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London Time

Poetry from London's time banks

nef is an independent think-and-do tank that inspires and demonstrates real economic well-being.

We aim to improve quality of life by promoting innovative solutions that challenge mainstream thinking on economic, environmental and social issues. We work in partnership and put people and the planet first.



nef (the new economics foundation) is a registered charity founded in 1986 by the leaders of The Other Economic Summit (TOES), which forced issues such as international debt onto the agenda of the G7/G8 summit meetings. It has taken a lead in helping establish new coalitions and organisations such as the Jubilee 2000 debt campaign; the Ethical Trading Initiative; the UK Social Investment Forum; and new ways to measure social and economic well-being.



London Time

Poetry from London's time banks

This publication is a collaboration between the London Time Bank network, the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust, and **nef**



London Time Bank is a network of time banks for London, launched in 2001. It is managed by **nef** with support from the Bridge House Trust, City Parochial Foundation, the Big Lottery and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

London Time Bank would like to thank everyone who has supported the publication of this poetry book. Thank you to those who are taking part in poetry writing sessions throughout London time banks.



Andrew Carnegie gave £2 million to create the UK Trust, which bears his name. Through wise investments, grants of more than £24 million have been made over the last 87 years for, among other things, opening public libraries, providing church organs, developing village halls and supporting community needs in the arts, heritage and social welfare. Carnegie UK Trust has provided funds to publish this book and supports poetry in time banks in London.



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Foreword

Poetry, and a thriving community of new poets and poetry readers, is just one of the many unpredicted positive outcomes to have emerged from the London Time Bank.

Poetry has always accompanied time banking. When the first time bank was launched in London, in 2001, poetry writing was one of the first activities to earn time credits. Poems commonly feature in time bank opening ceremonies and celebrations. A group of children from Angell Town Time Bank in Brixton even took over the Old Vic theatre for a day to perform a drama based on their own poems. For some reason (one we certainly never predicted) time banks seem to attract poetry!

And from this unexpected juxtaposition emerged the London Time Bank Poetry Project. It has been an enormous success and has involved people in writing and creativity who have never done anything like it before.

I am enormously proud of the role **nef** has played in launching this project, but it would be unfair and inaccurate to claim full credit for its success. This has been down to the hard work of the London Time Bank team, the tireless commitment of individual time bank co-ordinators around London, the imagination and effort of the tutors and, above all, the brave leap taken by so many individual time bank participants: expressing themselves in poetry, often for the first time – and finding it had power. Some of that power shines through these poems.

Time banks have a proven record of transforming lives, and this project has been no exception. The poems in this book are the proof of the role that time banks can play in helping people to support each other in seizing opportunities and taking on new challenges. But they also show that poetry, far from being an 'unpopular art', is part of the living reality of London today.

Stewart Wallace

Executive Director

nef



The London Time Bank Poetry Project

Between October 2003 and October 2004, people of all ages and backgrounds, with a wide variety of personal circumstances, were encouraged to get together to write, critique, perform and put forward their poetry and prose for publication. This book is the result. It includes contributions from participants of nine time banks in the London area.

For many participants, the experience of creative writing in small, informal settings, supported by experienced poets proved to be invaluable.

London Time Bank is the network of time banks operating across London. Time banks can currently be found in 14 London boroughs, in schools, youth clubs, on housing estates, in faith settings, doctors' surgeries and other health settings.

A time bank is a way of building community by helping members of the community to support each other and develop new skills and confidence. Being part of a time bank means that you can learn new skills, such as how to use a computer, how to write poetry or improve your English. You can share your skills with other people: bake someone a cake, collect medication for a housebound person or simply call someone to check that they are okay. You can ask for some help for yourself: get that bit of guttering fixed, have your garden looked after whilst you are on holiday or take part in yoga classes. Time banking is about two-way volunteering, the give and take that is the foundation of vibrant communities.

I hope everyone will get as much pleasure from reading this book as we got making it.

Our time bank co-ordinators: Suzana Atanaskovic, Levi Clarke and Ann Shine, Maria Duha and Urmi Nurjahan, Julia King and Tom Roth, Shelley McKowen, Vicky Micalef, Olive Lewis, Alison Paule, Sherelle Ramus, Peter Roberts.

Our poets and creative writing tutors: Barrington Fritz, Delroy McLean, Stephen Micalef, Dave Neita, Emily Pedder.

Our time bank member poets: Kate Bishop, Peter Daly, Doris Micalef, Christopher Micalef, P.J. Carmody, Maria Drury, Belinda M. Harries, Diana E. Cox, Mollie Hattam, several anon's, Iris Brown, S.I. Molla, Anita Francisco, Eppie Carreda, Kathy Randall, Norah Platt, Terry Bently (deceased), Elsa Pascale, Joy Swaby, Mary Murphy, Rev. Desrie Ramus, David Greaves, Marva Donaldson, Marcia Williams, Jackie Odell, Michelle Roberts, Theresa Dunphy, Mary Stopp, Flo Knight, Rod Harrison, Simon Tyler, Mavis Sayer, Sheila Armstrong, Joan Brookes, Eugene Thompson, Audrey Parker.

Karen Lyon

Project manager

What the time banks did

The poetry project was extremely slow to start, but once the poetry bug bit us, it was something we couldn't stop, even if we had wanted to. We learnt a lot and had fun along the way. We encouraged people who had never thought they would enjoy this sort of thing to explore a new area and we inspired those who had already written poetry to develop their work.

We created space where it felt safe to explore own life experiences. Participants were really committed, both to working in their groups and to work taken home.

Because of the many different people involved, each time bank ran their local poetry projects in their own, unique way.

Angell Town Time Bank ran a series of three workshops in the autumn of 2003. This established group gathered and selected poems for inclusion in *The Angell Town Book of Poetry*. A selection of 40 poems written by children, teenagers and adults from the Angell Town Estate were included. They launched their poetry book during their Christmas celebration event, distributing it to every household on the estate.

Cares of Life Time Bank ran a series of three, monthly, all-day sessions that were part of Community Activity Days. The project was specifically targeted to black users of South London and Maudsley Health Trust services and local community members. The sessions focused on nurturing presentation and performance techniques. They used games, played with random words and wrote group poems to build confidence. Whilst the first session only attracted 5 participants, the last one attracted 25!

Time for Change Time Bank, within a drop-in day centre for resettled homeless people, ran a series of four, monthly sessions. Some participants were already familiar with writing poetry. The workshops, whilst fun, managed to confront serious and difficult issues. On National Poetry Day 2003 centre users held a celebration of poetry. Over Christmas the centre was decorated with the participants' poems mounted onto backings they had created to illustrate the season. The Burns Night (Day) was great fun, too. Tam O'Shanter hats and wigs were worn; haggis, neaps and tatties, and Irn Bru were on offer; and the Scotsmen (and others) read the poems of their bard. Sadly, the time bank closed in June 2004 when The Lambeth Walk-in Centre service was withdrawn by West London Mission.

West Euston Time Bank ran monthly poetry workshops with poetry readings performed to audiences of 10–25 within the Third Age Project. On National Poetry Day in October 2003 and 2004, celebrations of Black History Month and National Poetry Day were combined to include traditional stories, poems and art of refugees from Somalia who make up a significant membership of the local community and the time bank. They established links with the local library to widen access. Participants are hoping to publish their own pamphlet of poems soon.

Deptford and New Cross Time Bank ran poetry workshops fortnightly from a variety of locations near the time bank base: the local community centre, library and Pepys Resource Centre. The group had a feel of “extended family” as the time bank co-ordinator and their resident poet are siblings and the ages of those taking part ranged from 8 to 68. On National Poetry Day 2004, they performed their work at their local community centre.

Rushey Green Time Bank held their poetry workshops in the waiting room at the GP’s surgery where this time bank is based. People attended the sessions or wrote poetry at home to share with the group. The people in this group were already writing poetry and these regular sessions provided a forum to share their work, offer constructive criticism and support, and give them the opportunity to build confidence around performing on stage. Poets from this group performed poetry at Lewisham People’s Day in July and at Moonbow Jakes café / bar on Catford High Street on National Poetry Day 2004. The group are thinking of publishing a pamphlet of their poems, inspired by The Beatrice Trust, who publish a pamphlet called Poets in the Waiting Room.

Aylesbury Estate Time Bank created links with local youth by working with Connexions. The workshops were mainly attended by teenage boys and the core group of five participants wrote “rap” with the support of the time bank co-ordinator. They are planning to use sound recording facilities available to them to create music to put their words to. The real challenge in these meetings was that of talking through the subject matter presented in the poems, of which a selected few have been submitted for publication in this book.

Hoxton Sure Start Time Bank offered six, monthly workshops to parents eligible for Sure Start funded support. The parents who worked together on poetry pieces have formed supportive relationships that have benefited other aspects of their lives. One participant was willing to carry on the organisation of the poetry meetings but the support to do this was absent after the temporary contract for managing the time bank ended. The Sure Start time bank was without a broker from April 2004 to October 2004.

Mildmay Time Bank chose to focus on creative writing rather than poetry and the learning was delivered over a six-week period. A group of eight students, from a wide variety of backgrounds, covered the fundamentals – building characters, writing dialogue and creating a sense of place. Even the students who were most challenged by the actual writing were able to express things they had not thought possible. Emily Pedder, the tutor, had this to say: *“This was something very noticeable in this group: getting together each week and talking about their writing and, by implication, their lives, was a very important part of the experience.”*

Breakdown

It's the year two thousand and fifty-one
Britain's covered in colossal lichen
And the grey squirrels have won
Above us swoops the two-headed crow
Shabby scavenger – harbinger of woe
Searching for food where no crops are sown
Jutting from its ribcage sticks sick bones.
The temperature rises annually by three degrees
All that's left are a few Sitka trees
The rainforests are mere woods
We no longer produce manufactured goods
Deformed changelings gnaw at dead weeds
Mindless, un-remembering the terrible deed
Dotty hermits on mountains gibber their dirge
The ice-caps melted – Venice submerged
The primulas are dead under a moon blood red
Engirdled with glowing rings like Saturn
Images of Christ are spat on
Sacrificial lambs are fattened
By vestal lasses pumping gasses
Winter brings yellow hazel catkins dangling from bare twigs
Sunburned with cancer, bald-headed mutants wear grass wigs
Mutterings of apple crop failure and ships drifting with dead sailors
Ladybirds have changed their spots
And food stores are spongy with mildew and rot
Greenhouse windows – smashed, splintered
Greenfly plagues rage this winter
Lice-covered leprotics yearn in the heat for snow up to their knees
Winter flower is out of step with the bees
Butterflies reckless tortoise shells emerge into hell
As the noise on the Geiger leaps another decibel
Hibernation to a wretched world of wilting suffocation
Gas-masked country rambler's creak and stare
Something odd happened, once scenic landscape flattened and bare
Dust rusts unused cars
Owners deranged with cold sore scars
Blaming others for the cataclysmic changes
Methane rains with a thunderclap from the clouds
Bodies of the dead wrapped in polyester shrouds
People chant at ineffectual masses

"Go away! Go away! Greenhouse gasses!"
Chlorofluorocarbons leave their indelible mark
The landscape denuded, irreversibly stark
Dogs walk backwards, hedgehogs bark
Stumbling over the abyss into the eternal dark.

Stephen Micallef
Deptford and New Cross Time Bank

Perfect Love

Love is a new born baby;
Tiny, kicking like a frog,
Peddling its arms anti-clockwise,
Ready for a haymaker,
Wrapped up in Santa's beard.
Its mother – hot, bothered,
Calculating her bewilderment,
Baby sucking a warm – cupped teat,
Sleeping already with green jowl
Monsters will not growl
They'll not bow
Not now

Rob Morrison

Missing You

I close my eyes to see you
I listen and then I hear you
In my photos I can see you
Memories of the fun we had
Keep me from being sad
Although I find I'm feeling bad
One day our paths will cross
Through someone else's loss

Maria Drury



Shakespeare's sonnet 18 Revised

Shall I compare thee to a tropical storm?
Thou art more violent and warm
You renew my life and clean my soul
You take my parts and make me whole
To compare thee to a storm is insane
Thou art the eye of the hurricane

Dave Neita



Love

To make you happy
My love
I shall bring seven colours
From the rainbow – paint you in seven colours
Seek out the pearls from the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean,
I will go to Heaven
To Bring the Elixir for your eternal life
But what I want only is your LOVE for me.

Or for the second thought
I shall love you without asking any return from you,
My satisfaction is only
To love you, love you,
Love you, you, you, you,
Where are you my LOVE?

Where are you?
Show me your beautiful face to me my love!

S.I. Molla

*“ This has opened my eyes and I am now able
to look at things in a new way ”*

Easter Eggs

Easter eggs
All chocolatey and sweet
Sharing with family and friends
Till we've had our fill
Expressing our love and affection
Remember Christ's resurrection

Kate Bishop



Car Auctions

In the compound there are a large number of cars standing
Waiting, until they go under the auctioneer's hammer.
When a truly horrible example is driven into the arena
You may well see people holding their noses
Or looking in another direction
In order to escape the smog-like substance coming from the car's exhaust.
Clearly the engine is in a poor state
And bidders are loathe to bid, fearing heavy bills.

While walking through the yard I came across an old car
Which I recognised as being an Austin Princess
And its appearance makes anyone viewing it form the opinion
That it had been dragged from a field.
The Princess of over fifty years old
And, despite her condition,
She is very rare and worth restoring.
In appearance she resembles a large old Bentley
And in her day had been very grand.
In another part of the yard is another rare car
Which I recognise as a Hillman California.
This is much smaller than the Princess
And looks to have come out of someone's garden
Where it must have stood for some years.
Not quite as old as the Princess but again,
Part of British motoring history.

I enjoy looking at old cars
And can only describe the experience as
Rather like meeting up with old friends.
I hope these old friends are soon in better health

Peter Daly





Scary Scary Being Adults

The word “adult” where did it come from?
Who decided that one, when we become adults?
What a scary sound it makes – ADULTS – Yuk
Responsibility, behaviour, bills, Yuk
I don't like that sound, Yuk.
Would much rather be called “nearly grown-ups”, so there is a silent Catch 22
So that if something doesn't go right, it's OK, 'cos we're nearly grown-ups
And we'll know better next time.
Adult, scary word of words.

Vicky Micallef



Spring

Spring, when the birds begin to twitter and sing
Where skylarks fly high on the wing
Squirrels scamper from tree to tree
Hanging on to branches as they flee
The fallen leaves that have died
How now mulched and fertilised
To see trees that once were bare
Now breathe life from the warmer air
Jasmine, forsythia, the catkins too
The pink and white of cherry and almond trees to view

The splendour of all
The different changing colours of green
Amongst the grass and down the paths
The bright yellow of the daffodils can be seen
On the banks, by the side of the road
The primroses and violets grow
And as far as the eye can see
Through woodlands too, the most magnificent carpet of the deepest blue.

Audrey Parker

Just The Ticket

On a lovely warm day,
When you've finished your lunch,
Pack the bag with the tartan rug.
Don't forget the mug,
And a few bananas in a bunch,
And then wend your way.

Where? To the pitch, on the common or green,
That's where people "that matter" are bound to be seen.

They've all got a ticket,
To watch the cricket.

And they've taken a picnic like us,
They're local and walked, and of sport they have talked,
But we've come here on the bus.

Which end shall we sit?
Shall we choose just that bit
Of grass, beneath the willow?
Put down that rug, give it a tug
And use your coat as a pillow.

The game gets started, and play goes well,
Gran's opened the thermos
I SO LOVE THAT SMELL

Tea from a thermos
Spells "cricket" for me
With Granny and Grandpa,
Who call me "their bee".

It never did rain,
It never was wet,
It was never a pain,
But you could always bet....

It was a lovely time out,
With no sight of a tout... 'cos

You just had your ticket
To watch the cricket.

Belinda Harries





“ After the class last week I got home and just wrote and wrote and wrote! ”

Regrets

Out-of-date sushi
Such a bargain
Cheap and delicious
Easy to eat
Slips down a treat
And then back up again.

Throbbing head
Churning stomach
Aching, acid throat
Gurgling guts
Fountains of fish
Regurgitated rice

Bacillus cereus
The added ingredient
Odourless
Tasteless
Colourless
Microscopic

Lurking in my treat
Not so good to eat
Sushi seafood
Now it's clear
Was not after all
Such a good idea

Diana E. Cox



Poems by Tracey, Iris, Suku and Spike

Children

They are important to me.
Their wide eyes and reaching fingers make me shy
Love and care and learning to let go
They should always be loved
I'll never give up on them.

Time Bank Member

My Son

I live for him
Precious
I like the turn of his neck
He's the future
Love him with all my heart

Iris Brown

Dancing

I like to throw myself in the air
And sing
I enjoy doing it, it keeps me fit
I feel young, energetic and sexy
When the dancing is over I just want to sleep

Time Bank Member

Laughing

Never too much
I do it a lot when drunk
Because it makes me feel happy
My belly shakes and my tongue is on fire
It cures the worst of pain

Time Bank Member





My Love Of Prayer

Each day that I wake and
Greet the dawning of a new day,
I pray
It's fair to say that
I love to pray.

I pray for health, strength,
Wisdom, knowledge and
Understanding.
Not just for myself
But for my children, who
I love, I also pray for she
With whom I am in love,
And all this I get
From my Father above.

I pray in the morning
Before I am fed
I pray in the night-time before
I go to bed.

But I some times
Just pray all times
Of the day.

But most of all I
Pray just to say
Thank you my Father
Who art in Heaven above
Thank you for this world
To which I am in love

Barrington Fritz



Prayer

Prayer is the way to be close to God,
No matter what your problem is,
It can be solved by means of your
Fervent prayer.

When you pray, make sure it comes
From your heart,
Close to God, for prayer comes from God
And it was only God who could have
Listened to our prayers
Could solve our problems.

Prayers conquered all,
Prayer is the best weapon
In our daily life.
You should make sure that
We should not miss our prayers
Everyday.

The more you pray, the more
You will be close to God.

Anita Francisco



Lucky Joy

My pet cat's name is Lucky Joy.
Whenever I come home from any appointment
He is always there to welcome me with his usual greeting 'MEOW, MEOW, MEOW!
Oh how I felt so relieved
So happy to get a hug, cuddle, stroke his silly hair
No matter how tired I am
Or how exhausted I am
No more pain nor sorrow within me
But joy, love, care
That's the best time of my life, with my cat
LUCKY JOY!

*Eppie Carreda
West Euston Time Bank*



Love

I love music,
All kinds of beautiful sounds;
Man made and natural.
Loud trumpets and quiet bird song.
The sound of wind in the trees;
People laughing wholeheartedly at a good joke
A male Welsh voice choir, singing from the heart
The 'whoosh' of waves hitting a pebble beach
Recordings of beautiful spoken Shakesperian speeches by someone like Sir Laurence Olivier
The harmony of a Cathedral choir,
The purring of a contented cat sleeping on my lap

I thank the God who gave me ears to hear.

Kathy Randle

6.30 in the morning – Regents Park

The lights come on one by one
Life in the city has just begun
Newsboys whistling, bringing the news
Hurry, hurry. No time to lose

Buses are moving, people are too
Rushing and racing to get in the queue
No time to stop or talk for a while
Too busy to chat or even to smile

Where do we rush to, what do we gain
Missing so much, just increasing the pain
One day we must stop this mad speeding rate
Sadly sometimes it is just too late

So enjoy life. Cut down on the race
Take it easy. Take second place
You see so much more if you're not in a hurry
So sit down. Relax. Be happy. Don't worry

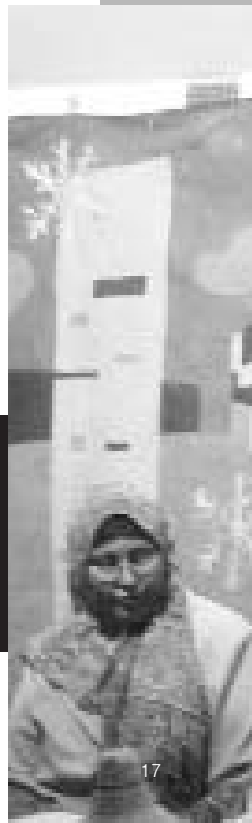
Norah Platt

It was for real, that was for sure

We were having a cup of tea
And she had just said goodbye to me
As she opened the door to go
A voice shouted "NO"
Go back in please
We were shaking at the knees
Looking through the window pane
I was wondering if it was a game
As we could see a policeman with a gun
But it was not The Bill having fun
It was for real, that was for sure
Then again she opened the door
But came back in, with a cop all in black
"Is there a door?" "Can I look out the back?"
"Yes" I said "no door but a wall"
He went out and stood (by the wall) looking very cool.
When he came in he said "it's alright –
Thanks, I hope I didn't give you a fright"
Then he was gone.
I'm still wondering what was going on.

Doris Micallef

" I'm currently suffering from agoraphobia, brought on by work-related stress; I have found by coming to the workshops I have gained confidence to leave the house, going to public places and meeting people; this has been has been extremely therapeutic "





Debt Collector

"Are we playing hide and seek?"

"Yeah, that's right" she whispered ever so softly

"So crawl into that cupboard, under the sink
and don't make a noise" – she was really frightened

But why? It's only a game
And you're my Mum

The banging at the door made the whole house shake
A gruff voice bellowed

"I know you're in there"
Her eyes reassuring, she whispered even softer
"It'll be alright"

"Don't worry – I'll be back" the stranger growled
through the letter box

We heard his steps and the doors of the lift
And she said "he didn't even count to 100!"

P.J. Carmody

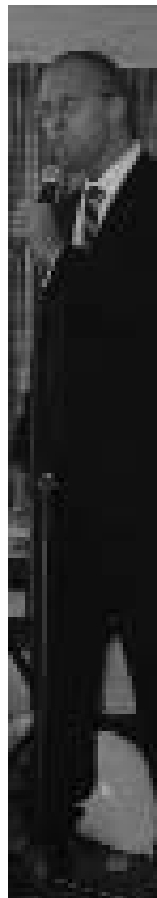
My Kitchen

I've got a teeny weeny kitchen,
Only measures ten by four,
There's a draining board, and stainless sink,
A new 'Everest' back door.

The washing machine and cooker,
Fit nicely in the space,
And when I want to drain the veg,
I turn without a pace.

It's ever so convenient,
And suits me to a 'T',
T'was built like that, in thoughtful days,
In eighteen ninety-three!

Mollie Hattam



My Mate and Politics

I don't understand politics; it's not a subject I'd choose
But my mate knows everything, so I asked him of his views
Come in, he said, sit down, then he poured two beers
I sat opposite him, I really was all ears.

Now politics is easy, says he, just divide the main parts by these,
There's Labour, and Conservative and the Liberal Democracy.
Labour leans to the Left, Conservatives to the Right
And the Liberals are in the middle, now can you see the light?

I pointed out that Labour was now 'New' Labour, is that the same thing?
Well yes, says he, but they lean a bit to the Right wing!
And the Conservatives? I asked, aren't they moving to the Left gradually?
Er, yes, he replied, that's the place they want to be.

But what about the Liberals – where is the middle ground?
Ah, he says, taking up the centre, that's where they'll be found.
I asked what 'Left' and 'Right' really means, 'cos I have never known...
It's either side of the Liberals, my mate confidently intoned.

So what about those parties that want to save the fox, the whale, and the pound?
Well, says my mate, it's to the Left, Right, and the middle, that they'll be found
And two more beers did appear, our glasses were re-filled,
I must say they went down well; they were nicely chilled.

Maybe I should vote Independent, or for the Green Party, or Communist
I asked my mate where these were, on his Left, Right, and middle list,
You can't pigeonhole all parties to the Left, middle or Right, he whinges,
There are some parties that are on what we call 'the fringes'.

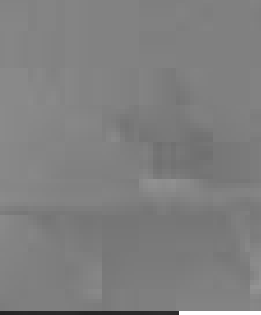
On the fringes of what? I did persist, for I was keen to know...
That's where the, er, non-aligned political parties go
I had some doubt now in my mates' knowledge of our political system,
But two more beers I nicked from his fridge, I don't think that he missed 'em!

I asked, why there is only one speaker in the House of Commons,
'cos they don't want stereo (A good answer among a lot of wrong-uns)
This House of Lords, I asked my mate, what exactly are they for?
My mate finished his beer, looked at me, and admitted he wasn't sure.

Thus an hour, it passes, we've got two empty glasses, and of politics I'm none the wiser,
I'd have learnt no more, If we'd shut the fridge door, and guzzled instead Tizer!
It was getting late, as I said to my mate, I'm not gonna vote anymore
My mate nodded his head, went off to bed, and quietly I closed his front door.

Terry Bently (deceased)





My Stick

You beat me with my walking stick
You do not listen when I speak
You will not therefore know my truth
If you seek not any further proof.



Hit me
You hit me with my walking stick
Below the belt
Where I am weak.

You berate me for not walking faster
You're barely tolerable as my measured steps falter
You tongue-lash me for not being fitter and on opening my mouth
You shout, 'DON'T BICKER!'

You stride length-wise across my life
And when you speak, you've decided what
I'm supposed in silence to bear.
Sure I would, sure I did
When I knew not better
But now, now that I've been reliably informed
I possess enough to know
This unequal situation
Must come to an end.

I'm wresting control, I'm investing in me
With the aid of my stick
Propelling forward I'll be
Onward and upward will I fly
And even though the journey be slow
With my stick I'll forward go.
Come stick, come brush past me
As together we'll our companion be
Come stick, come stick by me
A journey into the unknown
Together we'll agree.

Elsa Pascale



“ To have been inspired, initially, at the poetry group run by time bank led me to write a poem to say thank you to the trainers who ran a course I attended, which led me to read this poem to course participants at The South London and Maudsley Trust’s corporate training day which led me to help staff to be able to better help support mental health service users in their care ”

Ageism, Ageism, Ageism

There’s a storm about Ageism
Roaming all over the town
Too old to be employed
Too old for practically everything
But never too old to pay the bills
And never too old to be attacked.
Ageism, Ageism, Ageism

I’d only just left the shop
With my strap bag on my back
When I was viciously attacked
And flattened to the ground.

They took my bag with all I had
My arms and legs were shattered
My heart was saddened for many years
But when my parts were healed
And my heart was back intact...
I used my pass to Granville baths
And there I learnt to swim and exercise my limbs.

And now if ever I am attacked
By a dirty, rotten crook
I’ll show him a thing or two.
Ageism, Ageism, Ageism.

Joy Swaby



The portentous lily

I came into this world with the stain of original sin upon my soul

I was baptised when I was three weeks old
Crying as the christening waters welcomed me
Wrapped in white robes through which the
Translucent innocence of my soul radiated

I made my first confession when I was six
Stumbling nervously over my act of contrition
Scared of all the sins I had yet to commit
Wondering just how forgiving my God would be

I made my first communion when I was seven
Walking up the aisle in my white dress and veil
Excited about being a bride of Christ
Marrying into a religion I had yet to understand

I was confirmed when I was eleven
Choosing my own special middle name
Weighed down by thoughts of being grown up
Deciding to live my life as a Christian adult

I was married when I was twenty eight
Promising before God to uphold that holy union
Enveloped in the perfume of iridescent lilies
Rejoicing in knowing only death could do us part

I am divorced now at forty-one
Remembering the vows taken and promises made
My dress stained by the lilies' stamen
Portending the failure of the institution I so firmly believed in

Mary Murphy



“ Being of advanced years and recently bereaved I particularly enjoyed meeting other people and the informal atmosphere ”

Why do we challenge

Young man, young woman
Who lives life on the edge
Young generation, a threat to their nation
You see the car coming
Yet you stand still
Challenging them to stop
What if their brakes should fail?

Eugene Thompson

To walk uprightly

To walk uprightly,
and truthfully speaking the truth at all times
not forgetting the creator and our saviour Jesus Christ
who has brought us salvation
and gave his life as a ransom for our sins.
So we look forward to him coming.

Rev. Desrie Ramus

To make a difference

Here I am at forty-nine
Looking for ways and meaning to life
Where do I go? Who do I see?
How can I make a difference?

David Greaves

Confusion

Who am I? Who are you?
Why are we here?
What must we do?
How do we make sense of it all?

Marva Donaldson





What if

I wasn't here today?
What would I be doing?

Washing the plates,
Preparing the dinner,
Or even a spot of cleaning.

Having a nap,
Maybe reading, or, even just singing.

What if I wasn't here today?
What would my children be doing?

Marcia Williams

“ I have an identity: Bee the Poet, who works so hard, to keep her title of the Sydenham Bard ”

What if

What if everyone was at peace with one another?

What if everyone smiled at one another?

What if that smile encouraged another?

What if beauty is in the eye of the beholder?

What if all was right and good?

What If we all loved one another and were friends to each other?

What if

Time Bank Member

What if

Everyone is a friend?
All prepared to lend,
We wouldn't have to send,
The old folks round the bend!

Then

We'd have time to discuss,
Our problems on the bus.
Or walking in the park,
No problems after dark.

Then

Young and old could talk
Together they can walk,
Build bridges 'stead of walls,
Preventing future mauls.

What if

Flowers grew in soil
As a result of community toil
Preventing emotional boil
Then we could anger foil.

Jacquie Odell

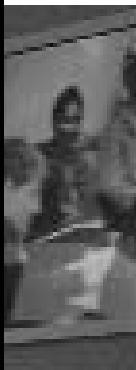


What if?

What if there was no sunshine?
What if there was no rain?
Would the trees and flowers grow?
Would we feel no pain?

What if there was no you
What if there was no me
Would there be peace on Earth
Or would there just be dust

Time Bank Member





What if

What if I had no parents
I had no home
I had no children

What if I had no skills
I had no job
I had ill health

What if I lived forever
I became rich
I had everything

But there is no need to worry
And there is no need to fret
As Jesus Christ has surrounded me
And the devil hasn't got me yet

Michelle Roberts

Birth * Death

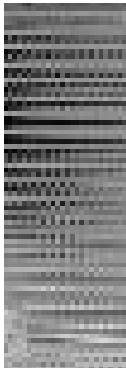
Celebrate the joy of birth
Our unity has proved
Love ...joylaughter fulfilment
Together we share the pleasure

Our joy is shattered by sorrow
Death creeps up on our elation
We give life and receive death

Along with sorrow; grief; pain and worries about the future.

Life and death comes to us all one day

Time Bank Member



The War

Now it's time for the war
Scared people hiding behind their door
Here comes the army marching with pride
Standing with their eyes open wide
People died and people cried
Family members in a crowd crying
Sad but also proud
The war is over – hooray, hooray
But soldiers and people past away today

Christopher Elliot Micallef (aged 10)

If I were you

If I were you
And you were me
Could you tell me the things you would like to be?
I am not normal,
This is true
But could I be someone like you?
We always worry
We always care
But are we ever really there?
We need to know
We wonder why
We say hello and then goodbye.

Theresa Dunphy

Friendship

True friends are diamonds precious and rare.
False ones are autumn leaves found everywhere.
One can have many colleagues
But to have a friend is something special.

Mary Stopp



The Only Way

One way is the only way
No right – no left – just one way
One way home, one way to school
Some roads say one way
Or some say the high way
Is this my life as it develops one way?
Opportunities close, it comes one way
To get a BMW that is my way

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How can I

How can I tolerate you?
When you can't tolerate me.
How can I respect you?
When you can't respect me.
How can I like you?
When you can't like me.
How can I love you?
When you can't love me.

Time Bank Member

Anger

When I get upset and scared I stand and stare and
Watch the world just pass me by

Time Bank Member

*“ It's a safe environment to take a risk and have a go
– and a place to meet new friends, some of
whom I would not have met otherwise ”*

Detox Paradox

Am I extreme or so serene,
or lost upon the path between.
A beacon of compassionate light,
a dark soul huddled in the night.
Striving for a brighter life,
invoking death to end this fight.
Unloved a wraith in dire despair,
yet; cared for one who loves to share.
Confused, frustrated, agitated,
focussed, willing, motivated.
Yearning that I desire most,
haunted by my bygone ghosts.
Flitting midst this paradox,
I seek the key to my detox.

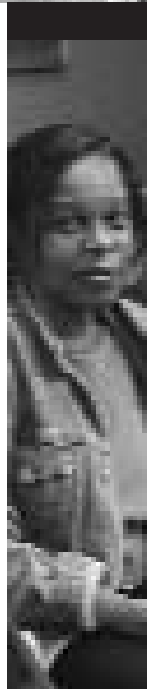
Simon Tyler

Carrots

What are carrots?
They are long and skinny
Orangey brown
Round at the top
With hair on their crown
Wrinkly skin covered all over.

Eat them cooked
Eat them raw
Eat them at the table
Eat them going out the door.

Mavis Sayer



September Song

On September 11th I was working in the fields
Bending down I stretched my back
God! You know just how that feels
Picking all those potatoes and weeding all those crops
There comes a time when you must take a break
Before quite literally (from exhaustion) one drops

So I sat down upon a fallen Oak tree
That must have once been a sight to see
The dried-up creepers fell away in my hand, looking down
I stood up and then I walked all around
Just to see, if I could, the reason it fell
And what brought about its final death knell

This tree that shaded lovers as they made marriage vows
Where children had picnics and watched grazing cows
Inside I saw the rot that brought down this Oak
That used to stand proud with its leafy canopied cloak
Protecting the birds and the creatures of the wild
Till winter passed by and the weather turned mild

Springtime's creation could then burst into song
But one day something went terribly wrong
The storm came! And the Oak tree fell, everything died
All the squirrels and the birds (their babies too)
There was really nowhere left to hide

The hills on the horizon for miles and miles around
Must have seen this tall soldier fall to the ground
You see a farmer's trade hardly allows room
For little baby acorns to be grown
And the hills all around had problems too (with the storm)
So this poor old Oak tree had no family of its own

The seed of bitterness anger and hate was nurtured deep inside
Oh Lord above, only you know how this old Oak tree cried!!!
And the nature of this world conspired
It is sad to say
Revenge was taken upon the Twin Trade Towers
On this September day

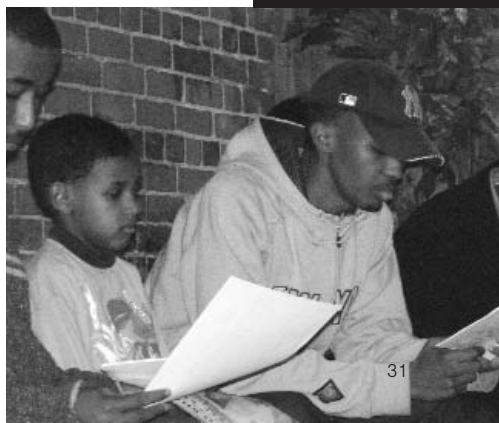
But God knew all about this long before
And for the future made a plan He'd always had in store
One day, flying south, a bird rested in this tree
Picking up an acorn in its claw, it flew away
Higher than anybody could see
On and on this little bird flew
Then suddenly its little heart fluttered to a stop too

But not even a tiny little sparrow ever falls to the ground
Without God in his mighty throne room
In heaven hearing the sound
So marking the spot today, where this little bird fell
Grows a little oak tree and what a tale this sapling tells

So let us try to keep our houses
Low and not too high
Because we really must leave space above
Where all the birds can fly
Stop making the skyscrapers oh so tall
A little bird's heart is only small, after all

To try and escape mankind's foul air
Sometimes takes more strength than a bird has to spare
So to remind us of our folly
Let not this memory fade
This September's sacrifice (and the smoke as the Towers fell!)
The eleventh hour, the market place
The truth another tree had to tell

Rod Harrison





Aylesbury Estate

I went down to the
Aylesbury Estate
And me no no it must
Have been fate
Dat we meet some
Children, and dem
Sound great.

All a dem have
So much talent
Dem must be
God sent
Keep doing what you
Do best
And you will never
Fail in any test.

Time Bank Member



Voices From The Void (Tales of the Chao-Child)

Child within, I feel you yearn,
For love and laughter, free of pain,
So I your adult vow to learn,
To tread the path, your dreams to gain.
The quest ahead will challenge me,
My fears to face head on.
For you my child I must set free,
I value you dear son.
So keep in touch along the way,
And when you hurt just call.
Your needs are mine, I will not stray,
Together we shall rise not fall.

The Chaoist



My Mom

Mom Mom
Wonderful Mom
Who brought me in this wonderful world?
I wonder if she knew if I was a girl.

She loved me, cared for me
In order to grow
That was difficult
Now I know...

Mom Mom wonderful Mom
You're not just a Mom
But a FANTASTIC NAN
Most would say that's rather grand

Mom Mom wonderful Mom
Why are you so far away?
Who'd live in the USA?
My Mom
That's who... so far away

Joan Brooks

Missing You

I missed you this morning
The sun didn't rise.
I missed you this noon-day
The smile in your eyes.
I missed you this evening
Your presence so soft.
Like dewdrops on cobwebs
Like moonlight on frost.
I want to enfold you
In arms full of love.
But you are not here now
And I'm all alone.

Sheila Armstrong



My Time Bank

It's off to the time bank drop-in I go
To see the others I'm getting to know
A lovely hour and a great cup of tea
I talk to them and they talk back to me.

We get all the news
About who would like what
And sometimes there's clues
As to what's needed, a plot.

To have help with, a walk to be taken
Or can you help out and cook eggs and then bacon?

Oh and don't forget it's poems on Monday
Dave will be waiting to hear what you've wrote
And you can read it, not learn it by rote.

Sharon has moved so I am on the big look out
And am sure that the broker will deal
I need to have help with a shop now and then
To buy food so I get a good meal.

I know I could ask
For whatever the task
I'd like to have help with today
Leave it with Shelley and
She'll give it some wellie
And come back to me ever so fast.

Thank you my time bank
I love you so much
I won't ever leave you
And I will keep in touch.

There may be the case
That we have started the race
To start up a bank nearer home
We'll just have to see
How quick this will be
And me, I can't wait for the outcome.

Belinda Harries



One of the other things we do



Local Works: Local people must be put back at heart of their local economies. Policies that favour the large and remote are threatening the vibrancy and diversity of our communities, bringing Ghost Town Britain. Giving real power to local people can reinvigorate our local rural and urban economies.

nef is leading this campaign characterised by a highly diverse membership that seeks to combat the spectre of 'Ghost Town Britain'. It promotes the importance of local sustainability and self-determination. For example, Local Works was a big part of the campaign to defend community pharmacies. Taking as a starting point the fact that local communities should be more in charge of their own economies, education, healthcare, consumer and leisure needs, Local Works is campaigning for a legal framework that can make this happen.

The needs of communities must be at the heart of environmental, social and political justice. At a time of growing disenchantment with political processes, individuals and communities can and should have a real impact on how money is spent in their communities and what they invest in. Having a tangible impact on the delivery of services is a vital tool for political, social, environmental and economic reinvigoration in all of our communities.

Local Works recognises that there is no single blueprint, but that communities should draw up and implement their own plans to achieve these goals.

For more information please call
020 7820 6300