The Bangor Literary Journal

Issue four: August 2018

Featured Poet: Christine Murray
Featured Writer: Simon Maltman
Featured Artist: Terry Bradley
Editors’ Welcome

Greeting readers, welcome to issue four of The Bangor Literary Journal. We are pleased to bring you another beautifully-packed issue of our journal and even more delighted to be launching it as part of Open House Festival.

In this issue, we are thrilled to feature internationally renowned poet Christine Murray, who is also the founder of Poethead. We talk to her about her inspirations, what projects she is working on at the moment and what she has planned in the future, in regards to her new book and Poethead.

Our featured writer is prominent Northern Irish Crime writer Simon Maltman, who chats with us about the explosion of ‘Ulster Noir’. Simon discusses what it feels like to be both a writer and a musician, and how the two entities can complement each other, yet require totally different approaches.

In addition, the unstoppable and internationally acclaimed artist, Terry Bradley, took time out of his busy schedule to talk to us about his motivation as a painter and tell us about the exciting events forthcoming in his new Bangor Gallery space.

And of course, all of this excitement sits happily alongside our hand-picked selection of exceptional poetry, flash fiction, photography and art.

As always, we hope you enjoy and feel inspired by what you find within these pages!

Kind Regards

Amy and Paul
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Christine Murray lives in Dublin with her two children Tadhg and Anna. Her poetry has been widely published, both in print and online, in chapbooks, anthologies and journals. She founded and curates Poethead; a poetry blog which is dedicated to platforming work by women poets, their translators and editors. She is an active member of Fired! Irish Women Poets and The Canon which seeks to celebrate and draw awareness to the rich cultural heritage of Irish women poets through awareness-raising and reading.
Christine, thank you for taking the time to chat with us. Can you tell us when you first discovered your passion for writing? Did you always want to be a writer?

Thanks Amy! I do not think it is a question of always wanting or desiring something. I know that I have always had a notebook of one kind or another in my hand. I worked as a woodcutter, an artist (etching and dry-point) a stonecutter and a writer. My first recognition as a writer came at school, when an essay that I had written was read to all the classes. Up to that point, I had had a teacher who red-marked everything, she had retired and a new teacher brought with her a new perspective on creativity which I enjoyed. My grammar still suffers, but it loosened me concerning my writing. The idea of making books came much later, in my twenties when I had my own library and wanted to put my own books on the shelves.

Who has been your main influence within your own work?

I have admired the work of many women poets over quite a few years now, my first exposure to serious writing by women artists was in UCD. We were reading ‘Aurora Leigh’ by Elizabeth Barrett-Browning. I spent a lot of time in the shelves exploring Barrett-Browning’s work and reading about her life, she intrigued me. Her life story is fascinating, from her previously quiet existence to her elopement in her forties, her exile, her family’s rejection of her on the instigation of their father and her endless perseverance in the face of incredible odds through health issues, her addiction, miscarriages, isolation and exile. When you begin to research and read about your favourite writer, it slips their work into context, her fame was hard won and came at great cost. Somehow, Elizabeth led me to Sexton and Plath. I always questioned why we did not study these women seriously. I skipped a lot of classes and lost myself in their worlds, a lot.

Not only are you a writer, but you are also the founder and editor of Poethead. For anyone who doesn't already know, what is Poethead and why did you start it?

Poethead is a website founded in 2008 as a result of my drive to share the work of women writers that I admired. The first thing about Poethead was that it was conceived to be celebratory. The second thing was, as a working writer, I deal with many issues that the poets discuss and email with me about. There can often be years between book publications, but all the time the poet is writing and working. How does the poet remain visible when they can be working away at edits, rewrites, book creation and work/family life? We do have magazines and journals, but there are accessibility issues inherent in print. The internet represents a huge opportunity to platform and celebrate the work of Irish women writers. They irony of it is, that I can compress and archive the site in seconds, but it has taken a decade to create.
Christine, what projects or events are you working on at the minute?

I have a job and a family, so I tend to keep my events and projects to a minimum, in order to be available to them. I will be doing some events with Fired! Irish Women Poets and The Canon, the Aspects festival is one of these. The book is forthcoming in October with Turas Press and I am working on a new book too, at the moment. It was started during the summer months and I really need to work on the structure of the second chapter. Winter is my writing time, as I have a little more time in the morning to focus, due to my kids’ school and college routines. Summer tends to be very scattered and unstructured in terms of finding writing time.

Your book is being released in October, tell us about it.

Bind is a single poem, a book that is divided into chapters or sections. I began writing poetry in series and sequences and I soon moved onto making book-length poems. Bind is not a collection in the traditional sense, it charts a progress through four chapters. Each chapter of the book is concerned in one or two details of a progress, from sleeping to waking, for instance. From dreamy observation and processing, to confrontation of the image: a flower, a claw, a feather. The poem ends with a lament for dream. It’s title is derived from the triple lock or ‘bound’ series of words that occur through the first chapter.

Finally, Christine, have you any other future plans that you want to divulge to us?

Just my new book, which could take a year or maybe two. It is percolating but not divulging itself. I have outlined 3 chapters and a coda. Because of my process, this may change. I keep everything very fluid when I begin a book. I have four notebooks at this time. One parent book for the entire, and three for the working sections. I sketch ideas and images into the books, depending on the theme and hope that it will actually come together. The working title which I am not discussing now, was a bit of a surprise to me, but I am going with it.
Christine Murray’s Book Publications:

- “Cycles,” (Lapwing Press, 2013)
- “The Blind” (Oneiros Books, 2013)
- “Signature,” (Bone Orchard Press, 2014)

Anthologies representing her work include:

- “And Agamemnon Dead: An Anthology of Early 21st Century Irish Poetry,” (eds Peter O’Neill and Walter Ruhlmann;
- “All The Worlds Between,” (Eds Srilata Krishnan and Fíona Bolger, Yoda Publishing, 2017),
- She was a contributor to “Eavan Boland: Inside History,” (Eds Siobhán Campbell and Nessa O’Mahony, Arlen House, 2016).

A detail from A Hierarchy of Halls
tabernacle

gold-bodied, a beetle dives
into muck and dirt, a silica

of glitter on his porch,
wing.

there is no evidence of his home now
it is gone,

small soil tabernacle,
he carried in the sun.

by Christine Murray
starlings

The sea opened its avenue just now, pearl-throated I
they call,    mother    mother

sweet the sun-in,
  to walk up into it -

and the starlings have come
to peck at the grass    about us

the young are screaming for bread
that is right at their feet.

by Christine Murray
Morning in the garden

O heart!

My tree is full of small birds,
red flowers.

I am below the level of the bee,
the wingbeat of the wren.

A new robin dapples through his
never-ending blue, green.

My tree flowers
   beat red like hearts
in warm rings.

by Christine Murray
Fred Johnston was born in Belfast in 1951 and worked for some years as a journalist and PR man in Dublin. With Neil Jordan and Peter Sheridan, he co-founded the old Irish Writers’ Cooperative in the ‘Seventies. In 1972 he received a Hennessy Literary Award for prose. Thereafter he reviewed books for Hibernia Fortnightly Review, Fortnight (NI,) and theatre for The Sunday Press, and his poems and short stories began to appear regularly. He has had three novels and two collections of short stories published, and three plays produced. He continues to review new poetry for Poetry Ireland Review and Books Ireland. Reviews have also appeared in Harpers & Queen, The Sunday Times, and The Southern Review (US.) In 2002 he received a Prix de l’Ambassade (Dublin) for his translation work with French poetry and in 2004, he was writer-in-residence to the Princess Grace Irish Library, Monaco. He moved to Galway in the late ‘Seventies, where he founded Galway’s annual literature festival, Cuirt, in 1986 and The Western Writers’ Centre in 2001. His most recent collection of poems is ‘Alligator Days,’ published by Revival Press, and a new volume of poetry, ‘Rogue States,’ will appear from Salmon Poetry later this year. Recent poems have appeared in The Spectator and The New Statesman and The Irish Times.
Testament

*God brought him forth out of Egypt: he hath as it were*
*The strength of an unicorn . . . .*

- Numbers 24 1.(8)

My father said that, since I was still workless,
He’d get me into the shipyard. Harland & Wolff,
Queen’s Island, duncher caps and bicycle clips.
My grandfather was secretary to the East Belfast
Boilermakers’ Union – sons after sons in their tribes.

Well and good, all this; it helped if you belonged
To a Lodge.
Clan writ ran the length of the rails and the height
Of a gantry. I squinted at the grids and girders

Saw in them an infinite cartoglyph, read the
Signs and codes, the black mass of men herding
Over the bridge out of their Egypt, a treacle of black bees:
All of it an intimate speech of sorts, whispers through the iron;
A job for life, rivet and scalding steel, tea from a tin.

All well and good; a word in the open ear, keys
To a Jerusalem of water and iron. Not for me.
Not mentioned again.
Not spoken of, building arks like Noah, tossing them
On the waters like bread: no Moses to whack the tide in two.

by Fred Johnston
Linette Marie Allen is earning an MFA in Creative Writing & Publishing Arts at the University of Baltimore. She travels widely and says her prior master’s from The London School of Economics richly fuels her poetics. Her work has appeared or is forthcoming in Notre Dame Review, Atticus Review, The Tishman Review, and other journals.
Beautiful

I dip it slowly at three—three
times & see myself at eight

holding my breath at sunset
in a pool of carnival-blue; this
teabag is sweet, is made of bones,
of crooked teeth in perpetual smile

no matter how Monarchs steep—the
thought of diving from ebony dipped

in carnival-pink, seacap hiding curls
& the memory of seals chasing otters
to their caves. I squeeze, watch water
the color of walnuts collapse, hunt

for tiny mouths to bless, for beautiful
little girls in bags & bags of rain

bowing to sunshine.

by Linette Marie Allen
Brian Wilson is a writer from Newtownards, Northern Ireland. In 2014 he graduated from Queen's University Belfast with an MA degree in Creative Writing. His most recent work (a short story titled 'RECOVERY') was featured as part of the Smoke & Mirrors exhibit at the Torrance Art Museum in California. He likes to tweet from @bwilson4815
Fun fact, said Mr Miskimmin. Scrabo Tower sits on the site of a once active volcano. The volcano is dormant, now. Sleeping. But some day it might wake up. Can you imagine?

We could imagine. We craned our necks for a look out the window. Each of us saw the exact same thing: the tower popping out of the hillside like a cork from a champagne bottle, shooting into the sky, trailed by a gush of red lava.

Is that true, sir?

Mr Miskimmin smiled. If you close your eyes and listen, he said. Sometimes you can feel tremors coming from inside the hill.

We closed our eyes and listened.

Try it at home, he said. After dinner. When it's quiet. Then he went back to teaching us geography.

That evening dad cooked lasagne. When he burned the top a bit, I didn't care. I thought it looked like magma. After, I pushed my plate aside and shut my eyes.

What are you doing? Mum asked.

I told my parents what I had learned. Mum laughed and dad said Mr Miskimmin was talking nonsense.

Even so, I listened after dinner every night for a week.

by Brian Wilson
Attracta Fahy’s background is Nursing/Social Care. She works in private practice as an Integrative Psychotherapist/Supervisor. She lives in Co.Galway, and has three children. She completed her MA in Writing NUIG in 2017 and is participating in Over The Edge poetry workshops. Her poems have been published in Banshee, Poetry Ireland Review, The Blue Nib, Poethead, The Lake, North West Words, Crossways Literary Magazine, Coast to Coast to Coast, Dodging The Rain, Cold Coffee Stand, Burning House Press, and Galway Review. Her work has also been long listed for other magazines, included in the Blue Nib Anthology, and accepted for upcoming publication in Picaroon, and The Curlew.
There Were Other Ways

I want to tell you
that there are other ways to leave
your daughter. When one bows out,
a text does not suffice, unkept promises
no comfort for her road ahead.

Your absence left the scar, her heart torn
as she smiled. She put her eyes on yours,
asked for truth, you lied, she knew,
you left. A ballerina threw off her dress,
piano closed, her singing mute.

Her shattered faith reflected on graffiti walls,
her tears a luminous pond of longing,
‘I hate my life,’
she sobbed, stretched over pine floors.

I tried to tell you, she hears the sound,
a voice selling lies, you wouldn’t listen,
her side-lined. I tried to tell her you couldn’t
help it, she didn’t understand. The past
obliterated, we cannot speak your name.

A vacuous silence ruled until
she found a way, grass growing
over a trampoline. Inside her invisible
face reflects, that there were other ways
to leave your daughter.

by Attracta Fahy
Ross Thompson is a writer from Bangor, County Down. Most recently, he was shortlisted for the Seamus Heaney New Writing Award, placed joint runner-up in the Mairtin Crawford Award, and read 'The Slipping Forecast' on the BBC for The Arts Show. He was also commissioned by NI Screen to write a poetic sequence for the Coast To Coast project.
Lifeblood

A blind needle finds a vein, and my crimson ink goes pumping through a clear tube into the tin belly of a greedy machine. It brings to mind sucking milkshake up a curly straw while holidaying as a boy on the Isle of Man: I remember straying into the wrong chalet, where a stranger in polyester hooked up to some sort of gas canister glanced at me over aviator glasses - a real dead ringer for a serial killer. I could not have got out of there faster.

I cannot answer why, while my lifeblood ferries away to be tested for markers of cancer,

I am thinking about a random encounter with an unknown figure who filled me with terror.

by Ross Thompson
Flash Fiction  Sherry Morris

Sherry Morris is from a small Missouri town, but she still gets around. After living in London for almost twenty years, working as a university administrator, she moved to a farm in the Scottish Highlands where she goes for walks, watches clouds and dreams up stories. Her monologues, short stories and flash fiction have won prizes, placed on shortlists and been performed in London and Scotland. She loves a crumpet and a cup of tea in the morning, and still has her American accent. Her first published short story was about her Peace Corps experience in Ukraine and appears in A Small Key Opens Big Doors. Her other published short stories can be found on www.uksherka.com. Feel free to follow her @Uksherka.
Snow Love

We wake to find the world going white like our hair. You put on your leopard-print smoking jacket, I don my best Carmen Miranda-banana hat. We bolt outdoors like colts then gasp -- the air’s so cold we smoke like dragons. Down the drive we helter-skelter, squawking like kiddiewinks. Of course there’s risk with falling, but so what? We both know this time it won’t hurt.

Later you cook my favourite meal though you don’t like liver and I find your reading glasses for you. We snuggle in front of the fire and find magic under the duvet. When you ask why I’m smiling, I say, ‘Snow love.’ Then we laugh and laugh and laugh.

by Sherry Morris
Photography

Shelley Tracey

Himalayan Poppies

These magical poppies are an example of the many botanical treasures in the National Botanic Gardens at Kilmacurragh in Wicklow. I wanted to capture the way in which they light up their surroundings.

Wildflowers

These campions grow in hedgerows and at woodland edges. I wanted to capture the contrasts between the two colours and offer a close-up view of these delicate flowers.

Biography

Shelley Tracey is a writer who takes photographs for inspiration and for the joy of playing with light. Her photographs have been exhibited in the Courthouse Gallery, Ennistymon, County Clare; in the Causeway Coast exhibition; and at the Blackberry Path Arts Studios.
Simon Maltman is an author and musician from Northern Ireland. *A Chaser on the Rocks* was his critically lauded debut novel, followed by the Amazon Bestseller collection of shorts: *More Faces*. He is also the author of the hard boiled *Bongo Fury* series and the sequel to his first book, *A Kill for the Poet*. He has released through Solstice Publishing and Bloodhound Books, and his short stories have been featured in various anthologies. Simon is an established musician, performing with his current band The Hung Jury. He lives in Northern Ireland, with his wife and two daughters.
Hi Simon, thanks for taking the time to chat with us. Can you describe to us what first got you into writing?

Hi Amy, thanks for having me along. I suppose it was first having a love of books and wanting to try my hand at it really. Music had been my first love for many years and I wrote songs all the time. Before that it was poetry. Since I got into writing short stories and now novels, it's the thing I really love to do the most. It's also the discipline that I probably find the most challenging for me personally. I started writing fiction about five years ago now. Before that I had dabbled in trying a few screen-plays and a few different things like that. Hollywood didn't come calling anyway! Rock Stardom hasn't come yet either! They say all crime fiction writers are just wannabe rock stars.

Another thing that may well have subconsciously later got me into writing, was a school visit many years ago. The local author Maurice Leitch came to my school to talk with us and it stuck with me. I still have the copy I bought at the time of his terrific crime novel- Silver's City.

You mainly write crime fiction, in particular, crime stories set in Northern Ireland. What initially inspired you to explore this area?

I really never thought of writing anything else to be honest, because that's what I really enjoy reading myself. It felt natural for me to try and write in that style. I think that crime writing gives you something dramatic to hang whatever else you want to write about on to. I usually have some particular idea or theme I want to draw out, and this genre allows me to do that. It's also just a great way to bring drama in. I mean, you can describe someone having a cup of tea and it might sound lovely. But, if you describe them having that cup of tea while a killer with a knife is hiding in the kitchen cupboard- it's going to be much more dramatic! That reminds of something that Raymond Chandler said once. It was along the lines of, 'Whenever I get stuck for an idea, I just get a guy to come in through the door with a gun.'

There has been such a surge in great crime fiction recently and in Northern Ireland we’re seeing a total explosion of it. There are so many really talented crime writers locally at the moment and this 'Ulster Noir' thing has really taken off. I feel lucky to be a very small part of it.

Northern Ireland as a setting always ends up as a substantial part of my books. I really love the scenery and the culture of the place and I try to get that across. Personally, I find it helpful to my writing, to place the stories in real locations that I know really well.

Simon, with Colin Bateman at a recent event in Bangor
Who or what have been your main influences within your writing?

It's hard to name just a few. My top two never really change- Raymond Chandler and Richard Stark- two absolute masters! I certainly tried to imitate elements of them both at the start.

There are so many writers that I love. Many are also from Northern Ireland, as it happens. Like I said, we are fortunate that there has been this great surge, that is still going on at the moment. I have been a big fan of Colin Bateman for years. His books have really engaging plots and are very funny. He came along to an author event I was doing recently and it was lovely to finally meet him. He also gave me the good piece of advice that there is no money in writing! Haha.

Not only are you a writer, but you are also a musician. Do you feel that the music and writing have a lot in common, or do you treat the two areas as totally separate entities?

Yes, I love music and still like to play. I haven't written much recently though and funnily enough I do approach them both quite differently. When recording, I favour spontaneity and enjoy having a freshness to it, mistakes and all. Writing, I find so different, as I go over and over everything; editing and refining it. That is the only way I know how to get the best from prose. Sometimes I'll let a flow go and wait to fix it up later- but it will get fixed. One day it might be fun to create some sort of project that incorporated them both. Kickback City is a brilliant novella/C.D/audiobook/graphic novel. It features songs by Rory Gallagher that Ian Rankin then put a story to and they built it from that- it's a class little package.

I did get to mix them both a little recently too at a library event with Gerard Brennan, when we brought the guitars along and sang Hey Joe and Whiskey in the Jar together.

Gerard Brennan and Simon, mixing crime with music at Bangor Library.
Simon, tell us a bit about your novels.

I have two novels out called *A Chaser on the Rocks* and *A Kill for the Poet*. They are part of a series and feature a modern detective with some mental health problems and a forties detective as a 'story in a story.' I also have two novellas available (set in Bangor, in a fictional music shop) and a collection of all my short stories. Hopefully by the end of the year a new standalone novel I have finished will be published. At the moment, I have started on another standalone novel.

What are you currently working on? What exciting adventures have you in the pipeline?

Recently I have started up a walking tour in partnership with Belfast Hidden Tours. It's called *Belfast Noir*. I created it, because basically I thought it a shame that nobody else was doing something like it already. I talk a lot about local crime writers during it and we visit locations and discuss locally shot Film and TV, such as *Line of Duty*, *Odd Man Out*, *The Fall* and *Divorcing Jack.* Next month I have been invited to take part in The Aspects Festival, which I'm very excited about. I'm particularly pleased as my event also includes Gerard Brennan and Brian McGilloway. It should be a great night!

*Facebook.com/simonmaltmancrimefiction*
*Twitter- @simonmaltman*
Shadow in Hat

This photo was taken at about 8:30 pm, but owing to the long white nights in St. Petersburg, Russia, there isn't a real sunset, just a lengthening of daylight into evening. After many years, I had returned to Piskarevskoye Cemetery, site of the numerous mass graves of the siege of Leningrad, while though harrowing, also has a sense of peace. Strolling in the waning light, it was hard, seeing my shadow on the wall at the end, not to feel as though I too had become one with the shades.

Biography

Diane G. Martin, Russian literature specialist, graduate of Willamette University, and winner of the Diana Woods Memorial Award for Creative Nonfiction has published poetry, fiction and creative nonfiction in many international journals. Her photos have been exhibited in the US, Russia, and Italy, published in Conclave, Slipstream, Dodging the Rain, Stonecoast Review, Dark Ink, The Grief Diaries, Pigeonholes, Steam Ticket, Third Wednesday, and soon in Tulane Review. She has broadcast essays on Maine Public Radio, as well as participating in radio programs and documentaries in the US and Russia. She has recently completed a collection of memoirs.
James Valvis is the author of a full-length poetry collection and two chapbooks. He has placed poetry or fiction in Ploughshares, River Styx, Folio, Arts & Letters, Barrow Street, Poem, Louisville Review, The Sun, and many others. His poetry was chosen for Best American Poetry 2017. His fiction was chosen for Sundress Best of the Net. His work was also runner-up for the Asimov’s Readers’ Award. A former US Army soldier, he lives in the Seattle area.
Stepping Back into the River

Heraclitus said you never step into the same river twice, but I wonder. Like the time I started talking to my ex-wife again. It was like stepping into the same river twice. After twenty years she hadn’t changed. She even looked the same. She knew all the old ways to manipulate me, the places between the ribs that protect my sanity where she could slide in the knife with surgical exactness. She stroked my successes before suddenly dismissing them just as she did when we were married; again she found ways to exaggerate my weaknesses beyond their natural shame.

I loved her once and could not love her anymore, and this is why Heraclitus was correct: you cannot step into a river that is the same, but he was also partly wrong. You could step into a river that remained the same in every way that mattered --
cold, polluted, current too fast, waters full of piranha, all the reasons you stepped out of that river in the first place.

by James Valvis
Clifton Redmond is an Irish poet, a member of Carlow Writers' Co-operative and a student at Carlow College Saint Patrick's. He has had his poems published in various journals and magazines both in print and online.
On the Banks of the Barrow

We walked the foot-worn track
from Graiguecullen
to Milford, sang
midnight songs to salmon fishers
on the other side, our love burned
in the yellow lamps of poachers.
The kiss I stole could not be held
in nets, or tangled up in lines.
I leaned in, my mouth a filling lock,
traced sinuses, embraced tributaries,
the harmonic pulse of eddies,
hands of scaly-sweat, afraid of the slip.
Concealed hooks, swivels,
and flashy lures spun us
from our senses. Every word was bait,
the lead weight pulled us under.

by Clifton Redmond
Poetry  Laura Cameron

Laura Cameron’s poems have been published in local anthologies including Between Light and the Half Light and On the Grass When I Arrive. Laura was long-listed twice for the Seamus Heaney Award for New Writing. She founded The Dead Shy Poets’ Society, meeting weekly in Belfast to share poetry aloud.
Poem

We walk between beds on damp grass,
soak up the green, reds, yellows, whites, peaches -
heavy rain has tarnished some, but awakened the perfume of others.
With sugared lips and marshmallowed hair,
children climb into the crux of a pine tree,
while under tarpaulin, a blonde woman in pink sings Back to Black.
At home, worn out on the sofa, we find a poem
in the rose petals stuck to the soles of my boots.

by Laura Cameron
It’s Teaming

Watercolour and machine stitching on paper.
It’s 1989, I’m 8 and on a family holiday in Donegal. It's teaming and all things are a variation of grey.
Misty Morning

Watercolour and machine stitching on paper.
A piece exploring the contrast of a traditional watercolour sky with a more abstracted landscape. It’s about finding a balanced outcome in the contrasting styles but also about creating peacefulness, so the viewer can be transported if only for a fleeting moment away from their busy mind to find a sense of stillness.

Points of contact are instagram @judefentonart
Facebook- Jude Fenton Art
or my website is www.judefentonart.co.uk
Julia Paillier lives in Kent, England, and writes very short fiction. Recent work has won places in the Reflex and Flash 500 competitions, and been selected for publication on Spelk and in Flash, the international short short story magazine.
Best Behaviour

The week my daughter was born, it rained. Cats and dogs. I remember the sound, ra-ta-ta-ta against the window. “At least we’re not out in that,” the old nurse said, looking out, hands clasped behind her back. But I wished I was.

I’d done my homework, knew how oxytocin floods your veins like warm syrup, tricks you into mummy love. Not me, I thought. But I was no exception.

Teacups rattling on a tray brought in the morning. Sister Angela stroked my hair and whispered “Don’t look.”

But I looked, of course I did. I stood at the window and watched them carry her across the driveway. Little white parcel. Handshakes under an umbrella. I could still smell her softness on my skin. But I didn’t fuss. I kept my word, my promise, just as I’d said I would.

by Julia Paillier
Iain’s poetry is inspired by his love of the landscape, the sea and sailing; his poems are often a tale of someone he has met, or of a journey he has undertaken.

His work has been published online in the Blue Nib, Lagan Online and the inaugural edition of the Bangor Literary Journal. He was runner up in the second year of The Bangor Poetry Competition, has read at Aspects Festival and is a regular contributor to Poetry NI’s Friday nights at the Crescent Arts Centre, Belfast.
The Clock Maker

He had promised he would read me a story. Instead he had lingered in his hut since two, surrounded by the fust of book binding, old cobwebs and half assembled clocks. Now I stood on the threshold of his secret world, stalled between the tick and the tock; his mealtime summons undelivered. Turning, he raised age mottled hands, hands that had once held a hundred cogs in balance, lifted thick lenses from his rheumy eyes, and smiled. Somewhere a clock struck six. “Is it that time already?” was all he said.

by Iain Campbell
Asbach

The girl that got away
I let go

The romance of air flight
Was Far stronger

And though I missed
Her dark hair

I missed
The blue skies more

And how it received
My anxious body

High above
The highest clouds

Mother Earth
Is most boring

And My loft
An empty library

Where I smoke
And write

And baptize
my disappointment

In German brandy.

By Mark Antony Rossi
Marilyn Timms, is a writer and artist living in Gloucestershire. Her poetry has been described by Alison Brackenbury as ‘a collection of brave and unexpected adventures, with intoxicating, sometimes threatening colours ... poems of war are particularly sharp and well-informed. Her writing explodes with energy.’ Her collection, *Poppy Juice*, was launched at the 2018 Cheltenham Poetry Festival.
Remembering Helen

For ten years, I toed the official line.
‘Don’t visit: seeing strangers distresses her. 
She doesn’t even know her own children. 
Why do you think she’d remember you?’
Why indeed? What would I say to her?

Remember me? – the shy, ringleted tot
afraid of your strange, Norfolk accent;
hating the all-pervading smell
of peelings being boiled for the illegal
sow at the bottom of your garden?

Remember me? The twelve-year-old swot,
embarrassed by your insistence
that I recite Milton and Shakespeare,
disconcerted by your six-foot, heavy body
and your stiff, still-military bearing?

Surely, you remember the bride
you held so tightly and wished all the
love and the luck in the world?
People said afterwards
they had never seen you so happy.

No? I was the face that appeared
spasmodically at family gatherings;
that behaved impeccably,
that asked the right questions,
gave all the right answers,

then went away and forgot you
for another year or two.
I was the stranger who rubbed
your swollen feet when Alzheimer’s
began pecking at your brain.

I’m the one who toed the party line
and stayed away. Hearing of your death
today, I am flooded with a compassion
that would have been so much better
spent on you in your lifetime.

by Marilyn Timms
FEATURED ARTIST:

TERRY BRADLEY
Terry, we are delighted to have you with us for this interview. Has art always been something that you have been drawn to?

Hello Amy, thanks for having me today, it’s a pleasure to meet you. Art has always been a major part of my life. My earliest memories of drawing and influence were Herge’s adventures of Tintin - I loved the simplicity and line of his illustrations and my own sketches and drawings continued from there. I still find my best form of relaxation is to paint and draw and I find inspiration through a variety of sources that take shape in new collections of work.

What would you say, has been your biggest influence?

I’m a voyeur by nature, so observing people is my biggest influence. This is portrayed through my paintings of women and dockers who are transformed into unique pieces of art. The emotive aspect of my work creates empathy within people that seems to reflect part of themselves- that’s what I like to achieve.

Your work is not the ‘conventional’ type of art to be found in galleries. How would you describe your work and why do you think it appeals to such a wide range of people?

My work is contemporary, figurative and people relate and identify with the emotion that is reflected in the painting. To strike a chord with someone when they view your art is amazing and is very humbling. This motivates me to create more work so people can feel connected, as that’s what it’s all about - to feel connected.
You are enjoying a very successful artistic career. What have been the highlights of this journey for you? What moments are you most proud of?

One of my proudest achievements has to be painting the ‘Dead Rabbit’ for the Best Bar in the World in New York. The guys that own the bar are actually from Belfast. They worked as barmen, so to see them rise and build this fabulous bar and have one of my paintings on the wall, is something I’m immensely happy about.

What projects are you currently involved in?

Our latest undertaking has been to set-up and create the Bradley Gallery in Bangor, Northern Ireland. This is a space where any member of the public can walk-in and browse the collection of prints, canvases and merchandise. Having never had a permanent base before, we have had an overwhelming response to the Gallery opening.

Dead Rabbit: everything on canvas!
As an artist, where do you see yourself in five years’ time? Have you any events or exhibitions coming up that you’d like to tell us about?

To celebrate being in the gallery a year, we’re going to have an exhibition late 2018 to coincide with a number of new Bradley releases. I’m not going to give much away at this stage as we’re still in concept mode, but we’ll have lots of updates on our website and social media over the next few weeks.

Forget Me Not: charcoal, pastel and watercolour on paper
Biography: Terry Bradley

Terry Bradley was born in Belfast, Northern Ireland in 1965. His early life was spent growing up in some of the most volatile streets in Belfast where his mother tried to keep him inside and away from the “Troubles” outside their front door. Bradley found a form of escapism reading Hergé’s Adventures of Tin Tin and his work is still influenced by the black lines of the vivid drawings that illustrated the collection of books that he gradually acquired.

Bradley made the move to Dublin in 1989 and was busy painting and drawing in his spare time. A chance conversation led to Bradley’s first exhibition in the famous PoD nightclub. The night was a huge success and Terry finally started to make some money from the one thing that had stayed with him all his life.

Bradley has now reached a place in his life that he is comfortable with. He is able to paint full time and explore the voyeuristic side of his nature that he first discovered as a child observing the dangerous world around him. His work often centres on strong and powerful women, most recently the burlesque dancers of Paris. He has also started exploring the colourful characters from the Belfast dockland area known as Sailortown, famous around the world for their hard drinking and hard-working attitude.

His need to say more with his art and his love of symbolism has led him to use the paintings to convey his personal thoughts. Words such as Honour, Hope, Faith and Love are all used frequently in his latest work.

His art has recently come to the attention of world brand leaders such as ABSOLUT Vodka and Harley Davidson with Terry being named as brand ambassador for HD. He has recently exhibited with The Bike Shed in both London and Paris. He is currently working on a commissioned piece for the Dear Rabbit in NYC (officially the best bar in the world), which is being showcased at their 5th anniversary party on the 12th Feb 2018. His facebook page has 50,000 followers from all over the world. Terry opened his first permanent art gallery in Bangor, Northern Ireland in October 2017 where he showcases his latest work including original pieces and limited edition prints on paper and canvas. Bradley is married with three children and lives and works in Ireland.
Everyman: pen and ink on paper

For further details or to view Bradley's work visit www.terrybradley.com / email info@terrybradley.com / 00 44 (0) 7866313153 / follow Terry Bradley on facebook http://www.facebook.com/#!/livelifebradley or twitter @terrybradleyart
Ria Collins lives in Galway, has had work published in Skylight 47 and A New Ulster. She was shortlisted for Poems for Patience Competition 2017 and 2018 and shortlisted for Over the Edge New Writer in 2016 and long listed in 2017. She read from her work at Cuirt International Poetry Festival 2018.
Dive Of The Kingfisher

I am tired of being a woman
suckled and suckling, torn from childbirth
hands wrinkled from years submerged,
I clasp at dreams that trickle down.
Forgotten, not yet coffined. I must wait.

I shoulder the clouds of my mother,
blackened January,
rain falls inward, time contracts,
chalk bones, weightless, skinless,
madness in the veins.

A sparrow of small movements
I circle around crumbs, claws light
ready to dance through the sky.
I should be a bird
a thing of beauty.

Perhaps a kingfisher,
emerald mantle
flaming underbelly
a blue flash
across the Universe.

by Ria Collins
Her Way

I have always been fascinated by the American West. This photo reminds me of the 19th century American landscape in painting. It shows the infinity of space, the desire to continue the conquest of an unknown land. We are fortunate that, to this day much of this land is yet to truly explore, and has not in fact been conquered. It is the world as we must preserve it.
Photography  Fabrice Poussin

Sentinel at Dusk

This photo taken in The Valley of the Gods, in Southern Utah brings out the majesty of a rather unknown area of the state. While many will visit Monument Valley, they bypass this amazing 18 mile dirt road through some most amazingly colorful and rather quiet places. It too is almost unknown, and as a result purer than most locales. Well guarded by its sentinel mounts, this site inspires with every inch of its depth.

Biography

Fabrice Poussin teaches French and English at Shorter University. Author of novels and poetry, his work has appeared in Kestrel, Symposium, The Chimes, and dozens of other magazines. His photography has been published in The Front Porch Review, the San Pedro River Review as well as other publications.
DS Maolalai recently returned to Ireland after four years away, now spending his days working maintenance dispatch for a bank and his nights looking out the window and wishing he had a view. His first collection, Love is Breaking Plates in the Garden, was published in 2016 by the Encircle Press. He has twice been nominated for the Pushcart Prize.
Smells like sweet milk

I wake
before you
and inhale your gentle
restful smell,
fresh
and cool
as frogs in water.
and your skin,
like sweet milk
infused with flowerpetals. sugar
taken
straight from the fridge
and slightly warmed. sleep
we know
is good for the soul
and a respite for the senses,
being as I get to see
your little hands
twisting around each other
like mice in dreams,
and in the morning
everyone looks so beautiful asleep,
and smells so
beautiful too,
rested and kind
and little noises around the lips.
sweet noises, slumber hearfuls
soft as a rabbit's neck.
of course
the mouth, when I slip down
to kiss it
still tastes rancid. I guess
because it's in direct line with your asshole
or it's where the words will come from
when you wake up.

by Diarmuid ó Maolalaí
Melanie Arrowood Wilcox is a writer and artist. Her creative works focus on nature, spirit, and the interaction between people and their environments.
Twelve Years

Twelve years ago they climbed the 268 stairs spiralling upward to the light, a seven-year-old boy and his father. After the light was moved, rolled along inch-by-inch to save it from the sea from which it had rescued so many, they climbed the stairs again: Two men this time, marking the passage of time.

by Melanie Arrowood Wilcox
Poetry

Julie Primon

Julie Primon is a PhD student in Creative Writing at Cardiff University. A French native, Julie is working on a historical novel set in 1940's Italy, loosely based on her grandmother's own story. In her spare time, she occasionally writes poems and short stories, and she enjoys discovering new places.
Erasure

Weeks after we left, following
the truck two hours out
of the city we called home,
my sister found another key.
We should have given it back.
A year later, she visits an old neighbour
across the hall, places the key in what was
our front door.
The flat is not rented yet
too many things to upgrade
the thirty-year-old electricity,
single-glazed windows, no
insulation.

They could have changed the locks
the door glides open
and I watch on my phone’s screen the illegal recording
my sister made. The wallpaper
we chose so carefully has been stripped
walls painted a noncommittal white, the parquet
replaced. Traces of us whitewashed.
It seems smaller somehow.
The living room at last yields
evidence: the shelves my mother put up
in a small recess
have survived sterilization.
She made them specially, took measurements,
drilled holes, screwed in
brackets.
In this white desert that was once our childhood
décor, I feel strangely satisfied
that something of our family has escaped
erasure.

by Julie Primon
Diane Jackman’s poetry has appeared in Rialto, Bangor Literary Journal, optimum, Snakeskin, small press magazines and many anthologies. She was the winner of the Liverpool Festival, Deddington and Café Writers Norfolk prizes. Starting out as a children’s writer with seven books and more than 100 stories published, she now concentrates on poetry. With her late composer husband she wrote several works for choir and the libretto for *Pinocchio* for Kings’ Singers/LSO. She is passionately interested in Anglo-Saxon literature and medieval rabbit warrens.
Mending shoes

With no money and no work
my hungry grandfather begged scraps
of leather to mend his family's shoes.

Two children lost, his broken heart
beat this refrain, survivors must
keep dry feet. In the cold kitchen

he lodged a shoe on to the last,
levered off the papery sole
and measured, fresh and fat, a new

sole from his hoard. Dreaming broken
by woodpecker taps, my father
woke to shoes, good as new, polished

bright by spit and rag,
ready to step out into
another cheerless day.

by Diane Jackman
Poetry

Gráinne Daly

Gráinne Daly holds an MA in Creative Writing from UCD. Shortlisted for the Gregory O'Donoghue International Poetry Prize, Maeve Binchy UCD Travel Award and Robert Monteith Poetry Prize, 2017, her work has been published in a number of publications. Winner of the Greywood Arts Residency 2017, she has just completed her debut novel.
Distressed Acids

The Pope’s in the pan
with the fish and chips -
two fresh cod
one smoked
a long ray
bucket of chips
and Pope John Paul XXIII

Someone should do something,
scoop him out
set him aside
let the oil drain off
in the tray with the
battered mushrooms
and the spice burger
that was cooked for an old man
who changed his mind and
took a salad burger instead

But no, he’s still in there,
the fish is floating on the surface
along with the chips,
golden, ready to be
lifted and bagged
salted and vinegary
together or separate

What’ll they do with the Pope?
Put him in a Snack Box
alongside a nice breast
of Southern Fry and a scoop of chips
for the way home?
It’s a long way from Tallaght to the Vatican.

by Gráinne Daly
I'm a writer, psychotherapist and stay at home mum, and my short stories have been published in Crannog, A New Ulster, Wordlegs, Ropes, and The Irish Independent. My first published story "How to Save a Life" was shortlisted for the Hennessy New Irish Writing Awards in 2011.

I've recently finished writing my first novel, and am currently looking for a publisher, and in my free time I enjoy music and playing the guitar badly.
"You always lit up a room." The words lit up the screen of my phone. My stomach flipped, my heart thumped me breathless.

What I meant to say was, for me, you changed a room just by entering it. Two hundred people in a lecture hall, with my back towards the door, I could feel you. Before you searched me out in the crowd, before you took the seat next to me and blushed your hello.

I was eighteen, and terrified of that thing I felt in the pit of my stomach, the softening between my legs. Afraid that I might do something terrible I'd regret. Something that changed the way you looked at me.

One day, in a classroom lit by February sun, you slipped into the seat next to me, freshly showered at two in the afternoon and I knew you had been in her bed. Green with jealousy, we chattered on through the stabbing pain of betrayal. Mine, not yours, because even when you drunkenly told me you loved me, I couldn't say it back.

Another message flashed on screen. "There was never a time I wasn't glad to catch a glimpse of you."

Another betrayal. "Likewise."

by Aisling Keogh
Lorraine Carey is an Irish poet and artist whose work has featured in Atrium, Prole, Picaroon, The Lake, The Blue Nib, Poethead, Laldy, The Honest Ulsterman and Epoque Press among others. Her debut collection From Doll House Windows (Revival Press) was published in June 2017. She was a runner up in both the Trocaire / Poetry Ireland and The Blue Nib Chapbook Competition 2017.
The Gas Heater

The shock of my wet sheet hauled me from sleep, along with the leaden voice of my mother, as I rustled and rolled over on plastic. Her ire balanced on a strained rung of the laundry basket, which now spewed sheets and more. Out of my nightdress I stepped, heavy with fading strawberries - the result of sixty degree washes several times a week - and the nocturnal overfill of my useless bladder.

Into the bath, navy like my skin where ghost breath left me. My distorted face on the tap mocked me, as I sat in lukewarm water, chased the bar of Imperial Leather. It slipped away like a minnow, the little gold label slightly budged in soapy goo, as goosebumps tried their best. My teeth played a jig as we clamoured for a spot in front of the gas heater. We pushed and fought, battled for a square where the bar of honeycomb bled. Into three minutes and fiery red, our legs mottled with intolerance as we knelt on that lino space.

I dressed in a dance as she pulled us out of our daydreams shouting out the time. She saw the minibus at Cookes, I envied her knack to see from so far away. She switched the heater off, the isolator, a mutant jelly bean, dormant until the same tomorrow unravelled again.

by Lorraine Carey
The Inner Aspect, Guangzhou

A shop that looks like a depository of some closed theatre stage paraphernalia in an underground passage: basically the same way in which China relates to Western modes and patterns it checks, sniffs, chews and spits out.

Biography

Miodrag Kojadinović ended up as a Canadian-Serbian living in Norway, Macau, Holland, Hungary, Mainland China and whatnot.