

Muse Letter

DIY Poets (November 2025)

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What's been happening?

DIY Poets held an **Annual General Meeting** in September. All present incumbent roles were re-elected, except for Museletter Editor which Hazel has taken on (and here it is! Constructive feedback and suggestions welcomed). Members of the group said that they had enjoyed Helen's Museletter and expressed thanks to her for undertaking the role. Joy is planning to handover her social media role next year – so please get in touch with her if you feel able to help with this.

Some DIY poets travelled to a rainy **Morcombe for the Poetry Festival**, featuring as part of the Speech Therapy troop, as well as the Poetry Cocktail stage and peppering the open mics.

DIY Poets featured on stage and stall, at the **10 Years of Nottingham Poetry Festival** celebration at Metronome November 23rd alongside the great and the good of the Nottingham poetry scene.

Hockley Hustle featured a range of music and poetry across the city in support of local charities. Including plenty of DIY poets and friends.

The **Poetry Song Cake and Friends** event in Bulwell at the end of November celebrated with cake and raised funds for charities.

DIY Poets Youtube channel hosts a new poem each month: Recent contributions have been from Helen Sadler: "What Rhymes with Slartibartfast?"; Clare Stewart "Margarita"; and Hongwei Bao "Self Portrait as a Banana" -Check them out here: [DIY Poets - YouTube](#)

November Quarterly Review:

ACT 1

We gathered on a dark evening in November (for the last time at City Arts) to share poems and welcome newcomers and allcomers to the stage and screen.

Jennifer did a magnificent job, stepping up for the first time to be our host. We began the night with **Frank McMahon** -Bard of the Brief, opening with a book launch plug, followed by six short poems, "Navvies" exploring the positives of immigration, "Behind the Curtain" on seeking real friendships, and "Stones in my Running Shoes", "Top Trumps" featuring everyone's favourite orange-faced bully, "Conkers" on mental health, the passage of time and resilience, and finally a tribute to the NHS and a warning.

Next up was **Hazel**, picking up on the running theme she performed two poems on running, followed by a pairing of an instructional poem "How to Clean a Bathtub and Resolve and Argument" and an anti-instructional poem "How Not To Paint Your Toenails".

Elaine Boot was next up with her debut pamphlet for sale, performing the title poem "Spotting Something Other than a Pidgeon" a poem from five floors up full of hope, scenery buildings and birds. This was followed by three poems musing on the morphing seasons, preparing for autumn/winter, leaves changing and an unfulfilled promise of snow. Finally, a moving piece "My Mum" with loving memories of her mum.

Don Holmes was next up "Guitar Man" a comedic, onomatopoeic piece, reflecting on giving up on a dream, whilst recognising other strengths. "Stir Sunday" remembered Christmas traditions, a celebration of family and the joy of licking the spoon. Finally "If Only" talked of missed opportunities, love and regret.

Laura Grevel was next, joining on zoom to perform a selection of nature themed poems "Abundance" on the voice of nature calling, the repeated refrain "You're the.." gave thanks for abundance in nature and community. A poem on listening to nature and the sonnet of a toad, finally the "Song of the Owl" culminated with wonderful observations of nature that transported the room.

Next up was our Featured Act: **Vron McIntyre** joining on zoom and a very welcome return to the DIY stage. Vron is a brilliant, queer, non-binary, disabled poet and person, and long-time campaigner including a stint at Greenham Common. They gave an fantastic and well crafted feature set, moving from the personal, to the societal and ending on love.

Vron opened with "Childhood Home" with moving memories of moving on, and all that remains in the act of living around those still there. "Exercising the Beast" which is in her pamphlet featured a rubber mechanical beast machine. "Glorious Green Jumper" on handed down inheritance, and the love of green mohair. This led into a lovely memorial poem about mum "Four Years On" remembering that maternal song, the voice, the toast and tea, the care and love. The next was an enjoyable sensuous poem "Driving Home from Sainsbury's" taking us to a specific feeling a moment in time and connection with self in that moment.

The second part of Vron's act moved to more overtly political and broader themes, although of course they all entwine with the personal. "The Fuckups" on chosen family and finding tribes. "Borrowed from Tomorrow" on living with chronic illness, the impossibility of pacing, on building resilience and not being defeated. "Another War" was a covid poem, but unfortunately still relevant in reflecting on priorities and neglects in society. "Business Class Bin" gave some light relief and had us laughing although it still came with a serious message – someone's done their "business" all over the place, and who's going to clean it up!? This was followed with "Extinction" setting out the terms of survival for the "queer fat trans disabled" and the need for terminology to describe experience, and for community to validate it.

Vron's final act closed with a set of love poems, of a kind, "Starstruck" on galactic adoration, "Twisted Together" a word-play on twisty turning swirling feelings. "Keys" was about loving every little thing about someone, from the mundane to the profound. And lastly, a sonnet "They and Them" on the joy of pronouns, and a call to "live as who we really are, truth and autonomy our guiding stars" -well said Vron! We loved it.

We took a short break, during which there were a lot of **heartfelt thanks to Alma and Joe** and all at City Arts for their support over the years with a fond goodbye to the venue.

ACT 2

Alexandra picked up the hosting for the second half: opening with **Andrew Martin**, the Prince of Pun who gave us his typically witty, topical punny poems, first "Apple" on the science of Wellbeing. "Marvelling" a nature poem, and "Mont Blanc" on ultra trail running. "Solo" on solo swimming in Swiss Lakes and finally "Stage 4" reflecting on health challenges of Chris Hoy.

Jennifer Thorpe was next up, opening with "Rumination" a mental health definition poem, with repetitive ruminating rebellious wordplay. "Antidote for the Antagonistic" a study of the Letter A and starting anew. "Clothing" listened in on conversations of our clothing items. "Loose Chippings" considered what is chipped away at in life and what is left. Finally, "Belly Dancer" explored the freedom and joy found in expression of movement.

Guy Jones stepped up to the mic next, opening with a plug for the Christmas open mic in Sherwood (Sunday 14th December from 7pm). His first poem "Not Just for Christmas" features in the current DIY Poets zine, and reflects on homelessness and the failures of society during the cold hard season. This was followed by a spot of flash fiction, a true story with some spooky festive prose, mixing a supernatural flavour, with a splash of the spirit – of the alcohol flavour.

John Humphries graced us with a trilogy of Dylan Thomas inspired pieces, straight from having stayed in the bard's home. "From Dylan Thomas' Bedroom No 1" sat in lyrical conversation with Dylan through the years, responding in word to the memory of history.

“From Dylan Thomas’ Bedroom No 2” was inspired by a mirror, and a wondering of who else has looked into that glass and what have they seen. Finally, “From Dylan Thomas’ Bedroom No 3” related to the Edwardian light pulls, and a hankering for the romantic idea of a poet gripped by inspiration, writing into the night, contrasted with the more efficient work-a-day 9-5 routine he is said to have kept. Perhaps it’s true that inspiration only comes if she finds you working.

Clare Stewart our beloved crone-poet and leader of Women’s Centre Workshops, offered up some holiday inspired pieces following a recent trip to Italy. “Hotel Balcony” gave a descriptive observational poem of this moment, in relation to that historical moment of “panic-pumice- pummelling” in which Piny the Younger stayed home with a book, only to witness and remember the eruption that ended Pompeii. “Alone, You Will Never Walk” inspired by Anthony Gormley’s statues on Crosby Beach, eyes on the sea, watchful and protective.

Will Kummer opened the open mic section with an old favourite, an observational piece and a true story of an auspicious train ride home.

Jake Wildman was next, with a night-work poem, on the benefits of shift work for a subsection of people with already disrupted sleep routines, describing a community of nocturnal workers who would “rather be a grey-eared-bat than a rock-dove”. This was followed by a “Break-up poem” which he insists is not a love poem, despite being a poem about love and real connection, if only in hindsight.

Brian was next joining on zoom, with an abject poem about an inability to write abject poems. A “Vital Renunciation of Citizenship”, on familial and generational shifting sands and finally “Untitled” on alienation and feelings of being an imposter.

Lutia was next, offering beautiful poems on scenery and connections, delight in water, connectivity and seeing self and the world as one.

Kevin came next with a strong pair of poems – first on the trauma response of pushing away love, feelings of paranoia and a bravely vulnerable description of difficulty in accepting compassion and the confusion this causes. This was followed by a comedic poem considering what it would be like to adopt Pingu, the chaos-loving anarchic plasticine penguin, and how this might play out as he grows up. I think you’d make an excellent role model for him!

Martin ended the night with a poem on ageing and approaching death, which caught us out by turning quickly from funny to poignant. Finally, a lighter piece on an annoying neighbour’s tree. Watch out neighbours!

This concluded our November quarterly. A fantastic and varied evening of poetry.

Join us next time in February (date and venue tbc)

Review/Summary by Hazel Warren

Interview with a DIY Poet: Hazel

I was kindly nominated by Laura Grevel (see her interview in the August Museletter) so at the risk of completely dominating this my first attempt at the Museletter – here is an interview with a DIY Poet!

Whereabouts in Nottingham are you from and have you lived there all your life?

I'm from Durham, Northeast England. I've moved about a bit, but settled in Nottingham around 11-12 years ago.

When did you start writing poetry?

I can remember writing poems as a child, we were surrounded with poems and books, my dad loved silly rhymes, I was always attracted to playing with language and loved a good metaphor, particularly as a teenager. I didn't start in earnest and certainly not sharing any of it out loud, until I moved to Nottingham, found DIY poets, and discovered spoken word.

Who are your poetic influences? Who do you admire?

I think I probably absorbed some poetic influences through my life that I've not even been particularly aware of, as well as those that might be more music/lyric related than straight up poetry. I'm currently loving Mary Oliver, Holly McNish, Bradley Taylor and Harry Baker.

What made you start writing poetry?

A need to express myself. A slight tendency towards pedantry, and the fact that unlike in conversation/socially - with a poem you get time to think what you want to say and how to say it.

Do you have a short poem to share that you have written and that you are especially proud of?

This one appears in my book "To See the Moon" (available from me, and Big White Shed – shameless plug!) I've always been quite pleased with the brevity and the visuals in this:

Desolation

Seeing you, is like picking a scab
Irresistible, but tinged with morbid fascination
Like revisiting the site of some old devastation
You are Pompeii, you are Chernobyl
And I should stay away, but don't know if I'm able
I'm placing a bet, that I'm bound to lose
Because, seeing you, is like pressing a bruise
I only do it, to check that it still hurts.

Please will you nominate the next poet for this?

So far we have had: Elaine Boot, Don Holmes, Joy Rice, Stuart Wormsley, Clare Stewart, Frank Mac, John Humphreys, Laura Grevel and Hazel Warren.

I will nominate: Guy Jones

Upcoming Events:

I thought I'd add this section to the Museletter – please let me know if you have more to add for next time (to be published in Feb/March)

Check out the DIY Poets Webpage for more: [DIY Poets](#)

And contact Guy to get an event listed on the page.

What?	Where?	When?	Contact
Festive Open mic	Sherwood	14 December 2025	Guy Jones
DIY Poets Festive Social	Navigation, Wilford Street	18 December 2025	Clare Stewart
DIY Quarterly Showcase, featuring Leanne Moden	Tbc	February 2026	Clare Stewart
Women Say Stuff (International Women's Day poetry event)	Tbc (seeking a zoom friendly, accessible venue – any ideas get in touch)	Weekend of 8 March 2026	Lytisha

New look Museletter – Hazel has taken this on, please let her know your thoughts and suggestions. What would you like to see more or less of? And if you have any contributions for upcoming Museletters.