

OTHER VOICES

POEMS TO CELEBRATE
FORTY YEARS OF THE CURE



Cover Art by Ali Jones

Other Voices: The Cure at 40

Edited by Andie Berryman & Ali Jones

Poems of love,
loss,
time travel
and the beautiful sadness.
inspired by
'The Cure'.

Foreword

Music holds many meanings, and it can send us time travelling back into memories, to different places and people, like a thread that links all things together. When I realised that The Cure would celebrate their 40th anniversary of performing under that name in 2018, I was shocked to realise that I have been listening to their music for around 30 of those years. Discovering their music was transformative for me, in that it showed me that it wasn't necessary to adhere to mainstream and popular ways of being and looking. Wearing an aesthetic and sound based on the coat tails of punk, I wonder if part of what drew me to The Cure was the sense of protest and anti-fashion, which has intentionally been assumed as an identity by an army of fans. Knowing the commitment of many who love The Cure, and wanting to do something to celebrate The Cure's longevity and creativity led me to thinking about what could be done to mark their 40th. In calling for poems based around experiences of listening to The Cure and emotional responses to their music, we received poetry from around the world. These poems tell stories of love and loss, of listening to music as an escape from difficult times, of being mired in the dark beauty of discovering lipstick and hairspray, of staying up too late and thinking too much. They tell of getting together and breaking up, of being the one left with the mixtape, the misfit, the one putting headphones to drown out the mundane and disappear into the powerful narratives and swirling sounds. The Cure have had a lasting impact on the music industry in that they have refused to compromise to gain popularity, ignoring suggestions to lose long instrumental introductions of gain radio air-play, and releasing tracks which labels have considered commercially unwise – some of these have become their best-selling songs. Maybe the spirit of determination to be true to your own creativity is what shines through and allows so many poets to come together in this celebration in words. We hope you enjoy reading these poems and would like to thank all the contributors and those who have supported this project.

Ali Jones (Oxford 2018)

What can I say about The Cure? Well not much, apart from they've been around as long as I have and nearly everyone from pensioner to millennial, whether you live in Tawian, Mexico or the UK, everyone knows them. These poems are collected and 'Cure-rated' for your reading pleasure, enjoy and many thanks to the contributors.

Andie Berryman (Oxford 2018)

Heart On The Floor

by Bonnie Strohl

"Is this seat taken?" he said
"Let's have dinner." he said
wanting more than a lie
33,000 miles in the sky

I said goodbye as we landed
gave him my number
the start of a love affair
happened that summer

dizzy on the roof
six different ways on the floor
charming, seducing me
playing "The Head In The Door"

"I love that song," she said
he put the tape in my hand
the start of one love affair
the start of another end

With my heart in his hand
his fist in my chest
waiting days for the phone to ring
I didn't pass the test

From Close to Me
to A Night Like This
the girl from the Valley
he didn't miss

"This can't work" he said
"You'll be fine. I'm sure."
he had broken my heart
but he gave me The Cure.

A Pioneer Eating A Sausage Roll

By Stephen Watt

He sat at Glasgow High Street station.

Barely fourteen. Chalk dust
powdered the shrouded face
underneath a cobweb mop.
Friends appeared to grow into cousin's jackets,
the Lenny Kravitz denim
regular kids were accustomed to wearing

but his shoulders
flagged in ill-fitted garments.
His sister's fishnet leggings apparent
when the train *gasp*ed at the terminus.

Interest in conversation waned.

As pitchforks of rain
doused cigarettes and plastic bottles of alcohol,
he swipes pastry from a book about suffragettes
and voting polls; sponged mascara away
with his oily, polished nails.

Nearby juveniles catcalled, gesturing insults

so he reached inside a pocket
to flip a worn-out tape into his Walkman,
permitting Robert Smith's echoes
to dissolve inside his xylophonic bones.

The Cure is a synthesiser, making home
and sense
in a city of red-blooded bewilderment –

unaccustomed to the beat of his pulse;
his blood-red lipstick.

Pictures of Sarah

By Becky Cherriman

Gangling limbs and smile, lipstick like Smith's smeared
round your tiny mouth you told me of your love for Shelley
and bewitched me with The Cure.

You were to be a model and whiled away
the hours with hand-held mirrors, trying to make it true.
My svelte ankles made you jealous.

Ethereal in velvet, you lisped Romantic
under rumour of candlelight,
room heavy with mould and my mother's Opium.

Wading into your house, we were *slow drowned*
in synth, both of us *lost in the dark*, in that mawing danger
of something present we couldn't lyricise in ink.

I heard you became a star of sorts, a figure in glossy magazines
but no trace of you on the net,
that vagueness not definite enough for the digital age.

Probably a mother now, aged, but my *pictures*
are you - *stone white, screaming at the sky*,
one of the *angels, lost in the dark*.

Tiger Cubs From Love Cats : Robert Smith – The Cure

By Jessica Mookherjee

They circle each other at night, walk, stalk,
avoid each others eyes – kiss milk teeth,
slink streets. Neighbours sleep while
they are big as moon, sleek as rock, wide
as yawns, bright as night. They throw

everything known to tigers into seas.
Hide, unheard for centuries, until spring
begins to show them a hundred other
treacherous missing objects they lost.
Their dust-shine stripes glowing

and eyes flashing amber.
They tell each other secrets, say they'd sleep
on icebergs, take bullets, invite each other
round for or tea, cream slathered
then curl by firesides, full with perfect sleep.

They grasp hands, through Apsley Street.
A tough lover might find a right way, unbroken,
un-hated, not mouse kissed, or missing, but
this, their strange crisp, childish,
serious love, is purred, mewled and unspoken.

Wild Mood Swings And Besides

By Mat Riches

If you want
to be part of the Club
America is the only place to go
and this is a lie:
the 13th I've heard since I woke up
with a strange attraction
to mint.
Cars will fly one day,
and we'll take road-trips to Jupiter.
Crash courses in navigating deep sleeping
will be a matter of course and we'll run rings
round and round and round
our ideas of distance;
they'll soon be gone
the way of hype-cycles and we'll be numb
to any return
that outweighs the trap
required for recognising the onset
of whatever wild
mood swings you factor in
to locate this treasure.
It's more than you can bare to your pink dreams.
I mean, it used to be me
at home, waiting on the other side
across the ocean
like the sort of Adonais
you wouldn't weep for.
If you're looking for blood, flowers, or more,
I'm afraid you've got the wrong number.

(Untitled)

By Kirstie Pendergrass

First reading waves
of heat
as they escaped an
overgrown back alley.

Unwittingly translating
the breeze, baby
teeth grinding,
through telemetry
in her sleep.

Near impossible to
believe discourse
meaning belied
by the form of air.

The first vibrations reach
through tiny bones
and swim an ocean
embalming a heart.

Drowning each receptor
shaped like
a crimson hallway
a crying mother
a leaf veined chrysalis
more or less filled
with sighs.

If it should feel different
you never let on
recalling rhythms of that first
unfortunate breath.

Once More

By Christy Reed

The night
Filled with trepidation and disobedience
The stars aligned
So perfectly, so beautifully
And guide me to you

The darkness spins
Upon your breathtaking face
My glittering eyes transfixed in yours
So blue and so true

Your hand tenderly touches my face
Moves fervently into my untamed hair
The whisper of your soft voice
Haunting every day ahead

Once more
Organically relinquishing all
As an alluring melody
Secretly orchestrating deep within our souls

Forty-nine

By Dan Brotzel

I put on *A Few Hours After This* and I'm 17 again
half cut and head ringing
standing in my mum's kitchen in the middle of the night
my heart washed clean by the intro's orchestral waves
breathing out smoke into the black back-garden
the last living soul in my suburban world

I re-rewind my tape cassette
Staring at the Sea -- the Unavailable B Sides
back to the only track that ever mattered
and read again the note she slipped me
-- the words she'd never say:

*'just because I don't meet your eye,
doesn't mean I'm not looking for you.
just because I don't say it, doesn't mean I don't care.
because just enough is knowing, surely, that I'll always be there...'*

and though in truth I never really knew her again
her words have stayed with me down the years, like his
*'just put your hands around my heart,
and squeeze me til I'm dry...'*

and now the music swells again and the voice reminds me
of the many ways there are to yearn

Raw

By Loretta Gonzalez

Years without speaking has caused my mouth to wither and dry. Maybe it's better this way, without the familiar dismay of countless lost expressions not being heard. The instant regret will fill my empty cup and I'll be left with my hand reaching out for yours.

These invading memories of all my selfish promises, cause torment and amusement to twirl around in my head. Avoiding eye contact doesn't seem conceal exposure, so instead I smile and say hello. Constantly pushing down the tragic vexation and unbalanced passion.

There is this old lady with the experience of a thousand. Amber colored windows to her heart capture the light. She waits patiently, everyday waits. I watch her and draw strength if only for a time.

Shadow boxes filled with yesterday's faces. Sweet and simple laughter of youth, the dreamers with their secret plans. First kisses and stolen glances hidden from the world. Dandelion wishes scattered through a cloudy sky, while the grey sets in above their heads.

Captivated by the tranquility of the sea after the storm. Gentle waves lined with honey sweep against my fingertips. A winged creature landing brings with him song and sobering eyes.

Morning fear of disappointment when the dancing trees come to a standstill. My unsettling logic presses in and has left me silent... Until now.

All those Days In Between By Emma Lee

Yesterday I found your mixtape
it was always there with
the tracks labelled in
your chaotic, inked scrawl.

Press play, take me
back to those days:
life a blank page,
young enough to find
ourselves, old enough
to change our world.
How many of us
saw our dreams through?

You were all anxious chaos
and I was painfully shy,
but we dreamed, wrote, drew.
About to become adults,
so much we
never knew.

Yesterday, I played your tape.
You're now distant in time
and place. How much became true?
Did you keep your dreams alive?

I put the tape
back on the shelf.
Life's page covered
with words, with work.
I'm not in touch,
can't see how yours
turned out. I trust
life's still in tune.

And if life is rooted
in childhood, we knew alone,
the ache of dreaming,
how music links people.
So little
we knew. The Cure

The Cure

By Ian McLachlan

Is an injection that numbs,
how flat your voice on the line,
and skin so white a corpse haunts
Carfax, walks the University Parks.
Is it to tame you, this viscous weight,
a throb of wings in the chest? Is it medicine?
Invalid among friends, stoop there
with plastic glass of beer in your black 501s
and black t-shirt. Injection that summons
the outsider, tithes for a god of distances.
Wish to hand, track titles a prognosis
in John's neat biro. *Open, Cut, Apart ...*
is it the cure?

(Untitled)
-Carolina Valasquez

Every night I see you, you will always look like a mess, a beautiful mess..
Why is it difficult to love you?
Why can't you be here?
Your memory hurts but loving you hurts more.
I can remember the day you left,
You, you wanted to feel free but I wasn't ready..
Love can be toxic, break you until the last breath
But it can be marvelous and comfortable.
Playing our songs, will make your essence stay
The essence of young and innocent love..
And that's all I need.

MY HEART OF SHELLS

By Thomas Fattoruso

Although this may only be the start
I give to you this shell heart
In the hope that we never ever part
And our love remains forever true

I've made for you special this heart of shells
Touched with a sprinkle of my blood cells
Symbolizing how much my love swells
Whenever I get close to you

The star in the middle is the tie that binds
My heart and your heart and both our minds
You are an amazingly unbelievable find
My breaths I now breathe for you

I hope I can live up to all that you need
And all you may want me to be
From this day forth you are all I see
My promise is to always be true

And if our love should ever have to end
And our hearts are not strong enough to mend
Remember the day on which I send
My heart of shells to you

So today I give you my shell heart
To show you how I feel right from the start
In the hope that we never ever part
And our love remains forever true

An Optimistic View of Fall

By Ann Wan-lih Chang

Different colour
you wear
on Mascara.
Woke me up at Dawn,
with yellowish dew
Buzz of seasonal mourning
Here it comes,
drawing near and intimate

On 'Disintegration'

By E.T Cresswell

I remember as though I were there,
Lounging afternoons in an Aston car park,
You, half-awake in the passenger seat,
Lost in the songs you would one day play for me.

Emerging, new and dark and beautiful,
In the year I was born,
A sweet melancholy on summer days
For a dark-eyed winterborn child;
They were always, somehow, mine.

They stayed, reaching deep into the wells of my mind,
Infused forever in the thoughts, conversations,
The stories, loves, poems, loves, fears and fantasies
Of a green-eyed father looking forwards;
They were always, somehow, yours.

I don't think of you often,
Musing late nights in an empty bar
Until longed-for auras cloud my eyes and my mind calls to yours,
Lost in the songs you used to play for me.

Your head (on the door!)

By Cyril Sandou

dreaming in a swimming pool
i'm sinking into the liquid
like a deaf man
you said the same thing
but there is no sound
out of your mouth
you swallow some gulps
with a beastly pout

this is the most indecisive dream
that you have never done
with scattered bloody flowers
(inside my head)
inside my head full of wine
you can't leave the empty bottle
because its perfume has no sense

the waves are higher and higher
you sweat burning
and full of fear, you drown
the volume has changed
the water clears up
against the wall
translucent and illusive

Into the Trees

By Simon Paul Wilson

I have walked streets of fascination.
Pushed and fought,
dreamt of heads on doors
And of spider-people
who exist only to devour.
I've covered my face in hanging gardens.
I've kissed and been tortured
by girls who were so far away,
Never knowing how much they were adored.
And when worlds ended,
when all had disintegrated,
I would always return to that forest.
To hear her voice,
to run towards nothing.
For when I was lost in the deep darkness,
I would find the cure.

(Untitled)
By Lucinda Button

Into the forest
you and me,
the darkness is suffocating inside.
Here we go again,
I want to get off this ride.

I'm sick to my stomach,
your fingers in my brain.
Heart wide open,
yet darkness come down like rain

The monster is here.
Growing between us,
so much to fear.
I'm searching for the light, searching for the light,
when will this end
when will we give up the fight.

So many times,
So many places.
Too much pain
too many faces.
I'm broken, I'm spent,
Fucking done with the craziness.

Expats don't cry

by Gaby Sambuccetti

I was a teen
under the Malvinas post-war propaganda,
but my guilty pleasure was to listen to you.

By listening to your songs,
I accepted the otherness.

I was fourteen, and I read about the bad experience
that the band had,
when you went to Argentina for the first time.

Even though, you promised you will never come back there,
I didn't mind
because I had the ability to see through your dark make-up.

And I've learnt to embrace singularity.
And I've learnt to use your songs while writing my poems,
to make catharsis... and survive.

I thought I was never going to see you playing,
But then, fifteen years later, I've come to live to the UK.

And I saw the band surrounded by long red curtains,
with an ancient Roman style: a circle with an elevated ceiling
at the Royal Albert Hall.

Just for an instant I forgot about nations,
oppression and war.

I was cured of the marked borders among our cultures,

The line in the ocean was getting undone.

I looked how grown you were,
How grown I was myself,
because we grew up together,

And we were finally at the same place.

So I misjudged your limit,
and I tried 'to hide the tears in my eyes'
because expats don't cry.



Writers

Stephen Watt -is Dumbarton Football Club's Poet-in-Residence. His debut collection 'Spit' was published in 2012 and was followed by his first pamphlet 'Optograms' in 2016. Stephen's third book will be a music-poetry collaboration with Scottish musicians and is earmarked to be published by record label Last Night from Glasgow on 30 November 2018, followed by a fourth book in 2019 focussed on crime poetry. Stephen also reviews for Louder Than War, The Wee Review and Rave Child, and is a previous winner of the Poetry Rivals Slam and the StAnza Digital Poetry Slam.

Becky Cherriman-is a writer, workshop leader and performer based in Leeds. Published by Seren, *Mslexia*, *New Walk*, *Envoi*, Bloodaxe, *Well Versed* and in *Poets For Corbyn*, her poetry pamphlet *Echolocation* and collection *Empires of Clay* were released in 2016. Becky's poem 'Jesus Lives' was highly commended in the Forward Prizes 2017. She also writes fiction and for theatre.
www.beckycherriman.com.

Jessica Mookherjee is a poet of Bengali heritage and has lived in Wales, London, and now Kent. She has written two pamphlets, *Swell* (Telldale Press) and *Joyride* (Black Light Engine Room). Her first collection *Flood* (Cultured Llama) was published in 2018. In 2017 she was highly commended in the Forward Prize, for best single poem. Jessica's poems have appeared in *The Rialto*, *The North*, *Agenda*, *New Welsh Review*, *The Moth* and many others. Her poems have also appeared in a number of anthologies such as *Best New British and Irish Poets 2017*(Eyewear). She is co-editor of *Against the Grain Poetry Press*.

Mat Riches- lives in Beckenham, Kent. He is a father and husband. By day he is a professional Insight-haverer for ITV, but at night he is a trainee Bongosero. He has previously been published in *The Interpreter's House*, *South*, *Orbis*, *Under The Radar*, *Obsessed With Pipework* and *And Other Poems*. He first came to *The Cure* when he taped ..In Orange off of the BBC in the 80s. If pushed his favourite song is ..nope, can't choose. He is about yea high. He can be found on Twitter: @matriches. One of these facts is not true.

Kirstie Pendergrass- Kirstie is a Licensed Massage Therapist because helping people feel more at home in their bodies is the best job in the world. Her first love is dance. Writing a poem about *The Cure*, her favorite band for 30 years, was much more fun than writing for a global corporate bank, which she used to do. She lives in NYC with her husband and son but dreams of retiring somewhere she can garden, connect with nature, and own a horse-sized dog or two. Kirstie holds a B.S. in Psychology and a M. A. in Special Education. She is not "Kristie."

Christy Reed- The Cure's music has always been both melodically and lyrically the backdrop to great moments in my life. Every song, every album represents a place in time for me. Thanks to the song "One More Time", I was able to recreate a wonderful moment from memory.

Dan Brotzel -Now 50, I've been a Cure fan since I was a teen. You sort of had to be really if, like me, you went to the same school as the band. The music has been a constant in my life ever since, and especially the words. Favourite album: Pornography. Favourite track: A Few Hours After This.

Loretta Gonzalez -1990's kid, lover of all creation, artist in her own right, traveller, friend of the friendless, Cure fan. @vanilla_smile_L.A.

Emma Lee - Emma Lee's most recent collection is "Ghosts in the Desert" (IDP, 2015), she co-edited "Over Land, Over Sea: poems for those seeking refuge" (Five Leaves, 2015), reviews for The High Window Journal, The Journal, London Grip and Sabotage Reviews and blogs at <http://emmalee1.wordpress.com>

Ian McLachlan - Ian's favourite Cure song is *Disintegration*. Or maybe *A Letter to Elise*. Or maybe *Cut Here*. His satirical pamphlet *Confronting the Danger of Art*, which he co-authored with artist Phil Cooper, is available from Sidekick Books. He tweets and instagrams @ianjmclachlan.

Carolina Valasquez - My name is Itzia Carolina Velásquez Ramírez and I'm 16 years old, I was born and raised in México, Puebla. Since I was a kid, The Cure was part of my favourite music, I never was a "normal kid" and while I was growing and joining the puberty, they were by my side in every step I did. They also helped me through really difficult times and I couldn't be thankful enough. The poem I tried to do, it's inspired in my favorites songs "Just Like Heaven", "Pictures of You" and "Mint Car" because they were part in my first relationship and they have a lot of meaning to me. Making this, I hope I can show the love and gratitude to The Cure because they are an incredible band and it's not easy to stay 40 years together.

Thomas Fattoruso - I've been a Cure fan since 1987. I've gone through a couple of periods in my life of writing poetry. One particular poem I have written was inspired by an image of the shell heart in the Bloodflowers cd booklet. At the time Bloodflowers came out I was living in Puerto Rico, where I used to walk the beach every morning and collect shells. I had a huge collection of really nice shells. After I moved back to New York in 2001, I started writing poetry again in 2003. I was working on this love poem...and I noticed the shell heart in the Bloodflowers booklet...and I was like 'yes that's it...so I decided to combine my love of shells with a (new) love for a woman...

Ann Wan-Lih Chang - I was born on 21 April 1968 in Taipei and now live in Kaohsiung, Taiwan. I completed my Master's degree and PhD. in Irish literature in Northern Ireland, U.K. My interest is listening to Cure music, singing, drinking and cooking. I am currently working as an assistant professor of English at Shih-chien university in Taiwan.

E-T Cresswell - I was introduced to The Cure at a young age, by a father with very good taste in music. Ey has enjoyed writing since primary school, though ey did not experiment with poetry until ey was a teenager. The Cure became a big influence on their earliest poems, though these did not do justice to their inspirations as well as the young E-T believed they did. E-T likes to think that ey has improved greatly since then. Ey currently lives in Oxford, where ey works in a vegetarian pub, and often performs at the Catweazle Club open mic night.

Cyril Sandou - i'm just an amateur for Robert's words! without interesting biography except my collage for 'secret 7' dedicated by Robert himself.

Simon Paul Wilson... is an English man who travelled to Asia and found a second home. He is also a writer of what he likes to call quirky fiction and wasabi punk, Two totally made-up genres that he hopes will make him famous one day.

Lucinda Button - Lucinda Button has been a Robert Smith and The Cure fangirl since her cliched teen angst years, they touched her as a deeply feeling and deeply thinking girl, and their music felt like a safe place in a world that felt often overwhelming. Their music has travelled with her for the last 25 years, as a (mostly) comfortable companion.

Gaby Sambucetti - is a writer and teacher from Argentina. She is the author of five books including the widely reviewed 'Al Nudo Lo Que Nos Quito'. She has been the host and founder of different poetry events in Buenos Aires, like the events called 'Palabras en el sótano' (Words at the Cellar) and 'Nos vemos!' (See You Later!). After publishing her second book, in 2012, she moved to the UK. She is studying a creative writing BA at Brunel University while working as a teacher and as a writer. She is also events co-director at the Oxford Writers' House.

