

The Unfinished Book of Poetry 2023

poems from five
Cork secondary schools





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poetry from five Cork City secondary schools



Comhairle Cathrach Chorcaí
Cork City Council

Arts Ealaíona

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LIBRARIES LEABHARLANNA

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Foreword

The seasons turn and time goes by and yet somethings are almost a given, a high point in the year. So it is with *The Unfinished Book of Poetry 2023*, now this extraordinary anthology is the 19th edition in the series, and once more is also published as an eBook. The world post Covid has settled back into a new normality and yet the interest in this creative ongoing project has never waned and grows and continues to blossom.

The Unfinished Book features new poems from young writers across the city. This year's edition showcases 45 young voices, representing five schools. The breadth of the work in this anthology showcases a vibrant contribution throughout with a wide variety of subject and style. The finished product is, as ever, thanks to the careful and attentive work of the five assisting writers. Each component of this process is important but without them this project would not have the impact it continues to enjoy. They have the happy effect of bringing out the talent of the students, and giving them the skills and confidence to express themselves in these, their collected works.

Thanks, and Congratulations to all of the young writers involved and their assisting writers:

- Regina Mundi College with poet Niamh Prior in Douglas Library;
- Ballincollig Community School led by poet Matthew Geden at the school;
- Coláiste Dabhéid chúram Colm Ó Ceallacháin, i Leabharlann na Cathrach;
- St Patrick's College with poet Lani O'Hanlon in Mayfield Library; and
- Presentation Brothers College with Paul Casey at the school.

As many of you know this was an innovative project in 2005, when the first *Unfinished Book of Poetry* was published. It has led to something unique that has a resonance with the younger writers. As it continues to prosper I warmly welcome this latest volume and I hope you enjoy it.

Special thanks to the assisting Authors and especially Paul Casey of Ó Bhéal for editing and curating the work.

David O'Brien
Cork City Librarian, April 2023

Assisting Writers' Biographies

Niamh Prior

Niamh Prior discovered a love for teaching creative writing when she began facilitating workshops for teenagers around her kitchen table in 2007. She continued to do so every Saturday morning until 2013 when she enrolled in the MA in Creative Writing at UCC. She has taught creative writing on the English degree programme at UCC. Her writing has appeared in publications including *The Stinging Fly*, *The North* and *The London Magazine*. Her poetry has won or been shortlisted for various competitions, most recently the Sylvia Plath Prize. Her debut book of fiction, *Catchlights*, was published in June 2022.

Matthew Geden

Matthew Geden was born and brought up in the English Midlands, moving to Kinsale in 1990. He has published several collections of poetry including *Fruit* (SurVision Books, 2020) and, most recently, *The Cloud Architect* (Doire Press, 2022). In 2017 he set up Kinsale Writing School providing a resource for local and international writers. He runs workshops, edits manuscripts and mentors emerging writers. In November 2019 he was Writer in Residence at Nanjing Literature Centre in China. He is the current Writer in Residence for Cork County Library and Arts Service.

Colm Ó Ceallacháin

Tá Colm Ó Ceallacháin i mbun na ceardlainne scríbhneoireachta 'Peann agus Pár' i leabharlann Shráid an Chapail 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.

Assisting Writers' Biographies

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.

Lani O'Hanlon

Lani O' Hanlon is the winner of the Poetry Ireland/ Trocaire Competition, 2022 and one of Poetry Ireland's Introductory Poets. She received a Participatory Project Award from the Arts Council of Ireland in 2023 and her poetry collection will be published by Dedalus Press in 2023/2024. She is a regular contributor to RTE Radio, Sunday Miscellany and her writing is published internationally. An experienced facilitator, creative writing teacher and somatic movement therapist; she designs, directs and teaches programmes with Waterford City and County Arts Office, South East Libraries, The Molly Keane Writers Retreats and the Waterford Healing Arts Trust.

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 *The Irish Times*. 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).

Regina Mundi College

Poetry by

Myah O'Brien

Solène Halligon

Arden Mallari

Emma Browne

Grace Hourihan

Leah Davis

Arissa Mallari

Assisting Writer: Niamh Prior

T.Y. Coordinator: Ger O'Donovan

Workshops held at Regina Mundi College



Let me start by saying that it was an absolute privilege and a joy to work with and get to know these young poets. As our workshops took place at their school, I asked the students that when they enter the library for the writing sessions, to imagine they are no longer at school but have entered the world of poetry. And enter the world of poetry they did.

It didn't take me long to realise that I was working with a group of exceptionally bright, creative, talented people. Over the course of our nine workshops, I was honoured to witness the creation of their poetry — some of which quite frankly blew my mind, I was so impressed with it. Seeing these poets develop confidence in their writing, and the courage to use their voices and share their work was an absolute pleasure.

Our workshops began with an introduction to free-writing, an exercise we used to warm up for almost all the subsequent sessions. We also did an exercise to help the students recognise how unique, original and valid their writing

voice is — they saw how everyone starting from the same prompt produced completely different pieces. (Well, actually the twins' pieces nearly scuppered the point of that exercise by being uncannily similar! However, they each had their own individual way of expressing what they wrote.)

For six sessions we did one or two writing exercises and we read a variety of poems every week including some by Sylvia Plath, Billy Collins, William Carlos Williams, Jo Shapcott, Anne Sexton, Carolyn Forché, Alden Nowlan, Matthew Dickman, and Doireann Ní Ghríofa. They looked at the content and the form and learned to discuss poems in a group, giving their impressions and observations. They always engaged enthusiastically with the work and made perceptive comments.

One of the first exercises we did was writing haiku to express the abstract in concrete terms. We worked a lot on including the senses in poetry. The students wrote poems focusing on objects, from the point of view of and about them. They produced some spectacular metaphors and similes when we focused on figurative writing.

We dedicated two workshops towards the end to giving and receiving peer feedback. This was when the level of the students' perceptiveness and grasp on poetry really came into relief. Their insights and comments quite often amazed me, and were delivered with generosity, maturity, respect and eloquence.

The girls were enthusiastic and engaged, not just with the poems I showed them or that they wrote themselves, but also with each other's work. They were delighted to see each other produce strong, affecting poems — as was of course I. Over the nine workshops they had come to form a supportive, encouraging and vivacious group. I am sure that these girls will continue to write and that for some of them this book is the first of many publications.

I am grateful for having been able to be a part of this project. Thank you to Paul Casey and Cork City Libraries, without whom none of this would have happened. And I extend a massive thank you to Ger O'Donovan, TY coordinator (a well-earned title!), who liaised with the girls for me and made sure we had everything we needed for the workshops to run smoothly.

Niamh Prior

Poems

Regina Mundi College



Riddle

Myah O'Brien

A jungle of arms,
a diligent helper until
my dying breath.

I may be an army
or old and alone,
an impromptu instrument
to those who dare.

People often replace me
with amateur stand-ins,
a naïve fork or wooden spoon,
simply because they refuse
to seek my wisdom.

Only to complain,
to cry out
when it all
goes wrong.

Nothing

Myah O'Brien

Mouth full of old coins
Wide-eyed pain, sudden, sour, sharp
Alas there's no knife

Everyday

Grace Hourihan

Looking out my window, but only pieces at a time
Looking out onto common ground
I turn to my room – nothing
Nothing but a bed and gloomy walls
I hear a buzz, I hear it everyday
It reminds me of that one movie
“Everyone is innocent”
How I long to be outside
Everyday is the same in here but not out there
Everyday could be different, how I’d never know
But now I’m stuck here for as long as time flows

Nail file

Grace Hourihan

Not knowing when we’ll need it
you carry it for the both of us
A pull on my hand
a warning sign
The time has come
Its rough edges pierce my skin back and forth
Shaped and sliced she is not the same
Maybe next week but not for now

Embarrassed

Solène Halligon

He knows more than you.
Hands in yellow, warm, wet bleach,
brass mocks bitter taste.

Riddle

Solène Halligon

Smooth cold shine at the bottom,
opaque glass on top.
Waiting to be thawed out with a switch, flick,
then yellow-warm spreading in an instant,
giving you everything you see.
Bouncing about,
oozing into corners,
making visions out of me.
Don't forget me, warm turns to hot,
hot turns to burning.
I am every idea you've ever had,
for what you can't touch you see.
Waiting to be thawed out with a switch, flick,
shining, waking, taking,
showing everything to me.

Cooking

Solène Halligon

Dressed up, prettied up for consumption.
I always prefer when it's me mirrored in the dishes,
when memories are shared,
over something warm, cold, or just right,
I am just right there.

Black and White

Solène Halligon

It's over now
but you are burning holes in the ground
with the determination of someone who knows
too much truth.
I have a sinking feeling I know the route,
or worse,
I conjured it myself
from the weight on my own backbone.
It's over now
but waves are crashing behind the sockets
of my eyes, bringing the salty sting
of unwillingly dripping truth.
I have a sinking feeling I know the wreckage,
or worse,
I know it as history from ancient family photo albums,
But it's over now – it's gone.

The Words

Solène Halligon

I had no idea that the words I would step through
to finally enter this world
would drag ink across pages with such vigour,
that nobody else would know.
Blotting, dragging, running, ripping,
desperate to get it out.
Flat empty stares at full messy,
and knows I can fill up again.
Never still until the twitches are tinted blue on paper
and it's up,
and it's out,
and it's gone,
and it's not worth chasing.

Dear Clothes

Leah Davis

Before me, you are cold and damp.
I wait out all day and protect you from the ground.
Slowly rotting and rusting
I snap when pushed too far.
With every passing minute
I long to see more,
more than just your bleak patterns
and disappointing fit.
I want to see their world.
Not just your little bit.

Sick Heat

Arden Mallari

You, a celestial body,
a strawberry blonde tipped with frost,
and burnt number sprinkled on ivory cheeks
you matched the ice glazed over evergreen leaves like its waxy coating.

You, reckoning force, the foundation of my refuge,
your jarring thaw is an enigma,
it's cooked my beasts into caves as they now stay in stone
from an internal clock wrong,
our failed soul instinct.

The perfect vessel turned sour,
a grand piano for a concerto
you cannot play.

You are the grout under my feet
in between the tiles of my bathroom floor
I'll hurt everyone by moving out –
the dust mites bearing witness.

I want everything back,
braving contusion for a ticket home
trusting this time
saving this hour late.

Cassette Envy

Arden Mallari

One euro for cancer – “Children’s Nursery Rhymes”
the only pair to an obsolete machine.
I love to love and I love you, perfect in every way!
Filled with ribbons and dust
instead of blood and flesh.
You sit and play when inserted, told,
a frail dog without personality.

Ribbed, a dip in the middle –
your opening pleasure
I wish my life was contained
within a single string;
To play and repeat
rip out and put back
break in half if you really want to.

Nail Polish Deluxe

Arden Mallari

Finally, like a drop of blood on white elastic band
the vinyl lifts off hairs upon hairs upon hairs
like a woman in a dam of oil.
She is woven tightly between the cracks
of factory polyester.

Oh, to have a wrist!!
Like an armpit, or simply bones
wider than the others that rule our world.
So biological, though sought for by me-
faulted, wronged, misfortuned.

It could have been a drop of gold,
or leftover meals eaten up well
but my nails, a square sliver barer
are enough testimony.

Brethren Burden

Arden Mallari

We, a two-headed calf
you can't see
Your one eyed multiplied four
that I want out—
a plank of wood
thin and large to carry with me, like that crucifix.
I find the same refuge everywhere but this manger
where our skulls smash.
Does the labor pay off?
Does the breathing get spent?
Because every time I hear your exhale
a sword drives into me
Deeper
I just wish it was long enough to reach the bed below
and end both of us
because that's what I really want,
in for a grain, in for a child,
cord connected in this life
and for every life after.

now again

Arissa Mallari

arguing and loud whispers, we won't stop asking. promises made by the hour, unfulfilling words passed from mouth to mouth on a never-ending street.

pulverise the broken glass on the side of the road while i tell you not to smoke or have secret romances in small towns. i'll force you to dream my way. second guess each direction the arrow points, and follow it home no matter what i've made you believe.

there are cameras everywhere, and you don't know which glass I'm looking through. but i'm there. i'm pulling your strings until your heart or mine snaps into slices. it will land on you anyway.

i'll stay here, and i won't ever let you live despite how many times we've told each other, despite my many pretend deaths in pretend conversations.

now, promise me you'll love me past the grave, past the take-off, past the door's final closing. you know what you want and who you love, and none of it will ever be me. but i want your life more than you, so it'll be what i choose.

that's why i did that. that's why you're like this. no, don't hand it over. i wanted you strong, not weak. that's the point. you're the end of this. you're what i have wanted. you are my life.

because of that, i love you, and i love my money, and my girls. my girls who will never want to learn to be me. i don't even know they'll learn no matter what they do. even if i let them live. i'll deal with it, it's ok, don't worry about me. take the rest of the food. you're embarrassed! come on. say it sweetly. now again.

Sonnet of Expectation

Arissa Mallari

By the cradle and mobile I'll stay here waiting
The sun and birds I promised you are waiting too
Find the light and look from me for the last time
A big warm house on sticks with an even greater nose.
Fulfill me for these final hours and listen with me
Let the movement ache and try to remember it for next time.
I often wonder if this is passing through you like it is me,
And if you can see my thoughts of our fate, delights and origins.
No matter how many walks I take from the front room to the kitchen,
Then to your room again, it will never fail to get me.
That I know you're what I've waited for my whole life, and I haven't even heard
you speak.
You have wrung me dry time and again, and I'll ask if I was really made for this.
Even if this water house breaks in half, bright pink as you are,
You'll wait for me too.

Grace's Heart

Arissa Mallari

Owing her platinum blanketed in a future blond.

A home - constant,

she wears nothing but his clothes,

but God, is she self-made.

Money in a pocket and double-laced shoes,

you couldn't see her from a mile away

but you'd know she's there,

on the street,

unrecognisable every time.

Her unwavering sweetness and noise

save our ever-loving minds.

Ruled by her matrix, she keeps it safely.

Above her head,

in her eyes.

Astronaut

Emma Browne

I'm in the control room
looking out at the vast, open void full of stars and floating rocks
My daze is broken
I'm no longer spaced out
alarms are going off
I can't stop them
I remember being young playing with toy rockets
throwing them in the air hoping that would be me
I race to the cabin
The captain tells me we're going down
I wish I hadn't gotten that toy rocket for my sixth birthday
I wish to be back on earth where it's safe
I wish I hadn't left
I wish I had said goodbye

Ballincollig Community School

Poetry by

Katie Bruen

Priscillia Isibor

Róisín O’Sullivan

Hannah Lucey

Ellen Curran

Léa Delauche

Charlie McCarthy

Emily Nora Spillane

Denis Gavrya

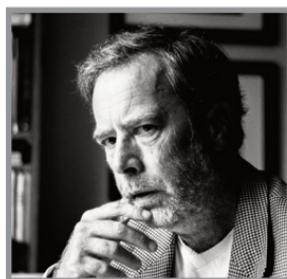
Senan Nakajima

Evie Burke

Assisting Writer: Matthew Geden

T.Y. Coordinator: Michelle O’Halloran

Workshops held at Ballincollig C.S.



This year, for a number of reasons, seemed to pass by quickly. Our early sessions at the end of 2022 swiftly gave rise to a sudden burst of final meetings in February and March of this year. It felt as though we’d barely begun to progress into the possibilities of the poetic world. Or so I thought. As I looked back, however, through the poems submitted by the students I realised that they had worked hard to assimilate techniques and ideas, producing poems of talent and flair. It was only then that I was able to appreciate the journey these young writers had been on.

My first impressions of our writing group were very favourable. Numbers were strong and it was evident early on that the students already had a good grasp of the basics such as similes, metaphors, alliteration and the structuring of a poem. In our first session we looked at Seamus Heaney’s poem “Digging” and considered how each of us might write a personal poem about

writing. In the following week we examined a poem by Eavan Boland and talked about numerous topics including personification, love and the concept of poetic voices. I was consistently impressed by some of the ideas as well as some of the poems produced and became even more impressed as the weeks went by.

After Christmas I was already conscious of the deadline for submissions so I began to encourage students to hand in work when they felt they had finished it. A trickle of poems became a deluge as the class took to the task in hand and worked diligently throughout. Speed exercises were popular as was, to my surprise, an exercise on the villanelle. I think the given structure of such a poem appealed to many of these writers. Attempts at alphabet poems were constrained by time whilst there was a mixed response to an exercise based upon William Carlos Williams' classic poem, "The Red Wheelbarrow". Other exercises included a collage poem, poems based upon headlines and also on newspaper articles. In the last week some really lovely haiku were written as well as early attempts to write rap poetry, a challenge for the future perhaps.

This was a thoroughly enjoyable series of sessions and I would like to thank Michelle O'Halloran and Maria Hooley for making my visits to Ballincollig Community School possible. I would also like to acknowledge the continued hard work of Paul Casey at Ó Bhéal but mostly I'd like to thank the students themselves for participating so wholeheartedly and producing such a fine array of work.

Matthew Geden

Poems

Ballincollig Community School



The War Destroys The Lives Of All

Katie Bruen

A short walk around what was once a park
The and dust clouds your eyes.

10 in the morning yet it seems so dark
The memories replay. Of the screams and cries

The panic and urgency is what will help mark
The days of “It’s ok, all will be good” terrible lies.

The Barn

Katie Bruen

A path of mud that’s made from time
leads to the barn.

A box of food, a bed of hay
here calves stay.

Sunlight beams peak through the cracks
of the rusted ceiling.

Today they’re safe from fear of rain
the barn won’t fall today.

More Than

Katie Bruen

More than
just a drop
in the ocean

We will not back away

The solution
Celebrate survivors
People have the power to change or die
No matter how privileged or how poor

Those who poisoned girls deserve death

They'll end up being utterly irrelevant
Just like him

Life

Charlie McCarthy

And don't let anybody tell you you can't run, dance, sing, or be a baller
You can be a king
Now you can work a nine-to-five if it makes you smile at night
Money ain't a measure of success
'Cause you can have a billion and be dead
You can have a 20 grand flat and live a long, long life with no stress

Escape

Priscillia Isibor

As I walked barefoot onto the parapet,
The cold and crisp night air brushed against my face.
It swept my hair behind my shoulders and my heart began to race.

The wheels of my mind began to turn,
As I tried to figure out how I even got here in the first place.
I needed to escape and do it with haste.

I ran outside, I didn't care about any germs.
It felt like I was being chased.
I just hope that wasn't the case.

Hot Air Balloon Stuck In The Sky

Priscillia Isibor

The sun is shining,
The weather is cool.
Everything seems to be going well,
But in the sky there is a stuck air balloon!

The people are terrified.
"What should we do now?"
There's nothing left to do,
But to hope that it will come down.

Six Haiku

Priscillia Isibor

The rain waters the dry earth
Nature soaks it up
Now the earth thirsts no longer

Cotton candy clouds pass by
The warmth the sun gives
Makes me happy I'm alive

Snow is falling down
The soothing songs of the birds
As they search for food

The door creaks loudly
The footsteps grow near and near
Ever so slowly

The ice always fades
Nothing keeps it from melting
There's no prevention

People shout for joy
Hope never escapes this place
Freedom in the field

If I Could

Priscillia Isibor

If I could move a million miles away from here I would.

They tell me to stay, not to go,

But oh, how I wish I could.

I wish I could pick up my keys and lock the door behind me for good.

Start my car and turn on the radio.

If I could drive a million miles away from here, oh I would.

I keep telling myself I should,

But I never have the guts to do so.

But I wish I finally could.

The people around me, they have misunderstood.

Because little do they know, this is not really my home.

And if I could move a million miles away from here, I would.

They pressure me to stay, not to go but oh, how I wish I could.

The Things I See

Emily Nora Spillane

I see the pigs, the cows, the sheep
and their lambs.

I see people working hard, driving tractors
and eating their lunch.

I see the farmer, trying to provide
for his kids

and I see the scarecrow, trying to
protect his field.

Thousands Dead Or Injured After Suicide Bomb At Concert

Emily Nora Spillane

It was supposed to be a night to remember.
Not one you wish you could forget.
The artist comes to the stage. Everybody
ecstatic. Boom. everybody panicked. Run away,
find shelter but the shelter is not to
be had. Bodies everywhere I hear
the sirens. I see the guards. Panic,
adrenaline, scared. It was a night
I don't want to remember, but a
night I won't be able to forget.

A Fairytale In New York

Emily Nora Spillane

He failed a drugs test, problems still exist.
There can be no one-size-fits-all solution.
The lifelong learning women-only leadership,
the scheme had its challenges and took
a lot of perseverance and foresight.
Give it a few more years and we will be
able to look at the impact.

It can be hard to find someone,
I was too stupid,
lack of confidence.
There's nothing in prison.

The Seasons

Emily Nora Spillane

I carry my heart but it's not mine
It belongs to winter and its snow
He arrives when I wait for time

I carry my heart but it's not mine
It belongs to Spring and its doe
It arrives when I wait for time

I carry my heart but it's not mine
It belongs to Summer and its sea
It arrives when I wait for time

I carry my heart but it's not mine
It belongs to Autumn and its breeze
It arrives when I wait for time

I carry my heart but it's not mine
It belongs to the seasons and its qualities
They arrive when I wait for time

The seasons and climate are under attack
Yet it's the only thing guaranteed to come back
I carry my heart but it's not mine
The seasons arrive when I wait for time

The Branches Look Bare

Emily Nora Spillane

The branches look bare
Watch the leaves fall from the trees
But the tree still stands

The sand on my feet
The waves hit my ankles
I belong to the ocean

I stand on the hill
Looking out at the ploughed fields
The wheat is my gold

The day was long
Like all difficult days are
I write my feelings on a page
Because a sheet of paper listens
More than a person

Four Haiku

Róisín O'Sullivan

Harsh frosty air
Freezes a lonely raindrop
Crystalizes more

Quiet lonely plants
Wither without regret
Famished beyond life

A bird call sings out
As church bells chime with ease
Dead men sleep no more

Lines run flat on screen
Machines are taken away
Screams are heard, the end

Learning How To Walk In Another Person's Shoes

Róisín O'Sullivan

A sight not yet seen by another,
a new person strolled leisurely down the same path,
a sign on their blind side read "Keep Out",
the glasses that hung from their neck had shattered

but on they went and never once did they blink
never once did they look back.

Lonely Maiden

Róisín O'Sullivan

Wheels crunching gravel rang out
In the cold night air
Barefoot on the parapet
I shivered with skin just as fair

I would wait for him
Sickness and germ
I would not run away
But await the day he would return

Joann Salmon Says Her Father Actively Discouraged Her From Pursuing A Career In Engineering, While Encouraging Her Brothers To Go For It

Róisín O'Sullivan

“It would be better to be a little fish in a little pond rather than a little fish in a big pond.”

“There are plenty of ways to get to where you want to go. No matter what, you will encounter upset, failure, and maybe have your dreams dashed. Dust yourself off and pick yourself back up.”

“Don’t ever take no as a final answer,” she says.

Sosa

Denis Gavrya

after William Carlos Williams

the cows are tonka
meat

the money is big
wheat

glazed with sosa
grow

beside the red
wheelbarrow

Shoplifting Case Delayed As Accused Arrested For Shoplifting

Denis Gavrya

There he sits,
next in line,
how he stumbled
down this road,
the rope then fits,
above his spine,
humiliated and humbled.

Like Icarus

Hannah Lucey

I stand barefoot on the ledge
I am on the edge of sanity
My vanity is naught but a pledge

The wind whistles by
As I stand on the parapet
I can't handle it, I say goodbye

I am but a plague to society
A notoriety, a measly worm
A germ, worthless and unsightly

Will I brave the air?
My hair and clothes sway in the breeze
My knees are steady as I stare

The bright wheels of cars turn like pearls
I unfurl my wings
To sing and soar like Icarus as I leave this world

My Name Is Death

Hannah Lucey

A is for atrocity but I command it
B is for bones but they are my armour
C is for calm but I rip it to shreds
D is for death but that is my name
E is for eager but no-one else wants it
F is for fear but I revel in its shadow
G is for good but when am I ever
H is for hatred but I love it dearly
I is for immediate but I prefer to kill slowly
J is for joy but I anger at the sight
K is for kill but I live for it daily
L is for love but I shy away from its warmth
M is for meek but I rise up to vanquish
N is for never but it always ends the same
O is for omen but I am always the cause
P is for pleasure but I cause it to perish
Q is for quiet but the screams are my music
R is for repent but I don't forgive
S is for shadow but I am one and the same
T is for terror but I excite at its appearance
U is for usurp but you can't defeat me
V is for vow but I tear relationships apart
W is for wash but the bloodstains don't fade
X is for xylophone but my instrument is the organ
Y is for youth but I can still steal you away
Z is for zero but your heartbeats are numbered

Love

Hannah Lucey

Love is a being, a creature, a friend
Love is soft and gentle
It will nestle against your hand
Then leap into your lap
Where it fits and belongs
Quiet purring filling your soul

Love is soft and gentle
But love can be angry, red-hot and sharp
Taken too far
Love's claws can rake at your skin, your soul
Love without sense can lash out, be all-consuming
Love can cause pain and sadness
We must be careful with love

Love may leave you
And get lost for a while
But love always comes back
Love cannot be forced into your home at your whim
It must creep in in its own time
Perhaps when you least expect it
Maybe a little different, a little changed
But love will be with you

Love is temperamental
And must be treated with care
But love is special and needed
To make life worth living

Three Haiku

Hannah Lucey

You can fall, not fail
To make your home in the dirt
Is when it's over

Blankets of crisp snow
Covering the sleeping earth
The season of rest

Amber lights the sky
Timber ablaze like lanterns
Terrible beauty

Diamonds & Hearts

Senan Nakajima

What William didn't do to lie
He will have a say in the service
Won with the ace & returned a heart
A remarkable clue!
Grow weak: doctor has nothing to work on
He discarded a low diamond
More solidly, the price of lies

The Old Farm Yard

Senan Nakajima

Dull, dry mud
Smell of slurry stings your senses

A creaking fence
Then cattle simultaneously turning

Brown, big eyes
Just like the burren they call home

Two Haiku

Senan Nakajima

Hidden in rockpools
Red spotted crab hides
From lurking shadow above

Calming sea sound breeze
Sand stuck under your finger nails
Sailing boats dot the sea

Millions Flock To The Streets In Protest

Ellen Curran

Bodies packed close together
A sea of people that seems to go on forever

People scream and beg for peace
A lone stranger fighting for the future
Of his niece

People beg and shout to be heard but in
The end to the government they feel like a
Burden

All they want is for their voices to be
Heard

But as the first shot of tear gas is
Blasted they have to fly away like a
Bird

A Home

Ellen Curran

A man and a woman

Husband and wife

Looking out

Admiring their life

Glistening green fields

A red panelled barn

A safe haven

A home for all

Four Haiku

Ellen Curran

The grass is swaying

The flowers brace for impact

A storm is coming

A young bird takes flight

A young child takes its first steps

Adulthood begins now

A step is taken
But in the wrong direction
Ignorance wins out

Fog lies across earth
Grief touches people today
Fog clouds people's minds

Lost Adventure

Ellen Curran

I'm just going outside and may be some time
I will dare to be brave and look for what once
was mine

It has long been lost in the deep dark
shadows
But deserves to be floating in the blue
crystal shallows

I had it once when I was a child
but lost it when I got too stuck in
my mind

It is something rare but everyone should
have it

It is a sense of adventure and I long
to find it

Dear Diary

Ellen Curran

It is what I write

Day in day out

It is what I write

My feelings on a page

It is what I write

I need to share with someone

It is why I write

Even if you are a bundle of pages

It is why I write

Finding A Voice For Ireland's Great Women

Evie Burke

Seeing yourself in stories can be very validating.

The battle for women to be heard was a long process

FOR CENTURIES and the work expresses this struggle

for women to speak out.

Our daughter unpredictably is mature enough

for an accomplished and thought-provoking platform.

Coming And Going

Evie Burke

Fresh cut grass

Fields

Cattle being moved

Agitated

Run down shed

Collapsing

New modern shed

Replacing

Coming and going

Jobs to do

Two Haiku

Evie Burke

Sun glimmering upon

The easy flow of the stream

Oh, to be a fish

Gloomy autumn day

Sun fighting its way through the clouds

But it stands no chance

Maybe One Day

Léa Delauche

Maybe one day I'll be enough
And I won't disappoint anymore
Maybe one day I'll get better

I'll train hard and I'll get tough,
I'll be serious, I won't laugh
And maybe one day I'll be enough.

I'll take no break and for that matter,
I won't sleep much either,
I'll do all that to get better.

I tried my best for so long now,
Trained and trained but nothing changed.
Will I ever be enough?

I say "my best" but I feel like,
I never even gave that much,
I promise you I'll get better.

"I can do more" I tell myself.
But when the time comes it all goes wrong.
And for me to be enough,
First I need to get better.

Digging

Léa Delauche

after Seamus Heaney

Phone in hand,
I look at the pictures.
The groupchat is filled with them.
I smile, they seem to have fun.
They look happy,
Talking, laughing, with their friends
And I stare
At the pictures
And I smile
At their smiles
But I think I know
I know what I am feeling
I am not where I need to be.
I look up,
My messy room is judging me.
This is not it.
This is not what I want
What I want is somewhere else.
So I go downstairs,
I sit there,
Pen in hand and thoughts in head
The clock is ticking,
My parents are working,
Both of them behind their computer.
Since early they work,
They will finish late.
I go out to clear my head.
I don't want to dig like them.

Love Personification

Léa Delauche

Love came and went
She played with us like we were pawns on a board.
She tricked us and failed us.
I still remember the day she came
Quiet and unexpected,
Like an owl flying in the night.
Searching for her next prey.
But love got bored.
Like a child who asked for a toy
But now he has it,
Doesn't want it anymore.
So she left.
I guess our story wasn't good enough
Now she's probably playing with some other people's heart.
But I liked our story,
Even if she didn't
I just hope, next time
She won't let us go.

The Most Unusual Thing I Ever Stole

Léa Delauche

The most unusual thing I ever stole was a tooth.
But not your usual white tooth.
No. It was a yellow tooth.
Now, don't get me wrong.
It wasn't dirty or old.
No. it was golden. Pure gold.
I don't know what went through my mind,
That day, when I took it.
I remember when I first noticed it.
It was attached to a pink gum,
Surrounded by its white friends.
It kind of seemed out of place,
In a police officer's mouth.
At that time I heard it.
I could sense it calling me,
Begging me to free it.
I might sound like a crazy person,
Saying that teeth talked to me,
But, trust me, it did,
Not literally, of course,
But it did.
So I did something I never did before.
I broke the law.
Seeing that the tooth was moving,
I realised that it would easily come off.
And that was what made me do it.
I ran towards the police officer,
Screaming, and batting my arms.
And when he turned his head towards me
I didn't think, I acted.
I hit him with my full strength
And took his tooth.

Lost

Léa Delauche

He wandered on this road.
The lonely path that he chose
Was no longer what he wished for
It felt like it was imposed.

He looked back
But the mist had covered the track
There was no way back
He looked left and right,
But the giant trees of the forest
Darken and blocked his vision.

There was nothing but the path
He didn't know where it led.
How he got there and why.
All he knew was that this road,
Was all there was left.

Even if he didn't like it,
Even if he tried to change it,
Even if all he wanted
Was to know where it led to.

But the path was not nice
And he'd had enough of it.
One day he will take his axe,
One day he will cut the trees,
Go into the forest and be free,
But for now he walks,
He has no axe yet.
But do not worry,
The axe will come,
Like it always does.

I Have Lived So Long In This Wall

Léa Delauche

I have lived so long in this wall
I have spent so long without light,
That my vision became useless.
In my misfortune I could hear
Behind the wall, the children laughing.
I would imagine their faces and their stories,
I would create their character.
My favourite one was named Sophy,
She was kind and liked smoothies,
She had long golden hair,
Blue eyes and a pink dress,
Her laugh was the only thing
That brightened the wall.
My stomach grumbled,
How long has it been
Since I last ate?
I don't remember.
And I don't care.
I hear the birds,
So I know it's morning.
The wall is still here.
Another day I spend.
How long has it been?
Days? Months? Years?
Maybe I'm an adult now.
I don't know.
And I don't care.
All I need is her laugh.

Coláiste Dabhéid

Poetry by

Lily Ní Shúilleabháin

Aoife Ní Chianáin

Naoise Fitzgerald

Chulainn Ó Tuama

Chelsea Ní Chéilleachair

Ceola Ní Shluaigh

Leah Norberg

Assisting Writer: Colm Ó Ceallacháin

T.Y. Coordinator: Ciara Breathnach

Workshops held in Cork City Library

Assisting Librarian: Declan Barron



Bhain mé an-taitneamh as a bheith ag obair le rang na hidirbhliana ó Choláiste Daibhéid. Tháingamar le chéile i dtús an gheimhridh, agus leanamar orainn as sin isteach san earrach. Mar is léir ó na dánta atá scríofa ag an ngrúpa seo, ní raibh siad díomhaoín lena linn. Tá féith na cruthaitheachta, ina iliomad cló, i ngach ball den ghrúpa.

Ceann des na rudaí ba thaitneamhaí faoi na ceardlanna a bhí againn ná nach raibh aon leisce ar an ngrúpa dul i mbun pinn. Go deimhin chaitheamar níos mó ama ag scríobh ná mar a chaitheamar ag léamh nó ag plé dánta, agus d'fhéadfá a dhá oiread dánta a chur sa chnuasach seo dá mbeadh an spás ann dóibh.

Tá a léamh féin ag gach uile bhall den ghrúpa ar an saol, agus tá seo le feiceáil sa réimse ábhar agus téamaí a roghnaigh siad. Scríobhann siad ar chúrsaí

teaghlaigh agus ar chúrsaí taistil, ar an ngrá is ar an ngruaim, ar na rudaí a bhíonn ina inspioráid acu agus orthu siúd a chuireann le báiní iad. Is léir go bhfuil siad breá sásta tabhairt faoina gcuid filíochta san uile bhealach, idir shúgradh is dáiríre.

Míle buíochas leis na filí seo as a gcuid smaointe a roinnt liom, agus buíochas le foireann na scoile i gColáiste Daibhéid a chabhraigh leo an deis sin a thapú. Gabhaim buíochas freisin le foireann na leabharlainne i Sráid an Chapail Bhú as an seomra a chur ar fáil dúinn, agus le Paul Casey as gach uile rud a thabhairt le chéile go cumasach, mar a dheineann sé i gcónaí. Tá filí óga Chorcaí go mór faoi chomaoin aige.

Ba chóir go mbeadh gach uile scríbhneoir a bhfuil a saothar sa chnuasach seo mórálach as a gcuid iarrachtaí, agus tá súil agam go mbaineann na léitheoirí a oiread pléisiúir astu agus a bhain mise astu agus mé á léamh i gcéaduaire.

The transition year students from Coláiste Daibhéid came together for our first workshop back in autumn 2022, and have been working on these poems right through until March of this year. As is apparent from the poems published here, they have not been idle. One of the most enjoyable aspects of working with this group was to see how eager they were to create – I think they would have kept on writing whether I was there or not.

Every one of these young poets has given us their own unique take on the world and we should be thankful for the opportunity to hear those voices, in all their variety of tone and theme – from the deadly serious to the hilariously funny. I thank them all for their effort and commitment.

Thanks also to Coláiste Daibhéid for giving them the opportunity to showcase their work, and to the staff at the Cork City Library, Grand Parade for facilitating us. Thanks as always to Paul Casey for bringing everything together – the young poets featured in the various editions of the Unfinished Book owe

him a great debt.

All of those featured in this year's edition should be very proud of what they have achieved. I hope that you will get as much pleasure from reading their work as I did in witnessing them bring it to life.

Colm Ó Ceallacháin

Poems

Coláiste Dabhéid



Wooden Box

Lily Ní Shúilleabháin

The church doors hide me
but they still allow me to view the rows of people waiting for something
as i shuffle down the aisle
careful not to disturb people
i notice a wooden box in front of the altar
and a picture of a girl to the right
wait,
the girl
she looks an awful lot like me
i look back to view the rows of people
they're crying
and even when i smile at them, they still look right through me
why can't they see me
i'm right here

Toothpaste

Lily Ní Shúilleabháin

what does tomorrow hold
i always wonder
my mother tells me to “live in the now” but i can't seem to get the taste
of tomorrow morning's toothpaste out of my mind.
the sweet smell of my black coffee no sugar no milk
and the hopeful feeling that maybe tomorrow you will break the silence
between us.

An Chumhacht Is Mó

Lily Ní Shúilleabháin

Cad í an chumhacht is mó?

An í cumhacht leictreach í

a ritheann trí gach cathair ar domhan?

Nó cumhacht an mhúinteora a choimeádann páistí ag foghlaim?

Ní hea, is é ciúnas an chumhacht is mó, é sin agus na focail nach bhfuil ráite.

Tá cumhacht ag an gciúnas le do smaointe a chur ag rith nuair atá tú ag dul a chodladh gach oíche,

agus leis an gceist a chur ort, “cad ba chóir dom a dhéanamh chun an chumhacht seo a bhriseadh?”

i can't memorize

Lily Ní Shúilleabháin

i can't memorize my exam materials

i can't memorize Shakespeare

even though i've spent countless hours reading and re-reading and writing and re-writing.

not once is it retained.

but from just one glance into your eyes i've memorized each line and shade and feature.

each blood vessel and eyelash.

even though i try to erase it, it stays there, memorized.

for my lover

Lily Ní Shúilleabháin

roses are red violets are blue
a kitten is lovely unlike you

orchids are white
red ones are rare
leaves are dead and so is your hair

magnolia grows with buds like eggs
mushrooms are stumpy and so are your legs

sunflowers reach up to the skies
a weight is dead and so are your eyes

foxgloves in hedges surround the farms
your look is ugly and so are your arms

daisies are pretty, dandies have style
sand is yellow and so is your smile.

Gorm

Aoife Ní Chianáin

Ceapann daoine go bhfuil gorm brónach
Ach cuir i gcás go bhfuil sé dóchasach.
Cuir i gcás go bhfuil sé lán de ghrá
Nó lán de mhí-ádh.
Cad faoi dearfach
Nó faoi déistineach?

Pink

Aoife Ní Chianáin

Pink like barbies or childhood bedrooms, pink like bubblegum or pretty nail
polish
Pink like nostalgia
Pink to make the boys wink

Dearg

Aoife Ní Chianáin

Nuair a fhéachann daoine dearg
An mbíonn fearg orthu
An smaoiníonn said faoin dainséar
Nó an mbraitheann said saor?

Paper straws

Naoise Fitzgerald

Your plastic counterpart is frowned upon,
But in popularity you're no better,
All it takes is one sip,
A drop of liquid and you wither.
You're better for the planet,
And better for our future,
Although I hate you paper straws,
I have to be a user.

Catalonian Macdonalds

Naoise Fitzgerald

Macdonalds in Barcelona,
What a treat,
I just need one bite,
And then I am complete.

The Hatman

Chulainn Ó Tuama

I can't take benadryl
Even if I'm very ill
'Coz if the hatman finds out
He'll hide under my couch
Not that I'm trying to flee him,
I just don't want to see him
Because I owe him lots of money
Please donate to my cause
I am addicted to benadryl.

Cormac

Chulainn Ó Tuama

Creaky halls in the dead of night
The breathing sends chills down my spine
The creature lurks, just inches away
And I know well that I'm its prey
I hear its footsteps slowly creeping
As pupils dilate from the fear I'm feeling
It brandishes a knife, that reflects the bright of moon
As tears begin to swell, because the end is nearing soon
The creature relishes in the silence, and hums a creepy tune
As it reaches my dorm's door, and crawls into the room
I hope it can't see me, or it'll lunge at me fast
The blood-fueled murderous rage can be seen in its eyes
I shouldn't have touched my brother's cereal
Now he'll be sure I die.
As I write these final words, if this is ever seen,
Please eliminate Cormac. I pray this is a dream.

Curly fries

Chelsea Ní Chéilleachair

I miss you, curly fries,
it's been four years,
2019 you left us,
we miss your lovely taste,
and cheap price,
we miss your scrumptious smell.
You were the best side,
a lot has happened since you left,
a virus swept.
Was this karma, I wonder?

Éire

Chelsea Ní Chéilleachair

Daoine áille
Sráideanna áille
Teanga álainn
Tír álainn.

An glas, bán agus oráiste

Ceola Ní Shluaigh

An glas agus an oráiste ach cad faoi an bán?

Idir an dá cheann eile,

é ag scaipeadh fola agus deora,

daoine agus cairde.

Cad faoi an glas nach féidir teagmháil leis an oráiste?

Cad is brí leis an mbán

i mo chroí go hiomlán?

Táim leis an mbán ach is cuid den ghlas mé.

Ba mhaith liom seasamh ar son an bháin

i gcomhar leis an nglas.

My balaclava

Ceola Ní Shluaigh

My balaclava keeps me warm, I listen to the fire of the storm,

My balaclava hides my face and keeps me mindful of my place,

Those who hid behind a mask in fear of a fiery flask,

My balaclava keeps me warm as I listen to the storm.

Flowers

Ceola Ní Shluaigh

I want flowers
Not some lie to last for hours
All I want are flowers

I gave you my heart

Leah Norberg

I gave you my heart
In its heart shaped box
And I gave you the key
To its heart shaped locks

I trusted you with it
And said handle with care
But you just couldn't commit
And left me in despair

You threw down the box
And broke it in two
And there lay my heart
Disregarded by you.

St Patrick's College

Poetry by

Malena Jolie Baake

Megan Houlihan

Sandra Murphy

Alice Stockley

Mira Thomas

Leah Hartigan Hurley

Bonnie O'Mahony

Iska Bernhauer

Clodagh Murphy

Shona Power

Assisting Writer: Lani O'Hanlon

School TY Coordinator: June McCarthy

Workshops held in: Mayfield Library

Assisting Librarian: Richard Forrest



On our first day together in Mayfield Library we gathered around the table. I had brought a Tibetan Singing Bowl and the students asked about this. I told them that it was made from seven precious metals. I held the bowl in my left hand and with my right hand tipped the stick off the edge and the bowl rang true and clear. I then demonstrated how to circle the stick around the edge to make the bowl vibrate, hum and sing. Each student tried this and along with the dong and hum, there was laughter and the lilt of their voices in the air. We had begun.

These transition year students from St. Patrick's College knew each other but I was trying to learn the sound of each name and discover the colour and tone of each voice.

We settled in and I asked the students to notice their inner landscape eg; thoughts, feelings and physical sensations, sounds, smells...

To write we need to be aware of surface thoughts, the monkey mind babbling away and then sinking a little into the deeper tones and resonances so we can become more present to what is happening around and within us and our task then is to write this down. *'Poetry comes fine-spun from a mind at peace.'* Ovid.

To begin to build a sustainable writing practice we began in that same way each week, noticing our inner landscape and then the outer one and sharing a few lines about something beautiful we had seen, smelt, touched or heard that week.

After reading Eavan Boland's poem *This Moment* we wrote about the sound, smell, and taste of this moment, and what we could see around us and this often led back to other moments in our lives.

We read poems about the natural world; *The Tree* by Caroline Duffy, and *The Song of Wandering Aengus*, by Yeats. We read Grace Wells's poem about shoes, and Doireann Ní Grioffa's poem about a red coat, and I discovered that these young women did not know that Eavan Boland, Paula Meehan and other writers had made it possible for Irish women to write about their experience of being in a female body in the world and how difficult it was to do that before they cleared the ground.

Over nine weeks I came to know each student, some students came most weeks and began to study the craft, others came in and out. I was moved over and over by a line written or something confided in the imaginative, creative space we were building together week by week. This project is well supported by the structure created by Paul Casey, and also by teacher June McCarthy, librarian, Richard Forrest, Claire and all the staff in Mayfield Library who kindly photocopied poems and made us feel so at home.

The students wrote and shared their writing, we wrote about food,

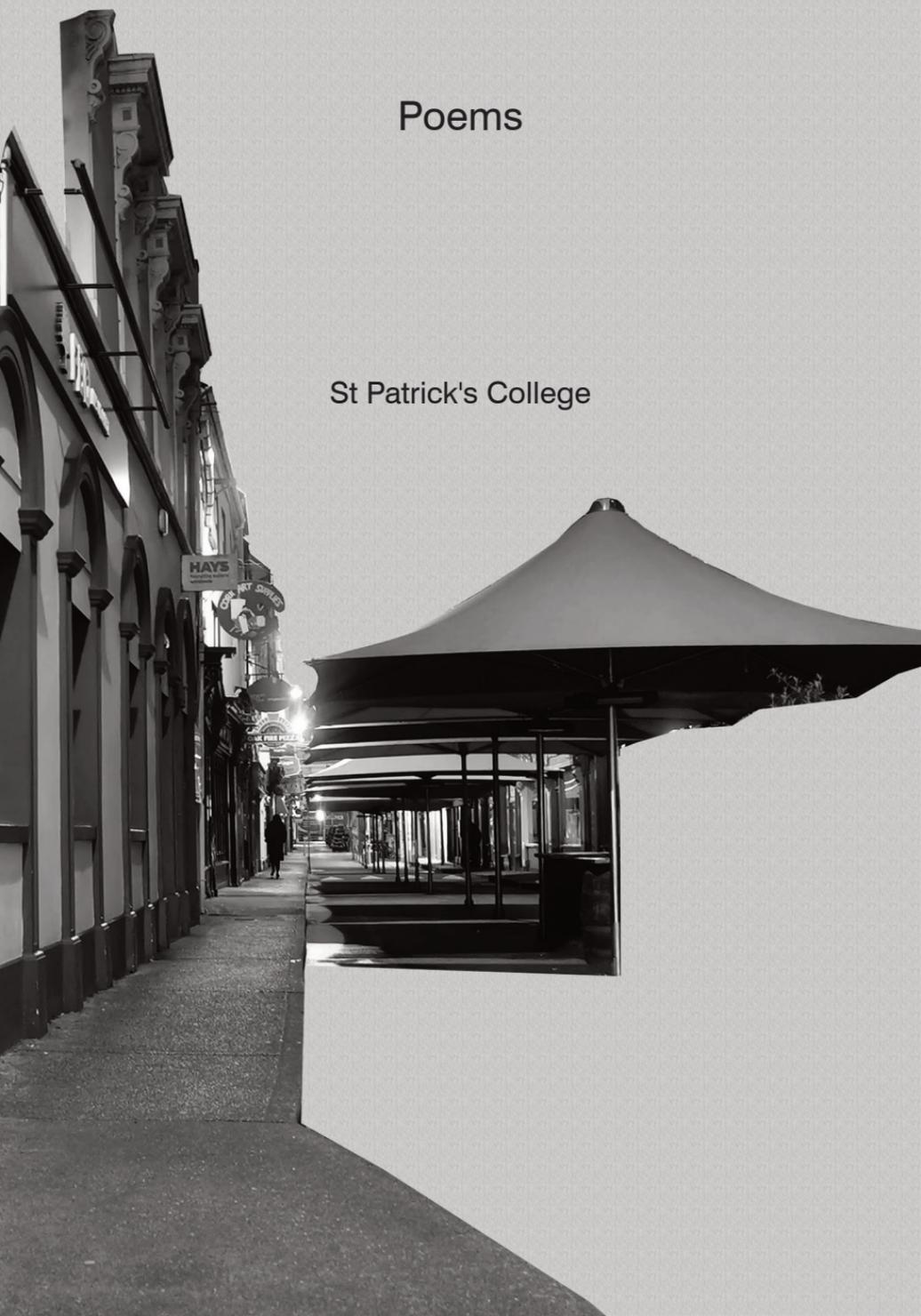
relationships, games, playing, words, dreams, animals in dreams and in our lives. We wrote about encounters with wildness, the natural world and our embodied place in it, from the viewpoint of a tree, a river, a fox, or a bird. We read poems about creatures of all kinds and we read up on the lives and habitats of different creatures we related to eg: crows, swans, the platypus. We looked at some Ekphrastic poetry, writing about paintings in the Library. We wrote about books in the library and the people gathering there each week. We read poems about friendship, a mother's hands. and the seasons. On Bridget's day, we imagined meeting Bridget, as a homeless woman, a mythical nature Goddess, an old woman, a young woman, or a child and what she might say to us.

Richard gave us a Bridget's cross that had been in the library for a year amongst all those writers, words and stories. This cross is hanging on the daffodil-yellow wall in my kitchen and when I see it there above a bowl of fruit and a bowl of eggs, I think about the gifted young writers who are so supportive of each other and brave enough to speak, write and share their writing. Each voice has a different colour, a different tone and a unique way of expressing what it is to be alive at this moment, in these times and how important, relevant and vital that is.

Lani O'Hanlon

Poems

St Patrick's College



The Tree of My Childhood

Malena Jolie Baake

the tree of my childhood stands deep in the woods
you have to run quite a while to find it
but if you do, you won't regret it.

the tree is so deep in the forest,
you can't hear the cars no more,
the wind is going through the leaves
to make them sing their own melody.

my tree looks like an old man
it bends forwards and cracks
like a storm is going through it.

I climbed this tree when I was scared,
I climbed this tree when I was sad,
I climbed this tree with a friend,
I climbed it all by myself.

My tree dreams of a time long gone;
before they came and took down
his brothers and sisters,
everything around,

when he wasn't the last of his kind,
before he became my tree to climb.

Teddy Bear

Malena Jolie Baake

the sky is red as blood
steps on cobblestones
people with grey coats
get off the afternoon train

a Labrador is howling gloomy
church bells ring in the distance
smell of motor oil in the air
an unknown aftertaste

a teddy bear hung up on a fence
whispers of a child long gone
a candle flickers in the wind
the sky starts to cry out my pain

a single tear rolling down
please don't forget me
please don't ever forget me
whispers the child gently

The Coat

Malena Jolie Baake

for my Mom

Waves meeting the shore.
wind blowing through my hair,
birds piercing through the sky.

We walk down the main street;
colourful houses,
big crowds, lighthouse.

Mom pulls me into a clothes shop.
People everywhere, trying on
sweaters, jeans and jackets.

Mom's eye meets mine, a coat in her hand;
long sleeves, thick fabric, two buttons,
black intertwined with white.

It's warm and heavy on my shoulders.
We walk out, the coat in my hand,
it has become mine.

I wear it like a second skin,
an item I can never take off.
I leave my mom wearing my coat.

I go, catch the bus, put my coat aside.
The bus drives and drives and drives.
I get out without my coat.

Forgotten on a seat, tossed aside.
As I unlock the door of my new home
I notice the missing warmth around my shoulders,

the missing buttons, the lost comfort.

Ballycotton Lighthouse

Malena Jolie Baake

Big cliff, sharp edges, water splashing.
Big waves, blue and white, stone breaking through.
A dark shadow over the cliffs,
yes up, look up, up on the hill.
The top of the lighthouse,
a shadow over it, the sun in its back.
The tops of houses spying down at me.
A blue sky, grey clouds, light.
A storm is coming.
I am leaving home.
I am leaving my city, leaving my comfort.
I'm looking up, scared and small like a mouse.
The last thing I will see before I am gone
The Ballycotton lighthouse.

This is Only the Beginning

Malena Jolie Baake

Today I met Bridget at the harbour wall,
the sky was painted in red and orange,
clouds splattered across the sky.

The sun said goodbye, the moon rising.
Standing next to me the goddess Bridget,
young, pale skin, eyes that held a universe.

'My name is Bridget, goddess and saint,
patroness of healers, poets and women.'
The goddess breathed into my ear,
'Be young, be new, be fearless and free,
but most importantly be proud to be women,
believe me this is only the beginning.'

With that she's vanished away with the wind.
I looked down at the water and my mirror image.
This is only the beginning.

Happy

Malena Jolie Baake

Sun shines through the foggy window,
I run down the green hill in grandma's garden,
feel the wind going through my dark hair,
bare small feet touch freshly cut grass.

I've always loved being at grandma's house,
even though she's not my real grandma,
like many things, this was a lie to keep me happy.

She calls my name, it echoes through the garden.
She holds an eastern themed plate with rabbit print,
it's covered in chocolate chip cookies.
I think they are self-made, but they aren't.

It's just a lie she has made to keep me happy.

You wear the brown and white woolly scarf

Leah Hartigan Hurley

for my Grandad, John Hartigan

The wool is no longer fluffy but flat
from being worn so much, threads

flowing loosely at the ends, being lifted up
by the wind coming through the window,

rolled down all the way, in your 1997 *Opel Astra*
listening to Dino - *Little Old Wine Drinker Me*.

We reach the open fields in Dublin Hill,
Penney, our white terrier runs ahead.

Behind the IDA we pick blackberries,
for Nan to make into a pie.

But now there is no you, no car, no dog.
All that's left is the scarf. The scent fading away.

Winter

Leah Hartigan Hurley

1

Icy snow on the grass,
Christmas songs on the radio.

Going to my Nan's when everyone comes over.
Grandad giving out about the cost of heating.

Our yearly meet-up. The adults downstairs
and all the cousins hanging out upstairs.

The Big wheel on Grand Parade, the lights.
Watching Christmas movies in my new pyjamas.

2

The days after Christmas, all boring
and the same. Staying in bed til two,
I just don't get up or go anywhere.

Looking forward to New Year's Eve,
then its January and I look forward
to summer. I hate that I'm growing-up

and it doesn't feel like Christmas anymore.

Sand Sandwiches

Leah Hartigan Hurley

for my Dad

You bring me for a spin in the car because
I love it, even though you hate driving.
We go to Youghal beach where we eat sandwiches
that have a side of sand in them.

Caught in traffic mid December,
we park on the side of the road to eat our KFC
while listening to our song *Feel it again*.
We only like the song because it's so bad.

We enjoy a packet of Christmas box *Taytos*
for dessert when we go home.

We play mini golf and I win nearly every time,
it makes you second guess who plays golf as a hobby.

You taught me how to ride my bike in Glanmire park ,
After riding my bike I went to the swings to sing *Singing in the Rain*.

Leaving early in the morning with caramel squares packed,
to go fishing with my luminous pink rod,
where the reel lights up as you spin it.
Afterwards we stop in Macroom, You hate the town
but we get dinner while waiting for our spin home.

BunkBeds

Leah Hartigan Hurley

A pile of clothes stacked on bunkbeds,
all belonging to my older cousin.
Hazel and I try them on while preparing a dance for her mam.

I can hear her telling me I did the wrong step,
Whilst One Direction's *You And I* plays in the background.
We go downstairs and perform our dance and rap to Justin Bieber songs.

My face is hot from the mix of nail varnish
which we thought was make-up,
and the fire lighting cozy in the sitting-room.

We end the night with the famous Louise hot chocolate
and watch a 2000s movie looking forward
to doing the exact same thing tomorrow.

The Tree

Megan Houliban

1

The tall tree has a smooth trunk,
its cherry blossom petals are delicate and fragile
while the branches are long, skinny and smooth.

It smells like an autumn day
The smell of mud and leaves
It's my tree to watch grow.

The colours and the way it stands is unique
The cherry blossom tree dreams of having a friend
So I won't stand alone day through night.

2

The tree stands tall,
pink blossoms blooming,

down where me and my dogs like to play,
this is my favourite tree to pass every day.

Blossoms slowly falling to the ground,
the sound of the wind growling around.

We Used to Play

Megan Houliban

When we used to play it was fun,
We would enjoy it every day.

We used to play moms and dads,
We used to play tip the can.

Me, you and our teddies, freddie and molly,
Best friends flying around, jumping and dancing.

Back when we would only have tea and toast for breakfast,
We used to enjoy making each other laugh.

Your face would go so red from laughter,
I would be on the floor laughing so hard.

When we used to play,
Those were the good old days.

Charm

Megan Houliban

A lonely girl wandered down through the town.
She came across loads of steps leading down to a small hidden beach

She arrived at the bottom and took off her shoes and socks,
felt the cold sand melting in between her toes.

She sat on a large rock and enjoyed the peace
and the sound of waves crashing against the shore

The lonely girl caught a glimpse of a red and white light house,
this reminded her of her mother.

Her mom always loved the beach and had a light house
charm which she brought everywhere in her bag

As the girl gazed at the red and white lighthouse,
she didn't feel so lonely anymore.

A Purple Starburst

Bonnie O'Mahony

The telly is playing some sort of game show you love, Nan.
I sit between your legs on the hard floor.
There is a can of hairspray in your hand, the spray
suffocates me silently as you pull back my hair.
A sweet you gave me, a purple starburst, dances on my tongue

I hear granddad calling down to you
'Where's my shirt?' He yells"
I shuffle forward as you stand up,
I examine the dust on the table next to me
as you make your way upstairs.
I grab a dark red pillow off the chair
that you were sitting in and place it under me.

You both come back down with smiling faces
that make the cold air fade, you drown
out the telly as you speak to each other.
I watch the clock wishing time would speed by
and my mam would come soon.

I race to the door when she arrives,
slipping on the waxed floorboards,
waving a swift goodbye to the two of you.

I am just a little girl, and when I am grown
I will wish that I didn't complain like I did
when you were doing my hair. I will wish
I listened to you talk, instead of watching
the clock and I will wish I hugged you goodbye.

thinking

Bonnie O'Mahony

i think of the rain and the smell it leaves on the earth when it stops
i think of the dark spots on the moon that you can only see when it's really dark
i think of the sunsets creeping up on the daylight leaving us with pink painted skies
i think of the little things that bring me joy on the days that aren't so good
i think of the people I've met who knew you as well
and i think to myself
do they think of you when they see all these things
or is it just me

that feeling

Bonnie O'Mahony

that feeling
that feeling that you want everything to be ok
but your throat starts to hurt and your eyes start to sting
your heart beats faster and faster
and with every breath your chest gets tighter
thoughts racing through your head
there's nothing wrong
but everything is wrong
you start to fear this feeling will last forever
i think that's the worst part

Biryani

Sandra Murphy

The food my step-dad is obsessed with;

the smell of garlic, turmeric, chilli powder
and other spices are completely pungent.

Though the flavour is quite nice,
the stench of it lasts for hours on end.

No matter what I do
I can't escape its ponging smell.

I lock doors and open windows
yet its odour is unending.

I just want it to disappear,
its flavour is everlasting.

But it reminds me, I'm home.

Just Do It

Iska Bernhauer

after Long Way Down by One Direction

That's what I hear every day.
It is not difficult, just try it.
that's what the people say.

I can't fight the fear,
fear is in me, has been all my life
it's getting better every day,
but I can't get over my fear.

The thoughts in my head,
I want it, I want it so much.
But it's all just in my head,
No one can see it.

The fear is there,
the fear of not being accepted.
Because I am different
because I can't do what others do so simply.

The moment has passed too quickly to act,
could do it, but I need more time,
More time I don't have because someone is faster.

My hands are shaking,
Because I don't trust myself to do it.
Because I don't know what will happen,
I'm afraid of the effect

Point of no returning
Now it's just too late to turn around
I try it
But I fail 'cause I don't know how the people react.

Everyone can do it except me,
Everyone makes it except me,
Everyone is brave except me,
It's only the fear who controls me.

Cinderella Shoe

Alice Stockley

A silver slipper
hangs from my neck.
The cold silver chain
sends chills down my spine.

A token from my Mom,
the feeling of the steel heel
that I press into my thumb
when I'm talking.

The shoe takes me
back to simpler times.
Waking up to dress up,
thinking that someday
my prince would come.

To My Best Friend

Clodagh Murphy

You undeniably
have the most beautiful soul
of anyone I've ever known
you're authentic and real.

I can come to you with anything,
you're the one person I trust the most,
you never judge me
and I love you for that.

To think that some day
we will go our separate ways
makes my heart ache.
Not because we choose to

but because as we grow up
things will change.

You thought those trials would last forever

Clodagh Murphy

Happiness to me
is being content
with the life you live

though you may not
receive much, you
still find ways to give.

In moments of pain you
thought those trials
would last forever

good comes to those
who wait as you watch
your heart come back together

How much would I give and hold my breath

Mira Thomas

(Birth:)

Oh, how much I love being a human.
Having my own thoughts, body and life's dream.
To quench my thirsty blind eyes illusion,
Seeing blossoming, neverending green.

(Raising:)

Oh, how much I love being a human.
To touch the soft surface of your bare skin.
Your moving, freckles and our fusion,
Whispering: you are my choices begin.

(Death:)

Oh, how much I love being a human.
But in our bodies timers are our hearts.
I'll sit back, smile while I quietly groan.
No regret because life can't be surpassed.

Oh, how much would I give and hold my breath,
To stop the circle of birth, raising and death.

The Library

Mira Thomas

I can hear a child laugh: 'You're a robber! You're a robber!'
And echoing footsteps on scratched floor.
My eyes catch all the books around, improper.
I can feel them staring at me and roar.
The cold smell of old ancient books
who want to be read before
they turn yellow and crumble to dust.
Coming closer. Telling stories
I don't even want to hear anymore.
They whisper, cry, they scream at me.
The murmur booms in my ears,
my shaky hands holding my burning head.
My body vibrates, my chest rises,
sweating words. Breath frozen.
Heart beating faster.
Like a timer of my death
Sprinkled with Goosebumps,
Dusty taste of gloom
Go, before it'll be too late, they say.
Lamps flickering above me.
Go and seize the day.

My Grandmother

Mira Thomas

She is cutting the raw cabbage,
Quickly, in her own rhythm.
She puts the seasoned dead meat into the big leaves
And rolls the wrinkly leaves
With her wrinkly fingers.
She isn't even looking at what she's doing,
Maybe it's her thousandth time,
Her skilfull fingertips feeling the cold meat.
Her eyes staring through the window
As if she's not in the kitchen but
Somewhere in her memories.
And I realise
How much I love my grandmother.

The Childhood Dress

Mira Thomas

I don't remember where it's from
nor the day I got it.
I just remember how it felt,
made with soft cotton.

And flowers all over, printed,
like the meadow I was playing in.

The flower prints are not gone but faded,
blurred away like my memories.

I'll never run and fly like a metamorphotic insect again,
innocently looking for the sweetness of life begun.
Never feel the sun tickle my young fresh face's glen
and smell the earthy song of rubbed grass on skin.

Some Lines

Mira Thomas

Her soul died a hurtful death, stabbed.
Cut into pieces by blood thirsty hunters,
her body's flesh left alone, once coveted.
Still the bitter taste of metal on their tongues.
And out of the stormy sky tons of rain fell,
to quench the thirsty earth.
Since then, she has a steely gaze, numb.
Revenge is reflected.
But nobody knows what's going on in her head.
But she hasn't become weaker, no, she is the strongest now.
Nothing makes her laugh again or tease or even smile.
She's a wandering revenge between the innocents,
she was promised everything, she believed everything blindly and innocent.
And even though there would be something beautiful, she wouldn't get trapped
anymore.

Being in the Wood

Mira Thomas

I woke up in the wood bathed moonlight,
not sure if it was a dream or not.

It felt like it was my first time to see
but I knew everything since birth.

Tired, I have walked my whole life
but never felt this ground
under my naked feet,
and already feel so bound.

It's dark as well and deep and cold.
Bare goosebumps glimmering in moon.
How long will it go?
Where will I be soon?

The time feels slowed, backwards going.
With every step I'm going towards the moon I feel lighter.
My faded memories blur away around me.
They swirl around, I don't catch them back.

Innocent again, and nothing.
Relieved from all the boundness on earth.
I know he will take me away soon.
The big, the truth, the moon.

Worn Out

Shona Power

I'm actually quite tired,
you might not see it instantly,
I might come off as;
hard working,
a try hard,
an all-rounder
but if someone stopped to look at me
properly.
If someone actually cared
or, perhaps
if someone wanted to realise
they would see the pain and wisdom
behind my eyes that has been building
for all fifteen years. They would in fact
see that I am actually quite tired.

Presentation Brothers College

Poetry by

Andrew Maume

Hugh McGinn

Jack Bugler

Leo Porion

Ronan McCarthy

Daire McStay

Ian Crowley

Kieran Barry

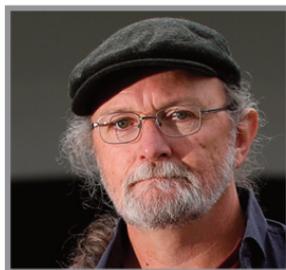
MacDara Toibin

Robert Barry

Assisting Writer: Paul Casey

T.Y. Coordinator: Eanna O'Loingsigh

Workshops held at Presentation B.C.



I have thoroughly enjoyed working on this year's *The Unfinished Book of Poetry* project, been humbled to witness the vibrant engagement and creative commitment from the TY students at Presentation Brothers College. They have produced an excellent body of work here, which I am delighted to include. It's the first time that Pres has been involved in the project, now in its 19th year, and these young writers have done themselves proud.

Over nine creatively charged sessions, these young poets in the making were exposed to a wide span of what is possible in poetry, through the close study of poetry from across the world, both traditional and contemporary, including Charles Simic, Ted Hughes, Emily Dickinson, Sylvia Plath, Simon Armitage, Wislawa Szymborska, Pascale Petit, Matthew Sweeney, Basho, Mary Oliver, Jackie Kay, Amy Lowell, Galway Kinnell, Li-Young Lee, Christan Bök, Pablo

Neruda, Robert Frost, Gertrude Stein, Ogden Nash, Bruce Lansky, Billy Collins, Erica Jong, A. E. Stallings, Benjamin Zephaniah and many others besides. I firmly believe that exposure to a wide variety in reading material can only translate into richer, more informed poetry.

We explored a range of poetic themes and elements, including the language of metaphor, lyricity, constraint, cliché, anthropomorphism, exquisite corpse, haiku, emotions and fictional narratives, ekphrasis, list poems, humour, superstition, food and refugee poems, any of which may be evidenced in successful form within these pages.

I was thrilled by their enthusiasm and willingness to take the creative plunge, take risks in their writing and to take whatever meaning resonated with them personally from each of the poems we explored - they were able to refrain, as Billy Collins advises, from 'torturing a confession out of them'. I do hope these budding young writers will keep their connection with the written word alive, and I look forward to discovering their work in print over the years to come.

I am thankful to PBC's T.Y. Coordinator Eanna O'Loingsigh for his diligent help with setting up the workshops, and as ever to our community arts officer Siobhán Clancy and librarian Patricia Looney for continuing their enthusiastic support of this outstanding project, with which I am proud to be associated.

Paul Casey

Poems

Presentation Brothers College



Dear Artist

Andrew Maume

after the image by Joe Boske

Why have you painted such balance

With this animal?

Why have you painted such a picturesque view

Of this animal?

Dear Artist

What is the meaning of this image

Of this animal?

Why have you painted a background so warm, so clear

Behind this animal?

Dear Joe Boske

What is the meaning of this image

Of this animal?

What if I, the poet, were to replace the image

Of this animal?

What would happen?

Haiku Sequence

Andrew Maume

Tree planted to save
The Earth from climate change
Made sad by winter

What time are you home?
I hope we can go hang out
From your friend Andrew

Dear Robert Barry
PresLink is priority
Don't you forget that

Cork Haiku

Andrew Maume

Cork is our county
The county of the Rebels
The real capital !!!

The banks of the Lee
Our great beautiful county
The Rebels abú !!!

Why Me?

Andrew Maume

Seven feet tall, green as grass
I live in the attic and only come out
Once a year
I live here with other objects
but they cannot hear me

I am isolated
Lonely
Then I am brought downstairs
Dressed up, a star placed on my head

I bring so much joy
But I do not know why
Every year people gather around me
The dog bites me

The people open presents near me
Why me?
Then I am once again brought back
Back to the cold, dark attic

Until next year ??...

Shandon Bells Clock Faces

Andrew Maume

I am morning of warm Summer
I can see as far as Blackpool shopping centre
I can wave at you from here
Though I give you the wrong time
I am usually as precise as a bent ruler

I am night of chilly winter
I can see as far as the Elysian Tower
I can tower over you
Though I would need to grow
It's like I am trapped in time

I am afternoon of bright Spring
I can see as far as Cork City Gaol and Apple
I can jump from me to you
Though I am a hundred and twenty feet high
I am like a child at Christmas, beaming with pride and happiness

I am evening of foggy Autumn
I can see as far as Lover's Walk
I can swim from me to you
Though I cannot move
I am as loud as a boat, Ding, Ding, Ding

What the Rooms Feel

Andrew Maume

The Living Room loves my Dad

The Kitchen will always remember baking with my Mum

The Hall likes the pictures hanging on the wall

The Dining Room remembers Grandma
telling stories at Christmas

The Back Room needs new paint

The stairs wants to keep the carpet clean

My room loves me and is invaded

by my family and dog on occasion

My parents' room protects my parents

My brother's room enjoys listening to his Xbox

My brother's room loves the peace

North Korea Planning To Nuke USA

Andrew Maume

The leader of North Korea

Kim Jong-un

has announced his attack

on American soil today

Joe Biden, American President

said that we will be ok

because Kim is bluffing

While America is huff and puffing

People are fleeing

Crying and leaving

As

Andrew Maume

My charger is as black as the grim reaper calling me to rest
As dark as my room
when I turn off the lights and close the curtain
As good as my mother
how she helps me every day
As green as the blades of grass
that grow yearly in our small front garden
As red as the love
my mother and father share
As soft as my pillow
as I fall into a deep slumber
As grey as my duvet
as I pull it closer and tighter
As yellow as the nightly apple juice
I drink for low blood sugar
As rough as the toast I swallow
for my breakfast
As hard as waking up
at 7am for school
My dog is as white as the snow falling near Santa's workshop

Dear Pancake

Andrew Maume

You feel warm, soft and smooth
Like a freshly baked flat cake
I can smell your toppings
lemon, sugar, nutella
Sometimes you smell like burn
I love when you are at the perfect,
oh so perfect temperature
Luke warm

Dear amazing food
you bring me such memories
The Tuesday named after you a few years ago
Mum was cooking, let us all have a go off flipping
But when I flipped you broke, so fun !!!
Not all good memories are good though
While only last month I awoke
To cook you, but the pan was broken
You were not perfect and broke apart.

A nibble of you tastes like Heaven
like a freshly baked cake with lemon on top
A giant bite of you tastes sometimes sweet,
sometimes sour. Unreal! I'm on cloud 9
You are made with my Nana's recipe
Which I know off by heart

If I could have made you for Nana
She would have loved you

You are the perfect food
You carry on the tradition
You bring back good memories
Everything goes with, or on you
I love you forever
I will forget you never, never, never

Superstitions

Andrew Maume

Superstitions are powerful and dangerous things
Understanding them is a curse
Play the game, you might end up in a hearse
Ending them might bring you to angels' wings
Read this with care, for
Superstitions are always there
Try to avoid them as best you can, or
In a few years your funeral might be a plan
Tipping a salt shaker over
I cannot put my shoes on the table no more
Opening an umbrella indoors
Never break a mirror
Superstitions are dangerous things, so be careful !!!

Magpie

Andrew Maume

One for a smile

Two for tears

Three for a laugh

Four for a whimper

Five for love

Six for hate

Seven for the best day of your existence

Eight for a fright

Nine for calmness

Ten for the worst day of your existence

Early this morning

Andrew Maume

I flew to the moon

As I travelled up

my rockets started to boom

Suddenly we were out of the Earth

and into the dark, black space

After four more hours

we had won the space race

When we landed I got to meet

that man on the moon

I was happy as could be like a kid with a balloon

We had finished our mission

I was sad it was over

But I will be happy forever.

Rugby Pantoum

Andrew Maume

The powerful scrum came to a halt
The huge prop was sadly injured
It was the silly lock's fault
After the tackle from the ginger

The huge prop was sadly injured
We lost the rugby ball
After the tackle from the ginger
How the mighty fall

We lost the rugby ball
I made an excellent pass
How the mighty fall
A player fell on his ass

I made an excellent pass
I went and scored a try
A player fell on his ass
The opposition could only cry

I went and scored a try
The powerful scrum came to a halt
The opposition could only cry
It was the silly lock's fault

Waking Dream

Daire McStay

I was happy waking up for school this morning
I waited for the humm of Joe's spaceship to take me away
Once its red bonnet flew around the corner I jumped in
I was only 25 minutes late to class but I forgot my saxophone
Lu Xiao Xin Olympic gold medalist weightlifter was sitting in my seat
so I gave him the boot and sat down
Today we were discussing porcupines
and their capability of flight
I was quite interested
until Seb made a terrible joke making me angry
I've never laughed at him, not today, yesterday
and probably not tomorrow

Haiku

Daire McStay

An acorn glistens
It cooks slowly in the sun
Waiting to be seen

Fish on a Bicycle

Daire McStay

A fish cycles a bike down a busy street
but few take notice on the cool sunny day
It gives me a warm feeling

Being different doesn't make a difference
to anyone around you
so why care to stand out?

Why choose a fish
on a bike
out of all things strange?

It helps put perspective
on when I have felt looked at for being something different
but in reality I only was thinking that

A look through a shop window reveals the oddest of sights.
A fish on a bike
Noticed by few but perfectly out of place

A cool winter morning
its smooth bright pattern trails by leaving nothing
As sudden as it was there it is gone

No proof of its existence
Although so odd it paled in comparison to normality
What if it never passed at all?

The Climber

Daire McStay

His mind a winter evening fading quicker as months roll on
and his skin a summer day dryer than the pavement
His eyes a foggy wasteland clouding slowly
And his movement like frost laying on the window
His hands like drums beaten from past use
And his knees like the sharp sound of a rock

His back was steep, past the summit
and his clothes were a dusty cottage
His lungs a basement cellar, dark from time
And his stomach left empty from meals gone past
He lays still now, an urn on the countertop
His body a soulless shoe

Happiness

Daire McStay

Yellow like the bees
It happens when I'm not in school
It sounds like a buzzing speeding up
It smells like pollen drifting through the air
It feels soft like velvet
Happiness makes the world go round and round
like a child on a carousel
It is tiring though
It can even taste bitter

Refugee

Daire McStay

A view from the inside of
Buildings I've never seen
I now visit almost everyday

I don't understand the other kids
They still let me play with them
But that's twice a day

The rest of the day is quiet
Having a football for a mouth
Makes it so quiet

All Kinds of Weather

Hugh McGinn

Winds come hurtling across the land like an escaped convict
Icy paths watch in silence ready for prey to stumble on them
Nimble snowflakes avoid disturbances like ninjas
Trees tremble in the wind while hiding their true facade
Euphuism lies as many people are slain by its harsh conditions
Receding snow falls victim to the sun's harsh beams

Haiku Sequence

Hugh McGinn

The falling of leaves
Squirrels dancing in the trees
Glistening colours

Cold blooded killer
Watching you in the darkness
Ambushes its prey

Slithering around
Crystallised like a diamond
Finally it's free

How are you today
Are you feeling quite happy?
Get back to me soon

Sadness

Hugh McGinn

Is the feeling of the first morning after summer
The sudden shock of an ice cube sliding down your back
Like a charred piece of meat too burned to be palpable
Shocked by the horrific tang of deceased fish
The high pitched ringing that makes your ears go deaf

A Flying Eagle

Hugh McGinn

Oh so high and mighty!
Yet its presence is obscure
A dog in an aeroplane chasing after squirrels
A hairy coconut running around as hard as stone
Big and juicy and crispy and shiny
Leaps across the dirt paved road
in search of bones

Superstition

Hugh McGinn

Sometimes we ask the question What if?
Unusual occurrences happen in the blink of an eye
Polarising your greatest fears in front of you
Every time I see black fur scuttering across me
Run, run, run
Should I believe this ancient myth?
Terrible actions may occur
Is this really who I am
Treating this feline friend like a foe?
Irresistible thoughts flood my mind
Noble people don't run from cats
but would they run from the grim reaper?

Room of Emptiness

Hugh McGinn

after 'La Tortillera' by Diego Rivera

Two people in a room of emptiness
Their hands moulding the clay
The clay moulding their minds
The concentration is fascinating

Pottery is what keeps them alive
Like slaves hard at work
Their minds feel numb
But are not needed for this task

Waking Dream

Hugh McGinn

This morning I helped god make the sky
When I was up there the clouds swirled by
A yellow hippo bowed its head
Twelve great eagles ready for bed
Bilbo filled the chimney with smoke
Camouflaged frog bounced and loudly croaked
Anger turned red from the steamy vapor inside
“Heri, Hodie et Cras” he cried

Dear Chicken Breast

Hugh McGinn

I am your true love
I want to see those grill marks all over your body
Your soft inside fills me with immeasurable joy
The smell off your juices trickling down towards me
You're lukewarm inside but hot to the touch
The feeling of biting into you after a long hard day
Hopefully no more salmonella
Protected by your spices on the outside
Yet the deeper I go the more real you taste
The death of innocent lives
to that I am sympathetic
The pain and suffering you must go through
The snapping of your bones is met with joy
And to anyone who does not like you
the way I do
I think they are deluded
Goodbye for now
We will speak again soon

Cork Haiku

Hugh McGinn

Containing wonders
The city that never stops
Cork's English market

Oil

Ian Crowley

Pitch black, the darkness surrounds me.
Suddenly, the earth starts to shake,
I can feel my whole body being squeezed.
Like dust under a vacuum I'm sucked up

Up through pipes and forced into barrels
I'm not used to the sun, its rays cut me into colours
Apparently I'm useful now
I'm glad to be important, it wasn't like that for millennia

Now I am high in the air
Without me nothing would get done
People spent a lot of money to entice me,
Push me out of my shell.
Now they're saying I'm dangerous
That my very use is reckless

Stress

Ian Crowley

A whirlpool, thrashing you around, choking you
The screams of someone getting louder and closer
It's often like looking through a microscope, seeing a small hole as a crater
It's the smell of diesel, overwhelming, disabling your senses
It's a house made from bricks and bricks of worry
Stress

Itch

Ian Crowley

It's increasingly unbearable, my will growing thin
It first started out as a single tingle on my skin
It grows in annoyance, screaming for my attention
There is very little to help its prevention
Eventually I give in, but not a single scratch
Like the quick strike of a match
A destitute gambler scratching down to the last lotto card
I can't stop, won't stop, the sensation is too euphoric
Feels like what drink must be to an alcoholic
A demented prospector digging for ecstasy
Often I can't stop even if I bleed
Ointments, creams, lotions, gel,
It all helps to keep my skin nice and well
But when I start to feel the itch come on
The scratching won't wait too long
End

Refugees

Ian Crowley

When the sounds of gunfire came
I was fearful for my life
It was my small hometown being attacked
But my whole world came crashing down

Sprinting past deserted houses
I had nothing left but family
Urban areas becoming jungles
Of death and misery

Fleeing through fields
Running to a different land
At some point reaching heaven
From the hell that I've escaped

It's been a week in my new country
For now, this is my home
Hopefully some day I'll go back
To the place I used to know

Fiction

Jack Bugler

I woke up in a city up in the clouds
It felt like I could fly with plane popping sounds
I looked and saw an endless white and blue
Amongst the buildings I saw house number 44
I then decided to knock on this door
It opened to see a pig with wings
I walked in and cried at the couch made of strings
I woke up this morning in building 44
I guess no one knows what the future brings

Bittersweet

Jack Bugler

Grey like a cloudy day
surrounded by colourful buildings
It happens on a school day with only free classes
It sounds like a backhanded compliment
It tastes like coffee full of sugar
It smells like rotting fruit
Bittersweet

Haiku

Jack Bugler

As Caesar once said
I came I saw I conquered
Until he was too

Could I please have the
Homework answers that are due
For Friday morning?

T'was a nice city
We visited last Thursday
The real capital

Art

Jack Bugler

Davinci had so much creativity
during the renaissance
When he put oil to canvas
It turned into a masterpiece

Cliché

Kieran Barry

I woke up in the dead of night
You could've heard a pin drop
In my cabin in the woods
My heart was in my mouth
Creeping down the creaking hall
I was as pale as a ghost
Out of the corner of my eye
I saw a glimpse of someone
And shouted for him to stop
beating around the bush
Because it takes two to tango
But we didn't see eye to eye
So I missed the boat
as he ran off into the night

Boredom

Kieran Barry

Is the dull grey of a prison cell
It happens when it's been four hours and there's still four left
It sounds like the sharp ticking of a clock as time scrapes past
It smells like a dusty old room
It tastes like boiled unseasoned chicken
Boredom

Haiku

Kieran Barry

A hole in a tree
Deep inside a squirrel sleeps
Hidden from the world

A cold fog settles
Over the beautiful lake
As the morning comes

Rain slowly dripping
Down my face helps to disguise
Tears I'm ashamed of

Sitting on the roof
I can see the city lights
Shining far below

Superstition

Kieran Barry

I was always told by my granny
Breaking a mirror brings
Seven dreadful years
Of awful happenings
Well if that's true I'm in for a life sentence
Because every mirror in my house is now just smithereens
However this is a necessary evil
For in every mirror I look into
It's not my face I see
But a strange demonic creature
Staring back at me
So I had to break the mirrors
I had to set it free
Because if I kept it trapped in there
Oh how angry it would be!

Tree

Kieran Barry

I stand strong
beautiful in the summer
ghastly in the winter

Many people and animals
have relied on me
for food and shelter

Dear Potato

Kieran Barry

You're rough brown and dirty
Unappealing to the eye
But with a little preparation
Your taste could make me cry
Whether mashed, roasted or fried
With ketchup, butter, any kind of sauce
You're Ireland's greatest pride
For hundreds of years, a staple
We've relied on you so much
So filling and nutritious
We've used you as a crutch
Eaten with steaks, burgers, stew
You're the greatest plant in the world I'd argue
Deep inside I know it's true

Rugby

Kieran Barry

On the pitch I feel free from life's shackles
Feel every impact of the crunching tackles
The fiery passion, desire to win
Even just thinking about it I can't help but grin
The elation from a game well played
The disappointment with every mistake made
Knowledge I'm improving brings great satisfaction
My need to prove myself brings me into the action

Rugby Pantoum

Kieran Barry

The ball is thrown with such velocity
Each try is met with a deafening cheer
You can really feel the animosity
The crowd knows victory is near

Each try is met with a deafening cheer
A wayward pass almost makes my heart stop
The crowd knows victory is near
A chance to get back on top

A wayward pass almost makes my heart stop
Our prop makes sure he's going nowhere
A chance to get back on top
No other player can compare

Our prop makes sure he's going nowhere
The ball is thrown with such velocity
No other player can compare
You can really feel the animosity

Refugee

Kieran Barry

I have forgotten my mother's face
I will never forget her voice
Pleading to stay with me

We were sheep, helpless and afraid
But to them we were wolves
Coming to take their jobs, housing, money
All we wanted was safety and respect

My parents were sent back
My brother and I remained
Our country is in ruins
But I'd return in a heartbeat

To feel safe in my father's arms
To see my mother smile again

Match Day

Leo Porion

My jersey striped black and white
black as the deepest depths of the marina trench
White as the florescent bulbs adorning an operating room
The winning feeling as he places the ball over the line
Emotion takes over and arms shoot into the air
The other team crumple softly in defeat
As softly as the breeze in summer's heat

Confusion

Leo Porion

Confusion is a polar bear
dancing the conga in a Hawaiian dress
My math teacher's whiteboard
A slippery multi coloured glue stick

A cologne smelling of toilet water
that tastes like apples
A matte black traffic cone
with arms and legs

Confusion is what's understood
when nothing is understood

Refugees

Leo Porion

When I close my eyes I see the face of my brother
What was left
His tears cut through a path
through the ash of his burnt skin
His ears streaming deep red
His warm smile a mere obstacle
for the merciless shrapnel

It wasn't long before he fell
He was laid to rest in a pool of his own blood
I can still smell his singed hair
I can still hear the screams from under the rubble
But before the roof came down to silence them
I ran

Ran until I couldn't run
Ran to a far away place
where I can sleep knowing I will wake the next day
Only I do not know what the next day offers
I have no food nor money
No clothes and no home

I see my brother's warm smile
in the children playing soccer with their friends
I have dreams of better times
So help me live my dreams
Because had the rubble come to you

Had life dealt a different hand
When you close your eyes
What would you see?

Them

Leo Porion

They are the warmth when winter comes
The ones with a blanket when disease succumbs
They are a lighthouse in troubled seas
The bread to a nice Swiss cheese
They are the weights to a gym
They are as sweet as a choir's hymn
They are the music to a party

They make bad times good
and good times great
I never mentioned a name
But yet you know them
Take some time to thank them
because without them
Smiles would succumb to gravity

Curiosity

MacDara Toibin

Curiosity is probing a lightless room
It is the echo of a sound
seemingly from nowhere

It is the prism that shows every colour
The scent that turns your head
The taste of unknown ingredients

Despair

MacDara Toibin

Despair is grabbing at thin air
It is the reverberation
of your voice without response

It is the backs of surrounding people
The sting in your nose from the smouldering ashes
of your home, a bite into a tasteless birthday cake

At the Dock of the Styx

MacDara Toibin

after the artwork by Michael Ray

As I sit in the edge of despair
The weight of my sins hailing down on my back
I cast my rod into nothingness,
Searching for my own salvation

Just before I feel myself break from the pressure
The rain stops, they stand there
bearing my punishment with me
Although not a word is said

I never see their faces
I am grateful for the company
Sitting at the dock of the Styx
Fishing for a way back

Nothing Average

MacDara Toibin

He's the dead of night when predators hunt
He's winter, the longest nights of the year
He's a desert, devoid of life on the surface
He's a string instrument screeching out of key
He's a cliff being eroded
He's a roundabout without a turnoff
He's a room with no door
He's a trench coat concealing what's underneath
But his stature and walk are that of the most average man

Rage

MacDara Toibin

The unyielding red orange of a devastating wildfire
The first millisecond of an explosion, it happens
when the cage breaks, the leash snaps, the mind caves

It sounds like the rolling of thunder, the howling
of a hurricane, the cries of a man with nothing left to lose
It smells like the smoke of fire, the dust of a collapsed house

the rotting of a grand feast

This morning I lost my shadow

MacDara Toibin

Blinded by the light, I screamed and shut my eyes
All I could see was bright white everywhere
Complete and total 360 degrees whiteout
Pan searched for his lost shadow

But it was futile searching for a bat at night
The unchained satisfaction of everything
robbed of my beliefs. I had been standing up
Now I've lost my legs, my throne a wheelchair forevermore

Talking

Ronan McCarthy

The talking, faint and distant
But come closer
Talking, insistent
Truth revealed
Painful revelations
Years of controversy sparked
In one conversation

Fly Dear

Ronan McCarthy

After the painting by Cristina Bernazzani

Fly dear!

Fly dear!

You can do it!

Fly dear!

Fly dear!

You can do it!

I've raised four ducks and twenty geese

But you're the only bird I'll ever meet

Who once old enough to leave the nest

Didn't stretch their wings

Puff out their chest

And fly!

Don't you get tired of sitting around,

Sleeping all day, pecking on the ground?

Come now dear chicken, if you really try

One of these days you'll surely fly!

Four Faced Liar

Ronan McCarthy

I am in Spring, early morning
I see as far as the North Pole
I hear the sound of rattlesnakes
No, all I hear is the breaking of ice
I am alone,
But I am free

I am in Summer, early afternoon
I cannot see anything for the mist is too thick
I can fly, far about the ground
No, I'm stuck down here
I feel as though I am trapped inside a block of ice.

I am in Autumn, evening
I can see the Northern Lights reflecting across the landscape
I am the one who brings the lights into being
No, I don't know where they come from
Out here I am like a man born yesterday, knowing nothing

I am in Winter, midnight
I see nothing, no light
I can disappear, travel away from this wretched place!
No, I am stuck here forever
I am afraid.

Haiku Sequence

Ronan McCarthy

Staring at the sky
I see a black bird flying
Oh how beautiful

Low beneath the trees
In a small hole I observe
A white mouse dying

Hey how have you been?
Want to go see a movie?
Tickets are 9.50.

Did you hear the news?
I have been expelled from school
Cause I killed a man.

Cork Haiku

Ronan McCarthy

Red and white's our flag
We are the true capital
Better than Dublin

The Diary

Ronan McCarthy

In an old shoe box under your bed,
There I lie.

And everyday when you come home,
To me you cry.

About all your worries and your fears,
In full you divulge them.

And I must say that I always find,
I hate you by the end.

All your selfish acts,
All your wicked thoughts,
Every day without fail,
To my pages you have brought.

Superstitions

Ronan McCarthy

Disaster! Crisis!
All is ruined in this house
Our son is filled with shame
Because of him we shall have
Seven years of pain

He's made us carry
A monumental weight
With one small action
He's change our fate

Seven years bad luck
The penalty is clear
I warned him not
To throw that ball inside here

Envy

Ronan McCarthy

Our most covetous friend.

That green slippery creature which appears on our shoulder and comments on everything we see.

It starts when your colleague receives a promotion or your neighbour buys a new car or you're the last of your friends to get married.

It sounds like a snotty arrogant child, hissing and judging those who have more.

Smells like a perfume made from the most bitter of fruits.

That demon on our shoulder that will not go away.

Envy.

Rooms

Ronan McCarthy

The guest bedroom feels lonely,
It's been abandoned for so long.

The attic, resentful
For we have robbed it of its precious baubles and tinsel,
Not to mention the star.

The kitchen, tired, depressed.
So many messes it has had to live through,
Food has been spilt on its floor.

But at last the sitting room
So warm, filled with such joy
A comfort for man, woman, girl and boy!

The sitting room's memories are of comfort and ease,
Coffee and biscuits, the most charming TV!

While other rooms may be shellshocked and war torn
The sitting room is a haven, for all that is wholesome and warm.

Rugby

Ronan McCarthy

Rugby is a game played with a ball

It's always enjoyed by one and all

If you play very often, chances are high

One day soon a concussion is nigh

Rugby is a game that requires full devotion

More important than school or exams or your very emotions!

'I don't have time for my maths, I'm playing ruby here!'

Yes you can't count to ten, but have no fear

Because ruby is a game played with a ball

You'd better enjoy it, one and all

One Day

Ronan McCarthy

Somewhere a child is crying, wailing on the floor
One day they will stop, and never again be so forlorn.

One day we will do away with all our anger and cruelty
Love *for all* will prevail, kindness *to all* will be a duty.

One day there shall be an end to conflicts and wars
All people will unite, and throw down their swords.

One day all poverty will end
There will be no homeless, no orphans
no victims to defend.

One day all sickness will be cured, all will be well
The very last patient saved by the bell.

One day the dead shall rise from their graves
And hug their old friends, filled with life's grace.

One day there'll be no fear
And all the pain will disappear.

One day, I'll see you again

One day everything's gonna be ok

One day.

I Travelled by Boat

Ronan McCarthy

Others who travel by boat can look out their window and admire their view

I didn't

All I saw were the waves
Those terrible waves
Looming, menacing
Like tall black mountains,
Crashing down in a bone chilling display

Others who travel by boat go in cruise ships the size of the Titanic

I didn't

Sitting in a dingy
A dingy the size of my bed
With six other people
So cold. So afraid.

Others who travel by boat bring all their cherished possessions with them

I didn't

All I had were my clothes
The clothes I'd been wearing for the past two weeks
The clothes my father gave me when he woke me up at three in the morning
Everything else had burned
I had nothing

Others who travel by boat arrive happy and safe, all their loved ones with them

Thank God, so did I

Morning blues

Robert Barry

You hear the sound
the wicked vibration
the alarms going off
a dreadful sensation

You arise from soporific comfort
Into the frigid cold
Don your prickly shirt
Wear your blazer as told

I fix up the unbearable tie
Perfect as a stickler
I stumble downstairs
As drunk as a fiddler

I regret the late night
Which my sleep did bilk
Crunchy cereal, chilled milk
Soggy cereal, warm milk

The nauseating mint
Makes my stomach turn
I wish to stay at home
But with school my parents are stern

Out the door and into the squally wind
There is no time for sorrow
I must be gone now
and back home again
To do it all again tomorrow



The Unfinished Book of Poetry 2023

featuring poems by

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Grace Hourihan
Solène Halligon
Leah Davis
Arden Mallari
Arisa Mallari
Emma Browne
Katie Bruen
Charlie McCarthy
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Leo Porion
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