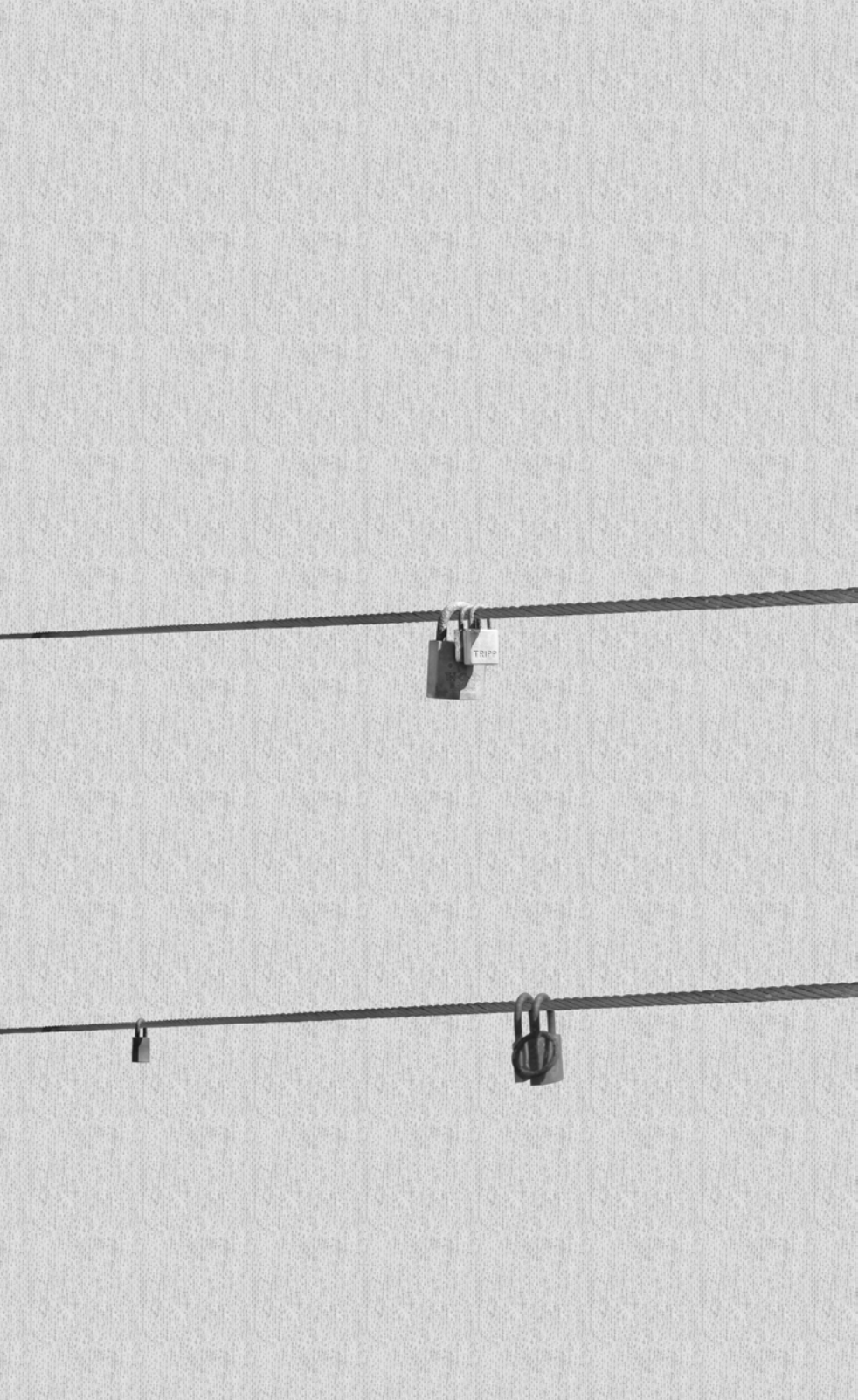


# The Unfinished Book of Poetry 2021

poems from **Cork** secondary schools



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



# The Unfinished Book of Poetry 2021

poetry from four Cork City secondary schools



Comhairle Cathrach Chorcaí  
Cork City Council



Published by  
Cork City Council, Cork City Libraries and Ó Bhéal

Published in 2021 by Cork City Council,  
Cork City Libraries and Ó Bhéal



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# The Unfinished Book of Poetry 2021



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# Foreword

The first *Unfinished Book of Poetry* was published in 2005 as part of the programme celebrating Cork as European City of Culture. This year we celebrate the 17th edition. The series has adapted and changed over the years with last year seeing *The Unfinished Book* published as an eBook for the first time. As the Covid-19 pandemic continued, the process of putting the book together in 2021 demanded further change. All workshops were held over Zoom this year which was very challenging for all involved making this a very special edition of the book.

The *Unfinished Book* again features new poems from young writers across the city. This year's edition showcases voices representing four schools. The work these writers have produced comprises a wonderful anthology, illustrating an impressive variety of subject and style. The finished product is testament to the versatility of the assisting writers and the talent of the students from Coláiste an Phiarsaigh faoi chúram Colm Ó Ceallacháin, St. Francis Capuchin College with Niamh Prior, St. Aidan's School with Lani O'Hanlon and Coláiste Éamonn Rís with Paul Casey.

I extend a very special thanks to Paul Casey of Ó Bhéal for the editing and curation of this book, as well as guiding the students of Coláiste Éamonn Rís. His resilience, spirit, and ability to face all challenges in a creative way has ensured the continuation of the anthology during this pandemic and has also ensured our continued enjoyment of original works from exciting young voices.

**Patricia Looney**  
Cork City Librarian

# Assisting Writers' Biographies

## Colm Ó Ceallacháin

Tá Colm Ó Ceallacháin i mbun na ceardlainne scríbhneoireachta 'Peann agus Pár' i leabharlann Shráid an Chapail Bhuí ó 2018. D'fhoilsigh Cois Life a chéad chnuasach gearrscéalta, *I dtír mbilis na mbeo*, i 2017. Foilsíodh dánta leis in *Strokestown Poetry Anthology 4* agus *Aneas* i 2020.

Colm Ó Ceallacháin has been facilitating the Irish language writing workshop 'Peann agus Pár' in the Central Library, Grand Parade, since 2018. Cois Life published his first short story collection, *I dtír mbilis na mbeo*, in 2017. Most recently he has had poems published in *Strokestown Poetry Anthology 4* and *Aneas* in 2020.

## Lani O'Hanlon

Lani O' Hanlon is an award winning poet, writer and movement artist working in Arts and Health with Waterford Healing Arts Trust, The Molly Keane House, Waterford City and County Arts Office and Libraries.

Author of *Dancing the Rainbow: Holistic Well-Being Through Movement* and *The Little Theatre* (poetry), she has an MA in creative writing from Lancaster University, with poetry published various journals including *Poetry Ireland Review*, *Poetry*, *The Irish Times*, *Southward*, *The Stinging Fly*, *Orbis*, *Abridged*, *Msllexia* and in various anthologies including Bloodaxe's *Staying Human*, Vanguard's *14 magazine*, The Munster Literature Centre's *Pandemia* and regularly broadcast on RTE's Sunday Miscellany.

Poetry films with director Fiona Aryan have been selected for the Zebra Film Festival in Berlin and the first Irish winner of the Ó Bhéal International Poetry Film Competition.

# Assisting Writers' Biographies

## Paul Casey

Paul Casey is a writer and facilitator of poetry. His poems have been published in journals and anthologies across Ireland and worldwide over the past two decades, most recently in *Days of Clear Light* (Salmon Poetry), *Live Encounters*, *Pratik* and *New Coin*. His most recent collection is *Virtual Tides* (Salmon Poetry, 2016), which followed *home more or less* (Salmon, 2012) and a chapbook, *It's Not all Bad* (Heaventree Press, 2009).

He edited *A Journey called Home* (Cork City Libraries, 2018), an anthology of poems and stories from immigrant writers with translations in 20 languages. He has taught creative writing since 2003 and works with writers of all ages, via Poetry Ireland's Writers in Schools scheme, UCC's ACE programme and since 2013 through the annual Unfinished Book of Poetry project. He promotes poetry in his role as director of Ó Bhéal in Cork - [www.obheal.ie](http://www.obheal.ie).

## Niamh Prior

Niamh Prior is from Kinsale. Her fiction and poetry has appeared in journals including *The Penny Dreadful*, *Southword* and *The Stinging Fly*. Her poetry has been shortlisted or highly commended in competitions including The Patrick Kavanagh Award, Cúirt New Writing Prize and The Dermot Healy Award.

She discovered a love for teaching creative writing when she began facilitating workshops for teenagers around her kitchen table in 2007. She continued to do so every Saturday morning until 2013 when she became one of the inaugural MA in Creative Writing students at UCC. For her thesis she wrote a poetry collection, the title poem of which, *Lagan*, won the 2016 iYeats International Poetry Competition. In 2019 she was awarded the John Montague poetry mentorship bursary by the Munster Literature Centre.

She enjoyed doing her MA so much that she went on to do a PhD in Creative Writing for which she focused on fiction. Her doctoral studies were funded by a scholarship from UCC and a Postgraduate Scholarship from the Irish Research Council. She has taught creative writing on the undergraduate English programme at UCC.

## Coláiste an Phiarsaigh

Poetry by

**Seán Ó Conaill**

**Tess Sexton**

**Ruth Nic Pháidín**

**Tess Nic Cárthaigh**

**Sadhbh Ní Shúilleabháin**

**Kiela Ní Dhochartaigh**

**Oisín Ó Luanaigh**

**Caoilinn Ní Bhuachalla**

Assisting Writer: **Colm Ó Ceallacháin**

School T.Y. Coordinator: **Celine Ní Scollaí**



Bhain mé an-taitneamh as a bheith ag obair leis an ngrúpa breá seo ón idirbhliain i gColáiste an Phiarsaigh. Ní raibh rudaí go héasca acu i mbliana agus gan iad ar scoil in aon chor ar feadh cuid mhaith den am, agus is ar líne a bhí ár gceardlanna á reachtáil, ar ndóigh. É sin ráite ghlac siad páirt go fonnmhar sna ceardlanna, agus chruthaigh siad go léir go bhfuil mianach iontach iontu, mar is léir óna gcuid iarrachtaí sa chnuasach seo.

Phléamar réimse leathan ábhar agus sinn i mbun na gceardlann, agus léamar dánta ó chuid mhaith scríbhneoirí, na filí is mó iomrá ina measc, gan amhras, ach roinnt mhaith guthanna úra chomh maith.

Nuair a thug ár ngrúpa faoina gcuid dánta féin a chumadh, bhí rogha na n-ábhar chomh leathan céanna. Tá dánta sa chnuasach seo a théann i ngleic leis an nádúr is le héifeacht an truaillithe air, le huaigneas, brón is grá agus, chomh maith céanna, le huachtar reoite, le caife is le pis talún. Is léir gur ghoill na srianta atá curtha i bhfeidhm le breis agus bliain anuas ar na scoláirí, ach tá le feiceáil freisin gurb é an dóchas, thar rud ar bith, is treise i gcur chuige na scríbhneoirí óga seo. Tá súil agam go bhfanfaidh an dóchas sin leo ina saol i gcoitinne, mar go bhfuil bua na scríbhneoireachta is na samhlaíochta ag gach uile dhuine acu.

Gabhaim buíochas ó chroí le scoláirí na hidirbhliana as páirt a ghlacadh sna ceardlanna go léir, is gabhaim buíochas freisin le Celine Uí Scoláí is leis na múinteoirí eile as an deis sin a thabhairt dóibh siúd agus domsa.

**Colm Ó Ceallacháin**

I have thoroughly enjoyed working with this fine group of young writers from Coláiste an Phiarsaigh. Things have not been easy for them this year, having missed out on so much of what normally takes place during Transition Year in school. Our workshops took place online, of course, which wasn't easy either, but the students embraced the situation and the poems featured in this anthology reflect the efforts they have all put in.

We covered numerous topics during the workshops, and read from the work of many poets, both well-established and up and coming.

When our group began creating their own work the choice of subjects covered was just as wide ranging. There are poems here that deal with nature and the effects of pollution on it, with travel and weather, with loneliness, sadness and love but there are also poems that speak of the simple joys of ice cream, coffee and tiramisu.

The restrictions that have been placed on people's lives for the past year have obviously affected the students, but if there is one underlying theme present in the work they have produced I feel that it is hope. They have displayed talent and imagination which I am sure they will continue to develop, both in their poetry and in their lives in general.

A big thank you to them all for the effort that they have put in, and many thanks also to their teachers for facilitating the workshops, and to Paul Casey for overseeing the whole project.

**Colm Ó Ceallacháin**





# Poems

Coláiste an Phiarsaigh



# TY Sciobtha Uainn

*Seán Ó Conaill*

TY sciobtha uainn !!

Obair ón mbaile tugtha dúinn

Briseadh croí, is easpa comhluadair

Gan caint, gan spraoi, gan aon fhuadar

TY sciobtha uainn !!

Turas ar bith ní raibh ann dúinn,

Taithí oibre – Cad é sin?

Ceolchoirm – gan deis canadh go binn!

TY sciobtha uainn !! Ó mo léan,

Is pleananna móra beartaithe agam féin

Spórt is spraoi is caint is craic

Ag gabháil linn, ag tógáil raic!!

TY sciobtha uainn !! Crá mo chroí

Turas gaeltachta níor chualamar rud faoi!

Saoirse teorainn – níl trácht ar ceann a fháil

Is Micheál, gan cinneadh deánta, is é sa Dáil

TY sciobtha uainn !! Is trua ár gcás

Cuimhneacháin TY- is cuid é dár bhfás

Ach mo léan tá na figúirí covid ag fás

Teorainn fós orainn – is trua ár gcás

TY sciobtha uainn !! Cabhraigh linn

Is scaoil ar ais díreach ar scoil sinn !

Tá ár ndóthain de 'Level 5' curtha isteach

Tá sé in am dúinn briseadh AMACH!!!

# Grá don Trá

*Seán Ó Conaill*

Is fada ó bhí mé cois trá  
Ag luí ar an ngaineamh sa bhá,  
An t-aer úr ag séideadh go séimh  
Na tonnta ag briseadh ar dhromchla an Aigéin.

Is fada ó bhí mé ag ligint mo scíth  
Ag siúl ar bhruach na farraige gan bróga nó stocaí,  
meangadh gáire orainn go léir  
gan trácht ar víreas ar bith faoin spéir.

Is fada ó bhí mé in ann léimt ón gcé  
Is amuigh ar an uisce lá i ndiadh lae,  
Ag seoltóireacht is ag lapadáil thart  
ár gcairdeas ag dul ó neart go neart.

Is mé suite i mo sheomra ag scríobh an dáin  
Smaoiním siar ar an tírdhreach gorm is bán,  
Is cinnte go bhfuil mé ag súil leis an lá  
Go suífidh mé arís, cois trá.

## Sa Bhaile Arís

*Sadbbb Ní Shúilleabbáin*

Ag éirí go luath  
Go moch ar maidin  
Ag pacáil na málaí  
Chun dul suas san aer

Ón teas go dtí an fuacht  
Bhíomar ag dul abhaile  
Lenár mbróga lán go béal le gaineamh

Bhíomar brónach bheith ag imeacht  
Ach bhí mé sásta bheith thar n-ais i mo leaba féin.

## Sneachta sa chlós

*Sadbbb Ní Shúilleabbáin*

An Geimhreadh a bhí ann  
Sa bhliain 2010  
Bhíos suite i seomra  
Le beirt chairde liom.

D'fhéach duine amach  
Agus chuala mé an scread  
Bhí an sneachta ag titim  
Agus ní raibh sé chun stopadh.

Ritheamar amach sa chlós  
Ní raibh aon ní chun muid a stopadh.

## Mo Dheartháirín Óg

*Sadbbb Ní Shúilleabbáin*

Tá deartháirín beag agamsa  
Donagh is ainm dó,  
Nuair a bhíonn sé ar a sháimhín só  
Ní bhíonn aon ghleo.

Níl aige ach seacht mbliana  
Ach caithfear a rá,  
Gur buachaillín beag cliste é  
Gach nóiméad don lá.

Nach ionadh a bhí orainn  
Nuair a scread sé amach os ard,  
“Mol an óige agus tiocfaidh sí”  
Le meangadh ar a aghaidh.

Nuair a bhímíd le chéile  
Cuireann sé gliondar ar mo chroí,  
Nach álainn é mo dheartháir  
Lena chroí mór groí.

## Haikú

*Sadbbb Ní Shúilleabbáin*

Spórt is spraoi  
Screadaíl is canadh  
Amuigh faoin aer

## Looking

*Sadbbb Ní Shúilleabbáin*

Sitting down

Looking at a screen

Looking out a window

Rain running along the patio

Wind whistling through the branches

Nothing to be heard

Except the sounds of nature

Big trees and little trees

Swaying in the wind

Of all different colours.

Sitting down

Looking at a screen

Looking out a window

Waiting and waiting

For something to happen

Hoping to meet people on your daily walk

Just to get that little bit of social interaction

Waking up and doing the same thing

Day after day.

## A Trade

*Tess Sexton*

A bargain with such a dealer seemed all too sweet.  
His ashy hand left an imprint in mine; I was his.  
The sky above burned orange and I tasted the heat on my skin.  
Up above, liquid sun poured onto the bright orange canvas.  
I followed his cloak down the deep steps,  
it seemed cooler down here.

## Sand

*Tess Sexton*

She took me to the beach one day.  
I didn't know where we were.  
The floor turned my feet a crisp cold, it stung.  
Little specks in my hair, my teeth, in my eyes.  
Tiny rocks, crunching and burning.

## No Fishing

*Tess Sexton*

If I let you go,  
You will be free to see the world.  
To taste new cultures and breathe experiences.  
I will stay, on my throne of thoughts,  
Surrounded by a pond of busy fish.

she cried on a train.

*Tess Sexton*

the tears – a stream down her face  
her hand – moved to cover them  
the window behind her – passed in flashes of gray and ugly white  
where she was going - i don't know, but i knew where she had come from  
close to My home – We boarded at the same stop.



# Bogha Báistí

*Kiela Ní Dhochartaigh*

Ag stealladh báistí,

Is an ghrian ag scaladh.

Bogha báistí leis na dathanna éagsúla

Pota breá mór ag deireadh,

Faigh é. Beidh tú lán sásta.

## Green 99

*Ruth Nic Pháidín*

A national treasure  
An iconic delicacy  
the Green 99  
an annual indulgence

Tell me why this simple treat  
tastes different dyed green  
more succulent, more scrumptious, more fulfilling

Oh Green 99  
unveil your secrets  
was it St. Patrick himself who blessed you with such  
flavour and mystery

Green 99  
you will be missed this year  
the memories we had, will never be forgotten  
I hope to unmask you one day

Farewell thee Green 99 ...

## February

*Ruth Nic Pháidín*

The wind begins to howl  
the grass, crisp as ice  
Snow tumbles down  
Raindrops, small as grains of rice

This February is different  
not like ones before,  
it's colder and wilder  
there's definitely something more

Maybe she is angry  
with what the world has become  
She sees all the destruction  
and feels there is nothing that can be done

This February is different  
we're all stuck inside,  
no faces to see, no places to go,  
but at least I have you by my side

## Haiku #1

*Ruth Nic Pháidín*

Cailín ag suí cois uaighe  
Crobhaing bláthanna ina lámha  
Deoir ag sleamhnú síos a haghaidh

## Haiku #2

*Ruth Nic Pháidín*

Thosaigh an mac tíre ag rith  
Leoithne san aer  
É ag creachadh  
An t-ocras ag dul i méid

## Brionglóidí

*Oisín Ó Luanaigh*

Lá breá brothallach a bhí,  
Amhrán na n-éan á chanadh go binn,  
Bhí mise, mé féin, im aonar im luí,  
Go ciúin, go séimh ag ligean mo scíth'.

Is mé im aonar ag ithe mo cheapairí,  
Chualas ceol aláinn ó leaidín,  
Shiúlas thart chuig an fhuaim,  
'gus is beag nár thiteas im chodladh go buan,  
Níorbh ann ach brionglóid faoin leaidín,  
A thit ina chodladh go tobann, gan phian.

Deacair an rud é treabhadh ar aghaidh,  
Nuair nach bhfuil teannas ar a aghaidh,  
Gan anáil  
Gan solas  
Gan grá a thuistí  
Ní féidir ach smaoineamh air i mo bhrionglóidí.

A Sheáinín, a Sheáinín, a Sheáinín beag óg,  
Tógadh uainn tú gan aon agóid,  
Is tú id luí sa bhosca óir,  
Mé féin is do mháthair tógtha ónár leaid óg,  
Ní raibh tú ach trí bliana d'aois,  
Ag troid i gcoinne do shláinte.

Ar deireadh bhuaigh an ailse scámhógach,  
Is muid fágtha anseo ag brionglóideach.

## Cappuchino

*Tess Nic Cárthaigh*

Once we shared a coffee  
A Cappuchino, with maybe a toffee  
out would come an employee  
bearing gifts  
little treasures to seal every rift.  
Now that's ended a year since  
April.

## Oighear Iodálach

*Tess Nic Cárthaigh*

Piazza iltíreach plódaithe  
le daoine, siopaí agus bialanna  
Cailín beag ag suí  
le caipín bán  
agus gúna buí  
Oighear Iodálach  
i lámh amháin  
Tiramisu agus granita  
de ardchaighdeán.

## Pis talún agus sceaimpí

*Tess Nic Cárthaigh*

Scáilphrionta timpeall an bheáir  
ar an Cian ar na gloiní  
scáil taobh thiar den bhord  
brioscáin stálaithe ar ghoile folamh.  
Brioscaí sceaimpí á malartú  
ó lámh go lámh.  
Pis talún faoi stól ard.

## Soilse fluaraiseacha

*Tess Nic Cárthaigh*

Soilse fluaraiseacha ag scaladh anuas  
púdráil ar an bhfuinneog  
marc ar an gclár bán  
lá tar éis lae  
gan ábhar seachráin  
gan dámhachtain.

## Truailliú

*Tess Nic Cárthaigh*

Siúl síos na bóithre  
Boladh géar i mo shrón.  
Éiríonn deatach liath  
ó thúr fuinniúil.

## Expectations

*Tess Nic Cárthaigh*

In primary school I was smart  
Good at writing, History and art

Expectations were held of me so high  
So overpowering I could cry.  
At a higher level I was kept  
The days grew harder and so I wept  
At a higher level I was kept.



## Mo Ghrása

*Caoilinn Ní Bhuachalla*

Shiúil tú isteach go tobann  
Mo ghrá duit níos mó ná éinne eile  
Ní rabhas ag súil leat ach  
táim chomh sásta go bhfuil tú anseo  
Mo Ghrása

Bíonn tú ann dom i gcónaí  
Chun suaimhneas na mara a thabhairt dom  
Ní thógfainn éinne eile  
Mo Ghrása

Nuair a fheicim d'ainm  
Athraíonn mo mhothúcháin  
ar an bpointe  
Is tusa an duine domsa  
Mo Ghrása

# Neirbhís

*Caolinn Ní Bhuachalla*

Neirbhís

Neirbhís

An t-aon rud ar m'aigne

An mbeidh cairde agam?

An mbeidh mo mhúinteoir go deas?

Smaointe ag rith agus ag rith

Mo chéad lá.



## St. Aidan's Community College

Poetry by

**Chloe Foo**

**Aoife Higginston**

**Charlie Smith**

**Ronan O'Keeffe**

**Xavier Ticao**

**Alex McCarthy**

**Adam O'Brien**

**Kelvin McGowan**

**Jack Kearney**

Assisting Writer: **Lani O'Hanlon**

T.Y. Coordinator: **Eamon Breen**



November and all is quiet, not even a passing tractor.

I switch on Zoom and on they come in a great crowd of *Admit all*, my study fills with their voices and their energy. There is a shrill whine as all the laptops crash into each other. I can't see their faces because of the masks and it is hard to hear what they are saying. I spot my image on a big screen in their class and wish I had put on some make-up. I have no idea how we are going to do this.

I edge into it by asking what inspires you? Note down the books and films trying to match muffled voices with the names on the screens. We read Jackie Kay's poem, *The Kindness of Trees*, and I ask the students to remember a tree they climbed or played under or one they saw or see every day, then we enter the ancient Irish woods and imagination with Yeats, *The Song of Wandering Aengus*, and end with Danusha Laméris's *Small Kindnesses*. They are patient with my efforts and I am energised and moved by the large kindness, courtesy and welcome given to me by teachers and students alike.

In our next sessions, we look at Louis de Paor's poem *Rory*, about a Rory Gallagher concert he attended when he was young. The students write about their favourite music, what it was like to be at a concert or even to hear the buskers on Patrick Street. We read an extract from Gary Snyder's poem

*What You Should Know to be a Poet*, which begins: *All you can know about animals as persons/ the names of trees and flowers and weeds/ the names of stars and the movements of planets/ and the moon/ your own six senses, with a watchful elegant mind/ at least one kind of traditional magic:*

We are just entering this world of magic and myth with Molly Twomey's *Fionnuala, The White Tiger* by RS Thomas when the schools are closed and for a time our sessions end. When we resume some weeks later, I am joined by a smaller group, each one working from home, and often the cameras on phone screens and laptops are switched off. I understand from Mr O'Brien that students are often working that way, I assume it is because of the exhaustion that comes from too much screen time and perhaps for some students the need for privacy. Sometimes the signal goes and I lose some of them. I am deeply grateful to Xavier Ticao who calmly tells me that someone has no mic or that someone else has lost signal.

I begin to know and recognise each student by voice and through their writing. I think of Rilke's *Letters To A Young Poet* that began when a student, Franz Xaver Kappus, was at a military academy and sent some of his verses to Rilke, requesting an assessment of their value. The older artist, Rainer Maria Rilke (1875–1926), replied in a series of letters. Writers have communicated for centuries through letters and writing and we are doing the same, through the chatbox, Zoom and Email.

We read *Oh Sweethearts* by Liz Berry, write about first love, and the way an ice star with icicles like the spokes of a wheel could become a metaphor for first love, exquisite, shining but sharp.

We write about our rooms, the view from a bedroom window, the sound of other people and pets in the house, the repetition of each day as the light changes and winter turns into spring. We read Elizabeth Bishop's poem about the art of losing, things we have lost this year, and perhaps some things gained. We explore Ekphrasis - *the literary and rhetorical trope of summoning up—through words—an impression of a visual stimulus, object, or scene.* describing and dreaming into a painting by Chagall, also photographs, posters and other images around us. We look at a poetry film, *Numb* made by Liv McNeil for a school project, showing through film what it is like to be a room doing schoolwork day after day.

When he is teaching new writers, my mentor, the poet Thomas McCarthy, often quotes Vladimir Nabokov. *'literature arises from an obsession with*

*the “blessed particulars” of reality. Poetry, more than anything else, is the suffering body keenly observed.’*

We are not suffering like the poet Ilyam Sami Comak who has been wrongfully imprisoned in Turkey for over twenty years, he wrote *‘no cage can contain the colours of my heart’* and he also said that he writes poetry for the free happy child that he once was; but we do take time to acknowledge how we feel. We read Robert Adamson and the way description of surroundings, images, landscape and other people can mirror one’s inner feelings.

Musician, Davey Arthur says that he plays a tune by focusing on one note at a time, writer, Colm Tobin describes how Hemingway studied a painting by Cezanne, and the tiny brushstrokes; red, green, yellow, repeating until a whole painting was created. Hemingway realised that he could do that, write small sentences like those brushstrokes, one at a time until he had made a story or a novel. Colm Tobin said that he writes from an inner feeling, placing those small sentences one by one on the page.

I come to know each writer in transition year by these small brushstrokes becoming first poems, each writer beginning to communicate from their own unique and particular way of experiencing the world.

**Lani O’Hanlon**

# Poems

St. Aidan's Community College



# This Patch Of Light

*Chloe Foo*

Sun shining high in the sky,  
birds flying in a flock racing through the air,  
sun the colour of happiness, reflected  
down on the streets. Ice-creams melt like darkness.

The sky fills with clouds, a light pierces through  
but cloud begins to block the light once more,  
this patch of light begins to darken,  
streets are filled with emptiness yet again.

Dolphins swim freely in the ocean,  
jump high in the air, catch a breath of fresh air,  
travel together, swim through waters exploring.



## Walking With My Friends

*Chloe Foo*

The streets are lit,  
cars pass by on the road,  
cold air hits us,  
the warmth of the hot chocolate in my hands

## I Got My Teddy Bear When I Was Too Young To Remember

*Chloe Foo*

I called him Teddy,  
Teddy slept beside me every night,  
Teddy was with me when I was happy, sad or in between,  
I felt safe with teddy by my side in the dark or on stormy nights.  
Teddy was my friend that never left my side.  
As I grow older teddy still sits and watches me on the side

# Lockdown

*Chloe Foo*

The same day repeating,  
I wake up late almost every day.  
I tried baking, puzzles and a game  
but it was just same;

cars passing by,  
the clicking of my pen,  
the typing of the keyboard,  
a crackling sound from my laptop,

the ticking  
of my mint coloured clock,  
birds cawing as they fly by,  
people talking downstairs.

There is a wooden birdhouse in my room,  
a taste of toothpaste in my mouth,  
a velvet cushion on my bed,  
my round metal money box on my desk.

Light reflecting from the picture frame,  
birds sing outside  
the scent of flowers,  
the cold air        as cold as ice.

# Dara And His Dad And Mam Are Moving To France

*Chloe Foo*

He could barely sit up by himself,  
no words just whimpers or strange sounds,  
the look he gave followed by a gentle smile.

Now he runs faster than you can catch him,  
when I see him he says hey,  
that wide smile followed by a silly giggle.

He's cheery, playful and messy  
With his massive smile  
As a reminder  
Until I see his little face again.

## Music Can Transport You To A Different World Entirely

*Chloe Foo*

It's not often I listen to music but when I do  
I feel relaxed, forget everything around me  
and focus on the sound, beat and rhythm,  
sometimes an escape from reality,  
my worries begin to dissolve and disappear  
until the last note of the song when they return.

## Crystal As Cold As Ice

*Chloe Foo*

The glowing of the crystal illuminates the room,  
crystal like the heart is fragile and would shatter with one wrong move.  
Deep within the cave, the crystal keeps the place alive, with the cold  
sensation  
which soon becomes warm as the crystal earns a place in your heart.

# Scenes From My Life

*Chloe Foo*

In third class I went to my Aunt's wedding and stayed up almost the entire night, the atmosphere was full of people singing and dancing.

The day my younger brother was born my dad took my older brother and I to the lock and then to the hospital where we got to meet my younger brother for the first time.

After my communion and before we went to the zoo, I went into Claire's accessories and bought 50 euro worth of items.

When I was small my mam was ringing a taxi at the desk in Blackpool and attached to the desk was a rectangular container with a key inside it, I twisted the key and opened the box that had a safety vest inside and once I opened the metal box a really loud alarm went off in the shopping centre.

## Senses

*Aoife Higginston*

Rain outside tapping off my window panes,  
plates clinking off of each other downstairs as my dad puts them away,  
the teacher talking and the mic crackling slightly,  
my grandmother on the phone to her friend.

Fresh air through the open window  
the smell of breakfast coming from the kitchen  
and the scent from the diffuser I have in my room.

the canvas picture of flowers that is faced opposite to my bed,  
the frames on my wall filled with pictures of me and my friends,  
my own reflection in the mirror in my room,  
my laptop right in front of me with my class on it.

# Memories

*Aoife Higginston*

I was just four years old. My grandad collected me from pre-school in the early afternoon, how excited i was to see him walk towards the glass doors.

Then going with him to feed the ducks at the lough which was one of my favorite things to do at the time and now whenever i pass there it brings back these memories.

I was ten years old when my parents surprised us with a trip to a holiday destination in Africa, one of my favourite experiences thus far and i think it broadened my mind as i was able to experience a wildly different culture than what i am used to.

I cherish all of my Christmas memories as it is my favourite time of the year. One Christmas sticks out in particular, i must have been really young waking up to find a huge dollhouse by the tree. I was overjoyed, I had been wanting a dollhouse just like this for ages. My dad assembled it for me and it took what seemed like forever, I was so excited to be able to play with it all day.

## How I am today?

*Aoife Higginston*

I feel tired and a sense of underachievement because I missed some online classes this morning,

restless in my room and want to go downstairs or go for a walk but I can hear the rain tapping on my window so I know that's not an option today.

A sense of deja vu as I feel like every day is repeating itself. This feeling has been present ever since online school began.

In this class however, I feel more relaxed as I can take the time to think about what I'm feeling and write it down.

## How Innocent We Were

*Aoife Higginston*

An old picture of my sister and I on Christmas morning.

We are standing in the living room of our old house,  
in our pyjamas with huge smiles on our faces.

There is a huge dollhouse next to me that my dad had assembled,  
and my sister got a toy horse she called strawberry. I remember  
this Christmas clearly because I was so excited to receive my dollhouse.

How innocent we were and this is shown  
even by the presents we received. I will always treasure  
those Christmas mornings - my favourite time of year.



## Painting poem

*Charlie Smith*

I imagine this is on the edge of a market  
With a deep thick mysterious forest lying beyond the road.  
The violin player and his helper are outcasted, seen as cursed  
Or bewildered, simply looking for a small amount of money.

## Depression poem

*Charlie Smith*

Various shades of grey mounted upon dark clouds  
Overlooking a park, although the rain has stopped now,  
Everything is still damp, frowns are wrapped around  
People's faces in their own world, always  
Going somewhere and doing something.

## First Love Poem

*Charlie Smith*

Intense emotions, full of passion,  
Nerves and fear, thinking what it could  
Or can be, optimism rains above all, logical  
Thinking is out the window, hoping for the best.

## Image Poem

*Charlie Smith*

My Nan's house from the late 70s or early 80s,  
It's important to me as a different style of family photo,  
My granddad's old white Escort is in the driveway  
And my nan down on one knee pulling weeds in the garden.  
From recalled memories the terrace was full of life,  
Many young kids such as my aunts and uncles,  
Swarms of friend groups and my Nan's home-cooking-  
The smell beaming from the house with conversations  
And likely arguing from brothers and sisters.

# Dasher

*Ronan O' Keefe*

Patches of light stream through gaps in the sitting room curtains,  
My parents and gran whisper to each other as I open my presents.  
Mam walks in and out of the kitchen where she is frying up rashers and  
sausages.

I touch the cold hard plastic of new toys. A sugary taste in my mouth,  
colourful wrapping paper pops out from the plain walls.

I hear scampering coming from the corner of the room.  
Smell the fresh hay. Touch the cold metal bars of a cage,  
glimpse fur through the bars. My Mam comes and lifts  
the rabbit out of the cage and puts him into my arms,  
he is white, with a brown circle around his right eye,  
brown ears and brown spots on his back, a tiny bit of brown  
over his nose. He tries to jump from my arms but I hold onto him.

## Fox

*Ronan O' Keeffe*

When I was five years old, a fox would occasionally pass through the lush green valley that you can see from my grandparents' back garden. This wouldn't happen very often but when it did, Granda and I would spend ages just watching the fox until it left.

Granda standing beside me in his blue knit jumper, handing me a pair of binoculars that I couldn't really use though I pretended I knew how, the bouncy rubber of the large binoculars in my tiny hands.

We used to whisper even though there was no chance of the fox hearing us. Blinding sunlight in my eyes, filled with awe and wonder as the fox strolled proudly through the valley.

# I Am From

*Ronan O' Keefe*

Cork.

Citrus and vanilla,

music and kettles.

elephants.

The old horse chestnut tree outside my grandparent's house,

going out for dinner on the Sunday after my birthday,

opening one present on Christmas Eve.

# In Disneyworld

*Ronan O' Keeffe*

I touch the cold walls of Snow White's castle,  
the damp metallic railings,  
there is a sweet scent of pastries baking,  
the crisp fresh morning air.

Under the Sea is playing through the far away speakers,  
in the distance the metallic crash of rollercoasters,

Inside, light pours through the stained glass windows,  
my Mam is right next to me, my upper arm against her elbow,  
the taste of icing sugar and cinnamon in my mouth,  
Imagine, something I saw on television, is actually real.

# The Ones I Hold Dear And Close

*Xavier Ticao*

The sun was shining, the sky blue,  
Birds chirping, trees and grass rustling,  
Gusts of wind making me feel light, air in my lungs.

The taste of Fruit Pastilles,  
And water from the tap,  
That bright breezy day,  
Giggles, shouts of laughter,

When times were great  
When times were easier,  
The presence of each of them,  
Thirteen comrades;

Six foot Brandon towering over the rest of us,  
Rico with a ball in his grasp,  
Our arms around each other's shoulders  
The ones I hold dear, right there  
Next to me, and physically touching me.

# Beyblades

*Xavier Ticao*

Metallic spinners, a gadget attached it to the bottom and a string we pulled to make the Beyblades spin at high speeds in a round basin we called the Stadium.

The two metallic spinners would clash off one another, the clinks and clanks made the atmosphere intense adrenaline-inducing; whichever one stopped spinning first lost.

Inspired from the TV show, I bought multiple of these, played around with my brother EJ, competing in an endless battle, shouting “Let it Rip!!!” for hours upon end.

As the competition prolongs itself, our pride would go off the line, we would downplay and slag each other; “I’m better!” or “You’re a loser!”

When we were young and to this day, we both still feel joy and excitement when we use them once again.



# Jungkook - Euphoria

*Xavier Ticao*

At first sight, a youthful dream calls out to me. A sun so bright rises and luminates my life. Is this all a dream or is this an illusion? A green oasis in a desert reveals itself before me, a resemblance to a priori within my very soul. It fills me with bliss to the point where I cannot breathe and everything around me becomes transparent. As I gaze upon the distances of this dream, the sounds of the far-away ocean, over the horizon ring in my ear, a place that becomes so much clearer. Take my hands now.... No matter what happens in this dream, whether the desert becomes cracked or whoever shakes this world, don't ever let go and don't ever let go and don't ever wake up from this dream because in the end, you are the cause of my euphoria. Close all the doors that lead to reality and we'll run away..... as whenever I'm with you, I'm in utopia.

## Romantic Love Story

*Xavier Ticao*

As a girl and a boy walk aimlessly around the park, their paths cross and their eyes lock. Like love at first sight, they can't help but glance into each other's eyes that are filled with deep affection and intimacy. As they approach each other timidly, the two hesitate and walk past. Without a second thought, the boy turns back and grabs her by the hand, pulling her towards his chest for a warm, tender hug. Her cheeks become red with blush and her muscles ease from the softness of the hug as the boy caresses her in his arms. In a matter of moments, they depart from the park, hands intertwined as they walk through the iron gate and into what seems like paradise.

## Icicle Ball

*Xavier Ticao*

The image is like a ball of blades.

Icicles protruding from every angle with an intent of malice and reflection so clear it's reminiscent to that of a diamond.

Though menacing at first glance, the object appears to be a sight of fascination,

a sight that appeals to the naked eye. With its appearance so abstract, it is like that of a relic, an artifact, an ancient stone.

# Lockdown

*Xavier Ticao*

Everything feels more gentle and calm as I remain in the security of my home.

I embrace my inner peace and delve into a world of euphoria and serenity. The melody of the music playing lingers in my ears, uplifts my emotions and my very soul.

Videos upon videos are all that I watch on YouTube as the days go by as well as games that I play on my PS4 with my friends.

There are little things that bring sadness to me despite living in this solitary situation.

Though the idea of not being able to hang out with my comrades is heart-breaking,

it doesn't affect me in the slightest as the thought of playing games with them instead brings a greater sense of joy to me.

# In The Country Of The Phillipines

*Xavier Ticao*

I see nothing but the tropics,  
vibrant villages and lavish leaves of the wildlife.  
The scent of the breeze refreshes my lungs as the gusts of wind circulate  
throughout my body. The taste of Halo-Halo fill my tongue  
and the taste is savoured.

I am from a family in the Philippines. Not filled with luxury but essential  
needs suffice. Our house is near a crystal-clear beach, scorching sunlight,  
white-marbled flooring. The fresh breeze of the tropics and the Narra  
Trees and nature itself.

The sounds of domestic cock-screaching fills the air, the grinding of gears  
from tricycles and the rustling of leaves lingers in my ear and a feeling of  
tranquility.

More than 7 years since I saw them, warmly greeted by all my family and  
cousin, a very wholesome reunion and one that I will not forget.

## Penguin

*Alex McCarthy*

I was around 12 years old  
in Fota with my mother and little cousin  
it was her first time and it was a warm but windy day,  
some clouds but not too many.

Walking to the exit of Fota we passed by the penguins,  
my little cousin said to me "pet it" and my 12 year old brain decided sure  
then proceeded to try and pet the penguin,  
it bit me and my cousin had a great laugh.

## Pugsy

*Alex McCarthy*

The most beautiful thing that I heard this week  
was my dog barking in the crispy morning  
of Monday as we were going off to school.

His bark was a high pitch squeak with a sad tone.  
It was the pup's first time seeing us leave for school  
because we had gotten him on Christmas morning.

And also because of the bad stuff  
that is happening around the world at the moment.  
He just acted like a mad man when we returned home

## There Is A Picture

*Adam O'Brien*

Me and my sister  
together, sitting on the couch  
and it has meant a great deal  
to me for some time, the loving  
and caring nature, the joy,  
makes me feel extremely grateful.

## Halo

*Adam O'Brien*

The image of the beautiful  
sunset slowly descending  
as it still shines a halo  
of slowing orange light  
and ultimately the brightening  
tremendous sight of incredible  
sunlight dimmers down.

# Toy

*Adam O'Brien*

My favourite childhood toy  
was a really cool  
bright red remote controlled car.

I would anticipate coming home  
from school every day,  
just to enjoy the luxury  
of playing with it for hours.

## As Long As It Stays

*Kevin McGowan*

A photograph of Grandad in my room  
can sometimes bring a tear to my eye.

After his passing I was completely devastated,  
it was so sudden, so quick.

I feel like as long as the photograph stays  
in my room. Then so does he.

## A Childhood Toy

*Kevin McGowan*

As a child I would have a large amount of toys  
but there was this one action figure  
that I would love to play with.

I received it off my uncle one year for Christmas  
and it was truly one of my favourites.  
I would sit in my room for countless hours

And play with this figure and much more toys that I had.



## About A Tree

*Jack Kearney*

There is a small, red-leaved tree in our patio garden.  
It grows next to our door, and I pass it nearly every day,  
whether I'm going to school or on a walk.

The branches are thin and spiny, revealed  
in winter when the leaves die and fall off.  
In summer its foliage grows back, vibrant and bright.

We have ornaments around its pot, and the tree  
is surrounded by flowers and ferns, cushioning it,  
adding life to the patio. It has been growing for years.  
And what I think of first when I imagine our garden.

## Those Brief Moments

*Jack Kearney*

For the most part, this morning wasn't particularly noteworthy,  
but I do vividly recall opening my eyes first and noticing the sun  
hadn't quite risen over the horizon, and for those brief moments  
I felt at ease, knowing I still had a few short minutes to myself,

not to sleep, nor to wake, but to ponder the day ahead of me.  
Just to lie, motionless on my bed. However it couldn't last;  
I did eventually have to get up and continue as normal,  
along my usual, monotonous routine.

# Wood

*Jack Kearney*

I imagine a thin, well-trodden path winding  
through a thick wall of tall, old oaks and ashes,  
beyond which is what the mind cannot imagine.

Its foliage blocking out all but faint traces of sunlight,  
the rest plunged into deep yet alluring darkness, almost  
beckoning you to wander through, to explore but not to stray.

As you focus on one thing, it morphs and changes,  
you forget you were distracted by anything at all.  
The tree you could perceive so clearly, you could see

the moist dew on its bark, dissipates, and you forget  
it ever was. Instead, you take it all in as one, not fixating  
on anything in particular. Just living in the moment.

## Chair

*Jack Kearney*

My room's office chair is something I use everyday,

be it for homework, listening to music,  
reading or playing videogames.

It's small, due to the awkward shape of my room,  
but still very comfortable and relaxing.

It gives me a visceral sense of home  
and peacefulness. It's where I can retreat to,

and enter a world of my own, where I can be at ease.

## My Relationship With Music

*Jack Kearney*

I prefer to listen to music on my own, while drawing,  
doing homework or any number of other things. I feel like  
it allows me to relate better to the music and appreciate it more deeply.

Without distractions, I'm able to focus on individual sounds  
and instruments being used; the drums, the keyboard, the guitars, the base.

I have a broad taste in music, since I can appreciate that every piece of  
music came from a place of creativity, which in a sense, can help me in my  
creative process.

# Coming Back

*Jack Kearney*

Being back in school after so long is a strange experience.  
I expected there to be big differences in people after four months;  
That people would have matured or mellowed,  
given the collective exilement from general society.

The fact that this wasn't the case was both subtly disappointing,  
but also comforting, in a weird way. It feels like we're pretending  
nothing has changed, yet the ever-present crisis still looms  
behind us all, expecting us to put on a happy façade  
and keep walking. While staying positive has been hard,  
most, I suspect, have been able to cope with it.



## Coláiste Éamann Rís

Poetry by

**David Cronin**

**Scott Hennessy**

**Michael Hurley**

**Jamie McSweeney**

**Thomas Morgan**

**Robert Nolan**

**Sean O'Callaghan**

**Evan Power**

**Kamil Rozwarski**

Assisting writer: **Paul Casey**

School T.Y. Coordinator: **Daire Keane**



This year's Unfinished Book project posed a host of new obstacles, from not being able to hold physical workshops in the local libraries nearest to the schools, to the continued opening and closing of the schools, the technical challenges of hosting digital meetings both in and outside of the classroom and the inevitable zoom fatigue that students have been faced with having to perform via virtual media day in and day out.

Despite all of this, these nine talented students from Coláiste Éamann Rís responded with gusto and confidence. We started most sessions with the five word challenge, to warm up the creative muscles. This was inevitably followed in each session with an exploration into a new area of poetry, by way of examples from a wide assemblage of world poets, and through two to three writing exercises per class.

Some of the areas we focused on were metaphor, cliché, specific description, sound, rhythm, emotion and the senses, ekphrasis, anthropomorphism, superstition, lists, form, narrative, constraint, experimentalism and reading aloud. We explored work from poets including Billy Collins, Carl Sandberg, Emily Dickinson, Sylvia Plath, Simon Armitage, Christian Bök, W.S. Merwin, Gertrude Stein, Wilfred Owen, Matsuo Bashō, Wislawa Szymborska, Galway Kinnell, Rabindranath Tagore, Mary Oliver and Joy Harjo.

While volume of output was not as high as in previous years, this was of course of no concern whatsoever, for with less time to spend on developing the work, one should always favour quality over quantity and the poems in this edition are a testament to that ethos - effort and dedication aside.

Developing a fine sense of empathy is crucial to a writer's development. We explored this area by way of relationships, anthropomorphism, POV and object poems, as in Robert Nolan's poems 'Charlie' and 'Superstition', or in Jamie McSweeney's poems 'Model Tank' and 'Life Support' where he enters the innermost thoughts of his unfinished model tank and personal computer. Many of the poems were constructed from a mixture of experience of imagination, like Thomas Morgan's 'Crazy Exaggeration'. We explored list poems and anaphora to describe life during covid, as in Sean O'Callaghan's poem 'Another Day of School' and we included a lot of word-play exercises as demonstrated in David Cronin's acrostic 'Superstition' poem. We experimented with list poems, as in Scott Hennessy's 'Weekdays'. We worked with forms such as haiku and clerihews, as in Michael Hurley's haiku sequence and we wrote about personal journeys (with a dash of magic realism) as rendered in the poems of Evan Power and Kamil Rozwarski.

Overall I was very impressed with the efforts made by these young writers. I hope they continue to explore the world through the written word, through their vast imaginations and their ever-deepening experiences.

**Paul Casey**





# Poems

Coláiste Éamann Rís



# Superstition

*David Cronin*

Spirits are all around us

Use a circle of salt to keep them away

People tend to not believe in them

Even though they are very real

Ravens fly in unison

Swooping through the air

Trailing their claws

In cages we try to contain them

Tombstones are for the dead

In the streets they are walking

Ouija Boards create them

Never summon the spirits

# Weekdays

*Scott Hennesy*

Monday, close to but after Sunday, I wake up feeling fresh but unsure if it will be a fun day

Tuesday, as for some might be a blues day but for me normally an uneventful day

Wednesday, the day that early is when school ends day

Thursday, I was going to write something good but wasn't really sure day

Friday, is the high day feeling like it's my day

Saturday, when my work schedule shatters day

Sunday, really just the end of the week then back to Monday

# Musical

*Scott Hennesy*

On the surface

I was alone at home so

I decided to play trombone

I only started

so being good at it

was distant and far

I hopped on my guitar

I was pulling the strings

thinking of things

I could play

to get me through the day

# I am Sound

*Scott Hennesy*

As the cars are passing  
the wind blows past  
the car is moving fast

the crow is cawing  
the traffic lights beep  
for people to cross the road

when safe, I am sound  
I surround you no matter what  
I get louder and quieter

I am sound

## Trees

*Michael Hurley*

Whispers through the trees  
A cool bed beneath the stars  
Growing ever strong

## An Invasion

*Michael Hurley*

Overwhelming force  
Overtaking all it sees  
Rushing to the end

## The Dark Sky

*Michael Hurley*

Lanterns in the dark  
Fear of what lurks where  
We may never know

# Monarchy

*Jamie McSweeney*

The humans see me as a king  
a queen, a monarchy.

I am their overlord  
and they know it well.

I assert my dominance  
by sitting on their couch.

When dark falls on this world

I seek something.

Something in the kitchen.

I often go in there at night and see things  
possibly ghosts.

My humans look at me  
as if I am insane.

Despite being their overlord

I love my humans.

When my humans leave in their car  
whether it's raining, shining or dark  
it doesn't seem to stop them.

So I wait for them by the window  
to come back.

Sometimes when the humans come  
back from their adventure

they bring white plastic bags  
which have a strong smell of food

They usually have brown stuff

in a carton called curry  
Never liked the stuff  
especially when I push it off the table  
and get flung across the house



# Life Support 1

*Jamie McSweeney*

My owner leaves me in his room  
he often closes me in  
so I can't see anything but myself  
When he needs me, he opens me  
puts a cable of sorts into me

He spends hours on end staring  
at me, keeping me on life support  
so I don't die on him, when he's done  
he takes the cable away  
puts me back into storage  
until I'm needed again

I am still young  
only a few years young.  
He spilled a drink on me once  
and went insane because of it  
he brought me to another man  
and had me repaired, put back  
into service. From what I heard,  
I am very important to him.

But he needs me, you see.  
He often learns from me  
and so much of what he learns  
is thanks to me. Does it mean  
I am safe though? Because I heard  
he is getting a new laptop soon.

## Life Support 2

*Jamie McSweeney*

I am one of the most versatile electronics at your disposal

I am simple but complicated at the same time

Not everyone has one of me, but many do for jobs

school, for personal, malicious or everyday use

I can be used to find your answers, or as a weapon

if you are someone who knows electronics well

I have many buttons to my design

as each conventional one of me has

You press them, they make noises

like click and clack. I need power

to work and I have to be on life support

to live for a long time

## Life Support 3

*Jamie McSweeney*

My owner is a mixed bag.  
He relies on me  
to get his important things done  
but he despises me to the core.

I'm 8 years old and my internals are damaged  
by a drink he spilt a long long time ago.  
But when I take any time I need  
for myself, he goes full on berserk.

Profanity and hate unleashed  
on levels that would drive many to violence  
yet he still holds onto me  
he seems to know my importance is significant.

Despite his vulgarity and arrogance I still live to serve him,  
he is not always like this and I get to serve a purpose  
unlike many who are forgotten, recycled or destroyed  
for some ridiculous video on Youtube.

The only thing my owner does to scare me  
is threaten to replace me. I fear that day is coming.

## American Gothic

*Jamie McSweeney*

*after Grant Wood's painting, 1930*

Amish, conservative, countryside

Farmers, 1800's, western, olden

The stare from the man makes me a bit uneasy

It almost feels real, the stare

authentic because of how well it is done

Not a feeling but an idea

How simple American life was back then

They lived very quiet lives.

Who are these people?

## Gothic

*Jamie McSweeney*

*after Grant Wood's 'American Gothic', 1930*

Amish and rural people share many things in common.

**M**uch more than you'd think. They typically don't have technology and want to live quiet lives.

**E**very day there's work around the estate to do. Getting work done is job #1.

**R**ural was the norm outside of the city. Farm work and whatnot was common.

**I**n this picture, you can see a rural American farmer and his wife.

**C**atholics who believed in god and worked in their rural home, happy. The American dream.

**A**merican Gothic was painted in 1930, representing an older sense of life.

**N**ot always would people see this life as peaceful today. Now this life is associated in pop culture with horror genres.

# My Week

*Jamie McSweeney*

On the first day, I feel like I'm dead.  
The weight of my unencouraged limbs  
makes it feel like they are made of lead.

The second day I'm a smashed-up generator.  
Trying to work, but I don't have the ability.

The third day, I feel like a tank.  
Slowly but surely getting through it.

The fourth day I begin to slow down,  
like a streetcar on mud.

The fifth day, everything is okay.  
I'm like the song queen "Don't stop me now".

And finally on the sixth and final day,  
I can rest. The pain of the first five is gone  
until the cycle repeats once more.

# Model Tank

*Jamie McSweeney*

## I

I am a model of a relic, a tank that never was  
I sit in my owner's room all the time  
on a small foldable table  
while he plays games on a console,  
does work, or, most of the time  
is not in the room  
I've observed the space  
when he isn't around  
it seems that it is his bedroom.

I sit on a sort of mat with paper on it  
from time to time he puts work into me.  
I am sort of complete now, my tracks,  
hull and turret are assembled  
he has yet to put on the extras  
and my new paint job.

From what I have observed  
he seems to store the models on his shelves  
above his bed, above his TV, wherever  
he has spare space. He seems to keep  
his most impressive model under his lamp  
next to his playstation.

Right now it's a large model  
weathered and painted dark gray  
it seems to resemble a Tiger II heavy tank  
This man clearly has an interest in these machines.

## II

I can't really turn my head  
(turret) without outside help.  
Thankfully he has made me face forward  
where I get a good view of everything.  
I can see his playstation, his TV, his lamp,  
the Tiger II under it, and a few other things  
like furniture and such.

I don't have much to say about my days  
to be honest, some days he gets to work,  
some days he just sits down on the chair  
and plays his games. He leaves the window  
on my left open and I can hear all the noises  
of cars and life going on. It makes me wonder,  
could I experience the outside world some day?

### III

I often imagine what will happen next.  
I wonder if he will do my camouflage,  
will he put more parts on, what will he do?  
I do look forward to being completed,  
because from what I know,  
he plans on putting me under the lamp.

And what do I dream about?  
That's an obvious one, I just hope  
to be the best made model of them all.  
I have a good feeling about it  
he has even downloaded pictures  
of other examples of tanks and their camos.

### IV

Being me is boring until the owner comes back.  
He works on me, watches videos, plays games,  
you name it. I actually find interest in these videos  
and I find him entertaining to watch when playing  
games. But when he is not here, I'm alone  
with my thoughts. Nothing to do or think really,  
because besides the noises from the window  
to think about, what else can I do?



## V

My oldest memory? Besides the factory  
I was constructed in, I remember well  
when he began to put my turret together.  
He'd put on the gun, then the cupola, then my  
rangefinders, then he'd add the top and bottom.

Then I'd watch him put my hull and suspension  
system together. He'd often get frustrated  
even angry. But I am grateful he is doing this,  
because having a body and head is nice.

I hope to be the best model of them all.  
Elegant, detailed, and great looking.  
But I also have a fear, that if he messes  
me up so much he'll give up and put me  
into the bin, never to be seen again.

## Crazy Exaggeration

*Thomas Morgan*

This morning I ran with lions in my living room  
The lions crashed into the wall and made a big boom  
There was doom and gloom in that room  
One lion's roar really rang a bell  
It knocked my cat right out of its shell  
Knights and horses blocked the door  
Everyone fell right through the floor  
That's when I said "Alright, No more!"

## Emotion

*Thomas Morgan*

Light blue like the sky on a summer's day  
It happens when I eat my favourite food  
It sounds like the birds chirping in the early morning  
It smells like strawberries and pears  
The glare off the sun in mid-day  
The feel of warm sand  
It's playing football on a hot day  
Waking up on christmas morning  
It's hot chocolate on a cold winter's night

# Charlie

*Robert Nolan*

Charlie Please

Don't go out the door

Stay with me, the gluttony you boar

I want to eat more

Let's sit right there

And dine on our comfy chairs

And off he went

With a heart shaped dent

Deep in his chest

But it was for the best

To leave the one he loved

For him it felt as if he was unloved

As he was caught up in addiction

Leaving his relationships in affliction

And deep down he'd always known

That thanks to himself he was all alone

Charlie was a broken man

His mind and soul were lost

a broken cello for a body

As he stands just right there

And life just being unfair

Charlie thought what did it cost

For a man like me to be this lost

## Irritation

*Robert Nolan*

Dance like a tornado

Crumple like clothes

Burst like a soft can

Be as simple as abc's

Wobble like a tabletop

Be as angry as a thunderstorm

Be as Scary as can be

As loud as thunder

As sudden as lightning

Nag like an itch

## My Week

*Robert Nolan*

On Monday doom itself approaches

On Tuesday I'm marching through mud

On Wednesday I'm reaching the peak of the mountain

On Thursday I'm on the final stretch of the climb

On Friday I've scaled the entirety of Mt Everest and I can rest on the summit

On Saturday I am king of the world

On Sunday I am fearful of the journey to the bottom

# Love

*Robert Nolan*

When the heart beats with love  
it plays like a trombone  
with a very funky melody  
and dances with a speeding rhythm  
like a fine electric guitar

When the mind awakens to our link  
It's as if the world becomes pink  
When the morning birds sing our song  
It's as if nothing can go wrong

When spring begins to dance to our love  
My heart will flutter as if a dove  
I want to be with this person forever  
This bond is something I cannot sever

## Sounds

*Robert Nolan*

The trampoline speaks as  
The springs go “boing”  
My breath goes in and out  
Life comes in and out  
Crows fly over head  
Cawing and calling out for any food below  
Beads rattle and scatter  
Causing quite a clatter  
Like a snake caught in a trance  
Twisting and turning like in a dance  
Laughter, the sound of a happy man  
A release of good spirit  
As the air pushes his lungs to the limit  
These are the things my ears have found  
These are the wonderful gifts of sound

# I am Music

*Robert Nolan*

I am music

You know me

You can feel me

In your head

In your ears

In your heart

I come in many tunes and sounds

But who knows which is best

For some I am profound

You can't touch me

or see me

But I will play my tune

Because I am me

I Am Music

## Misery

*Robert Nolan*

Misery is a yellow traffic light  
Which slows your world to a halt  
It happens when you realise you're the one at fault  
It drowns you  
Like the deep ocean blue  
It sounds like a man crying in pain  
And it smells like damp clothes left out in the rain  
Misery

## Autumn Haiku

*Robert Nolan*

The leaves are falling  
The orange sun blazing brightly  
On this lovely day



## Abandoned

*Robert Nolan*

*After 'Master Bedroom' by Andrew Newell Wjeth*

In this house of darkness and cold  
Lies a poor dog abandoned and old  
Left without his master  
Surrounded by walls of dreary stone and plaster  
Darker and colder as days go by  
No chance to say goodbye  
So there he lies in the lord's bedroom  
Sleeping on the side so his owner will have room

## A Cat's Day

*Robert Nolan*

Here I am with my four little legs  
Walking through the kitchen with the aroma of fine eggs  
Ridding the smell of last night's curry  
Over I go to the couch in a hurry  
So I can rest, I am quite the lazy cat  
In the crevasse where my master usually sat.

## Superstition

*Robert Nolan*

In this world people fawn over fortune and luck  
Their fear of karma as a speeding truck  
They turn when black cats cross their path  
In hopes of avoiding destiny's wrath  
Superstition's a screwdriver putting "nails" in their heads  
And filling their hearts with dread  
It clouds their minds  
In fear of what they might find  
It takes your luck in an act of theft  
And leaves you wondering what do I have left?  
Superstitions are fickle things  
And who knows what life will bring  
Whether it's real or not  
The path forward is all we've got

## Journeys

*Robert Nolan*

On this journey I walk on under the big blue sky  
I keep walking until the sky is tinted with orange dye.  
I dragged my feet which could only be described as dead  
Without any idea of where my path would end.  
I decided to keep on walking as that was my plan  
Instead of slouching in some car or van.  
Many believe that journeys are about going from A to B  
But in reality they're about all the things we feel and see

# Another Day of School

*Sean O'Callaghan*

Another day of school with an itchy mask on my face

Another day of school we have to give space

Another day of school I'm in my own bubble

Another day of school it is illegal to cuddle

Another day of school not many places to go

Another day of school one classroom is my home

Another day of school everything has to be cleaned

Another day of school my lessons are screens

Another day of school with the trips we take

Another day of school is the fun we make

Another day of school going on walks

Another day of school with my friends to talk

Another day of school to have fun with my friends

Another day of school I have to attend

Another day of school may have been changed

Another day of school just in a different lane

## Master Bedroom

*Evan Power*

*after the painting by Andrew Newell Wyeth*

A warm evening after a sunny day Kids play, distant honks and howls  
He lies in bed  
basking in the slow sunset  
Neither bark nor growl  
Dreaming of munching down  
on a big white bone  
Fetching a big boney branch  
It's a dog's life

## Clocks

*Evan Power*

I hang around all day  
Face on the wall, high and tall  
I tick, tock, all day without stop  
I can heal all wounds  
I am in every person's view  
It's boring, looking down from atop  
I sometimes wish I could walk and talk  
I watch him take the dogs for a stroll  
Tell an interesting story  
It's a pipe dream  
After all, my only job is to tick, tock.

# Superstition

*Evan Power*

What if you walked under a ladder?

Would you get a bucket of paint on top of your head? Or would you stand there, full of dread?

What if you opened an umbrella indoors? Would you get drenched from head to toe? Or would you cause a thunderstorm?

What if you saw a black cat? Would you backtrack?

Or would you give it a pat on the back?

What if you broke a mirror?

Would you trigger 7 years of bad luck?

Or would you just have to sweep it up?

What would you do if a bird was to fly into your room?

Would you think you might die?

Or would you try get it to shoo?

# The Journey

*Evan Power*

I close my eyes  
My body begins to rise  
I gain my wings, ready for the journey

I spread them wide  
take one last big stride  
I'm on my final ride

I float above and below the big blue  
Flying through the concrete jungles  
Trees pierce the heavens with their spires

In awe  
I can only float by

I flap flap flap around  
through the cotton ball clouds  
I can see the end but am not sure  
if I want to meet mine just yet

I look down  
as my family look up  
cheering chanting good luck  
To them I am just a dove

# The Journey

*Kamil Rożnyarski*

I was driving my beat up mini cooper  
amazed at the view around me  
slowly I made my way over a bridge  
the ocean below me waved calmly

I looked at my iced out watch  
17:45. I drive through  
a forest, wildlife all around me  
hiding in the trees and grass

I slow to check what I need  
from the approaching shop  
when a deer with huge antlers  
jumps onto my car, in attack

I freeze not knowing what to do  
I jump out of my broken down car  
I open my boot to take out my bike  
Speeding off to the shop to get help

## St. Francis Capuchin College

Poetry by

**Barry**

**Charlie Moloney**

**Kumayl Mustafa**

**Max Baykov**

**Bryan Chan**

**Jack Morrissy**

**Liam Gillis**

**Ríán Mulcahy**

Assisting writer: **Niamh Prior**

School TY Coordinator: **Jason Barry**



Every one of the students who took part in the workshops was a valuable and positive presence that contributed to the group dynamic. They each brought their own insights and interpretations of poems we read and their own unique viewpoint and personalities to poems they wrote. Between them they have written poems that are by turns honest, funny, deep, touching, fantastical, uplifting, and technically impressive.

Though I had certain exercises planned for the workshops, we took some detours, allowing the course to evolve as directed by areas of interest that arose from the work these young poets were producing. One of the topics that came up was rhyme. The students thrived when we looked at the use of rhyme from Shakespeare to contemporary poetry. This led to the them rising to the challenge of writing their own villanelles.

Over time they became conscious and deliberate about the form of their free verse. They also became adept with rhythm, imagery and tone. It takes a certain kind of bravery to share your writing with others. They became more and more comfortable reading their work out within the group, which is a testament to the respect they showed each other as poets and the interest they had in each other's work.



For the last meeting we had a peer feedback session. I took a step back and let them do the talking. The feedback they gave each other showed an understanding of and a sensibility for poetry. The poets demonstrated genuine appreciation for each other's work while providing pragmatic suggestions for redrafting and polishing their poems.

I am grateful to the boys for getting out of bed for poetry – no mean feat on a Friday morning during lockdown! It was an absolute pleasure to spend time with them and to get to know them a little. I admit I was somewhat bereft the first Friday morning after our last workshop when I found myself missing that hour and half of talking and writing poetry with them.

Although we had quite a few weeks together, in a way it feels like we were only getting going. And for some of the students I'm sure it is the case that they are only just getting going with their writing and that they will look back on this book as the first time their work was published.

Thanks to TY coordinator Jason Barry for his input into organising the workshops and an extra special thank you to Elaine Heaslip for her efforts in sorting out unpredicted and unpredictable technological issues during the first few sessions which took place in the school. A huge thank you also to Paul Casey and Cork City Libraries, without whom none of this would have happened.

**Niamh Prior**



# Poems

St. Francis Capuchin College



# I'm Possible

*Barry*

Impossible, a word misused so easily.  
Not able to occur, exist or be done.  
Slow down, look closely and you'll see the contrary.

“This is impossible”, a lie spoken too frequently,  
by people failing to succeed and not having fun.  
Impossible, a word misused so easily.

We all need to stop thinking so negatively,  
reflect on every “impossible” thing we have done.  
Slow down, look closely — you'll see the contrary.

They told me it's impossible to walk again normally  
but I knew the “impossible” was what I could overcome.  
Impossible, a word misused so easily.

But now I'm possible, I live my life freely and happily.  
I can do the so-called impossible things like walk and run.  
I will not slow down, because I have seen the contrary.

Nothing is impossible, stop giving up repeatedly.  
You will get knocked down. So what? You're not the only one.  
Impossible a word misused so easily.  
Slow it down, look closely and you'll see the contrary.

## Three Haiku

*Bryan Chan*

The moon shines at dawn,  
bats flapping their wings, silence,  
waiting for twilight.

An ant crawls slowly,  
unaware of the cosmos.  
Looking up at God —

Walking on the grass,  
a sparrow has a motive,  
worms feel heaven close.

# A Sleepless Night

*Bryan Chan*

The sun is deep in the abyss  
the moon glowing in the night sky  
the world freezes in stillness.

Silence descends all around you.  
You lay down in your bed, lonely,  
fascinated by your addiction, unable to stop it.

Kept awake by the devil of the night  
hands clutching against your phone,  
posts, likes, comments fly —  
and so does your sad future.

Your brain gets twisted up,  
like a maze, not knowing where you are,  
not knowing how to get out.

Now, awestruck, you gaze up into twinkling stars,  
they blink at you in sympathy.  
Time seems to slow, and stop.  
And you wish it would keep moving.

The cold, miserable night moves on,  
rain splatters down and wind howls with glee,  
unaware of such misery.

## Who Am I?

*Bryan Chan*

He is 9 O' clock  
works and shines at this hour.

He is spring  
a new start, a new beginning.

He is a sunny day  
bright and radiant, in every way.

He is a piano  
different keys will swing his mood.

He is a mountain  
searching for opportunities.

Also, quite a bumpy road  
turning and braking at every stop.

He lives in a cave  
blissfully unaware of life.

He is a cold attic, and  
a stool to sit on.

A fork with many pointed prongs  
but useful, when used right.

A watch that tick-tocks constantly  
but don't wear it? The tick-tock stops.

# A Field

*Bryan Chan*

Blue tulips, green leaves,  
gently swaying in the breeze,  
like raindrops falling from the sky.  
In Spring there is blooming, no gloom to be seen,  
a butterfly perching on top of a leaf,  
a pretty sight, relaxing, after a flight.

The glowing sun, the fluffy clouds,  
the sky is as blue as the open sea.  
In summer, daisies are sprouting!  
The dry brown mud, so thirsty,  
relieved only by rain, while  
violets and lilies dance with glee.

Pollen flows through the air,  
wind howls, rushing through the pack,  
a nice sound is played, Autumn is here.  
Sunflowers and daffodils, ready to blossom,  
while other plants huddle  
in storms that pass.

Frost and icicles start to appear.  
The pack stops growing, struggling to survive.  
Winter has come, and the cold is here.  
Leaves and stalks slowly die away,  
but some plants survive, they await their fate,  
blue tulips, green leaves, the field is soon full.



# The Flight

*Bryan Chan*

My heart hammers in my chest  
as I start to ascend, up into the sky.

Trying to be calm, like the pro I was meant to be  
hearing the passengers laugh and snore.

My memory drifts back to my father's plane,  
vivid images of it crashing into the ocean.

As I start to fly over water,  
I just hope to be able to succeed.

I take a breath with renewed vigor  
and glide smoothly over the sea.

## Murph

*Charlie Moloney*

I feel at ease now.

I watch him dance angelically.

The outdoors awakens his truth.

He turns to me, panting.

We continue through the countryside.

## Tiger in a Tropical Storm

*Charlie Moloney*

a young Bengal cowers, deep within the brush

ferocious the storm, sky a thundering roar

rain, heavy and persistent, patterns the tiger's back

the wind wild and strong, bellows across the jungle ripping through all that  
stands in its way

his ears cautious and straight, his nose twitches with nerves

lightning distant and powerful, the trees fall victim to the red flower

the jungle a choir of chaos, the storm has no mercy

a young Bengal waits, his fangs chatter in the bitterness of the night, his  
eyes wide and scared

a young Bengal cowers, the storm goes on

## Haiku: Sorrow

*Jack Morrissey*

As frigid as ice  
its giant cats' tongues lick you  
as hard as a rock

It falls down the glass  
the small droplets fill your ears  
the rain is heavy

The hole is dug deep  
the smell of dirt fills the air  
coats inside your lungs

As sour as a lemon  
it shrivels up your taste buds  
and you taste nothing

## Haiku: The Colour Blue

*Jack Morrissey*

As sweet as ice-cream  
on a scorching summer day  
children run and play

Your mind is at ease  
its soothing presence hugs you  
You lay there at rest

Your nose fills with salt  
like the bed of the sea floor  
The waves crash the cliffs

It bends in your hands  
changing it from shape to shape  
slimy as a snail

# The Cookbook

*Jack Morrissey*

I see the way people look at me  
jaws dropped, pretending not to stare  
looking in awe at me  
they say "I'd love to have me some of that"  
as I lie here motionless, stuck in place  
I get compliments like "you look amazing"  
People love me so much they become addicted to my food  
They said it's intoxicating  
never once noticing the ingredients or instructions, only going after the  
food  
leaving the rest of it to collect dust while the food looks as good as new  
All while I stand in a shop wearing a light blue and green jacket

# The Butterflies

*Jack Morrissey*

The room is cold and slippy as I watch the rows of people  
hold their breath in silence before erupting into applause  
I turn and psych myself up for the biggest moment of my life  
As I hear the clattering of metal rungs echoing  
the butterflies build in my stomach

Coach comes in and tells me I'm next  
He's sweating which only adds to the already slippy floor  
I imagine myself when I was young and, on the board,  
everything seemed so much bigger back then

I stand up and make my way towards the giant ladder  
The cold metal sinks into my flesh as I go higher  
the butterflies getting bigger the higher I climb  
I'm almost at the top, everything's been leading to this,  
I whisper silently to myself and wish for me to win

The platform is coarse yet surprisingly bouncy  
I push the nerves back down  
I sprint and do a reverse 4½ somersault  
as I fall the world fades and my body relaxes  
The butterflies are gone  
and I hit the bottom to a cacophony of cheers

2020

*Jack Morrissey*

The year the whole world stopped  
while we only watched as people began to drop  
from something small and deadly with a vice-like grip.  
How little we knew this was just the tip.

Week by week month by month  
everyone was saying this thing has to stop  
while we made jokes and laughed without care.  
Little did we know it was already in the air.

I woke up one day and schools were shut down.  
I jumped out of bed and ran, only to be cut down.  
Just like that our homes turned to prisons overnight,  
so, we prayed and prayed hoping for an end in sight.

We were told to stay inside and not see each other  
we couldn't see our uncles, not even our grandmother  
and more and more shops began to close.  
Every day the virus grows.

So, we stay inside to protect the ones we hold dear  
as many people lose their careers.  
Some walk around with no mask and don't care  
all the while they're polluting the air.

We could go to school but only through a screen  
where we could all talk but not really be seen.  
We thought by the summer it'd surely be gone  
but we still knew we were its pawns.

By the end everything was wrecked.  
It all gave us a time to reflect.  
We were locked up inside of most of the year  
2020, the year of restrictions and fear.

## Business

*Jack Morris, sy*

The money calls to me  
I can't leave the office  
I'm trapped, unable to escape  
The weight of my choices crushes me  
But I cannot escape



# Fight

*Jack Morrissey*

He yelled at me and slammed the door shut.  
Everyday there's always been fighting.  
Trying to talk to him had been useless.

I walk over to pick up a carrot to cut  
while I daydream back to our first sighting.  
I tried to help him so much. It had been fruitless.

Now I stand here in our little hut.  
We dated and everything was all so exciting  
yet this blinded me and made me clueless

He was so handsome but kept his mouth shut.  
He always seemed to be so inviting.  
After a while he turned out to be ruthless.

But even him leaving now feels like a punch to the gut.  
I pick up the dinner and switch on the lighting.  
He smashed the bulb. He always was venomous.

I walk over to the table feeling uncut.  
Everything was always frightening  
but I sit under the broken light feeling useless.

# Lonely

*Jack Morrissey*

I stand tall, still but flowing, cold under the Autumn sun.

I have no friends to greet me, the birds and fish are my only companions.

No words uttered except the occasional chirp, no words only sound.

Sounds of the water falling, rocks cracking off only to be sunk with a plop,  
the swaying of the leaves in the wind.

The rocks provide me with no support as I fall continuously,  
only doing something when they break off, leaving me lonelier than I was  
before,

sometimes bouncing off into the stream only to be shot away like a bullet  
out of a gun

as I stand here unable to stop it.

In time my companions leave me too, like they always do.

The colourful leaves on the trees wilt and die,  
the birds migrate south. The fish swim to the sea.

Leaving me standing here again, lonely.

## Another Day

*Jack Morrissey*

I get out of my car and breathe out a deep sigh  
and try and carry my legs to the front door.

The school is tall and proud  
but the people who inhabit it are anything but.

I enter through the doors and watch husks of people walk past  
and I join in with the herd.

I drop off into the staffroom collecting my books and not making eye contact.

I arrive at and advance into my classroom.

Everyone is sitting still in place, like statues, unflinching and unmoving.

I get the tests on my desk and hand them out to the robot-like students  
and I watch as they carefully pick up their pencils and scribble on the paper

I rest my head against the whiteboard and sigh, turning on the projector  
as I do so they can see the answers.

I read them out not caring if I sound enthusiastic or not.

As they stare at the board with their cold lifeless eyes  
the school day carries on like it would any other day

boring, uninteresting, long and full of stress

Just another day in my life.

# Glue

*Kumayl Mustafa*

As I touch the page  
slowly, stickily, smoothly  
my lingering remains  
attach to the paper  
my clear misty self  
closing the gap to all

# Toy

*Kumayl Mustafa*

I am a toy  
sitting on the top shelf  
away and out of reach  
admired till the cracks begin to show

I am a toy  
opened by your cousin on Christmas  
as you enviously watch  
till one day I'm yours to discard

I am a toy  
bringing humour and glee  
and I dance and play  
till my batteries are empty

I am a toy  
to be used  
and abused  
till the day my gears begin to stick

I am a toy  
unloved and unwanted  
and once all are done  
left to rot alone in a landfill

# Pandemic

*Kumayl Mustafa*

The unrelenting isolation  
loneliness, frustration and depression  
darkness hidden behind the masks  
the unending nightmare  
hands and soul worn under sanitiser

Our lives are now online  
hidden from others' view  
as loneliness takes over  
hidden behind a cloth mask

Life will never be normal  
as covid takes all  
the neverending lockdown  
may bring our downfall

# The Audition

*Kumayl Mustafa*

Sitting in the room  
peeking through the window

watching as they all dance and sing and read  
knowing I will never be like them

As the final names are called  
and mine once again forgotten

my grandfather's words echo in my head  
his words of encouragement knacking through my skull

Yet as I walk out of the room  
the tears fall out of my eyes

I would just wish  
to make him proud once more

to see his face light up  
just once more

# Teacher

*Liam Gillis*

In front of a board a dressed man appears,  
a mountain of books and a brown shining beard,  
a marker in hand, looking down at us all  
as together we stand, as he takes the role-call.

Disgust on his face when he hands out the test,  
poor Jimmy did well but not so the rest.  
Thought I'd do well and achieve a B grade  
as I sat in my seat hoping and praying.

Receiving my test with fear through my back,  
accused of cheating, hold up what's that?  
Confronting the man with veins through his hand,  
he was ready for war in old Banna Strand.

No explanation, just more assignments.  
I hated science, so many requirements.  
As he sat in his seat, we waited in silence  
for that day to come, which saw his retirement.



## Homeward Bound

*Max Baykov*

I'm in my quarters, looking out a window,  
I see a training ground full of new recruits.

I stop looking out the window and decide to get some rest.  
I'm still in my quarters, lying on my bunkbed.

There's a fight going on outside, the new guys are having too much fun —  
I find out my bunkmate is getting bullied by the boys from Oban.

I start to recall my worst day on the battlefield,  
the vultures were coming to tear us apart.

I leave my quarters wishing I was homeward bound.

## Sunset in Bali

*Max Baykov*

There's a sight I have never seen before,  
something like this can't be found on a moor.  
The object in the distance is setting down gradually,  
what's in front of me resembles a paradise.

I'm standing on a balcony enjoying the view,  
the water is reflecting the image I'm gazing upon,  
the sky is coloured in bright yellow, orange and red  
I can't deny what I'm doing is perpetual.

The palm trees are standing where they're meant to be,  
a wonderment beyond anything you could imagine.  
If the sun will set on the horizon  
I will hate the inevitability of its cycle.

This is something I will never dare forget  
and if heaven has a door  
I'll be knocking, wishing to relive this moment forever.

## A Harsh Mountain Trail

*Max Baykov*

On a harsh mountain trail  
we were looking for herbs,  
not like being dropped on a rail.

Where were we travelling you ask.  
A narrow path through the peaks,  
on a harsh mountain trail.

A wise man is giving me a task,  
not like being dropped on a rail,  
only wish to not take the risk.

A shrine stands next to the edge,  
what track leads to it you ask.  
A harsh mountain trail.

The droplets are shaped like hail,  
falling while we stand on the ledge.  
Wonder what track leads to it,

a harsh mountain trail,  
not like being dropped on a rail.

## Dublin Bay from Howth

*Rían Mulcahy*

*after the painting 'Dublin Bay from Howth' by Harry Kernoff*

I sit on the cliff face, looking out into the bay,  
the grass still wet with a hint of dew.

It is early morning, the sky filled with a faint  
orange hiding behind a collection of clouds.

Distant peaks pierce the sky standing  
tall and proud against the horizon.

The tranquil sea is still except for a singular ship  
leaving a wake in its trail.

The hum of its engines fills my ears along with the  
singing of seagulls echoing against the cliffs.

A lone lighthouse stands guard accompanied  
by a quaint cabin for its keepers.

I lie on that cliff motionless, entranced with the views enriching beauty,  
with no calls to answer, no responsibilities to uphold,  
free from the constraints of life.

# A Vicious Cycle

*Rían Mulcahy*

The mercenaries' fire burned hard.

The roaring inferno and screams of neighbours filled my ears.

Many were running, panicking, trying to fight back, but not me,

I lay beside the body of my mother that was

Bloody, Bruised, Lifeless.

I heard the galloping of hooves approaching and I looked up,  
there was someone in steel plate with an entourage of cavalry —  
undeniably the man responsible for the destruction.

Our gazes locked as he rode by.

I vowed in that moment that I would kill him.

As soon as age permitted, I became a soldier.

From lowly peasant, to man-at-arms, to knight, I rose through the ranks,

I tempered my blade, gained renown, acquired a reputation,

some called me a hero, others a brute.

I never let go of my goal.

One day I got the opportunity I had so desperately desired.

I wish I could say we had a legendary duel, a story for the bards,

but no — a quick sword in the gut and it was over.

Justice has been served, I thought, My mother avenged.

But the blackness inside of me only grew.

I continued my crusade, I let it consume me.

I eventually became indiscriminate in my violence.

Until one day we were fighting in some back water village

and I came across a boy lying next to a body that could only be his mother.

It was Bloody, Bruised, Lifeless.

# The Tale of a Bullet

*Rían Mulcahy*

I was once explosive and filled with life,  
new, clean, and as sharp as a knife.  
While I was simple, I knew my meaning,  
nothing else mattered, I waited dreaming.

I remember it as if it were yesterday, it was my time to shine.  
I felt it inside me, an undeniable sign.  
With a tap of trigger, I shot out of the rifle,  
into the battle, spinning in a spiral.

While I never met my target, it did not hinder my excitement,  
I hit the ground jumping, but eventually fell silent.  
I sat there, empty and confused,  
when I thought, "What now?" I was left bemused.

I don't know how long I lay there on that ground,  
I even feared that I may never be found.  
But one day, someone came across me,  
he took me home and I was finally free.

He put on display, all clean and shiny,  
and now I have what I wanted, purpose, finally.







# The Unfinished Book of Poetry 2021

featuring poems by

Seán Ó Conaill  
Sadhbh Ní Shúilleabháin  
Tess Sexton  
Kiela Ní Dhochartaigh  
Ruth Nic Pháidín  
Oisín Ó Luanaigh  
Tess Nic Cárthaigh  
Caoilinn Ní Bhuachalla

Chloe Foo  
Aoife Higginston  
Charlie Smith  
Ronan O'Keeffe  
Xavier Ticao  
Alex McCarthy  
Adam O'Brien  
Kelvin McGowan  
Jack Kearney

David Cronin  
Scott Hennessy  
Michael Hurley  
Jamie McSweeney  
Thomas Morgan  
Robert Nolan  
Sean O'Callaghan  
Evan Power  
Kamil Rozwarski

Barry  
Bryan Chan  
Charlie Moloney  
Jack Morrissy  
Kumayl Mustafa  
Liam Gillis  
Max Baykov  
Rían Mulcahy



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