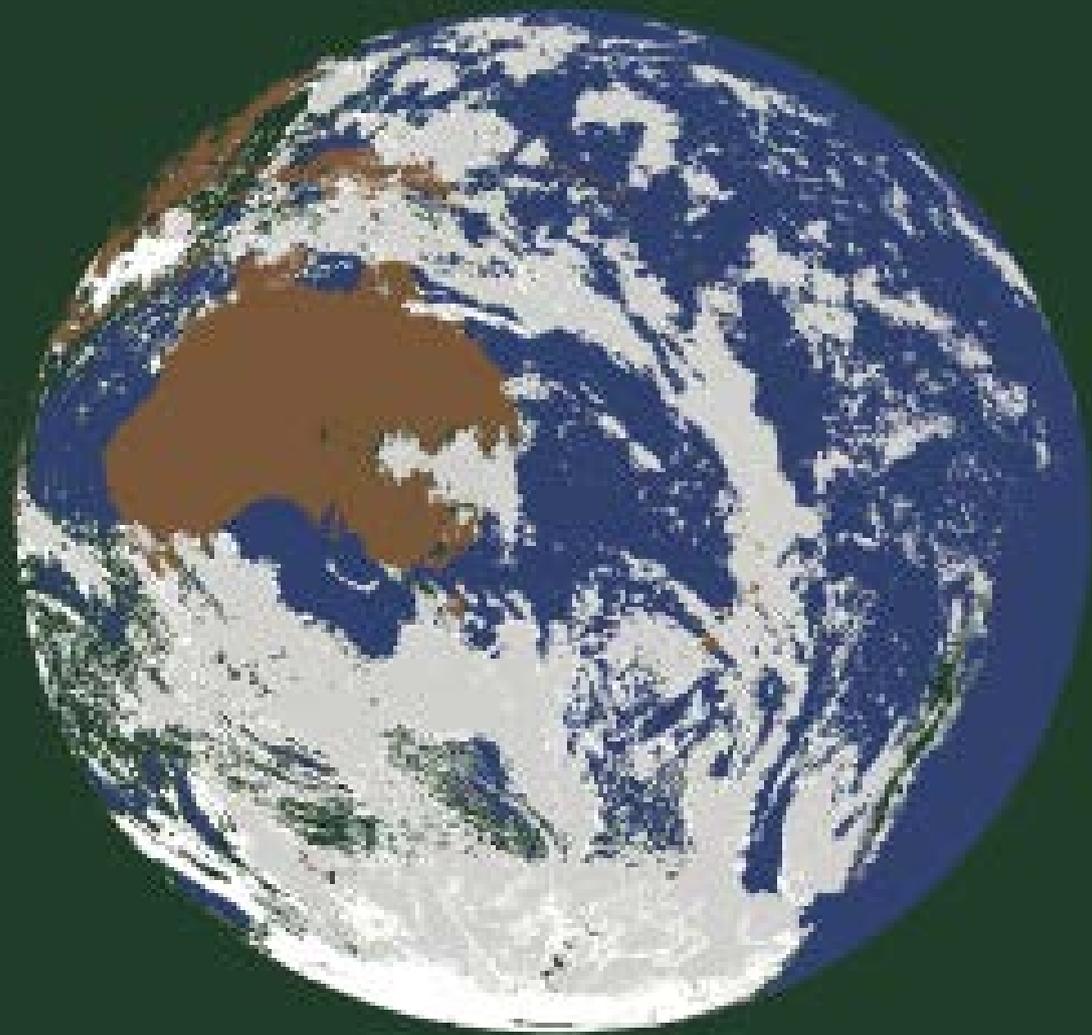


# ONE WORLD ONE CHANCE



FALINGE PARK WRITING GROUP

EDITED BY SEAMUS KELLY

**ONE WORLD  
ONE CHANCE**

**There is no Planet B**

Falinge Park Writing Group

Edited by Seamus Kelly

**One World: One Chance  
There is no Planet B**

Published in 2022 by Seamus Kelly,  
Littleborough, OL15 0DT

Copyright (c) Seamus Kelly 2022

Layout and cover design by Seamus Kelly

Copyright in each poem, story or article remains with the individual writer.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form, by any means without the prior written permission of the publisher.

Printed in the United Kingdom

The Climate Worx project and this publication have been made possible with the support of the Rochdale Borough Culture Network Small Grants Programme 2021.

The grant programme was managed by Cartwheel Arts, a charity based in Heywood, that promotes social inclusion, cohesion, diversity and regeneration through community participation in vibrant, innovative, high-quality arts projects.

Falinge Park Writers Group, and Seamus Kelly are grateful for the support of Vintage Worx Community Development Trust who have provided a venue and support throughout this project.

The editor would like to thank Eileen Earnshaw, who established and leads the Falinge Park Writing Group for her enthusiasm and support since the project was first proposed.

## **Introduction**

Although Bill Anders took the first photograph of the whole of planet earth in 1968 from Apollo 8 the first full colour photograph of the planet, fully illuminated by the Sun, was taken by Harrison Schmitt in 1972 from Apollo 17, the last manned flight to the moon. That photo became known as the Blue Marble.

Artist Luke Jerram was inspired by the Blue Marble image and created the huge 7m wide globe of the Earth which he called Gaia. Jerram himself said: "I hope visitors to Gaia get to see the Earth as if from space; an incredibly beautiful and precious place. An ecosystem we urgently need to look after – our only home."

Inspired by the Gaia installation exhibited in Rochdale, I developed the Climate Worx project; a series of workshops focusing on the environment and climate change.

The excellent work produced by the enthusiastic participants forms the basis of this collection. You will find this book informative, enjoyable and, perhaps most importantly, a call to action.

There is no planet B.

*Seamus Kelly*

## Contents

Haiku	1
Memories	2
Witnesses	3
If I Could Turn Back Time	4
Extinction rebellion	6
All Life Matters	7
A Painter and Decorator Considers the Planet	8
Everyday World	9
Migrating Trees	10
The Air Has Gone Thin and Silent	12
Smiling with their Backs to the Inferno	14
Environmental	16
Three Short verses	18
Thoughts on the Blue Marble	19
The Blue Marvel	20
Autumn Rap	21
Departure	22
Interviewing Mother Earth	23
The Sun Rises	24
Climate Roundabout	25
Ticking	26
There's a Hole in my Planet	28
Urban Dustman	30
The Blue Marble (Gaia)	31
The Fairytale of the New World	32
A Regeneration	34
Metronome Through Time	36
About the writers	37

I dreamed that I was  
living slowly – slower still  
than the oldest stone

*Inspired by TIME, a pebble structure created in memory of  
the Poet M. Vasalis (1909-1998)*

Sandra Buckley

## Memories

The old lady told me she remembered autumn golds,  
summer greens, blossoms, a kaleidoscope of colours.  
I told her I had seen these things on an old recording.  
She said, ' Could you touch, inhale their scent, let their  
pollen stain your fingers?'  
but the old are often foolish 'no I said, of course not'.

She told me, long ago she'd stood,  
where wonder waves of salty sea  
splashed diamonds on bare thighs and feet,  
how hands pooled water clear and bright,  
that smelt of sky, and night, and life.  
but the old are often foolish,  
live in half imagined dreams.

She talked of friends, relatives,  
of seasons come and gone,  
of fingers touching, faces smiling,  
church halls and communities  
that vanished, one by one.  
She talked of graven images, of oligarchs and kings.  
The need for more possessions, the normalcy of greed.  
Her mind slips through the decades,  
I smile, she is so old, with fairy tales and parables,  
with dreams of long ago.  
Today, the temperature is rising,  
the air weighs heavy and unclean  
I hold her hand and sit with her  
we view the garden on the screen.

Eileen Earnshaw

## Witnesses

Robotic lens survey devastation:  
barrenness, a wilderness of ash mounds,  
blackened tree stumps, desiccation.  
Incapable of feelings, the lenses can only assimilate.  
The turgid half light of fetid air,  
rank, bitter, accentuates doom in the gloom.  
Carved out river courses, stony, arid,  
reminiscent of Nazca lines, pattern the land.  
Silence is eerie, dense,  
devoid of birdsong, normal sound.  
Occasionally, winds whistle and moan  
across the featureless landscape,  
unheard by perfunctory, mechanical machines.  
Programmed to withstand adversities,  
robots do not need fuelling.  
Wear and tear automatically repair.  
These machines are the sole, self-sufficient,  
survivors of our apocalypse.  
Only they, have resolutely recorded  
the foolishness of mankind.  
They are robotic time capsules, witnesses,  
holding within their android memories  
the history of our demise.

## If I Could Turn Back Time

If I could turn back time  
if I could find a way  
how many days?  
How many years?

If I could turn back time  
I'd scale back,  
live closer to smaller, quieter  
and less polluting workplaces.

We'd walk to school,  
we'd cycle to work,  
we'd work from home and  
we'd work to live.

Would I stop at smaller cities?  
Were factories a step too far?  
And what about fossil fuels?  
Planes and trains and cars?

If I could turn back time  
there'd be no oil or plastics.  
If I could turn back time we'd need  
no more climate guerrilla tactics.

Faced with crucial choices;  
left or right, up or down,  
we prevaricate before  
ploughing straight ahead.

If I could turn back time;  
We'd pause,  
we'd think,  
we'd actually make a decision.

If I could turn back time  
If I could turn back  
If I could turn  
If I could  
If I  
If

I wonder how far I'd really go....

*Seamus Kelly*

## **Extinction Rebellion**

Forests dwindle for agricultural greed  
Producing products we don't really need  
Species extinctions should not be an option  
Sustainability's a better adoption  
Life on our planet is varied and broad  
It's diminution must not be ignored  
Forget the great hypes big business will sell you on  
Best to be part of Extinction Rebellion

*Robin Parker*

## All Life Matters

All life matters - how true is that?

Amongst the selfishness of humankind, care of others, of other species, has been diminished. Selfish people who have made wealth their god have contributed to a world which will not be fit to inhabit in an unbelievably short time.

You may wonder what this has to do with you or me! If we are to get out of the mess our people have created we have to learn to pull together, pool ideas, forget our own selfish needs and desires and work for the good of everyone. The insects under our feet aren't able to help themselves; birds flying above our heads aren't able to help themselves. Indeed, none of us on our own can do a damn thing BUT together great things could be achieved. However, firstly, we have to find the will to act.

The weakest need help from the strongest. People should be aware of others' struggles and by doing our bit - small or large - a contribution to mankind begins.

Climate change affects everything and everyone. It is time to pull together, unite and fight to right the wrongs done to our planet.

Maureen Harrison

## A Painter and Decorator Considers the Planet

I tend to brush aside my emotions  
Gloss over what I feel  
My life has been a roller  
Coaster it's true  
I've kept my heart under coat  
My topcoat a veneer  
A varnish of what's real

When I was in my prime  
Well, primer than I am now  
I could paper over the cracks  
Measure up to my responsibilities

Now my silk life  
Has turned matt  
Urban slate  
Stippled  
With worry

Wet and dry  
The sandpaper of time  
Has run out  
For our planet.

Ray Stearn

## Everyday World

Morning, gleaming  
myriad forms of flora, fauna,  
quiver response.  
People, all colours, creeds,  
supple limbs, movement,  
voices and music.  
A glorious diversity  
stimulating joy.  
Not once but every single day,  
ours to love and care for.

Eileen Earnshaw

## Migrating Trees

"Hey Guys" said one big tree "can you feel something different in your roots?"

"Such as?" the little shrub asked bemused. The Big Fella was always going on about something.

"Well, there's warmth for sure. It's always been there but now I feel it more acutely in my nether regions."

The other trees listened to Big Fella. He was their leader though none of them could recall him ever being elected. Maybe something to do with his size!

They all concentrated on their root system. Goodness there was something going on, each thought,

"What shall we do?" wailed the pretty little tree. "I don't want my feet to burn."

"Well" said Big Fella "let us try to get our babies further up the hill."

"How do we do that?" the others chorused.

"Next time a great gust of wind happens we all shake our leaves and branches as much as we can and the seeds will be carried further up."

"Can't see what good that will do" grunted the gnarled old tree who was really in awe of Big Fella but felt he needed to be cut down to size.

"It will save us" was the Big Fella's reply. "We will live long enough to see a brighter future. Even if we don't see the end results our children will benefit. It will be better for everyone."

The others agreed and, sure enough, next time the strong wind came they all shook their leaves and branches as much as they could.

In time, at the top of the hill, new trees started to sprout and older ones further down the slope nodded their heads in satisfaction. They knew their time was running out but between them they had created a new beginning for all their species to survive.

The flowers noticed what the trees were doing and started a similar process.

Insects, birds and other forest creatures thought the trees were very smart and started to make their own exodus to the top of the hill. Soon the bottom of the hill was quite lifeless but life flourished at the top.

Big Fella had had the foresight to see what was going to happen in the future so he had done his little bit to motivate the others. He was very pleased with the result.

*Maureen Harrison*

## **The Air Has Gone Thin and Silent.**

The lidless eyes of windows  
Stare across a barren land.  
The air has gone thin and silent, except for  
The sound of a child's swing rocking  
Backwards and forwards endlessly,  
Scraping it's screams of rusted grief  
Where once was a garden, in tumbling greens  
A blackbird singing in tall lilac spires  
Overblown roses spilling stone walls in June  
Running feet reaching a doorway for sweets  
past a grey cat asleep in the shadows.  
The air has gone still and silent  
A pink peg is hanging alone on a line  
forgotten and nudged by a whisper of heat  
A wing of a car is orange and lace,  
The earth is a dustbowl, cracked in places  
The air has gone thin and silent  
Forgetting the sounds of a language  
Clouds are all hollow, and empty,  
Look up to the vault of an empty sky  
There is an absence of birds,  
an absence of song  
No buzz of bees  
No rustle of leaves  
The air has grown still and silent  
In the lands of the north  
The glaciers slide melting,  
Into the arms of the welcoming ocean.  
The northern lights are left to bleed  
In random swirls of pink and green  
Over the glimmer and glitz of ice.

The air has grown still and silent  
Except for the sound where buildings break,  
Bridges creak  
Where nothing speaks  
where heat beats down,  
houses drown,  
and we all fell down  
The air has grown still and silent.

*Sylvia Anne Jones*

### **Smiling With Their Backs to the Inferno**

Her once-white fur yellowed,  
she took her final, empty-stomached, steps  
and the great northern white bear,  
Ursus Maritimus,  
faded away like the ice and snow.  
Did they know; she was the last of her kind  
as they stood, one arm raised,  
in a phoney-selfie salute,  
fixed grins and pouts,  
with their backs to the tragedy?

They picked a plastic bag from  
his cold dead stomach  
The label read; "Dispose of packaging responsibly"  
He, the last of the great  
ocean-going leatherbacks, couldn't read  
and he washed up  
strangled by mankind,  
remotely from the inside,  
portent of a rising plastic tide.

The fires started,  
kindled by imaginary needs,  
stoked by a terrible greed  
and you could see the smoke from space.  
And a billion pound-shop-Neros  
fiddle with their phones  
one arm raised as they  
turn their backs  
on the Amazon.

And I heard Greta's generation,  
I saw them march and felt their rage.  
Saw them dissed for a few classes missed,  
by an older generation  
who jeer to cover their fear,  
of the nascent reality?  
Yet they'll stand  
one arm raised  
in a phoney-selfie salute.  
Smiling,  
with their backs to the inferno.

Seamus Kelly

## Environmental

Environs were mental; they suffered with poor health. Once  
they were rich but now, they have no wealth.  
They lived in the rainforests of Brazil but then human beings  
started to kill  
The trees and shrubs that housed the small mammals, the  
flora, the fauna and the cool water channels.  
Next, they lived on the shores of Alaska until Exxon Valdez  
had its disaster.  
Then the poor birds and fish were covered in an oily dish.  
A black filthy wave of something so grave.  
Then came Chernobyl fallout which led to serious doubt  
About the future of the people who were piled up like a  
steeple.  
Then we polluted our rivers and seas with heavy metals  
and disease.  
We pumped into the air products of combustion and I swear  
That our lungs are not right. Some people start to fight  
For each breath that they take leading the elderly to shake  
Off their mortal coil prematurely when all is said and done  
surely  
Can we improve our stature when dealing with nature?  
To reduce what we buy, reuse what we can and try  
To recycle bottles and plastics and not be too drastic.  
To save aluminium and cans so that we can make plans  
To take care of resources and reduce the thing that forces  
Us into destruction without causing too much ruction.  
We the consumers have great power; instead of taking a  
bath, take a shower.  
We can turn the TV off at the wall to keep our electricity  
bills small.  
To fill our kettle with just enough water to make that cup  
of tea for our daughter

Or son, mum or dad, grandma or grandad.  
To fill a washing machine to the top and avoid wasting  
electricity and save every drop  
Of water that we use. We really have no excuse  
For wasting our fossil fuels which we burn in our homes and  
schools.  
To turn our thermostats down so that mother or father do  
no frown  
When they get their quarterly bill so their children they do  
not grill.  
We have to plan our weekly shop to prevent those bananas  
turning to slop.  
On average we waste a third of what we buy and you and I  
have to ask ourselves why  
We don't just buy what we need. Is it because we succumb  
to greed?  
Our waste goes to landfill which is going to cause something  
that will  
Increase greenhouse gases which will, in turn, affect the  
masses.  
When we want to breathe clean air, methane and carbon  
dioxide levels will make us scare.  
If we don't take care, it will be too late. Our earth's balance  
is delicate.  
We'll have no sense of the blight we create to our Earth  
which once was great.  
So, if we want to avoid Armageddon and sending ourselves  
to heaven.  
We need to take ourselves back in time to when there were  
plenty of grapes on the vine.  
Single-use plastics are not fantastic.

Chris Green

Knock, Knock.  
Who's There?  
It's Time.  
What Time?  
Time for Change!

### Sunset

Our world is a drowning butterfly  
Wings dripping toxic waste

Clinging to its rump I sense  
A desperate last flutter

Sinking into the acid sea  
Like an evil sunset

### Demo

avert world crisis  
restore natural balance  
halt global warming

Sandra Buckley

## Thoughts on 'The Blue Marble'

The dust of the world,  
black ridges on my fingers,  
it is nothing, everything.  
These nondescript grains  
the essence of life,  
our past, our possible future.

Statistics abound, numbers  
we cannot comprehend.  
This global facsimile  
of vibrancy, colour.  
This is our beleaguered world,  
looking to us for protection.

Time is of the essence.  
Still we pause, prevaricate.  
The geese that laid our golden eggs  
march us onwards to the grave,  
economics trump survival.  
Money always wins the race.

Eileen Earnshaw

## The Blue Marvel

It seems quite large  
This Gaia globe  
Big balloon

In reality  
It's not even a football  
Not even a ping pong ball  
Not even a marble  
Not even a dragee  
Not even a pinhead  
Nor even a pinprick  
In the general scheme of things

Twinkle twinkle little star  
How we wonder what you are  
We have stacked the odds so high  
Is the planet doomed to die

Can we restore our blue marble  
To a blue marvel once again

Ray Stearn

## Autumn Rap

Wild winds rip leaves off trees,  
hurtling down in green frenzy.  
Green leaves?  
What does this mean?  
It's Autumn, they should be gold and red.  
It's said,  
changing seasons are the reasons.  
Nature's clock has run amok,  
impacting on the ecosystems,  
equilibrium shot to pieces,  
affecting plants and other species.  
Longer summers, shorter winters,  
open chances in the expanses  
for prolonging allergies.  
Fires in woods, Nature weeps floods.  
Temperatures soar and disease is more.  
Pious prompts say "I told you so!"  
recalling this has happened before.  
So, have you listened to this data?  
Are you for action or a time waster?  
Do you want this aberration  
to destroy the rhythm of our nation  
or save it for the next generation?  
SAVE OUR PLANET NOW!

Glenis Meeks

## Departure

The pandemic was the last straw.  
Will the last person to leave Britain please close the door?  
  
The situation had already been bad for hundreds of years.  
Will the last person to leave Europe please open their ears.  
  
Pestilence, plague, fuelled by hot air from empty talk about  
pollution.  
Will the last person alive please learn this is not the  
solution.  
  
We couldn't cope with Mother Nature's frown,  
Will the last person to leave please pull the blinds down.  
  
In the end we simply gave up the fight,  
Will the last person to leave the planet please turn off the  
light.

Ray Stearn

## Interviewing Mother Earth

First question please, for Mother Earth.  
Do you actually feel unwell?  
And if you die, where will you go?  
Please Mother Earth, do tell.

More frequent you're unleashing floods  
And destructive hurricanes.  
Perhaps there's something going on  
You're trying to communicate?

Our numbers growing year by year  
May have worn you down,  
The furthest corners of our world  
Polluted by humankind.

The icecap's reducing steadily  
As your inner core is heating.  
These changes are so unsettling  
There's even talk of leaving.

Admittedly, through our exploits  
Of pure greed and carelessness,  
We forgot what mattered most  
Were your precious resources.  
Yet, Mother Earth, we're all agreed  
That your beauty goes beyond  
Anything else known to us.  
Did we grab too much at once?

Last question please, for Mother Earth.  
Can you still rebalance?  
Or are we now beyond all hope  
Awaiting eternal silence .....

Sandra Buckley

## The Sun Rises

Today the sun rises  
the birds sing  
rivers flow  
and clouds drift.

I breathe pure time  
capture their songs  
hear the trees grow.

The early morning pond  
ready to ripple  
glistens.

Seeing beyond light  
beyond dreams  
I am

a pendulum, frozen  
in the space between thoughts.

Tomorrow the sun will rise.

Seamus Kelly

## Climate Roundabout

I love flying abroad, said Flighty Florence  
You'll need me with you, said Brian Burnoil  
You'll heat up the planet, said Dubious Dougall  
Far too much energy, said Dozing Dylan  
It's poisoning my fields, said Ailing Ermintrude  
We'll all be dead, said Zebedee

I'll sow all I can, said Penny Planter  
I'll spread a lot further, said Terry Tree  
You'll soak up my waters, said Phyllis Flood  
And take in my gases, said Carlo Dioxide  
I'll do that too, said Futia Flowers  
Then we can relax in our beds, said Zebedee

Robin Parker

## Ticking

We measure in degrees  
Celsius and Fahrenheit.  
We count the years,  
the days, and the hours.

Our clock is ticking.  
Our scales are not in balance.  
Our clocks don't tick  
to the sun and the moon.

A journey too far, to find food,  
is not measured in miles or kilometres  
But in steps, in wing-beats  
and in fading energy.

A cup, a pint, a litre or a gallon  
means nothing when  
the fresh water has all but gone.  
Too little food is not measured in  
kilograms and pounds  
not grammes and ounces,  
but in hunger pangs and wasting flesh.

Inside our man-made bubbles  
we aren't fighting fading muscles,  
to drag ourselves across the ice,  
to swim against the current,  
or to fly, unlike the wind.

Those journeys are measured  
in lost weight, lost strength  
lost chances and ultimately,  
lost hope.

Our clock is ticking,  
we count populations,  
chart migrations,  
talk about change.  
We plan and claim reductions,  
while the mercury rises.

We decide what and who is,  
or is not, sustainable.  
Our prevarications and delays  
hasten their demise, and our own.

Our clock is ticking  
but we can't hear the alarm.

Their extinctions foretell our own.  
Our scales are not in balance.  
Our clocks don't tick  
to the sun and the moon.

Our clock is ticking.  
That alarm keeps ringing.  
Why can't we hear it?

Tick tock.  
Tick tock.  
Tick tock.

*Seamus Kelly*

## There's a Hole in my Planet

There's a hole in my planet McDonalds, KFC,  
there's a hole in my planet fast food shop a hole.  
So, what shall I do now consumer, hungry man?  
So, what shall I do now fast-food fan what now?  
Stop burning rain forests contractor, destroyer.  
Preserve our good wildlife because we love that.  
How do I raise cattle purchaser, meat eater?  
How do I raise that meat shopper how do I?  
Who says I need meat now producer, good farmer?  
Who says I need that food dear rancher says who?  
Try healthy alternatives customer, shopper.  
Try plant-based food products buyer please try.  
But I like my palm oil manufacturer, fabricator.  
But I am addicted creator oh dear.  
So, wean yourself off it to save those rain forests.  
Eat more fruit and vegetables when you shop right now.  
I do love my planet forestry destroyer.  
I do want to save it from Armageddon.  
We need to eat less meat you dear carnivore now.  
Substitute our diet with pulses and veg.  
By reducing our livestock, we free up our dear land.  
To give us all free space for our people now.  
Try alternative cuisines you hungry meat eater.  
Let's not lose those forests to give us fresh air.  
I want to breathe oxygen and not perish out now.  
I want to fill my lungs with fresh air I do.  
You're sure I can't tempt you with bangers and burgers.  
You're sure I can't lure you with fast food, you're sure?  
I love all my flora before you poison it.  
I love my fauna which you will kill soon.  
I love a diverse planet before you destroy it.

I love diversity so please leave it be.  
So, what about plastics my misguided maker?  
Single-use plastics are not right for us.  
But I like plastic straws in my gin and tonic why can I not  
have one bar steward why not?  
Because they choke our fish and wildlife you know this.  
Because they are wasteful dear bar-fly that's why.  
What about my beer cans off license controller?  
What about my four-pack which I want right now?  
Get rid of those plastics, you beer swilling monsters.  
Get rid of those chokers and get wise right now.  
My Friday take-away is full of those plastics.  
Deliveroo take out please take heed right now.  
Reuse those containers take-away consumer.  
Recycle materials to reduce waste right now.  
What about those fossil fuels when heating your dwelling?  
There must be alternative fuels must there not?  
They are running out now and warm up our planet so use  
wind and wave power to save our dear world.  
Those ice caps are shrinking with that global warming.  
The arctics are smaller because we are bad.  
So how do we stop this you clever mad scientists?  
How do we stop us from drowning next year?  
By turning down heating by one degree Celsius.  
By fitting TRV's to heating good man.  
Our shores are eroding with that global warming.  
The UK is shrinking this great sceptred isle.

Chris Green

## Urban Dustman

I'm the urban dustman, baby,  
I got a creed,  
I'm fed up with all this greed.  
I'm the urban dustman, baby,  
Love blue skies,  
Moths and dragonflies.

I don't use diesel,  
I don't use gas.  
Coal power stations I knock down,  
They're a right pain in the ass.

I'm the urban dustman, baby,  
Boilers are out,  
That's what I'm about.

I wake up every morning  
With a frown upon my face,  
These humans on our planet, well,  
They are a big disgrace.

I'm the urban dustman,  
I'm intelligent and clean,  
Know what I mean.  
I'm the urban dustman  
As a cleaner second to none,  
It's a lot of fun.

I never let the planet down,  
I've never made a boob.  
Recycling your magazines,  
And bog roll inner tubes.

I'm the urban dustman, baby,  
Now here's the twist.  
I don't exist!

Ray Stearn

## The Blue Marble (Gaia)

I thought it would be the colours of the rainbow.  
More reds, oranges, yellows.  
Instead, I see blue.  
The deepest blue.  
Blue that stops my breathe.  
Beautiful, beautiful blue.  
Blue that I can swim in.  
Dive in.  
Float in.  
Flowing, spinning, swirling.  
Then the lightest blue, almost white.  
I think I see Heaven, not Earth.  
The clouds look like feathers, fluffy, weightless,  
angels dancing.  
There's a glimpse of something beyond.  
I can't touch it.  
I can't smell it.  
I can't taste it.  
It's silent, yet speaks so loud.  
I see blue, beautiful, beautiful blue.

*Joanne Wood*

## The Fairy Tale of the New World

When we were children and our parents read us a fairy story the opening words were: 'once upon a time in a land far, far away...' Now we are grown up and we have suffered the disappointment that fairy tales don't come true we realise that the past has suddenly caught up with us. Never mind 'once upon a time' what about once upon right now? We have used our time and made a poor job of looking after our world and the environment we inhabit. Time is now of the essence as in, we are running out of time: the Earth's once bountiful resources are petering out and we have a limited amount of time in which to use them wisely and frugally or lose them for good.

If we heed the warnings our planet gives us: tempest, flood, earthquake, forest fire or tsunami then we can put our world right again and ensure our environment is fit for purpose both for us and for the generations to follow.

Never mind that land 'far, far away' let's deal with the land immediately beneath our feet, the water that runs through it and the air we breathe in our locale. We are very lucky to breathe fresh, clean air and to drink cool, clear water. Not all lands are quite so lucky. We have the technology to share with other cultures in the careful use of what we consume, both what we eat and drink and what we pass as waste back to the Earth.

Another feature common to fairy tales was the bad or evil character; the ugly witch, the wicked step mother, the ogre, the angry giant. The bad character in environmental issues is often ourselves; our wanton disregard for the future of

our blue planet and the pollution with which we blight it. We do not to be the bad character; we do not need to eat the poisoned apple; we do not need to prick our thumb on the waste we create and what we send to landfill.

There is always a redemptive character in fairy tales; the beautiful princess, the handsome prince or the kindly king or queen. We can be that character in the tale of our lives. We can be careful what beans we sow; we can be careful what we eat. We can avoid the poisoned chalice.

By policing what we leach into our rivers and seas, what gases we expel into the stratosphere, we can be a good Samaritan, neighbour and citizen and enjoy the fruits of the unpolluted tree.

The fairy story of us and our journey through time on this planet will turn into a nightmare if we fail to listen to the delicate heartbeat of our beautiful planet. Otherwise, it will fade and die.

In the fairy tale the protagonists 'live happily ever after'. If we want to do so then we need to watch what we use, reuse what we can, recycle whatever can be recycled with love.

*Chris Green*

## **A Regeneration.**

Deep down in dark gloom  
among weeds and brown silt,  
the river hid its secrets  
for years and years.  
An old stone sink, and a windscreen,  
lay undisturbed and mouldering,  
while at the water's edge, a cabinet broke the surface  
with one door closed, the other open,  
twitching in the flow, like a stricken bird  
with an injured wing.

Across a bulrush bed  
a purple dress displayed itself,  
with a sleeve draped, unravelling,  
trapped and waving.  
Christmas tinsel and fishing line  
floated on the surface, caught in water weeds,  
anchored by fallen rubble, winding round and round  
in a whirlpool of foam, accompanied  
by a nest of plastic bottles which bobbed and danced.

There used to be houses here, and further along,  
warehouses lined the space  
where the land ends and the river runs.  
Boats came with cargoes of  
coal and wool and bales of cotton,  
the sound of the people carried over water,  
and when they left to spend their lives  
in a city full of chimney stacks,  
where fog rose high in the morning air,  
all that remained was silence.

When the sun shone it glittered the river,  
and when the moon rose, it silvered the water,

wind rippled reflections, for years and years  
as people came in the dead of night,  
with their bags of rubbish and unwanted things.  
Then the great day came came.  
giant yellow shovels, on huge ridged wheels.  
rolled right over the waist high weeds  
flattened the nettles and bold purple thistles,  
the waving grasses and white lacy hemlock.

Engines purred on the riverbank, brakes hissed insistently,  
as voices called the plans they made  
before the tremendous gathering  
of all those old discarded things.  
The water was emptied of bicycles, the rocking horse  
with the rusty springs, the sopping mouldy mattresses  
the old stone sink, the windscreen, and  
the cabinet with the open door,  
were all piled up in a great big skip,  
and the river was gradually free.

The river is slowly recovering  
rippling over smooth black stones  
babbling it's own joyful language  
flowing unhindered, away to the sea.  
Nature has now returned to this place,  
the swans and the geese and the mallards are here,  
they clack and cry and hoot and cluck,  
while in the good earth of the river bank,  
Voles and insects make their homes,  
where violets, ferns and king cups grow.

*Sylvia Anne Jones.*

## **Metronome through Time**

Largo in the prehistoric era of dinosaurs  
Larghetto as glaciers froze solid during the ice age  
Adagio when reptiles grew wings and took to the skies  
Andante flaring up as the first fire was lit by early mankind  
Moderato throughout medieval times with tribal battles  
raging  
Allegro in the age of enlightenment and discovery  
Presto as industrial growth overtook natural well being  
Prestissimo to prevent life on our planet dying out

*Sandra Buckley*

## About the writers

**Glenis Meeks:** A retired Head of Infants, I love juggling with words to find apt descriptions for my creative writing. Now, in my eightieth year, I am still learning, researching, recording, curious about life in all its forms.

**Chris Green:** Now 60, I was born in Leicester and moved to Rochdale 35 years ago. A retired quantity surveyor, I took up creative writing just recently. Passionate about environmental issues I am a keen swimmer, a regular walker and an accomplished cook. I have two grown up children: Chelsea and Matthew.

**Sandra Buckley:** I decided to join this writing project when the Gaia exhibition came to Rochdale town centre. The universe continues to hold many mysteries for me. I consider myself someone who cares for the natural environment, and exploring the effects of climate change on our planet was a real eye opener.

**Ray Stearn:** was born in Kent but has now spent more than half his life living in Yorkshire and working in Rochdale. Writing poetry, prose, plays and often on toilet walls he tries to see the funny side of life more often than not and sometimes even succeeds.

**Seamus Kelly:** A poet, writer and artist, with a particular interest in the environment, runs creative workshops for people of all ages. He led this project delivering a series of workshops to the Falinge Park Writing Group to inspire the writing in this book.

**Eileen Earnshaw:** I enjoy writing but like everyone else the responsibilities of work and family took precedence. My writing now covers all genres but am most interested in creating performance poetry. Having recently achieved PGSA degree I enjoy using that experience and knowledge in facilitating writing groups and developing projects.

**Robin Parker:** Writer of poems and parodies, Robin has published his own book 'Edenfield Scrolls', a collection of 'Bible' stories with a Lancashire theme. He has also completed an as yet unpublished volume of 75 Shakespearian style sonnets to works of Vincent Van Gogh.

**Sylvia Anne Jones:** I was born in Scotland, brought up in Wales and now live in Rochdale with my husband. I have been taking classes in Poetry and Creative Writing for 20 years. I have realised is that there is always something new to learn. I love creating images with words.

**Maureen Harrison:** When I retired I took up creative writing, painting and, lately, playing the ukulele. I have always been interested in nature and am concerned climate change will do irreversible damage to our planet without immediate action taken by everybody.

**Joanne Wood:** At 45 I discovered my written voice. A brain tumour caused me to lose my speech so written words became more important. I discovered recovery through story telling, poetry, prose and acceptance in a group of ordinary folk who are inspiring and awesome.