

PaleoRik

A sequence of poems by
Rik Roots

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Dedicated to
Angela K, David B, David G, Helen N, Helene A,
James B, James H, John S, Laurie S, Louise R, Mark R,

Martin S, Mick D, Paul G, Piers G, Ron T, Ronald F,
Tim K, Val L, Vicci B, Vincent de S ... and all those who endured
the first drafts of these poems during those long, long
winter evenings in Stukeley Street. Thank you all!

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London

Should he ever speak of home,
it would be of the land he would tell:
villages on sea level plains would again build
in the midst of his eye.
He would trek in sentences, friends he has known -
paths trod as a child in hand-me-down shoes.
The music. The radios. The open grate fire.
The gossip of neighbours
who visited for news.

Of home he will not speak: not to me.
He will drink the juice of his home
in this mock ale house. He will smoke.
He will listen to records, captured rhythm,
smile, talk of work and weather
to spartan associates: he will not gossip.
The gossip bears no depth for him.
We are alien twins glance-met in London,
and the mirror before me
is smudged.

Rituals

Autumn would bring us rituals to school.
Conkers: bootlace strung,
hung from coat toggles on proud display.
Until smashed.

All Hallow's eve and tall-cone witch hats:
card masks green finger painted - soon torn,
berry potions, and dare-stolen grave chippings
slipped quietly to the pockets of rivals and foes
as a curse.

Fireworks for the fifth:
celebrate the demise of our grand manikin
paraded on shoulders around the school ground,
lighting the close night with its broken-wood pyre
and sprouting buttered jacket potatoes
from the embers.

Poppies:
card-petalled, stem-chewed, Haig-stamped,
that led us coldly as mist to morning
to the sword-carved cross ahead of the church,
where once the lintel gallows stood
and we were paraded: dreaming
of warming cold rain from woolen uniforms

- it was beyond me: only a poppy,
and I knew dead soldiers breathe again
when playtime has gone.

Cremations

The sun has swilled caskets of Spanish wine
and reeled from its path - falling too far north.
This summer bleaches me.

The heat has stripped me naked and now
I am laid out on a bed in a windowless room,
burning, sweat dribbling past chest pubes
to puddle my navel: I cannot sleep.

In my shorts I had walked from Leyton station
past the Birbeck Arms on North Birbeck Road
to the breath-stench tunnels of the Cathall Estate.
In three weeks of heat the community lawns
have painted their blades brown and followed the worms
to deeper earths: feral rottweilers were tracking me,
padding cautiously on my shadow,
licking water from my blistered thighs.

Taking the oven-lift to an estate-tower roof,
I found Leytonstone Catholic graveyard
laid out below: squared rows of granite crosses
and marbled angels watching Birbeck fry.
Two holes had been dug: black doors to heaven –
no caskets filled them yet.
The bereaved will wait until the bedding of the sun
before laying to rest their memory-corpses:
the departed reek less in the dusk.

Kingfisher Pool

Once I found a waterfall.
I watched the kingfisher perched on his rock.
With a blue flume he dove deep to the abyss
and surfaced with gaping bream in his beak.

I started - and stalled.
A fear of water caressing the face
held me as a stringed mannequin
- shrinking the bollocks as again
the kingfisher wet his oval head.

Perched on his rock after,
one feathered eye spoke:
scared of the waters?

Maybe a muscle rippled, as slowly
a shirt was un-burdoned and dropped.
A quick circle of glancing stare
was touched on the barricade trees
as button-holes puckered their mouths wide,
and the denims fell - expertly crumpled.

Dive! The beak chattered. *Dive to touch the stones
where the glass Sargasso elvers grow,
eating worms.*

And I dared. As a pink walrus
tattooed here and there with hair on hide,
I plunged within the waterfall pool -
and mouthed a scream for shock
as my bubbles were lifted to the pond-skater home.

Cold! The airspheres bellowed. *Free!*

[James](#)

James watches the monkey organ-chained.
It huddles askance and will not look:
the whites of its eyes avoid the crowds,
and the crowds claim James and the monkey
is gone.

And James is funneled through canvas tunnels.
Crowds scramble to counters of baubles and jewels
where hawkers and dealers line the sides
screaming their wares, beckoning James
to finger the goods, catching his ears
with prices and bargains James cannot afford,
then to throw him away, garbage,
thrusting his presence from their tresles,
their caustic rebukes stinging his sockets, flaming
his eyes -

and James is lost:
he lowers his head down to
his shoulders and sits in a
mire of legs and boots and dirt and
heels, eyewhites straining away and
ears handshacked, with a
shivering chin tapping
patellas and whispering in
silence: *go away* -

go away -

Uri

Uri slides motionless across the curve of the skies,
eyeless, checking niches and ledges
within balustrades of uncapped lintel
steeping from plains of choking sands,
aching to reach his fingers.

He descends.
Trailing rainbows, he swathes
through shoals of angels and butterflies
and floats in the maw of a cavern cathedral
besieged by urchins driven
from deserts beyond to graze
the swaying alters of his Eden.

Taking a spear of latexed steel
Uri impales the aliens, cracking shells:
rending flesh to the salt-current whim
until the last urchin spine drifts across
the coral floor and his starving lungs burn.
Uri clammers liquid ladders back to the skies
- leaving parrots and angels to feed on detritus
with butterflies and morays and dog sharks
and crabs.

Breaking the wave-dome, Uri pushes his mask
to the top of his head and gasps air through teeth,
tastes the salt in the breeze.

Choice

Into the left eye mirrors a desert
. . complete horizon . . grained aridity . .
clean sterile pure

*Into the right orb shade contingencies: cold cramp space duty food
emotion inanition inertia composure leisure sex shit heart beer sweat
death sweat heat sex death.*

On a grey morning, cold morning
- - - - this morning
it could be simple to pluck the right eye
- - - from the head, let the blood stumble
- - - from the socket, allow scabs to
drag across a cheek, welcome a
- - - - - desert back home.

[Search](#)

I only search for him at the weekend:
week is a time for duty, support -
tasks more important than me.
My quarry, the fox, hides his shadow in faces,
a slick flick of an eyeball down,
a stare edged across overlong
disrupting the camouflage, on trains,
across streets, quick to move on.
If my veins did not flicker, I would not know:
perhaps he was here.

I traipse in search of different scenes.
Here is a bar where men converse,
words smoothing cross-grain desires.
A den the dogs have learnt to fear.
Brush safe, a form stretches in the aisles,
curls under stools, observes by tables.
Now I can see him, a proud beast,
clear at the edge on my eye.
I have his scent. He has mine.
Teeth smile.

Flaw

Flaw sits in my cupboards
Flaw stands behind doors
Flaw hides in the curtains
--- whittling its claws.
Flaw smirks in my mirrors
Flaw shadows my back
Flaw skips in my nightmares
--- it has that knack.

Flaw crumples my clothing
Flaw stains my best sheets
Flaw spits when I'm hungry
--- and still I eat.
Flaw plagues my horizons
Flaw makes you all see
that Flaw is my partner
--- a true part of me.

East of Islington

1. Cannonbury

Half-six of an evening and already
the paving has been crisped smooth,
no stone, no ledge has been spared
its dickens-winter decoration.
Shuffling unbalanced left and right
I chuff my way home, trailing
exhalations behind me.

2. Essex Road

Some shops remain open, huddled
within their festive gear. Like candles
and moths they beggar my reflexes -
Enter, they carol-chant my cash. *Spend*.
Brittle, I walk on, fearful of falling
if I should take a wrong step
away from the track to my door.

3. Northchurch

The cars in Northchurch Road
squat by their kerbs, henges in shadows.
Jack-the-Lad has beaten me here, riming
each car window with a glittery glaze.
Stopping, I try to sign
a frosted screen, but my hands
are un-gloved: my fingers stick.

[Hunters](#)

From the desert brush a dappled cat
sleeks in through an open window,
noses the furniture: sits,
regards me with eyes of jasper.
Offering a back-hand for perusal,
it is accepted, rasped for salt,
marked and ignored. We gaze at shadows

thrown from the torchlights close in the night.
Forms beyond call unseen, mouths in hand-cups:
identify and greet, carouse and touch.
I dress in cotton, abandon the room
and walk sand paths, hunting flesh.

Gridded within rows and columns
of paint peeled collonnades,
prey can be found. I watch
moon-moths cascade in pheromones
over pillars supporting the wheeling star-plate:
when desert winds gust, some fail in the dance
and pillow towards my temple trap.

I chase, leaping to claw great ghosts from the air,
fisting at wings. Palming a fat, flying grub
into the stocks of a decayed history.
Claiming the prize I breed fire,
strip wings and unhinge legs,
skewer the body on a copper rod.
Singe. Heat. Eat.

Scared

When the angels came to take the world
across the universe to heaven,
I heard a familiar trumpet blown
- softly, not quite off-key -
as I crouched in my quilted bed alone.

When the dancers of death recalled the winds
out from the bellows that blew them,
I smelt remnants, the faintest taint
of cheap cologne at the top of the stairs,
and shook.

When the sons and daughters of Flamer Jack
crowded the porch to proclaim the departure
of one I had tried not to love,
my eyes burned reflections of their swaying flames
- and I cried.

It was not a father's pulse that failed:
rather a slice of my Breath. Yet sometimes -
when the precious clock strikes, when winter comes,
when I sense cheap cologne by my side -
I know he is there,

and I learn once more my muscled Breath
and my Breath that is stopped
must stay sundered a while longer yet.
The lesson hurts me: it burns me.
And still I am scared of the wound.

Democracy

I smile to the video in the shop window.
Someone smiles at me from the stage of the TV.
When I wave, I wave back.

I walk from work, along Victoria Street
to Parliament Square. Cameras
line the iron gates: I do not smile.
This is not my stage.
In the shadows of towers a polite man
talks to electronics. When he smiles,
I see headlined guile. The face is sincere:
the eyes laugh.

Above, talking wires whisper
farewell to pre-neon light.
A great bell stirs in its analogue tower:
shivers a boom through cables and space -
I smile to a man behind a camera,
step away from his frame,
become free.

Paradise

An exile in paradise
weeps, hearing life,
life gone, boys with
machetes. Sliced pigs,
bullets and birdsong.

Paradise seems unnoticed by a second, whose eyes
(he says) boiled when his shack was torched.
He remembers to smile when a camera is clicked.

This one, pretty in a dress,
sings songs and claps hands,
shows the strangers her pictures -
fat mummies and stick daddies
with slits crayon-stitched and
bandaged with magic. Mummy will come
to paradise soon, she says.

A fourth, older, wiser,
twelve, heats water
for drinking, shrinks
when the wood cracks.

A soldier with no boots watches the boys
play football through the camp. He wants
to play too, but the footballers are older,
and don't know he exists.

The sixth eats.
Paradise smells better
when the hunger
has gone.

Fallen

Here lies a church: its bricks, dis-mortared,
lump across the wild-grass park. A cross
topples into hawthorn thickets. Weathered graves
erupt crazed from once secret gardens.
One wall still stands, a messenger-board for old loves,
trite advice; affiliations.

Here stands the mould of a boy, whose fingers drip
from small hands hugging a candle snuffed in the rain.
Cotton has been hung across the loins; a tide of soot
twines over the hair. The eyes have bleached; hoar-frosts
weave across the face. The feet are marked by passing dogs,
as is the pedestal, crusted in bottles and butts.

Cold clouds shade the walls of the place where once I played.
Iron gates are rusted shut: gravel paths have grassed over
and thistles taint the playing greens. There are no rules
to keep now; no signposts; no borders. Just crumbling statues
to remember the past and the bricks of a universe
that fell long ago.

City

One Tuesday, I tasted a different city:
walked along Hackney's canal at the close
of the day, sat chatting with a friend
in a canal-side pub. Noticed the green
between the grey; touched air in place of grime.
Forgot that this was my home.

I can see the dome of St Paul's from the office window.
At dusk, stray sunbursts gild its white walls
and again the magic happens, transporting me
to a city I rarely see. Though the moment passes
and spatters of rain stipple the window,
I remember the passing pride.

Discovery

(For Nigel)

This is a strange territory: I met it last
when I was small, hand-led in family formation.
Now that I stand tall, the terrain aches its hues.
Horizons are more subtle, the landscapes more distinct.
Deserts mingle with forests; streams flood fields.
Complexities encourage an expedition
I abandoned long ago.

Since you marked my map, I feel surer of my step.
I can avoid the pedestals others have built, track
faint trails through gardens; accept flowers for their colour,
fruit for their taste. Mazes I once hid from, confused, scare me
no more. There is nothing simple in this emotion, nothing pure,
except the map with its crosses, your touch
and my trust.

[Relativity](#)

Today I am left in bed, my head tethered to a pillow by stout phlegm cords.

When my friend came back from Paris
he had but two platelets left
to his name. He christened them in memory
of friends: Cabernet, and Sauvignon.

Lungs hold their breath, stunned by this vile ague's performance.

After resisting the pleas of surgeons to scrape
the remains of his spleen from his guts he flew
home to Sydney, rehearsing his Strine slang
on the way to Heathrow.

I hack my appreciation as another cycle of shivers spins to its climax.

He left us, the proud father of thirty
one brand new baby blood cells,
each one precious,
all home grown.

Eclipse

For some you are pretty to look at; to others
a quirk of nature, a passage of time.
I know I am smaller than you, and you
are my teacher.

From the moment the rip-tide tore
the waters from my cot and life's
breath stung my lungs, you have
taught me.

Through your filter I have touched
the world, seen through its shadows,
its secrets. Your revolution fixed my path,
set my actions before me.

You sicken me. I dodged your shadow
as it judged the land, watched it fall
a hundred miles south (though at the last
my shadow deserted me).

And I felt the breath of your lesson
rush a curving swathe across the sea,
the land, past Paris and Turkey to the oceans
beyond India.

Murderous bitch! Kings should have died,
not the streets of shoddy Gölcük. Money loving misers
should have knelt helpless before you, not
the towers of Istanbul.

Once more to me you teach an end.
I cling to the frame of the door you rip
from my grasp, deny my eyes the sight
of mortality,

relieved that my soil stays solid, that
Hackney stands still, and I in it,
and in a week your face will shine full.
And I will adore you again.

Dinosaur

I have a dinosaur perched in my palm.
It should be free, but the arm
is bloodied. I look within the fixed eye
as I swab the parallel gouges
clean.

Cat curses pounce across my back.
When I look back he ignores me,
disdain shivering the stout brush tail.
Ear flicks inform me I shall pay
for thieving his toy.

The wound clots. Alien muscles slip
within the rainbow skin, restless.
As I un-cup my hands a sharp, ritual peck stabs
my thumb. It runs, forelimbs sprint-pumping
as it gaits away.

Resurrection

February: finger bones
of yellow crocus bud
across Hackney's green gravepits.

A skeleton of spring
sparks a beacon flare
at the distant edge
of this winter's shroud.

Decorating

I start with the lights. Good friends I've loved,
they start with the tree - sought and bought with bristles
and cones, balanced on a stand in the front room. Heirloom
baubles then mixed with glitter and gauzes, chocolates
and candlelights, each layer added as a conversation,
their story wrapping Christmas fresh for the year. No,

I start with the lights, check each bulb in its socket
before I wind them round my plastic spruce, settle the plug,
switch the show on. I pause with each snowy card received:
a smile for the decoded signature; changed addresses noted
in my dieting address book, shedding its leaves. Then I tack
holly and mistletoe to my front door, a dozen
sticky berries to greet the unknown year.

Review this book

Did you enjoy this book? Did you hate it? Are you still shrugging your shoulders, trying to decide if these poems are – really – poems?

Please don't be scared to let your fellow readers know what you think of this book. You can visit any of the following links and leave your comments – ten words or a thousand, one star or five: they all add up!

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About the author

Rik lives and works in London. To earn money, he codes websites and stuff. In his spare time he codes, and writes: mainly science fiction and poetry.

Rik's major claim to 'proper' poetic fame is being part of the group that established Magma Magazine - he even edited Magma 6, for his sins. The magazine's subsequent success has nothing to do with Rik; he left the Management Board a few weeks before Magma 7 was published.

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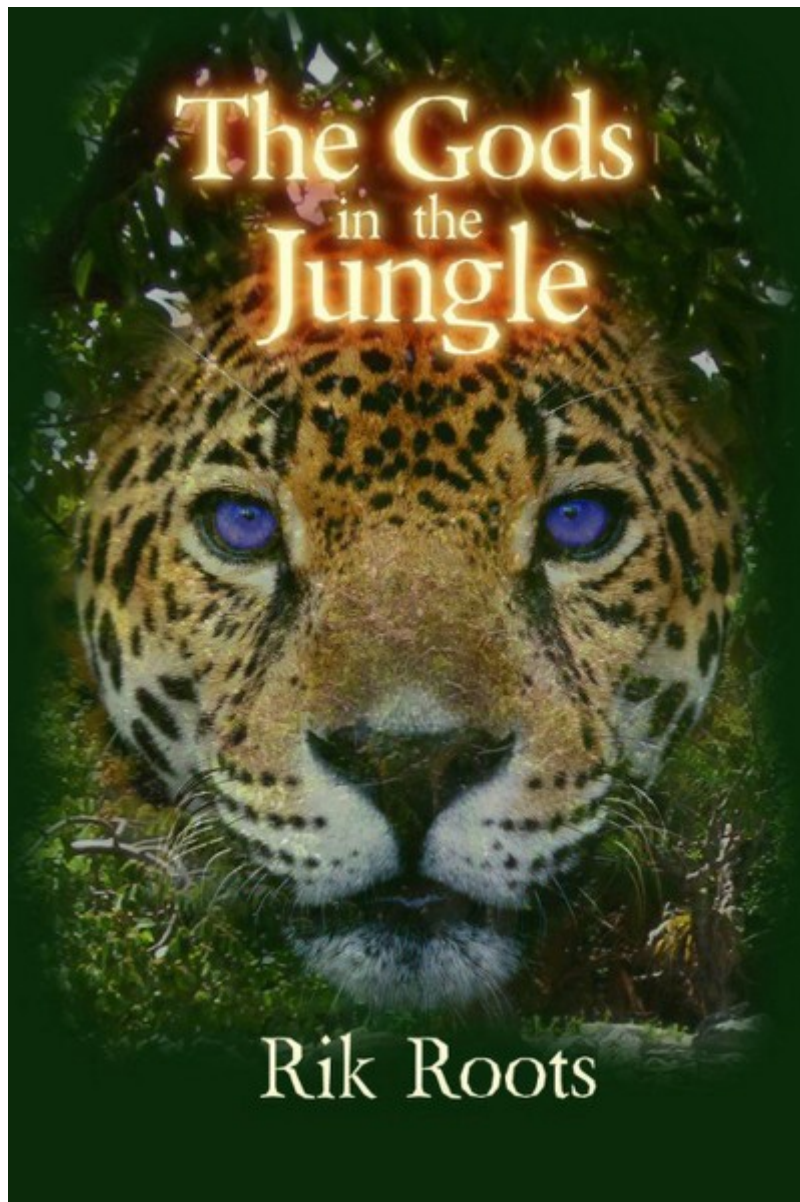
Other books by Rik Roots

Rik gives away all of his books (in eBook formats) for free, mainly via Smashwords, Apple iBooks and Google Play. Hardback copies of each book can be found on Lulu (at cost price). Rik does not sell his works through Amazon or the Kindle Store.

Some of Rik's books can be found on Goodreads. Rik doesn't 'get' GoodReads, so doesn't pay much attention to the site. If GoodReads is your thing, then you can find [Rik's Author Page thing here](#) (or possibly [here](#)).

Why the free giveaway? Rik writes for fun. He hopes the people who read his works also find some pleasure in the experience. What's life without a few gifts, huh?

The Gods in the Jungle



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Solstice eve. It rained until after sunset, each cloud unfurling its blanket of fresh water across the city, the force of the liquid sheets flattening the river into a resentful calmness. The storm washed the city's stone streets to a dark grey cleanliness, rivulets digging and scrubbing away the rubbish and dust as they weaved their glugging paths down the great hillside.

The rain stopped as quickly as it had arrived. For a short while the only sounds were the city's sounds: the knocks of doors and windows being unshuttered; the splash and clash of the traders in the Market Square tipping water from their awnings and dismantling their stalls; the warbles

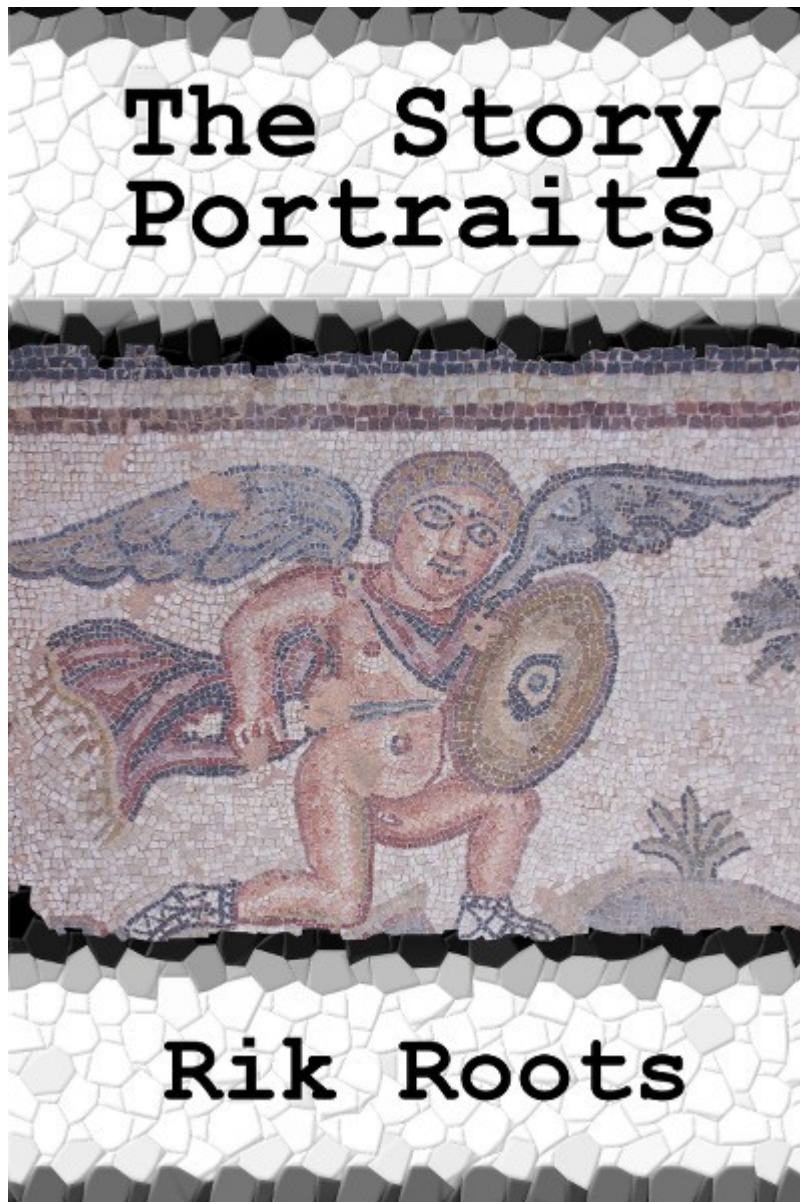
of neighbours and friends greeting each other as they started their preparations for the festival celebrations.

Then from across the river and beyond the city walls the volume of the jungle began to grow. High-pitch chirrups, loud in the ears of children but blessedly damped from adult hearing. Deep yowls echoing through the dark from unknown mouths and snouts. Careful people listened to the growing cacophony, attempting to catch the cadence of the imps and demons now rustling through the vegetation, adjusting their personal wards to combat this night's special dangers: an extra green rag tied around the left wrist for some; a stone with blue veins placed in a pocket; a whispered blessing over a thimbleful of warmed ghevvesein turned opaque by the addition of water ...

The jungle city of Bassakesh, the sole source of the valuable Vedegga dye, holds within its walls the keys to the future of the Vreski Empire. In the name of Politics Delesse, the Governor's daughter, must marry Loken – reluctant heir to one of the most powerful Clans in the Empire.

What neither of them expect are the guests who attend their ceremonies: pain, and betrayal; murder and plague ... and yet love, too. But can love ever be enough when great civilisations burn and crash, and die?

The Story Portraits (short stories)



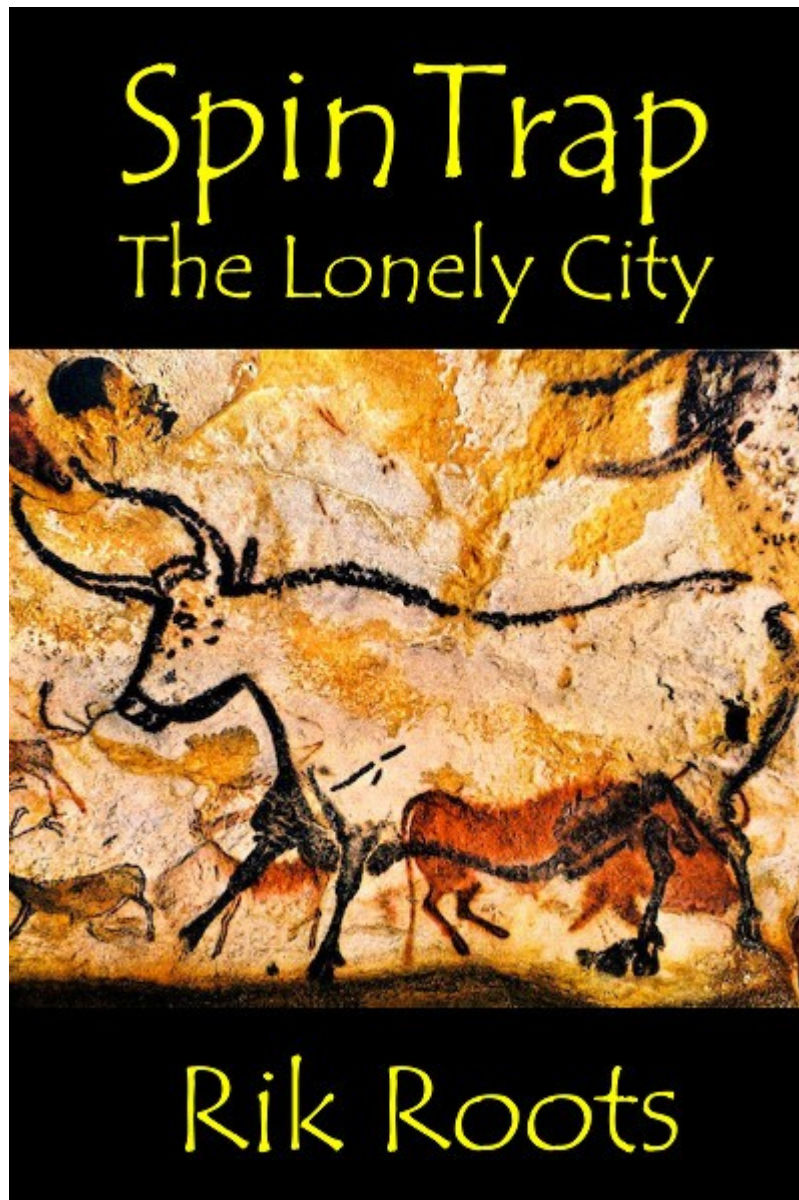
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'That doctor told me Frank's got maggots in his arse, Dot! What's Frank doing with maggots in his arse?'

Welcome to this, my first collection of micro-fiction. Within these pages you will discover a range of characters looking to tell their stories – some more surreal than others – in various styles and voices. Suffer alongside Frank as he recovers in hospital from an accident; watch young Jacob discover a new form of entertainment; follow Jack as he breaks free of the confines of his bathroom.

But most importantly, enjoy these stories. After all, I wrote them for you.

Spin Trap: the Lonely City



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There is evil in the world, and it comes packaged in the form of pretty little capsules.

Marc ... I'm beginning to think of him as my gaoler. He took Sam to see a doctor, all loose tie and top button undone in slacks and petrol blue brogues: doctors have no sense of theatricality any more. The consultation took less than ten minutes and resulted in a handwritten scribble across a form alongside instructions to visit a particular apothecary – no, I mean pharmacist – who was serving late that night. In exchange for the note Sam was given a rattling plastic bottle, brown, with a lid as complex as a puzzle box for the opening.

That first pill almost rendered me home! It took every fragment of my concentration to keep hold of the host's mind as the chords of his senses eased to a gelatinous slime and the sharp escarpments of his memories eroded.

A second slip of paper from the doctor was more welcome: a 'sick note' which allows Sam to stay away from work for a fortnight and still be paid by his employer. The concept ... astonishes me.

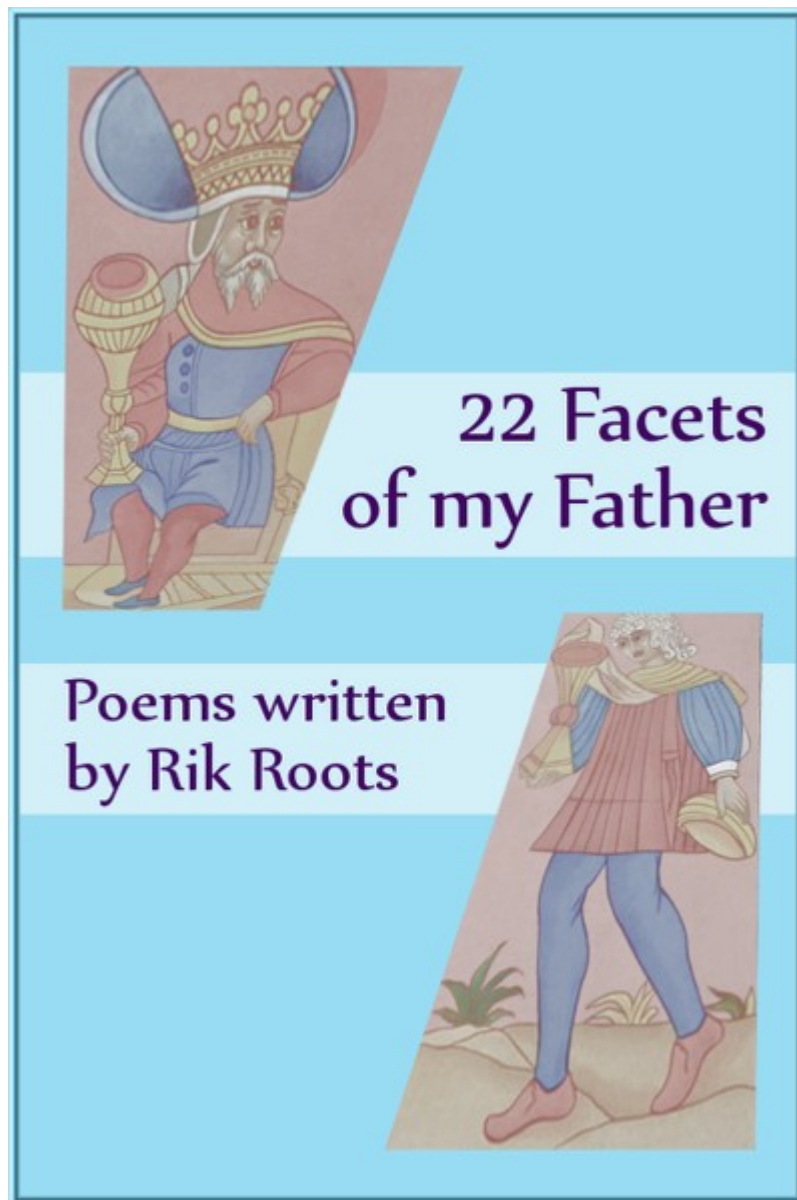
Kal is not having the best of times. Though the changes that have taken place since his last visit to the Outer World - and in particular London - fascinate him, the job he needs to complete is turning out to be a full set of frustrations and confusions.

The fact that his friends keep on killing themselves to escape from some horror he cannot feel only adds to his woes.

Worst of all, the man in whose head he lives knows he is there ... and has no interest at all in being told what to do.

Spin Trap: Worlds Within Worlds
(to be published before 2020)

22 Facets of my Father



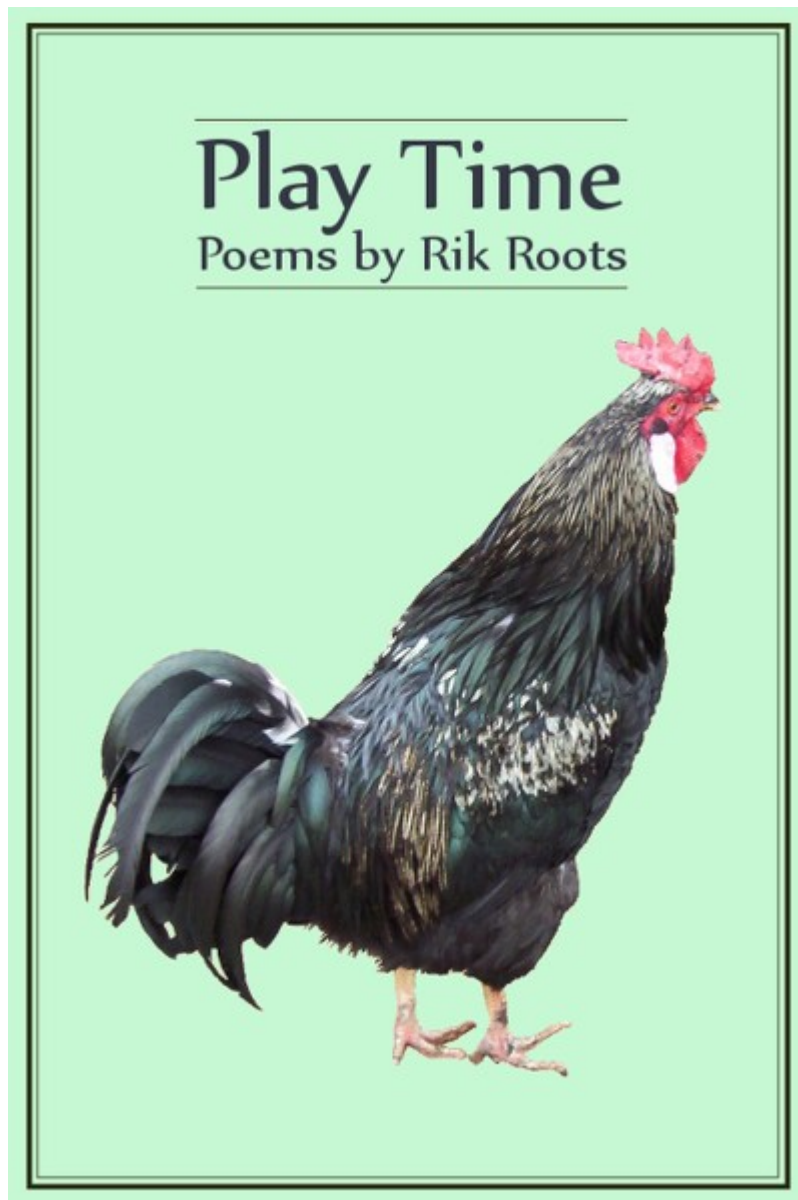
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How can a person define their relationship with their father? In a book, a story? In a poem ... or twenty two of them?

I knew my father for just over seventeen years. It would be another seventeen years before I finally found a way to think about him - his life, his memory - that made sense to me.

I don't expect these 22 free-verse poems to please everyone or, indeed, anyone in particular. And while there's a core of the confessional in each of them, they are not intended to be accurate or truthful: they are poems, after all. Enjoy!

Play Time



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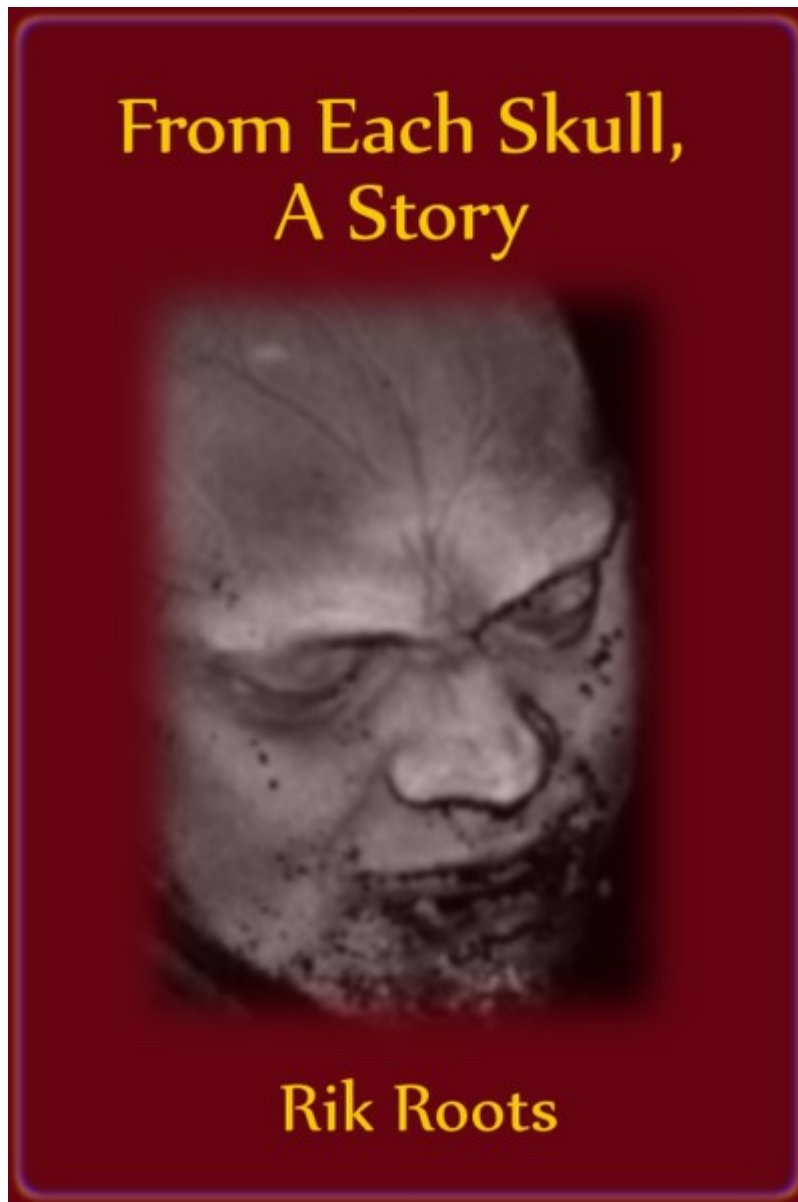
Within the pages of this short chapbook (in the UK: pamphlet) can be found a set of poems mostly dating back to the early 1990s, a time after I arrived fresh-faced in London and before I abandoned (capital P) Poetry in favour of hard drinking and an overdose of uncaring, anonymous, castaway sexual encounters. I suppose they represent a time when I believed Poetry could be a Force for Good both in the world, and within me.

Scattered between those poems are another set of verses - these ones written around the turn of the millennium when I decided to stop

worshipping at the altar of the Great Cock and start twisting poetry (small p) into a tool for giving me a different kind of pleasure, and worth.

There's no over-arching theme to the poems as such but, looking back now - a lifetime later - at these works, I still find I'm proud of each of them, in their own ways. I hope you have as much fun reading them as I had writing them!

From Each Skull, A Story



- » Hardcopy: [Lulu](#) (£1.99 + vat + delivery)
- » eBook: [Smashwords](#) – [iBooks](#) – [Google Play](#)

Does everyone have a story in them? A story as interesting and as riveting as any ongoing soap-opera or Hollywood blockbuster?

In the beginning was the word, and that word was - *usenet*. Before *usenet* there was nothing un-mediated, un-controlled. Gate-keepers and taste-setters strode between voids, keeping all matter and thought within the bounds of acceptable control. Freedom was illusory; free will a joke played by mostly-unseen godlings.

Usenet changed the world. *Usenet* changed me. Within its soft explosion, a cleansing wrath that stated, simply: Here Be Freedoms - Be Careful Where You Shit!

It didn't take us (early) adopters long to smear turds over the servers, the networks and, of course, each other. And as quickly as it came, *usenet* went away - barely remembered nowadays. Yet from those beginnings grew the ideas of free copy and free voice, the power of the social networks and the chattersphere in whose many bubbles we now all live and work.

This book contains poems birthed during that tumultuous time - different kinds of poems, new-yet-at-the-same-time-old kinds of poems. Internet poems whose defining features are as much about the way they were developed, built and polished as they are about content and imagery. People from parts of the planet I had barely heard of before contributed to the makings of these poems; their different ways of looking at the world showed me a different way to see what poetry is, what it can do ... and just how much unvarnished fun the whole mess can be!

The internet has changed poetry in ways people are barely beginning to understand. Have you changed - yet?

Poems to Quote to your Lover



- » Hardcopy: [Lulu](#) (£1.99 + vat + delivery)
- » eBook: [Smashwords](#) – [iBooks](#) – [Google Play](#)

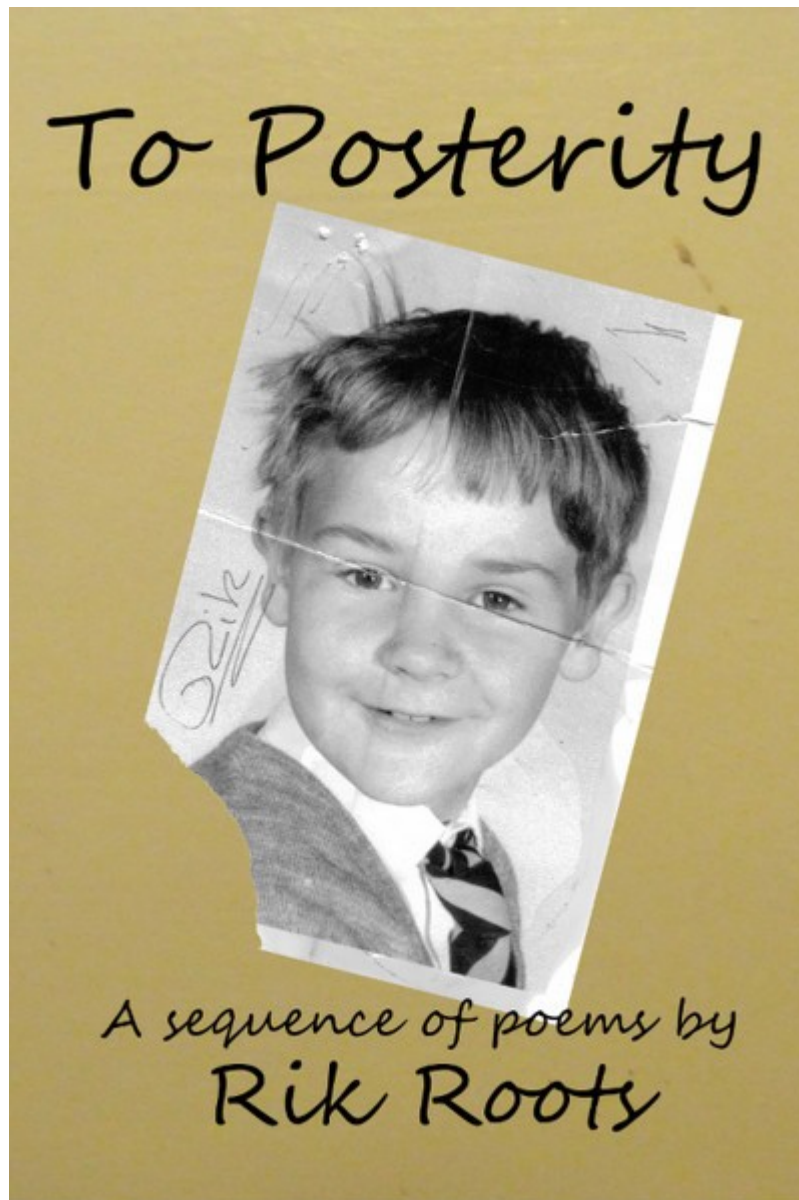
"Welcome to this, my third collection of poems. In this collection, I am proud to present you with some love. These poems deal with loves and relationships in all their wonderful and woeful manifestations. Some of the poems are a little raunchier than others, but there's nothing (too) offensive or smutty in them!"

Okay ... so that's the blurb to my little book of gay erotic verse, written back in March 2010 when I first self-published it. Between then and now (October 2017) this book - with no effort by me to promote or advertise it - has been downloaded from various online shops more than 28,000 times - which makes it by far my most popular book of verse. For a while

it was in the top 10 poetry books in the Apple iShop thingy - at one point reaching #5 in the charts.

Why? I have my suspicions, but I'm not saying. You'll have to download the book yourself to see if the poems deserve such attention.

To Posterity



- » Hardcopy: [Lulu](#) (£2.49 + vat + delivery)
- » eBook: [Smashwords](#) – [iBooks](#) – [Google Play](#)

Between 2007 and 2011 I did an Open University creative writing course. Some of the things I absorbed during those years I managed to extrude back into the poems I was writing at the time. In other ways, my verse outlook remained as idiosyncratic and obtuse as ever.

Those years were, for me, both wonderful and difficult. For the first time in my adult life I was freed from the need to work (though that ended soon enough). Equally, this was the time when I had to confront death in a very adult, personal way. I enjoy writing about death; I'm less keen on touching dead bodies.

Why should you want to read this book? I think it contains some of my best poems. Those of you who know me, already know my views on poets and posterity; those who don't ... well, it's about time you learned, yes?

Snowdrop (a story in verse)



- » Hardcopy: [Lulu](#) (£5.00 + vat + delivery)
- » eBook: [Smashwords](#) – [iBooks](#) – Google Play

For most people, Christmas is a time of joy; for some it has become a time of lonely sorrow.

For Snowdrop, Christmas is about to become a timeless place of fear, horror – and unimaginable loss.

On the hill above the Marshes, someone watches; some thing waits ...

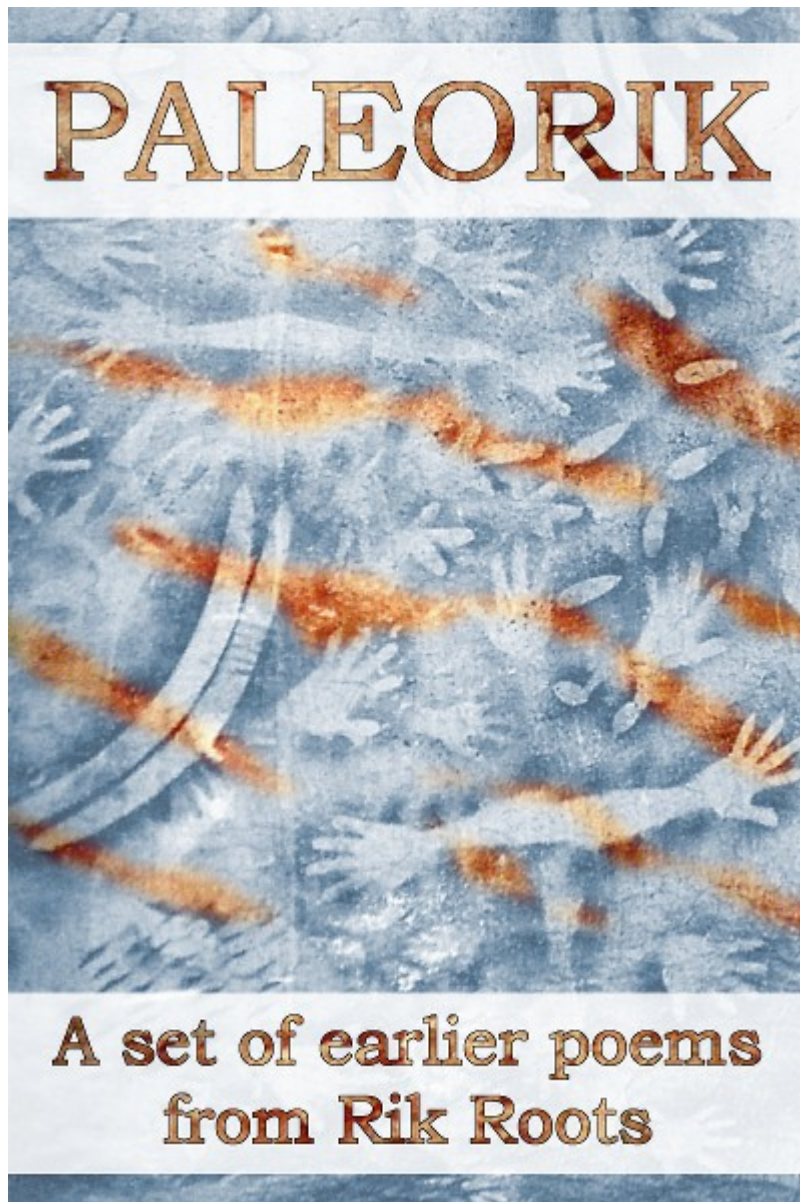
It took me over eight years to complete this book, from writing the first lines early in 2004 to publishing it in July 2012. When I started writing it, I thought a 'long poem' was something that would be more than five

pages. Then Snowdrop took on a life of her own and demanded more: more detail, more story, more life!

Most of the lines are in form; more than half in alliterative verse (rhymes at the beginning of the words, not the end). The story they tell is of a Kent where myths and superstitions are alive and well – and very much out to get you!

Whatever others may think of this book, it remains the one which I am most proud of. I doubt I will ever be tempted to write such a long sequence again in my life.

PaleoRik



- » Hardcopy: Lulu (£2.49 + vat + delivery)
- » eBook: [Smashwords](#) – iBooks – Google Play

Some of my earliest verses came to me one day and said: we feel neglected! We feel ignored - why should all the later poems get all of the glory. Some of us have been published, you know, in proper magazines and stuff!

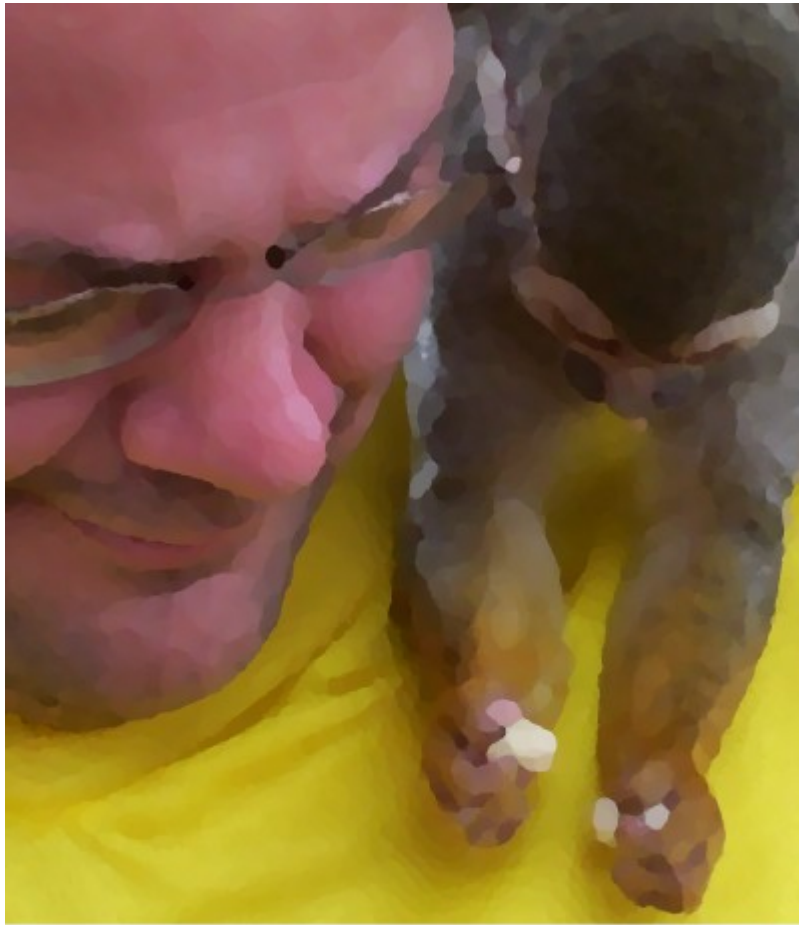
And I, in an inexplicable episode of sympathy for the poems' plight, agreed to build a chapbook just for them.

Almost all of the poems in this book were written in the 20th century. Looking back on them now I can see where I was experimenting with voice, characterisation and storytelling within the form of a poem. The

publication venue for some of these works was Magma Magazine – a venture which I helped to start and which is still going strong more than two decades later.

A lot has changed in the world since I wrote these verses. The internet has transformed the process of developing and workshopping a poem beyond recognition. But I still remember the face-to-face weekly workshop in Stukeley Street with a lot of fondness: most of the bruises to my ego have healed up quite nicely!

And Still I Breathe



And Still I Breathe *Poems by Rik Roots*

- » Hardcopy: Lulu (£2.49 + vat + delivery)
- » eBook: Smashwords – iBooks – Google Play

In this, the second decade of the twenty first century, the Internet became – more. More than a static repository of knowledge. More than a set of venues for buying and selling goods and services. It became a place where people lived.

Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Google+, YouTube, Pinterest, Instagram, Tumblr, Flickr, Reddit, Snapchat, WhatsApp ... Match, eHarmony, Tinder, Grindr ... if you haven't got a presence on these venues, then do you really exist?

The Internet shapes the way we work, play, love and hate. It feeds us news and lies in equal measure. It tells us how to live, what to buy, which way to vote. It has brought us hope. It has brought us Isis and Brexit and Trump. God? Monster? Whatever ...

I find writing poems about the Internet almost as difficult as writing poems about working in an office. The damn thing is too slippery to categorise, and we still have no idea how its powers will play out in our lives. And yet the effort has to be made ... and still we breathe.

More Poems to Quote to your Lover

(working title, to be published before 2020)

Competition Time

(working title, to be published before 2020)

End Time

(working title, to be published before 2020)