



WHAT
MAKES
HOME?

A COLLECTION OF UNIQUE
POEMS ON HOMELESSNESS

EDITED BY DR GRACE
TIDMARSH AND DR SALLY
REYNARD

Acknowledgements

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This poetry collection forms part of a larger ongoing project (10+ years) surrounding youth homelessness led by Prof. Jennifer Cumming alongside colleague Dr Mary Quinton. We would also like to thank Prof. Jessica Pykett, Dr Dorothy Butchard and James Rodker.



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Sport psychology research
in new territories





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Further information

Before you begin reading through the foreword and the poems included in this e-Book, we would like to draw your attention to the kind of topics that will be covered in the poems so you can make an informed choice about reading them. Please see below a list of topics covered followed by some key support information. Please note key support information is UK based.

Content note

The poems contained in this collection broadly contain content and descriptions related to homelessness. Within this, violence, domestic abuse, alcohol and substance use, and mental illness are covered. Please keep this in mind as you make a decision on what, if at all, is the best way for you to engage with the content. Information on associated support services can be found below.

Homelessness support services:

- [Shelter](#) - call 0808 800 4444 or live chat
- [Centrepoin](#)t - call 0808 800 0661 or live chat

Mental health support services:

- [Samaritans](#) - call 116 123 (Open 24/7)
- [Mind](#) Infoline - call 0300 123 3393
- Text [SHOUT](#) to 85258

Drug and alcohol support services:

- [Frank](#) - text 82111 or call 0300 123 6600

Domestic abuse support services:

- [Refuge](#) - call 0808 2000 247 or live chat

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A F T E R W O R D

FOREWORD

01

Welcome to this collection of poetry. The poems explore experiences of homelessness as well as perceptions of homelessness from a variety of individuals with and without lived, or current, experiences of homelessness.

There are many stereotypes associated with experiencing homelessness. For example, homelessness is often portrayed as what we can see - rough sleeping - however, there are many more types of hidden homelessness, such as sofa surfing, that we don't see so obviously in our communities. Experiencing homelessness impacts a variety of people including young people, families and those from the LGBTQ+ community. As you make your way through this collection of poems we invite you to keep an open mind of curiosity to the experiences of others.

Those experiencing homelessness are often seen as less than human and problems to be solved. We invite you to consider a contrary perspective that instead sees people who have strengths and the potential to succeed. In bringing these poems together, our aim is to build on a long tradition of poetry written by people with lived experience of homelessness which has tackled stigma and stereotypes."

Written by
Dr Grace Tidmarsh

02

P O E T R Y
C O L L E C T I O N

02

DANGER & DIFFICULTIES

04

05 / WHAT IS HOME

06 / I NEED A HOME

07 / HOME FOR NOW

09 / MY HOME

10 / AS THE DAY BREAKS

What is home?

Anonymous

No safety within these walls.

Fear, danger; no security.

I need to run, where is home. It's not here!

I want warmth, comfort, a cosy nest. The place I see in the glossy pictures, or the movies, I want Disney, the enchantment.

Instead, reality, dark, stark danger.



Created with **Magic Media**, an AI system by Canva

Image description: A black, grey and white sketch of a person stood facing away from view in a small, dark, empty room looking outside through big open doors.

I Need a Home

Anonymous

To keep my child, I need a home.
But no-one gets how hard it was when I had one.
The constant abuse,
Shouting and crying,
The things that he did,
Was no place like home.
She's all that I want, and I can't lose another,
But everything's numb and I lost all my strength.
The drugs help
And walking around
It's not a safe place,
It's no place like home.
Sometimes I dream of a place of my own.
Of forgetting the past, not feeling quite so alone.
A kitchen to cook,
Protection from the rain,
A permanent bed,
A place to call home.

Home for Now

Sonia L Fereday

These concrete walls
If they were to crumble
I'd surely be crushed by the 7 plus floors above.
If the weight of it all was to take over me.
It would surely dead me.
As I turn the key
I stop and think
It's already crushing me.
I don't even want to go in.
Can feel the tension as I wonder how this door's
still standing the amount of times it's been kicked
in.
The angers on the walls.
Holes through the doors.
The constant treading on eggshells saying comes
to mind.
As I look to the floor at the pieces of glass from
the plate thrown up the wall.
Teenage hormones at their finest.
No space to retreat to as we tread on each others
toes in this 2 bed flat.
All 4 of us with anger issues
In each others way

The constant blocked drains.
Broken heating the damp ready to decay us.
Home life at the moment
Is an absolute chaos.



Created with **Magic Media**, an AI system by Canva

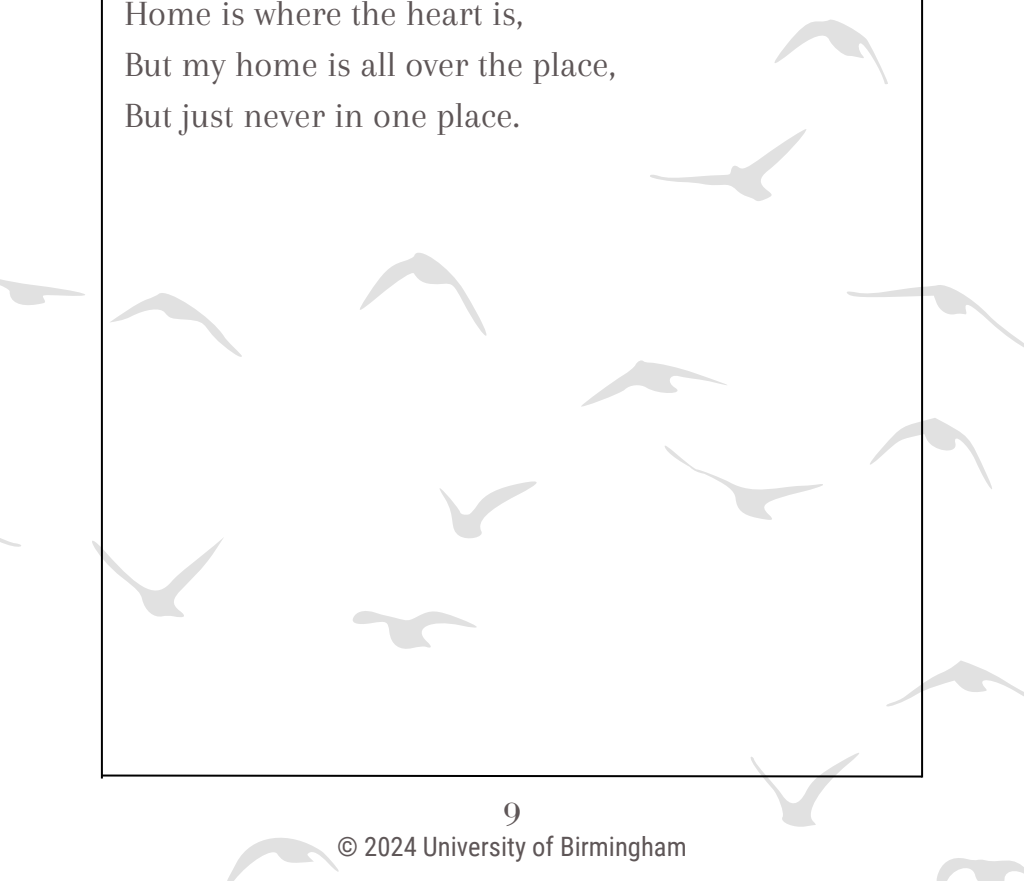
Image description: A black, grey and white sketch of the front of a house, with a person stood facing away from view, on the step to the orange front door.



My Home

Sahira

Home is where the heart is,
At least that's what they say,
But my home is on a different friend's sofa every
week,
Or the cold pathway where I see hundreds of different
faces but no smiles,
Or the park field where I get more warmth from
watching the birds fly by rather than hugs from the
ones I love,
Home is where the heart is,
But my home is all over the place,
But just never in one place.



As The Day Breaks

Anonymous

Sharp frigid needles,
stab at my skin,
I can't feel my fingers,
and my clothes are too thin.

It seeps into everything,
in day and in night,
it's constant and relentless,
I'm dreading its bite.

I used to love winter,
for its glittering frost,
but now all i can think of,
is how much it will cost.

Every day it continues,
I fear for the worst,
the colder it gets,
I wonder if I've been cursed.

How much longer,
must I wait here alone,
in the dark of night,
sat on ice covered stone.

As the day breaks,
and the snow starts to melt,
a hand reaches out,
and there a woman is knelt.

"It's not much" she says,
as she hands me a cup,
it's warm and it's sweet,
and tears start to well up.

Before I can thank her,
she's walked down the road,
but I'll never forget,
the kindness she showed.



APPRECIATION & YEARNING

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13 / HOW LUCKY ARE WE

14 / MY OWN FRONT DOOR

15 / HOME

16 / THE QUEST FOR
HAPPINESS

How Lucky Are We

Betsy Faulkner

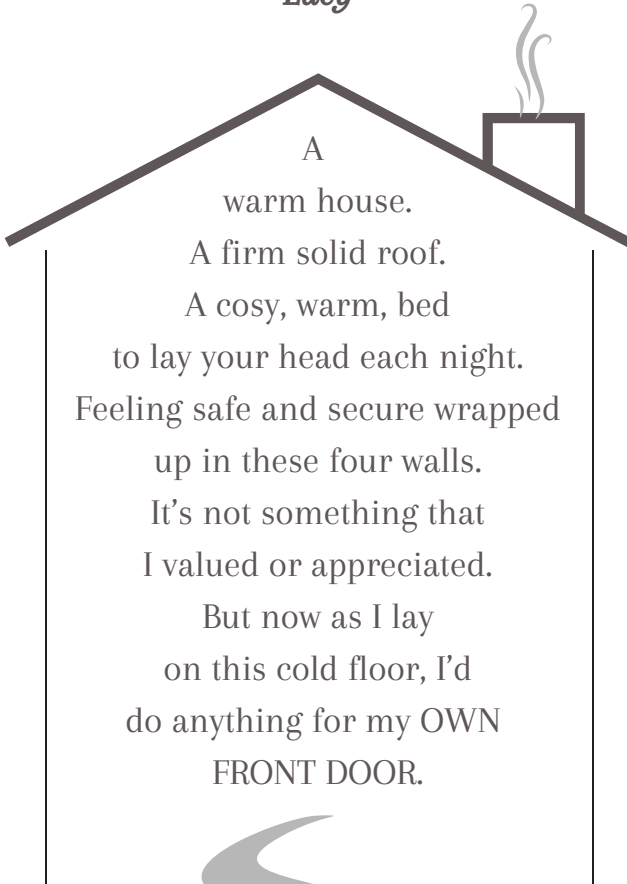


How lucky we are to have a roof over our heads,
A large comfy sofa and 3 double beds.
How lucky we are to have access to showers,
To have warm, home cooked meals and a vase full
of flowers.
How lucky we are to have someone to talk to,
A house and a home that we are able to walk to.
But how lucky are we, if a fellow human has none,
Not a house, nor a home, and yet onlookers walk
on?
How lucky are we, if our people are starving,
All while we worry if our iPhone is charging?
But how lucky are we to know that we can make a
difference,
With a community of kind hearts, and a selfless
magnificence.
How lucky are we to be able to offer a hand,
To use our privilege and make Brum a better
land.
We are so lucky and we need to share this,
To help and support, so no lives are dismissed.



My Own Front Door

Lucy



A
warm house.
A firm solid roof.
A cosy, warm, bed
to lay your head each night.
Feeling safe and secure wrapped
up in these four walls.
It's not something that
I valued or appreciated.
But now as I lay
on this cold floor, I'd
do anything for my OWN
FRONT DOOR.



Home

Anonymous



“Poetry is the distillation of experience”.
So how might I write about something I’ve never
experienced?
I’ve always had a home - somewhere safe,
somewhere to return to. Somewhere to lie and
rely. Lie low. Out of sight.

The Quest for Happiness

Kieran

In shadows deep, a forest endless sprawls
My steps on glass a broken path befalls
Thorns tear at dreams a solitary plight
Alone in cold I seek the elusive light.
Whispers of despair the trees confide
A silent plea within for joy to guide.
Lost in questions amid the chilling air
I ask the universe where hides happiness rare
The echoes linger a silent reply
As time unfolds beneath the somber sky.
Through shattered shards and thorns that
persist
I journey on in the hope of happiness missed.

HELP & UNDERSTANDING

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18 / A S E E D

19 / H O M E - L E S S

20 / H O M E

A Seed

Anonymous

I am your brother, your father, your uncle, your son,

when you cross the street or judge me, have you really won?

My current situation and how I present stems from a seed,

a seed that was planted by a child in need.

My behaviour may seem angry and rises in extremes,

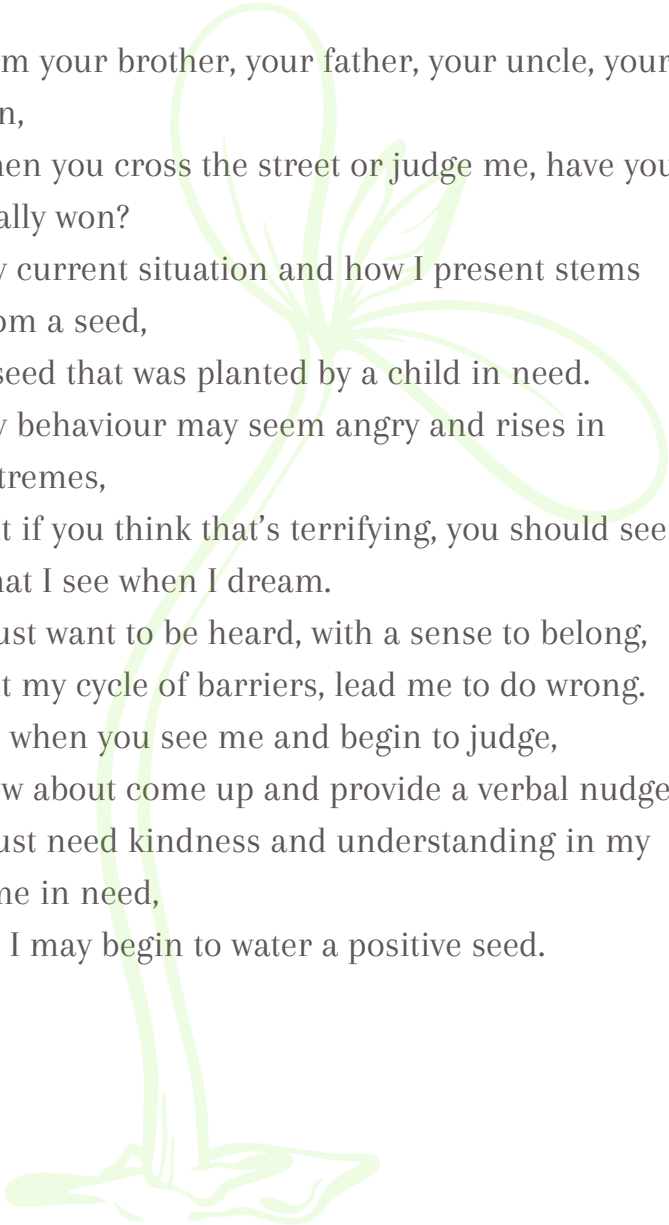
but if you think that's terrifying, you should see what I see when I dream.

I just want to be heard, with a sense to belong, but my cycle of barriers, lead me to do wrong.

So when you see me and begin to judge, how about come up and provide a verbal nudge?

I just need kindness and understanding in my time in need,

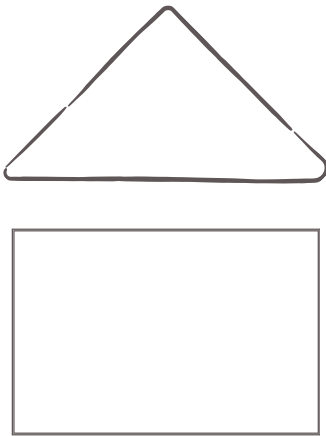
So I may begin to water a positive seed.



Home-less

Anonymous

Seaside town I've grown. My home.
To see someone without was so rare
It seemed at the time. People seemed to care.
Cities shocked me, many years on.
The immensity of the scale.
And I've never ever known what I can do to
help.
Homelessness..?



Home,
Mac MacDonald

Home to me is warmth and safety
I dream of this
My long term goal
This fuels my distress

Outside is cold and damp
This drains and pains me so
I just want a place inside for once
My place to go, my place called home

Misconception feeds the hate
The belief we all choose this life
But hear my truth my guilt and shame
It's with us all, cuts like a scythe

Escape is calling me I want to leave
This life outside and sleep forever
But dream I do that all you people
Will join and help us all together

AFTERWORD

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All the contributors and the editors would like to thank you for taking the time to read through the poetry collection. We hope that it has provided a sense of understanding, connection and hope. Our aim is to highlight the role that we can play as individuals, communities, organisations and broader overarching systems in changing harmful stigma associated with homelessness.

If you're feeling inspired to get creative and put pen to paper, or fingers to keyboard, and get writing your own poetry it doesn't matter whether you have written poetry before or not. We would love to hear from you if you do write your own poetry about homelessness or any of the issues covered here you can let us know by getting in touch at the SPRINT Project website: <https://www.sprintproject.org/>. If you feel a spark to write your own poetry and want some feedback or to publish your work you can do so at Flow: <https://flow-for-all.org/>.

If you have been affected by anything throughout this book then there are a variety of support services detailed in the "further information" section at the start of this book. They also have advice on how to support others if needed and you can make an alert for anyone 18+ years of age who is rough sleeping via <https://thestreetlink.org.uk/start>.

Thank you



ENCOUNTER NEW AND CONTEMPORARY PERSPECTIVES ON HOMELESSNESS AND PRECARITY THROUGH POETRY.

What Makes Home is a collection of poems that brings together different perspectives and experiences on homelessness and precarity. It includes poems from young people and adults with lived experience of homelessness, as well as those without. It demonstrates the difficulties of experiencing homelessness and precarity. At the same time it shows the strength and ambition of the humans at the centre of these experiences. The poetry collection has been arranged into three main sections:

- Danger and difficulties
- Appreciation and yearning
- Help and Understanding

“The poetry eBook is a powerful and unique collection of poems, for many young people we work with in St Basils creativity is the key to unlock connection with others, connection with thoughts, feeling and emotions which often bring rebalance and resilience in their lives. It’s beyond powerful to see St Basils young people contribute to this book knowing their journeys and struggles and their creative ability to use the power of words to connect with the meaning of home.” -TRR, St Basils

Visit the SPRINT Project website for more information on this project and related works.

www.sprintproject.org