

# Sideways

poetry magazine

*The 'London' Issue*



# Sideways Poetry Magazine

London & Manchester, UK

Issue Two

## Founders/Editors:

Richard Gilbert-Cross & Richy Campbell

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We at *Sideways* believe that poetry should always be accessible, with everybody having a voice.

If you've always enjoyed poetry, or even if this is your first taste of it, we encourage you to jot down the first poem that comes to your mind. No fear of rejection, no fear of judgement. Freedom to express yourself.

Please support poetry and the poets in this issue by sending around copies to your friends and discussing your favourites.

Google the poets and reach out to them if you especially enjoyed something.

'Oh, I love London Society! It is entirely composed now of beautiful idiots and brilliant lunatics. Just what society should be.' – *Oscar Wilde*

# Poems

Louis Faber - 'Mid Morning Song'

Nicola Stringer - 'London Chronic'

Judith Wozniak - 'Westminster Bridge'

Ilse Pedler - 'Museum of Excuses'

William Doreski - 'The Spread of Unicorns'

William Doreski - 'A Map of Pre-War London'

Kat Dixon - 'other people are furniture (on the tube)'

James Bell - 'parachuting onto Euston Road'

# Louis Faber

Louis Faber is a poet and retired attorney and college literature teacher; residing in Rochester, New York and Coconut Creek, Florida. His work has previously appeared in Eureka Literary Magazine, European Judaism, The South Carolina Review and Worcester Review, among many others, and has been nominated for a Pushcart Prize. A book of poetry, *The Right to Depart*, was published by Plain View Press.

## Mid Morning Song

He leans against the wall  
outside the Prêt à Manger  
witting with his dog  
on the old Mexican blankets  
that look uniquely out of place  
on a cool London morning.  
He sips the now fetid coffee  
in its Styrofoam cup,  
its Burger King logo  
and temperature warning.  
His hair is long, mostly  
gray with streaks of white,  
his beard white  
with swaths of blond, he  
looks as though he  
just stepped down the plank  
of the great sailing ship,  
returned from a voyage  
save for his tattered, stained  
Manchester United sweatpants.  
I put 50p in his metal box  
against my better judgment

and stroke behind the ears  
of the placid dog.  
“May you be many times praised”  
he sputters, through teeth  
stained tobacco brown,  
“for with more like you,  
Rufus here, and I shall later  
enjoy a fine repast.  
May Saint Dymphna be praised.”  
In the taxi to Paddington Station  
I wonder who my patron  
might be, if Jews  
only had Saints.

# Nicola Stringer

Nic Stringer was highly commended in the Forward Prizes 2018 for her first collection *A day that you happen to know*, published by Guillemot Press. Poetry and art have been reproduced in anthologies and journals including *The Forward Book of Poetry 2019* and the forthcoming *Valley Press Anthology of Prose Poetry*, *Magma*, *Structo*, *Eborakon*, *The Interpreter's House* and online at Burning House Press. Nic is also a member of the sound collective Fractured Strings and manages poetry events and collaborations as part of Corrupted Poetry.

## London Chronic

The air  
these days  
is filthy  
echoes shaped  
to emerge  
with the taste of  
endings  
parts missing  
or gnawed away

Like wild things  
we try to detect the heat  
from major organs

When touched or disturbed  
we push half-formed wings down flat  
pray or hiss  
and every day fifty tonnes of rock hit  
reshaping the landscape  
sculpting  
carving  
carrying  
the broken pieces

Moving gradually  
with a glacier's weight  
we secrete dark fluids  
from bristled feet  
to keep attached  
to the surface

Far from  
our commonplaces  
collect supplies  
retreat  
to lay monstrous eggs  
in our food

# Judith Wozniak

Judith Wozniak lives in Hampshire and spent her working life as a GP. She is currently in her second year as student on the MA course at the Poetry School in London. She has had poems published in *Reach Poetry*, *Poetry24*, *Ink Sweat & Tears* and the Hippocrates Prize Anthology 2019.

## **Westminster Bridge**

*March 22<sup>nd</sup> 2017*

The river has swallowed its sounds  
air thick as the moments before an eclipse

when the birds leave. Overhead the throb  
of two helicopters circling. A man running.

The South Bank already cordoned off,  
blue and white tape tangles the breeze,

Men in hard hats slide down ladders  
leaving behind bones of scaffolding.

The streets smell of dust and thunder.  
There is nobody to ask.

# Ilse Pedler

Ilse Pedler's pamphlet, *The Dogs That Chase Bicycle Wheels*, won the 2015 Mslexia Pamphlet competition. She is the poet in residence at Sidmouth Folk Week and works as a veterinary surgeon in Saffron Walden.

## **The Museum of Excuses**

*Of course, come in I'm glad you could find us, most people forget we're here.  
Do mind the metal doors, they close quite quickly,  
I'm afraid the exhibits have a habit of leaking out.  
Yes, these common ones roam free.*

**He told me to do it.  
I ran out of time.**

*On our left is the gallery of denial.  
It's one of the larger spaces and we hang our exhibits from the ceiling.  
Yes, the humming is quite usual and they do sway rather curiously I know.  
Feel free to walk among them, there are ear defenders if you wish.*

**I didn't do it.  
I wasn't there.**

*I agree, most people don't stay in the room for long,  
the whining can become intolerable  
but we find the ringing in the ears usually subsides by the end of the tour.  
Please follow me.*

*On our left is the main gallery, some of the oldest exhibits are mounted here.  
The gold frames are quite impressive aren't they?*

**It wasn't my fault.  
I couldn't help it.**

*On our right is the room of regret we have a special exhibition at the moment, a European theme.*

**I didn't really think it would happen**  
**It was only a protest vote**

*Yes, that's a book of apology, if you would care to add your name...  
I'll leave you now to browse on your own.*

*The building works? It's our new extension, funding has been surprisingly straightforward this time.*

*The walls are lead lined and there will be protective suits to wear but please stay behind the barrier, it's not quite finished yet, as you can see the exhibits are currently waiting to be hung, I agree the orange glow can be quite unsettling.*

**It was only a deterrent**  
**We had no choice**

*Yes, I feel you're right,  
it may well be our last exhibition.*

# William Doreski

William's work has appeared in various e- and print journals, as well as several collections; most recently, *A Black River, A Dark Fall* (2019).

## The Spread of Unicorns

The dentist I met in the British  
Museum Reading Room assures me  
that an hour or two in his chair

will result in a perfect smile,  
all at public expense. Outside  
London, on a small wooded knoll,

his office is a tiny cement  
block fortress. Propped in the chair  
while he hones his instruments,

I read in the *Herald-Tribune*  
that my friend Ellen killed her husband  
with the spear of a unicorn.

Examining antiques in Essex  
she mistook a long metal blowgun  
for a telescope and tried to peer

over the marshes. Finding her view  
blocked, she tried to blow off the lens.  
The spiral horn shot from the tube

and pierced her husband's forehead,  
skewering his tiny brain. Later  
the police admitted that several

browsers had died the same way,  
but the town tax on their burial  
has purchased an Apple computer

for the kindergarten, so who cares?  
The dentist has read the story  
and is pleased that I know the people.

He also possesses a blowgun  
designed to fire unicorn horns,  
but lacks the ammunition. Now,

as we laugh over the oddity  
of impalement by endangered  
species, he rolls my upper lip

and sticks something to it: tooth decals.  
My new smile flashes in the mirror  
like a page torn from a bible.

I shake the dentist's thick little hand.  
Outside in the yellow light  
a woman kneels by a fallen man.

A spiral horn juts from his forehead.  
The woman raises her face and smiles  
a decal-smile like my own.

We understand. The horn happens  
from inside-out, and the blowgun's  
a trick to make someone look guilty.

Already I feel a nub of horn  
throb under the skin. Not much time.  
The woman and I enter the woods

and press our decal-smiles together  
with the enthusiasm strangers  
always foster in each other.

We hope to overcome the grief  
our resistance to sex will nurture,  
preventing the spread of unicorns.

### **A Map of Pre-War London**

Remember Watch Night? New Year's Eve  
under St. Paul's floating dome,  
survivors of the Blitz sighing  
favorite hymns as the years revolved  
at midnight. We spilled into streets

that raved from Trafalgar Square  
up Bond to Piccadilly where  
we caught a sweating underground  
reeking of liquefied hoodlums  
and dozed all the way to Hammersmith.

Now poring over a map  
of pre-war London I note  
how the streets around St. Paul's  
met at sharper angles, ghostly  
old buildings Charles Dickens both

admired and deplored leaning  
against each other like the drunks  
crowding down Shaftesbury Avenue.  
German bombs, half of them duds,  
blasted corridors, clearing views

of the cathedral and changing  
the way Cheapside and Newgate merge,  
realigning Cannon and Queen  
Victoria Streets. Our walk  
down Ludgate, Fleet, and the Strand

felt empty and haunted; but meeting  
the mobs at Charing Cross swept us  
into the New Year and smothered  
the scorched memories of a war  
that ended before we were born.

I fold the old map so gently  
none of the bombed streets rupture;  
but I feel their alignment suffer  
as the houses collapse in rubble.  
That stink of bombs exhumes

the ugly rage we dream away  
after midnight, drowning drunk  
in pools of bilious lamplight,  
the drone of the bombers fading  
in the humbled grays of dawn.

# Kat Dixon

Kat Dixon is an emerging writer, studying with the Poetry School in London. Her poems have appeared in Southbank Magazine and Perverse. Her unpublished manuscript, *Letters to ex lovers I will never send*, was shortlisted for the Rialto Pamphlet Prize 2019. Her poem *Raising Maidens* was nominated for a Forward Prize (2019).

## **other people are furniture (on the tube)**

paths cut through heave  
gates fly the sheer volume of faces  
shelves of tiredness

my father calls it fluid dynamics  
in a way we are like water  
currents repelling currents

a man asks an entire carriage for money  
most of us pretend  
we can't smell close-quartered pain

Important Solitary Narratives  
imagine if all the headphones were hacked  
a single soundtrack for 2.6 million ears

# James Bell

James Bell is a Scottish poet who now lives in France where he contributes non-fiction to an English language journal. He has written poetry and fiction for over twenty years and is still publishing.

## **parachuting onto Euston Road**

I parachute onto Euston Road three or four times a year  
not that anybody notices - don't even notice the season

I am always ignored in the struggle with silk and line  
seen perhaps as apposite or obsessive - an artist on the lam

a madman even though I find in London that  
most activities are tolerated if they are not terrorist

I remember how colour of parachute used to be important  
often asked about this in other quarters now left behind

I usually aim for the new British Library courtyard  
take care to miss Kings Cross and Euston stations out

St Pancras is another where I could wrap up and leave the country  
celebrate how I manage to leave my parachute behind

every time it is still there on the ground though nobody ever notices  
as they drink coffee outside or stride in and out of the library

with purpose and traffic trundles incessantly on the road outside  
there is usually space to land and apart from my initial tumble

my landing is unremarkable as I do not hit the statue  
of the muscled metal man or a chair from the outdoor café

I generally do not show any purpose but this is allowed



# Sideways

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## Call for submissions!

Get your poems published in *Sideways*

For Issue 3 we are throwing open the doors for an 'open house'.

Poems can be about any subject and in any form. Length-wise, most poems we view are up to 3 pages of A4.

We welcome poetry from both published and unpublished writers. All we ask is that each submission has not been previously published elsewhere.

Also, do include a brief biography/publication history.

**Please email submissions to:** [sidewayspoetry@gmail.com](mailto:sidewayspoetry@gmail.com)

**With thanks to our contributors:**

Louis Faber, Nicola Stringer, Judith Wozniak, Ilse Pedler,  
William Doreski, Kat Dixon, James Bell

*Sideways* is a themed online and print poetry magazine. Each issue features poets from around the world, often based on each issue's theme.

It is always an absolute pleasure welcoming submissions from established writers, and we especially encourage poems from those who are yet to be published.

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