



On the occasion of Ó Bhéal's ninth Anniversary

11th April 2016

twelve shortlisted poems from the 3rd

Five Words International Poetry Competition

and

poems selected from the last fifty Five Word Challenges

(13th April 2015 - 4th April 2016)

Ó Bhéal would like to acknowledge the following organisations
for their valued support during our ninth year

The Long Valley
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to the house eMCees
and board members
the audiences
and poets
thank you

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'le gach bó a buinín agus le gach leabhar a chóip'
(to each cow its calf and to every book its copy)
- *Diarmuid, 6th C. High King*

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Five Words

Volume IX

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FOREWORD

The launch of *Five Words Vol IX* on April 11th 2016, marks our 453rd event, and sees Ó Bhéal enter into its tenth year. The weekly Five Word Challenge held each Monday has remained a staple exercise for local poets to play with and develop their craft, while providing an inclusive, encouraging space for anyone to turn their hand at words for the first time. Monday night challenges offer 15 minutes to complete a new piece, while the International Competition is more generous, allowing seven days.

We're grateful for another immense and successful year of events, including a world-class Winter Warmer festival and our two rapidly growing competitions. 2015 saw the addition of office space in the Civic Trust House along with a dedicated C.E. Scheme wage for an administrative/media assistant, a position currently held by Shane Vaughan. Ó Bhéal also announced its inability to continue the weekly series beyond April 2017 without a director's wage, a solution to which has yet to be secured.

2016 has proved fortunate for Ó Bhéal through an increase in Arts Council funding allowing for an increase in poets' fees, as well as by way of a philanthropic grant from The Community Foundation for Ireland, exclusively dedicated to presenting eight, 1916 commemorative events to mark the The Rising centenary. *The Unfinished Book of Poetry* continues again this year with added sponsorship from the Farmgate Café, allowing for the project to work with five schools instead of four.

Many at Ó Bhéal mourned the loss in 2015 of two regular poets, the much loved Tadge O'Mullane, and Eoin Murray, an unusually talented and impressionable young poet - both of whom passed away unexpectedly. We are pleased to be able to publish in this volume Eoin's winning Five Word poem from the 6th of July, *I Fastened the Sinker*.

It remains a privilege and a pleasure to meet and discover the work of so many talented poets and artists through Ó Bhéal, to share in the flow of the know, as it were, and as our tenth blockbuster year begins, we really do hope it's not the end for the weekly series. We're trying our best to avoid that, but should it happen we'll go out with a bang on our 10th Anniversary night, on the 10th of April 2017. The competitions are secure and the Winter Warmer festival is here to stay. We'll also continue certain once-off events, regardless of the outcome.

Thanks to everyone who contributed to the International and weekly competitions in our ninth year, and to the audiences and all involved at Ó Bhéal.

Sláinte, is Beannachtaí agaibh,
Paul Casey
Director

"Love in all eight tones and all five semitones
of the word's full octave."

Stephen Fry

3rd Five Words International Poetry Competition

SHORTLIST

Winner

John W. Sexton (Ireland) *The Dancehall on the Summit
of the Bloodiest Head
of the Twenty-Six-Headed Giant*

Highly Commended

Beth Somerford (England) *Tuesday on a Fulcrum*
Janet Lees (England) *Commuter*

Other Shortlisted Poems

Mary Anne Smith (England) *Night of the Nightjar*
Pam Szadowski (England) *Tribes*
Jenny Pollak (Australia) *An awful hush*
Tamara Miles (U.S.A.) *Chinese Zodiac:
Year of the Red Fire Monkey*
Janet Lees (England) *An Unread Novel in a Charity Shop*
Shirley Bell (England) *Igloo*
Derek Sellen (England) *Ragwort*
John W. Sexton (Ireland) *Coin in the Soft Machine*
Tamara Miles (U.S.A.) *Sky: An Open Window*

John W. Sexton

Overall Winner

port option ever pander bones

**The Dancehall on the Summit
of the Bloodiest Head
of the Twenty-Six-Headed Giant**

The dirigible made port in the port on the side of his head
That would be the thirteenth head. There was no option
on landing on any of his twenty-five other heads, for they
were permed and pandered for the rich and elite to frolic
in the luxury of his curls. But head number thirteen was as devoid
of hair as ever. On disembarking they were met by a stainless steel
bouncer. Pale ornamental rushes, carved from the bones of murdered
dancers, lined the fleshy streets. The bouncer struck sparks
with each step up the bone steps to the dancehall on the top of the head.
The bouncer sang a song as he led the group up the steps, sang a song
through his square stainless teeth, a song of the slaughtered waltzers,
one that they had sung as they fell under the pummelling fists
of the bouncer. The bouncer's voice was deep in his steel throat,
the song was beautiful and free of pain. The other twenty-five heads
were all ears, they basked in the scandal and judged. The revel-makers
knew that this would be a dizzy weekend alright, dancing
on the bald escarpments of head number thirteen, all the other
heads talking to each other, but studiously ignoring theirs.
Yes, head number thirteen was there in the midst of all those
more superior heads, with not even its own shoulder to lean on.

Beth Somerford

Highly Commended

ordinary translate fog clock link

Tuesday On a Fulcrum

Across the dip that marks the Lewes road,
the roofs of Hanover are a tight collage
of red-brown tiles. On an ordinary morning
we can see them from the hill; but today
a sea-fret plumes inland, masking
the banks of huddled houses, and only
gangs of seagulls crack the air as they
translate a West Side Story dance.

Later, the fog is swapped for skeins
of somber clouds, sunlight fingering
their edges and drizzling its bright
caramel upon a leaden sea. At four o'clock
a dust truck makes the weekly promenade,
and Tuesday bends round on itself,
as if the light had weighed too much.
The TV aerials clink along like chandlery.

Janet Lees

Highly Commended

sculpt secret jump flatter leather

Commuter

Petrified England streams past the window to the backbeat of your buzzing hands, caffeinated blood laced with secret longing – lorries without loads, frosted mattresses, a steaming horse in a field; they all speak to the sideways jump of this secret longing, as does the laptop warming your thighs, a pushchair crumpled on the luggage shelf, the mother curve of a mint green bridge flattering the estuary, hanging

from the sky like God's own art. The skeletons of pioneers clamour at station fences – *let us in, let us on, take us somewhere new to colonise*. In your hands the veins show grey, not blue, skin crackled, mapped with lines like the mock leather seats of the first car you remember. Tapping away, two panicky sand crabs far from the shore, always digging for something, feeling for something, trying to pin something down, sculpt something out. At this speed the sleet flows across the window almost horizontal. The train is crying. But it has to keep on. It has no choice.

Mary Anne Smith
Shortlisted
rare flood night polish clay

Night of the Nightjar

Why did we come here?

Yes - that June storm at last withdrew
murmuring, leaving the evening air

disturbed, the moths mad, the night
flooded with uneasy, shifting light, the moon
melting candle wax into a squid-ink sky.

This ancient woodland's seen it all
before; oak, beech, sweet chestnut,
in freeze-framed silhouetted statues,

feet firmed in clay, standing through a
thousand years - electric storms,
lamps, torches, and now the trains, their

distant rhythm thumps in heartbeat time,
pulsating glints in the dark like
polished amber beads drawn through

a velvet glove. This is why we're here.
In the ensuing stillness the air tightens,
vibrates, whirring, churring and

hypnotising, as a rare pale pointed star
silently divides the night. We stand
goat-like, watching the nightjar feed

in the milky light.

Pam Szadowski

Shortlisted

cabbage ant restrict brace nous

Tribes

Moved in
with nan,
Plump lad,
Double brace,
Gripping a
rigid
music case.

Gang said
"No nous",
Lay in wait
Until,
Cabbage whiff
of nan's house,
Became the
stench
of longing
to belong.

Programmer now,
Good money
in town,
Working on
a game,
About
a misfit ant.

Of course,
Tribes do
what they've
always done,
Strive to
restrict their
oddest
one.

Jenny Pollak

Shortlisted

camber snow shift gesture drum

An awful hush

It wasn't the repetitive click of the keyring
still swinging from the dash
or the shift of the song to a minor key
on the car radio. It wasn't the slow beat
of the drums or the drip of oil as it leaked
from the bonnet in a slick stream.

It was the awkward camber of the wheels
as they lay half out of the drift, almost floating,
and the gesture of the child — the slack
fingers resting so casually on snow,
as if to suggest the child was sleeping.

Tamara Miles

Shortlisted

penny swallow focus fold mushroom

Chinese Zodiac: Year of the Red Fire Monkey

Monkey is clever and playful. I spoon mushrooms out of the hot and sour soup you brought home from Panda Express, imagine the adorable black and white mammal stuck in our driveway, his Hoverboard ablaze, still balancing myriad boxes and our fortunes in a backpack. We offer to ring the fire department, but he protests. Nothing but a little singed fur; the monkey's prank, he smiles. No need for sirens.

Monkey is intelligent, a flirt who has trouble paying attention. His visits are brief but romantic. Across the way, he woos our widow neighbor, who misses her husband's jokes. Tempered by fire, a regular monkey gets a new name and becomes more determined, more focused in his seduction.

Fire monkey dreams big dreams. We play the numbers and win; we never again wash or fold our own clothes. A personal chef provides the soup, homemade, delicious, so hot our tongues are on fire. All day long, good luck whether or not we find a penny or pick it up. Bills are paid; you don't have to swallow your pride or borrow money from retirement to take me to Hilton Head.

Fire monkey is intense and passionate. Tonight, after I put away the Chinese food, turn off the lights, and take the puppy out one more time: role play; you, an emperor from the Chang dynasty. My feet bound in happiness. My fortune says, "A fool dreams of another life when she eats luck like honey from a golden bowl."

Tamara Miles

Shortlisted

penny swallow focus fold mushroom

Fire monkey likes to give gifts. In the morning,
I'll write a check to the World Wildlife Fund and plant
a bamboo forest in the backyard. Conservationists
say we shouldn't put more value on certain animals
just because they're cute.

Fire monkey has the energy to see a plan through.
What do you say we mate for life, and never appear
on the list of endangered species?

Janet Lees

Shortlisted

novella hello peninsular knit rain

An Unread Novella in a Charity Shop

You might have been conceived
on the back of a bus ticket,
but you weren't made for this
strip-lit life on a shelf overlooking

a sea of house-clearings and washed-up
clothes— at night their labels fluttering
like the ghosts of unkept promises:
Next, New Look, Atmosphere—

barely touched by shoppers
who knit their brows and tut
at the cost of dented colanders,
old Hellos and legless Barbies;

cold-shouldered by the twofer hardbacks
(you pass time thinking up unlikely pairings:
Dickens & Price, Clarkson & Mantel),
pieces of work, all of them,

the type that get looked at,
lapped up, fought over, while you
remain unremarked, unmarked,
your edges browning, starting to ripple

as another wave of browsers passes
you over— even a citrus-scented poet,
all *longhand with a fountain pen*;
insular, out of sync, drowning

Janet Lees

Shortlisted

novella hello peninsular knit rain

in her own ink— even she passes you over;
the almost perfect order
of your small dark bones,
the caught breath between them;

your way of driving wild things
across uncharted plains,
your blink-and-you'll-miss-it shower
of the sweetest imaginable rain.

Shirley Bell

Shortlisted

seam rove dress igloo gentle

Igloo

I wanted to rove the world and see its heat
but all the while I yearned to go I didn't notice
how, behind my back, you dressed the snow, block
by block, seam by seam, in perfect symmetry.
Now you contain me in the ice of your implacable
heart and your crystalline love is as cold as an igloo;
I lie inside its catenoid, and, folded in your arms,
the gentle chill is stealing through my bones
as we lie still in this blank carapace. I think I hear
each snowflake fall outside, sifting away the future
and freezing us here, snowbound in the silence.

Derek Sellen

Shortlisted

broken ragwort fumble mongrel hair

Ragwort

You may call me what you like -
stinking willy, mare's fart, cankerwort -
but I am no smelly mongrel:

I am St James's flower
with my thirteen petals and my golden heart.

My stems are smooth and hairless,
a climbing frame for bronze caterpillars;
the Cinnabar and the Knot Horn are my moths.

Touch me and I will sting you;
yank me and I will have the stronger grip.

Yes, I am noxious, an 'injurious weed',
not easily broken. I seize acres.
I poison horses and cattle that crop me.

Fumble at my roots in heavy duty gloves,
lever me out with spades, burn me. As you like.

My seeds lie deep and wide
beyond the reach of control orders.
I am a tough foe. I hold my piece of earth.

John W. Sexton

Shortlisted

penny swallow mushroom focus fold

A Coin in the Soft Machine

Above the copse the looping arches of the swallows
make a momentary roof that holds back daylight.
In a fold of their shifting bodies the magician hides a penny,
high up near the attic door to the moon.
When the swallow-roof dissipates into the encroaching dusk
then you might hear the whisper
of field mushroom breaching the soil.
That is the moment when the focus changes,
when things become clear, when the penny drops.

Tamara Miles

Shortlisted

maze sharp blue panoply tire

Sky: An Open Window

Window-shoppers never tire of a glass menagerie;
light falls equally on the giraffe and the laughing hyena,
though only one is graceful. From heaven,
God, too, sees his colorful, organic panoply
on the blue planet under an epic sun.
The sharp edge of a slow-moving glacier
fascinates Him, as does a village ski-slope
on which tightly bundled tourists climb,
some soon to tumble down, down,
and on the ground collapse in laughter.

Far from there, a team of scientists
and ethnographers treks into the Amazon forest,
a complicated maze of broadleaf trees,
low-lying bushes, and entanglements, to study
its inhabitants, most of which are insects,
including Gigantiops destructor,
an ant with enormous eyes designed for jungle navigation,
and the jeweled caterpillar, destined to metamorphosize
into a winged moth.

Kafka's mysterious beetle might be here.
Only big-eyed God knows; he counts each creature,
even the strange, camouflaged jumping stick
and the praying mantis, a personal favorite
in his collection. Its spiny arms extend to trap its prey,
then return to Namaste.
In the murky river, an electric eel still shimmers.

Tamara Miles

Shortlisted

maze sharp blue panoply tire

But I've forgotten the indigenous
people, who watch, amused, from their hidden height,
as the industrious outsiders plunder on
against the setting sun, and the precious light
they depend upon grows dim like a storefront bulb
that flickers and then suddenly goes out.
The great store-keeper has drawn a curtain
across the sky; the kinkajou has drawn in the last fruit
with its five-inch tongue. Wait. Look closely there.

Judges' Comments

Colm Scully

The Dancehall on the Summit of the Bloodiest Head of the Twenty-Six-Headed Giant (John W. Sexton)

The transformation of a giant's head into a dance floor for the passengers on a wandering airship is never abandoned throughout this fantastical poem. Its skilfully engaging storytelling style, coupled with a sophisticated use of prosodic tools provides us with a complete poetic experience.

Tuesday on a Fulcrum (Beth Somerford)

Its formal construction and gentle cadence tells a day's story from a singular point of view. Looking down over the town of Hanover we are guided through that day's dreary but beautiful passing, aided by the poems finely balanced, delicate descriptiveness.

Commuter (Janet Lees)

As if we have engaged all our own inventions to somehow follow the unspecified human project, this poem reveals how modernity is not complex at all, only multiple versions of us "like panicky sand crabs - always digging for something." The conceit of the commuter on the train is not original, but in this case is profoundly achieved.

Night of the Nightjar (Mary Anne Smith)

Layering myth over nature this formal poem floods a nocturnal scene with light through the skilful use of simile and metaphor. It tempts us to follow distant rhythms back to prehistory where man was closer to things of the earth.

Tribes (Pam Szadowski)

In sixty words, this tight, sparse poem successfully uses compressed language and short lines to define a character, a place and even propose a universal truth. It manages this through the use of strong culturally infused words to which we can all relate.

An awful hush (Jenny Pollak)

This elegy is almost a list poem which turns with subtlety in the final third from the negative to the positive. The tragic outcome of a car crash in the snow avoids the sentimental through skilled snapshots of the quotidian to direct its message.

Judges' Comments

Colm Scully

Chinese Zodiac: Year of the Red Fire Monkey (Tamara Miles)

Long poems have a more difficult task as they need to maintain cadence and form while often meandering their way through an extended narrative. This is admirably completed here using elemental imagery and humour to construct a fine love poem.

An Unread Novella in a Charity Shop (Janet Lees)

This story of an unknown novella is very much a writer's poem. It is easy to empathise with the hopeless mission of the book's author as illuminated through the charming personification of the physical book. I loved the description of the poet customer - "all longhand with a fountain pen: insular, out of sync, drowning in her own ink."

Igloo (Shirley Bell)

This is a simple poem that did not attempt to break the constraints of the five assigned words. Whereas this often ends in failure, in this case it managed to maintain the metaphor and create a space full of disillusion and enmity where once love had seemed possible.

Ragwort (Derek Sellen)

The use of archaic language and inversions gave this a medieval feel. I thought of "John Barleycorn" when reading it first. Yet it is also of the now, with "heavy duty gloves" and "control orders" rooting it firmly in the present day.

A Coin in the Soft Machine (John W. Sexton)

I loved the surreal architecture this created out of the looping flight of swallows, forcing me to create a structure in my mind. Almost Wordsworthian in its theme, it dares us to recollect emotion in a moment of tranquility.

Sky, an Open Window (Tamara Miles)

This is an unashamedly environmentalist piece, bestowing human proclivities on a God collector busily inspecting his eclectic collection. It works well, managing the often difficult task of using scientific terms and phrases in a poem's construction.

Judges' Comments

Marie Coveney

The Dancehall on the Summit of the Bloodiest Head of the Twenty-Six-Headed Giant (John W. Sexton)

The Dancehall is a worthy winner, a chilling, surreal fairytale written with great skill. Its imagery will linger in your imagination long after reading.

Tuesday on a Fulcrum (Beth Somerford)

An atmospheric poem that wonderfully captures a day in the life of a seaside town, where low light hovers over its slow-moving residents and only a gang of seagulls break the torpid air.

Commuter (Janet Lees)

In 'Commuter' the rhythm pulses with urgency, that of the train and the hands tapping on a laptop, like, 'two panicky sand crabs far from shore.'

Night of the Nightjar (Mary Anne Smith)

A tightly-crafted and wonderful poem that evokes the uneasy stillness that descends after a storm and the haunting myth of the Nightjar.

Tribes (Pam Szadowski)

The difficult subject of being an outsider, is dealt with great restraint and pathos in this poem.

An awful hush (Jenny Pollak)

An unflinching look at a car crash and its very young victim.

Judges' Comments

Marie Coveney

Chinese Zodiac: Year of the Red Fire Monkey (Tamara Miles)

A well-crafted, humorous poem where a Hoverboard blazes and a Panda suffers singed fur.

An Unread Novella in a Charity Shop (Janet Lees)

A very successful poem told in the voice of an overlooked book, its letters like 'small dark bones.'

Igloo (Shirley Bell)

An icy love poem or a poem about an uneasy codependency, either way, a very thought-provoking poem.

Ragwort (Derek Sellen)

In this strong poem, the voice is both dismissive and threatening, finishing with military-like paranoia.

A Coin in the Soft Machine (John W. Sexton)

Here nature is 'a magician' and earth a 'soft machine' in a beautifully evocative poem.

Sky, an Open Window (Tamara Miles)

A wonderful poem of wry humour, where the all-seeing God is likened to a big-eyed Gigantiops destructor of the Amazon forest.

Sketches by Margaret Creedon O'Shea



Sketches by Margaret Creedon O'Shea



Sean Bent

Winner - 18th August 2015

song discrete trousers eclectic comedy

The New Truth

*Dedicated in loving memory to Eoin Murray,
a regular Ó Bhéaler and my dear friend,
who was buried the day
this 5 word challenge was written*

I don't feel like singing songs today.
Normally I play with the B flat - F - G thrill but...
Today I'm not thrilled and I realized
that song is about missing someone,
and I don't want to remind myself.

Surely there's something I can do,
I have eclectic tastes I can pull it together,
Make something new,
Even in my darkest I can do comedy.
Actually.... y'know what,
Tonight I'd rather be discrete.
I feel what I'm feeling
I won't cover it with cheap tricks.

I don't know what is going to happen.
I don't know how to adapt.
So I'll do all I can in advance,
put my trousers on properly
walk out and face the new truth.
Whatever happens happens,
What more could we lose.

Sean Bent

18th September 2015

bockety blonde brother brick door

Doors

That door has closed
But it gives me reason to dig beneath the floorboards
No escape means you have to make one and yes
Sometimes the trial is insurmountable and would only break you
But I only have a day left, what's left to lose but doubt

I remember life on the other side of that door,
The blonde wanderer who showed me what could be
And we tested the theory together
Never fearing to fail, we knew we would err,
Scared only of the capacity for inaction.

That person was more to me than my own brother
I imagine they're still there, on the other side of the door
Wondering by now surely where I'd drifted
Their gift for finding answers might be thrown
And may well land on the space between what is known and unknown
And drift closer to the one they seek
But maybe this door needs to be closed to them

Maybe it's better this reinforced enclosure be not bockety
Maybe I need to learn to escape,
Away from the teacher, so I may manage my fear
To dig through these floorboards and visit the lower reaches of experience
To fall and be drawn to climb

Or to fall and find only dirt, to dig through
To scrape away to the layers of clay
And burn to kiln bricks to make a base to rise to a new place
And a new door

Rosalin Blue

Winner - 14th December 2015

wetness dryness conversation hide character

Hiding

The dryness of the wine
mirrors red in glasses
half full or half empty
our dry conversation
about this and that
private political
chit-chat
that goes not
down to our emotions

What we feel
we hide in talk
about the wetness
the inescapable puddles
pools and floods
which we do not
let flow – let go

The red wetness
of the wine alone
cannot open our lips
to the deeper soul
– the heart talk

and the wine merely
wets our tongues
as we continue to hide
our true characters
behind the weather

Rosalin Blue

Winner - 14th December 2015

wetness dryness conversation hide character

instead of the true
wetness of life
that we both long for

Winner - 10th August 2015

orchid orchestra diaphanous blue

Devotion

for Ray

Giving myself
to you
as incomplete as
I am

My skin thinner than
you might see
My soul's protection
diaphanous as butterflies

I lay open to you
in deepest devotion
my heart's orchid in bloom
just for you

as an orchestra beds us
in the perfect tune
of our souls rising
into the blue

Benjamin Burns

Winner - 30th November 2015

birmingham queen pleasure movement double

Untitled

We went clubbing in Birmingham,
danced to Queen,
to We Will Rock You
with movements obscene.

I did the double splits,
left my trousers in bits,
gave in to carnal pleasures
with a box of curry chips
on the way back to the hotel in Birmingham.

Benjamin Burns

Winner - 1st february 2016

suspects pox telephone day orange

Untitled

I'm bearing fruit,
peel, my skin.

I've come out in oranges
since that trip to Seville
where I spent the night
in a telephone box
and woke up delicious.

The doctor suspects
it's a new form of pox,
tells me to lay off
the marmalade,
take a few days off!
On the plus side
you won't get scurvy.

I peel my skin
and tear apart
segments of myself.

Robert Carlile

Winner - 15th June 2015

arachnophobia fountain sultry chin redundant

Arachnophobia

Arachnophobia is an irrational response

To such a marvel of natural design

A spider moves with more ease than any man-made thing

It's mostly legs, springing forth from its body

Like jets from a fountain

Long and lithe

Sultry, to another spider

Successfully seductive

Spiders don't discriminate between gender when they mate

Even they know that they're amazing,

All legs as fragile as china and silk as strong as steel

Our materials pale in comparison

They're more beautiful than anything we could make,

With millions of other species that were all perfect before we got here

To remind us that all our efforts at creation are completely redundant

Maybe that's why we're afraid of them.

Paul Casey

Winner - 4th May 2015

sphere circle metallic doodle gaelic

Untitled

Since discovering my metallic side
I can see gaelic sounds, in 3D
Everywhere it's spoken,
words fountain from their
once-upon-a-2D
nothingness, into spheres
of seductive syllable clouds
which I collect and carry home
to doodle-sound around
the empty air

28th September 2015

independent beverage ballerina mysterious inconspicuous

The Fiveness of Syllables

Lines with one word sounds are my best
Simple, double sounding wordings maybe never clever enough
Anapest, beverage sentences, endlessly galloping, complicate triplicates
Mysterious compositions incinerate independent ballerinas
Marvellosities, inconspicuous scribblegraphers, contrafabricate informalities

Paul Casey

7th December 2015

rain hope hiccup bottle mountain

Untitled

For a few minutes
it was raining hiccups
in the Long Valley's Hayloft bar
after the barman left the bottles
on their own for far too long

Poker-faced poets
can wear the face of a mountain
when it comes to the important things
but the flood of hiccups along Winthrop Street
however, has raised some highbrows and questions

and one way or another
the price of a pint

25th January 2016

glide burns mammoth buttons jam

Untitled

The rain loses its way and
there's a traffic jam in the sky
everytime a mammoth poem burns
gravity right down to the ground

But tons of elephants
can't glide effortlessly
for too long when all the half-made
metaphors come crashing down

Margaret Creedon O'Shea

17th August 2015

song trousers eclectic discrete comedy

Shut up already

Levity has need of brevity
To ensure a quip's longevity.
Cut lines short and tightly
Use all editing facility.
Fast punch lines are mandatory
To trouser comic bounty.
Avoid palaver in comedy.
Eclectically slag vanity,
But discretion and irony
Prevent hecklers kicking totty.
And after for your swan song
keep your lyrics Thin Boy slim,
for that fat lady's song,
like this one's,
waaay too long...

Winner - 14th March 2016

chicka beamish contemplate mist comedy

Creamy

after Play misty for me - Clint Eastwood

Be mishty eyed foire* me, my little Chickadee.
My Con-template for the perfect man.
No surrogate Guinness am I,
No poor fake, substitute,
Oh No,
I'm your fun sized pint sized glass of creamy mischief
Beaming up to you, beam me up to you
Singing mishty boozy love songs for you

*foire is Kerry slang meaning *for*.

Margaret Creedon O'Shea

19th October 2015

map leather spring caoineadh scotch

Timeturn

Map each feeling

Paint a water world of tears

Anseo in here.

Ag caoineadh faoina bhfalli

Oilean amhain i ngach domhain fhein

I learscail an diomadh

Speak tender skin

Speak vellum volumes of tasting the father's leather.

Orate theatrically,

Far better than any Scottish tragedy

Of torment that dare not speak its name.

Exult like a sacred spring lamb,

Gleagal, gliontach

Ag preabadh san aer.

Le driocht ina neamh fhein.

Some are macanta and brodmhar.

Some are ag pleicicocht le geantraí

But nil aon ceann amhain balamh

Faoin learscail an tsaol anseo in here.

O fhalla go talamh

It these rusty walls could only speak

To draw a limbic map

To chart the depth

Of each own sensation.

Michelle Delea

Winner - 21st September 2015

hiphop pumpkin yellow frenetic deflation

Untitled

Frentically flicking through
Everything he ever knew
Hiphop to be,
He had the opportunity to
Hand-cut the key of her mind: Her i-pod
Touch sent him rushing to deflect
Deflation and potential rejection
'Cause maybe
If he knew a Smashing Pumpkins tune
He wouldn't have to have
Coldplay's *Yellow* on loop and hope
Time could
Stop
And Reverse
To rehearse what to say
To maybe see her again
Yesterday

Donal Dempsey

Winner - 8th February 2016

perhaps blazing minute storm locked

Untitled

"Quizás...Quizás...Quizás!

"Perhaps...perhaps not!"
she smirked

her eyes blazing
with defiance.

I, now
(locked out of)
this holy minute

where everything & nothing
can happen

chance eroded
second by second.

The storm of love
passing me by

the debris of rejection
scattered in her wake.

Nuka Gbafuh

Winner - 20th July 2015

chestnut philosopher purpose random tentacles

Untitled

"Purpose; peculiarity; power; pondered the philosopher,
As he sat beneath the shades of the giant chestnut,
Watching its roots seep like tentacles back into the earth;
How our roots run deep into the very same source,
Yet we vary, sweet as the chestnut and bitter as the kola nut;
Quirks, quips, kinks, idiosyncrasies;
The full scale of eccentricities notes;
The full spectrum; random faces of a glass block;
Life's most intriguing riddle.

Then it struck him; for irrespective of taste and organoleptics,
The kola nut every bit as brimming with purpose as the chestnut;
How we vary, so we all can serve a purpose,
And how there's more to life than meets the tongue."

Ray Hanrahan

Winner - 25th May 2015

heavenly referendum bono dice attentive

Untitled

"It's all so heavenly", sighed Sinéad on the radio,
"The referendum has passed,
a new milestone in our nation's maturity."
The utterance hung languidly in the air,
resonating and savoured in my attentive ear.
"Indeed we have escaped from
the tutelage of the unchristian churches
and shown an inclusivity
the envy of the world", continued Sinéad,
though now making a dice with boredom
as she went on and on and on and on.
It had one saving grace though -
we were not being harangued by Bono the tax exile.

Niall Herriott

Winner - 25th January 2016

glide burns mammoth buttons jam

Freedom Song

for Burns Night

Burns night is a hoot,
fly-buttons popping
as strippers are stripping
to celebrate Rab Burns.
It's a mammoth piss-up
In Glasgow pubs aye.
It's a ride, it's a glide
to inde-fuckin'-pendence
for the Scots whay-hae
and the toffs in Westminster
are in a right royal jam
aye

Niall Herriot

22nd February 2016

procrastinate continue quark supernova lucky

WTF?

I was talking to Hawking,
he told me it was done, they had formulated the TOE.
The Big Toe? No the 'T.O.E', Theory of Everything
and nothing-ness.
It seems a supernova in our universe
Is the result of a black hole in another.
Our multiverse is riddled with worm-holes
and twanging with vibrating strings.
Those quarks are quare yolks altogether.
It's all very joycean or beckettian or something.
Our existence depends on whether
particles such as protons will procrastinate
or continue to do their thing
energetically.
If we are lucky we may survive the new big bang
that could happen any time in a galaxy somewhere.
Or it may be curtains.
Nothingness for us.
That's what Hawking said anyway.

Cara Kursh

Winner - 9th November 2015

catharsis cask sublime wanderer note

Catharsis Incarnate

I made up my mind the other night,
that each moment was to be sublime.
and the end of the road was not the direction in which I would choose to go.
I made a mental note to always go
in the ways in which I felt I should sway; in the ways I wanted to sway,
and become a wanderer.
To traverse the verses of the world as I saw fit,
as I felt it.
To be cathartic; catharsis incarnate.

Cathartic living in every movement and moment,
in every line, in every note;
in every cask, cranny and nook.

I would make the journey, not the direction nor the destination that which was
golden.

Patrick Loughnane
29th February 2016
box ribald slant chew dew

Untitled

Only once have I seen
a box knock someone out.

It was in a pub about to be
flattened for a bypass.

Called the Dew Drop Inn,
it fell with as much grace.

A woman had taken exception
to the ribald talk from the bar-

Its slant arses grown giddy
with the night and porter.

Just at the door, a voice
managed to catch her:

*"Here love, there's more
meat on me dog at home*

*would you ever come with me,
and I'll give ya something to ate"*

In the ensuing laughter,
she gave him something to chew.

Ciarán MacArtain

2nd November 2015

distinguish kitsch wooden debatable lobster

Untitled

With disarming confidence
And a golden tongue
You can disarm the less confident
And silver tongued
And protect your minimal intellect
And armour your closed mind
From a litany of questions
With debatable facts
Spoken in a tone that closes debate.
Cold.
The traits of the genuine,
On brief encounters,
Can hardly be distinguished
From public displays of wooden acting.
But do not fret in encounters with “such”,
When taken on dates by “such”
And get quoted cookbook recipes
For hollandaise sauce
Even though it is béchamel
Your dinner is dressed with.
When “such” describes the décor
Of the tacky restaurant he has dragged you to
As “kitsch”
And with golden hand approaching the hand
Of your silver armour, tries to disarm you
With well-phrased falsities
About the lobster.
True lobsters mate for life.
Know that you are not a lobster.
That you are not in a glass tank.
That the fingers pointed at you in golden armour
Will be directed at something else
Once you have moved from its path.

Ciarán MacArtain

2nd November 2015

distinguish kitsch wooden debatable lobster

That 80's faux mahogany
With gold veneer trims
Is tacky.
Kitsch isn't even a word.

To know silently is to know,
Just as it is to know loudly.

Ciarán MacArtain

Winner - 5th October 2015

spotlight sculpture mexican avocado sad

Untitled

Sad with two a's means happiness in old Persia
And other prolonged "aa" sounds mean human instincts are re-acting
To an action of the instant before;
Positive, negative, sexual.
Fearful, relaxed, harassed.
The voice of the heart.

"Mexican"
Means "Mexican't" in America
Though the good green Mexican avocado
Means mass guacamole
To the hands of the TexMex who could!
And all inches of bloody terrain, states and cities
North, West, East and to the minimal South
Of the U.S.
Where full stops are very important!
Any other attempt to signalise togetherness means Red
Leaving you spot-lit by solidarity
Still as a sculpture.

Bernadette McCarthy

26th October 2015

jazz punishment scratch catapult angel

Jazz Prayer

Jazz angel, why don't you fling
me tonight from your catapult
of cocktailing glee, I want you
to scratch me up like a '78,
but you're such an mp3
punishing me with your sterility
of Dolby Surround Sound;
beating your Jehovah wings against me
as you rant me into submission
cheek-to-cheek, and I'm in Heaven:
this is my punishment, this is my praise,
this is a jazz weekend.

Bernadette McCarthy

28th September 2015

independent beverage ballerina mysterious inconspicuous

Untitled

When the next blood-moon comes
and Catalonia gains independence,
Pedro will drink every beverage
known to man, woman, and goat

in the Pyrenees; he'll head
to his favourite café and dance
with the dusky owner, her heavy joints
will turn, poised as a ballerina's

and he will swing topless, hairy
as a god of war or billy goat,
until he jams his tongue roughly down
her throat. Then she'll kick him

out under the monstrous moonlight
and he'll languidly creep back,
quietly triumphant, to his she-goats
where he'll lie down on

the whole turning world,
inconspicuous as a bacterium
on the not-so-mysterious
photographed surface of Mars.

John Mee

Winner - 26th October 2015

jazz punishment scratch catapult angel

Fall

Scratch an angel
and beneath the glitter and feathers
there's a whitewashed devil
enduring eternal punishment
for that old business of storming
the walls of heaven
with scaling ladders and catapults –
the shining fall, Satan
and all that jazz.

Matt Mooney

28th September 2015

independent beverage mysterious ballerina inconspicuous

Gone Out

There's something in camogie and lately ladies football
That shouts out it's their way to women's independence;
At the bar the drinking of strong beverages is forbidden
Among these ballerinas streaming out on playing fields,
Equipped with hurling sticks, using them to good effect;
Like their men, following and striking the small tan ball
On its very mysterious flights of fancy hither and thither,
No matter what the weather from one goal to the other,
Succeeding for their clubs and counties inconspicuously
While the lads have nothing to show in the line of silver;
When they do they are heralded by the male mad media.
Fifteen female footballers a side in their modus operandi
Play the games of old as a form of feminine expression -
Tired of standing by while their lovers and their spouses
Go to kick about morning, noon and under lights at night,
No more today to be the back up for the boys out at play -
They'll have to find someone else to make the sandwiches.

Eoin Murray

Winner - 6th July 2015

confuddled puddle fortress festival sinker

I Fastened the Sinker

I fastened the sinker to my rod and cast my worm into that giant puddle we call
the sea.

I felt the vibrations of a loud festival thump up through my rod.

'A bite!' I gasped. My reel spun out and I was sucked into the underwater
fortress.

No, literally, it was an underwater fortress. Full of rainbow scaly things with
phosphorescent feelers. Women with coconut bras and giant fins for legs.

I was so confuddled I could barely catch my breath. But a coconut girl made two
slits just under each of my jowls, so I could breathe again.

I gorged on oxygen until my lungs were satisfied.

With each breath I forgot my former life above the now darker tent of blue.

I swayed with the rhythm of the undercurrent

And smiled with my new friends in the all engulfing silence.

Stan Notte

Winner - 18th January 2016

revolt slow brim ostrich balaclava

Untitled

Revolting that's what I am. Revolting.

I'm slow in the head. On my feet. On the floor. On the beach.

Everywhere I go people say it.

Revolting

Revolting

Revolting

I fill them - apparently - to the brim
with grim, grizzly and ghastly emotions.

I remind them, they say behind my back
or on blogs they think I don't read
of ancient, darker times.

I remind them, they say on Facebook pages
they somehow believe balaclava their identity
that the world changes slowly
that ideals they long ago abandoned
live on, no fester, in animals like me.

I am, they post, a dodo disguised in ostrich feathers.

A facade that, despite it's beauty,
is tainted by a brain buried deeply
in the sands of the past.

Revolting I am.

Revolting.

Stan Notte

Winner - 15th February 2016

austerity seahorse sepia dancing lucid

Untitled

History shows adventure and freedom often come at an equal price.
Many a viking, crusader or mariner will
among tales of tacking dolphins and dancing seahorses
recall family left behind or fallen comrades
the price of bravery
or maybe greed

The men and women of 1916 had many such a tale
some never told, others long forgotten
more stilled in sepia soaked images
sitting silent in ancient homes, draws and landfills

Those images were once lucid events in the minds of Irish citizens
as lucid perhaps as tales that fill our papers
and congest our modern web
Tales of broken promises
minefields of mindless manifestos
puppet politicians
and so much more

tales we should never forget
tales we must recall
as we put an X in a box
tales of 'Special' advisors for who the salary cap was too small
tales of our territory being terrorised by austerity
tales of bankers laughing on the phone
at us I say
not those we elected

Stan Notte

Winner - 15th February 2016

austerity seahorse sepia dancing lucid

Oh yes some tales are worth remembering
and repeating
Because it is in these we dress our votes

Winner - 22nd February 2016

procrastinate continue quark supernova lucky

Untitled

A supernova does not procrastinate.
It simply does what it does.
Driven by the nature of every quark of its being
it explodes
throwing glorious light into the universe.

Lucky are those who witness this light.
Luckier still those that imitate the supernova
and shine as we humans are destined to.

For it is they who light our world
Brighten our lives
Bring joy to our souls
continually bring good vibrations to our every quark.

So shine on the crazy bastards.
Shine on.
Shine on.
Shine on.

Deirdre O'Brien

Winner - 14th September 2015

fiction challenge discotheque tomato octopus

The Animal Discotheque

8 arms in, 8 arms out,
In. Out. In. Out.
Shake them all about
To the octopus' shout

'Get off you mutt'
Said the red tomato, but
Too late, all squashed!

There's so much fiction
In emotion and in diction
But the challenge is to wreck
In the Animal Discotheque.
glass base, hard as a lover,
until patience, and zest taken in patience,
bloomed into a snow-white mould
stinking up the whole fruit-bowl.
He was a most devious lemon.

Edward O'Dwyer

Winner - 29th June 2015

fáilte neidín pogue confusion capitalism

Fáilte

Nadine, our four-year-old daughter,
has more Irish than any of them,
but they try out their few words on us,
and mispronounce them.

We're Irish, the family of Yanks tell us.
Oh, we say, and leave it at that.

Fáilte, Nadine says to the man
in baggy jeans and a massive chequered shirt.

He is definitely a gun owner.
He has the red, whiskery face
of a man who enjoys his dinner that much more
if he has killed it himself.

Fáilte, her little voice as soft as a *póg*,
soft as the good rain,
our summer rain.

There is none of our accusatory ways in her,
none of our time-bought cynicism.
Capitalism, Bush, Guantanamo mean nothing to her.

She isn't thinking about the guns this man owns,
the kinds of guns teenagers buy
at WALMART stores before they carry out
a massacre at their high-school.

Edward O'Dwyer

Winner - 29th June 2015

fáilte neidín pogue confusion capitalism

She says it again, a little louder this time.

Fáilte, and this time he hears her.

He takes in the word.

He chews the word, and rolls it around
in his neo-imperial mouth, tastes it.

Fáilte, he says back to her
with a slow, torturous drawl,

stretching the syllables to their breaking point,
like they are his prisoners now,
and they will tell him what they know.

Jude O'Neill

8th June 2015

business plummet frame pig concubine

This Man's Mood in Shadow

He sneaks up the backstairs, led by the hand.
Red faced and puffy. Pig.

His sweat glistens in streams and drips
From his frame across the bed.

They plummet and soar.
Their business behind blinds nobody shall know.

What he asks of his concubine is hailed and shunned
And only ever spoke of in hushed, lusty, whispered voices.

Jude O'Neill

17th August 2015

song trousers discreet eclectic comedy

Loose Change

You had your own song, your own vision,
And your own kind of discreet comedy that
Sometimes someone might hear and giggle at a thought unkept.

Short eclectic nights shared between
Weeks too long apart and I wonder now
What you did in the gaps between;
Trying to find who you were then,
Where you were.

In waves I search for you.
Like the way we check loose trouser pockets
For looser change, trying to make the difference.
I search for your smile, a laugh, a hug.
I search.

Rosie O'Regan

Winner - 11th January 2016

bowie gratuitous over-encumbered festival cold

Untitled

I'd been working hard for days,
hefted scaffold, hammered wood, metal, flesh, laid cables
the full length of fields,
hung lights and the need for sleep on pills,
each day into night over encumbered the last.
When the festival kicked off I was banjaxed,
every reveller became a gratuitous card board cut out
I wanted to shoot them down, or
maybe just sit them down,
tell them about my bruised fingers,
about the cold, cold ground that underpins everything.
The beats battered,
but when Bowie played, when Bowie played
I slept,
light as stardust

Tina Pisco

Winner - 1st June 2015

steak obfustication elbow torrential meerkat

“Look at that old lady go!”

When I am old and fat

And fit to die

I'm gonna go to New Orleans'where the streets smell of lavender and piss

I'm gonna drink with the boys in sharp suits

I'm gonna dance with girls in red stilettos

I'm gonna eat gumbo and clams till I pop

I'm gonna sing Hallelujah

At every funeral, a mint julep in one hand,

A tambourine in the other

While the band plays

I'll sway

In a flowered mumu and flip-flops,

My purpose clear

To hear my heart beat

da beat da beat da beatbeat

until the final spasm takes me

home to where the angels sing the Blues

Tina Pisco

Winner - 31st August 2015

delusional bucket ruminant silence storm

Leaky Roof

The drip breaks the silence.

Hits the bucket.

Staccato counterpoint

to the distant storm.

I watch you, watch me, watching you.

Counting the drip, drip, drip,

Lose myself,

between the roof and the leak,

between the drip and the storm,

between the sane and the delusional.

Michael Ray

26th October 2015

jazz catapult angel punishment scratch

Bambi

A punishment angel sits on my shoulder,

jabs me with the quill from a feather.

Sometimes my angel sniffs angel-dust,

catapults missiles like dissonant jazz,

at strangers who cower in corners.

Tonight, my punishment angel is heavy;

she was making a quiver this morning,

then went out on a cloud shooting rhythms,

ate quavers and minims all evening.

Her wings scratch the sides of my face

as she puts back the doe in her eyes.

Siobhan Tanner

Winner - 11th May 2015

circular door trophy porcupine knowledge

The Price of Freedom

The square window was barred
the eyes of my soul

so i went instead
through a circular door
A deva stood beckoning
with a garland of heads

hung like a trophy
and my heart filled with dread

A thousand sharp ends
like some porcupine

I shrank from Her knowledge
and stayed entwined

Rab Urquhart

Winner - 22nd June 2015

synapse stereotypical overabundant rail bridge

Untitled

This overabundance was typical; there was food everywhere, over here food, over there, more food. Food food food, my synapses snapped deliciously as I swallowed another choice morsel, I grew enormously fat and waddled and wobbled everywhere, Then there was the drink; in here, drink, In there drink, gallons and hectoliters of the stuff. Drink and drinking and eating became my life and I railed against the fashionable fetish for fasting.

One day I went out for a wibbely wobbely wubbely webbely walk, when, crossing a bridge I heard the scream and rasp of tearing metal, rivets popped, welds cracked and yawed in an agony of extrusion, the bridge dropped and folded, trapping and squeezing me and I burst like an overripe strawberry under the heel of a jackboot.

Winner - 13th July 2015

kangaroo peaches gallows patriarch nymph

Untitled

There were peaches hanging from the noose of the gallows whilst grape vines flaked up the post and pears festooned the drop bar. "Nice day for a hanging" bellowed the patriarch in jocular tones, the nymph nodded enthusiastically, being responsible for the decoration of the death-trap. Doors opened and the condemned criminal was brought in, the noose, peaches and all, was tightened around his neck. The executioner turned his gaze to the patriarch, who stood with arm raised then stiffly dropped, Crack! The trap opened and he began to drop, Smash! Bouncing through a window came a large brown creature, landing next to the gallows it caught the criminal, snapped the rope, and, with a small fore-paw swiped the peaches, grapes, and pears into a frontal pouch, the creature bounced, crouched, and sprang up over the wall and away." What was that?" said the patriarch, "that", said the nymph, was a ninja kangaroo.

Rab Urquhart

28th September 2015

independent mysterious beverage ballerina inconspicuous

Untitled

He was not your average Ballerina, more a crooner than a screamer, and there was something in the way he moved which made him inconspicuous, hardly an asset in his profession. More mysterious still was the way he would exclude himself from all practice, arriving into the dress rehearsal to perform his part with symmetry, poise, grace, and power. He was independent; this man was an island.

That year the Beverage report was published, an investigation into the societal norms and rituals of male Ballerinas: he was average.

19th October 2015

map leather spring crying scotch

Untitled

In an attempt to scotch rumors of the island's shrinkage the old maps were produced. Engraved into the aged, cracked, leather were the dimensions of the isle the last time the rumors arose; in 1827. Measurements with angle, rule, and spring were quickly taken and calculations ensued, The result being declared, it seemed that the rumors were true: since 1827 the island was three miles shorter and 1 mile thinner. From the back of the hall the crying, wailing, and keening began.

Shane Vaughan

Winner - 18th May 2015

tube torture testimony heifer puffy

Testament

This my testimony, testing matrimony
to a heifer. No, that's not fair,
less bovine more boring,
mooring romance on the rocks
of Saturday night talk-shows and
cheap take-away chips.
Though for sure, this is torture,
this is it—
we'll dash ourselves on boxsets,
bodies splayed like puffy jumpers,
comfy pants. But, no,
that's not fair.
Not quite spayed out but pushed in
like specimen to the tube,
something curious to be examined,
pulled apart, picked out:
questioned—
Why do you love her still?

Shane Vaughan

Winner - 19th October 2015

map leather spring crying scotch

As Gaelic, Please

In school I was no good at languages.
I was no good at the other subjects either
but I was really bad at languages...
...you might say I was a pro at bad language.

Given a map
I could successfully not speak
the mother tongue
of almost every country
pointed out -
however,
I was particularly
awful
at Irish

"An bhuil cead agam dul go di an ...leather us?"

And leather us she did,
old Miss Caoimhe Mac
not Cuine Mac, as I thought for three months
or Queasy Mac as I thought for two more.

It was only in the Spring of that year
that I found a language I was even worse at
than Irish:

Scotch Gallic

Shane Vaughan

Winner - 23rd November 2015

pine influenza decadence inlet cellotape

Untitled

Nostrils cellotaped for fear of flooding
hallway inlet deserted
bed well made into fortress
of blankets and tv reruns

Is it decadence to indulge
in a weeklong binge with influenza?
Or karma for a shared korma
with Sue from accounting?

Oh, the mewl of my pining
is echoed only by the mucus
of my very own
bad bacteria.

Cathi Weldon

Winner - 7th December 2015

rain hope hiccup bottle mountain

For What It's Worth

The hiccup upped and outed in spite
of his usual trick to bottle it. His breathing
became heavy, out of control. His whole body
seemed in revolt against this enforced stillness.

I could have throttled him. His timing.
Here we were stranded in a stranger's funeral
while outside on the rugged rocks our tent
was tethered in the rain, with tattered hopes
of it providing shelter for the night.

The mountain people's faces turned on us. Stared.
A glass was raised. A gruff voice claimed:
A wee drop will cure your ails.

Sketches by Margaret Creedon O'Shea



Sketches by Margaret Creedon O'Shea



Biographies of Shortlisted Poets

John W.Sexton

John W. Sexton is the author of five poetry collections, the most recent being *The Offspring of the Moon* (Salmon Poetry, 2013). His sixth collection, *Futures Pass*, is also forthcoming from Salmon. Under the ironic pseudonym of Sex W. Johnston he has recorded an album with legendary Stranglers frontman Hugh Cornwell, entitled *Sons of Shiva*, which has been released on Track Records. He is a past nominee for The Hennessy Literary Award and his poem 'The Green Owl' won the Listowel Poetry Prize 2007. Also in 2007 he was awarded a Patrick and Katherine Kavanagh Fellowship in Poetry.

Beth Somerford

Beth Somerford's poems appear in various publications, most recently *Backlash*, *Brittle Star* and *The Interpreter's House*, and in her pamphlet, *Messing with Endings*. She is Director of creative training company Different Development, and author of *Rhyme and Reason: The Poetry of Leadership* (as alter ego Sam Chittenden). She mostly lives in Brighton.

www.bethsomerford.com.

Janet Lees

Janet Lees is a poet and digital artist based in the Isle of Man. Her poetry has been published in magazines including *Magma*, *Poetry News* and *The Missing Slate*, and she has been widely anthologised – most recently via the annual Templar anthology and the Aesthetica International Creative Writing Award. Her poetry films have been selected for international festivals and prizes including the Aesthetica Art Prize, the Ó Bhéal Poetry-Film Competition and FilmPoem. Janet holds an MA in Creative Writing with distinction from Lancaster University, UK.

janetlees.weebly.com

Biographies of Shortlisted Poets

Mary Anne Smith

Mary Anne Smith was born in London but is very proud to have Cork ancestry. Her creative writing credits include a shortlisting in the 2011 Canterbury Festival Poet of the Year award, third prize in the 2012 Save As International Prose Awards, a poem chosen as one of four to accompany the film *The Good Book*, shown at the 2013 Wise Words Festival in Canterbury, and a commendation in the 2015 Cafe Writers competition. Mary Anne is a bookseller, and lives in Canterbury.

Pam Szadowski

Pam is 55 years old, married twice, with a daughter and three sons, the oldest of whom, Josh died in 2007. Until the age of 10 she lived on the Wirral, visiting the beach in all weathers; then her dad moved the family to landlocked Berkshire. She married young and lived in Borneo and Indonesia with her first husband and older children. When things didn't work out, she came back to Berkshire where she was a single mum for six years before marrying again. She lived in Castlepollard in Co Westmeath for 11 years but moved back to Berkshire in 2008 so that her youngest son could attend a school specialising in dyspraxia. For the past 4 years she has been working in the special needs department of a secondary school. She started writing poetry last year after her first grandchild, Maya was born

Jenny Pollak

Jenny Pollak has been a visual artist most of her life, focusing in photography, video and sculptural installation. More recently she has begun to write poetry. For a period of ten years she also toured and performed as a percussionist, flautist and backing vocalist with various Latin American bands, her musical career culminating in a performance at the Opening Ceremony of the Sydney Paralympic Games in 2000. Her current focus is in poetry and in video installation which incorporates both sculpture and poetry.

She has been shortlisted for the Bridport Poetry Prize (2013), the Fish Poetry Prize, (2014), The World Wetlands Day Poetry Prize (2016), and placed 3rd in the Australian Catholic University Literature Award (2013) and 4th in the International Welsh Poetry Competition (2013).

www.jennypollak.com

Biographies of Shortlisted Poets

Tamara Miles

Tamara Miles teaches English, Humanities, and College Skills at OCtech, a small college in Orangeburg, SC, USA. For her 50th birthday, she joined an online creativity boot camp organized by the remarkable Irish writer, Jane Barry, and wrote poetry like a madwoman for a month. During that time, she discovered Ó Bhéal and was captivated with the Five-Word Poetry Project. Oh, and six generations before her great-grandfather (John Henry Hyatt) lived another ancestor named Stephen Heard, born in Galway, Ireland. Therefore, she's a bit Irish after all.

Shirley Bell

Shirley Bell has been widely anthologised by publishers including Faber and Anvil and her poetry has appeared in magazines including *Ambit*, *Poetry Review*, *The London Magazine*, *The Spectator* and many others. Her poetry has been broadcast on Radio 3 and she also had a small pamphlet published by the Wide Skirt. More recently her work has appeared in *The Rialto*, *the North*, and *fathers and what must be said*, an anthology published by Rebel Poetry. She was one of *Poetry Super Highway's* poets of the week and appeared in the *Blue Max Review* 2015, is going to be published in the anthology of the final 100 of *Poetry Rivals*, 2015 and was short-listed in the Blackwater Poetry Festival 2016 members' competition. She also has two pamphlets from 2013; *behind the glass* and *Poetry of Hospitals and Waiting Rooms*.

Derek Sellen

Derek Sellen's work has been published widely and received awards over many years. He won *Five Words* in 2015 and *Hungry Hill Poets Meet Politics* in 2014. He has written on a wide range of subjects including Spanish painters, Korean musicians and Indian cave-paintings. The word 'ragwort' among the five words in August sparked memories of watching (not helping!) his daughter and her partner clear their smallholding of rampant ragwort. He lives in Canterbury Kent and is an active member of SaveAs Writers.

International Poetry-Film Competition Shortlist 2015

Swoon (Belgium)	<i>Bridgemaster</i>
Othniel Smith (Uk/USA)	<i>Census</i>
Hernán Talavera (Spain)	<i>Everything Makes Love with the Silence</i>
Eugeny Tsymbalyuk (Ukraine)	<i>Growing Up</i>
Peter Madden (Ireland)	<i>I Come From</i>
(winner) Cheryl Gross (USA)	<i>In the Circus of you</i>
Cindy St. Onge (USA)	<i>Lot's Wife</i>
Cindy St. Onge (USA)	<i>Memaloose Island</i>
Santiago Parres (Spain)	<i>No One's Dog</i>
Charlotte Hodes & Deryn Rees-Jones (UK)	<i>Questions Of Travel</i>
MV Isip, T. Sartorio, & T. Doncillo (Philippines)	<i>Run Manilla Run</i>
Robert Peake (UK)	<i>Snowblindness</i>
Shane Vaughan & Lucy Dawson (Ireland)	<i>Solomon</i>
Cindy St. Onge (USA)	<i>The Plains of Asphodel</i>
Matthew Hayes (Canada)	<i>Tonight Is for the Trees</i>
James Starkie (UK)	<i>Banshees</i>
Bagadefente (Brazil)	<i>Cas'leluia and Final Brega</i>
Sam Pool (USA)	<i>Double Pendulum</i>
C.O. Moed & Adrian Garcia Gomez (NL)	<i>Fucking Him</i>
Dmytro Sukholytkyy-Sobchuk (Ukraine)	<i>Hipnosis</i>
Kate Sweeney (UK)	<i>In the Air</i>
Eleni Cay (UK/Canada)	<i>Intertwined</i>
Susanne Wiegner (Germany)	<i>Kasper Hauser Song (Wiegner Kaspar)</i>
Belén Montero & Celia Parra (Spain)	<i>Palabrapalícula</i>
Marco Di Gennaro (Italy)	<i>Poemotus 1915</i>
Christin Bolewski (Germany)	<i>Shizen</i>
Marie Silkeberg & Ghayath Almadhoun (Sweden)	<i>Snow</i>
Eoghan O'Reilly (Ireland)	<i>Two Minutes</i>
Mikhail Kvadratov (Russia)	<i>Water Girls</i>
Hernán Talavera (USA)	<i>You Won't Come Back</i>

Winter Warmer Poetry Festival 2015

Featured Guests

Fri 20th November

Kim Moore | Dean Browne | Michelle O'Sullivan

Maurice Scully | Kobus Moolman | Kerry Hardie

Nell Ni Chroinin & Marcus Mac Cinghail | Erin Fornoff
Karlis Verdins | Aneirin Karadog

Sat 21st November

Poetry-Films | Dancy Poetry with Amy Prendergast | Closed Mic

Michal Weber & Friends | John W. Sexton | Christine Murray

Eileen Sheehan | James Byrne | Orlagh de Bhaldraithe

Lillian Allen | Derry O'Sullivan | Maram Al Masri

Theo Dorgan | Leanne O'Sullivan | John Cummins



*The 4th Winter Warmer Festival will be held at The Kino in Cork
25th-26th November 2016*

McNamara Slam Winners 2015-2016

13 April	Thomas Moore
20 April	Lizzie Foley
27 April	Tina Pisco
4 May	Paul Casey
11 May	Siobhán Tanner
18 May	Shane Vaughan
25 May	Ray Hanrahan
1 June	Tina Pisco
8 June	Bernadette McCarthy
15 June	Rob Carlile
22 June	Rab Urquhart
29 June	Ed O'Dwyer
6 July	Eoin Murray
13 July	Robyn
20 July	Nuka Gbafah
27 July	Eoin Murray
3 August	Rab Urquhart
10 August	Rosalin Blue
17 August	Seán Bent
24 August	Rosie O'Regan
31 August	Tina Pisco
7 September	Munster Slam Champ - Cormac Lally
14 September	Deirdre O'Brien
18 September	Rab Urquhart
21 September	Michelle Delea
28 September	Bernadette McCarthy
5 October	Ciarán MacArtain
12 October	Matthew Moynihan
19 October	Shane Vaughan
26 October	John Mee
2 November	Rab Urquhart
9 November	Cara Kursh
16 November	Bobby (Bairbre) Langford
23 November	Shane Vaughan
30 November	Ben Burns
7 December	Cathi Weldon
14 December	Rosalin Blue
11 January	Rosie O'Regan
18 January	Stanley Notte
25 January	Niall Herriott
1 February	Ben Burns
8 February	Dónall Dempsey
15 February	Stanley Notte
22 February	Stanley Notte
29 February	Patrick Loughnane
7 March	Ray Hanrahan
14 March	Margaret Creedon O'Shea
21 March	Rab Urquhart
28 March	Maureen Rua
4 April	Rosalin Blue

Guest Poets 2015-2016

13 April	Derek Sellen & Poets from <i>Five Words Vol VIII</i>
20 April	John Pinschmidt
27 April	Gabriel FitzMaurice
4 May	Áine Uí Fhoghlú
11 May	Rachel Warriner
18 May	Vivienne McKechnie
25 May	Noel Monahan
1 June	Michael Naughten Shanks & Evan Costigan
8 June	Oran Ryan
15 June	Mike and Austin Durack
22 June	Alice Lyons
29 June	Seán Ó Roideacháin
6 July	Nell Regan
13 July	Evelyn Casey
20 July	Clara Rose Thornton
27 July	Emily Weitzman & Tom McCarthy
3 August	Celine McGlynn
10 August	Mark Granier
17 August	Adam Rudden
24 August	Liam Prút
31 August	Mary O'Donnell
7 September	Tina Pisco
14 September	Carmel Macdonald Grahame
18 September	Abby Oliveira
21 September	Brendan Constantine
28 September	Matt Mooney
5 October	Sheila Mannix
12 October	Breda Wall Ryan
19 October	Mike Mac Domhnaill
26 October	Afric McGlinchey, Michael Ray and The Blue Notes
2 November	Noel King
9 November	Huw Parsons
16 November	Jaki McCarrick
23 November	Elaine Gaston
30 November	Victoria Kennefick & Jennifer Matthews
7 December	Rozalie Hirs
14 December	Philippe Beck
11 January	Colm Scully & Conor McManus
18 January	Helen Harrison & Marian O'Rourke
25 January	John McGrath
1 February	New Creative Writing from UCC
8 February	Madelaine MacNamara
15 February	Maeve O'Sullivan
22 February	John MacKenna
29 February	Anne Marie Kennedy & Sean Ruane
7 March	Paul Ó Colmáin
14 March	Connie Voisine
21 March	James Arthur
28 March	Gabriel Rosenstock, Cathal Quinn & Enda Reilly
4 April	Mary Kennelly

the 4th Ó



Bhéal



Five Words

Poetry Competition

500 euro single prize

Ó Bhéal : pr. oh vale (v) Irish meaning From the Mouth

Do you have what it takes to master the Five Word Challenge?

Every Tuesday, from mid-April to the end of January,
five new words appear on the Ó Bhéal website

The competition runs for forty-one weeks, with a new set of words
each week. You then have seven days to write and submit a poem
which must contain all five words offered for that week

The winner and shortlisted entries will be announced during early
March and invited to read at Ó Bhéal's 10th Anniversary event,
on 10th April 2017

visit www.obheal.ie/fivewordscomp
for this week's words, guidelines and submissions



the 4th Ó
bhéal



2016
poetry-film
competition

Ó Bhéal's 4th Poetry-Film Competition will be open for submissions from 1st May - Aug 31st.

International submissions are accepted for any Poetry-Film under ten minutes (English Subtitles required for foreign language Films).

What is a Poetry-Film? It's a fast growing genre utilising the screen to bring poems to life! Your film must base its framework around a poem, either yours, a colleagues, or one in the public domain.

30 shortlisted poetry-films will be screened at the IndieCork Film Festival in October 2016. One winner will receive the festival prize for best poetry-film

Free to Enter!

For submissions and guidelines see:
www.obheal.ie/poetryfilm

INDIE CORK



OCTOBER 2016
A FESTIVAL OF INDEPENDENT FILM & MUSIC



a weekly poetry event

for poetry and spoken word performance

every Monday from 9.30pm

bring your own poetry ...

... or just listen in

Guests poets and an open-mic every week

Storytelling and unplugged ceol also welcome

at the hayloft (upstairs at the long valley), winthrop street, Cork

for more info contact paul on 085 712 6299
or email info@obheal.ie

www.obheal.ie

Free Entry



