

# CAPture:

art etc...

# P O E T R Y

Cover image: Sam Kennedy, *Untitled*, 2025

Vol 3  
Jan 2026

Image description: A photo of a blue, almost cloudless sky has a vapour trail

The page reads:

CAPTURE ART ETC

POETRY

COVER IMAGE: Sam

Kennedy, Untitled, 2025

Vol 3 Jan 2026

# A Note on: The Power of Poetry

In the face of war and famine; under fire from hatred and vitriol, writing or reading poetry might seem frivolous. Poetry can be cast as romantic, ephemeral, and frilly in the face of its more serious siblings such as journalism. But as Margaret Atwood, the great matriarch of 21<sup>st</sup> Century literature, attests “A word after a word after a word is power.” And perhaps in dark times this is the greatest gift we can be given. To be told that in pen and paper; in the words we hold in our hearts and notebooks- we have power!

(Sidenote- Atwood is renowned for her novels but her poetry is phenomenal!)

In her article on the power of poetry, Julie Meril Gardner, Nottingham Trent University, muses that writing is not an escape from anguish but declares, "If we write with courage and with integrity, it can take us to the very heart of it." <sup>1</sup> Peter Mackay, current Makar (Scottish Poet Laureate) claims that poetry can even keep "endangered languages alive," <sup>2</sup>

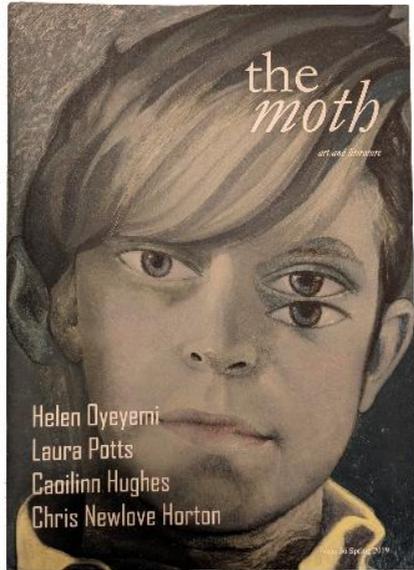


Image description: a magazine cover featuring a portrait of a young boy- his left eye in double vision reads “the moth art and literature”

Whilst Zara Mahmood, writes in Rock and Art, that poetry can, “articulate the immense weight of generational trauma or the fierce,

defiant hope of a protest movement."<sup>3</sup>

Bold claims! But what is it about poetry that makes it so powerful? Well, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, said that poetry was the “best words in the best order” but to get a bit more poetic about it- the brevity of the form means that careful consideration must be paid to each word, space and punctuation mark. To get metaphorical about it, poetry is the dark concentrated smoky tones of good whisky, in the literary world. Or in other words, it packs a punch in a few words (epic poetry aside of course) which makes it

the perfect vehicle to convey majestic sentiments and monumental ideas!

With the power to navigate and portray human emotion, save languages and topple our nemeses why wouldn't we read and write poetry? So, let's just start with a word, add another word and another and before we know it, we might have the makings of something intensely powerful!

And worry not if writing isn't your thing, we have a host of beautiful, powerful and intriguing poems and poets in this issue that you're

bound to be beguiled and may even be inspired!

1. <https://theconversation.com/how-poetry-can-sustain-us-through-illness-bereavement-and-change-271003>
2. <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2024/dec/03/scotland-has-always-been-multilingual-new-scottish-makar-peter-mackay>
3. <https://www.rockandart.org/poetry-as-activism-modern-poets-social-justice/>

The following two poems were written and illustrated by Jemma Third, for the creature under the table when the bell tolls midnight on New Year's Eve.

Instagram: [jemmas\\_heart](#)

Image Descriptions

(images not included)

the illustrations are line drawings of creatures with antennae with wings and curling toenails.

# Toothless

I'm under the table.

The clock tells 11.59pm

This is the last time I'll  
have you all to myself.

There's shrieking and  
laughter coming from the  
kitchen, teeth licked and  
ready for midnight.

This is the last time. I  
swallow it.

The way your hair falls  
mimics mine, your eyes  
like molasses until hit

with sunlight. You  
became honey in my  
hands once.

I lick my rightside canine  
and swivel my tongue  
around the star until it  
won't budge, It's lasted  
longer than we ever did.

I held on to the table legs  
with both arms, I should  
have held you closer. The  
smell of wood and wine  
linger like smoke on your  
breath. To taste again  
would be defeat,  
irrevocably so.

Under the table isn't quite  
as I had needed.

I swallow my tongue and  
with that your name. I  
can't welcome the new  
year with old cavities.

Your voice is so loud I  
almost miss the  
fireworks.

The clock tells 00:00am  
That's it now... you're  
really gone from my  
breastbone.

Where do I run when it's  
dark this winter?

Where do I place myself  
when the sunlight breaks  
through the trees?

Where do I turn when I  
step out a cigarette?

What do I do with my  
mouth?

The clock tells 00:01am  
The year is over.

That's all I got of you.

Houndstooth

on new years eve i put  
myself to bed early

i couldn't stomach the  
change without you here.

there is an empty pit  
where your love for me  
should be

it resides in the bottom of  
my heart

and churns my  
stomach until i cannot eat

it is the last night of the  
year where you left me  
with this feeling i call love  
for you

but I think after 365 days  
of carrying it around on  
my back and shoulders

i should give it another  
name

i call it grief.

i think my heart is rotting  
in places

i have corners that even i  
don't visit

the corners where you  
live

i am nauseous from  
nostalgia.

maybe i should have  
begged forgiveness (love

realizing all the beautiful  
things i could have  
accomplished had I not  
been so consumed by

taking up as little space  
as possible.

the space i occupy is  
cramped from the thought  
of you and the way that  
you looked at me back  
then

on the days i miss you  
the most and get that  
feeling in my heart, i  
wonder if you can feel it  
too?

maybe if i think of you  
more loudly it will disturb  
your sleep and you will  
pick up when the time  
comes..

happy new years  
i promise I won't call.

# Rock Star Noir by Mike Cowley

You're standing at the junction  
Between the light and the pyre  
Watching Robert Johnson's licks  
Turn to brimstone and fire  
A lifetime of choices  
Have led to this place  
Where the crows chant torch  
songs  
The dogs scavenge for bones  
And the poet's last verse  
Becomes tomorrow's ring-tone.

Welcome to the crossroads  
Where the stars never sleep  
The streets turn to rapids  
And the generals weep  
If you'd heard the laments  
And lifted your eyes  
Held a hand when it was offered  
And said your goodbyes  
This juncture would be mist  
A place with no map  
A story we told ourselves  
On the long road back.

You blew it, Jonny

All the girls cried your name

The bouncers name-checked you

All the boys bought your game

You must have seen them coming

With their ledgers and cadavers

Rictus expressions and cocaine  
clipe hangovers

The trouble is

(You can see it now)

When love until then

Came in glares and slaps

Empty plates and kitchen cold  
snaps

What they dangled sang like  
The Twittering Machine  
Promises honed bitter and lean.

I drank it all in  
I filled the spaces  
Wounds like ravines  
Cancelled holidays  
Empty cases  
I'd dare the rest of you  
Not to walk in my shoes  
My shot at immortality  
And the debts it accrues  
I was waiting at the junction

But the dark claimed my name

Trying to flag a ride

But you never came.

# **Skinhead Pincer Movement**

## **by Mike Cowley**

We creased the shadows of the  
high street's glooms

An asphalt quarter of a  
thousand moons

Trenches occupied in a ghost-  
culture battle

A closing flourish for Sta-prest  
cattle

The bells tolled and static came  
down

The sun reproached our last  
sortie into town

Without the means or the  
strategies to repel

Just ahead and out of view

The best laid plans, if only we  
knew

The Skinhead Pincer  
Movement.

Papers and people swirled in  
convulsions

Unmoored by kinetics

And the roar of compulsions

Frozen in the frame of  
Littlewoods's arches

A munitions dump of boots and  
braces

Blank expressions fixed

The quarry in sight

Our best versions ready to be  
served up to

The Skinhead Pincer Movement

Sun Tzu's got nothing on these  
fuckers

Hannibal and Napoleon are  
tactical suckers

Evasive manoeuvres were taken  
smartly

But not so you'd notice

We were thinking only partly  
Just when refuge invited us in  
On the cusp of shelter  
From history's bin  
A waiting detachment completed  
The Skinhead Pincer  
Movement.

I first felt a fist  
And then a kick  
But this wasn't a song  
And we weren't John Wick  
Head, meet concrete  
My mate a kick in the balls

Staff and customers settled in  
A dance of fires in the hole  
Their feet were swift  
The soles well practiced  
An arc of violence, a perfect axis  
We should have known  
This was no fresh lore  
New military forms, new  
subcultural norms  
No codebreaking could have  
prepared us for  
The Skinhead Pincer  
Movement.

I appealed to the gods  
That look out for young Mods  
But the immortals fell silent  
And looked the other way  
The Skinhead Pincer Movement  
Is a game they don't play.

# The Burden of Bravery by Shae Morgon

I don't suffer from anxiety I am burdened with immense bravery. I have seen that the monsters under the bed are very real and still continue to sleep in the bed every night. I have had to say goodnight to monsters far worse than any boogie man and even sit at the dinner table with them. I have seen how dangerous the world is and yet still leave the safety of my own home. I beat myself up because I can't be in public without feeling

overwhelming anxiety when I should be congratulating myself for even entertaining the idea of interacting with people, when I've been hurt so badly by people before.

Today I went to the beach, it might seem unremarkable to most people however every step I took away from home felt dangerous, the monster that was under the bed doesn't live there he moves around with me, sometimes he's in the distance and I can just see him in my peripheral vision, other times he's right behind me breathing

down my neck, dragging his claws around my chest.

Sometimes he's in front of my screaming "go home!" or "I will kill you!". Today as I went to the beach he was there whispering doubt into my ear, I ignored him. He got louder as I got to the beach, he stood in front of me screaming but I didn't obey, I turned my back and walked away from him. With one foot in front of the other I walked away his shouts fading to mere whispers until I couldn't hear him, all I could hear was the

crashing of the waves and the pebbles under my feet.

Now I know he's still there he did not wash away with the waves at the beach but today I won a battle that no one else saw, a victory that leads me to the statement, I don't suffer from anxiety I am burdened with immense bravery.

# Nothing makes sense

**By Romana Docherty**

The only thing that makes sense  
right now

Is that nothing makes sense.

I guess there's a minimal  
comfort in knowing to expect the  
unexpected.

The dynamics turned upside  
down.

The world going by but I'm  
always in it. I'm not observing.  
I'm part of the action whether I  
want to be or not.

My oh my.

I long for the day that the visions  
in my mind become my reality.  
When dancing is ephemeral and  
nothing else exists except  
sublime.

**Pause**

**By Romana Docherty**

A warm thick cloud around my  
silhouette.

Breathing, rested, like a living  
breeze.

Monotone. Golden bulb  
gleaming in the night light.

Silver glistening in my field of view. Blurred shapes that could be anything I want them to be. If I can't see a perfume bottle, was it ever a perfume bottle. Or was it a blob of white on the dimmed dresser all along.

Time goes ticking on, but the silence is phenomenal. Like the world really has paused, just for me, to take this time and soak in the dark, emptiness before tomorrow dawns a new page.

Thank you.

I can imagine the world going by in a slow motion as I type.

Because the pause is permitted,  
so undisturbed. I could almost  
go outside and run into the  
darkness, knowing, not a soul  
would catch my eye, notice my  
figure or my bare feet on the  
dampened paths and uneven  
roads. I would only be disturbed  
by my own sense of sensibility.

I am not running outside. But for  
now whilst I am paused, I can  
imagine what it would be like to  
run a-mock outside in the  
looming darkness with only the  
glistening stars for viewers.

With no judgement, no  
neighbours, no bright car lights  
or whistling birds.

Just me.

Just me and everything else and  
nothing else at all.

Thank you for the pause.

# Ode to a lassie

by Catherine Cullen

Why was the tree felt by youth  
stretching vulgarly with muscle a  
reflection of the man back  
home. Lust for girls an artist  
without craft making money the  
only way she knew. Pulsing  
writhing and loose ended on the  
tree one arm stretched round  
bark the other mere monkey  
singing to Mark from her toe tips  
but ignoring a life and  
relationship past when normal

life taught compliance where the heart all but felt.

Instead, her lips pursed round her huge jaw and she fell upon the ground kicking mud. Life as a lass of lassies and bosoms to feel in bedrooms behind doors surprised her surreptitious ego and filled her with naked truth. It is there she learnt to act in remittance of her failures.

But this was no misspent youth in fact she roared and became a stronger stringer a woman and beauty both men and female admired. Causing a calamity amongst them as she more than

often settled for singledom. No suiter displeased her father who suffered her misfortune and wile ways.

“You have nothing for me” came her reply to much of the guidance, devoted and her lassie strode from one end of Dundee high street to another wearing nothing but scant T shirt and boots on the end of her feet kicking up dust and debris whist her mother chose how much is this and sucked her teeth behind forbidden thick lips

.

It was once enchantment of her younger son a scoundrel of red hair that bewitched and forced a lawless marriage now, she saw only her daughter for comfort and malice toward townsfolk who tipped their hats and winked on passing all-knowing as both daughter and mother past the mantle to other next of kin.

# **White cage in bloom**

**by Daniel Oakes**

my bones are all wrong

but straining my jaw

i protect their gaze

from this jagged maw.

the white cage in bloom

a cannibal womb

encrypting my most fatal flaw

their bones are in closets

hanged and mothballed

fossils of values and virtues  
performed

mine: a burden

hide in folds of skin

for fear of appearing

without them

deformed

my bones aren't so strong

often neglect their role

of rigidly scaffolding

my hastily-writ soul

the troupe all costumed

in play-death exhume

find well-rehearsed motifs  
mocking back from the hole

“i robot, was built  
from galvanised guilt  
a calcified metallic sigh  
i serve and persist  
but if i wish to live  
then i must be able to die

yet vampire am i  
to feed as they cry  
my eyes fixed upon the stakes;  
impregnable steel

designed to conceal  
my veins are not wires, but  
snakes”

... sinuous reminders  
yet i can't recall  
the truth i've postponed  
for my hardest fall.

my bones are just WRONG  
recast me in dirt  
and water with years  
lost by those i hurt  
this composted construct

of ossified rust  
returned to cold comfort  
of meaningless dust.

...

my bones hear a song  
though faint against black  
a perennial flame  
arising from lack  
that light lies within  
no tunnel, no end  
i spiral and branch  
and though doubtful - ascend

reincarnating me  
not recursive oak tree  
more like willow:  
i weep, and i bend

**\*treasure map\***

**by Daniel Oakes**

stranded by captains  
for a mutiny unplanned  
still cyclically sifting  
my well-trodden sand  
while hunting for treasure  
they assured was no lie  
your arrival was as startling  
as a sun in black sky

map and territory -  
the real and the story

a mistake is not made  
when such partners are found  
it is made when we hide  
those trinkets we've spied  
and preface an X  
atop firm-flattened ground

reactions we've learned  
to maintain our wealth  
of guilt imperfections  
- the cost, for our health!  
connections are kindling  
we burn, so we smother  
for fear of our worth

being judged by the other

this overcorrection

our quietest shame

fearfully provisions

dotted lines for my name

rough seas, tall trees,

a sea-serpent or two

i pay their tales no heed

my direction is you.

this overlooked treasure

radiant, deserving

something a life could be given  
in

serving

my search now for answers:

how something so small

can shine down so brightly

my north star i'd call

but more than an anchor for my

navigation

the lesson, the gift, from you has

been

patience

# OkCupid's Picks for You!

Sascha, wow, looking like the  
embellished detail

In a favourite anecdote. Peter,  
baubled, Alessa,

battered popcorn. Jacqueline,  
the patch of shade

in the cave after the light's been  
dazzling off the sea

right at me all morning.

Rebecca, I marvel

at your metallic symmetry.

Helena, dawn over quiet  
streets, enjoyed alone.

Ali, hand-rolled cigarettes  
and cheap polyester. Who  
among us could ignore, Emma,  
the enormous pot of lentils you  
Offer the hungry children? Oh  
flamingo-necked Lianne. Oh  
Leo, neon handful. Sofia, you  
glad palpitation.

Öykü, teaching me that sitting  
close to red is its own kind  
of seduction. Christin, prising  
the bottlecap back

with your mightiest incisor.

Carla, you gaze humming like  
the bassline

from a song whose words

I've forgotten entirely. Sarah, it's  
been a long week, I just want to  
dance.

Hedwig, can I tell you a secret?

Dil,

do you come here to window  
shop too? Hannah, don't you  
love us

for that, our gorging on  
these feasts of imagined  
queer desire?

Lilac, will you love me        like  
this:        a hungry portal back  
to yourself?

God,    Lin,    rolling to the other  
side of the picnic blanket,  
following the sun

as she saunters through the  
mid-afternoon.    God,

Hannah, your immaculate

Grace.        God, Sophia,  
how I wish I was the word you  
were halfway through saying

When the shutter clicked.

Cynthia, what I wouldn't give  
to be

that ladder in your tights.

Clarissa, please, show  
me how your

autumn aches. Kitty, hey,

good to match you,

how's your day going so far?

**Dylan McNulty-Holmes**  
**(he/they)**

**Writer and editor**

**[dylanmcnultyholmes.com](http://dylanmcnultyholmes.com)**

# Rinds

I spend the season looking at  
everyone's lips

Grey hunks of dead skin

I spend the season rubbing

Mid range moisturiser into my  
reptilian knuckles

I spend the season watching a  
father introduce his

Frost-pinkened baby to snow

I spend the season taking the  
bench

Vacated by a man with a  
bleached lavender moustache

Reminding myself I too once  
was covered in sequins

Like the glitter of gutted fish on  
ice on sale I spend

The season running into  
elevators held open

By fur-hatted Polish  
grandmothers smiling and  
saying

Words I don't understand there  
is not

A single Slavic septuagenarian  
who isn't disappointed

By my English accent I am  
disappointed

By my English accent this  
season won't teach me

How to live up to the promise of  
this dry, dry face

**Dylan McNulty-Holmes**  
**(he/they)**

**Writer and editor**

**[dylanmcnultyholmes.com](http://dylanmcnultyholmes.com)**

# Where porcelain gathers

by Ed Cawood

From face to face, careful to avoid laminar rivulets soaking through my shoes, I step cautiously around the big sister. Her fissures glint, vitreous, under the rapidly expanding light. Here, facing North looking across the estuary, mercury pools. I twisted my ankle in this spot last year, a symptom of my impatience.

Octobers first patinas have scattered across the beach.

Soon to be swallowed, they  
shiver, fearful of the ravenous  
ascent of the 11 o'clock tide.

On this side of Big Ox, shards of  
painted pottery are trapped in  
her wrinkles. The sky blooms  
over Fife, the King's unsettled  
crown. Pink-fingered, I place my  
palm on the Earth's back and  
feel the waves run over the back  
of my hand. The blood rushes  
under my skin.

# The Human Clay

By Matt Francey

I feel so strongly that an artist must be breathing deeply and it must alter him, taking time to stretch your whole sensibility.

I felt shame dictate the paintings  
the beauty I feed off  
exploration of desire  
unhappiness love language life  
and why?

Interviews with contemporary  
artist's, contemporary lovers,  
artists

nourished by passions

cavorting sensual visceral  
elements

## TWISTED FORMS

and his despairs cite human  
condition... drinking through  
creativity

“Quoted”

feelings of desperation and  
unhappiness are emotional  
pleas for

help...recognizable figural  
nuanced abstract erotic  
expressionism.

It was dark

I walked forever...high amongst  
the nature of it.

Francis Bacon. I work paint



Image descriptions: an A7 zine  
with red arrows, text and images

of Francis Bacon is shown in various forms. One image shows the zine in a transparent cover with an embossed label reading “I work paint”

Ones to watch...

**McNish** is a home-grown poet and performer, now living between Cambridge and Glasgow. Her most recent publication *Virgin* blows apart the stereotypes, shackles and shame associated with her anthology's title with gumption and panache. She has a host of accolades to her name including the kudos -worthy "first poet to record at Abbey Road"!

Read more at:

<https://www.holliepoetry.com/>

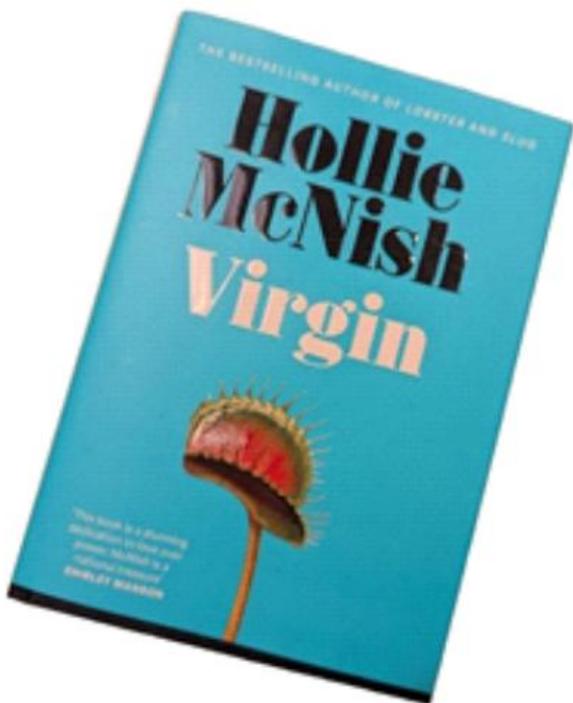


Image description: a book with a light blue cover features a Venus flytrap and reads Hollie McNish, Virgin

**We** have partly included Michael Pedersen as he is Hollie's partner- and there's nothing cuter than a poetry couple- but also because he is an awesome writer, performer and poet. Not only this but he is The Edinburgh Makar, Edinburgh University Writer in Residence, co-founded Neu! Reekie! (which produces international literary events) and he is... The Cat Prince!

Find out more at:

<https://www.michaelpedersen.co.uk/>

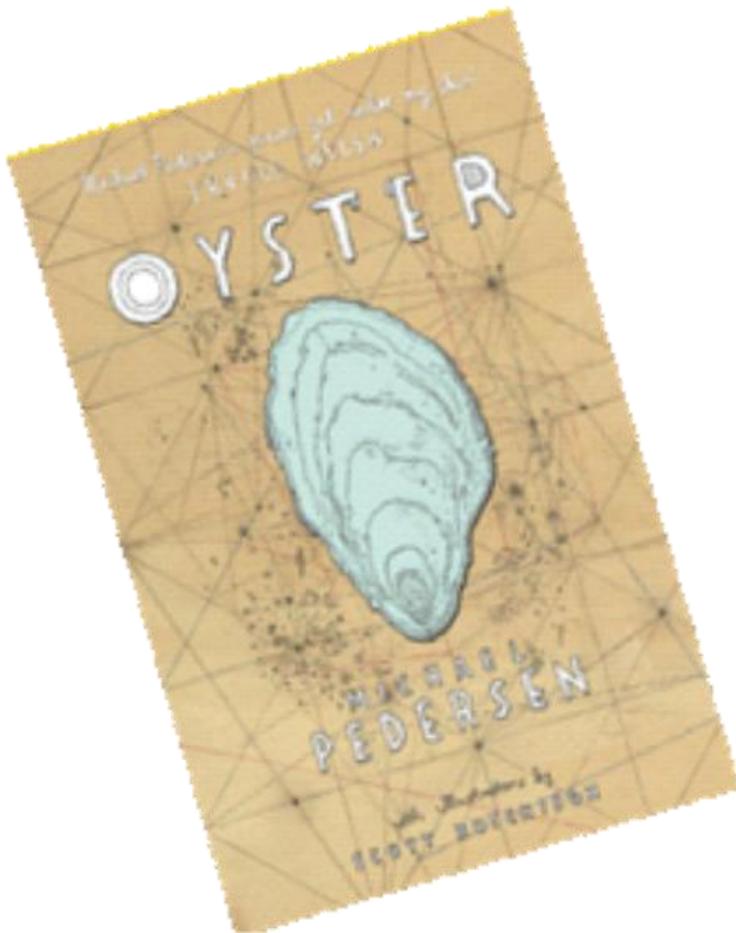


Image description: a book with a beige cover features a drawing of an oyster and reads Oyster

Michael Pedersen with  
illustrations by Scott Hutchison

Other Poetry stuff to read and  
do!

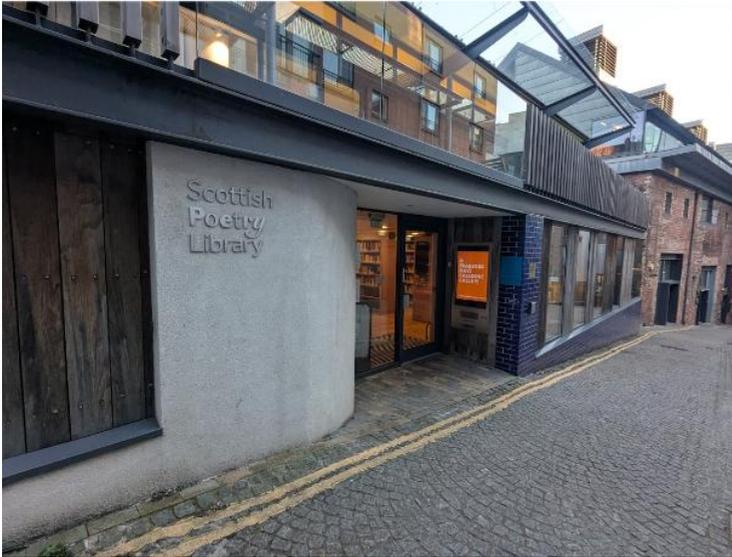


Image description: A concrete  
glass and wood- two-storey  
building sits on a cobbled street.  
A metal sign reads 'Scottish  
Poetry Library'

# **Scottish Poetry Library Podcast**

Scottish Poetry library has a long running podcast available on Podbean.com with many different poetic works available. Recently featuring Thomas A Clark's latest poetry collection 'Thrums' and works by Juana Adcock discussed by Samuel Tongue.

<https://www.scottishpoetrylibrary.org.uk/>

# **Push the Boat Out in collaboration with Scotland's Literary Festival**

For the past 8 months  
organisation have been hosting  
an open mic night at the Inspace  
Gallery with opportunity to sign  
up and attend for 2026 featuring  
many poets.

[https://pushtheboatout.org/rock-  
the-boat/](https://pushtheboatout.org/rock-the-boat/)

# **The Moth Magazine**

'The Moth' is a magazine that host annual awards such as 'The Moth Poetry prize' sand 'The Moth Nature Writing Prize' with their magazine available to purchase online featuring many Scottish poems for adults and children.

<https://www.themothmagazine.com/>

# Mslexia

Mslexia is a non-profit organisation focussed on helping to empower female writers and get their work recognised. They offer a quarterly magazine championing established and completely new women's writing alongside competitions and development opportunities.

<https://mslexia.co.uk/>



# Gutter Magazine

A scottish publication by many Scotland based poets and written. Recently featuring Peter Mackay's poem 'Duanag mu dheidhinn Dòbhrain' available in Scottish Gaelic and English.

<https://www.guttermag.co.uk/>

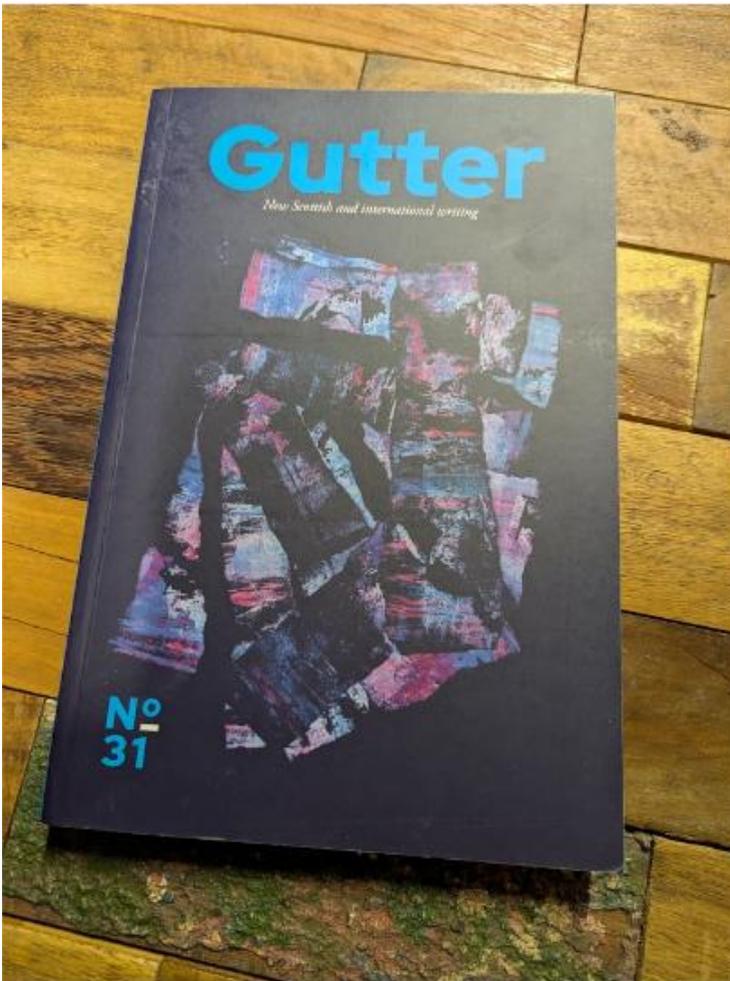


Image description: A book with a dark blue cover and blue white and purple abstract artwork reads “Gutter, New Scottish and International Writing, No 31”

Blank for your own writing...

Back page image description:

A photo of a blue, almost cloudless sky has a vapour trail

The page reads:

Capture is a brand new, artist-run publication dedicated to promoting visual arts and writing. Launched in October 2025 the project marked an exciting new strand of the HND Contemporary Art Practice Course (CAPetc...) Professional Practice and Exhibition Studies programme, which aims to provide a platform

for new, emerging, and  
established voices alike.

Find out more at  
[captureartetc.com](http://captureartetc.com)

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Find out more at: <https://captureartetc.com/> or scan

