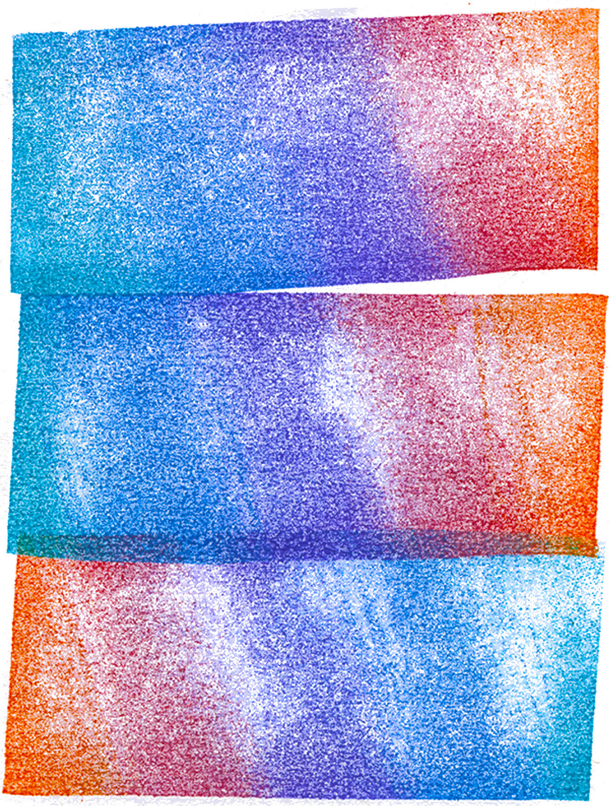
HOW WE MADE IT THROUGH

A Thrutopia Collection



Foreword by RUPERT READ

Response by MANDA SCOTT

Contributors

Helen Atkinson
Laura Bok
Laura Autumn Cox
Nic Fife
Claire Glover
Bronwen Gray
John Gray
Gen Lamont
Will McDonald
Cath Mortimer
Felicity Palmer
Jo Reilly
James Shammas-King
Pie Ainslie Waller
Sarah E Williams
Tom Malcolm Wright

How We Made It Through

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Layout design - Nic Fife

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Foreword

by Rupert Read

In a world now 'warming' above the planetary boundary of 1.5°C, with all the environmental tipping points that threshold will bring, what is the role of stories in creating or vibrating with active hope in these times?

Most climate fiction so far has been depressingly dystopian, or blandly utopian. Thrutopian vision instead brings us a pragmatic yet hopeful story. How could we in fact make it through?

Transformative and Strategic Adaptation helps us to transform our civilization to be in readiness for the future. Impacts beyond 1.5°C, the agreed maximum limit-target for global overheating, are already here. In this context, adaptation, preparedness and resilience-building are no longer optional. They become central, pivotal to whether we survive, let alone flourish.

Creating a flourishing future even in the jaws of adversity requires us first to imagine it together.

Thrutopias are Transformative Adaptation boldly and concretely imagined. Thrutopian stories show how we can get through by adapting to what is coming at us by transforming our systems, probably mostly from the bottom up.

What seems likely is that life for many if not all of us will over time become technologically simpler, and more local. Local communities can be the principal source of security and material support - if those who live in community are prepared to shape that possibility together.

How We Made It Through, this collection of prose, poetry and art you're now reading, brings together community, creativity, fear and hope in one place. I hope you are inspired by the contributions gathered here. Some of them may strike you (as they do me) as still too utopian. One or two of them might seem a tad more dystopian than we might collectively be able to aim at. They are interesting as efforts to explore the emerging thrutopian genre.

And some of them are beautiful.

Inventor of the term 'Thrutopia', Professor Rupert Read is co-director of The Climate Majority Project and Emeritus Professor of Philosophy at the University of East Anglia. He is the author and co-author of several books including This Civilisation is Finished and Transformative Adaptation. He has been building Thrutopianism into his own creative and scenarios work, including his viral internet short Out of the Ashes.

https://climatemajorityproject.com/

Special Place

Claire Glover

What if we all have a special place?
A place to go when hope is lost,
When life overwhelms, or gets too much.
A place to bask in the joy of life,
Of looking up, of being alive.

For me maybe an open field,
Frost glistening, trees whispering,
Greens and browns, blues and whites.
The sun is peeping, the clouds are creeping.
A crunch as I walk and fresh air as I breathe.

For you maybe a different place.
An architectural bridge, an atmospheric lamp post,
A tree where nature has done its thing,
A park full of people, flowers and squirrels,
A flood plain to forage for an abundance of gifts.

Can my special place meet yours?
Can they meet alongside, beside or within?
Are they all part of the same?
Brought together by each and every one of us.
Every special place important, worth fighting for.

And as we join together,
Each individual together as a group,
Each special place together as a whole.
We connect our special places,
We link together and so
Together we make it through.

How we made 'How We Made It Through'

by the How We Made It Through core group: Felicity Palmer, John Gray and James Shammas-King

In 2023, Planet South Bank member John Gray shared an idea with us which he had been brewing for some time. How do we tell better stories to guide us through the crises in which we find ourselves today? In most of our media we see only dystopian visions of our future, ravaged by climate change and worsening authoritarianism. But on the other hand, utopian visions of the future often feel naïve and unrealistic. It was here that John introduced us to the work of the environmental philosopher Rupert Read, who argues for the necessity of 'thrutopias'. Thrutopias combine realism with hope. They are stories which accept the severity of the difficult times ahead, but remain hopeful that we can make it through.

The idea, then, was simple but powerful: let's tell stories about our own neighbourhood, in the future where we've made it through. We hoped that both the stories themselves, and the act of coming together to make them, would generate the community connection and shared hope that we all need to bring these futures into being. It was here that our project was born.

We had already been working together for some time as part of our local community climate action group, Planet South Bank. Founded in 2012 with the vision of creating a more resilient, more resourceful, and more connected community in our neighbourhood of South Bank, York – the idea of How We Made It Through felt like a natural step in pursuit of this vision. We started planning in the autumn and by the start of 2024 we were ready to launch.

The title of the project outlined its core parts:

How **- The stories had to focus on the practical details of how the people of South Bank responded, adapted, and ultimately made it through the polycrisis.**

We **- The project was aimed specifically at residents of the South Bank area, and we encouraged people to set their stories within the neighbourhood– to emphasise that we make it through as a community, not as isolated individuals.**

Made It **- The stories didn't have to be fluffy or positive– in fact, participants were actively encouraged to sit with the reality of just how scary the future seems– but they did have to be hopeful. One of the few conditions we imposed on participants is that no matter what story you want to tell, the people of South Bank have to make it!**

Through **- The backdrop of the project and of the stories is the overlapping and interconnected set of ecological and political crises that we can call the 'polycrisis'. Encompassing everything from climate instability and ecological collapse to oppression and political turmoil, we didn't require participants to focus on any particular aspect of the polycrisis, but it was important that we accepted the scientific reality of there being something which we have to get through.**

Running over six months until a submission deadline of 31st July 2024, we put the call out through flyers, posters, social media, radio interviews, and word of mouth. Twenty people responded initially and once our programme of free workshops and online calls kicked off, more joined along the way. Now writing a year later, this publication contains the work of more than thirty individual entries, and media ranging from prose to poetry, and from collage to needle felting. The generous support of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and Abundance Press pulled all of our work into this book you're holding today.

There are a lot of things that, in our minds, are beautiful about this project. But one of the most beautiful things is that it is easily reproducible in any neighbourhood. You can find lots more information and guidance about how we ran the project on our website, planetsouthbank.org.uk. All our templates and documents are free to share. We hope it can allow for more projects like these to generate local hopefulness across the country and beyond.

Weeds

Laura Bok

We kept on pushing with our heads
We were compelled; we had no choice.
The way would bend to will in time.
We set our shoulders to the wheel
Of opening up the smallest chink -
In seeped the rain, in crept the light,
We got our roots in; then we grew.
Constrained by force, against the grain
That is how we made it through.

In Praise of Rosebay Willowherb

Bronwen Gray

Fifty-six years ago, in 1996, I worked in post-war Bosnia. I remember the societal collapse that took place there and the utter devastation of infrastructure and of nature. I saw such desolation, and yet, out of that, flowers grew. I discovered the humble rosebay willow herb – otherwise known as fireweed – and saw how tenacious it was in bomb sites.

I was once walking past the ruins of what had been the local school. My co-worker was a local young woman, who pointed out the school and said 'that's my geography classroom', as we passed a heap of rubble strewn with rosebay willow herb. The image stayed with me, and inspired me to create two pieces of art. The flowers spoke to me of hope and new life. Those who survived the war made it through to a time when reconstruction began, and, in pockets, reconciliation started to blossom.

Twenty-eight years later I was living in York, and in that year – 2024 – there were repeated floods followed by strong winds. Multiple beautiful, aged trees fell, particularly in Rowntree Park and along the river banks. It was heartbreaking to see the devastation, and the loss of these old friends who had stood for so long.

In May of that year a group of us gathered in the park – by then mercifully dry – to create land art relating to our shared future in that part of the city. A range of hopeful artworks were produced, some spelling out the word Hope.

I was drawn to a huge tree trunk lying on its side. That was one of the recent victims of our changing weather. A long crack ran from the base up the trunk for about 1.5 metres. It seemed to be calling out for decoration. A few of us gathered leaves and flowers and filled the gaping crack with our beautiful finds. It felt good to honour that tree by drawing attention to it and celebrating what it had been. It felt like an act of memorial.

And now, in 2052, in a time of unpredictable and extreme weather, I take time to notice the things we're losing, whatever it is that is dying out or literally falling over. Sadly, it happens all too often, and has done over recent decades. It's not just our beautiful natural world: organisations and systems have been falling apart.

And yet, we are here and are managing to carve out time to create simple beauty. Where there is loss and sadness, we notice; then we honour the losses. Out of sadness, we create beauty.

Over the years we have learnt to more truly appreciate nature in all her glory. We understand our place in nature so much better than we did in 2024, or 1996. At the age of 82, I am moved to see how much rosebay willow herb is blooming in South Bank. It blooms in the houses abandoned to flooding, and the old Amazon warehouses no longer in business. It's showing us, again, that there is still hope, that there is still possibility. And it's not just the rosebay willow herb that shows us this, it's also areas like

the beautifully re-wilded Nun Ings, that in 2024 wasn't much more than a field, or the vast swathes of community gardens that weren't even dreamed of back in 1996.

In some ways we've become a little like rosebay willow herb ourselves. We've become beacons of hope as we bloom and flourish even in challenging times. We've become truly rooted in this place, and rooted in our celebration of all that we still have, as well as honouring – and remembering - what has been lost.


Nun Ings
happy
walking
peaceful
relaxed
nature
walk
wildlife
space
plants
warm
looking
calming
beautiful
dog
people
learning
butterflies
refreshed
frogs
tranquility
feeling
escape
reflect
look
humans
talking
grass
picnic
alive
bats
meet
drawing
close
open
proud
belonging
quiet
sit
river
swimming
air
clean
access
still
wild
free
fruit
flowers
relaxing
pleased
water
litter
special
fascinated
senses
refuge
calm
together
reconnecting
healthier
watching
fellow
birds
trees
friends
inspired
harmony
content
well
embraced
part of something bigger
green
sounds
changes
spotting
fresh air
immersed
grounded
playing
positive

Nun Ings Word Cloud

Will McDonald, Friends of Nun Ings

At an open meeting of the Friends of Nun Ings in the summer of 2024, the questions were asked:

"If we were in 2035, what would you like to be doing on Nun Ings, and how would you like to feel?"

This word cloud is a summary of the responses to this exercise.

Nun Ings, which is in private hands and is to be found between York Racecourse and the river Ouse, is a wide open patch of land that has been used by many different groups over the years. It was once used for grazing by the Freemen of York, when it was known as 'average land'. Historically "average land" was grazed by York Freemen and the residents of Middlethorpe for the winter (6 months October to April) and cultivated by the Church owners linked to Clementhorpe Nunnery for the remaining summer months. It has long offered generations of York residents access to the countryside right on their doorsteps. The Friends of Nun Ings aim to protect and enhance the land for present and future generations.

The Nature Reserve

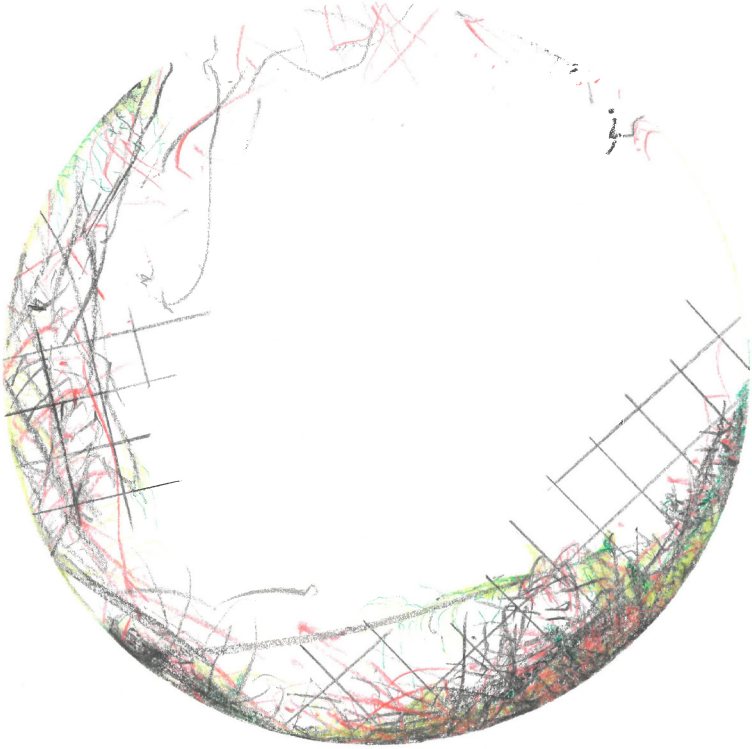
Laura Bok

A fly landed on my foot.
Sure, I'd rather have a dragonfly
Or a beetle or a newt.
But flies must have some wildness too.
All things are not bright and cute
So a resting fly will do.

Festina Lente

Laura Bok

Basking like a lizard
Unmoving but aware
Of streams of fluff slowly descending
On the pale, bare-chested players
Unhurried, moving up as well as down
The dull thump of the shot
Bird looping like garlands
Creatures without name
Suspended above the grass.
Gleaming faces, yellow of yellow,
Angled westwards, cupping the sun,
Their cups runneth over.
Frantic and lethargic
Aimless and true
Ephemeral and eternal
The whole scene is a poem.



Beaten Down, Creeping Back Out
Cath Mortimer

Yet... Maybe

Claire Glover

Rigid in hopelessness
Stuck in isolation
All encompassing
Risk and threat our only neighbours
Change impossible
Panic and fear all around
Yet ..... maybe

Breathe in, breathe out

Maybe?
Together?
Maybe together?
Shame overwhelms
Impossible to dream
To share an alternative
Yet ..... maybe

Breathe in together, breathe out together

The unknown, the unexplored
Possibility is next door,
Can we accommodate?
Can we change?
Live with or
Live alongside
Yet .... maybe

A space to breathe in together, to breathe out together

Together we make time
We make space for curiosity
A pathway to possibility
A place to meet, a space to relate
A space to be
A space to hope
Together in hope

The Plaques

Felicity Palmer

Even in those last days of the old world, when so much needed doing and time seemed so scarce and irreplaceable, it was the effort spent on the acts of love that helped us identify the future; that helped us recognise its face long before it had fully arrived. Even in the barren fields, in the floods of waste and violence, those acts of love proved that we were entering a new time. The world had changed, and we would be different forever more.

On one hot June afternoon, while wildfires crept across Hob Moor and black smoke reached across the tenements of Holgate, a man sat at his kitchen table, with his windows closed, his curtains closed, and a thin beam of dusty light splitting his laptop screen. He was a volunteer— at least, technically, he supposed he still was, although the Friends of Rowntree Park hadn't convened a meeting for many years by then, and there was no committee, no authority, instructing him to do anything at all anymore. It was his own idea that had him sitting at his kitchen table on that hot, grim, fearful afternoon, with an empty cup of nettle tea at his elbow and a neat stack of bronze memorial plaques in front of him. The plaques were grime-green, shedding crumbs of lichen on his tablecloth, after their many years spent mounted on the old benches of Rowntree Park. But now the benches were gone. And the plaques— a dozen of them, bearing the names of loved ones who'd been lost long ago— had nowhere to go. It was his last act, as the last known volunteer of the Friends of Rowntree Park, to find those memorial plaques a home.

The Park had been closed for many years, by that afternoon. The river was too high for too much of the year, and the cost of running the industrial-scale water pump was too steep in a time when the national electricity grid was so fragile— with all those storms battering it from the outside, and the patchy, lurching progress of the green energy transition attempting to rebuild it from the inside out. For many years now, residents who stood on the hill at the top of Richardson Street, looking down into the near-perennially sealed iron gates at the end of the road, would see nothing but the high brown water swilling through the tennis court fences, and the slack nets dragging against the southerly current. The park, founded so many years ago for the people of York, had been stolen slowly, in plain sight, while all the people of York looked dolefully on.

There were costs to cleaning the paths and replanting the decorative beds every time the water receded. Even allocating all the hours of volunteer labour felt increasingly unjustifiable, in light of all the other unfolding crises around the city. Few could argue that the waterlogged hydrangeas were the neighbourhood's highest priority, when the hospital needed any help it could get to manage the crowded emergency rooms, and every year more hands were needed to free those trapped in the increasingly frequent heatwave traffic incidents on the ring road. There was so much pain and stubbornness in how things used to be done, now that the last volunteer was the only one left to look back on it all: he thought of the days spent repairing the damage every springtime, sweeping the brown water out, doing all this busy, useless work, refusing to look the grief in the eye. It turns out there had been a lot of grief for a long time, now that he was able to see it from the dim safety of his kitchen table. Whole careers had been spent labouring under the ruling sign of Denial; whole lifetimes spent smothering the aches and pains of horrible things that had beset the whole world, all those small, quiet, but million-strong

clues of the great changes that were coming. And once those changes had really arrived, both as suddenly and as plainly as the river had stolen the park, there was a great flush of energy through the world. Outpourings of emotions happened in the streets, in supermarkets, in offices, in public squares. It came out in the shape of riots and fighting, over tinned goods and toilet paper; some wept openly over the photocopier, others got out of their cars and simply walked away, leaving the commute unfinished, the cars idling in the road until they eventually sputtered and died. It was a period of deep grief. It was horrible, and it stung, and ate everything up like a wildfire. But after the numb stagnation of the generations of denial that had come before, it felt, to many, like liberation.

Only a few weeks before that hot June day, after who knows how many years of upheaval, change, and struggling, there had been a moment of unfamiliar peace. In the worsening drought, the river had finally ebbed low enough to see the waterlogged outlines of the park, and one morning the neighbours of Richardson Street had woken up with a strange, resigned clarity in their hearts. They knew that the day had come to see the park for the last time. They knew that it was time to say goodbye.

There's no denying that there was some pragmatism to it— there were useful materials, under all that water, and too many people were living in a state of desperate need to allow good wood and tiles and bricks and metal go to waste in the Ouse. But there was more to what happened that day; even the most hardened cynics could feel it in the humid morning air. As neighbours gathered around the park gates, from streets far beyond the hill, some arrived with tools, wheelbarrows, garden gloves and bottles of water for the work ahead. It was, in some ways, unremarkable that no instructions were needed— people had started to live in such a different way from the old times, and it was no longer

an option to wait for an action plan or a man in charge to make sure that a shared need was met. They spread out with their tools and took the park apart patiently, piece by piece. A procession of burdened wheelbarrows led back up Richardson Street and along Bishy Road, where they were dumped in the common land of the old car park by the greengrocers, and more neighbours crouched and sorted through the objects into piles of things that could be salvaged and reused and re-homed. Not a thing was wasted. The rotten wood fed the compost bins, the tiles clothed the new woodsheds on the Little Knavesmire. It was heavy work, and took several days because they had to stop for the hottest hours of the sun— but by the time the sparks had hit Hob Moor and the summer fires had truly begun, there was little left of Rowntree Park but dry soil, some concrete paths that couldn't be undone, and an old duckhouse that floated on the current and was decided to be left for when the waters returned.

There wasn't much ceremony, when the work was finished. The materials needed redistributing and there was always so much to be done, in those days, when everything was still urgent and terrible. But people had been telling each other stories as they'd worked, as people have always done. They'd talked about their memories of the park. They talked about taking little ones to see the frogspawn under the bridge, about picnics that had happened under the willows. As they worked, there were some objects that had formed their own pile, in the car park next to the greengrocers on Bishy Road. A baby's dummy. A set of house keys; a rusted mood ring. A padlock with two initials chiseled into it: 'NF + FP', found locked to the railings of the long-gone skate park. The memorial plaques from the benches. They were things that no-one knew what to do with— things that could have been valuable, maybe, for their metals or working parts, but were instead a different kind of precious that no-one could bear to repurpose. It was a sign of the new world. That with all

the grief and all the need, there were still acts of sentimentality. Useless acts of love. The last volunteer of the Friends of Rowntree Park took those plaques home and tried to find their next of kin. There were so many other things that needed doing. But he made the time to try.

He searched every social media platform that was still standing, he scoured the local records, he even tried poking through the long-abandoned files of the Friends of Rowntree Park folder, but there was nothing of use. All the people who had paid to have those shiny plaques mounted on the park benches, who knows how long ago, were all gone now— left, unreachable, or otherwise disappeared. He sat in his kitchen with the stack of names and tried to think of what they would've wanted. All their families had wanted was to honour those they'd lost, in a favourite place that they'd loved— how could they have known that the place would one day be lost too? The grief was as thick as the heat. He sat, and all dozen of those left-behind people sat around his kitchen table with him, in that thick silence, all thinking about the old park with the willow trees and the bridge with the frogspawn underneath.

The park may have been gifted to them, the people of York, but only now they were coming to understand that it had never been theirs. The neat concrete path around the lip of the duck pond was from another time, another way of thinking. Hermes, the statue that was once poised above a fish pond but was now always treading water, still held his message high— his raised hand could still be seen on lower days, when the water was bright and calm.

There were so many other uses for the metal— it could've been recycled into nails, hooks, buttons, knives, a hundred other things that the neighbourhood desperately needed. But the new

world would never be built unless it was built deliberately, with each brick an intentional act of love. He got up and cleaned the plaques in his kitchen sink. They dried in the afternoon sun and he carried them back up the hill to Bishy Road. There had once been an estate agent's on the high street, but of course nobody had any use for that anymore, and after standing empty for so long, the building was now slowly turning into a sort of museum. There were many others who had been holding onto those sentimental objects; relics from another time which no-one was quite ready to forget. A few neighbours had started arranging the objects on shelves, and as was the way nowadays, others had joined over time, bringing tools or other offerings that might fit the job.

While summer worsened and the wildfire smouldered on, the plaques were laid with dignity into the flooring of the new people's museum. In not long they were worn smooth by the shoes of visitors, bringing their own gifts and contributions. And despite all the change and the disruption of everything, the sun still tracked the same arc over the world, and so in late summer, every summer from then on, the plaques shone a polished gold in the low light of the afternoon.

"For Douglas: who loved this park and everyone in it."

Giving Up

Claire Glover

Do we give up on giving up?
Take down what we give up?
Give up we are told will bring reward.
But if we give up, what is left?
The others, the whats, the whys the whos, the whens;
The problems that crowd and threaten to overwhelm.
And what if we give up these steps we take;
We give up on sorting, cutting down or doing more?
What do we get from giving up?
Maybe more time to take up?
More time maybe to come together.
More time maybe to imagine and dream,
To relate or to shine
And into this space, this absence of giving
What can emerge?
Open now to seeing
What maybe we gain
As we give up on giving up

Ekphrasis

Pie Ainslie Waller

ekphrasis

~ word comes from the Greek ek and phrásis = 'out' and 'speak'

= my response to How we made it through

Examine the shapes & themes 'wish machine' spirals orbits, dots, stars, blobs, threads

Came about due to a combination of involvement in community social & crafting group & thoughts around 'How we made it through'

Stress relief
hold, squeeze, stroke,
pass from hand
to hand

within
each felted shape
organic patterns/motifs
are represented which
emerged almost
unbidden

spheres/
eggs/ pebbles,
nuggets
these felted shapes,
physical creations are a
combination of practical-
making task combined
with thoughts,
feelings
& ideas

these shapes
are robust/resilient
can be left outdoors
weatherproof
but will eventually
decompose
natural materials
wool

The Scent of Strangeness

Sarah E Williams

I know about age. Well, my nose does. I am young, while Red Monty is pretty old. He's pretty old but Calvin is really old. So impossibly old it's hard comprehend: half of his cells are battered, near death or warped into alien versions of themselves that move sluggishly round his body and sometimes leave their alien scent to spread to different areas. This alien scent seems to be killing the cells that it comes into contact with. They will eventually kill Calvin but this won't be for a while. He might keep going too after I'm dead.

Calvin is one of the oldest persons I know. He's like this scent marker left by someone who passed through lifetimes ago. A stranger who visited another place and left their lingering smell as the scant evidence of the odd place and time they came from. I accompany Calvin out to the park each day where we tend to the plants and live chickens. Red Monty sometimes comes too but more and more, he stays home. We'll always greet him enthusiastically when we come back in and Calvin's taken to bringing him small scraps of his lunch so I save a little of mine for him.

When we get to the park Calvin holds the canoe while I hop on board. He does this really carefully. I tried to tell him that I could get in with my eyes closed but I've realised that Calvin likes to feel that he is helping me. Now I make sure to thank him for his help and his eyes and cheeks crinkle.

Calvin takes time to get into the canoe then and I try to help

him. I stand with my feet on the edges to balance and still the boat as much as possible while he clambers in, swinging his heavy rubber boots over the side.

We push out onto the park and I can't help but wriggle in delight and throw a smile over my shoulder at Calvin before tilting my head up to smell what the park has in store for us.
We make the rounds. We visit the three sisters and Calvin shares a tin of beer with the big round orange ones. Most of the tin goes into the ground but Calvin swigs the last drops and smacks his lips. He's offered me some before but its not half as good as the water collected in the big leaves which I sip to keep him company.

After we've had a drink with the sisters and checked them over – Calvin peering at the tops of the corn and me sniffing for any scent of decay below – we get back in the boat and move on to the hens. For this I'm allowed off the boat but I must lie very still and I lower my head to the ground.

The chooks, as Calvin calls them, come over steadily and scramble around Calvin's feet, cooing excitedly. One of them, the little spotty one, runs straight over to me and sits right in my armpit. This is the usual routine. It's colder at the moment and Calvin's started bringing hot porridge but Spotty likes to warm up by me first. She snuggles in and I lift my head very slowly and lick the odd, rough bit of skin on the top of her head.

Spotty is very young. She's very very young compared to Calvin and pretty young compared to Red Monty and about half as young as me. Which is very young. She smells of eggs and dung and some blood from where she scratched her wing a bit too hard with her scaly foot.

When Calvin tells me, I stand up very slowly. Spotty stands up with me and then stalks under my belly to go and finally, casually, help herself to some porridge. She's really got a sense of style, that hen.

Calvin and I get back into the boat and finish our chores. We tend to the other floating islands and I smile at the ducks who are just waking up on their own little floating home. The fog is lifting now and it is clear and starting to warm up. We make our way back to the road and tie up the canoe. Calvin flicks the thumb from down to up on the boat's mooring and we leave it to have its own adventures for the day – I wonder who will go in today? I'll find out tomorrow.

We walk up the road towards the shop and as we get into the busier street I start to hear people call my name.

Hey Grey!

Working hard or hardly working?

Over here, Grey! Hey Cal, do you mind if I give him a bit of this?

Go on, as long as it's alright and we won't miss it.

Not at all – Grey's the only one that wants this.

I smile at all of them – our neighbours and friends – and politely accept the bowl put down for me. It's a soft roll, a fish head, potato and carrots – all smelling strongly of the fridge that the bowl and its contents has been kept in overnight.

I lap up everything, apart from the roll which I then take in my

mouth gently and smile around it at the woman (old for me, young for Calvin) who saved them for me.

That's for Red, I take it? What a kind boy you are.

She scratches my ears and I lean my head into her palm. Calvin and I walk on.

This time of year is great. Most of my jobs are in the spring, when I must stay at the park all day and protect the young plants from birds that aren't hens, and in a few weeks' time when I'll be employed to fetch and carry and be on lookout for anyone who needs help. For now though, it's plain sailing in the days, helping Calvin to fix things and being patted and fed are my main jobs at this time.

I've even had a day hanging out with Elvis, who's employed to kill the rats that swim through our park, that would get away with killing hens and wreaking havoc on our plants if they weren't scared off. Elvis is about half my size but twice as vicious as I could be. Her hooked claws and hissing spit are enough to make any rat think twice about their actions. She seems to have quite the reputation now and only the stupidest rats still come by.
I spot Elvis hanging on the top of the striped awning and I smile at her. She watches me with round eyes. I never know if she recognises me from this distance – she always seems wary but I suppose that's in her bones. Nothing a few days lazing in the sun with me will fix.

I feel small hands run over my neck and back as we walk by the very young (in Calvin terms) persons. They always giggle when I pass. Some of them watch with wide eyes like Elvis, but most are eager to reach out and I let them. Like with Spotty, I just keep my movements slow and don't do anything that could scare them away.

Calvin and I reach the shop and I trot to my bed straight away to bury the roll under my blankets. There is the bone that I keep in there for when the shop is quiet and I give it a quick, friendly lick. There is almost no taste left in it now, but Calvin sometimes spreads some peanut butter on it or some tinned food: that's a real treat.

Once I've sorted my things out I go back into the main room and glance up at Calvin. He's busy tinkering away and fixing a bike chain, so I go into the window and take my usual spot lying down and looking out.

I spend the day dozing, waking, smiling at people through the window, getting petted by customers and bringing Calvin the odd tool he asks for. We take lunch together and Calvin gives me one of his crusts of bread and tucks the other back in the box for Red Monty.

It's starting to get darker when we leave the shop. The streets are quiet and the air is sweet. There are traces of ancient chemicals – on Calvin's yellowing breath and engrained in dust set deep into the bricks – but only traces now.

My breath, Red Monty's breath and the young ones of Calvin's kind are sweet and have a lack of those alien cells that are slowly killing Calvin.

Other things are killing everyone else, of course. Red Monty has home-grown bulging cells that don't stop growing and have started to show through his ever thinning coat. My own liver will slow down by the time I reach Red Monty's age – it already has scents of strangeness that will lead to a slow demise, but not for many years. And these deadly strangenesses are in many places,

even the hens will get some, and the birds that are not hens. There are always some deadly strangenesses but there are less of them than when the black cloying smell of burning hung in the air itself and infiltrated cells and earth.

We get home to Red Monty and he has heaved himself out of his bed and greets us at the gate of the garden. The door has been open for him all day. He is feeling good today and he wags his tail. I smile back at him and we lick each other's faces. He smells the strong scent of Spotty on my coat, and the fish on my breath. I nudge Calvin to give him the roll I saved and the crust and Red Monty eats mush of bread mixed with warm sweet liquid-oats slowly. He finishes half and I leave the rest in case he wants more later.

We curl up together next to the hot wall and I sleep.

I Root For Them

Laura Bok

Cycling home along the river, I thought:
Foxes live here
In this thinnest width of wilderness
We let them have
Because it was no good to us.
Still, they live out their wild lives.
The very thought is enough.

The river came up the next day.
Foxes might have to swim.

A Series of Conversations Overheard on the Number 22 Bus to South Bank

Gen Lamont

Conversation one

A : Hi, sorry to bother you. Is this seat taken?
B : Oh, no, you're all good.
A : Thanks. So, how are you?
B : Oh, y'know, fine. Glad to have a bit of sun, but not sure it'll last long.
A : Oh, stop being such a pessimist. Besides, how could it get worse?
B : Oh, I don't know. Maybe next it'll be cataracts and hurricanes, or a volcano will suddenly sprout in the middle of my garden.
A : Oh come on, we need to count ourselves lucky!
B : Yes, we do. We could be the poor buggers in god-knows-where who have to actually deal with hurricanes.
A : I hear in America they're closing the borders, too many people trying to leave to get away from hurricane season. They say it'll crash the economy.
B : And all of the touristy countries that no longer get tourists. I mean, how could they?
A : And now there's the enquiry coming out about funding fossil fuels, and hurricane parties. It's not like we're the good guys in any of this, we just off-loaded our evil to somewhere else.
B : And now we're dealing with the consequences.
A : Well I'm sure it'll work itself out in the end.
B : Well that's what they were saying twenty years ago, and now look at us.
C : I reckon it's all a conspiracy. They're trying to scare us so that we start following them blind.

B : Well, sir, are we following them blind? No, last time I checked we were marching in the streets. If it really is a conspiracy, then it's all theory and no talk.
A : Besides, who would knowingly manufacture this. Not go along with it, or contribute for their own gain, but actually cause it? It would be a stupid thing to do, because it would all come out eventually. And what would happen then?
C : Execution on live telly?
B : Oh do buzz off. You're living in cuckoo land.
C : I see I can't convince you of the truth. But you'll all know soon enough.
B : Well my issue with that, Sir, is that you're looking to heft the blame onto someone else. Try and convince yourself that it's not your fault, even though you still drive a petrol car and drive everywhere even if you can walk.
C : Well-
B : No, don't interrupt. It's not polite. You try to convince yourself that you're not as guilty as every one of us, but you're doing your bit. So if you want all this to go away, you need to stop posting on your forums and facebook groups, and start growing your own veg, or walking to work, or taking part in the protests. Or you're just as buzzed as the rest of us.
A : I feel bad for the kids. Which you wouldn't know about, I suppose. But my kids were born into this, where hurricanes in England were average and panic about crops not growing was normal telly. They're the ones that don't get to be kids. They have to be protesters and wonder-kids and "such brave souls". They have to be pitied, but not listened to. No, never listened to because it's adults like you who think they know better. Even if they're the ones who won't make it to forty while we'll live an average life. Or die before the starvation starts.
C : That's my stop. I've got to go.
(bus door noises)
B : You really taught him.
A : He needed teaching.

Conversation two

A : Hi again, how are you?
B : Shocked it's only been a week if I'm honest.
A : Well, it seems all of the protests finally kicked in, and the politicians are getting some sense knocked into them.
B : You got your "I voted" sticker?
A : I think everyone has, now. Everyone who can vote anyway.
B : Funny how it took one massive natural disaster to spur us all into action.
A : Well I suppose 200,000 deaths will do that to a country.
B : Funny how that works, isn't it? Millions dying in all the wars we're practically funding in other countries, thousands starving to death in our towns and cities but when they all die in one go, that's when they care.
A : I don't think we have the funds to care that much for other countries at the minute, but there's no excuse for the starvation on our streets. Homelessness has gone up tenfold but the funds haven't caught up. Kids aren't even going to college since they can't afford to not get a full-time job or two. We're just lucky that South Bank is one of the better-off places.
B : For now.
A : Watch it, your pessimism is showing.
B : Well, there's a reason I'm pessimistic. We're a while away off from the finish line yet.
A : Still, we're a lot better off than we were a week ago.
B : Funny how time works, isn't it. Have you seen the other conspiracy bloke?
A : Not a peep.
B : Last time I saw him he was on his way to a garden centre, and I heard that he's selling a few things to buy an electric car.
A : Really?
B : What you said to him must have stuck. He's got a kid on the way, you know?
A : Wow. Guess he must have not thought about his kid's future

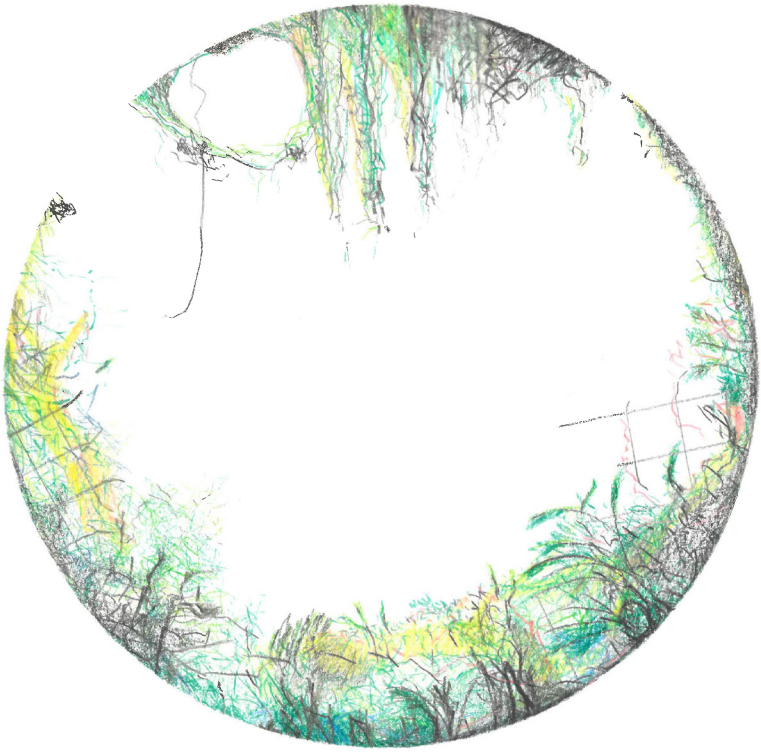
in relation to his conspiracy theories.
B : Good that you knocked some sense into him, then.
A : There's gonna be a storm tonight, didn't you hear?
B : That'll be good for my crops, I suppose. That way I also don't have to take water out of my allowance.
A : My kids want to go out into it. I'm stuck between the answers of hell no, you'll get yourselves killed, or heck no, you'll get yourselves killed. I don't want them picking up any bad language.
B : Well, some strong language might make sure they don't sneak out anyway. But then again, kids do need to be kids. It shouldn't be too bad, tonight. And as long as they don't go out with an umbrella -
A : - Which they won't, or I'll kill them before they get the chance to be electrocuted.
B : Then all should be good.
A : You're not wrong. Maybe I'll have a think about it.
B : My partner wants to go to one of those protests, but I'm worried that we'll get arrested.
A : Why do you call her your partner? Why not girlfriend?
B : Well at my age the word girlfriend feels a bit weird. Partner's a bit more grown up. And anyway, you've moved past my point entirely.
A : Sorry. I think you should go. You care about it, right? And there are still issues that need sorting. We're not going to change people's minds with pleases and thank-yous. Sometimes you need to wave a banner in the air. And anger can be a cleansing emotion, that's what Minnie says.
B : Your therapist?
A : Yes, she's very helpful with all this climate anxiety and stuff. My kids go to her as well, so they can let off a bit of steam to an impartial party.
B : Look at you with your fancy words, you've been reading the dictionary lately?
A : No, but I have been going to a bookclub, so I've picked up

some phrases.
B : Oh, of course.
A : How's the allotment going?
B : Very well, thank you. It feels good to be doing my part, and whatever food I don't eat I can give away to my neighbours. The amount of rhubarb crumble I've been making is ridiculous, I'm sure my neighbours are sick of it. But it's not like I can keep it in the house.
A : Well, I'm sure that you'll need someone to take it off your hands, and when you come round I could always put the kettle on.
B : That would be lovely, thank you.
(bus sounds)

Conversation three

A : Tell me, how can a year pass that quickly?
B : Well it's been quite an exciting year, hasn't it? I've got a collection of "I voted" stickers now, and they say that COP has finally come to a good agreement. Lots of money in the GCF whatever that means, and we're finally helping out with stopping fossil fuels.
A : It's a marvel what a good amount of money can do, when invested in the right places.
B : And what favours can do when cashed in at the right times.
A : Well, now all those countries are being weaned off of fossil-fuels, we can finally rest knowing that all the numbers are going down, not up.
B : When are they estimating that our global average temperature will go back to normal?
C : 15 years.
A : Well, I suppose it's progress. It's nice to see you.
C : I've been pretty ashamed of myself, frankly. But I'm very glad that you snapped me out of all that conspiracy nonsense. What I needed was a good kick. And I left your thoughts on all those

facebook groups I was in, so hopefully a few other people have seen sense now.
B : I'm glad to hear it, and it's good to have you back.
A : How have the protests been?
B : It's been great! My fiancé has been buzzing with excitement.
A : Oh yes, I heard about that! Congrats on the engagement.
B : Well, I proposed when we all thought we had twenty years left, but now I'm pleased that I did it. And I can't wait to be able to say she's my wife.
C : So you went to the protests too? I'm sad I missed you!
B : Yes, it was pretty fun doing all of the cardboard signs and such. Plus, it was nice doing my part. And it's not over, anyway.
A : Will it ever be?
B : Y'know I don't think it will. And that's okay. Because the higher our standards are, the finish line just gets further and further away. In 15 years time, we'll barely notice that we got to the finish line we're looking at now. Anyway, this is my stop. I'll see you two tomorrow for rhubarb pie and tea, right?
(bus noises)
C : Are you going to tell her, or am I?
A : Neither of us will.
C : But her rhubarb pie tastes like soap.
A : That's what friends do.
C : Friends?
A : Yes, of course. Friends.



Overtaking Human Traces
Cath Mortimer

After the Writing Workshop

Laura Bok

When we stepped outside
Pulled the door shut behind
Sniffed the air like a fox
With a vole-trail to find
Shriek of swift pierced our brain
Notes of blackbirds like rain
Falling into our souls.
When we sat down to write
In a darkening park
Because the spur-sense was bright
For the impulse to mark
Though folks might mark us as mad.
We rinsed our eyes in a bath
Of a pinkening sky
Stroked our ears with the leaves
Of the willows nearby.
Let the cold gain control
And the wind ruffle too;
That is, art merged with heart,
How we made it through.

How We Made It Through

Claire Glover

Did we make it through each of us an island?
Each an isolated entity,
Primed and ready to fight.
Did we make it through each of us alone?
Or did we make it through
by turning to our left,
Turning to our right,
Seeing what we see and slowly reaching out.
Each of us an individual
But all of us connected.
Joined in our shared aim.
Did we make it through by reaching out,
By connecting, by working together
Sharing our thoughts, our ideas and
Comforting each other's fears.
Celebrating our dreams.
Building hope and connection.
Finding purpose and a reason to change.
Is that how we made it through?

Unleave

James Shammas-King

For some time, I lived in the neighbourhood of the trees. Like old friends they greeted me, and like friends they gave me things without expecting reciprocity. I traced the seasons through the colours of the orchard; bare and black in winter, singing in spring, verdant in summer, and at their most beautiful as summer faded. No-one alive now could remember when they were planted, or by whom. The apples and plums I would collect from them every year were gifts from some unknown benefactor.

It was the coldest and driest spring for many years, and the mood in South Bank was one of cheer and cautious optimism for the summer ahead. I was excited to share in this with my friends, but the blossom on the trees seemed muted somehow. The new leaves had sprung grey as the skies above York had when the Shield first went up. However, there were now many trees in this part of the city, far more than when my apples and plums had been planted. I worried about the leaves in silence, and no-one else seemed to notice.

I came to South Bank in search of a quiet life, having spent many years being dispatched around the world. Flying the aircraft which dispersed the Shield was at the time about the only career open to me, with commercial flights few and far between, air forces using exclusively drones, and no desire to fly private jets for the rich. The work uprooted and dispersed me too; never staying in one place more than a few months to ensure even coverage, aiming for where the stratosphere was closest to the surface, and trying to keep one step ahead of those opposed

to what we were trying to do. The project was and remains deeply controversial, and it was probably for the best that I disconnected myself from my previous life in order to take part in it. Now, I found myself dispersed once again. No-one in this oasis of urban greenery knew what I used to do for a living, and I planned to keep it that way. People here believed in a different way to approach the problems we faced.

About a week after I first noticed that my trees seemed to be struggling with something, I decided to try and do something about it. I had inherited an assortment of old books about plants from a distant relative as a child, and to these I turned in search of answers. Lichens, it seemed, could tell you about the quality of the air, but all those living on the bark of the trees seemed happy enough. Neither could I see any bolls, dead branches, or other clear signs of parasites. The trees had coped with the fires and floods of years past before we got the problems under control, making climatic explanations unlikely too. It was as if they had simply lost their enthusiasm for life, having reached great ages and weathered many storms. I felt nevertheless that they should not pass out of the life of the urban forest. This was the kind of sentimentality I had once tried to avoid. In my struggle to diagnose what was happening, I was reminded that my very distant ancestors were farmers and foresters and would have had answers beyond what the old books could tell me.

After a few more days, the blossom disappeared, though it held on elsewhere in the neighbourhood. I thought about the people that must have planted these trees. What were their hopes, their aspirations for the future? Was it a simple act of putting a cutting in the ground, or was there a ceremony, a gathering? What would they have done in this situation?

I have always been someone who did things by the book. When the time came to take action against our common problems, I waited for instructions. The Shield was what our leaders thought would make a difference, and I believed that it did, but many saw it as an imposition, an excuse for business as usual, an attempt at a technical fix for something that instead required a transformation. The community gardens, solar power, and reforesting that I saw around me in South Bank seemed to come from a different understanding of the world than the one I was used to. While I knew the Shield had made this all possible, or at least easier, I realised that in this place, in this time, I could act by myself, for others. There would be no signal, no instruction, beyond what the trees themselves had told me.

On what felt like a chilly evening, I came into the presence of the trees with the cuttings I had taken from them years ago for my own modest back yard, now becoming healthy young trees in their own right. I had made use of the field reforestation kits that were supplied free of charge to the interested to imbue the soil with a healthy dose of mycelial fungi. As I planted my offering, spaced out around the ailing plums and apples, I thought about how no being is an island. All are sustained by mutual networks of support, sometimes from unexpected places, like the fractal geometries of the strands of the rhizomes, said the old books. I had done much to change this world, and I was finding that the world in turn was changing me. After all, there is no shield so strong that the right pressure, at the right place and in the right time, could not break through it. This place had given me a new perspective, and I wanted to give something back. Having planted my seedlings, I looked up at the sky, and smiled.

The Trees Called Me to the Earth

Laura Autumn Cox

The oldest tree in the world is centuries old, and the tallest, Hyperion, towers over 115 meters. These trees are the things of legends, gnarled and wise, our universal elders. But their smaller brethren are no less powerful, with a deep and undeniable strength able to weather even the most terrifying storms.

It was the trees that called me to the earth. In spring they sprouted green, an unfaltering canopy of consistency in the turbulence of my childhood. In summer, sunlight dappled their boughs as they swayed gently in the warm breeze. In autumn, they shed their leaves like scales, smooth and slippery and certain. Then, in winter, like twisted works of art they frightened me… Yet it was they who were vulnerable and exposed.

They. Them. Trees just like people; great-great-great-great grandmothers, resilient and unshakeable.

I worshipped the trees long before I knew what a god was. I buried offerings beneath their roots – beads, trinkets, and secret confessions scribbled on scraps of paper. I knelt in the mulch of the forest church, baptised by spiralling helicopter seeds. I collected chestnuts and conkers and kept them in my pockets, stroking their silky skin before gifting them back to the place where I found them. I did not know it then, but I was praying, in my own way.

A voice whispered to me in the rustling pom-pom cherry blossoms. It dared me to go higher as I shimmied up the branches of my favourite climbing trees, and announced itself shrilly when I tapped

the spikes of the monkey puzzle tree that grew much taller than anyone expected. The voice beckoned me to the magical portals between kissing branches and hummed to me on grassy hills.

You see, the path less travelled has a siren song, and once you hear it, you always follow.

We can all listen to the voice. There are some who simply do not hear it, and the reasons are as leaves on a tree. But there are also those who deliberately block their ears.

So it is up to those who hear the voice to give it words – to turn it into something tangible.

I'm not sure what these words should be. But if the voice could speak as we speak to each other, perhaps it would say:

We have always been here. We were here long before you. We ask nothing of you. We give to you freely. And yet … You take ALL from us.

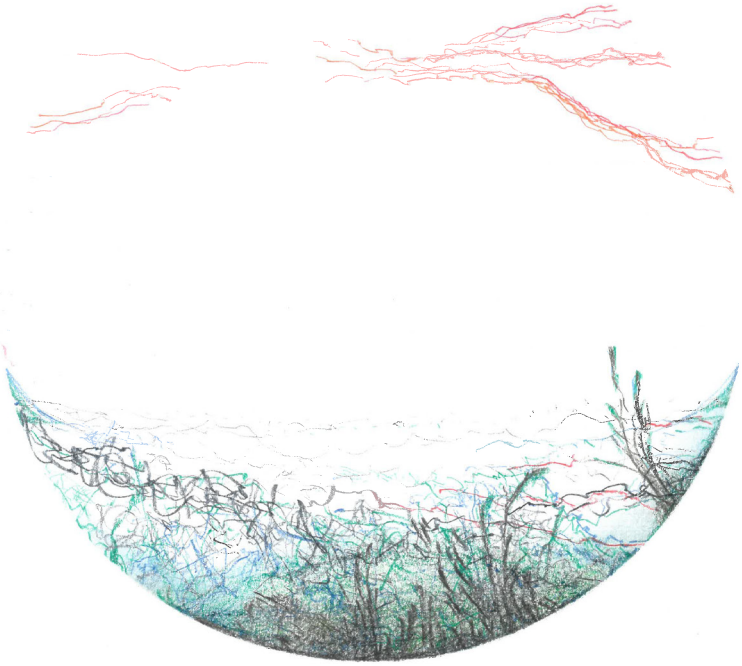
If my heart did not break when I say these words, I might be able to convince myself they are far from the truth. But something tells me they are not.

It is the trees I think of as I stand with those who also hear the silvan lament. Because what else is there to do?

It is a difficult thing to accept – that we are, by our very existence, threatening the flora and fauna we intrinsically love but struggle to respect. We do not live in harmony with nature, however much we try. But 'try' is what we have to do.

What does this look like? You do not need me to tell you. The voice will tell you. But what words will you give it?

Urgent
Jo Reilly



Serenity Returns
Cath Mortimer

Ordinary

Claire Glover

'You are extraordinary', I am told,
'To have made it through.'

'I am ordinary', I reply,
'To have made it through.'

'You are extraordinary', they counter,
Not reading the nuances, the subtleties.

'I am ordinary', I reply,
'I took one day at a time.'

You are extraordinary', they insist,
Not seeing the sadness, the loss, the grief.

'You were part of the solution', they say,
You helped make it happen.'

'I am ordinary', I reply,
'I took comfort in my tribe that held me steady.'

'You are extraordinary', they insist,
Their voices louder, saying more about them than me.

'You took charge, you made a difference', they demand,
'Surely you did so many things to make it through?'

‘I am ordinary’ I replied,
‘I asked for care and gave it in return’.

‘We shared the load’ I added,
‘A symbiotic process, we each helped each other’.

‘You are extraordinary’ they plead,
‘We need you to be extraordinary’.

‘I am ordinary’ I reply,
‘I continued to hope’.

‘This may make me extraordinary,
Or this may make me ordinary.’

‘But it helped me to believe,
That we could make it through’

And we did.
We made it through.

How We Made It Through

John Gray

There came a time when we noticed things were happening for the last time.

The last time bananas made it through to the shops.

The last time the council pumped out Rowntree Park after a flood.

The last time the horse chestnut tree by Southlands Church flowered, before that summer's wildfire killed it.

The last time the toilets flushed.

The last time, for a long time, that we felt safe.

Like the unfolding of the emergency itself, the actual collapse happened slowly. Bit by bit, the infrastructure that protected us and the towns and cities in the country at large gave up the ghost. The storms became too violent for the pylon repairs to keep up, and a few fragile powerlines survived to carry electricity whenever the power stations could generate. Yorkshire Water (never was a company so misnamed as to who really owned the company and its profits) struggled on a few further months with its generators; but like light bulbs on an ancient string of Christmas lights, the pumping stations and sewage stations glimmered out one by one by one. At first, in the floods at least, the river water quality improved; but very soon the river became a toxic force of all the waste no

longer filtered and purified.

The long-range weather forecast for York was set well before the 2020's, when hopes for keeping to the safe zone below +1.5 degrees of warming were finally dashed. Until the amount of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere returned to safe levels, our forecast was for increasing extremes: hotter, colder, wetter, drier, and windier. Like a poor comedian wretchedly running through the same bad jokes, these extremes happened in rotation. 2031: 43 degrees heat which wrecked the crops and set fire racing through our city's green spaces. Next year, dust storms from the fields which had failed the previous year. Next year, never-before flooding. Heat again the year after. In between, winters which alternated between excessively benign and extreme cold; and every now and then, a 'normal' winter which felt more abnormal the longer it went on.

A local York politician in 2023 predicted the need for a wildfire warning system "in the next ten years". She also called for a green shield to reduce heat and air pollution within the city. The wildfires prediction was spot on - over-optimistic only by a couple of years. But the warning system was never created; how many lives it would have saved that summer of 2031.

More and more of us woke up over time. Each of us had a different tipping point for "OK, now it's serious". Some had woken up long ago; and how exasperating it was to be alongside those who still chattered about flying to their latest holiday, or who moaned about "this strange weather we're having" without being able to take the conversation to the next level of "Yes, so let's talk about how shall we respond…".

But I too was asleep, once upon a time.

Awake or not, the city changed around us; and the real, local, emergency began.

For years, the joke was that to fix the climate crisis, we just needed fewer humans.

At last in the west for the first time, as the public health infrastructure in the city failed piece by piece, nature finally delivered on that need.

"The inequality crisis" became a common term for a while, as poverty and vulnerability escalated. The tented cities grew up, each with their own culture and flavour – Parliament Steet, around the Minster, and across the newly-finished pedestrian plaza between the city walls and the railway station. As areas of the city succumbed to the flooding, or the storms, or the fires, or all three in quick succession, the newly-homeless arrived as best they could. Not everyone made it through those cities; but even there we saw the essence of human organizing and cooperating, as well as the essence of human selfishness.

Nationally the picture was the same. Floods and heat drove folk from the east to shelter in the west. Storms in the south and west pushed them north. And the drought evaporated every community impartially.

Those with the most resources were the most vocal in their complaining; but those with the least resources were the most violent. And why would they not be violent: the crisis simply layered more unfairness on an already unfairly-resourced citizenship.

The paradox was, the fewer the people there were, the more dangerous our streets became. Desperate folk do desperate things. Law and order dwelt in the hands of the people around

you. It was the thing I'd most feared: the ungovernable violence of hungry people.

The last time we knew that there was any aspect of the state that could protect us.

When does a city stop being an organized collective, and become instead an incoherent reality of lots of people living near each other? When there were no more fire engines? When the link between the police and the criminal justice system was fractured, because there were no more courts and no more mechanisms for holding anyone to account? The social contract was unilaterally breached: how can citizens contract with the state to conform to social order, when there is no state to contract with?

It may sound strange to hear, but there was a strong rearguard for democracy. Even before the disappointments of the 2029 general election, the movement for citizen participation had begun to flourish. A few enlightened councillors enabled a shift previously unimaginable: citizens' assemblies really could have an influential voice alongside elected members.

We had to hold hard to democracy, because we were beginning to see what its absence would look like. The occasional assemblies weren't enough: we needed something that wasn't threatening, too structured or too reliant on the same faces each time. Come as you are; but come!, because the assemblies were becoming the only way the council could really tap into the pressures and trends across the city. Some of the older folk came forth with their wisdom and experience. Some of the younger folk generously put aside their righteous fury. There was common good found in a common future.

The impact was a long-overdue shift from a strategic preoccupation with mitigation efforts (reducing emissions from the city) to now also the hard realities of adaptation: how to keep people safe when we're outside the ecological safe-zone.

The climate café movement in York had been a great starting point for this. Efforts in the late 2020's to train people in community facilitation skills, and in the skills of building awareness and resilience, paid off as people came together to discuss, to reflect, and to organize as best they could. Many efforts led nowhere, or failed to take into account the rapidity and the violence of the change; but the seeds planted then bore fruit years later.

Come gather round, people, wherever you roam,
And admit that the waters around you have grown;
And accept it that soon you'll be drenched to the bone
If your time to you is worth saving.
And you better start swimming or you'll sink like a stone:
For the times, they are a-changin'.

Come mothers and fathers throughout the land,
And don't criticize what you can't understand.
Your sons and your daughters are beyond your command;
Your old road is rapidly aging.
Please get out of the new one if you can't lend your hand:
For the times, they are a-changin'

Bob Dylan, from *The Times They Are A-Changin'* (1964)

The gangs came to our street, fighting each other as much as the people whose homes they looted. They broke into our place at midnight. They had clubs and knives, not guns: a distinction

without a difference. We'd talked before, the two of us what to do: not to resist, for to do so would only postpone the next more coordinated assault. And to tell where the stores were the moment one of us was threatened. Everyone had some kind of stockpile: a pathetic stash, a few days' worth at most. Perhaps that's why we survived, relatively intact. Our food and bedding was more valuable in the moment; and the gang's trademark finish, wrenching the front door off its hinges marked us out: There's nothing left here now.

Along the streets, the front doors hung mutely, grotesquely. Between them, every degree of tilt was represented, from the just-off-the-vertical to the horizontal.

It's odd how a smashed front door brings protection. We were marked and defined. Cleaned out and taken: rinsed and no need to repeat. We broke a couple of windows on purpose to further emphasise the neglect within. And we watched hidden upstairs as later gangs passed through. A few houses checked, a few items taken, but the rest were passed over.

On the street, we knew amongst us who was alive. The houses turned into burrows, and the blessed scarcity of people meant we didn't need to fight each other. We knew how to make fire. The careful boiling of river dregs kept body and soul together.

And the journey took a new phase: Now we just take the next step, and the next, and the next.

Those first few winters, my god.

Those streets which had established community solar energy schemes had a big advantage.

For all of us, we could nurture a few possible-to-protect crops as the weather further destabilised. There were potatoes, from indefatigable roots across the allotments; and meagre fruit-tree harvests (and how hard it was, two months after each harvest, to resist chopping those trees down for firewood!) At least the hornbeams, planted in the late 2020's city-wide tree-planting schemes, were another life-raft: hornbeams burn hot, bringing fierce welcome energy to stoves and bivvy fireplaces. The local foraging network, began after a series of foraging walks in 2024, had worked hard in the years after to share knowledge locally of what was in our hedgerows and green spaces: without that we would have struggled even more. We had put effort into local training – water management and purification, electricity generation, and building-repairs: skills we could share in the community needed to look after each other.

And most miraculously of all, there waiting for us beside the racecourse was a technology created nearly a thousand years previously: small patches of ridge and furrow. With those as a

model, we founded a community planting ground – a mix of individual and share-all ridges which could bond us together.

As best we could, we put into place structures that would support more than just a few of us: health, water, power, sanitation, and food. Not located in the single, fragile monolithic structures from before the collapse, but local, networked-but-separate capacities, with scope for circuit-breakers, redundancy and flexibility. If one failed, others could step in. If nothing else, the crisis had taught us to change our hearts, and our understandings of what was important. We had learnt that money and power together made a disastrous combination when applied to the universal commons of public goods. At last the economy was understood to be part of the environment, and not the other way round.

This was now the turn of our visionaries, our poets, our musicians, our dancers, to step forward in their full power. Long-dormant, their skills now responded to our hearts: we yearned to build from a place of humility. How could we make sense of the past? What was important to let go of, and what could we refashion? Could we reconcile ourselves to who we had been, and who we now were?

There was a time when we noticed things happening for the last time.

The last time a gang came through.

The last time we weren't hungry through the winter.

The last time when we didn't all feel afraid all of the time.

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Fights Against War and Stupidity
Nic Fife

The Listener

James Shammas-King

1.

The concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere is 292 parts per million.

I used to have a lot more friends around here than I do now. We would be always chatting, sharing news, lending each other a hand, and enjoying our good fortune to be living in such a place; on a gentle slope, near the river, in a real community. Now though, there are a lot fewer of us around. It's so much louder than it used to be, and many of my closer friends have stopped talking. I fear I know what has happened to them. I hear the sounds of people, and the things people bring with them. The ground shakes, the air is full of clamour, and there may be no space for me in this world they are building.

2.

The concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere is 331 parts per million.

Some days it can be hard to breathe, but that's OK. My lungs are strong. What bothers me more is the noise. When I was young it was quiet and peaceful here, but I know nothing stays still these days. After all, I'm not originally from round here myself; my great-great-great grandparents, I believe, came over from Greece, or possibly Albania, but my extended family have always been welcome here. It's strange perhaps to miss the quiet of childhood, but there are other sounds I miss too. Horses for one, and the clacking sound of the tram in the morning was much

more pleasant than the diesel engines I have to put up with now. I can feel the air thicken as they pass, and it's been getting worse for a while. The dawn chorus is getting quieter every year. Sometimes the rain hurts, and it's warmer too. I know I'll be fine, but I do wish people would act with a little more care.

3.

The concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere is 419 parts per million.

People used to talk about the weather as a neutral, meaningless conversation starter. Catching snippets of such conversations over the years, and being fortunate to have a longer perspective than those who can speak, has made me realise how long it took most people to notice that the weather was changing. I suppose if people had to rely on it for their everyday needs, they might have paid more attention, but now I have noticed the small talk has shifted to other topics. The weather now confuses and scares people; it wasn't supposed to get to 40 degrees this far north, and the rain makes no sense to anyone. It was hard work in that heat, and it's becoming clear to me that I need to change how I respond to the seasons. It takes a while to get used to them though, and these changes recently have come so fast that I'm not sure how I'm going to cope, if I'm honest. Still, we do what we can. At least the engines aren't as loud as they used to be.

4.

The concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere is 475 parts per million.

Over the course of a few days, the noise went from a distant murmur to an unbearable roaring and splintering. I had heard and felt storms before of course- 1987, 2028, 2041 – but nothing of this magnitude, nothing of this force. I did my best to withstand the wind, but when morning came I found I had lost some of my upper branches. One was embedded in the roof tiles of Southlands Methodist Church, another was blocking

Bishopthorpe Road, said the passers-by. I mourned the loss of these parts of myself, though the local people did their best to cheer me up by installing metal supports to hold up some of my older and more precarious boughs. As the volunteers worked to put me on crutches, I listened to their conversations (as I like to do), which confirmed to me whispers I had been hearing on the wind. A massive reforestation project was underway, an attempt to return the region to the woodland which had been its natural state for thousands of years. I sensed the presence, at long last, of other new trees. The volunteers' views on this ranged from excitement, to relief at being able to find a job they felt good doing, to concern following the storm. Planting more trees won't do us much good if this keeps happening, said one. It brings us hope, said another.

5.

The concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere is 330 parts per million.

There's a cat stuck somewhere up in my higher branches. I don't remember noticing it climb up, but cats are quiet and I have different senses to you, if you're reading rather than listening to this. I think it was after one of the nests of parakeets that have made their homes here for the last few decades. There are some people with ladders trying to coax it down, and I'm enjoying hearing the concerted effort of a group of people to rescue the small daft creature. They're annoyed the cat chose to climb up me, the tallest and oldest tree in this forest, but I'm flattered by the attention. People comment approvingly of me as they pass by, especially when I'm in flower or dropping conkers, and I hope they think too of the several tonnes of carbon dioxide I've removed from the air. I've heard a lot of change over the last few centuries, but here I am, with clean air, new friends, and even the trams are back! Here in a cooler, quieter place, I have more to listen to.

Bramble

Tom Malcolm Wright

Jessica looked down at the water.

'There's a fish, mummy!'

Mummy stopped rowing and let the boat glide to a stop. Jessica peered down beneath the silver sheen created by the sun on the top of the water, down into the brown depths, and at the shimmering scales of the fish as it slid past them.

'Looks like a bream,' said Mummy. 'You can tell by how flat it looks.'

Jessica's attention shifted and she looked out at the reeds and the glistening dragonflies darting between them. Beyond the reeds was the grassy verge of Knaveslake, lined with picnickers and paddlers. Beyond the hill, the houses shone with their solar panels and white painted walls. The domestic wind turbines in the allotments, gaily painted like maypoles, twisted lazily in the breeze.

'Boat number five, come in please, your time is up,' called the barker.

Mummy sighed and picked up the oars once more and began to pull for shore. Jessica dangled a hand in the water, feeling the cool of it on her skin.

It had been a great trip, Mummy was a good rower and they had done the whole of the Lake, round to meet the Ouse and then back on the far side, where Knaveswood stretched out towards Selby. She had seen frogs, and heron, and ducks and waterboatspeople and

seven different kinds of trees, although Jessica still had problems telling a beech from a hornbeam.

Mummy was pulling up at the jetty by the red brick building which rented out the boats and sold frozen fruits beneath a very faded sign saying 'Cricket Pavilion.' Jessica waited to be lifted up on to the jetty and then said, 'Mummy, can I go help Daddy with the strawberries?' Mummy raised an eyebrow, in the full knowledge that carrying home the strawberries also meant eating half the strawberries, then shrugged. 'Sure, why not.'

Jessica took off at a run, up the steps, listened and looked both ways for rickshaws and bicycles, headed across the road, and into the allotments. Immediately she was swallowed up by the shadow of the trees and bushes on either side, the air suddenly cool and green. She ran along the little track which would take her up a slight incline and then round to the left to their allotment which was pressed against the ancient red wall which marked the edge of their back garden, but then a sudden 'Pssst' stopped her in mid-run.

She turned to see another little girl staring at her from out of the bushes.

Jessica was confused by the little girl, since she had an older look to her face, a sort of knowing look like the girls at the top of the school had, the ones who were getting ready to go to secondary and knew all the secrets a big girl should know. But, at the same time, this girl was smaller than Jessica, both shorter and slenderer. She was wearing a dress made of leaves. It must have taken her a long time to make. Earlier that week it had taken Jessica half a day to make a daisy crown, and the leaf dress seemed much more complicated.

'Hello, my name is Jessica.'

The little girl in the leaf dress raised an eyebrow in a similar way to how Mummy did when Jessica said something unexpected.

'Well met, Jessica.' Her voice was like the sparkle of a stream and the wet of fresh turned earth. 'You can call me Bramble.'

'Hello Bramble. Do you go to school here?'

'No, I used to live here a long time ago, but then I left. And now I'm back.'

Jessica nodded. She'd had a friend who'd gone away to live far away and the idea that people went away to other places made sense to her. The idea that they might come back again was also quite reassuring.

'My Daddy has strawberries. Would you like some?'

Bramble seemed to think about this for a long time. 'I have had blueberries at the court of the Thorn King. I've had damsons in the bowers of the Queen of the Night. I've had gooseberries picked by the Duke of Spinners himself. And of course I have dined deeply on my own superb blackberries. . .'

Jessica's eyes went wide; she did not understand any of this but it sounded very grand.

'. . . but right now I could eat a strawberry or three. Just to see how they are.'

'Okay, well, it's this way.'

Jessica took off at a sprint again and stopped breathless a few paces in front of the little gate to their allotment. She looked around for Bramble and to her surprise the strange girl was already leaning on

a water butt to the side of the path, looking completely unruffled.

'Oh! You're fast!'

'I am. I am the fastest. I've outrun the water of a great fall, the howling wind of a storm, and even the warmth of a sunny day. I am the fastest there is, in all the Courts.'

'Wow. I came sixth in the egg and spoon race.'

'Well, if I'd raced against an egg and a spoon I would definitely have won. Unless they were enchanted, but I'd call that cheating.'

Jessica stood still for a moment trying to understand that.

'Anyway, I won this race, and someone mentioned strawberries. Strawberries might make a suitable prize.'

Jessica nodded and pushed open the gate to the little allotment, where Daddy was finishing watering the tomatoes with water from the rain catcher. To the side of him was a basket of green beans (yuck) and a basket of strawberries (yum).

Jessica took a deep breath so she could use her special Daddy Please Voice and opened her eyes wide to do the special Daddy Please Eyes, which together had not once let her down. Apart from that one time with the pony, but she had got an iced treat instead, so she still counted that as a win.

'Daddy, please can I have some strawberries for Bramble!'

Daddy straightened up, taking off his wide-brimmed hat and wiping sweat from his brow.

'Hey Sweetpea, how was the lake?'

She told him quickly in a single breath, and a single sentence, albeit one with a lot of 'ands' in it.

'. . . And then we had to come back and then I asked Mummy if I could come and help you with the strawberries and then I met this other little girl in a dress made of leaves and she said she would like some strawberries so I said I would ask you and please can I have some strawberries for Bramble and maybe a strawberry or two for myself as well?'

Daddy's brows knitted. 'And where's this Bramble now?'

'She's just out on the path by the water butt.'

Daddy stepped around Jessica and stuck his head out to look at the water butt and then came back and crouched down in front of Jessica, picked up the basket and handed it to her. He looked her right in the eyes which was always a sign he was about to say something Very Serious.

'Be sure to give her the best strawberries first, before you have any. And don't offer her anything else, or promise her anything else. And don't take any gifts from her. If she offers you anything, you need you to say the following words okay? 'Thank you for all you and your people give us. We honour and praise you, but you have already given us everything we need, and we have learnt to take no more than that.' Say it back for me.

'Thank you for all you and your people give us. We. . . honour and. . . praise you, but you have already given us everything we need, and we have learnt to take no more than that.'

'This is really important. Do you understand?'

Jessica nodded vigorously.

‘It’s really important, Sweetpea.’

Jessica nodded so vigorously, her hair got tousled in front of her face.

‘And once you’ve shared the strawberries, come straight home.’

‘Okay Daddy!’ and she had grabbed the basket and was off before he could say another word.

When she got to the water butt she looked around and couldn’t see Bramble. Maybe she didn’t like other people’s grown-ups and had hidden from Daddy. The smell of strawberries wafted deep into her nose. She looked at the ones on the top of the basket. Deep red and juicy and delicious. Her mouth instantly filled with saliva. Before she knew it, her hand was hovering over the strawberry. A long moment passed. But she had promised Daddy, so she slowly lowered the hand.

As she looked up, she saw Bramble leaning against the water butt as if she had been patiently waiting there the whole time.

Jessica gave a little courtesy and offered the basket of strawberries to her. Bramble stretched out her long, delicate fingers and picked up the exact strawberry Jessica had been eyeing. Jessica’s heart sank a little, but Daddy had been very clear.

Bramble began to eat the strawberry very slowly, with small bites of her sharp little teeth. After each bite her eyes closed as she chewed and she gave little mumbles of pleasure.

Jessica’s arms were getting tired holding the basket, but as soon as Bramble had finished the best strawberry, she leaned forward and casually picked up the second-best strawberry and began eating again, in no greater rush than with the first.

Jessica's arms had begun to shake a little bit by the time the second-best one was gone, but Bramble reached in and took the third-best and with relish and small, sharp bites, she began to eat it.

Finally, Bramble was done with the third-best and her fingers hovered over the basket, just as Jessica's had done, and then lowered to her side. 'Three is enough, thank you.'

'You're all done?' asked Jessica.

Bramble nodded.

'You sure?'

Bramble had not quite finished the second nod when Jessica scooped up the fourth, fifth and sixth-best strawberries and stuffed them in her mouth. She chewed merrily for a long moment until she could swallow them down. 'Ahhh!' she said.

Bramble smiled. 'Those were delicious strawberries. I thank you, little girl, you have been most gracious.'

Jessica scowled for a moment at 'little girl'; she was definitely taller than Bramble, but then she remembered Daddy's words and gave a little bow.

'I have to take the rest back to Mummy now.'

'I'll walk with you.'

And off they went.

The allotments had trees growing on them which grew together over the path and strained the light leaf-green. Jessica liked this bit of the allotment best. You couldn't see a house or telephone line anywhere. Even the fences were so overgrown, you could be in the middle of a deep forest, miles from anywhere.

Butterflies flew down from a nearby buddleia; beautiful ones she didn't know the names of, deep blues and purples and reds, shifting like light on a bubble. Some settled on Bramble's shoulders like a cloak, and others on her head like a crown. Some more flapped around Jessica, tickling her nose till she giggled, and then landing on her summer dress.

'Your strawberries, whilst not as good as damsons in the bowers of the Queen of the Night, were very nice indeed. Thank you, Jessica.'

'S'alright.'

'Would you like to hear a story, Jessica?'

'Sure.'

'Once upon a time, there was a Queen amongst the Faeries, a queen of bush and berry, her fruits delicious, and her thorns wickedly sharp. She, like all the Great Ones of the Folk, was beautiful and terrible. The Short-Lived Ones knew this of her. They knew to accept her gifts and fear her thorns, to treat her with respect, with reverence.'

'Uh huh,' Jessica didn't know this particular story and was already a bit confused by it.

'But then the Short-Lived Ones changed, as Short-Lived Ones do. Often an individual Short-Lived One can stay pretty much

the same their whole short life through, but then they die and the ones who come after sometimes forget what the last one knew and so quickly the Short-Lived Ones as a whole have changed. They would strip her bare, so no more fruit would come, or cut her back for roads to be built through her domain. And it was not just the Queen, though she was by far the most beautiful and the most terrible. All the Queens and Kings, Duchesses and Dukes, Baronesses and Barons, Countesses and Counts, even the common Sprites and Boggarts, all of the Folk, Great and Small, found themselves under constant attack from the greed, anger and foolishness of the Short-Lived Ones.'

Jessica nodded as if she was following, even though she wasn't. They seemed to have been walking down the tree-shrouded path for much longer than it normally took. The trees were so thick above her that hardly any light came through, and the briars to the left and right were so thick she couldn't see the allotment sheds and greenhouses. She doubted she would be able to see much at all, except the butterflies on her dress had begun to gently glow and shimmer. She watched the beautiful colours as they swam and shifted.

'The Short-Lived Ones thought they had defeated the Folk, as if they were fighting a war that could possibly be won. Indeed, they thought they were fighting a war to tame us and our bounties, but really, they were fighting a war with themselves, like a branch coming to life to cut down the trunk of its own tree.

But for us a season is barely an hour, a circuit of the sun a single day, the lifetime of a single Short-Lived One the passing of a week. So, all we had to do was wait. We did not retreat, we merely slept, in our burrows and our bowers, less than a score of Short-Lived One's lives.'

'And when those Short-Lived Ones had wrought such destruction that the tree of the world looked like it might topple, we stirred from our slumber, awoke in our full majesty, and we came upon them in the storms which tore the roofs from their homes, in the floods which drowned their crops, in the beating sun which burnt and dried till all was thirst and sand. And still, they did not understand. We did not cause those things; that was all their own doing; we merely revelled in the return.'

Jessica realised that she had not really been listening to Bramble, which was rude, but the colours shimmering and shifting across her dress were so beautiful.

'And there's you, little Jessica. You have treated the Queen of Bush and Berry with respect, offering her the three best strawberries from your basket, even when your mouth watered at the smell of them. You would make a fine lady's maid in my court, with your good manners and your pretty curls. Would you like that, little Jessica?'

Jessica murmered, and glanced up from the scintillating butterflies just for a moment. Had Bramble always been that tall, looking down at Jessica with a face beautiful but terrible? But then the butterflies shifted into the deepest most wonderful blue she had ever seen, and she giggled with delight.

'I will offer you this gift, little Jessica, as befits the lady's maid of a queen.' And suddenly, in her hands, was the most beautiful coronet. It looked as if it was made of daisies but their stems were finely-wrought silver, their discs florets made of shining gold, and the white of each ray floret were shimmering diamonds. It was the most beautiful thing Jessica had ever seen. The butterflies seemed to dim, the daylight was gone now, and all was dark in the thick, enmeshed shade of the trees and briars. There was just Jessica, Bramble, and this most beautiful coronet. Jessica felt her

hand reach up for it.

Then she remembered her Daddy's words, and slowly, almost painfully, lowered her arm, and she forced herself to say, word by careful word, with lips that felt like stones: 'Thank you for all you and your people give to us. We honour and praise you, but you have already given us everything we need, and we have learnt to take no more than that.'

As she said the final word Jessica blinked. The butterflies fluttered by, now looking more like Red Admirals. The sun drifted down through the gaps in the leaves, and she could see the stile which led out of the allotments and on to the street. In the distance she heard a rickshaw bell ringing a gentle warning.

For a moment it looked as if Bramble was holding a daisy chain in her hands, but then it was gone. Jessica looked down at Bramble, this strange little grown-up girl, who had a look on her face which was difficult to read. 'I'm sad not to have you as a lady's maid, little Jessica, but I'm glad that your people have learnt from their losses. As long as you continue to honour me so, I will ensure your bushes are full of berries every Autumn. But I will warn you, my sisters and brothers, aunts and uncles and myriad cousins, may have longer memories than me. The trust of the Folk is not easily earnt.'

Jessica nodded politely. She was becoming very aware of the smell of the remaining strawberries in her basket.

'I'd better go home now. It was nice to meet you, Bramble. I hope I see you again.'

At this Bramble smiled her strangely grown-up smile. 'That is a wish I can gladly fulfil, little Jessica.' And then she seemed to skip into a gap between the brambles and was gone. Jessica hadn't

known there was a path there and immediately tried to find it, but to her it seemed to just be thick and thorny bushes.

Jessica ran with the basket out on to the street and was surprised to see that the sun was low in the sky and thick, heavy grey clouds were pressing around it. It had gone from pleasantly warm to sticky and close in a few moments.

She ran home as fast as she could.

The shutters were already closed on the house, and the turbine on the roof lowered, as it always was before a storm. She went in through the outer door, putting her shoes carefully on the rack, and then through the inner door, into the cool of the well-insulated house. Mummy and Daddy were in the kitchen. Their voices were raised, and Mummy had just used a bad word.

'-sake Toby, you let her go with one of the Folk? Do you even know what kind?'

'Jessica said she was called Bramble. Sounded like Garden Folk.'

'For all we know she could be Royalty. You know how dangerous they are.'

'Exactly! Jessica had already offered this Bramble strawberries; think about what could have happened if I just whisked her away, leaving an angry member of the Folk outside our house, expecting tribute.'

'Yes, but it's been five hours. She might have –'

Jessica came in and put the basket of strawberries on the counter. Her two parents went giddy with relief and swept her up in to a big hug. Argument temporarily forgotten, all was kisses, and

concern and 'Are you alright?'s.

Eventually, they put her back down on her special chair and served the evening meal, and as ever her parents pointed at each little bowl of different vegetables and pulses and and sauces and told her who in the community had grown them and in which allotment, and what they were, and then they all sat in silence for a moment to say thanks to the people and the plants and the land that had grown their meal, then Jessica told them what had happened; that the nice girl had offered her a beautiful crown but she had remembered what Daddy said and she had repeated his words and then she told them what Bramble had said, as best as she could remember. Her parents relaxed even further, shoulders lowering, breath slowing.

They ate a pleasant meal in quiet.

Later, Mummy and Daddy both kissed her goodnight, and tucked up in her little room at the top of the house.

'You did really well today, Jessica,' said Mummy, hovering by the door for a moment.

'Thanks Mummy,' she said, still wondering what all the fuss was about; she'd just been polite like she'd been taught. Her mummy turned on the little ladybird nightlight and the room filled with a gentle warm glow. It reminded her of the butterflies.

Then the storm finally broke; it sounded muffled through the shutters and the double-glazed windows and the insulation panels between her and the roof tiles, but still she could hear wind and rain driving against the house. She quite liked the storms, at least, she did when she was snuggled up tight and warm and safe like this.

She strained to listen to the sound outside. In it, she thought she heard something new, something she had never heard before. As the wind and rain drove against the roof tiles, she thought she heard the sound of voices, many voices, high and raucous, full of furious delight, whooping and squealing to one another, the storm full of them, alive with them.

As was the whole world, she realised.

And then she fell asleep, and dreamt of butterflies and crowns.

Endosymbiosis

James Shammas-King

the greening the bringing-together-up-out the reconfiguring
the change we didn't see coming
more or less more and less
what we wanted needed (en)visioned
lost gained found were granted by some higher power
took from some lower power
grew organically
from cuttings detritus compost of past versions of ourselves
[where we're going we won't need those]
there is grandeur in this view of life, someone said

A Perfect Afternoon in Rowntree Park

Laura Bok

When we realised that we couldn't
frame it
bottle it
freeze it
picture it
capture it
buy it
but only
inhabit it

that is when we made it through.

Response by Manda Scott

What if we all have a special place, and give up on giving up, and find the willowherb and the flies and the plaques that hold our hearts together as we build community, as we tell each other stories of the old system collapsing and a new one being born from the rubble.

Our world is not what we think it is: it is certainly not what we thought it was going to be and the future is unknowable. But by our stories, we shape the worlds we want to step into - the future-memories of possibility, of communities built on reciprocity and respect and relationships between the human and more-than-human worlds …

And these stories of How We Made It Through are a stepping stone on the route to a future we'd be proud to leave to the generations yet unborn. Will those who come after us look back with awe and pride that we were the ones who, in spite of everything, stepped up and stepped forward and let ourselves be vulnerable in this place of absolute uncertainty?

If a young person seven generations from now were to find a copy of this ordinary-extraordinary collection, I think they might well see the spark of a light that led to the world they inhabit: and that world might well be worth living in.

Born in Scotland at 318ppm CO2, Manda Scott was once a veterinary surgeon and is now a novelist, smallholder, contemporary shamanic trainer and host of the international chart-topping Accidental Gods podcast. With her wife, Faith Tilleray, she is co-creator of the Thrutopia Masterclass.

https://mandascott.co.uk/