







## Crannóg 23 spring 2010

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*Sandra Bunting  
Gerardine Burke  
Jarlath Fahy  
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*Published by*

**Crannóg Media  
Galway Language Centre  
Bridge Mills  
Galway  
Ireland**

*editor@crannogmagazine.com  
www.crannogmagazine.com*

*ISSN 1649-4865*

*Cover images: Sabine Springer  
Cover design: Sandra Bunting  
Production: Wordsonthestreet*



*Printed by e-print Ltd. Dublin*

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*Crannóg acknowledges the assistance of:*



*Galway City Council Galway Language Centre Mill St Study Centre*

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# CONTENTS

## FICTION

<b>Karen J. McDonnell</b>	
An Chúirt .....	11
<b>Dustin M. Hoffman</b>	
Waiting For Landing .....	14
Angel In The Pit .....	16
<b>Susan McKinley</b>	
The Girl In Paris .....	17
<b>Gerry Boland</b>	
When Peter Came Home .....	22
<b>Tanya Farrelly</b>	
When Black Dogs Sing .....	26
<b>Miriam Moreno Perez</b>	
Gladiolus .....	31

## POETRY

<b>Orla Fay</b>	
The Moon In March .....	35
<b>Maureen Weldon</b>	
Rhydymwyn .....	36
<b>Steve Shilling</b>	
Last Rose Of The Season .....	37
<b>Mark O'Flynn</b>	
Nets .....	38
<b>Laura Synnott</b>	
Seashell .....	39
<b>Noel King</b>	
My Soliloquy Talks Back .....	40
<b>Barbara De Franceschi</b>	
The Dance .....	42
<b>Mark Murphy</b>	
The Butterfly Lovers .....	43
<b>Deirdre Grimes</b>	
The Fisherman's Wife .....	44
<b>Mike Gallagher</b>	
Dreamweaver .....	45
<b>Maureen Gallagher</b>	
View From The Moon .....	46
<b>Nicholas Friedman</b>	
Gleaning .....	47

<b>Jarlath Fahy</b>	
Fighting .....	48
<b>Honor Duff</b>	
King Hawk .....	50
<b>Susan Kelly</b>	
Roaming Down Main Street .....	51
<b>Siobhan Daffy</b>	
Green Fingers .....	52
<b>Martin Burke</b>	
In The Year Of The Hawk .....	54
<b>Sandra Bunting</b>	
Thin Resurrection .....	55
<b>Marianne Perron</b>	
Cancer .....	56
<b>Ed Madden</b>	
The Language Of Flowers .....	58
<b>Aideen Henry</b>	
Slipstream .....	59
<b>Bibliographical Details</b> .....	62

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FICTION



Those days recall themselves to me now. I bring them up in my head and see them as if I was sitting in front of yesterday's dinner. I was on the edge of fifteen when the strangers arrived. Why would you want to know about it now, I wonder, when I'm nearly seventy-five and all those people from that time in their graves. All gone. That's what we'd say to Sorcha, when the porridge was finished. All gone, Babóg, imithe. The world turns, and comes around on itself, I suppose.

It was May of nineteen thirteen when they arrived. The weather was bad for that time of the year. I do remember that. They came from the town side, over the bridge on an ass and cart, with all the fine wooden boxes up behind them. My brother Peadar, who was eighteen, first caught sight of them. There was a man with them, he was from the University. He spoke Irish, English and the language of the two ladies. French. That's right, French they were. That was a rare sight for us in those days. Two French women, travelling on their own, mind you. On their own!

The man, his name won't come to me now, told us that the ladies were at the Claddagh to take photographs. Of us! I was just out of school. I had a bit of English, but girl it was all Irish there, then. One of the women was small. She wore the tiniest boots I've ever seen, then or now. Such leather in those boots. She smiled and pointed at herself and said 'Maddelen'. Our baba, Sorcha, pointed at my mother and said, 'Mamaí'. We laughed and sure that broke the ice.

The other woman now, she was taller. She had fine, wide shoulders. The way she lifted the wooden boxes out of that cart! Some of the boxes had legs. We hadn't seen a camera before then. It was like a strange boxy animal with one big eye. I said 'You're welcome here', in English and Maddelen smiled at me. 'Thank you', said she. Only it sounded like 'Zank you'. We got on like a house on fire after that. She introduced us to her friend, Marguerite. Some from the Claddagh called them Maddelen and Margaret. I learned the way to say their names. Maddel-en and Margur-eet. They had lovely smiles, both of those girls. I can call them girls now. I was the girl then. I think Peadar fell in love, with both of them.

For some days they stayed. The wind was so bad they had to hold down the legs of the camera box when they were taking the photographs. We stayed still and counted to ten in our heads. A h-aon, a dó, a trí, 's mar sin. Sorcha used to close her eyes when she was counting and they'd be trying to get her to open them. Then we

would all start laughing, and the French ladies would do the same. They took a photo of me, in my finery, my red cloak that my aunt Nora made and my mother had trimmed for me. I sat on the wall outside the cottage, my fresh clean skirt hooked up over my red petticoat and one of Mاماí's coloured shawls around the front of me. I had my cloak over my shoulders and the hood up. I didn't know what to do with my hands, so I held them in my lap. I remember crossing my right leg over the left. My mother was shaking her head and pointing at it, but the French ladies shook their hands to say it was grand, let me be. Then I counted to ten.

Because it was a Sunday and the fishing boats were in, my father, Peadar and Uncle Patsy took the ladies off in the boat. They went up the bay to Spiddal to our cousins. They were Kellys too. I know they took photographs there. My aunt, she wore the red shawl, they loved red those girls. Did I tell you those photographs were in colour? Well, they were. Very different for those days I hear. Anyway, they loved the red. My aunt wore her red shawl and sat for them at the old table with some of fringe-work. Now, you won't know about that, girl. A woman would work at putting fringes on shawls and scarves and maybe a belt. My aunt in Spiddal had her own wool, and she got seventeen and a half-pence, old money, for each shawl she fringed. It took her near three days to finish one alone. Ah, you may smile, girl, you may smile, but that's how it was then.

They had a good day out in Spiddal. The wind blew up when they were coming home and they had a hard time rowing. The wind was with them but turning in towards the strand they had to turn against the waves. The boat started to take on water. They were so near the strand that some of the other men could see them and managed to get a currach out to them. They got the ladies in to the other boat and my Uncle Patsy. Peadar made sure that the ladies boxes went in – he was worried that the photographs would be ruined. The currach was heavy now so they pushed off and shouted in for another to come out to them. Those men were kings of the sea, they were powerful strong. The two currachs passed each other, one heavy bringing home the women, the other one fighting the tide to get to Dadaí and Peadar. All from the cottages were out on the strand now. The wind bet our faces and forced tears from our eyes. The boat went over. Only Dadaí came up. He went down again and again. I could hear his shouting for Peadar on the wind. Then the currach men reached him and dragged him out of the sea. So. That was that. Peadar, imithe.

We got never got him back. And it all happened so close to the strand, you'd think the sea would have given him up. Girl, don't look like that. It was a long time ago. The Claddagh, sure it's a name only: all history now. That row of cottages seems like two hundred years ago now. Ahh, they were great girls. They would come into

the cottages and sit by the fire and drink tea, as if they'd been doing it all their lives. My mother was very fond of them. They cried with her, for Peadar.

You know, they took a photograph of my aunt Nora and her youngest outside their cottage. I can see the lumpy white walls, clear as day, when I close my eyes. And the neat mousy brown thatch. And I see my grandfather, Dadaí, and my cousin Tomaí, them all in a line on the low wall, counting to ten. History now. All of them. He was never the same, my poor father, after we lost Peadar to the sea.

I've seen you smile while I talked into this tape recorder for you. You find it difficult to believe the stories I've told you on your visits. Find those photographs. Find Mian Kelly on the edge of fifteen. I had black hair, like all the women in our family. Those French girls used to joke about us being leftovers from the Spanish Armada. I'd love to see those photographs. The man from the University told us that they worked for a man in Paris; that lots of people were out in the world taking photos for him. Imagine, I'm in a box in Paris, or in an old photo album, I suppose. I've never seen Paris. You go to Paris, girl. I wonder, now, would you be able to see my chilblains in the photograph? It was a very cold May in nineteen thirteen.

We brought cans of beer embossed with silver mountains over top blue aluminium skylines, as many as we could steal from Toby's dad's fridge and stash in our jeans and coat pockets. We carried our cargo down 89 to a tight dirt road that dead-ended at the small airport outside our town. From the trunk of Conner's '82 Crown Vic, we pulled flimsy green lawn chairs and set them in a half-circle of four at midnight to wait and watch for planes to come in. We waited almost every night. Seamus said drug runners used the tiny airstrip to bring in massive shipments of high-grade pot, that if we ever saw a plane land, they'd gift garbage bags of the stuff to keep our mouths shut. It happened to one of his brother's friends a few years ago. It could happen to us.

We planned it all out. We'd have a beer waiting for them, raised high to flash the arctic mountain-scape of beery refreshment, as if we were spectators at a marathon offering little cups of water, cheering on the last leg of their race. They'd guzzle, the brilliant tracks of red and white airstrip lights glinting and curving around silver cans suckled by their chapped, nerve-shattered lips. Then, they'd unload their precious freight, not neglecting to give us a generous reward. We'd be their heroes. And they'd be ours.

Though a single plane never landed, we vowed to wait, forever if needed, to see the airstrip burst into light, to greet the greatest guests our farm town would ever know. This was our chance.

One night in August, Toby grounded for missing mountain cans, Conner fixing his transmission, and Seamus writing a makeup essay about *Hamlet*—a deal brokered to earn him a D in English so he could still graduate, even though we'd walked in June—I brought a girl to our airport. I drove her in my father's new Silverado. We didn't have lawn chairs or beer, but we sipped from a glass bottle with no label half-filled with whiskey. I told her our plans for planes, our expectations, our dreams, as we lay with our backs to the cool grass, legs propped against the chainlink fence surrounding the airstrip. I wanted to impress her, to bring heat to her soft shoulder skin that I nudged my shoulder against, but the only heat came from whiskey burning in my stomach.

As I considered plans for my lips to lull toward hers, to finally cash in my summer of waiting at the airport, a row of white lights snapped on in the distance. I bolted upright, my lips cool and dry. Another row of white, then red, sketched paths

over a black field. My eyes cast to the sky. I ached for engine hum. I reached for a lawn chair that wasn't there to steady my legs. She didn't notice and emptied the bottle in one final drag, then twined her bare toes through chainlink diamonds. An hour later and still no plane, no landing, no drug runners, no lovers, just the two of us clinging to the fence—my fingers and her toes.

She got bored, and I drove her home. I never told the guys what I didn't see, and they'd never know they missed lights carving through flat, dark field. I'll never know if a plane sputtered overhead that night. They were lucky to not have come so close. But had Seamus and Toby and Conner been there, we would have waited all night for what was ahead.

Carla stands in the back yard and stares up at the sky. Occasionally the clouds part to reveal a sliver of moon. It casts its light on the wooden fence that separates Carla's vegetable patch from the rest of the yard, but mostly the clouds cover the sky and it is impossible to see the surroundings. For Carla, this is not a problem. She knows every inch of this land, the position of every tree and where the earth is uneven. She walks it every night and doesn't need the moonlight to guide her.

As Carla stands there she smokes a cigarette. The smoke spirals upwards, towards the cloudy sky. She puts out a hand and absently strokes the black dog that stands by her side, black as the night that surrounds them.

'Where is he, Bobby?' she says. 'Where's my boy?'

The dog pushes his face into her hand. She feels the dampness of his nose, his rough tongue as he slides it along her palm. She runs her hand along his back, buries her fingers in his thick fur and feels him pressing against her.

In the shed, Carla turns on the light. Sheila lifts her head off the blanket in her bed and looks at Carla with tired eyes. Six black pups nuzzle her body. Their tiny paws press into her stomach as they squirm and nibble, pawing and clawing at each other in an attempt to get their mother's milk. Every so often, she pushes them away roughly with her nose.

Carla kneels down and rubs Sheila's ears. She looks at the pups. Some of them are sleeping, the others constantly move depriving the older dog of sleep.

'Don't worry girl, I won't touch them,' she says.

She knows the protective instinct of this mother for her young.

Carla turns out the light, steps outside and pushes a brick against the door to keep it ajar. Slowly, she walks back towards the house, the black dog at her side, his paws softly beating a rhythm on the pathway through the grass.

A light burns in the kitchen. Carla pictures Ray inside. She hears the tap running and guesses that he's making a last pot of tea before going to bed. It's strange, him being here. His coat hanging on the end of the banister, his boots beneath the stairs where they used to be. She stops in the hall and looks at them, farmers' boots, mud caked into the soles and sides; tracks on the lino where he came in from the yard.

The kitchen is warm. He stands at the sink scalding the teapot. He turns as he hears her come in.

‘Will you have a drop of tea?’ he says.

‘Sure why not.’

She sits at the kitchen table. The dog lies at her foot. She takes a Digestive biscuit from the packet, breaks it in two and gives him half. He arrived three months ago. They had been alerted to his presence by his late-night howling on the doorstep. She had put up posters around the neighbourhood, but no one had claimed him and Lucas had begged her to keep him. The dog developed an allegiance to Carla and had followed her ever since.

She watches as Ray takes two mugs out of the press, his back to her. He knows where everything’s kept. Why wouldn’t he? It was his home for almost ten years. It feels like a lifetime ago.

‘Any news?’ Ray asks.

He sits opposite her, pours tea into her mug and then his own. She shakes her head and looks away so that he doesn’t see the fear in her eyes. She knows it has been there lately. She’s seen it as she’s stood in front of the mirror undressing for bed, trying to block out the voices that tell her that Lucas might never come home.

Ray sighs, lifts the mug to his lips and drinks loudly. For a short time they sit in silence, each one afraid to voice their fears. When he arrived three weeks before, they had sat at this table and she had told him everything she could about the last time she had seen their son. He’d made suggestions, the two of them carrying out their own investigation that always led to the same place. Nowhere.

‘Have you been up at the Reynolds’ place?’

Ray puts his mug down and looks straight at her.

‘I’ve been outside checking on the dogs.’

‘You know you can’t keep doing this, Carla.’

‘I’m not doing anything,’ she says, but she doesn’t look at him when she speaks.

‘Tom Reynolds told me that you’ve been going up there. That he’s seen you standing outside the house at night.’

She says nothing.

‘He says it’ll have to stop. That he doesn’t know anything about Lucas.’

‘He didn’t just disappear, Ray.’ Her voice trembles.

‘You can’t go accusing innocent people.’

‘Why not?’ she says.

He sighs, exasperated, and a small, rational part of her knows that there is some truth in what he’s saying, that she has no idea what has happened to their son.

‘He felt bad telling me. He said he can’t imagine what we must be going through, but you can’t go prying into other people’s lives, Carla.’

She looks at the ground.

‘You must think I’m crazy,’ she says.

‘No.’

Ray stands up and rinses his mug at the sink. He pauses as he walks past, squeezes her shoulder and she almost puts a hand up to touch his. She raises it a little and then lets it fall in her lap again.

Upstairs, Carla hears him bumping around in Lucas’s room. She imagines him getting undressed, sitting on the edge of the bed, looking around at his son’s things and knowing that he doesn’t belong there. She pictures him spinning the globe on Lucas’s desk, jabbing it with his finger and wondering where on the earth his son could be.

Carla sits there and drains the last of her tea. She glances in the bottom of the cup where the tealeaves are scattered in an uneven pattern. Her grandmother used to read these leaves. She remembers women coming to the house in the hope of uncovering their fortunes. She’d never believed in such things. She still doesn’t. She doesn’t believe that some gypsy woman can reveal the whereabouts of her son, but she is almost desperate enough to try.

Overhead, the bumping gives way to silence. Ray has gone to bed. She stands up, slowly, rinses the mug and hangs it on the wooden stand. She takes the black dog’s lead from a drawer and he rises knowing that it’s time.

The torch bobs as she walks, it’s milky beam illuminating the hedges at the sides of the narrow road. The dog pulls ahead, his breathing fast and rasping in the night air. She walks quickly. Her footsteps making no sound in her canvas shoes. She keeps to the middle of the country road. She has no fear of traffic. Few cars pass this way, and she will see their lights as soon as they turn the bend at the top of the hill. The night is thick around them. They push on, the dog leading the woman through the night.

Eventually, he slows down. He stops every now and then to smell at the edge of the ditch, pricks up his ears when he hears a rustling in the hedges. Carla listens too. She knows that it’s a creature, maybe a rat scurrying through the muddy waters, but every time the dog stops to sniff the air, her heart quickens and she tries not to picture her son’s body, cold and muddied, lying at the bottom of the ditch covered by brambles.

Every night the woman and the dog trace the boy’s footsteps. She knows that whatever happened, happened along this stretch of road, the half-mile between their house and the Reynolds’. They have combed the area, search teams with sniffer-dogs, they’ve spoken to all the residents in a ten-mile radius and they have uncovered

nothing. Not one person saw Lucas walking to the Reynolds' house that evening.

Carla and the dog stop at the end of the laneway that leads onto Tom Reynolds's land. His red jeep is parked outside the garage. She stands there and watches the house in silence, the dog motionless by her side. The curtains are open and she can see into the living room. Reynolds's wife is there sitting in front of the television. She is alone. There is no sign of Reynolds himself or of the boy. Every time she sees him she feels a tightness in her throat that makes it difficult to breathe. If it weren't for the boy, she thinks, Lucas wouldn't have taken that road.

Carla hears a noise. She stands back, crouches down low, her hand steady on the dog's lead. She presses his back gently and he lies down beside her. Tom Reynolds appears from around the side of the house. His son walks behind him. He opens the back door of the jeep and the boy stands there, quietly. Carla strains to see what they're doing. She hears her pulse hammering in her ears. He takes something from the back of the jeep, but she is too far away to see what it is. He slams the door shut, and leads the boy to the garage. He shifts the door and gestures for him to enter. The boy walks inside, his head down. She hears voices. They have vanished from view now. She thinks she hears a boy whimpering and she moves forward instinctively, every nerve-end taut.

She keeps to the shadows of the trees, grips the dog's lead tightly. She is afraid of what she might see inside, but she is determined to find out what has happened to her son. It is dark in the garage. Reynolds has left the light off. She creeps nearer. She is within feet of the door now. The whimpering continues, but it is not the voice of her son. In a corner at the back of the garage, she sees Reynolds. He is crouching over something. Someone.

'No, Dad, please!'

Reynolds's son's voice is a whisper.

'I won't say anything, I promise. Dad, please don't.'

He is crying now. Reynolds doesn't say anything. She hears the clink of his belt buckle as he removes it from his trousers, and she stands there unable to move. As the leather cracks on the boy's back, he yells out in pain. The black dog shifts at her side and a low growl escapes his lips. Carla hushes him, her mouth close to his ear.

She stands up, her legs shaking. She considers rushing into the garage to stop this hideous beating, but who know what Reynolds might do. The only way she can save the boy is to get away from this place, to tell someone what she has seen. They will have to believe her now. They will have to help her to find Lucas.

As they walk up the lane approaching her house, Carla sees a figure at the gate. Her heart quickens. For a moment she wonders if Reynolds saw her after all. If he

decided to follow her here, took a shortcut through the fields to reach the house before she arrived. She takes the black dog off the lead, expecting him to rush forward. Instead he continues to walk at the same pace.

‘Where’ve you been, Carla?’

Ray’s voice rings out clear in the night. He stands at the gate looking out across the land and she almost runs to reach him. She tries to speak, to tell him about Reynolds, but instead the tears come, hot and fast, and she knows, that as sure as the black dog will continue to walk by her side, Lucas will never come home.

POETRY



One thing you can say about the razor wire  
when the overnight spiders cast their fishing nets  
and the early morning light strikes  
at just the right angle,  
for a moment the fence is meshed  
in shimmering colour like something woven  
or stumbled upon, decrepit in a swamp,  
and everything to be faced on the other side  
for a moment disappears.

---

THE BUTTERFLY LOVERS

MARK MURPHY

---

We've been stricken by an armada  
of butterflies

my love and I  
were dozing in the garden  
under the red berry trees and pines  
when our friends came to pass

Master Chuang knows  
only too well  
the fate  
of lovers dozing  
when the butterfly happens past  
how the Cloudless Sulphur  
and human creature  
dream as one  
with imperfect acuity  
becoming as  
indivisible as man and woman  
sooner still  
than the echoes  
of words

---

THE FISHERMAN'S WIFE

DEIRDRE GRIMES

---

You brought your wife in  
in a net  
a dark treasure captured at sea  
she had been tossing from wave to wave with abandon  
so you took her home.

Her nakedness tastes clear and briny  
like licking mollusks  
skin smooth sleek and cold  
she still had seaweed in her fleshy crevices  
seashells for hair clips tangled

She had lived windswept  
on some distant rocky outcrop in some far off bay  
which you can still see in the background of her eyes  
now she lies on your hearth rug  
leaving a pool of sea water on your floor.

Each night you take her moist body,  
beautiful to behold  
shining in the candlelight or  
glowing by dying embers  
she gazes into you  
and out the other side  
and beyond you to the window  
which looks out on the sea.

## BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS

## **Biographical details**

**Gerry Boland** has had poems published in *The Stinging Fly*, *The SHOp*, *Southword*, *The Stony Thursday Book*, among others. He came third in the 2008 Francis MacManus Short Story Competition, and is included in the 2009 FISH anthology. He was the recipient in 2001 of a literary bursary from Dublin City Council. He has had two travel books on Dublin published, the most recent of which was *Strollers Guide To Dublin* (Gill&Macmillan,1999).

**Sandra Bunting** grew up in Canada and now lives in Galway. Her poetry collection *Identified in Trees* was published in 2006 by Marram Press. Besides poetry, she writes fiction, works in journalism and is involved in printmaking, batik and silkpainting.

**Siobhán Daffy** is based in the Glenasmole Valley, Dublin. She is interested in poetry as an oral art form and performs her poems accompanying herself with percussion and ngoni African harp. Her poems have appeared in *The Sunday Tribune*, *New Irish Writing*, *The SHOp Magazine*, *Southword*, *West 47* and in two anthologies of emerging Dublin poets *Night & Day* and *County Lines*. She has recently performed at the Arts Council Literary Tent, Electric Picnic 2009 and as part of the Redline Festival, Dublin.

**Barbara De Franceschi** is an Australian poet who lives in the outback mining town of Broken Hill. Her work has been published widely in Australia and in five different counties. Barbara is also a performance poet and performs the spoken word at festivals and numerous venues. Her first collection of poetry *Lavender Blood* was published in 2004 her second collection *Strands* in May 2009.

**Honor Duff** was born in Dublin and has lived for several years in Cavan. She was the 2009 winner of the Caomhnú National Poetry Competition, and has been published in *Boyne Berries* and *Windows Authors & Artists*.

**Jarlath Fahy's** first collection is *The Man Who Was Haunted By Beautiful Smells* (Wordsonthestreet 2007).

**Tanya Farrelly** is a graduate of NUI Maynooth where she completed a Masters Degree in English Literature. She currently works as an English Language teacher. Her work was shortlisted for the Hennessy Awards in 2002, and also for the Francis MacManus Awards. Her stories have been published in literary journals such as *Whispers and Shouts* and *West 47 online*. Her work has also been broadcast on RTE's Sunday Miscellany. She has won numerous prizes in writing competitions, including runner-up prize in the William Trevor International Short Story Competition 2008, and the Mitchelstown Short Story Competition 2009. She is currently doing a PhD in Creative Writing.

**Orla Fay** is a member of Boyne Writers Group. She has been published in *The Sharp Review*, *Boyne Berries*, *Crannog*, *Revival* and in *New Poems of Oriel*.

**Nicholas Friedman** works as Assistant Editor of *The Barefoot Muse*, an online journal of formal and metrical verse. His poetry has appeared or is forthcoming in *Measure*, *Light Quarterly*, *Annals of Internal Medicine*, *Blue Unicorn*, *The Raintown Review*, and *Census*. He lives in Syracuse, NY.

**Maureen Gallagher** lives in Galway. Her first collection of poetry, entitled *Calling the Tune*, was published by Wordsonthestreet in December 2008. In 2009 she won the Leyney Writers' Short Story Award, and was shortlisted for the Varilux Short Story Award and the Golden Pen Short Story Award. She was also on the shortlist for the Swift (Saggart) Poetry Award, the iYeats Poetry Award and the Swift (Trim) Satire Award. Her essay "The Philosophy of Art" features in the current *Cork Literary Review*. Her work will feature in the forthcoming *Cinnamon Anthology*.

**Mike Gallagher** was born on Achill Island, County Mayo, Ireland. He has been published in, among others, *The Doghouse Book of Ballad Poems*, *Irish Haiku Society*, *The World Haiku Review*, *Revival*, *The Stony Thursday*, *VerbSap*, *The Poetry Porch* and *The Swarhmore Literary Review*. He is a founder member of the Seanacháí Writers Group, Listowel.

**Deirdre Grimes** holds a degree in Fine art, Sculpture from Limerick school of Art and design. She has been published in *Electronic acorn*, *The Burning Bush*, *American Tanka*, *Aha! Poetry*, *The Heron's Nest*, *Midnightedition*, *The Creel*. Her work has also been translated and published in Croatia.

**Aideen Henry** has been published in numerous journals including *Crannóg*, *West 47*, *the Shop*, *Revival*, *Stony Thursday Book*, *Ropes*, *Southword*, *The Cúirt Annual*, *The Sunday Tribune*. Her first poetry collection will be published by Salmon in 2010. She completed the MA in Writing at NUI, Galway in 2008. A short story, *Antemortem*, featured in *The Town of Fiction*, a short story anthology launched at Cúirt in April 2009. A short story, *Morning Surgery*, was shortlisted for the Aindreas McEntee Prize.

**Dustin M. Hoffman** has an MFA in fiction from Bowling Green State University. He is currently working on his PhD in creative writing at Western Michigan University. His work has recently appeared or is forthcoming in *Blue Earth Review*, *Other Poetry*, *Conclave: A Journal of Character*, *Black Warrior Review*, and *Gargoyle*.

**Susan Kelly** is a Mayo based poet. She has been published locally and in *Cyphers* magazine and has won prizes for her work at the Leyney Writer's Festival, Tubbercurry and the Raftery Festival, Kiltimagh. She is a member of the Westport Writer's group.

**Noel King** was born and lives in Tralee, Ireland. His poems, stories and reviews have been published in journals and magazines in twenty-eight countries. He is editor of *Doghouse*, a poetry and short stories imprint. His collection, *Prophecy of the Past*, appears from Salmon in 2010

**Karen J. McDonnell** lives in the Burren, having returned to her home county of Clare after twenty-five years living and working in Dublin. She has worked in International Banking, as an actress and voice-over artist, and is currently an under-graduate at NUI Galway studying Arts and Writing. In February, 2009 her poem *Vronsky* won a competition organized by the Clare Three-Legged Stool poets.

**Susan McKinley** is an Australian writer who wishes she lived in Galway. She is currently travelling around the UK and Europe before heading home to Australia to undertake further study.

**Ed Madden** is an associate professor of English at the University of South Carolina. His first book of poetry, *Signals*, won the 2007 South Carolina Poetry Book Prize. His poems have also been published in *Los Angeles Review*, *Southern Humanities Review*, *Poetry Ireland*, and other journals, as well as *Best New Poets 2007* and the 2007 Notre Dame anthology, *The Book of Irish American Poetry: From the Eighteenth Century to the Present*. He is currently a research fellow at the NUIG Centre for Irish Studies.

**Mark Murphy** has been published by *Poetry New Zealand*, *Apollo's Lyre (Canada)*, *Quarterly Literary Review Singapore*, *Poetry Scotland*, *The Warwick Review (UK)*, *Istanbul Literature Review (Turkey)*, *The Paris Atlantic Journal (France)*, *The American Dissident (US)*, *The Tampa Review (US)*, *Left Curve (US)* and *The Stinging Fly (Ireland)*.

**Mark O'Flynn's** poetry and short stories have appeared in a wide range of magazines. He has published three collections of poems, most recently *What Can Be Proven* in 2007. His second novel, *Grassdogs*, was published by Harper Collins in 2006. He has also had seven plays professionally produced. He lives in the Blue Mountains in New South Wales.

**Miriam Moreno Perez** is an author and a journalism and modern languages teacher. She has produced and presented a radio programme in Cornwall (England), *The Literary Show*, exclusively dedicated to the short story. She has written several collections of short stories and a collection of essays. She writes both in Spanish and English.

**Marianne Perron** is a graduate of the Concordia English Literature and Creative Writing program. She has published a poetry collection with Montreal's With Words Press. Her work has appeared numerous times in *Soliloquies Anthology*. She is the Editor-in-Chief of the *Grasshopper Reads* online book review, and is a freelance story analyst and reviewer. A film buff, she writes a column for the website *Sound on Sight*, and her screenplay *La Bonne Soeur* was a finalist in SODEC's Cours Ecrit Ton Court.

**Steve Shilling** has been published in numerous journals, including in *DASH Journal*, *Reed Magazine*, *Caveat Lector*, and *Red Wheelbarrow*. A graduate of Hope College in Holland, Michigan, he has taught high school English for the last twelve years

**Sabine Springer** was born in Germany. She came to Ireland in 1990. In 1999 she graduated from N.U.I. Galway with an Hons. degree in science and also had her first solo exhibition of prints. She began printmaking at RTC Galway in 1996 during her university studies of Zoology, Botany and Geology and was immediately strongly attracted to the technique, in particular etching. Not surprising, as both her grandfather and great-grandfather worked as master engravers in Stuttgart.

**Laura Synnott** was born in Dublin in November 1980. She attended Presentation Secondary School in Terenure and studied English and History at Trinity College Dublin. She now works as a secondary school teacher in Colaiste Chraobh Abhann Co. Wicklow.

**Maureen Weldon** lives in North Wales near Chester. Her most recent book: *Breakfast At Kilumney*, is published by Poetry Monthly Press. She is widely published in Small Press magazines and journals, including: *The Sons of Camus Writers International*, *Poetry Cornwall*, *Poetry Scotland*, *Roundyhouse*, *FIRE*, *Poetry Monthly*. She has won a number of poetry awards, including Highly Commended for The 2007 Elizabeth Longford Poetry Competition, for the Society of Women Writers & Journalists of which she is a member.