

# the edge



SPRING 2012

Welcome to the Spring Issue of Edge Magazine!

We've had a busy few months since the last issue, and we're sure the rest of you are equally busy with assignment deadlines as the term comes to an end.

We'd like to take the opportunity to thank everyone who submitted, and all those who've helped and supported us along the way. Edge wouldn't be possible without all of you.

Special thanks, also, to Kaye Kossick, for all of the amazing things she does, and to Adam Stothard for providing a majority of the images used in this issue.

We're very pleased with this issue to offer you an excellent selection of prose, poetry and photography from your fellow students. So sit back. Take a breather from that nagging deadline. Maybe a slice of cake or two is in order. And let us entertain you for bit.

Good luck with all of your essays, projects and exams! We'll see you right back here next year.

The Edge

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# INESCAPABLE

JAMES LINDSAY

It was not with guns, cameras, corrupted officials or hypnotism that this dystopia was set up. It was not with brainwashing, policing, murder and 'disappearances'. It was not through Ministries of Love and Orwellian radio propaganda that this dystopia was established. It was nobody's end result to revel in, nobody's victory, nobody's dictatorship.

This dystopia was a Cage no one perceived and everyone lived in. This was the Cage that left the door open and watched as you paced up and down looking at the open door and telling yourself the Cage was home. You put up portraits, tinsel and a tree in December; floral decorations or cacti for the other eleven months of existing. It was luxury in the way that an uncomfortable pause is still a silence. It was comfort in the same way finding out that the card was up the magician's sleeve all along is an affirmation of one's own intelligence. Disquieting quiet. Disenchanted enchantments. Uncomfortable comforts.

The graffiti, still in existence, seemed unoriginal; the a-political irreverence of the art form weak in comparison to its predecessor. The protests against tax raises, working hours, fees and other governmental impositions were impotent, futile, hypocritical and more often than not simply embarrassing. The music, generic and electronically doctored to give a consistence of quality that bred more convergence until only variations of a theme filled the music players of a generation, each member of the generation believing their identity, their "scene", their music taste, tattoos, dreams, ideals and future plans were unique, valuable, clever.

And yet the inhabitants of the Cage would sell you their unique, valuable, clever identity, scene, music taste, their tattoos, dreams, ideals and future plans for a can of energy drink and their Warholian 15 minutes on the sun-bed of fame. To be the gossip.

This dystopia was not made with brainwashing, murder, policing, governmentally approved 'disappearances' or huge posters informing you of who was watching whom. It was birthed by the wisdom of the previous generations, the technological advances and the throne of money and microchips on which every Cage sat, polished chrome and heated water with no idea of how much the Caged took for granted. Took for Themselves. Everybody wanted the capacity to conference call the moon, willing to buy touch screen, three

dimensional, fibre optic, motion sensor, Windows compatible, fair trade, seven times filtered, triple distilled, I-marketed buzzword notebook that would only be outsold by the 1.1 model, which ironically cost even less to make and marketed at double the cost because it weighed 0.8 grams less and was 3 millimetres thinner than the previous, bulky, outdated model. No one would wait for 1.2, because six weeks was too long for technological deification whilst living in technological defecation.

The world of tomorrow was yesterday's news and the satellite hovering above the stratosphere was of greater importance than the 22 year old missing student in Hull that appeared on the news one day. For 2 and a half minutes. Without any update on that situation, but twenty four hour coverage on the latest sports scores coming in from America, Japan, and Europe. Not even the police are looking anymore, having given up after a week or so. No one cares unless you can speed up their internet connection, make them money, or run one hundred metres in 9.4 seconds with less bloods in your steroid-stream than the next 6'6" mesomorphic ectomorph who has been training since she was one year old five times a week.

So, that's how I dropped off the map, fell out of my Cage. It was easy. Big Brother wasn't watching. Big Sister couldn't care less. Big Father ran out before I was born, and Big Mother was living in wherever the next TV program was set. Reported missing on day 3, presumed dead on day 11. Day 25: grieving over, normality restored.

And I was free.

This is not the story about how I single handedly brought down the government and restored beautiful chaos, because I didn't. This is not all about how I rocked the world, because I didn't. This is the story of how I faded away comfortably and will not be remembered by anyone "of note" when I die.

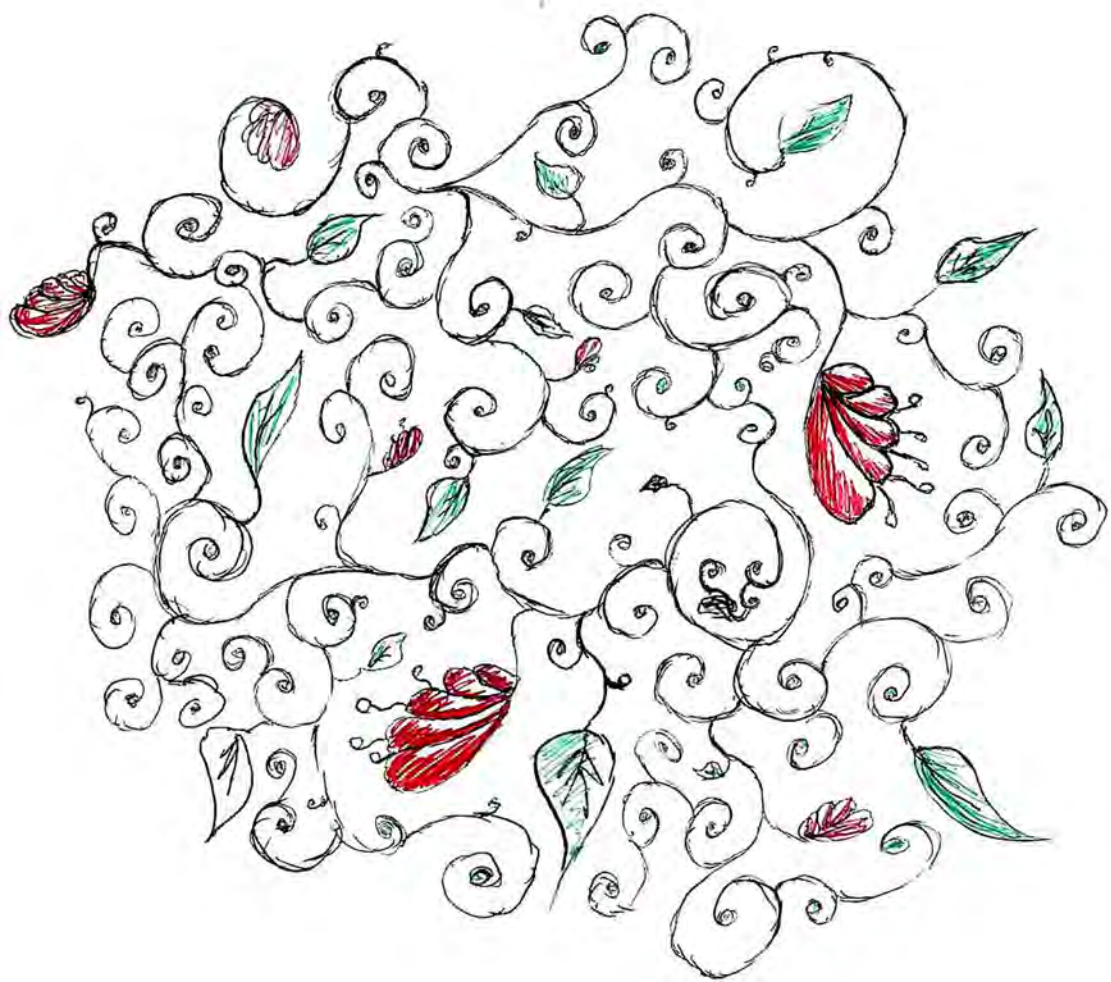
This is my story, as it happened.





IL CUORE BLU  
ROSEMARY LAZZARI

Arresting colour disguises grey truth  
Collapsed souls  
lay to feel human  
A sad glint of knowing  
in the defiant eye  
Muffling the perpetual roar  
of seeping shame  
Merge into the suffocating filth  
Anguished by the muted darkness  
Rich  
in limp blue sorrow  
Lay to feel human  
Uncovering to cover  
rolling despair. Evermore





THINGS I'VE

NEVER DONE

ETTRICK SCOTT

I've never been in a betting shop  
And I've never seen a stripper.  
Never felt the need to read a book  
About the Yorkshire Ripper.  
I've never seen inside a jail  
(I've never been that bad)  
I've never eaten that beetroot shite,  
Nor have I ever punched my dad.

I've never mugged a grandmother  
And taxed her old age pension,  
I've never crucified a cat  
To scratch some inner tension.  
I've not swallowed shitloads of smack  
To smuggle through some borders,  
And while I think Blue Monday's good,  
I've never liked New Order.

I never trust a hippy  
Or give a sucker even breaks,  
And as a rule,  
I never knock it till I try it.  
I've never tried to top myself,  
I've not got what it takes.  
I've been tempted, though,  
But not enough to buy it.

I've never fallen fast  
For a fickle femme fatale,  
And I've never fancied  
Fisting foreplay frolics.  
I've never been to Blackpool,  
I suspect I never shall,  
I've seen pictures  
And it looks like total bollocks.

I've never found a God,  
(But it's not like I ever looked)  
It never seemed like my idea of fun.  
But never say never,  
You won't be here forever,  
Live hard before you write that list  
Of things you never done.



Ruffled, mottled feathers  
Blown to and fro by the gales  
Twittering protests  
Against your laughing foes

So very, very little  
Those tiny wings flutter  
In defiance  
You sing nonetheless

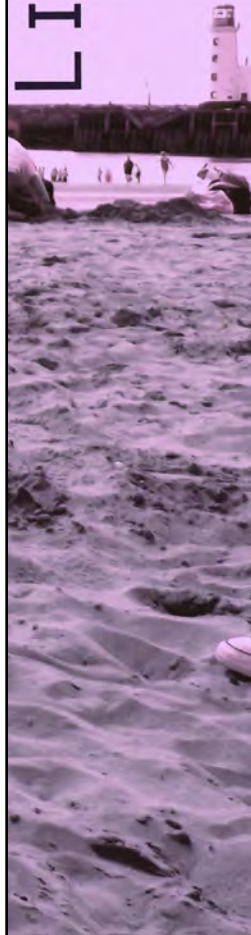
Easy prey you are, little wings  
To those who circle above  
And patiently prowl the shadows  
Waiting, waiting claws unsheathed

Yet you dart and weave  
Frightened though you are  
So lost and far from home  
Dear, sweet little thing

Do not flit from my grasp  
I shall neither bind nor cage you  
Allow me to shelter you  
Be your safe, warm perch  
I ask nothing of you  
Only to hold you close

# LITTLE WREN

CHRISTINA WOODS





# THE SUNDANCER AND THE BUTTERFLY

NEIL CAMPBELL

When Muhammad Ali came to South Shields he fought an exhibition bout, and had his marriage blessed in Laygate mosque. We saw him on King Street as he passed on an open top bus.

They showed some of his last fights on TV, when he got really hammered against Larry Holmes and Trevor Berbick. Even in the closing rounds, when Ali was only saved from further punishment by the referee, my dad said it was a disgrace, and that Ali would have won in the end. Dad said Ali was only pretending, conning his opponent with the rope a dope like he did with George Foreman in Zaire.

When the then Cassius Clay came back after winning a gold medal at the Rome Olympics, he wasn't allowed to sit down for a meal in a restaurant in his home town, and so he threw his gold medal into the Ohio River. Later, when world champion, he was drafted into the army to go to Vietnam. He refused to go, stating that 'No Vietcong ever called me nigger'.

Ali's epic fights with Joe Frazier went down in boxing legend, but the toll on both men was heavy. In old age Joe Frazier lived above the same boxing gym in Philadelphia where he trained for those fights. The third Ali/Frazier fight, the 'Thriller in Manila', was only stopped when Frazier's trainer, Eddie Futch, threw the towel in at the end of the fourteenth round. Frazier sat alone in his Philadelphia apartment, still believing he should have gone out for that last round.

People talk about Ali in the past tense as though he's no longer still alive. There was that time when he lit the flame for the Olympics and millions of people watched all around the world as the Parkinson's shook the torch he was carrying. Ali kept fighting twenty fights too long because he knew he was a hero. And he kept fighting because he needed the money for his friends and family.

My dad was working at the colliery in Boldon when Ali beat Foreman in Zaire. He told me about Foreman, and how many boxing pundits thought he was the heaviest puncher in the history of the fight game. He had destroyed Joe Frazier, knocking him down six times in one fight.

Despite Scargill and the efforts of the striking miners, the pit at Bolden was closed down. After that, Dad would sit in the pub all afternoon, smoking, and nursing one pint of mild, and then when the smoking ban came in he couldn't even do that anymore.

Standing with bird-like arms I will stretch my feathered fingers  
across the horizon. Arching my slender neck I shall search  
heaven with eyes piercing beyond the universe, my slim body  
will tremble to the wind's rhythms caressing thermal plains to  
embrace darkening skies,

"Will you hold me safe?" she asks.

Toes clawing rock, like talons unborn of unearthly shackles  
I will ache to ascend. Bending with abandoned poise I shall  
aim like an archer's arrow to target beyond gravity,

"Will you hold me safe?" she asks.

One glorious leap and fetters will fall. I will belong to space,  
without form or feeling like the first born fledgling testing  
courage,

"Will you hold me safe?" she asks.

"No, but I will unlock your gilded cage and let you go," he  
whispered.



BEACHY - HEAD BETRAYAL

DENNY LISLE





WHATSOEVER HAPPENED HANNAH JOHNSON  
TO HAPPY ENDINGS?

## *One Day* David Nicholls

Having just finished David Nicholls's novel *One Day*, I can't help but feel disappointed with the ending. I was thoroughly enjoying the will they/won't they relationship between best friends, Dexter and Emma, and finding it utterly relatable. Let's admit it, we have all had that one friend who we unashamedly flirt with, but never actually date. This couple represent it perfectly.

Despite an amazing night together, Dexter and Emma decide to just be friends and to keep in touch. Emma begins as a waitress at a run-down restaurant whilst Dexter becomes a famous TV presenter, causing friction in their relationship. The tables turn when she gets a boyfriend and job as a teacher, whilst Dexter's life of sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll soon becomes hangovers, unconsciousness and regret. He tumbles into the world of an alcoholic.

We think it's all over for Em and Dex when we see him married and a father. Then we discover his wife is cheating on him; and we are so happy that she is. Enter Emma. After much exasperation they finally get together. (Even though we knew it was coming all along.) To my relief their decision to become a couple is not over-dramatised or incredibly romantic, it is simple and real.


Our happiness continues as we see them married and trying for a baby and then boom! The ending. Their exciting, eventual relationship is just beginning to blossom, when on her way to meet Dexter, Emma gets knocked over on her bike and dies.

This completely destroyed the book for me, making me unwilling to read on. I don't see why Nicholls chose this ending. I suppose it's presumably to make us realise that what we want is right in front of us and yet you would think he would realise that witnessing twenty exasperating years of them becoming so close and then falling out does this anyway.

We fall in love with the characters and their relationship, not the tragedy. Happy endings simply no longer exist. I know that a lot of the classics have terribly tragic endings – *Romeo and Juliet*, *Titanic*, *PS I Love You*, *The Notebook*, etc. – and that's what makes them so popular but I don't want every up-and-coming rom-com to feel someone has to die in order for theirs to be successful. Classics such as *Bridget Jones*, *Notting Hill*, *Grease* and so many more prove this. People are desperate for a romantic relationship: it's why women are so obsessed with guys doing over the top proposals, leaving petrified men feeling the need to rent out the Eiffel Tower, hide it in the cake or hire a marching band.

Don't get me wrong I still loved the book, the chemistry between the two characters was engaging and relatable, I just recommend that, to avoid depression, you should not read the ending.

For once could someone please write me a story with a happy ending?



THIS IS NOT  
A POEM

This is not a poem, as it doesn't fit the formula  
But perhaps that is the point, because neither does life;  
Love, loss, pain, joy; they're never straight, true, or right.  
They're not captured in a box like structure  
Fastened with a ribbon, then given as a gift.  
Take love, it's not valentines or happy endings  
Love is hard, blunt like a brick, maddening  
Annoying, enough to make you sick.

Occasionally I laugh when I get angry  
Or gag for breath whilst crying at something comic  
Emotions never run true. Love's always right and wrong  
Give me a love that's infuriatingly wholly  
Soak me in something tangible and kiss me like a brick  
This isn't a love sonnet, though it's fourteen lines long.

ASA MADDISON



*Today there will be snow, and everyone will be still for a day.*  
In half light, breath-holding semi-darkness, the first flakes fell.

They appeared from nowhere, as if the snow had created the clouds.

By the time the radio alarm blared into life inside, the snow sounds were mingled with the distant scrape of struggling snowplows.

“My God,” he whispered, at the doorway. “Where did all this come from?”

Apparently it’s this bad all over the region. Nobody expected a storm like this.”

The snow whispered all around them.

His body relaxed a little, and the tense muscles of his neck seemed to loosen.

“When we met, it snowed.” He breathed in the heavy, cold air.

“And we walked through the streets together. Just the two of us.

You said the city belonged to us alone.

The big blizzard. Another freak storm, like this one.”

He looked at her, his eyes bright.

“I know something we could do in this blizzard.”

Swirls of white danced through the air in front of the porch.

“You know,” he said as they turned back to the house,

“if I didn’t know better, I might even think you’d caused this storm.”

The breath of snow touched their backs as they closed the door on the blizzard.

CHI ONE

DAVID R MORGAN





BANCO DE ESPAÑA

C2  
783  
BSL



# CLOSE

DANIEL BOWMAN

Out of nowhere came the thought that the air felt very close. I hadn't noticed it before, but the realisation made me pause, shattering my previously pleasant state of mind. Despite focusing all my efforts on relaxing, I was now very much awake and alert to the threats the early morning presented. The only other people wandering around at this time are psychopaths. Had I only maintained my sleepy ignorance for a while longer, I may not have noticed the man leaning on a garden wall further down the road. Even if I had, I certainly wouldn't have let his presence trouble me as it did. I felt the familiar sensation of my thoughts spiralling out of control. The strategists in my head were getting over-excited, all eager to voice their opinion on how best to neutralize this potential threat. I submitted to them.

This was it.

Clearly, this man was capable of anything; mugging, raping or killing me. He could follow me home, get into my house, endanger my family. I allowed my frenzied imagination to trawl through every possible outcome of my passing this man, who, on closer inspection, was tall and gangling, as if his legs had continued growing without the consent of the rest of his body. His complexion was that of someone from somewhere in the middle-east. Something about the combination of his beige trousers and slightly darker beige coat made me smirk inwardly, but this careless reaction was quickly stifled now by my highly suspicious mind.

Approaching him, I tried not to make eye-contact, but was equally conscious that this itself might cause offence if he suspected me of doing it deliberately. I could check my phone. That gives me a viable excuse for not looking at him. Suppose it might just provoke his temptation to mug me though. Eyes down, I passed him, scuffing the sole of my shoe loudly in front of him. I felt his eyes on me. No longer privacy, just exposure. Suddenly I longed for the presence of people, if only to act as witnesses.

Leaving him behind me, I considered speeding up, but hesitated. He might take it as an insult, a racist comment even. Would I have reacted with the same irrational caution had it been a white man stood there? I'd never suspected myself of racism before, but, if this morning was anything to go by, I certainly wasn't the one in control of my thoughts. Satisfied with this, I walked the short distance to my house.

I knew from years of experience that my footsteps would echo in our passage, as if someone was walking behind you, but today it caught me off guard. The man could be, and almost certainly was pursuing me. As much as I objected, I found myself sprinting through my gate to the door. I panicked as my flustered fingers failed to fit the key in the lock, jabbing the edges of the keyhole. I almost laughed with relief as I was able to turn the key, slip through the door and slam it shut behind me. I slid down onto the kitchen floor, feeling sick.

I slowly rose and traipsed upstairs, uncertain as to how and why I had let things escalate to such an extent. I encountered my mum on the landing, having woken her up when I slammed the door.

“Are you alright? I heard you running down the passage, what happened?”

“Nothing.” I replied. “Nothing happened.”



# HOLD YOUR BREATH

DAVID R MORGAN

When I was twelve, we lived in Placka, Crete and had a swimming pool in the garden. Me and my friends spent a lot of time lying next to it with baby oil on our skin and Sun-In on our hair.

We didn't really swim much; no matter how much chlorine my dad dumped in, the algae kept coming back thicker and thicker on the side near our lounge chairs, choking the pump until it burned out and died. Like having a heart attack, Dad said. It looked like the invasion of the alien slime monsters to me, but Mum says they call it "bloom."

In Year 8, two of the boys started whispering "smells like fish" to each other whenever I came near them, especially if I uncrossed my legs or bent over.

I snatched the glasses off Jason and stomped on them, and punched his friend Theos in the ribs. Since I was a good girl and I'd never been caught fighting before, they let me off with a week of detention and writing an essay on turning the other cheek.

I got a B.

In Year 9, I started poking holes in the webbing between my fingers with a safety pin in maths class.

They called my mum in to the Head of Years Office and she came out stuffing a bunch of emails into her purse.

I thought I was grounded for sure, but she kept talking about emotional pain until I asked her if she and Dad were getting a divorce.

After that we came back to Luton, England. Then she took me to the Arndale and said I could get anything I wanted. I got blue highlights, which Mum thought was sort of okay because she had read in the Daily Mail how all the girls are doing it. I don't even like Hannah Montana.

Mum likes talking in the car about serious stuff because then she doesn't have to look at me or figure out what to do with her hands.

She said I know it's hard for you, becoming a woman. I said that's not the problem. She said I hope you're not blaming me.

I said no but I don't think she believed me.

I know it's not her fault. I'm not a retard, and I am good at Biology. Mum is clearly not a fish.

I know it's got to be one of my grandmothers' fault, or maybe great-grandmothers'.

I can't tell who because Dad's mum is dead and Mum

doesn't talk to her folks since the blame game thing about me. In all the really old pictures they had long skirts.

Peter Kay could be under there.

I'm pretty sure it isn't going to happen to my sister Gemma too. At least, Mrs. Krupinski says it doesn't work like that with blue eyes.

But Gemma's only eight, so I kept the Sun-In, just in case.

I don't know how long it is going to take until I become a mermaid. Maybe not till college. I'll need to go to one by the Sea. Poole or Bournemouth perhaps. With my condition I will only rapidly metamorphose in water. My fins and tail will expand. When dry the fins and tail will shrink to a vestige, leaving my scaly legs to work.

Mum always says *don't hold your breath*, waiting for things to change, but I do; At night with my mouth smushed against the pillow, or in the Bath Road Swimming Pool with my hair making a big jellyfish cloud in front of my face. I can do it for six minutes now.

My knees and elbows are getting scaly already, but I got this great seaweed lotion from The Body Shop that keeps it under control.

When it comes, I'll be ready.

I'm doing my science project on coral reefs.

I stole my mum's pearls that she never wears anyway.

I sent half my birthday money to Greenpeace.

And I'm making myself learn to eat sushi.

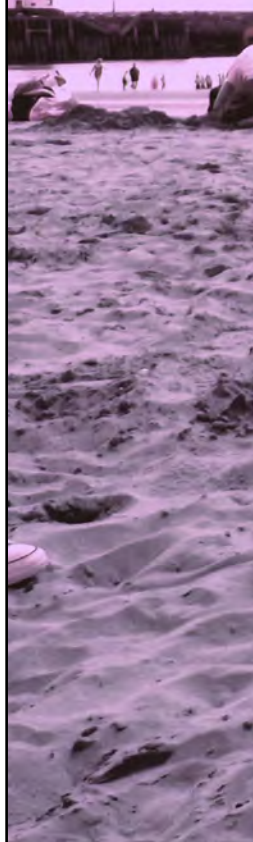




A haze of memories splash across the page  
like a photograph.  
It all comes back to you one day;  
the zip's purr as it rolls down.  
The screams, the gasps, the odour.  
Slow slide of denim to the floor.  
Whiskey on his breath.  
Your perfume, mingled with the duvets.  
Bare legs, pink polyester torn back.  
The aftermath.  
a bloody silence;  
the air of the crime.

SPILT COFFEE

POPPY HAWS



We survived. Cities an' homes an' families rip all to pieces, but we was the ones lived. We was the ones learnt how.

'Til *they* came.

There was stories from other camps. People could turn the weather, or make things move. Animals not lookin' like any animal should. People not lookin' like any person should. They said it was government weapons changed things. They said people wasn't the only ones lost homes in the War.

Maybe it was jus' us believin' again brought 'em all back.

But nothin' happened to us. We kep' ourselves safe an' we stayed safe. 'Til that night.

'Most three months ago.

One second was jus' normal. Next they was there.

The Nameless.

Everywhere.

We try shootin'. Stabbin'. Fire. Anything.

They jus' kept comin'.

Like animals. Diseased. Savage.

Maybe they was human once. When you look't in their faces – their eyes – there was nothin' left but pure, desperate hunger.

They took six. Killed eight, an' jus' left the bodies in the road. Next mornin' we couldn't even recognise 'em as people we live' an' breathe' with.

Next night we sat behind bolted doors an' barricaded windows with anythin' we could make a weapon. We set traps an' alarms all 'round Camp so we'd know when they was comin'.

They got past the alarms.

They rip't out doors.

They dragged us into the street an' circled like wolves.

They laughed. An' laughed.

Nine kilt.

Right there.

Them Nameless, they took 'em an' rip't 'em apart with bare hands. Arms, legs, heads torn right off an' all those things jus' grinnin' an' laughin' with 'em blood-smear'd faces. Pushin' us innit. Leerin' heads at us.

They took eight.

That third night all we could do was sit in the dark murmurin' prayers to whatever still listened with whatever words we still remembered.

They came anyway.

Four got Taken. None got kilt.

Fourth night, we jus' waited. 'Fraid to breathe. 'Fraid to speak. 'Fraid to move.

You could feel the fear thick an' hot like August afternoon.

Nothin'. Not a sound all night.

An' the next night, an' the night after.

There's a thing about hope. It comes whether'n you want it.

An' most always when it shouldn't.

Three weeks we live like that. Terrified an' waitin'. An' then they came back. Walk't right into Camp like it belonged to 'em. Grinnin' with those awful teeth.

This wasn't no chaotic attack. They 'spected us. One by one. Eyes. Teeth. Arms. Legs. They *tasted* us.

An' we let 'em.

We was too scared to do anythin' else.

Their leader watch't everythin'.

Never touch't any of us. Never made no sound. The Nameless jus' knew what he want.

He was taller'n the rest, and... better. Like the difference 'tween real leather an' those fakes't just lookit.

He stood in the middle of Camp like a big marble statue. Jus' as still. Jus' as perfect. Jus' lookin' at him made my skin crawl worse'n all their touchin' an' tastin' ever did.

Three nights they came. Three nights we gave in. Some were taken, but no one died.

An' we went back to waitin'.

We barely look't at each other.

On the 29th day, he showed up.

I knew he was a soldier. Even without all its patches, I recognised it as the same ones wore by the boys back home. Same ones Mama'd sew twelve hours a day. But it was old. Stained. Worn. Jus' like the rest of him. His hair hung in long, scraggly tendrils down his shoulders an' mostly hid his face. But I saw it. He looked up for jus' a second when he walk't by. He had that thing about him, like an animal you know needs put down or any second he might turn on you. It put everyone on edge, but I couldn't do it, an' no one else wanted to, either.



*CHILDISH GAMBINO // PATRICK SWIFT*

in the old movies Mama'd watch t'always have a happy ending. He didn't sound like he could do all the things they did.

'No more,' Dumas said. His voice too quiet an' too old for his face. Like he hadn't said anythin' out loud in a real long time.

Leader jus' look't at him like he couldn't decide what he thought, but Dumas didn't back down.

What happen next I thought about so many times an' so many different ways, but there's nothin' about it ever makes any sense no matter how you look at it.

Leader reach't for Dumas. He move fast like they did, but it didn' seem like he was tryin' to hurt Dumas. Like he jus' wanta see if Dumas was real, maybe. 'Cept soon as he moved, everythin' slowed down. Like movies sometimes does.

Dumas's hand shot out. Straight in Leader's chest. An' the light jus' found him. Or came from him. Or exist *with* him. All that light burnin' 'round him 'til Camp was bright as day. It was like the world slid sideways an' would never find its way back again. All these horrible, splittin' shrieks 'round us, an' the whole Camp kept gettin' brighter an' brighter 'til you couldn' see anythin' but pure white an' then it was gone. Darker'n it'd been for all the light spots in our eyes.

There was nothing' left where Leader been 'cept smoke an' ash an' scorched ground. The Nameless was gone faster'n you could blink, but we stayed put 'cause Dumas was still there. Like a switch the life jus' poured right outta him an' he fell to the ground.

None of us moved. None of us breathed.

Then he pull his head up an' look at us with those sad, crazy eyes. He look't so *scared*. I could see his chest movin' with big, jerky breaths.

An' then he just ran.

Some of the boys made a show of tryin' to find him, but no one kept at it very long. Truth was, we was more scared of him'n the Nameless.

It's been thirty days. None of us know what's gonna happen. Most are afraid to hope. But that's the thing. Hope comes whether you want it or not.

There won't be anyone left if they come back. So someone should know what happened.

For ten years we kep' ourselves safe. 'Til the Nameless.

Tonight they're s'posed to come again.



I.  
Numb sense, keep  
the flowers.  
A present from me.  
Drawn up from  
The earth, plucked and  
picked and  
left to die.  
Artificial life, squeezed out,  
then pull the plug.  
The vase is left  
empty and  
The Sun  
brings no relief.

II.  
Dead land, where  
roses bloom and we  
shared the wine.  
I slipped between  
the stones, and  
looked for your name.  
Out on the edge  
the ground was  
broken and overgrown,  
And the shadows  
of the willow  
kept you  
In Darkness.

III.

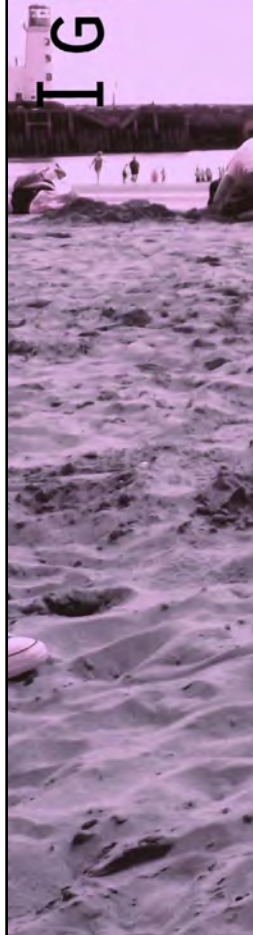
Lost eyes, paid off with  
Gold. Fog clouded  
the moors, and  
the sheep ate  
their children.  
I wandered across  
that land, stick in hand,  
and counted my losses.  
Salt lines, etched  
in the safety of the hot broth.  
For the vampires, she said.

IV.

Stomp bump, dissolving in  
The Mass of  
flailing arms.  
Raised up, reaching  
and screaming for  
Some New God.  
Electric surges,  
lights flickered,  
the crowd merges and  
I saw your face,  
breaking freely.  
“If only tomorrow  
would die.”

IGNORANT CUTS

OLLIE JEGGO



# THE LETTER

CHLOE BEALE

*Inspired by the poem 'Tea for Two (A Tragedy)' from B is for Bad Poetry, Pamela August Russell.*

*'It wasn't until after  
I poured the second cup  
that I realised  
I was alone.'*

To my dearest husband,

Again, it has been too long. I feel this is my fault. Today, I watered the front garden. The roses are just beginning to come through, I can see their early shoots. I fear, though, that they will wither before they have the chance to grow fully. I could never encourage them as you could. But then, you always had a way with these things.

Annette was supposed to come round today, but Paul fell ill. She rang to tell me they had taken him into hospital. I must admit, as I know I only can to you, that there was a spark of anger within me. I have no right to resent him, or her. Not like I do sickness itself. Disease, it seems, has made somewhat of a friend of me.

I only wish I could see Andrew more. He is still so young, so darling, I wish to be around him all the time, while I am still here to do so. I told our daughter that she could bring him here to me, so I could look after him while she saw to her husband. She said it was too far to come, and Rebecca, her next door neighbour, would be more than happy to look after my grandson.

I can only hope that Anne doesn't have to suffer a loss so great as losing one's partner; especially not now, while they are both so young.



Do you remember what it was like to be young, my dear? Sometimes, I fear I forget. And then I remember, the day you drove us to the coast. We played around at the pier fair, ate as much sugar as we could handle, and then just lay on the beach, until the night fell upon us.

I remember how it drew us in, how the darkness shielded us, and how perfectly alone we felt. That is one of the only memories I have left of being young. It is not surprising; it was always my favourite.

I miss you.

I'm in fear, almost constantly, of the void. I don't fear death, my darling. I fear that I will never have the chance to hear your voice again. What I would give to listen to you read the morning paper to me, in your chair, while I begrudgingly try to concentrate on my crossword. I never really did hate it you know. In fact, since you have gone, I can no longer think of the answers.

You always told me that I was stronger. Fearless you said, remembering the time I shouted at your Mother. She told you to stop fooling around with ideas of love, and marry a nice church going girl, have a couple of children, and get a proper job.

We showed her didn't we?

Listen, I must go. I think I'm going to drive down to visit Paul and Anne in hospital. I think she needs me right now.

I'm sorry I can't talk more. Isn't it funny, when you were still here, sometimes we would go days before finally having a conversation. Now I can no longer find you, it appears I have so much more to say. I suppose that is the meaning of irony, a concept you were always far too familiar with.

I put out another cup again. I must stop doing that, though I don't think I ever will.

I love you.  
Your wife.



REGRETTABLE

WEATHER

MARTYN ARMSTRONG

**Haiku:**

Colossus: The tree  
slithers, its branches writhe and  
hiss—I lean on it.

**Tanka:**

‘This blade is rusty,  
it nips the skin’. The ground is  
brown, red, and muddy.  
The river snakes past, twisting...  
a warm stream trickles, crimson.

**Pantun:**

A shiver changes me; a  
warm glow slowly drains away...  
Two miles south of the river  
a telephone rings and rings.



Travel by night  
Your one choice  
To run  
Without backward glance  
Lest be snared and tried

Eyes weighted in sorrow  
All the anger and pain  
The fires  
Fuel for the injured heart

Slip from shadow to shadow  
Avoid the streets' bulbs  
So cruelly they cast your shadow  
With that, you must bolt  
Every noise causes an involuntary flinch  
Each flicker of your peripheral  
Causes alarm  
For the noise is not your own

Lost, alone  
The mind awash with confusion  
Restless in the muscle  
Beneath its cage of bone

Find somewhere  
Settle down  
Rest easy  
Sleep well

Things unachievable  
To Souls like your own  
They, we, us  
As many as shadows are  
The lonely, the unloved  
Daughters and sons  
Disgraced and fallen  
Shunned and deceived  
There is no safety in the norm  
No shelter in the light  
Only those akin  
Will show you in

Settle for now  
For always we must move  
Wayward be wayward  
Your kin be mine

We are the fallen  
The Angels, the shadows  
Always we will be  
And always will be Kin

It was yellow, plastic and cost 69p from WH Smith. Strands of hair clung to it from the mascara smeared on its surfaces, while its end was dimpled from shopping lists and Sudoku puzzles. Its structural stability had been challenged from where it had been bashed around in her bag, but never the less it was still functional and that was all that mattered. She shivered and pulled her coat around her, stepping through the streetlight's arches across the pavement and towards the underpass.

She descended and entered the belly of the tunnel, all illuminated in an orange glow that warmed discarded leaves and last night's urine trails. The mechanical rattle and clunk from above signalled she'd missed her connection, she sighed. But what was seven minutes? She carried on, pulling her handbag closer as the wind shuffled the rubbish behind her and she climbed out into the night. The platform stood empty, not that she'd expected anything else for this time and the lone CCTV camera hung down from its cable, intent only on monitoring the ground.

'It's dark tonight isn't it?' said a voice. She looked around, but saw no one. She blinked and increased her grip on her bag. There was a tutting sound somewhere above her. 'Some people think it's rude not to answer questions,' it continued. She turned, looked up and saw a figure, somehow perched on the lamppost, hugging it almost, dressed in black and staring down at her.

'Sorry, I,' she paused, 'I didn't see you up there.'

'Yeah, most people don't,' it breathed out, surveying into the dark. 'But, the thing is, you get such a great view from this perspective,' the figure twitched its focus back to her, 'well normally.'

'Right,' she replied.

'On your way home then,' it asked. She shrugged and checked her watch. 'To your boyfriend's?' She shrugged again. The figure sighed and shifted its weight, 'not big on talking then?' She did not reply, but stared out on to the track, waiting for the click and murmur of activity that would soon follow and knotted her hands together.

The hiss of the seam of friction between metal and cloth, followed by a soft landing pricked her ears to the forefront. Then the footsteps as the figure strolled up and stood beside her. She just reached its shoulder. The blackness

from its outfit almost consumed it into the night; it breathed in and out the cold air between its fleshy features. It clicked its tongue and played with the cuff of its jacket for a while; before it became more rigid and rooted around in its pockets. The electricity buzzed through the cables ahead and the tracks clicked into place. She stepped towards the edge of the platform, aligning herself with where the door would be, to allow herself the quickest transition into warmth as possible.

'So I guess, this is where it ends,' the figure said, 'it was nice talking to you. If only fleetingly.'

'Yeah, I guess,' she replied slightly glimpsing in its direction. She winced as the glare from the metro lights reflected into her eye off the object now held in its gloved hand. She breathed in sharply as the train began to pull into the platform, then she ran.

It grabbed at her, wrenching the bag from her shoulder and spilling its contents across the concrete floor. She screamed sharply and drew the attention of the people inside the moving train, all imprisoned by the doors. She kicked out at it, yelling, running, screaming, punching, anything. But it pounced and pushed her to the floor. Its face was flicked with sweat and slobber and it stared down at her, burning its eyes into her. Holding the blade close to the throb, it salivated the milliseconds, just before the slice.

Its bodyweight on top of her trapped her flat, one arm was pinned under her, but the other lay out unnoticed. She scratched at it, with the forgotten limb, but nothing shifted that gaze or impeded it in its pursuit. The floor was wet, uneven and she scraped over the surface searching until one of the tips brushed into a plastic shell. She grasped the object and in one motion drove it straight into one of its fiery eyes and forced the air out of her lungs. It screamed, loosened its grip and tried to slash out into the now empty space. Weapon in hand she ran for the train, leaving it and her bag behind. Stumbling and panting she jabbed the button, her fingers sliding on the surface and glanced back to see the figure shrieking in its failure.

The doors opened and she scrambled into the light, filled with pale faces, who all offered hands to stab at the button. Someone screamed. All heads flicked to the exterior as the figure raised itself off the platform and lurched train-ward. It gathered pace, dripping red on man-made solidity, with increasing velocity toward the door. The hand over its eye not succeeding to stem the seep. They hung there as the doors clunked closed before its touch.

This intrigued the figure and it rested its face against the window, peering in and smearing its features on the glass as it prodded at the button with a sticky finger. The train started forward; making away, then it juddered and halted.

The collective sigh was quickly undermined as the bloody mess smiled widely in at them, then drew its hand away from the window and into its pocket once more. The train indecisively jerked forward a centimetre, then another, finally solidifying on increasing its pace. The figure removed its teeth from light and banged on the sides of the train echoing away a metallic clang as the metro gathered speed. It lingered on the platform edge screeching after the train as it disappeared into the distance.

She sank down to the train floor, one hand pressed against its plastic surface, the other wrapped around a yellow pen.



Nightmarish whispers  
Stolen from stirred children  
Squeak like park swings  
Against the grey  
The Insomniac moon  
Covers its face  
Within the crying clouds

Hands form temples  
Forced fingers point upwards  
Towards the sky  
Like the child's  
Deaf eyes  
Words fall unheard  
Dropped  
By an Unresponsive moon  
Like rain from the crying clouds

Ignorant moon  
Gloater  
Stealer of time  
Banker of day  
It's one glass eye  
Woozily peeks from behind  
Its gloomy monocle  
A veil upon the crying clouds

Tired light  
Shines with anguish  
From the perpetual moon  
Revolving continuously conscious  
Around a world unforgiving  
Upon its dry drowsy eyes, tears  
From a quilt of crying clouds

MOON LIGHT

ASA MADDISON





SUN ON THE HORIZON

MARTYN ARMSTRONG

The embers in the fire begin to fade,  
the moonlight no longer dances through the branches,  
the dangers of this day are on the way.

The moss-covered wood, turned red near the fray;  
a body has fallen; it no longer dances,  
the embers in the fire begin to fade.

Our memories, *'remember, the walk that day?'*  
*'Same place, we have taken our chances',*  
the dangers of this day are on the way.

*'It is done, wipe it, bury, it, the blade.'*  
Dark skies lift: the sun's advance.  
The embers in the fire begin to fade.

Silence: It was done: buried, the waste.  
*'We did it. we knew the consequences.'*  
The dangers of this day are on the way.

Bodies will swing a-top of branches,  
This sullied ground, our last sight, we sway:  
The embers in the fire begin to fade,  
the dangers of this day, are on the way.





# the edge

SASHKA DRAKOS

JULIA BOND

ASA MADDISON

CHLOE BEALE

ADAM STOTHARD

KAYE KOSSICK

