

THE BANGOR LITERARY JOURNAL
ISSUE 8: APRIL 2019



Featuring:
Geraldine
O'Kane
and
Maeshine.

Plus,
exceptional
poetry,
flash fiction,
artwork
and
photography

Editors' Welcome

Hello readers and welcome to issue 8 of The Bangor Literary Journal!

What a delightful issue this has been to compile; and yet, what a difficult process it has been to select the work for inclusion. Yet again, we were tasked to read over three hundred wonderful submissions from all over the globe: creating around a 7% acceptance rate.

In these pages, you will find words to make you laugh and cry; alongside stunning artwork and photography.

We are delighted to give you two intriguing and insightful interviews. Firstly, with renowned poet Geraldine O'Kane and secondly, with the beautifully talented Maeshine, as they talk about their new album 'Gentle Peace'.

Thank you to everyone for your continued support and to all those who submit their work to us- please keep doing so!

We hope you enjoy the featured work and feel inspired and moved by it.

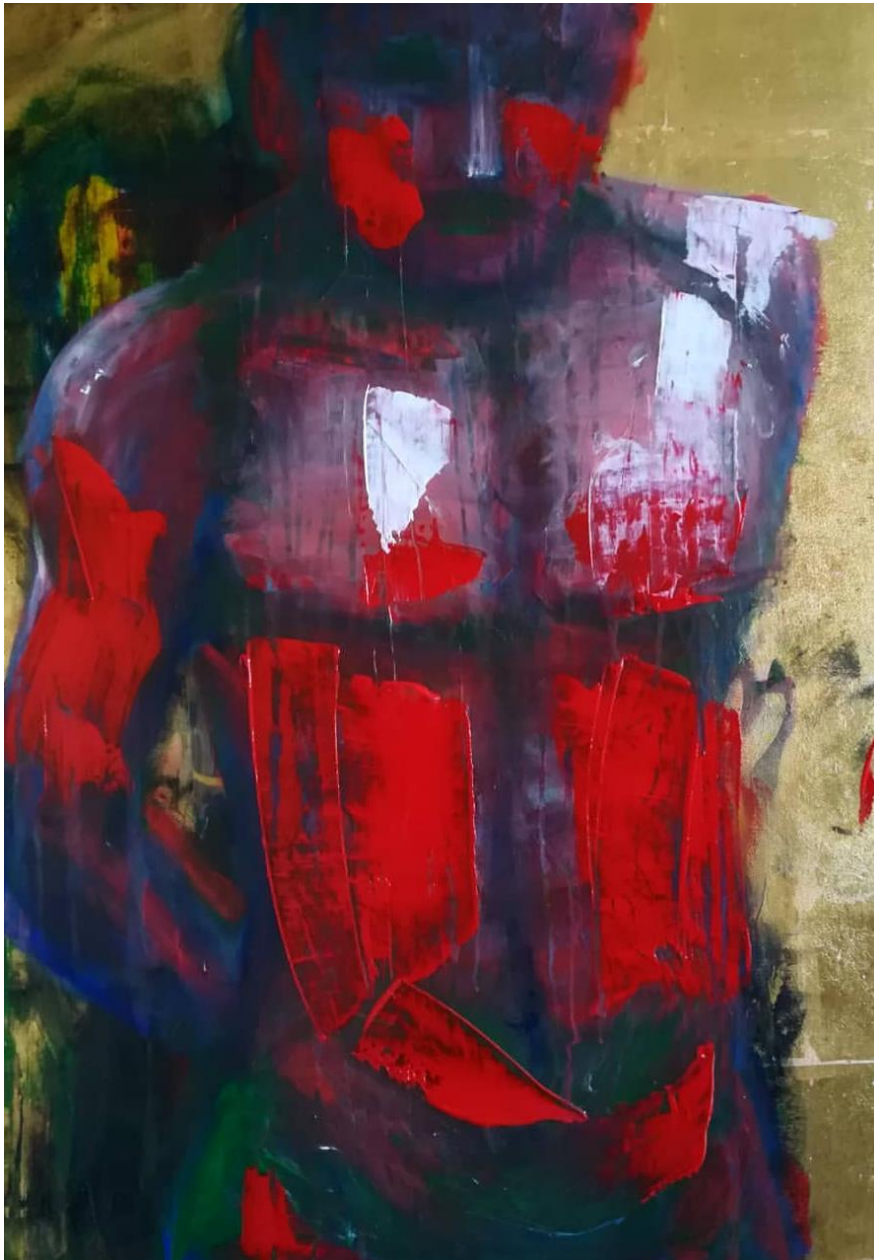
All the best-

Amy and Paul



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Grief

Grief is acrylic on canvas with gold leaf. Ingrid's artistic work explores somatic themes of the human condition, and also reflects her poetry which has been described as visceral.

Ingrid Casey is a poet, parent, artist and activist. She has been writing poetry since 2015, and some prose, with publications in literary journals from Brooklyn to Kentucky, Dublin to Cardiff. She is a John Hewitt bursary recipient, amongst other accolades. Her debut collection, *Mandible* (the Onslaught Press, 2018) has been described by poet Jessica Traynor as a 'vital addition to Irish poetry.' This year she also produced a ground-breaking short documentary on families living in homeless accommodation: www.throughthecracks.ie

Poetry

James Owens

James Owens's most recent collection of poems is *Mortalia* (FutureCycle Press, 2015). His poems, stories, and translations appear widely in literary journals, including recent or upcoming publications in *Adirondack Review*, *The American Journal of Poetry*, *The Honest Ulsterman*, and *Southword*. He earned an MFA at the University of Alabama and lives in a small town in northern Ontario.



Wanting a Storm on his Birthday

He desires wind itself above the house,
not wind as metaphor, as if a river
of days might slide across the sky,

spiralling dust and the stiff leaves
of a dry November, the year's pivot
where air catches and is torn.

The warm lover sleeps beside him,
but he thinks of unresting clouds
and steps through heavy rooms.

The hour threatens, and he augurs
rain and lashed branches stripped
wild all through the dark country;

and he wants morning, glossed and wet,
twigs from the ruined choirs,
renewal and homecoming.

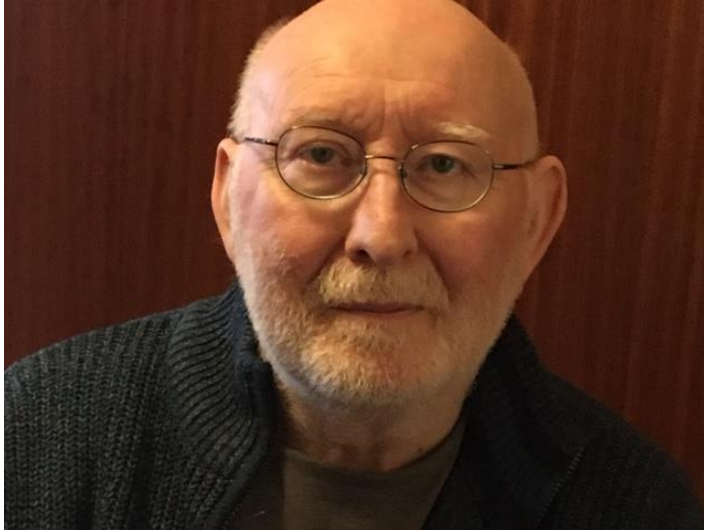
He wants to think about wind, not
the end hunting him from blind sky,
chasing his known years into chaos

like a flock of panicked starlings
when the hawk plummets hooked
and holy among their cries.

by James Owens

Gordon Gibson lives in Troon on the South-West coast of Scotland. After lecturing in higher education for 20 years, he now writes full-time. His poems and short stories have appeared in a number of print and online publications.

He blogs at <https://ragmansbugle.wordpress.com/>



Eating Alone

The table, nowadays, is never set.
I watch the television as I eat.
Upon my knee a tray, with something cold,
unappetising, clinging to a plate,
or, for a treat, a grey and tepid pie,
snatched from the oven when my patience fails.
The absence of all others chills the air.
The voice of news rings out through empty rooms.

While memory refurbishes the lost:
bright cutlery, best linen cloth spread out,
the kitchen crammed with every chair we owned,
our elbows nudging as we stretched across
to ladle scalding stew or fork potatoes.
Plain fare, served up with laughter or dispute,
And always there was talk, and talk, and talk.

by Gordon Gibson

Poetry

Keshia Starrett

Keshia Starrett is from Derry and currently lives in Leeds where she is studying for her PhD. Her poems have appeared in various magazines and anthologies, including Crannóg, The Interpreter's House, Abridged, The Honest Ulsterman and Ink, Sweat & Tears. She performs at open mic nights and readings across Britain and Ireland, and most recently read at the Whitworth Gallery in Manchester. Her pamphlet *Hysterical* is available from Burning Eye Books.



environmental factors

I trace the cracked
spine of a diary I kept
when I was 8 and discover
my mother's vertebrae

every time I unscrew
a wine cap
I feel her trapped nerves
kneaded by my
ungloved fingers

every time I load my food shop
into a plastic Aldi bag
I see it's A lined and branded
in a brown waste-paper bin
beside her unmade bed

I feel the merlot rise in my throat
as she sellotapes the bag
into place
to catch her vomit;
ready reliable
when she wakes up and reaches

by Keshia Starrett

Flash Fiction

Kerriann Speers

Kerriann Speers is a historical fiction writer with a degree in Journalism and Publishing Studies. She lives along the North Coast of Ireland, where she is a member of Flowerfield Writers Group, Portstewart. An early school report read "Kerriann reads words that aren't necessarily on the page." This remains true.



Mutually Assured Destruction

I had to see her one last time before the bomb dropped.

The urgency in the President's voice sharpened my mind. She was my first thought. Before myself. Before my kids.

Us. Our pact.

Maggie knelt in front of the television, the flicker of white illuminating her face. In prayer I thought, until I saw the curl of the phone cord wound around her palms.

Later as we lay in bed, both listening to each other's breathing, I replayed the words in my head.

Nuclear.
Missiles.
Strike.
Capability.
Hudson Bay to Lima.
Canada to Peru.
All gone.
Forever and ever.
Amen.

'There could be looting,' Maggie said. 'We should've stocked up.'

'I'm not gonna die waiting in line for a can of beans.'

Barrelling down the highway, I knew where I was going. Not away from my house, my family, but towards her. My whole life had been heading away from her, from the town where we grew up, the corner where she kissed me goodbye.

On her porch we stood eyeball to eyeball. Ready for mutually assured destruction, to push our families to the brink. She didn't take my hand. I could only blink away the tears.

by Kerriann Speers

Poetry

Ceinwen E. Cariad Haydon

Ceinwen lives in Newcastle upon Tyne, UK. She writes short stories and poetry. She has been widely published in web magazines and print anthologies. She was Highly Commended in the Blue Nib Chapbook Competition [Spring 2018], won the Hedgehog Press Poetry Competition 'Songs to Learn and Sing' [August 2018] and was shortlisted for the Neatly Folded Paper Pamphlet Competition, Hedgehog Press [October 2019]. In 2017 she graduated with an MA in Creative Writing from Newcastle University and she is now developing practice as a creative writing facilitator with hard to reach groups. She believes everyone's voice counts.



The Banker

Peppered eyebrows
arch over ice-blue eyeballs.
Skin tags blob beneath his lashes,
shaped like tears he'd never, ever shed.
His large, flat ears flap open,
appear poised to hear, a pity
that's an optical illusion.
His full top-lip, curved Cupid's bow,
defies his lower, thin and tight.
He dresses for a temperate part
but beware, his sober clothes belie him.
This upstart man breaks all the rules

fixes his curled grimace.
Pitiless, he stares into the distance
careless
of the usual pecuniary duties.

He dreams of profit,
lusts after purses,
and a thick, hard bulge of money,
swollen to fill his bottomless gambler's pockets.

by Ceinwen E. Cariad Haydon

Poetry

Paul McCarrick

Paul McCarrick's poetry has appeared in *The Stinging Fly*, *Crannóg*, *Boyne Berries*, *Skylight 47*, *wordlegs*, *Bangor Literary Journal*, and was longlisted in the 2018 *Over The Edge New Writer Competition*. His novel, *Happy-Cry with My Brilliant Life* was longlisted in the 2014 *IWC Novel Fair*.



Perpetual Adoration

I'm tired already thinking about it.
It's made so official like the October Bank Holiday
or a General Election when I find the flyer between
Genuine Italian Pizza and
The Best Dry-Cleaners in Ireland.
How nobody came up with
Come pray the day away
I'll never know.

Sitting before the altar lit by shadows
you think perhaps this is the only light allowed
for perpetual exposure to this body and blood.
In between the rites incanted and rosaries ripped through
by women determined to tag out and get home before dark
it's a scene transfixed. A postcard to send to Rome,
the well wishes and good lucks as meaningful as they are flammable.

No one speaks, but bows and nods and smiles and I know
not to be cheeky and ask does anyone ever check for a pulse.
Or if I light seven candles more and do a private, a personal
Stations of the Cross will the prayer land faster. The women
rattling through the Mysteries of Light would not be ones
to be messed with in the flickers between the candles and callings.

by Paul McCarrick

Poetry

Joanne McCarthy

Joanne McCarthy is an Irish poet living in Waterford City. She studied Irish language and Geography in University College Cork and holds a M.Phil in Social and Cultural Geography. She is a keen anthropologist and observer of people. She speaks and writes in both Irish and English language and she regularly takes part in local spoken word events.



Two-piece

It will be fruit of a rogue detour
on a trip to town to get supplies,
a belled and belted step
from pyjamas into menswear.

It will come over threshold
slung over shoulder in plastic cover.
Leaning in to show it to his father,
still talking, he will unzip blue cloth,
watch wrinkles turn to smile,
'isn't it grand indeed?'

The smile will not mask the old
man's relief the suit is not black.

More wood will be put on the fire,
cupboards will be replenished.
The day will slow into itself again.

His shoulders will bear weight
of his father's best suit soon
but today is not the day
for knowing that.

by Joanne McCarthy

Featured Poet

Geraldine O’Kane



Geraldine O’Kane is a poet, creative writing facilitator and mental health advocate. She is editor of Panning for Poems, a micropoetry broadside series, and co-hosts Purely Poetry, a monthly poetry open mic night. She was a recipient of the Artist Career Enhancement Scheme 2015/16 from Arts Council of Northern Ireland. Her debut collection is due in June 2020 from Salmon Poetry.

Geraldine, thank you for taking the time to chat with us. Did you always want to be a writer?

Thank you for wanting to chat to me! I wouldn't say I always wanted to be a writer, but I have written poetry from I was around 12-13yrs old. At that stage I wanted to be an historian or a professional athlete and then later I wanted to be an art historian (which did involve writing lots of essays!) So, as I got older, I wanted to be more involved with writing - but things just didn't happen that way. I was ill with anorexia when I was taking my A-Levels- when I tried to take my own life. I left school and tried to take up A-levels again, but really my health wasn't up to it.

I then went back to education as a mature student and did my Access course in Social Sciences and then took up a part time degree in humanities, which eventually was renamed History and English. I was working full time as well and stopped at HNC level. It was probably during this time from 2005 that I became more passionate about writing being a larger part of my life. I started to take it more seriously; I joined some writing forums; I learned to write better and how to critique mine and others' work and then I started sending work out for publication. Colin was the first person to publish me in 2005- long before we actually met!

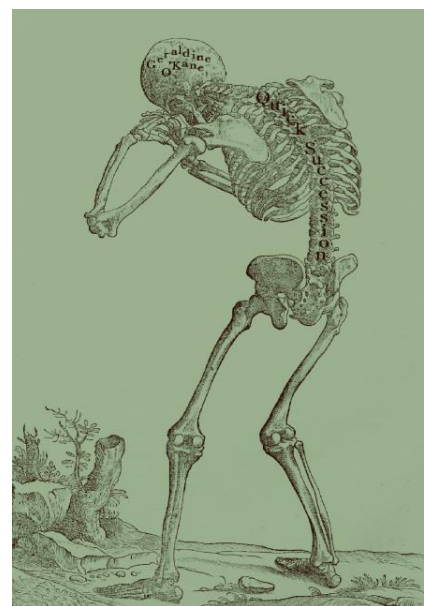
If you had sum up your work in three words, but would they be? Can you explain why?

Telling, Emotional, Plathian.

Telling, because I like to tell a story through poetry. It's not academic and it's quite spoken word, but it lingers somewhere in the middle. I like to read poems that draw me into a story as well; I don't want to work hard at trying to understand a poem, especially when you are listening to it being read aloud, there isn't that time to analyse every word.

Which leads to me to *Emotional*. I like to feel a poem, even if I can't put myself in the place of the poem, I can access how it makes me feel. I want to people to be moved in an emotional way by my poems. It very strange being married to a poet whose poetry is very much based in concrete images and observation. I used to feel my poetry was lacking, but I have come to see we just write from different places: I think namely the head and the heart!

Weirdly people have often compared my poems to *Plath* and I, in no way, think they mean that I'm on the same level literary-wise, but more I have that confessional style that she made popular. This kind of ties in with the story telling element, all my poems are not necessarily related to my life, but I use the confessional style to make it feel like it is



Geraldine's pamphlet 'Quick Succession' published by Pen-Point Press

You have your debut full collection coming out with Salmon Poetry in 2020. Tell us about your current writing and selection process in compiling the collection.



The collection which has a working title of 'Venus in my Livingroom' is complete in its manuscript form. I have started to edit poems out of it, but I have yet to have that conversation with Jessie from Salmon Poetry. She may have other ideas about what is kept in and what is left out.

The poems I've been writing in the last couple of years, I feel are some of my strongest writing to date, and some of those will be included in the collection. However, most new poems will be a work in progress towards a next collection (I say this because I am a painfully slow poet) and I envision it may take

me five years or more to have enough good poems for another collection. I've made my peace with my tortoise-like pace. My writing comes in bursts, but that doesn't mean in those fallow times, that I am not preparing to write. I am constantly reading poetry and jotting down ideas for poems that I feel I may want to write, when that energy comes.

You have always been a promoter of the Northern Irish poetry scene. Why is poetry so important?

Poetry is individual, it's community and it's universal. Poems are read at weddings and funerals, it's in our advertising! We connect with poetry much more than we think and that's what makes it clever and important. It can be used to explain things we can't always put words to, it can open us up to new experiences we may never have an opportunity to experience or may never want to experience; mental health, domestic violence, abortion, homelessness etc. Poetry puts us in tune with and gives context to the minutia, miracles and devastation that happens around us every day.

Poetry is a source of connection. Sometimes people talk about being around people, but still feeling alone- for me poetry surpasses that feeling. You can read or hear (I do like to listen to poetry being read aloud) and connect with the words or the feelings the piece creates and get the sense that you are not alone in the world. That someone somewhere, the poet, may be a few thousand miles from you; the poet may even be dead- but this adds to that *knowing* that someone, somewhere, at some time, understood what you are feeling or seeing. Not only that, but they were able to put it into words; something, many of us for whatever reason, don't feel we can. Writing poetry (and other kinds of creative writing) builds confidence and resilience, it's a great way to get your thoughts/feelings outside of yourself, which in itself can take a huge burden off you.

Looking back over your writing career, what would you say your proudest or most memorable moments have been?

That's a great question, there have been so many high moments. One special moment would be winning my first and only poetry slam the North West Heat of the All Ireland Poetry Slam in 2013. Due to my anxiety issues; had you told thirteen-year old me, that I would ever voluntarily stand up by myself and recite my own poems in front of people and do it so well that I would win; well, I would have not believed you! Also, in 2013 I was invited to read at the First Fortnight Festival in Dublin, the energy was electric and the crowd (and I mean a crowd) were so welcoming and supportive.

Being chosen for the Artists Career Enhancement Scheme Award (ACES) by the Arts Council in 2015/16, and knowing that someone else has faith in this weird thing that you do, is beyond incredible. Without that support, I doubt my first collection would be coming out. Being part of Olive Broderick's Words for Castle Ward writing collective is very special. Olive has such passion for literature, it's just a pleasure to be in her presence. Collaborating with the artist Brian Kielt, for the stART Talking exhibition in 2015 was pretty amazing. He let his painting live in our house for three months as inspiration and I was very sad when the painting left!

Of course, having my manuscript accepted by Salmon Poetry is one of my most memorable moments. I never thought the day would come, that someone would want to publish a whole book of my work, let alone an Irish publisher. Then there's co-hosting Purely Poetry and watching our poetry community grow, will always be top of my list of memorable things. We have watched people grow- in their writing ability, in confidence and we have gained many friendships as a result.

Having a poem chosen as one of the 50 Best British and Irish Poets by Eyewear publishing in 2017 was a very memorable moment. So was, being asked to do a TED talk for TEDx Belfast on poetry and mental health- well, I'd do that again in a heartbeat, as I have been watching TED Talks for years! I wish I had been able to memorise the whole talk, but because of fibro fog, it just wasn't possible. Having a poem in Arlen House anthology 2018, *Washing Windows*, was a special moment as I have great respect for Arlen House, their beautiful publications and their continual championing of women writers. Moreover, I will never forget the two collaborations I curated; *Poetic Perspective* and *Product of Perception*. The willingness of others to give up their time freely and get involved in my artistic endeavours is so humbling and in both, we had some beautiful creations of poetry, music, art, sculpture and dance. Who could ask for more!?



Lastly, because I could go on all day..... The Black Bough, a new online mirco-poetry broadsheet, has just put out a call for submissions, announcing that they were inspired to start the journal, having followed the success of *Panning for Poems*, the mirco-poetry online and in print broadsheet, that I founded in 2017.

If you had words of advice for anyone starting to write poetry, what would you tell them?

Just write, write for yourself, write because you want to write or because you can't help yourself- but write and don't think of anything beyond that! First and foremost, writing must be a pleasure and just for you. Once you get all of yourself out and you want to take writing further, start to read. Read all types of poetry; poems that you fall in love with, poems that you don't connect with, poems that move you to feel something both positive and negative; and never stop reading. Poetry is easy in that way, because you can read a 30 second poem that can change your view on a subject completely. If someone says they haven't time to read poetry, then in my view they aren't serious about writing. It should be kept as hobby or source of personal enjoyment and that is ok too!

We all know that our poems are our babies, but even children must find their way in the world eventually. Let your poems be critiqued and let them grow. Critique should come from someone able and trusted, but remember, the poem is yours and that's the opinion that ultimately counts. Critique can also come from yourself (this is where reading good poetry comes in handy, it helps you recognise what you are doing well or where you are going wrong). Be open and honest with your writing self, put your ego away, that is not how you make a connection with the audience of your work.

Finally, can you tell us what is in the pipeline for 2019 and 2020?

Currently Colin and I are performing at Staccato in Dublin next Wednesday 10th April. We have a poetry reading, slam and writing workshop forthcoming in the Belfast Book Festival, more details will be announced in due course. As always, we have the Purely Poetry open mic on the first Friday of each month at the Crescent Arts Centre.

Personally, I will be looking forward to editing my manuscript ahead of the collection launch in June 2020. I am currently working on a play/musical, which is my first jaunt outside of poetry. I want to try and write more poetry in general but with a particular focus on the Haibun, which I have written quite a few of recently and want to explore more and try to perfect. I would also like to curate another poetry collaboration, however, I just haven't hit on an idea that fills me with excitement, yet! If anyone would like to collaborate with me, please drop me a line! I would love to be invited to judge a poetry competition, that has always been on my bucket list of poetry things to achieve. I am always available to deliver writing workshops should anyone be looking for a facilitator.

Find out more here:

<http://thepoetokane.weebly.com/>



Meditation of an ex-smoker

Every couple of years it happens:
I catch the scent of a freshly lit cigarette
that drives me insane, I'm lingering close
like a swooning teenager, a familiar yearning for taste,
smell, habit becomes an urge.

A plan starts in my head;
I'll go to a petrol station out of town,
purchase a Bic and a light brand to
avoid the dreaded headache
brought on by unusage.
I'll wear an old coat with a hood covering my hair
to limit what the smoke can cling to
it's staleness calling me out.

I'll go around the side of the garage out of sight
hold the light blue pack in my hand.
Unwrap - crinkle of cellophane,
Lift the lid back, peel off silver foil,
reveal soft sand tips,
pinch one between nail and thumb,
lift to lips, while head simultaneously
slips forward,
I'll raise the lighter, cup my hand an igloo against the wind,
snick-snick-fizz, sniff of butane,
paper flares in a vibrant circle,
withers as I draw breath, the cotton filter held within puckered lips,
draws a crowd of smoke into my mouth searching for a throat.
Taste buds receive the smooth earthiness peat and meadows,
fragrant heat-blossom bellows into fragile lungs.

My world slows,
relaxes..
a deep exhalation smothers
the urge.

by Geraldine O'Kane

Walking Meditation

Steep incline lined either side of me
with weeping willow; arms stretched,
bent, uplifted to various poses, sanctioning
breath from my body, I breathe in forest;
Petrichor, Pine, Eucalyptus, fern...

I breathe out the weeks stress.
Eyes dart at crackle of splinting wood,
Head side-glances to retake shapes found in ancient trunks,
bark peeling to reveal magic eye –
faces, owls and hearts.
Deoxygenated lungs look for rest –
log swing - three deep in breadth
hangs high from ragged limbs.

Butterflies are flattered by the camera I carry
but rarely light ling enough to be caught on film,
long since grown wise to being captured by glass.

by Geraldine O’Kane

Ordering off Menu 080716

I've been training my face to take on a look of acknowledgement
where eyes stay focused, maybe add a barely comprehensible smile
a nod to further the illusion, a delayer whilst I traverse
the last days and weeks of my mind, figure out who the other woman is.

Brain digs its heels into the conversation by making
a loud verbal approval without my consent. They break
briefly and are off again. They talk, I try to keep up; they engage me.
How can I be present in the moment while trying to sieve my past
for a name, just a name? I wish they'd stop talking, stop talking
stop fucking talking!

Both craniums twist towards me at the exact moment
a magnet pulls their gray eyes into me. Their mouths frozen
between scowl and smile like playing statues when we were children.
Never have I saw two people ajar before, it's rather funny.

But they have stopped and stayed stopped
I feel as if this is my doing, I think I may have shouted aloud!
If I continue on this angsty pathway the silence may continue
I move my chair abruptly back so the floorboards squeal
my feet arrive below and spirit me away in deliberate stomps.

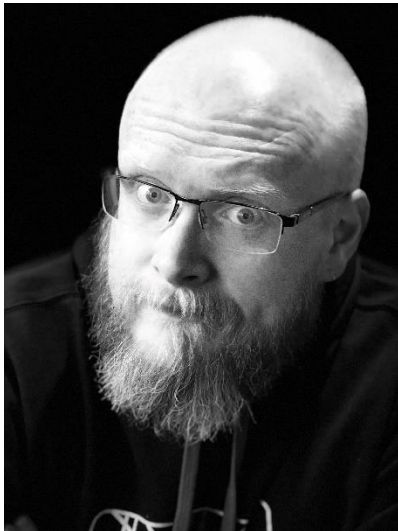
Shame rises a sweat on me then heat devouring air - turning molten
my delicate moth wings, the weight pulling me back into a room
where lots of faces eat food and are busy not looking at me.
A small shift and I remember I'm in a restaurant
the woman with my wife is our daughter.
I've nowhere to go but keep walking towards the light.

by Geraldine O'Kane

Flash Fiction

Chris Wright

Chris Wright is from Bangor, Northern Ireland. His work has featured in several publications such as The Bangor Literary Journal, The Wellington Street Review, The Belfast Telegraph, and Broadsheet.ie. Chris is a Politics Graduate from Queens University, Belfast and is currently working on his second novel.



First, Do No Harm

He always savoured the empty moments. The moments that hung in the air like the promise of a thunderstorm. The moments where he was nothing, no-one, nowhere. Then it would all come back to him. It was like being born or, at least, that's what he told the Doctor despite having no recollection of his actual birth.

Distant feelings would tumble in from the edge of the world. The tell tale signs that let him know just how bad it had been. The penny smell of blood on the air, the soft gasp and gurgle at his feet, or worse still, silence. He prayed for their absence and not for the first time.

Reality clung heavy to him like his sodden shirt, hot and salty from the weight of the sun on the sealed window pane. He winced at the contact of the first thump. Each subsequent boom beaded off of his heavy brow. The Doctor tapped her pencil again and again on the yellow, lined paper she used to write short sentences that summarised long lives. The increasing dent on the pad would be her last impression upon this world.

by Chris Wright

Poetry

Sally Michaelson

Sally Michaelson is a Conference Interpreter in Brussels. Her poems have been published in *Ink, Sweat and Tears*, *Lighthouse*, *Algebra of Owls* and *Amethyst*.



Encounter

My mother

on learning that her toddler son
was dying

packed her womb with me
so tightly-

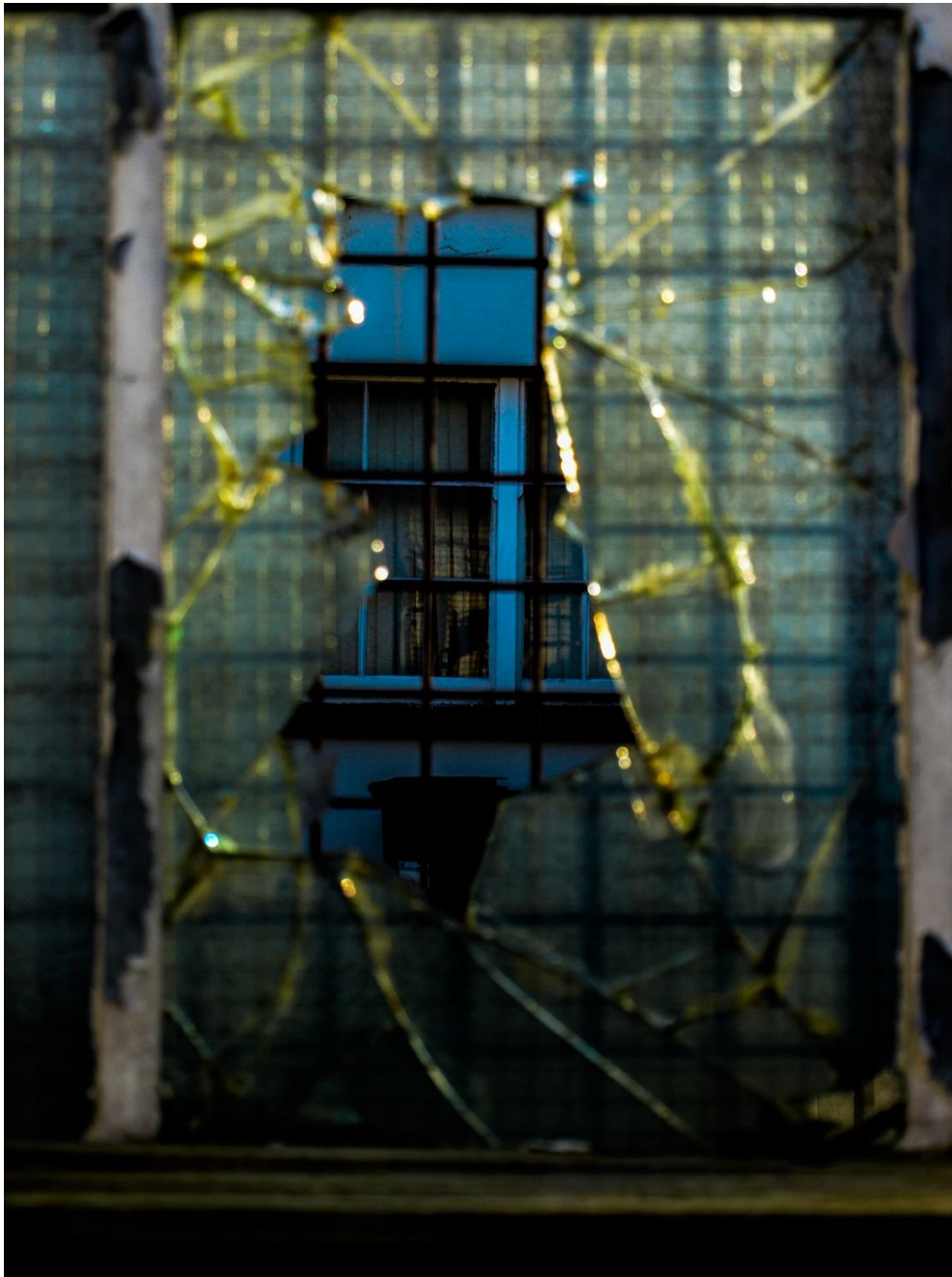
a butterfly without a pin
my brother's soul

hovered in the hospital,
I made my descent

into a girl's body
as he was flying out

we merged.

by Sally Michaelson



Broken Window (Part of the 'There Is A Beauty In Broken Things' series)

I find beauty in the most innocuous of things, in the seemingly mundane, in the broken, in those objects and scenes which would not necessarily be deemed beautiful, or even interesting. And, always, that beauty is there to be seen if you are willing to look, willing to trust the world around you, how it will show you these things in every day life. You do not need to be in a studio to find such beauty. Nor do you need to guide people or objects into desired positions to capture this beauty.



Locks, Wall.

Biography

Edward Lee's poetry, short stories, non-fiction and photography have been published in magazines in Ireland, England and America, including The Stinging Fly, Skylight 47, Acumen and Smiths Knoll. He is currently working on a photography exhibition called 'Lying Down With The Dead'.

He also makes musical noise under the names Ayahuasca Collective, Lewis Milne, Orson Carroll, Blinded Architect, Lego Figures Fighting, and Pale Blond Boy.

Poetry

Peter Adair

Peter Adair won The Funeral Services Northern Ireland Poetry Competition in 2016. Two poems were shortlisted for The Seamus Heaney Award for New Writing 2018. His poems have appeared in *The Honest Ulsterman*, *PN Review*, *The Galway Review*, *The Bangor Literary Journal*, *Lagan Online* and other journals and anthologies. He has read at The Belfast Book Festival and Aspects Festival.



Language Rules

(after Hannah Arendt)

Evacuation resettlement East.

Shipments per week problems of transport forest.

We did our best to make everything palatable.

Health Department selection ditches.

Railway station passenger numbers barbed wire.

If I am shown a gaping wound, I can't look at it. I couldn't have become a doctor. I hardly looked...

Directives facilities/teeth.

Preparations legal questions watches.

Here for the first and last time I had a choice.

Bearer of secrets bearer of orders.

We have remained decent.

A spurt of blood like a fountain.

by Peter Adair

Flash Fiction

Joseph Black

A. Joseph Black is from Carnlough, County Antrim and writes short stories and flash fictions. Over thirty of his pieces can be found online, in literary magazines, and in print anthologies. His short stories *Nora* and *By The Lake* have been published as chapbooks in Australia. In 2017 he was shortlisted for the Bath Flash Fiction Award, and was runner up in the 2018 Colm Tóibín International Short Story Award.



The Way Barry Walked

The way Barry walked put people off before they'd even spoken to him. He moved with an apologetic slope, giving him the air of someone who'd just done something they shouldn't have. Perhaps people somehow felt that speaking to him was to become complicit in whatever it was he'd done.

I liked Barry. Those who got past his gait to engage him in conversation were generously rewarded. His repertoire of unvarnished anecdotes from his life was inexhaustible, and shared them without malice or conceit. I never heard the same story twice. Barry had been to war, married three times, served two prison sentences, run his own business (into the ground) and once knocked Lucien Freud out cold with "a fair dig".

I didn't notice him gone at first. When I asked I was told he'd died in his sleep, at home. Not with a bang but a whimper. Barry had read all of Eliot, and was as likely to quote him on any given day as he was to share a tip for the second race at Fairyhouse.

"Barry died," I told Phil at work.

"Barry?" he replied, without looking up from his phone, "Your man who walks funny?"

by Joseph Black

Poetry

Margaret Galvin

Margaret Galvin grew up in Cahir, Co. Tipperary but has lived all of her adult life in Wexford where she worked variously with the library service, as Editor of Ireland's Own and in Social Care. Her poetry is well represented in the journals, most recently The Honest Ulsterman, North and Stix (Leeds). Her collections include The Waiting Room (Doghouse) and The Scattering Lawns (Lapwing). She holds an MA in Child, Youth and Family Studies and frequently delivers workshops on creative writing for identity and self understanding.



Best Lad

*(in memory of my cousin, John Ledger, 1929-2014
and his mother, Bridgey Coughlan, Clonmore)*

Strange to hear his name spoken
by a genealogist tracking down
his cousins to inherit whatever few shillings
he has left, intestate, no next of kin.

All I recall of him is a meticulously kept garage,
his mother, my aunt Bridgey, proud of his neat competence,
guiding us through shelves of screwdrivers and pliers,
sockets and spanners, he, a young man, silent and remote,
wiping his hands in an oily rag,
eager for a night out in the Fairfield Halls
where Petula Clarke would advise him to '*go downtown*'
and '*linger on the sidewalk where the neon lights are pretty.*'

The air in the bathroom was musky with old spice
when he soaped away the grime of the day,
his footprints damp in the talcum powder
He angled his jaw and hummed as he shaved:
Don't sleep in the subway darling.

The genealogist tells me he was steady in his way,
held the same job all his life, leased a small flat
in a red brick semi on a quiet street,
signed himself into a home shortly before his death.
What a pity he didn't leave his money to a nurse
who consoled him in Tamil or Tagalog
as he sweated out his last days in Ashton Manor,
or in a rare moment of avowal
claim Petula Clarke as his next of kin.

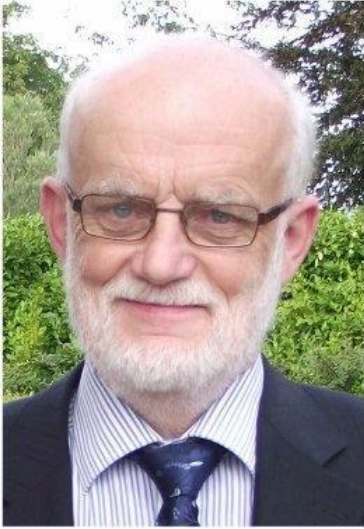
I can only hope that she returned to minister to him
in his final hours, assured him that she knew
a place where the lights are low,
a place for a chap like him, lingering in doorways,
shy and solitary, greasy with engine oil,
his shaven jaw spicy with lotion,
my aunt Bridgey busy with the clothes brush,
encouraging her 'best lad.'

by Margaret Galvin

Poetry

Michael Farry

Michael Farry has had two poetry collection published, *Asking for Directions*, by Doghouse Books, Tralee, in 2012 and *The Age of Glass*, by Revival Press, Limerick in June 2017. His poetry has been published in journals and anthologies in Ireland, the UK, America, Israel, India, Australia and Canada and poems of his have won prizes in competitions. His history book, *Sligo, The Irish Revolution 1912-1923*, was published in 2012 by Four Courts Press, Dublin.



Flying Home

At my age the mind is impossible to control.
I'm on the last departure out of Leeds Bradford
returning after a poetry week-end, parole
from humdrum retirement, my luggage stowed
while behind me the airport closes down, the whole
area dropping the shutters, themselves alone.
I'm glad to be getting out but I'm taken aback
by the propellers, and want to advise the crew
how the Sopwith Camel had to be humoured until
it gained altitude and manoeuvrability improved
but they're also shuttered in, so I order a snack,
dream I'm Giles Blennerhassett, skilled gunner
in a Farman two-seater, the deja vu of wet tarmac,
last flights, a free garrison at Brazzaville.

by Michael Farry

Poetry

Arthur Broomfield

Dr Arthur Broomfield is a poet, fiction writer and Beckett scholar from Ballyfin, County Laois. His recent poetry collection, *Cold Coffee at Emo Court* [Revival Press] is a best seller, having reached sales of 2000 copies. His poetry has been published in journals in Ireland, The UK and the USA. His critically acclaimed study on the works of Samuel Beckett *The Empty Too : language and philosophy in the works of Samuel Beckett* [Cambridge Scholars' Publishing 2014] is available from Amazon and from the publisher. Dr Broomfield holds a PhD in English literature from Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick.



The age of swift flow

And they beheld the marriage of Figaro
the shard of glass piercing the chocolate blancmange.
The age of swift flow and dumb down was carved
on the face of Jupiter's heaving moon.
Croquet lawns rippled to the whisking of omelettes
and mourned the lost voice and clover clogs
of the landlocked queen of burnt-out daffodil bulbs.
Sea-blown barbiturates and the death dance
of ascending threshing mills
merged with the silly hats on Lady's Day
at the Galway races.

by Arthur Broomfield

Poetry

Attracta Fahy

Attracta Fahy's background is Nursing/Social Care. She works as a Psychotherapist, lives in Co. Galway, and has three children. She completed her MA in Writing NUIG in 2017, and participates in Over The Edge poetry workshops. Her poems have been published in Banshee, Poetry Ireland Review, The Blue Nib, Poethead, Crossways Literary Magazine, North West Words, Picaroon, Bangor Literary Journal, Curlew, Coast to Coast to Coast, Honest Ulsterman, and several other journals, and magazines. She has been included in The Blue Nib Anthology, shortlisted for 2018 Over The Edge New Writer of The Year, and is a Blue Nib nominee for Pushcart. Attracta was one of the winners in a recent White Pamphlet series competition with Hedgehog Poetry Press, and will have her first pamphlet collection published in 2019.



How Did I love You

I loved you on my knees cutting the grass verge
with scissors, digging weeds,
creating a perfect ground for your feet.

I loved you as far as the longest straight line,
and back, cataclysmic spread of galaxies,
crashing stars, after millions of years, still
flicker light on a raven night, my love
falling, still, you were gold to my heart.

I loved you like galvanised waves spread
in rows over terraced homes, into horizons,
the unison of a thousand starlings preparing
for flight.

I loved you in sounds, creating a dance
in your honour.

I loved you like a bucket loves to carry,
this vessel leaking water, life,
loved like warm dandelions cover fields,
dying when pulled.

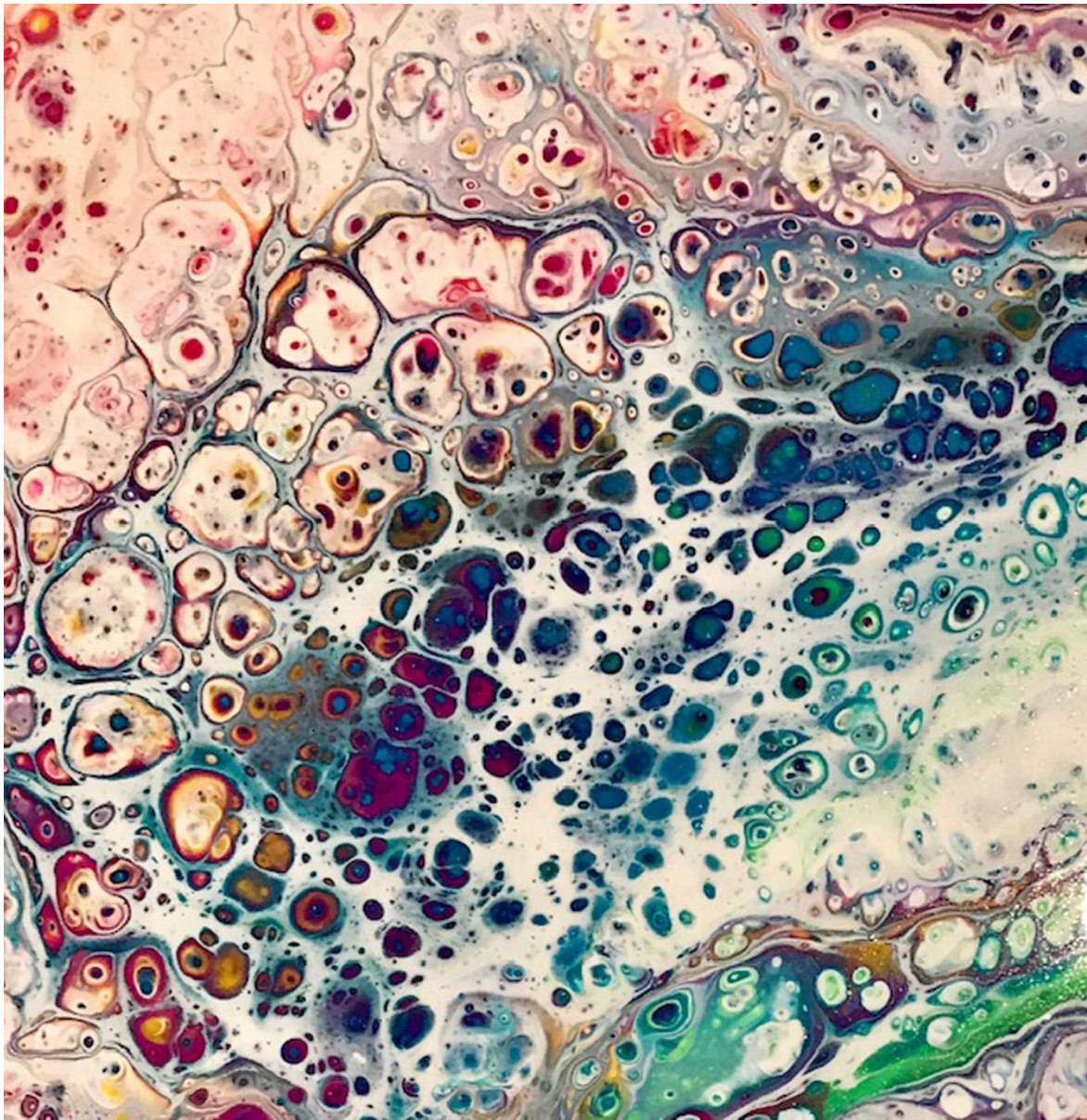
I loved, walking barefoot, feet
took me over bramble, stone,
into underworld, last foot leaving shore,
into the depth, ocean, another land,
sweeping me off my feet, floating
to music,
your smile,
my death.

by Attracta Fahy



Protoplasm

Sandy Coomer is an artist and poet living in Brentwood, TN. Her poetry has been published in numerous journals and anthologies and she is the author of three poetry chapbooks, including the recent *Rivers Within Us* (Unsolicited Press). Her art has been featured in local art shows and exhibits and has been published in journals such as *Lunch Ticket* (Antioch University Los Angeles), *Gravel*, *The Wire's Dream Magazine*, *Up the Staircase*, *Taxicab*, *Spider Mirror*, and *The Magnolia Review*, among others. Sandy is the director of Rockvale Writers' Colony in College Grove, TN. She is a teacher, a dreamer, a seeker, and an explorer. Her favourite word is "Believe."



Frost Flowers

The paintings are part of a large collection of over 100 paintings that explore the earth, the body, the environment and the science that binds it all together. These pieces are acrylic pour paintings created by combining acrylic paint with various substrates and silicone oil. The layers of paint react within the mixture according to their density and form an abstract design. I interpret the design in terms of land, water, sky, body, natural elements, and phenomena. My aim in creating this collection is to present unusual and alternative views of life and nature in order to inspire viewers to 'widen their world.'

Poetry

Conor Smyth

Conor Smyth is a 36 year old amateur writer and Bangor native who has written articles for Culture N.I and previously had poems published in A New Ulster, Cold Coffee Stand and The Merida Review.



One in Two

They say it is one in two but
Why did that one have to be you?
Why can't it be more like one in a million
Like a lost lottery or anomaly
To say that you were one in a million to me is wrong
You were one in infinity, like venus in the night sky or
Every sunrise I ever saw
Every conversation we shared
and each time you smiled despite
being the one in two

by Conor Smyth

Breda Joyce is currently a Masters in Creative Writing student in U.C.C. Her poems have appeared in recent editions of *The Honest Ulsterman*, *The Quarryman*, *The Galway Review* and her poem *The Void* was commended in *Poetry Ireland's* Poetry Project Award. Her writings have appeared in *Ireland's Own Anthology* and in *The Irish Times*.



Unravelling

Your bare feet move towards the centre of the still wet lawn and back out again. You are searching, searching for something that must be found before day breaks on your loss.

Your head is low over the flowerbed. I watch your face infused with an old bouquet. You sit and pull the belt of your dressing gown tighter around you.

A church bell peals and you count out the chimes: one, two, three, four five, six. You go back inside.

Later when I talk to you about your morning meanderings, you give me a concerned look as if I'm the one who's acting strangely.

- You know I like to walk the garden. Why can't you just leave me be?

You've always been predictable, just like the knitting patterns you follow: one plain two purl, repeat to the end of the line. I watch you now unpick a jumper stitch by stitch, row by row, to find the one that slipped, that caused it to unravel.

I look in the hallway mirror and see myself in your dressing gown, your slippers. You remember me even when I can't tell you who I am.

by Breda Joyce

Dandelion

Van Gogh went mad
and sprayed canvas grass
with flaming yellow rays
of feisty flowers:
mini suns each one.

I watch the stages
of your orange cored life
drain colour as
stalks droop around
your pin cushioned crown.

Then, as if to honour
your coronation
seeds are released.

I am a child clocking time.
Your constellation
spiograph the sky.

One o clock, two o clock,
a fluffy world takes flight;
fields now full of what time
has parachuted by.

by Breda Joyce



Remnants of an East Belfast Seamstress

Sunday drives to Sydenham
Great Aunt Delia—
reams of cloth
needles, pins
unthreaded spools—
the undiscovered riches
of an East Belfast seamstress

Amy Louise Wyatt is a poet and artist from Bangor Co Down. Both photograph and poem are part of a series about her great Aunt Delia, a spinster seamstress who lived in East Belfast. Ironically, she made wedding dresses all her life and lived to 103 years old.

Poetry

Ali Znaidi

Ali Znaidi (b.1977) lives in Redeyef, Tunisia. He is the author of several chapbooks, including *Experimental Ruminations* (Fowlpox Press, 2012), *Moon's Cloth Embroidered with Poems* (Origami Poems Project, 2012), *Bye, Donna Summer!* (Fowlpox Press, 2014), *Taste of the Edge* (Kind of a Hurricane Press, 2014), *Mathemaku x5* (Spacecraft Press, 2015), and *Austere Lights* (Locofo Chaps: an imprint of Moria Books, 2017). His translations into English have appeared in *The Lifted Brow*, *InTranslation: a web-exclusive section of The Brooklyn Rail*, *International Poetry Review*, and elsewhere. For more, visit alznaidi.blogspot.com.



Sonnet in which as I saw a mosaic of bees

A dervish was whirling
to the rain's music.
Stray bullets were pouring forth
hitting birds.
Asbestos boots were treading
on ants.
The narrative suggested fear.
Panicked animals had no solution
but to hug trees.
I was about to write
a historiography of fear.
But I rejected the idea
just as quickly as I saw a mosaic of
bees on the mouth of a honey badger.

by Ali Znaidi

Poetry

Meg McCleery

Meg studied at QUB and UUU and is a former College lecturer in English Literature and Media where she taught and developed literature courses validated by Q.U.B. She also ran Creative Writing classes in Belfast Community and Women's Centres and later Book Groups at Crescent Arts. She was awarded Highly Commended Poet in the Fifth Bangor Poetry competition 2017 and has had poetry published in Poetry Now and Poetry Anthologies. Originally from Belfast, Meg now lives in North Down and is working on her first novel.



Fish

She would slap the cold dead fish onto the slab and I would watch it lying there fascinated by its open mouth and cold, staring, dead eyes.
I would feel sick.
I knew the gutting would come next.

This was our Friday ritual when a day at my grandmother's became a day of mixed pleasures. First the walk to the shops, my hand numb white from her tight grasp, then the greengrocers for the turnip and white potatoes and then the dreaded fishmongers!

Her foreign accent made the smoked haddock sound exotic... we only ever had white cod in our house. The fishmonger would lay the soulless fish on his stained hand for inspection and wait for her nod of approval. One expert to another.
I would avert my eyes from his blood stained apron and sigh with relief when she would nod.
Ritual over I'd forget the fish for a while.

But there was no avoiding the gutting, the smell and the blood and the gore.

Once cooked the fish took on a different light, steamed and golden, running with butter, I was always ashamed at my delight.

She never knew how much I hated the gutting for I was always in awe of her, a big capable woman she would have had no time for wimps like me!

Now I buy fish prepared: I prefer life that way. No gutting required!

by Meg McCleery

Poetry

Alistair Graham

Alistair is a poet, short story writer and photographer. He was born in Belfast where he now lives with his wife Lucille. Some of his poems and short stories have appeared in; A New Belfast Poetry Map, A New Ulster, Boyne Berries, Crannog, Open Mouse, Shift Magazine, The Incubator, THE SHOp, the Desmond O'Grady Poetry Competition, the Poetry Institute of the British Isles and the Golden Thread Gallery, Belfast. The Irish Writers Centre in Dublin and No Alibis book store in Belfast previously hosted book launches for Alistair. Published books to date; War and Want, Lapwing Publications,2011 and Streets of Belfast, Lapwing Publications,2012.



Clap Their Hands

At the front of the house, this morning, the sun is up.
At the back, two white trails stretch across a blue sky.
The glossy sheen of a starling glitters as it glides over my head.
It flies between the trails like a small car, between the hedges, on a country road.
A silver powdered moon watches the whole affair; watches the plane fly out of sight.
I finish my cigarette, get dressed for work.

At lunchtime, in work, the heat is nudging the twenties and the sky is blue.
The front of the building is shaded; for now, the parked cars are bearable.
At the back of the building the high sun is scorching the concrete.
In the distance, The Port of Belfast cranes glide back and forth
like mad-men in a locked room, rocking in their chairs.
I finish my cigarette, walk back into the office.

At noon, I leave my desk and walk the corridor to the loo.
The toilet bowl is not centred; it sits more to the left than the right.
The thin walls of the cubicle are depressive-grey; the door is blue.
I lift my hands from my thighs, open out my arms
until the back of my hands reach the grey walls.
You can hear the sound as they touch; tap, tap.

At the back of the house, after work, the sun is still up.
I smoke a cigarette and survey the grass and trees.
Lucille calls out from an open window, "time is not on our side."
Forty minutes until we leave and drive to the theatre at the mill
to watch the performance of Septic Tiger.
I finish my cigarette, change my clothes.

Three hours ago, we left for the performance. Now I'm back out the back
and the sun is nowhere to be seen and it's too dark to see starlings,
white trails in the sky, the length of a plane or a blade of grass.
I set my glass on the table beside the ash tray and pick up the lighter.
The glow from the cigarette tip is a red heart pulsing in my temples,
instructing me to finish up and get undressed for bed.

I quickly stub out the cigarette in the seashell on the table and look up to the sky.
The starlings are in their millions among thousands of colliding planes.
Hundreds of ash-covered moons illuminate the performance.
The inhabitants from the surrounding houses sit on their rooftops and clap their hands.

I turn the key in the kitchen door. The sky is ablaze and the people love it.
The kitchen radio is sounding out a familiar waltz from the corner of the room.
The newscaster interrupts and announces, people are falling from rooftops to their death.

By Alistair Graham

Flash Fiction

Penny Blackburn

Penny Blackburn lives in the North East of England and writes poetry and short fiction. Her online publication includes pieces in Writers' Café, Picaroon and Marsden Poetry Village and she has appeared in print anthologies by Batley Poets and Paper Swans Press.



Summer Bonfire

The carefully stored and dried stacks of wood – spider havens where a shiver of scuttling things would be unleashed across the skin – depleted during the evening. The drink went down, the embers glowed whiter.

Somebody suggested, “There’s always that old chair.”

It was brought, enthusiastically, by a couple of the lads. It didn’t need an axe, just a quick wrench apart like some strange chicken being jointed.

It burnt brilliantly. A shower of copper-gold sparks was cast into the night sky; blistering and peeling old paint created goblin faces in the depths of the fire.

That was the start. We would feed the fire all night, until everything we had would be burned.

Sideboards, tables, chairs, the old garden shed – the new one. The whatnot Granny Mavis left. The bedside cabinet, the bedding, the beds. The books – deep breath, it’s just paper – the TV, the stereo, the contents of the cupboards. The clothes and the ornaments, the crockery and the photo albums.

All the accumulated weight of life thrown on the fire. If it burned, it burned. If it didn’t, we didn’t care.

In the morning, an emptied house. Our only unburnt item – a rake for the ashes.

by Penny Blackburn

Poetry

Lee Prosser

Lee currently lives in a small village in West Wales and graduated with an MA in creative writing at Swansea University in 2018

His background in poetry started by performing at spoken word events and Welsh festivals. and has performed at the Laugharne festival, Swansea's 'Green Fuse' Festival and the Llandovery sheep festival.

His work is published online and in print in The Gull, Haiku Journal, and three drops from a cauldron. His poem 'A Sonnet for Those Things Lost' was highly commended in the Cannon Poets 2018 poetry competition.



Ascension

I see young men
gripped tight onto the cluster of colours
that form the climbing wall.

Feet and fingers closely coupled
and their legs betraying a shake

as they are still learning to fall.

I know nothing
from the sanctuary of the café.

Peering over the Perspex
to catch a glimpse of my son's ascent
not understanding the complexity

like the difference in chords to the trained ear

it's all about the scale, I guess
I carry all the worry

maybe there's more going on
than just the greying of my snout–
the colour of ash

as the fire burns fiercely
within the hardening clay of his body.

by Lee Prosser

Dare

It was hurling a stick that did it,
maybe it was more like a branch without leaves.
Canine teeth left it scarred and naked.

Edging the turning circle
at the end our short road, wasps camped in a papery ball
deep within the common hedge.

If I threw it, I was in. Call it initiation
it was the only way. They were all older by a year or two,
in the city that's a lot when you're only ten.

Two boys, one girl and me
we made up the street. I had to time it right
and waited as the man dressed

equipping himself with a special gun
from the back of his white council van
and crept like an assassin towards the nest.

I was a little bastard—
his words as the swarm stormed
and he had to quickly withdraw.

He grassed me to my mam
but I didn't care though

I was in.

by Lee Prosser



Abandoned nest | Shadow play

I found this bird's nest in a garden in Co. Waterford. As I examined it, I noticed that the shadows it cast were strange and reminiscent of monsters. The camera I had to hand at the time was the one on my iPhone 5.

Mona Atkinson is an Irish artist currently living in Cork. Born in Germany, Mona studied at the National College of Art and Design in Dublin, graduating in 2011. Mona's handbags and pockets are full of notebooks and scraps of paper. She enjoys contributing to independent zines and collaborating with other artists.

Poetry

Billy Fenton

Billy Fenton lives in Ireland and he writes poetry and short stories. His work has been published in the *Irish Times*, *Poetry Ireland Review*, and *Cattails*. He was shortlisted for a Hennessy Award in 2018.



Contract

A dismembered body
scattered like a warning,
across the mountain path,
skull picked clean,
backbone broken,
not a rib to be seen.

Beyond,
a surround of mountain,
tucked into cloud,
a circle of waterfalls
humming,
like an orchestra
not needing a conductor,
knowing exactly
what to do,
to give back
everything that is taken.

by Billy Fenton

Poetry

Laura Morgan

Laura Morgan is a writer, teacher and reader, living in Belfast. She has been published with Abridged Online, and was commended in the Poetry Day HeadStuff competition, 2018. Her first novel 'Stars Apart' is available on Amazon Kindle. Recently, she has been spotted performing her poetry to Belfast audiences.



Babushka

Lying out in the sun
Limbs touching limbs,
Like a line of Russian dolls.

Before,
We were in one body:

I, upside down,
Swimming in my mama,
While you, the potential you,
The egg halfyou,
Was clutched inside of me,
Nestled with your Ova siblings.

We, once an I.

And now we lie,
All kissed by the sun
Limb to limb,
Chatting.

by Laura Morgan

Elizabeth McGeown is twice All-Ulster Poetry Slam Champion and three-time finalist in the All-Ireland, the only woman to have ever qualified three times. She was the 'sacrificial' poet at the final of the All Ireland Poetry Slam 2015, also serving on the judging panel. Chosen by Dublin: UNESCO City Of Literature for the Lingo Slam 2015, she placed third in 2016. Festivals she has performed at include Body & Soul, Lingo and the Edinburgh Fringe. She has recently completed a Scottish tour, guesting at Sonnet Youth and Poetry Circus, amongst other events. Her first e-pamphlet "twas" was published in December 2018 by Pen Points Press.



The Cross-Community School Trip, 1997

"It's up, down, left, right", "No, up, down right and left!" Travelling to St. Mary's, the only thing we were sure of is that it was always Up first. We'd seen it on TV, yer man from Ballykissangel always gazing up at the statue mournfully, touching his hand to his forehead and then the rest was so fast we missed it. We were comparing our Catholic notes.

Their foyer was full of statues. A life-size Jesus (was it Jesus or was it one of their other ones? We'll never know) towered over us from his plinth. He worried the more sensitive, bleeding like that. A gasped giggle began to spread through the crowd which parted to reveal Jack kissing Jesus' feet. Jack always did... not the things we wouldn't dare, but the things that were beyond our imaginations. Kissing the feet of Jesus. We laughed because we were supposed to. The host school did not.

We had failed our first cross-community hurdle. On the bus home we wondered if Sadie would be allowed to wear her Rangers scarf next time. It had been a Christmas present. She sang The Sash. I sat at the back. Something was wrong here.

by Elizabeth McGeown

Music Feature

Maeshine



Maeshine fuses Celtic, folk, world and new age genres into a unique sound of their own. Their pure voices, ethereal instruments and songs of gratitude, joy, mindfulness and love take audiences on a heart-warming journey.

"Relaxing, soothing, beautiful, therapeutic, restorative " say their listeners. With lyrics that inspire well-being, stunning vocals, chimes, singing bowls, gypsy guitar, Tambura chord, Rav Vast and lullaby drums this duo is refreshingly original and spellbinding.

Hi Inge, thank you so much for chatting with us today, we are delighted. Firstly, can you tell us a little bit about how you first got into music?

I think music has been with me since I was in the womb.

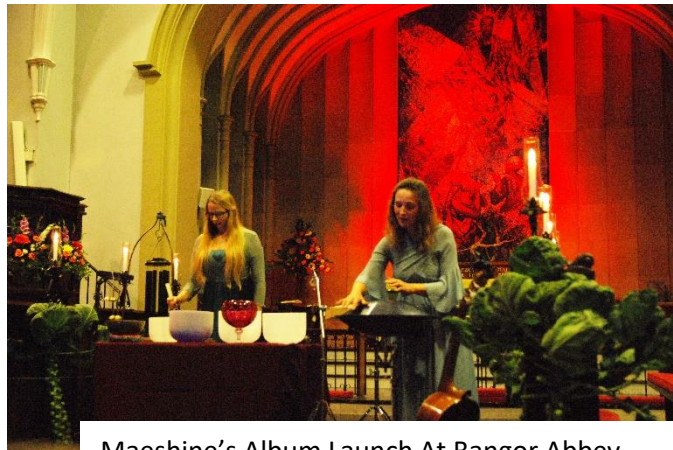
My mum has a beautiful voice and is always singing. I think I absorbed that love of singing from her. My aunt is a professional singer and in my extended family there are professional singers and classical musicians. Therefore, every get-together would include some form of sing-song.

We travelled a lot during my childhood and I loved hearing all different types of music. I originally asked to learn to play the harp, but there were no classes anywhere near us, so I started to learn to play the classical guitar instead. When I was 12, a singer songwriter duo came to perform at my school and I really loved their music. I ended up taking part in one of their folk guitar courses and one day, one of the people attending shared a song she'd just written. That was an "Aha" moment for me; after which I started song writing, and have never stopped since.

Maeshine have just launched their first album. What type of music can we find on 'Gentle Peace'?

Our music is very tranquil, a fusion of new age, Celtic, folk and world genres. We use a lot of ethereal, meditative instruments.

My son, who produced the album, has a degree in composition for film and has added some beautiful orchestral moments, multiple layered vocals and a variety of unusual sounds. The lyrics speak of nature, love, stillness, gratitude and being present in the moment.



Maeshine's Album Launch At Bangor Abbey

As a singer song writer, what is your starting point for a new song?

I have no starting point, no predetermined idea of what I will write about. My songs arise from a meditative still space. In those moments, experiences that have touched me deeply, seem to emerge as songs. Sometimes, I write something I don't really understand until later, like insights that I need to learn.

Usually words and music arrive at the same time, they just kind of flow out. On another day I'll go back and tweak the words. I am not shy to change words, even years later, if I feel I have gained new depths of understanding that can help the song grow.

Your family members play a big part in your musical and artistic path. What is like to work alongside the ones you love?

It's an amazing blessing in my life which I am so thankful for.

The way my daughter captured the spirit of the songs in her art touched me so deeply. Some of the drawings made me cry (in the nicest possible way) and I learnt new things through her eyes. This prompted me to write the little quotes for the Gentle Peace cards and book.

Working with Tommy in the studio flowed so naturally, and he ensured I stayed true to myself all the way through. There were these magic moments where we just gelled, and would virtually come out with the same suggestion at the same time.

And he was so nurturing and patient. I just loved sharing the whole creative process with him.



Rosie Haghighi: Tender Love Aglow

Anna is my son's girlfriend, and we started performing together in September last year. I very much enjoy rehearsing with Anna and we always start with some meditation, followed by our vocal warm ups. We both love singing bowls and other ethereal instruments. It's just magical to harmonise our voices together. We have a lot of fun, as well as depth of connection. She is like a daughter to me and a really good friend.



My husband is our photographer. He created our website and he helps with promotion and management. We have worked alongside each other in various businesses over the years and the challenge has always been to keep business separate from our relationship. Thankfully, we've managed to find a balance which works for us.

What have been your proudest and most memorable moments in your musical journey so far?

I'm not sure about this question, because every single time you connect with someone heart to heart through music is incredibly special. To take pride in my music would be to feel that I own it, but I don't feel that, I feel that I've been lucky to uncover these treasures. It's a bit like going on an archaeological dig, the things are already there. When I'm fine tuning lyrics it feels like I'm scraping away the final bits of dirt, in order to fully reveal the song. It's about continuously letting go of what you've done before, in order to be a clear vessel for the next song you write, or the next performance you give. That way, each one is the most memorable in that moment. It's never about numbers, it's all about doing it from the heart, be it for one person or a thousand people.

Have you any exciting events on the horizon?

Anna and I are going to start a monthly music relaxation evening, where we will be sharing some of the more meditative songs and then have moments of soothing instruments in between. The focus of it will be for people to connect with the peaceful and therapeutic side of music.

We usually play a couple of songs at Yarnspinners every month at Bangor Library. It's a lovely event of storytelling, poetry and music. We will be there again on 10 April 2.30pm.



On 23 May we will be a part of the Learning Festival at Bangor Carnegie Library and will have Rosie's Gentle Peace Art Exhibition there and also perform songs from the album.

Other opportunities are emerging, and we will keep people updated on our website and Facebook.



Rosie Haghighi: Sunshine in a Clearing

Finally Inge, if you could summarise the message that you want to put across to your audience, what would that be?

Our family's Gentle Peace music, art and words are our way of sharing some beauty, creativity, harmony and love. I wish for everyone to find a way of life that brings joy and calmness to their hearts.

Buy Gentle Peace' here:'

<https://www.maeshine.com/shop>

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www.maeshine.com

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Teardrop

'Teardrop' was inspired by the 2018 Bangor Literary Journal painting competition on the theme of Love, for which I wrote: *Yesterday, love sang her day awake. Tonight, bombs distil it into a single tear.* It is painted in oils on board.

Marilyn A Timms, is a writer and artist living in Gloucestershire who has recently begun illustrating her poetry. She paints in oils, acrylics and encaustic wax and occasionally attempts a fusion of all three. She is delighted to have been invited to read from her second poetry collection, *Both Sides of the Coin*, at this year's Cheltenham Poetry Festival

FORTY WORDS COMPETITION
OPEN UNTIL
MIDNIGHT 10TH APRIL 2019

A MINI-FICTION CATEGORY:
ENTER A PIECE OF PROSE ON
ANY TOPIC, IN ANY STYLE, AS
LONG AS IT IS 40 WORDS OR
LESS. (TITLE NOT INCLUDED
IN WORD COUNT)

A MINI-POETRY CATEGORY:
ENTER A POEM ON ANY TOPIC,
ANY STYLE AND ANY
AMOUNT OF LINES OR
STANZAS, AS LONG AS IT IS 40
WORDS OR LESS. (TITLE NOT
INCLUDED IN WORD COUNT)

Please email your entries to thebangorliteraryjournal@hotmail.com with the heading

FORTY WORDS SUBMISSION- Name. In the Body of the email, please include a short note, brief biography, author image, contact details and your PayPal transaction code. Your submissions should be attached in a separate Word document, with no trace of your name, as they are read anonymously. Each entry should be put into a separate Word document- so if you are putting forward three pieces, then three separate documents should be attached. You can enter both categories as many times as you wish.

Your entries should not have been previously published online or in print and must be your own original work.

We do not accept simultaneous submissions.

You can enter from anywhere in the world. Open to both established and emerging writers.

Deadline for submissions: Midnight 10th April 2019. Once the editorial team have made their decision, winners will be notified by the 30th April 2019.

Prizes:

First prize for each category: The winning pieces of poetry and prose shall be featured in the ninth issue of The Bangor Literary Journal, alongside a feature about the winning writers. The winners shall have the opportunity to read their winning pieces and be presented with their framed certificates and a piece of original artwork at The Open House Festival Launch of The Bangor Literary Journal at The Blackberry Path Studios; plus other reading opportunities in 2019.

Second prize for each category: Your piece will feature in the ninth issue of The Bangor Literary Journal, you will receive a certificate and you will be offered reading opportunities.

There will also be a commended and highly commended list for each category, with reading opportunities.

It is £3.50 to enter a piece of poetry or prose or enter two pieces for £6, or four pieces for £10. This is a fundraising event to help us cover the costs of our website; our launch events and if there's anything left over, it will go straight into promoting the journal.

Please pay below and then copy the PayPal transaction number and paste it onto the body of the email with your submission. Thank you for your donation and good luck!

You can enter as many times as you wish!