

# Live encounters

POETRY

May 2016

## READING THE LINES

Easter 1916 Commemorative Edition

Produced in association with  
**Fiery Arrow Press**



**Platform One and Guest Writers**  
edited by Eileen Casey

Featuring Patricia Fitzgerald and Francis Noel Duffy



# EILEEN CASEY READING THE LINES



The idea behind *Reading The Lines* derives from William Butler Yeats' *Easter 1916*. Poets were invited to choose a line from this iconic work which resonated for them, either culturally, politically or historically. The chosen line was then given a new lease of poetic life, forming a transitional bridge from the now of 2016 to a century ago and the events which led up to or followed on from Ireland becoming a Republic. Because *Easter 1916* is such a well known poem, certain lines have gone into public consciousness, lines such as: *Are changed, changed utterly: A terrible beauty is born*. But there are equally evocative lines which also speak to both the mind and heart, lines such as: *Hearts with one purpose alone, To murmur name upon name, / As a mother names her child or We know their dream; enough / To know they dreamed and are dead*. *Easter 1916* as well as being an exploration of Yeats' response to the political situation in Ireland, also reflects his fascination with numerology: it consists of two stanzas of 16 lines each and two of 24 lines, referring to the date.

It's interesting to see the various resulting perspectives in this collection. Some of the poems invoke the names of the signatories of the Proclamation; MacDonagh, Pearse, Connolly. This naming also occurs in Yeats' poem and is ritualistic, containing within it the seeds of a sacred act. How the Rising affected children surfaces in some of the poems, poignantly conveyed by Susan Condon in 'Sacrificial Lamb.' One of the first casualties of the Rising was a child of tender age. Indeed, it's the lives of real people and how they coped that occupies most of the creative space in *Reading The Lines*. Yeats, in *Easter 1916* uses Dublin and its streets as setting, together with its people.

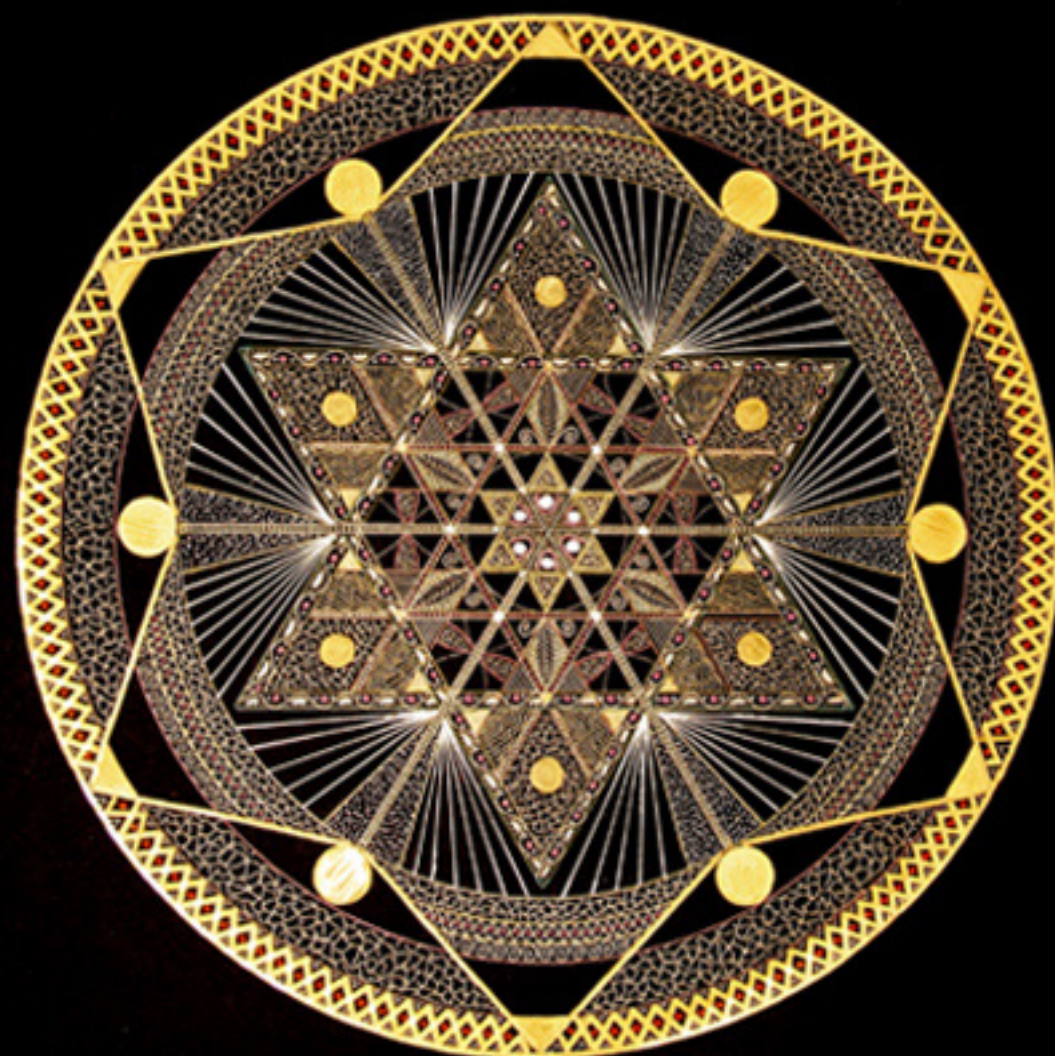
Colm McGlynn's Grand-Aunt Mable, a photographer was killed by a stray bullet. McGlynn also fondly remembers helping his father repair Kilmainham Gaol prior to the 1966 celebrations. Doreen Duffy's poem 'Brutal Peace,' carries in its title an echo of Yeats' passion for mutual incompatibilities (antinomies). There's humour in Trish Nugent's poem 'Uncle Ned,' as revealed in an innocent remark made by a five year old wanting to know where Maud (the 'troubling' of Yeats' life) had 'gone.'

The third section of *Easter 1916* deal with the natural world (cloud to tumbling cloud, moor-hens, moor-cocks, stream...reflecting the flux and flow of life), imagery which surfaces throughout this collection of new works. As does an attempt to address the question Yeats himself asks in the final section, 'Was it needless death after all?'

The poems in *Reading The Lines* come from poets who form Platform One Writers' Group (Rua Red, Tallaght). However, there are guest writers here also, writers such as Cecilia McGovern, Clairr O'Connor, Maggie O'Dwyer, Mairide Woods and Geraldine Mills. The youngest contributor is Lucy Higgins (aged 11). It's a privilege to include them. Artists Patricia Fitzgerald and Francis Noel Duffy have abundantly given of their art. It's extremely fitting to showcase Fitzgerald's stunningly visual Mandalas. Yeats himself was drawn to the form (as too was William Blake) and constructed similar diagrams. He refers to them as 'hard symbolic bones' in his introduction to 'A Vision,' (published in 1925, an explanation of life founded upon the writings of Giraldus and upon certain doctrines attributed to Kusta Ben Luka). They were, in his view, 'the living organism of imagination of which poetry is the flower.' No less significant is the inclusion of images from Duffy's exhibition *1916 Women Rising Up*. Some of the poems are themed around two of his subjects Constance Markievicz and Maud Gonne.

It's a pleasure for the writers and artists included in this special 1916 limited edition and for Fiery Arrow Press, to be associated with *Live Encounters*. Indeed, when I first came across this online magazine, I knew it would make a perfect fit for the purpose of bringing new commemorative poems to a global audience. A huge debt of gratitude is owed to Mark Ulyseas. Without his endless patience and expertise in the putting together of this edition, it simply wouldn't exist. I also wish to acknowledge funding from South Dublin County Council's 2016 Commemorations Fund.



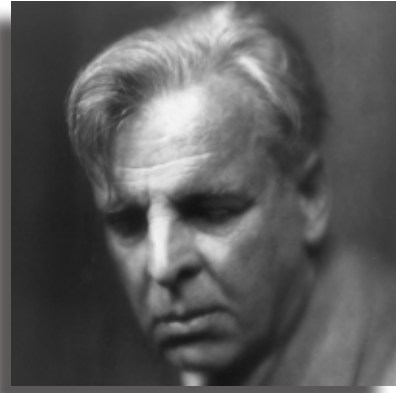


TRANSFORMATION

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TONY SHIELDS  
TRISH NUGENT  
VIVIENNE KEARNS



## EASTER 1916

I have met them at close of day  
 Coming with vivid faces  
 From counter or desk among grey  
 Eighteenth-century houses.  
 I have passed with a nod of the head  
 Or polite meaningless words,  
 Or have lingered awhile and said  
 Polite meaningless words,  
 And thought before I had done  
 Of a mocking tale or a gibe  
 To please a companion  
 Around the fire at the club,  
 Being certain that they and I  
 But lived where motley is worn:  
 All changed, changed utterly:  
 A terrible beauty is born.

That woman's days were spent  
 In ignorant good-will,  
 Her nights in argument  
 Until her voice grew shrill.  
 What voice more sweet than hers  
 When, young and beautiful,  
 She rode to harriers?  
 This man had kept a school  
 And rode our wingèd horse;  
 This other his helper and friend  
 Was coming into his force;  
 He might have won fame in the end,  
 So sensitive his nature seemed,  
 So daring and sweet his thought.  
 This other man I had dreamed  
 A drunken, vainglorious lout.

He had done most bitter wrong  
 To some who are near my heart,  
 Yet I number him in the song;  
 He, too, has resigned his part  
 In the casual comedy;  
 He, too, has been changed in his turn,  
 Transformed utterly:  
 A terrible beauty is born.

Hearts with one purpose alone  
 Through summer and winter seem  
 Enchanted to a stone  
 To trouble the living stream.  
 The horse that comes from the road,  
 The rider, the birds that range  
 From cloud to tumbling cloud,  
 Minute by minute they change;  
 A shadow of cloud on the stream  
 Changes minute by minute;  
 A horse-hoof slides on the brim,  
 And a horse plashes within it;  
 The long-legged moor-hens dive,  
 And hens to moor-cocks call;  
 Minute by minute they live:  
 The stone's in the midst of all.

Too long a sacrifice  
 Can make a stone of the heart.  
 O when may it suffice?  
 That is Heaven's part, our part  
 To murmur name upon name,  
 As a mother names her child  
 When sleep at last has come  
 On limbs that had run wild.

What is it but nightfall?  
 No, no, not night but death;  
 Was it needless death after all?  
 For England may keep faith  
 For all that is done and said.  
 We know their dream; enough  
 To know they dreamed and are dead;  
 And what if excess of love  
 Bewildered them till they died?  
 I write it out in a verse—  
 MacDonagh and MacBride  
 And Connolly and Pearse  
 Now and in time to be,  
 Wherever green is worn,  
 Are changed, changed utterly:  
 A terrible beauty is born.



A TERRIBLE BEAUTY IS BORN.





Ainé Lyons is a native Dubliner, born in 1936 in a small village (Milltown) on the banks of the Dodder. *In Praise of Small Things* (Fiery Arrow Press) is published to celebrate her eightieth year. Her work has received many awards from literary competitions including, Francis Ledwidge, The Luas Literary Award, The Golden Pen and Jonathan Swift Awards. Carol Ann Duffy, while Poet Laureate in the United Kingdom, highly commended her writing.



Anne Marron, Dubliner, Emigrant and Lifelong Learner always had a grá for communicating. Her favourite hobbies are writing, reading and painting. Her writings were read at The Irish Writers' Centre and anthologised in *Ireland's Own*, *Kaleidoscope* (a collective memoir), *Letting Go* (a memoir published 2015). Her prose received an award at The Jonathan Swift Awards. Anne holds a BA in English and MA in Sociology. She lives with her husband Niall, in Lucan, County Dublin. They have three grown up children; Maria, Niall and Liza.

## HEARTS WITH ONE PURPOSE ALONE

They will march forever down Sackville Street  
Easter sunlight glinting on their rifles.  
Poets and dreamers welded by one desire  
to set Ireland free.  
Like the Spartans who held the pass  
at Thermopylae, they knew death would come.

That was their sacrifice -  
to hear the golden harp of Tara.  
Their lonely, dead faces stare  
from newspaper and book,  
heroes with dreams touched with iron.

Hearts with one purpose alone  
wherever green is worn.

## DREAMERS

Naïve Scholars, thoughts of power  
beguiled, preach revolution.  
We know their dream; enough  
to know they dreamed and are dead.

Brave men sacrificed,  
in pursuit of freedom.

A nation awakens, takes up arms,  
rejects occupation. Servitude  
is cast aside; choosing instead  
liberty and equality.

Brave men sacrificed  
in pursuit of freedom.

Broken-hearted mothers hear the old refrain.  
"A nation once again"  
shouted from the rooftops.  
We know their dream; enough  
to know they dreamed and are dead.

## ANNETTE BRYAN



Annette Bryan is a writer and a member of the Red Roan Writers and Platform One. Her work has been published in magazines and newspapers. Her latest story *Site 666* is included in the anthology *Circle & Square*. Her love for the Arts started at a very young age when she could be found taking the leading part while acting and singing at stage school. She studied painting in oils back in the eighties, and was overjoyed when she received her first commission. She lives with her husband Paul in Templeogue.

## BRIAN KIRK



Brian Kirk is a poet from Clondalkin in Dublin. His poetry has been published widely in journals and anthologies. He won the Jonathan Swift Poetry Award in 2014, the Bailieborough Poetry Prize in 2015 and the Galway RCC Poetry Award in 2016. He was selected for the Poetry Ireland Introductions Series in 2013 and was highly commended in the Patrick Kavanagh Award in 2014 and 2015. He is a member of the Hibernian Writers Workshop and blogs at [www.briankirkwriter.com](http://www.briankirkwriter.com)

### JAMES MC KEOWN, FORGOTTEN HERO

The Horse that comes from the road  
reminds me of times gone past;  
tales of woe my Grandfather told  
of a brother he loved and lost.

How he put shoes on their horses  
while men from Dundalk hid in his forge.  
He took notes of what was said,  
used them for the cause.

Our brave men just waited, knowing  
their comrades' fate. In Kilmainham Gaol  
lined up and shot to death.

As young James waited, a letter he wrote.  
"It's my turn tomorrow Ma, the boys  
will be by my side.  
I'm ready for our final fight.  
I do it for the freedom of our kind.  
Salute the brotherhood for me  
it's the price of liberty.  
No tears, though this is my last farewell,  
just pass my story down the line."

### JUST WORDS

I've been instructed to compose these lines,  
designed to quench the light and to deflect,  
with polite meaningless words, not underline  
regret about your plight, nor to resurrect  
it. People like you always have a case  
to make, against the state, the church – abuse  
you claim (which we all know was commonplace).  
And so I'm charged with making an excuse  
for other's failings such as they may be,  
an expression of sorrow, not of guilt,  
careful to sidestep liability  
while at the same time stitching a dark quilt  
to smother the words of those without a voice,  
using the same language as Yeats and Joyce.



Brigid Flynn is a member of Platform One and St. Muirín Writers. She gets inspiration from her childhood in County Kilkenny, years spent in London and current life in South Dublin. Writings are featured and anthologised: *Flower Gathering*, *South of the County: New Myths and Tales*, *Circle & Square* (Fiery Arrow) and *Kaleidoscope*. Achievements include prize-winner in Dublin County Council Poetry Competition and Poet of Fingal Competition. Work was included among the prize-winners in the Francis Ledwidge and Jonathon Swift Awards.

## PADRAIG PEARSE

The streets of Irish towns and villages  
from Donegal to Dublin, Kilkenny  
to Kinsale, are engraved with his name.  
One hundred years have passed  
since his savage demise.

So sensitive his nature seemed,  
so daring and sweet his thought.

A barrister, teacher, writer,  
academic, lover of nature,  
from Scoil Eanna where he worked  
with brother Liam and MacDonagh,  
he dreamed of an Ireland free.  
But he entered the ugly world of war.

So sensitive his nature seemed  
so daring and sweet his thought.

His mother mourned both her sons.  
Together with Connolly, Ceannt, Clarke  
and Plunkett, they made the ultimate sacrifice  
in a city bathed in the blood of youth.  
Our country struggled and survived,  
not whole, but with a missing limb.

So sensitive his nature seemed,  
so daring and sweet his thought.



Cecilia McGovern was born in County Mayo and has lived all her adult life in Dublin where she worked as a primary school teacher. Always interested in poetry, W.B.Y. is her all time favourite. She was a prize-winner on two occasions: "Poetry Now" (Dun Laoghaire Poetry Festival) and also The Dart Poetry Competition (her poem subsequently displayed on the Dart). A collection of her poetry *Polishing The Evidence* was published by Salmon Poetry in 2009.

## WHAT VOICE MORE SWEET THAN HERS

She looked the part in a silk kimono –  
soft-spoken host to the dreamy poet  
with an eye for custom and ceremony  
in lofty rooms with tall windows;  
but she saw beyond the great gazebo  
hungry tenement children  
little scarecrows in cut-down castoffs  
their playground the city streets.

She swapped silks for tweed battledress  
found the cause she'd wished for,  
conspiring to feed tenement people  
transform boyscouts to soldiers.  
Ill, she kept faith in a public ward  
the last act of her defiant testimony.





Clairr O'Connor lives in Dublin. She is the author of two novels and four collections of poetry. Her radio plays have been broadcast by RTE Radio One, BBC Radio 4 and Radio Warsaw. Her most recent poetry book is *So Far* (Astrolabe Press 2012). Her New & Selected Poems will be published by Astrolabe Press in 2017. Widely anthologised, her work is included in *The Great Book of Ireland* and *The Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing* (Vols IV/V).

## REFUGEE IN IRELAND 2016

*"Was it but nightfall?" (W.B. Yeats Easter 1916)*

That haphazard house that dominates my dreams  
finally disintegrated. So many times those fragile  
fractures crept up the outward masonry, my held-in  
breath the only thing keeping it up.

Strange how my hands stitched a perfect  
holy text in praise of the history of the house  
- my fingers knew no confusion -  
before it crumbled.

The village cedar at the field's edge still stood.  
Grandmother said, "Even a cagoule can hide most  
of your face if you need it." When the bombs hit  
all was lost. There was noise, dust, chaos.  
The frivolity of fashion was not a concern.  
I glimpsed my dusty hennaed feet, almost fell again  
but righted myself. Those few left journeyed to the sea.

Before the wall of water hit, there was the comfort  
of murmured prayers. Many times, floating in that black night  
my mind left me. I woke on a beach to shouting and the bodies  
of dead children. What now? Terror lingers  
though there is beauty on this damp island.



Maud Gonne MacBride  
painting by  
Francis Noel Duffy



Colm McGlynn was born in Rathmines and is a priest and Provincial of the Servite Order. He has won 1st prize in South County Dublin Social Inclusion's Poetry Award. Currently based in Benburb, County Tyrone, he enjoys writing poetry, reading and he also enjoys time spent with his brothers and sisters and their families. Published *The Golden Thread* (Fiery Arrow Press) in 2014.



## KILMAINHAM GAOL (1966)

Inside a gaol I passed a thousand times  
I walk into a memory of childhood Saturdays.  
Visits with Dad and other volunteers  
plastering the cracks where our leaders died.

Fifty years on I savour  
what is now a historical landmark.  
I cherish the efforts of my father  
to restore this building  
and the sacrifice of those who  
gave their lives for Irish freedom.

I'm the same age now as my father was then.  
I realise how these events shaped lives,  
steered my father's father and a whole generation  
towards a better, more reconciled Ireland.

## MABEL MCGLYNN

Mabel was my Grand-Aunt and a photographer  
caught in the 1916 crossfire. Taking pictures,  
saying polite meaningless words  
then getting shot in the leg  
outside the Unitarian Church  
in St Stephens Green.  
Now I murmur name upon name  
of other ancestors who fought  
for Ireland's freedom  
in these Easter days of remembering  
a century on.

Doreen Duffy studied the various forms of creative writing at Oxford University online, at UCD and at NUI Maynooth. Her publications include *The Ireland's Own Anthology*, *Circle & Square*, *The Woman's Way*, *The Irish Times*, *The Burning Bush 2* and *Brilliant Flash Fiction* online. She has received many awards including first place in the Jonathan Swift Poetry Competition and most recently she was awarded the Deirdre Purcell Cup at The Edgeworth Literary Festival. Doreen is working towards her first collection of poetry. [www.doreenduffy.blogspot.ie](http://www.doreenduffy.blogspot.ie)



## FIRST LIGHT

When sleep at last has come  
on limbs that had run wild  
the pipes will play their song  
until they reach the child  
and naked eyes will fill the stream  
search deeply for the violin's cry  
to carry across unyielding  
ground by heartbeat hooves.  
Nails hammered in  
will dance uproar from his soul.  
He'll leave his song behind, no need  
for words, already we know them all.  
At first light they'll take him out  
and still the child will hear  
the music of his words, his poems  
a whispered prayer.  
Although a summer's day  
clouds will hang in a mourning sky  
for the people who remain  
outside the gate.  
We can hear their voices rise  
over the walls and across the fields  
until they reach the sea;

the river bled their music in  
their song for liberty.

## BRUTAL PEACE

So sensitive his nature seemed  
so daring and sweet his thought  
it made me not believe  
anything could cause him hurt.  
He left our house that morning  
bent to touch my face  
in the softness of the moon  
I heard the verse  
whisper in his voice  
soft with life and lilt.  
The outside world is a dream  
through long dark nights  
where neither mind  
could think of sleep.  
Glimmer from the grate  
our only light  
savage pain burned  
strong but sweet  
as the day wore on  
dust rained in narrow streets.  
The pavement wet  
along one side  
where shiny cobbles leaned,  
those that were  
scattered like stones  
stood squarely without names.  
It billowed like fog  
into the hills  
lay across the bruised land.

Dark arches  
catch a ribbon of blue  
I see his face again  
in dreams.



## FRANCIS NOEL DUFFY



Countess Markievicz  
painting by  
Francis Noel Duffy

## EILEEN CASEY



Eileen Casey's poetry and fiction are widely published in collections and anthologies. She has shown a number of poetry in public places installations, including 'Reading Fire, Writing Flame'/'Seagulls'/'The Jane Austen Sewing Kit'/'Poetry on the Wall'. She holds an M.Phil (Creative Writing) from The School of English, Trinity College Dublin. She is a recipient of a Hennessy Literary Award (fiction) and a Katherine Kavanagh Poetry Fellowship. Fiction awards also include The Maria Edgeworth and the Cecil Day Lewis Prize.

### FROM BREATH THE SPIRIT COMES

*(after a painting of Countess Markievicz by Francis Noel Duffy)*

I had never enough of her heroic deeds  
that summer of my sixteenth year.  
Released at last from chalky schoolrooms,  
I walked the mile from Birr to Crinkle town,  
where a barrack's bricks and mortar  
powdered into ruin.

Overhead, I saw the shades of war  
bleed into Easter skies, wild blackberries  
I picked from the hedgerows  
were glossed as tumbling curls.  
Gossamer gowns worn at Lissadell,  
she exchanged for the dull glint of military  
uniform; Eva still a gazelle in silk-skinned  
kimonos in that glimmering house.  
Constance dimmed then doused those lamps,  
replaced them with raging fires.

Decades later,  
she breathes again in the ethereal mists  
born of an artist's gift. Hers is a spirit  
unquenched,  
wedded for all time  
to a 'terrible beauty'.

## THE HORSE THAT COMES FROM THE ROAD

The horse that comes from the road is bridled,  
beribboned. Hooves are heard from the road,  
clangs of iron on concrete is the horse that comes  
like a thief in the night, tail swishing its fish of air.  
Bargaining hands rise to flesh the silver coined  
salmon leaping in words from frothing mouths.  
Spidery webs of spittle lace the hedges.

The horse that comes from the road is black,  
speckled with sweat, like a sparrow's egg.  
All night, through the long night, it has been driven  
by miles of shouting men into and over the ditches  
where witches once flew over a blood red moon  
into a swoon of morning. This river waters  
the flanks of the beast, bridled and beribboned  
after a hundred years slumbering  
in myth, a century jumping hedges and fences  
to leave a train of prints indented  
in the indentured land. A forest of debt  
grown evergreen.

The horse that comes from the road  
is hardened by weather, the harness of morning  
a lather on leather, nowhere to go  
those days when concrete is slipping.  
Days when the iron rungs of her hooves  
are only the proof it exists.  
Her scent rises to heavens.  
This horse that comes from the road  
has unseated her rider, is barebacked, free.

The road is a ribbon of green sashing through  
a land once broken and beaten, blood spilled  
over ills and hills, where hillocks  
billow the breaths of marching bands,  
fifes and drums. The horse that comes from the road

knows no other abode. Forages for space  
in a lace of air.

## BIRDS

Gunfire whistled through the GPO  
detonating fear in hearts  
who heard the cordite tune of bullets,  
knew how to read smoke.

I have met them at close of day  
walking like birds on the periphery  
of a shoreline, slowly fading. In magpie markings  
light and half-light, their dreaming reeds  
bend. Though buildings rise, phoenix like,  
their faces are not vivid.

Among the detritus of the everyday  
such possibility is glimpsed as in a swan's  
full stretch, along the banks of the Royal Canal.  
Yet, their faces are not vivid.

They lean into dusk gathering streets  
scarcely remembering their gift of flight.





Gavan Duffy lives and works in Dublin. He is a member of Platform One Writers' Group and has previously published in *Crannog*, *Stony Thursday Book*, *The Poetry Ireland Review*, *The Stinging Fly*, *Boyne Berries*, *Poetry Porch*, *South Bank Poetry Journal*, *New Irish Writing*. He has been placed or commended in various competitions including Dromineer, Redline Book Festivals. He was shortlisted for a Hennessy Literary Award in 2014.



My paternal roots are from Castleventry, County Cork. I was born in India, lived in England and South Africa. I arrived in Dublin in April, 1966, two years wed to Don my Irish husband from Clontarf. I joined a creative writing group - St Muirín's and to my surprise I enjoyed the challenge as well as the company of a wonderful group of women. I'm also part of Platform One.

## CENTURY

Minute by minute they change;  
seconds pass like stitches bursting along a seam  
and a new moment slams down softly on the one before.  
Sly shadows slither over shrinking walls  
and baffled faces, stiff with lies, hustle in to replace  
the speechless dead.

Inside they slouch in their seats and gnaw on time,  
they swear allegiance to all three colours of the flag,  
force young voices to sing old songs,  
to provide truth and pay for the past.

Hour by hour they gather,  
eager to grieve and meddle with the grave,  
piling up in towers of bones  
and hordes of rainy days,  
in lonely crowds  
that march the livid streets.

From a saucer of blood  
old men dip fingers and draw themselves wounds,  
the final priest grips his chalice by its slender throat,  
smacks his lips like he were swallowing silk  
thanks his god our bombs and bullets  
have finished their cruel applause,  
thanks his god  
only a lesser hunger now drives us abroad,  
thanks his god  
we have grown tired of planting dead trees  
and crying splendid tears.

## WAS IT NEEDLESS DEATH AFTER ALL?

A proclamation stated a New Ireland,  
shattered the complacency of a nation  
no longer to live under the heel of England.  
Was it needless death after all?

Barracks of the Army and R.I.C. told  
"Go crush this rebellion, arrest the Republicans of Treason."  
Kangaroo courts sanctioned their execution warrants.  
Was it needless death after all?

Authors, poets, artists, no need to emigrate.  
Catholicism the institution – now pay for the sins of the past.  
The smart phone and internet, new tools of freedom for ideas.  
Was it needless death after all?

Let the deaths of Tomás Ceant and William Rowe heal the past,  
no more blood to be shed.  
If men and women will abandon greed and share,  
was it needless death after all?

Onwards and upwards, revel in the good,  
a new Ireland, free of the past, for all the people.  
No longer to live on our knees, we now stand proud and tall.  
Was it needless death after all?



Geraldine Mills is the author of three collections of short stories and four collections of poetry. She has been awarded many prizes and bursaries including the Hennessy/Tribune New Irish Writer Award, two Arts Council Bursaries and a Patrick and Katherine Kavanagh Fellowship. Her fiction and poetry is taught in universities in Connecticut, and Massachusetts, U.S.A. Her first children's novel titled *Gold* is forthcoming from Little Island in June, 2016. She is currently working on her second children's novel.



## THE RIDER, THE BIRDS

### PRAYER FOR MY LOST BOY

*What is it but nightfall?* I tell myself at first,  
as I hush little Lily in her cot, watch the bright day settle into sleep.  
No need to worry. He'll be driven home by the hunger  
After stravaging the streets with his young butties,

Knowing there's no hurry, his da away, and with him his leather belt  
that welted his son's legs if he was one tock of the clock late.  
But me? I turn the time piece to the wall and he knows it,  
taller than me now, able to ruffle my thin hair as he stands above me.

All night I wait, the clock mocks me, no news of him,  
only word coming back from Sackville Street:  
shooting, stacked cards of buildings sliding down.  
Oh, what have I done? Sent him into a battle field,

for such a useless thing: a toy for his new sister,  
when her unfocused eye has yet to measure light.  
Elvery's the Elephant House, a stone's throw from the GPO,  
That last saw him playing on the big elephant inside the door.

Each day I search for him but not a trace,  
as if the very animal's feet picked up the murmur of rising  
before the first shot was fired, took itself out of the shop,  
its armoured skin repelling bullets from every side,

stepped over the dead horses at Nelson's Pillar,  
my gentle, laughing boy secure on its back, his blond hair  
a golden halo round his head, as they lumbered off the killing street,  
followed the source of the river that brought them to safer ground.



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.



## MOLLY O'REILLY (1900-1950)

Molly, born to a loyal citizen of the Crown,  
a rebel from a young age, loves to dance.  
A hornpipe sets her feet on air.  
She hears James Connolly speak,  
all is changed, changed utterly.

On Palm Sunday, though only sixteen,  
she gets the call from Rosie Hackett.  
On Beresford Place, Gardiner Street  
They hoist the Green Harp flag  
and fly it high over Liberty Hall  
against her father's wishes.

All Easter week the young girl's days  
are spent wending her way through  
narrow city streets avoiding  
bullets, barricades and barbed-wire,  
carrying messages from the GPO  
to City Hall and beyond.

## FORGOTTEN CHILDREN

From eighteen-century houses  
they run to scavenge food and fuel  
innocent children doing their best  
for mothers with no hope.  
Playing the part of the man of the house  
unaware their fathers lie dead in the Somme  
unaware of the bullets in the streets  
unaware that only Nelson still stands.  
Friends get caught in the crossfire  
sorrow seeps into Sackville Street  
as a mother names her child.



Maggie O'Dwyer was born in Dublin in 1951. Since graduation from art college in 1974, her work has been exhibited widely and included in the Royal Hibernian Academy Exhibitions. In 2000 she won a scholarship to the Eastern Washington University Writing Workshop and was awarded a place in the Poetry Ireland Introduction Series in 2007. Her debut collection *Laughter Heard from the road* (Templar Poetry) was shortlisted for the Rupert & Eithne Strong Award in 2009. *The Wire Heart* (Templar Poetry) is her most recent work and was launched at Keats House in April, 2016.



Woods writes poetry, short stories and radio pieces. Her work has appeared in anthologies and reviews and on RTE radio. She has won several prizes including two Hennessy awards, the Francis McManus and a PJ O'Connor award. Two collections of her poetry, *The Lost Roundness of the World* and *Unobserved Moments of Change* have been published by Astrolabe. One of her poems appears in the recent anthology: *If Ever You Go to Dublin Town*. She lives in North Dublin.

## THE CAT AND THE HARE

Who are you to take my voice,  
to say I surprised him  
on our wedding night,  
in that dismal place of moss  
and fog, my mouth a cave  
of spirits that drew him to me,  
gave him my words, so that he  
could weave a cloth, for the world  
to stand on.

I knew what I wanted,  
how to keep them close,  
the nymphs with their fragile bones  
the bare-breasted brazen ones.  
I saw how they genuflected,  
slavered like wild hounds  
to his fairies and wet streams,  
how he made the king's words  
his own.

I knew how to keep my secrets,  
like a veil of mist that glanced  
my cheek, reminding me  
that I alone was the feeder.  
There was no sacrifice, no stone made  
of my heart.  
I was there from beginning to end.  
I was the one who said.  
"A poet has no right, not to write."

## "TOO LONG A SACRIFICE CAN MAKE A STONE OF THE HEART"

Those old men in worn suits  
who stood in the back rooms of pubs  
or outside churches  
carrying the sacred past  
in silken breast pockets;  
He was in the movement,  
someone would whisper. Once  
they were passionate  
curly-haired boys in caps,  
but too long a sacrifice  
left room only  
for feelings about flags  
and traitors. No compromise  
within those large  
geometric concepts  
that billowed the republic  
at places like Bodenstown.  
You were never interned  
they might mutter  
to women who pressed them  
on a need for children's shoes  
or food for the table.  
Those old beliefs  
froze into talk of jail rations.  
We gave them a wide berth  
as they spat out anger  
at the wheeler dealers  
who haggled in the silence  
around the patriot dead.  
A stone is a painful pyx  
to hold firm under the heart  
in times of scarcity.





Poet, journalist and fiction writer, Marie Gahan has won the Scottish International Poetry Competition, the Works National Women's Poetry Competition, the Listowel Poetry Competition and the Golden Pen. She won the Cootehill Short Story Competition and was shortlisted for the William Trevor Prize. Her debut poetry collection *The Margarine Eaters* was published by Lapwing Press in 2009. She facilitates creative writing classes and has edited *Flower Gathering* and *Kaleidoscope* two anthologies of her students' work.

## UPRISING

Poets, teachers, dreamers, propelled  
to arms by the breadth  
of their own vision:  
Pearse, Plunket, Clarke,  
McDonagh and the rest;  
mild-mannered men, unlikely heroes,  
yet wherever green is worn  
they will be remembered.

Rifles heavy in soft hands,  
hearts with one purpose,  
brave men and true;  
David against a Goliath empire,  
they shed their blood,  
fought and died for Ireland.  
Wherever green is worn,  
they will be remembered.



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.

## IN FREEDOM'S GROUND

And what of those that fell for ideals?  
Resting now in freedom's ground,  
dead citizenry of Republic  
who purchased this sovereignty.  
Do their bones toss and turn – restless  
like those who walk  
to vibrations of patronaged bells -  
where once their flesh sang and their blood transformed  
ascending – to symbolic notes of the psaltery.  
Great Seal of Ireland's sovereign destinies  
what would they who are dead think of Irish glories now,  
that *Terrible Beauty Born*?

## NIAMH BYRNE



Niamh Byrne is a poet, writer and dramatist. She has worked on creative projects that have been staged in Listowel and Dublin. Her most recent prose piece is in the anthology *Circle and Square* (Fiery Arrow Press). Niamh teaches creative writing and is at present working on her first novel. She is a member of three writing groups who are all currently working on projects.

### GHLAOIGH NA SINSIR AMACH

(For the Irish Literary Revivalists)

Can you hear them calling Cathleen?  
Certain men the English shot.  
Can you hear them Cathleen?  
'Free give us free.'  
Come up off your knees Cathleen.  
The herd of Saxon have  
been fattening on you  
too long a sacrifice;  
'Free give us free.'  
**Ghlaoigh Cathleen amach**  
'Rise from your bondage;  
rouse this sleeping land.  
This land is our land;  
turn your faces to me.  
Listen can you hear them?  
Certain men the English shot.  
One by one you are dying,  
bequeathing your souls to the master;  
betroth your souls to me.  
Come up off your knees.  
Free give us free;  
"They shall be remembered forever;  
The people shall hear them forever;"  
Certain men the English shot.  
Free; they gave us Free.

## PATRICIA FITZGERALD



Patricia Fitzgerald is a Mandala Artist based in Dublin. From the classical Indian language of Sanskrit, the word mandala can be loosely translated to mean circle. The mandala represents wholeness, the structure of life itself, a cosmic diagram that shows us our relatedness to the infinite, that which extends both beyond and within our bodies and minds. Patricia studied Visual Education and Communication at Dun Laoghaire College of Art & Design (IADT) and also holds a first class honours degree in Philosophy and Sociology from University College, Dublin. She hosts workshops on the art of mandala and meditation both in Ireland and abroad.



### HEAVEN'S PART



Orla Donoghue has broadcast several memoir pieces on the RTÉ Radio 1 Sunday Miscellany show, the latest in 2016 for a St Patrick's Day special. Her poetry has been included in *Circle & Square*, an anthology edited by Eileen Casey in 2016. Orla's memoir piece *All I want for Christmas is a Cup of Tea with My Mother* was published by The Irish Times in 2015. She is currently writing her first novel *The Bellini Trust* and blogs at [www.sanditonpress.com](http://www.sanditonpress.com)



## REFLECTING THE RISING

Was it needless death after all?  
 When even young children had to die  
 And nobody dared look parents in the eye.  
 Did Dublin have to crumble and fall  
 For Ireland to be free? Or did we aim too high?  
 Was it needless death after all?  
 Hidden stories at this time we recall  
 shattered dreams adrift, memories lie  
 hidden as we take time to say goodbye.  
 Was it needless death after all?

## THE ARREST

(After a painting of the same title by Kathleen Fox in 1916)

Second in command, Constance led  
 Irish troops at St Stephen's Green  
 Nobody there to intervene  
 They held fast, not one fled.

She fought until the last day  
 Her nights in argument  
 Never one to be content  
 until all Ireland had their say.

Smoke swirled in cold air  
 Rifles towards grey skies  
 Did they know more would die?  
 That nothing in this Rising would be fair.

Dublin crumbled, many lay dead  
 Ireland free their one request  
 A crowd gathered at her arrest  
 "I am ready," was all she said.

## PATRICIA BEST



Patricia Best began writing poetry and short stories in 2008, on reaching a significant birthday. Since then she has enjoyed seeing her work published, awarded and preformed. She has been included in many anthologies, most recently, with 'Little Gem' in *Circle & Square*, (Fiery Arrow Press). On finishing a Creative Writing course in NUI Maynooth she has embarked on the adventure of writing her first novel. She is a member of Platform One and Virginia Writers in Tallaght where she lives and Phoenix Writers, Maynooth.

## RENA SPARLING



Since her marriage to Eamonn in 1974, Rena, a northside Dubliner, has lived in Knocklyon, Dublin 16. While rearing two sons she volunteered to assist the local newsletter team with their regular publication of the Knocklyon News. Returning to the workforce in the late 1990s she spent two years working with the Library service in Dublin City and County before finally returning to the Civil Service. Now retired, she has more time to pursue her interests in Literature and the Arts.

### EASTER LILY

On milky white flesh  
Ruby rivulets ran  
Into your chalice like cup.  
Other sacrifices made  
were offered up  
that Easter.  
*And from cloud to tumbling cloud*  
rumours spread  
from crowd to murmuring crowd,  
loose victory and passionate faith.  
Uncharted freedom.

### A SHADOW OF CLOUD ON THE STREAM

Flowing waters, peaceful minds  
troubled clouds drifting. Landscape  
faded, dimmed beauty. Dark  
moments brooding. What ails those

who ruffle tranquillity? Cause strife.  
Hearts of stone unwilling to yield  
Religious belief, no reprieve. Stones

in the stream lie solid. Unmoved.  
Washed clean by trickling waters;  
nature changing, passing time  
life's flow never falters.

We are but transient in this world  
of myriad cultures, creeds.  
Why kill and maim, what does it gain?  
War and misery, all in vain.



Susan Condon, a native of Dublin, is currently working on her second novel. She was awarded a Certificate in Creative Writing from NUI Maynooth while her short stories have won numerous awards including first prize in the Jonathan Swift Creative Writing Award. Publications include *My Weekly*, *Ireland's Own Anthology*, *Flash Flood Journal*, *Spelk* and *Flash Fiction Magazine*. Susan blogs at: [www.susancondon.wordpress.com](http://www.susancondon.wordpress.com) or you can find her on Twitter: @SusanCondon or check out her crime fiction interviews on [www.writing.ie](http://www.writing.ie)



## SACRIFICIAL LAMB

Weary feet trudge onward, I unfold  
my white handkerchief, a vain attempt  
to quell unease. In my wake, bodies and decay.  
I dab at gun-smoke streaming eyes, cover my nose.  
Silent witness to the atrocities of war.

Children climb over rubble buildings,  
scavenging firewood to pile high  
in the black baby pram. It squeals  
in protest as they push it over debris  
covered cobbled streets.

I'd heard of the death of a two year old.

"Caught in the crossfire," I'd been told.  
"A single shot fired, entered his pram,  
penetrated his head. Yet his sibling,"  
they said, "survived. Unharmmed."  
I imagine I hear his cry.

Screams and bullets. Flames engulf buildings.  
His mother, his sibling, how they must ache  
for his sacrifice so Eire can be free,  
a land he will never grow to see.  
*Now and in time to be,  
wherever green is worn,  
are changed, changed utterly:  
A terrible beauty is born.*

## A BETTER WORLD

Looking skyward I wonder at the plumes of rising smoke.  
It's difficult to know whether friend or foe is the cause.  
Sounds of gunfire halt my stride. I pause to reflect.

Back pushed tight against brick, I wonder if, after all,  
she could be right. Yet I cannot believe that - for what  
it would mean to my comrades, to the cause.

"You'll die for nothing: An ideal that can never be realised."

Her parting words ring in my ears. I close my eyes  
trying in vain, to conjure her image; blue eyes, dark hair,  
a hand resting on her belly where my child waits to be born.

Surely he deserves a better world. A free Eire.

Head down, I push on, through narrow cobbled streets,  
deserted but for the twitch of an aged lace curtain, behind  
grimy window panes. Pale ghosts retreat back in time.

From around the corner, death peers, through the sunken  
eyes of a young boy. Cold fear steals away my breath.  
No doubt, in the days and weeks to come we will all play  
*our part  
To murmur name upon name,  
As a mother names her child.*

## TONY HIGGINS



Tony Higgins has written songs, stories and poems for many years. He was nominated for a Hennessy award for poetry in 2006. His work has been published in Ireland, England, Holland and the USA.

### A CLOUDED DREAM (MARCH 2016)

From cloud to tumbling cloud  
the dreams have fallen down  
shrouded, to a world latticed  
by fence posts and borders.  
Mistake upon mistake,  
each flake piling high as drifted snow  
how far short we fell.  
So many miles to go  
the gap between the aim and the arrow.  
All being equal under the sun –  
that glorious vision the cloud obscures  
lost in transition while privilege endures  
Loyalty trades its price, honesty  
has no value and freedom's call  
echoes through lost and homeless halls,  
how far short we fell,  
by wisps of lost possibilities betrayed  
how far short we fall,  
how far short we failed.

## LUCY HIGGINS



Lucy Higgins is aged 11 and is a 6th class pupil at St John's N.S. Clondalkin. She will be starting secondary school in September. Lucy likes art, reading, music, languages and sports. This is her first published poem.

### ANOTHER CLOUDY DREAM

A shadow of cloud on the stream,  
a shadow of cloud on my dream  
of soldiers marching back and forth,  
marching by the four courts.  
All hoping that the fighting will end,  
while children are playing round the bend.  
Now Pearse is reading out  
as angry men and women shout,  
such strange sounds in the night  
are giving children frights.





Tony is a singer/songwriter living in Dublin. In an earlier life, he was an Accountant but now retired he has the time to pursue his passion for music. This involves him singing in his community, running a song writing workshop and writing the occasional poem. Over the past few years, he has participated extensively in a number of projects with song writing and music groups across Europe. His music is available at [www.tonybardon.com](http://www.tonybardon.com) and [www.hazelwoodsongs.com](http://www.hazelwoodsongs.com) which features selected poems of WB Yeats.



I was born in Co. Cavan and came to Dublin 55 years ago. I am married to Mairéad and we have 3 adult children. I am a member of both Marlay Grange Poetry Group and Platform One Writers' Group. I have had some poetry published. I have a Diploma in Theology, General Counselling and Addiction. I have a passion for sport and am a member of Ballyboden St Enda's GAA Club. I am also a member of a male spirituality group for many years.

## EASTER 1916

That woman's days were spent, caring for her family.  
Her husband John had no work, times were tough.

A job as janitor at St Enda's brought relief.  
She was pleased to see the darkness slip away  
He was a distant relative of Mr Pearse  
The connection helped.

After Sunday Mass at Easter  
John went back to the school  
He did not return.

On Monday, she heard rumours from the city.  
Where was John? Why had he not returned?  
She was dismayed to learn on Tuesday

Mr Pearce was the leader of a rebellion.

The terrible truth she learned on Wednesday.  
John was dead, caught in the crossfire,  
forces he scarcely understood.

Their lives were changed, changed utterly.

That woman's days were spents struggling  
to raise her children. Without a father  
in a cruel new Mother Ireland.  
There were no connections.

## INNOCENTS

I met the ghosts of Pearse, McDonagh, Plunkett  
walking in the park of Saint Enda's.  
They said:  
'We did not die so ruthless men  
could bomb our children  
on living streets.  
They dishonoured our cause.  
Have innocent blood  
on our hands.  
Their names are written  
on remembrance stones  
so that we never forget  
their sacrifice.  
We knew we were going to die.  
When we saw the innocents being shot  
we surrendered.'

'A terrible beauty is born' said Mr Yeats.  
One hundred years of blood-stained streets  
lost generations,  
is too long a sacrifice.



Trish Nugent is a writer of poetry, memoir and scripts. She has had poetry published in newspapers and magazines. Three of her memory pieces have been published in *Ireland's Own*. Trish has won several prizes for her poetry. One memory piece is included in Platform One's anthology *Circle & Square*. She has been writing for and performing with 'Scene Stealers Drama group' for the past six years. They regularly perform at Rua Red in Tallaght. Trish is writing her first novel.



Vivienne Kearns is currently working on her historical novel *The Emerald Dress* set in early 18th century Dublin. She has presented and produced an arts programme for local radio and her poetry has been published in *Circle & Square*, an anthology published by Fiery Arrow Press and edited by Eileen Casey. Vivienne was shortlisted for the Fish Flash Fiction Prize in 2016. She holds an honours degree in English from UCD and blogs at [www.sanditonpress.com](http://www.sanditonpress.com)

### UNCLE NED

She watches them coming with vivid faces on Easter morning -  
no thought for the significance of the day.  
"Thanks granny", they shout,  
eager for the polite meaningless words to be over.  
As the bright foil covered eggs are handed round,  
they half listen to her stories of Easter's past,  
of Uncle Ned who fought for freedom;  
Of Pearse, Collins and granny's friend Maude Gonne.  
"Gone where?" asks the innocent five year old,  
his mouth full of chocolate.  
Granny smiles as she looks at the picture above the fireplace,  
remembering another young boy,  
another Easter.

### ANCIENT HORSEMEN

I have passed with a nod of the head  
and made my way along dirt tracks  
amongst apple trees in dappled light  
where early fruit had fallen  
I left it there and made away  
believing tales of ancient horsemen  
whose ghosts wandered the woods at night  
in doomed search of freedom






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SLEEP AT LAST HAS COME

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