



57

**THE
FREE
POETRY
MAGAZINE**



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

you know what's shitty

: rich folk flying
their
private jets
between airports in
the same city

Harry Wilding



Paris, Texas

Paris, Texas, was further than we thought:
took us three days to travel there.

Through exams in French and German,
while the man walked across the desert.
Through the scrubbing of a bay window roof,
while the child walked home from school alone.
Through the failed opening of a bank account online,
while the estranged mother waited
to talk to her next “trick”.

While the husband lined up shoes in the sun.
While the American desert spread out before us.
While the pinks and greens of life throbbed.

While our borders closed and a vigil was disturbed
by police in riot gear.
While two black sisters were stabbed in Wembley Park
and I can't bear to say what the police did.

Took us three days to travel to Paris, Texas—
it was much further than we thought.

(Poem inspired by the film *Paris, Texas*)
Laura Grevel

Perimenopause

Perimenopause

What's that?

Perimenopause

I'm going slightly mad!

Perimenopause

It comes before the menopause .

Perimenopause

Needs to be talked about more .

Perimenopause

Natures inconvenience.

Elaine Boot



Northumberland

Barkless timber, bleached and bare,
beached high and dry, sandy shore,
bright grains gathered on gradients,
tide and time never paused,
rocky Staple, Farne Islands,
puffins, guillemots, binoculars
scanning rocky landscape,
sudden, sharp descent,
a twisted knee, lifeboat rescue,
worse things happen at sea.

Massive stone structures,
fortified, repaired or in ruins,
defended inherited terrain,
elements more adverse than
wind or rain, invasive individuals,
arrows, cannon balls, contested
lands of coast and country.

Marine salinity, cumulative, collective
tears, cliffs, dark and brooding,
guillemots and breeding terns,
noisy, nesting, splattered white,
ammonia, fresh guano white,
dolphins arcing parallel to shore,
their pod cast to sea, recorded for
training porpoises.

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Rain

Dry Earth breathes again
Damp leaves soak up welcome rain
Gardeners will smile

Sue McFarlane



Music

Melody so clear
Singing carried far on waves
Lyrics fill my heart.

Sue McFarlane

Can't Stop the Rain

I can no more stop what's happening in Ukraine
Than I can stop the rain.

Can give a refugee an umbrella

But dark skies remain

Its depressing so I only watch the news once a
day.

No point in gazing at skies so gray.

Being well informed

About a world deformed.

Staff on the trains can strike,

Do more than rail against injustice.

A broad tent against the rain,

Can force the clouds to negotiate.

Frank McMahon



Old Haunts

There was no point in going back
To the old haunts.
These dead have no ghosts.
They outnumber the living.
The pub no longer his local;
Snugs have gone
Now open plan
Change is hard
Everyone pays by card.
Not even any balds and greys
To discuss the old days.

Frank McMahon



Word Loss

They want to close the libraries
shut them up, from me and from you,
too much page-turning causes trouble,
the books are tired and overdue.

Through stories, poems and memoir,
they've forgotten how much we learn
from a tense plot and strong image
the joy we can feel, the slow burn.

We forget about our troubles
as energy bills rise, uncurl,
the chapters reveal their secrets
quite takes us to another world.

We gain from reading facts, research,
then there's knowledge, information,
to sustain, nourish young and old -
libraries help to grow nations.

We are the players in time here,
it's not just about the pages,
it's community and fair play.
We should all have access, stages.

They want to close the libraries.
Don't let them. We need this space
to learn together, challenge, stretch,
to think, absorb and plan escapes.

Gail Webb

The unknown pleasures of allotment gardening

24 hours of isolation in the wilderness of a lonely place.
Decades ago, it was a means to an end and a novelty;
these days I am a candidate for prizes.

She's lost control of the adjacent plot;
a colony of weeds in the Interzone is moving closer.
Transmission, Love, will tear us apart.
If the result is an atrocity exhibition,
then at the ceremony there will be no love lost.

As the new dawn fades, I feel the atmosphere,
of the dead souls, in a shadowplay,
they walked in line before across the allotment.
One day I will passover and meet
these leaders of men for unknown pleasures
talking about the vegetables of a new order.

Stuart Whomsley



The flavour

It should be truth in knowing,
But knowing is always breaking,
And breaking is usually random.
A random unaudited list of stuff,
Stuff that's gold and stuff that's shite,
But it's the shite that adds the flavour.

John Humphreys

How come
It's easier to express
When you're milking me?

Becky Deans



BEFORE TOMORROW BLOWS AWAY

How bleak the future soon will be
If we don't face reality
The verdant Earth beneath our feet
Barren, sterile and soon deplete
No longer will the cattle graze
No wildlife roaming to amaze
Trees and bushes sadly gone
No green-grass hills to gaze upon
Rivers long ago stopped flowing
Now a dry wind, howling, blowing
Where once a river flowed nearby
Is just a gully, arid, dry
This vision does not have to be
We all can change reality
Make that effort, here, today
Before tomorrow blows away

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We are currently open for submissions for **issue 58**
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 10th November
2022 Send poems to:

frankmac_1999@yahoo.co.uk

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