

Sideways

poetry magazine



Sideways Poetry Magazine

London & Manchester, UK

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Founders/Editors:

Richard Gilbert-Cross

&

Richy Campbell

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We at *Sideways* believe that poetry should always be accessible, with everybody having a voice.

Please support poetry and the poets in this issue by sending around copies to your friends and discussing your favourites. Whilst all poets in this issue own the rights to their poems, you are free to print and distribute the magazine yourself.

Or you could web search the poets and reach out to them if you especially enjoyed something.

“Let us not waste love, it is rare enough”

— Iris Murdoch

The Sea, The Sea

Poems

EUGENE O'HARE - 'To the Kids and their Mother' & 'Cousin'

GLENIS MOORE - 'Sunburn'

DIANE WEBSTER - 'Her Toothpick'

IAN HEFFERNAN - 'The Frontier Guard'

CLIVE DONOVAN - 'Spring Snow' & 'The Visit'

MARK MANSFIELD - 'Rimbaud's "Sensation"'

WILLIAM DORESKEI - 'Something For The Middle Class'

RODNEY WOOD - 'At The Filling Station'

ANTONY OWENS - 'Japanese Bones'

ROBERT BEVERIDGE - 'Vegetable Stand' & 'Painted Princess'

New Poets

TESS AITEOUAKRIM - 'The Sapling'

JACOB DUFFY - 'Ouch'

BECKY FRIEND - 'Still'

ALAN MAGUIRE - 'Life In 1 Act'

Eugene O'Hare

Eugene O'Hare's recent poems appear in Rattle, Cyphers, Lunate, Atrium, Stand and more. He was shortlisted for the 2021 poetry prize at Belfast Book Festival and the 2022 Fish Publishing Prize. He is working towards a first collection.

To The Kids and their Mother

i stopped gardening on the wedding day.

your flowers were appalled-
those hot nights when
i missed their feed. the eldest rose bush

grew away from me like a teenager
preferring life with the neighbours

& a heat has followed me since i left
as if i were a god capable of ordering rain.

the sun's dry cough has been splitting
my head since midday and i'm sat here

in its sickness; an absent father
in a borrowed car- waiting for my kids
who know i am here but have grown
too shy to say the D word of my name.

Cousin

even on bad days
my dreams are coming true.

like this white sky
zinging with the smell
of a peeled green apple.

since late morning, birds
began singing the names
of their many children
from the hospital wings of trees

while construction workers tore up
pavements with jackhammers
as if hunting for the devil himself.

& my cousin finally pregnant!
the flutters in her tummy;
a new language she learned long ago
but could find no body to teach it to.

Glenis Moore

Glenis has been writing poetry since the first Covid lockdown and does her writing at night as she suffers from insomnia. When she is not writing poetry she makes beaded jewellery, reads and sometimes runs 10K races slowly. She has been published by Dreich, Dust Poetry and Wildfire Words.

Sunburn

The sun was fierce that day:
heat bouncing off the grey pavement slabs,
tarmac bubbling
like blackcurrant jam just reaching the set.
But the sea was cool. Its soporific waves
lulling sun-pinked bodies,
soothing away the feel of burning as our fiery enemy
stalked us across the violent blue sky.

The next morning the crisp soreness broke
into running wounds, tracks of crimson
that wept for the invention of factor 50.
I still have my battle scars
born in the dry heat of 1976,
with its long desert days and sleepless
sweat-stained nights, alongside a haunting fear
of skin cancer.

Diane Webster

Diane Webster's work has appeared in "El Portal," "North Dakota Quarterly," "New English Review" and other literary magazines. She had a micro-chap published by Origami Poetry Press in 2022, and one of her poems was nominated for Best of the Net.

Her Toothpick

After her stroke, Mom asked Dad
if he still had her toothpick.

He nodded yes digging
into his sweatshirt pocket,
handing her the toothpick
she had used like always,
like before.

When she completed her task,
she handed it back to Dad,
and he buried it in his pocket.

Does that toothpick
still rest in his pocket,
polished by fingering,
but dull on the points
snagged with lint
or broken
like Dad's heart
when she died?

Ian Heffernan

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

The Frontier Guard

Li Bai

This northern mountain pass, the wind, the sand,
A desolation stretching back in time.
The fallen leaves, the yellow autumn grass,
I climb the tower, take my turn on guard.
A ruined fort, beyond it endless dunes,
A border village left without its walls.
White bones that have withstood a thousand frosts,
High heaps concealed by brambles, grass and trees.
So who has brought about this tyranny?
The 'arrogant of heaven', cruel and wild.
They drew the anger of our emperor,
The troops began to beat their horse-borne drums.
Then harmony gave way to killing rage
And turmoil spread throughout the borderlands.
An army several hundred thousand strong
And sorrow, sorrow like the frontier rain.
Not only this, but sorrow that men leave
And farms and gardens fall into disuse.
Too few of us to mount a long defence,
How could you understand the hardship here?
There's no Li Mu to lead our troops today,
We'll soon be food for tigers and wild dogs.

Clive Donovan

Clive Donovan is the author of two poetry collections, *The Taste of Glass* (Cinnamon Press) and *Wound Up With Love* (Lapwing) and is published in a wide variety of magazines including *Acumen*, *Agenda*, *Crannog*, *Prole*, *Sentinel*, *Sideways* and *Stand*. He lives in Totnes, Devon, UK. He is a Pushcart and Forward Prize nominee for 2022's best individual poems.

Spring Snow

A surprise of snowflakes, keeping military silence :
White soldiers, in their trillions, descend
From some big, invisible mother-cloud above.

They swirl and leap, uplifted by breezes,
Touching each to each, creating even bigger flakes,
Then ruthlessly attach to all points – curves, spikes and finules.

Nothing is immune : Squatting on moving children,
Bicycles and buses, thin, looped wires,
The tender twigs of Spring, bent almost to snapping.

This gradual concert of invasion softens contours,
Spreading even to a robin's chicks, naked in a box.
It creeps through keyholes, door cracks, chimneys.

Calmly, on your eyelashes, some impudent crystals perch.
You call them melted angels as they form ersatz tears.
I watch from under your parasol – today, so misnamed –

And the armies above display their simple intent;
To make amorphous all else, with their intricate dead weight,
Thrumming on the panels of taut blue silk.

The Visit

I went to visit my friend.
There was a path of sorts
– bumpy, rocky, rutted.
Flat mandrakes littered the track;
I would ask him about them later
and also about those eaters of the world
who have consumed the future
and I would share my observations
on women. We would meditate upon what lasts.
There was an intelligent shrike
on the wayside calling up newts to impale.
There had been a little light rain
and some snails were slowly ascending;
their enduring shells black and purple
for all to witness in the sun.
Also enduring were the bones of creatures
unknown to me hanging on a walnut tree.
My friend fancied himself as a bit of a shaman
and decorated his shack with grisly items
– to ward off attack, I guess.
Here now, a clutch of feathers, a red eye
painted on the door,
which opens at my gentle push;
bunches of herbs sway,
sweet and bitter herbs swing.
I have tasted some of these before.

(continued overleaf)

I go no further, he is out.
I sit on a comfortable lump of wood,
gazing at his prayer flags
bisecting the far-off mountain
and placid lake below
and I wait,
my feet in scattered charcoal.

Mark Mansfield

Mark Mansfield is the author of three full-length collections of poetry: *Strangers Like You*, *Soul Barker* and *Greygolden*; and one chapbook, *Notes from the Isle of Exiled Imaginary Playmates* (all published by Chester River Press and available on Amazon). His poems have appeared in *The Adirondack Review*, *Anthropocene*, *Bayou*, *Fourteen Hills*, *The High Window*, *Iota*, *The Journal*, *London Grip*, *Magma*, *Measure*, *Obsessed with Pipework*, *Salt Hill Journal*, *Sarasvati*, *Tulane Review*, *Unsplendid*, *Visitant*, and elsewhere. He has been a Pushcart Prize nominee. Currently, he lives in upstate New York.

Rimbaud's "Sensation"

Blue summer evenings, I will seek the trails,
prickled with wheat. Trampling the blades of grass:
a dreamer, I'll feel the freshness at my feet.
I'll let the wind bathe my bare head as

not speaking, I'll think nothing, not a word.
Yet infinite love will be within my soul,
as I drift far, far as some wanderer
by nature, happy as with a woman. Whole.

William Doreski

William Doreski lives in Peterborough, New Hampshire. He has taught at several colleges and universities. His most recent book of poetry is *Dogs Don't Care* (2022). His essays, poetry, fiction, and reviews have appeared in various journals.

Something for the Middle Class

We box up the rural night
in lightproof cartons to sell
by mail to urban readers
of The New Yorker and Atlantic.
Instructions warn the purchasers
to open the box in the dark

or they'll void the warrantee.
We've made and lost great fortunes
with scams cruder than this one.
Boxing and selling autumn leaves.
Bottling swamp water for children
to explore with novice microscopes.

Once we plucked a chunk of oak
to peddle as a shard of The Cross
to a newly minted priest.
We're almost ashamed of ourselves,
but some scientists believe
that the core of the planet has stopped

(continued overleaf)

spinning, or has reversed itself.
What does this enormity tell us?
We must scheme to profit from it.
Maybe an anti-rotational
suit of flimsy Mylar, surplus
haz-mat outfits recycled

and peddled to suburban rubes.
Most of our scams require
insecure middle-class people
afraid of missing out on something.
Their money is too limp to matter,
and their children look embarrassed.

We're assisting by selling them
goods impossible to critique,
the rural night they purchase
deep enough to renew the sex lives
embalmed in the sodium orange
glare of crime-proof lamplight.

Rodney Wood

Rodney Wood is retired and lives in Farnborough, Hampshire. He's been published in various magazines including Magma, Orbis and The High Window, and hosts the monthly open mic at The Lightbox in Woking.

At The Filling Station

“When was the last time you spent a quiet moment just doing nothing - just sitting and looking” - Ralph Marston

I can't be bothered bringing a book or Kindle, so just sit in the dentist's waiting room. Opposite me is an old couple from Nepal. She's wearing a printed long skirt, Kurti tunic, shawl, while he's in a Sherpa jacket, tracksuit bottoms,

a cream bucket hat. Both wear cheap trainers. He's aloof, making eye contact with no one. It starts to rain. He's thinking of home, where there's flooding, landslides and death. A woman enters with a pram, talks with

the receptionist before wheeling it to an alcove by the window. She talks to the old woman. The baby's astonished. A man with a rucksack passes outside, stops and bows to the old man before making exaggerated running actions.

Over the next half hour, he passes several times. It's because of Joanne Lumley they're here. She fought to make sure Nepalese soldiers got their pension and they chose to live here because they're familiar with the area and have

(continued overleaf)

friends nearby. From the waiting room, I can see a sushi and bento restaurant, a bubble tea café, and an Asian supermarket. Their children go to the Tech and, like all students today, ignore the rain as they have more important

things to worry about. Life's bushtucker trials are only just starting and ahead there's slime, venomous insects and various penises to chew over. And there's Olive with a trolley wheeling it past the Pound Shop. I wrote a poem

for her. Opposite the dentist is a middle-aged white couple have set up a little display of bibles and pamphlets in the doorway of an empty shop. A large poster says *God will forgive all sinners, even homosexuals*. But I can't

think what's there to forgive. I hum to myself Nathaniel Rateliff & The Night Sweats, S.O.B.. Outside pigeons decide whether to fly, or cakewalk away from a two-year old who is delighted to have come across these soft toys.

There's a row of pride-of-India or China trees outside and I feel guilty I have never talked to, embraced or sat beneath them, as Olive is doing. I decide to join her. But then, the receptionist says, "The dentist will see you now."

Antony Owen

Antony Owen is the author of nine poetry collections since 2009. His work was shortlisted for The Ted Hughes Award for New Work in Poetry and he is a winner of the Bread & Roses Working Class Poetry Award and The Museum of Military Medicine Award. Broken Sleep Books are publishing his New & Selected poems in 2024

Japanese Bones

“Those who drank water after the Pikadon died instantly from the heat” - Hibakusha

In post atomic November
when wind was still as Nagasaki shadows
you looked at your face in the rivers warped water
threw a stone at yourself so you could disappear there.

In post atomic December
it was warm as American smiles
cold as speculums of Japanese steel.
Your bloodline ended in the menstrual dusk
a new day was born but not your rush wrapped son.

You wrote about Japanese bones,
how they protruded from atomic darkness like lilies.
Every now and then they stay with you all summer.
You remember a child holding a huge ear in black rain,
when he drank and died there, bubbles burst from his eyes.

Robert Beveridge

Robert Beveridge (he/him) makes noise (xterminal.bandcamp.com) and writes poetry on unceded Mingo land (Akron, OH). Recent/upcoming appearances in Midwest Zen, egoPHobia, and FRiGG, among others.

Vegetable Stand

the bodies
of a thousand
black metal musicians
on the ocean floor
Coralize

the spikes
of their leather
armbands
become homes
for entire new species
of bivalves

prized
for the corpse-
paint designs
of their shells

Painted Princess

It's one of those things, ya know,
another bourbon and we were off again
me and the painted princess
on another excursion into the deep
blue eyes of Sjöfn

I close my eyes and see
her six-two body flow
over me like honey
and lap at my eyelids
earlobes chest toes
wherever she was
at the time

my lips on hers
the two of us pass
the breath of life
between us
our runes on the tablets of fate
intertwined
until the fickle goddess
would clear the stone again

(continued overleaf)

on the road, hundred
thirty-first day this year
poetry reading in another town
same motel room each night
one double bed
and a painting from the Starving
Artists' Coalition on the wall
how many times we made love
in that room I don't know
we showered together
sometimes for hours
then shaved each other
with straight razors
and collapsed again
onto the bed

poetry reading 8PM
then off to the bar
with a fresh new cadre of coeds
trying to worm their ways
back to our room
lust and flesh and booze

but we just sat there
fingers intertwined
and talked poetry
with a pale student or two
and an uncomfortable-looking professor

(continued overleaf)

dawn, back into the car
and on to the next room
on to the next town,
me and the painted princess
and Sjöfn, blue-eyed
hot goddess of lust
with a bourbon bottle
sweetened with honey,
musk, lavender, and sex
nestled between her thighs

New Poets

Tess Aiteouakrim

Tess Aiteouakrim is an emerging 19-year-old poet born and raised in London. She uses poetry as her best attempt to describe the indescribable and takes inspiration from the everyday. Tess particularly enjoys fusing her passions of science and art into pieces to uncover the depths and truths of the world which we live in.

The Sapling

Someone once
Called me a Sapling
I was new
To the written art
But a 'sapling'
Suggests I'll get far

I ask myself
How much I'll see
Or
How much I'll be seen
Oak, cherry blossom, coast redwood
Yet it's through the depths of my roots
I shall only be understood

I breathe the air of time
And one will surely find
How its precious presents
Is rather sublime

(continued overleaf)

Though the fuel to flourish
Like pollen to spring
Is this thing

Patience

Steering the sapling
To the highest of heights
It's bound to attain

Jacob Duffy

Jacob is a 25-year-old student of Art and Humanities at Open University. He developed a passion for poetry through a creative writing module. Although his only prior publication was in primary school, he's excited to share his work with a larger audience.

Ouch

Signals fire off to the brain
Messages of danger and peril
A warning that is all too late
Hands gripped so tight, trembling
Turning my knuckles as white as ice
Face crumpled, scrunched in anguish
Teeth gritted, grinding, like a pestle on a mortar
Swear words rattling, from every corner of the brain
Trying to comprehend, the scale of betrayal
As I assess the damage
Of the Lego piece stuck,
At the bottom of my bare foot.

Rebecca Friend

Rebecca has been writing poetry on and off since her early twenties. It usually takes an event of extreme elation or severe sorrow to occur to prompt her to unleash her creative side. The more life experience she gains, the more important writing becomes to her. She has recently been published by Sideways Poetry Magazine.

Still

clocks still chime, telephones still ring
dogs still bark, and birds still sing
the music still plays, yet the light does not fade

planes still soar, sirens still wail
babies still cry, and clouds still hail
the stars still sparkle, yet the light does not fade

yet in my world, everything is still
you were my love, you were my life
you will forever be the light, and that light will *never* fade

Alan Maguire

Alan McGuire is a teacher, writer and all-round politico-literary head who is originally from Swindon, but now lives in Madrid, Spain. New to poetry, he has been published on the Culture Matters website.

Life In 1 Act

The first act

Energetic performance

Steady plot

Flat characters

Little sign of conflict

Funnily executed.

Rising conflict –

Fails to materialise.

Foregrounding after the climax.

Overpriced brands and too

much emphasis on

USP

Never-ending-conflict

that ends well, until the credits

Intermission

The sequel was better than

the original, the prequel is yet

to come.

Credits

This issue felt like a really special one. We hope you enjoyed reading this as much as we enjoyed putting it together.

And to the talented writers, without whom there'd be no magazine: *thank you*.

As Sylvia Plath said, "It is a terrible thing
To be so open: it is as if my heart
Put on a face and walked into the world."

Sideways x

Haiku Corner

'A Species and a Friend' By G.S.

Soaring over clouds
A black majestic crow surveys
The world below him

Are you feeling inspired?

Get your poems published in *Sideways*

Issue 10 coming March 2024!

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poetry magazine

We are very grateful for the poets featured in this issue. We have already received submissions for issue 10 and would like to roll out submissions to more of our readers.

Poems can be about any subject and in any form. Length-wise, most poems we view are up to 5 pages of A4 at the very maximum.

We welcome poetry from both published and unpublished writers. All we ask is that each submission has not been previously published elsewhere.

Also, do include a brief biography/publication history. The submission window ends on 28th February 2024.

Please email submissions to: sidewayspoetry@gmail.com

So many thanks to our wonderful contributors:

Eugene O'Hare, Glenis Moore, Diane Webster, Ian Heffernan, Clive Donovan, Mark Mansfield, William Doreski, Rodney Wood, Antony Owens, Robert Beveridge, Tess Aiteouakrim, Jacob Duffy, Becky Friend and Alan Maguire

Sideways is an online poetry magazine.

Each issue features poets from around
the world.

It is always an absolute pleasure
welcoming submissions from established
writers, and we especially encourage
poems from those who are yet to be
published.

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