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edited by russell bennetts

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# Poets For Corbyn

Edited by Russell Bennetts

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# Poets For Corbyn

# Wongawongaland

Tom Pickard

Doctor Gobbles wants to stop the jobless  
quaffing from his gissy goblets  
and break their backs  
on the rock of his salvation.

He serves a cold buffet of hot wars  
to pump-up the economy for further plunder  
and squanders young lives  
like bankers on a junket.

If he hung the hungry he'd hang the anger out,  
incentivise to fuck off and die  
or just have a jousting match  
of polite poetries.

Once they bled themselves for a cure  
now they only bleed the poor

## For Jeremy Corbyn

Michael Rosen

Fresh from:  
proclaiming the virtues of the  
1000 year dynasty, the British monarchy;

advising us of the special qualities of a  
non-elected second chamber  
with its origins in Norman rule;

celebrating an economic system  
that was developed and finessed  
with the use of child labour around 1810;

continuing to solve international disputes  
with the 10,000 year old method of  
killing those you disagree with;

they tell us that socialism is outdated.

## Scarlet Macaws

Pascale Petit

The scarlet macaws want their red back,  
not puce or pink but rich rubescence.  
They squawk and screech and growl  
for the people to give it back.

They want their green and yellow, the ultramarine  
and azure of their flight feathers.  
They want their green homes to vibrate  
against their red plumage.

They don't want to be eaten.  
They don't want to be sacrificed.  
They don't want to be shot for their celestial light  
and lose their teeth and eyes.  
They don't want to be called Seven Macaw  
and mark the coming of the dry season  
or the hurricane season.

They don't want to be shot from the world tree  
by the Hero Twins  
or be worn by them in a victory headdress.  
They don't want to be bred as pets or for trade.

They want to spread their feathers  
like the world's riches, a currency  
that doesn't cost a thing, that doesn't  
symbolise blood.  
They don't want their heads chopped off  
and stuck on poles in city temples.

They say their scarlet hue is life.  
They say that every tree is an axis mundi  
and all their eyes are suns.  
They don't want their heads stuck on grey human bodies  
for funeral rites.



They don't want their ashes to treat diseases  
because no medicine is left, no doctor.

They want to take their place  
with the quetzal and the jaguar.  
Their feathers are axes,  
their feathers are lightning,  
their feathers are rain

for everyone, not just the rulers with their royal aviaries.  
Sun-macaws are free,  
they are prayer-arrows,  
Morning Stars,  
they are the west wind that brings change.  
They are the cardinal directions of health.

Do not bury them in human graves.  
Do not bury them as plucked grave-goods  
until the country is just a naked carcass  
with its feet and wings bound tight around its heart.

## The Seven Ages of a Labour MP

Ian Birchall

At first the student,  
Posing and strutting in the NUS.  
Then the droning speaker, with his briefcase  
And shining Sunday suit, creeping to his  
Selection Committee. And then the loyalist,  
Lying like trooper, with a woeful tirade  
Made to his Leader's buttocks. Then an MP,  
Full of strange terms, reading from autocue,  
Lacking all honour, shallow and slick in quarrel,  
Seeking the bubble reputation,  
Ever in the camera's eye. And then the minister,  
In fair round belly with free dinners lined,  
Eyes insincere and clothes of formal cut,  
Full of cheap lies and dodgy evasions;  
And so he makes his pile. The sixth age shifts  
Into the mean and clichéd veteran,  
With spectacles on nose and perks on side;  
His youthful hopes, long lost, are far too wide  
For his shrunk mind; and his big manly voice,  
Turning again toward childish platitudes,  
Repeats the old slogans. Last scene of all,  
That ends this uneventful history,  
Is Second Chamber, full of mere oblivion,  
*Sans teeth, sans brain, sans guts, sans principles.*

## Until I Built the Wall

Michael Schmidt

Until I built the wall they did not find me.  
Sweet anarchy! attending quietly  
To wild birds or picking the blackberry.

Trespassers did not know they erred and came  
In and away, leaving the land the same.  
The hunter went to richer ground for game.

Tending, profitless, my property  
Which no map mentioned, where no metal lay  
In veins beneath the surface of hard clay

And bristle grass, I watched my livestock -- scores  
Of lizards, armadillos, and the birds --  
Free citizens. I had concealed no snares.

Mere ground. Mere nothing harvested or sown.  
But how the shadows made the rough design  
Live as a landscape for the man alone!

So I grew proud. That's why I built the wall  
Of stone and mortar, and I drove a nail  
Into a stake and hung a sign to tell

The wanderer *Private Land*, with guarantees  
Of instant death for *anyone who tries*  
*To enter here: leave hope.* Vain promises!

Who would I kill or could I kill?  
Before I turned a servant of the will  
To mark my ground, indeed, who would I hurt or kill?

Now peering from the rim of my high wall  
I see the plain outside abruptly shrill  
With enemies I do not know. They call

*Who's in there, what do you mean, and why?*  
I hold my peace, but they've discovered me  
Because I drew a line, a *Here am I*.

They rob my peace, they take away my sleep.  
Their voices drizzle all the night. I step  
Along the wall as round a castle keep

Till in the daylight there they stand again,  
Drawn up from their shadows till at noon  
Ghost warriors hover by the place I own.

As ribs around a heart, the gentle wall  
Tucks in the land, or as a crisp snail shell  
Cups its soft cause. Yet yearlong vigil

Sours memory of the lovely ground,  
Rivets to masonry the heart and hand:  
I tend a straitened altitude of stone.

## The Red Road

Marion McCready

The morning scent of spring  
colours the sky  
above the Red Road.

Son,  
close your eyes.

Swallow this bitter butterfly,  
let its wings expand in your throat  
(as we tie ourselves together with rope).

Mother, father,  
at cloud-height,  
the clouds form crosses in the sky.

Son,  
come.  
God will catch us.

The frost-thumbed grass will cry  
with our broken bones alone  
(the furniture of our souls),

for we are citizens of the sky.

# For the Love of God

Nick Telfer

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## Anderby Creek

Rory Waterman

*for Ian Parks*

*I went east by south-east  
to the place, found everything  
was there just as they'd said:  
the one road leading out*

*and leading in: an empty beach-house,  
brittle dunes, a few groynes  
sloping down into the sea.*

*Ian Parks, 'Anderby Creek'*

I heard you read this tonight in central Leicester  
in a strip-lit hall as phosphorescence swelled  
unseen along that coast, dimly glittering,  
and slathering the groynes. Clench your eyes and gaze  
distantly through the lids: it swims like that.  
The hills and tight walls of your Yorkshire mining town  
can recede beyond distance.

*I [...] tried to find the reason why I came.*

Did it help that nothing is here?  
The pub stays bolted; Skegness isn't so far  
but barely smudges the night. The stars are sharp.  
The place won't care if you come back. Come back.  
Watch patternless algae thrash against that dark,  
creating what a flailing thought makes there –  
like your father lowering swiftly through the bedrock.

## Doll Hospital at the Top of the Hill

Helen Ivory

Take her to the doll hospital;  
restring the limbs with slipknots  
fill the skull with lint  
clean out the craze lines on her face  
and paint on a 1940s smile.

If this model has a welded voicebox  
the upset might have rend it mute  
or misfired its mechanism in some way.  
This type of fixing  
is too complex to execute.

Fill in the forms for discharge now,  
wheel her all the way to the door.  
When you release the handles  
Newton's Theory of Gravity jumps in.  
Now Repeat.



## COMMA

Iain Galbraith

Something is growing  
into Mantree's head, it could be a twig-like  
horn, a short piece of rope  
or a spine for all he cares  
he has forgotten its name straight away.  
But this has happened before.  
He remembers the moment

an idea rooted  
snaking its way through his muddy morning

it unnerved him with curves, inlets, bays  
and a pine-tipped promontory.  
The waves were leaping against his walls  
they covered practically everything:

it seems this place is no longer what it was  
and you, my dear, have changed  
but all of us were always  
already changing. We were loving  
each other and becoming ever newer  
in a field that retained its ghosts  
in passing  
a blue sky, old currencies, suspended  
relative clauses  
your first spring tide  
the earliest version of a saucer

that brief intake of breath  
when we lifted a stone on the beach  
and an elver scribbled away

*side-winding*

## Unelectable

Andy Jackson

You recall that all-night sitting? We were dead  
before our time, saw ourselves phased out  
within five years. I know that you were swayed  
by other manifestos, dandled by their spin at night  
and, in searching for a soul, this house divided.  
They will tell you I'm a bullet to the party's head,  
a prophet who brings forth not honey but a drought,  
forgetting how I stood to rage at laws not made  
so much as meted out in strokes of black and white

I have not simply come to sweep prevaricants away,  
but to reclaim the unequivocal reply. The books  
from which we sprang have all been bowdlerised,  
the songs we sang together have been taken off  
the playlist. Acts of faith have been repealed.  
I represent the things you want but cannot say,  
the ideology of why the hell not; socialism redux,  
neither new nor old, not clean or compromised  
but human to its heart, and that could be enough.

## J.C.

Nicholas Murray

Like sheep who've scattered to the field's high corner,  
the commentariat – now hunted fauna –  
together cling.

The practised put-downs, and the usual sneers,  
predictable pandering to baser fears,  
the lazy tricks that served for years  
no longer sing.

Pundits and pollsters, penny-a-liners,  
effortless liars and maligners,  
pieces pitched,  
to *Guardian* or 4 no longer hack it.  
The *zeitgeist's* moved; they can no longer track it  
and there's a note inside the salary packet:  
*you're ditched!*

Chancellor Osborne's undeterred,  
and gives his underlings the word:  
attack!

Class-warrior of an antique kind  
he makes his colleagues of one mind  
to hound the workers from behind.

A pack

of snapping Tory dogs  
emerging from the autumn fogs  
exult.

The 'enemy within' attracts their curses  
(that's dinner ladies, carers, nurses  
who learn there's little in their purses).

It's the cult

of settling scores, unleashing dogs of war  
(though strikes are fewer than before).

They winch  
their arses to the saddle, salivating,  
excited by the prey that's waiting,  
eased by commentators' Left-baiting:  
a cinch.

Their anti-union bill's revealed,  
and like a rotten fruit when peeled  
it's vile  
inside: more harsh than any iron regime  
has yet to implement, or even dream,  
where strikers must declare the theme  
of any Tweet

before releasing it or face a fine or gaol:  
that's Britain now where oppositions fail  
to fight.

Until J.C. discovers that the old and young  
are eager to bite back, give tongue  
to protest, scrap the song that's sung  
stage Right.

Its mandate twenty five per cent of votes,  
the Government each day emotes:  
'Reform!'  
until our ears become resistant to the sound,  
detect the lie that is its constant ground,  
refuse the claim that they have found  
a 'norm'.

Corbyn's no knight in shining vest,  
or bright Messiah from the West  
(he'd say)  
but someone who has found a way to voice  
a fractured country's need for choice,  
to say we'll make another kind of noise:  
*No way!*

**from 'a better tale to tell'  
composed from submissions to The Smith Commission**

Alec Finlay

Federalism  
raises the problem  
of what to do  
in England

there seems  
little appetite  
to recreate

*Wessex*  
*Mercia*  
*Northumbria*

as states  
of the union

a new English parliament  
is a necessity

whether the English  
want it or not

here's a radical solution  
which may satisfy  
ALL parties

Yes & No

a new Union  
(or perhaps Federation)

but 'Union'  
has a certain  
ring to it

England and Scotland  
momentarily

leave the current Union

as independent countries

but join (as independent countries)

with all others  
in the wider  
British Isles

in a new trading entity

with common currency  
(let's say the Pound)

with a common  
defence policy  
foreign policy

in a mutual partnership

I think Wales would like that

it may need England  
to be persuaded

we could all be one  
'band of brothers  
on this Sceptered isle?'

(what is to complain  
about that?)

## Growing Fears That the Leadership Contest Has Been Hijacked by Far-Left Infiltrators

Erik Kennedy

If you think that spiny lobsters  
should own  
the spiny lobster migration paths  
and not some groaning sea-god  
who licenses his image  
for use in tuna ads and myths,

and if you believe a turtle shell  
with dozens  
of turtles trying to get in, crying  
'We're all in it together,'  
is what the world will look like  
in about 2029,

and if the chambered nautilus  
to you  
represents a way of coping  
with a repeated loss of home  
instead of a ropey scheme  
for having loads of extra bedrooms,

and if in your entire life  
you've had  
no-one to identify with  
who wasn't first and last  
a danger to the good  
through well-meaning compromise,

if you can agree to this,  
resignedly but definitely,  
you might be a socialist.

## **The Spiders (A New Labour Fallacy)**

Ian Pindar

The government here is largely  
made up of spiders. They don't like us.

They tell us how lucky we are  
to be ruled over by spiders

and how our enemies  
are envious.

Only spiders  
are rewarded with high positions

so we all want to be spiders  
if it means getting on.

We don't like spiders  
but we're resigned to becoming spiders

if that's what it takes to defeat  
the spiders.



## Austerity

Becky Cherriman

Hear it scutter  
along the guttering of offices,  
in the bins behind Waitrose,  
the thorned bushes at the playground's edge –  
a language devised by the high-born  
to parch the lips of those with less.

Live here too long  
and it will shudder down your throat like flu.  
You will wake one morning aching with it,  
all other tongues you know forgotten –  
the vernacular of the workers,  
lexicons of children with little,  
dialects of kindness,  
the diction of being human.

## Coat

Josephine Corcoran

*after Edip Cansever*

A woman filled with the gladness of living  
refused to be suspicious of hope.

She was weary with the gloom of her coat  
and she emptied its pockets of cynicism.

She took out timidity.  
She took out pessimism.

She took out scaremongering  
and put in honesty.

She took out the fear of being misinterpreted  
and put in the gift of saying what she believed in.

She took out the analysis of opinion polls  
and put in compassion.

On the street, other people admired her coat.  
“That’s what I call a coat!” they said and helped her to fill its pockets.

The giving up of seats on buses they put there,  
the opening of doors and impossible jars,  
the carrying of baby buggies up flights of stairs.

They put compliments into the pockets,  
they put in favours, encouragement,  
patience, tolerance and understanding.

The sharing of belongings they put there  
and the sharing of ideas. The lending of things:  
clothes, make-up, books, tea, coffee, milk, sugar  
– so much lending! And no guarantees of repayment!

Deep inside the coat,  
the woman held on to the goodness of people.

Winter was coming and the coat was keeping her warm.  
The woman kept piling things into the pockets.

## 8<sup>th</sup> May song

Natalie Chin

eyes refreshing screen at 7am  
as another wave of paper boats  
float in from the distance, towards  
the shoreline of meshed fingers  
tirelessly unfolding all night  
that which already bears the  
weight of the morning news

now all you can think of is  
how as a child you knew to pray  
when you were afraid that no one  
was coming home before dark

lines fall and fences rise  
everyone is a stranger again  
it doesn't matter if you're [ \_\_\_\_ ]  
if your loyalties have been carved up  
as if all equally immutable  
as if you've given up your agency  
as if the dead have said:  
'yes, it's true—the place I was born  
was the only place that could ever  
anchor me back to shore'

so the day's warmth comes forth  
black oil rippling through river  
maybe this is what it means  
when sometimes it has  
to close before it opens  
and yet who has won  
and at what cost

on one hand so tempted by  
the slip towards the exit sign  
on the other I have this burning torch  
I hold before the Thames

and this terrifying unfinished anger

## Corbyn

Ernest Schonfield

They call you mad  
Because you don't suck up to bankers  
They call you sick  
Because you believe in fair play  
They call you a wrecker  
Because you want to build hospitals  
They call you economically incompetent  
When they have sold the nation's assets at a loss.  
They say you can never win.  
You say, we'll see.  
My friend Barry joined Labour.  
The website asked:  
Why are you joining Labour?  
He typed back:  
So I can vote for Corbyn  
Because I'm sick of New Labour bullshit  
and I can't wait to see the look  
on war criminal Tony Blair's face  
when they elect a decent man  
of principle and integrity  
rather than some Tory-lite twat!

## The upper chambers of the heart

Kirsten Irving

*"People who say their heart is with Corbyn, get a transplant".  
Tony Blair, 2015*

A transplant is carried out under general intervention.  
(where you are unconscious)

A conference normally takes between four and six hours.

You will be connected to a machine  
circulating and oxygenating.  
at a meeting in Battersea  
which acts as an artificial hunger strike.

A thin flexible tube will be inserted  
to drain your empire, but we no longer have one.  
That is the least it can do at the present time.

A cut is made, allowing an entirely peaceful person to access your place of safety.

A portion of the right and left atria  
amidst the rubble of their existence.

When the debate begins to function, we need to learn the lessons.  
The team is satisfied that I do not have much time.

Your breastbone will have been closed, and the tissues and skin will have been closed.

There will be drains coming out of your chest,  
and more disasters that follow from them

We could be doing something far more useful in the world  
We know that because we all take up this House.  
A very strange delegation.

I hope that we begin to see some taken off the bypass machine.  
I hope that they will inform me of the victims,

of the places in which they have arrived.

The wars of the future will largely be about dissolvable stitches.

You will wake up in the Foreign Office, under sedation and attached to a strategic defence review to help your breathing.

You can be moved for further monitoring with stainless steel wires.

We might delude ourselves that the rest of the world love us—they do not.



## Love Letter to Jeremy Corbyn

Jess Green

Sun reporters are not sleeping.  
They're hairless  
wild eyed  
lip bitten  
and greying,  
because since the downfall  
of Lord Sewell  
all screwed up and used up  
all belly and bra straps  
they're desperate to find  
someone else  
to pin up  
with their arse out.

They've set their sights on Jeremy Corbyn  
to crush him  
like a moth under fist  
present him  
as this  
mad, withering, Stalin-esque  
geriatric.

They've paid  
every secret source they know  
to try and find  
one account of him  
being corrupted  
but after weeks of rummaging  
through the internet  
all they've managed  
is one mention of Hamas  
and £5.60 for an ink cartridge.

And with each satirical cartoon  
depicting him  
as this dangerous lefty loon

and Tony Blair  
threatening to rip out  
the heart of every voter,  
his popularity swells  
as each banker  
locks up  
his stocks  
and his daughters.

And Harriet Harman seethes  
remembers her student days  
when she too felt  
a little more remorse  
and understanding  
for the poorest and downtrodden.

Then shakes away  
those memories  
of spliffs  
and Trotsky  
and the second sex  
and sends out lists  
of suspicious names  
on the hard left.

Liz Kendall breathes fire  
from her East Midlands ivory tower  
calls the people of Leicester  
to promise to vote for her,  
holding their  
council tax rates in one hand  
and a cross bow in the other.

Smiling Yvette Cooper  
blank faced and glazed over  
promising that  
as soon as someone elects  
her as leader  
she'll get down  
off that fence

one side or another.

Andy Burnham's clutching at straws,  
searching Corbyn's floor  
for anything we might recognise  
as radical.

But behind closed doors  
they weep uncontrollably  
as the control  
they're rapidly losing  
over their precious  
centre left  
Labour Party,  
rueing the day  
they ever gave this much power  
to the electorate  
warning of decades  
in opposition  
and raising the ghost  
of Michael Foot.

Crying and lying  
and stomping  
and trying  
to turn the heads of every voter  
away from that Mumsnet Wooer  
that white haired  
soft eyed  
night bus rider  
that slimmed down Bernard Cribbins  
cape crusader  
revolutionary anti tie wearer  
fighting for the right to wear plaid  
and a corduroy cardy.

He's calm and he's cool  
and he takes no shit  
from Krishnan Guru Murphy  
he's hot stuff

and old stuff  
and he's 68 going on sexy.  
He's strawberries  
and oysters  
and careless whisper,  
he's a kaftan  
and a flatcap  
and he's never been  
more hated by Labour.

Because despite  
telling us they are the party of the left wing.  
Corbyn actually means it  
and that's why there's just no place  
for him.

## The Danger of J.C.

Todd Swift

It takes a lot to rattle Blair,  
it took a lot to rattle Pilate,  
Corbyn running isn't fair  
and it's probably too late

to try and cap the flare  
firing, but they try, mate,  
the folks in New Labour  
who once were very great

in how they steered affairs  
of what was their state;  
Jeremy has the grey hair  
and would try and create

a Britain that wasn't theirs  
but more a shared plate;  
so he's unleashed terrors  
last seen in 2008.

If you're good and straight  
better take care, take care,  
some big boot somewhere  
is going to orchestrate

a campaign on air  
to sift up the falling hate;  
a whole cloud of it in the square  
where the people congregate,

milling about, trying to equate  
what's said with that's there;  
it's all about power,  
we can all relate;

if it slips from them to our  
type, then all hell will operate:

from their reactionary lair,  
not from ours, a world we create

precisely when we annihilate  
the fear of not doing what is required  
by the ones who breathe fire  
to oversee the wars, and own estates.

## Sand

Martin Figura

A little Midlands new town with nothing left  
to make or do, or mountains to speak of  
and no-one passing through. The bypass  
exit sign does not say *An Historic Market Town*.

No stately home, cathedral, cobbled streets,  
no green or pond, no ducks, no honey-stoned  
second homes; just overspill without blue  
plaques. The town hall is an office block.

Still they won't just chuck it in  
and with a grant, men turn themselves  
brick by brick into a museum  
while their nimble-fingered wives

fashion jewellery from circuit boards,  
components and coloured wires  
to stock the shelves by the postcard rack  
and stacks of books of bygone days.

The town has edged itself with sand,  
the one-way-circuit, a never-ending  
coastal road. Hold a shell to your ear  
and hear the rush of the M6/M5 intersection.

Bunting hangs from shop to shop, the precinct  
is ablaze, a promenade of windows blind  
with Union Jacks, a mural by a local artist  
adorns the underpass. The marketing's rolled out

to Leamington Spa, to Droitwich, to Telford  
to Ashby-de-la-Zouch and all points in between.  
On the next bank holiday everybody waits:  
the dripping hanging baskets, the portly mayor

in chains; the goose-pimpled beauty queen;

kids holding maypole ribbons, balloons or flags;  
the Sealed Knot done up as Mods and Rockers  
ready for the battle of sixty-four (on the hour,

every hour); a maze; a brass band tuning up; the Lost  
Children's Hut; seagulls in a cloudless sky; vendors  
of buckets, spades and fudges; the committee wearing  
*Can I Help You* badges.



## Modern Ruin

Jody Porter

There is more light here than before  
now another time-gutted home  
has been unbuilt.

A new absence shines for a while  
in the brick-dust and pipework  
of its gone bulk.

Banal forces go about their business  
stopping up the gap with something new  
and profitable.

And every mute piece of rubble  
bows its head like a dog  
to its master.

The past communicates with us  
in humility.

We must be merciful.

## Poem of Philosophical and Parental Conundrums Written In An Election Year

Erin Belieu

From the backseat, Jude saying, Mama, I HATE  
Republicans, and the way he says HATE,  
saying it the way only a seven-year-old can,

saying it like he's very, very certain,

is plenty disturbing since I've never once  
heard the word HATE come out of his mouth  
until this morning. And there are those

who may be reading this poem,  
those people without children, or  
those, I should say, who choose not  
to have children, you might be impatient

now that Jude has appeared here to make  
his meaningful pronouncement, and I  
get how tedious it is, listening to those

who choose to have children  
drone on about the stupidity of standardized  
tests and the difficulty in finding authentically  
organic apple juice; but I beg your patience and

ask you to imagine how unnerving it is to be  
responsible for these weird beings who rarely  
do anything you'd expected when you were  
reading *What to Expect When You're Expecting*;

how we're suckered into thinking this kid stuff  
is a science when really it's the most abstract  
art form, like you're standing in a gallery at

MoMA, staring at an aquarium in which float  
three basketballs, and the piece is titled

*Aquarium with Three Basketballs,*

and you're looking at others in the gallery  
considering the basketballs and *they* don't look  
as if they're having some cross-eyed internal  
struggle, and you're sweating a little

and embarrassed, thinking,  
*There's a message here that I'm not getting,*

which is what I feel like, often, to have a child,  
and what I ponder in this moment; whether I've  
blown it again, as Jude, nicknamed by his teachers

“The Radiating Joy Machine,” boy of peculiar light  
and unusual kindness, has arrived this morning  
in the backseat of the car, belting out the word  
HATE and sounding like he absolutely means it.

And there are more practical difficulties beyond  
what could be viewed as the self-indulgently  
philosophical, such as Jude's father, my ex-husband,

who's given me a speech the day before about  
not pushing our politics on Jude and letting him  
make up his own mind when he's old enough  
to understand the complexities of the issues.

And, on principle, surely, I agree,

though I know another factor must be  
that Jude's father is now married to a woman  
who's half Cuban and from Miami, who's not

thrilled with Jude piping up about republicans and  
booing every time a GOP candidate appears on TV.

And that's what you call the *realpolitik* in action  
when it comes to divorce, wherein the rubber hits  
the “blended” family's road. But since I'm not

half Cuban and not from Miami, I don't pretend I can speak to the cultural pressure and loyalties of the single-issue voter, though secretly I want to say to my ex-husband, the die-hardest of liberals – something I'll always love about him – I want to say,

Really? When your beloved aunt is gay, as is my brother, whose husband is a political exile from Colombia? When Jude has a medical issue that

might someday be cured by stem cell therapy, as insurance drains our paychecks every month while refusing to pay for a single, useful thing?

*Really?* But deep down, I know he's right. If Jude has come to HATE, it's probably come through me, even though I try so hard to love the sinner

even when the sin is the most fucckulous interpretation of the Old Testament that makes me want to grab every Christian evangelical by the neck and shake them till their

brains kick in. Which makes me think of my friend Matt, a boy I had a crush on in high school, who's now a corporate attorney in Houston; Matt,

who's tracked me down on the Internet and we've taken to flaming each other about politics by e-mail; how recently he sent me his beautiful family's Christmas card, and honestly they don't *look* evil,

and Matt says he'd rather choose whom to help with his money than have it flushed on social programs that clearly don't work. And while he doesn't convince me, I grudgingly acknowledge this point of view and

concede that not all Republicans, even tax attorneys in Texas, are necessarily Earth-raping titans

with \$7,000 shower curtains, that they may have actual convictions, holding them as dearly as

I do my own. So finally, I tell Jude we might STRONGLY DISAGREE with people's opinions, but we try to love the people themselves. Then I tell him briefly about a guy named Gandhi and another guy named Martin Luther King and how

the progressive mind always triumphs in the end, and he's maybe paying attention, though he's tricky that way and glazes over often, as you can imagine.

But he's satisfied for the moment, squinting through the foggy car window, and I feel better as it's morning, with the sun just poking up over the canopied road

as we drive quietly through our tidy neighborhood of houses with doorway flags promoting pineapples and football teams and whatever else my neighbors

feel the need to advertise, and I'm thinking maybe I got it right this time, maybe I did okay at least; this doesn't have to be the thing Jude talks about someday in therapy.

But with kids, you never know, as our present is busy becoming their future, every minute, every day.

while they're working as hard as they can to perfect the obstinate and beautiful mystery that every soul ends up being to every other.

## About the Authors

**Erin Belieu** is the author of four books of poetry: *Infanta* (1995), selected by Hayden Carruth for the National Poetry Series; *One Above, One Below* (2000); *Black Box* (2006), a finalist for the Los Angeles Times Book Prize; and *Slant Six* (2014). Belieu co-edited, with Susan Aizenberg, the volume *The Extraordinary Tide: New Poetry by American Women* (2001). With poet Cate Marvin, Belieu co-founded and co-directs VIDA: Women in the Literary Arts, an organization that seeks to “explore critical and cultural perceptions of writing by women” in contemporary culture.

‘Poem of Philosophical and Parental Conundrums Written In An Election Year’ was first published in *Slant Six*.

**Ian Birchall** is a longstanding socialist historian and translator.

**Becky Cherriman** is a writer, workshop leader and performer based in Leeds. Published by *Mslexia*, *New Walk*, *Envoi*, *Well Versed* and *Bloodaxe*, she was resident poet for Morley Literature Festival in 2013. Her latest collaboration is *Haunt*, an Imove commission working with people experiencing homelessness in Harrogate. Cinnamon Press will publish her first poetry collection in 2016. She is online at <http://www.beckycherriman.com>.

‘Austerity’ first appeared in *The Morning Star*.

**Natalie Chin** (b. 1992) grew up in Singapore and lives in London. She is the Literary Editor of *Galavant Magazine*. Her writing has been published in *The Quietus*, *Ellipsis Journal* and *Living In The Future*. She is online at <http://herbonestructure.com>.

**Josephine Corcoran**’s pamphlet ‘The Mislplaced House’ is published by tall-lighthouse. She is online at [josephinecorcoran.wordpress.com](http://josephinecorcoran.wordpress.com) and is editor at *And Other Poems*.

**Martin Figura** was born in Liverpool in 1956. He was recently described in a hospital referral letter as ‘a pleasant 58 year old gentleman’. His collection and show *Whistle* (Arrowhead Press) was shortlisted for the Ted Hughes Award and won the 2013 Saboteur Award for Best Spoken Word Show. He won the Poetry Society’s 2010 Hamish Canham Prize. He has published two pamphlets with *Nasty Little Press*: *Arthur* and *Boring The Arse Off Young People* and is now working on his new show *Dr Zeeman’s Catastrophe Machine*. A collection of the same name with Cinnamon Press is due in early 2016, and a pamphlet, *Shed*, is due out shortly with Gatehouse Press. He lives in Norwich with his wife Helen Ivory.

**Alec Finlay** was born in Scotland in 1966. He is an artist, poet and publisher. He now lives and works in the North East of England. In 2002 he became the first BALTIC artist in residence. Most recently he has worked as an artist in residence at Yorkshire Sculpture Park, where he has been creating a series of art projects on themes connected with nature and contemporary culture – Avant-Garde English Landscape. He set up the Morning Star small press, which publishes the Folios and the pocketbooks series. Recent books include *Turning Toward Living* (Platform Projects, 2004), *Shared Writing*, (Platform Projects, 2005), *Ludwig Wittgenstein: There Where You Are Not* (Blackdog, 2006), *Mesostic Herbarium* (Platform Projects, 2004), *Wind Blown Clouds* (Morning Star, 2005), *Be My Reader* (Bristol, Shearsman, 2012), and the pamphlet *Question your Teaspoon* (Calder Wood, 2012).

**Iain Galbraith's** poems have appeared in the *Times Literary Supplement*, *Poetry Review*, *PN Review*, *Edinburgh Review*, *New Writing* and many other journals and books. A winner of the John Dryden Translation Prize and the Stephen Spender Prize for Poetry Translation he is also the editor of five poetry anthologies, while his recent translated books include a selection of W.G. Sebald's poetry, *Across the Land and the Water* (2011), John Burnside's selected poems in German, *Versuch über das Licht* (2011), and Jan Wagner's *Self-portrait with a Swarm of Bees* (2015). He is an occasional lecturer, and in 2014-15 taught Poetics of Translation at the University of Applied Arts in Vienna. He grew up in Scotland and now lives in Germany.

**Jess Green** is a poet and workshop leader. She lives in Leicester.

**Kirsten Irving** is one of the founders of collaborative poetry press Sidekick Books, and the editor of more than 10 anthologies. Her own work has been commissioned for a range of titles and readings, covering topics as broad as computer games, leylines, David Lynch's *Blue Velvet*, women's bodies, the Iraq War and *The Simpsons*. Her debut collection, *Never Never Never Come Back*, was released in 2012 by Salt Publishing, and she is currently developing her first full poetry show from the scratch of *Run*, a tribute to the movie *Battle Royale*. She tweets @KoftheTriffids.

'The upper chambers of the heart collage' is a collage of Jeremy Corbyn's 'Debate on the address: Queen's Speech - Britain in the World', taken from and the NHS Choices article 'How a heart transplant is performed'.

**Helen Ivory** is a poet and assemblage/collage artist. Her fourth Bloodaxe Books collection is *Waiting for Bluebeard*. She edits the webzine *Ink Sweat & Tears*, and is Course Director and teaches for, the for the UEA/ WCN creative writing programme. A collaborative Tarot pack with the artist Tom de Freston is forthcoming from Gatehouse Press in Winter 2015, and a book of collage cut-up poems from Knives Forks and Spoons Press in Spring 2016.

**Andy Jackson** is from Salford, and now lives in Scotland. He is the editor of *Anthologies Split Screen, Double Bill* and *Tour de Vers* (Red Squirrel Press) and *Whaleback City* (with W.N. Herbert, Dundee University Press). His collection of poetry, *The Assassination Museum*, was published in 2010, also by Red Squirrel Press. Andy co-curates the New Boots and Pantisocracies poetry project with W.N. Herbert.

**Erik Kennedy** may live in New Zealand, but he supports people who support the people, anywhere they are. In the UK his poems have appeared in *The Morning Star*, *Oxford Poetry*, and *Poems in Which*. He is the poetry editor for *Queen Mob's Teahouse*. He is on Twitter at [@thetearooms](https://twitter.com/thetearooms).

The title 'Growing Fears That the Leadership Contest Has Been Hijacked by Far-Left Infiltrators' is a dazzlingly stupid phrase from the first sentence of a *Telegraph* article of 27 July, 2015 ('Jeremy Corbyn faces coup plot if he wins Labour leadership').

**Marion McCready** lives in Argyll, Scotland. Her first full-length collection is *Tree Language* (Eyewear Publishing, 2014).

'The Red Road' was first published in her pamphlet.

**Nicholas Murray** is a poet and literary biographer based in Wales and London who has written lives of Aldous Huxley, Kafka and Bruce Chatwin. He is the author of *Get Real!* (Rack Press, 2011) a verse diatribe against the last coalition Government. His new poetry collection, *The Secrets of the Sea* is published in September by Melos Press. He is a former Labour Party activist and was assistant Secretary of Bermondsey Labour Party in the early 1980s when Peter Tatchell unsuccessfully stood for the Bermondsey Parliamentary seat. He is the winner of the 2015 Basil Bunting Prize.

**Pascale Petit's** sixth collection *Fauverie* was shortlisted for the 2014 T. S. Eliot Prize and won the 2013 Manchester Poetry Prize. Her fifth collection *What the Water Gave Me: Poems after Frida Kahlo* was shortlisted for both the T. S. Eliot Prize and Wales Book of the Year, and was a Book of the Year in *The Observer*. Pascale has had three collections chosen as Books of the Year in the *Times Literary Supplement*, *The Independent* and *The Observer*. She is the recipient of a Cholmondeley Award and is chair of the judging panel for the 2015 T. S. Eliot Prize. Bloodaxe will publish her seventh collection *Mama Amazonica* in 2017.

'Scarlet Macaws' was previously published in the New Boots and Pantisocracies: 100 days of poetry for the austere generation project.



**Tom Pickard's** latest book, *hoyoot, collected poems and songs*, was published by Carcanet in 2014. His 'Ballad Of Jamie Allan' published by Flood Editions (Chicago) was a finalist in the National Book Critics Circle Awards in 2008. He has written librettos and lyrics for musicians and composers. His forthcoming collection, *Winter Migrants*, is due from Carcanet in 2016.

**Ian Pindar** has published two poetry collections, *Emporium* and *Constellations* (both Carcanet). *Emporium* was shortlisted for The Seamus Heaney Centre for Poetry Prize for First Full Collection 2012. His poems have appeared in *The Forward Book of Poetry 2011 and 2012*, *London Magazine*, *Magma*, *PN Review*, *Poetry Review*, *Stand* and the *Times Literary Supplement*. He won second prize in the National Poetry Competition 2009, a supplementary prize in the Bridport Prize 2010 and was shortlisted for the 2010 Forward Poetry Prize (Best Single Poem).

**Jody Porter** is a poet and poetry editor at *The Morning Star*.

**Michael Rosen** is a writer, broadcaster and Professor of Children's Literature at Goldsmiths, University of London. His forthcoming book of political poems is 'Don't Mention the Children' (Smokestack Books, Oct 2015).

'For Jeremy Corbyn' first appeared at [michaelrosenblog.blogspot.co.uk](http://michaelrosenblog.blogspot.co.uk).

**Michael Schmidt** OBE FRSL is the founder and editorial and managing director of Carcanet Press Limited, the general editor of *PN Review*, and Professor of Poetry at the University of Glasgow. He is currently a writer in residence at St John's College, Cambridge, and a visiting professor at the University of Bolton.

**Ernest Schonfield** is a writer and Lecturer in German at the University of Glasgow.

**Todd Swift** is author of nine full collections of poetry and editor of the *100 Poets Against the War* anthology series with Val Stevenson. Jeremy Corbyn attended the launch in 2003.

**Nick Telfer** is a British poet and writer at *PN Review*.

**Rory Waterman's** *Tonight the Summer's Over* (Carcenet, 2013) is a PBS Recommendation and was shortlisted for the Seamus Heaney Prize. He lectures English at Nottingham Trent University, and writes regularly for the *Times Literary Supplement* and other publications. He has also written two books on twentieth-century poetry, and edits *New Walk*, an international magazine for poetry and the arts. 'Anderby Creek' first appeared in *The Interpreter's House*.

