

FLIGHT

The background of the cover is a vibrant, abstract painting with horizontal and diagonal strokes in shades of blue, green, and yellow. Overlaid on this are several white birds, possibly seagulls or terns, with black outlines, flying in various directions. The birds are scattered across the middle and upper portions of the cover.

A Plumb Lines Anthology

EDITED BY REGINA BEACH

Flight

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Lapidus Publishing • Bristol, U.K.

Flight: A Plumb Lines Anthology
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Dedicated to Katrina Plumb

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Preface

Welcome to the first Plumb Lines poetry anthology. Plumb Lines came about through a partnership between the Plumb family and Lapidus International to support the work of writing groups and to give recognition to emerging writers with shared experiences.

The Plumb family wanted to commemorate the life of their sister, Katrina, who died in 2021. Katrina was a tireless campaigner who encouraged the expression of voices from all walks of life—especially beyond the mainstream. These voices can move us, entertain us, and inspire us in so many ways. It is important that they are heard.

The Plumb family desires to create a lasting legacy for Katrina. The purpose being to support the development of inclusive groups through the exploration of creative expression. Flight was chosen as the theme for the first anthology as it captures some of Katrina's essence, which is hard to put into words—a desire for freedom and refusal to be defined. The word can be interpreted in many ways allowing plenty of scope for creativity.

For our pilot anthology, we have partnered with three organizations from the Bristol area: Bristol Drugs Project (BDP), Diverse UK, and Misfits Theatre Company. All three of the supportive groups worked towards producing poems on the theme of flight.

More details about the work of the groups can be found in the coming pages as can information about the passionate champions of writing for wellbeing: Sophie Wilsdon and Fazey Alleyne from BDP, Sally Hare from Diverse UK, and Anita Karla Kelly from Misfits Theatre Company.

Our primary goals in creating this poetry anthology are to provide benefit to the writers and readers in Katrina's memory and to create a long-lasting legacy through subsequent projects. Lapidus International and the Plumb Lines project want to nurture partnerships with inclusive writing groups in Bristol and beyond to support writing for wellbeing in all its various forms.

There are numerous examples of how creating grassroots anthologies within existing writing for wellbeing communities is both affirming and empowering. Such anthologies provide a platform for individuals who want to be heard and share their experiences and perspectives.

We hope that you enjoy the writing contained herein. All of the contributors and group coordinators worked hard to produce affective writing on the theme. If you would like to support and/or join the groups then please reach out and get involved.

If you would like to join Lapidus International or support our work in other ways, please get in touch at info@lapidus.org.uk. We welcome researchers and facilitators of writing for wellbeing as well as writers in all stages of their career who find expressive writing beneficial in their own practice.

Writing helps people to understand themselves and others. Writing groups create reflective spaces where individuals can strive to improve self-expression and understanding. Both Lapidus and the Plumb family believe that these are essential skills and we wish to promote writing for wellbeing through this and future collaborative projects.

Jason Glover

Groups Co-ordinator for Lapidus International

Praise for Flight

People in recovery are often underestimated and stigmatised in today's society. The reality is that people with lived experience of drug and alcohol use are often uniquely creative thinkers who produce reflective and illuminating work. We are honoured to be included in this anthology.

**Sophie Wilsdon, Bristol Drugs Project
Creative Communities Co-ordinator**

As the concept of neurodiversity has become more widely understood and embraced, particularly over the past 10 years, society is starting properly to attend to the wealth of skills amongst neurodivergent people. One of the greatest areas of achievement has been within the arts. Autistic and neurodivergent people experience and see the world in ways that are sometimes missed by others. The fertile ground of neurodiversity has given us some incredible creative artists. The Diverse Creative Writers is one of Diverse UK's most successful, longstanding groups.

Andrew Powell, Chair of Trustees, Diverse UK

I think being part of a poetry group helps me express my creative side and poetic ability. Being a member of a poetry group makes me feel like a special part of the community, it helps me to show who I am and to have my voice heard.

**Liam Hudson, Poetry Group Member
and Contributor to Flight**

Foreword

Whoosh, swoosh and welcome to the first Plumb Lines anthology. From pigs to flamingos and airplanes to angels, this poetry collection bursts with energy as Bristol authors address the theme of flight in original and thought-provoking ways. Each poem is an open window to the space of sky.

You'll find trails of emotion and sharp observation as you are asked to '*grab hold of the air with your wings*', consider a lingering '*perfume in the sky*', contemplate the connection between singing and flying, and imagine how it might feel to be strapped to a '*parliament of owls*'. Let the images float over you, the sounds resonate, and your emotions stir.

Poetry, at its heart, is a conversation. It is the poet's unique way of speaking to the world, to themselves, and to us, their audience. This anthology voices environmental concerns and a longing for the wild; it contemplates evolution and, at times, takes us into the nitty-gritty of Bristol life.

Congratulations to all those who have been involved in this magnificent volume. Hopefully it's the first of many under the Lapidus Publishing imprint.

And special thanks to you, our readers. Thank you for embarking on this poetic journey with us. We believe there's something here for everyone.

Lucy and Mel
Co-chairs, Lapidus International

Contributors

**Eve Bates
Claire Brennan
Dan Bryan
CD
Martin Daniels
Jackie Edwards
Lottie Ferris
Beverley Gillespie
Alistair Gunn
Mark Hackwell
Deborah Harris
Rachael Hillier
Liam Hudson
Stuart Kelly
Tim Knight
Bill Loveridge
A.A.R. Nightingale
Beth Richards**

This project makes me feel like
a real poet, I feel famous. It's
important to feel heard.

Alistair Gunn

Flight

Deborah Harris

If I could fly, fly and flee,
Like a bumble bee,
To a place where I could somehow, properly be me.
Free from anxiety,
Somewhere I could fit, to a tee.
I'd be an owl, or an eagle, or even a flea.
I'd be free from the weight of this big giant body.
When I got tired, I'd just land on somebody.
I'd be free of this kind of life,
Which sometimes feels like Borstal.
So I'd fly to the best of restaurants
And have a taste of every tasty morsel.
I'd never be stuck, for what to do,
Because if I ever got trapped indoors,
I'd fly through a flue.

Water and Air

Jackie Edwards

Underwater.

Our ancestors moved in three dimensions.

But when we crawled out of the water onto the land we
were restricted to just two.

Like game pieces,

We could move forward and backward, side to side,
but

never leave the board.

We could no longer escape upwards into the empty sky.

The air was too thin to lift us. We could no longer “swim”.

A whole plane of existence

Vacant,

Unused.

Lost to us.

Until the insects gained their wings,

And could move through the air like fish moved
through
water.

For millions of years, they had the sky to themselves.

Because what was the probability such a miracle could
happen again?

But happen again it did.

Reptiles learnt to fly.

They were followed by the birds. Then long after a
single group of mammals.

Four times flight evolved.

Four different wing structures.

Four different solutions to the same problem:

How could flimsy air hold up something so big?

It seems magical, but it was inevitable.

The atmosphere is just another ocean.

And just as those with fins use the water,

Those with wings make use of the sky.

I Would Strap a Parliament of Owls to Me

Claire Brennan

I would strap a parliament of owls on to me
And fly towards Mr Sun and Mrs Moon,
Then the owls start to say to me Twit Twoo.
Because they would like to build a nest on top of the
roof of my home.

I would strap a flamboyance of flamingos on to me
And then I and they would move from the west country
All the way to up north in the UK
By flying and all of a sudden land
In one city and so to a place where you will find a
theme park

Waiting to Fly

Mark Hackwell

Sitting on the runway, waiting to fly
Got my Bible here to help me get by.
I really don't mean to make a fuss
But I'd rather be on a Bristol bus ...

Our driver who lives in Avon
Harry be his name
Thy Kingsdown come, thy Bishopston
In Bath as it is in Avon.

Give us this day our daily Bed–minster
And forgive us our bus passes as we forgive those
With a bus pass against us.
And lead us not into Temple Meads Station
But deliver us from Eastville.

For thine is the Kingsdown
The Barrow and the Gurney
For Ever and Ever
Downend ... Cheers drive

Airplane

Beth Richards

Airplane airplane, up

In the sky

Rising over the horizon

Pollution in the air

Let's find another solution

Animals are dying

Nature is crying

Everyone should be trying to stop global warming

Flight

Martin Daniels

Flight of an angel, soaring high,

Through the clear blue sky.

Flight of an angel, soaring high,

Through the clear blue sky.

An angel takes flight in the midnight sky,

Wings of shimmering silver, soaring high.

Guided by starlight, a celestial grace,

Dancing through clouds and a heavenly embrace.

Through the whispers of the night, the angel glides,

A messenger of peace, with love that abides.

Leaving trails of stardust in its wake,

A vision of beauty, for all hearts to partake.

Ipsi the Chicken

Lottie Ferris

The Chicken was called Ipsi. She sat in the potato patch and looked at the crow on the fence.

‘Oh Edwick—tell me about the flight thing again,’ Ipsi said.

‘Well, when we get older we just get to grab hold of the air with our wings, and pull ourself up into sky. Then you can climb around all high up looking down at things being small. That’s flying. Dad says it’s hard work though.’

‘So cool. I can’t wait!’

‘Me neither!’ responded Edwick excitedly.

Years passed—Edwick flew but Ipsi couldn’t. She had been determined, but though now given up, her heart continued to hold a little dream of flight.

Many lifetimes in the future, a chick opened her eyes for the first time.

The chick was just about seven days old. Her eyelids had been fused together for far too long, but now finally open, her eyesight was apparently normal.

The first thing she saw was a bird sitting on a fence. It crowed and flew away.

This sight of the rooster’s flight awoke a memory in her that proved her soul was much older.

Ipsi (for the chick was she) was overwhelmed. She ran away as fast as she could.

As she ran along, her life continued to flood back, and Ipsi paid no attention to her surroundings. I did, though:

A roofed garden, on top of a tall conical building, almost as big as a cathedral. Mostly surrounding the building were green sloping hill-lands, although part of the view was blocked by a massive billboard (*Jacob Paz Iqbal for Martian Co-President!* faded letters proclaimed). To the building's east was an abrupt cliff-drop.

Ipsi skittered off the eastern edge.

The speed of descent was slow.

Ipsi could see a green expanse (woodland?) rushing up from below, and, not wanting to die, she gave flight a final attempt.

The greenery slowed its approach, a mild wind hovering around Ipsi's firmly flapping wings.

Ipsi flew, filled with triumph and delight, chirping ecstatically. Her dream now reached, the hen flew until her young wings were exhausted.

Flight

Stuart Kelly

Yeah yeah, just wanna get higher,
Up above the clouds, freedom, desire,
The air up there is a purifier,
Down below, I can hear the town crier
From heaven straight to hell-fire
Rise from the ashes, from the phoenix retire,
Rejoice in the angelic chords of the choir.

Freedom

Liam Hudson

I'm flying to freedom

I'm happy and calm

I'm just a little bird, but I've got a kind heart

I don't go through clouds and they won't break apart

My wings are tiny and I want to be free

And when I am free

Just the sky and me

Propane

Eve Bates

Throw it over board
The burner is brass
Horizon grows broad

Throw it over board
The bags weigh it down
Throw it over board
My friend moved abroad

Throw it over board
The up all nights
The pills

Throw it over board
My 10Ks, roleplays
The flame flares
The wind bangs
Throw it over board

My name
Opportunities
Throw it over board

My laugh
Heavy lunch
Throw it over board

My fashion sense
My hair
Throw it over board

My dad's moustache
Trainspotted smiles
Cause of death
Throw it over board

My friend's face
My youth
Throw it over board
I'd like that one back actually
Throw it over board

The only fire that thins air,
colds
Throw it over board
The moon fuels winds
Which are my breath
Throw it over board

Fingers

Frozen

To the rim

Throw it over board

Cradle

Crayon

Throw it over board

My silence

My speech

My silence again

Throw it over board

My book

My life

My footprint

Throw it over board

Each one

A version number

Gone

I will never stop climbing

Flight

Bill Loveridge

Flying is always on my mind

Be brave

I'm doing a nosedive!

Whoooooooooosh

Through the air like jelly blancmange

Birds watching with a fright

With delight when job's done

So be brave bird!

Whoooooooooosh is natural to me

The Night Is Black and the Sky Is Clear

A.A.R. Nightingale

Nine, ten, eleven p.m.

The night is black and the sky is clear.

All is well, and the children can dream.

The streets are silent, and the buildings can sleep.

Up, up, up, up, looking up at the sky,
there's nothing up there.

Everyone is safe, and they all dream the pleasant dream.

Twelve, one, two a.m.

The night is still black and the sky is still clear.

Doesn't look like there's going to be anyone up there.

Wait, wait, wait, wait! There is something flying up there.

Sound the alarms and call the guards,
there's a plane up there!

Hide! Hide! Hide! Hide! Wait until it goes away.

Wait, wait, wait, wait! There's something going up
there.

There's something else flying up there
and they are not alone!

The night is black, the sky is no longer clear!

There are a whole lot of them now!

Run! Run! Run! Run! To the shelters now!
For the blitz is coming!

Three, four, five a.m. The bombs have stopped
and the skies are clear again.

The streets are silent again, but buildings are no longer
sleeping, they are screaming!

Fire! Fire! Fire! Fire! They shouted. The planes may
be gone, but the pleasant dream has ended.

The trucks arrived, and the flames were put out,
but the dreams were still gone.

Six, seven, eight a.m. and for the rest of the day.
The night was gone, and the sky was still clear.

Dig, dig, dig, dig. There was a lot to rebuild,
and a lot of graves for the bodies to go.

It will be nighttime soon, and the whole nightmare
will all start once again.

Nine, ten, eleven p.m. The night is black
and the sky is clear.

All is well, and the children can dream.

The Stars Alight

CD

I look outside, the stars alight,
With crystal wings, I want to fly.
My heart has wings and I take flight,
Over the ocean, the night bright.
With glowing stars, my path far,
The door ajar, the window open,
And I'm hoping for something better,
Forgetting my worries, my pain and all that I've gained
Is freedom, dreaming of love.

Twisty Turner Powerful

Rachael Hillier

I am twisty turner strong

I am powerful strong

I am rocket fire gases plane

I am colourful

I am flame sounds

I am strong smoker fire popping

I am very powerful

Flight Number One

Beverley Gillespie

Flying like an eagle in the air I go.
Freedom from my troubled life.
Through the shining bright radiant sun.
Soft delicate clouds playing hide and seek.
Skipping from planet to planet.
Stars dancing and laughing as they go by.

Leaving behind the aroma of the perfume in the sky.
Please let me stay.
I belong here in the sky.

Suddenly she plummeted from a height.
Bang! Crash! Splash!
Everything went off like fireworks.
As I floated through the air.

I Am Flying

Dan Bryan

I am between the ocean and the waves.

I am alive, the weight lifted off my shoulders

I am the speed of lightning

I soar like an eagle or a kingfisher going backwards.

I am swimming, I think I am flying.

Singing *I Believe I Can Fly* with my school choir
takes me above the clouds.

Flight Number Two

Beverley Gillespie

Wow! Amazing! What is it?
Bright vibrant lights shining from corner to corner.
Slim, slender and massive.
If only I could touch it.
Taste it. Hold it.

My heart skips and jumps.
I could hardly breathe.
What is it?

She bounced, she danced from side to side.
She plummeted from a height.
Bang! Crash! Splash!
Everything went off like fireworks.
As I floated through the air.
If only I knew where I was going.

I am all puffed out.
When will I get there?
Today or tomorrow.
Please make it soon.

Through the scanner I went.

If only they had listened.

When I told them I had a metal hip.

Pigs in the Sky

Tim Knight

I am in the sky and look!
There's a pig.
Not a small one,
but no, it's very big.
I am thinking about that one line
where pigs fly,
But they can't,
not even way up high.
So why is there a pig
away from the ground?
Perhaps it got lonely
since nobody is around.
This pig loves it up here,
Says it's fun,
I am worried it will get roasted,
by the sun.
The pig wants to stay,
in one place,
I noticed it's wearing shoes,
but with no lace.

I'm worried,
I can't get the pig down,
so I grabbed it and flew off,
across the town.

Up We Go

Beth Richards

Up we go—swoosh!

The sky to me is the place to be

Floating, being free

I'm full of glee

Making shapes in the sky

Building a nice, soft cloud pie

I Am Flying

Rachael Hillier

I am sailing across the sea
I fly over the stormy waters
I am flying across the ocean
I am flying passing high clouds
to be with you to be free
Flying up the sky
I'm sitting down on the clouds
Can you hear me can you hear me
Fly through the dark night
Far away
Fly home again

Acknowledgements

Our deepest gratitude goes to the Plumb family.

Thanks to all the poets and facilitators who participated in this inaugural Plumb Lines project from Bristol Drugs Project, Diverse UK, and Misfits Theatre Company.

Thank you to Jason Glover, Kate Poll, Rick Wilson, Gina Beach and all of the Lapidus International Directors including the chairs Mel and Lucy, who helped bring this project to life.

About the Editor

Regina Beach is a disabled poet and essayist. Originally from the American midwest, she now calls the U.K. home. She is delighted to serve as the inaugural Editor-in-Chief of the Plumb Lines projects. Her writing has appeared in *Global Poemic*, *Boldly Mental*, *The Rail*, *Haiku by You*, *Five Minutes*, *Visual Verse*, *The Horror Tree*, and *Disoriented* among others. She is the founder of the literary magazine *Lesions | Art + Words*, which features the work of people living with chronic health conditions. Regina hosts Writers' Hour for the London Writers' Salon and is the editor of the Salon's *Writing in Community* anthology. She was an assistant editor of the inaugural *Stafford Challenge Anthology* and designer for *From Where I Sit: An Anthology from the Write to Heal Program*. She facilitates writing and creativity workshops for the MS-UK charity and is the producer of the *Living Well with MS* podcast.

Read more of Regina's writing at reginagbeach.com.

About the Artist

Cathy May (VIVA LA MAY) is a Bristol-based visual artist whose work blends single-line drawing, expressive painting, and bold use of colour to create emotive illustrations and paintings. Working in mixed media, she explores themes of fragility, strength, and belonging, inspired by traditional tattoo, anatomical, and botanical motifs.

The cover image *Paper Birds* was created using acrylic paint and ink. It has been exhibited in shows in Merthyr Tydfil, Cardiff, and Bristol.

Originally from Cheltenham, Cathy studied art and design at college and events management at university before working in arts coordination, community engagement, and charitable projects across the UK delivering and facilitating arts-for-wellbeing and social inclusion projects.

Her practice is rooted in personal healing and connection, reflecting her own lived experiences with health, resilience, and empowerment. Alongside her solo portfolio, Cathy has contributed to community arts and wellbeing projects across the U.K., including The Talking Shop (Omidaze Productions), Trinity Arts, Herbalists Without Borders, and The Brick Project. Her work seeks to celebrate the connections between people, nature, and place.

Visit linktr.ee/VivaLaMay to learn more about her work.

About Lapidus International

Lapidus International's aim is to provide a welcoming environment to explore and celebrate the transformative power of writing. We are passionate about developing a community that believes in using the power of words to make a difference.

We know that writing endures as a way to express suffering, joy, healing, and belonging in the intersection of personal circumstances and social conditions.

Through practice, research, publishing, and partnerships, we recognise words and writing as an accessible force for wellbeing, activism, and therapy.

Our membership reflects the voices of all communities, including those who have been discounted, prohibited, displaced, and underserved.

Everything we offer is designed to enhance professional and personal development. Lapidus International links experienced practitioners and those just starting out to the information and networks they need.

In these times of global upheaval, where words can be debased, Lapidus International will not compromise.

We are actively working to ensure that we welcome all communities. Lapidus membership includes practitioners working in education, health, community, voluntary, public, and private sectors. The Lapidus Magazine and LIRIC Journal provide insights into the activities of writers, poets, and facilitators working in diverse settings such as schools, hospitals, and prisons. They also highlight the ways in which writing contributes to the wellbeing of individuals, groups, and communities.

Lapidus welcomes and supports writers, poets, and anyone passionate about writing for wellbeing. We have a wealth of resources and guides that can help even complete beginners to find a therapeutic outlet through writing.

Lapidus is governed by a board of directors who are supported by a part-time team of administrative staff.

Through our membership we offer a range of benefits including:

- Events which encourage members to expand and develop their creative process
- Access to written resources from a range of individuals and groups
- Personal development opportunities to help develop skills and business
- A biannual magazine
- Members-only social media groups to share thoughts and develop connections
- The option to join regional groups and connect with other writers and practitioners

Learn more at lapidus.org.uk

About Bristol Drugs Project's Lyrically Lifted

Sophie Wilsdon, Creative Communities Co-ordinator

Lyrically Lifted was a lyric-writing and freestyling group that ran at Bristol Drugs Project (BDP) for around a year in 2023-24. It was part of BDP's Creative Communities, a unique program of weekly creative groups for adults affected by drug or alcohol use.

Lyrically Lifted was conceived and delivered entirely by Fazezy Alleyne, as part of her Drug and Alcohol Traineeship at BDP. Through her own lived experience of drug and alcohol use, plus a lifetime of experience of lyric making and performing, she created a unique group that fused and connected the histories of spoken word, performance poetry, hip hop, and the wider poetry landscape. Participants explored lyrics' impact and importance for people who've experienced multiple disadvantages across history.

"Calling all MCs, poets, rappers, and hip hop heads. We want your liveliest most legendary lyrics. Come along to a meeting of styles, writing, and performing. UP FOR A CYPHER?"

The group were keen to take part in the Plumb Lines anthology project and spent several sessions working on poems about the theme of flight. The theme resonated with narratives and ideas already present in the group around addiction, journeys to and from self, home, and seeking escape.

Creative Communities groups are led by experienced arts practitioners alongside drug workers and volunteers, building positive relationships, breaking

through stigma, developing work and social skills, and creating a vital, life-affirming sense of community.

Creative Communities began in 2014 with the forming of Rising Voices choir, and now also includes Bristol Recovery Orchestra (in partnership with Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra), Oi Polloi (in partnership with Bristol Old Vic), a Beginners' Music group (in partnership with Changing Tunes), and a Move on Music group (with Trinity Arts). Lyrically Lifted led BDP to recognise the need for more lyric-writing groups, which we have since brought into our programme through Hip Hop Garden.

We are proud of the relationships we've built with people in recovery over the last 10 years, and also with our partners, without whom we couldn't do what we do.

Bristol Drugs Project is a charity that has been providing harm reduction and treatment services for people seeking support with their relationship to drugs and/or alcohol since 1986.

Learn more at bdp.org.uk

About Diverse UK's Creative Writing Group

Sally Hare, Facilitator

The story of the Diverse UK creative writing group, for adults who identify as autistic, starts in autumn 2016. Andrew Powell was in the process of establishing what would become Diverse UK. The idea for a creative writing group came from service users with whom he was working who enjoyed expressing themselves through writing.

Founding facilitator Sally Hare came on board in response to Andrew's call-out for volunteers, and the first meeting of the group was held in Studio 45 ... the oldest nightclub in Bristol. The group's inaugural meeting was held in a sticky-floored, disco-lit room at the back of the club where nobody could really see what they were writing! Lights flashed and there was distant dance music playing—not the best setting for those with hypersensitivity to their surroundings. Despite this, the group instantly felt like a supportive and safe space and had a fantastic energy from the outset. Several of those first few attendees have remained members ever since.

The group promptly relocated to the more appropriate Central Library in 2017 and Asha Sahni came on board as the group's co-facilitator. It has had a steady membership since, attracting committed writers who come to find a creative space, to share prompts, or use the time to pursue their own projects in the company of like-minded souls once a month. The group size is deliberately kept small so members have an opportunity to feel part of a regular club, and have time

and space to share their work with the group if they choose.

In 2018 the group had to move from the Central Library and found its current home in Bishopston Library. Thanks to Zoom, the group survived lockdown, and when Asha stepped down in 2022, the group opted to operate a rolling list of volunteer co-facilitators who take turns sharing writing prompts and hosting feedback sessions.

As a group we've managed to create something very special over the years—a safe, welcoming space for everyone to share their creativity, focus on writing, experiment, and just be who we are that day. We hosted the 'Landscapes' event for the Bristol Festival of Literature in 2020, where our members showcased their writing, finding many ways to interpret the deliberately loose theme. We also displayed a selection of pieces in the CREATE Centre café from 2022, and have recently produced our first anthology, *Diverse Minds*, which was launched in Bishopston Library in December 2024.

The group has been full for some time now, operating a waiting list which is evergrowing as we tend to retain members. To address this, we have now established a second writing group facilitated by one of our current group members, and are looking forward to celebrating our tenth anniversary in style in 2026!

Learn more at diverseuk.org

About Misfits Theatre Company's Poetry Group

Anita Karly Kelly, Facilitator

Misfits Theatre Company UK is a unique theatre and social group, led by people with learning disabilities (PWLD). Our mission is to improve the life opportunities and aspirations of PWLD, preventing social exclusion of PWLD and challenging perceptions through creative activities. The poetry group was set up by Anita Karla Kelly, a playwright, poet, writer, and socially engaged artist. Anita set up the poetry group up in September 2016. She is committed to supporting people from marginalised communities to speak out.

The Misfits Theatre began in 1997 as Silent Voices and was based at ACTA Community Theatre around 2002. We branched out to Hamilton House in 2007 and moved to St Paul's Learning Centre in 2023. Discovering that people loved writing and expressing themselves through words, we now have an ongoing poetry group. Having a safe and supported space for members to say whatever they want and the words being valued is freeing and healing.

We like to go out, visit different places, and perform our poetry all over Bristol. We also have exhibitions and make films. Members create poignant, funny, powerful work showcasing their unique perspectives. We have performed at Bristol Central Library, Bristol Beacon, Ardagh Centre, exhibited work in Southmead Hospital, and collaboratively showcased at events such as International Women's Day and Bristol Community Festival.

One of our favourite projects was linking up with Peoples Republic of Stokes Croft (PRSC) and writing poetry around identity and space. We cleaned a tunnel in the Bear Pit in the centre of Bristol and had our poems printed up on massive posters. The poems were then exhibited in a tunnel in the Bear Pit which linked the homeless community and the learning disabled community. The project broke down barriers and created a real dialogue—this is why we write.

The Plumb Lines project about flight inspired the group to think about being free. Sometimes having a learning disability can feel like being trapped; expressing ourselves and being heard can make us feel free like flying.

Sometimes we want to talk about serious things like our disabilities or the world around us, other times we like to make people laugh and think about the things we love.

Learn more at misfitstheatre.com

Lapidus International Board of Directors

Mel Perry, Co-chair

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Alison Cable, Co-editor of Lapidus Magazine

Peter Emelone

Get Involved with Lapidus

Members of Lapidus International receive a complementary Lapidus Magazine subscription and may contribute their own poetry and/or articles for upcoming issues. Members are also invited to the Lapidus Living Research Community and to contribute to the Lapidus International Research and Innovation Community (LIRIC) Journal. Attend events, advertise your offerings, and come along to the Creative Bridges Conference or the Summer Festival. All are welcome from hobby writers and budding poets to writing for wellbeing researchers and facilitators. We're also always looking for writing groups to be part of the next Plumb Lines project.

Get in touch at lapidus.org.uk/contact