



Live encounters

P O E T R Y

Celebrating six years 2010 - 2015
Free online magazine from village earth
October 2016

SONGS FROM 12 POETS



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CONTRIBUTORS

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Against Silence

Maria Wallace

Maria Wallace was born in Catalonia, lived in Chile for ten years and later settled in Dublin. She has won many national and international poetry prizes, amongst them The Sunday Tribune Hennessy Literary Awards, 2006. Her work has been published in Ireland, England Italy, Australia and Catalonia. In 1996 she founded Virginia House Creative Writers and has edited four anthologies of their work. She has published two bilingual poetry collections (English - Catalan). She judges The Jonathan Swift Awards.



A Gypsy Woman in Ireland

Terry McDonagh

Irish poet and dramatist, Terry McDonagh, taught creative writing at the University of Hamburg and was Drama Director at the Int. School Hamburg for 15 years. He now works freelance; has been writer in residence in Europe, Asia, Australia; published 7 poetry collections, book of letters, prose and poetry for young people translated into Indonesian and German, distributed internationally by Syracuse Uni. Press; latest poetry collection Ripple Effect/Arlen House; children's story, Michel the Merman, illustrated by Marc Barnes (NZ). He lives in Hamburg and Ireland. www.terry-mcdonagh.com



War

Michael J. Whelan

Michael J. Whelan lives in South Dublin. He served as a UN Peacekeeper in Lebanon and Kosovo with the Irish Army and is a historian and keeper of the Air Corps Military Museum. He was 2nd Place in the Patrick Kavanagh & 3rd in the Jonathan Swift Awards. He is widely published and read for the Poetry Ireland Introductions series and his debut collection 'Peacekeeper' was published in 2016 by Doire Press.



Threnody

Anton Floyd

Anton Floyd was born in Egypt of Irish, Maltese, English and French Lebanese parentage. He studied English at Trinity College Dublin and University College Cork. He has lived and worked in the Eastern Mediterranean. He is now teaching in Cork city and lives in West Cork. Poems published in The Stony Thursday Book and haiku in Shamrock. He won the IHS International Competition (2014), honourable mention (2015) and was runner up in the Snapshot Press (UK) Haiku Calendar 2016 Competition. He is a member of Irish Haiku Society.



From Which it is Torn - 111

Paul Casey

Paul Casey grew up between Ireland and southern Africa. He has published work in five of his spoken languages and has been featured at festivals and venues worldwide. His second full collection from Salmon Poetry is *Virtual Tides* (2016) and his poetry was recently translated into Romanian by Singur Publishing, in the Contemporary Irish Poetry volume, *Blackjack*. He edits the annual *Unfinished Book of Poetry* for Cork City Libraries (secondary schools writing) and is director of the Ó Bhéal poetry series in Cork, at www.obheal.ie



Two Poems

Mae Newman

Mae Newman lives in Rathfarnham and is a member of Platform One, Marley Poetry Group and St Muirín's Writing Group. She has won numerous prizes here and abroad. Her debut poetry collection *Mist Shrouds the Morning* was published by Lapwing. She is a member of Whitechurch Library Social History. She likes to read and go to plays.

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Live
encounters

POETRY
OCTOBER 2016



At The World's End - I1

Randhir Khare

Khare is an award winning author of twenty one volumes of non-fiction, fiction, translation and poetry. Executive Editor of Heritage India, the International Culture Journal, a Director of The Rewachand Bhojwani Academy and Visiting Professor to the Dept Of English, Pune University. Recently he was given The Residency Award by The Sahitya Akademi (India's National Academy of Letters) for his contribution to Indian Literature and the Human Rights Award for his efforts to preserve and celebrate marginal and minority cultures. www.randhirkhare.in



Desert Hands, Dublin Heart

Courtney Lavender

Courtney Lavender is a native born Los Angeleno with deep roots in Ireland. She's spent the better part of her years working both as a performing musician and behind the scenes in travel, licensing, and as a staff writer for Rock Cellar Magazine. She has had additional written works published on TheRumpus.net, and is working toward her first poetry collection.



Six Poems

Matthew Rice

Matthew Rice was born in Belfast in 1980. He now lives and works in Carrickfergus, County Antrim. Rice has published poems in magazines and journals on both sides of the Atlantic, including *The Asheville Poetry Review* and *The Honest Ulsterman*. He was one of six new poets showcased in a special reading organised by Poetry NI and Poetry Ireland. He was long-listed for the Seamus Heaney Award for New Writing 2016.



Said The Reed

Shahbano Aliani

Shahbano Aliani is a Shaykha (spiritual master) in the Shahdili-Darqawi Sufi order. Her quest for purpose and meaning brought her to the Sufi path in 2009. Soon thereafter Shahbano started writing poetry, a collection of which has been published by Intent Publishing South Africa and Na'layn Publications, Pakistan entitled, "Set My Heart On Fire". Though written in English and in a modern voice, her verse is both a timeless chronicle of and a manual for spiritual transformation, in the finest tradition of Sufi poetry.



Women in Iran

Nasrin Parvaz

Nasrin Parvaz became a civil rights activist when the Islamic regime took power in 1979. She was arrested in 1982, tortured and spent eight years in prison. Shortly after her release she fled to England where she claimed asylum in 1993. Her prison memoir was published in Farsi in 2003 and in Italian in 2006. A novel, *Temptation*, based on the true stories of some male prisoners who survived the 1988 massacre of Iranian prisoners was published in Farsi in 2008. www.nparvaz.wix.com



Gifts of Time

John Pinschmidt

Pinschmidt, born in Denver in 1947, is a retired high school English and drama teacher. He lives in Herbertstown, Co. Limerick, Ireland with his Irish wife in her family's ancestral stone farmhouse. Although he has written poetry for over 40 years, he only seriously pursued publication since unexpectedly taking first runner up in Limerick City's October 2009 *Cuisle International Poetry Festival Slam*. It opened doors to a performance poet who writes accessibly about what moves him, capturing and celebrating current and past lives. His first collection, *Maiden Voyage*, was published by Revival Press in February, 2014. www.limerickwriterscentre.com www.omahonys.ie

Maria Wallace was born in Catalonia, lived in Chile for ten years and later settled in Dublin. She has won many national and international poetry prizes, amongst them The Sunday Tribune Hennessy Literary Awards, 2006. Her work has been published in Ireland, England Italy, Australia and Catalonia. In 1996 she founded Virginia House Creative Writers and has edited four anthologies of their work. She has published two bilingual poetry collections (English - Catalan). She judges The Jonathan Swift Awards.



The Meenybradden Bog Woman

(from the late medieval period, uncovered in 1978 in county Donegal)

Peat-brown hours
turned to centuries,
toughened
your skin with the soft touch
of nature's forgatherings.
A lullaby the drip and squelch
of wet leavings,
the gossip of grasses,
the winnowing wind
and occasional birdsong
rippling over you
like the deepest, final note
of a cello.
And you listening
to all that muted music,
stilled in the hold of roots,
under the brown-veined roof
of your dark sky,

hating the silent tongue
of time.

No death in the afternoon

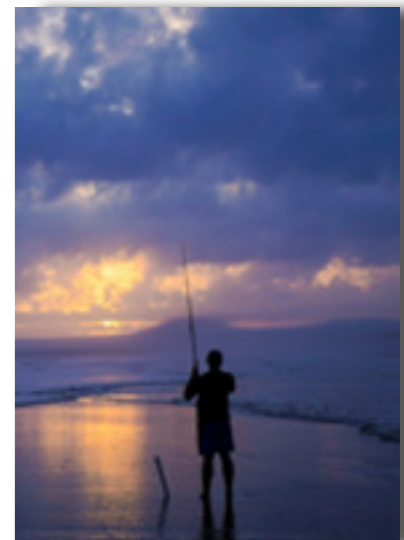
(i.m E. Hemingway. Sunday, July the 2nd 1961)

You woke before the sun
showed over the mountains
east of Ketchum, before it had time to touch
a greeting on your window.

With bathrobe and slippers, ghostly silent
walking by your wife's bedroom door.
In the storeroom familiar gun oil and leather smells
reaffirming your decision.

Were you, that day, the old man of the sea trailing behind
nothing but fish bones, a defeated carcass unable to feel
the unloving contact of cold metal? Or, in that padlocked
plaza de toros, did you battle with,
run away from the beast? Heat like embers,
hot even the sand under your feet, faced
with a raging bull, black back glistening with blood
that would be repaid with blood. No spectators
to applaud last *faena* for bull and matador.

No death in the afternoon. Crisp dawn,
and the bells toll for you.



Now a stranger

I am a stranger in the house
where I was born.

My family is spread out all over the world,
in different countries,
above, below under the soil,
in poems, in pictures.

The trees outside
are getting ready
for their summer display of figs,
almonds, walnuts and apples,
but they don't recognise me anymore.

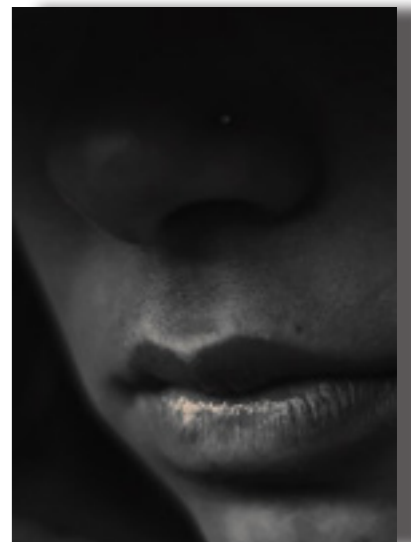
Now all the echoes are too distant
to be heard or understood,
and my days here are heaped under
other peoples' days.

Against silence

In a warm, coffee-scented café
we drank unsweetened tea,
talked for hours, discussed
the ins and outs of literature,
all the time afraid
to give a name to what we felt.

You severed each saving line
to avoid the temptation
of a meaningful utterance,
the temptation of a coming back,
and I failed to read tea leaves,
signs telling me some stories
will remain unwritten,
that language painfully buried
is seldom resurrected.

I don't know where you are now,
but I'm here writing a river of words
to run against your silence.



The last two items from her bag

Auntie Big Bags we called her,
though, I wondered why the plural
when all I ever saw was the one,
ballooned, time and use brown-coloured
which she always carried under her left arm.

I spent hours imagining
the pristine floral pattern
she must have fallen in love with;
in good light I could still distinguish
pink and green on the cloth.

Even the kitchen sink's in there,
Big Bags would say, opening
its ragged mouth to get, invariably,
a packet of Silvermints, she swore
they were good for her stomach.

One evening, the two of us alone
in the house, she took out a bottle
of lavender scented oil, *to calm the nerves.*
A book of Chinese proverbs, *for wisdom.*
Rosary beads, *for when worried.*
Novena leaflets and rabbit's foot, *for good luck.*
Notebook, pens, crumpled up paper,
bills, handkerchiefs, coins and keys
on the kitchen table, and what cushioned
the bottom of her bag: a dark green,
hand knitted scarf, so long it would have gone
three times round my neck,
and a red-ribboned bunch of letters.

I change the ribbon quite often, she said
fingering the bow: *I will never wash the scarf.*
Noticing it was caked with dirt
through and through, I asked why.

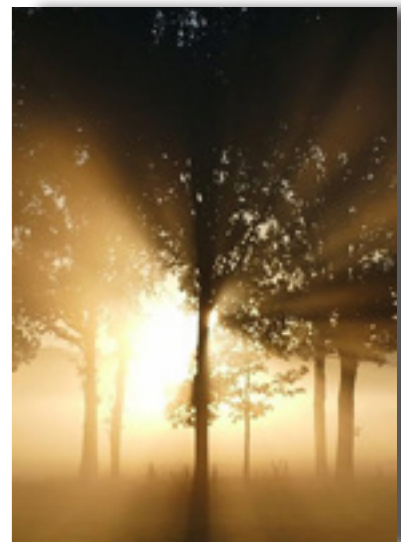
She looked away, whispered:
French mud and Irish blood.

The will to be

In the beginning
there was a quiver,
a lone first note
venturing into empty spaces.

Others followed,
uncertain.

With no conductor to guide
their infant steps,
they sung their will to be,
staves played over
lonely hearts,
a story written by desire.



This poem was first published in the inaugural issue of Live Encounters Magazine January 2010.

Founding Contributor of Live Encounters. 2010
www.terry-mcdonagh.com



A Gypsy Woman in Ireland

These days in Ireland, people talk
 about the price of sites,
 the cost of tribunals, property abroad,
 or foreigners...refugees:
 lazy people come for our riches,
 who won't work. They steal,
 eat raw from our fields,
 blacken our reputation and
 colour the skin of our children.

I am Sonia, a Gypsy woman
 who dreamed colours and grew up
 gathering berries in a village
 in Romania. I earned my way
 to university to become a doctor
 and the pride of my mother's heart.

My father never had a nation
 and died in Auschwitz.

I was arrested with a bundle
 of leaflets and when I had to flee
 to Ireland, I was sad:
 not to be a doctor,
 not to visit my mother's grave,
 to marry an Irishman.

I have never stolen. I am
 spring clean, stalk strong,
 proud and honest as

the memory of snails and owls
 in our desolate garden.

I fled when a sneering bullet
 ended my mother's life. She died
 at the mean will of our state; in
 our house; in my place.

Now, I can only shelter
 behind my husband's curtains
 in a childless fourth-floor flat
 before closing time in Dublin.

I still see my uncle
 blazing
 with his shining sickle
 in shirt sleeves.

My husband in Ireland
 you gave me my first passport
 and beat me daily:
 - for the sighs and secrets
 in our troubled death-songs
 ...like Irish songs.
 - for my childhood in fields,
 - for our hawks, falcons and silver,
 - for the poetry in our people.

I should be able to talk
 in the shops, but
 they listen away from my accent.

I cannot tell them of our winters,
 of our trees whistling like
 the shades of accordion music.

I have learned to hide
 behind candles in churches;
 to disappear into the woodwork
 and to listen to the distant patience
 in the singing of my ancestors:

homeless in Romania
 homeless in Serbia
 homeless inland
 homeless in Germany
 homeless in the east
 homeless in France
 homeless in Italy
 homeless in the west
 homeless in England
 homeless in Russia
 homeless on the coast
 homeless in Bulgaria
 homeless in Albania
 homeless in the north
 homeless in Europe
 homeless in the south
 homeless in Ireland.

The flowers have gone out
 on another summer.

I'm a year closer to my mother.

Michael J. Whelan lives in South Dublin. He served as a UN Peacekeeper in Lebanon and Kosovo with the Irish Army and is a historian and keeper of the Air Corps Military Museum. He was 2nd Place in the Patrick Kavanagh & 3rd in the Jonathan Swift Awards. He is widely published and read for the Poetry Ireland Introductions series and his debut collection 'Peacekeeper' was published in 2016 by Doire Press.



Demon

Mechanical echoes drift
down from a black hilltop
with the threatening coughs
of an angry monster
moving clumsily
in the still night
like a drunken demon
about to chastise
his fearful children,
gearing up to spew rage
and venom
at half sleeping villages
where some await
the thunderous splash of lights
and others
holding their breaths
prepare to die
again.

Caravan

Eyes sunken deep into her face,
searching frantically but not seeing,
pleading to an unforgiving world
she battles along the crowded road,
her life's belongings strung about her
body in hastily filled bags
bulging at the seams,
children trailing like a desert caravan
in a sea of misery,
escaping the mortars smashing her village
into sand.



© Michael Whelan

Balkan Fire

(Yugoslav war 1990s)

Brave bullet, free at last of your muzzle,
your song distorts the sky with birds.
Echoes beat across startled landscapes
in hopeless chase, only destination
matters now.

A cowering marketplace hides
tired eyes and soft flesh
waiting to be pierced, bone to
be shattered. Determined,
you search, craving your bloodlust,
seeking out your victory.

Yellow Tape

Passing A.P.C.s
and troops at every corner
between the clanking,
twisting clatter of metal
caterpillar tracks on
hulking tanks
and the labouring monsters
of armoured cars
hovering close
to keep them safe
from hand grenades
and open windows,
K.FOR soldiers
escort children to school
hand in hand,
two by two
through narrow lanes
of yellow tape
with skulls and bones
warning of unexploded bombs
on cold thin mornings
in Lipjan.

APC = Armoured Personnel Carrier
K.FOR = Kosovo peacekeeping forces
Lipjan = Town in Irish area of operations



© Michael Whelan

War

Early snow laid quiet the land,
 kept still in silent slumber,
 streams curving under frozen shields
 caressed the virgin wonder
 and scars of war upon the earth
 were hidden to the sky,
 for in that morning's dawning breath
 both man and bird could fly.
 But in the woods bold soldiers woke
 a bear from angry sleep,
 their marching songs fuelled his hate,
 brought bloodlust to his teeth.

And in the field a stomping mare
 feared her awful fate,
 biting and kicking she fought to live
 until the fateful claw
 that laid her quiet on the land,
 blood stealing all the snow.
 As she died her heat rose up
 like steam from all her wounds,
 her organs bled the air above
 and soldiers warmed their hands.

For A Dollar

She never looked at you.
 Muslim women, alone, don't look at you.
 She was older,
 same age as my mother,
 wore jeans and a scarf around her chin.
 I dropped off my laundry,
 which she hand washed every week for a dollar.
 Always smiled when paid,
 'Shukran, shukran' she said and lowered her head.
 Never got her name.

But I saw her.
 Alone, tired and worn,
 bent over and a little forlorn,
 her house bomb damaged and torn
 and a mess of soldiers dirty uniforms,
 no father or brothers to protect her,
 only their image on a wall.

And I saw them too, in her brave hollow eyes.
 Long dead.
 She was strong, only twenty-five,
 but had lived much longer.



© Michael Whelan

Anton Floyd was born in Egypt of Irish, Maltese, English and French Lebanese parentage. Raised in Cyprus he lived through the Cypriot struggle for independence. With the outbreak of intercommunal hostilities in 1963, the family was evicted at gunpoint from their Nicosia home by Turkish Cypriot militiamen, making them refugees in a divided capital. He studied English at Trinity College Dublin and University College Cork. He has lived and worked in the Eastern Mediterranean. He is now teaching in Cork city and lives in West Cork. Poems published in *The Stony Thursday Book*, *The Ghent Review* and haiku in *Shamrock*. He won the IHS International Competition (2014), honourable mention (2015) and was runner up in the Snapshot Press (UK) Haiku Calendar 2016 Competition. He is a member of Irish Haiku Society. A selection of his haiku is included in 'Between the Leaves', an anthology of new haiku writing from Ireland (Arlen House). His longer poems are looking for a home.

Photograph of Anton by Carole Anne Floyd



necessity knows no law

perrone or allepo

they were so absolute
defying the angles of the sun
they made our clocks
tell their time only
they justified it saying
necessity knows no law

they made a trophy of our flag
occupied our streets
daily parading their vainglory
they took hostages to gag all hope
summarily stole our all
they robbed our mattresses for wool
they froze us to the bone
necessity knows no law

they left the town a ruin
every room every stone defiled
even in defeat
they could not resist
a final arrogant jab
they daubed a slogan
parading their vainglory
on our mayoral wall
nicht angern do not be angry
nur wundern just be astonished

as you tell me this history
I search my heart and in your eyes
to know finally what survives
after necessity knows no law

lefkara lace

for Olga Loizia

take the endless cadence
in this instance of summer
the vast sea's soft caresses
it lays momentary traces
of its lacemaking
on the gentle slant of the beach

take another such instance
that made permanent this transience
recall the woman at her lacemaking
her fingertip's delicate stitches
gleeful at her dancing needlepoint
tracing a lace collar
made to touch
the warmth of your slender neck

paphos

when the sirocco came last night
the finest red dust from africa
filled the cracks under the door
that before let in the moonlight



© Anton Floyd

Paul Casey grew up between Ireland and southern Africa. He has published work in five of his spoken languages and has been featured at festivals and venues worldwide. His second full collection from Salmon Poetry is *Virtual Tides* (2016) and his poetry was recently translated into Romanian by Singur Publishing, in the Contemporary Irish Poetry volume, *Blackjack*. He edits the annual *Unfinished Book of Poetry* for Cork City Libraries (secondary schools writing) and is director of the Ó Bhéal poetry series in Cork, at www.obheal.ie.



Extract from the cento-sonnet sequence: *From Which it is Torn*
for T.S.Eliot and after 210 poets

Dreams

A professor dreams he has eaten all his books
In the round tower where doves dream
Without ever thinking that their dream was dead the day it was dreamt
I have no dreamtime history. I don't feel the dead watching me.
I have wrapped my dreams in a silken cloth
They have gone back into the lakes with their dreams
She came to me last night while I was lost in dreams
To dream the nursing home we'll winter in

And even though I woke up then the dream didn't end there
And warm-flanked yaks shifted in their dreaming
Recalling dreams of songs I sang out over water
Dark night's for love and rest and pleasant dreams
I went to sleep and saw the fortune teller
Dream the days and nights and weeks into each other

Texture

Memories of last week's textures – flaky, slimy, spongy, slick
The stone hut's sooted walls I sometimes touched
The grain and the tassel of a sage trampoline
Worn-smooth benches, the herringbone of parquet
Bright long fingers feel along its hairy pliant edge
Nets are a white, coarse weave of nylon mesh, harsh
Sunk in her royal bed, up to her treble-chin in pink satin
She is feathery, rippling, not toughened yet for harvest

Someone's coffin is being sanded, laminated, shined
We swept Indian ink, finished in lanolin, over the silvery.
Scraping and burnishing the prepared surface of the etching copper
To this demi paradise of iron, stone and stucco
A boy strokes a finger through the drops on a parked BMW
Callused skin on his fingertips forgets what he knew in darkness



Senses

The pitches and the keys of the tuned silence
Waking, the sounds come first, amorphous and discordant
Microphones blared songs of tenderness from a circus tent
The tensed coil of sound is released
Shock-black bubble-doun-beat bouncing
To shine is to be surrounded by the dark
His gaze climbed the ladder to the ceiling
The tang of winkles flavours my good Fridays

Their skin is grey and rough as pumice stone
Sightless, I breathe and touch; this night of pines is needly
Lean to take a kiss that's silver-cold
The wind noises, the dependable window panes
Two black suns burn in my face and my raw lips pulse
As I splashed and swam I swallowed a lump of moon

Home

I would I were stretched in my bed of clay
Today it rained, and I thought again of home
Other immortals had been at home on earth
Who's gonna take *that* motherfucker home?
He hastens after his dog and home to the wife
I go home and put the kettle on; remember
Among the rituals of return the opening of the case
Like my father, though he stayed at home

I'm steaming home, ploughing your peace of mind
Until I'm home and dry. 'Welcome', you'll say.
You roam by the light of a million million suns home
Tonight by the hearth the wind gave up the ghost
In this room I loved my woman, fathered my son
Take full possession, make yourself at home.



Mae Newman lives in Rathfarnham and is a member of Platform One, Marley Poetry Group and St Muirín's Writing Group. She has won numerous prizes here and abroad. Her debut poetry collection *Mist Shrouds the Morning* was published by Lapwing. She is a member of Whitechurch Library Social History. She likes to read and go to plays.



Shadow Side

The grass is still damp from early morning dew
moisture trails are made where my bare feet step.
I hear the Dawn Chorus awakening my senses
telling me another day has begun.
I feel so at peace with the world.
In this sacred place
I say a prayer of gratitude.
Then I see him,
proudly walking towards me.
Petrified I whisper
'Good Morning Mr Magpie where, oh where is your mate?'
My heart starts to race,
knees shake, head throbs,
'one for sorrow, two for joy.'
Frozen to the spot
I look in vain for another.
All other species
are flying two by two
all except my magpie who continues to stare.
Time stands still,
still he does not move.
I search in vain for his mate, but nothing!
My mind does somersaults
wondering how or when
the bad news will reach me.
Panic sets in. I make a run for it,
fall and twist my ankle.

Ennui

The sink is blocked and I'm waiting for the plumber I didn't call. The sink, with dirty dishes caked with grease, wait to be washed and I've no intention of washing them as I'm going out to prune the roses or cut the grass before weeds smother everything. Anyway I need something wonderful to look at that will make me forget the pile of dirty dishes in the blocked sink I can't wash until the plumber comes, so I'll stay outside write a poem, read a book, walk in the park, listen to birds sing. I don't know why I won't call a plumber. I think it's because I don't want any one invading my space so I'll hold on to the dirty dishes until the day comes when the sun shines brightly in the sky and the rays start to reflect different colours on my walls.

I'll have to do something positive but until then I'll sit, dream my troubles away and hope in the Divine they'll sort themselves out though, I can only do that for a short period before reality strikes and I continue the normal humdrum of everyday life as a housewife or mother or whatever it is I am.



Randhir Khare, award winning Indian Writer, Artist, Teacher,
 Founding Contributor of Live Encounters Magazine 2010 www.randhirkhare.in
 Watch Randhir's poetry performance at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q_rh9OcmoGM



Harpoon

Hacked from earth's womb,
 Furnaced, hammered, oiled,
 I search for a heart.

I am waiting to see whales die,
 Turning over and over
 In the turquoise sea –

Great bodies shuddering,
 Moaning, vomiting black,
 No god answering;

No Jonah hidden in the
 Red insides of leviathans
 Ripped by death.

I have seen the inner flesh
 Of earth sore from giving,
 Sore from the battering;

I am nightmare's blade,
 One day the globe will thrash
 And shudder in its blue placenta –

When I sink into its hump.

The Red Gum

In last night's storm, a red gum fell,
 Across the boundary wall it lay;
 Brickwork collapsed and glass chips
 Were scattered on the floating grass.

Beneath a cataract sky all day
 An exodus of ants and bees
 Trailed out across the foliage
 Of splintered knees and broken hands.

Roots were torn and dripped with light,
 Spittled mud, bleeding black;
 A gaping hole swarmed worms and grubs,
 A battered lizard twitching still.

Childhood's totem ripped apart,
 We stand and watch the sickle lop
 Wet leaves and twigs whilst axe and saw
 Eat wood and spit out bark.



Dodo

Your world changed to arrows, clubs, bullets,
All we could devise to kill you with;
Blood-smeared pugmarks of death behind you,
Before you, beside you, inside you.
What did you do to protect yourself?
Forests had vanished in smoke,
The good earth gutted by the plough;
Homes, farms, townships, grew up around you,
The unfriendly sky stood overhead.

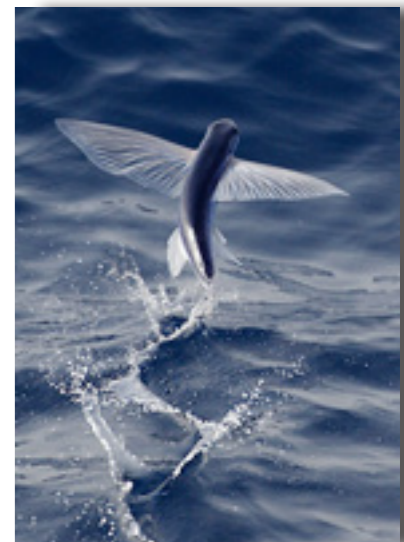
I see now with shame, the last of your race
Carrying her heavy body on tired feet,
Dead long before the club had found her skull;
Your last root wrenched out from the rotten earth
Strewn with corpses, carcasses and gods.

He Who Loves Water

Dip him in the river who loves water.

William Blake

'Dip him in the river, who loves water,'
Watch fins swell from his spine,
His feet solder by weed-slime to a tail,
His jaw split open to gills,
His skin fold into scales,
His arms shrink to fine bony flippers;
Let him swim free, who loves water,
And chase the currents to the river source
To see the mountain trickle smoothen rock,
Hunger for air then course back down
Past wet ferns and forests, rain, wind-whips;
Let him be, who loves water,
That he may know the wonder of gills
And scales and fins and tails;
That he may brush weed-roots, sink in silt,
Scratch his back on fossils,
Float with the rise and fall of the river;
Let him sing of rivers, who loves water,
For in his song you will hear
The first spring burst among
The rocks –
And journey to the cities of the sea.



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Courtney Lavender is a native born Los Angeleno with deep roots in Ireland. She's spent the better part of her years working both as a performing musician and behind the scenes in travel, licensing, and as a staff writer for Rock Cellar Magazine. She has had additional written works published on TheRumpus.net, and is working toward her first poetry collection. <http://courtneylavender.com>



desert hands, dublin heart

i am one part desert,
 parched dirt and
 lizard blood
 the deep, sweeping
 sigh
 of the contented
 wholly empty

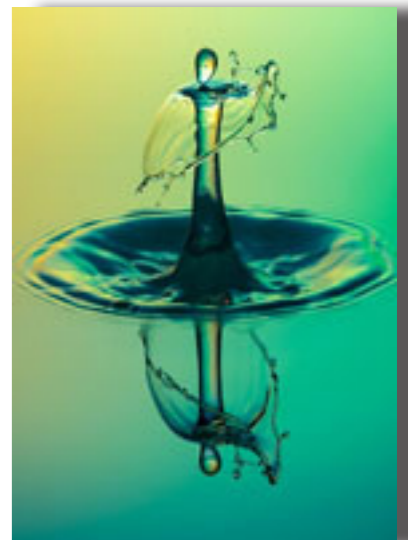
i am one part isle,
 rolling green and
 charcoal squall
 bogged with tears
 ripe with words
 plucked from
 a tugging, wanting
 wind

i am
 the east and west of separate lands
 and one forgets
 the other

forgets i am
 the cincturing sky
 and adjoining
 sea

reflective

the trick is to get as far above the valley
 as the hills will allow
 one mile, two miles
 by foot
 in darkness
 to greet scorpius, southern guide
 balanced, anticipatory
 on the curl of its tail,
 to greet antares, its fiery heart,
 and the moon
 stealing your breath
 with its orange blush
 and crooked cap,
 slipping above the city
 until
 out of the light
 you see
 yourself
 again



“C”

there is a tiny growth
in my father's body.
fibrous poison
born from every bad thought
and every wrong move,
every poor excuse.

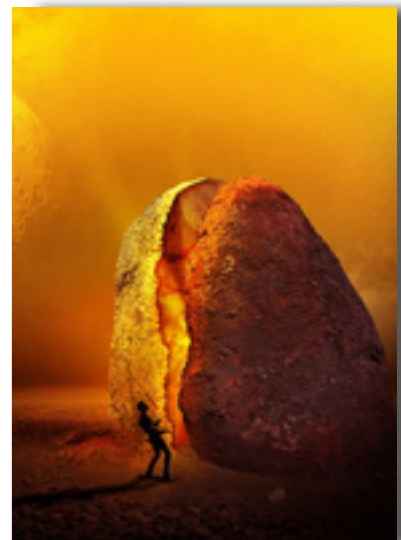
there is a pillar in his chest
that he has never accessed
to rain light upon all misdeeds.
but all he will see
is this mass he's become
 grotesque
 sickly tinged
like his fingers 'round my throat.
like his grip that drew my blood.

but what of small hands in full-size catcher's mitts,
and drumsticks meeting skins?
and what of all the lessons in stars
and bike tire maintenance?

how does one trust the weightless
when they know the leaden weight of shame?
how does one lean on beauty
when it's been pushed away?
and what does he care if he dies
if he was never alive?

If

if love is smouldering coal
in an open palm
it's not that if i closed my fist
you would burn me
it's that
you would turn to ash



Matthew Rice was born in Belfast in 1980. He now lives and works in Carrickfergus, County Antrim. He is currently studying for his BA Honours in English Language and Literature. Rice has published poems in magazines and journals on both sides of the Atlantic, including *The Asheville Poetry Review* and *The Honest Ulsterman*. He was one of six new poets showcased in a special reading organised by Poetry NI and Poetry Ireland. His work was chosen for the 2016 Community Arts Partnership anthology, *Connections*, funded by the Arts Council of Northern Ireland. He was long-listed for the Seamus Heaney Award for New Writing 2016. He has recently finalised his first collection of poems entitled *Door Left Open*.



Book-Shaped

The growing sound
of an engine, coming closer, homely
as the crackle of a wood-stoked fire.

The hum of his voice beneath the floorboards,
stairs creaking gently every other step
before the slot of landing-light

widens across the carpet
and he bandies a book-shaped,
brown paper bag around the doorframe –

Don't read it all tonight, get to sleep before the birds.

Then the wink as he leaves,
the door left open just enough

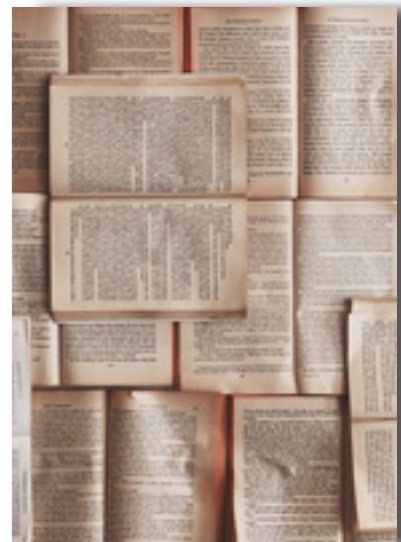
for the light to touch the words.

Long Count

Balancing on the beams
it seemed a swan-dive to the ground.
Dust tasted savoury,
wood-planings curled back on themselves
like a stilled gesture –

I didn't understand, of course.
Workman chatter filled the echoes,
shouts of bring-me-this, bring-me-that;
the house extending around us.
You could see the future in the dust-laden sunrays –

Of course, I didn't understand.
The hammers buried the nails,
our dreams, still intact –
me, with a future of fails,
looking down between the beams.



Lost

He'd catch my eye every now and again,
across the bar, tucked against the wall,
elbow-snug, hands across themselves

at rest, moving only to scribble on a crossword
when the answer flamed in his glass,
then ritually leave the pencil and grip the pint

to be chased down with a whiskey. You'd see him
day or night, steeped in age, Sunday afternoons
with the air of widower, silhouetted in front of the window

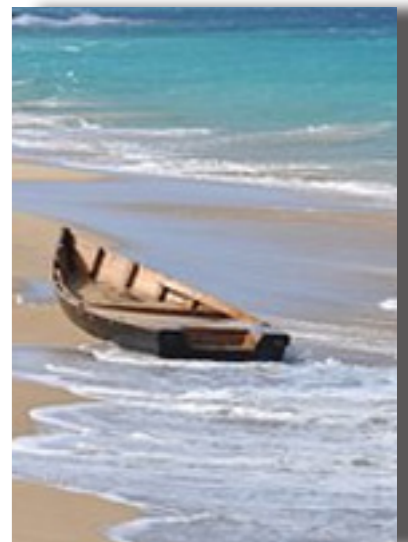
where the old abandoned boats
in the bay pulled and tugged gently
against what kept them from being lost.

Out of Nowhere

You swat a dozen bluebottles
with a magazine to keep them
away from your coffee, amid
reports of war and natural disasters.

Then, out of nowhere,
one quiet afternoon,
one appears in front of you
to expire at your feet,

sounding out your heart.



The Latch

I undid the latch,
Opening the window into the night
Where the moon was signalling.

Those starless evenings
I felt like Caligula
Sleeplessly walking

The marble halls,
His mind again
A frightened child's

Late Morning

Without sound of television
Or the chatter of radio;
Just pure, unworn privacy,
A moment that moves
Beyond itself

Into the unnameable,
Culminating by the window,
Perhaps, new kitchen roll
Torn off in a clean splash

Of sunlight,
Ghosting dust before your eyes,
Space debris
Raining into air.



Shahbano Aliani is a Shaykha (spiritual master) in the Shahdili-Darqawi Sufi order. Her quest for purpose and meaning brought her to the Sufi path in 2009. Soon thereafter Shahbano started writing poetry, a collection of which has been published by Intent Publishing South Africa and Na'layn Publications, Pakistan entitled, "Set My Heart On Fire". Though written in English and in a modern voice, her verse is both a timeless chronicle of and a manual for spiritual transformation, in the finest tradition of Sufi poetry.



No Cure But You

i cannot recall
the exact moment
though surely
my soul knew and
had been waiting

to the unconscious self
drowned
in layer upon layer of sleep
at first glance
you were like any other
and in my ignorance
i was hopelessly, utterly
defenseless

Love stole upon me
like monsoon clouds
gathering stealthily
in the night
unseen, unheard by anyone
except by those possessed
or devout

and a knife plunged swiftly
slicing
to the center of my heart
inflicting a wound
for which
there is no cure
but You

the whole world was transformed
in an instant-
an instant i still cannot
hope to recall-
the smell of rain
the music of dawn birds
the taste of mangoes

and now everything
everything
everything!
is tinged with your fragrance
your presence or absence
the hue
in which my life gets painted

this exquisite pain
is borne and nursed
in silence

in a world that can read
rumi's transcendent devotion
as carnal desire
what hope do i have
to speak of this

even to you?

Nothing Else Matters

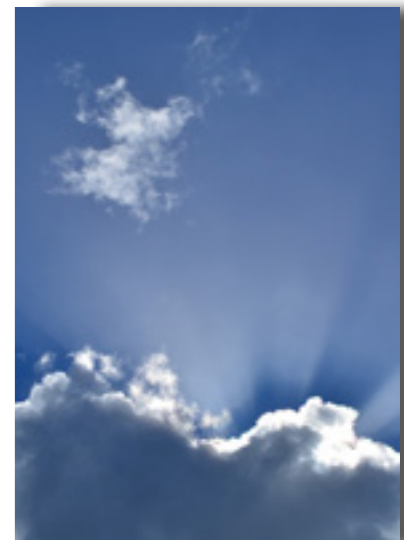
come, Friend
so i can breathe and live again
without You
my heart is constricted
and my breath
comes painfully

come!
so i can expand like the sky
soar up like the wind
pour out like a cloud

listen:
all day i collect beautiful words
to string into songs for You
when You are away
they wither and turn to dust
come, so these beautiful words
can bloom and grow a garden

come!
so i am swallowed up
by the space
around You

nothing else matters!



Perfumed Fountain

i was eating sawdust
before you let me drink
from your perfumed fountain

what did i know of fragrance
of being thirst
of being quenched
of love and longing
even
of
my
self
before i met you ?

it is no small matter:
Love

it marks all its prisoners
for complete annihilation

even if i wanted
where would i go?

it is the entire cosmos
and holds us
enthralled

I Don't Know Any Other Way

i love You
like a sky full of monsoon clouds
loves the earth

with abundance
with abandon
without reserve

and like
the sky full of monsoon clouds
i want to become
a million
tiny
glistening
tear drop
stars
of water

that pour
day after day
night after night
without pause
without fear

until the very last drop
is dissolved
and obliterated
in the ground
of Your Being,

has become
pure, silent,
emptiness

i love You like this
because like the sky
and its monsoon clouds
i don't know
any. other. way.



Begging The Moon

there was a time
when i only wanted
things
that could be bought
in shops
with money

You've turned me
into a beggar
who begs
without hope

late in the evening
i implore the breeze:

*come rushing to me
over tropical flowers
drops of fragrant moonlight
on trees
that give up to their lover,
the night, their gorgeous
perfume*

*gather this joy
that reminds me of
the one i adore
blow it on me
like the breath i crave*

in the night
it's the moon i beg:

*you whose sweet radiance
is like my beloved,
my life, my precious soul*

come!

*come, sink into my heart
there is a perpetual,
slow-burning fire in here
i cannot put out with
anything
perhaps your snowy whiteness
can cool it*

come!

then sleep takes over
and puts an end to this
daily humiliation
just for the night

at dawn hunger awakens
with the world
and i go down on my knees
to the sun:

*enter me like fire
through the skin
turn
these smouldering embers
in my chest
to a giant blaze
let there be fire everywhere
inside and out*

*have Mercy,
i can't bear it anymore!*



Nasrin Parvaz became a civil rights activist when the Islamic regime took power in 1979. She was arrested in 1982, tortured and spent eight years in prison. In 1993, she fled to England. Nasrin's prison memoir was published in Farsi in 2002, and it was published in Italian in 2006 by Effedue Edizioni. A novel, *Temptation*, based on the true stories of some male prisoners who survived the 1988 massacre of Iranian prisoners was published in Farsi in 2008. Nasrin's stories appeared in *Exiled Writers Ink*. Since 2005, together with poet Hubert Moore, Nasrin has translated poems, prohibited in Iran, from Farsi into English. They appear in the *Modern Poetry in Translation* series. Her article, *Writing in the 'Host' Language*, published in *The Great Flight*, MPT 2016 Number 1, and is on the MPT website. <http://nasrinparvaz.org/>



Women are black in Iran

Blacks can't breathe in America
because of police attacks.
Women fear for their lives in Iran
because of acid attacks.

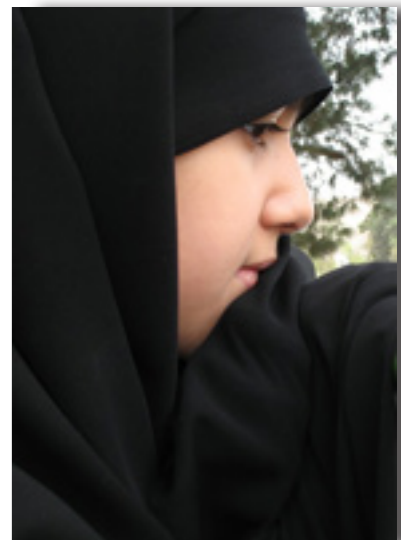
'These are deep-rooted tensions,'
the president of America said,
'and cannot be solved overnight.'

'Men should not take matters into their own hands,'
the president of Iran said,
'but women must cover themselves up.'

Civil Disobedience

She cut her hair short
so she could pass for a boy
and go to the football stadium.
She hated football
and loved her hair long.

She went to football only because it was forbidden.



Pinschmidt is a retired high school English and drama teacher who lives in Herbertstown, Co. Limerick, Ireland with his Irish wife in her family's ancestral stone farmhouse. Although he has written poetry for over 40 years, he only seriously pursued publication since unexpectedly taking first runner up in Limerick City's October 2009 *Cuisle International Poetry Festival Slam*. It opened doors to a performance poet who writes accessibly about what moves him, capturing and celebrating current and past lives. His first collection, *Maiden Voyage*, was published by Revival Press in February, 2014. Available at www.limerickwriterscentre.com and www.omahonys.ie.



Timepiece

To Bill, Bette, and Jimmy Braasch February 1990

Nestled in my right hand, both lower fingers curved under,
The thumb looking poised for action on the stem,
I cradle the now intimate weight of a heavy yellow pocket watch,
So unlike the black plastic on my left wrist,
If lost cutting or splitting wood, expendable.
This winter on weekend mornings I sit early and alone before
Deep oak fires, the gold beside me as I ponder and write.

Last winter, brilliant, intense "Uncle Bull" died, leaving
No children of his own blood, so the watch was given to me.
It had belonged to his mother, and before, my great-grandfather,
William de la Barre, an engineer born near the blue Danube.
In Minneapolis his visage, in bronze, overlooks the Mississippi,
The power he helped harness to mill flour.
The greatest of my kin, and I now have his watch.

The case is finely wrought, small flowers, leaves,
And bladed wheat, lest I forget.
His fingers have worn away most of the engraved cross-hatched
Spirals around the central crest. Sprung open with a faint click
The thinnest blue-black hands circuit the Roman numerals.

A quarter turn westward the inside of the case becomes a
Golden mirror. Up close, it frames my left eye and its age lines.
So few have looked within. The tick is loud and strident.

The same time that ticked for him now ticks for me.
The heraldic shield on the case has yet to be etched
With initials. If the kind-eyed old man with the
Sweeping moustache never filled it, how might I?

And yet, I return each morning at least to wind and keep the faith
With sheer quality, this vital force, which, like paged words,
Helps hold back the night, give meaning to the day.

That Trembling World

To Willie Lavery who died May 13, 1977, aged 81

"Don't go near the bog—you can't trust its surface!"
But that hot August day in '73 Old Willie offered
To show me where turf was dug in the 40's and 50's
And where he and Mick Casey swam as children.
I drove us to Ballinard burial ground, and wellies shod,
Sleán and his father's crescent sickle for him,
Stout walking stick and shovel for me,
We headed through Garret Barry's fields and hedges
Down towards the irregular pool-speckled basin,
Its greens and browns like thick, half-crustured syrup.

Soon, near a straight edge, saying nothing,
Willie walked out onto water
His boots just eight inches of funnel tops
The surface rippling ten feet in concentric circles
On the impossible great mattress.
He told me to follow his much lighter weight. Thinking
Quicksand, I set out like a spider, legs and supports askew
And watched by Willie and ghosts who had harvested
This ground, we explored, sustained by the near hidden
Borders of old turf beds.

After, in his element, he coolly, expertly cut eight or ten sods
Pitching them out to dry, not that they were ever collected.
Sweating hard in the still heat, after false starts I cut four
Or five. Just before leaving, promising the greatest water,
He led me to a small spring, cleared its source with his
Sickle, and we each drank two shovel blades of the
Sweetest liquid.

Forty years now, and on my walks to the graveyard
The abandoned bog beckons, its pools still reflecting sky,
And some days the gentle wind is like the near-silent footing
Of turf in that trembling world just below where
Many of them now lie, including Willie.

On Finding Seamus Heaney: Poems and a Memoir *at Moe's Books, on Telegraph Avenue, Berkeley, Summer 1989*

There was his name, square and simple, gold pressed into the
Peat-brown leather of a folio volume. Freed from the slipcase,
It clings to the touch. My hand rills concentric circles, splayed
Borders and crosses, stone passages from Newgrange alive
In the slanting dusty light of Moe's, late afternoon, murmurings
And smothered noises, lost in reverie, the center sounded.

Opening now irregular edges of bond rich
Cream fields leisurely surround tight tracks of print
Erupting bog faces, turf cuttings, ruts, fogs
The slap, feel, sump, clutter and squelch of rural Ireland.

A water stain spreading the upper corners of the early 60's
Uncollected poems cut the dollar value from one-twenty
to forty, as if a little damp could hurt this word hoard
That sings of bogholes, wind-frayed ropes of pump
Water, the monk-fished seas of the Great Skellig,
The watermark a baptism, confirmation, of more worth.

Himself has signed it at the end
(He touched this book that I now touch)
Over the smaller, confident hand of Thomas Flanagan
Who so intimidated me just a half-mile away in 1969.
I had sought his Irish names I studied, independently,
Synge, Kavanagh, and Yeats mostly to fathom the world
of a clear-eyed girl from a stone farmhouse near Lough Gur
Met hitchhiking in Europe the previous summer, my bride
the next. Flanagan's introduction, like his begrudged grade,
A vindication of sorts: the living poet I most admire
Esteemed by this sternest critic.

My muses abide, still reflected in blue eyes
Revived anywhere by Synge, Kavanagh, Yeats, and Heaney
Or wind, mixed sunlight and showers which fleet best
Across small, stone-walled fields of green.

Walpurgisnacht: Berlin Moonrising, April 30, 1990

Der Teufelsberg, or "Devil's Mountain", is the highest hill
in Berlin, amassed from 12 million cubic meters of rubble,
from over 400,000 buildings destroyed in World War II.

Ceaseless chipping, hammering, on Die Mauer, The Wall,
A guilty frenzy on previously forbidden ground
The slow yield of pitiful pieces, grudged respect
For this disappearing grey conglomerate scar---
Oblique views through its twisted iron skeleton:
Imagine, seeing Der Brandenburger Tor from underneath!
Stone façade over brick arching upwards like New Year's rockets

The Soviet rockets, howitzers, British and American planes
Shattered Berlin in '45, the jagged, gape-jawed ruins
Still haunting in black and white, scarved hausfraus
Seared from coal-bunker vengeance meted out by drunken
Red Army hordes, by day hard-scrabble chipping mortar
Brick by brick, block by block in the heart of the Third Reich.

Tonight, the last in April (Hitler's last too)
A full moon rises above this new Berlin over
Mercedes Star, Ost Bahnhof, Cite Foch, Potsdamm
Funkturn, Clayalee, Kurfurstendamm, Grunewald
Ganymede, Charlottenburg, Unter den Linden,
And the light gathers, thickens, the stone dust slowly pulls up,
Forming a vast vortex and in one great Wagnerian heave
Sucks The Wall complete

And miles from Reichstag und Bunker, Der Teufelsberg,
The cracked facades, shards, fin-de-siècle Alt Berlin, asleep,
Grass covered now, for kites and sleds, suddenly it too stirs
In the pale light, and pulls slowly up, this fourth coming,
Gathered "memory and desire", and links,
Die Mauer und Der Teufelsberg
Until a giant, gaunt, grey, spread-winged Eagle unfolds, hovers,
Circling, circling, waiting for where, which way, to land.



Live encounters

POETRY

Celebrating six years 2010 - 2015
Free online magazine from village earth
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Photograph by Mark Ulyseas