WINGED JOY

POEMS FROM THE PERFORMANCE POETS AT WM COLLEGE

INTRODUCTION

This booklet features poems written by learners in the performance poetry course at WM College. It is the culmination of 10 weeks work together building confidence in using poetic techniques and learning new performance skills.

These poems are funny and moving and complex. I thank the learners for their fantastic contributions.

Sadly due to illness Oliver Lalor was unable to send his work for this booklet but I hope that his wonderful poems (particularly the one in which he wonders what it would be like to be a goat) will reach an audience soon.

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HEATHER HARTE

Stanley Green said No Protein!

"The End of the World is Nigh!" He said
"Eat beans and peas and die!"

Every day on Oxford Street carrying a board
or banner
The bean and pea man strutted his stuff
In a knowledgeable, righteous manner

The answer to mankind's distress
We were told, was a simpler diet
No protein or leguminous seeds
No alcohol, passion, or riot!

He seemed assured of a secret truth
About how to live forever
But it meant giving up just about everything nice
So he wasn't popular, or very clever

However...he kept his pact to enlighten us
And trudged the streets alone
In his raincoat and a funny hat
With a voice like a megaphone!

So we didn't notice that he wasn't there
It was years before we wondered why
Why did the bean and pea man disappear?
Without a word or note of goodbye

Well, it all just shows that you can be sure
That his theories didn't lead to results
If after he gave up everything good,
He ended up with no pulse!
(Groan.....)



STANLEY GREEN WALKED UP AND DOWN OXFORD STREET AND REGENT STREET WEARING A SANDWICH BOARD OR CARRYING A BILLBOARD, SIX DAYS A WEEK, FROM 1968 UNTIL 1993, THE YEAR HE DIED, ADVOCATING EATING LESS PROTEIN IN ORDER TO SUPPRESS LIBIDO, AND MAKE PEOPLE KINDER.

HEATHER HARTE

Besties

"What are you doing with that wig?" I said
Running my hand through her acrylic-maned head
She threw it off and showed her stubble
"That's better, you looked like Old Mother Hubbard!"
Caressing her crown of short soft curls
We fell about laughing like when we were girls

She isn't ruled by her disease
She laughs and speaks with consummate ease,
But we know, unsaid, that things are hard
So we choose to share laughter, and mutual regard.

Not every parting is a pause

Any kiss goodbye could be the last
Hug them tight, hold on fast,
Imprint the moment in your heart
Enough to keep forever, when you part.

For you will never know if it's the one,
Which seals the loving, when it's done

Not every parting is a pause
For fate is fickle and time a trickster
Without a reason or because
A life is ended.
The string of memories suspended
While grief holds you instead.

HEATHER HARTE

City planners and Citizens

Definition: A citizen is a native or naturalised member of a state or nation.

Citizen birds, you are, like me, natives of our isle
But someone stole your habitat, replaced it with a concrete mat
Then swapped your flowers for sterile bowers
And arty cubes of 'Style'

Spray, spray the weed-killer goes
Pray, pray for no one knows the cost, way down the road.
Poisoning the greenery, to keep things neat and cleaner-y.
Planners have a strange idea of beauty
But the truth will yet unfold.

Leave the walls of creeping vine,
In clumps of colour that reach and twine
To cover ugly masonry.
To house the Robin and the Wren
To bring our wildlife back again.

Let them be. Leave them to me,
I'll feed, and house, I'll watch and browse
Their fascinating bird activity.

Don't cut their shrubs with nests and grubs!
We don't want your 'designed' topiary,
When the streets could be wild aviaries
That welcome home our native flocks
Whose cheerful calls will serve to mock
Your concrete silent sterile spaces

In this city people want to lift their faces
And see their friends, our citizen birds
Whose winged joy, our suffering erases

LEE GIBBS

A Poem for Pat

She lived in a world of bungalow alarms,
Where people got out of the wrong bed
'I don't know how to renounce that word'
She used to say.

She was Pat.
Lover of cardigans, WKD Blue, Murder She Wrote.
She was a speed reader not of books, but people.

'Are you listening to me? What did I just say?'
That's how she would rein me in,
As if I were still a seven-year-old
But she was always my aunt.

She was Pat.
She was short, nearer to the ground.
Grounded.
She was perceptive of the world.
'Pick a penny up for good luck!'

Pat was my soul mate.
As I said, 10 years ago, a week on Tuesday:
'Where do people go to when they die.'
'I don't know' said grandad
'It seems to me that people set up home in our hearts'

ANTOINETTE BROOKS

A SUNDAY MORNING WALK ALONG YORK WAY TO THE LOCAL BUS STOP AT APPROXIMATELY 9.45 AM

First the shoes
Comfortable, old, reliable
Fragile feet cocooned
In a cradle of warmth
Dependable and secure
Cushioning reluctant bones

A weekend morning,
Cold air
Biting at my cheek
Unexpectedly sharp for May.
Stick hits harsh concrete ground and clicks
Clicks...
Clicks...
Far above seagulls squalling
Angrily
Violently and unseen
High-pitched, boisterous
Swooping downward
Bully boys of the sky

A distant church bell calls forlornly
Sunday morning, the bell's reminding
Ignored by all it keeps on chiming
For those
In need and in despair
It calls...
Like a discarded lover
Yearning to be needed
Offering solace
That goes unheeded
And ignored.
Yet still it calls
It calls
It calls...

ANTOINETTE BROOKS

Different congregations now
Gather along York Way
The yummy mummy yoga crew
Teenaged boys with nothing to do
The determined Seniors' Walking Group
Who strive to keep old age away
Feet thud slowly
Each third Sunday
Snatches of conversation
Frail voice breathless,
Panting, asking,
"Are we st- stopping yet for a cuppa?"
Margaret, we've done over an hour..."

What's that?
Whiffs of ganja transcend the air
Pungent, earthy-scented, deep
The sour, bitter, stench of beer
Bleary men, sickly sweet
with ale, are huddled here
Strongly accented unclear speech
Swapping stories
A cacophony of nicotined-slurried voices
Hops and home, dreams and despair
Swaying slightly,
Loudly vocal
Congregated outside their local
Hacking residential competitive coughs
Limboed until the moment when
The pub will open
(And it's not yet ten)

Aaahhh!
Screeching brakes
The bus approaches
I wave to catch the driver's eye
He smiles and shrugs
And as I reach the stop
He waves back and the bus whurrs on by

OLIVER LALOR

Death is the starting point or is it the end?

Death is indeed a life-sentence
for birth is the onset of death.
With debit, defeat and demise,
we're not living, we're dying.
Death is life and that's it!

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