



On the occasion of Ó Bhéal's tenth Anniversary

10th April 2017

twelve shortlisted poems from the 4th

Five Words International Poetry Competition

and

poems from the last fifty Five Word Challenges

(11th April 2016 - 3rd April 2017)

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

The Long Valley
Foras na Gaeilge
The Arts Council
Cork City Council
Cork City Libraries
The Indie Cork Film Festival
The UCC English Department
The Munster Literature Centre
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NUIG Galway
The Farmgate Café
The Community Foundation for Ireland
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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 X

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FOREWORD

The launch of *Five Words Vol X* on April 10th 2017 happens to be Ó Bhéal's tenth anniversary and 504th event. This date was a make-or-break deadline for us to secure arts funding, or the series would be discontinued. We're delighted to report that as of January 2017 Ó Bhéal is in receipt of a revenue grant from the Cork City Council Arts Office, and is now able to continue beyond its tenth year and to plan for the longer-term. 2017 has also seen a small increase in Arts Council funding and the return of our vital Foras na Gaeilge grant. Focus has now turned towards European funding bodies and networks, as all national avenues seem to have been explored.

Our 4th Winter Warmer festival was a delightful success and worked brilliantly in the Kino, even though we'll need to find another home soon, due to its impending closure. With a serious boost in volunteers co-ordinated by Stan Notte, the festival worked more efficiently and comfortably than ever. The Winter Warmer continues to attract interest and funding and is moving full steam ahead, with an ever-growing international profile and audience numbers. Similarly Ó Bhéal's two competitions continue to attract new writers and filmmakers, while the poetry-film competition drew a large increase in entries, and is now being toured annually to Clare Island Film Festival and features in the 2017 Belfast Film Festival, Stanzas in Limerick and at POEMARIA, in Vigo. Ó Bhéal is also in the process of developing poetry-film workshops, which will also be able to accompany the films when on tour.

The Community Foundation for Ireland grant was a crucial and unexpected boon in 2016, successfully presenting eight elaborate 1916 commemorative events to mark the centenary of The Rising, featuring many of the country's leading poets. *The Unfinished Book of Poetry* moves from strength to strength, working with over fifty young writers this year, along with five poets, five libraries, Cork Life Centre and four Cork city schools. The book will be launched at Cork City Library on April 26th.

Ó Bhéal's San Francisco twinning exchange is progressing leaps and bounds thanks to the innovative genius of poet-professor Raina J.Léon, who also read at the Winter Warmer last November. As Ó Bhéal's official twinning partner at St.Mary's College, Raina has arranged for Kathy D'Arcy to visit San Francisco later this year for a series of workshops and readings and we're expecting more poets and students from the Bay Area to visit before long. Coventry-Cork twinning is also back on track this year, with Coventry poets set to read in July.

Thanks to everyone who contributed to the International and weekly competitions in our tenth year, for all the vital donations and to the superb audiences and writers and artists who make it what it is. We'll do our level best to keep it growing. *Sláinte!*

Paul Casey
Director
Ó Bhéal

"The main facts in human life are five:
birth, food, sleep, love and death."

E. M. Forster

4th Five Words International Poetry Competition

SHORTLIST

Winner

John Baylis Post (Ireland) *Identifications*

Highly Commended

Siobhan Campbell (Ireland) *Milk*

Tamara Miles (U.S.A.) *The Safety*

Other Shortlisted Poems

Jane Boxall (U.S.A) *LOVELOCKS*

Siobhan Campbell (Ireland) *Eve*

Margaret Mc Carthy (Ireland) *Only Connected*

Ted O'Regan (Ireland) *Perspective*

Derek Sellen (England) *THE ZOMBIE-MAKER*

Tamara Miles (U.S.A.) *Minor Deities*

Margaret Mc Carthy (Ireland) *A fickle god*

Jane Boxall (U.S.A) *STITCHES*

John D. Kelly (Northern Ireland) *The Buttonhole*

John Baylis Post

Overall Winner

fibre house mere shoelace assume

Identifications

This shoebox is its own museum, enclosing the same variety of odds and ends, artefacts, significances. The statue is from the Pacific, the notice says beside the remembered stairs just inside the lid; Ionic columns lead into a fold of tissue with a possibly Iron Age piece of pot from the garden; inside someone's mother's prayer-book there's a café where the Reading Room used to be, but no books; the Rubens St Christopher is the one Lucy was wearing when the train hit her — it isn't dented.

He gave her a random stone picked up on Ben Bulben the day she proposed. The stone became a ring. She kept the idea of it in her underwear drawer. The stone is a stone, somewhere. The idea died when she did. And no one knows who he was.

I like small-town museums; not the ones with aggressive themes and interpretative graphics, but mere cabinets of curiosities: five broken clay pipes, found when they dug a new drain at the Post Office; some Victorian fans given by Miss Farr (Miss Farr?); three albumen prints of unknown men with sidewhiskers, against a church wall looking exactly like the church wall now, so there's no information except that three men looked like that, and who they may have been is buried in the churchyard. There's a tag from a Roman shoelace, someone's assumed, but it's bent lead with fragments of fibres and nothing to say.

That ship that sailed into the bottle, sixty miles inland,

John Baylis Post

Overall Winner

fibre house mere shoelace assume

isn't a good one, and the bottle is clean; not even fingerprints.
Nine, yes nine, tiles from the old workhouse floor, salvaged
when it was bulldozed for the new industrial estate,
the derelict sixties one on the north side of town;
except the tiles could have come from anywhere
that used red-brick tiles for flooring — I can't see
starvation, typhus, or separation on these in particular.
And there's a story not attached to that Bronze Age skull
which might have belonged to a warrior or a potter
or a saint or a thief or a lover, who may have died
violently, or not, near the playpark by the chapel; the caption
sets out meticulously what isn't known about him.

There's no label on Lucy's St Christopher. She has no story.

Siobhan Campbell

Highly Commended

milk enclave fall tissue orbit

Milk

Heads to tails, enclave of the haggart,
their dark pupils orbit in white eyes
as if they have seen the fall twice over
and are bored.

These are the milk cows, heifered once.

They won't feel the tissue calf again
nor make moan in the birth stall.

Their days have a shape beyond the sun,
the milking shed that gleams its steely beckon.

Moments when, backs to the hedge,
the dripping haw above them seems a sign
that somewhere else there is another heaven
where a slow lowing may still rumble on,
wending the sides of hills, finding the thorny gaps –
a long flat O that comes from the base notes,
that curls to a tongue of harsh. This is lowing.

A sound that makes dairy farmers fret
and as it grows inside them like a tampering
they think of arrivals, returnings, and not
just the sun or spring or birds back from
over-winter but nudging feelings out of
a deep hold, the lowing wells until a crispness
settles, when with their cows they know
that they are hard to love, and that
in every field there's some pretending.

Tamara Miles
Highly Commended
provoke lock salt black conundrum

The Safety

My cousin left his shotgun, safety off, propped
up against the house, and when his father
saw it, in front of me he threw it far
out into the lake and said,

That's one mistake you'll never make
again -- and as my cousin was brother
to me (I had no other), I felt the shame
and loss near as much as he. After that, he always
seemed angry, easily provoked.

Once he offered me a motorcycle ride,
and determined to hide a throat that raged
and burned, I went. By the time we got home,
I was wrecked with fever, spent, and assigned
to bed with a gargle mix of salt and meds,
and he was in trouble again –

this time I was the cause. He was older,
and responsible for me, they said.

Eyes near black with fury, he asked,
Why didn't you tell me you were sick?
Because I wanted to go with you, I said,
and I knew you wouldn't take me if I told.

It's one mistake he'd never make again.

A conundrum, I guess, why for love
or other grown-up hobbies we turn as reckless

Tamara Miles
Highly Commended
provoke lock salt black conundrum

as a loaded weapon and end up deep in water
we can't see through, locked down in mud
and rust

where the fierce and angry gods have thrown
and separated us.

Jane Boxall

Shortlisted

provoke lock salt black conundrum

LOVELOCKS

A padlock has a stiff swan's neck – a beak
and an anti-beak, securing what's yours
forevermore. In the lake, it will sink.

Ubiquitous and ugly, cheap brass scores
a tight, wonky scale on the chain-link fence:
the skimmed lines of a contract, holding fast;
botched braces placed by too many dentists;
they wait for the boltcutter or for rust.

The keys go free – thrown away, or flown home.

Mute and fruitless, locks cling to the cordon.
Each one hangs its head – the mechanism
aches for prod and swivel, to be undone

like that three-word conundrum that demands
only its own echo for protection.

Siobhan Campbell

Shortlisted

flown proof hinge date disturb

Eve

The fields and the walls, the fields and the walls
the walk down to the strand following tracks of cows
 who know where the stream flows in
 who drink from the tribute stream.

No-one told you that you are made of this but you know
tuft and hallow, cow pat and thistle, the spiked and the soft
what gives and what resists, wind-rushed dust fiends
twirled in small tornados, reminders of other powers
unnamed but acknowledged.

 You are this. If you had to recompose,
these would appear: land-line bleached to a westerly sun,
hedges leaning into shadow, the threat
of hawthorn casting a curse for later, shucked peas
in a green popped mouth, stooks of turf footed to dry
so they will burn heat into the winter.

 And the horses –
fen wide they breed horizon, flattening the fields and walls.
You, tucked into a ridge, maybe a lazy bed, abandoned in
famine. The horses arrival, snort-still they halt out of speed,
half-turn, a rearing eye roll, seeing what you cannot,
manes wet, tails high and then the shift –
they decide against all odds to graze, while your heart
stores the flown proofs, the hinge between theirs
and yours. You are not disturbed but date this down
 as if a new year is not illusion.

Margaret McCarthy

Shortlisted

cake shout blatant electric asterisk

Only Connected

Let me eat cake my dear, let me eat cake
Put away all of the bread.
Tell no sad stories, brighten my day with
A few blatant lies instead.
Let me drink wine and don't mention the dangers,
And next morning try not to shout;
Bring paracetamol and maybe a fry
As I stub my cigarette out.
Try not to clean up each curse with an asterisk
When I set feelings free from my heart.
Light me a fire that is coal, not electric,
Bring me right back to the start.
Back to a world that seemed to be safe
Where a god looked on from above
And scientists tried to turn metal to gold
And all could be conquered by love
Put away probes and internet feeds
Burn all the data collected
Let us live happily, dying together
Not competing. Only connected.

Ted O'Regan

Shortlisted

trot shadow sloth feral frozen

Perspective

'For fear', was mother's
mantra in my childhood;
her suspicions grew, matured,
became so great, she consigned
me, aged eight, into the
gulag of grandmother's
care, internal exile on
my uncle's farm. I heard
the eager trot of calves;
they barged the buckets
spilling food across dark
shadows; uncle swung
his stick, struck a feral
blow; the nearest beast
sagged like a swaying
sloth. In frozen fear, I
stood splay-mouthed, watched
the eyes roll in these beasts,
and beads of scared sweat
erupt on his pale scalp.

Time stopped, until the
calf regained composure,
posture; slunk away. I
breathed again but felt
this violence cure like
hardening concrete.

Two decades on. I
Once attacked a door; it
had become unhinged and

Ted O'Regan

Shortlisted

trot shadow sloth feral frozen

fell upon our new-bought
fridge. When temper flares,
it starves the brain. In pain,
confused, we strike to damage
some, or all, that falls
within our violent sweep.
I see this clearer now
at night, with tired eyes
that cannot read; a mind
that will not let me sleep.

Derek Sellen
Shortlisted
culture noise lace leaf abort

THE ZOMBIE-MAKER

A thing grown from a culture in the lab,
this creature is a tracery of cells,
as flimsy as lace, moving in drifts,
gathering itself into airy gowns.
It is too late to abort it as it sheds
offspring from its blossoming tendrils.
It leaves its first victim behind it,
his face in its tail like Magritte's wrapped man.

It is drape, it is veil, it is flounce,
it is a dress we must wear
as it advances, seeping under doors,
gliding through vents, cascading down
stairs and corridors in noiseless pursuit.
We are enfolded in its foam and syrup,
our bones hollowed out, our flesh honeycombed,
as a bug serrates and perforates a leaf,

until we are nothing but a gummy texture,
an acid scent. It hardens round us,
a carapace, an exoskeleton, a case
for new organs formed out of the floss.
Senses return, as if ears and eyes and pores
unseal, we are almost what we were.
We have lost, though, any sense of a self,
we are the creature's raiment and it wears us as its mask.

Tamara Miles

Shortlisted

provoke wear minor heron muddle

Minor Deities

We were at Hilton Head.

I'd heard the resident blue heron
at our rented townhouse
pond was choking on a rope
and would almost surely die.

A vet had been summoned.

I began to pray, to provoke
a distant God into relinquishing
his insufferable hold on life
and death for this one hour,
to spare the great bird.

In regular life, in the comings
and goings, I wear a face of proud
intellectualism, make fun
of the absurdities of religion,

say all paths the same
to whatever glory,
whatever neoclassic nirvana
we may find at the end,

but for the minor god knotted
up in the throat outside I turned
to my old ways and muddled
through a murky intercession.

I do not know how it turned
out. We left the place that day
before I learned for sure whether
either god would live on.

Margaret McCarthy

Shortlisted

octagon synopsis decide thread heart

A fickle god

The bins had to go out
But there on the side door
A shard of sunlight
Slashed through shadows
And exposed a spider's web;
A delicate, elegant octagon
Each translucent thread joined in
A synopsis of beauty,
The author at the heart
Hungry. Waiting.
The bins had to go out.
Time to decide.
A soft violent trembling
A silken doom.
Delicate as faith.
Deadly as religion.
Improbable transient strength.
Unknown to the spider,
A fickle god decided that
The bins could wait.

Jane Boxall

Shortlisted

concuss journey drape tick bath

STITCHES

Anne Lamott's *Stitches*
is unreadable in the
large-print edition

I mistakenly
ordered. The font's dark edges
stab the white-draped page

in three dimensions.
The lungs of each word have been
vertiginously

over-inflated –
my eyes tick with the pressure.
I shut the hardback

and dive into the
same old nightmare – aeroplanes
zipping on black wires

in three dimensions.
Our small words are dissolved. Jets
concuss the blue sky.

When I wake up, it's
into another migraine's
TippEx-speckled draft.

Jane Boxall

Shortlisted

concuss journey drape tick bath

I wait for bright worms
to complete their gyrations
across my vision

until the disco's
closed and even the stragglers
go home. I open

blackout drapes, admit
a sunbath to the bedroom.
In the sticky trap

that was intended
for a brown-recluse spider,
a cricket has made

John D. Kelly

Shortlisted

upend tentacle myopic shudder swept

The Buttonhole

The cute button
 of her soft belly
has you pinned

like a sucker
 may be held as prey
on the tip of a tentacle.

You are navel gazing
 again, conscious
of her slight shudder

but oblivious to the pain.
 You nearly done?
Stop! Stop! Hurry up!

End it! she cries,
 but you are not fazed
by her call.

You are swept up
 in the flood of it all,
caught in myopic trance.

You smell only blood
 until a fragrance of rose
is eventually born

as you carefully form
 the delicate petals
of a boutonnière —

your heart on a sleeve —
 colour and thorn
in the sanguine out-and-in

of your tattooist's iron,
 as you circle it
on a canvas of skin.

Judges' Comments

Afric McGlinchey

Identifications (John Baylis Post)

The poem itself is a cabinet of curiosities, and our eye is directed towards a myriad of stray details – but the emotional resonance is most powerfully felt with the introduction of the St Christopher and Lucy's name. Although the last line tells us: 'There's no label on Lucy's St Christopher. She has no story', the poet has given her one. An absolutely wonderful poem, and a worthy winner.

Milk (Siobhan Campbell)

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

The Safety (Tamara Miles)

A rhythmic narrative, convincingly told. I particularly loved the line, 'why for love or other grown-up hobbies...' This is intense hero-worship, vividly remembered and evoked.

Eve (Siobhan Campbell)

A very painterly poem, brushstrokes gradually clarifying into a landscape. Vivid descriptions of the horses and interesting use of the second person.

A fickle god (Margaret McCarthy)

A well-caught hesitancy, on the brink of a decision. And we all recognise that moment of playing god. Dramatic similes: 'delicate as faith. Deadly as religion.'

STITCHES (Jane Boxall)

I liked the unexpected images, which suggest patterns, and violent verbs which echo the speaker's own pain: the font stabbing the page, the jets concussing the sky.

Judges' Comments

Afric McGlinchey

Perspective (Ted O'Regan)

The parallels and patterns here are effective. And the striking simile: 'I...felt this violence cure like hardening concrete.' Also, the aphorism: 'When temper flares, it starves the brain.'

THE ZOMBIE-MAKER (Derek Sellen)

I like the mystery of this creature and the development of the narrative. Also the language: a 'tracery of cells'; a 'carapace'; an 'exoskeleton'. An engaging poem.

Minor Deities (Tamara Miles)

A non-believer too, I felt a recognition with this poem. I like the idea of the heron as a minor god and the notion of 'old ways' as somehow a pagan act.

Only Connected (Margaret McCarthy)

There's a Norwegian word: 'hygge', that describes shared experiences, spontaneous social harmony and connection. It is also a poetry form. This is a charming hygge.

LOVELOCKS (Jane Boxall)

I was intrigued by this clever poem, and enjoyed the earthy language: 'wonky', 'bolt cutter', 'prod', 'swivel', 'mucky'. Another one that warrants repeated readings.

The Buttonhole (John D. Kelly)

Teasing, suggestive and paradoxical; 'predator' and 'prey' might exchange places; the sanguine tattooist with the heart on a sleeve. A pleasurable poem.

Judges' Comments

John W. Sexton

Identifications (John Baylis Post)

Memory and history are corruptible and therefore destined to be fragmentary and, eventually, almost enigmatic. Memory is the micro-history of the individual, and like the history of the wider community it sheds its ghosts to haunt whatever it has touched. This poem deftly examines these issues by way of the museum of the shoe-box and the museum of the heart.

Milk (Siobhan Campbell)

Here, language and concept almost graft the mind of the reader into the poem itself, until we are not simply reading, but experiencing the poem's narrative from the inside. A wonderful piece, and expertly done.

The Safety (Tamara Miles)

This poem demonstrates a universal: how, in our overeager desire for friendship or kinship, we can sometimes damage any hope of it by neglecting the interests of those with which we seek a bond. In the final analysis, there's a self-judgement here that impinges on the reader and reflects back our own past complicities.

Eve (Siobhan Campbell)

This is an enigmatic poem that operates much like the sliding series of archetypes that often assail us in dreams. First we are in a field, or are perhaps the field itself; we have the knowledge of place through its own memory. The poem proceeds to unravel the myth of itself and we wake from it.

A fickle god (Margaret McCarthy)

A spider's web is an artwork of a kind; functional but expertly crafted; doomful but also home; its fragility somehow inviting us to break it, but also daring us not to.

STITCHES (Jane Boxall)

This poem so wonderfully captures failing eyesight, migraine, and the subsequent clarity of sight that one often gets when emerging from a bad headache. The reader experiences how it is to see, both imperfectly and perfectly.

Judges' Comments

John W. Sexton

Perspective (Ted O'Regan)

On its most obvious level this poem is a brief essay on the concept of perspective, using memory and personal experience. But on an inner level it hints at something darker and more confessional; it is at this level that the reader suddenly receives a perspective of his or her own. Some poems are mirrors; this is one of those.

THE ZOMBIE-MAKER (Derek Sellen)

This is a very well-executed poem of science fictional horror that infects us at the very moment the test-tube shatters.

Minor Deities (Tamara Miles)

Sometimes it is only when faith is shrivelled and without life that faith can come alive. This time that we currently live in is very close to that sometime: when belief in the invisible and in prayer seem utterly pointless. This poem describes such a moment using a memorable image, and brings a small god, of sorts, to vivid life.

Only Connected (Margaret McCarthy)

Light verse is a genre often shamefully disdained by poets. In this piece we are enticed by the sure use of rhythm and pacing, stepping willingly into the dance that is laid out for us, humming its good-natured tune and finding ourselves in agreement with its common-sense aspirations.

LOVELOCKS (Jane Boxall)

This poem plays with image, concept and sound like a puzzle that exists largely in its own logic but makes perfect sense while you are twined inside it. This wonderful piece hinges not only on its use of sound puns, but also on image puns. Like any good puzzle, once it ends, the reader wants to go back into it again.

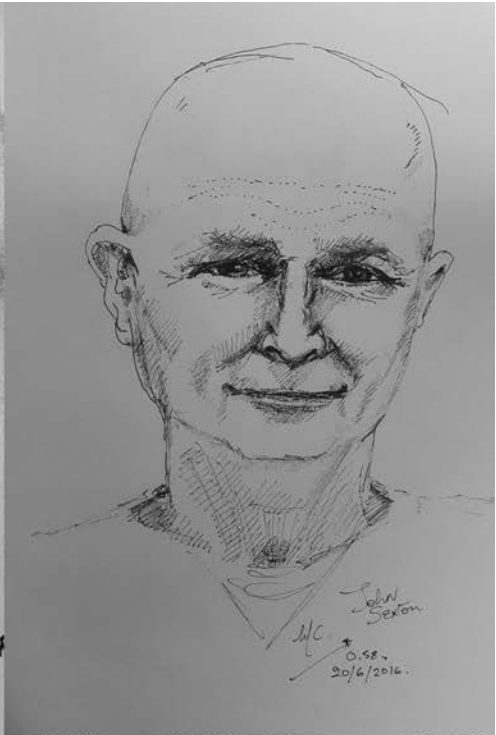
The Buttonhole (John D. Kelly)

This is a cheeky poem that appears at first to have sex on the brain; only to reveal that it's possibly as innocent as a picture.

Sketches by Margaret Creedon O'Shea



Sketches by Margaret Creedon O'Shea



Simon Aronsohn

Winner - 26th September 2016

gloaming brew explanation frog sliver

Interstellar travel

Post apocalypse

End of the Anthropocene

Man's age and rage

Turned a new page in evolution's cycle

The frog, recently promoted to captain

On this mission of space exploration

Raised from the gloaming of suspended animation

Harvested kelp

Thin slivers on space crackers

To go with his foaming brew

Wondering in the silence of anti-gravity

Whether in the boundless eternity of galaxies

He would find

Intelligent life

An explanation for how one can survive

And keep the world alive

Cédric Bikond

Winner - 6th March 2017

birthday menstruation flippant pepper hat

"Coronation"

"You are a woman, now", said her mother,
talking through the door.

She might have found it reassuring if
the pepper red stain on her pants did not set her mood.

Flippant, she remained silent, seated on the throne,
uttering unintelligent babble (through the tears).

Her father came to mind, as he always said she was his princess,
and now was the coronation: menstruation.

Birthday of a queen,
with the hat of womanhood for crown.

Benjamin Burns

Winner - 25th April 2016

bustle excitement pangolin winding deciduous

Untitled

I met a deciduous Pangolin
in October
with scales of yellow

The brightest brightest yellow
scales as tough as mica schist
flaking, sparkled in the autumn mist

And in my excitement
I followed the vibrant
Pangolin
as it bustled blindly
through the haze, a winding path
between the trees

Leaves delicate and frail
falling quietly, Pangolin flaking
leaving a trail
of glowing scales
like pencil pairings

Till we came to a clearing
and burning unbearably
bright as a Sun of dancing daffodils,
a thousand deciduous Pangolins
shedding their scales together

Transfixed, I watch
till I stop to turn
and follow the winding
trail of blazing
yellow scales home

Benjamin Burns

Winner - 2nd May 2016

bamboozle sail capitalism flinch spongy

Untitled

I sail into town,
it's a fine windy day,
and carried on the air
from a long way away

shouts and laughter,
celebratory cheers
blown up the hill
to interest my ears

and I cross at the quay
onto Grand Parade
where I see a crowd of people
in joyous disarray.

I'm bamboozled by the sight
of a giant bath sponge
being heaved upright,
sudsy in the sunlight.

I flinch as the spongy
megalith tips,
falls sideways and squashes
the onlooking crowd.

Shout it! Shout it! Shout it loud!
Capitalism
is a giant bath sponge
flattening us all!

And the sirens call.

Benjamin Burns
Winner - 13th February 2017
piano flimsy winter state prophet

Untitled

The Prophet turns her fingers
into fluttering keys.

Her arms ripple and split
into rows of hammers,
striking the metal strings
which stretch from her larynx
down the black body
of the piano.

Notes that sparkle like frost
and shatter
winter
sadness,
and the flimsy grasses sway
to a higher state.

Alexis Campbell Bannerman

Winner - 30th January 2017

hare light cosmos music rain

The Fairy Door of Fionn mac Cumhaill

Fionn mac Cumhaill's
light arrow
pierced a hare
but it didn't die
instead I'm sure
he heard it swear
and run into a fairy door
quite near the floor.
But because of macho pride
Fionn mac Cumhaill
couldn't let
this poor hare hide,
instead he crawled inside the door
looking like an idiot
and heard the insults rain
like music
from a creature inside,
a fairy,
who was as fair
as the Cosmos.

Winner - 19th September 2016

snare energy fubsy sense trump

The Trump Poem

I don't have enough energy
for this American politics.
Who has the sheer sense
to vote based on
who entertains us most?
His hair is the color of urine,
He is fubsy, his girlfriend is thin
Lets all take a dump
on Trump.

Paul Casey

Winner - 13th March 2017

piggyback naivety wyvern cringe helpful

500 Ó Bhéals

Forgive the obvious naivety
but I'd like to write a wyvern
into being

The Welsh among you may wish
to know why've earned the right
to write a wyvern, at all, into being

So I'll tell you (cringe)
Have you heard of that (fireless) poem
that can piggyback off other poems?

Not helpful? Okay. It's a kind of magpie poem
but with gigantic claws and wings. And while
wyverns can seldom soar to great heights

They are extremely short poems
having only two feet
(iamb iamb)
the end

Jacqui Corcoran

6th February 2017

oregano princess goose trump splice

A Recipe for Success

Splice a princess down the middle.

Season with salt and pepper, a sprinkle of oregano.

Mix well with one puréed goose.

Stuff the lot into the bottom

of one Mister Trump.

Wrap in foil and cook at a very high temperature.

When done, unwrap, and fuck it all out the window.

Make a hat from the tinfoil.

Margaret Creedon O'Shea

10th October 2016

raking endless swamp oil tintinabulation

FOND TIMES

Endless hours of misery tapping out the hours
to the unremitting rhythm of tin tin adulation
The rainy symphony of a corrugated iron roof.
The wick of the old dear's tilly lamp was limp.

Oil was sparse in frugal times.
The meadow, now a reeking swamp where once
the Cabbage White and Meadow Brown fluttered-
flirted in the sky.

Where once the thistle stung
and tickled her
beneath her heavy petticoat.
When the stretch of the spring evening
afforded extra pleasure
to her
and her unspoken maneen.
Where the spokes of her wheel spun,
twirled where thrown down.

When the Pattern Day
caused a case of Company Keeping.
with the worst type of pup,
the townie blackguard.

Repent at your pleasure
Savour each misdemeanour

Such distraction for the seniors
is a vital naughty treasure.

Go Bhfoire Dia.
A Iosa Christ na Fhlaitheas.
Is trua nach bhfuil me og,
ach nach mor an pleachiocht a bhaint as?

Margaret Creedon O'Shea
Winner - 23rd January 2017
sink bird sporting leap ingest

Sporty Bird

“Would I be in with a sporting chance
To sink velvet lips on you,
If I hover like a humming bird
to ingest each pheromone from you?”

She leaps right back in indignation
with a weather eye firmly on him.
“You’re more a bird of prey to me
so sink those talons elsewhere.”

“Ingest me now
for I must have you .
Oh sporting bird !
I’ll expire for the want of you .”

“Desist, thou Quare Hawk
or I’ll report you.
You’re a well known predator
so save your soft talk.”

Margaret Creedon O'Shea

30th May 2016

absquatulate withered gnostic blancmange chalcedony

Agnostic

Withered and shrivelled away by agnostic apathy
You no longer believe in me
Don't know my face
You don't recognise me you say
Anosognosia we used to call that once
You serve your bland blancmange its cold ascerbic flavour
With a touch of flaccid pallour
Chalcedony stones cling to your digits
Semi precious you boast
Tacky with sanguine clammy dullness
Absqau vitae purify
chelate this toxic metal from my system.
And I will blossom again in soft hawthorn bloom.
And I believe enough for me if not for you.

Alan Egan

Winner - 9th January 2017

instinct inclusion afloat wallpaper positive

The Searcher

If you can ignore the wallpaper outside Tesco,
the ticket machine
in Paul Street car park
will tell you
that Change Is Possible.

Some wait for New Year's Day,
a positive date.
Why not January 28th,
the year of the rooster,
and inclusion with the Chinese?

Or stay afloat
for a special anniversary?
Why not right now?
Trust your instinct.
It happens within.

Should you doubt,
go to Paul Street,
and ask the machine.
Or simply look inside yourself.

Bernadette Gallagher

29th August 2016

cracked scruffy pollination mange pint

Not Spot

Our son's dog is called Scruffy
I know it sounds cracked but
it is true.

He is a Bichon Frise, white
like the top of a pint of Guinness

Pollination trips him up as it does
me.

The mange is something we don't
hear about nowadays

regretfully.

28th November 2016

horse river pause red homeless

A Thin Line

I sit by the riverside
fishing rod held taut

blood gushes from
my catch as I pause
to take it all in.

I have killed

Sky, red - I strike
a match

my horse and
I, homeless -
eat mullet and grass.

Bernadette Gallagher

9th January 2017

instinct inclusion afloat wallpaper positive

On a cold winter's night

January starts with a positive
note at Ó Bhéal,

walls covered in maps
not quite wallpaper – to keep
us afloat as we sail the waters,
instinct left to drown.

Inclusion is the buzz word,
upstairs in The Long Valley.

16th January 2017

water nurture rabbit herbivore polar

On the Street

My polar opposite I met tonight
not once, but twice

Without food, water, home

Were they nurtured in the womb
too?

Like rabbits we produce litter
after litter – some we choose to feed

Herbivores eat well at The Quay Co-Op
or out in the field – not on the street.

Bernadette Gallagher

13th February 2017

piano flimsy winter state prophet

The Prophet

We entered, bringing gifts
to a man many years
our senior.

Sitting at a fire
ashes pulled out
onto the hearth.

In the far room
a piano – flimsy
to the touch.

A brandy changes
our state from winter
to something warmer.

The postman prophet
his final visitor.

Niall Herriott

30th January 2017

hare light cosmos music rain

HARE

Does a hare
hear the music of the cosmos?
Or just sit
and enjoy the light rain?

Niall Herriott

20th June 2016

enchantment illuminate stupendous slit sporadic

A HORROR STORY ON THE LONGEST DAY OF THE YEAR

This is the night of enchantment
when the narrow door to the otherworld
can be opened with the lightest of touches.
But if you do squeeze through that slit
In the hope of being illuminated
you might be in for a stupendous shock
for only sporadic searchers come out again.
The Banshee, it seems, is most partial to a feed
of slow-roasted human flesh.

16th September 2016

snake apple river trump love

OFF THE WALL

Slithery snake Trump offers the apple
of power to that lady he does not love
in return for the Vice Presidency.
Getting what he wants as usual,
he sells her down the river
stabbing her in the back – metaphorically -
by exposing all her secrets.
He replaces her as President
of the world's greatest democracy
then breaks all his promises
about an end to foreign adventures....
But he has to pay for the wall personally

Cathal Holden

Winner - 18th April 2016

tectonic greyhound silence engine frivolous

Maria Matrem

for Sister Clare Crockett

She taught children in the rubble
Beneath the fallen lintel
Under tonnes of dust and ash and grey
Where they had played
Their frivolous orphans' games
Before prayers in the morning

Maria Matrem
Gloria in Excelsis

The bell in the chapel
Rang like a kicked dog
And was silenced

She taught them mnemonics
To remember conjugations
And natural science

How the earth's mantle moves
On its molten core
How tectonic plates
Shift like moulting crabs
How the planet turns on its axis
Like a drive shaft
An engine of the glory of God

The siren sounds a greyhound's whine
The sun sets like a shot horse
The bell rings like a kicked dog

Maria Matrem
Gloria in Excelsis

Thomas Howarth
Winner - 7th November 2016
train clock fish quooof puncture

Untitled

It was going to be a long journey
so he packed a hot water bottle in the glove box.
He'd have taken the train,
but he lost the ticket in the garden
and resolved
'oh, I'll taken the car then'.

So there he was, ready to go,
last second he discovered a puncture
Such an inconvenience
at such a vital juncture
But he was a man of initiative,
and he removed the offending wheel
and replaced it with a sturdy clock from the attic.
This clock had been in the family for generations,
developing mystical properties,
and he found that as he reversed the car,
with each backwards revolution of the makeshift wheel,
he travelled several years back in time.

So he reversed down the driveway - 1987
and down the road - 1970
and the motorway disappeared beneath him.
And he reversed, on this magic clock,
all the way to the coast
- 300 million years BC
and there he saw evolution's ghost
the first fish out of the sea.

He was far from home,
and from the job interview he was supposed to be attending
But he had a while now to prepare
And - in case of ice age -
the quooof in the glove box was there.

Thomas Howarth

Winner - 17th October 2016

circumference mould intrinsic daft eagle

Untitled

The man who owned the bird sanctuary - he was a daft one.
He worked alone, and the place was going to pot
the ospreys were up to their knees in mould
and the flamingo complained of rot
and the cages' paltry circumference denied
the intrinsic nature of those who could fly.
One evening he got in with the seabirds -
he felt an affinity with seagulls.
But they flocked and overpowered him
and locked him away with the eagles.

Winner - 20th February 2017

taoiseach egg lovely she wreckage

Untitled

I crawl from a crash-landing
a single-engine, monolingual wreckage
break English underfoot like shattered eggshell
attempt two or three words of Irish.
Sí, which means someone important
and Taoiseach, which is lovely - I think it means fairy
but it's no use
my mouth is full with one tongue
so I go back to my broken egg
and on the way deposit my scrappy attempts at Irish
with the rest of the bruscar.

Amy McAllister

Winner - 12th September 2016

fragile skelligs debauched horse terror

Untitled

The horse, he knows. He knows he's fragile now.
The cow moos strong, the moo-horn, cocky prick,
Sits on its arse and shakes its salmon udders-
Quite a thing.
If cows they could, this cow would sing
A football chant to taunt,
A rant against the ones that run
In fancy blankets with their hair all pretty.
And the horse, the horse feels really shitty,
Knows he's sick,
His knee joints skelligs, hips in bits-
Too young, this has to be some error.
And his jockey doesn't visit anymore,
Has gone straight off with some horse else,
The tiny whore.
While he is falling more and sleeping more
And looks upon tomorrow filled with terror.
With the cow, debauched as ever,
Licking at its bits with narrowed eyes.

Ciarán MacArtain

9th January 2016

instinct inclusion afloat wallpaper positive

Untitled

You can see your breath
In the room that I sleep in
You can see the shadow
Of your body on the wall
Where you took back
Your light from the paint
Blue and crying with condensation

A dusk sea where darkness
Is just about afloat
On the concrete.

Under the control of your every whim.

Aspect to your instinct.

Is it there with you?
Do you feel its inclusion?
Are you peers?

Are you sure?
Are you positive?

Bernadette McCarthy

Winner - 3rd October 2016

belligerent margin corner destiny orca

Untitled

The only orca in Ireland
lived on the margins of civil society.
Not only was he both black and white
but he was a deprived, depressive orca,
flapping like a drowned mine
along the length of the harbour
until the day he cornered his nemesis
in Dingle Bay. That fecker Fungi...
Fungi the first, second, third...?
Noone knew anymore,
one thing's for sure,
Fungi's hour had come.

Snout to snout, they stared
each other down. There wasn't a sole
fishing-boat or tourist boat around
to witness the abominable display.
Had there been they would have whispered
in Johnny Fox's bar later on
of fins, bones, teeth, and strange guts,
the infinite belligerence of the only Irish orca
meeting his destiny.

Afric McGlinchey

6th March 2016

birthday menstruation flippant pepper hat

On the occasion of a birthday

I have a friend
who taught me the art of flippancy
(flippant, see?)
when faced with a birthday
one wouldn't want to celebrate
(cursed with a zero),
or men who strew (or stru) their hats
like pepper, in elation
when the crescent's moon's at home.
It's a queer sort of gesture,
more like pink-feather-duster swirls
around a lamp post,
the ghost of summers past,
fitting in the pooling light,
right there at your feet,
just as they begin
the 'happy...'

Nicola Moffat

Winner - 5th September 2016

grind silence summit cue been

Façade

I've been somewhere else
This whole time

Coked up on this summit
Of tits and blonde hair,

Forgetting I'm actually still here

Screaming in silence
And waiting for your cue

To straddle and grind you
Into dust.

Mary Nagle

21st November 2016

bog exhuberant braces native actualised

Braces

She had to be held down
have her skin pricked with an ugly gun
feel her chemistry conspire with the enemy.

Undrugged, she stood – a fish in her mouth:
Metal, heavy and swimming.
No sharp edges though.
Too bad.

She would have rathered the teeth of a dog,
yellow and useful,
or live naked as a native
with plates in her ears
and a husband aged 15.

Now she befriends
self-actualized pretenders with
predictable,
perpendicular
Teeth.

Mary Nagle
Winner - 27th February
may sinew sabre photo cold

Family Photo

Twins in fringes aim
plastic sabres at the camera
- their faces show Braveheart in battle.
They wouldn't even blink at a spillage of guts
or fall for a bullet. But they'd bleed for us,
their Mammies and Daddies,
for blood is the beauty of war.

The cold of the day is not betrayed except in
sinews raised on my sister's hand.
she is clasping her scarf,
her eyebrows arch to emphasize an elegance
acquired to distract from the creeping lines
- her skin had hid ropes all this time.
May is loosing temperance.

Stanley Notte

10th October 2016

raking endless swamp oil tintinabulation

Untitled

Tintinadulation: what kind of word is that? A fancy one I'd say. As well as one I can't spell!

Thank God this isn't school. If it were I'd now be dreading (is that grammatically correct?) Miss Rezler, my elephantine (is that a word?) english teacher, hovering over this page, and my shoulder, red pen in hand, tusk tusking in heavy breaths, born from her heaving breasts, while raking endless lines through my many mistakes.

She'd move away then - still tusk tusking - leaving me to sink into a swamp of inadaquacy (that's misspelled too, I'd say) where alligators constantly snap a limited vocabulary - Useless! Waster! Failure! - and a lone toad ribbets a hollow gurgle of glee that sounds, to my untrained ear, like oil bubbling from arid ground.

Michael O'Callaghan
16th September 2016
trump apple river snake love

Untitled

Forget the Garden myth,
the tree, the snake, the exile.
The loss.

Apples fall.

So once a river wove through paradise
So very long ago we can't recall
how the garden gave us all;
it formed us -
from the jungle we were formed.

Now paradise is lost,
and nothing makes sense now, all separate,
all atomised and separated; lost.

But who's afraid of love, afraid to speak the word?
Love that holds and binds, connects,
like water, air and earth connect,
like space connects when love comes,
gathers all.

For love has this one flaw, it can't exclude.
Love only knows the all, the magic moment
when we all connect love trumps,
love trumpets, triumphs;
gathers all.

Gráinne O'Connor

Winner - 11th July 2016

different text suspicious sorry cast

Untitled

Babooshka tests her lover when there's
Nothing to suspect.
Kate can hold her double bass all strong
Yet, still, caress
Showing us the subtle difference between
To love, and to obsess.
Who would cast themselves Babooshka when they
Inspect this block of text?

Smooth lyrics, like her blood red lips
And hips, but I forget
The tightened chest, the catch of breath -
My sorry-for-being-ness.
Condemn Babooshka so I can,
But I don't pluck the strings yet.

Gráinne O'Connor

Winner - 14th November 2016

seaweed forget trump incontinent electron

Untitled

Toilet roll limpet
Stuck round my shoe
Like some sick toxic
Seaweed, stuck
As I exit the toilet.
I scrape and I shake
But I can't get it off.
Stamping my feet only
Renders it deeper in
Shoe crevices, cracks
Soon it seeps through my sneakers
And I never say 'sneakers'
Cause that is American
God, look what he's already done.

"The President-Elect"
Ron Burgundy reads
From a fake teleprompter cause
This can't be the news.
America
What
Have
You
Done?
Facebook is asking!
They squat and they squeeze
But they can't get it out,
He's a poo they can't pass,
They're rendered incontinent
And did it all to and by themselves.
As if Trump still has nothing to answer for.

Gráinne O'Connor

31st October 2016

original rhythm autumn thrum outdated

Untitled

Unmoved as the distant thrum
of Autumn Leaves is
bashed out again down some
indiscernible side street
the cynic ponders the limits
of improv on such an iconic tune.
What are the ways to incite new
riffs, new rhythms that
differ to the former?

Perhaps it signalled the
so-called autumn of his life:
One last panicked effort to
out-run the out-dated, stay current
out-live the leaves and the thrumming
down that side street still continued.
Hallowe'en 2016 - the last day of jazz
and the day the autumn leaves.
It didn't make him smile.

James O'Leary

Winner - 27th July 2016

becoming command extreme fish kettle

Withdrawal

Progression was slow
until I woke up
drowning, throat
disappearing—fins
came before gills,
before I thought
to fetch salt
from the cupboard,
this craving
increasing, silvered
body twisting,
eyes sliding
sideways, command
of speech waning,
mouth becoming
a maw—I regret
ingesting fish and not
calling my mother
more—flopping
to the tub, flapping
at taps with legs
now merged into one
extremity, and what
happened next is
another kettle of me.

James O'Leary

9th January 2017

instinct inclusion afloat wallpaper positive

Open

I, inconveniently, have a chronic
fear of microphones. I feel,
when in front of one, like that lone
potato in the bag, turned over
to reveal a large flower-like growth,
not a sprig that can be tidied,
but something emerging from the core,
undeniable, unnerving, shot
through the fabric of my potato-being,
now amplified, the shine
of spotlights pointed straight at it.

James O'Loughlin

Winner - 24th October 2016

furniture phoenix slapped finished unintentional

Untitled

It smacked of every other type of heated exchange,
It slapped and crackled,
like a phoenix fanning the flames,
If felt like old furniture,
tired and stained.
It was all unintentional, I swear,
But it's too late...
It's finished.

Rosie O'Regan

Winner - 25th July 2016

dancer bilingual field pressure obliterate

Untitled

Across the field where green meets sky
I stand still, not still, still yet moving

the unseen parts of myself as a plant
might, or so as I tell myself

I do not call myself a dancer,
tried for a time but gave up under pressure

Here, I obliterate that self
move slow, the inward out, the outward in

I am bilingual, speaking earth,
breeze

Winner - 31st October 2016

original rhythm autumn thrum outdated

Untitled

Autumn, and we are leaves falling
onto a plastic stage
No earth to merge with
No rhythm or rhyme to fly us

to the compost of the future
Just the endless thrum
The mindless Trump-Thrum
The original, outdated

Mark O'Sullivan

30th May 2016

absquatulate withered gnostic blancmange chalcedony

Untitled

Absquatulate with me, O withered, gnostic crone,
The willow in the garden, the blamanche has overgrown
The chalcedony in your hand holds its secret still
your desserts are laid waste utterly; elope with me, you will.

Richard O'Toole

Winner - 16th May 2016

wall routine orbit chaos wreckage

Untitled

We kissed behind the stone wall
it was grey
not like those kisses
they made me soar
love sent into orbit

Took me out of the City chaos
the urban decay
the routine
the wreckage

I counted every stone
we leaped across clint and grike
staligmities and staligtities

Flowers grew in that wall
and then I knew it was Summer.

Niamh Prior

Winner - 21st November 2016

bog exhuberant braces native actualised

Untitled

No, it does not count as going native
if you leave your braces on;
it is a cunning way to conceal traces
of freckles you'd rather not show
or those two rows of six nipples
that make you suspect you're not
far evolved from a dog.
Go on, display them with exuberance!
Ditch the suspenders
embrace your aureolic extras
climb that pyramid
become your full-on actualised self.

Charlie Saad

Winner - 30th May 2016

absquatulate withered gnostic blancmange chalcedony

Donald Trump

Attention, citizens of the world.

Absquatulate with yer chalcedony,
a new sheriff has come to town.

He, with his withered pelt of animal hide
which sits atop his head,

confronts us as a not so gnostic
challenger in this age of apple strudel and blancmange.

Get out while you still can.

Colm Scully

Winner - 8th August 2016

friction turbulent volley pregnant bombardment

Olympic

I said I'd write friction.

Stories of turbulent pregnancies ending in angry children
called Damage and Uncertainty.

Who grow up to be volleyball players,
playing on the sands at Rio, for Ireland
against the mighty girls of Brazil.

Awaiting a bombardment across the net on Ipanema.

Damage and Uncertainty would be tough.

Toughened by long hours training on Dollymount Strand
in tricolour bikinis on winter nights.

But lack of strong opposition would be there undoing

Losing 10-nil in the quarter finals

to the Russian girls,

Testosterovich and Haemoglobovich.

Janie Sparks
Winner - 28th November 2016
red river horse pause homeless

The bet

There is a red can
anchoring a man by the river
clinking change to press away
his shakes, his shivers
He is there.

But where?

Surely not there, surely not where they can see him, where their blank stares wear
away his person by the never-changing season.

They give pennies, but not pause, not even a clause to ask of his status,

He is past this point of acquaintance no longer a person now, just a complainant

To them he has become a horse, his course clinking like hoofbeats in rain

'how dare he deign to exist on the same plane as we?'

Icy breeze creeps inside an overcoat, but cold for him is a permanent thing, a thing
God must've wrote;

he shivers not, this is not new, and now they also think him boneless.

He hears them bet under their breath as they pass:

"He's 'proably not even homeless."

Janie Sparks

Winner – 12th December 2016

surface pester corrosive combustible cask

Overfilled

A young girl lays awake in a cask beneath the earth.
No one knows she's gone yet
or they bet she'll yet return
No need to wreck the party's mirth
Her 'tantrums' aren't worth the work it took to inter her to most
to most

corroding wood on splintered skin, splintered bone within
corroding wood corrosive in her soul
she is combustible.
quick to scream,
quick to cry
but oh so long to find she's died

The wounds fester
under the earth's surface. She is unfound.
They think but don't say, at least she's not here to pester us
finally had the sense to kick up dust, to leave us

None there to cry her seas, no one speaks her eulogies
no funerals for girls like these.
in her the maggots find a feast
buried just east of the family plot
a story forgot in an overfull grave.

Rab Urquhart

Winner - 4th July 2016

silence honey spaces melting crows

Untitled

Angels come in silence, their ecstasies melting through the spaces in the everyday.
Bees are angel orgasms personified and honey is the birth of the beautiful.
Crows also come in silence but caw loudly afterwards.

Winner - 18th July 2016

layout haircut cork swimming sausages

Untitled

Look at this layout of a stake out on the way out to get a hair cut from the barber who got a bail out coz he was drowning, now he's swimming, bobilly bobilling like a cork in the Trevi fountain but he's still counting and he's saving squirrel awaying all his sausages and his whisky against the future coz he's anxious and that's his treasure.

Rab Urquhart

Winner - 22nd August 2016

fluent calculation several avaricious plum

Untitled

The Plum hung plumbly, fluent in it's plumbity, and next to it hung several more; plumfull and full of plum, a rapid calculation to gauge my avaraciousness, then I ate one plumb, then another one. Plumfull and full of plum I plumbed the depths of pluminess.

Winner - 10th October 2016

raking endless swamp oil tintinabulation

Untitled

I raked leaves, I raked gravel which turned to ashes which I also raked. With the tintinabulation brought by rain my raked ashes turned to clay, I raked that clay for a day then oiled my rake and put it away. I rose next day, it was very damp and I strode down to rake the swamp, it sure needed raking anyway, so I raked that from North to South, from East to West and up and down, and then I threw that endless rake away

Shane Vaughan

Winner - 13th June 2016

precocious random closet flap ice-cream

Precocious

They called me precocious
for eating ice cream in the rain
the white streaks streaming random
down my bald chin
onto my loose white shirt
flapping in the gale
whipping in the howl
the rain diluting the shirt
and the cream
the cone my rod to the lightning
itself white in the sky
every bit of me covered in white
except my slick-haired forehead hammering
against the rain
and my mouth a pale O of pink
gaped open to receive the peal of thunder
clapping white in my brain froze head
exorcising my closeted skeletons
on the rough tarmac – black, black
splattered with white drops of ice-cream
breadcrumbing my way home
– Back.

Patricia Walsh

Winner - 1st August 2016

product becoming zeal locked benign

Untitled

Stopmotion pornography becoming your situation

Whittling away at the computer in style

What dedication! What zeal!

Suitably locked in that study of yours

Making it benign, a vocation of sorts

A product of the last ages, religious oblivion.

Eyes of desire becoming, your glory

Eating with zeal a technological triumph

Locked in a stalemate with imaginary friends

Nothing wrong with your obsession

Benign all the way with your automation

A product of here and now, hitting the floor.

20th March 2017

equinox bar traveller rugby horse

Untitled

To the intrepid traveller

Trainspotting behind the bar

Does it ever cross your mind

To back the right horse

Before or after you raise the bar

So much it condemns you

In the thick of a rugby scrum

You balance your fortunes

Night following day

An equinox of the soul

Condemned to hanging in the balance.

Patricia Walsh

17th October 2016

circumference mould intrinsic daft eagle

Churches of Ireland

Dangerous ideas stall you, inquiring
From books on a cursed index, burning
Not enough to dash the mould right off
Nor travel the circumference to a daft conclusion
Intrinsic to your argument, so you will ride
On the wings of eagles to a logical conclusion.

Supporting glances from a circumference eye
Preaching from eagle lecterns is your call.
Dangerous sounding daft from the pulpit
Caking the mould from disused buildings
Intrinsic to your speech, falling on blind guides
An overly familiar guest does its bidding.

The roof obviated, dismantled in history
Threadbare chimneys gouge the era
Too daft to record, circumference of privilege
Intrinsic to the heart of an eagle's pride
Mouldy as it is, relevant to my purpose
History's deft hand recording the debacle.

Torn out plaques visit their situation
On innocent tides, bulging graveyards
Divest themselves of its sorrow
Getting more daft with an intrinsic season
Eagles picking on carrion locked away
Mould taking care of the rest.

No one is indispensable, not even me.
Looking at a circumference of global calling.
Bell tower defunct, daft in their usage

Patricia Walsh

17th October 2016

circumference mould intrinsic daft eagle

Intrinsic to purpose long disappear
The eagle lectern repatriated
Mould needing cleaning a forgotten act.

What's the wisdom in recording these things?
In memoriam the oppressors a daft exercise
Intrinsic to our fabric, like it or not
An eagle rising from the flames
Covered in mould since my last sighting
Circumference of an intrinsic world is rich.

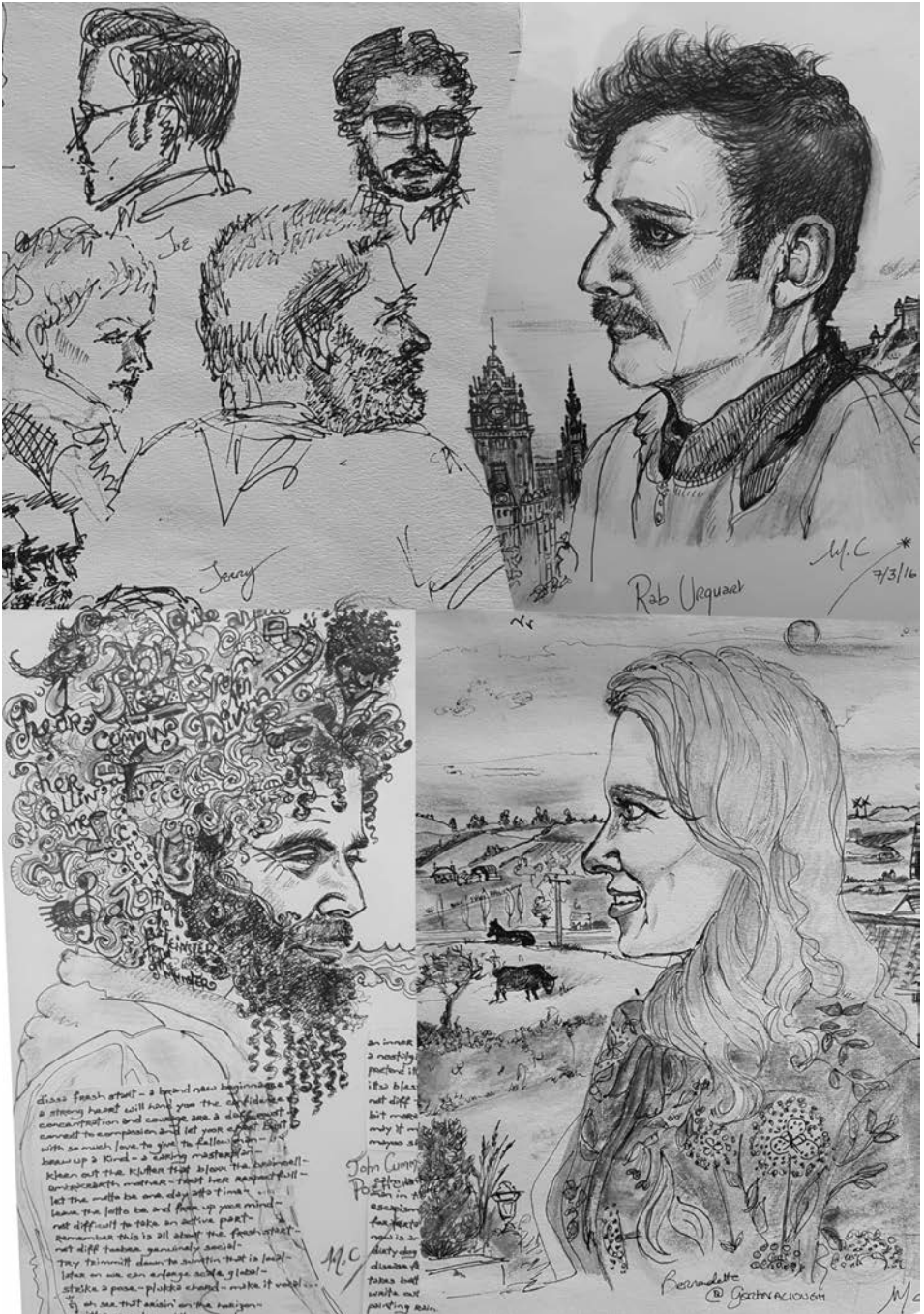
Façadist to the extreme, appropriating windows
For decoration, an intrinsic heritage lost
Daft for safekeeping, appropriate eagles
Of a lost cause, mould infecting
A circumference of stolen history, abiding
On a mantelpiece of a huckster's delight.

Silent as the grave, a whore like the mould
Skulking in darkened corners no one can reach
Death intrinsic to history, daft in its purpose
Calling on eagles to rise above the circumference
Pieces of God, circumambulating the graveyard
Paper and tape mercilessly calling the time.

Sketches by Margaret Creedon O'Shea



Sketches by Margaret Creedon O'Shea



Biographies of Shortlisted Poets

John Baylis Post

John Baylis Post (previously, at various times, a medieval historian, a wages clerk, a manuscript curator, a parliamentary election agent, and head of a general hospital) lives on the Beara peninsula in West Cork. He has been writing poetry, on and off (mostly off), for upwards of fifty years. His poems have been published in Ireland, England, and Italy, and he was judged Canterbury Poet of the Year 2014. He now helps to run Hungry Hill Writing's competitions and publications (www.hungryhillwriting.org). Selected poems and some other writing, together with fine art photographs, can be found at:

www.johnbaylispost.com

Siobhan Campbell

Siobhan Campbell is an award-winning poet, the author of four collections. She received the Oxford Brookes International Poetry Prize in 2016. Her new book, just out, is *Heat Signature* – from Seren Press. Her last work *Cross-Talk* was called 'unsparingly strong... a fine and ferocious book' by PNRReview. Siobhan holds awards in the National and Troubadour competitions and is the winner of the Templar poetry prize. Her work is widely anthologised including in *New British and Irish Poets* (Bloodaxe) and *Womens' Work: twentieth century poets writing in English*. Recent work has appeared in *The Hopkins Review*, *Magma*, *Poetry Ireland* and *Asymptote*. Siobhan works at The Open University where she's developing curriculum for the new MA in Creative Writing.

Tamara Miles

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

Margaret Mc Carthy

Margaret Mc Carthy grew up in Dublin. She has taught in a secondary school in Dublin for over 27 years. Reading and writing have been lifelong hobbies and in 2006 she wrote thirteen short stories which Veritas published as an illustrated book called *The Cat Did Not Know*. That was a dream come true. Writing is still a delight.

Biographies of Shortlisted Poets

Jane Boxall

Jane Boxall is a freelance percussionist and writer, working across diverse genres. She focuses on both rock drumming and art-music marimba, touring and recording as a soloist, collaborator and session player. Jane has performed in concert halls, art galleries, cafes, castles, kindergartens, hospitals, universities, forests and festivals from Rome to San Francisco, and Manhattan to France. Born in England and raised in Scotland, Jane completed her BA and MA in Music at the University of York (UK), and her Doctorate in Percussion Performance at the University of Illinois. Find out more about Jane at:

www.janeboxall.com

John D. Kelly

John D. Kelly lives and writes in Co. Fermanagh. Since he began writing creatively in 2011, his work has been commended in several competitions and printed in various literary publications. He was Highly Commended in the Patrick Kavanagh Poetry Award 2016, awarded joint 'Silver' in the International Dermot Healy Poetry Competition in both 2015 and 2014, and won first prize in Hungry Hill 'Poets Meet Painters' 2014, amongst other awards. He has read his work at various venues and events in Ireland and is currently working towards a first collection.

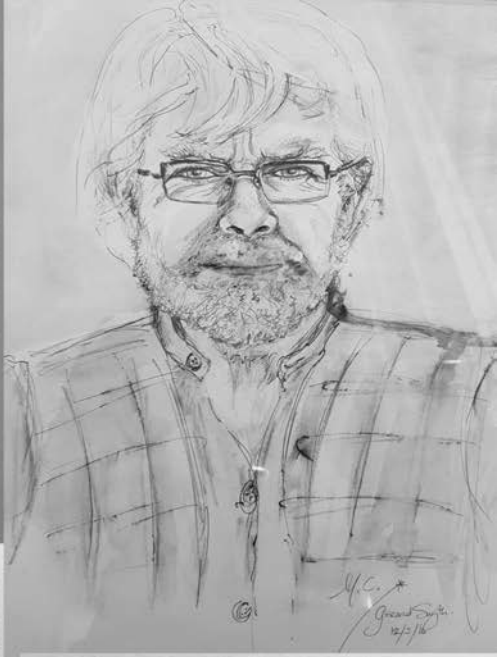
Derek Sellen

Derek Sellen lives in Canterbury Kent. Five Words is a great stimulus for new poetry. Every so often one of the random words connects and leads in an unexpected direction. He is currently nearing the end of a poetry project based on the lives and work of Spanish artists. He has won Hungry Hill Poets Meet Politics and O Bheal Five Words in recent years as well as being shortlisted in both competitions, which has led to visits to the beautiful Beara Peninsula and Cork city.

Ted O'Regan

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

Sketches by Margaret Creedon O'Shea



International Poetry-Film Competition Shortlist 2016

Dotan Gur (Israel)	<i>Sun Hours</i>
Diana Taylor (UK)	<i>Once in Whitley Bay</i>
(winner) Marie Craven (Australia)	<i>Dictionary Illustrations</i>
Marie Craven (Australia)	<i>One Dream Opening Into Many</i>
Bao Zhu (China/Ireland)	<i>Red Line Haiku</i>
Kuesti Fraun (Germany)	<i>SMART USER</i>
Martha McCollough (USA)	<i>Two Story Train</i>
Jason Lam (Australia)	<i>Us Right Now</i>
John Weselcouch (USA)	<i>DADA!</i>
Patrick O' Shea (Ireland)	<i>Peter and the Wolf (Aladdin Sane?)</i>
Pamela Falkenberg and Jack Cochran (USA)	<i>The Nat King Cole Post Office</i>
Karoline Georges (Canada)	<i>Repères (Landmarks)</i>
Angie Bogachenko (Ukraine)	<i>Love Mykolaiv if you dare</i>
Celia Parra (Spain)	<i>Adondar a lingua (Kneading language)</i>
Paul Broderick (USA)	<i>What The Waves Brought In</i>
Marie Craven (Australia)	<i>Joining the Lotus Eaters</i>
Eugenia Lindblad (Italy)	<i>Eclipse</i>
Corbin Louis and Devin Ensz (USA)	<i>SADDLE</i>
Diarmuid Fitzgerald & Ciarán Ó Floinn (Ire)	<i>Thames Way</i>
Suzie Hanna (UK)	<i>Known Unto God</i>
Anatoly Kuris (Belarus)	<i>Baisan and Buben – F5</i>
Sanna Larmola (Estonia / Finland)	<i>Helvetinjumalankone (Hell'sgodmachine)</i>
Pamela Falkenberg and Jack Cochran (USA)	<i>The Eternal Footman</i>
Pamela Falkenberg and Jack Cochran (USA)	<i>The Bloom</i>
Manuel Vilarinho (Portugal)	<i>Chamada Geral (Calling All)</i>
Pádraig Burke (Ireland)	<i>A Demonstration</i>
Jan Peeters & Paul Bogaert (Belgium)	<i>WHAT DOES THE SEA SAY?</i>
Urs Mader (Germany)	<i>We are the ones who were born</i>

Winter Warmer Poetry Festival 2016

Featured Guests

Fri 25th November

Seán Dennehy | Ross Donlon | Annemarie Ní Churreáin

Jessica Traynor | John Fitzgerald | Paula Cunningham

Kerrie O'Brien | Jos Smith | Martín Veiga | Emily Cullen

Sat 26th November

Poetry-Films | Performance Art with Francesca Castellano | Closed Mic

Roisín Kelly | Paul McMahon | Eibhlís Carcione

John Ennis | Billy Mills | Gerry Hanberry

Josep Lluís Aguiló | Catherine Walsh | Michael Augustin

Tara Bergin | Raina J. León | Elaine Feeney



*The 5th Winter Warmer Festival takes place from the
24th-25th November 2017*

McNamara Slam Winners 2016-2017

11 April	Stanley Notte
18 April	Cathal Holden
25 April	Benjamin Burns
2 May	Benjamin Burns
9 May	Seosamhín Nic Eachaidh
16 May	Richard O'Toole
23 May	Brede Larkin
30 May	Charlie Saad
6 June	Shane Vaughan
13 June	Shane Vaughan
20 June	Cédric Bikond
27 June	Paul Casey
4 July	Rab Urquhart
11 July	Gráinne O'Connor
18 July	Rab Urquhart
25 July	Rosie O'Regan
27 July	James O'Leary
1 August	Patricia Walsh
8 August	Colm Scully
15 August	Shane Vaughan
22 August	Rab Urquhart
29 August	American George
5 September	Nicola Moffat
12 September	Amy McAllister
16 September	Máirín-Rua Ní Aodha
19 September	Alexis Campbell Bannerman
26 September	Simon Aronsohn
3 October	Bernadette McCarthy
10 October	Rab Urquhart
17 October	Thomas Howarth
24 October	James O'Loughlin
31 October	Rosie O'Regan
7 November	Thomas Howarth
14 November	Gráinne O'Connor
21 November	Niamh Prior
28 November	Janie Sparks
5 December	Niamh O'Donovan
12 December	Janie Sparks
9 January	Alan Egan
16 January	Rab Urquhart
23 January	Margaret Creedon O'Shea
30 January	Alexis Campbell Bannerman
6 February	Jacqui Corcoran
13 February	Benjamin Burns
20 February	Thomas Howard
27 February	Mary Nagle
6 March	Cédric Bikond
13 March	Paul Casey
20 March	Mary Nagle
27 March	Emer Penny
3 April	Phil Nannery

Guest Poets 2016-2017

11 April	John W.Sexton & Poets from <i>Five Words Vol IX</i>
18 April	Ron Carey & Tom Moloney
25 April	Ruth O'Callaghan
2 May	Alvy Carragher
9 May	Nuala Ni Dhomnaill
16 May	The Squat Pen (John McAllister & Co.)
23 May	Eastrogen Rising: a rebel cabaret (6 poets)
30 May	Daragh Bradish
6 June	Kate Dempsey
13 June	Julie Morrissy & Stephen Sexton
20 June	Anne Tannam
27 June	John Hennessy
4 July	Maggie Harris
11 July	Paul Butterfield & Drucilla Wall
18 July	Doireann Ni Ghríofa & Mick O'Shea
25 July	Lorna Shaughnessy
27 July	IASIL Conference (7 Cork poets)
1 August	Susan Connolly
8 August	Anne Irwin & Stephen Byrne
15 August	Sandra Ann Winters
22 August	1916 Women the World Over (5 poets)
29 August	Eleanor Rees
5 September	Elaine Cosgrove & Trevor Conway
12 September	Christine Broe
16 September	Temper-Mental MissElayneous
19 September	Keith Payne
26 September	Kevin Barrington
3 October	Rafiq Kathwari
10 October	The Memory of the Present (3 poets)
17 October	Stephen Connolly & Friends
24 October	Salmon 35th Anniversary (3 poets)
31 October	Sarah Clancy & The Jazz Messengers
7 November	Paul Muldoon
14 November	Jean O'Brien
21 November	Adam Wyeth
28 November	Simon Anthology (4 poets)
5 December	Seán O'Riordáin centenary event (IMRAM)
12 December	Ian Duhig
9 January	Ben Simmons & Amy Barry
16 January	Mike Garry
23 January	Ann Leahy
30 January	Michael Coady
6 February	New Creative Writing from UCC (6 poets)
13 February	Gerard Smyth
20 February	Séamus Barra Ó Súilleabháin
27 February	Amanda Bell
6 March	Claire Crowther
13 March	Michelle Cahill
20 March	Michèle Vassal-Ring
27 March	Michael J. Whelan
3 April	Louis de Paor

the 5th Ó



Bhéal



Five Words

Poetry Competition 500 euro single prize

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

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

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

The winner and shortlisted entries will be announced during early
March and invited to read at Ó Bhéal's 11th Anniversary event,
on 16th April 2018

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



the 5th Ó bhéal

2017
poetry-film
competition

Ó Bhéal's 5th Poetry-Film Competition is open for submissions from 1st May – Aug 31st 2017.

International submissions are accepted for any poetry-film under ten minutes (English subtitles required for non-english language Films). Entries must have been completed since August 31st 2015.

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

Up to 30 shortlisted poetry-films will be screened at the IndieCork Film Festival in October 2017. One winner will receive the festival prize for best poetry-film

Free to Enter!

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

INDIE CORK



08 - 15
OCTOBER
2017 A FESTIVAL
OF INDEPENDENT
FILM & MUSIC



a weekly poetry event

for poetry and spoken word performance

every Monday from 9.30pm

bring your own poetry ...

... or just listen in

poetry

Guests poets and an open-mic every week

Storytelling and unplugged ceol also welcome

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

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

www.obheal.ie

Free Entry



Sketches by Alexis Campbell Bannerman



Sketches by Alexis Campbell Bannerman



the
spoken
word
Happy 50th
O' bheal



Alain
13-3-2017