

# The Unfinished Book of Poetry 2022

poems 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



Comhairle Cathrach Chorcaí  
Cork City Council



Published by  
Cork City Council

Published in 2022 by Cork City Council,  
Cork City Libraries and Schools Project



**LIBRARIES  
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CORK CITY COUNCIL | COMHAIRLE CATHRACH CHORCAÍ

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# The Unfinished Book of Poetry 2022



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# Foreword

*The Unfinished Book of Poetry 2022* is the 18th edition in the series, and the third edition to be published as an eBook. This publication is an exciting departure for Cork City Libraries, even though it is happening now because of the Covid-19 emergency. It's the first time in three years that we have been able to hold workshops in person as well as hold a physical launch in the city library. With restrictions coming to an end, there posed a variety of challenges for venue space, with some schools opting for school space, others for their local library and some keeping to the digital confines of Zoom. It's a testament to the interest in this wonderful ongoing project that the show did go on and continues to blossom.

*The Unfinished Book* features new poems from young writers across the city. This year's edition showcases 46 young voices, representing five schools. The breadth of the work in this anthology showcases a strong standard throughout with a wide variety of subject and style. The finished product is thanks to the careful and attentive work of the five assisting writers without whom this project would not have the impact it continues to enjoy and to the talent of the students.

Congratulations to all of the young writers involved: na daltaí as Gaelcholáiste Mhuire AG chúram Colm Ó Ceallacháin, i Leabharlann na Linne Duibhe; the pupils from Mayfield Community School led by Paul Casey via Zoom; the pupils from St Aloysius School with Dean Browne in The City Library; the pupils from Coláiste Chríost Rí led by Paul Casey at the school; and the pupils from Bishopstown Community School with John W. Sexton in Bishopstown Library and at the school.

An innovative project in 2005, when the first *Unfinished Book of Poetry* was published, has led to something unique that has a resonance with the younger writers. It continues to grow, and I welcome this latest volume and hope you enjoy it. Special thanks to the assisting Authors and especially Paul Casey of Ó Bhéal for editing and curating the work and bringing it all together.

**David O'Brien**  
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 Chapaill Bhuí ó 2018. Foilsíodh dánta leis insan *Strokestown Poetry Anthology 4* agus in *Aneas 1*. D'fhoilsigh Leabhar Breac a dhara cnuasach gearrscéalta, *Ré na bhFathach*, i 2021, leabhar a bhain áit amach ar ghearrliosta Leabhar Gaeilge na Bliana ag an Post Book Awards, 2021.

Colm Ó Ceallacháin has been facilitating the Irish language writing workshop 'Peann agus Pár' in the Central Library, Grand Parade, since 2018. His poems have been published in the *Strokestown Poetry Anthology 4* and in the journal *Aneas*. His second collection of short stories, *Ré na bhFathach*, was published by Leabhar Breac in 2021, and was shortlisted for Irish language book of the year at the An Post Irish Book Awards, 2021.

## Paul Casey

Paul Casey's 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) and *Local Wonders* (Dedalus Press). 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).

His poetry has been translated into Romanian, Chinese, French, German, Italian and Galician. 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 through the annual *Unfinished Book of Poetry* project. He promotes poetry as director of Ó Bhéal in Cork - [www.obheal.ie](http://www.obheal.ie)

# Assisting Writers' Biographies

## Dean Browne

Dean Browne was raised in Tipperary and lives in Cork. His poems have appeared in *Banshee*, *Bath Magg*, *Poetry Ireland Review*, *The Poetry Review*, *POETRY*, *Southword*, *The Stinging Fly*, and elsewhere. He won the Geoffrey Dearmer Prize in 2021 and was a winner of the Poetry Business Pamphlet Competition that same year. His pamphlet *Kitchens at Night* was published by Smith | Doorstop in February 2022.

## John W Sexton

John W. Sexton was born in 1958 and is the author of eight collections of poetry, the three most recent being: *Futures Pass* (Salmon Poetry, 2018), *Inverted Night* (SurVision, 2019), and *Visions at Templeglantine* (Revival Press, 2020). He also created and wrote the science fiction comedy-drama, *The Ivory Tower*, for RTE radio, which ran to over one hundred half-hour episodes. His novels based on this series, *The Johnny Coffin Diaries* and *Johnny Coffin School-Dazed* are both published by The O'Brien Press, and have been translated into Italian and Serbian.

He has recorded an album with legendary Stranglers frontman, Hugh Cornwell, entitled *Sons of Shiva*, which has been released on Track Records. He has been nominated for The Hennessy Literary Award and his poem "The Green Owl" won the Listowel Poetry Prize 2007 for best single poem. He was awarded a Patrick and Katherine Kavanagh Fellowship In Poetry for 2007/2008. He is one of the most requested writers currently working under Poetry Ireland's Writers-In-Schools Scheme and was editor of the Kilkenny Arts Office online poetry journal for teens, *Rhyme Rag*, from 2014 to 2015.



## Gaelcholáiste Mhuire AG

Poetry by

Conchúr Ó Rinn

Cáit Ní Chéilleachair

Séamas Ó Curnáin

Sorcha Slaughter

Benjamin Ó Muirí

Odhrna Ní Mhuirthile

Kelly Ní Chathasaigh

Heather Ní Thnúthail

Eoghan Ó Súilleabháin

Jake Ó Mathúna Ó Muirí

Assisting Writer: **Colm Ó Ceallacháin**

T.Y. Coordinator: **Damien Ó Maoldomhnaigh**

Workshops held in **Blackpool Library**

Executive Librarian: **Clare Doyle**



Sa seomra fairsing a bhronn Leabharlann na Linne Duibhe orainn, d'oibrigh rang na hidirbhliana ó Ghaelcholáiste Mhuire go dúthrachtach, naoi seisiún i ndiaidh a chéile, agus seo anois toradh a saothar. Ba mhór an cúnaimh dúinn chomh réchúiseach muinteartha is a bhí an grúpa seo le linn na hoibre, mar go ndeachamar i mbun pinn i gcónaí i dtimpeallacht fáiltiúil sona. Ní raibh aon leisce orthu a gcuid dánta a bhreacadh síos, ná ní raibh aon easpa ábhar le plé acu ach chomh beag. Go deimhin d'fhoghlaim mise a oiread céanna, nó níos mó, ón ngrúpa seo is a raibh d'eolas le scaipeadh agam féin orthu siúd.

Ba chuma an t-ábhar a bhí faoi chaibidil againn a bheith trom nó éadrom, bhí cur chuige an grúpa i gcónaí dearfach, agus bhí d'acmhainn acu greann a fháisceadh as fiú an t-ábhar ba thromchúisí, ag baint a dtuiscint leithleach féin as. Is léir sin ach na dánta breátha seo atá scríofa acu a léamh.

Bhí radharc againn ó sheomra na leabharlainne ar an saol ag imeacht thart os comhair ár súile, idir thraein Bhaile Átha Cliath ag teacht amach as an tollán agus mhuintir na dúiche agus iad ag dul i mbun a ngnó, agus a bhuíochas air sin, b'fhéidir, tá fuinneamh faoi leith le brath sna dánta seo. Tá, chomh maith, casadh na bliana le sonrú i línte na bhfilí. Ní nach ionadh, agus na ceardlanna á rith ó dhúluachair an gheimhridh go laethanta geala

an earraigh. Bhí ar a gcumas casadh isteach ar a gcuid smaointe féin freisin, agus tá dánta anseo atá lán machnaimh agus tuisceana.

B'iontach mar inspioráid dúinn an pictiúr atá ar crochadh sa leabharlann, pictiúr a thugann léargas dúinn ar loisceadh Chorcaí i 1920, agus is léir gur chuaigh an pictiúr seo i bhfeidhm ar chuid d'ár bhfilí a scríobh go cumasach ar dhathanna bladhmanna na heachtra sin.

Mo bhuíochas le scoláirí cumasacha na hidirbhliana ó Ghaelcholáiste Mhuire, agus lena múinteoir Damien Ó Maoldomhnaigh a thacaigh linn feadh na slí, agus mo bhuíochas freisin le foireann na leabharlainne sa Linn Dubh a bhronn spás oibre orainn go fial.

### **Colm Ó Ceallacháin**

In the bright airy room that was given to us in Blackpool Library, the Transition Year students from Gaelcholáiste Mhuire worked hard, over nine workshops, on perfecting their craft. The results of their labour can be seen in this anthology, and it is an impressive and diverse body of work. It helped, of course, that this group of young writers was so friendly and easy-going, as it meant that the workshops took place in a relaxed and welcoming environment.

Our group was not slow to put pen to paper, and there was no lack of variety in the topics that were covered. I learned something new from them every day. No matter how serious the issue, this group were able to write about it in a positive manner, often drawing humour from the heaviest of subject matter in their own unique style.

We come upon life in all its variety in these poems, inspired, possibly, by the view from our perch on the first floor of the library, where we could observe life passing by below us. There is, I think, a vital energy in these poems as a result of this. There is also a sense of the world turning in some of the poems that deal with nature, going as they do from deepest winter to the first days of spring. These young writers are quite capable of turning inwards as well, and have written poems which are full of contemplation and mature reflection.

There is a fine painting hanging in Blackpool Library depicting the burning of Cork in 1920, and it is interesting to note that a number of our group

turned to it for inspiration, writing poems in which they evoke the colours of that night so vividly.

Heartfelt thanks are due to the students of Gaelcholáiste Mhuire who took part in this project with such enthusiasm, to their teacher Damien Moloney, and to the staff of Blackpool Library who kindly accommodated us.

**Colm Ó Ceallacháin**



# Poems

Gaelcholáiste Mhuire AG



## Ag dul suas ar an stáitse

*Conchúr Ó Rinn*

Ag dul suas ar an stáitse

Ag ullmhú don cheol

Ag féachaint amach ar na daoine

Gach súil ormsa.

An brú ag ardú.

An ceol ag tosú.

“Tá tú ceart go leor a Chonchúir,  
rinne tú é seo an bhliain seo caite.”

Thosaigh mé ag canadh.

## Aer gan ocsaigin

*Conchúr Ó Rinn*

The poison from the cars

choking us

Draining life at its foundation

Sucking life out of the Earth

Strangling us silently

Like a snake

Constricting its prey.

Slowly circling it,

Looming,

Waiting.

## Dhá Haiku

*Conchúr Ó Rinn*

Solas na cathrach ar siúl  
Ag siúl síos na sráide  
Ag clúdach an nádúir.

A fish gliding through the stream  
As the early morning fog clouds the field  
A man treks down the path.

## Chugam

*Cáit Ní Chéilleachair*

Bhí díomá orm  
Le críoch an aistir  
Críoch na buachana  
Ar an lá is measa

É fágtha inár ndiaidh  
Deis a bhí ann  
Níor thógamar an seans  
Níl rath buan

Díomá orm  
Nuair a tháinig mé abhaile  
Tásc ná tuairisc  
Ar mheangadh gáire

Barróg a bhí uaim  
's fuair mé é  
Beidh lá eile ag an bPaorach  
Chugam é, a dúirt sé.



# Ár gCultúr, Do Rogha!!!

*Cáit Ní Chéilleachair*

Ár dteanga, ár spórt,  
Ár gcultúr iontach féin,  
Ár spórt thar a bheith spráúil,  
Ár gCumann Lúthchleas Gael.

Cluichí deacra, cluichí cliste,  
Cluichí sceitimíneacha, gan dabht,  
Cluichí spórtúla, cluichí spráúla,  
Tá ár gcluichí ar fheabhas.

Camógaíocht, Iomáint,  
Peil na mBan, Peil Ghaelach,  
Iad ar fad mar ghéaga,  
Den chrann mór céanna.

Camáin inár lámha,  
Cosaint fiacla sa bhéal,  
Lámhainní spóirt ar ár méara,  
T-léine thar muinéal.

Ag rith timpeall na páirce,  
I gcomhair seasca nóiméad,  
Muid marbh dá bharr sin,  
Bainimid taitneamh as céad faoin gcéad.

Cúl Báire, Cosantóir,  
Imreoir Lár Páirce, Tosáí,  
Iad ag obair le chéile,  
I gcoinne na bhfreasúraí.

Lá grianmhar siamsúil,  
Thíos ag an bPáirc,  
Ag tabhairt tacaíochta dár bhfoireann,  
Ag béicíl is ag screadaíl gan stad.

Ag freastal ar na cluichí,  
I gcarr beag plódaithe,  
Ach is cuma sa tsioc linn,  
Lenár gcairde inár gcomhlúadar.

Is aoibhinn liom Éire is an spórt atá aici,  
Is aoibhinn liom na heachtraí a tharlaíonn inti,  
Ag imirt nó ag féachaint air mar tá grá agam di,  
Ní stopfaidh mé choíche, ní stopfaidh mé riamh!!!

## Féachaint Suas

*Cáit Ní Chéilleachair*

Faigh réidh leis na deora  
Is cuir uait an t-olagón  
Caith uait an ísle brí  
Is ná glac leis an mbrón

Laethanta níos faide  
Meon níos dearfaí  
Taobh amuigh níos gile  
Is oscail do chroí

Níl leithscéal a thuilleadh  
Don phian nó don bhrón  
Tá réiteach ar an gcruachás  
Éirigh as an t-olagón.

# Tusa

*Cáit Ní Chéilleachair*

Dúradh liom an oíche roimh ré  
Nach raibh tú rómhaith  
Níor chreid mé a raibh ráite  
Bhí tú róláidir  
Ach nuair a chonaic mé aghaidh mo mháthar  
Í ar an nguthán le m'athair a bhí leat

Stop mo shaol ag casadh  
mo chroí ag bualadh  
m'intinn ag oibriú

Níl cúis a thuilleadh  
Bród a chur ort

Ach  
leanfaidh mé ar aghaidh  
i d'ainm  
beidh bród ort asam  
cé nach féidir liom thú a fheiscint  
tá fhios a'am  
go bhfuil tú liom  
ón tír seo chuig an gcéad cheann eile.

## Tír an dá Theanga

*Cáit Ní Chéilleachair*

Ag gobadh amach romham  
Balla mórthimpeall orm  
Bacainn ar chairdeas  
Bacainn ar shuaimhneas  
Gan saoirse labhartha  
Nó neamhspleáchas teanga

Ní féidir liom éalú ón easpa cultúir

Nach ollphéist í  
An teorainn sin  
Ag cruthú deacrachtaí  
Ag cur stop le haon bhua  
Ag cur coisc ar dhaoine  
Bheith nádúrtha

Gan ligint dúinn í a labhairt os ard.

## Breath materialized as smoke

*Séamas Ó Curnáin*

Breath materialized as smoke  
Fire cracks, drawing its final spark  
Shuddering bodies huddled together  
holding hope close  
as the light dims for the last time.

## Carpets of Opportunity

*Séamas Ó Curnáin*

Prisms splice neon light  
as music makes the night last  
colours burst as people dance  
reconnecting youth for one last chance.

## Stars close out the eve

*Séamas Ó Curnáin*

Glistening through a veil of cloth  
signalling the day's start  
clouds obstruct the view  
yet it remains bright and flourishing  
as weather forms,  
stars close out the eve.

## Dawn goes to Dusk

*Séamas Ó Curnáin*

Dawn goes to Dusk  
Streets empty steadily  
Birds return to their nests  
after a long day's work  
it all repeats again.

## Sé Haiku

*Séamas Ó Curnáin*

Scamaill sa spéir  
daoine sa teach  
leadrán ar theilifís.

Spórt is spraoi  
Screadaíl is canadh  
Amuigh faoin aer.

Cailín ag suí cois uaighe  
Crobhaing bhláthanna ina lámh  
Deoir ag sleamhnú síos.

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

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

Ice melts to nothing  
The leaves return again  
Everything changes yet remains.



# Bhí an ghrian ag scoilteadh na gcloch

*Sorcha Slaughter*

Bhí an ghrian ag scoilteadh na gcloch,  
bhíomar san fhéar, ag sú na gréine,  
ar aghaidh, ar aghaidh,  
bhíomar ag súgradh leis na bláthanna,  
bhí corónacha déanta as nóiníní,  
ina suí ar ár gceanna.

# Dán Dhatheangach / Bilingual Poem

*Sorcha Slaughter*

Cosúil le saighead trí mo chroí,  
tollann tú m'anam,  
ag fágáil smidiríní i do dhiaidh,  
ag fágáil píosaí díot ionam,  
cosúil le saighead trí mo chroí,  
fágann tú mé i do lorg,  
tá do chuid bréaga ag stróiceadh as a chéile mé,  
b'fhéidir gur tusa an eochair,  
ach athraíodh mo ghlas.

Like an arrow through my heart,  
you puncture my soul,  
leaving your splinters behind,  
leaving pieces of you with me,  
like an arrow through my heart,  
you leave me behind,  
lately your lies have torn me apart,  
you may have been the key,  
but my locks have been changed.

## Nollaig

*Benjamin Ó Muiri*

Sneachta bán ag titim ón spéir  
Spórt agus spraoi ag rith tríd an aer  
Daidí na Nollag ag teacht, agus níl a fhios ag na páistí  
Gan aon rud diúltach, níl ann ach sonas  
Ag breith barróige, ag gáire, ag spraoi is ag canadh  
Agus tagann sé gach bliain, ní chaithfidh tú  
fanacht rófhada.

## Saoire

*Benjamin Ó Muiri*

An áit dubh le daoine  
Mothúcháin dhifriúla ag rith tríd an aer  
Sceitimíní, brón, sonas, strus  
Boladh an chaife  
Meangadh gáire agus bagáiste  
Na heitleáin ag imeacht  
Suas sa spéir.

## Tá an ghrian ag taitneamh

*Odbrna Ní Mbuirthíle*

Tá an ghrian ag taitneamh  
agus an ghaoth ag séideadh.

Ina suí sa pháirc  
i measc na mbláthanna.

## Na duilleoga ag titim

*Odbrna Ní Mbuirthíle*

Na duilleoga ag titim  
an ghaoth ag séideadh.

Damhsa amháin deireanach  
ar an tslí síos.

## Haiku

*Kelly Ní Chathasaigh*

tá an ghrian ag scoilteadh na gcloch,  
tá na páistí ag gáire,  
agus boladh na mbláthanna san aer.

## Tine

*Kelly Ní Chathasaigh*

Bhí an foirgneamh trí thine,  
gach duine ag screadaíl,  
tá na lasracha ag teacht aníos is aníos,  
eagla i súile na ndaoine,  
Bhí an spéir dubh le deatach.

## The arrow went through my heart

*Kelly Ní Chathasaigh*

The arrow went through my heart,  
like a dart,  
I might have cried,  
my love for you has died.

## The sun blinds us

*Heather Ní Thnúthail*

The sun blinds us  
In this dimly lit room  
As the air reeks of jealousy  
giving me a sense of impending doom.

The dead flower sitting on the window sill  
Reminding me of what once was  
The love that has diminished  
From what I caused.

## End of an Era

*Heather Ní Thnúthail*

Back to age 5 en route to the park  
Just finished school with a smile  
Running around freely, lungs filled with laughter  
As we play with our friends for a while.

Skip to 13 when it's the final walk in the park  
Linking with my friend Sarah  
As we get hit with nostalgia  
Coming to terms with this end of an era.

## Tine

*Heather Ní Thnútbaíl*

Tá an tsráid dubh le daoine  
Tá eagla an domhain orthu  
De réir mar a éiríonn an tine  
Neamhrialaithe  
Oráiste agus dubh ag líonadh na spéire.

## Mo ghrá sa spéir

*Eoghan Ó Súilleabháin*

Mo ghrá sa spéir  
Mise anseo, gan tusa anseo  
Bím ag smaoiniamh ort gach uair a fhéachaim suas  
Beidh tú i mo chroí i gcónaí  
Is tú mo ghrá.

## Haiku

*Eoghan Ó Súilleabháin*

Amuigh le mo chairde  
na laethanta níos faide  
é níos fuaire i mí Feabhra.



## Cearnóg

*Eoghan Ó Súilleabháin*

Bhí duine ar rothar  
ag spraoi is ag baint taitnimh as  
nuair a d'fhéach sé suas bhí bus ag teacht go tapa  
ní fhaca an bus é  
agus, mar sin, bhí a chorp chomh leibhéalta le cearnóg.

## When I was a child

*Eoghan Ó Súilleabháin*

When I was a child, I thought they could do no wrong.  
When I was a child, everyone seemed to get along.  
When I was a child, we were always together.  
When I was a child, I thought it would last forever.

## Nuair a bhuaigh mé craobh iomána

*Eoghan Ó Súilleabháin*

Bhí mé ann, bhí mé neirbhíseach,  
ach bhí muinín agam.  
Chuamar amach, bhíomar ina sheasamh ann,  
agus thosaigh Amhrán na bhFiann.  
Bhí mé réidh chun troda, réidh le buachan.  
Nuair a tháinig leath-am  
bhíomar dhá phointe chun tosaigh.

## Spéir na hOíche

*Jake Ó Mathúna Ó Muiri*

An oíche ag tógaint an domhan isteach sa dorchadas,  
Gan éan ag canadh nó feithid le feiceáil.  
Meán oíche san fhoraois,  
Na réaltaí ag lasadh na spéire.

Le mo dhá shúil ar oscailt,  
agus an spéir gan scamall,  
Brathaim gurb é seo an rud is suaimhní a rinne mé riamh.  
Fanfaidh mé anseo go dtí an mhaidin dár gcionn.

## Réaltaí sa spéir

*Jake Ó Mathúna Ó Muiri*

Ag féachaint ar na réaltaí sa spéir  
is an ghaoth ag séideadh ar m'aghaidh  
Cloisim crainn ag luascadh is éin ag canadh  
is feithidí ag bogadh ar an talamh.

Le tine mór ag lasadh an nádúir  
Dúnaim mo shúile le meangadh ar m'aghaidh  
Is é seo an rud a chuireann ríméad orm  
a bheith páirteach sa nádúr uair amháin eile.

## Dhá Haiku

*Jake Ó Mathúna Ó Muiri*

Báisteach ag titim ón spéir  
Carr ag taisteal  
Daoine ag rith agus ag ithe.

Na héin ag canadh  
An ghrian ag teacht suas  
Na hainmhithe ag dúiseacht.



## Mayfield Community School

Poetry by

**Abigail Collins**

**Dean Barrett**

**Angel Best**

**Mislav Longin**

**Daniel Singleton**

**Shelby O'Keefe**

**Lily Stevens**

**Kaya O'Flynn**

**Kane O'Brien**

**Thomas Sheehan**

**Katie Kent**

Assisting Writer: **Paul Casey**

T.Y. Coordinator: **Mags Heffernan**

Workshops held Online (**Google Meets**)



The most recent edition of *The Unfinished Book of Poetry* has proved to be the most challenging yet. Libraries and schools needed to work within a range of differing restrictions, meaning some workshops were held in libraries, some in schools while others yet needed to be run via Google Meets. Such was the case with the student writers from Mayfield Community School, who underwent 18 shorter, online sessions rather than the usual nine. Technical challenges aside, these students applied themselves brilliantly and produced some astounding work, which I am delighted to include here.

We explored a wide range of literary themes and poetic elements, including the language of metaphor, lyricality, constraint, cliché, anthropomorphism, exquisite corpse, haiku, emotions and fictional narratives, ekphrasis, list poems, humour, superstition, food, invention and journey poems, all while exploring poets from across place and time. I am humbled by their brave efforts and I hope these talented young writers keep their pens moving, the world is in need of their bright imaginations!

**Paul Casey**



# Poems

Mayfield Community School





## I am Abigail

*Abigail Collins*

I am Abigail

I am the proud daughter of John and Sharon

Who needs eyelash glue and a tan from a bottle

But also the love from her crazy family

Who sees siblings swinging everywhere

Who hates babysitting my brothers and sister

Who fears the day when there's no more babysitting

Who dreams of a business with my name on the door

Who has written poems of BLANK verse

Who is resident of my dreams

Collins

## House Sense

*Abigail Collins*

My parent's room wears Chanel number smell

My room is odd, like me

My sister's room is a work of art

My front room frequently goes to Summer Bay to get away

My kitchen is fed up of the bad odour of burnt poppies

My bathroom pops with bubblebath fun and scents of fake fruit

The heart of the hallway holds my first steps

## Goblin Fruit

*Angel Best*

This morning I hit my car into a cloud  
The air was broken with a puff  
And the sky was left completely blue  
until a big five was drawn in the clouds  
It summoned the goblin  
sleeping behind me  
A red eagle swooped  
To the branch of his fingers  
And I tremble at the thought  
Of the fruit  
That may grow from that tree.

## Confusion...

*Angel Best*

Grey as the roads on a cloudy day  
It happens when the sun is shy  
You can feel it around you like a thick sea mist  
It sounds like raindrops  
Hitting and spitting on your car window  
It smells like damp ash  
It's my Monday morning alarm  
It's the future of my history

## Shell

*Angel Best*

On a very beautiful beach they lie,  
A smell like the seafood,  
That they once held inside.

I imagine raindrops gently knocking  
on their shiny surfaces  
And splattering the sand around them.

Born in the deep of the ocean  
Life for them was good  
Until it emptied out.

## I am Angel

*Angel Best*

Son of a warrior mother  
Who needs to live a brilliant life  
Who loves his family  
Who sees everything and nothing  
Who hates hangovers  
Who fears the dark of death  
Who dreams of being himself  
Who has written poems of the ocean  
Who is resident of his own perspective  
on this short life.  
Rosique

## My House

*Angel Best*

My living room echoes with ALL the emotions  
My kitchen salivates at the lingering aroma of Christmas lamb  
My hall still rings with the howls of falls  
My little sister's room needs a new pair of ears  
My room is tense with the tension between me and my brother  
My parent's room...(I don't want to think about what it has seen)

## Dream Journey

*Daniel Singleton*

I'm leaving Ireland for New York  
On the back of an Eagle.  
Sharp claws,  
Cracking caws,  
Feathery saddle,  
Loud, loud, fast and bald.  
See the Atlantic,  
Lots of cloud,  
Other eagles with sky passengers,  
Mountain tops  
Scary drops  
Chirping, shouting, thunder and my scream  
In the fresh breeze  
I freeze  
Eagle loop, stomach soup  
Until I see...  
The Statue of Liberty.

## A Postcard from Paris

*Daniel Singleton*

Dear Family,

Paris is the best

I can almost touch the heat

In which the Eiffel tower sings,

And the Louvre's a pyramid of buried kings.

And Disneyland is just divine

Under Florida-like skies.

And everywhere the language of love

Is soft and sweet like a buttery croissant.

## War

*Daniel Singleton*

Wounded soldiers

Are in pain and just want to

Rest

## A War Haiku

*Daniel Singleton*

Never ending war

Destruction of our houses

Please stop it Putin

## My Phone

*Daniel Singleton*

Sees my friendly face first thing in the morning  
Hears friend talk to friends and family  
Is always there for me, as reliable as a new day  
Rings with pleasure to get my attention  
Feels dejected when I trade it in  
For a newer, better looking model.

## Phone

*Daniel Singleton*

Pleased  
Hearing my voice every day  
Ongoing call  
Never  
Ends

## Ukraine

*Daniel Singleton*

United  
Kyiv  
Resilient  
Against the evil  
Invader  
Night time will  
End

## Dough

*Lily Stevens*

Another day  
Another ball of dough  
Flat and colourless  
Like all my days  
Dull and rusty  
like this room  
flat pat flat pat flat pat  
my child will flat pat too  
Inherit these floury days  
of dusty dough

## Two Monkeys

*Lily Stevens*

Two monkeys in chains  
Ship's free on rusted sea  
Iron rusts around tiny limbs  
Sails set out under the iron sun

# Shandon Bells

*Lily Stevens*

I am the midnight  
in the moonlit sky  
through the wintery Sparkle  
the clouds blink for me

I can see as far as  
The beautiful wavy river Lee  
It carries ships in front of me  
Down to the wavy wavy sea

I can tell the wrong time  
And confuse those below  
They trust me, the fools  
But they never know

You can still hear my charms  
Through the snow on my arms  
Covering the show of time  
For in the wintery sparkle, I chime.



## No. 115 dreams

*Lily Stevens*

The living room hears the drama in Watford  
The kitchen hears the cheers when Arsenal score  
The hall hates my dog's barking  
The cupboard is sick of the smell of muddy football boots  
The toilet detests my older brother  
The stairs are allergic to the dog's fur  
The walls aren't thick enough to hold all the screeching  
The door is bruised from the knocking  
My parents' bedroom is full of Gogglebox and giggles  
My room loves me  
It's also in Hogwarts with my friend Harry.  
My brother is gagging on stinky socks  
The attic is a meditation master,  
It gets all the peace and quiet.

## Mother

*Lily Stevens*

My best friend, she is always  
Optimistic. Though  
Tough when she needs to be. She's my  
Hero and I'm  
Elated she's mine, the most  
Reliable person in my world.

## Friends

*Lily Stevens*

They are the school bell on a Friday evening

They are the sun bright in the summer sky

They are the voice of a popstar queen

Their humour makes me cackle like a witch

They are the smell of bubblegum and hugs

Their cuddles feel like a warm hoodie

They are the silver lining on the rain cloud.

## Ukraine

*Lily Stevens*

Under fire

Kyiv is brave.

Russia

Attacks

Incessantly. We

Never

Ever, learn.

# To Vegas on a Plane

*Kane O'Brien*

First to the bus station by car  
then by bus to Dublin  
leaving plainly on a plane

Staring out the window  
at the blue sky  
and cream cotton candy clouds

The air conditioning carries the scent of excitement  
Can't wait to smell the oxygen adrenalin  
of the Vegas money honeyed air

I'll be broke from gambling  
But I won't care  
I'll have had lots of fun  
From being there

# A Shady Holiday in the Sun

*Kane O'Brien*

Hi Mam,

Hope you're well!

Look, I'll cut to the chase.

I'M BROKE!!

Any chance of a loan

of a couple of grand

I'm here flipflop standing

on the sand

in sunny and shady Thailand

Two people got shot,

three got arrested,

I fled the scene...

but undetected

So all going well no need to worry

Just send me the money

And if you could would you

hurry.

Love Kane

## Different from Everyone Else

*Katie Kent*

She was a woman of wild beauty  
so different from everyone else  
She was a woman of tangled imagination  
very different from everyone else.  
She had wild exotic animals as pets,  
more exotic than everyone else  
She had a life of adventure,  
More exciting than everyone else  
Yes, she was different from everyone else  
And I envy her.  
But not everyone can be the same...  
Or different from everyone else.

## Baking

*Katie Kent*

Under the fierce sun I bake.  
Everyday.  
Bread I bake  
Under the endless sun.  
Inside the baking oven,  
Life's no fun  
Bread rises  
Like I rise each morning  
To my cracked and crusty days.

Hi Dad!\*

*Katie Kent*

Hi Dad,

I haven't talked to you

in 16 years.

How ya doing?

I'm here in New York

living my best life

without you

(but isn't that what I always had to do)

Mam is happy now

with her handsome new man

and big brother is a celebrated Queen of drag.

We did it.

Without YOU

To drag us down.

Anyway I hope you finally found the milk

That took you away for sixteen years

Just wanna let you know

No more tears

So thanks for coming and running

From your only daughter

*\* this is a fictional account*

# The Breadmakers

*Dean Barrett*

My hands are sore  
from all the flour.  
I've been cooking all day  
every hour.  
What is it about this constant knead  
That makes me bleed  
sadness.

My daughter is here.  
We work side by side  
Day in day out.  
I feel her need too.  
We keep slogging  
As the hours slug by.  
My hands weaken  
at the day's end.

I hear my daughter by my side  
Letting out big sighs.  
As the day comes to an end  
We let out big cries.  
Worried these days  
will get harder  
like the crust of stale bread.

# Dear Mam and Dad,

*Dean Barrett*

I hope you're okay?  
I'm in Lanzarote,  
On this fantastic day.

The sun shines down  
on the waves sloshing the shore  
People are screaming,  
A rainbow joy roar.

It smells of hot butter  
And salty sea hair.  
In the waterpark we slide  
In the chlorine filled air.

But boys got arrested  
And some of them bled.  
You'll be glad to know  
I instantly fled.

Tomorrow I hope to skydive  
And be free  
I just wish that you  
Were both here now  
with me.



## Superstition

*Mislav Longin*

I saw a black cat  
as it crossed my path

I cursed the mirror  
as I walked past

The sky grey and depressed  
as I went home to rest

The work man climbed the ladder  
as the cat got madder

## Superstition 2

*Mislav Longin*

Serpents cross the road  
Under the load of the witch's code  
Perhaps it's just a lie  
Even as we think we survive we die  
Reptiles devour the innocent  
Save your young

Tomorrow the sun shall rise  
Innocence shall die  
Tomorrow the moon will rise  
Innocence shall survive  
Only the bad will thrive  
Never believe a lie.

# A Postcard from Istanbul to my friend in the Whitehouse

*Mislav Longin*

Dear Joe Biden,

I have arrived safely  
in the beautiful city on the Bosphorus,

Istanbul

The soaring minarets and mosques make  
my cold little atheist heart full

The call to prayer  
is always there

Baklava, sweet almond fills the air  
sugars wrapped in a pastry pillow

Silks softly floating through the saffron  
breeze

I wrap myself in the veils of this city  
I breathe in the beefy burek

I wish for more money

So I can indulge  
in more Turkish honey

# The Journey

*Mislav Longin*

I am Kylie,  
Who's lived a thousand years in several hours  
and seen winter in all its forms.

I am Kylie,  
Whose only misfortune is feeling alone.  
But whose greatest strength is the way I've grown.

I am Kylie  
I bowed to all the bullies and accepted my fate  
but no more will I tolerate, their intolerance and hate.

I am Kylie,  
I spent my tears only on my family  
I took my sorrows and threw them to the sea  
never trusting strangers with what's unique to me.

I am Kylie.  
I am the one girl the others fear  
The one they don't want their boyfriends near  
My threats hold the weight of tears.

I am Kylie,  
I shall make my enemies bow in disgrace  
As I take my place

As Queen of the World.

## Confessions of a Queen of the World (I'm still here)

*Mislav Longin*

My gilded room is shining  
As the basic girls' hopes dim.  
I stride through the wide halls  
And a tall Queen says, I win!

Mirror, mirror on the wall  
Who's the baddest of them all?  
Oh yes, it's me, as I recall.

The great ballroom glimmers  
in light from diamond chandelier  
Yes Mirror, Mirror on the wall  
The baddest Queen is truly here.

## I am Kylie

*Mislav Longin*

I am Kylie  
Daughter of Marina & Kruno of Croatia  
Who needs money  
Who loves power  
Who sees injustice and ugliness  
Who hates ugly people and bad fashion  
Who fears nothing  
Who dreams of being POWER  
Who has written poems of comedy and reality  
Who is resident of men's hearts  
Longin

## Packing List

*Shelby O'Keefe*

I'm bringing My Mam  
To fight off a bear.  
I'm bringing my make-up  
So I'll look good out there.  
I'm bringing my phone  
So to my friend I can moan.  
I'm bringing my dog  
So he won't be afraid.  
I'm bringing my teacher  
To act as my maid.

## I am Shelby

*Shelby O'Keefe*

I am Shelby  
Daughter of a fearless pair  
Who needs my own room to do my hair  
Who loves my crazy family  
As much as they are crazy about me  
Who see the positive side of negative people  
Who hates when the negativity spreads its web like hairy spiders  
Who fears spiders, cold water and cross teachers  
Who dreams of a magical future that you can't yet see  
Who has written poems of laughs and tragedy  
Resident of the Glen  
O'Keefe, meaning gentle

13th March 2020

*Shelby O'Keefe*

One day in 2020  
our lives changed

Corona came  
and crowned our days  
with disconnect and disinfectant

Blasting its deadly seeds  
of disease

Locked us in our homes  
which soon became our prisons

Not knowing when  
it would end  
we lived in fear

With cupboards full  
of toilet paper

Faces full of pimples  
over suffocating masks

Big scary tasks  
of being in the world with a mask

We finally got freedom  
no pimples on our faces

Like flowers  
blooming on a summer's day

## Shattered Glass

*Shelby O'Keefe*

I woke this morning  
to a cold swerve of wind  
I went to check it out  
glass shattered  
on the ground  
afraid a robber could have been around  
then again, it could have been just a little mouse!

## Nan

*Shelby O'Keefe*

It was a normal night  
nothing nasty.  
At 2 o'clock all changed,

forever.

My mam got the news.  
My two cousins and I

slept through, not knowing.  
In the morning we woke  
to a sadder world.

Scared and confused  
when I got the news  
the tears came,

though I tried to keep them away.  
I can now only hold my nan  
in a flowery picture frame.

## The Monkeys in Chains

*Shelby O'Keefe*

I see wavey water  
And cracky ships  
The monkeys as sad  
As pirates with no gold  
chained with cold iron  
There on a cracked brick wall  
not knowing if they will fall

## School

*Kaya O'Flynn*

School is boring, getting up early on mornings  
Cold as ice sitting in a freezing room  
How long till school's done? I think all day  
One O'Clock and the day's dragging  
On and on for hours on end  
Long boring days without a friend

## Day at the Beach

*Kaya O'Flynn*

I wish you were here the beach water is so clear  
There's clouds in the sky and birds are rushing by  
there's a smell of salt in the air and people are sitting on chairs  
Children are running by  
and I can hear them laughing under the golden sky  
they reach the water with waves splashing and crashing.



# Cup

*Thomas Sheehan*

Hanging around on dangerous cliff  
just chilling and warm  
waiting, wrapped in plastic,  
in plastic nice and warm just chilling  
until one day I was picked and was happy  
and when I got to the smaller place I was always warm  
now I'm always cold, to me it doesn't really matter what happens  
it feels all the same, same, why does it always feel like a cold fridge inside  
nothing new just staying there never changing, other times I'm like an oven  
feeling warm and now I feel like a counter just in the middle

I always watch the gods walking around like they own the place  
I'm like pick me sometimes, I feel like I understand them sometimes  
I see drops dripping from their heads, I think they do that when they're sad  
I wish I could do that but I can't, I'm just a marble frozen statue,  
an object is what am I really, I see some cups falling  
I hope that won't happen to me  
I hope I just stay on the counter

Being a cup,  
some are different, but to me living inside this place  
they're all the same, nothing different nothing spectacular about me  
for me I feel different but don't look different, I look like everyone else  
just inside this cold place waiting around and hanging about  
what about me, they never pick this cup  
I'm just hanging about once more

# Wide Water is What We Need

*Thomas Sheehan*

Help, help someone help us before a wave comes we hope  
or a wave of echoing horrors approaches and overcomes us  
Lower, higher the waves don't stop I hope  
or help will come and take over the humans for the better

Shh my poor whale I feel your pain  
Over, over your cycle repeats itself, it continues  
Nothing but harshness from the rest of the humans  
Go away you, why are you hunting them

Just help me help them from a whale song  
that shall sing you away like a wave, wave  
I still remember the whale song from here  
there are also rumours about one heroic person

who will come and stop the torture  
stop the pain in your whale song

# Globe

*Thomas Sheehan*

Winter

winter's like being in a snowglobe  
just looking out through the window  
all I see is a cold blizzard in this wonderless land  
and just a soft  
                    coat of snow spread along the freezing ground

I wonder what it's like  
outside the globe all I see is snow  
once again spread along the freezing ground  
while I continue to stare out the window  
and just look  
                    upon the lights, they're always the same  
                    green, red, yellow that's all I see outside

The window  
amongst just snow once again  
I wonder what it's like outside this globe  
it's probably less harsh out there compared  
to being stuck in here  
                    I wonder what life is like out there

I wonder  
am I the only one stuck in here  
I shall just spend my days staring  
out the windowless glass to hope  
for another  
                    winterless cage out there somewhere



## St Aloysius School

Poetry by

**Clodagh O'Neil**

**Anna Schorno**

**Niamh O'Mahony**

**Emma Fuohy**

**Kate Donovan**

**Jodie Lynch Hegarty**

**Sandy O'Mahony**

**Viktoria Kreslak**

**Sian Kiely**

**Dayna Underhill**

Assisting writer: **Dean Browne**

T.Y. Coordinator: **Kate Whalley**

Workshops held in **Cork City Library**

Assisting Librarian: **Declan Barron**



Teaching poetry workshops to the students at St Aloysius was a joy, and it was always intriguing to see the various strengths elicited from the students by this or that exercise, whether the form was haiku, erasure, sonnet, or prose poem. Some excelled here, others excelled there, but a constant was the generosity of their attention and their unified interest in doing the best job possible. Some performed best in collaboration, for others it was an endeavour to be undertaken solo. Some wrote by hand, others favored their phone or laptop.

Once we grasped the rudimentary principles of metaphor and simile, and explored poetic form in some of its innumerable manifestations, we were away. Watching their confidence burgeon was a great pleasure, and their gradual sense that they need not suppress their natural sense of humour or quirks in their writing was, too, a source of satisfaction, even pride. This will be plainly evident in the poems that follow. Whatever course these terribly talented girls pursue, I hope they will sustain their creative impulse and find ways to let it in, because they possess heart and talent in abundance. I hope they will recall our workshops fondly, as I undoubtedly will. On and up!

**Dean Browne**



# Poems

St Aloysius School



## Our Galaxy ...

*Clodagh O'Neil*

Our galaxy is this most unknown thing we know. People are fascinated by the glittering stars on a clear cold night. The moon is the eye of beauty. Venus is the planet of love but if an astronaut was to walk upon the love planet he would explode and erupt, equivalent to relationships of today.

## My Brother

*Clodagh O'Neil*

My brother. My mother always says he's in his own world and is never concerned about any of his life problems. He is interesting to look at, he has a box mullet, many piercings and many tattoos but my mother always says he's missing a few screws. He has a car but he is never very far. He does drawing on people for a living he said it's very relieving. My mother always says it's underwhelming. He went to Marine school but it didn't last very long, he always knew he wanted to do drawing for a living and now spends his days talking to strangers. He meets many interesting people everyday, which isn't a surprise because he is interesting in himself, my mother always says.

## the crunch of the leaves

*Clodagh O'Neil*

the crunch of the leaves  
the crunch of the snow  
you hear it under your feet

so cold your hands sting  
you feel the tingle in your fingers  
and the stinging in your feet

## After Hieronymus Bosch

*Clodagh O'Neil*

Constant dissociation,  
not being able to differentiate between reality  
and immortality,  
not being able to find  
a way out of this blind  
undermind.



## Hey Mr Octopus ...

*Clodagh O'Neil*

Hey Mr Octopus, how's life under the sea?  
Any chance you will have a tea party with me?  
One cup or eight, will we call it a date?  
RSVP, don't leave it too late.

## Sonnet

*Clodagh O'Neil*

During my day  
I wish I was in my bed to lay  
I go to school,  
It almost feels cruel  
The fact that we have to sit  
And act like we give a Schmitt.  
But it's not all bad and torture  
In every class I have my own corner  
I sit back and watch  
I see everyone is trying to be topnotch.  
School isn't for me, you see  
I would prefer to live off the grid with glee  
But due to the fact I'm a 16-year-old girl  
I have to go and be serious.

## Haiku

*Niamh O'Mahony*

Vanilla lattes.

Café Depreche is nice.

They are good value.

## Sonnet

*Niamh O'Mahony and Kate Donovan*

Missing – Emotions

Tears – missing

Lonely – tears

Feeling – lonely

Empty – feeling

Mind – empty

Spinning – mind

Stomach – spinning

Reaching – stomach

Lost – reaching

Life – lost

Losing – life

Always – losing

Missing – always

## Bare Branches

*Niamh O'Mahony and Kate Donovan*

Happiness is like a fresh autumn breeze,  
Chilling and exciting.  
Happiness feels like changing Autumn leaves,  
Like Autumn leaves it's followed by bare,  
Bare tree branches, cold and empty  
Like a single leaf exposed, vulnerable  
Waiting to be trampled, trampled solely for  
One measly single crunch, one moment of joy

## *I Want, I Want!*

*Kate Donovan*

*after William Blake*

The moon above  
Seemed full of love,  
Everything that I ever wanted,  
Day after day to not feel haunted

Everyone told me the moon was out of reach,  
But I forever dream of a clear water beach,  
Where I can feel the waves through the moon's subtle touch,  
The moon still somehow feels out of clutch

Everyone thinks I'm mad for wanting the moon,  
But they don't understand the haunted feeling of doom,  
No matter what I have to do

I will  
Get to the moon.

## At first I was excited

*Kate Donovan*

At first I was excited  
To explore up above,  
I finally got one I was delighted,  
I tore up the ladder made of wood,  
As any other child would.

All of a sudden my world was blank,  
I slowly but surely sank,  
Falling for what seemed like forever.  
I don't like feeling like this, please not again ever.

## Pepper, simplicity, vessel, creator

*Kate Donovan*

Life is like a grain of pepper,  
Seemingly dark,  
But full of flavour,  
Have trust in the process it'll come later.

Life is best when viewed as simplicity,  
One step, then next,  
Is all you have to see,  
Even though at times life may seem vexed.

## Erasure: 'The Silken Tent' by Robert Frost

*Kate Donovan*

Robert Frost

~~She is as in a field a silken tent~~  
~~At midday when a sunny summer breeze~~  
~~Has dried the dew and all its ropes relent,~~  
~~So that in guys it gently sways at ease,~~  
~~And its supporting central cedar pole,~~  
~~That is its pinnacle to heavenward~~  
~~And signifies the sureness of the soul,~~  
~~Seems to owe naught to any single cord,~~  
~~But strictly held by none, is loosely bound~~  
~~By countless silken ties of love and thought~~  
~~To every thing on earth the compass round,~~  
~~And only by one's going slightly taut,~~  
~~In the capriciousness of summer air,~~  
~~Is of the slightest bondage made aware.~~

## Butterfly Paper

*Sandy O'Mahony*

On a warm summer evening  
sun about to set  
butterflies flying like paper planes  
in a classroom.

## Beach Day

*Sandy O'Mahony*

On a long summer day  
Blueberry sea, tide going out  
Grass still like a statue  
Sand in shoes, bags and towels,  
Long walks in the dunes,  
Bugs, butterflies as you walk by  
Hearing the waves crashing against the sand  
Forgetting reality, enjoying the warm wind

## We are all living in history

*Sandy O'Mahony*

We are all living in history  
with different pasts  
our history in books  
and wars starting without warning  
but more prepared than the past

## Bagel / Hotdog

*Sandy O'Mahony*

A bagel and a hotdog  
watching a football match.

# Erasure: 'The Silken Tent' by Robert Frost

*Sian Kiely / Sandy O'Mahony*

Robert Frost

She is as in a field a silken tent  
At midday when a sunny summer breeze  
Has dried the dew and all its ropes relent,  
So that in guys it gently sways at ease,  
And its supporting central cedar pole,  
That is its pinnacle to heavenward  
And signifies the sureness of the soul,  
Seems to owe naught to any single cord,  
But strictly held by none, is loosely bound  
By countless silken ties of love and thought  
To every thing on earth the compass round,  
And only by one's going slightly taut,  
In the capriciousness of summer air,  
Is of the slightest bondage made aware.

# Erasure: Shadow and Bone by Leigh Bardugo

Sian Kiely

I lost track of time. Night and day passed through the windows of the coach. I stared out at the landscape, searching for landmarks to give me some sense of familiarity. I'd expected that we would take the long road, but instead we struck to the Vy, and Fedya or ex-Fedya had opted for speed over stealth, trying to get me safely behind Osha's doubtful protection of my power spread to the envious assassins who operated within Ravka's borders. We kept a brutal pace. Occasionally I was allowed to change horses and I was allowed to sleep. When I was able to sleep, my dreams were nightmares.

Once, I awoke with a start, my heart pounding. Fedya was watching me. Ivan was asleep beside me, snoring loudly.

"Who's Mai?" he asked.

I realised I must have been talking. Embarrassed, I glanced at the *opishnik* sitting beside me. One stared impassively forward, the other dozing. Outside, the afternoon sun shone through a grove of birchwood trees as we rumbled on.

"No one," I said. "A friend."

"The tracker?"

I nodded. "He was with me on the S. He saved my life."

"And you saved his?"

I opened my mouth to disagree, but



## Venus is one of the brightest ...

*Sian Kiely*

Venus is one of the brightest natural objects in the night sky.  
I hope that when he looks up he asks himself why,  
She had left before the stars could come out,  
And because of this, didn't have any doubt.

There are billions of galaxies,  
She now happens to be one,  
It's time boys snap out of reality,  
And realise their actions cannot be undone.

Now she dances with the moon,  
Waiting for recess at noon,  
Watching the earth go round,  
Now that she's gone, without a sound  
But even now, when she sees an astronaut  
She can't help but is left with an afterthought.

## Envy, weather

*Sian Kiely*

Why do I feel so much envy for the weather?  
Something that does not know I exist,  
Yet I sit here and wonder what it would be like to always be loved, even  
when there's mist.

Perhaps it's all the attention,  
The clouds move so elegantly,  
While I'm sat here in detention,  
Moving so hesitantly.

# Audrey Hepburn

*Sian Kiely*

She was fair,  
she was elegant,  
Always had styled hair,  
Always stayed relevant.

She left the world at her feet,  
She was slim,  
She had eyes so sweet,  
Though her shades were always dim.

She lived different lives,  
For she acted in many movies,  
But I could see that behind those eyes  
There were insecurities,  
But her money could solve these.

She had all the money in the world,  
But wealth cannot fix health,  
For when she was just sixty three,  
She didn't make it cancer free,  
She now rests in peace,  
Since the winter of 1993.

## He worked a 9-5 job

*Sian Kiely*

He worked a 9-5 job,  
And dropped his kids to school,  
But he was thinking of you,  
Like all of his friends do.

His wife dropped off his briefcase,  
At 4:32,  
But he didn't see her face,  
He just imagined the woman's tattoos.

She lives in daydreams with him,  
But he doesn't know who she is,  
So he remained himself, quite grim,  
Wondering when she will be his?

He climbed into bed,  
to dream about this woman, who lives in his head,  
His wife didn't say a word, the conversation remained dead.

He imagined running away,  
To see this stunning getaway,  
But before he could believe,  
His wife nudged his shoulder,  
And told him "I'm leaving you,"  
And what a relief,  
But she was just a woman in his dreams.

## Olivia O'Donovan

*Sian Kiely*

Love is bitter cold  
it can be the best in the world  
but is every woman's downfall  
love is the thing that can end wars  
signs and does other stuff  
love is dangerous  
it can drive women crazy  
disrupt lives  
changing their mental state.

Love is happy  
it changes your life.  
it fills your heart with  
love and joy.  
Love is the best thing that  
happened to me  
and I hate it  
what about you?

## Dear Octopus

*Sian Kiely*

I sometimes wonder what life must be like under the sea.  
Is it as scary as being on land?  
It must be so cool to have three hearts.  
It must be so nice to love people easily.

## Room of the crying girl

*Anna Schorno*

The walls of the room are painted in a very light blue which makes the whole room kind of cold. On the small bed, sits an old teddy bear that misses one eye and beside that there's an old with ruffles decorated pillow with the name "Elisabeth" embroidered on it.

The wooden, crumbling window has white curtains with a blue flower pattern on it and underneath the window there's an old wooden drawer. The drawer is painted blue but the paint is chipping off and one of the drawers is laying down on the floor next to it.

The Room kind of gives me goosebumps. The cold, whispering wind is coming through the crack in the window. It seems like the ghost of the girl that once lived here is crying very silently.

## Getting up - Haiku

*Anna Schorno*

The first thing to get up  
You need to make your brain get up  
Before anything else gets up

The next thing to get up  
You need to make your heart get up  
before you really get up

The last thing to get up  
Surely has to be your body getting up  
Now you start your day

## Like a Fairytale

*Anna Schorno*

When I was younger  
I built myself a fantasy world  
We had these tiny kind of woods in our backyard  
where I was living it out  
But most of it I just made up in my head  
In my world there were creatures that you'll never see  
Every single one of the plants had its own particular smell  
and its own kind of color.  
All the animals were tame and trusting  
You could rub them  
and none of them would've ever hurt you.  
Whatever I was feeling,  
I went out in the woods  
Into my own calming space.

## Lazy day

*Anna Schorno*

When I woke up this morning  
and I looked out of my window  
I saw outside it was storming  
but I was hoping for a rainbow.

I stood up early that day  
And decided to stay at home  
Because the sky was grey  
I brushed my hair with a comb.

## A full week

*Anna Schorno*

On Monday she went to her nanna  
And made tea for her and Diana

On Tuesday she was playing the Piano  
She played in G minor Andagio

On Wednesday she was trying to bake  
And what she made it was a cake

On Thursday she went to the gym  
And afterwards she wanted to swim

On Friday she was babysitting  
And during that she started knitting

On Saturday she went to the disco  
The theme that day was San Francisco

On Sunday she made a relaxed day  
She sat in her chair and drank her cafe

## Earth pollution

*Anna Schorno*

I looked at the ground  
And what I saw  
Was junk in the dirt  
A plastic straw

## Named After a Sweet But Oh So Bitter

*Emma Fuohy*

Forgotten faces  
Missing places  
Held back by guilt  
Hide in the quilt  
Shut my eyes tight  
Another sleepless night  
Wanting to be alone  
Not ever safe at home  
He won't leave  
She doesn't believe  
Cry and beg  
Scratching at the leg  
Why must you blame  
Me triggered by his name

## She makes me feel wild and free

*Emma Fuohy*

She makes me feel wild and free  
She truly is my galaxy  
She reached to me like an astronaut to the moon

She's like my stars, my sun, I swoon  
Venus known for love, blesses me  
With the one I love, I'm finally free



after Mary Ruefle

*Emma Fuohy*

Late night  
for good  
a big gut  
hold more than enough  
He went out  
umbrella bent  
the truck had left  
On a whim  
a bottle of wine  
Gone crazy  
He felt  
wonderful  
for good

The world is getting ruined ...

*Emma Fuohy*

The world is getting ruined by the ones who gave it a name  
It's no one's fault of course say the people who are to blame  
Scientists and people saw the warnings, kept living life the same  
It is our fault, putting plastic in the ocean, infecting earth's domain  
We have to do something about this, crowds don't listen when you don't  
have fame

after Tess Gallagher

*Emma Fuohy*

his old  
silk vest  
unrolling  
like something live  
then spread it  
on the kitchen table  
wrinkles down  
its shape against  
come back  
his pockets  
the buttons  
I held my arms out  
looped over  
them  
She  
went into the bathroom  
how I looked  
wind chimes  
off key  
crying so I stood back  
the porcelain had been staring  
I go to her  
I stood still

They say it will take a while ...

*Emma Fuohy*

They say it will take a while maybe weeks  
Roaming the library waiting for a name to call

Treated like a bitch

Sitting on the floor, hours everyday  
Thinking of who hurt them, memories won't go away  
He gave out when they didn't purr  
Shouting and calling them a slur  
Hurt like a dog, eyes tear up.  
They don't like it here, they don't want to stay.

Dear Mr Octopus

*Jodie Lynch Hegarty*

Dear Mr Octopus,  
You juggle things  
Like we juggle life.  
You blend in  
To protect yourself,  
As we do.

# The Day the World Ends

*Jodie Lynch Hegarty*

*after Czesław Miłosz*

On the day the world ends  
I awake from a coma  
to see cracks on the walls,  
rubble on the floor, windows broken  
and paper all around.

I get out of bed to find out  
I'm in a hospital gown and  
no shoes. I walk around trying  
to find my way out as I find  
the main double doors

I open the doors to discover  
an empty city with buildings  
collapsing and cars that are  
burnt. I find an abandoned  
store that sells clothes –  
I changed from the gown, put on  
some shoes and packed a bag  
full of things I might need.  
I set off to find some people.

I walk for days with the  
sun bating down on me, the  
heat is a kiln. I see these  
creatures that move quite fast

and I hide in the ruins as quiet  
as I can but, unfortunately,  
it is no good. They come  
and claw until I am gone.

## Mountains

*Viktoria Kreslak*

the mountains are tall and traitorous, we have to climb to see the top, most people give up half way through or before they even start because they can't see the top of the mountain. they often take the easy route by the river instead of changing their mindset on the longer mountainous route.

## The Mouse

*Viktoria Kreslak*

the mouse, so small and white honestly quite a delight but you never really see her anymore, she's always there, you can hear her all the time wondering around her little room but she doesn't come out to say hi anymore.

## Celebrations

*Viktoria Kreslak*

the famous irish holiday is coming upon us once again. the streets with green shamrocks and the parade on patrick street has never been so voluptuous. people are dressed as leprechauns once again talking about the gold at the end of the rainbow. now that this pandemic has come to an end we celebrate this day with a drink once again.

## Ghost

*Dayna Underhill*

The windows had a layer of thin ice after the snow. The grass had no evidence of life, only the sight of the white snow. Seeing the smoke from the houses on the black and the kids playing in the cold soft snow it gave me the spirit of an old Christmas ghost.

## Dusk

*Dayna Underhill*

A long empty corridor  
When a human  
Figure appears  
I had to stand there  
As I faced the figure  
A rich posh figure  
I guess  
He stood there  
With what looked like  
A hobble  
I guess  
I stood there  
For eternity

## Cap

*Dayna Underhill*

In the attic of my old  
Childhood home  
Is where I found it  
In an old rustic chest  
His old fabric hat  
I took it with me  
Down to the kitchen  
Where his chair  
Sat still  
With his old cushion  
Not a dent to be seen  
It brought back  
Many magnificent memories  
Oh  
How I wish he was here

## Flew

*Dayna Underhill*

Though he is gone nearly ten years dead  
We kept the cap on the top  
Had his pillows by the bed  
And his pictures by the hob  
  
We couldn't leave it though  
His life was true  
Though we can't have known  
I would like to know if he flew

## The past

*Dayna Underhill*

The past

Was secret

Until the future came

It held its secrets

The books had warnings

The old could tell

From their lives

The history books were real

## Haiku

*Dayna Underhill*

A crow who met death

Who somehow survived the day

To tell the tale

His life as a crow

With a golden crown to wear

A privileged crow

Whose life is normal

Although he met death he

Never changed.



# Bubble

*Dayna Underhill*

A little girl  
Sat in her bubble  
By herself  
Where she lived  
Where she loved  
A book in her lap  
A light to shine  
No friends in sight  
No family to annoy  
By herself  
In her imagination  
Where she sat  
In the corner of her room  
That's her bubble

# Years

*Dayna Underhill*

Waking up

Early morning everyday

To the same routine

As the first born

Taking care of them all

As if they were leaving

Every year as

They grow up

To leave their home

But will always return

A new generation

Born into the world

They will know

How you felt

Through the years

## Coláiste Chríost Rí

Poetry by

**Adam Lynch**

**Daniel Mitchell**

**Eddie Strehl**

**Nikolay Lynch**

Assisting writers: **Paul Casey**

School TY Coordinator: **James Lenihan**

Workshops held in: **Coláiste Chríost Rí**



It's not often I get to work with smaller groups during *The Unfinished Book of Poetry* project. While I was surprised at first to see a class of only four, I was soon put at ease when I realised just how engaged and focussed this group was. Even though I had taken over from another writer who had to withdraw due to covid concerns, we were soon in the swing of things and were able to explore many of the poetic elements I believe are fundamental to gaining a good grasp of exactly what it is (aside from oodles of effort and imagination) it takes to make poetry happen. These four young writers responded diligently and wholeheartedly, which is evident in the work here.

We explored a wide range of poets from across geographical space and time, including the likes of Billy Collins, Sylvia Plath, Matthew Sweeney, Wislawa Szymborska, Simon Armitage and a host of others, to survey a variety of literary tools and poetic elements, during each session - metaphor, musicality, cliché, haiku, anthropomorphism, emotional and fictional narratives, humour, ekphrasis, list poems, superstition, food, invention and journey poems, among others. I hope you enjoy them as much as I do!

**Paul Casey**

# Poems

Coláiste Chríost Rí



## A knock on the door ...

*Adam Lynch*

A knock on the door echoes through my head,  
I hear the wind whistle in the air.  
The sun tries to peak over the hills, telling  
Morning to arrive,  
But the sky is dark, winter wants to thrive

## She is

*Adam Lynch*

She is the morning, always awake,  
She is the summer, always bright.  
She is warm, as a freshly baked cake,  
She is the sun, shining its light.

She is the harp, soft and calm,  
She is a rock concrete, crazy and mad.  
She is a volcano, can give you a fright,  
She is a walking trail, can calm you down after a stressful day.

She is the living room, cozy and soft,  
She is a comedy book, full of jokes.  
She is a story, very interesting,  
She will always be armour, keeping my family safe.

## 14 Boyne Crescent

*Daniel Mitchell*

The front door swoops open using all my might  
to stop it from swinging back into me.

I'm greeted by a carpet that follows my feet  
and as I enter, the smell of perfume,  
can only be described as the colour pink,  
sweet, calming, it sends tingles up your spine.

The wallpaper around the hall is so inviting to touch,  
a design from a bygone era of home décor.

As my fingertips run against it, they feel the bubble  
of each individual crevice.

The stairs creak as I climb, trying my best  
not to wake the man of the house.

I enter the living room  
and the photos of everyone I know,  
unrecognisable with age.

And suddenly as you take a step further,  
the feeling hits you,  
the warmth I've known since infancy.

The fire crackles, promising not to bite,  
but as I edge closer, my skin begins to melt away,  
My only defence is the arm rest of the leather couch.  
I let my face rest against the cold, cold giant's chair,  
I'm now safe from my fears,  
But unable to move, unless I face the flames.

## Home Away From Home

*Daniel Mitchell*

To the tiles that greet my feet with a shiver,  
To the bark of the dog that bursts my eardrum  
To the couch that invites me to sink into it,  
To the stairs that creak with every footstep,  
To the urge to open each door out of curiosity,  
To the smile of excitement ushering me inside,  
Thank you for putting a smile on my face.

To the feeling of exhaustion but the happiness keeping me awake,  
To the dog now asleep on my lap,  
To the movie I'm not focused on,  
To the clothes that make me feel like a cloud,  
To the fly on the wall after sneaking in the back door,  
To the two slices of pizza left in the foot stool,  
Thank you for making me at peace.

## Blind to Colour

*Daniel Mitchell*

What is pink? The panther is pink, with his theme song playing along.  
What is red? My own is red, no that's the wrong pen, this is the red one!  
What is blue? My water is blue, although it's more see-through.  
What is white? The clouds are white, until it starts to rain.  
What is yellow? The sun is yellow, I say whilst my retinas burn away.  
What is green? The grass is green, but no... it's orange... okay fine, my  
school jumper is green, no... that looks brown. WHAT IS GREEN?

## Guiding Star

*Daniel Mitchell*

I stepped out my door and the darkness of the night covered all,  
Lights looked dull but I walked until the star shone,  
I continued to walk as the star followed suit.

The cars tried to disrupt our peace with their booming engines  
Coughing black smoke, but the star prevailed,  
It followed by me and it listened, not only did it listen, it understood.

With a light so bright, it broke through my own darkness,  
I said goodbye but it always stayed, shining forever onto me.

## Window

*Daniel Mitchell*

I see all,  
Nothing is hidden from me,  
Except whatever stands behind that wall.

I let the air flow,  
From outside to in,  
I let you hear the wind blow.

For I have many uses, to keep fresh and to see,  
But I just hate when those filthy hands touch me.



# Masks

*Daniel Mitchell*

Masks are done for  
Show your face to the world  
We persevered

# Nr 1

*Eddie Strehl*

civil war of blood,  
silence under grapes at sea,  
pick, throw it leave it

# Ireland

*Eddie Strehl*

what is there to do?  
not even sheep around here  
This cannot be it

# 100 thoughts united

*Eddie Strehl*

100 thoughts united  
in humanity and distinct in their cloth  
my family is different

PB

*Eddie Strehl*

Dear jar of peanut butter,  
standing in the corner of my wardrobe  
waiting for me to come home,  
and put on a warm cosy hoodie,  
I can't resist you,  
after a stressful day,  
a spoon next to you and your top lifted a bit,  
for me to touch the seamless surface of your walls,  
and take a tip to tease me.

When I then take more,  
my shoulders ease.  
I feel complete,  
my smile is released.  
And today I put a jar into the corner of her wardrobe,  
lifted up the top,  
and laid a spoon next to it.

two birds, two chains ...

*Eddie Strehl*

two birds, two chains, two monkeys  
but how many fish, can't we see  
because they're under a cover  
together in the dull prison of water.  
or are we the prisoners?

## Marek

*Eddie Strehl*

He is 11:00 o'clock, ready for lunch break but not willing to stop.  
he is the beginning of summer, when the preparations are done  
he is a flute, happily,  
he is the top of a hill,  
he is the nice street in the neighbourhood you choose even though it's longer.  
he is a small couch that can stand in every room  
he is the hand held Hoover, always charged up  
he is the pair of soccer shorts next to your bed

## xAirplane

*Eddie Strehl*

It is loud but so quiet  
I look through the rows  
people sleep, kids ask their mother for something to play  
I don't hear them. It's so loud but so quiet

I see the pulsating city  
Its lights are far away  
I can't hear it.  
It's too loud but so quiet.

With every second all problems are further away  
I feel the pressure falling off me  
Everything unimportant is disappearing  
I stop looking back

## Colour

*Nikolay Lynch*

What is red? The stop sign is red,  
To stop people going to their death bed.  
What is yellow? The sun is yellow,  
Keeping you warm.  
What is pink? A rose is pink  
Which makes the girls wink.  
What is blue? The sea is blue,  
Where sea creatures swim through.  
What is black? Our front door is black  
Which is located at the end of a cul-de-sac

## Summer

*Nikolay Lynch*

Lying on a towel off the hot golden sand  
I look to my right with a cocktail in hand  
The children on the sandy shore  
As their grandad on his deckchair snores  
The taste of salt on my lips  
Reminds me of fish and chips

## What am I?

*Nikolay Lynch*

curved like a lion ready to pounce  
I join with lots of others  
I move people from one place to another  
I have a friend who comes to me  
I am mostly silent and cannot be heard  
I have an owner who starts me up  
I think of how to keep you safe  
I make a noise like most others  
i dream of how fast i can go curved like a lion ready to pounce.

## Dreams

*Nikolay Lynch*

The living room remembers the Christmas tree going up each year  
The kitchen can hear the rattle of everyone scrambling for food  
The hallway is troubled with all the dirty shoes  
The toilet is sick of being flushed  
My room is hoping to be cleaned once more  
The attic is full of my grandmother's stash of memories  
The garden is dead waiting for a new lease of life  
The house can dream but it cannot stop it from falling apart  
Only I can do that.

## Below

*Nikolay Lynch*

As I sit on a boat  
Watching the dolphins play and dance  
Together in tandem

As the hot spicy sun shines  
Down on me all I think about

Is what it's like below the water  
Down, down, down into the dark

## Love

*Nikolay Lynch*

Love is the thing  
That makes your heart stop

It's part of your soul  
That has been lost

Love is spending time with her  
It's the sweet cherry blossom in spring

Love is also the thing  
That can make your heart split.

## Bishopstown Community School

### Poetry by

**Aderinmola Adeniran**

**Quahira Malebe**

**Emma Hayman**

**Apolonia Synowiecka**

**Szymon Szoltun**

**Michael Chucks**

**Mikolaj Wujek**

**Jack Sullivan**

**Aleksa Lajic**

**Megan Murphy**

**Elykia Abossolo Mbo**

Assisting writer: **John W. Sexton**

T.Y. Coordinator: **Ciara Clifford**

Workshops held in **Bishopstown Library**

Co-ordinating Librarian: **Fionuala Ronan**



The students from Bishopstown Community School represent one age: the sixteen-year-old of now. But these particular sixteen-year-olds of now represent several different cultures, some of them fluent in their own languages, and every one of them had their own very particular idea of what they wanted to do. A few, of course, probably initially wanted to do nothing. But that's never really a problem, because nothing always comes before something anyway. But most wanted to write, and some were already writing, in private and for themselves, often with no desire to show their writing to others. This is the usual case with most writers setting out.

And some in the group, and again this is a common situation with beginner writers, very definitely wanted to write, but had never really ever written anything, but at the same time had given it much thought, even to the extent that a lot of nebulous ideas about things they wanted to write had been suspended, like some form of creative frogspawn, in their minds for years. Indeed, the condition of most writers, and certainly most poets, is that our minds are often full of clotted creative frogspawn, all of it waiting for the right conditions, the favourable temperature, and the pertinent stimuli, in order to stir it into metamorphosis.

The task of the visiting writer is very often just a matter of disturbing the creative frogspawn by throwing a few stones into the pond. Metaphorical stones, of course. Throwing actual stones at students doesn't work. In fact, most writers of any level of experience will react negatively to any kind of chiding.

The first thing that I discovered about my students was that, besides Irish and English, there were many other languages amongst them, from Polish to Serbian, from French to Spanish, and even Yoruba. They were all adamant, however, that they wanted to create poetry solely from English. However, indigenous language is never still and can never be silenced, and is always embedded in the DNA of our clotted creative frogspawn. And in the writing of these young poets, you'll often see how their inherent language and culture finds ways to break out into the poetry.

One of the metaphorical stones that I often threw into the pond was the suggestion for magical thinking. Magical thinking should not be confused with a tendency towards fantasy, but is actually a psychological technique, often used by writers and artists, to place a filter through the real in order to encourage hidden textures to reveal themselves. It's a bit like looking into the great distances of outer space through different screens, infra-red or ultra-violet for instance, in order to reveal otherwise unseen definitions. In poetry, magical thinking has a powerful tendency to expose metaphor, and metaphor always adds extra tone – from resonance, to feeling, to atmosphere.

In the poems that follow, you'll find the real world in abundance, but often refitted, enhanced, truer to itself. Please enter. The poets await you.

**John W. Sexton**





# Poems

Bishopstown Community School



# My World

*Aderinmola Adeniran*

It's warm and bright,  
the air is sweet.

There's so much to do;  
there's plenty of time.

It's a great day.

It's a great hour.

But why am I reluctant?

Why do I hesitate?

Why do I give up without trying?

Why am I here?

Suddenly it's not warm, it's dull.

The air isn't sweet, it's just suffocating.

The great hour has passed.

There's so much I want to do.

But I just can't.

I'm able but at the same time I'm not.

I'm just tired.

I'm tired of everything.

School. Food. Myself.

I'm tired of this feeling.

Why am I like this?

Why am I so suffocated?

Why am I so tired?

I don't do anything but at the same time I do too much.

It's overbearing, it's choking me.

It's slowly killing me.  
I'm too tired to fight it.  
But tomorrow is another day,

I can try again tomorrow. Right?  
Or will I give up again before I even try?

## True Beauty

*Aderinmola Adeniran*

You're beautiful.  
Even in your ugly moments.

Your actions make me smile.  
Your joy brings me peace.

You're a beautiful flower  
and I love to watch you grow.

## A Pindrop

*Aderinmola Adeniran*

Sometimes used to create a comedic atmosphere or a tense one.

It emphasises how quiet the place is.

I wish I saw the signs.

Push pins, such a funny word you truly know how to push me.

Pin drops.

The sound of them resonates within me.

But not for good reasons. Not with you.

With you, I'm tip-toeing around pins carefully.

Hoping you won't sneak up and push.

Pin drops.

With you the pins aren't dropping.

Not on the ground anyway.

You're forcing them down my throat.

No matter how much I struggle.

Or fight.

You hold me tight.

Such intimacy comes at a price.

Pin drops.

Restricting me.

With nowhere to go.

I stop.

I give up.

And just let you do as you please.

Spilling out of my mouth are pins.

Dropping softly to the ground.

Pin drops.

A sound that truly resonates within.

Pin drops.

At least within me.

## Something Destroying the World

*Aderinmola Adeniran*

Post, Like, Repost, Comment, Repeat.

Post, Like, Repost, Comment, Repeat.

Most people on social media follow  
this interesting sequence.

A sequence that keeps us addicted;

a sequence that keeps us obsessed.

A sequence that slowly kills

“Why didn’t they like my post?”

“Why did they get more views?”

“Why can’t they like me, like they like her?”

A sequence that takes over lives;

a sequence that kills.

A sequence that will keep going on;

a destructive sequence.

# Pray

*Aderinmola Adeniran*

Was it wrong for me to long for comfort?

Was it wrong to cry into the heavens?

Praying for them to take me away.

So that I can be with you once more.

Why was I forced to bear this burden?

Why couldn't I be like the rest?

Content.

Happy, that I had you in my life once.

Was it wrong to wish for another life with you?

Was it selfishness?

Or was it despair?

If another chance was to come,

I would grab it and run.

Run with you.

But life isn't as kind as dreams.

So, I'm left in the dark,

longing for comfort.

From someone who isn't here.

Someone who leaves me crying at our shared memories.

Someone I'm grateful for.

Someone who doesn't exist.

Not in this world.

Not anymore.

Only in places I cannot see.

Though I'm thankful  
for our time shared together,  
I pray I will never feel such emotions again.

## Cricket

*Aderinmola Adeniran*

On scorching summer nights  
when you're trying to sleep,  
I'm outside singing sweet hymns.  
I sing only for you, my sweet.  
I sing to help you rest a bit.  
Though why are you irritated?

Is my singing awful?  
Well, that doesn't matter,  
I will sing to you till tomorrow.  
You kick your blanket off your body,  
and smother your face with a pillow.  
I know I sing a bit off tune,  
but there's truly no need to be rude.  
I said it once and I'll say it twice.

I will sing till tomorrow.  
I am your night-time companion.  
Even if you do not like my sweet tunes,  
you will soon become immune.



# Perfect

*Aderinmola Adeniran*

Why won't they look my way?  
I need their constant stares to feel whole.  
Why don't they acknowledge me?  
Why do they only whisper bad things?  
Why don't they care the same way I do?  
Why? Why? Why? Why?

But that's okay.  
I'll just pretend.  
I'll be the perfect girl.  
I am the perfect girl.  
I don't need anyone if I have myself,  
they don't matter to me.

I need to fit into their standards.  
I need their approval.  
I don't care if it's all fake.  
I want approval, I want love, I want attention.

Screw them!  
I need it all, it's not a want anymore.  
They don't matter to me, they're just jealous.

That's why  
I have to be the perfect girl

# Decaying Rose

*Aderinmola Adeniran*

Sometimes when I look at you  
I feel pure rage.  
Sometimes it's adoration.

You really like hurting me.  
I'm sure you like the way my eyes brim with tears.  
How my nose scrunches in distaste.  
And how my eyebrows knit together.  
You make me regret everything.

I often wish I could hate you,  
but I can't bring myself to.  
Yet you hurt me repeatedly  
and I just let you.  
Always hoping for once  
that you'll learn how your words  
are like poisoned thorns:

wrapping around my body  
while I reach out for a decaying rose.  
A rose that can't hold on any longer.

But I am the foolish one,  
knowing you will not change.  
Not for me.  
Not ever for me.

## Detective

*Quahira Malebe*

We put you under the stairs in the night; it acted as a dark alleyway. In the morning we scooped you up and you ran through our sleeves, like speeding through the tunnels along a highway. I didn't do any research. I just assumed, like a naive cop throwing away a case file.

I never noticed the signs, the scratching, the squeaking just like an unreliable witness.

One morning I woke up and one of you had disappeared; the other lay face up, completely still. We stared and wondered, like officers first stepping into a crime scene. We buried you in the snow with make-shift shovels and mourned, like a heartbroken family donned in black.

We moved on with our lives and decided to do some cleaning, giving ourselves a fresh start.

We found you in a pot, laying face up, completely still. We were shocked and confused, like detectives reopening a closed case. We had no choice but to move on once again and life was still. To this day I still ponder about what happened. Just like a retired detective living with his regrets.

# Difference

*Quahira Malebe*

I'm put on this pedestal, praised and rewarded.  
People look up to me, they listen to my words  
and follow them with enthusiasm.

I'm perfect.

They know it and they tell me all the time.

I tell them I'm not; I blush and shrug it off.

"You're so humble" they say.

I don't brag, it's unbecoming.

Want to know a secret? I really am perfect.

I'm more perfect than they say I am.

There are not enough words in the English language  
to describe how truly phenomenal I am.

I'm better than those who praise me;

I honestly feel bad for them.

They will live their lives,  
only hoping they can reach me.

They can't and they never will.

Their job will always be to look up to me.

Not people like me.

Only me.

There are no other people on this Earth like me.

I'm the only me.

I'm the only extraordinary,  
beautiful, talented and beloved me.

## Forever & Ever & Ever, Amen

*Quahira Malebe*

You're divine in everything you do, in everything you say.

I can feel your presence with me every single day.

I have loved you since birth in every single way.

The mighty printer in my heart you shall stay.

You create and create with no hesitation.

Whether it's hundreds or thousands you print with dedication.

You are not selective; no matter what the job is, you will get it done.

You scan bigger and brighter than our Earth's scorching sun.

A simple office supply to many, but much more to me.

I bow to you every day, my holy deity.

Keep printing forevermore and make my life a joy.

It is my duty as your loyal servant to love you from now to evermore.

## Wasted Time

*Quahira Malebe*

I was content for the most part  
but I could tell something was off.  
It hadn't clicked yet, but the spark was gone.

I felt sick every time I spoke to you,  
because I felt like I was lying and to you.  
To a certain extent I had been.

The day I realised I did not love you  
but someone else.

That day I beat myself up  
for the way I was feeling.

It wasn't your fault. It wasn't mine either,  
but if I had any control  
I wouldn't have let it happen.  
I wouldn't have turned my back on you  
and ran away.

I know you moved on, as have I.  
Maybe it was karma coming to your side,  
because no matter how much I ran  
I couldn't keep up.

I left you only to end up alone again.  
The day I realised I did not love you  
but someone else.

# End of the Road

*Quahira Malebe*

Little king of the night it's time to come home. Return to your cave shrouded in darkness on your humble steed. You fought an honest battle; your brethren would be proud. Now it's time to turn on your headlights and navigate your way to your throne. Your shrew is weary from the long journey. You promised rest would come soon. You yourself are tired but tonight, Oh king, you won't sleep. Tonight, you will sit on your throne and reminisce on all of your fallen soldiers. Those who fought to protect you since the sun rose in the morning.

Oh little king of the night you no longer have subjects to rule over. How can you call yourself a king? Perhaps living in solitude will be a fitting punishment; failure shouldn't be taken lightly.

Your steed has collapsed under your weight, this is the end of the line. The vanquished skull you once held in your hand falls to the ground alongside your once trusted friend. Perhaps you were never fit to be a king. It's time to hang up the crown. Close your eyes, turn off your headlights and let yourself fall.

Goodnight little king of the night, you served the darkness well.

# Conscience

*Quahira Malebe*

Hidden in the nooks and crannies you never search,  
cosied up with all the spiders and their webs,  
I'm watching and I'm waiting.

I see you getting ready for bed,  
I adore every strand on your head,  
I'm always watching and waiting.

When the lights go out, I find myself getting bolder.  
I know the night is on my side.  
I get so close I can breathe on your shoulder;  
oh how I hope you don't open your eyes.  
I know if you saw me, you wouldn't like me much.  
The glisten in my eyes isn't charming enough.

But when the day comes where you jump awake,  
don't be frightened - I'm here for your sake.  
I'm here to protect you, watching and waiting.  
I would never hurt you, watching and waiting.  
I really love you, watching and waiting.  
I will never leave you; I'm always  
watching and waiting.



## Film Reel

*Quahira Malebe*

Eyes glued to the screen  
you absorb everything you see.  
Fixated on a particular scene,  
Unbeknownst to others  
absorbing every detail you need.

Transported to your own world,  
one of the characters in a fictional land.  
You know what to do, you know what to say.  
You fit in with them  
as if you've lived with them everyday.

You can recite line after line without fault.  
Your mind is full of colour, a creative vault.  
To others you're different, to me you're brilliant.  
Your passion and memory are worth  
millions upon millions, millions upon millions.

# A Marriage Story

*Quahira Malebe*

Pot holes filled with love bugs  
Love bugs that infect your skin  
Skin covered in rashes  
Rashes that leave your body red  
Red like the blood dripping from your nose  
Your nose so battered and broken  
Broken like a fallen chandelier  
The chandelier that crashed at the ball  
The ball you attended because of your wife  
Your wife now cold and grey  
Grey like the sky that cries out rain  
Rain that splatters onto the black road  
The road filled with pot holes, empty and void of love

# Distance

*Quahira Malebe*

I've met you around two times.

I can only remember one.

That memory of you that summer I felt was enough.

We sat together under the sun,

and you thatched for everyone to see.

That time I didn't realise

how much you'd mean to me.

I know, despite the distance,

you were a kind and warm soul.

The impact you had hit me tenfold.

Although all I have is your picture,

I'll never forget you were there.

The thatched mat that's hung on our door

will stay with us forever,

a treasure that's become rare.

## 2036 Dying Cells

*Quahira Malebe*

I would be able to wake-up as a different person every single day.  
One day a woman working for the underground, the darkest parts of my city.  
Another day an anxious man marrying his third bride.  
I'll have a device to steal the identity of those I choose.  
I'll live their life for a day.  
I won't know who they are or what they do.  
I'll simply feel the way they feel for our whole day.  
Never the same person even if I loved being in their skin.  
Each body I steal leaves my own vulnerable, losing life.  
Everything has a limit.  
Before I go I want to do right by my past self.  
Experience the things I never got to.  
I'd like to live out my last days as someone who's fully content;  
someone who can bring me peace.  
After all, once I leave my last stranger's body  
I'll most likely never wake up in my own again.

# Midsummer Prince

*Quahira Malebe*

Scorching hot sun  
Dry short grass  
Vacant empty space

Far, far away  
Trees full and bright  
bearing sweet gifts, catch my eye

Each step forward  
I feel a strange pull  
One fruit is there waiting for me

A crisp crimson apple  
Not a bruise in sight  
Speckled and streaked with the golden sunlight

I can already taste it  
Sharp, sweet and succulent  
A stream close by, perfect for washing

I reach up to grab it  
The pull vanished in an instant  
Dark brooding woods reveal themselves

I feel a sense of unease  
The air feels empty  
But there's something close to me

The push has vanished,  
replaced by the command to stay  
There's no escaping the grizzly  
that's set its sight on me

Stuck to the grass wishing it were quicksand  
Leaning closer to me I can hardly breathe  
It leans closer to me and says,  
"You don't belong here"

I looked in its black, deep eyes  
The life of a man who suffered great losses  
The life of a man who fought for his people

I step away from the great bear before me  
No pull or push forcing my hand  
The history of a fallen monarchy engraved in this land

I return to the dry grass  
Feel the warmth of the earth  
The Midsummer Prince protects his world forever

## First First...love?

*Quahira Malebe*

Scarlet red love

Feverish feeling

Eyes following

Heavy breathing

Hands touch

Feelings lost

Empty and yearning

Your flame stops burning

You only stoke the flame

When you say my name

Royal blue cold

I miss you; I need you

# Sheriff

*Emma Hayman*

My pride and joy

A break from my real life

My eejit

Oversized child

My safe place

My dumb old man

The reason my piggy bank is empty

My only reason I'm happy after a bad day

My really, really beautiful

My life

Dramatic Numpty

My favourite thing to see every day

Far too loyal to me

My venting buddy

My best friend



# Protector

*Emma Hayman*

The moon, the stars, an animal  
Everything relates back to you in my head

Artemis  
The goddess of the moon  
The goddess of the hunt  
Sister of Apollo

I thought a lot about you  
Constantly drawn to you

One of the few deities  
I still have faith in at this point

You've always been there for me  
Protecting me

I don't know if it's just me  
You could just be in my head

Either way, you help me

# The Greatest Magician

*Emma Hayman*

I can see the look of embarrassment in your eyes  
You claimed that you could summon a ghost  
Your audience laughing when to them there was nothing there  
Even you couldn't see it  
But I could

It's getting ready to swallow you  
And to drag you into the darkness

You should look down at your shadow

There's a reason you shouldn't summon spirits  
You could end up summoning the wrong one

The spirit you wanted was already here  
It was me

# Help

*Emma Hayman*

I can feel the wind in my hair as I leave the forest  
My basket is full of food for the children in the village

I had heard a few of them talking about a famine  
While they were near the edge of the trees

I wanted to help  
When I got there they were all in the Square, talking

They gathered their children as they saw me  
And they bundled them inside

I left my basket of food in the square  
Their faces went white  
Almost bloodless

Suddenly they were all gone  
My basket left there  
Completely full

Fine  
They're starving and they won't accept help

I suppose I'll send a little fire  
A kinder death for them

# That Me

*Emma Hayman*

I hate you  
That was all I could think of  
I loved you  
And you've just gone  
No apologies  
'We're too different now'

All I'm thinking now is good riddance  
You've decided I'm not good enough?  
Maybe you were never worth my time  
I never felt like I was enough for you

I was never pretty enough  
Never funny enough  
You were the 'perfect' one  
The one people wanted

I was the extra one that was just there  
I knew you before all this  
Both of us were at our worst  
Both of us felt unworthy of love

Both of us were ugly by other people's standards  
So we gravitated to each other  
As soon as you became 'that girl' then that was it for us  
You found other people

Better people in your eyes  
Other 'perfect' people

You moved on  
I was always there but you never wanted me then

You found your new, shiny, perfect friends  
So I did too  
I found my kind, accepting, imperfect friends  
And I've never been happier

I can be myself now  
I'm glad that time is finally over  
and I can move on  
from the hardest times of my life

You were that last reminder  
That me is finally gone

## The Palace in the Sky is Quiet

*Emma Hayman*

Only two beings out of the hundreds that were there are left  
The sleeping deity and a single attendant  
The god will sleep until someone on earth remembers him  
Humanity has forgotten  
There's no use for him if he's not worshipped  
The universe cast him aside  
Eventually, he could wake  
For now he sleeps in a cold, empty palace in the sky  
Waiting for someone to remember

# The Kraken Rests

*Emma Hayman*

Hiding under the doomed ship  
Waiting for the organ to play  
The dead man on borrowed time is below the surface  
Waiting to play that dreaded piece on the organ  
That only the kraken can hear

The kraken wakes at the sound of the organ  
It sees the ship above and slowly the tentacles glide upwards  
Ready to drag the sleeping ship down into the depths  
The sailors sleep, unknowing of what's coming  
The monster below the hull

The dead man below the surface starts to play louder  
A single tentacle rises above the waves  
It grabs the man in the crow's nest  
As the man is swept away, the bell is rung  
Every man on board is awake

The dead man continues to play,  
Hearing the roar of the monster  
and the screams of the people on board  
The sailors desperately swing,  
slash and stab at the tentacles

More and more of their crewmates  
are being swallowed by the beast  
The tune begins to slow to just the beat  
of the kraken's heart  
The monster retreats beneath the waves once more

The sailors return to their beds  
Assuming they have won  
Little do they know  
the dead man will softly continue to play

The crescendo finally arrives  
The kraken rises again  
the sailors wake for the last time

Just to hear the roar of the kraken  
and the crunch of wood  
The last sounds they will ever hear  
before they end up in the kraken's beak

## Constantly

*Emma Hayman*

The constantly growing potato  
A potato that grows to the size of a house  
A house with a rat living in it  
A rat that reads minds like a book  
A book so full of nonsense that no one can understand but the person  
The person that swims in the river  
A river that flows with clouds  
The clouds that never stop raining on the potato  
The constantly growing potato

# Blood

*Apolonia Synowiecka*

I look out my window, watching the beautiful moon.

It is like it's speaking to me, telling me  
that it's time for the ritual.

Soon from pearl white it turns blood red.

It's the blood moon tonight.

I have been waiting for it a long time.

It's tonight that I finally sacrifice my dolls to the devil.

You may say that it's unusual to give dolls as a sacrifice.

But the dolls, each one of them,  
has an ancient soul in them that no human can touch.

All I am doing is making sure that she's safe;  
but with a payment, of course.

I am getting my little sister back.

She died years ago.

I've missed her so much.

Finally, I get to see her.



# The Fate

*Apolonia Synowiecka*

Walking through an empty dark corridor, I can feel goosebumps rising on my skin. I have no idea how I got here but the lack of light is scaring me. Seeing a light in the corner flickering, I think: “Why is there a light only there?”

Starting to move towards it I see an olden door, slowly opening in my direction. Walking through it is another corridor with an extra two flickering lights, but then I see a weird texture in the shape of another door, one that looks like a blend of moss and wood. Like a tree in the shape of a door.

Walking bravely in the door’s direction, I close my eyes and take a deep breath: only to inhale fresh scent of musk and earth. A wave of cold air hits my face and then, I open my eyes to the sight of dark woods, and mountains peeking out from the trees.

I’ve never been outside when it was so dark, a sense of adrenaline fills my body. I slowly step on the wet grass, a few leaves crunching under my feet. Feeling a strong pull towards the woods, I start walking towards them, taking my time and looking around with every least step I take.

Now I am deep inside the woods, with a fading recollection of how I got here. I look up to see a white sparkly orb by the crown of a tree. Something is telling me to get there and take it, there’s a force pushing me towards it.

On approaching the tree, branch by branch I start climbing it; multiple times almost missing my step, almost causing myself to fall. The more I climb, the quicker I realise that the orb is right beside the moon. And the closer I get, the colder it gets.

Looking at the moon, mesmerized, I see a shadow bulking closer to me. I

blink my eyes and shake my head to check if I'm hallucinating. They are not hallucinations. Greater, greater, now all I see is a gigantic snow owl flying towards me, its feathers glistening in the moonlight, alabaster wings and feathers.

It stretches its wings at every approach, closer to me. Its eyes dark as night and focused on me, I've never seen anything more beautiful than this creature. It is pleasant to the eye. It gets closer and closer to me, but before I can adjust, it snatches me off the last branch, and now I see that the white orb is held in its other claw.

Shaking my frail body through the swift air, the creature addresses me:  
"You are the answer to our happy ever after..."

## The Dancing Forest

*Apolonia Synowiecka*

Running through the dancing forest  
trying to run away from something terrifying.

I don't know what I'm doing but it's helping.  
I'm aware that this won't last forever  
and I'll end up somewhere I won't be able  
to get away from.

This is painful to do but I can't help it.  
I've been running away from my problems  
all my life and I'm doing it again.

# Delusion

*Apolonia Synowiecka*

Walking through the most beautiful place

I've ever been in.

Blossoming trees are all around me.

The scent of damp moss

and wet tree trunks calm me with every deep breath I take.

It feels like home; if I could I'd stay here forever.

The thought of building

my dream home right here

makes my stomach flutter.

Imagining myself decorating my own place,

watering every plant that's around me.

Feeding every creature that passes my land,

making sure it's a safe place for me and my pets.

Staying mostly home, writing stories with no one

to interrupt or distract me.

Taking care of every fruit that's growing

makes me the happiest person on the planet.

Every time I think of anything similar, my heart smiles.

I just hope one day this dream

will come true.

If it doesn't, I'll feel doomed.

## Mullet

*Szymon Szoltun*

A mullet. A muscle.

A living, breathing muscle.

A wild fish full of life.

A beast full of might.

Just like us or what we attempt to be.

The drive to be.

Even if some think we say mother instead of mullet.

We let ourselves loose to be stronger.

## Deadlifting

*Szymon Szoltun*

When I touch the bar

The pain fades

It is just me and the bar

As my worries fade

I ready myself, and let it fade

Lift it up into the sky

Then I smile through my pride

I have achieved my best

## Guardian

*Szymon Szoltun*

I sit, I watch through the eternity  
Just like I was asked by the Unity

I just sit  
I just wait

Until the horn is blown  
I wait like a clown

For the stars to die  
So I can be free

## House

*Szymon Szoltun*

In the distance you stood  
Hoping some would feel welcome in you

Your foundations brittle  
Only for beetles

Kids used to play  
Now they are scared

You are a place for fear

The stains still linger

# How I See Them

*Michael Chucks*

What do you see, what do you see? What are you thinking  
when you look at me?

A young Black man with some light; sixteen years old  
and ready to fight. The people you fear when you see at sight,  
running, hiding or holding your bag tight. You judge me  
by what I wear, do and say, calling the cops if I look your way.  
You say I'm destined to go out and rob at night,  
listen to drill music and drink till midnight.

But that is not what I see  
I see a young man, that's not big or tall,  
a boy that looks like them all.  
Waking up and it's all a dream, a vision, a scheme.

What is happening to me?

# A Hundred Things

*Michael Chucks*

Walking up to the door.

Knocking on the door.

Waiting for my grandparents  
to answer:

opening it open.

But it wasn't them,

it was someone else -

who I'd never seen before.

They must have been invited

into the house,

for only family are allowed in.

At this point

a hundred things were going through me.

## Face

*Mikolaj Wijek*

I feel it watching from out of sight  
Its presence keeps me awake at the darkest of hours  
Finding it is no easy task  
As I get nearer I can feel it dispel  
But who is it and what does it want?  
It seems sinister yet so complex  
Did it come and find me or is it bound to my mind?  
It creeps through the cracks on the bedroom wall  
It haunts me constantly till day turns to night  
I wish I could speak to the face on my wall

## Witch

*Mikolaj Wijek*

The sound of the wind is like a foreboding call  
An ominous sound, like a warning for all  
For no one knows what will happen tonight  
The setting is perfect, no moon and no light  
The farmers and villagers feel a mischievous power  
It passes through the wild during the witching hour  
The night is ours, all hope will be devoured



# Rabbits

*Jack Sullivan*

Tom and Jerry were the best of friends,  
better than we imagined.  
But we'd misnamed one of them.

The day I came home from school  
and there were multiple rabbits  
at the back of the hutch  
was one of the happiest days of my childhood.

But then, when the male attacked  
his own offspring  
it was one of their last days together.

The fairy tale darkened when the big bad fox  
came and ruined my childhood  
by stealing all their lives.

But the male was lucky  
because he had been separated from the rest,  
in a box of his own for attacking the young.

In the end he ran away  
after chewing his way out of his cage.

# Around

*Jack Sullivan*

Ah shit, here we go again.  
Again, on a trip around life

every day has its ups and downs  
but it all goes around.

What comes around, as they say.  
But does it matter? Do the rich

worry about where their next meal  
comes from, or do people

even care anymore? As long  
as they have the good life

there are no problems  
with the world.

# Incy

*Aleksa Lajic*

I am on the wall,  
you may never see me.

It might take you hours,  
Ages, but when you do,

you get scared. I wonder why?  
What is wrong with me?

Did I do something wrong?  
I am here just for safe, warm

space and darkness, but you  
still want to kill me.

## ...king Rat

*Aleksa Lajic*

You were the only person I trusted,  
And now I'm caught, you get busted.

I trusted you with my life,  
and you turned and stabbed me with a knife.

I thought you were the one I could share my thoughts,  
feelings and everything with, you'd watch my back.

But turns out you are just a ...king rat.

## In What Galaxy?

*Aleksa Lajic*

In the box I am stuck,  
there is no way out.

Escaping?

There is no doubt.

Weird planet this might be,  
but in what galaxy?

There are birds with human faces  
and hunting horns by their sides.

When I ask them any question,  
they just say "good night".

## As Usual

*Aleksa Lajic*

I am walking home as usual,  
but I decide to use a route  
that I have never used before.

It goes through the cave  
that people say is creepy,  
but I can't see what could go wrong.

As I am admiring the hanging crystals inside,  
I glance back along the path and see a weird,  
skinless, see-through creature riding some kind

of a huge mouse. He looks straight into my eyes,  
with a look as if he is about to take my soul.

I can see his ribs and organs and the exit

of the cave on the other side where I am supposed  
to go. In his hands he is carrying an empty skull.

I think it has been with him for a long time.

As he stares at me with its glowing eyes  
he lets out a high scream. Then he proceeds

to just go through me with his pointed, pointing eyes ...

# All the Way to Heaven

*Aleksa Lajic*

I wake up from a nightmare and head to the bathroom. But the hallway seems very different than usual: there are no doors along the sides, no light switches, nothing, just one door at the end with a little bit of bright light coming out of it. As I head in, I hear the door squeaking slowly, then, as soon as I turn around, it shuts itself and fades into the wall. When I turn back around there is suddenly another hallway in front of me, again with no light switches and no doors along the sides and again just one door at the very end. As I am approaching it, I see more and more light coming out of it, as if it might go all the way to heaven. As I enter through the doorway a flash of white light bursts and then fades away, and all of a sudden I am in some kind of a garden with a huge ladder. So, I decide to climb up the ladder, but at the very top I reach the limit and stand on a cloud. Then I hear something approaching me. It is a hawk as wide as a car. As it flies towards me it squeaks and grabs me in its talon, bringing me somewhere further up into the sky. Then a really bright light bangs into my eyes. Bangs! I am in hospital. Doctors tell me I have been in a coma for centuries and that it is now 4035. Human civilization is barely hanging on. I faint.

## The Lady in My Shadows

*Megan Murphy*

The lady in my shadows hides away.  
Once the lights are switched off for bedtime  
she appears on my pitch black, dark bedroom walls.  
She has the same look of fear in her eyes each night,  
as if she needs help.  
I hold out my hand.  
When I do there is a loud thump,  
then a scream and she disappears.  
I open my eyes to see a crowd of faces hovering over me.

## The Moth That Drinks Our Light

*Megan Murphy*

I come to work at night.  
I flutter my wings and come through your doors and windows.  
I follow the light all night:  
all night I try to find the perfect light.  
I dance around the light all night,  
Sucking up the light.  
Come morning, you will never know I was there.  
I leave no trace,  
as I'm the moth who drinks the light.

# Space Ducks

*Megan Murphy*

I believe we have space ducks.  
Ducks who float when they paddle in space.  
Space that is so, so far away,  
far away from Earth.  
Earth, where ducks paddle in lakes,  
lakes that are beautifully blue,  
looking up at the space ducks.

There are such things as space ducks.  
Ducks who shake their wet feathers,  
feathers that are so soft and tickling.  
Tickling that makes the loudest laughs,  
laughs as loud as elephants walking.  
Elephants that are loud in your dreams



## Radical Radness

*Megan Murphy*

*(For the Dissident Ugandan Poet, Stella Nyanzi)*

All these angers have built up inside me.  
And these men trying to put me in jail is not helping.  
They're grabbing whatever they can to rip me from the ground;  
I grip tightly onto one of the military's legs.  
All I can hear is the exasperated voices,  
screaming for me to let go.  
Anger rushes through me.

## The Burning Face

*Megan Murphy*

Every night when the clock strikes twelve, a man appears.  
Appears in the pitch-black night;  
the moon pierces through the clouds.  
The man is dressed in a long-tattered robe  
and has big round glasses framing his face.  
The moon shines brightly on his face  
and it starts to go up in flames;  
luminous orange and bright red sparks as he burns.  
The trees slowly start to close in on him.  
One look away and the trees make him disappear.  
The trees open back up and he's gone,  
as if nothing has happened.  
Every single night without fail.

# For When the Day Comes

*Elykia Abossolo Mbo*

I'm tired and scared.

We have to explain ourselves anywhere we go.

Us existing is already too much for them.

We can't go anywhere without an angry woman calling the police at us.

We can't walk home without getting shot by a cop who tonight is just dangerous.

They were both just sleeping and for some reason that was enough for them to end a short life.

They were all just kids laughing and goofing around with toys and that was too much, they opened fire.

And all of this because of the colour of our skin.

They may all rest in peace but they shouldn't have to.

We shouldn't have to worry, shouldn't have to keep our guard up all the time.

We shouldn't have to tell our children to be careful around certain people.

We shouldn't have to explain to our sons and daughters why their daddies will never be back.

I'm so sad, scared and tired.

I'm sad that this is the harsh reality for so many of our people.

I haven't experienced racism that much yet myself, but...

I'm scared for when the day comes that I have to face an angry white person, yelling nigga at me, or telling me I look pretty for a tree ornament, or that I'm a monkey. For the day I get refused a job because of my skin colour, my name or my hair and I'm tired.

I'm tired to have to worry about all those things, getting shit if I get in the wrong place at the wrong time, to learn one of my friends of colour got hurt by a bigot.

I'm a sixteen-year-old black girl and I'm scared, tired and sad.

# Lazy

*Ehykia Abossolo Mbo*

I had a pet some years ago.  
I can't remember her name for some reason.  
But I know she was the best hamster I'll ever have.

Once I lost her in our living room  
because I was too stupid or something  
and we found her two days later, thank God.  
She had kept some food in her cheeks.

Sadly, she died.  
She started becoming "lazy"  
and wouldn't eat her food anymore,  
and had stopped moving around in her cage.  
My aunt had to get her to the veterinary surgeon,  
only for him to put the poor thing down.

We buried her the day after in our backyard, next to a tree.  
I remember being sad, I think I cried a lot that night  
and my sister cried all the next day.

She was my best and first pet.  
I'll never forget her.  
May she rest in peace.

## I love you?

*Elykia Abossolo Mbo*

I love you,  
you and your brown hair  
with your blue azure eyes,

I love you,  
your nickname  
and all your funny games;  
the way you said I was the only one,  
saying I was pretty as Persephone.

I love you,  
your kisses and your hugs,  
the way you blush.  
When you message me,  
saying that you love me,  
and I reply to you with a cute nickname.  
But... oh?  
You don't like it?  
It's okay, I can reinvent it.

I love you?  
The way you ignore me,  
whenever I'm near you.  
I come toward your way  
for you to just sway away.  
So I message you  
“Hey, is everything all right”

I don't like you.  
The way you ruined everything  
and then blamed it on issues.  
You could've told me;  
I would have helped you.  
I'm not a mind reader.  
I can't do anything if you act any scarier.

I hate you.  
The way you keep begging me.  
Even after I said "c'est fini".  
You made jokes about it.  
So I'm making it real.  
And now you're all over me,  
begging me to try it again.  
I hate you.

## Not You. Me.

*Elykia Abossolo Mbo*

I'm different. I'm black.  
I'm really skinny,  
just like a skeleton.  
I'm socially awkward  
and I'm into colourful clothing.  
I love dancing.  
I don't enjoy anything  
that could be called normal.

## Picture

*Elykia Abossolo Mbo*

I took a picture of them.  
They looked out of it.  
With their dark eyes  
they looked at me, I was paralyzed.

They were just standing,  
and it was extremely confusing.  
How can such a nice person  
turn from something “or norme”?

The shadow under their silhouettes;  
walls, the wall wee-stained  
and plain.  
And I couldn't help but feel some pain.

Are they okay?  
They asked me to do this.  
But I don't know  
if I can anymore.

# Uncle

*Elykia Abossolo Mbo*

My uncle

He was the best

He was the nicest

Until something came in

Messing with his head

My uncle is the tallest of them all

and in my family we can go beyond walls

I remember him from when I was six

He used to joke around with us and bounce us on his knees

Giving us hiccups

Brown was the colour of his eyes

They were always so bright

Papers were always all over his desk

As he loved to draw small sketches

My uncle was a nice uncle

I miss him everytime I think of him

I hope he's okay

In the place where he was sent away

## Tiny Creature Large in the Mind

*Elykia Abossolo Mbo*

I was going outside  
for a run at night.  
The stars where so shiny  
I couldn't stay indoors.  
Step by step I approached.  
The exit then seemed so far.  
A cockroach!  
But it seems to have a "dar".  
What is it called?  
It has string dentons.  
I think it's called a mantis.

## On the Other Side

*Elykia Abossolo Mbo*

An answer is a mouth that lies  
Lies are gross like the sun dropping onto my hair  
Hair is short like the legs of my shoe  
My shoe was glad I didn't talk to that clown  
The clown on the other side was disappointed  
His daughter took the last wall



## Purple is Not Real

*Elykia Abossolo Mbo*

Yesterday, I'd gone to the past  
To tell my future self  
How to put make-up on a cloud  
And they told me they prefer eating  
Eating gives us baloney  
Baloney tastes like dreams  
Dreams float around in space  
Space fills up the void of the mirror  
Mirror jumped on a dog  
Dog ran backwards in the pink lake  
The pink lake was full of giraffes  
A giraffe told me that purple is not real  
Real, what is real after all?  
Even horses don't know the math answer

# In the Sudden Forest

*Elykia Abossolo Mbo*

I'm nice and cosy in my chair taking the sun rays in. I'm hoping to get my melanin back; the winter didn't do great on me. I'm listening to help me calm down from that panic attack I had previously. Ugh, I hate when it happens, literally coming out of nowhere when I'm reading or something. Oh, I almost forgot how pretty it is outside. The panic attack probably stopped me from seeing what was going on outside. Wow, all those trees are so tall and pretty, they just follow each other like a sort of small path, and there's a forest at the end of this path of trees. I never noticed it before, how strange. I've got to visit it, forests are so great. Ever since I was a small girl I have always loved forests. They're pretty, they're calm and when no one is in them it's so good. I shall go later for a calm walking session.

Ah! The entrance of the forest. I decided for my own personal reasons to go at sunset, because of how the light plays and everything, it's not too bright, not too dark, perfect for me.

The ground is so dense yet so soft under my feet, with all the leaves cracking and the grass-wet sounds. I am having blast. I can even hear all the animals, the birds, the frogs, all the other types of animals too. Oh! Was that a fox?

Finally I can just relax and admire the nature while listening to mother nature's music. I can just forget about everything and go on with my day. Sometimes I wish I could live in the woods forever. That'd get rid of my anxiety all right. Oh shoot, I got myself in the deep part of the forest, might have gone into my rough for a little too long.

What was that? A rustle...maybe it's just a camper. Or someone who heard me; they probably thought the same as I just did. It's probably just the shape of my anxiety.







# The Unfinished Book of Poetry 2022

featuring poems by

Conchúr Ó Rinn

Cáit Ní Chéilleachair

Séamas Ó Curnáin

Sorcha Slaughter

Benjamin Ó Muirí

Odherna Ní Mhuirthile

Kelly Ní Chathasaigh

Heather Ní Thnúthail

Eoghan Ó Súilleabháin

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