

# The Unfinished Book of Poetry 2023

poems from five  
**Cork** secondary schools





# The Unfinished Book of Poetry 2023

poetry from five Cork City secondary schools



Comhairle Cathrach Chorcaí  
Cork City Council

**Arts** Ealaíona

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# The Unfinished Book of Poetry 2023



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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

*Arisa 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.

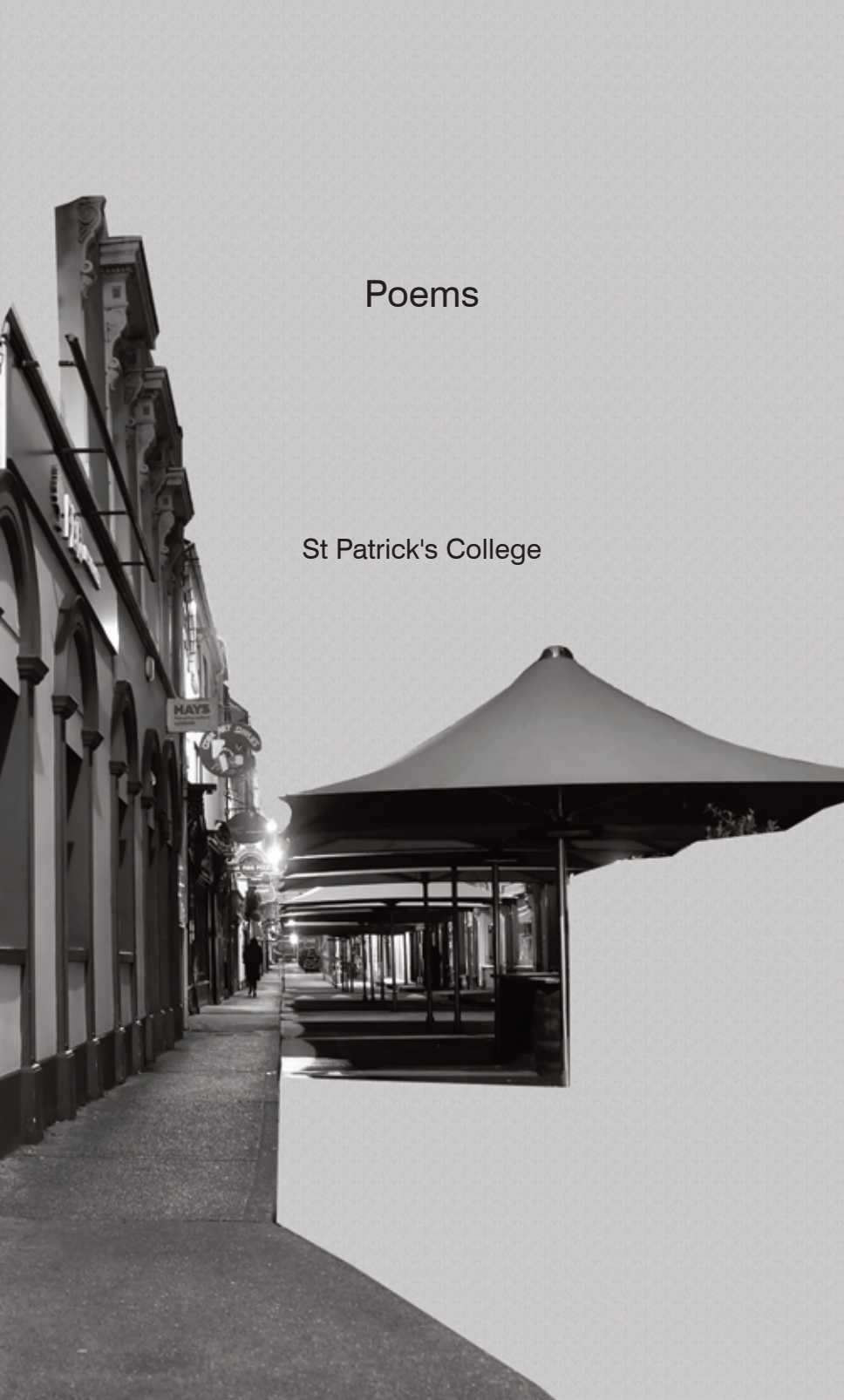
Over nine weeks I came to know each student, some students came most weeks and began to study the craft, others came in and out. I was moved over and over by a line written or something confided in the imaginative, creative space we were building together week by week. This project is well supported 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 metamorphic 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

Myah O'Brien  
Grace Hourihan  
Solène Halligon  
Leah Davis  
Arden Mallari  
Arisa Mallari  
Emma Browne  
Katie Bruen  
Charlie McCarthy  
Priscillia Isibor  
Emily Nora Spillane  
Róisín O'Sullivan  
Denis Gavrya  
Hannah Lucey  
Senan Nakajima  
Ellen Curran  
Evie Burke  
Léa Delauche  
Lily Ní Shúilleabháin  
Aoife Ní Chianáin  
Naoise Fitzgerald  
Chulainn Ó Tuama  
Chelsea Ní Chéilleachair  
Ceola Ní Shluaigh  
Leah Norberg  
Malena Jolie Baake  
Leah Hartigan Hurley  
Megan Houlihan  
Bonnie O'Mahony  
Sandra Murphy  
Iska Bernhauer  
Alice Stockley  
Clodagh Murphy  
Mira Thomas  
Shona Power  
Andrew Maume  
Daire McStay  
Hugh McGinn  
Ian Crowley  
Jack Bugler  
Kieran Barry  
Leo Porion  
MacDara Toibin  
Ronan McCarthy  
Robert Barry



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