

VOLUME 1:

# RESONANCE

AN ANTHOLOGY OF RESOUNDING  
VOICES, WRITTEN AND PUBLISHED  
ENTIRELY BY YOUNG  
CREATIVES.

# CONTENTS

*Trigger warnings: mentions of blood, physical violence and self-harm are present on pages 17 and 30. Please read at your discretion.*

FOUNDER'S NOTE.....iii

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS.....iv

POETRY.....1

all american  
*Caitlin Mae Thomson*.....2

A Black Ocean Full of Mermaids  
*Eleonora Papotto*.....4

madchester  
*Caitlin Mae Thomson*.....5

Loss  
*Selene Muñoz*.....7

feeling out of place  
*Eleonora Papotto*.....9

The Vestal Virgins  
*Mary Lou*.....12

SHORT STORY.....13

Acceptance  
*Michael Raine*.....14

My Nostalgic Right Leg  
*Kate Baguley*.....18

Red-emulsion Spattered Seafront  
*Kai Daniel Malloy*.....26

SPECIAL THANKS.....31

# A note from the founder

Ta Voix is an initiative that I felt was incredibly necessary. Having faced innumerable rejections from publishers for not being experienced enough, I decided it was time to break the cycle. It felt like the only way I could possibly gain experience would be to make my own platform and, since I knew I wasn't alone in this struggle, I wanted to give others that option, too. Not everyone can afford to take time off work for work experience. Not everyone can give up the stability of a full-time job for a fixed-term internship. The industry is guilty of systemic racism, ableism and classism and, hopefully, Ta Voix will be one small step to combat this, and contribute to the diversification of the publishing industry in the near future.

Although I'm the founder of this project, the names on the page opposite and the voices in the pages to follow are entirely to thank for the creation of this anthology. Every single one of these people have struggled to get into the literary industry. Every single one of them deserves the chance. Let this anthology be a testament to the talent of those 'without enough experience'. Let it attest to their passion and enthusiasm. Let it expose a fundamental flaw in the industry. The Ta Voix team is made up of those who feel that experience is essential for a job in publishing, but weren't offered another option. The Ta Voix team is dedicated, they are talented and, above all, they are deserving.

Raphaëlle

# Contributing EDITORS

*Abi Gunning*

*Alessia De Silva*

*Alexandra Alderson*

*Alice King*

*Alice Ahearn*

*Amy Douglas*

*Amy Smith*

*Andrea Reynell*

*Angelica Curzi*

*Anna Ilaria Crysel*

*Anna Loo*

*Ann-Christin Mayer*

*Audrey Linton*

*Avery Watson*

*Aysel Dilara Kasap*

*Avneet Bains*

*Bayley Cornfield*

*Bonnie Gibbs*

*Caitlin Evans*

*Caitlin Flavell*

*Cassidy Smith*

*Charlotte Haley*

*Cíara Rosney*

*Dessie Tsvetkova*

*Elise Middleton*

*Elizabeth Oladoyin*

*Ella Elliott*

*Emily Goulding*

*Emily Simms*

*Emma Bradley*

*Fernando Concha*

*Giulia Maggiori*

*Grace Robinson*

*Grace Barber*

*Grace Balfour-Harle*

*Hannah Spruce*

*Hannah Davenport*

*Hidayah Mustafa*

*Holly Butteriss*

*Imy Brighty-Potts*

*Isobel Green*

*Jack Mckeever*

*Jia Wen*

*Juliette Howard*

*Juliette Tulloch*

*Kate Baguley*

*Kate Williams*

*Khushboo Malhotra*

*Kirsten Murray*

*Laheba Alam*

*Laura Riordan*

*Lauren Pegler*

*Lauren Steele*

*Leah Quinn*

*Leah Tozer*

*Lexie Mladenovic*

*Leyre Veras*

*Lily Evans*

*Lizzie Dawson*

*Lucy Godber*

*Lucy Lillystone*

*Malvika Padin*

*Marie Fisher*

*Martine Wilmes*

*Mary Karayel*

*Mary Lou*

*Meg Osborne*

*Megan Jones*

*Megan Powell*

*Megan Whitlock*

*Molly Burgess*

*Natalia Grzeszkiewicz*

*Nina Semple*

*Noah Grey*

*Oisin Harris*

*Olga Bialasik*

*Pearl Andrews Horrigan*

*Rachel Holland*

*Reece Jordan*

*Rhianna Louise*

*Robert Harries*

*Robyn Hewson*

*Sabrina Matica-Hickey*

*Samuel Heaton*

*Sarah Lundy*

*Sarah Rouse*

*Selene Muñoz*

*Sofia Brizio*

*Stephanie Hugman*

*Tessa Paci Innocenti*

*Vanessa Browne*

*Verity Stuart*

*Will Britton*

*Zexna Opara*

*Zoe Bondi*

*With special thanks to:*

*Hannah Beeson*

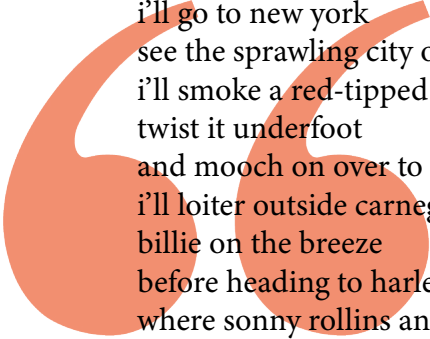
*Jane Link*

*Leyla Mehmet*

*Lucy Zeitlin*

*Sarah Goosem*

*01;* POETRY



i'll go to new york  
see the sprawling city of spires  
i'll smoke a red-tipped cigarette outside tiffany's  
twist it underfoot  
and mooch on over to manhattan  
i'll loiter outside carnegie hall, straining to hear  
billie on the breeze  
before heading to harlem  
where sonny rollins and i jam out  
on our knees

then i'll go west  
road-tripping with sal paradise  
i'll find myself in some dive bar  
order a whiskey on the rocks  
marilyn crooning on the jukebox  
i'll spin on my little red stool  
wink at bukowski  
and blow kisses across the room  
i'll stroll downtown  
through action, cut, scene,  
to drink a cola with james dean

i'm all american now,  
chasing a dream  
and breathing in  
hot disillusionment  
in dry desert land

# all american

Caitlin Mae Thomson







# A Black Ocean Full of Mermaids

Eleonora Papotto

Thoughts are swimming  
Inside my head.

Calling me to lose my mind.  
Painfully screaming my name.

Seductive mermaids,  
With long, thorny hair.

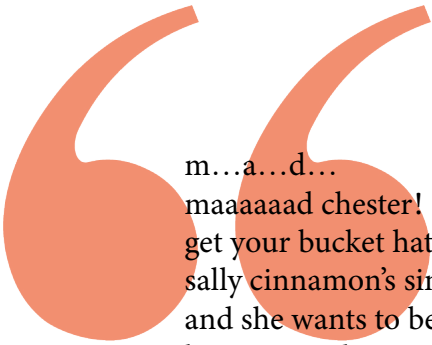
Luring me into their abyss  
With their sharp and colourful tails.

My consciousness is drowning  
In their enchanting song.


I crave you to escape from their claws:  
Kill their torment or love their flaws.

But, they have no soul.  
You will never see their eyes.





m...a...d...  
maaaaaad chester!  
get your bucket hats on boys  
sally cinnamon's single  
and she wants to be adored.  
baggy jeans kissing the ground  
and pills shoved in socks,  
on cloud fucking nine  
we walk through the doors  
of hacienda,  
ian brown is our god and  
this is the second fucking coming.  
we cadge a lift  
to a merseyside gaff,  
smoke a spliff  
and our bodies become slow  
minds floating and  
spiralling above grimey carpets.  
The next week  
we break into heaven,  
swim across the shallow water  
and experience  
a second baptism, in ecstasy  
while a low slung sun sets over spike island.



# madchester

Caitlin Mae Thomson



MATT &  
PHRED'S

MATT &  
PHRED'S

# Loss

Selene Muñoz

The serene silence of death,  
the strength left behind,  
a life now contained in frail memories.  
Night falls like a veil of grief,  
the moon shines to guide the dead and comfort the living.  
Grey as the souls lost long ago,  
and the stones their flesh call home.  
It all happened at dusk, when orange filled the sky,  
and gone was the metallic taste of blood;  
death had claimed him long before,  
the scarlet poison dribbled from his mouth.  
A silent cry of misery and desperation  
broke the air like a lonely, howling wolf.  
The unconditional love of a mother,  
the eternal youth of her soul,  
so pure it could not be contained.

He made no sound when he met the ground,  
light as a feather he faced his destiny  
as part of a divine plan.  
But what is divine other than human making,  
something above, merciful and kind,  
that does nothing but observe?  
Truth is, humans are alone,  
no one is spared.  
Death is the only truth.

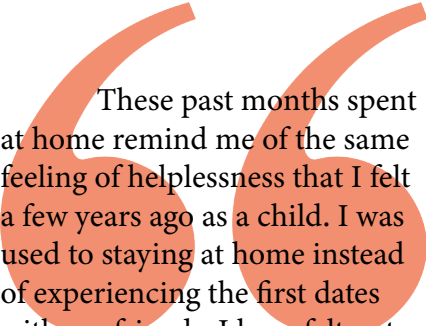
She rushed to him but found no relief  
in the empty shell she held to her heart.  
She sat clutching her own making,  
weighed down by the hefty cost of life.

Offering what was left of her own sanity to whatever was above.  
Never aware of it, but always waylaying.  
Hopelessly, as her son was sailing through the painful river,  
eternity only cost him an obol.

Pain filled her heart and dried her throat,  
rage tinted her vision red and her world  
exploded at the lack of mercy from beyond.  
She turned her head and saw the blue figure staring,  
sharing the same hopeless feeling of a future  
slipping through their fingers.  
Was that her consciousness?  
Her son?  
Was that Death itself?

She straightened her back,  
leaving her mind blank.  
All that was left on earth  
was the serene silence of Death.





These past months spent at home remind me of the same feeling of helplessness that I felt a few years ago as a child. I was used to staying at home instead of experiencing the first dates with my friends. I have felt out of place my entire life, as though unable to reach society's standards. Sometimes I would feel 'too intelligent' to go out and play with my peers. Other times, 'not beautiful enough' to walk alongside other girls who looked so charming in my eyes. Sometimes I would feel 'too sad' to go to that party and properly enjoy the night. Back then, I felt like a prisoner of my own thoughts. Now I feel like a prisoner of something external. But does it really matter why we feel like prisoners? Because, in the end, we cannot escape from the feeling. As I grew up, I realised that the childhood fears I used to hate were much better than what I find myself fearing in adolescence. Actually, many times, when we live in the moment, we mainly notice the negative attitudes we have, but when the moment

passes, these negative attitudes become blurred and we are left remembering it fondly. It has happened with my childhood memories, and I can see it is happening with people's nostalgic memories of life before lockdown. I've read countless social media posts from people who claim to miss the way their lives were before. But did any of them truly enjoy the way things used to be? Don't you remember complaining about going to work, being tired all the time, never having time for yourself? Don't you remember complaining about family obligations when all you wanted to do was see your friends or read that new book? Don't you remember all the times you wanted to change something in your life, but never had the courage to do so? We were not as free as we think we were. Of course, we were more free than during these months, but please, do not let this lockdown mess with your feelings. Do not forget that even before quarantine we were prisoners; maybe of our minds, fears, work, lifestyle, or

society. This pandemic is detrimental; it has taken away from us our freedom of movement, to go wherever we want, the ability to travel, to meet our friends and loved ones. Yet this is also a reminder that we should not go back to who we were before. We should become someone new. We should give a different meaning to the word 'freedom'. No longer should we let our fears and negative feelings control us. I do not want to feel out of place again, I want to be free to accept myself as I am. It must not be read in any philosophical way. It just means that, now that the pandemic is almost over, I won't allow myself to lose time on things I no longer appreciate, nor stress about meeting society's standards. I have already spent too much time. What is the point in being free in my movements but stuck in my fear of not being enough for society? I want a complete and full feeling of freedom.

I want to be truly free.

# feeling out of place

Eleonora Papotto







# The Vestal Virgins

“ beauty  
is a curse  
i was  
not  
blessed with

i'm one  
and three  
i'll be  
no one  
to everybody  
someone  
to few  
the one  
to the one

i'll follow  
the path  
of the vestal  
virgins  
while  
my body  
burns  
in a flame

i'll be  
the priestess  
of my  
own body

i am  
Mine.

”  
Mary Lou

02; SHORT  
STORY

# Acceptance

Michael Raine

THUS COMES THE DAY I AM TO DIE.

I squat in my cold, stone prison, my numb hands cupped over my knees. My unkempt beard begins to itch. I reach my skeletal fingers in amongst the wiry hairs and search. I pull out a large, round and hardened creature. It has a strong shell for a body and a long, protruding appendage jutting out from its disproportionately minute head. The creature silently squirms between my fingers. It is in pain, I know that much, but its biological disadvantages prevent it from making any noise that would indicate such discomfort. I close my eyes and imagine the creature shrieking at the top of its lungs, screaming in agony as it convulses in my hand. I open my eyes again and stare intently at it. The creature writhes as I hold it tightly between forefinger and thumb, but remains silent. I drop it onto the ground and it scuttles away into the shadows. I doubt I will see it again.

Why am I here? Do you want to know? I won't tell you. I dislike lingering on the past. The only thing that matters now is that I'm here, and will be dead soon anyway. Soon I shall be publicly beheaded as punishment for my perceived crimes. Soon I will cross over to the other side. I do not fear it; I am ready. I have made my peace with God. My imprisonment has left me with ample time for prayer. I have confessed my many sins to the Almighty in the hope that I will be absolved and join Him in Heaven. I will walk with Him, side by side, through the gates of His Kingdom and I will at last know contentment. I will be truly free.

I glance dejectedly over to my so-called *bed*. A dirty,

moth-eaten blanket, stained by the previous user, lies crumpled on a thin pile of straw. I look away; I have no desire to sleep now. Through the bars of my prison cell I see an empty gaol. There is not a single soul occupying any of the other cells. Even the broad-chested gaoler waits outside in the courtyard. I am alone, thank God. I do not want to spend my final moments surrounded by criminals and drunkards. All I want is peace; peace and acceptance from my Lord.

From behind the thick wooden door that separates the prison and the outside world, I hear a heavy bolt slide, and the sound of a key turning in a rusted lock. It is time. The door flies open with a crash and the gaoler stands in the frame, his muscular body strong as the walls of my cell. He stomps over to me and leers, his rough hands gripping the prison bars tightly. A quiet cough echoes through the room and he turns.

A gentleman gazes at us from the open door. Dressed in the finest clothing, the man wears a white wig and a self-important smirk.

‘Are we ready to commence?’ he asks with a high-pitched, nasally voice. The gaoler’s intimidating attitude turns automatically into one of grovelling.

‘Yes, my Lord,’ the gaoler snivels, unlocking my cell. He throws the door wide open and it hits the wall with a spectacular clang.

‘Come here,’ he commands, his finger gesturing to the space just in front of him.

I limp towards him and he binds my wrists with a thick, coarse rope that scratches my skin. His hand on my shoulder, he leads me out of the door. The gentleman follows close behind, undoubtedly regarding me with contempt.

We are outside now. The sudden sunlight startles me and I instinctively thrust my bound hands upwards to cover my eyes from the pain. The gaoler tugs them back down and shoots me a glare. I should not have done that.

We trudge along a muddy track, my feet sinking further and

further with every step. We reach a square courtyard, a raised platform standing in the centre. Atop, a man with an axe awaits, his face contorted with terrifying glee. Cobbled walls stand imposingly all around me and the entire place is filled with angry spectators, who watch me with eyes full of hate. A clear sky has opened up - no doubt getting ready to accept me to that heavenly realm. The crowd jeers at me as I ascend the steps to the chopping block.

I should be afraid, but all I can focus on is that sky. There is not a cloud in sight. A bright blue canvas gazes down upon me as I take my first tentative steps towards the block. The sun warms my pale face as I lay my head onto the splintered wood and a quiet sense of joy fills my feeble body. I can hear the axe rise above my head. I shut my eyes tight and a wide smile fixes itself onto my face. My time here is over. All the suffering will end and I will join my gracious Lord. I am ready. I hear the blade slice the air as the axe falls.



My God. It isn't possible. It can't be. Still here. I am still here.

I remain tethered to this mortal coil! It can't be so! My eyelids part and I stare at the bright blue sky once again. It hasn't changed. It remains as blue as ever. My eyes fill with tears that drip down my cold cheeks. I feel nothing. Nothing. I feel nothing below my chin. I force my eyes to move and I see the chopping block. It is higher than before and stained scarlet. I see the bloodied stump of my neck gaze back at me.

Why?

Why am I still here? Did it not work? Have I offended my Lord? What could I have done to deserve this?

*Flash.*

A flash of light. I sense it. It is...

I am accepted!

I will be next to Him. My Lord. I will be beside Him! His

But, no! The light is gone. I am not there. I am here. I am still here.

Then it happens. The once blue sky fills with the blackest of clouds, massive and dark. Not a speck of blue is visible. Rain pours down and strikes me, though I can barely feel it now. All the warmth drains from me. I close my eyes once again in some desperate hope that I might be accepted. It must be a mistake; it must! God can't have disowned me! As the lids of my eyes meet once again, I see nothing but blackness. It is a black darker than I could have ever imagined. Then, as the rain batters my face ferociously, the blackness morphs into a deep dark red. It is the red of blood; the red of blood. As the sound of the rain fades from my ears and the rest of the world goes silent...

I hear a quiet cackle welcoming me with glee.





# My Nostalgic Right Leg

Kate Baguley

I LUG MYSELF UP THE HILL TOWARDS GILMORE'S, my new satchel swinging by my side. I've always admired people who use satchels. They work in fancy offices, have important meetings and fill their satchels with files from their important meetings. The tag is still on the strap, so I pull the plastic until it breaks off. I place the tag inside my satchel, which is otherwise empty. I arrive at Gilmore's quicker than expected. 11:50 a.m. Ten minutes early.

*Deep breath, Jamie. You've got this.*

I push the door open and step in, left foot first.

Gilmore's feels more like home than anywhere in the city. I spent most of my undergraduate years here. Revising, hungover, heartbroken — you name it, these four walls have seen it. The café is filled with vintage, mismatching furniture that makes me feel like I'm in my grandma's living room. A mixture of family heirlooms and shabby chic items. There are china teacups dangling on little hooks from the exposed brick walls.

I gravitate towards my usual table. I look at the sofa pressed against the window, then to the seat opposite that faces outside. It's an antique dentist's chair that looks like a torture device. I sit down and slot my legs underneath the table, which is a tall desk that sits at my ribcage. It's the perfect spot for doing work — not that I'm here for that today. On the desk, there is a porcelain trinket of the three little pigs embracing each other. There is no sign of the big bad wolf.

11:55 a.m. Five minutes. My right leg bounces, shaking the table with each movement. I can't just sit here. I pick up my satchel and join the queue for a drink. I reach into my jacket pocket to find it

empty. I try my other pocket... nada. I look in my satchel and see only the broken tag. I've forgotten my wallet. *Bollocks.*

*How am I going to pay now? I can't ask the girl, that's just rude. Bad first impression.*

'What-if' scenarios zoom around my head until I notice the waitress behind the counter looking at me, puzzled. Her eyebrows sink downwards and her head tilts to the left. She smiles like she knows me but I don't recognise her.

'Hi.' She pauses. 'It's James, right?'

Hearing my full name reminds me of when my mum is mad at me, or, worse, disappointed. 'James' appears under an umbrella of negative emotions.

'Hi. Yes, it is. I'm not sure if I remember, sorry. I'm pretty awful with faces,' I reply. Not a very flattering response, is it?

'I'm Emily. We had History class together?' she says. 'At St Wilfred's.'

I search for the memory of the girl who sat next to me at school. All I remember of her are some chunky braces and a large fringe. Her fringe is wispier now. It suits her.

'Oh yes! Sorry, Emily, I didn't recognise you! How are you? I didn't know you worked here.'

'I'm good, thanks! I just work here on the weekends. It's the only way I can afford my MA.'

'What do you study?'

'Classics.'

I raise my eyebrows, impressed.

'What about you? Did you stay on?' she asks.

'No, I didn't. A master's wasn't really on the cards for me. I'm a journalist at a newspaper based at the quayside.' She raises her eyebrows back. 'It isn't as impressive as it sounds. Lots of making coffee, not so much reporting.'

'Ha, I feel you. Can I get you a drink? It's on me, for old time's sake.'

'A cappuccino would be amazing.' I place my hands in my empty pockets and smile. 'Thanks.'



‘The last time I saw you, you were a bit... worse for wear.’ Emily looks at me for a spark of remembrance.

I shake my head and laugh. ‘Oh God. That was a messy night. It was my twenty-first.’ I grimace with embarrassment.

‘You should have seen mine.’ she says. ‘Oh, and then you chased my friend down Northumberland Street screaming ‘Je—’

‘Oh God, please don’t remind me.’ I shake my head and laugh with her.

‘Emily.’ A woman behind the counter scolds. I assume it’s her manager.

The queue has extended out of the café. Emily gives me an apologetic smirk and returns to her job. The whole encounter makes me forget why I’m here, until my phone starts buzzing in my back pocket. I check the screen: ‘BLIND DATE.’ My old self apparently must create reminders about such things. How tragic. My new self switches the phone to silent.

I take my coffee and return to my seat. I search up and down the queue for my potential date:

*She’s a bit too old. Cute dog, though. Nope, he’s male. Good-looking, though. I like her shoes. Oh, I loved that book. Good choice! God, everyone knows each other in here, don’t they?*

At this exact moment, I spot her. Not my date, no; someone else. A sweep of blonde hair, a familiar lean on her right leg, and it’s confirmed: my ex-girlfriend. Holy crap. My heart starts racing, I’m so dizzy I might puke, and all I can think about is hiding. I impulsively duck, allowing the desk-come-coffee-table to hide me. My right leg starts jiggling just as my left leg calms down, causing my chair to spin this way and that. Maybe it isn’t her. It can’t be her.

‘Hi there, I’m sorry to bother you but are you waiting on a date? I’m struggling to find the guy I’m looking for.’

I would know that voice anywhere. Buried beneath this table or six feet under, that voice could resurrect me on its own. I stay under the desk. Maybe she’s speaking to someone else.

‘Um, I’m sorry to interrupt, but...’

I lift my head too quickly, bashing it on my way up. My face

feels completely flushed. Half embarrassment, half blood-rush. There she is, right in front of me: Jessica Stewart. *How hard did I hit my head?* Well, there goes my plan. How can you reinvent yourself in front of someone who already knows you?

‘Oh my god, Jamie! What on earth are you doing here?’

‘Jess! Hi! What are *you* doing here?’

‘I’m here on this stupid blind date. My friends think I need to “get back on the market”. What about you?’ she says, calmly smiling as if this isn’t the most painfully awkward experience.

‘Am *I* back on the market?’ I ask.

‘No. Why are you *here*?’

‘Oh, of course. Just for a coffee,’ I quickly interject. ‘And what brings you to Newcastle for this date? Really into Geordies?’

‘I’ve just started my master’s here! I was getting bored of Manchester, so I thought, why not? I always liked it when I used to visit you.’ Silence. ‘I didn’t bother telling you as I assumed you had moved somewhere better for a graduate job,’ she says, slipping comfortably into a condescending manner that likes to remind me that I’m inadequate.

‘I do have a grad job. At a paper. In town.’ *Ha.*

‘Impressive. Anyway, I better go and find my date! We’ll have to catch up properly sometime,’ she says, touching my upper arm. I doubt it has any true intention behind it. Neither does my reply.

I watch as she searches the café for her mystery date. I quickly down my coffee and plan my escape route. The queue has bulged back into the café to shelter from the rain, making my exit significantly more difficult. I push through the crowd, getting around three people away from the door when I bump into Jess again.

‘Looks like I’ve been stood up. Fancy being my knight in shining armour and accompanying me for a coffee?’

*How could I possibly say no?*

We return to my table and I sit on the sofa with my back to the window. She looks different. She has a piercing in her right nostril, and I search for the memory of that spot of bare skin. I feel seventeen again, infatuated. There’s something strange about

bumping into someone you haven't seen for a long time. You know the person, but you also know nothing about them. I know she has a birthmark at the top of her left thigh and that she's scared of becoming like her mother. I don't know what song she has on repeat or her go-to takeaway. Not anymore.

I sit through agonising stories about the boyfriends that usurped me, and she tries not to laugh about my lack of girlfriends since. I feel my right leg reach out towards her under the table. I'm not surprised. Take, for example, the incident that Emily brought up before. I had drunkenly mistook her friend to be Jess and, right leg first, chased her down the street, only to find out it wasn't. I pull my leg back from under the table.

'I'm gonna order another coffee. Can I get you one?' Jess asks. 'Yes, please.'

I take the opportunity to look around the café. My eyes land on Emily, who is clearing a table. She lifts the teacups delicately, as if they might break at any moment. She picks up a grey trinket while she wipes the table. It's the big bad wolf. I look to the table in front of me, at the three little pigs, who are smiling obliviously. I look back to Emily, and her eyes meet mine. She smiles. Jess's voice interrupts the moment, and I struggle to balance my attention.

'So, yeah, he was amazing for me, but I wanted to be by myself and...' she says as she sits down, talking about some guy called Jason.

Emily serves us our drinks, carefully placing the cups onto the table. Jess grabs hers and spills some coffee. She giggles and looks at Emily to clean it up, which she does. I catch Emily's eye and smile an apology.

'Do you remember when you would walk me home during the winter, when it was freezing, and we would just stand and look up at the stars?' Jess reminisces. 'What about when we were late for Georgia's party on Bonfire Night because we were... you know.'

I laugh along in response. She always manages to do this, reel me back in. But she doesn't mention the other side of these stories. She conveniently forgets how she moaned about us having to walk

because I couldn't afford a car. She doesn't mention my discovery of her and another boy in the bathroom at that party. I must remind myself of this side — otherwise I'll get trapped. I can't let that happen again.

'We better get going; we've been here for hours!' she says.

I get up and follow her in a trance. She walks ahead of me, and I speed walk to catch up, my right leg striding towards the past and my left leg doing everything to prevent my entrapment. As we make our way towards the Metro station, we begin to slow down. I know that this is goodbye.



‘It was so nice to see you,’ she says. ‘It was unexpected but... needed, I guess.’

‘Yeah, completely unexpected! It was great to see you. After so long.’

‘I’ll call you,’ she says as she hugs me.

It’s an awkward embrace. Wonderful and confusing — everything a first love is. In those split seconds of contact, I am transported to the past. As the familiar warmth of her cheek reaches my neck, I get the faint trace of her perfume, a deep and mature smell. I snap out of my trance. This isn’t the girl that I once knew. She is different and so am I. This uncanny clone of my ex-girlfriend leaves me in the same spot where she broke my heart two years previously. I watch her leave without turning back, just as she did that day. Talk about déjà vu. My right leg jerks forward to run after her. Muscle memory. Instead, I head to my platform.

Standing on the platform, my heart feels lighter, like I’ve left something behind. How cliché. I realise that I have left something behind: my satchel, in the café. *Bollocks*. I race back up the escalators two steps at a time. Both my left and right leg run in perfect alternation. The sign on the door says ‘Closed’ but I can see the staff tidying up, so I push the door ajar.

‘I’m sorry, we’re... Oh! James! Hi,’ Emily says as she pops up from behind the counter.

‘Hi, I think I left my bag here before. Don’t suppose you have it?’

She rises, lifting my satchel with her, and places it on the counter.

I tell myself I should stop staring at her hands on my bag and take it, thank her and leave. But something stops me, forcing me to stay; forcing me to talk to her, to find out her story.

‘Call me “Jamie”, will you?’





# Red-emulsion Spattered Seafront

Kai Daniel Malloy

SHARP, STACCATO TAPS – a pair of impatient fingers rapped repeatedly against the windowpane. The rhythmic clacking quickened as the clamour in the background grew in volume. ‘Q\_IET Z\_NE’ suggested a sequence of tarnished letters fastened above the glass. The message was fruitless, for the noise persisted. Perhaps the absent vowels were to blame. The tumult continued for several seconds before subsiding into silence. Giving her head a solemn shake, the woman with the noise-dampening fingers reclined into the resumed hush of the scudding carriage and let out a resigned breath.

After causing this disturbance, the boy hunched over the ragged carpet. His palms fervently scraped at the floor, limbs attempting to regather his belongings that were currently strewn across the aisle. His howl had stopped now. Admittedly, he had only allowed a singular pained yelp to escape, but the force and velocity with which it had erupted from his chest made it seem endless to the surrounding passengers, as if a perpetual caterwauling were to occupy their earholes for the remainder of the passage. The 11:57 Southeastern Service from London Victoria to Margate was already unpleasant enough as it was without that added irritant.

He was ungainly in both gait and posture: lanky despite being slightly vertically challenged. He was clunky and uncoordinated in almost all of his movements, with the laxity of his limbs making him appear likely to collapse at any given moment. His extremities were susceptible to tremors, and

vibrated violently as he fumbled around on the floor. Darting to and fro, he jittered around the train car, stooped in a stupor. His clothing swallowed him. Layers of threadbare textiles kept him captive — hand-me-down garments weighing on his wings, preventing a flighty escape. Within the lumbering heap of dirty laundry were a set of overalls, off-white and heavily stained, hanging slackly so that the frayed ends raked the floor; weather-beaten trainers, one of them hole-ridden and with a freshly semi-detached sole; several pieces of tawdry jewellery; a strip of ivory gauze fastened firmly around the upper forearm, reddened in the centre; and — most crucially — a Tesco bag containing a claggy egg-and-cess sandwich. His features were boyish: a puerile profile hidden under an unruly mop of flaxen hair. Stray strands obscured his vision, causing him to constantly run his fingers through the tangled mess to adjust its composition. Eager eyes peered out from beneath it and darted furtively around the train, in search of a missing artefact that he had yet to recover from the shabby overlay. Swivelling in their sockets, quizzical lenses aimed to find their focus, evidently, to no avail. Upon forsaking the search, his eyelids fluttered before closing completely in resignation. He had recovered his palette knives, foldable easel, mini canvases, and fountain pens. He had also gathered various brushes, sponges, and even a National Lottery scratchcard promising an all-expenses-paid trip to Magaluf. What else could he possibly need?

A small cylindrical pot trundled through the gangway, passing between his splayed legs. Noticing in his periphery that it was gradually edging away from him, he dived towards it with arms outstretched, skidding across the coarse flooring. Ignoring the protests of the passengers around him, he clasped the tiny container firmly with both hands and secured its flimsy lid, before pocketing it in one swift motion. The unease in his eyes evaporated, and was replaced with a contented placidity. Soon he could alight. His two-minute-and-twenty-seven second ordeal had come to a conclusion.



*Splosh!* Water seeped into his shoes, dampening the fabric that secluded his toes from serrated shingle and salted spray. It turned his cardboard bulletin into a briny pulp, the chaotically etched words bleeding steadily into one another. This illegible notice — along with its designer — would have usually been located on the sandier sections of the seafront. Today, he had braved harsher terrain, hoarsely roaring his pitch into the spit of the surf:

‘Come get ya portrait painted! Only twenty quid — proper cheap, that is! Take one home and show the missus how nice I can make ya look! Yeah, even your ugly mug!’

For the most part, passers-by paid him no heed. It didn’t help that his little sign was now practically liquid. Everyday pedestrians weren’t to know of his artistic aptitude if they were either hard of hearing or simply not listening to his unrelenting yowling.



A pair of impatient digits rapped repeatedly against a phone screen. The owner of these racketing forefingers paced threateningly towards the boy before coming to an abrupt halt. Shaking her head solemnly, the woman perched upon the rickety stool, scanning the painter with a probing gaze. She scoffed before placing her device deftly on her lap, giving it a couple of concluding clacks, and bridging her arms loosely over the tops of her thighs. She reclined further into the backless seat, giving the boy a firm nod, as she slipped a crumpled note into waiting hands. This assertive action spurred him into frenzied activity. His limbs flapped frantically as he arranged his wares. Brushes were bandied about. Pencils propelled, sponges slung, and chalk chucked. It was only when it came to handling his small cylindrical pot, that this unhinged groping stopped. Delicacy dressed his digits as he clutched the container, rolling it gingerly between his palms. He traced its peeling label, stroking the faded imprints that had once been ornately gilded lettering. Then, clasping the glass pot tenderly in both hands, he gave it a vigorous shake. A pensive look permeated his face as the vessel's contents sloshed against its walls. The cap was unscrewed, and the liquid decanted into a flimsy plastic mixing tray. Thick, viscous fluid filled the shallow dish, quivering faintly as it settled. It gleamed liverishly: a sickly sheen spread itself across the substance's skin. It spumed and sputtered.

The woman cocked her head, eyes widening at the strange ichor. She pursed her lips critically before returning to her recumbent state.

He picked up his brush. He clenched it robustly in his fist. He slashed and gashed belligerently at the canvas, layers of sweeping lacerations lay on top of one another. He violently hacked away with reckless abandon. He paused intermittently to replenish his painter's tool with bitty globules of pallid paste — these were the rare moments of calm amidst the havoc of his heavy-handed daubing. He expelled the odd groan as he painted, an air of intense concentration prevailing across his profile

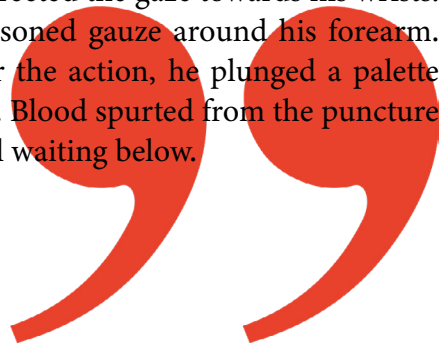
as he toiled over the piece. The woman, with a roguish glint in both irises, watched him labour.

The portrait took shape at an uncomfortably rapid pace. In spite of the brash and slapdash brandishing of the brush, individual strokes were not discernible. Tints blended into each other seamlessly, without harsh margins: the likeness of the work was abnormally accurate. There was something off-putting in its hyperrealism, the uncanny seeping through its verisimilitude. What was most peculiar, however, was how the pigment, a deep crimson before its application, took on all manner of hues and tones once administered to the canvas.

*SHATTER!* A misplaced elbow sent shards of glass ricocheting off the crags. The boy let out a searing scream that punctuated the gentle ringing of the fallen fragments. Gawking at the scarlet smatterings of fluid that now adorned the ground, he fell to all fours and vainly attempted to snatch up the fluid with cupped hands.

The woman watched the painter topple the cylinder with undivided attention, smirking at the blunder.

The fumbling stopped as abruptly as it had started. Knees and palms pressed firm against the red-emulsion spattered seafront. The boy glared at the ground, then directed the gaze towards his wrists. Wincing, he ripped off the crimson gauze around his forearm. Before the woman could register the action, he plunged a palette knife deep into the exposed flesh. Blood spurted from the puncture and dribbled into the empty bowl waiting below.



# 03; SPECIAL THANKS

*For helping with the less glamorous side of publishing:*

*Hannah Beeson*

*Jane Link*

*Leyla Mehmet*

*Lucy Zeitlin*

*Sarah Goosem*

*To everyone who supported this initiative from the outset.*

*To every single contributor, who has volunteered their time and talent to this initiative.*

*To Benjamin Davis, for forcing me to persevere when I didn't think this could ever succeed, and generously supplying his photography.*



RESONANCE, VOLUME 1: AN ANTHOLOGY OF RESOUNDING VOICES,  
WRITTEN AND PUBLISHED ENTIRELY BY YOUNG CREATIVES  
First published by Ta Voix 2020

[www.tavoix.co.uk](http://www.tavoix.co.uk)

Copyright retained by the individual authors. Ta Voix has been granted the non-exclusive right to exhibit these works. No part of this anthology may be reproduced without prior written permission of the individual copyright owners, except for the use of cited quotation.

Photography © Benjamin S P Davis  
Design © Raphaëlle Broughton  
Typesetting © Raphaëlle Broughton

# RESONANCE

VOLUME 1: AN ANTHOLOGY OF  
RESOUNDING VOICES, WRITTEN AND  
PUBLISHED ENTIRELY BY YOUNG  
CREATIVES.

*RESONANCE is the first collection of creative writing digitally published by Ta Voix, and will hopefully be the first of many. Everything within these digital bindings has been lovingly created by young writers, and meticulously edited and produced by young publishers. We are not yet professionals, but we deserve the chance to be.*

*Not only will this collection of poetry and prose resonate with you, but the anthology will be resounding. We loudly, and clearly proclaim that the literary industry needs to diversify, it needs transparency, and it needs change.*

