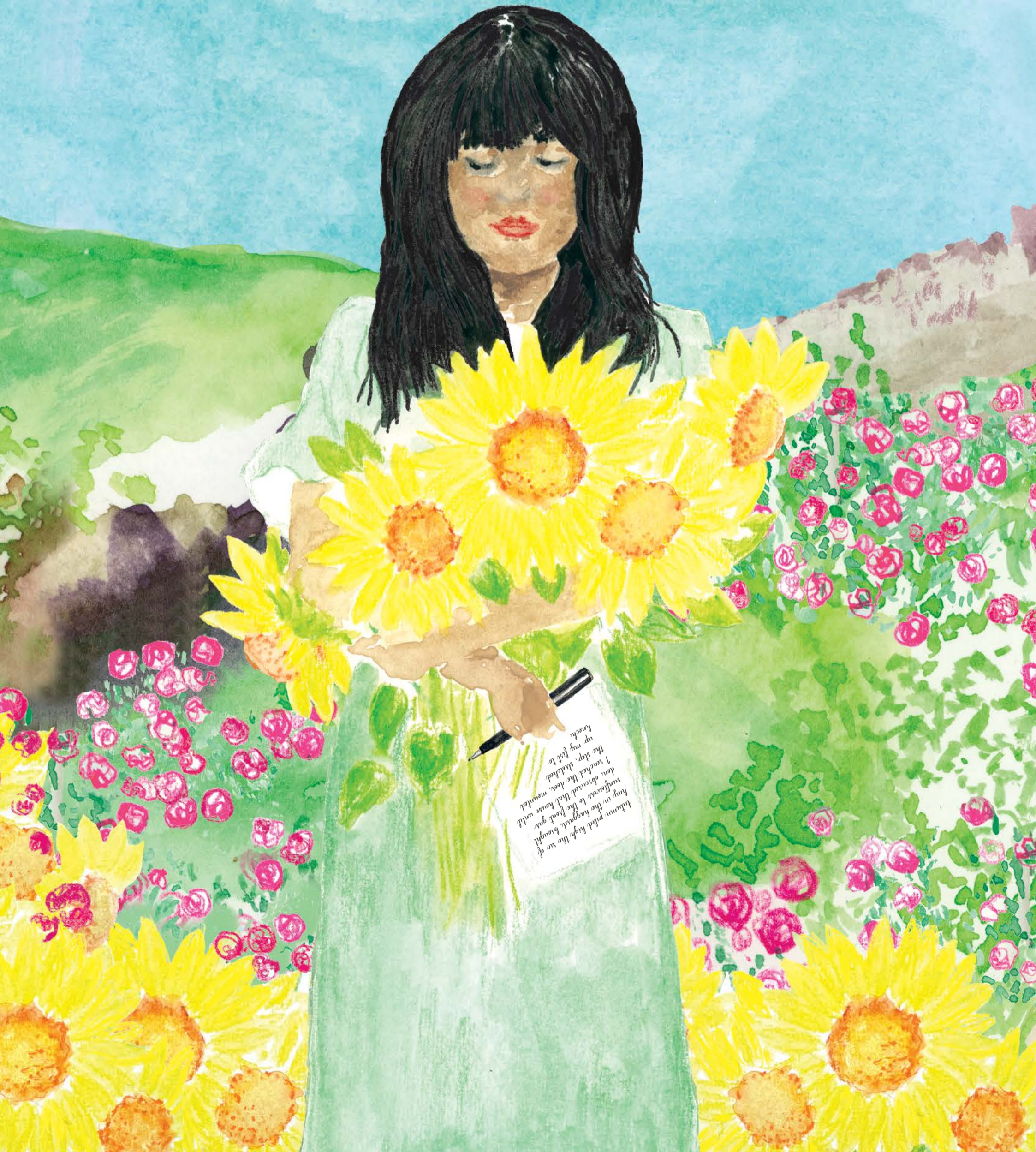


Poetry
BROADSHEET

A publication of Kilkenny County Council Arts Office • August 2023



Autumn plied high the ve of
hay in the haystack, brought
sunflowers to the farm gate
I reached the door, mowed
den, observed that house will
the step, stretched
up my feet to
kneel.

Spice

i)
Then the whole of Mooncoin began to talk
The village whispered at first about the smells

That came from Mrs. Howley's scullery
And replaced the commonplace aromas

Of cabbages and turnips and carrots on the boil
That anointed the other houses on the street

ii)
You flavoured our dinners
With cumin and ginger and paprika the spices

That you read about in your Uncle Jim's letters
Sent all the way from Bowbazar Street Calcutta

And we were born again like that moment when
Dorothy's world turned from grey to technicolour

iii)
As it was in the beginning, the words came first
You hoarded them in your notebooks in the inglenook

Shorthand for the world out beyond the kitchen door
That you could invent without stepping past the threshold

Noel Howley



before my sexuality was met as an issue

A man skimming stones
across the water's surface-
it was something to marvel at-
skipping off and appearing to slide
the open sea for that small moment

We stood in the ocean
Leaping bellybutton-high waves,
Laughing as each one broke on our backs,
Feet lifting from the sands below
As the water played with us like dolls,
Bodies close enough that I knew I wouldn't drown;
I trusted he would save me
From whatever I was afraid of losing
Drawstring knotted on my shorts, just to be safe.

Darren Caffrey

Do you need to get in, Lavender Boy?

The rear-view is speaking third eye horror.
Enormous machines are gliding past.
My conscience jams the breaks.

We both look like our mothers;
I touch the candle when she sings.
Are you still hoarding posters in the attic

Leaving a mess for the kids?
In the dream version of the real street,
I am forgetting the feeling of your pity.

Canice Kenealy

Meeting Maggie

Where are the edges of your light blue eyes Maggie?
where is the frame of your determined gaze,
the border of your exquisitely lined face?

Yours is a skull of grace, hair cut close
To a head that was beautiful once,
before the darkness descended, before each child became a sinking stone,
before your hanging laughter was worn smooth.

Where is the borderland of my need for answers Maggie?
Where is the end of those long-told lies?

Alice Bennett

Principles for Designing a 10,000 Year [Clock]

Avoid sliding friction,
ticking,
Stay clean, stay dry.

Expect earthquakes,
non-malicious human interactions,
And don't tempt thieves.

The [clock] should be maintainable
with bronze-age technology,
It should be possible

to build working models of the [clock]
from table-top to monumental size-
with the same design.

Use familiar materials.
Make it easy to build spare parts.
Go slow.

Anticipate restarts and always, always
include the manual.
With occasional maintenance the [clock]

should reasonably be expected
to display the correct time
for the next 10,000 years.

Source text, with kind permission from the Long Now Foundation

Nuala Roche

Máithreachas

Í féin in a codladh ar mo chliabh;

faoiseamh.

Deis chun scroll
nó anáil a ghlacadh.
Tosú arís.
An sceideal céanna
gach trí huaire.

Seans fáighte agam
m'fhréamhacha a chur fúm arís
agus cupán tae a thógáil
i mo lámh eile.

Ansin, féachaim uirthi
agus filleann an t-iontas ar ais.

Nach bhfuil an t-ádh orm
'bheith gafa léi.
Caithfidh an domhain fanacht
go dtí go mbeidh sí réidh.

Idir an dá linn,
mise ag sú,
croí isteach léi.

Mia King



Life Cycles

First paid work
after the disaster of exams,
pig farm labourer – early mornings
pointing my bike east, to Ellistown,
up Pennystone hill and through the fields,
breathing freedom in and out
as the village sleeps.

Shrieks and a warm
clinging smell.
Pink quivering bodies
thrust snouts and human eyes under
and over cabin doors,
ears cocked intelligently for
news of breakfast, lunch or dinner.

And I'm laying into heavy work, wheeling
barrow loads of muck
on whistling legs
watching new life arrive,
pig after pig after pig sliding
into the farrowing crate
soon joyfully playing
in the golden straw
pummeling their mothers' teats
in rows of seven.

And evenings
in the country pub,
pint after pint after pint,
while, way out to sea,
a new disaster's building.

Mike Watts



Sunflowers

At the fall of the year when apples ripened
and the air was crisp as a fresh biscuit,
they came back from nothing, stretched
skyward, their faces locked to the rising sun.

I was bewitched, a little afraid,
imagined they could uproot,
follow me back along the hard clay lane
that turned to muck in winter.

A forest of green fellows, yellow-petalled,
tall and straight, concealed the house, crowded
chicken-soiled paths that led to the front door,
curved around to cow sheds and dung heaps.

Autumn piled high the rick of hay in the haggard,
brought sunflowers to the front garden,
obscured that house until I reached the door,
mounted the step, stretched up my fist to knock.

Anne Mac Darby Beck

Beauty I didn't expect to find in a Nursing Home

Elderly and infirm figures float by me
in the courtyard, as in a swimming pool.

A magnolia tree is an upturned lantern
like my hand that fits perfectly around your papery wrist.

In your bedroom, charts note a remarkable progress;
no one has seen the stash in your handbag.

You turn your face skywards, smile broadly,
tell me the forecast is much better than expected.

Breda Joyce



Big Pod Doyle

Your knees bouncing to the rhythm of your breath,
you'd pour your rhymes into me;
Jack Tap skinning his goat,
Little Boy Blue blowing his horn as he rode
with Galloping Hogan to ambush a trainload of Williamites
and Humpty Dumpty up on the Hill of Graine
painting pictures of the Ginnet
in the throes of her morning ablutions.

For an hour we'd ride the sovereign kingdoms
of your mind
where wolves roamed the craggy glens
and outlawed rebels roved in gallant bands
to drive the Saxon stranger from our land.
We'd hear the banshee crying in Doolin's Bosheen,
the thump of Goosey Gander throwing Mikey Dunphy down the stairs
and in the names of local fields, we'd glean
lost highways travelled by the ancient kings.

Old men cried when they met me on the road,
cried for that day in '33
when the Blueshirts dared to march
along our road. No *pasaran*, you roared,
as you came charging out the door
with Fenian heart and blackthorn stick
and drove them Fascist bastards to the Hill of Tullaroan.

Paddy Doyle



Ten Ways of Looking at a Dead Dog Walking

1. The dog glares at the magpies and snarls
As the wind tosses his tangled hair. He stinks
of the clay of the grave.
2. The dog keeps his secret.
3. He will not say why the clouds tickle
the earth with shadows.
4. He has the eye of an angel, but murder
is in his heart.
5. The doctor stitches my father's foot
still bloody from the fangs.
6. The dog is the doom-laden dragon,
the tongue that warms like a burst of sunlight;
7. He is not a Trappist monk, silent
in his habits, but a bell that shrinks the moon
to a five-cent piece.
8. He was spawned from a serpent's egg
in a tenement, to the cry of gulls.
9. This dog gnawed bones under the walls
of Troy, gazed on the cross
at Golgotha, inhaled death at Auschwitz.
10. He says to me:
I peer from behind the sockets of your eyes.
I hear the howling in your skull.
11. Behind the door, a vet fetches in fear,
the needle of extinction.

Eamonn Donovan



from a girl to a girl

At St Mary's, we were high on the love of God
and the presence of boys from other schools
we watched them do kickflips and smoke
and we learned to dance there –
we didn't know we were dancing on graves.

When they find you,
a shroud in that southwest corner,
the archaeologist says;
*this teenage girl appears not to have had
an easy life;*

*her spine was corrupted
from the prolonged lifting of heavy weights*

Crumpled myself, from computer and Covid,
I want to ask:
before you carried burdens so heavy, you died

were there nights when, dizzy and life-drunk,
your bones felt a freedom too?

Emily Murtagh



Introduction

Kilkenny County Council Arts Office is delighted, once again, to announce the publication of the twenty third issue of the ever-popular Kilkenny Poetry Broadsheet. The aim of the publication is to give Kilkenny poets the opportunity to be published alongside their peers in a beautifully illustrated broadsheet. One hundred and five poems by fifty eight poets were submitted for consideration this year and twelve poems were selected by our editor Afric McGlinchey. The Broadsheet is hugely popular amongst our writing community and the wider public and one that we in the Arts Office look forward to every year.

Editors Note

I'm grateful to Mary Butler and Deirdre Southey for the invitation to edit this year's Broadsheet and for all their support during the process. It's been a privilege. Like art or music, poetry is a vessel for self-expression, a vehicle for catharsis, a conduit for connection. After experiencing something acutely – beauty, love, sorrow, joy – who hasn't felt the urge to pick up a pen and try to capture it?

Each of the 105 poems I received offered its own unique expression of the human spirit. There were poems about the small things that make life magical: trees and pigs and birds and flowers and bogs, about individual moments. I was heart-warmed by poems describing familial relationships, particularly elegies to fathers and grandfathers. Many were in the first person. I was glad to see some written in the Irish language too.

Emily Dickinson's often-quoted '*Tell the truth, but tell it slant*' is the most useful advice I've experienced in my own poetry life, and several submissions did just that, sometimes via interesting literary devices. All the shortlisted poems stood out because their narratives were unusual, arresting or mysterious. For me, it's not just the what but the how. Like most poets, I'm attracted to distinctive language, to the concrete image. I loved reading each poem aloud and listening for rhythm, assonance. For the voice. The hardest part of the editing process is not being able to accept all the poems for publication, because all of them had something to commend them. I hope those of you who didn't make it this time are not too disheartened. Persistence is an essential aspect of the creative journey. My selection is based on my own sensibility and taste, and another editor might well have chosen your poem. So please, keep sending your work out.

It was a gift to be entrusted with the responsibility of recognising and celebrating the talent and creativity of Kilkenny poets. Congratulations to those whose poems appear here. I hope readers of the Broadsheet enjoy them as much as I did.

Afric McGlinchey

Afric McGlinchey Biography

Afric McGlinchey was awarded the Hennessy Award for Emerging Poetry for 2010, the Northern Liberties Award (USA) in 2012 and the Poets Meet Politics Award in 2015. Named as one of Ireland's Rising Poets by Poetry Ireland Review, she has received a number of awards from the Arts Council of Ireland, including two Literature Bursaries (2017 and 2022), a Covid-19 Bursary (2020) and an Agility Award (2021).

In 2012, Salmon Poetry published *The lucky star of hidden things*, which evokes her nomadic upbringing between Ireland and Africa. It was translated into Italian and studied at Bologna University as part of a Series on Dislocation. Her second Salmon Poetry collection, *Ghost of the Fisher Cat*, loosely set in medieval Paris, was also translated into Italian, and in December 2022, the work was presented at a Women in Translation showcase in Dublin alongside Freda Laughton, Eavan Boland and Sinead Morrissey.

A surrealist pamphlet, *Invisible Insane (SurVision)* appeared in 2019, and in 2021, Broken Sleep Books (UK) published her hybrid childhood memoir, *Tied to the Wind*, which has been described by one reviewer as 'a brilliant and important book'. Afric lives in West Cork where she works as a freelance editor and reviewer. She is also on the Munster Literature Centre and Words Ireland mentoring panels.

Online poetry correspondence courses are available on her website at www.africmcglinchey.com

Kilkenny County Council Arts Office

Kilkenny County Council Arts Office,
Patrick's Court,
Patrick Street,
Kilkenny

Mary Butler, Arts Officer

mary.butler@kilkennycoco.ie

Deirdre Southey, Arts Administrator

deirdre.southey@kilkennycoco.ie

Series Director

Mary Butler

Series Coordinator

Deirdre Southey

Editor

Afric McGlinchey

Graphic Design & Illustration

Louise Naughton | louisenoughton.com

T: 0567794547

W: kilkennyartsoffice.ie

