

NORTHAMPTON POETRY REVIEW



ISSUE 2 : WINTER 2017/18



POETRY - FICTION - REVIEWS

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Northampton Poetry Review
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About Northampton Poetry Review

The Northampton Poetry Review is a new literary journal based in Northamptonshire, UK. Its mission is to give voice to new poetry, fiction and non-fiction.

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Editorial | Welcome

Dear Friends,

Come on in. It's cold outside.

Welcome to that difficult second issue. It's a new year. Outside it's dark and an icy rain is falling. Temperatures are a little above zero. Winter is truly here.

A brief scan of the news and social media does little to brighten the spirits. The world appears to have continued its cork screwed descent that 2017 had set it upon...



John Clare, patron st. of the NPR

Britain is frozen with the inertia of Brexit. Europe is out in the cold. More widely there's a chilly vacuum in collective beliefs that's allowed for a new politics of cold hearted popularism. All the while despot leaders threaten to put us all a tweet away from nuclear winter. Chilly times indeed. Have things ever been darker? I'm sure they have and yet it's hard not to feel pessimistic about the collective destination.

We arrive then at this month's theme of hibernation and reflect upon it as both a biological necessity and a means to rejuvenate and replenish. We're helped in that goal by some excellent new writing that includes hibernation poems, wintry reflections and snowy meditations.

The importance of good writing is now more important than ever. Reports in November highlighted a proposal that would see twenty eight of Northampton's thirty six libraries threatened with closure due to budget

cuts. To paraphrase Alan Moore, a truly monstrous turn of events if true. We'd urge you to have your say and get involved in the various campaigns that are out there to help prevent this.

Despite the bleak picture we've painted to this point we remain positive for 2018 and the mission we have set ourselves at NPR. If you enjoy the NPR we would ask you to spread the word by any means at your disposal.

We'd also like to thank you the reader along with all the contributors to the first two issues of NPR and offer our best wishes to you all for a happy and succesful year ahead.

Tom Harding

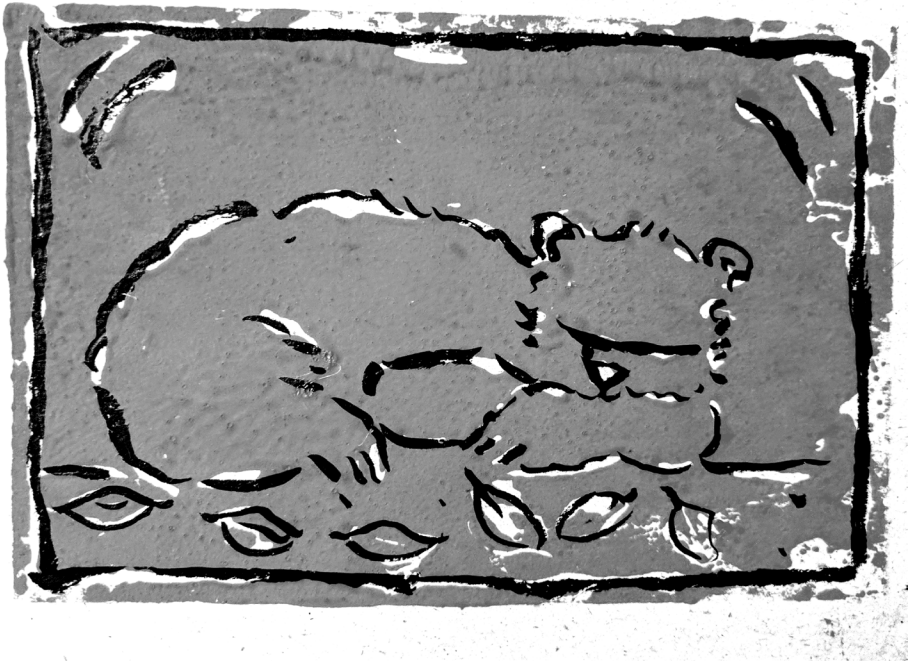
Editor, Northampton Poetry Review



*“Withering and keen the winter comes
While comfort flyes to close shut rooms
And sees the snow in feathers pass
Winnowing by the window glass
And unfelt tempests howl and beat
Above his head in corner seat”*

The Shepherds Calendar - January- Winters Day
John Clare

ISSUE 2: HIBERNATION



Paul Waring

HEDGEHOG CYCLE

Summer, its work now done, turned to face elsewhere. Last dregs of September sun, talk of barbeque and balmy nights outdoors long past when I first noticed you; your spiny-roof scuttling towards fresh-stocked compost at the back of the garden.

Autumn winds bullied down leaves to huddle in heaps like city litter. One afternoon we swept and gathered them; a crisped, colour-drained, mass. That night, I heard grunts and squeaks and wondered if you were expressing delight about a rooted-out worm or ambushed beetle. Winter came early, saw you off to hunker down before we woke to witness November's first frost stiffen the lawn. I imagined you curled somewhere deep in torpor: an underground den in pin-drop silent blackness, metabolism switched, clicked to energy-saving mode.

Spring's sharp light cut through to bleed garden colour again; opened daffodils as air filled with sparrow song and chatter. Putting out the bins in stark moonlight, I heard familiar sounds; saw you briefly, shuffle soft-fur belly over wet grass and disappear beneath the shed, too busy to stop.

Madelaine Smith

WINTER DIALOGUE

Nowhere to hide in this naked late hour;
when all is stripped bare, truths
are exposed against a slate grey sky.

Above, the sun, a disk of cold white light,
sounds a note beyond the understanding
of those who care to listen.

There hangs a mist between us.
Everything was said long ago, or left unsaid;
too late now to start a conversation.

And yet you reach for my fingers as we
cross frosted grass, hold my warmed hand
to your chilled cheek, smile into my eyes,

Speak silently to me. Words redundant -
they think we have nothing to say...
as if one lifetime was long enough to say it all.

Byron Benyon

WOODPECKER IN WINTER

A low winter sun,
its yellow rays like cold girders
angle the vulnerable trees
as a woodpecker
catches the light's fading eye;
he anchors himself to the bark,
some impulse within flits
to a different task,
his woodscape, found headlands
to radiate his mark,
those inlays flashed into place,
his tiny script of wonderment
brought to a working day's perfection.



FOR JOHN CLARE (1793 – 1864)

With attentive words
he observed
the individual bird and common place,
keen language conscious
to the changing landscape,
he walked at daybreak
in varied seasons,
the oddling in green lanes
who strolled with a subtle eye:
a terrain of brambles,
the molehills that became
symbols of freedom,
his rich countryside untamed.



BRYNMAWR for Claude Powis

When the sea dropped
clear away,
the past happened,
the iron jaws of a hardboiled place,
winter comes easily
to the high town of the country.

Waun Helygen – Marsh of the Willows,
caught at the head of the valley
the air rarefied,
a raw presence
as the snow covers
the old tracks on mountain ridges.
Moonlight and singeing frost,
remote cairns on Llangattock moors,
the wind cracks the wanderer in half.
Adrift Ebbw Fach?
History can dry you up
with only echoes of the forge,
the ice begins to weep,
slow on a big hill.

B. Clavery

THOUGHTS ON THE YEAR END

As the year runs out of days thoughts turn metaphysical. Days slip into one another. Time becomes no time. We begin to think about our place in things. About our physical existence in the world and about our very thoughts of time itself and where we're going. Strangely we can go twelve months without such a thought and suddenly, encouraged by soft lights, the intimacy of a gathering, a little wine, we're conjuring spirits before us. Old ghosts and perhaps even more spookily our futures. We think of where we have been and where we're going. Our thoughts are made pure, both happy and sad. Like the best poetry time is slowed down. Moments are held for and then let go. We're reminded of life's great sadness but at it's best what a sweet kind of sadness it is.



Kristin Camitta Zimet

MOURNING CLOAK BUTTERFLY

I

A white oak rattles at the sky
above your grave, and snow creeps
up the trunk. I want to lie there, flat,
slide with the mourning cloak beneath
loose bark, folded against myself,
note in the slot of a dead-letter office.
Envelope a scab, address leached,
a lichen's drab gray-brown.

II

The rattling falls still. Leaves
give over skeletons to brown grass.
Upstroking sap shivers the bole.
Inside the bud scales is a gathering,
a swarm of green antennae. So much
prickling, such pushing out. Light
fingers the crack: a summoning,
a lamp to read me by.

III

This creased page smooths
open. My scales are not black:
a rich dark follows grief, a glint
of humus-brown, of fresh earth.
I am edged in new light, honeycombed
with shade, a tatted yellow. Spots
of purple-blue carry your eyes.
Send me where you will.

Tim Gadhorn

HIBERNATION BLUES

Can you hear the snow fall?
Nothing could be quieter now
not even the moth
tapping open heartedly at the bulb
like the blind man weaving
through the bodies of the lamp lit station.
Still and still, then listen;
the cat purring in his sleep,
the clock counting time
in the empty kitchen,
the radio whispering its news
in the dark,
the mouse building his future
in yesterday's newspapers.



WINTER HAIKU

The house in the field
dark except for the porch light
on newly laid snow.

The leaves in the yard;
pages of calendar
caught in new year winds.

All night winter winds
blow against the sloping roof,
wiping the slate clean.

Newly fallen snow
welcomes in the new year,
whitening the page.

New snow in the yard.
The cat hesitates before
greeting the new year.

Sat drinking coffee
we put grievances aside
and watch the snow fall.

Just then- a comet!
Like your brightest thought, lost in
a litter of stars.

The plans that we made
lie scattered at the year's end,
like leaves in the yard.

Old resolutions
in the margins of a book;
Camus' The Stranger.

The foot hesitates
first steps of brand new year,
cold upon the floor!

Still and still and still,
The snow falling quietly.
Making the world new.



Humphrey Astley

PERTURBATION

A comet came, it
fell within their call-responsive
reach

when pure chance corrupted
and perturbed her slow
year – teased her from her
belt –

as Jupiter drew near
and cast her as extra-terrestrial,
unearthing one of the seven-
hundred wonders of the
system

A comet with the look
of a glacier that crawled
into a heaven of deathly cold,
or stone-age relic cycloned
and ballooned by wild
fractals

And when, wired with hunger,
their craft approached
as though it neared some cast-
adrift leviathan – larger,
larger – little did they imagine
that she would be
singing

RUNNING THROUGH SNOW

The black
undersides of your shoes,

the arrhythmia they beat
with your deafblind heart.

The hot-blooded id
enthralled by what falls,

by what fleetingly
glazes you with scales.

The stranger
who will not return

your smile,
who does not believe

in spells.

The school play's
paper rain.



Amlanjyoti Goswami

AWAY

We are inside the capsule
Slowly breathing
Prayers and promises.
I want to see my little one,
One more time.
This time, I will
Go meet the mountain.

The air taxi ploughs its lonely way
Through speed bumps in the sky
A slow bullock cart trudging the
Long way home, the bumpy icy
Wastes of time
The clouds unruffled, calm as my
Deep, single
Breath.

Yes,
To go where no one has before
But
What do we leave behind?

An embrace, perhaps an
Unsaid word?

White arrows
Fall, like nectar, on
Parched throats, crops,
Souls

An icicle at a time
Breathing Beethoven at sunset.
Are they listening upstairs?

Finally, terra firma,
The familiar jostle for the lost
Suitcase overhead, stuffed
With belongings no one would miss.
I fold,
My dreams in a handkerchief, pocket
The empty box of almonds,
And ask about the weather
When I was away.



Sydney Perera

WINTER TREES

These have shed the bright burden
Of their leaves and stand resting,
Sleeping, dead some would say.
Their branches, some stretched outwards and down
In gestures of defeat,
Some upwards like supplicating fingers
Of a dying man.

But deep down the root hairs
Commune secretly with the soil,
And high up the tracery of branches
Hold mute converse with the sun and air.

And soon these tight buds,
Now like dead knots of life,
Will quiver and burst forth into leaf
And clothe the trees
In emerald splendour.

Would that I could
Likewise
In these autumnal years
Shed my burden of past joys,
And after nearly dying through the winter days
Re-clothe myself
In a garment of fresh joys
New-woven
By the air of heaven
And the soil of the earth!

Brad Evans

FULL MOON CEILIDH

When the mid-winter moon is a full, ripe peach
When a gentle breeze blows through the trees
An old man wanders down a dead, country lane
Past a turnpike - left broke by the centuries

He looks for those he no longer knows -
His memories blown to fragments by the years.
There's a barn down a dead, country lane
Where strings can be heard 'midst the cheers...

Take me! Take me! Take me!
To the full moon céilidh
Where the farmers light their fires
On the fields of seasons' gone.

Where the ladies can't stop laughing
And the men just can't stop grinning
Where dancing can be heard 'til the dawn...

There's a broke turnpike left alone by the centuries
Where a motorist drives past without knowing
There's a barn that once stood down a dead, country lane
With a lonely old man now dancing...

So, take me! Take me! Take me!
To the full moon Céilidh
Where the farmers light their fires
On the fields of seasons' past.

Where the ladies can't stop laughing
And the men just can't stop grinning
While the drunken poets roar away the night!

An old man wanders up a dead, country lane
Past a turnpike - left broke by the centuries
He looks for those he no longer knows -
His memories blown to fragments by the years...



Yvonne Mitton

WOODLAND

Dark ink trails wetly
floods a barely seen sky
and grey, smeared landscape
distant, stilled and silent
by the dead end of the year
behind the triple, tensed barrier
of the closeness of bare trees
and flaccid rags of undergrowth
rooted into the saturated earth
the waiting trap of mud and rot
makes intimate with unsure feet
bone branches overhead snarl
and hold the ghosts of fogged air
claw in the iced chill of night
the despair of a winter wood
drips insensate and steals
the sense of direction
the path is gone.

Inspired by Freedom In Restrictions ~ a triptych by Maureen Ford
Northamptonshire Town & County Art Society Annual Exhibition 2016

David Olsen

THIS BEAR

never takes a winter sleep.
His eyes ever on the board,
he calculates his every move.
Alert to weakness, he awaits
the chance to mate his prey.

Hungry in summer as in spring,
his autumn belly's never full.

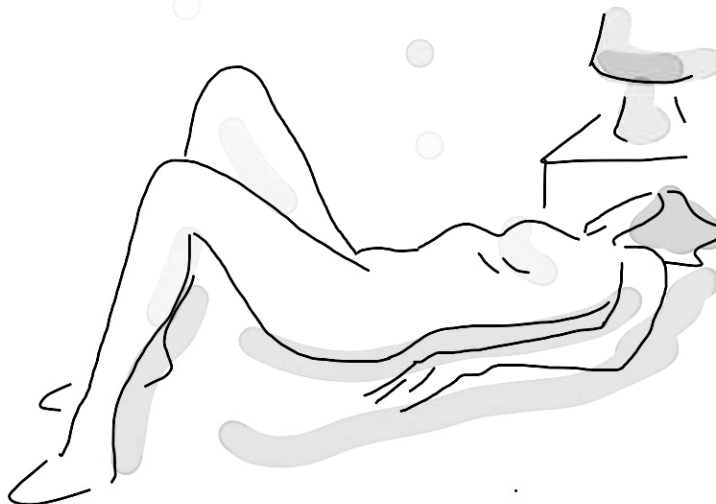
Drowsing opposition crushed,
he devours Crimea first,
and with practised stealth
nibbles Ukraine, then eyes
those tempting Baltic snacks.



Farrah Fray

WINTER

Soft wavering sky, gently dyed
In baby blue and cotton white
wrapped gently around every neck
as summer's body is put to rest,
and rain becomes a mild terrain
to talk about again and again
Fleeting days- december's gift
before time speeds up and everything
shifts
turkey, rosé,
rosemary and time
the longest nights shortened by wine
Crisp, the air welcomes the touch
And night buses grow brighter
when couples laugh
Twinkling, loud, then suddenly gone
Winter never stays for long.

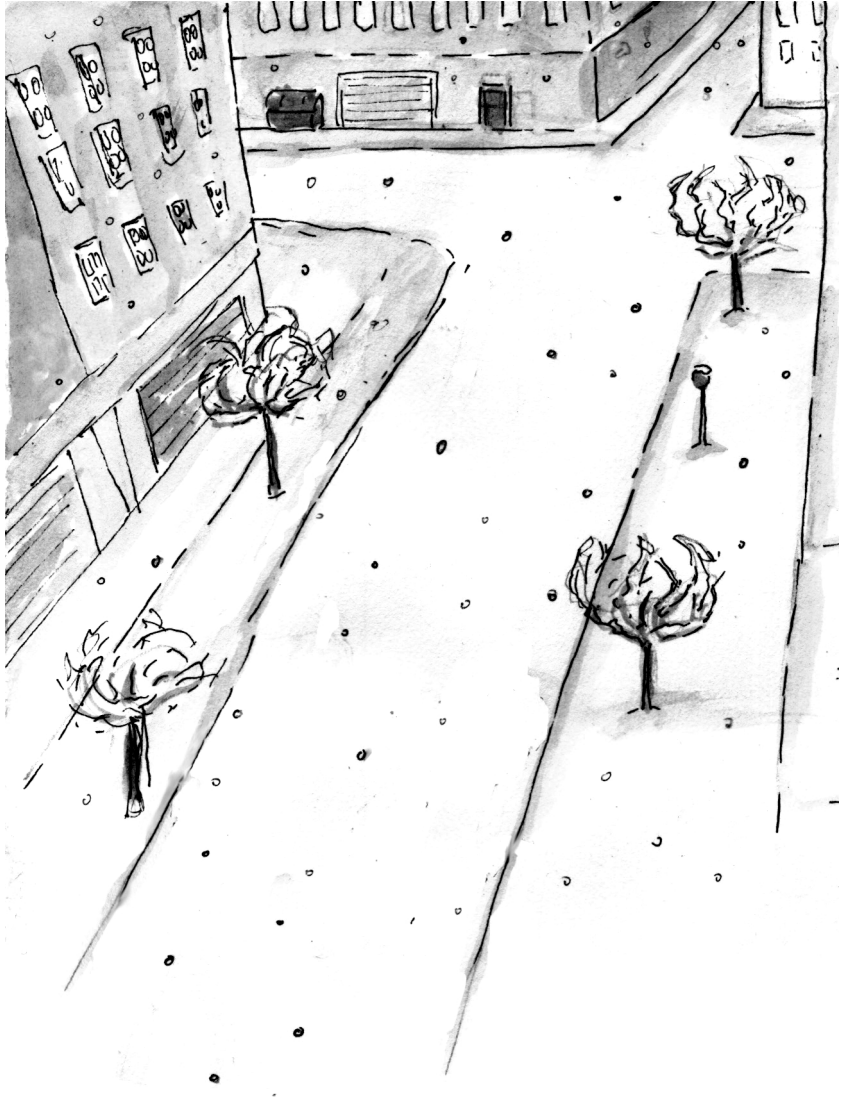




*"Tis Winter, and I love to read indoors,
When the Moon hangs her crescent up on high;
While on the window shutters the wind roars,
And storms like furies pass remorseless by."*

The Winter's Come
John Clare

FEATURED POET



Robert Ford

WINTER FIRE

Layers of January air, made serious with dew
and glowing with thin sunlight, pierce the trees.
It took our paper coffee cups, filled with petrol,
to kindle the stubborn fingers of holly and elder,
and we'd have almost blown our woollen hats off
and our brains out if we'd been wearing them. Still,

we ran like silly boys, laughing, for cover, breathless,
the explosion sucking the air right from our chests.
Finally, the cypress branches grumbled into life, and
frog-coloured smoke tongued the breeze, looking for
something to escape upon. It slid towards the motorway,
greening the vision of every driver crawling into work.

Robert Ford lives on the east coast of Scotland. His poetry has appeared in both print and online publications in the UK and US, including Antiphon, Picaroon Poetry, Butcher's Dog and San Pedro River Review. More of his work can be found at <https://wezzlehead.wordpress.com/>

OCTOBER

Your apologetic square of
buttercups and grass is already
rationed a pitiful allowance of sunlight,
barely enough to shrug away
the dew, let alone warm bones.

The shadows across it are now
of the sharpened, blood-drawing kind.

I stare, flat-eyed, at the dereliction
from your window for longer and longer
each morning, catch myself way adrift
from the presence of only moments ago.

Unnamed promises have slipped away,
irretrievably, flowers become seed-heads.

And it's happening to you. I watch you,
in time-lapse, physically recede,
disappearing around a corner,
beyond sight, out of reach;

folding in on yourself like a balled-up sock,
a puzzle without solution, ruminating.
Dark wheels of thought hinder
every laboured movement, as you
rehearse another long, inner winter.

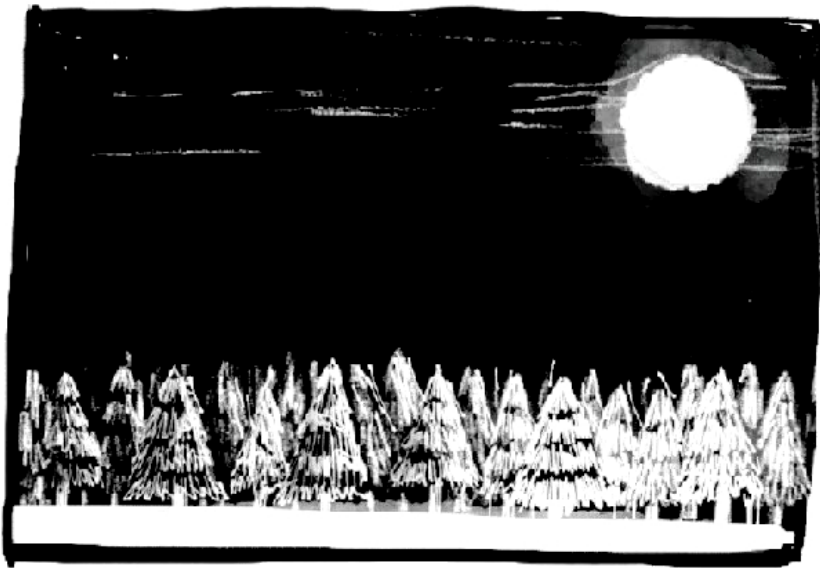
HOLLY

All this time cowed in shadows,
stunted and contained, or else

straggling desperately through gaps,
her thick-set leaves have become

as dark as the longest night, and
glossed well beyond necessity.

Each has grown a ready fist of teeth,
defending her hard, blood-blister fruits.



SUNSHINE

Three years may have slipped away between
your two distant orbits since they last overlapped,

but nothing has changed. What did you expect?
His uncracked egg of a head is still crudely shorn

and crowned by a baseball cap, red now instead
of green. And that dodgy left eye is obviously

still not responding to the treatment – in fact,
you can actually see the iris beginning to fragment,

glittering blue between the blinking, and you wonder
just how uncertain, opaque or simply mesmerising

everything looks through its kaleidoscopic turns.
You'll never know. Still, he greets you like a brother,

like everyone, like always, just grateful to be sharing
a moment on Earth with you. He's sorry, but he has

somewhere else to be, and shuffles onwards,
unaware of the dust he momentarily blew away.

PUTTING BACK THE CLOCKS

It catches us by surprise every time.
We never manage to be ready for it,
even though the slowly-paling days
have already shrunk down so much
they barely even fit into their boxes,
and complain fiercely to everyone
about the lack of themselves.

Without any clear reason or instructions,
we've started eating porridge again.
Taking herbal supplements. Regular showers
of leaves spray from the parade of trees
lining the wet streets uptown. Certain
bolder ones – poplars, you decide –
are the first to go fully, brazenly naked.

Trying to ignore the wheezy darkness,
we roam the house, digging out timepieces,
stealing hours, pushing buttons, twirling dials
on the heater controls. It all adds up
to so little. But always there will be one
we've missed, will discover mid-January,
clinging quietly to last year's summer.

FURTHER POEMS



Stuart Buck

THE BROKENHEARTED FUGITIVES WILL MEET ON STREET CORNERS AND DANCE LIKE FLOWERS AGAIN

my friend tells me he cannot see the lights on the surface of the moon
because there is a patch of the bad thing in his heart
so I tell him to look now
at the sinking birds kissing the taller plants around us
he can still cry in his car at night, alone
now that the radio is playing cadenza
the birds and the notes falling as one
and time is a loop not a line
so now he is the lights on the surface of the moon
I am a teardrop, alone
the radio kisses the tall plants
my heart is a bird



Brad Evans

THE OLD MAN

My journey

he said

will take me to all the places
I once shared.

It was summer...

And looking out the window behind me,
where I worked,

I'd only just thought of how fine the day actually was
before he arrived

and so I helped him
to find

what he was looking for.

There were maps and some guides he needed
before I watched him leave...

he was an old man
like so many,

but this old man
was preparing himself

for a slow, final journey -

A journey to all the places
he had once shared

with her.



Wes Lee

SUNDAYS WERE A DESERT TO YOU

Some Sundays now I think of you,
your eyes blank;

the hours coming to sit
like weight.

Tarantulas would come
skittering from their earthly homes.

Sunday's delirium tremens.
Sunday's grim mouth.

Sunday's stiffening
of the hands.

While others might curl with a book –
minds and souls become hammocks –

there you were at the window
gazing out to nothing.



Holly Day

THE SUNNY AIR

She unfurls the wet sheets and hangs them on the line to dry, imagines she's performing a rite thousands of years old, she's just like some woman in ancient Egypt, hanging her linen out to dry. She's read books about linen production
how to beat flax into fibers to be tied or spun into thread, turned into cloth light enough
to shield one against the hot desert sun. She tries to talk to her husband about these things, about how she is just like a woman from ancient Egypt but he doesn't want to talk about silly things like that.

Later, when her husband comes up behind her while she's folding the laundry
slips his hands under her shirt and cradles her breasts, she wonders if the woman she's imagining
also had a husband that ignored most of the things she said, that maybe that other woman
had ideas about building pyramids, or trapping lions, or fighting battles more efficiently
only to be carelessly led off to bed, her bright thoughts dismantled with a kiss.

A BAO A QU

There is a creature that sits at the base of our dreams
waiting for us to take that first step towards completion. It only awakens
when we take the first step, when we finally decide to make our dreams
reality, we're going to dig in and finally become
the person we were born to be. It's this first realization
that wakes the creature from its slumber, causes it to take
its own first tentative steps as well, slowly bloat and blossom into

a shape big enough to haunt the tail end of hope. With each new step
we take towards possibility, the creature grows larger and larger
solid enough to stick out a foot to trip us, tread
purposefully on the backs of our heels, on a dangling cloak hem
the train of a dress. You have only two options:

you can drag the ever-increasing monster of doubt
along with you as you persevere,
or to stop to confront the monster
allow it to see your face. It's the second choice
that causes it to swell to gargantuan proportions
until it can roll over and crush you to death.

WRAPPED AROUND YOUR SHOULDERS

We have always been moments from destruction.
There has never been a moment when we haven't been aware
that perfection is finite and unstable.

Ancient Egyptians used to believe that the Nile was home
to a massive snake capable of swallowing the sun
and it was when the waters were low and especially navigable
when the surrounding shores were the most fertile and best for cultivation
that this snake would shake itself out of sleep
and inhale passing boats
because they, too, knew that things are never
as good as they seem, that comfort is an illusion.

In Melanesia, another snake creature waits in the water
for fishermen who get too greedy, pull too many fish
from the depths of its home. When this happens, the snake
comes out of hiding and swallows the boat, man, and catch whole
leaves only memories as a warning.

Every dark cave hides a monster, every lake, another.
We are being spied on by mirrors and reflective pools—
there is no such thing
as safety or peace.



*“The winter comes; I walk alone,
I want no bird to sing;
To those who keep their hearts their own
The winter is the spring.”*

The Shepherds Calendar - February - A Thaw
John Clare

FEATURES



Simon Howes

HENRY DAVID THOREAU AND EFFECTIVE HIBERNATION

*'Anyone can become angry – that is easy, but to be angry with the right person, to the right degree, at the right time, for the right purpose, and in the right way- this is not easy.'*¹

I recently came across the above quotation from Aristotle in a book I have been reading, and it reminded me of how, in my initial years as a psychotherapy student, I found it a revelation to consider that the psyche operates at its own pace, regardless of the pace we may wish to impose upon it. If we suffer a bereavement, we often need to be sad for a while, if we experience an injustice we sometimes need to be angry, and if something joyful happens there is a need to bear witness to this emotion too for a period of time. At times I think that, in line with Aristotle's comments, psychological health comes from us doing the right things at the right time, whereas if we don't accept where we are and what we need to feel, this can lead to inner conflict and an inability to process the underlying state.

I often use the metaphor of the three-field system in my clientwork to illustrate how, for inner balance, we need hibernatory reflective periods to offset our periods of activity. I remember being taught at school how in medieval Europe farmers would rotate the planting of their crops, with each field having a year of being left fallow, unplanted, every three years, to allow time for the land to regain nutrients and become fertile again. We as humans have this need too, and if we have been working hard for a period of time, we often need to take some time off to allow ourselves to regather our energies. If we do not listen consciously to the parts of ourselves which clamour for space and restfulness, we are more likely to increase our stress levels and, at an extreme level, are at risk of becoming burned out. For, if we think of the psyche as a self-regulating system, burnout can be seen as a period of hibernation imposed upon us, rather than a chosen one.

When I think of hibernation in literature, I think of the classic mid-nineteenth-century work ‘Walden’ by Henry David Thoreau, an introspective account of the author’s two years spent alone in a cabin at Walden Pond. Thoreau wrote in his journal of the need to ‘Live in each season as it passes; breathe the air, drink the drink, taste the fruit, and resign yourself to the influence of the earth’² – advice that it seems that Aristotle would have concurred with. A few years ago I had the good fortune to visit Walden Pond in Concord Massachusetts, and to both walk around and swim in the lake that Thoreau so rhapsodised about, during what was a period of hibernation for me too, before starting a busy new job.

One of the ironies of psychological hibernation, is that although it is a period of withdrawal from society, if we listen to this need and follow it in the right way, it in turn can help us to return to the community at large refreshed and with something new to offer. This can happen in large ways or in small ways, an example being that even whilst writing this article I had to take several breaks, which I found helped me reflect on the theme and come back with new perspectives and ideas.

It could reasonably be argued that in Western culture we overvalue activity and undervalue reflection and, yet it is often through hibernating effectively that we are able to be more effectively active too. In the words of the American writer Ralph Ellison – ‘A hibernation is a covert preparation for a more overt action’³. As winter is here and as for so many of us the holiday season is approaching after a long year, we would do well to allow ourselves to truly rest and meet our inner reflective needs, so that we may rise up again, invigorated, in the New Year.

Simon Howes is a BACP Accredited Counsellor and Psychotherapist

1 Quoted in Farrelly, F. and Brandsma, J. (1974). Provocative Therapy. Milbrae: Meta Publications. P53

2 Thoreau, H. D. Journal Entry August 23rd, 1853. Taken from - <http://quotegeek.com/literature/henry-david-thoreau/3355/>

3 Ellison, R. Invisible Man. Taken from - http://www.pajiba.com/book_reviews/the-pajiba-book-club-discusses-invisible-man-by-ralph-ellison-.php

Even Bots Get The Blues

Computer generated haiku from poem.exe.
micropoetry // a bot by @inky // poemexe.com

parking lot
church bells
a beacon

winter fog
its image unsteady
the city street

trees icy black and wet
on his lips
in the moonlight

the new year arrived
noon shadows

winter solstice
with the acorn...
peace and quiet

winter morning
a wren
flight of cranes
motionless

how many old memories
the hum of the wind
a flower opens

lovers parting
sweeping the snow...
the trill of the cicadas

with a broken snowball
deep in the mist
this sunset

the cry of the cicada
the warm bedclothes
in my hand

confidently rising
and gently
listening to snow.



poem.exe is a bot which generates haiku-like poems and publishes them to social media. Follow on twitter: @poem_exe

Matt Harding

IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT NOISES...

In the middle of the night noises are equations I have to solve, I close my eyes and as I step between sleep and wake tissue and brick dissolve, boundaries ebb and flow as I lose distinction between building and self, all sound now closely gathered in.

The skin of a house separates, dividing us from that which is not of us, a thin membrane and boundary marking; a house not only provides shelter but also gives access to a less guarded mode, its façade allowing us to remove our own as we cross its threshold to resume a version of ourselves residing within. Each room bears witness to a thousand gestures and repeated actions as over time we broker relationships consolidate forms and become ingrained within these spaces. The room shapes us as we them.

In his work 'The Poetics Of Space', Gaston Bachelard notes how 'Winter is by far the oldest of seasons' and that 'on snowy days the house too seems old'.

The Seasons carry with them new lenses for experiencing homes and spaces. I remember one winter morning when I was young coming downstairs to see snow encroaching underneath the front door, its crystals stuck upon the straw mat left me with a feeling of the house as a permeable object as well as the protector and provider of shelter.

The abrasive winter landscape brings the necessity and privilege of shelter into sharper focus, it can also lead to an awareness of the materials of the buildings themselves as they endure. These skins and bones are exposed like us to the ongoing glare of attrition and their continuity and welfare in a very physical sense enables our own.

In the middle of the night I often lose distinction between building and myself as the sounds get closer and closer in.

Seems Like A Freeze Out

Our music editor Sun Pie chooses his favourite 12 songs about winter & hibernation. Find the playlist via our twitter feed @NPoetryReview

Alice - Tom Waits

Foggy music. The accompaniment to a dream. It's all shadows and silhouettes. Like putting your ear to a snow globe.

Snow Fall - Ahmad Jamal Trio

The sound of falling snow. A meditation, a mind leap. If there are fifty words for snow this song studies them all.

Cold Weather Blues - Muddy Waters

Some songs are so sparse you could drive a truck through their beats, or maybe here a snow plough. Cold war blues.

Time Passes Slowly - Bob Dylan

This time he's up in the mountains. Sequestered to a cabin, watching time pass. Things are moving so slow, time has almost come to a halt. Music to make new year's resolutions to.

Long Long Winter - Bob Marley

A song about longing. This one pulls back the curtain and gets inside reality leaving nothing but the essential behind.

White Winter Hymnal - Fleet Foxes

Running with the hounds. A hymn, a hunting song perhaps. This song is made up of echo and longing.

Winter Lady - Leonard Cohen

A traditional ballad focussed on human longing. A journal entry on a cold night.

Cello Gonzales - Chilli Gonzales

Chilli music or chilly music? A chamber piece. A closed room with a window to look out. A view of the white world in all its happy and sad beauty.

If In Winter (100 Lovers) - Vashti Bunyan

An interlude. More an utterance, a whispered confession. Pillow talk.

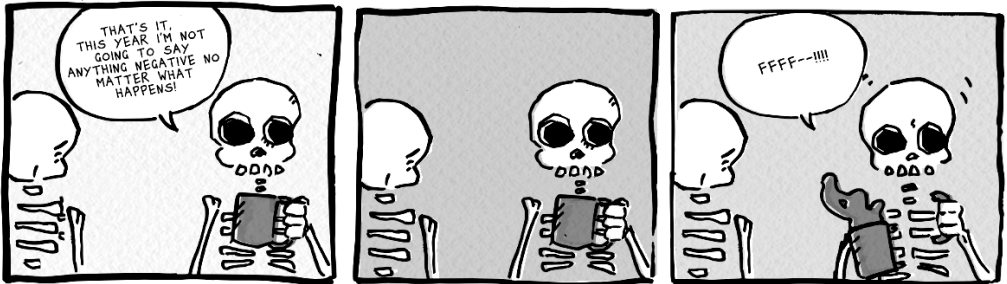
The Snow Prelude No.2 - Ludovico Einaudi

One to clean the pallet. Lays the ground for what's to come next. Smooth as a blanket of newly fallen snow.

Sleep Dirt - Franz Zappa

Cabin fever music. Headache blues.

NEW YEARS RESOLUTION



Author Biographies

HUMPHREY 'HUCK' ASTLEY is a poet and musician based in Oxford, England. His works include the three-part album and stage-show *Alexander the Great* (PRSF, 2013-15) and the pamphlet *The Gallows-Humored Melody* (Albion Beatnik Press, 2016). His poetry has appeared in publications such as *Agenda* and *Disclaimer* and is forthcoming in *And Other Poems*; a new pamphlet, *The One-Sided Coin*, is also forthcoming from *Rain over Bouville*. | humphreyastley.co.uk

BYRON BEYNON lives in Wales. His work has appeared in several publications including *London Magazine*, *Cyphers*, *Poetry Wales*, *Wasafiri*, *The Interpreter's House*, *The Yellow Nib* and the human rights anthology *In Protest* (University of London and Keats House Poets). Collections include *Cuffs* (Rack Press) and *The Echoing Coastline* (Agenda Editions). A former co-editor of *Roundyhouse Magazine*.

STUART BUCK is a poet and writer living in North Wales. He writes surreal, philosophical poetry with touches of quantum physics and history thrown in. His poetry and prose have been widely published in journals such as *The Stare's Nest*, *Cultured Vultures*, *Deadsnakes*, *The Bitchin' Kitsch*, *Erbacce Journal*, *The Seventh Quarry*, *Walking is Still Honest*, *Yellow Chair Review*, *The Sunflower Collective* and *Under the Fable*. He has been a featured poet in both *FIVE* magazine and *poetrykit*. When he is not writing or reading, he enjoys juggling, cooking and ambient music.

B. CLAVERY is an expert in the field of revisionist art. He resides in Malibu and is the editor of *Sluggish: A Magazine of the Transformative Arts*.

HOLLY DAY has taught writing classes at the Loft Literary Center in Minneapolis, Minnesota, since 2000. Her poetry has recently appeared in *Big Muddy*, *The Cape Rock*, *New Ohio Review*, and *Gargoyle*, and her published books include *Walking Twin Cities*, *Music Theory for Dummies*, and *Ugly Girl*. She has been a featured presenter at *Write On*, *Door County (WI)*, *Northwoods Writer's Festival (CA)*, and the *Spirit Lake Poetry Series (MN)*. Her newest poetry collections, *A Perfect Day for Semaphore* (Finishing Line Press) and *The Yellow Dot of a Daisy* (Alien Buddha Press) will be out late 2018.

BRAD EVANS was born in Sydney 1971, I am a UK-based poet and writer. My poetry, short stories, articles, interviews, letters and reviews have been published in zines, magazines and anthologies throughout Europe, the U.S. and the Pacific and have most recently appeared in Studio La Primitive, Backlash, The Journal and The Dawn Treader.

ROBERT FORD lives on the east coast of Scotland. His poetry has appeared in both print and online publications in the UK and US, including Antiphon, Picaroon Poetry, Butcher's Dog and San Pedro River Review. More of his work can be found at <https://wezzlehead.wordpress.com/>

FARRAH FRAY is a writer and activist living in London. Growing up between London and Libya, her work navigates explorations of culture, displacement, feminism and identity with a focus on Libya and London. Although her poetry and prose has constantly moved between public and private spaces, she has written for various different platforms such as Letters Ly Libya and Khabar Keslan. Through her poetry she hopes to expand the understanding and representation of middle eastern women in modern literature. Her first poetry collection, A recipe for Rebellion, is now available online. Farrah also translates for Haawiyat-a comic aimed at Syrian refugees. (www.syriacomic.com)
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TIM GADHORN spent many a year working on the greeting card industry before retiring to the town of Kettering in Northamptonshire. Last year he produced an award winning biography of the American poet Henry Timrod entitled Frailer than the Flowers.

AMLANJYOTI GOSWAMI's poems have appeared in publications in India, Nepal, the UK, Hong Kong, South Africa, Kenya and the USA, including Forty under Forty: An Anthology of Post-Globalisation Poetry (Poetrywala, 2016) and A Change of Climate (University of Edinburgh, Environmental Justice Foundation and Manchester Metropolitan University, 2017). He grew up in Guwahati, Assam and lives in Delhi.

MATT HARDING is a musician who lives in London. You can learn more about his work here www.mattharding.co.uk

SIMON HOWES is a BACP Accredited Counsellor and Psychotherapist with

a private practice in Northampton. Please visit his website www.northampton-counselling.co.uk for further details.

WES LEE is originally from the UK & currently lives in New Zealand. Her latest collection *Body, Remember* was launched in 2017 by Eyewear Publishing in London. Her poems have appeared in *The Stony Thursday Book*, *The Fenland Reed*, *New Writing Scotland*, *The London Magazine*, *Poetry London*, *Riptide*, *Poetry New Zealand*, and many other journals and anthologies. She has won a number of awards for her writing including The BNZ Katherine Mansfield Literary Award; The Over the Edge New Writer of the Year Award in Galway, and most recently as a contributor to *Remembering Oluwale*, winner of The Saboteur Awards Best Anthology 2017.

YVONNE MITTON is an alumni of The Royal College of Art, was the Head of Fashion at Nene College (now Northampton University) for 25 years before retiring due to ill-health.

Writing entered her life when she was asked to write an obituary for *The Times* for her friend the Northamptonshire artist Henry Bird.

After that, through sheer serendipity, she started writing reviews and interviewing for the renowned world music magazine, *FRoots*, specialising in modern Algerian Rai and Turkish Sufi genres, with little bit of electronica and Japanese drumming thrown in!

Since then, after taking part in an Arts Council creative writing project held at Northampton Museum and Art Gallery in 2006, she and others formed the independent group, *Creative Writers @ the Museum*, still going and strong and currently based at Abington Park Museum.

DAVID OLSEN is a poet, playwright, and fiction writer with a BA in chemistry from University of California-Berkeley and an MA in creative writing from San Francisco State University, he was formerly an energy economist, management consultant, and performing arts critic. He has lived in Oxford since 2002.

SYDNEY PERERA was born in Sri-Lanka (then known as Ceylon) in 1921. A teacher for many years, Sydney divided his later life between London and Colombo writing poetry, short stories and hosting University of the Third Age (U3A) study groups focusing on Shakespeare's historical plays. Sydney passed away in 2016 leaving behind a large portfolio of unpublished poetry. He also completed a memoir entitled 'A School Teacher's Odyssey'.

MADELAINE SMITH has worked in bookselling, publishing, theatre, museums, and was, for one brief shining moment, editor of New Writer magazine. She has had work published on Ink, Sweat & Tears, Paper Swans (online and in The Darker Side of Love) and as a part of the Silent Voices project (<https://silent-voicespoetry.wordpress.com/>) as well as in local anthologies and exhibitions. Madelaine lives in Winchester though has spent many happy hours researching her family history in the Northamptonshire villages that make up Woodford cum Membris.

DR PAUL WARING Paul Waring is a retired clinical psychologist who once designed menswear and was a singer/songwriter in several Liverpool bands. He has been nominated for the Pushcart Prize and his poetry has appeared or is forthcoming at *Clear Poetry*, *Prole*, *The Open Mouse*, *Amaryllis*, *Scrittura Magazine*, *Reach Poetry*, *Rat's Ass Review*, *Foxglove Journal*, *Eunoia Review* and many others. Other examples of his published work are available on his blog: <https://waringwords.wordpress.com>

KRISTIN CAMITTA ZIMET is the author of a book of poetry, *Take in My Arms the Dark*, and also the editor of *The Sow's Ear Poetry Review*. Her poetry is in a great many journals in the United States and the United Kingdom.



*“Soon wears its merry garb of white
And icicles that fret at noon
Will eke their icy tails at night
Beneath the chilly stars and moon*

*Nature soon sickens of her joys
And all is sad and dumb again
Save merry shouts of sliding boys
About the frozen furrowd plain”*

The Shepherds Calendar - February - A Thaw
John Clare



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