



ISSUE FIVE
KNEADED
VERSES

Polaris

THE EDINBURGH PARK
LITERARY ZINE

POETRY FROM ART AT EDINBURGH PARK

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Polaris

EDITORIAL

Issue Five

Kneaded Verses

Poetry Contributors

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Shane Strachan

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Patina is the renowned patisserie & social gravity that pulls Edinburgh Park together, shaping the character, rhythm & daily cadence of the public development. Inspired by the intimate bakeries of Copenhagen, its inventive combinations of ingredients & distinctly Scandinavian sensibility have made it both a local landmark & gathering place. For KNEADED VERSES, edition five of our literary zine Polaris, the contributing poets were generously hosted by Patina for a bread-making & pastry-decorating night workshop with Geffen, the co-founder & director, & two of her top artisan bakers.

The three invited poets, Iona Lee, Jane Goldman & Shane Strachan, already renowned in their métier, learned a new craft & created fresh poetic work in response to bread in the abstract & the art of bread-making. Within the Patina kitchen we were allowed to engage directly with the physical, performative aspects of baking: touch, rhythm, transformation & ritual in a hands-on session. It was a space for observation, note-taking & sensory engagement (& for taking home a bag of freshly baked goods that were gifted to us at the end too!)

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sculpture and poetry
at Edinburgh Park



Bread-making is one of humanity's oldest crafts & shared arts. It has been a fundamental part of human sustenance for thousands of years, a simple but profound staple, with origins that trace back to ancient civilisations where grains were first cultivated. It is both ritual & nutrition & it balances science & skill, the same way poetry

relies on rhythm, transformation & close attention to process. It is something that offers artistry in the ordinary, providing a fertile metaphorical ground for ekphrastic work.

Poetry came to embody a bridge, bringing together craft, memory & powerful voice, ranging from a powerful sestina in Scots, one of Scotland's celebrated languages, which speaks of time spent in the cold confines of a prison kitchen, hands remembering what the world has tried to forget: how to shape, to knead, to begin again. A beautiful poem which imbues a fragile hope & choreography of survival, so that through the heat of labour & the patience of process, another life, too, might 'stairt tae flooer' under pressure.

In *PATINA: A STARTER CULTURE*, we are shown that bread is not simply made; it accrues & gathers like a surface touched by weather; memory & body carrying traces of what they have been. An ekphrastic meditation on surfaces; bronze, flesh, dough & each marked by time, touch & transformation. Moving between Degas' dancers & the living culture of bread, it renders the process as artwork, where folding & fermentation become acts of inscription. Language accrues like patina itself, until the poem becomes a layered artefact: part sculpture, part loaf, part living archive of making. Phrases are layered unpredictably, nothing is static & everything is in the act of becoming.

In 'Poem With Air Pockets', bread also becomes both subject & artwork, the poem itself an act of ekphrasis, rendering not a static object, but a living process born into language. Like a still life that refuses to stay still, the loaf is observed across its becoming: from pale morning labour to the final hollow knock. The poem attends not only to what is seen, but to what is hidden; the invisible architecture of air, the breath held within dough, the quiet expansion of life beneath the stale surface. The scattered spacing & drifting forms on the page evoke the very 'air pockets' they describe, turning absence into presence.

In this way, the poem does not merely depict bread, it actually enacts it, shaping language into something porous & alive. Its fragmented structure mirrors a series of shifting perspectives, as though the poet were sketching the loaf from multiple angles, capturing gesture, texture & pause.

In my piece (a sexy bread poem!) I moved from the sacred space of history to the sensual, private contours of the bedroom, creating something that captures not just the making of bread but also the embodied, ongoing assembling of sustaining love. Traditions & relationships are both supported through repetition, attention & touch. The act of baking becomes inseparable from the act of loving: both require patience, heat, vulnerability & a willingness to be transformed. All poems treat bread as a process of becoming, not a finished object; rising, proofing, fermenting, resting like a poem on a page, procuring the same messiness & rhythm of both kneading & drafting.

What is finally presented is not just a loaf of bread, but a study in attention: a meditation on how we witness making & how, in the act of looking closely, we begin to understand the quiet mastery of nourishment itself. Cycles of prison routine, artistic process, daily baking & long-term relationships; each poem insists that meaning emerges through slow, repeated acts. It is a method that connects past & present, myth & daily ritual, individuality & community. These verses are just not needed; they are craved.

Janette Ayachi
Poet in Residence at Edinburgh Sculpture Park

JANE GOLDMAN

PATINA – A STARTER CULTURE

(for Linda Vittoni, Mauro Delli Agosti and Geffen Yoeli-Rimmer)



JANE GOLDMAN is a Poet and Reader in English Literature and Creative Writing at Glasgow University, and General Editor of the Cambridge University Press Edition of the Works of Virginia Woolf. Her poetry books include: *Border Thoughts* (Leamington Books, 2014); *SEKXPHRASTIKS* (Dostoyevsky Wannabe, 2021); *Catullus 64* (Main Point Books, 2023), a vivid translation of the Roman poet's mini-epic; with 12 a collective of Scottish women poets, *Pink Witch* (Main Point Books, 2024), a critiques of *Barbie* via the Witches of Scotland; and with Colin Herd, Nicky Melville, Iain Morrison and Maria Sledmere, *NOT JUST A NY QUINCUNX* (Mermaid Hotel, 2024).

maybe danton got it wrong maybe
a people's primary besoin for education
comes with bread not après bread maybe
a people's primary besoin is for poetry
poetry is the thing that comes with bread

it's in the fold folding the flesh tucked
alive between dancer dancing and degas
chalking the dancer dancing and degas
painting the dancer undressing degas
remaking the little dancer's flesh-dance
in clay and wax and hair the flesh-dance
of a little degas dancer folded and cast
into bronze a bronze cast flesh-dance
time and weather fold over a little degas
dancer and bronze bronzes into bloom a skin
bloom a laminating mantle bloom in a skim scum
of illinition illinition is the crustiness of verdigris
a crust crusting a little degas dancing bronze
folding fleshiness blooming dusty verdigris scruff
made monumental a flesh-dancing verdigris scruff
made monumental in slow-setting plaster cast large
in bronze monumental flesh dance in bronze by tucker
tucker's dancer after degas two is a dancing bronze
folding fleshiness blooming dusty verdigris scruff
the crusty illinition of its verdigris scruff
a dressing on hollow bronze echoing flesh undressing
slow dressing over time – a patination – a patina

a patina patinates like pater's inestimable patina
of ancient smoke and weather and natural decay
a patina is moody cannot be hurried it starts in weather
always and already starting a patina starts with weather
like bread think of the bloomy patination of bread crust
the bread a cheek folding tears into itself each cheek
a loaf folding into its own self caress and blushing

patina is a viennoiserie in edinburgh's airborne place
we're here to make phrases over the making of bread
our dough is sour dough but it's also yours yet bread
has become a dream not a metaphor (not real) for some
people where queuing for flour can be fatal the bread is born
with them and with them the bread is killed these phrases
a kind of selkirk grace coming with us into the kitchen
some bread is storm soaked some bread is shoulder borne
like victory wings bringing sweet change (change is bready)

every day the dough is different like a baby its time on the trolley
depends on the weather every dough is different like a baby
but it's a bundle you must leave in the fridge overnight a baby
you have checked for gluten by stretching and pre-shape shapes
gently so fold it over tuck it under press it down try
to push under this side and turn it you can feel it's stronger
this is pre-shape now it needs to rest as it tucks itself
into itself now stretch the bread back from under wraps
to floured board stretch it square out (fold and fold and fold)
interleave fold three times over roll it back to your belly slap it
on top like a baby – it's alive – leave at room temperature
until one finger above dough in the banneton has it in the fridge

it's alive alright in the fold and tucking the bread is a baby
a baby that is its own nappy a nappy tucking into itself
pinch your hands here folding it back in here giving shape
of the bundle pinch the sides make sure to close the edges
we need to close this like this then this you can see straight away
slap it – always that sound– pinch the edge (a bubble came
a bubble came) close these edges (beautiful beautiful)

[a baguette is born between fold and roll in cloth on board
flour the cloth for a baguette born between folds now scrape
the table surface brush out the bannetons clean for the next
day bannetons are paper boats (bannetons can be bamboo)]

out of the fridge a dough baby's cheek must be scored
the tension in the dough is released by the cut how we
tremble before taking razor to dough cheek how we
marvel at the plenitude that unfolds into the cut the cut
unfolds the dough – the dough makes more surface of itself
the bloomy crust that comes out oven hot is a patina of sorts

check the bread in the oven
knock the bottom of it
does it echo inside?
does it resonate inside?

IONA LEE

POEM WITH AIR POCKETS



IONA LEE is a writer from Edinburgh whose work encompasses poetry, visual art, music, and live performance. For over a decade, she has been reading her work in venues and on festival stages across the UK and Europe, everywhere from Shetland to Cornwall, dive bars to the Royal Albert Hall. Her critically acclaimed debut poetry collection, 'Anamnesis' (Polygon, 2023), was shortlisted for the Edwin Morgan Award and won the Somerset Maugham Award. In 2024, Iona published 'What I Love About a Cloud Is Its Unpredictability' (Trickhouse Press), a collection of visual and concrete poetry created through interactions with the geolocation software what3words.

I

Risen early
as the pale sun,
 someone
is making today's bread,

hands balancing
the elements
and slow time.

II

The first recipe
must be reinvented
every morning.

The flour lifts
 like weather.

III

Reunion

of bran and germ –

gristed and milled
sifted and mixed
watered and wrestled

stretched
to a small pane
of clarity:

alive with light.

IV

Beneath

a gingham teacloth

the dough
turns and yawns
in its sleep.

V

Snug as a cat
snoozing like
a fire.

o

o

o

o

o

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o

o

o

o

o

o

o

o

o

The
dough's dreams

o

go o



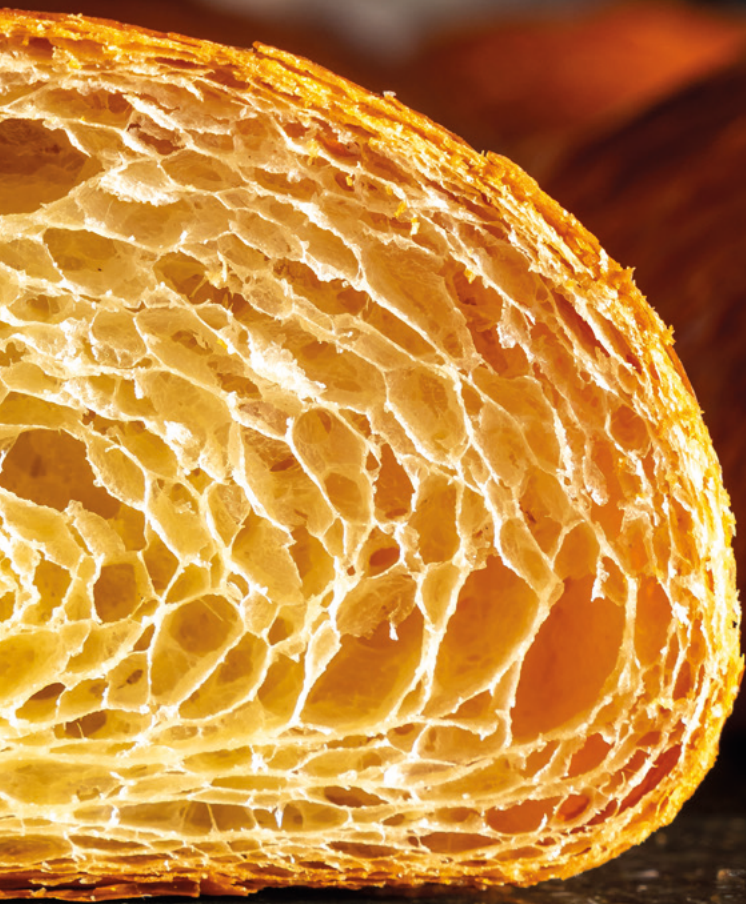














VIII

A hidden form
within the dough
is coaxed into being,

the shape
of a held breath.

IX

Fermentation.

The final fermata,
elipses, lacuna...

O teach me
the art of rest, I lack
the discipline.

X

Heart and hearth
smoke, heat arranges
its chambers,
 alveoli blooms,
yeast breathes
 its last.

XI

Born from the oven,
the baker knocks
and listens –

empty rooms,
nothing moving inside.

The holey flesh
is blessed and left
to rest, pulse cooling
 on the rack.

XII

Take time
and use it well –

leave no corner
of bread
unbuttered.

BRAKKIN BREID SHANE STRACHAN



SHANE STRACHAN was the 2022-23 national *Scots Scriever* (National Library of Scotland) for which he was awarded *Scots Champion* at the 2023 *Scots Language Awards*. He also won the 2024 *McCash Scots Poetry Prize* and was the 2024 *Loud Poets North Slam Champion*. His publications include *Refashioning Bill Gibb for the 21st Century* (Bloomsbury) and *DWAMS* (Tapsalteerie), which was nominated for Best Poetry Book at the 2024 Saltire Awards. He holds a PhD in Creative Writing from the University of Aberdeen, where he now lectures.

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Afore prison, ye niver hid such clean haans.
Ye waash them again then gaither thegither
some watter, tubs o saat, yeast and flour.
The stainless steel coonter micht be caul
tae the touch, but this job is a wee escape
fae aa them lang days inside bi yersel.

Some nichts, ye dream o baking in yer cell –
mixin aathing in a boul wi sticky haans,
wee bubbles rising up tae escape.
Ye need muscle tae knead thegither
twinty loaves, the kitchen fine and caul
sae the dough will bud like a flooer.

Aften ye staan and waatch the baas o flour
blaa up till their hoven, ivery yeast cell
fattent on sugar til mair's birthed en caul.
They grow a skin that's sae saft in yer haans
as ye rax and fald the dough thegither –
awa in a dwam, yer derk thochts escape.

The bannetons mind ye o yer attimpts at escape –
dustin their bases and sides wi fite flour,
they're shaped like the bedpans that sit thegither
on the fleer each locked-doon nicht in yer cell.
At brakfist, ye'd exchanged them wi the twa haans
at the hatch fer some breid, sae stale and caul.

Wi yer kitchen pye, ye'll mibbe buy a phonecaal
and dial that place ye couldna wyte tae escape.
Ye wunner fit ye'll baith spik aboot as yer haans
pinch and reshape the dough on tap o fresh flour.
Could ye convince her ye'd remak yersel –
brak aathing apairt then build it back thegither?

Aa proofed, ye lay oot yer breid dough thegither
on oven trays then free them fae the caul
o the kitchen bi lockin them up in their haet cell.
Fan they're baked, ye let the steam escape
afore ye tik een loaf oot, aa stoorie wi flour.
Ye listen hard as ye knock wi baith haans...

Inside yersel, ye hear shairds gaither thegither.
Braid braks in yer haans and haet fechts the caul –
ye escape ill seeds and stairt tae flooer.





JANETTE AYACHI BREAD'S BREATH IN BEDROOMS



JANETTE AYACHI (1982-) BA (Film Media/English Literature, Stirling University), MSc (Creative Writing, Edinburgh University), is a Scottish-Algerian poet. She's the author of *Hand Over Mouth Music* (Pavilion, Liverpool University Press), which won the *Saltire Poetry Book of the Year Literary Award 2019* & *QuickFire, Slow Burning* (Pavilion, LUP, 2024), which was shortlisted for *Scotland's National Book Awards & The Laurel Prize 2024*. She's a regular on BBC arts programmes, performs internationally, mentors for *The Scottish Book Trust*, collaborates with artists & has even starred in a few whisky adverts! She's currently writing her third poetry collection, *Corpus Mysticum* (Pavilion, LUP, 2028), with an award from the *Scottish Literature Alliance*. In her spare time, she is writing her travel memoir, *Lonerlust*, her debut novel, *Sweet Figs* & cultural essay/memoir, *First Sightings*. She is Poet in Residence at *Edinburgh Sculpture Park*.

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Aprons & rings off pending &
prepped for sterility, hope, a hospital.

The oven has a stainless steel morgue table,
a human heart weighs two hundred to four hundred grams,
a loaf of bread is eight hundred & fifty grams –
I think of this as we are incubated in foreplay for forty-five minutes
perfect loaves live in the gaps between the baking.

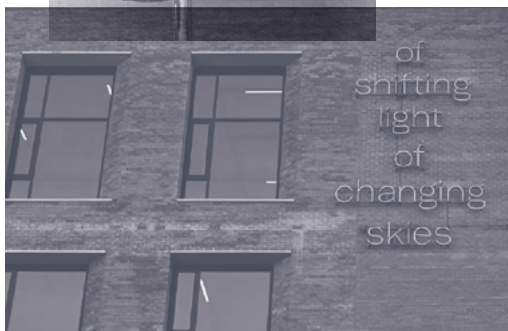
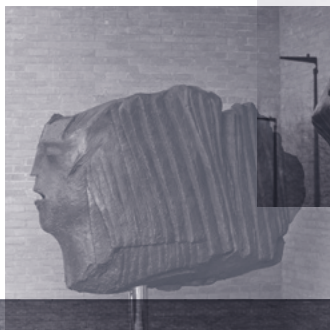
You circle my body like a banneton
slice a signature, an incision on the dough like a C-section
allowing me to expand as I swell against the cut & birth a crescendo
a bread echo, I repeat my moan, unaware of its tendency to hold frequency
between your limbs as segments of myself crumble over the white cotton cloth
& I fold in all the best places, fascia releasing, cellular bubbling & oh rapture,
you do not rush the heat, giving space for me to rise at my own pace
& I hold my breathe until things cool down.

The epidermis of doughskin is like the film of hot milk, without scores,
bread will burst randomly
at weak points in the crust,
surgical slashing shows a hesitation mark
like when someone slits their own throat
but we are here for the divine, for the lust,
not the horror, not the death,
for the love that distracts us
from all commonalities of being
these are the mouths we feed
when there is bread
there is no famine.

A French baguette is baked
for nine minutes at three hundred degrees
I close my eyes & turn up flames on the belly's inferno
it is not just food, it is human connection
an immediacy of baking, community,
reconnecting us to the basics of life,
the elementals of desire, there is still a hunger lingering
but with carnal longings; it is hunger & thirst simultaneously.



Grain is transformed with hands, water, fire & patience.
Is this, too, the secret alchemy of sustaining love?
So age & exposure have created a patina over our appetite
all these years together & the prospect of many more.
It all started in a small bakery in Copenhagen
where our hearts & hands opened
across the Frederiksberg canal
& now we share a bedroom
& most mornings you serve me
malted bread & manuka honey kisses
& I am always left wanting excess of the sweetness
a pinch of sea salt in the mix, a ginger tea & you kneel down
to worship me & I am sated, I am your Goddess Isis, gold
& turquoise-winged
breaking bread's breath & keeping love fresh.



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