

Sideways

poetry magazine



Issue Five
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Sideways Poetry Magazine

London & Manchester, UK

Issue Five

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.

“Can't bring back time. Like holding water in your hand.”

– James Joyce - ‘Ulysses’

Poems

Edward Alport - 'DIES IRA' & 'How To Eat Chocolate'

Mike Cole - 'Bats', 'Inebriate' & 'Climb'

Bill Cotter - 'Visiting a Remembered Watershed' & 'Visiting an Old Wimmera Home'

Philip Davison - 'Bowl of Fruit'

Ian Heffernan - 'Chinese Haiku' & 'Nocturne, September 2018'

Oormila Vijayakrishnan Prahlad - 'Secret Lives' & 'Holding Out'

Christine Hamm - 'they move through their mute rooms'

Lorelei Bacht - 'Sailor, i refute you.'

New Poets

Deborah York - 'Thankful'

Edward Alport

Edward Alport is a retired teacher and proud Essex Boy. He occupies his time as a poet, gardener and writer for children. He has had poetry, stories and articles published in a variety of webzines and magazines. He sometimes posts snarky micropoems on Twitter as @cross_mouse.

DIES IRA

(Bishopsgate 1993)

My hand crawls with instant maggots

To think that, with a gesture

I could send their jaws

Careering through bricks and bone

I will mould my maggots,

Shape them lovingly into innocent forms,

Squeeze them into cracks and crevices

And let them sleep, in comfort,

Until they stammer into life

And rip their way through flesh and furnishings.

Look at my hand

Look at the egg lying on the bare bone

See it sweat (steady!) in anticipation

My maggots have no need of broken glass

No need to crawl around on bloodstains

Or justify themselves with pupae

They need the incubation and the hatch

And the pattern of my fingerprint.

How to Eat Chocolate

Taste this, she said.

Balance it on your tongue.

Let the fires of heaven dribble through your blood.

Let the claws of jaguars caress your cheek.

Drift down the river of remembering.

A slow journey.

A slower journey.

Past the fields of gold and violet,

And I will drift with you, she said.

Mike Cole

Mike Cole grew up in Fresno, California and graduated from Fresno State College in 1971 (MA in Poetry, 1991). His poems have appeared in Antioch Review, Laurel Review, Midland Review, Thin Air, and other magazines. He lives in the Sierra Nevada Foothills near Yosemite National Park.

Bats

If you are here just as the sky begins to lighten,
you will see the bats coming back to their rest.
If you sit where I sit making no sound
except the almost silent tapping on a keyboard
or the light scratching of a pen or pencil on paper,
you will hear the bats taking their positions for sleep.
Then, long before sunlight breaks over the ridge,
there will be silence again inside these walls,
and no one would know unless he had been here
to see the black shapes dart across the pale sky
that they were hanging there like soft cocoons
waiting to open again to chase echoes across the dark.

Inebriate

I have gone places.
I assure you of that.
Why yesterday I walked to the top of the hill
and watched a raven dismantle an apple
that had been hanging there so long
it was brown and soft
and possibly fermented enough
to cause a raven to forget for awhile
how to rise into its future.

Climb

for Jane

At 20,000 feet
roped in a line of silhouettes
stepping single file
across a sky scraped clean
by wind so strong
she can lean her full weight against it,
she knows a hurt so deep
she closes her eyes
before each step and builds
a new reason for going on,
but she knows too how new
the Bolivian light will seem
those mornings after the climb
when she wakes late
in her room in La Paz,
stands in the open window
looking out at the mountain
that crushed her spirit
to dark stone
then gave it back to her
with brighter wings
to carry her between here
and her next climb.

Bill Cotter

Bill Cotter's poems have appeared in Australia, New Zealand, England and India. He has won a number of literary awards, including the Melbourne Shakespeare Society's sonnet competition. He has also published a novel exploring the gold rushes in Victoria in the 1850s, a collection of short stories and a short play for voices. He has conducted creative writing classes for adults and children. He lives with his wife, Kaylene, in Bairnsdale, a country town in Victoria, Australia.

VISITING A REMEMBERED WOOLSHED

It stands there still, an island, iron walled, iron roofed,

Washed by the same fleeces of flung clouds,

Slow moving shadows from the red bluff behind

And the spear sharp sun.

But, it is old, now.

The yards around it are filled with weeds,

Though the dry, concrete sheep dip, so intimidating as a child,

Still retains the lingering scent of arsenic.

Windows, robbed of glass, are gapped mouths

And the corrugated iron tank,

Once strong as a drum, is now tilted, empty

And bleeding streams of rust.

Gone are the tides of unshorn, grey backed sheep

And the sweeping dust.

Gone the circling dogs, eager to bark and nip,

But ears pricked and eying their masters.

Gone are the brown hatted men, bustling, shoving and shouting.

The roof is a landing strip for crows

And the gravel track is lined with weeds.

It is an old man, now,

Abandoned

But perhaps content with its memories.

REVISITING AN OLD WIMMERA HOME

Spring has clearly come,

Come with the long, curled clouds,

The sheets of bright blue sky

And the skeins of copper-coloured ibises

Still landing on the dam.

But, all is changed.

Gone are the uniform fields of oats and wheat,

The old, heavy bellied trucks

And the clapped-out ploughs lined up like trophies.

All is new, space age now,

Computerised, comfortable and contained.

Wheat rubs shoulders with barley, gaudy canola,

Sorghum, millet and maize.

The track that snared my uncle's truck is sealed.

Gone are the drooping she oaks.

Where the pigs were fed, manicured lawn now grows

And gravel paths contain disciplined garden beds.

Strangers own the farm, now

And the Wimmera I knew is a memory.

Philip Davison

Philip Davison lives in Dublin. He has published nine novels. He writes radio drama. He has written two television dramas and one play for stage. He co-wrote *Learning Gravity*, a BBC Storyville documentary on poet and undertaker, Thomas Lynch.

Bowl of Fruit

The suspended coal burst of a kiwi fruit.
I have never seen you eat a kiwi.

Where are you, my brother
in your coma?

I am not a ventriloquist
I will not tread softly to your bedside
I will organise no gathering.

Aren't you worried about me?
The birds are singing.
In all humanity
there is no mistake here.

This way, this way.
My daughter, not yet born,
will paint your nails.
I will peel an apple for you
from your lousy still life.

Listen to me.
The hearing, I know, is last to go.

Ian Heffernan

Ian Heffernan was born just outside London, where he still lives. He studied at UCL and SOAS and works with the homeless. His poetry has been published recently in the High Window, the Raintown Review, Morphrog, London Grip, Acumen, Ink Sweat & Tears, South Bank Poetry and elsewhere.

CHINESE HAIKU

Snow and ice have tamed
The aimlessness of water –
The winter stones crack.

*

Fifteen years ago –
The bullfrogs at 4am
Belching out their joy.

*

The bright drunken moon
Wheels past the small pavilion –
A woodcutter stares.

*

This half-prayer at dawn
In a northern hermitage
Beneath high clear skies.

*

Sichuan at sunrise –
The constellations slope off
With the waning moon.

*

A single bell chimes,
A plover calls into fog –
Here I've found shelter.

*

The curtains parted,
A face-off with the mirror –
White hair is a myth.

*

Two children alone
With a snoring prostitute –
A monk by the gate.

*

Budai airs his paunch –
A novice leads a monkey
Through the temple grounds.

*

Beyond the frontier
The path twists and falls away,
Even the air fails.

*

Returning boats mean
Isolation and defeat –
A Tartar horn sounds.

*

Two widows in spring –
Rain on village streets at dawn,
Dusk at the frontier.

*

Chance and blind distance –
Now the islands slip away
Into mist and rain.

*

A golden *qilin*
Appears at the Eastern Gate –
The birth of a sage.

*

That unswept courtyard –
The tiny *mea culpa*
Of another drink.

*

My shadow runs rings
Around me like a wild man –
Autumn afternoon.

*

The light grows weaker –
The screaming of the gibbons
Has broken its strength.

*

A drinking party –
Only the wind complains now
In its empty voice.

*

The shrine in moonlight –
Deep in the forest the paths
Creep about, conspire.

*

Spring ice, a spent storm –
Here at the westernmost point
Of things, life holds out.

NOCTURNE, SEPTEMBER 2018

I hear a gull calling from the roofs.
It seems unusual in the early hours.

I hear a helicopter trace
Repeated arcs in the sky

And drunken instruments chime.
I smell night-scented stock.

This is the kingdom of the achromate.
The colours gather here to rest

And darkness sown by star and wind
Watches over them till dawn.

Wide awake at an open window
I think of those who cling to sleep
Like stranded climbers, awaiting help,

And those who cling to life
With hands as thin as paperclips;
Morning clear as a misprint to them.

But most of all I think of...

Chic-thighed girls, the mark left by a bra strap,
Small scatterings of clothes, the press of breasts,
The odd geometries of sex.

My life, though, is a weakened magnet.
I know it now, and know my youth
Outlasts me, looks at me askance,

And recognise that there's a cruelty
At the heart of things, not gentleness;
Cruelty that's innate and organised.

These thoughts convolve and disappear.
It's quiet again (as it should be).
The night air slips like a stolen child

Through the narrowing and widening streets.

Oormila Vijaykrishnan Prahlad

Oormila Vijaykrishnan Prahlad is an Indian-Australian artist, poet, and pianist. She holds a Masters in English and is a member of Sydney's North Shore Poetry Project. Her art and poetry have been widely published in both print and online literary journals and anthologies. Her recent works have been featured in Tistelblomma, Silver Birch Press, and Underwood Press. New works are forthcoming in The Tide Rises, The Furious Gazelle, Black Bough Poetry, and elsewhere. She is a chief editor for Authora Australis. Find her @oormilaprahlad on Twitter and oormila_paintings on Instagram.

Secret Lives

At the warehouse on a Sunday
he's teetering on a ladder
looking for a coping saw,
a file for our dining table,
when high up on the rack
he spots a row
of sixty-piece tool kits,
and squealing like a toddler
running wild in Toys R Us,
he reaches for one,
but the scowl on my face screams
We have six of those already!
Exasperated nag of a wife,
I spend my days
confiscating hammers,
spanners and pliers
that tumble
out of hidden corners
in bookshelves and chests,
peeking out of
underwear drawers.

The desert in April
is a carpet of blooms,
I'm six, picking dandelions
while dad soaps and mops
the two door Buick.
Propping up the hood
I clamber and peer inside
poking around the carburettor
as dad launches
into a lecture
on internal combustion
and four stroke pistons.
Then he asks me to fetch
a wrench from the boot
and there I stumble upon
his secret life
hoarded beneath tarpaulin:
a hundred clamps, and Allen keys,
chisels, mallets, electric drills
the stash of toys
he hides from mother.

Holding out

Peeking through the bars of home
I watch the southern autumn
arrive in buds
of anemone blooms,
studded margarite
in the swatches of thicket.

Even in this stupor
of prolonged isolation,
Sweet Janes awaken
curled in pearly bundles,
the garden transforming
with the promise
of winter blossoms.

Mini pompom fists
shiver open,
skirts flared, double whorled,
stamens quilled with gold,
the grass a Saxony carpet
of petals and pollen dust.

Within the stones of my fortress
I breathe in the calm
of this preternatural beauty -
the spirit of things still holding out,
untarnished hope
in a befouled world
besieged at once
by a brand-new strain of virus
and the age-old thirst
for violence.

Christine Hamm

Christine E. Hamm (she/her), queer & disabled English Professor, social worker and student of ecopoetics, has a PhD in English, and lives in New Jersey. She recently won the Tenth Gate prize from Word Works for her manuscript, *Gorilla*. She has had work featured in *North American Review*, *Nat Brut*, *Painted Bride Quarterly* and many others. She has published six chapbooks, and several books -- including *Saints & Cannibals*.

This poem has a title that's taken from a line in Plath's *Blue Moles*. The line is in brackets.

[they move through their mute rooms]

Behind the museum's glass, each animal with
its own finger-painted backdrop. All this dirt, pretend. Some
dioramas so small they neatly fit into my purse.
The red squirrel with tufted ears watches me, amethyst eyes
unforgiving. They say the tang of glue lingers for
years. The vitrines stained by the prints of the man who last
yanked those necks into position. I have lost my

shoe, now limping in the warm dark lining the halls. A scarlet ibis,

frozen, clings to a plastic and paper tree. Fenced

by a landscape copied from National Geographic. All dirt is pretend.

Lorelei Bracht

Lorelei Bacht is a European bookworm and poet living in Asia. She enjoys climbing trees and observing orb weavers. When she is not drawing sad little sketches, she writes - too much. Her work has appeared/is forthcoming in *Visitant*, *The Wondrous Real*, *Quail Bell*, *Fahmidan*, *Abridged Magazine*, *Odd Magazine*, *Postscript*, *PROEM*, *SWWIM*, *Strukturriss*, *The Inflectionist Review*, *Slouching Beast Journal*, *Hecate*, and others. She is also on Instagram: @lorelei.bacht.writer and on Twitter: @bachtlorelei

Sailor, I refute you.

He is the white weed which I pull, pull,
pull out of my teeth every night – there is
much more of it that requires pulling:

heave, heave, and I am the sailor cutting
the surgeon knot, the fisherman knifing
the net, letting the silver loose. Every

choice made at sea is a matter of survival:
It is either you or the whale that makes
it to the feast - and rarely both. A whale

is a landscape, an intentional cathedral,
feeding its multitudes on the mistakes
of drowned captains. And I know who

I want to be: not the yellow raincoat, not
the red boot, the thick jumper, the pipe,
nothing to do with you.

Sailor, I refute you.

Deborah York

Deborah is currently studying 'English Literature and Creative Writing' with the Open University, and in her second year. Writing poetry is new to her, and she has found writing poetry is as relaxing as reading it. She has never published any of her poems.

Thankful

Early each morning

I saw that sunflower

gaze through my window.

Golden florets glowed warm

against the sun

its bloom, like a child dancing

nodded gracefully

in the breeze.

It had struggled a long way

up from the earth

to my window for light

bursting my consciousness

with beatific warmth.

Bees buzzed, adding liveliness

a reminder of myself –

once too, in full bloom.

Day by day

its petals wilted.

Heavy with drying seeds

it bowed its head,

bringing joy one last time

to hungry beaks

a mirror image of myself –

now tired and stooped.

Last night, thunder rumbled

flashes of lightning lit up the sky

deafening rain

beat against my window

and now – calm

with frail fingers

I pull back the curtain - no flower

a life cut short.

In bed as I lay,
body aching
I hear my carer
cheer my life
with each new greeting
thankful I am here with friends
kind and caring
and for a life, too long.

Credits

A massive thank you to the talented poets of this issue. Without you, there would be no magazine. And to the readers - we really hope you enjoyed reading, your support means so much.

Sideways x

Cover Photo by @ScottWebb on Unsplash - a huge thank you

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Haiku Corner

'Olympic Haiku' By G.S.

Olympic medals
shimmer of silver and gold
as if by magic

Feeling inspired?

Get your poems published in *Sideways*

Issue 6 coming January 2022!

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poetry magazine

We are *so* excited for Issue 6. Issue 5 was our biggest and best yet - & we cannot wait to start reading your submissions.

Poems can be about any subject and in any form. Length-wise, most poems we view are up to 5 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:

Edward Alport, Mike Cole, Bill Cotter, Philip Davison, Ian Heffernan,
Oormila Vijayakrishnan Prahlad, Christine Hamm, Lorelei Bacht & Deborah
York

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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