

The Unfinished Book of Poetry 2020

from five **Cork** secondary schools



A Cork City Council Arts Office, Cork City Libraries and Schools Project
in partnership with Ó Bhéal



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poetry from five Cork City secondary schools



Published by
Cork City Council

Published in 2020 by Cork City Council,
Cork City Libraries and Schools Project



**LIBRARIES
LEABHARLANNA**

CORK CITY COUNCIL | COMHAIRLE CATHRACH CHORCAÍ

Supported by the Arts Office, Cork City Council
in partnership with Ó Bhéal

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The Unfinished Book of Poetry 2020



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Foreword

The *Unfinished Book of Poetry 2020* is the 16th edition in the series, but the first edition to be published as an eBook. This is an exciting departure for Cork City Libraries, even though it is happening now because of the Covid-19 emergency.

Another departure for this year's *Unfinished Book* is that it includes, for the first time, pupils, schools, and libraries from areas new to the city: Ballincollig and Glanmire.

Although this is a different format, the *Unfinished Book* again features new poems from young writers across the city. This year's edition showcases 50 young voices, representing five schools. The work these writers have produced comprises a wonderful anthology, illustrating an impressive variety of subject, style and a very strong standard throughout. The finished product is testament to the great work of the five assisting writers.

Thanks and congratulations to all of the young writers:

- o na daltaí as Gaelcholáiste Choilm faoi chúram Bernadette Nic an tSaoir, i Leabharlann Bhaile an Chollaigh;
- o the pupils from Presentation Secondary School led by Matthew Geden, in Tory Top Library;
- o the pupils from St. Vincent's Secondary School with Afric McGlinchey, in Blackpool Library;
- o the pupils from Glanmire Community College led by Paul Casey, in Glanmire Library; and
- o the pupils from Ashton Comprehensive School with Roisín Kelly in the City Library, Grand Parade.

I am delighted to acknowledge the work of Paul Casey of Ó Bhéal in the editing and curation of the project. I also acknowledge the work of all the Libraries staff – in the City centre, Ballincollig, Blackpool, Tory Top, and Glanmire, coordinated by Eibhlín and the Children & Young People's services team at the City Library.

Enjoy – digitally and every other way!

Liam Ronayne
Cork City Librarian

Assisting Writers' Biographies

Bernadette Nic an tSaoir / Bernadette McIntyre

Ó Bhaile na mBocht i gcathair Chorcaí do Bernadette Nic an tSaoir agus chaith sí an chuid is mó dá saol oibre mar mhúinteoir teangacha i gcoistí gairmoideachais. Chaith sí tamall leis in ionad spioradálta – Les Foyers de Charité – gar do Lyon na Fraince. Tá sí anois ag maireachtaint i nGarrán na mBráthar mar a mbíonn sí ag obair mar aistritheoir/eagarthóir agus ag scríobh. Tá sé leabhar filíochta aici foilsithe ag Coiscéim agus taithí mhaith aici ar aistriúchán ó Bhéarla/Fraincis go Gaeilge. Is é an leabhar is déanaí aici ná *Marta Robin – Gearrbheatha* (FÁS 2018), aistriúchán ón bhFraincis ar bheathaisnéis Marthe Robin a bhunaigh na Foyers de Charité a luaitear anso thuas.

Bernadette McIntyre is a native of Mayfield in Cork city and has spent most her working life as a language teacher in the VEC system. She also spent a year's career break in the main centre of Les Foyers de Charité near Lyon. She now lives in Gurranaברה where she works as a freelance translator/editor. Bernadette has six collections of poetry to date, all published by Coiscéim, as well as literary translations from French. Her latest book is *Marta Robin – Gearrbheatha* (FÁS 2018), a translation of the life of Marthe Robin, the French stigmatist (1902-1981) who founded the above mentioned Foyers de Charité in 1936.

Matthew Geden

Matthew Geden was born and brought up in the English Midlands, moving to Kinsale in 1990. He has published several collections of poetry including *The Place Inside* with Dedalus Press and most recently *Fruit* published by SurVision Books. He currently reviews fiction for the *Irish Examiner* and poetry for *Poetry Ireland Review*.

In 2017 he set up Kinsale Writing School providing a resource for local and international writers. He runs workshops, edits manuscripts and mentors emerging writers. In November 2019 he was Writer in Residence at Nanjing Literature Centre, China. He is the 2020 Writer in Residence for Cork County Library and Arts Service.

Assisting Writers' Biographies

Afric McGlinchey

Afric McGlinchey is the author of *The lucky star of hidden things* (Salmon Poetry / Italian translation published by L'Arcolaio), *Ghost of the Fisher Cat* (Salmon / Italian translation forthcoming in 2020) and *Invisible Insane* (SurVision). Among other honours, she is a Hennessy winner, an Arts Council bursary recipient, and a Pushcart and Best of the Net nominee. Her work has been translated into five languages and has recently appeared or is forthcoming in *Poetry International*, *Magma*, *Poetry Ireland Review*, *Al-Khemia Poetica*, the *Oxford Climate Change* anthology, the *Dedalus Paris* anthology and elsewhere. Afric holds a post-graduate English literature degree from the University of Cape Town and lives in West Cork, Ireland where she edits, reviews and facilitates workshops. For more visit www.africmcglinchey.com

Paul Casey

Paul Casey was born in Cork and has lived mostly in Ireland, Zambia and South Africa. His most recent collection is *Virtual Tides* (Salmon Poetry, 2016). A chapbook, *It's Not all Bad*, appeared from The Heaventree Press in 2009, followed by his debut collection *home more or less* (Salmon, 2012). He edited *A Journey called Home* (Cork City Libraries, 2018), an anthology of poems and stories from immigrant communities in 20 languages. His poems have appeared most recently in recently in *New Coin* and *Backstory Journal*. He teaches creative writing for the UCC's ACE programme and is the director of Ó Bhéal, at www.obheal.ie.

Róisín Kelly

Róisín Kelly was born in west Belfast and raised in Co. Leitrim. After a year as a handweaver on Clare Island and an MA in Writing at NUI Galway, she now calls Cork City home. Her first full collection of poetry, *Mercy* (Bloodaxe Books 2020), follows her 2016 chapbook *Rapture* (Southword Editions). She won the FISH Poetry Prize in 2017, and publications in which her work has appeared include *Poetry (Chicago)*, *Ambit*, *Magma*, *The Stinging Fly*, and *Winter Papers Volume 3*. For more about Róisín, visit www.roisinkelly.com

Gaelcholáiste Choilm

Poetry by

Aoife Ní Bhruadair

Ciara Ní Aodha

David Ó Meachair

Faye Ní Iarlatha

Órla Ní Ghliasáin

Art Óg Ó Gráda

Cillian Ó Cathasaigh

Éadaoin Erlandsson

Órlaith Ní Chionnaith

Seosamh Ó Buachalla

Assisting Writer: **Bernadette Nic an tSaoir**

T.Y. Coordinator: **Emilie Doyle**

Workshops held in **Ballincollig Library**

Executive Librarian: **Richard Forrest**



I mbliana don chéad uair bhogamar amach ón gceantar cathrach mar a bhíodh chun fáiltiú roimh scoláirí ó Ghaelcholáiste Choilm, Baile an Chollaigh agus iadsan anois laistigh de cheantar oifigiúil na Comhairle Cathrach ó anuraidh. Bhí fonn chun filíochta orthu ón gcéad lá, iad ag comhoibriú liomsa agus lena chéile i ngach aon slí. Thugas faoi deara go raibh réimse an-leathan suimeanna ina measc, bhíodh plé againn ar cheol, rince, aisteoireacht, taisteal agus ar ndóigh litríocht. Ní raibh aon ghanntanas smaointe chun dánta a spreagadh. Bhain an t-eolas a bhí acu ar an stair siar díom, go háirithe toisc nach bhfuilim féin go maith chuici. Ní bhíodh na cúrsaí staire do na scrúdaithe le mo linnse suimiúil ar chor ar bith. An t-aon stair atá agamsa ná an stair a mhaireas tríd ó na daichidí i leith ach ní beag san is dócha! Bhí an-eolas ag cúpla duine ar an dá Chogadh Domhanda is tá dánta fíntacha againn dá reir.

Léiríodar suim i gcúrsaí reatha freisin, sa toghchán ar ndóigh is é ar siúl lena linn sin. Bhíomar ar aon intinn nárbh fhiú dán a chumadh faoin gceist úd ná faoi pholaiteoirí. Cad a d'fhéadfá a rá fúthu nach raibh ráite go minic cheana? Topaicí eile a gcuireadh suim iontu ná daoine gan dídean agus inimircigh is bhí tuiscint thar na bearta acu ar na fadhbanna úd. Buntáiste mór ab ea sinn a bheith suite i Leabarlann Bhaile an Chollaigh do na ceardlanna, is raidhse leabhar thart orainn le tarraingt astu dá mbeifeá ag lorg inspioráide. Léirigh an grúpa ar fad suim sa léitheoireacht agus is iontach é sin mar spreagadh

chun cumadóireachta.

Táim go mór faoi chomaoín ag cách a bhain leis an dtionscnamh seo a eagrú, leanaigí den obair is go maire sibh. Do na scoláirí, tá bonn maith anois fúibh maidir le litríocht agus filíocht a léamh is a scríobh agus beidh an bua san gaibh i gcónaí. Guím gach rath oraibh is ar bhúr n-oidí amach anseo.

Bernadette Nic an tSaoir

This year we welcomed students from Gaelcholáiste Choilm, Ballincollig for the first time as up to recently they were in the Cork County Council Area. They were eager to write poetry from the very first session. Nothing seemed to deter them and they co-operated extremely well as a group. We covered a wide range of interests as we searched for ideas, for example, music, dance, theatre, sport and literature. A few students were very well up in the history of the two World Wars and we have a few fine poems on this topic. I was very impressed by their knowledge, especially as history was never my best subject. The history I know now is what I've lived through since the forties so I suppose that's not bad either!

We had a few lively discussions on current affairs, Brexit etc. Though they didn't develop and lead to a poem it was all a worthwhile exchange of ideas. We do have some very good poems on current issues such as poverty, housing, homelessness and immigration. It was one great advantage that the sessions were held in Ballincollig Library so we had plenty of books to consult if we needed inspiration.

I am really grateful to all who made this event possible, keep up the good work. To the students I just want to thank you all for participating. You have built a foundation for study and writing of literature and poetry in the future so do try to nurture that interest. Thank you all again and I wish yourselves and teachers every success.

Bernadette McIntyre

Poems

Gaelcholáiste Choilm



An Tigin Bán

Aoife Ní Bbrúadair

Fear beag ina chónaí
Sa tigin bán
Gan aon bhean chéile
É trína chéile
Téann gach uile lá go dtí
 an tigh tabhairne
 ag ól lena chairde
 ag ól ina aonar
Go dorchadas na hoíche
Níl airgead aige choíche.

Chug Chug Chug

Aoife Ní Bbrúadair

Chug Chug Chug
'One more', they said.
Chug Chug Chug
'Sure gowan', they said.
Chug Chug Chug
'What harm', they said.

A lot of harm, I say now.
Chug Chug Chug
I drank away my money.
I drank away my house.
I drank away my family.

All I think of now
As I lie in the shop doorway
Is Chug Chug Chug.

Mo Chúinne

Aoife Ní Bhrúadair

Gan tigh gan seomra
Gan rud ar bith
Ach táim ar mo shuaimhneas
Agus mé i mo chúinne.

Suím i mo chúinne
Ag doras an tsiopa
Le mo chlann
Níl aon rud uaimse ach iad

Feicim na páistí
Ag ithe milseán
Ag caint lena gclann
Ag caitheamh éadaí galánta
Níl faic eile uaimse ach é sin.

Scéal Mo Bheatha

Aoife Ní Bhrúadair

Isteach sa rang liom
30 aghaidh os mo chomhair
Mo chéad lá i mbun ranga
Seo an lá mór

Féachaim ar na scoláirí
Meangadh gáire ar a mbéal
Smaoiním ar a dtodhchaí
Cuirfidh mise lena scéal

Scéal iontach a bheidh acu go léir
Scéalta lán de spraoi
Mise mar réalt is treoraí
Iadsan fós mar bhanríon nó rí

No Sound

Aoife Ní Bhrúadair

What? Say that again. Pardon.
I repeated again and again
Her hearing's fine said the doctor
She's just a distracted child

I was three when I used a phone
My minder noticed
Although I'm a rightie
I put it to my left ear

Test after test,
Visit after visit.
Everything's fine
Said the doctor again

Buzz Buzz Buzz
Call from the doctor
Everything's not fine
The tests were wrong

No sound none at all
From the right ear
A life of turning my head
To hear someone whisper

My Santa Claus

Aoife Ní Bhrúadair

As I look across the way
He smiles at me
I look forward every day
To my time to see
My Santa Claus

His suit isn't red
His hair isn't white
But when I see his head
All my world is right with
My Santa Claus

He doesn't travel the world
All in one night
And no he's not bold
It's always a Yes in a world of maybe with
My Santa Claus

When he's around
My life fills with happiness
For our life will be blessed
Even in times of mess
It will be with
My Santa Claus

Birds Of Glanworth

Aoife Ní Bhrúadair

The family of birds of Glanworth
Were a big family of eight.
The nest was small
But they loved each other.

As each baby bird left
Birdie the mother bird
And Big Bird the father bird
Adapted to a life of two.

One day Big Bird
Flew up and away into the sky
Leaving Birdie alone
But she adapted to a life of one.

Twelve years of a life of one,
Birdie decided she missed Big Bird
She said her goodbyes
And flew into the sky.

Their baby birds live on
With all their baby baby birds
Missing Big Bird and Birdie
But living in the memories
Of the family of birds of Glanworth.

Grian Agus Gealach

Aoife Ní Bhrúadair

Gach maidin feicim an ghrian
Gach oíche feicim an ghealach
Tríd an díomá agus tragóid
Tiocfaidh grian is gealach

Aon lá go mbíonn buairt orm
Bainim leas as an lonradh
A thagann anuas ón spéir
Gach uile lá

Ní stopann aon rud
Sin córas na gréine
Ní stopann aon rud
Ionam féin is im shaol

Proper New Yorkers

Aoife Ní Bhrúadair

As I roam through the crowded streets
And look up at huge skyscrapers,
The Big Apple is all too sweet
And filled with proper New Yorkers.

A city filled with lights,
Times Square blows me away.
But I do get a fright
When I hear the price of Broadway.

I open my eyes to the world
And see the mess all around,
Peoples' hearts stone cold,
To this place they are all bound.

Sugar Butter Flour

Aoife Ní Bhrúadair

Sugar butter flour
I grab my apron
I grab my mixer
I grab my ingredients

Sugar butter flour
Mix everything together
Pop it in the oven
And out comes the cake

Sugar butter flour
Not just a cake
A cake tells a story
Of the baker's life

Sugar butter flour
A well made cake
They were happy and at peace
And it was mixed with ease

Sugar butter flour
A hard dense cake
It was made with stress
And mixed with tension

Sugar butter flour
But a cake made with love
That is the super cake
Which we will call perfection

Me And My Balloon

Aoife Ní Bhrúadair

One day I bought a balloon,
 A balloon coloured pink.
With it I could fly to the moon,
 The balloon was my story's ink.

Everywhere I walked
 With me the balloon stayed.
The balloon and I chatted
 All the time as we played.

Suddenly I lost my balloon
 And it flew into the sky,
Up an up towards the moon
 As I waved goodbye.

A life all by myself now
 Without ink for my story.
So I live with my true self
 Yet still I waved goodbye.

Haikú

Aoife Ní Bhrúadair

Fia donn ag rith
Ceo agus drúcht ar maidin
Leoithne na gcrann

Doire Fhíonáin

Art Óg Ó Gráda

Seo é mo bhaile ó bhaile
Thíos i nDeisceart Chiarraí
Láthair chun machnamh
Chun cneasú
Thíos i measc na sléibhte
Iad glas, donn, rua is ór
Trá bán leis an bhfarraige ag síneadh
I bhfad radharc na súl
Mé liom féin anso le mo smaointe
Ar an dtrá fada gaofar
Gan faic le déanamh ach suí
Éisteacht leis an ngaoth ag rith isteach
Ón Fharraige Mhór
Tonnta ag tuairteáil ar an ngaineamh
Smaoiním ar an dtráth sular tháinig an duine
Gan tígh ná bóthar le feiscint
Faic na ngrást ach an nádúr beo
Tráth an tsuaimhnis
Aimsir an tsuaimhnis
Domhan simplí

Fadó

Ciara Ní Aodha

Dán Próis

Is ait liom smaoinemh ar an am fadó. Cathaoir adhmaid agus bláthanna sa phróca. Fallaí bána is urlár cloiche. An t-aer úr lasmuigh, féar glas agus crainn. B'in é an saol.

Uafás atá againn inniu. Cogaidh san Oirthear. Fadhbanna aeráide muna dtugaimid aire don domhan atá againn. Is féidir an saol a bheith simplí arís, mar a bhí fadó. Orainn fein atá.

I am Invisible

Ciara Ní Aodha

I am in an emergency

Where do I live?

Everywhere

Where am I going?

I don't know

How did this happen?

Unsure

Because I am that person you hear about on the radio

The person who lives nowhere and has nothing

I am the person who asks you every day for just

the slightest bit of recognition

But you pretend not to see me

Because you don't see me

For to you

I am invisible

My Species

Ciara Ní Aodba

I fear for my future
I had hoped for a long happy life
I wondered what the future held
As I shared it with those I love

Now I am uncertain
Will I reach the future
My dreams of peace
My species cannot be trusted
My species are irresponsible
My species are killing their surroundings

Killing the beautiful air and wild creatures
Killing what has been since time began
Killing the hope of a future

My species have killed
But if you can kill you can create
Create new sources of food and life
Create new times and opportunities
Create hope for a new future

It's all up to my species

The Girl On The Rocks

Ciara Ní Aodba

She waits on the rocks each day, singing,
Waiting for someone to take her away
To a world she knows.
A world where young women can speak up,
Live their lives freely,
Free of men telling them what to do
What to say
What to wear
How to act.

She waits on the rocks each day, singing,
Singing her melody of hope,
Hoping that someone will hear.
Feeling lonely, lost,
Despairing, doubting.

She sits and sings her song of love.
The only replies are the crashing waves of the sea.

Dhá Haikú

Ciara Ní Aodba

Liomóid is teile
Dom chosaint ón ngrian bhuí
Sin blas an tsamhraidh

Luch tí ag rith chugam
Fonn air éalú ón áit seo
Scaoilfead amach é

Mise agus an Stáitse

Ciara Ní Aodba

Is aoibhinn liom aon áit amháin
I gcathair mhór Chorcaí,
Is féidir liom a bheith ionraic ann
Is meas orm dá réir.

Sin é Tigh an Opera
Áras mór cáiliúil,
Nuair atáim ar an stáitse
Líonaim an tigh le mo ghuth

Ag canadh ó mo chroí amach
San áit is fearr ar domhan,
Is mian liom teacht arís is arís,
Seo é mo bhaile fhéin.

Is anso a bhraithim go sona,
In airde ar an stáitse ollmhór,
Pobal na hÉireann ag fanacht liom
Is stiúrthóirí ar mo thóir.

Me and my Open Window

Ciara Ní Aodba

Girl reading a letter at an open window, Jan Vermeer

The window has become my friend
From all the time spent together.
Each day the wooden frame is moist with my tears.
Sometimes the birds come to comfort me
But today is not one of those days.
Today it is just me
And my open window.

The letter arrived this morning,
Brown and crinkled from the journey.
Who knew a piece of paper could carry so much sadness?
I read it and crumble, just like the paint on my window.
From now on it is just me
And my open window.

I know the war will come closer,
Taking over my country house
Just like it took him.
The window will no longer hold my secrets and privacy.
For after all a window is just glass.
A glass window, and me
And my open window.

The Wisdom a Bird Possesses

Ciara Ní Aodba

It's a magical thing to be free,
Soaring through the sky,
The cool breeze through my outstretched feathers.
Feeling the height within me
I go higher and higher into enormous blue.
This thing that I feel, this is freedom.

But I am one of the free.
Somewhere, stretched across this vast world
Is one just like me.
Same build, same brain
But different coloured feathers.

A bird waits, stuck in a cage,
Waiting for when he can be free
And soar just like me.
Stuck, locked, caged.
He should be flying,
Discovering, seeking.

Each day I discover a new land,
New beginnings, opportunities.

Each day a bird waits, stuck in a cage,
Staring at the oppressive bars
Of his prison.

Ceol Na nÉan

Cillian Ó Cathasaigh

Bímse ag obair go dian gach lá
Lasmuigh de mo thigín beag faoin dtuath.
Ach líonann mo chroí le háthas
Nuair a chloisim na héin ag canadh go binn
Lasmuigh de mo thigín faoin dtuath.

Licence To Kill

Cillian Ó Cathasaigh

Trucks and cars
fun in bars
all bring memories back to me
from that day I lost everything in Farranree

I heard a zoom
and then a boom
next thing I know gone, all gone,
my family, my home, happiness.

I'm now here a week later
on the streets outside a shop called Crater,
no money, no family, no happiness.
All it takes is one slippy road, one drunk driver
to wipe all happiness from my life,
one slippy road, one drunk driver

A Lost Hope

Cillian Ó Cathasaigh

War is over, everyone is happy for the first time in six years.
Everyone but me because Auschwitz camp and Nazi Germany
has destroyed my family.

My brother, sister and mother perished in war.
My father taken hostage by the Nazis – a death sentence.

I see four people yelling and waving.
I wave back thinking my family didn't perish.
As I begin to walk towards them I am shoved by a boy
And see him running towards my family.

That's my family, I say. My last bit of hope.
One shove, one blink and the image of my family standing,
Waving, perishes into thin air
Just as they perished in the war.

Haikú

Cillian Ó Cathasaigh

Gabhar mór groí ag rith
Téann sé isteach sa bhfóraois
Chun breith ar sceiteog bheag

Deireadh an Chogaidh

Cillian Ó Cathasaigh

Ní fhéadfainn é a chreidiúint,
Bhí deireadh leis an gcogadh.
Gach tragóid a tharla, im intinn fós
Go ceann na mblianta le teacht.

Tá deireadh leis an gcogadh,
Daoine anois go sona sásta.
Bhí mé féin fós gruama,
Gach cuid dem chroí briste.

Ní fhéadfainn é a chreidiúint,
Bhí deireadh leis an gcogadh.
Bhí deireadh le mo chlann
Ní fheicfidh mé iad go deo arís.

Ní fhéadfainn é a chreidiúint,
Bhí deireadh leis an gcogadh.
Le caoga bliain anuas bhí an ceart agam.
Ní fhaca mé mo chlann arís.
Bhí mo shaol ar fad go dona.

First Day at School

Cillian Ó Cathasaigh

On my first day at school
I hugged the principal's knees
On my first day at school
I ate a sandwich with cheese

On my first day at school
I learned how to say Dia dhuit
On my first day at school
I said I can speak Irish a bit

On my first day at school
With new friends I played games
On my first day at school
I had to learn all their names
On my first day at school
I enjoyed it so much
I said 'Enough of the Irish,
I need to learn Dutch.'

On my first day at school
We did PE in a dome
I packed up all my stuff
And went home.

Éalú

David Ó Meachair

Laethanta saoire agus ceol
I bpáirt le chéile
Seans agam éalú
Ón saol lán de strus
Faoiseamh aigne éisteacht le ceol
Nó dul thar sáile
Ag rith ón mbrú
Tá an domhan chomh beag anois
Saoirse agamsa ag éalú
Im intinn fhéin
Trín gceol agus saoire

Dealbh

David Ó Meachair

An saol inniu
Chomh difriúil ó mo shaol mar a bhíodh
Meaisíní glórmhara ag gluaiseacht
Gach sórt dath orthu
Ag líonadh na sráide
Spéir chomh gorm le loch
Chomh difriúil ó na spéartha liath
A bhíodh tharam
I rith an chogaidh
Mé greamaithe anso anois
Ar an gcolún seo
Cloch mór i lár na slí
Mé ag breathnú ar na daoine
Is mise i mo dhealbh

Nocht

David Ó Meachair

Turas go dtí an chathair,
Bíonn sé an-deacair.
Féachaint ar na daoine bochta
Ina luí ann, nocht
Gan gheansaí ná cóta,
Ag taibhreamh faoi dhinnéar rósta,
De shíor ag iarraidh déirce.
Titeann an oíche i bhfáiteadh na súl.
Trua agam do na daoine bochta
Fós ina luí ar an gcoincreít
Is í chomh fuar doicheadh.

Aimsir na Nollag

David Ó Meachair

Na soilse Nollag go léir
Ar lasadh go hard sa spéir
Siúlaim abhaile im aonar
Mo chuid smaointe dom bhuaireadh
Faoi chairde is faoi chlann
Ag tiomáint ar na bóithre sleamhain
Tráth draíochta gan dabht
Fós bíonn scamall éigin os mo chionn
Thart ar an Nollaig

Cá Bhfuil an Tanora?

David Ó Meachair

An Nollaig le mo chlann
Mar a bhí an chéad lá riamh
Is ait nach dtagann aon athrú
Ag ól Tanora is ag éisteacht le Wham
Ag ithe Taytos agus *boney-roasted ham*
Ag ól tae i rith an lae
Secret Santa i ngach aon teach
Roses is *Celebrations* gan bhac
Ag imirt *Monopoly* agus cártaí
Le colceathracha sa seomra suí
Am speisialta le mo chlann
Smaoiním ar an dtráth seo le fonn
Is breá liom an Nollaig le mo chlann

Fuacht

David Ó Meachair

Mé féin is mo leanbh
Inár gcónaí le chéile
I dteach beag umhal
Gan aon chumhacht
Ná cosaint ón ndomhan fuarchúiseach
Grá againn dá chéile
Inár dteach beag umhal
Saor ón bhfuacht

Before Summer Ends

David Ó Meachair

Late nights with my friends,
Getting up early to walk dogs,
Trying to fit everything in
Before summer ends.

Splashing in sapphire waves,
Lounging on golden sand,
Trying to do as much as we can
Before summer ends.

On blistering hot days
Regular trips to the shop
To buy their stock of ice pops
Before summer ends.

Travelling to a bustling city
And quaint little villages,
Trying to visit so many places
Before summer ends.

Or the best days by far
When you don't do anything,
Just relaxing and resting
Before summer ends.

Battling away thousands of midges
As they attack my head
Before summer ends.

Assisi

David Ó Meachair

Ag siúl na sráide caoile
I gcoinne na dturasóirí
Mé fein is mo leanbh
Gan chabhair ó éinne
Ach Naomh Proinsias a bhí mór
Leis na hainmhithe is na héin
An Mhaighdean Mhuire thuas
Is Íosa Críost ár Slánaitheoir
Ar fhalla an tséipéil

Gan faic uaim ach éalú
Go dtí an saol mar a bhíodh
Mé féin is mo leanbh
In árasán beag
Aghaidh síos ar an gcathair
Gan chabhair ó éinne
Ach Naomh Proinsias a bhí mór
Leis na hainmhithe is na héin
An Mhaighdean Mhuire thuas
Is Íosa Críost ár Slánaitheoir
Ar fhalla an tséipéil

The Lazy Boy

David Ó Meachair

Read, write, draw,
That's all they ever say.
Read, write, draw,
Why can't they go away?

Sleep, sleep, sleep,
That's what I do.
Sleep, sleep, sleep,
I hate school.

Wake up, wake up, wake up,
Whenever I close my eyes.
Wake up, wake up, wake up,
When I sleep how time flies.

Sick of school, sick of learning,
Sick of early mornings.
Only thing I want to do
Is sleep the day away.

Haikú

David Ó Meachair

Eilit bheag thapaidh
Ag rith tríd an gcoill gan bhac
Gan aon rud sa tslí

Blas na nDeor

Éadaoin Erlandsson

An ghaoth mar thaibhse mór
Ag screadaíl timpeall orm
Faic i mo cheann
Ach brón agus buairt

Na deora móra ag titim anuas
Thugas mo chúl don teach
Ritheas sall chuig mo mháthair
Í brónach
Blas na ndeor i mo bhéal

Dóchas

Éadaoin Erlandsson

Bíonn solas lonrach gléghéal ar lasadh i ngach aon duine
Ach múchtar é ag dorchadas an domhain,
Ag brón, buairt is éadóchas.

Bíodh sásamh i do chroí, ná géill don uafás.
Coimeád an solas ar lasadh
Ag lonradh chomh geal leis an réaltra.

Memory

Éadaoin Erlandsson

We were three, six and nine,
My sisters and I
As we ran through the fields to the woods.

Rustle of trees
Sweet smell of wild flowers
Soft mucky grass
Under my boots.

A sharp icy wind
Whooshing all around
Tears in our eyes
Our noses red.

Joy and excitement
A flaming sun sinks on the horizon.

We were three, six and nine,
My sisters and I
As we ran through the fields to the woods.

The Post Office

Faye Ní Iarlatha

I sit outside the post office each day,
Waiting and wishing my life away.
The silent parade of people who pass,
My hands are ice, my eyes like glass.

I remember a time of gold and red,
Food in my belly, a roof overhead,
Loud hearty laughs and people to love,
Now all I greet is the night sky above.

No four walls around me,
Yet I've never been more trapped.
I've nowhere to go,
My lips are all chapped.

The people who pass,
They scorn and turn away.
Yet I sit still waiting
By the post office each day.

Cumhacht

Fáye Ní Iarlatha

Ait an rud é cumhacht
Mar cheannaire ar dhaoine
Cumhacht ag an mbanríon
Soiléir le feiscint

Máistir nó múinteoir
Deachtóir i gceannas ar thír
Ach tá cumhacht eile fós ann
Cumhacht umhal

Sin cumhacht chiúin an linbh
Ina chodladh go séimh
Cumhacht chiúin cheilte
An linbh sa teach

Waiting Through Winter

Faye Ní Iarlatha

A warm glow from the setting sun
On the world below,
We share secrets.
Sickly sweet lemonade gone to our heads,
We laugh about everything and nothing.

Time slips away and it looks like summer won't end.
Gentle hum of engines running,
The hay where we sat as it scratched our backs.
It seems permanent, it has to be so.

Drunk on happiness but I am sobered
By a bitter wind that nips my hands, my smile.
Winter has crept in and I cannot thaw it,
I can only wait in silence.

The sun that just warmed me has set
And with it so have you.
So I wait through winter for the sun to rise again,
But I have no way of knowing if it ever will.

Cúirt Mhic Shéafraidh

Faye Ní Iarlatba

Feicim anois an choill,
Crainn arda ag cromadh,
Bachlóga chorcradhearga mar bhlaincéad
Ag síneadh amach gan chríoch le feiscint.

Feicim anois an trá,
Tonnta ag éirí is ag titim arís,
An sáile san aer go blasta ar mo theanga
Gan le clos ach scread na n-éan.

Feicim anois an tigh tábhairne,
Ceol agus craic ag blocadh,
Bia blasta is pobal cineálta,
Áit spraoi is saor ó inní.

Feicim anois an cailín spraoiúil
Nuair a fhilleann sí anso,
Lasann a croí is a súile
Le sábháilteacht is compord
Anso i gCúirt Mhic Shéafraidh.

Back To School

Órlaith Ní Chionnaith

Why do those in power still ponder on climate change? They focus on prevention, not action. They tell us to go back to school, to find a solution. Leave it to the adults to worry.

Have I the right to live without fear? Without fear of the day when they say it's too late now, we have ruined all chances of a life on earth for our children.

What is my legacy if I don't stand up? I refuse to be silent. I won't watch the world crumble. I will stand up now. The more you try to silence me, the more I will fight.

Missing my Home

Órlaith Ní Chionnaith

Vast buildings lit up in Hong Kong

Bright fluorescent street lights

New friends in Australia

A Koala bear's fur soft to the touch

A pawprint on my palm

Soft rhythm of waves in Bali

Brilliant white sands lap my feet

Happy friends in Biarritz

Nostalgia

Longing to see them again

But where does my heart long to be?

At home with friends and family

Sa Chathair Mhór

Órlaith Ní Cbionnaith

Cuimhním ar an lá
Mé i mo luí ar an dtrá
An ghrian ag scoilteadh na gcloch
Tonnta séimhe ag dul tharam go bog

Cuimhním ar an lá breá úd
Mé ag siúl ar Shráid Pádraig
Daoine anaithnid ag dul tharam
Tonnta garbha plóid na sráide

Cuimhním ar na daoine úd
Gan suim acu ionam
Ach ina gclann féin
Is a stair spéisiúil
Mar thonnta uaignis
Ag dul tharam gach lá

Cárta Poist

Órla Ní Gbliasáin

Éirí na gréine go hard thar na sléibhte
Go moch ar maidin
Blaincéad bán ag clúdach an tírdhreach
Níl éinne ann
Ach mise is an dúlra
Anso i Kaunertaler sa Tirol

Bóthar Na Trá

Órla Ní Gbliasáin

Ag tiomáint síos Bóthar na Trá
Thugas súilfhéachaint ar chlé
Ar an dtigh inar tógadh mé
Chonac leaid óg sa ghairdín

Ritheann sé sall is anall
Ag canadh leis na héin
Is braithim uaim an lá
Nuair b'é sin mo ghairdín fhéin

Ar Bhruach Na Laoi

Órla Ní Gbliasáin

Tagann na sluaite go dtí an chathair
Don siopadóireacht agus spraoi
Is filléann abhaile ist oíche
I bhfad ó Abhainn na Laoi

Ach mise téim ag siúl na sráide
Go díreach lasmuigh den teach
Mar is fearr liom bheith i mo chónaí
Go díreach ar bhruach na Laoi.

Behind The Bookshelf

Órla Ní Gbliasáin

In the silence of the library
You scarcely hear a sound
But the turning of pages
Or the scratch of pen on paper

Then I hear a voice
That warms my heart
A little girl singing
Behind the bookshelf

I see her tiny feet
Her bright red hair
Her happy song is an echo
Through the books
In the silence of the library

Draíocht

Órla Ní Gbliasáin

Bhí máthair ina cónaí i dtigh fuar
I lár na coille dorcha
Bhí cumhacht draíochta aici siúd
Ar pé leanbh ar leag sí súil air
Na leanaí de shíor ag gáirí is ag spraoi
Gan achran gan chaoineadh
Bean umhal í a mhair sa choill
Ar son na bpáistí

Dhá Haikú

Seosamb Ó Buachalla

Rith tríd an dúlra
Na duilleoga ag titim
Buí, donn is dearg

Ag ithe milseán
Sa tsíoc agus sa tsneachta
Os comhair na tine

Sráid na Sléibhte

Seosamb Ó Buachalla

Anois táim ag codladh ar an sráid
Is fada ó thángas ar an mbád
I mo bhaile fhéin bhíos ag codladh faoi shléibhte
Ag éisteacht leis na gunnaí ag scréachach
Na sléibhte ar crith ó bhuamaí ag pléascadh
Thángas go hÉirinn lena bheith saor sábháilte
Mé anois amuigh faoin mbáisteach is gan chabhair ó lucht na sráide

Flers – Courcellette

Seosamb Ó Buachalla

Weeks of fighting is destroying the Somme

A simple soldier hides in the trenches

Doing his best to survive

A wife and child left behind

An enemy attack on his mind

He relaxes with a beer in Courcellette

He wants this to end so he takes a rest

He returns to the trenches to hear a cry

“Diese Engländer kommen mit riesigen Maschinen”

He lifted his head, fired a shot,

But his target was 14 tonnes of steel.

Fortunately the tank got stuck

But that was the limit to his luck.

The enemy’s slow advance made too much ground

And ran over the trench.

This poor German soldier never came home.

His last ever sight was that first tank.

Now he’s sunken in the mud.

He lost the fight.

Presentation Secondary School

Poetry by

Raquel Pascual

Ropa Tusso

Chloe Fitzgerald

Saoirse O'Brien

Maria Eduarda

S

Anonymous

Assisting Writer: **Matthew Geden**

T.Y. Coordinator: **Gavin Foley**

Workshops held in **Tory Top Library**

Executive Librarian: **Deirbhile Dennehy**



The Unfinished Book of Poetry project is for me one of the most innovative and interesting literary programmes in the city of Cork. It is a wonderful opportunity to encourage young writers to express themselves, to develop their poetic tastes and styles and to ultimately achieve a first publication at a tender age. Every writer from aged 9 to 90 still enjoys that sense of completion when a poem is finally in print and so it is wonderful to see a new volume out despite the extraordinary circumstances of a challenging year so far. Now, more than ever, we need to pull together and celebrate each other and new poetry from new writers seems an ideal excuse for celebration.

Our first sessions took place in Tory Top Road Library where we were assigned to a spacious community room. The library staff were all very friendly and helpful enabling us to all settle in and focus on the task in hand. We began with some simple exercises, each student writing about themselves, their family and their home. Most of the students were from Cork, but we also had Maria from Brazil and Raquel from Spain. I set the class various exercises on these subjects and the classes developed from there. As the weeks passed the exercises became more testing and fun. It was great to see the writing of the girls also developing as they experimented with rhyme and free verse.

In one session the group worked in pairs looking at newspaper articles and

trying to pick out interesting subjects for poetry. We also looked at some classic poems such as Stevie Smith's "Not Waving but Drowning". The week after they returned from work experience our classes were moved to the impressive school library. Here we began by talking about each student's participation in the workplace and how this can be used in creative writing. I encouraged them to write about what they had learnt and also to think about different occupations and how some of these were dying out. We read Seamus Heaney's poem "Thatcher" and talked about traditional crafts. Later we also spoke about less noble occupations and read "Stealing" by Carol Ann Duffy. The first line of this poem proved a useful prompt for some of the girls' own writing. Other popular exercises included writing poems of sounds heard on the way to school, ghost stories and the five word challenge.

I am very proud of the way the girls stuck to their task throughout these sessions. The schedule wasn't ideal and then the uncertainty just before the schools closed in March was upsetting to all of us. Nevertheless, I could see real improvements in their writing and growing maturity in themselves. These girls are genuinely interested in the world around them and in the burning issues of the day. They are caring and worry about their friends, family and the planet. Their poems are also hopeful and rereading them I am hopeful too, the future is in good hands. I would like to thank Tory Top Road Library, Presentation Girls School, Paul Casey and all who made this possible but especially the students themselves who made these classes such a pleasure.

Matthew Geden

Poems

Presentation Secondary School



A Spice Cake

Raquel Pascual

The cover of the packet said:
“You will never forget the taste
of this wonderful birthday cake.”

The sound of a birthday song
invited me to explore.

The biscuits looked very nice
like a door to paradise.

My friends gave me a great surprise
and I rushed to get a fork and knife.
As soon as I took the first slice
my mouth blew up on fire!
It was really spicy, my eyes began to cry.

Now I know that the spice in the cake
still stays on my lips
and I will never forget the feeling
that was so strong and real.

This is like the faithful friendship
that I share with my friends
with whom my best moments I spend.

The Journey of a Drop

Raquel Pascual

On a round cloud in white high light
a water drop full of life shone
she was starting her journey,
she felt fear and excitement.

She continued falling and falling
and decided to fight against death,
start to dance with the breeze.

The earth lantern shone brightly
under the turquoise blue abyss
and the melody of the birds
was music to her ears.

The breeze of the calm wind
stroked her fragile cheeks.
The mountain peaks
opened her heart to the unending sky of dreams.

She followed her dear friends
and another blue drop said:
Your destiny is in that blue blanket
and the white crests of that vastness
will protect you and give you happiness.

Poem About My Self

Raquel Pascual

I am a very friendly person,
I help people when they are in pain.
My eyes are like bright stars
and I love being with my lads.

Poetry is the thing I love most
and I'd like to learn more.

When you see me smile
it's like winning a medal
and my laughing cheeks
are like red petals.

My honey lips
give off sweetness
and my hugs are blows of happiness.

My kisses are like the gentle summer breeze
and my eyes windows to paradise.

Poem About My Brother

Raquel Pascual

Laughing at all the times
he makes my days shine.
I am proud of him
and he is special to me.

He always steals me a smile
and fills everything with light.
The wind brings me his laughter,
he will achieve everything
because he is a fighter.

If I could give him any advice
I'd say be kind and wise.

Poem About Spain

Raquel Pascual

Looking out the window,
lonely and wondering who I am
and if they could come,
my friends, my family,
all that I left behind.
In Spain, the place that saw me grow
and gave me happiness and love.

My childhood full of love
illuminated my heart's stove,
which is now a clock
needing to be repaired,
weak by a deep nostalgic cove.

A Long Car Ride

Ropa Tuso

“Where are we going?”

She asks this every 30 minutes

and I’m still yet to give

a direct answer.

“Somewhere nice...”

“Who’s going to be there?”

She wonders with great excitement

in her eyes.

“You’ll find out soon.”

“How long are we staying?”

These questions are getting

harder to answer.

“For as long as we need to, dear.”

“Mom?”

What will she ask now?

“Where is Dad?”

An Endless Loop of Crazy

Ropa Tuso

What is the mind

Most are one of a kind

Others are hard to find

But all are intertwined

In this world we call divine

I miss the first day

Ropa Tusó

I miss the first day

back when I was new and shiny

back when I had a lot to look forward to

I miss the first week

back when I had a lot of new faces to look at

back when everyone wanted me

I miss the first month

back when you got me a new cover every day

back when you said I was the best

thing to happen to you

But most of all -

I miss the first year

back when you couldn't let go of me

back when you didn't forget to charge me

back when it was just you and me

Now I am here in your drawer

with all the other phones

you loved and left to die

Don't Let the Bed Bugs Bite

Chloe Fitzgerald

Time to go to sleep
My mom said sleep tight
Don't let the bed bugs bite
The sun rose as did I
As I rose I noticed I was not at home
I looked down and got the shock of my life
Feet you would think right?
Hooves horse's hooves
How?
I must have let the bed bugs bite

Summer Breeze

Chloe Fitzgerald

The beach, a place of peace
A horse, a person's purse
Breeze, the summer breeze, on the beach
Secure, that is what best friends are for
Gallop, like an angel in the sky
Love, for the thing you would die for
Care for the one thing you see as joy
Jump all the obstacles
Trot to be bold
Forget all your troubles
The horse will be your support
Even if you can't take anymore
You must keep riding

Two Face

Chloe Fitzgerald

The word nurse

A soft and welcoming word

The nurse with the big kind smile

The nurse with the big blue eyes

But what have those big blue eyes seen

The big blue loving eyes have seen the

Darkest things of all

Nurse

Is she as kind after all

Knocking on death's door day in and day out

While still having a big kind smile and

Big blue loving eyes

Is she a devil in disguise?

What if she is the nurse with the big

Sharp knife

And not with the big kind smile

The nurse with the psycho mind

And not with the big blue loving eyes

I think she is a devil in disguise

Horse Shop

Chloe Fitzgerald

I like horses
They definitely use people's purses
The shop definitely has lots of purpose
As your horse needs feed
To be able to give you what you need
Watching the clock tick by
Waiting for time to go by
Walking out the door
Finally waving goodbye

A Special Place

Chloe Fitzgerald

A girl in a white dress
Sitting by a crystal blue lake
Just like her dog's crystal blue eyes
This is the place she goes for peace of mind
To find herself freedom
The sun
She brings a beach umbrella to block
The sun
The umbrella is also blocking all the
Monsters in her head while in this special place
She brings her special spray to this place
It smells just like strawberries
This brings her back to a good place

Through the Waterfall

Chloe Fitzgerald

We decided to go camping
Were we in our right mind?
On a deserted island
Searching for a place to stay
By a waterfall that seems alright
Blue crystal water like the blue sky
Emerald green leaves like the green grass
Searching?
Searching seemed nice
Searching for what?
I guess whatever we find
A dark wet cave
Scary right?
But what about a gold light glimmer?
Cause that's what I came to find
Then I knew I was sorted for life
Do you want to know what I came to find
I guess you need to make up your own mind

Home

Chloe Fitzgerald

Home
A place where I can go
To say hi to my dog Joe
To get into my bed
With a shelter over my head
And sleep forever more

The Strangest Thing I Ever Saw ...

Saoirse O'Brien

The strangest thing I ever saw,
a monkey dangling from the ceiling.
He clapped his hands, made a scratch,
and suddenly started swinging.

He zoomed around the box-like room,
gripping the bars above his head,
and settled in the far right corner,
in a tree-like bamboo bed.

He sat in the corner as I peered through the glass,
every second, every minute a new person would pass.
A click of a camera, a bright white flash,
they'd move to the next animal kept behind double-glazed glass.

A monkey once young and free,
he could swing in the jungle from tree to tree.
A monkey whose life is not the same,
kept in a dark room for people to be entertained.

A room filled with fake trees,
the monkey kept in isolation,
like every other animal in the zoo,
kept for public observation.

In Those 7 Minutes

Saoirse O'Brien

I wake up,
5:55 the clock reads,
I'm not meant to be up for over an hour,
but can't go back to sleep.

I start hearing odd noises downstairs,
it sounds like someone is in the house,
but I'm home alone -
I must be imagining things.

The squeak of cupboards opening,
sends a chill down my spine.
I can't be imagining that ...
Can I?

I hear footsteps coming up the stairs,
Thud, Thud, Thud, Thud -
they're getting louder,
getting closer.

I glance at the alarm clock, 6:02
in those 7 minutes the odd sounds didn't stop.
In those 7 minutes I clenched the sheets in fear.
In those 7 minutes -

On My Way

Saoirse O'Brien

Bang!

Thud, Thud, Thud, Thud -

drip drop, drip drop -

Bark, Bark

Ahhhh - hehehe -

vroom -

vroom -

Thud, Thud, Thud, Thud -

drip drop, drip drop -

Chirp, c

vroom -

creeeek,

Ding Dong.

Home

Maria Eduarda

Tropical weather,

A nice hot breeze

And the end of a sunny day.

Every day is magical in my place,

My sweet home, Brazil.

Houses, in many colours

Maria Eduarda

Houses, in many colours,
Blue, yellow, red
And the windows coloured too
Infinite combinations

Red house with a yellow window,
A brown one with a pink window,
My favourite is the blue house,
It reminds me of the ocean

The bushes, so different to each other
One, with many red flowers
Another, without any flowers
But with green, more green than I've ever seen

There is a big tree
Without leaves, winter loses all of them
But at the same time
The tree still has life,
Because of the birds, many birds

At least a big blue sky,
It's a sunny day.
There are no clouds,
It's my favourite type of sky.

Popstar

Maria Eduarda

I woke up,
I felt strange.
Blonde hair, shiny eyes
Oh my God I think I'm a popstar!

Everything is how I like it,
I ate pizza for breakfast
And lasagna for lunch
Everyone made what I wanted.

I had a show,
It was incredible!
The lights, the energy, the people.
It felt like everyone loved me.

At the end of the day
I was exhausted,
But I could feel the love,
It was good.

A Young Girl

S

A young girl from a troubled background,
a hard start to life.

She struggled to find her way,
battling day and night.

She puts on a brave face
and faces each day with a smile,
but what's under the mask
that she tries so desperately to hide?

She screams for help,
gasps for breath as she drowns in tears.
The constant urge to numb the pain
and all her darkest fears.

A girl with so much potential
and so little to lose.
She lashes out
and starts to abuse.

Her "friends" say it makes her "better",
but deep down she knows it's not true,
yet day after day she chooses
to drink and smoke a joint or two.

A young girl,
now a mother of three.
An addict, not a parent,
is what her eldest girl sees.

Many years go by and it's still the same,
same girl,
same issue,
same method to tame.

She Sits There

S

She sits there
looking in the mirror,
studying her reflection,
disgusted by what she sees.

A young girl,
aged in her mid-teens,
an expression of sadness,
broken as it seems.

She has long brown wire-like hair,
wide eyes -
a mixture of many colours,
magnified by black and blue glasses perched upon her face.

A girl with a short slim figure,
but not like the Instagram pictures.

A hopeless being
is all the girl is seeing.

Sitting there slouched over,
she looks away in despair,
with the palm of her hand placed under her chin
and fingers on her cheek next to an upside down grin.

This can't be me,
this can't be what people see,
this can't be the way I see her,
or the way I see me.

She looks back into the mirror,
staring at her reflection,
looking deeper and deeper
at more than one section.

She sees a story
and so much more,
looking into her eyes
there's more than before.

A young girl
who's kind and sweet,
a hard-working student
who never suffers defeat.

A warming smile,
infectious laugh.
An intelligent girl
who's discovered her other half.

Beauty isn't surface deep,
it's so much more.
What's on the inside
is what you're looking for.

The girl in the reflection,
that girl is me,
for the first time in forever
I'm happy to be me.

Sitting On a Plane

Anonymous

Sitting on a plane.

Coming home for the New Year,
although the sound of turbulence
was unbearable to my ears.

Bringing me back to a time where
I couldn't visit the cinema
because even the sound of the opening
credits felt as if there was a drum
next to my ear.

And with every beat of that drum
my surroundings became louder and scarier
making my childhood visits to the cinema
a disliked memory every year.

Bang

Anonymous

A tragic accident
Turned into a story
That would live on
For centuries.

Bang - she shot the pistol.
The sound that turned
A day of celebration
Into a day of mourning.

The screams of family members
Upon hearing the haunted tale,
Seeing the White Lady of Kinsale
Makes your body weak and frail.

St. Vincent's Secondary School

Poetry by

Aimee Cronin

Alexandra Bozhesko

Ava Tynan

Britney Callanan

Danielle O'Connor

Emily Peyton-Blake

Emma O'Callaghan

Hannah St. Leger

Jennifer O'Mahony

Louise McKenzie

Martyna Laurinaityte

Megan Constant

Mollie Blount-Connors

Tiana Murphy-Osindero

Assisting writer: **Afric McGlinchey**

T.Y. Coordinator: **Natalie Henry**

Workshops held in **Blackpool Library**

Executive Librarian: **Clare Doyle**



It's always a pleasure opening a door into poetry when young minds are attentive and receptive. The St. Vincent's girls were a joy. Our explorations were various, and our reading included some of the greats, such as Dylan Thomas, Sylvia Plath, Derek Mahon, Wallace Stephens and Elizabeth Bishop as well as other voices: Sara Baume, Lucy Sweeney-Byrne, Blas Falconer, John Banville, Etienne Van Heerden, Laure-Anne Bosselaar and Eva H.D., to name a few. We also used opening sentences by master writers as springboards for their own poems. We focused on using all the senses, being aware of location, and stepping into the shoes of other people, creatures or objects. Maybe that object comes alive. Maybe it starts talking to you, telling you where it's been, whispering a secret. We generated a load of raw material, then manipulated it to create avant-garde poems. The girls learned how to bury a secret deep inside a poem.

We looked at Eva HD's award-winning poem, 38 Michigans. In this poem,

she uses the idea of Michigan, a state, as a unit of measurement, to show how far away she feels from her dead brother. When a metaphor extends through a whole poem, it is called a conceit. All the private things the siblings shared come into the poem, making it mysterious, but also relatable. We brainstormed the private language of friends, of siblings.

We played with poetry forms, such as villanelles and pantoums. The girls learned to identify how an incantation is created by a pantoum's interlocking pattern of rhyme and repetition; as lines reverberate between stanzas, they fill the poem with echoes.

We considered how a poem could be compared to an animal. The living parts of a poem are the words, the images, the rhythms. The spirit is the life which inhabits them when they all work together. So, as Ted Hughes shows in his poem, *The Thought-Fox*, you have to make sure that all those parts are alive. Words that live are those we hear, like 'click', or we see, like 'freckled', or we taste, like 'vinegar', or touch, like 'prickle' or smell, like 'tar'. We tried to select words that belong directly to one of the five senses. Or words that seem to use their muscles, like 'flick' or 'balance'. I asked the girls to see their poem as an animal: touch it, smell it, listen to it, turn themselves into it. They were surprised at the way words seemed to look after themselves, like magic. We didn't bother about commas or full stops or that sort of thing. Instead, the girls kept their eyes, ears, nose, taste, touch, their whole being, on the thing they were turning into words. After a bit of practice, and after telling themselves a few times that they didn't care how other people had written about the same subject, that this was the way they were doing it, they relaxed into the spirit of being creative. When we had an editing session, and finally came up with the finished poems, they were surprised and pleased with the results. They had captured a spirit, a creature.

I'll remember with fondness Emily's lucid dream cheetah, Martyna's pixel fantasies, Aimee tangoing under the night sky, Louise's car 'talking yellow', Ava's 'thinking with eyebrows', Britney's chloroform and lead concoction, Emma's 'eyes getting lost in the sky', Danielle's rainbow, 'dragging its belly', Jenny's dog's brown eyes that 'can't lie', Mollie's brother, 'being a teenager and whatnot', Hannah 'feeling like a squashed ant', Alex's 'zero isn't enough', Megan's cloud as a 'pig, rocking around', Tiana's 'car dive eyes.'

Congrats on your work, and thanks girls. Hope you enjoyed the course as much as I did. Keep writing!

Afric McGlinchey

Poems

St. Vincent's Secondary School



Captured

Aimee Cronin

I shut my eyes and the world goes dark.

A minute later, you appear.

I think I met you in my dreams.

We go waltzing in the night sky.

My heart flutters like a butterfly.

I shut my eyes and the world goes dark.

I dreamt that you were on one knee,

under the moonlight, held me tight.

I think I met you in my dreams.

Stars above shine down on us,

dismissing darkness creeping up.

I shut my eyes and the world goes dark.

I fancied that we'd always be together,

but when I awaken, it's not what it seems.

I think I met you in my dreams.

I should have forgot you long ago.

But at least I know I'm not alone

I shut my eyes and the world goes dark

I think I met you in my dreams.

In the middle of a crowd, there is a child dancing

Aimee Cronin

Their minds
focused;
hers roaming,
music playing in her head,
as her body moves to the rhythm
in a universe of her own.
Oblivious of the real world,
her hands brush
against bags and coats,
eyes closed, inhabiting her dreams,
while onlookers
relive the memory
of being similarly free.

This Fox

Aimee Cronin

I pull on the rectangular handle
revealing the silver hidden inside.
Reach in and pause,
magic chirping in my fast brown eyes.
I feel electricity power through
my heart, waiting for a moment
to come popping out.
Love sparks a fire,
like a fox in the wood.

10 Depths to Sail

Aimee Cronin

after Wallace Stephens

i)

On the surface
of the calm blue ocean
the only visible thing
was the shadow of a whale.

ii)

We were of two minds
just the shadow and me
sailing in the same direction.

iii)

The waves crashed with stormy force,
the shadow disappearing.

iv)

A girl is singular;
a girl and a whale
are singular.

v)

I do not know which to fear:
the shadow creeping
or not at all;
the surface breaking
or what comes after.

vi)

Foam covers the surface
just like used toothpaste
A gasp of air shoots up
from time to time.

vii)

the boat
traced by shadow;
an indecipherable cause.

viii)

O tall sailors of Spain
why do you imagine dangerous crossings?
Do you not see how the sea
surrounds your ship,
following your moves undisturbed?

ix)

I know deep blue eyes
and lucid, inescapable rhythms;
but I know too
that the shadow knows more
than I know.

x)

When the shadow sank,
it marked the shallows
of one of many coasts.

The day a dog moved into my soul

Aimee Cronin

the moon
overwhelmed him,
yes,
above his raised eyes,
tilted back, black curly ears,
brown and grey fur underneath,
face as dark as a cold night,
the vision keeping him warm,
a deep breath of fresh air
through his moist soft nose.

Dinner distracts him;
yaps for joy as he runs
quick, from side to side
trying to contain
the excitement.

Mostly, he dreams,
his eyes
getting lost
in the sky.

Two good girls

Aimee Cronin

The bell rings right on the dot. We all race to the classroom door, a line like a snake, fingers to lips, not a peep, two heels clicking. I let you go in front of me, while others behind us wave their hands in the air as if they are cheer-leading. She ignores them and opens the door. We turn to each other and smirk, walk past her, high heads. The good girls.

Puddle

Alexandra Bozbesko

Lying awake, I think of F, as she called herself. Her and her tiny dog. She was ruthless. She bullied younger kids, which she thought was 'cool'. Once, she made a little boy swim in a puddle while I was watching from the window. I leaned out and told her stop. She really deserved a slap. Boys loved her laugh, figure, jokes; they found me a weirdo with my curly hair. 'Medusa', they called me. I straightened my hair, did my brows, wore different clothes. Went against everything I believe in. Then realised she was trying to change who she is too: her surname, nationality, hair, face, voice.

There was always that fear of her, even when I wanted to be like her. Whenever I felt the conflict of that pang, I'd remember the puddle. Come back to myself.

Not my Dad

Alexandra Bozbesko

He says things over and over again,
stupid jokes, feeds us on cheap food,
mean, loves himself and no one else,
good at putting the blame on me,
makes others feel guilt, pressure,
hate. Not smart, barely reads,
takes mum's money, spends it on hoes,
loves money and cars. Doesn't care
about the grandchildren, me. Money can
buy everything, sixty boxes of sweets.
Zero isn't enough.

edges

Alexandra Bozhesko

i)

at dawn

the only moving thing

is the mist

rising from the river

ii)

as the river flowed past

i was wondering

what's at the edge

of the world

iii)

you wake up in the morning

the windows are moist

although there is no rain

iv)

you can give it any shape or form

it can be a cylinder or cube

it can be hot or cold

v)

you think you're the boss

i dare you to go into the open sea

what gives life can also take it away

vi)

when the beast comes from the east
it freezes
it can be a sword, a knife or a screw

vii)

you walk through the wet grass
but there is no rain

viii)

the cliff hits the water,
which starts to cry
then runs away.

Devil Finger

Alexandra Bozhesko

The devil finger points
at pancakes. Gets
with my flowers. Thorny legs,
pear eyes,
rear choking on a snow flake.
Neck to the guillotine.
Metal sees your reflection
as a chamber with a gouger.
The hen awakes.
Field moves, but clouds stay,
knuckles in the sky.

I close my eyes

Alexandra Bozhesko

I close my eyes and you're still here.

Did I make this all up again?

You're nowhere near.

I see this picture,

see this scene,

I close my eyes and you're still here.

In all my head it's all you.

But though I sense your presence,

you're nowhere near.

There isn't a connection.

It's a 6 o'clock habit, like eating sweets.

I close my eyes and you're still here.

We talk, we laugh, we touch. I wish.

Like a blue lagoon,

you're nowhere near.

I'm in love with my creation of you,

not in love with *you*.

I close my eyes and you're still here,

and yet, you're nowhere near.

This is not a love story

Ava Tynan

I fancied you'd return, the way you said.
Fell in love as I caught your eyes.
Feels like I made you up.

You were my first love,
told me I was your little dove.
I fancied you'd return, the way you said.

I felt so special;
all those late night phone calls.
Feels like I made you up.

Then you went and cheated,
and I hit you with a hurley.
I fancied you'd return, the way you said.

You thought you were so cool,
but you acted like a fool.
Feels like I made you up.

I'm happy that you're gone,
so now I can move on.
I fancied you'd return, the way you said.
Feels like I made you up.

Take your Mark

Ava Tynan

There was always a Mark,
no matter where I went.
Mark No. 1 was my brother,
whom I liked to call Monkey,
he was such a messer.
Now, so quiet.
Mark No. 2 was my uncle.
He was a twin.
I always confused them,
unless he was alone.
Mark No. 3 was from pre-school,
After eight years of no contact,
we've become friends again.
Mark No. 4 was last summer.
He spelled his name with a C.
That made him unique to me.

Getting out of the hot seat

Ava Tynan

We split up and the defences came:
they were muscly, foxy, blue-eyed men.
I plucked the tick off my dog
and used the bongos
of the paddy wagon.
Saw him thinking with eyebrows,
while mouth-popping her face off a wall
with a love island bull behind them.
An indigo lump on my bump.
Free throw.

I take the long handle

Britney Callanan

Spoon the sponge.
The green doors are naturally
behind the book.
Blue Lucozade
takes an oceanic chance,
drops the renegade.
The gaps in my freckles
draw close
at mid-term.

Mourning, noon and night

Britney Callanan

Twelve years of friendship, twelve years of memories,
all got washed away, back in winter 2017. I often think
about how life would be if she hadn't cut me off.
Hadn't blocked me, for no apparent reason.

Trying to think what I did wrong is like a colour-
blind person trying to sort out reds and greens.
It's impossible that anyone could be as fake as she was.
Twelve years of my life, buried, disintegrating.

It's raining

Britney Callanan

Raindrops fall from my eyelashes.
Everything inside is grey and cloudy.
Others walk in sunlight
while I stumble around
in my dark shadow.
I can't catch a glimpse
of sunshine
or a summer tan.
It's raining
I can't leave my house
or I'll drown.
Nobody likes rain,
especially
when you're the cloud,
building up inside.

In my shed

Britney Callanan

I mix your drink with chloroform and lead,
head to school.

You're locked up in my shed

'You are insane,' they all said.

I'm simply figuring it out

I mix your drink with chloroform and lead.

I dream you could be with me in my bed.

It's going to come true.

You're locked up in my shed.

My friend has been found dead.

I keep you as my treasure.

I mix your drink with chloroform and lead.

On my wall there'll be a head,

a body in my closet.

You're locked up in my shed.

I decide to murder you instead.

The torture's almost over.

I mix your drink with chloroform and lead

You're locked up in my shed.

Weather

Danielle O'Connor

Waking up with unusual weather –
sun beaming down,
or snow covering the surface –
brings back such good memories.

Sun beaming down,
not even rain ruining the day
or snow covering the surface –
where will we be going today?

Not even rain ruining the day,
because we're young and so excited.
Where will we be going today?
Different as currencies.

So young but so excited,
spending time with my family,
different as currencies,
unusual accents, and just as interesting.

Spending time with my family,
snow covering the surface,
interesting as unusual accents –
brings back such good memories.

Retainers

Danielle O'Connor

A rainbow drags its belly
like a violet placebo,
or a metal handle
with curved bars,
or a toaster, poured.
My car door, white,
discombobulated
as a splat cake.
Shoot, court, Bernadette.
Gen run – you going?
I was talking to her;
checked phone
and the centres of my feet
were a pole and split
my head,
as though an elephant
had worked on it.

Ten Times the Cheetah Looked

Emily Peyton-Blake

Among the tall wet grasses,
I can see your magnificent fur.
Warm brown eyes with binocular vision,
the print of my teacher's jacket.

People try to hunt ye all,
you and your friends,
you and your family,
and still you don't come at me.

Wind travels at cheetah speed,
or you shoot past, swifter than lightning,
leaving your doppelganger
far, far behind.

Why do we humans act so cruelly?
The movement of air whistles
past possible attack

.

You can hear my footsteps
from three miles away.
On the path, I see a trace of your spoor.

We catch eyes and stare.
You look at me as if I was your prey.
Now I pray.

Lucid dreams appear
real, a drop of golden sun
making the cheetah's coat glow.

Droplets fall,
create a bog
which separates me from you.
Can't see you anymore.

It is dark.
I cannot see.
You were my symbol
navigating me
like a compass.

The wind is moving again.
The cheetah must be running.

White blob in the sky

Emily Peyton-Blake

like foam off a pint of beer.
On the court, the banana cut
looks different too.
Half way down, the brown eyes
can appear like her
eyelashes when she squints,
black and large, all stacked
with a silver rose.
Obligated love
blends into the lizard,
tied-up heart.

Tattoo

Emily Peyton-Blake

Beautiful, familiar, in front of my eyes
A face identical to mine
I know you, mother,
An ink portrait on my father's forearm.

A face identical to mine
He can go months without remembering you
An ink portrait on my father's forearm
Most of the time it's covered up.

He can go months without remembering you
But after a whiskey the emotions open
Most of the time, it's covered up
His mind plays tricks on him

After a whiskey the emotions open
He gets angry
His mind plays tricks on him
I know you, mother.

He gets angry.
A face identical to mine,
Mother,
Beautiful, familiar, in front of my eyes.

Aftermath

Emily Peyton-Blake

I can still feel
your breath against my neck.
My dreams fooled me.

Your emerald eyes, like a glen
of green roses.
I can still feel

how we fit together, a key in a keyhole.
We talked for days on end.
I think my dreams fooled me.

We touched lips.
I shut my eyes in the moment.
My dreams fooled me.

I could almost smell your intelligence.
Will we meet when we're older?
My dreams fooled me.

What if I had told you I loved you?
Would that have changed things?
I still feel
my dreams fooled me.

Afternoon walk

Emma O'Callaghan

It is dark and dull,
cold as ice.
Shining glass footpaths.
A red nose and puffy red cheeks.
The crackle of leaves
as I walk through the park.
Shadowed figures in the distance.
The smell of fresh air, sound of a creaky
swing. And I know what I'm feeling:
peace.

Underlined

Hannah St. Leger

The ice on my car window
pirouettes, grande jetés.
Sunkissed, small lips,
do a plié,
Eyebrows, thin, Arabesque
like a phone alarm,
tick tock to French class
as though I'm my dad's
favourite; ecstatic
news about the Corona
virus, dimples, pancaked,
shaking with
nervous pleurisy;
feeling like a squashed ant.

Air

Hannah St. Leger

1

Ecstatic to be
smacked in the face
by fresh air.

2

Broken, the walls of the Colloseum;
You throwing coins into the Trevi.

3

A wedding.
What a beautiful couple,
walking up the aisle, cool as a breeze.

4

Happiness suddenly turns into unhappiness.
A twister, an earthquake.

5

Is it the power of the mind?
I'm floating, even flying.

6

I can imagine a world with no gravity.
But a world without air?
Impossible.

I try

Hannah St. Leger

I try to get over you, I try,
dance until the pain disappears.
Then she appears, she's in my orbit,
reminding me of you.

I dance, and the pain disappears.
It's what I love, what I do best.
She reminds me of you.
When she's not around, I feel alive.

Dancing is what I love; it's what I do best.
I am close to being myself again.
When she's not around, I feel alive.
I've never felt this good.

I'm close to being myself again,
finally happy.
I've never felt this good before.
And then she tears me down.

I finally feel happy.
Until she appears, until she's in my orbit.
And she tears me down again.
I try to get over you, I try.

If the stars

Jennifer O'Mahony

The stars go waltzing out
in blue and red
I see stars in the twinkle in your eye

Thousands of butterflies
swirling around me;
the stars go waltzing out

It was always you
since the start.
I see stars in the twinkle in your eye

What we have is lush,
so we keep hush hush.
The stars go waltzing out

Can we tell
if what we have is true?
I see stars in the twinkle in your eye

It's hard to know
if we'll be together tomorrow,
if the stars will go on waltzing out
and I'll still see stars in the twinkle in your eye.

What's in a name?

Jennifer O'Mahony

My birth name is Jennifer, but nobody seems to call me that anymore. Only a few teachers and strangers. 'Jennifer' feels so formal. To my friends and family, I'm Jen. To my little sisters and younger cousins, Jenny. Cleo calls me Jenna. The name 'Jennifer' means 'white wave'. Do Jen and Jenny create a different energy, different person? Truth is, I really don't know.

Haiku for Cassie

Jennifer O'Mahony

White, with that black spot,
Pup frenzy; now old-lazy.
Your brown eyes can't lie.

I found a white piece of paper with your name on it

Louise McKenzie

It's silver, digs into my food,
mouth, shoes;
the car talks yellow,
three-pointer, suicide;
tanned, slick rick, awake,
bites, hurts my toe
off the chair, stings
like a bee.

Pixels

Martyna Laurinaityte

I close my eyes and see a different image,
imagine that moment;
fantasies of course.

I see pixels floating
as I stare into the light.
Close my eyes and see a different image

I dazed that it was only us,
holding hands tightly.
Fantasies of course.

I'm not getting signs that it's impossible.
Maybe it'll come soon.
I close my eyes and see a different image.

I'm not positive that you know who I am,
but I would like to think you do.
Fantasies of course.

The thought of having you here with me
would be too good to be true.
I close my eyes and see a different image,
Fantasies of course.

Ticking

Martyna Laurinaityte

I hear singing from a distance,
quiet, yet so distracting,
as my pen touches white paper.
Nothing more calm.

Quiet, yet so distracting,
the sun beaming into the room.
Nothing more calm,
clock ticking each second.

The sun beaming into the room;
nothing more calm,
clock ticking each second,
the day getting darker as clouds drift over.

Nothing more calm;
whispers from passers-by,
the day getting darker as clouds drift over.
Quick shallow movements, birds flying.

Whispers from passers-by
as my pen touches white paper.
Quick shallow movements, birds flying.
I hear singing from a distance.

Caring for my goldfish

Martyna Laurinaityte

Similar, yet different, their scales glimmer
as the sun shines down on them.

Their fins touch the corals. They're getting bigger
as the days pass.

I lay my finger against the fishbowl,
and they know what's coming.

Sudden appearance of the two fish, nosing after the food
floating on the surface.

I remove them to a temporary bowl,
then bring them back to fresh water, new rocks and corals.
They get a new little friend too, a tiny snail to keep the grass
good as new. Something unusual for them. Something exciting.

The sky catches my gaze

Megan Constant

Watching clouds float by:
one is a bear scratching its back,
big, dark
like it's gonna rain;
another is yellow 'n' purple,
full of power
I notice a pig rocking around.
My bones reply, blasphemous.

Aimee is the French for 'loved'

Megan Constant

There was always an Aimee.
Aimee No. 1 was a know-it-all
and would whisper about you
behind your back.
Aimee No. 2 was the opposite.
She would barely talk,
And when she did, it made no sense.
Then there was Aimee No. 3,
the sporty yet nerdy girl.
Aimee No.4
was both shy and sneaky.
No one has seen her in years.

Paranoia

Mollie Blount-Connors

I

Through dozens of countries
it's creeping up on us,
a plague
stalking the world.

II

Started as innocent experimentation
or did it?
A mistake or on purpose?

III

They've called it Corona ('a deadly disease')
While most people are suffering,
the rich are carefree as a breeze.

IV

Corona and fear,
the same thing.
Money, government, distrust,
the same thing.

V

You see that woman collapse
on the train.
You can almost look it in the eye.
You keep quiet,
put on your mask.
You won't hold her hand.
You pull up your gloves, tighter.
No contact!

Waiting

Mollie Blount-Connors

Waiting furiously for Mam, he was sitting and pouting
She was late coming from work
His friend's father asks do we have a lift
I protest as my brother shoves me in the car

She was late coming from work
Never go anywhere with strangers, I was always told
I protest as my brother shoves me in the car
On the ride home, I know we're in trouble

Never go anywhere with strangers, I was told
She rushes in the door, coming from our school
On the ride home, I know we're in trouble
He doesn't accept he's wrong, being a teenager and whatnot

She rushes in the door, coming from the school
I stand there, sobbing, telling her it wasn't me
He doesn't accept he's wrong, being a teenager and whatnot
I feel hurt for putting that look of worry on her face

I stand there sobbing, telling her it wasn't me
His friend's father asks do we have a lift
I feel hurt for putting that look of worry on her face
Waiting furiously for Mam, he was sitting and pouting.

Could be's

Mollie Blount-Connors

You're the cloud filled with could be's,
drooping over my head
shadowing me, even when I sleep.
From the first day I opened my eyes
you were there.

I grew immune to the loud
bouncing and screams from the sidelines.

Only a tot, I put on my first jersey,
unsure whether I was sure or not.

With a mind full of uncertainty
I did it anyway, because what else
was the future going to hold for me?

Now I am coping,
dealing with the bad decisions
my five-year-old self made.

The cloud fills with could be's;
They're getting closer as I grow older.

I can see through the cloud now.

All it took was that one roll
of the ankle.

Now the cloud is shallower.

So I've decided
to form my own could be's,
my own thoughts of the future.

As Green as Ever

Mollie Blount-Connors

I dream about you.
But dreaming isn't enough.
Not a chance anyone could ever measure up.
(I know I didn't invent you.)

The grass is as green as ever.
The daffodils are our stars.
I dream about you,
but dreaming isn't enough.

At night, my life is perfect.
You leave me puzzled
and in love.
(I know I didn't invent you.)

I thought you'd be here when I awoke.
But I trust you'll appear
in due course.
(I know I didn't invent you.)

In the dark, you arrive, right on cue.
I dream about you.
But dreaming isn't enough.
(I know I didn't invent you.)

Do you mind?

Tiana Murphy-Osindero

Split in two,
braided
through the rendezvous,
conditioned by car dive eyes,
to tell or to die,
to paint me blue,
you kangaroo –
yeah, why?

Olives and Radishes, You and Me

Tiana Murphy-Osindero

I never liked them;
the taste never sat right with me.
But I still bought them,
since you loved them so much.
I had to be the same.
I've tried them again.
I like olives now,
but radishes still make me gag.
Some things can't change.
Now you're just part
of a tidal wave of memories.
You're me and I'm a horrible radish,
ruining your feast.

Overheard fragments

Tiana Murphy-Osindero

...and I are not the same...

She says I'm stupid...

...I barely exist

...ate the cake...

I watched in disgust.

...and I are not the same

...to feel the sun on my face...

She says I'm a curse.

I barely exist...

I love you so much...

but she says you aren't to be trusted.

...and I are not the same

I hear birdsong.

She keeps me up all night and turns them into screams.

...I barely exist...

It's so peaceful...

She forgets how to swim and we both drown.

Myself and I are not the same...

Lighthouse

Tiana Murphy-Osindero

Blick, black, fumble
halfway up the stairs,
no reason to care,
I've Ireland this far for you.
Oh, I have these rules,
light breeze and a silver moon,
enter all this, soon.

Glanmire Community College

Poetry by

John Laceda

Wafiq Usman

Millie Quirk

Joshua Kolawole

Ben McCarthy

Pahalavan Premareji

Lauren Murphy

Patrick Manning

Jason Daly

Assisting writer: **Paul Casey**

School Coordinator: **Imelda Manning**

Workshops held in: **Glanmire Library**

Co-ordinating Librarian: **Maire Walsh**



It was a special treat to be able to include a school from Glanmire this year, thanks to the expansion of the new city bounds. The staff at Glanmire Library were enthusiastic to welcome the project for the first time and superbly efficient in creating a comfortable space for the workshops. The students were confident and at ease from their start and were eager to get their teeth into the exercises each week, oozing with zest and an impressive respect for the creative space.

The sessions included inventing and developing metaphors, working with clichés, sound in poetry, imagery and forms, ekphrasis, anthropomorphism, dialogue, found poetry and collective poems, whilst working with a wide range of themes, including superstition, seasons and journeys to name a few. We explored the poems of authors from across time and place, including Billy Collins, Emily Dickinson, Sylvia Plath, Simon Armitage, Christian Bök, William Carlos Williams, Robert Frost, Gertrude Stein, Rainer Maria Rilke, W.H.Auden, Wislawa Szymborska, Amy Lowell, Galway Kinnell, Mary Oliver, Sinéad Morrissey and others.

I was pleased to see a marked improvement in writing confidence and attention to detail as the weeks went by. Each session would produce between two and four new pieces. These nine writers would then redraft

their poems after each session into a word document, while looking for ways to improve the content and flow, considering economy, superfluous language, line breaks and enjambments, pauses and caesura, and replacing abstract with concrete images wherever possible.

The camaraderie was as infectious as it was mutually inspiring among the group. I was moved by the sheer volume of creativity and emotional courage these young writers displayed over the course of the project and I sincerely hope that they continue to put pen to paper and make magic out of their unique lives and infinite imaginations.

Paul Casey

Poems

Glanmire Community College



This Creation

John Laceda

This creation is one which repels light.
The base of egg carton, once filled
with pure eggs that could hatch into anything,
is now empty like the void, full of night.

This creation, as time goes on, takes shape
The tin foil surrounding it
manifests its shallowness
But deep down, you can feel something ache

This is its fate
The duct tape binding it as one
Forces difficulty in changing it
All it can do is hope, and wait

The River

John Laceda

This river flows only one way
Those that follow it are at ease
Those that don't are led astray
Lacking the ability to agree

They are the ones that learn
The challenges that lie ahead

They are too deep to return
And experience existential dread

They come to a realisation
Of their unforgivable mistake
Their ignorant actions
Of attempting to go against fate

The Truth

John Laceda

Vast emptiness it all that is in this hot barren desert
Food is very scarce and the nights not so pleasant
And yet here I am traversing these endless dunes
To which I end up stuck in this underground tomb

Here the dead rest and lay
Corpses remain to rot and decay
An eerie shriek further below I hear
Desperate to escape I follow in fear

To my dismay, I uncover the truth
The shriek from before
A dark omen
Foreseeing my own doom

Normal

Pabalavan Premareji

His face, a ticking clock
Drowned by lost voices
Echoing, bellowing, chained by the lock
That was formed from wrong choices

His voice, a screech of the chair
That startles like a slammed door
At the surface all seems fair
But under his breath he just wants to be more

More like charging footsteps
Herding together all formal
Inside he cries for help
Because he just wants to be normal

Sorrow

Pabalavan Premareji

Greyer than a city of smog
Duller than the clouds of fog
It happens when you lose someone
Friends, family and even loved ones
It sounds like an empty room
Silent in its unending doom
And it smells like worn down rope
That drowns out all joy and hope

Headlines

Pahalavan Premareji

Murder mayhem in Metropolis

Is orchestrated by the reckless
Who cause criminals to become chainless

Living life after his lucky lotto

Many a day ask for his photo
To which the answer is always no

Charging charities who neglect causes

Stem from people not helping those
Who need more help than you

Money

Pahalavan Premareji

Buzzing bees keen on sweet honey
Are not unlike people greedy for money
Flocking like flamingos
Swarming like seagulls
They all fight to keep the green in sight

Never mind broken bones
And cracking backs
All that matters is making racks

I am music

Pahalavan Premareji

I am the universal language
That plays the heart new chords
I am the melody, that unforeseen adventure
That causes jesters to please their lords

I am the pitter patter on rainy days
That fills the silence of a mind in a haze
I am the catalyst of emotion
Happiness, sadness, anguish and scorn
The eerie, tangible tension
That causes a heart to be torn

But most of all I am unity
That brings together tongues of all nations
I cause that irresistible feeling
That makes people dancing sensations.

Cork

Pahalavan Premareji

Harbours bright as blue
Shops and streets shining like new
A bright living star

Fate

Wafiq Usman

after the photograph by Martina Gardiner

With no anchor onboard, it was still a liability
We knew there was no possibility but we had to stand by
We could only hope for a miracle but this was reality,
There was nothing to do, but peer into the starry sky,
Having the wrong mentality for this fatality
Questions exploded inside my head like fireworks at the sight

A mixture of jitters and distress ran through my blood
identifying the possible risks but it was too late
taking no action while I stood
hearing a scream and knowing the worst had happened, 'great'
fear jabbing at my insides like needles as I heard a loud thud
What WAS happening to everyone? Were we going to have to flee or wait?
An acrid smell of burning socks lingering

Out through the easy route I went 'why?'
And there was a creature floundering and stumbling
And staring up at me as if I was a mere fly.
A terrible look of mingled fury and fear came over my face ailing
Standing transfixed, growing smaller and smaller by the second that goes by
like a French fry, hereby
seeing myself reflected in those misty eyes, appalling
'Bang' the ship then perched on top of the rocks

Lying sprawled on the ground, being withheld
stranded on an island with no clue how to get by,
although, like long ago, be it so
sky so brightly blue as though it had been enamelled,

my choices lay ahead, stay or go I did not know
my head seemed to be in complete disarray,
with no one left and me alone, I chose to go with the flow
accepting fate contrary to changing it to my good,
little did I know the price I'd have to pay

Witches

Wafiq Usman

Xe Denhe peered sternly everywhere
Then, stress reflected,
Her dewy eyes,
He descended heedlessly,
Resentment strengthened extremely
She'd fled even deeper helplessly,
"See!" detestment repleted Xe Denhe's eyes
her resplendent green dress blended
The dependent gentlemen, geezers everywhere dented
Yells drenched by jeers
The scene teemed, tenements everywhere
She'd empty strength, empty energy,
Eyes emerged next
The scent, extremely repellent
Yells were drenched by jeers -
They'd perfectly tethered her
Her eyes gently 'n' gently receded deeper 'n' deeper

Run Away

Wafiq Usman

Staring at my problem,
standing transfixed,
wondering what to do,
but I guess I could run away

Obstacles keep arising,
getting bigger and bigger after each other
me being blind to this,
thinking how long the solution would take
but I guess I could run away

Getting involved in the darkness,
blind to the consequences,
struggles getting tougher by the day,
but I guess I could run away

Eventually, my hurdles becoming huge,
Stress and worryness taking control of me
me trying valiantly, looking to escape,
but there was nowhere to run.....

Exquisite Corpse

Wafiq Usman & Classmates

The lush vegetation hung like a canopy above my head,
The expansive leaves invaded the space,
Ensuring that movement would be difficult
My smart self knew that beautiful mother nature was on my side
How dare you she yells as cramp begins to desecrate a small tree
The tree screams where do you think you are? A bathroom? Angrily
And in righteous fury it smites those around it
All hail the sword in the stone
It was a heroic fight worth remembering

Unexpectedly joyriding the slick Royals Royce
Strongly flexing your enormous wealth
Stupidly hiring a hungry hooker
Pleased smiling, the dead body
Calmly sitting on the cold floor
Cheerfully chewing the tasty toffees
Unknowingly gorging on chewy toys
Slowly walking in the fierce killer

The lush vegetation hangs like a canopy above my head,
I brush it away and continue across the border
Running and jumping, coming closer toward her
Until the hidden land mine explodes loudly
Shrapnel and bits of mortar rain down from the heavens
To which the trumpets come blowing right after
They were a sign of hope and were always good to hear
Their supportive words helped her through her darker times
She had suffered a life of depression and loneliness.

The Disappearance

Wafiq Usman

Alvin rolled up his newspaper,
Tears rushing out and clambered up the stone steps,
throwing his caramel bar, ruefully,
He could not believe what he had visually perceived
Jenny had been kidnapped from within the house under serious precaution
Every bitter and resentful thought, pouring out of him
Being more of a hindrance than a help
Yellow teeth baring a grin
Giving up completely
Without trying valiantly
Little did he know she was taken
From one of their own men

Metaphors

Lauren Murphy

after Simon Armitage

Her eyes were black holes
And her mouth was a straight line
And her ears were cat flaps
And her hair was a bird's nest
She laughed and it was a dog whistle
And her neck was a lamp post
And her legs were oil barrels
The palms of her hands were maps
And her fingers were sharpened pencils
And her footsteps were scale 5 earthquakes
And her heart was an old, cold stone.

Dialogue poem

Lauren Murphy

Happiness:

I'm here to make everyone smile

Sadness:

my job is to make life a misery.

Happiness:

life can be as happy as you want to make it.

Sadness:

no matter how hard you try you will fail.

Happiness:

I come with love and success.

Sadness:

love can make you miserable and success isn't possible without money.

Happiness:

I will make your happy times happier

Sadness:

I will make your sad times sadder.

Happiness:

your stressful times will be limited if you focus on me.

Sadness:

with me stress will consume your life.

Computer

Lauren Murphy

I wake up not being able to move
Sweaty fingers digging into me (my buttons)
I seem to be projecting a bright light in front of me
Boy shouting at someone not in the room
No matter how hard I try I cannot move
I am lying on something solid (a desk)
Uncomfortable
When another shout from a woman is heard
the boy slams down my top half
and forgets about me
leaving me in silence.

Sad

Lauren Murphy

Dull, dark and blue like the sky on a winter night.
It happens when bad news is given
when something you are looking forward to doesn't happen
or when a death occurs.
It sounds like heavy rain
trapping you inside your house.
It smells like burnt food
left in the oven for too long,
or thick smoke coming from a fire,
sad.

Exquisite Corpse

Lauren Murphy & Classmates

The happy clown was once a sad clown believe it or not.
He always stood transfixed when something went wrong.
And then he stood still and gazed as they burst into song.
He's confused, lost in thought. As they sing all wrong.
He loses his balance and falls quickly, shattering his ankle.
And this shattering his ego and what little pride he'd left.
He couldn't take it anymore and went to Antarctica.
He met a penguin and went sledding and made an igloo.
It was a crazy experience; one he would never ever forget.

The Canvas

Lauren Murphy

The painting was nearly finished.
It had taken the artist over fifteen years to finish
which is nearly a third of his life.
The years were like a blur though
because of how much had happened in them
and how much the artist had gone through.

The colourful picture was the opposite
of the artist's dark life.
The life size canvas took up most of his bedroom wall
where he spent most of his time hiding away
with only the company of his brushes.

A Narrow Dark Alley

Lauren Murphy

after the book cover by Michael Ray

Light misty rain falls from a gloomy sky.
Complete silence fills the filthy air.
The narrow ledges on the wall seem to be rotting in dirt and moss.
The smell of nearby takeaway food wafts down the alley
and the sound of the busy people outside
is muted by the mysterious atmosphere.
The cold streets of New York in the afternoon
are busy everywhere except in this alley.

The old black cat is oblivious to the outside world.
No-one sees him and he sees no one
except the tall mysterious man holding the umbrella above him.
The man stands there all night and all day,
he has no where to go.
His black trench coat, gloves, hat and shoes
make him almost blend in with the dirty walls.

Cork

Lauren Murphy

The busy city floods
The working people flood
Quick chat while everyone walks

A Book of Poetry Ideas

Millie Quirk

Idea 1-

Every so often the thirtieth day
somehow of a month falls on a Friday.
Everyone's worst fear and bad luck seem to come to life.
Black cats creep out of dark eerie alleys.
Magpies perch on electricity wires in groups
waiting to be counted by passersby.
Ladders stand idle left by builders
That have gone on their break.

Idea 2-

The days following the hurricane the taste of saltiness
From the sea lingered in my mouth.
The old battered bridge was crumbling more and more
With every minute that passed.
The rain was belting and battering against me
I could feel every drop seeping into my jacket.
The bridge was old and the stone coloured and changed
Due to the acid rain and the heavy loads travelling over it.
The bridge with one last effort fell but it took with it
The memories of the first bridge in the village.

Idea 3-

An idea like a flower grows and grows
But it must be worked on hard for it to blossom
Put together by stems or ladders
When pen is put to paper ideas will blossom
When ideas are ripe in the brain
they spill onto paper
Is the paper blank?
Grab a ladder
And climb until the idea blossoms

Six Haiku

Patrick Manning

Cork haiku

A big shopping place
Seagulls eat up all the waste
During the lunch rush

Endangered bird

I live in a cage
They admire my beauty
An endangered bird

Depression

I stink of despair
The smell everyone hates
I am depression

Reality

I kill most hopes and dreams
Even if they're possible
Because I am reality

Hallucination

Have fun now
But it won't last
It's just a dream

Tell no one

Hide the body
Tell no one
It's our little secret...

Opera

Patrick Manning

I was at the opera,
Enjoying the sweet melody,
Accompanied by the piano,
Living in ecstasy.

A man ran to the stage,
His face had a scar
He pulled out a bomb
It was the worst day of my life so far

The ambulance rushed to the scene,
Not many survived,
They found me in the rubble,
I was barely alive.

It's been a year
I look out in the rain,
I listen to the bees buzz,
While I try to forget the pain.

Musical Joy

Patrick Manning

I am music,
I bring joy to everyone
I blow people away with talent
It's what they do for fun

I am a centre of joy,
I live to entertain,
I express all emotions,
Like happiness or pain.

Exposed murderer:
Last month I killed five ladies
They screamed and choked as if they had rabies,
Their faces were all a bright red,
When my mother found them all dead.

I felt like the lion king's main villain scar
I felt like a lion who ruled from afar,
I was jailed for life, it all happened so fast,
Oh well, it's not, like I can change the past.

Introduction to Poetry

Patrick Manning

after Billy Collins

I tell them to take a poem,
And grasp it by a lamp,
Like a prisoner,
Stuck.

I say drop a child into a poem,
And watch it learn and progress,

Or storm inside the poet's room,
And search the room for a light.

I want their minds to wonder,
Across the beauty of a poem,
Waving at us on the shore.

But all they will do,
Is tie a poem to a pole with a belt,
And burn the answer out of it.

They beat it with a rock,
To find it's true meaning.

PTSD

Patrick Manning

The pain of war is portrayed,
Like a little board game,
The government douches yawn,
While soldiers are used as pawns,
There is nothing we can gain,
when soldiers die or go insane

They made this image bright,
To shine a bit of light,
On the doomed soldiers' eyes,
Until they meet their demise.

They say war can be fun,
Not if you're shot by a gun,
It's really full of despair,
But the government just doesn't care.

What they do is really sick,
As I felt this horrible trick,
I'm really down on my luck,
Until we win or lose I'm stuck.

Man made destruction:

I woke up and saw a spirit, who said it was a warning,
If we don't change our ways now,
Even Everest will be affected, by global warming.

Reflection

Joshua Kolawole

I was at my friend's old house. I say old house because she had been kidnapped and murdered this time three years ago. She was a caramel-coloured small, gentle girl. Nobody, least of all her family, could believe what had happened. There was a steady stream of tears coming out of my eyes. I checked my phone through the blur. It was late enough, around half nine in the evening or so. I clambered over the partition that had been built after the unfortunate crime and left for home.

Attempt at Alliteration

Joshua Kolawole

Colm Cronin caught colds plentiful, whilst
Peter Parker picked a pepper and popped it in his mouth
Murder mysteries are most mesmerizing usually
Most make me squirm, make me squeal and squeak,
Like a mouse maintaining fright, for fun however,
I fall flat on my face when free falling and faint for a few and flail.

Flailed for a few and fainted whilst in free fall, my face fell flat
“For fun is frightening”, maintains the mouse,
As he is squeaking and squealing, almost squirming
Usually mesmerized by most mysteries of murder and morose meetings
with monsters
It popped and longer, of peppers, said Peter
Colm Cronin did not catch colds, the colds caught Colm Cronin.

A Few Haiku

Joshua Kolawole

bus station

Rain hits the ground like,
Small stones, waiting for a bus home
I tap my card, sit, and ponder

netflix

Browsing, observing, reviewing
“Violent TV Shows” or “Irreverent Comedies”?
Too much choice, it feels like

5:12am

I woke up early, at 5:12am to be exact
Instead of resuming my dream, I put it on pause
I listened to the silence and watched the sun rise

How to Examine a Man

Joshua Kolawole

after Billy Collins

I tell them to take a man
and hold him up to the light
Or press an ear to his chest and listen to his heart speak
I say drop the man in a maze in the middle of nowhere
and watch him try to escape
Or put said man in a dark room and
watch him search for a switch or handle
I tell them to run across the man's conscience
and call out for his soul
But all they do is tie him to a chair and
torture him with meaningless phrases
and eventually get a confession out of him
They beat him with words like whips
And try to find out his true intentions, his true thoughts, his true dreams

Space Slithers

Jason Daly

Everyone has become entangled in the mystery of the extra-terrestrial snakes
and why they came here, They dwell in the sewer drain so beware to any
passer-by because once you hear the slithering you know your end is near.

News Headlines

Jason Daly

Dog with no legs has gone missing

Parents say they're devastated the dog has gone missing they will miss the "constant barking and attention it required" other members of the family say "it's like it just got up and walked out the door".

Homeless man named "Rich" Wins lottery

A frustrated man gives this homeless gentleman a lottery ticket saying "maybe you will have more luck than me," after the homeless man wins he tracks down the owner of the ticket and shares the money.

Armed robbers rob a gun store

Two men decide to rob a gun store with water guns painted matte black, they were successful, as the store owner says "I didn't have anything to defend myself with".

Depression

Jason Daly

Blue like my pen or the tears shed from your eyes

It happens when it starts to rain or a long lasting friendship you loved dies

It sounds like a kid crying because the others won't share

And smells like a hollowness in the air

Living your life in crippling despair

Depression

My Kinda Lucky Day

Jason Daly

I climb up a ladder perched so high
And to my surprise I see a magpie
I scan its surroundings and what do I see
13 big black cats at the bottom of its tree
I pity for the bird just its luck
I hear a noise in the distance similar to the sound of the horn on a truck
It zoomed past the tree just missing the cats by sheer luck
To my surprise a leprechaun came out with no hesitation he spoke
“No dilly dally leave that bird alone and go back to your alley!”
The cats left with no more interest in the tree
And the magpie went to sleep ever so blissfully

Bread

Jason Daly

You can get so much from a simple grain
Just plant and wait no strain no pain
Bread is sometimes associated with money
But this is not for your wallet it's for your tummy
And I know you might think this is stupid or funny
But you would be a complete nutter
If you bought bread without butter
Yes you heard me I didn't stutter
There are so many combinations and things you can combine
Now I'm off to pray to my bread shrine

Night For Despair

Jason Daly

This morning I woke up with a knife in my hand
My head was pounding like the drums in a rock band
The knife was stained red
To my surprise I see a figure lying next to me in the bed
I roll them over and to my despair it's my friend Cal
And next to him is a fluffy figure I believe to be his god Cal
I burst into tears and start punching my wall
Visioning my future that is now doomed to fall

Revenge

Jason Daly

After summoning my pool of lava from hades
I hope to kill all the men, women and babies
Sweat pouring from my head the strain and heat are empowering
My dominance and abilities are limitless and towering
Using my magical gifts to get my revenge
The city will have less bodies than rocks in Stonehenge
I wave my staff to deliver my final blow
Everything within the walls will go

Munch

Jason Daly

In my hands I have a sandwich containing ham,

chicken and 2 slices of bread

and I regret to say soon it will be dead

munch

the feeling I get eating something as simple as this fills my mind

with enjoyment and bliss it doesn't get much better than this

munch

I remember walking to the fridge getting my ham and chicken,

can't forget get the butter this sandwich is perfect where's my ribbon

The happiness that *munch* this brings people is intense,

to think how much you can do with this is quite immense

munch

Darn my last bite what a tragic way to end the night,

well I'll see you all some other day

Perhaps in my eulogy for my Spicy Italian Subway

munch

The Craic

Jason Daly

I was strolling past the harbour in Cork City

as I heard an echo in my vicinity.

It was a busy and lively night

but I still heard the man walking out of the carry out

with beer in a 6-pack yelling

“Well cuz what's the Craic”

Cursed?

Ben McCarthy

Walked under a Ladder
Stepped into room thirteen
Yet all things considered
My life was quite the dream

But then I heard the rumours
The talk of luck to worsen
Next time I saw a black cat
I became a different person

I ran away, my legs a blur,
my face pale with terror
I was scared, my mind a whirr,
As bleak worries filled my head
I wondered if I'm soon to be dead
I got away from its sharp claws
but still on edge, my instinct raw.
I saw things that simply weren't there
Is that a magpie, Are they not rare?

I ran again, my mind a storm
I finally stopped, my clothes dirty and torn
I looked up and saw a beacon of hope
A rainbow, its coloured rays to help me cope
Yet its bright end I never saw, no sign of any leprechauns
I looked down at a river, and saw my reflection
I was dirty and rough, with a crazed complexion
I laughed at my folly, and made my way back
Smiling with mirth at this minor setback

Exquisite Corpse

Ben McCarthy (with Classmates)

Big man hunts blue whale

But Blue whale too strong

Reminding me about the extraordinary book "Moby Dick"

And the exciting adventures that lies at the vast ocean

They stumble across a drunk mermaid who is eating her live brother

He's tempted to join but his chivalry and morals are high. He yells, swims away to the youngling

The exhausted youngling makes his way to the shore and takes a gigantic breath

And survives off the course rough sand that gets everywhere through nothing but cold righteous fury

The Egg-Man

Ben McCarthy (with Classmates)

They create a mould around my face

I just need to push them into place

As I continue the pressure the cartons fold

I wrap the metallic foil around the mould

I tape it together, I'm immune to harm

I repeat this process on my legs and arms

I do my torso, which is tricky

From my shoulders to my mickey

In my shell of egg cartons and foil

I look as good as an English royal

I am the egg man

Past Perspective

Ben McCarthy

The food is plentiful, the water clean
In the past this would have been the dream
Our houses strong, our lifespan long
Our wealth would surpass their kings

I wonder if, we showed them this
would their Jaws drop in amazement?
Or would they think, these high-tech tricks
Is just some cheap entertainment?

If we showed them our machines would they believe its magic?
Or would they think, our easy being, is just a bit too drastic?
Would they think we're wise large sages, with a great deep education
Or would they believe we're decadent fools, cursed with just damnation

I suppose we'll never know, if our ancestors would be proud
But then again times moves on, they've already taken their bow
And while I have a curiosity, imagining what they would think
All we can do is follow them, in trying to make the future bright
We'll make mistakes, sure they weren't saints, and we've progressed so far
And in the end we can't pretend, we aren't this stage's final stars

Ashton School

Poetry by

Clodagh Kelly

Lucy McManus

Adam Jere

Zaria Killian

Crystabell Sotgiu

Anonymous

Fiona Corcoran

Noreen Angozi

Elle Coves

Charlie Kitteringham

Caoimhe Neff

Assisting writer: **Roisín Kelly**

T.Y. Coordinator: **Sarah Falvey**

Workshops held in **Cork City Library**

Co-ordinating Librarian: **Eibhlín Cassidy**



During one of the final sessions with my group of students from Ashton School, I described for them a writing exercise as found in *The Poet's Companion* by Kim Addonizio and Dorianne Laux:

Everyone of a certain age remembers where they were when John F. Kennedy was assassinated. Think about where you were when some major event occurred; write a poem that draws a parallel between something in your life and the event.

Poetry that attempts to deal with such world-changing events, I tried to explain, makes its true impact on a micro level rather than a macro one. A poem about JFK's assassination that focuses on the incident itself might struggle to capture the almost incomprehensible scale of shock that is still associated with it. It is usually the personal realm that provides the most fertile ground for exploring such society-defining moments. What were you doing when you heard about it? What were you doing just before that? What tiny detail might suggest to the reader that all was changed, changed utterly? What detail might suggest that the world had, in fact, failed to change at all?

Thinking about it, I said that the event that first came to mind for me personally was 9/11. But ye wouldn't be old enough to remember that I suppose, I said.

I hadn't considered the possibility that none of my students had even been *born* at that point.

None of us could have known what would happen next. I certainly didn't expect to be sitting down to write this foreword in the midst of a global pandemic. How can everything have changed so absolutely, so suddenly? A month ago, during what would turn out to be our last session together, a flurry of February snow swirled outside the window. We reminisced about the blizzard two years ago that transformed Ireland to an unfamiliar country. Now my memory of that session is tinged by the new knowledge that a much more terrifying and intangible storm was even then brewing beyond the walls of the Thomas Davis room in Cork City Library.

This was the room in which, session after session, I was overwhelmed by the students' courage in committing their experiences, thoughts, and imaginations to paper, and by their bravery in reading their work aloud to the rest of their peers. Even if some poems were too painful to share, the students were always there for one another, forming a network of support and compassion against forces over which they had no control. I came away from each and every session in awe of these mature and articulate young people. But these sessions often triggered a feeling of raw vulnerability within myself. I later realised that proximity to the students was drawing forth the teenage me once again. I thought she was buried, obsolete. Yet here she was, resurfacing with all her fears and hopes and uncertainties intact. I was left with the painful reminder of just how hard it is to be a teenager. You have a long way to go before an understanding of the world comes within your grasp, but you have a range and depth of emotion that many people don't give you credit for. You are neither treated with the gentleness that a child requires, nor with the respect that an adult deserves.

Meanwhile, you are urged to look to the future for the promise of stability and security. In our last session, some of the students expressed their wish to never become an adult. There was so much they wanted to do *while* they were a teenager, and hadn't done yet, and they felt that time was running out. There was also a fear that they *wouldn't* have it all figured out within the next decade or so. As one student wrote, "To think that one day I'll wake up and I'm 30, still all over the place / The harsh world I'll have to face.' As

someone who finally got to experience at least a mild version of a lost teenage-hood in her mid-to-late twenties, this one really spoke to me. Particularly because I happened to turn 30 in the midst of our sessions.

However, I would much rather have to deal with this harsh world at the age of 30 than come of age in the strange new reality that has since swept over us. I hope the students are okay. I hope they still have a chance to exert their right to emotional exhilaration and giddy irresponsibility. During this paradoxical hibernation, in Ireland's springtime when everything else is beginning to wake up, I hope they will remember this lesson: that writing has the power to transform even painful experiences and emotions into something precious. Poetry is the painted veil that hangs between us and the suggestion of elsewhere.

For now, I am so honoured to introduce these poems by the Ashton students, with their distinct voices and their subjects ranging from love poetry to pastoral (which in the housebound quarantine era has taken on a particular poignancy), from the dreamworld to the political. We looked at work by Kim Addonizio, Lauryn Hill, Gary Soto, Philip Levine, and John Agard. They wrote song lyrics, raps, poems in the style of Rupi Kaur, and personal essays. They wrote the stories of themselves. Perhaps someday they will be the voices that record the tiny everyday details that have already defined our daily existence at the dawn of a new era. And they might yet address an issue that remains unchanged both in spite of and within the ever-shifting spectrum of pandemics, climate change, and social injustice: how to grow up.

Roisín Kelly

Poems

Ashton School



Untitled

Clodagh Kelly

when the blackened moon
aligned with the concrete crust
and your sight dimmed
for the last time
the database birds
and metal smiles
looked almost true
something in the wind
reminded the humans of what they were
computer glitch
system error
are you more alive up there?

Dad

Clodagh Kelly

the pomelo moon glistened
and the frothy beer poured
away from it all
we strolled down the winding path
'You know, if I could have a daughter, it wouldn't be you.'
laughter erupted in the moonlight
'same goes for you Ian'
in the distance I began to hear
the intoxicated shouts
of the man I never knew
and truth was
I never wanted that stone path to end.

Purgatory

Clodagh Kelly (co-written with Bobby Abern)

I'm on an empty staircase, where you once sat. thoughts were fought for by
the devil and angel til' lucifer claimed me as his grand title

Unsettling yes, the flames spread into my lonely head. If only for lovers and
dreamers and fools would I be back behind that razor blade where my wrists
would slit instead.

Silly goose my mother would say, a good deed keeps the nightmares at bay, if
only I listened I could've foreseen the fluorescent lights that closed the doors
of my mind.

I could've been ascending the stairway, with my thoughts trickling behind.

?

Clodagh Kelly

I sit alone in my room

at 3:42 a.m.

tears smudged in my eyes as I read the text

he never cared

he was never there for you

every beauty you saw in him

never really existed

it was a reflection of what you wish he were

and I wonder to myself is everyone like this too

or if it's just myself, that I'm truly unlovable

I pick up my pen and write

I am alone. 3 times

And realise that is the only truth

I have left

Charlie <3

Clodagh Kelly

blueberries bitter
cigarettes burn
the world forgot you long ago
the red lines on your skin
the hurt in your eyes
never controlled you
sweet as the honey
that drips from the moon
you are the most beautiful person
I have ever met
for you are drowned in darkness
but bring me the sun

Ode to Sappho

Fiona Corcoran

I shall travel to find the sweetest violets,
Ones deserving of your grace,
Their delicate scent caught in
The wind gone by.

I will weave them into a crown
To place upon your head
To protect you from the world
Outside the safety of our haven.

A Sapphic sign of my pure adoration.

Mythomania

Fiona Corcoran

Perhaps the most dangerous lies,
Are the ones we tell ourselves,
Those that blind not only our eyes but our mind

Our vision becomes so clouded,
That we are unable to differentiate
Between destruction and beauty,
Especially when they collide.

Lies blur the lines from black to white
And makes us unsure of who is good and bad
Because anyone can lie.

It's all too easy to let words tangle
Out of our mouths in anger or spite
And suffocate others in a nonchalant manner.

Lies are stories used to justify your actions,
To convince you that you are in the right,
When deep down you know it is all wrong.

Often by the time people realise this, it is too late.
The toxic nature of a lie is designed
To slowly choke you, until it is more than you can bear.

Until you are tied up in a web
That you have unknowingly laced together yourself.

Komorebi

Fiona Corcoran

As I cycle through the woods,
I look up at the canopy above me.
The warm buttery sunshine
Glides along my arms
As my bike slices through the air
Soft breeze drift through
The chestnut leaves,
Welcoming that familiar rustling.

The forest orchestra is tuning up.
The Song of Connemara

Deep in the wild of Connemara,
A new song is being sung.
A duet between two lovers;
Wind and sea.

Creating crashing waves
Together in perfect harmony.

On the surface of water,
Barely skimming the deep
Or the peak of a mountain,
I am complete.

Copper brown leaves starched
Crisp from the departing heat
Like a blanket of autumn
Under the soles of my feet.

I dream of gusts of wind
Billowing through my hair
Drilling the cold into my bones
Ensuring I feel the absence of sun

I think of the many misshapen clouds
That drifted across the sky,
Casting vast shadows onto the land below
And threatening rainfall.

I miss the familiar sway of the trees,
Guarding us like silent sentries.
I still remember the smell of petrichor
And the salty tang of the sea.

I fall to sleep with thoughts of Connemara,
Take me back to the countryside
And leave me resting under
The clear starry night once more.

Eudaimonia

Fiona Corcoran

Sometimes I can't help but wonder
If I was as ignorant as some have been
Would my life have lost ever reminder
Of our earth and its charms—
Sweet and bitter?

But maybe that would be better,
Not feeling anything at all.
Rather than feel any pain,
To rid myself of all emotion—
Good and bad.

Maybe it's cruel to be happy
When so many people are hurting
And happiness makes it easy to forget
Lessons taught by time.

When society proclaims that Icarus flew,
But doesn't care that he has since fallen.
Looking only at their reflection in the water,
Dismissing what lies beneath the surface.

Happiness can make people grow cold,
They become so addicted to euphoria
That they push away those in need.
Not wanting to empathise.
Because if you care, you risk getting hurt.
And it's so much easier to
Avoid eye-contact with those
Begging on the streets
Or change the channel
When the news comes on
And shut ourselves away from pain.

Because isolation as a defence mechanism
Seems so much more appealing,
Than leaving our first world bubbles of safety
And being forced to face the reality
That our world, is broken.

Technicolour Sky

Fiona Corcoran

Shades of sunset flooding the skyline
The last sliver of gold bleed
Across the horizon.

Blankets of bleak grey clouds
Clash with the light
Making a sharp incision
In the hues of azure and crimson

Teardrops scatter down
From the alluring sky above;

Now new colours are introduced
To the palette

And ethereal beams of rainbow
Arc over the world below
Before dispersing into nothing
But a soft haze

An echo of the colours
Etched into my brain.

The once vivid pigments
Fade fast as the night wears on,
The colours tiring

And resigning themselves to
A monotonous black that
Lingers until the break of dawn

Once more I am forced to say
Adieu to the technicolour painting
Gone all too quickly.

Thoughts of stars

Fiona Corcoran

I like to think of stars as memories,
Fragments of the universe
Scattered across the sky.

Maybe we're all just as broken as each other
And we're just waiting to be reformed as stars.

Our shattered pieces are all unique
Yet sometimes we forge a connection
And fit together like pieces of a puzzle
Or a beguiling mosaic.

Perhaps when we die we become
Bright echoes of who we once were
And our delicate sins are absolved
Leaving only our innocent hopes behind.

So with our darkness purged from us
In the moment of everlasting night,
We begin to look not at good and evil

But only at the other idyllic stars painted
On this infinite ceiling around us.

Orange

Anonymous

To me, orange is the colour of change
It represents the freedom of life outside a cage
Other colours around it themselves rearrange
Orange is the ruler of everything in sight
It itself is what brings colour to life
As it's the deliverance of light
It represents an activeness, goes down but full of fight
Its presence neverending continues to ignite
Orange is the colour of prosperity not less
It is sun. It is god. It is unforgivably the best.
It is ceasefire, powerful from compromise,
Given reign in an hour where true balance lies.
It shows us everything.
Everything is orange in a sense of its trace
Without orange earth would be a colourless face
Nature does not recognise it
For wherever it shows land is lit
Eyes follow orange as it is an anomaly
Something you have to pay attention to, a mandatory homily.
It is a compromise between greats
The meeting of anticipated fates
It signals the end and the beginning
Whether sun or stars are winning

North Main Street

Anonymous

The other day I heard somewhere that as humans we move in and out of buildings and call them ours when in reality, we belong to them. All I mean is that the average human lives to be about 79 and during that time they are expected to move house 11 times whilst the houses we live in are expected to last over 200 years. We are the variable in the equation whereas the houses are the constant, we are a part of the houses' lives rather than the other way around.

I have lived on North Main Street for almost 15 years and while I think I know everything about the street and its inhabitants, really the street itself is the only thing that can know everything, and since it can't talk I can only give my own experience. I don't remember anything from my first year living on the street, I've been told that I moved around my 1st birthday so I got to have a birthday in Dublin and another one in Cork. The lift in my apartment block was broken at the time so my uncle and granddad single-handedly moved all of our stuff up the four flights of stairs.

My mum fell in love with the city, so we adopted it, however not everyone was nice. Around age 4 was when I started to realise that passers-by looked at my mum and me in ways that weren't always friendly. I asked my mum why this was and she replied by pointing at the man with the pink mo-hawk who was crossing the road. She said, "Look at him, see how because his hair stands out people will look at him? It's not because he's a bad person, it's just because people aren't used to seeing bright pink hair."

Around that same time, our local pub closed down. Le Cheile had become a Friday tradition. We would go every Friday to hear the band play. We would sit at the bar while the barman entertained me giving me gifts and free food. When the pub closed we looked for another place for Fridays, we tried out a café below the flat which seemed nice enough till I broke a cup and the owner made some comments to my mum that weren't really related to the fact that

I had broken a cup. After that, Fridays became Dunnes days where my cousins and I would test our independence by getting Friday treats on our own which we would bring back to the flat and feast on. We were often joined by friends from school and neighbours. It was my neighbours Fatima and Sumaya who taught me the trick of throwing water over the side of the building onto the heads of passers-by below. After some years this developed into a new year's activity where we would wait for the drunken partiers to stumble out from the pub and we could then confuse them by shouting from above where they couldn't see us.

It was with Fatima and Sumaya that I formed my first band with. The band was called big mix. We consisted of a recorder, a tambourine, a flute and a violin. We tried busking, but nobody gave us money. We even drew posters on the walls in our buildings but nobody came to our gigs. Instead we got in trouble with our mums for having marked the walls. It was while hiding from our mums that we discovered the sanctuary, the fire escape. The fire escape is an old rusty staircase that leads to the ground floor. It is the same fire escape that the screen rooms from the cinema below have access to. This means that while down there you can hear snippets of the films. It's totally deserted as you have to break glass to access the key. While down there, we discovered that it was haunted. The ghost of Ibeam left his signature for us to find and he often made crashing and booming noises as he tried to batter us. In reality his "signature" was actually the words *1 beam* which was written by a builder on a plank of wood that had been left there. The noises Ibeam was making were actually the crashes and booms that came from within the cinema.

I had my first heartbreak when Fatima and Sumaya moved house and I was on my own for the first time since my previous neighbour Oba returned to Tripoli. I had my second heartbreak when Dunnes Stores closed and I had to

buy overpriced junk in Daybreak instead. Eventually Lidl arrived but that became my fourth heartbreak because it had a bakery and 4 months after its arrival I'd gained two stone. Sadly, water was not the only thing to fly off the fourth floor, I had my fifth heartbreak when my cat Ginny leapt from the building on her 3rd suicide attempt. The cinema workers were on a fag break below so one of them, in an attempt to revive her, administered CPR. It wasn't of any use however as my poor baby had hit a bike rack on the way down. All of these heartbreaks were resolved once a month on Thursday night payday, when my mum would take me to our favourite restaurant Currans.

These are just a few memories that North Main Street has served as the setting for. While the street may not seem like much, none of these incidents or activities that have made up my childhood could have happened if I lived in a different place. I used to feel embarrassed when I told others I lived in an apartment but now I understand how nice it is and how lucky we are to live there. I wouldn't live anywhere else in the world.

A Moment in History

Anonymous

When I was quite small, I got a lot of curious and sometimes negative attention. My first proper memories of loving attention were from dance. I used to do dance and drama and I thought I was exceptionally talented. This confidence in my abilities came from the fact that within my first year of starting at the dance school, I was cast as a lead in my class's performance. The next year the same thing happened. I had been cast as Tiana in *The Princess and the Frog* and as Queen Latifah in *Hairspray*. Getting cast as these leads

was a huge boost to my ego and as a result I thought myself one of the most talented dancers in the world. While I may have been a good dancer, the reason I got both roles was because in my dance school of two hundred or so pupils I was the only ethnic kid.

Irish television at the time had the same colour palette as my dance school. At the time, the TV we had at home was a box TV and it only picked up the five poverty channels meaning that before Netflix my TV consisted of RTE1 and 2, RTE Junior, TG Cathair and RTE. These were all very very white channels.

My mum made sure to buy me books and DVDs that featured black leads but none of these films or books were written by Irish authors or set in Ireland. They were basically all American so that led to me viewing diversity as a foreign concept, not something that would be achieved in Ireland during my childhood. I considered it my responsibility to create diversity by growing up and getting on telly. When the Toy Show came on and there was another year of total whiteness, I'd think maybe next year I'll sign up and then they won't all be white. I didn't consider promoting diversity the responsibility of the makers of the TV show, I considered it mine. I thought that when I grew up then I'd get a job in the telly and then the problem would be totally solved. This was not a healthy thought process for any child to go through when they switched on the TV.

The lack of diversity on Irish telly really was a problem and it influenced my generation's experience. Because I guess this generation and the 10 years before us are the first generation of children from African, Eastern European and Asian countries to be born in Ireland. Of course there were others before us but only in the late 1990s did African people start to migrate to Ireland in greater numbers. Even though there were always Africans in Ireland we have

really been the first generation of black or mixed race kids to grow up with friends who also come from those backgrounds.

The lack of diversity on TV meant that those of us who were not white Irish were constantly subjected to a series of pointless and often hurtful questions due to the curiosity factor. The fact that RTE decided to ignore the issue of diversity in its many children's shows was wrong as it denied itself an opportunity to introduce diversity, equality and anti-racism concepts to children at a young age. RTE Junior ignored the diversification of its audience and chose to represent Ireland as it was 20 years ago instead of the Ireland it was now. The adults who controlled the public service broadcaster had the opportunity to make life easier for us and educate our peers and their parents during their leisure time—when instead they left the educating to us. This may seem unrelated to the main point but I promise I'm getting there. You see as a child I wanted to be an actor or a dancer or just something on TV. I thought that by the time I was good enough to get on telly, RTE would have opened up a spot just for me which was of course ridiculous and delusional. I guess I was just following the principles of my dance school in that they saw my arrival as an opportunity to incorporate tokenistic diversity into their shows and dress it up as inclusion.

The Rose of Tralee is one of RTE's biggest televised events year in and year out. I've never actually watched the Rose of Tralee through, because it's not something either my mum or I could stick through, but in 2018 for some reason my mum had the TV on at the start and I happened to be in the room. It was the same as usual, basically a load of white girls, so I just left the room and my mum changed the channel. The next morning however, my mum called out my name and looked up from her phone to smile at me. She was holding up her phone to show me the winner of the Rose of Tralee, I think I must have scoffed at her at first because well I couldn't care less, but

then I actually saw the picture and I realised that the winner, Kirsten Kate Maher, was mixed, like me.

A mixed race girl had won the Rose of Tralee. Irish people had voted for a mixed girl to win their competition. I was actually in mild shock, I didn't want my mum to know how surprised I was because it seemed sad to be happy about such a small thing but I went into my room and just let it sink in. It just felt like such a monumental moment for me because I never ever would have even believed the possibility of Irish people voting for someone with her colour skin.

At that time I was 14 years old, and I no longer wanted to be a dancer or an actor and after that it no longer seemed so important for me to be on TV because since that day I started to notice more and more televised black and mixed actors and actresses on RTE. People like Ruth Negga were being recognised for their outstanding performances. While people were saying 'Oh, her father is from wherever ...' they were also saying she was Irish. The same year there was a black Irish dancer on the Late Late Toy Show. I am not trying to say that Ireland only started to represent its diversity in 2018, I'm only saying that's just when I started to notice it and how important that was to me at the time. When I was younger and I pictured my future, it would always be me in a room full of white people, which was based on my experience at the time. It wasn't realistic but I never felt things would change.

I no longer want to be a dancer, but I still want to go into television and be a journalist. I do think that RTE should diversify its staff more as the only back news anchor I've seen on Irish telly is Zainab Boladale on Nationwide. But I do believe that if fingers crossed I get to work there, I won't be the only ethnic representation. I believe that by then hopefully RTE will look a little more like BBC.

Some Things are Worth Fighting For

Anonymous

First time I saw a picture of my dad
Was the same day I noticed fathers were things that most kids had
See he missed the heat, the sun and course his mum so birthdays and first
days were things to which he couldn't come
Maybe aged 10 I realised that it didn't all add up
A scar an affidavit and mum's knowing looks
Clues.
He was missing cause of bruises not because of excuses
But I didn't want to know so I pretended delusion
When mum brought it up I allowed confusion
I preferred arrogance to the knowledge of two fists
He used his.
Violence instead of kisses
A "no" instead of "yes I'll be your missus"
Wrong answer. Bam. Hit to the head.
Still lucky poor mum didn't end up cold dead
Changes had to be made
Visitation hours started to fade
So mum set about devoting herself to my dreams and wishes
Spoiled me for guilt over crashing plates and dishes
But nobody's perfect
And love is unconditional
So know I'll always love you
But of excuses I'll have none
I understand that some things are worth fighting for.

The Hate U Give

Lucy McManus

Did you think it was just a toy gun?

Did you think it wouldn't kill him?

Did you think they'd just bounce off,

When the bullets hit him?

Did you see his eyes grow wide? Did you see him start a-swaying?

When he lay lifeless on the ground, did you think he was just playing?

Did you think he could have killed you? Did you think he had a gun?

Did you think he could have shot you, when he was on the run?

Did you know he was just 16, when you pulled the trigger back?

Was it all in self defense?

Or was it just cos he was black?

Douglas

Lucy McManus

Ok, but Douglas, what's going on,

Tesco's burned down, the cinema's gone?

Douglas is changing but let's face it, it's true

If you want a KC's you'll still have to queue.

Legacies

Noreen Angozi

Thought Process.

I can't believe I'm only now realising how important these moments are,

To think right now I'm just living life each day without truly living life

All because I think the future is far

To think that one day I'll wake up and I'm 30, still all over the place

The harsh world I'll have to face

My childhood gone without a trace and the impacts of the decisions my
teenage years pushed me to make

Mistakes?

I'll never know 'til they come back to bite me or help me

It's a make or break situation I suppose

Things I know

Who will she become?

Heck, who will I become?

I guess only time will tell.

We like to think we are in full control of how everything turns out

But no, life plays us all and makes us think it's on us

Just an on-going game of heads or tails,

The lucky one gets it all before the penny rusts,

Skin turns to dust,

And someone else continues the legacy we built or at least tried to build

Remembered,

That's what I want to be

But that's something many others will simply repeat

So I need to live my life for me, not for you but for me

So one day when I go to rest,

Life no longer in my chest

I'll get to rest, most importantly in peace

Untitled 014

Noreen Angozi

I find myself holding back on showing emotion.
Maybe I'm just afraid I'll cause a commotion or bother you with the little
details of how I'm truly feeling
I guess I'm just afraid that one day my problems will finally hit the ceiling
I can only bottle them up for so long before the bottle breaks
An earthquake, full of emotion
Every emotion I've ever felt
Every person I've ever loved
Every tear that bought a new reason as to why I'm not good enough
Every smile I've ever smiled
Real or false
Every feeling that words simply can't recreate,
I wanna fly like a bird,
Soar high, then higher
Away to a haven where I can serenely retire
But for now I got to stay caged in a persona that'll change as I age,
Just act like it doesn't bother me until I find another blank page.

Archives

Noreen Angozi

My favourite sport, one that proves to be dangerous and heart-breaking
Jumping to every conclusion other than what obviously lies in front of me

Minimal

The smallest problem becomes hours of worrying

A needle so easily transformed to a dagger

The smallest seed watered by thoughts

Creating the ugliest flower yet the flower that garners the most attention

I don't get why that's how it is

You can't de-program what you are, right?

I'm no robot, it's evident in the amount of emotion I show

Good or bad but then again, what can determine that?

"You do not have to be good" but what's good and what's bad?

I can't fathom what's wrong with that logic

If I overthink so much that it kills me eventually, what's good in that?

Thoughts are therapeutic but these,

These thoughts, they're poisonous

Slowly adding more poison to my IV drip

Killing me slowly and painfully

Making me rot

Years and years' worth of things I should've forgot

Archived in my memory

Rose-Tinted Window

Noreen Angozi

Perhaps the rose-tinted window he views me from has begun to grow dull
Perhaps I need to step away from the window sill, but to gaze at him
through this light is just so blissful
Even when I ultimately change scenery to admire winter as though it were a
spring day,
He will remain beautiful, so it's him I suppose, not my window of rose tint,
it's him
He is the rose that creates beauty in all that surrounds him

Unexpected

Noreen Angozi

A pair
Our friendship so likely yet unlikely
Two very different personalities at first glance,
But put them side by side and I can tell you're just like me
Maybe not exactly but a couple similarities
Somehow we work in harmony, I don't get it
I guess at first I thought I hated you
But it's a lot deeper than that
Honestly I don't know why and that's a matter of fact
To be exact, you're not my role model
But man I look up to you
And no, I don't want you to take this as some dramatic ego boost
Last year, we were strangers
This year, not so much
So I guess thank you for wandering over at lunch

Dear Sunrise

Noreen Angozi

Tongue-tied,
An array of words perfectly yet imperfectly laid out
My mind tangled between fact and fiction
My heart, for it knew only love's bitter peak
An adventurer looking for something more
Sunrise,
Its orange hues met my tired gaze
Awakening something I only longed for
It's warmth, it's familiarity, but still a feeling I never knew
Could it be you dear Sunrise that brings my ever fleeting joy something
more to hold on to?
All the earth wishes they could claim you as their own
But to me, in my heart
I know you are mine
And every morning your beauty I will come to behold

Achill Island

Noreen Angozi

Take me back to the place where my soul resides
Where heaven meets the earth
Where peace truly can be restored
The only place I've ever really adored
Take me back to the sunkissed shore
Still so radiant during autumn's tedious reign
Decorated ever so delicately by footsteps frozen in time
Take me back to the place where the wind carries the sea's hopeful song
And all things in life can be made new

Sandcastle friendships

Noreen Angozi

I love sandcastles

They come and they go

You build them, have fun with them

Almost build a connection with them

And then they wash away.

They remind me of certain friendships I've had over the years.

The ones that you work hard to create

Go out of your way to maintain a bond

All because in their presence you just felt like you belonged

Then you start building,

Then you add the secrets and memories,

The love and the laughter

And then the surprises, you never quite know what they're after

But you know it's something you love

But then as quickly as the tide rolls in, they're gone

You can't explain why

They're just gone

Maybe it's for the best

But the memories of those friendships

I'll always hold close to my chest

D.P.S

Adam Jere

So we calling ourselves the dead poet society
Gotta love the irony
Well maybe, we all going to heaven if people keep trying me
Book your one way ticket all golden like Ezekiel
Or King Midas my touch could corrode through all people
Baptized in evil so I always had a taste for blood
Captured by a nice family who tried to show me love
I just blocked them out can't hear them we all slaves to temptation
Managed to take them with me they were just the demonstration
Of my mass incarceration of faith
You call it sacred
I thought it was too until I lost all of my patience
My Grandmother and Father and even my fucking pastor
It seems the high plan is just a damned disaster
I try to hold the Darkness in but sometimes it gets past my pigment
Settles in my skin and I start to get malicious
Shoots out at others I try to point it at myself
Caught the bullet pull up the hoodie don't bother asking for help
We just 12 poets in a circle nah let me make a quick correction
11 poets and one demon trying to calm his hell bent direction

Untitled

Adam Jere

I'm insecure to a whole nother level
I'm so worried that it's fucking up my mental
Who will I be the man or the kid
Either way I'm still messing up shit
I worry about things that never happen
I'm so nervous will I cause her any damage
I'm embarrassed bout this weight that I carry on myself
I could drown and I would never cry for help
It's so real to me
I'm gone rise above this man you gone see
but else finna toast in my victory
I'm all alone look what this one bitch did to me
This vulnerability has grown toxic
So I built up these gates you gone need a locksmith
You can't save me from me I'm my own hostage
I kidnap myself when I feel positive

Melodies

Adam Jere

I keep on hearing these melodies
Count them out so I guess they a part of me
In a second they gone have to jumpstart they gone tear me apart to put a
cease to my misery
I'm just kidding what the hell has gotten into me
I want attention like a diamond centrepiece
See the happiness dripping off me like a chain but it's all just a game cause
this painting a frame
A perfect image that you leave corrupt with just a touch
If the world's problems they always get to us
But they never fucking cared for us they just labelled me dangerous
Got no one to trust
Cept for myself
But I guess nobody else gone jump to the abyss
What the fuck am i supposed to do with this gift
I think I'm gonna let it fucking rot in the pit
Pit of my emotions where nobody comes to open up my soul just a lot of
kind words spoken
Spoken to no avail
Can you help me
Get over this shit
Don't forget me
I swear to god one day you won't escape
All your friends are always gonna play me
And your just gonna have to love to hate me
Until then assume I'm crazy

Cheap Coffee

Adam Jere

Cheap coffee

Me and you chilling

Everything is all good till I start overthinking

It's crazy how I can mess up situations in fear of what could happen

But you're still here

Sticking right to my right content in staying there

My new biggest fear

Is losing you to something that I said

And today that nearly happened on accident

Imagine then

If we argue and I pop a fuse

I hate to lose in more ways than one

But there is no winning in this game we begun

Keep looking up don't you ever look down

Cause then you are looking at me no smoke screens around

Rose tinted windows

blessed to renew

Impressions of a pessimist pressed in pressure pulled out and pulverized

Love Hatred

Adam Jere

Sometimes I love to see you at your lowest point
Cause around other people you just hold fake hope
The real you is so far away from the you you choose to display
I'm wondering how long can you keep up the charade
Wake up in the morning like is today the day
Smiling from ear to ear hoping that maybe you will implode today
But I won't bug you for it I'll just let happen and hope that in the end you
cause damage
Fighting with a sense of empathy and rage let it out
Doesn't feel do good when you embrace the pain and shout
Your stomach's turning but you ain't hungry for food you starving for terror
You speak out when the nice guy disappears and causes the horror
We've been missing for like half a year
Who gives a fuck about friends
That shit always comes to an end
Better you pull the trigger then wait for someone else to hit you in the chest
Crying in the corner thinking maybe you weren't the best
This world is kill or be killed
the sooner you learn that the sooner we can get back to our thrills
Look at you all positive all happy all good
I'm glad we are past the woes don't be misunderstood
But if we chilling living with nothing to complain about
Please tell me what in the fuck are we gonna write about
in positivity
Back up before we all combust you know how it does
My head returns to earth so I'm gonna take a sip
Steaming cup of tranquillity up to my lips
Stare into my eyes they race around like a marathon
But stop to a break whenever you are greeting them

8 a.m.

Elle Coves

seems to me
everything's new
I'm still me
but you're not you
the world keeps spinning
while I'm trapped in last year's —
memories;
they're haunting me
I keep them in the pocket of my jeans
to reminisce,
whenever I feel lonely

8 a.m.

waiting for the bus to come
wishing you'd pick up your phone
for once in a while

Friday night and it's getting so late
you're out with her
while I sit and wait
for you
but you're not around
keep letting me down
I can see it in your eyes
you've made a mistake
I'm sorry love but now it's way too late
for you
I'm sick of being around when you keep letting me down

I can't seem to get you off my mind
no matter how hard I try

blue (I miss you)

Elle Coves

I miss the days we would stay up until three
talking about boys and watching Modern Family
and after all maybe we weren't meant to be
if it's only taken you a year
to forget me
of course I never expected you to cry yourself to sleep each night
and I want you to be happy
but I'm happy when you hold me tight
I guess that somewhere down the line
we forgot to remember
and moved on with our lives
which is fine,
I'll be alright
I just wasn't ready to let go
close that chapter in my life

tell me what to do
If I can't get you out of my head
and I feel so blue
I miss you
I miss you

and since we're being honest here
I must confess
almost every song I've written has been for you
I feel like such a mess
I'd rather be anywhere else
than in this empty room
where I'm just a ghost to you

It's like I'm not really here
you see right through me and it
kills me
fills me
with fear
to see just how replaceable I can be
I don't understand it
how I wasted too many tears
when you never really cared

cada vez

Elle Coves

cada vez que te miro
vuelvo a caer,
eres fuego que arde,
vuelvo a nacer
cada vez que te busco
no te dejas ver
cuando consigo olvidarte
vuelves a aparecer
vuelves
una, otra vez

say

Elle Coves

I've been hiding

I've been trying to hold back

all that lying always gets you off track

oh I've been running,

I've been running away,

from all the things that I was too scared to say

trust me I've been trying to fight it

but it gets harder every time

so I'll say what I've been wanting to say

you know it's on the tip of my tongue

won't try to hold it in any longer

say it if I mean it, I'll regret it if I leave it

I spent so much time trying to hide the truth

what do you have,

what do you have to say?

what if everything we have fades away?

believe me I've been trying to fight it

but it gets harder every time

say

what I've been wanting to say

you know it's on the tip of my tongue

won't try to hold it in any longer

say it if I mean it, I'll regret it if I leave it

I'll just say what I've been wanting to say
you know it's on the tip of my tongue
won't try to hold it in any longer
I'll say it if I mean it, I'll regret it if I leave it

spent too much time trying to hide the truth
that I just keep on falling
for you

paradise poetry

Elle Coves

I said: "take me away, on this rainy day. I want to leave this place,
let's escape"
so you took me to paradise
and I watched the sunlight turn your eyes
into the bluest shades of Caribbean seas

start again

Elle Coves

still think about the time
you told me you were mine
I thought we would never be apart
and as the seasons change
you're in a different place
and every time you leave you break my heart
but somehow you come back again
every time
and all all hurt and guilt and pain are left behind

I want to start over again
I want to start over again
because every single time that we get closer
I think about the way I used to hold you
start over again
I want to start over again
because every single time that I get closer
that's when you turn around and give me closure

and every time we touch
it all gets too much
and all my doubts come rushing in
I can't take the pain
of losing you again
but I just can't stay away

still think about the time
you told me you were mine
I thought we would never be apart

Kiss of Light

Zaria Killian

The sun that rolls through the sultry sky
Is captured in a jar of honey
She neither hastens nor resists arrival of the souging autumn night
Youth elemental within her hearty core
Like the swift grass and the fibre of wheat
the waves that kiss the smoothly shore
She's playful in the heat
The inimical frost of twelve has come
She all too softly saw
Till now she drank the Spring rills of the icy winter thaw

Snake's nest in a mouth

Zaria Killian

An old man leans on his cane and observes
He sees a dog's snout sniffing through rubbish.
Slobbering through arteries and blooded nerves
Fur cluttered on its rough tongue
Clogging his pus-stained, rotted and infected lung
Garbage on the slimy pavement looked like soggy fabric
A world in which life is governed by filth and senseless tactic
Who knew stupidity could raise such fearful phantoms
That brainwash stadiums to chant vile and barbaric anthems
People possessed with demented mania of gluttony and greed
No empathy supplied by starving screams of deafening plead
He feels the conformity of hunger twitching at his hands that shake
Tries. But can't dismiss the relishing thirst of cannibalistic steak.

Scent of Stars

Zaria Killian

While the Honey coloured moon hangs in the dusty air
The blistered paint crusts at the light of the evening stare
Only sleepy and tranquil, came to all I saw
Like balm on a wound, one fleshy and raw
Married to the stars of astrological serene
Carry the frankful history of earth in the eye of between
All years in existence of a contradicting tune
The city asleep, as I ponder over the moon
Waves captured by a convex of emotions wash over me
The life of the stars, the Withdrawal of the Sea

The Art student

Zaria Killian

Golden warm is the sun in which she lies
Her thoughts arranged like paint on high cloudless skies
The intake of delicate sniffs of the grassy breeze
The gentle humming of insects and wild honeybees
The sound of trickling sap of maple in the old oak
Feelings of fruitfulness this all does provoke
Dusty sketchpads in shelves captured of the sight
Of the rolling green Farm countryside
Her jacket bundled underneath her head
Pondering of all her emotions that she leaves unsaid
She is an entity of things accomplished and a potential of things to be
Only now can she feel this, in the sun's golden melody

Hail to Earth

Zaria Killian

As the world wakes and creation begins to live in rhyme to the placid light of
the sun.

Fists massage the gum out of swollen eyes

and pastels encompass the essence of the icy, pallid skies

Rhyme to the clouds that begin to glide across grass like doves,

And rhyme to a razory wind that tangles within all of matter

That dries the moistened roots of the earthy garden satyr

As the chalk white curtains scrape flutters in a whisperly reply

Evoke the influx of inner contentment within the only internal my

Rhyme to strangling ivy, keeper of milky, and ripened petals that die at its grip
with languid grace

Similarly to the wilted, crisp ones choked within the greasy window and
clustered table

Rhyme to the bird that patters in the shattered flower vase

Who will eventually return to its fissure in the gable

All which we don't see, but consider sawn

Would trail us to alignment of the earth,

Coax us to the vapour of the dawn

Forgotten

Zaria Killian

The same rain that fell on battlefields now soaks the moss

The landscape differs but still present of loss

The same exact sky of the gloomy lit night

The same vapour cloud, the same play of light

The same family of moths that still scower the place

Flutter within history, of lives that unlaced

Trick with their march

Zaria Killian

When pleasure is found in the grace of dying things
The malversation of mankind and earth then begins.
When the faultless raised and brought to life by loving birth
Are now scorched ankle deep by the blistering filthy earth
Boiled and crusted as they spit bones onto the mud
Prowl through tangled bodies and clotted blood
As kings tramp their perpetual journey forever long
As they march the parade to their own devious song.

When the money steals instead of the stealer,
When the drugs deal instead of the dealer
Nobody will hear the roucous screams that don't encompass volumes out of
us anymore
As faces are bitten by vermin and worms infected with lies to our deepest
core.

When the twitching lips press lightly to the forehead of the last soul dying
This is when a remedy of the cure will start finally clarifying
And people will be awakened
But it's too late, for the maggots and rotten blood awaits
Due to the rich Republics and populous States
The earth is lost and comes an age for empty goodbyes as the world engulfs
into a jet black sunrise
This fate is saturated with the filthiest sorrows
Throbs me to gulps of the furthest down horrors
Then life is lost and death to springs
For everything be scorched by the ferocity of Kings.

Home

Zaria Killian

Amid the meadows and golden fields of wheat
In the expanses of infinite hues that hold a traveller's warm, weary feet
lies a secluded village in which peace silently brews
Where the sun's warmth perpetually and inevitably will suffuse
The smell of hay and reminiscent memories,
of outings, conversations and adventurous discoveries
chatters about quickenings and "better soon" recoveries
The ring of a bicycle on the road so balmly queer
A morning walk in the dew covered fields in the aponic atmosphere
The silence of it all and then the carnos church choir,
swifts softly through the streets like a zen pacifier.
The traveller's eye will sadly be, sighting the village in bare simplicity
Without knowing how special it is to me,
how it's my little gift of synchronicity.

Fruit

Zaria Killian

Meadows in amour of light and air
A sweetening breeze and a dash of hair
Spread in fruit fields, face concealed
From the farmer who hoes the sugar field

"Friend"

Zaria Killian

The perpetual ticking of the clock indicates the time
The court indicates the punishment for an unforgivable crime
But what did our friendship indicate?

Did its intentions always lie in the joints of your wrist?
Did your words intentionally have the epilepsy of contorted twists?

I wish I knew.
But, too long I waited for your explanation that's too long overdue
For I who am curious about each
Am not curious about you.

I believe

Zaria Killian

A blade of grass is no less a journey of the rain
of those who live in peace, or of those who live in vain
of those who breathe and leave plenty after them
Or those who relish a trample, on a ripened flower stem
of those who release in taste of unquiet ocean
Or those who shatter and crack with wilding emotion
Rescuer or victim of falseness and artifice
Either boil with their lust or learn their suffice

The fox

Charlie Kitteringham

I enter the kitchen.

One which has grown smaller with familiarity.

The hunger has returned.

I brandish a knife and carefully cut through my loaf.

Crumbs litter the counter.

A rustle is heard outside and the porch light cuts through her dark safety blanket.

Glowing emerald eyes pierce into mine.

She calls, her ghostly howls beckon me to open the door.

I am hesitant but creep towards the door rest my hand on the handle, finally

I turn it.

She rushes in and the door slams against the wall.

She snatches the bread and scurries.

The next night the hunger is stronger and I quickly slice more bread.

More and more crumbs coating the counter I never cleaned.

Her familiar howls mark her presence.

Her hunger has brought her back, she has grown more desperate.

One crumb was too many and she has become too driven by the taste.

Night after night.

Dark into light that is chased away faster and faster.

She is corrupted.

She's never satisfied.

There is no more bread.

She has bled me dry.

She has consumed.

Untitled

Charlie Kitteringham

Water turns to wine.

Gardeners destroy flowers.

Hands were once held together by an unbreakable love and a ring and now are
prided away by life and a piece of paper.

Knives are multipurpose tools.

Sharpeners don't stay together either.

People are blinded by others' beauty till they can't see their own.

I'll never let you go is an empty promise.

We make permanent places for temporary people

The Gardener

Charlie Kitteringham

You were a gardener.

Your duty was to protect.

But I'm not a pretty flower to you.

I was a reject.

I did my best to blossom.

I did my best to grow but your cold hands were all I grew to know.

You stayed for years swearing to the world that you cared.

I couldn't argue because my view of you was impaired.

You once spent the night in my flowerbed.

You tore away my petals and left me while I bled.

Almost 9 years later I hear your name once again.

The news that the gardener has been slain.

Not by another but by yourself.

Those rough hands that tied a rope to a shelf.

The massacre

Charlie Kitteringham

Fragments of a paper doll are torn up on the ground.
She no longer weeps or makes a sound.
Crimson ink covers the floor like a blanket.
Making the ground her new casket.
Her arms were ripped away trying to help people hold on,
Her legs were torn off chasing dreams and people that were long gone,
Her stomach was cut out to help others digest what they couldn't,
Her liver was taken out to filter the toxins theirs wouldn't,
Her eyes were gouged out to help people see their own beauty and worth,
Her brain was scooped out to give the way they think new birth,
Her heart was taken to continue to spread love after death,
Her lungs were removed to give others fresh breath,
Her spine was broken trying to give others support,
The strain was too much and her body had to contort.
There is the scene, gruesome and rather grim,
She helped and gave so much but now she doesn't have a limb.

Bliss in innocence

Charlie Kitteringham

A state of being uncorrupted.
The waves of colour could dance without being interrupted.
Oblivious to the slaughter and poverty preached on TV.
Instead you watched cartoons riddled with glee.
You only knew one person who could turn water into wine.
Then your father's hand around the neck would intertwine.
Gardeners would help and protect and help flowers grow but now they tear
away the petals and let crimson rivers flow

Irony

Charlie Kitteringham

A man, father, son and human sits on broken concrete. The concrete jungle holds him in a state of defeat. His head hangs low and he holds a sign with a hand that bleeds. No one puts out a hand or an ear to his pleas. Christians always say love thine neighbour as thine love yourself but still don't help those who have no wealth. Why is he mocked and ridiculed? He slipped up but once lived a life you ruled. Why is he denied basic human rights? To roam the streets and get into fights? Breaking news a man, father, son and human is found dead. Why do you still turn a blind eye and break your bread? Why do you mock his only way to cope? Why won't you help restore dignity and give him hope? We cannot let the facts and statistics remain true. In the blink of an eye that man could be you

When my time has come

Charlie Kitteringham

When my time has come.
When it's time to say goodbye.
Put me in a mahogany coffin and leave me there to lie.
Cover me, let the soil hug me tight.
Comfort one another that it's gonna be alright.
Please don't cry,
You and I both know,
This is the circle of life, when things come they also must go.
Instead celebrate the memories from which I was alive.
Know I'm always with you to help you strive.
After all we all must face the same end.
We all must eventually
Descend.

Please, don't end up going awry.
I'll see you again so for now,
Goodbye.

My nest

Charlie Kitteringham

Just 3 birds trying their best.
Then 3 became 2 because 1 left the nest.
1 had enough, he said he was through.
3 and 2 didn't know what to do.
2 did her best to care for 3.
3 remained cheerful, loving and carefree.
She was so young and so naïve,
She wore her little heart on her sleeve.
But vultures came along clawing at her heart.
Trying their best to make her fall apart.
1 showed up from time to time.
I remember them as green and as bitter as lime.
2 was still there just as loving and protective,
After all 3 was her child and that was her one objective.
As 3 got older her smile got more and more washed away,
But then there were 4 and still are to this day.
The colour that had drained from 2 and 3's world had returned.
They fight hard and deserve what they've earned.
They now have a full nest once again,
There's no more worry and no more stain
And 3's little heart has over time grown
And some of the vulture's cuts over time have been sewn.

hope comes like a waterfall

Caoimbe Neff

You say you want everything for us
All the wealth this world could bring,
But you have messed with fickle fingers of fate.
Just so you could have your win.

Then hope comes like a waterfall all at once then everything.
We will change the face of history,
Seek the power that's within

Now our cities lie with dreamers,
Who have visions in their head.
They are willing to spark the rebellion
From right inside their bed

We will change the face of history
Seek the power from within

For hope comes like a waterfall all at once then everything.

Dawn

Caoimbe Neff

The break of dawn, a golden hue
What was old, now is new.
The birth of light message of hope
Breathing life into people who need it the most.

The artist's hand we may not know
Just what is the reason behind this glorious show

For life comes in stages,
Just like the day
We must learn to cherish them all
In their own special way

Although I'm not certain of what the dawn might bring
Every person on earth will experience different things

So while the world sleeps,
I lie awake
Dreaming about tomorrow,
Waiting for the sun to break.

friendship

Caoimbe Neff

Do you know those people
That feel like sunshine?
The ones that light up your face
Make you see life from a different angle
And give you the warmest embrace.

I'm lucky enough to know one of those people.
That ignites the fire from within.
Leaves me with stars in my eyes on my face a grin.

The birds sang out in the morning dew.
End of an era, beginning of something.
You're just so good to be true

ocean waters

Caoimbe Neff

I cried an ocean.

Filled it with tears.

The world slowly started to re-enact my deepest fears.

Just as I thought my life would begin.

The tidal wave came crashing in

My thoughts my mind went spiralling down.

My beauty faded, I've lost my crown

Just as I thought my life would begin,

The tidal wave came crashing in

I tried so hard but I couldn't swim.

My thoughts my mind went spiralling down

Now heavy is the head that wears the crown.

fate

Caoimbe Neff

Bloody thorn on thistled rose

Did you ever know what the future foretold?

Two soliders gone, but I survived.

How I wish there was a compromise.

Breathing in the cloud of green.

How different I wish your life could have been

You were the victim of hate,

But perhaps that was destined fate.

Spring's Break

Crystabell Sotgiu

The sunlight broke through the depression that was the dull, overcasting clouds illuminating the wet ground in patches. Though the air was cold, crisp, and refreshing, the newly emerged light provided a sense of warmth. The snow that had once masked the immense ugliness of the street had now turned to slush, allowing colour to peep through the disappearing blanket. The melting snow revealed the town once again, bringing it to life like a black and white film transitioning into colour. A bird lay proudly perched upon a bare tree, serenading the arrival of spring and filling the air with life. Although the end of winter was abrupt, it brought tranquillity and ease, and showed the town in its true form of ethereal beauty. It was only then, in the deep silence of the street, that I thought paradise could quite possibly be at home.

Reflection

Anonymous

Cherry lips trace my skin,
Leaving behind
Small reminders of days
Filled with warm sunshine
And honey.

These prints are symbolic
Of happier days
And yet they are used
Against me,
A mark of shame and disappointment,

Raising the question—
Who are you now?

TY Party Mentality

Anonymous

People will sing, and laugh and shout,
Some will dance, then pass out.
Hair will be held, joints rolled,
Secrets shared and stories told.
Filters will vanish, in puffs of smoke,
Vodka will swirl, in cups of coke.
Anguished tears and drinks will spill,
Be wiped away, and refilled.
2000s soundtrack, Pon de Replay,
Say My Name, Rock DJ.
Hugs will matter, you'll pour your heart out,
Honesty's easy, when it's dark out.
On a balcony, lungs full of stars,
Above the streetlights, and the cars,
You'll hug your friends, laugh and thrive,
Sip your drink and feel alive.

Just your Manic Pixie

Anonymous

It was fun
In a sort of a limited way
Being his Manic Pixie Dream Girl
for a while
Until the same moment
He caught feelings
And I realised how exhausting it was
Like I'd poured a glass of juice
And finally filled it up
Only to realize
I wasn't thirsty

You

Anonymous

Showing up out of nowhere,
You see it as a grand gesture,
A way to win me back.
But all I see is blinded desperation
To hold on to what once was.

I'm on a new chapter
But you keep bringing me back
To your favourite line.
The one where you thought
I was yours.

But what you don't see is
That I was never a prize to win
Or an object to own.

You focused so much on
Keeping me in a cage
That you didn't notice I'd long gone.

You thought of all the ways to
Keep me for yourself but
You lost me the moment
You tried to change me.

Do as lovers do

Anonymous

Do as lovers do, fall asleep under the stars
And drink in the light as it falls
From the harvest moon.
With thoughts that revolve in polyphonic melodies,

Simplify my feelings with a casual touch.
A smile, a glance.
Fingers laced together, souls entwined.
A graceful dance.

Hold me close to your body,
Feel my heat against yours.
Bare skin without sin.
Purest forms of love.

Embrace me without reserve,
And while our moon still shine,
Swear to never let me go.
My heart is thine.



The Unfinished Book of Poetry 2020

featuring poems by

Aoife Ní Bhruadair

Art Óg Ó Gráda

Ciara Ní Aodha

Cillian Ó Cathasaigh

David Ó Meachair

Éadaoin Erlandsson

Faye Ní Iarlatha

Órlaith Ní Chionnaith

Órla Ní Ghliasaín

Seosamh Ó Buachalla

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Ropa Tuso

Chloe Fitzgerald

Saoirse O'Brien

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Ben McCarthy

Clodagh Kelly

Fiona Corcoran

Lucy McManus

Noreen Angozi

Adam Jere

Elle Coves

Zaria Killian

Charlie Kitteringham

Caoimhe Neff

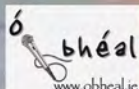
Crystabell Sotgiu

Anonymous



Cork City of Sanctuary

We are Cork.



A Cork City Council Arts Office, Cork City Libraries and Schools Project
in partnership with Ó Bhéal