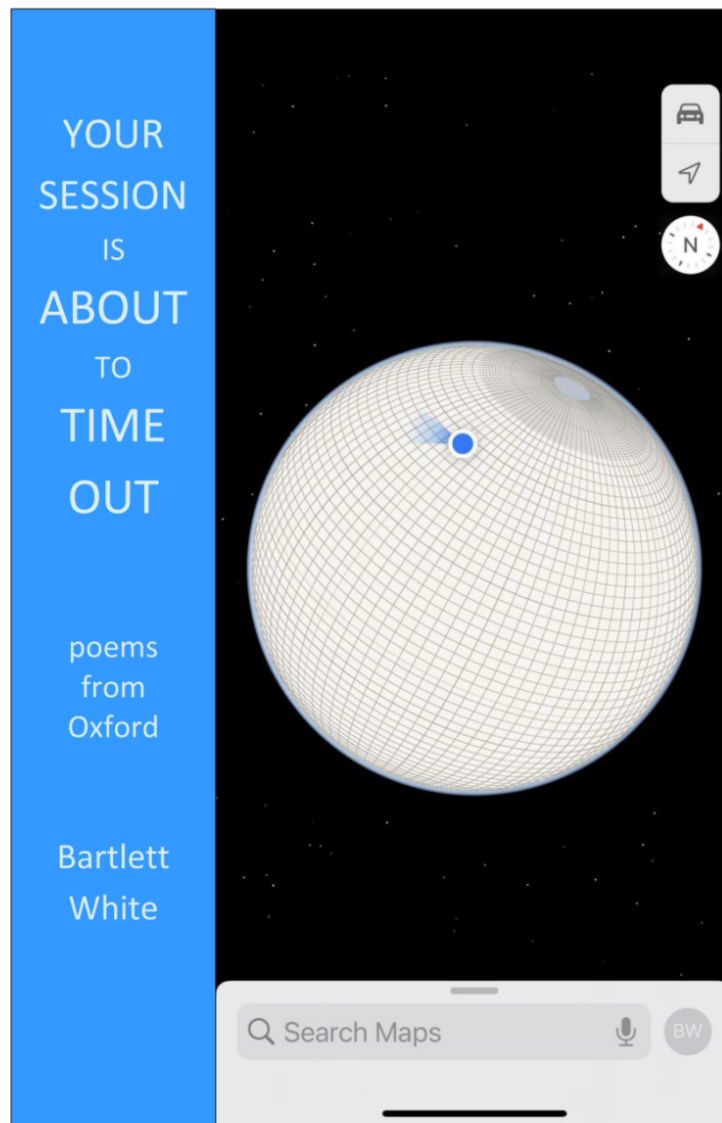




YOUR SESSION IS ABOUT TO TIME OUT:
poems from Oxford

by Bartlett White (FootHills Publishing, 2025)

Available for \$15 from the author:

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Or from the publisher:

<https://foothillspublishing.org/bart-white/>

“Time Out” is what the world desperately needs right now. And this chronological account of an American poet’s extended visit to Oxford provides the reader with the joys and insights only fresh eyes can provide, especially when those eyes belong to a poet with time on his hands to leisurely stroll the streets, fields, and museums of an ancient town. Bart White has keen eyes, indeed, for a fox slipping between parked cars, a “raptor in a wind-herded, cloud-packed sky,” two lovers kissing by the college gate, unawares of the passing world, a man in a doorway, sharpening a knife.

The concept of a “time out, or temporary escape from the temporal, implies a “time in” and so these poems do acknowledge mortality, as in references to drought in England, wildfires on several continents, memorials to the dead of a World War: “For the list of names was long / yet the sun on the flowers / and across the grass / was light.” But they also reflect on that which remains, Stonehenge, a Medieval hermitess’s chapel in Binsey Woods, artifacts of bygone civilizations, and, when his phone goes blank on the Chunnel’s train, savoring a sip of wine, “This taste in my mouth, reassurance / I am still on earth.” Reassurance, too, there can be time outs from the digital realm. This collection of time outs may be exactly what you need.

John Roche, author of *The Joe Poems* and *Tubbables*

When I see the cover with the small blue ping on a map, moving through space and time, it feels to me to be a perfect analogy for how we go through life in this age of computer-driven “sessions”. How refreshing then, to have a master storyteller share vignettes of real people and experiences drawn from his six months in Port Meadow, Oxford, England. How do observations made while living in a different country influence us? I think of Elizabeth Bishop’s “Questions of Travel”: they allow us to ponder, perhaps as she puts it *blurr’dly and inconclusive*, but ponder nonetheless “Where should we be today”. Bart White’s poems will provide guideposts for your journey to enjoy at your leisure.

Kitty Jospé, author of *Sum: I* and *Whispers of Perhaps*

Bartlett White is the author of the Pushcart-nominated *The Faces We Had As Children* (FootHills Publishing, 2014) and *The Art of Restoration* (Jules Poetry Playhouse, 2022). He has co-edited five anthologies of poetry with themes as diverse as the climate crisis, birds and cinema. He is currently co-editing with Linda Winston an anthology of epistolary poetry: *Dear Lover, Soldier, Prisoner, Ghost* that seeks a publisher. He lives in Rochester, New York.

Sample poems from the new collection for your consideration.

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Falafel Man

The falafel stand man
has Gloucester Green
all to himself this fine fall morning.

Metal curtains
on his neighbors' shops still down and locked.

Yellow and orange star-shaped leaves
gum trees let drop
stick to the wet, brown bricks of the "Green."

The Kebab King hasn't come.
The Cashino owner's home asleep.
Angrid Thai Take Away is dark as a tomb.

But the light is on at the falafel stand
and the falafel man
prepares his food.

Chopped parsley and cut tomatoes
mingle as he makes a fresh batch of tabouli,
smoky aroma of his baba ghanouj,
oil getting hot in the fryer.

A pair of teenagers approach,
just off the bus, pulling a single suitcase;
wheels clatter loudly over the bricks of the Green.
They stop to study the menu.
Their two heads touch.

And the man hums a tune
heard long ago
as a boy in his grandmother's kitchen
while he waits for the young lovers
to make up their minds
and tell him what they want for breakfast.

What can he serve to satisfy their hunger?
On the morning such as this
he could feed the world.

Summer of Drought

Parks tawny as savannahs; Christ Meadow,
a dusty lot. No green, every college courtyard
dry as stone, lovely lawns turned to straw.

Back in mid-April no one took notice, but then
nothing, not a drop. And the days piled up:
May, June, July...we realized rain had stopped.

Spain and France are burning, and half of California.
In sub-Sahara Africa, unending famine, so
this is not the worst, no, this is not the worst.

Yet it hurts to witness the withering of a garden.

Finally, a light rain falls, half an hour's worth.
Leaves glisten with water and such a relief we feel.

And overnight, after a rainstorm drums
parched dirt, we wake up glad.

In the brown churchyard, two days later,
a tinge of green reappears...spring reborn.
Dead grass revives. Rain brings hope
after four months dry.

Child's Play in Bonn Square

A girl and a boy are playing
round the steps of the war monument
in Bonn Square.

When they bump into each other
at the pedestal's corner,
Your turn, she says, *I'll wait here*.

So the boy slides away along the narrow ledge
and after a moment she follows,
pleased and smiling, expecting to

find him at the stone's first turn,
but no one. Around the next corner
then... not there either...

Henry? she calls out. *Where are you?*
Beyond her impatience, there's an undertone
of doubt, a beginning of fear...

Where are you? the words of her question tremble...
Turn around, Abigail! he cries out,
tapping her shoulder and grinning,

for in her eyes he sees how happy she is
to see him. *Abigail, Come closer.*
There's something I want to tell you.

She tucks her hair behind one ear
for secrets this friend will share.
A boy and a girl in a game,

Henry and Abigail playing,
beneath the soldiers' names
round the war memorial in Bonn Square.

I saw an ocean

I saw an ocean in Port Meadow
sea birds flashing in the brilliant dawn.

Alright—not an ocean really—November rains
flooded low ground, but gulls in great numbers

came to the water, calling over and over
as if the shallow pool were ocean truly

with sky reflected blue as any sea,
and geese and ducks quacking and honking,

and a dog let loose that splashed wildly in,
running and yipping, barking the news:

There's an ocean of birds
for the chasing this morning,

flocks and flocks in the meadow,
Come see!

She Skates through Jericho

With powerful rhythmic swings of one leg
propels herself to the crest of Walton Street
then pulls the leg aboard
for the long ride down
bare arms loose by her sides
blonde curls waving in the breeze
bold beauty
proud sailor
 on this asphalt sea

With a subtle shift of weight
she cuts into the empty plaza
before the Institute of Government
& traces lazy circles
 just for fun

Her passing image reflects in glass
slips through steel & glides away

Blithe spirit, tender body
over the unforgiving surfaces
 of this rough world