

A Duet Of Ghosts

Poets in Conversation

Black Bough Poetry

Online version

WHAT OTHERS ARE SAYING:

We're immensely proud of our books at **Black Bough**, but don't just take our word for it. Here are some snippets from avid readers and leading lights in the poetry and literary world, who also love the power and poetic punch of our imagistic, micro world...

"Micro poems are demanding and unforgiving. A handful of lines and words leave little room for error or self indulgence. *Black Bough Poetry's Christmas & Winter edition (vol. 2)* contains finely crafted works with language and deep imagery that surprise and delight ... Editor Matthew M. C. Smith and his team have given us a true gift of creativity and community." - **Dana Knott (Editor of Tiny Wren Lit) for East Ridge Review**

"the writers and artists gathered here [in *Deep Time: Volume 1*] have carried out their own fathomings and explorations, and the result is a collection of work that feels both contemporary and mythic, urgent and ancient"
- **Robert Macfarlane**

"Here [in *Dark Confessions*] are fierce, musical poems that chart interior spaces of solitude and constraint but also pieces that sizzle with imagination and, to quote Natalie Ann Holborow, 'spread miles / between your skin and wet gardens'. A raw and potent gathering."
- **John McCullough**

"This is what I want from an anthology. *Afterfeather* is a treasure box inviting you to reach in, pick at random and be guaranteed unexpected delight. All 24 poems are vivid and short, allowing you to read and reread them into familiarity. Again and again, I found myself murmuring lines for the sheer pleasure of feeling them in my mouth."
- **Amazon reviewer for *Afterfeather***

“Deep Time: Volume 1, published by Black Bough Poetry, is a journey into the complex spaces of human existence. The poetry and art begs us to crack open the surface, to delve deep and to examine our lives with purpose ... All of the artists contained in this anthology extend an invitation for us to spend some deeper time with ourselves, exploring the underland of humanity and nature and how we connect with it.”

- **Ann van der Giessen for Juliette Writes**

*“The kind of poetry which leaves an indelible impression on you, the kind of poetry which seeps into your bones.” - Amazon reviewer for **Freedom Rapture***

“Black Bough Poetry, founded in 2019 by Matthew M. C. Smith, has reignited the independent poetry scene in the United Kingdom through their publication of high-quality, imagist poetry and their engagement with poets and presses of all backgrounds” - Alan Parry (Ed. Broken Spine)

Online version

*“These [poems in **Deep Time vol 2**] are journeys as much as they are poems, steeped in ancestral traditions. A wonderfully enjoyable read and a beautiful reminder of the transience of our own existence.”*

- **Alex J Langlands (archaeologist, presenter and writer).**

“As fierce, affecting and captivating as performances by rock god Jim Morrison or punk priestess Debbie Harry, this feast of vivid, imagistic, and richly lyrical poems have the wild energy of the mosh pit, and are as intoxicating as an after show party.” - Anna Saunders poet and CEO Cheltenham Poetry Festival.

Guest Editor: Jen Feroze

Black Bough Poetry Editor: Matthew M C Smith

Artist: Charlotte Baxter

First published in print by Black Bough Poetry in 2022.

Seaglass was first published in *Pushing Out The Boat* Issue 16.

White Lily first appeared in *Spirit Mother* by Patricia M Osborne, published by *The Hedgehog Poetry Press*

My Father, Aged Forty, Flying A Kite, Alone was first published in *B O D Y*.

Self Contained first appeared in *Afterfeather* from *Black Bough Poetry*

January Moon first appeared in the Silver Branch series from *Black Bough Poetry*.

Our thanks to the editors of these publications.

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'Creyr / Heron' - Wood and linocut with Chine Colle
Charlotte Baxter

FOREWORD:

From guest editor Jen Feroze:

Putting together this anthology has been a joy. Each pair of facing pages is a call and answer between poets, the second in each pairing written as an ‘after’ or response piece to the first. These poems speak to each other in varied and beautiful ways, while each brings a fresh wholeness of its own. In selecting the poems for this special issue, I was struck by how brilliantly and, at times, hauntingly images are shifted and refracted to create entirely new landscapes, soundscapes and reading experiences. Every writer featured in this anthology has a real handle on their craft, and each pair of poems rings with exquisitely judged echoes. What we have here is a shimmering game of Marco Polo rippling across oceans and time zones. I can’t wait for you to discover it.

From Black Bough editor Matthew M C Smith:

Welcome to another special edition of *Black Bough Poetry* – special as we have never done an ‘after’ or ‘companion’ poems anthology before; special, too, as this is guest edited by the tremendous literary talent that is Jen Feroze. Asking talented poets to curate Black Bough editions has really paid dividends in 2022, keeping this press vital and experimental with Jen assessing very carefully the poems that should be included from our Twitter platform @TopTweetTuesday and the order. It’s impressive to see such strong imagist work here – poems loaded with meaning and nuance, exemplifying our aesthetic. We looked at a wide range of art that would match the contemplative nature of the poems in this book. Once again, we showcase another outstanding artist based in Wales, Charlotte Baxter, based in Pembrokeshire. Our thanks to everyone involved in this beautiful collection. This will be an unforgettable issue!

The Poet Spells Her Name

I spell my name with an S -
a stream slipping between
banks of sun-dried summer grass -
an apple-cheeked a, arms open,
adorable. An r is a broken
arch of rambling roses,
red petals, russet rosehips.
The second a is ample,
and the h is the tail-end
of a long-held sigh.

Sarah Connor

Online version

The Poet Spells Her Name

with a C, like the first cup of
coffee in the morning; a crescent
moon that blooms into an o of
wonder when a raven lands on the
branch of the r, an inquisitive i,
followed by a double n -
nevermore, nevermore, the a is an
aperture, letting the light in.

Corinna Board

Online version

Vase

The vase stands on the hall table,
cracked, water seeps out
in cool rivulets that trace a path
down the glazed exterior of
rich green, blue, cloud-swirl white.

This is the only vase in the house
but the flowers in the garden
are so beautiful

that each of us cuts a stem,
fills the vase with blood-red peonies,
irises the colour of midnight,
roses like the blush of evening sun.

Flowers in a cracked vase,
a burst of reckless beauty.

Beth Brooke

Verse

night is complacent
a plastic sun sits in
vase of cracked sky
a poem bleeds, runs
down dawn's throat
the red cock yawns
cracked morn voice
beckons virgin light
we pluck a stalk each
a prayer & wild verses

Jide Badmus

Online version

Frogskin

Is what I call it when we touch.
Like when we're walking along the pier
and the back of your left hand brushes my fingers.
It's the shivery jump that shoots
up my arms and down my spine.
I can't help the way my brain
fills with water lilies, their opening petals
flushed pink against dark water.

Jen Feroze

Online version

Lotus-Fall

Before we were
a clash
of hot breaths,

a skimming
stone down body's penumbra,

before, before —

a knuckle-brush.

Stillness
beading, opening
a single moment
to petals. And inside, the hours

tremble,
rolling off

another —

Letitia Jju

Scattered

Here noses the warm beast
of riverstone into the envelope
of my folded hand. There the socket
she knocked from, the gap in the cairn
of a rocky family, the heavy tongue
of the water—pronouncing *loss*
loss loss all the way down to the sea.
At some point the dragged neck-weight
you were crumbled grey and was breathed out
and in along this gulping throat and no room left
in the caving mouth for any other word.
I weigh my choice stood tall, feathers of sun
through wattle's rattle and the heart
of stone on the palm's scale. To sink a gift
or pocket it: how each means letting go. Hard old
beast, my hand is opening: the wind shouts *ash*.

Ankh Spice

Courage

This pebble word that sits balanced
on the tip
of my tongue,
a rounded weight of meaning,
carefully measured, it gives shape
to gaps between worlds,
a surface shared then split then travelled -
millennia, eon, ocean,
rolled, reeled, relinquished
to lie sheltered in shattered sand.
I pebble-press this thought into your palm
from the other side of this blistering Earth.

Larissa Reid

Online version

Pieridae

Kite tassels slipped from your string,
you buoy on the breeze, living
confetti, celebrating
the simple fact of being
here at all - a bow of wing -
no thought of how you're using
your time ... how fast you're going.

Mark Antony Owen

Online version

Dichotomy

i don't know how to describe
the way i am when i'm alone.

somewhere across the skyline
a cormorant is cutting the night,
slicing through fossil vapour
with wings the length of a single
white line paced on a motorway,
the staggered breath of paint
beneath flight and exhaust.

Briony Collins

Online version

White Lily

Hera puts her baby
to the breast,
beads of milk fall
to earth and spring
up as soft-white
trumpet blooms.

Patricia M. Osborne

Online version

Boon

An emptiness of arms.
Breasts leak dew—
beads of mourning opal.

Silhouette
of sleeping seahorse
cradled in silk—
sapling that slipped
from my womb.

Shivering sprig, curled
in wind, cloud-ward bound,
strengthens to tree
in the seep of seasons.

Spring's boon of solace,
an armful of zephyrs—
my angel-child blooms
in lavender-blues.

Oormila Vijaykrishnan Prahlad

The Significance Of A Heron

When she stands, her legs—one bent, one straight—
are the strings we stretch between the stars
to pluck from random placement a shape
vibrating with meaning for a humming mind.
And when her head turns this way and that,
the grid of the dumb earth turns to follow.
All our rules are plumbed from her.

In flight, though, her gangly legs dangle.
The magnanimous curves of her switchback neck
are aerodynamically ludicrous.
And her wings look like mittens too big for her hands.

But even when she flies, ungainly,
we remember her lit by a rising sun,
beak level with the horizon,
neck coiled like a spring—a sentinel.

She carries within her a stillness.
When she alights, it gradually
permeates her surroundings,
the same way stars stealthily appear, bringing order
to a sky hungering to be measured.

J-T Kelly

Hero(n)

Plumbing
the stillness
of dusk

and these margins
of water
and twilight,

the heron waits -

inventing mindfulness,

condensing a moment
in perfect self-containment.

And man -
dumb-fingered,
joining the dots,

all string
and awkward
elbow.

Missing the stars.

Ivor Daniel

Ghosts

You are always told
they'll be in the knotted wood
of a creak hinged door,
or stood behind it on tiptoe
with a satchel of howling mist.

They say it to scare us,
but we straddle it
as a thrill, like a kiss in an alley.
We go stalking the night,
looking for hauntings,
fingers crossed, mouths open,
ready to scream the moon raw.

All my bite your tongue teeth line up
as a collection of headstones,
our hankering words rattling
together. We sit breathless,
an inch of anticipation between
our locked together eyes,
like a duet of ghosts set in glass.

We are going to burn
the light black
as we pull the stars out
of the cauldron scorched sky.

Daniel Duggan

If Ghosts Could Speak

I'm reminded of my grandparents'
house, its storytelling fireplace
its dark corners

the cough and creak
of passing ghosts,
wood that wore a winter coat.

I watch this spider, silently
spinning a web
as silver strands of DNA

wonder at words
escaping through
a broken pane.

Now I have no night light comfort
no hand to hold as darkness stalks
a staircase swallowing itself.

If my grandparents are stars
in this blue-black sky, can I
reach out and trap their dreams.

Eileen Carney Hulme



'Adlewyrchiad' (Reflection) - Linocut
Charlotte Baxter



'Glaw a Thonnau / Rain & Waves' - Linocut
Charlotte Baxter

These Summer Days

These summer days
that warble into dusk,
birdsong threading golden silks
through fading rays,

these scented, hay-honeyed days,
thick and sweet as roses,
meadows stubble-stalked by jays,
by lean and hungry cats,

they stretch from here to there,
carried on the silver tide of poplar leaves,
the silver tide of moonlight,
the silver voices of the owls.

Online version

Jane Dougherty

This Summer Day

In eddies of early heat,
Speckled Woods rise
in a double-helix pas de deux,
scenting tree-top honeydew.

A lazy gust of west wind
needles dormant pines,
reluctant arms wave awake,
only to sleep again.

Curtains drawn, blinds pulled,
suburban life subdued,
anxiety turns tepid. Life
goes on. The world burns.

Online version

Mary Earnshaw

Seaglass

As a child I had many special pieces:
five red, three butter yellow,
one deepest purple,
and one bright, bright, orange.

But when I thought one day
I am grown
I dropped them into the sand.

I was wrong.
I still look for them
on every beach,
even as my days grow short.

Maxine Rose Munro

Online version

Under The Basin

A cupboard,
painted lime green one summer,
with a clickable clasp
on the door
and a dainty handle.

From inside I could use my thumb,
push the ball in on that latch
release it slowly,
shut myself in
with gentlest click.

The day I found I no longer fitted
beside the u-bend, in that space, I cried.
I had not known
this day would come.

Sue Finch

January Moon

On a night barren of dreams
and bereft of inspiration
I listen for the sound
of frost lifting ploughed fields
and stare out of the window

to where that noctilucent fruit
hangs out of reach
above a black ground
scattered carelessly
with glittering world-seeds.

Andy MacGregor

Online version

Attic Window

rain falls as twilight
scented and lazy

a memory of ashes
and smoke
apples and cedar
the solace of an orange moon

through hour and shadow
I fold paper cranes
and skip stones
over dollhouses

and watch the sky
fall to pieces

Online version

Regine Ebner

My Father, Aged Forty, Flying A Kite, Alone

The line! Keep it taut,
he shouted
to no one, and ran upwind,
his arms inexplicable
to whomever was looking
out of the bus window on their way home.
The field sloped away and disappeared
into rosehip shrubs. I remember not being there to see
the red and yellow delta spin towards the ground
from too much breath,
but I can imagine the bridle going up, the eyes
pinning the beast to the sky, the mouth
filling with a fresh batch of incantation.
The bus stopped, I think, and people poured out,
baffled by their heavy hearts,
and not one of them, not one
thought of the kite.

Radka Thea Otápková

**My Father-in-Law, Aged Eighty, Flying a Kite,
Unknown**

The list of things it's absurd
to imagine him doing is long.
Skydiving, of course.
Well, most things, in fact.
And this is not a list-poem
so I'll cut to the chase:
even kite flying is a stretch.

Yet there it is
- the string caught (or is it cut?) -
twitching like a stuck fly
on the breath of his broken words.

Ant Heald

Online version

self contained

an unsettling in the hawthorn bush
a winter wind rips at spring
 white petals violated
grass too long in the churned up lawn
roses clenched anxious in their own heads
 by the wall another dead rabbit
lost to a virus or fall of poison
 body slack eyes locked on sky
 rooks arrive a bicker of wings
 pick over gristle veins
a line of pines lean on hills unmoving

Lynn Valentine

Online version

shore line

continual shrieking celebrating this
elemental meeting place
wave tips scattering water's spray
escaping
whirled by gusts air's shuddering power
unsettling stones earth giving way
a cataclysmic ringing
rearrangements forms of
death of course
gulls squabble
dismembering a crab its limbs still
moving busily about
jackdaws search methodically
a pair of pigeons
plump incomprehension
skeery oyster-catchers frantic
piping carried away
by noise to
the curve of earth's end the disintegrating horizon
immeasurably far beyond

Ewan Smith

Wistman's Wood

would you lay your hand against a tree and imagine
it waking? a benediction for solidity, a prayer

for some wiser kind of life. perhaps that is only my holy
for who knows what is good anymore. who is god

anymore. i spent sunday in a church i used to know.
there, i found a thousand years of windburn and gnarled flesh

curled by the hand of desolation. i laid down inside
the moss, inside the damp palm of that consecrated ground

and was lost; a foetus in a cradle of swamp. above me hung
a sap-scabbed branch that held another's name and

i could not help but think of you – you,
who i did not meet. you, who i would not hold

you, who stroked the hollow of my throat and said:
only these loneliest of lands leave us yearning

the sun spread its riches across the canopy then and i smiled

for every lost thread
for every life i would not know

Rebecca Hooper

Atlas

Driving west where history deepens in the candle of dusk, one is remade as old stars. Seeing through stained glass as if ruin preceded our first breath, I feel your attention slip from my shoulder to Land's End.

Watching from afar is easy, a narrator, soft-lipped, conversing with a stranger. But to hold beauty as a precious thing, is a different faith. Hold it like the day's long gaze over heather tundra and all that is unmapped.

Decanting time is an art too. An unsteady hand leads to a sharp turn where wildness is a brambled dirt trail. But you gasp anyway, with something like pain or anticipation. And departure bay, idyll boats waiting to cradle our bodies - it could be heaven, if only you would trade the Gregorian for the immeasurable. If you dare come close enough to taste the salt of sorrow and its native tongues.

I would be the passenger looking back once at this ruddy painting - artist unknown. I'd curate each stepping stone and tell you it is about a greater picture; silver trout leaping across planets. The compass dismantled. As if the telescope lens were clouded by desire, you are bringing me the universe in a bell jar. Or that on a life-size scale, our faltering could prescribe the full yellow of joy, of flax in mid July. That across a swallow's small wingspan, bearings lost - I'd love you all the way there.

Vikki C.

Pinned

The distant hum of storm's fret
in an anonymity of sea.
Low slow sound as long years strain
through oak beams and bone rings.
Vessel pinned, hearts hemmed in,
to this scrolled embroidery of wind.

Larissa Reid

Online version

Cutting Loose

Fretful in the heavy thrum of heat,
sea-levels shift like convicts in chains,
straining against things done and still to come.
Ringed plovers scatter, unpicking tidelines
in a frenzy of pin-sharp calls. Offshore,
wind unfurls to sweet release of rain.

Alice Stainer

Online version

Morning Sea

Day began before I woke
while I slept it swam

slow and powerful
as a great whale

into the dark
sifting stars

dispersing shoals of night fish
turning them into blackbirds.

Jane Dougherty

Online version

Eventide

When I wasn't paying mind
afternoon became eventide.

Sometime between five and nine
Hera's golden apple fell

through rainbow arched skies.
Faster than a wet feather,

plucked from a white swan maiden,
sailing soundless across the moon.

Ian Richardson

Online version

CONTRIBUTOR BIOGRAPHIES

The A Duet Of Ghosts Team

Jen Feroze lives by the sea in Essex with her husband and two small sleep thieves. She spent 10 years working in children's publishing and has written and edited over 100 books for children, including a Christmas no 1 bestseller. A former Foyle young poet, her poetry has appeared or is forthcoming in a variety of publications including *Spelt*, *Poetry Wales*, *Atrium*, *Dust*, *Miniskirt* and *One Hand Clapping*. Jen was shortlisted for the Dai Fry award for mystical poetry. Her debut collection, *The Colour of Hope*, was published in 2020 to raise money for Mind mental health charity. Find her on instagram: @the_colourofhope and on Twitter: @jenlareine.

Charlotte Baxter is drawn to the natural world. Her work acknowledges the rhythms and cycles found in nature and the dynamic beauty found in the landscape. Charlotte works primarily with lino and woodcut and the printmaking process itself greatly influences her work with each element bringing its own exciting opportunities – most notably the unpredictable results that can be achieved through building layers, pattern and texture within her prints. Find more of her work at www.charlottebaxterart.com

Matthew M C Smith is a writer from Wales with two collections, *Origin: 21 Poems* and the forthcoming *The Keeper of Aeons (Broken Spine)*. He edits *Black Bough Poetry*, *Top Tweet Tuesday* and the *Silver Branch* project.

Online version

Poets

Alice Stainer teaches English Literature to visiting students in Oxford and is also a dancer and musician. Her work particularly explores place and human relationship through the lenses of nature and art, and appears in journals such as *Green Ink Poetry*, *192 Magazine*, *Atrium*, *Feral Poetry* and *The Dawntreader*. She is nervously putting together her first pamphlet and tweets poetically @AliceStainer.

Andy MacGregor is an ecologist and philosopher from Glasgow, Scotland, where he lives with his wife and two teenage kids. He finds his inspiration chiefly in nature, both in the depth and grandeur of natural landscapes, and in the magic of tiny creatures. When not penning poems and playing the guitar, he is slowly writing a philosophical book about human consciousness and our relationship to the world around us. Find him on Twitter @macgregor_andy.

Ankh Spice is an Aotearoa New Zealand poet, author of *The Water Engine (Femme Salvé Books, 2021)*. His poetry is widely published, eight times nominated for Pushcart Prize/Best of the Net. He's a poetry contributing editor at *Barren Magazine*, co-edits at *IceFloe Press*, and like all of us, is an ambulant sea. Find him at www.ankhspice-seagoatscreampoeetry.com; Twitter: @SeaGoatScreamsPoetry; Facebook: @AnkhSpiceSeaGoatScreamsPoetry

Ant Heald hails from Yorkshire and lives in Llanelli, which influenced his contribution to poemofthenorth.co.uk He has previous form in responding to other poets, having shadowed all the poems in that collection (see Instagram - @antheald). His work appears in previous and forthcoming *Black Bough Christmas/Winter* editions. He has had creative non-fiction published in Nation.Cymru and was awarded the inaugural Gwobr Lenyddol Nigel Jenkins Literary Award, 2021.

Beth Brooke is a retired teacher, living in Dorset. Her debut pamphlet, 'A Landscape With Birds' is published by *Hedgehog Poetry Press*. She has also had work published by *Marble*, *The York Literary Review*, *Dreich* and a number of other journals.

Briony Collins is the author of *Blame it on Me* and *All That Glisters*, both published by *Broken Sleep Books*. Her next instalment of poetry - *The Birds, The Rabbits, The Trees* - is forthcoming with them in April 2023. Currently, Briony manages her time between running *Cape Magazine* and working on her PhD. Website: www.brionycollins.co.uk Twitter: @ri_collins

Corinna Board teaches English as an additional language in Oxford. She grew up on her grandparents' farm in the Cotswolds and is particularly inspired by nature. Her work is published or forthcoming in *the6ress*, *Black Cat Poetry Press*, *Wild Roof Journal*, *Humana Obscura*, *Green Ink Poetry*, *Anthropocene*, *Spelt* and elsewhere. She is currently working on her first pamphlet. Corinna can be found on Instagram @parole_de_reveuse and on Twitter @CorinnaBoard.

Daniel Duggan is meandering around the Scottish Borders, his fingers covered in rust and inky myths. Inside his chatterbox noggin sits a kilned desire to unearth the words that will show you who he really is. You can find him with a mug of tea in his hand, a hat on his head and birds coat tailing his shadow.

Eileen Carney Hulme has three collections published. She has won a number of competitions and her poems have appeared in many magazines, anthologies and internet poetry websites. Her work has been set to music and performed in Ireland and a selection of her poems inspired and featured in an art exhibition in Scotland. www.eileencarneyhulme.org.uk

Ewan Smith is a retired primary school teacher now living the dream by the seaside in North Wales. He is a member of the Colwyn Bay Writers' Circle and is learning Welsh with more enthusiasm than accuracy.

Ian Richardson lives on the East coast of Scotland, he has been reading for a long time. Eventually, inevitably, he began to write and his work has appeared in many poetry publications, online and in print. In September 2015, Ian was Overall Winner in the Scottish Borders 'Waverley Lines' poetry competition. His work has appeared in several *Black Bough* publications. Ian writes haiku. Many examples of which can be found on Twitter @IanRich10562022

Ivor Daniel lives in Gloucestershire, UK. His poems have appeared in *A Spray of Hope, wildfire words, Steel Jackdaw, Writeresque, iamb, Fevers of the Mind, The Trawler 2021, Roi Fainéant, Ice Floe Press, The Dawntreader, After..., Alien Buddha, Block Party and Black Nore Review*. He has poems forthcoming in *Re-Side, Lit. 202, The Orchard Lea Anthology (Cancer)* and *The Crump's Barn Anthology (Halloween)*. Find him on Twitter @IvorDaniel

J-T Kelly is an innkeeper in Indianapolis. He lives in a brick house with his wife and five children, his two parents, and a dog.

Jane Dougherty lives and works in southwest France. Her poems and stories have been published in magazines and journals including *Ogham Stone, the Ekphrastic Review, Black Bough Poetry, ink sweat and tears, Glean, Nightingale & Sparrow, Green Ink* and *Brilliant Flash Fiction*. She blogs at <https://janedougherty.wordpress.com/> Her poetry chapbooks: 'thicker than water' and 'birds and other feathers' were published in October and November 2020.

Jide Badmus is inspired by beauty and destruction; he believes that things in ruins were once beautiful. Author of *Obaluaye (FlowerSong Press, 2022)* and two other full Poetry collections, and five Poetry Chapbooks. He has a Pushcart Prize nomination. Badmus has curated Four anthologies He is founder, *INKspiredNG*, Poetry Editor for *Con-scio Magazine*, and sits on the board of advisors for *Libretto Magazine*. Jide writes from Lagos, Nigeria. He tweets @bardmus.

Larissa Reid has written poetry and prose regularly since 2016. Notable publications include *Northwords Now, Silk & Smoke, Green Ink Poetry, Black Bough Poetry's Anthologies*, and the *Beyond the Swelkie Anthology*. She had a poem shortlisted for the Janet Coats Memorial Prize 2020. Based on Scotland's east coast, she balances her writing life with bringing up her daughters. Larissa is a founder member of the Edinburgh-based writing group, Twisted::Colon.

Letitia Jiju has a penchant for imagist poems and retelling the divine & the mythological. Her poems have appeared/are forthcoming in *Black Bough Poetry, Amethyst Review, Moist Poetry Journal, Acropolis Journal* and *Emirates Literature Festival*. She serves as Poetry Editor at *Mag 20/20*. You can find her on Instagram/Twitter @eaturltuce.

Lynn Valentine lives in the Scottish Highlands with a mountain for a neighbour. Her debut collection, *Life's Stink and Honey*, was published by *Cinnamon Press* in 2022, after winning the Cinnamon Literature Award. Her Scots language pamphlet, 'A Glimmer o Stars', was published by *Hedgehog Poetry Press* in 2021, after winning their dialect competition. She is currently being mentored by the poet Niall Campbell after winning a place on the Roddy Lumsden Memorial Mentoring scheme.

Mark Antony Owen is the author of digital-only poetry project *Subruria*. He's also the creator, curator and publisher of online poetry journals *iamb* and *After...*

Mary Earnshaw lives south of the River Ribble, between the sea and Lancashire's mosslands. Ptolemy named the area 'Belisama', which is also the title of a pamphlet of locally-inspired poems by four Southport poets, including Mary, published by *Dreich*. Mary's poetry, short stories and creative non-fiction have been published in a variety of print journals and anthologies. In 2021 she was shortlisted for the Bridport Poetry Prize and the Julian Lennon Poetry Prize.

Maxine Rose Munro is a Shetlander adrift on the outskirts of Glasgow. She writes in both English and her native Shetlandic Scots. She is widely published, both in print and online, most recently in *The Scottish Poetry Library Best Scottish Poem 2021* anthology, and in *The Scotsman*. Her work has appeared in railway stations, doctor's waiting rooms, and been part of a performance by the Scottish Ensemble. Find her here www.maxinerosemunro.com.

Ormila Vijaykrishnan Prahlad is an Indian-Australian artist, poet, and improv pianist. Her art and poetry have been published in various journals and anthologies including *Eunoia Review*, *Cordite Poetry Review*, *Bracken Magazine*, and *Black Bough Poetry*. She is a Pushcart and multiple Best of the Net nominee. Find her @oormilaprahlad and www.instagram.com/oormila_paintings.

Patricia M Osborne is married with grown-up children and grandchildren. In 2019 she graduated with an MA in Creative Writing. She is a published novelist, poet and short fiction writer with five poetry pamphlets published by *The Hedgehog Poetry Press*, and numerous poems and short stories appearing in various literary magazines and anthologies. Her debut poetry pamphlet, 'Taxus Baccata', was nominated for the Michael Marks Pamphlet Award.

Radka Thea Otpková writes poetry exclusively in English, although Czech is her first language. In 2019 she won the Waltham Forest Poetry Competition. Her poems have appeared online in *B O D Y* and *Moria* and in print in *The North* and *Tears in the Fence*.

Rebecca Hooper is a scientist of non-human minds. She currently works with wild corvids and monkeys. In her spare time she can usually be found writing poetry, swimming in the sea or curling up on the sofa with a cup of tea and a book. Her friends suspect she was a cat in a former life (she does not disagree).

Regine Ebner is a teacher and writer in Tucson, Arizona. She is the author of the poetry chapbook, 'Oxidized Pennies' (*Alien Buddha Press*, 2022), and widely published in press anthologies such as *Black Bough Poetry*, *Cerasus Magazine*, *Acropolis Journal*, *Spellbinder Magazine*, *Livina Press* and others. She writes colourful, imagistic poetry about nature, light and loss, and the great southwest Sonoran Desert.

Sarah Connor is a Pushcart nominee living in North Devon, England, surrounded by mud and apple trees. Her poetry and CNF have appeared in several publications, including *Black Bough*, *Spelt* and *Eat the Storms*. Sarah tweets as @sacosw and posts

mostly poetry at <https://fmmewritespoems.wordpress.com>. She is a regular host at <https://dversepoets.com/>

Sue Finch's debut collection, *Magnifying Glass*, was published in 2020. Her work has also appeared in a number of online magazines. She lives with her wife in North Wales. She loves the coast, peculiar things and the scent of ice-cream freezers. You can often find her on Twitter @soopoftheday.

Vikki C. is a British born poet and fiction writer whose work features vivid imagery inspired by the themes of existentialism, science and nature. Her writing is published in several anthologies including *Afterfeather*; the 2022 summer edition of *Black Bough Poetry*. Her voice and poetry have been featured in various spoken word projects and collaborations. Vikki is an avid pianist who enjoys composing soundscapes for spoken poetry. Vikki writes on Twitter under the handle @VWC_Writes.

Online version



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'Nos/Night' - Wood and linocut with Chine Colle
Charlotte Baxter

RECOMMENDED READING

Black Bough Poetry thrives on community. Why not electrify your bookshelves by checking out some of these titles from the press and friends of the Bough?

The Black Bough Poetry Library

(all titles available on Amazon)

Deep Time Vol 1 (Black Bough, 2020)

Deep Time Vol 2 (Black Bough, 2020)

Christmas & Winter Vol 1 (Black Bough, 2020)

Christmas & Winter Vol 2 (Black Bough, 2021)

Dark Confessions (Black Bough, 2021)

Freedom-Rapture (Black Bough, 2021)

Under Photon Crowns - Dai Fry (Black Bough, 2021)

Afterfeather (Black Bough, 2022)

Books From The '*A Duet Of Ghosts*' Team:

Origins: 21 Poems - Matthew M C Smith (Amazon, 2018)

The Colour of Hope - Jen Feroze (Matador, 2020)

Sun-Tipped Pillars Of Our Hearts (Black Bough, 2022)

Forthcoming Titles

The Keeper of Aeons - Matthew M C Smith (Broken Spine, 2022)

Nights on the Line - individual collection by M.S. Evans (2022/23)

Christmas & Winter Vol 3 (Black Bough 2022)

Tutankhamun Centenary Anthology (Black Bough 2023)

The Wasteland Centenary Anthology (Black Bough 2023)