

Issue 7  
Autumn 2008

# Scrabble

THE

TASTE

ISSUE



FREE CREATIVE WRITING MAGAZINE PUBLISHED BY TELL US ANOTHER ONE

HELLO



Taste, they say, is a very personal matter: be it our taste in foodstuffs, fashion, relationships, music, books or art. Join the Scribble dinner party this autumn and sample some truly delicious morsels of poetry and prose. Chew on trout with poet and novelist Gift Nyoni, go carnivorous with Nabila Suriya, sample ciorbar with prize-winner Hilary Walker and then muse on architecture, opulence and the stresses of getting home furnishings right. We are also delighted to publish an extract of Bernadine Evaristo's marvelous new book, *Blonde Roots*, and to chat with Lizzie Finlay, children's book illustrator extraordinaire.

Bon appetit!

Kim Haygarth  
Editor



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SCRIBBLE  
SPOTLIGHT  
ON...

GIFT  
NYONI:

WRITER  
WITH BITE



One of the pals in this summer's fantastic Anjum Malik and Friends poetry event at Rochdale's Wheatsheaf Library, Gift Nyoni left the audience cheering for more. Gift is a deadly serious writer, primarily of prose, who is profoundly interested in the people who society views with suspicion, fear or disgust: "Within them, there is still the human element and its voice is what I'm interested in expressing. His aim in writing is to bear witness to society's ills and he says that this is where his interest in poetry kicks in: "At times, the things witnessed bring up feelings of frustration and anger, the

urge to react immediately. I don't choose to write poetry, it's a release mechanism." As a writer his ambitions for the future are: "To ask questions. To shock people to death and back. In 10 years time I will be practising law, holding one or two people to account." Crikey! If you meet Gift, you'd do well to be on your very best behaviour.

On the lighter topic of taste, what about his palette? He's pretty easygoing when it comes to his favourite dish: "Take a chicken. Kill it. Pluck it. Boil, fry or roast it and I'll eat it." But the fabulous poem below was inspired by a real-life dining nightmare: "A woman I loved refused to return to me because she had met someone else. As she drove her stiletto through my heart, she calmly grilled trout and offered it to me. She had never cooked trout before. In an effort to slander her, I convinced myself she had learnt it from this new man. I sat down and let my imagination from its cage." It's a poetic morsel every spurned lover is sure to enjoy chewing over.

Check out Gift's weekly blog at [www.commonwordblogs.org.uk](http://www.commonwordblogs.org.uk) and watch out for performances as he vows to become a more regular voice on the North West poetry scene.

### Whole English Trout

Whole English Trout  
I tore up all your letters!  
I ripped them all and scattered them in the wind like broken teeth  
I went through all our photographs  
And burnt holes in your eyes  
For seven days and seven nights  
I starved myself of sleep  
Just so I wouldn't dream of you  
Feign for you  
Lean towards, my empty right

I miss you dearly  
And I wish you were here  
All I have left of you is this trout  
That He cooked for you  
That night  
That You cooked for Me  
The following night  
That you taught me to cook  
Over many nights  
That I'm cooking right now  
Under candle light  
For your sister

© Gift Nyoni





## TELL US ANOTHER ONE : CHAPTER SEVEN

The last quarter at Tell Us Another One has, as always, been action-packed! **The Folk on the Hill**, a stunning book of stories and poems from the Langley estate was launched in September at Langley Library with readings, beautiful 'washing line' art (you had to be there) and cake. Who could ask for anything more? The book has garnered an overwhelming response. Get your copy of this limited edition book from Langley Library (and don't forget that Christmas is coming so you might want some for family and friends!). Ring them on 0161 654 8911 to find out opening times.



**Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow** has been an exciting digital stories project working with ROFTRA and young people from the Falinge area in Rochdale. Participants wrote stories reflecting on their lives so far and their hopes for the future. Audio recordings of the work were then skillfully mixed with still images by facilitator Marie Crook to create fun and powerful 'films'. Check these out on the Cartwheel Arts website.

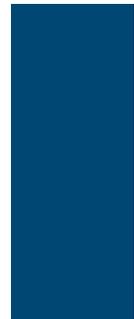


Community workshops on **Children of the Dream**, our multicultural children's storybook, are now completed and three amazing illustrators (including Lizzie Finlay, see over page) are beavering away bringing Surestart parents' poems and tales to life for the publication which is out in December.



Our regular monthly **story groups** continue in Darnhill, Deepish, Langley and Spotland and we've been having lots of fun. We regularly work with some of the best writers in the region and recently we've visited recording studios to get our words down for posterity, Rochdale Town Hall (at the express invite of the Mayor) and Bright Books to hear Lemn Sissay reading work from his brand new poetry collection.

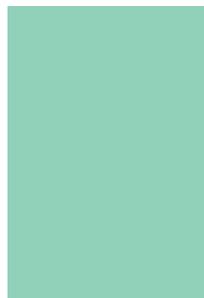
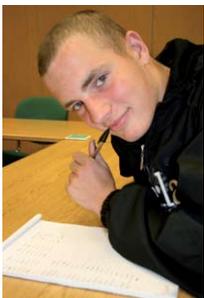
For more information about any of the Tell Us Another One activities, contact Kim Haygarth at Cartwheel Arts on: 01706 361300 / [kim@cartwheelarts.org.uk](mailto:kim@cartwheelarts.org.uk). And be sure to add [www.cartwheelarts.org.uk](http://www.cartwheelarts.org.uk) to your 'Favourites'



**Next Issue: Journeys**  
The deadline for submissions is Friday 12 December.

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LIZZIE FINLAY:

A QUIRKY CHARACTER

At one time or another we've all been captivated by some truly magical illustrations that we've seen in a children's book. **Lizzie Finlay** is a Manchester artist with a sizeable back catalogue - both as children's book illustrator and more recently as a storyteller too. Here she chats to Scribble about her early artistic leanings, drawing baddies and babysitting.

**Were you a budding artist as a child?**

I've always loved drawing, painting, doodling and making things. Art was definitely my favourite subject in school.

**When did you first think seriously of becoming an illustrator?**

I think I've always wanted to be an illustrator, even when I didn't know the word for it. I was delighted, in primary school, when I found out it was a real career. A bookbinder taught us how to make little books that we filled with our own stories and pictures. I loved every minute of it and I decided then that this was my dream job.

I also considered studying English, as I love literature and narratives, but illustration is great as it brings text and image together and there's a joy in responding to the words.

**Are you the type of person who will sit in a cafe doodling on a serviette?**

Yes, but I always have a little sketch book handy to scribble in, to capture everyday things - people's expressions, conversations, things to include in future pictures, things that inspire me.

**What type of stories do you love to illustrate?**

I love stories with quirky characters (I like the baddies, they're more complex and fun to illustrate - the pirates and the wolves - as long as they're not too scary). I like stories with great descriptions and suspense, stories that transport you to another place, and ones which move you.

**Which children's illustrators inspire you?**

Lots... Quentin Blake is my all time favourite, David McKee (Elmer, Mr. Benn) Lauren Child, John Burningham, Neil Layton, Marc Boutavant, Dr. Seuss, Charles Schultz (Snoopy)...

**What type of art do you like in general?**

I love David Hockney's drawings and early works, they're amazing... skillful. I love Jean-Michel Basquiat for his freedom and expression and Andy Warhol's work really inspires me. I also like mail art, for it's rubber stamps, ephemera and collage and because it documents journeys and processes and is a fun movement.

**Tell us a bit about your work as a writer as well.**

I've recently started writing as well as illustrating, and I'm loving it. It's great to work over a whole book. My first book Dandylion is out in January and it's been a dream to have it published.

**What would you like to be doing in 5 years' time?**

This. I love it. I'm very lucky.

**Do you like adult books less than children's books?**

I like both, but probably have more children's books in my house. The children's section is usually the first department I visit in a bookshop... I can't resist peeking at the new picture books.

**Given your storytelling expertise, do you find yourself called on to babysit for children of friends and family?**

Not really, so far.

**This issue of Scribble has a 'Taste' theme. What's your favourite taste in the whole world?**

There's something magical about avocados! Also, a good cup of tea when you're gasping, a beer at the right moment, and... chocolate.

**Name two things that you find bad taste in other people.**

Mean-ness and dream-squashing.

**What would be your three top tips for artists interested in getting into illustrating children's books?**

1. Be determined, keep drawing. Draw everything. Look at children's books constantly.
2. Some training in Illustration helps.
3. Contact the Association Of Illustrators: [www.theaoi.com](http://www.theaoi.com) for the best advice on the whole industry, including seminars, guidebooks and exhibitions.

Lizzie's book Dandylion will be published by Red Fox in January 2009. For more information about Lizzie's work visit her agent's website: [www.Tallbean.co.uk](http://www.Tallbean.co.uk)



# OVER TO YOU... TASTE

## New Buildings Planned

Let's cross our fingers -  
As an architect crosses fingers  
'Gainst the planner's crassness 'nd backhanders -  
That this'll spring from native earth  
To sit impeccable and timeless  
Between cathedral and cherry-blossom.

© Rodney Hall

## Ionic Irrigation

The dark descends, mugginess heralded its return  
It catches me unaware, as I chase around the house and garden  
Closing open windows, which once brought a refreshing chill  
Rescuing stiff washing already revealing the first drops.

I sit quietly, by the last open window  
Catching the change in the air, the unique smell  
Caressing my nostrils, a cleansing balm.

The deluge begins, stripping the leaves of city grime  
The trees dance as the water courses down their trunks  
The street litter and silted drains groan  
Unable to resist the persistent flood  
Combining to create a muddy soup.

I watch the storm whilst it drifts away,  
Abandoning soggy leaves, giant puddles, drains choked  
Taking a deep breath I inhale the freshness that remains.

© Sue Holt

## Never Question Your Wife

Oh brave is the husband  
Who chooses, in haste,  
To question the value  
Of his dear wife's taste.

The choice of the wallpaper,  
Purple and bright,  
Won't go with the carpet  
But then again, might!

The flowers in the garden  
Don't flow through at all,  
Especially the vine  
Growing up the back wall.

He might have been wiser  
Had he dithered and tarried,  
For just look at her choice  
Of the fellow she married!

© Rodney Hall



### Thirst Quencher?

I drink up knowledge,  
Like water from a cup,  
Absorbing and remembering its taste.  
It drains through my body,  
Giving me wisdom and intellect.  
I know that one day,  
The cup will brim over,  
And I will have tasted enough.

© Yasmin Hussain



## OVER TO YOU... TASTE

### Milk Men

When first seduced,  
I was reduced  
to a fruity fool on heat  
by a creamy, dreamy, full-fat treat;  
rich as rice-pudding.  
Too much naughtiness  
left me a bloated mess.  
Sickened of the cooling clot,  
found he was no Lancelot,  
so I sent him on his curds and whey.

On a whim  
tried someone skimmed.  
Harmless as a calf,  
cut calories by half.  
Relations so healthy,  
but hardly a jamboree.  
A weak cup of tea,  
just too bland.  
Bird in the hand  
not worth two in the bush.

So I resist my fad for cads,  
avoid goody-goody lads.  
A semi-skimmed dish  
will deliver my wish  
for a well-balanced act.  
Keeps body intact  
while milk-shaking my soul.  
A winning whole  
refreshes my six-pint passion,  
leaving the sweetest taste.

© Rod Tame

### When Your Biscuit Falls Into Your Drink

It should never happen to anyone, let alone me  
The day my biscuit dropped into my tea  
I couldn't take it out and I had no access to a spoon  
So I couldn't take it out, therefore it stayed marooned  
At the bottom of my cup, destroying the taste  
But I hated to see a cuppa go to waste  
So I downed the drink all in one  
And I wretched and I gipped until the taste was gone  
Shortly the vile after-taste went away  
But that experience really ruined my day  
Now I've had a load of things happen in my life  
And I've had my fair share of trouble and strife  
But one of the worst things that ever happened to me  
Was when my biscuit fell into my tea  
I've being mugged and threatened and mentally abused  
I've fallen in love with people only to end up being used  
I've seen friends get buried and others locked up  
But that doesn't even compare to the torment of dropping a biscuit in my  
cup  
I've drank so much that my liver couldn't cope  
I've been so ill that doctors gave up hope  
But none of that's as bad as the time I threw up  
After eating the remains of the biscuit in my cup  
Now you may think that I'm taking this too far  
And I know you will find this poem a little bit bizarre  
But for me, death, betrayal and needless wars  
All that stuff just seems to pause  
Call it madness or insanity  
But nothing else matters until that biscuit is out of my tea!

© Cayn White



## My Granny

My Granny discovered that  
good taste, bad taste, sour taste, salty taste, wet taste,  
dry taste, no taste, poor taste, cold taste,  
blended into colourless grey,  
when she killed off her last few taste buds,  
smoking sixty a fags day.

And as for the tastes of the aesthetic kind  
does it matter a damn when one's almost blind,  
and cannot identify whether,  
you're eating something you enjoyed in the past,  
with a gob that's morphed into leather?

To quote my Granny once again  
about the time she was eleven,  
she said fish and chips don't taste the same now,  
as in 1927.

A time she said, rich in polite respect, and friendly courteous ways  
of endless nice weather, children playing together,  
on happiness-ridden warm days  
lots of wonderful fun under a sun filling empty skies,  
eating jam butties, drinking pop,  
Dad having a beer, Mum knitting sat near,  
so innocent and chaste.

And as we leave,  
father burps up his sleeve,  
a gesture performed, with old fashioned good taste.

© Ken Eaton- Dykes



## Halal and haram

Understand what I eat  
I'm not a vegetarian, I love meat.  
Juicy, oozing lamb leg on Sunday  
Sizzling steak with chips on Wednesday  
Chargrilled chicken cooked on Friday  
I love my meat.

Understand what I eat  
I have halal meat.

I'm pale because I'm thalassaemic  
The curse in Asian genetics.  
Not from avoiding chicken nuggets.

It's not that I don't eat meat  
I'm not a vegetarian, I love meat.

© Nabila Suriya



## The Churn

Splash, thud, splash, thud  
Like the paddles of a Mississippi steamer  
Steady, rhythmic, beating time, lento  
Now the sound marks the final stage  
The last carefully choreographed steps  
The dance? It's churning day

In the kitchen, listening, feeling  
As she turns the old wooden handle  
Splash, thud, splash, thud  
Only a few minutes to go  
She knows the dance so well  
Created it perhaps  
Still she stops to check

The milk had stood in its basin  
As the cream rose to the top  
She had skimmed it off, gently  
Sometimes she blows across the surface  
Sometimes she uses a flat spoon  
The cream had stood in its bowl  
Now it is ready, the churning begun

The rhythmic beat grows slower, softer  
Two more little glances under the lid  
Just to be sure  
On the paddle the small clumps  
Have started to form  
Soon the paddle stops

She washes her already clean hands  
Pin-head oatmeal to remove the soap  
The super-clean hand reaches into the churn  
And draws out the golden butter  
In a wooden bowl she kneads it  
Forms it into shape  
Wraps it and stands it on the pantry shelf

Granny always made the best butter  
Rich, smooth, soft and tasty  
So much better than mass-produced  
We children always knew that  
Expectant we'd listen  
Splash, thud, splash, thud  
Like the paddles of a Mississippi steamer  
© Seamus Kelly

If you would like your words to be considered for these pages, get in touch! The theme of the next magazine is **Journeys**. Think as widely around this word and its associations as you like - we're looking for lots of original ideas. Scribble contact details are on the back page. Get in touch by **Friday 12 December**. Submissions under 300 words are recommended. Please note that Scribble reserves the right to edit submitted material. Prizes will be given to a winner and a runner up. See page 12 for details.

Don't worry if you have sent in work and don't see it here. We receive a lot of material through, but we do keep it all and may publish it in a later edition of Scribble.



## I Like Eggs Again

48 before I tasted Eggs Benedict.  
The soft eggs, oozing on  
salmon slivers and toasted bread.  
I thought I had died and gone to heaven.  
It electrified my taste buds.  
I closed my eyes,  
to savour the smooth texture,  
as it blended.  
But sadly, I ended  
with egg on my chin  
and I smiled to recall,  
a time when I was young  
and had just begun,  
to master  
dipping sliced loaf  
into soft shelled yellow.  
Always favouring white  
Over brown, unless speckled.  
And even then  
managed to dot  
little spots down my front.  
Soft egg,  
be it fried, poached or boiled,  
is no respecter of age.

© Bridie Breen



OVER TO YOU..  
GLOBAL

## The Happiest Meal

Don't you live on TV?  
Ronald! You are a man.  
Do you have a willy?  
Are you American,  
like dinosaurs or Santa Claus?  
Do you know Moschops?  
Is this where your hamburgers grow  
from seeds off of burger bun tops?

If you ate the burger seeds,  
would a tree grow inside you?  
Would branches poke out of your nose,  
covered in bogey goo?  
Then, would they grow snot burgers  
that taste of burger and snot?  
Would the tree get bigger and bigger  
inside you until you went 'pop'!

Y'know your burger friends that talk,  
do you eat them as well?  
What if a speaking one's fallen asleep  
and you've eaten him - how can you tell?

Wow! A crown! Balloons and toys!  
Ronald, you give so much to boys.  
You're like Michael Jackson  
but white.

Do you have a son?  
Do you eat burgers every night?

Do you stay up after bedtime, hidden  
where the burgers grow?  
I bet you get away with loads  
and no one tells you no!

D'you teach your son to grow his food  
from the burger seed?

Do you read him fairy stories  
then clap cos you believe?

Do you do each other's lipstick?  
Will he be on telly too?  
I wish you could be my Dad, Ronald.  
I've learned loads from you.

© Dominic Berry

## What is it Mummy?

The chandeliers reflect the opulence of the tables. The white starched tablecloths are barely visible beneath the silverware, crystal glasses and lavish cascades of flowers. The guests are resplendent in evening dress, the ladies in tiaras, the men display many coloured sashes. Lord Melville turns to President Mgatto.

"I say the smoked eel paté was rather good."

"Yes but I think there was just a little too much Tabasco."

"Ah here comes the lobster."

Lord Melville sips his crisp '98 Chateau Bonnet Entre-deux-Mers and then savours the succulent meat of his Lobster Thermidor, forking pieces from the scalded pink shell.

"This Pernod and cheese sauce is an improvement on the normal Brandy sauce I'd say. The hint of aniseed goes well with shellfish."

"Yes, Lord Melville. I must tell my Chef. I do enjoy lobsters but they can be a little rubbery if they're over cooked. In fact I have a lobster farm at my palace, er, residence."

"How very civilised. I'm afraid grouse is the best I can run to on my estate."

"You must have had a tiring journey here today? "

"Not really, I always manage a good sleep flying first class. Full size bed you know. The EU picks up the tab of course. But you must have had a long journey yourself."

"Well I stopped off in Saudi, a little arms procurement, so not so bad. But I had trouble here though. The stupid hotel only reserved three floors. Half my lot had to stay in a Holiday Inn for goodness sake."

The lobster debris is removed to the accompaniment of a string quartet. The dessert of rose water with iced fruit and blueberry jus is served followed by Roquefort, Remi-Martin and coffee. Conversation is hushed as the first speaker is called.

"It gives me great pleasure to welcome all our guests to this the seventeenth conference on the relief of starvation and poverty in the third world."

© David Ryder



# BLONDE ROOTS



We are delighted to publish an extract from the much-anticipated new novel from Bernardine Evaristo which re-imagines history and turns the slave trade upside down.

So while my boss Bwana and his family are out clinking rum-and-coke glasses and shaking their wobbly backsides at fancy parties down the road, I've been assigned duties in his office to sort through his ledgers. I used to hope that the celebration of Voodooass would be the one day off in the year for us slaves – but oh no, it's business as usual.

Outside the window the palm trees which line the avenues are decorated with gold and silver streamers. They are tall, sleek, snooty with the deportment of those who grow up balancing the precious milk of coconuts on their heads; and dangling from their glossy green fronds are flickering oil lamps sitting in red-painted cassava gourds.

The cobblestone pavement has been swept smooth of yesterday's sandstorm and the hawkers selling takeaways have been sent packing.

Frogs and crickets provide a drunken night-time chorus while camel-drawn carriages deliver stoosh party guests to our neighbouring compounds. The men wear flamboyant kaftans and their glamorously fat women try to outdo each other with peacock-print headscarves tied up into the most extravagant girlie bows.

All the houses are freshly whitewashed, with stained-glass windows depicting the gods: Oshun, Shangira, Yemonja. Stone sphinxes guard porches and stationed by doorways are torch lamps on tall marble plinths - their flames are slippery blue fingers grasping

out at the sticky night-time air.

From the upper rooms of the houses blast the hectic-electronic beats of the young, and from downstairs comes the mellow music

of the marimba, amid the laughter and bantering of people who have every reason to celebrate this season of goodwill, because

they are free men and free women in the heart of the most expensive piece of real estate in the known world: Mayfah.

Chief Kaga Konata Katamba I is the Bwana in question. He made his fortune in the import-export game, the notorious transatlantic slave run, before settling down to life in polite society as an absentee sugar baron, part-time husband, freelance father, retired decent human being and, it goes without saying, sacked soul.

My boss is also a full-time anti-abolitionist, publishing his pro-slavery rants in his mouthpiece The Flame - a pamphlet distributed far and wide - as a freebie.

In spite of myself, I'd just begun to flick through the latest godawful issue, feeling my stomach constrict and my throat tighten,

when a hand shoved a folded note through the open office window and vanished before I could see who it was attached to.

I opened the note, read the magic words and felt my head suddenly drowning.

Waves crashed and thundered inside my skull.

I let out the most almighty, silent howl.

Then I passed out.

How long for, I've no idea, maybe a few minutes, but when I came to I was slumped in my seat, my head dropped forwards, the

note still in my hand.

I read it again through a film of water.

It was real and it was true - I was being given the chance to escape.

Oh Lord.

After so many years on the waiting list the thing I most desired was in the palm of my hand. Yet it was all too quick. I sat there

frozen. A thousand what ifs ran through my mind. In returning my life to its rightful owner - me - I would also be putting my life

at stake. If I wasn't careful or lucky I'd end up at the local whipping post or chopping block.

Then my survival instincts kicked in.

My head cleared.

I was back again.

I ripped the note to shreds.

I stood up and looked at the wooden mask of Bwana's face on the wall.

And I gave it the right, royal one finger salute.

## IN THE FRAME



**Scribble asks photographer Bernadette Delaney for the lowdown on this wedding drama.**

### **Nose tweaks**

“This is my favourite recent image, taken this summer at a wedding commission in Wiltshire. To my delight the venue was a photographer’s dream: a croquet lawn surrounded by a number of follies.

I set the wedding party up in the mock theatre, took the usual “look into the camera” shot, and then asked them to interact with each other. The ‘players’ must have had amateur dramatic experience as they threw themselves into their roles with a passion.

This has become my signature style, and some great shots have evolved this way.” At this point the male pictured stole the box from the female and sat down no more

Find out more about Bernadette at: [www.bernadettedelaney.com](http://www.bernadettedelaney.com) / [info@bernadettedelaney.com](mailto:info@bernadettedelaney.com) / 07795 965848

## WINNING WORDS

This magazine's prize-scoopers on the **Taste** theme are **Hilary Walker** (first place) and **Angie Whitworth** (second place), both submitting highly original and powerful pieces of work. Well done!

Congrats to **Carolyn Crossley** who knew that the correct answer to the question: **Who is the winner for the 2008 Broadband Prize for Fiction?** was **Rose Tremain**.

Apologies to **Claudia Lowe** whose prize-winning piece **For Sale** was published in the last issue with the wrong name against it. Sorry Claudia!

Turn the page for your chance to be a winter winner.



## THE SCRIBBLE YOUNG WRITERS AWARD

Young Langley people from Demesne Community Centre got creatively writing over the summer. Workshop facilitators Katie Haigh and Diana Kilduff inspired them to write poetry – sometimes for the very first time. This winner of the Scribble Young Writers Award is Anthony Holmes. The judges were impressed not just by its content but by the hard work and determination he showed in getting down to the task. Well done to Anthony and keep writing!

### My Favourite Programme

My favourite programme is so cool  
They have five brilliant teams  
Sometimes they can look the fool  
If I got on it, it would fulfill my dreams

The teams are divided into animal groups  
They test each other's courage and strength  
Raven always calls them warriors or troops  
This programme is the perfect length

For every task they can win jewels  
They have to succeed in the quest  
While remembering to follow the rules  
Then they will become the best

© Anthony Holmes

The Scribble Young Writers Award was set up by Katie and Scribble to encourage new local talent. If you know a group who would like to take part, get in touch at the Scribble address.



### Accident

I taste blood.  
Hot, metallic blood.  
Thick  
Quick  
Filling my mouth.

Silent road.  
No more squealing tyres.  
Soft  
Voice  
Hands on my back.

Sirens sound.  
Loud, sharp coming near.  
I see blood on the road.  
My blood.  
Sirens.  
Fear.  
I taste fear.

© Angie Whitworth



### Ciorbar with everything

Her name in Russian meant 'Little Doll',  
Puca

Now, in middle years,  
her doll like features danced across her face,  
when she smiled

In this alien existence Puca was my light,  
she was my welcome  
she was my warmth

sit, sit, sit, eat, eat, eat,  
small English words that she was confident with  
She gesticulated wildly bringing out plate after plate  
of cold meat, bottles of preserves and to begin  
always was Ciorbar

It was a kind of soup  
Red  
Extract of beetroot  
Lukewarm  
Harsh  
Bitter  
And very obviously missing something

She'd stand over me as I ate, watching, anxious

I always began with gusto, not wishing to offend

'I'm full, honestly, Puca'  
'I'm just not very hungry today'  
I'd mime all my weak excuses

Doll like features would crumple  
So I'd force down a few more spoonfuls

It was post revolution Bucharest  
Post normality  
Post lack of food  
Radu, her husband, shot dead for daring to speak out

His widow believed that life would get better now,  
She had to believe, but when, and how  
so she kept busy, making ciorbar, with everything

Months later she came to stay  
'Little Doll' in England  
Puca saw Sainsbury's and wept  
'such choice, such choice'

She bought fresh herbs and fine quality ingredients  
and in my well stocked modern western world kitchen  
Puca made ciorbar for me

It was a kind of soup  
Red  
Extract of beetroot  
Lukewarm,  
Harsh  
Bitter  
And very obviously with something missing

She stood over me watching, anxious

I ate with gusto, all of it  
Smiling, laughing  
Doll like features beamed

Her name in Russian meant 'Little Doll'  
and nothing to do with being a good cook

© Hilary Walker

## WHAT'S GOING ON?

### Open Mic Poetry Night

Fourth Sunday of every month, 8pm, £1

*Olde Boar's Head pub, Long Street, Middleton*

If you've not been before, come and find out what you've been missing all this time! This is Rochdale Borough's one and only night for poetry writers and appreciators to come together. For more information contact Paul Blackburn at Write Out Loud on 07796 475490 or just turn up on the night.

### Luke Wright, Poet & Man

Friday 21 (7.30pm) and Saturday 22 Nov (8pm), £9.50 / £6

*The Studio, Royal Exchange Theatre, Manchester*

Luke Wright is one of the UK's leading stand-up poets. Married and mortgaged at 25, Wright looks at what it takes to be a proper grown-up chap in the 21st Century. You're sure to be bowled over by his trademark blistering verse. This show is touring the UK (and is sure to sell out) so catch him while he's local. Call 0161 8339833 to book your tickets!

### Aladdin

Saturday 22 Nov – Saturday 10 Jan, *Oldham Coliseum*

The legendary Oldham Coliseum panto returns as Aladdin, the wacky Widow Twankey and their friends battle the evil Abanazar in a magical adventure story of flying carpets, beautiful princesses, bejewelled caves and genies in lamps. Ring the box office on 0161 624 2829 for ticket details.

### The Wizard of Oz

Saturday 29 Nov – Sunday 4 Jan, *The Lowry, Salford*

Put on your ruby slippers and follow the Yellow Brick Road and join Dorothy, the Tin Man, Scarecrow and Cowardly Lion in the magical land of Oz. A surefire Christmas heart-warmer. Call 0870 787 5780 to book tickets.

### Verbally Challenged

Wednesday 3 December, 7.30pm, £5, *Contact, Manchester*

Five exciting, emerging writers have been set the challenge of writing a new mini-play that will entertain, inspire and compete for the audience's vote. Come along and make one lucky writer the winner of £100 prize money! Contact the box office on 0161 274 0600 for further info.

### DBC Pierre

Monday 15 December, 6.30pm, £5 / £3

*Martin Harris Centre, University of Manchester*

Having funded a nomadic lifestyle working as a designer, photographer, film-maker and cartoonist, DBC Pierre's first cult novel, *Vernon God Little*, erupted just before his fortieth birthday. It went on to win a whole host of prizes. Come and hear him read from his third novel and pose him a tricky question or two after. Tickets can be purchased by visiting [www.quaytickets.com](http://www.quaytickets.com), calling the box office on 0161 275 8951 or e-mailing [boxoffice@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:boxoffice@manchester.ac.uk).

### Opportunities:

Bright Books on Shawclough Road, Rochdale is considering starting a reading group and wants to measure the potential. It would be held one evening per month and the plan is to read an adult book but with the possibility - if there is enough interest - to read children's fiction too and review and discuss children's picture books by using the stock in the showroom. The reading group would be free of charge to join and the all-important refreshments would be supplied. If you are interested email Sharon Drummond at [sharon@brightbooks.co.uk](mailto:sharon@brightbooks.co.uk) with details of nights / times that would suit you.

## COMPETITIONS

### FOR THE READERS:

To win a £15 book token and other fabulous bookworm freebies answer the following question:



**What is the name of the classic tragic book by Thomas Hardy that has recently had a BBC re-working?**

### FOR THE WRITERS:

## Journeys

Write a poem or story (max 300 words) on the theme of the next issue.

The best submission will take away a £40 voucher of their choice, the runner-up a £20 voucher, and both will be published in the winter edition of *Scribble*.

Don't forget to: give an interesting perspective on the theme, give your submission an original title and make every word matter!

Entries to both competitions to Kim Haygarth at the *Scribble* email / address (details below).

Deadline for both: **Friday 12 December 2008.**

If you have entered *Scribble* competitions before, don't let that put you off - try and try again!

### Scribble

c/o Tell Us Another One

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