

These Aimless Days

Meg Baxter

**You count on your fingers the ferris wheels,
the near-touches, the butter sunsets and the slow
walks home in the rain. The kisses that burned
still number highest. You fall asleep**

**and dream in words like *azalea, butterscotch,*
hummingbird, Idaho, but wake with moon-blood
on the mattress and a numbness in your arms.
A girl you met this week smells of lavender**

**and something called “tonka”—
you think of her in the shower, then decide you’ll message
her later, but the wind never blows in the right direction
and you can’t find any clean clothes.**



Meg Baxter is a poet, performer and Creative Writing student living in Bath. Her work is a collection of 'disjointed wonderlands' and 'archipelagos of memory' in which she discusses intimacy, heartache, obsession and small sadnesses. She loves laughter, the colour pink and weird dolls in charity shops.

Breath of the Divine

Peter Roe

A soft exhale...

**Breath from infant lungs
knuckles pale with rapt concentration
wrapped tight on the rail
of the nursery cot**

**A brilliant beam
of sunlight cutting
through the darkened room
is the object of the child's
laser like focus**

**Seconds later...
the infant laughs with glee
when dust motes swirl
in response to his breath**

**Then moments of calm
while the air settles
until a soft exhale
from infant lungs
sends universes spinning
in a moment of divine creation**



Peter Roe lives in Bridport on the Jurassic Coast but was born and raised a 'Northern Lad' in Buxton in the Peak District. He is a disabled, aspie performance poet, writer, film-maker and self confessed nerd who likes to shatter peoples' misconceptions about computer geeks!

Peter has been The Deputy Bard of Caer Dur (Dorchester), and appeared in fringes in 2019. He was runner up in the Bridport Short Story Slam 2018, He was a finalist in the Apples and Snakes South-West Slam in 2018, Long listed in the 'Writing Without Limits' category for The Yeovil Literary Prize 2017 and winner of The Western Gazette Best Local Writer 2017 for his poem 'War of The Words'. He is an organiser of the monthly spoken word event Apothecary in Bridport and sits on the steering committee for Dorset Writers Network and recently shortlisted for The Blandford Poetry Prize 2019

The Law Says You Have £53.10 Each Week To Live On

Myriam San Marco

He told himself stories to survive.

**How a slice of bread is a loaf, brown
letters hugging the door close are presents
for his children now in care. I listen,**

**look at the bread, how the butter doesn't
reach the crusts and who will you feed it to?
If the door screams open to the dark men
with their dark smiles and their dark clothes**

**with extra pound signs in their dark eyes,
they who assign money to memories,
swap paper for hats, carrots in their hair:
call a crowd for everything must go!**

**He sits by the fireplace, fingers in
ashes, tells himself stories. I listen.**



Myriam San Marco is a French poet based in Bournemouth, UK. She has hosted The Platform Open Mic and 'Spread the Verb' bi-monthly night in Poole Museum and currently runs Word Makers and Silent Shakers - I first met her when we were competing against one another in Frome and she has put me on at her nights in old tumbling down theatres in Bournemouth. She is a lady of many, many hats and talents and a really good friend of mine who always offers salient advice and listens, which is a skill many don't have.

She is the first poet in residence at the Chocolate Poetry Club in London, and was the first ever poet laureate of Bournemouth...I'm not sure how true it is that she was the first, but it's interesting isn't it?

Myriam's poetry will gently take you by the hand while arresting you at the ears. Her words, enveloped with charm, both hurt and heal. Her narratives unfold like citrus with honey, in boiling water. Skillfully careening a serrated edge slalom of linguistic fireworks

Pisces' Perch

Rory Paddle



**The king of fishers, a sneak preview of a blue void
Given only at this time by his call, deafens the impenetrable noise
A white wall tumbles as the depths push back, throwing life upwards to draw
breath
But just holding your own here can be hard, and all the creatures know
Yet, as the droplets land, for sure calmer waters flow
Here our friend sits, quiet, patient and warm
His orange closed, like a concertina fan waiting for end of dawn**

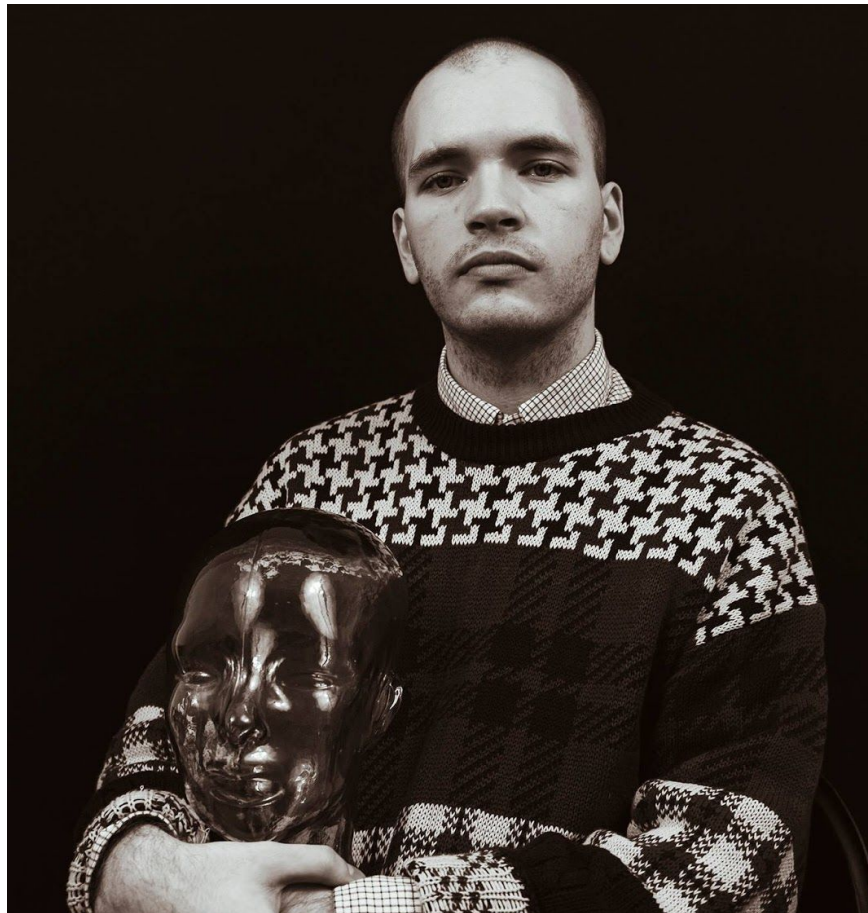


“My name is Rory Paddle and I am a writer from Sussex. Ever since I was a small boy I have been obsessed with music, art and nature. As an adult I love to travel, so try to channel my experiences of the globe through my creations. I have featured on BBC Radio and take great pleasure in sharing my words, I hope too that you can draw some comfort and joy from them. On a daily basis I attend a regular job and go home to my wonderful fiancé and two dogs”

An Encounter

Joshua Jones

A man bums a cigarette from me
Outside Victoria Station. He says
He needs a smoke, before going
To the dentist, and he left his fags
At home. He asks where I'm from
And if I could roll for him. He has
One arm, and at the bottom of
That arm there is a hand with
Three fingers, clutching a black
Bin bag full of clothes. I say:
"Not a problem mate, and
South Wales. He was in treatment
With a girl from Abergavenny.
He wonders what she is up to now.
I look up and say, it's a miserable day.
He says it could be a lot worse.



Originally from Llanelli, South Wales, Joshua Jones began performing as a spoken word poet while studying at Solent University, Southampton. There he edited *On The Water*, regularly performed at gigs supporting music acts such as Cassels, Crywank (honestly, that's a real band name and they are pretty damn good), Itoldyoulwouldeatyou and Listener (to name a few), and won the regional Hammer & Tongues Poetry Slam.

He also released 'The Fresh Prince Of Nowhere', a split record between Dominic James of Scarecrow Boat and himself. He also released a collection of poetry on Circle House Records called 'The Place', a zine called 'A Memory in Everywhere', and has toured across the UK and performed at festivals such as Brighton Fringe and Turbulence

More recently, Joshua has relocated to Bristol to study an MA at Bath Spa University. In 2019 he released an EP under the name Human Head, called 'Sorry, I Wasn't Listening' on Beth Shalom Records. He is currently on the Apples and Snakes' Poetry Platform 2020 programme.

I met him competing against him in a slam (there's a lot of that going around) and despite my best intentions we became friends, he's always writing and always around

on the Bristol scene. He also helped me film a video where he pretended to be me for a day...which was very nice of him.

Yellow

Laura Kestrel

**They said I tasted like yellow
My lips oozed with drops of it
Like honey painted on comb.
Or of gorse flowers fruiting coconut smells
Ripening in the specks of sea-kissed sunlight.**

**I said wryly that they reminded me of fiery red
But more the delicate insides of tulip petals.
They were the colour of everything I had suppressed
Like steam long left hidden inside a pot,
Boiling, boiling, boiling
And about to bubble over.**

**Maybe we were blue, so many different kaleidoscopic hues of blue
- the colour of hope
Or just unexpected rays of moonlight
On an astoundingly average evening.
Marking black and white films with vibrant colour**

**Even amongst these shimmers of azure
Their bold daring blue was exemplified fiercely by boring dreary backdrops
- not a wallflower, but a flower breathing life into all walls
And if yellow is a favourable flavour
Well, then I guess they must be yellow too.**

I'm still not exactly sure what yellow means –

But I think I like it.



Laura Kestrel is an international slam-poetry champion, multilingual LGBTQIA+ writer, workshop facilitator, producer and artist from Cornwall. An empowering presence, they focus on giving strength to the voiceless in society. In 2016, they represented the South-West in the National Poetry Anthology. Since Autumn-2016 with their spoken-word debut, they have been performing regularly across Europe, America, and Canada. They have led several poetry workshops/mentorships, curated international project #PoemsByPost, as well as hosting their events Arthena, and SYMpoésieUM. In 2019, they embarked on a new mixed-media project and queer community, Delphimmunity, whose works will be exhibited in 2021-2022, and hopefully at the Queer Arts Festival in Vancouver. Their first book, *Lambs with Manes of Lions* was published in August 2017, and their second collection *Turn- Stiles and Turn-Around Smiles* will be for general release in 2020. They are also the author of several short stories, an exhibited artist, and are currently writing their first play. They were recently invited to take part in Words First; a National spoken-word programme, preceding their summer-2019 tour. They currently reside in Spain, where they have performed at events such as *Cosmopoética*, and *Versat i Fet*. More recently, they have been invited to partake in an Arvon retreat week in March 2020, co-produced with Apples & Snakes, as well as the 16th International Short Story Conference.

Equinox

David Ralph Lewis

Echoes of yesterday beat in the darkness.
A fox stalks the gloom for dinner.
Clouds part. The galaxy unfurls in secret.
This is the dominion of owls.

Mice hide from sudden sharp claws.
The stars dim and black fades into blue.
Sun rises over the park. Inhale.
Joggers grow gold. One stops and weeps.

Cursing his lot, an ice cream van parks.
As the same tune loops, rain falls.
He sighs and unpeels a raspberry ripple.
Only a brief shower. Turned out nice again.

Unnoticed, the seasons are in perfect balance.
Office workers invade and conquer benches,
A few stragglers staying longer than allocated.
Sandwich boxes regularly interrupt the grass.

Pigeons swoop, Hoover up crumbs and worms.
Sprawled groups are preserved in amber.
The sun sinks below perception. Exhale.
Giving up, the ice cream van heads home.

Nocturnal eyes start to open again.
Mars rises above the horizon.
The darkness holds no fear for the drunk.
The earth's heart beats once, slow and deep.



David Ralph Lewis is a poet and short story writer based in Bristol, UK, When not writing, he enjoys dancing badly at gigs and attempting to grow vegetables. His first chapbook, *Our Voices in the Chaos*, was published by Selcouth Station in October 2019. You can follow him at www.davidralphlewis.co.uk

He's one of those people that's constantly working at his craft, you can see him at local open mics, strutting his stuff and playing with words in a careful considered but playful way and is always supporting his fellow poets with enthusiasm and kind words which, quite frankly, is what everyone needs