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THE
FREE
POETRY
MAGAZINE



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

my son's face is full of screws, so I scoff and tell him

'you're not properly Nottin'um'

and then he's off on one

reminding me he was born

here and has lived

here his entire nine years,

uses words like nesh and mardyeh,

loves ducks and goose

fair, wants Notts County, and even

Forest, to win

and knows Derby and Leicester (king

or no king) don't compare to the

Queen of the Midlands:

'so why, *dad*, am I not properly

Nottin'um, please?'

'well, mi'duck, it was your reaction just now

to my offer of mushy peas.'

Harry Wilding



BAR STOOL COOL

She stepped out of her car
And strolled into the bar
Looking very cool
She settled on a stool

Twenty pairs of eyes
Were fixed upon her thighs
But she sat upon the stool
Ignoring all their drool

She sipped her ice-cold drink
Not a staring eye could blink
But this girl was no fool
She just maintained her cool

A handsome stranger came
To end their drooling game
And settled on the stool
Next to the queen of cool

They chatted at the bar
Then walked out to her car
And the empty-headed fools
Stared at the bar-room stools

© **Don Holmes**



From Frankie to Frank

I might have been fourteen,
When I changed
From Frankie to Frank.
My name contracting
As my world got slightly bigger.
My shell replaced
By an armour
Of denim and leather.
I want to bang a gong
For my old gang.
I was still Frankie at home
But a bum fluff Frank
For when I wanted to roam
Townward to the *Giffard*.

Frank McMahon



Not afraid

Camellia flowers lie startled on the earth.
Doubt in sticky accumulations
as aching candles overspill heavier hurts.
Childish, wildish, almost silly, some fallen together,

some apart. They could at any moment
be caught up by any of their branches,
if a one could bend so far, welcomed home
with lanterns, rough laughter and still believing.

Ruby blue on a mossy underglaze
the hymn keeps repeating. A robin,
unseen before, witness, celebrant of then
this is left.

The leap inward. And fresh stones standing
when the tide has at length gone out.

Kevin Jackson

No Resurrection

I don't believe in the resurrection,
At least with a capital R.
I see no detection
Of this as truth. I had my defection
Years ago. No way out of the tomb,
No trinity of infinity .
There's a resurrection
Of the dead earth each spring,
But for how many more?
As our Earth is crucified,
Nailed to a giant cross,
Made from the rainforest,
To slowly suffocate.
It feebly clings to breath,
Near to death,
Before being flung
Into the eternal tomb.

**Frank
McMahon**



In black forms

In black forms of orange and burgundy
the words appear like burnt toast,
crumbling, free falling floor-wards.
The pensive pain like squid inked pasta in
its oily sea.
Lines caw like crows who've seen one too
many deaths,
listening, writing their own sadder music,
avoiding the loud boasts of shinier verse.
In sodden cemeteries they sing of the end,
the holes in the world, where everything
stopped.

John Humphreys

Corners

I will take the torn-off corners of time not
fully spent:

those hours in queues,
on buses,

waiting for the answering of a phone,
moments lost in absent drift,
waiting to be served,
searching for the right word.

I will bundle them all up,
iron them flat
and press out shapes of days:
my time
to loop onto the end of time.

Elaine Bowden



Spring

A gang of starlings
in their stage suits
tumble through the deceitful blue:
infinite elasticity of edge
Hope bundled in the fist-bloated pockets
of a winter coat.

A breath of lawn before the green-free
twisted hedge,
barbed and fingers crossed
for trouble,
for another chance
to blossom

Much lost in the months just past
never to re-surface.

But not, it would seem, the spring

Elaine Bowden



Gastropods

Gregarious gastropods,
partial to precipitation,
nocturnal foraging on lush lawns,
soft, soil paths prepared, moist is a must,
supper of leaves, treasured floral forms,
vulnerable, vegetable crops,
your fingers crossed like bean canes.

The Royal Horticultural Society,
changing at a snail's pace,
molluscs no longer a 'menace',
climbing rough, red brick,
finding form, leaving trails,
glass panes glistening,
textural, timber boundaries,
slimy slugs, large black, great grey,
shel-tered snails tell coiled tales,
much-maligned meandering molluscs.

Nursery rhymes told us that
'little boys are made of these'.

Who am I to disagree?

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NEW BEGINNINGS

On the beaten trail
Very familiar to me
The trampled down path
Goes on forever
But what's behind the parallel hedges
The sturdy lines of poplar trees
Do I have to keep walking this way?
On the spur of the moment
I ease through the hedge
That hems me in
A soft meadow
Dandelions and buttercups
The tweeting music of birds
High up in the deep blue sky
Sunshine makes my eyes blink
The air smells fresh and clean
I can go anywhere I wish
I drink in the calm and peace
It nurtures me
New beginnings

Richard Banker



Second - Hand Guilt

There is a fox
in Nanna's wardrobe,
snapping at floral
dresses, overalls,
a Sunday coat.

Beady eyes
fix on me,
as I sneak in
to feel the silks,
nylons and fur.

Does it run
in the family,
a wish for
animal pelt to wrap
itself round a body?

My daughter
asks for one
from Camden Market,
stalls brimming
with nostalgia.

The fox's grin hurts
as it clasps a tail
around bony shoulders.
*Let's look for something
different, new, I say.*

Gail Webb



Graffiti – “Be Water”

A redbrick wall.
Begin with a little drip dripping
a slow thaw
dewdrops at rosy dawn
rusty leaking gutter
raspberry ice lolly on a hot day.

Sharp edges soften
fatten
sag, and now, losing its shape,
falls, and finally
the rush and whoosh
An iron-red river flooding
down the road
and the cars become gondolas.

Clare Stewart
January 2022





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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 30th July 2022 Send
poems to:

frankmac_1999@yahoo.co.uk

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