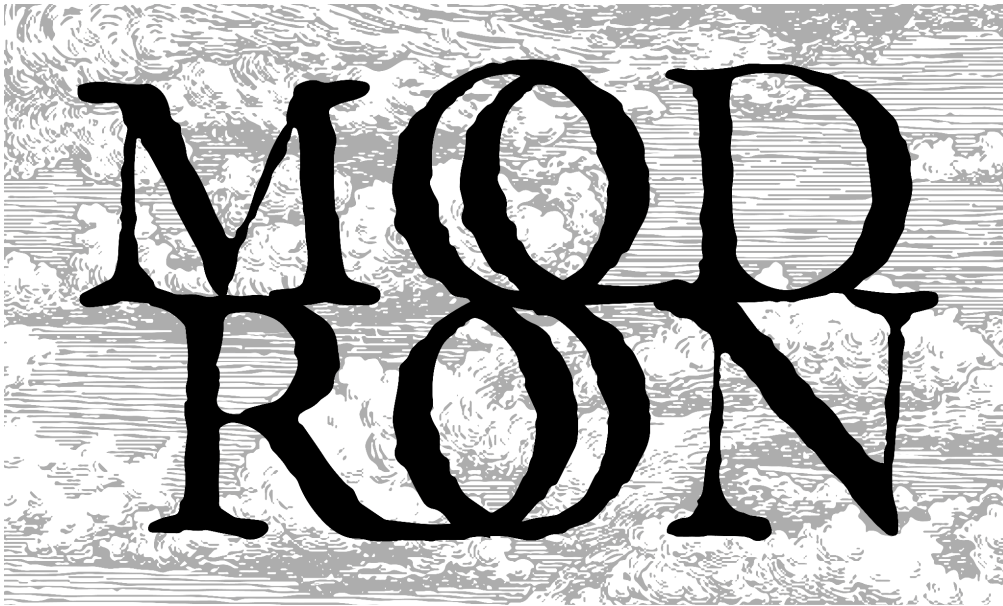




Matt Howard's first full collection, *Gall*, was published by The Rialto in 2018 and was winner of the 2018 East Anglian Book Award for Poetry, shortlisted for the Seamus Heaney Centre First Collection Prize in 2019 and won Best First Collection in the inaugural Laurel Prize 2020. His second collection, *Broadlands* is forthcoming from Bloodaxe in 2024. After eleven years working for the RSPB, Matt was the Douglas Caster Fellow in Poetry at the University of Leeds 2021 - 2023.

Earthstars

I don't have much truck with binomials
and anyway, this lot were first found at Cockley Cley,
so *Geastrum britannicum* just won't do for these
pre-Boudiccan shade-haunters. Look out for them -
fruiting provincials, dragging themselves into flesh,
staggering from this mud, their bodies still pushing
through all the Latinate, pine needle litter
with puffball heads round and dented as our vowels.

--

Exuviae Survey

TG 33974 06301

Here's one, low on a stem of saw sedge,
see how the dyke's now in favourable condition –
water soldier, frogbit, good airy water.
And all this at the edge, there for the nymph

to crawl up and cling to at their last
ministering before emerging. Note it here,
a kind of loss, moved on from,
the time given and all groundwork done.

I don't tend to the Latin names, I know this
as the whole case of a Norfolk hawker -
the waferish, moulted thing, standing-to,
earthed, to be kindled under the tongue.