

LUNCH



003

Welcome to our third edition of LUNCH.

Suitable for vegetarians and vegans.

LUNCH 003

Welcome to the third edition of Lunch. Our magazine is full of the poetry created by poets who are friends of Poetry Kit Courses.

This edition edited by Jim Bennett

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Dominic Bond

Then, this happened

Soft digits fold into
mine,
gossamers from a field
of light so powerful
no one can see it without
believing.

He paints on a canvas
disfigured by winter,
his face like blossom
against a pallid sky.

I stroke his forehead
away from the window,
the room warm,
life apparent,
sincere.

Dominic Bond

Guises

He holds my bike, me
poised ready to
fly. You can sense the houses
sat behind bushes that can't
see I'm ready
for roads that raise more
questions than answers,

like his hands
that could be muslin as here
or the sharp thorns of somebody's
poison, jagged edges cutting
my flesh,
that seared their logic to
my insides,
hands whose absence
I still feel.

This is the guise that fits
him best, his hands keeping
me upright,
hands that were human,
that through their deeds
let me see light
in his shadow.

Dominic Bond

Home schooling

It passed through grubby hands until
it was my turn.

It was plain with no writing,
suitably vague.

It waited in my bag until
no one was watching.

It was in another language, with
bodies I hadn't seen before.

It seared images that still dance
in my lust painfully.

It's an education that happens
when there is silence.

Clair Chilvers

Quatorze Juillet 1990

Tonight in the garden
the heat, the wine
 reminded me
 of that evening driving through France
 fast roads all the way

a pause at a café to phone ahead.

We had forgotten the date
 but they had a room for us
 and a table outside for dinner
 looking across the square
 through the pollarded chestnuts

to a long white-clothed table.

We had a bottle of cold white wine
sent to our room
 while we bathed and changed,
 forgot how long the journey had been.

Dinner taken slowly in the twilight
 while we watched the procession,
 candle-lit, from the church
 to the white-clothed table.

They had their feast and we had ours.

Clair Chilvers

Knitting

Grandmother knitted socks
frowning as she turned the heel
on grey metal needles.

She was a seamstress;
our overcoats offcuts
from smart tweed suits,
hand-knitted hats and gloves to match

Mother knitted with casual nonchalance,
on the beach in a striped deckchair,
handkerchief tied over her nose
against the mohair fibres.

I was a quick learner,
graduating from egg cosy
to bed jacket, knitted in one piece
on thick wooden needles.

I learnt to wind the wool around my hand,
the entry token to the secret clique,
at first ungainly but before I knew it
I could knit and read a pattern.

Years later, I chanced upon him,
knitting a sweater, on the same thick needles
as that first pink bed jacket,
but in colours of eye-watering panache.

Clair Chilvers

The race

in Brinker's time they closed the Prinsengracht
every year as temperatures began to fall
when the weather looked set for snow
their mother finished the knitted hats and gloves
their father carved the wooden skates
just in time
the last winner's name on Canterlandse Bridge
was 20 years ago

polar bears die on shrinking ice floes
villages fall into the sea
storms from El Niño fell forests
the Nile is dammed
farms downstream dry out
famine widespread
mobile phones won't feed the children
oilmen plant robots in the Amazon
ranchers cut down rainforest for cattle
one-child-families distort the demography
of generations
private planes whisk the rich to their playgrounds
low-cost airlines cram families into ever smaller seats
to get their annual dose of carcinogenic rays
at crowded seaside destinations

we plant vineyards where they never would have flourished
enjoy warm summers, regret the milder winters
open another bottle
to forget

A C Clarke

Coming back

The path's as I remembered. We turn left
into woodland, squirrels, inquisitive dogs.
The air wraps round us, stifling as a mask,
won't lift until we're halfway there and sun

twitches the curtain from the familiar hill
bony, unwelcoming as ever. At the burn
workmen are shoring up a bank which slid
into the water a rainstorm ago.

No cars parked at the house at the top of the slope,
no warning barks. The huge cisterns
that punctuate the water pipeline
lurk in the undergrowth like palace ruins.

It won't be long before we sight the village,
its churchyard obelisk pointing a stern
finger at a sky which still refuses
to let us see what lies on the horizon.

A C Clarke

Last train back

I press my face against the carriage window
and see only my double's anxious stare.
It's dark. The train is somewhere near Linlithgow,

next station stop: the indicator says so,
that's on an endless loop. I mouth a prayer
and press my face against the carriage window -

we could be hurtling through a void. I know,
but don't believe the world is still out there.
It's dark. The train is somewhere near Linlithgow,

I hope. But I'm alone. No-one to show
I'm not a ghost hastening to God knows where.
I press my face against the carriage window:

the lights I see are mere reflections. Though
I tell myself I'm silly I'm aware
it's dark for miles. *Is* the train near Linlithgow?

A C Clarke's

A sense of danger

The sound of a train is the sound of the wind (Sean O'Brien)

'The trees are talking to each other' his mother says
when he stands among conifers,
a movement in the air, a sighing
like the sea that time he stumbled too far in
tugged sideways by the energy of water.
'It didn't mean to hurt you' his mother said.
But he knows otherwise, as he knows

each time his mother tells him 'it won't hurt you'
she is trusting the world too far. When he trembles
as an express train shudders through a station
blasting his cheeks with its onrush and she soothes him
'don't be afraid, it can't jump off the rails'
its dragon roar proclaims a speed untamed

delighting in its power. However much
she talks of signals, safety brakes and drivers
alert to every danger, he feels in his bones,
bones that he's sure of, he touches them daily –
the long struts that keep his hands from melting,
the hard fact of his wrist – nothing can stop

the sheer aliveness of things which are not human
waiting always to spring their surprises,
topple across a path, buck the points,
a whole hill slide down its own sled-run,
a roof whip off - or a child cosseted
in a healthy womb open its eyes on darkness.

Collette Donne

LIVERPOOL

whispering ashes haunt the estuary,
grey foamy water buried its album of memories,
a seafaring paradise now disappeared;
no more sugar and spice landing at the dock,
no more crammed boats waiting patiently to unload,
no more lovers to greet foreign lips or homespun accents,
today it's different –
the Echo arena competes with the Liver birds for top attraction,
the vacant promenade longs for seafarers and women to tap their toes,
raise the concrete to chatter and scheming.
the desolate seagulls swoon through the air, dancing with what remains
of empty waters that swallow Liverpool stories.

you see,
it's a city with characters from storybooks; adventurers and love tales
and yes, Romeo and Juliet are names that Liverpudlians christen their kids.
you might say 'you're joking' - no, no I'm not. Anything can happen here.
it's bigger than Hollywood. It's greater than Ken Loach films.
it's blue and red dreams of trophies,
it's Alma De Cuba rumba nights,
it's the drum stick lollipop at the end of a night in the Blue Angel,
it's Matthew Street,
it's trendy hotels gazing over the river Mersey,
it's shops galore in Liverpool One,
it's the Everyman Theatre and more,
it's religion gone mad,
it's the endless dreams of people with sod all and those who've made it big.
it's a city built on Sandstone to endure constancy and all that changes.

Collette Donne

If this be me

accept these miserable tears
for sad kids and misspent years.
seasons weep.
men never cheat
on lies that still remain.

mother's lost the will to give
another social service gig.
come on In, watch the show;
bloody knuckles, kids that scream
hiding pain in evergreens.

unequivocal scars on kids hearts
booming start and dead end stop.
race like Lurchers round a bend:
only to find, there's no end
to copycat traces, no sweet revenge.

Collette Donne

Four times

this isn't a poem about lighthouses on rocks or wet sandy dogs.
this isn't about noisy seagulls and stinky seaweed.

nor is it about the time we attended his funeral –
it's not about mourning in the rain.
nor is it about heaven
it's not about black eyes, nor how our tears stiffened our faces.
it's not about how our broken hearts darkened the sky

and this is certainly not about red wine sauce smothering fried potatoes.
it's not about Chianti and candles

and most certainly not about scruffy
chequered tablecloths and delicious ice cream.
this is not a poem about a cheerful woman
with a beautiful face
she isn't adorned with jewellery
she quietly strolls to the shops looking ordinary.
it's about the woman of my dreams
her radiant face
jingle jangle soft coo coo
she sounds like a windchime as she walks
smells like a rose
sapphire eyes
ruby cheeks
Senorita is a diamond wherever she goes.

Collette Donne

Elsewhere

There are bananas selling fast elsewhere.
in the supermarket I remember my map of the world
glued to my kitchen table.
like a voodoo doll, I pin the world down,
finding coffee stained rivers and crumpet smudges,
from Saratov to Akita treading continents safely,
hopping on boats and cranky trains with my Assam tea,
smelling the air and feeling close to my laminated world.

elsewhere life is busy.
Aunt Mary embroiders a bedspread of Mauritius -
she says that the island will rock me to sleep.
for winter she's mending my blanket,
mapping out northern stars with navy silk thread
and white lace for an icy moon.
Elsewhere, nobody knows Aunt Mary,
the seamstress who maps out my domestic world.

Sheila Lockhart

beyond the peatstack

his dark coat catches the wind
as greenshank and curlew pipe
and pale cloud-curtains shroud
the island's watchful shores

he will come to your door
with his strangeness from beyond the sea
no longer yours but still your own
grown from the rain soaked bog
and the wind worn stone

you watch and wait still doubting
as the dark curve of the moor
hides him from view
breath held heart stilled you count
the seconds until he appears
from beyond the peatstack

Sheila Lockhart

Mrs Woolf takes a walk by the Orrin

buckets of beads rattle down the windscreen
trees sway green plumes
spears of grass spring away from raindrops
birches in black and grey weave
dark stripes up and down
up and down
lichen drips from boughs
like a drowned woman's hair
I walk and count wild flowers

pignut buttercup speedwell bluebell

beside the empty cottage an abandoned chair
wood-whitened in a sea of uncut grass
waits as the nettle gall unfurls
its fulvous tongue
a shed door on one hinge lifts
its chin to charcoal clouds that press
on the furrowed rust of its roof

foxglove hawkweed bedstraw broom

ferns burst in emerald rosettes
beside the swollen stream mosses cloak
heaved stumps of alder
bracken swallows up the asphalt as it rolls
down into a deep green tunnel
beneath the maples

water avens horsetail hard fern soft rush

the pool conceals secrets
a copper beech drips pearls
onto its olive surface
yellow slime mould oozes
like lumpy hollandaise
blushing orchids huddle in the ditch

yellow rattle flag iris tormentil gorse

Cul Beag rises up like a well-fired loaf
round and brown and crusted with pines
the Orrin sunshine-silver rock-speckled
rushes past the disused burial ground
tomb stones beckon pale beyond its fence

self heal heartsease forget me not forget me not

Audrey McIlvain

Guernica in Aranjuez?

The garden restaurant is redolent
with the scent of magnolia. Leaves
whisper under the swish of mid-day heat,

and we await lunch by a water-lily pond.
A fountain nearby mists away our languor
in the tiled cloister. But, suddenly, it starts –

quietly at first, then – in flashes and bursts –
squeals from a little bird. It skirmishes
in the water, squandering energy to survive.
We scurry to the rescue, but in vain:

the sparrow's frenetic rasgueado stops
whilst Rodrigo's Adagio crackles and chitters
from a tinny speaker, echoing our defeat.
After all these years, it haunts me still ...

Audrey McIlvain

In the Attic

She races up the forbidden steps
while they are out golfing.
The latch yields to the longest key;

a naked bulb flickers, awakening
whiskery inhabitants. She gulps down smells
of stale cloths, mouse droppings...

Under the skylight window, she creaks open
a mahogany cabinet, abandoned years ago.
Yellowed papers spill out as dead moths glide,

stealthily flittering past: Granny's parentage,
no one had surmised. Only the blue moon,
the bats swept back to muffled corners.

Only the blue moon, the bats.

Audrey McIlvain

Never Too Late

Michael was a man whose life
was a dry stone wall.

He believed it would be solid, permanent,
so he started at the finish, setting out
the quoin to cheek-end the boundary,
interlocked stones to prevent instability.

Not for him some glittery quartz
or ornamental marble for effect.
Year on year, course by course,
he filled the voids with pinners;

never faltered, despite aching limbs
and cracked knuckles. He laboured on

until it was complete, all rocks in place,
strengthened by through-stones front to back
and tapered along the top with coping-stones,
fine-hewn and chiselled with precision.

But, 40 years later, in a Scarborough care-home
watching *Escape to the Sun* through chalky cataracts,
he knocked over his plastic mug of milky tea,
bounded from the lounge, packed a rucksack,

saluted good-bye to ‘the oldies’, and pedalled away
on a found bicycle yelling, “Sod this, I’m out of here –
escaping to the sun in Benidorm.” B.B.C. Look North
reported the incident as ‘most concerning’.

In interview, Matron confirmed that Michael
had always been a “polite, quiet old man.”

Kriss Nichol

First Breath

the heat of her words slippery
inside her oyster mouth until
released in stifled screams
interspersed with gasps and gulps

her medicine ball stomach contracts
slabs of muscle rise and strain
stammer slightly then rest as
warm fingers stroke and caress

luxuriant ripple of hair
now wet snakes across her face
eyes are slits jaws clamp shut
she is oblivious to all but the crowning

the guiding the slither and emptying
the new breath drenched in song
the weight of memories held in this body
and the blade-edge ache to keep him safe

Kriss Nichol

The End of Summer

autumn trees breathe fire in the late rosy sun
unleash their pent-up colours acquired and stored
throughout summer's heat I watch them glow
umber ochre raw and burnt sienna
magenta russet bronze gold
nature's rich palette

that captures the spirit of power
released by the sun's exquisite
energy
energy I believed we shared but
soon the clocks will go

back another reminder of the
relentless passage of time since you
entered my life left again like a swallow
at the end of summer I
trusted your promises trusted you'd return
here to be by my side
empty promises burn my hopes to ash

Kriss Nichol

Harbinger

high on a branch of withered oak
a shadow moves beside smudges
of long-abandoned nests

make out the raven's hunched form
like a tumorous growth on bark
catch the blackness of eyes

that capture the early moon
imprison it in his soul
as easily as a mouse in curled claws

a malignant presence he betrays
larger prey to predators his blade beak
feasts on leftovers

Maria North

Rice Pudding

She cooked it all up
in the scrapey tin
in the brown-spattered stove
with the bendy blue legs
in the scullery with the mangle
and walls made of bricks
that she'd gone up a ladder
to try to make nice
with sour cream gloss
on a stiff sticky brush,
cooked it all up
in the brown spattered stove
with the bendy blue legs
after meat and two veg
til the rice was soft
and the skin was brown
in the scullery with the tiles
with the corners chipped off
that she'd gone on her knees
to try to make nice
with elbow grease and
cardinal red,
served it all up
with venom and sugar
and sterilised milk
in the weary white bowls
with the edges chipped off,
after roast and yorkshire
drowned in brown;
dolloped it out
and we ate it all up -
the dull cream duty
she'd tried to make nice
with the cardboardy milk
in the tired tin
in the jaded scullery's
worn out stove,
we ate it all up
with a spoonful of jam,
then she washed it all up
and started again on Monday

Maria North

Taste

In the pre-Acrylic era,
they lent a touch of flair
to white stilettos, padded
handbags with snappy clasps,

a classy signature
to pleated skirts and fitted
jackets, twinsets in banlon,
filmy chiffon scarves.

Delicate ruches
wiggled up the wrist
towards the fingertips -
where nylon elegance

enfolded pearlised pink
within the purest white of all.
All grown up at sixteen,
a nice respectable girl

in whom your mother was
well pleased, you couldn't
keep them white for very long.
You couldn't hide

the grubby fingertips,
the scuffmarks on your pointy shoes,
the padded handbag's clasp
that no longer snapped.

Anyway it was far too hot
for summer swaddling.
You yanked away
these trappings of refinement,

danced your fingers
through the playful breeze.
The pearly pink veneer
had started to chip.

You raked at it with your
teeth, despite the bitter taste -
raked and raked until
you'd scraped it all away.

Maria North

She's got more

You pour the wine so carelessly
as if it matters nothing
whether it's fairly shared.

From where I sit,
monitoring to the millilitre,
it always looks as if you've
given yourself the most.
My whole being's screaming

She's got more than me -
just like it always was,
outrage so acute
I'd want to count the peas.
Smallest gets least;
only the big survive.

From a different angle,
the levels look just about the same.
I struggle to persuade myself
they'll do, but it's still there -
that urge to push the glasses
side by side to check.

Mandy Pannett

Happenings

This isn't a poem about the industrial
nursery site on the hill which doesn't

look like an abandoned film-set
or a dusty moonscape.

This isn't about the underfoot feel
of stretches of gravel and sand and this

isn't about the silence broken only
by cries of rooks and the occasional gull.

Nor does this concern the fact there are mounds
of rocks, rusty frames and dirty-cream

sheets of polythene flapping loosely
like skeleton leaves in winter.

It will never be about the acres of tunnels
where seeds are trying to grow.

Nor is this about an Amnesty
Forget-Me-Not Day in Trafalgar Square.

I'm not standing behind Glenda Jackson
and neither does she shuffle some papers

for her speech or suddenly turn around
and say *Will you hold my bag?*

Nor is it about the march when someone
thrusts a placard at me. It's not about

how heavy it is or how my arms ache nor
the manner in which everyone carries bunches

of forget-me-nots. No way does a woman
hold a pot of flowers up high like an offering.

(cont)

(cont)

This is not about you. Not a poem
about you. This time you do not send

a photo of yourself so I don't know
if your eyebrows are still bushy, almost

meeting in the middle. I'd remember
if we called them *Devil's Eyebrows*.

How do I know if your eyes are still
deep blue. Joan Baez could not have sung

about your eyes being bluer than robins' eggs
since it was never our song.

So I'm not following that twitch
of nostalgia and I won't go wandering

any bitter-sweet way.
Melancholy is like a house with

many rooms but there are doors
to close upon them

and forget-me-nots unpicked
look much bluer, you know, in a garden.

Mandy Pannett

Aside

It's only in fiction that weather and mood are in league.
Hardy's the expert, master of dreariness, with each
syllable drenched in suggestions of rain. Vagueness
is Dickens' forte too. How bravely the horses drag the coach
up Shooters Hill. They'll never make Dover in such fog.
Trees here, on pathways of Sussex, fling blossom willy-nilly
at the feet of passers-by. Every bush has a tale, tells enough
gossip for an hour or two. Cul-de-sacs are powdery, yellow
with catkins, younger than springtime and almost live up to their
bygone names – Strawberry Fields, Orchard Way, Spinney, Moat.
The air is light, full of birdsong, there's a sense, everywhere
of déjà vu with the setting familiar although the scene won't do.
It feels unnatural, feels wrong. Wrong to be living in parenthesis.
The suspension of time has charms but not like this. Not this.

Mandy Pannett

Small Rain

Rain, you are a soundtrack playing long and low in shadows.
An underhum to the darkest hours, cosmic, hypnotic and thin.
In shadows you fill green-algae pools, flood puddle and ditch,
hypnotic and thin on tin roof and tarmac you skydance through
every puddle and ditch, a winter pond-skater in cool rivers of frost.
Skydancing through every wild east wind with aeolian music
in rivers of frost, come tree, come tuft, you shimmy through night.
Aeolian music in midnight hours you transform into smaller rain.
Shimmy through night, small rain, with a *Westron Wynde*.
Small rain in the darkest hours, an underhum long and low.

Shiela Roe

The Threads

after Seamus Heaney The Butts

It was dusk,
fading light sucked colour.
Cars queued in the High Street,
their brake lights an endless trail of red.
We joined the line and stared
at bubble-wrap faces of passers-by
as they hurried on the pavement,
bodies shapeless in suits and jackets and macs.
It was like watching a film
with sound muted, colour bleached out.

We drove in slow procession
to the charity shop, Your clothes
behind us on the back seat,
but there was nowhere to park,
so she jumped out of the car,
our daughter, our firstborn,
lifted You into her arms
and bore You into the shop;
all the shirts and trousers and coats;
the worsteds, tweeds, linens and corduroys,
woven into the material of You,
each thread I loved, love still,
the regular weave of an Englishman.

Not so with my Mother, whose silks
and damasks, crepes and cashmere
she interwove with pearls, a diamonte brooch
to add hard lustre, compose a question
she would never answer.

When she died, I sat long hours
beside her closed coffin, longing
to understand what was really inside.

Shiela Roe

Conch Shell

You offer shelter,
your door is always open wide,
but just inside there's a smell
I recognise, a whiff of something
unpleasant.

I reach out to you.
Your body is hard and sharp,
jagged points cut my fingers.
you curl your lip, yet I can see
beyond a pinkness,
pale as a baby's skin.
If I dare to put my ear up close,
there's a rushing sound,
but hollow, more like a laugh.

Greta Ross

this is the tale with knobs on

(cut up poem using phrases from 'i' newspaper, May 2020)

it's been a miserable time
we'll look back on it nostalgically
for the rest of our lives to
remember things from our other life
which upset us long ago
 such a light touch he wouldn't have
 woken next door's baby
it weighs on my mind and my heart
heavily she said
 people who break the rules and
make things more difficult

this time it will feel different
but tangible in our everyday lives
if people would be brave enough

and grab that red thread with both hands
 even if just for a little while

a more profound realisation
couldn't make the moon empathise
with what was happening
it just seemed so disconnected

this is probably a big mistake
it was while I was on one of those
 her glove as seen through an
 empty wine glass
the illusion is
 astonishingly subtle
the images play
with rainbows as three
dimensional
objects
surreal but soothing

(cont)

(cont)

It's not immediately apparent how
or why
people will have grown accustomed
for example they don't bother
to face the view
they rarely look into the eyes of the crowd
 not that you are obliged to stay
on the alert for such minutiae

that we are even talking
about privacy concerning your thermostat
is frankly pretty nuts
 every day I am reminded
 about the unpredictability
 of my condition
either way a vacuum
will be created
there is no real way of knowing

one should never underestimate
the gap
between realities on the ground
and the story as told from
sitting still and watching
the impossibility of perfection

once you have seen
that connection
it's very difficult to unsee it

Greta Ross

Stamp collection, St Petersburg 1997

At the gates to the public park
a man in an army jacket and jeans
precisely centred an old valise
on a fold-out card table
and took out a worn album
“*stamps?*”

beside him a woman in slippers
held out hand-knitted socks
and cracked sunflower seeds between her teeth
while a band in the park played
something patriotic

Judith Wozniak

The Dinner Gong

On the Saturday after payday Mum and I get the bus
to Gants Hill to visit 'Uncles', her name for Lloyds Bank,
then our treat, lunch at the Dinner Gong.

I love the crimson cave of curtained booths
with slithery cold leather banquettes. Wall lights,
in crinoline skirts, dim the light to a rosy glow.

The waitress wears a black dress a tiny apron
and a cake frill hat. She writes our order
with a nub of pencil perched behind her ear.

We always have the roast of the day with
two sorts of potatoes, peas and carrots
served in a shiny silver divided dish.

Once she took me to the new Wimpy Bar
across the road. Burgers wrapped in crinkly paper
squirted with ketchup from an outsized plastic tomato.

My mother buttoned up in her best coat clutching
the clasp of her handbag, with matching gloves,
asked for cutlery in her telephone voice.

The waiter pointed to a fan of paper napkins.
Pink crept up her neck. She was quiet all the way home.
I crossed my fingers, said I preferred the Dinner Gong.

Judith Wozniak

Mirror Image

A mirror from a junk shop
round, gold rococo border,
speckled with age, like a toad.

Spotted when a small spider
scuttled from its web hammock,
slung across an acanthus leaf.

It cost both crisp notes
from my Saturday job.
I so wanted her to like it.

I smuggled it home,
stowed it under the stairs
behind a tangle of brooms.

I watched her reflection, squeeze
the tiny purple tube, a swathe
of cream, the colour of wet plaster,

smudged on her nose.
Cerise lipstick, worn flat,
a swift sweep, licked into place.

Sometimes I pass the mirror
glimpse her face,
eyebrows raised in a question.

POETS BIOGRAPHIES

Dominic Bond

Collette Donne

I grew up in Liverpool and left this city when I was 18 for another city, Vienna, Austria. I lived there for 7 years. In my twenties I returned to the UK and spent many years in Oxford working for the University. I also completed an Access course there and went on to the University of Lancaster as a mature student where I graduated with a BA Hons degree in History. I currently live in Hertfordshire. My affection for poetry has been with me since I was a child. I wrote lots in my teens and more infrequently as an adult. My life's intention is to learn more about poetry through reading and writing, to perfect my aspiration as a poet.

Clair Chilvers

Clair Chilvers was a cancer scientist, and latterly worked for the UK National Health Service. She divides her time between writing and running the charity Mental Health Research UK. She lives in Gloucestershire, UK. She has had poems published in Agenda, Allegro, Amaryllis, Artemis, Atrium, the Ekphrastic Review, Impspired, Ink Sweat and Tears, the Poetry Atlas, Poetry Kit's Plague Year Anthology, Sarasvati and Snakeskin. Her poems have been longlisted or commended in the Cinnamon Press Pamphlet Prize 2020, and Poetry Kit Competition 2020. www.clairchilverspoetry.co.uk

A C Clarke's

A C Clarke's fifth collection is *A Troubling Woman*. She was a winner in the Cinnamon 2017 pamphlet competition with *War Baby*. *Drochaid* (Tapsalteerie), with Maggie Rabatski and Sheila Templeton, was published last year. She is working on poems about Gala Éluard/Dalí and her circle.

Sheila Lockhart

Sheila Lockhart is a retired social worker and lives on the Black Isle in the Scottish Highlands with her partner and two Icelandic horses, tending her garden and writing poetry. She is a member of Ross-shire Writers and the Moniack Mhor writers' group and has had work published by *Northwords Now*, *Arachne Press*, *Nine Muses Poetry*, *Twelve Rivers* (*Suffolk Poetry Society*), the *StAnza Poetry Map of Scotland*, *The Writers' Cafe* and the *Ekphrastic Review*.

Audrey McIlvain

Audrey McIlvain is a relative newcomer to the world of poetry after a hectic career in education, teacher training, music teaching, publishing, and consultancy work for various universities and the British Council, both in the U.K. and overseas (Spain, Mexico, South Africa, Slovenia, Chile).

She has always enjoyed poetry and gained a Masters Degree in Creative Writing (online) with Manchester Metropolitan University in 2017.

She has published many educational articles, seven books for children, a self-help book for the elderly, and a first collection of poetry, *Hold On a Minute*. She also won the category she entered in the national WW1 poetry competition, 'Whispers of War' and her work has appeared in *Ink, Sweat and Tears*.

Her interests include singing, playing the piano and art.

Kriss Nichol

Maria North

Maria North is a retired psychotherapist who was happy to move from London to Lincoln three years ago. She has always loved finding clarity in writing, whether creative, academic, or work-related. She has ventured into self-publishing, and had a leaflet published with Poetry Kit.

Mandy Pannett

Mandy Pannett works freelance as a creative writing tutor. Five poetry collections and two novellas have been published. A new collection *Crossing the Hinge* is due to be published autumn 2020 by KFS Press.

Shiela Roe

Shiela Roe has been writing poems for many years. She has an M.A. in Creative Writing. She lives in Cheshire.

Judith Wozniak

Judith Wozniak spent her working life as a GP. Her poems have recently appeared in *Ink Sweat & Tears*, *The Poetry Shed*, *The Cardiff Review*, *Reach*, *South* and *These are the Hands* NHS Anthology. She won first prize in the Hippocrates Competition 2020. Her pamphlet *Patient Watching*, is forthcoming with the Hedgehog Press.