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NEW POETRY ANTHOLOGY LOOKS AT WHAT WE HAVE IN COMMON

'The Commons' is part of the Hare-Raising Digest anthology series and was published by Waterhare Press on 16th August 2019.

This poetry anthology is the first Hare-Raising Digest and features local writers from Plymouth as well as others from the UK and overseas. All of the poetry within The Commons centres around the themes of oppression, frustration, isolation, counterculture, and identity. Chief Editor Thom Boulton (who is Plymouth's current Poet Laureate) said, "What I love about this collection is how it builds from anger, concern, anxiety, and sadness towards a demand for hope and change." He continued "The anthology is accessible and relatable which is perfect for someone completely new to the world of poetry. At the same time, the creative works are of such a good calibre that they will satisfy the avid poetry enthusiasts as well." Joanna Morgan, one of the editors of The Commons, added, "With the current tumultuous political situation in the UK, this collection is a refreshing, unapologetic voice of the times which challenges your principles, traditions and vision of the future."

Where a lot of poetry anthologies tend to draw on already published works, The Commons exclusively features never before seen poetry. Countless submissions were sifted through by the selection team of Thom Boulton, William Telford, and Sam Richards, until 35 poems from 26 poets came together like puzzle pieces. William said, "The standard of submissions was extremely high, making it a very difficult task to whittle them down. Any of them could have made the final selection, they were all that good. But there is only so much space in a book and after a lot of head scratching the poems you will read in the published collection were chosen. They are all wonderful."

The book is divided into three sections, with the final section dedicated to an essay and several poems written by Sam Richards, the original brain behind the concept of the book. "The Commons is an idea I posted on Facebook." explained Sam, "It revives and expands on the old idea of common land, although with a twist suitable to our 21st century society."

Many established poets have contributed, including Hannah Linden, John Philips, Gloucestershire Poet Laureate Brenda Read-Brown, and Forward Prize nominee Steve Spence. Hare-Raising Digest seeks to give a spotlight to lesser-known writers as well such as Merris Longstaff and Kat Savage, and brings new audiences to the works of the many contributing international poets. When asked about how all the backgrounds of the poets, their works, and the ongoing themes of the book helped influence the cover design, artist Andrew Martin said, "I went for circles to capture everything. Like



the writers and their poems, the circles represent the simplicity of complexity. You find them everywhere, from the stains left by the coffee mugs to the flaring corona of suns. They represent the edge of things and yet contain the place they were born from and where they will return to; ripples in the stillness.”

The Commons (Hare-Raising Digest) is available to buy online from <https://waterharepress.weebly.com>

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If you would like to arrange an interview or event then please contact Thom directly through either his email greenbanddruid@outlook.com or by phoning him on 07814 683856.