

Truce

CBS

I will sit
With this empty morning
The fog clearing steadily
From my tupperware head
The steam rising reluctantly
From my coffee cup
Watching it unfurl
Like fern fronds
Tightly bound

I had designs
Of conquering
This day
But today the world
Is stillness
It appears
Neither of us
Have stomach
For the fight

So we sit
Together in silence
Wary still - yet
Content somehow
In the other's company
Grateful
For the sunrise
Happy
Simply to exist



Chris is a poet and spoken worder based in Bristol who doesn't like writing about himself, particularly in the third person.

I work in a special needs school as an LSA, love playing sport; especially cricket and football and sometimes when I'm not being lazy I make art and write things. My life goal is to save the world."

Peace Lily

Beth Calverley

In the kitchen
with its window - a sheet
of unmade sky,
she slumps in her pot,
limp, dramatic, all joy lost
to the anxious night.

Go on, move: pour her a glass
from the tap, wet her throat,
and turn to drink one too.

The earth, a hot,
compacted headache,
breaks its grip.

Look round - hello!
that was quick!
She's up, dressed, ready to live.
All her loving fingers reach.

Another instant and my face
is in her body,
my hands on the table,
a prayer of green.

You'll find me like this,
at the halt of the world,
bent double into endless leaves,
breathing in peace.

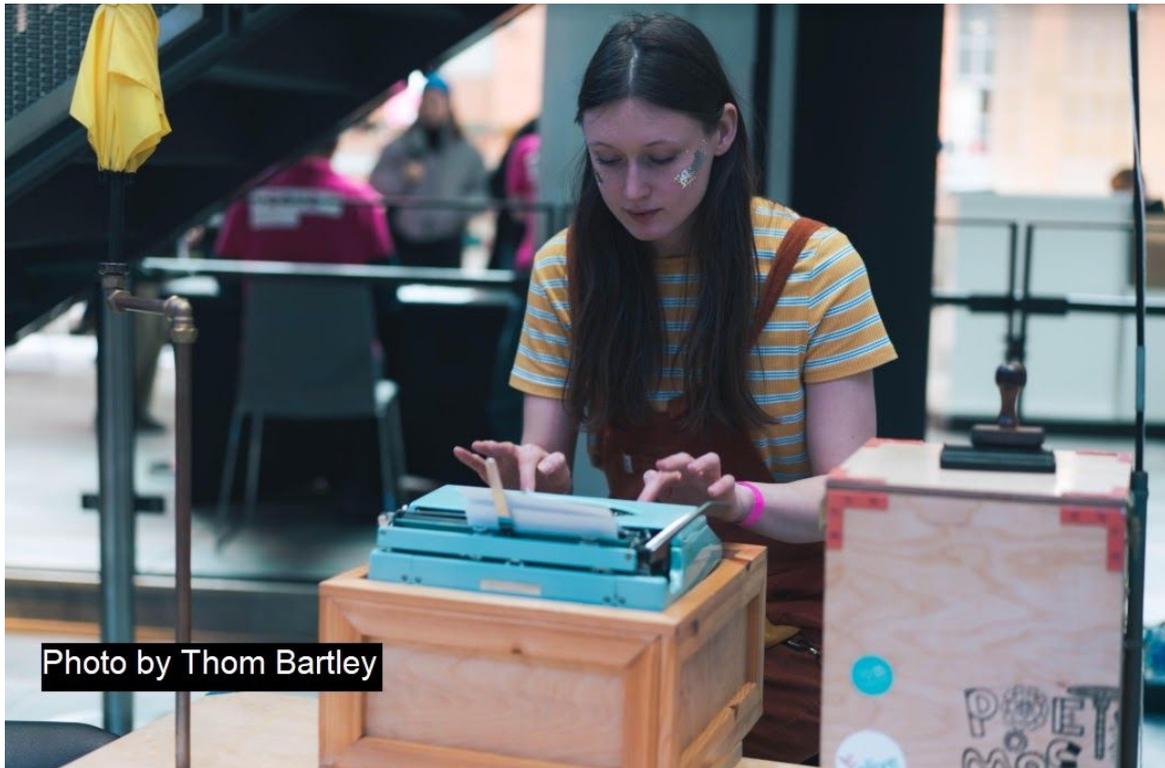


Photo by Thom Bartley

Hello! My name is Beth - I am a poet, workshop leader and founder of The Poetry Machine. I co-create poems with people, live in the moment, on my vintage typewriter. I have a theatrical wheel-along 'machine' that I take to events - it always sparks people's curiosity with its bright yellow umbrella, bubble engine and flagpole!

I love helping people to express thoughts and feelings through creativity. The best part is when people tell me that they haven't ever really felt that poetry was for them but The Poetry Machine made it feel meaningful in a new way. I feel super lucky to be doing this as my job and although the current situation means I can't work as much (I work mainly in hospitals, schools, charities and festivals where there are lots of people!) I am pleased to be able to spend some time writing new poems like the one below.

I wrote this poem about the Peace Lily in my kitchen - sometimes, when it all gets a bit much, I hold one of her 'hands' or put my whole face into her leaves and it helps to calm me down! Hope you enjoy it :) if you want to find out more about my work, head to www.thepoetrymachine.live

It Only Took a Few Days of Silence for Me to Notice

Lara Mersom

It only took a few days of silence for me to notice/
that my bedroom clock had stopped ticking / that I've been doing less
talking and more listening / things are normally too loud / for me to sit
and pay attention / it takes a certain patience to listen to time / and
notice it's faint mimicking of an unfamiliar steady heart beat / i'm used to
the heaviness of days ticked off the calendar / & a future that's too
unknown / busy lending the only mornings that i have with you to
overthinking / & checking my phone first thing / ignoring the fact that you
have not been sleeping / whilst time has been looming silently over your
shoulders / i tell you / i've been holding onto pictures of your past lovers /
placing them on top of one another / & tracing their outlines / i am not
proud to confess that i sometimes draw myself onto them / I want to call
you up / tell you that it only took a few days of silence for me to notice /
that my bedroom clock had stopped ticking / that you have grey in your
hair / that there's a tiredness creeping in around your eyes / I want to let
you know that I think you might sleep better / now that I've hung up that
picture of you and I / all wide eyed and smiling / twenty years from now.



I am that person that has a bedroom floor littered with books & disappears at gatherings to hide in my bedroom to write about how great my friends are. You can sometimes find me typing on the typewriter that you probably assumed was a decorative piece, whilst donning a man's shirt that I thrifted in Paris. I will probably write poetry about you if you give me a book and write in the front of it or if you just tell me that Attenborough would be proud of my Parisian shirt.

GRASS STAINS

Taran Spalding-Jenkin

**They don't teach us how everyone's palette is different
I find solace in the green and blue
To me, they are one and the same
The leaves on the trees and summer seas
Speak the same quiet language
In joyful tones
Learned from Adam's clay filled ribs
Terracotta coffee hugs in the first light of the earth
From which all things grow**

**To me,
A storm is as green as nettle
Sharp, to be respected like an elder
But in the doc leaf of blankets
Inoculated against the buzz
Thunder is an old friend letting me know he is still alive
He is dog fur warmth in my skylit mug
Reassuring in its gravity
Like a bungee jump
Or an all clear**

**Lightning strikes me as a bluebottle
Prism glinting carapace of light
Fizzing over with too short life
Not long enough to hit twice
It only looks white, in the same way my clothes seem black
But are really
Really
Dark green**

**My mum insists on natural fibres
In them I am one hundred percent cotton
I am an air sign floating on the peaks of my smile
Which stick to my stubbled cheeks like fluff
They show me the sun of grass stained knees
Of football fields and village greens**

**Of shorts through bramble thickets and sandals through rock pools
There's a reason solar panels are blue like hope
Like washing on the line**



Dydh da! That's 'good day' in Cornish, (pronounced di-th dah). My name is Taran, a writer and poet from Cornwall, and as I write this I am watching gusts of wind blow the pink flowers of the camellia around outside my bedroom window. It is windy, but quite sunny, and reminds me of childhood weekends in the garden. I haven't been writing much recently, but the poem I've sent for you is brand new and written with the sun in mind. I hope you feel the warmth on your face when you read it. I am about to embark on a big project with other artists from all over western Europe, including Irish, Freise, Basque, Welsh, Scottish and Cornish! We start online meetings soon and will create a show to be performed in Galway in September. Perhaps I will be able to share some of the resulting work with you? I hope you are keeping well and taking care of yourself. I'll leave you with a Cornish toast to good health to keep you going until next time:- Yeghes da! (Yeh-hes dah!).

**All the best,
Taran Spalding-Jenkin**

Skibbereen

Kathryn O'Driscoll

**Take me to your great wide somewhere,
behind old tins of magnolia emulsion paint
and ancestors, all expired,
take me back to where you set your face to the sunrise
and show me everything that fell out of your pockets before the flood.
I want to see how alike we are
in retracing a fence post you touched for luck on Sunday's
or a shortcut to the local
or a good hideout for kissing or pretending to be bears -
I never knew your face lit up with childhood joy
palm up with a pebble, a frog and a shilling,
but I remember all those days you gave me everything you had on you
including the coat from your bones
and the prayers from your lips
and made my days blister with the warmth of your love.**



Hi there, my name's Kate. I'm currently in isolation with my amazing partner Kasha, and our labrador-cross Laika. So I'm very lucky. I hope you're doing okay. I have spent a lot of time in my house (almost a decade in total) due to health reasons so I know it can be hard. The important thing to remember is that nothing lasts forever. If you are struggling to deal with the weeks, or days ahead, then just focus on the next 3 minutes. I promise you, if you do that enough times over, the days will look after themselves. All you have to do today is survive. It's all any of us have to do. So be kind to yourself, yeah? Cos the person who printed this off for you, or downloaded it for you, or sent it to you, or put it together for you (Thanks, Sam), wants you to know you're not alone. And you're not.

Love, Kate x

Indisposed to Spring

Cat Brown

Freshly flared horse parsley, leaves of bramble.
The raw scent of spice and untrodden balm.
Virgin wild chervil before flower, spic and span.
Early purple orchids nodding with coy chat.
Celestines like first stars, bombarding the
shelter of the guileless new woodland ground.

Wall to wall, a fresh breach of wild garlic,
full round yet ruptured, redolent with scent.
Jack by the hedge peppered with vigor and zing.
I am bound to breathe in all of this, and
lift my vim full lungs, so unseasoned my draught,
the lords and ladies of my reluctant heart.

And just out, spotted dead nettle stars dance
to mother-die with amethyst pizzazz.
The current go for life, a gust of give,
with wood sorrel and yellow archangel
crushed in hand. The vault of youthful rush clips
from this dewy, deafening hem and haw kiss.

