

A BREATH OF FRESH AIR

By Lincolnshire writers and artists

A Breath of Fresh Air
Edited by Em Burton

Table of Contents

<i>Foreword</i> - Em Burton	4
<i>Cherry Blossom</i> - Stef Bishop	7
<i>My Wood</i> – Rachel Coman	10
<i>Diary of a Lincolnshire Sheep Stealer</i> – Steve Eede	12
<i>Artwork: Summer Roses</i> – Julie Eyett	16
<i>Two Poems: March 2002 and 7 Layers of Chocolate Cake Blues</i> – Kenn Gordon	19
<i>Two Poems: If Bumblebee’s were Spirits and The Quest</i> – Teigh-Anne Shave	22
<i>Renewal</i> – Gav Skerry	27
<i>King’s Defense</i> - Ali Thomas	30

Foreword

A huge thank you to all the contributors and submitters to the fourth issue of Lincs & Inks. I would also like to extend my thanks to those who donated to our Go Fund Me page. With their help, we purchased a website domain, and treated our website to a makeover. This book consists of poetry, prose and art by writers from across Lincolnshire, who were tasked with submitting inspired by summer, bright colours or evoking joy and they nailed it. Hope you enjoy reading their work as much as I have 🍌

Cherry Blossom

Stef Bishop

Bio

Stef Bishop is a keen walker of Lincoln city. He can often be seen getting lost in antique stores, daydreaming by the cathedral, feeding squirrels in the arboretum or scribbling ideas on the back of shopping receipts. Hopefully, one day, more and more of these aforementioned ideas will see fruition and a poetry collection will emerge.

Cherry Blossom

The first time I met you was when some boys had beaten you up,
you were left slumped on a tree and blossom petals were falling
on your head. We started seeing each other, I cared about you.
Summer arrived and we listened to songs together
in the swelter of afternoons, I watched you hold an ice cream cone
aloft to see what seagull was bold enough to swipe it from
your hand. We were young, I had plans but you did not.
The world seemed like simple putty in your hands, you were a piece
of upturned fluff drifting among the dunes; at times, you seemed
away with the fairies in a cloudless sky. At night
we would lay as flat as skate-fish on your caravan roof to watch
the stars. The seaside arcades would flash into the wilderness
of your unsure eyes as if abandonment was to be your fate.

I wish those boys hadn’t left you slumped on that tree and we never
met and your youthful foolishness wouldn’t of be so dear to me.
Even now, many years later, I hear news that you still return
to this coastal town, hoping to see me; maybe you thought
this childhood summer would last forever, but no,
you were an idiot. I will never forgive or forget what you did.
You are a bitch, a bitch, yes, a bitch; I’m a woman calling you
this repeatedly in the echo of summers past, in the aftermath
of our shadows entwined. You will erode away like sandstone,
you will never kiss me or feel sweet blossom touch your lips again.

My Wood

Rachel Coman

Bio

Born and bred in Lincolnshire, Rachel Coman still resides there accompanied by her partner, three cats, and five chickens. With a deep connection to nature, Rachel is passionate about conservation and the wild world, elements that always weave their way into her works. Rachel writes while immersed in her small woodland, the setting for this poem and her forthcoming book. This debut nature memoir will explore the magic and mysteries of the wood, which nestles in the deepest Lincolnshire Fenlands. Imagine a wild woman with twig infested hair, sitting under an oak tree with a battered old notebook and pencil in hand, scribbling away as a hare silently lopes by.

My Wood

My wood, small wood, I waited long,
For you to bring me your wild song,
Away from your riches, I'm slight,
Stretch my poetic limb I might,

Your spirit lives within my mind,
The glisten, the green, the dew divine,
Long may you live and blossom, glow,
Hardy wall against the west blow,

Winter naked, cold yet steadfast,
You know, this slumber will not last,
White fall, badger sleep, berries red,
My wood, my love, what lies ahead?

Springtime soon, brings sweet yellow shine,
Honeyed tang, like foragers wine,
Goddess awakened, pure graceful smile,
Cherry blossom, seen from a mile,

Litha forth, high in the blue sky,
Small wood, my dream, we softly sigh,
Heavy with life, laden and lush,
Much time in, a warm scented hush,

Then you, bathed in fire ochre, tan,
Soon be back to where it began,
Your clothing burned, leaf to the ground,
Turn of the wheel, us two go round,

I wonder what you see, my wood,
All you give and provide for good,
The roe, the crow, the frog, the hare,
So grateful I, that you do share,

Dark wood I watch your night nymphs dance,
Small wood mere forest goblins glance,
My wood, my world, forever you'll be,
My wood, my love, pray stay with me.

Diary of a Lincolnshire Sheep Stealer (in six parts)

Steve Eede (Edenbray)

Bio

‘Write what you know so that you will know what you write’ is an oft quoted maxim often accredited to Ernest Hemingway and of course it is a good rule of thumb for any writer to live by. For nearly 60 years I have sought to write my thoughts about life and the human experience in poems of various styles, short stories and articles and I have always tried to follow that principle. I have recently chronicled my writing experience in an Anthology entitled - **edenbray edits**. that is available to purchase.

I wrote my first serious, poetic piece around 1966 and entitled it - 'The day I redrew myself in mine own eyes'. I remember the tone and gist of that first piece was full of youthful introspection and teenage angst, the frustrations of an adolescent who had begun to wrestle with the ugliness of the world and yet I also recall that although refreshingly honest it remained full of energy and a certain optimism and may well have included some of my best work.

edenbray continues to write poems that illuminate, educate and inspire. 'this Lincolnshire - Diary of a Lincolnshire sheep stealer' is a recent work and is something of an Opus that I hope the reader gains pleasure from.

Diary of a Sheep Stealer

this Lincolnshire .. .

it begins.....I.

squashed brown, glassy marbles
as much as one big taw or a boulder
in playground exchange, a ten second
glance at the showy-girl's knickers while
the old girl makes cow-eyes
she, but twenty others passing by
eating grass before they fertilise
varied colours, all have shiny eyes

this Lincolnshire is nothing special rabbits on
the hop, hares and badgers fields in different
shades of umber colours some pale, some clay,
some colour o’trout jump to fisheries,
where ‘the sleeping man' is one of life's mysteries
from Grimsby to River Lym that babbles, or
Somersby there you can listen, to words by
Tennyson

an otter seen at Stickney dyke
places I trundle on my bike
unseen, yet I hear scavengers cry
a buzzard family of four I spied
one mile over auburn mounds of hay
Magainot lines under skies of grey
haystack sketches in a book I drew in
the local art of Charlie Haseldine
prairie fens stretch far as Wyoming
Serengeti dried by the heat of sun
rhino imagined where fallow deer roam
wander in confines of stately homes grassy
wolds prove the lie that spills there are no
hills within this rolling shire dales, moor,
marsh briar, coastal fenland commended as
an international wetland

.II.

if I were fenslodger's son with musket gun two
barrels o’lead in reed beds well hidden bag of
godwit, brace of ruff, one plump bittern boot
waders, calico coat, a three cornered hat I'd greet
thee at dawn, set sale upon the lee tides rushing
in, partners in crime who hum ‘oh God our help
in ages’ smoke pipes of clay birds flew, we bag
a gargeneye for the stew

.III.

salute then Dutch men's arrival, his
instruments of change and drainage
engineers hired to stick their fingers in
myth and fact subsist ’til John Rennie
labour of the many with pick and shovel
they dug trenches, dykes and sluices
drained fenland marshes, muddied waters
fenslodgers soon departed
paid off by tribute for their trouble
thus and thus the economy grew
new farmland too and towns
where new people paid new taxes new
houses where once were swamps new
roads, lanes, farms and tracks new Lincoln
grew, old Boston too Caistor, Bourne,

tulips, sugar-beet n'tats

Stamford welcomes ruling classes
central hilly parts, n’ leafy wolds
the stoat and deer that dart
clear the moat, load the cart
for Percy Grainger, Aussie stranger
who learned thy folk tradition
his wisdom culturally allied to
Frederick Delius, a Yorkshireman

whose music coloured in and then
coloured up our market towns
iron Brigg, historic Gainsborough
to the north or down beside
the Deepings, o' flat lands
your skies full of wonder
cannot hold the thunder of their birth
yet hold such scintillating light
.IV.

the sheep-markets, the Viking Way
Scunthorpe, villages as Brumby
names with Yorkshire drawl
set on their knees did crawl, west
farmers held sway o’ richest topsoil
tho’ not thar' many wages pay
except thou were a farm servant
denied a wife or much life at all

'till the military call, or news broke
of higher wages on the borders
across the sea in New England
or in Albertland, New Zealand
where a colony of 1,000 departed
excited by ‘conquest of the free’
we drafted immigrants long afore
one came over from Balkan sea

.V.
Buttercup sways in the meadow
old Lucy, mothers bereft
their bullocks journeyed to the abattoir this
bright morning wi’ sheep n'pigs once we
travelled in to market towns Alford, Market
Raisen, Low-eth while still we doff the cap
to likes of Asda travel on in yon pantechnicon
narrow roads, no passing

.VI.
In continuum ~
I'll not bandy words now with thee
should thou so mardy laugh at me this
‘Lincolnshire’ stands upon the wolds by
coastal marshes off the wash I came here
a bandit on the run a sheep-stealer before
the poet carried my own palyass early to
bed cut cauli’ with a hallowed knife

in evening mizzling
St Hugh doth splawder into view
not being of certainty of truth
requiring cash to fix kirk’s roof
note the chimes of St Botolph
spire-less church ne'er finished
the spires of this shire are many
settled in their gentle dells
stand agin the suttly mumbles
of an indigo sky that passes by we on’t
dark side of that thar rainbow
with rooster crow, black footed jay
I stand atop the banks
watch trawlers line up their return
to rivers Witham and the Humber
tankers decked with lumber
from Norway, Scandinavia
immigrants aboard cheat custom man
sewn pockets lined with stash
I hear the ships horn

I stand atop the banks
white owl advancing, hares prancing I
seen a parliament of owls at the Hobhole
hen harriers at Scremby
Midsummer Night's Dream at Casterton
a black swan fly at Conningsby
yet never have I seen a better sky
than those o' Lincoln county

Summer Roses

Julie Eyett



Two Poems

Kenn Gordon

Authors Note (TW: Drug addiction, police involvement, cancer)

Finn Amadam was a good friend of mine who I met many years ago whilst I was playing in an Irish Rebel band (1916)

Finn was a political person who along with his sister Hals (Hayley) watched their father being murdered by a Loyalist mob. The two kids were just 11 years old and had been coming back from playing on the football ground nearer their home. A family friend scooped up the two children and took them across the border to the republic of Ireland. Finn joined the Irish Republican Socialist movement. (which whilst Finn never committed any offence other than being a member of the Irish Republican Socialist Brotherhood) it was outlawed by the British crown. Finn spent time in the H blocks during the bad times of the late 1970 early 1980 upon his release in 1980 Finn organised protests in one such protest he was shot in the thigh by a British soldier. This only further strengthened his political feeling and when he came out from hospital he started writing leaflets condemning the illegal occupation of the four counties of the north. An arrest warrant was issued for Finn and his sister. they became what was euphemistically known as OTR. This is how I met Finn we would pass messages between the OTR's and their families here in the UK and also in Ireland. in 1998 I had an internet based Radio Show (Voices Of Resistance) which talked about the troubles in Ireland but also any troubles from around the world. Finn would come on the show and talk politics. He also helped me with lyrics for many of my original songs. Finn got pancreatic cancer in 2004 and he was still hiding out in the USA he could not afford the meds that were prescribed for him so he started to self medicate with pain killers and when the over the shelf stuff stopped working he turned to illegal drugs Morphine/heroin/fentanyl and pretty soon he became an addict. sometimes he would come on the show and talk about forms that pain took from emotion pain of broken romances, to the troubles in Ireland, to problems around the globe. As a socialist I was and still am sympathetic to his ideals. Finn died in great pain in 2016 his sister still lives in the USA I wrote a lot of the poems from the recordings that I made with him over the years. Sometimes the words can seem fractured that is because in many ways Finn was a fractured man caused by his fractured childhood. His sister is still in touch with me and when I asked if I could use his words in a book of poems, she agreed.

Finn's relationships were often fleeting. His mind though was one of the sharpest I have ever come across. He did not tolerate fools or wannabes. like his words his art (he learned to pain when in the H blocks of the Long Kesh Prison in Northern Ireland) they always had something to say usually what people did not want to hear!

So I have a couple of hundred poems which are always hard hitting. and best read in a Irish accent in order for the humour and strong views to be explained

8th March 2002

Well can I skip the maths
As I have proven me worth there...
Three is gentle
Virtuous
Fertile
Mirth
Tears
Naughty
Getting paid
And again
Getting laid
In that most miraculous of ways
Which brings on four fingers
Slapped
To your face

The Seven Layers of Chocolate Cake Blues

7 Layers of Chocolate Cake Blues

1. When people forget your birthday or make coconut instead of chocolate cake.
2. When at a wedding, the bride and groom smash cake in each other’s face and you just know the marriage will never last.
3. When kids have chocolate cakes in their lunches, but you don’t, so you have to pretend you don’t like them and that it doesn’t matter.
4. When there is a fight over the last piece of cake, of which this would be your first piece and his 8th, but he’s too much a bastard to even split it.
So you throw the cake at him, knife embedded, and it hits him in the back of the head.
A double case of the blues
because you didn’t get the cake AND you realize that some people are just mean assholes.
5. The anticipation of cake.
When Mary, renowned for her penchant for hugging and making the best chocolate cake, rings you up to say she’s coming over with one of her latest creations.
Full of anticipation, you
await her arrival.
When she does, she’s full of hugs,
but no cake in hand.
She forgot when she put it in
the car and sat on it, so now it’s a sheet cake and
you’re desperate enough for a taste that you lick the
cling film clean.
6. While you rarely eat sweets, you begin to crave a piece of chocolate cake.
So on the way home, you pick
one up for later.
Again, anticipation mounts until
you just can’t stand it ~ off you go to eat it.
But when you take off the cling film, you find it infected
with a bunch of bugs that climbed in before the seal
was made.
7. When a cake is evenly divided between all present and on your way back to eat yours, it falls on the dirty floor, frosting down, and you’re with family so no one will share their piece with you.
Now you understand the layers of chocolate cake blues.

Two Poems

Teigh-Anne Shave

Bio

Teigh-anne moved to Boston in 2021 from Essex and is an eclectic artist (& writer). Turning 50 this year she set quests to complete. She runs holistic workshops at festivals in summers, so; get back to reading her poems, was one. She also challenged herself to learn ukulele, turn a poem into a song and perform it. She did both and enjoys creating laughter and smiles the most. Her first poetry book ‘I Call My Mum For Poem Time’, includes poems and their story and will be published in September 2024 (in time for her Mum's 77th birthday).

If Bumble Bees Were Spirits

If Bumble Bees were spirits,
Would we scream and run away?
Or would we stop
and take some time,
Pull up a chair and stay?
Would we worry that they will sting us?
Or simply let them fly about.
Welcoming their presence,
Instead of freaking out.
If bumble bees were spirits
Of our loved ones that we miss,
Would we not stand close and talk to them?
Or blow them all a kiss?
If bumble bees held our ancestors,
Taking turns to check on you,
Would you not want a family meeting
Maybe gather up a few?
We'd fill our gardens with lavender,
Fill them to the brim,
And we'd come to visit often,
Have a tea party on a whim.
We'd be happy sitting quietly
While we listen to them hum
And we'd always give them compliments,
Not mention their big bum.
They'd be our friends, We'd LOVE them
Cos we'd get a second chance
At all the times we weren't there
And we'd laugh and sing and dance
We'd not worry about the stinging
We'd be happy just to be,
In the presence of our dna.
Far less scared and free.
Free to sit and wonder
What it is that they might see,
Or what they may be thinking
From the viewpoint of a bee..

You'd want them to see a happy you,
Maybe know that they are seen,
So you vow to look them in the face
And tell them how you've been.
We'd thank them for the lessons,
Of what they taught us most of all,
And we'd think all the fun we had,
How we laughed and had a ball.

IF Bees were tiny creatures
The most important of all the lands,
We could change the way we think of them
In case their survival was in our hands.
And our survival was in theirs.

The Quest

In households all around the world,
A challenge would begin.
A race of magnificent importance
And one they'd try to win.
The race would start exciting,
Some saw it as a quest.
Some thought it quite impossible
But - the reward would be the best!
Once the quest had been accepted
They'd jump into the car,
But behind the wheel there's tension
As the journey seemed quite far.
They're stuck in traffic.
It's getting late.
And they're moving like a snail.
It's looking grim and more likely,
That they're about to bloody fail.
The clock in the car glows brightly
But time's moving way too fast.
Maybe there's a little hope,
Even if they do come last.
As hope is lost and time runs out
They feel like they're in heaven.
As they turn into mcdonalds drive thru
To find;
They've only gone and extended breakfast to ELEVEN!

Renewal

Gav Skerry

Bio

Gav is a nearly 50 something NHS community health worker who loves his words.
He enjoys plotting fantasy landscapes for novels and painting word pictures with his attempts at poetry!
He lives happily in Wragby with his fiancée Charlotte and his cat Leo!

Renewal

The cold and usual
Finally withdrawn
Bright and shiny shoots
The new, bursts forward
Let’s start again

Something different
Terrifying and exciting
Stretch and change
Progress, movement, growth
Emerge out of chrysalis

As the beams shine through
Chances awake
The work begins
The harvest will yield
Regeneration

Nervous and anxious
The next stage unsure
Best foot forward
You can get there
It will get better

Life is stages

Each different
Vibrant with possibility
Let’s grab it
And do this, all so well

Kings Defence

Ali Thomas

Bio

Ali Thomas is a poet and writer studying BA(Hons) English and Creative Writing in Lincoln. She enjoys all things creative and writes in a variety of formats. They explore themes of travelling, romance, the Gothic and mythology in their work. They are currently working on their first poetry collection.

Kings defence

at the louvre,
we walk barefoot. aching.
i drag you to see mona. at the front i understand,
why the world is obsessed with dying women.
i say: ‘i lost you in the crowd.’
as if she didn’t see you too.
at the back, you take my hand whilst we take
the unwanted history.