

Sunfish

a magazine of exploratory poetics

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featuring new work by

rob mclennan • Ken Edwards • Antony Rowland
Steven Waling • Gareth Twose
James Davies • Mark Cobley

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Submissions

Sunfish welcomes submissions from both published and unpublished authors. While the main focus of the magazine is poetry, it's also interested in essays, journals, interviews and hybrid forms.

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Sunfish is also available **free** as a pdf to anyone that wants it – just get in touch at the address above to request it.

rob mclennan

from C.

*Achilles himself cannot wish
to slay himself for the wrong
he has done to his alter-ego Hector
Hector disguised as Patroclus
Hector self-object of Achilles
Who by impersonating Achilles
will ever overtake the tortoise
—Susan Howe, Pierce-Arrow*

This has nothing to do
with anything;

red balloon a strata,
rolling downhill,

crime-fight,

convalescent jeer;

the past invents derivates,
oblique stem, beginning

of investment;

disappears, at present
; damage

, a damned thing,

Murdered a flush wrong,
thigh, a reckon,

cracked; dead temperate,

an expert in resizing,
living every word

that emerged from her mouth

a wavelenth; force
, one day

enter rooms

sleepily; digital hands
hold hours, down

the hour

beware wakefulness

: it spreads,

A tire-tred; all the mental customs,
record keepers,

, what risked nothing

history: unhooked our losses,
marriages that never

, threadbare
caked in ash

a thin bread; wizened ash
and keep, returning failure

a maze of
fearful, straight lines,

push

how to map a changing travelogue,
chart happy, polar depths,

lively in its boots;

Ribcage, middle c
particulates,

, deflates

a conflict, boiled
down to point,

, combined reflection,
lets pretend,

a spherical notion,
sometimes a great theory

of untuned strings,

turn
, turn

so high above the earth, appears
so small,

Stockyards; shelves
constructed out of tights,

, a master-plan

a bush erupts; chick-pea,
rose petal, figs; eyes

, windshield preserves

what have I lost?
Jack Spicer wrote,

when shall I start to sing?

stop talking; goose is cooked,
glass pie-plate, returned

and almost clean,

cracked sidewalks
, red balloons

Rock-smart, hip
a heavy ember,

, avocado pits
an edge

of many days

wishbone; single-servings
clear, and clear

the lights in human form,

drives; imaginary church
we never glimpsed

in folk-tale woods; we walked,
were folk ourselves,

; thin panic-moon,

Sonnets of poppies; curdles
under breath,

a promise, lesser-than

, palmed
was never purchased

brown mixing bowl; would fall to earth,
would feed on pearls,

and constant renovation; bare
but for new paint, layers-spread,

these walls,

replacing even air,
the riverbank,

a cherished

long address,

Ken Edwards

from BARDO

The Sea

A dazzling white sheet from afar. A blade shines from horizon to horizon, its light much too white for the eye. Light leaching out of it. Mild, variegated, lacking definition; but with a hard frosty glitter in the distance. Milk and dirt heaving rhythmically, water breathing in and out. Heavy easterly, the water brown with silt inland, and pale green further off, clashing waves in your face. Swirling muck in the shallows. Bumpy and glittering, then clean and clear.

An intending surfer undresses by his car. A detective orders you to get rid of my books. He's a cross between Sean Bonney and José Mourinho, but actually the opposite of both. Huge and green and billowing, with Hurricanes and Messerschmidts pursuing each other madly above it in gathering clouds.

On the the sixth day there is a rainbow, made from the emissions of disintegrating aircraft.

It's a kind of crescendo, I call it the sea.

The Sea (2)

Bands of green and blue, little rippling waves. And, may I say, a feather, of diseased appearance. The diseased head of a man. Who gave me the whooping 'flu, you swine? Is that a dog talking? Have we come to this? Take me to the cliff, and drop me there. Let me fall through space, and so become alive. Dolls and ghosts and dogs, daddy and mummy bears, gorillas, pigs and mice and all the hybrids in between. Breeding in a tight corner, sounds almost hooman. I ain't scared of the sea, but it's a container for everything I don't like to think about, such as buttons and cotton buds. When the bottles rattle, they remind me of bones. This is nothing. This is neither fiction nor poetry, we couldn't market it.

The Sea (3)

A twinkling expanse in the morning sunshine. On a portable radio, sweet talk from across the globe. Sounded like she was singing from a nest of wires. Don't think about it. The downtown retail sector is in a state of devastation. Hungry creatures roam, look like they've been punched senseless selling unsustainable debt to each other. I love my black Moorish bass. But I've been beaten over my metaphorical head too, and I'm much too nervous to stand up. (Stop it, you're hyperventilating.) I love crashing, but nothing bad has happened yet, has it? Time to declutter the house, hey listen to my poem about Obama (obvious displacement activity, stop it). Something is coming, something with an enormous belly. Ghost of a gull chick. I do not think that she will sing to me.

The Sea (4)

Pale grey-green, almost no waves, tide out. An aircraft disintegrated over mid-Atlantic, very peacefully. Zombies very nice peoples. No, they are vampires. They are Dover sole and plaice, and other flat fish such as dabs, flounders, lemon soles, also brills, turbot, cod and the various types of dogfish, large shoals of mackerel, herring, sprats, lobsters, shrimps and whelks. I love crashing flounders, please. Then your own thoughts start to cluster in. Build your own groyne right here and pump out the sewage, guys, or this will all turn into a mortuary. Back wall of Butler's Gap was the old sea defence. Funky Fish will eat people. Save our salt, please. Heavy metal. Slimy things. They're still looking for the black box.

The Sea (5)

Turquoise in the lee of the groyne, a white sheet where the sun is upon it. Turns out this is an unnamed paragraph, about nothing, written in a "hotel of real spies". A trumpet in the shape of a boat. At first glance, it extruded the body language of convergence, then it became convenient, and finally a commodity, and so it goes on, day after day, beginning after ending after beginning, persons and events and horizons in a blur. History turns into salt – to what purpose? We are never told. Even the electric smells of fish. Surf spangles and dribbles, monstrously dressed. Cats come out in fearful places after the towers have fallen. Even the porpoises smell of electricity; would you credit it? Everyone's at the edge right here; there is no centre! What porpoise? Drummers march past on Fish St, playing the usual rhythm that, we are assured, has not varied since 1066. Consumers of the Ancient State of Albion, awake!

The Sea (6)

Immense glitter sparkle in the distance. Split particles show splutters in chardonnay. Fishing with Higgs the bo'sun, fielding for godlets. Keep those figures floundering, flittering. So how do you know that you exist? When your whole life flashes? Can you describe this, Jack? They knew him as a fisherman, not as a fiddler. He flew into the light off the edge of the harbour arm on an old clinker craft with an elliptic stern, and was seen no more. What kind of language is that? What are you like? The sea is like the sea. And still the metaphors keep coming. Is there *anything at all* back down there?

The Sea (7)

Tide in, blowy breakers, deep grey-green with silt in it. Sky is wet, bent over. A word "crystal-lised" in it. Drifting, long-lining, seining, trammelling, trawling, again, and always. And above that, more light, and here comes the evaluation: that everything will evaporate into nothing, that this book will capture nothing, that everything that is narrated here has occurred within the space of a split particle, where there's nothing, where no one can hear you think. Hello! Sorry at this perceived confusion or stress. "After we had visited the caves, pale sunshine started to come through while we walked down to the old town through the twittens." This sentence will continue after we have gone, slowly decaying, until at some point in the future it, too, will fail; the space it encloses will no longer be enclosed. They (who?) demolish the lovely decking, and everything that we held dear. Sun sinks, tide ebbs, tide flows, time passes, there is increasing self-similarity, until no verbs or nouns remain, no one can know that you desiring machines exist, or ever existed, under high eaves in darkness, nor above in light. Write that down, or sing it over the waves:

Yoh!

Yip!

Antony Rowland

Manchester

(after Allen Ginsberg)

Manchester I gave you fifty years and you gave me a crock of it.
Manchester twenty pence and your skyscrapers chipping the fog.
I can't stand your piss-pot canals and gob-fulls of grey.
Manchester when will you sack Shaun Ryder, your main cultural advisor?
Go fuck yourself with your urban beaches.
I can't get over last winter's lack of happy-chappy comedy.
I won't write my poem until you need a hanky again to cross town.
Manchester when will you stop claiming it doesn't rain?
When will you jive naked in your copious hail?
When will you sing through your Victorian graves?
When will you brew a decent beer? Your only beer was Boddingtons, and you couldn't even
keep that.
Why is Alexandra Park so full of tears?
Manchester when will you send your eggs to Hulme?
I'm sick of your demands to be business-facing, enterprising, entertaining, client-focussed,
integrated, impact-directed, market-orientated and community-centred. Fuck the
community.
When can I go into Greggs bakery and buy a vanilla slice with my good looks?
Manchester after all it is you and I who are perfect, not Leeds.
Your industrial past is too much for me.
You made me want to be Eric Cantona's car.
There must be some other way to bridge the Irwell.
Robert Powell is in Tadcaster I don't think he'll come back it's not rocket science.
Are you nawty or is this some form of posse swaggering?
I'm trying to come to a semi-colon.
I refuse to give up my obsession with Peel Park haiku.
Manchester stop doing the pimp roll I know what you're up to.
Manchester the elm leaves went out with French New Wave Cinema.
I haven't read the *Reporter* for months, everyday somebody gets filched outside Sainsburys.
Manchester I feel sentimental about the urban beaches that never happened.
Manchester I used to be young when I was a kid I'm not sorry.
I smoke menthol cigarettes every chance I get.
I sit in my boudoir for days on end staring at the multiple piping system under the sink.
When I go to Peking Express I get drunk and eat the string piglets with dim sum.
My mind is Piccadilly Bus Station on a wet November evening.
You should have seen me reading Enid Blyton.
My collegial mentor thinks I'm a fucking nutcase.
I won't sing Land of Hope and Glory, Land of Liverpool Too.
I have moments of clarity and vibrations from Saturn.

Manchester I haven't told you what I did to the caretaker after he left some milk in my office,
disturbed me in the shower, and then axed my desk in half during the night, the dirty
fucker.

I'm addressing you.

Are you going to let your emotional life be determined by The X-Factor?

I'm obsessed by The X-Factor.

I stare at Simon Cowell every week.

His piggy eyes slink past me every time I avoid the newsagents.

I saw him in the basement of the Clifford Whitworth Library.

He's always telling us about responsibility. Judges on the X-Factor are serious. They want us
to do our best. Everyone's better apart from me.

It occurs to me that I am Simon Cowell.

Simon, you're writing poems again.

Manchester is rising against Simon Cowell.

I'd better consider the precinct's resources.

The resources consist of two dog-end rollies millions of mis-spent fireworks and twenty-five
places to buy barms, not baps.

I say nothing about the night's Manhattan Island nor the millions of scallies who live in my
flower pots under the light of 500 Zippos.

I have abolished several lap-dancing bars in town, but they don't listen to me.

My ambition is to be Pro-Vice Chancellor for Enterprise despite the fact that I'm a Catholic.

Manchester how can I write about your bus station when you have a tendency to concrete
over sunken rose gardens and call it art?

I will continue like Lester Piggott my haikus are as individual as his nags more so they're all
different sexes.

Manchester I will sell you narrative poems for £5 each, £5 down from my epic about the
Manchester canal system which thankfully I could never finish.

Manchester free the posse five.

Manchester save Simon Cowell from a boiling-oil death.

Manchester that woman from Girls Aloud must never die or get fat.

Manchester I am the reincarnation of Ian Curtis only this time with a walrus moustache and
George Michael earrings.

Manchester you don't want to go to war with Salford.

Manchester it's them bad Scousers.

Them Scousers them Scousers and them Yorkie twats. And them Scousers.

Liverpool wants to eat us alive. Liverpool's power mad. She wants to take culture from our
canals.

Her wants to grab Warrington. Her wants a *City Life*.

Her wants to drain our Ship Canal. Help.

Manchester this is deadly serious.

Manchester this is the impression I get from examining the walls of your lime-tiled pubs.

Manchester is this correct?

I'd better get right down to the Chophouse.

Manchester you bitch, it's true, I love you; love you, that is, like the happy in a happy marriage.

Manchester I'm shouldering your whiney condensation.

English

I wish that I am be supporting play for express to like you:
We have a piling match of cheese and fried crap with a spicy sauce.
Baby pig – a first favourite is the white flower pickled in the head.
Does everyone also want to become dear like me?
I am a joke baby pig. You can also become beautiful like me now.
Maybe I've been hoping too hard, but I've gone this far
And it's more than I hoped for. Do not use mental tools
For prolonging the life of the pan. Re-seal bag
To pervert from dessication. Decontamination
Is powerful, no bruising, don't be stained with grease,
It is liked by housewives of The United States of America,
Japan, The Soviet Union, Italy, and all the world.
This pan's shining elegance has a high qualified feeling
Which appeals to our mind, an admirable elegance
That makes us wide-eyed. Authentic elegance
Has an incredible power which charges the surrounding atmosphere.
This is super. Fry me to the moon.
This is a convenience and a foppish flying pan
For indoor and outdoor use only: mum
Should also make delicious from this;
The family is also a pleasure. Toast club.
I feel toast. Tea or café. Your heart and a rock n'roll time.
Let's try homeparty fashionably and have a nice chat with nice fellow.
Flexible straws which we can bend freely are very convenient for us.
And shock the toast. It's a London Calling. Once again.

This towel is full of dreams.
This happy is a secret for you and me.
I'll take them up one by one and bring all of them carefully
With this sink and brain cleaner. To warm up many people
Is my duty and I take pride in it. Relieve the relief
And listen to the angel's whisper. Go on...
I don't meet you recently. I want
To meet you before long. At that time,
Let's talk about the present condition to each other:
This is a riverbank matter.
I remember the first time we met: you
Had a purple dress on and wore a golden brooch.
I went on a trip.

We are enjoying our pleasant with vigour:
 Would you like me the whole? You can say
 This wear is high gread and sophisticated style,
 But you are strictly fobidden to go whoring, drug taking, gamble
 And engaged in speculation: we'll handle the violator.
 Yo-yo – don't leave the string alone; be aware of people coming close;
 Be aware of the mental parts which dissemble.
 It happens to the damage of our store equipment
 By a quest's fault. And let me request it at cost. It is
 Remarkable to the quests such as in our store
 And it may have to leave it leave (an act of trouble)
 To the done one. It is hardly responsible about the trouble
 Of the internet in our store at all. Enter the on-line neighbour,
 Choose to belong to sex and with opposite
 Should of the native net card conjunction, native conjunction
 Of right shot, the choice to belong to sex, to sexframe,
 Choosing the automation to obtaining the server address automatically.
 This is a permanent error; I've given up. Sorry it didn't work out.

The Bedfordshire Clanger

Surprise pudding was always custard
 sheltering fruit or a butterfly bun
 whereas elongated suet crust dumpling
 causes murder at the Dunstable Chiltern:
 jam filling scandal folds meat dessert into item one.
 Fresh charabanc parties party with Chadwick's white puddings
 from Bury market whereas bi-annual Pudding Throwing Contest
 at Stubbins threatened with closure of Corner Pin inn is battering
 plinthed Yorkshire puddings with strictly sticky underarm throwing
 – more of a mid-course palate cleanser than an arse-kicker –
 of six-ounce Lancashire black puddings. 'What a
 waste of an opportune flouncer', says rehabilitated Tyke,
 'Give me a moist steaming globe any day or the syncopal kick
 of suet crunch that I would not have missed for worlds.
 Avoid the charms of impressionable dolcelatte and scarlet trevise, chunk flour
 glue against the dropping mornings,
 fox top-flight cancer with Sussex Pond Pudding,
 Great Western victory roll and Rotherfield sweet-tooth;
 muddy your beef rafters with a scud pastry,
 the reverse discourse of flump syllabub
 ("It's not raining outside, it's just dropping")
 against the architectural puddings bolted together
 for the piggy patron, Prince Regent, by genius Careme.'
 Not for nothing did the English pudding-eaters
 invent the pudding cloth, milky junket and its cargo

of silky onions, sweets of the stick to yr spoon variety:
join the demonstration in Cowgait against the expulsion
of the Edinburgh puddynge wyffes – they are not
witches in thrumbe Cappes as the size zeros claim
with their perennial, sugary, salty threats
of fat tax; kisiel o smaku truskawkowym to them,
a soft strawberry jelly saturated in pectin,
gelatine innards with the orange-red burrs
of quince flowers. Yesterday, my pears fell off
as if under a Halloween spell, puddings
bigger than your eyes. Amundson troughs
on chocolate pudding while Scott starves
with tayberry pavlova, sorbet and mousse,
the grease-proof plum: ‘Stuff your truffling’, Scott says,
‘Over kamuro of mango, cheese and space dust –
instead of Champagne and Pernod we have
the Halifax and Thirsk; thirst after creeling
over the buttery nuggets of the Pontefract,
the tangerine tinge of a premature shoplift
and the slumps, crunches and grunts
of pudding pies exported to Tampa; this
form of pastry is, we believe, peculiar
to Kent where it is eaten by all classes during Lent.’
Kangaroo puddy-puds put across the pudibund screen
of our hands to a puddingy flump, a haggis
in Masefield’s basket, a cold bulging blobby thing
commonly accused of following individual puddingwife
wrasses that were foraging on the substrate.
Old Hardwick skags! Pick up your rags!
To mend your mothers’ pudding-bags.
Thomas Burton’s wife found washing puddings
in the town beck: fined the sum of one shilling.
You’re eating pudding for dessert, and he
brings you a fork: stick him in the pudding-pit
or lard kettle with some panhorse and scrapple;
after all the heresy of powdered custard,
Were nat for podynges the world were clene done.

Save me from the Rootbots

Cut the grief needle, cohiba mouth.
Starlings twister the Ings: this place
is not only an oasis of culture.

Where did you leave the par?

A bird mouthful this dark: the place
for the after-work party is only a landing away.

The semi-days posing by adits,
the white daffodils' liquorice: off-culture
mells here into a vibrant unity.

The warming books cark. Get some scran,
slap wood after succulents: young
families dominate the streetscape.

Petites nightmares, churning over the fabric.
Gulls pick R.I.P. Danny: sparknotes
bookrag the meaning of pinkmoney.

Sonex your laughing memories.
A magpie pads the cut ladder: nettings
may be tied, always on the pulse.

Drop some tickle. Clouds
seal the underpass: memory
foam moulds to your own shape.

Suck the dregs of leave, peripatetic weeble.
Creative people work here in shoplike offices:
the lilac bundles its flame. Pip me.

Orme

Through your dubious milk and merry window:
bogged cod and romanesco's phyllotaxis;
avoid the uniform taps and blood-bucket jars.
Anachronistic wasps accost as the leat
empties the sea under SLOW TO AVOID WASH.
Silent couples endure the pitch, tail-gate
their spirits, crazy golf and the finger pegs.
Jets scramble, kettle the air as the pot steeps,
followed by a round of pause. The river
widens at a trace and saloons wreck the shoulder.
An egret rarely whites the trail through to
Victorian sun flash: the pier flakes
blue as the wind, trampoline amusement shaft.
Heavy showers turn new pebbles that creep to
the beach plate. Gull slopes pull the mud homeward
and pylons arm the ringway with sag cable.

Steven Waling

Little Bird

She says you have what you want

she says no-one knows anymore
how to make scrambled eggs

little bird

but hasn't it been good

•

She says they're always curdled these days
she says you're supposed to have popadoms
with not before the meal she says

we should have been viewing the dolphins
on the ferry to Spain but

we look up at the Minster wow
in the evening light collared doves
she says they're all over this year

•

She says I've seen my little bird

she says Alright I suppose
they don't know it's wrong
think that's how it is little bird

chasing its spider down six hundred years
in the Zouche chapel window

•

She says wow hasn't it been good
she says you have what you want

little bird

we shouldn't really be here we should be
on a boat watching dolphins or something

•

The trouble with England is
you're never too far
from a history lesson

she says weren't we lucky
to find this place

Roman boots & Viking boots & Norman boots

no-one knows she says
I'll be alright she says wow

you go on your wander

•

She says that's wonderful
not what we expected she says
I won't see dolphins again

we sit looking up at the Minster

she says double basses are back
they're all over this year
she says wow she says

little bird

no-one knows you should
crumble popodoms into the main

Ward D3

a bundle of sticks /// wriggles on a bed
it's hard to believe in God /// are there any crackers
mum you're in hospital /// oh I forgot
visiting hours /// are between 6 and 8

but now you're here /// are there any crackers
close the curtains /// is there a party next door
pull the sheet back over her /// oh I forgot
ambulance siren /// like a startled cat

it's the delivery suite /// what's all that banging
dissociated as to place /// acute serious infection
but now you're here /// it's hard to believe in
nurse wipes down plastic mattress /// when there's such

I saw rabbits on the lawn /// I'm hungry
they should bite the bullet /// just get on with it
she tries to climb out of a sheet /// a bundle of sticks
close the curtains /// are there any crackers

the eyes don't connect /// no but there's chocolate
disoriented as to place /// I'll have some of that
see God in mother's face /// like a startled cat
is there a party next door /// oh I forgot

Home

that corridor smell

vegetables

the weather doesn't know
whether it's coming or going

recurring theme

•

iron age gravemounds
Oswald's junction of 2 rivers
hills of the inevitable
dusted with icing sugar
shall I cut the meat for you

recurring theme

•

you'd go in sometimes
cancelled memories of
2 ups 2 downs back to back
when am I going home
her room would be balmy
to stifling to claustrophobic
chocolate pudding for afters

if you eat your

•

a murder's taking place
box in the corner
repeats repeats

squirrels over the lawn

one of those memories
sometimes for school lunch
she'd make banana sandwiches
can you stay longer

Incident Tape

completely horse a mounted officer
by the home of the beer and burger

POLICE LINE DO NOT CROSS
cordoned sun and church bells

haptic air

me officer I was at home
with a nice little anecdote
and a Cabernet Sauvignon
about growing up

‘can you prove that
let’s get bungalowed
outside Sainsbury’s
scene of

sunday morning heading
to meeting

Terry Wogan back
on radio quality
refreshment

I speak Shakespearean like a native
has crossed to the bus stop

PANDORA’S ALL NIGHT EVERY NIGHT

officer there was a café down that road
(insert small anecdote about time being
a shed serving good breakfasts
replaced by a car-park

1891 FALLOWFIELD STATION

locked between the hours of painted
ladies pavement stain Toulouse
Lautrec up the stairs 6am – 6pm

what was there before Weatherspoons

glass everywhere

'there's a bit of a debate
about how you say
your family name

funny thing to say
Malcolm and Edwin dead the same year
oh anarchy

a woman in white scrubs
picks up equipment

surveils the scene

Gareth Twose

Divine Sounds

The call to prayer. The Qur'an chanted with longing, yearning, a call to come home after being out in the world too long, to come back to the house of God. The unadorned human voice, joyful and proud. The Muslim equivalent of Don't worry, be happy. It took 12 to 13 years of training in musical theory, in the contrasts between major and minor, between prose and poetry, to learn to sing the Qur'an. More like controlled crying. Northern Soul. There were letters in the Qur'an that were without meaning, they were the uncreated word of God, the original sounds that made up the universe, coming back to life.

•

Northern Soul's It'll Never Be Over for Me. The Big Dipper school of singing. Up and down and through the wringer. Huge climaxes and bits that were simply preludes to even bigger climaxes. With a raw edge that Motown didn't have. And faces that were less photogenic. That's what gave it the purity. Its relation with the Other. Seven different ways of reciting it fixed since the seventh century. It had to be sung. It was only when sung that it had the quality of revelation.

•

Bhangra and rap pumping out of the car stereos so loud it changed the molecular structure of the air. The boy racers shooting the speed bumps. Past the Community Chuch Shop, Farooq Goldsmith. The supermarkets. The coriander, menthi, flat-leaf parsley, spinach, okra and chillies. The sacks, the bulk bins, of basmati, the cumin, fennel, bulbs of garlic. The thirties pub now a Bangla Station Burhan Centre, Ahmads Wholesale Retailer of Meat and Poultry. Open Night and Day. The take-aways. With Bollywood videos on TV. Yes, boss, yes, boss. Salad, yoghurt and mango juice. Self-purification. There is no god except God.

•

Men wearing lace skullcaps and embroidered waistcoats over long cotton shirts, or Matrix-style jilbabs, walk out of the mosque and go straight to the Taj Chippery for a tray of kebab meat and yoghurt sauce. Mixing the sacred and the yoghurt sauce. Saunter over to Trendy Haircuts to get their beards trimmed. Then get into their silver or metallic blue Audis, BMWs and Lexuses and drive home.

The women queuing in Asda in their beautiful saris buying bulk bags of crisps, burgers and those buns with sesame seeds.

Third pillar: everything belongs to God and we hold possessions in trust.

•

Teenagers chanting a kind of rap sign language: Loser, loser, double loser, as if, whatever, get the picture, duuh! The original sounds that made up the universe.

•

Sometimes it had the restrained elegance of *Kind of Blue*. The slow burn melancholy. Lit up by saxophone moments of spiritual joy. Walking for over an hour from Edale, they carried the dead to the burial yard in Castleton. Past the hawthorn hedges, the celandine, the ox-eye daisies, opposite Cow Low hill, past Windy Wappins. You could hear it, spring coming, through the trumpets of the daffodils.

There were letters in the Qur'an that were without meaning, they were the uncreated word of God, the original sounds that made up the universe, coming back to life.

Only

see the city:
the bad air lies in a bowl
under bin lid of cloud.
Why is countryside
always described
as rolling? Giddy.
Choppy. Rock
and roll. New cagoule
works. Rain resting,
not sinking. People de-materialise
as you leave car park.
Our mortgage has three parts,
two rolled over, like hills.

Memory of beach
trauma: splash of milk-
bottle skin
borrowed white
trunks, with tear.
Now olive, not tan
tan was cool maybe his
off-white was de rigeur
Only 2 % tree cover
in poorest parts. No green means
no casual encounters, no shared
space. Cheap
flights means everyone
tanned, or can

fake it. But
distinctions... Had to be
subtle, not tangoed. Even
naked, you weren't.

'... as in a race in which, after a series of bursts in which various runners forge ahead or catch up, the initial gaps are maintained; in other words, whenever the attempts of the initially most disadvantaged groups to come into possession of the assets previously possessed by groups immediately above them in the social hierarchy or immediately ahead of them in the race are more or less counterbalanced, at all levels, by the efforts of better-placed groups to maintain the scarcity and distinctiveness of their assets.'

Density: the inter-
connection between
houses, shops
and amenities encouraged
cycling and walking
could he bite the bullet
and shop at Aldis? the loose
burbs carved by
roads
to nowhere.
You coughed all night
Can I get you anything
more than paracetamol?
Fierce and viral
free aliums with every copy
of *Home and Garden*.
Glasgow toile (pronounced
twahl) on toile a home 'with
timeless appeal combining
past and present with distinctive
flair'
you can't see the join 'socially
ranked geographical space'

Elderly man on electric
mobility scooter,
Skull framing
grey-green smoker's face
recession shades
into depression
we are what
city makes us

Incapacity

Can you stand unaided?
impossible
mortgages taken out
by no job no
income types, the stoner dude
across the road, a case of
misaligned incentives
if you climb the walls
lean on the table
you're fit for work.

like lingering for too long
by the lube stand
sinus piercing
eye watering
uilleann pipes the urge
to dirge Europe picking the bones
of Ireland clean
people not breeding
like rabbits so much as not
dropping like flies

'No-one believed me, top end quants working out formulas which proved the risk off it all going tits up only likely in a time frame several trillion times longer than the history of the universe. The companies doing the credit rating were being paid by the companies they were rating. Triple A's awarded like smarties. I kept saying, You can't keep telling me unlikely is impossible. Just what we didn't need was another big shot of insane risk. The CDOs and CDSs were big and weird and had a funny smell.'

Catching the jam
shaped damp patch
which keeps re-appearing
the mortar draws the
silence in
no benefit cases, no unfair
dismissals of the
poor, outside the rule of law
students wearing
'Because We're Not
Worth It' t-shirts kick in
windows is it live?
They're re-creating
the Highland clearances

Are you unsatisfied?

Of course

I have memorised my whole timetable
but I didn't memorise that bit.

Lunch boxes never die.

No-one asking the obvious:

James Davies

What do you do for a living

I was not making a monument

What have you got there for lunch

I was not making an object

Three lines of domestic poetry

You would pour blackcurrant juice and tuna over the floor

All the time waiting for Mike to say *Yvonne's dead*

And sniggering caught sight of a pretty fox

Cornfed written musak

Art is not the spiritual side of business

Its old function is best captured in the movies

Do not with cornfed musak

To use paint

But not make paintings

Like the way Mike used the photocopier before me

Each Trevor of the month

Scene after scene shows you this different life

The future deferred

Inbetween a waterfall

Inbetween a parlor

Has anyone seen the laminator

It was last seen in room 43

The next minute the cereal had gone

But where'd that new milk come from

I drank my Campari and glanced

Molly are baffled

Yet my manager can lick yr manager

For one of those National Lottery dispensers

'He told me he told you to'

What to do at 10 o'clock

She feels he is eating her by his demand to be eaten by her

I haven't the time

Three men walk into a bar
 "Two hazelnuts who can't have sex"
So the other says do it at golden warming
 With colleagues like at Christmas but with less embarrassment

I do not like that
 So I go back
And take off my mac
 And take off my hat

Same dot minor difference
 Two buddhas make same soup
Which way's a birthday
 How heavy's a heartbreak

One girl I went to school with became an actress
 Another set up her own dry cleaning business
And another recovered from cocaine addiction and lives at Seven Sisters
 Oh and this boy I dated for a few weeks turns out he's gay and no longer Dan but Daniel

I have a bird I like to hold
 And the seed of the fire gets feeble and cold
I have a bird I like to hold
 And the seed of the fire gets feeble and cold

And so we'll call her Laura
 (Gavin was his name)
We liked to drink tequila
 And run round in the rain

Thrownness; a fault with the finisher
 Computer stuff in a computer bag
False buddha on the bus
 But of course I digress

Writers
 One don't really know what to say to them
And laughter leaves us so doubly serious afterwards
 I'm writing my next book she says

Andy's magic bullet points
 A thesis at the beginning i.e. from art to artifact
A middle bit. i.e. sometimes I think I might wear cowboy boots
 An end bit i.e. Martin Cruz will not be in today

Your understanding comes too late
Your understanding comes not at all
Have you looked outside; is it as it was or has it changed
Like a comet hitting a sparrow's egg

In a room of one's own doing unpaid overtime
For need of a chicken deal or a reprocessed bit of strumpet
Sometimes I was like a blackbird or thereabouts
Sometimes I pretended to learn from history

Impossible exercise with ball
Thanks to the black smokers
Like Hustler's choose your own story series
There's no way out

Darren is out the back of Threshers
He has your speed bagged up and ready
With hygienic gloves on
Like Anne of Cleves or Ruby Shearswater

Cherries are red. Gardens are green.
The sea is blue. My hat is yellow.
Little birds can be brown.
When the lights go out everything is black

Maxing out led me to online aid imperialism
It was like having Gucci
And umbelliferous penduncles at the same time
Serious joy but not like a Mormon

Ambivalent sensations in a walnut
A theatre of plastic orange biscuit tin lids
A room of oracles
Tick Tick a phone rings

In the film version of the completeness of incompleteness
A stretch in an imaginary piano
Did not do me tuttyness
Whence the firm said to do it comparatively

Most of the time I'm at work I work
Sometimes at work I do not work
Whenever I am in work I am in work
At the weekend I am not at work

Recalling the weight of a grapefruit
Bullied as criminals of the dream
Aerial view of meteor crater, Arizona
They smell of the lamp not the sun

Buddha shadow with sandpaper
Zizzing hum of an itchyapod
Intergrown pyrite cubes
Everything outside the family is a feud

Infinites of information
Got me up and down like a koala
The disenchantment of the world is horrible, intolerable
Find a balance between made-up magic and believed-magic

I drew the Death of Marat on a Princess Di souvenir mug
It was Charlotte Corday eating grapes by a swimming pool with a numpty
A panoply of objects: the photographers, the mystery lover,
The mystery shopper, the tunnel, the wicked Sauron, the land-mine safety gear

Mark Cobley

Andrew seems popular

Mr Hanson didn't dance.

The students were singing.

Andrew fought all afternoon.

I jogged two months ago.

They swam that morning.

I didn't drive last summer.

We didn't have a summer.

The gardeners walked quickly.

You were driving slowly.

You were working nicely.

You weren't reading amongst the trees.

Those computers are not reliable.

I am dancing at present.

They enjoy swimming.

They washed clothes.

The doctor peels an orange.

I borrow money.

That banker stole money.

I drive a car.

They smell a flower.

I washed a car.

Mathew took medicine. Edward broke a leg.

Sandra fried an egg. I cooked chops.

Those electricians fly a kite.

They replace a fuse.

The doctor wore a hat. The doctor went to the bank

I rowed a boat.

Elizabeth called home.

It was raining.

He put away the car.

I played tennis. They rowed a boat.
I read a magazine. He is helpful.
They aren't librarians. She isn't a science teacher.
Erika is curvy. I'm not a bartender.
The bus driver is bald. I pick a peach.
I bought grapes. They are gardeners.
She isn't a student. She isn't a musician.
He isn't popular. Julie won't become a manager.

Rita's aunt reads in the library.

Those thieves granted him his wish.

They strike her a heavy blow.

Those journalists give her a book.

They promise her a delicious dinner.

I am eating breakfast.

The doctor spends a lot of money.

He isn't sad.

He is mowing the lawn.

This teacher shows them a photograph.

That politician teaches them mathematics.

This farmer offers her a bribe.

I wrote her a letter.

They rode a unicycle.

Those librarians give her a book.

Those librarians handed her a piece of paper.

I'm not fighting in front of the restaurant at this exact moment.

Sandra isn't fighting.

She is scared. We eat cake.

Andrew doesn't have an alarm clock.

The barber has a pair of scissors.

The fisherman has a pair of scissors.

Elizabeth is a bus driver.

I have a pencil under the bridge.

George has a pair of pliers next to his bed.

His chairs belong to the teachers.

The carpenter has a pair of pliers.

This isn't Elizabeth's pencil.

She doesn't have a large dress.

The cheap screwdriver belongs to Kate's granddaughter.

Mr Hanson's ex-wife has some chairs at home.

That musician doesn't have a suitcase.

The electricians don't have any duck eggs.

Janet won the third prize.

They catch butterflies.

That journalist kicked the ball.

The electrician climbed that ladder. Larry isn't a carpenter.

Those taxi drivers caught the fish. Those taxi drivers served dinner.

Andrew's uncle drove a green car.

They replaced another fuse.

Those journalists drew a map.

Those gardeners wear sunglasses.

I spend money.

I washed clothes.

They row a boat.

Richard used a computer.

Jessica is a taxi driver.

Jessica didn't row a boat.

Edward sets an alarm clock.

They steal things. He stole magpies.

They steal things.

That flight attendant drank water.

Those doctors shave.

Richard is blue.

They walk.

I surf.

They eat.

Steve walks.

Alfred's niece swims.

Those singers sang.

That banker eats.

Catherine seems strange.

They aren't helpful. They are tall.

Catherine isn't a garbage man.

They aren't politicians.

Those car mechanics aren't electricians.

Mathew isn't a student.

She is selfish.

It is dark.

They sleep.

They pray.

Frank sleeps.

I jog. I drive. They jumped. They read.

Sandra shouted.

I play.

Joseph sleeps with the doctor.

Catherine sings.

I am not a taxi driver.

Sarah became a barber.

Catherine won't become a carpenter.

I'm not thin.

She is friendly.

Andrew seems popular.

They aren't strange.

Edward looks sick.

Edward is green.

Edward keeps pigs.

Deborah's son doesn't look polite.

it is going to rain.

The flight attendants don't have patterned umbrellas.

She isn't stupid.

George isn't a plumber.

I called him "the bankrupt".

She called him "the idle farmer".

Andrew's uncle heard the girl crying.

They fixed the radio.

The rain has stopped.

They ironed a blouse.

I leave the door open.

ink

when they said orange
I saw black.
I thought it simple.

their green was red
overcoats simply wellingtons

the empty chair

don't want to repeat myself
but people do what people do
then go to sleep
then when sleeping
so
then
after all
it happened
then
and
so
that was that
this is that
then well
what next
when
it happens
then all sorts of things
but
look
the empty chair is still empty. see there is no one there

Notes on Contributors

Mark Cobby has two books, his long poem in three parts, *The Flaming Man* (The Arthur Shilling Press, 2010), and *40°38'51"N 73°58'11"W* (Knives, Forks & Spoons Press, 2010). He appears in the *title goes here* and *kaddish*, two e-books written with Emily & Simon Howard and the forthcoming *Eighteens* (Knives, Forks & Spoons Press). He edits the poetry blog *Red Ceilings* and also publishes poetry e-books and chapbooks at the Red Ceilings Press. His personal blog can be found at theblueceilings.blogspot.com/.

James Davies is the author of *Plants* (Reality Street), *The Manual Handling Process* (Beard of Bees) and *Acronyms* (onedit); with Simon Taylor, as *Joy as Tiresome Vandalism*, *aRb* (if p then q) and *Absolute Elsewhere* (Knives Forks & Spoons). He edits *if p then q* and is one of the organisers of The Other Room.

Ken Edwards' books include the poetry collections *Good Science* (Roof Books, 1992), *eight + six* (Reality Street, 2003), *No Public Language: Selected Poems 1975–95* (Shearsman Books, 2006), *Bird Migration in the 21st Century* (Spectacular Diseases, 2006), *Songbook* (Shearsman Books, 2009), the novel *Futures* (Reality Street, 1998) and the prose work *Nostalgia for Unknown Cities* (Reality Street, 2007). A book of short narratives, *Down With Beauty*, is in progress. He has been editor/publisher of the small press Reality Street since 1993. After 35 years in London, he now lives with his partner Elaine in Hastings, on the south coast of England, where he plays bass guitar with the band The Moors.

rob mclennan currently lives in Ottawa, Canada's glorious capital city, where he was born. The author of more than twenty trade books of poetry, fiction and non-fiction, his most recent titles are the poetry collections *52 flowers (or, a perth edge)* (Obvious Epiphanies, 2010), *kate street* (Moir, 2010), *Glengarry* (Talonbooks, 2011) and *wild horses* (University of Alberta, 2010) and a second novel, *missing persons* (2009). An editor and publisher, he runs above/ground press, Chaudiere Books (with Jennifer Mulligan), *The Garneau Review* (ottwater.com/garneareview), *seventeen seconds: a journal of poetry and poetics* (ottwater.com/seventeenseconds) and the Ottawa poetry pdf annual *ottwater* (ottwater.com), and regularly posts reviews, essays, interviews and other notices at robmclennan.blogspot.com

Antony Rowland's first collection, *The Land Of Green Ginger*, was published by Salt Press in 2008, and a chapbook entitled *Birkenau* appeared in 2010 from Knives Forks & Spoons Press. His work was included in the recent anthology *Identity Parade: New British and Irish Poets*, and he also recorded last year for the Poetry Archive.

Formerly a newspaper journalist, **Gareth Twose** now works as a teacher and union rep at a sixth form college in Wigan. He lives in Manchester and completed a PhD on style and syntax in early modern English poetry at the University of Manchester in 2005.

Steven Waling is the author of *Travelator* (Salt) and *Captured Yes* (Knives Forks & Spoons), and is still in pursuit of that elusive lyric eye down various dark alleys. Poems in *Blaart*, *Blackbox Manifold*, *Poetry Wales* and other distinguished literary kidneys.