



Unlocked

heartlines

Unlocked

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Unlocked

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Preface

As we emerge from the physical lockdown we've collectively endured in 2020–2021, we are celebrating poetically with the very timely theme of 'unlocked'.

Heartlines writers is now a well-established group with its own website; www.heartlines.uk. Four of the members run the very popular Soundbites open mic which happens on the second Monday of the month and group members have been published on a variety of platforms. This is our second pamphlet, a follow up to **sunglasses at midnight**.

The 26 poems explore multiple facets of the theme and reading the poems is like entering a hall of mirrors or gazing into a brightly cut jewel – you glimpse another view, another idea, another vision as you turn each page. Some poems are joyful, some thoughtful, some regretful, some fantastical, some playful, some touching, some sombre and each poet has their own unique voice.

You can also listen to the poems on our YouTube channel (accessed via the Heartlines website).

We are very grateful to The Arts Society Leeds for their generous support for Unlocked. It's been my absolute pleasure to curate the pamphlet and we hope that you enjoy savouring the feelings and emotions that the poems conjure up.

Liz McPherson

On behalf of all the Heartlines writers.

July 2021

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Un[b]locked [One Letter Can Make All the Difference]

Malcolm Henshall

Here Lie Demons

Bill Fitzsimons

Up in Smoke

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New Year

Liz McPherson

Earth day

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Inspiration behind the poems

Free At Last

Open the cage
and see the bird fly,
spreading her wings
as she soars into the sky,
over fields, mountains and streams,
blood rushing through her body,
breezes caressing her feathers,
free at last.

Unlock my door and let me out.
Let me run through the garden,
through the streets and the parks,
feet thumping on the pavement,
then, rustling through fallen leaves.
Laughing, breathing, dancing,
blood pulsing in my veins,
free at last.

Open the door to my heart.
Let me tell you how I feel.
Watch me break out through
all the unnecessary barriers
I carelessly erected around me.
Let me be me, as you are you,
and we can soar together once more,
free at last.

Marie Sheard

Fantastic Break Away

I got up and breakfasted extremely merrily
The troubles of others on the news didn't bother me
I switched off the twitter, the i-pad and the big telly
Did my packing mentally and set off fantastically

Up into the hills with the tent and no rent to pay
Pitched by a stream which splashed and gurgled all the
day

Wet grass in the morning as I soaked my socks all
recklessly

And tended to my blister in the vista very carefully

Exuberant and carefree as we spurned all the waterfalls
And sped up Ingleborough with nougat and chocolate
balls

And clambered in our thick socks and boots to the very
tops

And met others there in their tee shirts and red flip flops

My imagination running wild to camping near Ingleton
White Scar caves and Thornton Falls, lots of pretty
villages

But ultimately all I see is lockdown life that's all humdrum

And by my bed an empty flask, Gripman's brand of
laudanum

Rosie Cantrell

Awakening (an aubade to a morning in April 2021)

Sometimes she is slow
in the mornings
unlocking herself gently
from the nights storeroom of dreams
stacked on shelves of untold meanings
and fragments that fade with the light.
She uncurls now, like a fern frond
opening to the sunlight
and the unlived mystery
of the new day

It was a long time ago,
in another land called yesterday
it all happened
The silence, the absence
of the knock on the door,
of the cars rumbling past,
some with windows open and the beats breaking
out across the pavements
and the low rumble and curved
white signatures of the planes overhead.

The sharp scent and bitter taste
of the alcohol rub by the
half glazed front door.
The masks on the other side,
some made with bright African cotton, some in
blue denim,
or that old flowered fabric,
reshaped from a teeshirt.

Later, came the surgical strength masks
she ordered in bulk
on the internet.

The conversations and the classes
with others of her species
moving, and speaking
from their postage stamp boxes
stacked sixteen to a screen
in a zoom room.

The familiar call of

“you’re still on mute!”
as mouths moved, voices
unheard.

All that is behind
as she uncurls into this new day,
green and fragile,
consecrated with hope
and spring sunshine.

She examines the shelves
of the unlocked storeroom.

The possibilities are endless.

Today she will go out.

Today she will meet with a friend.

Today she will see her mum in the garden.

Today she will go to the hairdressers.

Today she will drink this coffee,
warm, dark and fragrant with life
in the corner café.

Today she will.....

Eileen Neil

A Whole Year Gone

I am stuck in
a scrolling screen,
Is it January?
or Tuesday?
or midnight?
I've been nowhere
done nothing.
A whole year
a whole girl later
a whole new child to measure.
To greet.
To hug
To kiss.
A whole year
bittersweet and bruising.
Not nightmare nor waking life.
A whole year.
My first grandchild
locked in my phone
A whole year.
A fallen tree of a year.
A whole girl later.

Cate Anderson

Block

Contrary to popular stereotype,
poets are hardy creatures.
We suffer for our art.
The struggle to unlock
the right metaphor.
It is a battle.
Finding the key to
the appropriate simile,
invades our every waking hour.
No peace for the poet.
Writing in our centrally-heated cocoons,
rather than watching Bargain Hunt on the tele,
is like a priest flagellating himself.
We must bare our souls
and our etymological scars
before the heavenly muse.
We struggle with our stanzas,
rebel against our rhymes.
We are martyrs to our metaphors,
slaves to our similes.
But do we wave the white flag?
Do we roll over like a slain boxer?
No, we fight on,
throw off the shackles
to release lines,
such as these,
of beauty and insight,
to enlighten those poor sods
who are not poets.

Malcolm Henshall

The Locksmith of Mumbai

The old locksmith sat by the open door of his shop
Sharpening his pencils
Watching the dusty dawning of the day
The early risers walking to office, shop
Or market pushing barrows of fresh picked produce.

The heat was rapidly rising this Mumbai morning
As the shutters came down and awnings went up.
He glanced at his work bench and key cutting tools
As he sat behind his writing desk
Wondering what the day would bring.

It was many years since his wife
Was taken from him by the Gods.
Every day he yearned to join her
But he knew he had to be patient,
Do good in the world before that happy reunion.

Each day since she had died he had written a short verse
A reminder of why it was good to be alive
About the joy in the world
The consolations of service
The happiness he still had to share.

Each day he pinned them to his shop sign
A picture of an open lock and keys.
His customers read them, admired his optimism,
Took comfort from his fortitude
His placid acceptance of bereavement.

As time passed, passers-by stopped to read
Small groups would congregate each morning
Waiting for the shutters to rise.
The day's verse, pinned to the sign, brought smiles to
their faces
Lifted their spirits to face the coming day.

A steady stream of humanity would pause at his shop
Some reading aloud for friends and strangers
That could not read
All marvelled at the beauty of the locksmith's words
The passion for life, the glimpse of future peace and
repose.

Some asked him to write a poem or letter
To a secret lover, a favourite child, a betrayed wife,
A despondent husband, or an unrequited love.
Some were illiterate, others not well versed
In the language of love, despair, hope and remorse.

The years passed by and he became revered
A poet, a philosopher, sage of the secrets of the soul,
Of the vagaries and vicissitudes of the heart,
Hearts that need mending
Hearts closed to hope and happiness
Hearts to be unlocked.

At the end of each day
Awnings down and shutters up
He climbs to his room above the shop
Eats his frugal meal, sat opposite an empty chair
And tells his wife stories of the living.

In bed, as he slips into sleep
He whispers a verse of love to the sentinel Gods
To pass to his beloved as he patiently waits for the day
He will unlock his own heart again
In the peace of their everlasting embrace.

Terry Wassall

Another Shaming Secret

Another shaming secret unlocked
from the trick box of our colonial past.
This time, the Imperial War Graves Commission
flying false colours from a crooked mast.

Their task: to commemorate citizens of the British Empire
who lost their lives in the Greatest War.
Their pledge: that regardless of military rank
or position in civil life,
all would be treated equally in their graves.

A century on, duplicity is exposed
and finally labelled.

Acred rows of tended sentries
stand a white and watchful guard
above the finest of the fallen.
Meticulous monuments list the names of others missing,
presumed dead.

Yet some were deemed too pagan to appreciate
identified spaces and personal headstones.
They expired too far from home,
had families too poor or uncivilised
to ever visit such resting places,
so 'the erection of individual memorials
would represent a waste of public money'.

Instead, registers were compiled and consigned to
archives,
or simply lost.

Those bodies were buried in mass graves
outside the pristine walls and grassy slopes,
abandoned to a legacy
of scrubland, litter and dust.

So, yes, a secret is unlocked –
another scandal of our racist history,
admitted grudgingly
with no possibility of redress,
then privileged lips revert to silence
though there's so much more to confess.

Barbara Lawton

Amnesia

Unlock – All that grief, all that pain
Unlock – Breath and breathe
Unlock – A scintilla of hope
Reaching into the past
Unlock – the future
Seek justice
For the visceral horror
Meted out against people of colour
(Now and then)
Unlock the bodies
Crash through the centuries
Excavate the mines of selective Amnesia
(For some).
Unlocked – A running sore that cannot heal
Lock up hate
Reforge the key
Unlock love
And live

Myrna Moore

When Galaxies Break Anchor

When the Milky Way and Andromeda meet,
It won't be love. It will be
Destruction. Linking star-strewn arms,
A Dance of death will begin.
When Andromeda kisses, she takes a life.
The whirligig will grow in pace,
Suns will be thrown into space,
Whole systems, linked for billions of years
Will fail.
Moons will perish,
And comets lose their way.
Matter will clash with anti-matter,
The gods themselves will scatter.
And, come the end,
Their two black hearts will join
To form one heart no bigger than a coin.

Howard Benn

When Galaxies Interlock

When the Milky Way and Andromeda meet,
It won't be destruction.

It will be love.

A marriage of stars, a consummation,

Two galaxies lost in one another,

Where gravity serves as a lock

To their embrace.

All heavenly bodies

Will have the room to breathe,

The space from sun-to-sun

Remaining.

Pulsars will beat with heart anew,

Moons of all colours will rise

Above planets where star-crossed lovers gaze,

And, from afar, where we call night,

One heart will shine a love so bright.

Howard Benn

The April Fool

The man I met in my dream
wore pantaloons maroon,
upon his head a hat of straw,
across his cheek a brawling scar,
beneath his brow, squarish eyes
of liquid mawkishness,
he smiled, his bow-tie twirled,
'meet me in the star-quilt sky',
he lilted. I left the bar of gin
and glittering garb,
outside the dream he grew
larger than a giant oak,
with his country-city look,
poor-rich man marooned,
deep inside my head,
let loose upon the world
to play light-hearted tricks.

Linda Marshall

Breaking Through

Who are we?
Fighting to live
Bursting through the canal
To breathe our first earthly breath
The first fight won
Luck of the draw as to which golden madonna will nurture
us through the rocky terrain of grazed knees and bumped
egos, of shy stumblings.
We may, dig deep inner strength from God knows where.
To get up again and again
To grow to transform
Even through dark, thorny, strangling suffocating
beginnings
Some of us can breakthrough this hostile cocoon to warm
our wings
In another light
To see the colours of a new world
A world that allows
That accepts
That gives love
To all it's creatures
As we blink and stretch
Into who we've become.

Karen Byrne

To Mr Denney and his Classroom Cell

You tried to teach us but there were forty
of us. So you pressured and poured scorn on
our attempts to learn and made the year for me
quite awful with your lash of rulers, wooden,
rapped against your other hand, thrashed with threat
as you strode down
aisles of our classroom cell,
growled sarcastic words – still we couldn't get
what it was you meant to say, at least not well
enough to understand, we just cheered the bell,
(inside), jingling the start of joyful playtime,
freeing us from your manufactured hell
your pent up banged up scene of hate crime.
How could the playground, with its concrete hardness,
the outside ice-cold freezing toilets,
seem much safer than the classroom, joyless –
with you who seemed to want to harm us?
Well, it could and it did, for you, Mr Denney
might have been good for a few but not for any –
one like me.

Rosie Cantrell

Out of Reach

The heavy keys clank on his chain
and he looks in as he passes the cell.
Rainwater drips into a drain;
far away there's the toll of a bell.

He looks in as he passes my cell,
'You'll be lucky to get less than twenty.'
Far away there's the toll of a bell;
my brain feels shrivelled and empty.

'You'll be lucky to get less than twenty-'
I dream at night that the door is unlocked,
though my brain feels shrivelled and empty
I see my passage to freedom unblocked.

Cold dawn light creeps in through the bars,
rainwater drips into the drain,
dreams fade, hope dies with the last fading stars
as heavy keys clank on a chain.

Dru Long

Connections

Yesterday, rummaging in an old drawer,
I found a black and white photograph:
stiff and Victorian figures,
a message from past time.

A sepia-toned portrait of a young couple,
artificially composed, a studio picture.
He, stiff-collared and stern: she, enrobed
in an iron-bodiced gown, no smiles
upon their set faces. I stared in
curious wonder at this scene out of time.

I had seen this picture before: memories
stirred in the canyons of my mind.
I recall my mother showing me this with pride
and sadness—the only likeness she had
of her grandparents, a relic of the family line.
Was I ten when I had last seen this?
No matter, for as I gazed at Time's reminder,
I felt the flow of history and blood converge,
forging their past and my present in a union
indissoluble as eternity and love.

Bill Fitzsimons

Photograph

Her memory is fragile lace, same face
but not the character we knew. Behind
the shaky smile are shadows, flitting
to and fro, of family, work, another

childhood long ago. And like the sun
behind a cloud her real self's allowed
a fleeting flare, a shaft of sunlight in
the dark, a rare and unexpected sight.

Tasks once relished fade away, the TVs
left on most of the day to give the false
impression of some company while intellect
unravels almost imperceptibly.

A pot of tears instead of tea, a tap
that can't be turned, a key that's lost, a cherished
garden full of weeds, dead flowers in the vase,
hours filled with loneliness, anxiety.

But on the mantelpiece a picture draws
her gaze, despite the cataracts that cloud
her eyes. Within the frame, a world away,
a couple on the lake at Roundhay Park.

She slim and dark, he young and fair. She knows
that soon she'll join him there. He holds
her hand, I'm here my love, she hears him say.
Preserved for sixty years, their perfect day.

Liz McPherson

Into the Light

From the dark depths of
The pond, larvae crawl out and
Dragons fly away.

Wilting sun flowers
Turn their weary heads towards
Another new dawn

Leaf buds swell, drowsy
Insects take flight, singing birds
Are weaving their nests.

The solitary
Heart is unlocked with the key
Of an open smile

Terry Wassall

Grandma's Bedroom

I unlock her bedroom, now empty of her.
It is dark, with its heavy sculpted bed frame,
its dark wardrobe which I open onto white linen
And the scent of rosewater and lavender.
The bed rests under a vast white lace eiderdown
Looking like snow on the mountain tops.
Two marble topped tall boys keep guard at either side
and a vivid floral velvet cushion nestles in the armchair,
a rare spark of colour in the silent gloom.
At the bedside the big alarm clock with fluorescent hands
Stares out blankly, while the bronze bulldog keeps an eye
on
The pink glass ball of the night light.
Unlocking the room unlocks my memories.
Here I am, a child, at the end of the day, sitting with
grandma by the window,
Grey wooden shutters pushed aside, net curtains
fluttering.
We count the few cars heaving their way up the steep
road below.
Church bells ring every quarter and men in blue overalls
and berets
Come and go from the café on the ground floor.
And there I am, at night, lying cocooned in heavy cotton
sheets,
Watching rare lights flash by on the ceiling, sliced by the
slits in the shutters.
I listen to the regular beat of the alarm clock speeding
towards morning,
And count the quarters, halves and hours from the church
bell.

Marie Sheard

I Do Not Sew

Though I do not sew
I've stitched my heart tight into my chest.
Not French knots in brightly coloured silks, but
with chains of steel.

I've stitched my heart tight into my chest
to shield it from this darkest year
with chains of steel,
a year that deadened hope and smothered dreams.

To shield it from this darkest year –
a funereal tapestry of fear,
a year that deadened hope and smothered dreams.
It's time to patch my withered heart with care.

No thick wool tapestry of fear –
but French knots in brightly coloured silks.
It's time to patch my withered heart with care
though I do not sew.

Cate Anderson

The Key

We saved the box until last. Clearing the drawers and wardrobe had taken longer than I thought.

The taffeta and brocade dress spun me back to 10 years old watching my mother's face light up the room as she greeted the guests. I ran my finger over the gold embroidery, it looked untouched.

The smile was fleeting. I smiled when she smiled but too often her brow had been furrowed. Anger came easily. Rage came easily. It had taken me a lifetime to understand these eruptions.

Would I put this ensemble on the pile for St Augustine's or should I keep it? I placed it on the pile that could not be discarded – yet.

Absence is a presence.

The box was embellished with mother of pearl trimmings. It had come back with her from the Holy Land tour in 1965. Opening the lid revealed yellowing receipts but buried in the folds of the fraying, satin lining was a key. I felt the weight of it, as I looked around, wondering what it would unlock.

Myrna Moore

Cop 26

An exquisite teabowl falls,
and shatters into many pieces;
a leg bone snaps against the windscreen
of a reckless driver's car,
hearts break as lovers leave
without a word or backward glance,
and hourly, in some nearby ancient forest,
earth's lungs are hacked and felled
for fuel, creating deserts
on our devastated planet.

We fear nothing will ever be the same,
the bowl cannot ever be as perfect,
the bone as tough, the heart as trusting
or free of longing for a love that's lost.
The earth will never be as lovely,
the seas as clean, and free of plastic
the forests of ancient oak and elm
as full of life, or glaciers be as frozen.

There's no return to how it was,
there can be no turning back;
but we can unlock an ancient power
and with the golden dust of restoration,
see the hidden meaning in the scar,
seal the cracked and broken bowl,
heal the torn and trampled heart,
know that the mended bone is stronger,
seize the chance to halt the desolation
of our one and only home, in the spirit
of kintsugi, with a global golden joining.

Dru Long

Un[b]locked [One Letter Can Make All the Difference]

She is 86,
a born-again Christian.
Bells and smells are not her thing at all.
Clinging to life but
assured of heaven.
Is that a paradox?
I spoke to her.
She in the Hospice.
"I am consecrated", she said
Is that some form
of last rites for those of
an evangelical persuasion?
I wondered.
This was hard but, unlike her,
I kept going.
"I've never been consecrated before,"
she said.
Neither have I, I thought.
"It must be the change in diet,"
she said.
The penny, unlike other matter,
dropped.
"Constipated"!
"That's what I said, is the line bad?"
'That must be uncomfortable for you?'
"Yes, but I hope to be unblocked this evening"
"Let's hope so,"
I said movingly.

Malcolm Henshall

Here Lie Demons

Who will unlock the dark dungeon
of my deepest and most shameful
secrets? All the accumulated dross
of a lifetime of sin.

In the basement of my debauchery
lurk demons – the howling monkeys
of madness
and psychic vampires
that devour any decency
that may have lingered.

In my sweat-stained bed I wrestle
with the ghosts of my wicked past.

But to no avail. I cannot shake
off the memories of my misdeeds.
Oh God, please release me from
this bondage. Please unlock the door
of my dungeon and let the light shine in.

Bill Fitzsimons

Up in Smoke

Trembling, she unlocked the box,
its Gothic key ponderous,

mistiness rose towards her eyes,
causing them to smart.

She remembered the bitter tang
from his cigarettes,

how he used to blow smoke rings
into her screwed-up face,

how she coughed, and hated it,
put up with his selfishness,

his spending on clothes, music,
how he sucked her dry,

lounged about in breakfast bars,
and never paid for coffee.

True to form – his gift on the day
of red-blood Valentine,

consisted of nothing, cost nothing,
fog in a vampire's box.

Linda Marshall

New Year

That oil painting course I meant to take,
letters unwritten, library books unread,
a special message for a birthday cake,
scores of poems imprisoned in my head.

Those posh dinners that remained uncooked
the room unpapered, the marathon not run,
holidays and theatre trips I didn't book,
photographs not taken, the diet failed again.

The ends of years are dusted with regrets –
stillborn and stunted things, half formed schemes,
drawers stuffed with forgotten projects,
shapeless thoughts and embryonic dreams.

Time now to sweep them all away –
New Year, new resolutions, another day.

Liz McPherson

Earth Day

It took him so long to find his way
through the interstellar dust
wading through dark matter,
electromagnetic radiation
and stellar nurseries.

The last glimpse of his home
was a pale blue dot, receding
in distance and in memory,
until his own warm yellow sun
became a faint star
in an unnamed constellation.

There had been ravines
where water cascaded in silver droplets
through honeyed strata of multicoloured
craggs, clefts and towering cliffs.

Meadows of wildflowers
with their oceans of nectar
and the soft humming of the bees.

The trees arching their branches
into webs of twigs wreathed with leaves
of spring green, unfurling
like flags, waved at the sun's light.

Wild creatures had prowled through jungles,
wandered the hot dry savannahs,
while the winged ones soared and
warbled through the sweet air.

The scent of roses, or jasmine,
or warm amber wafting like incense
through a sacred landscape.

The gates of Eden were left unlocked; open
for the bankers to ravage the garden.
Ignoring the lone voice of the shepherd,
wolves mauled the sheep,

and the lion devoured the lamb.
The river Acheron was dammed
and Charon the boatman was redeployed
to manage the floodgate, as
the Elysian fields became a building site.
The blue planet grew grey and weary
under the weight of concrete,
the once flawless oceans suffocated

by multicoloured plastic particles,
and used ring pulls.

Once, in another time it had been Earth Day.

Everything connected in the breath of life
and the water of being.

Everything had been One.

All the names of God united
in the Great Spirit, weaving
in and out of the green
and blue weft of the planet.

What happened?

What on Earth happened?

What in heaven and on earth happened?

Who allowed it to happen?

And why?

Why?

The last word was soundless
in the unending ether
of the universe.

Eileen Neil

THE INSPIRATION BEHIND THE POEMS.

MALCOLM

Block

The idea for this poem originated from a Heartlines meeting. We were to take a line from a novel and use it as a prompt to write a poem. From it came, I hope, a humorous piece suggesting that I, in my guise as a poet, shouldn't take myself too seriously.

Un[b]locked

Whilst I didn't have this conversation myself it was one that was reported to me. I have embellished it, of course, to bring out the humour in what is a sad situation.

BARBARA

Another Shaming Secret or Duplicity Exposed

A response to revelations that the War Graves Commission reneged on their commitment to ensure all citizens of the British Empire killed in the Great War received equal memorials.

TERRY

Into the Light:

This collection of four haiku addresses feelings I have about the relaxation of the Coronavirus lockdown being eased in the Spring of 2021; the feeling of release in the lengthening days, the renewal of nature and the promise of good times to come.

The Locksmith of Mumbai:

This poem was prompted by a true story broadcast of the BBC World Service. The general theme is that of problems that open opportunities and unlock potentials.

HOWARD

When Galaxies Break Anchor

When Galaxies Interlock

The galaxy Andromeda is actually approaching the Milky Way (they won't meet in our lifetimes). Happily, of the two scenarios in my poems, the peaceful one is more likely!

MARIE

Free at Last.

I wrote Free at Last to express the yearning for the release from restrictions during lockdown.

Grandma's bedroom

is about unlocked memories when visiting a place where those memories were once made.

LINDA

The April Fool

In The April Fool I describe a character who featured in a recent dream of mine.

Up in Smoke

This poem was written with my favourite steam punk trinket box in mind.

DRU

Out Of Reach

'Lockdown' always had a sense of 'lock-up' in my mind and the poem came from the thought of how that felt.

Cop 26

The Japanese concept of kintsugi, a golden joining, breakage and restoration, inspired me with the idea of the joining together of world leaders meeting at the COP, to stop global heating and repair the planet.

ROSIE

To Mr Denney and His Classroom Cell

It's hard to stand up to bullies as a child, especially if the bully is a teacher. But you can pick up a pen fifty years later.

Fantastic Breakaway

This was written when Covid meant we were restricted to our home area, so the best we could do was take imaginary trips.

MYRNA

Amnesia and The Key

Both poems have the same influences. They are a tribute to my English teacher introducing us to Seamus Heaney. He said, 'These poems will never leave you'. Unlocking secrets, the pain of the oppressed, are the raw materials.

EILEEN

Awakening

An aubade is a poem to the dawn of a new day. I wrote it in April 2021, when we were allowed to meet up again as two households out of doors.

Earth Day

Someone had sent me images of our blue planet from space, and I was reflecting on how rapidly and mindlessly it is being destroyed. The poem pulls from sources ranging from Greek mythology and the Bible to science fiction. The building site near my home is actually called "Elysian Field."

BILL

Connections

My first poem, was inspired by the discovery of some old photographs hidden in a drawer.

Here Lie Demons

My second one is an entirely imaginary piece, but possibly inspired by old guilt feelings.

CATE

I Do Not Sew

An attempt to reconnect with emotions kept under lock and key since the start of the pandemic.

A Whole Year Gone

A reaction to the restrictions in place to control the spread of the Coronavirus and which have prevented me from meeting my first grandchild – born last year in Jakarta.

KAREN

Breaking Through

A reflection on how individuals can break through nature/nurture to become who they want to be.

LIZ

Photograph

Written for my mother-in-law who, after the death of her beloved husband and in ill health herself, longed more than anything else to be with him. The poem was read at her funeral which took place less than a year after his passing.

New Year

I love writing sonnets – this one celebrates the time of year when we traditionally look forward to taking on new challenges.

Take a stroll through a glittering hall of poems created to fit the very timely theme of 'Unlocked'.

Stretch and breathe in a collection that celebrates the joy of release, tells stories of hopes and dreams, calls for wrongs to be righted and dabbles in make-believe and illusion.

Written with skill, precision and touches of humour these poems carry you along on an unforgettable journey.

There is much triumph and hope in these crafted poems which imagine, with great originality, the freedoms and change unlocking will bring. With this anthology, we can all look forward.

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<http://www.theartsocietyleeds.org/>