

Welcome to Broadsheet 26

Many of these poets are featured in the New Generation Poets issue of *Agenda*, Vol 49 Nos 3-4 and we welcome the new voices of those who aren't.

We proudly present the two featured artists: **Rachael Kantaris** and **Ann-Marie James**.

After obtaining a Foundation Diploma in Art and Design at Falmouth School of Art, **Rachael Kantaris** studied for three years at Brighton University and was awarded a B.A. (Hons) in Visual and Performing Arts where she did both fine art and contemporary dance. She then spent a further two years completing an M.A. in Fine Art Printmaking in 1992. She has exhibited widely including being invited by The British Council to do a residency and exhibit in Berlin, Manila and Sydney.

She says of her working process: 'Etching for me lies somewhere between sculpture and painting. It can be a very physical medium, and I use and explore this sculptural quality in my work. I love the contradiction of altering the surface of the metal to create painterly marks on the paper. My imagery develops from a desire to explore something ambiguous; a sense of place, a perspective, an emotion, a colour. From these beginnings the piece becomes an adventure, not knowing until I finish where it's going to end up.'

My work is driven by a fascination for colour and I spend weeks changing the relationship of colours slightly until I get it right, but what is unique about the etching process is that none of this struggle shows, and the finished piece has a freshness and glow about it not possible to achieve in a painting. Ultimately I do it because it's very exciting, especially with etching' There's something magical about the moment you finally lift the image off the press and you've got it right.'

Rachael lives and works in St Ives with her husband and three young daughters and runs The Porthmeor Print Workshop, a large, open-access printmaking [workshop](#) where she makes her etchings. She teaches at various places including The Tate St Ives and The Newlyn School of Art and she also has a painting studio around the corner and regularly exhibits her paintings and etchings in galleries throughout Britain and worldwide.

Ann-Marie James (b. 1981) was born in Buckinghamshire, UK and currently lives and works in London. The artist studied MA Fine Art at Wimbledon College of Art, London (2010–12); Postgraduate Diploma in Fine Art at Chelsea College of Art and Design, London (2010) and BA (Hons) Fine Art at Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design, London (2001–04). Awards include the Derek Hill Foundation Scholarship at The British School at Rome (2013–14); MFI Flat Time House Graduate Award, supported by the John Latham Foundation, London (2012); The Jealous Graduate Print Prize, London (2012) and The Queen's Award, Central Saint Martins Scholarship Awards (2003). She has undertaken residencies at Headspace (supported by the Daiwa Foundation), Nara, Japan (2011) and Lantana Projects, Memphis, TN, US (2006).

She says of her work: 'My practice, which encompasses painting, drawing, sculptural intervention and photography, employs quotation to explore my relationship with both the specific source material that I appropriate, and the history of the discipline in which I am working. I am interested in taking something that already has an established cultural reading that I can wrestle with, adapt, exploit, examine and transform. Operating within the existing aesthetic of a pre-existing image or object, I aim to make something that is both in keeping

with, and at odds with, the nature of its source. Drawing upon cultural artifacts that, over time, have been widely considered to be revered, established, accomplished, poetic, beautiful or sublime, I seek to explore their transmutation to form new composites- a dry conceptual approach that is contrasted with a visceral aesthetic. Within my practice, aspects of purloined pictorial elements from art history are veiled, conjoined, contorted, revealed, emphasized, interpreted, translated, explored, repeated, omitted and manipulated, imbuing them with a new spirit to my own ends. The hybrids that I have constructed have so far taken the form of small paintings on found book plates, pencil drawings, large scale paintings and photographic documentation of interventions made (with permission) at the Museum of Classical Archaeology at Cambridge University.'



Rachael Kantaris: Aponysios, acrylic on board



Ann-Marie James: Marmo 1, acrylic and oil on board

Caoimhe Devaney is an 18 year old Irish girl. She is in her final year of secondary school in the Holy Child School in Killiney in Dublin. She has won 1st place in the senior categories of two national poetry competitions (the Patrick Kavanagh Poetry Prize for the poem 'Andromeda's Garden' and PDST Mind's Ink for the poem 'In the House of a Dying Man'). She has also been published in the graphic novel collection *Demons in Disguise*. Her influences include the poetry of Sylvia Plath and Pablo Neruda.

Porphyro

We are terminally young.
Too young, it seems,
To live like this;

At once two old crones
Shuffling after each other
In a nursing home, and

Stocky white-haired infants
Whose fat fingers touch
For a long instant.

I am too young to understand
This nameless feeling, but
I know the colour of it;

This quiet purple, and if
You look closer you'll notice
A faint red flicker, keeping time

A little slower than a heartbeat.
This is the colour of the space
Between your closed lips, the

Inside of my eyelids, the endless
Sunday afternoons spent bending
Time into something new,

This is the colour
Of the things I miss
When I'm alone.

Charlotte Eichler is 33 years old and lives in West Yorkshire. Her poetry has appeared in magazines including *Agenda (Broadsheet 22)*, *The Rialto* and *Ink, Sweat and Tears*. She is a freelance book editor and assistant editor of the *International Medieval Bibliography* at the University of Leeds.

Still Life

A soft unstoppable wind blows into the kitchen –
wings dim the light to a chiaroscuro glow.

Velvety bodies cover the surfaces, crawl like drops
of water over fruit. My husband strips bones

at the table as one clings to his face, hiding his eyes;
I can't hear him speak for their rattling flight.

Dinner's burning and I feel like a visitor
just passing through. In seconds they're pouring

back out the window like smoke – one lands
on the tips of my fingers, shakes in the breeze.

The Fifty-Year Traffic Jam

sits tyre deep in sphagnum moss
surrounded by cracked glass

and rusting fern. In spring, bluetits
hurl themselves at wing mirrors

and oily pools collect electric dragonflies
with copper wire wings.

The forest drinks them in,
sucks up radiator fluid and cogs –

its creaking branches sound
more metallic by the day.



Rachael Kantaris: Storm, etching, edition of 20

Born in Belfast in 1993, **Jacob Agee** attended St Michael's Primary School (1997-2004) and Royal Belfast Academical Institution (2004-2011). He has recently completed a four-year joint honours BA in Jewish and Islamic Civilizations, with Classics. He divides his time between Belfast, Dublin, and Korčula in Croatia. His poetry has appeared in *Poetry Ireland Review* (Issue 111, edited by John F. Deane) and the TCD literary journal *Icarus* (three times).

Iphigenia

Poor girl.
Forgotten outcrop
Of war's cost, at Aulis.

Blood on the tideland going out,
Glossing whirlpools, dying rock-pool sea grottoes.

Eyes, hazel-polished olives
In sea foam, abdomen white, dead as snow.

Hair tangled like dulse or kelp,
Locks over what could have been,
Plastered, now, on her mermaid-cold skin.
Dry crust of bloody sand, and soaked clothes, clinging.

That dead hair that first fuzzed and fanned out
Like a peacock's wings, in water.
Up and down in red ink with the ebb of hours.
Now left by the tide that took him away,

On to Anatolia, ethnic cleanser,
Hero of Hellas, and huntress appeased
By feminine blood. Low tide, like all
That could have been going, and going, but yet still here,

Really, in her cold surreal peace
On the beach, coastal limbo, free from the beast.

The Silent Valley

Butterfly *polje*, sometimes. A soft
Silence steeping in the heat, out beyond Koćje.
Where admirals float amid scant flowers
And cabbage whites twine feints with lilacs,
Around the old stone walls. For movement, this is all:
This, and the evergreens' odd breeze-sways at the rims.

Stillness adjourns like the sky itself,
And all things are always still.

Still are the trunks of the trees.
Still are the dry-stone walls and the *drače*,
And the karst dacha on the hill above
The still vineyards and the olive groves.
Still is the silence in the chairs in the trees
For the wild boar's hunter-in-waiting.
Still too is the mine in the shaft
Left unexploded since World War II.

And silent is the morning: no cock crows.
Silent is the evening: no dogs going at it.
A silent depth, out of earshot of all roads.

I summer out there in the maquis,
Where it dips into the Silent Valley.
I know it, its half-left fields always empty,
The trailed ridge where snippets of sea
Are seen between the hills. From the cypress'
Nod of ascension to the pale mauve on
A butterfly's wing, it tells me as much as itself.

Notes:

Polje: valley, fields (Croatian).
Drače: brambles (Croatian).

Nightingales

in the olive meadows,
seraphim of the night,
with their shrill erratic trills,
a sweet needling
in the land's duvet,
comforting deep darkness.
The flowers woven out from
Penelope's ear-loom.



Ann-Marie James: Marmo 2, acrylic and oil on board

Jessica Traynor is a thirty-one year old poet from Dublin. Her first collection, *Liffey Swim* (Dedalus Press, 2014), was shortlisted for the Strong/Shine Award. Poems have recently appeared in *Hallelujah for Fifty Foot Women* (Bloodaxe, 2015) *Poetry Ireland Review*, *One* (Jacar Press), *The Stony Thursday Book*, *The Irish Times* and *The Stinging Fly*. She is under commission by the Arts Council (IRL) to write a poem as part of the Easter Rising centenary celebrations, and was a runner-up in the 2015 Troubadour International Poetry Prize. She works as Literary Manager of the Abbey Theatre, Dublin.

Knot

Herleva felt something stir inside her
when carrying her son, dreamed that the boy
came out of her womb and grew into a tree –

Just as when Robert called down from the rampart
to the trench where she was dying cloth
Herleva knew the stir in him –

history makes room for coincidence,
for prophetic ambition, and Herleva
imagined her small life grown into a tree

with a brood of golden apples lacing its branches,
a white horse dancing between her thighs.
The shining seeds of it stirred inside her,

only to be struck out by the scratching
of black-inked quills. The tanner's daughter
had a boy that grew into a tree,

named bastard for his mother's
meaner roots. History made a footnote of Herleva:
and though a seed had stirred in her,
the only trace left is the knot inside the tree.

Katelyn VerSprill, 24, is a poet, researcher, and messy cook who resides in Edinburgh, Scotland. Originally from New Jersey, she moved to the UK in 2014 to pursue her Masters degree at Lancaster University in northern England and is currently a PhD candidate at the same institution. Her poetry has appeared in *Killing the Angel* and helped her become the 2014-2015 Fulbright-Lancaster University Postgraduate Scholar. She has studied under the direction of poets Mark Doty, Eoghan Walls, and Paul Farley.

Bankrupt

Downstairs, my father sings
another old folk song as he
marinates our last few steaks
in soy sauce, honey, and spices.

He peels the potatoes, sets them
to simmer, and sautés the mushrooms
with chopped leeks, onions, and garlic
splashed with a good white wine.

While the meat kicks up smoke
on the hob, he blanches the broccoli,
tosses it with a generous drop of sesame
oil and a handful of toasted almonds.

He has already uncorked the best
red wine and it stands breathing.
Dessert will be strawberries
and fresh cream, whipped by hand.

When we sit down to eat,
he thanks God and his grace
for the food and the drink,
but we have nothing left in the house.



Rachael Kantaris: Tableau, acrylic on canvas

Lucy Ingrams, in her forties, has had poems in *THE SHOP*, *Ink*, *Sweat and Tears*, *Magma* and *Poetry Ireland* among other publications. She is studying on the MPhil Creative Writing programme at the University of South Wales under Philip Gross.

Wirry-cowe

A bugbear or ghost

– from ‘worry’ (Scots: wirry) in the sense of harass, and ‘cowe’ a hobgoblin or object of terror

I walk and the evening, like spoil
 laid for gamblers, spreads
winged marsh orchids, grass of Parnassus –
 summer’s booty, its spreith.

I climb a dune’s shadow, till light
 bursts on its gold-rush west,
and I’m blinded and touching the gaze
 of deer silhouettes.

I walk and can part gull dialects,
 kittiwake from black-back from fulmar.
I stop and an owl gathers – dream-rows
the tide of thin air.

Till Perthudden – Is it Poor Man rock
 or some wirry-cowe gets up
there and goes with me? All shruggish, screwing
its goitre in gulps.

We walk and the cowe works
 to subsume me: punctures
cushioning heather, a cartwheel of beach,
 mind-greys and heart-sours.

The cowe tramps – though the evening
 offers plover, like plenty,
two lochans, like two sides to a coin,
 a rain cloud, like clemency,

for my ransom – and then it’s too dark to star
 if I’m hexed, or I’ve fled
(through a hatch in its head)
to the heels of the cantling deer?

Patrick Wright, 35, is a writer and academic living and working in Manchester. After his PhD on the sublime at the University of Manchester, he has taught English and Art History at the University of Manchester, University of Salford, MMU and the Open University. He currently teaches 'The Arts Past and Present' and 'Voices, Texts and Material Culture' with the OU: humanities modules, which include Creative Writing. Thus far, he is author of two books and several academic articles.

The Mania Doll on Southport Pier

In the days of the roller skating rink
we had one called Pepe. Boxed-in,
his pierrot wrists jangled, his feet
impaled with strings. Now this

as you tilt your head like him,
your hat of paper cloche, ridiculous;
deadpan behind a blind woman's shades,
strange as a geisha.

He laughs and laughs as if his head
might fall off. And the more he laughs
the more you regress to the time
you said they thought you sick

for not being entertained. Young
as I was in the roller skating rink,
you recalled how you slunk among kids
your age, and went catatonic

as your peers laughed and laughed
at the freak show, by the bendy mirrors
and holograms, the clownish hordes.
You went serious and shy

as you do so now: shoulders stiff, a form,
letting your bag of chips go cold.
The kiosk shadows, they crane.
A coin-operated doll ends the show.

Angel of the Cosmos (The Mural)

As you stretch on a chair and wear something throw-on, the mural
you make is streaked in ultramarine; globes of peeled paper, plaster;
forms you infer from light – alien super earths
all brought together in the galactic centre.

I observe and confer from the cherry red swivel chair
your itch to smash the kentia palm vase, stick slivers as mirrors,
get someone else to curse themselves and shape its smithereens,
encrust those seas with shrapnel. Your what-ifs cascade –

like Muji frames, tiled across and over; dabbing toenail varnish,
red to accentuate the pareidolic skull; crackle glazing
the skirting boards – nitromors, tangerine dream, fireburst
with shocks of magenta; stick lights lighting the unsunned corner.

You burn magnesium bright as I come over occasionally, brush
your feet through your chaussettes, Vangelis playing in the background,
as you sublimate with a scourer and matt glissando strokes.

I trust your guesstimations when you say this is destined to be

a true aurora borealis of coloured auras and orbs.

You unpeel again accretions of layers, a neighbour's décor –
greens, dirty mushrooms – and insist on a star field over it,
starboard side; plumes of hot gas in a nebula. You stand back,

hands on hips, head cocked to one side, rhapsodised, zoned
somewhere remote, full flow. I have to temper though the madcap
proposals, since you would happily bolt a chair
up there or fibre-optic cable, fix false limbs and eyelashes

on paint, when I would go for the more sensible gold leaf.

And when not looking you write *avec le fantôme* in lipstick
on the shabby chic shelves – shocking pink, freshly sponged boho,
old rose – too manic to include me or kiss.



Rachael Kantaris: Spring Rush, etching, edition of 10

Paul Connolly's poetry has appeared in *The Warwick Review*, *The Reader*, *The Cannon's Mouth* and *The Dawntreader*. He was shortlisted for the 2015 Bridport Prize and won third prize in the 2015 Magna Carta Poetry Competition (judged by George Szirtes).

Train Encounter

High-vis overall, smell of fags, dry cement,
Tall curly hair squared off at the side, bent

Sharp chin, thin grouted-on black beard, the eyes
Of Walid Jumblatt, he couldn't miss him, tries

To ignore leg-splayed sprawl, hard hat, bag, the
Olfactory disruption this spindly

Builder – who'll get off at East Croydon – stalls
His planned broadsheet-absorption with, and falls

Back inside redoubts of the familiar,
Thoughts of their latest. What was wrong with her?

For she had willed them bring more death into
The world, their own made another's, we do

Our deaths on those who need us, he sensed, saw
The builder's smartphone. *Absorb, taste, deplore*

Is sophistication long in making. The
Icon repeated over and over: she

Feigned shock at discovery on her bed
One finger at her lower lip, three red

Stars alone clothe WetLucy21.
He tasted long enough, a moment gone

At once, beat down by indignation, to guess
This the chat-room world he swerved when, unconfessed

Almost to himself he'd sought release – she
Is pregnant after all – on online girlie

Mags. *Fuckin bitch Ill fuck you.* He caved in
Shrivelled as he thumbed the words. All that laughing

At his eyes, taunts, the back hands from his dad,
The priest, finding a place among the lads

In sociabilities mocked up from urge
Normalised, dirty talk made freedom's upsurge,

Liberty from that drabness, from the *O*
Clemens, o pia, o dulcis virgo

From the midnight door knocks caught from his mother's
Eyes, even after they had ceased, these are

Not his collect. Nor his. He tries, spying down
His paper's crenulations, to disown

Suggestions of involvement. Kin? What rubbish.
A sepsis spored across his Petri dish

Of prime ingredients, the spoil of
The world, must not soil mine, stay above,

Although we keep our neighbours – purge my keep –
And are alike, my brother – fuck you creep –

And Blackadder's wise woman cries out *Kill*
Everyone in the world the answer his will

Returns to. East Croydon. The builder gets
Off, a dark pinstripe takes his place. He lets

Slight sweats settle and cool round his flanks, stares down
A cougher, then draws his paper up, compounds

Himself within his taste's conventions, due,
Exact, and joys in atomy anew.



Ann-Marie James: Marmo 3, acrylic and oil on board

Rob Yates, 24, recently returned from a two year stint in Indonesia and New Zealand. He is now back in the UK. His work has previously appeared in *Agenda's* 24th Broadsheet as well as *Morphrog*, *London Grip*, *Poet and Geek* and various other online magazines. He hails from Essex.

The Distance Between Things

What is it that turns porch lights into stars,
distant suburbs into firmament, unmarred
by dusk's stretch, domestic quarrels sunk, and
impossible to hold?

The white reach of some far gone ridge, the soul's
mind climbing towards a line of brute snow,
the cold spine, something falling through a dream
away and away and beautiful
for all that,

such as receding sleep, closest and furthest
of all our homes, a peak and a well, the crest
and utter sink, a world away from mountains,
but akin.

What is there in the distance between things
that turns a shared bed into a breathing
gulf? We live beneath each other's skins but,
in sleep and waking, branch.

The gaps between words. All that is not said
and all that hurts when spoken, growing dead
out of the mouth, because when speaking out
one is always on the edge of all living,
but when the hunter's call rings in the distance,
it sings.

What is there in the distance between things?
The porch star in the valley, the closing
of doors, high mist, our painful intimacies.
The navigation of what's next to us
and, moving outwards, gone.

Tess Jolly has had poems published in a wide variety of magazines. She has been commended in the Four Counties Poetry Competition, the Barnet Arts Competition and twice in the *Mslaxia* Women's Poetry Competition. Last year she came joint second in the *Stanza* Poetry Competition and won the Hamish Canham Prize. A pamphlet is due from Eyewear Publishing this year.

We'll Talk about This When it's Over

we'll talk about this when it's over I tell myself
as I help him down from the hut on the hillside
as he becomes less and less able to walk
we'll talk about this when it's over I say
when I see the shock in the driver's eyes
when someone gives him water and it falls to the floor
we'll talk about this when it's over he sounds
like he's speaking in tongues he keeps trying to get up
as if there's somewhere he needs to be as if he could go
anywhere now we'll talk about this when it's over
a nurse is sorry there's nothing she can do
on this island 'til morning strangers carry him
onto a boat they pat him on the back wish him luck
and I know what kind of luck they mean
we'll talk about this when it's over people are asking
what's wrong I don't know what to tell them
because what could be this wrong he's slipping
in and out of sleep we'll talk about this when it's over
he opens his eyes to order two *Beerlao* I want to cry
because wherever he is he thinks I am with him
then he doesn't open his eyes anymore we'll talk about this
when it's over when children name their worst fears
some say being the last one awake in a house
they describe it as loneliness I hear music
I can only imagine dying to we'll talk about this
when it's over because talking will make it
the past which will mean we'll be telling a story
which will mean it won't be happening to us any longer
they tell me another few hours and he wouldn't...
then he wakes and the sun has melted into sea
the moon is a tossed coin rising something is over
but something else is beginning I don't know what it is
or how to help and he doesn't want to talk



Racheal Kantaris: Islands, acrylic on canvas

Rosamund Taylor is 27 and from Dublin. In 2015 she was a runner-up for the Patrick Kavanagh Award, and shortlisted for the Montreal International Poetry Prize for the second time. She has been published in a number of magazines in the UK and Ireland, including *Crannóg*, *The Shop*, and *The Stony Thursday Book*. She is working on a first poetry collection.

Hominidae

Once we knew how to suck a nipple,
our first discovery our tongue pulling life
into our mouths, that tug, that rite.

I used to groom hair with my mouth and fingers,
seek warmth and find it, I knew what to do
when I saw a tree, a forest, its golden shadows.

Now I wake too early, sit in leather chairs,
eat grapes from Chile, I forget my body,
these legs, this mouth. I don't see the wild

though wildness is everywhere – deer in Phoenix Park
their skin twitching, a cow rubbing her face
on spring grass. Moss growing, always growing.

Everywhere and still I forget how to lie
in the sun, how to walk in the dark.
The closest I come is through glass –

my breath held, my hands raised: through glass,
I see an ape's furred hands,
then her palms, lined, like my own.

Will Burns, 35, was born in London and raised in Buckinghamshire. He didn't finish his English degree, choosing instead to start an ill-fated band with his brother. He has worked in factories, cleaning windows, painting houses and the best record shop on earth. He likes sports and ornithology and is Poet-In-Residence at *Caught By The River*. His poems have been published in *Structo Magazine*, *Ambit*, *Illustrated Ape* and the *Independent Online*. He was named as one of the 4 Faber & Faber New Poets for 2014 with his pamphlet, *Faber New Poets 10*, published in October 2014.

A Chinese Restaurant Called Happiness

The first day we met
I told you exactly the way
it was going down.
A litrona or two
of beer and the book
of Lowry fragments.

You were tough as your blood
then and only let
yourself out in increments.
We stopped talking one day
but it wasn't talking properly
anyway, at that point.

Just messages and other stuff.
A whole channel of noise
between us, and everything
tending to scraps,
where you wanted real, honest food.

That one time I flew
over to visit I looked out
of the plane window
the whole flight. Imagined
all that living being done
out there in the cold.



Rachael Kantaris: *Between Two Places*, acrylic on board

Ryan Foster is a 22-year-old writer from North East England. He is published across various subjects, including short stories, sports journalism, political writing, and music and poetry criticism. In 2015 he started his own freelance writing business, Foster Editorial. In 2016 his debut poetry volume, *Achilles On Reprieve*, was picked up by Lapwing Publications.

By a Lake

Ariadne is in old age, not yet reborn at the behest of Dionysus.

Promenading with Ariadne,
A woman of strange complexion,
I chuckled

At a gang of urchins
Wading after geese,
Tripping and splashing with their
Brittle sticks.

And Ariadne expounded;

'I now am, I think, at a sufficient width of
Consciousness, and have thus fulfilled
My marriage.'

The geese had drifted to the centre
Of the water,
The boisterous gaggle
Cheered obscenities, comically-intoned.

'I've earned my peace, I think,
And it's greater than hebetude.
You say I married a lush, well,
Is that in itself not enough
To bring in
The gentle dark?'

The geese had taken to the air,
In the middle of the bright water
One of the boys was flapping
Like a fish on ice.
I could no longer make out the vulgarities.

The People Crouch by Water

We have had our hour of peace
And now must talk commence;
Hope!
Hear; from fat throats fly
Volleys of rhetoric,
A chorus at groin-height,
We return pell-mell to pondside,
How still and unobtrusive the surface.

At klaxon-call the women kiss,
Cannabis sucked from tongue to tongue,
Pellets of it, in commerce.

The gods of slumber
Bring in the evening,
And blankets for tumult.
The town's mouth is ringed
With blanketed forms,
We needn't suffer these things awake.



Ann-Marie James: Marmo 4, acrylic and oil on board

Sarah Lindon's poems have appeared in *Magma*, *Poetry Wales*, *Scintilla*, *Seam*, *Stand* and *The Reader* and in *Tokens for the Foundlings* ed. Tony Curtis (Seren, 2012). In 2012 she completed an MPhil in writing at what was then the University of Glamorgan. She is 34 and lives and works in London.

Woodlouse

Somehow it's never squashed.
It drops from under a log,
turns and tickles away,
undercurrent, suppressed purr,
it can clench into the shape
of a plate-armoured seed
that will not germinate.
It runs like a tray of itself,
curling slightly at the edges,
useful, giving nothing away
and you try to pick it up.
Sudden spherical artefact.

Viper

basks in the open till charged then
plummets like mercury into the ground,
propels its flex pregnant with intent,
inhabits undergrowth, unseen thrum,
the malcontent ready to use its venom's dizzying
lifeshaft into the blood,
vertigoing prang of feedback discharging mind;
travelling totem, little transfusion of adrenaline,
a single limb, self-spring, self-hinge, the lust
in wanderlust, penetrating each small space
and rewiring it, a strange, cool motor,
resolves its molten mettle on rock.



Ann-Marie James: Marmo 5, acrylic and oil on board

Robert Francis is a poet from the Black Country. He graduated from Teesside University's Creative Writing MA and is currently researching his PhD at the University of Wolverhampton. His work has appeared in many online and print magazines. His first Chapbook, *Transitions*, was published in 2015 by The Black Light Engine Room Press.

Merry Hill

From the remains of Roundoak
(still warm before rust)
buds the cenotaph –
a hankersore,
sharp, sanitised
with slick polish.

Instead of taming steel,
that feeds every chink
of our honeycomb,
we're sold xenos
that breed skulkworms
over our loot.
They chew
and mottle lavea
through our roots.



Ann-Marie James: Marmo 6, acrylic and oil on board

