

The 11th International Symposium
of the Hippocrates Initiative for
Poetry and Medicine

May 23-24, 2024

FINAL

PROGRAMME

The 11th International Symposium of the Hippocrates Initiative for Poetry and Medicine

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PROGRAMME

THURSDAY, MAY 23

09:00 | **Registration**

[Ground floor]

09:30 | **Symposium Opening**

[Conference Room]

10:00 | **Welcome Lecture**

[Conference Room]

The Hippocrates Initiative: The Story So Far

Michael Hulse, co-founder of the Hippocrates Initiative

Chair: Luz Mar González-Arias

10:30 | **Panel 1: Metaphors and Medical Practice**

[Conference Room]

Outside Narration: Implementation of Poetry in Trauma Detection and Treatment Sessions. A Methodological Approach

Alba de Juan i López, University of Oviedo

Metaphor and Heart Disease in Contemporary Poetry

Emma Trott, University of Leeds

Chair: Gloria García Pintueles

11:30 Coffee Break and Pop-up Bookshop

12:00 Panel 2: Medicine, Poetry and the Brain

[Conference Room]

Re-marking Time: Poetry in Medical Spacetime

Shane Neilson, poet, physician, and critic

Where Poetry Meets Psychiatry: Exploring the Relationship Between Thought Disorder and Creativity

Safia Khan, Luton and Dunstable Hospital

Chair: Carmen Quijada Díez

13:00 The Donald Singer Memorial Lecture

[Conference Room]

Poetry as Antibody: Inoculating Against the Malaise of Instrumentalism in Medical Education

Alan Bleakley, Professor Emeritus of Medical Education and Medical Humanities, University of Plymouth

Chair: Luz Mar González-Arias

14:00 Lunch [Sidrería Tierra Astur, Avilés]

16:00 Poet's Corner

[Room 1A]

Poetry Reading by Alan Bleakley and Shane Neilson

Book Launch: *Routledge Handbook of Medicine and Poetry*

Chair: Michael Hulse

17:00 | **Panel 3: Can Poetry Help in Clinical Encounters?**

[Room 1B]

Writing with the Body: A Movement Poetry Workshop for Healthcare Workers to Tune into their Vulnerability

Marianne Luyo Avalo, Cayetano Heredia University

Shouldn't Hurt a Bit, Should It?

Emma Storr, University of Leeds

Chair: Lena Elipe Gutiérrez

18:00 | **Poet's Corner**

[Room 1A]

Poetry Reading by Isabel Alonso-Breto and Emma Storr

Chair: Alba de Juan i López

19:00 | **Avilés Guided Tour**

FRIDAY, MAY 24

09:00 Panel 4: Poetry as Therapy in History

[Conference Room]

Wounded Spirit's Chant: PTSD and the Native American Experience

Aitana Monzón Blasco, University of Zaragoza

Empathic Exploration: Experiencing Medicine through Poetry

Friederike Foedtke, University of Salamanca

Chair: Marta Fernández Morales

10:00 Panel 5: Poetry and the Body

[Conference Room]

"The Captain Calls His Name, It Has No Meaning." Louise Glück's
Finding Solace in Obliqueness of Illness

Zuzanna Zarebska, University of Lisbon

*My Body and Me: Pain, Desire, and Corporality in Beatriz Gimeno's
Poetry*

Luis León Prieto, independent scholar

Chair: Máximo Aláez Corral

11:00 Coffee Break and Pop-up Bookshop

11:30 Hippocrates Lecture

[Conference Room]

Poems from Hospitals in War Zones and Refugee Camps

Andrew Dimitri, Medical Team Leader, Médecins sans Frontières

Chair: Luz Mar González-Arias

12:30 Panel 6: Mental Health and the Ethics of Care

[Conference Room]

Two “Careful Readings” of Poetry and Care

Isabel Alonso-Breto, University of Barcelona

I Have Given [...] my Body to Surgeons: Medical Spaces and Images in Sylvia Plath’s “Tulips”

Gudrun Palomino Tirado, University Jaume I

Chair: Shadia Abdel-Rahman Téllez

13:30 Lunch [Casa Alvarín, Avilés]

15:30 Hippocrates Poetic Encounter

[Room 1A]

Peter Wallis’s *Half Other*: Poetry Reading and Conversation with Emma Storr

Chair: Michael Hulse

16:30 Panel 7: Applied Medical Humanities

[Room 1B]

The Impact of Using Online Zoom for a Creative Writing Course for Cancer Patients and Relatives

Wendy French and Audrey Ardern-Jones, Maggie’s Centre, Sutton at the Royal Marsden Hospital

Therapeutic Potential of Poetry for Patients with Neurological Conditions: A Scoping Review

Akshayaa K. Chittibabu, UCLA David Geffen School of Medicine

Poetry as an Educational Tool for Enhancing Mental Health Practitioners’ Understanding of Lived Experience Psychosis

Dami Okhiria, Sheffield University

Chair: Marta Ramón García

18:00 | **2024 Ceremony of the Hippocrates Awards for Poetry and Medicine**

[Conference Room]

20:00 | **Closing Reception**

PLENARY SPEAKERS

Alan Bleakley

Poetry as Antibody: Inoculating Against the Malaise of Instrumentalism in Medical Education

Medical education is suffering from a malaise—a creeping reductive instrumentalism that produces doctors as technicians. Patients deserve more than this. The poetic imagination can act as an antibody that protects from such instrumentalism, seeking rather to express ethical, aesthetic, political, and transcendental values. Such an imagination is characterised by the production of innovative metaphors. Ironically, patients' talk (the vernacular) is metaphor-rich, whereas technical medical talk—grounded in biomedicine—refuses metaphor. Pedagogical interventions beyond the instrumental are called for that raise quality, intensity, and complexity of the learning experience for medical students. Medical education with a poetic imagination at its heart promises to shape doctors who can practice a lyrical medicine, and is essentially political, embracing an aesthetics of resistance in the face of instrumental approaches. The talk will demonstrate how an aesthetics of resistance can reach deep into the most reductive, functional aspects of medical education—such as learning about pharmaceuticals—to transform practices. The implications of treating a poetic imagination as antibody to the malaise of instrumentalism can be summarised as a linguistic challenge, where medical pedagogies must nourish use of the subjunctive mood as a democratic gesture.

Dr Alan Bleakley is Emeritus Professor of Medical Education and Medical Humanities at Plymouth University Peninsula Medical School UK, and past President of the Association for Medical Humanities. He has a background in zoology and psychology and worked for many years as a psychodynamic psychotherapist. He was head of the clinical education research group at Peninsula Medical School (Universities of Exeter and Plymouth) where he also set up an innovative medical humanities curriculum development and research unit. He has an international reputation as a scholar in the fields of medical education and medical humanities and has published 20 academic books and many articles and book chapters. He is also a widely published poet with seven collections.

Bleakley's most recent books are: *The Bio-illogical* (poetry) (2024, Artel Press); *Handbook of Medicine and Poetry* (edited with Dr Shane Neilson) (2024, Routledge); *Medical Humanities: Ethics, Aesthetics, Politics* (2024, Routledge); *Psychotherapy, the Alchemical Imagination and Metaphors of Substance* (2024, De Gruyter); *Poetry in the Clinic: Towards a Lyrical Medicine* (with Dr Shane Neilson) (2021, Routledge).

Peter Wallis

Peter Wallis's *Half Other*: Poetry Reading and Conversation with Emma Storr

Peter Wallis is a Hawthornden Fellow, three times winner of the Thetford Open Poetry Competition, winner of the Living with Dementia Poetry Competition, and of the Barnet Poetry Competition. His poems have been shortlisted in the National Poetry Competition and shortlisted three times for the Bridport Prize. He won publication of a pamphlet, *Articles of Twinship*, in the Bare Fiction Debut Poetry Collection Competition 2015. A couple of unusual prizes have included the Richard Boswell Bowl, awarded by the National Poetry Foundation, and the opportunity to read his work on Radio 4's Poetry Please (as a winner in the BBC's *Gardeners' World* poetry competition).

His poems appear regularly in print and online journals including *Magma*, *Poetry News*, *Poetry Salzburg Review* and *The New European*. Until Covid called a halt, he ran a monthly poetry workshop for people living with dementia in a local care home. He is now Allotment Poet in Residence for his Town Council and is Submissions Editor for the UK charity *Poems in the Waiting Room*. *Half Other*, described by Michael Hulse as "a triumph of the human spirit," is his first full collection.

LECTURES

Michael Hulse

The Hippocrates Initiative: The Story So Far

In this talk, Michael Hulse describes the birth of the Hippocrates Prize, its accompanying symposium, and the Hippocrates Press, which has published anthologies on the heart and brain as well as single-authored volumes of poetry and criticism. He outlines the key points in the history of The Hippocrates Initiative from 2009 until the death of co-founder Professor Donald Singer in 2022 and examines the nature of its contribution to understanding relations between the disciplines of poetry and medicine.

Michael Hulse is the co-founder of the Hippocrates Initiative and a key figure in contemporary poetry. He has won numerous awards for his poetry and has translated more than sixty books from the German, among them works by W. G. Sebald, Goethe and Rilke. Reading tours have taken him to Canada, the US and Mexico, Australia, New Zealand, India, and several European countries—his audience for his solo event at Adelaide Writers' Week 2012 numbered 700. Michael has worked in publishing, television, and universities, and in 2020 retired from the University of Warwick, where he taught poetry and comparative literature. His co-edited anthology *The Twentieth Century in Poetry* was a poetry bestseller, and his most recent collection of poems, *Half-Life*, was chosen as a Book of the Year by John Kinsella.

Andrew Dimitri

Poems from Hospitals in War Zones and Refugee Camps

During his talk, Dr Dimitri will show some photographs from his work over the years with Médecins Sans Frontières and read poems which have emerged from his experiences.

Dr Andrew Dimitri is a poet and physician based in Sydney, Australia. Over the last 15 years he has worked for Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) in some of the world's most challenging and troubled regions, including conflict zones and refugee camps. His poems about these experiences attained second place in the 2017 and third place in the 2021 Hippocrates Prizes, and he has been a featured 'Poet of the Week' by the *Guardian* (UK). His first collection, *Winter in Northern Iraq* was published by the Hippocrates Press in 2019. His second collection is due for publication by the Hippocrates Press in October 2024, and this presentation will also feature some of the works from this upcoming collection.

POETRY READINGS

Alan Bleakley

Dr Alan Bleakley is Emeritus Professor of Medical Education and Medical Humanities at Plymouth University School of Medicine, UK. He has six collections of poetry—most recently *The Bio-Illogical* (2023, The Artel Press), and has published widely, including: *The Times Literary Supplement*, *London Review of Books*, *Manhattan Review*, *Bananas*, *The Honest Ulsterman*, *Stand*, *The Rialto*, *London Magazine*, *South West Review*, *Westwords*, *New Poetry*, and is anthologized in *Transformation*, *South West Review: A Celebration*, *Arvon Foundation Anthology*, *Cornwall in Verse*, and *The Dreamt Sea: Anglo-Cornish Poetry 1928-2004*. He has co-written (with Shane Neilson) *Poetry in the Clinic: Towards a Lyrical Medicine* (Routledge 2022) and co-edited (with Shane Neilson) the *Routledge Handbook of Medicine and Poetry* (2024).

Shane Neilson

Shane Neilson is a poet, physician, and critic who will publish *The Reign*, his seventh trade book of poetry, with Goose Lane Editions in 2025. Shane's work has appeared in *Poetry Magazine*, *Prairie Schooner*, *Verse Daily*, and *Fiddlehead*. His *Dysphoria* (PQL, 2017) won the Hamilton Book Award, and *Complete Physical* was shortlisted for the Trillium Poetry Prize.

Isabel Alonso-Breto

In her twenties, Isabel Alonso-Breto compiled an unpublished poetry collection entitled *Seis veces siete poemas* ("Six Times Seven Poems"). After such paltry feat, academic endeavours engulfed her poetic vocation, and for years she would just write the occasional poem. She kept on reading, teaching, and translating poetry, though, having rendered into Spanish pieces by, among others, Sabrina Brancato, Sia Figiel, Amryl Johnson, Grace Nichols and Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill, and, more recently, the anthology *Sow Only Words*, by Tamil poet Cheran. In 2017 she fell ill with breast cancer, and the experience rekindled her long-lost habit of writing down thoughts with something of a poetic vocation. She would later on put them together in another collection, entitled *Elogio de la tabla de surf y otros poemas desde el cáncer de mama* (*In Praise of the Surfboard and Other Poems from Breast Cancer*), which, perhaps out of habit, she translated into English herself.

Emma Storr

Storr lives in Yorkshire. She worked as a GP and academic and is now a Visiting Associate Professor in Primary Care at the University of Leeds. She has written poetry all her life and in 2018 completed an MPhil in Writing at the University of South Wales. Her poems have been widely published in magazines and anthologies and won prizes in local and national poetry competitions. Her debut pamphlet *Heart Murmur*, published in 2019, was based on her experience of working as a GP. In 2022, Fair Acre Press published *Offcumdens*, featuring 41 of Emma's poems paired with Bob Hamilton's photographs of Yorkshire's people, streets, and landscapes. In 2023 Emma was joint winner of the Geoff Stevens Memorial Prize organised by Indigo Dreams. This led to the publication of her first solo collection *The Year of Two Winters*.