

## Neil Campbell

### Bookshop Poem #1

Sitting below the bookshop rafters  
all online orders processed  
I lie back in the comfy chair  
Eleanor got from the Tree of Life  
& drink the Brasserie beer  
imported French lager from Aldi  
while listening to Ginsberg & Bukowski  
on Spotify, my phone attached  
to the AUX in the battered stereo  
hiding among old books downstairs.  
'On the Hustle' & 'A Supermarket in  
California' & then a bit of Jack,  
the Steve Allen stuff, & I feel like  
I'm really earning my £8.72 an hour,  
the current minimum wage. Soon I'll  
head back downstairs for another beer –  
two is enough for a working afternoon –  
& I'll jog downstairs & jog back upstairs  
because you need to be fit in this job,  
on point, sharp, striving ever upward,  
by which I mean, striving to keep to this,  
striving to return to this, before the cycle home  
& my genuinely darling wife.

c) Neil Campbell

**Neil Campbell**

**Bookshop Poem #2**

I pause the cricket  
listen to the rain that sounds  
like steam around the roof  
hunker down beneath the wet summer  
drink another bottle of Aldi's finest  
kick back in the armchair  
we got from the Tree of Life  
before lockdown made all of this  
online only.

I think about the man living in his van  
outside the shop & how he called it  
'Van Life' rather than 'Living in a Van'  
& how he said he smacked a smackhead  
who was going on with himself,  
& I think about the lack of orders  
coming in from Abe & Amazon  
& I think about the bloke I saw  
yesterday, sprawled across the tarmac  
after a police incident  
@ Sharston Roundabout.

c)Neil Campbell

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**Bookshop Poem #5**

There's no orders  
my feet are up on the desk  
I'm facing the CCTV monitor  
watching sun on the locked front  
door in black & white  
& it's like an old film noir  
except there's nobody in shot  
& just the shadows of  
the shipping containers, containers  
all filled with books & all  
locked up vs the virus.

c)Neil Campbell

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**Bookshop Poem #10**

Another keyboard warrior via email  
threatening to report us to the police  
& calling us THIEVES! & hoping  
that we GO BANKRUPT!  
It's already been explained to this  
fucking space cadet  
that the book was dispatched  
from here  
& in all likelihood has been  
lost in the post.

c)Neil Campbell

Neil Campbell is from Manchester, England. Poetry collection *In the Gemini Café* available now from Knives, Forks and Spoons Press.  
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Favourite Poem: Ask for Nothing by Philip Levine