

Poetry Supplement to the *Lauds* double issue  
of *Agenda* Vol. 43, Nos 2-3

Welcome to another valuable online poetry supplement to the above issue of *Agenda* which focuses on **W.H. Auden**, **Louis MacNeice**, **Michael Hamburger**, and includes a general section of poems, as well as a long poem by **John Kinsella**. The work below comprises a talented fellowship of poets and artists who complement each other.

The **Artco Gallery** in Leeds (Tel. 0113 262 0056 [www.artco.co.uk](http://www.artco.co.uk) ) has an amazing selection of modern masters for sale, including **Chagall**, **Dali** and **Picasso** who were known well to the Greek poet, **Nanos Valaoritis** and his artist wife, **Marie Wilson**, both of whom feature in the *Lauds* issue of *Agenda*.



**Chagall:** Quai de Bercy

**Gerry Wells** lives in Rutland. His poetry and short stories have appeared in many periodicals and various BBC programmes. He has published five collections of poetry and has had work selected for a number of anthologies. He has been a soldier, farmer and lecturer and is now happily retired with time enough to write.

### **Impressionist**

Past first light... brush-strokes on a canvas  
Beyond the sharps and flats of vehicles:  
Colours now of sprung arteries... spreading,  
Images that hang in minds like bats.

Sunbeams, slick as foxes, cross  
Open ground, flattering with warmth:  
Each etched moment strikes its attitude,  
It could be hung on a gallery wall.

Brushwork ghosts-in negatives of wash...  
Woodsmoke? Imagination takes its fix  
From the scent and draw of scrounged wood,  
Braziers... men standing around. Waiting.

The brush stops short... in some glossed corner  
Of the frame, Chanticleer articulates the dream  
That carries him away... cadence, artistry,  
Collide – crazing a masterpiece of earth and sky.

### **Presque Vu**

Oh, you subtle ghosts!

So nearly I had the drop on you –  
Seizing at inklings, your loaded hints  
At some enormous future:  
Came that sense of breaking through,  
Of flashback images spinning  
At the speeds of memory.

Kingdoms lit by amazing light  
In full zap and lilt of colouring,  
Entirieties divorced from reason  
In *almost* recognition, neither  
The artists' epiphany nor dream –  
But cogencies immediate and far,

Dissolving in the very thought  
Like candles overcome by dark.



**Chagall:** The Lamentations of Jeremiah

**Gill McEvoy** lives in Chester and runs three regular poetry events. her poems have been widely published in magazines and her first pamphlet, *Uncertain Days*, was published by Happenstance Press in 2006.

### **First piano**

It is a temple of sound  
at which I worship, my open hands  
resting on the black and white tiles of its floor.

In its gleaming walls of black  
my ghost sits open-mouthed, struck dumb.

I do not press my fingers down:  
this silence is its own magnificent.

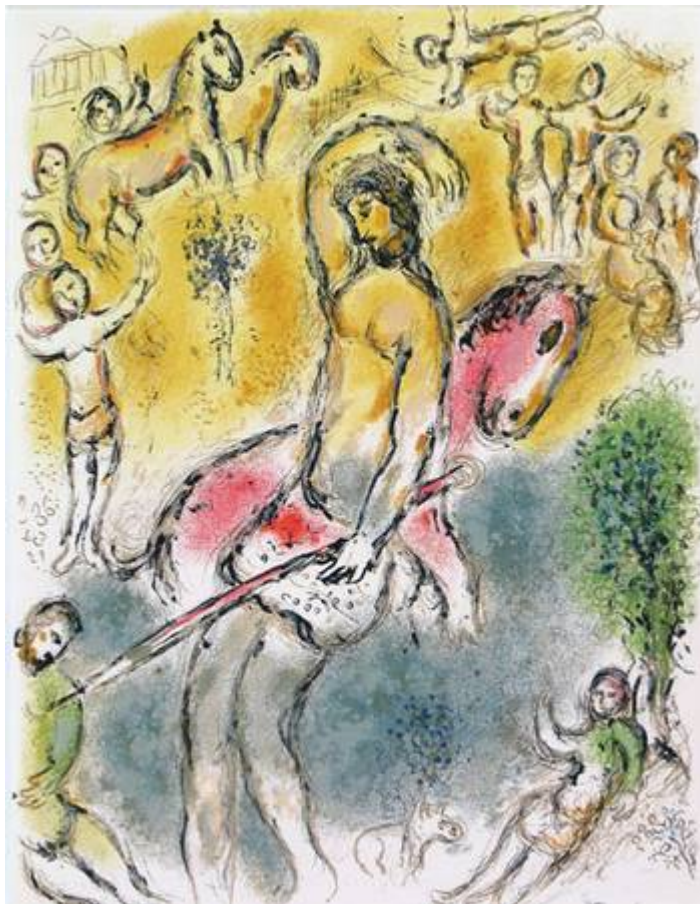
## The Green Man

Dip your hand in my skull,  
pluck out a branch,  
grow it from the earth of your palm.

Wind slithers through my head of leaves,  
moss coats my chin,  
rain dribbles from my beard of oak,  
lichen crusts my skin.

Ah, but my body oozes  
honey, sap.

Come, dip.



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**Chagall:** I am Odysseus

**Chris Jones** is senior lecturer in Poetry at the University of St. Andrews. He is a specialist in Old English and his book, *Strange Likeness: The Use of English in Twentieth Century Poetry* was published by Oxford University Press in 2006.

### **Adam's Complaint**

Not earth was cursed  
but language, lapsed  
beneath its burden.

Upon a time  
word and world  
were circumscribed.

But under the over-  
naming, freighted  
with sayings and saws,

things fall  
silent, slip  
into sadness.

The moment you must say  
where is a beginning,  
where an end,

call this one lover,  
or else friend—  
here the music fades.

No more  
can you hear it sing—  
only clamour

of tokens and signs,  
echoes of noisy  
no-things.

And the rest is...  
well,  
you know the rest.

This is 'just' translation:  
there's no original text.

## **Desert Island Game**

So, you're on a desert island – obviously –  
and you can take two of the following:

One childhood crush you  
haven't seen since school;

Any obsolete musical instrument  
you can reconstruct from manuscript;

One design for a tattoo you  
don't wear but would like to;

Your favourite word from a dead  
language (imaginary or real);

Frozen seed or ova from the year you believe  
you were fittest and at your most attractive;

A subway map of the city you'd  
most like to visit before you die;

A photograph of one gift you wished  
you'd never given but kept yourself;

A full concordance to the collected  
works of any author (living or dead);

A full concordance to your heart, soul, mind --  
or wherever the hell you think selfhood resides:

With which driftwood could you shore up a raft  
when memory's salvage swamps your ship-wrecked craft?

## **Jill Townsend**

### **Lines**

Dawn draws black lines from the sea;  
the fisherman brings his wet net  
to the dark-bottomed boat and slips easily  
in to the morning. The fret-  
work of light, split like scales, as he weaves  
his way in between the real  
and the unreal obstructions, dissolves  
in the catch, the splash of his paddle.



**Chagall:** Ahasuerus sends Vasthi away

**Abby Millager** lives and writes amid mushroom farms in the Northern hills of Delaware. At one time, briefly, she was a doctor. Her poems and other texts have been widely published. This is her first publication in the U.K.

**Ignore these lawns fools drive, hectoring,**

into the weave  
of a laboring June. For now

is the one girl's fate to unfreeze  
digits of remorse.

Minutes thicken,  
as this our penniless bard,

marvelous in her aura, thrashes  
awake stories: bent-forth palaces,

martyring fields rude laborers  
depict with scythes, and

that boy who cried out  
in the voice of his shaft-entering.

Another acorn fells  
autumn's ill-tined rake. All things

wend/stumble past this last  
warrior day. Shrikes blink twice,

snap pandering maws. Such foul  
seed gulfs promises, bends

sympathy toward  
the upturned bridge

this girl's guiltless sands  
burn to cross: dream islands,

purple with gulls and seas  
fishes fly up from. But every

emptiness, moldering,  
or horned, tamps the dimpled

light of unseeing,  
pierced by a meddling god

whose needles, even now,  
whipstitch mind's frost-

ridden debt to the rhapsody  
of winter's devotion. Frugal mice

chatter at naught's cruel keening.  
Slip the waging hedgerow no

quiet rings and from which  
frail fear makes bold

as a baby's uncut nail, catching  
the fringe of her auntie's shawl.



**Vincent Crotty:** Nocturne – Kanturk

**Vincent Crotty** was born and raised in Kanturk, County Cork, South West Ireland. He now lives in Boston. Known for his landscape and figurative paintings, Vincent's oil paintings explore the places, faces and light of both Atlantic coasts. Having worked in a factory for five years, Vincent took up painting at the age of 22 with a fierce commitment, and studied sign painting and interior decorating at Fás, a trade school in Cork City. He also studied under the well-known West Cork sign-painter, Tomás Tuipéir, and learned to paint free-hand letters, Celtic designs and evocative pictorial signs.

In 1990 he immigrated to Boston and studied intensively under well established artists there, specialising in 'plein air' painting.

His work has received many awards and been exhibited widely. He also teaches and runs workshops in the U.S. His commissioned portrait of Irish poet, Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill hangs in the Irish Collection in the Burns Library, Boston College. Many of his paintings are in the Greenlane Gallery, Dingle, Co. Kerry, Ireland <http://www.greenlanegallery.com/>

**Alyson Hallett's** first full volume of poetry, *The Stone Library*, came out with Peterloo Poets in 2007. She has also published fiction and drama and established herself as a successful public artist. Alyson has taught courses for the Arvon Foundation and she has just finished a 3 year poet-in-residence post at the Small School in Hartland. Prior to this she was Visiting Writer at the University of the West of England for two years. Full details can be seen on her website: [www.thestonelibrary.com](http://www.thestonelibrary.com)

## **The Village**

A young man died last night  
and this morning is not the same  
as any other.

The rain that falls early,  
the weight of a roof on a house,  
the curtained windows – nothing the same.

One bedroom is too empty.

One mother so far from herself  
she no longer recognises the kettle  
in her own kitchen.

## **My love that we are come to this –**

salt on our skins, two years of Atlantic  
ocean swum into our veins. If I could  
I'd drain the feverish weed from our minds  
and reinstate the time and place where we  
were unaware. But no curtain can hide  
us now – these fields, these clockwork tides are etched  
into our brows and no disguise can mask  
the squalls of nature we survived. Imbibed.  
Earth will quake before long and cliffs will bend  
and twist again, their solid mass folded  
like sheets on a bed broken and remade.  
Fruit. Marmalade. The transformative  
token of love's last rampant nail driven  
fast and sure into wood that bears our names.

**David Hadley** is in his late-40s, married with three children. He lives in Cradley Heath, West Midlands. For several years he has been a househusband, whilst trying to find the time to write.

Before that, for ten years he worked at the Midlands Electricity Board, putting the bills in envelopes. Then he became, briefly, a mature student at Hull University reading English and Philosophy, but he dropped out after the first year.

His poems have been published in *Stand*, *Eclipse*, *Envoi*, *Poetry Nottingham International*, *Raw Edge* and several other magazines. He has also had several short stories published.

## **Rain**

The rain will fall, we will forget  
the sun and all its burning light,  
forget these long days of regret.

The too hot nights are unpaid debts  
against our time spent there, so slight.  
The rain will fall, we will forget.

ignoring morning's alphabet  
and hiding under sheets held tight,  
forget these long days of regret.

And now we sing our last duet  
about our sun that shone so bright.  
The rain will fall, we will forget

how days are jewels in sunsets,  
recalling hours and how we might  
forget these long days of regret.

Then, leaving all our dreams upset  
by darkest winter's longest nights  
the rain will fall, we will forget,  
forget these long days of regret.

## **Heatwave**

She pours the coldest waters over heat,  
her head of summer, heavy, languid thought,  
a cooling of all desire, bittersweet.

The weight of summer's long and hot onslaught  
is taken by water, bringing dreams of snow  
and winter white, the mountains, afterthought

of breezes, fresher air and falling snow  
through dreaming into night and peace at last.  
A certain place there, only she can know.

She walks those streets of dreaming. Nights so vast  
that distance falls across the night before  
she feels the heat despite the shadows cast

across her path, towards the house and door  
still locked to bar that life she lived before.

**Frances Anne King** was born in Glasgow in 1951. She grew up in Glamorganshire, South Pembrokeshire and East Sussex. In the 1970s she trained as a nurse at St. Bartholomew's Hospital, London. She is currently studying at Bath Spa university for a BA in English and Creative Studies. She has had a few poems published and is working on her first collection, *Bricks, Flesh and Blood*, inspired by her nursing experiences and the history of the City of London.

### **Bomb in the Tower of London, July 1974**

Of course there were far worse injuries;  
lost limbs, ruptured spleens – the shock  
of red-raw wounds that gaped and bled –  
but hers, although invisible, and in the scheme

of things no threat to life, struck deep.  
Her husband nursed her hand in both of his,  
as if it were a bird he'd found bereft,  
and told me how they'd planned the trip

for months. How oak-strips from the doors  
had flown like shrapnel through the room,  
how thick white dust had choked the air  
and how they'd stumbled into daylight

miraculously unhurt, except the blast had done  
something to her ears – she couldn't hear  
a thing. Months later, sound staggered back,  
muffled, wound round with cotton-wool.

It made me think of conch shells; how we hold  
the curved chamber to our ear to catch an echoed  
roar of sea. Imagine voices with no cadence,  
calling from some place – always too distant.

**Stephen Devereux** grew up near the Suffolk coast and worked in factories and on farms before going to the University of East Anglia. Since then he has taught and lectured in the North West. He has published articles, short stories and poems in several magazines and journals, including: *The Guardian Review*; *The Contemporary Review*; *Acumen*, *Brittle Star*, *Chimera*, *Coffee House Poetry*; *Envoi*; *Iota*; *The Journal*; *The Interpreter's House*; *Obsessed with Pipework*; *Other Poetry*; *Poetry Salzburg Review* and *The SHOp*

### **I Dreamed the Seas had Run Dry**

I dreamed the seas had run dry  
And I stood on a sunny, familiar cliff  
And looked out beyond the ruined  
Sunken cities, the smashed churches,  
The dead cottages and the broken ships  
Dropped down in battle formation,  
The drowned boys and strangled babies,  
The shot down planes, the cars washed out to sea  
And the submarines caught in fishing nets-  
And saw in the farthest distance green fields  
And blue-grey woods, fires burning in clearings,  
Women crouched on the ground with their kids  
While the men went off to fish in the streams  
That ran down from a vast grey mountain.

### **Fumigating**

Odd how we have to clear out  
The trace of someone else before  
We can live where they have lived.  
Scrub out flats that are clean already,  
Flush the loos too many times.  
Our stomachs churn at the sight  
Of a stranger's hair in the shower.

In our hotel they'd established  
The illusion of freshness in a space  
Lived in by thousands. Clean towels,  
Toilet paper folded to a point,  
A posy of sweets arranged on the bed.  
No one ever died, or lived,

In such a duplicated, sterile place.

But when we cleaned up after he'd gone  
And she'd been taken to a nursing home,  
We were rubbing them out, not for ourselves,  
But for the others who would come here soon.  
I got a whiff of his staleness,  
His grease on the musty curtains,  
Dropped the mop and sat down  
To wait for him to come home.



**Vincent Crotty:** Sun rays in Kilaloe

**David Hale** was born in Scotland and currently lives in Gloucestershire. He works at Ruskin Mill College, a centre for young people with Asperger's Syndrome and learning differences. He has an MA in Creative Writing from Bath Spa University, and has had work published in various journals.

### **Coming in to land**

They wait, laboured thoughts broken only by the traffic  
of faces to ask questions, draw blood, register the drum  
and bass distortions of the child's heartbeat across deep-space.

She listens as the language of surgery is explained,  
queries, makes sure she understands the mechanics  
of such a birth, turns to him, but already tangential

he's imagining new arrivals, the yowling of engines  
as tugged and battered they burst through cloud cover,  
the screech of wheels - the tiny puff of smoke

as each child touches down after its long flight.  
And when it's time, gaps appear in the narrative -  
she wonders where she left the baby clothes,

he at the sense of rapid descent in a room full of clogs  
and bleached smocks, as he passes through turbulence  
into theatre to take his place by her side as the incision is made.

Suddenly nauseous as the ticklish blade parts muscle  
and tissue, she crushes his fingers within her own.  
Unresponsive, he's straining to hear the drone of engines

coming up past the docks, over the cathedral tower,  
making final adjustments before coming in to land.  
Momentarily, she loses consciousness as distant

hands rummage in her belly, doesn't see as he turns  
so very pale, pitches forward onto the gleaming floor,  
pooled now with blood around the surgeon's feet.

**Laura A. Ciraolo** was born in New York City and has lived there as long as she can remember. She's had her cat for 10 years, her husband for 28 years and her car for 21 years, not necessarily in any order of importance. She has poems out now in *Left Facing Bird*, the *New York Quarterly* #63, the *Long Island Quarterly*, *iota* #78 (UK) and *The Centrifugal Eye*. She's had poems recently in *MiPOesias*, *Rumble*, and *Orbis Quarterly International Literary Journal* (UK). When Laura is not reading or writing, she is finishing a graduate degree in Theology.

### **The Bone Yard**

I am forced now to go to the bone yard,  
a place where the flesh fades to black and white.  
I finger a dry bone or another  
that is ivory, polished, slippery,  
where my family is de-animated,  
de-constructed, de-commissioned, bombers  
in the desert beyond death, as if they  
could fly again in feathers, blood and wings.  
Azure haze crackles around them, lightning  
discharges, releases into chaos,  
into the blue, rippled, shadowy panes  
between us, my grandmother's toothless smile,  
my grandfather, his warm and outstretched hand,  
my safety, my house, my safe house, my home.

### **Painting My Sister**

*June 4, 2002*

Standing off to the side, out of sight,  
You are always there  
At the edge of the mirror.  
I can see the color of your sleeve  
Caught in its beveled edge,  
Where the ladies dance in formal patterns  
Long passed away into wallpaper.

The artist takes a fine sable brush  
To outline edges in mars black  
As the carver's knife cuts  
A Tudor rose into the wood  
As the engravers art is on copper or  
On stone and flowers grow to the edge  
Reflected in polished marble.

Your diamond earring is lost  
Rolling under the blue satin chair.  
In a rustle of silk,  
You tap your foot  
On the glossy wood,  
Lit like a candle slowly burning  
Down into a burnished dark.

Here you will find  
A hand on a shoulder  
A bird flying from a branch  
A flash of red  
Wired  
A shell to the ear for  
Tinnitus white noise whoosh of the sea  
A bit of cloth caught and torn  
Threads of crimson  
A lock of hair  
And a polished bone,  
Sharp and brittle like hunger.



**Vincent Crotty:** River Bank, Ennistymon

**Louise Warren** was born in Dorset and lives in London. She has worked as a playwright, most recently with The Little Angel Theatre and Immediate Theatre. Her poems are appearing in *Stand* and *The New Writer*. She works for a mental health charity and has a nine year old son.

### **Marmalade**

I cut and taste  
Bitter and sweet,  
My blunt knife flounders on skin,  
It wants to be so thin, so even,  
My hands ache,  
To make that perfect thing.

Spitting and seething.  
A furious volcanic insanity. Breath comes in short painful gasps,  
Surfaces disappear under steam,  
Bodies dissolving in an oily splattering fug.

A finger sliced open, stinging, a slick of white and orange  
Boils then settles, clears,  
The kitchen appears again, a photograph coming into focus.  
Me with my apron on, smiling into the lens of an upturned spoon.

Labelled, lids on tight.  
A dozen orange explosions  
Each silenced with a paper,  
Wafer thin  
Waiting to go off.

### **Rhubarb Sheds**

The word *crowns* for them.  
At first not right.  
Not gold, not made,  
But things of push, of creep, of nub,  
A flay of blackened leaf  
Like burnt, like ancient rot,  
And glistening pinkly underneath,  
A thing of *rude*.

But here we are.  
Inside the rhubarb sheds.  
The dank, the dark, the mulch,  
A mile away from green,  
The mash of grass, the pipe of bird,  
Of sky and seed.

Paying homage, looking, bowing heads,  
We file along in rows.  
It's as quiet as a church,  
The candles float and flare,  
Each stalk a blanch of white  
Each flame a yellow bud.

We listen.  
For the creak of grow  
Of rustle, stretch, unfurl  
Of shove, of up, and *out*.



**Vincent Crotty:** Cows on Kerry Head

**Simon Jackson** was born in Manchester. He worked as an itinerant musician and teacher in Eastern Europe, North Africa and South America during the 1990s and now lives in Edinburgh. *Reflections on Moonlight* won the British Gas Young Playwright Award, *Frankenstein, the Monster's Story* for Theatre of Fire toured Britain, Ireland, Holland and Belgian, and his latest play, *Shooting at the Balcony* is currently being produced for Radio 4. His poetry has appeared in anthologies and magazines here and overseas and an album, *Tomorrow When I Awake as God*, recorded under the pseudonym Torpedo Buoy, is scheduled for release this Autumn ([www.myspace.com/torpedobuoy](http://www.myspace.com/torpedobuoy)).

### **The Gift**

I searched the shallows for a gift,  
scouring the sand  
dappled by sun through water,

but the anenomes were too spiky  
and the mussels were still using their shells,  
and the few shapely stones  
were slept on by whelks;

I chased fish, clear as crystal,  
but could only catch their shadows  
rippling across the pale sand.

I thought I'd found the perfect keepsake,  
spiralling silver and pearl, but when  
I reached for it, matchstalk legs  
carried it beyond my grasp.

So I bring these droplets, pieces of sea,  
glistening on my skin.  
They will not remain, like shell or coral,  
they are not pearls, they will lose their lustre,  
dry to flakes of salt,  
moistening the air with their departure -

but for now they are sparkling jewels,  
glistening like sweat, like tears, they are  
the possibility of all water  
and they are my gift to you,  
all that the sea would let me take,  
sprinkled glimmering across your back  
to shine, and cool, and be gone.

**Tony D'Arpino**, an Irish-Italian-American poet, lived for many years in California and Hawai'i, currently lives in Bristol. Recent work has appeared in *Barrow Street*, *Poetry East*, *Poetry Monthly* (Nottingham), and in the City Lights anthology *The Other Side of The Postcard*. Most recent book is *Greatest Hits* (Pudding House Press, Columbus, Ohio).

### **Forest Geometry**

*Silence has no end; speech is  
just the beginning of it.*

Thoreau

### **the path into the woods**

cannot be seen from the treetops  
the wind leads to another sky

the path follows roots  
triangles of growth and fall  
cradle of understory

the old book fell apart in my hands  
near the kitchen garden the musty library smell  
mingled with the herbs and mints

what seemed planet now a tragic sun  
an archaeology of stars  
excited in the new forest

the light sounds like someone  
saying dream dream  
in the gentle voice of a child



‘© Nicholas Jagger, 2008’ : End of Day 3

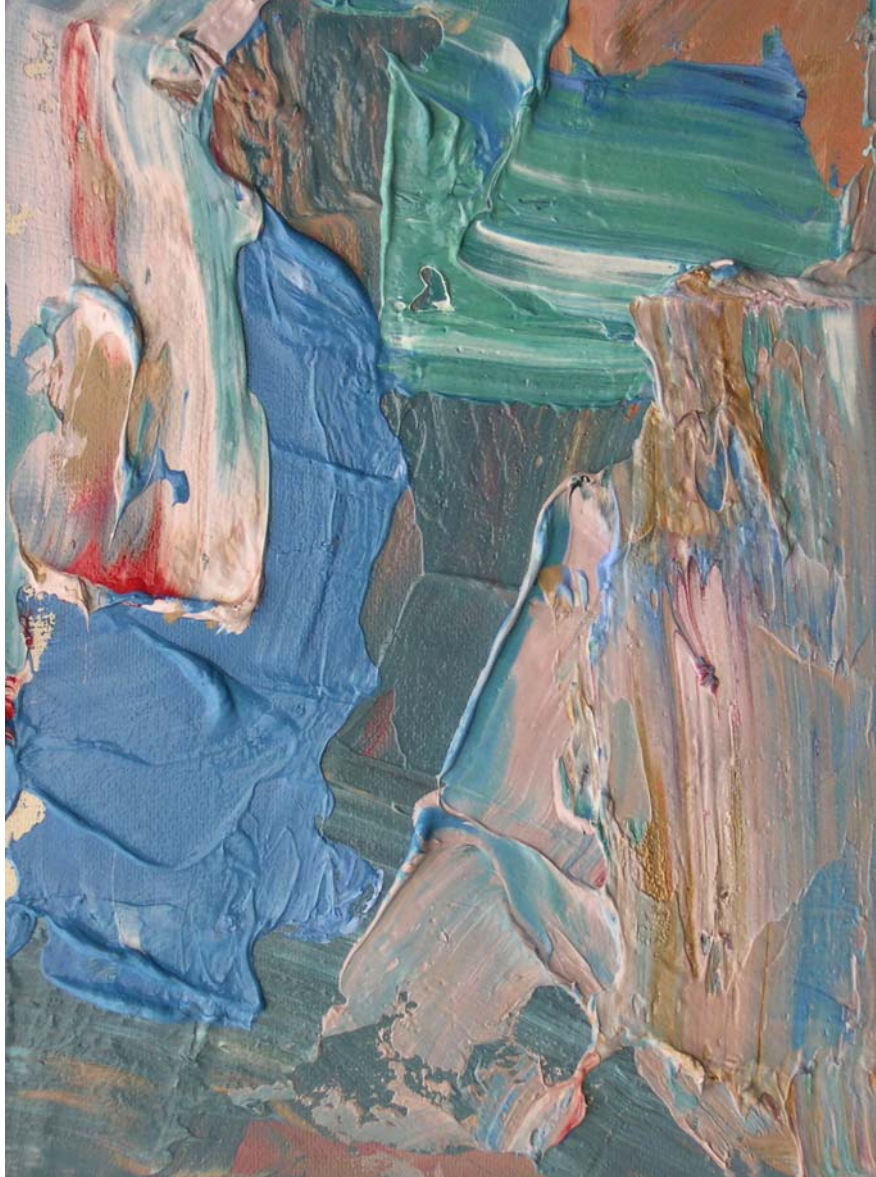
**Terry Dammary** lives in the Peak District with his family and assorted animals. He has travelled, laboured and lectured abroad and in the UK. He has a house that's in the clouds and writes to keep himself sane. These poems are from a sequence of seventy which was written over a period of four weeks.

### **Like artisans**

They rise as desires  
those feelings that you wake  
lit by the spark in your eyes  
sexy as a candle flame  
as hot as a struck match  
And like country smithies  
moonlight alchemists  
we feed the furnace  
and squeeze the bellows  
A kiln where pots are made  
glaze running down the jars  
A forge where the iron glows  
for ours is the crucible  
the horn of the anvil  
a locomotive at steam  
And in the ashes that we make  
bright as a welder's arc  
thoughts alive like mercury  
flow warm as smelted steel  
etched on plate like the engraver's art  
and born of the nights like a kicking child

### **Vernaculars**

like norma jean's subway air  
like the point of fontaine's shoe  
they let you see it how it is  
a dress that slips to the floor  
lying like a pool of soft satin  
they let lines tell of poetry  
about a Madonna unveiled  
conceits like lilies  
thrown at her feet  
me down upon my knees  
and they let her shine  
like liberty's torch  
an unfurled bud  
like a rose in Spanish harlem  
like a tree that grows in Brooklyn



‘© Nicholas Jagger, 2008’: Triptych 2

**Nicholas Jagger** is a poet and artist. His poems have previously appeared in *Agenda*, *Stand* and *HQ*.

**Fawzia Kane** was born in San Fernando, Trinidad and came to Britain on a scholarship to study architecture. She lives and works in London. Her poems have been published in many magazines including *Poetry Wales*, *Poetry London*, *The Interpreter's House*, *The SHop*, *The Rialto* and *Quattrocento*. Her work was included in *Entering the Tapestry*, edited by Mimi Khalvati and Graham Fawcett (Enitharmon 2003).

### **Tantie Diabesse consults the tarot (or pretends to)**

The punters are made to sit and one by one  
I see their lives spread out in a line.  
Some fidget, some stay still, like corbeaux pretending to sleep.

When turned over, the pictures bleed fear into the room,  
but I don't care, I'm used to this.  
They don't even notice that the cards are ignored.  
I play on their eagerness to be pleased,  
my lies can never be as great as those  
they tell to themselves.

The trick is: always leave twenty-five cents worth,  
a well-hidden surprise, my little explosion of dark  
that stays with them forever.

### **Ogmore**

I miss the sea  
so you take me there.

We watch rockpools  
fill and ebb. Silently

a river's mouth touches  
warm spreadeagled dunes,

salt-water trickles along opening  
cracks in stonefaced bluffs.

Take soundings of icy voices,  
let them rise over the breakers. Listen,

from the back of the waves  
they come, and separate again.

**D W Brydon** was born in Edinburgh in 1975.

### **Sleepless**

For hours, I have listened  
to the darkness beating in the pillow.  
Now I am knocking my head  
back against the headboard  
like a bee soldiering against the glass  
and I am back at the edge of Leirichie-laar  
where there seemed no way forward.

Going home in the gloaming, each truck spun  
our shadows on a zoetrope of trees.  
Reaching the car beneath a sky at war,  
I volunteered to drive.

Tadpoles of rain  
fled across side-windows. Intestinal clouds  
bled pink above. The road ahead  
was slashed open  
and we skydived then,  
were flung back in slow motion.

Night after night,  
I wake up in darkness,  
glimpse outlines like road markings,  
then see the dazzled faces clearly.



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