



THE GINKGO PRIZE

—
AREAS OF
OUTSTANDING
NATURAL BEAUTY
BEST POEM OF
LANDSCAPE

COMPETITION
ANTHOLOGY
2020



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*The National Association for Areas
of Outstanding Natural Beauty:
Best Poem of Landscape Prize
Anthology 2020*

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Areas of Outstanding
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PREFACE

In 2019, the UK's Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) celebrated the 70th anniversary of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act. This piece of ground breaking legislation recognised the fundamental link between the appreciation of the natural environment and our health and wellbeing.

Our celebrations were focused on a 'National Moment', when AONB teams throughout the country, on the same day at exactly the same time, formed hearts in their local landscapes: hearts made of stones, light, apples, sand, but mostly hearts made of people. This creative, collective expression of our love for landscape was both moving and important.

The centrepiece event was the first reading of 'Fugitives', a poem written for us by the Poet Laureate Simon Armitage. This took place on a perfect sunny day on the slopes of Arnside Knott in Cumbria.

The commissioning of 'Fugitives' was the AONBs' first step into eco-poetry, which has now grown into a partnership with Poetry School supporting both the Laurel and Ginkgo Prizes.

This anthology brings together the 20 longlisted poems in the category 'Best Poem of Landscape'; a category of the Ginkgo Prize that we collectively sponsor.

The relationship between poetry and landscape goes back to the origins of language, and to interpret natural beauty artistically goes to the very root of what it means to be human. We all know how it feels to be stopped in our tracks by the wonder of nature – whether that be in a quiet woodland, before a roiling sea or in the stillness before a storm in a city park. We are also very aware of the fragility of this beauty and the need to actively protect it.

The poems you hold in your hands give voice to this urgency. The natural world not only keeps us alive, it also adds colour to the lives we live. These poems express the sense of awe nature can bring; from the tiniest spore to incredible unlikeliness of a whole planet so perfectly balanced that life has been able to flourish, and how much we stand to lose if we don't act to retain this balance.

**– Howard Davies, Chief Executive
National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty**

AREAS OF
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BEST POEM OF
LANDSCAPE

WINNING
POEM

Anglezarke Moor

This moor is mine.
Or, at least, I pretend
I own the peat that gives
gently under my feet.

That dark brown
pool of water, acid
and reed-edged.
A monster might lie

just under the surface,
eyes half-closed, gills
palpating, my monster,
my pool.

These furred fells
rise, one behind the other.
Their curved flanks
breathe for me.

Spitler's Edge,
Will Narr Hill,
Noon Hill,
Rivington Pike.

My skylarks
flirt with the sun,
throats open, sing
a lemon-sherbet song.

Bog cotton rags
flutter. My bouquet.
Pinpricks of light
on the dark.

My ancient limestone
ribs rise up
through thin skin,
rain mapped.

At last, Great Hill.
My long, slow climb
to sky-reaching
cairn of stones.

AREAS OF
OUTSTANDING
NATURAL BEAUTY
BEST POEM OF
LANDSCAPE

SHORTLISTED
POEMS

After rain

the clarity of light, & mud flats
the colours – waders, scanning the ground

rising equally their earth, this

but biting cold – layer on layer
alto chorus, & higher

curlew flies with its extra-
ordinary beak – the same sound

they made on the moors
they make here, as at home, always

calling, seeking –
the sea a distant gap

these flocks settle

like thoughts settle like thoughts
at the creek edge – flocks

of white and black white dark
air cleared, brushed back from

the estuary's face

blue light becoming bluer & the clouds
pinking in the pink sandlets.

Along the Edge

Living beside the canal towpath, every day brings doorstep birdsong, frogs and the water's glisten, pulling me closer.

Moor hens snip the surface; a swan ruffles up a lace dress with its feather-stitched wake towards its reed-moored nest. Shimmering light hides the fast paddling beneath, the deeper flit of fish, and other sunken secrets – rusted metal re-sculpted by weed.

This evening, the hedgerow is a chorus of bird chatter and May blossom. Snazzy bulrushes and tall grasses sway to the late hours' slow jazz.

As I watch from the footbridge, the sun's touch warms my skin: a thin layer of amber silks across everything still within the day's reach.

Here, I've no need for frog-princes – the canal carries my love without spilling.

Before night seals over, time skips a single heartbeat. It's just long enough for me to lift my arms like wings, and dream the ease of quiet flight: rising as high as a whooper swan, looping and curving like the water, but always returning to this, my reed-moored home.

*sleep is a ripple
of unseen breaths; a lone owl
hoots through the darkness*

Back Home

This is how MacCaig must have felt returning to Assynt in summer, soothed and thrilled by the birches' dance and the aspens hushing and clapping, egging us on and calming us down in equal measure, an exuberant jostle of lushness awash with flowers, untamed bushiness thronging without orchestration.

What grows is so much more gorgeous than what is grown, woods so much lovelier than garden, the assemblage so much more alive, leaves in rampant proportion to the profusion of flowers, life revelling – moths, earwigs, spiders and birds frolicking about in all dimensions fighting, fornicating, feeding.

There is no watering – the sky does that. No-one prepares the ground – it prepares itself or is joyfully unprepared for the surprises thrown at it. Nothing is sown or planted – seeds set themselves or let the wind or animals take them, sometimes contriving their own personal supply of fertiliser. Otherwise there is no fertiliser. It is all already fertile.

Cotswolds Walk

Turning the corner as the paper gulls
rise up in reverse confetti,
their origami wings shimmering
against a sky streaked eggshell blue
with the speckled signature of clouds
across the page of October when the fields
are engraved with the bones of a civil war.

The hush of a stream disguised as the skeleton
of childhood summers clattering across the hills.
The oaks stark in their embrace of the horizon.
Their black arms swaying to the hum
of the telephone wires as the limestone
creaks with the fossil ghosts of cavaliers.

There is the deep indigo ink of history
and then there is the surprise of how a feather
caught in a straggle of hedge makes me soar
out over the land itself. Dipped in flight,
the light is haunted by my footsteps.

Dorset

Birds perch on telegraph wires
like music notes on staves. They shift
in stop-go cinematography
as cattle with black and white maps
on their backs lumber across fields
under curving shadowy hillsides,
sunlight-slashed. Two horses, one white
with white lashes, the other sorrel
with a blonde mane, stand flank to shoulder,
static from poll to croup but facing
opposite ways, like a couple
not talking. Hook-headed, a hawk
hovers. In woods, all elbows, knees
and contorted spindly limbs vaguely
gesturing, that tap of Morse means
woodpecker. Nerves in soil inch
a foot, and clumsy butterflies,
flimsy as the earliest planes,
brush a chrysalis on a shrub
that hangs like a parachutist
caught in a tree. Kite-like, the soul
tugs. A heartbeat of hooves, the flicker
of birds against coastlines of cloud
and all the sweeps and dips and folds
of countryside invite one to
follow dreamy rivers out to
where the sea broadcasts to the world.

Edge of the Mendips

We scour Hellenge Hill for honewort,
small wiry constellations
fractured among the inching sward.
A blue shieldbug, having distilled
the sky onto its back, spears
a sawfly larva and sprints away
into hundreds of years
of dry Somerset hair-grass.
To leaf through the field journals
of the old botanists, then press
their findings into the herbaria of our minds:
musk thistle, carline thistle, dwarf thistle,
the earth prickles and runs to the edge
as this line of hills points off
down the estuary, across the Atlantic,
ultimately to Newfoundland.

Joining the dots between
honewort's inverted chandeliers
distracts us from the other view,
southwest over the River Parrett:
Hinkley Point C under construction,
like a dated drawing of a spaceport
filled in with grey crayons,
and the Severn shipping lane
busy with associated materials.
Yes, honewort's dusty bluish leaves
and Bridgwater's new hotels
and brothels to serve the workers.
Or a blustery rock-rose
and the cargo boats leaning heavily
against the current. Let's count
the flowers, then count them again.

Heptonstall Cemetery

Even amidst fierce flames the golden lotus can be planted—Sylvia Plath
Foolish enough to have been a poet—Asa Benveniste

The two churches hunch like a dark collar
over the crags,
one broken, hollow as a flute,
the other a jutting, boxy, black bone,
cutting a square field where new names
turn up in rips of soil.

Walk on the damp earth, a muddle
of clay and bracken. The summer
honeysuckle
clips our dates and dedications;
rubbing wind keens the chiselled freight
of grey tongues licking toward rain and light.

Look behind the crumbled wall, a stone lip
hangs, opening the valley's leafy rift;
there, a lost eye
sifts the paradox of tree-rock-shadow,
searching, hoping, certain that there must be
something more than a patch of suicides
swept clean above a gloomy wood.

I

Half-buried in white sand,
a lost city of old creels,
their blue-strung bones
binding the *machair*
on this bitter-bright morning.
At the island's low margin,
fields flecked with goose shit,
as you perch on Precambrian,
look north to Staffa and watch
the sea's white flame flare
in Fingal's gut. Across the loch,
Ardmeanach and, beyond,
Ben More tipped with snow.
South, the Abbey crosses itself
against the skyline. Skirting
a field back to the track,
greylag rise on apricot feet,
as if polite, to let you pass.
The ferry will leave in an hour,
only a village between you
and the slipway. It's enough,
this is enough.

Marsh Rosemary

The foodie on the guided tour says
sea aster's the aristocrat of greens,
a forager's pick, from creek or shore,
long fingered, tender, nutty, sweet,
a flick of purple lash, a golden eye,
more succulent than samphire.

Whereas sea lavender is common
as mud, a bitter lick, a fishy after-spit,
not fit even for sheep's greens,
tendering him no salty nourishment.
He sees: plain statice, cut and dried,
a clump of pink, tied up in bunches,

though she's sinking slowly into blue.
Not fit, not right, head calyx-turned,
all pentagram and glaucous spoon.
There's more to mauve than magic.
Her paint brush washes acres of this
saltmarsh till it matches evening sky.

Come closer, even he might see
there's nectar in her paper fold,
a subtle, weak, scent but a payload
promising as any heady namesake
from some inland field or garden.
Stop still and breathe. Or leave

her be, busy with summer hives.
Prepare to wait, like those more
thrifty visitors, for sweetness:
honey, poured, thin, yellow-green,
into an autumn jar, to settle, seal
and crystallise all winter through.

Seas

Growing up, the sea was a ghost to me,
a compound familiar at the edge of the fens,
outer space munching the rim of a planet,
a coronal coast, like the burr round the iris,
a wealth misted to peripheral vision.

It was stories deep: the veil abysmally lifted
from the face of the earth, the glass coffin lid
from Snow White so the land could heaving breathe,
the stinging vanished like a hawthorn curse
that had swamped with its draggly stranglehold,

the fallen realm in crushing, crashing exile,
banished and scolded, put back in its place
as if with the wag of a Dutch boy's finger,
and ever since needing to be brought to heel,
cut into ditches and drains, sliced and sluiced,

lashing in its chains, grey as a dinosaur,
and ever-menacing, ever more like the beast
returning nosing at night to the house,
Grendel's mother come after centuries for vengeance,
indiscriminate recompense in limbs ripped off;

it was shingly, twinkly, like a frost-jarred night sky
– sheared of cloud – slinging in on a salt of wind
like David fleeing the feigning Goliath,
or in the lash of a gull like a gale-toughened dove
screaming the flood was coming, fast as an arrow,

and plain as a raider wave, horsing and flashing,
the wipeout like chalk on the board, the uproar

foretold in waterfalls, bells ringing like rigging,
even the storytime shushing that spelled out
how the waves hushed up their crabby approach.

However, now I've left, now I live amidst mountains
over the sea, I can look back and see
it had no such intent or slaving ambition;
but it's not like I know it more closely,
or see it more clearly, and not like the dread

has tidily subsided; it goes deeper,
in a rampant gravity, as if all along,
beneath the thin land of the skin, the patchwork
ditchwork of vessels, the blasted hedgerows of bones,
the sea is only something I've harboured,

and no sea is ever where it wants to be.

Shepherd's Cup

i

A fist-sized hollow
to hold these dark pines, chestnuts,
towering beeches, the sky like blue milk pouring in,

the short bright nights,
mist's scarves knotted along the valleys,
the flight of rivers, buzzards, golden eagles;

this flock of four hundred,
the bells' deep sing-song along rocky paths
as we move from *crête* to *crête*:

I'll take it home for Madelaine to taste
this quiet spot in the shade of box tree
from which I prised a burr, scraped off bark

and scooped until the niche was blond, fine-grained,
soft as a lamb's ear filled
with tolling.

Up here, each valley is a green cup
to its brim – the animals and I, we drink
from stars and silence,

from the sum of what we need:
gourd, knife, canvas sheet; a flacon
of juniper oil, an amulet to ward off illness.

ii

Just a fist sized hollow
two inches high, the pale exterior minutely carved:
zig-zag band below the rim,

and underneath, a heart, a *croix de St André*,
a cross-hatched loop
that might be a snake or a twisting path.

It's split and held
with seven rusted staples, but still two cracks
allow the outside in –

like mountain streams just after rain:
twin cascades of light
dissolving on the base.

We can see the owner was right-handed:
left of the thumb-rest handle, the rim
is worn to a mouth-width dip.

Untouchable behind glass,
a button at the side brings us
this shepherd by a stream

recalling painted collars,
pride in a good-looking flock,
flash floods, scarcity of water.

*

crête – mountain ridge
croix de St André – St Andrews Cross

Sketches of the Western isles

[Uibhist—seen through intermittent rain]

From the beached beaches battered and flat,
planks of driftwood
protrude, like lonesome sailor stumps.

Mist holds the machair in a vague embrace,
and jagged clouds
hang, like scraps of iron over pink sheets.

Fiddle rave—harsh man, harsher drink;
a pensive young lady might want an escape.

A Common Gull, with a broken wing
that sits and waits to die; exactly,
in the same posture as a mother brooding.

3am: more stars than lives in Earth's history.

Fields never truly dry—a swallowing of feet
for a hundred squelching generations
took their ruin, to the insides of the earth.

Snowfall: like the hush wings of swandown,
land enfolded
by a sheet of white, and a melded sleep. . .

The shore again, it stomps on the sand
pummelled pummelled
by heavyweight Atlantic wind. Taste of salt.

Hearing huge waves detonate, sympathy
for the rocks. . . leaning back like scared cats.

Sympathy, for bush & malnourished tree,
who crouch low like conscripts,
behind the dune-trenches. And
Love, for the soul that keeps the island afloat.

Slow Burn

& Other Landscape Readings

— reflections on social and environmental discourse, justice, and systems change
(excerpted from a series of literary nonfiction essays, poetry, photography, and illustration)

Anthropic #2

we scarcely noted—

crystal sheets slipping, reluctantly,
into darkening waters,
yielding millennial form
through persuasion of ambiance

rosy pulp waning, sickly,
from decalcified villas,
tempered in briny amusement
by acidic dispersion

bristled sprigs splitting, rusty,
off rot-captured bases,
brittle to burrowed invasions
with weary from parchment

soaked refuse plaiting, densely,
as stringed choking masses,
congealed in haute couture biomes
of vulgar distinction

pallid dust wafting, absently,
on baked, shallow fields,
barren with virtue depleted
through vigour of reaping

trenched terrain weeping, elementally,
into bright turquoise pools,
gashing from open abrading
to wrest for production

*—with most missives lost
amidst spellbound carousing,
'til*

currents licked heartlands
with groundswells and blazes,
and pestilence leached to
the edge of precautions

singeing us gently
as gracious correction,
still testing the boundaries
of callous compulsion

with discharged displays
of errant devolution,
upholding our pride
as a last valediction.

Sphagnum

Neat black slashes etch the moors
with strange uneven geometry,
where cotton grass tickles the marshland
and oystercatchers stripe the sky.

Sometimes even sphagnum moss
dries out, is bleached
white against the green,
earth's lungs dysfunctional;
the searing pain of wind-scoured wounds
inflicted through the years
of slicing, gathering, storing power
to fuel future fires.

When showers return to bring relief,
the surface sucks and groans in watery grief
labouring to grow a millimetre
while the aching space between
one long wet winter and the next
breathes in the rain,

absorbing it in acres of black gold
which retains the moisture, holding it
until the sun returns, the moorland drains
and all the excess water, like spent breath
is released again.

Even then the captured carbon still remains,
is carried down, compacted into peat,
holding the heat of centuries;
while mist insinuates its loneliness
into every fold of spongy moss
and cold wet winds sigh bleakly of their loss.

Spurn Point

Holderness dips the frayed edges of her skirts
hesitantly in the perishing deep.

A loose thread trails the mouth of the Humber,
a hair's breadth from storm-severed.

From a higher vantage point you might see it
drift westward, the foetal curl of its spine,
if there were any foothold but sand here
on this pale glimmer under yawning sky.

Wind-whipped, wave-worn, she combs the elements
in search of herself, builds an island of detritus,
weaving sea-jewelled shingle into marram grass.

In a brittle fist of broken jetty
she clutches a blue balloon; it resembles
one snatched 30 years ago from the cliffs
at Sewerby, marring a trip to the circus.
Her pockets must be stuffed with childhood.

The ancient name of this place, *Ravenspurn*,
graced a cul-de-sac on your council estate –
an early warning that getting cocky
will get you nowhere in the end, the sea
will swallow us, battlements and all.
You come here at last, walk the tightrope
across shuffling centuries, watch the tide
rolling in at impossible angles.

St Catherine's Hill, Winchester

A mound, I'm shaped
with a perpetual, expectant hump.
A scheduled, ancient monument

beneath my copse I'm solid,
chalked-in deep, white as morning milk
but marbled through with fecund earth.

On spring and summer days
I wear my fanciest of grasses
my Cocksfoot, my Timothy,

my Crested Dogstails,
all purple tipped and breeze-swept
like the fringes of a shawl.

With Whitethroat and Linnet's song
I coax straggling ramblers out
of The Black Bottle, away

from clinking, yeasty pints and onto paths
bedded-in between the fresh,
weed-strewn river-slits

of these ancient meadows,
plague pits, ditch and bank.
My verdurous under-water vines

are live with speckled-brown trout,
vole and elusive otter.
Walkers may follow these shallow streams

all the way to my turf-carved druid maze.
The Celtic tools are long gone,
footprints too - but beside the beech trees

with their partial shade
you'll find some horizontal, fallen boughs
the most natural, recurring human seats.

And with all the souls who passed through in earlier times
we'll share the quiet, the cool, the mauve-lit
end of days.

Surface Tension

Tinny dialect of osprey
and algae turning toxic in sunlight,
so close to miracle food,

in Cancale, near an ancient hearth
where the haunches of almost-us
knelt to rhino bones

blackened by heat's immensity,
cooled by the babble of priestly
cormorants, guillemots,

sea lettuces merely leaning
on rocks, unattached as a sociopath,
imbibing from their cosmos

poison or colostrum, below
a boar succumbing on the shoreline,
boom between jagged crumb

and quartz, native to this
languagelessness, enduring waves
of it, the oyster beds' silence

razoring heel, tendon, hid
in grassy blankets, sussing the sun
through the pewter of a losing

lotto ticket, hoisted by biceps,
sorted, mountain'd, sold with lemon
wedges (one per dozen), a plastic

knife, just so, unemotional
as *materna vulgaris*, as an eater thinks
witch, waif, hermit, queen,

deciding which feminine archetype
she was, wool pulled closer,
a cold wholeness oiling the throat,

mineral memory, bleached pith,
that particular shade (*healing bruise*) of
thistle in lockstep with

the salt-drenched gannet,
its desperate character, diving again
into the dreadful, choppy rain,

heavenly as an unnamed baby
carried away, the mother's trailing arms
limp in the twilight drip drip.

The Valley as Magician

i

Cloud rises like wood smoke
in an upside down T,

thin vapour grounded
in the low valley. Above

the highest fir tree, white
grain slips past drowsily

crossing a semblance of sun:
off-white hole in a scree sky.

I have to guess the road below
in black stripes of the forest.

ii

A crow steals an apple
from Eve's lopsided tree,

lands in Gwilym's garden
and devours it in four pecks.

He stares at me
through the fence.

*Lunch, he says, better
than bread and marmalade.*

He flies off to beyond
the tan and cream goats

I can only glimpse
through the tree gaps.

iii

*Biodegradable.
Not for use on wanted plants.*

I spray on the recently hewn,
weeping stems

of a formerly large plant.
The nozzle leaks.

I unscrew the top and pour neat
along the edge of silver slate.

A week later, grass has yellowed
but perks up as if springtime

among the indigo gravel.
To lift up just the roots

I'd have to remove each stone.
Even the moss is alive.

iv

On a walk not like a walk
but a tinker down the quarry,

I limbo under boughs
towards the brush of the Dulas,

dew entering my trainers,
pressing mushroom bells

into twigs. I stop in a hollow
silked with grass. Then suddenly –

wham - I'm pulled out from inside,
just like that, like rubbery sap,

thinned, as if I'm the shadow
of cloud in the V of this valley.

Tide Going Out

Lindisfarne, Holy Island

Wet moist silt, slips across the mud flats
Markings of seaweed, leaving trails.
The lungs respire as the weight of water drains,
Veins of liquid moves itself ever near
As the drawing tide sighs
going out going out going out

Way back across those dunes
The sea rolls white with a deep rhythmic roar
Sheltering these grey glossy muds flats that mirror the sky
While clams work and worry at the soft silt.
There is a moaning
a distant discussion
from far out across the estuary
It hangs out on the wind
Hovering, a murmuring of love
whispers from a sand bank
The conversation of beached seals

The muscle of the silt condenses
From a watery state to milky cream
the water, the accretion
Evaporates as the tide force pulls
Revealing the tidal bed
This vast open skin of the weeping wound
A salted marsh sea flatland
Seeping water sweats to cloud
Bleeding through the slow satin silk film

Inhaling the beached infusion,
Distilled to sand.
A poised, suspended meditation

POET BIOGRAPHIES

WINNER: LIZ BYRNE was born and grew up in Dublin. She now lives on the edge of the West Pennine Moors. She worked as a clinical psychologist in the NHS until her retirement. She was shortlisted for the Bridport Poetry Prize, 2019 and was highly commended in the Artlyst: Art to Poetry Competition, 2020. Her poetry appears in *The Curlew*, *Obsessed with Pipework*, *Orbis*, *Agenda* and *Butcher's Dog*.

SHORTLISTED POETS:

OLIVIA WALWYN's poems have appeared in a range of magazines and anthologies including most recently, *Lucent Dreaming*, *Here Comes Everyone* and *The Dawntreader*. Her pamphlet *En Route* was published by Templar in 2018, and her first collection, *Halcyon*, in 2019 (Templar). She currently lives in Norwich, where she works as a Teaching Assistant.

SARAH LEAVESLEY loves walking, swimming, cycling, photography and exploring outdoors. Winner of the Overton Poetry Prize 2020 and CP Aware Award Prize for Poetry 2021, Sarah's pamphlet *Ten Lines or More Than Just Love Notes* and a collection *Blood Sugar, Sex, Magic* are forthcoming in 2021.

MANDY HAGGITH lives in Assynt, Scotland, and teaches Literature and Creative Writing at the University of the Highlands and Islands where she runs a tree poetry project, A-B-Tree, inspired by the Gaelic tree alphabet. Her books include four poetry collections, most recently *Why the Sky is Far Away* (Red Squirrel Press, 2019), a tree poetry anthology, a non-fiction book about paper and five novels, including *The Last Bear*, which won the Robin Jenkins Literary Award for environmental writing. She has been poet in residence at the Royal Botanical Gardens Edinburgh and at Inverewe Garden. www.mandyhaggith.net

AOIFE MANNIX was born in Sweden of Irish parents. She grew up in Dublin, Ottawa and New York before moving to the UK. She read English and Sociology at Trinity College Dublin and has a PhD in creative writing from Goldsmiths, University of London. She has previously worked as a script editor for the BBC. She has published four collections of poetry, four libretti and a novel. She has been poet in residence for the Royal Shakespeare Company and BBC Radio 4's Saturday Live, amongst others. She has toured internationally as a writer with the British Council.

MARK KIRKBRIDE lives in Surrey but grew up in Dorset. He is the author of *The Plot Against Heaven*, *Game Changers of the Apocalypse* and *Satan's Fan Club*, published by Omnium Gatherum. *Game Changers of the Apocalypse* was a semi-finalist in the Kindle Book Awards 2019.

His short stories have appeared in *Under the Bed*, *Sci Phi Journal*, *Disclaimer Magazine*, *Flash Fiction Magazine* and *So It Goes: The Literary Journal of the Kurt Vonnegut Memorial Library*. Poetry credits include the *London Reader*, the *Big Issue*, the *Morning Star*, the *Daily Mirror*, *Sein und Werden* and Horror Writers Association chapbooks.

DAVID HAWKINS is an amateur naturalist (especially botany, bryophytes, insects) and professional natural history editor from Bristol. Recent poetry has been published in the likes of *Magma*, *White Review*, *Poetry Wales*, *The Goose* and *Interpreter's House*. He was runner up in the 2015 National Poetry Competition. His favourite place in the Mendips is Ubley Warren, where he was once lucky enough to see a barn owl catch a field vole and then fly up into a yew tree to eat it.

DANIEL FRASER is a writer from Hebden Bridge, Yorkshire. His poetry and prose have won prizes and been published widely in print and online, including: *London Magazine*, *LA Review of Books*, *Aeon*, *Acumen*, *X-R-A-Y*, *Poetry Birmingham*, *Radical Philosophy* and *Review 31*. His debut poetry pamphlet '*Lung Iron*' is published by the Oxford Brookes Poetry Centre's **ignitionpress**. A current humanities excellence scholar at University College Cork, his research examines crisis and traumatic temporality in post-1945 European literature.

MARTIN MALONE, born in County Durham, now lives in Gardenstown on the north-east coast of Scotland. He has published three poetry collections: *The Waiting Hillside* (Templar, 2011), *Cur* (Shoestring, 2015), *The Unreturning* (Shoestring 2019) and a *Selected Poems 2005 – 2020: Larksong Static* (Hedgehog 2020). He is currently working on two new collections and writing a third album for his regathered band from the 1980s, Innocents Abroad. He's won and not won some prizes in the past. His website is to be found at: www.martinmalonepoetry.com

LINDA GOULDEN lives at the edge of the beautiful Derbyshire Peak District but while visiting North Norfolk found herself much taken with its birds and broads, seafood and samphire, and an expanse of sea lavender a.k.a. marsh rosemary. Her poetry has appeared in magazines, anthologies, online, on local radio, in woodland display, in choral arrangement, and in her pamphlet 'Speaking parts', published in her seventieth year.

IAIN TWIDDY Iain Twiddy studied literature at university and lived for several years in northern Japan. His poetry has appeared in *The Poetry Review*, *Poetry Ireland Review*, *Stand*, *The Stinging Fly*, *The London Magazine*, *Harvard Review*, and elsewhere. He has written two critical studies, *Pastoral Elegy in Contemporary British and Irish Poetry* (2012) and *Cancer Poetry* (2015).

SHARON BLACK is from Glasgow and lives in a remote valley of the Cévennes mountains of France. Her poetry is published widely in the UK and she has won many prizes for her work, including the Guernsey International Poetry Competition 2019 and *The London Magazine* Poetry Prizes 2019 and 2018. She is editor of Pindrop Press. Her two collections are *To Know Bedrock* (Pindrop, 2011) and *The Art of Egg* (Two Ravens, 2015; Pindrop, 2019). A pamphlet, *Rib*, will appear with Wayleave Press in 2021 and her third full collection with Drunk Muse Press in 2022. www.sharonblack.co.uk

FRED MELNYCZUK is a writer based in Scotland, with poems and prose published or forthcoming in many places throughout the UK, Europe, and the US, including: *The Poetry Review*, *The London Magazine*, *Poetry Salzburg Review*, *the FT*, *The Telegraph*, *Ink Sweat & Tears*, *Blue Earth Review*, and many others. He has been shortlisted for both the Alpine Fellowship Writing Prize and the Jane Martin Poetry Prize. Recently, he was included in Eyewear Publishing's current 'Best New...' series, and graduated with a Distinction from the University of Glasgow's Creative Writing MLitt programme.

PERIN RUTTONSHA is an interdisciplinary creative practitioner, systemic designer, and PhD candidate with the University of Waterloo (UW) School of Environment, Resources and Sustainability (SERS). She has over fifteen years of experience facilitating processes of multilevel systems transformation for complex challenges, covering themes of sustainable and affordable shelter, urban and rural planning, Indigenous community resilience, population health, and cultural programming. Ruttonsha has designed and taught related curricula at elementary, undergraduate, and postgraduate levels, working with the University of Waterloo (UW), George Brown College (GBC), and the Institute without Boundaries (IwB), along with local community groups. Her work hybridizes creative with academic approaches, drawing upon the capacity of the arts to enable sensemaking amidst global social and environmental change. www.perinruttonsha.com

ALWYN MARRIAGE's eleven books include poetry, fiction and non-fiction. She's widely published in magazines, anthologies and on-line and gives readings all over Britain and in many other countries around the world. Her latest novel is *The Elder Race*, her last poetry collection was *In the Image: Portraits of mediaeval women*; and a collection of her covid poems, 'Pandora's Pandemic', is due out in June this year. Formerly a university philosophy lecturer, CEO of two international literature and literacy NGOs and an environmental consultant, she's Managing Editor of Oversteps Books and a research fellow at Surrey University. www.marriages.me.uk/alwyn

KRISTINA DIPROSE founded and co-runs Rhubarb at the Triangle, a monthly open mic night in Shipley. Kristina's poems have featured in online and print journals including *Three Drops From a Cauldron*, *Algebra of Owls*, *Stirred#1* (Björk), *Dwell Time*, and *Route 57*, as well as the *Un/Forced Rhubarb* anthology (Ings Poetry, 2017), the Leeds Church Institute anthology *And the Stones Fell Open* (Yaffle, 2020) and the Saltaire Festival anthology *Green Aire* (2020). She placed 2nd in the 2017 Ilkley Literature Festival open mic, and won Seafront Cottages' lockdown poetry competition in 2020.

MARIE-LOUISE EYRES made the National Poetry Competition long list twice, in 2019 & 2020. In 2019 she was highly commended in the Bridport Prize, shortlisted by Live Canon and longlisted for the Ginkgo and Brotherton Prizes. Her poems appear widely in UK, US and Irish journals including *Agenda*, *Portland Review* and *The Poetry Bus*. Originally from London she lives long term in the USA with her family

PAULA BOHINCE is the author of three poetry collections, most recently *Swallows and Waves*. Her poems have appeared in *The New Yorker*, *The New York Review of Books*, *The TLS*, *the New Statesman*, *Granta*, and elsewhere. She received second prize in the 2013 National Poetry Competition. Honors include a fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Amy Lowell Poetry Travelling Scholarship, and the Dartmouth Poet in Residence appointment at The Frost Place. She was the 2020 John Montague International Poetry Fellow at University College Cork. She lives in Pennsylvania.

ZILLAH BOWES is a writer, filmmaker and photographer. For poetry, she has won the Wordsworth Trust Prize and Poems on the Buses Competition, and was shortlisted for the Manchester Poetry Prize, Alpine Fellowship and Wasafiri New Writing Prize, among others. She has received a RSL Literature Matters Award and a Creative Wales Award. Her poems have been published in magazines and anthologies including *Mslexia*, *Wasafiri*, *The North* and *Poetry Wales*.

MOOIE SCOTT is a visual artist living in the Scottish Borders. She uses painting, drawing, ceramics, video and the written word to respond to the ephemeral and the untouchable – the wind, the light, a mood. Writing and painting entwine. Recording in the open air, and drawn to textured surfaces of the natural world, she expresses her sensory responses in sketchbooks which she describes as a kind of *en plein air* poetry.

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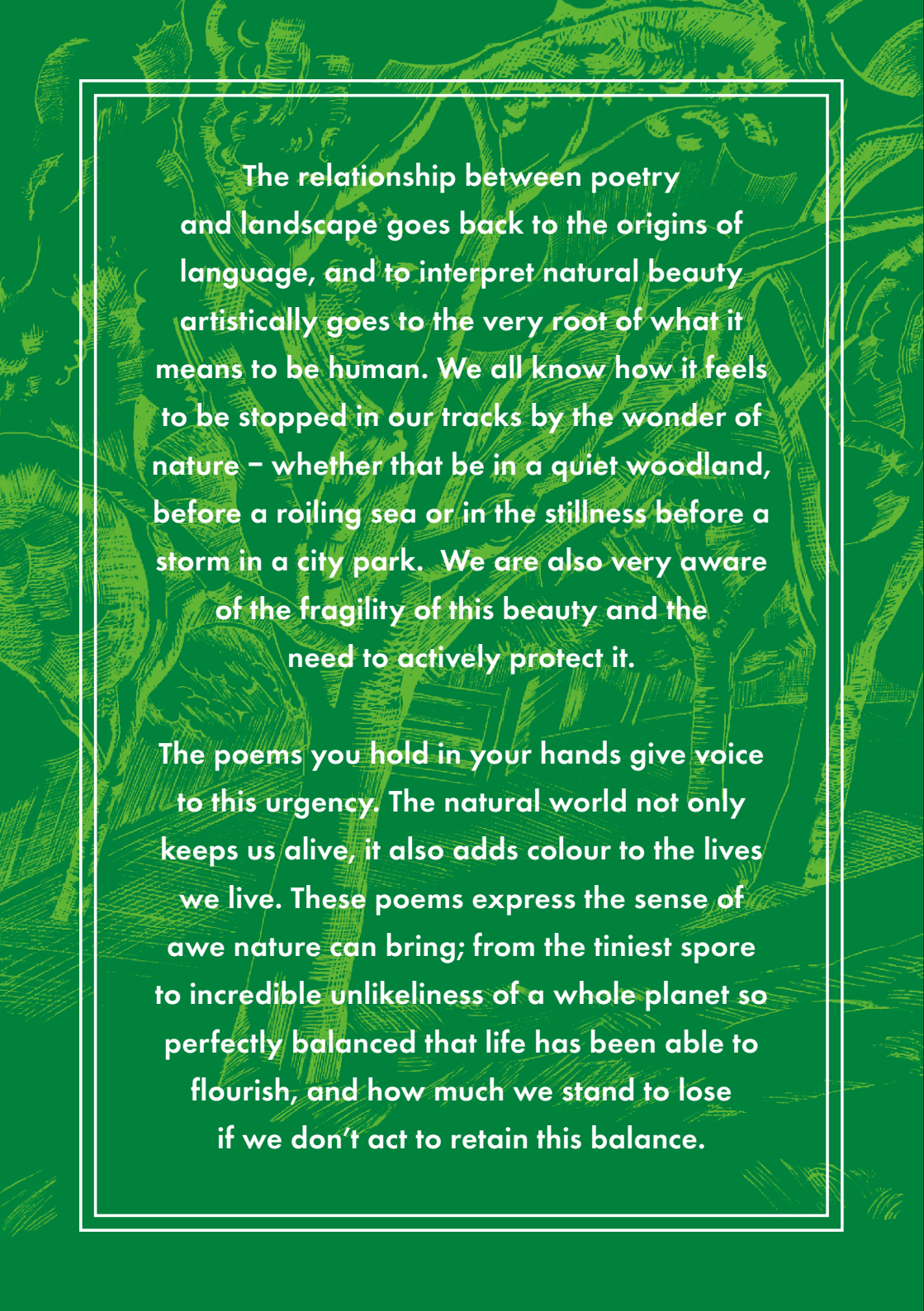
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The relationship between poetry and landscape goes back to the origins of language, and to interpret natural beauty artistically goes to the very root of what it means to be human. We all know how it feels to be stopped in our tracks by the wonder of nature – whether that be in a quiet woodland, before a roiling sea or in the stillness before a storm in a city park. We are also very aware of the fragility of this beauty and the need to actively protect it.

The poems you hold in your hands give voice to this urgency. The natural world not only keeps us alive, it also adds colour to the lives we live. These poems express the sense of awe nature can bring; from the tiniest spore to incredible unlikeliness of a whole planet so perfectly balanced that life has been able to flourish, and how much we stand to lose if we don't act to retain this balance.