

**... and welcome**

to the third edition of Sour Grapes, the bi-monthly pamphlet of new writing by members of the Monday Night Group.

Thanks to all who bought the second edition. Without your interest, commitment and money, this third edition wouldn't be here.

The Monday Night Group exists to bring writers together in a supportive environment, irrespective of gender, race, ethnic origin, social background, sexual orientation or disability and to give them the opportunity to read their work and receive constructive feedback.

The group also provides publishing and performance opportunities. Members of the group regularly perform at Frog & Bucket and Tommy Ducks' poetry evenings.

If you would like more details of the Monday Night Group, please contact Commonword on 0161-236 2773.

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Third edition editors are:

**Paul J King**

Paul currently works part-time as a razor blade salesman in order to fund the writing of his first book, 'Inside the Diseased Mind'.

**Steven Waling**

Steve is currently composing the 'Oxford Book of Unemployed Poets', in between scribbling deathless verses in the margin of the Book of Life.

**Steve O'Connor**

Steve isn't related to Des, Tom, Sinéad or Hazel. Lives.

**Steve Waling****blue forever**

I write in response to your article on favourite colours. Mine contains in it all shades from sea and sky to the shirt my favourite daughter bought for me this Christmastide, which I wear even now.

I own a cobalt Sierra, some years old, its dashboard cyan, seat covers slate. My furniture's royal, cerulean, pale; my carpet's dyed turquoise and peacock. I drink every week in the Oxford.

Even the jeans that hug the hips of the lovely ladies at the shop where I purchase my baccy, or the bags of salt in my crisps, are stained that inestimable hue.

Not everything I own is thus tinted; though the tiles in my bathroom gleam ultramarine, the towels are crimson, a gift from my wife whom I divorced due to being incompatible.

Some years ago I joined a club of ancient Celtic enthusiasts. Each weekend in the summer months we paint our bodies all over in woad and charge naked over hills at Romans

in gold and silver accoutrements. As I write, Elmore James picks a fine twelve bars on bottleneck steel as I wrap myself in whisky haze to keep my melancholia in check.

I am neither obsessed nor an anorak, as last night's correspondent implied. You may well find he too favours some reckless shade of opinion, and no-one accuses him thus;

though I have often thought such pigments predisposed one to tempers, hot flushes and problems with the heart; whereas I in contrast am calm and pacific, as a sea rolling azure forever.

**Pete Ali****fugazi**

Captains of industry smile like Cheshire cats in leather seats taking what's not theirs

Polluted air poisoned with acid seas blackened by oil No-one seems to care

third world children starve their eyes vacant stare the rich grinning wanting more don't want to share

back home strangers throw daggers through cold-hearted stares to the poor in gutters dreaming of home

satellites pollute heaven watch our every move we live in fear of the button in a world totally Fugazi

**Mark Bailey****monty righton**

John Cleese Knobbly knees You should have been in The Three Degrees

**Paul J King****overheard in asda**

In Asda near the tinned beans a young girl is crying "What's up, dear?" said mum. Dad says, "smack her ... Just smack her ... That'll shut 'er up."

**Steve O'Connor****meeting george clinton**

It was quarter past twelve, and stood outside the Academy, Kelvin Bell and me, Were waiting for a taxi, after a concert by the legendary George Clinton.

"There's the man 'imself", said Kelv. We ran over and said "Hello", like two horny monkeys, waiting for the man to declare us funky. He put down his beat box, took off his sunglasses, said "Hello", and shook our hands, what a man! George Clinton.

With all my jive I summoned up "Great concert, man!" "Thanks", said George, as he climbed into the back of a bashed-up white VW camper van, and it sped off. Presumably to meet the tour-bus parked around the corner, but I'll always consider it an honour to have met George Clinton.

**Kevin Doyle****winter break**

A couple of suitcases in the boot, young boy strapped to the back seat, they're all set to get off. Leafless trees line up the street: the child has a chronic cough.

What they're doing seems astute, (some overseas sunshine in store) arguably so when, without warning, the bank he's responsible for stays locked on monday morning ...





*Sophie Clarke***patience**

Close your eyes. Say when  
you will place your hands  
on my shoulders, smile at me as I wake.  
I wait for you to arrive  
and change the colour of the day.

I feign indifference,  
sink one more whisky.  
The cat and I unanimously  
toast you.

Although you are a stranger,  
I know what you taste like,  
warm in the morning,  
your fingers perceiving who I am.  
My skin, eyes, cheekbones,  
taking shape, just so.

Our darkness a closed world,  
this trusting touch,  
this limitless view ...

this waiting for you.

*Louise Glasscoe***tube**

Those, with their tinted hair, painted nails,  
peanut-oiled skin, hang  
like slabs of meat on springs,  
eye-to-eye vision,  
wall-to-wall expression,  
digest their daily gossip  
pause to earn their daily bread.

*Michael Kemp***unfinished symphony**

You pluck at my G string,  
Fiddle with my tuning peg,  
And caress my strings with your bow.  
Then you get out of bed,  
Get dressed,  
And go.

*Steve Rouse***the hat throwing incident**

There was a photograph in the paper  
of Second World War servicemen  
throwing their hats into the air.  
It was taken at the apogee of the hats' flight,  
and looked as though the soldiers might  
be gesturing in fear  
at a fleet of tiny flying saucers.

I have never vicariously witnessed  
a hat-throwing incident where  
the hats have returned to ground.

All hat throwing incidents are vicarious.  
They happen in photographs or films  
where the shutter always clicks or  
the editor snips at the moment when  
you might expect gravity to kick in.

I worry about these hats and servicemen;  
their actions appear odd and ill-advised.  
When the hats fall,  
how does each find his own again?  
Perhaps these are advanced radar-guided hats,  
automatically returning to their owners; or,  
and this seems more likely  
in a photo taken in '43,  
each hat is attached to its soldier by  
a long piece of elastic.

Perhaps the hats are disposable  
and only worn at ceremonial  
hat-throwing occasions.  
Perhaps all servicemen's heads  
are the same size; or  
it's all part of training them  
to be selfless and obedient. . .  
"The hat we gave you when you graduated,  
the hat which you have worn so proudly,  
brushed and polished so diligently,  
until the leather band is like molasses  
and the plastic peak shines like oil. . .  
throw it away. . .  
walk over a cliff."

Or maybe mass-thrown hats  
do not obey universal laws  
and hover in mid-air  
until brought down  
by butterfly nets.

.../...

Perhaps these hovering hats  
really *are* fleets of flying saucers  
and there is something that the Government  
hasn't told us all these years.

Or else servicemen just write their names in their hats,  
so they can find them again afterwards.

*Kevin Doyle***you never know what to believe**

Henry had a hankie full of sundust  
and kept a dog with three tails  
that could suck a giant slug  
from the heart of an orange.

Henry always had the right rhyme  
even for the trickiest line, and knowledge  
of a place where many rivers ran  
in riots over land that rain couldn't find.

The bomb he housed in a matchbox  
must have just gone bang, one day,  
destroying the dog and dispersing the dust.  
"Absence of rain equals a desert", he'll say.

*Paul J King***throwback**

Ga-Re, Ga-Re, I didn't know I loved you till I saw you  
rock'n'roll and I love you love me love. I wanted the full  
outfit, but my mum wouldn't buy it. So what did I have, one  
gold tie ... And the entire recorded back catalogue. That was  
only because she liked to listen to them as well.

I loved that tie, wore it to school, got laughed at, didn't care. I  
was proud. Proud to be one of the chosen ones. Proud to  
be one of the gang. The new world glitter organisation. The  
Church of Gary Christ of Latter Day Glitters.

**SOUR GRAPES**

in this issue,  
new writing by:

pete ali  
mark bailey  
sophie clarke  
kevin doyle  
louise glasscoe  
michael kemp  
paul j king  
steve o'connor  
steve rouse  
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