



**54**

**THE  
FREE  
POETRY  
MAGAZINE**



**WE'RE NICE, WE'RE ONLINE  
AND WE DON'T ALWAYS RHYME**

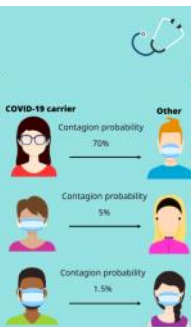
## Their Rights

They want their rights  
They want their freedom  
They want their liberty  
In their flat Earth world.  
No masks, no vaccine,  
No reliance on science.  
Might as well want their right  
To drive their cars  
As they please.  
To drive while pissed,  
Forgetting the lights they've missed.  
Would be fine if it was only them  
On the roads, like in the ads.  
But if they drive while drunk,  
Would they ignore the lives they've sunk,  
Do as they please,  
Shatter some knees?

**Frank McMahon**

## WHY WEAR A MASK?

.....  
Face coverings are now mandatory to wear whilst in shops in England. This is in order to stop the spread of COVID-19 since transmission happens through cough and sneeze droplets. By wearing a mask we can significantly reduce the chance of transmission and protect ourselves and those around us.



## **Scruffy Grey Trainers**

I shall be sorry when  
these scruffy grey trainers  
finally kick the bucket

tatty and grubby  
I daren't wash them  
in case they fall apart.

Worn to work when new  
but soon became comfy  
made my feet happy

I'd leave work early  
on Friday afternoon  
take my good shoes off

slip these trainers on  
without socks  
without undoing laces

drive off into the weekend  
stretching toes, relaxing  
feeling like me again.

**Vron McIntyre**



## The football post

Saturday evening mum comes from the kitchen,  
salad in front of the colour TV,  
tripe & chitterlings, *the News* has just started, waiting  
for Brucie,  
but where can dad be?  
Here he is now, fresh from the newsagent,  
bringing the things we love the most:  
some choccy, some crisps and what we are needing,  
a gleg at the pictures in *The Football Post*.

## Stuart Whomsley

**FOOTBALL POST**

Vol. LXX, No. 12 NOTTINGHAM, SATURDAY, JANUARY 21, 1978 Price 9p

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**THERE'S NO HOLDING HIGH-RIDING FOREST**

**JOHN LAWSON at the City Ground**

**THE skill and commitment of Nottingham Forest proved too much even for the considerable defensive qualities of Villa. Steve Arnold is another thrill-packed game, here this afternoon.**

The Reds have triumphed after 90 minutes when Steve Arnold's late goal secured a 1-0 victory. The Reds' defence was superb, and in the 85th minute Steve Arnold scored the winning goal.

**Headline: 26,743**

Nottingham Forest's victory for Nottingham and Liverpool could not be said to be a surprise.

A Liverpool side in which several youngsters had shone in the league last season, but in the long run they had not been able to make a mark.

Nottingham Forest's victory was a surprise to many, but it was not a surprise to those who had followed the team since its formation.

**STUART WHOMSLEY**

## THE LITTLE GREEN MAN

I was happily walking my dog in the park  
When a little green man passed me by  
He too was walking his pet on a lead  
And I couldn't help wondering why  
The dog that he had was sporting six legs  
With two tails that wagged to and fro  
It's swivelling eyes looked two ways at once  
So of course I wanted to know  
"What make of dog is your pet?" I asked him  
And the little green man looked agog  
"It's a snapper bullsatian" was his reply  
"And it comes from a planet called Zog"  
I realised then that something was wrong  
For they boarded a saucer close by  
A whirring and buzzing of engines began  
Then it disappeared straight to the sky  
When I got home and related the tale  
My wife just laughed in my face  
Said she "I'm hiding your whisky my love.  
It'll be in a very safe place!"

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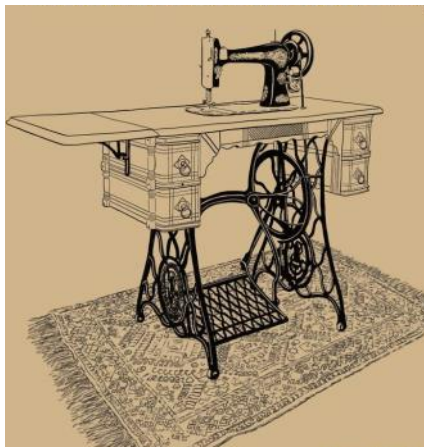
## Measured

Her foot is rhythmic  
pushing down then release  
perfect timing  
the steady whirr  
of the treadle machine.

Head bent, home permed hair  
shoulders hunch in skilled precision  
cutting, sewing, trimmed neat edges  
the weight of tape about her neck

The hum of work pervades the home  
The sum of her work keeps the home  
measured, a fine margin  
from going without.

**Andrea Lucy-Hearst**



***Remember Those Walls I Built***  
**(Beyoncé quote)**

Remember those walls I built  
I didn't know I'd made them  
You told me they were too tall  
I didn't know they were there  
You could not see over them  
I didn't know I'd built them  
You told me to knock them down  
I did not know how to  
You told me I was difficult  
I did not understand you  
My self began to shatter  
I wanted you to see me  
Your earthquake undermined me  
You'd looked but could not find me

**Clare Stewart**  
September 2021



## **John's Son, b. 2020**

A new baby arrives with hair all fluffy,  
his eyes tightly shut against a harsh world.  
In the year of COVID, air so stuffy,  
is this a new start, a freshwater pearl?

This little one may be a brave soldier  
as he snorts and snuggles like babies do,  
but what will you tell him when he is older  
about the year he was born in, and you?

Surrounded by death and the virus still,  
he is here, with the usual aplomb;  
no birth is ever that run of the mill,  
it requires celebration, a song.

You name him to honour many who served  
in the long battle waged around his ears;  
forgive us if we remain quite unnerved  
by the sacrifice of those wise in years.

Now he will learn of gods and monsters all,  
sometimes they come in the shape of humans,  
sometimes their smile turns your hope to down-  
fall  
and with their power, mortals are ruined.

**Gail Webb**



## Poem 2

put your green face on before you leave today  
and  
look in canals to make sure you are always  
head up eyes nice always got to be  
more sure of your “lost” self, more  
sure you are truly sat with you today  
what are fingers for but moving to  
dripping basslines and keeping  
a secret space between yours and mine  
cycling smooth is just mixing porridge and mo-  
tor bikes have  
got to have lumps (yawn down my street)  
always wondering how long before you will find  
me  
sat tapping sipping thinking (hiding)  
why not draw the shapes in your mind on your  
knee and why not  
chase the sun in the morning (never make it in a  
day)  
grey cats will always sit in windowsills and  
black birds do not know a world before wires  
so there are lots of thoughts lost to my gravel  
and goosebump sky  
hiding in the sand dunes  
i buried them with a fork  
(took a while)  
and said  
goodnight

**Blossom Hibbert**

poem 5

man sits lake listens and goose (broken wing goose)

will eavesdrop

drop the act, goose

girl cycles through the present future,

past with a whole hand on only one bar

takes a finger off every time she makes eyes (scrambled  
eyes on toast)

man reads books puts out bins drives crunchy cars

talks to me through shadows singing on the road (when  
her sun is hid)

hidden girl looks down drains spits out gum wants  
more bruises

hey, have you heard that one about splodges on fruit  
and

girls that cycle with no hands? (no punchline)

she fell off, eventually. expectantly, enthusiastically

man laughs to self; man thinks to tumbling girls

(tumble dried women)

and simply chuckles

i (being the goose) would like to know

if girls cycle with no hands. if men still tell secrets to  
lakes.

if a goose could ever ride a bike?

**Blossom Hibbert**

## **Park-garden rest**

The white flame of pampas grass  
ignites its stillness deep inside the stir,  
the turmoil of turning where rest is forgotten.

October is a reckoning, where the last of summer  
fights with the wind as leaves are lost to the battle.  
But Sage and Primroses defiant stand  
in their purple and yellow parade,

to reach for the thin sun of late afternoon,  
the last shawl of the soul mends all those who ask it,  
thinking of those whose plaques adorn these benches,  
favourite places that hold their last traces.

The walls stay silent as if the surfeit of stories are  
theirs  
to guard, while the afternoon reader coughs against  
the air  
to more invented histories,  
that run their predestined course like some too tame  
river.

I reach for the white flame as if in it  
might hide more debauched tales,  
the life I once dreamed of, before the world began.

**John Humphreys**

## **All you can eat**

Take me down near Dublin city,  
where the grass is green,  
and the goats sit pretty.

Grazing mammals tearing, chewing,  
razing to the ground spiky scrub,  
the thorny question,  
if not now, when?

Goats follow human females,  
devour dominant vegetation,  
novel satellite tracking,  
save from extinction,  
ruminants with a view.

All you can eat,  
scrub, heather, gorse,  
overgrown green life,  
conservation, of course,  
prevents wildfires,  
plants so pernicious,  
feed fearsome flames,  
landowner judicious.

Goats recruited  
to do our bidding,  
rebellious ruminants,  
no kidding!

## **Peace of Mind**

peace of mind –  
peace of mind we all want –  
peace of mind peace of mind –  
we all want not to be found –  
in busyness - in busyness so to find  
- so to find - so to find –  
peace of mind  
- peace of mind  
- where to go –  
what to do - what to do  
- peace of mind peace of mind –  
where to find - where to find –  
they say - yes yes say - they say –  
yes yes say - love is blind  
- love is blind so so never mind –  
never mind - with - oh yes –  
with - oh yes with - outgoing concern  
- no no - not - taking too much on –  
we are heading –  
you are heading - yes yes  
- heading towards - peace of mind

**John Merchant**







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We are currently open for submissions for **issue 55**. Poems can be on any theme. The only stipulation is that they are short, (25 lines or less) to fit onto a page of A6. Your poem may be brilliant but if its as long as Paradise Lost then it won't get in.

The deadline for submissions is January 20th 2022  
Send poems (text or short video content) to  
[frankmac\\_1999@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:frankmac_1999@yahoo.co.uk)

**DIY POETS**  
**Issue 54 also**  
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