



69

THE
FREE
POETRY
MAGAZINE



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

COUNTING

From when we're born we start to count
From days to weeks, then years
You count the days you are a child
And mothers count the tears
As teenagers we count the hours
When next we see our love
We marry, then have children too
Count blessings from above
We count the days 'til we can have
A weekend with them all
Those happy times with family
And friends who just might call
When illness strikes we count the hours
When loved ones will be well
Or count the weeks when someone passed
And could not ring that bell
Why do we count those passing hours
Those minutes, weeks and days
We could have used that precious time
In oh so many ways

© **Don Holmes**

A rebel without an IQ

Electric scooter rider
Wheelie on an e-bike type of
Shoplifter and burglar
And occasional phone robber

Black joggers, hooded puffer and a balaclava.
a casual dealer with
All the antisocial behaviours

Thinks he's cool.
Thinks he's happening.
Thinks he's justified.
The cops are after him.

His mum doesn't know him
Teachers can't show him
He's meant to be at school
but he's a rebel without an IQ

His life is grim but it'll get a lot worse
When he's sat in a cell or the back of a hearse.
Every day he puts on a front
But he's just a massive c**t.

Martyn Fisher

Margarita

Tequila (blue agave, the heart of the piña), lime juice, triple sec (orange flavoured liqueur), salt on the rim of the glass

Agave-sweet
lime-sharp
orange-bright!
You, salty daisy
your pine-heart golden centre
white petal-teeth
standing greenly tall,
friends with the breeze.

The cocktail mix of you!

Clare Stewart
August 2025



VISIONE (In my mind?)

I remember

*As I STOOD In stark solitude
“An EERY silence covered me,”
Followed me, PROPOSITIONED me.....
I’d often WONDERED about the Afterlife -
Now it HAD descended,
Still COULD NOT comprehend.
Weird that, EVEN though it’s here*

Jennifer Thorpe

Before I wake

Garden summer sunrise. Early morning’s mist
rise, to softens and conceal what’s hidden.
Wet grass, hem drags heavy, stiffens and snags.
Unclaimed footprints follow will o’th’whisp,

Ungraspable spectre shimmers then slips
through my dew-soaked fingers.
Glimpse shadow thickness creature dissolving into
air.

Lobelia’s rainbow, thin as air, holds stiff attention
to salute spectral visitation that fades away,
as daybreak swallows stars

Helen Sadler

Three dancing dots

Three dancing dots
A sign someone is typing

Three dancing dots
A sign someone there

Three dancing dots
Any minute now a message will appear

Three dancing dots
Suddenly disappear

Three dancing dots
Elaine Boot

Haikus

Art is for everyone, always!
An anomaly trying to steal it away?
Squash it, drive it away!

A day away from home
Not something that is worth the slightest moan
Haiku word count, hey ho!

Matthew Smith

The Nottingham to Grantham Canal

A trillion years of pressure made the coal,
That for hundreds floated on the stream, past
Lock gate, windlass, towpath, bush and tree,
A plodding horse throughout the centuries.

Time has washed the muddy pawprints out
The hooves and boots, the bodies, hands and
claws

The colour fades from dirty brown to pale
Clues to past use locked up in memory.

Footnote of history, a transport lost in time,
A short-term wonder, quickly trumped by steam,
Land cut deep, discarded, changed with need
leaving unsolved clues in mud. But the land endures.

Helen Sadler

December Without Christmas

They'd lived for fifty years together,
and her not being there now
is like December without;
the Holly and the mistletoe,
and the postcard dreams of snow,
the under the tree unwrapping,
the by the fire post pudding napping.
Now it's just darkening days.

Frank McMahon

Not Just for Christmas

You can blame it on the force nine
of economic variables
forever making unforecast landfall
though to be fair
the signs were there in the isobars
from the last time one came to blow our homes away

You can blame it on those who bluster out
loaded figures showing just for the record
that funding is up to support/prevent
yet still jetsam gathers in doorways
and the barometer swings in the same old direction

You may even blame it on the victims
you won't be the last

You can blame on who you like
it only happens to 'other people'
after all
there is no such thing as bad weather
just unfortunate clothing

So collar up against the prevailing
you pass another one
wrapped in shabby unfortunateness
hunkering down below the dew point
asleep? off his face? worse?
and you hold off the nagging thought
"I'm only a pay cheque away"

Guy Jones

**Charon's* boat
(after John Bellany's picture of the same
name)**

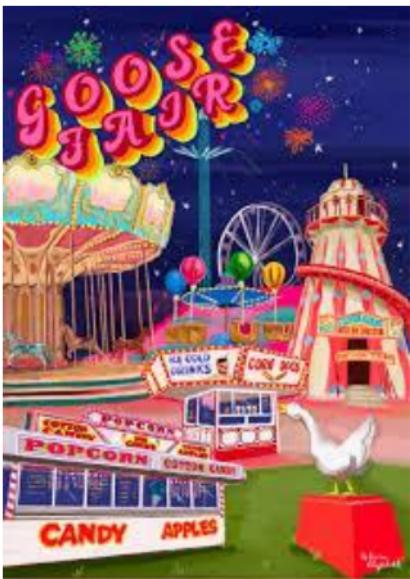
To be of now,
remembering a better self,
but in a ship of lost souls.
Within arms distance
of a lifebuoy called hope,
but too late to use it.
While accordion and saxophone
dance us to the end of time.
Oh Rose of Sharon, boat, sailing
vessel of transference.
It's in the owl's eyes,
death, as surprise,
but why so, when half the crew
stare blankly through bleached skulls.
If only the sea were this blue,
when we were still alive.

John Humphreys

Seasons Change

Not autumn reds
Nor winter blues
On the Forest
October hues
Are neon shine
Magenta loops
Aquamarine
And dark red haze
With shrieks of joy
And yellow ducks
The fair is here
And Goosey struts

Lytisha



Communist creatures

Smurfs are sixty-seven,
original drawn scenarios,
communist creatures,
never elevate above your comrades,
film franchise favours true inner self,
capitalist culture clash,
diminutive, friendly folk,
drawing their pensions.

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SPEECH THERAPY

**NOTTINGHAM'S PREMIER
POETRY NIGHT**

every 1st Friday ~7.30-1am
At **BUNKERS HILL**
36 –38 Hockley
Nottingham NG1 1FP
poetry partying since 2011

A Rule-Breaking Sonnet

I was a rule-breaker at school, calling
this boy's name, pulling that girl's hair,
leaving a frog or two on the teacher's desk.

Mr Wang, the new teacher, is no tame beast,
smelled his prey with a hunter instinct.

He grabbed my ear, dragged me into his office,
roared like a furious lion. I stood in the corner,
arms stretched, palms up, body shaking.

The air felt heavy, the cicadas cried out loud.

Smack! How the ruler bit my palms with its
long tongue.

Smack! How my body shivered, how I managed
to stand still.

Smack! What fire burning sensation! What nee-
dle piercing pain!

Smack! How my eyes moistened, how my tears
ran.

Crack! The wooden ruler split into halves.

(Hongwei Bao)



Rules to be broken include:

- 1). Wear school uniform
- 2). School shoes only
- 3). Healthy snack only
- 4). No squash / juice in water bottles
- 5). No crazy hairstyles
- 6). No soft toys in school
- 7). No make up / temporary tattoos
- 8). No nail varnish

DIY POETS QUARTERLY SHOWCASE

@ City Arts
11-13 Hockley,
Nottingham NG1 1FH

OPEN MIC
Sign up on the night
7PM –10PM

November 20th

Celebrations Tub

There is a whole constellation
in the celebrations tub,
a galaxy of flavours in a red plastic container,
when presented by all of this deliciousness,
it's hard to be an abstainer.

Joy Rice

Goosey's Flag

You drew your cross on my heart
Claimed me
I could not tell
If this was
An act of love
Aggression, anger
Or fear

You drew your cross on my heart
Marked me
All I knew was
You did not care
For my history
My tarred feet
My long March
Looking for purchase
Finding death

You drew your cross on my heart
Scarred me
Dug deep into grooves already there
Your foolishness changed nothing
But damaged everything

Diane Horsley



**DO YOU WANT TO MEET OTHER
POETS? SHARE YOUR WORK? GET
THE CHANCE TO PLAN EVENTS?
PERFORM YOUR WORK?**

**DIY Poets are a Nottingham based
poetry collective, with a mission
to bring poetry to the masses.**

**We aim to make poetry accessible
to readers, and give opportunities
and encouragement to writers
and performers.**

**DIY poets meet regularly to share
works, give and receive friendly
constructive feedback and plan
events.**

**Find out more. Sign up for regular
updates. Get involved.
Get in touch...**

**www.diypoets.co.uk
frankmac_1999@yahoo.co.uk**

We are currently open for submissions for **issue 70**

Poems should be on the them of light and dark.

They should be short, (25 lines or less) to fit onto a page of A6. Your poem may be brilliant but if it's as long as *Paradise Lost* then it won't get in.

The deadline for submissions is 30th December 2025

Send poems to:

frankmac_1999@yahoo.co.uk

DIY POETS



Poet

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frankmac_1999@yahoo.co.uk
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