



WE HAVE NEVER SEEN SOMETHING LIKE THIS

Poems by members of the
Roundhouse Poetry Collective

2019 – 2021



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March 2021

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About the Roundhouse Poetry Collective

The Roundhouse Poetry Collective is formed of a group of young writers and poets aged 18-25 who meet weekly to create, experiment and develop their craft, under guidance from established and celebrated poets.

This year's cohort were led by journalist and writer Bridget Minamore and spoken word poet and performer Cecilia Knapp. Due to the pandemic and the national lockdown in the UK, sessions came to a temporary pause in March 2020 and resumed online from October 2020. Despite the challenges of an unprecedented year, the collective have stayed supportive of one another and have collaborated digitally to produce this very special collection of their work.

Foreword

We are so happy to be able to write this Foreword, and we are similarly delighted that there will be a place where people can read the compelling, playful, innovative, joyful, honest and moving poems created over the last year by members of the Roundhouse Poetry Collective – each of whom has such a distinct and important voice.

When we sat down to shortlist for this year's cohort, way back in the summer of 2019, we were blown away by the quality of writing we found in over 150 applications. We asked each other whether we would ever be able to choose from such a varied group of young writers; it took a long time, and a lot of thought, but eventually we did. It's testament to the talents of the eighteen young writers we eventually settled on, all of whom jumped out at us with both their stories and their potential, that we knew each of them had to be a part of that year's Collective. Some we knew, having seen or read their work in the poetry scene over the years, while others we had never met or heard of until their application. But all of them shone. Now, a year and a half later, there is not one member of the Collective whose voice is not missed when they're not in the room.

Since September 2019, we have been writing together. Despite how tough 2020 was for everyone, despite how tough 2021 continues to be, and despite having to take a break while we all dealt with what was literally an unprecedented situation, we have stuck together. In one of our final online workshops together recently, we were struck by how much their individual and unique voices have grown, as well as their collective spirit: they are a team. They support each other and they are the definition of a writing community. We are endlessly proud of them — they inspire us with their words and with their spirit. When they share their early drafts with

a guest tutor, or read and perform to crowds large and small, pride continues to swell in our chests. We are certain this will only continue as their writing continues to go from strength to strength.

Esme, Abena, Natalie, Helen, Connor, Troy, Courtney, Jacob, Oakley, Niamh, Rosanna, Shanay, PJ, Kirk-Ann, Tanaka, miracle, Samantar, and Nailah, your talent and drive, your kindness to each other's writing, and your kindness to each other (and us) has been beautiful to watch.

It's been an honour to spend all this time with your words, and to help guide you through the last year – it's been an endless pleasure and a privilege to be the tutors for the Roundhouse Poetry Collective. A special thank you for always making us laugh – we'll even miss the (numerous) jokes at our expense, the ribbing at the fact we're 'old', and the amused but patient explainers of slang terms.

We can't wait to see where you go next, and we will miss you all.

Cecilia Knapp & Bridget Minamore
Co-Tutors of the Roundhouse Poetry Collective

You try to tidy your room one Saturday

You try to tidy your room one Saturday
but when you move the wardrobe to Hoover,

you find a birthday card from your grandparents
who couldn't speak English, six unused pencils

with HELEN on the side, a boiled red crab
that peels open its eyes and whispers,

"Good evening," even though it's just
gone midday, the plankton-eaten remains

of the whale that swam the Thames,
an empty bit of space that disappears

as soon as you touch it, both your parents,
as they looked in their wedding photo,

Mum in her puffy white sleeves and veil,
and Dad with his terrible moustache,

the blare of the fog horn from camp
that rattles every ornament in your room,

Mr Blobby, who rolls up off the ground
and waddles past your parents and the crab,

the grey cat you threw a Croc at for shitting
in your garden, and, look, a fresh turd too,

Lola who avoids your eye and says, "I'm going
to tell everyone what we did," a Facebook message

from the girl you knew who got hit by a bus
and died, Percy Bysshe Shelley (he's actually quite fit),

followed by Charlotte's pet terrapin Shelley
(who ran away, but was found, months later,

at the front door), your cousin's comment
about 'homosexuals', a dry, persistent cough,

the tag that goes around Paddington's neck
but with your name on it, four pubes and a lot of dust.

"You should clean more," your mum shudders,
throwing her bouquet in the bin. "That's disgusting."

By Helen Bowell

Before The Whitewash

It is 1614
My spirit wakes in a femme's body
Fingers laced with gold bands,
knuckles of the woman I love
She whistles my name so fluent
'Me do, Abena'
My valves forget their rhythm
Lips are warm on mine
Father greets my in laws with his right hand
No one casts stone cast to kill us
In this Ghana they are celebrating our union

Atoms in this skin begin to twitch

It is 1886 now
The land reeks of blood and honey
My new tongue curls to assert that I am
King Mwanga of Buganda
Before my brain can register
A plague is here, bleached men with Slave Bibles
Stripping our God Katonda from all that is sacred
For the first time, sodomy a third guest
as I make love to another man

My soul slips into 1634
The garments that clothe me bind the
lumps on my chest
Men in my harem wear soft beaded gowns,
they are my wives
Neck swivelling only to 'Njola'
King Nzinga
Subject's knees become prayer beds before me
As I sharpen swords to charge towards the Portuguese
Who drag my people like muck onto cargo ships

My soul is shifting again

Njola pushes a plead into me

"Relay my lineage to my beloved Angola
Where my body immortalised marble in the city centre
Yet I am dead named Queen"

Its 2020
Familiar cells
Gulping Mutwuo ne nkatenkwan
Father's mouth a portal to a Ghana I never knew
But this Ghana is missing a chunk of its backbone

I make several attempts to tell my Father who I am
To tell him that we too wear white hooded gowns
As we mourn our black men
Yet kill our queer folk
With our own bare hands

Njola's aura stays with me
Kisses the shaved sides of my boy cut
Their life a compass
Pointing me to Queer Africa

By Abena Essah Bediako

Calico

A male calico cat is sitting inside a room
full of dogs. Easily he sees through
their hunger, their boisterous and barrier.
He wants to let them know

but the room's already losing its sobriety,
so instead he paws his way out,
feels the needles gnawing at a bent leg
dissolve like bubbles.

Outside, he looks to the sky
for a fast wind to catch
more of the citrus sunshine
clinging onto a fading summer,

drops to the ground
any leftover sting like balls of quartz:
firming the first bounce,
the eventual shatter

By Troy Cabida

Written after Serendipity by BTS.

**First published in War Dove by Bad Betty Press,
Spring 2020.**

I am once again going to the big Sainsbury's just to feel something

I am buying expensive ketchup in order to properly love
you.
Do you remember when you leant over between me and
a hot
showerhead? You said you would kill me if I fucked up
your hair
and I believed you. I still did it. You still let me. I keep
my
butter in a butter dish in order to properly love you
I don't eat butter. What body did we fry and salt?
Now I'm a want monster in the aisles. A want monster is
someone who licks everything, someone with brand
loyalty.
I notice the freezers are full of our faces. We showcase
an impressive range of emotions. Merger! Wow, I love
you
so much that we now share a face. Our teeth are your
dogteeth, our platinum hair, platinum. Do you remember
when you woke me pressing butter into my ear? We
were
so villainous. Here, get a prawn. In this bleachy super-
scape
there is no safe distance. All the headlines pretend they
know us.
(Man Kills Man In Dye Job Mishap). (Man Filmed
Assigning
Deeper Meaning). Get ready. I am bulk buying garlic for
my last
remaining violence. Let's be real, I'm going to eat us
both.

By Connor Byrne

How You Wear the Word After Saeed Jones

You arrive, hair slicked back with amniotic gel,
parents lathering you in unrinseable letters.

You arrive, under stroller-dense maple trees,
life-size dolls playing infant-matchmakers.

You arrive, a starfish over the toilet,
eyes slicing your breasts by the sink.

You arrive, watching glitter-peacocks parading;
you stretch tears away, your uncertainty brimming.

You arrive via blackmail,
your mouth, a blow-dryer for bloody freckles.

You arrive, bending and straightening;
unclasping from old letters and gripping new ones.

You arrive, lightbulb derrières nestling on your cushion
thighs, your arms curling around them like a seatbelt.

Your mother arrives, disappointment re-figures and the
uncremating begins; you wish yourself unborn, less;
your body intact, your soul unburnable.

By Courtney Conrad

Celebrity Chef

Autumn is fruit not death, so I go swimming
to self-preserve for winter. In Brixton
there's a leisure centre
where you can backstroke
four floors high.

I'm seeking love, who isn't? I find it in sushi,
Christmas tree decorations, flesh
under my fingertips, the taste
of salt. If I feel sick,
I go swimming.

I enjoy travelling: Tokyo, Vienna,
petrol and sugar. I've tasted everything.
Each week, a man comes to photograph
my hairsprayed dishes, we joke about
McDonalds. Sometimes, he puts
the wrappers in my bin
before he leaves.

When I flew to Tokyo, I realised air
was just one more box of heat and fog;
still, I am untouched.

In my leisure time,
I go swimming.

Sometimes, I plunge my head
into the water; sometimes I want to plunge
my head into a wall. His photographs
are beautiful. I make too much.

It makes me sick. Autumn
is endless fruit.

By Rosanna Hildyard

In other news

a woman lost her wedding ring and found it again sixteen years later growing on a carrot inside her garden the likeliest available explanation being she must have removed the ring whilst peeling the potatoes she was preparing for her husband's evening meal the bowl the potatoes were peeled over must have been taken outside to the garden upturned on a pile of rotting vegetables a compost heap slowly turning the waste materials back into generative forms of living matter the soil turning the potato skins into some veritable good as they broke down to create diverse kinds of plant life during which time the woman's marriage soured bitter rows ever since she first lost the object of her promise made suddenly visible again one day in a sliver of orange she spotted from her kitchen which made it look as if the ring was being worn on a much thinner finger did rabbits begin to leap about the compost heap proclaiming the document of proof had risen the day her ring reappeared hey presto instant as a parlour trick some declarative statement carrot is the most affirming of vegetables is the moral very clear now recycling is good good things come to those who wait it's depressing even in nature the gilded path to desire is heterosexual in terms like marriage gold wedding rings being metonymic for what is sustainable what is good for the planet in the way paper bags are not all that better than plastic yet somehow remain blameless and yes all my anger is being recapitulated through another marriage story another absent husband only present nominally I have been reading a lot about homonormativity I have let the side down for ever wanting my happily assimilated ever after do all the queers die at the end from AIDS

By Oakley Flanagan

At up

At the death of my grandmother's husband
 i danced in her ear she said you are happy
 man i made it my duty to let love travel and
 fill rooms told my mother i believe in true
 love hugged her and said i'm sorry for
 smoking weed but hug me back knocked
 rum punch from my brothers hand
 told him he is king didn't need to fetch another
 stood by drinking water the younger perched
 in grandma's walker are my blessings there
 nothing but love on council estate reminiscing
 uncles celebrating the deceased mortality means
 make the most of moments no fear people end
 Up throwing down dirt; you buried in a coffin.

By Kirk-Ann Roberts

calcium surplus

my index finger is milky green
from the ring you gave me
haven't brushed our teeth
for two days and this is my only chance
to experience calcium surplus luckily
my sister gave us a seal bag
of toothpaste from her tube if that's not
familial love I don't know
what is but my love for you
is as thick as sun block as clear
as antihistamine perhaps the leaves
of those now dead plants you got me
mean something about nurturing the self
because I think I look after you just fine

By Niamh Haran

Baby takes my daylight and sickens it

When we play, we are cops and robbers;
I always catch him stealing time from me.
Energy. Most days I swallow its light 'fore
his fingerless brioche fists close around it.

Walk away from baby in supermarkets to
teach him I will always come back. I will
always find him; know the sound of baby's
cry against every other rugrat in the line-up.

With white sun in stomach I will starve baby
of each sumptuous sin I was raised on. Only
feed him things worth their weight in gold,
nothing heavier. Baby will be dirt poor in

paradise, where it matters little how you get
there. Pleasant prisons like these still have
inmates asking what you're in for. Ghosts'
stories kill their heros. Hope my baby's okay.

By Jacob Constable

Fragments of my mother's homeland underwater

Southern Vietnam will be submerged by 2050.
– Saigoneer, Oct 2019

Every place has a name for this.
Here, it is tận thế.

A fortune once told me that *rain is worth everything*
and so I knew that it held all we had ever burned –
pork skewers, begging letters, hell money,
my great-grandmother's remains,
her son's prepared flesh.

In monsoon season, they fused with everything we exhaled.

•

Once, Vietnamese people were said to be descended from
Âu Cơ, a fairy from the mountains,
and Lạc Long Quân, a dragon from the sea.

When their forms touched sand, one hundred children
climbed out from black eggs.

•

When the land disappeared,
we poured our ancestors' ashes into Aquafina bottles,
let them live in the ghost of our thirst.

•

Once, we planted peach trees for Tết,
planned to chop and sour the fruit in jars.

Once, the sun slipped so low
that every peach burst on our palms.

We stayed out until our hair singed,
watched black strands split into dust on the concrete.

•

Once, Âu Cơ and Quân spent too long away from home.

Quân tried to hold his human shape but could not stop
his tail from growing back.

Âu Cơ tried to cut off her wings and bled a typhoon.

•

Once, a river curdled
at the memory of splitting,

the toxins it was fed
still in the bodies of five generations.

In the bombed cities, waves pull apart reconstructions
of every holy building.

My mother does not cry
because she has already lived through this,

because home is swept away
every minute you're not there.

I hear her voice bend open to red gas,
recede into her mother's toothless murmurs
like names heard through snow.

When we are afraid, it no longer matters that we never learned
to fully understand each other.

•

These days, we are meatless.
My mother still dreams of a pig

fat enough to feed us all for a month,
though we have long since lost our talent for slaughter.

•

Once, Quân threatened a flood so that the sea and land
might be joined.

Âu Cơ fled with half her children, taught them to plant
khoai lang in pockets of warm earth.

Quân carried away all who remained on his back, and
they lived as fishermen.

•

Once, there was nothing to hold onto
but the prayers that streaked from my mother's mouth,

her belief that I would live longer if oiled and blessed,
that when she died, there would be someone left

to ask after her bones.

•

Once, we wanted to believe that we'd survive the flood
because we were born from a collision of mountain
and sea.

Because nothing has ever held us
as closely as water.

By Natalie Linh Bolderston

First published in *The Poetry Review*, Winter 2019

a nude from the bathtub self-portrait

i am without measurement
marooned; a piss puddle
of blue from a slanted

cock

pins and needles thread
wind and rain to my feet
haven't left my bed in

yonks

assume the form
of flight; this is where
i land: in search of a

ruler

forgetting
god never used
straight lines

i am a soulja boy
comeback; i am

cain with the sleeves
of my morality

rolled up
staring life in the face

saying; what you want
some? you fucking want

some?

By miracle

me too. me, too.

sometimes, i feel like lifting my arse in the air and
saying take it away, head bent back fingers splayed, i
was born with a placard in one hand,

i let my face do the rest. i lie in bed with empty
between my legs and hang it on the wall when i'm done
with it, open my barbies up real wide and stare to settle
the rocking in my hips, it's comfort but it's someone
else's now. i say my name twice so it makes sense,
say it soft so they think about the gifts i came to give
the world, the truth in my breast milk for the diversity
campaign. they want one more analogy, use to believe
the more beautiful something was the less likely people
were to ruin it but then look what you did you made
them all pussies then you made them all pink. i am eyes
and gapped teeth and only one Scottish ancestor when
the lights go out i look down at smooth skin broken
by a rupture. i want to say something holy lies here try
not to let the sweetness spill can't brace the shame of
packing it back inside. You want mess who's hair tucks
neatly behind ears. You are starving children in Africa.

By Shanay Neusum-James

Floodwater/Qardho or I was drowning, I wasn't (After Safia Elhilo)

I was drowning, I wasn't. Warm and narked in my western bed I scrolled to watch my city drown. The houses washed away like the sandcastles of my childhood. I saw my many faces. They prayed, entered a void of silence, imitated the sun. I watched from my phone. I wanted it, I didn't. I questioned it,

I didn't. My bordered body scrolled on. My hydrated mouth spoke of the floodwater, they said it tasted like the moon's farewell. I looked for images, I didn't. I should've donated, I didn't. I wanted to call, I didn't. I watched from oceans away. My teeth being washed away

by the rain. We have never seen something like this. They have never seen something like this. What if I am the floodwater? What if my rage is the rain trying to wash the borders on my tongue. Am I wrong for dreaming in another world? Is the floodwater my punishment to dream left and not right? They lost

homes, I didn't, they lost photos and beds to sleep with the indigo sky, I didn't. I moved on, they didn't. I am dry, and they are still drowning. They say the city will never be the same again. They say the city will wear a different tomorrow. What if the floodwater washed my name away from their mouths? What if

tomorrow makes them forget me. They prayed, I didn't. They called God, I slept. The floodwater cleansed them of my sorrows, my western sorrows. Dissolved my stupid protest safe in my citizenship. Washed my tongue of the heavy words I mustn't wear. I liked their posts to soothe my floating back. I

reposted their sinking clothes to hang mine dry. I saw their faces dampened in my mouth. They moved on, I didn't. They shored to new living rooms. I am still lost. Sailing in search of my sinking body. I try to archive their words from the videos. In hopes it catches my body in the ocean. They survived, I didn't.

Moved to new homes, I didn't. The city stayed, I was washed out to the desert. My many faces cocooned to dry. It is clear, the floodwater washed everything heavy from their hands and out to the quiet. Though ringing misery leaves wet a trail, it doesn't lead to them. They ate, I didn't. They were rebuilt, I wasn't. They sang,

I sunk into the wallowing void. They harvested, I never planted. One of my faces said on a video *despite our hardship, the water knows its destination. God knew who's time it was*. The floodwater came for them, I didn't. God called on them, I didn't. Who's city am I, if the floodwater didn't drum my words to dry my better bodies?

By Samantar Osman

Tommy Builds A Cocktail

Tommy spied a sun-dried palm tree in an untouched garden
with crusty dark skin and cracks riddling
all along its side, weeping out of its shell
he aimed for a branch and down a coconut fell

it didn't implode on impact or split in his grip
he had to kick it along the cobblestone path
drag the shell across a pebble-dashed wall
and hook up the jet-powered sandblaster.
Even a parade of lawnmower wheelies couldn't shred it.

After the stalemate, Tommy retrained as a mercenary
infiltration demolitions counter-insurgency
and busted the shell wide open with a perfect salute

he chopped lime with a ceremonial sword
mixed barrel-aged rum with mashed mint in a Boston glass sliced
pineapples and sprinkled four sugar heaped spoonfuls on top and throttled
it all together before straining out any not quite pulverized pulp.

Tommy piled on crushed ice from the fridge dispenser
raked the evidence behind the second shed
and added red rose petals from the
planter on the roadside of the main drive
to garnish.

By Peter deGraft-Johnson, 'The Repeat Beat Poet'

Self Portrait as Elle Woods

That part where I leave dinner ringless, mascara
streaming down my face. That part where I'm buoyant
boulders poking out my chest, deranged grin, held together
by a strappy pink bikini. Where I'm VHS soft porn. That part there.

That part when my costume is a sexy humiliation. That part where I do it
for the guy. When I do it *not* for that guy, for a different guy. Never for myself.
That part when I bend myself behind my back, *and snap!* myself in half so there's enough
to go around. Where the beauty salon is an inferno, gossip whispers against raw
nailbeds fleshing our cuticles. That part where the hand lands on my thigh, late
evening gasp behind a closed office door. That part where my girls come
too, they're there yapping and screaming, hand-bag dogs shushed
to quiet at the courthouse. That part where my hair is dumb silk,
catastrophic white girl. That part when I become beautiful.

By Esme Allman

Saudades For Nani

To be Mulher is to be mother of children's children
Matriarch of steel spines
Mob wife
To run from home to make home
To get hair curled once a week and coloured every third Friday

To be Mulher is to sneak sweets in bedside drawers
To make camp in bathroom with phone cord trenches
Discuss ailments with friends like celebrity gossip
Laugh through your hands with flared nostrils

To be Mulher is to cultivate life
In the garden, kitchen and corners of your granddaughters
It is leaving behind
An empty hollow that is sneaking reminder of loss
It is coming home to find that home was a person, not a place

To be Mulher is to be bilingual nomad
To combine continents into well-travelled country
To fight for love and take flight for it
And dole affection out like fateha

To be Mulher is play Indian classics on Sunday mornings
Still dance at 70
To spice food with ancestors guidance
To Make sure your family eats
To Take concern when they don't
To Become a living ghost whose recipes cannot be recreated

To be mulher is to smell of earth and Chanel n.5
To grow own tomatoes
It is to live on in pictures
In the smell of grass after it rains
In dressers full of prescriptions

Decorative China
In the taste of matapha
And the call to prayer

To be mulher is to matter
To leave people in pieces
Struggling to stitch ourselves whole again

By Nailah Dossa

Black boys can't swim? I guess

I sea the blue
The blue sees me
We have a tug of war
On who should harvest the wind

I lose.

Cause what's new
A black boy
Surrendering to nature
As always

By Tanaka Fuego

Poet biographies



Esme Allman is a multi-disciplinary artist who is a poet, theatre-maker and facilitator based in South East London. Her work explores history, blackness, memory and the ways these themes interact with one another. She has been commissioned by

Sydenham Arts, BBC Sounds and ICA New Creatives Commission, Barbican Centre's New Creatives: *Subject to Change* and English Heritage. Her work has appeared in *POSTSCRIPT*, *The Colour of Madness* anthology, the Barbican Young Poets 19/20 Anthology and *The Skinny*. She is a poet on Barbican Young Poets and Roundhouse Poetry Collective.



Natalie Linh Bolderston is a Vietnamese-Chinese-British poet. In 2020, she received an Eric Gregory Award and co-won the Rebecca Swift Women Poets' Prize. Her pamphlet, *The Protection of Ghosts*, is published with V. Press. Find Natalie on

Instagram: @NatalieLinhBolderston and Twitter: @NatBolderston

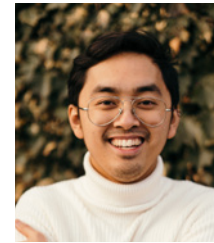


Helen Howell is a poet and producer. She is a co-founder of Dead [Women] Poets Society, and an alumna of The Writing Squad, the London Writers Awards and the London Library Emerging Writers scheme. She won a Bronze Creative Future Writers' Award

in 2020, and in February 2021 was a Poetry Business digital Poet in Residence. Twitter: @helen_bowell



Connor Byrne is a poet from Brighton, now living in London. They write a lot about being queer and trans, and their relationship to others and the world.



Troy Cabida (he/him) is a Filipino poet, producer and library assistant based in south-west London. His recent poems have appeared in *TAYO*, *harana*, *MacMillan* and *Bath Magg*. A former member of the Barbican Young Poets and Roundhouse

Poetry Collective, he currently works as a producer for London open mic night Poetry and Shaah and is co-founder of Liwayway Kolektibo, an arts and culture network providing space for UK-based Filipino/a/x creatives. His debut pamphlet, *War Dove*, was published by Bad Betty Press in 2020.

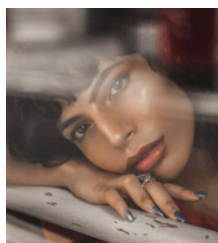


Courtney Conrad is a Jamaican poet. She is a member of Malika's Poetry Kitchen. She was the Roundhouse Slam runner-up and a BBC Fringe Slam finalist. She is an alumna of the Obsidian Foundation Retreat. She has performed at Glastonbury Festival

and StAnza Festival. Courtney has been published in Bad Betty Press' *Field Notes on Survival* anthology, Birmingham Literary Journal and *The White Review*. She was shortlisted for The White Review Poet's Prize 2020 and longlisted for the Women Poets' Prize 2020



Jacob Constable is a Black British Caribbean writer, and has been writing poems since he was 12. His work deals with the vast-smallness of the human experience, and is influenced by a love of languages, his studies in psychotherapy, and the childhood dream of becoming an astronaut.



Nailah Dossa is a writer, poet and model from London. She is a Roundhouse Poetry alumnus and has an degree in English Literature. She has worked with brands including L'Oréal, Zalando, H&M and has performed at the Roundhouse, Birmingham and BBC Words First. Her poetry explores femininity, the South Asian diaspora and themes of love and loss. She is currently working on her first pamphlet that will be out later this year.



Abena Essah Bediako is a poet, singer-songwriter, model and activist from North London. They are an Alumni of the Obsidian Foundation Black Poet's retreat 2020, a BBC Words First finalist and a current a member of the Writing Room 2021 cohort. They were also one of the speakers for the Channel 4 documentary *Hair Power: Me and My Afro*. Abena has been commissioned to write poetry for the BBC, Marques Almeida for London Fashion Week and the Baroque at the Edge Festival. Their work explores their personal identity such as their Ghanaian heritage, queer identity, childhood memories and Queer African Ancestry.



Oakley Flanagan a writer and poet. As a playwright 'This Queer House'; (OPIA Collective, Vault Festival). Their poetry appears in *Bath Magg*, *Poetry London*, *Under the Radar* and *Wasafiri*, as well as anthologised work for 3 of Cups Press, Hachette, Orion and Verve Poetry Press. Oakley was a winner of TLC's Queer Reads scheme 2020 for their novel in progress 'Quercus'.



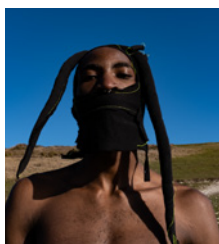
Niamh Haran is a queer poet from North London. Some of their poems appear in *Bath Magg*, *Ink Sweat & Tears*, *The Interpreter's House* and *Perverse*.



Rosanna Hildyard is an editor, writer and translator from North Yorkshire. Her poetry has recently been published by *Banshee*, *Modern Poetry in Translation* and the Crested Tit Collective. Her pamphlet of short stories, *Slaughter*, will be published by Broken Sleep Books in March 2021.



Shanay Neusum-James is an actress, poet and theatre-maker based in South London. She is an alumna of The BRIT School, the Obsidian Foundation Black Poets Retreat and the BBC Words First Scheme. Shanay is currently directing Reece Lyons in her one-woman show, *LILITH*.



miracle: i'm out here baby



Samantar Osman is a Swedish-born Somali poet. He is a Roundhouse Poetry Collective alumnus and has published work on EastSide Anthology, Sawti Zine, and FourthFloor Poetry Series. Samantar has performed at the Roundhouse, Birmingham Hippodrome, Kings College London, University of London and more. His poetry explores fatherhood, masculinity, Black working-class culture, and more. Samantar is currently a student at SOAS, University of London, doing a BA in African Studies.



The Repeat Beat Poet is Peter deGraft-Johnson, a Hip Hop Poet, emcee, and broadcaster. He is the co-founder of Hip Hop poetry night Pen-Ting, hosts the multi-award nominated Lunar Poetry Podcast which is archived in the British Library, his work is published by Bad Betty Press & Magma Poetry, and he is an Obsidian Foundation fellow.



Kirk-Ann Roberts is a Caribbean-born, London-based writer and theatre director. A Roundhouse Resident Artist and graduate of the Young Vic Directors programme. Innovation, honesty and inclusivity are at the heart of Kirk-Ann's work which often focuses on themes of identity and home.



Tanaka is a slam winning, multi-published, international spoken word performer. He is a black, queer artist whose poems cross leaps and boundaries throughout his identity.

Cover illustration: Pattern created from floor plans of the Paul Hamlyn Roundhouse Studios for young creatives aged 11-25 years old.



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