**What was your inspiration for this topic?**

The topic came out of art trips and holidays in Italy. It seems that everywhere you turn in Italy there is renaissance art, and everything is imbued with spirituality and colour. I was particularly excited to come across a lesser-known Fra Angelico annunciation painting in a small town near where my family often stay on holiday, and I was also intrigued by another Fra Angelico (in Cortona) which has text coming out of Mary's and the angel's mouths. I started to think about the religiosity of Italy and art, but also the whole way that the annunciation (the story of an angel appearing to Mary) is actually about a kind of intrusion of being from another world into the human realm.

Dear Mary (Shearsman, 2017) was very much a book about art, colour, painting and Italy with some poems about the annunciation in. Later, Sarah and I worked more specifically on the theme of annunciations to produce individual poems which we gathered together in the pamphlet Impossible Songs (Analogue Flashback, 2017), and previously in a series of self-produced leaflets, Joyful Mysteries #1-5, which also included work by Falmouth alumni and ex-lecturer, artist and writer Peter Gillies.

A Confusion of Marys is very focussed on annunciation poems. I invited Sarah to contribute to a Shearsman book, so she has a section of poems in this new paperback volume. I should point out many of the poems are humourous and surreal; they include poems about an alien visitation, conspiracy theories (note how annunCIAtion includes 'CIA'!) and online dating, as well as more serious ideas.

**How did the collaboration with Sarah Cave come about?**

Sarah is a writer I am regularly in touch with as a poet, sharing ideas and drafts of work. I supervised her undergraduate dissertation at Falmouth several years ago, which - after some reworking - was published. She has a wide range of interests, from Moomins to David Bowie, via hermits, the arctic, reliquaries, angels and the punk band Pussy Riot. She responded to some of the poems and images I shared with her a few years back and it's just grown from there.

**How long has the book taken to produce?**

For me it was a couple of years work. I researched a lot of contemporary images (paintings and photographs) of angels and the annunciation, and read several books about motifs and symbolism in renaissance art, as well as others books of art criticism and texts that documented installation and performance work on the subject. I should also mention a strange (obviously, fictional) interview with Mary that Matthew Collings wrote for Art Review! Some texts written in response went into a long prose poem sequence which was first published in the academic journal The Quint: an interdisciplinary journal from the north, others became discrete poems assembled as the titular section of the book. The final manuscript was submitted last year and its official publication is February 2020.

**How does it feel to have your book published?**

It's always exciting to get a new book. A box of books arrived yesterday, and it hasn't quite sunk in yet.... At the risk of sounding egotistical I read a copy in bed last night: a final book makes it seem like someone else's work. I'm looking forward to doing some readings and launch events, and hope to be speaking about the project, and showing some of the images that inspired it, at the New Writing conference in London this summer.