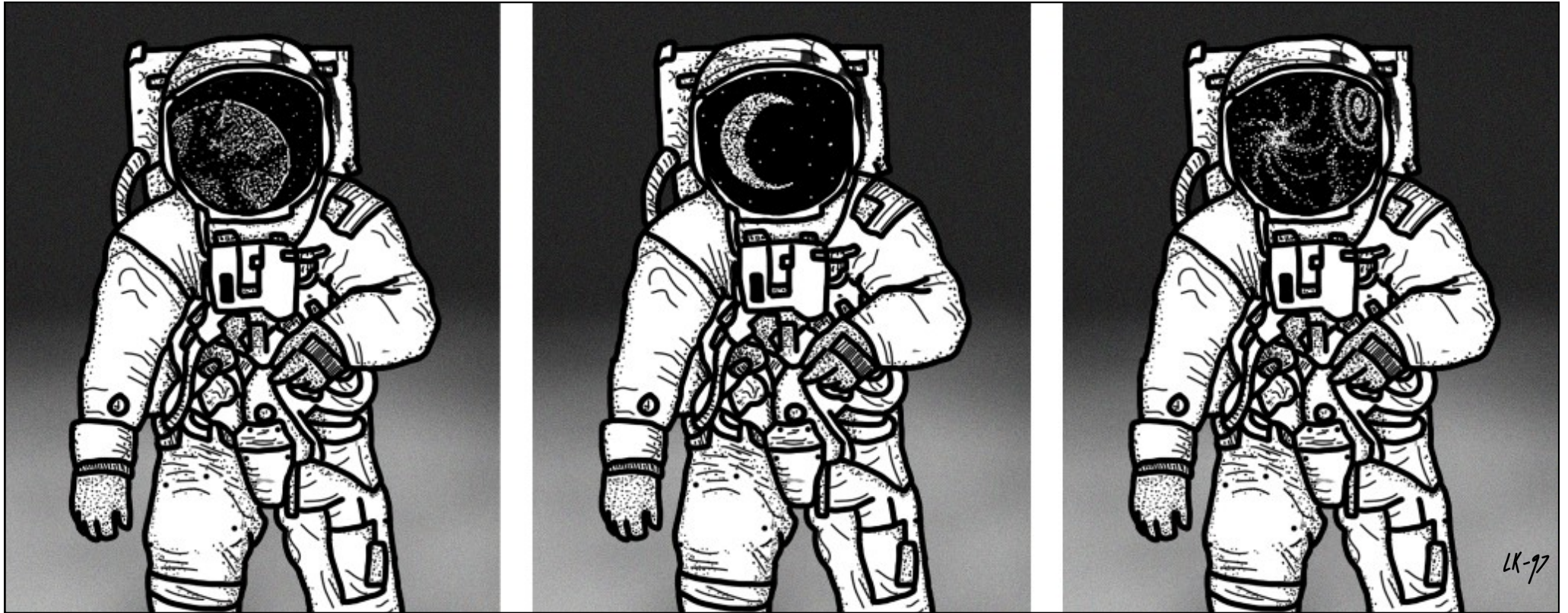




Black Bough Poetry: Issue 2



‘lux aeterna’— ‘eternal light’

A tribute to: Apollo 11 #50years - Helen Sharman #firstBritoninspace

Welcome—from Wales to the world!

Black Bough Issue 2 commemorates 50 years since the NASA moon landing in 1969 by Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin, with Michael Collins in lunar orbit. This Issue is also dedicated to Helen Sharman, the first Briton in space and a variety of other figures from Leonardo Da Vinci to Van Gogh, Henrietta Leavitt, Valentina Tereshkova, Peter Higgs and Dr Lyn Evans, that have inspired the poets.

The editorial team and I are amazed by the dazzling array of talent from across the world. When we requested submissions for space/ cosmic poems, the response was huge and it has been a challenging but exciting task to put this together. I'd like to offer a huge thanks to the Guest Readers - Lee Prosser, Laura Wainwright and Katie Stockton - for their hard work, good judgment and diligence. They were a huge asset. This Issue has been further enlivened by a mystery artist—LK-97—who sent us amazing artwork. We now know who this artist is—Elizabeth Kembell, from Stoke-on-Trent, England. Elizabeth had three poems accepted for this Issue but the talent and enthusiasm didn't stop there. The addition of her artwork has been a revelation.

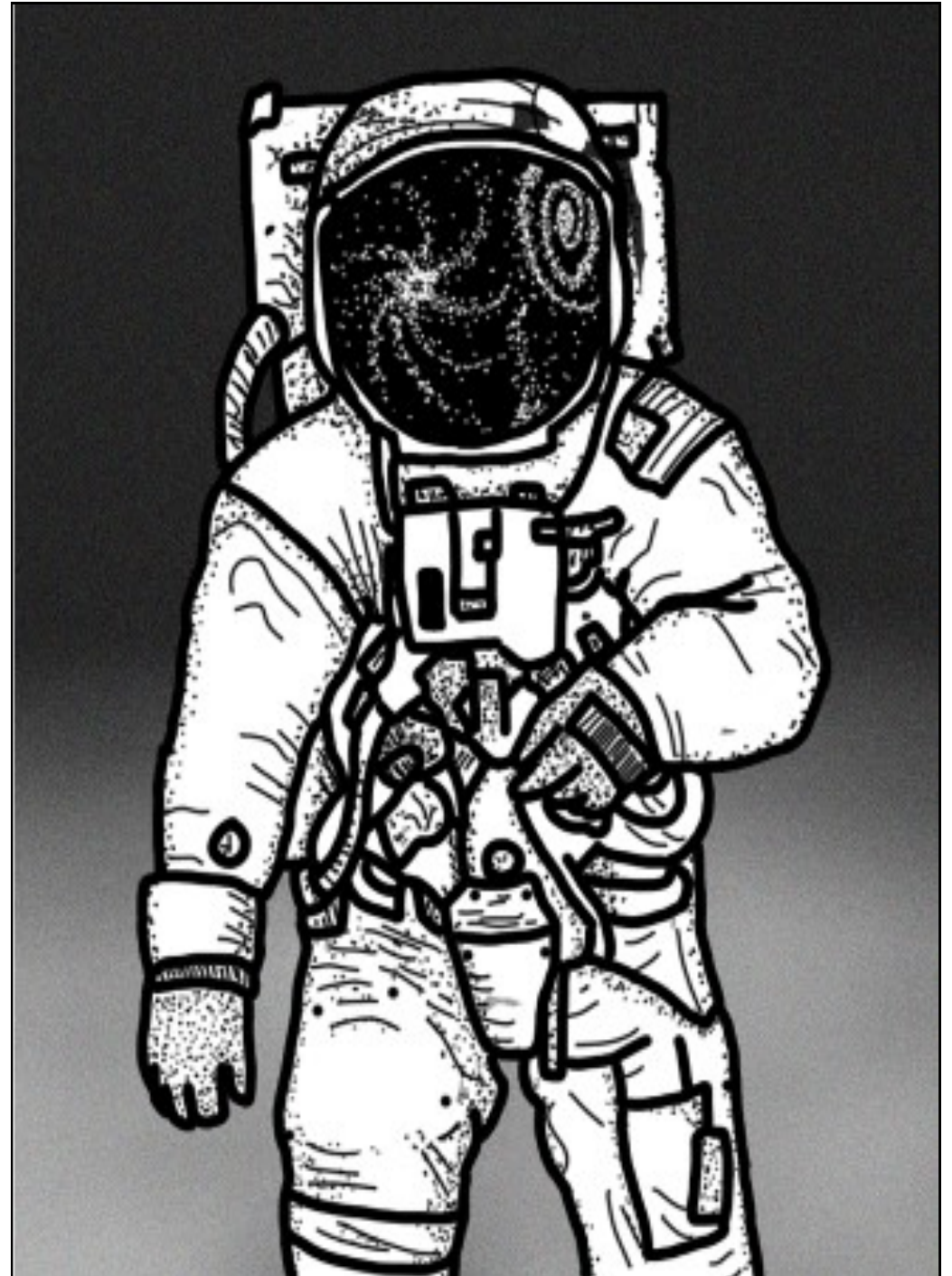
The title of Issue 2, 'Lux aeterna / *nitya jyoti*', comes from the Jess Thayil poem in the prologue. While many of the poems are grounded in time, characters and places, 'eternal light' transcends darkness, time and matter.

Poets have also been asked to record their work on Youtube and Soundcloud. The third Voyager golden disc will therefore be the Black Bough golden disc with 'Sounds of the poets'. Make sure you follow Black Bough on Twitter and join a worldwide, supportive community of talented poets.

Thanks for reading,

Matthew M C Smith—Editor

19th July 2019.



Black Bough Editorial & Design Crew



Lee Prosser

Guest reader & features

Katie Stockton

Guest reader & features

Matthew M C Smith

Editor-in-chief

Laura Wainwright

Guest reader & features

LK-97

Mystery artist

Prologue - ‘ lux aeterna / nitya jyoti ’

(eternal light)

Lux Aeterna / nitya jyoti

in the death-churn *kanti kayapushti*
her left hand melts fear *vagdanam dwipam*
the moon softens its tug the ocean relents
and breaks into song *shanti: shanti: shanti:*

from Bhumi's girandoles stars leap and lance
the gloom. As Varaha lifts a conch to his lips
velliccam: velliccam: velliccam:

Jess Thayil

Inspired by (but also stays independent of) a Hindu myth in which goddess Bhumi – the personification of earth – was rescued from the ocean by her husband Varaha, a form of Vishnu, the cosmic preserver. In some sculptures, Bhumi is depicted with her left hand in *abhaya mudra* (the gesture of fearlessness). Words transliterated from Malayalam: *nitya jyoti* – eternal light; *kanti* – brilliance; *kayapushti* – (physical) strength; *vagdanam* – promise; *dwipam* – lamp; *shanti* – peace; *velliccam* – light

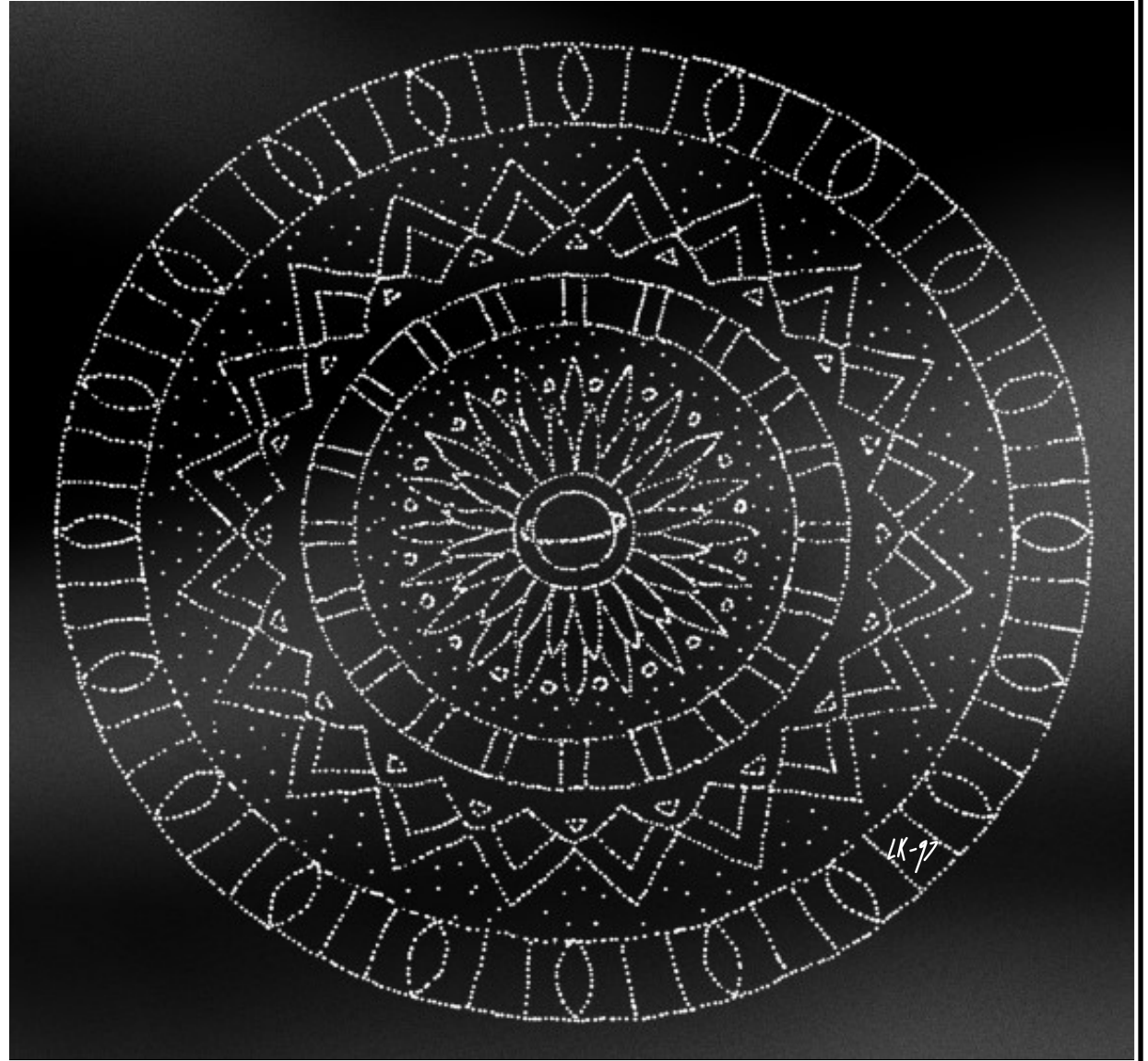
चन्द्रमा मनसो जातः । चक्षोः सूर्यो अजायत ।

the mind is affected by *Chandra*
in the ancient scriptures
it is the circle of life, rebirth,
waxing, waning
with thoughts that ebb and flow

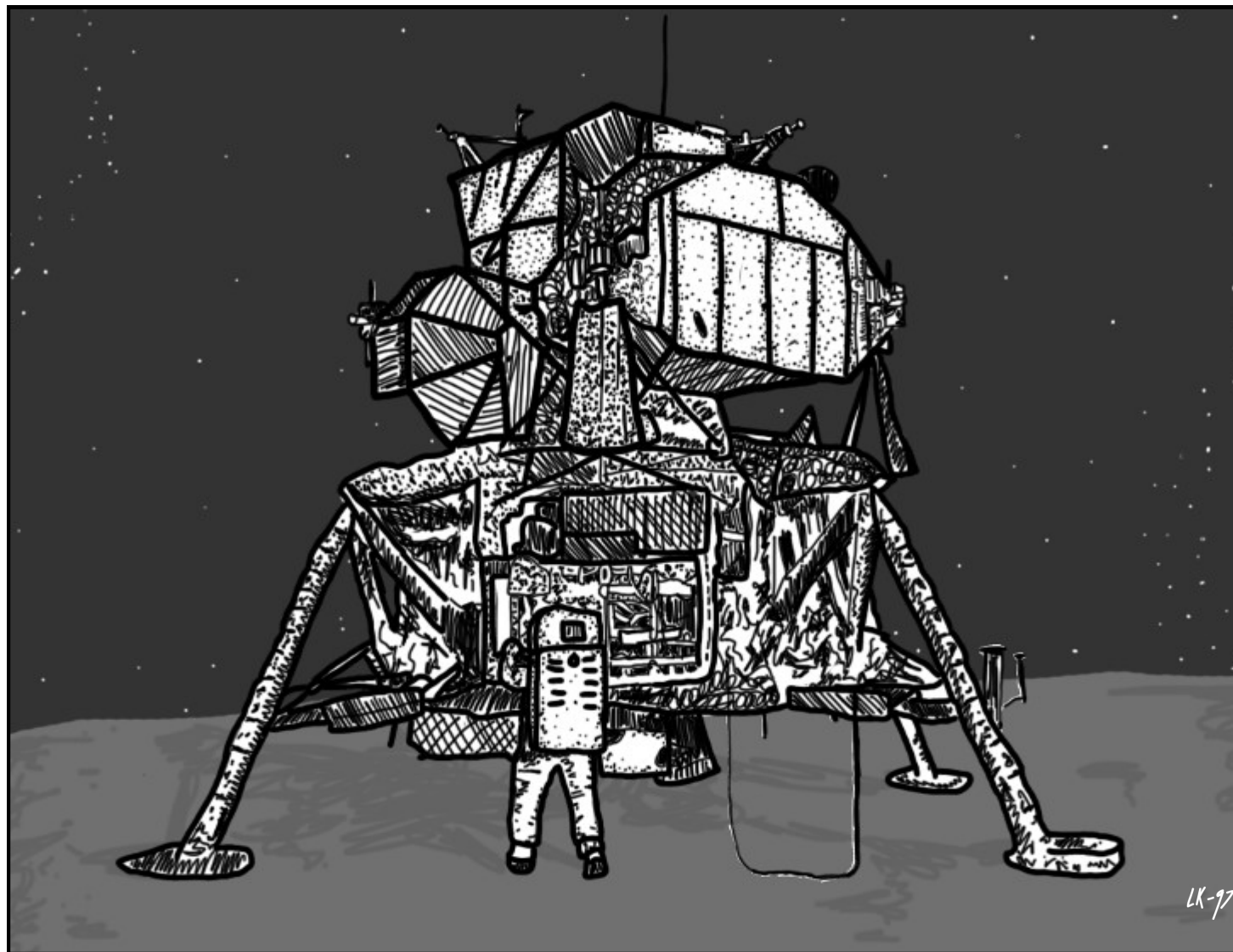
Surya, the sun, its rays from infinite distance
our eye, consciousness, immortality.

Leela Soma

Note: Chandra- moon
Surya- Sun
(Quote from Yajur Veda 1200-1000 BCE)



I - Apollo 11 #50 years



Small

you buzz you kneel
you slip into the black
vast gape then gasp
at the craft that carried
you and your flag
through a silent sea
so beautiful so desolate,
so giant you leap

K Weber

Mother

Moonchild,
I longed to visit her.
Jealous of these men:
Their footprints in her cool dust.
I had to smooth her
And soothe her
And make the crescent faultless,
For grey-eyed Selene, again.

Ann Marie Foster

Temporal Law

After Apollo 9

Years spring past us, but we feel
no seasons: time is our only winter.
Your presence comes first at twilight
and then at dawn—black holes formed
in Artemis' name, an outline of cosmos
that spell the name of the golden sun.
Escape into the darkness comes just
as naturally, landing offers unease—
we fly until we throttle into disorder,
handmade. Winter only offers unrest.

Preston Smith

Blast Off

Believing we can obtain
life beyond the sky

Finally, freely, take flight
Unfettered, soar to specks of light

Lilia Cosavalente

Watchers

A frequency:
Pin-cold,
Pierces light years,
Probes the vacuum –
Blind finger extending
Into the butterfly-wing blue
Haze of atmosphere
In the spaces
Between brain-folds
Atoms shift.
Uneasy in their darkness,
Receiving.

Polly Oliver

Separation

1969 is as old as the moon,
when veneered cathodes with cornered petulance
sparked in sitting rooms,
when we saw those bleached and unearthly loping figures,
who mattered less than earlier pictures
when colour caught the rocket's staging:
a flaring ring flung back
against the planet's wide, dumbfounded face.
A single gesture yes, but broadcast live,
we shared the heat of this unbridling.

The other one

There are blinded grotesques in the Hieronymous deep
who push on in faith, oblivious.
Two kicked at sand, planted flags and shielded eyes
from the networks' glare,
while the third drifted unremembered.
And when his raft of tin sank behind the moon
everything was occluded:
a Lazarus,
impatient to surface
and rebreath the light.

Julian Cason

Apollo 11, An Anniversary: Three poems.

I

*Beauteous the moon full on the lawn;
And beauteous, when the veil's withdrawn' -
Christopher Smart*

moon's turmoil in the axis of a rose-stem
flying into nothing you hold your breath
like a swimmer siphoned into darkness

Southwest of Tranquility, the touch-down surface:
rocks, anomalies and debris;
behind you: fifty years, a world of screens
flickering blue and waiting.

II

it's all laid out like yesterday
the prospect to the promontory
of Kant Plateau:
where the module's shadow
cuts across in high res shots
the bounding promenade,
our first steps in protective suits
and time is vertigo in space,
we flail in reaching outwards
whirling specks of dust.

III

perhaps, though we don't always seem
very much or seem to see in camera arrays
that we have made, we sometimes see ourselves
coming towards us and going away in spaces
so utterly different from those out there,
in ways we only half-forget, a dream to the dreamless;
there are no powerful rockets to take us
only something glimpsed once back in the desert
of caves we turn to with dawning thought
of ochre, of beads and bones stained red.

David Annwn

Conviction

I believe you went
to the moon and back,
praying as you rattled
through the dark,

felt you moving over us,
a twinkle in the sky,
wondering what though art.

Experience

At the turn into adult
I lay on red clay,
the rains had passed.

I saw my first one,
two, three shooting stars...
like waiting for a bus.

Still, I cling on to the ride,
a comet that's all mine.

Observation

After Adorno

I see it in the descending seed,
it's whirl wide as the schema
of ashen rock riding
our tide in time;
 watching the stars
 down to Earth.

Kate North

The Dark Side of the Moon

Looking up into the sky at night I see a familiar sight:
the big round lunar satellite with an asteroid pock-scarred face.
The name for your face belonged to a deceased, monocled astronomer
who informed me as a child about solar flares, black holes,
gas giants and the rings of Saturn.

When he died he became the man in the moon.
The moon which he mapped and telescope scoured.

When he died, asteroid 2012 XE54 passed close to our planet, a distant star
turned supernova. A nebulous dusty cloud stretched lazily across space
and a bright-tailed meteor hurtled onwards—past the dark side of the moon.

Ghosts

Gazed flickering stars.
Glitter-filled eyes lighting up
in this scattered space.
The burnt-out stars leave a trace
as shadows in this distance.

Lee Prosser

Manoeuvre

Eagle of the Sun-God
falls on 'Tranquillity

stands footpads first
in front of our TV

a carpet's diamond
for its base. Count

down to departure
beyond child's grip

till its return here
plying lunar dust

Tim Youngs

Hanging

The harsh light a cold burn, blinding,
and flashed, reflecting off the visor
the end of the path foreshadowed
just as it began: airless, hope shattered
desiccated, exposed, or buried beneath dust made from rocks shattered.
And after, after the end of the affair
and after the end of the end of hostilities, even
we left behind what we left behind
and we can dream of finding old things anew
because the moon forever hangs, as we do

Antonio Fusco.

Moon, Landing 20th July 1969

I was moon-hungry, ten years old,
So I set a mirror on the beach
And lay in wait that night.
Moon landed there, looked up
And was a child! Like me, an only child,
Tentative and curious, hoping to play.
To have him as my friend, I saw
I'd have to let him go
And come at will. Chastened, I prayed
That all the astronauts would lose their appetites.

Angela Graham

21.5 hrs / the two of you

Those first steps on the uneven moon; was a trail left
when you walked from darkness into light? I know

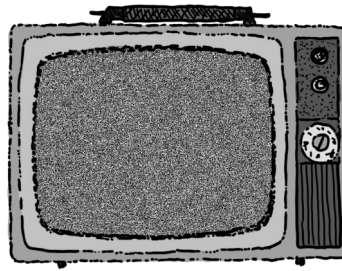
it hadn't been easy, but after all, the *Eagle* did land;
you became the first souls to stand there. That amber

crescent in a cloudless sky that day; with you, pounds
of flesh, to bring back home. Soon after, *Merritt Island*

was a place of sheer joy; with faces, ripe coconuts and
a golden seabeach, men banging on numerous desks,

computer panels, mouths wide open as black holes;
that day it wasn't just you that had run to the moon.

Jzyant Kashyap



Communion

Buzz Aldrin performed Christian communion while waiting for his historical walk on the moon. It wasn't highly publicized by NASA because they were afraid of the criticism it might generate.

Silent and cold among rocks,
the secret to life:
everything turns to dust,
even on the moon.

Safe inside lunar lander:
wine sipped from silver chalice,
bread broken purposely,
prayer spoken.

Richard LeDue

Moon Landing

On that warm July night,
my father watched moonstruck
as Neil Armstrong took his giant leap.

I remained firmly earthbound,
watching our new puppies in the TV screen light,
their small black and white bodies tumbling,
stepping hesitantly into their futures.

Now--ensorcelled by moon-glow--
I plummet back, landing my time-rocket
on the rocky surface of memory.

Merril D. Smith

One line

Speaking to Houston
in clipped Midwestern phrases

he kept a tight-coiled line
of poetry under his tongue,

the same he'd carried
through engagement, marriage,
the birth of his children,

waiting to be uttered
to an airless moon and watching world.

Magnificent desolation

Desolate, he rallied,
this eldest son
in the role of second man.

If his words aren't the ones
we all know, the prints
of his boots will outlast mountains,

in that fine grey dust where no
foot has been since,
that desolate magnificence.

One art

Their mission patch
was his design, but as the bald eagle
swoops down on the Sea of Tranquility
olive branch in claw, who thinks
of the essential artist, pilot
of the ark, about to slip away from the glory
behind the dark side of the moon?

Later he would leave
his Everglades and fighter jets unsigned
fearing they would be valued beyond their merit.

Thomas Tyrrell

Stroller at Dusk

a toddler
wheeled past tree bark

parked cars, red-loud sign
looks up

says the branches
are brushing the moon

Bill Stadick

earthrise

in night we watched silicate
studied the formula of sky

bodies attenuate, pale:
we're left with white points

remembering was not enough
then she rose wetted our eyes

Tamsin Blaxter

For Karen

On the Moon
Nothing but magnificent desolation
My footsteps remind me
Of all those you will never take
Every step
Each impression unyielding
Eternal,
A father's love
Incandescent like the stars

Daniel Page

Man on the Moon

I can see you, my love
From crater's shadow stretched long
A blue and white vision
In moon's dark day sky
Dusty, burnt with stars
My eyes tear, I brace my heels
Into the regolith
Twist off my helmet
Blood boils

David Fry

9 1/2 B

(Where Neil trod)

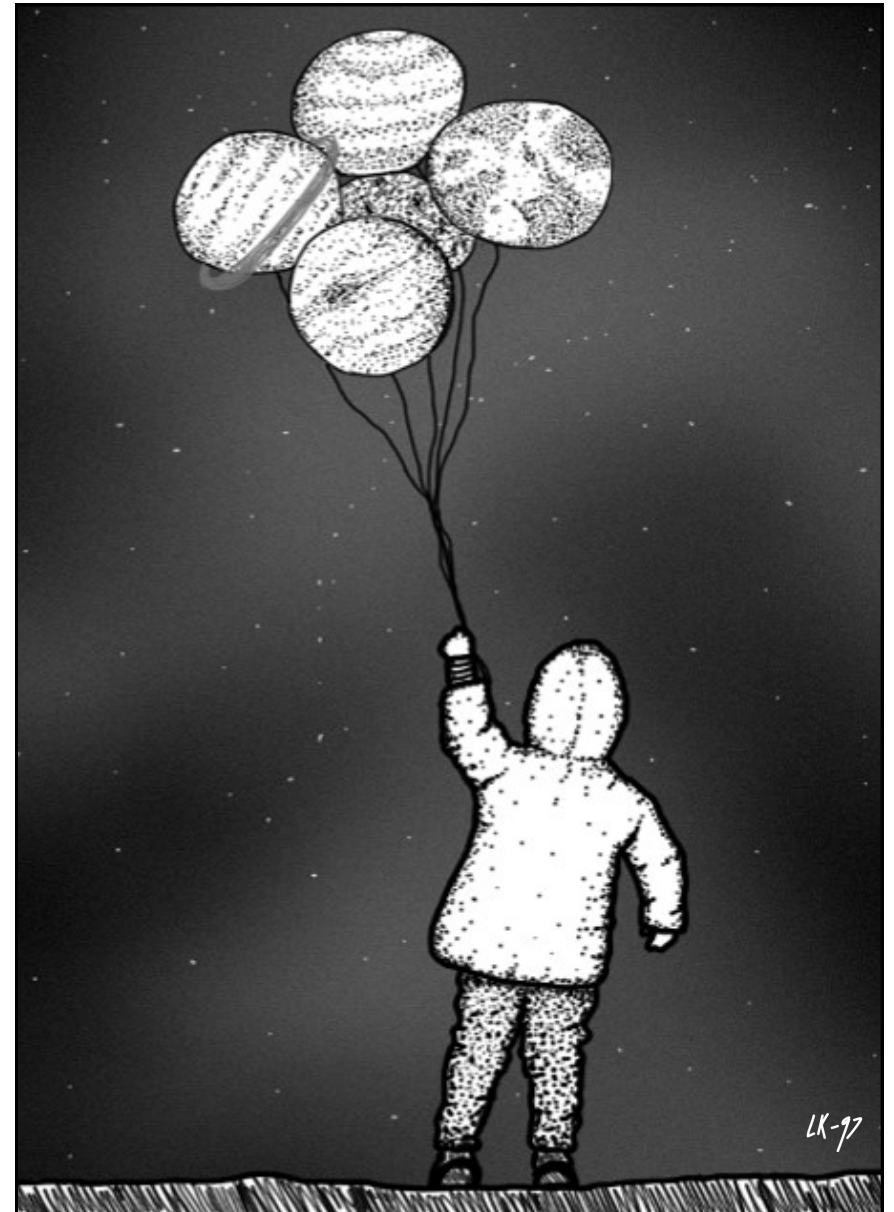
Ghost silver sphere
glowing bright.
'Tides' commander
beyond my reach.
Distance dwarfs you
yet amongst shadows
man's footprints lie.

Richard Waring

50 word transcript

We choose to go to the moon...
Lights on, down two and do
the other things, forward, faint
shadow, not because they are
easy, picking up some dust, but
because they are hard, because
that challenge is... contact, one
we are unwilling to, we copy you,
postpone. Tranquillity Base.

Ian Richardson



Apollo

When I was a kid, I only needed
a big cardboard box, to build a spaceship.
Neat tin-foil plates polished, engines bled, charting a course for a nearby time- rip.

There is a guy I know, who succeeded
in baffling folk without any censorship
with his claims that nasa had completed
a similar trick with their lunar trip.

Cardboard, sand, mirrors and tin foil gilded
pods. No space explorers. More craftman-
ship.

John McLachlan

The sitting room mission

Jessie, Maggie and me, in home-knitted balaclavas
squashed into the Tunnocks 11,
our cardboard box capsule
fully equipped with crayoned control panels.
The fine craft shuddered through the long unknown.
Steel-calm teamwork brought us a safe landing.
Over mounds and craters of icing sugar,
our avatars, Sindy, Barbie and Ken,
Slowly skipped and squawked their path to history
And planted a Saltire.

Marka Rifat

First Moon Landing

My brother, sister, and I take one small step
closer to the console television, gather around
as if it's fire, cooking meat for dinner,
and we're leashed dogs, salivating for the treat.
Mom hands us a bowl of hot, buttered popcorn.
Parents, grandparents perch on the edge
of couches and chairs. Brother announces he's Neil.
I shout I'm Buzz. *Girls can't be astronauts. Can, too*, I scream.
Mom shushes us. The Eagle lands. Neil walks, speaks for us all.
We don't move, bowl of popcorn untouched in front of us.

Robin Wright

Apollo 11

the hand-me-down sofa in my aunt's lounge grunted beneath us
family – friends – neighbours - *buddled together*
awake into the night – white pipe smoke swirled – toasts with jars of homebrew
all of us *children* again *excited/frightened*
by the astronomic events showing on the b & w television set
the only one on the block - sucking the room towards it – *buzzing/crackling* - conversation dead
- *a black hole* -
“... *far above the world*” - defying gravity - three men in clouds

Alan Parry

Brother's Moon Landing

The rest of us knelt close to the screen as
Lazarus stepped out, no longer entombed.
But you ran outside with your Instamatic,
priest-like you raised it to the distant moon.

I've looked it up: it was a crescent, waxing
though in my memory it is always full –
full of your belief, despite our teasing –
your camera had witnessed a miracle.

Anything could happen... and then it did.
You would have been 60 this year, had you lived.

Ellie Rees

Black and White Baby Steps

My white-haired lover tells it in monochrome
relocation by way of ka-tunk ka-tunk concrete highways
New York to New Mexico
in a Rambler station wagon
heaped with small-step memories
while Earth traveled
to the moon
in buoyant leaps and bounds

Christine Owens

The Flea Market

Artists painting river stones
at a flea market table yield
pet rocks as Apollo reaches the moon.
Mine has the moon lander.
I carry that promise of technology
with me until I turn from space.

Now, washed by dust and light from
other galaxies, my smooth head reflects
a chemotherapy travelogue. I return
to technology and drifting planets.

Michael Dickel

One small step

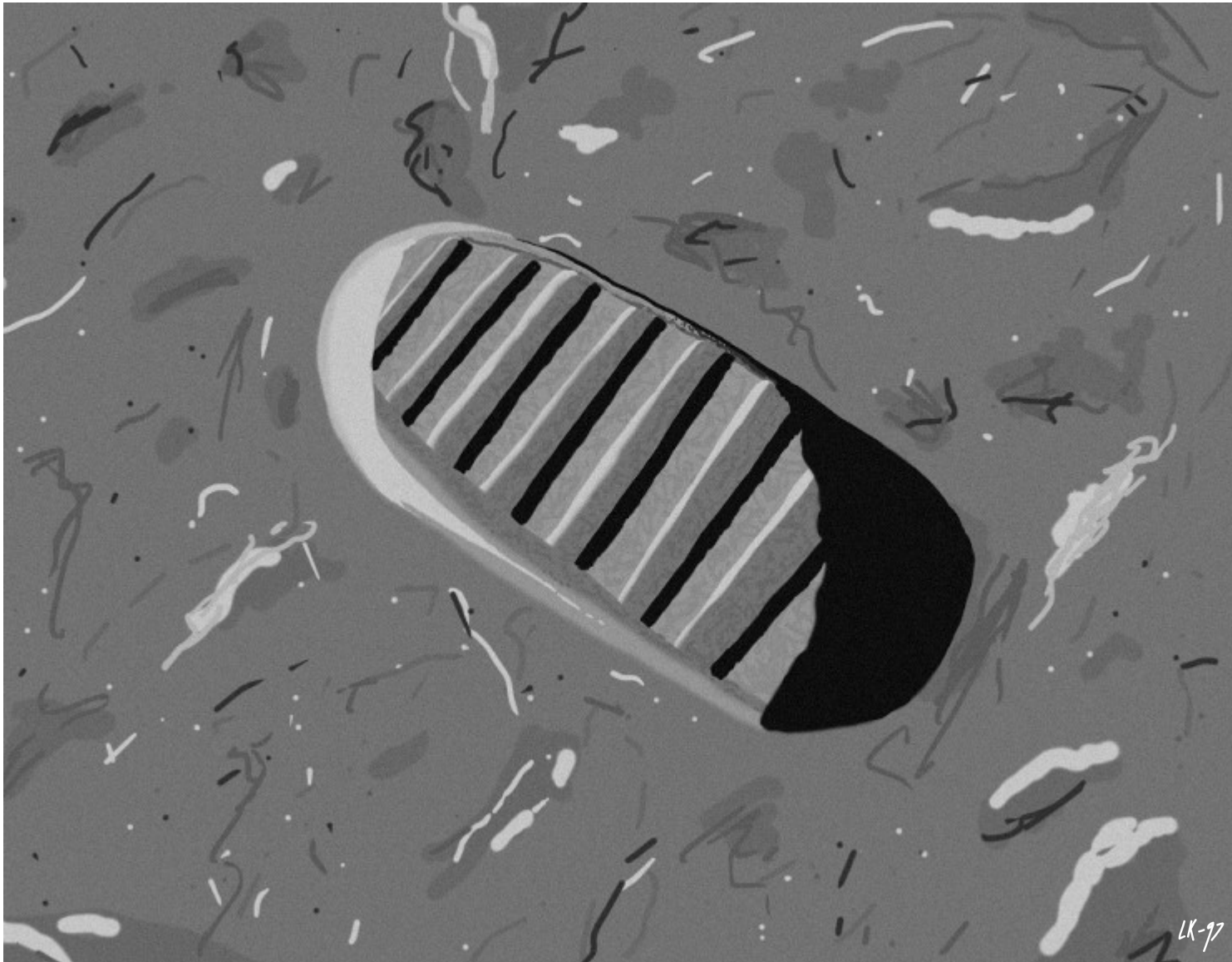
There is a crater in my foot, stars are spinning around my bed;
new orbits are but one small step away.

But while a man walks on the moon, I am confined, cannot
put one slippered foot in front of the next.

I feel the gravity of my eleven years, dream of planets beyond
the ward, am giddy with the pull of the universe.

Fifty new dawns, half a century in my veins, scars are healing;
I leave footsteps in the moon dust, dock.

Pat Edwards



Giant leap

Strange to think
that the first giant leap
the hairless ape took
was standing,

that a quirk of fate changed them.
A tree's ripened fruit
hanging like suns
and one small step.

Later
in steel capsules they went beyond
this dying world
to claim a barren moon.

David Rudd Mitchell

II - Cosmic poems

(for Helen Sharman, first Briton in space)



Three Flights

TB

Find

On the whelk stuck shelf,
hand sized, a stone.

A cold, brackish weight
haloed with pale rings

shadowed with ammonite coil and crevasse –
the troughed salt pans of a malformed moon.

Collision of the deep cosmos
this timeworn matter, wind dried

on my bright palm
shoaling atoms and long light.

Flight

The gasping white fall,
the gust and flap of the freed

parachute could not prepare
Tereshkova

for the fire and thrust of cramped Vostok 6
rumbling, shuddering up through lit cloud

into lagoon then sea-cave blue then
black and the swimming dome of earth

she orbited forty-eight times, returning
and returning like the moon-sick tide to a stone.

Note:

Valentina Tereshkova was a Russian cosmonaut and the first woman to fly in space. She was launched into space on Vostok 6 on June 16, 1963. She was chosen for the space mission on the basis of her ability as an amateur parachutist.

Forward

Inspired by Helen Sharman (Astronaut)

What return now
for a stiff glove of grit from a trodden luminary

brushed dust from coin-rubbed craters
the blown powder of flags.

Juno's weightless labours have travelled
like light towards a red end: birth

sunned to rust on screed peak and roved mineral bed,
the locked ice and hushed seas

of Earth's death's head
in our hands. Now how to set foot?

Laura Wainwright

Note:

Sharman has stated 'we should push forward not only our individual boundaries, but also the boundaries of what humans believe is possible'. She has said 'plans to send humans back to the moon lack 'vision''. Asked if she supported 'Barack Obama's plan to send humans to Mars or Donald Trump's policy to first return to the moon, she said Mars had to be the goal, and that the planned lunar missions of both NASA and the European Space Agency were driven by a need for short-term achievement.' She also notes that 'it is important to make space travel greener'. (*The Guardian*, April 27, 2018)

Da Bo Chi*
(Voyager 1)

Our words wander with you
endlessly through the cosmos
*iaith y nefoedd***, interstellar
leaving our heliosphere.
Particles zip and stream as
you'll splutter into silence
growing colder, further from
us, the smallest blue speck
in a beam of scattered light.

*Good bye (Welsh)

**language of heaven (Welsh)

Telling the Bees

Tonight we'll search the sky for
Caer Gwydion, Arianrod's
pathway to heaven and for the
brightest of the seven sister stars.
Now the bottom of the garden
feels a galaxy away, as we tread
weightlessly in white suits and
whisper to the honeyed hives
*mae 'di mynd**, turning them
half circle away from the sun.

*she's gone (Welsh)

Ness Owen

My Last Artwork

The night sky a sea
of scattered lamps,
blinking flotillas
a lingering lucidity
ancient constellations
map celestial dreams

Karlo Silverio Sevilla



Waltz

The moon dons her black gown,
speckled with stars. Tonight
she'll dance, a tiara of light
for lovers below. Tides
will splash rhythm
while silhouettes spin.

Robin Wright

Islanders

inhabit the edges, bound
by sky, by rock, by moon-turned sea,
lives lived in the salt round
that inhabits the edges, bound
to nothing, journeyed days crowned
in constellations, the drift of infinity
inhabiting all edges, bound
as sky, as rock, as moon-turned sea.

Angela T Carr

Colony 1

The terminal sun throws a golden band
 onto the alien grain of the table we grew
 and cut and joined. I chart multiplying
 islands of senile pigment on a clawed
 and fissured hand. Amber motes turn
 and shine and form an outline that reaches
 out and caresses my neck and whispers,
We were the first, we are the last.
Let those heavy rays in, my love.
I am waiting.

Philip Berry

After gods

He wanders, drifting, after death of gods
 and kneels on rock at earth's still pool,
 where water ripples to finger's touch.
 He rises, raising eyes to starry vault,
 spirit soars through endless night,
 with ancient heavens myriad on show.
 He leans again at water's blackened edge;
 the graven image, stream of light of stars,
 imprisoned, still, a liquid mirror.

Matthew M C Smith

Saltwort

Caustic in the sand
 where we build our fire,

 and I sleep rolled in a blanket beside it,
 a brand that shifts in the beach breeze,

 its shadow under Alpheratz,
 my mother's star

 tonight blue
 as driftwood ash,

 and I feel its roots in the bedrock,
 the limestone that allows

Robert Minbinnick

Break water

A first of rocks strides into the surging sea
 under a canopy of battleship grey clouds.
 Broken boulders vanish and re-emerge.
 A road of promise lost and found
 to salt spray oblivion.

Phil Knight

Bliss as

An upside-down rainbow
lorikeet dangling
from liquid amber
branches
sweet plump seeds filling its sun
-warmed belly high above the wild
abandoned laughter of kookaburras
floating over a rippling star
-studded green sea
of breeze-bewitched trees.

Over a midnight shore

My last words to her a lie—
a dark tide lashing the broken silver line—
sleet-scattered wind rattling dark glass,
a rasping gasp as she sprang into the frigid gap
after I told my mother she could leave us.

Changeling

As ethereal as radiance, as mystifying as the Milky Way—staring backwards into
time, standing in the frost-bright grass—you would teach me about stars,

first precious intoxicating breath-stealer—like these far-off stars and love and unfathomable
beauty, your radiant youth standing aloft in this ice-lit star-field at twelve

already dwarfing me with all your maths and facts I don't know
where they all came from or when, and I am floating in this vast

unexplored territory—an entire constellation of you stretching away,
infinitely greater than that first small spark telling me you existed

in me and you gasp *A shooting star*
Yes I breathe *You are*.



Anne Casey

we are made of

cells that bind us
that glue blood, muscle, bone
our spaces within spirits
to dark webs of stars
burning worlds

Paul Robert Mullen

The Hare

She barrels through the silk night,
moonlight glinting from her tail,
smacking wind with whiskers
like silver thread, searching
for the fissure of dawn.

Mari Ellis Dunning



BLACK BOUGH
POETRY

Speed of light

in the rocket's exhausts
molecules labour for lift off

chaos > birth > combustion

we reach for heavens

half burnt out.

Seated, we calculate
the distance to paradise,
stir embers to requite the flirtation
of these infinite light years.

Glen Wilson

Space Station

In sleep, cosmic rays flash like binary,
pulse on visual cortex.

City circuits spread, silent as tombs,
oceans, landmass, whorls of cloud,
tropics, latitudes, spectral horizons,
storms' green fire on arc of globe.

We travel into night, day, dark, light,
terrifically lonely
with ghost memories
of being and love.

Matthew M C Smith

Satis damnum

Grieving in the blue above a graveyard,
skeletal face shocked pale as bone,
her horror for the dead a distress,

she cannot turn away from the sunset
of their stones; pray for their passage,
weep a drop of her seas for their souls.

This is what enough loss will do to you.
What a lifetime of looking down
does to hearts that pull against the tides.

Mark Antony Owen

Symposium

The lights of oblivion set in comet dust,
 streaking the skies in silver glow.
 Below, the Earth yearns for her lover--
 the soft and gentle moon.
 Though shadowed by the radiant sun,
 cold and barren from his flares,
 she waxes and wanes love letters--
 Morse code to her blue planet--
 dreaming one day,
 they'll collide again.

Dorian Sinnott

Elegy for the Night

under stained glass skies
 how am I not meant to feel inadequate?

I'll spend the evening
 erasing stars I can't own

building supernova armies
 in your constellation freckles

I will cloak myself in the stardust
 imprinted on half shut eyes

and shroud each and every trace
 of the night-time that doesn't want me

Sasha Smith

Réaltóireacht

Goideann dorachadas radharc mo shúile,
 sciobann domhantarraingt mo chorp leis
 agus mé ag titeant go trom ar an tocht bunchaite seo.

Tugaim neamhaird ar an áit seo, dírim ar raon níos fiúntaí -
 mo ghealach, realtaí, réaltra agus mo chruinne, a chroíthe,
 is libhse a luím síos de dheoin, lán im'dhúiseacht.

Stargazing

Darkness blinds my eyes and gravity claims my body
 in one sharp landing on this worn sprung mattress.

I pay circumstance no heed, tuning in to the space above me;
 my moon, stars, galaxies, my universe, my loves,
 you are my bed fellows of choice. I lie wanton for you.

Joanne McCarthy

one

but Leonardo was first to the moon,
ravelling through space
in a skull-white shuttle
launched from an olive grove,
impossible, his beard flying
as he solved, computed, wondered,
eyes fixed always upwards
on the perplexing wax ball.

giant

up and on he rocketed into an inky sky
starred with questions, light speed voyager,
until, centuries young, he set his feet
on the moon's frown
and unpicked an ancient puzzle:
how the old-moon's death mask,
could live on, zombie,
above the new-moon's rib.
Earthshine!

leap

no other astronaut has lived
the lunar night as he has,
in ghostlit seas trembling silver,
still the only human
to step into moon's gloaming
and see our lantern Earth,
luminous, candling,
a light leaping out
into the universe's unending dark.

Rae Howells

HM



LK-72

Davinci Spatial Code

An unstable pattern, unseen planets.
Words and links, a spatial sign language,
hidden, the traceable map.

Benedicta Boamah

Look

their gloved hands
guide the telescope

away from town
and its risen light

help their child
adjust the mount

track movements
our ancients knew

then yield to cold
snap lens cap back

Tim Youngs

Sidenote on space travel

Micrometeoroids cause concern.

The star-stuck endlessness, the uncomputable vision
of unmanned space, that blind compass we call the sun:

phenomena like these cannot but overawe.
But, once in flight, we fear those bullet-grams of rock, im-
pact's attrition,
hostile to Apollo's hull, as to a moon-bound man.

Michael Caines

Stars and moon

Riven black torn mind
star swirled cobalt sky
crescent moon gold azure
streaked spiralled star
Arles east view sunrise
brings uncertainty unrelieved
reveals agony within

Rob Cullen

Pilgrim mother

Wise Penelope, no longer weaving, unravelling,
nor biding time. Her craft blasting
through troposphere, mesosphere, ionosphere,
penetrating dark exosphere. Earthbound limits,
questions of her loyalty and chastity,
like burnt-out capsules fall away into endless orbit.
Pligrim mother, messiah, incubator of new worlds.
This time, no vigil, but the voyager
into the portal of the stars

Kathryn Hope



Three Tanka Series

Choke

Peeled white skin
Reveals multiple, fragile layers
Cling of gravity
Membrane only one cell thick
Re-entry by osmosis

Other

Future sight
Who would want to know all of this?
More than stars
Anxiety born of certainty
Rather, blind-choice be my shield

Rage

The gold disc spins
North Star bright, Venus above
A blushing moon
Footprint of my rage, mere dust
In the face of so much beauty

Eliot North

Observance

Night dances her Dance of the Dead, darkens her
eyes with bold kohl; thinks *I Shadow*, laughs privately.

Night is bone-bare, holds out a finger for Moth to still
himself – but Moth, electrified, craves only Moon.

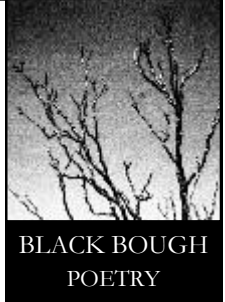
Moon wears her Sunday best, drapes mist over an exposed
shoulder, experiments with gold highlights, and is pleased.

Moon feels her own fading, becomes raggedy-fragile,
shying from the brassy Sun; listens, bitterly, to birdsong.

Sarah Doyle

Mercury Matters

I have no recollection of heat's absence.
My skin cracks with it. Sometimes, I wake
from sleep's brief dreams and believe myself
fleetingly temperate. Disappointment always
dawns. I regret to confess, bitterness is
my frequent companion. Half-consumed
by the Sun, I am runtish, barren. Pock-
marked with proximity, I bear the brunt,
and bitterly. Stoicism is not for me. I burn, as
the Gods throw another coal in the furnace.



Creation Myth

See the Fate
of a primordial pipette
fulfilled.
Taut,
it drips out a monastery
wants wishes to be cast upon it
across oceans of unknowing.

Stasis

Once upon a stasis
of cold, bystander black,
silent eyes
constellated themselves
into order.

Katie Stockton

Lit

I throw the moon into my father's fiery mouth.
Sober as milk, she eclipses his flaming throat,
floods her pearl glow into his blank eyes, blanches

their red threads. She cools his scorched tongue,
hushes his curses, croons her ancient, tidal songs
to reach the boy in him that only she can heal.

Now, glittering with life, he spits. To cauterise
the balm of all that pale loveliness, he rolls the scotch
around his gums, ignites the blaze once more.

Kathryn Bevis

The black hole has a face

Explorers are fixed on discovering worlds,
shrouded in cosmic black,
where secrets lie hidden,
and now we've seen its face,
its imaged eyes stare vacant through glimpses of futures,
present, though undiscovered,
unreached, though reachable.

Catherine McCabe

Magnus Opus

The Cosmos, a womb of darkness,
heartbeats of perfect harmony,
dancing constellations, planets, stars.
Moon-dust magic, Magnus Opus observed.
Man births chaos, eviscerates Earth,
plunders frontiers, searches for immortality.

Caroline Johnstone

Gravity

It is a dangerous thing to be born;
we are vulnerable, spinning deep in space.

Sometimes, before I sleep, face in pillow's foam
I turn for breath, grip my bed frame.

imagine being suspended along the curve
of Earth's concentric layers

I am frantic at the thought of spiralling
out of control, falling

falling.....

Wendy Holborow

Lila

We wrote our names
in starlight;
scattered love across
the sky's black velvet.

You left me standing
in silence;
a forgotten note
in night's divine play.

Josh Rees

Astronaut

Sealed in microgravity,
floating witness to stars,
follower of forever abyss.

Sense this earth turn,
know this station's velocity,
sentry of pale blue sphere
where gravities keep perfection,

a perfection as rare as love.
Is there love beyond this orbit?
Is there love outside this world?

Matthew M C Smith

GT

The path of the moon

(from an Anglo-Saxon riddle)

*Ic wiht geseah wundorlice
lyftfæt leotlic listrum gegierwed*

*dust stonc to beofonum deaw feol on eorþan
niht forð gewat nanig sippan
wera gewiste þære wihte sið*

I saw a being, wondrously
shining, a cup of sky, cunningly made.

Dust rose to heaven, dew fell on earth,
Night went forth. No one later
could plot her path.

This star

(from an Anglo-Saxon rune poem)

*Tir biþ tacna sum healdeð trywa wel
wiþ æþelingas a biþ on færylde
ofer nihta genipu næfre swiceþ*

This star is a sure sign: it keeps faith well
with our rulers, is always journeying
over night's mists, never drifting.

Rosemary Appleton

A Star for Lina*

(An Imperfect View of A Comet)

(*astronomer Caroline Herschel, 1750-1848)

Here she is, in her neat town garden,
the telescope's tube snagging on her sash.
Dew seeping into her satin shoes,
she wipes the angled mirrors, tilts it up,
reflecting beams and so subverting
time itself, she feels, as she streams
the star's brightly private glare towards
her eye - her vision's range now
approaching, surely, God's own scope.

Sagittarius A

In the spiralling mass,
a swirling dark death,
a star once ablaze.

Planets, particles, light,
drawn, devoured.

Nothing within its reach
escapes its grasp.

Tracy Martinez

Falling

Reflected in your eye – the moon,
the mass of stars, the galaxy,
a hundred billion galaxies more; the beautiful
infinity of universe caught,
pinned upon your depthless pupil.

You blink.
Within the penumbra
of your careless lids I lose
my entire cosmos.

Penny Blackburn

Woman in the moon

I am not the man in the moon she sighs
teetering like a blanched melon she threatens
to roll herself down to the seabed blasting silt
scattering tides in every direction sudden jetstream
a cool emergency her dull skull puckers they land
soundlessly trekking her lip *I am so bored of spacemen*
she confesses to Orion wincing at the jab of a flagpole
the moon-boot's thwack *time for a crash landing*

Natalie Ann Holborow



22 Vulpeculae

Hot evening, wisteria roaring with bees;
a raven, soaring, fixed one of us with its yellow eye.
Demon star, faint pulsing variable,
burst of rays from the cold uncharted.

Threats emerge, conceal themselves again.
But somewhere you remember.

Robert Hamilton

A firmament

Moths glitter in light
each in its frantic parabola.

Andromeda there. A flash
of Canis Major. Sagittarius
appears in a clatter of projectiles.

I could learn these shapes
if only there were time.

Above the city

It's cold up here, icy air filling lungs with
emptiness, a taste of moonlight -
stars close enough to switch off or
blot with one thumb. The sky;
suspended spirals of light, of dark -
I reach to touch the shapes of the universe.
The goosebumps on my skin are
constellations, their own galaxies.

Luminescence

The hushed glow of city lights
spills against midnight sky;
the glare from your phone screen
illuminating blood-shot eyes;
an unfurling urban luminescence
obscures the stars.

Elizabeth Kemball

Floor 3, Room 13

In the dark: fairy-lights, suspended as stars,
the tungsten street lamp glow,
intermittent flashes of the smoke alarm, blue lights,
streak the ceiling: an aurora borealis.
This galaxy encased in concrete and brick,
close enough to breathe in.

The dark - a universe shrunk into
four walls - makes gods of us all.



The Stars My Teachers

Once in a blue earth
I could watch surf break
on alien shores
without you.

No one taught these stars
to flare in synchrony,
this cold to reach
your iced heart's burn.

Shared

Charles Duke left
a photo of his family
on the moon.
Their tiny faces also looked
at what he once saw.

Before sun's searing day
could peel and flay,
their single spot of color
graced a dead gray world.

Kyla Houbolt

Shooting Star, Falling Star

We lie on our backs, you and I,
to watch the night sky.
"There's one!" you say,
"make a wish."

But starlight fills
my eyes with tears,
my mouth
with secrets.

Cosmusic

Sliver of moon –
quarter-note
sky song
in the key
of see

Mary Harwell Saylor

sketch

walking as in a dream
black footprints on white

a cratered canvas
the landscape is sketched
I see pitted snow
on thunder moon

Frances Boyle

beneath the starlight

midnight means picnic blankets
laid out amongst fireflies
on astral turf; it means
buttered sandwiches beside waterfalls
mirroring the stars.

the stars dance
in their orbital carousel,
painting the skies with abstraction;

i let their silver light restore me.

Emilee Moyce

Monophobia

The emptiness of space, vast,
strange, should've been
brought into life
by a boundless awareness
more perfect than us.
Yet wherever we go,
in all we explore, we find
only reflections of our invention.

Maxine Rose Munro

Space Station Webcam

In my wheelchair
with curtains closed
I am hanging high
above the earth, watching
the luminous shell of cloud
spin away over sapphire
oceans glinting gold,
all of us rolling toward
the infinite black velvet.

Lucy Whitehead

The Starry Night *after Vincent Van Gogh*

rolling in on glistening waves

he picks you up carries your small weight

a surge of indigo a splash of black

towards those bright expanding spheres of light

a spectral conjuring as skin and bone dissolve

through smoke and mirrors into night

Rachel Carney

The Universe

Chrysalis of dust compressed
embrace yourself goodbye
when your nails touch the edge
ready to be dust again
I will catch you in the next embrace

Elise Triplett

An extract from 'Bird Drawing by Charles Tunnicliffe'

For a stunned second
after it struck the window
the starling fanned its wings
then folded and fell away,
the glass rattling its casement
like a brittle-boned body.

The startled class are stilled
around the sill as the bird stirs,
labours off into the treeline -
its dusty night-sky primaries
collected on the glazing
in a liminal nebulae

Glyn Edwards



LK-97

Aftermath: flash from the Pleistocene

blown up basalt gored plateau blood & sweat surge
gift salts from the deep kiss the lip of the mammoth

wound. Frazzled earth ejecta an apron unfurled sowing
moon rock & maskelynite for latter-day treasures eucalyptus

tamarind teak & bamboo; from the ancient bruise sweet call
to golden orioles tailorbirds mongoose & chinkara

once jewels to kings now nucleus to farmland & ruins of gods
a thrumming galaxy of lives. And Lonar Lake nucleus

of the nucleus wide & winsome always a hungry lesion
whispering protests always a diamond from colossal accident –

First Sketch:: Lacus Lenitatis–

one link in the necklace wider
than hate & faith though you diminish neither;

carry delight & winter as if
they're the same & your name is balance.

In Terra Nivium land of snows
your gaze is steady & your face set higher

looks to the other side: fixed on happiness
no matter how the sorrow weighs.

Jess Thayil

Notes:

Lonar Lake is a crater-lake in the Buldhana district of the state of Maharashtra in India. The lake is believed to have formed after a meteorite impact hit the Deccan Plateau during the Pleistocene, known commonly as the last Ice Age. It's a site of interest for scientists, and in recent years, it's enjoyed the status of a hidden-away tourist locale.

Notes:

The earth's moon has basaltic plains on its surface that early astronomers took to be water features. Many of these plains have retained their names even after it came to be known that they were not seas, bays, lakes, etc. Lacus Lenitatis (Lake of Tenderness) is a lunar mare located in a specific region called Terra Nivium (Land of Snows) on the earth's moon. Other 'water bodies' like Sinus Fidei (Bay of Faith), Lacus Odii (Lake of Hate) and Lacus Gaudii (Lake of Delight) are also situated in Terra Nivium.



Interlude

Four billion miles away
it is winter on Pluto
the sun a lit cigarette
punctuating the conversation
between worlds, its breath
frozen in the atmosphere

You step into the room
look from her to him
to wrap up warm
be home by ten.

Dom Conlon

Landed

Tranquillity is the sea after a billion years,
after bombardment from all sides,
and after youth's hot love has carved
new channels in its map of the future.

The basin is dry, nothing to rock the boat,
nothing to sail to or from and the moon
we once dreamt of lies beneath our feet.
Was there ever water here?

Interlude

mankind
puts fifty new stars
in the sky

Jack Priestnall

Landed

a cosmic seed blooms a universe

Gravities

When we were fast planets
orbiting the schoolyard

the fringes of our scarves
encircled us like moons

and sometimes we collided.

Lava erupted in angry scabs
on our scorched knees.

Our mouths were gaping seas
learning what tides mean.

Laurie Koensgen

Lyra

She is a song.
A serenade
between planets,
carried skyward
on eagle's wings.
A myth. A lyric
falling in spellbound
crystalline fragments,
piercing infinite darkness.

Chloe Gorman



The Man Who thought He Was An Astronaut.

Unshucked in his cloud-white pod, feigning weightlessness, suspended
on the thin twist of his own imagination. Seeing solar systems mapped
before his eyes, streets mirrored in the shining, black convexity of visor,
worlds slipping through his force field, a mirage of stars, a memory of distant light.
He watches us, sealed in our carapace of shadows, decoding the interstices
of silence, the empty discharges of text and tweet and unsent emails, a ghostly stasis.
He holds the earth in heavy, weighted boots, to keep him from free-fall,

anchoring his soul in heat and light, the all engulfing solace of space and sky.
This world, a small, blue pebble. The man who thought he was an astronaut
remembers not to scream.

The Child With Mars In Her Eyes.

Her eyes, unprecedented, beyond blue,
held on to the fog of galaxies, decay of heavens.
No summer evenings, no fragrant seasons,
she's distant, far out in her universe, a time capsule
smelling of false ancestors and broken promises.

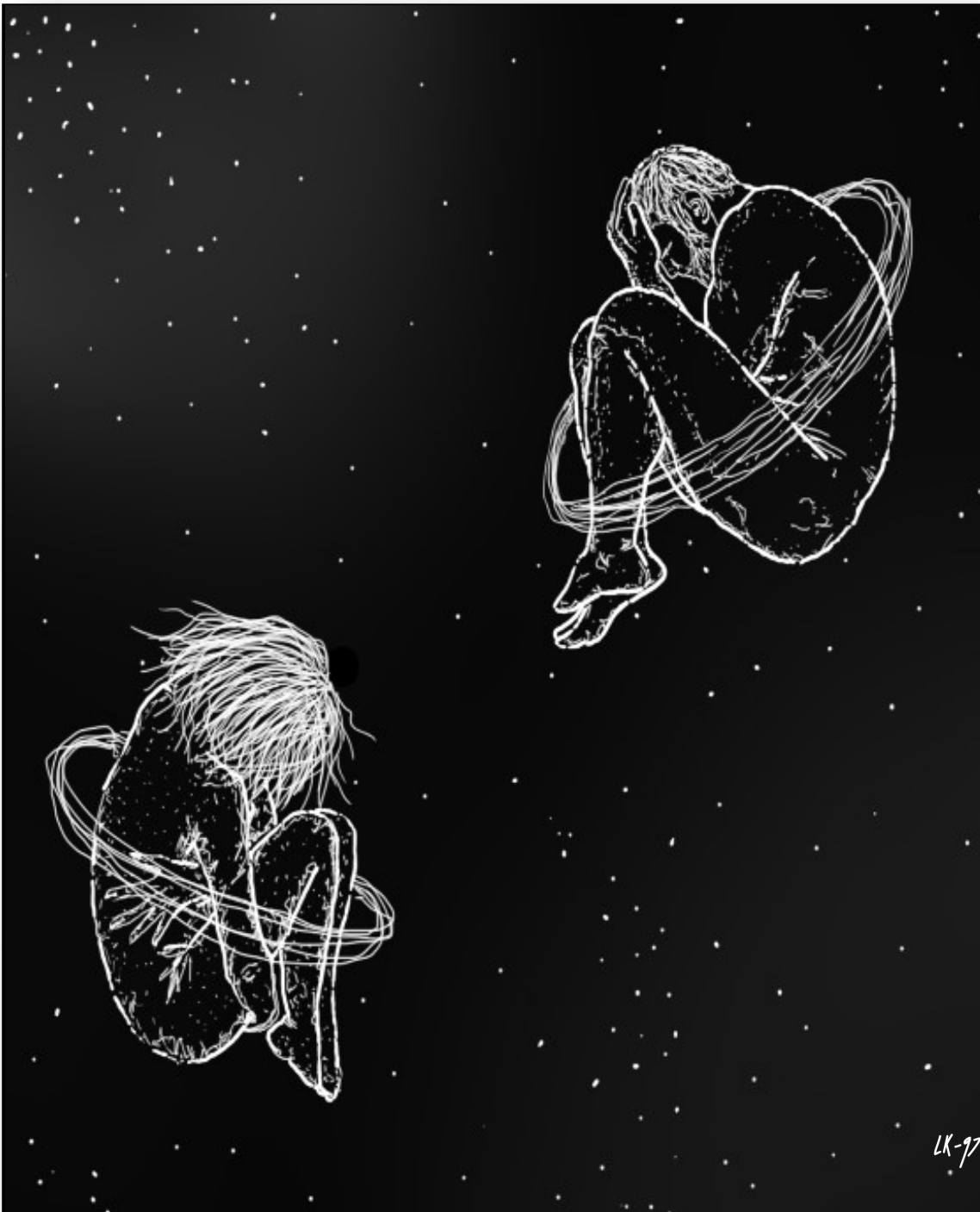
Searching for mirrors, her visions are straw-men
trembling behind walls, a bloodstain on flagstones,
she's been a child too long. The slender shadows
peter out. Beneath her flaxen lashes,
Mars ascends.

The Woman Who Wanted To Be An Asteroid.

Falling through the fierce, ink-black,
her soul hard, bronze, unlit
by other passing souls, adrift in the airless
bowl, earth's blue skin soft wrapped,
a tissue of colour, love letters
captive in the half-dark,
the woman who wanted to be an asteroid,
her territories ablaze, iron core ice-cold,
plummets,
watched by whole cities.

Lesley Quayle





Faint hymns

(After William Shakespeare)

We've shared a hundred years between us,
tracing pale familiar patterns for too long.

Last night we found remembered worlds,
reached out and brushed the sky.
We summoned stars, uniting miles
of endless space and felt the planet judder.

We cling like shadows to the surface,
chant faint hymns to the fruitless moon.

Knowing my place

I rarely think beyond the sky.
The stars and comets blaze their trails
within a ceiling of my making.

But once, just once, as I drove early
east, I found my scale as sun-rise
showed itself as earth-fall.

On a cloudless night

Through the clematis arch
that leads to nowhere,
I join the silver slugs
to party on the moonlit lawn.

Kathy Gee

Deckchair, duvet, whisky mac,
my face is raised to watch
this section of the universe
that is entirely mine.

DW

Landing mass

She harvests planets, ticks them off
with her telescope, not for her

the subtlety of stamp-collecting,
the chink of coins from other lands.

Instead she prefers the golden sheen
of Venus, the red sister rose of Mars.

Some nights she leaves her observatory,
takes a stroll in the friendship of stars.

Remembers those that have also walked,
the Moon a silver locket, holding secrets close.

Lynn Valentine



Constellations

of uniquely-spaced,

silvery stars

burn hydrogen

through aeons

to illuminate the depths

of space

and time,

even though each light

is finite.

Behold the most beautiful

self-sacrifice

in the universe.

Michael Leach

Wishing on a Near Earth Object

icy body
fresh veins of frozen
material. Virgin ice slips away from
the Oort Cloud, a singular blur of white across night *dust tail constellations on her skin*
a minuscule iridescent stream plummeting further *blisters, burning, browning, barely fading*
towards the pinprick of light one
ought not fly too
close to

Iona Murphy

Waxing Gibbous at 3pm

His gaze burns my shoulder.
This wink-eyed stranger
Follows close like a sun
blanched
Shadow—colorless face
Unnerves in daytime—
The ghost of last night.

Copper Moon

Suspended by unseen wire
An inch above the horizon.
Tinctured a copper tone
Through an atmospheric filter.
A penny in the sky
God dropped and promptly forgot.

Waning Crescent

Metallic shard cast off by the
Celestial smith—platinum
Shaved to wicked points.
Catch, cut deep the midnight
Velvet expanse—thin gleam,
Like light slipping beneath a door.

Sarah M. Lillard

When they say

When they say after every person that dies, they become
a star, there must be an empty space in the sky
for them when everyone is born; so when we all die we
become those spaces; so when a last person remains
on our earth, there's an ageless sky, full of stars —
blinding
— despite all the light that never reaches us

Jayant Kashyap

Dark Matter

How do we see the unseen?
A ghostly presence felt,
this dark path between stars.

The Milky Way, a pearly spiral,
and we with limited vision,
star-created, star-drawn,
unable to see the tenebrous beauty
of bent light.

Merril D. Smith

Spider's Web

My buddy's dressed like
Ziggy Stardust

he's on his knees
looking up at the sky
pleading for sharper watercolor

his body's full of aurora craters
I want to kiss them all
I want interstellar us

Our lives are hymns
to bold electronics

Justin Karcher

Supernova

O Betelgeuse, I look at your shoulder
in the sky, still fastening Orion's body
like a red, celestial gauze when all
you really want is to burst into light —
I, too, carry this desire for annihilation,
for being jettisoned from the astrosphere,
like a flawed lodestar — just a burning,
wild blaze who explodes before she is cast
forcibly like Cassiopeia into starlight.

Kunjana Parashar

Breath

Exhaled, our breaths
are distilled, transmuted,
to layers in atmosphere.

Light of stars scattered
by dark dust serrated air,
makes nights shimmer.

Ranjabali Chaudhuri

Structural Integrity

It starts with a creak, a crack
in this man-o'-war's oaken beams,
then a bang, a big bang,
from somewhere down below,
and suddenly there is no below,
no up, no down,
and we are plunging through nothing
on a doomed trajectory,
the panic of being
in a punctured tin can.

Mark Gilbert

Dandelion Galaxies

Is this not where we stood
watched dandelion galaxies
fragment
our skin torn apart
with divided longings?
Your promise;
stars conjure from
destruction.
We swallow broken ground
forage the sky for resurrection

Kathy Parker

Harvest moon (October 1993)

dad died in autumn
his eyes closed
behind faded curtains
hidden from moon and stars
outside
head thrown back
I howled raw grief
until clouds shifted apart
gifted shafts of lunar light
his love held back night

Ceinwen Haydon

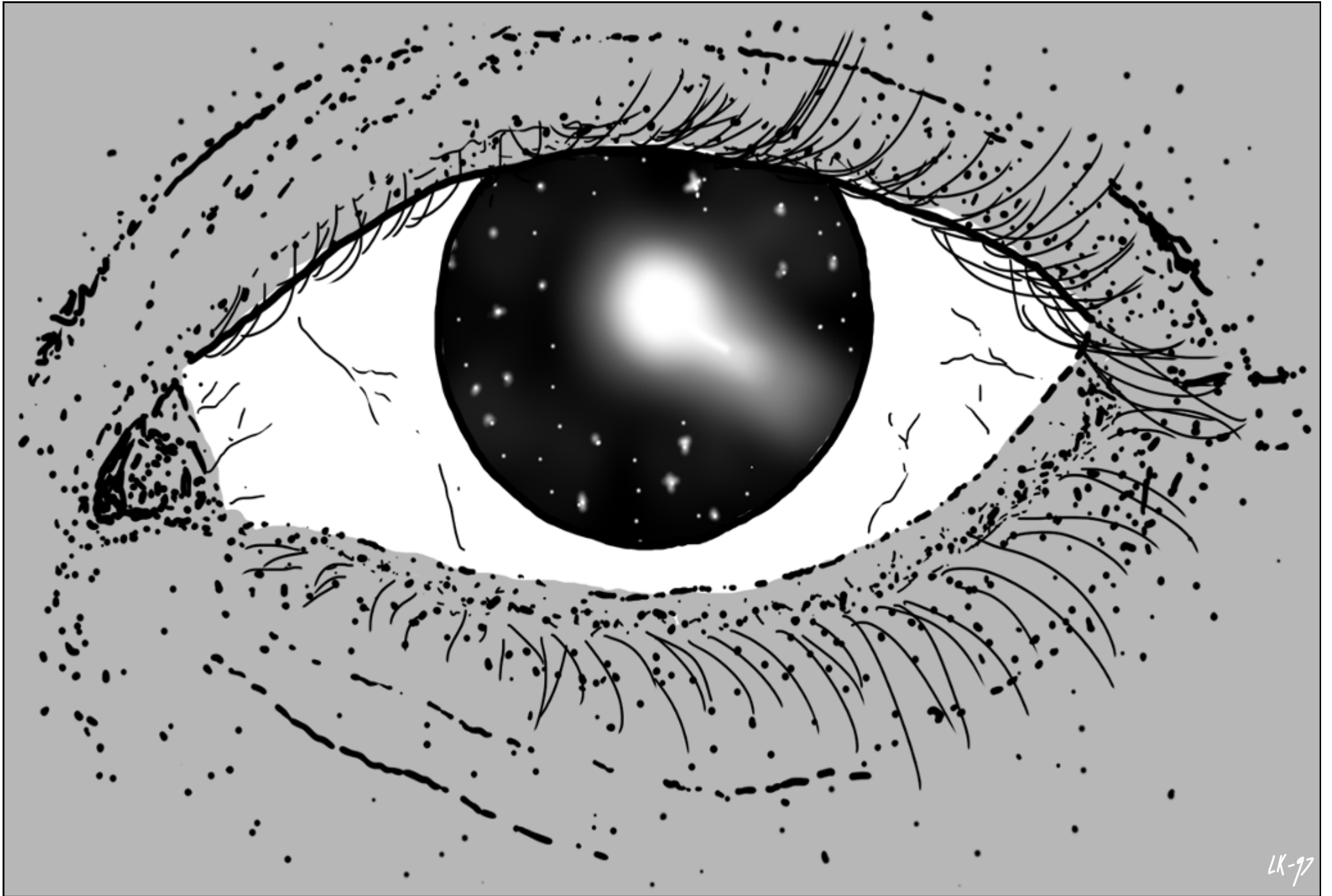
Bella Notte

An ocean of dark enveloping;
L'appel du vide, taking over.
Staring into spheres like the moon,
freckled constellations,
the heat of Mars,
radiating
atmospheric
in between.

The Galaxy Trend

Tie-dyed
stars and clouds and moons
appear in blacks and purples and blues
and glitters, of course,
sparkles to set the mood;
deep space brought earth-bound
in shirts and slimes and hair and shoes
in galaxy-coloured trendy hues.

Juliette Sebock



Microcosm

Night slews in, slowdark inks the pond
Hine-nui-te-pō's fingers stir giddy a constellation
of gentled waterbeetles

In twitching orbit, podfoil bodies surf
swells of silver equations, arrayed
antennae quivering for any edges to the endless

Even the wingless will fling themselves at new suns
jetting vapour at dawn
to escape this steady drowning

Southern Cross(ing)

To our bones, we're sailors
your castoff ancestors and mine
greedy for the long horizons

Black water licks the hull, paua-tongue velvet
Sacks fill, the shucking knife flashes an arc, the sky stabbed
to welling jewels of broken nacre

And up there, the crux of it all, those four bullroaring stars
Haere mai, their pointer song a hook
tugging south the waka, laden with stories
of silver fish, and earth so rich for growing

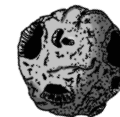
Ankh Spice

Beltsong

Old dustblood Pluto ring-a-rosies
with lumpen children - Nix and Styx, twin rocky
griefs
and frozen motes
who once-were-worlds

Lobed trench deep, the Planitia heart
pangs ion-fecion red
at every trip and fall

Star-shot bodies
grind pretty sparks for wishing
and every earthkid asks to fly





At the Heart of the Milky Way

Bubblegum and blue ink sky
over a barrelling midnight train.

Awake and lonely in the carriage
like a galaxy eating her own organs

spitting out stars like tobacco.
We mix rum and raspberries to feel

like dust. An anchor-less planet speeding
this way. Its shadow passes over

your face, taking me with it.

Ursa

What's the sparkling price of lust?

The sky's wife turns a woman
to a brown bear.

The son is a feather-tailed arrow,
a taut silver bow.

It is an easy story.

The sky pulls families from the earth.
Into himself.

As girls, we realise the cost:
all the stars are graves.

Kandace Siobhan Walker

[...]

Life learns its quiet phases.
We draw close and then, it seems,
with no power of our own
pull apart. Find new orbits.

[...]

Paul Deaton

From 'Spring Tide - 'A Watchful Astronomy': Seren, 2017.

[...] Walking home, over Gaol Ferry Bridge,
after some party drinks, Orion splayed
above St Paul's Church like a fat limbed gingerbread man,
and that star, cold as quartz, your watchful astronomy
tells you isn't a star but giant Jupiter, up there,
the same size as the stone in your shoe.

From the title poem 'A Watchful Astronomy': Seren, 2017.

Back of the Net

Palpable thickness
of stars / Pencil-thin scratch of plane
strikes through surface-sand sky / The line reveals itself
to be a circle on its side. *Big moon*,
says the eye

Comets dim their lights upon landing,
take off trailing life,
commiserate the orbit
that can't see
past the prize

Lydia Unsworth

syzygy

shadowy moon yawns
just shy of wide-eyed embrace
between earth and sun

Nidbi Zak/Aria Eipe

My Son's Space

My son wants to find a planet
hotter than ours, but cooling rapidly.
We will trade places with the goldilocks
aliens so each of us finds a just-right home.

This is how he solves problems—missile attacks,
the climate crisis, poverty. He invents solutions,
builds models, gives all the energy and love
he has to liquid possibilities of rescue.

Hearing I have lymphoma doesn't dissolve his glittering
resolve. He sits, quiet. Then he says, I will find a cure.

Michael Dickel

Defiance.

I'll tear a sheet of starlight for your blanket,
a burnished cloth of gold to ward off fears,
there beneath bright Apollo, you'll greet the morn-
ing,
curled inside your mother's wounded feet,
eyes defiant shimmering flakes of jet,
burn away the fog of my appearance,
from deep within that ragged bundle,
a jolting tearful journey in the moonlight,
brought you here as if cast from heavens net.

Ruairí de Barra

Tethered

Inhale
Open the airlock,
float into black.
Distant stars cold and glittering.
Exhale
Below dingy white boots
the globe glows blue
marbled with white clouds
Inhale

Horsehead Nebula

Within Orion's belt,
the black stallion rears up
to meet a cloud of scarlet flame
before he bolts,
galloping between dying supergiants.

Karen Steiger

Theory

Fact gravitationally glanced back.
Lens, lights, ballerinas in time's performance.

Backdrop of cosmic waves,
in endless expansion,
pulses raised,
the audience edge seats,
seeking, listening,
beating hearts,
and insight, silence!

It starts.

Andrew Carnegie

Haiku

Ghost-grey galleon
sails the scattered-star expanse,
silent and stately.

Lucy Virgo

we made much of the moon

Wong May said *heart draw a circle*—more than once I’ve spiraled
the sporadic hairs in the center of his chest—soft capital O’s—in the dark
of last September, he sent me a photo of his shiny, silver, floating circle—its glow
pouring over splintered Texas backcountry branches—my own circle looked dull
& mediocre in comparison (against gaudy big-city lighting)—he said
my big tranquil rock was beautiful & I could have wept—it watched
in silence as my hand first found his under a picnic table
at a bar weathered & dusted in a layer of Crawford silt clay—
Emily Dickinson said *To light, and / Then return*, round & round
in motion—looking into a pint glass brimmed golden, I see a harvest moon

Melanie Kristeen

Mirrorball

Sequined glints
waltz infinite interstellar steps
through inky ballroom depths.

Laura T. Fyfe

Space bound

Saturn’s rings record time –
icy grooves sifted and separated
shades of gravity in tracks of sand, tan and fossil grey

learn its loops, skim their circumference –
brush the curves; fall through shattered surfaces
rematerialize, reborn to conquer giants

stay light – keep Titan’s opal bead in sight,
resist the pull of tidal forces
that rip apart orbiting moons

KC Bailey



A Henrietta Leavitt

Te dieron un escritorio a treinta centavos la hora y cerraron la puerta.
Y tú, armada de lápiz, lupa y logaritmos, nos abriste los cielos.
Hallaste la inmensidad que Aristarco y Bruno soñaron.
Derribaste los muros de Harvard, las fronteras de Cambridge,
las costas de América y el horizonte del mundo.
Arrojaste la mirada humana más allá de las Hespérides, más arriba que el Olimpo,
y con la luz de la razón quebraste la antigua esfera celeste.
Nos revelaste que Andrómeda nunca necesitó ser rescatada,
porque está miles de millones de veces más lejos que Perseo,
más lejos que el Pegaso, donde el monstruo del mar no puede alcanzarla.

To Henrietta Leavitt

They gave you a desk at thirty cents an hour and closed the door.
And you, armed with pencil, loupe and logarithms, opened the heavens to us.
You found the immensity Aristarchus and Bruno dreamed of.
You tore down the walls of Harvard, the borders of Cambridge,
the coasts of America and the horizon of the world.
You cast the human gaze beyond the Hesperides, above Olympus,
and with the light of reason shattered the old celestial sphere.
You revealed to us that Andromeda never needed to be rescued,
for she's billions of times farther than Perseus,
farther than Pegasus, where the sea monster can never reach her.

Arturo Serrano

Fís

Feadán aisteach cam
Sé troigh ar leithead
Ina sheasamh idir beirt ballaí briste
Clúidithe le caonach
Sna talaimh leathan Caisleáin Biorra.
Leacht i gcuimhne brionglóid ,
Leacht i gcuimhne baois,
Gur thógadh an teileascóp is mó sa domhan
Ar an faiche faoi fhéar droimneach seo
Faoi braillín liath scamail.

Translation:

Vision
A strange, crooked pipe
Six feet wide
Standing between two broken walls
Covered in moss
In the grounds of Birr Castle
A monument to a dream
A monument to folly
That the world's largest telescope
Was built on these rolling grassy lawns
Beneath a grey sheet of cloud

Niall Feeney

V - 'Atomsmasher'

(for Peter Higgs and Dr Lyn Evans)

Neutrino Hunter

I seek the whisper of a rumour
An alteration so subtle
It is almost without meaning.
This dark power
Binder of galaxy, cosmos.

Its presence as absence revealed
A breath exhaled, a shadow left behind.

David Fry

Deep Space

What lives beyond stars
where darkness across the void
swallows light?

Planets and comets collide
A silence, a violence, unseen

Paul Kohn

Higgs boson

FIRED >

FIRED >

veil>vortex>sphere>spin>speed

wave>web>weave>

chasm>cause>

fury>force

ghost-god-

G A S P

(shroud
source)

Matthew M C Smith

Quantum

Toss a dart at an orbital
and only a small fraction
of the time will you pin
an electron
corner a quark

this is what our bodies
are like, often found
in the same rooms
but so unlikely
to collide

Joey Lew

The Atomsmasher

*(After a Presentation by Dr Lyn Evans at the Science Café,
Dylan Thomas Centre, Swansea, September 2012).*

1.

Soon it's all going to be
science fiction. Let me tell you how.
Tomorrow will be today.
And Lyn Evans will find himself
in the next dimension
as easily as leaving a room.
Yes, I can promise you
that: science fiction.
Lyn Evans smashing the atoms,
so we can all find out...

2.

The garden too quiet.
That type of quiet
when a sparrowhawk comes down.

There it is,
its breast barred.
Sandstone and quartz.

Not a voice, not a vowel.
But the type of quiet
when a sparrowhawk comes down.

The baleful bird.

3.

Aubergine flower
purple to black
from a pavement crack
as the earth moves.
Nightflower, I'd say, black
stem and black sap.
A judge's black cap

4.

Lyn Evans told us dark energy fills space.
And Lyn Evans is home
after annihilating atoms
in Switzerland.

I loved Lyn Evans's cyclonic mind.
But he failed to make his computer work.
So why doesn't he turn
back time?, a voice behind me asked.

Robert Minbinnick

5.

And I thought of the anti-
orchid, anti-purple out
of anti-earth, the anti
God who put the particles
together and apart. Maybe
it doesn't work like that.
And maybe it does.

6.

Salute Lyn Evans, thunderbolt
on his costume. Yes, Lyn the atom
smasher, who could not make
his computer work.
But one day he will turn back time...
The software should be the same.
And if time is many mansions
maybe that's why Lyn Evans
keeps leaving the room...

"There are no comments by Mr. Armstrong. He lives reclusively in Ohio and does not attend conferences, reunions, celebrations, parades, anniversaries, press events. He does not answer mail from strangers, answer the telephone, open the door. He was however, many years ago, asked how he felt knowing his footprints might remain undisturbed on the lunar surface for centuries. 'I hope somebody goes up there some day,' he said, 'and cleans them up.'" – Mary Ruefle

the breakaway effect

when pilot whales lay down on a beach, their lungs collapse
under the weight—flesh & fat crush intestines, liver—heat exhausted

, mouths agape. animals kill themselves without comment. a loss of oxygen
can cause one last grand erection—a euphoria of sorts—coming back

to a spacecraft is difficult for some astronauts, separated from the cosmos
(from everything) by almost nothing, blood suspended

at their feet. outside of gravity, organs float in the body. whales are still
on a beach—still heavy—the *gravitas of gravity*, like rapture of the deep

, effects us profoundly. a stag, a cliff & a leap. isn't it vulgar?
isn't it grand? —life, I mean, release

Melanie Kristeen

Mir Falls

(3644)

Gold against black
above blue.
Your sails carried us.
A decade of life
where none should be.
Knowledge and hope
burning the sky.

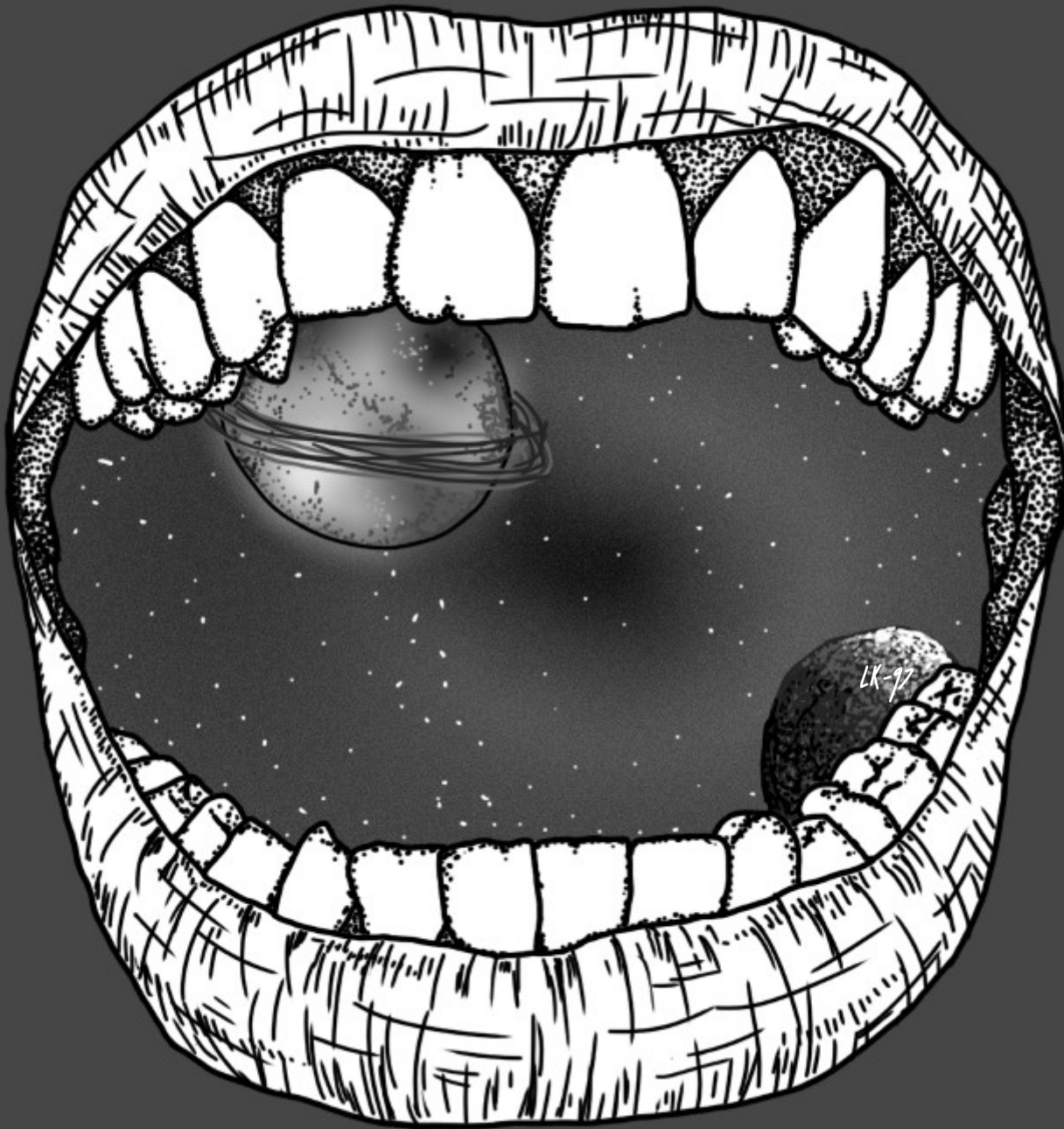
Voyager 1

(Valentine's Day, 1990)

The last look
a shutters click
our system from the edge.
One pale blue dot
in a family portrait
the mark of man unseen.
Travelling on
beyond dark borders,
to continue our story,
our search.

Richard Waring

Epilogue - 'remnant fragments'



Faraway Stars Eat Time

Star-Death spreads through infinite galaxies,
dashing toward planets not yet born—drifts
of fury and awe travelled.

A saguaro stands high, beckoning
suns in the night-sky—their expiry
as incandescent explosions:

celestial parade of dead lovers—
pinholes outside stygian desert edges.

C. Aloysius Mariotti

Collision

It comes in slivers a plutonian silence
before the beginning and after each end

she feels its heartbeat cold and burning
still her breath to listen again

here lies a forgotten stranger
words shine on an unmarked grave

a tiny flash a mute impact
three hundred thousand miles away

brings her squealing to the ground
a dime-sized crater in her side

Scott Elder

Time's end

A finite infinity
expanding ever outwards
into itself
into nothing,
the rush to entropy.

Richard Waring

Part Messages Received from the Missing Mission to the Kuiper Belt:

Message 142326§ŒóHηϑEÕñ,dTdz^W_W

Searching the muted sky while near Djanggawul Fossae on Pluto
our equipment picked up two reddish cubewanos slowly crush together
... after orbiting around each other for millions of years < >
the remnant fragments from this brutal embrace floated away...

Message 5443741100E33Δ64HŽ

On the deathly frozen Haumea we looked up
and saw the dim ring circling the egg shaped plutoid < >
... the bigger Hi'iaka appeared boldly then the gloomy Namaka
both moved quickly in the faint day sky which only lasted 4 hours«

Message 5658454

☼ We passed tiny Dysnomia and approached Eris
the last known outpost of our Solar System, its surface was rocky white
looking back, we saw the Sun which was only a bright point in the distance,
« after a few quick orbits we sped away...

Rob McKinnon

entropi
(i A/JW)

Pe teflid y meini sanctaidd yma
i'r awyr fil o weithiau,
ni fyddent yn glanio fel hyn yn ôl.

Mae pob sgwrs mewn carreg
yn datod, dymchwel,
y cystrawennau'n cracio,

pobl fel morgrug
yn cario'r geiriau cerfiedig i ffwrdd,
a'r seiniau pwyth-drwodd o fol y waliau,

i godi rhywbeth newydd;
a fydd hefyd
yn disgyn yn ei dro...

entropy (for A/JW)

If these holy stones were thrown
up into the air a thousand times,
they wouldn't land back like this.

All conversations in stone
crumble, collapse,
the syntaxes snap,
for ant-like people
to carry away the carved words,
and the tie-stoned sounds from the walls' belly,

to build something new;
which will itself
fall in turn ...

(translation by Geraint Lovgreen)

Ifor ap Glyn, National Poet of Wales

“Da Bo Chi” - “goodbye”

List of Contributors

BLACK BOUGH
POETRY



David Annwn is the author of eleven collections of poetry, the most recent being *Red Bank* (2018). He is a winner of the Cardiff International Prize for Poetry. He has written the Gothic trilogy of critical studies: *Gothic Machine* (2011), *Sexuality and the Gothic Magic Lantern* (2014) and *Gothic Effigy* (2018). An exhibition of his poetry appeared with the calligraphy of Thomas Ingmire at the Book Club of California in San Francisco in 2016 and the American film-maker, Howard Munson, has recently made videos of his work. His poetry is included in *The Edge of Necessary*, *An Anthology of Welsh Innovative Poetry 1966-2018* (2019).

Rosemary Appleton has had her poems published in *Msllexia*, *The Fenland Reed*, *Spontaneity* and *The Wellington Street Review*. She writes in snatched, coffee-fuelled moments in the wilds of East Anglia. tweeting @BluestockingBks

KC Bailey is a poet from Northamptonshire, studying towards an MA in Creative Writing. When not writing, reading or walking her dog, she practices Tai Chi and drinks Earl Grey tea, though hasn't yet mastered the art of doing both at the same time. On Twitter @KCBailey_Writer.

Philip Berry's poems have appeared or are forthcoming in *Lucent Dreams*, *Picaron*, *Little Dog Poetry*, *Black Bough*, and *The Healing Muse*. He also writes short fiction, CNF and a medical blog. His writing can be explored at www.philberrycreative.wordpress.com or @philaberry

Kathryn Bevis is an emerging poet and educator. Founder of The Writing School, she hosts an ACE-funded Poetry for Wellbeing project for service users of Mind. In 2019, Kathryn has won the Poets and Players competition, come third in the Welshpool Poetry Festival Competition, and been runner up in the Out-Spoken Prize for Poetry.

Penny Blackburn lives in the North East of England and writes poetry and short fiction. Her online publication includes pieces in *Writers' Café*, *Bangor Literary Journal* and *Marsden Poetry Village* and she has appeared in print anthologies by Batley Poets and *Paper Swans Press*.

Tamsin Blaxter is a poet and historical linguist based in Cambridge. She was born in a house on the brow of a hill from which balloons could often be seen. She never knows what to write in these things. @what_really_no / www.icge.co.uk.

Benedicta Boamah—a skilled Emergency Nurse from Ghana who writes poetry during her leisure periods. Previously published in *Black Bough Issue 1*.

Frances Boyle is a Canadian writer, and the author of two books of poetry (one in 2014, one due in fall 2019), a novella (2018) and a short story collection to be published in 2020. She lives in Ottawa, and her poems and short fiction appear in print and online magazines throughout Canada and the U.S. This is her first U.K. publication.

Michael Caines has had poems published online via *Visual Verse* and *Allegro Poetry*, and in print in the *New European*. An assistant editor on the *Times Literary Supplement*, and co-founder of the *Brixton Review of Books*, he published a critical book called *Shakespeare and the Eighteenth Century* with *Oxford University Press* in 2013.

Andrew Carnegie is an adventurer, entrepreneur and Wiltshire based poet, with a national bravery award. He sailed around the UK in 2018 pursuing the stories of the Celtic Saints and then carried a 200ft cross from Malmesbury, 200 miles North to York, during Lent 2019. He's appeared in the Nation-wide series of ITV adverts and also BBC Radio 4. He is in the unusual position of having written poetry for commercial use without having published his own anthology, so far

Angela T. Carr is a poet living in Dublin. Winner of the 2018 Laureate's Prize, selected by Carol Ann Duffy, her work has been placed or shortlisted in over 40 national and international literary competitions and published in Ireland, the UK and US. More at www.adreamingskin.com.

Rachel Carney has had poems published in several magazines and journals including *The New Welsh Review*, *Ink Sweat and Tears*, and *The Wales Haiku Journal*. She is a book blogger at

www.createdtoread.com and has also written articles and reviews for magazines and websites www.createdtoread.com @createdtoread www.facebook.com/createdtoread

Anne Casey Originally from the west of Ireland, Anne Casey is a Sydney-based writer and poet. Author of *where the lost things go* (Salmon Poetry 2017, 2nd ed 2018), her second poetry collection, *out of emptied cups*, was published by *Salmon* in June 2019. Anne's writing and poetry are widely published internationally and rank in *The Irish Times* Most-Read. She has won/shortlisted for poetry awards in Ireland, Northern Ireland, the USA, the UK, Canada and Australia, and is Senior Poetry Editor of two literary journals.

Julian Cason has two jobs. He works both as a lawyer and as a poet. Born and raised in Cardiff. Most recently published in *Envoi*, *Pulp Poets Press*, *Nine Muses* and *The Dawntreader*.

Ranjabali Chaudhuri is a lawyer and a published poet. At the moment she is packing her boxes to move from Amsterdam to London, but some day she hopes to live in a cottage in the Nilgiris. Her Twitter handle is @Ranjabali.

Dom Conlon is a poet and author. His first collection, *Astro Poetica*, was praised by Nicola Davies as being 'Insightful, thought-provoking and fun'. His second collection, *This Rock That Rock* is being released by *Troika* in Spring 2020. He tweets @dom_conlon

Lilia Cosavalente is a California-grown, Arizona-based writer who is just starting to put her own work out there. Film grad and entertainment industry employee, she enjoys using words and music to inspire and entertain people. She tweets about writing, work, and anime on her Twitter: @scriptsoprano

Rob Cullen grew up in the Rhondda, attended Bristol, Cardiff, Brighton Art Schools - lived in New York & Brighton. Rob's collection *Uncertain Times* was published in 2016. He's been published in *I AM NOT A SILENT POET*, *The Bezine*, *The Learned Pig*, *Red Poets* issues 17 & 18. Rob has written a crime novel and is writing his second.

Paul Deaton was born in London and raised in Wales. He was runner-up in the Arvon International Poetry Competition 2010 and winner of the SaveAs Writers International Poetry Prize 2016. His work appears regularly in *The Spectator*, is included in York Notes for GCSE study guides and is featured in various magazines and anthologies including *PN Review*, *The London Magazine*, *The Dark Horse*. A novel started on his MLiTT at Glasgow University was recently finished. *A Watchful Astronomy* (Seren) is his debut collection, and a Poetry Book Society Recommendation

Ruairí de Barra is from Co. Mayo and now resides in Co. Cork. He is a sailor, an award-winning military journalist, and a poet. His creative work has featured with *Tinteán*, *A New Ulster*, *Live Encounters*, *The Bangor Literary Journal*, and it can all be read on www.paperneverrefusedink.com

Michael Dickel writes on & off line & edits Meta/ Phor(e) /Play (MichaelDickel@info). His next poetry book, *Nothing Remembers*, is due from *Finishing Line Press* late summer 2019.

Sarah Doyle won the WoLF poetry competition and Brexit in Poetry 2019, was runner-up in the Keats-Shelley Poetry Prize 2019, and was highly commended in the Forward Prizes 2018. She is currently researching a PhD in meteorological poetry at Birmingham City University.

Mari Ellis Dunning is an award-winning Welsh writer of poetry, short stories and children's books. Her debut children's book was launched at the Abergavenny Writing Festival in 2016 and her debut poetry collection, *Salacia*, was nominated for the Wales Book of the Year Award in 2019. Mari has an MA in Creative Writing from Aberystwyth University. The coast is hugely important to her writing and wellbeing. She tweets at @mariellis.

Nidhi Zak/Aria Eipe is a poet, pacifist and fabulist. She has recently presented her work at the Cork International Poetry Festival '19 and the Jaipur Literature Festival '18. She is an MFA candidate at University College Dublin, where she is working on her debut collection.

Scott Elder lives in France. His poems have appeared or are forthcoming in numerous magazines including *Southword*, *The New Welsh Reader*, *The Rialto*, and *The Moth*. A pamphlet 'Breaking Away' was published by *Poetry Salzburg* and his debut collection *Part of the Dark* by *Dempsey & Windle*.

Glyn Edwards - a teacher in North Wales and an MA student at Manchester Metropolitan University. His debut collection of poetry *Vertebrae* was published by *The Lonely Press* in July.

Pat Edwards—a writer, workshop facilitator, reviewer and general poetry activist. Her work has appeared in *Prole*, *Magma*, *Ink Sweat & Tears* and

others. Pat hosts Verbatim monthly poetry open mic nights and curates Welshpool Poetry Festival in Mid Wales. @PatEdwar70504378

Niall Feeney is equally passionate about the inspirational nature of space exploration and the community building that goes into keeping minority languages alive. He is a keen amateur astronomer who practices his Irish by tweeting about current affairs and science as @iroke

Ann-Marie Foster is a journalist and newsreader for the BBC in Belfast. 'It's a great job but I can't use adjectives. Or adverbs. Or metaphors. You get the picture'. @AnnMarieCFoster

David Fry worked in social work for over thirty years and has recently started writing. He is entirely self-taught and whilst he respects rhyme and rhythm his first love is creating images through the written word. @thnargg

Antonio Fusco is an Irish-born writer living in Paris. He has a background in fine art and philosophy and his poetry has been published in *Sons and Daughters* journal @SostieneFusco

Laura T. Fyfe lives in Stirling and suffers from a chronic low boredom threshold. She facilitates writing workshops and communities, writes poetry, fiction and non-fiction. Her books *Wellspring* and *Magpie Mind* help writers live more creative lives. Twitter: @FigmentLaura Instagram: @lauratfyfe

Mark Gilbert writes short prose and poetry and has recently been published in *Sonic Boom*, *Human/Kind*, *Wales Haiku Journal* and *Weird Laburnum*. He also does the occasional spoken word event. @MarkgZero.

Kathy Gee's career was in heritage. Her poetry collection was published by V. Press <http://vpresspoetry.blogspot.co.uk/p/book-of-bones.html> and she wrote the spoken word elements for <http://suiteforthefallensoldier.com/>. Her small collection of duologues – *Checkout*, set in a corner shop – was published in March 2019. <http://vpresspoetry.blogspot.com/p/bookshop.html>

Chloe Gorman is a copywriter, aspiring poet & author. Her poetry and fiction leans towards romantic, dark and gothic themes. She has an MA in Professional Writing from Falmouth University for which she received a distinction. She has poems

being published soon in *Ravens in the Attic*, *Mokeychick*, *Three Drops From a Cauldron*, *Black Bough Issue 1 & Fevers of the Mind*.

Angela Graham is a film-maker (BAFTA, Foreign-language Oscar entrant). Since 2018 her poetry has appeared in *The North*, *Infinite Rust*, *The Honest Ulsterman*, *The Ogham Stone 2019*, *The Bangor Literary Journal* and *The Open Ear*. An award-winning short story writer, she was nominated by Crannóg for the Pushcart Prize 2019 and her collection, set in Wales, Ireland and Italy, *A City Burning*, is due from *Seren* next year. She is completing a novel on the politics of language, with the support of an award from the Arts Council of Northern Ireland. @angelagraham8 <http://angelagraham.org/2018/10/my-work-in-2018/>

Robert Hamilton is a poet and English professor living in Texas. His first chapbook, *Heart Trouble*, was published by Ghost *City Press* in 2018. Recent poems appear in *Posit* and *The Fictional Café*. He tweets at @ragandboneshop.

Natalie Ann Holborow is a Swansea-born writer of poetry and fiction. In 2015, she won both the Terry Hetherington Award and Robin Reeves Prize, and was this year commended for the Hippocrates Prize for Poetry and Medicine. Her debut collection, *And Suddenly You Find Yourself*, was listed as one of *Wales Art's Reviews* Best Books of 2017. She is currently finishing off her second collection, *Small*

Wendy Holborow is a prize winning poet and fiction writer, published internationally. *After the Silent Phone Call* (Poetry Salzburg 2015) *An Italian Afternoon* (Indigo Dreams 2017 a Poetry Book Society recommendation), and *Janky Tuk Tucs* (The High Window Press 2018) <https://www.wendyholborow.org.uk>

Kathryn Hope is a retired infants teacher from Swansea who has just started writing poetry and is unpublished. She enjoys gardening, her family and her two dogs Bunt and Mimi. Kath's poem in Issue 2 is a feminist mythological & futuristic, cosmic poem.

Kyla Houbolt has been writing for years and only recently begun sending out work. She has enjoyed writing micropoems this year which have appeared in *Nightingale & Sparrow*, *Detritus Online*, as well as *Black Bough* Poetry's inaugural issue. Other work in *Kissing Dynamite* special zine *Hand to Mouth*, and forthcoming in several journals including *Barren Magazine* and *Juke Joint*. Follow her on Twitter @luaz_poet. Kyla lives and writes in Gastonia, NC, USA.

Rae Howells is a Swansea poet and journalist. She has had poems published in *Magma*, *The Rialto*, *Envoi*, *New Welsh Review*, *Marble*, *Poetry Ireland*, *The Cardiff Review* and others, and has won both the *Welsh International* and *Rialto* Nature and Place.

Caroline Johnstone grew up in Northern Ireland but now lives in Ayrshire where she dares people to be happier all around the world. An author and a storyteller poet, she's been published in the US, UK and Ireland. She's a member of the Scottish Poetry Library's Advisory Board, is the social media manager for the Federation of Writers (Scotland) and is a member and supporter of Women Aloud NI, Scottish Pen and the Association of Scottish Artists for Peace.

Jayant Kashyap is a Pushcart Prize-nominee, the co-founding editor of *Bold + Italic*, and a food blogger, has his debut chapbook, *Survival*, coming soon from Clare Songbirds Publishing House, NY.

Elizabeth Kemball is from Stoke-on-Trent and writes both poetry and prose. She graduated last year from the University of Warwick with a degree in English Literature and Creative writing. Her poems often centre around nature, bodies and religion. Elizabeth shocked the editorial team and readership of *Black Bough* Issue 2 by revealing that she was the artist who sent artwork for Issue 2 under an alias—L.K-97. She revealed herself as artist on 13.7.19. All artwork in Issue 2 is by Elizabeth.

Phil Knight is a poet from Neath. He has been published in *Poetry Wales*, *Earthlove*, *Planet*, *Dial 174* and others. In 2015 the Red Poets published his collection *You Are Welcome To Wales*.

Laurie Koensgen—her poems have appeared in *Literary Review of Canada*, *Arc Poetry Magazine*, *In/Words*, *Barren Magazine*, *Juniper: A Poetry Journal*, *Kissing Dynamite* and elsewhere. She was shortlisted for *The Malabat Review's* Far Horizons Award for Poetry 2018. Laurie is a founding member of Ottawa, Canada's Ruby Tuesdays poetry collective.

Paul Kohn is a songwriter and muso from South Australia.

Melanie Kristeen is filled with generalized anxiety. She tentatively thinks of herself as a radical feminist, poet and educator who hails from San Antonio, Texas. She just graduated with an MFA in poetry at Texas State University and is currently the 2019-2020 poet in resident at the Clark house in Smithville, Texas. She has been the recipient of a Damsite residency in New Mexico and has been published both online and in print by *University of Hell Press*. She was also a commissioned, featured artist for Luminaria: San Antonio Arts Festival. Twitter:@TheMelSpell

Michael J. Leach — is a poet, statistician and researcher whose work combines science with art. His poems have appeared in science and literary journals, including *The Mathematical Intelligencer* and *Cordite Poetry Review*. He lives in Bendigo, Australia.

Richard LeDue was born in Sydney, Nova Scotia. He currently lives in Norway House, Manitoba. His work has been published in by the Tower Poetry Society, in *Adelaide Literary Magazine*, *the Eunoia Review*, and *Mojave Heart Review*.

Joey Lew holds an MFA from UNC-Greensboro and is currently a medical student at UCSF. Her interviews and reviews have been published in *Diode*, *Michigan Quarterly Review Online*, and *Tupelo Quarterly*, and her poetry can be seen in *Gravel*.

Sarah M. Lillard is a writer living in Virginia. She writes poetry and lyric essays on a variety of subjects that include birds, motherhood, and living with chronic illness. She has work forthcoming in the summer 2019 issue of *The Hellebore*.

C. Aloysius Mariotti was born in Pennsylvania and raised in Arizona. He studied creative writing at the University of Arizona in Tucson, where he also listened to a lot of Rush, Radiohead, and PJ Harvey. He resides in Massachusetts with his wife Kristen and crazy Westie Bella Francine.

Tracy Martinez—artist, craftsperson and photographer with BA(Hons) in Fine Art. Also writes poetry and is working on a fantasy novel. Originally from Swansea, Tracy now lives in Llanelli, overlooking the wetlands and estuary which inspires her work. Facebook.com/TracyCabbleArt. Facebook.com/TangerineCloudStudios

Catherine McCabe is a Belfast-based Ghostwriter, Poet and Blogger, with work published in *A New Ulster* (2018) and on *Spillwords* (2019). In

2016, she co-created spy memoir *The Black Market Concierge*. Her first poetry collection, *Zombie Town* deals with themes including climate change, women, mental health, dating and love.

Joanne McCarthy is a poet and spoken word artist from Waterford, Ireland. She holds a M.Phil. in Social and Cultural Geography and writes about people and place in both English and Irish. Her videopoem 'Shoulder' will be screened as part of Modwords Festival 2019.

Rob McKinnon lives in the Adelaide Hills, South Australia. His poetry has previously been published in *Dissident Voice*, *Tuck Magazine* and *InDaily*

John McLachlan is 36 and has written for as long as he could form words legibly. He loves to write poetry and to grow and seek inspiration from all things. Whether it is a broken pencil or a smashed snail shell, a perfect rose or a petrol line gleaming multi-colours in the sun, he likes to find a little poetry everywhere.

Robert Minhinnick is a Welsh poet, novelist, short story writer and essayist. He has won the Forward Prize twice, along with Wales Book of the Year a record three times – most recently for his poetry collection, *Diary of the Last Man* (Carcenet, 2017). *Diary of the Last Man* was also shortlisted for the T.S. Eliot Prize and has been made into a film, directed by Eamon Bourke. He is former editor of *Poetry Wales* and cofounder of Friends of the Earth Cymru and Sustainable Wales

Emilee Moyce—a Cardiff-based poet from central California. She graduated from Kingston University in 2018 with a degree in English Literature and Creative Writing and is currently pursuing an M.A. in Translation Studies from Cardiff University. Her favourite things are words, cats, music, and laundry detergent.

Paul Robert Mullen is a poet, musician, lecturer, sociable loner and compulsive traveller from Southport, Liverpool, England. He is the author of: *curse this blue raincoat* (2017), *testimony* (2018) and *35* (2018) and has been published in many magazines, e-zines, journals and anthologies. He likes porridge, Leonard Cohen, sharks, people singing harmonies, books with broken spines and all things minimalist.

Maxine Rose Munro writes in both English and Shetlandic Scots. She is widely published in the UK, in print and online, and her work has been nominated for The Pushcart Prize and Best of the Net. Find her here www.maxinerosemunro.com

Iona Murphy is an Mst(res) student at The University of St Andrews. When she isn't doing the Plath and Sexton research she is meant to be doing, she's writing poems or calling out diet-culture on Twitter. Currently, she is working on her first collection of poems *Numbers*, throwing down messy ideas for a novel, and of course trying to finish her degree!

Eliot North is a writer, doctor and educator who lives between the North East of the UK and Spain. She writes poetry and prose, has been published widely and is looking to publish her first collection entitled *Ectopia: a diary of pregnancy loss in prose and tanka* @eliot_north

Kate North—Kate North is from Cardiff and writes poetry and fiction. She is Reader in Creative Writing at Cardiff Metropolitan University and Chair of Literature Wales. Her latest publications are a poetry collection *The Way Out* (Parthian, 2018) and a short story collection *Punch* (Cinnamon Press, 2019).

Polly Oliver—hails from Cornwall and lives in Swansea. She's been writing poetry on and off for years, mainly reading it at open mic nights across the city. Her poems have been published on Spillwords.com and on her blog 'RocksandBones – Poems from the Celtic Fringes'. She was published in *Black Bough* Issue 1.

Mark Antony Owen is a syllabic poet from East Hampshire, who writes exclusively in nine original forms—sometimes, with variations. His work centres on that world where the rural bleeds into the suburban: a world he calls 'subrural'. Mark is author of digital-only poetry project *Subruria*.

Ness Owen is from Ynys Mon. Her poems have been published in journals and anthologies including in *Poetry Wales*, *Red Poets*, *Msllexia*, *Arachne Press*, *Mother's Milk Books* and *Three Drops Press*. Her collection *Mamiaith* (Mother-tongue) will be published by *Arachne Press* in August.

Christine Owens has been writing poetry and short stories on and off

for over 40 years. Her first honourable mention for poetry was for Ohio Poetry Day as a teenager. She has been recently published in 2017 in *A Poet's Picnic Anthology* in Albuquerque, New Mexico as well as receiving a runner up in We Art Friends International Poetry Tournament 2018. Twitter: @PoetrySkep

Daniel Page is a primary school teacher, historian and aspiring poet from Norfolk. His work often takes inspiration from local and national historical events as well as the quirky nature of his day job. @pagesandpages77

Kunjana Parashar is a poet from Mumbai who holds an MA in English Literature from Mumbai University. Her poetry appears or is forthcoming in *The Hellebore*, *The Rumpus* (ENOUGH series), *Barren Magazine*, *Riggwelter*, *Eunoia Review*, and elsewhere. You can find her on Twitter @wolfwasp

Kathy Parker is a writer, poet and spoken word performer from South Australia, and author of *The Unravelling Heart*, her first collection of poetry and prose. Kathy is an op-ed contributor for Network Ten's news website, 10 Daily, with work also published at *SA Life Magazine*, *Huffington Post*, *Elephant Journal*, *The Mighty* and *The Mind's Journal*.

Alan Parry is a poet, playwright and copywriter from Southport, Merseyside. He is an English Literature graduate and is training to teach high school English this coming year. He cites James Joyce and Alan Bennett as his favourite writers. Twitter: @AlanParry83 Instagram: alphapapa83

Jack Priestnall is a Creative Writing undergrad at Bangor University, he has had work published in *The Seventh Quarry Press*, *Better Than Starbucks*, *Bottle Rocket Press*, *Frogpond Journal*, *Haiku Journal*, and *The Cherita*.

Lee Prosser currently lives in a small village in West Wales and graduated with an MA in Creative Writing at Swansea University in 2018. His work is published in *The Gull*, *Haiku Journal*, *Three Drops*. Lee has been published in both Issues of *Black Bough* and was one of three Guest Readers for Issue 2.

Lesley Quayle—a widely published, prize-winning poet, a folk/blues singer, flash fiction writer and editor, living in deepest, darkest

Dorset. Her latest pamphlet is 'Black Bicycle' (4Word, May 2018).

Ian Richardson lives on the East coast of Scotland. In November 2016, he won the Anstruther Writing Award. In September 2015, he was Overall Winner in the Scottish Borders 'Waverley Lines' poetry competition. Ian is a regular contributor to the themed 'Lies, Dreaming spoken word podcast.

Marka Rifat—lives in Scotland and writes stories, poems and drama. She has been awarded prizes in poetry and fiction, had short plays performed in Aberdeen and poems shown on Dover Arts Development website and in a Norfolk church. This year, she performed her work at Granite Noir 2019, a festival of crime writing, had a story published in the Arachne Press anthology *Noon* and another in *The Eildon Tree*, in an inaugural participation with the Scottish Mental Health Arts Festival.

Ellie Rees gained a PhD in Creative Writing from Swansea University in 2018. She has had her work published both online (*Trestle Ties* and *Cabinet of Heed* for example) and on paper (*The Lonely Crowd*, NWR). Her ambition is to publish a collection of poetry. She has the poems, now needs a publisher!

Josh Rees writes poetry and prose. He is a Creative Writing MA student at Swansea University. Aptly enough, he is currently writing a novel called *In Search of the Moon*.

David Rudd-Mitchell is an occasional poet who has had work published in poetry magazines including *BLER*, *Projectionists*, *Playground*, *Zen Space* and *Simply Haiku*.

Juliette Sebock is the author of *Mistakes Were Made* and has work forthcoming or appearing in a wide variety of publications. She is the founding editor of *Nightingale & Sparrow*, runs a lifestyle blog, 'For the Sake of Good Taste' and is a regular contributor with *Marias at Sampaguitas*.

Arturo Serrano was born in Colombia and is a creative writing student and professional translator. He has published science fiction in *Antimatter Magazine* and *Axxón*, and movie reviews in *Hypable*. He is currently working on an alternate history novel.

Karlo Silverio Sevilla writes from Quezon City, Philippines and is the author of two poetry collections: *Metro Manila Mammal* (Soma Publishing, 2018) and *You* (Origami Poems Project, 2017). He has poems published in *Philippines Graphic*, *Eclectica*, *Ariel Chart*, *Quatrain.Fish*, *Peeking Cat Poetry*, *Milk + Beans*, and elsewhere.

Dorian Sinnott is a graduate of Emerson College's Writing, Literature, and Publishing program, currently residing in the beautiful and historic Kingston, NY with his two cats. He spends his weekends cosplaying at comic cons up and down the east coast, and herding cats at his local animal shelter. Dorian's work has appeared in numerous magazines and journals, including: *Crab Fat Literary Magazine*, *The Hungry Chimera*, and *Riggwelter*.

Matthew M C Smith—Matthew Smith published his poetry debut *Origin: 21 Poems* (Amazon KDP) in 2018. He is from Swansea, Wales, and is the editor of *Black Bough Poetry*. His poems have been published in online publication 'Panning for Poems' and *Seventh Quarry Press*. He won the R.S. Thomas Prize for Poetry at Gwyl Cybi Festival for his poem 'Henrhyd Falls' in 2018. He tweets at @MatthewMCSmith

Merril D. Smith is an independent scholar with a Ph.D. in American History. Her poetry and stories have appeared recently in *Rhythm & Bones*, *Vita Brevis*, *Streetlight Press*, *Ghost City*, *Twist in Time*, *Mojave Heart Review*, and *Wellington Street Review*.

Preston Smith is a senior at Bowling Green State University where he studies English Literature. Preston has interned with *Mid-American Review* and is currently the managing editor of *Prairie Margins*. He can be found on Twitter (and Instagram!) @psm_writes, tweeting about his cats, Helios and Misty, and his love for fairy tales. He has poems published in "The Castle" (*Royal Rose*), *The Arsonist*, *Brave Voices Magazine*, and *Nightingale & Sparrow* and forthcoming in *Catfish Creek* and *Pink Plastic House a tiny journal*.

Ankh Spice is a poet from New Zealand, obsessed with the sea. He is a survivor of various asylums, including a University where an English degree once happened despite himself. He writes because he has been unsuccessful hiding his lack of skin – so his poetry keeps breathing, even when it hurts, mostly exhaling in natural images.

Leela Soma was born in Madras/Chennai, India and now lives in Glasgow. Her poems and short stories have been published in a number of anthologies, publications. She has published two novels and two collections of poetry. She has served on the Scottish Writer's Centre Committee and is now in East Dunbartonshire Arts & Culture Committee. Some of her work reflects her dual heritage of India and Scotland. Twitter: @glasgowlee Website: leelasoma.wordpress.com

Karen Steiger Karen Steiger is the founder and sole contributor to *The Midlife Crisis Poet* (www.themidlifecrisispoet.com) and has been published in *The Pangolin Review*, *The Wells Street Journal*, and *Leading Edge Magazine*. Her work will appear in future editions of *Kaleidotrope* and *Arsenika*. She currently resides in Schaumburg with her husband, Matt, and two retired racing greyhounds, Giza and Horus.

Katherine Stockton is a Welsh playwright and poet, currently studying a MA in Scriptwriting at UEA after graduating from the University of Warwick. She has recently had a play produced in Norwich's historic Maddermarket Theatre and looks forward to being a published poet in the upcoming East Anglian anthology *Like The Sea I Think*. Katie has appeared in both Issues of *Black Bough* and was one of three Guest Readers for Issue 2.

Jess Thayil is working to complete a first collection of poems. Her poetry has featured in Magma Poetry, The Stinging Fly, Ink Sweat & Tears, Black Bough Poetry, AbstractMagazineTV, Potomac Review and Whale Road Review.

Elise Triplett is a writer working from Bowling Green, Ohio working on getting their first publication. They have an upcoming internship with *Mid-American Review*. They don't enjoy the beach, but they do like going to cat cafes.

Thomas Tyrrell has a PhD in English Literature and lives in Cardiff. A two-time winner of the Terry Hetherington poetry prize, he is published in *Spectral Realms*, *Picaron*, *The Lake*, *London Grip* and elsewhere. He blogs at www.foolgrowswise.com.

Lynn Valentine writes between dog walks on the Black Isle in the Scottish Highlands. Her work has appeared in anthologies and online in places such as the Scottish Poetry Library blog and *Ink, Sweat and Tears*. She is a previous winner of the Glasgow Women's Library 'Dragon's Pen' award and has been placed in other competitions.

Luci Virgo—Lives Down Under, by the Blue Lake. Identifies as female, & is currently journeying to meet herself.

Kandace Siobhan Walker is a writer and visual artist. Her short film *Last Days of the Girl's Kingdom*, produced in collaboration with the ICA and DAZED, was aired on Channel 4's Random Acts. Her writing has appeared in *Quirk*, *The Good Journal* and *Obsidian*. She lives in Wales.

Laura Wainwright was born in Cardiff and lives in Newport, south Wales. She is author of a book of literary criticism, *New Territories in Modernism: Anglophone Welsh Writing 1939-1945* (University of Wales Press,

2018). She was shortlisted in the Bridport Prize poetry competition in 2013. Her poetry is published or forthcoming in *Black Bough Poetry*, *Wales Haiku Journal*, *Picaron Poetry* and *Burning House Press*. She is guest editor for *Black Bough* issue 2. Twitter: @wainwrightlj

Richard Waring—Richard has lived in Belfast all his life. He loves his city and like many who live there shows that love by constantly complaining about it. His first poem 'To Lie On White On Green' is published in the 2019 CAP anthology *Find*.

K Weber has recently written work in *Pink Plastic House* and *Memoir Mixtapes*. K's photography is featured in *Barren Magazine*. Her 4 self-published poetry books are free in PDF & audio formats. These and her full writing credits available at <http://kweberandherwords.wordpress.com>

Lucy Whitehead writes haiku and poetry. Her haiku have been published in various international journals and anthologies, including *Akitsu Quarterly*, *Blithe Spirit*, *Frogpond*, *hedgerow*, *Modern Haiku*, *Otata*, *The Heron's Nest*, *tinynwords*, *Under the Basho*, and *a hole in the light: The Red Moon Anthology of English-Language Haiku 2018*. Her poetry has appeared in *Barren Magazine*, *Burning House Press*, *Twist in Time Literary Magazine*, and *Mookychick Magazine*. Her Twitter handle is @blueirispoetry.

Glen Wilson lives in Portadown. He has been widely published having work in *The Honest Ulsterman*, *Iota*, *The Paperclip*, amongst others. He won the Seamus Heaney Award for New Writing in 2017, the Jonathan Swift Creative Writing Award in 2018 and The Trim Poetry competition in 2019. His first collection of poetry *An Experience on the Tongue* with Doire Press is out now. <https://glenwilsonpoetry.wordpress.com/> Twitter @glenhswilson <https://www.doirepress.com/bookstore/poetry/>

Robin Wright lives in Southern Indiana. Her work has appeared in *Panophy*, *Spank the Carp*, *Rue Scribe*, *Terror House Magazine*, and others. Two of her poems were published in *The University of Southern Indiana's 50th anniversary anthology*, *Time Present, Time Past*. In 2018 *Panophy* nominated one of her poems for a Pushcart Prize.

Tim Youngs is the author of the pamphlet, *Touching Distance* (Five Leaves, 2017) and co-editor with Sarah Jackson of the anthology, *In Transit: Poems of Travel* (The Emma Press, 2018). His poems have appeared in several print and online magazines.