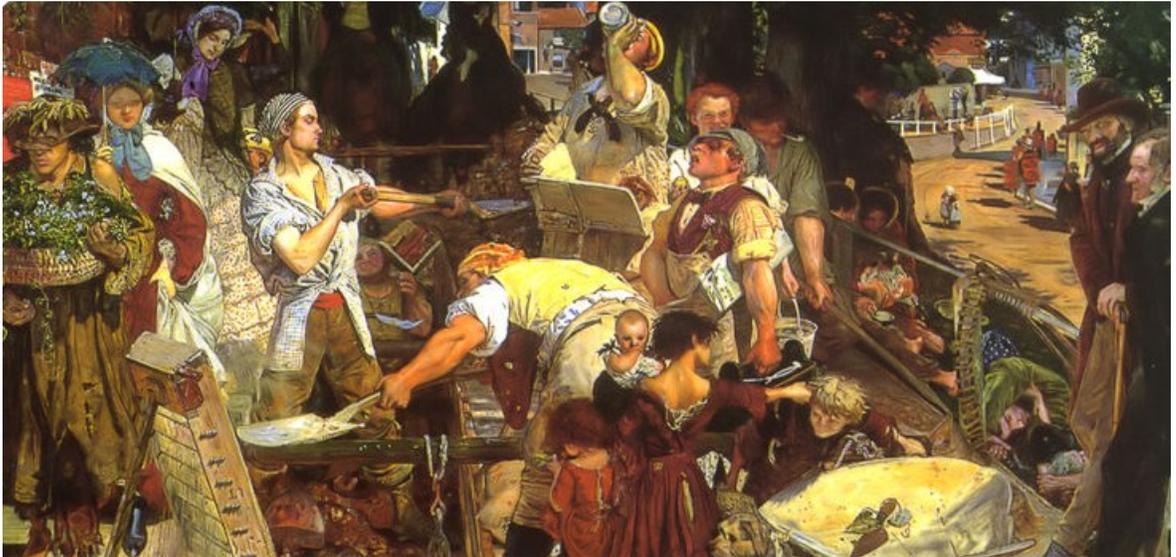


piece WORK



POETRY ANTHOLOGY
Edited by Jim Bennett

**piece
WORK**



**A poetry anthology by the PK Community of Poets
For UK National Poetry Day 9th October 2008**

Edited by Jim Bennett

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ISBN 1873761 60 3

ISBN 978-1-873761-50-2

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication data.

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.

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Cover picture is a detail from the painting

WORK by FORD MADOX BROWN

Manchester Art Gallery

CONTENTS

| | | |
|--------------------|--|----------------|
| JAMES BELL | FROM RUSSIA TO MISS MONEYPENNY WORKING AT ENNUI | 6 7 |
| JIM BENNETT | CLOWN DRY STONE WALLS | 8 9 |
| BOB COOPER | JOHN AT THE SHIELDFIELD GARAGE | 10 |
| WAIATA DAWN DAVIES | THE SAILOR | 11 |
| SALLY EVANS | DEADLINES | 12 |
| SALLY JAMES | FIRST INJECTION IN THE DEPTHS BACK TO BACK | 13 14 15 |
| PHILIP JOHNSON | BEACON MOTHERS LITTLE HELPER | 16 17 |
| GOL McADAM | BIRDIE THE COLLIER | 18 19 |
| MICK MOSS | AS IF | 20 |
| MANDY PANNETT | CORREGGIO IN THE GREENHOUSE | 21 |
| SHERRY PASQUARELLO | 24/7 | 22 |
| BARBARA PHILLIPS | GIG GANGS | 23 |
| MICHELLE V. POZAR | WORKING GIRL WORKING MIND | 24 24 |
| CAROL SIRCOULOMB | THREE HAIKU | 25 |
| TAMMARA OR SLILAT | STILL LIFE WITH POMEGRANATES | 26 |
| KAREN STANLEY | WORK | 27 |
| CONTRIBUTORS | | 28 |

JAMES BELL

FROM RUSSIA TO MISS MONEYPENNY

Well who knows where anything will lead Money Penny,
should we ever depart from our set piece on this film set
where our flirtations take place for only minutes each time.

We have grown to know what unscripted dreams there are –
how things would really be if you dared to leave
the desk and intercom that M listens into all the time.

You know other women will be gone when the mission is done;
your fight though is an undeclared cold war that conflicts
with how you love the danger in a man who couldn't care less.

Those minutes are your adventure, without penetration on or off screen.
In any other office situation our meeting would only be work
and we the mere ciphers to be encoded into pension funds.

Here, on film, the ordinary cannot touch us with misinformation.
Ciao! Money Penny – remember we live more than twice.

JAMES BELL

WORKING AT ENNUI

He is easy in his groove, you just can't see it,
as easy as patterns made by the sun,
there's no conversational tone below the words;
it's a case of what you see is what you get.

As easy as patterns made by the sun -
another entity that may never mature with work.
It's a case of what you see is what you get
and what is left shows very little in daylight.

Another entity that may never mature with work
for as the cliché says it's another can of worms
and what is left shows very little in daylight.
If the sun doesn't shine it makes no difference

for as the cliché says it's another can of worms
clocked up by the years as they amble on.
If the sun doesn't shine it makes no difference,
a crust of bread is enough as is a roof overhead

clocked up by the years as they amble on.
There's no conversational tone below the words,
a crust of bread is enough as is a roof overhead.
He is easy in his groove, you just can't see it.

JIM BENNETT

CLOWN

today I decided to go to work
as a clown

round red nose
baggy hoop trousers
oversized shoes
rouge cheeks
thick painted eyebrows

large squirting flower
in the multi patched coat lapel

people said
you're a clown
and I had to agree

all day I pulled sad faces
as people tried to tell me
their stories
I pointed at my eye
and the track my
painted tear would take

but there is no point in being a clown
clowns don't help anyone
not even themselves
and a lot of people were frightened
when they saw me

tomorrow I am going to
work as someone else
Batman perhaps
after all
anything is better
than being me

JIM BENNETT

DRY STONE WALLS

walls snake up hills
cutting shapes out of the land --
padocks for grazing sheep
areas for new growth
statements of ownership

the land was open
grazed and trodden
untill the wallbuilders
took stone from the hillsides
flat on flat curves on hollow
filling voids and space
with practiced eye

the walls grew spaces
for gates styles
and crossing points

and capped
with the weight of millennia
the walls stand
an impossible labour

BOB COOPER

JOHN AT THE SHIELDSFIELD GARAGE

A glance seems enough as he bends, unscrews the airfilter,
prods with a finger – *Fetch a half cup of petrol* – pours.

Start it again – a spurt – then he spits, wipes his eyes, swears.

Cleaning hands he explains a lazy fuel pump – *and
your carburettor, the jet's the width of a darning needle,
doesn't block, just needs time. Or prime it, see?*

He accepts we sometimes keep running on empty, likes his trannie
loud as he works – *ALL YOU NEED IS LOVE, LOVE* – he sings
as the bonnet's pressed shut, and the body rocks slightly,
and all that he's touched still trembles, hums.

WAIATA DAWN DAVIES

THE SAILOR

The day he turned eighteen
he sailed out of Liverpool
on a corvette that nipped
at the heels of slow tramps,
shepherding them to Boston.

He listened to the sounds of radio
silence, the breath of the Atlantic,
the beat of ships' engines and
the wolf pack stalking.

All that time he was cold, wet,
hungry and frightened, except
for one week in Barbados where
they picked up a convoy, carrying
sugar so beleaguered Britons
could sweeten their rationed tea.

There he bought a gift for his mother,
guarded it back to 'the Pool'
and stepped ashore past piles
of rubble which had been warehouses.
Tired people in drab austerity smiled
to see the young sailor heading
through shattered streets, sea bag on shoulder
carrying a great bunch of bananas, lush and
gold on that grey Liverpool day.

SALLY EVANS

DEADLINES

For me, she said, to work has been
to hunt the next word and the next,
the saying, sequel, poem or book,
mine or others': words sought out
in a thesaurus or my head,
or sought in broken dictionaries,
or dialect wrought from some old man
with questions when I hear him wheeze
his Scots, Devonian or cant.

True I have slaved at stoves and desks,
fed fantasies and banks, been seen
in galleries, streets and offices
and tried to marshal facts or faces
not for my own ends, but for others',
dead-end lifelines in shop or club.
But everywhere I worked were words,
those that enabled, those that barred,
those that consoled and understood.

Some merely amused or entertained.
Some showed the lengths that words could go,
the heights they'd climb, printed or spread
across the internet, or said
on radio and stage, in bed.
Words are my people, words my home
yet somehow, sometimes we are fed
among these deadlines where I work.
I know my words are others' bread.

SALLY JAMES

FIRST INJECTION

It was the glass syringes I remember,
the intramuscular needles
and the drawing up of liquid
from ampoules cold from the fridge
the smell of methylated spirits
lingering in the air and the wince
when the needle went deep into
the muscle. The upper outer quadrant
of the buttock was the place to inject
we were told. We practiced on oranges
at first, grimaced when we lied
we had done this many times before.
We were student nurses
straight from training school
in starched aprons and caps,
black stockings, lace up shoes
and orange juice still on our fingers.

SALLY JAMES

IN THE DEPTHS

Underneath this earth
where roads heave
and sway with today's
mechanisation
men tunnelled
for yesterday's fuel.
The sweat of old men
cells of young skin
mixed with coal dust, salt,
unexplained blood
and droppings from
pit ponies weary with work.
Iron girders rust in the deep
along with wrecks of wagons
rail tracks and wheels
seams fold and twist
in ancient forests
and the bones
of a linnet crumble.

SALLY JAMES

BACK TO BACK

I can imagine them now
coarse red fingers flat caps
loose trousers with strong belts
leaning on their shovels
strong tea in tin cupped hands
cigarettes full strength
clenched in nicotine teeth
waiting to lay new bricks
for old houses
two up two down
in the shadow of a mill
the shudder of the weaving shed
their noisy neighbour.

PHILIP JOHNSON

BEACON

Head like a

beacon

harnesses words

mulls them

over

unites them

makes sentences

breaks em

up

Like a printer with his pasteboard

wordsmith

word

smith

words

myth

rhyme

PHILIP JOHNSON

MOTHER'S LITTLE HELPER

It was a song of the Rolling Stones in the chart
at the time

our teacher asked what chores we did to earn our keep at home.

We never really considered the house
or domestic needs before.

This was pre Bob the Builder and so it was something I had to resolve
without serving any form of apprenticeship.

Having washed the pots down the toilet I looked at the windows
and the soot fallen from the chimneys at ICI which covered them

Why, with a cloth, just wipe it off today knowing it will all be back
again tomorrow when, with a good stiff yard brush,

the glass and all could be cleared?

GOL McADAM

BIRDIE

6 to 2 2 to 10 10 to 6
the shifts he worked were
the first dividers of my life.

Wire grey hair,
a bread eater,
orphaned aged nine,
known as Birdie,
Herbert on Sundays.

Heavy tweed overcoat,
jaunty trilby hat,
brown shoes,
tartan muffler,
daily paper,
football pools,
a bob each way
at the bookies.

6 to 2
we afternooned in the park.

2 to 10
we morninged at the shops.

10 to 6
we piggy-backed to bed.

Him, a tartan scarfed orphan
decanted to my grandfather:
me, still wearing the scarf, the
posthumous docking of his ship.

GOL McADAM (after Seamus Heaney)

THE COLLIER

There was a twilight respite
the long shadows on the road
dragging the night
a darkling pool

to swamp the pit of day
and the moon rose
like a pale patch of self
in the blackness

of each short evening.
Then, his hand rattled
on the door catch,
and the gas-lit room

sent its flare of home
to wrap him where he stood
in the open door
before entering.

Now nodding approval
he downs his meal,
now sits, wide-legged,
in the dirt of work

with a full pipe:
this is his space,
where cot and clock shove him
to the next grinding shift.

And here is grief
like a cornet blast
repeated off-key
in the mine's band.

MICK MOSS

AS IF

'Get a job' she said
'Do something useful
something productive.
It's all very well being
an *artist*
but that's not real work.
That doesn't contribute
to the GNP.
That won't provide jobs,
help people get out of debt,
settle their bills or
rise above the poverty trap.
It's time you took
responsibility.'

I thought about it

and took a job
in a bank.

MANDY PANNETT

CORREGGIO IN THE GREENHOUSE

Summer leaves are poked by sun.
Courgettes dangle low upon the ground.

Tomatoes limp in rows of duos, trios or
the occasional one. Aubergines,
too hot in purple, sweat
in heat of glass.

Tendrils by the skylight twist, arch back
upon themselves. Renaissance painters, they
would bend the world.

Within the tambour of the dome, Correggio worked
his magic space, hid golden shadows
in a fold of cloth.

With heaven's own vault in a cupola bowl
angels flew into the light.

How did he feel when the sky grew grey,
up on his ledge with his chalk and his brush,
dabbing at stars and a figure so small
it could scarcely be seen?

Hot sun fades as the day slows down.
Greenhouses chill in the shade.

Tendrils of creepers unwind.

SHERRY PASQUARELLO

24/7

build it up
tear it down
blow it up, build it
better
dig holes
fill them in
dig them again, deeper
plant seeds
pull weeds up
plant more, plow
under
living is
work
hard labor
a life sentence
no parole
no appeal

BARBARA PHILLIPS

GIG GANGS

my father would come home
after gigs with his railway gang
throw his bundle into a corner
saying he would get to it
and then he sat at the kitchen table
lit up a cigarette and stared for hours
into visions he would not share
one hot day when the gang
was close to home in Capreol
I took a fresh thermos of hot
bitter tea made just the way
he liked it and walked towards
the sound of steel on iron
beating out of time through

hammers menacing the air
before they came down
hard on spikes smelling of
tar and oil and despair
the men's hunched shoulders
gleamed goldbrown burdened
by preparation for the iron

horse that would come chugging
smoke across skies and pines
its gigantic wheels clattered
thunder into the earth
set floors in homes to shaking
window panes into trembling
for china that quaked on dustless shelves

the men swung their hammers wide
and called to each other
come on boys there's work to be done
the missus needs flour for flapjacks
the kids need shoes and we
need a drink and some cigs
won't be long now before quitting time

heads of spikes shone clean next to rails
chrome polished by sun for the locomotive
going to cities where men in leather soled
shoes smoked cigars sipped fine brandy
followed stock quotes bragged about weekends
they would be wilderness bound on trains that tore
up rails, took thrill seekers out of town

MICHELLE V. POZAR

WORKING GIRL

She walked the streets
some called it work
some called it illegal
she called it a pain in the ass
sometimes literally
it paid the bills

WORKING MIND

Awake or asleep my head keeps working
thoughts tumble out of mind effortlessly
looking for spaces to fill
I accommodate my brain cells and write
wondering if 'the end' will ever come
the realization of what wouldn't be strikes me
'Essence' wouldn't roam underground looking for his true self
there would be no 'Thunderbolt' time travel subway to ride
the 'Cabin Killer' wouldn't be stalking his next victim
and 'Tobias Tinkle' would have never been born to pee on the kitchen floor
if my mind hadn't worked

CAROL SIRCOULOMB

THREE HAIKU

tired of long hours
the baby screams alone
her mother weeps

his feet swell
unable to stand longer
nursing home rehab

empty eyes
he strains for oxygen
my fathers breath

TAMMARA OR SLILAT

STILL LIFE WITH POMEGRANATES

Be still, watch:
Crimson and cadmium red
pomegranates set against
cascading ivory cloth, an old bottle
of wine in phtalocynine emerald green
and a leafy bough to bring the diagonal
uplifting energy to the composition.

We're so used to seeing that we've stopped
looking. This is what I want you to do:
forget everything you know, everything
you believe to be
true. Knowing depends
on the point of Perception: change that
and you've changed the world.

When you put your brush to the canvas
focus not on what is
there, but rather on what is not.
Objects are defined by the empty space
around them, just as people
are remembered not only
by their deeds, but also by what
they neglected, or forgot

KAREN STANLEY

WORK

In the office, work is punctuated
with visits to the loo,
or prohibited e-mails
that foretell impending doom
(or luck), if you don't (or do)
send them to a zillion friends,
so you spend the rest of the day
cruising your contacts folder.

Work is interrupted by stolen moments
at the water cooler, or watching
through the window, precious glints
of sun spark off a giant crystal spider.
(surreal or what – but true!)

At home, the cat's miaow
disrupts me washing dishes –
it's raining again and my dried hands
dry her wet fur, then re-submerge
in soapy water – rainbows
glow on floating suds.

Later, studying on the PC
a shower of hail perforates
my concentration. My world
seems to be a place where work
is desultory and slipped in slyly.

If only.

Contributors

James Bell

Was born in Scotland and has lived and worked for many years in Devon and gains great inspiration from the local rural land and riverscapes. He has released a CD of his poetry and original guitar music called "O'Grady and Mount Fuji". Apart from being published widely in magazines he has been a PK Featured Poet and contributed to Transparent Words. A first collection, "the just vanished place", will appear in 2008 from Tall Lighthouse.

Jim Bennett

Lives near Liverpool in the UK and is the managing editor of www.poetrykit.org. His most recent publication is a poetry collection called "The Man Who Tried To Hug Clouds" by Bluechrome Publishing 2004 (2nd edition 2005). Jim teaches Creative Writing at the University of Liverpool and tours throughout the year giving readings and performances of his work.

Bob Cooper

See: <http://www.arrowheadpress.co.uk/books/allwe.html>

Waiata Dawn Davies

Was married to the sailor in her poem for forty four years and now lives alone at the mouth of the Waitaki River, New Zealand.

Sally Evans

Sally Evans lives in Callander, Scotland. She is an active poet on the internet and in print. Her books include Bewick walks to Scotland and the Bees. Her website is <http://groups.msn.com/desktopsallye> She is the editor of the paper broadsheet Poetry Scotland, which also has a website on www.poetryscotland.co.uk

Sally James

I have an MA in creative writing from Bolton University. I write in both standard English and Lancashire dialect. I also write children's poetry. I have had poems published in various anthologies and small press magazines and read on local radio. I have four grown up children, grandchildren, one great grandchild, and two dogs.
website www.sallyjames.co.uk

Philip Johnson

Diagnosed with Crohn's Disease 1982. Resection Op April 82 and again April 2006. I am presently employed as a Senior Care assistant / Care Team Leader.

The spark of inspiration can come from anywhere at any hour for me - from people watching to things I hear or read or even in the middle of the night (suppose events must sometimes be mulling in my subconscious before outpouring). By far my best work is written spontaneously.

Achievements to date:

Work published by Poetry Now, Anchor Poets, North West Disabled Writers Group, Mid Cheshire Writers Group, Cheshire Carers Centre Newsletter, National Assc for Colitis & Crohn's Disease newsletters, local, regional and 1 national newspapers.

Poetry Kit CD Project for Voices 2007:

<http://fizbang1.users.btopenworld.com/pkcd2007.html>

Gol McAdam

Gol McAdam lives in Yorkshire and Kent. She has a PhD in Cultural Studies and an MA in Creative Writing. Her poems have appeared in a range of journals and anthologies. Other writings include academic texts, fiction and radio drama.

Mick Moss

www.emc2.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk

Mandy Pannett

Mandy Pannett has lived in Kent, Wales, London and Sussex where she has spent several years teaching English to pupils with a wide range of abilities including special needs. She also leads creative writing workshops for children and adults in various parts of the country and enjoys taking part in poetry readings of her own and other poets' work. She runs an Arts Cafe in East Sussex and is involved in working with local writing groups, advising on and leading many sessions on poetry appreciation and writing. Her first collection of poems *Boy's Story* was issued on CD with original music between some of the poems. This told the story of an imaginary servant boy growing up in medieval Ludlow. Two further collections of her poetry – *Bee Purple* and *Frost Hollow* – have been published by Oversteps Books and her work has been widely published in magazines such as *Tears in the Fence*, *Fire*, *Osiris*, *The Journal*, *Envoi*, *The Interpreter's House*, *Coffee House*, *Other Poetry*, *South*, *Cadenza* and online in *Nth Position* and *Ink-Sweat-and-Tears*.

<http://www.poetrypf.co.uk/mandypannettpage.html>

<http://www.overstepsbooks.com/> (go to Oversteps Poets/Mandy Pannett)

Sherry Pasquarello

I am a poet from Pittsburgh Pennsylvania. I have been writing since the 60's and have been published in: the individualist newsletter, black roses, online at, the amateur poetry journal, alchemy lit. mag, the writer's hood and caught in the net. a member of the international PK poetry kit list workshop and has been included in the anthology project, dec. 2004 and in national poetry day projects, recently in, four volts. uk. pk#10 and the picolata review. a list administrator for the PK list. featured poet PK June'07 #20.

my blog is - www.afterthebridge.blogspot.com which is an eclectic mix of poetry and life, with the occasional guest. I am also a member of the pittsburgh woman's blogging society.

Barbara Phillips

Barbara Phillips is also the author of *Tympanic Mysteries: Love Is A Tympanic Mystery*, *Shadows In The Echoes*, *Confessions Of A Sybaritic Puritan*, *Blue Sails Haiku & Not*, and *Gold Fish Sings Cherry Blossom Songs*. Her work has been published as well in various print and electronic publications, such as *Transparent Words*, *Caught In The Net*, *Ygdrasil A Journal of The Poetic Arts*, *Poemata*, *Verse Afire*, *Quills Canadian poetry Magazine*, *Canadian Writer's Journal*, *Poetry Canada Magazine*, *Malleable Jangle*, *Hammered Out*, *Bywords Quarterly Journal*, *Zimmerzine*, *Poetry Super Highway*, *Writer's Hood*, and *Ottaw Arts Review*. Her work has appeared in anthologies such as *Oval Victory: The Best of Canadian Poetry*, *A Time Of Trial: Beyond The Terror of 9/11*, *No Love Lost*, *EOA And West: London Poems Part II*, *Seeds6: An Anthology of Poetry*, and *Handprints On The Future*. She has been a featured poet and was a recipient of the Ted Plantos Memorial Seed Money Fund.

Michelle V. Pozar

A former substance abuse counselor grew up in a mill town at the base of the Cascade Mountains in Oregon's South Willamette Valley. Between her love of human nature and its expression, she continuously seeks to delve deeper into life's anomalies. She has been featured as an op-editor in Seattle-area papers. Her first Flash fiction piece "Twisted" appeared in *The Rose & Thorn Literary Ezine* in the Autumn 2006 issue.

<http://www.theroseandthornezine.com/Fall06/Twisted.html>

She is currently working on a psychological thriller that is due to be completed in early 2009. Her poetry is her relaxation between chapters. She participated in the PK's NPD project last year with her contribution of 'Discarded Remains'.

<http://www.poetrykit.org/pkp/npd2007/index.htm>

Tammara Or Slilat

Tammara Or Slilat, 48, poet, painter, healer. Lives in Moshav Arbel, Israel, divorced, 2 daughters, 3 dogs and a cat. Teaches English in Bikat Kinarot High school in Kibutz Beit Zera. Published 2 books of poems in Hebrew. Received the Jordan Valley Creativity Award in 2004. Currently studying in Bar Ilan University for MA in English Literature and Creative Writing.

Karen Stanley

The wrong side of forty, but the right side of ninety – I started writing poetry when Blue Peter had just started out, but I lapsed a bit. I enrolled on one of Jim Bennett's on-line poetry courses, which brought home how much I loved playing with words, and it triggered me off writing again. But while taking part in Jim's course, he introduced me to the wonderful PK list, and I haven't stopped writing since. Although I work full time, poetry is a passion I don't want to lose now I've found it. Most of my poetry is naff, but the helpful comments from fellow PK'ers have helped me improve a few of them, and more importantly, the friendly atmosphere on the list has encouraged me to keep writing. I have had 7 poems shortlisted on the Guardian newspaper's on-line poetry workshop, and 2 poems have appeared on Loch Raven Review. I've still got a long way to go before I get to be as good as I would like, but I'm enjoying the journey.