



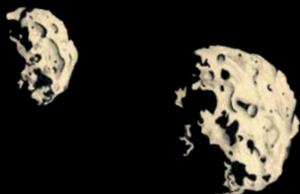
*Battered Moons
Poetry Competition*

2018



*presents
the winning poems
plus
two meteorites*

*part of
Poetry
Swindon*



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*Guest Judge,
Jacob Sam-La Rose*

*Organiser and Judge,
Cristina Navazo-Eguía Newton*

First Prize: Julia Webb

Second Prize: Julie-ann Rowell

Third Prize: Janice Booth

Commendations:

Jane Burn

Peter Iveson

Chris Tuohy

Nicola Daly

*Saturn's moon Phoebe images from
original art by Harriet Crayford*

SEVEN NEW MOONS

It's now a year since the spacecraft Cassini plunged into the atmosphere of Saturn at tens of thousands of miles per hour to burn up like a meteor and become part of the planet itself. It was the 'grand finale' of a mission to explore Saturn and its ring system.

During its exploration, Cassini had the first opportunity for close-up studies of our feature moon, Phoebe. It also discovered a hexagonal-shaped jet stream at the planet's north pole, gigantic storms, shifting rings and 7 previously unknown moons: Methone, Pallene, Polydeuces, Daphnis, Anthe, Aegaeon, and S/2009 S1, a 'propeller moonlet' still waiting for a permanent name.

It was precisely Saturn's satellites that inspired Battered Moons Poetry Competition's name as it set out on its own mission nine years ago. As with Cassini, it has also been a matter of probing the outer reach in search of the unknown, year after year. Without fail, the reward of the find has made it worthwhile.

This pamphlet celebrates 7 of the new moons that the judges came upon. They were chosen as winners and commendations from among hundreds of entries that were received from all over UK, and which Battered Moons administrator Sam Loveless diligently registered and sent to the judges. That was no mean feat and he deserves warm gratitude. Jacob Sam-La Rose and myself read each entry and carefully considered our shortlists. Jacob, as guest judge, then had the difficult job to pick out the seven finalists.

These are poems that resisted being left out of orbit. They came back to the mind, and kept offering their strange wonderful atmospheres for scrutiny and delight. We are thankful to the poets that created them, in fact to all the poets who sent us their poems – it is hard to make the final selection of 7 out of hundreds, but as Jacob himself put it, 'It's been a joy to read them'. My thanks go to Jacob for taking care of the final stage and steering the competition to good end. As with previous guest judges Malika Booker, Daljit Nagra, Pascale Petit, David Morley, Alice Oswald, Michael Simmons Roberts, Lesley Saunders and Martin Malone; Battered Moons could not have happened without his work and wisdom.

Finally, our acknowledgement is due to Poetry Swindon Festival, Artswords, and Arts Council England for their invaluable support.

Cristina Navazo-Eguía Newton
Organiser
September 2018

Set in 'Centaur' type

First Prize: Julia Webb

We is in the bank

We is number three in the queue
and gulls scream over the city,
and the gulls shriek *dump, dump,*
dump, fish and chips and sometimes *pie.*

We is behind the woman in the fox fur
whose hair is a silver helmet,
whose voice is a snort
as she importants herself on her mobile phone
and every ring has its own finger.

We is in the bank
and Small is roll, rolling on the shiny floor
while the rest of the anoraked queue
pull ugly faces because secretly
they would like to slide and roll too.

We is in the bank
and the queue is moving so slowly
it doesn't move at all,
and Small is tugging my dress every ten seconds
with an *are we there yet? Are we there yet?*

We is in the bank
with the mouth machines all along the wall,
some that spit notes out and others that suck them in,
and Small wants to press the buttons
but *no, no, you must not look at*
what other people's fingers are doing.

We is in the bank eyes to the front,
someone sneezes their Decembers out
into the shared air and we breathe them in,
we do the slow shoe shuffle
and eventually after we have wait, wait, waited

we put our lips to the glass
and voice-hug the worried woman who lives
behind the window,
and she points and shrugs,
sends us back out into the city of gulls.

Second Prize: Julie-ann Rowell

Bandit

White and black flash shimmer, bullet-eyed
out of hedgerow, defiantly clean as if
newly painted, no flaw, yet drama in the clasp
of claw, iridescent in close up, tell us your blue story.
The wiles of you in a human mirror, the volume
of your clatter language, the bullying trade, sending
even hawks off-kilter. If one, a worry, and I must
address you cordially, we incomers; it's your terrain.
If two, the world is a joyride, hospitable,
in the dog-rose, goat willow, spindle, stitchwort.
I watch you argue, batter, flag that long tail, waiting
on the gable, ready to attack, or gathering
in parliament for those decisions to be made
and those secrets you hold. You'll never show me
silver or gold, but you might harbour a grudge.

Third Prize: Janice Booth

A barista tells of his broken marriage

For during the incantation of grinding beans,
the wafting incense of coffee,

I wait

as a screaming outburst of steam
briefly obscures you.

You hold

a grubby cloth before your eyes.

For during the outpouring of
that dark mass

into my cup, I observe your hand shaking.

White froth from a silver jug
overflows

but already the black is seeping through.

For during the time you place
a sweet offering

on the saucer that dislodges the cup, I say

it's ok and we both hold out our hands
to redeem

the situation, to balance the drink. You say

bless you. For during that moment
something seems

to pass between us and my hymning heart

is skittery. I drink down
in silence

as you buff the drip tray, throw away

the spent grounds from
this sad altar.

Commended: Peter Iveson

Boat Trip

We fly like gulls
Through the water wind and wet
An oversized seahorse
Bracing the waves
And the wind is a song
And it sings in our throats
Of the cold north-east and whaling boats
And we skew like a tern
Close banking the rocks
While the seals wave
Stacked up on the shore
And your cheeks are frozen
But your hands are soft
And your hair is a fishing net to catch the sun

Commended: Chris Tuohy

St. Ives

Your family were steeped in salt.
Hands tempered
on rope tackle, cleats
and scuttling pots dredged from the deep.

Now, from the Lamp Rock look-out
you watch the twisting waters
that carved your driftwood grain
break white over mussel-black boulders.

On Porthmeor skittering gulls
with a wing dip
catch the squall
and sling shot round the bay.

To the east
day trippers shoal
where your father's catch
flashed metallic on the slip.

Above, the scudding grey
spits salt-tinged spots
over the last of the lobster fleet
stranded by the tide.

Commended: Nicola Daly

The Woman Who Mutilated My Mother

What my mother remembered was everything:
The ghost of a silver dollar moon still floating
when they came to steer her shaking body down the narrow staircase
and gave her like a parcel of meat to a stranger with a rib of grey hair.

The woman`s eyes darted like blowflies as she sat my mother on a stool
and the acacia thorns brought to seal the wound spilt from her bag.

What she tried to forget apart from the poultice of eggs, sugar and wormwood
was the rasp that sat in her lungs for hours afraid to pass up through her lips
in the usual way even when she felt the gentle hands of cousins.

What my mother can never forgive:
Is the war her father pumped into her blood,
the day he wrapped the sliver of gold around her wrist.
Pleased, that she had learnt how to carry pain just like her mother.

Guest Judge: Jacob Sam-La Rose

CREDIT DUE

“AAA is, was, and always will be, without question, the greatest video game player on Earth.”

—Uncyclopedia

Those days, my list of cornerstone truths
began with drum n' bass, and the fact that
 there would always be
a chip shop open in a lonely street, its light
and signage testament against closing hour
 and the falling dark—
and in that chip shop: coin-op cabinet,
waypoint for the lost, aimless and hungry,
 squat in corner, Buddha
of appetite and emptiness. Bless
the lottery of dumb and broken stick, or careworn button
 mashed to senselessness. Bless
shotgun hot-seat, winner plays first round. Bless
leader-board and high-score sheet, whoever cared enough
 to mark the time with their initials. Bless
the hallowed AAA, and all the screens
we poured ourselves into. Bless
 those nights,
our small-change lives.

Judge : Cristina Newton

If You Are not Asleep,

then speak to me.

I am sick of the new buildings and the echoing close
and the woman who pulls the weeds out at your doorstep,
thinking she's doing good.

If you are not asleep, or dead,
you must be thinking of something.
Magpies. Fish. House spiders.
You must have something to say.

I am left to fill this smallness
and start the world from scratch.
It comes out like a child no one wanted.
It wails in ways no one hears.

Anything I say falls on its face
or reels back into the things you don't.
I let out an inverted harangue calling the dead
to go pick up their bones and make peace.

Not because hostilities are over,
or the truth has entered or exited anybody's heart,
but because we have run out of time,
and you are still saying nothing,

and I don't want to hear the noise.

THE POETS

Julia Webb is a poetry editor for Lighthouse and a graduate of UEA's poetry MA. She lives in Norwich where she teaches creative writing and works for Gatehouse Press. She has had work in various journals and anthologies including Magma, The Rialto, Ambit, Envoi, Oxford Poetry and Butcher's Dog. Her poem 'Sisters' was highly commended in the 2017 Forward Prize. Her first collection *Bird Sisters* was published by Nine Arches Press in 2016.

Julie-ann Rowell's pamphlet *Convergence* (Brodie Press) won a PBS Award. Her collection *Letters North* was nominated for the Michael Murphy Poetry Prize for Best First Collection in Britain and Ireland in 2011. Her latest collection, *Voices in the Garden*, about Joan of Arc, is published by Lapwing Publications, Belfast. She teaches poetry and mentors in Bristol.

Janice Booth lives in Swindon and is a practitioner and lecturer in Chinese Medicine. She has won a Commendation in the 8th International Hippocratic Poetry Competition and a High Commendation in the 6th Bangor Poetry Competition. Several of her poems have featured in magazines and anthologies recently, notably in the Bath Poetry Café anthology, Orange Coast Review and The Interpreter's House. She was a joint winner of two previous Battered Moon's Competitions.

Jane Burn's poems have appeared in a wide range of magazines from Under the Radar to The Rialto to name a few, as well as many anthologies from publishers such as Seren and The Emma Press. She recently won first prize in the PENfro Festival Poetry Competition. Her next collection, *One of These Dead Places* will shortly be available from Culture Matters.

Peter Iveson spent most of his life in London but moved to the south-west two years ago. It is perhaps this change that has kindled a new creativity; before moving he had written nothing since school. 'Boat trip' describes a journey to see the seals at Blakeney with his five-year old son; and it is he, his spirit, and the familiar but remote landscapes of childhood that occur in much of Peter's poetry.

Chris Tuohy is a late-blooming London Irish writer. He was commended in the Hove Grown Poetry Competition 2017 for his first offering for public scrutiny. To pay the bills he runs a political monitoring company in Westminster. Aside from writing, he is a keen wild swimmer and photographer.

Nicola Daly has had poetry and prose published in magazines such as The North, The Rialto, Myslexia and many more. Her short stories have appeared in publications such as Honno Anthologies and Stinging Fly. In 2014 she won the Gatehouse Literary prize for short fiction and came third in the HISSAC Prize. In 2017 she came third in the Welsh Writing Awards organised by the New Welsh Review

THE TEAM

Administrator and registrar

Sam Loveless is a poet from Swindon. He has a degree in English Literature and Creative Writing from Swansea University. He organises events for Poetry Swindon and has curated a literature show for local radio. He reads periodically at events in the south west and has reviewed for Sabotage Reviews and Poetry Wales.

Guest Judge

Jacob Sam-La Rose's collection *Breaking Silence* was shortlisted for a Forward Poetry prize and an Aldeburgh Fenton award. His poems and essays have been published in journals and anthologies such as *Ploughshares*, *Wasafiri*, *Identity Parade: New British and Irish Poets* and *Poetry by Heart: A Treasury of Poems to Read Aloud*. As an artistic director and educator, he is responsible for the Barbican Young Poets programme and is widely recognised as a facilitator and supporter of emerging writers. His creative practice also includes experiments with poetry and code.

Jacob Sam-La Rose's writing has been characterised as vivid, masterly and carefully structured. He is widely recognised as an indefatigable facilitator, mentor and supporter of young and emerging poets.

Judge and organiser

Cristina Navazo-Eguía Newton published two collections in Spanish before moving to Britain. Her English poems appear in *Wasafiri*, *PN Review*, *Poetry London*, *Long Poem Magazine*, *Best of Poetry London* and elsewhere, and have been commended at *Troubadour*, Nottingham, *Strokestown* (Ireland) and *Gregory O'Donoghue* (Ireland). She is a winner of the *Poetry London Competition* and *Hope Bourne*. Her third collection, *Cry Wolf*, received a *Straid Award* and is published by *Templar*. Cristina is the singing half of *Flame&co*, with *Haydn Bonadie* on guitar, and a *Creative Writing PhD student* at *Cardiff University*.



COMMENTS BY GUEST JUDGE JACOB SAM-LA ROSE

1 We is in the bank

Based within a quintessentially mundane setting— the bank teller's queue— this poem fizzles beyond its everyday trappings, unafraid to slip the nooses of language and perspective, simultaneously subject to and escaping from the restrictions of a repressive, shared space. Bold, and brilliant.

2 Bandit

The eye of this poem is sharp and bright, focusing in on its subject— the magpie— with a delightful precision and accuracy of language.



3 A Barista tells of his broken marriage

What's exchanged between the barista and their customer here is so much more than the act of preparing and serving a cup of coffee. The act is ritualised, elevated through allusions to religious and spiritual practice. It's this juxtaposition that powers the poem— a tricky balance, well rendered.

COMMENDATIONS



You Can't Break Up with a Rapist

A challenging, necessary poem, full of disjoint and fracture. It's hard to employ celebratory language when considering the experience that the poem offers up, but the attention to form is devastatingly appropriate; its patchwork nature manifesting hurdles and breaks in thought-flow. Hurdles that the poem, ultimately, surmounts.

Boat Trip

As with some of the best "peak experience" poems, this doesn't just draw us into a rendered moment through choice detail. There's a wonderful attention to musicality and rhythm here that renders the poem an experience in itself.

St Ives

There's a wonderful sense of heritage here, an intimate connection with place. It's an immersive effort— a fantastic example of how language can summon experience into being and make it a tangible, living thing.

The Woman Who Mutilated My Mother

Beyond the intimation of a traumatic event, there's an inventiveness here that lends the poem an almost surreal touch. It manages to be horrifying and utterly engaging at the same time— a function of the poet's choice selection of detail and the power of suggestion.





We is in the bank 'grabs you with its true-to life yet subtly surrealist scene. The critique of the human construct is as intelligent as is scathing, the language generates new roles for words and the characters – both animate and inanimate - stand out like mythical beings: rings own fingers, mouth machines spit and suck notes, ravenous gulls shout orders, the dragon-like furred lady snorts and “importants herself”, people become a dehumanised ‘anoraked queue’ pulling ugly, envious faces, and we pity the worried cashier trapped in this Kafkan (or is it Dickensian?) nightmare. Small, by rolling over rules and tugging for answers, becomes the hero of this tragicomedy of the absurd where things hoped for never happen.

'Bandit' is a dazzle of a jewel, packed tight with sound effects and startling observations which remind us of all we didn't know we knew about magpies. They come alive straight out of ancient folklore, having lost none of their legendary clout, and demanding our respect as much as our affection. Yes, they are gorgeous, and they probably also rule the world.

'A barista tells of his broken marriage' intones a litany in measured pulse and pristine structure, its attention carefully weighed between the material and the spiritual. As dark matter pulls down, there is the redeeming act of human communion. The cup is drunk in silence, the spent grounds thrown away – a necessary gesture of mourning but also of survival.

'You Can't Break Up with a Rapist' hauntingly audits life scars that cannot be undone. It holds its anger in place, leaving the negative spaces to shout for themselves between the efs. The poem itself becomes a mastering of grief, of the aggression perpetrated first in violence, then in the clinical coldness left around it.



'Boat Trip' chants like a sea shanty with an eco-friendly heart. The voice of the poem tunes in with the elements, as the senses are aroused and the selves of the two travellers are fully absorbed in nature. Then the poem changes tack and veers with the heart and the glint of the sun to become a love song.

'St. Ives' is best read out loud, relishing its pithy Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian words: skittering, scuttling, scudding, squall, shoal, slip, sling, – and the wonderful alliterations, such as those running through “spits salt-tinged spots” and “the last of the lobster”. Beyond -indeed through - its terse, muscular sound, this is a poem about identity – personal, familial, cultural. A poem about a changing world where the past is not past and reminiscence is as powerful as presence.

The Woman Who Mutilated My Mother' takes leaps of empathy as a daughter voicing her mother's memory of the brutal rituals of genital mutilation she suffered as a child. It is, of course, a denunciation of woman's abuse and subjection under a Patriarchy that reduces the woman to a chattel – ‘a parcel of meat’ – and ‘pumps war into her blood’. It is, even more hauntingly, the implied denunciation of woman's own part in that abuse, through the witch-like figure with her bag of acacia thorns.





*Guest Judge:
Jacob Sam-La Rose*

*Judge and organiser:
Cristina Navazo-Eguía
Newton*

*Registrar:
Sam Loveless*



*Supported by:
Arts Council
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Designed and edited by Cristina Navazo-Eguía Newton*