

Editorial

Welcome to the ninth issue of *Flash*. This issue features new stories from Australia, Canada, Britain, France, Ghana, Ireland, and the USA. We are especially pleased to open with two flashes from English poet Craig Raine's exquisitely crafted novel-in-stories, *Heartbreak* (2010), a bleak but humorous exploration of sexual love. We are also delighted to publish new stories by three well-established American writers: scholar and memoirist Ihab Hassan, and novelists Elise Blackwell and Robin Greene.

'Flash Presents' features pieces from *Wouldn't You Like to Know* (2010), a virtuoso and richly varied collection of flashes by American short-story writer Pamela Painter, and from *Out of the Wreckage* (2008), a wonderfully unsettling book of 'dream parables' (reviewed in *Flash*, 2.2) by South African author Allan Kolski Horwitz. This issue again turns to earlier publications with our first ever 'Flash Essay', in which Jon Davis revisits Jayne Anne Phillips's debut chapbook, *Sweethearts* (1976), a forgotten classic from a writer who has gone on to achieve considerable success.

In 'Flash Reviews', Ian Seed is enlightened by the existentialist tragi-comedy of Etgar Keret's *Suddenly, a Knock on the Door*, while Paul McDonald admires Jon McGregor's exploration of lives made less ordinary in *This Isn't the Sort of Thing That Happens to Someone Like You*. (Two flashes extracted from McGregor's first novel, *If Nobody Speaks of Remarkable Things* (2002), were featured in *Flash*, 5.1.) Louisa Yates enjoys Tania Hershman's quirky, science-inflected take on contemporary society in *My Mother Was an Upright Piano*; Jake Campbell unearths a self-published gem in Nick Parker's delightfully off-beat *The Exploding Boy and Other Tiny Tales*; and Laura Tansley finds *Jawbreakers* – an anthology edited by Calum Kerr and Valerie O'Riordan to mark the UK's first National Flash-Fiction Day – many-layered and much to her taste. Also reviewed are two books that cross genres. Tony Williams is enthralled by Craig Taylor's *Londoners*, a montage of flash-like interviews, while Ashley Chantler responds in kind to Sean Hill's *Very Short Stories*, a collection of 'twiction'. Each review is accompanied by a sample story.

We hope you enjoy this issue.

Peter Blair and Ashley Chantler

Contents

Editorial

Hans von Bülow *Craig Raine*

The Male Gaze *Craig Raine*

Eavesdropping *Kevin Tosca*

In Flames *Kevin Tosca*

The Wound *Ihab Hassan*

Road Rage *Wayne Dean-Richards*

Click *Robin Greene*

Rescue *Steve Cushman*

Apples *Steve Cushman*

Playschool *Mary McCluskey*

Preferred Dance *Aba Amissah Asibon*

Sex Ed *Charles Haverty*

Man of the House *Casey Haymes*

Warehouse *Elise Blackwell*

She Is the Keeper *Alisa Golden*

Lucky *Alisa Golden*

L. A. Supermarket *Lucas Dean Fiser*

Sacred *Jamie Figueroa*

Feel-Bad Factor *Dom Carter*

The Radio Interviewer's Hat-Trick *David Steward*

Five Short Videos On My Mobile Phone *David Steward*

Working Identity *David Steward*

Contemporaneous *Ross Weldon*

Assumption *Michael Mohr*

Work *Paul Noonan*

Negation *Paul Noonan*

The Afterlife of Margaret of Antioch *Paul Noonan*

The Smell of His Neck *Julie Maclean*

Over Easily *Vincent Pagé*

Wheel *Robert Maslen*

Dust *G. C. Perry*

Sequence *G. C. Perry*

Eons *Trevor Crown*

Black Glass *Trevor Crown*

Beaky *Paul Blaney*

Spring Migration *Kate Flaherty*

Everyone Has A Favourite Spot *Sarah-Clare Conlon*

Husbandry *Eliezra Schaffzin*

Between Lightning and Thunder *Eric Scot Tryon*

The Weight of Metal *Eric Scot Tryon*

The Thing About Endings *Eric Scot Tryon*

Grave Digging *Jenny Gray*

Flash Presents

Pamela Painter

- ‘Your Letter in an Envelope in the Mail’
- ‘The New Year’

Allan Kolski Horwitz

- ‘Excursion’
- ‘It Was Raining’

Flash Essay

Jon Davis, ‘*Sweethearts*, by Jayne Anne Phillips’

Flash Reviews

Etgar Keret, *Suddenly, a Knock on the Door*

- Reviewer: *Ian Seed*
- Sample story: ‘Guava’

Jon McGregor, *This Isn’t the Sort of Thing That Happens to Someone Like You*

- Reviewer: *Paul McDonald*
- Sample story: ‘Dig a Hole’

Tania Hershman, *My Mother Was an Upright Piano*

- Reviewer: *Louisa Yates*
- Sample story: 'The Google 250'

Nick Parker, *The Exploding Boy and Other Tiny Tales*

- Reviewer: *Jake Campbell*
- Sample story: 'Blink'

Calum Kerr and Valerie O'Riordan (eds), *Jawbreakers*

- Reviewer: *Laura Tansley*
- Sample story: 'Jawbreakers' *Jen Campbell*

Craig Taylor, *Londoners*

- Reviewer: *Tony Williams*
- Sample story: 'Philip and Ann Wilson'

Sean Hill, *Very Short Stories*

- Reviewer: *Ashley Chantler*
- Sample story: '[Untitled]'

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