

The background of the cover is a dense, textured arrangement of various objects. At the top, there are many small, round, colorful beads in shades of blue, green, yellow, red, and white. Below these, there are larger, more varied items including buttons of different shapes and colors (white, black, gold, silver), and several coins, some of which are clearly identifiable as British pence coins. The overall composition is rich and detailed, suggesting a theme of mystery or discovery.

Enigma

Magazine

Issue 5

Summer 2010

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Editor: Susan Gray

Graphic Designer: Jorge Ba-Oh

Cover Design: Linda Ravenswood

Editorial/Business Address:

41 Floral Street, London, WC2E 9DG

Phone: 020 7836 7399

Fax: 020 7836 2286

E-mail: editor@enigmacw.co.uk

Website: www.enigmacw.co.uk

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EDITOR'S NOTE

We welcome an unusually warm summer this year as well as a range of fresh and exciting material hot off the press, all beautifully covered by Linda Ravenswood's lovely photography – we showcase the works of Covent Garden's Poet in Residence, Inua Ellams and Sarah Ismail brings into discussion a very thought provoking issue of "Disablism". Racism and sexism is a huge part of our daily lives and measures are taken into place to stop these, whilst discrimination and prejudice against disabled people go on unnoticed. Her Ebook, Listen to the Silence, is her collection of poetry that can be seen at www.samedifference1.com, a creative response to this.

We've been receiving more MP3s for online and will be updating the website shortly with more material! Enigma Magazine offers a multi media experience and so would like to grace your ears and eyes with all the fresh and seasoned talent everyone has to offer.

At the moment we've been slowly breaking in to print again – with blurb versions of Enigma Issue 3 created and Issue 4 will follow suit.

First issue past our yearly four – I'm so proud to see Enigma pass this point: we've covered such issues as publishing in the electronic industry and the rise of a whole new tidal wave of voices in the writers of tomorrow, to spoken word and new resolutions for the creative industry. Our aims to publish all backgrounds and all ages, as well as bring to attention different creative topics and strategies in modern life have continued for over a year now and I look forward to compiling and reading more of your submissions!

Kind regards,

Susan Gray

Editor of Enigma Magazine

www.enigmacw.co.uk

Please send submissions, suggestions and/or questions to editor@enigmacw.co.uk. Information is also available on the website at www.enigmacw.co.uk.

I offer you the gift of language, my gift
And no more, so that wherever you go
Words fall around you meaning no more
Than the full force of their making, and you
Translate the clicking of teeth against
Teeth and tongue as morning light spilling
Into the enclosed square of a seaside town,
Breath drawn in and held as the ocean
When no one sees it, the waves still,
The fishing boats drift in a calm beyond sleep.

DM/MW/01

REFLECTIONS

Drops tossed from the oar
In
My childhood, move mountains
On the surface of Coniston Water.
And now I too dip lightly
Through City street faces
Half seen glancesadrift in my wake
I paddle a succession of beds
In strange rooms observing the silence of mountains.

DM/R/02

My exposed hand begins to ache.
My other rattles the keys in my pocket.

The ground is littered with seeds from an ash,
Exclamations without a point --

This is my hand on your shoulder.

This is the other side, the space
That's given and taken at once.

Space to be arranged like chairs,
Easy chairs in front of a flat screen TV.

Space that's room like the separate rooms
Where we live and open our books, our mouths

To someone who's always someone else
On the other side of the space, the air we breathe.

DM/LN/03

On Saturdays in summer the sounds of lawnmowers harmonise.
A random weave of metallic notes scored in the style
Of Steve Reich or John Cage. Ken next door
Has been doing the street's verge voluntarily for years:
His is a Hitachi model (with hints of Shankar and Hendrix).
We use a Husqvana Mark One and its notes are precise
Though slightly Texas Chainsaw which scares the cats. Anjo
Across the road, who does everything there herself, pushes a Flymo
Which has the lofty hum of a razor or hairdryer:
Ken calls it a woman's machine. Peter from around the corner
Uses a clunky red thing that sounds like a Glockenspiel;
He did my dad's verge last week. Peter's a bit of a control freak
And I think would rather die than watch other people's grass grow.
My dad, who is new to the area, has never pushed a mower
In his life. Not unless you count sheep or cows as he grew up on a farm.
The long and sloping lawn of Coogans requires the sit-down
Variety that sounds like a drum and leaves pale and dark stripes
Like a rugby jersey, except Mr. Coogan, who owns a picture-framing shop,
Is not very visual, and his lines always collapse to a crooked V.
The acoustics rattle the street and all the animals hide
But I find it a comfort listening to my neighbours out in the open
Air making their illogical-sounding folk music.

JM/W/01

An eye on the horizon,
Bloodshot sun.
Red pain
Cracks the earth.

Scarab scrabbles
Ineffectual.
A leathery scuffle
With the dungball
Which settles in its dusty cradle.

Sand scratches.
Dust and hairball
Clog my throat.
Going to choke.
Struggle to breathe.
Wheeze and heave.
Got to get it, cough it,
Hack it
Out.

My eyelid unglues.
Bright air glares through.
It crackles
Like it could set alight.

Tendrils unfurl,
Stretches up,
Loops and curls
From my hand.
My wrist!
It's writhing from my wrist.
Got to get it off!
Pull it, twist it off.

"Hey love, stop it! Don't do that.
Sandra! The lady in bed 18,
She's pulled out her drip again.
She's a right one, her."

IF/D/01

We've stopped at a service station called 'Welcome Break'. We walk in, and sit at the counter.

I tell Harvey we're playing a game: we're pretending that he's my little brother, and that his name is now "Oliver."

"My brother would like a milkshake," I say to the girl behind the counter, whose name is Connie, according to the badge on her right breast.

Connie asks Harvey what flavour he wants, and Harvey says "My name is Oliver, and I want strawberry!"

Connie laughs. I tell Harvey to ask her nicely.

"My name is Oliver, and I want strawberry, please!" says Harvey.

Connie smiles at him and goes to the milkshake machine. I watch her as she takes a cup from the rack above her head, holds it under the tap and pulls the lever. She spots her reflection in the silver surface of the machine, pushes a lock of hair from her eyes and gives herself a quick makeup check.

If only Lisa looked like that...

Connie brings Harvey his milkshake. She smiles at him and says "Do you want a straw with that?"

Harvey nods, and says "yes, please," when I prompt him.

"Drink up, Oliver." I say, taking the straw Connie provides us with, tearing off the paper wrapper and sticking it in Harvey's milkshake. I give Connie the cash and she walks off to serve someone else.

"When are we going to the beach?" Harvey says, sucking at the straw.

"We're halfway there, just another hour or so." We're heading for Bournemouth. I thought I'd spend the day on the beach with him. I don't have much cash, so I can't spoil him like Lisa would, but we'll go on the helter skelter, have ice creams, make sandcastles, that sort of thing. Then we'll check into a hotel. That's as far as the plan goes.

This'll be the most time I've ever spent with him, and the first time I've seen him at all in nearly three months. Lisa's parents had a lot to do with that.

"When are we going to see Mum again?" says Harvey.

"Soon, but me and you are going to spend some time together first. Mum thought she'd give us a few days together, just you and me. Now hurry up, or we'll be too late for the donkey rides."

Harvey's almost halfway through his milkshake already. Connie comes walking past.

"How old are you?" Harvey asks her. Connie looks at me, smiling, and raises her eyebrows.

"Harvey, you shouldn't ask people that," I say.

"Why?"

"Because it's rude."

"Why?"

"It's alright," says Connie, "I'm twenty-one, Harvey, how old are you?"

Harvey holds out his hand, four fingers splayed and his thumb tucked in.

"Four!" he says.

"Wow, aren't you big?"

"You're the same age as my Dad!" says Harvey, pointing at me. My stomach does a swandive. Dammit, Harvey...

"Really?" says Connie, still smiling, though I know she's doing maths in her head.

She looks at me. I look down at the counter, cheeks burning.

"Finished!" says Harvey. Thank God for that, I think.

"I want another one," he says.

He's not getting another one. I've just realised that Connie called him "Harvey" a minute ago.

"Come on, mate, we have to go now."

Problem is, Lisa would've given him another milkshake, and he knows it, so he

kicks up a fuss.

"I want another one!"

"No, Harvey, we have to go,"

And with that, he tilts back his head and lets out a scream at least twice as big as he is.

"I want another one!"

"Come on, Harvey..." I say, standing up and taking his hand. Harvey digs his heels into the carpet.

"I want another milkshake! Give me another milkshake!"

People are staring at us. I pick Harvey up. He beats his fists against my shoulders.

"I hate you! I hate you! Give me another milkshake!"

I walk out through the double screen doors and take him to the car. He calms down.

"I'm sorry Dad, I don't hate you, I didn't mean it..." he says as I strap him into his booster seat.

We drive out of the car park and onto the motorway. My heart is in my ears.

"It's okay, Harvey. I know."

I put my foot down and we're off.

JW/HW/01

I was Captain Nemo.
You were Captain Ahab.
With our nets, and our trays,
Pipettes and Microscopes.
We wanted to find White Whales.
Battle blood-crazed sharks.
Sever the arms of a giant Octopus.
But, instead we found Aliens in miniature,
whole universes in a grain of Sand.
And, back at school, we put our finds on a graph,
Measured the Alkaline levels in the water,
And thought about the ripples we had made,
For tiny creatures we could not imagine.

We laughed at the five year olds,
Collecting Frog Spawn in a Jam Jar,
And realised that we too, would soon be too big
For our small pond.

But, now a large pond separates us,
We keep in touch through a bigger net,
Your caught your White Whale,
Found contentment on a calmer sea,
Whilst I am still drifting,
Looking for something to anchor me.

BM/P/01

This wasn't where he wanted to be. As Tom glanced down on the churning river far below him he felt sick. A cool wind blew swiftly around him as he struggled to hold on, beads of sweat brimming on his face. As he took in the desolate scene before him his mind replayed the events of last month. It was a messy one with the lads, and even though he wasn't a big drinker he didn't want to feel left out. He'd recently split up with his girlfriend and with nothing to do but feel miserable he really wanted to drown his sorrows. All night he had downed shots, beer and even red wine, a drink he really couldn't stand. That was when it happened, when he saw his ex and made the most catastrophic mistake of his life.

Kate had waltzed into the bar looking gorgeous, her long blonde hair splayed down the nape of her neck, her pretty green eyes sparkling in the bright lights. As she walked in all eyes turned to her and he could feel his stomach churning – be it in jealousy or longing he didn't know. Despite everything he had done to try and get over her it hadn't worked, he still loved her. He had to do something to make her want him back. Downing his drink he got up, stumbled and lurched towards her, his footsteps twisting as he struggled to retain his composure. Her eyes widened in horror as she saw the state of him, unaware of the impact their split had on his emotions.

"Are you okay Tom?" she said, her voice concerned.

"Kate... I wa...nt you..."

Before he finished his stomach churned violently and he felt the contents of his stomach rising rapidly towards his mouth. He threw up all over Kate's outfit, leaving her disgusted and fuming.

"You idiot! How could you do this to me? Call yourself a man, having to drink to make yourself look good."

In his memory the vision of her angry eyes penetrated into his soul; her words you're not a man replaying over and over. That was how he found himself here, wanting to make it up to her, to prove that despite everything he was a man and someone she could rely on. It had been a long climb to the surface, his legs shaking and stomach churning the whole way. Now he stood here, hundreds of miles above ground level wishing the ground would swallow him up. Despite what he had vowed to prove he knew he couldn't do it, he wasn't a man at all he was merely a young boy. Fear rose up in his body, choking him as he tried to catch his breath. As he went to turn around he felt a strong hand in his back sending him flying over the edge. His heart thumped massively in his chest as he felt the ground disappear beneath him, the ground looming ever near. In his last seconds he thought of Kate and the happiness she brought him, his eyes

widening as the waves roared towards his face.

It only took twenty seconds to fall and two minutes to be yanked away, the bungee rope pulling him back up into the air. Tom gasped his eyes still seeing a beautiful blue sky, his ears hearing the cheers of all his friends up above him. It had taken all his resolve to overcome his fear of heights and raise £500 for Cancer Research in a charity bungee jump. Now that's what made a man.

ML/KC/01

REFLECTIONS

On these crowded Streets,
Where people gather,
Talking about nothing,
Where the digital whirr
Stops,

And on these crowded streets,
Full of bustle and noise,
Where tired doormen,
Keep up the pretense
That inside there is more fun
Than you can imagine,
And promises are broken like glass.

On these crowded street,
Full of the living, and the half dead,
Where men in three piece suits,
Bear the haunted look of
Every failed interview,
And bad date,
And women in Lipstick
Read a forest full of glossy magazines,
Whilst a public school Bert and Ernie
Prepare the country for pain,
And we stare out of the café window,
And watch the slow descent of the rain.

BM/WM/02

DRUID'S HEATH

Invisible ears twitch
In the long coarse grass

Could easily be a grasshopper
Jumping from reed to reed

Or a drifting seed ready
To plant its magic

The soothsayer knows when
The gorse will grow

When the light will reign
And the circling beasts sleep

Where to plant Welsh roots so
Stone bathes in the rising sun

And how to bless the heather
For a twitch of an ear.

BH/DH/01

ROARS

There are lions outside my window
Stampeding as a pride
Bursting through my window
Coming to get me.

They tear at my flesh
Chew on my bones
I can almost feel them
Coming to get me.

There were lions outside my window
I was sure of it
But now there's nothing but
The wind pounding on the glass.

BH/L/02

And only to wear blue.
When you talk about love.
Afterward.
When there is no-one
These days are out of time.

That we may begin
To see love's changing.
I hear alone what you say,
How a sense of indigo falls
In base resonance
Almost motionless.

Scent of jasmine, wild
In the derelict square,
At once we name
Invisible moonlight.
The rhythm of water
Sighs false innocence,
The way a cymbal sound spins.

In the cool of first light
The river scenes shimmer.
What seems a city
Is distant sunrise.
Contraries of night pale
Into harmonies
As morning moves:
Every day a truth revealed.

How you catch the essential
Syncopation,
The stair well chorus,
Impromptu sensations
Of the world at work
Soon we see our masters
In seasons they cannot control.
Count the beat before they speak:
How many lies to Babylon?

JAZZ

And after music, silence
Days like these are uneasy
With desire all the way down,
Walking out from here
As the mood changes
With phases of love.
This way the waters
Can come no more
Once the heat burns
Every ocean dry.

GH/J/01

A LADY LAMENTED

The room where once she dreamed is open
To the fallen leaves, scurrying
In half-heard words that lie
Like dust gathered in shadows.

About here were her footsteps
Not yet still on the marble floor,
Its pattern a map of unknown places.
Her silk sway was the ocean's swell,

Now calm as the carved memorial
Where modestly she sleeps
Even at the sound of her name,
Even at the rise of the sun.

GH/LL/02

I'm writing a letter to Santa
To tell him my head doesn't work
When I'm asleep I dream about things
That haunt me and taunt me and hurt
I imagine a world taken over
By mutes wearing fine tailored suits
I want to ask a favour of Santa
Please send me some suitable pills

This morning I'm mailing e-Jesus
Got his address from the door of a stall
I'm pleading for a bit of his magic
Please turn all my shit into fish
So I can feed the ungrateful five thousand
Upon such sweet fine delicacies
And then with my Midas back passage
I'll be worshiped like god's only gift

And a text I would send to the godhead
If and only his number were listed
I know that he'd listen, if he existed
Cos that's what almighties will do
If I must live amongst all of these lizards
Please may I have an ark or a spark or
Something to make me quiet different
Then I'll survive on this line I must walk

AS/WL/01

Palimpsests of Classical China

Advice to the Imagination

Do not tell all you know,
Nor give names to everything.
Some truths are unknown,
Many lives anonymous.
History is written in fragments.

If one word is remembered
You have discovered a new world,
Its clime equitable,
Its land fecund,
Where fauna move freely
And in abundance.
Snow falls on fast-flowing rivers
Where fish ride the crest of white waves.

Do not tell of what you find here,
Nor chart it for others to follow.
Speak only in general terms
Of another world supposed.
Let readers think your tale romance,
Unless, as you write, a shadow falls.
Consider the fate of creatures,
Punished for being
Where they may be found.

GF/AI/01

XANDU

No-one can imagine the world
Seen from the stars,
For no-one has found the path
That leads beyond the mountain heights,
Nor yet the trail in the wastes
That is surely heavenward.

Of these things there are whispers.
A song of mysteries is said to be lost.
Travellers who leave never return.
Rumours are many and
As varied as the flowers
Growing in a well-tended garden.

In Xangdu city
The bamboo palace pleases
All who dream of her.

GH/X/03

OWL

The sleeping owl is in the tree all day,
At night he comes out to hoot and hunt.
Do not wait for him to come out
Before you play your parts.
He sleeps in the old shrewd oak-tree
But at night, his eyes are whirlpools
And when he floats over the house his spirit
Carries the house with it above the oaks
To a lonely shining oasis where calm eyes watch awake
In the moonlight — but our eyes are always dreaming.

DM/O/04

AFTER THE RAIN

I can see things clearly
Now that I've removed rose-tinted glasses
Which cost me dearly.

I look at you now and wonder
What kind of spell you had me under.

It seemed like a good idea at the time
But your memory now smashes
Though I pretend to everyone that I'm fine.

I wonder what I saw in you
And why I let your memory turn me blue.

Why did we end up together,
Why did I fall In love with you
And think we were forever?

I know why I thought it was love
And swore you were sent from above.

It was that 'funny girl' vibe
Which made me forget what to do
And feel so alive.

Things are so clear to me now
And for your love I'll no longer bow.

I was standing a fork in the road
And every direction seemed bad,
You hid in the shadows waiting to goad.

I could dwell on you for a long time
Even though I know you'll never be mine.

I could mope over you day and night,
Make myself feel so sad
Because for your love I would fight.

I choose to abandon your memory
And make this love my enemy.

PS/AR/01

It was past 1 o'clock when I drove my father back from hospital. Doused in the heavy hum of tyres over tarmac, we sat in silence. I was tired after the drive up the motorway and hadn't slept since dawn. Dad had been awake longer, sat by my mother's bedside. Signs of mental and physical drain were unmistakable upon his gaunt face and he barely noticed as we pulled up at the home my parents had shared for 39 years.

Her death was nothing of a surprise, but there is little that can prepare one for these events. In fact, despite increasing sickness, we had done all we could to not think of it, determined that the last years of my mother's life would not be spent dwelling on the inevitable.

I led him into the house and asked if there was anything he needed. A drink? Something to eat? He grunted the politest refusals he could manage, before heading silently upstairs. His footsteps – usually heavy and cumbersome – were light and ghostly, as if his whole being had been reduced by half.

I went into the sitting room, opened my father's drinks cabinet and poured myself a large whisky. I sat on the sofa and gazed at the family photographs hung on the wall next to my father's various accolades. And here I drifted to sleep, slumping onto the familiar upholstery surrounded by memories.

I was woken by a great crash from upstairs. Still hazy, I rushed up to discover my father halfway down the attic ladder, carrying an unwieldy cardboard box. More boxes were scattered liberally across the landing floor. My father placed this new box down and tore it open with his penknife.

"Ah," he said, reaching inside. "Here it is!"

"Dad, what on earth are you doing?" I asked.

My father heaved out an old-fashioned typewriter – the very one he had used when his career was at its peak and his writing most prolific.

"Do you know how long it is since I've used this thing?" he said, admiring the weighty machine in his hands.

I shrugged.

"12 years. Since your mother got sick, in fact."

"Oh," I said unsurely.

"When your mother got sick, I had to give up my writing to look after her. I had

to give up a lot of things to look after her." Noticing the rising look of distaste upon my face, he added, "Not that I minded doing that, of course. But now there's no reason I shouldn't start doing all those things again."

"But don't you think you should be..."

"Grieving? I've had 12 years of grieving, son. We both did. Sure, we tried to make the best out of whatever time we had left together, but we both knew the end would come sooner or later. Here, take this."

He pushed the typewriter into my arms. "My study."

I led the way down the stairs and into the tiny study, which had become a gloomy storage room in the last decade. My father cleared a space on the cluttered desk for typewriter.

"You wouldn't think it was possible for only two people to collect so much junk over the years," he said looking round. "Well, I guess my first job is to clear this room out. Most of this can go to the charity shop."

And with that he was carrying boxes under each arm and stacking them near the front door.

"But don't you think you should rest?" I protested. "It was only yesterday when..."

"She died. I haven't forgotten, you know. But do you think your mother would want me moping around the house wasting even more of my time?"

"Wasting your time? So that's what it was? Looking after mum?"

"You don't know," he fumed, his finger wagging reproachfully. "You and your brother made sure you stayed at a safe distance. It was left to me to care for your mother single-handedly. Not that I complained – it was my duty, after all. 'In sickness and in health', that's what we agreed and she would have done no less for me. But we both knew that the last 12 years have been a complete waste for both of us. Enough of my life has already been taken by that disease and I don't intend to let it have any more of me!"

He pushed past me and picked up two more boxes. I stood for a moment, dumbstruck, then gave in to the inevitable and went to help him.

We spent the whole morning sorting boxes. "Your mother would have wanted them put to good use," he said whenever we came across a load of her old

things. "She'd have done the job herself if she'd been able to." And so, boxes of her old clothes, gardening magazines (the only way she had been able to keep up with her life's passion once bed-ridden), vinyl records, sewing equipment and cheap romantic novels were arranged into piles to be sent to the shop, palmed off on friends or thrown away – the building blocks of her life ready to be broken up and dispersed.

As we worked, I broached the subject of funeral arrangements. "If you want, Dad, I can take care of things. Matthew will be back tomorrow. Between us we will be able to sort everything out, let people know, that kind of thing."

"Sure," replied my father, disinterestedly. "Do you think Pamela on Yarwood Terrace would be interested in these?" he asked, indicating a crate of ugly porcelain figurines.

"I've no idea," I said.

"Neither has she, so it's worth a try," he chuckled. "She'd be the only person with bad enough taste to buy them from the charity shop, so we may as well cut out the middle-man!"

"You can be involved if you want to, Dad. It's just I thought it might be easier for you to let us take care of things."

"What? Oh, the funeral. Yes, that's fine by me." Once again his attention was stolen, this time by an intriguing box of abandoned knitting projects. "Your mother should have known better than thinking her mind could ever be satisfied by this old lady's hobby," he laughed, carrying it to the rubbish pile.

"I suppose we better start letting people know," said my father suddenly over lunch. I was pleased that he finally seemed to be showing some interest in the situation, until he added, "Can you sort it out please, David? The address book is on the side-board."

"What are you going to do this afternoon?" I asked.

In response, he left the room. When he returned he was brandishing a thick, yellowish manuscript. "This," he announced, "is my masterpiece."

"Turning Points? The Oxford Affair?" I asked, nonplussed.

"Those pieces of throwaway nonsense are nothing compared to this. In fact, my entire catalogue should be pulped when this beauty hits the shelves."

My father spotted the blank look on my face.

"14 years ago I was finished, washed-up, out-dated – as tired as the clichés there were using to describe me. 'Nobody reads crime fiction any more,' they said. 'Gordon Trelawny is finished'. But the only person who was going to decide if Gordon Trelawny was finished was Gordon Trelawny. So I started work on *The Silver Ring* – an epic love story to silence the critics."

"And it's the best thing you've ever written?" I ventured.

"Yes... well, it will be when it's finished. You see, when your mother got sick, *The Silver Ring* was somewhat waylaid. But now there's nothing stopping me finishing it."

He gave me a look that dared me to challenge this declaration, but I was wise enough to let it pass. "If you need me, I shall be in my study," he said.

I would be lying if I said this attitude of apparent disregard for my mother's memory did not disturb me, but I told myself to accept the old rule of mourning, that people should be allowed to come through these situations in their own way. For 12 years my father's desire to create had been restrained by the necessity to maintain. Now he seemed determined to work at a fevered pace to make up for lost time – not only freed, but enlivened by his wife's passing. Let him work, I thought. Let him get it out of his system – sooner or later he will run himself down and have to accept what has happened.

My own method of dealing with bereavement was to immerse myself in the necessary tasks to hand. I booked our 'slot' at the funeral parlour. I phoned my wife to tell her that I should be staying up here for the next few days, but that she and the children needn't join me until the day before the burial. I made sure that my brother had caught the right train. And then I began the arduous task of informing my parent's friends and associates of the loss.

At 4 o'clock, I decided I needed a break from delivering bad news and elected to take some boxes to the charity shop. I leaned my head through the study door. My father turned to me, beaming.

"I've still got it, my dear boy!" he exclaimed, indicating the neatly-stacked pile next to his antiquated typewriter. "Two chapters already. The world has waited long enough for this book, but I am pleased to report that they will not need to wait much longer!"

When I returned from the shop, I expected to find my father still working in the same high spirits. But the study was empty. I went into the kitchen; he was not

there either, but on the table a copy of the Yellow Pages lay open at a page listing garden centres. I glanced out of the window and was startled to see my father digging furiously at a flower bed.

"What on earth are you doing?" I cried, running outside. "You're 62 for Christ's sake! You shouldn't be digging like this!" He ignored me, indiscriminately shovelling another spade-full of earth and flowers into a wheel-barrow. "And what are you doing to mum's flowers?"

My father pushed the spade into the freshly purged soil, leaned against the spade handle and addressed me calmly: "I am clearing a space for my new shed."

"New shed? What on Earth are you talking about?"

"I've just ordered it."

"But what do you need a new shed for?"

"My new bike."

"A motor bike?!" I gasped.

"Remember my old Triumph? I think it's about time I got back onto the open road. It's good for inspiration, we writers find."

I spent a few moments letting my disbelief flow through me as my father heaved up the barrow and wheeled it past me, dumping the contents onto a pile on another flowerbed.

"Mum died yesterday, and not only are you going through some bizarre delayed mid-life crisis, you're destroying her garden!"

He shrugged nonchalantly.

"She loved this garden!" I implored.

"I know," said my father, resuming his digging, "but she's not here to enjoy it any more."

My father went through the routine of pleasantries at the funeral, playing the part of the grieving husband convincingly. But after the wake he wanted to bid us an immediate farewell so he could continue with his book, meddling with his bike or one of the other outlandish projects he had spent the week engaging in.

My brother said that I should let him be and that his new-found verve should be encouraged. It seemed I had little choice in the matter.

Yes, I was glad that he was enjoying life, but my concern for my mother remained. I couldn't help wondering if she had known she had been such a manacle for my father's creative spirits. Even as he pushed past me with dusty boxes or barrows of dirt, I couldn't help but feel in the way – how had my mother felt after 12 years of unwillingly restraining him? Her body may have become increasingly incapacitated, but her mind remained sharp. She could not have helped but notice how much of a constraint she was to him, my father, the prolific writer she had married 39 years previously.

But then again, the change in him now was so severe and sudden that I consoled myself with the notion that this vibrancy had, until now, been repressed by a subconsciously-voluntary obligation that only the all-changing power of grief had shaken him free of, like a tree unburdened of snow by a refreshing wind.

Either way, this tragedy was born out of the illness that had ravaged my mother and, as my father had done, it was time to put it behind me. I forced my life back into normality over the next few days, checking on my father occasionally and receiving excited updates on the progress of *The Silver Ring* or detailed mechanical break-downs of the second-hand Triumph he was restoring, but no mention of his feelings about my mother.

And then, exactly a week after her funeral, I received a phone call from the hospital informing me that my father had been taken in after a heart attack. Once again I made the exhausting drive up the motorway and spent the night sitting by a bedside, but this time I left alone.

As my father was buried next to my mother, the friends and relatives attending the service said he must have died from a broken heart. I found this hard to believe when I thought of his uncaring attitude after mum's death, but like him I played the part of the grieving son, repressing the bitterness he had given me as a parting gift.

A few days later, as, for the second time in a fortnight, I began the melancholy process of sorting through a dead parent's belongings, I found the *Silver Ring* manuscript, freshly finished and waiting to be posted to Dad's old publisher. I turned the cover and started reading.

I had rarely found much interest in my father's works, but the new style he exhibited in *The Silver Ring* had me gripped. It told the story of two lovers who met by a moonlit pool in 1914, the threads of whose lives became separated but

continued to weave around each other in an incredibly imaginative narrative full of unexpected twists. With vivid characters and pulsating sequences, my father had created a fine fabric that, as he predicted, enveloped all his previous writing. What was most remarkable was the finale in which, with the skill of a master weaver, he pulled the threads of the lovers tight once more to bind the whole story.

I spent the entire day soaking it in, unable to put it down until I reached the end, well into night's darkness. If I was any judge, then my father was correct in pronouncing it his best ever work. But what struck me most, among the swathes of great characters he had conjured, was the familiarity of the two protagonists – a free-spirited artist whose love for life, art and his soul-mate were curtailed when he was forced to enlist for the war, and the object of his affections, an intelligent yet tender young woman whose loyalty to her absent love was matched only by her determination to overcome the terrible circumstances into which their romance was thrown.

And, as I placed the roughly-bound manuscript down and drained my whisky glass, I said a silent apology to my father for having ever doubted his devotion to my mother's memory.

AW/SR/01A

BUS POEM

It all begins with a spark
Make sure your ticket is valid
For the journey you are making
Take advantage of unlimited time
To see beauty in the detail
Remember me to lose me
Live in the moments re-use me
Ring the bell once
For your safety all standing

JG/BP/01

WINTER

Tired planed flights
Of the artist painting
The weary gesture

Ill maintains the dark
One hovers above the
Hand stain some empty
Sky

Offset on the canvas
The rushyas water sends
Of trembling flights

A clumsy posture
Delivers the painting
To turn a somersault

The artist delivers
Dark dark pain
Turn libraciones target
At propagations of a
Dark spot extended
By the sky

JG/W/01

Alpacas in their barber shop nightmare
Yoghurted across the Andean hillscape,
And the Copihue sigh of sunlight
Filtered our chainmail skin to pink.
Only the stevia spoke in the breeze.
This was the sixth day of our indulgence -
We'd almost healed
In the absence of the city's cardiac crush.
The commuter roar was now Chilean
Farmers whipping Quechuan threats
At clueless livestock. The Clapham gust
Was now an arid Puelche kneading
Naked plateaus. Words had been few
In our enduring irritation. This argument
Had gestated over weeks or months -
I don't know which. But,
This unsaid Latin vista milkied
Out the glass of our obsession,
And when we camped down that night
We interlocked our bodies
As knuckles curl into a single fist.

MH/WE/01

I told stories before I could write. I have vivid memories of lying in the lower bunk staring up at the slump made by my sister as Mum told us stories, a role I quickly took over, telling my siblings stories heavily influenced by Cinderella and The Singing Ringing Tree. I had very Teutonic ideas of beauty: long blonde hair, blue eyes... I remember thinking a friend's mother the picture of perfection... it is only now I recall the immense height of her peroxide beehive - which she covered with a scarf that barely met under her chin - Marge Simpson in the making.

My tales were blood-bolted and full of danger; I was more enthused by the Grimms than Andersen.

I devoured retellings of Greek and Norse myth, British, French and Russian folk tales and of course, Andrew Lang's Blue, Yellow etc fairy books,

Many of these stories I read with transfixed horror, not for the gore (I'm a sucker for a werewolf) but for the matter-of-fact-ness and inevitability of the way things go wrong.

The first story I wrote down went something like this.

Pretty Princess wants to marry a prince.

Princess tells Queen. Queen advises them to run away.

They meet a goatherd.

"Hello you two, where are you running off to?" Says the goatherd

"We are running away," says the Princess.

Princess and Prince come to a river without a bridge.

Goatherd reappears and gets them over the river.

They come to the Princess' uncle's house.

"Hello, you two," says Uncle, "where are you two running off to?"

"We're running away," says the Princess.

"Well you must stop for tea," says Uncle.

And they sit down for buns and squash. Uncle locks them in and rushes off to

tell the King.

Knock at door. It's the goatherd, who has a key.

Uncle and the King come running.

"You two had better run off," says the goatherd.

They go home.

"Hello you two," says the Queen, "where did you two run off to?"

Princess explains the goatherd and the river and the uncle.

Queen says that goatherd is another uncle she sent to keep an eye on them, sends them to bed.

In the morning, the King is very cross, but not with Princess.

Reflecting on this first effort, I notice that I have picked up on the antagonism within families, the journey, the humble stranger who isn't what they seem to be and the use of repetition much loved by traditional storytellers.

So have I done with fairytales? I think probably not.

I've just about finished writing a Lesbian Fantasy Epic, which follows many of the traditional fairytale rules and in which that impassable river re-occurs, this time with tragic consequences.

Is this the magic of fairy tales? That they grow with you and can be turned to any use you care to put them?

Or are they the apparently humble stranger who turns up when needed, and is not what they seem to be?

Cherry Potts

Disablism? What's that? I hear you ask. You've heard of Racism, Sexism, and a few other 'isms' - but never Disablism, you say.

Well, I'm not surprised that you've never heard of Disablism, and I don't blame you. Disablism is unfortunately not yet as recognised as it should be by those who don't have a disability. However, anyone who does have a disability knows that disablism is just as bad as its better-known friends. Disablism is discrimination against a disabled person because of their disability.

Frankie Boyle's comments against people with Down's Syndrome during his recent 'comedy' tour were an example of disablism. They were heard by audience member Sharon Smith, whose daughter has Down's Syndrome, and were all over the news two days later.

Early last year, Jeremy Clarkson was caught on record while speaking to a journalist calling Gordon Brown a 'one-eyed Scottish idiot.' After a simple little apology, Jeremy Clarkson was allowed to keep his job at the BBC. Yet, just before this incident, Carol Thatcher was sacked by the BBC for making a racist comment against a black, French tennis player, off air after a recording of The One Show. She never officially apologised for this racism- she simply said that the remark was meant to be a joke.

As I wrote on my blog, Same Difference, at the time, I think the reason Clarkson, unlike Thatcher, was allowed to keep his job goes much deeper than his apology.

Everyone knows what racism is. It is now considered a 'normal' form of offence. Everyone knows that it is wrong, and most people these days understand how painful it is.

However, unfortunately, the same can not yet be said for disablism. Most people who don't have disabilities don't yet realise that disablism is to a disabled person what racism is to a person from an ethnic minority. Sometimes it feels, to people with disabilities, like they don't realise that we have feelings, too.

A disablist comment is just as painful as a racist one. It's just as cruel and just as wrong. Both the 'isms' deserve equal punishment.

I'm a disabled person, and I think it's about time we all started recognising disablism for what it is. That's why one of the main themes in my collection of original poetry, *Listen To The Silence*, is a plea from disabled people to end disablism. There are many who experience disablism every day of their lives who can't speak out against it. I wrote these poems in an effort to speak for them as well as myself, because I believe that we all deserve to be heard. Please listen to the silence- you'll be surprised just how loud it is!

Listen To The Silence is an e-book, available to download from www.samedifference1.com for £2.

Sarah Ismail

Looking up at the swirling Artex, I turn my head and smother my face in the soft linen of your pillow, breathing in the scent of freshly washed hair. I imagine you stepping out of the shower, droplets of water racing down the contours of your body like rain down a window pane. Your breasts are heavy with milk, your swollen nipples as dark as cocoa against the creamy pallor of your skin. Your sun-streaked hair, now black with water, falls sleek and straight over your lightly freckled shoulders in stark contrast with the soft tawny down curling between your legs.

Our history fills this room. Watercolours of places we have visited hang above the bed. Piles of our favourite books precariously pepper the floorboards. You try not to show it but I know how cross you must get when I borrow one without asking. I am truly sorry for that. The temptation to digest the words your eyes have read, to look for evidence of you on every page – a turned corner, a smudged print from bath-time reading – is too much for me to resist. Hastily scribbled post-it notes litter the sideboard, proving that I am in your thoughts as much as you are in mine when we're apart. I am never happier than when I am here.

Nature marked the morning we met. Christened with the first snowfall of the year, the skeletal ebony limbs of the trees lining my route to work were lavishly draped with brilliant white icing. A virginal, glistening carpet stretched out before me, hiding treachery underfoot as winter nipped at my face and frosted my breath for no-one to see. Cloaks of snow concealed empty lager cans littering the grass and transformed the graffitied benches, tarnished slide and seesaw into objects of beauty. The tired suburban landscape of the park took on a magical quality, so pristine, so perfect, seemingly unsoiled by human touch except for the boot prints tracking me in the snow. As I turned right out of the gates towards the station, I almost fell over you, or more accurately your son cocooned against the biting cold in his pushchair. Of course there was the expected embarrassment, flurry of apologies and hurried half-smiles, but even then, from that first momentary collision of our everyday lives, there was a connection. A tacit complicity that fate had brought us together – no, that we were meant to be together – despite the inconveniences of our separate lives.

It is astounding how one event can alter your perspective. Instead of longing for the weekends, I now yearn for the routine of my daily commute. Each morning I get up an hour earlier to shower and get ready. I take extra care over my appearance, making sure that every detail is correct. I know how much you appreciate the effort I make for you. I time my journey to perfection. Old man out to fetch the morning paper at the top of the hill. Check. Asian student, head down listening to mp3 player, by the post box on the corner. Check. Couple entering the park hand in hand to walk their Great Dane. Check. Different people, different lives, different routines unwittingly colluding to ensure that

I can watch you walking towards me for the longest possible time before our paths cross.

Of course I never have to worry about you being late. Despite working full-time at the university and needing to get Charlie ready for nursery in the mornings, you always look so beautiful, so composed, so in control. You are the epitome of a modern woman – strong, intelligent and independent, more than capable of juggling the demands of a career and motherhood. I am so proud of you; most women sit in the darkness of your shadow and you do not even know it. But I know you better than I know myself. The flush of your cheeks when you first notice me. The way your eyes light up and you smile openly despite yourself, before casting your eyes to the ground as I grow close. All signs that beneath that placid exterior, your heart is racing as fast as mine, that your downturned eyes conceal the longing within you. I respect your privacy and would never demand public displays of affection. These tokens are enough. I collect them like treasures to pore over in the early hours, turning them this way and that in my mind until their meaning is crystal clear. Like the key. How clever of you to drop it from your pocket as I walked past! You know I always glance back over my shoulder to watch you and that its distinctive key ring would catch my eye. All I had to do then was set off a little earlier the following morning to pass you as you left your house to know where you live.

It's not that I can't see the irony of my morning ritual. I mean, I no longer have a job to go to at the end of it. But you have given me a new lease of life. No. You are my purpose for living. Small sacrifices have to be made in relationships sometimes; a fact I have to keep explaining to Gran who has begrudgingly let me have my old room back after I fell behind on the rent. It's such a waste, she keeps saying, such a waste. And I guess from her point of view it is hard to understand how I can walk away from a city law firm I spent a year courting, and put into remission three years of legal training which she worked day and night to pay for.

But our love is all consuming. It permeates my every waking hour and saturates my dreams with desire and fear. Day after day I let myself into your house to feel close to you, to piece together your movements. The soft indent in the cushion where you drink your coffee watching the morning news; another empty void in your Pill packet; last week's issue of The Sunday Times magazine, folded to Relative Values, pushed down the side of the toilet. Even your little eccentricities – eight rejected corners on a plate of toast crumbs, an inch of tea left at the bottom of your mug, a collection of half-filled water tumblers cluttering your bedside table – are endearing. And if only Gran could see your DVD and CD collections! Cut from the same cloth, two peas in a pod, cast in the same mould, she would shriek, clapping her hands together in that irritating way she has, like she is a young girl again. Even I have to admit though, it is remarkable how our tastes

mirror each other and I have more than made up for any gaps on my shelves by acquiring duplicates of missing titles over the months we've been together.

As I lie here on our bed and look around me, I see you in all things. I see us. I long for the time when you will run your fingers over my body, translating me with your touch as I have translated you. Until then I know I must be patient, must try to emulate your elegance and grace in case I too become cast in your shadow. Smoothing down my skirt and fixing my hair, I pull myself together and prepare to face the outside world without you.

KAT/TC/01

INUA ELLAMS – Poet in Residence, Covent Garden

CAARE (Council for the Advancement of Arts, Recreation and Education), the charity who gave birth to Enigma Magazine, is based in Covent Garden and feels like the perfect place to conceive a cultural magazine – deep within the rich histories of London, the sparkling lights of theatre land and the bustling performers in the plaza and squares. It's not surprising that there is a poet in residence to help document experiences and draw beautiful art from his surroundings – Inua Ellams, a Nigerian poet and graphic artist who has, from April 2010, been turning feelings and opinions from London's most famous public space into beautiful prose, poetry and drawings for 12 months.

I'm delighted to display some of his work here for Enigma Magazine.

His name is Ben.

We haven't been introduced; I haven't said 'Hi' to the waisted coated, blue blazered, artful dodgerish man smashing a red suitcase to the grounds of courtyard. He is of the tribe of street performers I will meet over the course of the day. This is my first as Covent Garden's creative in residence, I have a chesterfield-esque chair parked on the side of the courtyard close to the Royal Opera House. On my right is the rich food market, which to my unbreakfasted self, is both pleasure and pain. Sophie, who I have introduced myself to behind the Laveli stall waves, I make towards her but hear Ben, raw and relentless demanding attention, confidence thick as Covent Garden's history cracking off his shoulders. 'This is the home of street theatre' he declares, 'Not that that matters to you...'

He starts his act like this – cute, condescending comments at passerbys, 'This is my mother', he says gesturing to an older lady, who blushes embarrassed, playfully strikes his arms, but poses for a photograph. Five minutes pass and he has charmed the streaming pedestrian into a small pool of an audience. He spends the next ten setting the props for his performance about the grounds. He asks randomly, 'Where are you from?' Answers come thick and fast in varying accents, Spain, Portugal, Oslo, Edinburgh. To the American he asks, 'You a tourist or have to come to learn the language?'

He themed the next five minutes on the capacity to understand English, mime's instructions on how to applaud and leads the gathered on a clapping and screaming spree until anyone within earshot is drawn. Finally, Ben begins the show. He juggle pins then knives. After the applause dies, he throws the pins at selected men in the audience asking them to hold up the objects. Keiron from Ireland, Tom from London and one simply called Ipswich. 'Ladies and gen'l'men, for my grand finale, I need three volunteers and as these men have

their hands up, give 'em a round of applause!

My phone rings, I find a corner for the call, and when I return, Tom and Ipswich are on either side of Keiron, and Ben, Ben is standing on Keiron's shoulder; 'Stand Still! Keiron! I am speaking English!'. He proceeds to juggle knives. As he berates his 'volunteers', Ben asks for money, encourages the audience to be generous, he does this full time, this is the most honest way to earn a living, please give what you can.

But in the crowd's dispersal, in their reach for wallets, as the the walls of the street theatre created by their bodies crumble and disappear, I realise the real trick had little to do with knives or juggle pins. The real trick was the set up: Ben's ability to pull the child like want for a spectacle out of an audience and make, in a world of iMAX cinema, death defying stunts and special effects, make the idea of a man throwing and catching things, mean a little more. And on And on.

This time I sit behind Pizza Pasta Vino on the Piazza's west side. To my right, a mono-cyclist in a straight jacket beguiles an audience to loose coins.

In the courtyard behind, between Crème de la Crepe, Punch & Judy, Octopus, Battersea Pie Station and Candy Cakes, the Paella sellers free fingers of aroma.

A jeaned string quartet strums classics from a corner and packs of wild childs clatter past chattering, voices acrobatic – mad hatter style, and in the sudden dip

To silence

A family parts ways. Father shudders, mother holds her son, whose lone sob claims this quiet as their own.

Somewhere, a rattle startles, and life goes on.

Inua Ellams

Enigma aims to make the creative writing world accessible to all as part of the arts programme for the charity CAARE (The Council for the Advancement of Arts and Recreation in Education). Its ethos is for all people of all ages and backgrounds to have the opportunity to have their work published and shared with others.

Enigma reflects the wide variety of today's creative writing, from works by published authors to poetry from school children. We want to show that anyone with a pen and paper can write and improve by seeing their work alongside others.

Why "Enigma"?

All work is identified by a code, rather than a name. The code can be referenced simply with the alphabet, but our aim is that all work should be read without prejudice on its first read, and can be traced now to the back of the publication to find out more about the writer.

Submission guidelines

Up to three poems/short stories/short scripts (up to 3,000 words max) per person are accepted.

NB: Also please include a short paragraph about what made you interested in writing as reference to the code if you get selected. Examples of this can be seen at the back of this issue.

Features

What's your story?

No matter what background, aspirations or goals in the literary world, Enigma Magazine would be delighted to hear your story for this quarterly feature. The limit is 300 to 500 words.

Submissions should be sent to editor@enigmacw.co.uk or by post to Enigma Magazine, 41 Floral Street, Covent Garden, London WC2E 9DG entitled "What's your story?"

Enigma is published by CAARE (The Council for the Advancement of Arts,

Enigma Creative Writing magazine is currently being published by the London charity CAARE (The Council for the Advancement of Arts, Recreation and Education), who have now acted as a guardian for arts and sports in Britain for over 10 years. Protecting Britain's cultural interest, they often undergo political campaigns, archive and research information regarding the mental and physical wellbeing of the nation.

The founder, operatic conductor Denis Vaughan, the initial driving force and founding father of the National Lottery in Britain, set up to provide a funding foundation for Arts and Sports. He has also been mentioned as 'the man who brought more money to sport than anyone else in the 20th Century.' CAARE is the only charity to fully monitor Lottery spending on good causes, and over time the priorities over the use of Lottery funds have changed and used for other purposes. CAARE's main ethos is to widen access and participation in arts and sports to the Lottery's full potential, and must be protected to serve its paying public personally.

In the past year, articles about CAARE and Denis Vaughan has had quite a wide range of media coverage including, *The Times*, *The Daily Mail*, *The Scotsman* and *Time Out* magazine.

Enigma Creative Writing Magazine is only one of their projects to spread awareness of arts and sports for the public, and all proceeds from purchasing this magazine in print in the future will go towards this cause. To find out more about current and past projects, visit www.caare.co.uk.

DM/MW/01, DM/R/02, DM/LN/03, DM/O/04

My Way of Saying Nothing, Reflections, Last Night I Saw You, Owl – David Morgan

JM/W/01

Woodstock – Jaki McCarrick

Jaki McCarrick is a graduate of Trinity College, Dublin. Her first play, *The Mushroom Pickers*, won the 2005 Scottish Drama Association's National Playwriting Competition, and premiered at the Southwark Playhouse in London in May 2006 (to 4-star reviews in the *Evening Standard*) and in New York in February 2009. She has published poetry in *Poetry Ireland Review*, *Revival*, *Boyne Berries*, *Southword*, *Cyphers*, *Cathach*, *Word on the Street*, *Stylus* (Australia), *The Pedestal* (North Carolina), *Ouroboros* (New York), *Atonal*, and short stories in *The Dublin Review*, *Verbal Arts Magazine*, *Cyphers*, *Brace* - published by Comma Press, *Random Acts of Writing*, *The Frogmore Papers*. She was *Writer-in-Residence* at the Tyrone Guthrie Centre for the Pushkin Trust in July 2007. She recently won first prize in the Northern Ireland Spinetinglers Dark Fiction competition and was selected for the 2009 Poetry Ireland Introduction series of emerging poets. Her play, *The Moth-Hour*, has been nominated for a number of awards and her most recent play, *Leopoldville*, was this year short-listed for the Adrienne Benham Award, and selected by David Hare as a finalist in the 2010 Yale Drama Series Playwriting Competition; the play has also just won the 2010 Papatango New Writing Award and was recently staged at the Tristan Bates Theatre in London to much critical acclaim.

IF/D/01

Dehydration – Imogen Featherstone

"I inherited my addiction to reading and writing from my dad who was an English teacher. When I was growing up, our house was full of thousands and thousands of books so I couldn't avoid their influence even if I wanted to. I have worked in healthcare for quite a few years and am now working as a researcher in mental health. I find that health-related themes often come up in my writing. I spend a lot of my spare time writing short stories and poems (when I'm not feeding my other addiction: watching *Come Dine With Me!*)"

JW/H/01

Halfway – Joe Wyatt

Past - Born on April 1st, 1988. My first ever story was a fully illustrated adaptation of *Jack and the Beanstalk* that I produced at the age of eight. It ended with Jack taking out the terrible Giant with an enchanted, flying tank. It's still probably the best thing I've ever done.

Present - By the time you read this, I'll either have graduated from a degree in Creative Writing at Norwich University College of the Arts and swanned

off to an three-month internship in South Africa, or I won't have graduated, disappearing instead into a spiral of alcoholic binges and checkout jobs.

Future - Beyond South Africa, there are no concrete plans, but they shall hopefully involve writing in some form or other. I hope to produce enough short stories over the following year or so for me to get a collection published, if I can.

BM/P/01

Ponds – Benjamin McNair

KC/ML/01

Mistake of a lifetime – Kathy Cakebread

I have been writing since I was 13, and have written a large number of stories up to novella length. I am trying to get one of my novels printed the traditional way but alas I'm not having much luck unfortunately!

I enjoy reading, writing, socialising, cinema, gaming and money making opportunities.

BM/WM/02

Wednesday Morning, 9am – Benjamin McNair

BH/DH/01, BH/R/02

Druid's Heath/Roars – Bryony Harrison

Bryony Harrison has always had a thirst to tell stories and has been writing since a child. The world of the internet turned a hobby into dream career when she found a poetry website for young people. Since then, she has experimented in many different forms of writing and is currently taking a BA in Creative Writing.

GH/J/01

Jazz – Geoffrey Heptonstall

AS/WL/01

Walk the Line – Ant Smith

GF/AI/01, GH/LL/02, GH/X/03

At the Gates of an Unexpected City (excerpts) - Geoffrey Heptonstall

PS/AR/01

After the Rain – Pamela Scott

I am 29 years old and live in Glasgow. I work full time in an office. I write poems, short stories and the occasional script. I'm working on a novel. One

of my poems has been published in the anthology 'Crab Lines off the Pier' by Indigo Dream Press. I've made it through to the final round of judging in 'The Brit Unpublished Writer of the Year'. One of my stories will be published in 'Scriptor 8', a small press magazine in October. Two of my poems have been selected for publication in 'The Strand Book of International Poets 2010'.

I've recently been short listed for the 'Global Short Story Competition' and 'The Newark Poetry Society Competition. One of my stories was a runner up in story competition run by 'Writing Magazine'. I have had a poem published in 'The New Writer'. I have had two short stories and a poem published in 'Carillon', a small press magazine. I have had four poems published in a local magazine. One of my poems won second place in a poetry competition run by the David St John Thomas Charitable Trust. I have had several poems published in anthologies by United Press Ltd. I have also had several reader letters published in national magazines.

AW/SR/01

The Silver Ring – Alex Wire

A L Wire is a 26-year-old fiction writer from Nottingham. Since he began writing short stories three years ago, he has been published in the anthologies *Born in the 1980s* (Route; 2008) and *Sailing on a Dream* (Writers Dock; 2007), as well as *Brilliant* and *Twisted Tongue* magazines and several websites. He is currently looking for a publisher for his first novel. He updates a blog at <http://sparkle-and-believe.blogspot.com> when the urge takes hold.

DM/O/01

Owl – David Morgan

JG/BP/01, JG/W/02

Bus Poem/Winter – Jenny Goulding

MH/WE/01

What Else is There – Maximilian T. Hawke

What's your Story? – My Life in Fairytales

Cherry Potts

Writing against Disablism

Sarah Ismail

KAT/TC/01

The Collector – Kerry Anne - Tipping

Artist Feature – Inua Ellams

