

ECHO





# E C H O

April 2018

Edited by Jessica Tillings

E C H O is an online zine, which runs alongside the interdisciplinary reading series



Currently, we only solicit submissions from open mic performers. To sign-up for an open mic slot at our next event please visit: <http://reverbsw.weebly.com/contact>

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# Giving the World to Venus

*Hilary Walker*

*This poem tells the story of how I met my daughter in a Romanian orphanage in the spring of 1990, just after the Romanian revolution.*

Row upon row, cot upon cot,  
and the smell.

I watch the worn out, tired, hard-life women  
as they casually throw babies around for a living,  
they hold a child feet first under a freezing cold water tap  
and grin with amusement to see my horror at that  
It's hard not to judge

Babies for sale, dark-skin cheaper than pale,  
babies damaged, derailed,  
babies with missing years lost inside their heads as they rock,  
and rock

Children paraded, tiny hands reach out to grab hold of my heart,  
two years old but babies,  
undersized, unsteady, undernourished  
and some already looking at life through empty eyes

a voice says  
'We don't wish to offend but would you be willing to  
consider a gypsy child?'  
It's hard not to judge

My gypsy baby is number twelve,  
she is the smallest and the darkest,  
but her eyes shine and tell me she is still holding on tight to her spirit,  
no sign yet of surrender

I hold this tiny life and ask myself what right I have  
to take her from her country, her culture and her creed,  
then I look around at her country, her culture and her creed  
and know for certain that she will die here,  
even if she lives,  
so I'm sold, and I'm told I must find her mother,  
find Venus

Venus with her rich olive skin is beautiful  
but Venus is not the Goddess of Love,

Venus is young and has no shoes  
and snow is falling lightly above the filthy oil fields of Prahova County.

We smile and I try to remember everything.  
I'm told she has dreams for the baby she's never seen,  
to become an English princess, like the daughter of a queen.  
It's hard not to judge

I want to buy Venus some shoes  
but the interpreter scorns and warns  
'She's just a gypsy, she'll want more,  
you must show her you are strong'

But I don't want to be strong,  
I want to give her the world for she has given the world to me.

Rebellion kicks in  
Venus and I link arms and go shopping in downtown Bucharest.  
In department stores devoid of light we rummage together cheerfully,  
new comrades searching deep in the darkness

We emerge triumphant with an odd pair of ill-fitting boots,  
and as I raise my eyes to gaze at the mother of my child,  
I see Venus, the Goddess of love,  
who now stands magnificently with the world at her feet.

# Ode to A-Nine-Eight

*R. J. Holmes*

Remembered only in time redeemed  
to blow off steam and react to the path denied  
to introduce random slivers of shielding and expendable strength  
scorching into someone strong, surrounded by roaring beauty.  
He had the stars eluding smoking optimism  
for dreams rely upon an intonation of a name  
a choice, a lifetime's education toward the impact of her war.

*How often have you been included in the mountains*

Desire is for youth and continues to various minds  
as you practice your heart, taste your own world, the clash  
of rippled crustaceans in the air like demons in the universe of darkness  
we are all their pain combined with Others understanding  
on shifting sand not thugs trying to diet a spiritual act.  
Life comes from silent personality, beauty's efficiency  
and light pale skin covering the actuality of her as a woman, and the power of a god  
or the dark inchoate shapes suspended with sand and fingers outstretched  
for the unbridled ambition of some sacred soul.

*weathering the deeps wells of frozen stone?*

Other flesh-aged men, ravaged, dying in everything as long as the vows  
averse the elegant lines of her avatars of a million years of terror  
assuming the bedrock of courage born from dreams and replaceable habitats.  
A modular world a piece of overripe metal frames tanning thin the reality  
a convenience this landscape sensed creative powers of people clogged  
with a skull both symmetrical and sinuous, a quality of his droplets echoing in  
a few precious minutes makes many things as if shadows arced silently across the last years of history.  
There terror tears into sections crashed to the sea, joy in life is movements flowed as if  
they were more than face value of the whirlpool, a time of identical eyebrows balanced the fear and  
flash storms making the wrong, despite the place of nuclei or organisms in symbolic forms  
a darker variation tapped those volcanic vents, the deeps wells of frozen limestone.

*You showed me I was not a circle of the whirlpool.*

Metallic shapes suspended with blindness  
triggered unexpected troopers, modified, decayed  
from the maintenance of flesh and black-market  
service just a clone between one man, a living intoxicated  
human trained to lay down creativity.

*No two of us have a meaning being human*

As if a machine not a circle of static inkings as if  
there was no way of telling how they might be thrown into  
other flesh-aged men, ravaged, dying in the deep wells of frozen stone  
spiral-dancing on his body torn and worn not by war but by time.  
Time he remembered his features, child, infant floating in that  
special pain, anger, fear, it holds the ultimate power a serious  
need to blow off steam, the trooper watched tapping the whole

to experience the fear of dying in the tears of the tempo and  
efficiency of a mother's love continuing to evaluate and drum.  
*nor being free.*

In the darkness the universe of inferior troopers modified  
from the same cloned allied lines of engagement between  
labour and intellect, eyes reflect accelerated childhood imaginations  
encoded pieces in place of nuclei and organics flowing into functional warriors.  
Blood repeated on its own remembers everything against the reincarnation of  
a direction that might have pain and shapes suspended with intuition  
pulsed with artificial enthusiasm, the curriculum mastered living in the metallic fruit.  
Global pain, anger, fear it holds the very ground, raised since before birth membranes ruptured  
military cadences uniform, four conditioned words the competency sloughed tissues trails to nothing  
a mourned living entertainment crawled, disloyal membranes more ravenously breathing life  
as gruelling as stalactite flesh.

*Swear a name, not a number, to set you free.*

# Crepe Town

*Torkel Tennberg*

Bye bye syrup, we have only Nutella now. It seems we have run out, we knew this day would come, but it is still a surprise. No more syrup, Canada does not like us, and we have no maple trees, just small shrubs of inedible berries, sparsely found in this vast desert. Luckily Italy are still our friends, but their shipping prices are high, though Canada did not like us, they were kind. Italy likes us, but they will not send us real Nutella chocolate flavoured spread, they instead send us the raw hazelnuts, unwashed and pushed onto the open ocean. Often the boats do not make it to us, as we in Crepe Town are far away and great winds sweep across our rocky shores. The hazelnuts that we do receive, we clean with the saliva of our hot mouths, many of us fall ill and perish from parasites, perhaps from the Italian soil or delivered by seagulls during travel. We do not know. What we make with the hazelnuts is hardly Nutella at all, it is barely even chocolate flavoured really, also not spreadable. It is brown though, a granular and dry substance, not fit for human consumption but we pretend it is Nutella and we brand it so. The fact of the matter is that we desperately need something to put on our absurd amount of crepes.



# Insiders

*Tanvir Ratul*

Pull off your knife out of my heart, I am not there, what is the blood the ones who has gone by beating the mountain to the sky of pride, both the love and the death are inside

Mostly, going to someone is being nobody, what is the few that hold your inner hands as you and hide, as if the sake and memories are inside

If the eyes are foreign place, the skin is the homeland which has been returned to, what is the moment and the distance if the time dial has been injured or tied, both the hour hand and the minute hand are inside

The pain in my voice has been beating me to me for a long time, what is the heart-horse and love, and the desire of going to the mountains on a stride while dying is inside

I am the doubling voice of the good and the evil, what is the drowning effect, don't wrap God around your neck by making prayer and duet with a guide whereas the gloom is inside

Human is the emptiness on the paper inside the skin, what is the favour if the notebook of a life is totally composed of letters on each slide, yet every syllable is inside

Heart and the little things can only be told by keeping quiet, what is the secret if the human is the sentence of the loyalty and the testament survived, die and be! interjection is inside

# Reality

*Tanvir Ratul*

I'm subject to whoever has a piece of reality that offers, sells me, even if it's used. The reality is that the human is self-defused if it does not go into consciousness. And the conscious ones are so few that bless isn't enough. Let's hit bottom and chaos will come. It's nothing it isn't tough.

Reality is all that you understand. Infinity is yours to greed on the other hand.

This is my metaphor for the reality that we perceive: now make yourself active and simulate a telescope. Then close your hand and hope till you get a little hole. That's so miserable science we have of this universe to manage and apply. Now, if you expand your sly knowledge through the academy or empirically, but solid, the only thing you'll get indeed is that the little hole... expand its diameter. So talk about reality and other, when we each have focused our fist to different segments of the world at least...

# *from* 'Deviance'

*R. J. Holmes*

## III

the means of destruction:  
simplistic acts of indifferent  
anger at the day-to-day boredom and humiliation of  
an observation not capitalism or resentment at the breaking  
of windows uprooting the destruction so that  
destruction itself may drive such acts of apparent 'purpose' or  
meaning besides anger underlying stealing or  
'joyriding' play-ground equipment overlaps acts  
attributed to indifference to produce mobilisation of  
outlets or brands about 'being heard'

the means of destruction:  
exclusion from the acceptable means  
to generate such behaviours its apex the power  
the idea that such could be said of the Vandals disregarded  
the media more complex to condemn as straightforward  
mob conditions delve into the breaking of windows  
of well-known banks and chain stores of property  
indifference to social rules broken car breaking trees and  
destroying human summits it seems wanton capitalism overlaps  
acts of damage and the defacing of Rome

the means of destruction:  
social rules often favoured  
politicised vandalism pervading the sanctity of private property  
social rules need not apply rationing summits to the one per cent of  
capitalism overlaps the contexts of destruction interpretations  
delve into the deeper breaking of trees and the Breaking of Rome  
attributes the power conditions allowed controversial methods of  
material objects of individuals or kinds of damaging individual  
performance of burning of cars to mob conditions marginalised youth  
officially 'senseless' protesters in three acts the means of production

# Traveller

*Hilary Walker*

To experience - you say,  
to explore another culture or maybe to find yourself,

Is that why India called?

You ride her trains with privilege, peer at her world  
through first class eyes and  
wrinkle your nose at the smell of poverty.

On the platform the beggar speaks in English

'I have no money & must go home, will you give it to me?  
as the ragged child taps your arm and another reaches into your bag.

But India calls to you,  
offers herself to your imagination as she attacks your senses,  
punches you deep into her colours,  
her aroma,  
her spices,  
her noise,  
her dirt,  
her heat,  
all staining your soul.

Then you visit the mausoleum, the reason you  
travelled so far,  
Crown Palace of love and beauty,  
and as the sun gloriously rises above the Taj Mahal  
you find your breath  
and your words are silently swept away.

# Unified Field

*Tanvir Ratul*

There's a theory in every obscure universe  
Where words float on the waves of thought  
Casting emerging ripples of being across the surface of civilisation  
The idea remains intact  
and ultimate and solitary  
Leaving the universe behind it  
This is the time, in the epicentre of all we heartily behold  
We protect each and every nano-bits  
And if we locate ourselves in the dearth of sense  
Away from affectionate glance  
We must come back here  
And gain the simple satisfaction of reckoning each other

# Poem to Myself

*Fiona Berry*

The joy of new beginnings,  
The fear of moving on,  
The excitement of what might be,  
The fear of it going wrong.

It's time to leave the hurt behind,  
It's time to look to the sun,  
To let the shadows fall behind you,  
It's time to have some fun,

To take each day as it comes,  
To live in and enjoy each moment,  
To not worry about the future,  
To repair the confidence dent.

Just believe in yourself and your worth,  
And the rest will fall into place,  
Take your time and enjoy simple things,  
Life is not a race!

Spend time doing the things YOU enjoy,  
And talk often to the people you love,  
Keep your head held high,  
And remember you are tough!

Be open to new possibilities,  
And just enjoy what they may bring,  
Don't worry too much about what they might mean,  
Just be and let your heart sing!

Believe that everything happens for a reason,  
Even if the reasons unclear,  
Embrace your ups and downs,  
You're in the driving seat, you just have to learn to steer.

Give yourself time and attention,  
Do whatever you need to help you heal,  
Have faith and take a day at a time,  
And listen carefully to how you feel.

Make lots of plans and keep busy,  
Distractions a powerful tool,  
Be carried away by the excitement of the unknown,  
But never again be taken for a fool.



Stay strong, be true to yourself,  
Be whoever YOU want to be,  
Don't dwell on things or think too much,  
And happiness will come naturally.

Good things are waiting for you,  
They won't be far away,  
Be kind to yourself and patient,  
And I promise; you'll be ok

## Contributors

**Fiona Berry** is originally from Yorkshire but has moved around since attending Edge Hill University, including living in Australia and London. Now living in Southport, Fiona manages the children's service for a charity. Fiona is currently setting up a business, *Berry Poetic*, writing personalised poems. During a personally challenging last couple of years, Fiona discovered how therapeutic poetry writing could be during difficult times. While a lot of her poems reflect these times, Fiona hopes her writing has something others can relate to – from being in the depths of despair, to being positive, inspired and grateful. New to sharing her work, Fiona's goal for 2018 was to start reading at open mic nights – something she is now doing and enjoying (though still gets nervous!). Good mental health is a topic Fiona is passionate about and, as daunting as it is exciting, by sharing her poems she hopes to articulate that it's ok not to be ok all the time but with hope and positivity things can and do get better!

**R. J. Holmes** lives and, occasionally, writes in Ormskirk. He is currently a second year Creative Writing student at Edge Hill University and is also an intern for Edge Hill University Press, working on copyediting its next publication, *Scenes from the Revolution*. Robert mainly writes fiction, but has been inspired by the William Burroughs cut-up method to explore his own poetics, using academic texts and science-fiction stories as original sources for generating new material.

**Tanvir Ratul**, lives in Liverpool, mainly writes poetry and nonfiction in three languages; and ideologically opposes the concept of literary organisation based on profit making mechanism. He first started to write when he was at the end of his high school. Over the last 17 years, the list of his published books grew to a considerable number. He is currently working as a researcher and faculty member at an educational institute, his teaching interest remains within Literature and Creative Writing, whereas, research domain includes Natural Language Processing and Computational Linguistics. He is also the editor of Lastbench, a poetry magazine which is available both in print and online at: [www.lastbench.org](http://www.lastbench.org)

**Torkel Tennberg** is a Game Art and Animation student at SAE institute in Liverpool. His artwork and writing can be found in *SPAM Zine*, *E C H O* and *Black Market Review*. Torkel is one part of the game studio Elevated Sudoku, they are currently working on their debut game ERROR [singularity]. Alongside Luke Thurogood, he part of *The Pollyverse*, a multimedia series detailing the adventures of Polly St. Irene and others

**Hilary Walker** became involved with the Bolton based poetry performance group *Write Out Loud* in 2004 and gained experience of reading her work at *open mic* events around the North West. She also travelled with the group to poetry festivals including:

Bordeaux, and on a personal level has enjoyed performing poetry whilst on holiday in Greenwich Village, New York and throughout Australia.

Hilary believes that within her poetry she creates a space of honesty that is difficult to find in any other aspect of her life. She writes passionately about life experiences in order to understand and make sense of the world.

Hilary has recently completed a memoir written about her daughter who she adopted from Romania, and currently is beginning a project to archive the personal memories and social history contained within many letters received and sent between her parents during the Second World War.

FREE EVENT

VOLUME 6

SPOKEN WORD

# REVERB



**brendan  
quinn**

**the  
pollyverse**

**ascend silver poison**

**MONDAY 16TH APRIL - 7.30 PM**

**THE ARTS CENTRE, EDGE HILL UNIVERSITY, ORMSKIRK**