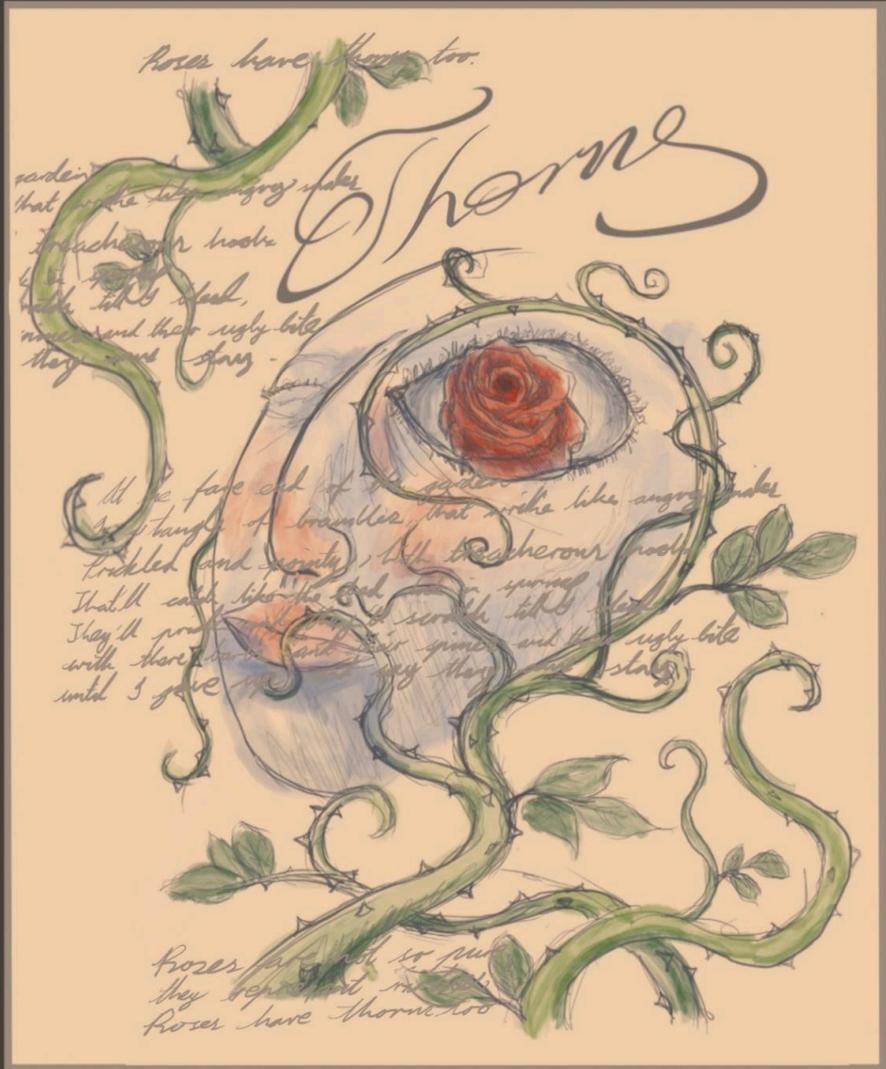


Epiphanies



DAVID
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Anthology 2022

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<i>Front cover image</i>	David Corcoran
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The theme for this year's Housman Verse Prize was 'epiphanies' – moments of profound realisation, often arising from something seemingly insignificant. James Joyce described his literary epiphanies as moments of 'sudden spiritual manifestation' in which his characters may sense the moment of epiphany without truly understanding it themselves.

The poems entered reflected on personal epiphanies large and small, from relationships to careers; on the yearning for an epiphany and on the courage required to respond to one when it comes.

The winning poem by Charlotte seems to me to capture a moment of mutual epiphany, but, as with all captivating writing, I am not completely sure.

We are indebted to David Corcoran and Katie Kan for their beautiful cover illustrations; I hope you enjoy the collection.

Mr Paul Dinnen
Head of English

Thorns

At the far end of the garden
Is a tangle of brambles that writhe like angry snakes.
Prickled and pointy, With treacherous hooks
That'll catch like the shed lock in spring.
And every time I try to clear it,
They'll prick and they'll scratch till I bleed,
with their barbs and their spines and their ugly bite,
until I give up and say they can stay.

It's a tiny patch at the back,
In the shade of the fence, and the shed,
And with the vegetable patch, the lawn, and the flowers
It's almost insignificant.
The rest of it all looks beautiful,
And I know I've worked so hard,
But it never changes that the brambles you see,
Mean you'll never appreciate the rest like me.

The rest of the garden is neat,
Trimmed grass and roses in bloom.
The evening sun is setting, and you're strolling up the lawn,
I think you really like it; you say the roses look divine,
Yet you persist with your comments,
About the brambles (of all the things)
And somehow the barbs feel sharper,
Now you've mentioned it again.

I don't know why they bother you,
It's not your garden, its mine,
Yes, they're imperfect and annoying at times,
But I can get along just fine.
They're out of the way, since I tamed and trimmed,
And I guess that they're alright to stay.
They matter to me; I've grown quite fond
But you won't listen anyway.

And what's just occurred to me I'd never have thought,
Because it seems such a funny thing
For all you seem to hate brambles,
their pricks and their tangles, that you protest at every turn.
At the end of the day, something you forget without fail,
Is that roses are not so pure.
For all that they represent virtue,
Roses have thorns too.

Charlotte James, LVI

– Housman Verse Prize Winner 2022

Epiphany

That moment of realisation,
The match has been lit, illuminating everything.
No longer unaware of the truth,
Revelation beyond measure.

How did you not know
Or recognise the unfamiliar feeling?
Why did it slip through the cracks,
Hiding from you in plain sight?

And what do you do now,
Now that you finally understand?
Is it best put aside for ever,
Or should it be clutched tightly?

Where will you journey,
If you do not let it go?
Could numerous questions be answered,
Changing the world as you knew it?

An epiphany is a strange thing,
It seizes you tight and plays at your mind.
You cannot resist succumbing to it,
Letting it fill you with emotion.

The shock as it suddenly appears:
Intrigue while it lingers on,
Despair when it eventually leaves you,
Until the next one fills your life again.

Whether it is love,
Or the most remarkable idea.
An epiphany will change you,
Usually for the better.

So, embrace this new sensation,
That thought only just arising.
Let it overtake your senses,
Give in to what is evidently so.

Do not fear this unknown,
For it comes to set you free.
Allow the new knowledge to lift you high,
Follow the epiphany wherever it may take you.

Charlotte Holden, UVI

(Untitled)

I cannot bear all of the authenticity or reality,
So I want some escape to that cold municipality
And to waste my days in the midst of ice-blue gales.
But would that be enough?

I want grand men and old houses
But perhaps the other way around
And I can barely feel the ground,
Graced with all the possibilities which do seem to rouse us.

I wish to reach for green eyes laced lightly
Round the top of my spine and
With glorious, gold chains and sapphires like the
Weighing of hands preaching for these gems.

And once I wanted a pen in my hand,
But where now do I stand?
In the sand? In cold, nightly deserts?
Or rather in the heights of my desire for white hill tops.

But can I face the possibility of the drop
And the acceleration down these
Fragile, powdered slopes which I'd somehow like to call home.
But am I even strong enough?

I wanted the reaching of skies
And the great vaulting of life but
The mirror's just lied and
I've lain down that pathetic idea and ceased to try.

I've desired to use my mouth and my voice
But the fear of speaking publicly just hasn't been a choice,
So I've lain that all to rest,
And in my mouth rests silence.

So now watch me tangled in thorns and
Imagine the rolling of green hills
With the falling of feathered wings
In celestial azure-skied paintings but
All life in that has cried and wept out like my sweet reprise.

But more sincerely I want leave.

I want Sweden and these
Bright white lights all at my feet and
The reflections of blue and green
From those arcs of the sky at night -
Though I wish it not to come,
But I want myself to run and freeze.

So let me polish away these icy hoards
As I climb aboard some unfamiliar
Tin capsule whilst I'm bored.
For it is the freezing of
Life and the freeze up of wives -

Of which the latter I won't ever be.
For I would like to escape to that
Cold-hearted municipality,
In the northern country then settle
Utterly disguised but alive, unrecognised.

So a Stockholm flight to Östersund,
Then Luleå-bound like Marianne.

Choice

SATs, AEOs, GCSEs, A-Levels.
A man of letters with no more words
To turn to. Aimlessly wandering through tests
and grades and terms turning to years,
hoping the trials will reveal future's secret.
I wait for an epiphany as the choice of a career looms over.

Seb Bullock, UIV

An Epiphany of Epiphany

Here I sit bemused
Struggling for an epiphany of epiphanies
I must continue to write without clues

My eyes wander out of a window
Dreaming for a reason to procrastinate
Perhaps the dandelions which droop
Or the rain, which caused it to...
I must hurry, else I'll be late

Perhaps I will find my spark in history
For many great eureka's have come from it, you see.

Of course! Who else more fitting than Archimedes,
The Greek Jack of All Trades who coined 'Eureka'
An exclamation that can only be described as an epiphany

Regardless of if you have 'found' the solution to expose a
silver crown
Or an idea for some poem
Epiphany will always be a feeling
In a league of its own

Neel Agrawal, UIV

Buried Alive

The wonders science can create. Or nightmares. It's taken mankind many years to come to terms with their phobias, but even more to find the root cause of them. But we've finally done it. Only, as the news announcement floods my warm kitchen, the sizzling aromas of my dinner, cooking, surging along with my growing hunger, cold understanding overwhelms me from the last snippet of the news I heard. Putting down the utensils and going to sit on my sofa, I turn up the volume on the television, dread pooling in my gut. This was meant to be a good day in the scientific community. A celebration, even. But the only thing I felt was an immense sense of disgust. The anchors had the test subjects I'd come to learn so much about over the years on, talking about their experiences, to allow this new knowledge to be reached. All I wished for right now was to go back to not knowing, any thought of eating now long gone. Just listening to the results of the experiment I had lost years of my life to sent the hairs on my neck and arms bolt upright. Because we'd realised that phobias were caused by the way we died in our past lives. And I am claustrophobic.

Imogen Thomas, LVI

Wheels or Doors

Wheels or doors
A debate exposing everyone's flaws
Of course wheels are
Most axiomatically in cars
Yet a 5 or 3 door car makes all the difference
When arguing your preference
Are hinges wheels or
Doors windows
In this debate anything goes
What is it really?
A spirited debate
Similar to whether the ketchup you ate
Was kept in the fridge or the cupboard
Oh look two more doors
But is a cupboard a door
Or a cog a wheel
Let us forget this spiel
It is really an occurrence
Quite regular, which
Reveals our lack of tolerance
A way to divide
And stick with those like of mind
Though mild
It is seen even in a child
The answers do not matter
Only the fact that they scatter

Nell Stone, UVI

at the far end of the
garden is a tangled
brambly. That will be like
angry snakes Prickled and
poisnty, with treacherous hooks
that'll catch like the shed lock
in spring and everytime I try to
clear it, the brambles they'll
sawd their spines and their harsh
hides until I can't and they rugly
they can stay. I say
at the back. Every patch
in the shade of the barn, and
the shed, and with the vegetable
patch, the lawn, and the flower
It's almost insignificant

epiphany