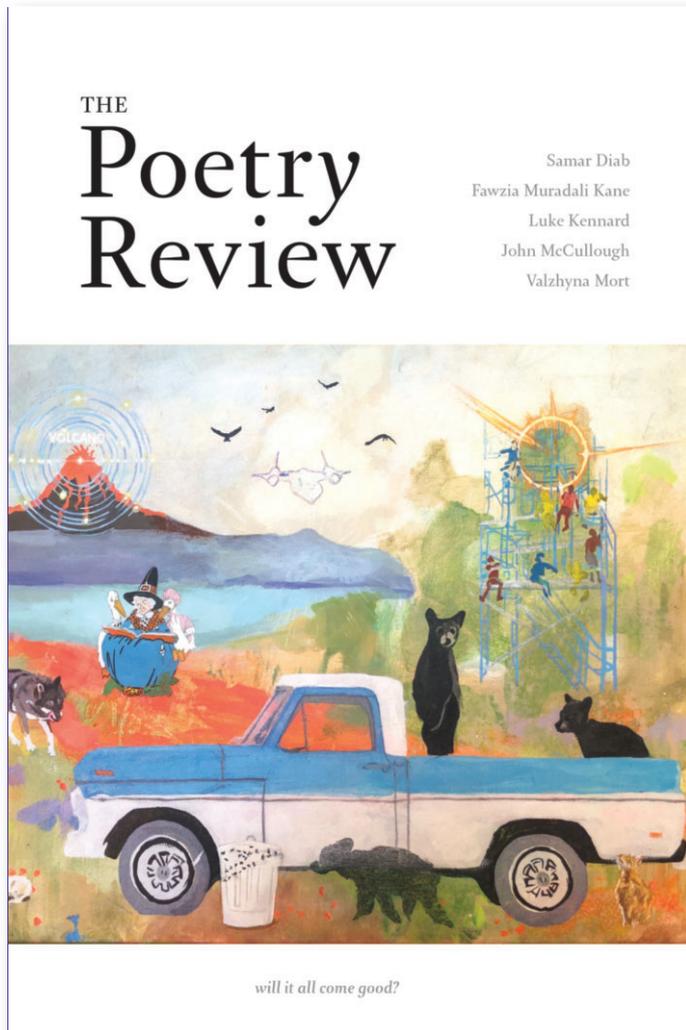


# THE POETRY SOCIETY



**“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

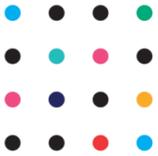
*The Poetry Review* is The Poetry Society’s quarterly magazine. Full of poems, reviews and essays, it’s part of our conversation with the world.

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...

### ‘A Story About Water’ by Gboyega Odubanjo

Turn the page to read Gboyega’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.



## Gboyega Odubanjo

### A Story About Water

so there's a scorpion and a frog—they're trying to get across this river—the scorpion says to the frog take me—the frog says are you sure because if you sting me we'll both drown—the scorpion says of course i'm sure—so the frog takes the scorpion and the scorpion stings the frog and of course they both drown—wait actually it's two sisters—sorry—two sisters trying to get across this river—and the river says i'm gonna need something in order for you two to get across—the first sister says take my mangoes—the second younger sister says no you can't have my mangoes and she tries to go across and of course she drowns—besides the old man already told them don't go into the water—he said don't you know that that is how they took us—the younger sister probably forgot because the old man said a lot of things—he's the one who said two by two for forty days—sorry—different story—this old man said if you want the water to stop then plant a cross in the yard and sprinkle it with salt—but it didn't stop—whole time the sun and ocean are chilling on a bench—the ocean invites the sun to its house—the sun says how come you never come to my house—the ocean says i'm not sure if i should come—the sun—of course you should—the ocean—are you sure there'll be enough room—the sun—of course i'm sure—so the ocean goes and fills up the whole living room—says are you sure—the sun says i'm sure—so the ocean fills the corridors stairs bedrooms the whole gaff—and so that's why the ocean is here and the sun all the way up there

*'A Story About Water' was published in The Poetry Review, Vol 110, No. 3, autumn 2020. © The Poetry Society & The author, 2020. More at [poetrysociety.org.uk](http://poetrysociety.org.uk)*



## Discussion points

- What tales does Gboyega Odubanjo combine in his poem? There's this one: [bit.ly/scorpionfrog](https://bit.ly/scorpionfrog) and this one: [bit.ly/floodnarrative](https://bit.ly/floodnarrative) – any more that you can spot? What's the effect of this loosely punctuated pile up of tales on you? Do you feel overwhelmed reading the poem, or filled with energy or something else altogether?
- Try reading the poem out loud or performing it. Does it work better if you sit down and read it quietly, or move about the room and give it some volume? Think about the different ways important information is spoken – an individual whisper in the ear or a performance broadcast to a large audience. What sort of speech is this poem?
- What does the poem tell us about the frog and the scorpion? What about the ocean and the sun? Do you think this is a climate crisis poem?

## Writing Prompt

Think about the bodies of water which surround you: how far do you live from the sea, a river, a reservoir? What water is there in your bathtub, your kettle, your bottle? Think about the water cycle, how rain returns to the sea. Where is there too much water, where is there not enough water? Write a poem where all these bodies of water flow into one. What might this flowing water symbolise? (Gboyega Odubanjo ran a writing challenge with People Need Nature for Young Poets Network recently – give it a go here: [bit.ly/pnnchallenge](https://bit.ly/pnnchallenge))

## About the Poet

Gboyega Odubanjo was born and raised in East London. His pamphlet, *While I Yet Live*, was published by Bad Betty Press in 2019. He is an editor of *bath magg*.



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