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ISSUE FIVE

Ed. Alycia Pirmohamed

LUCILLE MONA LING • DAVID NASH
SARA FOGARTY OLMOS • VJ RENÉ
SHAKEEMA EDWARDS • ZAHRA RAFIQ
CHARLOTTE BALDWIN • ALEJA TADDESSE
ANJALI RAMAYYA • FRANCESCA BROOKS
SAM RYE • ANNINA ZHENG-HARDY
EMILY ALICE SPIVEY • ULYSES RAZO
KARAN CHAMBERS • WENDELIN LAW
NATASHA TANNA • DEEKSHA VEIRAIH
CAITLIN TINA JONES • ELLORA SUTTON

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ISSUE FIVE
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INTRODUCTION

After days of reading and rereading, I'm feeling somewhat dazed but also incredibly satisfied. Spending time with poetry is one of my greatest pleasures, and what a real joy it was to get a glimpse at so much new work all at once – what a privilege it was to be pulled away from the work I may normally find myself picking up, to break the pattern of my reading, and encounter all these different and often new-to-me poetic modes and ways of making.

I distinctly remember how I felt submitting poetry as a newer writer: excited, exposed, anxious, hopeful, mystified – and vulnerable, too. Always vulnerable. Vulnerability, for me, seems to be the constant variable when it comes to writing and sharing poetry. So, with all of that in mind, I did my best to show care and attention to each of the over 400 submissions for *Propel's* fifth issue. Earlier, when I said rereading, I meant it. These submissions came with me to the highlands, to park benches at the botanic gardens, and on many, many train journeys. I shared space with them, ate breakfast with them, and saw that Submittable landing page more than I saw my friends.

The truth is, I did feel a great responsibility while reading these submissions. The cover letters were sometimes a little window into the lives of these writers. Once in a while, they revealed that the submission was their very first submission ever. Maybe I'm projecting again, but what a tender, special thing that is. Other times, they were written intimately, with the writer engaged in dialogue with the submitted poems and a potential audience. Both this context and the poems themselves hinted at the shapes of different lives in different places, all pursuing the wild, equally fulfilling and frustrating act of writing and submitting poetry.

Anyway, all of this is to say I find being a gatekeeper a complicated thing, and though the job is to select only a few from the many, I hope that doors have also been opened: to new voices and strategies, to perspectives that are experimenting with subject and form. To poems that found a home here because

they came across my particular gaze, and maybe I saw something, understood something, or felt something that the poet wanted to get across in a magical kind of symbiosis. That's the other gift of *Propel*. A new guest editor for each issue is a terrific model; it means that there is always the potential for a writer, for a poem, to find space here, because each editor brings with them a fresh perspective.

In *My Trade Is Mystery* (a craft book I recommend to all poets) Carl Phillips writes that 'the poem is the evidence – like tracks, or footprints – of my quest into and across strange territory, the shape I've left almost as if unintentionally behind me.' The twenty poems here are the tracks, the evidence, the shapes left behind, of these twenty writers who have taken risks across these pages:

Here are poems that rupture language and syntax, like Wendelin Law's 'I dreamed a turbid dream...', Karan Chambers' 'siren', and Lucille Mona Ling's 'What should we do with our superstitious fathers';

Here are poems that untangle and defamiliarise poetic structures, like VJ Ren e's 'Sonnet (with an untranslated copy of *Fragoletta*)', and Sam Rye's 'Ancestry';

Here are poems that are curious and discursive, like Ulyses Razo's 'Bee Sleeping Off the Blue Tears', Caitlin Tina Jones' 'Impala', Zahra Rafiq's 'Dreamcatcher,' and Annina Zheng-Hardy's 'Waterlogged';

Here are poems that are rhythmic and powerfully attuned to the musicality of a line, like Aleja Taddesse's 'morning' and Anjali Ramayya's 'Kathak Dancer';

Here are poems that are ecologically engaged, intertwining physical and emotional landscapes, like Emily Alice Spivey's 'Canal,' David Nash's 'Turlough', Charlotte Baldwin's 'Bucolic Acid,' and Shakeema Edwards' 'Topsoil';

Here are poems that are reflective and relational, like Deeksha Veiraiah's 'Dear Sunny', Sara Fogarty Olmos' 'Eating Fruit', and Francesca Brooks' 'Choosing jewels';

Here are poems that destabilise notions of the self, of the body, with compelling diction, like Ellora Sutton's 'Bitch River' and Natasha Tanna's 'endocrine romance'.

Here are poems that are ironic, heartfelt, explorative, subversive, inquisitive – and ultimately, so, so beautiful.

— Alycia Pirmohamed
May 2023

IMPALA

Caitlin Tina Jones

Do you sometimes see yourself in pictures and wonder
How you managed to stay alive, so unknowing
Of all the mangled eaves hushed over you,
Dangled soft in front of you, like a claw hammer and
A wish, playing in the mouth of the taped-off lane.
Ally had ridden down it
And I could see her caved-in head, a broken
Round vase, forbidden purpling and powdered glass
On the tarmac, and how my heart had pounded
What a normal thing it was to cry then, to cry and
Then to laugh, how they held my wrists and not my
Hands, to avoid my eyes and the rumour water.
But she'd cycled back, so safe, sculpted
Fresh and translucent in the summer, annealed and beaming
Saying it was fine, saying a man would never catch her
Too fast and far too bright, and I could see her as an impala then
And never anything else, sheer prongs stuttered golden in the light.

DREAMCATCHER

Zahra Rafiq

Pellucid in deception you thread
Your calculations together in silk
Stitches. Of every crevice in my room
You chose the ceiling of the windowsill
A fault line crossing realities. The sun is not
Destined to rise for another 4 hours
But I am awake and dressed
4:30am in my business suit. I don't think
You ever sleep, you're relentless in
Furnishing your silvery home with more
Silver, a diaphanous mirror raging
In your puddle of dark. It fascinates me
A load bearing biomaterial stronger
Than steel. I want to be a bullet when I smile,
Lethal and promising and fast.
You weave them together in a sort
Of tapestry, your way of justifying your future
With tragedies. As if to remind me
You're not the villain in this story.
Remember my blonde tresses, how they turned
To gossamer with ammonia persulfate –
There was no saviour here.
Suddenly you've stopped and you're silent.
I begin to mourn, but then
Eight obsidian needles climb the web
Swallow the shooting star whole.

WHAT SHOULD WE DO WITH OUR SUPERSTITIOUS FATHERS

Lucille Mona Ling

unlearned love crawls

into their arms,

children

Not us

others,

self-made or

left

in the cribs of water lilies

eastern statues of stars

embedded in the octagonal petal dress

they wear bracelets around their wrists

Don't let me continue

Don't let me continue

you'd rather I erase these

symbols of fractal misinterpretation

the red crying

the infinite yellow wishes for better roofs

I have seen your hands dance

To music

Loud in the shell of the metallic

car

care

taker

Takeaway the t

and you leave the puppet

Aching

achieving inanimate emotions
known to AI

ai

to love

aime

love me

there are so many languages ai

Can learn

I

Can learn

to aimlessly improvise healing

The tea leaves that predicted

green misfortunes have now rotten into

Auspiciousness,

I remember how you listened

To hypnotic

To repetitive

Music inaccessible

to small ears

Too hypnotic

Too repetitive

too small

too childish

Listen to the outside, beyond
the rhythm lie

goosebumps:

hills of transcen

dance

Notes:

1. *Stern* means 'star' in German.
2. *Ai* means 'love' in Chinese.
3. *J'aime* means 'I love' in French

CHOOSING JEWELS

Francesca Brooks

I like the slick lacquered lid
 of a mushroom in the damp,
shy
of the secret of its gills
 vaulted, ticklish,
 a kind of velvet
intended only to be known
 by leaf rot forest floor.

The swamps are ferrous,
 moss-edged fogged with spore

I stay close
 to the waxy fluorescence
of Orange Peel ascocarps,
 the snuffed wicks
 of the Candlestick fungus
like the small,
 pale arm that reaches
from a wet log

I dream of the ice caves of
 Bearded Tooth Lion's Mane
mycelial snow cascade

find ears of jelly cupped to felled elder
plush, evanescent,
a maroon light listening
for parakeets bark of heron disturbed,
a landscape
intimate
as the ridge of skin and cartilage
known only
to pillow lover's soft eye.

I DREAMED A TURBID DREAM
WITH LOW-LYING EYES
AND BECAME

Wendelin Law

the dene of a leith
the dene of a lush
body, a writhing leash

—unleashed, a rush in-
fallible, I yielded
to the swelling firth

over begrimed canals
over-flowing—over
braes slipping—

over burns and burns
swaddled by the leith
—tonguing air

my throat soused
in ripples and pebbles,
rising-and-falling babbles—

a dyadic nakedness:
[spasms]: *give me more*
[more & more]: *hone me*

more and bend me, deep
down the gulf and up
bulging hills, the aether

exudes white ruptures—
crooned and climaxed
with *more, more*— —

DEAR SUNNY

Deeksha Veiraiah

inspired by Ocean Vuong

The thing about me is
that I'm only brave enough to say goodbye.
So I'm sorry I only held you once before
you went. And I'm sorry
that I still think about it; how different I'd be
if I had stayed in the backseat with you.
The truth is that I'm scared of my hands
because I don't love them enough to cry.
And I hid my tears while you were burning,
but now I wish I'd watched the fire too.
Because your brother was the same as mine.
Because I'm not an expert but I understand
how you *hurt*.
Because love isn't enough for me. I want
forever even when I'm tired – I want to be haunted
by my dad's face in the mirror. By the felt mice
still sleeping in the cupboard.
So here's what happened:
I refused to watch you die
and now I can only write about fangs;
named after someone I don't know, but
maybe we're both better off that way. And
I still find your ash on my clothes. And
time is divided into before and
after. And now
we have a dog named after the dead.

ENDOCRINE ROMANCE

Natasha Tanna

I can write the least romantic lines tonight
or not

I try to write you a non-poem and it doesn't come,
I let the fever pass to see if the paracetamol
will cure my sentimentality
and it doesn't

despite the sheets being soaked by covid sweats
and the hypoglycaemia of my diabetic body
caused by the gliclazide tablets I took
when I realised
three doses late
that therafly was 84.7% sugar,
despite all of this, I don't change them
(the sheets, I mean, not the tablets)

I sprinkle the text with names of medicines to remove all its charm
but even pharmaceuticals seem poetic to me today
dear gliclazide, seductive therafly

the pills and the powders stretch out on the sheets
where I confused my foot with yours, ambifootstrous,
and I only realised when I tried to wiggle my toes and they wouldn't obey
and I, with all my self-control,
thought I'd been paralysed
until I realised that
our skin is almost the same colour

I inhale you from the delirium of the double red lines
where I haven't yet lost my sense of smell, or taste,
and I tell myself that I would put up with all the nosebleeds
all the chairs falling from the sky
all the quarantines
to survive yet again
even just in my imagination
the brackets
in which we wrote
together
poetry by non-poets
not autobiographical, of course,
because we are not always us,
well, *you*, yes, you are always you
without respite

and I don't know if it's the fever
or the pills
or sugar, poison,
but I feel that you're here
still
and not just because of the sheets

the sheets from which I did literary analysis
of the whatsapps
of two literature teachers
who underestimated
with great pleasure
the reading of the other

and I try once more to write
a text you will call a poem without my consent
and I'll say how can it be a poem if I'm not a poet
reflecting you
and we'll have the same argument as always
if 'always' means 10 days
that were like
10 months
a decade
or more

an always where I saw
for the first time
and infinitely
intimately
writing as the pulse of life
and I asked
"do you write with your left hand?"

and plagiarising peri rossi
with a soft 'r'
and a few changes
like every good plagiarist
I tell you that as I write to kiss you
I know that we live many times
each and every one
anti-biographical, anti-romantic,
and without expectation.

KATHAK DANCER

Anjali Ramayya

For Vikram Iyengar, dancer-choreographer

there is a stillness in his movements a quiet
in the spaces between beats darkness foreshadowing
footwork slow measured tatkar in lamplight

we listen wait anticipate his next move
watch hold our breath
feel the silence

a quickening of pace jingle of anklet bells
slow subtle movements of fingers wrists hands
slow sinuous lift of arms sway of body

a study in self-absorption *mudras* whispering
I am moon wind lotus I am snake flood lover
I am artistry and lexicon

quicker now and quicker an assurance of feet and bells
syllables tether dancer to earth tree to cloud
spell stories of Krishna of beauty and love fear awe

of war and duty of the charioteer
stories told in gesture eye rhythm tempo

the sound of *ghungroo*

whirl of dervish dance

then a slow gathering of self

and streams of thought

reflections connections

flowing into cross-legged confluence

and stillness

a purposeful withdrawal

from chaos

meditation companions acceptance

of other

birth death arrival

a self-gathering

TOPSOIL

Shakeema Edwards

It's legal now in New York to compost bodies—
to return each atom to the earth
on beds of sawdust and alfalfa,
where microbes, fertile with purpose,
unravel them to the bone,

make them silt, clay, peat, or loam;
they will nourish beetles and worms,
hibiscus, bougainvillea, royal poinciana;
they'll regrow forests of sequoias
and cherry blossoms; they will flourish

and perhaps discover how God decided
which millipede would receive ocelli
and which, eyeless, would bioluminesce
beneath soil, unable to perceive
in the damp dark its own brilliance.

BITCH RIVER

Ellora Sutton

My body is a river in recovery from another body.

We're all just out here trying our best

but some people's best is fucking awful

and that's not my fault. I'm exhausted.

The sun cannot set in the same river twice

or something. I adore how its pink flesh pollutes

the river's mummy-flesh, like that time

on holiday, as a kid, when I was so sick

all that came up was rot and algae, bile and silt,

silt, the dark rind of a dagger so eroded

it was a mistranslation, a misunderstanding,

the slit in my side. Is my body property?

Help me, I need to change all the batteries

in all the smoke alarms and chandeliers,

the realtors are coming, I don't want them to notice

the water damage, the low ground,

the predictability of living

on a floodplain.

WATERLOGGED

Annina Zheng-Hardy

After getting the correct diagnosis,
I went straight from the hospital
to the train station to enjoy
a medium length journey.
15 hours is the minimum time needed
to really unfurl on your bunk,
from the boiling water tap, fill
several cups of instant noodles,
eat enough smushed-in-plastic tofu
off a stick, sleep as though a loving hand
is rocking your cradle. Wake
with yet more transit in store.
I've always loved trains.
Nevertheless, at 21, I was just
old and ornery enough
to begin thinking things like
this was more fun when I was a child,
when no one had phones to live
temporarily within instead.
In the arrived at city,
its famous scenery
conquered my eye
line. The conveyor belt
messages written in lights,
the windows' dripping

cooling protrusions, bifurcating
dark water. We stayed on a street
where row after row of wood workshops
opened onto the sidewalk to display their wares — coffins
shiny as cellos. This, before the shortage.
A half-finished one, overturned and propped on its stilts.
The man looked so much like he was building a small boat.
At night, drunk in a crowd, I disappeared into a toilet,
by accident flushed my phone.
She noticed it in the bowl and fished it out.
The light disappeared from the screen,
beautifully. I clutched it desperately
to my chest and lurched to the floor. Found myself
lying prostrate as a sleeping baby does. Then, gently,
the hands on my back, in my armpits.
It never did turn on again, the phone.
On the train ride back,
it would've been of no use to me anyway —
violently ill the whole way,
primordial, crouched and shivering.
The way a sick body can tell you *but really? you ain't shit.*
I'd taken to running my fingers lightly over my sternum,
it soothed me, the feel of the tumour growing beneath my skin,
the perfect rounded dome of it, its centredness,
the way it throbbed at times,
like a reminder of its volcanic promise.
Her face I never saw.
So tightly closed
were the pair of heaving eyes.

*My phone my phone, I cried,
I'm so stupid, I can't believe it.*
Anonymous to each other,
just some girl I was, just some girl was she.
Left in my mouth, a strand of her long hair.

BUCOLIC ACID

Charlotte Baldwin

I read the label on the dream
over and over. Warning:
Corrosive to skin, emotions,
leather shoes, memory. I pace
the garden path barefoot so
long, you could stir the earth
with a spoon. Still my feet burn.
In the field beyond the
mortgage, goats breathe curls of
steam into overpriced bales of
hay bought on Amazon. I clear
plastic out of a river with
strangers, fail to reduce screen
time, meet friends for bitter
coffees in the rain. The town
flowerpresses me between wet
paving slabs while I hope-
scroll, pictures of fields slowly
burning the skin from my
fingertips.

BEE SLEEPING OFF THE BLUE TEARS

Ulyses Razo

'I want a deeply ordered image, but I want it to come about by chance.'

— *Francis Bacon*

the trouble begins
with poetry as machine.

from the inside of this whale,
i woke up on a surgeon's table,

the moon foggy like childhood.

while alive, we were just
one of those things that happened

from time to time.
a castle made of skin

in the brain of a nimbus.

the compass will not encompass us,
Arroyo says, whose name stands for water.

reading *The Sacraments of Desire*,
it looked like someone had killed a mosquito

on the corner of a page, & below it:
perhaps some spilled Hypnotiq.

they chose the right place to do it,
where the words read:

My dearest, you are a green leaf torn
by your own hands because of love.

I could not tell you not to do it,
just as I cannot tell the wind or lightning

not to damage a tree.

ripped lips
grow back again.

but the net between my feet
and my life is no longer there.

SIREN

Karan Chambers

here is the night on a pen nib. sabre carved & starkened.
cross-hatched stretch of stars. abyss. full. of not knowing.
of teetering. here is the moon's bright arch. curving.
guttural. coffee-stain ring of half. remembrance. here is
marshland pressing. below a dead-rimmed sky. scalding.
rabbit-eared tuft. of longing. bless me. for i have. desired.
snatched. wanted. greedy-handed. stuffed my mouth so full.
i choked. forgot myself. fleeting. here is the world in an ink
spill. thickblack. gleaming. spread like faded light. painful.
here the water. waits. eager. manuscript of anticipatory.
silence. stuck. in soft-drift splendour. it's been years. since
last i stood. here. straining. forwards motion. less. here are
my fingers. exposed to the air. freezing. startled. by the
depths. of not-being. here is the sound. of stiff-limbed.
resignation. knotted. curling upwards. these are follies.
delusions. half. snarled. roots of forgetting. wisped.
vaporous. & somewhere. in the not-here. a small word.
of recognition.

TURLOUGH

David Nash

Water with its moon in Libra:
now you see it,

sudden water, where yesterday
you'd happened

on a desire path
home, which would have halved

the time it takes. Now with water,
doubled. Doubled water –

the lake you see before you now is
the lake you don't

inverted, the water table
with its legs in the air,

an underground overed,
a frown upside-downed.

You roll up your jeans
to ford or afford it, and exactly at waist

height you are one of two things:
an anchor tethering sky

or the lake's space programme.

This water one day

will leave land in its wake.

You will stand in

a grass meniscus

while the water, untroubled,

summers in closure.

Now you don't.

ANCESTRY

im Shirley, 1932–2023

Sam Rye

a kind of fieldwork
without touch
the message reads
white frost
again today
I long
to be able
to do the things
you do
even the algorithm
taunts me
my son
tells me I leave
voice notes
as I drift
between my own
body like a cold
front well I
never intended
the night to come
the glass of days
to sleep at the ends
of my wrists

am I only gleaning
that ache
of other lives
before me
intractable
as weather
the virus
pulling at the roots
I slip inside
your mind
to enter
every room
for the first time
blue intruder
we're not so
different you
and I who
once lied
dormant
in a body of wheat
leaving a circle
where my voice
drew the wind

twenty something body

my still

touching her knees in places
in remembrance
of unreal waters
& pages
from the waist down
of a body

crossing back across [] Rd.

Writing is another

EATING FRUIT

Sara Fogarty Olmos

For my mum.

Which sins do you want me to confess?
What would it mean to you if
I said that because of you— I bargain
with the fates using my eyelashes, that I left
your gloves on the floor for the dog to tear
apart, that I still won't eat fruit blushed with bruises.

What if, instead, I told you that I spent twenty-five
pounds on figs this month, just to savour the
spongy pith, to feel the wet crush of seeds like
sand in my mouth, to tongue the memory of wasps:
mothers and children confusing beginnings
and endings in purple, organ darkness.

Before, where there was a blank, there is you
cutting watermelon into squares, leaving it
in the fridge for when we came back from the beach
sunsick and seadazed. And again, you,
biting off chunks of apple because I'd lost my
front teeth. You, sucking on the bitter rind of a lemon.

Maybe it comes down to this — cherry pits
have only a small amount of poison.
These days, I take care to peel an orange all
the way without breaking it, and winding it back to
make an empty whole. And even now, in a kitchen,
a peach pit slips out of your hand and skitters on the tiles.

SONNET (WITH AN UNTRANSLATED COPY
OF FRAGOLETTA)

VJ René

Along the lilac lake, the lingering evening
Relinquishing the slight, soft fragrance of dying
Strawberry leaves, I thought of you sadly again

And all at once I was speaking in the language
Of a vague emphatic past, familiar to me
Only in reproduction, a tongue of anther

And of winglet. This is the unself-consciousness
Of pollen. This blue-black smear is the nightingale
The night breathes into its hands. These are the letters
Left in sand by a pair of snakes. This is the sea.

This is the sound of the strange scent of perfecting.
This is the moment in which they give you something
For the pain. And this is the moment in which you
Hold onto my hand and tell me it is hurting.

MORNING

Aleja Taddesse

makes a bad thing sing
makes a bad thing serenade suffering
mourning, slurring, feeding and tweeting under a brief blue sky
fumes and snuffed beams from night drives,
linger in patterns
sequences of stop-start sleep

morning brings a million revolutions a minute—
we are working, pedalling through
not as radical, resolute, as morning news presumes
morning—

a

released kite

silk skirt on cocoa-buttered
 skin.

morning, kin, morning friend, morning bossman!

who we praying for this morning?
where to cast our morning paper?
morning beautiful, fervent fodder

morning, let us now sing.

CONTRIBUTORS

CAITLIN TINA JONES is a working-class autistic poet from Hengoed, South Wales. She is currently undertaking a BA in English Literature and Creative Writing at Cardiff University. She was a recipient of the 2022 Walter Swan Poetry Prize, highly commended in the 2023 Cúirt New Writing Prize, and has been published in print and online by *Lucent Dreaming* and Powders Press.

ZAHRA RAFIQ is a 17-year-old poet studying for her A-levels in Chemistry, Biology, Physics and Maths. She is a winner of the Foyle Young Poets of the Year award 2022, and enjoys incorporating science into her work. She seeks poetic inspiration in nature, and by the age of 11 had scaled the three highest peaks in the United Kingdom.

LUCILLE MONA LING is a poet from Berlin, currently based in Glasgow. Her poetry has been published in *The Dark Horse*, *Gutter*, *Horizon Magazine*, and *Middleground Magazine*. She has been included in the Scottish Poetry Library Anthology of *Best Scottish Poems of 2021*. Since 2023 she is the founder and poetry editor at *Contralytic* an interdisciplinary philosophy journal.

FRANCESCA BROOKS is a writer and researcher, living in Manchester and working at the University of York. Francesca's poetry and essays have been published, or are forthcoming, with *PN Review*, *gorse*, *Tentacular* and *3AM Magazine*, amongst others. In 2021 she was longlisted for *Primers 6* with *Nine Arches Press*. In a previous life Francesca worked with art galleries, rare book dealers, frozen food companies and even a circus.

WENDELIN LAW ([@wendylawwrites](#)) is a poet and writer born and raised in Hong Kong's concrete jungle. She currently lives in Edinburgh—where the rain is a constant downpour of em-dashes—and Arthur's Seat roar is akin to that of the Lion Rock (an iconic mountain in Hong Kong). She is the 1st prize winner of Verve Poetry Festival Competition 2023 and was shortlisted for Magma's Poetry Pamphlet Competition 2022.

DEEKSHA VEIRAI AH is a student and aspiring writer from Edinburgh. She is particularly interested in the surreal and fantastical, and enjoys using those lenses to write about personhood, nature, and familial relationships.

NATASHA TANNA is a writer based in Cambridge. She is also a Lecturer in the Department of English and Related Literature at the University of York where she teaches courses on queer textualities, literature and migration, Latin American culture, and creative critical forms.

ANJALI RAMAYYA: Inspired by life in India and Scotland, the two countries she calls home, Anjali started writing poetry and short fiction two years ago, following retirement. Her work has been short/long listed in competitions and published by *Poetry Scotland*, *Dreich* magazine, *Soor Ploom*, and *Writers' Umbrella*.

SHAKEEMA EDWARDS is an Antiguan American poet studying with the Seamus Heaney Centre at Queen's University Belfast.

ELLORA SUTTON is a poet and museum person based in Hampshire. Her work has been published in *The Poetry Review*, *bath magg*, *Popshot*, and *The North*, among others, and she is the poetry reviewer for *Mslexia*. Her pamphlet, *Antonyms for Burial*, was the Poetry Book Society Spring 2023 Pamphlet Choice. She tweets [@ellora_sutton](https://twitter.com/ellora_sutton).

ANNINA ZHENG-HARDY (she/her) is a poet from New York and Sichuan. Her poems and short fiction are forthcoming or have appeared in *Joyland*, *Catapult*, *The Offing*, *bath magg*, *Honey Literary*, and elsewhere.

CHARLOTTE BALDWIN works on a national project supporting young people's mental health and as a creative writing tutor & dogwalker. As Gypsy Rose Poetry, she travels round London visiting people living in isolation to talk about their lives and write poems for them. Her debut pamphlet, *With My Lips Pressed to the Ear of the Earth*, is out now with Nine Pens. Her poems have appeared in *Finished Creatures*, *The North*, *Under the Radar*, *Shearsman*, *Lighthouse* and *Tears in the Fence*, among others.

ULYSES RAZO is an MFA candidate for poetry at Randolph College. His poems, essays, and translations have appeared or are forthcoming in *Ghost City Review*, *The South Carolina Review*, *Roi Fainéant Press*, *Barzakh*, *Life and Legends*, *Months to Years*, and elsewhere. He lives in London.

KARAN CHAMBERS is an ex-English teacher and mum to three lively boys. She has been published by *Ink Sweat & Tears*, *Sylvia Magazine*, and *The Hyacinth Review*, and is forthcoming in *Atrium*. Her pamphlet *Where the Light Still Reaches* was longlisted for publication by The Emma Press. Find her on Instagram [@KaranChambersPoetry](#) and Twitter [@KaranJCChambers](#).

DAVID NASH is a poet and writer from County Cork, Ireland, who lives and works between Europe and Chile. His poetry has appeared in various publications such as *The White Review*, *The Stinging Fly*, and Pilot Press' *Queer Anthologies* series. His art texts have appeared in numerous exhibitions and art books throughout the UK and Ireland, most recently for Wolfgang Tillmans at IMMA. His first children's book, *Bajo Mis Pies*, was released in Latin America in 2020, as were two translations of books on the social and cultural history of Chile. He writes a column for *Harper's Bazaar Korea* and *Elle Korea*, and other essays have appeared in the *Irish Times*. His first book, *The Island of Chile*, came out in September 2022 with 14Poems, and his second, as yet untitled, will be released by Dedalus Press in 2023.

SAM RYE is a poet and editor originally from the North East of England and now based in Manchester. He recently completed his MA in Modern and Contemporary Literature at the University of Manchester. His poetry has been published in *Butcher's Dog*, *The Shore*, *Dodging the Rain* and *Prole*. He is currently working on his first pamphlet, *The Bone-House*.

EMILY ALICE SPIVEY is a multi-disciplinary writer navigating themes of body, landscape, water and cyclicity. Rooted in her relationship to England's Peak District, North Wales and South-Western Scotland, poetry is an embodied practice for Emily, with the intent of walking readers through a planetary fabric of moving forms. She is currently collating her first pamphlet of poetry and studying on the MSt in Creative Writing at The University of Cambridge.

SARA FOGARTY OLMOS was born in Bilbao to an Basque mother and an Irish father, and was raised in Manchester. She will be starting her master's in September where she will be researching fatness, futurity and the short stories of Peter Carey. Sara has poems published in *Ink Sweat + Tears*, *Times New Haiku* and *Carmen et Error*. You can find her at: [@sarafogartyolmos](#) on Instagram and [@sfogol](#) on Twitter.

VJ RENÉ is a poet and PhD student at the University of East Anglia. Their research explores the relationship between queer textual and fleshly embodiment in the works of Swinburne.

ALEJA TADDESSE is a writer and historian living in London. Her poetry touches on the themes of diaspora, Africa, womanhood, tradition, spirituality and religiosity. Her poems range from being introspective pieces to reimaged takes on ritualistic lore. They speak to the challenges of embracing identity on her own terms and the significance of place/belonging in a city whose diverse cultures are bound up with brutal, heavy histories of erasure and resistance. Her recent dissertation on African Liberation Movements explores grassroots, radical organising in late 20th century. She hopes to continue working on understudied histories, in particular of anti-imperialist struggles within diaspora communities in Britain and elsewhere.

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