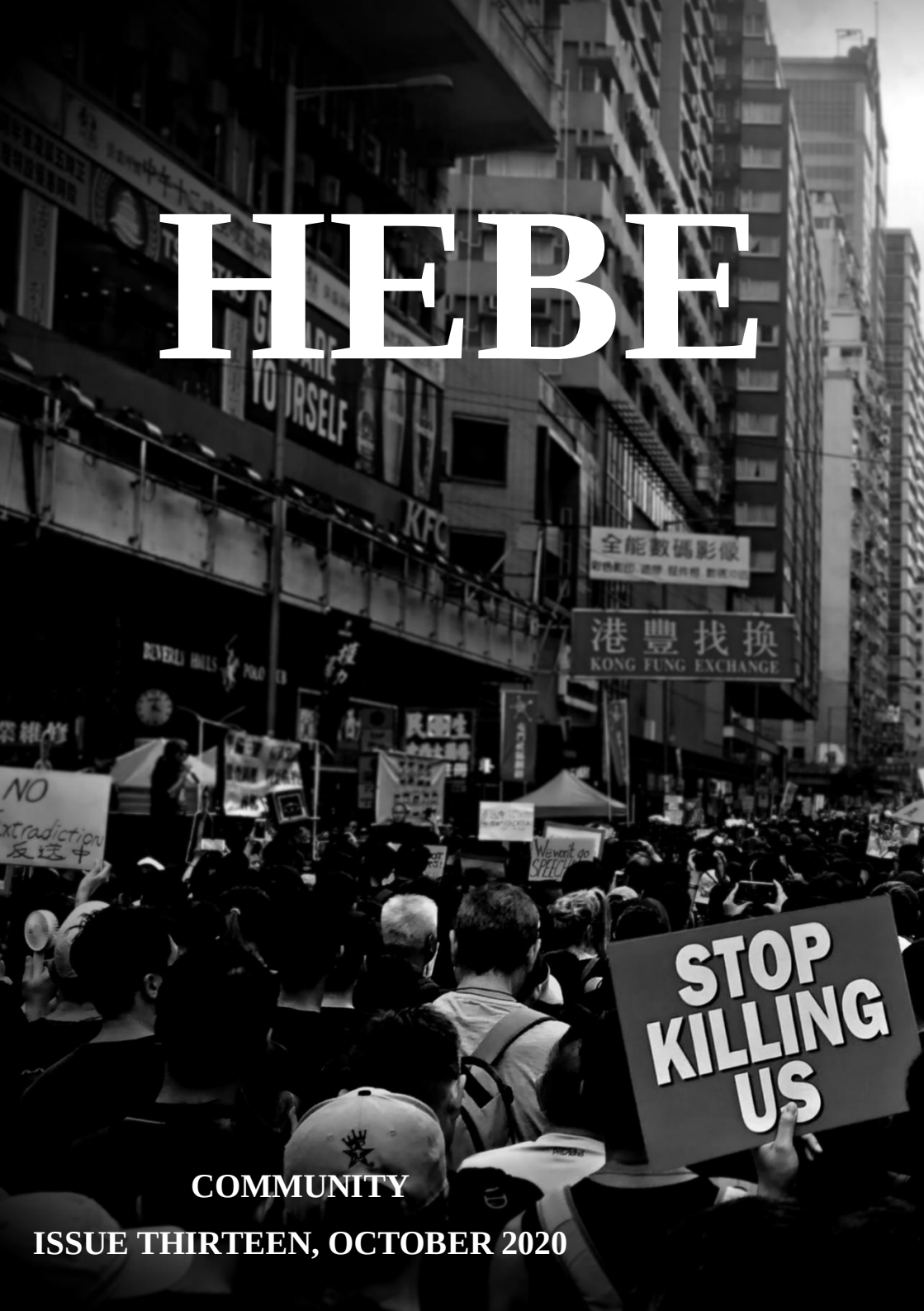
# HEBE




**COMMUNITY**

**ISSUE THIRTEEN, OCTOBER 2020**

**Front cover photograph: *Strength in Numbers* by 17 year-old Jasmine Shek**

I'm currently a rising senior at an international school in Hong Kong. My photography and writing work revolves mainly around community, culture and current issues.

With everything going on in the world right now, it is vital that we stick together as one big community to get through such rough and unprecedented times. Whether it's supporting the Black Lives Matter movement, raising awareness about the crisis in Yemen, surviving COVID-19 or fighting for your democracy and freedom (something especially personal to me), there will always be strength in numbers.

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**Editor's Note**

Welcome to HEBE. We are an online magazine that publishes the work of poets, photographers and illustrators aged 18 and under, and the theme for our thirteenth issue is 'community'.

I felt particularly honoured to edit the poetry for this issue, with each young writer crafting through verse a testament and deeply personal representation of their community. The compassion of the poetry was remarkable. It seemed that each poem said 'come on in and share the people, places, and ideas I hold closest to my heart'. The diversity through which the theme was interpreted proves that 'community' comes in many forms, and can stem from personal family, to spiritual locations, to the community of nature which encompasses all living things. Walker and Seekjaer describe those alienated from community with poignancy. Yet, this issue proves that when community breaks down new communities can be found, joined, and resurrected in the most unexpected places.

The collective voice of young people forms a defiant, intelligent, and important community. HEBE is one of few journals concentrated on celebrating and upholding such a community thorough solely publishing the work of those 18 and under. This makes it an important platform where the opinions of youth are not only heard but validated and celebrated.

Be sure to keep an eye out for our fourteenth issue, the theme for which is 'security'. Submissions for this fourteenth issue will close on the 30th of November, and the magazine will be released in January 2021. More details can be found on our website: www.hebepoetry.co.uk.

Amelie MJ, HEBE Editor

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**Quintessence of our community**

Our morning sings hymns as the bell in the temple chimes alongside
the *aazan* in the Holy hours of dawn light
We read myths of goddesses with auspicious weapons, of
*shakti* and the power of the third eye,
We read tales of bravery from
the valor of Sultana Razia and that of Rani Laxmibai
We muse upon divine Bible verses and
chant prayers to the Lord in school assemblies.

And in togetherness like the concurrence of all faiths
We see how the universe calls for
unity, like Din-I- Ilahi —
Like the idea of *Brahma* being the world's supreme soul
We dive deep into ecstasy - ecumenical empathy and though
We know
There's norming, storming, adjourning, forming –
still
We are bound here,
in this world, earthen, enmeshed as one.

We are bound in

The essence of a community –

Where nothing actually –

Simply nothing can mean

More than humanity.

S. Rupsha Mitra, 17

I am a student of Psychology from India. I love writing poetry and have a penchant for everything that is creative. My work can be found in literary magazines including Hebe Poetry Magazine, Bridge Ink and Indian Periodical.

**Jolly yellow fellow**

Exile in London, TV is my only friend.

Boris is doing the show today,

'From herd immunity to social-distancing'.

Ah, face masks! Finally.

Oh wait. No. It's face coverings.

To succeed, you need only two rules:

1. No same terminologies as the Communist. Duh.

2. Nothing good came from China.

Even if I can't tell apart Vietnamese from Chinese, it has to be South Korean.

Ay what can I say.

I've been wearing masks since February,

And I've been receiving disgusted looks since February.

Oh forgive me, quite a typo,

Since the first wave of Chinese immigrants to San Francisco in 1815.

Katrina Wang, 18

I am a Chinese-Canadian student who's currently unable to go home due to COVID-19 travel bans.

**The Gang Paradox**

His eyes offer me a question that I
Would never dare to spell out
In my head or with those stale
Alphabet noodles my mum stared at
Stomach rumbling as I ate yesterday

They offer me something I can't
Refuse and my mouth dries up
As I reply the wrong answer
A monosyllabic yes instead
Of
No

He places it in my hand
11 digits which leave a
Tattoo on my mind as they
Grate themselves into memory

And suddenly my black hoodie
Feels like a political statement
And my bike feels like a weapon

And that woman on the news
Seems like a horoscope into
A future where my mistakes
Cease to exist and I
Cease to be

And so the next night
When I come home from
My new dealings at the
Garden den on the estate
Laden down with packages
From people whose faces
Are pasted on the newspaper
Warranted for much more
Than I own
Or am worth

I avoid my mothers shock
As she sputters with questions
Silencing her with an eyebrow

I say I have some friends
Who will take care of us

Failing to mention

My risky business

But today we both eat noodles

Real fresh noodles.

Lauren Lisk, 14

I am just beginning to consider myself a poet - you can normally find me singing or making noise on the piano.

**Voyage**

The first night I heard a thunderstorm, I mistook it for an earthquake.
There was no way something so loud was made by the sky,
the sky just as soft as you and I.

My mother's plants uprooted as if someone had reached in,
pulled spindly vines from warm soil, tore them from comfort.

This was when I learned that the world

could let my roots breathe above ground,
take me from a situation I knew
like the back of your soft hands. Could that be why when growing up I
I mistook footsteps for the ground shaking, alone in all its trauma?

My friend's grandfather was uprooted at war,
and for months and years after, he'd always have a place at the dinner table.

It's as if he'd walk in at any second,
wipe his muddy shoes at the door, kiss his wife's bordered cheek
and dig into fresh tomato soup, into baked sourdough bread,

into any conversation they had begun to fill the empty chair at the table.

I have not gone to war and nor shall I return.
But when the earth curls up around you,
at what point does hope arrive, open its mouth,
and take its place at the table?

I had dreamt this day for months,
dreamt I- having loved the world so much-
would have not stood by as time
held a match against its throat.

Ugly things make the best fuel
swallowed whole in flames in the time it takes for food to hit the stomach.

It's true, you and I are more like a forest fire than a pretty picture,
the graveyard ghost and not the actual body.

The city you leave behind is still mine to love.

**Your Father's Taxi Route Takes Him Past a Mosque**

a minaret yawns  a call to prayer  your father
prays from his seat  says *Allah*  keep my family
safe  says *bismillah*  let there be light
car rumbles tirelessly  bloodline stretches
a row  of heads bowed  neat shoe stacks
his knees  ghost to this street  the parking lot
empties to linen scarves  mosque hats  a map
of sweat  upper lips trimmed  their hands
phantom  moustaches of '97  head hung a
shadow  of sagging trees  but *oh Allah*
*oh Allah*  let us belong  let us enter
hands a wall of  grief  let us remember
streets and streets  ketchup bottles
diner fries  not our smell
not counting  our blessings  to drive
home empty.

Iqra Naseem, 17

I'm a student currently studying for A-levels, who enjoys writing poetry in whatever spare time I get. My work is regularly inspired by themes of identity,

religion, family, culture and femininity, and by poets such as Warsan Shire and Fatimah Asghar. I usually spend my time posting online (on various sites), experimenting in the kitchen or listening to music.

Free Rights

Martha Iris Blue, 13

## THE COMMUNITY OF ANIMALS

this unsightly assembling of beasts happens nightly,
in a secret woodland palace, always out of human sight,
stealing among the gorse bushes,
slinking through shadowy trees,
silently sharing berries
squished gratefully into gaping mouths;
hungry animals echoing their regal wind-howl,
telling of future secrets yet unborn.

Underground,
little blind fox cubs
listen to the sounds above.

Tonight no human voices
will conjure up fear;
only friends surround
with sticky paws and swishy tails,
crumpled furs flashing in this most animal of places,
screeching around the woodlands
always out of sight,
in the darkest hollows of the night.

Time to choose the crown.

Aurora B.E. Blue, 11

I have been writing poetry for 5 years, I often write about unusual things, animals, stray cats and dreams. I try to incorporate nature into my artwork as much as I can, I am constantly searching for opportunities (or sometimes excuses!) to get out into nature. I have climbed Snowdon 5 times, Scarfell Pike twice, summited Tryfan via the North Side, I can't get enough mountain climbing in! I have won the Ledbury Poetry Festival for my age category two years running, won this year's Felix Denis Stratford Poetry Prize for my age category and also came 3rd place in this year's Chaucer Heritage Poetry Competition!

Early Monochrome Crowd: Too Many to be Lonely.

Aurora B.E. Blue, 11

Regenerating the Moors

Martha Iris Blue, 13

***The Redheaded Madman gets evicted by The Community***

Community

A common unity

But he is not common

In everything there is a silent sacrifice

We all gave something to this unity

So that one day we might wake up

And proudly say the words us and we

But this pathetic painter

This ear cutting freak

Who wanders round at night

Comes knocking at our doors

And then asks to paint our flowers.

But we did not water them for him

We watered them for us

So instead he goes to the hill

Reserved for young lovers

Who wish to bathe in starlight

But he is up there all alone

And we hear him laughing

As he takes a starry night

And turns it into a swirling mess

Far beyond anything even resembling astronomy

It is clear that he is no us and we must

Send him away

Let him steal the stars from someone else.

Niels Høffding Seekjær, 18

I am a student from Denmark. I really enjoy writing and reading poetry of all kinds. When I am not writing I mostly spend my time reading history or hiking.

**Scent**

She changes her shampoo the fifth week: A bottle from the
dollar store with an ingredients list half-gone,
It's vanilla but reeks of rose petals

*What vanilla smells like this?* She asks the cashier the sixth week
*You gon' buy anything? No need to*
*leave your house for nothin'.* The cashier eyes the customer behind her,
chewing gum
*Good day to you too.* When she passes the register,
she catches vanilla

On the tenth week, she visits a store two miles further and
drops the shampoo bottle before she could buy it
*That's the most expensive one here, miss.*
She leaves without paying but smells
her hand on the ride back

She forgets the week she shops online
The dollar store's website has a sale,
and she calls customer support
*Your call has been forwarded -*

The next day, she shops for gum.

**Voice**

Next to me, you have two:
The first one tickles my ear, warms
my cheek, snuggles in between cracks
of hardwood floorboards
It rises and falls with the swing of
your shoulders, elbows, fingers,
pauses before every one of my
stolen jokes, and after,
your voice is yours
It seeps into the air as waves of
chuckles,
forced yet not forced, clear yet
unclear
The second one is sedentary,
wooden spoons mixing water in
iron pots, trays of metal scraping against
a marble table
It's thunder, not you, that shakes ground
Losing track of the miles away,
your voice is yours and the
buzz of a life unknown

I yearn for a vestige,

the smallest tide of a world that's ours.

**Resemblance**

It never occurs when everyone (except your father and you)
distracts neighbor James with
curses in a language he hopes is
English,
never when your mother stops painting her nails because
your brother's exam paper hides everything but
bloody red polish,
never when everyone's outside, your grandmother's voice
slicing dead grass to reach houses other than old James'

It occurs when everyone (except your father and you)
plays proper house over Christmas with the artificial tree coated
in winter's warmth until your father undoes the falsities
with freezing hands until you crack under the weight of
Confucius, cursing filial piety for cursing docility
When you and father yell,
your pitches collide to match grandmother's glassy plea and
crystallize in the open window's winds, yet
when brother prepares rice for mother who's
feeding the family's flames that you, too, intend
on salvaging,

when mother places her hand on your cheek and flies over

your dimples as equal in depth as father's,

you can feel the familiarity of their voices, their breaths

matching yours.

Tina Huang, 16

I am a high school student living in the United States. Outside of writing, I enjoy painting with acrylics and trying out new cake recipes.

**Write Me Letters**

And note them by candlelight.

Like no birds-eye view knows us
by street lamps or lit screens.

Signatures folded in a blanket, sewn
beneath jogged letters, blotched ink,
spelling errors.

Vowels unravelled down letterboxes
and doormats watered by their threads.

Texts have scarce time for growth.

I'd rather trace mountains of rough
blends paved to my address, and
hear their snowed peaks rise
from monochrome reflection,
then lose you to the cordless air...

Left watching grey clouds scrolling
over temporary landscapes.
Let me drown instead by rain of your
words, tilt my head up to catch
droplets of slanted
exclamations.

Call it old-fashioned but you feel
closer on paper.
And a thousand online messages
can't reach my veins
the same way a
paper cut can.

Alice Brooker, 16

I love being outside in nature, especially during the autumn. Poetry has been a great way for me to engage more with the environment, and its images often prop up somewhere no matter what I'm writing!

**the cities came together …**

this year
in a choking, yolky yoking mass of daily smog,
a dense mulch expanding all over

leaving
us.
coughing
whilst sleeping

seeping our collective strength

Earth-
home
calls
like a dying child denied aid and air,

collective
body
bolts self within
a heaving chest,

rasping against shared turmoil

ageing an already uneasy population
locked within
copy-paste blocks of mock-harmony
attempting a dignified guise of tranquility

but no humility

what wisdom of punishment
calls for boundaries
between us to grow

like snowdrop bulbs buried between paving-slabs

now

we look disguised
together
not mutual nor sympathetic,
nor agreed

approval is assumed
while rebellion is attributed to disintegration

disintegration
to a depression of greynesses

motherland
friendship
once flourished
here

now
under microscopically-grained
mobile screens
we smoulder in conflict

no trust
no love
no values
disunity

external aggression

power
held in a single hand

no class
left
but a poison of status

learning that
fate and origin
belong to few

and teaching that

separation is best

opinion
without the mercy

to give life a chance

Martha Iris Blue, 13

I have been writing poetry since the age of four; writing poetry allows my thoughts to speak more clearly and gives room for my brain to breath, I think.

Anyway, for me, Art is a way to interpret or re-interpret colour, shade and texture, not just to copy what is in front of me. I particularly find inspiration in everyday people, often sketching them and what they are doing (so beware, I may sketch you!).

I am more at home in nature and therefore am naturally concerned about any issue surrounding climate distortion. Inspiration in the natural world comes thick and fast, meaning my poetry and art is often full of nature, I love rainy walks where I can think clearly and write better! I climb mountains almost as much as I write poetry and have even bagged a Munro!

The Ten Commandments

Martha Iris Blue, 13

**Paper Planes**

We huddled like geese,
squishing salty cheeks together in a fleshy flow of tears.
Tighter we pressed,
lengthy lights burdening our backs.
Soldering solid iron splinters.

The train trundled up its wayward tracks,
skirting past chimneys' saturated smoke.
Sunday cigar vapours stifling breathy sobs,
our hearts orchestrating departures.
The grumblings of a grappled goodbye.

Siamese twins, locked with a bolt,
we clung like chewing gum to purvey pavements.
Connected in an invisible,
Invincible
childhood timeline.

Ten years old,
picnicking and finger-licking with pleated jam butties,
buttered in a harshly velvet skin.

Thawing sweetened lips with gummy hands.

Fumbling and stringing our life's plans.

Haloing on the tips of red-roofed buses,

shouting,

'You'll never take us alive!'

Teetering on borders,

wind whirling wildly around these vocal athletes.

Arousing the deaf London streets.

Patchy.

Silent. Slipping into morphed looking glasses.

Paper plane memories.

Soaring like Shearwaters in strawberry skies,

clouded by our faint goodbyes.

Heidi Rolph-Stott, 18

I'm a writer, actor and creator from Staffordshire. I have been acting for many years which inspired me this year to begin writing my own words and create my own work, something that I have not looked back on! I am a member of The National Youth Theatre of Great Britain and am also a fashion model with Viva Models in London, Paris and Barcelona. However, this is the very first time that my writing has ever been published!

**Inosculation**

*- when outer layers of branches, roots or trees, in close proximity, rub together causing them to gradually fuse*

When we met, I was stunted,
you were just unsettled.
A weeping willow,
easily snapped in strong wind;

drawn to me, your source of water.
We grew together,
so I could crown.
You clung to me; I clung to you.

We became deep-rooted,
I knew you as you knew me.
I flourished; needy,
now nourished.

I cherish the times
we shook from laughter.
You became my supply,

but you needed water.

I grasped— green— for your light.
Thriving in each other's presence,
if twisted; tangled.
Before long, I lay uprooted,

seized by high winds:

ripped from my Eden;
or was I pollarded,
cleared away, removed?

I should have predicted
from the first waver:
you were not long-lived.

Soon, it will rain
on my shrivelled leaves.
They fall away.
Time gathers, trees re-flower.

**That Night**

20.20

Bananagrams

Round after round—

Nosebleed.

We take linguistic liberties; they talk.

We play another version,

Filling the table with sophisticated words.

We play another version; they talk.

21.33

Mug cakes.

Here are the mugs.

Where's the flour; sugar?

Orange extract? Here-

We fight over the bowl.

Tom, Mathew, Ben, Connor

Who is Connor?

Four mugs, nuke them.

Warm and gooey.

Sweet, but sickly. Orange.

Still, they talk.

23.56

To the room.

The call; the laughs; the bathroom.

Irish Snap. Feet.

Tipsy with tiredness, we talk.

1.40

Shall we stay?

Where are they? Still talking.

We need our things.

Jeans.

Off the phone, into a bed; cold.

1.59

She's back.

The talking stops.

2.00

Can we stay?

Beds, floor, couch?

We stay.

2.10

To the library.

Couches for seven,

If we sleep.

2.11

The mattress,

Down the stairs.

Still on the stairs.

Stuck on the stairs,

Laughing.

Did we wake them? No.

Sliding down the stairs.

2.13

Couches for all!

No, not anymore.

There are couches for three.

2.15

To the kitchen.

Tea for two,

Microwave—

Cheese, crackers, toast for five.

2.20

Back to your room,

Back you go.

'I'll check'

2.25

I return.

She is crying, she's writing.

Everything is fine.

She reads, she breathes.

No, she can't. Everything is fine.

Don't come in.

She laughs, she cries. Nosebleed.

She cries.

Everything is fine.

3.38

She sleeps; we sleep.

Couch, pillow, jeans;

No blanket.

6.45

She wakes.

7.08

I wake; she's cold

Still no blanket.

Use pillows, barricade windows.

Relocate. Pace.

7.30

We rise.

Shall we go back?

Rain, wind, cold.

Our own cabin in the woods.

Elena J Walker, 16

I was born in California and moved to England when I was 8 for my mom to pursue the MA followed by the PhD in creative writing. As a result, I have grown up surrounded by poetry and prose. Previously my poetry has been twice commended in the Ted Hughes Young Poets Award for which it also received a special mention. I take pride in being a fourth-generation writer and thoroughly enjoy poetry as a way to channel emotion into text.