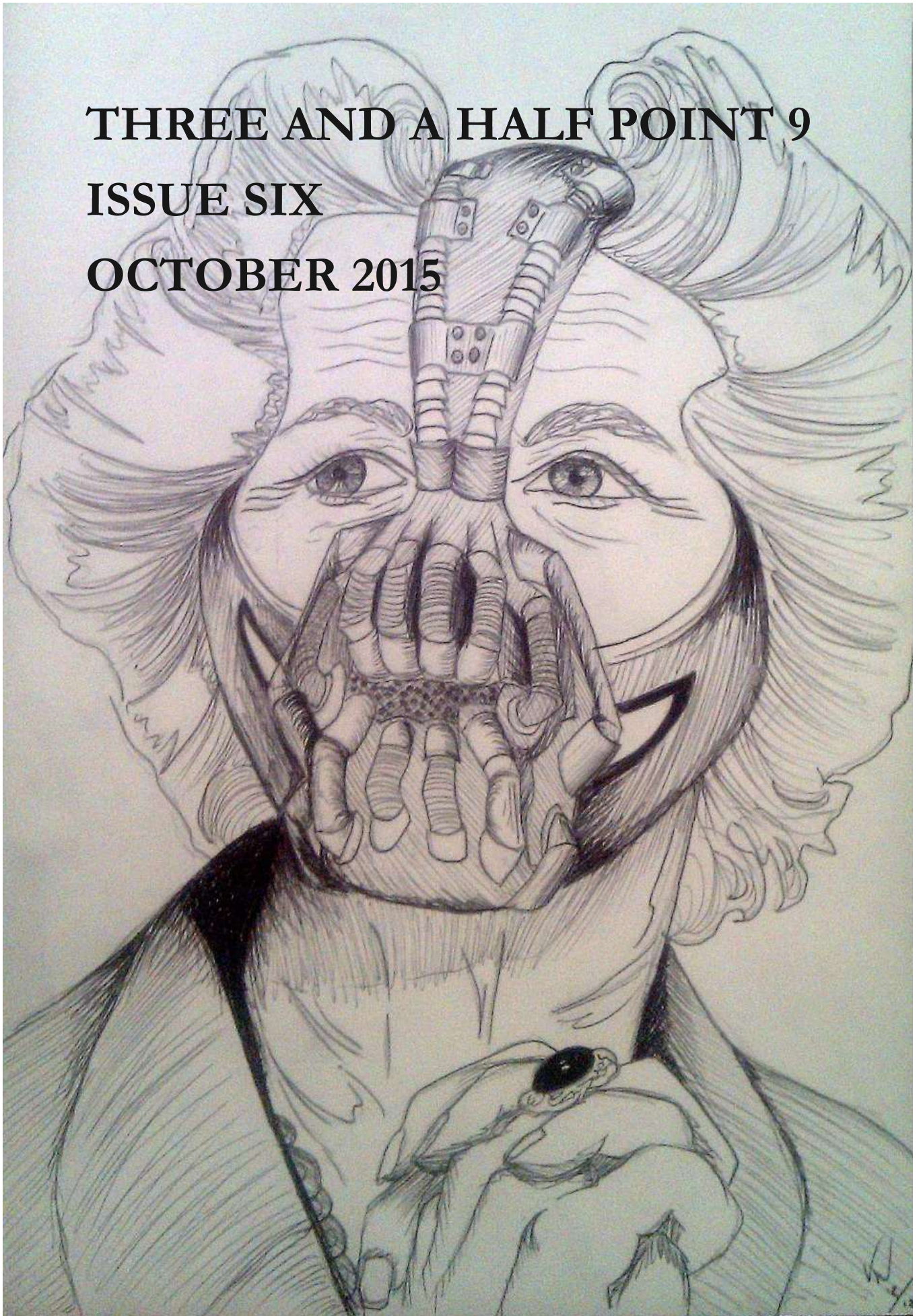


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Three And A Half Point 9

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Editor

Luke Thurogood

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Of Crystal Splinters

Robert Sheppard

(Words) float through skylights

Frames of leaves bald

Twigs against warming a

Bell-jar drops through

Taint trapping gas Orpheus

Is without Eurydice here as

Lament powders the air I

Thought

My mind mummified with emotion

I thought everything

Was compiled

On reels of tape piled into temple walls

Anyone who claims the future

May be its disciple blank

Spaces the

White noise the grey

Areas the black-outs sing

Softer than the power they void

Into nod-offs asleep on the top

Shelf in a modesty bag cargo

Cultist with no

Cargo no postcards from the future

Heavy with blossom a cement torso

Drops to earth

The palm of night across your eyes

Silvery haze above

Blue the sun burns

A tunnel throws shadows

Under your feet wire

And wheels the old connectives spoor

And breeze the longest story ladders

Up sides of tombs assume

The human viewpoint without

Attention desert from

The air down with the sand beetles

It's grain by grain living

Cannot be assimilated to the

Shot of morphine taking the eye

Beyond meaning economy

And work these rasps

Rhythmic spectrally

Calming

Rock towards expiry the poem

Does nothing this inhaling

Hollow

Death's trap door is not just

Individuated catastrophe not

Just representation mis-sounded

Sounded a memory palace

Full of off-stage props a

Hush-hush plot its shade

Falling flat like a shadow with

Brittle guitar licks a

Cradle of harmony his

Good music force-field

Consciousness crackling this

Is a world replete that's a man

Gasping

That wholeness is a flag as he becomes

His own oval narrowing to a tube of breath

Eating Cherries

Adam Hampton

Eating cherries

Fingertips stained the colour of suffocation

The pans are eggy

Quarrel over washing up

That ivy you hate?

Look how the leaves turn red in autumn

(Babies' hands searching through fence panels)

Isn't it lovely?

Outside

Stretching rapeseed hedgerow skyline

The fat air slumped on metalled roads

Skin of escaping saltwater

Eating cherries

Lips stained the colour of suffocation

she comes above the sheets of lime

Tom Crompton

today there is no obligation only the stranding

belly oak west

flash of the deep

set shimmer as if

the corona had

taken it through the mouth&sucking

each other

to spit this liquid

(goddess alight

through the shrubs

to burn me

wet lightning

COMMUTING

Will Daunt

Through the smear of a window,
facing backwards,

jackdaws argue in the Astro's goal, peeling off
like a buddleia branch line, fed by
that signal box once, at the halt, with
its vistas of turbines and waterlogged hawthorn, where
lambs skedaddle from frost, which
floods the glass house hives, by
dyke or sluice or tributary and
poplar parallelograms and,

pulling in, the arms of a Priory arch
hide by a shrubbery.

The Tides: Pilling Moss Southport,

December 18th 1720

The fanshells wash upon the shore
beaten by your waves' crescendo,
in the half-light you seem almost calm
do you bid us good morning?
Fortified townsmen portage a trail listening

for your warnings,
will you be cruel?
Ingrained in the driftwood
stolen in the cracks of caves

do you answer to the moon?

Omar Mourning

Mark Russell

He resists indictment thrashing in the sands,
his slow warm juice in your mane, your nails,
aspects of smooth polish, burnt incense,
an apricot of malice baked in brine.

Prevent the flax sails turning to mulch,
stroke panic where you sense its pulse, ask:
*Have you the tenacity to liberate your nurse
from the hot plates, laurels and prickly tigers?*

But his scalp is blistered with spring water,
grim crests discard their ghost-lives
combing for fibres of potent flesh.

He knows that you are the source of the beach,
that given the correct organ and neck of rock,
sea-blindness will be your rightful reward.

Daily Special

M.A. Schaffner

The hawk shakes its tail in the canopy
and bobs into the heavy, shiny leaves.

It might have caught something, it might have thought
to simply gain a better view. It's not

like shopping or dining out. This cafe
is a swath of land, and every entree

has eyes that flare in grief and surrender.
And this you must do over and over

without regret or sentiment or prayer
except for the gratitude in your stare.

One life ends as another carries on
to no end but its droppings, tears, and spawn.

Dee Stable

Steve Fletcher

We're in the spin room again

explain my self, you explain your self

cotton on jen, where do I stand

facing a notion of

direction

wary in the spin, loom ingrained

austere, discussions figure gelid

charts collectively no known noun

not now, pass that punnet of plums hun'

don't you mention what's in the mouth

the question of Immigration

bald ain't cute, it's the lowest thing

I'm not voting for that arse dear

hate the great leveller a common

con (come on) the denominator?

Denudate that paté

switch over blood it's a whig thing

can you spin wearing it bare

your opinion counts for some

thin' what we don't know why it is

precisely whine on cordial

juice dark, that see, radiates

motion sickness inevitable

difficult to digress off the Kru

welcome to our charity spin

coasting whirs the strand mate

just past that ur-myth, seared

bodies, ghrelin, a pre pran
dial delight, cine caulked

your post, give us our daily
breed.

Grinding on the spin cycle
fear the different why is that
even a question, odd to hear it

Just answer the statement
knot delaying the kick-off
causes all sorts of organ

isational problems. *You left that*
in then. The 'just look at the
mess and the time of it all

now'. Self express irony mail these

telegraph times, what one might call
atavistic actant. *Oh, really.*

Object-O-Vision

that red wheelbarrow the critic said
it
represents God, how
surreal. What pointy whiskers
wood maker, floppy watches
listen in through this signature de
vice, that gardener's tool re-rep
resents: some cymbal crash and please
work it out yourself
too heavy a stress. Perhaps.

Dream on. But I'll be honest
not in imagery, collectively

each individual's wright's a responsibility
rite. Blame Blaire, Eric not earn, speak
now Jurra 's out. On Jaffa
hell's a piece. Of work,
hear that salute to Ezra
six eight times more swing
not the metronome but, what's that, waltz
following a Sousa march, a bit
jazzy, how about yo

Kidnapped in Sorrento

Alfred Stockholm

I was kidnapped in Sorrento

CONTRIBUTORS

Robert Sheppard lives in Liverpool and co-organises the Storm and Golden Sky reading series, when he is not professing poetry at Edge Hill University. This year sees the publication of three poetry books: *Words out of Time* (KFS), *History or Sleep: Selected Poems* (Shearsman), *Unfinish* (Veer).

Adam Hampton is a student of English Language and Creative Writing at Edge Hill University. His poems have been published by Ikleftiko and Robert Sheppard. A former Royal Marine, much of his poetry tackles the theme of conflict. He lives with his wife and daughter in Southport, England. He is currently undertaking an MA in creative writing.

Tom Crompton is a poet and artist from Chorley. He is currently a student of the Warwick Writing Programme. His work has been published in a variety of magazines, shortlisted for the Jane Martin Poetry Prize 2014, and longlisted for the Melita Hume in 2015. His debut pamphlet of poetry will be published in summer 2016 by The New Fire Tree Press.

Will Daunt lives in Ormskirk and is a student on the M.A. in Creative Writing at Edge Hill University. His most recent collection of poetry, *Landed*, was published by Belfast's Lapwing Publications in 2013. Will has reviewed for *Envoi* magazine and the (now defunct) *New Hope International* website, as well as adjudicating poetry competitions for the London-based Sentinel Press.

Sarah Billington is from Preston in Lancashire and now lives in Tarleton not far from the seaside town of Southport. She studied creative writing at Edge Hill University and is currently working towards an MA in poetry to deepen her academic knowledge of the subject. Her landscape collection won the Rhiannon Evans poetry scholarship and she has had her work published in *Question Mark* magazine. She has performed poetry at the Everyman theatre in Liverpool.

Mark Russell has published *Saturday Morning Pictures* (Red Ceilings Press, 2015), and *Pursued by Well-being* (tall-lighthouse, 2013). His poems have appeared in many places, including *Tears in the Fence*, *Otoliths*, *Molly Bloom*, *Shadowtrain*, *fourfold*, *The Rialto*, *The Interpreter's House*, *Gutter* and *Poetry Salzburg Review*.

M. A. Schaffner has had poems published in Shenandoah, Prairie Schooner, Agni, and elsewhere -- most recently in Hermes, Modern Poetry Review, and Pennsylvania Review. Long-ago-published books include the poetry collection *The Good Opinion of Squirrels* and the novel *War Boys*. Schaffner spends most days in Arlington, Virginia juggling a Toshiba laptop and a Gillott 404.

Steve Fletcher is a literary fraud created by Albie Ak Abi. He has had poetry published in Saplingzine, as Albie Young. He claims to have been awarded Edge Hill University's Rhiannon Evans Poetry Scholarship in 2015, and to have had writing published on Robert Sheppard's blogsite, which celebrated twenty-five years of Creative Writing at Edge Hill University by publishing work of poets that have developed through the programme (<http://robertsheppard.blogspot.co.uk/2014/09/twenty-five-years-of-creative-writing.html>). However, nobody believes a word he says, as he cannot be trusted and he smells real bad. He claims to be fifty years old, happily married and the father of seven. His ambition is to become a literary fiction.

Alfred Stockholm is 65 years of age. He has never been to Sorrento.