



THE BUGLE

**An arts magazine by people with lived
experience of homelessness and its
surrounding issues.**

ISSUE 55

About The Bugle

The Bugle is our mouthpiece which alerts readers to matters which we feel need attention, while at the same time allows us to explore our creative skills—whether through writing poetry, artwork, cartoons or other means of expression

Our History

The first edition was unleashed on an unsuspecting public in November 2005. At that time it ran to eight pages only, with limited colours. The first edition was sent round Bethany units—such as Bethany House in Couper Street, and encouraged people to put their thoughts down on paper. It was sometime later that The Bugle would have its own dedicated slot, first at the old Learning Centre on Jane Street, and now at Bonnington Road.

People come and go, depending on what life has to dish out to them, yet it's encouraging to note even while the pandemic has forced us apart from meeting in person, we have maintained nearly a dozen regular contributors. As the reputation of the magazine has grown, people now send in work from all over Scotland as well. We always try to give everyone who submits work the space for their voice to be heard.

We are always learning new things in order to keep improving. The magazine you now hold in your hands has grown into an impressively colourful and glossy production which we are proud of and which we hope you enjoy. We gratefully acknowledge all the financial help which has come from several sources.

Our Mission

We are a creative, welcoming, open-minded and supportive group of people who may have experienced homelessness and are supportive of the issues surrounding homelessness.

We aim to promote free and open communication which connects with others through creative writing, journalism and visual art. We hope to encourage others to think about issues that are often hidden. We produce a magazine which reflects real issues but goes deeper than the current trend for 'reality.'

Our Reader Agreement

In keeping with our mission, we have developed guidelines to help encourage an innovative and trustworthy environment in which to publish our material. We promise to...

- Provide hope, honesty and positivity
- Refrain from making discriminatory comments
- Place warnings on articles that contain adult content

We ask you to...

- Respect other people's viewpoints
- Give us the benefit of the doubt regarding spelling, grammar and writing
- All authors and artist retain copyright. Do not use our images or writing elsewhere
- Credit the artist or author when quoting them

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Your Feedback

Rear Image by Monique Van Aalst

If you would like to know more about the Bugle, comment on what you have read or to submit an article, then please contact us at:

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Disclaimer

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Moon City

The following tale was written with men at HMP Glenochill based on the theme 'A Story of Grace.'



Despite the blazing electric lights that hung across Moon City, the place was never anything less than pitch black. The rain, that fell into its gutters and streets where rats and vermin scuttled about searching out morsels, was relentless. Since the sun had set forever, the city had become the last on Earth, clinging to the rocks that had once been the high peaks of the Cairngorms, but which now barely kept the dark ocean waters at bay.

Constantine had decided to go for a walk. He could no longer stand the atmosphere at the High Palace, around which the city circled. Myeth, his father and ruler of the city, had been in a foul mood, ranting and raving about his desires to wipe out the human and Crawler populations with whom they were forced to share the metropolis.

'But what would we eat father,' Constantine had complained, 'The humans fill up our blood banks, and the Crawlers keep the humans from running away. Without either of them, we Vampires would also die soon after.'

'And what would be so bad about that,' his father had grumbled. Constantine hated it when his father got like this. He was an energetic young Vampire, who remained unusually curious about the blood cattles' lives. Often on his walks he would seek to listen in to their conversations, although, it has to be said, never with any great sense of empathy. Maybe he would hear Iago, his father's favourite blood source, weakly moaning about his inability to regenerate blood quickly enough. Or perhaps, workmen cursing and fighting over their miserable lot. Works people generally had blood-types less exotic and tasty than the likes of Iago and the more favoured classes. Sometimes Constantine would even venture into the outer suburbs of the city, much to the squeals of horror from his Vampire friends. This was where those with the least desirable or diseased blood were forced to live in squalor. And so it was on this afternoon, he found himself picking over the puddles and potholes of a particularly dismal neighbourhood.

'Please help me.' A scruffy, bearded faced man launched at Constantine from a door way, 'My wife, she is very sick. A haemophilic.' Cried the man, 'We cannot feed our children.'

'And what's that got to do with me.' Constantine shaking the man off with horror.

'Maybe you could help us? Put in a word to the high council'

The Vampire scoffed. 'Your problems are too small for me, let alone any high council. Be gone with you!'

A few paces on, Costantine stopped. Maybe he was getting in too deep here. It had been all fun and games so far, but these streets weren't safe. Once he reached the walls where the sewers gave out, he would be in Crawler territory, and then he would be in real danger. He decided to turn back home.

Magnus, the leader of the Crawlers, was also having a bad day. Sometimes he could bear the lowly position he and his crew had been forced to occupy. He could at least ignore it, but on other days, rage filled his veins and he longed to smash the Vampires' power over the city. This was one of those days.

When the truce had been signed, it had been decided that Crawlers could have the run of the city when the lights were turned off (to replicate the humans' night time and allow them to sleep). In turn, they, the Crawlers, would keep the humans hemmed into the city and unable to escape. For most Crawlers that was enough. Most just wanted to maraud about a bit, make a lot of noise and do anyone in who was foolish enough to be out after curfew, but whenever Magnus glimpsed the Palace on his nightly prowls he found himself coveting the royal thrown until it hurt.

Today, tired of his restrictions, he disguised himself in a cloak and went to drown his sorrows in a dingy pub. The lights were too low to notice his crawler skin and the clientele too sozzled to care even if they did. Still, he couldn't help himself from instigating a wind-up. Some workman type of elderly gent came in, and started arguing with a bloated young man about leaving his post. As far as Magnus could work out, they were gravediggers. Magnus took pity on the poor lad. He let his hood fall from his head and hissed 'I'll drink your blood,' toward the frustrated overseer, at his most hoarse and Crawlery.

'There's even Crawlers in here,' yelped the old man, as he fled from the door. The two new pals laughed at his stumbling exit.

'Ah, Scotland,' sighed Magnus, in a slight non-sequitur, but the drink was making him sentimental, 'Bonny Scotland.'

'Acht, wits bonny about it?' mumbled the young man, 'S'always pishing it doon wi' rain.'

'Ah it was a beautiful country before the Great Accident. Before there were vampires and Crawlers. You know, if I were in charge, I'd put it right.'

'Is that right.

'Oh aye,

'Then why no do sumthin aboot it.'

Suddenly the warm sentimental feeling Magnus had been experiencing hardened into iron. 'You're right,' he muttered, 'I should.'



Hamish sloped home through the dripping eaves of the shanty town, without a thought in his head. Hunger and poverty had reduced him to his basic functions. If he could keep his wife and kids alive, then that was enough. That was worth staying alive for. Today he had begged a few odds and scraps from neighbours, who despite their own poverty, still viewed him and his family as an especially pitiful case. Up town, few strangers had been kind enough to put even the most cursory of tokens in his begging bowl. Sometimes, though, he remembered the young princely vampire he had nearly accosted earlier in the day. Of course, the vampire had acted as aloof and disgusted as all Vampires he had ever interacted with had, but somehow Hamish felt there was something different about this particular moment. There were of course many fantastical hopes and prophecies by which the humans managed to haul themselves through the drudgery of their lives. Hamish had little time for them usually, merely focusing on surviving, but thinking about that interaction with the young Vampire, one might even have caught something of a smile on the poor man's filthy face. Not that even Hamish could say why.

Not far from his home, he heard a groan down an alley. Hamish stopped, and wondered for a second. The groan came again, merging into more of a cry. Although exhausted and eager to put what little food he had gathered in front of his wife and children, Hamish turned and took a few tentative steps towards the noise. He had been right. It was the young Vampire, huddled over, dark liquid spreading around his body.

'What's happened, sire?' Mumbled Hamish.

'Oh, please, please, you have to help me!' The Vampire stuttered, 'A Crawler! A Crawler got me.'

'A Crawler?'

'Yes!'

That puzzled Hamish. It was still a few hours until lights out, and no Crawler was to attack a Vampire or war could erupt again. He put it from his mind, and focused on the immediate issue. 'Is there anything I can do?'

'Please,' the Vampire pleaded, 'I need blood. Any blood as soon as possible.'

'I only have O-negative,' Hamish replied, 'And, I'm anaemic.'

'Doesn't matter, anything. Now!'

At least Hamish knew his veins would be full, so he offered the vampire his wrist and gasped as the sharp teeth dug in and the lips began to draw. Some moments passed. The Vampire seemed tearful. 'Why...? Why did you help me?' He asked, 'I know you. You are the man I pushed away today.'

'I can't stand to see another living being suffering sire.' Said Hamish, plainly, 'Always been that way.'

'Thank you ' Said Constantine. He rose, his strength returning, 'You are a good man. I'll never forget this.'

In the Palace, Myeth's day had gone from bad to worse. Iago's snivelling had driven him to distraction. Was it Myeth's fault that Iago's delectable AB-positive blood was the best he had ever tasted? No. All Myeth had done was furnish this bumbling blot of blood cattle with as much steak and spinach as the city's human farms could muster, housed him in the most luxurious of accommodation, seen to it that he had the best doctors and resources to ensure that his sweet, sweet blood supply kept flowing, and yet, still, STILL, Iago came to him complaining of weakness, headaches and heart palpitations. 'Please, sire, you have drained me of too much. I need more time to renew.'

'Not good enough.'

'If you take more, then I don't know how long it will be until I you can feast again.'

Myeth gave a grim chortle, 'As if you will dictate to me when I feast. I feast when I choose, and upon whom I choose.'

'But sire, the law of the council is that no Vampire shall kill a human, and if you take more sire, I am unsure if I will survive it.'

'That blasted council,' thought Myeth, 'meddling, long in the tooth.' If crawlers were the stick that held humans in their current state, then the no-kill law was the carrot, along with the promise of reasonable comforts that were beyond anyone's grasp in the wildness and waves beyond the city walls. 'I shall give you six hours.' He threatened, 'You have denied me long enough. In six hours, I will feast and I will feast long and hard.'

Now those six hour were up, and Myeth could tell from Iago's twisted, pallid face that it was not good news. 'Please, sire...' he started.

'Enough!' Myeth swooped from his throne, and grasping Iago's neck, bit deep and began exhaling long deep inhalations of blood. True, it was perhaps not the best his blood had ever been, but still, it was sweeter than honey and wine on Myeth's tongue.

'Please, sire, you'll kill me.' Myeth only drew harder and harder, until Iago's words faded in whimpers. 'Stop...' He whispered. One long, hard final draw and he let man crumple to the ground. It crossed Myeth's mind to make demands for his next appointment, but he could see from the light fading in Iago's eyes that there was little point. He wiped his lips, and stepped across the body to exit the chamber. This would be the way it was from here on in. No more would blood cattle dictate to him when he would and would not take....

'Father!' Constantine came crashing through the grand entrance, to see the empty space. His father conspicuously absent.

'Please... help me.' Iago gasped with all his remaining strength.

Constantine hesitated, but knew what he had to do. Using his sharp teeth, he burst his own skin, and gave his arm to Iago to feed. Of course, human blood would have done nothing for him, but Vampire blood swirled with the vitality of all those on whom they had fed upon. The colour returned to Iago's cheeks, his muscles spasmed with new energy, and like Constantine earlier, his eyes became wet with tears.

'You saved me, sire,' he wondered, 'you saved me. A human!'

'After one of your kind saved me today,' said Constantine, 'How could I not?'

But, sire, do you know what this means?’

Constantine looked at him curiously.

‘The prophesy has come true! A vampire has saved a human with his blood, and not through force, but through voluntary kindness.’

‘What does that mean?’

‘That the world shall be healed...’

Myeth left the feasting chamber and set out to return to his own apartments, however, his way was blocked by a hunched shadow. From the angry snarls and the stench of sewage, he knows it can only be Magnus, leader of the Crawlers. It didn’t even cross Myeth’s mind to question what Magnus was doing there. This was right where Myeth wanted him; right at the centre of his web.

In the low light, their eyes connect and their muscles tense. Here they were. Two old enemies, longing to destroy each other, face to face. They gritted their teeth, ready to attack, when a gasp filled the place and wave was sent through them. It was like a shiver, but warm and soft. And when they look towards each other again, some different feeling has come over them.

Constantine raised Iago from the ground. ‘Come,’ he said, ‘we must find my father, before he can do anymore damage.’

They raced through the door, down the darkened corridors and up the grand staircase. Iago feeling more youthful than he had ever felt in his life. When they arrived on the floor above, the sight they see shocks them both. Myeth and Magnus, no longer a Vampire, no longer a Crawler, but humans themselves, and more than that brothers, standing arms around each other’s shoulders on the balcony. ‘Look,’ said Myeth, ‘look what is happening.’

Constantine and Iago looked across the balcony to the horizon where the sky was being split by golden rays. ‘What is it?’ Asked Constantine.

‘The sun is rising,’ replied his father, ‘nearly four hundred years since it last set.’

And all across the city, all the people, for people was now all there were, watch as the golden orb climbed higher and higher, warming their faces as their eyes blinked to adjust to the light. And soon a great cheers erupts, as people fling their arms around each other and whip tears from the cheeks.

So one single act of kindness, one single drop of grace, changed this dark world to light, like a pebble when it is thrown into a pool send ripples across the surface.



Bertie, the Naughty Dragon by Rosalind Alexander

Tom often dreamt about dragons. Sometimes, he even dreamt that he WAS a dragon. He didn't like the scary kind who set things on fire. Instead, he imagined tame dragons who did good things for people. If Tom had a dragon, it would fly over green hills. Fly, fly, fly over buses, trains and even high above the clouds. His dragon would be his everyday friend.

One dark night, Tom heard a loud noise in the kitchen. He raced out of bed and darted down the creaky stairs. To his amazement, there sat a dragon, right upon his kitchen floor! What was he doing? Tom saw that the dragon was tucking into his favourite chocolate. He wasn't cross, just surprised. "Am I dreaming?" he wondered, giving himself a pinch. "Ow! No, I'm definitely not dreaming!"

The dragon turned around to find the boy looking at him. He clumsily stood up and muttered, "Hello."

Tom couldn't believe his ears- a talking dragon! "How did you get in the front door?" he asked the dragon.

"The door was ajar and I just stumbled in," the dragon replied.

"Do you have a name?"

"My name is Bertie," said the dragon. "Do YOU have a name?"

"Of course I do! My name is Tom." After a short pause, he continued, "It would have been nice if you'd asked to share my chocolate, you know."

"Oh, dear. I am ever so sorry, but I haven't eaten for days, you see," said Bertie.

"Well, that's no excuse! Looks like you need to learn some manners."

"I suppose so," said Bertie, pulling a face.

Tom soon forgot about the mishap, as he and Bertie got to know each other. Before long, they were great friends and decided to go on an adventure. Tom climbed up on Bertie's back and held on, as they flew out the door and upward. Far away, high up in the great skies, they flew, over hills, houses, lakes and tall trees. In the moonlight, Tom pointed out his school, a little dog who was wandering around and at his favorite place to hunt for magic rocks. After they'd seen all of the town and countryside, Bertie was understandably tired. He decided to



set down on a quiet bridge that overlooked a small pond. As he settled on the ground, Tom climbed off his back. "Thank goodness!" exclaimed Bertie, with a sigh of relief. "I could do with a drink of water."

"Me, too," replied Tom.

Once they'd quenched their thirst, they splashed each other in fun, until they fell back with exhaustion. Since it was a bit of a cool morning, they were both shivering, having been thoroughly soaked. Tom found some clover leaves, which he and Bertie used to dry themselves off with. "I'm really hungry. Can we go back to your house and have some more of that yummy chocolate?" asked Bertie.

"Now, now," said Tom. "It really isn't good for your tummy, to be eating so much chocolate. A bit of yummy food will do you good, though."

"Like what?" asked Bertie, rubbing his tummy.

"What if I make some of my special Green Turtle Soup? You'll enjoy it and it'll make your teeth strong," said Tom.

"Sounds good to me!" said Bertie, cheerfully.

"Let's go!" Tom barely had time to climb onto Bertie's back and hold on, when they suddenly zoomed toward the sky. Before long, they could see Tom's house, his bedroom light still on. As they entered the slightly open window, Tom's mother jumped up, in fright. "Where have you been?" she asked. "I came to check in on you and you were gone! I've been so worried."

Tom apologized and explained the night's events. His mother was happy to meet Bertie and noticed that his tummy was grumbling loudly!

"I apologize for the noise, but I'm ever so hungry," said Bertie, looking at Tom.

"I told Bertie I would make him my special Green Turtle Soup," said Tom.

His mother thought that was an excellent idea, as the sun was just coming up and it would be breakfast time soon. As they went down the creaky steps and into the kitchen, Tom excitedly told his mother all about his new friend Bertie and the adventure they'd been on, while the town slept.





Articles

Under the Beech Tree on Tuesday 20th September 2022 at Corstorphine Hill *by Nic S.*

I don't think I've really paid a lot of attention to the under canopy of a tree before now. The mindfulness task was to use our sense of sight to focus in on something that really grabbed our attention and really look at it, to see beyond the surface. I chose a spot to sit in against a beech tree that had a particularly lovely view of the sun illuminating a patch of established ferns, prehistoric memories of an alien time. I turned my attention to the branches and leaves above me and first focused on the movements of a tiny fly playing an unsuccessful game of tig with an even smaller semi-opaque insect that was crowned the winner of the game by hiding on the other side of the leaf. The confusion of the little fly was amusing and it eventually flew off to no doubt attempt a win with another game with an unwitting opponent. In the absence of a mobile fixation, my attention hovered to the small leaflets emerging from the lumpy nodes on the inner branch directly above me. I followed the trail further along the branch and followed a journey of the leaflets' eventuality-bright green stems with single leaves, to more leaves growing along a single stem, to side growth and the dominant stem now becoming a branch, and to the thick woody branches reaching out like a dancer's graceful arms. I found myself realising that I hadn't really taken time to look at the development of a tree in terms of it's width growth. All these leaves that we see as the dense greenness of a tree is made up of various stages of branch growth and each stage is equally as important to the success of these gentle giants. My time was coming to an end and I felt my awareness drifting more towards a general anxiety than to full-focus, however much my attention wanted to stay there and linger within the simple magnitude of this beech tree. I gave thanks to this particular tree for allowing me to be in its presence and teaching me to be still enough to notice structures and patterns and to understand how plants and trees grow. There's academically having knowledge and reading and understanding the invisible science of these organisms, and then there's *knowing*— using the senses to physically differentiate between species, to note them and have the real-world experiential learning.

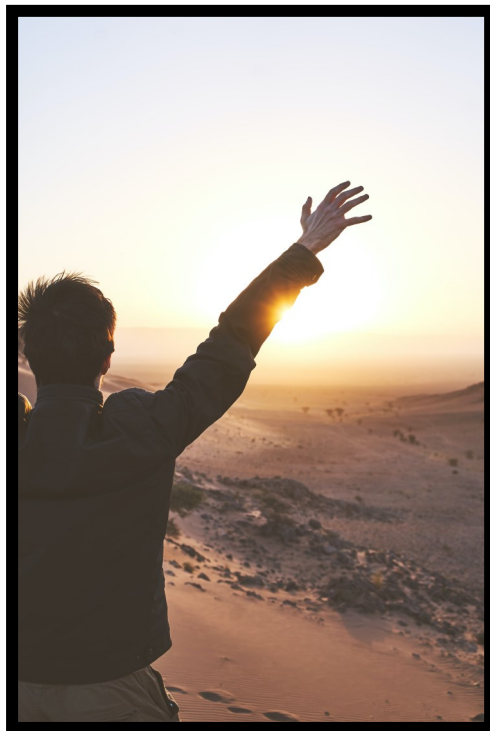
Humility, Health, Wealth and Joy *by Eddie Watt*

Humility, Health, Wealth and Joy. Four pillars of my life to get the direction that I am determined to at least attempt to become a better person. Previously an alcoholic, humility was a foreign emotion to me. Alcohol would have ruined my life had I not found the strength to beat it. Self centered on getting the next hit of my passport out of the heartbreak and my coping mechanism to mask the past pain in my personal life. I live in the present day and this drug is no longer a part of my life. One lesson I have been fortunate to learn is that finding the Humility to be grateful for every moment I'm alive. Fourteen years of hard drinking has had devastating effects on my health to the point of being given six months to live over four years ago. Who would have thought that I could turn my life around and see the light at the end of the darkness of alcohol dependence. Health is

still so important to my recovery even though it's been three and a half years sober. Health, in particular mental health, is very much a part of my daily routine. Born with an extremely rare genetic neurological condition and just diagnosed aged 48 which is linked to the diagnosis of early onset Dementia and struggling with poor mental health illness and issues prior to the pandemic which has swept the world has given me a new insight that our past doesn't define us, it's about accepting our many flaws that each of have and at least try and overcome the challenges and obstacles that this journey we call life throws at us.

Wealth certainly doesn't mean or guarantee you success and monetary wealth, while helpful, can't buy eternal happiness and prosperity. To me personally Wealth is having a wealth of faith and belief in yourself. Belief in myself is something that I strongly struggle with. Perhaps the forgiveness that God gives us all I find it hard to forgive myself. One thing that I've learned is that the most important things are not the big car or house nor big career title it's the simple things in life that are important. Having come through the homeless system but fortunate enough to never having had to live on the cold, cruel streets it's perhaps given me a little more open honest perspective on how fortunate I am to have a roof over my head and food on the table especially in light of having previously held a moderately successful 25-year career in hotel management. I've seen it from both sides of the spectrum. That's why I think that the work that Bethany Christian Trust does is such a special, valuable and precious asset. From the many hard working people and unsung volunteer heroes who have shown a kindness that I am not used to receiving and a belief in me that I sometimes feel I don't deserve gives a chink of light in many people's time of despair.

To close, Joy is an absolute integral part of everyone's well being and is not a thing that is easy to perpetually have and keep. Like life it will have peaks and troughs, triumphs and failure's. If there is one thing that keeps my mind active and my soul strong is that a little bit of humility, health, a whole lot of wealth of experience and faith can maybe, just maybe bring the eternal happiness and joy that we all deserve and strive to achieve. Take care of yourself and each other.



Three Short Articles by Graham Forrester

Cutting a long complex story short, I am a long term loner but NOT by choice. At rare and random times in my life there have been things that helped to change that. But all through it I always did my best to change it also. Every little help counts. I joined the writers group in September 2013. I started to see it as a one for all and all for one kind of feel thing. There is no bad mouthing others, putting each other down, point scoring or finger pointing.

I later started to write mainly about inspiring things for others who may read it in **THE BUGLE** magazine. I even wrote something that is personal and tragic. It was not for pity seeking, but to let others going through hell see that they are not alone. We all do have something in common, no matter what it is or how small or big it may be.

My hope was to find understanding non-judgemental friendships from the group. Positive thinking is the key to many things.

Imagine This

Imagine that there was you and another you... but that that the other you was living his life, making the most of the good things and times you missed out on, no matter what the reason was or who made it be so. He plays it all the way you should have done.

Imagine that he does not say the things you wish you had not said and does not do what you wish you had not done. Would you be wishing that was you all along, and having regrets that you weren't? Would you need to wish this or have these regrets? Who can say?

Hopefully not.

Not everyone wants you to know

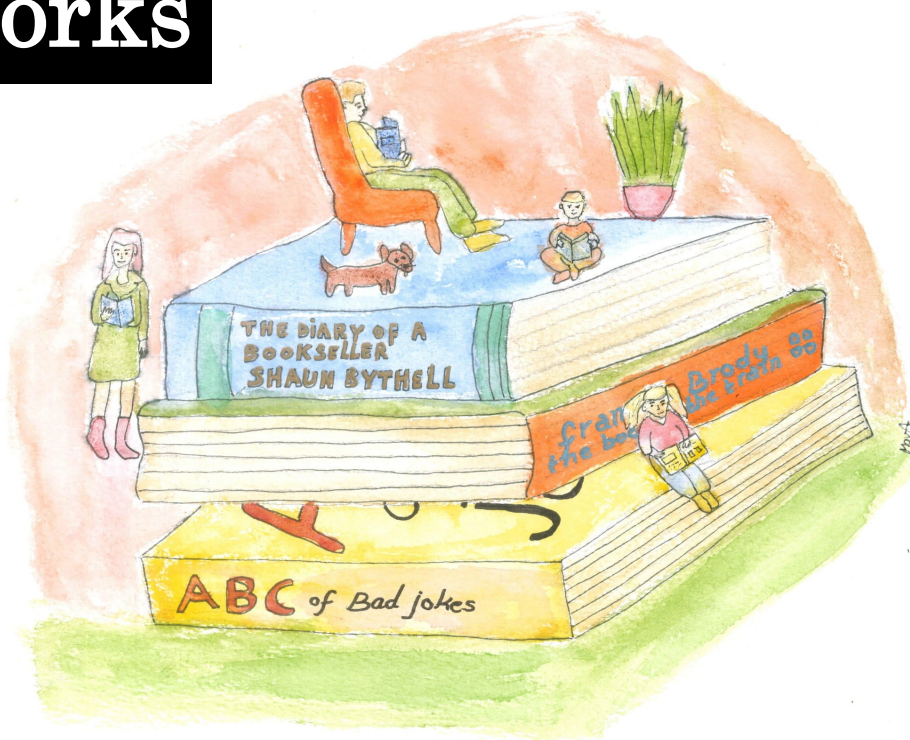
For whatever reason there are people who hide that they are lonely and loners, but not by self-choice. If you know what to look for then you may not need to be told.

For many reasons some people do not want you to know they are struggling with something. It does not have to be cash connected in any way. If you can help them then DO IT, befriend people. We all need someone some times and we may never know when.

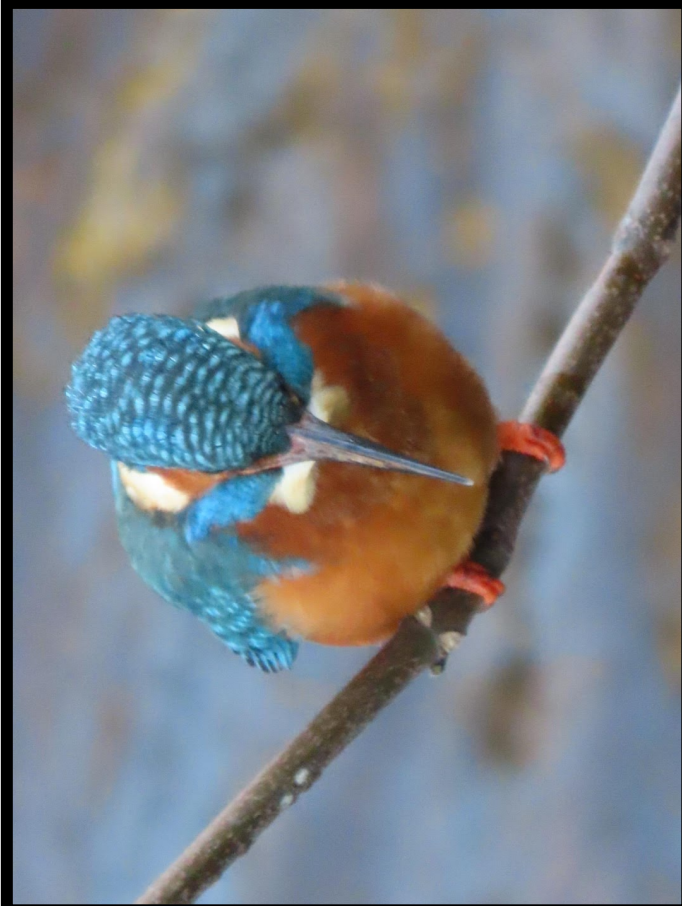
Keep in mind it could be you and what goes round comes round even in positive ways when positive attitude is given.



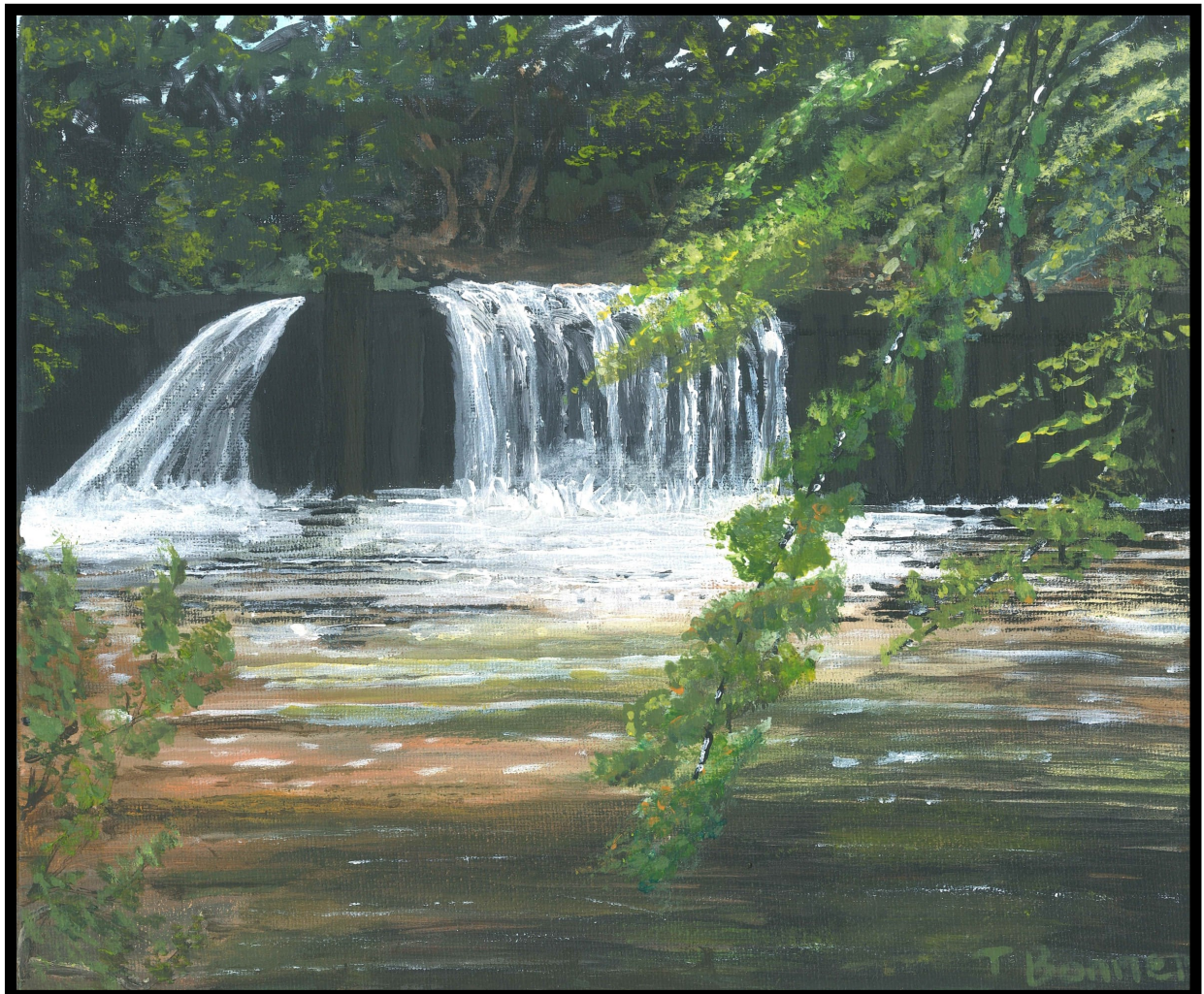
Artworks



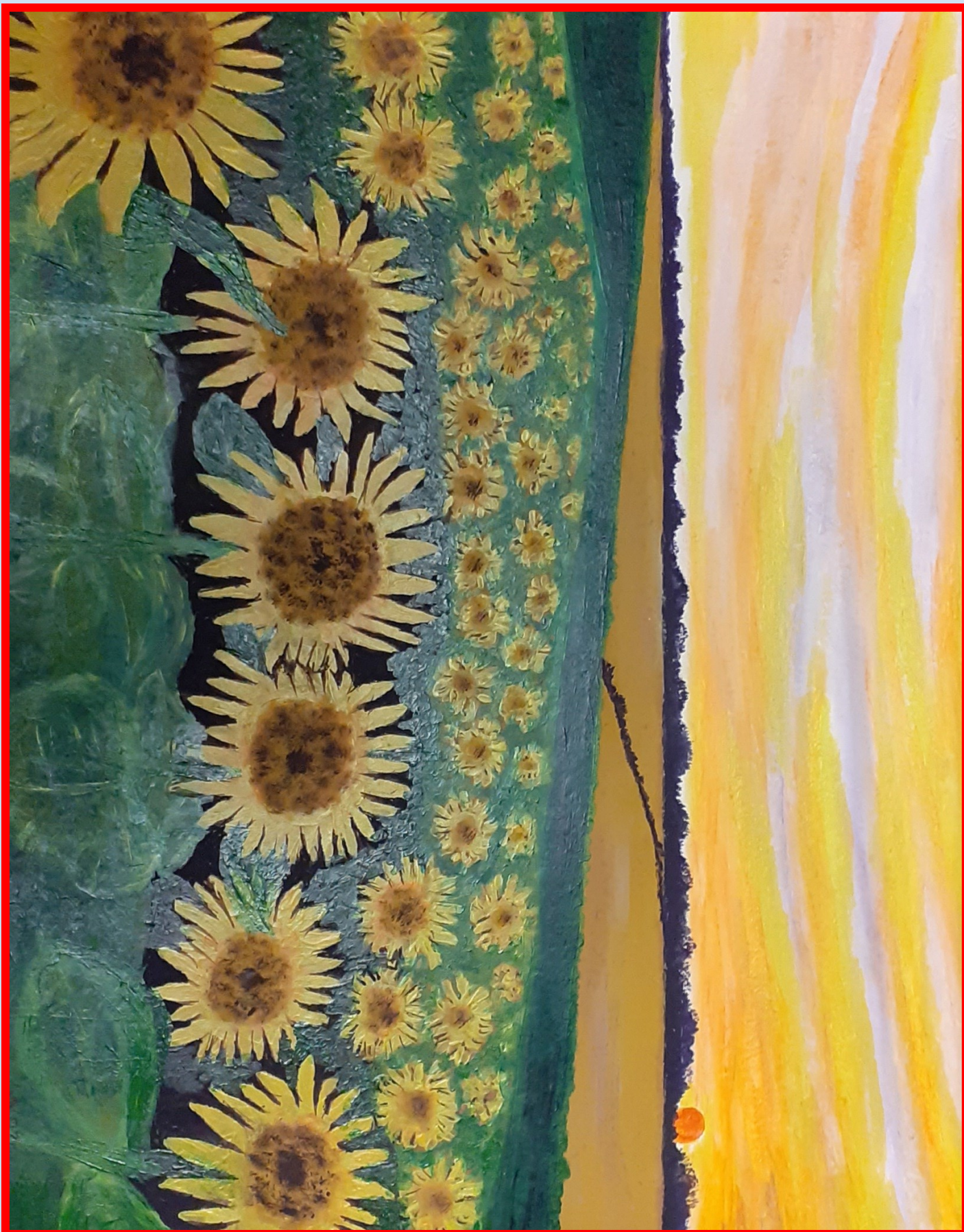
Two Illustrations by Monique Van Aalst



Four Wildlife Photographs by Rosalind Alexander
Over Leaf: Four Paintings by Tony Bonner







Sunset Over Sunflower by Garry Miller (Aka. Hoz)
Opposite: **Photograph** by Rosalind Alexander

Poems

A large, leafless tree stands in a pond, its reflection clearly visible in the water. The sky is blue with scattered clouds. In the background, there is a grassy field, a fence, and a small building with graffiti.

**REFLECTIONS &
REMEMBERINGS**

Freudian Landscapes

By Allan Buchan

Psychodrama

A dance in confusion

A play of surrealism

Like a fish floating in the desert

Making no sense

A dream of interpretation

Unless

It's the haunting expression

Of an artist; of Salvador Dali

That dissects the mind

Into fish and desert; particle and wave

Separating the senses from the
emotions

A Doctor Jekyll and Mister Hyde

Drinking the potion

Of oil on canvas

Conscious and unconscious

Struggling for superiority

Day at war with night

Eclipsing at dusk and dawn

Melting time

Into a new form of wilderness

A Freudian landscape

Where a single voice

Cries out for help

Looking desperately for peace

Trapped between two images

That are mutually independent

Yet, sharing the same frame of
reference

They say escape is easy

Just look away from the painting

But, it's a portrait of you



Recall *by Mikael*

After a weary wait,

The dawn threw open a window,

And flickering in it's own place

A postcard memory of something unsaddened.

Maybe an offering,

Maybe of something to come,

But he knew it had always been around.

More than memory,

Belief,

Transformed in an instant into something everlasting,

Just occasionally misplaced,

Like an old book

Or a photo in between the pages.

The mist had settled,

Illuminating the space between the sky and the ground,

And he felt loved.



Be Beautiful by AJA

Eat away, my hungry one,
for we know, when you're done,
you'll sleep for a while
and then, true to style,
you'll wake and be.
for all to see,
the epitome of beauty

Eat to feed your hibernation.
Sustain yourself for the celebration
by becoming an adult butterfly.
Eat, don't die
before your transformation,
and your coronation,
as beauty unrivalled.

If you eat enough to transform
You will no longer be a worm
but brighten up our sky
for then all you have to do
is fly, and be you,
alive and so very beautiful.

Body Dysmorphia by Nic S.

I wish I was an amorphous blob
And didn't have to worry about
The jiggles that surround a skeletal structure.
Embarrassment and shame,
Delusions and denial,
Meaningless and unfounded
With no basis in reality
As a formless entity.

Rock Pools by Mikael

I count the cracks
When I walk the street alone
I turn puddles into rock pools
When i feel low.



Lockdown Limericks

By Monique Van Aalst

There was a Dutch lassie in Leith
She couldn't stand long on her feet
The lockdown made her weep
She lost all her sleep
And she couldn't hold on to her teeth

(la la la la la la)

This Dutch lassie got a visit from Perry
He sailed right over on a ferry
He didn't stay long
The attraction was wrong
And she ended up needing a sherry

(la la la la la la)

It's hard to get anything written
In a time when I sometimes get bitten
By a metaphorical black dog
Caught up in a fog
Or by a 'love bug' very smitten

(la la la la la la)

The lock down plays havoc with the mind
When can I leave this misery behind?

It gets on my nerves
It spirals and it swerves
Oh sanity is very hard to find

(la la la la la la)

Corona is the most dreaded word
I'd rather have a date with Colin Firth
Mister Darcy any time
He can commit no crime
As long as I won't get hurt

(la la la la la la)

I'm only a simple kinda guy

By Garry Millar (aka Hoz)

I'm only a simple kinda guy
With the essentials of life
I been a Carpenter
I been a backsliding Christian
Still try to repaint my past
I been right down
But fortunately not out
I have had holidays in the sun
But also have lost my freedom
I have had feelings of remorse
Which I remotely remember
My family umbilical cord was cut
I have worn Tuxedos with pride
I have also walked barefoot in the snow
I have flown over the Swiss Alps
I have crawled on my knees to be free
I have watched the brightest star
I have heard the Wailing Wall cry
But I'm still a simple kinda guy

The Human Soul by *Rosalind Alexander*

The heart is the most sensitive work of art.
It's cares nurtured the soul.
The eyes are the window to your inner most
being.
Whether you are in the midst of a storm, or
flourishing in a meadow
it craves the peacefulness of the valleys.
The tender care of lambs.
He is the wise shepherd.



He Never Knew Me by Nic S.

He never really knew me.

I never knew myself.

I had skills that I had then that I am only just understanding are inherent within me. The ability to listen to people and hold space has always been there, but it was neither given value nor nurtured.

Now, in my adult years, I have seen it as a natural ability that has rare value.

He never knew me.

He didn't want to.

To know me was to see me as a whole person.

To see me as a whole person was to admit I had also been abused.

To accept that I was abused was to understand that I needed love,

Love that he did not have to give.

In his eyes, I was a carbon copy of the person that hurt us both,

Except I wasn't.

Genetically I had both of them inside of me, Not just her.

Him too.

He was determined to change me, only his efforts were futile.

He didn't show me the alternatives. He expected me to change into something I had no concept of. If I knew how to be different I would have been that way. I was a teenager trying to find my way in a world that was fraught with emotions and fluctuating hormones, alongside living in a house that felt more like a prison than a warm and safe environment. I had already gone through enough trauma in one lifetime, and now I was having to navigate exams, fitting in socially, readjusting friendship groups and this confusing change in dynamics with boys.

Who I am today is not a person I would ever have imagined as a young person. I didn't

have the emotional or mental space to comprehend a future vision of myself. I had ideals that could never come to fruition. For years I lived in delusion of a parental relationship that I saw emulated on the TV shows I addictively consumed on a daily basis, avoiding the emptiness of an inescapable reality. Delusion was the antidote to familial rejection. A rejection that would haunt me to a near early death.

He never knew me,

And I don't want him to.

The light and joy that I have worked hard to grow and nurture is available only to those who deserve it.

His rejection of my existence was overpowered by the dissolution of his presence in my life.

He never knew me,

And now he never will.

He never knew me,

But now I know myself.



Springsteen by Mikael

listening to Springsteen's Streets of Philadelphia on a bootleg live album i have on vinyl.
that song changes it's title to streets of East Yorkshire when my head hears it.
i was given less than 4 months to live.
my body had collapsed from hard living.
i was told to say goodbye to anyone i care about.
but i wanted to see York again before i died.
in Yorkshire i found out about some experimental treatment.
with an 82percent chance of a worse death.
i was the worst they had.
i told em to roll the dice.
they said the treatment would be agony.
horrific.
used that exact word.
they weren't lying.
and i once jumped off 40mls of methadone when i was young.
there were times i prayed to die.
i used to have to inject myself in the liver with a giant syringe.
and for 24hours i couldn't move for the waves of pain.
couldn't tolerate sound.
light.
i had very dark curtains.
lived in a cabin in a field.
and built a Mary garden.
girls used to drive from Harrogate to see it.
found out by the posh girls at the stables down the lane.
14 months they had fixed me.
wonder of wonders.
and so i borrowed money from my old man and built a little house.
just off Beverley Road.
it took him a month to convince me to take the loan.
said he wanted to make up for everything.
the one time i fell for wishful thinking.
the house went up one winter.
i carried bricks in the mud.
wasn't in it a week and a half when i lost it in a legal wrangle with my old man.
leaving me homeless.
barely out of a walking stick.
while he took the proceeds and ran.
bought a range rover.
so when i hear that song it really sings to me.
and the crackle of the vinyl suits my scars.

The Scarlet Bath by Tony Bonner

CONTENT WARNING: The following poem contains vivid description of suicidal thoughts. The writer has said he is now able to look back at the time when he wrote this and feel grateful that he is no longer in that place. It is included here for its power and insight, and as a reminder that no one is alone in struggling with these feelings. If you, or anyone you know, is struggling, please know that help is out there and recovery from mental health issues is possible. **Samaritans:** 116 123

We don't need pills or knives
Ropes or razors to end our lives.
Flashing thoughts, sharper than steel
Cut too deep to let us heal.

"What if...", "I could...", the verbal path
Leads down towards the scarlet bath.
"I can't" "I'm blind" "There's no way back"
Steps on depressions descending track.

Are there two voices deep inside?
Me and my monster, forever tied
In a quarrel through a lengthening night
A bludgeoning, painful, bloody fight.

With no referee to judge and guide
No saving bell, no one ringside
The monster's words start to make sense
Past, present, but no future tense.

The future will be dark and hard'
Happiness free, bruised and scarred.
No loving other at your side
To dry your tears ,to be a guide.

"Is that the way you want to say
You're forced to live from day to day?
I'm not the monster, I'm your friend,
And I'll be with you at the end.

I struggle hard to raise my voice
"Please let me see I have a choice.
A way to change, a different path?
Monster points – the scarlet bath.

Too tired to live, too scared to die
Too scared to live, ashamed of why
That all my fifty seven years
Have left me nothing except fears.

And if a new life can't begin
I fear I'll let the monster win.





**Bald in North Berwick by Allan
Buchan**

*Inspired by a trip to North Berwick
with the Bethany's Men's group.*

Pebbles on the beach
Sun-dried
Like a crowd of bald headed men
Filmed from high above
Never two the same
Shaped and shaded
And formed into groups
And held in place
By liquid sand
The tide is far out
Leaving a sullen calmness
And while the waves in the distance
wash forwards
The sea retreats
Seabirds prefer to paddle
As the living belongs to the water
The emotional power
Of a medium
Moving – very moving
The offbeat of ebb and flow
The disquiet of surge and retire
Is the heartbeat of the shore
The tide will return
Moon rising
Bringing turmoil and madness
That causes the stillness of reason
To wash over the heads
Of bald headed men in North Berwick

I Hope You Read This by AJA

What have I got to say
That just might pave the way
for someone to return home
and never need again to roam
no longer a tramp or feeling so alone?
If you are in the same boat as me
can you create a poem that lets you see
where and how to get along
and with a friend get to sing a happy song
safe and glad both are no longer so alone?
Are you walking down a new street
feeling anything but safe or sweet
but really wishing this lonely life could end?
Think, what could it cost to make a friend
if you write a poem that speaks from the heart.
If you succeed
and let someone read
what you have to say
might two souls not win a happier day
where loneliness is made more bearable.
How hurtful is this sad age
caused by that unhappy rage
and do you hope or even care
friends do want you back there
now you and they know what that rage has cost?
What are you going to lose
if you sit and choose
to speak up and hope
poetry helps you do more than just cope
and you see it as the first successful step you took.
It is not a sin
to try to win
a better life, with friends who care,
and made glad you are there,
all learning **how** to have a **better** life.

The Little Visitor
by Rosalind Alexander

A little baby squirrel
lost its way
But found time to play.

Tugging at my shoe laces
I gave it a wee bite to eat
it nibbled all that was left
The poor wee blighter
Chased me around the room
He jumped around
like a little acrobat
Then at last we let
it go.

But the little tinker
popped back to say
hello.
I ran for Shelia
next door.
She kindly brought a box
The poor wee might wasn't
Happy it tried to scramble
Out of the box
we tried once more
to let the wee thing go
At last it followed
it's foot steps home....

Springtime ***by Tam Laidlaw***

Spring is in the air, there's magic everywhere,
Sunglasses at the ready, dig out my old deck chair,
Discard my gloves, winter boots and my woollen
hat,
My old hot water bottle, there's now no need for
that!

Spring is in the air, snow has melted on the hills,
Flowers now in bloom, snowdrops, crocuses, and
daffodils,
Newly mowed grass has awakened my sense of
smell.
A warm breeze blowing through my hair, all is good
and well!

Bethany (What Can I Say)
by Allan Buchan

Life can be groovy
Until you falter
Some with ill health
Some at the altar

Leading to homelessness
Or related issues
And the councillor's table
With the box of tissues

Then comes support
And getting it together
Finding some calm
From the bad weather

Next, there is structure
A routine to follow
Where one can cope
Today and tomorrow

And all the time you're healing
And learning new things
Where writers write
And singers sing

Pulled from the mire
Saved from the abyss
With a road to travel
Bethany is this





And though the meal was mighty fine
It was my memory stayed filled
Coz you agreed to another date
And we have our friendship still.

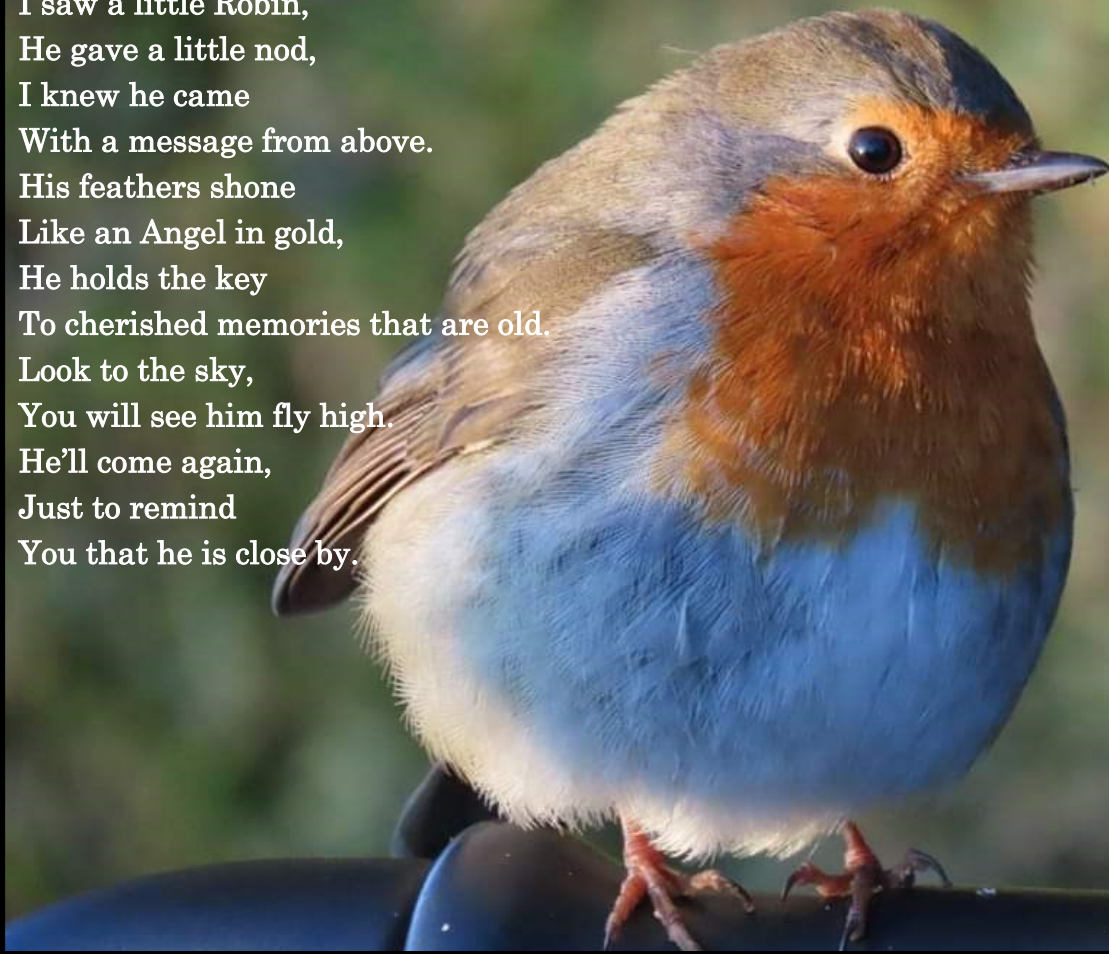
Writer's Block by Nic S

No matter how hard I try to grab them, they are adapted to their environment and know the nooks to hide from my desperate grasps.



A Reminder by Rosalind Alexander

I saw a little Robin,
He gave a little nod,
I knew he came
With a message from above.
His feathers shone
Like an Angel in gold,
He holds the key
To cherished memories that are old.
Look to the sky,
You will see him fly high.
He'll come again,
Just to remind
You that he is close by.



Creative Writer by Tam Laidlaw

I think, of all the jobs, I'd rather be a creative writer,
More than being a milkman, postman, fireman or cage fighter,
I can honestly say, those jobs I really don't disrespect,
Writing's the only occupation where I most connect.

I love to think and let my imagination run wild,
For as long as I can remember, even as a very young child,
I'd sit in class, but my mind wasn't there, all throughout my daydreaming youth,
All those times I escaped from the real world have been beneficial, I'm living proof!

I Love By Garry Millar (aka Hoz)

I love Jesus
I love the Creator
The Alpha and the Omega
I love my father and my mother
I love my brother and my sister
I love my neighbours as myself
I love being Scottish
I love my forefathers

I love being sober
I love beauty
I love Mother Nature
I love painting
I love being me
Thank you Jesus for dying
For my sins on the cross
So that I may have everlasting LIFE

Douglas's Diary

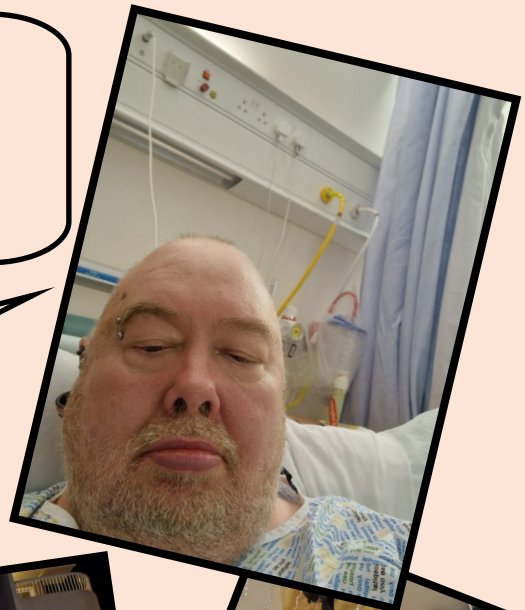


It was always going to be a good Christmas this year, with all the decorations up everywhere! The Mound looked very nice, and the decorations up at The Dome looked fabulous!



This is a statue of Kenny Buchanan, a boxer from Leith, in the St. James Centre Quarter.

I was in the Royal Edinburgh Infirmary because I had a fall in the bath. I was in for a week, with a very sore back.



Me at the Hibs ground on Christmas Day!



This is the Hotel Sol Pelicanos Ocas in Benidorm. Here I am at their 31st December Gala Meal!



Back Page Banter with Angus...

What is the slowest area of Edinburgh? Wester Snails...

What do you get if you cross an Kangaroo with an ice cream? A Whippie Skippy!

What animal has the best sense of humour? A Gi-laugh...



What lamp shade is made of sweets? A Candy-lier

What do you call a boxing mouse? Mice Tyson

What do parrots use to communicate? Squawky Talkies

What do you get when you cross a ball with a musical instrument? Pingie-pingie-gongie-bongies

What chocolate can fly? A fairy milk

What do you get when you cross a cow with a kangaroo?
A mooie-rooie!

What is a squirrel's favourite sandwich? A Nuttie-Buttie

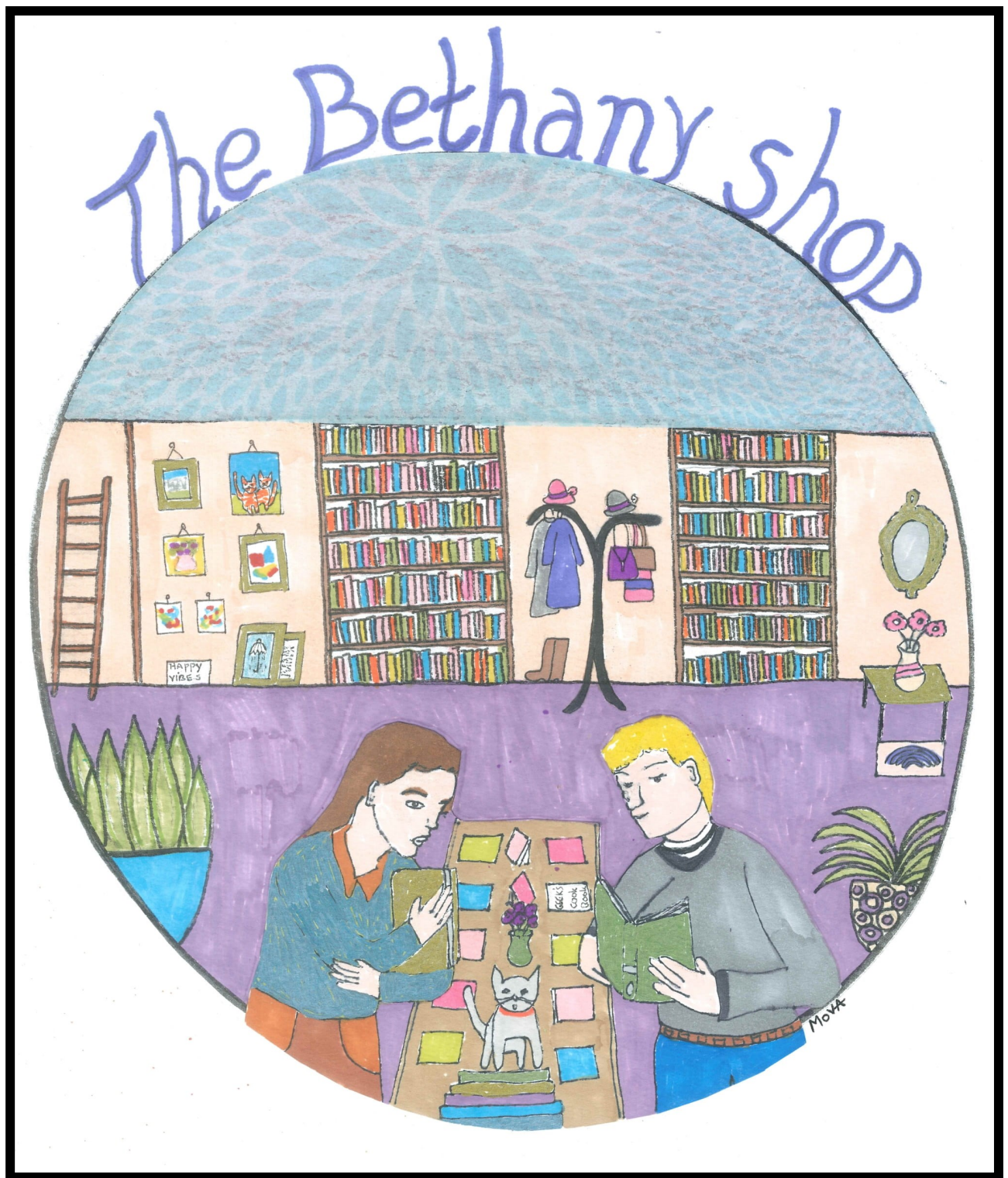
What do you call a pest driver? A buggy buggie

What do you get if you cross Saturn with a roundabout?
A Ringie Spinny

What do you get if you cross Bethany Christian Trust, The Bugle Magazine, a character from The Magic Roundabout and a dance? A Bugle-Bethie-Dougal-Boogie-Oogie-Doogie!



The Bugle group meet most Wednesday afternoons. We meet for workshops, to write, to catch-up and to go for trips. If you or anyone you know would be interested in coming along or finding out more please email samrowe@bethanychristiantrust.com or call 07818893093. If you just have a piece of writing or art that you would like to submit please email bugle.edinburgh@gmail.com



To Garry Grant Miller (aka Hoz)
17th July 1946 – 19th December 2022



**Creative
Expressions**