

TIME-KEEPERS



A POETRY KIT PROJECT – EDITED BY JIM BENNETT

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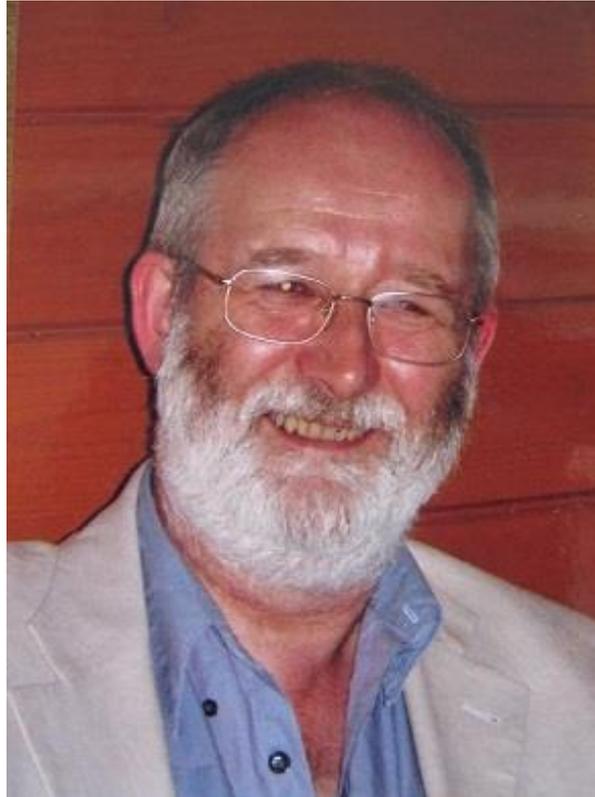
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JAMES BELL



James Bell - is Scottish and now lives in France where he contributes non-fiction and photography to an English language journal. Widely published in print and online poetry publications. He has two poetry collections to date *the just vanished place* and *fishing for beginners* and a third collection *Here at the End of the World* forthcoming from Lapwing Poetry.

JAMES BELL

time flies

*(Time flies like an arrow; fruit
flies like a banana)*

Anthony G. Oettinger

bananas come in bunches
apples can't fly like a banana
drop in their own time

raspberries and strawberries
and their ilk get in a jam
go nowhere

all fruit has its season
arrows never go that far
time never stops

JAMES BELL

time after time the cherries were fine

until one day
after being dipped too long in hot water
their plastic container melts
though the cherries stay well rounded
so lips can mould around them
in a slight pout as teeth bite into the stone
in a soft reverence for the fruit
savour in the mouth for a time then
the hard centre is indelicately spat out
 springs a smile
 of cherry juice on redder lips
the next is still warm
 cherry trees take a long time
to grow - first to blossom
 viewed
for days of admiration among
many others
the fruit in its own season
packed in small plastic containers –
still better loose
 to caress first in cold water

JAMES BELL

c'est la vie dans le monde des araignée

you see the spider creep along
under the kitchen cabinet –
calculate there is time
to get the fly swatter and effect
its execution
one of those long-legged ones
that doesn't go at great speed
its web making concentrated and deliberate
all over
especially where
you don't expect it to build -
evidence that spiders see their world
much different to us –
decide on a stay of execution
and see the spider hirple
round the cabinet corner
and head for a darker place
where time no longer exists
and you couldn't and wouldn't want to go

MARY BRAY



Mary Bray hails from Norfolk in the United Kingdom. She is a writer and silk painter. She has three self published books on prose and poetry written under the name Samantha Beardon. She also has had work published in several anthologies.

MARY BRAY

Moon crossed star.

He stands braced, knees slightly bent
to counteract the movement
from the ship's deck
the cold icy wind viciously, adds
its voice to the buzz
of the ropes and rigging,
whilst the crash
of a breaking wave sends shivers
through ship and man.

Night sprawls over the horizon
softening its edges
the stars spread like dancing dust motes
the gibbous traversing heaven.

For the first time in four days
he sights the constellations,
he finds the big dipper, the kite
and Arcturus the bright star
which will be crossed by the moon.

He has used his innate knowledge
of wind and tide
combined with the ships speed
to estimate his ships position
but he knows this is a wild approximation.
Now he can get an accurate fix.

Horizon, the rising moon and Arcturus
a blessed triumvirate, he can measure
angles and distances and calculate
the time in Greenwich
then he can pinpoint his longitude
All he needs is accurate time.

LESLEY BURT



Lesley Burt's poetry has been successful in competitions and published in magazines over many years, including: *The Interpreter's House*, *Prole*, *Sentinel Literary Quarterly*, *The Butchers Dog* and *Tears in the Fence*; also online, including by the *Poetry Kit*, *The Poetry Shed*, *Algebra of Owls*, *The Blue Nib* and *Ink*, *Sweat and Tears*

LESLEY BURT

requirements for clocks

if planning ahead demands
consistent observation and recording
of recurring seasons first map the heavens

where stars at sunrise and twilight
predict seasons for drought flood
when crops will grow or die

then make a case for mean time
engineer cogs gong pendulum
beat and chime notion into noise

set pointers to mark and circle
at constant speed count numbers
equidistant on the edge of a dial

and exert a name over their movement
clockwise as if the sun might take
an alternative direction

BOB COOPER



Bob Cooper's latest collection is *Everyone Turns*, published by Pindrop Press in 2017. See: <http://www.pindroppress.com/books/Everyone%20Turns.html> He lives on the Wirral in the UK.

BOB COOPER

Between the new and the old

It's late. They watch their telly:
a floodlit tower, lit clock face,
hear - as everyone cheers on the screen,
raises glasses to the camera,
hugs and kisses cheeks -
the first midnight chime of Big Ben.

Then the remote's lifted,
 slowly aimed,
 firmly pressed:
a blankly darkened silent screen.

Soon heads touch their settee's wings
while they hear their own soundless music
when they stood elsewhere in familiar rooms
and, here, now, silent laughing ghosts appear,
mingle, lean forward, almost touch them

until one of their phones calls out its tune
- the ghosts hover, wait to disappear
but listen, expecting one of them
to talk, come to life -

but it's a drunken voice.
*Hello, I'm at
 a party. Someone's
passed out, dropped
 their phone - it was still
ringing. Happy New
 Year. Who are you?*
Names are exchanged.

Then silence. Silence
and the noise of their large clock
that's almost wound down.
Out of time it whirrs, pauses,
bongs its slow bongs.

BOB COOPER

Outside St. George's Hall, Liverpool, Midsummer Night

Under tall streetlights when the city's clocks strike twelve
Victoria and Albert, who puts on his top hat, dismount,
watch as forty figures step from the friezes: many naked, some children,
women gathering their drapes so they look more decent when they move,
then look back, help others clamber, stand near them on the cobbles

where they grin, hug, talk, then hold hands, form a circle
and dance lightly in the almost warm darkness, moving faster, faster,
then, out of breath, stop. Laughter. Some sit on steps, cuddle then kiss,
before, in harmony, they all sing what they've known for centuries,
gentle songs at first, then the bawdy lyrics that belong to tonight,

then many simply stand, stare at the moon, name dimly-lit stars and planets
or point to buildings, floodlit silhouettes they feel are familiar again
while Victoria and Albert smile, stroll between them. She takes off her jacket,
gives it to a woman who's shivering. He gives his hat to a bashful man
to cover what his hands try to hide as everyone saunters around

until they hear the clock's strike. They count in unison –
again, twelve times. And at the last chime become solemn,
walk slowly back to their wall, climb up to where they belong
to be gazed at in sunlight by those who'll never know their unsilent hour,
their bodies again unmoving, their faces unmoved.

published 2020 in The Broken Spine – see: <https://thebrokenspine.co.uk/about/>

JAN HARRIS



Jan Harris's poems have appeared in various journals including *Acumen*, *Envoi*, and *Poetry Wales*, and in anthologies, including several e-books published by Poetry Kit. Jan was awarded third place in the Wales Poetry Award, 2019. Her first collection, *Mute Swans on the Cam*, was published in July 2020 by Oversteps Books.

JAN HARRIS

Timekeepers

in rings around heartwood
trees keep time
larch to lime

earlywood's light
latewood's dark
aspens to larch

rings grow wide
in warm wet weather
oak to elder

resin and scars
date forest fires
gum to sequoia

carbon-14
charts solar flares
yew to pear

frost rings date
eruption on Thera
fir to juniper

in rings around heartwood
trees keep time
teak to pine

FRANCESCA HUNT



Francesca Hunt is a retired Chemistry teacher, living in Mid-Wales. She is an enthusiastic writer, who enjoys writing Poetry, short stories and is currently working on a couple of novels.

She has had success in several Poetry competitions and has had Flash Fiction published.

Where Time is Stored

Endless dates and times float on currents of air
before my eyes. I stand in an office building
in front of a Paternoster going down,
and a modern air-conned lift for up- *staff use only*.

Rickety wood takes me down, I jump
off quickly on the twentieth floor,
grab my ears, explosions, bombing and flares,
memories of the twin-towers haunt.

There are no windows, there is no sense.
I hear the click of nazi boots, and Hitler's
monotonic bite. Choking on the smell
of burning flesh, I crouch and shake.

On the nineteenth floor, my body flows to Swan Lake,
I smile, our first date- our ballet. Two floors down,
a country gent rests in the shade of a tree,
waiting for ripe apples to fall. Eureka- he's got it.

Head swimming, jet-lagged without flying,
I look at my watch, the digital date
flurries madly. I creep past a chap painting
the Sistine ceiling, and jump on the Paternoster

back to the twenty first. After scouring for Exit
signs, I sneak into the 'staff only' and press 22.
Neon lights flash: *Public access to the future
is denied, please disembark... Public access to...*

FRANCESCA HUNT

The disintegration of Persistent Persistence

*A dishcloth of time wrapped over winter's bough
drops tears.
Yesterday's mountains and pastures dream.*

*Wading through high water, I kick the elephant,
slam the door on crumbling brickwork,
and leave.*

*After: The Persistence of Memory (1931) and The Disintegration of The Persistence of
Memory (1952-1954) by Salvador Dali*

MARTHA LANDMAN



Martha Landman writes in Adelaide, South Australia where she is a member of Friendly Street Poets. Her work has appeared online and in anthologies in the UK, US, Australia and South Africa.

MARTHA LANDMAN

Delirium of an Early-October Commuter

*never run after a man or a bus
there will always be another one*

and here at Stop 9 on lower South Road

I'm not waiting but wishing

for the bus to take me from this wind howl

take me to the city streets are wind tunnels

I see it in the distance the bus on the other side of the train line

five minutes it will take five minutes

for the intersection to clear traffic like crossfire

westbound cars spit out from underneath the overpass the light changes

trains pass cars their eyes bright disappear into the underpass

at last the 8.48 arrives at 8.53

the driver sneezes blows his nose

if waiting isn't time and time isn't waiting is waiting for no one

and time doesn't evaporate like water

but like missed opportunities or 24 hours

until I get to Stop 9 again a lone figure in the wind

not waiting but wishing

MARTHA LANDMAN

It wouldn't add up

As old as her tongue, not her teeth
Mother's response to the question of age.

*Never was never accepted.
That's a long time, she'd say
take six months off.*

Her warning to a sour face:
*If the clock strikes 12 now
your face will stay like that.*

Accident or not, a broken mirror
accrued seven years of misery

while wait until your father comes home
lengthened the day exponentially.

I was doomed to fail Math
with an education like that.

DAPHNE MILNE



Daphne Milne lives in Fremantle, Western Australia. She writes poems, flash fiction, short stories and is currently working on a flash novella and a collection of poetry. Her work is published in print/on line in magazines and anthologies internationally. Her pamphlet *The Blue Boob Club* is published by Indigo Dreams <https://www.indigodreams.co.uk/daphne-milne/4594486684>. She is interviewed regularly on local radio, most recently at <https://fremantleshippingnews.com.au/2020/07/07/poets-paddock-daphne-milne/>

DAPHNE MILNE

Magic

Time is longer after dark.
At 3 a.m. before the sun
has crawled over the horizon
each minute stretches into ten.
You can live a whole lifetime
between 3 and 4 a.m.

DAPHNE MILNE

**Family album - Grange-over-Sands
Between the duckpond and the sea**

Those ducks must be the descendants
of the ones Grandmother knew
they look just like their forbears.

The faces in the photos look much the same
only the frocks differentiate
four generations of women.

Photos change from sepia
to black and white, through colour
until the final digital image

the fifth generation
wears shorts and teeshirts
clutches bags of breakfast crusts.

There's a smell of rain, duckshit,
the saltiness of rock pools,
damp sand, decaying dogfish

gossiping gulls drown out the sound
of passing trains, the incoming tide
a scent of damp pine trees overwhelms.

The engine driver waves at children
on the promenade. They wave back.
The past — another and a present country.

DAPHNE MILNE

Time slips sideways

My grandsons know nothing
of clock-springs or winders.
Hands curl beneath soft cheeks
eyelids flicker like digital watches
they dream of dinosaurs
time rolled back a million years.

Half a world away I'm making lunch.
Time started here in 1788
brought from the Old World
to a world that's older still
the continuum ignored
the dream time broken.

MARIA NORTH



Maria North is a retired psychotherapist who was happy to move from London to Lincoln in 2017. She has always loved finding clarity in writing, whether creative, academic, or work-related. She has ventured into self-publishing, and has had a leaflet published with Poetry Kit.

MARIA NORTH

Slowtime

Night stretches
beside someone else's snores
Streetlight off at twelve,
sensor light on then off at one -
the fox again

Shall I swap the lampshades round
Why does that clock tick so loud
Why is it still only half past three, when

all that's gone has gone
Fruitless,
these attempts to listen to the music
and keep time -

can't beat it;
it has run away with me
even though tonight it hardly moves

One day
forever closer
it will run away without me
but not tonight -

tomorrow never comes
then does

The peaches are missing
from our Morrisons online order
We never get everything

MARIA NORTH

Wrinkles in Time

Another Big Bang.
The millionth human race.
Father Time yawns,
upturns a creaking hourglass.

Same old flash floods and plagues,
famines, wars, ceaseless injustices.
A two-minute speck of silence, poppy-strewn,
a stolen twenty minutes as the gentlemen please
tilt heads and glasses to unnatural angles
to drain the last drops of the night.

He registers mild amusement
at the revelations of one Albert E.
Nothing is absolute, eh?
So he's worked it out again.
About time.

But for Albert,
it is a source of wonder
to discover that time and space,
the fabric of the universe,
each atom, every sub-atomic particle,
yes, everything is relative.

He deduces
(though he cannot quite believe it)
that if he travels fast enough,
beyond the speed of light
there is a different kind of time –
he can arrive back where he started
before he has been.

(Cont)

MARIA NORTH

(Cont)

Albert makes a call
to the Mistresses of Infinite Possibility
(the Masters, as usual, are otherwise engaged,
watching Intergalactic Football
and debating the state of nations at half-time).
Humbly requests to undertake a journey
round the curve of time and space
to the farthest reaches of the universe and back.
Piece of cake, they say.
So off he goes.

And back he comes. It seems no time at all.
Albert is perturbed to find
his hair is no longer grey,
and (unlike the fabric of space)
he has no wrinkles.
He fears he's going mad -
which is not surprising :
he hasn't come up with his theory as yet.

Another war has broken out on Mars;
Earth has the plague again.

A Great Grandmother clock chimes her stately hours
as Father Time nods off over a glass of port.

STUART NUNN



Stuart Nunn is a retired college lecturer living in South Gloucestershire. He belongs to two poetry groups, beside the PK List, where he has lurked and contributed for several years. A poem of his is currently to be seen in South 62. He is secretary of the local athletics club and works as a starter, when the virus allows.

STUART NUNN

Belyaev's foxes

Eyes flash yellow, teeth snarl and bite.
He chooses the quiet vixen, puts her
to the dog fox that's merely sullen.

Generations pass up the evolutionary tree.
He follows the chosen characteristic,
recapitulating primitive hunter-gatherers.

Unlooked for, colour changes, fur stripes,
ears flop, eyes turn winsome,
lose the memory of snow on the taiga
tails wag for approval. Heel, boy!

GRANT van WINGERDEN



Grant van Wingerden is a poet and song lyricist from Wialki. He lives down among the tea trees and waterfalls of Hazelbrook in the Blue Mountains, west of Sydney. Grant is a long time member of the Poetry Kit and is glad to be back and active on the list.

GRANT van WINGERDEN

Just in Time

I turned in time
I turned off taps
I learned a line
in tested traps

The current that passed overhead
the meaner words I might have said
The wiser ways to win the prize
the proper flex to exercise

The deeds I didn't as agreed
the mere nod to a near need
Consequent cancelling of consequence
an offering afforded to avoid offence

I dodged bull, let's say
hid my Id away
smothered smirks unqueried quirks
inner weigh whatever works

A split second
ready reckoned
time tested
I'm bested