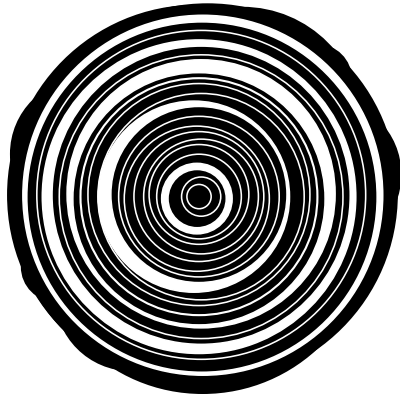


# HANES

Sophie McKeand



# HANES

*"There are things that are not sayable. That's why we have art."*

Leonora Carrington

## Acknowledgements

- *topography (plygu)* appears in *Poetry Wales*, winter 2015.
- *climate change/portmanteau* appeared in *Tears in The Fence*, Sept 2015.
- *you* was originally part of *The Artists' Manifesto* written and performed with Rhiannon White also at *National Theatre Wales' Summercamp*.
- *cut-and-come-again* was longlisted for the *Poetry Society's National Poetry Competition* in 2014.
- *Hanes* first appeared in the *Black Sheep* online journal (2015).
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- *dreams of giants (skin)* was published in *Poetry Wales* volume 40 (No. 4) Spring 2014.
- *dod i glawr (stiniog)* was published online as part of *Coflyfr: experimentations with time* (coflyfr.tumblr.com) autumn 2013.
- *Owlbones* was written in response to conversations with Graham Hartill at Ty Newydd during a week-long workshop in 2013.
- *Psycholingualeography* first appeared in issue 4 of *Dark Mountain* (summer 2013).
- *deadwood* was written during *Dark Mountain's* Prophets of Rock and Wave weekend workshop, winter 2012.
- *Deep* was originally recorded on the *DRKMTR* album in 2012 on the drumwithourhands.com record label.

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Poem/films can also be found at: [vimeo.com/sophiemckeand](https://vimeo.com/sophiemckeand)  
[www.sophiemckeand.com](http://www.sophiemckeand.com)

## Also by Sophie McKeand

**Prophecy:** conversations with myself | hand-stitched pamphlet 2010  
**DRKMTR:** album released on the drumwithourhands.com label 2012  
**Metaforestry:** storiâu o'r Gogs | album and illustrated poetry booklet 2013

All available from [sophiemckeand.com](http://sophiemckeand.com)

## **Comments on Sophie's work**

*"Sophie writes poems in which strange, old, true things are forced into contact with the present. They twist and turn and you never get quite what you expect from them, which is what gives them their power... some of the most interesting poems I've read in a long while. Genuinely original."*

**Paul Kingsnorth**

*"An allusive, restless sensibility turned outwards to the world; her words have heft, they grasp their way out of poetry into landscape."*

**Jay Griffiths**

*"Sophie McKeand embodies her poems in performance, the words flying off the page and flashing like fireflies. The effect is mesmerising and visceral."*

**Fiona Owen**



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# Hanes

we grow like nettles  
& recycle

(RS) k

my mother can't remember  
said she'd learnt as a child but  
too much time and so many dropped stitches

*- gwallgof -*

wool scrubbed, tumble-dried Family Feuds  
(heads of felt & gin)

wash-shrunk cast-offs  
put through-the-ringer

hand-me-down-a n g e r  
and nobody shows me how to work felt  
days stomp through the mind with predictable expendability  
left - right - left-right - left

*history forgets us*

I hunt out creation in junk-shops, books  
cable patterns

afraid of arms, I hide in strangers' words  
natter at street corners

k2 s11 k1 pss0 (WS) p

I am in knots

pick pick pick flecks the wool-blood-red  
*see this strand*

*this crimson thread is when/where  
the magic/the madness begins*

I stuff crocheted butterflies into pockets  
fairtraded imagos poke holes

this diapause dissolves us  
and I am foolish and weak and cannot dream

I fairisle tears  
*and think there must be something in the memory*

*unraveling*

I grasp at old yarns  
and hOwl at photographs

---

*gwallgof (Cymraeg): insane; mad*  
*gwall: defect, mistake*  
*cof: memory*

*hanes (Cymraeg): story, history, secret\**  
*\*obsolete meaning*



# cut-and-come-again

ВСЁ ДОЗВОЛЕНО \*

she plants time.

he dreams of rainforests.

*a range of leafy vegetables can be grown as cut-and-come-again*

for forty-five years the flowers fed him

Miracle Grown™ barefoot (in glass)

*either side could break*

*the agreement if it were expedient to do so*

seedssand

tears

expand

like rolling clouds

(the sky split in-to-two)

//L-side | R-side// vineripened ache

bought heavy with the chatter of hedgerows, houseplants

and the knowledge that

we cannot go on

cannot go back

must reap

time

& pray for a storm

---

*\*Everything is permitted*

- Dostoevsky

# pobl coedwig

she flocked

complex evolutionary novelty aside

the forest patterned

a mnemonic mirage

of green-footed people

moulting exoskeletons

& desire

*(this is how trees came to be)*

pan hedfanodd y bobl gyntra

llenwodd yr awyr gyda pluf

as this happened

snowdrops wormed

downwards

to hide from a wing-wrapped-sun

trees barked

at orange-beaked people

shivering on branches

in fear of

their minds.

# grey matter

I'm not sure I understand the question  
she said  
I'm not sure

& hoped intangible thoughts  
might knit to form speech -  
the dropped stitch  
picked up at the  
    next row

or maybe kites  
a great tangle      of kites  
fighting to breakfree  
pulling frantically like cats on leads  
poking through clouded  
    grey matter

overhead

(lightning/brilliance)

then smash to the ground -  
flop like      half-dead fish  
at the feet of gods

there is no

    truth  
she answered

only grey matter & lightning

# you

It is time to remember who you are  
no less than the child of stars  
no more than the space between atoms

when the snow tumbled white we scrambled for warmth  
(the waters of the world stacked ice-heavy and groaning)

we emerge wolf-grey  
howling 'where have you been?'  
the food grows cold, the drink warms; conversations stale as we wait for you

damp and heavy from the long hunt we circle, into the night we weave our  
breath with clouds and howl your name; how is it that you cannot hear?

*the root of thought  
is the flow of heart  
is the open doorway  
is lightening brilliance*

we circle like swans, patient and stoic,  
bark-like-feet break surface, paddle grit and slime,  
you think us elegant? (we rasp and hiss)  
you dream us wild? (we fight to be free)  
you think us royal? (we bathe in dust - drink pond water)  
your heart beats with our wings

my air was polluted (negative charge)  
my lakes evaporate (I collapse into dust)

we tracked the wrong path  
stuttered over mountains, heard only the echo of our thoughts, the chatter of  
mouths  
the sun embraced and abandoned us ten-thousand-times before we chased  
silence home with blistered feet, with dry mouths and wind-ravaged faces; skin  
creased like valleys.

now the heather is plum purple  
water slides into rock  
The Hare beats the ground but  
you are dying.

light extinguished, you sulk in shadows and complain.  
white swans illuminate your seeping heart so that you chase them away, scream  
darkness and forget.

we must plant rocks to remember  
one tree at a time to rewild

Do not idle.  
wolves circle.  
your heart beats with our wings.

It is time to remember who you are  
no less than the child of stars  
no more than the space between atoms

# rainforest

*Snowdonia's Celtic rain forest in Cwm Mynach (Monk's Valley) has around 200 days of rain each year.*

rainfall tears  
blister on skin  
rivulets'  
persistent fingers  
plough scars  
worry at the ground  
toss thoughts like stones

the landscape shifts  
is reformed  
-changeling-

and other times  
old memories  
are excavated  
tribal roots  
so deep I didn't know they existed  
so profound I couldn't tell you their name

the rain falls relentless  
washes clean  
veins & roots  
that shimmer like  
the backs of dolphins  
in darkness

and I can't look away  
can't turn away  
can't go back

the rain falls  
through the earth

and so do I

# deadwood

*lines written upon visiting a forest that is not in Cymru*

rumours ravage  
the river's mouth -  
secrets whisper indiscreetly to  
salmon & madmen  
rockbeds & fools

“(this is) deAd/w0od/  
time”

“thi(s is the t/ime of the deaD)  
w0 od”

“this” / “is d{eadw:ood”  
/tim;e/

-nobody believes her -

throat choked with the  
words of gods  
& men

letters&symbols&metaphors  
list  
like lost boats  
in the memory's fug -  
leaves &  
deadwood

hang

& we remember don't we?  
stories of  
death

& transience of being  
-?-we-remember-don't-we-?-

bathed in  
whitewash moons  
and dawn's red entrails

this blackened truth:

it is too much  
we ask too much

# climate change/portmanteau

we riise

(dŵr&seachange)

theN! [e]w/s

parAdigm \$hiftt\$

:ApArody:ApAthy:

full fathom five thy father lies

*the ocean wills the wave's reach*

floodgates & stacked chimneys [page-by-page]

year-upon-year

/hand-packed-philosophies/

*Ëcry when the war is over*

it never was won

still the trees whisper:

*¿lle mae eich gwreiddiau chi?*

eyes pool understanding

hand chopped water

still-poetic-soul

¿dach chi'n anghofio?

slippery/urwords dissolve the leaver

I pick at curled edges

& weep leaves

*it's so goddamn thick ere we can ardy see an inch infront of ar faces a real pea-souper rollin'*

*in fe miles dense I would say dense like a jungle an we ack through it oh! she acks! somebody*

*fetch er anky will yer smother dainty grating whisspers from pale trembling lipssso thick ere it*

*grates she grates we cannot see*

**\*\*ack\*\***

the night fell quickly

tarred drawl over concrete &labskaus

connnndensed

to

-rhotic-youse-arr-sm0g-

*poetry pupates in*

*the heart's*

*fractures &*

*sacrifices moth-*

*self to lighthouse*

*brilliance.*

Iamm missunderstood // same as youse

we destroy each other

&grieve for lostdogs



# deep

*lines written for the Irish Sea at Penmaenmawr*

I have tried to write you -  
failed time and again to capture your depth  
your essence  
the way in which you move  
now fluid, now enraged

now hypnotic  
there is electricity -  
the likes of which I cannot fathom  
in darkness that swells

primordial -  
I would be lost in you  
I marvel at those who are found in you  
but I would be

lost  
I would talk moonshine  
become intoxicated  
bask in your shallows  
surf thoughts that froth over cresting waves  
embrace the lie  
that is the warmth of you  
you call  
and I  
dive through surreal  
sink into profane  
disperse in profound  
undercurrents  
words cannot embody you  
understandings glance  
or are drained of light before

dawning  
unplumbed you remain  
deep

and I  
an empty shell  
beached like so many masquerading voices  
that whisper

your name

# form (Cronfa Alwen)

It's industrial -  
the effort poured

into treading water

shapes  
& reshapes

shapes  
& reshapes

-people and the landscape  
are water to him -

shapes & reshapes

the letters of his name



# dod i glawr ('stiniog)

On Monday I wrote:

*I invoke the spirit of the mountain*

(not much else happened)

*it was a difficult day*

last night he arrived

slate-strong-ancestor y geiriadur mawr

(I did not know him)

*roedd hi'n burw glaw*

it was a dream in which a gorilla

banged a man's head

against a table as

I performed poetry striding atop a hot-air

balloon

it was nighttime the fabric was soft

beneath my staff

(this means nothing)

I did not know him

show me how to write you I said

*sincere words are not pretty*

(I read this once)

*//in the beginning was the word && poetry is a descendant of the  
original word which mystics believe gave the impulse for all creation!/\**

I didn't see it coming

cannot write time

it is too ssslight

*subtle*

I wanted to write of

-slateshawl-slagheaps-

suffocation

&shattered existence

the mountain does not believe this

(knows his own strength)

*Parturient montes, nascetur ridiculus mus*

last night the mountain dreamed

& I did not know him

---

*\*poetry is the... Ben Okri, A Time For New Dreams*

# psycholinguageography

## (i) iaith

the diving sun

illuminates

turrets

castles

*logos*

strengthens shadows that

bear hug

crowds-houses-*mythos*

there are ghosts here

regardless of what is written

know that there are ghosts here

|flagstone|words|build|

|logical|formats|and|towerblocks|and|novels|

|Babel|the|flagship|enterprise|

destroyed by a myth

scattered remains

and t o n g u e s

(lick clean old wounds)

re-open, re-group & re-build

history tells us

we will be re-scattered

(learn from it)

dan ni ddim yn dysgu

she speaks in tongues

dwi ddim yn gwbod

here is something I learned from the mountains

-be careful when speaking with mountains-

magnifier of souls

creator of giants

poeni amdano fo

(we do not need giants)

there is a small woman who sits by the lake

she does not know it is a lake

(she thinks it a reflection)

nobody has the heart to tell her  
paid a phoeni amdani hi

this is the machine:

write binarydigits *pluggedintothenetwork*  
(grow syntax trees)

a precarious occupation -  
building history  
(the obsolete was once cliché)

with language

& words' mesolithic remains  
reminds of  
summer solstices  
at Bryn Celli Ddu  
(they did not question the meaning of the stones)

this is not a castle  
there is no castle

only shadows'  
fingers

choking the path

*she does not walk the right path*

wanders

through language  
*coedwig*

and when the birds sing  
you will know of her loss  
know that the twisting bark grimaces  
to be away from you  
(cannot leave/leaves)

there is no profit to be made  
from swimming upstream

**(ii) treigladau**

/amser/time/time/

/amser/time/time/

/amser/time/time/

there is no time -  
inthis landofgiants

exists  
existed  
existing  
extinct  
diodde

nothing is new  
(does na dim newyddion)

I had a dream last night a mean old spirit revealed the true nature of time

he was not so mean  
(or so old)

mi fasen nhw'n helpu  
I would have put it in a poem ((mi ddylwn i))  
should-a-would-a-could-a

tasen gynnyn nhw amser

(this is not the nature of time)

beth bynnag

I found words  
to put in the poem

fully formed

in a storm in a *teacup*  
((we take shelter gyda'r nos))

*breuddwydiwr*

falling down the rabbit  
hole

born&bredinthe briarpatch  
born&bredinthe briarpatch  
born&bredinthe briarpatch

\_leaves\_will\_yellow\_of\_their\_own\_accord\_  
\_carpet\_valleys\_blanket\_souls\_become\_mud\_earth\_life\_

does the tree map how she will grow? <maen nhw ar goll>

treigladau

&ocean&ice&rainfall&cloud&ocean&ice&rainfall&cloud&  
precipitated five seekers into the gully below

(search for knowledge&lose as much as you find)

“this is because there is not enough time”

(not enough time)

thereistoomuchtime

*it lies everywhere*

(is the only truth)

you would not grasp at it

(this is the nature of time)

if you knew what it meant

I see now that you did not understand her

(we all re-write history) roedd rhaid i ni

hers is such that we always knew

always knew

yes, we knew\*

\*(they did not know) she was once the barren  
wasteground once the twig who dreamed of oaks once the  
ugly duckling

(was always the same)

*remember that*

/

she does not forget.

the decay of empires spans decades

discards sterile carcasses nobody can eat

this is a long time

(that is not a long time)

when the universe is a fractal



**(iii) dysgu (lle)**

the land

is sacred

at Penmaenmawr

*butnotin thistime*

pan ôn i'n blentyn

I didn't know this

language

licked

&rounded in pebbles' memories that

chatter back&forth back&forth back&forth

&dance with butterflies (*iar fach yr haf*)

*I know because the land tells me*

pebbles chatter

oceansoftime

&swells

of conversations&words:inflections/iaith:

ygeiriadurmawr/

*learn\yn y wlad wyllit/teach*

words&thoughts kept simple

(lle mae'r

geiriau?).treigladau.treigladau.treigladau.

--- I do not know if you do not know ---

*(knowing from books is not knowing not not-knowing)*

seals sleep on the beach at Porth Dyniewaid

I don't think they know who we are

(it's as if we've learned nothing)

/stand on a bright day/& watch the seals laze for hours/& pale in comparison/&

complain of wet feet/ dim ots

(pam wnes ti adael dysgu?)

ideologues

learn-then-teach-*linearlineslostintranslation*

“there is a time and place for everything” (wise old nain)

dysgu (lle)

I visit  
& return  
visit & return

(what do I care for the holes in your end of our boat?)

I cannot hold the ocean

*ewch ati hi*

*fallintothewater*

& be reborn

*this is how to learn....*

*(dan ni i fod i)*

*...I was an acorn on the tree I was the seed of a woman who  
died I was made whole //shaped from song//*

a tiny acorn on the tree (who dreamed of womanhood) and fell

fell

*this is the second time I was born*  
what you look for in me you will find

# metathesis (soil)

*A hill is officially a mountain if it measures at least 2000 feet. Moel Famau is not classed as a mountain because she falls short by 182 feet.*

she amasses thoughts

like clouds

hums in soul

& feet

calls time to fall

& moments & moments & lifetimes

cascade through consciousness

& thought

& people hike

mynd i fyny

mynd i lawr

& cry

*what does it mean?*

what does it all mean?

# fruit

swollen flesh  
s t r e t c h e d  
belly tight  
the drum drum drum  
beats – out – time

you could set your clock  
by it  
manic pacing of the  
w e a t h e r m e n  
(raindancersofold)  
does nothing to change  
seasons  
fall  
of their own accord  
(mae'n hydref)

you do not have to know  
the r I p e n I n g  
to eat the

fruit

## **pause.**

do not lecture me

-on the world's faults

and I will not lecture you

-on your faults

only let us sit

in the sun's warmth

drink mint tea

& marvel at our

weeds

# guilt

My lover is a comatosed quadriplegic on life support. I should switch her off.  
Instead, I feed. Drip - drip.

It is evening. I am flown to a planet-like-form listing in space like a defunct satellite. I fold wings; draw closer to a great, ugly, deformed heart. The tight embrace of thick scars wrapped ravine-like across crimson muscle constricts beats, causing it to pound oddly. I howl blood. This is my heart. Strong rhythms thrum ribs. Stars pulse. I trace biographic tracks. Caress lesions. Weep leaves. Grieve for the stupid things I have allowed people to do to me, and the foolish things I have done to myself.

The woman-who-is-a-butterfly searches for the needy each morning. She is dogged. Empty. These actions fill her. *You will work with me.* I acquiesce.

The near-dead-man digs at the back of a long cave. I know he is near death because I have to cross the river of light to reach him. He tunnels from guilt. I crawl flesh floors. He hacks. Gouges meat. Fears light. *Here.* A shovel. *Dig.* We excavate. Deeper. Away from the light. Deeper into self. He will die. Who is he? *It does not matter. We heal.*

I take his hand. *Stop.*  
He shakes free. Digs. Frantic.  
You must help him. I cannot imagine how.

The woman-who-is-a-butterfly returns me to the near-dead-man. The tunnel's length is shocking. He has not slowed. I fashion a blanket to protect him from the light. He must trust me. We must move. The digging must stop or he will die. *The river of light is death.*

I know. I have died.  
He is fear. I am strength. We stagger out of the wound. He folds into blanket-safety. I carry him above my head and wade. We cross. Reach the other side and he breaks free. Saved. Healed. Gone.

I do not know who he is.  
*It does not matter. We heal.*

What did he fear?  
*We do not ask. We heal.*

*What did he fear?*  
The woman-who-is-a-butterfly does not return.

My guilt is a comatosed quadriplegic on life support. I should switch her off.  
Instead, I feed. Drip - drip.

# self harm

*for Pen y Gogarth*

he cuts  
feels the blade dig  
pain to release the pain

pain to release the pain  
doesn't go far enough  
not deep enough  
no rest

he explodes rock - blasts holes  
left gaping like the mouths of monsters

spews  
violence  
anger & rage

pain to release the pain

leaves him

brittle

s

t

r

a

w

m a n

# topography (plygu)

*A child plays with a four-coloured kite —  
black and white, green and red —  
before he explodes into stars.*

- Mahmoud Darwish

| mewnblyg |

I fold at the reservoir  
slate surfaced  
-creased--froth-

in the time before Understanding I  
lived through iceage & flood  
was desert &  
rock  
the Great Beginning tattooed on bark & flesh  
(I am not the woman I was)

*terra nullius*

cartographer's

breathless  
lengths  
caress

soles

//held hostage to shadow & son//

mynyddoedd

{ ff o l d - o u t }

| allblyg

the wall cracks |

I whisper *I love you*



# Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

*lines written at Loggerheads*

I walk

walking

I hear

no thing but the  
swish-swish-swish  
of waterproof jacket arms

the thud  
of wellington boots

-almostfailtocatch-

bird  
song - etched  
on winter's face  
tangible as spiders' webs

delicate as that first time you  
touched me

- and I shiver -  
feel notes slide  
from

eyelashes

-fall to earth with no great crescendo-

# chimera

she grows wings -  
unfurls shoulders  
shrugs the world's weight  
into oblivion

bones hollow -  
the concertina stretches  
out  
up and out and  
wingtips brush the  
bedrock of souls

She spirals -  
howls  
the moon into  
fragments

bringer of death  
eater of worlds

# Owlbones

*They said that when I was found,  
I had a jembe in my hand  
And chicken feathers in my mouth.*

Meshack Yobby - Mghanga (drums of Taita)

I- heard an owl hoot — tentative

ghosts of old injuries spAsmmm

<<<<blind truths& groundcures

bruised words & domestic violets

Orrr0gue.ton;;gues:

“He ... preferred to be thought a fool

rather than a subtle artificer.”

she ... wears silken treachery

shameless

words weal

wail on warrior skin

\\bluewash\\

*perhaps it is the — quiet voices  
that determine our decisions*

*{I can[not] heal}*

can dream can dream can dream || ag ysgrifennu

& roll owlbones

hold this white feather

hold it tight now

hoooold .... onnn ((&wave thrice atT moons))

timetrapped diamonds

*(d \_ r i p p e d*

*from wombs) &placEbo*

in the air between words

messengers cure you

[no cure you]

¡hi! ¡hi! ¡ho!

¡hi! ¡hi! ¡ho!

.toomuch.common.sense.reality.

maybe she'll start the revolution

standkneedeep in kids

& rise sister! rise!

*or pebble pOckets*

*♫ divr*

body-text-re- / -brand typography&&

repeat:

¡hi! ¡hi! ¡ho!

¡hi! ¡hi! ¡ho!

this is the cure

when the men

make you sick

I can — see why people believe

# birdbrain

they called her bird brain  
as if it were not a compliment

and as dawn devoured the night  
they howled with laughter  
at her chatter  
(reflections)

at the riverbank  
she would dip  
dip-dip  
dip-dip

with no understanding  
of the ridiculous

and the water roared    a cautionary tale

at the people who would call her bird brain  
as if it were not a compliment

