

# EXILE

Vol 13 No 2 Winter 2001

---

## A Review of Books Received

**Cadence** by Rod Riesco. Wilderswood Press, Bolton.  
£1.50. ISBN 0952454033

**Beyond Horizons** by Sharon Sweet, Downham Market. A pensive collection inspired by the countryside and coastline of Norfolk. £2.00.

**Serendipity** by Peter Huggins. Light-hearted verse, with delightful illustrations by Rosemary Huggins. 32pp A5.

**The Stranger:** selected Pieces 1974-2000, Ian Seed. A first-rate assortment of thoughtful pieces. 54pp.

**Old Hat** – ‘A volume of poems to please myself’ by Kenneth MacKinnon. An introspective collection, that may please others too.

Please contact Exile for fuller details.

---

Editors: Ann Elliott and John Marr

1 Armstrong Close, Hundon, Suffolk, CO10 8HD

e-mail: [exile@2from.com](mailto:exile@2from.com)

Visit our website at: [www.2from.com/exile](http://www.2from.com/exile)

## *INDEX*

|  |                       |    |
|--|-----------------------|----|
| Grave Concerns.....                        | Peter Alexander.....  | 3  |
| Anthropomorphing.....                      | Ken Champion.....     | 4  |
| Natural one.....                           | Gordon Crawford.....  | 5  |
| Counting.....                              | Dan Wyke.....         | 6  |
| Spring.....                                | Michael Shcherba..... | 7  |
| Rocket.....                                | Jeremy Worman.....    | 8  |
| To Fathom.....                             | Serena Shores.....    | 9  |
| The whispering wind.....                   | Keverne.....          | 10 |
| Stranger.....                              | Keith Woodhams.....   | 12 |
| Poet.....                                  | Neil Littlewood.....  | 12 |
| White Lines.....                           | Nick Pearson.....     | 13 |
| Humpty Dumpty.....                         | John Walton.....      | 14 |
| Lost Birthright.....                       | Michael Moore.....    | 14 |
| Voice of Conscience.....                   | Maria Daines.....     | 15 |
| Fluoxetine.....                            | Graham Mathers.....   | 15 |
| Students.....                              | Tim Cunningham.....   | 16 |
| How do we know<br>we were ever loved?..... | James Garry.....      | 17 |
| Late Farewell.....                         | Patrick Allen.....    | 18 |
| A Daughter's Lost Shoe.....                | Bob Lock.....         | 19 |
| The Broadcaster.....                       | David Hill.....       | 20 |
| The Needles.....                           | Brendan McMahan.....  | 20 |

## Grave Concerns

I wandered alone through the graveyard,  
Not knowing quite why I was there.  
Except that my heart was so lonely  
And my thoughts were all filled with despair.

I stooped at each mossy epitaph,  
Each flower, each freshly dug mound.  
I wondered what my life was about –  
Wondered, but no meaning was found.

As I left, a young girl knelt before me,  
Praying unashamedly loud.  
She said, 'Mummy, I love you and miss you.'  
Then at that, her little head bowed.

Her tiny shoulders shuddered with suffering.  
I had to go, get away from the pain.  
But I know I'll return in the future  
To wander on my own once again.

Peter Alexander      Edinburgh.

## Anthropomorphing

I once read a poem written by a wall  
and how the squeezed mortar felt.  
And one from a pond telling how  
it was when a child drowned in it.  
*'His mother churning my depths  
with his name.'* And verses by  
a hyena. I'm not laughing. A hyena.  
*'I trot, I lope, I slaver.'*

I'd like to write one about being  
a tortoise and what it's like  
to have hares gallop past  
and the triumph of just beating one  
that started three days earlier.

Or perhaps some stanzas  
from the Woolwich Ferry  
as it diesels across grey water  
and dreams of gliding through  
the glistening blue off Rio.

Ken Champion

Goodmayes, Essex.

Natural one,  
Where are we left  
When the great mind tells us  
That dreaming infinity  
Is only a small part of her potential,  
That she dreams upon dreams  
And being a mind is, to her,  
What a speck of dust  
Is to an infinite universe?

Where shall we go,  
My most tender one,  
When the wars have been  
And the wars will be,  
Can we hold onto Love  
In the midst of such crises?  
The conflicting truth,  
I know it can separate us.

It is tragic,  
My young woman,  
But here we are in life  
Acknowledging our chance,  
Although realising the world  
Has lifted the plumage  
From around our hearts.

Anything, could we ask for anything,  
And know a dream come true?

Perhaps, young Love,  
That is all we are:  
A simple dream come true.

Gordon Crawford

Glasgow

## Counting

While you've been away, the whole pond  
has started wriggling with tadpoles,  
the sweet-peas in the shed have lifted  
their shy heads, our lodger has left at last,  
my sister's made me an Uncle again,  
I've been to the cinema, done your washing,  
cycled to the sea-front, then left straight  
away, watched two t.v. films, smoked,  
hoovered the house from top to bottom,  
lost my keys, worried about omens,  
had poems accepted by a national magazine,  
scrubbed the shelves in the kitchen cupboards,  
slept in the spare room for the first night  
in years, answered all phone calls, eaten steak,  
rare, wondered if I've lost the knack  
of living alone, read until half-three, smoked,  
realized what a lot we do together, and  
so far this morning, this second and last,  
sound-sensitive, sun-shiney morning,  
looked out of the window at least six times.

Dan Wyke      Brighton

## Spring

We think of happiness at moments only,  
And happiness is always everywhere:  
In my small garden, in the warm and sunny  
Spring day, the freshness of the air.

O, deep, fathomless skies! A piece of brittle  
White cloud appears upon the span of blue.  
I watch it for a long while... We know too little  
And happiness is for the knowing few.

My window is open. There comes a cherry  
Tweet as a bird sits on the windowsill.  
I move aside the books as my eyes're weary,  
And going to a walk by the old mill.

The sun is setting. Skies are getting dark.  
The dreary millstones' sound reaches my ear.  
I admire the scenery and I'm up to the mark.  
Joy of life is in me. I feel and hear.

Michael Shcherba      Shyrnkent, Kazakhstan

## Rocket

My father showed me galaxies and stars  
Then fireworks sprayed our world in fire.  
The bangs and shapes of Guy Fawkes Night  
Loosed his held-in heart.  
He watched the rocket's showery flight  
Held his hands outstretched  
Silver blessings on our heads.

I now watch fireworks with my son  
Set off a rocket for my absent dad  
See his spirit in a hail of stars.

My son knows galaxies and stars —  
Will he fire a rocket up for me?  
Who tried to rise from earthbound grey.

The next rocket, a blessing for my son,  
As lordly as a comet's tail  
Unbound by earth's dull orb.

Weave your silver shape my son  
Beneath momentous night.

Jeremy Worman      London

## To Fathom

Deep down within, beneath, beyond  
As lapping knowledge curls and foams  
Encompass all the liquid tongues  
In heaving waters' weary groans  
Exasperated, holding all  
Through life's sweet essence, prophets sight  
Man's flimsy boats of learning thrall'd  
Horizon bound and blind as night.

An angry ocean, turned and balked  
By land-mass boundaries to flows  
Of endless tides, where beauty walks  
And chrystal clarities compose  
Great swells of dreams in gulfs of thought  
The stream-warmed blessings given, wane  
Immortal fount of wealth is caught  
And breaks upon our little brains.

The ships embarked for war, for trade  
And luxury, ride rolling ponds  
Of moon-drawn power, mercurial shades  
Of blue in universal bond  
From trench of black to harbours grey  
Uncomprehending, delving fleets  
Bottomless questions, number, weigh  
But man and sea: the twain shan't meet.

Serena Shores

Holt, Norfolk

The whispering wind sneaks, tiptoes  
behind the innocent prey.

A wild animal,  
Unleashed and free,  
He attacks.

A stab.

A blow to the heart.  
He rips at it  
Wants more and more,  
Desperate to live for one more night...

Suffocates the carelessness,  
Abandons the old,  
Lures the young bait  
Fresh and innocent,  
Tempt and invites them,  
And takes a hasty bite.

Stumble for balance,  
He breathes deeply onto the  
bare back,  
Secretly captures the precious voice:  
A magical radiant Jewel,  
Dancing deep  
into the mysterious night,  
Catch your breath,  
Catch it now.

A coward, hidden, disguised.

He ruthlessly scratches and beats  
eagerly whips the sun  
bleached locks,  
Staining the battered cheeks an ancient  
crimson,  
A delicate suffocating flower  
Scented so fine,  
Carved from the blood deep burning wax,  
Exposed to the fury of the Gale.

He spins the ink clouded sky,  
Taints and teases  
Spreads like diseases,  
Spits,  
Creating a rainfall,  
Washing away the victims' tears,  
Playing a dangerous game  
Of hide and seek,  
He mocks and ridicules.



@Kevinne '01



**Stranger**     Keith Woodhams   London

You are the portrait  
of a perfect summer's day,  
painted in Heavenly hues  
on a canvas of perfection.  
Your hair is as golden as the sun,  
your eyes, oceans,  
that go on forever into the distant horizon  
of my unrequited love.

**Poet**     Neil Littlewood   Nottingham

He hears "the symbiotic body sing  
that the duty of poetry  
is to live within its own truth.  
Never to bother throwing words away  
as punches to the heart  
that receives them.  
Shooting at hay bails in the dining hall  
he remembers a gallant lass  
once sharpening idleness on a hill  
strewn with slain men.  
With the pace of his thoughts —  
an ant stares upon a descending foot  
crippled with genius.

## White Lines

There are always flowers by the road  
twined around fence, lashed to pole  
oblivious to season  
clouding over their cellophane  
marking where, to the nearest estimate,  
some space-time convergence  
spun and bent a life.

They renew themselves, these flowers,  
their natural habitat tarmac's dirt edge,  
the proximity of carrion-pressed stone.

Sometimes I imagine the naturalist  
who replants and charts such places,  
one panning by a kerb or hedge  
on their mission of salvage.

They concentrate, perfectly still,  
for the beam as it cauterizes brain  
to conjure from ambient air  
final thoughts

as if they could be wrapped, or held.

Nick Pearson

Bridgnorth, Shropshire

**Humpty Dumpty** John Walton Wirral

Humpty Dumpty sat on the wall  
A foolish act for someone small.  
The wall was over six feet high  
He waved at all the passers by.

As they waved back he slipped and fell.  
They watched his fragile, speckled shell  
Strike the concrete path below  
And crack wide open, head to toe.

When they saw the yellow yoke  
They bowed their heads and no-one spoke  
And when the King was told who'd died  
"It's scrambled egg for tea!" he cried.

**Lost Birthright** Michael K. Moore Norwich

I was forged under  
an Anglian sky. Beaten.  
Anvil shaped. Whetted,  
by summer storm and winter  
snow. The land was pure  
and painted by lush bracken;  
heather; and Scots pine.  
The breckland glowed the aura  
of verdigris dawns.

Then, the East Anglian speech  
was vibrant – alive – /singing to the curlew's song.  
Now, traffic is loud,  
brecks are unwalked – and no-one  
speaks dialect any more.

## **Fluoxetine**

Anaesthetising.  
Sanitizing.  
Everything  
that has been.  
Watching  
without feeling.  
Numbing.  
Blunting.  
What is  
beyond description.  
Knowing  
without feeling.  
Anaesthetising.  
Desensitising.  
Reality.  
Dreams.  
Nightmares.  
Remembering  
without feeling.

Graham Mathers  
Wirral

## **Voice of Conscience**

I am your voice  
I am your pain  
I am the light  
While you remain...  
In darkness.

I'll fight for you  
When you are weak  
I'll say the words  
You cannot speak...  
In darkness.

I'll be the love  
That won't let go  
I'll be the doubt  
That conscience knows...  
In darkness.

And when a moment  
Takes too long  
When everything you had is gone  
Listen, for I'll sing your song...  
In darkness.

Maria Daines  
Horseheath, Cambs

## Students

What I remember most  
Of those bedsit days  
By the imperturbable Thames  
Is waiting for your visit,

Watching you approach,  
the sun catching your hair  
Like a raven's wing,  
And your flowing black dress

Taking focus like a shadow  
Finding substance with each  
Louder singing step  
And the heavenly ascent

To the tiny attic room  
To which your body gave soul  
As we unribboned and unwrapped  
The gift of each other,

Frantic fingers busy  
With the Braille of skin  
And removing our glasses  
To study love more closely.

Tim Cunningham     Billericay, Essex.

## How do we know we were ever loved?

How do we know we were ever loved?  
She asked. With sadness I said, 'I don't know'.  
But I thought about it, after she had left  
To go upstairs to be alone.

I laid on my bed and searched inside  
A heart I never found too well  
Fading with the pulse and suicide  
Of each apoplectic cell.

I idly twiddled a loose lonely thread  
Preventing myself from asking why  
I was silent, knowing I should've said  
'I won't get angry, I'll just let you cry'.

But our anger was the projection of pain  
And as eloquent as a falling tear,  
That we might be understood just the same  
At least I hope, I hope we were.

I slept drained of thought; I'd none left.  
But in the morning she entered my door  
I woke, and said, 'we know we were loved  
When we are told we are loved no more.

So I pray enlightenment will never be yours.'

James Garry

London

## Late Farewell

He feels her sadness hammered  
    into broken beams and  
shattered walls;

in her dying dreams dark allusions  
randomly play; he sees  
    clearly her fears.

Scattered debris is the room he  
standing alone invokes it's history,  
full face confronts his infant self;

an undertow  
    of troubled thought  
pulls, blood ties thicken,  
become tangible;

he stoops, disturbs her presence,  
stirs dust, offers a silent token,  
then with no looking back  
    to a fading past,  
he walks away.

Patrick Allen

Stevenage, Herts.

## **A Daughter's Lost Shoe**

Hearts then young, happy hours spent  
In the garden of England – Kent.  
Nurtured thoughts of those days  
As in warmth of summer lays  
Fordwich – Wickhambreaux.

A mighty oak, king of trees  
Cooling the brow with summer leaves.  
The wooden bridge, where lost her shoe  
In the river that saunters through  
Fordwich – Wickhambreaux.

Soulful the look of self-reproach  
That on heartstrings did encroach.  
On her face a trace of tear  
To pierce the heart like a spear,  
Fordwich – Wickhambreaux.

Although time now rings its toll  
Remains the memory within my soul,  
Fordwich – Wickhambreaux.

Bob Lock      Chatham, Kent

**The Broadcaster** David Hill Budapest, Hungary

If I talk naturally, I take up too much time.  
I breathe too loud. Pronounce the foreign names too well.  
I sometimes change the words they put into my mouth.

The editors want my opinions: want me down  
On paper: quote unquote, proofread and pigeonholed.  
I must not fluff. I must never be lost for words.

Last night I dreamt that you were working for them too.  
Your arms stretched out like callipers, you were assigned  
The task of finding out how many sides I had

**The Needles** Brendan McMahon Derby

We speak of the passing of time,  
the bandicoot at the back door  
on the edge of the circle of light,  
a cat killed by the tiger snakes  
that inhabit the swamp where the mountain cries.

And you say 'it's as though  
you've never been away,' and the years  
are unreal as the mist that fades  
from the Needles, leaving naked rock.

And seconds fall with the rattle  
of macadamias on tarpaulin,  
endless, renewed. Drinking the rain.