



HEBE

SECURITY

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Front cover photographer

Amy Cahill, 18

I'm an aspiring writer from Wexford. I want to be remembered for my words and nothing else.

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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 of our fourteenth issue is 'security'.

The prompt 'security' for me immediately brings to mind one's personal safety and protection from external danger. This might mean shielding oneself from hurtful language, or staying put in a safe haven separate from physical harm. Editing the poems for issue fourteen really opened my mind to the notion of security being not only about 'keeping out' the bad, but also about 'keeping in' the good; a far more hopeful and constructive mode through which to think of the term. This issue reads as an important reminder that warmth and comfort can be irreplaceable mechanisms of defence and security.

I was struck by the array of poems written from a person perspective other than the poet's own; albeit this be a robin, or an animal-turned-item-of-clothing. This at once derailed the definition of 'security' as a protection of oneself and made for a deeply compassionate collection of poems that flag security as not only an individual right; or even a human right, but something that is deserved by all.

Such range of perspective is why it is vital that the creative input of young people is published and heard. As one of the few spaces dedicated to publishing the work of solely those 18 and under, HEBE is a testament to the spectacularly nuanced and diverse voice of today's youth.

Be sure to keep an eye out for our fifteenth issue, the theme for which is 'endings'. Submissions for this fifteenth issue will close on the 28th of February, and the magazine will be released in April 2021. More details can be found on our website: www.hebepoetry.co.uk.

Amelie MJ, HEBE Editor

Poets and their poetry

Nico Escalona

Polyester Blend P.5

Sophia Boyd

Security Nest P.7

Leo Kang

The end of the world begins in the eyes P.9

October Song P.13

Esme B. Blue

AUTUMN LEAVES HAVE NO CHOICE P.15

Cloth P.16

Divya Mehrish

Scrawl P.18

Full P.22

Yesterday P.26

Gráinne Condron

paler than a white lie P.29

Amaal Fawzi

A Razor Called Insecurity P.32

Aurora B. E. Blue

MURMURS P.34

... CALLED INSECURITY P.35

gone ... gran P.37

Illustrators and their illustrations

Martha Iris Blue

<i>Safety in Numbers</i>	P.8
<i>The World is Safe With Me!</i>	P.17
<i>Secure and After</i>	P.31

Polyester Blend

If I embrace you warm enough,
Forget
That I am half-animal and half-fake
And wear me
Until I am threadbare.
Look, I have made myself

Machine-washable for you.
Rinse me with fabric softener,

Tumble-dry me,
Hold me to your chest,
And whisper of my softness.
Forget that I was
Picked by callused hands
And spun by machines
And stained with sweat.
Because I am pristine now,
Cleaner than where
I was stripped from.

Look,
I have made myself soft for you.

Look,
I am silkier than cotton.

Look,
I am not wool; I will not scratch your skin.

Look,
I cannot complain like linen.

Stretch me over your shoulders,
Drape me over your body.
Let me shelter your skin.
Let me be soft for you,
And forget that I am from somewhere.

Nico Escalona, 17

I am currently studying in the Ateneo de Manila Senior High School in the Philippines. Other than writing, I compete in local and international debate tournaments. I like to write about all the things that could have been.

Security Nest

The nest from which I spring
that to which I wing
the depth at which I fall
I do not regret at all
the courage of my mother
a trait I cannot cover
will today be set to test
from the top of my warm nest
engulfed with maturity
I fear for my security
Homebound to the nest
after each venture, each quest
forever my security nest
built by the deft robin redbreast.

Sophia Boyd, 13

I am a Year 8 student from Richmond. I love creative writing and spending time with friends and family. The inspiration behind this poem is my own mother, and how she has built an incredible environment for me. I started attending an after school poetry club with my friends and came to really enjoy poetry and how expressive it can be.



Safety in Numbers by 13 year-old Martha Iris Blue

The end of the world begins in the eyes

The babies are first to go, here and then who-knows-where
Like a debonair wink, brief and beautiful as breath.
Fear not, my friends. The rest of us will follow soon enough, for

In that great oak behind the eyes, the seconds
Swell and sigh like gourds, freckled with buried verbs,
Daubed in daydreams:
See the crevasses left by the tears of things.
The oak sloughs them off, one by one.
They blow kisses as they trundle
To oblivion.

Next, the gambolling lightning is leashed,
Jarred, pickled, shelved for who-knows-whom.
There is a jangling within, somewhere a shout,

then calm.
We turn out the lights and lock ourselves behind us.

Thus begins the downward slide, as we're
Borne back softly through the bellies of our lives.

We swing by half-eaten hopes and
Half-eat them again while
Something sticky dribbles from our mouths,
Pulsing as lungs do:
I call it guilt, or prayer, or a promise, whatever that means.

The world is unwound, now.
Here we part ways, and that's okay:
There is time enough, now.

Some of you first must
Clamber through the gloaming, sifting
Those age-dazed jewels.
You'll wave by former friends,
Watch your children sprout hair then shed it again,
Watch them forget how to walk.
Then (and I don't mean to alarm you),
Your old loves will stagger to their feet and stretch,
Moult the old, thorny things,
Scrubbing till they blaze,
Till she'll never leave, till you'll be together, always.

Me? I am but young: I have little left to go.

I pack up my fears for the future.
My mother and I tug on
our wellies, trampling memories together -
I grip her hand with fingers that soften and shrink.

Then we shuffle out,
All of us, into bruising dusk.
Already the houses are gone.
The trees doff themselves to the abyss,
the mountains
curtsey and crumble,
the sky murmurs into the land, the seasons flare
Once and -
shatter -
And as the world ends, now,
and the oceans drain out,
- now
and the concrete is ground to soil
and the soil to -
embers

and as thought steals away on the wind –

all the graves open,

and out comes kindness.

October Song

Our mother is in blood-bloom.
She swaddles herself in patchwork,
Shivers and sighs,
And the season falls from her palms
Like a molten memory,
Into the jowls of the mad old air.

The mad old air stirs crabbily,
He huffs and puffs,
And out fly the flaxen and the mustard, the
Mottled apricot and moiling cream,
Clamours of cornflower yellow, gagging amber,
Reds that riot like feral thoughts. And the trees
Sneeze their fire, and the
Sea foam froths like beggars' mouths, and the bloomed blood
Scuds over the cobblestones.

The sun is setting. Still,
I feel him rattle the world, lightning in a jam jar,
Beast and boon.
Borne of parting ways, his ghosts shamble: they are sun stained.

Oh, how he rages!
How he rollicks and strafes, gnashes and bawls,
Bearing down upon us, and
You throw out your arms to greet him,
And you laugh.

I watch your hair flurry and your eyes shine,
I fold myself around you.
We listen then, just the two of us,
To the mad old air.
I think he's singing.

Leo Kang, 16

I'm currently tucked away in some dour Yorkshire town, subsisting entirely on Dylan Thomas, Fela Kuti, and esoteric teas. Having only a handful of years on this planet under my belt, I write to wring them for all they're worth.

AUTUMN LEAVES HAVE NO CHOICE

To be afraid
of falling down a waterfall
is the better choice

Cloth

is only cloth if that is what it is made of.

I'd like a hair brush as soft as cloth,
that is not jagged and rough.

And if only the wind was as gentle...

Snow, though soft, is never warm enough!
I wish it were as warm as cloth.

But mum's hugs are soft, gentle and
are as warm as cloth and they are made of love.

Esme B. Blue. 7

I really like to write poetry - I like looking for homonyms and word patterns and meaning patterns. I like also to write about wildlife.



The World is Safe With Me! by 13 year-old Martha Iris Blue

Scrawl

I feel safe in this space
 between my knees: the earth here
 is dense and black and viscous. Light
 rings out
 hard and cold in my
 undergrowth I am shielded by tired
 shade as maple crinkles green
 into the crusted part of elbows.
 Syrup is sticky only to
 tongues. I am telling bones and
 tendons and cartilage to
 harmonize
 into a weapon I know how to wield.
 Bodies should be
 creatures. In a drunken powerful
 mouth and stomach war. brawl,
 Why do we fight with ourselves
 when there is so much else
 to fight for, to fight
 against? I paint my body like a
 cavity.
 I am both
 I thirst to feed, hollow and decayed.
 fed. but I hunger not to be
 My body is tight
 I am telling myself. This is enough.
 The only time of day when skin stretches
 tight against pelvis is dawn—
 do we all wake up
 empty?
 Flat and stiff and ready.
 We are voids that cannot afford
 to be filled. We were raised
 knowing *nothing exists*
 in a vacuum, my child. I grew
 up being told that my body was I was
 only infantile. ever mother

to my own breasts. You see,
 we learn to love glassy clouds.
 mornings where breath foams into crescent
 We learn to love lips cracked
 by shallow wind. We learn to love what water
 leaves behind. The ocean digs its tears
 into sand
 so the only crying comes from those
 of us who are lost.
 When I am wet and wounded, I press
 is key nails into scabs and twist. Keratin
 of my blood as I tell to the doors my skin I love
 these raw pink insides.
 as the steaks I want to be as rare
 I chop and crush
 into between
 cubes teeth.
 My abdomen has learned
 to swell
 our wombs with my lunch
 implant inside to meant is bread daily if as
 to meant is bread daily if as

without permission. I warn my uterus
 never to open.
 I do not appreciate unwelcome guests.
 Perhaps I will regret this one day,
 mornings. My body means but I cherish my cold, flat more
 to me than the Full. Life
 within another should not emerge life. We should
 compost ourselves first—
 corpse buckling into
 corpse, quiet ribs will splinter
 into breath out of ash. flames. Spark My body is
 I must preserve precision right: the
 of nipples strung through lungs.
 I have through my own desire. always breathed Please
 know that this to consumption. figure is immune I was not
 born poor: I have only from. enough
 to be guzzled myself. of
 This frame is to feed I am afraid of
 Creation. And I am afraid that turns
 this body inside out,

bleeding
 to be hurt.
 this frame
 of mine
 so I refuse
 this form—
 an animal

out its own
 even though
 of
 is
 holding.
 untouched—
 not how to

I am yet
 I am afraid
 what painting
 capable of
 to sacrifice
 to create
 master,
 not yet.

protections
 And
 I know

Full

I have this memory of us in the ocean—
thick thighs rolling between the waves
a polka dot of sweet moonshine glinting
on my ruddy nose. Mommy must have

forgotten to spread it, forgotten to pale
me with cracked fingertips. She used
to laugh, then. Bouncing me on her
knee, she would squeeze the air out

of the hollow between round stomach
and tight rib cage and float me until
I learned that drowning could always
be a choice. Age was sweet to her,

then. Before I knew about glass,
about bottles dancing on bathroom
floors, about cold music tucked behind
closed doors. Those were the days

when I slept with hot eyes, when nights

were yellow, and wet. When twilight
creaked by, shallow and slippery and
slow as the swing on the old porch.

When sharp rivulets of crimson began
meandering down the rotting mirror,
time had already stretched my calves,
my fingers, my fear. Time had already

stretched her tears, stretched the darkness
in her hair to soft, gray wisps. Stretched
her laughter into long, low wails whispering
behind my curtains, scratching at my door.

If I thought hard enough, it sounded like
a prayer, hummed. The morning the air
smelled like cold marsh sweat, I saw
orange in the sky, saw the pink gumdrops

in orange plastic cylinders popping
a firework of *twist, whoop, roll, tumble,*
pop. Repeat. She drowned in her own
colors. I saw the glass in her eyes before

I saw the shard between fingers etching
a smirking Jack-O-Lantern into her arm,
peach pus glistening through those jagged
teeth. That was the last time I spoke to her,

then. My lips cold glass slashing the glorious
stillness of her steely-eyed silence. When I
sleep now, I'm hungry—skin of ached
stomach pulled tight against pelvis, against

unborn uterus. I am empty of mother.

I crave salt. The ocean. Soft, clean skin.

I plead into the thirsty chant of thrashing
waves to feel fingers on stomach, again.

I swear to let my mother reclaim my bones.

Body came from body. I know I am hers.

I scrunch my eyes as I feel through the
murkiness of half-night. With the kitchen

knife, I trace the scar I made in my mother.

I peel back the flap of skin, shiver as a blast

of warm, throaty air seeps into my neck.

I climb back into her stomach and nestle

into the swollen, tangled caves between

her ribs. I cradle her heart in my arms, rock

her thudding lullaby to sleep. As my roots

plant into her earth, I kiss her tears and I cry.

Yesterday

It's a Sunday morning in January just before Groundhog Day and I'm waiting for my body to strip itself of this cold shudder; this silence, without knowing what the sound of my voice tastes like when I go to sleep past midnight.

I have a habit of sleeping in the tomorrow and waking up in the today.
It has been years since I slept in the yesterday.

I imagine that when I dream, my mouth coats over in sticky honey. I am mummified in warm fluid, preserved resting corpse. I wonder how many of us die and are reborn in one night; how many of us rest into our graves.

My mother sleeps later now in the bed she reigns over, the bed my father forfeited after she filed for divorce. I only turn my lights off after the shards of yellow peeking out from the corners of her door disperse into the shallow

dust of our hallway. The dark used to terrorize me, the thick velvet of shadowed curtains swallowing me. I couldn't fall asleep without knowing where I was falling.

I have a habit of sleeping in the tomorrow and waking up in the today.
It has been years since I slept in the yesterday.

My mother tells me that I was born nameless. Before branding me,
she wanted to feel the thump of my dry pulse, watch the way my soft bones
bent between her fingertips. I only became something after emerging.

What is a butterfly before emerging from the chrysalis? Worm wrapped up
in a pocket of leaves, my brother used to squish warm bodies between his toes.
What if, before emerging, I was just an ache in a quiet uterus?

I have a habit of sleeping in the tomorrow and waking up in the today.
It has been years since I slept in the yesterday.

What if my mother's body had ejected me without warning, like a sliver of poison
too sweet, too tempting? Perhaps then I would have had a name without first
shrieking
into the light of day. Perhaps then I could have been buried with an etching on
stone

and my bald head in the earth. Perhaps then I could have been orphaned. I
wonder what

I might be if my mother had wanted to eject me without her body's permission.

I wonder what I might have been if I died just as I became life. I wonder how
many

mothers eject body from body just because they don't know how to name a part
of their body that they don't know how to know, a part of their body that
becomes its own

body just as soon as it emerges from a wounded chrysalis.

Divya Mehrish, 18

My work has been longlisted at the National Poetry Competition and commended by the Foyle Young Poets of the Year Award as well as the Scholastic Writing Awards. I have been recognized by the Columbia College Chicago's Young Authors Writing Competition, the Gannon University National High School Poetry Contest, the Arizona State Poetry Society Contest, the New York Browning Society Poetry Contest, and the UK Poetry Society. My work has been published in PANK, Ricochet Review, Blue Marble Review, Polyphony Lit, Tulane Review, Sienna Solstice, The R  apparition Journal, The Ephimiliar Journal, Sandcutters, and Amtrak's magazine The National, among others.

paler than a white lie

I etched that face into midnight clouds

Unveiled! Nimbostratus!

What a useless nuisance

Sun, quite pleased

in shallow relief

basks in the knowledge that light,

is beauty

or was it on the 16 bus?

Inching inland on a top-deck day

Took the low road, stooping heavenward

I feel the clouds,

Those light-filled clouds

Sometimes mum asks

“How is --?”

And I say

“fine.”

“just fine.”

I gazed as those clouds bled every colour

From that pale face, paler still
Vapid ode to a friendlier ghost than I
Drifted by on gloaming stratus
Swept by light and oozing guilt

To edge away from that epoch
Find fresh power in cumulus
The hush of sky
Grows ever restless
Babble turns to grit and spits its grey rain hard
I curse the sky
That ugly sky

Sometimes mum asks
“how is --?”
And I say
“fine.”
“just fine.”

Gráinne Condron, 17

I forget often forget that I enjoy writing poetry, but each time I remember is as good as the last.



Secure and After by 13 year-old Martha Iris Blue

A Razor Called Insecurity

The girl peers at herself in the dusty, cracked mirror-

A kaleidoscope of splintered black and beige

Fragmented through a glass splatter.

Today, a boy made fun of the thick dark hair on her top lip.

It made her cry.

But that didn't hurt as much as it's hurting now

Because it's one thing to have your security insulted

And another thing to make yourself the insecure.

She runs her finger over her peach fuzz-

Peach fuzz, her mum calls it, not moustache,

Like he did. She wonders if she's less of a girl now

That she's been called out for the moustache

That has sat so innocently above the soft pink flesh

For so long.

She runs a finger along bare arms;

Arms sewn with more fur, but this is thicker -

curly, even. She thought it made her soft and kept her warm

But now it spikes in ugly bristles -

Wait. Her legs. Hairier even than the boys legs

From the upper classes, the pasty white boys with the smooth cheeks,

Their follicles seeming incapable of producing the hair

That coats her body everywhere.
Her eyebrows- or is it eyebrow? It's not separated like
The other girls' eyebrows, there's just one of them.
She liked that her brows represented unity,
One-ness. She thinks she was wrong.
Is her nose too big? Too hooked? Like a witch, a hag?
Is her skin too tanned?
She slides her fingers over the tiny twin blades
Of the disposable plastic razor she found in her mother's bathroom
And wonders if it will make all her insecurities go away.
It doesn't.

Amaal Fawzi, 15

I'm an Iraqi Brit with a Lebanese soul and a lot to say about it. Writing for me is all about emotion - I hope I can convey that with what I do.

MURMURS

a blue haze

whispers

blue truths

singing

turns to

choking dreams

being choked

and thoughts mixed

exchanging secrets

happiness dances

on a shoal of leaves

but behind closed doors

words turn outwards

this is my security.

... CALLED INSECURITY

Allied-hatred
burned red
as we trusted, this year -
and lusted
after an ear-burner
called insecurity.

We knew sooner or later
we'd be an idolater
to great metal powers
put out in inelegant towers
called insecurity.

This year we're fed lies
as big as pork pies,
shouting cruelties
called insecurity.

Untruthfulness
is a common enough thing,
kindness as rare as a tiger's wing

called insecurity.

As sharp as a letter-opener,
as blunt as a stone,
our hope is dull as the bone
called insecurity.

gone ... gran

mum's gran

once here ... now there ... gone.

born in the sign of Aries, showers and April flowers to me:

Lent Lilies to you

I linger on things - fingering ~

your green-and-brown packets-of-cards wood-and-leather box, for instance –
wondering how many times you used the cards, though I know never with me:

I know they were well-used ... I see tarnished cards, some torn along worn
edges.

(Great-granddad had elephantine hands.) I sense ageing.

On the reverse of every card is an image of a Japanese Geisha playing music on a
Shamisen guitar: you've travelled well. I never went anywhere with you.

I touch also your pill-box, still with the last pill inside - I keep your delicate
golden chain in there now.

I see how your gold-plated American watch, whose strap was set to your thin
wrists, fits mine.

I cradle your cheap beaded-plastic-coloured necklaces, priceless to me in their
delicateness.

I wear the evidence of your never-idle fingers: you always knitting patchwork
blankets & jumpers: to be washed first and not worn with short sleeves *because
pure wool is rough.*

Perhaps you saw the patchwork jumper in me ...

This old M&S gift box of yours housed Royal Jelly Body products once
when new

but now keeps safe two clock-winding keys but no clock, a leaf of pure gold!, a
silver broach with navy-blue-semi-precious stones set within, a miniature gold
basket with little pearl fruits overflowing ... and

a French necklace, silver-framed with an enamel inlay, the pastoral scene of a
young man and woman gazing into each other's eyes reminding me of older
pictures than you.

A necklace that looks like a string of rice grains looks like a Rosary crown but
you were Wesleyan. There's a difference!

I keep these precious things safe. I kept their meanings and memories hidden
but now I grow safely into them.

Secure ...

Aurora B. E. Blue, 11

I've written/created poetry for maybe 4/5 years so far and made as much art
alongside. I like to look into life deeply but often find that things on the surface
are just as interesting and are usually quite funny. Sometimes things I notice are
much more serious than they appear.

