

GATHER



The River



Gather is a collaborative zine showcasing artists in the Forth Valley area in central Scotland.

Prompted by the River Forth itself, which gives the valley its name, we chose The River to be the theme for the first publication.

The River Forth starts its journey at Ben Lomond and winds its way towards Stirling, where after 29 miles, it becomes tidal and opens into the Firth of Forth to join the North Sea. This is a collection of pieces that are inspired by the river, or relate to the communities which the Forth links together.

Published by Neon Tide Collective, a trio of artists working together to connect, showcase and share what we know with our local area.



Created and Edited by Joe McLellan

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Off to School

Kathy Armstrong

I Have Discovered

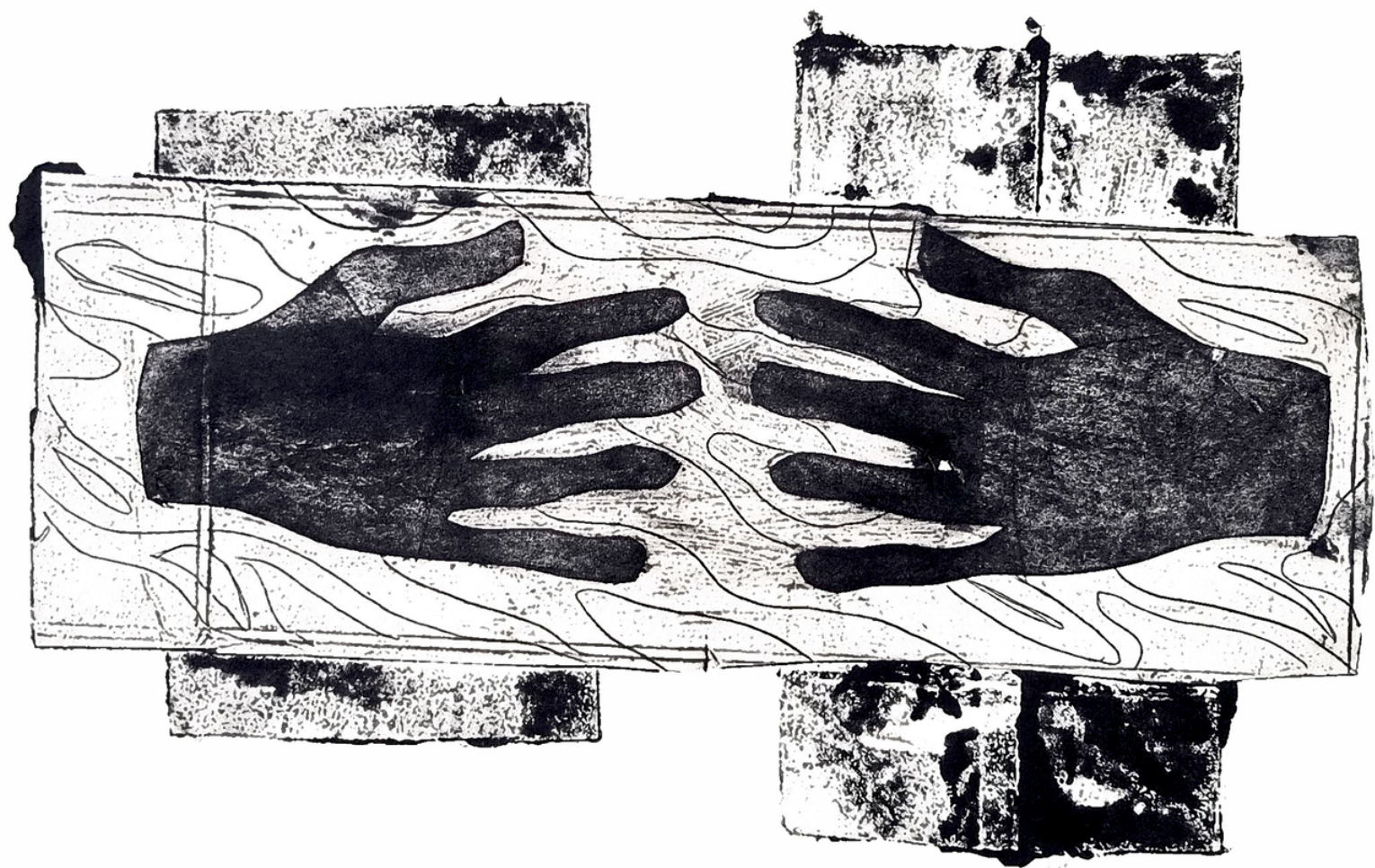
I love how the mallard pairs
guddling and alert
dabble along the gravelly margins
then raft along this runoff
of fertiliser and garden hose
and how the solitary heron
seems to materialise here
from another age
as guardian of shoaling ghost fish
but mostly I adore the dip
of flitting birds
jinking in and between the fleckled shadows
with only a lick of river
to loosen their voice.

Scarlett McQuillan



Dunmore on Film

Ella Liddle



Under the Surface

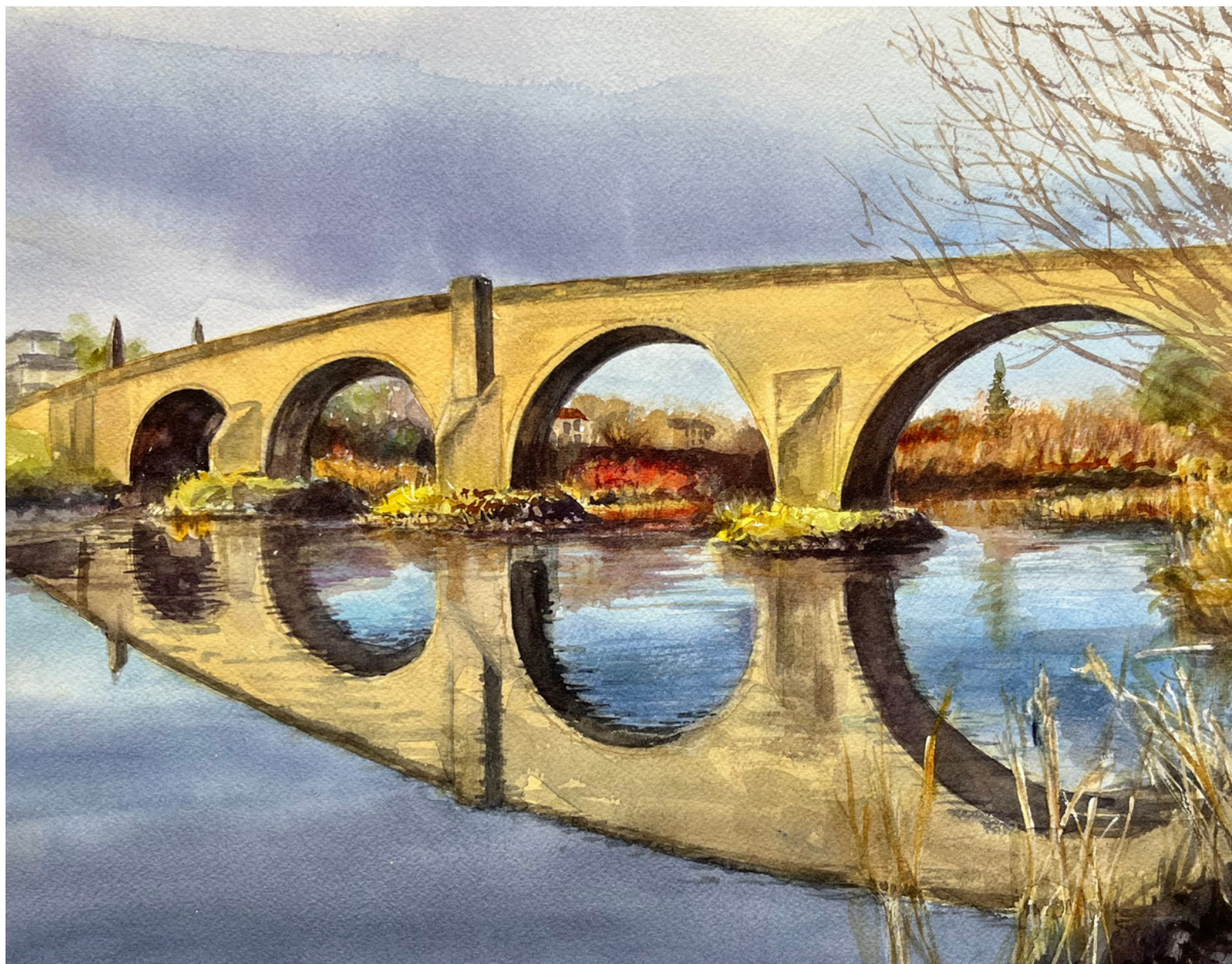
Joe McLellan



The grey heron - 'hɛrlɛ' 'hɛrɛlɛ' or
 'huron' in scots - is a large wading
 bird about a meter high and almost a
 two meter wingspan. They prowl the
 waters edge, silently looking for fish to
 stab (stug or stob) with their long
 yellow beaks.
 although solitary when feeding, they
 congregate together in the breeding
 season and a group of herons
 standing together is called a siege.
 they build their nests - a flat basket of
 sticks in tree crowns 25 m off the ground -
 (called -the 'heron's-sew')
 herons will live for 5-10 years

Grey Heron

Athena McLellan



The Old Stirling Bridge

Kathy Armstrong



The River of Hope

Elle Albacari



The Dreaded Bean-Nighe

Kristen Russell

Torquil The Explorer.

Hi, my name is Torquil, I'm a free spirit and an explorer. I often stay with my friends Jim and Carol, they're good at giving me space, but give me a roof over my head when I want it. Sometimes I'll go back for a few days and let them pamper me, feed me, I can sleep on their couch, or their summer house.

This one occasion I wanted to go out over the Perthshire hills, the weather was nice. I did a bit of fishing for my dinner, picked up other bits and pieces along the way, y'know proper Bear Grylls stuff, wood pigeon, bugs, drinking from burns. I love it.

You tend to think of cities to be problematic for troublesome characters, but there's local gangs here too, and you've got to watch out for the troublemakers. I was halfway up a hill, minding my own business and I came across James and Crawford, we've got history, so I knew we were going to have to square off. They made the first move, coming for me from both sides, I took a blow to the face, drawing blood. But I'm quicker than them, a few quick moves, and I left them licking their wounds, feeling sorry for themselves.

I headed up over the top of the hill, alongside the burn, a cool breeze keeping me from overheating, getting water from the burn to keep me hydrated.

At the top there are beautiful views, over to Killin, Aberfeldy and beyond, there's an absolute feeling of freedom, it's one of my favourite places to be, I arrived at twilight and decided to keep walking, a gentle pace, until I was tired, then found a place to stop for the night.

In the morning I performed my ablutions at a wee Lochan. There was trout in there, which were easy pickings, a lovely breakfast. I spent a few days up there, it was so tranquil, I can tell you.

But after a few days you get the need for home comforts, and I headed back to Jim and Carol's, avoided the local gangs and got back, by crossing the River Forth at Stirling Bridge, they told me it was about 8 days later, I must have lost track of time.

They fed me, cleaned up my bloodied fur and let me sleep in my wee round bed next to their couch while I rested up ready for my next trip. Though I might go out on the pull tonight while Jim and Carol are sleeping.

Greg McKee – Writer and Poet



Dunmore on Film

Ella Liddle

We The River

Rivertime starts with leaf mulch oozing mud.

A splungy tread against the sink

of sand and stroke of flow round ankles. You must know

never to approach directly, or a river will steal the earth from under you.

All stumble along humping banks the river was brown-green. Now

standing in the rank slurp of it, it blurs into its gravel bed

of lumped pebble. The fickle glamour of rivers.

Over the umber surface of jumbly stone,

beneath the sprackled leaves and snagging clouds you cannot see

the river alone, only: river as rock, lamprey, seedpod in tumbling tisane suspension.

A mewling shadow of buzzard. Some rusting beer tins.

This time during COVID the river was just thirsty dribbles,

a dry-bottomed spout. Rain plump, freshly sloshed, the flow now fankles itself

in tree roots and timber scrubbed smooth. In a riffle, froth purls forth from rock.

Deep russet sulks in trout-churned troughs.

Each nook offers up knick-knacks and other things to pocket.

Eyes scanning upstream for pottery or puckered bones, glints of schist

or chalky glass. Bent low, knees girning, blue haze clogs my sockets. Below my shadow, minnows scatter. Dredging knuckles unmoor pebbles, unleash mayfly.

My hands lift a pool of sour water that lingers then leaks down

past slats of palm. The damp streaking rust, staining my skin

in filmy whiffs of village, field, farm

discharge. Behold the filth of rivered fingers. For a moment

we the river ripple through the other. I am rooty and ruddy

and silted with litter. The river is

me; all rumpled thoughts, frustrated slither, a channel of time's runoff.

Rivertime ends with lumpy scuffle back to path. A brief farewell yet,

all homeward trek my feet keep flowing backwards: drip and drop, drip and drop.

Scarlett McQuillan



Sunsets Over Stirling

Callum Moore

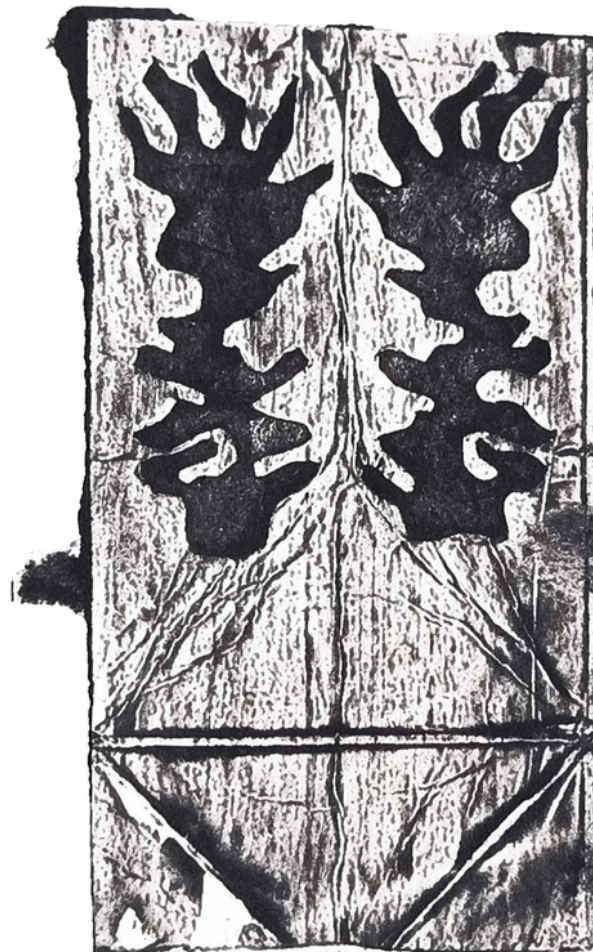
scawetland

{skōtlan(d)} Old English *ege* 'replaced by Old Norse *agi*. Scottish English the *land o' the leal*.

A person's place of reverential wonder. Belief has it that everyone has a *scawetland*. It's a place where humans experience a sense of awe, a feeling of peace and a condition of being that is unencumbered by fear, loneliness and regret. A person's *scawetland* can be a state of mind, of heart, of meaning and love. It can also be a physical place that inspires and comforts. This place can be anywhere – from a park bench or kitchen window to the top of a mountain or the banks of a valley's river. Often, a person's *scawetland* is a place they call and feel at home – a home where one lives, the community they are part of or even the planet they inhabit. In all instances, it is a place of energy and wonder that is revered and cherished.



Surfaces



Joe McLellan

Contributors

Thank you to everyone who contributed and made the first issue of GATHER possible!

All copyright remains with the original creator!

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