

**Dave Lewis**

*Selected Poems*



**Praise for Dave Lewis's poetry:**

"The poems are sharp, clear, and confident. He has a clarity only a real poet possesses."

- **Brian Patten**

"An engaging and diverse range of poems, well-crafted and driven by theme and form. The subjects are varied, but this confident poet succeeds in melding them into a coherent and rewarding collection."

- **David J Costello**

"Dave Lewis is a true Welsh poet of the Valleys."

- **Catrin Collier**

"His poetry is honest and direct. Each word is effective. Each word is easily understood. Unlike so many others today, he writes from the heart and soul, from raw emotion; he has drawn on his wide-ranging knowledge and experience to evolve a style, an elevated poetic diction, which eschews artifice and ornate language."

- **John Evans**

"Dave Lewis's work possesses an energy and freshness that lifts his imagery and empathy way above the work of many less ambitious poets."

- **Sally Spedding**

"The humour is dark, the love is bright, the poetry is touching, taunting, spewing, galling, tender."

- **Eloise Williams**

"The poems are deceptively complex... seemingly easily accessible but with deeper reading wrought with a covert enigmatic depth that remains unresolved."

- **Mike McNamara**

"Dave Lewis is a storyteller: sharply observant, witty and whimsical."

- **Kathy Miles**

"The stark reality Mr Lewis painted left me breathless. Readers will ride a rollercoaster of rich language, clever insights and creativity."

- **Jolen Whitworth**

"If Dave Lewis's work doesn't make you feel, then you might as well give up on this poetry lark... because that's what he does best. Make you feel!"

- **Agnes Meadows**

"His free-flowing verse makes him a Welsh son of the Beats."

- **Mike Jenkins**

"A compassionate poet of emotion and sensitivity; his use of pared down concise language and short simple forms is very successful."

- **Gillian Drake**

"Dave Lewis is a unique voice in the poetry world."

- **Maira Andrew**

"An outcry and reassertion of the true feelings of the individual, unhidden, unashamed and fiercely assertive of the beat that runs through us all."

- **Mick Evans**

## About the author



**Dave Lewis** is a writer and photographer based in **Pontypridd, south Wales**. He has always lived in Wales except for a short spell in Kenya in 1993-94.

He writes content for and still maintains many web sites. He has worked for **BBC Wales** and written local newspaper columns. He has also been published in a number of literary magazines and web sites all over the world.

In 2007 he set up the first ever **Welsh Poetry Competition**, an international poetry competition aimed at encouraging the wealth of creative writing talent that we know exists in Wales but currently languishes in the doldrums. It is now the biggest in Wales.

He also runs the **Welsh Writers**, A to Z database, an online resource that highlights the best writers from Wales or with Welsh connections.

Dave works for **Publish & Print**, his own book publishing company that is seeking writers that have been overlooked by the mainstream publishing industry.

In 2020 he launched the **Poetry Book Awards**, an international contest that seeks to reward self published poets, indies and small presses by helping to promote great poets overlooked by traditional publishers.

He has published a number of books, which can be bought direct from his web site, from all good book stores (as **paperbacks**) and are also available for download with **Amazon Kindle** and other platforms.

This short e-book is just a very small sample of his poetry.

*UK Amazon page – [www.amazon.co.uk/Dave-Lewis/e/B004W67KOW/](http://www.amazon.co.uk/Dave-Lewis/e/B004W67KOW/)*

*US Amazon page - [www.amazon.com/Dave-Lewis/e/B004W67KOW/](http://www.amazon.com/Dave-Lewis/e/B004W67KOW/)*

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*Tenerife Club Singer*

Alone at the bar  
Two packs of cigarettes  
Are stacked like long lost friends  
The club singer sits alone  
Constant in his loneliness  
As transit tourists chat  
For two weeks at a time  
His world, their world, complete  
Alone he sits and smokes  
Smokes himself to death  
Only home for the NHS  
Bald 'neath his cowboy hat

*Human Nature*

“Hey man!”

grated the Californian

“You left your *Howl* behind”

“Wow!”

“Did you hear that?” said Paulie

“Only in this city man,

and leave it to me,

I’ll get the man to sign it yeh,

and if you don’t hear from me

let me know and ask

me to send the fuckin’ book”

I left my friend a note.

My best friend in half an hour.

“Send me the fuckin’ book man!”

I wrote.

He laughed.

Now I wait in the rain in a land devoid

of oranges

for the postman.

*Afternoon Shift*

The lino shiny dead  
cramped crocodile  
choked hand  
bread and dripping  
at the cupboard towers  
arthritic apron  
dogs at feet  
her petal splits  
cuts like crusts  
she knows you know  
sliced chestnut  
men at work  
the knock on wood  
saltwater drips on fur

*Forest*

consider this forest closing her arms around you,  
precise,  
ejaculating dew-dawn soaked orchids, strangled by red and blue macaws  
in their paradise plumage and kaolin soaked beaks, and squawks  
rejoicing...  
later,  
in midnight glazed rainfall, spurting bat flocks to blue moon, citrus stains  
henna-hard rock high above as a river rage passion fruit film plays on (call it water fall)  
who longed for the forest to feel;  
to reveal a brief clearing,  
for jaguars and otters,  
and a trillion lustrous insects,  
canny kingfishers,  
some snakes,  
a lost golden king – perhaps?  
maybe,  
the forest could annually bloom; fresh monkeys, and lizards, and spiders,  
and tapirs, and rats the size of wheelbarrows?  
and the trees stay muffled with soft moss  
and perfume – never slate bare  
of environmental concerns  
and perhaps,  
the forest will gestate with poison arrow frogs and haemorrhagic diseases  
and be safe from dieticians and drug dealers and soldiers and miners and  
loggers and prospectors and rapists...  
and will consider closing her arms around herself,  
precise.



***Bundle***

sparkle –  
like a green leaf in winter frost,  
bright eyes

sometimes –  
you make me feel  
like I'm twenty again

held –  
my strong bear arm,  
eyes closed tight

rode –  
taxi, easy as a dream  
drunk on wine

happy –  
left all life behind  
that was undeserving

love –  
dare I even murmur closer?  
scared to feel

burn –  
deep within a smile  
like a child in snow

*What Could The World Say?*

We last saw him in a hard bed, opposite a confused ex-World  
champion snooker player

NHS nurses wanted to know how old he was, kept asking,  
and came to stare

like wide-eyed children who'd seen an elephant, a goblin or  
some giant caterpillar.

We took turns to dab his lips with sweet juice

silently save for his eyes that roved the room and your face

like a faithful dog who knows the car is for visits to the vets  
and painful injections

while we smile and stroke fur and try to pretend everything's  
normal,

as it were, in the days when meadows toned with the scent of  
urine.

Days later we got the phone call and the arrangements were  
made

matter of factly, like a shopping trip, or insurance claim

as his rabbits ate the stale grass, wired tight, nibble, strangely  
the same.

And so we travelled up by car, fuelled on strained talk and  
service stops, the younger generation - up to their eighties.

And when it was over we realized that all his old friends were  
twenty years gone,

none left to loiter, all long dead, as extinct as World War One  
soldiers mostly are.

But everybody loved him, anyone who knew him,

they were touched, by benevolence, by a prophet with the gift  
of time.

I cried with grown men and walked his straight garden path

while women made tea and cut too many sandwiches with  
over sharp knives.

His greatness left a hole for ages, his deafness louder than  
any voice,

what could the world say that would mean as much?

*Learning in Gaps*

'Sit down Williams you liddle shit!'

'Shudent call im at sir'

'Ease gaw problems sir'

said Ann Marie the slag

still twirlin' her copper curls

through her tongue and teeth.

The day had started well

Irvine was absent,

the slappers quiet in the corner,

and the sun glistening

on the frost covered grass

outside the Biol. lab.

'Aaaaaarrgh!'

'Fuck off, fuck off, fuck off!'

'Come ere mun,' I said

as we lapped the desks

like Coe and Ovet.

'No way sir, you'll lamp me.'

The rabbit headed for the door

he bolted out into the yard

into the headlights of the morning sun

the whole room followed

like a pack sensing blood

but he'd gone

screaming up the road

a car did an emergency stop

as he sprinted past Legges shop.

Two days later he was back,

sat down at the front

calm as a sea

during an August  
camping dawn.

'Well... better today r we?'

'Wha da ya mean sir?'

'No more nonsense like Tuesday yeh?'

'Wha dew mean mun, I havin' bin 'ere fa weeks like, yews trippin butt.'

Later,

the slappers in the corner told me

'E bin unda the bridge sniffin' aerosols'

'Yew know, on Maggies Hill sir.'

It was then I noticed the good kids,

sat like Buddha,

exposed yet safe,

as parents wanted,

hoped,

learning in gaps

like soldiers catching *sleep in snatches*,

and Ann Marie's hand crept down

between her legs

and she winked when I started talking about

environmental pollution

on page 63.

*Marrakech*

Salmon-pink

city of the living

teeming, steaming, shimmering

mottled mint tea afternoons

shade seeking shade

arch beyond arch, 'neath

a cobalt sky

shell-brown beauties

hidden behind black

creep closer, venture on

Past cropped jewels

pale olive

skin craving sunshine

until bats burst

and cobras are

bagged

the signal

for end of shift

and fires grow

and smoke fills the air

and passers-by

can only stand and stare

for a thousand thousand years

or more

*Quite early one morning*

'Y' Tumble

half past ten

a black and white

waitress

haiku's the menu

'black pudding, mushrooms or

tomato'

as shepherd alcoholics

warn of Swansea

storms

## *Tweet*

A good friend of mine, who doesn't talk to me, or telephone me, or ask what I'm up to or if I fancy a beer anymore, e-mailed me last minute to say she's on Twitter and that I should 'follow' her. She added that she'd be on Facebook if I ever needed to get hold of her in an emergency, and asked why I wasn't her friend yet, even though I thought we'd been friends since we started school together, on the same day in 1970...

Anyway, I thought why not? Get with the program Dave, you'll be left behind soon you cyber dinosaur you!

So I tried this Twitter thing.

I signed up and waited.

Nothing happened.

Then I sent a text (one of only 3 this year btw) to my oldest, best friend (pending) to ask how it all worked and when I could hope to start reaping the benefits and all.

She replied instantly (almost before I'd hit 'send' in fact).

'Doh! U hv 2 flw peeps mun butt! \*%\$£" – hehe, Lol.'

'Try Fry.'

And I did. I started to search for and follow all the 'Dave Lewis's' I could find.

There were a lot.

I found full-time playboys, semi-nude classical yard gnome repairmen, filmmakers, musicians, Iron Maiden-loving civil servants, glass blowers, erotic nude photographers, Great Fathers / Decent Husbands, Semi-Pro Golfers, Youth Wrestling/Baseball Coaches, Proudly Serving America, and Blessed With the Best Friends a Man Could Have, Independent thinkers, Transcendental Meditation Center Yogi's, truckers, rugby players, Lovers of music, films, Sopranos, football, Branston pickle, 24, Family Guy, scampi, Tang Soo Do and its related art Tai Chi, Editors of the TARDIS Newsroom and a U.S. Senate staffer. I didn't follow the god botherers, businessmen or marketers (seemed a bit pointless), but I did follow a lot of me's.

I waited.

Nothing.

Despondent now, I walked (using my legs) down the pub.

I entered, and discovered the place was heaving with single people (all engrossed in iPhone masturbation), couples sat across the table from each other (sending texts to people who weren't there, but should be, 'cos they were missing such a great time), gangs of girls (all tarted-up in their best texting outfits, implements charged and waving like dildos), in between sips and snarls at the gangs of boys, all tooled up in SuperDry & Hollister, text (ing?) wireless members of the faction for reinforcements.

Occasionally, a boy, or a girl, or a robot, would glance my way, and undress me of my t-shirt from Zanzibar, project violence into my smiling eyes. The eyes that filled with tears as the sun rose over that temple in the jungle, the eyes that gaped wide at those elephants in musth, the eyes I rubbed salt from when the dolphins and turtles outswam me, and the eyes that nearly went snow-blind on the equator, up that volcano.

I log on again Sunday morning, with a sore head, think it's alcohol-related, this hollow feeling lurking in my stomach.

Still waiting.

Still nothing.

Except offers to be someone else. Read about them. Connect with them. Find out about them. What they're doing. How well they're doing.

The me's I'll never know exist.

And I press the 'Back' button to the girl I stood next to. At the hot bar, with the hot pants.

I smiled and asked her if she came here often. She spat out her reply with the venom of a cobra (I saw once in Tanzania) and was gone, all too satisfied, she had logged off, momentarily, disconnected from her network, risked the downtime, to push between me and a DriftKing to order her shots.

'Get a life granddad!' she'd mispronounced, confusing textspeak with real speak.

I had to withdraw my puppy dog eyes. Go home, log on, search for that life.

That life I've been wasting up to now.



*Glass*

in the back garden  
throwing out old photographs  
Everest shards  
send a final warning  
as glass flames  
dare me to slip  
as I stare, mesmerised,  
watching your smiling face  
disappear beneath  
the rising rubble  
of mistakes

*Until Tomorrow*

Walking at dusk through the old park,  
the golden glow of forgiveness  
hangs in the air long enough  
for you to steal it with both hands  
but you choose not to,  
you choose, deliberately,  
to let the sun set on that particular episode.  
You walk the other way,  
past the lake, past the flowerbeds  
until you become traffic,  
become a remnant,  
for I will not open that wound again,  
will not offer the exquisite beauty of autumn  
in exchange for your eyes,  
those all-consuming lips,  
that soft touch and hard hug.  
No. It will not happen again this sharp day,  
I promise, I swear in my best verbs.  
Until tomorrow then.

*Lamb*

born beneath a tangle of stars  
cream cry Hamal  
blood-warm straw  
away in a manger  
the whistle of distant collie

but all too soon  
a frosty breeze chews the nostrils  
the farmed proletariat  
mass in trucks with fear  
spindle limbs hacked, knife hung on a hook

dragging her chair across the carpet  
mother mews the table herd  
clatter, scrape – silver on bone china  
manufactured in the factory  
nestled underneath the familiar glue-speckled hills

vinegar-sharp conversation about oppression  
dripping mint on the lottery of sex  
a rabble wrapped in wool shawls  
animal logos defining irony  
blind to the tender meat we are

*Eighty-five year old man with little grey dog, I see him every Thursday, it's usually raining*

'Enjoying your lunch?'

'Mmm.'

'Well, I don't talk to her much see.'

'No?'

'My son has a good job but he's moved up there with her, we didn't see them for years.'

'Daughter-in-law is all fur coat and no knickers.'

'Likes to have all these solicitor friends, and bankers.'

'Oh dear.'

'I drove up there once – you know what she said?'

'Wish you'd have phoned, we might have had visitors!'

'The cheeky fuckin' bitch!'

'Aye, I hate Christmas I do.'

'Yeh, a big fuss eh, me too.'

'My wife died Christmas.'

'Oh dear, yes I hate it too.'

'She loved Christmas she did.'

'Oh... sorry.'

'Fifty years married see.' (a tear forms in his eye)

'But I've had a good life.'

'I was in the Paras see.'

'In Austria we were once, skiing or something.'

'Well, those chalet maids... no-one went skiing.'

'Spread my seed see.' (he chuckles)

'I got plenty of money see.'

'I have!'

'Nah, they won't go short after my days.'

'Do you know how many times I've been in hospital this year?'

'Three times?'

'Three times.'

'I went on holiday, came back, had a water infection.'

'Oh dear.'

'No bladder see.'

'And then the diabetes kicks in.'

'Aye, can't take it with you.'

'They'll be alright, they know that, told them see.'

'This car is crap.'

'I can't help it see, I see one and I have to buy it.'

'My daughter says why not dad?'

'Don't drink or smoke.'

'Ever had a Peugeot? Crap steering wheel, too small.'

'It's going back after Christmas.'

'I've changed the locks see.'

'In case I go tomorrow.'

'I know her, she'd be straight down, try to empty the house she would, horrible cow.'

'Can't complain though.'

'Sandwiches is it?'

'Mmm.'

'Better go with her now.' (dog tugs at lead)

'Too wet.'

(He waves goodbye and gets back in his car)

(I smile)

*Catherine*

You were blood-red and lambing  
while I was still far more innocent than Spring.

The moon and the stars were aligned like bluebells  
but I was still rolling in the mud of my mind.

He knew, and he knew.  
Not that I really knew, or really knew.

How could it be?  
That an angel so pure would choose me.

And on that second, or was it third act of forgiveness  
I was mature and stupid and selfish and mistaken.

Kinda knew that God had sabotaged -  
our love song unwritten.

And so our shadows flew north  
and our shadows flew south,

now I cannot honestly remember  
if I've seen you, if I've lusted you, or if I've breathed in

the flowers in your hair,  
the Kate Bush in your eyes,

the soft cotton on your firm breasts –  
that Billabong shape.

I heard you went away  
and that is all I heard.

But thirty years of weathering  
can do nothing to wash me clean,

like virus replication,  
the sand it sticks to toes

and nothing I can say  
and nothing I can do,

can make the time come back to us,  
no, none of us, not even you.

*Eve at Rest Bay*

*Littorina*

smooth-shell streaked  
rainbow-mini-trapped within whorl

motley flecked  
like a brittle face

corn-fragile  
curved          jewelled

*"the Lord God made them all"*

a speck                          prism  
a variegated creation          beauty  
a galaxy beach                  morning  
between tides                  exposed  
briefly                          'Did you see?'

grain of colour  
size of your eyes

                grab maculate  
defile the moment

and  
keep deep          wash in  
   wash out  
throwing fiery flames  
on the sandy parchment

break in a curl  
                wave



*Terminus*

On the cold silver seat

winter wind blows discarded tickets, the confetti of zombie  
travellers,

as I gaze at the blue-bus sky

and ponder the millions of seconds that are wasted between  
shopping bags and diesel fumes and glances at watches and  
mobiles.

And there's the Goth girl in purple leggings, frowning at the old  
man with the face like crumpled paper, who's sneezing at the  
pale-white punk as he threads his guitar case through the  
forest of crutches,

elm-straight sleepwalkers, barcoded with fear, cheap t-shirted  
malnutrition, *Universally Credited*, long-ghosts, stare gangs,  
pausing for reinforcements by the cigarette machine on their  
way to the *hwb* of all dreams.

*Oak Leaf Stalker*

Walking down the hill past the library  
I heard the softest of footsteps behind me.  
So discreet, so mild,  
like your slippers brushing the pavement.  
But when I turned to smile at you  
all I saw was a solitary oak leaf,  
halfway between green and red,  
halfway between life and death.

I didn't know what I should have known  
or what I was supposed to know, for sure.  
Then a rustle in the giants above my head –  
the wind started to offer explanations.  
Only a million or so to begin with,  
bombarding my senses all at once,  
throwing out futures, testing my morals,  
outlining many lonely nights of grief.

I tried to ignore you, you oak leaf stalker,  
sucking the oxygen out of me.  
I wanted to rewind, I needed to go back,  
to replay that moment,  
say so many different things.  
But as the moon lit up the clock tower  
and the chimes rang out loud  
I knew I was on a new path and  
I guessed you'd be half way home by then.

*River Wye Weekend*

You came in a beat up old blue Landie  
with tales of sleeping giants on your lips.  
It was your first night in the cottage  
when the Wye was skipping over stones,  
dividing the spiked water milfoil  
with sacred Pumlumon Fawr sunk into the sunset.

We watched a heron draggle  
in and out of the water crowfoot beds,  
trusted we'd see muntjac or wild boar tomorrow.  
Look, there's a kingfisher, jewelled above the otter's holt  
and later a dipper, teeter-totter,  
near the yellow-cress.

Watching frogs collared by ripples  
we wish for a grass snake or polecat.  
Skipping past horse-tail and great willowherb  
you trace the sand martins with your miniature fingertips  
while I collect peppery chives from the bedrock  
and turn my once carefree soul to my stomach.

### *A Dream of Gawain*

If you should find yourself lost among the lily ponds of Bosherton, contemplating the magic of those Penrose stairs, take some time to breathe the same freshwater air that tiptoed through the lungs of the hermit Saint Govan one thousand and a half years ago. And perhaps slowly trace the clouds with fairy-tale cartography, gaze forever upon the antique summer sun and picture, secreted in this prehistoric fissure, King Arthur's nephew, in the twilight of his years, having made his peace with the Green Knight, dodging pirates, eating fish and drinking from the holy well. Listen for his cries, bobbing on the wind like a Manx Shearwater or a Chough, then place your hands upon the stone shadows and make a wish. Can you hear a whinny, swirling through the toothy marram and settling on your brine-soaked lips? Maybe it's the ghost of Sir Gawain's heroic white horse, Gringolet, with red ears, *keincaled*. And while the old man is mourning for the death of his steed in combat, imagine him ringing that silver bell, pure as the maidens of youth. Later, after watching shooting stars on Broad Haven beach I dreamt of angels encasing, in a giant whelk of stone, the Bell Rock, now tolling louder than thunder and as the breakers tattoo legends into the jagged coastline's edge I wake amongst a bed of thrift to the distant shimmer of a whale's song.

*Blade*

The cold concrete is your warm bed now  
while the artificial snow smells of flowers.  
Irrigating eyes blur the mustard moon  
and your blood is finger-licking good.  
You have no thoughts of stone boats – it's too soon,  
'cos you have double Geography on Monday morning  
and you want to learn much more about Jamaica.  
But as a siren wails somewhere in this circus town  
and your fist unfurls like a fern in monochrome  
perhaps that boy with the bigger blade  
will think of you on his short drive home.

If you liked these poems and want to read more then why not visit Dave's website for links to all his books. They are available on Amazon as paperbacks or kindle e-books:

[www.david-lewis.co.uk](http://www.david-lewis.co.uk)

And please feel free to *connect* with Dave ☺

Facebook – [www.facebook.com/djlewis1966](http://www.facebook.com/djlewis1966)

Twitter – [www.twitter.com/radhiphang](http://www.twitter.com/radhiphang)

BookBub – [www.bookbub.com/profile/dave-lewis?follow=true](http://www.bookbub.com/profile/dave-lewis?follow=true)

Goodreads – [www.goodreads.com/author/show/15270560.Dave\\_Lewis](http://www.goodreads.com/author/show/15270560.Dave_Lewis)

**Useful websites:**

Dave Lewis – Writer  
[www.david-lewis.co.uk](http://www.david-lewis.co.uk)

International Welsh Poetry Competition  
[www.welshpoetry.co.uk](http://www.welshpoetry.co.uk)

Welsh Writers  
[www.welshwriters.co.uk](http://www.welshwriters.co.uk)

Publish & Print  
[www.publishandprint.co.uk](http://www.publishandprint.co.uk)

Wales Trails  
[www.wales-trails.co.uk](http://www.wales-trails.co.uk)

Poetry Book Awards  
[www.poetrybookawards.co.uk](http://www.poetrybookawards.co.uk)