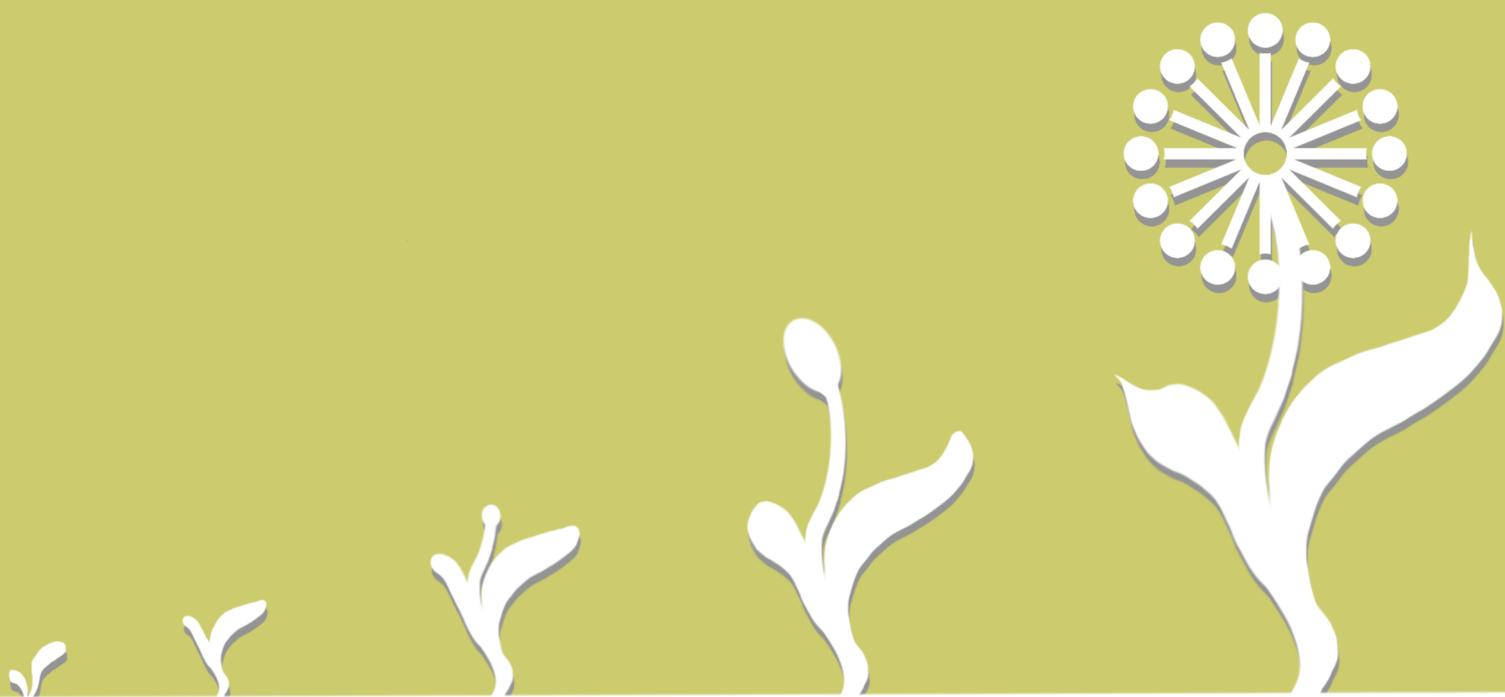


DAiSY
REGROWTH
A POETRY ANTHOLOGY





DAiSY: **REGROWTH**

During 2020 DAiSY delivered an online programme called DAiSY:ReGrowth. The project was a response to the global pandemic caused by Covid-19.

Our intention was to keep people connected and making art, and generally put some positivity back into the world. The theme of ReGrowth felt powerful, with connotations of nature and rejuvenation. It was an opportunity to explore and enjoy the world around us, and look forward to better times ahead.

Through a series of workshops we reached over 500 artists, dancers and writers, who learnt creative skills and made new work. This anthology is a result of 16 weeks of online sessions, led by writer Jackie Wills with the Creative Response Writing Group.

Disability Arts in Surrey (DAiSY) is a steering group of 14 member organisations with a disability, mental health and arts focus. We meet regularly to run projects, discuss ideas and share resources. Working with local and national cultural partners, we offer a range of opportunities to develop and share work across a diverse range of art forms. Our goal is to make Surrey a welcoming place for all artists to practice.

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Creative Response is an arts for wellbeing charity that supports people with mental health issues, physical and learning difficulties, and substance misuse. The charity offers weekly creative sessions of person-centred support, based on a foundation of mutual trust. Practising artists work alongside participants to share skills, knowledge and creativity in a unique, safe and supportive environment promoting personal resilience and wellbeing through the arts.

The Creative Response Writing Group offers an additional outlet to those inclined to put words on the page. Its provision has captured another strand of creativity that can often remain secret, or indeed close to an individual's heart. However, through learning to trust and support one another, wonderful words are knitted together and shared; both within and on occasion outside the confines of the group setting.

The Bench

He put his wallet on the bench next to the drawing board
He put his phone on the charger there
Put his pencil and notebook there too
Sound of the waterfall, sound of the birds singing
He brought the fish and laid them on the bench
The crispness of toast on a frosty morning
quinacridone and hansa yellow - the sunrise he put there
The smell of tarmac he put on the bench
He turned and put invisibility next to the tarmac
So long he had wanted to disappear
He put on the bench the dreaded clown
It momentarily could not see him
Could it?
The bench was cluttered
But it was always like that
Just like his mind.

Alister Scott

Celeriac

The feeling of old
Gnarly wrinkles
cold
earthy
sweet yet savoury
pale creamy skin
Still young on the inside -
yet aged on the outside
You are an unusual contradiction

Alister Scott

Painted Lady

Fluttering on the early morning breeze
The blue sky signalling a warm sunny day
The painted lady landed on a leaf in the park
To continue warming in the sun

The familiar sound of the city
Became very hectic with sirens
More sirens than usual
Following that loud crash that she had ignored earlier

People around her rushing, crying
While she gently relaxed
On her leaf
To be disturbed by the loud rumble

The air became dusty so
She took off to find a better place
Away from the din
Into the path of the fire truck.

Alister Scott

I Come From

I come from boiled cabbage
Coal boiler in the kitchen and a damp dog
I come from jam tarts and custard -
gravy and too much salt
White pepper
I come from a place where the TV is always on
but nobody is watching
Footsteps upstairs
A world of double negatives
Duck and manipulation
I come from a rocking horse called Kitty
and board games
An umbrella stand in the hallway
A dilapidated shed
I come from grass and orange sodium streetlights
red brick council houses and dried dog shit
Iron railings
I come from love and disconnection
damp, cold, windy and foreboding
I come from dogs and bees in the garden
A cat and spiders
I come from the gas works
A bag of coke on a bicycle
A worker's hand all big, strong and gnarly
handing me a fifty pence piece
Paraffin heater in the greenhouse
Broad beans and rhubarb
Lollipop lady
The shop around the corner
Sweets

Alister Scott

The Rain

The sky is crying on my window
Teardrops as large as pearls run down the pane
Leaving a snail trace as it descends.
One after another they trickle down
Some chasing the one in front
To reach the bottom
Slipping into their trail.
Down the side of the window
In a steady flow
Like a small brook
Winding its way to meet
Fellow travellers
On the ledge.
From here they form into large drops
Like marbles and clatter
Onto the bin below
Echoing like stones being thrown
By neighbours' children.

Caroline Wren

City life

Too many people
Not enough space
Moving too fast
Traffic too slow
Too many shops
Not enough green
Too much money
So many poor
All the greed
In need of more
Baby boomers
Sterile swimmers
Eggs on freeze
So much sex
Too many drugs
So ready to fight
Build the concrete
Chop the trees
Pollute the city
Choke and wheeze
Living cheek by jowl
Like pebbles on a beach
But oceans apart
Just too many people

Caroline Wren

Last Moments

She lay motionless on the bed
Sickness had etched and scarred her skin
Warm water and lavender soap
Now anointed her body.
I gently bathed her
Combed her auburn hair
Cleaned her nails.
The final journey started here
The cleaning ritual
Towards another life.
Pain erased from her face
Hands softened
Limbs limp
Illness washed from her body.
I saw her life in my hands
The young war bride
Dancing the jive
The dreams and hopes
A mother, a wife
A full life was lived.
This was the ultimate cleanse
All pain and suffering washed
Sweet lavender remains

Caroline Wren

Visit a crow

She sat in the chair old and frail
"Mouldering on" she said
"Waiting to die"
I had just arrived
But wanted to go
Eyeing the door that led outside
I tried to feel a softness in her face
A tenderness in her eyes
Compassion in her voice.
The dark crow sat and stared
Her sharp beak ready to
Peck, pick and stab
At everything I said
Scolding my thoughts.
I longed to feel the air
And run
Run from the
Murky shadowy squawks
Out into the street
Into the rain
Just run and run...
I looked at her in pity.
I gave the old crow tea and biscuits
And smiled
I reached for the door
And ran.

Caroline Wren

The Bees

As a child what did I know about bees?

They were black, yellow, they stung.

I would squash, swat them, I would knock them off my food.

When looking though through a wiser more mature magnifying glass

I saw the hope of the bee and its glory

Let that flag of the bee stand on its own as we know its function in life

its true vitalness

pollination

the world to create.

Deborah Watts

Fire

Having fresh baby soft peach-like skin
baby wipes across the softness of my cheeks
then a build-up of scars
a build-up of adult tough harsh skin alien to my body.
Wrapped up like a mummy for months
Wrapped, unwrapped, the pain, the unpain - which was worse.
The scars left. Pulling away my baby soft innocent skin
replacing it with ugly stand out lumpy bumpy patterns on my flank and arms
and stomach scars and a dead mum.
Lessons learnt.

Deborah Watts

My space of hope

I walk with illness reminders in my bag.
They rattle with an unmusical tune
rattle rattle rattle
constant reminder.
It is nearly one o'clock.
Then I'm stopped, first by the beautiful aroma
the scent that relaxes you firm and mesmerises you into a calm place.
My sound now is of the humming of the bees.
The bees swarm the lavender field.
I sit cross-legged like I haven't done since a child at assembly.
I sit staring and gasp at the bee, going in and out of the flower.
Perhaps one o'clock has gone but watches disappear and time with it
Perhaps I will sit longer and take hope of life carrying on like bees
and take home hope in my pocket and less worry, of the rattling sound.

Deborah Watts

The North

My dark world of horror that was The North.

The North of mean people.

People who beat
people who neglect
the North of mean people.

North could never just be thunder because thunder was temporary.
The North was mean.

Then moving, drawn away and
dancing ladies
happy music
laughter
yes, laughter.

A sign that said 'The South'.

The South was a new hopeful world.

A simple world saying South but it meant Christmas, but Christmas
with presents.

It meant friendship
It meant a smile
It meant a life
It meant escape
It meant safety
It meant I was home.

It's now not possible or wishful
to go back North.

Everything I dream of is here.

Deborah Watts

Birdsong at midnight

She did not have
the courage
to flee
the turgid, tawdry tale
of that most
of films
he took her to
in Leicester Square
on the longest day
the shortest night
at midnight
summers height on her birthday.

Immediately recognising
its already famed
absence
of artistic
and cinematic value
she knew at once
its worthlessness.

Instead
she sat there
silent, still
no words spoken
not a word
read or said.
Silent, still
mute.
Eyes closed
tight, shut
longing
for its end
her need
for and of it
desperate
but not wanting
to be its witness.

At the film's last
and final shots
the end
of its foul filth
her endurance
ended
she walked
through
the false
cinematic darkness
into Leicester Square
at midnight
summer's height.
In her quietness
her naivety
she thought she had
sought
had wanted
silence
imagined
and expected
an almost darkness
imagined
and expected
an almost silence
both
to match hers
save
those soft sounds
the soft tones
the conversations
of people walking home
to freshly
laundered bed linen
to the sleep
of well slept sleep
with no
remembrance
of that foul filth
the odious filth

they and she
had either
watched
or sat through.

Rather than
an almost darkness
that almost silence
instead
she walked
through both
straight
into
an explosion
an exuberance
of light.
A light
white and bright
reflecting
mirrored images
the tracery of trees
illuminated
etched against
black skies
their gnarled
or younger branches
wrapped loosely
with electricity
and fairy lights.

She had neither
expected
or imagined
nor yet dreamed
these sparrows
they could be
as gossips
gathering.

They
the constant

chatterers
bickering arguments
tiresome
tittle tattle
and
best ignored
meaningless.

To her
the surprise
of sparrows
singing
at midnight
illuminated
spotlighted
in crowded branches
was magical
almost
a fantasy
and very real.

The music
the astoundingly
astonishingly
loud
sound
of birdsong
in moon's light
against
the black skies
at midnight
summer's height.

Indeed
it seemed
she had swapped
a second
artless film
for it
and

she was glad.
Glad that
she had chosen
the feathered
brilliance
that explosive
exuberance
of sparrows
singing.

Their songs
the lyrics
their singing
all
captivated
and fascinated her.
She was transfixed
Transported
by them.
She understood
their meaning
their lyrics
the rhymes
and rhythms.

She understood
the nuances
the subtleties
hints
suggestions
undertones.
The songs and singing
of sparrows
at midnight
summers height
in Leicester Square.
A far
better choice
the most perfect
performance.

Deluge

The storm descends
Rivers cascading down my coat
A waterfall of sensations
Invigorating and energising

The haze lifts from my mind
And reality washes over me
The scent of tangibility
Centres me in this deluge

Rowan

The Wilds

It speaks in a voice without words. An instinct, a memory,
a recollection.

An awakened knowledge of something that's always been.

The wind blowing through the moors, the bracken catching against
my clothes.

It tells me I won't be the first. I won't be the last. So many have
crossed its expanse, listening to a voice of wind and leaves. Of birds
song and foxes howling.

The world has changed, but the wilds remain.

It tells me it will not be tamed. It will not be contained.

And it will not be silenced.

Rowan

I go wandering in nature

I go wandering in nature.
I am bathed in the sense of the goodness that surrounds me.
I am immersed in a sea of different green grasses.
Inside my pocket is a stone which I have picked off the ground.
I placed it in a safe place, trouser pocket.
Returning home for a hot cup of tea
I paint the rock with a message of kindness and hope.
I then return to nature where there are many trees.
I look for a safe place where I plant the stone, so that other people
can find it.
Then they can place it in their pocket to carry on the journey of
kindness and hope.

Sandra Priseman

Praise the Rain

Praise the rain that lands on bone-dried ground,
The ground so solid that nothing grows.
Praise for the rain that gives the plants a nourishing drink,
So nourishing that it restores the plants to their bright and
beautiful colourful fruits.

Praise for the rain that drops on our skin,
The skin encasing our body that stops us breathing.
Praise for the rain that washes away the toxic stuff that surrounds
us,
So refreshing that it replenishes the body to reveal the true and real
gifts.

Sandra Priseman

Celebrate

The glory in the art of doing
takes our mind to another place
a place where dreams are glorified.

The gifts in the art of doing
take our mind to another place
a place where dreams are gifted.

The fruits in the art of doing
take our mind to another place
a place where dreams are fruitful.

The strength in the art of doing
takes our mind to another place
a place where dreams are strengthened.

The reward in the art of doing
takes our mind to another place
a place where dreams are rewarded.

The comfort in the art of doing
takes our mind to another place
a place where dreams are comforted.

The counsel in the art of doing
takes our mind to another place
a place where dreams are counselled.

Being mindful gives us many talents
therefore the art of doing is never wasted
but to be celebrated.

Hedge Sparrow

Oh here they come again
With clever tricks
Not even the spinning
Can stop them now

I sit looking down on the edge of the roof
Why can't humans throw food up here
I know you bushy-tailed buggers rarely venture

Doesn't seem to matter to you
I'm good for the humans, softly cooing at sunrise
What do you offer
We may both be vermin
But at least I create a lullaby
Eat annoying bugs, not you; you're just a grey tormentor

Zena

The Hive

The day begins, sunshine land and sea
The only way I can describe it is the ocean washed everything into me
Sand broken down, fragmented, too small to see
But by god, it enters every part of you
Not one ounce available to be free

Small and scrummy, amazingly cool
It spread throughout me
You're still loved overall

Zena

Flocks

Stig of the dump comes to mind
Fish finger smell with cheese
Cosy toes, tired fingers
Draughty and cold, small and unbound
There she laid, blanket around
The blooded fresh body
New skin, hair and lungs
Discarded, no apology given
A crispness of the blanket with dancing pink ponies
Counting 123 to every perfect one of them
Empty basket laden in town
Small note, choice to give life
No chance to have grown
Just a piece of trash

Zena

Just One Day

The warmth of the sun
The brightening of the sky
Born into one

The one must crave
And embrace, mate and become

For it's only one day

In this month that I create and lay

I will allow myself to die
The two tone dragonfly

Zena