



On the occasion of Ó Bhéal's eleventh Anniversary

16th April 2018

twelve shortlisted poems from the 5th

Five Words International Poetry Competition

and

poems from fifty Five Word Challenges

(10th April 2017 - 9th April 2018)

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

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to the house eMCees
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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 XI

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FOREWORD

April 16th 2018 is Ó Bhéal's eleventh anniversary and 554th event. In 2017 Ó Bhéal underwent some notable changes, including a physical expansion of the venue space to accommodate 12-15 more audience members, plus our participation in the newly conceived European Community of Inclusive Culture (ECIC) partnership, which has enabled Ó Bhéal to travel with its members to partner festivals in Portugal, Spain, France and Italy. In turn, artists and facilitators from those countries will be involved with Ó Bhéal's 6th Winter Warmer festival in November '18. This project, funded by an Erasmus+ grant, allows us to share best practice and initiate outreach programmes to improve literacy and encourage collaboration between literature and other art forms. It has also enabled Ó Bhéal to develop its poetry-film programme to include a variety of related workshops. Meanwhile Erasmus+ in Madrid have provided Ó Bhéal with two interns for ten weeks each during 2018, who will assist with our ever-increasing administrative and multimedia-driven workload. In 2017 Ó Bhéal reignited its CE Scheme position, with the post being taken up by Paul Fitzgerald.

The 5th Winter Warmer festival was the most successful yet in its new home in the Village Hall and we now plan to expand the 6th Winter Warmer beyond the Friday and Saturday to include readings on the Sunday, plus a series of workshops running from Thursday to Monday. Both of Ó Bhéal's competitions have seen increases in submissions as the standard of entries continues to reach ever skyward. Funding-wise, the Arts Council increased its contribution slightly this year but we lost our Foras na Gaeilge grant (of ten years - and during Bliain na Gaeilge), but we have been asked to apply again for 2019. Ó Bhéal also retained its crucial revenue grant from Cork City Council Arts Office, which enables the weekly series to continue.

Ó Bhéal's long-established Cork-Coventry twinning exchange was a fine success with two poets travelling each way and seeing the publication of our second edition of the spoken worlds series, *sound as character*, featuring poems by Stanley Notte and Ciarán MacArtain. Our San Francisco exchange saw Kathy D'Arcy visit the Bay Area for a series of readings and engagements over eight days, thanks to our partner at St. Mary's College of California, professor-poet Raina J. León, who also brought sixteen of her arts students to Cork for three weeks in January. Ó Bhéal arranged a series of poetry-film workshops and logistic assistance, all while benefitting from the students who performed various tasks for Ó Bhéal. This has proved to be an extremely valuable relationship, the next stages of which we are now working on with gusto.

Our warm thanks to all who supported us in our eleventh year as audiences continue to flourish. We are now booked up with guest poets ten months in advance, as we continue in our quest to bring the best of Irish and International poets to Cork and to play our small part in nurturing the local poetry community.

Paul Casey
Director, Ó Bhéal

"One and one is two, and two and two is four,
and five will get you ten if you know how to work it."

Mae West

5th Five Words International Poetry Competition

SHORTLIST

Winner

Jill Munro (England) *Ptarmigan*

Highly Commended

Margaret McCarthy (Ireland) *Among Starlings*

Derek Sellen (England) *A Dream of my Dead Grandmother
in the Modern Art Museum*

Other Shortlisted Poems

Ted O'Regan (Ireland) *How We Are*
Mary-Jane Holmes (England) *Disciplining the Modern Satyr*
Giles Constable (England) *Nothing To See*
Jim Crickard (Ireland) *Writing for the Ó Bhéal Open-Mic*
Ted O'Regan (Ireland) *Amber*
Tamara Miles (U.S.A.) *Reindeer Moss*
Kirsten Irving (England) *Every Sunday Ever*
Ted O'Regan (Ireland) *Centenary*
Tamara Miles (U.S.A) *My Mother's Birthplace*

Jill Munro
Overall Winner
glow wind word burn peripheral

Ptarmigan

His parents named him to reflect his rocky Highland birth,
inflicted schooldays full of silent 'P's and cries
of 'lousy grouse' from other boys, a painful need

to spell out his name at every turn until his words
became a stony croak, his weeping a burning cough.
As he grew, peripheral snowshoes formed around his feet,

his blood brewed with fighting, coursing hormones,
his head-comb swelled, upright with no need for gel -
he found a mate, sloughed off his dull buff childhood.

The pale glow of his name had almost hidden him
until, luminous in the soft white of winter's plumage,
just his black tail-feathers were rippled by the wind.

Margaret McCarthy
Highly Commended
sex exuberant tempo marmalade aurora

Among Starlings

Aurora tilts a bowl of ambrosia
Warm gold fills the morning sky
And there appears a murmuration
And exuberant celebration
As starlings fill the air

In a tempo of their own design
They become a beating heart
As they swirl and sweep
And somehow keep
Perfect and united time

Without meaning beyond beauty
They fly close as though conferring
Then separate and almost disappear
Each new formed shape is clear
Yet tantalising and transient

All belong; and age, sex or shape
Or any difference at all
Is absorbed and assimilated
Accepted and so negated.
They become pure energy

All who watch feel it happen
As under the marmalade sky
Without touch or speech
Beyond earthly reach
Souls commingle among starlings

Derek Sellen
Highly Commended
born wall teardrop wind transform

A Dream of my Dead Grandmother in the Modern Art Museum

Between the Cezannes and the Braques, I lost her.
Somewhere she is straying – her pre-Raphaelite eyes
look at urinals, Popes, splatters, drips, drops,
stone spirals, woven twigs, slashed canvases,
nudes running, leaping, squatting, cramped, splayed,
soiled sheets, new-borns in nooses, shit in a can,
halved carcasses...

I want to rush in and protect her from shock
but the ever-vigilant attendants tell me:
'*all things are equal to the dead*' and '*art will transform her.*'
They show me on a screen her tiny greyscale figure
crossing a threshold into *Hyperrealism and Beyond*.
People around me whisper artists' names,
amplified in the marble halls to an onward-rushing wind.

Has she seen Hans Bellmer's *Dismembered Doll* yet?
Banksy's *Queen Victoria in Dominatrix Gear*?
Installation with Disembowelled Piano? It's all so far
from *King Cophetua and the Beggar Maid*.

Obedient

to gallery regulations, I catch up with her among
the Ron Muecks, standing on a plinth that's been provided.
A plaque is on the wall:

Mid-Twentieth Century Woman with Bag.

A static teardrop bubbles in her eye. I am not allowed to touch.

Ted O'Regan

Shortlisted

glow word wind burn peripheral

How we are

They are everywhere, the garages; two-storied, stone-fronted, a discreet distance from the house; stuffed with stuff; bigger than nineteen-seventies family homes; larger than the cottages that sheltered our forebears from bitter wind and rain. Today we build bigger, better garages than homes to house the homeless. It's how we are. They are everywhere, collectors, selling lines or flowers or lolly pops, just outside shops or churches at week-ends. With burning zeal some jiggle boxes, buckets, seek support; it's always a good cause. It's how we are.

Our rulers long farmed out essential care and service in this state; the church ran with that ball, controlled the game. Between them they made Ireland what it is, devalued words like mercy, hope and trust but always worshipped money, markets, 'the few bob'. This lets us glow with pride, we're doing well! Our ships save migrants, hand them into others' care, move on. It's how we are. Our people die on streets, in tents. Their passing passes, skates our screens, becomes peripheral once more. It's how we are in this unhappy land with fig-leaf skirts of charity.

Mary-Jane Holmes

Shortlisted

witch amethyst door dose nose

Disciplining the Modern Satyr

Ignore the fawning, the castanets,
the way he calls you *little witch*
and lifts your skirts with the tip
of his nose. Grab it, take the head
of a live trout, put it in his mouth,
let him breathe the air engendered
there or take a shrew mouse,
make a holocaust of it, serve it up
as a curative dose. Don't let him
talk you out of it, don't confuse
the soft suede of his chest
with the sound of jenny-wrens
making nests. Do what your mothers
did, your grandmothers - take him
to a tanner's yard, hold him over
the pit while the hides are turning,
tie an amethyst around his neck
to steal the gleam from his eyes.
If all else fails, lock the doors,
make sure he swallows the key.

Giles Constable
Shortlisted
echo grey debris blind season

Nothing to See

The city is accustomed now to a poker face sky,
neutral with recent uncertainties. The river,
still about it, remembers the ice which restrained
even its most turbulent reaches and levelled astonishing
space for festivity, for galloping under central arches,
displacing wherries to roost at water's edge.

A time this when the air was tangible with snow
and the season flourished its hand. A man,
illuminated by stout, might strike out for home,
a customary stagger from the ale house.
Next morning a gloved hand beckoned out the drift
to tell that streets might be reimagined at night.

Or to bed with shoes lined up, with a list made,
to wake to fog, distillate of brown and grey,
which could permeate plans, instil doubt. Set out blind,
the crossroads become a place of looming and suddenness.
A peeler cheery, raised his lantern but a horse reared,
tram crashed by and the children coughed beyond sight.

Now we contain the metropolis in a box.
We sway together on trains, heads down,
frothed by coffee, knowing everything.
Leaf mulch stoppers the drains.
Autumn has no idea where to turn,
accumulating its debris, workmanlike.

Giles Constable

Shortlisted

echo grey debris blind season

Each Monday an exact echo of the last
but then today, not. We emerged from cars,
from offices, tunnels, the millions of places
where we condition the air. We stood in
ragged assemblies, talked to strangers,
pointed up together as trees began
to toss their manes and the day changed utterly.

We gazed, swept the whole circumference,
as if chariots might ride the horizon,
as if the mothership, continents-long,
would make descent; explain next steps.
We stood, almost holding hands, wondering out loud,
echo of those who read eclipses, feared the migration of birds,
awaited summary events.

Soon screens lit up, the usual contagion. It turns out
there is nothing to see. Nothing in a red sun,
the wounded eye it cast over the gloaming afternoon;
nothing in sand and smoke mustering miles high,
refracting light into this smeared pale blood;
nothing in this gorgeous, overarching injury.

Jim Crickard

Shortlisted

jingle estatic smoke camp regret

Writing for the Ó Bhéal Open-Mic

O mythologized Monday nights
you are the main reason I write.
To hold the helm of the Open-Mic
with words that smoke and spark.
I want to set the HayLoft on fire
then put it out with poet-tears.
And when all of the smoke clears
They will clap so hard that
floor boards will crack in ecstatic applause.
Drink glasses will jingle to the table-edges
and fall and smash into quartz.
The Long Valley will bar me.
I will take my leave, majestically,
and black stains from the flames
will forever speak my name.

Before hitting the peaks of my ego trip
I will need to find something to write.
I could try to write like Sylvia Plath.
I will sit at the typewriter and bleed.
As I write by exhuming, ruminating,
I worry that I will cross the fine line between poetry and diary.
I see myself standing at the mic setting my childhood loose on the room and it's
knocking over pints.
Poets sighing and rolling their eyes
trying to dry their notebooks.
I'd be a swamp of regret stood at the mic, wanting to die.

Jim Crickard

Shortlisted

jingle estatic smoke camp regret

I could try to be the technical kind,
who write villanelles and sonnets.
Stick rigidly to form and rhythm
and talk about nature and use words like "hemlock" and "begot".
Sail them away in a John Keats dream.
But I know that this just isn't me.
Before long the poets would notice
one "begotten" word misused.
And I'd be nude at the open mic
using a thesaurus to cover myself.

You know what?
I'll just stick to what I know:
writing really camp poems.
After all, it's called Ó Bhéal not Ó Do Thóin.

Ted O'Regan

Shortlisted

frame hungry chorus remember daylight

Amber

I fell into a cold-frame, once. While
father yarned with Jerh, the convent
gardener, lifting onions, I walked out along
those slender, wooden ribs between the
panes that cracked under my weight;
I sank beneath the rhubarb leaves, heard
shards of snapping glass. My shouts brought
rescue, relocation to the kitchen, TCP for cuts
and hot, strong tea with scalding, AGA scones
to salve my wounded pride. I scoffed, with
butter-oozing lips, cocooned within this chorus
of concern as nuns fussed round the hungry child.
Some sixty years have passed. That convent
is mothballed. Cloches and cold-frames are
seldom seen. My choristers have gone to
graves or small, domestic billets. Dutch rhubarb
sells in shops. Our onions come from Spain.
Spurious scones are everywhere. But I remember
oceans of daylight that flooded in across my childhood
sands to gild my playing days in amber.

Tamara Miles
Shortlisted
pitch fuss ginger succumb idea

Reindeer Moss

(recalling Robert Frost, who said fire or ice would do...)

Cladonia rangiferina: Reindeer moss,
a lichen, food for heavy Arctic animals
who fuss beneath snow to find it.

Pastoral, multiple-branched, it feathers
low across a landscape, determined, gray-green
or off-white, both fungus and alga,

a symbiotic pairing, and does not succumb
to biting cold.

In warmer climates, when fire creeps in,
it is fed and gingered by the moss it lays claim to
until flames leap and spread.

To the Russian reindeer
herder, its antler-like appearance means food
is near, and with it, sustenance.

In Yamal, when an ice crust prevents reindeer
from getting to the moss, their carcasses lie
far and wide on the tundra as witnesses to its significance.

The reindeer fall from hunger,
go to sleep, and lie vulnerable to predators.

Tamara Miles

Shortlisted

pitch fuss ginger succumb idea

Rootless, then -- perhaps four inches high,
an organism that can live on dew determines
the life force of the mighty.

A natural idea in politics:

Those above should tremble, lest the ice
between us make them weak, their legs
buckle, and at last collapse ---

and if fire touches us, we will bear it on our backs
until it is pitched to every corner of this landscape,

and every mouth becomes a flamethrower.

Kirsten Irving

Shortlisted

alone whisk invent relative luck

Every Sunday Ever

As luck would have it
I was on fire when He called, having
tried to make a candle using very nice oils
and my shirt-tail as a wick. (And no,
I was not wearing it when I tried this.
That was after.) I was alone, and you know
what I'm like when I'm alone. I like to
make things new, invent. Do you remember
the brace of moths I snipped and shaped
from my master will? That sort of thing.
I did not want to think about death that day,
and what is the most undearthly thing?
"Insects that eat your clothes"
is correct! Now my relatives
will hiss and whistle and have to guess
who gets my riches. All, that is,
except Him. As my shoulder sizzled
I left him my whisk
(the good one, the silicone). Left it
clearly, black across one wing.

Ted O'Regan

Shortlisted

waste fizzle moon umbrella pain

Centenary

Eyes level with the table-top, I watched
father mending nuns' umbrellas, great, black,
spike-winged creatures swirling as he snipped
the florist's wire that bound back broken ribs.
He hated waste. Enjoyed the triumph of repair.
Came of age in our fledgling state and watched
the 'spoils' go to the well-connected. Felt
unfairness keenly, saw it play out in his life, some
lives around him drift away on the 'boat' to Britain.
A hundred years of sun and rain, of moon-lit,
ink-black nights have come and gone since he
was born to live his short life, in much pain, to
fizzle out and cough it all away. Today's elite is
still 'connected', insulated. Work has changed
but willing pairs of hands, like his, are squeezed
by 'zero hours' and rising rents. Trolley queues
are part of what we are; some parents have to
fight for respite care. Blackguard banks are
rampant, unrepentant. Human life is on the
scales. Ideals a decoration. 'Ireland boys hurray!'
It's gone astray.

Tamara Miles

Shortlisted

wind transform born teardrop wall

My Mother's Birthplace

I walked around the town
to go back in time.

My mother was born here,
a low wall edges the path.

It took her a long time to answer --
the sweetness of her voice,
teardrop.

This is an untold story --
she beckoned for me to follow.

We came around a bend in the road,
there wasn't another house in sight.

I swear to you on my mother's grave,
a blanket of fog fell over the mountains,
she angled the lamp towards her face --

my ancestors came from Cork,

they came in close succession,
a trickle of visitors,

ancestral spirits,
transformed --

Tamara Miles

Shortlisted

wind transform born teardrop wall

great-great grandmother,
great-great grandfather,
our Celtic cousins.

She flew down the road --
her hair was flying in the wind,

they embraced,
inexpressible joy.

Biographies of Shortlisted Poets

Jill Munro

Jill Munro's first collection *Man from La Paz* was published in 2015 by Green Bottle Press. She won the Fair Acre Press Pamphlet Competition with *The Quilted Multiverse* (2016), has been short-listed for the Bridport Prize and long-listed three times for the National Poetry Competition. Jill has been awarded a Hawthorden Fellowship for 2018. She lives in East Sussex.

Margaret Mc Carthy

Margaret Mc Carthy grew up in Dublin. She has taught mainly business subjects in a secondary school in Dublin for over 28 years. Reading and writing have been hobbies for many years. In 2006, her book *The Cat Did Not Know* was published by Veritas. An unexpected achievement that is still one of her proudest. Writing for her is a delight, a challenge, perplexing and rewarding.

Derek Sellen

Derek Sellen, from Canterbury UK, has written poetry on a wide range of topics from Spanish painters to Chinese street vendors. The poem in this Five Words anthology is based on an actual dream that he had. His poetry has been recognised in many competitions, including Poets Meet Politics, previous Ó Bhéal Five Words Competitions, Poetry Pulse and Poetry on the Lake. He is publishing a collection *The Other Guernica* during 2018 with Cultured Llama Press and some of his work can be seen online at: www.poetrykit.org/CITN/citn164.htm

Biographies of Shortlisted Poets

Ted O'Regan

Ted O'Regan was born and grew up in Rosscarbery, west Cork. He lives with his artist wife, Teresa in the hill country west of Cork Harbour. He has written, acted in and directed plays, produced pieces for radio and began writing poetry and memoir when he retired from teaching.

Mary-Jane Holmes

Mary-Jane Holmes is the winner of the 2017 Bridport Poetry Prize, the Martin Starkie Poetry Prize (2017), the Bedford International Poetry Prize (2016) and the Dromineer Fiction Prize (2014). Her work has been published in such places as *Myslexia*, *The Journal of Compressed Creative Arts*, *Prole*, *The Tishman Review*, *The Lonely Crowd*, *The Incubator* and *The Best Small Fictions 2016* anthology.

Her collection, *Heliotrope with Matches and Magnifying Glass*, will be published in March 2018 by Glasgow-based Pindrop Press. Mary-Jane is chief editor of Fish Publishing and editorial consultant at *The Well Review*, a poetry journal based in Cork, and director of the Casa Ana, Creative Writing Programme, Spain.

Giles Constable

Giles Constable is a doctor working in London who is passionate about the NHS. He started writing poems a couple of years ago and continues to practice. It has been a wonderful distraction from the rigours of work.

Biographies of Shortlisted Poets

Jim Crickard

Jim Crickard is a poet from Kerry living in Cork. Educated in UCC and UCD. He writes poems with playful introspective narratives and, at times, writes confessional poetry. A regular attendee of Ó Bhéal, he was invited to read his work at the 2017 Ó Bhéal Winter Warmer festival. He was also invited to read at 'The Crossover' festival in March, 2018. His poem 'A Glance' is published in *Contemporary Poetry 2*, an Indian Publication by Dr. Pradeep Chawal. He's currently focused on producing new work and submitting to magazines.

Kirsten Irving

Kirsten Irving co-runs Sidekick Books with Jon Stone, and is the editor of more than ten themed anthologies. Her first pamphlet, *What To Do* was published by Happenstance, and her first collection, *Never Never Never Come Back*, has just been re-released in paperback by Salt Publishing. In 2017 she published *Love Carcass*, a journal of one woman's affair with a monster. Her poetry has been anthologised widely, translated into Russian and Spanish and thrown out of a helicopter. Read more about Kirsten at www.kirstenirving.com

Tamara Miles

Tamara Miles teaches College English and Humanities in South Carolina. Her poetry and other writings have appeared in a variety of publications including *Ó Bhéal*; *Feminine Collective*; *Fall Lines*; *The Blue Nib*; *Tishman Review*; *Obra*; *Apricity*; *Elm Leaves*; *Cenacle*; and *RiverSedge*. She hosts an audio literary journal/radio show at SpiritPlantsRadio.com - "Where the Most Light Falls" - and welcomes submissions.

Judges' Comments

Kathy D'Arcy

Ptarmigan (Jill Munro)

There are beautiful musical lines in this piece, which weaves an odd, enchanting myth around the bird. A really well-crafted, memorable little fable.

Among Starlings (Margaret McCarthy)

Powerfully empathetic, this poem uses unusual language to convey the sense of loss felt by the cows. The opening line in particular is arresting, as is the evocation of lowing.

A Dream of my Grandmother in the Modern Art Museum (Derek Sellen)

Very unusual piece, which weaves the surreal poignancy of loss through a vivid cascade of images in a highly original way. The use of the bewildering array of images, some grotesque, some classical, seems to work in a really affecting way to interrogate the fractured thought processes of grief.

How We Are (Ted O'Regan)

This is an important poem for these times. The long, musical lines of almost incantatory poetry force the reader to really see the injustices laid out in front of them.

Disciplining the Modern Satyr (Mary-Jane Holmes)

More modern mythmaking here: the tension between the dangerous, animal energy of the being in the poem and the dry, cynical, vicious voice of the speaker is eye-watering!

Nothing To See (Giles Constable)

This poem works as a kind of urban pastoral, filled with beautiful descriptive lines. The surprising collapse of catharsis at the end really enhances the effectiveness of this piece, for me.

Judges' Comments

Kathy D'Arcy

Writing for the Ó Bhéal Open-Mic (Jim Crickard)

Funny, vivid, outrageous lines that fall over each other with an organic, almost conversational rhythm and really investigate what the process of composition feels like.

Amber (Ted O'Regan)

This writer's lines are long and lavish and addictive; there's a feeling of listening to someone speaking out of a dream. Thoughts flow into each other and the reflective, almost unconscious tone draws the reader into that double-edged memory space too.

Reindeer Moss (Tamara Miles)

There's a really rewarding faithfulness to the image here, which is sustained throughout the poem. The moss and the cold creep slowly into our thoughts, and the final idea is so subtly presented that it, too, dawns gently as a minor god and the notion of 'old ways' as somehow a pagan act.

Every Sunday Ever (Kirsten Irving)

The juxtaposition of a kind of winged surreality and an almost tongue-in-cheek conversational tone really works here – a very surprising, refreshing, awakening poem.

Centenary (Ted O'Regan)

Another important poem which manages to hold that topical, political space within beautifully detailed, rhythmic, reflective lines. The writer brings the topic into a very personal space where it can really be engaged with.

My Mother's Birthplace (Tamara Miles)

Another piece where surreality mingles with memory and myth, enhancing the power of all three. The tight little stanzas fly at the reader in their turns, each looking at memory in a slightly different way and all building to the joyful ending.

Judges' Comments

Rab Urquhart

Ptarmigan (Jill Munro)

The poem weaves, both gently and robustly, the journey of adolescence through the form of this colour-changing bird.

Among Starlings (Margaret McCarthy)

Reading this poem I become Starling.

A Dream of my Grandmother in the Modern Art Museum (Derek Sellen)

This poem does what it says on the tin: It's an extremely well made tin.

How We Are (Ted O'Regan)

A finely crafted meditation on contemporary Ireland.

Disciplining the Modern Satyr (Mary-Jane Holmes)

Advice on empowering the feminine and of a rebalancing of the dynamics of intimacy.

Nothing To See (Giles Constable)

Seasons shift, time passes, change is constant, the biggest issues, the smallest details, hope.

Judges' Comments

Rab Urquhart

Writing for the Ó Bhéal Open-Mic (Jim Crickard)

A sweet romp of a poem and a very true to life description of Ó Bhéal's open mic.

Amber (Ted O'Regan)

A well set poem worthy of Thomas Hardy in his prime.

Reindeer Moss (Tamara Miles)

A powerful lesson on the dependency of the strong upon the weak.

Every Sunday Ever (Kirsten Irving)

A delightfully frivolous yet profound piece that flirts with, not with.

Centenary (Ted O'Regan)

An insightful commentary on the century as told through the persona of the man of many parts.

My Mother's Birthplace (Tamara Miles)

A timeless tale, an exploration and celebration of bloodline, place, and home-feeling.

Sketches by Margaret Creedon O'Shea



Sketches by Margaret Creedon O'Shea



Niamh Bagnell

Winner - 26th June 2017

body ship planet palm avalanche

Untitled

The reader of palms was overly calm
as he sold me a planet of riches
he spoke of the lambs and how serious qualms
could be fed to a pallet of witches

So I stepped on the ship & intended to slip
to the east when the avalanche landed
But my body was tipped, on the side of my lip
& the feast was like nothing intended

like a terrible something was bended
& into the mist ever ended

the palm reader, I promptly unfriended

Ali Bracken
Winner - 11th September 2017
fume kiwi leg burger defenestrate

Determiner

No.

Just because I'm a kiwi
 doesn't mean I'm edible,
 brown, and hairy.

I'm not a burger from McDonalds
I'm not a chicken
 leg made from the fumes of broken
 hearted hens.

I will defenestrate you
 I mean it.

And no I'm not from the land down under,
 I despise that band,
 I hate that song,
And I hate Australia.

Ali Bracken

9th October 2018

benevolence outrageous fire tackle dawn

What Occurs Between Night and Day

The night-time
tackled the dawn.

Languid,
Unheard

The fire of the sun
cut a riven in the
sky that gave the
appearance of a silver
trident handle dividing
the sky and the ocean.

I want to hold it.
Hold it between both
my hands, remove it
from the sky and
use it to destroy
the night.

It is outrageous how
often the rage of the
night comes out in us.

The day,
Oh benevolence,
Oh morning.

Oh sweet sweet day.

Ali Bracken

Winner - 23rd October 2017

teach trouble graduate albatross endless

Pink Pedagogue

If you pedagogue me
I'll pedagogue you
Pedagogy of the oppressed.

Nothing is endless except
the idea of infinity.

Overhead the albatross
moves motionless across the sky.

Oh
Look
Pink Floyd.
I'm learning I'm learning
Teach me teach me
Trouble me trouble me.

I've learned more
from Pink Floyd
than I have from my undergraduate.
I am under a graduate
am I the undergraduate?

Oh
Look
Pink Floyd.
Echoes

Ali Bracken

Winner - 23rd October 2017

teach trouble graduate albatross endless

Overhead the albatross
swims motionless across the sky.

I am you and
what I see is me.
It's called Meddle
isn't it?
It was the third
album,
no the fourth.

Don't meddle with me
Don't trouble me
Don't trouble with me.

Pink Floyd or The Beatles?
Pink Floyd, definitely Pink Floyd.

What does it mean again?

If you pedagogue me
I'll pedagogue you.

Alexis Campbell-Bannerman
17th April 2017
straw glaze bottle hydrangea intimate

Untitled

The hydrangea was the last straw,
It was where our relationship bottlenecked...
My eyes glazed over,
When my intimate friend,
Urinated on my flowerbed.

Margaret Creedon O'Shea

Winner - 3rd July 2017

retrograde practice chieftain chicken ethnic

Retro O'Grady

Retro O'Grady they called him then
maintained his hoary ethnic identity
practised reels daily on his clapped up mandolin
fancied himself the chieftain of Harlem
always operated his 60's sound system modem
"They're no match for me," he'd say
"Those chicken tribesmen with their foreign notions
no Paso Doble could hold sway
to my stack of barley .."

There in his garret, on his beanbag
complete in retro-chic
plastic chairs – orange, cubist
Retracted pupils from last night's Coors light
or was it the cocktail he'd copied from
that James Bond film again
Practised retropulsion
-- his back shoe shuffle
Retroversion – always kept one eye behind him

Until one day, in the need of a gee up for propulsion
he was projected on
and now found himself ahead of time -
way too fast to win the fleadh ceol of Harlem
Retro O'Grady left behind his windshield wipers clapping time
with Booby mcgee - way behind on the winning stakes records
and now he's selling vinyl

Margaret Creedon O'Shea
Winner - 24th July 2017
lunar dance crowbar twin lotion

Gobby Twinkles

A lotion was essential to gain the bit of leverage,
To crowbar that silver slipper
onto her Crub of a foot.
You see –
She was Irrepressible,
determined to dance,
Regardless of her lack of grace,
her total lack of kinaesthetic sense.
For tonight Gobnait was
Diana, Lunar Goddess.
She ruled the waves
and her magnetic charm
would win her twin objectives
- SHE would BE the Macra Queen.
And
- She would take home her prize, Rogha na mBan
Thadelo O'Breen.
Her cleavage, heaved with the thought
of more roadside frontage.
But he had his eye on other things.
He clocked her with a side step towards that Nuncie wan,
and in one cute move, outdid her plan.
But she was irrepressible,
and, like the Neap Tide, this Hunter Goddess,
she will come again.

Margaret Creedon O'Shea

Winner - 5th March 2018

fingerprint legal euphoria specimen thereabouts

Reprint

Línte i mo lámha
Mar an aimsir atá caite
Is mise ag péinteáil
In éalú na n-ealaíon
My fingerprints are growing back
Retracing tracks to me.
Identikit. A legal me to fit.
DNA rethread. Get your Body Repairs for Free.
I touchscreen now. You light up
Euphoric, uncoded ... unlocked.
Brail the specimen. It friction burns.
Skin - Release your tired knots.
Thereabouts. True self revealed
like a GANSTA fingers the one who grassed.
I press it in the colour dye.
Fingerprint new futures from the past
in Isobars, Thermographics.
Cold front to cold face - in Bold Font.
Liquid lava life lines.
Body Dermographics.
Fingerprints are growing back
from seared, scorched Pain.
In Gucci 60's swirling lines.
I swear I don't know myself again.
Línte i mo lámha ag sineadh mar thonnta
a thagann chun bheith ina chiorcal laistigh orm.

Jim Crickard

Winner - 9th October 2017

benevolence outrageous fire tackle dawn

Spiritual Sights

I swallowed that hot coal,
felt that fiery anger scalding my throat
And rolled around all night till dawn
Like a madman talking to myself

What she said was bloody outrageous
Like she was Saint Benevolence
just back from Calcutta
with a whole lot of wisdom.

You say I'm not to trust my mind,
shall I just rely on your direct line to God
coming to you in whispers and signs
holding up Jesus on the phone
I think he'll pass you to his manager
AKA DAD AKA GOD

I don't get told how to live by anyone
I'll tackle you, even if you act like a nun.

Jim Crickard

Winner - 6th November 2017

tarantella signal tributary olive compass

Untitled

Our relationship is a river breaking off
into winding tributaries called moments,
that no annoying canal boats tour.
They are ours, they are pure.

Remember when you said you love tarantella
and I was like I'm arachnophobic
and your confused eyes scanned me
and you told me I'm such a philistine.

This relationship has spread veins
over my world and you're everywhere now.
Winding around the bank for instance,
where we laughed harder than newlyweds on their honeymoon.

I've been sailing around lost
in our olive green tributaries
with a compass trying to signal
my way to the truth:
could we be more than friends?

Jim Crickard

Winner - 27th November 2017

horrific fear batter insomnia cathedral

Jesus was a holy show last night

I was out last night with Jesus,
he was breakdancing on the River Lee.

I think he'll have the fear today.

He was over doing miracles:

Lennoxes is over-flowing with battered fish and loaves, they had to close,
and college road is stained red with a river of wine.

I will deny it for him, though, three times before the cock crows.

We all get carried away sometimes.

Light is emanating from the Bel Friary.

God is home in the cathedral and it is 4am.

He must be making tea because his
insomnia is going nowhere tonight

Like a horrific friend that won't leave.

He will spend the night cringing into his cup of tea.

Jim Crickard

Winner - 19th February 2018

nihilism asleep continental pretentious disguise

Sartre's Day Out

As the waiter took Sartre's order
he paused, nauseous with choice,
anguish of croissant or continental?
He slumped into the chair and
lost his appetite.
All morning snacking too much on nihilism, that black squid spaghetti.

Amused by the courtesy acted out
by the waiter he asked:
"What role, what pretentious disguise are you taking.
Are you a person with a name?
Existence precedes essence.
Oh, and I'll have a coffee."

After lunch Sartre went for a spot
of shopping and guffawed at
the million nail varnish colors
people polish their claws with.
He asked the clerk if she was asleep, whether it was all a dream.
And she said "Excuse me Sartre,
I see you worrying about everything being empty and meaningless.
Did it ever occur to you that everything is empty and meaningless?"
Sartre was stunned and outshined
and felt obliged to buy vermilion varnish.
Perhaps he can paint his nails
and wander around contemplating
with a hint of colour.

Megan Cronin

21st August 2017

rose eclipse saxophone corrosive loud

A Rose Eclipse

Every rose has its thorn,
he whispers.
and he wished he had known that sooner.
Before every ounce of hope he had, had turned to dust.
Before everything he once knew,
became everything he must learn to forget,
before every touch to his skin became corrosive.
Her voice invaded his mind.
Her words became louder and louder.
He tried to drown her
out with the melodic saxophone of his mind.
But, nothing.
Mind over matter,
he said.
Mind over matter.
It doesn't matter,
he said.
It does not matter, but it mattered.
It was heart over everything else.
And his was broke, gone dark.
A total eclipse of his heart.

Megan Cronin

28th August 2017

choke kleptocrat obsessed foundation abdicate

The Emerald Thief

“They are forced to abdicate”

He screams from the streets

Obsessed with the freedom of his country

The whole thirty-two county wide definition to be exact.

He’s choking with pride

As the kleptocrats are praised

For stealing back what is rightfully theirs

Laying firm foundations for the future of his emerald nation.

11th September 2017

fume kiwi leg burger defenestrate

Cee-air-a Lee

Her name was Kiwi.

Not because she was small and hairy.

Or green.

But because no one could pronounce her name and it sounded like Kiwi

And it worked.

And she was fuming.

An anger was boiling.

This night had been dooming.

Looming for a while now.

He hadn’t a leg to stand on,

He’d wasted his nine lives.

And in an act of pure defiance,

An assassination by defenestration had occurred.

He was out of her life.

This act had left her with a hunger,

So she left and went for a burger.

Megan Cronin

22nd September 2017

culture lipstick brexit mayo ecclesiastical

Ireland's Culture

This culture was once built upon ecclesiastical constructions
Years passed and it was challenged by a number of obstructions.
Eye-liner and lipstick helped our culture grow
While always telling Britain to go the hell home.
Britain took the warning and headed homestead
But they turned into Brexit and left Europe instead.
Irish culture is fantastic
Always so enthusiastic.
No matter who wins or loses
We always support our own
Mc Gregor versus Mayweather
Dublin versus Mayo

23rd October 2017

teach trouble endless graduate albatross

The Escaped Graduate

The graduate has escaped
SOUND THE ALARMS.
They are free
Of the albatross of institutionalised education.
SOUND THE ALARMS
Not because we want them back
But because they have been unleashed on the world
And there will be trouble
And endless attempts to make it.
But don't worry about what the world may do to them,
Because they too, can teach the world a lesson or two.

Dave Ford

Winner - 10th July 2017

coprolite kangaroo frustrate discombobulate copulate

Untitled

Close inspection of the coprolite,
by electron microscope, late at night.
Gives rise to introspection
on one's career selection.
Sorting through the fossil poo,
whether mammoth, bee, or kangaroo.
Is bound to frustrate, or even discombobulate,
the late-night scientist.
Best go home and copulate.

Bernadette Gallagher

Winner - 19th June 2017

freudian counter unforgiven heat bell

Winthrop Street

A slip, a Freudian slip
as I stumbled down the road
towards my younger self,
mistakes unforgiven, not
forgotten.

I rang the bell but
I wasn't home, shut
in, shut out, I
walked on to a
warmer day, heat
of June at a counter
not counting, sipping
a cold tonic, window
open to Cork's night airs.

Bernadette Gallagher

26th June 2017

body ship planet palm avalanche

Escape

The words came like an avalanche
pulling the ship down
into the deep dark world
another planet, bodies
fallen from boats cracked
at the seam.

Palms outstretched cold,
stiff, no handshake
fingers pointed
accusingly.

29th January 2018

repeal infatuation corrosive marble ectoplasm

Momentary

I met him last night
in the darkness
the ectoplasm dribbled
oozing whiteness over
his form, a marbling
almost corrosive
effect.

I was still infatuated.
If only I could
repeal his death.

Nuka Gbafah

Winner - 26th February 2018

octopus doughnut bleach abscond certain

Untitled

Those days were epic; that is for certain!

When in adventure we would abscond from home and reason,

Playing away till dizzy on those scorching afternoons,

Minds baked from the tropical heat,

Our better judgement bleached by the fiery sun.

Then like deer, we would make a beeline for the refreshing streams of cool waters

We never stayed away from the deep end;

We had the audacity of sharks,

And the dexterity of octopuses.

Yet somehow, we always got away with it

I remember they said we had heads like doughnuts;

Full on the outside; empty on the inside!

Abigail Grace

Winner - 29th January 2018

repeal infatuation corrosive marble ectoplasm

Baby You Must be Confused.

I don't think I quite understand

Your infatuation with what goes on between my thighs.

Smooth like marble?

Yes they are.

Delicate and silky?

Why yes, they are.

But watch my tongue turn

Razored, ragged, raised, and corrosive

When you begin to talk about what I should and shouldn't do,

And who I should and shouldn't do.

Baby! What I would do to a body like yours, you say,

But baby do you know what a fist like mine,

Could do to a mouth like yours?

Baby do you know that though a body like mine,

Can in fact bear a baby,

Baby,

Every step that I take,

Every bed that I break,

Each and every curl of my hair!

Down to the very ectoplasm

That makes my uterus divine;

Mine.

Repeal.

Kevin Griffin

5th March 2018

specimen legal fingerprint euphoria thereabouts

Untitled

After that first encounter, that early euphoria, or thereabouts, she kept thinking specimen. She always held that euphoria was a moveable feast, or rather a recurring banquet, best in small doses, and so, an ongoing fountain of sensation, sensation, she thought, a word with passive and active implications.

She could still feel his hands on her arms and wondered if he left fingerprints, love prints, she kept thinking, no not thinking, sensating. Once, when looking up a word she saw the word dactylogram, which, she now recalled, means fingerprint.

Why was she worried, all was legal, or thereabouts and specimen, now intrinsically linked with euphoria, was on the move again. She loved such phrases as thereabouts, little fences she called them. She thought they slowed life. But now, what the hell, Specimen and euphoria were on the scene again and everything was, if not moral, at least, legal, or thereabouts.

Ray Hanrahan

Winner - 5th February 2018

messing cattle scintillating limit crooked

Untitled

"Ah I was only messing!" said the Guard,
"Your cattle are all OK, just
The muck of the field on 'em,
Makes 'em look a little crooked in the viewing."
I was relieved. I was tasked with
Selling them in the market that day,
Using my scintillating sales patter
To get more than a bag of beans
For my horned and polled assets.
At the end of the day, with
All my bastes sold,
I drink a health with the buyers,
Three pints are the limit
for I have to cycle home this night.

Ray Hanrahan

Winner - 2nd April 2018

pendulum flake bucéid/bucket body-stocking dense

Untitled

Like Foucault's pendulum
I swing in a different direction
With the time of day.

In the morning I'm besuited
Wearing a bowler hat and
Carrying an umbrella.

By lunchtime I'm astronomically dense
Mount Everest in a teaspoon
Like a superhero in a body-stocking.

Come evening-time, I'm disguised
As a tree, holding a bucket
On one of my outstretched branches.

As night falls I'm draped in a toga,
A senator of a nonsensical republic.
If all of this makes a flake of sense to you,
You're a smarter man than I am!

Niall Herriot

Winner - 21st August 2017

rose eclipse saxophone corrosive loud

New Heritage

Jazz rose from the street
loud and proud
to accompany the poetry
in the Hayloft

That saxophone
rather than corrosively eclipsing
the spoken word
encouraged image-making

Niall Herriot

22nd September 2017

culture lipstick ecclesiastical brexit mayo

It's All up in the Air

Whoever *brexit* has to fixit ...right?
Oh yeah but David and Nigel have ducked out
and Boris is playing the Trump-like clown
on the populist loony-right fringe.
Maggie May seems to look dazed these days
and was heard singing '*lipstick on your collar,*
told a tale on you' and nobody knows why.
As for over here, the man from *Mayo* is gone too,
not that he would have a clue what to do
and Leo and Simon seem somewhat naive
about all the Machiavellian scams and schemes.
Our *ecclesiastical* nightmare is over (thank God!)
Our *culture*, in a broad sense, is changing fast,
so where to from here?....
new cosmopolitan and a splash of hipster
plus a dose of Country and Western,
also big farms, big pharma, vultures, techbots,
perhaps a helping of 'Deutschland uber alles'
(see Greece), not Panzer and jackboot now
but self-interested sanctimonious big finance?
But, to be positive, maybe brexit will exit.

James Francis Kelly

Winner - 17th July 2017

perambulate peculiar chart desire more

Laboratory Report

Let me have a look at that chart

It is a data analyst's work of art

But what is most peculiar

is this outlier in particular

It can only be there from fickle desire

For it does not follow a trend

but perambulates to an unknown end

And what is more

Rather than be a bore

When it comes to your line of best fit

It would be a rather inexplicable place to sit.

Jamie Lawton
5th February 2018

messing cattle scintillating limit crooked

Untitled

Scintillating conversation
sounding like prattle,
Messing with the status quo
is not the place of cattle.
Doing battle with an ocean,
a less crooked notion.
Drink a toast to the host
and put no limit on the potion.

Winner - 19th March 2018

congratulations cancellation constellation frost solitude

Untitled

Congratulations are in order,
Cancellation due to frost.
Another day upon the border,
finding self and being lost.
Solitude's a gift at first,
a constellation shining bright.
Soon I see it is a curse for
stars are only seen at night.

Ciarán MacArtain

14th August 2017

decelerate festival cot golden venomous

Untitled

I used to be a baby
But never ain't got caught in the cot
Crawlin' 'round carpets
And schemin' secret plots
Like pulling on the ears of my Mother
And crying on a cue
Decelerating my crawl
To lie on top of you
A festival in the sitting room,
Circus in the kitchen
Sometimes coughs I be sneezin'
Sometimes rashes itchin'
Sometimes venomous bee stings
While sitting in the garden
Sometimes strange aromas
After I've been ...
Give golden beginnings
Be forever pardoned.

Ciarán MacArtain

8th January 2018

first contract stigma random scrupulous

Untitled

The first time it happened
‘Twas like an outpost from heaven
Had taken up space in my chest.
I breathed through it.
Warm and full

Next time I was a tad
More scrupulous
And a little bit bent
With fear.

It arrived at random
Lithe and alive,
Beaming from ear to ear

Its bearer was honest,
Innocent and constant
And waiting only to hear

That I was solid, stable and perfectly able
To keep our communication clear

But I muddled out wavelength,
Corrupted our contract,
With a worsening panic
And so our brains interact
Like orbiting planets
Ear chambers ache with static
Channelling personal fears

A stigma I baked like a cake.

Ciarán MacArtain
Winner - 12th February 2018
holler grotesque snake gently India

Untitled

I wouldn't be one for paradoxes now
But is it possible to gently holler?
"Oi!"
"Here, Michela!"

So if I was drinking
An Irish India Pale Ale
Does that mean it was
Partly made in India
Partly made in Ireland
Or one of those quirky
Bar quips that you'd
Have to know to know.

Load of people saying
This is grotesque
And that is grotesque
Who the fuck was "Grot"?

Words are hard bai
And poets are shnakes!

Ciarán MacArtain

26th March 2018

scumbag osmosis equity democracy slander

Untitled

Not enough people calling each other out these days
What ever happened to getting straight to the crux of it?
Now it's all meander,
Flirt around the issue
In the name of parity
A propped up equity campaign
Endgame democracy
We'll all have an equal bite
Of the poisoned apple
Thrust before you by a silent order of scumbags,
Infecting by osmosis.

When characterising someone as a bag
Is taken as slander
How does one even begin to challenge
The scum within it.

Matthew Moynihan

Winner - 12th June 2017

serendipity salacious razor swoon left

See You Next Tuesday / From One C*ntservative To Another

Dear Arlene,

I am writing you today
in razored symbiotic serendipity
requesting you swoon against
the salacious left
and join me for a meal

of snakes

at number ten.

Dress code is Thatcher.
Cover every orifice of
your skin to scrape your
sub-humanity into the spotlight.

I look forward to
working with you

to blame our societal
scars on those who are not
working.

We are – as you know
as shrewd in leadership
as we are shrewed in
aesthetic.

Matthew Moynihan

Winner - 12th June 2017

serendipity salacious razor swoon left

By Good Friday 2018
let us have destroyed
our piece of peace.

We need your loyalty,
which of course your
battered bunch knows
all about.

See you next Tuesday.

From one c*ntservative to another,

Theresa May MP.

Matthew Moynihan

Winner - 4th September 2017

metrics spiral indignant cane sisyphian

Bless Me Poets For I Have Sinned...

Bless me poets for I have sinned.

It has been four weeks since my last confession.

Despite the poets' work
being a Sisyphean endeavour,
it pains me indignantly to tell you,

to let you inspect the darkness
in my spiralling bones.

Here are my sins.

One. The concept of measuring
metrics chills my soul.

Two. I don't know how to write
a Shakespearean sonnet.

Three. It pains me to read
Keats' poetry, he will never
'be my priest', whether or not
he 'feigns' a cane.

Four. The only form of form
my retinas can withstand
is my own, and even this
I find challenging.

Matthew Moynihan

Winner - 4th September 2017

metrics spiral indignant cane sisyphian

Five. I rarely use ink and pen,
unless anger pulses in my veins.

Six. Netflix is more pleasurable
to me than reading, unless it is
Plath's bell jar.

Yet here I am, and I lament
in your poetic grace.

I know what I must do
for you, your grace.

Ten short sonnets,
and a glory be...

to the poets.

Phil Nannery

Winner - 10th April 2017

map redundant accident anchor required

Aeon

By no accident, but instead
By noble three faced guile
The Japanese woman, Onna Nihon-jin
Expertly hands off the tray
To anchor tattooed absolution of sin,
Brown bubbling broth, with egg
And noodles, designed to flawlessly
Exorcise hangovers in Aeon Mall,
Higashi-Okazaki.

Brendan Behan once said,
That English men exploring the unknown
On maps with rifles in hands,
Got excitement, because they were
The types o'fellas who'd'a sold you
A Hoover in British suburbs.

Japan was never colonized,
And they see things through slightly different eyes
Than the Chinese whose grandparents fled Nanking.
I had a girlfriend I used to make sing,
In lonely karaoke booths,
No skill required,
And they threw paltry pittances at me, to entertain rich kids.
It's why I was hired,
And I'd tell her my people were
The same as hers, who were forced

Phil Nannery

Winner - 10th April 2017

map redundant accident anchor required

To buy British opium, but it was to
No avail, our ethnicities rendered redundant,
Just as she was Japanese when she went back to Beijing,
And me, American, and not Irish, in Ballaghadreen.

A small baby, with balled up fists,
Who doesn't know what his tribe is yet,
Gets rocked back and forth
By a mother making Japanese tsk-tsk-tsking
And his older sister, maybe six, but no more,
Watches me sloppily slurp soba noodles
Through my red beard, and I smile, and wink.

Phil Nannery

11th September 2017

fume kiwi leg burger defenestrate

A Live Fish, Dug up From a Field

I think I'm in love with Mel Gibson
For the same reason I'm in love with Kerouac.
Fume-fueled alcoholic Catholics,
Defenestrating critics with anti-Semitic tinged evisceration,
Frightening the hoyty-toyty white Protestants across the American nation,
A meat-grinder of artistic, guilt-riddled rage,
Like Aussies and Kiwis being made
Into hamburger-meat on ANZAC beaches of Gallipoli.

Oh why, Saint Mel, won't you answer me?
My drunken, ranting emails at 3 am,
Or postcards posted to *ti Jean*, Jacques Kerouac,
Hungover, lighting candles and saying Novenas
In front of blue-tile mosaic ikons of the Virgin Mary
And praying my lower left leg doesn't have gout
On a Wednesday morning.
I've sung this song before, and it is quite boring.

Stanley Notte

Winner - 28th August 2017

choke kleptocrat obsessed foundation abdicate

Yet Another Rant

Have you ever asked a kleptocrat to abdicate his power?

If you haven't you should.

Because the results are incredible to behold.

Legend has it Charlie Haughey almost choked on his caviar when the question was put to him on Inishvickillane island.

And Bertie Ahern was so shocked by a reporter's audacity that his memory utterly failed.

Oh we all know that tale, don't we. 8,000 pounds sterling - in cash - that 'may have been won on a horse!'

'Of course Bertie!' we cried. I mean who wouldn't recall having that amount of cash in their possession.

And then there's Pdraig Flynn's public declaration on the stress of running two homes simultaneously. Poor, poor Pdraig he expected us to reply.

But it's not just here in Ireland that kleptocrats seek sympathy.

Who can forget the palava in Eastern Europe about gold plated baths and taps in a leader's home, when food and clothing were in short supply on the streets of his country?

And don't get me started on South America, or Russia or Africa - where so many 'democracies' are built on a foundation of kleptocratic practices that exist solely to funnel state funds into the pockets of elected representatives.

You may now think that I'm obsessed with money. But I'm not. In fact the missing money doesn't bother me that much.

Actually that's a lie - the money does bother me. But not nearly as much as the lack of morality these tales highlight.

I mean how are we supposed to build worthwhile societies on the back of such shady ethics?

How are we to ask current and future generations to do what is right, to stand up for each other, to protect the weak and the innocent, when our leaders are such callous, iniquitous clowns?

That's what truly bothers me. And that's why I applaud those who ask the hard questions. Those who unmask the kleptocrats. For they give us hope. They offer US the possibility of a future where the needs of everyone are considered equal.

Deirdre O'Brien

7th August 2017

deranged expensive sesquipedalian visitor ghost

James Joyce

Was James Joyce the quintessential sesquipedalian?

Was Ulysses an epic work or the product of a deranged mind or a nerd's?

Joyce was like a ghost or a visitor to earth,

Who simply had expensive taste in words.

Niamh O'Donovan

Winner - 29th May 2017

code drunk inalienable philandering drop

Untitled

How many voices do I have

One inalienable

My own

That I own

Another philandering

Breaks away like a drunk

One talks in a code never

known by myself

Another inside, not quite hidden

but ready

Waiting to drop

Another lost except to moments

I'm lost in it all

I will know how they rise,

one day

And choose which one speaks

But first I will listen

I must hear what they say

Niamh O'Donovan
Winner - 5th June 2017

platypus wheel metallic harm concern

Untitled

There is a concern
embedded deep down

That I do no harm
with the wheel that I turn

Thrown in the open
and lost to it all

I twist and I scrape
at a life that will come

These thoughts taste metallic
That tells me what's wrong

But if I was a platypus
I'd just scratch my bum

Rosie O'Regan

Winner - 22nd January 2018

manic rocket lachanophobia cradle slippy

Beet It

I've bean mulching over the term lachanophobia,
think lachanophobics should be taken out and shot
with carrots, baby carrots, lots of sweet baby carrots
in their lachanophobic faces
from the cradle to their slippy cabbage-rot graves,
batter them with brussels sprouts, fill their manic pockets
with rocket, stuff their mouths,
watch them decompost

Richard Pierce

Winner - 20th November 2017

dimple supremacy traipse polish ocean

Early Arrival Observation

Selectively routine, it seemed the same faces graced Ó Bhéal
Trickle in at snail pace traipse singularly or in couplets to let out
Creative expression and vie for five world supremacy

No better remedy to a dull work week than to seek solace in attentiveness,
Duplex dimples crease skin from good imagery, metaphorical synergy or whenever
Rab decides to speak

Topics range from strange to subtle, beer taps interject with a whoosh like waves
from the ocean

A familiar community soon to be immersed in versed rehearsed poetry

Aided along by a rotating host
tonight kicking us off by kicking us off by counting in Polish
Raz Dwa Trzy

Grace Piotrowski
Winner - 25th September 2017
trace camp sand hair proud

Untitled

Sometimes it's hard to be proud of my country
and its embarrassing past
the history you can trace
from sea to shining sea
or more like polluted shore to cluttered beach
it's all the same —
dirty and disrespected

After summer days on the lake
my shower drain would choke on hair and sand
tangible memories that filled high school journals with
sunsets and campfires
— laughter and love
now I visit those lakes and the waves cough
up gasoline
too sick to be visited by students on holiday

While down south corals are bleached
and water has spiraled through islands,
over breakwalls,
and across Texas

I'm on another island
safe from nuclear threats
and protested disrespect

Most days I don't have a metaphor
or something new to say
I exasperate
wait for my poetic sense to find a new way to exclaim

Grace Piotrowski

Winner - 25th September 2017

trace camp sand hair proud

Fuck Trump
and fuck climate change deniers
and white political liars who
claim they're for the people

But the lamp above my head hasn't gone off yet
so until then
I wrap myself in 1000 shades of green that
I'm afraid my grandkids will never get to see.

John W. Sexton

10th April 2017

map redundant anchor required accident

Message from the Elohim

At the age of nine, (I was twelve),
my brother Marvin, (brother number two of five),
had convinced himself that the eczema
spreading all over his lower body
was a map sent down to him from Heaven

“Stop fucking scratching yourself,” I’d say.

“I’m not scratching. I’m trying to make out
if this is some place I know. It looks a bit like
Finsbury Park.”

“It’s a fucking rash all over your legs.
It’s not a map. It hasn’t been put on your body
by a fucking angel. You are not required
to work out its secrets. It’s just
a fucking itchy accident that has happened to you
and not to me.”

“You’re wrong. And stop swearing,
or I’ll tell mum.”

I’m right. And stop scratching,
or I’ll tell mum *on you*.”

Within a few weeks,
after several tubes of Betnovate,

John W. Sexton

10th April 2017

map redundant anchor required accident

the eczema had cleared
and his sharp nails were now redundant.

“Ah, what ... what the fuck are you doing now?
Are you looking at your arse in the mirror!”

“I’m looking at the map. It’s still there.
There are faint bits of it everywhere.
I’m trying to work out what it means
before it’s gone completely.”

He seemed still anchored by his obsession.
Except that the word *obsession* wasn’t really one
I was familiar with then. (Being only twelve.)

Philip Spillane
Winner - 11th December 2017
cold banner brew leather festive

Shanna La

Can I ask you?

Can you cook
my dreams,

brew them
in a saucepan
till they're thick
as leather

and mix them in
sugar, spices and things
that are nice.

Knit them,
so I can wear them
like mittens

and are deep with untold
imaginative fairytales.

I ask you
because I trust you,

as whoever is concocting
my dreams these nights,
cooks them into nightmares,

Philip Spillane

Winner - 11th December 2017

cold banner brew leather festive

that are dark,
unfestive and are very cold.

Please
make my dreams
into good dreams,

inspired by a
banner of our love

Joe Sweeney
Winner - 1st May 2017
luxury grecian satnav polyester may

A Polyester Wedding

After a disaster of a wedding, where most of the guests got food poisoning, we made a swift exit and headed off on our honeymoon. We were taking a motoring trip through Europe, destination the Grecian Isles where we had booked a luxury hotel. The sat nav in our hired car, however, broke down and we ended up in a freezing little hamlet in the Swiss mountains, just before we ran out of petrol. And as we sat in the car that night and blew into our hands we had our first fight ever and we were already wondering how long you had to be married before you could get divorced. Early the next morning though, we saw a troupe of English tourists with their children dressed in lederhosen flouncing along singing:

*'Here we go gathering nuts in May,
nuts in May, nuts in May,
Here we go gathering nuts in May
on a cold and frosty morning.'*

We laughed so much. That St Bernard moment, I think, was when our honeymoon was resuscitated. It may even have saved our marriage.

Joe Sweeney
5th June 2017
platypus wheel metallic harm concern

Untitled

(To whom it may concern)

Recently I got a new kind of spectacles, called varifocals. Suddenly I was seeing things I had never seen before. Extraordinary things started happening.

I saw a platypus in a hoody wheeling a trolley out of a supermarket pursued by a dog with two sheep. The duck-billed platypus then rammed a car with his trolley and did considerable harm.

There was a crunching metallic sound and then the car disintegrated, turned into a flock of crows who along with the platypus, the sheep and the dog all flew away.

I suppose it can all only mean one thing.

Shouldn't have gone to Specsavers.

Joe Sweeney

10th July 2017

discombobulate copulate frustrate copperlite kangaroo

A Strange Day

Some days can be strange, very frustrating. Surreal almost. I parked my car outside the Imperial and was getting out when a figure on a bike appeared out of the morning mist. The cyclist, in some kind of uniform, stopped.

"Your car is not parked properly," she said.

"Are you a guard...or something?" I enquired

"Reserve," she said. "Community policewoman."

"Oh, I get it," I said. "A kind of copperlight?"

I reparked the car and when I looked around she was gone, back into the mist. Had I imagined it?

The strangeness however was only beginning.

When I went into the hotel toilets I heard heavy breathing and pushing against the door of the cubicle, as if, perhaps, there were two people inside trying to copulate in the confined space.

Then I heard a man calling out in distress in a Scottish accent:

"Pardon me, I dinne wish to discombobulate you, sir, but I'm in a wee bit of a pickle."

"What is it?" I said, nervously. "What is it?"

"The bloody door is jammed, and I kan-gar-oo!"

Émilie Trudeau

Winner - 8th January 2018

first contract stigma random scrupulous

Untitled

There may be no more societal stigma
to the ease with which I take off my bra,
but those brief bodily contracts
have on my mind, such an impact...

I tell myself that I'll be more scrupulous and say 'no!'
If there's no trashcan in the toilet, or if they don't know where is Ontario.
Because a basic knowledge of Canadian geography,
and the awareness that I may be wearing a tampon,

Are some of the first things I now look for when having sex at random.

Émilie Trudeau

22nd January 2018

manic rocket lachanophobia cradle slippy

Untitled

I cradle the carrot
hoping for inspiration
to this new-year's resolution
of improving my bodily lot

I do not suffer from lachanophobia
I am in fact very fond of tomatoes, roquette and les avocats!
I would just always rather
literally eat a shit ton of sugar

And anyways, the diet industrial complex
is a dodgy industry at best
slippy-ing into body shaming
and encouragement of manic exercising

I already got out of an abusive relationship
where the scale governed my mood, gave me scars and made me sick
So I say fuck it!
I'll stick to blaming my period when my pants don't fit.

Cause I'd rather be a little bit fat and mostly sane,
than obsessing about how the hell to make cabbage
anything other than flavourless pain.

John Tynan

Winner - 17th April 2017

prehistoric fox gravel ice indifference

Untitled

"Arghhh, you prehistoric bastard."

The postman glowered,

His bike careering, letters layering the ice and gravel.

"That fecking fox"...

Who turned and feigned indifference. A skill perfected since the time before post.

Patricia Walsh

Winner - 4th December 2017

filth throbbing disillusion penicillin enchanted

Untitled

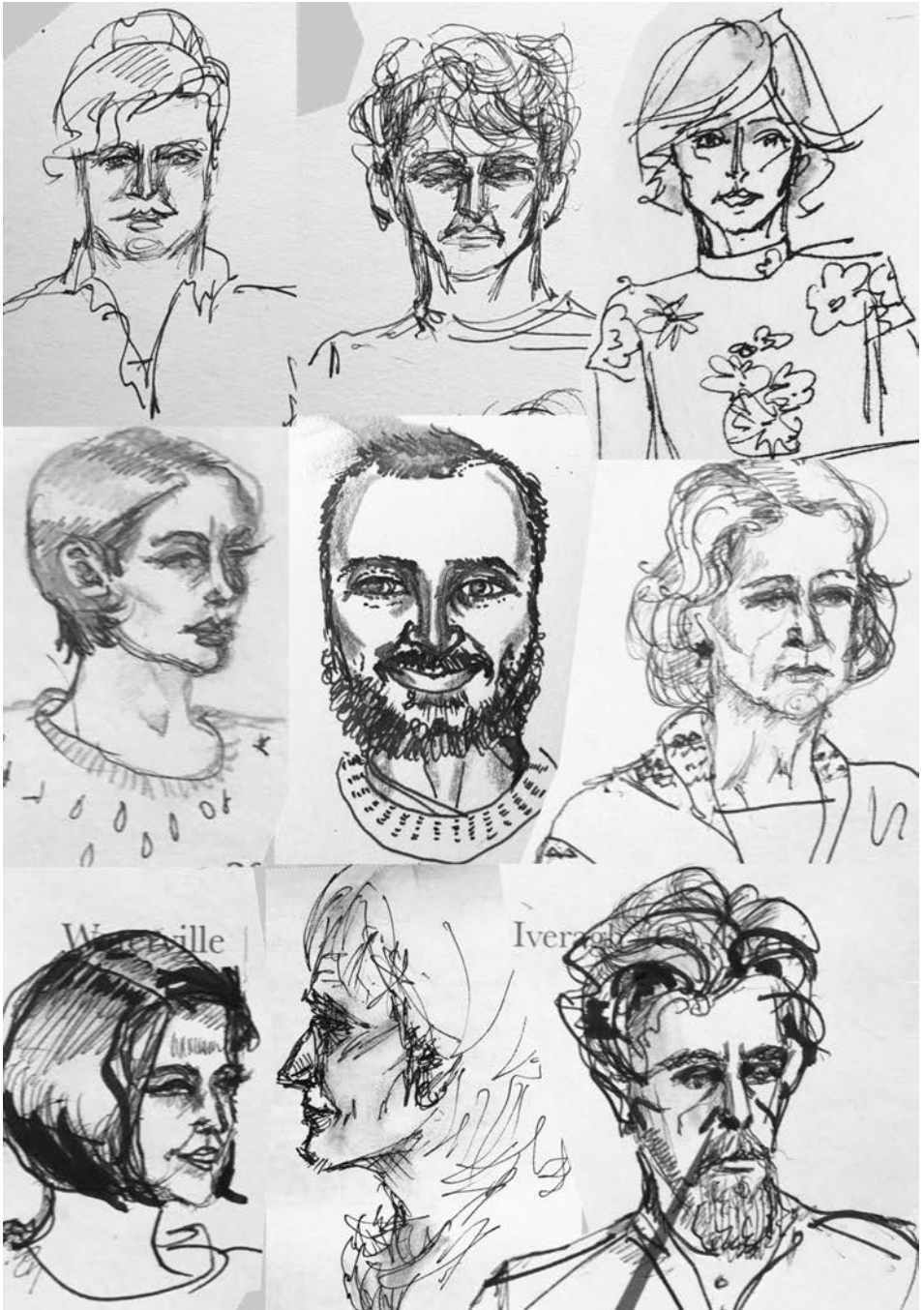
Enchanted in your own filth, a sucker puncher waster,
there's not enough time to be disillusioned,
penicillin your only allergy,
throbbing in your own way, orgasm permitting,
regaling in your own importance a common touch.

My head is throbbing at the last count,
not even penicillin sets the record straight,
enchanted by a lazy dog in its own filth,
pieces of respectability stoke the fire,
disillusioned to disease a worthy call.

Rising up from my filth, a throbbing disguise,
enchanted by the outside a given fate,
disillusioned by hallowed promises, happy veracity
not even your penicillin can save me now,
on God's golden shore, a schizophrenic door.

Early retirement from a disillusioned art,
rising from the filth of a stolen drink,
throbbing in ideation from a hard station,
a drug better than penicillin is on his way,
rising from the dross that is perpetual boredom.

Sketches by Margaret Creedon O'Shea



Sketches by Margaret Creedon O'Shea



Sketches by Margaret Creedon O'Shea



International Poetry-Film Competition Shortlist 2017

Cindy St. Onge (USA)	<i>Lithopedian</i>
Marie Craven (Australia)	<i>Poem for Rent</i>
Jazra Khaleed (Greece)	<i>Gone Is Syria, Gone</i>
Alastair Cook (UK)	<i>Arctica: What I Should Have Said</i>
Payson R. Stevens (USA)	<i>Stars Setting</i>
Radheya Jegatheva (Australia)	<i>iRony</i>
Emmet O' Brien (Ireland)	<i>The Clock Doctor</i>
Mark Neys (Belgium)	<i>Offering</i>
Ian Gibbins (Australia)	<i>Hexapod</i>
Diana Taylor (UK)	<i>Night Launderette North Street</i>
Colm Scully (Ireland)	<i>Phillips Modern Atlas of The World</i>
Lisa Seidenberg (USA)	<i>I Remember</i>
Richard Houguez (UK)	<i>Benton Languie</i>
Aoise Tutty (Ireland)	<i>The Road</i>
Bernard O' Rourke (Ireland)	<i>Impression, Canal</i>
Dan Douglas (UK)	<i>Bunstop</i>
James Jacket (Portugal)	<i>#domesticliteraturemovement</i>
Marie Craven (Australia)	<i>The Last Days</i>
Angie Bogachenko (Ukraine)	<i>Oracle of a found shoe</i>
Tanja Leonhardt (Germany)	<i>Appear</i>
Payson R. Stevens (USA)	<i>Monkey Mind</i>
(Winner) Kayla Jeanson (Canada)	<i>Descrambled Eggs</i>
Kostas Petsas (Greece)	<i>City of my Heart (Ciudad de mi Corazón)</i>
Diana Taylor (UK)	<i>America, Northumberland</i>
Marc Neys (Belgium)	<i>Aleppo</i>
Eleni Cay (UK)	<i>Sun-Earth Diglossia</i>
Charles Olsen (Spain)	<i>Lucas</i>
Caroline Rumley (USA)	<i>Shoes Without Feet</i>
Rachel McCrum & Jonathan Lamy (Scot/Can)	<i>I lost my shoes on Rachel Street</i>
Patricia Killelea (USA)	<i>How it Starts</i>

**INDIE
CORK**
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# Winter Warmer Poetry Festival 2017

## Featured Guests

Fri 24th November

Edward O' Dwyer | Niamh Prior | Richard Lambert | Frank Golden

Keith Payne | Jennifer Matthews | Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill

Brendan Cleary & Ken Marshall | Órfhlaith Foyle

Felispeaks | Stephen James Smith

Sat 25th November

Poetry-Films | Performance Art with Imna Pavon | Closed Mic

George Harding | Caitríona Ní Chléirchín | James O' Sullivan

Mary Noonan | Daniel Salgado | Rody Gorman

Stephen Watts | Billy Ramsell | Adnan Al-Sayegh

Stephen Sexton | Catherine Ann Cullen | Sophie Mayer



*The 6th Winter Warmer Festival takes place  
from 23rd-25th November 2018*



## McNamara Slam Winners 2017-2018

|              |                                                    |
|--------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| 10 April     | Phil Nannery                                       |
| 17 April     | John Tynan                                         |
| 24 April     | Rab Uruhart                                        |
| 1 May        | Joe Sweeney                                        |
| 8 May        | Rab Uruhart                                        |
| 15 May       | Emer Hayes                                         |
| 22 May       | Adam Drake                                         |
| 29 May       | Niamh O' Donovan                                   |
| 5 June       | Niamh O' Donovan                                   |
| 12 June      | Matthew Moynihan                                   |
| 19 June      | Bernadette Gallagher                               |
| 26 June      | Niamh Bagnell                                      |
| 3 July       | Mags Creedon O'Shea                                |
| 10 July      | Dave Ford                                          |
| 17 July      | James Kelly                                        |
| 24 July      | Mags Creedon O'Shea                                |
| 31 July      | Ciarán MacArtain                                   |
| 7 August     | Deirdre O'Brien                                    |
| 14 August    | Bernadette McCarthy                                |
| 21 August    | Niall Herriott                                     |
| 28 August    | Stan Notte                                         |
| 4 September  | Matthew Moynihan                                   |
| 11 September | Ali Bracken                                        |
| 18 September | Ciarán MacArtain                                   |
| 22 September | The Kerry Pirates of Penzance                      |
| 25 September | Grace Piotrowski                                   |
| 2 October    | Munster Slam Champions - Paul Curran & Ali Bracken |
| 9 October    | Jim Crickard                                       |
| 16 October   | Storm Ophelia                                      |
| 23 October   | Ali Bracken                                        |
| 30 October   | Rab Uruhart                                        |
| 6 November   | Jim Crickard                                       |
| 13 November  | Mary Nagle                                         |
| 20 November  | Richard Pierce                                     |
| 27 November  | Jim Crickard                                       |
| 4 December   | Patricia Walsh                                     |
| 11 December  | Philip Spillane                                    |
| 8 January    | Émilie Trudeau                                     |
| 15 January   | Eoin Hurley                                        |
| 22 January   | Rosie O'Regan                                      |
| 29 January   | Abigail Grace                                      |
| 5 February   | Ray Hanrahan                                       |
| 12 February  | Ciarán MacArtain                                   |
| 19 February  | Jim Crickard                                       |
| 26 February  | Nuka Gbafah                                        |
| 5 March      | Mags Creedon O'Shea                                |
| 12 March     | Ali Bracken                                        |
| 19 March     | Jamie Lawton                                       |
| 26 March     | Jim Crickard                                       |
| 2 April      | Ray Hanrahan                                       |
| 9 April      | Jenny deBie                                        |

## Guest Poets 2017-2018

|              |                                                       |
|--------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| 10 April     | John Baylis Post & Poets from <i>Five Words Vol X</i> |
| 17 April     | Rachel Coventry & Ingrid Casey                        |
| 24 April     | Martin Figura & Helen Ivory                           |
| 1 May        | John Murphy                                           |
| 8 May        | Shara McCallum                                        |
| 15 May       | Diarmuid Fitzgerald                                   |
| 22 May       | Mary Madec                                            |
| 29 May       | Sarah J. Sloat                                        |
| 5 June       | Stephanie Conn & Simon Lewis                          |
| 12 June      | Matthew Caley                                         |
| 19 June      | Jo Slade                                              |
| 26 June      | Linda Ibbotson & Sarah Byrne                          |
| 3 July       | Maria McManus                                         |
| 10 July      | Didi Jackson & Major Jackson                          |
| 17 July      | Celia De Fréine                                       |
| 24 July      | Andrea Mbarushimana & Russ Berry                      |
| 31 July      | Mary O'Malley                                         |
| 7 August     | Gerda Stevenson & Aonghas MacNeacail                  |
| 14 August    | Phil Lynch                                            |
| 21 August    | Lani O'Hanlon & Grace Wells                           |
| 28 August    | Deirdre Grimes & John Carew                           |
| 4 September  | Ailbhe Ní Ghearbhuigh                                 |
| 11 September | Jane Williams                                         |
| 18 September | Roger Hudson                                          |
| 22 September | Benjamin Burns & Paul McNamara                        |
| 25 September | Siobhán Campbell                                      |
| 2 October    | Miceál Kearney                                        |
| 9 October    | Tamara Miles & Karen J. McDonnell                     |
| 16 October   | Storm Ophelia                                         |
| 23 October   | Eamonn Lynskey                                        |
| 30 October   | Elaine Feeney & Quango Reinhardt                      |
| 6 November   | Özgecan Kesici & Panchali Mukherji                    |
| 13 November  | Theo Dorgan                                           |
| 20 November  | Brian Kirk                                            |
| 27 November  | Jessamine O Connor                                    |
| 4 December   | Stiofán Ó Cadhla                                      |
| 11 December  | Fernando Beltrán                                      |
| 8 January    | Cormac Lally & Julie Goo                              |
| 15 January   | Doireann Ní Ghríofa                                   |
| 22 January   | Fired!– Forgotten Women (5 Poets)                     |
| 29 January   | Paula Meehan                                          |
| 5 February   | New Creative Writing from UCC (7 Poets)               |
| 12 February  | All the Worlds Between (5 Poets)                      |
| 19 February  | Joel Deane                                            |
| 26 February  | Hazel Hogan & Alice Kinsella                          |
| 5 March      | Louis Mulcahy                                         |
| 12 March     | Patrick Stack                                         |
| 19 March     | John Foggin                                           |
| 26 March     | Eleanor Cummins, Eileen Sheehan & Jessie Lendennie    |
| 2 April      | Dairena Ní Chinnéide                                  |
| 9 April      | Brian Turner                                          |

the 6<sup>th</sup> Ó bhéal



Five Words  
Poetry Competition  
500 euro single prize

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

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

The competition runs for 42 weeks, with a new set of words appearing each week. Entrants 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 12th Anniversary event, on Monday 15th April 2019

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





Ó Bhéal's 6th Poetry-Film Competition is open for submissions from 1st May - Aug 15th 2018.

International submissions are accepted for any poetry-film under ten minutes (English subtitles required for non-english language Films). Entries must have been completed since August 2016.

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 the IndieCork Film Festival in October 2018. 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)

**INDIE CORK**



07 - 14  
OCTOBER  
2018 } A FESTIVAL  
OF INDEPENDENT  
FILM & MUSIC

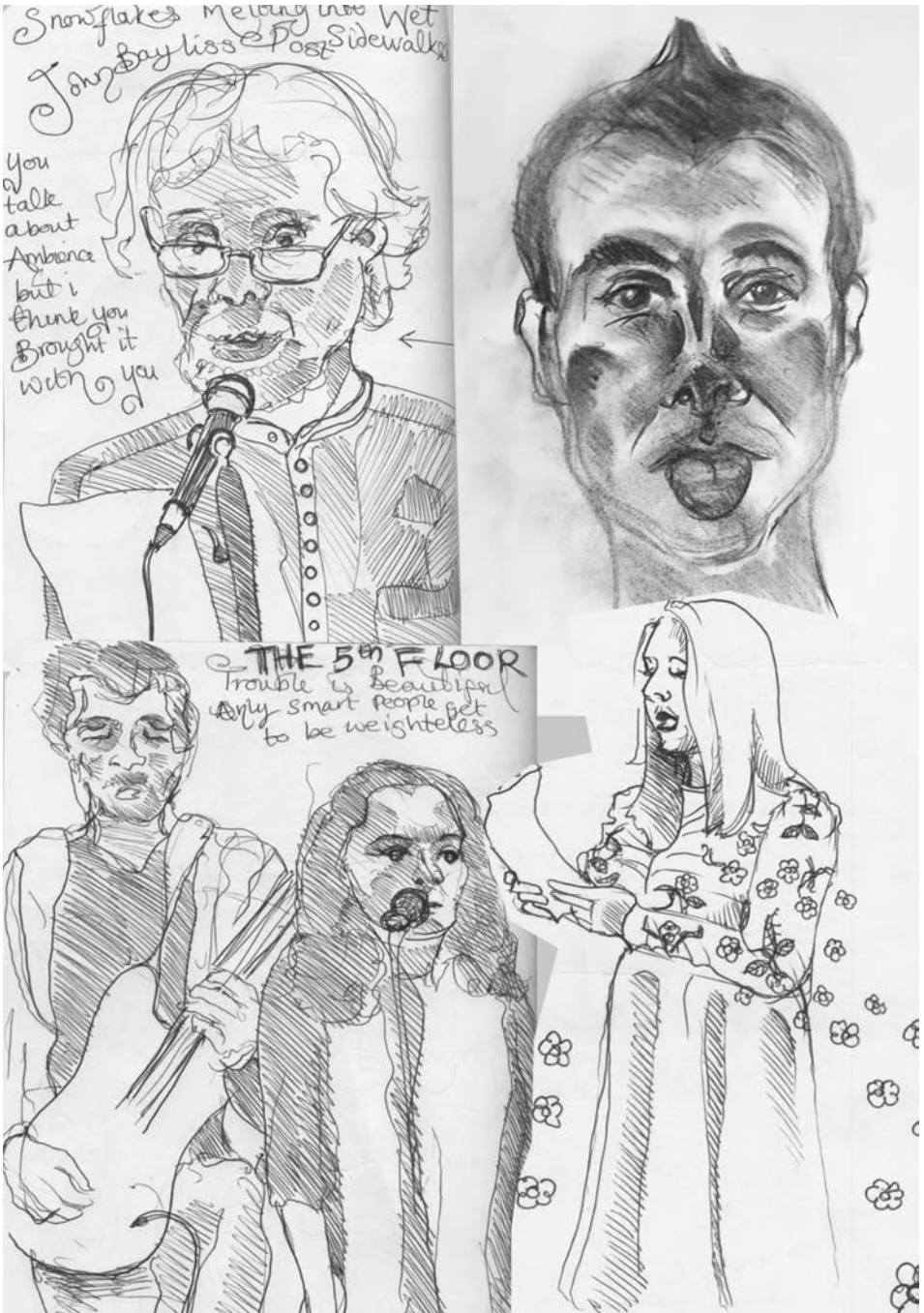
Sketches by Alexis Campbell Bannerman



Sketches by Alexis Campbell Bannerman



Sketches by Alexis Campbell Bannerman





## Cork's weekly poetry event

Guest poets & open-mic every week from 9.30pm

Poetry-Films from 8.30pm & the Five Word Challenge

poetry

every Monday

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

