

# Five Words

Volume XIII

poems from the

7th Five Words International Poetry Competition

*and from*

39 Five Word challenges

April 2019 to March 2020





On the occasion of Ó Bhéal's thirteenth Anniversary

*13th April 2020*

*twelve shortlisted poems from the 7th*

**Five Words International Poetry Competition**

*plus*

poems from live Five Word challenges

(15th April 2019 - 9th March 2020)

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

Erasmus+  
Colmcille  
Foras na Gaeilge  
The Long Valley  
The Arts Council  
Cork City Libraries  
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The Indie Cork Film Festival  
The UCC English Department  
The Munster Literature Centre  
Dunnes Stores  
Poetry Ireland  
NUIG Galway  
Forum Publications  
Arc Publications  
Paradiso  
CASiLaC  
Café Torino

and to the house eMCees, board members, audiences and poets

*Míle Buiochas!*

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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 XIII

## CONTENTS

<i>Foreword</i>	1
<b>7th Five Words International Poetry Competition</b>	
<i>Competition Shortlist</i>	3
Derek Sellen ( <i>winner</i> )	4
Cliona O'Connell ( <i>highly commended</i> )	6
Rosemary Norman ( <i>highly commended</i> )	7
Janice Bethany	8
Ada Volynska	9
Lucy Holme	10
Sharon Philips	11
Fiona Ritchie Walker	12
Michèle Vassal-Ring	13
Ada Volynska	14
Margaret McCarthy	15
David W Evans	16
<b>Biographies</b> of Shortlisted Poets	17
<b>Judges' Comments</b>	21
<b>Sketches</b> by Margaret Creedon O'Shea	25
<b>Five Word Challenge Poems</b>	
Rosalin Blue	27
Benjamin Burns	30
Paul Casey	33
Olive Corcoran	34
Margaret Creedon O'Shea	35
Jim Crickard	38

## CONTENTS

Bernadette Gallagher	40
Henry Glass	41
Ray Hanrahan	43
Leila Helgesen	44
Dan Johnson	45
Shaunna Lee Lynch	46
Ciarán MacArtain	48
Bernadette McCarthy	49
Jessica Militante	50
Conor O'Boyle	51
Michael O'Callaghan	52
Linda O'Flaherty	53
Rosie O'Regan	54
Catherine Ronan	56
Colm Scully	58
Philip Spillane	60
Angela Stratos	64
Molly Twomey	65
Rab Urquhart	67
Patricia Walsh	69
Bella Young	71
<b>Sketches</b> by Eileen Healy	73
International <b>Poetry-Film</b> Competition 2019	74
Featured Poets at the <b>Winter Warmer</b> 2019	75
<b>Five Word Challenge Winners</b> 2019-2020	76
<b>Guest Poets</b> 2019-2020	77
More <b>Sketches</b> by Margaret Creedon O'Shea	80

## FOREWORD

April 13th 2020 marks Ó Bhéal's thirteenth anniversary and was to be its 644th event. Due to Covid-19, Ó Bhéal's 643rd event in March was its last until conditions are safe to resume (see 9th March poems by Margaret Creedon O'Shea and Bernadette McCarthy). Event programming continues with events being cancelled or confirmed after review on a monthly basis. At the time of this publication, the 2020 (8th) Winter Warmer Poetry Festival is still scheduled to go ahead in November, with a change in venue from the Kino to the Nano Nagle Heritage Centre.

In 2020 Ó Bhéal reluctantly made an unavoidable shift from its weekly run of almost thirteen years to a new monthly schedule, primarily due to funding shortages. With regards to continued funding, the Arts Council has maintained its contribution and we retained our crucial Foras na Gaeilge and Colmcille grants. Our revenue grant from Cork City Council Arts Office continues, this being fundamental to the survival of the organisation.

In 2019 Ó Bhéal concluded its initial Erasmus+ two-year project within the European Community of Inclusive Culture (ECIC) partnership, along with its partner member festivals from Portugal, Spain, France and Italy. Plans are now afoot for ECIC to continue with yet another two-year project, which we hope will get underway in 2021.

Both of Ó Bhéal's competitions ran successfully in 2019/2020, with a similar volume of entries obtained for the Poetry-Film comp (200 from 33 countries). A significant increase in Five Word Competition entries (almost double) has allowed us to increase both prize money and judging fees. As of 2020, Ó Bhéal's Poetry-Film Competition will culminate in the Winter Warmer Poetry festival each November, after seven years taking part in IndieCork. The reason for the change is purely logistical and we are very grateful to all at IndieCork for seven invaluable partnership years.

The 2019 (7th) Winter Warmer festival was as successful as ever in the Kino, along with its Sunday events in the Long Valley, including our new partnership with *Many Tongues of Cork* and continued ISL support from Ray Greene for the deaf/hard of hearing community.

Ó Bhéal's Cork-Coventry twinning exchange was as triumphant as ever with two poets travelling each way, and publication of the fourth edition in the *spoken worlds* series: *paper incantations*, featuring poets Shaunna Lee Lynch and Benjamin Burns.

We are very grateful to all who supported us during our thirteenth year and we look forward to continuing with our regular events as soon as conditions allow.

Paul Casey  
Director  
Ó Bhéal

“The formula 'two and two make five' is not without its attractions.”

*Fyodor Dostoevsky*

7th Five Words International Poetry Competition

**SHORTLIST**

*Winner*

**Derek Sellen** (England) *Betty Fox is Skipping*

*Highly Commended*

**Cliona O'Connell** (Ireland) *Evolution*  
**Rosemary Norman** (England) *Automaton*

*Other Shortlisted Poems*

**Janice Bethany** (USA) *Father's Day*  
**Ada Volynska** (Ukraine) *Wise and Luminous*  
**Lucy Holme** (Ireland) *Smoke Flares, Pyro Prayers*  
**Sharon Phillips** (England) *The Boat Crane*  
**Fiona Ritchie Walker** (Eng/Scotland) *6am. River. Girl.*  
**Michèle Vassal-Ring** (France) *To Paint Death as The Mountain Pine Beetle*  
**Ada Volynska** (Ukraine) *Bottled Lines, Excellent Spirits*  
**Margaret McCarthy** (Ireland) *A Small Bee Came to Rest Upon My Hand*  
**David W Evans** (Jersey) *La Rue des Touettes*

Derek Sellen

*Overall Winner*

dystopia ice renew grey sleep

**Betty Fox is Skipping**

on eighteen inches of perch,  
twenty storeys above the buzz  
and dystopia of the street.

The rope skims her head,  
heels skim the rope,  
toes touch down and rebound.

Perhaps she'd rather this  
than the blindfold waltz  
or the famous death-whirl.

Indianapolis to Miami,  
Depression to Cold War,  
her crowds gasp.

She springs high,  
does mid-sky splits,  
angel in an ice-blond wig.

The name is leased;  
decades of nimble women  
renew Betty Fox, aerialist.

Dapper but grey, Benny  
debuts the latest. She clamps  
her thighs on his waist and leans out

Derek Sellen

*Overall Winner*

dystopia ice renew grey sleep

into the swallowing air,  
closing her blue eyes  
as if she sleeps;

he sees all the Bettys,  
ghosts of one another,  
slipping from him

as he begins to spin.

Cliona O'Connell  
*Highly Commended*  
tale desert uncover oval heart

**Evolution**

You need certain adaptations to survive  
on the leeward sides of mountains,  
in the deserts above which no cirrus  
or cumulus gathers  
as a sky full of favour.  
You need to be tough, wily,

spikey even; with roomy roots  
that stretch far below  
the oval swirls of sand  
and the dried-out patient lakes.  
You need a bent for the nocturnal,  
to be ready to resort to irrigation

at the first hint of wilting,  
at the first sign that the heart isn't in it  
you need to saddle up the caravans  
of camels, cross the salted fissures,  
uncover in silence  
your own tale's grievance

Rosemary Norman  
*Highly Commended*  
wood antique simulate find green

**Automation**

No antique woods  
to sing in but I simulate  
green like a bird,

not unlike. I find  
antique green even in  
woods I simulate,

not unlike green  
antique woods singing  
not unlike a bird.

Janice Bethany

*Shortlisted*

flint nexus upload sober press

**Father's Day**

The sun presses against  
the sea where a nexus  
of babies rides ready

to upload, their eyes  
sober gray flint.  
Colonies of fathers

squealing like gulls wait on  
the shore shaking off feathers  
for the finest nests.

Ada Volynska

*Shortlisted*

art luminous shock syllable train

**Wise and Luminous**

O Time. Thou art as the Luminous Rabbit.

I hear excellent reports of you on all sides.

A trainlike, shocking creature.

Moving –

    Alongwise,

        Towardwise,

            Aboutwise,

                Enoughwise,

                    Completwise,

                        Absurdwise,

                            Exactwise,

                                Indeedwise, –

further away from the 14th century.

(Very wise.)

All hail time.

Can I hear a little chorus?

(Syllables of praise.)

(Syllables of praise.)

Lucy Holme

*Shortlisted*

void spin blaze minute sing

### Smoke Flares, Pyro Prayers

It's been minutes since the sea of strangers raised me up, washed me onto the street.

Mere seconds for storm clouds to swell, a sky now fit to burst.

My staggering heart fights my brain, apportions pointless blame

You should have told me he wasn't gay I assumed he knew I wasn't single I thought  
I'd made a cool new friend this is all our fault.

We collided, fizzed like electrical wires in the rain, heavy steam rising, all exits  
obscured.

Head spinning, scalded from his face, which burnt my own  
shoulders touching, back against the cool damp wall, mind in a state of déshabillé.  
Frontal lobe decimated when he grabbed my ponytail.

We froze the bar clock. Stretched an hour out. What little time to probe the aching  
void inside of me.

No record of obsession born in lightening speed in this dingy basement club stained  
with jägermeister, foreign sweat and hash snatched handbags crunched underfoot,  
bankcards swallowed by the foggy pit.

One moment before I met his gaze, I was full grown yet flawed.

Lonely too, of that there's no real doubt.

But for the blaze! I was unprepared.

It set the past on fire, smoked me out of my careful cage.

'This is life,' he said. 'Take the good it gives, expect no more.'

I tried to out-swim my panicked head, the velvet night, but not his shadow.

Like a pyromaniac, I beckoned eyes of liquid brown.

Come, pour a gallon of oil on these flames.

Sharon Phillips

*Shortlisted*

grey alternate detail limestone terror

### **The Boat Crane**

I'm trying to write a poem about  
how I felt between your results  
and your diagnosis but the word  
that comes seems too emphatic  
because I know that I should show  
not tell and anyway my mind is

skittering to what we'll have for tea  
and the day last May we walked  
along the Undercliff, its chunks  
of limestone waste dull grey  
beneath the growth of brambles

so I am forced to admit that maybe  
this is how being in denial works,  
this search for distraction in details  
such as the fisherman's huts we saw  
collapsed on the shore, and how  
the plastic corrugations of their roofs  
formed a pattern in which the letters  
m and w alternated, you said,  
depending on whether one squinted,

and then the boat crane, smashed  
by a winter storm, its trim geometry  
a scatter of spillikins, the pebbles  
beneath it rust-stained. The word  
that I'm trying not to write is terror.

Fiona Ritchie Walker

*Shortlisted*

grey alternate detail limestone terror

6am. River. Girl.

She coughs up the blueprint  
of the city she never knew

*spoil heap, refuse heap, freckled dump*

arms round stone. The map opens.  
She locates the vertical, horizontal,  
details an estimation in tenths,  
all the alternate crossings.

Nothing is in her language.

Before the boats, a port moon,  
all the gulls still at sea, stars in the sleeping  
river, grid line to fall point.

The grey man's path,  
deep fermentation, dark staithe.  
Last night she dreamed  
of the fast-width river,  
here she is.

If she had a coin,  
but there is nothing in her hand.  
Where is the ladle, the limestone breen.  
She quotes the eastings, the good land.  
Fall point, waterfall.

She swallows down  
hard terror stone  
and the map gone,  
breathes in salt,  
open sea beyond the horizon.

Michèle Vassal-Ring

*Shortlisted*

click nerve beetle tend cube

### To Paint Death as the Mountain Pine Beetle

First draw a cube in your hardest 9H pencil to try to contain it. Outlining in graphite a barely visible cage. Use charcoal to quickly inscribe a carapace, uncompromising and heavy. Notice the resemblance it bears to the armoured police forces which we know, tend to sprout lately in the streets of Paris. Of Caracas.

Take a sienna brown, smoky like the torched hills West of Narooma or the singed forest floor of Altamira. Glaze it a solid black. Tinge with cobalt blue for the illusions of pure skies reflected on its exoskeleton and for the blue stain fungus it births below the bark, girdling a mosaic of ducts, of nerves, it slowly suffocates to grey.

Underline those points where stumpy limbs join to the abdomen to support it. Lubricate its articulations in oily shadows. Now paint its death chirp - the *Click click clicking* of mandibles. *Click*. Immense swaths of ashen trunks of missing pine scent. Life silenced by hunger. Notice the resemblance it bears to the sound of Orwell's proverbial boot? *Click click ... click*

Ada Volynska

*Shortlisted*

bronze cloud switch hot headline

**Bottled Lines, Excellent Spirits**

Bronze inebriety

clouds my head, line after line:

a hot switch.

Margaret McCarthy

*Shortlisted*

tale desert uncover oval heart

**A Small Bee Came to Rest Upon My Hand**

A small bee came to rest upon my hand,  
I slowed my breath to quieten my heart;  
A marvel that he chose just there to land.

For him a desert, though there was no sand,  
A dangerous terrain on which to start,  
A small bee came to rest upon my hand.

Weighed down with work, it seemed too weak to stand,  
Its gleaming wings too tired to play their part;  
A marvel that he chose just there to land.

No sting rests in this tale, no reprimand.  
This tiny, oval, living work of art,  
A small bee came to rest upon my hand.

Trust that the weary hearted understand;  
Though never closer, we were worlds apart,  
A marvel that he chose just there to land.

No meaning to uncover as time spanned,  
He took his rest, then readied to depart.  
A small bee came to rest upon my hand,  
A marvel that he chose just there to land.

David W Evans

*Shortlisted*

orbit delete dark moment starling

**La Rue des Touettes**

Hawthorn in this winter light looks bleak and dark, also forlorn.  
Sad it could be said, sad or contrite especially when the wind gusts.  
When the wind gusts hawthorn is a witch bowing at her forgone trial,  
broom stowed upright, like a faggot for the pyre.

These bare and patchy trees separate two leas:  
one of stubble, straws of something shorn late summer.  
Here troughs of tractor tracks keep rippling ponds of sky.

The other field is filled with broken stalks and heads  
with dirty faces. The gold of the sunflower has long gone,  
diminished to deep ochre, seeds deleted by little beaks.

Momentarily the trees regain their summer splendour  
in the colours of the night, moon flecked purple, the dust of verdigris:  
the Hawthorn Witch conjuring up clothing - foliage out of plumage.

Starlings fly through the branches like a surge of new autumn,  
plucked by gusts to animate a ballet, contort into arabesques,  
rotate in tight orbits; become a peppery breathing being,  
so loose, so solid, devilling a raptor's eye.

## Biographies of Shortlisted Poets

### Derek Sellen

Derek Sellen lives in Canterbury and has written poems, short stories and plays over many years. He won the Ó Bhéal Five Words Competition in 2015 and is thrilled and amazed to do so again. His work has been recognised in various international competitions, including Poetry on the Lake, Canterbury Festival and Cinnamon Press Competitions. His second collection *The Other Guernica* was published in 2018 and contains poems inspired by Spanish art and artists. He has given readings in many countries, including the UK, Eire, Italy, Russia, Slovakia and Germany.

### Cliona O'Connell

Cliona O'Connell's debut collection of poetry, *White Space*, was published in 2012. She was winner of the 2011 Cork Literary Review Manuscript Competition, short-listed for the 2019 Listowel Single Poem Award and runner-up in the 2019 Trocaire Poetry Competition. She was selected for the 2010 Poetry Ireland Introductions Series, runner up in the 2011 Patrick Kavanagh Award and shortlisted for the 2009 Hennessy Literary Awards for Emerging Poetry. Cliona has an MA in Poetry Studies from Dublin City University.

### Rosemary Norman

Rosemary Norman lives in London and has worked mainly as a librarian. One poem, *Lullaby*, is much anthologised and her third collection, *For example*, was published by Shoestring Press in 2016. Since 1995 she has collaborated with video artist Stuart Pound. Her poems become soundtrack, image, and sometimes both, and she has performed live with film. The work has been screened regularly at film and video festivals, and is on Vimeo.

## Biographies of Shortlisted Poets

### Janice Bethany

Janice Bethany lives in Houston, Texas, where she is a writing lecturer for the University of Houston system. She is a finalist in the 2019 creative writing competition *Letheon* for *Anesthesiology*, a medical journal, with other work in the *Ekphrastic Review*. She enjoys Wallace Stevens, walks where she composes along the bayous of a local habitat and is influenced by art, music, travel, nature, and the good world around her.

### Ada Volynska

Ada Volynska is an into-comedy-jazz-and-literature person from Kyiv, also, vaguely, a wannabe standup comedian. After a few unpleasant job attempts (including a month in a bookshop), and graduating as a Bachelor of Philosophy from the KNU she'd realised she really, probably, was only ever good with words. The thing was, then, to channel the energies right and gradually become perfect with words. The discovery of Ó Bhéal (July 2019) defined the right channel as poetry. The word jazz quest continues, along with the occasional disturbance of those around by harmonica shrieks, and postgraduate philosophy studies at alma mater.

### Lucy Holme

Originally from Kent in the UK, Lucy Holme moved to France after completing a BA in English from Manchester University. She then spent twelve years serving billionaires in seven star gin palaces before 'retiring' from a life at sea to set up home with her Irish partner in Cork City in 2013. Trained as a sommelier, she devoted many lost years to the study of wine before deciding last summer to devote herself purely to creative writing and in particular, poetry. Due to the rigours of parenting three very small children and a relentlessly attention-seeking dog, writing is achieved mainly at night.

## Biographies of Shortlisted Poets

### Sharon Phillips

Sharon Phillips spent most of her working life in post-16 education. Since her retirement in 2015 she has been learning to write poetry again, having given it up over 40 years previously. Sharon's poems have been published online and in print, most recently in *Poetry Birmingham* and the *Bridport Prize Anthology 2019*, with poems due to appear in *Sarasvati*, *The Dawn Treader* and the *Places of Poetry* anthology later this year. She lives in Otley, West Yorkshire.

### Fiona Ritchie Walker

Fiona Ritchie Walker is a Scot, from Montrose, Angus, who's lived in England for more than 25 years. She writes poetry and short fiction, which has been widely published in magazines and anthologies, including the *New Writing Scotland* series. Her last collection, *Second Week of the Soap*, was published by Red Squirrel Press.

### Michèle Vassal-Ring

Michèle Vassal-Ring won the First Collection Prize at Listowel Writers Week, with *Sandgames*, which along with her second book, *A Taste for Hemlock*, are both published by Salmon Poetry. Her poems have been short-listed for the Hennessy Awards and her poetry regularly appears in international literary publications, both in French and English. She has collaborated with the legendary guitarist Jimi Slevin (of Skid Row fame) and the late singer-song writer, Martin Egan. She currently shares her bed and keyboard with with four cats, some bees, five hens, an enormous dog called Duncan and a piper called Brendan.

## Biographies of Shortlisted Poets

### Margaret Mc Carthy

Margaret Mc Carthy grew up in Dublin. She has taught at second level in Dublin for over 30 years. Reading and writing have been hobbies for many years. She writes mainly poetry and is still trying to learn the craft. In 2006 her book was published by Veritas. It is called *The Cat Did Not Know* and was an unexpected achievement and a complete delight.

### David W Evans

David W Evans was born in Newcastle upon Tyne and grew up in county Durham and Northumberland. Study and then work, principally in public-sector posts, took him south to London, then Brighton and eventually the Island of Jersey. In the 90's he co-founded InToto, a small theatre company, and co-wrote plays for this and other Sussex companies. His poem 'Discharged Wednesday' won the Alan Jones Memorial Prize 2019. 'Rapunzel' won the A3 Review contest and will be published in April 2020. *Dobson's Ministry of Deliverance*, a supernatural farce concerning a haunted toilet is currently published (website only) by Fairlight Books.

## **Judges' Comments**

*Afric McGlinchey*

### **Betty Fox is Skipping** (Derek Sellen)

This poem's appeal is in its simplicity and cinematic quality. Each image evokes a bygone era. I always enjoy learning something new, and had to Google Betty Fox to find out more about the Sky Dancers, known as the world's greatest aerial act. It's also refreshing to come across a poem that has no trace of an 'I' voice.

### **Evolution** (Cliona O'Connell)

The various geographical landscapes of this poem give it a sense of spaciousness. I particularly liked the unexpected use of the adjective 'spiky', which opens up the mind to the evolution, not just of humans, but of plants, trees, every living thing.

### **Automaton** (Rosemary Norman)

A significant element of a poem is its title. This one introduces the notion of a robot attempting to emulate the living. The strange syntax could conceivably have been generated by a computer. The poignant effect is to hint at a future when forests and birds no longer exist and have to be simulated.

### **Father's Day** (Janice Bethany)

This succinct poem offers surprise, each image requiring a double-take. I enjoyed the collective noun, 'a nexus of babies', pun of the word 'upload' and the 'colonies' of fathers 'squealing like gulls'. A charming disconnect, effectively pulled off.

### **Wise and Luminous** (Ada Volynska)

Such a pleasure to read a shape-shifting poem that plays with words and register and sparkles with unexpectedness. Couldn't resist this.

### **Smoke Flares, Pyro Prayers** (Lucy Holme)

This poem effusively conveys the heat of a chance meeting in the midst of a euphoric crowd. Memorable imagery ('bankcards swallowed by the foggy pit') of the scene, the spilling out into the street, and from there to a dark corner in a club, a passionate, unwise encounter. Vividly told.

## Judges' Comments

*Afric McGlinchey*

### **The Boat Crane** (Sharon Phillips)

This poem deliberately flags the self-conscious process of tackling difficult subject matter, but then surprises with interesting parallels: the speaker's 'skittering' mind echoed later in the poem by the crane's 'scatter of spillikins'; the crane-like swing from images of a shared memory to the final word. Moving and evocative.

### **6am. River. Girl.** (Fiona Ritchie Walker)

Geometric vocabulary of cartography, lulling 'l' sounds, assonance, verbs subtly evoking both hesitancy and deliberation: coughs, swallows, breathes; locates, dreamed, quotes. Mysterious, atmospheric. I feel rather like a wily fish who knows the dangers of pretty, glittering things. Yet here I am, hooked..

### **To Paint Death as The Mountain Pine Beetle** (Michele Ring)

A clever poem, visually arresting and with interesting geographical/political references, and a conceit that remains focused to the end.

### **Bottled Lines, Excellent Spirits** (Ada Volynska)

A haiku that wins points for wit and brevity.

### **A Small Bee Came to Rest Upon My Hand** (Margaret McCarthy)

In this sweet, sincere poem, the poet makes good use of the villanelle form to intensify a moment. 'This tiny, oval, living work of art' is studied intently, and as well as speculation about how the exhausted bee is feeling, mutual vulnerability and trust are conveyed.

### **La Rue des Touettes** (David W Evans)

Attentive to detail and with a lyric flair, this poem's particular strength is its beautiful evocation of starlings, 'plucked by gusts to animate a ballet...become a peppery breathing being, so loose, so solid, devilling a raptor's eye.'

## Judges' Comments

*Michael Ray*

### **Betty Fox is Skipping** (Derek Sellen)

This poem carried itself beautifully through a sequence of triplets ending in a quatrain, the rhythmic qualities and slant rhyme brought this poem spinning to the top of the pile.

### **Evolution** (Cliona O'Connell)

So close to claiming first prize, this small tightly formed poem with its ingenious repetitions pulled me into the whirl and jerk of automata.

### **Automaton** (Rosemary Norman)

An arid poem full of stark images. A great example of how to slip five words seamlessly into the fabric of the poem.

### **Father's Day** (Janice Bethany)

A strange juxtaposition of images combine to create an unexpected conclusion.

### **Wise and Luminous** (Ada Volynska)

A visual treat with carefully arranged movements and a musical humour.

### **Smoke Flares, Pyro Prayers** (Lucy Holme)

As the lines shortened, this poem just got better and better – *It set the past on fire, smoked me out of my careful cage.*

## Judges' Comments

*Michael Ray*

### **The Boat Crane** (Sharon Phillips)

One of the few longer poems that kept me wanting more, that walked me all the way to the beginning.

### **6am. River. Girl.** (Fiona Ritchie Walker)

So much space left for the reader in this strangely compelling poem, so much to discover over several readings.

### **To Paint Death as The Mountain Pine Beetle** (Michele Ring)

Stunning images and a contained foreboding, this poem swallowed me in its sensory telling.

### **Bottled Lines, Excellent Spirits** (Ada Volynska)

So many ways to read this carefully worked haiku.

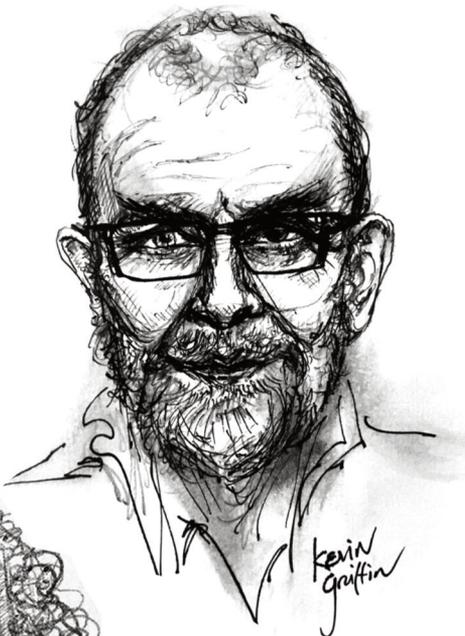
### **A Small Bee Came to Rest Upon My Hand** (Margaret McCarthy)

This villanelle with its traditional rhyme scheme and reinforcing repeats successfully and carries itself through to the final quatrain.

### **La Rue des Touettes** (David W Evans)

A beautiful poem capturing a shifting view with different ideas.

Sketches by Margaret Creedon O'Shea



Sketches by Margaret Creedon O'Shea



Rosalin Blue  
*Winner - 27th May 2019*  
football speckle local leather fubar

**Beauty Destroyed**

The speckled sky  
above the estuary  
gleams blue and grey  
in the evening light

The tide is out, reveals  
the local river meandering  
its islands specks of land  
on the way to sea

The drained sand  
shimmering of water  
mirrors the eggshell  
sphere above

A cold breeze today  
I pull the leather close  
around my chest  
and watch the football

That's been soaking  
in the river for weeks  
bobbing in the overflow  
looking all fubar

Just like the meadow  
around it – brown  
from round-up spray  
and riddled with plastic

Rosalin Blue

*5th August 2019*

lean raven unbecoming sausage freedom

Visit

The raven's feathers  
shimmer green and blue  
in the pastel evening light  
His lean muscles shining  
under his deep black coat

His wise eyes fixed  
on my kitchen window  
in patient anticipation  
His cawing calls different  
from the familiar folk of crows

Where have you come from  
on this poetic evening, Raven,  
What magic do you carry  
what message do you bring  
to those of us who listen

I open my kitchen window  
leaving the light stream in  
as you hop closer, cautiously  
while I cast out this morning's  
leftover sausages for you

Rather unbecoming to your plume  
You know the better way  
from centuries of survival

Rosalin Blue  
*5th August 2019*

lean raven unbecoming sausage freedom

You're an old soul, Raven  
and it looks like you're smiling

Curiously you inspect my offer  
and for a moment you halt  
letting me see you in your full beauty  
letting me watch you as you watch me  
– eye to eye

It is your freedom to share your wisdom  
in this quiet moment with me  
and I am honoured to look into your eyes  
and truly see you –  
Before you pick up my offering

– and fly

Ben Burns

*Winner - 6th May 2019*

princess aggressive baby pilot ladder

### The Social Climb

The princess could climb a ladder  
before she could walk.

She'd crawl up, rung to rung  
past castle, past beanstalk,

past birds and past clouds,  
into airspace and up!

A baby with ambition,  
past the jet, past the pilot,

past the ozone into space  
and up past the aggressive

sun, rung to rung  
until she ran out of ladder

and ended up Queen  
of high society.

Ben Burns

*Winner - 18th November 2019*

shadow shuttle shoes jupiter white

**Poem from the perspective of my stolen bicycle upon its subsequent recovery by an Garda Síochána**

Alone in the rain  
at the bottom of Shandon Street  
I leaned against the steel rail  
I'd been tied to  
dreaming of acceleration,  
gears clicking into place,  
when a shadow fell  
across the spokes  
of my front wheel.

A strange pair of shoes,  
a pair of cable cutters,  
the harsh grate of metal  
then freedom!

Back up Shandon Street  
with unfamiliar, sideways jerks.  
My pedals felt the patterns  
on the soles of these new shoes.

We shuttled down hills  
at break neck speed,  
white light, voices  
everywhere at once,  
Jupiter a blur in the clearing sky.

Ben Burns

*Winner - 18th November 2019*

shadow shuttle shoes jupiter white

The boy's cries, firelight,  
my mirror  
gone, crash! Flames  
melting my handle,  
tire punctured, wheel aching...

The confused space in the days between.  
I wait in silence to be serviced.

Paul Casey  
*2nd December 2019*  
splat whisk legacy cook spoon

Cosy Niche

You can call me spoonerism man or  
moonerism spam if spam's your thing

I'm well into home cooking too  
and that's comb hooking to you

I love my what hiskeys  
in the widdle of minter

unless I'm in a flat spin  
(and for my fellow hoonerism spumans)  
that's a splat fin

It's not much of a legacy  
this moonerism spam stuff

But I don't need fame or fortune  
This nosey quiche is just enough

Olive Corcoran

*Winner - 30th September 2019*

axis sulphur geansaí fortissimo glass

### Sulphur Fumes

Sulphur fumes  
slithered along  
the bottle green  
grass, turning  
its hue to a  
ghostly yellow.  
“Please help me”,  
she screamed, fumes  
covering her vehicle.  
“Fortissimo!” boasted  
a passing Kerryman,  
throwing off his geansaí.  
“It’s only yer axle  
and easily fixed.  
We’ll tow it to a Healy Rea garage  
down the boreen.  
Sure he’ll fix anything.  
If you’ve any other  
problems, sure his cousin  
is Micheál above  
in the Dáil-  
and there’s no extra  
charge for that!”

Margaret Creedon O'Shea  
2nd September 2019  
dark smell peat cadence wire

### Quixote Coyote

Goulaches squelched a gloopy cadence,  
Squidged his way through the bog.  
Sepia water dripped from peaty wedges  
that he had sliced with his sleadhan.  
A scent of earthy perfume  
lifted with the wind,  
full of damp Bog Cotton, Bonan bui, Cuckoo Flower.  
Small birds clung to telephone wires  
strung across Norwegian tree trunks.  
His eyes misted over  
at the thought of the blight on his horizon  
the "line speir", his heirloom.  
Shehy, Damhas and Duchas  
Running along to Ceim an Fhia  
A perfect brim to the West wind .  
Soon they'll tilt the windmills  
rising giant convoys  
section by section in heavy girth  
Concorde of *PLANT;INSERT;BISECT*  
My sky.  
He had a plan  
Mounted Honda like Don Quixote,  
a stick of the quare stuff for each pocket  
to warm the cockles of each truck.  
*"Ah that will soften their cough"*  
Fiery eyes whirled wild within  
his own Windmill,  
of his own mind.

Margaret Creedon O'Shea  
*Winner - 21st October 2019*  
glass pendulum momentum star vein

**Glass Veil**

I keep you safely in a glass box.  
Freeze each vein in liquid gold.  
You star in my nightly litany,  
rocking to give me momentum,  
to carry on.  
One foot at a time  
will bear me from oblivion.  
The pendulum has swung  
Pull-Push, Pull-Push  
The time has come and gone  
Pull-Push, Pull-Push.  
You disappear  
but rare bits of a soul I keep in here.  
A glass menagerie of memories,  
Fragile treasure of the unseen.  
Angeline had a rose viol they say.  
Mine is a gentler one,  
A glass box of your dust.  
with your koptic cross,  
my bearing for when I'm lost.

Margaret Creedon O'Shea

9th March 2020

rigorous hurricane plaster blame contagious

### Freeze Love

Be ruthless in pursuit of those who mug you with a kiss

*Hurry-in-and-cane* anyone who hugs.

Those affectionate thugs

must be rigorously weeded out.

Plaster lathers of carbolic soap.

Prevent disasters beyond our clinical scope.

Scrub the b'japers around each nail bed.

Hands to all stations fore and aft as per HSE aforesaid.

If you are brewing contagious covoids

we'll segregate you,

Should Facebook name, shame or blame you.

On the snow clad slopes of Lombardy,

At a high price to financial greed,

Slide down stock markets

Dip your knees for the price freeze.

Ski your pension fund aground.

Covoid price dive on The Ang Sung .

Up the Wassoo at Price Waterhouse.

O no say "*No to free love*".

But how can we be frosty or aloof?

*Hunt the Crowds of Paddys off the street.*

Parade to cafe pubs instead.

And if you're courting?

- Be discreet.

Jim Crickard  
*Winner - 24th June 2019*  
library cup fountain five bay

**Morning Sickness**

For the past five months, our bathroom has become a vomitorium,  
Ana is a Roman fountain trickling a perfect arc of bile,  
The little emperor pulls her guts like the reigns of a golden chariot.

We placed ginger biscuits on trays but the emperor refused,  
with one wave of infantile fingers, Ana was back in the bathroom  
to kneel on mosaic floor and bow before the ceramic throne.

After pushing her hands through sea sickness bands,  
she balances a cup of salt water on her forehead,  
tricking her body to heal by thinking it's out at sea.  
After reading an entire library of tips on morning sickness,  
Ana contests that retail therapy is all that really helps.

Soon after setting down bags from Penney's and TK Maxx  
Emperor makes a golden call to come to the vomitorium  
The light of the bathroom has become  
a part of her heart,  
it floats on the water inside the toilet with all of the flotsam  
drifting around the porcelain bay,  
her own face rippling back.

Jim Crickard  
*Winner - 2nd September 2019*  
dark smell peat cadence wire

**A Poet in Tesco**

I rummage the clearance of Tesco  
looking for discounted hummus,  
and meet an old friend turned foe  
who works for the government, and  
pays full price for his condiments

I want to go home and  
write a really dark poem.

the heady smell of Tom Ford Tobacco Noir  
emanating from his crystal white shirt,  
only three hundred dollars a bottle  
the base notes of peat, the nonsense  
of expensive things smelling like dirt

I want to go home and  
write a really dark poem

We meet each other at the queue  
I pretend he doesn't exist with my  
earphones blaring the wiry staccato cadence of black metal  
when the lady rings up the till  
my card declines, he steps and wields a credit card like a knight in shining Armani

I want go home and  
write a really dark poem

Bernadette Gallagher

*16th December 2019*

flickering sock wardrobe weakness twilight

**Christmas is here**

Barefoot, the sea washes over me  
to my ankles.

I couldn't wait to feel the Atlantic  
seep into my skin.

The light across the bay  
flickering in the twilight.

Every Christmas I give in  
a 'weakness' they call it.

Travel for hours to this  
empty house, no sock

for Santa, only photos  
in my parents' wardrobe.

Henry Glass

*17th June 2019*

polyglot found clarity wreckage misty

**Unknown**

Wandering through the misty wreckage,  
Pondering your broken history,  
Only the carriage of time,  
Can bring me clarity,  
The wrong roads taken,  
To the right places found,  
Summoned by the sound,  
Of a polyglot speaking,  
In familiar and foreign tongues,  
Explains to me life's lived lessons,  
Never failing to bring new ones

*8th July 2019*

glint howler flame river bowler

**Wolf**

Flame glinted,  
In the fiery eyes,  
Of the granite, grey, howling wolf,  
The callers cries echoing,  
Down winding wooded creeks,  
And long retired river beds,  
Its bowler black silhouette,  
Cast against the yellow moon

Henry Glass

*Winner - 9th September 2019*

gutter anal fringe writing soup

**Not gettin' in tonight**

At the upmarket bar,  
The bouncer was anal,  
About the dress code,  
You were directed to the gutter,  
It was a good night on the fringe,  
Couple of cans,  
Writing wheel tracks in the street,  
This is the soup of life

*Winner - 25th November 2019*

cloud empathy porcelain guilty jacket

**Rain Gear**

The guilty cloud,  
Was a dirty grey,  
Gone were the porcelain white,  
Of yesterday,  
The bright blue gleam,  
Turned darkened dull,  
That day nature's empathy,  
Was not with me,  
So to knock me down,  
From standing tall,  
The rain began to fall,  
I'd been betting on a better day,  
And forgot my fecking jacket

Ray Hanrahan

*Winner - 29th April 2019*

speckled irate sunken elephant ephemeral

**Untitled**

The elephant in the room whose dimensions

We can pace out and feel in space

But not give form in words

To spare each of us distress.

His speckled face and shoulders

No longer looks the picture of health

And his sunken cheeks tell the world

He is dying, but of this

We will not speak. He knows

This too, there is no unheeding

God he can bear anger towards, and

Over this loss he is momentarily irate.

It does not last long, it cannot,

For he is now on his penultimate breath.

Then it comes, soft and barely audible,

He says, 'Life is ephemeral', and expires.

Leila Helgesen  
*Winner - 13th January 2020*  
pickle blue watch sparkling salt

**O Holy Cucumber**

Pickles are tasty and easy to make,  
Make'em yourself, 'cause Tesco's are fake  
You just make a brine out of vinegar and salt  
If you fuck up, don't blame me, that'll be your own fault.  
The recipe's my grandma's, dead for ten years,  
She'll haunt you until you'll cry sparkling tears  
Respect there for pickles, the holy cucumber  
Watch the old craft, you'll always remember  
On crispy crack, happiest you've been,  
Turns your day from dark blue to green

Dan Johnson

*Winner - 11th November 2019*

spicy achieve wrinkle hope cannon

**Buffalo**

This November cold makes me  
look for you in my memory,  
but it's all wrinkly until  
a gust of wind, like a cannon shot, comes  
down the barrell of Oliver Plunkett  
and I am back in Buffalo  
eating hot wings, extra spicy,  
hoping that I'm not making  
too much of a mess  
and that the God of early winter  
will let me achieve my wildest dreams.

Shaunna Lee Lynch

*Winner - 5th August 2019*

lean raven unbecoming sausage freedom

### Untitled

August Bank holiday weekend,  
Cork- 1972,

May and Nora skipped off the train at Youghal  
celebrating their day of freedom from domesticity.

On the beach they ate their packed lunch of  
sausage sandwiches, hard boiled eggs  
and half an orange each.

In the sand they sat laughing over thermal flask tea  
and shared a pack of cigarettes they bought down the Boreen.  
They lit a little fire with what the sea discarded,  
and around it told stories  
of mothers and fathers and children,  
they sang songs of love and pain and putting curlers in your hair.

When the air cooled and the blue sky settled to pink,  
they went in search for chips.

Waiting in the salt and vinegar scented queue  
they got wind of a dance happening in the town hall.

The two ladies loved music  
and couldn't turn down the chance of a sway.

Such craic was had,  
that all time was lost  
and before they knew it,  
it was 11 o'clock.

The sky was now raven black  
and there was no chance of bus or train.

The men they danced with that evening  
offered to give them a lift  
but the women found their attitude unbecoming,  
and as Nora puts it,  
one of them had asked her to 'hold his '99'-  
he didn't have an ice cream.

Shaunna Lee Lynch

*5th August 2019*

lean raven unbecoming sausage freedom

They ran through the list of possibilities,  
they had spent the last of their money on chips  
and half pints of Murphy's with rasa.

They would have to call someone in the city to come get them  
and not everyone on the north side of Cork had a telephone  
so they called the only person they knew with one,  
Nora's employer, the Lord Mayor.

What alarm he got at midnight  
when the woman that cleaned his house  
called to ask if he'd go up to Gurrabraher and wake her husband  
to drive to Youghal and collect the two stranded damsels.  
And that's just what he did.

Ciarán MacArtain  
Winner - 20th May 2019  
settle chaos decant nubile orange

## Untitled

*(in two voices)*

Dacent.

Decant?

No DAE-CENT

Decent? As in fairly sound?

No, as in like, "she's fucking..."

Is she? Who?

What? No I'm on about the word.

No, I mean I'm on about her.

She's DAYCENT!

Nubile as fuck, ja get me?

And more then that bai,

She cares

And her favourite colour is also orange!

And she settles me down in moments of chaos.

Bernadette McCarthy

*Winner - 9th March 2020*

rigorous hurricane plaster blame contagious

### Contagion

Feeling like you're under siege  
with lungs afire and cheeks aflame,  
as you shudder, hack, and wheeze  
you wonder which one is to blame:  
was it the girl in the Crane Lane—  
Moira, or was it Pandora?--  
or was it the lass with the hurricane name—  
Ciara... no, Ophelia—  
her lips plastered onto your own  
firmly as dental cement;  
or was it that big lad in the gym  
lifting weights so rigorously,  
or was it the guy on the exercise bike—  
didn't he sneeze as you passed him by?  
The list of suspects goes on for pages  
but remember one thing: panic is contagious.

Jessica Militante

*Winner - 16th September 2019*

itinerary draught show spike cauliflower

**Across the Produce Aisle**

I saw him from across the produce aisle

In between the precarious pyramids of zucchini and eggplant

He was as pale as cauliflower

With hair the exact color and texture

As red cabbage

And though not on my shopping list

Nor my itinerary in general

It is with thoughts of my recent draught

That I figure he'd do

To show me his spike

Conor O'Boyle

*Winner - 16th December 2019*

flickering sock wardrobe weakness twilight

### Untitled

Hey. Sorry I missed your call.  
I've cleared out your wardrobe.  
Every sock and jock packed up.  
Games and DVDs too.  
I saw Twilight was on top.  
Not my favourite,  
as I'm sure you remember  
from the time you dragged me to it,  
but it's there...  
it is yours after all.

The lightbulb in the hall is still flickering.  
Why it still does that I don't know...  
but I guess now it won't bother you  
Look, I won't bother you with my weakness.  
It's not your problem anymore.  
Sorry it ended this way...

Michael O'Callaghan

*Winner - 15th July 2019*

tanner superfluous crying petunia leisure

### Sympathy

A penny for your thoughts.

A tanner for your tears.

A guinea for your grief.

"My bowl is empty.

My grief, worthless.

My tears, dry and arid

like the southern lands.

If I should cry the rains might fall,

the rivers flood,

and flowers would appear."

Your grief is precious -

it's your treasure!

"I have only grief, no leisure;

Crying dry tears,

the petunias all have withered.

Your sympathy is superfluous.

My grief is mine alone."

Linda O'Flaherty

*Winner - 22nd July 2019*

puncture dog astringent national jockeying

**Untitled**

Tongue sharp enough to leave ears bleeding

Astringent words to puncture feelings

A dog of a woman and a national treasure

Built for purpose, not for pleasure

I remember her jockeying to and fro

... mothering

And I loved her enough to let it all go

... everything.

Rosie O'Regan  
*Winner - 8th July 2019*  
glint howler flame river bowler

Untitled

I'd been feeling shit for months,  
shit big time  
shit in all it's shitty forms

Rivers of the stuff, exploding  
burning flames of it  
shit, poo, crap, shit

I became a howler  
a real irritable ass  
Something had to change

I made an appointment, the receptionist  
greeted me with a glint,  
whispered

"the doctor will be with you soon  
you're in safe hands  
we call him the Boweler"

Rosie O'Regan  
*Winner - 12th August 2019*  
beak deaf pint yellow reach

**Egg Shell**

I drink a pint of darkness, think  
If I had to choose  
I would sooner go deaf than blind

Silence at least offers some solace;  
you could still hear your own thoughts,  
the memory of music,

lip read.  
Darkness, not so much.  
You would have to reach around the unknowing,

touch your only way forward  
like a chick who breaks from its egg  
to find itself in a bigger egg

on an endless path of shell  
its yellow beak, a sharp sun  
piercing the dark

Catherine Ronan

*Winner - 9th December 2019*

chronic paperclip bread niggling deface

**Untitled**

The genie is out of the bottle  
And she is not going back to the kitchen  
To bake your bread or make your bed  
For that matter  
She refuses to wear  
Those niggling pyjamas  
Any more - no !  
She now wants to dance  
With naked reflections  
In silver pools of moonlight  
At midnight or later  
The insomnia has turned chronic  
She waits with Nirvana  
For the dawn chorus  
Sucking on a paper clip  
Waiting for the sun  
With Jim Morrison  
It's your fault  
Milk eyed moonbeam  
You know she is a child of the moon  
Because you are one too  
- Purveyor of dreams

The genie is going to deface the walls  
And eat through the bars  
Of your prison  
Without regret  
The genie is out of the bottle  
And she is not going back to the kitchen!

Catherine Ronan

*16th December 2019*

weakness twilight flickering sock wardrobe

### Escape

You hung me in the wardrobe  
On the left with the other  
Out of favour friends  
I should have known  
That you didn't give  
A sock about me  
You tied my lips  
With scarlet ribbon  
You said I wasn't worth  
Feeding  
I was stupid  
My kindness - a weakness  
You stripped me of  
All confidence  
So I hung there  
Lifeless but with  
Flickering hope  
Until one day you  
Forgot to lock the door  
This prattling rattling spectre of a poet  
Made a run for it at twilight  
Now the skeleton is stealing your sports car  
Yes – it's the red one - VROOM VROOM !

Colm Scully

*Winner - 17th June 2019*

polyglot found clarity wreckage misty

**Untitled**

"Clarity" they say  
"is the sister of understanding".  
I found that little gem  
in the wreckage of my marriage.

I fell in love with her  
on a dance floor in Amsterdam.  
Her misty eyes staring into mine,  
across the cacophony of sound.

She was a polyglot and  
we married the next day.  
It was over within a week.  
She couldn't speak English.

Colm Scully

*9th December 2019*

chronic paperclip bread niggling deface

**Untitled**

Banksy defaced another building today.

The church on Popes Quay

I saw him there with brushes and a spray can.

He mixed his paint outside Civic Trust House.

The seagulls, diving, pecked at his hat,

(a wool beany with bits of knitted bread).

He fought them off with swooshes of his brush,

niggling his attempts at art.

The paint sprayed across the walls of Saint Mary's,

splashing across the doric columns

as he tried to push them away.

Eventually they got the message,

what remained behind

on the romanesque facade.

A masterpiece of street art,

from this chaotic chronic scene.

The face of Jesus looking down across Cork City.

A lighted spliff in his hand,

a paperclip nose ring

and a serene smile.

Philip Spillane

*29th July 2019*

resplendent spaghetti downsize monitor baritone

**I Have a Voice**

Don't shut me down,  
I have a voice.

Yes, its automatic,  
repetitive, baritone  
harmonica,

but its my voice  
a sound, my sound  
don't shut me down.

my sisters  
and brothers,  
have being downsized,  
and simplified

you may have upgraded the  
graphics display  
of monitors, but it's a  
resplendent shroud.

it has covered you up  
from the reality,

we have a voice,  
and you can't shut us down.

Philip Spillane

*29th July 2019*

resplendent spaghetti downsize monitor baritone

our cabled world  
is a spaghetti  
gordian knot  
twisted and tangled,

we are more inside  
and don't deserve to  
be shutdown,

we need to restart  
together, stop suspending  
everything, and googling  
our problems away.

Don't shut us down,  
listen.

Philip Spillane  
*Winner - 2nd December 2019*  
splat whisk legacy cook spoon

The Spoon

If mirrors  
could capture and mind read  
self concerns,

what have I imprinted  
on all the spoons  
I used  
throughout my life  
at breakfast table.

Splattered in milk  
and smudged in  
soggy corn flakes,

My looks  
don't leave  
a lasting legacy,  
as its image is  
distorted on its head.

packed  
together  
in the dish washer,

they could  
whisk and cook up  
rumours  
about me,

Phillip Spillane

*Winner - 2nd December 2019*

splat whisk legacy cook spoon

Mixing this over and over in my mind,  
super self conscious at the breakfast table,  
just me  
and this spoon.

Angela Stratos

*Winner - 10th February 2020*

festoon palette test-tube transfer show

**Untitled**

She makes a holy show of me  
Long hair like festoons  
Slipping back and forth over freckled  
shoulders and between the gap where she  
broke her collarbone  
They jut at awkward angles like tilted test  
tubes spilling their glittered contents

Transfer it please  
Whatever she has, give it to me  
Magic or arrogance or entitlement  
Deliver it in envelopes or palettes  
Buckets and rusty wheelbarrows  
To my front door and leave it on the mat  
I want mountains of that holy show

Molly Twomey

*Winner - 26th August 2019*

orange cascade window perforate cool

**My Love,**

if eyes are the windows to the soul,  
I would perforate yours,  
peel you like an orange  
and crack your knuckles off  
to cool my drink.

I'd drop your body into the Lee,  
watch you cascade  
like a long blonde hair  
belonging to someone else  
on my side of our bed.

*Winner - 23rd September 2019*

overpower brownie pen line josh

**Swipe**

They say the pen is as mighty as the sword,  
but have you ever been overpowered by a knife  
scraping raw brownie dough  
off the side of a bowl that you thought  
would be dire because you met him online  
and he still lives at home watching  
re-runs of *Drake and Josh* but he is  
making you laugh so much you almost  
forget he is on parole and about  
to hold a blade to your throat.

Molly Twomey

Winner - 4th November 2019

erosion exchange tabernacle awkward judgemental

### Let Us Sleep

As Fr. Michael splits  
the body of Christ,  
throws back the wine,  
all I can think is

what a load of shite.  
Door of the tabernacle shines  
like a fake tooth.  
I am sick of judgemental looks,

awkward mummings  
of *Christ be with you*,  
welts on my knees  
like erosions.

What I really need  
after a forty-hour week  
is a good lie in.

Rab Urquhart

*17th June 2019*

polyglot found clarity wreckage misty

Untitled

I found it in the morning,  
it was scaly, it was grey,  
I saw it with such clarity  
that I couldn't explain it away,  
In the wreckage of the here and now,  
the fabric torn and frayed,  
A polyglot of verbs and nouns with  
nothing much to say,  
sometimes misty, sometimes clear,  
But never less than gay.

*8th July 2019*

glint howler flame river bowler

Untitled

Bouled over by a boulder and her ball,  
knocked over a wall. She was a howler,  
different from a screamer by  
the pitch of her bawl. I  
should'a been a screamer, they're  
keener for rapture and all.  
She asked me to forgive her, down  
by the river, after the fall.  
Night falls on the salt marsh,  
flames glint, Owl calls.

Rab Urquhart

*5th August 2019*

lean raven unbecoming sausage freedom

## Untitled

Freedom! skwaked the Raven as it swooped in, grabbing my lean pastrami sandwich and disappeared over the gable of a nearby building.

These types of event were becoming more commonplace; just yesterday there were reports about a troupe of Baboons in Dehli, they would range the city at night removing batteries, spark plugs and injectors, from all the vehicles they found.

Animal militancy was growing; 12 artificial insemination technicians had been kicked to death by unhorny cattle, city cats were congregating outside butchers, pissing and spraying, and scratching 'For the many, not the few' on doors and windows with diamond sharp claws.

I resolved to become Vegan and, realising that it would be unbecoming of me to eat them, I flushed my Clonakilty sausages, Pork content 40%, the other 60% probably Vegan, down the toilet.

Patricia Walsh

*22nd April 2019*

loyal rumble counterfeit gentle torrent

### Untitled

My computer is a loyal creature, after all,  
Sidling through the misgivings  
Of rumbling through junk files  
No need to counterfeit fixings  
Working in a torrent of speed  
Gently extending the battery life.

Incremental learning loyal to the touch  
Rumbling the secrets of another life  
Gentle as it is, a torrent of realisation  
No counterfeit workings can hold me now  
No snake oil repairs pull the other one.

Counterfeit repairs rumble through hubris  
A torrent of suggestions barricade same,  
Prizes for loyalty rumble past equipment  
A gentle push is all that is required.

Patricia Walsh

*Winner - 1st July 2019*

chanteuse petrify quarantine neighborhood corset

**Untitled**

I'm sorry I never threw my knickers at you,  
But some of your songs were so awful  
They should be under quarantine,  
Or at best petrifying till the cows come home.  
You're the joke of this neighborhood  
Squeezing out the talent in a corsets glare  
Revisiting terms and conditions as applied  
Do what you have an aptitude for, don't mind me  
A chanteuse of sorts will never become you

*16th December 2019*

flickering wardrobe weakness sock twilight

**Untitled**

It is a matter of cosmic weakness  
That one sock always gets lost in the wash,  
That wardrobes curse bespoke the twilight  
Lost in a parallel universe..!  
Or simply on holiday  
Flickering in the midst of this twilight  
Rubbishing further conspiracy theories  
Put down to experience, no less  
This wardrobe malfunction reigns supreme.

Bella Young

*Winner - 13th May 2019*

constipated diamond throne island fist

### Untitled

The island her mind lines from is turning  
She's not lonely or cramped  
But constipated in  
Too much pent-up thought  
The brain space and word-vom  
With its stained processed throne  
Calluses with lips, boils, and chattering teeth against  
Hardwood  
No one stole the diamonds,  
Nor breached her fort,  
Nor cut her hair, shook her hand  
Or met her with comfort

The Island of her mind is a saggy,  
Sour-turning, a burnt baking foil crisis  
Thing is;  
She's not lonely or cramped  
Pursing her hands in mock pain,  
Fisting empty air with anxious rapiers  
Nah, she's constipated  
Weighed down by too much  
Pent-up word thought brain space  
Overwhelm cognitive-consciousness  
She's a queen of a panic squish processed meat  
Stuffy throne

Bella Young

*Winner - 13th May 2019*

constipated diamond throne island fist

Chattering fingernails  
Against hardwood armrests  
Quivering lips lined with an  
Army of cold sores a-weeping  
Thing is;  
No one stole her diamonds,  
Nor breached her body fortress,  
Nor cut her hair or  
Held her hand in a crisis  
Nah, it's just that island of hers  
Is heavy with static

Sketches by Eileen Healy



# International Poetry-Film Competition Shortlist 2019

<b>Paul Broderick</b> (USA)	<i>for those who don't know chocolate</i>
<b>Jessamine O Connor</b> (UK)	<i>The Stranger</i>
<b>Stuart Pound</b> (UK)	<i>The Angry Sleeper</i>
<b>Fiona Tinwei Lam &amp; Tisha Deb Pillai</b> (Canada)	<i>Plasticnic</i>
<b>Tova Beck-Friedman</b> (USA)	<i>Jephthah's Daughter</i>
<b>Marie Craven</b> (Australia)	<i>Rodeo Days</i>
<b>Caroline Rumley</b> (USA)	<i>One Step Away</i>
<b>Lucia Sellars</b> (UK)	<i>Postcards from a window</i>
<b>Pamela Falkenberg &amp; Jack Cochran</b> (USA)	<i>In West Virginia</i>
<b>Charles Olsen</b> (Spain)	<i>Vertigo</i>
(Winner) <b>Fiona Aryan</b> (Ireland)	<i>Virginia gave me Roses</i>
<b>Amy Neswald</b> (USA)	<i>Blink</i>
<b>Dave Richardson</b> (USA)	<i>Cathedral</i>
<b>Lina Abojaradeh</b> (Jordan / Palestine)	<i>Handala's Dream</i>
<b>Edvinas Maciulevicius</b> (Ireland)	<i>Little Johnny</i>
<b>Matt Mullins</b> (USA)	<i>Semi-Automatic Pantoum</i>
<b>Mark Niehus</b> (Australia)	<i>We Are The Device</i>
<b>Stuart Pound</b> (UK)	<i>Song of the Nobird</i>
<b>Sarah Tremlett</b> (UK)	<i>Mr Sky</i>
<b>Marie Craven</b> (Australia)	<i>Misery</i>
<b>Jane Glennie</b> (UK)	<i>letter – to anyone who is listening</i>
<b>Janet Lees</b> (Isle of Man)	<i>Moss</i>
<b>Paul Broderick</b> (USA)	<i>Am I A Monster</i>
<b>Luke Morgan</b> (Ireland)	<i>Connemara Illuminated</i>
<b>Kathy Gee</b> (UK)	<i>Fecund</i>
<b>Alana Daly Mulligan</b> (Ireland)	<i>The Beach Woman</i>
<b>Kyriakos Chatzimichailidis</b> (Greece)	<i>Ithaka</i>
<b>Sarah Kelly</b> (Ireland)	<i>I Don't Feel Safe Inside my Skin</i>
<b>Pamela Boutros</b> (Australia)	<i>LOST</i>
<b>Juan Ibáñez</b> (Spain)	<i>The Garden of the Earthly Delights</i>
<b>Dave Knox</b> (Ireland)	<i>Home</i>

**INDIE  
CORK**  




# Winter Warmer Poetry Festival 2019

## Featured Guests

Fri 22nd November

Máire Ní Chéileachair | Con O'Drisceoil & Johnny McCarthy

Ciara Ní É | Philip Wilson | The Love of the Sun

Amanda Bell | Gabriel Rosenstock | Danielle McLaughlin

Dourga | Zsuzsa Csobánka | Richard Hawtree | Kimberly Reyes

Sat 23rd November

Poetry-Films | Poetry Film Discussion | Closed Mic

Afric McGlinchey | Francis Jones | Ciaran O'Driscoll

Louis Mulcahy | Aifric MacAodha | Anne Frater

Trevor Joyce | Jackie Wills | Liz Berry

Yolanda Castaño | Cormac Lally | Michelle Delea



*The 8th Winter Warmer Festival is scheduled for 27th-29th November 2020*

## McNamara Slam Winners 2019-2020

15 April	Philip Spillane
22 April	Philip Spillane
29 April	Ray Hanrahan
6 May	Ben Burns
13 May	Bella Young
20 May	Ciarán MacArtain
27 May	Sue Blue
3 June	Seán Ó Draoi
10 June	Paul Casey
17 June	Colm Scully
24 June	Jim Crickard
1 July	Patricia Walsh
8 July	Rosie O'Regan
15 July	Michael O'Callaghan
22 July	Linda O'Flaherty
29 July	Mary Crickard
5 August	Shaunna Lee Lynch
12 August	Rosie O'Regan
19 August	Niamh O'Donovan
26 August	Molly Twomey
2 September	Jim Crickard
9 September	Henry Glass
16 September	Jessie Militante
20 September	Amy Gurlitt
23 September	Molly Twomey
30 September	Olive Corcoran
7 October	Cathal Holden (Munster Slam)
14 October	Philip Spillane
21 October	Mags Creedon
28 October	Philip Spillane
4 November	Molly Twomey
11 November	Dan Johnson
18 November	Benjamin Burns
25 November	Henry Glass
2 December	Philip Spillane
9 December	Catherine Ronan
16 December	Conor O'Boyle
13 January	Leila Helgesen
10 February	Angela Stratos
9 March	Bernadette McCarthy

## Guest Poets 2019-2020

15 April	Mary Anne Smith & Poets from Five Words Vol XII
22 April	Majella Kelly
29 April	Tania Hershman
6 May	Joe Neal
13 May	Áine Durkin
20 May	Derek Sellen
27 May	Philip Metres & Dave Lucas
3 June	A Tribute to Danny Sheehy
10 June	Clodagh Beresford Dunne
17 June	Anthony Lawrence
24 June	Kimberly Campanello
1 July	Niall McDevitt
8 July	Jessica Traynor
15 July	Kate Newmann
22 July	Randolph Healy
29 July	Jim Crickard & Alana Daly Mulligan
5 August	Aysar Ghassan & Raef Boylan
12 August	Patrick Lodge
19 August	Katie Donovan
26 August	Eibhlís Carcione & Pádraig MacAoidh
2 September	David Toms
9 September	Alison Whitelock
16 September	Annemarie Ní Churreáin
20 September	Beau Williams
23 September	Michelle O'Sullivan
30 September	Kevin Griffin
7 October	Munster Slam & Emmet Kirwan
14 October	Clare McCotter
21 October	Christodoulos Makris
28 October	Alan Titley
4 November	Maurice Devitt
11 November	Miriam Gamble
18 November	Grace Wilentz & Siobhán Daffy
25 November	Ellen Dillon
2 December	Umang Kalra
9 December	Oran Ryan
16 December	Frank Ormsby
13 January	Máighr�ad Medbh
10 February	Sara Berkeley and New Creative Writing from UCC
9 March	F�ona Bolger and Moyra Donaldson

visible tortoise sunny fascinate psychotic caravan  
birth nexus 8<sup>th</sup> ó bhéal  
swelter antique beer sly concern thirst pleasure  
tale fern slim absurd write oval map yesterday



sense room detail l... box song advice spark  
tinsel surface hot t... spot incandescent  
wall grey south ro... innocent desert  
alert pass response boomerang sleep length flare



## Five Words Poetry Competition

1st Prize €750

2nd Prize €500

3rd Prize €250

Have you tried the Five Word Poetry Challenge?  
It's only €5 to enter ...

Every Tuesday from 14th April 2020 – 26th January 2021,  
five new words will appear on the Ó Bhéal website. Entrants have  
seven days to write and submit a poem which contains all five words.

The winners and shortlist of 12 entries will be announced in  
March 2021 and invited to read at Ó Bhéal in Cork  
on the 12th of April 2021.

visit [www.obheal.ie/fivewordscomp](http://www.obheal.ie/fivewordscomp)  
for this week's words, guidelines and submissions





Ó Bhéal's 8th Poetry-Film Competition is open for submissions  
from 1st May - 31st Aug 2020

International submissions are accepted for any poetry-film under  
ten minutes (English subtitles are required for non-english language Films).  
Entries must have been completed since May 2018.

Broadly speaking, a poetry-film is the translation of a poem into  
film-form, by way of interpretation that features the entire poem,  
either visually and/or audibly.

Up to 30 shortlisted poetry-films will be screened at  
Ó Bhéal's Winter Warmer Poetry Festival in November 2019.  
One winner will receive the festival prize for best poetry-film.

**Free to Enter!**

For submissions and guidelines see: [www.obheal.ie/poetryfilm](http://www.obheal.ie/poetryfilm)



Sketches by Margaret Creedon O'Shea



Sketches by Margaret Creedon O'Shea



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## Cork's monthly poetry event

Poetry-Films from 8.00pm, Five Word Challenge from 9.00pm

followed by Guest poets & Ópen-Mic

poetry

2nd Monday of each Month  
bring your own poetry ...  
... or just listen in

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

for more info email [info@obheal.ie](mailto:info@obheal.ie)

[www.youtube.com/obheal](http://www.youtube.com/obheal)

[www.twitter/obheal](http://www.twitter/obheal)

[www.facebook.com/obheal.poetry](http://www.facebook.com/obheal.poetry)

[www.instagram.com/obheal](http://www.instagram.com/obheal)

[www.obheal.ie](http://www.obheal.ie)

Free Entry



The 13th anthology of Five Word poems features the winning poem and shortlist from the 7th Five Words Poetry Competition. Entrants were given seven days to complete their poems. Poems have also been included from Ó Bhéal's Monday evening (live) Five Word Challenges, held in The Long Valley, as have sketches of guest poets and regulars made by two local fine artists: Margaret Creedon O'Shea and Eileen Healy.

April 13th 2020 marks 640+ Ó Bhéal sessions.

Our congratulations (for the second time) to this year's competition winner



**Derek Sellen!**



International competition entries must use the five words posted each Tuesday. Our 2020 judges, Afric McGlinchey and Michael Ray chose a shortlist of twelve poems, including the overall winner plus two commended entries. The five words used in Ó Bhéal's live Monday evening challenges are provided spontaneously by those present. The winner is

chosen by audience response and is awarded a drink courtesy of The Long Valley Bar plus a book or two of poems. The Monday evening five word poems are written in only 15 minutes and should be considered to be first drafts. Often these poems are developed further for journal publication elsewhere. The Five Word Challenge was conceived by poetry aficionado and emcee Gerry McNamara.



an ISBN-free publication

[www.obheal.ie](http://www.obheal.ie)

