



litfest

www.litfest.org

Litfest

Autumn Weekend

5-10 October

2023



Letter from The Chair

Hello and welcome to the Litfest Autumn Weekend!

This October, we are proud to provide a platform for writers with connections to the Northwest, including Polly Atkin, Caroline Bird, Natalie Sorrell Charlesworth, Jo Baker, James Clarke, M.W. Craven, Neil Curry, Kim Moore and Nicholas Radburn.

In addition we welcome two of the world's most celebrated writers to our city, with top environmental journalist, John Vidal, and Bulgarian novelist Georgi Gospodinov, winner of the 2023 International Booker Prize who will give this year's Lancaster International Fiction Lecture. His outstanding novel *Time Shelter* is a compelling insight into our desire to escape the present by seeking shelter in the past.

Almost all the events will be hybrid, that is live in-person and live online, so that you can watch in person or at home as suits you best – you can even catch up later on our YouTube channel (see page 3. for details), so there is every opportunity to enjoy the programme in full.

As a registered charity with irregular project funding, Litfest relies on its supporters and above all on you our co-creators and audiences for your work and your generous donations. Thank you for your continued support.

Julie Bell

Chair of Litfest

Litfest Autumn Weekend 2023 is supported by the following statutory bodies, and foundations:



And above all by you, our audiences

Get Involved

Litfest is a volunteer-run charity and our audiences and communities are central to our work. We love to hear from our audiences, and we encourage you to get involved over the festival period and beyond. Here are some ways you can play a part:

Share your thoughts and have your say

Please consider sharing your thoughts with the rest of the Litfest community on social media, or through the 'Have Your Say' section of the website — or why not talk to one of our event stewards to share your feedback and ideas?

Submit a poem to The 'Refuge' Poetry Mosaic

For National Poetry Day this year, Litfest is inviting submissions to our poetry mosaic. Everyone is invited to join in, regardless of age or experience: all poems submitted will be displayed in our poetry mosaic, and the authors of the twelve best poems (as selected by Litfest and poet Caroline Bird) will be invited to read at the National Poetry Day event on 5 October (Terms & Conditions apply).

Join the International Fiction Book Club

Litfest runs a lively online International Fiction Book Club, which meets once a month. New members are always welcome to join the discussion:

<https://litfest.org/internationalbookclub>

Volunteer with Litfest

Litfest is a volunteer-run organization and we are always on the hunt for volunteers to help out at events and behind the scenes. To find out more, please email marketing@litfest.org.

For full access information, including information on captioning for online events, please see:

www.litfest.org/access

Support Us What Makes Litfest is YOU

In light of the continuing rise in the cost-of-living, we have taken the decision to make **all** events in 2023 **free** to access, whether you attend the festival in-person or online.

We don't take this decision lightly – we're a small volunteer-led charity operating on minimal resources, and ticket income forms an important part of our financial strategy. But we believe firmly that the arts should be available to everyone, regardless of economic circumstances, and we remain committed to providing that access through Litfest events.

If you attend a Litfest event, we ask you to please consider donating if you feel able. Donations of all scales make a difference, are valued, and play a part in enabling us to present Litfest.

You can donate by scanning the QR code below, heading to www.litfest.org/support-us/ or donating with cash or by tapping a card at one of our donate points at the event itself. Every gift is valuable and supports our work, whether you choose to make a one-off or regular donation. And if you donate with Giftaid, Litfest receives an extra 25% via government support.

What could a donation help to pay for?

- £10 – two books to a local school
- £20 – a child to join in the Big Read
- £50 – a writer to attend a workshop
- £100 – a writer's travel or accommodation

No matter how big or small, your donation will play a part in the festival's future. **Thank you.**



Our partners and supporters are:

Lancaster Black History Group, Lancaster University, National Poetry Day, The Storey, The Dukes.

Ticket Information

This year, all tickets are free/pay what you can but need to be reserved via our website www.litfest.org. If you experience any difficulty booking tickets, or cannot access our online ticketing system, please email marketing@litfest.org or phone our office at **01524 509 005**.

Our office is only staffed part time, so please leave a message and we will get back to you as soon as possible.

Attend in-person

In-person tickets can be reserved on our website via Eventbrite. Please note that In-person tickets are limited due to venue capacity, so advance booking is recommended.

Please be sure to use your free ticket once reserved or let us know at least 24 hours in advance if you cannot take up your seat as 'no-shows' may prevent someone else from enjoying an event. Any remaining tickets will be made available on the door.

Watch online

Tickets to attend online via our streaming platform Crowdcast can also be reserved on the Litfest website. If you have reserved an online ticket, you can stream the event live, or catch-up for thirty days afterwards, either on Crowdcast or via the new Litfest Video Player.

After booking, you will receive a confirmation email with a link to the event page. You will also receive a reminder email ten minutes before the event begins. Simply click on the link in the email to join the event. If you do not receive the email please check your junk or spam folders.

30 Day Catch-up

You can also catch-up on Litfest events for 30 days on our YouTube Channel, the Litfest Player on our website or on Crowdcast.

Recordings will appear 24 hours after broadcast.

Submissions open 1 September

The Litfest 'Refuge' Mosaic National Poetry Day



To celebrate National Poetry Day on 5 October, Litfest is delighted to launch The Litfest 'Refuge' Poetry Mosaic. We invite everyone to contribute, before our deadline on 28th September, especially Northwest poets!

The theme for National Poetry Day this year is 'Refuge'. Litfest invites you to explore this idea in all its forms, including:

- Refuge from fear, danger, war
- Climate change, extreme weather
- Flight, escape, crossings of all kinds in search of safety
- Mental refuge, security and peace of mind
- Physical refuge and/or sanctuary

When you are ready to submit your poem (or poems) go to www.litfest.org/RefugePoetryMosaic. On the submission form we will also ask for your poem's main topic and themes. This information will help us to create our poetry mosaic which will be revealed on our website on Monday 3 October. After the event, all submitted and accepted poems will remain online in the 'Poetry Mosaic' as a permanent resource.

We will also be running a linked project for pupils in years 7 and 8 in Lancaster and District secondary schools, and providing supporting materials in the form of examples and ideas for teachers. If you are a teacher and would like to know more, please email: info@litfest.org

Litfest Autumn Weekend Launch

National Poetry Day with Caroline Bird

To celebrate National Poetry Day, we invite you to explore and respond to this year's theme of 'refuge', thinking about mental health and peace of mind as well as about the actual experience of seeking security as a refugee fleeing from a country that is no longer safe, or a family escaping extreme weather. Tell us what sanctuary means to you and imagine what it might mean if suddenly, as the Somali British poet Warsan Shire imagines at the beginning of her poem 'Home', you had to leave:

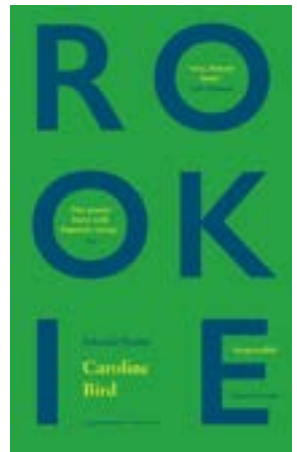
*no one leaves home unless
home is the mouth of a shark
you only run for the border
when you see the whole city running as well*



In the days leading up to National Poetry Day, Caroline Bird will curate a selection of 12–15 outstanding poems from those submitted to the Litfest 'Refuge' Poetry Mosaic by the deadline of midnight on 28 September. Then on Monday 2 October Litfest will contact those poets to invite them to read their work in person or online at this special event!

MC'd by Caroline Bird, the event itself will feature Caroline's own poetry, poems from the past and present by other poets, together with the selected poets' work.

Caroline Bird is a poet and playwright. Her sixth collection, *The Air Year*, won the Forward Prize for Best Collection 2020 and was shortlisted for the Polari Prize and the Costa Prize. Her fifth collection, *In These Days of Prohibition*, was shortlisted for the 2017 TS Eliot Prize and the Ted Hughes Award. She was one of the five official poets at the 2012 London Olympics. As a playwright, Bird has been shortlisted for the George Devine Award and the Susan Smith Blackburn Prize. *Rookie*, her Selected Poems was published in May 2022.



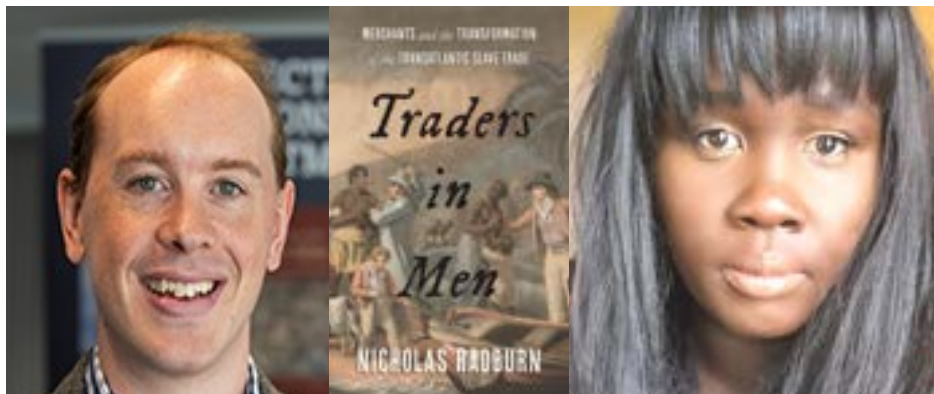
To Watch: In person at The Auditorium, The Storey
Online via Crowdcast

Tickets: Free/Pay What You Can (Recommended price £8 in-person/£5 online)
Tickets must be reserved online at www.litfest.org. All donations appreciated to support our work. For further information on how to book see page 3 of the programme or the Litfest website.

Friday 6 October

7:30pm

Nicholas Radburn in conversation with Geraldine Onek
Traders in Men: Merchants and the Transformation of the Transatlantic Slave Trade



During the eighteenth century, Britain's slave trade exploded in size. Formerly a small and geographically constricted business, the trade had, by the eve of the American Revolution, grown into a transatlantic system through which fifty thousand men, women, and children were enslaved every year.

In this wide-ranging history, Lancaster University's Nicholas Radburn explains how thousands of merchants collectively transformed the slave trade by devising highly efficient but violent new business methods. African brokers developed commercial infrastructure that facilitated the enslavement and sale of millions of people. Britons invented shipping methods that quelled enslaved people's constant resistance on the Middle Passage. And American slave traders formulated brutal techniques through which shiploads of people could quickly be sold to colonial buyers. Truly Atlantic-wide in its vision, this study shows how the slave trade dragged millions of people into its terrible vortex.

'This is a landmark study given its clear status as easily the best researched and most comprehensive book on the British slave trade to date' **David Eltis, co-author of *Atlas of the Transatlantic Slave Trade***

Nicholas Radburn is a senior lecturer in Atlantic history at Lancaster University and co-editor of www.slavevoyages.org. He lives in Lancaster which, after Bristol, Liverpool and London, was Britain's fourth largest slave-trading port.

Geraldine Onek is a primary school teacher, founder of Lancaster Black History Group and author of *Lancaster's Slavery Business: The Slave Trade and West-Indies Trade. A Teaching Resource for Primary Schools*.

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Saturday 7 October

3:00pm

Polly Atkin and Kim Moore, in conversation

Some of Us Just Fall and *Are You Judging Me Yet?*



Meet two of Britain's most interesting poets who have recently published hugely successful poetry collections: Polly Atkin's, *Much About Body*, Kim Moore *All the Men I Never Married* (winner of the 2022 Forward Poetry Prize for the Best Collection). They have also just published prose books that may not, at first sight, appear to have much in common.

Polly Atkin's acclaimed memoir of living with pain, *Some Us Just Fall*, and Kim Moore's challenging yet playful critical work, *Are You Judging Me Yet? Poetry and Everyday Sexism* explore similar problems but from very different angles. Everyday sexism and medical misogyny, poetry and health, and the importance of being seen, and seen true, will be explored in this fascinating conversation between two writers who challenge stereotypes of all kinds.

Polly Atkin lives in Cumbria. Her two poetry collections are *Basic Nest Architecture* and *Much about Body*. She is also the author of a biography, *Recovering Dorothy: The Hidden Life of Dorothy Wordsworth*. Her latest book is *Some of Us Just Fall*.

Kim Moore lives near Barrow-in-Furness. Her two poetry collections are *The Art of Falling* and *All the Men I Never Married*. She has also published a short memoir, *What the Trumpet Taught Me*. Her latest book is *Are You Judging Me Yet? Poetry and Everyday Sexism*.

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Four Poetry Pamphleteers

Natalie Sorrell Charlesworth, Neil Curry, Roshni Gallagher and Dan Power, with Eoghan Walls



Pamphlets can be a great way for emerging poets to bring their work to public attention or for established poets to focus on a theme. The four poets featured here have strikingly different approaches, but each offers work that is fresh and original, whether self-published or published by one of the lively pamphlet imprints currently at work in the UK today.

Natalie Sorrell Charlesworth lives in Preston. She won the Poetic Republic Portfolio Prize 2014. She is the Digital Marketing and Social Media Executive for Solaris Books, an active board member for Lancaster Litfest, an artist and genealogist. Her debut pamphlet, *Fleet Salvage*, is published by Broken Sleep.

Neil Curry is a poet, translator and literary critic. He has published six collections of poetry. As a literary critic he has published studies of Christopher Smart, Alexander Pope, George Herbert, William Cowper and William Shenstone. He also edited the *Collected Poems of Norman Nicholson*. His pamphlet *Things Being Various*, is published by Wayleave Press.

Roshni Gallagher is an award-winning poet from Leeds who now lives in Edinburgh, and explores themes of quietness and the natural world. In 2022 she won an Edwin Morgan Poetry Award and a Scottish Book Trust New Writers award for her work. Her debut pamphlet, *Bird Cherry*, is published by Verve Poetry Press.

Dan Power is a poet from the West Midlands, currently living in Dundee, and studying for a PhD in Creative Writing at Lancaster University. His second pamphlet, *Memory Foam*, is published by Doomsday Press.

Eoghan Walls teaches English Literature and Creative Writing at Lancaster University. He has published two poetry collections with Seren, *The Salt Harvest* and *Pigeon Songs*, and the novel *The Gospel of Orla* (Seven Stories).

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John Vidal—*Fevered Planet: How Diseases Emerge When We Harm Nature*

in conversation with Dr Sakthi Karunanithi



'Urgent, fascinating and essential, *Fevered Planet* tells a crucial story that most of us have missed'
George Monbiot

An urgent and impassioned piece of environmental reportage that links the climate crisis, human disease and the loss of nature: the three great environmental stories of our time.

***Fevered Planet* exposes how the way we farm, what we eat, the places we travel to and the scientific experiments we conduct create the perfect conditions for deadly new diseases to emerge and spread faster and further than ever. As Vidal expertly argues, unless we transform our relationship with the rest of the natural world, the pandemics we are facing today will just be the tip of the iceberg.**

'Vital, urgent, and forensic — John Vidal's unflinching examination of pandemic risk should be a wake-up call in capitals throughout the world' **Caroline Lucas MP**

John Vidal was born and brought up in West Africa. As one of the world's most experienced journalists and environment editor of the *Guardian* (1997–2023), he has reported on the climate crisis, disease and ecological change from more than 100 countries. He is the author of *McLibel*.

Dr Sakthi Karunanithi is Director of Health for Lancashire and a trustee of Litfest.

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Online via Crowdcast

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M. W. Craven — A Life of Crime (Fiction)

in conversation with Bill Swainson



Julie Winspear Photography

M. W. Craven is best known for his intricately plotted, best-selling crime novels set in Cumbria, featuring instinctive detective Washington Poe and super-intelligent geeky analyst Tilly Bradshaw. This summer he launched a new series, set in the USA and with a main character, US Marshal Ben Koenig, who is medically incapable of fear.

Craven will talk about his well-established characters, and his two newest books: *The Botanist*, the latest book in the 'Washington Poe' series, and *Fearless* ('A superb thriller that will have everyone gasping' — David Baldacci). He will also discuss the craft of crime-writing, and the not-so-gentle art of breaking into the American market, the ups and downs of film and TV options and the importance of humour.

M. W. Craven was born in Carlisle but grew up in Newcastle, running away to join the army at sixteen. In 1995 he completed a degree in social work with specialisms in criminology and substance misuse, and then took up a probation officer position in Whitehaven. Sixteen years later he took the plunge and became a full-time author. He still lives in Cumbria.

Bill Swainson is a Freelance Editor and Literary consultant, who edits a list of fiction in translation at MacLehose Press. He was formerly Senior Commissioning Editor at Bloomsbury (2000–2015).

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James Clarke and Jo Baker,
in conversation with Zoe Lambert
Sanderson's Isle and *The Midnight News*



Two novels set in two completely different worlds by two writers equally concerned with voice, style and narrative point of view.

It's 1969 and Speake is in London in search of his father. Instead, he finds Sanderson, a brash TV presenter who hosts parties where the punch is spiked with acid. A drifter who belongs nowhere, Speake joins Sanderson in search of a reclusive commune (material for a new TV programme), but finds himself seduced by the rugged beauty of the Lake District and the people he meets.

'A feisty, subversive countervision of England's lost futures and buried longings' **Rob Doyle**

It's 1940 and twenty-year-old Charlotte Richmond watches from her attic window as enemy planes fly over London. Still grieving her beloved brother who never returned from Dunkirk, she is working hard to keep her own life ticking over: holding down a dull typist job at the Ministry of Information, sharing gin and confidences with her best friend Elena, and dodging her difficult father. She has good reason to keep her head down and stay out of trouble. But how can she help herself when faced with Elena's inexplicable death?

'Intriguing and thrilling . . . it had me by the throat' **Emma Donoghue**

James Clarke grew up in the Rossendale Valley, Lancashire. His debut novel *The Litten Path* won the 2019 Betty Trask Prize. *Hollow in the Land*, a set of inter-connected short stories, appeared in 2020. He lives in Manchester.

Jo Baker is the acclaimed author of seven previous novels, including the *Sunday Times* bestselling *Longbourn*. She lives with her family in Lancaster.

Zoe Lambert is a writer of fiction and non-fiction who teaches English and Creative Writing at Lancaster University.

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Litfest International Fiction Book Club

Translator Angela Rodel, on Georgi Gospodinov's *Time Shelter*, Winner of the 2023 International Booker Prize



David Parry for the International Booker Prize 2023

For this special edition of the book club we are delighted to welcome the acclaimed translator Angela Rodel, who shared this year's International Booker with the Bulgarian writer Georgi Gospodinov (author of the winning masterpiece *Time Shelter* and speaker for this year's Lancaster International Fiction Lecture on Tuesday 10 October).

'A wide-ranging, thought-provoking, macabre and humorous novel about nationality, identity and ageing, and about the healing and destructive power of memory' **The panel of judges for the 2023 International Booker Prize**

The online Litfest International Fiction Book Club was launched in response to the Covid pandemic in April 2020. Since then, the club has discussed some 35 books, with the writer, translator or editor. Our guests have included authors Delphine de Vigan, Andrey Kurkov and Juan Gabriel Vásquez, and translators Antonia Lloyd-Jones (Olga Tokarczuk), Sasha Dugdale (Maria Stepanova), Frank Wynne (Alice Zeniter) and Jeremy Tiang (Zhang Yueran).

The Litfest International Fiction Book Club is jointly convened each month by Litfest trustee Bill Swainson and by Sam O'Donoghue who teaches Spanish at Lancaster University.

Angela Rodel is currently the Executive Director of the Bulgarian-American Fulbright Commission and a professional literary translator based in Bulgaria. She is a two-time Fulbright Scholar, who first went to Bulgaria in 1996 to study language and folk music at Sofia University. Her studies gave her a solid grasp of Bulgarian language and culture, an experience which deeply informed her graduate studies in linguistics and ethnomusicology in the United States.

For more about the book club go to: <https://litfest.org/international-fiction-book-club/>

To Watch: Online only, via Crowdcast

Tickets: Free/Pay What You Can (Recommended price £5)

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Litfest International Fiction Lecture:

Georgi Gospodinov



Litfest is delighted to announce that the third Lancaster International Fiction Lecture, a joint venture with the Departments of Languages & Cultures and English Literature & Creative Writing at Lancaster University, will be given by Georgi Gospodinov, whose novel written in Bulgarian and translated into English by Angela Rodel won this year's International Booker Prize.

Fiction is an artform shared by almost all languages. Right now, as the English-speaking world – thanks to translators and innovative publishers – is becoming more aware of the extraordinary fiction that has been and is being written everywhere and in all languages, it seemed to us that a lecture to discuss and celebrate fiction as an international artform could not be more timely.

In an interview for the International Booker Prize Gospodinov said: 'My urge to write this book came from the sense that something had gone awry in the clockworks of time. You could catch the scent of anxiety hanging in the air, you could touch it with your finger. After 2016 we seemed to be living in another world and another time... I come from a system that sold a "bright future" under communism. Now the stakes have shifted, and populists are selling a "bright past". I know via my own skin that both cheques bounce, they are backed by nothing.'

Georgi Gospodinov is one of Europe's most acclaimed writers. Originally from Bulgaria, his novels, *The Physics of Sorrow* and *Time Shelter*, have won his country's most prestigious literary prize twice and more than a dozen international prizes – including the International Booker Prize, Premio Strega Europeo, Central European Angelus Award and the Jan Michalski Prize.

Supported by the Departments of English Literature & Creative Writing and Languages & Cultures at Lancaster University.

To Watch: Online only, via Crowdcast

Tickets: Free/Pay What You Can (Recommended price £5)

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Save The Date!

Litfest 2024, 8-24 March



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With Litfest**

LITFEST NEEDS YOU!

**Interested in volunteering
to help with the festival?**

- Stewarding
- Box Office
- Bookstalls
- Spreading the word

Email:

marketing@litfest.org

Contact Details & General Information

Telephone: **01524 509 005**

Email: marketing@litfest.org

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All details are correct at the time of going to press.
We reserve the right to change the programme if
circumstances dictate.

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Registered Charity No. 510670.



Programme and Cover Art

by Natalie Sorrell Charlesworth

Photos of Litfest events by Ginny Koppenhol



The Storey:
Meeting House Lane, Lancaster LA1 1TH

The Storey is located in Lancaster City Centre, just two minutes' walk from Lancaster Railway Station (follow signs to the city centre). There are several Pay and Display car parks in and around the city centre, the closest being Dallas Road and Parksafes which is accessed via Bridge Lane and Damside St.

<https://www.lancaster.gov.uk/sites/the-storey/>

The Dukes
Moor Lane, Lancaster, LA1 1QE

The Dukes is located in the centre of Lancaster. There is some street parking available around the theatre and several car parks within walking distance. A car park space can usually be reserved at the back of the building (access via St Anne's Place) in advance for those who need access to the building via the ramp. Please mention this when booking.

For further information please see:

<https://dukeslancaster.org/your-visit/accessibility>

Date	Time	Venue	Event
05-Oct	7.30pm	The Auditorium, The Storey	Autumn Weekend Launch 'Refuge' – National Poetry Day with Caroline Bird
06-Oct	7.30pm	The Auditorium, The Storey	History: Nicholas Radburn
07-Oct	3:00pm	The Auditorium, The Storey	Memoir & Poetry: Polly Atkin & Kim Moore
	5:00pm	The Auditorium, The Storey	Poetry: Natalie Sorrell Charlesworth, Neil Curry, Roshni Gallagher and Dan Power
08-Oct	11:30am	The Round, The Dukes	Environment & Health: John Vidal
	2:30pm	The Round, The Dukes	Crime Fiction: M.W. Craven
	4:30pm	The Round, The Dukes	Fiction: James Clarke & Jo Baker
09-Oct	6.30pm	Online via Crowdcast	Litfest International Fiction Book Club: Angela Rodel on <i>Time Shelter</i> by Georgi Gospodinov
10-Oct	7:30pm	Online via Crowdcast	Lancaster International Fiction Lecture: Georgi Gospodinov

The Litfest Bookshop

Support Litfest and buy your books direct from our online bookshop:

www.litfest.org/shop

The Litfest Poetry Bookshop

On Saturday 7 October, throughout the afternoon and early evening, we will also be running an exclusively discounted poetry bookshop in The Print Room, at The Storey.

Come along for some exclusive bargains and rare finds!