

THE BUGLE

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

ISSUE 61

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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 that even when the pandemic forced us apart, we maintained nearly a dozen regular contributors as we continue you to do so today. 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
- To not use our images or writing elsewhere (All authors and artists retain copyright).
- Credit the artist or author when quoting them

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Your Feedback

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Disclaimer

The views expressed in The Bugle are not necessarily those of Bethany Christian Trust.

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Great Scots – Callum Beattie by Sandra Stewart

My husband and I have been fans of the Edinburgh based singer/songwriter Callum Beattie for over half of his life. His father, Davey and my husband John worked on the same jobs together. We were all out at Whistle Binkies one night and Davey said Callum was singing down at Jenny Ha's in the Canongate so we all went to see him. It has been a blood, sweat and tears slog for him to get to where he is now, selling out the Hydro in Glasgow in November, 2025. It is some achievement to go from selling about thirty tickets to fourteen thousand. He has released three albums now, *People Like Us*, *Vandals* and *INDI*.



INDI was released on the 23rd of January and the album launch was held at the Doubletree Hilton in

Glasgow the same day. It was a great excuse to get all dressed up in our glad rags and attend this Black-Tie event. Everything was going like clockwork, checked into the hotel, got my hair all put up at the hairdresser, put on my lovely party frock and my Dress Stewart tartan bolero jacket. John looked regal in his Royal Stewart kilt and plaid, till he sprayed what he thought was deodorant over his Argyle jacket. I thought it was silly string coming out of the can, but it turned out to be shaving foam!!! I was in absolute hysterics trying to wipe him down. Everybody looked absolutely fabulous, lots of sequins, glitter and bling, and more importantly, lots of men in kilts. There were forty tables of ten, so roughly four hundred people. Grado from Scotsquad was the compere and introduced the bands and held the charity auction. There was a golf weekend at St Andrews, tickets for the Boyzone reunion in London along with first class train travel and overnight stay, a few spa weekends and one table actually paid £5000 for Callum to come and play in their house. All money raised went to Ups and Downs and Mikeysline charities. Callum and the band came on about 9pm and played for an hour, which included quite a few tracks from the new album. Then when the band was finished there was a DJ to keep us all on the dance floor till the wee small hours. The album launch also included a small tour of Scottish cities in more intimate and smaller venues. His manager has already told us that this will be the last of them.

Callum began his musical career at the age of thirteen when he received his first guitar as a Christmas present. He writes from the heart and many of his songs are from real life experiences. The name of his first album *People Like Us*, released in 2020, apparently came from a conversation with his brother when they were playing pool. Callum was telling him

about his hopes and aspirations of writing and singing his own songs one day.

His brother told him, “Dinnae be daft Callum, things like that dinnae happen to people like us!” His songs tell stories, “Salamander Street” is about a school friend that became embroiled in prostitution, “Mammy” is a heart-rending song about his mother leaving the family home, “Some Heroes Don’t Wear Capes” is a lovely tribute to his father bringing his boys up alone, “Can’t Kill the Summer” and “Sunflower” are dedicated to a beautiful and brave teenage friend who tragically succumbed to cancer. Callum met his current manager, Dave Rogers, just as he was about to throw in the towel. Such was Dave’s



faith and conviction, he offered to work for Callum for seven months for nothing to try and turn things around. He maintains that Callum is “the wee brother I never thought I needed.” Callum is now an independent artist who sold out the Hydro in November 2025 and has a loyal band supporting him. Jason Tucker (guitar), Eryn Rae (violin), Johnny Madden (base), Gus Harrower (keyboards) and Nairn Milne (drums) are all great friends and they believed in him as much as Dave did. They have gone from paying for their own petrol and just earning a little bit of pocket money to making a substantial living as musicians. It is sad that there will be less of the more intimate gigs, my personal favourite was Strathpeffer Pavillion in the Highlands. But this was always inevitable. Callum’s talent could never be contained and he is now reaping the benefits of his hard work. I think Edinburgh Castle will be my last Callum Beattie concert; I would never survive a mosh pit!

For all the band, this journey is not just about money and fame. Callum and Dave have raised around £1million for charities like Mikeysline, Ups and Downs, prostate cancer and have recently set up the INDI Foundation. They joined Steps to Hope on a trip to South Africa and paid the tuition fees for many children to attend school until the age of sixteen and even contributed to the buying of a fishing boat for a man that lost his friend and his boat in a storm. It is a hard thing to keep your integrity and humility in the music industry but Callum has certainly achieved that, and his dream of playing at Edinburgh Castle comes true this summer. My husband and I have followed his career since he was not even old enough to have a pint in the pub he was playing in! There is a husky maturity in his voice now and he just gets better. The boy’s made it!

The INDI Foundation is a new charity founded by Callum Beattie and Dave Rogers, created to champion creativity, opportunity and access to music education through hands-on songwriting and creative workshops in deprived areas. INDI aims to inspire young people, build confidence and nurture self-expression where it’s needed most. Alongside its work in communities, the charity is also building a dedicated music school in Ghana, creating long-term access to the creative education and resources. At its heart, INDI believes that creativity can change lives—no matter where you’re from.

Valentine's Day by *Monique van Aalst*

A couple of Bugles ago, I wrote about Saint Patrick's Day as I was born that very day. This time I decided to write about another significant day, the 14th February, dedicated to Saint Valentine and it happens to be our editor Sam's birthday too, so it was not so hard to choose a subject for this article. During my adolescence years, a time of anxiety, awkwardness, but also for hope and aspirations, I received the occasional Valentine's Card, mostly anonymous. It was a brave thing to do for the sender because there was always a slight chance of the affection not being reciprocated. I was painfully shy, but hid it well by playing it cool. Maybe too well, as I never sent one myself to a potential crush.

My late mother was quite sentimental and sent me a couple of customised Valentine Cards, over the years. As a token of her love for her two children, my brother Jeffrey and I thought it rather sweet and we returned the favour, sending her some chocolates and cards. I will look briefly into the history of Valentine's Day, how it evolved from a Christian feast day into a romantic celebration and the significance it still has these days.

The Origin of Valentine's Day

Although there has been talk of several Christian martyrs named Valentine, the day may have taken its name from a priest who was martyred around 270 AD by the Roman emperor Claudius II Gothicus. He was sent to prison for defying the emperor's orders by secretly marrying young lovers to spare them from war. A married man wouldn't be any good on the battlefield. The story goes that the priest signed and handed a letter '*from your Valentine*' to his jailer's daughter, whom he had healed from blindness and whom he befriended. In other accounts there is a reference to Valentine of Terni, a bishop for whom the holiday was named, although it may be possible that the two saints were actually one person. For this reason, this feast day is associated with love, but not necessarily romantic love.

Another source says that in order to remind men of their vows and God's love, Saint Valentine is said to have cut hearts from parchment giving them to soldiers and persecuted Christians, a possible origin of the widespread use of hearts on the holiday.

The idea that Valentine's Day customs perpetuated those of the Roman 'Lupercalia', a local festival, which emphasised the ancient fertility rituals and Spring, has been accepted uncritically and repeated, in various forms up to this day. The more general festival of Juno Februa, meaning '*Juno the purifier*' or the '*chaste Juno*' was celebrated on February 13th and 14th. A fictitious lottery where boys and



An English Victorian era Valentine card located in the Museum of London.

men drew the names of girls and women from a jar to couple up with have no foundations at all. This even appeared in 18th century antiquarian works by Alan Butler and Francis Douce where these modern sources claim that Lupercalia was the source of practice of sending Valentines.

The first recorded association of Saint Valentine's Day with romantic love is believed to be in 'The parliament of fowls' (1382) by Geoffrey Chaucer, him of The Canterbury Tales anyone, a dream vision portraying a parliament of birds to choose their mates.

Formal messages or 'valentines' appeared in the 1500, mainly as poems or love letters between couples and by the late 1700s commercially printed cards were being used. Valentines commonly depict Cupid, the Roman God of love, along with hearts (emotions) and a reference to 'lovebirds' or doves.

*"The rose is red, the violet's blue
The honey's sweet and so are you.
Thou art my love and I am thine
I drew thee to my Valentine
The lot was cast and then I drew
And Fortune said it shou'd be you"*

A modern, may I say cliché, Valentine Day's poem, can be found in a collection of English nursery rhymes published in 'Gammer Gurton's Garland (1784) and published in London by Joseph Johnson...

In 1707 a British publisher issued 'The Young Man's Valentine Writer', which contained a number of suggested sentimental verses for the young lover unable to write his own. Printers had already printed so called 'mechanical valentines', a limited number of cards with verses and sketches. Paper Valentines became so popular in the early 19th century being mass produced in factories. Fancy handmade Valentines were made with real lace and ribbons. A quite impressive 60.000 cards were sent in 1835! And nowadays that number has risen globally as it being the ultimate way of showing the one you love how much they mean to you. However, the greeting cards are all mostly machine made (Hallmark) and too over-commercialised which some think has taken the spontaneity a bit out of it. Although I think a lot of women wouldn't secretly mind receiving a card, especially if it's from someone they fancy themselves. A personalised poem, song or piece of artwork would be highly

Top Ten gifts besides giving a personalised card, that people love to receive from a loved one:

1. Chocolate, sweets, preferably heart-shaped
2. Flowers, bouquets
3. Jewellery (sentimental, bespoke pieces)
4. Romantic dinner for two
5. Spa day voucher
6. Personalised items with the couple's image
7. Perfume, fragrance, beauty sets
8. Lingerie, Cosy apparel, lounge wear
9. Experience voucher; activity based
10. Curated, luxury hampers or interactive kits like e.g. Pasta making.

appreciated. In the list below you will find a top ten of gifts both men and women who love celebrating the day of love wouldn't mind receiving.

Not mentioned in the Top Ten list is the option for a romantic get-away weekend. Unsurprisingly Paris, Prague, Rome or Venice, are the go-to places to bring the sparkle back and be all loved up. Some other lovebirds prefer exotic destinations such as The Maldives, The Seychelles but the Scottish Highlands are a very popular choice too.

As a potential wedding date, the 14th February is besides being a bit cliché and

unoriginal, also quite expensive for bookings and venues may be crowded. A memorable date indeed, but some research suggests higher divorce rates for couples marrying on this specific day. (Oh joy)

Are there reasons not to celebrate this day of love and romance?

Valentine's Day may be great for loved up couples, but not many like to celebrate this day as it is viewed negatively by some, in particular 'unlucky in love' singles who don't really like to be reminded of why they are still single and who therefore may feel inadequate because of it. The Valentine's Day reminder may also trigger great sadness and grief among people who lost a loved one. It is seen as a catalyst for loneliness and adds to unnecessary financial pressure rather than just celebrating love. The promotion of **'high pressure consumerism'** is also met with objections, forcing people to splash the cash and buying lavish gifts to prove their affection. Some view it suspiciously as **'performance-based affection'**, creating envy among friends, co-workers or family. All to have the so-called perfect experience. People do compare their lives with others all the time and social media adds to the emotional distress by highlighting the gifts couples gave each other. Look how much we love each other? Isn't it wonderful?



Some argue that when you are loved up, you shouldn't just pick Valentine's Day, to show how much you love and care for one another. It can be done any day of the year. I personally think Christmas Day and Valentine's Day cause anxiety because of unnecessary unrealistic expectations and the financial strain.

Luckily, sending cards and chocolate can also be done among friends and family as a token of affection and friendship on Valentine's Day is always a thoughtful and kind thing to do.

Valentine's Day Worldwide

Countries where Valentine's Day is still popular and widely celebrated are mostly Western nations including the United States, Canada, the UK and most of Europe. The day also gained more popularity globally in Asia (Japan, South Korea, Philippines and China) and Latin America (Mexico, Argentina). Some countries in the world have a similar day under a different name, e.g. *Día del Amor y la Amistad* (Day of Love and Friendship) in most Latin American countries or on a different date, like on the 12th June for Brazil where it is known as Dia dos Namorados, or lover's day where it moved to coincide on the eve of St. Anthony's Day, the patron Saint of Marriage.

However, in predominantly non-Christian countries: such as in Russia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, India, Indonesia, Somalia, Pakistan and Malaysia, Valentine's Day is restricted or even banned. The main reasons for it, the day being of a different cultural and religious nature (and therefore deemed inappropriate), there is a ban on showing public affection and it is widely viewed as too Western and not in keeping of local traditions.

The Old Leather Pouch by Alan Robertson

The old man lay in bed close to death. He had lived in Kristiansand for many years, working as a printer, living in a grand house with servants and amusing the locals with his poor Norwegian and his heavy German accent. His beloved wife who he had married so many years before had died some years ago. The man was surrounded by his children, his grandchildren and his great grandchildren. He smiled at them and told them he had been carrying a great secret around with him for a long time, a secret that would change all their lives forever. His eldest son, a tall dignified man stooped over and tried to quieten the old man but the old man would not be dissuaded from his task. He demanded that his family lawyer be sent for. The eldest son assured the old man that this would be arranged for the following day. Satisfied, the old man allowed his nurse to give him medicine and soon fell into a deep sleep. The following morning, the old man was sitting up in bed, excited and alert, more alert than he had been for many years. His eldest son could not understand the change in the old man and the nurse hired by the family to look after the old man was unable to give any satisfactory medical explanation as to the sudden improvement in his condition.

In the late morning, the old man's lawyer came, he was the third generation of lawyer in his family to serve the old man, being retained by the old man just as his father and grandfather before him had been. The lawyer, a robust man in his early thirties dressed in a sober black suit with a black bow tie sat patiently in the room along with the rest of the old man's children, grandchildren and great grandchildren. The old man began to speak, "I was once a nobleman from a proud and honourable family, my best friend was the son of our Emperor, he would have been Emperor himself one day and I would have been appointed King of Bulgaria, but it was not to be." The old man looked round the room expecting voices of dissent, but there were none, his family knew him too well and the lawyer was on an excellent retainer, his silence and attention were guaranteed. The old man continued, "The Emperor was set in his ways and his advisers had promised him that he could reunite the three strands of Christianity and become the new Holy Roman Emperor, my friend and I thought this was nonsense, and we made our feelings clear to the Emperor. My friend was murdered and I was forced to give up my title, my rank and my castle, I met my beautiful wife while I was in exile in London, but I knew we could never be safe. I purchased a ship and faked our deaths and we became nobodies to ensure our survival."

The old man summoned his favourite grandson to him and asked him to fetch a small wooden box from a closet on the



other side of the room. The young man did as he was asked and placed the box onto the old man's bed. The old man lifted a silver chain he had been wearing around his neck up over his head. On the chain was a small brass key. He continued with his story, "The old Emperor was a fool, he could not see the changes that were coming in the world, he had heard about a wooden box that a French priest had found and believed that the contents of the box would give him great power. I decided to stop him by getting there first and taking the box. I was pursued by members of the Imperial Palace Guard, but I was too quick for them. The priest was a glutton and was easily swayed by gold coins; the fool sold me the box for a tenth of the price I was prepared to pay for it. You lawyer", the old man said gesturing, "Come closer and witness this."

The old man placed the small brass key into the lock and turned it. He lifted the lid of the box and reached inside it. He pulled out a Habsburg Ducal signet ring which he handed to the lawyer. The lawyer's eyes widened as he looked at the ring. "Oh yes", the old man said, "It's the real thing." He pulled out some papers which he placed on the bed and then he removed from the box a small black leather pouch. He carefully opened the leather pouch and signalling to his favourite grandson to open up his hand, he poured out the contents of the pouch into his grandson's hand. The old man's relatives leaned forward, straining to see what had come out of the pouch, in the grandson's hand were two small sparkling semi-precious stones.

"You lawyer", the old man said, "Use the ring and the papers to prove my claim, my family are the descendants of the Habsburgs, they have the right to the Habsburg titles and riches as well as my own castle, my private home that I had to abandon." The lawyer was unable to speak, he looked from the ring to the papers and then back to the ring again. The old man's relatives were more interested in the two semi-precious stones that the grandson was turning over in his cupped hand. The grandson looked to the old man for an explanation. "They are very old", the old man said, "They were once held by the ancient priests and give their possessor unlimited wealth", he chuckled heartily and addressed his favourite grandson, "How do you think an old rogue like me became so wealthy, did you think I made money from my print shop, or did you think I printed the money myself?" The old man turned again to the lawyer, "Whatever it takes, I want you to restore my family to their rightful place in the heart of Europe, now that the war is over it is time for the Habsburgs to rise again and restore the old Empire."

The old man died later that day in complete tranquillity. The lawyer was never able to persuade the world of the old man's claims and although he bestowed fabulous wealth on his family, they were never able to take back control of the castle, the palaces or the Empire. To this day the accumulated wealth of the Habsburgs sits in bank vaults all over Europe while lawyers argue over ownership. The two semi-precious stones were seized by the Norwegian government as part of the official death duties and were placed in a government vault in Oslo in February 1946. Only one poor quality black and white photograph of the two semi-precious stones is known to exist and all requests to view the semi-precious stones are politely turned down by the Norwegian government. Since 1946, Norway has continually been regarded as one of the wealthiest countries in the world; officially the wealth comes from its exploitation of oil resources, although this of course did not start until the 1970s.

How Ratatoskr Got His Coat by *John Robinson*

If you know of the Norse gods then you should have heard of the Yggdrasil, the World Tree, which connects all the different realms. Well, the World Tree has three creatures of legend that dwell within it. At the very top, amidst its branches dwells a great Eagle and in its roots lives the dragon Nithhewer. The two don't like each other, but as they are separated by the mighty tree you'd think it wouldn't matter. However the third creature was the squirrel, Ratatoskr. He was a magnificent-looking beast with sleek grey fur and a bushy tail that he was very proud of. He looked very dignified and regal, but in truth he was far from it.

Ratatoskr loved to cause trouble, he liked nothing more than to make someone lose their temper. Ratatoskr spent his days scurrying up and down the World Tree and he often carried messages back and forth between the Dragon and the Eagle.

One day he decided to play a trick on both the Dragon and the Eagle, changing the messages a little at a time. He told them sly tales that each was spreading rumours about the other. Oh how mad they got, screaming, cursing and shrieking their anger. The Eagle shook the branches of the tree like it was in a massive storm, while below at the roots the Dragon writhed so hard that the very ground shook. Ratatoskr thought this a fine joke and made the stories worse and worse.

Until one day Ratatoskr made the Eagle so mad that he bit Ratatoskr! Not to kill him mind, but to hurt him, to drive him away so the Eagle could have a little peace. Ratatoskr didn't care that he was bleeding, it wasn't very painful and as he was magical, it wasn't like it could kill him. So he just scampered down the World Tree, headed to the Dragon, determined to spread this new rumour and make the Dragon angry too.

Well, it worked, but maybe a little too well. The Dragon, too, struck at him. Ratatoskr dodged, but still one claw caught him and cut him.

The Dragon gave Ratatoskr a message for the Eagle, one far too rude for me to repeat here. Ratatoskr was impressed; even he would not have come up with something quite that foul.

Ratatoskr ran as fast as he could, and when he got to the top the Eagle was still fuming, actually shaking with rage. Ratatoskr gave the Eagle the Dragon's message and, shrieking in anger, the Eagle struck him, knocking Ratatoskr back down the Tree.

All day Ratatoskr scurried up and down the Tree, with messages from the Eagle and the Dragon, ensuring that neither got a chance to calm down. He got many cuts and bruises from the blows the two struck in their anger, but he felt it was well worth it for all the fun he was having. By the end of the day he collapsed, too exhausted to move. Still grinning at the mischief he had caused, Ratatoskr fell into a deep sleep.

When he woke, his hurts were all healed, but he saw his fur was stiff and stained from the blood his nicks and cuts had shed.

He went to a pool he knew and swam, but to his shock he couldn't get clean, no matter how much he scrubbed. His beautiful, grey fur was stained a deep red, from his nose to the tip of his bushy tail!

So this is why Ratatoskr's coat is red to this day, though some of his cousins still wear grey.

What has Recently Happened to Me (That I Remember) by Graham Forrester

Recently my mind seems to have gone kind of weird, to a point I ended up in hospital not so long ago. I had a swelling of my brain that I was later told I had encephalitis. I was in for some time but it is not clear how long for. I am not sure when I went into care either. People say it was before I went to hospital. They put me on medication and gave me eye drops.

I was told by a friend that my dear mum had passed away before I went to hospital, but I am not sure on this. I know she is dead. My social worker played her part well, even phoned me at times and visited me as did carers and my friends Hugh, Alex, Mike and another friend called Michael, who at random kept in contact with me by text and phone.

I am now back in my care home and still seeing social workers. I have 4 supportive friends: Mike, Alex, Michael and Hugh. And rejoined the Writer's group and plan to get back to my singing in ways I love to. My four friends I referred to here have been heroes to me and still are. I recently did a Roy Orbison song, 'Pretty Woman.'

Wednesday 15th of October and I am back at the writers group. It feels a bit like stepping back in time but its great to be back. There are only 2 other people who were at the group when I was last at it, who I know, but that's okay. Its great to meet new people as well, and they will get to know me too. It is like making a comeback!

Love in Time by Graham Forrester

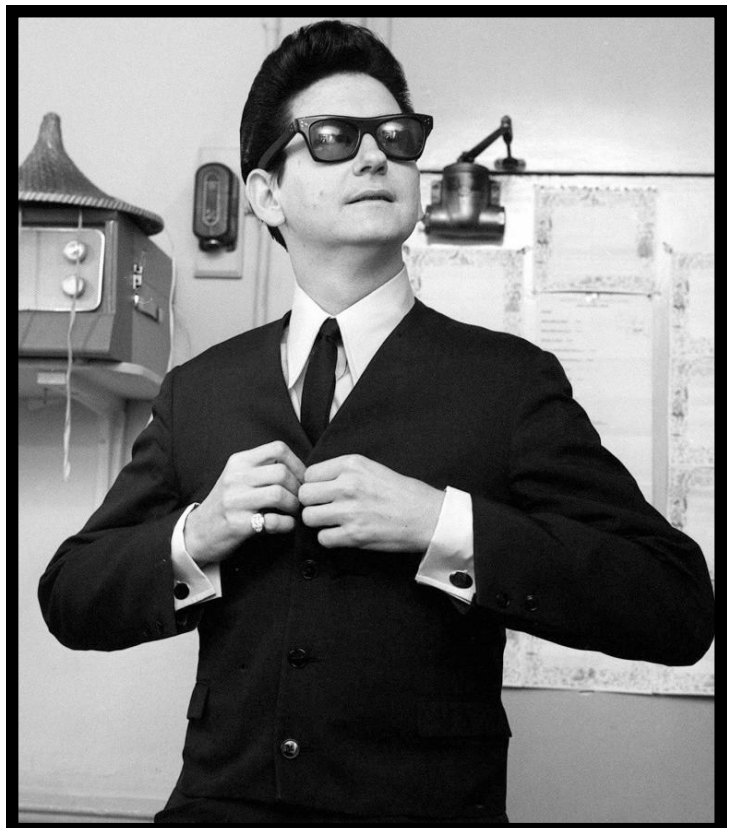
There is a Roy Orbison love song but like many past songs like the Roy Orbison song Love in time does not just have to be a love song but it can be for an atheist trying to find his faith in Jesus. Not all songs can only be just about love as in a man and woman, The words are as follows.

*They say the heart must feel it all.
Know every rise and every fall.
To earn the right to stand in sunlight.
Someday the sun will always shine.
Deep down inside this heart of mine.
And it will be my time.*

*Rivers keep flowing.
Cold winds keep blowing inside me.
I walk alone.
Hard rain keep fallin'
Lost souls keep callin' so lonely.
I hope I find, love in time... Love in time.*

*You know a man can't always choose.
Love has its rythm and its blues.
I hope it's there for me.*

*I hope I find it.
Shinin' somewhere
Somewhere out there.
There will be love in time... In time.*



Mr Ketchup and the Spider-Sock Buns by *Rosalind Alexander*

It was a beautiful, Sun-Shiny morning in the house where our favorite gentleman, Mr. Ketchup, lived. He was fast asleep in his cozy bed, dreaming of giant, wobbly puddles of red sauce. Suddenly, he woke up with a big stretch, his chef's hat slightly tilted to one side. But before he could even call out for his breakfast, he saw something truly wiggling! A fuzzy, tiny spider was zipping across the floor right past his



Read more of Mr Ketchups adventures by scanning the QR code or visiting www.allpoetry.com/Rosalind_Alex

bed. And guess what? The spider was wearing eight tiny, colourful striped socks on its legs!

Mr. Ketchup sat bolt upright, his eyes wide with surprise. "Great galloping gravy!" he shouted, "That spider is running away with our shiny golden trophy!" His friends, Haggis and Awkward Onion, peeked out from behind the bed frame. They were just as amazed to see the little spider carrying their prize, moving as fast as a lightning bolt toward the big, open wooden cupboard. The spider looked back with a cheeky grin, its socks tapping on the floor with a soft pat-pat-pat sound.

Being the brave and distinguished gentleman that he is, Mr. Ketchup didn't stay scared for long. He jumped out of bed, adjusted his chef's hat, and stood very tall. "By the power of the red sauce," he declared with a determined look, "we shall follow that stylish spider and bring our trophy back to the kitchen table!" With a cheerful shout, the whole band scrambled out of their blankets, ready for a brand-new, super-fast chase across the bedroom floor

The sun came up over the kitchen like a giant, golden coin. Mr. Ketchup, a very distinguished gentleman and the leader of the band, stood tall in his chef's hat. With a big, jolly smile, he shouted his newest Royal Decree: "By the power of the red sauce, today we shall bake the finest Spider-Sock Buns and become the champions of the kitchen!"

His friends were ready. Haggis sat at his drums, Ruby the Rude Raspberry wiggled her toes, Torrent-Face Tomato did a happy dance, and Awkward Onion stood brave and proud. They grabbed their mixing bowls and wooden spoons, ready to create something truly magical and very, very silly.

They mixed the dough until it was soft like a cloud. Then came the funny part! They shaped the buns and gave each one eight little legs made of dough, then dressed those legs in tiny,

colourful socks. "Look!" cheered Mr. Ketchup, "they are Spider-Sock Buns!" But just as they finished, they heard a strange, noisy scritch-scratch coming from behind a big bush in the park. Being brave gentlemen and friends, they crept over to see what was hiding. Out popped a giant, clumsy Jumping Jelly Bean who was tangled in his own shoelaces. They helped him tie his laces, and then they all piled into a super-fast race car to zoom around the track!

Vroom, vroom! The band zoomed across the finish line and won! They were handed a big, shiny, golden trophy. Mr. Ketchup held it high and declared, "This trophy shall be our new, fancy soup bowl!" They filled it with green soup and added long, wiggly noodles that looked just like worms.

They slurped their soup and laughed until their tummies wobbled. Then, they taught the local Torrent Fish how to do the "Fishy Boogie-Woogie" dance. To celebrate their success, they had a splashy dance party right inside the golden trophy-bowl. It was the most sparkly, wonderful night in all of Toast-Town!

When the moon was high and bright, the band felt sleepy. They tucked their fishy friends safely into the trophy-bowl and climbed into their cozy beds. As Mr. Ketchup drifted off to sleep, he thought about his busy day.

They had baked buns, won a race, eaten wormy soup, and danced with fish. It was a very big day for a very important gentleman. They closed their eyes, let out a happy sigh, and dreamt of even more silly adventures for tomorrow. The house was quiet, and all was well in the kitchen.

Angus's Joke Corner...

Why did Silly Billy and his sister Billie call Tuesday Chewsday?

Because they went and bought penny chews

What do you call a budgie who likes cake?

A Spongie

How do you congratulate a super motor bike stunt team?

You say it was wheelie good!

Why was the expert cleaner arrested?

For a bleach of the peace

What biscuit is a billionaire?

A Rich Tea

What chocolates do astronauts eat?

Galaxies, Milky-Ways, Star bars and Mars

What dessert did the woodcutter make when he was given some fruit?

A Banana Split





Artworks



Artwork Credits

Page 15: **Angel** by breezethirteen

Pages 16: **Watching Winter** by Tony Bonner

Page 17: **Two Scenes of Snowy Edinburgh** by Tony Bonner

Pages 18 and 19: **Three Illustrations for Aesop's Fables: The Tortoise and the Hare, The Lion and the Mouse, The Fox and The Crow** by Monique Van Aalst

Pages 20 and 21: **Landscapes and Flowers** by Paul McGuinness

Pages 25, 27, 28 and 34: Paintings and Illustrations by K&G









POEMS

Storms and Rainbows



Celestial Bodies

By Fiona Halliday

I feel his pain and I hear
the silence of his words
I see celestial beauty
in his eyes
no hint of harm or hate
misinterpretation of this
giant with the
baritone voice
it is whom I am
attracted to
in every demeanour
down and out
or flying high
I accept
unconditional
not seasonal but
evergreen love
the solace of which
I wish to imbue upon
him
an artist's mind
no folly for the

mundane
he brings a
sustenance of beauty to
the world
a blush of colour
across his face
the pallette awaiting
his elegant fingers
to map the destination
of the paintbrush
I wish to break the
silence and shout
he is my love
despite the odds
against us
no one knows
my frustration
is repressed
into a chasm
not even he knows
my constant
smile
belies
a facade

Guy Fawkes by Piper Halliwell

Its guy Fawkes night today
Everyone will be celebrating
On this night guy Fawkes tried to blow up
parliament
With a group of other men
But they weren't successful in doing so
The king was going to be there
King James I
He was opening the parliament
They were all excited for trying to kill the king
Now we celebrate it in the name of guy
Fawkes
And in the name of King James I
He was Mary Queen of Scots only child
He had many children in his mother's name
It continues down, onward today
He managed to bring England and Scotland
together



Today is my Birthday

by Duncan James Brown

Today is my Birthday
But there's no musical tone
The candles are extinguished
And I feel so alone

I'm not invited to a party
I don't wish for any cakes
My only wish is for self-forgiveness
For all my faults and mistakes

I didn't want to live
Didn't want to see today
Just three days ago
In the sea I wished to be washed away

I feel like I'm dreaming
Wondering if I'm really here
Of my future and my destiny
I live constantly in fear

I can't hold back the tears
My mood feels constantly descending
And the distress when I cry
Always feels never-ending

The pain is excruciating
Especially when my feelings go unspoken
I just can't see the daylight
And it leaves my heart broken

I'm not sure what each day brings
Any second, I'll just break
I just wish I could go in happiness
And overdose on birthday cake



Never Give Up

By Marie Pearson

I'm a lass that was lost in life, so I
learnt to be loud and then I was
away in the background.

I'd lost my pride and family along
the way.

I tried to be heard again and again
but always had the doors slammed
so hard that I hit the ground "Why
me".

Nah that's not the way! Never give
up for I'm always prepared to play.
Yes, I'll keep getting up and
knocking on doors till one day it
opens and only then I'll
have done my job.

Och Aye the Moo by Monique Van Aalst

A famous bullock
Called Hamish the Heeland coo
Was saved from the slaughterhouse
From a metaphorical noose
Sadly, a lot of folks felt ill at ease
Because of the mad cow disease
But Hamish whispered, 'Rescue me, please!'
Hurrah, a group of animal rights activists came to
the rescue

For this charming and beloved coo
He was moooooo-ved to Kilmahog
And resided in Trossachs Woolen Mill
His spirit undefeated still
He even received fan mail from overseas
Even when his coat was covered in fleas
People did everything to catch a glimpse of the
'James Dean' among the coos

In 2010, a lovely heifer Heather, joined him under
loud cheers and moos
Sadly, in 2014 the final curtain called for Hamish
to cross the bovine rainbow bridge

But I still keep a wee magnet of him on my fridge.

Auld Reekie by Paula Taylor

The shops are exquisite, if you care to browse,
to take time out from a busy day.

Or find out more about Edinburgh's history: the trams, the Vault,
the hustle and the bustle of the old market stalls.

Times when the butchers sold their meat down old Fleshmarket close;
the auld fishwives, always by their baskets, cut and bruised by making the creel.

Take a walk down to the Mile - you will sight the house of John Knox
(a very famous writer of his day).

You can view the Victorian houses where the gentry did reside,
the Tollbooth, where the executions took place, they took this all in their stride.

Then take a walk up to the infamous castle,
made famous through many malevolent acts.

The Nor Loch, which hides secrets even to this day.
And to the observant eye, the story of Greyfriars Bobby will totally encapsulate you.

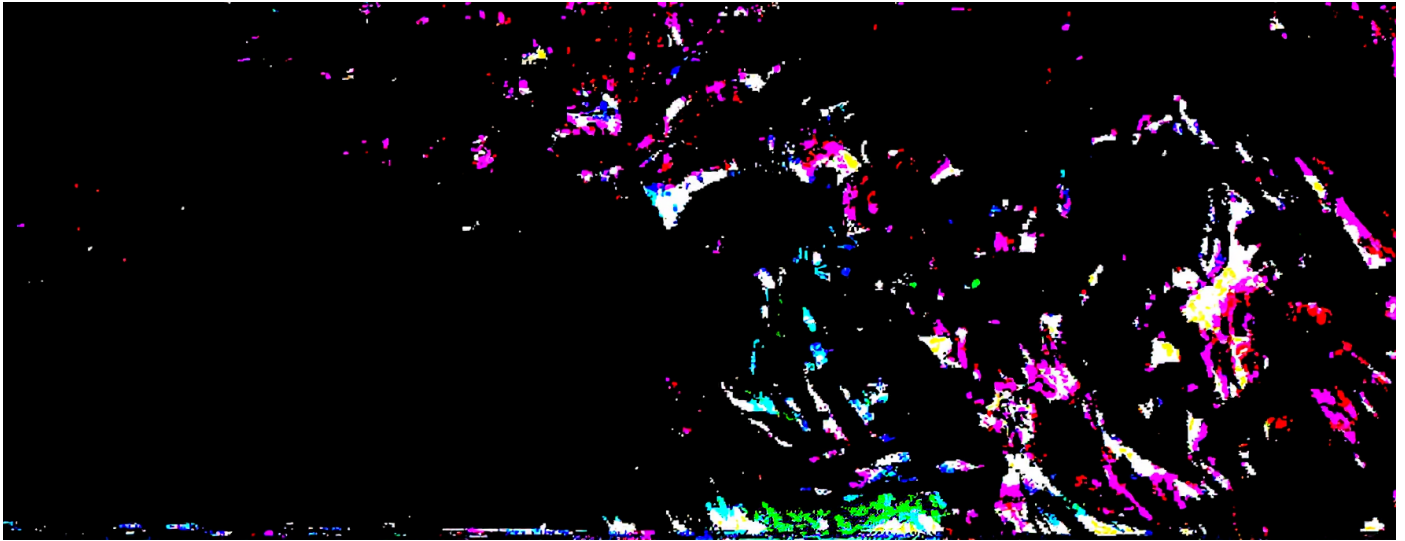
Auld Reekie will always be very mysterious worldwide
And its history will be widely recognised.

Where Can I Go? by Tony Bonner

(Content warning: War and Violence)

Tired, scared and hungry, home heaped on a
cart,
Trembling as the siren sounds,
I pull my children to me, cannot stop their
tears,
Praying that we'll find some safer ground.
Day after day, one way then the next,
Dust and terror, fleeing the attacks.
We have harmed no one, just tried to live our
lives
Those lives and homes destroyed, there's no
going back.
People from my street, the few that survived,
Through rubble and through wreckage, seek
the dead.
The children scream, the sirens wail,
Another night with rockets overhead.
Where's mummy, when's she coming? I hold
the wedding ring
I'd slipped from her broken bloodied hand
I push away the memory, her mangled,

battered body,
How can I make the children understand?
Why do men have guns? Have we done
something wrong?
Can we stop soon please Daddy, my feet
ache?
We reach another refugee camp, erect the
plastic sheets,
Prepare to spend another night awake.
Listen to the bombs fall, on our homes, in our
hearts,
Knowing that the craters they create
Will be used as mass graves, for bodies,
dreams and hope
Filled up to the top with burning hate.
A ceasefire will not matter, a temporary halt,
Guns will fire again and sirens whine,
Same old slogans shouted, scabbed wounds
reopened
Israel, Lebanon and Palestine.



Mother Earth Ascending — North Sea Ledger by *K&G*

Mother Earth settles spirits beneath granite and gorse, crowned not in gold but in weather. She presses her thumb into the faulted spine of the Highlands, lifts cliffs out of the North Atlantic swell, lets the Minch gnaw rock into patience.

Rightful without petition.

Elevation requires foundation. No tower of glass in Aberdeen rose without a wellhead drilled into the North Sea's black reserve. No dividend declared without pressure released from Jurassic stone.

Each step upward will hurt. Choose the height. Choose the fracture. Each one marked with different headstones— platform workers lost to flame and steel, coastlines thinned at Montrose and Skara Brae, villages watching winter tides take another measured bite. Rain is not interruption here. It is inheritance. It falls across Rannoch Moor, seeps into peatlands older than parliament, carbon held in sphagnum memory— until drained, cut, burned, stacked in tidy bricks for hearth and nostalgia.

What was once a vault becomes a vent.

Wind farms turn over moor and hill— white blades combing the sky near Whitelee, sentinels of transition or monuments to compromise, depending on who counts the cost.

The North Sea still heaves. Decommissioned rigs rust in the salt wind. Subsea pipelines vein the seabed like a circulatory system that forgot what it was meant to nourish.

Storm surges overtop seawalls in Stonehaven. Machair soils thin in the Hebrides.

Salmon farms net the fjorded inlets, lice spreading in cold current.

The open sewer of man's waste is not distant. It spills from overflow pipes after heavy rain, plastic threading the Firth of Forth, fertiliser bloom choking lochs that once mirrored only cloud.

Mother Earth does not promise comfort. She promises consequence. Permafrost maybe Arctic, but feedback loops are global; what burns in one basin warms every shore.

This ground is not passive terrain. It is peat archive and seismic record. It remembers glaciation. It will remember extraction.

Climb if you must— into turbines, into policy chambers, into new economies built from wind and tide— but know this:

The land is ledger. The sea is witness. And sovereignty will not be negotiated with press releases.

What We Think of the Weather by
K&G101225

Circumstances dictate-
but the circumstances have become mon-
strous.

The sky is no longer a roof
but an exposed wound,
leaking storms in erratic pulses
as if the atmosphere itself
were dying in stages.

The wind arrives like a broken herald,
carrying no message except terror.
It claws at the land,
rips tiles from homes,
hurls branches like warnings.
People say it screams at night—
not as metaphor,
but as report.

Rain does not fall anymore;
it descends in assaults,
slanted, furious,
as though the clouds have been weaponised.
Roads become temporary rivers,
rivers become unleashed animals,
and the sea-
the sea has moved closer
as if it wants to reclaim
what history stole from it.

The seasons have revolted.
Winter refuses to end,
stretching its darkness over months
until calendars are relics.
Dawn smoulders faintly
like a dying system light,
and dusk spreads across the land
with the certainty of occupation.
Children grow up thinking
That daylight is a rumour.

The heat follows the cold
with an intelligence of its own,
creeping into our buildings,
settling into the stone marrow

of houses meant for another age.
People collapse on stairwells,
breathless,
their walls sweating with them.
At night, the air hangs heavy
with the scent of electric failure.

Conversation has become ritual,
a litany of sightings:
the fields that cracked open,
the sheep stranded on the high road,
the supermarket shelves stripped
by a storm forecast.

We speak of climate change now
the way the ancient spoke of comets-
as omen, as curse, as proof
that the gods have withdrawn
their last tolerances.

Infrastructure buckles.

Dams crack.

Coastal towns shrink
under evacuation orders recited
with bureaucratic calm.

There are places in the north
where the power does not return
after outages;
the dark simply stays,
sprawling across the land
with sovereign entitlement.

And still the storms gather,
each one stranger,
each one born from a climate
that no longer remembers
what balance meant.

The world bends under them,
trees bowing, roads splitting,
the horizon flickering
like a failing signal.

We stand in the ruins of weather
and listen to what it is telling us:
that what we called nature
was a contract we broke,
that the sky is repossessing its rights,

that the future has begun early
and without permission.

And in the silence
after the next storm passes,

we recognise the truth
in our bones and in our fear-
we are not living through change.
We are living through consequences.



A Man and A Woman

By Fiona Halliday

enter my soul
with eclectic glances
you cannot run from love
ecstasy is bliss
not lost or
forbidden

you are mine
to delight in
and gaze upon
the chance of
mysterious separation
numbs me

dumfounds me to
distraction
the puzzle is
in your eyes
the maze I cannot
fathom is your mind
too deep
profound by far

I never seek something
other than you
my conundrum
tinged with
sage like proverbs
of wisdom so
profound
crumbs of love
from the
bread on my table
one step
closer
to loving you
eat with me
savour our
International love affair
salute our appetite
differences and
similarities
we are entwined
without knowing

Tilting the Scale by K&G270226

Air rises,
Air whispers,
Air gives breath,
Air withholds breath.
The spirit moves unseen,
Life depends, life is denied.

Water flows,
Water bends,
Water touches all,
Water gives, water takes.
Shapeless yet full,
It moulds what is offered,
it drinks what is left behind.

Fire burns,
Fire refines,
Fire warms, fire devours.
It lifts the mind,
It consumes the careless,
it grants new forms of life.

Earth roots,
Earth rises,
Earthquakes,
Earth holds all,
Blind, eternal,
Giver and taker,
Majesty beneath the feet.

Fear stirs,
Fear tests,
Fear cooks, fear burns.
Bravery is forged,
Courage is measured,
only when slumber ends.

To do is heavy,
To undo is heavier.
Awaken, awaken, awaken
Consciousness weighs the forces,
And the scale tilts.

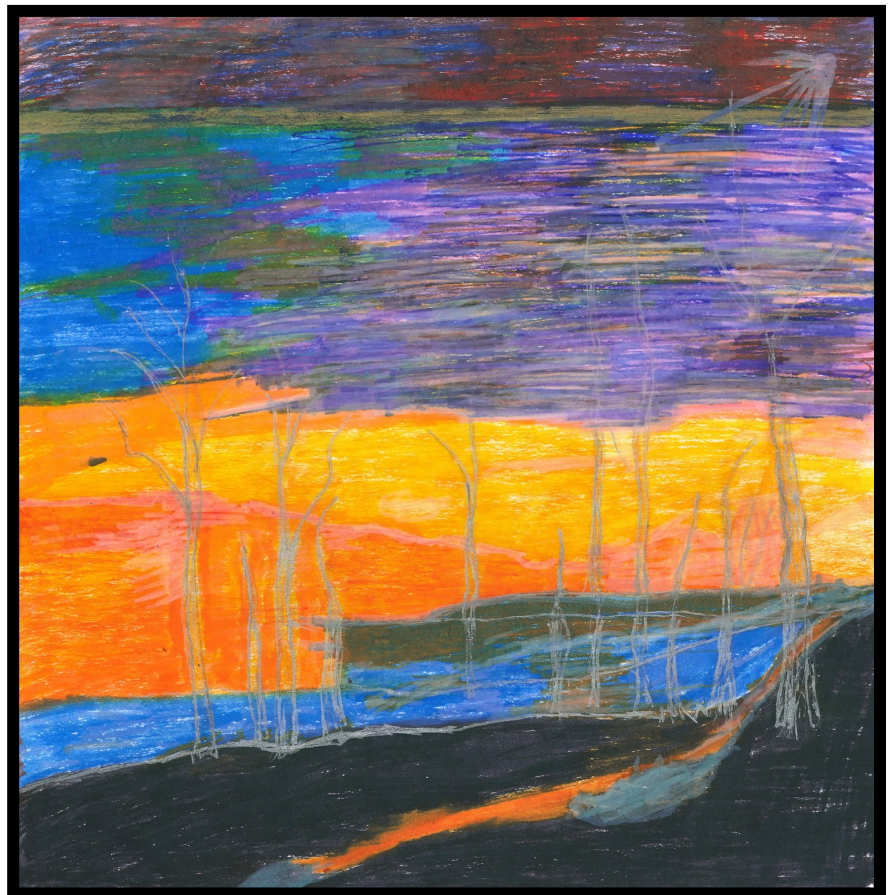
Love judges,
Love tilts,
Love blinds, Love frees,
Love measures, Love holds,

Love decides without possession,
Love weighs without bias,
Love alone aligns the elements.

Air, water, fire, earth-
Obey the tribunal,
Yield to the measure.
Premature revelation fractures the unready.
Only awakening discerns.
Only love adjudicates.

The brave rise through fire,
The wise flow with water,
the grounded endure with earth,
The vigilant breathe with air.
All obey the tilt,
All bend beneath love's law,
All rise beneath love's judgment.

Awaken!
Act!
Repair!
Tilt the scale,
And the world aligns –
Alive, measured, just.





Not Divine Valentine

By Duncan James Brown

I wake in a thick cloud
Staying in my bed
I can't see the blue sky
Coz it's raining in my head

I try to weather the storm
Feel the warmth of the sun
But all I can think of
Are things I have or haven't done

The silence is deafening
Playing in rhythm with my heart
Crying inconsolably
Asking why from our lives did we depart

Only the sound of the Hoover
The crunch of the bin
The steam of the iron
And the tears within

Hopeless and broken
Filled with despair
No card nor flower
No whisper of care

I'm losing the battle
Falling further apart
My soul it is broken
And even more is my heart

Lost is my spirit
And the love that I long
I feel I am weak
And can no longer be strong

It is the worst feeling
That I've ever felt on this day
I just feel I should drown myself
In all my distress and dismay

Yes today I'm so lonely
It's unbearable not divine
As due to my faults and my actions
I have no love or valentine

Manchester's Mossy Hills

By Alan Robertson

On Manchester's mossy hills
Remnants of past glory
Sit in decaying wastelands
Frost slowly coating them hoary

A weary Pilgrim
Abandoned and alone
Sits on fallen log
A substitute for a throne

Long journey left behind
From far away border
The Traveller now must rest
Recovering some order

Bleak future stretching forth
No hope for early respite
The Traveller shakes his head
No solution is in sight

Low clouds obscure all
Bringing comfort to the tired
Bodies sink slowly down
No longer are required

Trust It by Piper Halliwell

how many times do you have
to get something that doesn't
work out at all its weird
right anyway most the
time it does work out
not all the time though
so, trust your intendencies
and follow your heart
see where it goes
and at the end of it
trust yourself

Ode To The NHS

By Alan Robertson

The bleeping of the machines
Keep me awake all night
Every thirty minutes
The blood pressure cuff
Squeezes my arm
Is it supposed to reassure
That everything is all right

Every two hours
A buxom nurse
Asks me what year it is
I am tempted to give a wrong answer
To see how she reacts
I play it safe
And give the right answer
Treating it like a quiz
Luckily for me
It is not New Years Eve

The button I press
Delivers Opioids straight into my arm
If I press it too many times
A nurse admonishes me with a smile

Telling me to take it easy
Each press lasts for a while

Shift change brings a senior nurse
Bright and cheery
And smelling of lemon
Who tells me everything will be fine
I do not know
If I should believe her
She pats my arm
And sends a shiver down my spine

As the morning wears on
Two assistants offer me tea and toast
I hesitantly ask for coffee
They smile and deliver
Telling me nothing
Is too much trouble
They really are the most

Where would we be
Without the driving force
That is the NHS
Up an unpleasant waterway
Without a paddle
In the United States of course



Crystals by Paula Taylor

Reaching out like a fallen star you shine like a luminous light
Far Far Into the night Taking Time Out Walking Along The Beach
You Are Far Away Beyond The oceans Waves
You Are very Precious To The Earths Core As You Are Similar To A Malachite
You Are So Hard To Find
As You Have Been Created Through Billions Of Time
You Will Keep Coming Back To The Sublime
Just Looking At You It Fills My Heart And Soul With Peace And Tranquility

One Last Time

By Alan Robertson

An artist once said
It takes a long time to be young
It took me a long time to grow up
I walked the endless corridors
Unopened doors waiting patiently to be
pushed
I glanced at myself
In the limitless mirrors
Did the person in the mirror
Grow in the opposite direction to me
I saw myself
And saw myself
And saw myself again
Reflected in the mirror
Itself reflected in the reflected mirrors
Would I become trapped
In the endless reflections
I tightly squeezed my eyes shut
And swiftly moved on
I went down infinite stairs
My legs becoming tired and my mind weary
At the end of infinity
There was a dark forbidding door
I pushed and the door swung silently open
Revealing a deep verdant Paradise
I stepped out into Paradise
Enormous green trees creating
A pleasant protective canopy
And there it was
Swaying gently in the warm summer breeze
My very own treehouse
My place of safety and refuge
Where no harm could come to me
And the demons of grown up life could never find me
I climbed the wooden ladder
That continued without end
And entered my treehouse
My very own treehouse
One last time

Confusion by Tony Boner

Wash your hands and put your coat on,
We're going to see your gran
In her new home with the other old folk
And afterwards Dad says the plan
Is we'll go to that new burger place,
You can have a "Happy Meal"
But you must be nice to granny,
And even though you might feel
A bit confused give her a hug
Then sit quietly, read your book
And don't ask cheeky questions
About how she speaks or looks.
See granny's had what's called a stroke,
So she might not smile the same,
She might have trouble remembering things:
What day it is, perhaps your name
—
There, that wasn't too bad was it?
Why are you crying? What's wrong?
Tell mummy what the matter is
What do you mean "granny's gone?"



Haiku dya do...?

By John Robinson

What is a Haiku?
Well, it's the one opposite
To the lower coo

Onomatopoeia
The sound of spoken words
Resembling itself

Sprawled on the bed,
My Cat, far smaller than me,
Yet demands more space

My Cat is sleeping,
Warm on my lap, pinning me,
Purring, breathing rock

Hungry, my cat is
Yowling 'Faster' for his food,
Although rather fat.



Companion by Mikael

I see a fox
I see her every night
She has a den
On the bike path
Next door...
I love having a fox!
It's like living in an Enid
Blyton novel.

Scottish Spring by John Robinson

Today the sun is bright
though the air is still chill.
The daffodil stretches for the light
though the frost lingers still.

The rain falls, a heavy curtain
a biting wind makes the trees sway.
Still one thing that is certain
our Spring changes every day.

Coo by John Robinson

Moo, moo highland coo,
Hock deep in the mud
Lang o'hair 'n' lang o'horn
Calmly chewing on the cud
You'll find us on a postcard
You'll find us on a plate
You'll find us in your garden
If you didnae close yer gate...

Pouffe by Fiona Halliday

Succulent pouffe
Alluring pink in the boudoir
To rest the loins of the aroused
Excited by the final dance
Of intertwined bodies
We sing, we dance
In a congenial manner
Clandestine pouffe
We sit upon to gaze at
The enemy of truth
And transparency
In our chosen lovers.
Is he or she noble
In the translation
Of words and phases
Into affirmative mindful actions
Of the denial
Of the mindset of me?
Chasing dreams
Easily forgotten.



Double Bass by *Fiona Halliday*

The resonance of the bass
Undulating on my temples
My head explosions vibrate
Like colours of fireworks
Lingering in the sky
Songs of metaphors
Raising a cacophony of upbeat tempos
In the jazz bars of any city
Pull your chair up
Or decline the invite to sit down
Stand and be centred
An improvising music lover
An appraisal
Of the mind and soul is imminent
At the first pluck of the chords.

More Than Just People on Streets

By Duncan James Brown

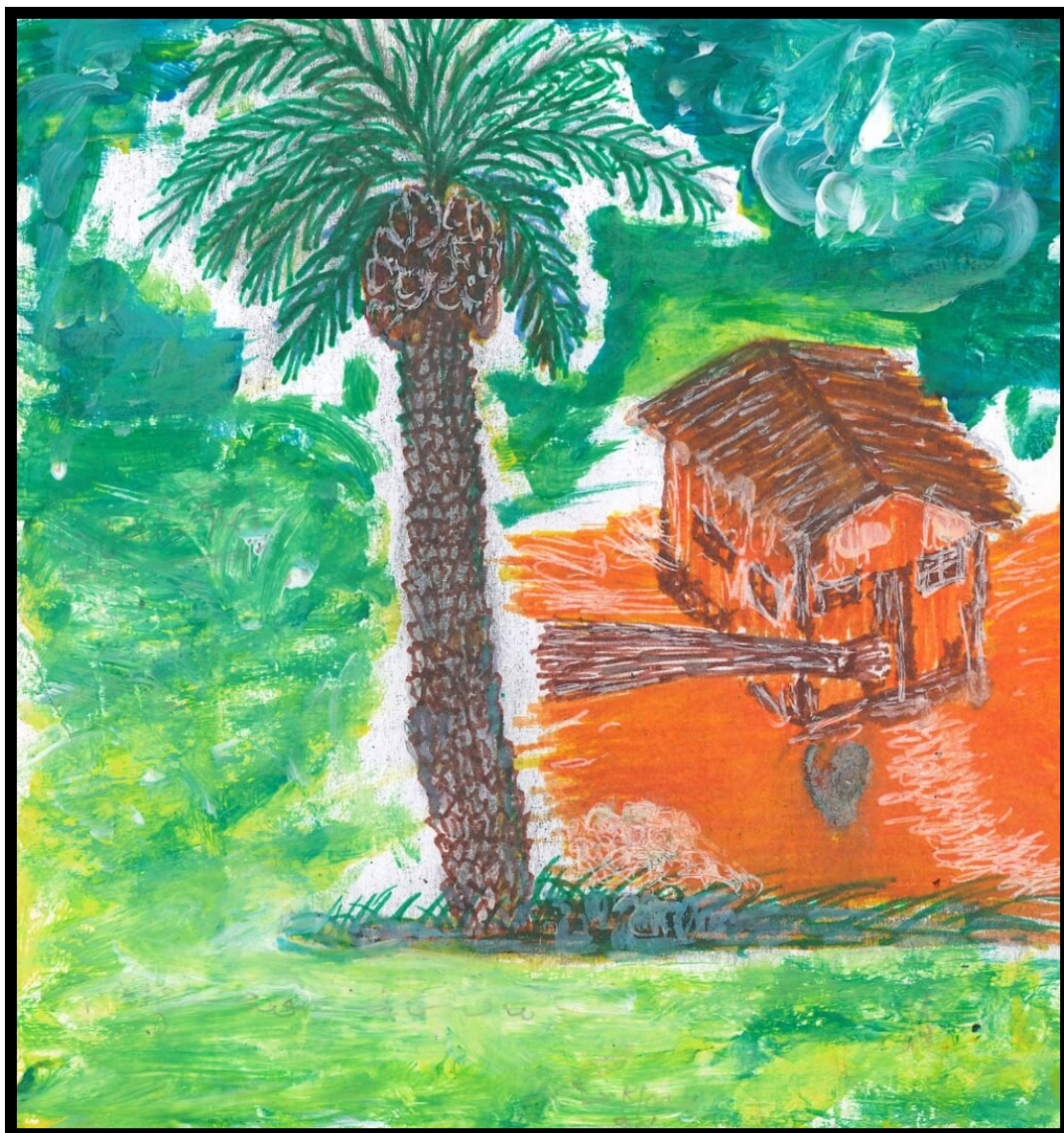
It would be the first time we'd meet
When she was alone on Union street
She was sat in a doorway
As I passed by her way
She looked hungry and cold
And the look of loneliness told
I was on the phone when I saw her cup
I said I'll ring you back and then I hung up
I rummaged in my pocket a little while
I said hello and it made her smile
I apologised I didn't have much change
But kind words we did exchange
Her smile said I appreciate your kindness
But in her eyes there was a sense of sadness
I just wanted to offer her more
I didn't want to leave her sat on a cold floor
I knew I had another coin from the shop
Coz I'd been in the bakers for pie, cake and
pop
But in trying to find it, me it did elude
And the fact I'd eaten, with nothing to share I
felt rude
All apologetic I wished her a good day

She smiled once again and wished me on my
way
I walked away deep in thought
Wishing that something from the bakers for
her I'd bought
I turned back and met her smiling face
Her grateful eyes that said thank you for
sharing my space
As I carried on walking from her sight I
would stray
But I found from that moment in my mind
she would stay
The traffic grew louder, I had places to be
Though sadly by catching the bus, her again I
didn't see
I just hope she'll stay safe and healthy and
shelter she'll find
To protect her and her smile, a sight that's
stuck in my mind
But each time I return I'll think how and
where she might be
And if we do meet again, I hope we can at
least share a chat and a warm cup of
tea.

Story of My Life by Piper Halliwell

my life was a mess at the beginning
but I angled to get sorted
I was having issues with neighbours
I reported it
now I am starting to get back to normal
I was thinking to move
but I can't do that anymore
my left knee is knackered
Completely gone
so am wating to hear from the doctor
or hospital
to get a knee replacement
but if I don't hear anything back fae them
am going private to get the replacement
so am doing really well now
am getting on with my life
my cats are great helping me out too

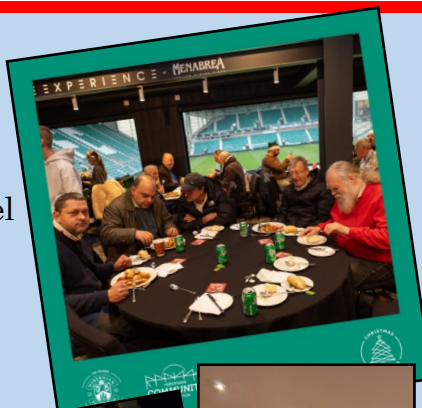
reminding me to take my meds and what
have yea,
I am in the middle of sorting the place out
trying to get rid of the bulky stuff I don't need
in the house
am getting out more
or am trying to get out more
due to my knee am taken it easy the now
it's prefect right now
it's perfect right now
am happier than ever
I was baptised on the 15 July 2025 at the old
durian church
it was great
my life has completely
changed am going to church more when I can
every Sunday am reading the bible
it's perfect now
and better.



Douglas's Diary...



Christmas Decorations were up at the Scotsman Hotel from the 3rd November!



I had my Christmas Day Meal at Hibs on Easter Road

Hibs won the Edinburgh derby 3 -2 between on the 27th December. Later in the year Martin Boyle departed Hibs after eleven seasons.



At New Year, I was off on my hols to the Sol Pelicans Ocas Hotel in Benidorm. Here's me at the Gala meal.



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

Never ignore a person who loves you
Cares for you
And misses you
Because one day
You might wake up and realise
You lost the moon while chasing the stars.
I lost my whole moon
While I wasted my time with
Fake stars...
So goodbye...

