

AUDACIOUS
WOMEN
FESTIVAL

AUDACIART WEEKLY

Through A Portal

26 June 2020



Photo: Through A Portal © Shona Cameron

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An Audacious Women Publication



AudaciArt – Through A Portal

This week's theme, *Through A Portal*, is inspired by a quotation from Arundhati Roy:

Historically, pandemics have forced humans to break with the past and imagine their world anew. This one is no different. It is a portal, a gateway between one world and the next.

We can choose to walk through it, dragging the carcasses of our prejudice and hatred, our avarice, our data banks and dead ideas, our dead rivers and smoky skies behind us. Or we can walk through lightly, with little luggage, ready to imagine another world. And ready to fight for it.

AudaciArt

Hallo Everybody

This week's quote from Arundhati Roy is actually about the pandemic. What a positive challenge she's presented us all with. Let's take it as a call to action, to imagine another world is possible, and to be ready to fight for it.

This is the 12th AudaciArt publication: an exciting collection of words and pictures by women. Insightful, moving and entertaining as ever.

If you're thinking of contributing something – in any art form – your work would be very welcome. Or, if you'd like to chat about it first, don't hesitate to get in touch.

The theme for Friday, 3rd July @ noon is: Footprints

And for the following week, 10th July: Being A Pretzel

Many thanks to all our contributors and to the Audacious Women volunteers who helped to make this possible.



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Arundhati Roy
Hilery Williams



(Suzanna) Arundhati Roy (24th November 1961) is an Indian author best known for her novel *The God of Small Things*, which won the Man Booker Prize for Fiction in 1997 and became the best-selling book by a non-expatriate Indian author.

She is also a political activist involved in human rights and environmental causes, bringing all her skills to interrogate unlawful, unfair and hugely damaging events to the fore.

She has spent the decades after the publication of her first novel, giving her voice to many causes: territorial disputes such as Kashmiri separatism, US Foreign policy in Afghanistan, Anti-Zionism, the rising populism of India's government and effect upon the poorest. Her campaign to challenge the building of over 3000 dams in India highlighted the fact that these dams have displaced 33 million people with little or no advantage to the economy long term. India's investment in these development projects is, she claims, married to corruption in the wealthy world. *'Development Aid' is rechanneled back to the countries it came from, she writes, masquerading as equipment cost or consultants' fees or salaries to the agencies' own staff.*



Roy's environmental activism goes further: She writes:

Earth, forest, water, air. These are assets that the state holds in trust for the people it represents. In a country like India, 70% of the population lives in rural areas. That's 700 million people. Their lives depend directly on access to natural resources. To snatch these away and sell them as stock to private companies is a process of barbaric dispossession on a scale that has no parallel in history.

She is a spokesperson for the anti-globalisation movement and a vehement critic of neo-imperialism and U.S. foreign policy. She opposes India's policies towards nuclear weapons as well as industrialisation and economic growth (which she describes as *encrypted with genocidal potential*).

Her warnings against India's *fascist* infrastructure and its herald in Prime Minister Narendra Modi have placed her in considerable danger.

Her numerous essays on contemporary politics and culture nonfiction were collected in a single volume, *My Seditious Heart* in 2019. She published a second novel, *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*, in 2017.

Her furious curiosity has not diminished. She writes that nonviolence, while preferable, cannot work if no media will cover your plight. As a member of the media, she works tirelessly to bring the world's attention to these pressing concerns.

Literature provides shelter. That's why we need it.

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Wiki (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arundhati_Roy) and Jacob (<https://www.jacobinmag.com/2020/05/arundhati-roy-my-seditious-heart-modi-naxalites-bjp>)



Portal to Stillness
Sally Freedman



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Stillness

Sally Freedman

There is a stillness here.
I move and am moved
To see true green, rare blue,
All colour shimmers, new.
I breathe and am breathed,
This air a treasured gift,
Calling and lifting me,
Pulling and shifting me
Till I become the clouds
And every bird in flight,
Each leaf that's blown,
Each seed that's sown.
There is a stillness here,
The pulse and throb of life
Through which the ages shine
Beyond that which is mine.

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The Portal At the End Of The Word

Heidi Goehrke



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the last word spoken
She turned away
from unbearable silence
from unused fragments of
language
onomatopoeically smashed
against the sounding board
of her no longer resonating
mind

a slight movement of her
head only
no more
no longer indicating the
willingness
to listen
no longer at the mercy of his
syntax

she left and carried
in her mind all the words
waiting to be spoken
by Her



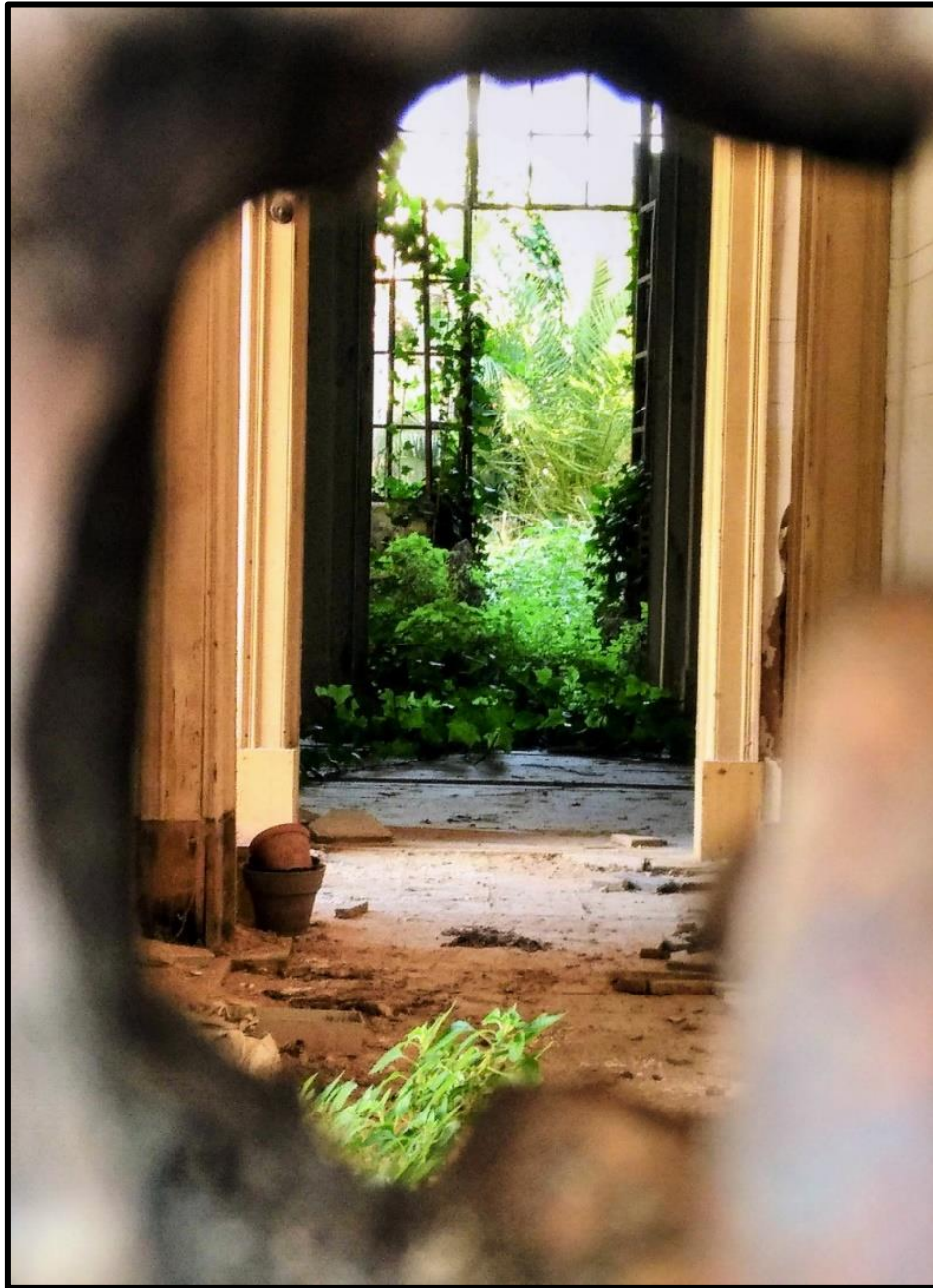
Liminal
Freda O'Byrne

There is a portal in my heart that you have gone through.
A portal, red and raw since losing you
A dawn moment.
A liminal thread, undone.
A glimmer wisp of before.
Then red. And raw.

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Through a Portal
Shona Cameron



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Through the Portal

Hilery Williams



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Lonely or self-sufficient? Both perhaps.

The solitary child falls with total abandon into multiple parallel worlds with ease. She has already been swept into the stormy sea in the painting, gasped at the doorframe surrounded only by a field, plunged courageously into the Pool between the Worlds. She is utterly rapt, engrossed in the experience where events occur outside ordinary laws that operate at 263 Queens Road.

She avoids strange bric-a-brac, leather-bound volumes and antimacassars as she hurtles down a rabbit hole, then lands abruptly to find a circular room bounded by locked doors. One – tiny, curtained – is accessible once the cake is consumed. The shrunken child enters the garden whilst, at a later time, the parallel world is accessed through a looking glass.

That wonderful garden is different from the one behind the walls in the bleak grounds on the Yorkshire moors where the wind cries like a mithering child (or is it the wind?).

A robin is her guide this time, not a note saying *Eat Me*. The key the bird uncovers opens the door for the first time in a decade. Wonder like electricity hums through her blood, she is enamoured with this novel world, filled with magic, colour, light; replete with opportunity, growth and life. She seizes the chance to become someone



else, or, rather, to learn who she can be. Ultimately she no longer has to keep the garden secret. She belongs.

Fuelled by ennui, desire for adventure, a quest for who-knows-what?, the reader crosses the threshold while never straying from her room. She merely needs to turn pages to be transported.

Soft fur brushes her face as she plays hide and seek. Then she feels not the solid back of the wardrobe but drifting snow on her lashes. She sees the Lamp Post. *Lucy, you're not in Oxford any more.*

Thus begins a story of prophecy fulfilled, heroes and monarchs created and the saviour of the world. Risks and dangers abound but –as another questing child discovers – eventually *the supper was still hot*. A lifetime there represents only a few moments in the real world (or is it?)

An ordinary round wooden doorway opening into a hole in the ground, the enchanted Doors of Durin: both are crossed and further adventures begin.

Four children enter a derelict war-torn church in Manchester and face evil forces galore before triumphantly returning treasures which enable them to hold back a terrible darkness by fulfilling a prophecy from another world.

The child understands that not all portals look like actual doors. Most do require a key, a password (*Speak, Friend, and Enter, The Deplorable Word*). Other means to entry might be Dust released by the sacrifice of a pre-pubescent child to create a bridge between worlds, or a subtle knife which surgically cuts windows into *terra incognita*. Perhaps the frontier is that loose skirting board in the hall under the grandfather clock.

Portals lurk round every corner. We just need to know how to unlock them.

Meanwhile the reader is transported. A book is the gateway to magic. Opening a book is as simple as opening a door, but usually infinitely more rewarding. Beloved characters – Mary, Alice, Lucy, Lyra and the rest – take her with them as they pass through these entrances into realms of discovery, danger and resolution.

Portals are symbols of all the beauty and strangeness and heartbreak and triumph to come. For the adventurer there is a risk, but the prize is to emerge braver, stronger, more questioning and resilient than before. If she only allows herself to trust to this dimension-hopping, to leap into the unknown, she will discover that another world, another life, another future is possible.

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Untitled
Anne Conrad



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