

Word on the Street : A Poetry Trail for Morley Literature Festival September - October 2013

Word on the Street was a poetic art trail that took the public from the Town Hall to the park and other locations in the town centre of Morley and celebrated poetry on the street rather than on the page.

Morley Literature Festival's poet in residence Becky Cherriman and visual artist Bryony Pritchard collaborated together to develop an outdoor trail with eleven poetry extracts featuring work by Julia Deakin, Pat Borthwick, Ian Parks, Greg White, Michelle Scally Clarke, Matthew Hedley Stoppard, Peter R White, Linda Marshall, Ian Duhig, Oz Hardwick and Steve Nash.

The poetry installations were hung up high and down low for people to read and absorb. During the Festival, Bryony and Becky led a large group of visitors around the trail packed with conversation and en-route live performances from the poets.

The creation of the poems referenced Morley's heritage as the first producer of shoddy cloth by using techniques we've forgotten over time. Each letter was hand printed using a letterpress onto a form of felted shoddy cloth, made especially by Bryony from botany lap waste and cotton strands.





SAy THE STRIP OF GROUND HAS TOLD THE WORLD OF US...
DON'T LOOK BACK



Befogged by Julia Deakin

Say this strip of ground has torn itself
from earth and floated up into the clouds.

Say you have been measured for a halo
which becomes you like your breath, floating

between vapour strata. Don't look back,
don't ask what lies ahead, below.

Let go. Pick wave-worn sounds
like debris from the grey. Or say

you've sunk, breathing,
to the sea bed. Take stock.

Perhaps the hard-edged world's no loss
for this

more playful
fathomless







Grass by Pat Borthwick
(*Surely the people is grass. Is XI 7*)

Gather a root of grass
from every lawn in the world,
every sports pitch and gutter,
barrack and hospital ground,
fold yard and pasture, watery bank,
concrete crevice and crack,
wherever grass might force through
to wave its green flags.

And look under things
like wagons shunted away
down the branch line, a churn,
rusting headstocks, long-handled tools,
the soles of the man left waiting.
Yellow it might be
but grass knows how to survive.
It never complicates air.
It travels the world
by linking arms with its neighbour.

With these roots, start a new lawn
in a place where everyone
can walk barefoot across it
(at least once in their lives) to feel
how something as simple as grass
knows how to sing so flutey and free
you need to get down on your knees
and tune your ear to its frequency.
O grass, what have we made you hear?

And after we named you 'grass'
then renamed you 5'(TTTAGGG) n-3',
what words did the wind bring
to make you cower and tremble?

*Nimble Will, Squirrel Tail, Tumble and Quitch,
Quaking Grass, Ribbon Grass, Velvet and Witch,
Bristle, Spear, Panic, Redtop and Switch,*
why have we made you brandish your swords?

What do you know?





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OF & SCA...NG PEN REDUCING FLESH & BLOOD TO DATE & NAMES OF IN-FANTS ALSO OR GOAL EDUCATION DEATHS OF THE DEATHS OF



Registry of Births and Deaths by Ian Parks

They queued for hours outside my door
to register the deaths of men -
of husbands, fathers, brothers, sons
who died in some disaster underground:
crushed when seams collapsed, encasing them
or choked inhaling poisonous fumes.

My front room used to be the office where
those girls and women in grey shawls
offered small comfort, held back tears,
a drop of ink and scraping pen
reducing flesh and blood to dates and names.
Of infants also, born to coal and dust;

the deaths of them, the deep successive tides.
At night I blink back darkness in my bed,
lie sleepless listening to the timeless air.
The town itself is riddled and subsides,
the barefoot shuffling of their tread
a tremor running through the downstairs rooms.

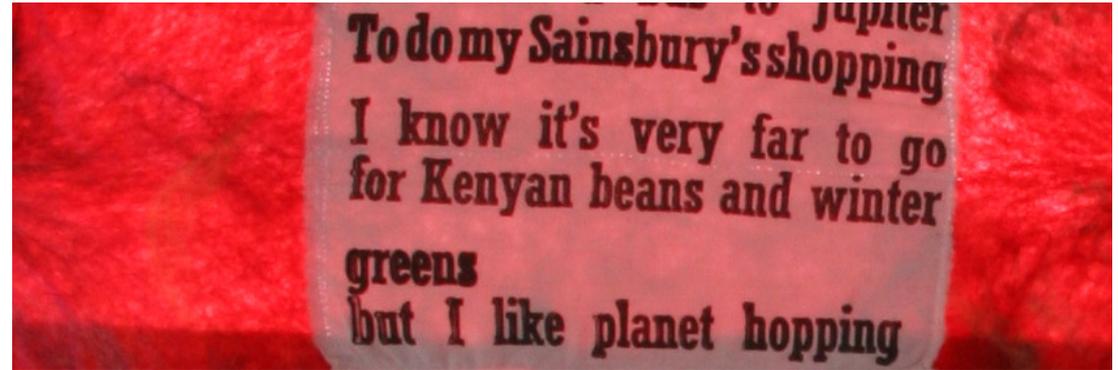
**THERE IS NOTHING
I WOULD RATHER DO
THAN AMBLE ONTO
ANY RUSTIC TRACK
TO WALK AND TALK
A MILE OR TWO WITH
YOU.**



Aberford Blues by Peter R White

No wandering cloud felt lonelier than I,
nor turned a cornflower sky such dismal grey
as when bright talk of spring finds no reply;
this conversation only flows one way.
Still kestrels hover, kites and buzzards soar;
beech is still bare, but willow's in display;
bluebells and garlic groves still wait to flower:
I am unmoved; you are not here today.
There was a time when exercise was all –
when mileage clocked, and time and pace and speed
were what I valued when I felt the call
to walk – but now there is a different need:
I simply want you there to answer back,
for there is nothing I would rather do
than amble onto any rustic track
to walk and talk a mile or two with you.





Material Universe by Linda Marshall

I'll catch a bus to Jupiter
To do my Sainsbury's shopping.
I know it's very far to go
For Kenyan beans and winter greens,
But I like planet hopping.

On Venus there's a BHS –
That sprawls across huge vistas.
I like the rows of space-age clothes,
The aisles that amble on for miles,
The floors that give you blisters.

The moons are used as 'park and rides',
From there we take a shooting star
To Comet for a bargain buy,
A flat screen or a time machine,
And then we stop off at a bar.

It takes us twenty thousand years
To do our daily shopping,
But different time zones keep us young,
Though many of them are far-flung,
As we go planet hopping.

A purple and orange patterned shawl, possibly a traditional textile, is draped over a metal grid. The shawl features intricate, abstract patterns in shades of orange, yellow, and black on a purple background. A white banner is attached to the bottom edge of the shawl, displaying text in bold, black, uppercase letters. The banner is secured to the shawl by blue ribbons at the top corners. The background consists of a metal grid, likely a window or door, with a horizontal metal bar visible on the left side.

**THEY WOVE THE BLACK WORM
A SHROUD OF WHITE STONE
AND THOUGHT IT WAS NOTHING
BUT THE WORM TURNED**



Bramhope Tunnel Disaster by Ian Duhig

They wove the black worm
a shroud of white stone
and thought it was nothing.
But the worm turned.

A red fabric piece, possibly a piece of clothing or a bag, is hanging in front of a metal grid. The fabric has a white label with text. Two blue ribbons are tied to the top and bottom of the fabric. The background is a dark metal grid.

cotton pinched from the mill
made marbles bags and
trousers for our boys
worry not, my love
you will find work elsewhere



Untitled by Matthew Hedley Stoppard

Cotton pinched from the mill
made marble bags and trousers for our boys -
worry not, my love, you will find work elsewhere.

**HER HANDS BLEED FROM
COTTON FIELDS
BACK SCARRED
AND BELLY FULL OF
WORMS AND LEGS
THAT BELONG TO THE
MASTER OF THE MILLS**



Untitled by Michelle Scally Clarke

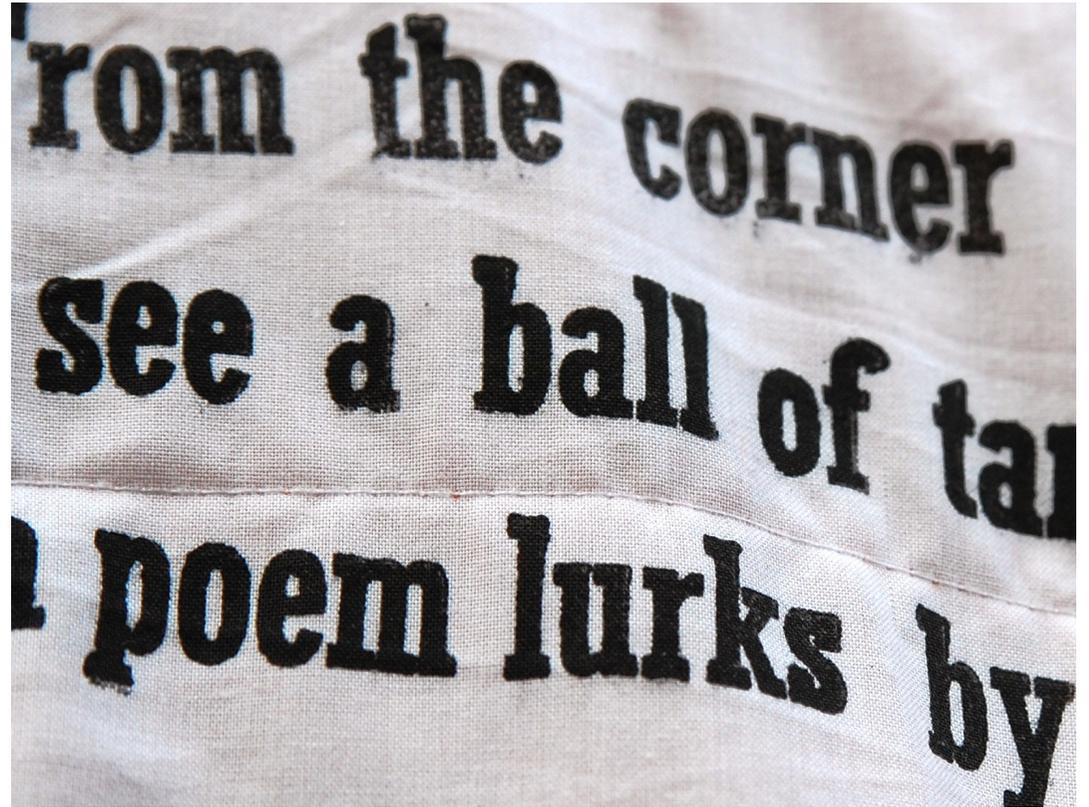
Her hand bleeds from cotton fields.
Back scarred and belly full of arms and legs
that belong to the master of the mills



From the corner of my eye
I see a ball of tangled words
a poem lurks by the door
waiting to be worked

Raw

it wants to be carded and
teased



Poem by Greg White

From the corner of my eye I see a ball of tangled words:
A poem lurks by the door, waiting to be worked.
Raw, it wants to be carded and teased, spun to a yarn,
Stretched on my page in warp and weft,
I'll weave it deftly, cleave it to a pattern and sew.

I shall wear it for best, my favourite coat.
For a season, a flattering fit for my frame.
Patched and mended, it will remain
In my wardrobe 'til metaphors fray,
Words hang off it in tatters. Until syllables sprout from the seams.



THERE IS KNOWLEDGE HERE TRUER THAN OUR BENEATH WRONG AND WE AS SO BUILT IT HERE



Mine by Oz Hardwick

There is something here
deeper than darkness
beneath these scarred hills,
harder than pain,
passion or callused hands.

There are echoes here
older than sound
beneath drowned seams,
toil and tears,
traces and twisted beams.

There is knowledge here
truer than touch
beneath wrong and right,
wit and words,
so black it shines white.





Street Psalms by Steve Nash
(in memory of James D. Quinton)

*'the edge is there
I know it's there
because it calls my name
and some days
I feel like running towards it...'* (from *Seduction*)

These streets will always be yours.
Dressed in a double-layer of cloud,
the pearls of your fingertips mime a cigarette.

A four-walled world made boundless
by your imagination. You'd strike out
into that borderland nightly

to beat out your exile in every step and word,
and return with the morning tapping stories
from your boots, scattering night-songs like sawdust

across the floor, the ineffable etched
into your face – another chance to paint
light onto the skin of light. And yes,

had you been a canvas lost in Paris
in the early nineteenth century, Picasso
may have painted his greatest work on you.

You who would always push for the edge
and thought something of my nothings.
You who will never stop reminding us

that a whisky-tongued stranger
lighting the borders with a cigarette
will always have stories to teach us.



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Peter R White, Linda Marshall, Ian Duhig, Oz Hardwick and Steve Nash