

Here

Poetry from the *Creative Writing Club* at *The Bridge At Waterloo*

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Here

(Renga *by* Fiona, Katerina Jugati, Anna Robinson, Abigail Tripp, John Sheehy)

Bus in traffic	FT
Stops at red light	
The old woman smiles	

Her hat is red children's cheeks AR
crushed beetles

Bustling roundabout	AT
Stationary priest	
Silent nave	

The purple statue JS
Is cloaked

Their eyes are hidden
They cry alone
Not knowing where sympathy lies

A cloudless sky
A fresh mown lawn

Tented dress
Speaks of pregnancy
And fear

Fragrant flowers bloom AT
Vagrant fates loom

The lyric is in the melody JS
I cross the street
In steps

The new life born KJ
To bear the now

Trains screech and rumble An organist practices All is calm	AT
Her arms move light In golden air	KJ
Stairs go up The lift rises Stairs go down	JS
Incense drifts Tickling summer window butterflies	FT
The dogs gather round the altar Begging for alms	AR
The priest kneels Incense dissipates	AT
She steps in dance Along the road To music only she can hear	FT
The sky falls In puddles of blossoms	AR
Nothing grows on barren ground But regret and rue Which wither in the wind	KJ
This poem Did speak to me	JS
Bare trees long for leaves As dogs chase squirrels And lunchtimes fight for a bench	AT
The grim corner harvest Weeds and litter blow	FT

The piano's brief note AR
Rises up the brickwork
Of the bridge

Uninterrupted AT
By the doorbell

The wind breezes JS
Fast and furious
Cool it for awhile

Here is where the air is true
And I am lost and found KJ

Frogspawn in the pond JS
Frogs leap on the marsh
The pond ablaze at night

Lamplights falls orange FT
On the green water weed

Standing on the beach AT
Feeling the salty wind
Watching the lights in office blocks

Stones by John Sheehy
(after *Houses* by Barbara Beyer)

Stone works dropping down
a house sits on top of the stone works
rounded up with gables
I don't see no windows in the house
In the front gable
I do see things like vents air bricks
in the front gable I see a white line
surrounding this gable
Something looks like a snake
with an evil eye purple in-cuts
Slabbed on top grooved gutted intense
Then I see the snake again raving for hunting
The snake is after frogs frogspawn squirrels. mice rats
anything that's running by
For a few bites this snake
will trap anything that moves

Clothes by John Sheehy
(after *Here* by Clive Burton and Tisna Westerhof)

Here is the creamy pinky blue socks
Here is the yellow one SF written on its legs
Here is white and green with brown on the outside
Here is unmatched delight, bare, opening
Here is a face, with his mouth open and his eyes
Here could be a dead person left to rot
Here is a body buried in a shallow grave

Angles of departure and return *by* Fiona
(after *Pitch* by Paul Bonomini)

First, cut your poles; these will meet at the centre
as we will meet at the centre from our disparate points.

Draw your line, each point 30 degrees from the other;
point A to point B, then C, then D;
already, 90 degrees from where....did I start?
Another line, to point E, then F, then G
now, 180 degrees. From here to there is the diameter,
neither stable nor sustainable.
From point G to H, on to I, to J;
better, but still the wind will blow through
and chill the bone, and break the bones.
Onward, though staggering a little, now,
point J to K, then L. Almost there.
Finally, from L to A and full circle, 360 degrees.
Finally, and always, coming home.

Sea Creatures *by* Fiona
(after *Well Trod* by Carl Froehlich)

Primordial tortoise-ancestors
grazing the warm, briny, shallow waters
near what will be, in many million years
right here, where you are standing.
Did they communicate, these ancestors, did they sing?
Would we understand them, and they, us?

How did they move? I think... with slow deliberation
stopping to consider the taste and texture of each discovery,
their solemn discernment shared
together at suns' setting.
Soliloquy of stones.

Map found during archaeological dig *by* Fiona
(after *Sculpture – PSTD#2* by Chris Horner)

Of ancient, eastern Asia, seen from space,
a delta spreads its delicate filaments,
water flowing down from central high lands.

To the north, a vast ravine;
beyond? There be dragons,
or gold.

See the gaping hole, a tear in its reality
when, after long centuries, by chance discovered
its finder, in haste, ripped the delicate fabric
unravelling its fragile integrity.

Alcatraz *by* John Sheehy

This is Alcatraz jail in
Francisco Bay California USA
I don't know when the last prisoner was released

I'm up on the back of a horse
A prison officer myself
Carrying a sword and a gun
A lot of prisoners tried to escape

they were frozen to death in the sea
Some were never again seen
These houses are for prison officers

One of these houses is mine
Johnny Cash came to give a concert
in Alcatraz on Alcatraz island.

Silent Choir by Katerina Jugati

(after *Silent Choir* by Mary Branson)

A silent scream emanates from these mouths - yet you can hear them - their silence sounds like thunder. Vibrations crack your grieving mask - tears flow like rivers down your cheeks, but there is no comfort here, no soft singing to make your heart mellow. Your face twists this way and that - it stretches beyond recognition. You're turning into someone else, someone you shall never know, for your name cannot be spoken. You whisper to your God, who doesn't recognise your voice because you can no longer scream. You will be silenced.

The Gardener by Katerina Jugati

(After *The Gardener* by Paul and Laura Carey)

My back is killing me! I must rest a while. I have been digging for quite a time now - a hole large enough in which to plant something quite unique. All my life I have dreamed of creating a wonderful new specimen - by cutting and grafting and experimenting with new combinations of soil and fertiliser. Now I think I have it at last! But I shall have to be patient, to plant it and wait and see. Now a beautiful butterfly has rested on my thigh. Folk say a butterfly is the soul of a dearly departed one. And I wonder could this be my wife, so recently passed? Only I know she will be with me forever in this garden.

Safe Guard by Katerina Jugati

(after *Safe Guard* by Amanda Loomes)

Signs telling you to slow down
Signs telling you you could drown
Signs telling you "Take Care"
Signs telling you "Beware!"
Signs telling you you can't come here
Signs telling you of crossing deer
Signs telling you "No ball games"
Signs telling you "Light no flames"
Some are pictures, some are words -
Doggie ones tell you to pick up turds-
And on and on and on they go
Warning of wind and rain and snow -
Will they never stop telling us what to do?!
I'm for tearing them down are you?

Innocent Heart *by* Elyz
(after *Hwel* by Alexandra Harley)

Innocent heart, wide open eyes
jumps into a trap - then loses sight
bleeding heart dries out, the blood...
Turns into a wounded heart.
Blessed heart cleans the scars.
Detoxing the hurts, then rejuvenating.
Never a hardened heart.

Shoes *by* Elyz
(after *In Their Shoes* by Paul Tecklenberg)

Haven't you seen through these fourteen stations set before us?
Haven't you been taught to follow these steps?
Like a sheep - quiet, enjoying the smell of grass **on** a sunny day.
Haven't you lived your life?
I'd rather be a sheep.
Without light, without direction - life is still trapped in these stations, Even after seeing the world.
Haven't you realized there's a price to pay
To live your life fully?
Freedom is priceless.

A 2025 Meditation by David Simoes Brown
(after *Gothic Spires* by Aude Herail Jager)

I find
As I get older
That heights frighten me
More than they used to
Too many news
Fearsome spikes
Jabbing tank traps
We should retreat
To the mountain tops where
There is perspective
And conquer our quotidian terror
For lesser fears
Finding a bitter peace in vertiginous isolation.

Chaos in a Can by David Simoes Brown
(after *Joy* by Anne Leigniel)

I visited CERN once
A baking hot June day in Switzerland
Feeling dishevelled even in my lightweight suit
In an atomic research facility
I'd come to press the flesh
Work the network
But first the obligatory tour
There were a lot of whitecoats they didn't look calm like I expected
The scientist's screens blazed chaos in a can
Spirals of joy wiggles of deviance
Destruction and creation in a perpetual instant
I might have lost myself had it not been for you
Entangling me back to earth
Stone-anchored and in yellow

The property ladder *by* Anna Robinson

(after *Strong and Stable for the Many not the Few* by Stathis Dimitriadis)

The grass is perfect - each blade exactly 6 centimetres, the earth it grows from is moist but not wet so it is soft to lie on - the only electric light is from a house two miles away and so the sky is velvet dark and thousands of stars loudly scream Here! Look up here!

This is not my usual address. I own nothing but have built my life in a small flat - too many possessions - few of which I would miss; meanwhile I dream of the palace I'll build when I win the lottery.

Here is where we are *by* Anna Robinson

(after *Here is where we are* by Sumi Perera)

Sticks and stones and wire
coils holding it all together

A bundle of sticks under an arm
on a head on a bent back

In a dried up river bed
In the eye of the storm

In a rhyming pattern of bricks
In an island of people ringing bells

How to Take Part

The *Creative Writing Club* meets Fortnightly on Wednesday evenings (2nd and 4th Wednesday of each month) during term time. You are welcome to join. Led by poet and local resident, Anna Robinson, the group works towards various projects - often with some kind of performance or other output at the end. Come along and try it out!

Contact Abigail Tripp on outreach@Stjohnswaterloo.org for details.