

# Five Words

Volume XVI

poems from the

10th Five Words International Poetry Competition

*and from*

Ó Bhéal's live event Five Word challenges

April 2022 to March 2023





On the occasion of Ó Bhéal's sixteenth Anniversary

*10th April 2023*

*featuring winning & shortlisted poems from the*

**10th Five Words International Poetry Competition**

*plus*

poems from live event Five Word challenges

(11th April 2022 - 13th March 2023)

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for their valued support during our sixteenth year:

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and to the house eMCees, board members, 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 XVI

## CONTENTS

<i>Foreword</i>	1
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### **10th Five Words International Poetry Competition**

<i>Shortlist</i>	3
David Ross Linklater ( <i>1st</i> )	4
Alison McCrossan ( <i>2nd</i> )	6
Glyn Matthews ( <i>3rd</i> )	7
David W Evans	9
Laura Theis	11
Jill Munro	12
John Baylis Post	13
Phoebe Colby	14
Rolf Parker-Houghton	15
Dante Miller	17
Gabrielle Deakin	18
Mandy Beattie	19
<b>Biographies</b> of Shortlisted Poets	21
<b>Judges' Comments</b> on Shortlisted Poems	25

### **Five Word Challenge Poems**

Cedric Bikond	31
Rosalin Blue	32
Pam Campbell	37
Jeff Cottrill	39
Margaret Creedon O'Shea	40
Jim Crickard	44
Abigail Kortering	46

# CONTENTS

## Five Word Challenge Poems

Shaunna Lee Lynch	48
Róisín Leggett Bohan	50
Matt Mooney	52
Ryan Morgan	53
Brendan Mulcahy	54
Rosemary Norman	55
Fionnuala O'Connell	56
Lauren O'Donovan	57
Rosie O'Regan	58
Catherine Ronan	59
Colm Scully	62
S'phongo	63
Máire Stephens	65

<b>Sketches</b> by Margaret Creedon O'Shea	20
	28-30
	67-68
	77

International <b>Poetry-Film</b> Competition Shortlist 2022	69
---	----

International <b>Poetry-Film</b> Irish Selection 2022	71
---	----

<b>Five Word Challenge Winners</b> 2022-2023	73
--	----

<b>Guest Poets</b> 2022-2023	73
------------------------------	----

Ó Bhéal Publications 2022	75
---------------------------	----

Ó Bhéal <b>Winter Warmer</b> Poster 2022	76
--	----

## FOREWORD

The 10th of April 2023 celebrates sixteen sweet Ó Bhéal years and our 683rd event (not including Winter Warmer festivals). *Five Words Volume XVI* of this anthology series features shortlisted poems from the most recent competition, including the winning entries from David Ross Linklater (1st), Alison McCrossan (2nd) & Glyn Matthews (3rd). Our judge, Cork poet Victoria Kennefick selected an impressive shortlist from 481 entries (representing 24 countries).

2023 sees a vast improvement in Ó Bhéal's hybrid mode of delivery, especially with the fine-tuning of digital audio & boost in broadband capacity. The 10th Winter Warmer festival experience benefitted greatly from an additional (3rd) camera angle, which made hosting the All-Ireland Poetry Slam Championship final even more thrilling in Nano Nagle Place. Our international, remote viewerships & participatory audiences continue to grow via this live, digital dimension since we first embraced the technology in early 2020, now vastly advanced thanks to a successive series of three Capacity Building grants awarded by the Arts Council of Ireland.

Our core Arts Council Grant for 2023 sees a very welcome 50% increase, especially since our loss of revenue from the private sector, the return of (and increase in) venue and accommodation costs, as well as the increase in digital and insurance overheads. We retained our Foras na Gaeilge and Colmcille grants, which remain unchanged in 2023 as does our cornerstone revenue grant from Cork City Council. Public donations in 2022 saw a slight increase, with featured guest poet fees at the Winter Warmer being upped to a minimum of 200 euros. This will increase to 250 euros in 2023.

Ó Bhéal's International Poetry-Film competition saw continued success in 2022, with its shortlist of 30 films chosen from 173 submissions (representing 33 countries). Two screenings of fifteen films were simulcast whilst being projected in-person, and for the second time we included a special selection of Irish poetry-films.

Ó Bhéal's 2022 *Unfinished Book of Poetry* project included a well-attended launch at the Cork City Library and featured poems in the Poetry in the Park series (as did our Winter Warmer guest poets). The Cork-Coventry twinning exchange resumed in-person with an electric exchange of poets, Sujana Crawford & John Bernard who visited Cork, and a reciprocal visit paid by Victoria Kennefick & Dean Browne.

The Ó Bhéal community was very sad to hear of the passing of Maurice Scully (RIP). Maurice was a guest three times in the Hayloft Bar, most recently in November 2022.

We are very grateful to everyone who supported us during our sixteenth year.

Paul Casey  
Director  
Ó Bhéal

*“Full fathom five thy father lies;  
Of his bones are coral made;”*

*William Shakespeare*

# 10th Five Words International Poetry Competition

## SHORTLIST

### *Winner*

**David Ross Linklater** (Scotland) *Lighthouse / Mother*

### *2nd Place*

**Alison McCrossan** (Ireland) *Walking alone*

### *3rd Place*

**Glyn Matthews** (England) *Terms of Endearment*

### *Other Shortlisted Poems*

**David W Evans** (Jersey) *Shive*

**Laura Theis** (England) *Gifted*

**Jill Munro** ( England) *After Eunice*

**John Baylis Post** ( England) *Scut*

**Phoebe Colby** (Canada) *Fump*

**Rolf Parker-Houghton** ( USA) *The University Of Brattleboro And The  
Uncluttered Table*

**Dante Miller** ( USA) *It Isn't Inevitable, Just Likely*

**Gabrielle Deakin** (Spain) *In praise of liminality*

**Mandy Beattie** (Scotland) *Then There Was Only One Foetal  
Heartbeat*

David Ross Linklater

*First Place*

fit innate direction compete isthmus

**Lighthouse / Mother**

A masterpiece,  
she does not need an audience  
when sketching the crimes of waves,  
their rolling weeds and white knuckles.

Captains cannot compete with the clarity  
of her vision.

She works the hours of a saint  
somewhere between glory and torment.

Others simply do not fit there.  
She has shouldered the many storms  
of novel nights—buoys raised on purple  
hundred-foot waves,

Nuckelavee roaming their crests,  
stripping whole crews out like feathers.  
Having cut through mist,  
the descriptions of silence,

she has learned to chart suffering  
by the tonne, offer direction across the salt fields.  
Having watched sky imitate sea,  
perfect poetry slopping in rock pools

reciting itself—rain and horneri, sun and limpet,  
she is the attempted answer  
to our unknowing, a pureness hauled-out  
over the blue.

David Ross Linklater

*First Place*

fit innate direction compete isthmus

Though she cannot promise life  
she has come to know a kind of peace  
aiming for that  
as stars wash their bodies,

as Gods come and go with the shoaling.  
What innate skill.  
To dance upon the isthmus.  
To fall so completely into darkness

then blast it away,  
the finest returning of light,  
the soft tuning of hope  
where there is none.



Alison McCrossan

*Second Place*

water pinch scale comfort starling

**Walking alone**

I was down by the clear water, watching minnows  
dart over stones. Taking comfort away from teenage taunts.

Hills scaled by gorse rose on the other side of the valley.  
A fella I'd seen around, a few years older than me,

arrived over my shoulder, bare-chested and tipsy.  
He started asking me questions.

I don't remember the content, just staring at the slopes.  
I remember him leaning in for a kiss,

the stickiness of his skin, the roughness of hair,  
as I pushed at his chest.

I remember telling a friend later, remember  
her saying, you kissed him, didn't you,

like there was nothing else I would do.  
I remember sitting on a rock after he'd gone.

How I lifted a plastic bag from a bush  
and trapped two minnows. How I left them to dry

under the sun. How three crows descended close by.  
How a lone starling flitted in

and pinched a minnow in its beak.  
How the other starlings wouldn't be far behind.

Glyn Matthews

*Third Place*

change enter heat hat hesitate

### Terms of Endearment

From my bed I heard my father  
enter in a drunken rage,  
beat midnight to a pulp  
as the juke-box played

from down below  
and thumped its bass notes,  
beating time while a  
Moto Guzzi revved outside.

Next day I hesitated in the lounge  
and wondered at the latest stains  
upon the wall that slowly  
changed from red to brown.

It was about that time my budgie died,  
I can't remember if I cried  
staring at his stiff blue body  
at the bottom of the cage.

I laid him in a cardboard box  
with tissue paper and a millet spray  
and took him to my grandma's  
on the other side of town.

We dug a grave between  
the hawthorn and the daffodils

Glyn Matthews

*Third Place*

change enter heat hat hesitate

spoke some words  
and wrote 'Joey' on a lolly-stick.

Then my father went away,  
the heat died down,  
the world turned more slowly and  
my mother stopped walking into doors.

I don't know why I wet the bed  
my mother changed the sheets  
in the middle of the night, and  
wordless, sat and stoked my head.

I can't recall my father's face  
although I still see Joey  
with his sparkling eye  
and in the wee small hours

sometimes I hear  
the tinkling of a little bell  
but what he's trying to say  
I cannot tell.

David W Evans  
*Shortlisted*  
change enter heat hat hesitate

Shive

Failing to be natural, all matters focus on her freedom,  
her world welcome unhindered is critical.

Charting the latitude below my pudding gut –  
domed stomach lidding life –  
X mapped by him, then dashed like scissor journeys  
on clothkits – dress patterns –

Here is X to be sliced ---  
Knife enters --- a cut imprecise ---- off margin --- badly angled;

The healer hesitates  
dips deeper:

X?

Sighs at the imprecision \ - - - - I hear him.

That menace blade \ - - that tool of approximate Caesarean  
should hiss as it reaches the heat of my blood - - - - - \  
He slits another careless lateral statement  
- - - touches, tenderness forgot - \  
cuts like communion: share in my flesh, her flesh:  
a birthday cake long baked sliced.

David W Evans

*Shortlisted*

change enter heat hat hesitate

My butchered baby rises,  
tugged through tough crimson she emerges.

My butchered baby rises wearing garlands  
of all me, my blood, hers...  
Screaming acute compliant pulsed  
fresh lipped by slaughter:  
the peach cheek of my daughter punctured like my pudding gut.  
Marked at the top of life, evicted from safety by violence,

marked to fight the moment life commences  
her battle scar unchanged in adulthood,  
the first war won;  
others still fought and she wounds slice by slice  
in the court of herself in the absence of physical aggressors.

Laura Theis  
*Shortlisted*  
dance pebble brittle echo sun

Gifted

we don't know how many witches exactly  
we asked to her christening

and how many others appeared  
uninvited and offended at the slight

witches are hard to count and their gifts  
may be hard to account for

we are still trying to puzzle out which ones  
were meant as curses and which ones

will turn out to be favours  
we've kept them all to be safe

put some in storage in a shoe box under her bed  
next to her collection of interesting pebbles

sometimes she lays them all out  
takes one and holds it in her palm like a small sun

to examine it closely  
*here is my wildness* she might say

*my inconsistency*  
*my flair for maniacal dance moves*

*my brittle temper and look here are all*  
*the echoes of you that sorrow inside me*

*and demand to be turned*  
*into song*

Jill Munro  
*Shortlisted*  
jade gust sense margin wheel

**After Eunice**

Day four and the night is closing in again. The familiar string of distant fairy lights from the houses on Crowborough Road don't twinkle across our field.

The dark is bloody dark when it comes in, too dark to see a lost boot, a lost mitten, a blown wheely bin. It will be candlelight and torch power that illuminates where we are,

a nearly full moon and Orion's belt will glow through triple-glazing that barely retains  
the remains of our dwindling heat. No radiator clank or kettle-hiss, no pan rattle –

all is silent save clock-tick, owl-hoot and Eunice's left-over gusts tumbling leaf skeletons  
across the wintering patio. Strange how we still store beer in the fridge, strange how,

after walking in the rain, I reach for the hairdryer. Candle-glint from red wine glasses warms,

we discuss how long before frozen food spoils, whether her nursing home has power,

until we are out of jaded words. We wait for another text to chime to reassure they are doing

all they can to restore us. Roe deer herd, we sense shadows nearer than normal to our margins.

Our powers wane, another early night beckons. This stillness, this darkness, this.

John Baylis Post

*Shortlisted*

opaque hare help text distance

Scut

a secret in the shape of a hare hopped over my foot

a mad hare maybe a hare in my unhelped imagination  
loping wetly through the early morning grass

I saw him in the field waited for his long zigzag dash  
his graceful race against a distance I could not share  
not my distance not my clouded secret but instead  
he came to me a slow lollop a cautious quiet alert  
through opaque drifts of sun-up and points of dew  
or not there a fancy a teardrop a sleight of the light  
a prompt an animal pretext for undetected thoughts  
an omen an occult phantasm a beast as cryptic signal  
nodding past this stone-still bewildered wonderer

a hare in the shape of a secret hopped over my foot



Phoebe Colby

*Shortlisted*

screen vote ceiling verse ample

**Fump**

Fumpfumpfumpfump

My ceiling fan votes in sound she

never screens the rest of the room's

noise, cuts through decisive - though she starts slow, in

fairness, and ample: in the breeze she creates

each fumping verse hits home on brow and before

your next breath she's at pace with

planes above

subways below

waves somewhere

and in its cavity,

your own beat.

## The University Of Brattleboro And The Uncluttered Table

You aren't going to believe me, unless you look this up; but I, Dr. Balderdash, created a fake university and a fake paranormal palaeontology department, with my very real wife, Cynthia who created a miniature yeti (so of course, we call it "Tiny Foot") out of a G. I. Joe doll she covered in fur and added a new face to, sculpted from clay and we took his photo, running in a Touch-Me-Not forest, and we laughed, and made a baby, and loaned Tiny Foot to our local librarian, Francisco Alejandro, who filmed him swinging in a tree, (If you move to Vermont, check out Tiny Foot from the library, and make your own fake photo) and we bought a house, and cast plaster "Chicken Rex" bones in dinosaur-bone-shaped holes we dug in our backyard with David and Jude, and buried the bones downtown, flew fake UFOs off a parking garage, (Black helium balloons, a fishing pole, LED lights plus people willing to believe = UFO) and we got a pig skull from a pig roast at my friend's birthday party, popped some goggles on him, (a pig skull, goggles, plus people who need to laugh = UFO alien) and buried him under a tombstone on which we chiselled in the words, "*In memory of the Mysterious Brattleboro Airman*", and we buried his stone and we dug up his stone, and his skull and his ribs, and the Chicken rex, in front of people, who bid in an auction for the remains, and our son, who loves life, and math, collected their money, and they cheered because we were faking a UFO alien crash site just for them, and I invited them to march around the tombstone of Levi Fuller, the long-dead governor of our state, (that is living with fentanyl and floods dropped on us from the warm ocean) who was also a scientist who tried to establish the note "A," at 435 vibrations per minute, and the people marched, blowing notes on bottles and clacking wooden clackers, tuned the way he liked and Susan Keese, from VPR came, and left with a story, and Chris Mays, from *The Reformer*, came and interviewed "Dr Rea L Faux", and left with a story,

## Rolf Parker-Houghton

### *Shortlisted*

dip   bustle   miniature   blind   ripe

and we made love on the table, and much later, invited everyone in town to our house, to carve floating Jack O' Lanterns and we took them to gently dip their creations in the mighty Kwenitekw, and the burning pumpkins float downstream to the cheers of people (we have video) who have sent them to the sea every Halloween with us for the last 20 years and we set out a little model of Cynthia's Holstein-Brontosaurus hybrid in front of the "Holstein Association Building" and took the gentle beast's photo from the right angle so that it seemed to be a giant in the street, blocking traffic, next to the museum where my wife's intricate silver wire fish were displayed back when I was just a math-teacher boyfriend, (who didn't do his share of the dishes) and embarrassingly admitted to this Carhart-wearing carpenter, this wilderness canoe-hike leader, this bronze caster, this sculptor, this arty Artemis that I sometimes liked women dressed in poof-sleeve dresses from the 1800s, and even liked them dresses with the bustles on them, (as works of art) because I thought it made women look ripe as mangoes, and she laughed and said, "Never!" before marrying me forever, despite our mismatch in many other things.

Would you believe that the joy I have sought to bring to this wonderful town is due in part to my tumbles into a hidden pit, and my desire to pull others out? Would you believe, after we were married, we both were sometimes harmed by the steady certainty of disappointment in each other, and years of fermenting frustration? It happens.

And what if I told you our arguments, our differences were worse than fights? Not mean, never hands, only words of blind despair, but so hopeless, at times it felt like the only way we stayed together was by taking divorce off the table. That can work sometimes,

and   it   worked   like   magic   for   us.

Dante Miller  
*Shortlisted*  
orca cue pinch wind arc

**It Isn't Inevitable, Just Likely**

Pack up the philosophies, honey, fold the art,  
Cue the pandemonium, darling –  
Atlantis is sinking.

The four winds have all been shuttered,  
The stars all popped and fizzled into black,  
Out waltz gods and monsters, far beyond  
The deadly arc of mortal dread.

In rush the waters,  
To kiss the temple fires cold,  
To smother the fields, to seep under your door,  
Under your eyelids, into your lungs.

The home you knew will be drowned silent,  
A tomb where only the orca might sing.

So, take a pinch of salt for luck, my dear,  
Wrap your fragile love in something soft, and

Run.

Gabrielle Deakin

*Shortlisted*

renew five suit between cork

**In praise of liminality**

The sweet spot  
is just beforehand,  
that in-between space  
when the lift of the tide  
heralds the orgasm  
which never matches  
its anticipated promise.

The cycle of desire  
requires constant renewal:  
it's the five-year-old  
who turns six tomorrow  
who imagines  
that six is different  
and miraculous.

So let us savour  
the hours before the wedding,  
the suit is on the hanger,  
the corks are in the bottles:  
Listen! This is  
the language of perfection  
when we hear as God does.

Mandy Beattie

*Shortlisted*

bevel help air crease close

**Then There Was Only One Foetal Heartbeat**

*“Give sorrow words; the grief  
that does not speak knits up  
the o-er wrought heart & bids it break.”*

— William Shakespeare

On the ashes of Thalidomide a red flag flies  
the mizzen half mast *but Christina only plays dress-up*  
*in our bodies archive.* At the close of her trimester I cannot help

but imagine in womb’s grave-leavening a double helix  
of shadow-dimple creases and mirror images  
of g(u)ilt’s bevel edges on her rainbow bridge:

Each twin-placental air and aria a solo  
obligato; yet sweet peas, larkspur  
delphiniums still bud, blossom

Sketches by Margaret Creedon O'Shea



## Biographies of Shortlisted Poets

David Ross Linklater  
First Place



**David Ross Linklater** is a poet from Balintore, Easter Ross in the Highlands in Scotland. He is the author of four pamphlets, most recently *Star Muck Bourach* (Wish Fullfillment Press, 2022). He is the recipient of a Dewar Arts Award and has been shortlisted for a New Writers Award and the Edwin Morgan Award. His work has appeared in *The Dark Horse*, *Bath Magg*, *New Writing Scotland* and *Gutter*. He lives in Glasgow where he works as a screen printer.

Alison McCrossan  
Second Place



**Alison McCrossan** is from Cork. She took the Master's in Creative Writing at UCC in 2019 with an interest in fiction and graduated with a growing interest in poetry. Publications include *The Honest Ulsterman*, *Southword*, *Crannog*, *Abridged*, *Orbis*, and *Stand Magazine* (forthcoming). Her novel in progress, *The Archaeologist*, has been longlisted for the Penguin Michael Joseph Undiscovered Writers' Prize 2023.

Glyn Matthews  
Third Place



**Glyn Matthews** is an ex-teacher of Art, English and Drama, escaping in 1989 to develop as an artist. A long held love of writing eventually prompted him to enhance his images with poetry. Thus, two art forms, that he had been exploring separately, were brought together. He finds working to prompts stimulating and so the Ó Bhéal competition appealed. He has self-published two books of poetry that he sells alongside his art, maintaining that.....'A picture on the wall dwells always in the corner of your eye. A book will close to dwell quietly in the corner of your mind.'



## Biographies of Shortlisted Poets

### David W Evans

**David W Evans** was born in Newcastle upon Tyne and lives in St Martin, Jersey. His poems have appeared in various anthologies and publications such as *Acumen*, *Dreich* and the *Frogmore Papers*. He has also been previously shortlisted in Ó Bhéal's Five Words Poetry Competition, winning second prize in the 2022 edition.

### Laura Theis

**Laura Theis'** exophonic work appears in *Poetry*, *Mslexia*, *Magma*, *Rattle*, *Strange Horizons*, *Asimov's*, *Aesthetica*, and anthologies by *Candlestick Press*, *Broken Sleep Books*, *Pan Macmillan* and *Off Topic* amongst others. Her Elgin-Award-nominated debut *how to extricate yourself*, an Oxford Poetry Library Book-of-the-Month, won the Brian Dempsey Memorial Prize. She was the recipient of the Society of Authors' Arthur Welton Award, the AM Heath Prize, Oxford Brookes Poetry Prize, Mogford Prize, Hammond House International Literary Award and a Forward Prize nomination. Her collection *A Spotter's Guide for Invisible Things* has won the 2022 Live Canon Collection Prize, and will be published by Live Canon later in 2023.

### Jill Munro

**Jill Munro** has been published in poetry publications include *The Rialto*, *The Fenland Reed* and *Popshot Quarterly*. Her first collection was *Man from La Paz*, published in 2015 by Green Bottle Press. She won the Fair Acre Press Pamphlet Competition with 'The Quilted Multiverse' (2016). She was awarded a Hawthornden Fellowship in 2018 and won the Ó Bhéal five words competition 2017/18. Jill lives and writes in the depths of Ashdown Forest, East Sussex.

## Biographies of Shortlisted Poets

### John Baylis Post

**John Baylis Post** is a member of Hungry Hill Writing, whose publications, competitions, and events he helped organise for several years. His poems have won several competitions in England and Ireland (including Ó Bhéal Five Words 2017). His first collection is overdue and his novels remain unpublished.

### Phoebe Colby

**Phoebe Colby** is a historian and writer by education, amateur farmer by way of side-hustle. Her interests keep circling back to the intersection of land, story and hospitality. Her academic work includes an online archive of documents on the Black art scene of Vancouver. For more about Phoebe visit <https://pjcolby.weebly.com/>

### Rolf Parker-Houghton

**Rolf Parker-Houghton** is a free-lance writer of history. He also writes a column on math and science education for *Parents Express*. His poems have been published in *The Road Not Taken: The Journal of Formal Poetry*. He and his wife, the artist Cynthia Parker-Houghton, live in Brattleboro, Vermont, USA, with their son, Morgen. Together they have created many, "replenishable treasure hunts" on wooded trails in the Brattleboro area and published codes that lead to the beautiful objects that they hide. They also create street theatre and other free events. "Pugna desperandum cum humor et in conventu cum aliis."

## Biographies of Shortlisted Poets

### Dante Miller

**Dante Miller** is a trans poet currently working through a degree at the University of South Florida. He was first published in 2021 in the third issue of *Lida Literary Magazine*, and in the same year was a recipient of the Bettye, Esther, and Dorothy Newman Poetry Award. He's been writing poetry and short stories since childhood, and maintains an undying fondness for both coffee and cats.

### Gabrielle Deakin

**Gabrielle Deakin** is an Australian cellist and instrumental teacher who lives in Barcelona with her husband, a Catalán novelist. Her qualifications as a poet are limited to a family tradition of composing doggerel for festive occasions, the odd serious poem shared exclusively with family and friends, and a vivid interest in the links between music and language, links she actively explores in her teaching. Her piano tuner encouraged her last year to bite the bullet and venture into new realms of poetic expression. She has found the ongoing Ó Bhéal Five word challenges invaluable helpful in this regard.

### Mandy Beattie

**Mandy Beattie** frequently loses herself in poetry & imaginings. She's been published in journals such as *Poets Republic*, *Drawn to The Light*, *Lothlorien*, *Ink*, *Sweat & Tears*, *Dreich*, *WordPeace*, *Visual Verse*, *Wildfire Words*, *Spilling Cocoa by Martin Amis*, *Last Stanza*, *The Haar*, *Purple Hermit*, *Crowstep*, *Spoonie*, *The Pen Points North*, *Advent with Annick* & more. She has a short story in *Howl New Irish Writing* and has features forthcoming in *Big Girl's Village Lockdown Showcase*, *House of Commons* & George Gunn's *Film*, *Words in The Wind*. She was Poets' Choice in *Marble Poetry*, has been shortlisted in the Black Box Competition & 10th International Five Words Competition.

## Judges' Comments

*Victoria Kennefick*

### First Place - **Lighthouse / Mother** (David Ross Linklater)

This stunning poem stopped me in my tracks. I am obsessed with hyphens at the moment and the use of one in the title was so arresting and unexpected. The poem itself is so beautifully written and I was utterly impressed by how the poet included unusual terms like 'nuckelavee,' 'horneri' and 'isthmus' in the poem so naturally and eloquently. This is a deep, dark, and mysterious poem – unknowable yet utterly familiar, just like a mother.

### Second Place - **Walking alone** (Alison McCrossan)

This brilliantly written poem is full of quiet, delicate moments that belie the sinister undertones that follow, 'I was down by the clear water, watching minnows/dart over stones. Taking comfort away from teenage taunts.' The imagery is unforgettable and perfectly described, the ending in particular stayed with me, 'How a lone starling flitted in/and pinched a minnow in its beak./How the other starlings wouldn't be far behind.'

### Third Place - **Terms of Endearment** (Glyn Matthews)

This poem opens with the lines,

From my bed I heard my father  
enter in a drunken rage,  
beat midnight to a pulp  
as the juke-box played

I was particularly taken by the brilliant, 'beat midnight to a pulp,' and the rest of the poem lives up to this disturbing and evocative image. The introduction of the budgie is a stroke of genius and brings an originality and freshness to this poem that is all its own, 'and wrote 'Joey' on a lolly-stick.'

## **Judges' Comments**

*Victoria Kennefick*

### **Shive** (David W Evans)

A shocking, original, and visceral poem about a traumatic birth – brilliantly expressed.

### **Gifted** (Laura Theis)

A clever, witty and beautiful take on what we inherit – and how it is a blessing and a curse.

### **After Eunice** (Jill Munro)

Poignant, unsettling and skillfully crafted, this poem is haunting and quietly devastating, ‘The dark is bloody dark when it comes in, too dark to see a lost boot, a lost mitten,/a blown wheely bin.’

### **Scut** (John Baylis Post)

This unusual and witty title alone won me over immediately, but the poem matches its energy and fizz by being utterly charming.

### **Fump** (Phoebe Colby)

This is a poem designed to be read aloud. The form, sound, and theme of the poem work together so harmoniously to make it a joyful and sensational reading experience.

## Judges' Comments

*Victoria Kennefick*

### **The University Of Brattleboro And The Uncluttered Table** (Rolf Parker-Houghton)

[This poem] is a reminder of what poems can do and how often the best ones move beyond our perceptions of what a poem can be. This is a wild, brilliant, and exciting poem that brings the reader through a wonderful series of images and ideas.

### **It Isn't Inevitable, Just Likely** (Dante Miller)

'Cue the pandemonium, darling –' this poem is an urgent, unrelenting warning about environmental peril composed with an edgy wit.

### **In praise of liminality** (Gabrielle Deakin)

This poem explores the '[t]he sweet spot[s]' of life, those liminal spaces we mightn't notice as we rush through them to our next experience. This is a gentle, uplifting reminder to stay present and love those in-between moments we can often ignore.

### **Then There Was Only One Foetal Heartbeat** (Mandy Beattie)

A heart-breaking and utterly original poem about the loss of a twin in utero.

Each twin-placental air and aria a solo  
obligato; yet sweet peas, larkspur  
delphiniums still bud, blossom

Sketches by Margaret Creedon O'Shea





Sketches by Margaret Creedon O'Shea





Sketches by Margaret Creedon O'Shea



Cédric Bikond

*Winner - 9th January 2023*

breathe airplane bollocks formaldehyde heaven

## Aloft

This is a special day. You know. The kind to leave an impression the moment you open your eyes. You barely slept in excitement, so you already float.

The family is in a frenzy, so no one pays attention to the bags under your lids... and you float.

The car is opened, the luggages are loaded, the chain formed by working ants that we are, busy under the clear sky of winter. In effort, you breathe out and your mind wanders off. Like that cloud, it floats.

Mom is a bit stressed. Dad says she is in "No bollocks mode" but we won't repeat it to her. He also said her nagging would be a real pain on the trip to the station. I doze off and on, cradled by the radio and its old tunes, some melody that floats.

It feels like heaven but nothing like travelling in an airplane. My sister will tuck me in, the craft's engine will sing a mechanical lullaby. There is a lady sitting on the seat in front of mine, wearing this white fur coat that fits her so well: she looks like an angel that reeks of death, a formal hide smelling of formaldehyde.

When I woke up she was gone, but the scent... It still floats.

Rosalin Blue  
9th May 2022  
angel leaves lift cowlick moist

Traces

*for Miley*

Wind weaves warmly  
through the trees, as leaves  
unfurl from twig and branch

Shoots of green break surface  
lifting the moist soil  
clods fall to the wayside

Spots of earth muddy the path  
that cuts the garden in half  
to where it meets the wall

A barberry stretches  
its fiery arms skywards  
whorled as a cowlick

Here the cat used to climb up  
to find her way beyond  
land's boundaries

Here she heard the call  
to the freedom of the hunter  
the wild challenging the wild

To the dangers of the street  
where darkness has no mercy  
and glaring eyes hit too hard

They came out of the blue.  
– Now an angel lifts her wings  
her unbroken spirit

Rosalin Blue

*9th May 2022*

angel leaves lift cowlick moist

Up from the sticky scraps  
on the tarmac – left behind  
only fur and blood

Dawn rises over empty lawn  
as her ethereal echo  
leaves a new trace in my garden

*13th June 2022*

sandwich delightful building change carpenter

### Perspectives

We describe the wind  
as blowing  
while in reality, it sucks.

What, if everything we see  
was actually backwards?

The butter on the outer side  
of the sandwich, delightful fillings  
wrapping the bun

Rosalin Blue

*13th June 2022*

sandwich delightful building change carpenter

While life happens  
on the outside of buildings  
destroyed by carpenters

What, if we don't lift our feet,  
but rather unhook them  
from gravity

What, if we walk towards  
our birth instead of death?

If birds, instead of flying  
on the winds of change,  
were to be lifted by the clouds

– How life's up-side-downs  
would fill with joy  
Our lows were to become  
pools of glistening gold!

So let's describe the wind  
as sucking, and may  
delightful fillings wrap our buns

Rosalin Blue  
*12th September 2022*  
foreign tongue botox drums flight

**Night of Feeling Foreign**

With swollen tongue I speak through clotted teeth  
like Botox in my eardrums takes out all vibes to hear

Though feet stomp rhythms into damp grass, and  
drums beat the dance, melodies of flute and sax  
caress, take flight and coil, weaving through the spine,  
I feel the music flow, body resounding in tune –

The mind cannot decipher tongue-twisting meanings  
behind words with no key to their store of lingo-history  
Can only see 2D: the image portrayed in their sound  
Cannot bridge the gap for missing roots – still...

Genetic echo reverberates through poetic body  
– Despite taking hold, I remain foreign

Rosalin Blue

*10th October 2022*

scrumptious ghost catkin alchemy desire

### **Hunter's Moon**

The hunter's moon is passing through  
electric swirls unleash its gales  
an alchemy of scents wafts in the air  
like ghosts of a year streaming from the soil

My eyes feast on your body in the silver light  
your scrumptious curves awaken my desire  
The fabric of the night melts under your breath  
flows over my skin in silken folds undulating

Fallen catkins softly stroke my cheeks  
mirror my velvet tips beneath your hands  
bathed in the chemistry of autumnal lightening  
as the Earth opens her heart to meet us

And wild as creatures of the dark we love  
like hunting through the forest  
rising in the mists of fragrance  
releasing our desire to the moon

Pam Campbell

*9th May 2022*

angel leaves lift cowlick moist

## Untitled

old arguments  
shadow-moisture lifted  
ball of confusion cowlicks our angel of the misbegotten  
leaves us backwards/forwards/sideways  
underground hidden          street running  
erased

*13th June 2022*

sandwich delightful building change carpenter

## Uvalde, Texas

nineteen children          fourth grade veterans  
learn to build a delightful story sandwich  
bread on the plate  
butter on the bread  
lettuce on the butter  
tomato on the lettuce  
meat on the tomato  
bread on the meat

but on May 24, 2022          the story changed  
two teachers first heard a chilling daytime-goodnight  
from a new carpenter of the plot  
who bulletted them and the children  
from butter on the bread...



Pam Campbell

*10th October 2022*

scrumptious ghost catkin alchemy desire

Tanzi, green-eyed catkin mine  
(or catakin as the Dutch say),  
transforms desire, pooling  
its ghostly alchemy,  
and leaps high in the air,  
paws stretched wide  
in glorious scrumptious flight.

*12th December 2022*

drones sleigh viscous bread growth

Didgeridoo drones  
trees creak wings flap  
viscous growth  
    breads snowfall  
sleigh runners cut anew  
    dream time.

*9th January 2023*

breathe airplane bollocks formaldehyde heaven

Out of my back pocket  
a poem limps,  
air-planed heavenly on formaldehyde fumes.  
Frenzied-letters bollocks to the page  
and breathes.

Jeff Cottrill

*Winner - 10th October 2022*

scrumptious ghost catkin alchemy desire

### **The Ghost of Lady Jane Catkin**

I feel a great, unquenched desire  
For a ghost that dwells upon the Shire  
She was rumoured to be Heathcliff's Catherine  
But I knew her once as Lady Jane Catkin  
I love her for her hair so messed  
And also for those scrumptious breasts  
She was once a master of alchemy  
With lots of help from her pal, Jimmy.

Margaret Creedon O'Shea  
*14th November 2023*  
pyjamas warning lights dust cat

Cat tale

Erudite T.S. Elliot  
Issued warning  
to one faded theatre cat.

“Soon, dear Gus,  
You must don ...for them ...  
a fake-fur coat.  
Dust whiskers in talc  
Purr through Grease paint  
Luxuriate in limelight.  
For a gold show will run  
well beyond Millennium.  
Then, in cellulide,  
you star in film  
(Even Dame Judy Dench  
Will come to clench in embarrassment).  
For this, dear Gus,  
will sink a flop.”

“Well, master, I must demur.  
Far happier here  
Retired on pyjama knees  
Between the covers  
squeezed flat,  
Old Possum's Book of Cats.  
Suits me well for I am old  
One forum will do  
For my cat tales to be told.”

Margaret Creedon O'Shea

9th January 2023

breathe airplane bollocks formaldehyde heaven

## Pickled

*"There are so many confitures,  
So many sweet preserves"*

\*Pickled in Post festive excess.

Encased fruit cake in this

slack flak jacket.

Plum-jammed with pudding.

Fodder for the Lipo kings.

\*Get used to smells of formaldehyde.

Pickled shapes marinate in time, where once they breathed

Boundless, endless heaven.

Living forever - alas, callow youth.

Paper airplane climb

Project their shapes in time.

Capsule names

in the name of anatomy.

Recast future present

For unskilled hands to practice.

\*Cryonics. Iced vanity.

Frozen in vain hope

Dream of their last lost face.

Awake to future decades -

Irreverent & alien.

Margaret Creedon O'Shea

*9th January 2023*

breathe airplane bollocks formaldehyde heaven

\*Beau locks the door.

Applies one layer more

To fading beauty.

"Getting old sucks", Cher said. Character lines dessicate.

Delineate.

Madame Beau recites,

"I am a unique confiture,

A very rare preserve,

Aged to special vintage.

Life lines. Love lines ...

The Riches that I richly deserve."

*13th March 2023*

teeth detention decompression instrument perpendicular

**Fine tooth**

What's with the perpendicular?

Stay tangential. Go off piste.

Forcible rigid patterns

Make teeth grit.

So determined to conform,

Drop plum Lines ... centre all.

Margaret Creedon O'Shea

*13th March 2023*

teeth detention decompression instrument perpendicular

Your gravity forever employed  
Pulls the craic back.  
Eliminate flaws.

Cold sterile instruments  
Squint from Petrie dish.  
Pliers, clamps.  
Manoeuvre, tweak, finesse.

Decompress pet. Let off steam.  
Give "detention-face"  
a rest.  
I don't rate LA smiles ...  
Roof party for this hard palate.

You sink your teeth in  
Way too far  
Tackle every topic.  
Give yourself a break  
Cut some slack.  
Be a tangent.  
Blind vectors are myopic.

Eliminate the perpendicular  
Paradigms must shift.  
Neuro plastic & adaptive  
Ebb & flux for the best fix.

Jim Crickard

*Winner - 13th June 2022*

sandwich delightful building change carpenter

**'I.O.U. Everything'**

Jesus didn't get on well with the other carpenters -  
they were always stealing his sandwiches.

They'd leave a lousy note to get another from 'Heaven's deli.'

Jesus would sulk in the corner, put in AirPods and make a call:  
"Hi Dad, it's me, you. They stole my lunch again."

A baguette would manifest like a tulip,  
a chicken fillet would fall in like an acorn,  
lettuce would present itself, emerging from earth  
After this delightful miracle, he'd go back to work  
building furniture with his mind, like he's playing The Sims,  
thinking of saying something to the others, of making a change.

Jim Crickard

*Winner - 13th February 2023*

slayer revolution plantain shampoo fizz

**'Everything, Everywhere, All at Once'**

The universe conspires to make me feel single  
when I see a love heart-shaped pizza in Lidl's.  
A revolution is happening in my heart (maybe it's Angina?)

No more to our Hollywood love. I meet you in all of our lives:  
Two Triads, a secret affair, I laugh and slap your black leather jacket  
setting off your gun, the bullet pierces through the portal -

Penetrates our medieval hut, dings off the metal tin  
Ricochets to our Rastafari' days, straight through your plantain  
Intercepts our gothic graveyard make out session  
Breaks the radio playing Slayer, our black lipstick smears...

Our worlds turn into a blur that looks like everything on a bagel  
Our lives fizz through the centre, volcanic eruption  
All of our futures, all of our pasts, endings, beginnings

The bullet cracks the glass of the love heart-shaped pizza.  
I'm unfazed, I've seen stranger things in Lidl's.  
I move along, filling my cart with groceries,  
forgetting that, in this universe, I don't need shampoo.



Abigail Kortering

*Winner - 11th July 2022*

swallow splash visions coattails share

Untitled

A vision of my youth—  
a decorated haunting that lurks  
in the in-between knitting of my psyche.

A small, smooth-bodied and small,  
a wisp of something not quite earth,  
and not quite sky, splashing against an airborne sea of cerulean.

Its ashy brown wings clasp together  
like hands that have known each other for so long,  
straining effortlessly against shivering winds.

A mother yanking on coat-tails—  
soft, nimble fingers pulling order into  
the chaos of a child.

The shared wholeness that pieced together shattered stillness.  
The feeling of warm hands tucked in cold ones  
while swallows dance in calmer seas than ours.

Shaunna Lee Lynch

*Winner - 23rd September 2022*

crone abundance picture hesitation anchovy

**Untitled**

Hesitation was her downfall,  
the Old Crone.

They say she used to do plays  
now she just talks to herself all day,  
duologues inside her head.

Never got her abundance,  
picture perfect ambition  
sacrificed for the kitchen.

Now she whispers couplets  
of Romeo and Juliet  
as she kneads anchovies  
into focaccia bread  
and wonders what could have been.

Shaunna Lee Lynch

*12th December 2022*

drones sleigh viscous bread growth

### Untitled

“Things will be different this year” the statement began,  
children ran screaming into weary mothers’ arms,  
as the global announcement hit heavy on the public.

“Due to the exponential growth  
of temperatures on the North Pole,  
Santa awoke last week  
to find his reindeers turned to viscose.  
Rudolph melted into a gelatinous mess  
of fur, antlers and a red nose.

Dasher, Prancer and Vixen,  
God knows how they felt as they melted-  
what’s left wouldn’t fill a bread roll.  
St.Nick blames himself, the old fool,  
having elves produce  
so much single use plastic  
surely contributed.

So we regret to inform you kids  
that this Christmas,  
Santa is too beside himself  
to sleigh down chimneys,  
so gifts will be delivered via drones.”

Shaunna Lee Lynch

*13th February 2023*

slayer revolution plantain shampoo fizz

Untitled

The most monumental thing  
that has ever happened me  
is finding Buffy the Vampire Slayer.  
I was ten years old,  
angry and bold  
in revolt of the gender I was assigned.  
When I saw this girl,  
feminine  
yet kicking and fighting  
absolutely dominating  
it was a revelation in my mind-  
girls could be more than kind,  
delicate and floral,  
as shampoo bottles would have you believe.  
The fizz of feminism rose within me  
like pink rosé.  
To this day,  
watching Buffy is my favorite thing to do,  
it's my comfort blanket.  
Some people love to skate,  
some love to eat fried plantains  
but I love Buffy the Vampire Slayer.

Róisín Leggett Bohan

*11th April 2022*

nocturnal beans echo intrusive liminal

## PLAY

the dead come out to play with me at night,  
open my liminal lobes, echo chants into my perturbed mind.  
they tickle my parietal cortex and pierce my bean-shaped brain,  
ever intrusive, forever savage; my closest nocturnal friends

*9th May 2022*

angel leaves lift cowlick moist

## Impermeable

She has become a wave to him from the other side of the street,  
his moist mouth once cowlicked her sentiments like the leaves  
she gathered up, crushed within the inside pockets of her gabardine.  
Lifting the cracks off his angel laugh, she barks back with a porous knowing smile.

*12th September 2022*

foreign tongue botox drums flight

And I had never really seen you before this...

flight to Charles de Gaulle,  
Your tongue side-stepping foreign sounds  
as if you held the breath of a clarinettist.  
The botoxed-sky lined the window seat of 15A,  
reminded me of so many times you said  
nothing.  
Even the ripple of a cloud could drum out misshapen words.

Róisín Leggett Bohan

*Winner - 13th March 2023*

teeth detention decompression instrument perpendicular

### **The Skellig Somniloquist**

My night walks have me rowing the currach. The sea side-slapping  
like the combustion of a percussion instrument.

You, buttoned up in my duffle coat, sucking  
on its perpendicular toggles.

When we moored beneath the warbling weight of gannets  
that marbled the rock edges, you barked at their conical eggs.

I carried you up the six hundred steps etched into granite, ribbing  
the parabolic curve of cliff.

To the monks in their beehive huts humming  
scriptures amongst the quiet detention of kittiwakes and basking sharks.

And the decompression of this moment made you nip at my fingers  
with your new soon to be gone teeth.

We watched on, as the monks sang a slow drift keening song.

Matt Mooney

*9th May 2022*

angel leaves lift cowlick moist

### Summer Fashion Show

Has an angel been about  
to lift our eyes to the lower skies  
these moist days in early May  
where treetops have grown crown toppers  
made of leaves of many shades of green -  
smoothies every side, shading us,  
cow-licked foliage for a festive season,  
a fine display of nature's wondrous ways -  
all dressed up for another summer fashion show.

Ryan Morgan

*Winner - 14th November 2023*

pyjamas warning lights dust cat

### **Taurid Roulette**

Into the stream  
Of shattered rock  
And ubiquitous dust  
Our planet careers  
With joyous disregard.  
Lights flare,  
Swarms of cat eyes  
Flash warning.  
Bright, hot,  
Hazard, beware,  
Don't cross the path  
Of more bulky beasts  
Lurking in the night,  
Lest we find ourselves  
Under the smiting paw  
Of those threatening brutes.

We stand and watch.  
Wishing, agog,  
A civilisation in pyjamas  
Under the catherine wheel display  
Of flickering popcorn bursting  
Into sensuous spectacle,  
Delighting in the refulgent dance  
Of dust and rock.  
Forgetting the inexorable pull  
Of gravity and extinction.



Brendan Mulcahy  
*12th September 2022*  
foreign tongue botox drums flight

### Christmas Overseas

Tongue and ham followed us  
To foreign shores each Christmas  
In packages padded with Kimberleys and Carroll's fags.

With swans swimming and drummers drumming,  
And Morecambe and Wise forever in full flight,  
We harvested as Irish a Christmas as we could.

But they were there, and we were here:  
Always a point when you felt Botox-numb.

*10th October 2022*  
scrumptious ghost catkin alchemy desire

### On balance, catkins

Catkins exist,  
though inclined to keep their presence hidden.

Ghosts don't.  
No more to work on there.

Desire more than passable,  
though championing Hurricane Carter  
wasn't one of Bob's smarter moves.

Alchemy is for the birds.

Scrumptious. My God, an adjective!  
A belly-filling pudding sort of word.

Rosemary Norman

*Winner - 11th April 2022*

nocturnal beans echo intrusive liminal

## BEANS

If you could go on through  
it would be better or not so bad

but no, you're held up  
between here as you used to know it

and nowhere, where you don't need to,  
it won't matter. The liminal

oppresses you with intrusive,  
or you think they are, thoughts of death –

if you could tell what that is –  
not calls even, echoes of what's done

already, and you have to come back  
to life which is nocturnal visits

to the toilet and sleeping in the daytime  
when we'll ask again if you're o.k.

and you'll say yes. Yes, I am...  
only I'm not full of beans.

Fionnuala O'Connell  
*Winner - 12th September 2022*  
foreign tongue botox drums flight

Untitled

Tongue twisting, breaking,  
Hating the sound of my foreign drums,  
Mouth taking steps to remember  
My mother's tongue.  
Home seems further away with  
every mistake my mouth makes.  
Eroding as memory fades,  
Botoxes enrage.  
We try to create space  
In a place that suffocates  
Awaking from flights as  
My mind dissociates,  
It's hard to stay awake these days.

Lauren O'Donovan

*12th December 2022*

drones sleigh viscous bread growth

### Seasonal Greens

As effortless as a star falling,  
she shrugs with one shoulder  
and takes a sip from her wine glass  
through pursed fire-engine lips.

In the background, a low alarm  
drones on like the theme track  
in a movie of someone else's life.

She talks about growth;  
how she is trying, but he isn't.  
How his words are viscous,  
slathering everything she thought they had  
with sour clots as thick as bread.  
How the gap between their backs in bed  
is a minefield of what the therapist said.  
How the more he tries to win,  
the less she cares about him.

She calls the waiter with one raised finger,  
sighs when he slips by, her freshly manicured  
index still pointing at the ceiling in protest.

Outside, a homeless man in a red jumper  
wears a false beard with elastic straps.  
He snaps the reins of an invisible sleigh  
and screams.

Rosie O'Regan

*8th August 2022*

angel offshore harbour laugh seagulls

## Offshore

Fishermen feed guts to seagulls

Angel white bellies beneath cloud tinted wings

Swoop and soar

Their cackled laugh

The harbour song

Catherine Ronan

*9th May 2022*

angel leaves lift cowlick moist

### **Celtic Summer**

It is Bealtaine and I pay  
My angel with the first  
Lift of dew from fairy hosts

The Light God Lú treats the buds  
To soft kisses  
Moist with promise

Leaves rebirth and children leave  
And I cowlick every curl home  
As the mirror forgets my name

In the month of May  
I still climb The Hill of Uisneach  
To light the biggest fire ever

And wash my face in new summer

Catherine Ronan

*Winner - 12th December 2022*

drones sleigh viscous bread growth

**Proposal**

One snowy evening at a quarter to four  
There was a very loud knocking on my front door  
Santa says – let's go for a sleigh ride  
Much too cold Santa – let's go inside  
He had sacks of goodies and tricks galore  
And he laid them all out on my living room floor  
Viscous treats never seen before  
Focaccia and sour dough – very exotic bread  
Yeast kept rising to the oven in my head  
There were chocolates, flowers and very fine wine  
So we had ourselves a very good time  
Mrs Claus and myself have divorced you know  
So there is no reason why we should not go  
But Santa Baby, I don't like reindeers and I don't like snow  
So he sent the drones home and we settled in for the night  
Snuggled up tight! I stroked his plush, red velveteen  
And he showed me his nipple piercing - very seldom seen  
Look he said, we should not tarry – I think it is time to marry  
Now Mr Red, I take an oath, I have seen your fantastic growth  
But Santa I cannot be steered  
I cannot marry you my dear  
Because you only come  
Just once a year!

Catherine Ronan

*13th February 2023*

slayer revolution plantain shampoo fizz

### Confess

We are metaverse lovers

Children of the revolution

Realms collide in champagne nebulae

Earth fills my lungs in sinister lair

I knight you with the pet name of 'Slayer'

We vibrate as two strings

On a plantain tapestry

Supernova lovers on a metaphysical bed

Our stars fuse and fizz in the sensuous

Shampoo of anything but squeaky clean

I confess and confess my galaxy

Of timeless desire for you



Colm Scully  
*9th January 2023*

breathe airplane bollocks formaldehyde heaven

**January in boarding school 1982**

The formaldehyde froze in the glass jars  
on the top shelf of the old school lab.  
Our breath crackled on exhalation  
The tips of our toes clinked against each other.  
We fired paper airplanes lathered with icicled spit.  
Outside, two priests in soutanes  
shovelled frosted coal into the school boiler.

Science class started late.  
Father Talbot arrived with rosey cheeks and mittened hands.  
My cold fingers left a beaker fall to the parquet floor.  
I shouted out Bollocks.  
The hurley was retrieved and I received five slogs across the arse,  
then five swipes of the leather to the palms of my hands.  
I sat back in my seat contented  
glowing in the warmth imparted  
by the heaven sent punishment.

## S'phongo

*8th August 2022*

angel offshore harbour laugh seagulls

### Preacher

'Hahahaha'

His laugh sent the Seagulls flapping towards the harbour island,

as the yacht bobbed above the salty waters of the Bahamas

He'd done it, all his dreams were accomplished

'Hahaha Gullible people they are',

he smiled knowing his offshore account was stacked for generations

'My blood will celebrate me til infinity'

'Hahaha, gullible people they are,'

As he imagined his congregants waiting for the angel of fortune.

S'phongo

*13th March 2023*

teeth detention decompression instrument perpendicular

### A Gvt Holiday

“Mr Truth will be placed on remand until the government is back from holiday.”

Ten years he spent in detention,

his teeth forced to remind him of that slimey sticky porridge they called food,

knowing well it's control dressed as good will and inclusive governance,

an instrument shoving more fat down the pig's mouth.

Orwell taught well.

His words like water,

easy to ingest,

easier to decompress...

Now Google, please remind me what perpendicular means...

Thanks dude.

Last line...

Writing political poetry is easy,

just make sure your rhymes are perpendicular

and your stanzas are left-leaning or right-leaning

## Máire Stephens

*Winner - 8th August 2022*

angel offshore harbour laugh seagulls

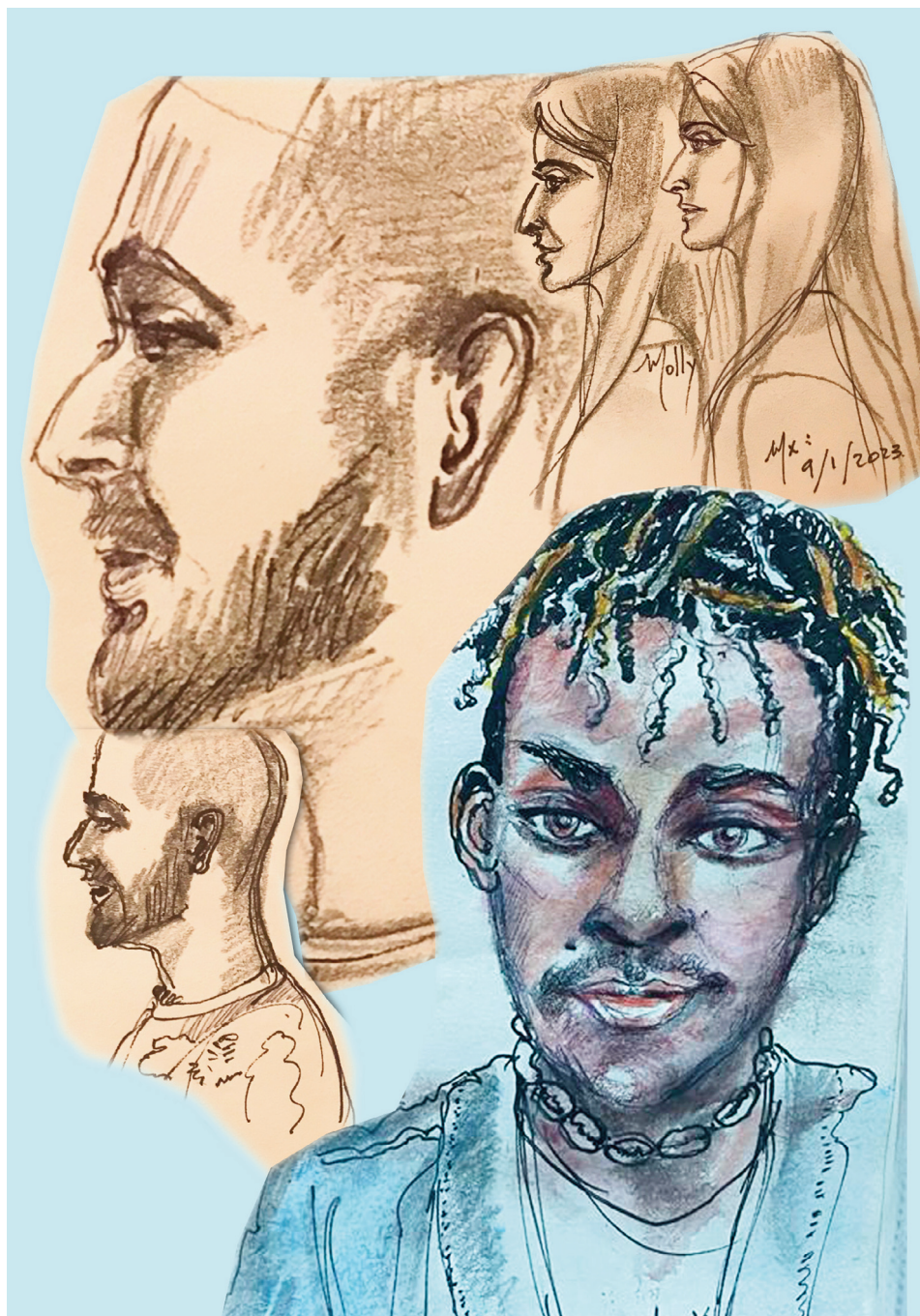
### **White Feathers**

White feathers torn from angel wings,  
God's laugh turned to mundane things,  
We Seagulls soar across the sky  
Screeching call and piercing cry.  
Polluted harbour where rubbish floats,  
White feathers soar o'er offshore boats.  
You call us vermin of the air,  
Raise your fists, but we don't care.  
Sandwich clutched in chubby hand,  
Cornet fallen on the sand,  
We follow ships across the bay  
Dive for the fish they throw away.  
What you discard or seek to keep  
We'll take what're we want to eat.  
White feathers ours, the angels heard.  
White feathers ours, we devil birds.

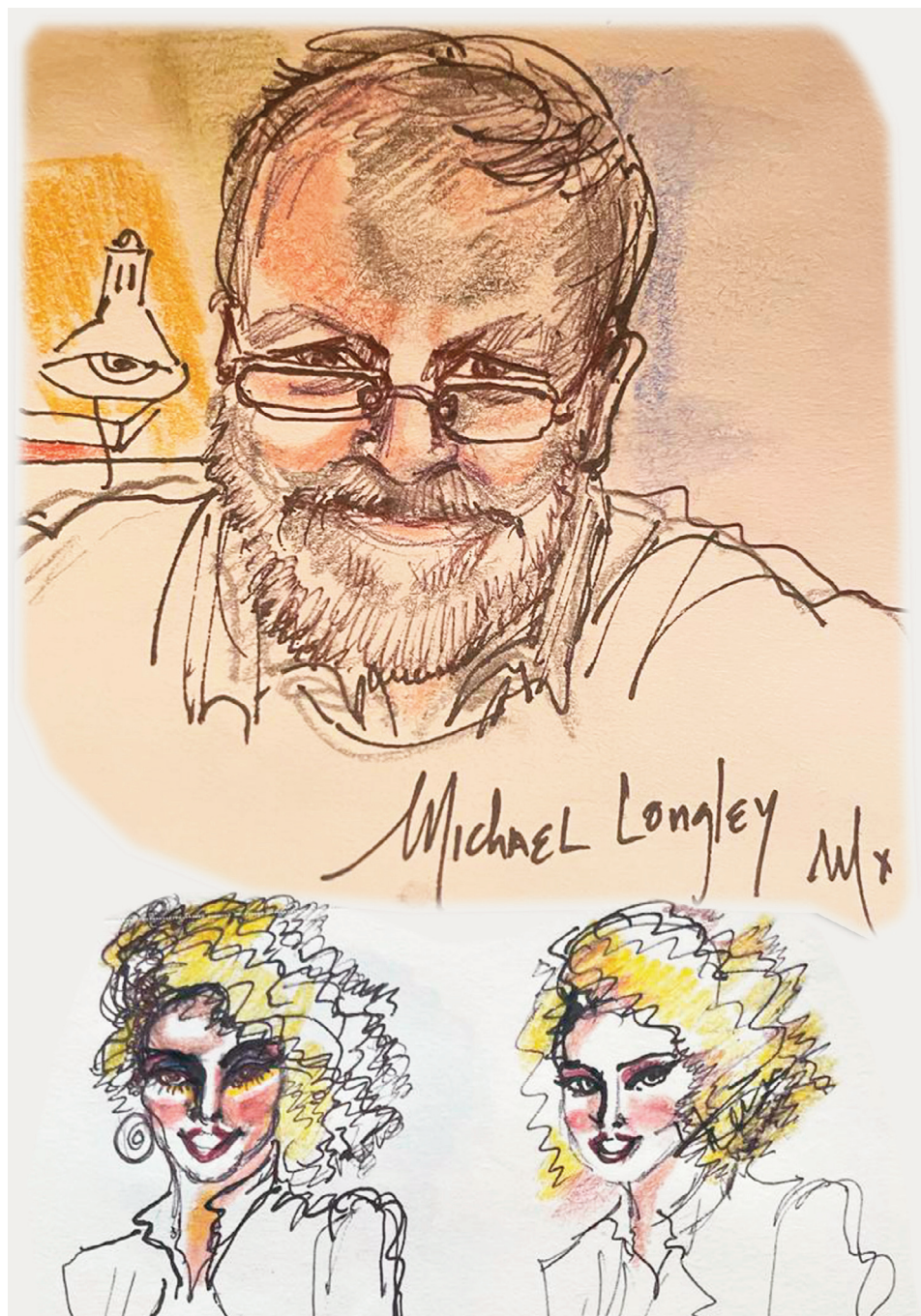


The  
Long Valley  
Bar

Sketches by Margaret Creedon O'Shea







# International Poetry-Film Competition Shortlist 2022

## Screening A

available now at [vimeo.com/775368685](https://vimeo.com/775368685)

<b>*Winner*</b>	<b>Jelle Meys</b> (Belgium)	<i>La luna asoma</i> (The moon appears)
<b>A. Korniienko &amp; Anna Kaliakina</b> (Ukraine)		3:45 a.m.
<b>Marta Ribeiro, Tiago Pimenta &amp; Alice do Carmo</b> (Portugal)		<i>Gravura / Essence</i>
<b>Pat Boran</b> (Ireland)		<i>Out of the Blue</i>
<b>John D. Scott</b> (USA / Canada)		<i>One Art</i>
<b>S'phongo</b> (Zimbabwe)		<i>Thru Hell</i>
<b>Angie Siveria &amp; Oskar Schuster</b> (Germany)		<i>Miramis</i>
<b>Matthew Thompson</b> (Ireland / USA)		<i>This is not a confessional poem</i>
<b>Marry Waterson</b> (England)		<i>Selkie</i>
<b>Eric Felipe-Barkin</b> (USA)		<i>Ghazal for the Diaspora</i>
<b>Mary Tighe &amp; Cormac Culkeen</b> (Ireland)		<i>For the Rockin' Bus Driver</i>
<b>Glenn Marshall</b> (Northern Ireland)		<i>Queueing for the Supercomputer</i>
<b>James E. Kenward</b> (Germany)		<i>Borne</i>
<b>Susan McCann</b> (USA)		<i>There's a certain Slant of light</i>
<b>Brian Mackenwells</b> (Ireland)		<i>Writing Advice</i>





# International Poetry-Film Competition Shortlist 2022

## Screening B

available now at [vimeo.com/775468943](https://vimeo.com/775468943)

<b>Avramenko Petro</b> (Ukraine)	<i>Confession of an unknown soldier</i>
<b>Diek Grobler</b> (S. Africa / The Netherlands)	<i>Transparency of the Sole</i>
<b>Marius Grose</b> (UK)	<i>Iktsuarpok</i>
<b>Richard Soriano Legaspi</b> (Philippines)	<i>But More Often</i>
<b>Philip Spillane</b> (Ireland)	<i>The Dunkettle Roundabout</i>
<b>Nicholas McGaughey</b> (Wales)	<i>Buying a Camper</i>
<b>Alexander Jones</b> (UK)	<i>Strata</i>
<b>Luke Morgan</b> (Ireland)	<i>Rodent</i>
<b>Jane Glennie</b> (UK)	<i>Because Goddess is Never Enough</i>
<b>Marc Neys</b> (Belgium)	<i>Someone was Always dying somewhere</i>
<b>Ian Gibbins</b> (Australia)	<i>The Life We Live Is Not Life Itself</i>
<b>Fiona Tinwei Lam, Lara Renaud &amp; Quinn Kelly</b> (Canada / USA)	<i>Merry</i>
<b>Pat Boran</b> (Ireland)	<i>Immigrants Open Shops</i>
<b>Janet Lees</b> (Isle of Man)	<i>Descent</i>
<b>David Ian Bickley</b> (Ireland)	<i>Forest Earth</i>



# International Poetry-Film Competition Shortlist 2022

## Irish Selection

available now at [vimeo.com/775181066](https://vimeo.com/775181066)

Dennis Earlie	<i>Lost Souls</i>
Aideen Cooney	<i>Nettles Netherland</i>
Pat Boran	<i>Lost and Found</i>
Matthew Thompson	<i>My Friends</i>
Lauren O'Donovan	<i>Latrinavox</i>
Anna Loi	<i>Sinking</i>
Matthew Thompson	<i>The Echo at Coole</i>
Phil Spillane & Angeni	<i>Memory Hair</i>
Barra Convery	<i>Finding Mothers</i>
David Ian Bickley	<i>The Thorn Tree</i>
Jennifer Redmond	<i>The Cloud Architect</i>
Pat Boran	<i>The Inverse Wave</i>
Thomas Pollock	<i>Breath Poem</i>
David Forsythe	<i>Pilgrim</i>
Fiona Aryan	<i>My Dream Out</i>
Aideen Cooney	<i>Descent of an Irish Sea Goddess</i>





Ó Bhéal's 11th Poetry-Film Competition is open for submissions  
from 1st May - 31st August 2023

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 2021

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 Festival in November 2023  
One winner will receive the festival prize for best poetry-film

**Free to Enter!**

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



## **McNamara Slam Winners 2022-2023**

11 April	Rosemary Norman
9 May	Catherine Ronan
13 June	Jim Crickard
11 July	Abigail Kortering
8 August	Máire Stephens
12 September	Fionnuala O'Connell
23 September	Shaunna Lee Lynch
10 October	Jeff Cottrill
14 November	Ryan Morgan
12 December	Catherine Ronan
9 January	Lauren O'Donovan
13 February	Cédric Bikond
13 March	Róisín Leggett Bohan

## **Guest Poets 2022-2023**

11 April	Marcella Remund, David W Evans & Peter Arvan Manos
9 May	Diarmuid Johnson and Róisín Sheehy
13 June	Amanda Bell and Susan Rich
11 July	Rosamund Taylor and Richie McCaffery
8 August	Sujana Crawford and John Bernard
12 September	Isobel Ní Riain and Áine Uí Fhoghlú
23 September	Stanley Notte and Dmytro Lazutkin
10 October	2022 Munster Poetry Slam & Abby Oliveira
14 November	Jane Ayres and Maurice Scully
12 December	Michael Longley
9 January	Luke Morgan and Molly Twomey
13 February	New Creative Writing from UCC
13 March	Jodie Hollander and Adam Wyeth

11<sup>th</sup>

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## Five Words Poetry Competition

1st Prize €750

2nd Prize €500

3rd Prize €250

Have you tried the Five Words Poetry Challenge?

It's only €5 to enter ...

Every Tuesday from 11th April 2023 to 30th January 2024, 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 2024 and invited to read at Ó Bhéal in Cork on the 8th of April 2024.

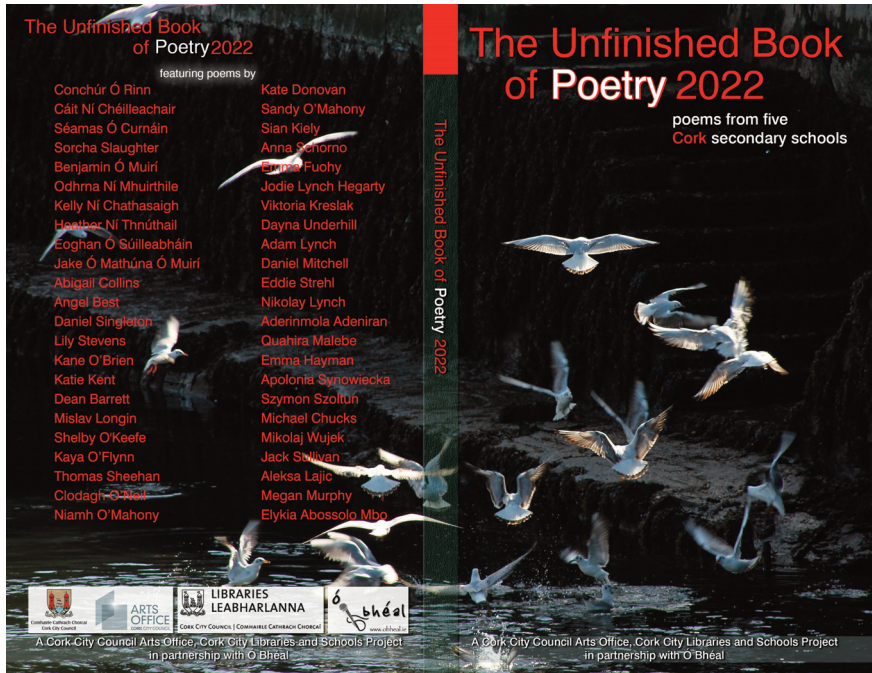
This year's Judge is Theo Dorgan

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





# Ó Bhéal Publications 2022



a hybrid poetry festival from Cork, Ireland  
**25th-27th November 2022**

in-person @ Nano Nagle Place  
 online @ [www.obheal.ie/winterwarmer](http://www.obheal.ie/winterwarmer)



5.00pm **Fri 25th November**



Fiona Kelleher



Micheál Ó hAodha



Marion F. Morrison



Myles Campbell

7.00pm



Yairen Jerez Columbié



Forrest Gander



Catherine Foley

9.00pm



Isaac Xubín



Allie Rigby



Jennie Feldman

7.00pm **Sat 26th November**



Pippa Little



Karla Brundage



Scott McKendry

9.00pm



Marcus Mac Conghail



Joelle Taylor



Moyra Donaldson

**Sun 27th November**

11.30am – 2.00pm

two screenings  
 (15 poetry films each)



3.00pm

with special guest  
 reigning All-Ireland Slam Champion



Shaunna Lee Lynch

**Sat 26th November**

11.00am – 12.00pm

a single screening  
 of 16 poetry films



12.30pm



Eleanor Rees

POEPLIT II  
 Universidade de Vigo



Greg Quieri



Matthew Geden



Cornelia Gräbner



Mary Noonan

3.00pm

Jeff Cottrell  
 Catherine Badin  
 S'phongo  
 Róisín Leggett Bohan  
 Antonio Di Mare

Closed Mic Set



Máire Stephens  
 Brendan Duffin  
 Ségolène  
 Pam Campbell  
 Jason J Fisher



Marguerite Quinlan



Margaret Kilcoyne



Marian Lovett



Helen Hastings



Spider Monkey



Claire Cormican



Cormac Fitzgerald



Barry Curran



Leon Dunne



Carán MacArtain



Lauren McNamara



Jim Crickard





Sketches by Margaret Creedon O'Shea

UCC: CREATIVE : Long Valley  
WRITING

O'Shea









The winning poems and shortlist from the 10th International Five Words poetry competition feature in this, our sixteenth volume. Entrants are given just seven days to write and submit poems which include all five words posted on our website each Tuesday for 42 weeks.

From over 480 entries, Judge Victoria Kennefick selected a shortlist of twelve superb poems.

April 10th 2023 marks Ó Bhéal's 683rd session.

Our congratulations to this year's winners ...

**David Ross Linklater (1st)**

**Alison McCrossan (2nd)**

**Glyn Matthews (3rd)**



Also included are poems from Ó Bhéal's Monday evening hybrid (in the room & on zoom) Five Word Challenges, held since April 2022, as are sketches of guest poets and regulars made by fine artist, musician & poet Margaret Creedon O'Shea. The five words used in Ó Bhéal's live events are provided spontaneously by those present and the winner is chosen by audience response. While these compositions are written within 15 minutes and may be considered first drafts at the time of initial sharing, writers may alter their poems prior to publication here. Sometimes they appear in journals, collections and other publications. The Five Word Challenge is also known as the McNamara Slam, conceived by poetry aficionado and emcee Gerry McNamara.