

# The Unfinished Book of Poetry 2025

poems from five **Cork** secondary schools



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



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poetry from five Cork City secondary schools



Comhairle Cathrach Chorcaí  
Cork City Council

**Arts** Ealaíona

Published by  
Cork City Council

Published in 2025 by Ó Bhéal,  
Cork City Council, Cork City Libraries and Schools Project



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# The Unfinished Book of Poetry 2025



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# Foreword

The 21st edition of this unique anthology, *The Unfinished Book of Poetry*, has yet again exceeded expectations, replete with 204 pages of rich and surprisingly adept verse, covering a wide range of subject matter which attests to the focus, maturity and forward-thinkingness of Cork city's next generation of young writers. It has also been published as an eBook, which is easily searchable online.

The 2025 edition features poems from 51 young writers engaged in transition year, representing five Cork city schools. Since the debut edition was published back in 2005, the year Cork city was the European Capital of Culture, over thirty schools have taken part in the project, most on multiple occasions.

The consistent quality of poems is in no small part thanks to the industrious tutorship of our five professional assisting writers. Their creative guidance is as crucial for the rounded development of our young writers as it is for the overall success of the course, providing the students with a strong foundation in what can be made possible with poetry.

These poems showcase the growing vision of a very talented and enlightened generation. My heartfelt congratulations to all of the young writers, from:

- Cork Educate Together Secondary School with poet Róisín Leggett Bohan at the school;
- Terence MacSwiney Community College led by poet David McLoughlin at Hollyhill Library and at the school;
- Ashton School with poet Róisín Kelly at the Cork City Library;
- Coláiste an Phiarsaigh le file Gormfhlaith Ní Shíocháin Ní Bheoláin, i Leabharlann Ghleann Maghair; agus
- Coláiste Éamann Rís led by poet Kerri Sonnenberg at the school.

Our *special thanks* to all the T.Y. co-ordinators and Cork city library staff.

Delights await you on every page. Enjoy!

Paul Casey  
Project Curator, April 2025

# Assisting Writers' Biographies

## Róisín Leggett Bohan

Róisín Leggett Bohan is from Cork. In 2024, she was runner-up in the Patrick Kavanagh Poetry Award, the Listowel Best Poem Prize and was a finalist in the Aesthetica Creative Writing Award. In 2025, she was longlisted for The National Poetry Competition from over 21,000 entries.. Her work appears in *PIR*, *Banshee*, *Magma*, *Aesthetica* and *The Pomegranate London* among others. She has several poems in *Beginnings Over and Over: Four New Poets from Ireland*, forthcoming with Dedalus Press, and will have poems featured in the next *The Stinging Fly*. Her work has been selected to be showcased nationwide by *Poetry Ireland* for Poetry Day this May. Róisín is a UCC graduate and co-founder of *HOWL New Irish Writing*. She is grateful for a literature bursary from the Arts Council of Ireland.

## David McLoughlin

David McLoughlin is a prize-winning poet, and a writer of memoir and personal essay. His third book, *Crash Centre*, was published in May 2024 by Salmon Poetry, and launched at Cork International Poetry Festival. His poems and essays have been anthologised and published in journals on both sides of the Atlantic. This is his second year teaching with *The Unfinished Book of Poetry*. He also teaches creative writing with Poetry Ireland's Writers in Schools programme and in The Irish Writers Centre, Munster Literature Centre and elsewhere. For more visit [www.davidmcloughlin.com](http://www.davidmcloughlin.com)



# Assisting Writers' Biographies

## Róisín Kelly

Róisín Kelly was born in West Belfast, raised in Leitrim, and now calls Cork City home. Her first collection of poetry, *Mercy*, was published by Bloodaxe Books in 2020. She is currently writing a novel.

## Gormfhlaith Ní Shíocháin Ní Bheoláin

Is file, scríbhneoir, ceoltóir agus amhránaí í Gormfhlaith Ní Shíocháin Ní Bheoláin. Tá máistreacht aici sat Sean- agus Meán-Ghaeilge. Tá a cuid filíochta curtha ar stáitse aici ar árdáin éagsúla, ag *REIC*, ag an *Winter Warmer Festival* (a ritheann *Ó Bhéal Chorcaí*) agus a thuilleadh nach iad. Tá mórán duaiseanna bainte ag a saothar scríofa agus tá a saothar léite aici ar fuaid na hÉireann agus in Latvia. Is féidir a saothar a léamh sna cnuasaigh *Taking Back the House: Poetry Ireland Introductions 2023*, *Lampa ar Lasadh: Gradam Mháire Mhac an tSaoi* agus *Washing Windows Too: Irish Women Write Poetry*, *Washing Windows V*, *Stony Thursday Poetry Book*, *Five Words Anthology*, *An Gairdín* agus sna hirísí *Comhar*, *Feasta*, *Poetry Ireland Review*, agus *The Stinging Fly*.

Gormfhlaith Ní Shíocháin Ní Bheoláin is a poet, writer, musician and singer. She has an MA in Early and Medieval Irish. She is a seasoned performer and her creative work has won many awards and has appeared in various publications. She has read her work all over Ireland and in Latvia.

# Assisting Writers' Biographies

## Kerri Sonnenberg

Kerri Sonnenberg is the author of the poetry collection *The Mudra* (Litmus Press, USA). Recent work has appeared internationally in the journals *Abridged*, *VOLT*, *Berlin Lit*, *Southword* and *Magma*. Other poems are forthcoming in *Banshee* and *Second Factory*. She has been awarded bursaries from the Arts Council and Cork City Council, and was longlisted for the Plaza Prose Poetry Prize in 2024. She has taught creative writing workshops since 2001 to people of all ages in the US, and through Greywood Arts and the KinShip Project in Cork. For more visit **[www.kerrisonnenberg.com](http://www.kerrisonnenberg.com)**



## Cork Educate Together Secondary School

Poetry by

**Adam James Ross**

**A.J. Chutke**

**Gaspar Napora**

**Liam Roberts**

**Liam McCann**

**Miguel Morillo Calderón**

**Oisín O'Connor**

**Riain O'Connor**

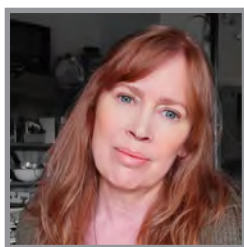
**Sean Nicholas Fernandes**

**Toby Skowroński**

Assisting Writer: Róisín Leggett Bohan

T.Y. Coordinator: Adrienne McLoughlin

Workshops held at Cork Educate Together



### to let the future in

There's a loop of poetry that has taken up residence in my eardrums. It says: *To let the future in.* (Louis Mulcahy. 'To Just Sit'. HOWL 24). For me, it has become a poetry earworm that resonates with the very purpose *The Unfinished Book of Poetry* project represents. It has given the TY poets of CETSS a space to express within and outside of verse, and I have been the grateful witness.

In room nine, over nine weeks, it was joyous to watch the evolvement of theme and craft in the work of these fine poets. There was much fun in the 'five-word challenge' game, it eased us into our morning. The poets also created collective poems, which were thatched together by passing the same sheet of paper to each person, each one writing a line and covering it. A magic symmetry appeared, which spoke of an unconscious collaborative ether in that room.

We examined an expansive list of poems, and they were used as springboards to alight the students' own voices and experiences. They stretched metaphors and crafted new kaleidoscope worlds with papayas, pomegranates, and chicken rolls. They embraced sound, language and leaned into rhyme. Our most productive class was that of ekphrasis, in which I brought in paintings or old Penguin book covers printed on postcards. There was Magritte, Kahlo, a postcard from Italy where an elderly man has his head bowed whilst lighting a candle in a church — see if you can find the poem this photo inspired! We looked at fictional/storytelling poems, persona poems, emotion poems, biographical poems, and poetry films, and the students also created work inspired by refugee poets. We explored the ways in which to economise words, line structure, line breaks and the vital role of editing work. Sometimes, I played music as a backdrop to their work. I distinctly remember a moment when Radiohead's *Daydreaming* filled the room with its haunting strings, the only other sounds, the tapping on keyboards, the scribbling of pens.

The students christened themselves *The Unmuted Poets*. How apt. Poetry, often a solitary pursuit, thrives in quiet spaces, allowing thoughts to simmer and observations to crystallize. But it's in the printed book, in shared voices, that poetry claims its power.

After our last class, we shared celebratory hot chocolates, teas, and juices at a local café. As poets, we embody an awareness of all that surrounds us, and this trait often carries with it an empathy, a tenderness toward humanity. When it was time to return to school, amidst the giggles and chat, each poet cleared up their cups and cutlery and brought them to the counter so that the server would be saved the bother. This was done instinctively, without any prompt from me. People, we are in safe hands. How fortunate are we to have these poets in our world. Let's continue to churn them onward and open a space for the future they represent.

My deepest gratitude to Paul Casey and Cork City Council for giving me the opportunity to take part in this project. I wish *The Unmuted Poets* everything that is good and kind as they move through this world in their own true ways.

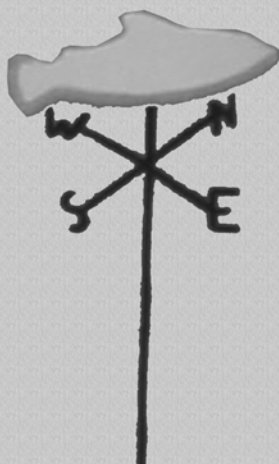
**Róisín Leggett Bohan**



# Poems

Cork Educate Together Secondary School

*“The Unmuted Poets”*



## In a Morning

*A collaborative poem compiled by Adam James Ross*

I watch Pompeii rise and fall  
as the sun hit me  
I had this warm feeling —  
headlights in the distance  
as tall as a lamppost.  
I burn up every room,  
scary as Miggy.  
A cold breeze —  
this is how it ends.

## Ode to Italian

*Adam James Ross*

Italian food, you  
are the best, no others  
can compete. You fill me  
up with heaven, in the form  
of sauce and wheat.  
That melted cheese, that noodle  
twist, the scent of roast  
pork belly beats  
all the foods you've ever seen  
on Hells' Kitchen  
on the Telly.

## Birdies IRE

*Adam James Ross*

I visited that house today  
the one down by the coast,  
where people sang, where people drank  
and fine barbecues were roast.

The people were gone  
the songs unsung,  
the windows all bust.  
Where I usually smell joy  
was misery and musk.

I visited that house today  
where folk were driven  
out — weary, sad, and beaten down  
kids too young to pout.

When will they learn?  
When will they see?  
That man's monstrous greed  
will rob us all  
of far worse things  
than my source of bird seeds.

# My Perfectly Stocked Fridge

*Adam James Ross*

acts as a magical bridge, unlimited creativity  
for the mouth, exploring flavours North

and South. My mother's  
mouldy cheese, my nostrils

it will never please. Father's spicy  
sauces, the cap stuck to the rim,

if a mouthful of heat is what you seek  
then ask for him. The crunch

of frozen carrots unpeeled, I like the skin,  
brings forth a wondrous taste to which nothing

is akin. A mess of fruitful bounties  
that I shall soon devour, a feeling

on my tongue  
of bile oh so sour.

# My breakfast made itself

*Adam James Ross*

today, the oats jump happily into the pot atop the stove and the fruit washing and cutting itself eagerly. The whoosh of water from the tap sounded identical to that of a babbling creek, it was an overpowering roar. The berries gazed up from the bowl to me, shining with all the vibrancy of a Christmas wreath. The bowl — a perfectly rounded zero, chirped in disdain as the spoon clinked against it. Fate smiled on me this day, for never before had I bore witness to such a spectacle of self-preparing food. My dogs drill ditches into my skull with their penetrating gaze, attempting psychic domination — I may give them a bite. I return their stare, stay strong — no puppy peer pressure today. It shall be a good day.

# Crisis of Identity

*Adam James Ross*

If you had six  
random animals, all  
of which were self-aware,  
they'd be quite blue  
not even care. A lightbulb  
in their mind shines  
with such bright luminescence,  
highlighting new thoughts,  
bringing forth new consequences.  
But just what is the source  
of their profound sadness,  
for they don't know what they are:  
platypi or platypuses?

## About Me

*Adam James Ross*

I am from seasonal blankets,  
from Coolree Creamery milk  
and sourdough bread.  
I am from the small white house  
cosy, lived in, walls cool  
to the touch. I am  
from dirt road boreens  
bumpy, wild, diverse  
with a view of the county  
to boot, from Michelle and James.  
I'm from the poor communication  
and far-reaching love,  
from the Easter bunny and Santa Claus.  
I'm from agnosticism, spirituality.  
I'm from Cork and Michigan.  
I am from breakfast for dinner,  
peanut butter bananas.  
From the time my father got married  
and forgot to tell his brother. The baldy  
shiny head of my father. The small  
wooden box of special family  
trinkets — the memories and people  
they bring back to us.



# A Barbershop in Paris

*Adam James Ross*

A lone streetlight floods the small space  
with vibrant luminescence. The dutiful wife  
patiently waits with a book, as her husband  
is tidied up. The rhythmic snip-snip  
of scissors shearing hair  
lulls her into a drowsy state, the barber is pleasant  
but clearly displeased at having to conduct  
another shave so close  
to closing time.

The cool night air of Paris  
caresses her face  
like the delicate touch  
of a lover. The freshly varnished  
staircase fills the room  
with a nostalgic scent,  
much reminiscent of Grandma's larder.

## Dolly

*Adam James Ross*

I fly between these bars  
day after day  
after day, imprisoned  
without trial.  
No judge or jury  
present, I endure  
the ceaseless barrage  
of *Who's a pretty birdie?*  
or *Dolly wanna cracker?*  
What Dolly wants  
is to be free, soaring  
through the sky, but Dolly  
cannot have that, so instead  
she will wait, and wait, and wait.

## Shiptimism

*Adam James Ross*

Three ships came sailing in  
and two birds flew  
and the crowd erupted  
into song and cheer.  
But separated from the mirth  
and merry-making of the people, two monkeys  
observed their captivity, painfully aware  
of the limited space they occupied.

Optimism and pessimism are two sides  
of the same coin. A semblance of two monkeys  
confined to the space of your mind  
gazing out the eyelid windows, eager to play  
their influence on the world outside the brain.

## Remembrance of Jeff the Pigeon

*Adam James Ross*

The eaves stole a glance  
at the pigeon hunched up  
in the garden.

The table smiled  
to itself as his temporary  
home was set atop  
it. The door creaked  
of the intrusion  
of the inquisitive  
dog, eager to wage war  
on the trespasser, only  
to be rushed downstairs.

The newcomer rustled  
his feathers and hunkered  
down, comfortable,  
ready to nap.

## Creativity Quazinar

*A collaborative poem compiled by A.J. Chutke*

The red chair stacks  
an old man of Aran  
goes around and around  
to the pen, to the king.  
Did somebody say *Just Eat*?  
A warm diner with festive music,  
spirits high. I like my Dutch chocolate,  
ding dong, I like ping pong too.  
And the cycle repeats.

## Food Stalker

*A.J. Chutke*

Hello, hot chicken roll  
I watch you  
from afar.  
Hi, hot chicken roll  
I follow you  
in my car.  
Nelly! I want you  
in my belly.

## We are Madagascan Monkeys

*A.J. Chutke*

we don't belong in a cage,  
we spend our time looking  
over the sea, but our hearts  
are filled with rage.  
Once I was free. Free,  
I would live in the trees.  
I am a Madagascan monkey.

## The Bed Bug

*A.J. Chutke*

I'm a bed bug,  
I live in your bed.  
When you sleep —  
remember, I'm always  
there. I will stare,  
lurk and creep  
until you clean your bed  
and I will be swept.

## Poetry Papaya

*A.J. Chutke*

Poetry brings peace  
and love, but it can be  
prickly like a porcupine  
or sweet like a papaya.

## The Bouncing Baboons

*A.J. Chutke*

A bubbling bunch  
of bouncing baboons  
barge briefly into a bubble wrap  
box business' building, blowing  
up the building into bits.

## The Chicken Stock Jelly

*A.J. Chutke*

The chicken stock jelly  
you force down your throat  
makes you barf and gargle,  
the bits of bone hard as brick  
make you sick. The vomit you  
fling hits the bucket with a bing.



# Loud and Quiet

*Gaspar Napora*

The room is quiet  
and so am I,  
the outside world  
is too loud.

My land was taken,  
all I know is gone,  
my only belongings  
my mind and my thoughts.

No one understands  
me, their language is foreign.  
I don't belong,  
we don't belong.

It's quiet again  
but I am speaking,  
there will be change  
and I will start it.

## Cold Sunshine

*A collaborative poem compiled by Gaspar Napora*

Away from my window  
the blinking, buzzing, bubbling broth  
births boisterous baboons.  
Under my umbrella, I watch the rain  
wash away. A cool breeze touches  
my skin, cooling me. My hair is slick  
frosty dew on an empty field. It's cold  
and calmer but it feels bold like Palmer,  
I wrote a page in a cage.

## Together

*A collaborative poem compiled by Liam Roberts*

I come from poverty —  
a roar in the jungle,  
a spider scurries on  
to the shelf, it lives  
in a hole. A frog from France  
croaks at the pond, but the peculiar  
Polish frog is perplexed  
by his powerful accent.  
I get a low taper fade —  
it's massive, quite abrasive,  
a cold hand touches my leg  
*Hello, are you there?*

## Yellow Taxi

*Liam Roberts*

New York is the loud place  
that brings people together.  
The sound of cars beeping  
that rings in your head.  
The aroma of pizzas  
from restaurants  
before bed.  
The texture of the rubble  
on the street  
makes you want to cover  
it with a sheet. You observe  
the people,  
all around you.

## The Confused Monkey

*Liam Roberts*

Monkeys look down  
in captivity and see  
that they can't do an activity.  
They see an artist, Frida. Realize  
they can't be saved  
not even by Dida.  
They glance at the creepy couple,  
think they will need a lance  
to save them.

# Mercurial Superfly

*Liam Roberts*

I am from football  
and football boots.  
I am from the townhouse —  
warm, funny, sporty.  
I am from Hydrangea —  
blooming, happy, wholesome.  
I'm from Wales  
and separation.  
From Michael  
and Indra.  
I'm from cooking  
and cleaning.  
From maturity  
and playing.  
I'm from multiple religions,  
backgrounds.  
I'm from Welsh Navy  
ancestry and Dutch French tradition.  
I'm from good pasta.

# My Coach

*Liam Roberts*

He is rain  
in autumn.  
He is  
a slow cooker.  
He is Hip Hop

## Stay

*Liam Roberts*

Please let me  
leave. I want to say  
weave. I don't like  
being stopped, so move on  
if you're being chopped.  
Can I see the light  
or am I too far gone?  
There's blight, my friends  
and family gone.  
All alone. Some people  
can't condone, throw me  
a bone.

## Iceberg Lettuce

*Liam Roberts*

The crunch and variety of lettuce  
you tend to have  
at lunch. When you get told  
off for being bold  
you get forced to clean  
mould. You thought it was going  
to take an hour, you were given sweets  
that were sour. Dinner time,  
you're feeling icy like Palmer  
but on your plate, it looks  
spicy, you're less calm.

## My Imagination

*A collaborative poem compiled by Lliam McCann*

I am a monkey as keen as can be.  
I see a nose that looks like a hose  
falling through the empty abyss  
of my mind, at the edge  
of consciousness I swing from branches.  
Listen to the howl  
of the hyena: *I love meat.*  
A cool, clammy, watery sensation  
creeps up my back, I shiver in anticipation.  
Why do I judge when I am imperfect myself.

## We Are Born to Run

*Lliam McCann*

We make our way  
towards the sun.  
Our soft shells  
our only protection.  
We hear the screams,  
look up, our fixation —  
the seagulls.  
We back up  
fearing their pointy beaks.  
Most make a run  
for it, get picked  
off one by one.

## Syrian Survivor

*Lliam McCann*

I come from rubble  
and dust.  
Everyone I meet  
I cannot trust.  
My journey is long  
and tiring.  
Those who survive  
inspire me.  
Cars, boats, going on foot.  
Only some countries  
are understood.

## A Flight of Stairs

*Lliam McCann*

I never knew  
it could give me  
nightmares.  
An unwavering feeling  
of guilt  
feels like a knife  
pushed to the hilt.  
A swift movement — and he fell,  
nobody was able to tell. Here  
on a honeymoon, heading home  
wrapped in a casket soon.  
Blunt force trauma  
to his head  
put him to bed.

# My Story

*Liam McCann*

I am from teabags,  
from pantries and boxes.  
I am from the dirty house  
that's lively, warm, loud.  
I am from sunflowers, tall  
but sturdy. I am from South Africa  
and know many people.  
From Adrian and Jennifer.  
I am from forgetfulness  
and tiredness. From being mature  
and immature.  
I'm from the Holy Cross.  
I'm from South Africa  
born into Irish ancestry.

# Eminem

*Miguel Morillo Calderón*

Once he had found  
out, he started listening  
to Eminem, platypus  
knew he had to scout  
for a cure for tuberculosis  
as he had no doubt  
he would soon eat pomegranate  
or spaghetti on a daily basis.



# POA1ITM

*A collaborative poem compiled by Miguel Morillo Calderón*

Pop out at 1 in the morning  
this is my kingdom come.  
A worm came out of the apple —  
a light flickering from darkness.  
I stare blankly at the paper,  
in the shadows, I live —  
dump icy water over my head.  
I have a cuzz but where is the huzz?  
The huzz with de bruzz,  
no one matches my bling.

## Monkeys

*Miguel Morillo Calderón*

The two of them looked down,  
hopeless, waiting for an opportunity  
to flee from their captivity  
as the monkeys looked displeased  
from the dryness, the surroundings led  
to negativity which brought upon their sadness.

Modern architecture was all he could think  
about as soon as Richards had an interest  
in it, he would share his idea aloud.  
And as soon as Pelican Books found out he was lit  
they all decided to share his ideas around.

## I am from

*Miguel Morillo Calderón*

I am from Santiago Bernabeu  
from fans and goals.

I am from the friendly grandmother, welcoming  
me home, ambitious, hearing new stories  
continuously.

I am from the green fields full of greatness  
that everyone fears.

I am from family dinner  
and love for sports,  
from Elsa and Miguel.

I'm from *Enjoy Yourself* and *Be Kind to Others*  
from *Never Swallow Gum* and *It's Just Football*.

I'm from Paella and Migas  
with their soft and delicious taste,  
from the moment I stuck a sword down  
my brother's throat.

## Senses

*Miguel Morillo Calderón*

Sweet and welcoming from the outside  
feels like forbidden from the inside  
from the crunchiness to the mouldiness  
within the mix between sour and spicy  
it's finished with a feeling of sticky.

# Trapped

*Miguel Morillo Calderón*

i)

Every day, the same  
over and over.

Every day the same  
views, and the taste  
of a terrible stew.

Every day, I hear astounding  
things from the abomination  
of the human species.

Every day, the horrific smoky smell  
but it has bad consequences as far  
as I can tell.

Every day, it's the same.

Oh, what I would do  
for monkeys  
to have more fame.

ii)

Every morning as I wake  
in my gargantuan cage  
I hear the other  
apes howling  
with rage.

## House

*Miguel Morillo Calderón*

As I was passing by  
the house, the eaves  
stuck out, I became curious  
so I had to scout. The table  
appeared to have been through war

as the walls began to soar,  
the creak as soon  
as I stepped upstairs  
had me thinking  
there was a leak.

## APE

*Miguel Morillo Calderón*

Every afternoon as I eat, I dream  
of tasting banana again.  
Every night as I try to sleep  
I avoid making the human  
my bait.

## Dear Sushi

*Miguel Morillo Calderón*

what a great creation  
you are. It starts  
with the rough  
connection between  
chopsticks and you.  
Floating in the air  
the scent of the sea  
hits me at 20. The first time  
you were in my mouth I knew  
your greatness — not only to find  
out cucumber is not the best  
in terms of tastiness. Even the slightest  
taste makes me dream,  
but only a big mouthful  
could make me faint.  
Ancient tales could never  
depict how great you are.

## Midnight Snack

*A collaborative poem compiled by Oisín O'Connor*

I woke with apples  
falling from the sky.  
I fell asleep looking  
for food. My nostrils had flared  
at the night of curry.  
I pulled out my Glock,  
at the back of your mind.  
Watching the raindrops  
race down the window —  
a vigorous eruption,  
like a dam bursting, cast forever in clay.  
My mercy prevails  
over my wrath.

## Kandersteg's Call

*Oisín O'Connor*

Beneath the peaks, where rivers run,  
we hiked and laughed beneath the sun.  
The alpine air so crisp, so clean — bound  
us in friendship, year by year.

By campfire's glow, our stories grow,  
in every star, a dream anew.  
Kandersteg's magic, wild and free,  
lives in our hearts, eternally.

## Last Day

*Oisín O'Connor*

The candles were bright  
but his muscles where tight,  
his children always fight,  
are never in sight.

His emotion flew  
and his energy blew away.  
He gazes in sorrow knowing  
he cannot borrow  
another tomorrow.

At this point he may  
just lay in the bay and pray,  
for tomorrow  
may be his last day.

## Secrets Inside

*Oisín O'Connor*

Over spaghetti we laughed till we cried,  
a pomegranate split, its secrets inside.  
Eminem's beats played loud in the air,  
a platypus waddles so clueless and unaware.

## I am from

*Ríain O'Connor*

those grassy greens in West Cork,  
from the chair by the fire, glistening.  
I am from family board games  
and movie nights. From Tim and Ted,  
the grandads that could fix anything.  
I am from summer nights in a field.  
I am from Christmas magic and belief,  
from a Sunday roast, steak and chips.  
From messing with my friends  
and working hard. I am from Turner's Cross  
every Friday night. I am from Cork, born and bred.

## Anger

*Ríain O'Connor*

The sound of a kettle  
whistling.  
The sight of water boiling,  
bubbling over.  
The taste of food  
scalding your mouth  
before you taste it.  
The smell of your least  
favourite food  
after a long day.



## The Dying Garden

*Ríain O'Connor*

The tuberculosis had spread,  
the platypus was dead.  
No more pomegranates  
would blossom, except for the spaghetti-loving  
possum. Eminem is Marshall Mathers  
but to the possum nothing matters.

## Captivity of Negativity

*Ríain O'Connor*

Two monkeys — stuck.  
They could fly like great eagles,  
but they bolt themselves  
down, will die with a frown.  
The captivity of negativity.

## Saoirse

*Ríain O'Connor*

Saoirse is longed  
for, what people fight  
for, but she is hard to find. I believe  
it is an illusion in one's mind.  
A nation divided, will there be something  
to unite it?

## Toaster

*Ríain O'Connor*

I am used day after day, no  
thanks given. Slowly rotting  
and rusting. The morning  
is when I wake, full of heat,  
but then I lie  
dormant, waiting, waiting,  
fire bubbling inside me,  
until I pop.

## Dog

*Ríain O'Connor*

As I awake, my companion  
is gone — taken. I search far  
and wide trying to find him.  
I sit and wait for hours, days,  
weeks. The door opens  
an explosion of joy hits me,  
my owner is home.

## Food Gone

*Ríain O'Connor*

The milk had gone sour  
the cheese full of mould  
the cake crunchy  
the apple juicy-spicy  
the ham sticky —  
decay and death  
agreed.

## Steak

*Ríain O'Connor*

Steak, steak, you are so much better  
than cake. So lean, full of protein.  
You and chips a better combo  
than hair and clips. So many ways to be cooked,  
you're never overlooked. Your taste  
cannot be replaced.

## A Weird One

*A collaborative poem compiled by Sean Nicholas Fernandes*

Burn me  
with your light.  
But somewhere,  
a ship is sinking.

The comet streaks  
across the night sky  
with all the brilliance  
of a lightbulb, smoothly,  
as an albatross on the open sea.  
Vengeance and justice  
are the only things I seek.

Suddenly, I get these  
lucid dreams.  
Real eyes realise  
real lies. I'm always late.

## Rhythm and Blues

*Sean Nicholas Fernandes*

Is what I listen to when I snooze,  
I think of all the consequences,  
everything I have to lose.

But at 6, when daylight comes,  
I wake up in gladness,  
watch Perry the Platypus,  
bury my sadness.

## The Life of a Tree

*Sean Nicholas Fernandes*

Once grown in a forest  
it now serves a purpose,  
to give away its oxygen  
on the earth's surface.

But when it grows old  
someone chops it off,  
they take a seat on it  
now it's as short as a dwarf.

## Over the horizon

*A collaborative poem compiled by Toby Skowronski*

creeping up the broken  
staircase, the wind whispers  
softly through the trees,  
caressing the leaves  
like the hand of a lover.  
I lurk in the shadows, waiting to strike —  
I am spider man, cauliflower,  
the vegetable below, low in a row.  
No one matches my bling, the sun  
sets and it will start again.

## Pet Cat

*Toby Skowronski*

This faithful sunny morning  
I woke, my eyes  
met with my pet  
cat, he spoke, his voice  
booming with a  
meow, *We have to go*  
*to the pink castle, we have to go now!*  
I sprung out of my bed  
and got ready in five.

## *Monkey*

*Toby Skowronski*

Two monkeys, now  
facing a harsh truth  
they could never live  
out their youth.

Trapped in a stone  
jail, tried to escape  
but the chain  
will not break,  
it is not frail.

When they look  
out, all they can see  
is the boat-filled  
unforgiving  
sea. The two  
considered, then disdained,  
bound together, never  
estranged.

## *Fog Lake*

*Toby Skowronski*

In the walls  
over the fog lake  
I rest in my bed  
lying awake.  
Stepping out through  
the door, looking  
at the vibrant sky, so different  
from the reflective surface  
under my eyes.  
Another world under  
the moving sheet, I stretch  
out my hands, stretch out my feet —  
stepping into another plane  
can't be the worst,  
that's when my second body  
leaves my first.

## *Whimsy*

*Toby Skowronski*

Opalescent like a shiny jewel,  
the line of a sunset, an ice  
cube, cool. It happens  
when I'm with my friends,  
when I frolic through a flowered  
green. It sounds like laughter, sparkles  
melodies free, and it smells  
like fresh pastries from LIDL  
bakery. Whimsy.





## Terence MacSwiney Community College

Poetry by

**Julia Hanlon O'Neill**

**Ava Byrd**

**Aimee Cunneen**

**Alex McKee**

**Camron Sheehan**

**Colum Hogan**

**Ciara Hegarty Rodgers**

**JD Fitzgerald**

**Mikayla Ryan**

**Darren Stewart**

**Marcos Valle Somavilla**

**Nicolás Vicente Romero**

**Reece Morey**

**Svea Johansson Aherne**

**Carmen López Guerrero Del Riego**

Assisting Writer: David McLoughlin

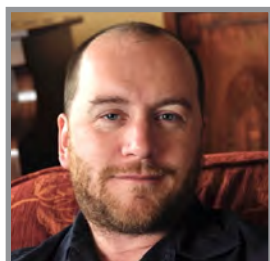
T.Y. Coordinator: Kenneth O'Neill

School librarian: Doreen Lundon

Workshops held at Hollyhill Library and

Terence MacSwiney CC school library

Assisting Librarian: Angela Hannon



Apart from the students' dry wit and exciting creative swerves, one thing I'll take away from my time at Terence MacSwiney Community College is the memory of the peaceful and excellently resourced school library, where "a poem blooms" (Svea Johansson Aherne). The library, and our classes, were expertly managed by Doreen Lundon, who was a great help throughout. I was also delighted to find that three of the group were exchange students from Spain. This allowed me to practice my Spanish, and address them with random and playful terms in "castellano", to which they responded with quizzical eyebrows and surprised laughs. This was all part of my overall cunning plan, which can be boiled down as: *when teaching young people, make yourself appear foolish to break the ice.*

Writing in a second language was no obstacle for these students, as can be seen in this love poem, an ekphrastic response to Van Gogh's "Starry Night": "Lost in the blue since the moment I saw you / I wish to live in that peaceful village / Where the wind sings / And the moon does too." (Carmen López Guerrero Del Riego)

During our time, we explored responses to nature ("noticing") and the built environment; we wrote personae poems, apologies, instructional poems, ekphrastic poems, as well as haiku and the students came up trumps with lines like: "The leaves fell down / The cold air is creeping in / Gilmore girls season" (as a fan of the programme, I particularly enjoyed this reference). Five Word Challenges yielded lines like "Bald people make me want to cry". An exercise where adjectives and nouns were scrambled to explore what unexpected combinations might result gave us lines like: "The gargantuan cowardly kite / soars in the summer sky." A look at William Carlos Williams' famous "This is Just to Say", an apology for eating "the plums / that were in / the icebox", inspired the following lines in Reece Morey's 'Endoscopy', with the medical procedure acting as a relationship metaphor:

This is just to say  
We wanted different things  
While I was open  
You wanted to move away  
That's why I blocked you  
The endoscopy saw a part of me  
was broken but you didn't.

Darren Stewart's 'The Cabin in the Snow' is a response to James Wright's 'Lying in a Hammock at William Duffy's Farm in Pine Island, Minnesota', a richly descriptive nature poem, where the poet only comes in at the end in a surprising statement, "I have wasted my life." In Darren's poem, the speaker appears to be a lumberjack whisking some eggs for breakfast. The poem ends

with a swerve: “As I prepare to heat up the car / A lone horse stares at me  
in the distance / elegantly free with no care, content. // I am the horse.”

I saw less than half of these poems before reading them in preparation for this  
anthology—some students kept their cards close to their chests—and I am  
100% thrilled at the quality, the humour and imagination in these pages.  
Thank you for the opportunity to work with you all. *Keep writing!*

**David McLoghlin**

# Poems

Terence MacSwiney Community College





# Echoes

*Julia Hanlon O'Neill*

I walk through the new drafty doors  
for the first time looking for the floral posters  
but finding bald heads and dull souls.  
I hear inaudible echoes coming from those hiding  
in the bathrooms. I sit in my chair, mask on  
magnifying the overbearing heat.  
For a 12 year old girl, I sure feel quite grown.

*Echoes by Ava Byrd (after the poem by Julia Hanlon O'Neill)*



## Winter Breeze

*Julia Hanlon O'Neill*

I open my curtains to see the frosty morning.  
The green grass, now white.  
Mothers walking their children to school  
cautiously along the slippery roads.  
The neighbours' dog roaming freely in his garden.  
Crows fleeing to reach the electrical lines first.  
The trees flowing in the winter breeze  
all because the world didn't end when I was 14.

Winter Breeze *by Ava Byrd (after the poem by Julia Hanlon O'Neill)*



## Forever Young

*Julia Hanlon O'Neill*

In my cocoon I was unaware of what  
the world truly was. I wanted to break  
free and experience what life could give.  
As time passed me I did just that.  
I experienced the ups and downs  
but most importantly the beauty of life.  
Although in the back of my mind  
a piece of me will always be in that cocoon.  
Innocent, unaware and forever young.

## The Zoo

*Julia Hanlon O'Neill*

We walk along the stony path  
forever side by side.  
The animals standing before me  
are no threat while I have your hand in mine.  
As we end our day of adventure through trees,  
I ask for your favourite part of today and you say me.



## Christmas

*Julia Hanlon O'Neill*

“Whose house will you spend Christmas at?”

A question asked each year;

after 16 years I still struggle to answer.

Will I keep on my pjs or get dressed?

Will I be an O'Neill or a Hanlon?

“Whose house will you spend Christmas at?”

Well, maybe ask me again tomorrow.

## The Fox

*Aimee Cunneen*

The fox who comes to your door,

Whose name I can't remember.

She takes extra of your food

To share it with another.

A younger fox started appearing,

An older one too you see.

Your pet fox and her lover

Together forever, him and her.

# Baby Talk

*Aimee Cunneen*

The terror you must have felt  
Me talking, then not hearing,

The echo of our voice without reply.  
You could snap your fingers in my face

My dull response, plain and unknowing.  
I said 'Mama', 'Dada' and said no more.

I couldn't hear you call my name.  
The doctor ran some tests,

Yet he said I was fine,  
As perfect as the light on a mid-summer's day.

My responding was cured,  
I spoke once again.

# Our Curses, My Dear

*Aimee Cunneen*

I've grown a heart so sharp and cruel.  
If you decide I am the one you'll love,  
You'll only cut your hand, my dear.

Desperation will erase us,  
These curses lay upon us,  
I love you truly, my dear.

With hair of snakes,  
And eyes to turn you to stone,  
I am not a vessel of good intent, my dear.

Little days and many nights,  
Too many days, too little nights  
Living with theses curses you shine on me.

Make a mercy out of me, my dear.

## A Chilly Day

*Alex McKee*

On the ground, I saw the ice,  
A chilly reminder of today's events,  
Frozen to the footpath,  
And hidden in plain sight,  
Like a predator stalking its prey.

The ice lies there,  
Waiting patiently, no glint to give it away,  
For its next unsuspecting victim,  
To meet their slippery fate.

## The Old Chair

*Alex McKee*

The girl sits  
On the old chair.  
The chair creaks,  
The chair fractures.

The chair falls.  
With it,  
The girl.

‘Ow.’

## A New Home

*Alex McKee*

As the sun is hidden,  
Not much light to be seen,  
I walk through the cold,  
Along the road.

My trek is much shorter,  
My life, much easier,  
And the walk to school,  
Now much faster.

The unfamiliar but welcoming warmth,  
Of a house newly known,  
A chapter of my life, coming to a close,  
And a new chapter, now beginning.

## Sunset Haiku

*Alex McKee*

As the sun recedes  
Far below the horizon  
The light fades to night

## Shadow of the Day

*Camron Sheehan*

On a gargantuan summer day  
the brightness fades away  
leaving only a kite  
swaying around in flight  
below it is a flower  
cowarding there for hours  
in the shadow of the day  
the brightness fades away.

## Little Red Riding Hood

*Camron Sheehan*

As the little girl dressed in red  
bids farewell to her mother  
she takes a stroll down the path  
hears a noise and a mutter  
out jumps a scary wolf  
walking on its back legs  
he looks at her with suspicion  
asking her where she's headed.  
Her grandmother's, she replies  
his eyes fixated on the goods.  
She tries to walk past him  
but he runs off with her food

## The Flowery Girl

*Camron Sheehan*

As I sat on my strange chair  
I remember when I first met the flowery girl.  
she was as soothing as a garden  
as confusing as an orange galaxy  
and as wise as an old tree  
I wake from my mind  
to see her bouncing around in the flowery field.

## The Mysterious Mysteries of a Blobfish

*Colum Hogan*

Blobfishes come from far deep  
In the ocean depths  
They don't really do much  
Other than lie and watch other fish  
One fish, two fish, three fish they'll be counting.  
Blobfishes don't know anything about themselves  
Can they grow legs? They don't know.  
Can they go into space? They don't know.  
Can they run for president? They really don't know.  
They stand on wet rocks  
Thinking about life.  
They will never know the truth.  
About what they really are.

# Untitled

*Colum Hogan*

In the Middle Earth,  
Lie some elves  
Living in a cheesecake house.  
In the same forest  
Lies a special boy  
What makes him special?  
He has the body of a person  
But the head of a dog.  
He finds the same...

The very same cheesecake house  
With smiley faced trees  
And the dog boy, we call him Felix  
Felix was walking in the forest  
Looking for mushrooms for his grandmother  
Who is celebrating her 80th birthday  
But Felix gets lost and gets scared.  
He runs in a random direction  
He trips and an elf spots him  
“You half feral adolescent, come with me,  
There is much cheese, so you can gobble your fears away.”  
Felix and the elf throttle away.  
“Your name?”  
“Felix.”  
“My name’s Bush”  
Felix and Bush made it to the cheesecake house,  
with lollipop lampposts.  
When they entered, Felix spotted a cook book  
HOW TO COOK A DOZEN AND ONE HALF OF DOG! It said  
“Bush, what is this?”



“uhhhhhhh.....” startled Bush  
Then a mushroom storm brewed in the sky  
Caused by Felix.  
The cheesecake house exploded  
Felix had enough mushrooms for his grandmother’s 80th.  
The End.

## Untitled

*Colum Hogan*

Bald people make me want to cry  
At the ocean the view is floral  
A drafty echo in my soul  
My history class is very dull  
I can see details of shells  
With my magnifying glass.

## A Way In, A Way Out

*Colum Hogan*

A way into school sometimes requires a drive.  
My way into school I saw a beautiful hill view.  
And annoying election posters.  
My way into school I saw funny graffiti  
and ugly chimney smoke  
And hours later, was my way out.  
I saw everything again.

## Echoes

*Ciara Hegarty Rodgers*

Graffiti decorates slabs,  
Floral hues spatter  
Dull lights, reflecting  
Drafty doorways, empty  
Echoes of homes, stripped bare  
Magnifying the memories, lost.

## Winter Wonderland

*JD Fitzgerald*

As I lift my head up from my bed  
I take a look outside and see  
a frozen winter wonderland, snow everywhere.  
I see people playing  
I see people defrosting cars  
And I even see them riding horses down the road  
I really love the winter.

## Cream Cheese Christmas Tree

*JD Fitzgerald*

As I look at my Cream Cheese Christmas Tree

The cheese runs down like rain on a window

I think of what my life has become.

I'm a slave to the cheese

Unable to look away.

The cheese compels me

I take a bite

I wake up and realise

*I AM THE CREAM CHEESE CHRISTMAS TREE*

As I look down, I see the bite mark on my cheesy skin

I get up and look in the mirror.

Why am I not cheese?

In the mirror I am just a normal person

but in reality I am just a cheesy tree.

## It's Bloody Cold

*JD Fitzgerald*

The sun sets faster now

The ground is icier now

It's too bloody cold.

# Breath as Clear as the Sky

*Mikayla Ryan*

The leaves iced over,  
the cold air blowing by,  
every person's breath seen  
as clear as sky.

The crows talking to one another  
Unusually loud  
as food is thrown onto the ground.

The two small kids  
going to school  
laughing with delight.

The winter is clear as the sun,  
the hot temperature disappears  
how I love the winter season

I say to myself  
as I tread careful  
not to slip.

My little sister beside me  
holding on tight so we don't slip  
on the cold cold ice.

## My Mind

*Mikayla Ryan*

I lift my fork to my mouth  
my mind running rampant  
the grass frozen over  
the horses speaking to one another  
almost everything is still  
except my mind thinking  
about how nice the dinner is,  
what I will do tomorrow,  
those two projects due soon  
my mind nothing but still  
but I wouldn't want it any other way.

## Blue Bells and Lily Petals

*Mikayla Ryan*

The gargantuan cowardly kite  
soars in the summer sky  
flying by the lily and blue bells  
brushing their petals with a comforting touch.

## Haiku

*Mikayla Ryan*

9pm the intro  
music starts  
all my family gathered around.

The snow falls with children's  
Christmas dreams the white blanket  
of snow ready for Saint Nick.

The Winter breaks  
through with the cold breeze  
passing through.

## The Passage through the Labyrinth

*Mikayla Ryan*

Press the glowing mark on the brick of stone  
for entry through to get back home.  
Don't trust the creature with two heads. Remember  
how a son became dead, how Icarus flew  
too close to the sun and a father lost his son.  
Remember not to get too cocky you'll forget your way home.  
Be brave, follow the path, Daedalus will be proud.

## Small and Fighting for Life

*Mikayla Ryan*

As I walk through the cold  
I see the trees big and small  
fighting for life, each drop of snow  
the opposite of delight.  
Kids run through the snow  
with Christmas lights as they hold hands.  
The gloves and hats end up in the snow  
having so much fun no one seems to know  
their parents in the warmth  
tending to the fire so hot.

## Magnifying Innocence

*Mikayla Ryan*

In the floral garden  
the four small feet run.  
Crushing the flowers in their path.  
The dull sky doesn't seem to dampen  
the mood or quiet the giggles.  
The echo of their laughter  
coming in the house like a draft.  
The muck on their clothes  
and the grass on their shoes  
magnifying their innocence, old or new.

## The Strange Bark

*Mikayla Ryan*

The spiky tree with the strange bark.

The garden annoying and orange.

The soothing field of beautiful small flowers.

## A Pigeon

*Mikayla Ryan*

A pigeon so simple, one with a history not many know or learn. Before the post man or phone, we had the pigeon, a bird we domesticated to be a messenger or a pet. But once we had all these things, the pigeon was long forgotten and left to fend for itself. It's like the saying about how birds flying out of the nest as baby birds need to learn to fly, they're sometimes pushed from the nest by their mother but not out of cruelty—out of love.



# Thoughts in the Greenhouse

*Darren Stewart*

The man lies in the greenhouse  
With a knee planted in the soil  
As the sweat beads roll down his bald head.

Consumed in his floral shrine  
Scents of bizarre nature surround him  
Tranquillity fills the air.

A draft fills the room through the open entrance  
As the thoughts of past worries that once  
Echoed through his mind dull out.

He plants his soul in the ground  
it magnetises how far he's come.

# The Walk to School

*Darren Stewart*

I walked to school today, it was cold outside.  
Cold, cold, as if Jack Frost had me in a head lock.  
He only released his cold embrace  
as I stepped into the school building  
It was then it felt as if a rush of fire fell upon my body  
Now it was way too hot. I looked in my bag  
For a drink and grabbed my Lucozade,  
I drank it as if it was my last day on earth.

# The Cabin in the Snow

*Darren Stewart*

I lift myself up in the morning  
My breath condensates the air.  
My house is frozen over from the cold

I prepare breakfast as I use  
My trusty fork to whisk some eggs  
True freedom in my little cabin in the snow

Away from everything.  
As I get ready for work, I let out a deep sigh:  
Another day of lumberjacking  
I step outside, my keys jingling in my hand

As I prepare to heat up the car  
A lone horse stares at me in the distance  
elegantly free with no care, content,

I am the horse.

# Like

*Darren Stewart*

The pen is like a sword for your thoughts.  
Your sight is like a flashlight of the body.  
Meeting a beautiful girl is like striking oil.  
Losing your way feels like a collapsing building.

## To Shake the Feeling

*Darren Stewart*

The gargantuan shrub flows  
in the basking summer light  
The warm breeze blowing it in the wind.

But still cowardly, I feel a sense of anxiety,  
of danger, as if I can't escape  
my wrong doings,

As if something bad is always around the corner.

## The Starry Night

*Marcos Valle Somavilla*

The hunter walks out of his little cottage  
Up in the mountains.  
He watches the village down below  
The warm lights from the houses  
The smell of pastries from the bakery.  
He looks around  
Watching the sky and stars  
He feels the wind in the dark night.

## Paella

*Marcos Valle Somavilla*

The Spanish dish made differently in every region  
The *Paellera*, a large frying pan  
Black, with white spots like stars  
Rice, chicken, rabbit or seafood  
A large dish that must be enjoyed in company.  
Different opinions: either you love it  
Or you don't like it at all,  
But you can't deny the fact:  
Eating paella with family and friends  
Just fills my heart.

## The Deer

*Marcos Valle Somavilla*

Casually wandering around the forest  
Walking along a long path  
Leading up a hill  
Sunset perfectly aligning on top  
Suddenly, a huge deer jumps over.  
What a majestic sight.

# Food and Family

*Nicolás Vicente Romero*

My mother cooks for us each day  
A different dish but in her way.  
Some days are nice, some are not  
But she puts all her love in the pot.

But when my father cooks  
Just once or twice a year  
He always does the same  
Recipe during the year's stay.

First water in the pot  
Then throw the flour in, making it soft  
Some *chorizo* for the spice  
And the *longaniza* does it nice.

Putting garlic without a care  
No measure needed, just place it there  
My favourite dish  
Is this.

# Ice

*Reece Morey*

The cars in driveways  
Frozen as the sun beams off them  
The windows covered in frost  
Even though the sun beams  
The icy chill came to freeze them  
Without any warning  
When I saw the car I defrosted it.

# Winter

*Reece Morey*

As I walked through the cold forest  
It was filled with trees  
I could smell Christmas  
I sped up running towards the road  
My body began heating  
from sprinting towards society  
Crash!  
My whole life flashed before my eyes  
I could see boats on salted water  
I could hear the broken intercom  
I could smell cheesecake  
As I lay in bed, my migraine migrated away.

## Frozen

*Reece Morey*

I go to lift my hand  
But it's frozen  
Frozen while holding my fork  
Frozen as the hunger takes over me  
I look towards the Chinese restaurant  
As the aroma of food takes over me

## Haiku

*Reece Morey*

The car froze over  
The hot water melted it  
The cold ice was gone

The leaves fell down  
The cold air is creeping in  
Gilmore girls season.

## Saturn

*Reece Morey*

Saturn's rings shone brightly  
It came and left  
As time went on the rings were gone  
They faded  
From lack of love  
They shone like the silver moon  
in the night  
And as bright as the burning sun  
Now they're gone  
Faded like watered-down ink  
The rings were beautiful  
Like a reflection  
Now they're faded like lights in the fog.

## Summer

*Reece Morey*

It was finally summer  
The flowers had bloomed  
Blinded by the rays of sun  
Until a kite blocked them out.  
For a moment in the sun I was cooled  
Almost like a carrot cake  
In the fridge.



# Kangaroo

*Reece Morey*

I'm like a kangaroo  
I laze around all day  
And get angry when I'm woken  
I run around the city as fast as they hop  
I fight my brother because I box like one  
In the end I bounce myself to bed  
The only difference is they live  
in sweet heat  
I live in ice and snow

# Koala

*Reece Morey*

My dog is a koala  
When she's cold she clings to me  
for warmth  
She has claws like one  
But never uses them  
She dives into my arms  
Like a koala to a tree  
She has fluffy ears and curls  
Even though koalas use straighteners  
She's still one.

## Pizza

*Reece Morey*

The walls were spiky  
The chair was bony  
The garden was dusty  
The field was musty  
The pizza was crusty

## Endoscopy

*Reece Morey*

This is just to say  
We wanted different things  
While I was open  
You wanted to move away  
That's why I blocked you  
The endoscopy saw a part of me  
was broken but you didn't.

## Flower

*Reece Morey*

When it ROSE from the ground  
It was bare and bald  
Its growth echoed through the world  
It was real  
Like the first draft of a text  
Slowly it got bigger  
Magnifying its beauty  
All this before it was dull and wore down

## Raccoon

*Reece Morey*

It roots through bins  
It looks like it's ready to rob a bank  
With its mask covering its face  
It loves popcorn and strawberries  
Its fur looks soft  
like it was just shampooed  
and conditioned  
Most people treat it like a rodent  
It's too cute to be like a rat or a mouse.

## A Golden Retriever

*Svea Johansson Aberne*

In fields of gold  
where sunlight gleams  
a golden retriever chases dreams  
with fur like rays of morning light  
bounds through grass,  
a joyful sight, a wagging tail,  
a flag or cheer brings smiles  
to all who venture near.

## The Beauty of Imagery

*Svea Johansson Aberne*

In a room where echoes softly dwell,  
a drafty breeze weaves tales I tell,  
bald branches stretch bare against the sky,  
while floral thoughts in whispers fly  
the pages turn a dull refrain  
a magnifying glass to seek the light  
in every word a spark ignites  
so let the verses dance and sway,  
in shadows where the heart finds play,  
for in this space, a poem blooms,  
a world alive, dispelling glooms.

## Summer

*Svea Johansson Aberne*

The gargantuan cowardly kite  
soars in the summer sky, flying by.  
The bluebells passing by  
the summer stalls  
with the smell of flowers in the air.

## My Sister

*Svea Johansson Aberne*

Sisters are like best friends, no doubt,  
Always there, through all the ups and downs,  
Laughing at jokes that only we get,  
Making memories that we won't forget.

She's got my back when things get tough,  
With her by my side, I can't get enough,  
Late night talks and silly fights,  
With her, every moment just feels right.

From inside jokes to shared dreams,  
Life's a blast, or so it seems,  
So here's to my sister, my partner in crime,  
Together forever, one day at a time.

## Where I'm From

*Carmen López Guerrero Del Riego*

Where I'm from, you know everyone you see in town.  
Where I'm from, my parents were once my teachers' students.  
You can feel the warmth of the Spanish sun everywhere.  
Where I'm from, kids eat *bocatas de jamón* during break.  
My town hasn't changed a bit since I was young.  
It's always the same people, the same places.  
But somehow, I'm glad it stays the same.  
Because that way, I know I won't have missed anything  
When I go back to Spain next year.

## Horse Riding

*Carmen López Guerrero Del Riego*

A fresh breeze  
The gentle sun hugging me  
As my dark horse danced  
In the bright emerald field.

Trust between me and her keeps magnifying,  
The world fades away as we travel

## Summer

*Carmen López Guerrero Del Riego*

As the sweet summer suddenly arrives,  
You can feel the fresh breeze, carrying the scent  
Of all those bright flowers, waiting fearfully to be cut.

## Poem About My Dog

*Carmen López Guerrero Del Riego*

I just want to sleep more.  
Who is this human that just woke me up?  
Why won't she give me her food? Rude.  
I wish they would stop picking me up  
And kissing me without respecting my personal space.  
That piece of chicken looks way better than my food.  
I'm totally gonna jump and see if I can take it.  
Why do they take me for walks?  
My perfect paws refuse to step on that dirty grass from the park.

## Starry Night

*Carmen López Guerrero Del Riego*

Lost in the blue since the moment I saw you  
I wish to live in that peaceful village  
Where the wind sings  
And the moon does too.

## Bad Decision (in Spain)

*Carmen López Guerrero Del Riego*

“Poor girl,” I thought to myself  
As I told her to join our group for the project.  
A few months later I discover  
Why no one liked her in the first place.  
She talked shit behind my back  
She didn’t care  
That because of me she made all her friends





## Ashton School

Poetry by

**Orlaith James**

**JB**

**Aurelius Weber-Shevchenko**

**Jamie McNally**

**Emma Healy**

**Ciara Spalding**

**Niamh Kirwan**

**Maria Mos**

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Assisting Writer: Róisín Kelly

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Workshops held at Cork City Library

Assisting Librarian: Declan Barron



The last time I tutored a group of students from Ashton School was in February 2020. By the time our workshops concluded, the first of Ireland's lockdowns was about to be announced. *The Unfinished Book of Poetry 2020* was launched via Zoom. The students went on to a final year of school that resembled nothing they had previously known in the course of their short lifetimes.

It was a surreal experience to be back in the Thomas Davis Room of Cork City Library five years later with a group of students, again from Ashton, who would only have been on the brink of their secondary school lives when the pandemic disrupted our timeline. Again, my role was to lead them towards a deeper understanding of the mysteries of the art form that is, at its core,

concerned mainly with the human condition and how to be alive.

But this was a new world. Much had transpired since that last workshop in the library when snow fell gently beyond the window, and these events were so potent and provoked such an extreme range of communal emotions—terror, awe, grief, rage—that at last, for me, poetry itself had begun to seem like it could only fail to live up to its role. I myself felt like I could no longer approach poetry with the curiosity I once possessed, or the innocence that in hindsight felt more like naivety. How could I initiate these students into a love of language when I was so full of self-doubt?

It is such a cliché to say that I learned more from the students than they learned from me but it was a journey of discovery for us all. I showed them the poems that had most influenced me and we talked about them. We looked at poems as a mystery to be decoded ('The Leaving' by Brigit Pegeen Kelly), poems as narrative ('Oranges' by Gary Soto), poems about self-love ('To Myself' by Franz Wright), and 'problematic' poems ('Daddy' by Sylvia Plath). We studied rhythm via Lauryn Hill; how to play with and subvert people's expectations of you based on your ethnicity, gender, or class via John Agard's 'Palm Tree King'; and how personal and national histories come to inform one another in Paul Durcan's 'Making Love Outside Áras an Uachtaráin'.

In response the students wrote poems that reminded me of what the point of poetry is. The point is that there is no point. The point is to write something that reflects something of your world and how you perceive it. We draw from humanity's collective unconscious—which can be traced back through millennia to the painted creatures and handprints we left in the dark on cave walls—and, by offering something of the personal, we contribute to the universal. This is something no AI model can ever replicate.

The poems from the Ashton students are thoughtful, intelligent, dark, compassionate, playful. They have written poems about nature and one's place

within nature; the powerlessness one experiences as a teenager; about burnout, depression, addiction, death; about romantic love, familial love, self-love; about dreams and about hope. Above all these poems are brave. Writing is scary. Publishing writing is scarier. All of these students have shown a willingness to tell a story, and to share those stories. One of these poems is about the feeling of being invisible, and yet through the power of poetry this feeling of invisibility is transformed into the act of being seen. All of these students have made something invisible visible, and I could not be prouder of them.

With many thanks to Paul Casey, the students' Transition Year coordinator Siobhán Dennehy, and Declan Barron of Cork City Libraries.

**Róisín Kelly**

# Poems

## Ashton School



# Muzzy Mere Exposure Effect

*Orlaith James*

My dog took to my bed  
Feeling tired and dead,  
Unsettled yet unwilling to move.

I shooed her off.  
It was not her place,  
For she desires fast pace  
When she races on the beach,  
Hunched back, bounding paws  
Leaving muzzy prints in the sand.

I thought of a cause,  
It made me pause.  
Because she would be bounding  
If she could.  
Instead she slugs about, bound to the house,  
Claws tapping tentatively on floors of wood.

I haven't changed my sheet,  
I haven't slept in her place either,  
Not wanting to replace or replicate her,  
For I know the feeling all too well  
Of stillness keeping life under lock  
And practicality setting me static.

I sleep over a big blanket,  
Wrapped in a roll,  
And not thinking of it as her casket,  
The thought takes a toll

On my conscious and good mind,  
I find I may be tied  
To my hound.  
And I may have set the grounds  
Of this deterioration of her soul.

## Persistence

*Orlaith James*

I awoke to the cold,  
A seether on my feet  
Brings shivers up my legs.

Bare feet ballet on the  
Hard floor,  
Wooden panes steel up  
To tender flesh.

I put on a pair of socks.  
Rugged and worn,  
Worn out white.

I'll be okay.

# Be My Angel

*Orlaith James*

Sitting at the step,  
Feet extend down toward the water.  
Green sludge, like damp dog's fur  
Floats about stagnantly.

A 7up bottle sticks to it;  
Dissonant, empty, used,  
With a grudge and clinginess  
Found amongst concerned kids.

From above sun rays  
Shimmer and shine  
To reflect on the water,  
To reflect on me.  
Small grey angel-like birds  
Flitter and float on the reflections,  
Dark grey silhouettes  
Dancing on light.

Kids run and shout.  
Angels retreat away  
Across into the light.  
But loyal and compassionate,  
They return.  
Far off, swans sit with regal grace.

I look back  
To the translucent green bubbles.  
I need to stand.



I look up to the depth  
Of Atlantic sky  
And turn around to see it  
Become a background  
To an oracular rainbow;  
Soft and pale,  
Faint and quaint,  
Comforting, guiding, guarding.

I need to stand.  
Feet plant on cold concrete.

I look to the  
Yellow band in the bow  
And think,  
Please,  
Be my angel.

# Halcyon Home

*Orlaith James*

Bubble bath lights flay  
And attract attention.  
Far-off beats and  
Excited chatter and laughs.

Turning away and up  
Two storks circle,  
Seeking to settle,  
Swooping unsure  
And haphazardly,  
Feet flopping side to side  
As they veer.

Until one resolves  
To stop the back and forth  
Flip-flopping with hesitancy,  
And leave.  
It glides out of view,  
Swift and steadfast.

One stork remains,  
Jarring, jerky movements.  
Then,  
It composes a moment,  
Eyes settled on a spot.

Down it descends,  
Almost headed toward  
The noise and light,

But lands on the bank,  
Fogged with darkness.

The stork stands  
Stock still,  
Unwavering, unmoving,  
Stillness in its own  
Bubble of halcyon haze.

I want to go home.

## RBF

*Orlaith James*

A resting cold bitch  
With a nervous twitch  
And chill and hunch in the shoulders,  
Puppet mouth pulls down,  
Latched shut.  
They see me from behind a boulder.

Hard and cold rugged stone  
Blocking out means  
And countenance and tone.

Behind this boulder I preen.  
Not much wanting to be seen mean,  
As I have been,  
As a bitch.

# Dawn Dreaming

*Orlaith James*

Gilded white gulls flitter overhead,  
My hands and feet and ears feel dead,  
Liquid lapses on my cheeks and toes,  
Arms flayed, a cross in the throws.

The night lends a background  
To the gentle display,  
Like petals,  
With the breeze backing their way.

I lift from the air and turn to take flight.  
The breeze tickles warmer higher tonight.

Along with the gulls I flitter and float,  
Upwards and downwards,  
Over the boats.

'Till I fade back to the chill,  
Sitting and milling  
Over the cold.

# Spring Sun

*Orlaith James*

I curl my toes  
Getting out of bed,  
My eyes and the corners of my mouth are dead.

A resident chill is in the air,  
Battling it with woollen socks  
I rise and undo all the locks.  
Open the window to a bright  
Descant of birds  
Picking from seed balls  
On skinny branches and firs.

For minutes my hands run  
Under hot water,  
Scalding then seeping  
In a comforting warmth.  
Then, when sensation has just begun  
I'm ready to step outside to sun.

# Noise

*Orlaith James*

Walking on leaves, gravel and  
Smooth tarmac,  
Breezing in twists and spirals  
Of euphoric fortune.

A beat resonates from the river,  
Reverberates underfoot.

Step-step; step. Step

The city operates to the beat.  
I walk with it  
Guiding me  
Like waves at my back .

Push-push; push. Push.

Jangling chained dogs are dodged,  
Cracks are overstepped,  
Louder thuds,  
Languid leisurely folks are overtaken,  
Construction cracks and bluntly bangs,  
Tyres roll with waves and engines roar.

Noise-noise; noise. Noise.

# Night Life

*Orlaith James*

A speck of sky is seen  
Through parted unapparent clouds.  
Soft,  
Arduous to notice  
The twinkle of three stars  
Amid the blank ruffled  
Nothing above.

By the river a gull flies low  
Skimming the water's edge.  
Leaves glide with convertibility  
On top,  
Being taken  
Bridge between Bridge.

Lights reflect,  
Pungent, stark,  
Full of colour and spark  
And ripple on the water.

Cars roll and exhaust.  
Footsteps, bikes, electric,  
Lively chatter, hushed, joking,  
Coy, passive, witty.

People are all about the city.

# Across the Lee

*Orlaith James*

The Lee leads way to a hub  
Of bubbles and building,  
Of noise and clang.  
Buses, sirens, beeping lorries and bustle.

Linear plots of settlement spread out  
On a line.  
Almost stellar,  
Like looking light-years away  
Through a telescope.

Surrounding me I see them spaced out,  
Yet clumped in clusters further on,  
Trying to fit into the lens.

Transmitting like a telephone line,  
Noise bounces back and forth.

Clunck-whizz-clink-whizz-bang!  
Then zips off again to tag another cluster.

A dog barks.  
The wind hushes,  
Disrupting the transmission.

From the center of distance  
The lens zooms out,  
Flying along the linear line,



Past  
People walking dogs,  
Jogging,  
Travelling from work and school,  
Tried, lively, social.  
Houses, petrol stations, roads and bridges.  
Past parks, concrete and  
Pillowed cobblestone.

Back to me,  
Staring out across the Lee.

## Tírgrá sa Teachíní Tréigthe

*Orlaith James*

I saw tírgrá since I was small,  
On the stone wall  
Worn by weather and time,  
Built with bród and bare hands.

Na ballaí of cottages,  
Brittle and weathered,  
Bulldozed by the wind, the rain,  
The freeze and thaw,  
But lived in with deliberate  
And delicate grá.

Where now shrews, foxes  
And magpies reside,  
And brambles and blackberries  
Grow on walls built with pride.  
And cliff walls erode further with the tide  
On the West digging into rock  
Like an axe through the years,  
Like the blunder of  
Fight and flee  
Rooted in our history  
Of people out and growing and  
Building and leaving  
And abandoning from fright and famine,  
On ships akin to coffins.

But behind their toes lies  
Our home  
With each their own tinteán,  
Carrying sentiments of slán.

## Centerfusion

*Orlaith James*

Sometimes my head fizzles out  
Like centerfusion.  
A tight knitted ball of knowledge  
Right at the center of my skull.

As I go through the day  
And events slow my way,  
It spins.

Counter-clockwise, against the grain,  
It starts slow,  
And builds up and quicker to a hurricane.

Knowledge and consciousness  
Untangle from the knot,  
Like spaghetti strings flying loose.

The turbulence accelerates and  
Strings stick to the inside of my skull,  
Tightly, moulding,  
Out of reach.

What's left after centerfusion  
Is a light misty fog,  
Clouded at my core.  
Dense, valuable thoughts linger  
Beyond my care and craze.

And despite my might,  
And all my fight,  
I enter into a haze.

# The Glen

*Orlaith James*

Midges nip and prick at my legs  
As water droplets  
Dribble over goosebumps.  
Damp from my togs permeates  
Grey cotton shorts.

I feel a numbing cold  
In my nose and fingers,  
Soft yet seeping,  
An old cold coming new to me.  
My heart throbs rhythmically,  
Sending pump after pump  
Of warm blood  
To soldier against it.

The Skelligs protrude dark  
From the sea,  
A stark silhouette  
To the pale horizon,  
Presenting a picture of ease.

Quaint seagulls squawk  
Blazoned to the sky,  
Flying to the rocks,  
Outwards and away.  
And I feel no dismay  
For them, feeling the sea breeze.

My thighs pinch  
At the bumpy abrading cement  
Of the pier.  
Underneath it burns a sear,  
Making indents to turn yellow when I stand,  
Leaving a cold bumpy band  
On my legs.

The wet zips with the salt  
Like electricity.  
My hair stands on end  
Like I have been electrocuted.  
The salt to this scene  
Seems suited.

My hair dries and crisps  
With sea salt.  
I taste it,  
In the air,  
On my lips.

I look out to it all,  
The seagulls preen.  
Everything tells me  
I am clean.

# Trust

*JB*

They always take the friendliest form,  
but in the end they'll always transform.  
Their power relies on the victim's trust,  
but their actions fill me with disgust.  
To harm someone so young,  
to harm them and make them bite their own tongue.

Yet you push it even further  
acting like you never hurt her,  
smiling and claiming innocence,  
telling all her story makes no sense,  
you truly make me sick,  
that someone so kind you'd pick.

And boy you must be really ignorant,  
to think I'd view you as special, as different.  
Yet I have to thank you so,  
because of you, now she'll know  
how to spot the mask of kind illusion  
and avoid psychotic delusion.

Your actions truly cost her  
a normal childhood, a happy life  
for she relives the night she turned five.  
You're nothing less than a monster.

## Action

*JB*

How many times must I drown  
to learn to float, or even to swim?  
How much skin must be churned  
for me to stop dancing with fire and getting burned.

The endless cycle of hope and despair  
dancing with each other in a masquerade  
stomping me out in the process  
ripping the seams of my mended heart.

How many fantasies will I dream  
before picking up the pen and sharing  
I am an empty shell  
an illusion of potential

All dreams  
    and ambitions  
        Never effort  
            Never action

# Control

*JB*

I'm no longer in control  
I'm looking through a screen. It's white.  
It's blinding.

I'm no longer in control. My hands move robotically.  
My legs march.

I'm no longer in control. I speak without thought.  
My mouth forms shapes without consent.

I'm no longer in control. People I love fade.  
Hated people I can't seem to evade.

I'm no longer in control. I lost you.  
I miss you.

I'm no longer in control. I can't seem to stop bleeding.  
The scars you left just aren't fading.  
And yet I can't control that feeling.

I'm no longer in control. Especially with salty streaks  
staining my cheeks.

I hate that I'm no longer in control.  
My eyes are but glass marbles that give vision of this cruel world.  
My hands search for you in the void you left.  
My legs bring me to places I no longer wish to see.  
I talk to people I wish no more but to burn.



My betraying mouth giving them false hope with those disgusting smiles.  
You left. You were the only one I loved. Only one I liked. Only love I'd kill for.  
Your comrades stick to me like moths to light. You left. I wish I left with you.  
But it doesn't matter now, I'm on my way.  
The scars you left never stopped bleeding.  
And tired from war, I decide to leave. Leave to the land you call home.

So I choose control. I take control. I am in control.

I shut the blinds on that blinding screen. I let my  
hands fall to my sides and stretch my legs out.

I stop talking. My mouth relaxes. I don't care about  
anyone. I am in control—I want them to fade.

I may have lost you, but not for long.  
For I am coming.

I listen to the drip. I am in control.  
I choose not to look. Not to listen.

I am in control, my love.  
I am in control.  
And I am on my way.

# Rotten Luck

*JB*

If I worked out  
and became strong and mighty  
would they give me a shot?

If I cut my hair short  
and grew out a beard  
would they offer me a handshake  
or would it still be a filthy plate from a rib-eye steak  
would respect be so weird?

If I threw fists instead of my mind  
would I be viewed as brave  
or would they stare and comment on my behind  
and if I told them off, told them to look away  
they'd throw their hands up, and yell,  
'Don't tell me how to behave.'

For my luck has been lost  
the day I was born  
that day my duty became to sustain lust  
for those whose respect has been torn

Yet they dare to say, We have it easy  
that our jobs pay less  
cuz we can't lift as much  
and god, once a month we feel a bit queasy  
of course for manly companies it's too much stress.

For again, I question my luck  
as to why it must suck  
I did nothing bad enough to deserve  
whatever men ask for I must serve  
they hand me a broom and expect a kiss and a thank you  
where if handed to a man they'd bellow—  
'Such disrespect!'  
Once more I shall ask you  
my so dear, good fellow  
if you really believe it's fair to expect  
  
my service because  
I was unfortunate enough  
to be born a  
woman.

## The Bug Fiesta

*JB*

Screaming—shouting  
directed at me, shivering  
I wasn't even even pouting.  
My vision dancing with spots  
as ladybugs danced with roaches on pots.  
Her wings fluttered as he spun her round  
reminding me of how rushing blood can sound.

Six legs, six steps, they spun, they twirled.  
My anxiety it flared.  
She laughed, he smiled  
I cried.  
They pried.

My hand tangled in hair  
Oh well,  
My breathing rapid, shallow  
In thought—in sadness  
I wallow.

Not a care in the world,  
As they spun—they twirled  
I clutched my stomach  
When I hurled.  
And I wished? No, I wondered

If the ladybugs and roaches  
Ever stopped to check their watches.  
As time went on  
My visions long gone  
But at least  
The bugs had a bit of fun  
Dancing to my breathing song.

# Dandelions

*JB*

When you look around the room,  
you only see gods.  
They shine bright, so much, many might get a fright  
yet they're all the same, like peas in pods  
to be a god is to be like them—all assumed

Over-polished bronze can only shine in light.  
Put on the shades, open your eyes.  
You're the sun illuminating the room  
don't let the weeds prevent your bloom.  
Realise your own size  
Your beauty beats all their fight.

It's time for your appreciation  
ignoring a dandelion's faux gold  
for the world came to a realisation  
for too long your thoughts have been untold.

You give others around you so much love  
you forget to save some for yourself.

## (Don't/Do) Let Go

*Aurelius Weber-Shevchenko*

Cursed by the love I have received.  
Cursed by the body I was birthed in.  
Cursed by the thoughts I can't exterminate.

For the love, the laughter, I was embraced in their arms.  
For the spirit, my soul, I was born in a body well functioning.  
For the heart, the kindness, I was said to be loving.

All the eons in the universe wouldn't be enough time for my beloveds.  
All the envy and hatred in the world couldn't change my vessel.  
All the fear and guilt could, maybe, make me usual, I hope.

Those deserving of my love are loved, but when ashes,  
cry my eyes til congealed blood.  
Those years of youth-drive ego are present, yes,  
but when gone, waste my time in its weight on Osmium.  
Those thoughts of corrupted aspect try to breathe air, yes,  
but if allowed to tread water, take my grey matter and polish it  
til it does glisten with a light never once before had.

Should I feel cherished or undeserving of love?  
Should I feel lucky or ashamed of my soul glove?  
Should I feel hope things change or let it go?

# Awake, Tired, Hungry, Asleep

*Aurelius Weber-Shevchenko*

Awake,  
Jumpy Heart.  
Feeling Blood Stumble.  
Time Passes By Uncontrollably,  
You Try To Hold On.

Salt Water Fills Your Sockets.  
Cry Til Eyes Wade.  
Negligibly Flooding Over—  
Sullen Beaches.  
Tired.

Hungry.  
Already Full.  
Half-Realised Reality—  
Comforts Your Stomach Pit.  
Spend Your Time In Ignorance.

They Will See Light Within,  
Ignore The Kinder Words.  
Beautiful? Loving? No.  
Think... Cry...  
Asleep.

# Don't Wake Up

*Aurelius Weber-Shevchenko*

Don't wake up, rotten to the core.

Don't wake up, your happiness makes you mourn.

Don't wake up, nothing here to care about.

Don't wake up, the dawn song bird sings too loud.

Don't wake up, the earth worms may think you scum.

Don't wake up, beat yourself down like a drum.

But whether you drummed or plucked away at yourself,

You didn't listen.

You woke up.

Woke up from a dream where everything was done,

And your soul wasn't infested with more scum.

Go back into your blissful oblivion,

And keep yourself there,

Because at least you didn't look so glum.

Don't wake up. Don't wake up. Don't wake up.



# I Can Only Feel Within My Soul

*Aurelius Weber-Shevchenko*

Spring must come to fill winter's void,  
Void replaced by warmth in its stead.  
But my cold, bloodless hands shiver with a trace,  
And my mind feels the blankness instead.

Every day, no matter the season of renewal or death,  
The fingers given to me, by my life, drain of blood.  
Muddy blood transporting rotten gruel to my heart.  
So the barren trees, disappearing so, offend me.  
How dare the trees renew themselves and spite me so.

"How can I be hopeful," I ask.  
"For the trees are revived, and the aroma of flowers spread."  
But I cannot feel what is not within me,  
So my soul runs backwards and dreads.  
"Then let your own flower bloom."  
No. My petals are dried.

## Detach

*Aurelius Weber-Shevchenko*

I want you here, always.

But I have to stop lying.

We won't always live in the same city, or country.

I'm scared of the distance.

But what is scarier than loss?

Harmonising with you when you aren't even playing a melody.

I shouldn't be scared when I have you for a while longer, and if we tried, longer.

But when you do go, I don't want to, but I have to detach.

Otherwise, you will be dragging my laboured body through your life with you.

And you won't ever even realise.

# Black and White Keys

*Jamie McNally*

The first time I cried  
For real, I was fifteen  
Alone, awaking in my room  
Alone, lost in the heat of my blanket  
Alone, I lay still for a while  
Alone, feeling empty, dull, and grey  
Alone, I got up eventually  
Alone, I play my keyboard  
Alone, pressing the keys note by note  
One after the other  
Not together  
The black and white keys  
The only true colours  
A slow sad song  
No one will hear  
Alone, I can't keep it together  
Alone, I'm an emotional wreck  
Alone, forever trapped in my room  
Alone, and the door will never open  
Alone, but at least no one will ever enter

## Morning Bell

*Jamie McNally*

The Morning Bell has a duller thud.  
My blanket is heavy, weighty and strong.  
Saturday, I usually feel quite good.  
Glance outside and the sun is gone,  
Lacking its normal uplifting hue.  
My world can be lit no longer.  
How long will this empty feeling continue?  
I miss the spark I used to foster:  
It's gone.

## I Am Not Really Here

*Jamie McNally*

I am not really here.  
I am a ghost, if you will.  
Not bringing fear,  
I just have disappeared.

I was never really here  
Never angry, never kind, never rotten—  
I was never seen as weird.  
I just have been completely forgotten.

I will never be here,  
Despite wanting to be.  
To me, no one will peer—  
I provide nothing to see

## The Start of Nothing

*Jamie McNally*

You received your one and only chance  
You could not dream of anything more  
It was literally there, in your grasp  
All that you ever wished of before

It was handed to you on a ruby platter  
You know you made it go awry  
And pretending that it didn't matter  
It's on you, you didn't even try

You thought you were in a dream  
The only time you feel something  
Though you could have made it real  
You did not: the start of nothing

# Sadistic Sisyphus

*Jamie McNally*

Wearing a crooked spine  
You trudge through your life  
The load; never easing  
Your pain is worsening daily

The weight of a boulder  
Stifling your conscience  
Crushing down your mind  
Just as it does to your body

The rock has grown old  
The load remains present  
Though made long ago  
The old all-familiar pain

Its weight has grown futile  
It's no longer needed  
Reminds you what has-been  
And your self-pity to your struggle

You can let go, now  
But you decide to not  
For the one weight greater than the boulder  
Is the crushing fear of change

“One must imagine Sisyphus happy”  
Unless he'd rather suffer

# Drowning Sun

*Jamie McNally*

Fading swiftly, the daylight shone  
The sun gradually crashing into the horizon  
Shining on the river, in which it drowns  
The scene illuminates, not for long  
I rest on a lonesome stump of wood  
Here a mighty pine once stood  
Now a stool, but once so strong  
I glance over the crumbling rocky wall,  
Standing slanted, soon, likely to fall  
Guarding it stood, in a time long gone  
Colourful waves, lightly splash  
It flows to the ocean, the river is dying  
Zooming cars, whizzing past  
The doddering train coughing and spluttering  
The scene is serene, how long will it last

## A Pleasant Afternoon

*Emma Healy*

Sitting in a coffee shop again.

The sun's rays dapple the ground around you, warm your skin.

The leather upholstery of the chair you're sitting on, cool beneath your fingertips.

The bitter scent of coffee in your nose,  
the rich taste of coffee on your tongue, familiar.

The hustle and bustle of the café around you,  
voices all blending into one, muffled by your earphones.  
The book in your hands, smooth pages turning softly.

## Dusk

*Emma Healy*

The room, illuminated by a lone candle burning brightly  
and the white blaring light from a laptop screen.

Beside it, a used cup, contents glistening softly.  
The scent of jasmine fills the air.



## Sea

*Emma Healy*

The smell of sea salt in the breeze.

The distant roar of waves crashing along the shore.

The gentle rocking of the boat beneath my feet.

The view of the sky and sea, royal blue in colour,  
topped with foaming white waves.

The warmth of the sun shining down on my skin.

The view of the land, forest green,  
drifting further and further away every second.

## Spring

*Emma Healy*

Birds chirp in the heat of day.

Lambs bleat in freshly grown fields.

The smell of cut grass and beginnings envelops me.

# My Dream

*Ciara Spalding*

His laugh ripples through my body,  
Continuing to join the beat above my lungs.  
I feel safe, warm and loved.  
Pots and pans surround us,  
Heavenly aroma filling the room.  
Baby bird chirps happily across to us,  
As we move to bundle her up in hugs.  
This is forever.  
This love will dance until our last breath.  
The lock is clicked, key thrown away.  
“My family,” I smile, as I open my eyes.

# Untitled

*Ciara Spalding*

The world watches as darkness encloses.  
Seconds slip into minutes slip into hours.  
How long has this screen been lit?  
The panic hits, sinking deep deep down.  
My life, my only chance,  
falls away like shadows into shade.

Panic, darkness,  
then light.

Curtains open, cool breeze blows.  
“This is peace,” I think, because  
everybody knows  
there is more to life  
than the world in your phone.

# Be Careful What You Wish For

*Niamh Kirwan*

As I shut my heavy eyes  
I go to a place in my mind.  
These dreams are happy yet filled with lies  
Where hope and silence are intertwined.

I find myself in a wood.  
You can hear a pin drop.  
I can do anything, I wish I could.  
I wish this dream would never stop.

As I travel back to my reality  
My surroundings I wish to keep.  
I must leave the place where I love to be.  
I wish that I could always sleep.

I try to open my eyes.  
I can't! I'm not stuck in this place.  
This world is now filled with lies.  
The real world I can no longer face.

# Life Is So Different But In Some Ways The Same

*Niamh Kirwan*

Life is so different  
But in some ways the same  
Remembering a grandparent  
Yet lighting a brand new flame

Life is different  
But in some ways the same  
It can still be magnificent  
Even in times of pain

Life is so different  
But in some ways the same  
Cancer became significant  
All my friends still remain

Life is so different  
But in some ways the same  
Shaping a life that's so different  
We dance in the rain

## A Friendship So Rare

*Niamh Kirwan*

A life built for two  
Just me and you

Twins, a friendship so rare  
Everything we must share

I don't know where to start  
People can hardly tell us apart

We spend every moment together  
With you there is always laughter

I hope it will be like this forever  
For us to live a happy ever after

## Untitled

*Maria Mos*

Like a leaf falling off a tree,  
Beautifully illuminated by the golden sun.  
All my colours shine.

Yet no matter what you do  
I will rot and shrivel until there is nothing left of me.  
Not a singular trace of my beauty  
That was once so captivating.

## Romanian Blues

*Maria Mos*

No I won't steal your wallet.

And I'm not Dracula.

But I have met him—

And he's a chill guy

If you tell me to go back,

I'll tell you to book me a ticket.

First class at that.

I'm in it to win it.

## Untitled

*Maria Mos*

I see daffodils blooming.

It reminds me that yet again it is spring.

Even though the winter was gruelling,

The birds will start to sing.

They will sing a song of spring.

Build nests up in the trees,

Watch the weather change,

And praise the sun.

## The Rush

*Maria Mos*

The nicotine rushes through my blood.  
Calming me,  
I know I should quit,  
I really want to.  
But I need this feeling to last forever.

The smoke looks magical,  
As it dances with the rays of sun  
Peeking through the curtains.

That's disgusting.  
Quit.  
You think that all of the time,  
You've seen what it does.  
The pain it causes.  
From something as simple  
As a little smoke.

## Untitled

*Maria Mos*

I am merely an object,  
There for you when you want me,  
And I stay silent.  
I don't argue or fight.



But if you pay attention,  
You'll notice how loud my silence is,  
Filled with words never said.

I always tried to be the bigger person,  
But really  
I should have never stayed silent.

## Bus Home

*Maria Mos*

I take the bus home.  
I'm surrounded by strangers.  
I'm in my own world.

I look out the window,  
and see the rain pour down.  
Every individual drop illuminated  
by the glow of the street lights.

I have my headphones on  
with my favourite song on repeat.  
I'm going home.  
This peace won't last.

So I sit there,  
looking out the window.  
Hoping that the bus takes  
just five minutes longer.

# Sleep?

*Maria Mos*

Anytime I want to sleep  
I lay in bed and start to count sheep,  
Slowly but surely I start to weep.  
I hurt myself I know it.  
Don't judge me I can't control it.

I wake up feeling worse,  
My head pounding,  
My body anything but grounded.  
I know I did it to myself,  
But I can't put my past on a far away shelf.

I know it made me who I am.  
But I only feel good in full glam.  
The shelf broke.  
I ran.  
For my past is not all I am.

So anytime I want to sleep  
I lay in bed and start to count sheep,  
Slowly but surely I start to weep.  
I hurt myself I know it.  
I'll never own it.

## Easier Said Than Done

*Maria Mos*

I thought I could do it,  
I thought it was true.  
But the more I dug, the more I realised,  
It was me. Not you.

Maybe I dug too far,  
But then I remembered,  
That no matter how far I dig,  
Or how much I try to fill the hole  
It'll never be up to par.

It's always not enough or too much,  
I'm never able to find the balance.  
I used substances, it was my crutch.  
Yet somehow it always left me at dusk.

So you ask me why I'm scared?  
I'll tell you I'm not prepared.  
I don't think I can face the truth,  
That it was my shovel that hit a tooth.

## The Perfect Life:

*Maria Mos*

I am everything I want to be.  
My life works out perfectly.  
The grass is always green,  
And the sunshine always gleams.

I sip my coffee, and look at the trees  
I hear the birds singing, along with the bees.  
This simple day is just how I imagined it to be,  
But it was never a reality.

Seasons change,  
Leaves and flowers wilt,  
And the perfect house was never built.

It wasn't ever a goal to be fulfilled.  
Just a journey that was only for the thrill.

# Untitled

*Maria Mos*

Every word you say  
Is another slice,  
Into my body, soul, and mind.

You throw your words at me  
Not thinking about what they do.  
Why do I have to live up to you?  
Why can't you live up to me?

You try to buy my love,  
Giving me money to keep me quiet.  
But when I ask,  
I'm just using you for it.

I will forever grieve,  
The person I could have been  
If you just understood me.

## It's Back? Again?

*Maria Mos*

It's back.

It creeps up on you subtly,

Then it hits you.

Bam!

Everything rushes back.

The disgust, the pain, the resentment.

That awful melody

The one you keep on repeat.

But you like it right?

You want to feel it.

Because everything else feels wrong and forced,

But this feels right?

You need help, yet refuse it,

You beg for it.

But once you can have it you'll do anything not to take it.

Your indecisiveness will lead you right back.

Back to where it all started.

But that's the point right?

# Untitled

*Maria Mos*

I am fake.

I show you what you want to see

And you take, and you take, and you take

And I'm still fake

If I showed the truth

No one would think of my youth

For my poison ages and grows

Like a rotten rose

I am not who I show you

I am not who you think

I sit by the kitchen sink

Alone with my drink

If I showed my true truth

Nobody would take

They would avoid me and my poison

Hate me and be poisoned

## Moving On

*Lorna Kirwan*

Walls that held us currently stand alone and bare,  
The sound of memories, a weight hard to wear.  
While boxes are filled, the recollections flow,  
Each object a story, a tale we all know.  
Leaving that house felt like an attack, how I wish I could go back.  
The laughter that echoed now emerges into the air,  
Departing a house we once held in our care.  
Now we move forward with hope in our hearts,  
New chapters await, room for new art.  
Though the hardships of goodbye may pull at our seams,  
Through the mission onwards I will have new dreams.

## The Silent Fight

*Lorna Kirwan*

Beneath the surface, a story is there  
A journey filled with trials, change and care,  
A scar a reminder about battles fought.

Cancer's shadow is a long path for you,  
Although within the worry, resilience grew,  
Even when we thought we were done and through

The scar tells of healing, a testament of strength,  
A symbol of survival, tells a silent story of length.



# I Thought I Wasn't Capable of Love

*Patricia Gulca*

I thought I wasn't capable of love, until his green eyes were looking into mine.  
I had fallen in love without noticing it for a while.

He captivated me without saying a word,  
I thought I wasn't capable of love until he blurred my world.

He would make my heart laugh and make my tears dry,  
I thought I wasn't capable of love until he would make me cry.

He would always care for me and try to love me,  
but all I could feel was an empty black hole in me.

He started to pay no attention and pretend like I didn't exist,  
I tried to fix something he had broken into a large piece.

I would ask myself over and over if I really was enough,  
but in the end it was him that wasn't capable of love.

## My Room

*Martha Smithers*

My room is a cosy place,  
Filled with colours and a warm space.  
Books and toys all around,  
A little world where joy is found.

Soft blankets and pillows too,  
A perfect spot for me and you.  
In this space I feel so free,  
My room's a treasure, just for me.

## My Room

*Abigail Kenny*

I hate my room.  
I hate how everything in it reminds me of someone I've met.  
A teddy bear from a boy I once loved.  
My sister's old lamp she didn't want.  
A book with an old friendship bracelet on top.  
My room is messy, ugly colours scattered everywhere.  
Why didn't I make it nicer while I had the chance.

# I Feel So Weak

*Abigail Kenny*

I feel so weak.  
Like my body is giving up.  
My brain is shutting down  
And I'm dying.

I feel so weak.  
Like my bones are slowly eroding.  
My legs can't hold me up anymore  
And I'm falling.

I feel so weak.  
Like my liver is getting diseased.  
My body can't take more drink  
And I'm crying.

I feel so weak.  
Like my eyes are slowly closing.  
My eyelids can't stay open  
And I'm dead.

## Is This What Death Really Feels Like?

*Abigail Kenny*

Am I dying?

No, I can't be.

Death is quicker than this.

Death is easier.

Death is peaceful and you're surrounded by

Colourful flowers and loved ones.

But this?

This has been going on for years.

It's slow.

This is difficult and confusing.

This is chaotic and the flowers I'm surrounded by are dead.

As for loved ones?

They don't sit and comfort me.

Is this what death really feels like?

## To Be Loved The Same Way I Love

*Abigail Kenny*

To be loved by a writer

Is to be loved for eternity

Because your name will forever

Bleed on my pages.

I may have moved on

But there are still hundreds of pages

Written for you.

To be loved by a writer  
Is every poet's dream.  
I hope someday my name  
Will forever bleed on your pages.  
You may have moved on  
But I wish there were hundreds of pages  
Written for me.

## Drowning

*Abigail Kenny*

It's happening again, isn't it?  
My days are getting longer.  
Weeks feel like months.  
But all I do is sleep.  
It's all I can do.  
I feel like I'm drowning.  
Like I'm alone, stranded in the middle of the ocean  
And I can't swim.  
No one can hear me screaming for help  
And I'm starting to lose my voice.  
In a way it's nice.  
Quiet and peaceful.  
So, for now I'll stop screaming for help  
And just let myself drown for a bit.

# Scared

*Abigail Kenny*

If I'm being honest, I'm terrified of death.  
Will people think I'm selfish for leaving so soon?  
Will everything finally go numb?  
Or will I have to do it all again?

Maybe I will relive the same horrors,  
Just in a new soul.  
Maybe some will hate me for leaving them on their own.  
But it's the only thought in my mind,  
And I can't seem to get it under control.

# A Different Kind of Disappointment

*Adam Kemel*

I once was special  
The chosen one  
Something different,  
Something new  
I stood out from the crowd.

I thought I was special  
I heard praise after praise,  
Day after day,  
Believed what I heard,  
Wielded it like a sword  
My very own Excalibur.

I was never special  
I grew older, like others  
Went to work, like others  
Talked, like others  
I never stood out,  
Blending into the crowd,  
I convinced myself I was made for more,  
Always more.

But when I look back,  
Considering my life,  
I realise  
I was never special.

# A Spring Odyssey

*Adam Kemel*

Clouds conceal the sun's rays  
Fast winds rush violently through the trees  
Heavy showers dot the grass with glistening dew  
And provide flowers with minerals  
Until the rain clouds break

Bulbs beat against the heavy topsoil  
Forcing their way through to their glorious sun  
No longer disguised by the clouds

The sun's indecisiveness furling the rejuvenation of the fields  
As the flowers greedily soak up its rays  
Satiating their hunger  
Knowing the sun will soon return  
To its home behind the clouds



# When We Are Apart

*Adam Kemel*

I hate to miss you  
My heart isn't strong enough  
My will isn't patient  
The world spins too fast  
I get dizzy with the thought  
Of missing you

I hate to leave you  
Each time we are together  
My words aren't permanent enough  
I'm not patient  
I don't know how I live  
Without your dazzling eyes  
Drawing me into your galaxy  
I've never been so lost

I hate to think of you  
When we are so far apart  
Our time isn't long enough  
It's difficult to be patient  
And it's harder when you inhabit my mind  
With your gorgeous smile  
And your infectious laugh

I hate that I can't always be with you  
But I love when I am

## Coláiste an Phiarsaigh

Poetry by

**Aoibhín Ní Shúilleabháin**

**Lena Ní Sheasnáin**

**Ruby Ní Drisceoil**

**Sophie Farrugia**

**Sadhbh Ní Chróinín**

**Abbi Ní Shúilleabháin**

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Assisting Writer: Gormfhlaith Ní Shíocháin Ní Bheoláin

T.Y. Coordinator: Celine Ní Scolaí

Workshops held in Glanmire Library

Assisting Librarian: Colin Murphy



Photo by Danni Ronan

*Doublevision* – suímid i scáthán briste. Agus shuíomar ann le linn na gceardlann filíochta i Leabharlann Ghleann Maghair. Meastar go mbíonn teannas idir Gaelainn agus Béarla. Ach is mó go mór ná san atá eatarthu. Sna ceardlanna filíochta bhí saoirse ag na daltaí scríobh, ag baint úsáide as pé focal a d’oir dóibh. Shnámhadar faoi easaibh an dátheangachais faoi mar a dheineann siad gach lá. Tá an dá theanga ag léá isteach ina chéile agus ag súgradh sna dánta atá amach romhat, a léitheoir. Dúrt níos mó ná babhta amháin faoi na filí seo é: tá siad sna púcaí. Bíodh is go bhfuilid i dtús turais gheobhaidh tú dánta diamhara troma scaollmhara tochtacha romhat. Seachain ar do thuras leo. Léirigh na filí seo doimhintuiscint ar an saol ina dtimpeall. Dá réir sin níor chuireadar aon nath in aon teicníc nó múnla nó cur chuige a chuireas faoina mbráid ach thuigeadar an t-iomlán... agus uaireanta ní thagann na dánta ainneoin na múnlaí. Bris agus athbhris agus ath-thóg nó tóg sos!

Tá greann greanta cliste agus taitneamh uileghabhálach an tsonais sna dánta romhat leis a léitheoir, mar sin b'fhéidir go ngeofá tú féin sa deireadh ar thaobh na gréine.

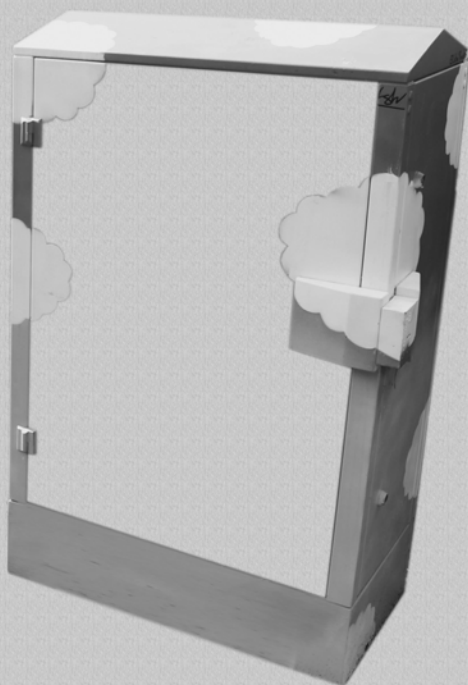
We decided to sit in a broken mirror. The tension people sense in the space between Irish and English is only a third of a half of a start of a story. There is so much more there than struggle. In the poetry workshops the pupils had the freedom to use whatever words they chose. They chose each other's words, finding rhymes, playing the meaning. They swam in streams of bilingualism as they do every day. In the poems before you, both languages melt into one another and play tricks. I have said it more than once of these poets: *tá siad sna PÚCAÍ*. Though they may be just beginning their journey, there are mysterious heavy dark poems before you. Beware on your way. These poets display a deep understanding of the world around them. Because of this awareness they took to every technique, form or method I showed them... but sometimes poems don't come easy, no matter the method. Change or break it or take a break! You will find clever humour and the all-encompassing happiness in the poems before you too, and you may just find the sunny side up.

**Gormfhlaith Ní Shíocháin Ní Bheoláin**



# Poems

Coláiste an Phiarsaigh



## Anseo

*Aoibhín Ní Shúilleabháin*

Fanfaidh mé anseo

Liom féin

Fanfaidh mé anseo

Gan aon *pain*

Fanfaidh mé anseo

Mé ag codladh go sámh

Fanfaidh mé anseo

Críoch an tsnámh

Fanfaidh mé anseo

An áit chiúin

Fanfaidh mé anseo

## A Dead Man

*Aoibhín Ní Shúilleabháin*

*après Rudyard Kipling*

I didn't lie, I didn't fight.

Therefore I smiled to please the high.

Now all my smiles are found untrue

and I must go back to what is true.

What story will I use to cover

my happiness to some others.

## Me with the air

*Aoibhín Ní Shúilleabháin*

The rain was pelting down  
Nothing but grey to be seen.

But somehow I didn't feel down  
I felt happy. I felt free.

It happened all of a sudden  
It just clicked.

The hard work started to pay off  
Like someone just flipped a switch

I didn't even notice my wet hair  
Or the mucky field

It was just me with the fresh air.  
Happy as could be.

## SCRIOSTA

*Aoibhín Ní Shúilleabháin*

Táimid SCRIOSTA ó na cogáí.

Ag cailliúnt na ndaoine,

Ag cailliúnt an ghrá.

Táimid SCRIOSTA ó na cogáí.

Gortaithe agus feargach,

Brónach agus uaigneach.

Táimid SCRIOSTA ó na cogáí.

Tithe SCRIOSTA,

Saolta SCRIOSTA.

Táimid SCRIOSTA.

SCRIOSTA ó na cogáí.

## The River

*Aoibhín Ní Shúilleabháin*

Endless flow

Could it ever stop

Never

But all of a sudden it stops.

Like a bus coming to its stop.

Like a story coming to its end.



# Duibheagán

*Aoibhín Ní Shúilleabháin*

Gan solas

gan glór

Gan sonas

ach mór.

Mé féin gan comhluadar

Is mé ag éirí fuar.

Ag dul i bhfolach

Mé ag féachaint tríd an deatach.

Cé comh fada is atá

na daoine a raibh tráth

agam cheana.

ag rith

*Aoibhín Ní Shúilleabháin*

ag rith

ag rith

ag rith

the sun in my eyes

ag rith ón bhfadhb.

## Teas

*Aoibhín Ní Shúilleabháin*

*après Nuala Ní Dombnaill*

Ag fanacht sa chistin te,  
ag déanamh tae láidir.

Tá sé fada ó  
mo ghrá fíor-láidir.

Braithim uaim na hoícheanta,  
ag súgradh ar na tránna.  
Bhí an-spraoi againn,  
na réalta ag gáire in aonacht linn.

Cá bhfuil sé anois?  
Níl clú ag éinne.  
Mé uaigneach anois  
gan éinne.

Na focail deas  
Na focail láidir  
Nach gcloisim anois agus mé i m'aonar.

## Mo bhaile

*Aoibhín Ní Shúilleabháin*

*après Máire Dinny Wren*

Beagáinín atá beo sa bhaile ina mairim  
Is ní aithníim an difríocht idir na séasúir.

Mothaím go bhfuil mé ag moilliú.  
Ach leanaim ar aghaidh ag rith.

Cad chuige nach bhfaighim cuairteoir?  
An é nach bhfeictear mé?

Ach tugann an beocht lasmuigh an dóchas go bhfeicfidh mé thú go luath.

## Unwell

*Aoibhín Ní Shúilleabháin*

My head was hurting,  
my body shaking.  
I'd had enough!  
Of all these changes.

My fingers were cold,  
almost like a mould  
Empty and hollow!  
not knowing who to follow.

## Taobh na gréine

*Aoibhín Ní Shúilleabháin*

D'aghaidh  
M'aghaidh  
san áit chéanna  
measaim gurb é seo taobh na gréine.

Níl mé i m'aonar a thuilleadh,  
tar éis do filleadh  
Anois tá séan ann  
taobh na gréine.

## Sorrow

*Lena Ní Sheasnáin*

The black clothes hung sorrowfully  
On the weak bodies.  
Tears flowing on rosy cheeks,  
While the little kids were bribed with treats.  
It was a day full of mixed emotions,  
A day of celebration, mourning and commotion.  
Although the room was crowded,  
I felt somewhat alone.  
We hugged, we laughed, and we remembered  
Of what was once known.  
She has gone now,  
To a place unknown.

## Mo Chroí

*Lena Ní Sheasnáin*

Tar liom go dtí an trá,  
croí lán de spraoi is grá.  
Do lámh i mo lámh,  
ag siúl go sámh.

Tar liom go dtí an trá,  
rachaimid ag snámh,  
táim caillte gan tú, a chroí.  
cloisim tú ag canadh sa ghaoith.

## Am Nollag

*Lena Ní Sheasnáin*

Tá an sneachta ag titim  
tá na soilse lasta  
tá na maisiúcháin crocht.

Mé féin agus mo theaghlach  
go léir le chéile  
ag caint agus ag canadh.

Is maith liom é seo,  
no is aoibhinn liom é seo  
mo theaghlach agus mé féin.  
An tslí go bhfanfaidh sé.

## Grandad

*Lena Ní Sheasnáin*

The leaves were falling,  
but so was I.  
It all happened in a blink of an eye.  
I didn't know what to say,  
I didn't know what to feel,  
All I could do was freeze.  
The chitter chatter around me was muffled  
I felt like I was in a bubble.  
No more visits to his house,  
No more embracing cuddles.

## Charity Shop

*Lena Ní Sheasnáin*

A pair of baby's shoes sat on the shelf  
€3 was all they cost.  
Labelled never worn, not even felt.

# The New Path of Life

*Lena Ní Sheasnáin*

*après Seamus Heaney*

It looked like a cluster of clouds  
Laying lonely on the pavement  
Where the dog would lay  
On a cold day.

A treat for the lonely eye.

But to be fair it sent a sense of hope.  
A new beginning.  
A fresh start.  
A newness in the backyard of our life,  
So subtle and so white.

The crunch beneath our feet as we follow.....  
The New Path of Life.  
Let them be heard, leave in the light.  
Our old life.... s l i p p i n g.  
A New Beginning.

# Nellie Stone

*Ruby Ní Drisceoil*

My name is Nellie Stone,  
And god I love to moan.  
About all this and that,  
My son and his new hat.

I don't know why I am this way,  
Sure I must have changed some day.  
I used to be all happy out,  
Now I only want to shout.

My family says it has to stop,  
Me and all my verbal slop.  
They don't get it like I do,  
How everything now seems to be new.

They don't even call by my house,  
Unless I was to be like a mouse.  
But I know no other way,  
To say everything I need to say.

The world it has no space,  
For a woman without a pretty face.  
So I'll be ugly, I'll be *dian*,  
And I'll get to say what I mean



# Mo Bhród

*Ruby Ní Drisceoil*

Ag breathnú ar mo chol ceathar óg,  
agus í ag léim suas ar an luascán,  
cosúil le gur dhéan mé nuair a bhí mé óg freisin.

Tá sí ag labhairt is ag labhairt,  
faoi pé rud faoin ghrian,  
agus í sé mbliana d'aois.

Táim tar éis a bheith ann dá saol go léir,  
í ag dul ó leanbh beag bídeach,  
isteach ina cailín mór ag tosnú ar scoil.

Níl cliú aici faoin mbród atá agam di,  
na mothúcháin a bhraithim agus  
í ag déanamh na rudaí céanna liomsa.

An bród atá ag gach duine inár dteaghlach di,  
an páiste deireanach, báibín na clainne,  
mo bhróidín óg.

## An Fhéithleog

*Ruby Ní Drisceoil*

An Ghrian ag breathnú síos orm,  
agus tá an ghaoth éadtrom ag séideadh,  
ag séideadh tríd mo sciatháin tanaí.  
Ansin bolaím an mhil ghleoite sin,  
ag snámh tríd an fhéar.  
Do mo mhealladh chuige,  
ar nós ceoil álainn na n-éan.  
Táim ann anois,  
ag siúl go cúramach ar na peitil,  
agus iad ag bogadh go suaimhneach.  
An blas álainn ag damhsa ar mo theanga,  
agus táim ag rince in sa ghaoth arís.

## Eagla

*Ruby Ní Drisceoil*

An mhuc imithe ar feadh tamaill  
mar feiceann sé na scamail  
Níl sé beomhar a thuilleadh  
agus níl sé ag filleadh  
Feicim é faoin mbord  
tá sé as ord  
Amach as an dorchadas  
agus braitheann sé an t-ocras  
Tá sé ar ais liom anois,  
agus ar feadh lóin, píosa dris

## Greim an Ghrá

*Ruby Ní Drisceoil*

Cloisim an glór arís; an screadaíl, an béiceadh  
An crann ag suí go trom ar an mballa  
Ag breathnú síos orm tríd an tost nó an glór  
Bíonn an lámh in uachtar aige i gcomhnaí

## Folamh agus Lán

*Ruby Ní Drisceoil & Sophie Farrugia*

Mé féin  
An duine casta, cantalach  
Mé féin  
Fós i mo pháiste óg  
Mé féin  
An té bhíonn amuigh sa spéir  
Mé féin  
An té ag gol, ag imirt le mothúcháin dáinséarach  
Mé féin  
Ag léimt, ag rith, ag imeacht  
Mé féin  
Ag smaoineamh is ag cuimhneamh  
  
Níl aon rud ceart sa saol  
Ach amháin mise a bheith mé fhéin.

# Open The Door

*Sophie Farrugia*

The weeks flew by, everyone was calm & contempt. The minutes, seconds and hours past and all was said. The rain poured, the wind howled, the sun shone, nobody even knew. Nothing was noticed, I heard the clock ticking backwards, rewinding all my memories, playing with my emotions. Suddenly I was a little girl again. I worried about nothing, my looks, clothes or my hair, didn't bother me. I was climbing trees and playing with dolls. I heard the songs that were played all night long. The doorbell rang and out I would come. But not the little girl that was there all along.

# Oideachas

*Sophie Farrugia*

D'oscail mé mo leabhair is mé ag dul as mo mheabhair. Táim suite sa suíochán seo arís, dúirt siad go mbeinn ar bís. Tá an t-am do mo bhualadh sa chloigeann, mo chosa ag bualadh ar an talamh, mo lámha ag crith. Tá sé thart, níor fhoghlaim mé rud ar bith.

## Taobh na Gréine

*Sophie Farrugia*

Táim greamaithe sa ghaiste, mo lámha teanntaithe. Iad ag rá é seo is é siúd, an gheobhaidh mé amach? Tá an bháisteach taobh liom ach feicim solas na gréine, duine oscail an doras, lig dom agus beidh mé ar thaobh na gréine.

## Saol eile

*Sophie Farrugia*

Tá a chroí agam ná fág mo thaobh ní mhairfidh mé gan tú. Is tú mo sholas ag lonradh ag deireadh an tolláin, m'fhéar glas ar thaobh eile an fhéir. Tá mo rúnta agat má tógtar thú ní mhairfidh mé sa saol, tá cúis ag gach éinne is tú mo dhuais.

## Nasc

*Sophie Farrugia*

I was handed to you, your biggest blessing. The bottle feeds, the nightmares, the weeds I grew. You stood by my side you knew what to do. You figured it out, the books, the videos, the advice, none of them had a clue. I turned out fine, I grew like a vine. Look at me now, are you proud?

## Iontaoibh

*Sophie Farrugia*

Saol eile an bhfuil ceann ann? Níl fiú a fhios againn go dtí go dtógann sé muid ann. Tá daoine scanraithe a gcos ag crith ach níl mé, tá iontaoibh agam as an Domhan.

## Saol eile

*Sophie Farrugia*

Mo bholg ag preabadh isteach is amach, mo scámhóga trí thine. Ní féidir liom análu, bhraithim marbh ach comh maith ag an am chéanna. Is cairdeas ceart é má mhothaíonn tú mar seo.

## Duine Randamach

*Sophie Farrugia*

Tá mo theanga amach, mo lámha ag dul i ngach treo, ag gáire is ag gáire ní féidir liom stop. Is breá liom an mhotháil seo. Tabhair dom é gach lá.

## State of Nature

*Sadhbh Ní Chróinín*

Hobbes once theorized that without strict authority humans would descend into a dog-eat-dog world which he coined ‘the state of nature.’ As I sit here, on yard eating my apple and ham and cheese sandwich I can’t help but seeing the similarities between the school yard and a state of nature. Girls sorted into packs based on the lightness of their hair and the orangeness of their skin. Boys shouting rubbish clinging onto whatever approval from the tribe they can. This is why I choose to sit alone, alone with my apple and ham and cheese sandwich.

## Taobh na Gréine

*Sadhbh Ní Chróinín*

Cad a tharla?

Tá an spréach imithe.

An draíocht san aimsir chaite.

Dóchas...céard é sin?

Táim ag iarraidh a bheith sásta.

Ag iarraidh a bheith láidir.

Ach is dócha

nach bhfuil fáilte romham

ar thaobh na gréine

a thuilleadh.

# Cailín

*Sadhbh Ní Chroínín*

Diúltaím é a chreidiúint  
anseo nóiméad amháin, le'd ghrá nua nóiméad eile.

Conas go bhféadfá cónaí leat féin?  
Le fios go bhfuilim anseo i m'aonar anois  
le beirt leanaí áille le d'ainmse liom.

Caithfidh mé a bheith láidir ach braithim chomh lag.  
Gan tusa le mo thaobh chun an tinteán a lasadh,  
cupán tae a dhéanamh, na gréithre a thriomú agus mé á ní.

Tá ceisteanna ag na cailíní nach bhféadfainn a fhreagairt.  
Cén fáth? Cá háit? Cé hí? Níl cliú dá laghad agamsa.  
Tá fonn orm briseadh síos. Dul a chodladh go dtí go bhfuil an  
*mess* seo thart. Rith go dtí nach féidir liom  
rith a thuilleadh.

Mar conas a mhíním dóibh gur droch-dhuine chuig an smior é a n-athair?



# One Day

*Sadhbhbh Ní Chroínín*

I think

That one day this journey will end

I hope

That one day the guns and bombs will stop.

I believe

That one day people will stop being scared of the dark hue of my skin.

I dream

That people will love me for who I am not where I come from.

# An Peann 's an Gunna

*Sadhbhbh Ní Chroínín*

Deirtear gur fearr an peann ná 'n gunna

Mínigh dom mar sin nach bhfuil,

Teorim phíotagarás

Príomhchathair na Fraince

Nó William Shakespeare

Ar eolas agam ach tuigim

Gunnaí

Buamaí

Tancanna

Deirtear gur fearr an peann ná 'n gunna

Ach ní fiú sin a rá gan tada a dhéanamh.

## Réidh

*Sadhbh Ní Chróinín*

Táim réidh

Táim ullamh

Ach táim neirbhíseach

Táim imníoch

Fáilte chuig an saol iontach seo a leanbh beag bídeach.

## Galar

*Sadhbh Ní Chróinín*

Tá an lá breá agus brothallach

An spéir glan agus gorm ag scoilteadh na gcloch

Táim ag iarraidh coimeád dearfach

Ach taobh thiar den Bhalla cosanta

Is cosúil go bhfuil tinneas ar mo smaointí.

Táim go hiomlán trína Chéile

Féachann gach rud sona dearg

Agus gach rud geal dorchá.

## Crann

*Sadhbh Ní Chroínín*

Craobhanna beaga  
nasctha le craobh mhór  
ag braith ar a chéile  
ar nós teaghlach beag  
ag tabhairt aire dá chéile  
ar nós teaghlach beag  
ag obair lena chéile  
ar nós teaghlach beag.

## Time

*Abbi Ní Shuilleabháin*

Clock ticking on the wall,  
As the children outside play ball.  
The days go on time still going  
Will we ever get a break from growing?

In a blink of an eye the clock strikes again  
What happened it all happened so fast.  
If only I could slow down times, I'd pay more than a dime.  
If only I could see you just one last time.

We would laugh all day, sing and dance.  
Life felt at a stance.  
But now you're gone my heart is picking  
While the clock on the wall continues ticking.

# Teacht chuig an deireadh

*Abbi Ní Shuilleabháin*

*après Nuala Ní Dombnaill*

Beidh ár súile ag na péisteanna

Ní rabhamar fiain.

Beidh ár gcroí ag stopadh

Beimid síos leis na clocha

Ní bheidh aon duine linn

Feicimid roots na gcrann.

Beidh an solas dorch

Is beidh ár bhfuil corcra

Is bainfear an fheoil dár gcnámha

Beidh sé gruama agus gránna.

Beidh na blianta ciúin

Cosúil leis an chéad rang ar an Luan

Ní bheidh aon duine ag labhairt amach

Ní chaithfimid dul i bhfolach.

Ní bheimid inár bpéire.

Táimid ag teacht chuig an deireadh.

## Ag leanúint na rialacha

*Abbi Ní Shúilleabháin*

Caithfimid na sciortaí a chuir chuig ár nglúine  
Bíonn daoine ag labhairt amach faoi dhath gúna  
Caithfidh ár ngruaig a bheith deas,  
Ach fós ní léireofar meas.  
Caithfimid leanúint na rialacha.

Níl cead againn amach má tá sé dorch  
Mar b'fhéidir go bhfaighimid corcra.  
Níl cead post “ceart” a fháil,  
Toisc níl aon cheann at all.  
Caithfimid leanúint na rialacha.

Táimid anseo chun a bheith inár máthair  
Ach tugann sé sin strus agus náire  
Níl cead agam mo smaointí a roinnt,  
Fiú tosú ag caint.  
Caithfimid leanúint na rialacha.

Caithfidh dinnéir a bheith ar an mbord,  
Ag guí to the lord.  
Caithfimid fanacht inár n-áit,  
Níl cead againn dul as áit.  
Caithfimid leanúint na rialacha.

Ní bhfaighimid pá ceart  
Briseann sé our heart.  
Ach cén fáth?  
Ach caithfimid leanúint na rialacha.

## Mothúcháin

*Abbi Ní Shuilleabháin*

Bíonn mothúcháin againn i gconaí  
Agus bhraith mé iad go láidir i m'áit chonaí.  
Le ceithre ballaí timpeall orm,  
Agus mé gorm.  
Bíonn mo chroí i mo bhéal  
Míthuiscint faoi cad atá ag tharlú i mo shaol  
Tuirseach agus fonn orm dul i bhfolach.  
Is fuath liom an glór i mo cheann  
Cosúil leis na duilleoga ag imeacht ó chrann.  
Braithim mothúcháin nuair a bhím liom féin,  
Rud chomh difriúil ó eitilt éan.

## Ceapaim

*Abbi Ní Shuilleabháin*

Ceapaim  
Ceapaim gur féidir liom eitilt sa spéir  
Ní chreideann na daoine go léir.  
Ach ceapaim  
Gur féidir liom rith ar uisce  
Gan aon timpiste.  
Imeacht ó mo cheann  
Ag scríobh le mo pheann  
Ceapann..... mé!

## Balúin Órga

*Alannah Nic Fhlannchadha Nic Fhinn*

balún dearg d'fhearg is d'fhíoch,

balún oráiste do mhearbhall.

balún buí le haghaidh athás is buíochas,

balún glas d'éad is drogall,

balún gorm le haghaidh suaimhneas,

balún lialóg don earrach,

balún indéagó do bhuairt is do shaibhreas,

balún órga do mhisneach...

## 214 – Glanmire – City Center – CUH

*Alannah Nic Fhlannchadha Nic Fhinn*

An brioscarnach de chumhdach milséan,  
An boladh láidir raithní,  
Rachtanna móra gáire,  
Is alcól ag sní ar an úrlár,  
*Seo é an saghas seirbhís bus i gCorcaigh...*

An struchtúr ag dioscarnach le creatha,  
Buaileadh an doras i m'aghaidh,  
Braoiníní allais ag sileadh orm,  
Ó chorpanna a bhfuil ag brú i ngach treo  
*Seo é an saghas seirbhís bus i gCorcaigh...*

Daoine ag béiceadh ós aird,  
Is iad ag titim síos an staighre géar,  
Cúpla uair déanach arís,  
*Seo é an saghas seirbhís bus i gCorcaigh...*

## Déagóirí

*Alannah Nic Fhlannchadha Nic Fhinn*

*après Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill*

Beidh ár súile leath-dhall  
Is ár mbéal ar tine.

Is fós beimid ag gearrán  
Faoi chuma ár n-aghaidh.



Stróicfear an ghruaig d'ár gceann.  
Athróidh dath ár craiceann is cruth ár gcnámh.  
Geofar alcól is milseán i measc rianta ár gcuid urlacan.  
Is riamh ní bheimid sásta lenár gcuma

## Saibhreas na Sláinte

*Alannah Nic Fhlannchadha Nic Fhinn*

*Après Bart Bambury*

Titeann báisteach cois na Mí  
Ag bualadh síos na duilleoga  
I láib dhorcha dhólásach.

Comhartha gruama  
Go bhfuil goimh an gheimhridh  
Ar leac an dorais.

Foláireamh follasach  
Greim docht a choimeád  
Ar stát do shláinte.

Nó buailfear síos sa láib thú  
I measc na nduilleog  
Chun go seasfar ort.

# Drowning

*Alannah Nic Fhlannchadha Nic Fhinn*

Knowing our words  
Were not wanted  
We stayed

Quiet, unheard,  
Like so many  
Before us

Bottled it up  
Inside our heads  
It stuck

Before the tide  
Broke  
and it was too late

The pain  
Flowing  
Out loud

Everyone  
Hears

# Folamh

*Alannah Nic Fhlannchadha Nic Fhinn*

ag stánadh ar an leathanach  
na focail greamaithe i mo cheann  
frásaí ag rith tríd m'intinn  
ar nós na gaoithe  
scéalta iontacha ullamh  
mothúcháin ag briseadh amach  
tuairimí láidre  
áiteanna  
cuimhní  
daoine  
Ach  
Fós  
Fanann an Páipéar Bán Folamh  
Na focail faoi ghlas  
Neamhshuim déanta  
Slán do lá amháin eile.

## Coláiste Éamann Rís

Poetry by

**Ivy Boland**

**Faye Moynihan**

**Robyn Waldron**

**Xiao Long Chalmers**

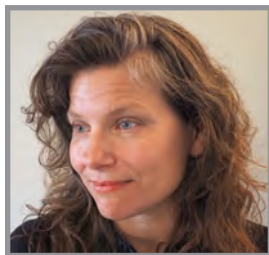
**Siobhan O'Callaghan**

**Oliwia Chmielecka**

Assisting Writer: Kerri Sonnenberg

T.Y. Coordinator: Luke Varian

Workshops held at Coláiste Éamann Rís



It was an absolute pleasure to work with this group of writers from Coláiste Éamann Rís. Language is the poet's medium, and it matters in its every nuance and context, so it was important to establish on day one that these young people were not students of poetry in our sessions, but writers, full stop. I encouraged them to regard writing as being as much an act of seeing and thinking as it is a practice of putting words on a page.

It's no small task, communicating one's inner landscape to a reader. Imagery was an element we focused on for its ability to be not just a vehicle, but a *channel* resonating with the senses, memories and emotions, potentially all at once. We looked at the power of images through poems by Seamus Heaney, Elizabeth Bishop and Sylvia Plath, and worked on our own image-driven poems through haiku and ekphrastic methods. And while the logistics of our sessions kept us on school grounds, I challenged these writers to always be looking and collecting images on their walks to and from school, and in the other times between our meetings. It soon became clear that these practices of attention were indeed nourishing the creative work written during our sessions.

I marvelled as I saw these writers also bring that diligence of attention to the poems I brought in for discussion each week. These writers seemed to intuitively understand that a vital part of being a writer is also being a reader, and they brought the full weight of their curiosity to the poems of Wendy Xu, Derek Mahon, Vona Groarke, among others. Having established that there would be no single or correct way of reading a poem, each of these writers proved themselves to be probative readers, asking incisive questions of the poems and making keen observations about the choices they saw other writers making. And while the act of writing a poem may seem like a solitary practice, the sociability of reading and discussing poems together connects the writer to a community and lets them know that their own poems will reverberate through the world in the ears and minds of readers, known and unknown to them. How thrilling is that?

Transition Year is an opportunity to experiment and explore new interests. In the spirit of this, I encouraged a sense of adventure and playfulness in our writing sessions by engaging with collaborative writing, erasures, MadLibs and trace poems. These methods allowed us to get inside another writer's shoes and walk around a bit, and also to reach outside our own comfort zones as writers and try something new. I applaud these writers for their openness in taking these adventures with language, for responding wholeheartedly to what must have seemed at times like peculiar provocations.

I am grateful to have had the time to accompany these writers on this part of their journey. I hope that they will continue to look at their own work and the work of others and ask good questions like *what surprised me the most?* We often asked this question after a period of freewriting as a way of underscoring the importance of process. After all, a poem is rarely born on the first go, fully formed. Rather, it's a process of discovery that unfolds as we engage with it, seeing what's around the next bend, what associations appear one step ahead of the editing mind, to take ourselves and our readers into uncharted territory. In this way, language is a medium for being curious and open to ourselves and

the world around us. Whatever these talented young people go on to pursue in the years ahead, I hope they will remember their connection to Poetry as a way of looking and being in the world.

**Kerri Sonnenberg**

# Poems

Coláiste Éamann Rís



# Self Portrait

*Ivy Boland*

I am porcelain, a doll made of light,  
In that light, soft and kind  
A stranger,  
An echo.

In my blood, my body  
A pulse not my own.  
I am not myself,  
I am porcelain.

The light, warm light,  
Flickering.  
Who is it?  
Who am I?

I am porcelain, a doll made of light  
Hollow beneath, quiet and waiting.  
A void, content  
Is that me?

I am porcelain.



## A Star Week

*Ivy Boland*

The stars were my womb

Warm

Soft

As I live I burn.

Red

Raw

And in my death, my beauty astounds all.

Like nothing in my life

I fade

Away,

Littering space with my love.

## The Storm

*Ivy Boland*

The wind cried like a widow grieving words

The lightning struck like a stab in the back.

The thunder growled unforgiven hurts

The rain soaked sorrow black

The storm raged on in deep denial

A cyclone of swirling depth

The calm before the trial

Swept up in the uproar of death.

# Don't Bite the Hand That Feeds You

*Ivy Boland*

Soft hands, strong arms.  
In the kitchen,  
Warriors, noblemen, bankers, the rich,  
Fall down the ladder.  
The cook in yellow and blue,  
Now has the power.  
The ruler of her own kingdom of sustenance,  
Without which those above her would starve.

Soft hands, terracotta pot.  
Baked goods line the table,  
A testament to her glory.  
A white cloth crown sits upon her head,  
Revealing her worn face.  
She works hard, a keeper of life.

She pours milk in her rotten room,  
No place for someone of her value.  
She is taken for granted,  
Her hand, the hand that feeds,  
Bitten  
By the ungrateful dogs in power.

# The Orchid

*Ivy Boland*

Amidst the wreckage of a love once bright,  
Two hearts now wander, lost in sorrow's shade.  
The days grow long, yet never bring them light,  
For grief's cold hand ensures the past won't fade.

An orchid blooms upon their fractured past,  
Its petals soft, yet rooted deep in pain.  
A fragile hope that loss will not outlast,  
Though memories like ghosts still call their name.

They dance through silence, aching to be free,  
Yet every step is traced with sorrow's thread.  
To heal, they face what once they feared to see—  
The love still breathing where they thought it dead.

So from the ashes, beauty dares to grow,  
For love once lost may find its way to show.

## Blackout poem

*Ivy Boland*

As subsequent cut s cultivate  
More, slash and burn  
Follow abandonment, exhausted

Dramatic phase  
The end had been Summits  
Deteriorated. Regrowth

Evidence of  
Significant change.  
Replaced this that stimulated.  
The final phase. S t a r v e

## Self Portrait Poem: A Blob

*Xiao Long Chalmers*

A blob, unidentifiable and shapeless,  
And it can make itself helpful or useless.  
It can make you happy, mad or even sob,  
After all, it is just a blob.

Sometimes it doesn't really know itself,  
Or feels as useless as a broken shelf.  
It tries to make itself strong and tough,  
But in the end, it's never enough.

# Deciphering a Picture

*Xiao Long Chalmers*

A mess of colours and shapes  
Incoherent and unclear,  
However with time our eyes  
Make beautiful things appear

A man telling a story  
With a lady talking back,  
A man and woman sit  
Intently listening to it all

Two completely uninterested,  
Facing the opposite direction,  
While a group of men in suits,  
Enter the room from behind

While simple objects stand out more than the rest,  
A hat resting on a knee  
Bottles of wine sit on the table,  
Which seems to bring them all together.

# The Little Red Clock

*Xiao Long Chalmers*

Small but still helpful  
Scuffed but still functional  
Imperfect but still usable  
Both quiet and loud, just depending on your focus  
Wrong at first, but was still able to be corrected  
Can help you, wake you up, annoy you or just stay quiet.

It's the sound of a quiet classroom,  
With someone waiting to go home.  
It's the sound of the dead of night,  
When you're walking through the hall.  
It's the sound that you hear,  
When you're waiting for the bad news.  
It's the sound you hear on your parents' bed,  
Waiting for them to come back.

# I Like

*Xiao Long Chalmers*

I like when things repeat,  
I like when I'm nice and warm.  
I like it when there's time to eat,  
I like when there's no risk of harm.

I like when things tend to rhyme,  
I like when things are always fair.  
I like it when I have free time,  
I like it when people share.

But I don't like my weight,  
And I don't like my hair.  
It fills me with hate,  
But people just don't seem to care.

## Untitled (A Trace Poem)

*Xiao Long Chalmers*

The sea, once calm and bustling,  
Now a hazardous wasteland, filled with regret.  
Once full of fishermen and eager swimmers,  
Is now a husk of its former self.

As need and greed begin to fester,  
One by one, they begin to fall.  
But it wasn't just man that suffered loss,  
Mother Nature too had taken a toll.

But they still did not care,  
And continued their rampage with nothing left to spare.  
Saying it was to lead and feed,  
To cover up all their need and greed.

# Like the Stars

*Xiao Long Chalmers*

Yes, there's many lingering in the sky,  
However only you have caught my eye,  
Shining brightly like those within the night,  
Two beautiful spheres surrounded by white.

Sometimes they hide behind mountains or trees,  
When I see them shine it fills me with glee  
While some prefer their own rooms or their cars,  
I think it's best to sleep under the stars

Though at first they may seem like the others,  
You must look closer, within the cluster,  
There you see beauty and their uniqueness,  
Their own look and their prettiness

That's just one reason why I love the stars,  
But just like them, there's still billions more.



## A Simple Trail

*Xiao Long Chalmers*

A long, muddy trail that curves  
Off into mystery.

A person walks this simple trail,  
Discovering their own story.

The trees surround its edges,  
Making everything else seem small,  
However one breaks free from the crowd,  
Standing free and tall.

A small river runs near the path,  
But only for a moment.  
Its beauty only but a fraction,  
Of time's eternal movement

## Self Portrait Poem

*Faye Moynihan*

I would pick the sound of a firework  
So loud and full of delight  
Although I may not always be so bright,  
I would still like to shine at night.  
For all to see so clear, so bright.

## Some things I like

*Faye Moynihan*

I like food, I like bed

I also like anything red

I like fashion with passion

I like rhyme along with time

I like flowers, I like roses

I like the beach, I like water

Especially in Spain.

## Untitled

*Faye Moynihan*

The sun is now coming

Bringing joy on its way

Flowers bloom and blossom

Signs of a long summer day.

## Tea-time

*Siobhan O'Callaghan*

I trudged in the door after a drawn out day  
“Put the kettle on” they said to me  
I’ll pour what’s left of my energy into a pot of tea  
I put the kettle on.  
Bubbles begin to dance around the quaint pool and I am greeted  
with that classic drone that tends to nullify being  
Gazing out beyond the windowsill and into the garden, all is still  
Like snow that sleeps on the summit  
I slip into a train of thought  
Assignments, projects, endeavours where deadlines are taught  
The claustrophobic hug of tidying yet to be done  
The castles of pages I have not even begun  
Slumber at twelve, up by seven  
Adored errands cease at eleven  
Yet I remain a statue, chained to the thought of taking on a task.  
A position I put myself into through a means of collection  
Remaining idle is no road to polished perfection  
But still I wait  
I wait  
I wait  
I’ll wait to no purpose  
At least I wait for water.  
The kettle pops back up.  
Time for tea.

## outside

*Siobhan O'Callaghan*

big sun shining down  
earthy scent fills the cool breeze  
childhood in a blink

## Ode to the Moon

*Siobhan O'Callaghan*

O moon, you beautiful sliver of light  
Poking through the earth's charcoal curtain  
Marching up above the skyline with your army of stars  
Forever the same yet never stagnant.  
The discipline you carry is inspiring.  
Even when you fall out of eye's reach  
you never fail to rise again.  
As the dawn creeps in, your presence fades  
but you'll never truly leave.  
Our gratitude goes out to you.

# Untitled

*Siobhan O'Callaghan*

You could take a feathered brush  
And wash the skyline with watercolour blue  
Amongst the ink paper airplanes  
High above nature's floral ruffles  
That serve as bedsheets  
For the coarse wet earth beneath.

Standing to attention are great trees towering above us  
The kind you peer up to in fear  
Alas, no worries  
The sun's embrace redeems these  
Into big friendly giants.

Take a look at the finishing touches  
Huts built up for humans to enjoy a comfortable existence in this oasis.  
Gorgeous gowns that resemble those same bedsheets  
Blow gently in the wind  
Families flock to bask in this world that surrounds them  
Almost as intertwined as the land beneath them

## Loneliness

*Siobhan O'Callaghan*

I pick up a stone  
From the rigid gravel beneath my feet.  
Feeling the orb's frigid temperature  
Resting in the palm of my hand  
I rub off its smooth surface  
With my wet thumb  
And I observe my own reflection  
I pelt it far out into the river.

## Untitled

*Siobhan O'Callaghan*

The world is a choir trying to harmonize  
It hums its melodies in separate times  
Rarely will it join in a polyphonic song,  
For camaraderie and life seems to feel wrong

# The Clock

*Robyn Waldron*

The ever quickening ticking of the clock,  
Makes time move so fast yet so slow,  
Memories come and go, ebb and flow,  
But one sticks most of all.

The heat blasting, frost still on the side windows  
Of my grandfather's Ford, an old, slightly beat up car.  
The hours we would spend sitting in silence,  
Listening to the ticking sound of the clock,  
But not the radio, never the radio.

When I was younger, he would tell stories of heroes and idiots,  
While I sat listening to the clock, wanting to be at home, not in traffic.  
But then secondary school came along,  
The stories slowed to a stop, now nothing but a ticking clock.  
Now he is gone along with his stories,  
And now all that can be heard,  
Is an ever ticking clock.

## The Western Winds

*Oliwia Chmielecka*

Dark stormy clouds,  
That the western winds bring,  
Winds attacking the grass,  
but a single tree stands strong

The western winds,  
That create destructive waves,  
Yet a small boat sways,  
With diligent men working hard.

## Untitled

*Oliwia Chmielecka*

I just woke up from a promise tomorrow,  
Our time on earth was through,  
Lost in the words,  
Wherever you go,  
that's where I'd follow,  
I'd want to hold you,  
And die with a smile,  
Right next to you.











# The Unfinished Book of Poetry 2025

featuring poems by

Adam James Ross	Orlaith James
A.J. Chutke	JB
Gaspar Napora	Aurelius Weber-Shevchenko
Liam Roberts	Jamie McNally
Liam McCann	Emma Healy
Miguel Morillo Calderón	Ciara Spalding
Oisín O'Connor	Niamh Kirwan
Riain O'Connor	Maria Mós
Sean Nicholas Fernandes	Lorna Kirwan
Toby Skowronski	Patricia Gulca
Julia Hanlon O'Neill	Martha Smithers
Ava Byrd	Abigail Kenny
Aimee Cunneen	Adam Kemel
Alex McKee	Aoibhín Ní Shúilleabháin
Camron Sheehan	Lena Ní Sheasnáin
Colum Hogan	Ruby Ní Drisceoil
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Mikayla Ryan	Abbi Ní Shúilleabháin
Darren Stewart	Alannah Nic Fhlannchadha Nic Fhinn
Marcos Valle Somavilla	Ivy Boland
Nicolás Vicente Romero	Xiao Long Chalmers
Reece Morey	Faye Moynihan
Svea Johansson Aherne	Siobhan O'Callaghan
Carmen López Guerrero Del Riego	Robyn Waldron
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