

# THE POETRY SOCIETY



**“The Poetry Review is unquestionably the most significant, flagship publication of its type in Britain, and has held that position for many years now.” – Simon Armitage**

## Discussion points & writing prompts

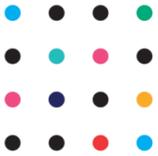
*The Poetry Review* is The Poetry Society’s quarterly magazine. Full of poems, reviews and essays, it’s part of our conversation with the world.

Each issue, we’ll pick a selection of poems to look at closely. Talk about them in the classroom, or with your poetry-writing friends, or just to yourself as you start to find out more about the poems you love, the poems that intrigue you, and the poems you want to write yourself. Our latest poem is...

### ‘Sea Creature Regrows Entire Body’ by Elaine Beckett

Turn the page to read Elaine’s poem and our ideas for exploring it further.

11-17 year olds: when the annual Foyle Young Poets of the Year Award is open, we’d love to see any new poems you write as a result of these prompts. The competition submission details are overleaf.



## Elaine Beckett

### Sea Creature Regrows Entire Body

was the headline that stopped me short.  
It took a day or two to get back to it  
what with all the broken cups.

The weather was fine,  
the kind of weather that makes a difference to people  
who prefer not to calm down

but react to whatever the next thing is  
that they think they ought to manage.  
Because you don't get to decide most things,

they happen through some other force  
which, in a moment of distraction,  
you yourself set in motion:

the brushing of a tiny hair,  
the turning of the wrong key in the wrong lock  
with all its transparency of knock-on effects

hours, days, even decades later  
like why on earth did you marry the person  
if you didn't even like them?

Of course June wasn't all like that.  
Some days were sublime –  
freshly milled pepper

and salt and ice cream  
and everything I've ever wanted  
for the rest of my life.

*'Sea Creature Regrows Entire Body' was published in The Poetry Review, Vol 102, No. 2, Summer 2020. © The Poetry Society & The author, 2020. More at [poetrysociety.org.uk](http://poetrysociety.org.uk)*



## Discussion points

- Might this be the article the poet is writing about – [bit.ly/seacreaturegrows](https://bit.ly/seacreaturegrows)? Some of that one is behind a paywall, but there are lots more articles and videos about this phenomenon to track down.
- There are no starfish or sea-squirts in this poem: in fact, there are no regenerating sea-creatures in it at all. What's going on? What is actually regrowing?
- Can you imagine a situation where you could give a copy of this poem as a gift? Who might give it to whom? What might they be trying to say with it?
- Which pair goes together more naturally – salt and pepper, or salt and ice? What happens when you put salt and ice together? What might these pairs of things – the pepper and salt, the salt and ice – be saying about the relationship of the couple in the poem? What's the effect of that stanza break in between pepper and salt?

## Writing Prompt

Lose yourselves amongst the online archives of *New Scientist*, *National Geographic* or *Science Focus* magazines. What catches your eye or sounds your potential poem alarm? Something biological, chemical, technological, geological? Write a poem which uses a scientific story or discovery as a metaphor for a changing inter-personal relationship. Animal, mineral, vegetable or human – what do they all have in common, and what differentiates them?

## About the Poet

Elaine Beckett grew up in Kent and studied music, film and architecture in London. She has mainly worked as a university lecturer. In 2008 she moved to Dorset where she joined a poetry group led by Annie Freud. Faber published her New Poet pamphlet in 2016.



For more from the Summer 2020 of *The Poetry Review*, visit the issue webpage at [bit.ly/tpr1102](https://bit.ly/tpr1102)

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- ▶ Sample our exclusive, online-only features 'Behind the Poem', 'In Front of the Poem' and 'Poetry Mixtape'
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- ▶ Enter the **Foyle Young Poets of the Year Award**, the most prestigious award for writers aged 11-17. Since it began in 1998, the Award has kick-started the career of some of today's most exciting poets from Sarah Howe and Helen Mort, to Jay Bernard and Caroline Bird. Prizes include mentoring, a residential Arvon writing course, Poetry Society membership and books. For full details, visit [foyleyoungpoets.org](https://foyleyoungpoets.org)