

Sideways

poetry magazine

PATIENCE

Issue Four

KINDNESS

January 2021

GOODNESS

Sideways Poetry Magazine

London & Manchester, UK

Issue Four

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.

Please support poetry and the poets in this issue by sending around copies to your friends and discussing your favourites. Whilst all poets in this issue own the rights to their poems, you are free to print and distribute the magazine yourself.

Or you could web search the poets and reach out to them if you especially enjoyed something.

'My alma mater was books, a good library... I could spend the rest of my life reading, just satisfying my curiosity'

– *Malcolm X*

Poems

DS Maolalai - 'Coathangers' & 'Knuckles'

Bruach Mhor - 'Scandanavia according to Netflix'

Timothy Resau - 'Leon's Dream' & 'During The First Illness'

Cara McKee - 'Red', 'The same as we've always been' & 'Donna'

Gerry Stewart - 'Self-Determination'

Gillie Robic - 'Fractured'

Beth McDonough - '28th of March Between the Port and the Cala'

Leisha Douglas - 'Stop Here' & 'The Order of Things'

New Poets

Gabrielle Finnegan - 'Dessert'

DS Maolalai

DS Maolalai has been nominated four times for Best of the Net and three times for the Pushcart Prize. His poetry has been released in two collections, "Love is Breaking Plates in the Garden" (Encircle Press, 2016) and "Sad Havoc Among the Birds" (Turas Press, 2019)

Coathangers

restless on a twenty-
ninth birthday,
and seeing my reflection
in the light
of an elevator
wall. and my father's
reflection, and my brother's.
all my uncles
and aunts as well.

knowing we don't
get too fat
in my family. we age
and stay skinny;
gristled and angular
and useless as a bag
of old coathangers. the meat
of my body is aging
to greyness.
chewy and bloody
and thickened by skin.
genetics – what wonderful
presents these are! better

than christmas,
and twenty-
nine birthdays. I'll wear
a nice coat and a shirt
that hangs loosely.
we're a family of bones
with no skin
and no sinew.
we're a wardrobe
of coathangers,
covered by shirts.

Knuckles.

he was quite
an old man, even
as a young one. a fire-
bred conservative
who spit
GAA.

he trained teams,
lived hurling,
was apparently
good at it. and we
were good friends,
and we stopped
being friends.

and I
saw him recently
in a GAA bar-
room. he's aging
quite ably; knuckles,
that suit.

like a tree
on the corner
of a very busy
road.

Bruach Mhor

Bruach Mhor swims frequently, tries to walk mindfully. His poems have appeared in such places as *The Interpreter's House*, *Dreich*, *The Lake*, *Morphrog*, *The Beach Hut*, *Ink+Sweat and Tears*, *Re-Side*, *Broken Spine*, *Poetry Village*, *Emerald* (Monstrous Regiment).

Scandinavia according to Netflix

Nobody smiles

Nobody laughs

A sad keyboard plays

whenever people

are walking through woods and snow

People are always

walking through woods and snow

Industrial estates are full of abandoned buildings

full of people
taped or tied to chairs

by detail obsessed murderers

Everyone is as cheerful
as a CCTV camera painted grey

Lars may have a thing with Yelena,
but it won't work out

Life is only the fourth episode
of season twelve

Timothy Resau

Timothy Resau is an American writer of fiction and poetry, originally from Baltimore, Maryland. His career has been in the international wine business. He currently resides in coastal North Carolina, and he's just completed a novel, *Three Gates East*. His writings have appeared in *Anti-Heroic Chic*, *Eskimo Pie*, *Scarlet Leaf Review*, and *Down in the Dirt*.

Leon's Dream

Leon drives around dreaming—
seeing the local boys change
before his very eyes into wasted shadows,
moving carelessly from promise to promise
like silhouettes curb to curb.
Leon overhears the conversations,
announcing their immediate verdict,
as background sound-bites drift by.
Leon dreams under streetlamps lit,
detailing slender hands pointing guns
at heads in this our most intense breath.
Leon dreams thru an out of gas city—
in America, too—
where the Fat Lady's now in drag,
has gotten high and lost her mind.

Leon's dreaming more blues than

Chicago even imagined.

Leon's all alone, driving

his busted bus of blues.

During the First Illness

Today the cabin smells of tobacco and cedar—
Bartok colors the silence—

To the east
the mountains stoop into nearby woods—

To the west
the leftover sun plays across the sky—

Turning north
I kill the pain with whiskey,
as laughter spills from my mouth,
like water dripping from a crack in the ceiling—

Facing south
I sit upon a log, calling your name with a desolate voice
from my alley of desperation, calling to a forgotten muse—

I notice autumn watching me like an old man,
wearing bright clothes, sitting by an open window,
toothless and haggard—

I attempt being professional, counting my days like pieces of gold,
listening to the concert of leaves, fading in motion,
like the last circular cycle of a disconnected fan,
flapping the breeze gently.
Another toast to another day
knowing that those my age are acting younger than I ...
even my fingernails feel the pain.

Cara L McKee

Cara L McKee grew up in Yorkshire and now lives on the west coast of Scotland. Her poetry has been published in places like *Gutter*, *Brittle Star*, *Ink Sweat & Tears*, and *The Queer Dot's Queer Quarantine*, and her book, *First Kiss* (Maytree Press) is out now. She is also on Twitter: @caralmckee

Red

It is the first, and is primary. It
is the longer wavelengths and yet not quite
infra-. It is burning and toasty warm,
gloved fingers on snowy days, and Mary
Queen of Scots' well chosen underlayer.

It is Snow White's lips and the wicked Queen's
apple, it is the rose of Lancashire
and the cross of St George and places we
do not belong. It is lefty Labour
and you know that it's still under the bed.

It is both cross and crescent and the tents
for the women. It is sacrifice and
courage, it is a mist of fury, it
is passion and lust. In the rocks and blood
under our feet it's rendered by iron

and it lies upon the battle field and
grows into poppies, and it lies on the
white sheets and grows into all the people.
Thanks to Rayleigh scattering it is the
sun rising and the sun going under,

and thanks to anthocyanins after
chlorophyll, it is Autumn leaves, and thanks
to pheomelanin it's the rarest
hair, and it's joy, happiness, good fortune,
and under that it's danger, hazard, stop.

The same as we've always been

When I started working with the old dears
my mum told me to keep in mind that it's

only our bodies, maybe parts of our
minds that get old, we're all still in here, just

the same as we were, as we are, as we've
always been. Always. I took that with me,

giggled with the old dears over David
Essex, batted away the advances

of the old men, and, in the darkest part
of the night shift I cuddled an old dear

who'd woken sure that she would die, and for
just a minute there she thought that maybe

I was her mum come again, and I thought
maybe sometimes we're not ourselves at all,

just like little kids playing some mad game
of dress up, too in it to get out now.

We go on, said the old dear at breakfast,
after. Perhaps my mum sent you. Perhaps

she did, perhaps in the next dark midnight
it'll be her mum that's cuddling her.

Donna

Donna, across the road, quietly noticed, early on during lockdown that I had forgotten the purpose of opening curtains, of dressing, not that she's a one for dressing - she's the PJ Queen, though it's day PJs, you can tell. Day PJs and hair that's always on its way to something else.

Donna, across the road, quietly noticed, and without any kind of commotion, crossed the road, left a care package with a candle, and the kind of smellies you use when you take good care of yourself. She left a cute card, she packaged up kindness, she left it.

Donna, across the road, quietly messaged me that the package was there, she said: *if I've got this wrong I can only apologise - you may think I'm always bright but looks can deceive.* I clambered out of my bed, I crept quietly down, I opened the door, I took that package to myself, I counted through her careful kindnesses.

Donna, across the road, quietly
chose to make a difference. She was kind,
she wrapped me up in care and helped me
to recapture my brightness, and that
meant that I could keep the care going,
passing kindness to my kids, giving
them warm words, quiet cuddles, giving
all of us a chance to consider
where else a quiet kindness could go.

Gerry Stewart

Gerry Stewart is a poet, creative writing tutor and editor based in Finland. Her poetry collection *Post-Holiday Blues* was published by Flambard Press, UK. Her collection *Totems* is to be published by Hedgehog Poetry Press in 2021. Her writing blog can be found at <http://thistlewren.blogspot.fi/> and @grimalkingerry on Twitter.

Self-Determination

Waiting rooms and requests
of 'just a minute'
tangled your first years,
as we struggled with the confusion
of our move to Finland.

Pushing you to entertain yourself
sparked off your independent streak.
I dealt with the bigger issues;
your brother's inexplicable tantrums
and translating doctors' reports.
Pushing you away.

You insist on doing everything yourself
even when I'm not ready,
climbing too high or running off
in whatever direction you choose.

Maybe it's genetics: our strong wills
blaze through the air, engulfing
everything between us like wildfires.

School looms and we navigate
the uneasy art of compromise.
You decide your own clothing, food,
toys within my fierce boundaries;
lines that can never shift,
yet you constantly test
their limits and mine.

To communicate we butt heads,
wondering who has won
and what that victory means.

Gillie Robic

Gillie Robic was born in India and lives in London. Her poems have appeared in the UK and the US. Her collections, *Swimming Through Marble* and *Lightfalls*, were published by Live Canon in 2016 and 2019

Fractured

They were drinking on the patio,
watching headlights silhouette trees.
She said *it's stuffy in here*
so they took their glasses to the viewing room,
squashed together inside
the huge blank television.
Who are those people staring at us?
I don't like synchronised drinking!
She hurled her glass at the screen –
everything cracked.

A beloved cousin arrived suddenly
with a backpack and a bottle of vodka.
He was as unexpected as his clinging companion,
who spent the evening rotating round his body,
sliding her hands up and down his arms and torso,
as if measuring him for some intimate ritual.
She paused only to lick his lips *because*
you have tomorrow on them – I remember it well.
In the morning the forensic team refused
the cleaner access to the wreckage.

Beth McDonough

Beth McDonough studied at GSA, then Dundee University. Her work connects strongly with place, particularly to the Tay, where she swims. Her poetry is in *Gutter, Stand, Magma* and elsewhere; she reviews in *DURA*. In *Handfast* (with Ruth Aylett) she explored autism. *Lamping for pickled fish*, is published by 4Word

28th of March

Between the Port and the Cala

Very soon, we won't arrive at that moment
on the goat path skipped between towns.
A glimpsed trip downhill watches both seas.

We won't pick up pace where the track
becomes double, then offers a fork
of a naughty lost loop to nowhere.

No-one will notice where tarmac begins,
or consider that awkward ambition of a road,
long left to crack, being eaten by landscapes.

Leisha Douglas

Her chapbook, *The Season of Drunken Bees*, received special mention in The Comstock Review's Niles 2009 Chapbook Competition. Her poems and short stories have appeared or are forthcoming in *Bluestem*, *Corium Magazine*, *decomp*, *Euphony Journal*, *Forge*, *Hobart*, and *Poydras Review* as well as many other journals and magazines

Stop Here

Autumnal air
saturated with pear and apple
reminders of years biking to middle school
along cracked sidewalks,
between swaths of mown grass,
the thrill of something always beginning,
that anticipation,
perhaps self-deceiving,
but necessary
to age and become.
Better to tether here
while nights lengthen,
and birds depart.

The Order of Things

By the outdoor bird feeder, in a metal can,
sunflower seeds and millet.
Alphabetized spices line the pantry's narrow shelves.
Nestled in a blue ceramic dish,
an oval of fragrant soap.
To gather or leave behind
an eagle feather along the hiking trail,
that pink quartz stone
blinking among the pine needles.
So many things once thought worth accumulating
lose pertinence or meaning.
My mother's Christmas decorations filled half a dumpster.
When this home is left for the last time,
what will be taken or discarded?
By whom?
Where?

Gabrielle Finnegan

Gabrielle is an actor and writer. Usually writing for the screen, she has recently turned her hand to writing and performing poetry, after being involved in Bath Spa's Spark Fest Online. She has always had a passion for poetry and aims to use it to explore social issues.

Dessert

I tease your honeyed words around my head.
That golden glow flows down through my body,
As I think about the way you got a little too close,
To whisper in my ear.
The sweetness of your praise,
I think about how good it would taste on my tongue.
How sticky your body became,
In revealing the way you felt.
I take you words, your touch,
The way your lips were almost on mine,
And I play with them, every time I feel low.
Thank you, sugar, for making me feel wanted
And wanting.

Credits

Thank you to all our fantastic contributors, all of whom made many hours of poetry-reading and re-reading the most exciting experience.

Sideways x

Cover Photo by Caleb Gregory on Unsplash

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Haiku Corner

'Chonk' By G.S.

An aquatic mammal
On the shore, it aims to rest
Until the fish come

Feeling inspired?

Get your poems published in *Sideways!*

Issue 5 coming July 2021!

Sideways

poetry magazine

We are excited for Issue 5, which is shaping up to be our biggest - and best - yet.

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

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

With thanks to our contributors:

DS Maolalai, Bruach Mhor, Timothy Resau, Cara McKee, Gerry Stewart,
Gillie Robic, Beth McDonough, Leisha Douglas & Gabrielle Finnegan

Sideways is an online poetry magazine. Each issue features poets from around the world, often based on an issue 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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