

Weatherfronts:

Climate change and
the stories we tell.

New poems and stories
commissioned from writers at
Weatherfronts in June 2014.

The pieces collected here were all commissioned by TippingPoint following the Weatherfronts event in London in June 2014. Writers were invited to send their proposals responding to the themes of the event.

© 2015

All copyright remains with the individual authors.

Acknowledgements

TippingPoint wishes to thank all the individuals and organisations who contributed to the success of Weatherfronts: Climate change and the stories we tell - both the event in June 2014 and this publication, including the hosts Free Word, Spread the Word, and the Mediating Change Group of the Open University.

Contents

Foreword <i>Peter Gingold</i>	4
Amber Warning <i>Sarah Butler</i>	5
Five poems after the IPCC Report <i>Stevie Ronnie</i>	23
Climate Change Kwansabas <i>Sai Murray, Selina Nwulu, Zena Edwards</i>	29
Three poems <i>Dan Simpson</i>	38
Green Bang <i>Nick Hunt</i>	43
Notes on the commissions	59
About the authors	66

Foreword

During the research for his recent book *Don't even think about it; why our brains are wired to ignore climate change*, climate change communications expert George Marshall talked to Nobel prize-winning psychologist Daniel Kahneman. His response? "I am very sorry, but I am deeply pessimistic. I really see no path to success on climate change." To expand, he adds "To mobilise people, this has to become an emotional issue. It has to have immediacy and salience. A distant, abstract and disputed threat just doesn't have the necessary characteristics for seriously mobilising public opinion."

This is the challenge that TippingPoint has been wrestling with for the last ten years: doing our best to stimulate creative thinking that translates the remote and uncertain into something with enough of a sense of urgency about it that people feel able to take hard personal decisions, and leaders feel confident enough to take tough political ones. Although it is certainly a creative challenge, we have found that there seems to be no limit to the number of forms, voices, and approaches that can be used to bring new and powerful perspectives to the subject.

An example: Professor Chris Rapley, who gave a really valued presentation at the event that brought this document into being, has recently been 'starring' in 2071, the show co-written with Duncan Macmillan and directed by Katie Mitchell at the Royal Court Theatre. A climate scientist at the Royal Court, brought back by popular demand, remarkably garnering both 1 star and 5 star reviews! What can be happening?

And, of course, the work in this document, commissioned following one of the many two day meetings TippingPoint has held. It was attended by 66 writers and 20 climate experts – an intensive exploration of the scientific 'facts', the politics, the creative possibilities and more. Many submitted excellent proposals for new work, from which a panel chose these for financial support.

These writers may or may not believe that mobilising public opinion is their job – though I suspect most would at least nod in that direction – but they are certainly playing their own enormously valuable part in translating the impact of that distant and uncertain threat into something more salient. Emotion? Without doubt. Abstract? Hardly.

Peter Gingold
Director, Tipping Point

Amber Warning

By Sarah Butler

A band of persistent and heavy rain will move northeast across the country. The rain will be accompanied by strong southeasterly winds bringing difficult driving conditions with surface water and spray on the roads. Isolated flooding from small watercourses is also possible. The strongest winds will be along the coasts with gusts of 60-65 mph in places with disruption to transport, including ferry services, likely.

I.

With perhaps the risk of more persistent rain

Ulverston: Heavy Rain. 8°, feels like temperature 4°. Precipitation probability 90%. Visibility: Very Poor.

‘What’s the worst that could happen?’ Mike said, turning his head back towards Lou as he walked. He was wearing old leather boots, a pair of ripped jeans and a tired waxed jacket, the hood pulled up over his blond hair. City man turned country gent. The cloud was so low they could see only each other and a narrow patch of peat bog.

‘We could die.’ Hurrying to catch up with him, Lou slipped, her foot sinking into cold dark water which darted over the lip of her boot. ‘Fuck.’ She felt it seep into her sock, chilling her skin.

‘We’re not going to die; we’re in the Lake District,’ Mike said, still walking.

‘I’ve got a wet foot.’ She could feel her heart, thundering now beneath her rain-beaded coat, her not-quite-thick-enough jumper, her too-short T-shirt.

Mike laughed. ‘No one’s ever died of a wet foot.’

Lou glared at him and then looked to either side, straining her eyes in an attempt to see: nothing but the faint shape of a rock; clusters of grass jewelled with water; dark damp ground. Their shoes sank into the wet moss, two squelching rhythms, not quite in time.

‘We can’t see,’ she said, and heard her voice career upwards a little. ‘We haven’t got a map.’ She swallowed. Or a compass. Or food. Or water. They’d planned a two hour stroll, but they’d been gone three hours already; spent half of that wandering about in thick cloud. She wanted to be back at their tiny rented cottage with its smoky fire and chintzy curtains. She wanted a

book and a cup of tea and a packet of chocolate biscuits.

‘A map wouldn’t help in this lot anyway,’ Mike said.

‘So what? We call mountain rescue?’ They had no reception. She’d already checked her phone, its little symbol whirling at the top of the screen, looking for a signal.

‘It’s fine. It’ll clear.’ Mike was drawing ahead, his shape fading into the thick grey. ‘I’m pretty sure we just keep heading this way. There’s a road and a pub, that’s what Stu said: *up onto the ridge, keep left down towards the forest, then you’ll hit the road and the pub’s half a mile from that.*’

‘So are we left?’ Lou could feel sweat prickling her armpits, but she was cold at the same time. ‘Is this even a path?’ She felt like someone had blindfolded her and spun her around until she felt sick.

‘A pint of beer and a steak and kidney pie, that’s what I’m having.’ Mike drew away, walking more quickly across the boggy land, stretching his stride to move from one dry hump of grass to another. A hill loomed out of the cloud for a moment, a brief jagged outline. Then it disappeared, and the rain started to come down heavier.

They had both agreed – a weekend in the Lakes would do them good: get away from the house and all the jobs that needed doing; away from their computers and emails and job worries; they’d be able to relax, to talk about things that needed talking about.

‘We’re lost in a fucking bog and you’re thinking about beer.’

She saw Mike’s shoulders lift into a hunch.

‘It’s three o’clock,’ she said. ‘This rain’s getting worse. And we’re probably just walking round in circles.’

He stopped abruptly and Lou nearly crashed into him; she backed away to a firm bit of ground.

‘What do you want me to do?’ he said. ‘Panic?’

‘I’m just trying to say, I’m scared. It’ll be dark in an hour and a half, and we don’t know where we are. We should have set off earlier.’

Mike shook his head. 'Don't start.'

The rain had found a route in around the collar of her jacket, she could feel it cold on her neck.

'I'm just saying, if we hadn't spent all that time faffing about –'

'So it's my fault then?' He gestured to the cloud, the rain, the wet ground.

She wanted to go home. That's all she wanted. Four walls, a roof, a fire, a cup of tea; nothing complicated.

'You said we didn't need a map.' Lou folded her arms, squeezed herself tight. She willed the cloud to clear but it looked thicker than ever and the rain was getting heavier, making pock marks in the puddles.

'I told you, a map's no use in a cloud anyway.'

'But we don't know where we are. We've no reception. We're fucked.' She felt the tears crowding up from her chest and tried to swallow them away.

Mike lifted both arms and then dropped them again. 'I don't know what you want, Lou.' She wanted to be safe, warm; she wanted to know where she was.

'And the thing I really don't understand is how come I'm the one who always has to fix everything?' Mike went on. 'The leak under the sink. The car. Your laptop. Your career crisis.' He counted them off, releasing a finger for each thing. Only his little finger remained bent into his palm. Lou looked at it and thought, *our relationship*. They'd drunk two bottles of wine the night before, but had talked about nothing but TV programmes and their friends new babies; they'd fallen asleep without even trying to have sex.

Mike sighed. 'I'm doing my best, Lou. I'm trying to be positive.'

'We need to think.' As a kid, her mum had told her to stay still if she ever got lost and the one time it had happened she'd done just that: a forest of unknown legs, and then a face she didn't know, *are you lost, love?* A woman trying to take her hand and Lou saying *no, I have to stay here, I have to stand still*. It had worked. Her mother's legs breaking through and her arms reaching down and scooping Lou up, hugging her long and tight, saying, *you're safe*,

it's all right darling, you're safe. She wished they could just stand still and that someone would come and find them.

'I'm cold, let's walk.' Mike hugged himself and twisted from left to right. Lou had a sudden image of him lying on the wet ground, curled up like a child, his face almost blue from the cold, and the thought of it made her heart skitter against her ribs.

'We need to go down, yes?' she said.

Mike raised his eyebrows.

'And right now we don't know which way's down?'

Mike shrugged.

'So.' Lou took a shaky breath and stared into the dense white of the cloud. She could hear the whisper of rain on the grass, and below that, a faint sound of running water. 'So we look for a river,' she said.

'A river?'

'Water goes down.' Lou pulled her shoulders back a little and tried to ignore the icy wind which felt like it was reaching into her bones. 'If we go down we can get out of the cloud, and Stu said to go down, didn't he?'

Mike nodded. 'He did.'

'So come on.' Lou reached out her hand. Mike took it, their fingers interlacing, cold and wet against each other, and they set off step by awkward step, over a landscape neither of them knew.

II.

Some heavy bursts of rain possible

Norwich: Heavy Rain. 11°, feels like temperature 7°. Precipitation probability 90%. Visibility: Moderate.

Rosie's sister always emailed before she phoned – it was part of their ritual: working out the time difference; checking they'd both be in. Rosie would hover in the hallway a good ten minutes before their agreed time and pounce

on the phone as soon as it rang.

Today though, there was no prior arrangement, and Rosie almost didn't pick up – the only other people who called her landline were trying to sell her double glazing or solar panels. She had double glazing, and her house didn't get enough sun for panels, but that didn't stop them from phoning.

'He's gone.' Hannah's voice, crackly with tears. 'Rosie, he's gone. He's left me.'

Iain. Hannah had met him on the internet the year the two sisters lived together in a tiny attic apartment in London, drinking gin and tonics on their minuscule balcony and sharing job worries, relationship worries, money worries. Hannah had met Iain. Rosie had met Jon; which hadn't lasted either, but at least there were no marriage vows or kids to complicate things even further.

Rosie wanted to crawl into the phone receiver; she wanted to wrap her arms around her sister, smell her shampoo, feel her hair tickle her face. She moved her hand over the lamp that sat next to the phone. It was shaped like an egg. 'What happened?' she asked.

'What didn't happen?' Hannah sounded tired. She wouldn't have slept. Rosie pictured her in the house she'd only ever seen in photos, pacing the rooms, trying not to wake Billy. 'It's been bad,' she said. 'You know that.'

'And Billy?'

'He's still asleep.' Hannah drew in a shaky breath. 'He's going to wake up and his dad's not here. That kind of thing screws people up.'

'He's got you,' Rosie said. 'He'll be fine.'

'I'm a mess. He shouldn't see me being a mess.'

Rosie needed to be there. She needed to be able to get on her bike and cycle to her sister's house, give her a hug, make her cups of tea, sandwiches, talk through what she'd tell Billy and then be there for her nephew to say all the things he wouldn't say to his mother. Except she'd only met him twice and he was eight already; even if she was there he wouldn't talk to her: she was a stranger.

Hannah started crying. Rosie lowered herself onto the hallway carpet, her back against the wall and listened to her sister sniff and gasp for breath, to the little animal moans and the rustle of a tissue. It had been raining all day. Rosie could see a slice of dull grey sky through the glass above the front door; could hear the tap tap of the rain, and the gurgle-rush of the gutter.

‘I’m sorry,’ Rosie said. ‘Hannah, I’m so sorry.’ She listened to her sister blow her nose, over there on the far side of the world, and thought, for a soaring moment, that now Hannah might come home. Now they might be able to be sisters again; proper sisters.

‘It’s raining,’ Rosie said.

‘Yeah?’ There was a hint of homesickness in Hannah’s voice.

‘The leaves are almost gone,’ Rosie said, then thought perhaps that was too depressing a thing to say.

‘A good season for mourning,’ Hannah said.

Rosie looked at the hallway mat – rough brown, dotted with bits of dry mud; a tiny yellow leaf; a dropped receipt. ‘Do you think you two might sort it out?’ she asked. Hannah said nothing. Rosie thought about her bank account. She had a couple of thousand saved, and three weeks leave still unplanned for. She closed her eyes and tried to imagine herself walking through Heathrow – fluorescent lights and polished floors, glistening shop fronts, digital departure boards. But she’d made a promise; she’d said she wouldn’t.

‘I miss you,’ she whispered into the receiver.

She heard Hannah sniff and swallow, and pictured her sister nodding with her face scrunched tight.

Rosie had made the decision years ago. *Too much information*, she’d joked to Hannah at the time, *once you know what all those emissions are doing, you can’t just ignore it*. That was before Iain; before Hannah had sat at Rosie’s narrow dining table, toying with a glass of wine, and said she was moving to Australia. Rosie had laughed, because it seemed impossible, ridiculous, unfair. *I’ll come back and visit*, Hannah had said; *we’ll see each other*.

‘It’s like everything’s fallen away,’ Hannah said; her voice sounded distant. ‘All those plans we had. For Billy. For the house. For us. We’re supposed to be going on holiday next month. Jamaica. It’s all booked.’ She paused. ‘Maybe you could –’

Rosie held her breath. Maybe she could. It had been easy enough the first few years, when Rosie had hardly enough money for rent never mind flights to Melbourne. Hannah did come back, once a year, and each time it was like they’d never been apart. These days it was more complicated – Rosie had a good job, money in the bank and no commitments; Hannah had a family, an extension, marriage problems.

‘No, of course,’ Hannah said. ‘I’m sorry Rosie, I just –’

Rosie dug her fingernails into the hard brown hallway carpet. She wanted to tell Hannah that she dreamt of her as you might dream of a dead person, howling dreams full of grief that left her wrung out, the sense of loss clawing at her insides.

The rain was coming down harder now, hammering at the house, the wind rattling the windows and the letterbox. It had been Jon who’d started it – all those books and websites about carbon emissions and drought in sub-Saharan Africa; climate change workshops and late night discussions; and Rosie’s rising sense that this was real and important and that she had no choice but to do something. They’d promised each other they’d never fly again. It was almost as though they were getting engaged – a giddy sense of power and commitment. And then Jon had gone – the way all of Rosie’s men seemed to – but climate change wasn’t going anywhere, and so she’d kept her promise, even when Hannah moved to Melbourne; even when Billy was born. And Hannah said she understood.

‘It’s going to be all right, Hannah,’ Rosie said.

‘I want to die.’

Rosie heard her own breath come in a gasp. ‘You do not want to die.’

‘It’s all gone.’

Rosie shook her head, pressing her lips together. ‘It’s not gone,’ she said, keeping her voice steady. ‘It’s just changed. It’s just different.’

'It's over.'

Rosie watched the rain shooting against the windows; listened to the wind trying to break into the hallway. 'Do you remember that time you wanted to get a tattoo?' she said.

'What?'

'You wanted a tattoo on your shoulder.'

Hannah let out a quiet huff of a laugh. '*Every end is a new beginning.* Wise before my time, is that what you're saying?'

'I was going to have the same one.'

'And we chickened out at the last minute because Mum would have thrashed us into next week.'

'I was glad,' Rosie said. 'I was scared of it hurting.'

'Me too.'

Rosie cradled the plastic receiver in both hands and listened to the coming storm. She wished they had had the tattoos: black cursive letters along the line of their shoulder blades, two mirror images on either side of the world.

III.

Further showers, some heavy, are expected

Brighton: Light shower day. 13°, feels like temperature 9°. Precipitation probability 50%. Visibility: Good.

To everyone,

Snails come out when it rains. DO NOT STAND ON THE SNAILS.

*Thank you,
Katie*

Katie examined her handiwork. She had written 'to everyone' because if she'd listed all the people in the block, there wouldn't have been enough room for the important bit, plus she didn't know how to spell everyone's name. Her plan was to Blu-tack the letter to the front door. Her dad would probably get cross because of the paint, but she'd explain how important it was and even if he didn't agree the damage would already be done and so he'd let her leave it up.

It had been raining since lunchtime. On the way to the funeral, Katie and her little brother Jon had sat in the back of the car and played raindrop races. Each had to pick a drop at one side of the window and then see which one reached the other side first. Sometimes the two drops joined together, which made it a draw. They did the whole game silently, because you are not supposed to talk at funerals, or in the car on the way to funerals, and so they kept score on their fingers and mouthed 'mine!' 'yours!' to each other, not letting their breath turn into sound.

Katie sucked her red felt tip pen and screwed up her face, thinking. After the part that said *DO NOT STAND ON THE SNAILS*, she added: *They will die and they have done nothing wrong*. There was a bit of her telling her not to write this because of the funeral, but then another part of her thought that that was exactly why she should write it. *Death is with us all*, that's what the man in the church had said, and then something about a valley of shadows. She'd heard Mrs Flynn from across the road tell Katie's mum the kids were too young to be at a funeral. Katie's mum had said they had to learn about death sooner or later, but Katie knew it was because the girl who usually babysat had the flu.

They hadn't spoken on the way back from the funeral either, but then they went up to Mr Moran's flat and everyone was talking, loud enough to make your ears hurt. Talking, and eating little sandwiches cut into triangles and drinking wine out of plastic cups. It was weird being in Mr Moran's flat because a) Mr Moran was dead and b) it was exactly the same as their flat – the same shaped rooms in the same order – but totally different: full of old man furniture and dusty black and white pictures of people who were probably dead as well.

There had been only four children there: Katie and Jon, and Danny and Zac – the twins from the ground floor who had just started secondary school and loved to torment Katie with tales of what lay in wait for her: teachers and toilets and cross country and exams.

They had all clustered by the front window of Mr Moran's living room and watched the rain splatter the glass and dance off the car roofs below. Katie

declared that she thought it was cool how the water had evaporated out of the ocean – which they would have been able to see if it hadn't been raining – and gone up into the clouds; was now falling onto their block, and then would run back towards the sea down the drain outside. Zac rolled his eyes and called her a swot. But it's all connected, she'd insisted, isn't that cool? He'd snorted and said the only good thing about rain was stamping in puddles and skidding in wet mud.

'Where's Mr Moran?' Jon asked.

Katie pointed at the grey sky and said, 'Up there, I think. In heaven.'

'Duh,' Danny said. 'They've burnt him.'

Katie glared at him.

'They have. In the crema-' He hesitated, 'the fire thing. You get burnt, or you get buried. My dad says heaven's something people made up to make themselves feel better.'

Jon slipped his tiny hand into Katie's.

'You shouldn't try and scare small people,' Katie said sternly.

Danny shrugged. 'I'm just saying the truth.'

Then the wind started howling, rattling the windows and whipping the leaves into wild dances on the street below; Zac and Danny started making motorbike noises and running in circles with their arms stretched out and their mum came and took them both home.

*

Katie carried her letter and the Blu-tack to the communal front door and stuck it as high as she could reach, squishing her finger into the corners so it would stay on. She wished she'd put some glitter round the edge – and maybe drawn a picture of a snail as well, but it felt too late now. She should have said something when everyone was up in Mr Moran's flat; made an announcement. Except the problem with adults is that they weren't very good at listening. Every time it rained she told them to be careful, and every time she found dead snails on the path up to the house – cracked shells and squashed, slimy bodies. She had tried making a line down the path with bits of

gravel from the garden: snails on the left, humans on the right – like they did with bikes and people in the park – but neither the snails nor the humans took any notice and pretty soon her neat gravel line had disintegrated. It was like neither of them cared, she thought, like the snails didn't care about dying and the humans didn't care about killing them. Still – she stood back to admire her letter – Miss Hanley said you had to try your best and keep trying your best even if you weren't sure it was going to make any difference; she said that that was the only option available.

IV.

It is likely to remain unsettled

Aberystwyth: Heavy shower day. 10°, feels like temperature 7°. Precipitation probability 70%. Visibility: Moderate.

It was blowing so hard Anton could barely keep hold of the balloon; had to press it against his chest while he checked the box was securely attached, and then hold it there as he waited for the numbers on the tiny plastic alarm clock to reach 11:00.

He wasn't an outdoor kind of a person. He had tried to compose an email to that effect, without saying *no, I won't do it*. But Professor Shaw hadn't seemed to notice, and had simply sent the name of a town, an address where Anton could pick up the equipment, a map and a set of instructions. So here he was, sat on the crest of a hill above the town whose name he had no idea how to pronounce. Scrubby grass. Scattered stones. Sheep droppings. At the airport train station he'd pointed to the name in his notebook and asked for a single ticket. It was a nice enough place, hugging a curved stretch of coastline and then reaching towards the lower slopes of the surrounding hills. The buildings were grey and severe looking, but with an elegance he appreciated.

He thought of Galati, the wide Danube creeping through the city, the constant fumes from the steel factory, his parents' apartment block with its view of another apartment block.

Staying wasn't an option. He'd tried to explain it to his mother but she just cried and threw up her hands and wouldn't listen. *There's nothing for me here*, he said, but she took it the wrong way, saying, *I'm here! Your father's here! We are nothing?*

At 10:59, Anton loosened his grip on the balloon so only his fingertips pressed into its surface. He waited, glanced into the murky sky, and then let

go. The orange globe bucked from side to side, as if trying to free itself from the radiosonde, as if it couldn't quite decide which way to go. He watched it rise and rise, its path smoother the higher it got, until it was a tiny orange dot in amongst the clouds; until it was gone. He spent the next couple of hours setting up his camp, waiting for a lull in the wind before he attempted to set up the tent – a befuddling arrangement of yellow fabric and thin poles which he wasn't entirely sure he'd got right. When he'd run out of pegs and decided it would have to do, he sat down and unwrapped one of the big bars of chocolate he'd bought near the train station.

'Hi there!'

Anton looked up to see a young woman in a red anorak striding across the field towards him. He wanted to slip inside the tent, pretend he hadn't heard her, but she was waving now. She'd seen him look up, and so there was nothing to do except wave back.

'Camping?' she said, eyeing his tent whose open door was flapping in the rising wind.

'Field campaign,' Anton said, aware of his accent. He wiped the back of his hand across his mouth.

The woman frowned and looked around. 'Isn't that an army thing?'

'It is for balloons,' he said, pointing at the pack of orange balloons and the canister of helium he would use to inflate them. 'To measure weather.'

The woman's forehead smoothed out. 'Serious?'

He was serious. Corina was always telling him so. *I love it*, she said, *I love that you care about tornadoes and cyclones, and all that big stuff*. He'd shown her some data he was working on once and she had leafed through the printed pages of numbers and laughed. *What is this?* He had tried to explain – about clouds, about ice particles, about rime-splinters, about trying to find a model that could work out what was happening up there. He had told her that when he thought about the earth he thought about the surface – where they were – and then about this grid of almost-cubes reaching up and up and up into the atmosphere. She had tried to listen. She had tried to understand.

'We send up every three hours,' he said to the woman. 'To collect the data.'

‘Can I watch?’

He wanted her to go away. He didn’t like people watching him work; it made his fingers feel thick and clumsy. But he shrugged, and the woman sat down next to him.

‘I’m Natalie, by the way,’ she said, reaching out a hand.

He took it, briefly, and thought he should offer her some chocolate.

‘It’s not really the weather for it, is it?’ She had her knees hugged to her chest, the wind dancing her hair against her cheek. He saw she had dark brown eyes, the colour of rich soil. ‘I guess that’s what you want though, weather,’ she said. ‘My dad used to say that – there’s a lot of *weather* on the way.’

‘There is always weather,’ Anton said.

‘I know, but – ’ She shook her head. ‘Never mind.’

*

Yesterday, he had been at his parents’ flat, enough food for twenty people crowded onto the table, and just the three of them sat around it, none of them inclined to eat.

‘Why do you care so much about this weather?’ his mother had asked.

Anton had turned to his father, a scientist himself, by training at least, but he had simply shrugged and said, ‘She is upset. You are our only son.’

‘What is so important about the weather?’ his mother kept on. ‘Why is the rain, and the clouds, more important than family?’

‘It’s my job.’ It was more than his job, but he didn’t know how to explain it to her, and she wasn’t listening, she was just talking. ‘It’s important,’ he tried. ‘For the future. Things are changing. We need to understand what’s happening.’

‘The future.’ She almost spat the words at him. ‘And what is the future with my son gone, and no grandchild?’ She glared at him. ‘That poor girl. Two years you string her along and then there’s the weather job and you drop her, you go.’

Corina had cried too, but said she understood. She had a sick father and a wayward sister; she was tied. And he didn't want to be tied any more. This was his break. This was his new start. He might be sitting in a muddy field in a country called Wales, but that was temporary, the rest of it – the new job, the cloud chamber, the conferences, the discoveries, the respect – was just around the corner.

*

The woman, Natalie, sniffed. 'You can smell the rain coming,' she said.

'That's ozone.'

She frowned, then said, 'The Ozone Layer,' as if she was talking to herself. 'Have we finished ruining that now?'

Anton laughed as he tied the small white radiosonde with the antennas and sensors sticking out from its sides underneath the next balloon. 'Have we finished ruining that now,' he repeated under his breath, nodding. 'That is good.' He fixed the balloon to the helium canister and turned the valve until it hissed. The balloon slowly swelled between his hands.

'You ever inhaled that stuff?' Natalie asked, and then put a squeaky voice on, 'My name is Natalie! What's your name?'

He smiled to himself, but when he looked up she was staring at him like it was his turn to speak. 'Oh,' he said. 'Anton. I'm Anton.'

'And what kind of data do you get?'

The balloon bucked against his stomach. He turned off the valve and eased the plastic free.

'Temperature, pressure, humidity, wind velocity.'

'All the way up?'

'Exactly.'

'Why?'

Anton checked the radiosonde was securely attached. He looked out

over the town towards the white breakers drawing lines across the sea and the distant rain starting to blur the hills around them. 'We need to know what's happening,' he said. 'We can work out how things operate, and then we can predict how things will change.'

'You're a fortune teller?' She laughed.

Anton swallowed back his irritation. 'We collect data, we make models, we test the models.'

'You guess?'

'Not *guess*.'

'You make an educated guess?'

*

What will happen to us? Corina had asked him, the two of them lying in bed together, her tracing a finger over his chest. What he should have said was, *we're over; I'm moving on; the weight of evidence suggests I'm not coming back*. Instead, he'd put his palm against her cheek and said, *I don't know*.

*

'I almost didn't come,' he said to the woman, Natalie.

'Sorry?' She frowned.

'To here. To the UK.' He had stood in the airport with his suitcase and watched the digital clock on the departure board click through its numbers. He wanted this, he'd told himself, he had worked for this, planned for this, fought for this. But he stood and watched the departure time get closer and closer and thought that he was risking everything for something he might not like, that might not work out.

'I almost missed my flight,' he said.

'God, I always do that. My dad calls me Little Miss Last Minute.'

He'd run in the end, his shoes squeaking against the polished airport floor; arrived at the gate sweating and out of breath and almost too late to

board.

‘I’m not very good with not knowing what will happen,’ he said, and then pressed his mouth shut because he hadn’t meant to say such a thing.

Natalie looked at him for a moment, and then said, ‘Nobody is.’ She pulled herself to her feet and held out her arms. ‘Can I let it go?’

It was against protocol. Anton scanned the field, as if Professor Shaw might pop up from behind the stone wall, finger wagging. The rain had reached them, soaking Natalie’s hair against her scalp, tap-tapping on the tiny yellow tent.

‘I’ll do it properly,’ she said. ‘I promise. I’ll do exactly what you tell me to do. I’d like it – to be part of your experiment, to be the one who set this one off to collect its data.’ She smiled, and Anton found himself smiling back; found himself holding the balloon out towards her. Her hands butted up against his as she took hold of it.

‘We have to wait until 14:00 exactly,’ Anton said.

Natalie nodded and then looked at him expectantly. The rain intensified, drumming an unsteady rhythm on the balloon’s surface.

‘You won’t let go until 14:00?’ Anton said.

‘I promise,’ she whispered.

Anton slowly released his grip, his hands sliding over the wet plastic. He took a small step backwards. Natalie held the balloon confidently.

‘One more minute,’ Anton said, ‘And then lift your arms, hold it steady and then let it go.’

At 14:00, Natalie did as he instructed. The balloon hesitated for a moment, then caught the breeze and was up and away, rocking from side to side as it rose.

Natalie stood with her head tipped back, watching it.

‘They put cameras on some of them,’ he told her. He’d seen footage from one – starting with blurred images of the ground, of a man’s face, of

nearby trees, and then rising quickly, a set of fields, a small town, the view widening and broadening to take in mountains, a lake, clouds. And then up and up and up, the earth getting smaller and less detailed, the sun brighter and fiercer, until you could see the curvature of the earth, the clouds like scrunched tissues scattered across it.

‘We’d be in the pictures,’ she said.

‘There’s no camera on that one.’

‘Yes, but imagine if it could see us,’ she said, still looking up. ‘Natalie and Anton standing on a hill in Wales.’

‘Getting smaller and smaller,’ Anton said.

‘Like dolls.’

‘Like ants.’

‘Until we disappear,’ Natalie said.

Anton swallowed. ‘Until we disappear.’

**Five poems after the IPCC
Report - Climate Change 2013:
The Physical Science Basis
(Working Group 1)**

By Stevie Ronnie

The Gardener Explains the Importance of Greenhouse Conditions

The greenhouse is the concentration of
that otherwise likely climate in which

the drying, the forcings, the increased
temperature is a small new level

surface. All that forcing at the ice-free
soil is a pathway to the increased year.

Even in drought I find wet surfaces
in the narrowing day. Seasonally the jar

of seawater under my bench is acted
upon by the moon. Such confidence as I

have observed in the Pacific is found
in this natural and green loss of time.

The similarities are likely and high-rise
until the cold and melted ocean sets the end.

How the Blue Box at the Bottom of Page 360 of the IPCC Report Might Sound to the Untrained Ear

Snub is just one compressor of the cryosphere,
but snub also sustains idiocy shibboleths and glides,
and has strong interlinks with all the other
cryospheric compressors, except sub-seance permafrost.
For excommunicates, snub can affray the rave
of seance-idiocy progenitors and can alter frozen
grown-ups through its insulating eggplant.
Snuggle and the persistence of snub cover
are strongly dependent on atmospheric temperature
and precipitation, and are thus likely to change
in compost like weathercocks on a changing clipboard.
For the Earth's clipboard in general, and more specifically,
the cryospheric compressors on which snub falls,
the two most important piccolo proprietresses of snub are:
its high albedo (reflectivity of solar raffle)
and its low thigh conductivity
which retinues because its high airlock contortion
makes it an excellent thigh intellectual.

Everything is Accelerated Here
for BR

Endless Arctic day – in-situ on deck
observing the retreating snowline
like some granular stop-motion.
Melt water pools on the hillsides
of these crevassed depressions
and these higher radial extensions.
Gravitationally, everything is making concave.
Four solid years, cycling like thunder
to measure the metres of melt
with five sacks of sliding rules.
The accumulation of a positive
pressure in the melt-zone of a cave
or an open and firm valley of firn.

Results

Upon returning to the scene
she found two of the used
(and likely high) assessed
subjects of the fourth result.
Each of them a small flat
disc creased and made
partial like some reference
to the 1000 year concentration.

So, as a mother might turn over
in her sleep towards her child,
she turns the observed subjects.
There is no certainty but
the uncertain human warming of
these blue agricultural pathways.

Time and the Two-Year-Old's Hands

It is enough the now and although it comes without anything it brings me everything.

Elizabeth Smart

I cannot picture my children's children
as a conical graph
although I must accept
that they will love between
its lines. What is now
wide will become narrow
as the known limps into a past
like damp sand in an hourglass.

But if time is not a line
could it be some simpler geometry
simply as complex as my daughter's
two-year-old hands? Am I
blameless for wanting her to live?

Climate Change Kwansabas

***By Sai Murray, Selina Nwulu
and Zena Edwards***

Introduction:

This collection takes race and climate as its central theme. In looking globally at who is most affected by climate change, we see that those disproportionately affected are countries within the global south, people from the majority world who directly rely on the land or the sea for their food and survival.

We consider how climate change impacts diaspora communities and how ongoing inequality and historical legacies of colonialism have led to migration and dislocation from ancestral lands. Our collection seeks to engage with dialogues about climate change that take into account the criminalisation of Black communities.

A note on the form:

Kwansabas are an African American verse form developed in honour of Kwanzaa - a seven day celebration of the African-American family encompassing African-American heritage, culture and principles. The Kwansaba, (swahili kwan – first fruit / saba – principle) adopts the number seven from Kwanzaa's Nguzo Saba (seven principles) and is a heptastich (a poem in seven lines) measured by seven words in each line written with no word exceeding seven letters.

Home is a hostile lover

By Selina Nwulu

Remember

Remember when our Delta waters were clean?
How we washed our faces in rivers
And chased fish with our bare hands?
Remember before Delta had its throat slit
And bled its oily pipes into soil,
When we hummed words into the water
And it would laugh and sing back?

Noose

We are burning alive in this village
The oil pipes spew open like bowels
And stain our home land with curses
Our mouths have become coated in oil
Drops make liquid nooses round our necks,
Our words buried and left for remains
We will never speak the same again

Eaten

Look how obese the ocean has become
Its waves ingest my fertile land vicious
And devours my home to its bones
The ocean leaves its off-cuts when sated
I am left a half lit emblem
Tell me, where does one turn to
when their home becomes a hostile lover?

Sinking

They're all sinking in the Mediterranean sea
Our borders have become dense and long
And their ships have burst into splints
The sea is bloated with people's limbs
Their memories did not make it either
They're all sinking in the Mediterranean sea
Watch how the bubbles float and pop

Funeral

Does my alarm clock wake me or
The night mares? I often cannot tell
Both remind me of a lonely funeral
I share a room with strangers, we
Breathe in damp and each other's lungs
We are wheezes who will not complain
We are still sinking on dry land

Future

I work long to send money home
They are sure of the future here
At home everything is on quick sand
So we speak in the present tense
For home is an exposed nerve, waiting
I work long here, saving my money
Hoping to send the future back home

Danger

You tell me to save the planet
to reduce my carbon foot print, buy
local and to turn my lights off
My foot prints are not wanted here
I buy but you think I steal
I'm afraid of what darkness might bring
You speak like I don't know danger

Spring in November

By Sai Murray

5/11

Bonfire Night. A man hanged, drawn, quartered.
Yet beyond council fences, flames flicker still.
This desire. This fire. Within. It burns.
Treason trumps torture. Famous anon. take streets
A million White masks. Black face unity.
Can we turn? Hunt out witches' wisdom?
Seek council with shaman? Lest we forget

9/11

From Guy's London torture Tower blood flows
Colours Israeli Red Sea, clots the Atlantic.
Nine eleven. Not Pnochet, not Opium wars,
Great War. Heroic death. Brave butchry. Sacred.
Pin Victoria to chests and sing victory.
Are these Afghan poppies? Made in China?
Or is this drug a British export?

10/11

Black death spawns a White saviour virus
Locusts take air, buzz over brown mouths
A bread basket is branded basket case
Feed the world with helpss needy Africns
Do They know it's thirty-four shoppng days
until Xmas? Give Us your fcking money
How much a pith helmet Space suit?

10/11

Flying above our planet you may pause
How fragile. Where are the borders? Walls?
Shudder. Someone has left the gas on.
Are those candles for the Ogoni nine?
An eternal smogged flame for Saro Wiwa?
Bonfire fury night and day where maps
are drawn. Protest hung. And village quartrd.

19/11

Back to earth for student sun rise
Black history strides strong from October
This term, we face race, qstion ugenics
Reject their choice cuts, favour ital diets.
High pressure sweeps in from the south
to reduce recycle replant our server farms.
Cold front here to stay. Kettles boil.

25/11

Steam release across Ocean. Sgrgatd city burns.
Nothing to see here in post racial society.
Black Out this bleak Friday. Buy nothing
Mammon clutches mama's throat. Hands up. Off.
Thick smoke revrses the choke hold. Cough.
Tears stream. Levees break. In these storms
a chance to remembr who we are.

When Earth Speaks Through Flesh

By Zena Edwards

And there she is again, vulnerable and brave
Body out in the open. Open season.
For good reason, light ablaze in her eye
She kneels not for absolution but freedom
Before growling armoury like dogs closing in.
She stands her ground untiring, her flesh
Soft, communicating hard resistance, no supplication.

She carves a silhouette: don't shoot! She kneels
On the white front lines for revolution
Time is no obstacle to her thinking
A future imagined for her children, reclaiming
dignity of her forbears waking stolen limbs
Of lineage, threaded through the black tar.
She is feminist activist now because her skin brims

With sharecropper songs pulled from the belly
of a nutritious homeland ripe with First Nation
ancient pueblo* song that echoed across plains,
when prairies were free and mustang grazed
When buffalo hoof pounded the grasses fleeing
the hunt. There, when enough was enough, And the earth
would yield in reciprocation to ritual prayer

Offerings in tune with nature's seasonal reincarnation
Here was activism rich as the land was lush
Here before violence was planted with each seed
watered with the wails of human misery and toil
The black African, woman, man-made mule
Under musket, bible, eugenics, profit, cotton bale
Cane and whip, welts and scarring deep

as the future name Ferguson. The season
Is ripe with familiar fruit, black bodies
plucked from their potential, sucked by hate
Spirit succoured by fallen ancestors. Arms open
To lightening strike, none but Ogun's* embrace
Will vanish this Oshun* beauty in high-tops
And jeans. Clear is her focus. Clean

is her heart like a purified forest
after conflagrations of fury, flaring after murder
Staring in the face of state armour
She kneels in protest before steel and hate
Buoyant upon centuries of crescendoing warrior roars
of the genocided. The climate is hot:
Fermenting prejudice, ripe rot, riot shields. Hot!

Clouds sting her eyes, tears smear, diluting
Her fear. Unreal courage where she kneels
She, vigilant dissident, in orbit for justice
on a land she has walked centuries before
She seems ephemeral, blurring reality, wooing bullets
That will not taste her blood today. Kneel!
Her body told her. Raise your hands Girl!

Praise those knees and hands, Sister!

*Pueblo songs - complex songs of First Nation peoples of the Americas
Ogun - Yoruba Orisha , warrior deity of metal, lightening. Often wrathful.
Oshun - Yoruba Orisha, deity of Love, Beauty and Diplomacy

Three poems

By Dan Simpson

Introduction:

Poet Dan Simpson responded to the commissions with three digital poems whose texts graphically demonstrate the impacts he wanted to explore. The print versions he has provided here illustrate these in 'snapshot' form, but to appreciate the full nature of his texts in action, please visit:

weatherfronts.dansimpsonpoet.co.uk

40

We are exposed
loose-fitting shifting bones
barely regulating
ultraviolet waves up diminishing
our barrier light

Polluting

The spoiled child sleeps spoiled
wrapped in a noxious fleece-lined embrace
her stained face peaceful
breathing tainted settled and calm corroded
nestled in clean cotton sheets foul
tucked in and sour corroded warm.

Yellow light softly tainted dawns
creeping into contaminated the sour room
gentle dirty and sweet
brightening the walls
she tainted foul soon foul opens her sickly eyes
blinks at the contaminated dirty world.

Her fist opens tainted and closes
fingers grasping at corroded stained nothing;
she holds everything in her palm.

Melting

He knows which card you picked
the number you're thinking of
where the rabbits are
how to say the secret words
make the hidden signs
and there's nothing up his sleeves.

He's got your watch and wallets
pocketed your front door keys
figured out your PIN number
he's sawn your wife in half
made off with your kids
and he's slowly disappearing.

Not with a bang and flash of light
the sudden billowing of smoke
but rather he's become hard to focus on
your eyes cannot seem to take him in
he slips in and out of conscious thought
becomes translucent in your memories.

Though you can't put your finger on it
something about you has been lost
borders drawn around an absence
but you do not know what has gone missing
your experience somehow shaded

Green Bang

By Nick Hunt

\$54 trillion a year

Estimated upper value of the world's natural capital and ecosystem services, according to ecological economist Robert Costanza

It was a warm autumn day, and the ecosystem service providers were buzzing in the natural capital. The foliage was consuming the light. Anders was sitting in his usual chair. Sophie and Sasha were on their way, and this afternoon he would go with Sasha to an area of outstanding natural beauty to forge a closer familial connection while recreationally walking.

No, that was not correct. Anders rubbed his head with his thumb. It wasn't an area of outstanding natural beauty, it was twelve hectares or thereabouts of medium to low quality indigenous fauna habitat, but Sasha need not be concerned about that. Sasha was nine years old. The place was pretty – yes, it was pretty – its cultural and recreational value was adequate for their purposes, and such qualitative definitions, he thought, were not of importance to children.

Such definitions were not of importance. Anders closed and reopened his eyes. He gazed at his trouser legs stretched across the patio, and then at the pebbles around the lawn and the trees beyond the garden. The trees were mostly rowans and oaks, and during a night of sleeplessness that had occurred some months ago he had calculated the value of each to about six hundred ecos a year – taking into account such factors as sequestration of atmospheric carbon, electricity conservation through shading and wind reduction, interception of particulate matter, and raising property values through leaf surface area. He looked at them now, doing their part. It was a ballpark estimate, and something about it bothered him now. The leaves were moving in the light. He rose from his usual chair and took a few paces, frowning.

He had woken up with that ache again, the one behind his collarbones. Every morning for the past few weeks – a dull, familiar bruising. He took a few paces and stopped, absently rubbing around his neck, and then checked his phone to see the time. They would be here any minute. He turned to go back into the house, wondering if he should change his jumper. He thought the last time had gone quite well. Sophie had cooked them all a meal, and then he had taken Sasha to the multiplex to watch a film. The film had been a good idea, because it had given them shared points of reference. Even if they hadn't discussed it – her mother had wanted her home straight after – Anders hoped the experience might connect them still.

The film had been about cartoon animals fleeing the effects of a super-volcano, but his recollection of the plot was vague. Some had escaped and some had perished, but he couldn't remember how, or why, or what situation the animals had been in when the film ended. He thought back to Sasha's face, impassive in the light of the screen, the way he had strained to look at her without her knowing he was looking. He hadn't really been able to tell whether or not she'd enjoyed it.

He found himself at the end of the garden, and suddenly realised he was crying. Well, perhaps he wasn't *crying* – but water was coming from his eyes, and he didn't know how he had got there. He'd thought he was going into the house. He was going to change his jumper. Wiping with the backs of both hands, he realised he didn't feel sad, could think of nothing to be sad about. Confused, he retraced his steps, and by the time he had reached the back door the phenomenon had ceased. He looked back towards the trees, the rowans and oaks holding and slowly increasing their value year by year, converting energy from the sun into fungible units of worth, diligently running through their economic functions.

Ironically, it was an economy he was no longer useful to, practically no longer part of. After all he'd done, he was finished now, relegated to the role of consumer – and these days, hardly even that. His consumption levels were negligible. When she had first visited here, a sort of preparatory check ahead of Sasha's visit today, Sophie had accused him of being a hermit. Actually it felt as if every word she spoke to him, since she'd started speaking to him, was an accusation of some kind, and he'd long since abdicated the right to defend himself. He was in the house now, moving through his possessions. Evidence of former worldly engagement was displayed haphazardly: dusty flatscreen monitors from the days when he still traded from home, a few framed photographs dating back to the early Bang, technology he no longer noticed but most of which was worth many times the value of the trees outside. His jumper was draped on the back of a chair. He pulled it over his head and walked through the room putting it on, bumping into furniture. They would be here any minute. He checked his phone again.

There wasn't much to do inside, so he returned to the garden. There was something about those trees, something he hadn't yet got right. It bothered him and he didn't know why. His collarbones still ached. He went to where the trees began and laid his hand on the nearest trunk, feeling the coolness of the bark and thinking automatically of the process of evapotranspiration cooling the air around his home, the calculations that flowed from that – suddenly he felt tired. He pressed his forehead to the trunk.

An ecosystem service provider was fumbling a path through the branches, colliding with the lower leaves, heading to its next pollination event. He watched it stagger drunkenly, and felt a small surge of affection. As a younger man he had made, and lost, a large amount of money on pollinators, buying forest habitat credits on behalf of tropical coffee plantations – until commodity prices had plunged, the coffee was replaced by pineapple groves to which pollination services were an active hindrance, the forest ceased to serve any purpose and the credits had depreciated in value by tens of thousands of ecos. But he was young then, starting out – he bounced back from things like that. Was it affection he felt, or nostalgia? Sometimes he missed who he had been. The service provider went on its way. The day was warm, but wet weather was coming. Soon it would be redundant.

He realised he had got distracted, and retreated to the middle of the lawn in order to look at the trees as a whole. Six hundred a year, a rough calculation. But the oaks were surely worth more than the rowans, both in terms of services rendered, due to their greater size, and their leaf surface area appeal – maybe even *cultural* appeal. How to quantify that? He took a few paces back. One and a half rowans, say, might equate to a single oak – was that a permissible starting point? The canopies were starting to brown. A couple of leaves detached themselves from the branch he was looking at and made their slow way down to earth, and that was when it jolted him: never mind the conversion rate between trees, what was the value of a *leaf*? He felt a tingling of nerves. The sensation was deeply familiar but had the effect of making him nervous. Rapidly, as if to get the whole thing over with, he selected a sample branch and estimated the number of leaves on that, multiplied that by the number of branches – an even wilder estimate that gave him one hundred and eighty thousand – then divided six hundred into that. Point zero zero three three ecos, or point three three cents, per leaf. Approximately three leaves to the cent. Three hundred leaves to the eco. He felt slightly sick in the warmth of the day. He might have to take off his jumper. Stooping around the lawn he began to sort them into a pile, counting under his breath as he went, fifty-eight, fifty-nine... one hundred and twenty-six, one hundred and twenty-seven... two ninety-eight, two ninety-nine, one unit of natural capital... then he straightened up, feeling ridiculous. He knew he should turn around.

‘Dad.’ She was in the garden, wearing wellies and a purple coat. Sophie was watching from the door, and Anders had the immediate impression that Sasha had been silently coaxed to utter the first word of greeting – he imagined a series of urgent mimes taking place between them, Sophie

encouraging, Sasha refusing, until her mother's will won out. Now she had accomplished her task the girl was staring at her feet, her face vaguely worried.

'What are you doing?' Sophie asked.

'Tidying leaves,' he said. There was a moment of silence, during which he dropped some leaves. 'How did you get here?'

'We drove,' Sophie said.

'No, in the garden.'

'The door wasn't locked. We rang the bell, but you didn't come. Sorry to barge in.'

'Hello, Sasha,' he said to his daughter. He bent at the knee and hugged her awkwardly, conscious of Sophie's critical eye.

'Hi,' said Sasha again. She created a small smile.

Sophie came out, but there was no hug. Instead she touched him on the arm. 'Shall we go inside?' she said. 'I've got stuff to make sandwiches.'

'I bought her a present.'

'Tell her, not me.'

'I bought you a present.'

'Thank you,' said Sasha. But once they were inside the house he forgot where it was – even *what* it was. He was feeling unpleasantly warm again, but didn't want to remove his jumper for fear his shirt might smell of sweat. Sophie had gone into the kitchen and was slicing bread for sandwiches. Her apparent familiarity with his home seemed less personal than professional, like a social service provider doing a house call.

Sasha sat on the edge of the sofa, her wellies dangling over the floor. Anders liked seeing her there, but he didn't know what to say to her.

'How are you?' he asked, hovering near.

'I'm okay.'

'How's school?'

'It's okay. I like Mrs MacGregor.' She thought for a while. 'I don't like games.'

'We're going for a walk.'

'I know.'

'Are you driving there?' asked Sophie, bringing a carrier bag full of sandwiches and other things. She was facing him, but he knew that her eyes were peripherally focused on the room, evaluating the conditions of his life. He wished he'd remembered to clean up a bit.

'No, it's just along the road. An area of low quality indigenous... outstanding... natural habitat.' The words were getting mixed up before they reached his mouth. Sophie was looking at him oddly. '*A woodland, woods,*' he managed to say, but it came out strangled.

'Are you alright?' she asked at the door, when Sasha had gone on ahead. 'You seem a bit... distracted, or something. If this isn't a good time...'

'I'm fine. It is a good time.'

'We can do this another weekend.'

'Really, I'm looking forward to it.'

'Try to relax. She's just a bit shy. She wants to like you, you know.'

They felt like the nicest words she had said to him for a long time, but immediately he wasn't sure. What did that mean, exactly? Anyway, there were no more concessions, and when they parted at the car her eyes were distant and alert. She kissed the top of Sasha's head, told her she'd be back at three, nodded to Anders in a manner that seemed exaggeratedly formal, and a moment later the car was gone and father and daughter were standing alone.

'Right,' said Anders, pointlessly. A helicopter rattled overhead. Brown leaves descended from the trees, economic units that had served their usefulness.

*

They walked together side by side, Anders holding the carrier bag, Sasha scuffing in her boots which were a little oversized, past the golf course, the ice hockey centre and a pre-developed development site, until they reached the start of the trees. Protected Natural Habitat Area was displayed on the entrance sign, and a system of green stars indicated its biological, cultural/ recreational and sequestration values, none of them especially high – in fact, Anders thought some were lower than when he last came here. Beyond the car-park two square posts indicated the starting points of the Common Toad and Hedgehog Trails, each with its cartoon representation of the indigenous creature in question, along with statistics about the various services they provided. The common toad wore sunglasses, and the hedgehog had a little hat. Wood-chip pathways sliced through the trees in two different directions.

‘Which way shall we go?’ asked Anders.

Sasha shrugged.

‘Which one do you like the look of most?’

She pointed to the one in the hat. ‘Are there hedgehogs?’ she asked with hope.

‘Theoretically there could be,’ he said as they set off down the path. ‘That is, it’s a suitable habitat. But I don’t know much about their habits or current distribution. We might not actually see them.’ Sasha didn’t respond to this. He wished he was better at talking to children. The path was wide enough to walk abreast but she seemed to want to walk slightly behind him, and they progressed like this for a couple of minutes without saying anything more. He analysed the quietness, and didn’t think it felt so bad – it was better to walk in silence, at least, than sit in silence in a room. The ache beneath his collarbones seemed to have subsided.

They wouldn’t see hedgehogs here, he knew. There weren’t enough green stars. These woods were less than ten years old – some of the smaller trees still wore protective mesh cylinders, though what they were protection against he wasn’t entirely sure. These twelve hectares of medium to low quality habitat had been forested by a soft drinks company, offset against a single hectare of rare/endangered species habitat somewhere in Spain, he seemed to recall, which the company needed to develop – he couldn’t

remember the species involved, but thought it was some kind of snail. He knew this because he'd taken an interest when the deal went through. He'd long been out of the game by then, but the existence value of a natural habitat area near his home had been higher than he'd anticipated – although of course there was no telling how long its existence might actually last. Like everything else in the world, it was only waiting its turn.

One hectare for twelve, he thought to himself. It seemed scarcely credible now. He couldn't even begin to guess what the rate might be in today's climate, the markets booming and crashing with increasing randomness, positive feedback mechanisms kicking in all over the place. He couldn't keep up with it any more. It wasn't like in the early days, when things had at least been *predictably* unstable. It was a different market now. It no longer made any sense.

The woods were quiet, apart from the sound of traffic rushing down the nearest road. Service providers of various kinds were active in the undergrowth, and intermittent birdsong added further bioacoustic appeal. He realised he had dimly imagined the little girl would be somehow running, jumping over water features, chasing fritillaries. He felt very anxious all of a sudden. He listened to her dutiful footsteps on the path behind, the rustle of her jacket as she moved her arms. What was she *thinking*?

'Do you like it here?' he asked.

'It's pretty,' she said.

Anders felt a wave of relief quite out of proportion to her words – he felt almost dizzy with it. 'It is,' he said. 'I'm glad we agree. Pretty places are very important. They have high recreational value, some might even say spiritual value. The world would be a worse place without them.'

There was silence again after that. He wished she would start a conversation for once, so it wasn't always down to him. But that was ridiculous, she was only nine years old. He tried to picture himself through her eyes: an awkward stranger who was attempting, for reasons she probably didn't understand, to fit himself inside her life where he hadn't fitted before. Uncomfortably dressed, unapproachably tall, seemingly incomprehensible. She wanted to like him, Sophie had said. And he wanted her to like him too. If both of them wanted the same thing, then surely it couldn't be so hard. What had Sophie said about him? Did she know the mistakes he'd made?

He was pretty sure she knew nothing about him – about who he was, or who he had been. How could she be expected to know? Her rubber boots scrunched on the path. There was a pigeon somewhere. The trees were spindlier round here, the foliage less mature – through the regular spacing of trunks, the ice hockey centre was visible metallically looming past the woods. He had walked this path dozens of times, and never noticed it before. How many visits, he wondered, to a medium to low quality habitat might equate to a single visit to a pristine boreal forest? Was there a qualitative rate of exchange – the way that, in a bygone age, two pilgrimages to certain shrines had been worth one pilgrimage to Rome? It was the kind of thing he'd once have discussed in the bar after work, a half-forgotten lifetime ago.

Twenty years ago, even ten. He found it almost impossible reaching his mind back to those times. His daughter might see him as shabby and odd, but he'd been part of something great. Someday, when she was older, he'd explain it all to her – how his generation had opened the world, how they'd changed *everything*.

Seized with sudden urgency, he opened his mouth to tell her this – but could find no starting point. He cleared his throat instead, squeezed shut his eyes. The problem was, his head got so full – he had to make a conscious effort to simplify the complexity. He found that his breath was short. The ache had returned.

Presently they came to a stream, not much more than two foot wide, with a sign that detailed its provisioning, regulating and recreational services scored by the usual green stars, which he didn't look at. The water was spanned by a little bridge, and as they stepped onto the bridge Anders, in a kind of desperate inspiration, reached down and took his daughter's hand. He amazed himself with this action – he had done it without thinking. Sasha's fingers stiffened in shock. She didn't pull away, at least. He realised his heart was beating fast, pounding beneath his shirt – this is ridiculous, he thought. But he felt very pleased.

'It's nice to see you,' he said. 'It's nice to go for a walk with you. I know you don't always... understand me. I mean, I try to make myself clear. But you'll get to know me, and I'll get to know you. Our relationship will progress. It will get better and better...'

Silence. Of course there was silence – what possible answer could she give? Her shyness and embarrassment were like a cloud keeping pace with her, as his own kept pace with him, moving at the speed of travel. But she

didn't pull away. They walked on for a while like this as the trail looped through the planted woods, and, not wanting to say any more, he silently counted the steps they took. It averaged at one and a half of hers to every one of his.

*

They ate their designated picnic in the designated picnic area, where wooden tables and benches were set alongside recycling bins shaped like hedgehogs and common toads. They were near the edge of the woods again, within proximity of the road, but the trees were rustling with wind energy so the traffic was less audible than it had been before. Anders sat on one side of the table, and Sasha on the other. The picnic was comprised of cheese and pickle sandwiches, trail mix, chocolate bars, banana yoghurts and carton drinks. Anders wasn't remotely hungry, but Sasha consumed her share with quiet diligence. He offered her his chocolate bar, but she shook her head and averted her eyes in a manner that seemed almost chaste.

'It's meant to be for you,' she said.

He put it in his top pocket.

Despite the fact he had held her hand, which made him glow when he thought of it, he still didn't know what to say to her, how to keep a conversation running beyond the initial sentences. He had no practice with her at all. She looked so much like her mother, so little like him – although perhaps he didn't have the ability to judge. He hadn't known her for the greater proportion of her life. He had sent cards, of course, birthday and suitable seasonal presents, and he had paid the appropriate legal share towards her upbringing. But until very recently, when Sophie's force of will had impelled them back into contact, he had accepted the fact of his daughter's existence only in the abstract. Part of him had assumed he deserved this – part of him had been happy to escape. Now the gratitude he felt was rather startling.

It was already too late, he supposed, for his presence to ever seem normal to her. She understood the world through his absence – this condition was fixed in her now, and probably could not be changed, no matter how many recreational walks they might engage in. Shifting baseline syndrome was what they called it once. What you consider normal as a child is what you consider normal as an adult, whether your background habitat is severely degraded or anything else. Certainly his own baseline had shifted more than once in his lifetime – for two decades he'd managed to keep pace with it, the peak and plateau of his career, before that grand systemic wobble that had ended everything. He could hardly claim to be keeping up now, keeping up with any

of it – a hermit, Sophie had said. Was that a joke? He supposed it was funny, considering the intricate involvement of his life before. But the system had grown too complicated. His course over the last few years was less a retreat than a simplification.

He watched his daughter as she ate, secretly, as if looking for clues. She was a self-contained unit, an existence entirely separate from his. She was wearing a purple coat. She had banana yoghurt at the corner of her mouth. The merest fact of her sitting there was astonishing to him. He felt a small pulse of despair: surely he would never understand her life, as she would never understand his. Today he might be obsolete, a historical irrelevance in the Green Bang's fading afterglow – but, once upon a time, he had added value to the world. That was the worth of his life, no matter what her mother might say.

It was the last great liberalisation, deregulation's final frontier. He had started off in carbon credits, like most of his contemporaries, buying and selling the right to emit sanctioned units of pollution. It was hardly groundbreaking work, but the theoretical sleight of hand that such an industry involved – transforming a negative externality into a tradable asset – had put him in a good position to expand into the other derivative markets taking shape at the time: pollination service provision, biodiversity offsetting, riparian and wetland banking, endangered species credits. He had been in the right place at the right time. All he had done, along with perhaps a thousand other bright young things in no more than half a dozen fortuitously placed companies, was to take the next logical step. The dominant global trend was comprehensive deregulation – the climate was highly favourable. He made good money. He travelled a lot. It was around this time he'd met Sophie. There was a sense that the world was changing, that he was a part of that change. How many people could say that, looking back on their lives? Once natural units were quantified, once they were fully fungible, it became possible to trade across different markets – to exchange endangered species credits, say, for carbon equivalent or peat bog futures, depending on the market rate. As more and more assets of natural capital were absorbed and integrated, there was exponential expansion. A critical mass was achieved: the green economy exploded. He and Sophie were living together. His office overlooked the Thames – itself transformed, in the new paradigm, from a greasy tidal river to a super-prime provisioning and regulating water service provider. He was one of the Men Who Sold the World, as the media unimaginatively had it. He and Sophie argued a lot. The market grew to include streams and mountains, icecaps, wetlands and high chaparrals, every conceivable biotic unit from apex predators to bottom-feeders. Speculation had even begun on complex systems such as

ocean currents, forest biomes, mycelium networks, wholesale ecosystems – there was no upper limit. He was a high-net-worth individual. Of course, there were warning signs. Was Sophie pregnant around then? It was all a little disordered.

When things had gone wrong, they had gone wrong fast. Anders couldn't actually recall... he felt very tired all of a sudden. The day was warm, and leaves were falling. Sasha still had banana yoghurt at the corner of her mouth.

'Dad?' She was glancing down into her hand at what he realised was a mobile phone. 'Mum wants to know what time we'll be back.'

'Oh.' It was an effort to think. 'What... what time is it now?'

'It's twenty to three. She's coming at three.'

'Oh. Yes. We'll be home by then.' He watched as her thumbs tapped out a message. It made her look unexpectedly older. He noticed, for the first time, that she had earrings in her ears, and wondered if they had been there before. 'You have yoghurt...' She raised her head. 'Yoghurt, just beside your mouth.'

She wiped it away with a solemn expression, which made her look like a child again. She put the phone in her pocket. Anders slowly put the rubbish in the bag. A yoghurt pot. A small plastic spoon. It felt too soon to leave.

'Sasha?'

'Yes?' Her solemnity grew, as if she sensed they were nearing that time – one of those adult conversations she'd probably learned to dread already. A siren whooped once, far away. She sat there very still.

'There was a time, before you were born, when a tree was just a tree... that's all it was, just that. And it was the same for other things. A mountain, a waterfall and a blade of grass were once just a mountain, a waterfall and a blade of grass. A bee was once just a bee. There was no reason for them.'

She gazed at him with worried eyes. He knotted his hands on the picnic table and concentrated on the words, on simplifying the complexity.

'And even longer before you were born – before there were any bees, or dinosaurs, or single-celled organisms, or anything else you might have heard

about – the world itself, the planet we live on, that had no reason either. It was only a ball of minerals waiting for something to happen to it, for something to give it meaning.

‘Then people came along, and for a long time they had no meaning either – they just happened to exist, like all the other things. But eventually, people gained reason. They learned how to value each other. Then they learned how to value the things around them – the trees, the waterfalls, the bees, the very world they lived on. Everything was given a purpose that it didn’t have before. Now, nothing exists for no reason, everything is working together – it’s a functioning part of a system that makes people happier. Of course, things go up and down, that’s part of the natural cycle – you’ll understand this some day. But the world has gained... a kind of reason, just like people once did. They used to call this Gaia. Well, we gave Gaia currency. Sasha, do you know what value is?’

It wasn’t a question, and she didn’t answer.

‘It’s another word for meaning. The higher the value, the higher the meaning. The meaning of the world is the total value of the world, all its units added up – all its leaves, its blades of grass, its reserves and its carbon sinks, its networks, systems, processes... everything together.’ Anders took a steadying breath. His hands felt rather far away, and something was happening to his eyes – a familiar throbbing. Sasha hadn’t spoken, hadn’t moved. Wind energy was stirring the trees, rustling the natural capital. Everything would be alright. ‘Sasha, value is the same as love. How can we love what has no value? That is to say... what I mean...’ The phenomenon was occurring again. Water was coming from his eyes, turning the world into rainbow prisms, yet once again he did not feel sad – instead, he felt quite elated. He wiped and snorted, and managed to say, ‘I value you very much,’ before covering up his face and breathing wetly into his hands. He stayed that way for a while.

When he had taken his hands away, Sasha was no longer at the table. But she hadn’t gone very far. Blearily he made her out, over by the recycling bins. He rose a little unsteadily and made his way to join her.

‘Hey. It’s alright,’ he said.

‘I know.’

‘Everything will be fine.’

She shrugged unhappily. She looked even more like a child.

‘What are you doing?’

‘Clearing up. It’s ten to three. Mum’s coming at three.’

‘Yes, we should be getting back.’ He watched as she separated the rubbish and fed it through the appropriate mouths, paper and cardboard in the hedgehog, plastic in the common toad. The colours stood out bright and strong. The hedgehog looked very brown, and the toad looked very green. Even after this natural habitat area had been exchanged, its services transposed to another sector of the world, Anders knew this was one of those moments that he would always remember.

*

Sophie’s car was in the drive, and she was sitting by the door. She gave Anders a funny look, but didn’t say anything. They went inside, and Anders made tea. They drank the tea in the living room. Sasha had a fizzy drink instead. Sophie asked Sasha if she’d enjoyed the walk, and she said that she had. The woods were pretty, she said again. They talked about this and that.

‘I’ll ring you,’ Sophie said as they left. ‘Look after yourself.’

‘Thanks for having me,’ said Sasha. They hugged on the step.

Two minutes after they’d gone, Anders remembered the present he’d bought. But by the time he’d located it, in a bag hanging on the kitchen door, the car had disappeared from the drive. It was a woolly hat and gloves, with animals knitted in – bobbly penguins and polar bears, grey things that were likely seals. It would have to wait until next time. Anyway, it was too warm.

He went upstairs and had a shower, then dressed again in the same set of clothes. There was mud on the trouser legs. He made his way back downstairs. He felt something against his chest and discovered the chocolate bar in his pocket, not melted yet, but on its way. He unwrapped it standing up, gazing around the familiar room. Dark, heavy furniture, expensive but a little worn. On the shelf, a squeezey rubber globe he’d once had on an office desk. He wandered to the garden again and took a seat in his usual chair. The rowans and oaks bordered the lawn. He slowly consumed the chocolate bar,

watching the trees and the light.

He hadn't finished the story, of course. Sophie would probably do it for him, one of these days when Sasha was grown – when their relationship involved more than watching cartoon films and going on recreational walks. She would tell the other side, if Sasha didn't know it already. But at least he had attempted to give her the bigger picture.

It was all a little disordered. When things had gone wrong, they had gone wrong fast – or perhaps they'd been going wrong for a while. He'd already moved out by then. A temporary thing, as he recalled – they couldn't be in the same house together. The baby was due in several months, and he couldn't think of that. There was a downturn in floodplain banking that was concerning, but manageable. A few analysts were warning that rainforest credit ratings in certain sectors of the market were unrealistically high, that low quality assets had been parcelled up with higher ones, but these concerns were ignored. There had been warning signs, but he hadn't paid attention.

It was commonly said that no-one saw it coming, but that wasn't entirely true. Some people had seen it coming, as some people always did. Some people made outrageous fortunes, as some people always did. A few canny hedge funds made a killing – humans were an infinitely adaptive species, after all. He just hadn't been one of them when positive feedback mechanisms turned millions of square miles of rainforest into tinder in an astoundingly short space of time, wiping billions of ecos off the market – sequestration, species, services, existence, the whole portfolio. The Amazon Basin Credit Crash, as it was later to be known, precipitated the other collapses: icecap reserves, coral reef futures, a whole raft of obscure derivatives like Sahel desertification mitigation credits, some of which he'd never even heard of – everything was interlinked. He hadn't moved fast enough. He had been wiped out.

Of course it wasn't the end of the world. A rush immediately began on remaining forest credits, in what was left of Indonesia and Congo, while the released option value of the desiccated Amazon created entirely different bubbles for a new generation of bright young things to make their fortunes on. That was part of the rise and fall, the natural rhythm of capital. Even then, with everything gone, Anders could have got back in the game. But something fundamental had changed. The Amazon crash spelled the end of that phase of multiplying possibilities that seemed to have no limitation, and expansion had been replaced by horse-trading over what was left. It was a new financial climate, one he did not understand. Once-dependable carbon stocks

disappeared in a puff of smoke, species banks of least concern suddenly plunged into negative value, speculation grew ever more wild – things were not predictable. The baseline had skewed too far, and he had not adapted.

Anders removed his shoes and his socks, spread his long toes on the lawn. The blades of grass tickled his feet. His generation had opened the world. No-one could take that away from him. He stared at the lawn, his vision drifting from the nearest blades of grass to the grass that spread beyond his feet, softening and widening, speckled with lurid dandelions, until his focus slipped and all he could see was green. The effect was a bit like going blind, or what he imagined might be the first second of the realisation of blindness occurring. The greenness was entirely abstract, not a colour but a sensation – stripped of meaning, stripped of value. It was the outermost edge of panic. He held it as long as he could.

The garden came into focus again, dazzlingly sharp and defined. Nothing had changed. There was no going back. He watched the trees. He watched the light. He finished the last of the chocolate bar. The ache was behind his collarbones, and the leaves were falling.

Notes on the commissions

Amber Warning

By Sarah Butler

I applied for a Weatherfronts commission because the idea of writing about climate change terrified me, and I'm a sucker for a challenge. Writing from a theme is problematic at the best of times, and climate change is a pretty hefty theme to take on. So I thought about ways to approach it and decided to explore the issues of uncertainty and scale, and use rain as an image to tie a series of stories together.

I started by setting up a blog www.outbreaksofrain.wordpress.com, where I posted creative responses to conversations and email exchanges about rain with a whole range of people: teachers, kids, architects, scientists, cyclists. At the same time, I spoke to friends and family about their perspective on climate change, read scientific papers and blog posts, and attended a couple of climate change focused events in Manchester where I live.

Then I sat down to write Amber Warning, and it was just as difficult as I thought it would be. Everything I wrote felt (too) heavy with symbolism. I found myself worrying whether I was writing about climate change 'enough', or 'too much'. It was a struggle to quieten this critical, anxious voice enough to be able to write freely and creatively.

I had originally anticipated writing one story with interweaving voices, but what came to me were four quite separate stories which I decided to think of as a sequence. I scoured weather forecasts online and picked out the un/certain phrases used to articulate what might happen in the future: expected; possible; likely; with perhaps the risk. I used these phrases, and the idea of a weather forecast, to link the sequence of stories together. The stories themselves came from a range of prompts – an email from a 12 year old girl; a meeting with two climate scientists; a foggy walk in the Lake District, and a conversation with a climate change activist. They all, I hope, give a different perspective on how we as humans deal with uncertainty, on a global and a personal scale.

Five poems after the IPCC Report

By Stevie Ronnie

The Gardener Explains the Importance of Greenhouse Conditions and Results

Knowing where and how to begin to work with the text of the IPCC report was an arduous task. My initial thoughts centred on the etymology of the word scenario. In its original Latin and Italian forms scenario is the sketch of the plot of a play. In the 1960's the word then began to be used to refer to hypothetical situations that could potentially come about as a result of nuclear war. In the context of the IPCC report a scenario is a clearly defined set of circumstances that lead to a particular set of possible future conditions. The IPCC scenarios are used as a way of providing a structured approach to the data used to project future results across the broad range of climate change research that takes place.

I began these two poems by searching through the IPCC report for the word scenario. Wherever the word occurred I took the other words from the sentence in which it appeared and wrote them out onto slips of paper. I then, quite literally, threw hundreds of these slips of paper up into the air so that the floor of my studio was covered in the vocabulary of the IPCC report. Over the course of the next two weeks I regularly scanned the floor for any interesting words or groupings of words that presented themselves. I then formed these words and phrases into lines of poetry that I pinned onto the wall, initially sticking strictly to a metrical structure of the sonnet form. After constructing two sonnets in this manner I then transcribed them from the wall and worked them through a series of drafts, as I would with any other poem and without any further conscious obligation to the IPCC report text or the strict form I had used during the initial composition.

How the Blue Box at the Bottom of Page 360 of the IPCC Report Might Sound to the Untrained Ear

This piece uses a variation of a surrealist technique called *n + 7* which was pioneered by the Oulipo group of writers. In the technique the significant nouns in a text are replaced by the word that appears seven entries further on in the dictionary. In this case I applied the rule of *n + 11* to a section of the IPCC report that appears in a blue text box at the bottom of page 360.

The interesting thing about this technique is that it highlights the structure and form of a text by shifting it into another world. Reading the IPCC report without scientific training and a professional interest in the data and results of the research is tough going and I applied this technique to several passages of the text in order to find a way into the report. This particular instance of the experiment seemed to fall naturally into lines and subsequently it became the poem that is included here.

Everything is Accelerated Here

In the composition of this poem I approached the report from a different angle. I started with an early draft of a poem that began during my residency in the High Arctic in 2013. I then applied a rule to the poem whereby words would only be included in it if they could also be found in the text of the IPCC report. If a word couldn't be found in the IPCC report then I found a suitable replacement word that could be found there.

The end result is a poem that has been filtered through the IPCC report. The original impulse to write was driven by a need to speak to my son while I was separated from him (hence the poem's dedication). I wanted to explain what I could see. When I looked back over my notes I remembered that the initial urge to write had seemed to be a very raw and human urge. I was interested to see if that raw emotion behind the original writing would be preserved if it were restricted to the vocabulary of the report.

Time and the Two-Year-Old's Hands

This poem is a response to the time I have spent reading and working with the IPCC report. My intention was to write something that articulated some of my thinking around the theme of time in the context of climate change. I wanted to write something tender, which looking back was perhaps a necessary antidote to the stale and functional nature of the report's language. The epigraph is taken from Elizabeth Smart's book length prose poem *By Grand Central Station I Sat Down and Wept*.

Climate Change Kwansabas

By Sai Murray, Selina Nwulu and Zena Edwards

The collection is divided into three series:

Home is a hostile lover – Selina Nwulu

This series is about the uncertainty of home. Though each verse denotes a different situation, the series as a whole draws on our current political climate to imagine the journey that many from the global south will make in search of safety and refuge from environmental degradation.

Spring in November – Sai Murray

These poems focus on several dates throughout the last month in which issues of race have raised the global temperature. The connected through-line of fire and heat, a questioning of how we use, measure and connect to our climate. These poems are a continuation of the thinking begun in the essay [Climate Change Conversations. And Questions...](#)

When Earth Speaks Through Flesh - Zena Edwards

This poem is in tribute to those who have died as a consequence of colonial and capitalist drives to profit from the oppression of a people. Inspired by the image of a young black women kneeling with her hands up before armoured police vehicles, a tear gas canister pluming right next to her during the protests in Ferguson, Missouri, where Black teenager, Mike Brown, was killed by white police officer, Darren Wilson. The patch of land she kneels on, marked with white painted road lines, belonged to the First Nation people of the Sioux tribe before it was the Ferguson we know, a tribe that would have lived in harmony with the land before colonisers and settlers systematically killed them and decimated the land with industrialisation and urbanisation. The piece implies how global climate issues are overshadowed by historical struggles for justice against racialized oppression in communities where space, land, the earth and nature's cycles are consistently in a state of resistance and balancing.

Three Poems

By Dan Simpson

Depleting

As the ozone layer is reduced and 'holes' appear, the poem itself starts disappearing - missing words and fragments.

Polluting

As ecosystems are upset by pollution, so the poem becomes corrupt: the text is disrupted by non-coherent words appearing in the poem, destroying sense.

Melting

As ice sheets recede, so the poem slowly disappears. The text erodes from the right hand side, leaving incomplete lines and, eventually, nothing.

Green Bang*By Nick Hunt*

The financialisation of nature - the tragically inevitable result of mixing environmentalism with neoliberalism - is a perfect subject for fiction, because it is a fiction. The concept sounded promising at first: that the reason we are destroying the environment is because we think it has no value, therefore by giving it a value - an economic value, of course - our attitude will change from one of disregard to respect. This short story does not attempt to outline the many ways in which this concept is flawed - a growing body of academic work does that comprehensively - but to explore the imaginative implications of a world in which economic values are the primary means of understanding our relationship with the environment. I was interested in immersing myself in the language of environmental economics, the terrifying banality of which is often blackly humorous, in order to see how a character steeped in such terminology would think, feel and act. The world this character inhabits is not far off, but it is not here yet. This story is not a prediction of the future: it is a warning, most of all about the power of language.

With thanks to the work of Clive L. Spash, Michael Curran, Joan Martinez Alier, Jutta Kill and Beth Stratford.

About the authors

Sarah Butler writes novels and short fiction, and has a particular interest in the relationship between writing and place. She has been writer-in-residence on the Central line and at Great Ormond Street Hospital. Her debut novel, *Ten Things I've Learnt About Love*, was published by Picador in 2013 and in fifteen languages around the world. Her second novel, *Before The Fire*, is published in March 2015.

urbanwords.org.uk | sarahbutler.org.uk

Zena Edwards Raised in Tottenham, North London, Zena is a unique voice in performance poetry and has been involved in writing and performance for 20 years after graduating from Middlesex. As a project developer and educator, she regularly engages with Youth Arts and Activism projects and empowerment through creativity in schools and libraries. Zena is Creative Director of Verse In Dialog, an umbrella company focused on cross art collaboration for positive social change.

goodnewzee.wordpress.com

Nick Hunt is a freelance writer and storyteller. His first book, *Walking the Woods and the Water*, is an account of an eight-month walk across Europe in the footsteps of Patrick Leigh Fermor. Nick's journalism has appeared in *The Guardian*, *The Economist*, *New Internationalist*, and other publications – investigating melting glaciers, language extinction and the effects of climate change on human cultures and beliefs. He also works as co-editor of the *Dark Mountain* books, and is full-time editor of their blog.

nickhuntscrutiny.com

Sai Murray is a founding poet facilitator on Platform's youth arts and campaigning project Shake! He co-edited *No Condition is Permanent: 19 Poets on Climate Justice and Change* (2010) and his debut poetry collection *Ad-liberation* was published in 2013: "Social commentary at its best... wry, witty and biting..." - *The Jamaica Gleaner*. He is arts and politics editor of *Sable Lit Mag*; a member of *Virtual Migrants*; resident poet at *Numbi*; and facilitator/mentor with mental health arts charity *Artists in Mind*.

saimurai.wordpress.com

Selina Nwulu is an, educationalist, writer, and poet. Making the personal political, her poetry is often inspired by global justice, protest and politics. Selina has worked on several commissions for Apples and Snakes, notably performed at an EU Environmental Human Rights Conference in Budapest and represented London on an Apples and Snakes national poetry tour. Having been published in a variety of magazines and anthologies, including *In Protest: 150 Poems for Human Rights* (2013), her first chapbook collection is due to be published by Burning Eye Books in 2015.

selinanwulupoetry.wordpress.com

Stevie Ronnie is a writer and artist with a background in computing. His work, often collaborative and participatory in nature, spans art forms to produce interactive pieces for publication, exhibition, installation and/or performance. Stevie is currently working on a series of visual and literary works inspired by a recent residency in the High Arctic.

stevieronnie.com

Dan Simpson is a spoken word poet and compère, poetry projects and events organiser, workshop facilitator and writer. He is a former Canterbury Laureate, and has been Poet in Residence at Waterloo Station Poet and Canterbury Roman Museum. His first collection of poetry is *Applied Mathematics*, published by Burning Eye Books, and his poems have featured on the BBC and London Underground. Dan has performed at major festivals, events, and venues around the UK, including: Glastonbury Festival, BBC Edinburgh Fringe Slam, and The National Theatre. He has worked on literature projects for Southbank Centre, Royal Academy of Arts, and the EC, and is a Poet Coach on Apples and Snakes' Spoke 'n' Word poetry in education project.

dansimpsonpoet.co.uk

This publication is the result of a collaboration between [TippingPoint](#), [Free Word](#) and [Spread the Word](#) with support from [Arts Council England](#).



LOTTERY FUNDED



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**