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# The Bottle Imp

**Issue 12, November 2012**  
**New Publications: Fiction & Poetry**

## **The Girl on the Stairs**

by Louise Welsh  
*John Murray, 2012*

Jane and Petra have been together for six years and after deciding to have a child, they move to Petra's hometown, Berlin. But things do not quite go according to plan. Jane, at six months pregnant, finds herself increasingly isolated and preoccupied with the monuments and reminders of the Holocaust which echo around the city—imagining the horrors that happened in the spaces around her. She becomes uneasy in the apartment and conceives a dread of the derelict backhouse across the courtyard. She also begins to suspect their neighbour, Alban Mann, of sexually assaulting his daughter, and places a phone call to the police which holds more significance than she can ever have known ... You can read a review of *The Girl on the Stairs* on the Scots Whay Hae! website.

## **When the Devil Drives**

by Christopher Brookmyre  
*Little, Brown, 2012*

When private investigator Jasmine Sharp is hired to find Tessa Garrion, a young woman who has vanished without trace, it becomes increasingly clear that there are those who want her to stay that way. What begins as a simple search awakens a malevolence that has lain dormant for three decades, putting Jasmine in the crosshairs of those who would stop at nothing to keep their secrets buried. Uncovering a hidden history of sex, drugs, ritualism and murder, realises she may need a little help from dark places herself if she's going to get to the truth. But then needs must ...

## **The Overhaul**

by Kathleen Jamie  
*Pan Macmillan, 2012*

*The Overhaul* is Kathleen Jamie's first collection since the award-winning *The Tree House*, and it broadens her poetic range considerably. *The Overhaul* continues Jamie's lyric enquiry into the aspects of the world our rushing lives elide, and even threaten. Whether she is addressing birds or rivers, or the need to accept loss, or sometimes, the desire to escape our own lives, her work is earthy and rigorous, her language at once elemental and tender.

## **Elsewhere**

Various  
*Cargo Publishers & McSweeney's, 2012*  
*Elsewhere* is entirely new. *Elsewhere* is a world we dream of visiting. *Elsewhere* is all the places we have ever been. *Elsewhere* is *Here, There, Somewhere* and *Everywhere*. The *Elsewhere* collection brings together many of the most influential and acclaimed writers in the world today. In the four themed volumes of *Here, There, Somewhere* and *Everywhere*, these writers explore what it means to them to be elsewhere. *Elsewhere* was commissioned in 2010 by the Edinburgh International Book Festival, and its publication marks an innovative publishing and design collaboration between Glasgow-based publisher Cargo and US-based McSweeney's.

## **Laughing at the Clock: New and Selected Poems | Déanamh Gáire Ris A' Chloc: Dáin Ùra Agus Thaghte**

by Aonghas MacNeacail  
*Polygon, 2012*

Widely regarded as the foremost poet writing today in the Gaelic language, MacNeacail casts his eye on love, aging, memory, language, politics and landscape in this masterful bilingual collection. Demonstrating MacNeacail's usual tight mastery of form and beautifully controlled rhythm, this collection, published to mark the poet's seventieth birthday, is a celebration of the best of contemporary Scottish poetry.

### **The Heart Broke In**

by James Meek

*Canongate Books, 2012*

Bec Shepherd is a malaria researcher struggling to lead a good life. Ritchie, her reprobate brother, is a rock star turned TV producer. When Bec refuses an offer of marriage from a powerful newspaper editor and Ritchie's indiscretions catch up with him, brother and sister are forced to choose between loyalty and betrayal. *The Heart Broke In* is an old-fashioned story of modern times, a rich, ambitious family drama of love, death and money in the era of gene therapy and Internet exposes.

### **Second Lives: Tales From Two Cities**

Will Self, Terrance Hayes, Jackie Kay & others

*Cargo Publishing, 2012*

*Second Lives: Tales From Two Cities* is our beautiful new book edited by Rodge Glass and Jane Bernstein. Bringing together stories of cities by looking at two former industrial heartlands – Glasgow and Pittsburgh – the book explores how we live, work and create our cities through short stories, poetry, essays, photography, art and illustration. From sports to "fracking", from night-walks to urban ruins, *Second Lives* asks big questions about where and how we live. And those asking the questions include National Book Award winners Terrance Hayes and Gerry Stern, Man Booker Prize 2012 nominee Will Self, the Costa Prize shortlisted Jackie Kay and many, many more. With stunning colour photographs and paintings, some of the best writing you'll read this year, this is not a book to be missed. You can download a generous preview from *Second Lives* free. The file opens as a pdf.

### **Ragas and Reels: A Visual and Poetic Look at some New Scots**

by Bashabi Fraser

with photographs by Hermann Rodrigues

*Luath Press, 2012*

The intricate stories told in Rodrigues' portraits are matched by the rhythms and imagery in Fraser's poetry. From 'The Bangladeshi Gentleman' to 'Jura Whisky', this book offers an insight into the fusion of Eastern and Western cultures in today's Scotland. By peppering her poems with both Scots words and Indian words, Fraser demonstrates the bi-cultural nature of many of today's Scots.

### **As Far As I Can See**

by Eunice Buchanan

*Kettillonia, 2012*

Eunice Buchanan is a poet and prose writer, born and bred in Arbroath, who writes both in English and in the rich Angus Scots of her upbringing. Her work has been widely published and has received a number of awards. Now her first collection, full of humour, wit, sceptical inquiry and love of language itself, is published by Kettillonia. The poet Tom Leonard says of *As Far As I Can See*: "An always intelligent and very Scottish sceptical curiosity is wed to an obstinate love of language and the world it describes in this late flowering of work from Eunice Buchanan ... This is the work of a woman who has something to report from, and to ask of, her time in the world; and she has done both with wonderful skill."

### **Mo Said She Was Quirky**

by James Kelman

*Penguin, 2012*

In *Mo Said She Was Quirky* James Kelman, the Booker-prize winning author of *How late it was, how late*, tells the story of Helen—a sister, a mother, a daughter—a very ordinary young woman. Her boyfriend said she was quirky but it was more than that. Some things were important. You had to fight for them. Only Helen wasn't as strong as people thought. She tried to be but didn't always succeed. Nobody does, not all the time. Trust, love, relationships; parents, children, lovers; death, wealth and home. The ordinary stuff of life—but extraordinary too when you think about it. As Helen did, each waking hour, till that strangest of moments on the way home from work when this skinny down-at-heel guy crossed the road in front of her. Brian? Her long-lost brother? How could it be? But it was his shape, his very presence. Could it be? So begins this twenty-four hours in the life of this ordinary young woman, as ordinary, as unique, as each and every one of us. *Mo Said She Was Quirky*—but there's more, much more, to Helen than that.

## **In Another World: Among Europe's Dying villages**

By Tom Pow  
*Polygon, 2012*

In one of the great defining moments in human history, more people now live in cities than in rural areas, and the effects of this depopulation and the plummeting birthrate are being felt keenly throughout Europe, which has the fastest-declining population in the world. Tom Pow sets out to explore what this means in some of the most rapidly vanishing areas of Europe. From Spain to Russia, he uses the tools of his trade—travelogue, essay, story and poem—to make connections, not only with what he encounters in numerous dying villages, but to reflect on his own experiences of memory, identity and loss. *In Another World* is an open book: not an argument, but an invitation to remember, to reflect and to engage with one of the most significant social issues affecting Europe today.

## **Collected Poems 1954-1994: Alastair Mackie**

ed. Christopher Rush  
*Two Ravens Press, 2012*

Alastair Mackie (1925–1995) was a poet of the later Scottish Renaissance who wrote much of his original work in Scots, the language of his childhood. He also translated poetry from several languages (French, Italian, German and Russian) into Scots and wrote original work, periodically, in English. As well as being a supreme poetic technician, Mackie was both a powerful satirist and a shrewd observer of the times. He is credited with advancing Scots as a living literary language—Mackie adapted and developed the language to write about contemporary themes. Mackie was not a poet looking back at a historical tongue—he was a native speaker who used the raw power of his first language, a spoken language uncorrupted by use as the tool of any bureaucracy or political hierarchy. While Scots may be a challenge to present to an audience in its written form, Mackie's poetry when read by Scots speakers is a breathtaking reminder of the immediacy and power of a people's language, formed and adapted by historical and social circumstance.



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