

Crannog 6 Summer 2004

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By the Tracks**Eoghan Garvey**

Waiting for sleep to come,
the sea clocked in
and the traffic made soft music.
And he learned this
trick almost -
to be alone and not to feel,
as a lost animal might,
and as he often knew for a fact,
that the quietly breaking wave
here and now
is all there is,
all there will be.

Sunrise**Celeste Ague**

On the good days I greet our early mornings
with as much sunshine as the house can hold,
brought to life by your hungry smile,
my stretches tickled by your flash of laughter.

On the bad days, the mornings after the teething
before,
I sulk at the sun beaming down on your smile,
swearing gently to your curious fingers
that I will wake you at 6:30am every Saturday
of your teenage years.

**On a Train,
Going Past an Old
Industrial Estate**

Georgina Milne

Railway zipped along a strip
Of windwhipped grass, as trainwheels trip along its track,
The steel clips slip and haul the engine on upon the
chattering slats;
Whilst in the window hulking bulkheads, workshop sheds
Rear up their black and blunted heads,
Some city overspill now just a shelled up,
Stumpy smokestack hell.

A paled down watercolour sky, each day again the same.
Horizon hung with sogging clouds and greyday rain;
No vigour in the drops, a smog of failure, hovered over
Pebbledashed and grimegashed walls and rusty shutters.
Years of work and waste and coaldirt smeared up warehouse
sheds,
This straight ledge working-angle-edge just mocks itself;
Now toil is gone there's nothing left..

But look beyond the ruins and spy the twigtrees and their
spangled mesh,
Their silhouette, a matted mess of branches blotched by
bulbing nests
And think how nature also leaves a legacy of former wealth.
She too can build and weave some life to thrive
But only for a while, you know, the generations come and
grow and soon they go,
And nothing lasts forever here, not man, nor beast nor stone.

Parking Lot**Chris Nikkell**

*Even the city carries ruins in its heart.
Longs to be touched in places
only it remembers*

—Anne Michaels—Phantom Limbs

Then, appearing before me, between the cracks
in the asphalt, I see the ruins

of the old theatre. I look closer for the stage,
the warped floor, the costume room
hidden under the trap door. After it closed,
a clothing company moved in. The curtains
were taken down, the hard wood was piled
high with jackets and linens, costumes
telling a new story, staging a play
behind the boxes in storage. I've come to watch

the cars park. I hear the doors click shut, locks
push down, the horn blowing a signal in alarm.

A woman in a white sedan pulls up to the parking attendant,

*and dashes out to meet her lover. The man,
quarters leaping from his pockets, kisses her hand,
then places a rose in her teeth, and change
in her palm. A band is queued,
a tango begins as the lovers leave their seats. I see*

all this, as the woman receives her ticket,
and parks her car where the balcony used to be.

Jacques d'Arc's Dream Nuala ni Chonchubhair

Isabelle said I should ignore it, but how could I? It was the darkest dream that I'd ever had and I've had many. My wife doesn't dream, or so she claims. Some of mine come to me over and over. Like the one where I step off the riverbank onto a boat, but instead of reaching the boat I fall down, down, down towards the water; I never fall into its weight, never gulp for breath through filling lungs.

I always wake up gasping.

But this dream was different. It was life-like and frightening in a way that had never happened before; it stretched out before me like the scenes in a play. I told Isabelle every detail of it as soon as I awoke. She lay beside me and listened, never saying a word, her nightcap as snug on her hair as a nest around eggs. Later I retold it to Jacquemin, Jean and Pierre, my sons. I was worried. This is what I said:

"The dream was about Joan. In it she was older than she is now, not by much, a year or two maybe; she looked about eighteen years old. She wore her red dress, the one your mother made for her after returning from pilgrimage. In this dream I saw Joan leave Domrémy, I somehow knew that she was leaving here forever. She was alone, she would never return, and we couldn't stop her. All of this I could tell.

I saw her then in the company of an army, there were many hundred horsemen; her hair was shorn like a boy's and she wore pants and a tunic, tightly laced to preserve her. What is worse, she proceeded to lead this army into battle and she was shot down by an archer. But I saw her rise from the ground almost as soon as she was hit - she had only a leg wound. She pulled the arrow from her flesh and before my very eyes the torn skin closed back together, sucking her blood back inside, healing itself.

Parts of the dream are blurry.

I saw Joan bow before a king. She spoke to him and his face glowed as he listened to her words. This time she wore armour and held a sword, the hilt of it almost as big as herself. I saw her then on a white horse, holding a banner blazing with angels; she expelled

some wantons from an army camp. They cursed at her, their long hair flying in the wind as they ran, but Joan just shouted after them that their Lord forgave them."

I paused and hung my head. The worst part of my dream was still to be told. My sons stared at me and moved in their seats.

'Is there more, father?' Pierre asked. I nodded. 'Go on,' he urged.

"The last part of my vision - my dream - is the most awful, my sons. It took place in Rouen; I recognised it though I have never been there. I saw your sister being dragged in chains through the market square; a mob called to her, jeering at her; a mere child. She did not answer or raise her head to them. Foreign soldiers, Englishmen, tied her to a pillar that was cluttered all around with firewood. There was a large crowd gathered: men, women, even children. Their faces were ugly, they leered and abused. Joan's crimes - whatever they were - were read to her; I couldn't hear them. She listened calmly. Then she spoke herself, though I couldn't make out the words. Or maybe I simply can't remember them. As she spoke she wept, then a crucifix was laid before her and then...and then...a man stepped forward and lit the wood at her feet.

My daughter's feet.

The flames rushed and she was quickly hidden among them. I could no longer see her, my only girl; not her legs, not her body, not her face. Above the crack and whirr of the fire that swallowed her I heard Joan call 'Jesus! Jesus!' over and over again. It was a prayer.

Then I woke up."

My sons didn't speak; they looked from each other to me.

'If Joan ever tries to leave us,' I said, 'if she ever tries to leave Domrémy, you must take her down to the river and drown her. You must hold her head under the water until no breath remains inside her body. And,' I said to them, 'if you refuse to do it, I will do it myself.'

May God forgive me.

Plenty

Laura Bentley

Fall strawberries were plucked.
Late cucumbers,
blooming and setting fruit
in the mountain fields.
The Millers

and the Yoders prayed
in a pine church
for bountiful succulents.
Women in white bonnets
tasted spring

gooseberries, plump
and sacred green.
Men in black hats
saw summer corn ahead,
cloistered gold

in solemn fields.
Children with folded hands,
stained strawberry red,
gathered
the silence

of melon and plum,
sugar cherry,
and grape.

THE BLESSED ICON**Peter Waring**

Four factions here;
On Temple Mount.
The Christian alone,
Increases by division.
So Cypriots, Orthodox
And humourless,
Look to their own.
Like Olympia, who, from
Nicosia docks, saw dolphins.
Fell into a swoon?

Not to mean, she never
Sensed the column sway -
The Blessed Icon blink at them.
But, from their own account,
Her best friend, stood
Two feet away, saw nothing.
If faith is the question
Here - has this sweet cuckoo none?
Father Anastasios shrugs -
Perhaps.

A ceiling lower than
Imagined. The dark panel
Higher up. Two gray-haired
Women to stand behind
And weep. Since I have
No faith, I'll fail, will
Miss the imprint, even -
God's gentle bird-
Mouthed Son.

Who has faith here?
Olympia. Anastasios?
Suppose we chip this plaster off?
And then? Remove
The column altogether?
See if the roof
Falls in?

Coffee at five thirty**Caolinn Hughes**

It's half past five and time to wake
For lovers, and for those who
Won't reach love since someone's
Lack of faith, but who will
Still crave that breathing time
When electric fires are lit
And last night's wine, morning
Breath and unbrushed teeth
Are coffee-sweetened through with
Familiar kettle click from
Beside the bed - at arms reach.

Time for her to grow aware
Of his huge arm behind her neck
That now feels a little sore
But far too kind to budge.
Time for his indulging thought
Of golf and such and how much
They need not mention love,
As they regret an open window
That's posting cold through
A letterbox crevice and forcing
Her teeth to quiver like when he
Touches her, as he crushes her tight to
A warm body at a moonless sunless
Morning time - when no one else awakes.

Somewhere Between**John Walsh**

Somewhere between
The crack of dawn
And the noon-day tide
The bend in the road
And the other side
The level plain
And the far and wide
The hump on the mountain
And all things that coincide
I touched your hand
And your soul replied.

Sunlight**John Walsh**

Sunlight
caught you off-guard,
Wrapped in throwback
To a past.

One arm limp,
You whispered to the breeze
Before turning
Home for evening.

You left the flowers
And the fields
Without you.

Unmoved
You draw the curtains
- it never crossed your mind.

Retreat**Alan Jude Moore**

I thought of you making love
There was nothing between us
but the discarded prints
of your next lover's hands

He brings you flowers
and plants them on the edge of your bed
so as to claim you
and in every crease of your body
thinking he has discovered you

I thought of you making love
so my shadow might burn into the wall
While under his command
all your legends unfurl

But I long to see you
waving your new flags
when we come to each other like traitors
when we advance one last time
with the spirit of beleaguered nations

Magic Realism**Eileen Casey**

An e-mail received today, titled:
Bellydancing, Cardiac arrest, Bunions
reminds me of letters sent
when I first left home.
Whole pages of tickertapes they were
where newborn babies were announced
in the same blue breath as in-grown toe-nails
the man three doors down but one
getting caught with a neighbour's wife
when the jewman turned the key
instead of knocking.
Burglaries, untimely deaths, ran into overpricing,
the nephew's braces, latest emigrations.
I wrote back of mermaids who sang all night
in cisterns, hallways loud with the mysteries of silence,
the woman in her seventies I saw
on Harold's Cross bridge most nights at six o'clock
dressed one day in party frock, laddered tights,
the next an army overcoat.

Separated by miles of blue road,
we kept each other's magic safe

in the real world.

Family Funeral**Mary Madec**

We rarely meet now
Except to bury the dead
And our hatchets for the day
As we stand saluting
All those who no longer have to survive
The hypocrisies of back-biting
And short-sightedness and lies
Hardly surprising
The family funeral is sad
The helpless handshakes
Wishing it otherwise
Not knowing how one might rise above
The petty inheritances poorly understood from childhood
Prejudices inhaled before opinions were made
Thin tears tipping off eyelids
As we try to fathom how blood is thicker than water
And when the goodbyes are spoken
The cruel irony of knowing-already-
When we will meet again

Havoc**Tom Duddy**

All our lives we longed for storms,
thrilled to see the covers whipping
off the supine country,
the boundary trees suddenly
dishevelled and uproarious,
the long grass pressed blue and vivid, paling
towards infinity.

When the storms were over,
they might leave in their wake
a spreadeagled oat stook,
perhaps a disbound sheaf,
a clean-snapped alder branch, an inkling
of washed-out light over the trees,

straws on the road near the town.

curriculum vitae**Margaret Maguire**

1965

stratford-on avon.

miss bullock and the stuffed cats on the landing so
dark,
so tired.

henry the fourth part two

she's turned the pram over again nice neighbours,
he's back from hospital - learns to walk again.

you won it, wore it, kept it, gave it me .

me on daddy's shoulders in harcourt st big coat that
was funny.

the trees are in their autumn beauty

peter shaefer - royal hunt of the sun - that wonderful
cloak I made

the light is dimmer

so tired

first prize at the flower power party

my first steps miraculous photo.

poor Sylvia Plath

dad I've got a degree

first communion all so white fresh flowers the smell
white socks too so pure.

the heart is a lonely hunter poor ted hughes

killiney beach sour salty smell stones huge waves sand

in the jam sandwiches hold my hand don't be afraid

we'll jump in together

hold on tight maria!

he doesn't love me anymore

the agony

the day you were born the ecstasy.

rain it must be evening.

the hospice

I love you mother Baggot St. Hospital Dad 82

i love you father

1982

spain buzzing of heat paella scarlet flowers so brown
shiny

felt beautiful

1969 - inish mean honeymoon landed on the moon
 oh rose thou art sick
 new york smell of food everywhere noise scott
 fitzgerald
 killiney wild garlic crushed underfoot,
 i love you
 graham greene the end of the affair banned so silly
 the famous five
 the chalet school & jo.
 little women oh beth
 its getting darker
 so tired
 oh joy that in our embers is something that doth live
 the dubliners in tallaght dancing with luke kelly
 if you feel like singing do sing an Irish song
 he pushed you in he didn't know you could have
 drowned,
 bright shards of water in that white heat
 i wish they'd turn the lights on

Reminiscence

Mary Madec

Warm damp July
 Reminds me of you
 Old friend
 Meadowsweet hanging on the air
 No wind
 Water drops weighing down leaves
 In the hedgerow
 Tears on your eyelashes
 Unspoken griefs of saying goodbye

HEART-SHAPED**By Sandra Bunting**

The family was going on a camping trip to France. Julia Ryan had never been that far away from Ireland before. Looking out the plane window, there were white fluffy clouds underneath her. That's why she wasn't scared. If the plane fell, or if she was somehow outside the plane, she would land on a bed of soft fleece. Up here, the sky was blue and the sun was shining. On the ground it had been raining.

Later there was a tickle in her tummy as they hit land with a bump. It was still sunny down on the ground, so it had to be France. She followed her parents and her older sister Annie through customs feeling very proud and grown up with her own passport. She listened as her parents tried out their French to pick up the rented car they had reserved. It was tiny but it was red and shiny. It looked a bit like a ladybird without the spots.

They managed to get the luggage, the tents and sleeping bags in the boot so they weren't cramped in the back seat. It was a long drive to the campsite and it was hot. Green fields gave way to tightly packed sunflowers and corn, tall and proud against the wispy blue sky. The earth was pale and dusty and looked as if it might crumble. There was a mixed scent of rose and lavender.

The campsite was outside the village in a little wood with a stream running through it. Mr. Ryan got out the tents. They were brand new. Julia and Annie had a bright yellow one to themselves while their parents had a slightly bigger one in navy blue.

By the time they got things set up, it was time for dinner. There was a communal barbecue and picnic site on the other side of a clump of trees but the Ryans had no food. The village was just a short drive away. But when they got there, shutters were closed on most of the houses and although it was still light, there were no people on the street. Perhaps it was a ghost town.

At the bottom of the street, they saw a light shining from a pizza restaurant. They were brought to a tiny courtyard that looked liked someone's back yard, containing three patio tables with umbrellas sticking out

of them. There were trees growing out of the pavement and potted flowers all around. An attractive woman at the next table was finishing her dessert. She had a white poodle in her lap and let it jump up and lick her face. She returned the kisses and made cooing noises to the dog to the disgust of Mr. Ryan .

They just made it back to the campsite before the gates closed at ten o'clock. The ground was lumpy. A fly had got in. Annie went on and on about her dreams, sang all the songs she learned in her performance school and talked about her friends back home. It was annoying. There were strange noises like something jumping on the tent. Julia had wanted to crawl in with her parents but was too frightened to open the flap. She was also happy to be independent and didn't want to let on that she was scared. Light seeped through the thin material of the tent and when she unzipped it, she saw long-eared rabbits hopping all around the site.

Julia's parents, tired by the long drive, were still sleeping. Annie had just woken up. They both dressed quickly and went out to explore the grounds. There was a central building with toilets, showers and washing machines. There were picnic tables, a little patio to have dinner, a little playground off to the side. That seemed to be it -no shop, no pool, no café.

When Julia's parents got up, they drove into the town to get supplies. Everything was different at the supermarkets but the girls were able to pick out what they wanted by the pictures on the packaging. They then visited a castle with knight's armour, secret passages and a wardrobe with hidden drawers for jewels, love letters or poison. Julia could imagine an alchemist making potions in the high towers or prisoners suffering horrors in the dungeon filled with bows, lances, swords and those balls with the spike that could be whirled at an enemy. Although she felt at home within the thick walls, it was good to get out among colourful hollyhocks and cool oak trees.

For lunch they bought two long baguettes and shared them with cheese and ham. That night they brought food to cook at the barbecue. Annie was helping her mother while Julia just sat at the picnic table watching

some children play. She was daydreaming when a ball landed at her feet.

Behind the ball was a boy who looked about her age. Soft light brown curls fell around his tanned face. Julia kicked the ball back to him. A few minutes later the ball landed at her feet again. She looked up and saw the boy looking at her. She got ready to kick it back to him again.

"Do you want to play?" he asked in a very English accent.

Julia nodded and walked over to the others waiting for the ball. They were all French. The boy spoke to them in French and to Julia in English.

"Julia, dinner," her mother called.

Julia started to walk away. She never had good social skills. Perhaps it was shyness. Sometimes she didn't know what to do in certain situations so she did nothing. The boy ran up to her.

"Will you play tomorrow?" he asked.

"Maybe," said Julia.

The next day they went shopping. Perfume shops offered hours of enjoyment. They could try on any they wanted. The different shapes and colours of the bottles were exquisite. There was even cologne for dogs. With each purchase there were free samples. It was great to be pampered. They went on to roam through the clothes shops. Julia convinced her mother that she needed a new green *Diesel* belly top and wide trousers for school.

The boy soon came over to her kicking the ball as soon as Julia sat down at the picnic tables.

"I'm Peter," he said.

"I'm Julia."

"I know," said the boy.

They played a bit of football but Julia found that she couldn't run in her new trousers. Peter said he had had enough too and they both walked back to the picnic table where Peter's father was drinking wine with her parents.

"Peter's mother is English. That's why he speaks so well," her mother explained.

Julia looked impassive. "When is dinner?" she asked.

"It will be a little while yet," said her mother.

Julia looked at Peter who took her by the hand and dragged her off.

"There's something I have to show you."

He brought her to a tree fort built in a huge oak. They climbed high into the branches and laughed at anyone who walked under it. They jumped on tire swings on another tree. He showed her the little stream where they caught a frog. Then Peter told her to follow him to the best place. She found herself walking down an incline into a natural cave. It was like going into a large room. Light poured in from the opening.

Peter put his hand on the wall of the cave and scooped out the porous earth.

"There used to be a tunnel from here down to that big chateau. But it caved in."

Julia poked a finger in the wall. Left there, maybe forever, was the hole she made.

"You could almost live here."

"There are thousands of caves around here. Some people do live in them."

Julia's imagination ran away with her.

"Imagine scooping out your own home," she said.

A shadow passed over the mouth of the cave. A dog perhaps but it reminded them that it was late.

"We had better get back. We can come again tomorrow."

When the family wasn't off touring, Julia was with Peter. They played football, went on the swing and explored the caves. However, the night before they were to leave Julia looked for Peter but he wasn't around.

The whole family, having organized everything for the journey the following day, were seated in front of their tents looking at the stars for the last time from this particular place. Peter appeared. He went over to Julia and handed her something. It was large rock of the same kind of material found in the caves. It was naturally shaped like a heart but Peter had drawn another smaller one in pink crayon in between their two names. It said: "Peter loves Julia". She looked at it and smiled but when she raised her head and saw everybody staring at her in expectation, she threw it

onto the ground, ran into the tent and cried herself to sleep. Peter pretended not to care.

He was there the next morning. Not only did Julia refuse to say goodbye, she kept her head down and would not look at him. Annie felt sorry for him, picked up the rock, put it in the boot and said good-bye.

The new campsite on the Seine was more elaborate. There was a swimming pool, water slide, tennis courts, crazy golf and a playground. The actual sites were not as nice though. There weren't as many trees. It was more open and not as private. Mr. Ryan got out the two tents and started to assemble them but the ground was hard and the pegs wouldn't go in. He looked around for something to bang them. Julia was sent off to look for a rock but she came back empty-handed. It didn't matter anyway because her father had managed to get them in.

"How were you able to get them in the ground?" Julia asked.

Her father shrugged.

"I found this old rock in the boot of the car. It was a bit soft but it did the job. Good thing we had it."

Julia looked towards the bushes he was pointing to. Lying there was the stone. It was broken in two, right through the middle of the painted heart. One half said "Peter loves". The other half said "Julia". Her father hadn't noticed because he never noticed those types of things.

She threw one half of the rock deeper into the bushes and picked up the one that said "Julia" and placed it in the boot again, smiling for the first time since they left the old campsite.

On the plane back home, Julia looked down on the clouds as she had done on the journey there. Although still fluffy, they appeared almost flimsy and not as much of a safety blanket as they had before. The holiday photos had been developed before they left France. Julia took out the one of Peter and hid it in her pocket, looking at it from time to time, not because she felt anything for him but because it made her feel special.

The red dog leaping**Kevin Donnelly**

The red dog leaping, snaps the crests of waves; Bounds
down the wet, brown sand; crouches
On its forelegs, the imagined foe; assaults
The breasts of talking women with muddy paws,

Who brush him off and go on talking,
The mornings latest news, and have you heard,
Yes, him and her. and would you ever, or, maybe,
New upholstery for the sofa, or maybe. World War III.

The early morning regulars arrive, one by one.
Lonely men and men alone. The quick dip
Before breakfast, before work. The solitary woman.
The artist, her daily baptism into art.

An older woman, dimpled thighs, rose
Lipstick on tanned faced, spreads her ample towel.
Unpacks her large straw bag and stands where the
wave Running back, undermines her feet.

And young, bright, scrubbed Christians arrive
In force. Craigville Tabernacle something, circle and toss
A beach ball, maybe Jesus, to and fro,
Which catches the wind and flies from them.

Golden Girl**Kevin Donnelly***For S.P.*

An au pair from west of Boston,
One year done at Smith, arrives
With her charges, a girl two years
Older than the tow-haired boy.

She settles them, herself. Their spot
For the day. Steps out of shorts.
Slides arms from tee shirt. There.
The healthy bodied American girl.

Skin already brown, the splash of
White bikini against the tan of skin,
Of sand, the shine of sea. And
Golden haired against the deep blue sky.

Telephone linemen in their truck approve.
The old man. Dunkin Donut coffee.
The crossword from the Cape Cod Times,
Gropes every word in the look of her.

And she gropes, the word for the poem,
The word for what she wants: cusp, poised, crest. Never
finds it. Crashes. Dies. The children
Survive and don't remember her at all.

An atheist in Achill**Andy Johnston**

To save the corpses from being waterlogged
The graveyard sits some scores of yards athwart
The cloud-capped blue-grey mountain called Sliabh Mor;
Which shows how thoughtful these islanders are:
Its gradient tips rain water to the plane
Giving their dead a kind of immortality;
Atlantic Way leads straight up to the graveyard;
The message on the gate says: "Please close gate"
The Achill people know a thing or two:
They've fought the war for immortality
And lost it - minus a pyrrhic victory here and there -
In this they swim the stream we all swim in;
And what is that I hear, as if far off -
A cuckoo calling from the mountain cloud -
Parodic to Ecclesiasticus -
"All is vanity - vanity of vanities".
But still these islanders long immortality;
Why else are all new houses gleaming white
And not the limestone-grey Taisce'd order
(With rust- red sashes or a darker blue) ?
A goldfinch trills and trills from a PT wire,
Monotonous as a geriatric drunk
Mesmeric song of larks is everywhere.

Regional Hospital, Cork

Mary O'Rourke

A father counts the hours
His son will spend in theatre
Stabbed in a drugs feud

A spotty teenager checks his watch
As he prepares for three hours on dialysis
Hopes his third kidney transplant
Will soon become a reality

The man with the haemorrhage behind his eye
Hides his cigarettes in a coloured handkerchief
As he escapes the hospital's no smoking zone

Inside, patients' slippers feet
Shuffle along corridors
Nurses move hurriedly from bed to bed
Surgeons call for scalpels
Babies are born, old men die

Here and there someone stops to
Admire the permanent art exhibition

Cowslips in a Persian Vase**Breid Sibley**

The place of stones
is my home.
Three gold finches
sing in the rowan tree.
The bees zig-zag from violet
to periwinkle aubretia.
The cat watches,
and swats the biggest one.

The stones and earth in my garden
Hold their memories.
Cowslips, daisies, cornflowers,
Forget-me-nots blossom
Before the grass is cut.
My bones remember...

The candlelight flutters
Cowslips in a Persian Vase.
Mozart's Clarinet Concerto
in A major.
Where we left off...
We will resume again...

A knock on the door.
A boy; "Will you buy a line".
No, not at this time.

Went Missing **Laura Treacy Bentley**

In the green of eternal autumn,
I walk into my shadow.

A collie friend lingers back this time,
not answering my call.

Moss-covered rocks quarried years before
hold the morning rain.

A heifer bolts from a sleeping meadow
as if to stop me.

A sturdy colt nuzzles his pale mother,
watching from a safe distance.

Inisheer floats like vapor,
seaside lights are sequined far below.

Silence steals from horizon to dark horizon.
I lift smooth rocks from a limestone wall

to enter a strange field.
Stone by stone I put them back,

weighing the very heft of time,
closing the gate,

covering my tracks.

Danger mouse**Jarlath Fahy**

There's a mouse in the house
 When I get him i'm gointa lay him out
 Like billy the kid or them long haired
 Flouncy shirted unshaven louts
 That took part in the paris commune
 Round his neck i'm gointa write in mouse
 This is what you get when you break into my house
 Undermining my muesli subverting my porridge
 Dining on my Madeira cake when you didn't earn
 With break backing work my daily bread you cannot
 Eat the crumbs from my table you end up in the jungle
 Of Bolivia or Colombia dead as che Guevara
 Red commie bastard dead mouse where's your
 Cuban cigar now where's your eternal revolution
 Where's your equal rights your marx your Lenin
 Your mouse proletariat your mouse workers rights
 Your mouse unions your leon mouse Trotsky
 Rosa mouse Luxemburg karl mouse liebknecht
 Dead in a ditch covered in blood kaput
 Like your union of mouse soviet socialist republics

seamus lyons**Jarlath Fahy**

seamus lyons its a crime
 the amount of times i ran behind
 you way behind you round
 the cathedral grounds
 i could hardly breathe
 trying to keep up with
 your long gangly legs

it wasn't fair when you tied
 me to that chair and tried
 to catapult me over a ten foot wall
 your grandfathers bowler hat
 wasn't going to protect me
 i want to call a tribunal
 i want compensation

i cried but you wouldn't listen
standing there with your mothers
breadknife counting backward
from one hundred dieing to cut the string

when we played show jumping
slapping our sides and shouting
gee up horsey you always won
your long legs jumped higher
some people made the fences
out of cardboard you used barbed wire
when we played what i called bow and arrow
and you called archery you wanted
to shoot something off my head
oh but you weren't satisfied with an apple
no it had to be a mandarin

that christmas santy brought you
red and yellow leather boxing gloves
he brought me brown and pink
plastic ones when we stepped
into the ring in your big sitting room
your reach was much longer than mine
you complained my gloves scratched you

when you wouldn't open the door i knocked and
knocked
your mother said you weren't in
but i saw you at one of your high windows
looking down on me

Melissa has a surplus of parents **Elizabeth Kate Switaj**

When her mother died she got her sister
--raised that way, of course and a car scene for
course her memoir

And when she decided
not to spend Thanksgiving weekend
smoking pot with mom
and her new boyfriend

she locked the entry calling
friends her family, saying
blood is nothing
and began the sequel
searching for her sperm dad.

Worst Kept Secret;
or, How You Finally Came
To Please Boss

Kevin Higgins

That first morning his obvious eyes,
and someone in the canteen
whispering as he passed: Arsehole.
But no. An arsehole at least
has some sort of definable use.

Then the years of brushing his cold paws
from your hind-quarters, while you captured
and secured the one, who each evening now hands
his testicles in at the door, and kneels
to your God of glossy, horrible things.

Today, the big man still busy,
not doing whatever it is he doesn't do;
as you position
yourself so

A Date To Remember**Gerardine Burke**

The street was quiet. Nora looked at the abandoned tram on its rails in the middle of Sackville Street and thought of her daddy. At ten o'clock this morning he too had left his car in College Green. Just got his top coat and walked off. "The swells will be on their way to the horse show" he had boasted. "I wonder will they walk." Mammy hadn't joined in his laughter. She just held Sean closer to her as he coughed.

It was the 26 of August 1913. Nora repeated the date to herself as her bare feet squished into muddy puddles and she squirmed at the coldness of the water. All along the street to the Imperial Hotel deserted tramcars lined the way. At Nelson's pillar an entire fleet stood vacant. She forgot for a moment that she was on her way to scrub lavatories, clean out grates and make fires for the toffs. She felt she was part of something bigger than herself.

Two and a half hours later, having finished work, she placed her hands in front of her face, palms outwards and scowled. Soot had made them as black as her feet. She didn't like walking the streets dirty. Despite the queue for the tap in the yard in the morning she always washed her neck, face, hands and feet before venturing out. But today everything felt different and not solely because it was her birthday.

She heard the familiar trundling sound before she saw policemen force a path through the crowd to let a tram through. She thought 'the drivers and conductors are on strike. It can't be.' A policeman stood on the front platform protecting the driver and another guarded the back. A crowd began to throw stones. The sound of breaking glass shocked her into running. Her mammy often talked of the mob and how ugly they could get when they were crossed but she hadn't believed her until now.

Before she turned into Brendan's Lane, the reek of filth, fat pork and decomposing liver told her that she was near the tenement. Soot and mud were clean dirt but she hated when she trod on shit or offal from the

slaughter house beside her. She had become an expert at dodging anything that looked suspicious underfoot. As she side-stepped yet another pig's heart, crawling with maggots, she smiled exposing teeth, neglected and rotten. Pushing back her hair, she straightened her shoulders, and with her expression happier she ran towards number 13, the black door.

Before she pushed it open she heard the shrieking. "Bloody Jim Larkin" and "mouths to feed." It was her mammy's voice. Daddy must be home. "Bloody." The man she had never seen appeared in front of her. No matter how hard she tried she could never separate him from the picture they had over the hearth, Christ looking up to heaven, a crown of thorns on his head, blood spattering his face. She tried to tell her father about how she pictured the person who caused all the rows between him and mammy but all he said was: "Sure you're only young. What do you know?"

"And what about that tramway tyrant you support? Jesus, he has even made a drudge out of Nora now." Her daddy's voice was cross and loud. She guessed who he meant by the tramway tyrant but she knew for certain that a drudge was what she had been all morning. And she knew that William Martin Murphy owned the hotel because daddy had explained to her why he was known as an industrial octopus. That his tentacles wrapped around everything - newspapers, bookshops, department stores, a hotel.

She listened to her father roaring. "I will not be a scab." She fingered the dry crusty surface of a sore on her finger, now nearly healed, and opened the door.

"You're a contrary bloody man." Her mother's voice was sour.

There were damp patches on the wallpaper in the hall and it was dark and airless. The ten rooms in the house were each occupied by a family. She pushed the door into what had once been the parlour. A dresser, stocked with three cups and a few saucers and plates, stood at the head of an iron bed with brass fittings. It took up most of the space. Lumps of horsehair pushed through the upholstery of two armchairs. The square

table in the corner had a form underneath. The marble hearth and high ceiling were a throw back to an earlier grandeur. A can of water was boiling on the coals. At night Nora slept under a quilt on the floor before the fire and Sean slept in a basket.

"Thank God you're back" her mother said, "and that none of those rioters hurt you."

"A rioter now am I?" Her father's face darkened. "Next you'll be calling me a looter." He was a thin man who had wrinkled prematurely. "I'm going out. There's a mass meeting on this evening. Larkin may appear. I'll be late home."

"Don't come back with a skinful," her mother warned.

He didn't answer, just got off the side of the bed where they had both been sitting and glanced at the sleeping Sean. Nora was still by the door when he took her hand in his and examined the dirt under her finger nails. "You're worse than any docker."

Nora felt her heart sinking and the spark of hope that her father would remember she was twelve today was fast dissolving. Her mother was too worried about Sean's bronchitis to think about anything else. She studied her face, pale, almost yellow. Her lips were blue as if they had been drained of blood. She took the place vacated by her father on the bed, reached out and touched her arm soothingly. She didn't want to broach the subject of food but running from the stone throwers had put an edge on an appetite she could usually stifle. Silent and awkward, she sat not knowing what to say, feeling a babyish desire to cry.

"I suppose you're hungry." Her mother's tone was resigned.

"I'd love a slice of bread."

"You'll have to go to Moriartys. Not a penny from the hotel since I started sending you in instead of me." She looked at Sean, breathing peacefully for once. "He'll soon be fighting fit again but until then we'll have to scrimp. What with your father on strike and all."

"Is there anything left to pawn?"

The lines beside her mammy's mouth deepened. She took a mother of pearl rosary beads from her apron pocket. "No food parcels from the church for strikers. They can go to hell." When she handed Nora the beads, their hands touched. "No skylarking. You hear. Go to the shop on Winetavern Street and do the business. Then buy some bread. Take my shawl. It'll keep you warm."

She was glad she was wrapped in something of her mammy's when she left the house. The shawl smelled of smoke but also her mother's body scent.

The August twilight had faded into night by the time she had disposed of the rosary beads. Sackville Street lay swathed in darkness but for the light of the torches brandished by men, belligerent and hungry. Big Jim mustn't have come to their meeting as her father had hoped he would.

She held her coins tightly as she headed for the bread shop. She was not afraid as she listened to men swear, women console and children cry. Wasn't her daddy one of them? The waters of the Liffey were dark and still. Nora's stomach felt cold and empty and the nearer she came to satisfying her hunger, the worse it got. She didn't increase her pace. She knew it was difficult to walk fast without stumping a toe, tripping on stones or lately, standing on fragments of glass.

She heard the sound of windows breaking. 'My God' she thought, 'looters.' A crowd of men and young boys ran down the street. "Bread" someone shouted. "Get some bread." She thought she recognised the voice. But she must be mistaken. He wouldn't steal

Police with batons drawn emerged from a side street. The window of the bakery shattered under an onslaught of stones. Glass crashed onto the pavement. A mass surged into the shop, grabbing cakes, bread and biscuits. The police waited until they came out their hands laden and their jaws bulging. They beat them round the head and kicked them when they were down. Blood and cream mixed together in the gutter.

She heard beating sounds, batons cracking skulls; kicking sounds, shoes thudding flesh. Stunned, she stood as if she were watching a puppet show until one

of the marionettes became familiar. He fell as if his strings had been cut. She heard the sound, dull and crunching, before she heard him shout. A box spilled from his arms.

His stomach was hard as she threw herself on top of him but his arms were limp. Blood crimsoned his face. The cacophony died. Ambulances came. They lifted her father on to a stretcher. A man told her kindly, "In the name of God, go home."

She hadn't the energy to cry. Her mother. How would she react when she heard? She'd have to go to the hospital. Nora would have to take care of Sean. Stunned, she simply sat on the street. Was her father going to die?

When she saw it, a spot of colour appeared on her pale cheek and though her eyes were still shocked and angry she smiled. Beside where her daddy had lain, was a cake, topped with icing and three almonds.

Roger, and out

Sadie Murphy

Sleep now,
for in the morning,
while Roger McGough
still adorns your shelf -
now a dustman
dealing in scraps of light -
you will need
his shovel
to dig through the day.

Gaillimh

Patricia Burke Brogan

Bonedust of Normans
whitens the air.

Bonedust of armies
darkens the sun.

Bulldozers rape
green flesh of Boherbeg:

Battlefield of
O'Neill and O'Donnell.

Musketballs fired
from the walls of Forthill

Ricochet along
Bother an Iarlaigh.

Birthcry!

Battlecry!

Deathcry!

Bastions bared,
dark secrets simmer,

Gaillimh, daughter of Breasail,
drowns in a sea of concrete.

Old battles still rage
through Dunbun-na-Gaillve,

through this city of soft edges and mechanical heart.

Tribes* Woman**Catherine Heaney**

**The Tribes were fourteen merchant families of Norman descent who controlled commerce in the city of Galway in the Middle Ages and whose descendants continued to trade in the town long after their power had passed.*

Pale eyes shifting
Caught the light of restless water in the docks,
Darkened when she bent
To scrape the scoop in tea chest corners,
To gather flour in slackened sacks,
-Another ounce, another penny -
Narrowed as the needle stopped.

Late evening, purpose in her eye and chin,
She stepped through ancient Norman streets,
Ancestral pavements, quiet now,
The cobblers and the hucksters and the fish mongers
Home, counting meagre takings
In squalid attics, back upstairs rooms.

At Saint Augustine's she climbed grey limestone steps,
Entered silence beneath high vaults,
Knelt,
Eyes fixed on some celestial trading place,
She bartered prayers for balanced books,
Asked the saints to speculate,
To find her hard cash deals
In paint and meal and boots.
Straight talk, she looked the Virgin in the face,
No short change there,
Her prayers were totted up on Rosary beads.

Wakeful and alert at night
She lay between thin sheets,
Debts outstanding paid in *Glorias*,
Settled with her husband in her flesh,
Invested merchant genes for future markets,
Unimagined deals in untold streets.

Only in a dream she melted,
Spread her limbs on fine-fur pelts, on new-shorn fleece,
Felt surrender,
A softening at the sight of full sailed ships glide in to
port,
Ancestral ensigns, hulls low,
Cargo-laden with wine and silk and spice.

Cillíneach**Jennifer Harrington**

On a cold day
few people ever
walk down here.
It's a wild place
a desolate spot
beside the tide.
A crab apple tree
has grown up beside
the old stone fence,
its branches gnarled
and twisted by years
of being lashed by the salty
winds of Atlantic storms.
A couple of rough stones
with crude crosses
etched on their surface
betray the history of this place
where grieving mothers
buried their unbaptised infants,
no place for them in a
Christian graveyard.
A sharp wind blows
the Autumn leaves rustle
and the twigs shake
making a sound like
the bones of all those
lost children buried here.
I wonder where are
all those innocent souls
now that Limbo has gone?
The smell of rotting
crab apples fills the air.

Note:

A Cillíneach is a burial ground for unbaptised children
and are to be mainly found on the west coast of Ireland

Lament

Patricia Burke Brogan

A jet-plane embroiders
the sky-tent
over our mirrored city.

Rain comes,
pearling concrete edges,
wrapping with gauzes
this wounded landscape.

A sun-brooch,
pinned on the shoulder
of the Atlantic
slips
and is lost.

All colour gone,
Loch an tSáile is now
a gigantic burial chamber.

Fossilised beneath
concrete dinosaurs,
our city waits
for future archaeologists

Let me clarify my position **David Meagher**

I could enquire, if indeed
it has been the case
that your happiness has been stilted
by the pinched grin upon your face?

And then again, I might
Quite reasonably ask
if you've ever had a dumb thought
those lips refused to pass?

Or if by any chance, across
All the depths of time and space
Your great efforts have brought
anything useful to the race?

But rather, let me make myself
Plainly understood :
I know the difference between
what I can and what I should.

Gift **Jennifer Harrington**

He brought me
fresh oranges
still warm from the tree
their thick skins
soaked in sunlight
I had never received
such a present before
the Summer sun
held in his hand
he pierced the skin
and offered the flesh
sweet juice ran
down my chin
golden drops of
summer sunlight
a gift from my lover

Summer Is Gone **Maureen Gallagher**

A mute heron on stilts stares
at the ash, blushing, ready to shed
leaves at the Bridge Mills cafe:
Summer is gone.

Like a couple of well-weathered gourds,
still intact but beyond the point
of urgent necessity - the onus on youth
to ensure continuity of the human seed -

we sip tea facing Winter; aging
pumpkins, still in their prime, steal the lime-
light in the Halloween display; the
mandarins in supporting roles.

A change of mood. We leave the cafe,
laughing, up-beat, as if it were spring;
November winds have not yet kicked in -
But truth is tangible: they're imminent.

Pillow **Alan Jude Moore**

Moves slowly through the underpass
Always like memory
The pillow arched against the headboard
 like your back used to be
I realised you in the middle of a storm
Just for a second
Reaching out
To the side of the escalator
The infant balanced in his mother's arm
Over ground
The slow traffic jam
Pins the day to its final hour
Black cars pass the window
Like whales in an aquarium
The restaurateur watches his waitress
Lighting up the candles
 and clearing tables

Departure Points**Tony O'Dwyer**

Whenever she mentioned Barcelona he would think of oranges. It went on for years. She'd suggest Barcelona and he'd find himself pouring a glass of orange juice or sucking in his cheeks or he'd remark on the way the morning light hit the kitchen wall. She'd keep telling him that was Seville. But that was no good. He knew that. It didn't stop him thinking of oranges.

And now he was here. On La Rambla. About to go into The English Bookshop. No oranges. That was Seville. But birds. Birds in cages. All the way down to the sea and the Placa del Portal de la Pay where the Monument a Colom stood looking out towards an undiscovered world.

Canaries. Budgerigars. Conures. Macaws. Finches. Sweet songsters. Raucous squawkers. Some might have even been mute. Ugly creatures with hooks for mouths. And the magnificently feathered with colours that reminded him of comic books. But behind bars. So far away.

The cruelty was like a stain on the beautiful day. Not like a shadow though. Here the shadows are welcome. That was why the nobles built tall houses in narrow streets. To live in each other's shadow. An irony.

Birds in cages are like fish out of water he thought. He smiled. Must write that down. They wore an expression of perplexity. Their eyes scummed over, blinking, like a lens shutter recording the tourists.

His phone rang. He looked around as his hand reached into his pocket. He thought people looked in his direction. But they were looking elsewhere. "Hello." An officious female voice asked, "Could I speak to Dale Comton, please?" He wondered why she asked that. She had just rung his mobile phone after all.

"This is he," he said, sounding pompous. "It's about your motor insurance. You were quoted the wrong premium. We're very sorry. Can you send a cheque?"

Beside him a young woman was interviewing a large Spanish gentleman. She spoke in English, passing a small dictaphone back and forth from her mouth to his.

Said she was from the International Herald Tribune. He replied in English but with a heavy Spanish accent. He wore one of those brown tartan scarves that were fashionable that year. Yet he had the look of a peasant. She took his photograph with a small digital camera. An Olympus Camedia C 350. She'd probably email the story straight away and have it in the paper the next morning.

A Cockatoo screeched close by. "Yes the cheque. As soon as I get back. I'm on holiday. Yes, next week. Goodbye."

Inside the shop was quiet, like libraries used to be. The weight of silence was augmented by the dark mahogany bookcases. Categories were stamped on brass plates fixed to the faces of the shelves. Towards the back of the shop was a raised area – about four steps – with a wooden railing round the edge. Behind the railing sat a middle-aged woman at a table which served as a desk. Damned insurance company, he thought. Why couldn't they have got it right. Incompetence infuriated him. He wouldn't say anything to Marguerite though. She'd fret and fret about it and that would ruin his holiday.

He was looking for an English translation of a poem by the Romantic poet *Rosalía de Castro*. He went directly to where the middle-aged woman sat. She didn't look up. He asked anyway. "*Deseo una traducción inglesa de 'En las orillas del Sar', por favour.*"

She raised her head slowly and answered in English. Her face was dead-pan. "It means '*Beside the river Sar*'." She smiled. "Joke." She got up and came round the table. She was taller and slimmer than he expected her to be. "Come with me." she said and led him through a door between two bookcases. Here was another room but this time there were no neat shelves or brass plates. This room was oval in shape and the walls were bare. There were two large heaps of books on the floor like two foci of a parabola or a cell with two nuclei. "I know what you think," she said. "You think these books are awaiting cataloguing. But you'd be wrong. This is our translation room. These books can only be moved from here by our - customers." The word rolled strangely on her tongue. "If you can find what you need you can have it for free." When she

smiled lines appeared in circles round her eyes. She hurried from the room closing the door into the shop outside.

He began to rummage. It appeared that one heap contained Spanish books and the other English. The same book could then be in both piles in different languages. But there was no system. It was impossible. It was like one of those bargain baskets on the street. If he were to find what he wanted it would only be by chance. He began to sift through the English heap.

The room was hot and the fluorescent lighting hurt his eyes. He sat on the floor picking up books and flicking them to one side. The whole thing seemed pointless and he began to lose interest. He wondered was Marquerite still shopping on the Placa St Jaume. The room was getting stuffier and he began to feel it closing in, trapping him. But then, after some time, he began to feel that it had a certain security and he began to breathe more easily.

The door opened again and the middle-aged woman strode in followed by a young woman dressed entirely in black. She looked in her early 20s with a beauty that had an element of remoteness. And he regarded beautiful women. They spoke to each other in Spanish. The older woman pointing at the floor to the heap of Spanish books. Then she left as she had done before. The young woman knelt, sitting on her haunches. She was wearing a short black skirt.

After some time she looked in his direction. "You are English?" He looked up. For a few moments her beauty rendered him speechless. He felt his throat tighten. Her dark eyes were wide and clear. Her lips were perfectly shaped. Her skin was like ivory under moonlight. "No", he said. "No. Irish."

"Ah", she said, her face lighting up. "I am looking for *La Reina de la Belleza del Leenane*. Maybe you can help me." He felt his heart race. What was he being asked. "How you say ... Leenane?" She smiled broadly at her pronunciation. "You know - the queen - the beautiful queen..."

"Ah, he said *The Beauty Queen of Leenane*. Yes. I know it. I've seen it. Great play. You want that in Spanish?"

"Yes. Yes." She became even more animated.

"Well let me look with you." He slid across the polished floor and the two of them rummaged through the Spanish pile. "You know Midsummer Night's Dream?" she asked suddenly.

"Yes", he said, "but that's not Irish."

"I know", she laughed. "Puck", she said then.

"What!" he said. Then they both laughed.

*

They didn't find *The Beauty Queen of Leenane*. But they did sit and talk for hours, he and the beautiful woman, sitting on the floor of the oval translation room of Barcelona's English Bookshop.

*

La Rambla was quieter now. The bird sellers had gone. There were fewer people on the street and he could walk more freely. The air was fresher. He reached into his pocket and took out his phone.

"Hello. Marquerite. It's me. Tell me, I've forgotten again. What street is our hotel on?"

"Hold on." She sounded groggy. "I've been sleeping. I've been shopping all day. Let me check... Yes. Its 35 Carrer la Paia."

"Thanks."

"Oh, did you find what you were looking for?"

"What? The poetry? Yes. Yes I did. Yes, I'll be home soon. Goodbye."

Memoirs**Peter Waring**

There was this scrum
At the counter, says memory,
A students queue much as
At the Union Bar except for
The tapping of the shoulder,
The unctuous go-you-on-you smiles.

The ad hoc protocol that swapped
and shuffled three ragged files
(OAP's outnumbered four to one
by skinny-ribs and flares)
Towards a rank of four joyless,
Airless glass-windowed cells.

So much for order - the greater.
Part of the shop floor heaved,
Elbow to leather-puckered elbow,
Boiled with a broth of goat-eyed,
long-haired importuners.
Pilferers and waiters-on.

Buyers of five-pack cigarettes.
Of Rizlas. Mars and Bounty bars.
Newsletters, Irish News and Daily
Telegraphs and pens. Almost
All, says memory, Adam's appled.
Three day stubbled, greasy-nosed.

A ping at the door and into
A semicircle of new April air
Blown in and winnowed for him
Steps a proven champion.
A puissant, well made man. Eyes cold as
Knuckle-bones. Flints in peat washed chalk.

No dead time about him,
Says memory, to lessen or
To lengthen. No days to burn for show.
Ah well. He left the company
Of Sufis for this. Talk
Of the Three Games of Man -

(Darts. Snooker...Poker or Pontoon?)
Teaching by example. But, here?
He'll give a wordless masterclass -
Gripping each in turn who cares
To turn toward him - lifting them as
Dusty skeps out from winter-storage sheds.

Dizzying them with the push,
The pull, the spin - till they fill
With drunken stillness,
Summer, orchard, high fields
And bog meadows, sun-margined

Repetitions**Martin Burke**

Once is never enough

words multiplying
water mutating into streams
the leaf from which a forest grows

the languages I promised myself
I would be proficient in
and the greening ground I promised to celebrate

all converge in the heart
as its wavers into
the light of these repetitions

so let me tell you again all the names a verb
is capable of
and water's aptitude to remain itself
as it flows in several directions into history

the mind/the heart operating there
in a compatible fashion

lips repeating syllables as if they were prayers
and the hands yearning for tangible tasks
yes, these are the repetitions I delight in
the crafts I aspire to

which the memory of the tribe
still has some knowledge of
which grow into a restlessness
I appease in this manner

which I tell the outlines of
again and again

no, once is not enough

delight cannot be so easily exhausted
or detailed
words are not so fatigued

for even as I speak
a stone resists my probings
and the memory of a shoreline
casts up new insights and meanings

as history drives itself into
each new day
and becomes what I cannot escape
no matter how hard the longing

yet is that my ambition-
to move beyond the water's flow
and the leaf's cartography
so that I might outwit 'history'?

yes and no
I rebel and submit
take part in and escape from

walk in those dark woods
which as a child I feared to walk in
but find them now a companion

cupping the water in my hands
and watching it flow away

repeating a words' possibilities
and choosing them all as my own

nothing is so sweet to the mind as this
nothing so sweet to the tongue
as the words which convey this

the beautiful ones of that dialogue
the heart is privy to and delights in
and takes its stand by
and says all things affirm

no, once is not enough
and never will be

the words and the water cannot be defined
cannot be captured
cannot be named once and for all

so let it be so

let all things escape a static definition

let water be water
and fire its equal opposite

let that reign in the eye and leap into
these acts by which I seek to show
my freedoms and submissions.

We Shake The Day Out Maureen Gallagher

We shake the day out before us
like a linen tablecloth, a gift,
reserved for a special affair such as this.

Measuring highs in dun envelopes,
dressing hours in black lace,
milking Larkin* for misogyny.

Without warning I stumble awkwardly.
You turn a light on my space
and observe a grubby stain spread.

I crumble over tea and rye cake,
bewildered by the myriad ways
we clearly no longer fit.

*Philip Larkin, poet.

Woman in a White Headscarf

Eileen Casey

Pale as cloud is the moon shape of her face
circled by the silk of her scarf.
Dressed full length in black coat, boots
flat lace-ups,
her hands are small pink peeps
under dark sleeves
holding tight to a wheelbarrow
pitted over stone trundled earth,
covered full length in mud.
Shadows of soldiers with rifles
cut across shadows struggling to rebuild.

At nightfall in this captive city
a woman flutters down her spine
the white flag of the day's surrender,

releases to black
the birds of her hair.

The Delivery Man **Tom Duddy**

When the delivery man called after tea
he let in before him such an easterly,
and he stepped down the hallway so briskly,

and he smiled so flushing, yet so briefly
and with such little knowledge of us,
and with such freedom from all accretion,

and with such innocence of all connection,
that our spirits flickered to life at once,
saltatorially. We cleared our throats

in greeting, and before we knew where we were
we had reached consensus on the lengthening
of the days, now that spring was here.

Such rustling, such quick society, such self-
forgetting! In his eyes, we were still citizens
of the world, with everything still to play for.

But then, while the smiles were still breaking
on our faces, he was gone. The house closed in fast
behind him and grew warm again, and airless
and secure. And dreaming once more overcame us.

Remembering the Leaving Cert Kevin Higgins

At times like this; the black
thoughts gathering like jackdaws;
its as if, after all these years,
I'm still the same schoolboy revolutionary,
who'd rather declare war on the free world,
than swot for an honours maths exam.
There I am, still dreading that moment,
when the supervisor says: You may begin;
still slouching down St. Mary's Road
the night before the results arrived,
still hoping against hope the envelope
somehow gets lost in the post.

Flight Alan Jude Moore

Overhead
there are one
or two birds
teasing each other
wings almost clipping
Driving
through the rain
we smoke instead
of speaking
Falling ten feet
or so, drift back up,
they dent the air
and try again
like feathers against a bell

**On the Burning of The
Kirov Ballet Costumes**

(St. Petersburg, September 2003)

Eileen Casey

I imagine them lined up like carcasses
row upon row of tulle
pale in the gauze of silence.

No-one knows quite how it begins,
how firebirds with sequined eyes
curl from the melt of net
leap through shattered glass
to lick red tongues
over an icy skyline.

Perhaps it is a careless flame
thrown down
by watchman or wardrobe mistress
ignites in sheaves of swan,
feathering a sinewy dance
along folds of dry taffeta.
It might be
frictions too long confined
between hoop and bone
flint into a flail of rhinestones
soaked in the heat
of an evening's performance.

GUITAR MUSIC**Liam Guilar**

(For Allan Alexander)

Only the music remembers
the wolves coming down through the trees
the rattling tinker's cart
and the slow steady beat
of the hooves on the road
now the summer camps
are overgrown with houses.

Only the music travels
the back roads through the woods
driving and driven, out and on
by the rhythmic moon
through marshland and wasteland
to the market and fair.
Freak show role players
for an urban fantasy,
the gypsies dance
in the cage of their freedom

Only the music contains
the old man singing stories
and the torches of the mob.
The bundled rags in winter,
and bare feet on the summer grass.
In the exhilarating dance
the lingering, ineffable sadness.

These Lines (*Galway to Dundalk*) Chris Nikkel

For Aoibhe

I think of the line you travelled by train
as a piece of string connecting two tin-cans,

one pressed tightly around my ear, the other
cupped over yours. Then the static space between

Heuston Station and Connolly— you took a bus.
heard there's a tunnel, built as a link, a connection

completing the line-
but never used. Now it is outdated, unsafe— the ribbon

still stretched across the opening like barbed wire.
Tonight when you called to tell me

you made it home safely, and the line
crackled and hummed, our words breaking

in the static, my ear was down to those tracks in the
tunnel,
listening for the crossing train, hearing your voice

echoing through these lines.

Biographical Details

Celeste Augé moved from Ontario, Canada when she was 12 and now lives in Co. Galway, with her husband and son. Her poems have appeared in publications such as *Cúirt Journal* and *Force 10*. She is currently completing a series of poems based on the first year of motherhood.

Laura Treacy Bentley is from Huntington, West Virginia. Her work has appeared in *The New York Quarterly*, *Poetry Ireland Review*, *Rosebud*, *Space and Time*, *The Stinging Fly* (Ireland), *Antietam Review*, *Art Times*, *Eureka Literary Magazine*, and *Wind*, among others

Patricia Burke Brogan is the author of the internationally acclaimed play *Eclipsed* and *Stained Glass at Samhain*. Her work was the subject of two academic papers presented at the recent IASIL conference in NUIG.

Sandra Bunting lives in the city centre with her family, dog, and beautiful blind black cat.

Gerardine Burke lives in Mayo with her family and teaches English and History at 2nd level. Her work has previously been published in *Crannóg*.

Martin Burke is an Irish poet living in Belgium who has been published mainly in the USA and UK. His recent chapbook *The Other Life* has been published by FootHills Publishing (N.Y.) and his play *Six Scenes from a War* has been published by New Theatre Publications (UK)

Eileen Casey is originally from the Midlands, living in Tallaght. She's been published in *The Stinging Fly*, *Poetry Ireland*, *Books Ireland* among others. Her work has also been broadcast on Sunday Miscellany and A Living Word. Awards include The Scottish International Poetry Competition, Listowel Writers Week, Cootehill Literary Awards, Southcounty Dublin Libraries Poetry on the Wall, finalist in 2004 Rattlebag Poetry Slam, among others. She's currently a mature student with Oscail.

Nuala ni Chonchubhair won the inaugural Cúirt New Writing Prize (2004), the Francis Mac Manus Award (2002), the Cecil Day Lewis Award (2003) and was nominated for a Hennessy Award, all for fiction. Her first collection of short fiction *The Wind Across the Grass* has just been published by Arlen House. Last year the same publishers brought out her first collection of poetry. Her poetry and fiction have been published in Ireland, the UK, Canada, the US appearing in publications such as *New Irish Writing*, *The Sunday Tribune*, *Whispers & Shouts*, *Poetry Ireland Review*, *The SHOp*, *The Stinging Fly*, *Northwords*, *Black Mountain Review*, *Garm Lu*, and two US anthologies.

Kevin Donnelly lives and writes in Galway. He read recently at the Over the Edge series in Galway City Library. He is completing a series of poems set in Craigville Beach, Cape Cod.

Tom Duddy teaches in the Philosophy Department at NUI Galway. In 2002 he published an academic book, *A History of Irish Thought* (Routledge).

Jarlath Fahy, a native of Tuam, now lives in Moycullen with his wife and three children.

Maureen Gallagher took part in this year's Poetry Ireland Introduction series of readings. She was recently featured in *Anthology 1*

Eoghan Garvey was born in Monaghan and now lives in Galway.

Liam Guilar was born in Coventry, England, moved to Australia in 1986. He has two collections published. *The Poet's Confession*, a chapbook, and an award winning book called *I'll Howl Before you Bury Me*, available from Interactive Press. Selections and reviews at: <http://www.ipoz.biz/titles/howl.htm>

Jennifer Harrington lives on the Beara Peninsula near Kenmare. She has had her work published in a variety of journals in Ireland and Britain, most recently in *Agenda*, *The Shop*, *The Sunday Tribune*, *Southword*, *Imagine Carillion* and *Pulser*. She won the Hennessey Literary Award for emerging poetry in March 2004.

Catherine Heaney is a native of Galway and a member of the Galway Writers Workshop. Her work has previously appeared in *Crannóg*.

Kevin Higgins has poems forthcoming in *Metre*, *The Shop*, *Gargoyle* (USA), *The Antigoneish Review* (Canada) etc. He reviews poetry for *Books In Canada*, *Vallum*, *Metre*, *Poetry Quarterly Review* (UK) & *The Galway Advertiser*. www.kevinhiggins.net

Caolinn Hughes was recently published in Annir's Anthology 1

Andy Johnston is originally from Mayo. He lectured for many years at GMIT. His chapbook, *The Spirit's Too Much With Us* was published by Poetry Monthly Press in 2003. A selected poems is due shortly.

Pat Jourdan's recent collection of poetry is *Turpentine*, Motet Press, 2004. she was recently featured in *Anthology 1*.

Mary Madec has lived in Galway for most of her adult life but was born in Mayo. She does research and teaching at Third Level.

Margaret Maguire lives and writes in Galway.

John Martin is a woodturner / sculptor, living in Moycullen.

David Meagher is a psychiatrist working in Limerick originally from Cavan (Baillieborough). He has had poems published in *Poetry Ireland Review*, *The Burning Bush*, *The SHOp* (in press), *Psychopoetica*, and *The Irish Medical Journal*.

Georgina Milne is an 18 year old student from Belfast. She has been published in Irish Journals and in a national Anthology.

Alan Jude Moore was born in Dublin in 1973. Publications include *Poetry Ireland Review*, *The Stinging Fly*, *The Burning Bush*, *Books Ireland*, *Ropes*, *The Sunday Tribune* and *Kestrel*. First collection, *Black State Cars*, will be published by Salmon in 2004, having been selected for the Salmon Publication Prize. He lives in Russia.

Sadie Murphy lives and writes in Galway.

Chris Nikkel is Canadian and a frequent visitor to Galway.

Tony O'Dwyer's collection is *Off Guard* Bradshaw Books, Cork 2003.

Mary O'Rourke has published a collection of poems, *My Mirror was Cracked*. A second collection is due in September. Her work has appeared in *The SHOP* and *Ireland's Own*.

Breid Sibley lives in Loughrea. She has been a prizewinner in the Baffle and Cathal Buí poetry competitions. She has been published in *Ropes* and *Time Haiku*.

Elizabeth Kate Switaj is originally from Seattle. She completed her BA at the Evergreen State College in 1999 and her MFA at New College of California in 2004. Her work has appeared in *Lucid Moon* and *The Iconoclast*. She currently resides in Anjo City in Japan's Aichi Prefecture.

John Walsh was born in Derry and has taught there and in Germany. He has been published in *Flaming Arrows* and *The Black Mountain Review*. He is also a singer and songwriter, living in Galway.

Peter Waring was born in 1947 in Belfast, educated at Methodist College and QUB. Worked as a draughtsman, art teacher and nurseryman and is now retired. A collection of his poetry was published by Lapwing.