

PUSH

catch

PUSH
THE BOAT
 OUT

THE

the

BOAT

wave

Edinburgh's
International
Poetry Festival

12–15 November 2026
+ pre-festival events

OUT



pushtheboatout.org
@PTBOPoetry

#PTBOFestival2026

We are grateful for the support of our funders and programme partners

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Event Categories



All Aboard!

Welcome to Push the Boat Out 2026! We can't wait to bring you our packed programme, with over 120 artists on board across 75 events in a bold mix of poetry, performance, music and art.

This year we're expanding the festival to four days from 12 to 15 November, with a number of warm up events taking place in the weeks before. First up is a very special event on Leith's iconic floating hotel, The Fingal. Join us to toast the festival with a glass of fizz and enjoy an evening with former Scottish Makar and all-round poetry powerhouse, Jackie Kay.

The main festival returns to the iconic Pleasance, with additional events around the city including our Poetry Tasting Menu with Ella Risbridger at Valvona and Crolla. Our full line-up includes in-person and online readings with some of the greatest voices in contemporary poetry, new commissions and premieres, workshops on everything from visual poetry to swordplay, and a music line up that involves sea shanties, hip-hop, and an unforgettable Saturday night gig with Anthony Joseph and his band, who bring a hypnotic fusion of spoken word, jazz, Afrobeat and funk.

This year's theme, *The Space Between*, explores liminal and transitional spaces both physical and metaphorical, from borderlands to dream states, and celebrates the uncertain and the undefined. Environmentally, it considers

shorelines: their cultural significance, their hold on our imaginations and the threat posed by the climate crisis to our coastlines.

For the first time we are introducing events for children and families, including a fun-packed event with former Children's Laureate, Joseph Coelho.

We're proud to continue our community programmes with partners including SCOREScotland, Poverty Alliance Scotland, Simon Community Scotland and high schools across Edinburgh. These give young people and adults opportunities to explore how words can empower, connect and challenge.

As always, we aim to support poets in a range of ways. Our free Development Day for aspiring and emerging poets is accompanied this year by a Sector Symposium for more established writers. We've also introduced a bursary programme to help you attend both.

And if you can't make it in person, we have a fantastic line up of online workshops and discussions, and a hybrid programme with free live-streamed events and a full broadcast schedule with EHFM, so we hope you'll join us from home.

Get in the boat, compañeros!

Emma Collins, **Director**

Access

We are committed to making Push the Boat Out as accessible as possible. Detailed accessibility information about each of our spaces can be found on our website in the Venue & Access section. A quiet room is also available.

Companion tickets are available for all events, please contact boxoffice@pushtheboatout.org to book.

To remove barriers to attendance we aim to keep tickets as affordable as possible. The programme includes 11 free events, a range of exhibitions, a festival treasure hunt and 13 Pay What You Can (PWYC) events with the lowest price point set at £0. We also have an excellent value Festival Pass offering free access to the majority of the programme.

For people who can't come to the festival in person, we offer an online programme, a number of live streamed events (look out for ) , and a programme of events free to listen to at home via our partners EHFM, online community radio station (look out for ). Full details can also be found online.

This year we are presenting a number of BSL interpreted events and these are indicated within the listings by this symbol  and listed below.

Friday 13 November

 **Words and Wine**
17:45–18:55

 **An Evening with Henry Normal**
20:00–21:00

Saturday 14 November

 **In Conversation: Karen Solie and Sarah Howe**
15:00–15:55

 **Tracing the Shoreline**
16:00–16:55

 **Maryville by Joelle Taylor**
19:30–20:30

Sunday 15 November

 **In Conversation: Anthony Joseph**
13:00–13:55

 **In Conversation: Naomi Shihab Nye**
15:00–15:55

on the horizon Pre-festival



WARM-UP EVENT

pool burn lock and sluice at Little Sparta

27 September | 14:00–15:00

- Little Sparta
- Tickets for this event are free with a purchased ticket for entry to Little Sparta. However as capacity is limited, advanced booking is strongly recommended.

Anyone attending without an advance booking will be required to pay Little Sparta's standard admission fee of £10-£15 on arrival and can be admitted to the event if any spaces remain unallocated on the day.

This year we partnered with Little Sparta to launch a new residency programme. Inspired by Iain Hamilton Finlay's concrete poetry garden, Iain Morrison and Corin Sworn have improvised physical writing tools from the garden itself to create new work, exploring how life morphs within systems built to order it.

Supported by the Estate of Ian Hamilton Finlay

LITTLE
SPARTA



WARM-UP EVENT

Festival Reading Group

29 October | 5 November

16:00–17:00

- Online
- PWYC

Can't wait for Push the Boat Out? Get into the festival spirit by joining poet **Marjorie Lotfi** for an exploration of the poetry of some of the fantastic writers appearing at this year's festival. Delve into a snapshot of the programme and go away with new poets you can't wait to read more of or see live! There are two chances to join the reading group with different poets discussed at each one. No preparation is required.

WARM-UP EVENT

An Evening with Jackie Kay

18:45–20:30

- Fingal Hotel
- £18.97 - £21.62 (incl booking fees)

In partnership with the Fingal Hotel, don't miss this lively and intimate event with the award-winning poet and writer **Jackie Kay**! Join us on board this luxury floating venue for an exclusive festival warm up celebrating the publication of Jackie Kay's new *Selected Poems*. Enjoy readings, stories – and a glass of fizz on arrival!



FINGAL HOTEL

Image: Neil Hanna



the spirit of the sea **Discover Fingal**



Fingal is a luxury floating hotel permanently berthed on Edinburgh's vibrant waterfront. A former Northern Lighthouse Board ship which has been transformed into an exquisite 23 cabin boutique hotel.

Tucked away on the top deck is the Lighthouse Restaurant – a beacon of culinary excellence.

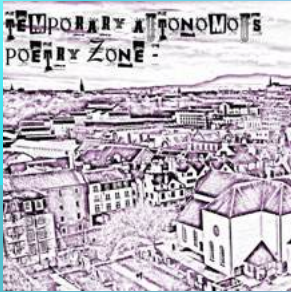
From an exquisite afternoon tea to a seasonal dinner menu, each dish is meticulously prepared, bursting with flavour, created by the passionate Galley Team, led by Restaurant Chef Andrea Sendon Alonso and Head Chef Pedro Barreira.



catch the wave

the outer deck

Around the festival



INTERACTIVE

Temporary Autonomous Poetry Zone – A Flotsam Flourish

- Around the Pleasance
- free, unticketed

More Fun With Games invite you to join us for a game of playful, palimpsest, poetic perambulations. A self-guided and paced immersive experience via our mobile web app for you to discover detritus and hidden gems. Unmoor yourself and drift on the currents of our Dérive, wander and wonder. Perhaps you might discover some prizes at the end of our treasure trail? Ask for information at our box office.



EXHIBITION

Room to Play

- Pleasance – Pentland
- free, unticketed

Room to Play: DIVIDUAL returns! Originally created for Hidden Door 2026, this creative technology-infused artistic installation has been reimagined for Push the Boat Out festival. Conceived as a retro-futuristic tech conglomerate that produces lifestyle technology, the exhibit features collaborative, reactive, multi-artform work that plays on themes of privacy, observation and data capitalism.

Image: Tinderbox Collective & Ray Interactive



INTERACTIVE

Purple Poetry

13 November | 15:00-18:00
14 November | 16:15-19:15

- Around the Pleasance
- £10 paid on site

Purple Poetry creates on-the-spot typewritten poems based on a brief conversation. This could be about absolutely anything: where is your heart right now, how has life been feeling lately? Award-winning poet **Heather Rose** combines counselling-informed listening with her lyrical poetry style to create a typewritten poem to treasure for only £10!

Image: Gilad Zinman



Festival Bookshop

Make sure you also drop by our festival bookshop, run by Lighthouse Books, in the cafe of the Pleasance, where you'll be able to browse and buy books, and have them signed by all your favourite festival poets!

LIGHTHOUSE



Image: Kat Gollock

Thursday 12 November

WORKSHOP

Shared Reading with Open Book

12:30–13:30

- Pleasance – Munro
- PWYC

Fancy digging deeper into the amazing talent taking part in this year's festival? Join **Jess** and **Lizzie** from Open Book for a gentle session of shared reading and discussion of poems by a selection of poets featured. Expect to go away with new favourites! No homework or experience is required.



Open Book

PERFORMANCE

New Writers Awards 2027: Spoken Word Shortlist

17:00–18:00

- Pleasance – Upper Hall
- PWYC

Cheer on Scotland's emerging spoken word talent and discover the scene's future headliners! Our friends over at Scottish Book Trust are joining us for an evening of short performances. As part of this year's New Writers Awards selection process, the shortlisted Spoken Word applicants will be sharing their skills in front of a live audience.

Scottish
Book Trust



INTERACTIVE

Poetical Pub Quiz

18:15–19:45

- Pleasance – Cabaret bar
- £11.55 – £13.67 (incl booking fees)

Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world. But do you know who actually said that? If you do, you might just be in luck.

Join **Ross McCleary** and **Beth Cochrane**, aka **Slamothy Jones**, for a highly competitive and stylishly aggressive poetry pub quiz that will stretch the definitions of Poetic General Knowledge and Pub Quizzery alike.



PERFORMANCE

Opening Night Cabaret, with Luke Wright

20:00–22:00

- Pleasance – Theatre
- £13.67 – £16.32 (incl booking fees)

Join us as we launch Push the Boat Out 2026 in style! **Luke Wright** will take the stage with an explosive set spanning more than two decades of poetry and performance: expect poems with sharp edges, strong rhythms and a big heart. Before the interval, we'll enjoy poems from **EmmaClaire Brightlyn** and **Nick Makoha** and music from rapper **RamZee**.

Image: Emily Fae

Friday 13 November



PERFORMANCE

Beyond the Margins

16:00–17:00

- Pleasance – Upper Hall
- PWYC

Join us to celebrate the launch of this brand-new poetry zine, and take home your own copy. Created by the people supported by the Simon Community Scotland through Streetreads, a library and community for people experiencing homelessness in Edinburgh, the zine explores their hopes and stories. With performances from group members, alongside facilitators **Julie McNeill** and **Kevin Gilday**. Refreshments provided.

In partnership with the Simon Community Scotland. With thanks to Typewronger Books

Image: Rhianonne Stone



WORKSHOP

A Thousand Words: A Visual Poetry Workshop

16:15–17:45

- Pleasance – Munro
- £21.62 – £26.92
(incl booking fees)

Join poet and artist **Dan Power** for a hands-on writing workshop, where we'll be blurring the line between poem and picture. Drawing from concrete poetry and photography, this workshop will take your writing to unexpected places, revealing connections between imagery and the imaginary. Transform poems into pictures and pictures into poems as you create your own visual poetry.

PERFORMANCE

Young Verses with Score Scotland

17:00–17:45

- Pleasance – Lomond
- PWYC

Join the young people from Tynecastle High School as they share poetry, spoken word music and stories created with **Bee Asha** and **Kat Borrowdale** (for Push the Boat Out) and **Davie Luhanga** (for SCOREScotland).



Dr Guthrie's
Association



the space between



FOOD & DRINK

Words and Wine

17:45–18:55

- Pleasance – Cabaret bar
- £16.32 – £19.50
- (incl booking fees)

Celebrate the start of the weekend by raising a glass with us! **Joe Trotter** from Edinburgh's independent wine merchants Great Grog will take you through a tempting array of wines, sharing each drink's story and history. Drinks will be poetically paired with performances by acclaimed spoken word poet **Kate Ireland**.

Great Grog



PERFORMANCE

Loud Poets Slam

19:00–21:00

- Pleasance – Upper Hall
- £11.55 – £13.67
- (incl booking fees)

Make sure you cheer, clap and holler as Edinburgh's top poets compete in the first of twelve heats for the biggest prize in UK slam poetry. Featuring **Josh Cake** as sacrificial poet, this will be a thumping celebration of some of the best spoken word coming out of Scotland today.



Image: Kate Cameron



MUSIC

Hip-hop night with Culture Clan

21:00–22:30

- Pleasance – Cabaret bar
- £11.55 – £13.67
- (incl booking fees)

A celebration of true Scottish rap music, bringing together artists from across the country. Featuring headline act **Red King**, alongside **Kouk** and **A420**, expect live performances, an open cypher and a night showcasing the diversity, character and creativity of Scottish rap.

PERFORMANCE

An Evening with Henry Normal

20:00–21:00

- Pleasance – Theatre
- £13.67 – £16.32
- (incl booking fees)

To celebrate the publication of his fourth collected poems anthology, writer, poet and TV producer **Henry Normal** has concentrated his thousand or so poems into a one-hour show like a tin of Campbell's soup in a black hole. Comedy, poetry, stories and songs – he's managed to pack everything into the show and more.

Image: Richard Davis

Saturday 14 November



WORKSHOP

Combing the Shoreline

10:00–11:15

- Meeting outside Portobello Swim Centre
- £11.55 – £13.67 (incl booking fees)

Be inspired by our shorelines, as you join artist and beachcomber extraordinaire **Emily Dubious** on a Portobello beachcomb. You'll then use your found treasures as prompts to create new work, in a half-hour writing workshop led by poet **Lisa Fannen**.



PortalLibri



WORKSHOP

Inherited Stories: A Masterclass with Sarah Howe

10:30–12:00

- Pleasance – Munro
- £21.62 – £26.92 (incl booking fees)

Join **Sarah Howe** for a workshop exploring the stories we inherit and the fertile space where generational memory and ancestral lore shade into myth and hearsay. We'll look at the myths about ourselves that others impose on us, thinking about inherited and newly invented poetic forms, before generating new drafts.

PERFORMANCE

Takeover: On the Shoreline of Infinity

10:45–11:40

- Pleasance – Upper Hall
- £11.55 – £13.67 (incl booking fees)

Shoreline of Infinity is Scotland's brightest and best **Science Fiction** magazine, publishing stories, poetry and articles since 2015. Join us as we investigate the liminal, speculating about the future and considering the past from our vantage point of the ever-shifting sands of the present. **Bram E Gieben**, **Medha Singh**, **Jeda Pearl**, **Lesla Ng** and **Rachel Plummer** will be performing along with our MC **Pippa Goldschmidt**.

SHORELINE
OF INFINITY

Image: Lucy Cheyne





catch the wave

PERFORMANCE

(((►))) States of Emergency: Writing the Plague

11:45–12:40

- Pleasance – Cabaret bar
- £11.55 – £13.67 (incl booking fees)

Join **Polly Atkin** and **Niall O'Gallagher** to discuss two collections which explore solitude and connection in a time of plague. Niall will be sharing translations from his upcoming Gaelic novella-in-verse *Litreachan Plàighe* (Plague Letters), while Polly will read from *Emergency Dream*, a collection which insistently centres disabled joy and disabled rage.



Comhairle nan
Leabhraichean
The Gaelic Books Council

Polly image: Alex Atkin Media

Niall image: Julie Broadfoot

PERFORMANCE

An Open Book Tour of Scotland

11:45–12:40

- Pleasance – Lomond
- PWYC

Join Open Book writers from across the country for a session packed with humour, storytelling and words to make you think. You'll hear a mixture of individual work and collaborative poems responding to themes such as Measuring, Comfort, Friendship, One Last Time, and many other things in between.



Open Book

WORKSHOP

Experimenting with Words and Music

12:30–14:00

- Pleasance – Theatre
- £21.62 – £26.92 (incl booking fees)

Want to collaborate with musicians, but not sure where to start? This workshop with **Iona Lee**, poet and frontwoman of poetry-led band Acolyte, and DJ **Nikki Kent** has you covered. We'll play with rhythm and tone, listening and responding, reflect on performance, experimentation and the musicality of language, and have the chance to try it all out.

Image: Laura Meek

PERFORMANCE

Contested Bodies

12:45–13:40

- Pleasance – Upper Hall
- £11.55 – £13.67 (incl booking fees)

Known for compelling, innovative and original work, in recent collections **Kim Moore** and **Charlotte Van den Broeck** each explore the female body as contested landscape. Kim's *The House of Broken Things* conjures an intimate atmosphere of haunted domesticity, while Charlotte's *The Inside of a Stone* explores the emotional resonance between desert landscapes and womanhood.

Part of Flip Through Flanders, presented by



Saturday

PERFORMANCE

Writing Between Languages

13:15–14:15

- Pleasance – Lomond
- £11.55 – £13.67 (incl booking fees)

Discover the creative potential which exists between and within languages, with performances from three incredible poets. Between them **Ghazal Mosadeq**, **Asmaa Azaizah** and **Robbie MacLeòid** write across English and Persian, Arabic and Gaelic. Join them for a multilingual poetical adventure!



EDWIN MORGAN TRUST

Robbie Image: Kris Kesiak
Asmaa image: Dirk Skiba



PERFORMANCE

Takeover: Art Riot

13:45–14:45

- Pleasance – Cabaret bar
- £11.55 – £13.67 (incl booking fees)

Join Art Riot Press, the small press with a big attitude, bringing you the very best new voices from Scotland and beyond! Enjoy performances by **Julie Laing**, **Aditya Narayan**, and **EmmaClaire Brightlyn** alongside some cheeky poetic audience participation shenanigans, hosted by Versaye duo, **Lorna Callery-Sithole** and **Wendy Miller**.



Julie image: Lauren McDougall
Emma image: Katie Ailes

WORKSHOP

Make A Tiny Poetry Game with Tinderbox

14:45–16:15

- Pleasance – Munro
- £21.62 – £26.92 (incl booking fees)

Make your poetry interactive, learn about game design, and make your own tiny pixel-art game using Bitsy, a little engine for little games, worlds, and stories! Led by Tinderbox Collective, this workshop is open to any level of experience with games, including complete beginners.



PERFORMANCE

pool burn lock
and sluice

15:00–15:55

- Pleasance – Theatre
→ £11.55 – £13.67 (incl booking fees)

During our new residency programme, poet **Iain Morrison** and visual artist **Corin Sworn** explored Little Sparta, Ian Hamilton Finlay's art garden, becoming fascinated by the challenges of keeping this living artwork in good health during ongoing climate catastrophe. Join us for an artist's talk about the garden and a performance of Iain and Corin's new work.

Supported by the Estate of Ian Hamilton Finlay

LITTLE
SPARTA

PERFORMANCE

In Conversation:
Karen Solie and Sarah Howe

15:00–15:55

- Pleasance – Upper Hall
→ £11.55 – £13.67 (incl booking fees)

Karen Solie's 2025 T.S. Eliot Prize winning collection, *Wellwater*, is described as holding "two sentiments, *The world is a beautiful place / The world is a terrible place, in perfect equipoise*". Also shortlisted, **Sarah Howe's** *Foretokens* navigates the complex inheritance of family, language and colonialism. Join them to discuss these luminous collections.

T. S. ELIOT PRIZE

PERFORMANCE

Tracing the Shoreline

16:00–16:55

- Pleasance – Lomond
→ £11.55 – £13.67 (incl booking fees)

Within this year's festival theme, *The Space Between*, we're exploring shorelines, their significance, power and the threat posed by climate crisis to our coastlines. **Garry Mackenzie** will join us with *Firth*, a poetic portrait of the Firth of Forth. **Alycia Pirmohamed** will read from her upcoming collection, as well as her memoir, *Shorelines*.

Chaired through the ConVERSE Emerging Chairs Programme with the University of Edinburgh



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Image: Timothy Phillips



Saturday

PERFORMANCE

(((►))) Poetry as Witness, Poetry as Protest

16:15–17:10

- Pleasance – Cabaret bar
- £11.55 – £13.67 (incl booking fees)

Hannah Lavery and **Don Mee Choi** are united by their embrace of work both playful and political. Don Mee Choi's *Freely Frayed* grapples with the politics of distance and language in its exploration of anti-colonial logic and identity. Hannah Lavery's *Everything Everyday* is a formally innovative poetic journal, where personal confession and public ritual converge.

Don Mee Image: Song GOT



PERFORMANCE

(((►))) Fetches and Folklore

17:15–18:10

- Pleasance – Upper Hall
- £11.55 – £13.67 (incl booking fees)

Join us for a double bill showcasing two of the most exciting debuts from the past year. Playful and spirited, **Kym Deyn** and **Colin Bramwell** explore and undo binaries, drawing on the doppelgangers and trickster figures of folklore to do so.

Colin image: Eva Brenda Rodriguez Paredes

MUSIC

Poetry Jam with Anoraq

18:15–19:15

- Pleasance – Cabaret bar
- PWYC

Expect the unexpected – as long as the unexpected includes poetry, music and plenty of improvisation. This year, our perennially popular poetry jam joins forces with spoken word band Anoraq. Come along with a poem you've always wanted to read with a backing band, or simply to listen and settle in for a night of musical fun.

Image: Clara Ionita





PERFORMANCE



Maryville by Joelle Taylor

19:30–20:30

→ Pleasance – Theatre

→ £13.67 – £16.32 (incl booking fees)

Join **Joelle Taylor** for the Scottish Premiere of the staged reading of *Maryville*: a searing, poetic excavation of fifty years of lesbian counterculture that charts the lives of four butch lesbians through five decades of underground queer history. Directed by **Neil Bartlett**, with visuals from **Sweatmother**, *Maryville* explores the scars, hopes and potentialities of dyke identity and the queer underground.

image: Robin Christian

FOOD & DRINK

Poetry Tasting Menu with Ella Risbridger

18:30–20:30

→ Valvona and Crolla

→ £51.30 – £58.72 (incl booking fees)

Treat yourself with food writer and poet **Ella Risbridger**. With Ella's best-selling debut cookbook described as "a manual for living and a declaration of hope", there's no better host for our inaugural full poetry tasting menu, where selected poems match your meal.

Includes a glass of fizz and speciality focaccia, followed by a two-course meal.



Image: Jamie Drew

MUSIC

PTBO's Saturday Night Gig with Anthony Joseph

19:30–22:30

→ Debating Hall, Teviot Row House

→ £13.67 – £16.32 (incl booking fees)

Push the Boat Out's annual Saturday Night gig presents award-winning writer and musician **Anthony Joseph** and his band. At their only Scottish date this year, enjoy a hypnotic fusion of spoken word, jazz, Afrobeat, funk and the rhythms of the Caribbean. With support from rapper, poet and musician **Bee Asha**.



Sunday 15 November

WORKSHOP

To the Point: A Workshop with Pens and Swords

10:30–11:55

- Pleasance – Theatre
- £21.62 – £26.92 (incl booking fees)

Led by spoken word artist and fight director **EmmaClaire Brightlyn**, this is a chance to be bold in your writing. Alternating bursts of writing prompts with basic sword work involving gentle and dynamic movement, this workshop will see writers parry words, cut lines and clash ideas. Bring your own notebook and pen. Swords provided!

WORKSHOP

Creating Queer and Othered Worlds

10:30–11:55

- Pleasance – Munro
- £21.62 – £26.92 (incl booking fees)

Join acclaimed poet **Joelle Taylor** for an intimate writing workshop exploring critical fabulation through a queer lens. Experimenting with approaches Joelle used in the collections *Maryville* and *C+nto & Othered Poems*, this workshop will look at how to create fictional universes in poetry, and how to explore queer identity as we build worlds.



PERFORMANCE

((())) ▶ Our Many-Voiced Country

11:00–12:00

- Pleasance – Upper Hall
- PWYC

As Scots Makar, **Peter Mackay** has embraced a mission to celebrate the many languages written in Scotland today. In this event, he brings together **Deborah Moffatt, Tim Tim Cheng, Vahid Davar, Mae Diansangu, Paul Malgrati** and **Jordí Larios** to present new writing interweaving Gaelic and Chinese, Spanish and Persian, French and Doric.

Image: Annette Mueck

PERFORMANCE

A Portobello Poetry Walk

11:00–12:30

- Portobello Bookshop
- £11.55 – £13.67 (incl booking fees)

Eleanor Rees' writing draws on liminal places and edgelands – so who better to take us on a poetry walk along the shoreline at Portobello. Join us for a short reading from *Portents and Portals* in Portobello Bookshop before a gentle walk along Portobello's promenade, interspersed with readings and discussion.

The
Portobello
Bookshop

#PTBOFestival2026





PERFORMANCE

Novels in Verse

12:00–12:55

- Pleasance – Cabaret bar
- £11.55 – £13.67 (incl booking fees)

Knockan, the new novel-in-verse by Glasgow Makar **Jim Carruth**, follows an estranged mother and daughter over a single week, while **Grace Yee**'s award-winning debut *Chinese Fish* is a decades-long multigenerational saga. In this double bill, Jim and Grace will read from their novels-in-verse and discuss the challenges and joys of this versatile form.

Chaired through the ConVERSE Emerging Chairs Programme with the University of Edinburgh



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PERFORMANCE

In Conversation: Anthony Joseph

13:00–13:55

- Pleasance – Upper Hall
- £13.67 – £16.32 (incl booking fees)

Anthony Joseph has been celebrated as 'the leader of the black avant-garde in Britain.' His new collection, *Haunting the Black Air*, journeys between London, New York, Trinidad and beyond, moving from unabashed joy to crippling grief. Join the award-winning author for readings from and discussions about this formally daring and emotionally incisive collection.

PERFORMANCE

Takeover: We Are Here Scotland

14:00–14:55

- Pleasance – Cabaret bar
- £11.55 – £13.67 (incl booking fees)

We Are Here Scotland works in solidarity with Black and Global Majority communities to help create spaces and opportunities across Scotland's creative industries. In this takeover, hosted by **Arusa Qureshi**, emerging poets **Pepita Mwanga**, **Chisom Okoronkwo**, and **ACE VISION** take to the stage for a showcase of soul-stirring poetry and music.



PERFORMANCE

Migration and Memory

12:00–12:55

- Pleasance – Lomond
- £11.55 – £13.67 (incl booking fees)

Learn what the future of Scottish poetry looks like in this double bill with **Roshni Gallagher** and **Clementine Ewokolo Burnley**: two joint winners of the 2024 James Berry Poetry Prize, whose newly released debut collections each explore the porous boundary between past and present, asking what remains after once-familiar places and people have gone.

Roshni image: Chantelle Gomez



Sunday

DISCUSSION

Revisiting the Epic

14:00–14:55

- Pleasance – Lomond
- £11.55 – £13.67 (incl booking fees)

Christopher Nolan's film of *The Odyssey* ignited a surprisingly hot debate around the interpretation of classical epics. Join researcher **James Oakley** and poets **Cai Tianxin** and **Spencer Mason** to discuss the epic form: its orality, tropes and enduring popularity.

Chaired through the ConVERSE Emerging Chairs Programme with the University of Edinburgh



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Image: Julia Koenig

PERFORMANCE

BSL In Conversation:
Naomi Shihab Nye

15:00–15:55

- Pleasance – Upper Hall
- £13.67 – £16.32 (incl booking fees)

- Don't miss this rare opportunity to hear Palestinian-American poet **Naomi Shihab Nye** read live! Join the former Young People's Poet Laureate for the USA, in conversation with **Alycia Pirmohamed**, for a mixture of readings and discussion of her work, which is by turns humorous, immediate and urgently political.



WORKSHOP

Poetry Masterclass with Anthony Joseph

15:15–16:45

- Pleasance – Munro
- £21.62 – £26.92 (incl booking fees)

Join award-winning poet, novelist, musician and academic **Anthony Joseph** for a poetry masterclass. With a mixture of discussion on form, new techniques, exercises and writing time, this is an opportunity to hone your craft and take your poetry to the next level.

INTERACTIVE

Sea Shanties for Sirens and Landlubbers

16:00–16:55

- Pleasance – Cabaret bar
- PWYC

Whether you're an experienced siren or you swear up and down you can't carry a tune, don't miss this lively session run by Edinburgh Shanty Co! No experience is necessary – come along to learn and sing some sea shanties, both traditional and original.

Image: Julia Koenig





PERFORMANCE

Strange Architecture

16:00–16:55

- Pleasance – Lomond
- £11.55 – £13.67 (incl booking fees)

In 2025, **Kevin P. Gilday** spent two months in Prague, writing a poetry cycle inspired by the city's brutalist buildings. Kevin will read from these alongside **JL Williams**, whose new collection, *Strange Architectures*, details her nightly dreams of buildings during lockdown. Both poets reflect on how the spaces we inhabit inform our lives.



MUSIC

Bàird Bhaile: Gaelic Poetry and Song Night

18:00–19:50

- Pleasance – Cabaret bar
- £11.55 – £13.67
(incl booking fees)

Join us for an evening of Gaelic poetry, music and song, brought together by **Jeni Ní Fhlannagáin (Bothan Dhùn Èideann/Lusan Bui)** and hosted by **Màiri Britton**. Immerse yourself in Gaelic's living traditions, with performances from **Ceithidh Chaimbeul, Babs Nicgriogair** and **Màrtainn Mac an t-Saoir**, alongside fiddle player **Rona Wilkie** and other voices from the wider Gaelic-speaking community.



Bothan
Dhùn Èideann



Comhairle nan
Leabhraichean
The Gaelic Book Council

Rona image: Iratxe Etxeandia

PERFORMANCE

The Space Between: New Poetic Performances

17:00–18:15

- Pleasance – Theatre
- £11.55 – £13.67 (incl booking fees)

We're thrilled to premiere three new commissions in association with the National Theatre of Scotland. Investigating the theme of 'The Space Between', these inventive performances by **Gray Crosbie** and **Guy Woods**, **£11.55 – £13.67** **Nancy Burns**, and



Sunday

INTERACTIVE

Rock the Boat

18:30–20:00

→ Pleasance – Upper Hall

→ free, ticketed

Join hosts **Catherine Wilson Garry** and **Julia Sorensen** for the festival edition of Rock the Boat, PTBO's longstanding monthly poetry open mic. Sign up in advance to perform your poetry alongside a score of other open mic-ers or kick back and enjoy the vibes. With feature poets **Amy B. Moreno** and **Sol Vardi**.

PERFORMANCE

((()))
On Slack Tide with **Aurora Engine**,
JL Williams, **Dean Atta**
and **Kirsty Logan**

20:00–21:00

→ Pleasance – Theatre

→ £13.67 – £16.32 (incl booking fees)

Definition: *the brief period at the turn of the tide when the water is still*. This specially commissioned collaboration from musician **Aurora Engine** and poets **JL Williams**, **Dean Atta** and **Kirsty Logan** fuses music, voice, electronica, poetry and performance in a singular, striking soundscape. It explores life transitions of birth, coming of age and death; and the waiting, stasis and flurries of emotion that accompany them.



the
space
between

#PTBOFestival2026



Children and Families Programme

We're delighted to introduce our first ever programme of events for children and families! Whether you're looking for new favourite rhymes and stories for your toddlers, a creative outlet for your budding young writers, or fun for all the family, we've got you covered.

KIDS

Junior Creative Writing, with Joseph Coelho

3 November | 18:00–19:00

- Drumbrae Library Hub
- free, unticketed

Calling all budding young writers! As part of PTBO 2026, **Joseph Coelho** will be joining Drumbrae Library's regular junior creative writing group. The former children's laureate will bring along a range of poetry prompts and writing exercises – all you need to bring is your enthusiasm!

For ages P5+

Edinburgh Libraries

KIDS

Bookbug Pushes the Boat Out

13 November | 10:30–11:00

- Central children's library
- free, unticketed

Join us for a special festival Bookbug with children's poet **Rachel Plummer**! Bookbug sessions are a firm favourite with parents and wee ones for sharing stories, poems and songs: we'll be enjoying all the songs and rhymes you'd usually expect, plus Rachel will read some of their favourite children's poems.

Edinburgh Libraries

KIDS

Our Voices Together

13 November | 14:00–15:00

- Pleasance – Munro
- £5.72 – £8.37 (incl booking fees)

Join acclaimed poet and children's author **Nadine Aisha Jassat** for an engaging and accessible workshop for children of all ages and their families. Together we'll have fun trying new poetry prompts to celebrate who we are, and making a collective poem from all of us to be displayed throughout the festival.

KIDS

Sail the Storyteller Sea

13 November | 15:30–16:30

- Pleasance – Cabaret bar
- £5.72 – £8.37 (incl booking fees)

Join the former Children's Laureate, **Joseph Coelho**, for a fun, energetic and inspiring event packed with poetry! Joseph will be sharing his most recent poetry book for kids, *Rapunzel is a Lettuce*. These are poems to fire the imagination and take you and your wee ones exploring. Perfect for children aged 7-11



downstream

Online events

Join in from home! Our online workshops bring together international guests, giving you the chance to grow your practice with insights and tips from world-renowned writers. We're also broadcasting a fantastic selection of events via livestream and in partnership with EHFM to allow you to watch or listen in at a time that suits. Full details are available on our website or look out for the (🎧 🎥) next to event listings.

WORKSHOP

Translating into Different Places, with Lorna Goodison

13 November | 14:00–15:30

→ Online

→ £21.62 – £26.92 (incl booking fees)

Lorna Goodison's latest publication, an astonishing new translation of *The Inferno* by Dante, situates Dante firmly in Jamaica and draws on the entire continuum of Jamaican speech. Join the former Poet Laureate of Jamaica for this online workshop on translating existing stories and texts into different places and Englishes, exploring the possibilities, challenges and solutions.

DISCUSSION

Marjorie's Table

14 & 15 November | 08:30–09:00

→ Online

→ free, ticketed

In this friendly morning meet-up led by Forward Prize-winning poet Marjorie Lotfi, you'll look at a cluster of poems by one of the poets from the festival's online programme, reflect briefly on craft, and then spend some time writing in response.

WORKSHOP

Ekphrasis: The Secret Rewards of Larceny

14 November | 14:00–15:30

→ Online

→ £21.62 – £26.92 (incl booking fees)

Join legendary poet Kwame Dawes for this online workshop on ekphrasis! After a discussion about the ways in which ekphrasis (the description of a work of visual art) has worked in some meaningful poetry, you'll attempt your own ekphrasis poems making use of artbooks available online as we enjoy and steal from great art.

DISCUSSION

Roundtable With Fady Joudah

14 November | 17:00–18:00

→ Online

→ PWYC

Take part in this intimate online round table reading and discussion with Palestinian poet Fady Joudah, in conversation with poet and publisher Anthony Anaxagorou. Fady will be reading from his most recent collection [...], a prize-winning collection which urgently speaks to Palestine's daily and historic erasure.

catch the wave



DISCUSSION

**Penelope's Craft:
an Online Reading****15 November | 14:00–15:00**

→ Online

→ PWYC

In penelope's cra0ft: a post-epic, acclaimed German poet **Ulrike Draesner** sees Penelope, Odysseus' wife, take to the sea alongside 100 other women from Ithaca. Join Ulrike and prize-winning translator **Karen Leeder** for a sneak peek into this energetic, tender and inventive book in translation, and to discuss re-writing and subverting myths.



EDWIN MORGAN TRUST

PERFORMANCE

**Obsidian Foundation
Online Showcase****15 November | 16:15–17:15**

→ Online

→ PWYC

This online showcase brings together four brilliant poets from the Obsidian Foundation community. Hosted by **Nick Makoha**, we'll hear from **Gemma Bedeau**, **Aphra Le Levier-Bennett**, **Ed Mabrey** and **Maureen Onwunali**. We'll discuss the poets' journeys, their work and the role of community, mentorship and development in their creative practice.

O Obsidian
Foundation

Nick image: Dirk Skiba

Ed image: Teal Moss Photography

WORKSHOP

**Celebrating the
Troublemaker:
A Workshop****15 November | 18:00–19:30**

→ Online

→ £21.62 – £26.92 (incl
booking fees)

In this online workshop, aimed at anyone interested in writing family stories or social histories, **Annemarie Ní Churreáin** will help us to explore the challenges and responsibilities of writing hidden and obscured histories, alongside the role that folklore, magic and the Otherworld can play in our work.



Professional Development

Push the Boat Out is committed to supporting poets at all stages to develop their craft and their careers. Building on our popular Development Day, which has been running since 2022, we've added a second free day of discussions, workshops and support. The Sector Symposium is aimed at more established writers, while the Development Day remains more focused on emerging and early career poets.

Both days are completely free to attend; you can book events individually but we'd encourage you to join us for the full day. Snacks, drinks and a light lunch will be provided to help you network and get to know your peers.

Feel free to mix and match between sessions and days or even come to both!

Bursaries are available, see p28.

Development Day 12 November

WORKSHOP

Working With Marginalised Groups

10:15–11:45

- Pleasance – Munro
- free, ticketed

If you're interested in using poetry to work with marginalised groups, don't miss this workshop with social worker and researcher **Dr Autumn Roesch-Marsh**. Sharing her experience of working with care-experienced young people on a project about friendship, Autumn will support participants to think about how they themselves might develop sessions for working with marginalised groups.

THE **BINKS** HUB

DISCUSSION

Between and Beyond Stage and Page: Documenting Spoken Word

10:30–11:30

- Pleasance – Upper Hall
- free, ticketed

For many poets, spoken word is their way into writing and sharing poetry – but what if you want a spoken word piece to continue after you perform it? Join us to consider the possibilities of publishing, filmed poems and more with **Mark Gallie** of spoken word collective I Am Loud, **Charlie Roy** of Stewed Rhubarb Press, and writer and artist **Julie Laing**.

DISCUSSION

Mentorship and Support: Programmes for Emerging Poets

11:45–12:45

- Pleasance – Upper Hall
- free, ticketed

Mentorship schemes for emerging writers can be invaluable – but what exactly are they, and what support do they provide? Join **Caitrin Armstrong**, Head of Writing Communities at the Scottish Book Trust, **Jim Caruth** from the Clydebuilt Verse Apprenticeship Scheme and **Nick Makoha** from the Obsidian Foundation to find out.

Chaired through the **ConVERSE** Emerging Chairs Programme with the University of Edinburgh



CLYDEBUILT



THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH
School of Literatures,
Languages and Cultures



take
the
next
step

Sector Symposium 13 November

WORKSHOP

Editing Your Own Work

13:45–15:30

→ Pleasance – Upper Hall
→ free, ticketed

Good editing can make the difference between a good poem and a great one. Join **Helena Nelson** (HappenStance Press) and **Eleanor Livingstone** (poet and former festival director) for a hands-on editing workshop. Bring along a draft poem, ideally 8 – 16 lines long, and experiment with techniques to take your writing to the next level.

DISCUSSION

Meet the Publishers

10:30–11:30

→ Pleasance – Upper Hall
→ free, ticketed

Meet three fantastic publishers and learn more about how they work with poets and what they look for. **John McAuliffe** of Carcanet, **Ghazal Mosadeq** of Pamenar Press and **Edward Crossan** from Birlinn will be joining forces to demystify the work of publishers and answer your questions about pitching, editing and the poet-publisher relationship.

Chaired through the **ConVERSE Emerging Chairs Programme** with the University of Edinburgh

C A R C A N E T



Pamenar Press



BIRLINN



THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH
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Languages and Cultures

DISCUSSION

Contracts and Copyright: What Do You Need to Know?

11:45–12:45

→ Pleasance – Upper Hall
→ free, ticketed

Navigating the world of contracts and copyright is daunting even at its best. **Amanda Holiday**, from the Society of Authors' Poetry & Spoken Word Group, **Duncan Lockerbie** of publisher Tapsalteerie, and **Anna Jaconelli**, a senior solicitor in Intellectual Property will be discussing what you need you know when negotiating with publishers.



INTERACTIVE

Publisher Surgeries

12:45–13:45

- Pleasance – Cabaret bar
- free, ticketed

Sign up for a ten-minute 1:1 with some of the fantastic publishers attending our symposium day, including publishers and editors from Carcanet, Birlinn, Pamenar Press, Art Riot Press, Tapsalteerie and Stewed Rhubarb. Don't miss this chance to get some individualised advice and guidance on the submission and publication process.

In the event of high interest in the surgeries, places will be allocated via a ballot. See website for full details.

DISCUSSION

Meet the Programmers

13:45–15:00

- Pleasance – Upper Hall
- free, ticketed

The decisions that go into creating a festival programme are many and varied. Join Push the Boat Out director **Emma Collins**, freelance festival programmer **Lee Randall**, and **Theresa Muñoz** from Newcastle Poetry Festival to learn more about how they work, and what you might want to consider when approaching festivals. Chaired by **Peggy Hughes**.

Bursaries

We're delighted this year to be able to introduce bursaries of up to £50 to those who might otherwise not be able to attend our professional development days. Bursaries can be used to cover travel, care or childcare or disability access costs.

Bursaries are available to anyone who has experience of socioeconomic barriers, for example: low income, poverty, extreme hardship, economic precarity, qualifying for income support (benefits or education grants), struggling to cover your bills or 'make ends meet'. Bursaries are provided on a lottery basis, with no questions asked.

Please see our website for further information and to apply.

ConVERSE

We're once again working in partnership with the University of Edinburgh's School of Literatures, Languages & Cultures to present ConVERSE: a project to support students as they develop their skills as event chairs.

A deft and impassioned chair is very much a co-pilot of any event – they can help ensure the event soars, sizzles and leaves a lasting impression on audiences and authors alike. At best, it will be remembered for years to come.

Students were invited to attend chairing masterclasses led by the University's Writer in Residence, Mary Paulson-Ellis, along with other experienced voices.

Selected students have been matched up with events to chair during the festival, and offered further support from the School of Literatures, Languages & Cultures at UoE. This partnership offers us the chance to support and nurture future talent and we're pleased to add it to the portfolio of support that we offer developing artists.

*the space
between*



THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH
School of Literatures,
Languages and Cultures

About Push the Boat Out

Push the Boat Out was created to capture the vibrancy and dynamism of contemporary poetry and spoken word, to celebrate its ever increasing influence and to bring it into conversation with other art forms.

We want not only to give poetry a new platform, but to create an environment where all variations of this vital art form are encouraged to grow, evolve and even collide. We explore fresh, inventive ways to bring poetry and people together by challenging perceptions of what poetry is, how and where it can be enjoyed and who it is for.

Our programme reflects and engages directly with the world around us in all its complexity and diversity; and aims to contribute to Scotland's long legacy – and future – as a place where poetry and the arts are thriving. Year-round, we offer professional development opportunities for artists, regular online writing workshops with internationally acclaimed poets and special guests from around the world, while Rock the Boat, our hugely popular open-mic night, takes place monthly.

Through our engagement programme we also support people to get involved in poetry who might not otherwise have the chance. We offer free festival tickets and also deliver programmes of creative activities. Partners in this programme include schools, and organisations like the Simon Community Scotland, SCOREScotland, and Poverty Alliance Scotland.

Follow us online, get involved and get in touch to see how you can play a part in our story.



@ptbopoetry

info@pushtheboatout.org

Support Us

Push the Boat Out is a registered charity. Donations from people like you are vital in supporting us to keep offering this unique, vibrant, eclectic festival, alongside our, growing community engagement and year round programmes.

With your help we can continue to contribute to increasing the diversity of poetry – in form, by supporting exciting collaborations with other art forms, and by highlighting work by artists from communities whose voices are under-represented in the arts and literature – as well as welcoming new people to enjoy poetry as a meaningful part of their everyday lives.



*scan to
donate*

Become a Friend of Push the Boat Out

Become one of our *compañeros* and help support the future of Push the Boat Out, Edinburgh's International Poetry Festival, alongside our year-round events, artist development and community programmes.

For £55 a year, Friends enjoy a host of benefits, including priority booking, 10% off everything at the festival, 50% off year-round events and festival workshops, plus exclusive invitations to our programme launch and opening party.

You'll also receive regular Friends updates packed with insider news, recommendations and special offers.

Join our community, enjoy more poetry and help us keep pushing the boat out.

at a glance

NOV	THURSDAY 12			FRIDAY 13							
	PLEASANCE			EDINBURGH	PLEASANCE					ONLINE	EDINBURGH
	Munro	Upper Hall	Theatre		Munro	Upper Hall	Theatre	Cabaret	Lomond		
8.30											
9.00											
10.00											
11.00	Working With Marginalised Groups										Combing the Shoreline Portobello
		Between and Beyond Stage and Page: Documenting Spoken Word		Bookbug Pushes the Boat Out Central children's library	Meet the Publishers						
12.00		Mentorship and Support: Programmes for Emerging Poets				Contracts and Copyright: What Do You Need to Know?					
	Shared Reading with Open Book										
13.00								Publisher Surgeries			
14.00		Editing Your Own Work			Our Voices Together	Meet the Programmers				Translating into Different Places, with Lorna Goodison	
15.00											
16.00								Sail the Storyteller Sea			
17.00		New Writers Awards 2027: Spoken Word Shortlist			A Thousand Words: A Visual Poetry Workshop				Young Verses with Score Scotland		
18.00								BSL Words and Wine			
19.00	Poetical Pub Quiz										
20.00						Loud Poets Slam	BSL An Evening with Henry Normal				PTBO's Saturday Night Gig with Anthony Joseph
21.00			Opening Night Cabaret, with Luke Wright								Debatng Hall, Teviot Row House
22.00								Hiphop night with Culture Clan			



DISCUSSION



WORKSHOP



PERFORMANCE



FOOD & DRINK



MUSIC

INTERACTIVE

SATURDAY 14

SUNDAY 15

Pleasance					Online	Edinburgh	Pleasance					Online
Munro	Upper Hall	Theatre	Cabaret	Lomond			Munro	Upper Hall	Theatre	Cabaret	Lomond	
					Marjorie's Table							Marjorie's Table
Inherited Stories: A Masterclass with Sarah Howe	Takeover: On the Shoreline of Infinity					A Portobello Poetry Walk	Creating Queer and Othered Worlds	Our Many-Voiced Country	To the Point: A Workshop with Pens and Swords			
			States of Emergency: Writing the Plague	An Open Book Tour of Scotland		Portobello				Novels in Verse	Migration and Memory	
	Contested Bodies	Experimenting with Words and Music						 In Conversation: Anthony Joseph				
			Takeover: Art Riot	Writing Between Languages								
					Ekphrasis: The Secret Rewards of Larceny					Takeover: We Are Here Scotland	Revisiting the Epic	Penelope's Craft: an Online Reading
Make A Tiny Poetry Game with Tinderbox	 In Conversation: Karen Solie and Sarah Howe	pool burn lock and sluice						 In Conversation: Naomi Shihab Nye				
			Poetry as Witness, Poetry as Protest	 Tracing the Shoreline			Poetry Masterclass with Anthony Joseph			Sea Shanties for Sirens and Landlubbers	Strange Architecture	Obsidian Foundation Online Showcase
	Fetches and Folklore				Roundtable With Fady Joudah				The Space Between – New Poetic Performances			
			Poetry Jam with Anoraq							Bàird Bhaile: Gaelic Poetry and Song Night		Celebrating the Troublemaker: A Workshop
		 Maryville by Joelle Taylor						Rock the Boat				
									On Slack Tide			

How to Find Us

All events take place at Pleasance, unless otherwise stated.

EDINBURGH



CLERMISTON



PORTOBELLO



LEITH



THE PLEASANCE
Pleasance Courtyard
60 Pleasance
Edinburgh
EH8 9TJ

FINGAL HOTEL
Alexandra Dock
Leith
Edinburgh
EH6 7DX

**TEVIOT
DEBATING HALL**
13 Bristo Square
Edinburgh
EH8 9AJ

**CENTRAL
CHILDREN'S
LIBRARY**
George IV Bridge
Edinburgh
EH1 1EG

**VALVONA
AND CROLLA**
19 Elm Row
Edinburgh
EH7 4AA

**THE
PORTOBELLO
BOOKSHOP**
46 Portobello
High Street
Edinburgh
EH15 1DA

PORTA LIBRI
167 – 171 Portobello
High Street
Edinburgh
EH15 1EU

**DRUMBRAE
LIBRARY HUB**
81 Drum Brae Drive
Edinburgh
EH4 7FE

Tickets *book now*

Tickets can be purchased via pushtheboatout.org or via our Box Office partners, Citizen Ticket. Booking fees apply to online ticket purchases and will be clearly displayed at checkout (35p + 5% + VAT per ticket). Tickets can also be purchased from the Pleasance during the festival. We recommend pre-booking as no allocation is held for door sales.

Individual event prices range from free of charge to £55. Concessions are available along with free companion tickets. We have a number of events offered on a Pay

What You Can basis with tiered pricing from free of charge to £15. These are tagged throughout the brochure as PWYC.

Festival Pass

Join us for the whole weekend with a brilliant value Festival Pass. Priced at £55 plus booking fee, there are a limited number of passes which will give access to the whole programme free of charge, other than the workshops, food & drink events, and our warm up event on board the Fingal which are offered at half price or less. T&C's apply.