

OCTOBER

Writing from online 'Zoom' workshops (send anything to share)

People write at home and exchange their work via email, post and at regular online 'Zoom' meetings on Tuesdays at 10.30:

They arrived in England (Blake/David) (Last 2 stanzas of the whole)

*I will not cease from Mental Fight,
Nor shall my Sword sleep in my hand:*

My family was in danger, so we took a chance
where children's cries were muffled,
and men hid tears searing their cheeks.

*Till we have built Jerusalem,
In England's green and pleasant Land.*

My family was in danger, so we took a chance
forced at gun-point onto tiny French inflatables,
our soaked corpses washed-up
on England's lovely southern seashore.

Fan (Pauline)

He knew he was privileged among men for the fan is a symbol of status in a poverty riddled world; made for the prestigious, the royal, the wealthy.

Jewel studded fans were found in the tombs of Egyptian pharaohs.

So he smiled as he took his familiar place on the mat beneath the ceiling and held the ropes that blistered his hands; the ropes that were attached to the giant flapping wings above their heads.

He was pleased to have been given the position though he knew they would not have given it to him had he not been deaf.

He witnessed too many conferences; secrets, scandals, even whispers of love but who was he to judge the Memsahibs and the Sahibs and the Great British Raj; their smart red coats, their bungalows, their Tiffin, their jodhpurs and their polo.

He was just a lowly punkawallah.

They arrived in England (Mark) One mother, 3 kids and 5 suitcases (one I've still got). Alone on Holyhead dock, September 1949, with a train ticket to Bristol in the pocket and the name of a priest. Nora Lee, 36, my Nan, and widow of Michael, ex Irish Free State Army dispatch rider and long dead of TB. Noel 17, the eldest and ex of Malahide Industrial School for Boys. Bernadette, 16, my Mother and the elder sister by a few minutes: ex of the Sacred Heart Orphanage, Dublin. Carmel, 16 and with a similar grim story. Behind them: the grinding poverty of proud, free and priest-ridden mid-century Ireland. Ahead: full employment, a Corporation house and a family life. To travel hopefully is not always a better thing than to arrive.

Exile – for Mahmoud Darwish (Mary)

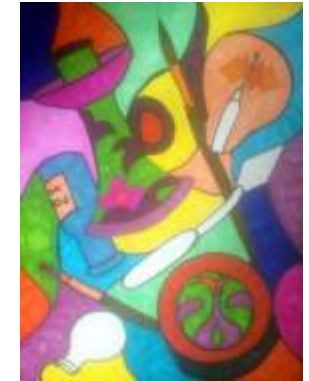
And when you let the owl in every night -
in through the round window
of the attic room where you slept all day-

then went to the factory, on a shift
suitable for a beginner in freedom
in a strange land, did you think of him,
as you made your millionth rivet?
see his round eyes in the gearwheels?
hear the whirr of his wings as the belts
flew?

And did you notice on returning, how
he had rooted through your few books,
your father's books, turning them over,
hunting for missing pages?

A photo and artwork inspired by Becca's first two packs

The themes were 'colour blocking'
and 'inspired by nature'.



OCTOBER DETAILS

You, our participants

currently contribute to our rent at Bank House and help keep our 'virtual' services going with donations, large and small, in cash and in kind.

You are also supporting one another through this time.

Cave Dwellers (Marion) We were the cave dwellers, the three of us, it was our other home, a hole in the rock. It was big enough but we made it bigger, scraping out sand and making shelves, building a fire and putting wood over the doorway. A farmer came one day and told us we would have more than a headache if the top fell in, but it never did. The cave is still there, but the dwellers have gone.

Soul (Bill) The deep hidden mysterious place where no eye can see, far beyond the reach of all outward distractions; untouched, unhindered by the cares, trials and tribulations, hopes and fears which are the lot of all humanity. As the breath from birth to death is the one constant unending stream so life flows on. We are all part of this great oneness, wholeness, entirety - this is who we are, our DNA, far beyond our human understanding but nevertheless very true and real.

Cats (Jane) Bastet, A proud goddess, A protector from evil spirits and from disease, But a goddess of the home, domesticity, women's secrets, fertility and childbirth. And of course she is the goddess of her brethren. The beautiful cat.



Contact details:

Bank House, 20 St Edward St
Leek, ST13 5DS

(Andy collects mail weekly)

Phone: 01538 528708

(calls come up on Andy's tablet; she will respond to numbers she knows and picks up messages weekly)

New mobile: 07760 138395 (use Whatsapp if possible, as Andy's mobile signal is poor at home)

Email: info@borderlandvoices.org.uk

Website: www.borderlandvoices.org.uk

Borderland Voices contact **Andy Collins: working from home**



Borderland Voices

21 years of arts for mental wellbeing



The Queen's Award
for Voluntary Service

Newsletter

OCTOBER 2020

Zoom writing every Tues 10.30: All welcome, contact Andy.

A link to **Becca's third art pack** (monochromatic colour) is on our website. Ask Andy if you want to join the next **Zoom art catch-up (Tues 20th 1.30)** or have a pack posted.

From December **we have new premises in Leek** (in rear part of Leek Health Centre, Fountain St). Though not ideal (use of a large **activity space Wednesdays only**) they provide a shared office and good storage.

Although Andy's promised **questionnaire** keeps evolving as the Covid situation changes, she hopes to circulate it this month, to gauge **what's been helpful and plan for the future.**

Covid situation and regulations permitting, the **Town Council** has invited BV to stage a **2-day drop-in arts event, 23/24 October**, in the former Tourist Info Office. Following all guidelines, participants can design **Women's Land Army-style posters** with Sarah Males.