

Editorial

Welcome to the ninth issue of *Flash*. This issue features new stories from Australia, Canada, Britain, France, Ghana, Ireland, and the USA. We are especially pleased to open with two flashes from English poet Craig Raine's exquisitely crafted novel-in-stories, *Heartbreak* (2010), a bleak but humorous exploration of sexual love. We are also delighted to publish new stories by three well-established American writers: scholar and memoirist Ihab Hassan, and novelists Elise Blackwell and Robin Greene.

'*Flash Presents*' features pieces from *Wouldn't You Like to Know* (2010), a virtuoso and richly varied collection of flashes by American short-story writer Pamela Painter, and from *Out of the Wreckage* (2008), a wonderfully unsettling book of 'dream parables' (reviewed in *Flash*, 2.2) by South African author Allan Kolski Horwitz. This issue again turns to earlier publications with our first ever 'Flash Essay', in which Jon Davis revisits Jayne Anne Phillips's debut chapbook, *Sweethearts* (1976), a forgotten classic from a writer who has gone on to achieve considerable success.

In 'Flash Reviews', Ian Seed is enlightened by the existentialist tragi-comedy of Etgar Keret's *Suddenly, a Knock on the Door*, while Paul McDonald admires Jon McGregor's exploration of lives made less ordinary in *This Isn't the Sort of Thing That Happens to Someone Like You*. (Two flashes extracted from McGregor's first novel, *If Nobody Speaks of Remarkable Things* (2002), were featured in *Flash*, 5.1.) Louisa Yates enjoys Tania Hershman's quirky, science-inflected take on contemporary society in *My Mother Was an Upright Piano*; Jake Campbell unearths a self-published gem in Nick Parker's delightfully off-beat *The Exploding Boy and Other Tiny Tales*; and Laura Tansley finds *Jambreakers* – an anthology edited by Calum Kerr and Valerie O'Riordan to mark the UK's first National Flash-Fiction Day – many-layered and much to her taste. Also reviewed are two books that cross genres. Tony Williams is enthralled by Craig Taylor's *Londoners*, a montage of flash-like interviews, while Ashley Chantler responds in kind to Sean Hill's *Very Short Stories*, a collection of 'twiction'. Each review is accompanied by a sample story.

We hope you enjoy this issue.

Peter Blair and Ashley Chantler

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