

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 muiníneach,  
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 theigh, a dhídeanaíthe  
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 Monks Door

In a medieval town  
An iron-studded door opens  
To cool flagstone corridors.

In the cloister before dawn  
Puffs of white breath waft around  
Hooded figures mumbling matins.  
Brother Dominique walks the walled garden  
To a small gate on the market side,  
Unlocks, opens, and leaves it.

The sun slowly rises. He digs  
Fare for the monastery table:  
Potatoes, parsnip, carrots, kale.  
Moving through rows of beans  
He pulls the heavy hood back,  
Cool air on his bare neck.

A small girl, basket in hand, watches him:  
‘Bless you little one’, he says taking it.  
She is quiet as he fills it with nature's bounty.  
Seeing her looking at the espaliers  
He picks four red apples  
Glistening among the fading foliage.

She nods and turns away holding  
Her load in front with both hands,  
Long dress brushing borage and bee balm.

Orla Hennessy



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 Director:** Mary Butler

**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.

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