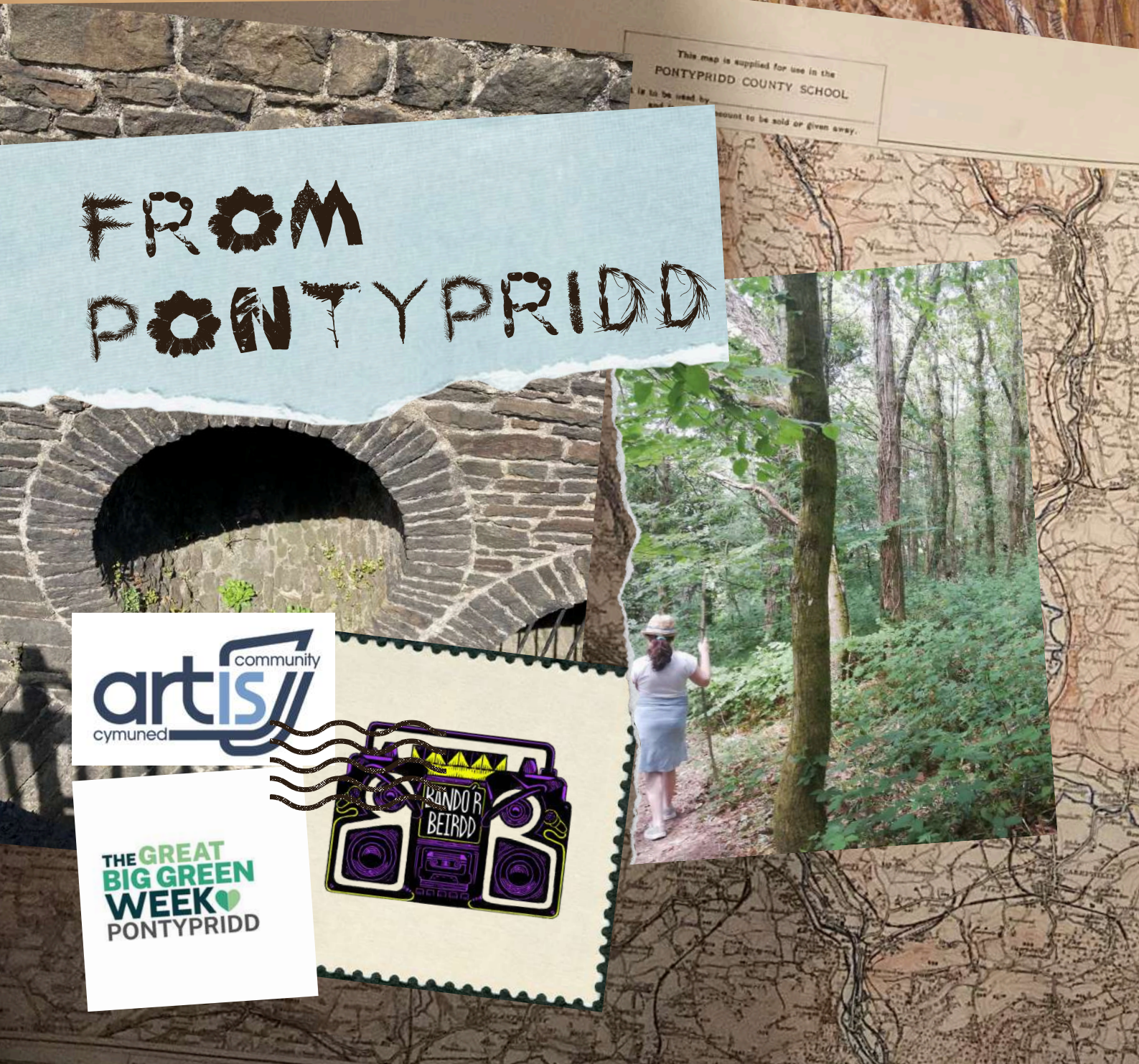




with
Love

An Anthology of Green Week Verse



This map is supplied for use in the
PONTYPRIDD COUNTY SCHOOL
It is to be used by
and is not to be sold or given away.

FROM
PONTYPRIDD







Rufus and Angela would like to thank everyone above for their support and contributions to this astounding collection of work. You are all so talented, we have been blown away and in some cases reduced to sobs by the FIERCENESS, passion and love displayed here. We are as yet an unfunded cooperative looking to support progressive and marginalised artists in an ethical way, our work is in the main unfunded, so we hugely appreciate all that you have done to make this a reality. Diolch yn Fawr Masif.

BANDOR BEIRDD IS A SAFE AND INCLUSIVE SPACE, DISCRIMINATION ON GROUNDS OF CLASS, RELIGION, ABILITY, DISABILITY, RACE, GENDER IDENTITY, SEXUAL ORIENTATION OR FLUENCY IN LANGUAGE WILL NOT BE TOLERATED. YOU WILL BE CALLED OUT, OR WORSE, YOU MAY FIND YOURSELF WRITTEN INTO A POEM



Foreword by Rufus Mufasa

In February 2020 I flew into Zimbabwe naive to the unfolding of Covid 19 and flew home to a flooded Pontypridd. The pandemic was upon us before anyone had time to process the enormity of the impact of it all and lockdown life had us whisked into new ways of living without any preparation.

Pontypridd Green Week 2021 was the first opportunity that our community had to address the flooding of our town. With Rivers as our theme we found a new peace as we stepped away from collective complications and imagined new beginnings.

RISE

The River wild & heavy
Ran riot on the streets
Gushed & beat the banks
Until everyone knew who was really in-charge.

The people sandbagged
To feel purposeful in the power shift
And the mould set in
And the water company paid out.

They didn't really want us
Picking apart the negligence
And everyone wanted everything
To go away.

The women never forgot the messages,
Emergency is always a feminist issue
And we had no right to be angry
With the bloodline of this town.

We litter-picked the barks,
Broke-bread on the bridge,
Sang lullabies to the Taff,
And for your peace we prayed.

hold up the river
hold each other
the people can fix this
the rainbow will come
the people will come
we will sing
we will pray
we will find new ways
re-visit old ones
Bread of Heaven
strong deliverer
songs of praises
bendithion
deep waters
a child I will always be
our mother is ever there
with knowledge & patience
make me a channel of your peace
make us a rescue squad
make us shoulder to shoulder
even when two meters apart
service-prayer-stewardship
water is alive
cloud-rain-river
river-sea-repeat
make us Heralds of the New
Rights of the River
clear doesn't mean clean
our Dippers are in so much danger
salute the great Wagtails
Marcus canoes on a Sunday
so keep everything that PGW has taught us
until every last bit
of our backstory is clean.

The following year we celebrated Trees and marvelled at the beauty of our town's park. Pontypridd Green Week 2023 welcomed Natash Borton who wrote a beautiful poem from her experiences here and inspired writers from all over Wales to consider the theme Common.

The idea of this anthology was born from wanting to document the last three years of Pontypridd Green Week and thank all of the environmental work organisations and groups in our community do. Many of these grassroots ideas come from selfless services, vision, and an urgency to embed sincere changes.

Also, in one of my earliest YMa Repair Cafe visits in 2023, a lady shared her memories of the old building and I wanted to mark this new transition, of this new culture and arts institution in the town, and cement that it is nothing without sharing, talking, access and inclusion. This building belongs to us all.

FOR TINA

Swap clothes, re-use, pass-on, repair,
fix your TV for free.
Gadgets, slow cookers, coffee machines - take up space,
pushing new & updated deals.

"What's wrong with a whisk & a bowl?"
Tina tap dances aged 7, now 70, still Shelley Hall.

The second year's theme was Trees.

I have hunted high & low for that poem. I identified the book it was scribed in from a short video clip, but due to renovation work my words are painfully displaced & there isn't a box or bundle that has flashed the purple-gold colour of the cover. If anyone in the community has a film of the celebration day in Ynysangharad Park please let us know.

December 1919 - thanks to subscription & the Miners Welfare Fund - pleasure land was secured for our people.

August 1923 - the park is opened - we commemorate the men stolen by war.

But what I also shared that day, under a Redwood Tree was poetry written by young people celebrating The Big Green Week in a creative writing session I facilitated with Head4Arts and Bethan Lewis.

The Rowan tree gives wisdom and protection
And is a home to the bees
Trees provide nuts for the squirrels, apples for us
And the Cherry Blossom is a masterpiece

Trees need water to be healthy
Safe spaces for their roots
Underground networks
They like living in groups

Don't waste paper
Harvest the fruits
Feel safe in the shelter
Tropical trees give us fruits to juice

There'd be no music
Without the trees
No guitars or violins
No songs about peace

No furniture, no fires
No bird's nests, no beehive
No journeying through seasons
We need trees to survive!

If I was a tree
What would I say?
Gwrandewch yn astud -
Mae gen i bethau pwysig i'w dweud

Rydym yn haeddu hawliau

Rydym yn werth eu hamddiffyn
Rydym yn gweithio yn ddi-ffael
i chi gael eich system

Nid dim ond cefndir
Ni yw ceidwaid gwybodaeth hynafol
Nid dim ond estheteg
Ni yw'r fasnach-deg weithiol

Coed,
Wedi bod yma yn hirach na ni
Wedi gweld popeth yn dod a diflannu
Wedi gweithio'n galed yn glanhau'r awyr ac ailgylchu
Mae'r coed yn haeddu parch - hebddyn nhw bydd popeth yn diflannu

Kate Strudwick led Head4Arts for many years, and gave me an abundance of opportunities for artistic growth, modelled pioneering social prescribing, advocated for nature and the environment, and supported me personally and professionally. Kate has been beyond a blessing, and the communities she has supported are still thriving from her love.

"I always call Kate my "Fairy Godmother" - she's the reason I do what I do! I was introduced to Kate when I found myself recently made redundant and was volunteering as a craft tutor. She said "you want to do art workshops and get paid?" She was a great mentor and Head4Arts were my first client. I have a lot to thank her for. As well as beginning my career in participatory arts she also got me started with learning Welsh, through the "Lockdown Language Learner" project and paid for my subscription to learn Welsh, which I'm still doing now! Incredible woman!"

Rhian Anderson

I believe we should be showing our community champions Radical Recognition. Angela Karadog and I have been part of online sessions led by Grace Quantock, a counsellor, writer, coach, wellness provocateur, and healing trailblazer.

"I want to live in a world where we are loved, accepted, and supported, and when illness, disability, difference, trauma or grief throw life off track, we can blaze a trail to a truer self"
Grace Quantock

Grace has an amazing approach to acknowledging her sources of knowledge and advocating Radical Recognition, and valuing the wealth of the arts in our lives, while championing access to all.



This anthology would not have been possible without the love & support of the Bando'r Beirdd community, a project I have been exploring since my post with Artis Community, and I absolutely must include a group poem created from our time together at Clwb y Bont, in August 2023.

"WE DON'T NEED NO MORE RELAPSE FACTORIES"

Johnny Giles

Bus Journeys

Des Mannay

Benefit Sanction Caps

Torrie Britain Bullshit

Ironing Cats

Acid Jazz

Wear a t-shirt of a band you hate

Gentrification madness

Underfloor heating on the tube

London dies

Write that down before it gets light!

Grandfathers

Gerhard Kress

Sour grapes

I'm but a small boy full of bravado

Plastic gadgets

Umbilical cords

My head listening to adult conversations

You know more about my Jewish roots than acceptable

You force me to queue

One more one more cluster duck

Dee Dickens

There is no hierarchy of pain

I hope your childhood didn't hurt

I hope you like what you see in the mirror

I hope you've got the right play list for you

I'm on the spectrum with you

Sway - break of day -

Dance on the table

Too big, too much, flying

Too convincing in therapy

You failed, I won

We need more talks about boobs
And pretty bras for all
Save Stacy the Saturday girl with salts
Books run the world

That word play got my tongue tied
I didn't write this song for you
I forgot the words

Jamie B

Sometimes when you're down I don't know what to say

Lighthouse has been a key word this week

I'll leave you with my James Brown theory
Until you get found!

But remember, you are what the world needs right now
You make someone smile
And the world needs that - exactly now!

Ferryside fleece
You have so many layers
Far more than me

Dominic Williams

I lost track of the task
Cos I was too busy
Taking photos of you

The one who's missing from the 1000's of archiving
Oh I love you so
Let's be mad men on the train
Together forever sharing cans & compassion

I missed the beginning
I had to make sure Dee was safe
They need to leave before the pubs close

Pick me up on a rainy night
Take a pen-knife incase the tent falls in
A way out is a way in
Exits marked
Diary entries

Think of an object
That reminds you of a loved one

Sunday afternoons - my mam - ironing

Her hands

In other news - Nicki Minaj performs for a dictator
David Attenborough
Don't be a bystander
Throw the brick & I'll still call it out

(Be) like the river
Cross Canyons
Take That & Rumi fans unite
Make a memory soup
We we we we we
No fascists up in here
We jam - we jam it out
We are never ever just poets

Selki Skin
Join in
Dl -
That's your thing right?

Mobility re-learned
Standing together
In patchwork paisley
Des says work well together
I agree
We all agree

And your hair
An extension of your nervous system
And we all looking OK- right?
How to begin?
Again, Selki Skin, Join Us
This learning curve
Power struggles
Tech-tonics
We are enough!
Just look at you now!
Fiddler on the roof
Too much gin & juice
Totally Tori Amos
Never was a Cornflake Girl
Liberty Choir
Mmm Mmm Mmm Mmm x4
Neidiwch ar y cwch 🎵

Pontypridd Green Week is in its fourth year.
Thank you for filling our first anthology with your words.

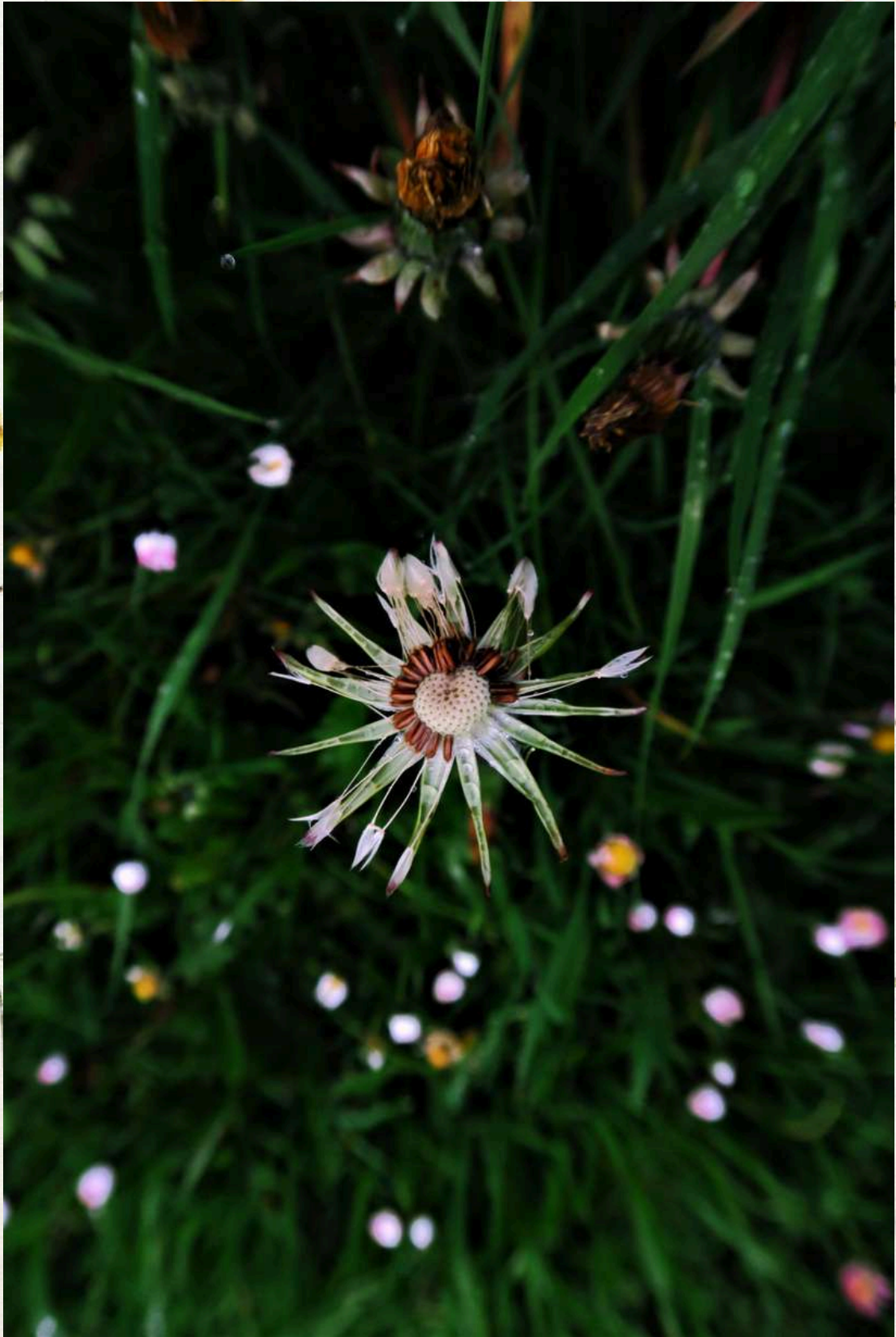


"When litter picking I was amazed but the huge amount of sanitary products embedded in the banking. Environmentalism is a feminist issue"



NURTURE

RESERVE



Gerhard Kress

NATURES LANGUAGE

Natures language whispers through the trees,
Natures language buzzes with the bees.
It speaks to you with the most gentle tone,
Letting you know that you are not alone,
Natures language travels in mountains,
Natures language shouts in fountains.
It comforts you with gentle therapy,
Bringing people together with solidarity.
Natures language.



Rowan Moon



HOW GREEN WAS MY VALLEY

How green was my valley, well in the past. They opened a
quarry, we feel the blast.
Continuously digging and taking the land. How green was
my valley, now black and so bland.

The people will fight for clean and fresh air, we now
want our government to show that they care.
Pollution and dust is what we must breathe, give us our
land back and save it from greed.

How green was my valley, not long ago. This land of my
father's, just say no!

Rhian Bull

GARBAGE WHALE

I saw a photograph of a whale. Mouth wide open, stuffed
with plastic bags and other detritus. Unable to
digest or disgorge, the whale had starved to death.

garbage whale
she shot her through the head
it was a special rifle, special bullet
the skull is porous bone
made to float, not sink
destructive plastic is
disintegrating after use
into nano fragments
gulped up, accumulating
inside creatures of the water
you've seen the swimmer
in an ocean of shopping bags
four times the size of Germany
the diver among floating rubbish
starving into oblivion in a sea of krill
their agonised despair, unrecorded
carcass sinking to the bottom
worms gather in thousands
ravaging blubber and intestines
halted at midnight, millennia hence
archaeologists would still puzzle over
carcasses, not of ancient warriors
but cell phones, mobiles, bags
billions and trillions of discarded
detritus as fashion and shareholders dictate

I watched her die
I watched her landed
I watched her dissected
I saw her intestines
littered with plastic
barely recovered from centuries of
persecution in the hunt for whale oil
now the end of the species
by human-enforced starvation
woman and man have to learn
to live without sea food or perish
fisher women and men without fishing
chippies without fish
children without cod liver oil
evolve to cope with
human-made particle pollution
or become extinct and leave the world
to tardigrade and cockroach
landmasses extend into the oceans
plastic floaters connect Europe and America
a nimble foot needs no ship, no plane
I watched her pain
I watched her shot
I watched her landed
I watched her cut open
I saw her blocked oesophagus

I believe in Free Love
where better than my garden
come all you freedom loving lovers
to my garden to love freely
free lovers have arrived
not feathered lovers yet
my neighbour's bees are making free
with lovely blossom nature offers
solitary bees, free of bondage
first to feed, followed by those
with free abode in neighbour's yard
as free as serfs can ever be
count on a reckoning, come harvest season
when my neighbour will be making free
to take his tithe from
labour of tied free love
while I pay him for
extracting juicy honey from
intense frolicking and making free
with my garden's pollen offering
extracting brown syrup from
glass-jar incarceration while
caramelizing into different states of being
come hither, loving bees, make free
love shall be thy price while I shall pay
the price to taste thy love's labour
a lovely lane a dream

when I returned, having watched, admired
a tremendous drum solo, full kit, no short cuts
I nearly stepped on it, The Rainbow!
not many in-door rainbows in built-up areas
under the roof between three walls
ending, pointing out through two large windows
in to unsettling pink setting sunshine
"Oh, I found a rainbow on the floor"
both ends scratchily folded over
disregarding most rules

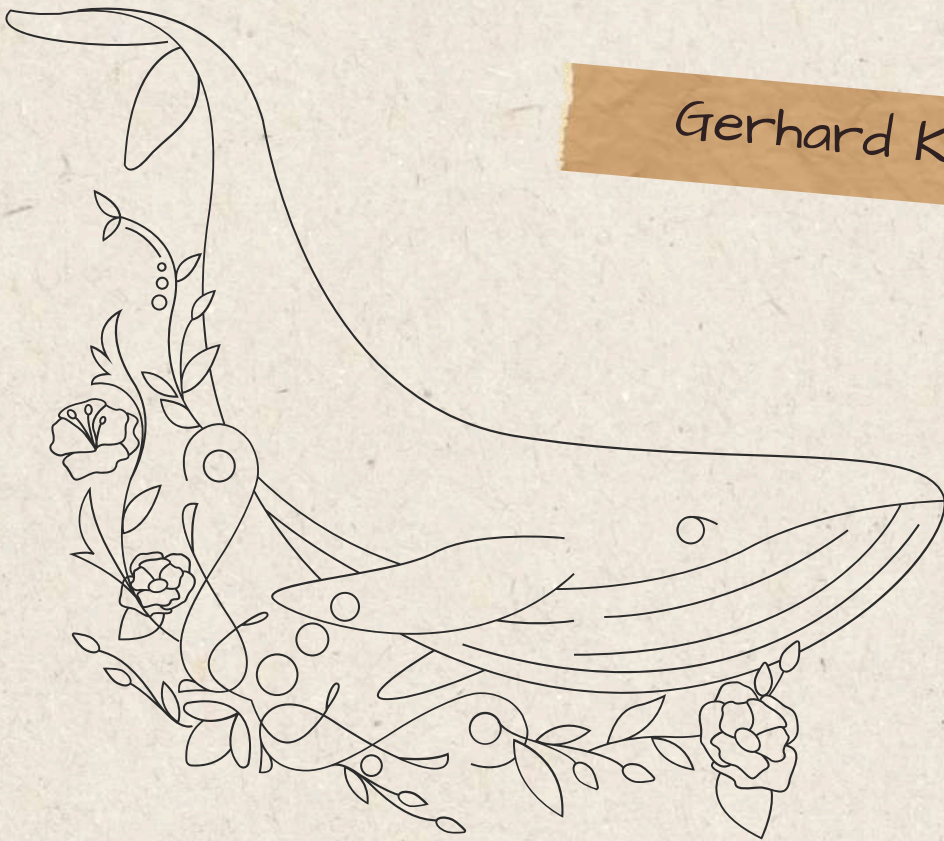
the rainbow, that's where I found it, she told me,
still puzzling over my question
smiling with one half of a face that is not
on good terms with the other
in my valley there is a forested stretch
hiding remains of old mining sheds
secret, barely enclosed Shangri La
no rain escapes, no sun penetrates
no moon, without paying sweet penalty
rainbows, once entered, forever remain
find the end ... find acid, find the jacket
we both shall walk the hills
as shadows to translucence
of all the shades of all the colours
daisies at the fringes that are not mountainous
a ghostly stream of thoughts
blending with mist that is fleetingly eternal
woodlice and earwigs reflections on a David Nash
exhibition

that pile of tree carcass
stacked in order of girth
in a place well chosen
away from common paths
at a natural promontory
in front of regenerating trees
known to Saxons, Normans,
invading Celts
never a king's realm, ... too wild
too remote for a queen's hunt
beneath: a green, moist carpet,
social housing for procreating
hunting in darkness, small beasts
the stack lives, soaking up
morning's dew, shrugging off
downpours, accumulating time
while acquiring a coat of moss
a city of beetles, woodlice, earwigs
and creatures with a thousand legs
in half a human life-time
woody pulp and moss forming
into a mount, surpassing
the most astonishing human cities
in four human lifetimes
when artificially created matter
has covered and suffocated every
millimetre of earth's surface,
only then can life once again
begin to thrive unhindered
agonizing struggle to the death
finally equalizing inequality

decay providing temporary
nourishment to remaining life forms
nutrients to put hair
on the chest of trees
amoebas and water bears
may continue their wars
under moss's protective mantle
trees first page of my book trees
I climbed a tree once
up to that part of the top
where branches could still
support my little body
I enjoyed the view
until I looked down
after regaining an almost
steady heart rhythm and
sufficient control of my limbs
I managed to descend, managed
to walk home with a steady gait
and walk I did, out of the forest
I have climbed trees again, but
never again with such haste
never again higher than
my head could cope with
trees have taught me many things
today I look at them and can
just about tell a Monkey Puzzle
from an oak, but that's no my concern
I enjoy their company and I enjoy
dreaming beneath shady branches
trees last page of my book trees

we are wilfully destroying forests
and we are wilfully planting trees
simultaneously, we are creating
ever more human beings
with ever greater needs for
ever diminishing resources
we are destroying natures'
carefully calibrated balance
no matter, the world will survive
no matter if humanity does not

Gerhard Kress



SPRING TIME

Newborn lambs, so innocent and sweet,
suckling milk from their mother's teat,
No care in the world, their playful charm,
the Dam stands close, to prevent any harm.

Symbols of hope and rebirth,
standing tall and proud on trodden earth.
Dancing in the breeze, high on Welsh hills
Sunny bright, blooming Daffodils.

Rising temperatures, longer days,
through the clouds, specs of sun rays.
Copious tunes, from birds in the trees,
Pleasing, sounds and melodies.

Mornings are calm, they feel so serene,
plants and foliage, turn from brown to green.
Look around you, at what the seasons will bring,
Nature comes alive a rebirth in Spring.

Emma Owen

ALL AMERICAN ACTION SHEPHERDESS

Village in shock
Dai Morgan's flock
absconded from their fescue.

Phone the police
smoke signal Sam Tân
call International Rescue.

All fuss and cost
Dai's sheep still lost
the village cannot sleep.

Their only chance
to go freelance
and bring in Rambo-peep.

Karen Gemma Brewer

PETH ESTRON

Bysedd y cŵn gwelais gyntaf
Wrth gerdded trwy gât anweledig y goedwig,
Ei chlychau llipa'n cydio'r coesau,
A'i chysgodion yn hir min nos.
'Bysedd yr ellyll' gelwir rhai'r rhain
Ond triais ddim meddwl am hynny.

Daeth griddfan lloerig o ryw gornel anghysbell
Y goedwig hynafol. Sgrech fenyw?
Sain i ofni'r diain, rhywbeth o hunllef
Gwaethaf o 'mhlentyndod.

Y cadno, fel gwrach yn llosgi
Gwnaeth y sŵn, rhesymais.

Trwy drwch y caddug a gododd o'r mwsogl
Ag gorweddodd fel carthen dros y cerrig
Fe welais goron wyn
Yn dawnsio rhwng yr helyg.
A'i gwyrth oedd hon, neu freuddwyd
A welais ymysg y coed?

Carw, ei gyrn arwych
Yn codi a chwympo bob hyn a hyn
Wrth iddo yfed o'r gors.

Cododd ei ben, fflachiodd golau'r sêr
Ar ei lygaid, ac ym mer fy esgyrn.
Fe welodd e fi'n sefyll yno, peth estron
Cyn ffoi.

CUT FLOWERS

On the day of my death
will the cherry trees bloom?
Will the congregants in my chamber
be decked in daisy chain crowns?

Will there be weeping?
Will the willows bow their heads
or rise to greet me?

Will I forget how it felt
to be barefoot on morning grass?

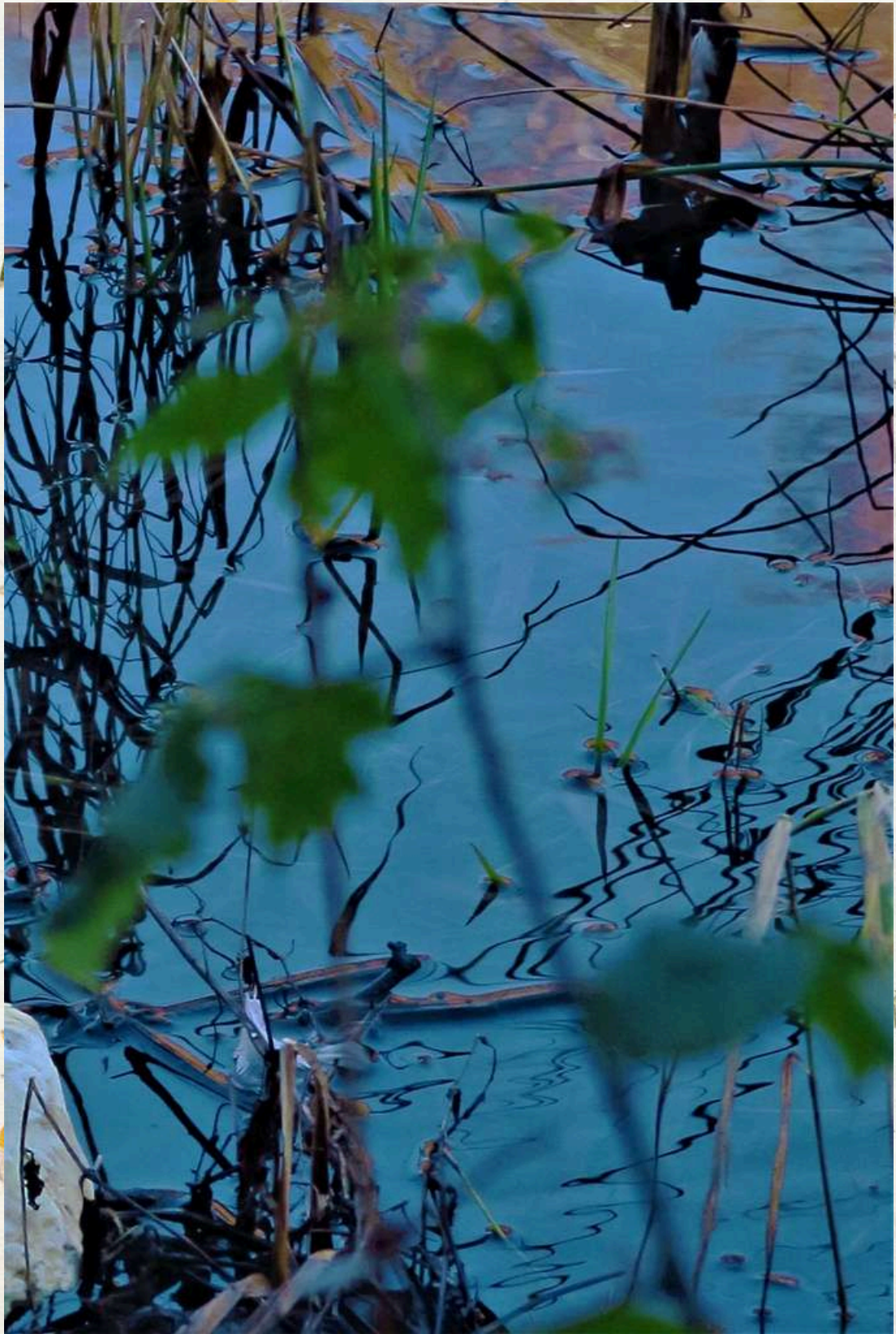
Will I ask for more time
as if it could be granted?

Will they plant seeds at my grave
so I may live on through the greenery,

or will it be cut flowers,
reverently placed,
so they can watch
something rot?



Dee Dickens



Gerhard Kress



RIGHTS OF
THE STAFF

The citizens of Pontypridd recognise that we are people of the river. The river made us Pontypridd, and so we declare that the River Taff and its tributaries, aquifers and all connected banks do have the following rights, and pledge therefore to advocate on behalf of the river to uphold and maintain them.

The River Taff has the right;
To Flow.

To perform the essential functions of a
river.

To native biodiversity.

To be kept free from litter and debris.

To be free from sewage.

To be free from pollution.

To be looked after and respected.

The people of Pontypridd will create poetry, art and song to give thanks and celebrate the work that the river does to support life.

THE TAFF

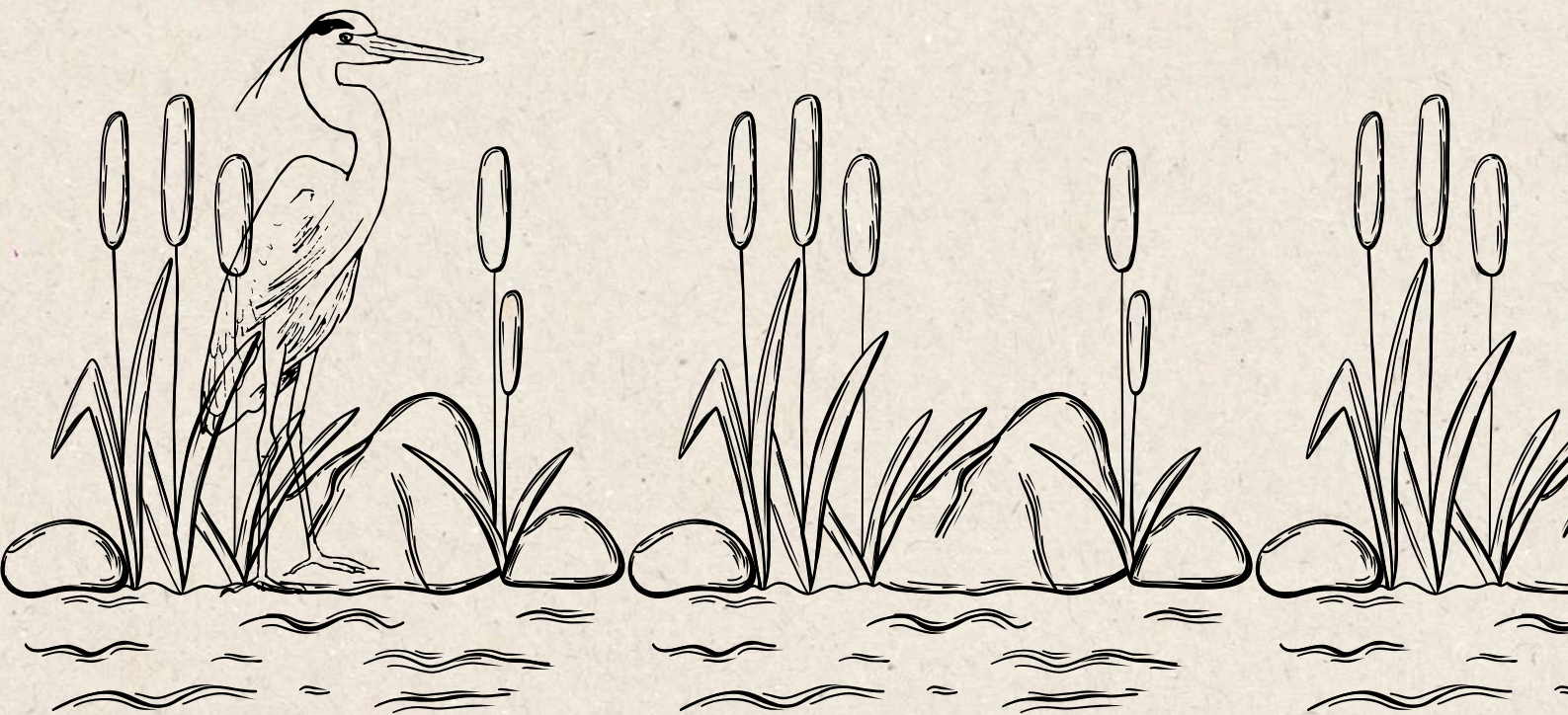
The Taff of my childhood
From Brecon to Cardiff Dock
Through molten Merthyr
And darkest Aberfan
Starless night black
Pneumoconiosis lung black
Mining sludge black.
Rainbow flecked oil puddles.
No birds, no fish.
A dead river for living communities.

Until the last week in July.
The miners relax
In the thin Porthcawl sun
Lungs rested.
Pints and fish and chips
Candyfloss and beach cricket
And the Taff slowly transforms
Black to grey to green.
A small boy stands
on the Old Bridge
And dreams
of kingfishers and herons
Of salmon and trout.

And now the mines are museums
Coal to dole
Steel mills to Trago Mills
And the river runs green
Salmon spawn, trout jump
We watch a solitary heron
On our daily walk.

The river has come alive.
the communities
struggle to stay alive.
Sometimes the river
Floods its banks
In anger.

Gareth Price



TIN WORKS WEIR

Forged by man, shaped by hand,
Powered by Mother Earth's command.
The River Taffs force controlled by a weir
waters strength is so clear.
With the power of water, ancient and bold.
In winter's rain, it rises high,
A torrential force,
Its white swirls are mesmerising,
In its violent dance.
Carrying with it human's waste,
A reminder of our footprint's taste.
But amidst the chaos, there's still natural pace,
In the heart of nature's space.
The Tinsplate Works weir stands firm, against the flow,
A testament to our ancestral industry toil,
nature's spoil,
That even in the face of human sway,
Nature's power will have its say.

Dan Townsend



PONTYPRIDD

TO

WRECSAM

FROM WREXHAM TO PONTY

with love

Driving down through Bannau Brycheiniog, the valley
pulls back a duvet of trees. A canopy of leaves shrouds a
treasure map of community.

My first impression of Pontypridd? A cacophony of
bridges.

Old pilgrimages into the air, new paths link here, to
there, to YMa.

Each road unfolds like steppingstones along the tide,
pulling upon long-dust bones of the river,
Cars flow in lines like reeds pulling towards the bank.

From above aderyn turn to llygaid as each street peeks
from behind a wild topiary.

The windows wink their bleary blinds,
Ty coed tip toe as the clouds become a tapestry in the
sky.

This one is a tree trunk waving to the horizon,
Sbia!

Dyma, women cackle along benches And unshackle
themselves from expectation.

Goggledd merched nestled in the south, would you guess
unless I opened my mouth?

On the wall of a tafan the North represent Cofiwch
Dryweryn becomes a backdrop to something more. Banio'r
beirdd beneath the floor above the cellar.

A man who has come for a choir who aren't singing plays
violin to a mannequin in green where the sky-blue
bunting whispers its moments to the breeze. A momento of
memories shared in community.

Sorry! The memories come back to me in scrapbook.

In an ancient woodland we share stories of castles and
asylums, of wounds and healing, in a space that keep hold
of its treasures
and reveals them to the ones who sit long enough to
listen, as glass jars and rhododendrons glisten in the
midday sun.

I wander the streets like an explorer in the wild, David
Attenborough style.

Here, we see Ponty in all its glory. A menagerie of
cymraeg a saesneg where bardd a plant, neu plant a plant
giggle into the Lido.

Seeds and saplings, we spoke of mother trees and how its
leaves stretch through generations, handing down
hiraeth for a future we have yet to know.

Even the rooftops bridge the gap between here and nawr,
as a shopfront holds the facade of 1904 -
a nod to the romantics, a post-industrial nostalgia, a
brutalist extravaganza.

A spaceship lands in the land of literature.

In fractures poems nest at my feet. We share ourselves in
joy and wounds the way that coal crackles into embers.
Ignited yet fleeting with a heat that outlasts
generations.
The land of my mothers.

Ponty; A timeline from ancient woodlands to spaceships -
Quick it's only just landed!

But never just anything; A tree; A river; A lion-headed
man;
The book of Bernard sits proudly in Jen Angharad's
hands.

The women of mab; the sculptures of man;
A lineage of warriors hold the creative purpose of this
land.

A woman sees a post on Instagram and becomes a friend.
A friend becomes a sister, becomes a kindred soul, yn y
adre,
catref unfurls into ferns that return year after year
after year

And here?
YMa, you know?

Here, where culture has space and room to grow.
A thriving ecology besides a striving community.

Pontypridd, with a capital P
Wales, as a capital We.

Natasha Borton

BRIDGE BY EARTHEN HOUSE

A Town identified as 'Pont-y-ty-pridd' as history states,
'Bridge by the Earthen House' is how it translates.
From wooden bridges, over the river, that's how it got its name,
Pontypridd is immersed in culture, antiquity and fame.

A single-span stone crossing, to either riverbed affix,
at the time, the longest in the world, built in 1756.
Rhondda river merges the Taff, beneath the water keeps flowing,
all these years holding still, as the town keeps growing.

Over the years the town has taken its fee,
once dominated, by the coal and iron industry.
In the junction of three valleys, it was the perfect location,
for the Merthyr Iron and Rhondda coal transportation.

From the demise of coal, and the hands of time,
the University and Market town, keeps sublime.
A picturesque location, with green hills all around,
and in the centre of it all, a memorial park to be found.

The town is infamous for many things,
poets and musicians, Evans James and James James.
They composed the Welsh National Anthem, for which we are proud,
when 'Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau', Land of my Fathers, is sung aloud.

Tom Jones, Fireman Sam to name just a few,
TV shows like, Torchwood and Doctor Who.
All filmed in Pontypridd at various locations,
home to Dr Price, who performed the first modern cremation.

Steeped in history, there's still so much to explore,
the old Market square with cobbled floor.
Café's, restaurants, and places to eat,
walks in the park and areas to meet.

Emma Owen

OES AUR WRECSAM

(I'w ganu i dôn fersiwn Ffrangeg Simon a Garfunkel of
"Feuilles-0", hen gân greol Haitaidd)

Wrecsam, bro fy mebyd,
a'r oes aur mae'n cael nawr.
Statws, newydd ddaeth i'r Sir,
gan greu un ddinas fawr.

Rob a Ryan, draw yn y cae ras,
a'r gobaith. A'r rhaglen dogfen,
caiff ei gwyllo nawr,
ar hyd a lled y byd,
wrth i ni gyd,
dilyn pob cam o'r daith.

Coedpoeth, Rhosymedre,
a Rhosllannerchrugog.
Gresfordd, Rhiwabon,
a Dyffryn Ceiriog.

Wedi ei bwytho'n dwt,
trwy'r oesoedd,
yn gwilt glytwaith hardd.
Yna diléit y bardd,
daw'r stedd fod draw,
a'r bwrlwm a ddaw,
ac yn y man:
dinas diwylliant,
Dinas diwylliant.

Sara Louise Wheeler

THE GOLDEN AGE OF WREXHAM

(Direct translation of the Welsh version 'Oes Aur Wreccsam',
which was written to be sung to
the tune of Simon and Garfunkel's French version of
'Feuilles-O', an old Haitian Creole
song)

Wrexham, my childhood home,
and the golden age it's having now.
New status, which came to the County,
creating one big city.

Rob and Ryan, over at the racecourse, with the hope.
And the documentary, which will be watched now,
all over the world,
as we all
follow every step of the journey.

Coedpoeth, Rhosymedre,
and Rhosllannerchrugog.
Gresford, Rhiwabon,
and Dyffryn Ceiriog.

Neatly stitched, through the ages,
into a beautiful patchwork quilt.
Then to the poets' delight,
the eisteddfod comes over,
the ensuing bustle comes,
and in the meantime:
City of culture,
City of culture.

Sara Louise Wheeler

ON THE BUSES...

A single ticket to Newport:
is all I bloody need

A single ticket to Newport:
with small change I plead

A single ticket to Newport:
I've got kids to feed

A single ticket to Newport:
get flirty and I'll breed

A single ticket to Newport:
hair that does recede

A single ticket to Newport:
cut me and I'll bleed

A single ticket to Newport:
aggression fuelled by speed

A single ticket to Newport:
addiction is the creed

A single ticket to Newport:
anxiety is freed

A single ticket to Newport:
I'll follow any lead

A single ticket to Newport:
challenge me - I'll cede

A single ticket to Newport:
aw - c'mon fuckin' driver

A single ticket to Newport:
wot - no change from a fiver?

A single ticket to Newport:
feel breath mixed with saliva

A single ticket to Newport:
I ain't no duck'n'diver.....

A single ticket to Newport.
Look mate - I'm a survivor.....

Des Mannay

THE
RIGHTS OF
TREES

PONTYPRIDD PLEDGES RESPECT AND PROTECTION FOR TREES,
LIVING BEINGS,
LEAVES TO HEAL NATIONS,
CROWNS TO PURIFY SKY.



REDWOOD

REPLIES

A collection of work created during a joint Bando'r
Beirdd and Pontypridd Green Week creative writing
workshop at Landed Festival in the summer of 2022 in
response to the themes of The Rights of Trees and Tree
Conversations.

ACORN
BROAD LEAF
WIND RUSHES LEAVES
OPAQUE IMAGININGS STILL HERE
BIRCH, OAK, STUMP
LEAVES, OXYGEN
WOOD

I tree,
claim my right to access clean air and water
Claim my space to grow
Hope for freedom from damage
Wish to provide safety, sanctuary and a home to all
nature
Need To exercise my ability to Photosynthesise
So that you, human, may survive.

How old are you?
How long have you been here?
What have you seen?
Tell me a story.
What was the world like when you were still an acorn?
Did mother oak pass on stories of her own?
Can you hear the other trees? What do they say?
Who are you a home to?
Do the lichens and the mosses tickle?
What do you wish we knew too?

I AM SURROUNDED BY SHIT
IS IT GOOD SHIT? IS IT?
DEEP IN SHEEP
SHIT
AREN'T WE ALL?
LEAVES, BUGS, SEEDS, BRANCHES FALL,
TO MIX IN.
THIS SHEEP SHIT'S
A BIT GRIM.

CHAKRA TREE
ROOTS
SURFACE
TRUNK
CONJUNCTION POINT
LEAF
SEED
POLLEN SOAR
CHAKRA TREE AND ME

The tree rights
The free rights
The tree
embarking
in bark markings
Silent swayings left long ago
Now we have ears
That hear
right?
Hear
Rights
Tree writes our histories
Remembers
Precious harmonies
And underground
All connections are found
Bound
And we get to leap and bound
Right?
Leaves and bound rights
The tree writes
The tree rights
Embarking underground all bound

THE TREES ASK FOR NOTHING FOR THEMSELVES
THEY KNOW ALREADY
HOW CONNECTED EVERYTHING IS
AND HOW TEMPORARY
THEY PLAY THE LONG GAME
FOR NO WHAT METEOR COMES
WHAT LAVA FLOWS
WHAT MAMMALIAN MIS-STEPS OCCUR
THAT TRIP THEM UP ON THEIR JOURNEY
ALL IT TAKES IS ONE SMALL PACKAGE OF HOPE
TO TURN SUNLIGHT INTO SUGAR
TO TRADE WITH FUNGI
FOR MICELEAL STRENGTH
THEY BORROW FROM THE ROCKS
THE STORED SUNLIGHT
AND SOON ENOUGH
THE TREE WILL SOAR
BACK TO THE SKY
IN SUN OUTREACH



ZIMBABWE

TO

WALES

IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE...

I was left standing in the middle of nowhere, just some bushes, with nothing, not anything. Not a cellphone, just a small handbag that I was carrying....

I had woken up exhausted and sleepy. I dragged myself to the bathroom and prepared to leave for my sister's house. I was very late, so I ran to the bus stop and hopped into a minivan. Like a good African child I greeted everyone cordially, and everyone in the van responded happily. I messaged my sister, lying to her, telling her that I was already halfway to her house. I sat by the window, and the driver ordered me to close it because it was quite windy outside.

His cell phone rang. I heard him questioning where the person on the other end was. He then told us that he had to return to pick up other people somewhere. The driver told me that since I hadn't paid the bus fare, I should just go find another cab or minivan, his was voice friendly. I agreed. But I was the only one being dropped. The other four individuals had already paid, and he couldn't refund their money so he had to return with them and then drop them later.

It was extremely difficult to open the door from the inside, because I had closed the window. I asked the driver if he could go outside and open it, but he simply answered, "The door will open." I attempted to open the door as he directed. "She has long nails, she can't open it," the lady next to me mocked. I ignored her and continued to try to unlock the door, unaware that the driver and the passengers were attempting to distract me. They were opening my handbag while I was battling with the door.

After about eight minutes, the guy next to the driver opened the door for me. I escaped, I was enraged. I took my handbag and the groceries I was carrying. I opened the pocket in my handbag where I had placed my phone and looked for it, but it was nowhere to be found. The driver had urged me to put my phone in my purse since it could fall on my way out, and my wallet had vanished along with another gorgeous sling bag that I had purchased the day before.

I looked for the minivan, but it had vanished. Everything had happened so quickly that I was taken aback. I couldn't even weep or do anything because I was in the middle of nowhere with nothing except my handbag and some clothing. I regretted lying to my sister about being halfway through the journey when I hadn't even begun.

Kundai Manyera



Rhian Anderson

HEARTBREAK

A fool I was to believe a stranger.
When they said it will end in tears,
I thought they were trying to raise my fears.
The person who was meant to nurture
ground me into powder pieces.

I am still in the process of healing.
I am still in the state of fragility.
The tears have dried up but the memories are still fresh.
The mind has given up, the heart is still fighting.
Did he really end things?

All this feels like a dream.
He said I was his first love.
I was stupid to believe that.
When I remember how we used to vibe
hard and soft like waves of the sea.

All the love making never meant a thing.
The late night calls were just for fun.
The nature walks on Sunday afternoon.
I had fallen in too deep, now I am drowning
in a pool of bitterness and hatred.

Our love was meant to be sacred.
I am crushed because I gave him my all.
The heart I gave him was whole,
only to get it in return with a hole.
Each day he made empty promises.

Primroses of promises,
Sweetest words, countless caresses,
only a cover up
I was just one of his mistresses.

LOST TRIBE

When they kissed the earth,
in that cylindrical shaped building,
the people's face became pale.
Ooooh! a baby girl has been born once again,

Who will be the heir to the throne?
Who will support you now?
"You're not man enough" .

All she will do are household chores,
If she tries to raise an eyebrow
into family business, she is rebuked.
In sacred courts, her feet are forbidden.

Attaining education is as good as throwing money
down the drain. Some of them can't write
their own names, not to mention the letter "A"
Their only education is to satisfy their husbands and in-
laws.

At an early age, people mention marriage.
"You're old enough now". Sometimes traded for sadza
Who cares about the age difference?
Some grooms are old enough to be their fathers ,
In days gone by, all they wanted was bride price.

Yes, they have got a spouse but
they are just punch bags,
Conjugal rights are not an option,
a woman should always be ready to satisfy Baba
The in-laws and extended relatives are to be served by
her .

If months pass without a visible belly,
they call her names. "Hey! you barren witch."
Some think she feasts on her unborn offspring.

Africans, your mindset was barbaric .
Within a blink of an eye,
the husband takes another wife.
Everyone supports the decision.
She is showered with torments from the co-wife.

Is there solace after death?
Who will welcome them into the ancestor's realm?
Who will want a barren ancestor?
No one performs the reincarnation.

There is no peace for The Lost Tribe.

Olivia Mabhugu

SADZA IS OUR STAPLE FOOD IN ZIMBABWE.
BABA IS SHONA WORD FOR FATHER

AN UNREALIZED TRUTH

As woman I am
not bound to win
but to be true.

Expected for not much
just a full-time housewife
and a daughter-in-law.

Keeping the house beautiful,
taking care of babies
and watching his success.

Sometimes I wonder.

Do I really like being in here?
Can I flee from this suffocating cage?

It's true
I'm selfish,
impatient,
naive
and a little insecure.
But don't I have dreams?

Just for the so called good of society
I am not allowed to complain,
oppressed by discrimination

You can't do this
if you do, we will disown you.
The mockery is bitter,
it hurts a lot,
containing my pure desires
in the name of peace.

They deprive me ,
chase away my plans ,
hold back my achievements,
I have no choice,
the inside of me gives up

Will I obtain green pastures?
All I pine after is their success
like a starving dog.
I have no identity of my own
I am helpless,
hopeless and dreamless.
They treat us as second citizens.

Will there be light?
the humiliation
segregation,
insults
and taunts are unbearable.

Women are unhappy living dolls.

Daisy Nzomba

My shoes have travelled miles of roads, struggling with the heavy load, I carry deep within. Beyond repair my shoes no longer shine. They have climbed uphill, they have been left out in the sun and soaked with rain. If you were in my shoes you would understand.

If you were in my shoes would you have waited and kept the promises given to me with such a solemn face? Would you have waded through the rains, walked in the sun holding hands, promising eternity? If you were in my shoes would you have given it away without sanction to a man who hasn't paid "Lobola", just hoping you will be called by his family name.

If you were in my shoes, would you have allowed yourself to get soaked in the rains? All in the name of creating memories, only to realise the rainy days were spent listening to emotional taunts, hatred, betrayal.

If you were in my shoes, would you have sacrificed friendship over love? Putting him first before friends and family, making him your priority. When reality struck he ends it with the statement "Let's Part Ways".

Regardless of being called by the mighty title "Makhoti" Daughter-in-law, that did not stop him from betrayal. If you were in my shoes, tears would be your best friend, heartache and unbearable pain.

If you were in my shoes, all the years of your life would have gone down the drain, despite society's taunts, deciding to fall in love at that age. If you were in my shoes would you have tolerated all that because you are in love?

THIS HOUSE IS NOT A HOME.

The smudge stick lays limp,
Struggling.
In a house now bound to ash-trays.
Depleting sense of security,
Cracking under the weight of the paint.

This house is not a home,
This house is a mausoleum of used refuge.
Hiding behind the sofa
Sitting in rat nests.
Mattress abandoned on the floor,
Imagine,
It's an exit.
Escaping the world
Forced upon tired shoulders.

This house is not a home.
It is the handle of a broom
Propping open wandering windows.
I ride sage smoke out that window,
Climbing the angst of the street signs.
The street sighs.
A life carved from callous skin
Peeling from back fat to build a tent.

This house is not a home.
It brings a nauseating sense of dread.
Candles flicker against curtains
With no will to stop it.
This building burns only in my mind
For the candles are the only source of light.

This house is not a home.
A dead rat now lounges in the kitchen sink,
With a cocktail glass
And a sardonic smile
Stiff with ease.

Placed in a tea towel, wrapped in white
An impromptu procession,
The pied-piper of death.
Guiding a rat corpse to the back garden,
Buried a foot deep.

I drive my key into the earth
A tiny cross,
A piece of your house.

But this house is not a home.

It's an omen of regret.

A banquet of flesh
Flea feasting on bare legs.

Crimson cries crackle,

Spitting from thighs

Manifesting rebellion

I dream of a home,

A house,

A fortress in the sky.

But this house, this house is not a home.

Vienna Hayes

TO MY SISTER

Here on this earth
It is a privilege to live
to feel what warmth & joy
really mean, to give love & receive it
It is the greatest gift
So listen, we aren't here
just to survive
we're here to fully thrive
wear that dress, kiss those you love
hold your sisters tight
go out there & seize it
It is your right

Alys Hall

THE MYSTERY OF WOMANHOOD

Growing up, I recognized beaches by the feeling of the
sand.

Getting nearer to the beach,
my body appreciates the cool breeze that soothes my soul.
My feet feel the warmth of the sand
but to my surprise, beaches can be full of pebbles,
a rare beauty that captures my heart.

Pebbles are hard on my bare feet, yet inviting to my eyes.
I search carefully for rare stones.
My mind captures their purity.

A pebble. a mix of colours; black dominating
with stripes of cream that turn the pebbles smooth and
whiter.

Just like the way womanhood can be pain and darkness,
just a mere hope for a brighter tomorrow,
only to create a strong and pure hearted woman.

How can a woman reach breaking point, yet be so strong?
That is the mystery of womanhood.

Beach pebbles are formed by weathering.
The physical breakdown of exposed rock surfaces
Womanhood is defined by physical and emotional pain,
exposure to deception and hatred
the greatest weakness of wanting to be loved.

Wait!!! Beach pebbles are not all smooth,
they tell a story of beauty through pain.
Womanhood's scars prove bravery, dark experience
conquered.
The pale sea pebbles' pure beauty, the inner soul of a
goddess,
the mystery of womanhood, the pride of beach pebbles.

TY NEWYDD*

A home away from home
A home that has seen many winters
yet glimmers with shades
of white and blue. A small palace
with views of the sea and green trees
that tower around the house
to keep her hidden
from jealous, prying eyes.

The calm of the sea on a summer night
makes sleep flow so pleasantly
rest a trance until the sea gulls wailing
at the sun's timely appearance.

Ty Newydd! Oh Ty Newydd
You have pushed hiraeth* away
as you provide me with warmth and comfort
as if I'm already home.

I miss you so, for in you I belonged
never have I ever
imagined it possible
to have two homes.

Nobukhosi Ndlovu

*HIRAETH - LONGING FOR HOME

*TY NEWYDD - NEW HOME



COMMON

BERTHYN A HIRAETH YM MHONTYPRIDD

Many of us have enjoyed accessing different areas of land around our town over the years.

Many of these spaces provide us with a strong sense of Perthyn, of feeling related to and belonging in these places. It is people who make spaces, places. In their turn these places may also leave us with a strong sense of Hiraeth, a longing for spaces that hold a special place in our hearts, long after we have left them, or they us.

For those who have grown up here memories of accessing land around the communities of Pontypridd go back several generations. Childhood memories of exploring, Winberry picking, den building, fire lighting, camping, and swimming in nature may have created a strong sense of connection, of Perthyn, to these special places.

For those of us who may have moved here in later life these memories may have been formed more recently. Places where we go to get away from our everyday cares, to walk, run, cycle, exercise dogs, pick litter, or inexplicably leave pants in the bushes for others to find. Spaces we can go to be with nature, or simply unwind.

Such places may have become sacred to us, deep bonds formed through the repetition of ritual, quiet places where we can commune with something greater than ourselves. They may have become imbued with meaning. We may have scattered the ashes of our loved ones, spaces becoming places of remembering and a connection to our ancestors.

We may have become so used to being able to freely access these spaces, of thinking of them as public places where we belong, that it may rarely occur to us that these spaces might be places that belong to others. And it may come as something of a surprise to us when they put forwards their own ideas for their future use.

What becomes of our sense of Perthyn then?

Those who grew up here can fondly remember the unwritten laws, the customary rights of access, between those who farm the land, and those who might access these same lands for a variety of purposes. Customs of access etched deep into the relationship

between those have been farming here for generations, and those later who settled here.

"I really had no idea how lucky I was growing up in the area when the farmers and landowners had a deep connection to the land and recognised it was OK to share. There was an unwritten understanding, 'you don't interfere with my farming, and you can wander where you like'". Robert Peterson, Save Craig Yr Hesg Not until such places are advertised as being for sale, change hands, become fenced off, might our feelings of Berthyn a Hiraeth become strongly felt. When we see places where we may once have felt that 'welcome in the hillside' become adorned with barbed wire, keep out, and no trespassing signs. We find ourselves displaced once again.

Yn Gymraeg the names given to places are themselves imbued with meaning, often relating to the way in which such places have been accessed and used by the people who belong to them. If we take the time to listen, we can learn a great deal about the story of a place from the names they have been called since people have known them.

Y Graig is a space that was once so well known as a place from which the local community harvested rocks, that this is what the place is still known as today. In an earlier time, other people may have known this bryn by another name, but 'the Graig' is the name by which it is known by most people in Pontypridd today.

As I write I can look southeast towards Caerdydd from my desk window in Pwllgwaun, this damp pool of a place, past the shoulder of Maesycoed, the once wooded field place, towards the Graig, the rocky place. And once in a while, Y Graig will call to me, cast its spell of Perthyn upon me, and cause me to leave my desk to fill a deep Hiraeth.

I will leave my front door and walk through the lanes of my children's formative years, briefly join the flow of the Afon Rhondda as it runs past the Clwb Rygbi. Crossing Sardis carpark, I traverse the culverted and buried Nant Gelliwion, and on its long buried bank take the cut through to follow the line of the old Barry Railway.

This takes me past the site of Graig railway station, demolished to be replaced by the now obsolete telecom exchange. Following the line of the old railway I will cross the raised walkway high above the carpark of Ysbyty Dewi Sant, to join the steepness of High Street before turning into Graig Street. At the end of which lies Y Graig.

Yma a steep flight of steps carries me up towards 'the track' to join the Pontypridd Circular as it passes through this open space. Like many of the hillsides of the Cymoedd Cymru the Graig is a landscape of once open grassland slowly becoming scrub and woodland, a place where residents are accustomed to roam at will in place of cattle.

In recent years observant residents have reported that their customary right to roam the Graig has been diminishing in small parcels. Plots of land changing hands have borne testimony to new signs erected warning the unwary to 'keep out - private property'. As much as people may belong to the Graig, the Graig also belongs to individual people.

During the Covid 19 pandemic many of us used our hours exercise a day, to lose our sense of time exploring the landscape around where we live. And during the Covid 19 pandemic many people also found the time, inclination, and resources to fulfil a long-held dream to become owners of land, many then using their new rights to exclude others.

In an easterly direction from the Graig I look across Cymoedd Gelliwion towards Maesycoed, admiring the ruin of Llandraw Farm; Mynydd Y Glyn rising in the distance as the sun sets behind. Yn Gymraeg Llan implies an enclosed settlement of the early Celtic Church, usually followed by the name of its founding saint. In this case though draw translates into 'yonder' so this may have been the farm of a nearby religious community.

Prior to the global pandemic Llandraw Farm was another place to which I often found myself drawn. Possibly due to their spiritual connection the ruin of the farmhouse, and the fields around it, are imbued with a deep sense of Berthyn a Hiraeth, a place of deep spiritual meaning to who knew it.

Sadly, it was during lockdown that the legal ownership of Llandraw Farm changed hands, from the guardianship of an older farmer who understood the relationship that residents had with the land, to that of younger family member who quickly moved to terminate the customary rights of access residents had long enjoyed here.

Almost directly north of the Graig, looking out over the Afon Rhondda lies the community of Graigwen, white rock. The rock that may have given the community its name is known locally as Eagle rock, for the way it overhangs the 'hollow' in which sits the community of Pantygrraigwen. And another parcel of land changed hands during lock-down

Having seen the woods above Graigwen pass through the hands of one developer after another the community here reformed group and raised the funds to purchase them. The woods that they belong to, now belong to them. Following another recent land purchase of the land around nearby Lan Farm the fields here no longer feel so welcoming.

Beyond these fields lie the ancient Pilgrimage Way known locally as the Darren Ddu (black edge) road and crossing this brings us to the fields above Craig-Yr-Hesg, the rock of sedges. These fields have offered a precious green haven for the people of Glyn Coch, the red valley for generations.

Here the community has fought a long running campaign to save their place of belonging from an international quarrying concern. Sadly the fences have gone up, and the exclusion of the community is reinforced by bailiffs empower to act in compliance with the laws of property ownership

Despite the power of ownership Perthyn a Hiraeth remain powerful forces that connect people to their landscape by their interaction with the places that matter to them. Perthyn a Hiraeth do not exclude people from their own landscape but call out to them and welcome those who would care for and look after them.

But this landscape calls to others too, and as a community we must find ways to work together, to balance the needs and desires of those who would own land here and prevent inappropriate exploitation of our land. It is these stories of Perthyn a Hiraeth, of the community purchase of Graigwen Woods, of ownership & exclusion, which have inspired the setting up a new community organisation, Tir Pontypridd.

Ken Moon



Rhian Anderson

HIRAETH

When I am sad I walk.
Watch a sunset on the beach.
I stay all night, watch the sunrise too,
but I can't do that here.
Not because there isn't a beach,
not because there isn't a sunset,
but because it isn't my beach.
Because it isn't my sunset.
It's slate, not stones.
The pain in your feet is different.
The pinks and reds of the tired sky
aren't quite as neon as my pink,
nor red enough to roar, the ocean in my veins.
There is no purple vivid enough
to be both libation and sustenance.
The sea is not my sea.
The pier is not my pier.
The bench I sit on is not worn to the shape of my hopes.
This promenade has never caught my tears.
This breeze will never blow me salt kisses.

Dee Dickens



Francesca Kay

This poem was written during my residency with Marion Cheung at The Place, Newport in conjunction with Tin Shed Theatre, Easter Friday 2024. I would like to not only give thanks for the residency, for all it taught me & the insight it gave me into creative community spaces, but also for their willingness to learn about additional access needs, to keep mothers in the arts & to raise awareness around issues affecting women in society & reimagine support networks to ensure we leave nobody behind.

HERFEIDDIAD = D E F I A N C E

HER = A CHALLENGE

FEITHIAD = DARE

Rufus Mufasa

I made it there
Through fuchsia-turquoise-teal waves
Reconnected with breath
Remembered the glimmer I caught in Abertawe

Aber (estuary) tawe, add an (l) and it becomes t a w e l
And I become aware of how I get there
By learning to not business myself with anything anyone has to
say or smear or scream or spite about me

I'm reminded that the clarity comes
Not always in waves & ways you'd expect
Sat in my Ford Transit custom
That wasn't the best decision
But I made a decision
That's massive
And so is the cost of the decision
But that doesn't matter - not right now
Sat in my Ford transit custom
In a Swan(sea) traffic jam
With my children & my dogs
25th Anniversary of The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill
Programme on BBC4 - the sneaking in of Scripture

Getting into hearts & homes
Sat in my Ford Transit Custom
One of the best bits of my life
Alive in my heart forever
That moment
That glimmer
Me & my girls
That Win
That safety
That t a w e l that day in A b e r t a w e (l)

COMMON PEOPLE

Jailee Lee

Who really made this great land we live in?
It wasn't the politicians, the bankers or billionaires.

No

It was the common folk

We common people.

But I wouldn't call this common place.

Who built our great architecture, roads, hospitals and
schools

Who wrote our wittiest poems, sonnets and books.

Who filled the galleries with splendid colourful
paintings and filled our tv with animation and
cartoons.

But common minds, labourers and artists

Who retold our legends and portrayed our most
interesting characters.

Who cheffed our tastiest meals and kept our families
fed.

Who bred.

and milked the cows, who butchered and prepared the
meat, for your British Sunday roast.

Who served us our end of the day pint, and made us feel
welcome in our local taverns.

Who delivered our parcels, on time and intact, picked
our litter and cleaned public toilets.

Who saved and cared for our ill and ageing families
when they needed it most

And kept us safe in our streets

Who were our key workers

That held back the tide of covid

It wasn't the politicians, the bankers or the
billionaires,

No. It was us. Yes us.

The common folk.

We.

The common people.

A LOT MEANT

"I'M IN CHARGE,"
HE RIBBED.
"I'M IN THE UNION,"
SHE COUNTERED,
DEMANDING TEA BREAKS
AND SAFETY WEAR.

"I'M STILL IN CHARGE."
"YES DEAR,"
SHE ACKNOWLEDGED,
CASTING ASIDE AN APPLE CORE
TO LACE HER
SNAKE-PROOF BOOTS.

Karen Gemma Brewer



THE COMMONERS

Welcome to South Wales
nothing is more common than this land
a mix of city and valley colliding together
like oil and water.

Yes, it's where I grew up
where people mock me for speaking 'proper'
of thinking that I'm better than others,
I have to draw a line.

Remind them of where I came from.
You think I came from the bay and the sea,
I grew from the valleys.

Where the Ogmore River begins its trek,
where the mine was once the villages beating heart,
where there is only one bus route,
one school,

one road in and one road out.

Nothing left to do
and usually nowhere left to go.

So before you visit me,
Why don't you walk with me?
They say, if you want to learn about someone
walk a mile in their shoes.

So, tie the laces of my hand-me-down shoes,
pull on my mud slick wellies
or my tattered old daps
and walk with me.

Walk a mile in my shoes,
I will show you everything
about the common folk.

The colourful caravans with 5 to a bed
The gas man with the best nose in Cardiff
The muck covered docks and grungy pubs
Crooks and family men sat sharing a pint
Gambling meagre pennies away
Children running wild on the streets
Hopscotch, skipping ropes and hula hoops
The green fields of lambs
Fox filled woods
And magic waterfalls.

Walk with me,
Walk a mile in my shoes,
I will show you everything
About the common folk.

The ones who have been here for centuries
hands dark with dirt
wellies glued to fields
living day by day
paycheck by paycheck.
unseen and unheard.

The ones who fill the bellies of many,
who have heated the homes,
cleaned the floors
and taught the posh kids to read.

The commoners with bad punctuation
crude language and jokes
downing a pint and smoking a joint.

Walk with me,
Walk a mile in my shoes,
I will show you everything
About the common folk.

We know who we are
working to our last days
our last breath;

the artists, the barbers, the plumbers,
the train drivers, the electricians, the farriers,
the butcher, the baker, the candlestick maker.

The ones who the rich rely on
a colony of workers
carrying the weight of empires
that were built on our backs
so we know how to help people
how to hold someone's hand
offering welsh cakes and cawl
because it is all that we have
grateful for morsels
grateful for land
grateful to watch our children grow
from the palm of our hands
hearts filled with song
The common folk
The royalty of the land.

Rhiannon Griffiths

Artists Left to Die Inside
United Kingdom 2023

		GBP
111123	YSBRYDOLI	10.00 A
252637	TIME TO CREATE	430.00 A
375985	MATERIALS	100.00 A
986542	EDITING	370.00 A
986542	CREATIVE COMMUNITY	267.00 A
589463	ACCESS TO OPPORTUNITIES	500.00 A
297365	EQUIPMENT	157.00 A
984751	THINKING SPACE	230.00 A
365749	TRAVEL TO SEE WORK	265.00 A
875968	TICKETS FOR SAID WORK	650.00 A

ADDITIONAL COSTS AT TILL

111111	UNIVERSAL CREDIT MINIMUM INCOME FLOOR	3700.00 B
222222	NO ACCESS TO CREDIT	5000.00 B
333333	LACK OF NEPOTISM	3000.00 B
444444	TIME SPENT BUDGETING	4900.00 B
555555	WORKING CLASS TAX	10000.00 B
666666	AGED OUT OF OPPORTUNITIES	6375.00 B
777777	SOCIETAL DISBELIEF OF WORKING CLASS TALENT	5000.00 B
	T O T A L	40,954

17 ITEMS

DEBIT CARD

**** * 6874

DECLINED

DECLINED

DECLINED

PURCHASE UNSUCCESSFUL. PLEASE TRY ANOTHER CARD OR ENSURE SUFFICIENT FUNDS AVAILABLE FOR THIS TRANSACTION.



WE ARE
BELONGING
TO NATURE

NO BORDERS FROM THE SKY
no fences in the sea
just granite and grass
mountains and rivers
forest and beach
built from starcrashed embers
other worlds
embedded into our own
of flesh and blood
sinew and soul
criss crossing continents
fusing difference into dna
dancing through dereliction
a species born to disperse

No borders from the sky
just a never ending circle
spinning in space
iris to earth
earth to iris
the patinaed patterns of evolution
the worn map of wonder
where mind and hand
have crafted our own contamination
as walls are built
and lines drawn
snipers trained
and checkpoints raised
where once children's footsteps ran
keeping out
penning in
labelling them
saving us
with teeth and skin
throat and eye



Patrick Jones

Our hearts break as we watch the devastation.
The earth split in two, burying our brothers and
sisters under the rubble that was their home.
We wring our hands in despair and helplessness, our
sobs choking in our throats.
If only we lived nearer we would pull the rubble from
your bodies until our hands bled, until we could reach
your hand in the darkness and pull you into the light.
But we live far and despair is a privilege we cannot
afford.

We busy ourselves in service of the helpers.
God opens the doors to one of his many houses and we
gather there each bringing gifts.
Food cooked with love fills the air with smells of home.
The sweet aroma of coffee served in a mother's cup and
shared generously with friends and strangers.
Bakers have woken early to make cakes filled with
spices and fruit to nourish you.
Booksellers, festival makers and circus performers
come and jewellery makers with gifts that sparkle like
snowflakes in the summer sun.
Buyers and sellers come, exchanging gifts and pressing
money into your hands. What is ours is yours.
Children share their favourite teddy bears and toys, a
magical unicorn makes us smile.
A family spends hours crafting flowers of paper and tin
to lay at your door.
We make badges of solidarity and, while our screens
fall silent to your suffering, together we weave
promises of remembering to hang on the wall.

The earth brings gifts too. Fruit bushes, fragrant herbs
and bulbs whose delicate flowers reach for the light
bringing the hope of spring. We paint our hands to give
thanks to the earth. We salute the sun.

Quiet, if you listen you will hear music - colourful
fiddle players, the sound of bass, gentle drumming and
songs from languages as old as our hills - celebrating
homeland.

The strong, clear voice of a young bard tells the tale of
our nation.

We hear your voice too, which hushes the room to
silence.

Our hands reach for each other, our hearts overflow, we
are so grateful to be here, with you in this place. Can
you feel the warmth of our embrace?

When you need us, hold out your hand, when we knock on
your door we know you'll be there.

We are one family on this fragile land we share. Our
community is close but our neighbours live everywhere.
Love has no borders.

Hayley Richards

LITTLE SISTER

My sister called this morning,
Have you seen the news?

The temperature is going up and up and the CO2 will spike
and I'm so scared.

We should build an ark. We should be all together not
spread across the country. I need to dig up the concrete,
dig down a bunker, dig in a tree.

And no one else cares and no one else sees. Why aren't we
acting now? Why are we not preparing? What can I do?
I say breathe Little one, you're already doing your part,
you don't eat meat, drive a car or travel by plane, you've
been recycling clothes your whole life. Pick one more
thing and stick to it for a few months until it's a habit,
then add in more. Learn about permaculture. Plant
flowers. Slow down. Let the weeds grow.

But why isn't it on the curriculum? Survival skills,
growing veg, building a generator and wind turbine?
Clothes mending, cooking from scratch?

It's like no one else cares and no one else sees. Why aren't
we acting now? Why are we not preparing? What can I do?
And I say breathe Little one. Though I know you are right.
The Revelation is too big to comprehend, too heavy to
carry alone, too much more for you, in survival mode and
me, fighting the system and her,
clawing,
at the rubble.

Have you seen the news?

Have you seen the news?

Angela Karadog

LIVING

Naturally, cities are where the money is.

Pollution, concrete, the rat race atmosphere,
hustle and bustle.

Where many move to, or commute to, to earn a 'living'.

Working all the hours under the Sun,
getting home as Moonlight glooms in a blurry shade,
smothered by the clouds above.

Frankly this is unhealthy, unnatural.

This is not living.

We have forced life to be like this.

Traded nature for what?

Why do you think life flourishes in the woods?

Surrounded by natural resources.

With nature is where we should be.

At one with the trees,
the birds and the bees,
we need to reunite,
form unity, a trinity,
humans, animals, trees.

Duke Al Durham

Living
in peace.

THE SHALLOWS

Unafraid to delve deep, feeling the flow of the tide on my
tired feet

I am deep and steeped in words, breeze, art and creative
fare.

My feet are meant to float and not be planted on the floor

I belong to the forces of ebb and flow

And ripple and wave

Not the sturdy, or straight, or strict or staid.

I want to be sure of the water that envelopes me within

And the droplets of ideas that stick to my skin

Mixed

With the freckles on my arms, I swim and think

I am driven by a thirst to traverse and immerse my heart
and mind

To find myself.

The shallows are not inviting, they are the water
whittled to nothing

I want to stride across the tip of the tide

I won't cross that divide by standing aside.

An ocean to swim, no boundaries to keep me still, the dark,
the deepest part, I depart, undulating

As I saunter through the water, taking risks, as my
thoughts sit

I permit myself to make my own choices and my own
decisions and not be over-ridden

I'll be living, the way I think is fitting to me.

Dipping and swimming wherever I want to go

Not standing on the shore, observing the tide as it draws
back, no hijack on who I am

I'll build my own rock, a foundation of my own dictation

I will find my own place to navigate, my own path and not
mask what's underneath

The skin and the scales, my tales and trails

I'm not all at sea but content with the rapping ride

I won't cross that divide by standing aside.

Zoe Murphy

SANCTUARY

Sometimes we're sat around the table with a brew,
a friend to guide the heart and hand;

or, we're running from horses in a field
and find a den, a circle of trees that have self-woven
and while the rain falls gentle through new leaves
we too are woven in.

And there's the seashell to the ear
and for that moment, the wave's blessing
an ancient spell we recognize in our blood
and can trust in.

A bookshop too, with its space and invitation
the cover of a book, each page, word, has spaces
between them, here we dream and speak
and are heard from.

clare e. potter

RACISM 2022

In a world that was built to fit us all
We still live by a system that lets us fall!
The recent pandemic highlighted the gaps
It really doesn't matter where you're from on the map

Because if you're truly not white or American or British
They still think you're nothing in a system that's not
fitted

People suffering because of the colour of their skin
Where does this evil come from? - It must be rooted deep
within!

In a nation that strives to be more inclusive
What is your excuse not to challenge the pollution?
If you think racism isn't toxic to the planet!
Then why do you think I'm fighting to ban it?

In a world filled with power, status, and control,
There still remain truths that are yet to be told!
In a history that's rich and full of culture,
Heritage was ripped like we were nothing but vultures!

People are killed through the division of power
Humanity is dying out by the hour
Children left homeless without any shelter
In a world where people should now know much better!

In a world that wasn't created by people
There's too much hatred; it's toxic. It's evil!
Change can only prevail when those around us accept it,
And stop denying that racism ever existed!

If it takes me a lifetime, to re-educate society
Then, I'll continue to do so because this is my priority
There's more than enough room for us all to survive!
It doesn't take much...

Look inside a beehive structure that supports an entire
colony,
And produces sweet nectar through living in harmony!
To protect each other and hold onto their wings,
Because they'd sacrifice their life with only one sting!

Can you really deny that racism still exists?
Because through your denial, I will continue to
persist!

All I want is equality for the nation,
And to be called by our names without abbreviations!

To speak our minds without explanation!
To be identified as people without expectation!
To be included and seen in true representation!
To be included and heard as a part of the nation!

Is it too much to ask that you make the effort?
To prevent this feeling of living in a desert!
Secluded, scared, always feeling alone,

Living on a land and never feeling at home!

Boris Johnson Claiming Peppa Pig's the best Britain's
got?

But wearing hijab is being referenced as a letter box!
Why do people have to still feel so fragile?
In a world created that prevents some feeling agile?

In a world that provides for all of creation,
But a system that divides an entire nation!
My belief in Allah is what keeps me humble,

Look inside a beehive structure that supports an entire
colony,

And produces sweet nectar through living in harmony!

To protect each other and hold onto their wings,
Because they'd sacrifice their life with only one sting!

Can you really deny that racism still exists?
Because through your denial, I will continue to persist!

All I want is equality for the nation,
And to be called by our names without abbreviations!

To speak our minds without explanation!
To be identified as people without expectation!
To be included and seen in true representation!
To be included and heard as a part of the nation!

Is it too much to ask that you make the effort?
To prevent this feeling of living in a desert!
Secluded, scared, always feeling alone,

Living on a land and never feeling at home!

Boris Johnson Claiming Peppa Pig's the best Britain's got?

But wearing hijab is being referenced as a letter box!

Why do people have to still feel so fragile?

In a world created that prevents some feeling agile?

In a world that provides for all of creation,

But a system that divides an entire nation!

My belief in Allah is what keeps me humble,

But my voice was built to make mountains rumble!

My words are true, and I won't stumble
And in a world filled with hatred, I won't crumble!
So I leave it with you now to make your choices!
And ask yourself why we are raising our voices!

And once you accept that we are all one race,
That will be the day Humanity finds true grace!
A place where people can feel safe!
A nation filled without disaster & disgrace

True representation of the people created!
Without being cheated by a system that's still outdated!
I need you to listen and feel the pressure of the heat!
Because through my voice you will feel your heart beat!

A feeling you're not comfortable to acknowledge or know!
But just know that one day soon, you too will grow!
I share with you my love and energy!

To build a world kind enough to hold onto my legacy!

Be truthful ,be kind ,
Just love one another,
This planet was created to be like our mother!
Not to destroy each other!!

Do you really need to hear stories of pain?
Before you realise, we're not making no gains?
Do we need to expose our darkest moments?
To educate you on all your misconduct?

Do we need to now fix all the damage that's been caused?
In a society that refuses to open their doors!
Doors of change will now open up
We'll ask once or twice, but then your times up!

How many more generations need to experience this
crime?

That prevents a society from growing in its time?
Let's all accept that the pain is real!
And together, we can figure out how to fix this ordeal!

Make your changes, take your stand,
Show me that you understand!
I will speak for the nation
It's all just a different way of education!

Forcing upon your representation!
A face the media portrayed would cause an invasion!
A force you will say you have never met

But a feeling I'll leave, you will never forget!

Don't forget that this started through police brutality
So it's about time we change our mentality
To know that we are sacrificing humanity!
For a system that still doesn't serve us equality!

I hope you leave now with high motivation
Because together with Queen Niche we will create an ANTI
racist nation!! 🤝🤝🤝👑👑👑

Peace , equality, and love to everyone ❤️

WRITTEN BY: NELLY ADAM AKA QUEEN NICHE

TOO DANGEROUS FOR PLASTIC DUCKS

On flat fields by the river Wye,
A multi-coloured crop appears,
Grown from seeds scattered in the Sixties.
Flower children, born of Woodstock,
In the heady breath of Peace & Love.
They were searching for light,
In the dark shadow of the Vietnam War.

Some of those seeds blew across the Atlantic.
Landed in the The Bath Festival of Blues and
Progressive Music,
Shepton Mallet. I was there. This was 1970.
Left school before the end of term to go.
Never went back. Hated school.
Men of religion. Brutal. Violent. Abusive.
I took an Army & Navy Store Poncho.
No tent. No sleeping-bag.
Lived on tinned sardines, corned beef, and Spam.
Survived.
Saw Zeppelin. Steppenwolf. Canned Heat.
Saw Zappa and Floyd.
Johnny Winter was the stand-out.
This was the Seventies.
Belfast. Derry.
The Troubles.

The seeds were sown, and grown, and spread again.
Landed in the Eighties: Stonehenge Free. Hyde Park.
Worthy Farm. Monsters of Rock. The Eighties.
The Falklands. Belgrano. Goose Green. Tumbledown.

Then the Nineties. Illegal raves.
Out in the wilds. In the forestry.
Drum & Bass, Jungle, Hardcore.
Way beyond the back of beyond.
The flower children danced,
Threw shapes. Trance.
Made babies,
In the shadow of the Gulf War.

Then Bosnia, then Kosovo,
Afghanistan, Iraq, then Libya,
Then Syria.
The decks turning.
The world burning.

Then Landed. 2023.
Those babies arrive.
First festival maybe.
A safe space. A safe place.
Some wear light-up wings. Faeries on the loose.
When the night dark falls, they run free.
When it rains. Out come the defiant smiles, well, it is
Wales.

A low-flying fighter scars the sky.
Jet engines scream.
Pilots train.
The shadow of Ukraine.
More rain.
The river rises, drunk on the deluge.

Tragedy strikes.
The race is cancelled.
Too dangerous for plastic ducks this year.

A safe place.
Faeries on the loose,
Searching for light,
Scattering Woodstock seed.
The heady breath of Peace & Love.

Peter Cox



Rosie Scribblah