

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+
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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
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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

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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-blonde 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,

Towardswise,

Aboutwise,

Enoughwise,

Complethewise,

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, apports 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 staithes.
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 mumblings
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

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

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# 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



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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



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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

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)

