CPQ 10 edited by

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Contents

Editorial by David Nettleingham p. 1

Michael Mirolla
The Wasp p. 3

Rona Laycock
Watching the Butcher Cut Meat p. 4
Ship Breakers, Gadani Beach p. 5

Karin Slater
Ruby p. 6
Island Feng Shui p. 6

Tiziano Fratus
[a recession in the Louisiana alligator farm market]
[recessione nel mercato dell’allevamento di alligatori in Louisiana] p. 7
[notes on Siberian macroeconomics]
[appunti di macroeconomia Siberiana] p. 10
[environmentalists inspired by a verse by Robert Lowell in western Europe]

Nicky Gould
Barefoot p. 15

Jenna Cardinale
“We Won’t Bow Down” p. 16

Ali Abdolrezaei
Court Hearing p. 17
Maria McCarthy
Strange Fruits p. 19
I Dream of a Shop Filled with All the Clothes I’ve Ever Worn p. 20

Jacob Russell
I Saw a Deer Beside a Wooded Path p. 21
From the House Across the Street p. 22

Flora Rosannes / Kate Robinson
Before Spring 1915
Vorfrühling 1915 p. 24

Ian Stephen
The Curl... p. 26

Colin Campbell Robinson
Immigrants p. 27
Breathe Right p. 27

Mohammed Hashas
The Tent That Was p. 28

Contributor Notes p. 29
EDITORIAL

In the basement of an art gallery (a pretentious enough setting), we sat sipping coffee and reading poems, worshipping modernism and deciphering Pound. Our small group met there fortnightly for ‘Wax Poetic’: to workshop and discuss poetic theory with no small sense of arrogance and purpose. In the autumn of 2007, we eventually took the logical next step (or so it seemed to us). We would produce a magazine featuring our work, and that of those we liked – because after all, who would not want to read us?

Of course, all editors have a philosophy, likes and dislikes, and I look back now with envy and the patronising smile of an older brother (an equally arrogant position) at the group’s attitude.

The magazine has developed as we had hoped and farther. At first, we gained a little local interest and we had a limited free print run through a contact in the printing world, but then only three issues in, due to the sort of unnecessarily overdramatic poetic differences that a philosophy and an ego can breed, the life of the magazine was almost cut short.

We went online in March 2008, and entered a burgeoning internet poetry community – international and multi-lingual. We began receiving as many submissions from outside of the UK as we did from our home turf, and as the inbox filled with post from scattered poets in many languages, we changed our scope. We realised that we probably weren’t the axis upon which the earth turned.

Through the contributions of some very gifted poets and now the dedication of editors who have launched Conversation in other languages, for other poetic communities, the magazine has grown into an international project of poet-volunteers. The founding of
our own publishing co-operative in the UK - The Conversation Paperpress - has not only cemented the philosophy upon which we planned our very first excursions but also shows us what a few small steps can achieve.

And so we hit double figures and a new decade. Issue 10 is another to be proud of, collecting poets from around the world and of varied ages together, and from whom as editors, we learn and bolster our message:

poetry can be a revolutionary activity, socially critical; a way of seeing things otherwise, to alter their meaning and explore in uncharted ways.

David Nettleingham
Michael Mirolla

The Wasp

Just yesterday, just yesterday,
the golden wasp fled my body.

Vainly in search of honey, in search of wine,
he’d crawled (between breaths between nights)
to the edge of dank capillaries,
to the focal plane of sight,
to the spine of nervous tension.

The words that buzzed in my throat,
the dreams that flexed their gaunt muscles,
the spasms upon daily waking,
were his – not mine. No longer mine.

And he stopped up my bowels, tore out my wind-pipe,
emptied my will like so much manure.
In search of honey, in search of wine.
And finding none he fled,
the hollowed space collapsing in his wake.

It happened so fast, so fast,
that even death herself,
dear sweet old dame,
delayed a ripe moment, delayed one ripe moment,
before bloating the shell
with her slender black reed.
Rona Laycock

Watching the Butcher Cut Meat

He sits at eye level,
perfect position
for a squirt of blood in the face.
Swollen cheeked from chewing *paan*
he sings tunelessly.

Gripping a knife between his big toe and the next,
he takes a bloody chunk and slings it
over the blade
and saws it with his foot.

Cats hiss over offal at my feet.
Their eyes narrowed,
teeth bared,
claws extended.
A short sharp spat then
one limps away.
The tuneless song continues.

Hell for a vegetarian.
Ears, eyes, feet and balls,
recognisable and for sale.
No coy labelling,
no polystyrene trays
or cellophane wraps.

Everything here is edible,
biodegradable and bloody.
SHIP BREAKERS, GADANI BEACH

She is condemned; shackled to the shore by chains of chanting men who pour
	heir strength into rope, etching their hands as they tauten cables and lean into the land.

Her entrails lie exposed and broken on the beach picked over by the poor as the metal breaches and sparks arc through leaking gas and oil residues creating a stage set of putrid spoil.

Bellerophon, brought low with age awaits the acetylene scalpel’s scoring of her nameplate.

Howls as rat-like men scramble within her womb, pulling, pushing and straining to exhume her engines and ingenious man-made heart. Voyeurs, we watch as she is pulled apart and left as carrion by a disempowered man with a job for life, however short that span.
KARIN SLATER

RUBY

was the minister’s daughter,
five foot five with a slight limp
all the boys teased her for.

Hair black to the white scalp,
always straight up and down
even in bad weather

she still walked
the mile and a half for the school bus
she would ride in silence.

When she was knocked down
school held an assembly,
and everybody cried.

ISLAND FENG SHUI

wooden table, chair,
stove, peat fire, dog, hairy wellies,
newspaper reeking of sgadan
[A RECESSION IN THE LOUISIANA ALLIGATOR FARM MARKET]

Despite the right hand which is marked by one caress too many, his voice trembles, wavering like the cord on which a little, red and white striped man is trying to keep his balance, a few steps forward, a few steps back, only to fall into the empty pools: his face is lined in tension, a multiplication of the expression of the hundreds of farmers who in less than one year have seen the volume of eggs sold drop from five hundred thirty to thirty thousand, while hides have dropped from thirty-five thousand to seven thousand five hundred, ain’t nobody buying shit no more! he huffs, hides ain’t selling, people want to save money, calfskin bags, leather belts: insistently, he massages the wrist of his left arm, the one holding the hide skinned off Tom, the beast that left him with his perpetual souvenir, a second wife sniggers his father, a man in full who, twenty-five years ago, had started up the company with two hundred fifty-five eggs: his good hand remains suspended in air, trapped in a web of worries, and spread open in expectation of a European rainfall that isn’t just water: forty employees risk being sent home in a few weeks, they cross their fingers, as do their wives, even harder, they hope they won’t see their husbands come home earlier than usual: a thermometer reads eighty-three degrees, one of the four brothers adds that the temperature must be kept constant, between eighty-two and eighty-nine degrees, if the temperature goes higher than that they grow faster and become aggressive, ‘specially with each other: a brochure flaunts the peak market results, with the hides of one
three and a half foot specimen framed like a relic:
if this keeps up, besides sending the employees home, we'll have
to kill the alligators and sell their meat to a restaurant
nearby that buys it for eight dollars a critter, you have no idea
how friggin’ much they can eat, every living day; to beat this crisis
it seems it’s not enough to think things through on your own

[RECESSIONE NEL MERCATO DELL’ALLEVAMENTO DI ALLIGATORI
IN LOUISIANA]

Nonostante la mano destra segnata da una carezza di troppo,
la voce freme, oscilla come la corda su cui tenta l’equilibrio
un ometto a strisce rosse e bianche, incedendo, retrocedendo,
per precipitare nelle vasche vuote: la faccia si scava nella
tensione, moltiplica lo sguardo delle centinaia di allevatori che
in meno di un anno hanno visto precipitare la vendita di uova,
da cinquecentotrenta a trentamila, e di pelli, da trentacinquemila
a settemilacinquecento, nessuno compra più un cazzo! sbuffa,
la pelle non va, la gente preferisce risparmiare, borse
in vitello, cinturini in cuoio: si massaggia con insistenza
il polso della sinistra, a cui è appesa la pelle scannata via da
Tom, la bestia che gli ha lasciato il ricordo perenne, 
una seconda moglie ridacchia il padre, un uomo tutto d’un pezzo
che venticinque anni prima aveva varato l’azienda con
duecentocinquantacinque uova: la mano sana resta appesa
in aria, imbrigliata in una ragnatela di preoccupazioni, e aperta
in attesa di una pioggia europea che non sia soltanto d’acqua:
i quaranta operai rischiano di restare a casa in poche settimane,
incrociano le dita e ancora più le mogli, che sperano di non
vederli rientrare prima del solito orario: un termometro indica
ottantatré gradi, uno dei quattro fratelli aggiunge che la
temperatura va tenuta sotto controllo, fra gli ottantadue e gli
ottantanove, se la temperatura sale crescono più in fretta
e si fanno aggressivi, soprattutto fra di loro: una brochure
ostenta i risultati del mercato al suo apice, con la pelle di un esemplare di tre piedi e mezzo incorniciata a reliquia: se continua così, oltre a lasciare a casa gli operai, ci tocca uccidere gli alligatori e vendere la carne ad un ristorante della zona che la compra per otto dollari a bestia, non può sapere quanto cristo mangiano ogni santo giorno: per battere questa crisi pare non basti pensare con la propria testa
NOTES ON SIBERIAN MACROECONOMICS

I pull down your stockings with my teeth
you stare at me expressionless glacial
arching your upper lip
the smell of cinnamon apple tea tempers
your body which is posed as though by god’s hands
on the black background of the sheet that replicates a nervous system
you murmur to me as I sleep
that not only elongated women
with hair like fish bones and transparent forearms
migrate from siberia
muscovite anthropologists disinter mammoth tusks
using old army vehicles
that survived the wars in afghanistan and the soviet empire
cut sectioned packaged and sold to hong kong merchants
objects that will end up in the luxury homes of the nouveaux riches
or some up-and-coming politician
you tell me about a chessboard carved in mammoth ivory
a chessboard that carries a dowry of a few thousands years
you interrupt your tale laughing over a nuance of the language that escapes me
you resume making love to my body
captured in the western segment of our small lunar sea
the polar night begins to fall
refreezing the remains of those creatures
as an ivory queen alights among stifled sighs
on the belly of an albino mermaid
ti abbasso le calze coi denti
mi fissi senza espressione glaciale
inarcando il labbro superiore
l’odore della tisana alla mela e cannella alleggerisce
la tua figura posata come dalle mani di dio
sullo sfondo nero del lenzuolo che riproduce un sistema nervoso
mi suggerisci mentre dormo
che dalla siberia non migrano soltanto lunghe donne
dai capelli di lisca e avambracci trasparenti
antropologi moscoviti estraggono zanne di mammuth
con vecchi automezzi militari
sopravvissuti alle guerre in afghanistan e all’impero sovietico
tagliate sezionate confezionate e vendute ai mercanti di hong kong
per oggetti che finiranno nelle abitazioni di lusso dei nuovi ricchi
o di qualche politico in ascesa
mi parli di una scacchiera intagliata nell’avorio dei mammuth
una scacchiera che porta in dote alcune migliaia d’anni
interrompi il racconto ridendo per qualche sfumatura della lingua che mi sfugge
ricominci a fare l’amore col mio corpo
catturata nella porzione occidentale del nostro piccolo mare lunare
la notte polare inizia a calare
ricongelando i resti di quelle creature
mentre una regina d’avorio si posa tra i sospiri strozzati
sul ventre di una sirena albina
[ENVIRONMENTALISTS INSPIRED BY A VERSE BY ROBERT LOWELL IN WESTERN EUROPE]

life resumes where it was interrupted
you rest your hand on my forehead
your fingers accompany my eyelids as they close
a gesture you make unwaveringly
as though every day at this same time
you performed the identical motion of spreading earth-toned colours
on aborigine canvasses

the call of a male eurasian eagle owl echoes outside the window
a sharp sound followed by a clipped high note
it's been ages you tell me since they nested in yorkshire
a few pairs were sighted ten years ago and now there are fifty-eight
in just a couple of years they have emigrated to holland to germany to sweden
and to scotland
they love clefts in rocks
near maastricht seven pairs live in a quarry
they have gotten used to the explosions

they don't mind us? I ask
in the silence of the sunset you tap my temple with your index finger
and what do they eat?
hedgehogs rabbits mice buzzards partridge quail
so then I say they are predators of other predators

the environmentalists are worried
they say it's unacceptable that non-english birds should endanger the
existence of protected species
a bird that hasn't lived in great britain for two hundred years
can't come here and feed off game and birds that were born and raised on
her majesty's soil
suddenly, no disinclination to murder
robert lowell wrote that I tell you
you aren’t listening to me
in the heart of western europe the eurasian eagle owl can be outlawed
on a par with the thought of the two of us
embedded one inside the other
everywhere

[AMBIENTALISTI ISPIRATI DA UN VERSO DI ROBERT LOWELL IN EUROPA OCCIDENTALE]

la vita ricomincia dove è stata interrotta
posi la mano sulla mia fronte
le dita accompagnano la chiusura delle palpebre
un gesto che esegui priva di tentennamenti
come se ogni giorno a quest’ora
eseguissi la medesima stesura dei colori color terra
su tele aborigene
dalla finestra riecheggia il richiamo di un maschio di gufo reale
un suono secco seguito da un acuto contratto
erano secoli mi dici che nello yorkshire non nidificavano
ne sono state avvistate alcune coppie dieci anni fa ed ora se ne contano
cinquantotto
in pochi anni sono emigrati in olanda in germania in svezia e in scozia
amano le fessure nella roccia
vicino a maastricht sette coppie vivono in una cava di roccia
si sono abituati anche alle esplosioni

non badano a noi? ti chiedo
nel silenzio del tramonto picchietti con l’indice la mia tempia
e cosa mangiano?
ricci conigli topi poiane barbagianni pernici quaglie
allora dico io sono predatori di altri predatori
gli ambientalisti sono in allarme
dicono che è inaccettabile che un uccello non inglese metta a rischio
l’esistenza di specie preservate
un uccello che non ha vissuto negli ultimi duecento anni in gran bretagna
non può venire qua a cibarsi di cacciagione e volatili nati e cresciuti sul
suolo di sua maestà

improvvisamente nessuna riluttanza a uccidere
l’ha scritto robert lowell ti dico
non mi ascolti
nel cuore dell’europa occidentale i gufi reali possono essere fuorilegge
al pari del pensiero di noi due
incastrati l’uno dentro l’altra
dappertutto
Nicky Gould

BAREFOOT

I hurl my shoes, left
and right. They pass it on –
a wave flinging

its army of shoes
into his face, each thud
the stamp of marching boots

carrying their sweat and stink,
their downtrodden miles.
The sound trickles away

like the end of rain,
and we remain, bare
heels dug into the dust.
JENNA CARDINALE

“WE WON’T BOW DOWN”

Of course the candles,
flowers, and letters are left.
Also eggs and charcoal
Xs. Someone in
New Orleans is practicing
something.

Graveyards are great places
to leave things behind. Skulls
of the small animals we’ve killed.
The gold-plated cross that hung
above a twin bed.

& we take away, too. Forgotten
fonts. Silver change.
The dirt on our shoes
stays with us.
COURT HEARING

The caravan was twice our numbers
all fully felled and suddenly fell aground
two three miles further along a headless horse was galloping
I was the head of them all

Come on! Behead them
they have not as many cattle as cattlemen
heart to the girls
and the bones leave for the wolves
howling in the café

The next caravan was down the mall
the road all the more sped up we arrived
there were not as many cattle as the wolves we took and slaughtered

- Yar Ali! Talk less balderdash
and brew me a strong tea

- Yes sir!

My eyes caught the bottom of the cup
The port was under water end to end
The Earth had vetoed God
I was the captain of them all

On the decks make swift sail in the wind, Sailors pretty damn quick
Pirates passed seven generations of each cup
we took no notice of the white horses and set sail to the sea
then anchored behind the coffee table
for me tea with sugar cubes on the side

the rebels all slurping cappuccinos
the police came
My companion had two three strands of hair jutting out
they closed down the café
and put me here in the dock
to stand before you, Your Honour!
Blackberries shrivel on Cellar Hill
though a few late blooms defy the new order:
blotted plums usurped by ripening pears.

A kestrel hovers over the orchard,
the gate staked by an estate agent’s board.
Cobnuts lie scattered like popcorn on the turning
to Lynsted Lane, by the houses that first broke
through the earth in the spring, now de-scaffolded,
exhaling steam through plastic heating vents.

And strange fruits hang in the hedgerow,
Stella cans, a Co-operative bakery wrapper
with orange sticker, reduced to 40p.
I DREAM OF A SHOP FILLED WITH ALL THE CLOTHES I’VE EVER WORN

The shopkeeper offers the shirt I wore on my eighteenth birthday – the only gift I asked for – blue and black, like a lumberjack’s,

frayed threads, faded check, detached yoke and collar now healed. ‘Try it on,’ he tempts, folding sleeve across breast, hand on heart.

It no more fits than the jeans I wore with it – red-tagged, stitched patch – the felt-penned plimsolls lying gape-mouthed on the floor,

or the skins of outgrown friends hung on a rack by the door.
JACOB RUSSELL

I SAW A DEER BESIDE THE WOODED PATH

the deer itself

an absence
marked

in bone

without the deer
a leg
without the flesh

radius and ulna infused
are one
tibia and fibula infused
are one

femur making three
bones
one

derear

disarticulate
of space and time
beside the rock strewn stream
FROM THE HOUSE ACROSS THE STREET

sparks orangely bright from the rooftop      spiraling
perish      the thought

of fire      all
the lights on    who
will live      and

next morning    nothing
only the rain

there are always sirens in the distant night
somewhere      the fire is real

every night it’s the same
everything changes
everything      the same

if only we could see it moving
see it happen

the way we see clouds move

sparks of light    smoke
without fire

this time     it wasn’t our turn
the house didn’t burn

when it comes
it will be
when we least expect it

going out

one bright window at a time
BEFORE SPRING 1915

There’s still no feeling of the approach of spring,
Just wilderness wrapped in blunt brown earth.
Yet still careworn women stand by the doors
Waiting and watching its birth.

Still deep snow lies in earthen troughs -
Rigid bodies draining the naked clay.
Yet as mid-winter’s pain is past,
And we’re endlessly yearning spring’s day

Welcome rushes from our hearts and blooms
Like artillery of snowflake shells
And clang of distant cannon’s changed
In longing, to Easter bells.
VORFRÜHLING 1915

Noch ist vom nahen Lenz kein Dust zu spüren,  
Noch hüllt die Flur rein stumpfes Erdenbraun,  
Und doch stehn abgehärmte Fraun schon vor den Türen,  
Erwartend da, als gäb’ es was zu schaun.

Auch liegt viel Schnee noch in den tiefen Mulden,  
Wie starre Leiber dräun die nackten Schollen,  
Doch weil wir diesen Winter länger nicht erdulden  
Und weil wir sehndend endlich diesen Frühling wollen,

Drum grüßt er uns zuerst aus unseren Herzen,  
Drum blüht er uns aus schneegeballten Flocken,  
Aus fernen Feuerschlünden drum, dumpf-erzen,  
Dröhnt’s in die Sehnsucht ein, wie heil’ge Osterglocken.
THE CURL...
*For Nicky and Adrian*

The curl of the meniscus
is in the last ten feet
before the end of a world.

It could be the Baltic.
The Pacific or bogland.
Salt, fresh or brackish.

More a matter of containment
as seen in a part-filled glass
held to the ambient light

before breakfast
where the slopes move
to the Clyde and Forth

but the wetness of the bowl
of this or any world can
alter the surface tension

and the turn of the liquid
might
no longer be
downward.
IMMIGRANTS

My family were interned for a spell, fed by Dutch cooks; lots of cheese; lots of milky coffee.
Down by Merri Creek rats were fattening. It was a perfect set-up.

The teacher lost my past. He found history an unnecessary distraction, didn’t help with learning the Rules.

Every morning, in the quadrangle, we made our vows wilting in the strange sun.

They beat my sisters and fed my brother lies. It was a perfect set-up.
No wires needed, the barb was in ‘G’day’

Of course the church had something to do with it. Vicars visited our Nissan Huts by night, whispered condolences, ignored all the crying.

BREATHE RIGHT

He is right about spaces, about breathing each word, each phrase.
Couplets need space to breathe like the human breath they are.

He is right about typographical considerations. They’re as important as the formal, the contextual, the meaning. All is all, all means all, he says

He is right to throw into his considerations a rotting dog.
Mohammed Hashas

THE TENT THAT WAS

Miles of tunnels have been dug
To unearth the riches of the land,
   To stir the stagnant ponds
   Where
The new tent stands to commemorate
The
   Tent
   That
   Was
In the raggedly hollowed tent, now,
   The wise mind that was
   Is
Torn into wretched fragments,
   Each splitting up into
   More minute ones
To show that of few, many are made
That of many, much more are begotten,
   All working to solidify
   The tent that was.
**Contributors**

**Ali Abdolrezaei** was born in 1969 in Northern Iran. He graduated with a Masters degree in Mechanical Engineering from Tehran Technical and Engineering University. He started his professional poetic career in 1986 and became one of the most serious and contentious poets in the new generation of Persian poetry. Publication of twelve varied books of poetry: “From Riskdom,” “Shinema,” So Sermon of Society”, “Improvisation”, “This dear cat”, “Paris in Renault”, “You Name this Book”, “Only Iron Men live in the rain”, “More dirty than literature”, “The gift in…”, “La Elaha Ella Love” and the multi-textual “Hermaphrodite” that have all received critical acclaim. He has also published a collection of his poems in English that called “In Riskdom Where I lived”.

In September 2001 after his protest against heavy censorship of his latest books such as Society and Shinema, he was banned from teaching and public speaking. He left Iran and after a few months stay in Germany, and two years in France, and he has been living in London for the last three years. [http://www.exiledwriters.co.uk/writers.shtml](http://www.exiledwriters.co.uk/writers.shtml)

**Colin Campbell Robinson** is an Australian writer and social researcher currently living in London. His poetry and prose have appeared in a number of journals and he has had numerous reports and papers published on a range of social issues. At the moment he is working with The Passage, the largest day centre in Europe for people experiencing homelessness as well as developing new writing projects incorporating the use of photography, sound and film.

**Jenna Cardinale** is the author of *Journals*, a chapbook from Coconut. Recent work appears in LIT, No Tell Motel, and qarrtsiluni. She lives in New York with K. and a dog named Maybe.

**Tiziano Fratus** (1975, Bergamo) is a Match Maker and sometimes a Match Seller. His fire has been reproduced in North and South America, in Western and Eastern Europe, in South East Asia, in places such as Casa Fernando Pessoa (Lisbon), Ars Poetica (Bratislava), Comedie du Livre (Montpellier), Writ-
ers Festival (Singapore), University of Vermont (Burlington), International Poetry Festival (Genoa), Poetry Center (Chicago), International Bookfair (Turin), Bowery Poetry Center (NYC), Poestate (Lugano). He has published ten boxes of matches in the country of Pasolini and Caravaggio, the last are Il Moloso (The Molossus, 2007), Il Vangelo della Carne (Flesh Gospel, 2008), La staticità dei pesci martello (Static Nature of Hammerhead Sharks, 2008), Il respiro della terra (Earth Breathing, 2009), and overseas: Poèmes chuchotés sur la berge du Pô. Six poètes de Turin Poésie (ELR Edizioni Le Ricerche, Lugano, 2008), A Room in Jerusalem (Farfalla Press / McMillan & Parrish. Brooklyn, 2008), Doubleskin. New Poetry Voices in Italy and Singapore (Ethos Books, Singapore, 2009), 5PX2. Five Italian Poets and Five Scottish Poets (Luath Press / Edizioni Torino Poesia, Edinburgh / Turin, 2009), Viaggio in Italia. Ocho poetas italianos contemporaneous (Sigamos Enamoradas, Buenos Aires, 2009). In 2010 new boxes of his matches will be published in Brazil (O Molosso e outros Molossos, Maza Edições, Belo Horizonte), in France (Monsiuer Fratus en Flames et en Bouches, Borborygmes Editions, Paris), in the USA (Creaturing. Selected Poems, Marick Press, Grosse Pointe Farms/Detroit); his fire will soon be repeated in other boxes also, in Argentina, Canada and Spain.

Nicky Gould is currently studying English & American Literature with Creative Writing at the University of Kent. She has always scribbled poetry, but has been writing it more seriously for about four years now. She works as a Youth Participation Officer, helping young people make a difference to their local communities. She lives near the sea in Whitstable, where she walks on the beach every day.

He is a member of local and international social and cultural networks, and is interested in world literature, world politics, multiculturalism, intellectual nomadism, travel writing, and geopoetics.

The poem here is an excerpt from *The Tent That Was* collection.

**Rona Laycock** is a creative writing tutor in Cirencester and has recently had her first collection of poems, *Borderlands*, published as an audio CD. The poems in this collection were inspired and influenced by the ten years she lived and worked in Pakistan, Egypt and Tunisia. Many of her poems have been published in magazines and two years ago one poem was shortlisted for the Bridport Prize.

She lives in Gloucestershire and earlier this year founded Writers in the Brewery, a monthly get together of writers in the New Brewry Arts Theatre, Cirencester. Each month they feature a guest writer before throwing the floor open to people who want to share their work.

She also edits *Graffiti* a new quarterly magazine for writers of all genres.

**Maria McCarthy** writes. When she isn’t writing, she thinks she should be. Her website is www.medwaymaria.co.uk

**Michael Mirolla** is the author of several novels, short story and poetry collections, and plays, and his latest publications include the novel *Berlin* and the *Light And Time* poetry collection. A novel, *The Facility*, is due out this fall from U.S. publishing house, Leapfrog Press. As well, he and a partner have taken on the management of Guernica Editions, one of Canada’s longest running publishing houses

**Kate Robinson** is translating the letters and poems of her Austrian great great grandmother, Flora Rosannes into English. Written in Vienna during World War I, *Before Spring 1915* is from a book by Flora, called *Wunden, Farbe und rankende Rosen* (*Wounds, Colours and Rambling Roses*), written in protest at the war. Flora, though a converted Catholic, was Jewish; she died tragically in Auschwitz in World War II.
Jacob Russell lives in South Philly. Ten years a potter, ten years working job to job as a temp while learning to write, twelve years teaching freshmen English... currently unemployed, finishing a second novel and managing a literary blog: Jacob Russell’s Barking Dog. He has been published in the Beloit Poetry Journal, Salmagundi, Potomac Review, Bitter Oleander, Pendelyboz, the Laurel Review and other literary venues.

Karin Slater: I’m a 25 year old graduate of creative writing based on the Isle of Lewis in the Outer Hebrides. I’ve had a number of poems printed in small press publications and when I’m not pondering about life, I work at a bespoke weaving company. Most weekends are spent on a peat-sodden allotment which is currently producing the finest of leeks.

Ian Stephen was born in Stornoway in the Outer Hebrides and still lives there. He worked for many years in the Coastguard service but has been publishing, exhibiting and performing his work since 1979. After winning the inaugural Robert Louis Stevenson Award in 1995, he resigned to work full time as a writer, artist and performer,

His short stories are published, with an audio CD, in the Polygon /pocketbooks series and collections of poems by Dangaroo Press, Polygon and Morning Star. His plays have toured throughout Scotland. He also won a Creative Scotland Award for navigating his own boat through the settings of Scottish maritime stories and he tells these and other stories at Festivals in several countries, most recently Ireland and the Czech Republic.

New and selected poems were recently published in a parallel text edition with translations into Czech (Periplum, Olomouc, 2007). His lyrics have also been translated into German and performed, with new music by two German-based composers, in Dusseldorf, Cologne and Bonn. He is now writing and collecting prose, fiction and non-fiction, funded by a two-year bursary from the Scottish Arts Council. He is presently on a storytelling residency in Orkney where he passes stories on to primary school pupils and developing written forms of oral stories ranging from Brittany to Norway.