

Egretta Garzetta

Eolas againn ar na healaí a neart, a ndílseacht, a dturas ríoga ar an abhann. Muid cleachta le nósanna na gcorr réisc ag iascaireacht ina n-aonar, a neadacha arda glórmhar le glaoch na scalltán comhartha deimhin an tsamhraidh. Corruair, lasair an chruidín ag éirí as oitir ghainimh.

Ansin, bliain amháin, tháinig éan nach bhfacamar riamh, ceann amháin, gléigeal mar shneachta aon oíche, allúrach, ach beag a dhóthain nár chuir isteach ar phríomhcheannas na n-ealaí.

Ceannródaí a bhí ann. Bliain dar gcionn, ceann eile, ansin ceithre ann - iad ag éirí muinéach, bruch na habhann á thréigean acu chun spaisteoireacht ar na bánta, go dtí go raibh tuairisc ann i mbliana faoi dhá éan déag ag fáireadh mar shoilsi ar craobhacha loma na darach.

Nílím cinnte carb as díobh, cad a chur iallach orthu bogadh, cad a mheall iad, ach tá siad anseo anois. Mar sin: a theifigh, a dhídeanaithe a dheoraithe, a oilithrigh, a chuairteoirí, a chairde, fáilte romhaibh.

Carmel Cummins

Lá Idirnáisiúnta na mBan 2019

Inniu, d'fhoghlaim mé dhaá fhocal nua: Gnéasachas, ciapadh gnéasach. Mo léan.

Carmel Cummins

Littoral

I sink and slide across the hump
Backed, marram fleeced skin.
Like whales, cast up, beached from old storms.
This eye crinkled, wind wrinkled shore

I begin to run, feet thudding
Along the hard packed sand
Hardly imprinting as I cross
This seaweed strewn and stinking floor.

Old bladder wrack and bleached crab claws,
Foetid fish with plastics hung
My legs slice through the sea, and I?
I kick and plunge.

Robert Pearson

Mother

That last night sitting by your bedside
I closed my eyes
and I was once again walking with you
through fern laden woods.
picking frauchins blackberries
wild strawberries
drinking sweet tea from a glass bottle
screwed up newspaper for a cap.
Collecting firewood
beside the stream
at the bottom of the hill
picking apples from the topmost branches
wrapping them in newspaper
and storing them
in an orange box.

Sitting by your hospital bed
that last night
the memories came crowding back
and I wanted to
keep my eyes closed
forever.

Joan Cleere

Middle of the Road

Midway upon the journey of our life
I found myself..
(The Inferno Canto I i-ii Dante)

(Accidentally) walking into poetry
after Sunday mass
we stand by the kitchen sink
peeling potatoes
for the casserole
sunlight gleaming on the on clock ticking

We smile
hands touch
across the unspoken everyday closeness of doing
(around us) the conversational clink of utensils
in the common tongue talk
the easy talk of artists about their business

(Everywhere) the eternal conference of chores
made bearable by the forgetfulness of habit
construct this modest house as our sacred home

Where we are now the moment when everything is done
the dining table laid
crystal china silverware linen napkins
the careful feast ready for taking up

And we sit among
(this) the set piece of our happiness

Noel Howley

The Birds

All we have are the birds.

All we have is I don't mind,
as long as you're okay
and I love you, if that's any use

and relax when it's dark
and you're great when you're not.

Blueberries
half-light
the walk home,
the verse I can't place
or finish
but somehow it helps.

Colour
The blood stop
the phone call

the uncareful friendship;

the times your fingers caught
what was thrown
just in time.

It was terrible, glorious, wondrous, torturous-

It will be
Okay.

Emily Murtagh

Pack

The yapping dog shows us who we are
our dog never barks, not a sound, the owners declare
I beg to differ-
your Tibetan terrier is a spoken word artist
of some renown in this neighbourhood,
we are not versed in the Tibetan language
its poetic tradition, inflections
but the rhythm of your dog's bluster is familiar
arf arf beat
arf arf arf
arf arf beat (times ten)
then the existential howl

you know that howl-
the one that brings a mother to the front door
hands aloft, the surgeon scrubbing up for dinner,
gazebo wind chimes are stilled,
a suckling baby unlatches,
the cursor freezes over SUBMIT
in that moment we are a pack,
we are all dogs in the street.

Nuala Roche

Where I Grew Up

(In Memory of the Kilkenny Artist Tony O' Malley)

What Art was there where I grew up?
All I saw were poor people struggling to
raise children, pay bills, then drink their
way to an early grave.

What Soul was there where I grew up?
All I saw were stone walls where we smoked
and talked of football and who was going
out with this girl and that.

What Hope was there where I grew up?
Teachers that taught us, many depressed,
some suicidal, lacking the magic spark
to pass the torch to youth

What Music was there where I grew up?
All I saw were shelves to be stocked,
floors to be mopped, cars washed,
grass cut and fences mended.

Then one day I heard of O' Malley: a painter,
one of our own, who left a good job at the bank
to paint pictures and who viewed Art
as an acceptable activity.

This painter saw inspiration everywhere; within stones,
bones and homes - in and under the surface of all
things. All you need is a working mind, O'Malley said,
and the enquiring eye to see.

Liam O' Neill

Caulking

Sometimes
This old love of ours
Seems like a boat
In bad need of a painting

Peeling, cracked,
We blame the waves and ragged
Seas, salt whip of the wind
Crooked shore. We curse
Weather, rocks and elemental
Rage - in vain.

Words are our only oakum,
untwisted rope wrung
From the heart's tight core
With firmness and tough craft
We must apply them.

Water-tight again, a caress
Will be our first coat.

Gerry Moran

Moon Woman

The moon dripped its wax on my thighs,
as I climbed from grounded child to sky-borne girl.

I felt the clouds, the aching blue,
sit on my skin, like art.

I flew into teens, the moon coaxed
a startling shape from my sea-wave flesh.

I rose and dipped in at the waist,
grew ribbons of legs and pebble breasts.

I stepped up to twenty, multiple eyes
followed my curve, as I learned the glory

of silver light,
what it means
to be wanted.

to flirt each phase,
holding the power of 'no'.

K. S. Moore

Blackberries

Something about the look of them-
cellophane wrapped in the chill compartment
of the supermarket; their big curly heads
perfectly groomed, all glossy and full,
makes me recoil, remembering
other days, scouting the hedgerows,
jam jar in hand, reaching through briars
to pick the ripened fruit, knowing
if I looked into the eye of a berry
as big and swollen as the ones I see now,
sooner or later something lean and limber
would worm its way into the light.

Nora Brennan

Darkness Into Light

It was the witching-hour morning of my discontent:
a bone-chilling, eerie episode when I should have been abed.
Dishevelled, disconcerted but defiant the yellow multitude
swelled the military precincts, Chandler's vocals in command.
Then, at precisely 4.15am, we poured down into the dormant
belly of the medieval city.
And thought of the significance.

Along John's quay and parallel, in haste and trepidation,
a ford was made, Canal Walk gained, the Castle overbearing.
Sub-aqua frogmen on the wave, stewards in hi-vis jackets,
a silent vigil sternly kept on Nore's swirling, greedy waters,
willing facilitator to so many.
And I thought of the significance.

The way up from darkness into light between high perimeter
walls was both stark and liberating.
And as we spilled out onto Castle Road the first grey fingers
of light crept up the eastern sky, while left and right from
Castle Park and garden the wild birds heralded the new-born
Day with a resounding dawn chorus.
And I rejoiced in the significance.

Tomás Céitinn



The Kilkenny County Council Arts Office is delighted to announce the publication of the nineteenth issue of the very popular Kilkenny Poetry Broadsheet. The aim of the publication is to give local writers a platform for their work. Ninety-five poems by fifty poets were submitted for consideration this year and thirteen poems by twelve poets were selected.

Editor Jean O'Brien

Jean O'Brien is a Dubliner who had an eight year sojourn in the Irish Midlands and is now back living in Dublin. She was writer in residence for County Laois in 2005. She has had five collections of poetry published her latest, her *New & Selected Fish on a Bicycle* was reprinted by Salmon Publishing in 2018. She was the 2017/18 recipient of the Patrick and Katherine Kavanagh Fellowship and has won awards for her poetry including The Arvon International Poetry Prize, the Fish International Prize and was recently shortlisted for the UCD Voices of War Poetry prize.

She holds an M. Phil. in creative writing/poetry from Trinity College, Dublin and tutors in creative writing and poetry in places as diverse as the Irish Writers Centre, Community groups, schools, prisons and at degree level. Her work is often broadcast on Sunday Miscellany and other programs and is widely anthologised.

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Series Coordinators: Deirdre Southey & Bernadette Roberts

Editor: Jean O'Brien

Graphic Design and Illustration: Alé Mercado

Jean O'Brien Editor's statement

I was honoured to be asked to judge this year's Kilkenny Poetry Broadsheet, and to run the workshop where I met many talented people. Judging is by its nature always a subjective thing, with different judges having their own preferences and sensibilities. One thing they tend to have in common is the ability to recognize and appreciate a good, well-worked poem when they meet it. Many of the poems I received fulfilled this expectation of being well-crafted, there were poems of nature, nurture, place and everything in-between. In the end I had to choose just thirteen to appear in the Broadsheet and five runners-up, whose poems were well worked and interesting, but unfortunately did not make the final cut.

Robert Frost said that for a poem to succeed it must be... "Like a piece of ice on a hot stove a poem should ride on its own melting...". By this he meant that it should hold the readers interest from the first line and evolve in a controlled way down the page. I was looking for poems that surprised, were mysterious, pushed at language and had an indefinable touch of magic. I received many such poems; my difficulty was in whittling them down. Poems went in and out of my hands under consideration, but eventually after reading and rereading they announced themselves to me and I hope you enjoy meeting them in the Broadsheet.

Thanks to Mary Butler and Deirdre Southey from Kilkenny Arts Office and to Alé Mercado for his design.



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