

Live Encounters celebrates 6 years 2010-2015

Live encounters

**Free online magazine from village earth
Volume Three December 2015**

Poetry

Guest Editorial

Noel Monahan

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CONTRIBUTORS

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Guest Editorial - Poetry, A Flow of Psychic Energy Noel Monahan

Monahan has published five collections of poetry. His next collection: *Where The Wind Sleeps*, New & Selected Poems, will be published by Salmon in May 2014. Literary awards include: The SeaCat National Award organised by Poetry Ireland, The Hiberno-English Poetry Award, The Irish Writers' Union Poetry Award, The William Allingham Poetry Award and The Kilkenny Poetry Prize for Poetry. Most recent plays include: *"The Children of Lir"* performed by Livin' Dred Theatre and *"Lovely Husbands"*, a drama based on Henry James' work performed at the inaugural Henry James Literary Festival, 2010.



Echolocation 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



An Urgency of Stars Geraldine Mills

Geraldine Mills has published 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, U.S.A. She is a tutor with NUI Galway and an online mentor with Creative Writing Ink. Her first children's novel titled *Gold* is forthcoming from Little Island in 2016. www.geraldinemills.com



Sons - Poems from the latest collection Noel King

Noel King was born and lives in Tralee, Co Kerry. In this his 50th year, he has reached his 1000th publication of a poem, haiku or short story in magazines and journals in thirty-eight countries. His poetry collections are published by Salmon: *Prophecy of the Past*, (2010), *The Stern Wave* (2013) and *Sons* (2015). He has edited more than fifty books of work by others and was poetry editor of *Revival Literary Journal* (Limerick Writers' Centre) in 2012/13. A short story collection, *The Key Signature & Other Stories* will be published in 2016.



Poems from Home - but Abroad Natalie Wood

Born in Birmingham, England, U.K., Natalie Wood began working in journalism a month prior to outbreak of the 1973 Yom Kippur War. She remained in regional Jewish journalism for over 20 years, leaving full-time writing to help run a family business and then completed a range of general office work. Wood and her husband, Brian Fink emigrated from Manchester to Israel in March 2010 and live in Karmiel, Galilee. She features in *Smith Magazine's* new *Six Word Memoirs On Jewish Life* and contributes to *Technorati*, *Blogcritics* and *Live Encounters* magazine. Her stories - [Website](#) and journalism - [Website](#)



Poems previously unpublished Paul Casey

Paul Casey grew up between Ireland, Zambia and South Africa - working in film, multimedia and teaching. He has written, published and performed poems in five of his six spoken languages. His second collection, *Virtual Tides* is due from Salmon Poetry in 2016. His debut is *home more or less* (Salmon, 2012). A chapbook, *It's Not all Bad* appeared in 2009 from the Heaventree Press. He edits the annual *Unfinished Book of Poetry* (teenage writing) and is director of the Ó Bhéal poetry series www.obheal.ie.

Celebrating 6 years 2010-2015



DECEMBER 2015
VOLUME THREE



Poems from Limerick Dominic Taylor

Dominic Taylor is from Limerick and is one of the founding members of The Limerick Writers' Centre. His work has appeared in various journals and he has read at venues around Ireland. His interests also include song writing and documentary film making. He is the organiser of the 'On The Nail' Literary Gathering, a monthly public reading event which takes place in Limerick. He holds an honours degree in Media and Communications from Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick, Ireland. www.limerickwriterscentre.com



Inheritance Miceál Kearney

Miceál Kearney; 35. Living and working on the family farm in South Galway, in the West of Ireland. Published in Ireland, England, America. His poems have been broadcast on Australian radio. His debut collection; *Inheritance* was published in 2008 by [Doire Press](#). His second is forthcoming from Arlen House. In 2012 he wrote/directed his first play; *Never Ending Wild Stories* as part of the Claremorris Fringe Festival. *Incestors*, his second play, was staged by The Seumas O'Kelly Players in 2014. His FB poems page [Click Here](#)



Poems from times on the road Joachim Matschoss

Joachim Matschoss was born in Germany and now lives in Melbourne/Australia. He is a playwright, poet and Theatre-maker. His Theatre Company, 'Backyard Theatre Ensemble (BYTE)' presents diverse pieces of theatre all across Melbourne/ Australia and internationally, both Youth Arts and for adults. Joachim has created theatre in Australia, New Zealand, United Kingdom, India, Uzbekistan, Malaysia, Indonesia, HongKong, Hungary, Taiwan, Switzerland and China. Joachim's poetry is published in Australia, Germany, the United Kingdom and the USA. www.byteensemble.com



Homecoming Andrew Forster

Forster has published three full-length collections of poetry, two with Flambard Press, *'Fear of Thunder'* (2007) and *'Territory'* (2010), and *'Homecoming'* with Smith Doorstop (2015). *'Fear of Thunder'* was shortlisted for the 2008 Forward Prize for Best First Collection and two poems, *'Horse Whisperer'* and *'Brothers'*, appear in the AQA GCSE syllabus. Until recently was Literature Officer at the Wordsworth Trust in Grasmere. He is co-editor of the online magazine *The Compass*. He is currently researching for a PhD at Manchester Metropolitan University, in ecopoetry, and administers the Michael Marks Awards for Poetry Pamphlets. www.andrewforsterpoems.blogspot.co.uk



Dislocation - This Is The Word of The Lost. John Corless

John Corless writes poetry, drama and fiction. He lives at one with nature in the countryside in the west of Ireland. In these poems, John explores loss in a number of forms. "It's a theme I keep returning to" he says. "The missed opportunity; inertia. It is often bleak. Sometimes less so." His other interests include photography, sculpture and generally making things.



I Didn't Get Where I Am Jim Burke

Jim Burke lives in Limerick, Ireland. Co-founder with John Liddy of *The Stony Thursday Book*. Poems have appeared in *The Shamrock Haiku Journal*, *The Literary Bohemian*, *The Crannog Poetry Journal*, *The Stony Thursday Book*, *The Revival Poetry Journal*. He is a member of *The Irish Haiku Society* and is on the committee of the *Limerick Writers Centre*.



Ta Preah Khan, Angkor, Siem Reap, Cambodia. Photograph by Mark Ulyseas

NOEL MONAHAN
CELEBRATED IRISH POET

POETRY, A FLOW OF PSYCHIC ENERGY

Poetry for me is a flow of psychic energy where chance ideas linger and demand to be written down. Ideas flow and wherever I am and whatever I perceive enters me. In "Diary Of A Town" a long poem from one of my collections, "Curve Of The Moon", published in 2010, I gathered scattered memories of my childhood. Some of these images were full of fog and particles of rain. I wrapped them in clouds of imagined events and turned some of them on their back and let them chase the shadows of the night. *Winking stars appear / Little windows to our souls in darkness / The town's voice quietens into the night / Inner voices of the people sing to themselves in sleep.* All of this playfulness is an example of the fun you can have writing poetry.

Poetry for me brings about transformation. It is a matter of tuning into the moment and waiting. I do not create my thoughts about a field or hill, a town or people. I have them given to me. I leave myself open to whatever chances to appear. In other words, I work at dethroning the everyday ego and allow my mind to go empty. It happens in a meaningful way and has a presence and a belonging like moss growing on a ditch. The common breathing in all of us gives my lines a sense of rhythm, a natural rhythm. I feel poetry is an attempt to discover some pre established harmony. The stones in the field and by the roadside are not dead and lifeless. I console myself that all of this is not madness. I rely a lot on modern discoveries in quantum physics and the universal principle that energy is constantly changing into something else and that the observer affects what is observed as Wolfgang Pauli has stated.

Once the initial charge of poetry has started, words pop in and out of lines to shape images and I am happy at what I love to call "Wordfarming", my way of gathering words into clusters and shaping them into the form of a poem to be. I call it "Wordfarming" because I am a farmer's son and I treat language like a farmer might treat the soil. I listen for the melody and colour of words. Finding the right words and shape of a poem often happens by chance. How we acquire language and words in general has always been of interest to me.

I like the ideas the American Linguist, Noam Chomsky puts forward. He generally states that language grows in us in much the same way as our limbs grow and we acquire the skill of walking. For me, Wordfarming plays a major part in writing poetry. First we have the stirring of a poem. Then we have some overall notion of the shape of the poem before we find the language. Finding the language is the wordfarming: We have roots of words ... meaning of words ... sound of words and words growing and words dying

WORDFARMING

Do words grow?
Must we water them daily?
Are they close to mother nature
Or do we spray them
With insecticides?

Do words need us?
Like the leaves need the wind
To sing their song.
Can they bloom?
And if they bloom

Have we time
To admire their colours?
Do they have stems?
Can they stand alone
Or must they always sway in clusters?

Do they have roots
Tucked away in the history of clay?
And are some seed-words
Asleep in the dark clay below
Waiting for a proper time to grow?

Are words part of us?
Part of Spring, Summer, Autumn, Winter?
Do words die?
And if they die
Can they come back again?

Poetry opens inquiry for me. I realise I have grown tired of the empiricism of the education system and that Cartesian philosophy of total commitment to cause and effect, the cue hitting the billiard ball and the result. Over the last three hundred years, we have lost our sense of wholeness and our sense of the mythic world. We banished our gods into space and named the planets after them. We have become too scientific, too fond of proving everything, in a world as I have already stated, that is constantly changing. Poetry has to have a much more open sense of inquiry for me and a sense of self discovery. I love to break free of the conventional way of looking at things, I love to shake hands with ghosts, hear poltergeists hammering away in the bookcase and look out for the hidden secrets in things. It is that sort of attitude that lead recently to my work on the Medieval story of “ Buile Suibhne”, Mad Sweeney, a manuscript in the Royal Irish Academy. It is a story that has fascinated many Irish writers over the ages right down to Brian O’Nolan (“Myles na gCapaillín”) in his novel “ At Swim Two Birds” and of course Seamus Heaney’s “Sweeney Astray”. According to the ancient legend, St. Ronan banished Sweeney to the trees to live as a wild bird and he now inhabits the In-Between Realm of his imagination, awaiting redemption. The story is full of psychic energy, that energy I referred to at the opening of this essay.

You must remember I came through the Irish Education system of the 1950s and early 60s. It was a formula, a dogma and there was no place for your own thinking and certainly your own creativity. You were caught in the collective wisdom of the parish. You thought and acted as everyone did. I felt trapped as a child. I felt a great urge to escape from the chapel of my childhood in Granard. I needed new tunings, transformation and a sense of self discovery. My trip to New York in 1970 to work as a student helped me on my way. It opened doors and windows as illustrated in the poem: *From Granard To New York*, (“ Opposite Walls”, Salmon Publishing, 1991).

Poetry is a border zone activity. It should be life changing for the writer and the reader. The fun with poetry now is my ability to delve into something new beyond the norm and accepted modes of learning. As a poet I want to be in communication with the unconscious, bringing messages up from deeply felt archetypal levels. Poetry gives you a licence to enter the apocalyptic world where cause and effect are not prevalent. It is a beyond place, hearing colours, tasting shapes, reading smoke from the fire. Poetry is a “Staying Alive” as Neil Astley has illustrated in that wonderful anthology published in 2002. Poetry prepares me to live in a world that has changed all too quickly for my liking.

When I finish a poem the world feels brighter, more vivid and alive for me. My thoughts walk slowly back to sleep. I feel transformed, with a sense of healing and discovery. Sometimes I feel I write poetry for the great sense of relief when the poem is finished and complete.



Echolocation, published by www.blaupause-books.com was launched on October 7th in Ireland by well-known children's author, **Sarah Webb**.
www.terry-mcdonagh.com

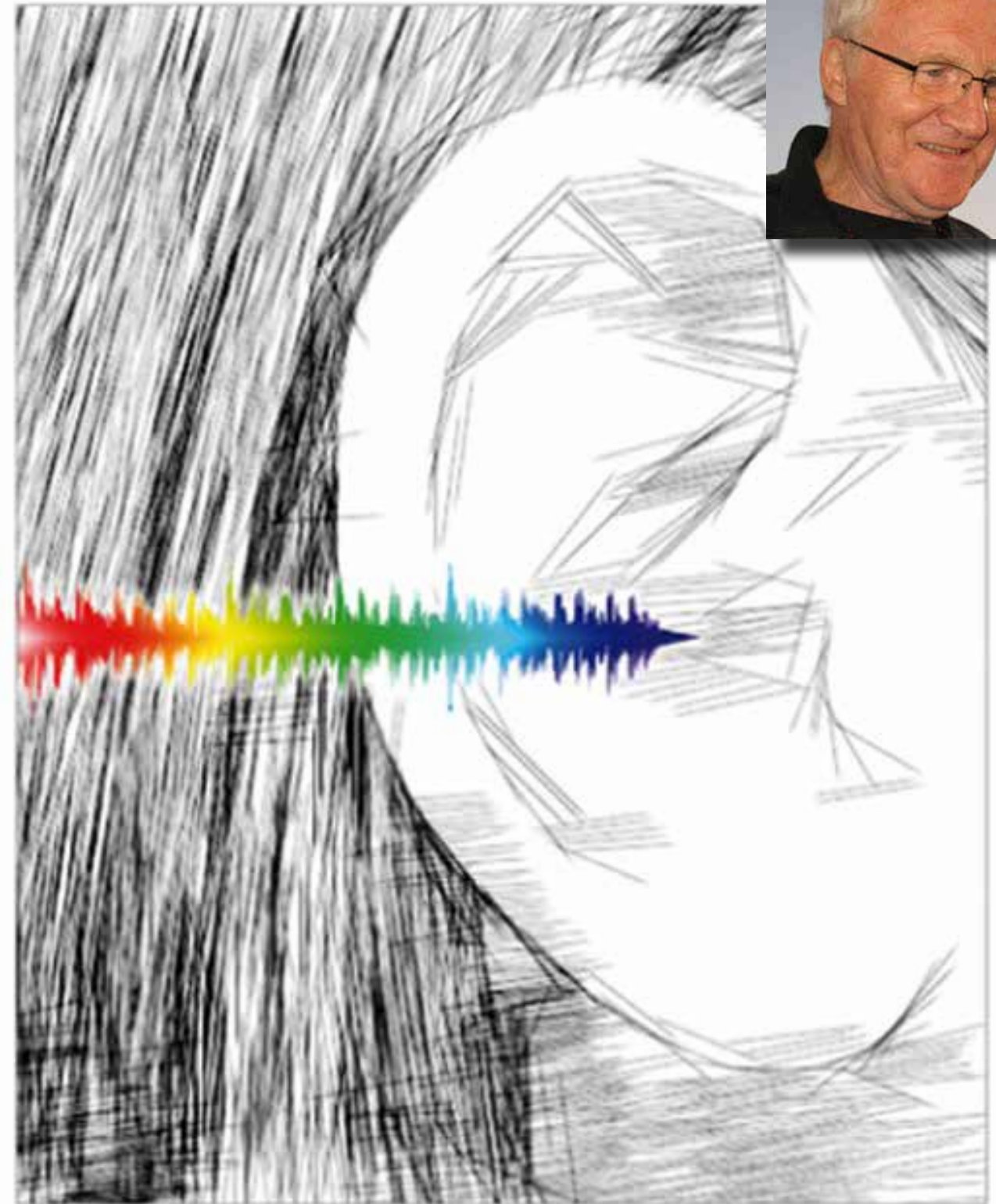
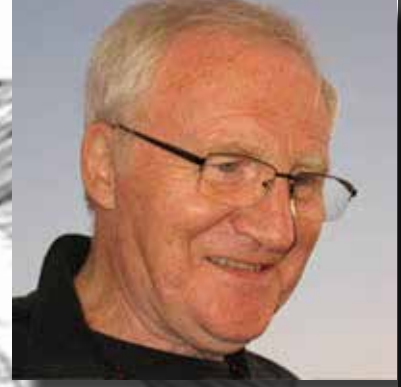
Pic © Sarah Webb

I chose the following five poems from my new poetry collection for young people, *Echolocation*, because they've got to do with forms of communication people experience in their everyday dealings with each other and their environment. - *Terry McDonagh*

Real Life on Telly

The woods near us
have been shut down
for instant repair:
the trees are too wild,
hedges need trimming,
paths must be levelled
in case people trip,
seats need colouring,
wildlife must be tagged
and signs are to be replaced.

If they'd only leave the woods
as they should be
I wouldn't have to watch
nature programmes on telly.



ECHOLOCATION

Terry McDonagh

Blaupause Books



Zapping in my Head

Zapping has gone to my head.
When I'm not zapping
in front of the telly,
I'm at it in my head.

Every programme
is short-lived.
Every unpleasant thought
is short-lived.

Zap, zap, zap I say
when person Teacher
suggests I read more.

Zap, zap, zap I say,
when Mum, Dad & Co.
suggest I help at home.

I zap girls, monsters I fear
and a bunch of smart-asses
who pinched my halo
on my way home from
being better than everyone else.

www dot

When I look at a web,
I think of busy spiders
weaving in corners.

There are webs
on hedges,
on gates,
on bicycle wheels,
on old wire fences,
even one in my bedroom.

I'm often afraid
to sneeze
in case I upset
my spider at work
or at play.

The spider's web
is a real net.
It catches food.

www dot is virtual,
without head nor tail
and it needs a button-pusher
to make it go.



Writing by Hand

At our new school, we don't have pens,
paper or books – we don't have to think
– a computer chip does it for us.

My dad says he wrote his name in the sand
and when tide erased and rubbished it
he'd write it again between ebb and flow.

Mum wrote her tests by hand.
I could read stars and could spell.
Writing by hand is spiritual, she says.

In social studies class, we tried shaping letters
with some old pens and paper our teacher
had kept locked away in a dusty cabinet, but

we gave up when our hands got weary. We
couldn't make the strange letter shapes – pages
got messy and it was impossible to stay between lines.

The good thing about the computer is that you don't
have to think or spell correctly – it does it for you, but
does it listen to a heart, smell the promises of spring

or the plight of a starling? Dad says his dad and dads
going back for generations had written their names
in the sand – they cherished the moment in the way

a wise person understands

the magic in water
the magic in paper
the magic in life

I can't turn back the tide
but I am learning to write.

Have Computers got Plans?

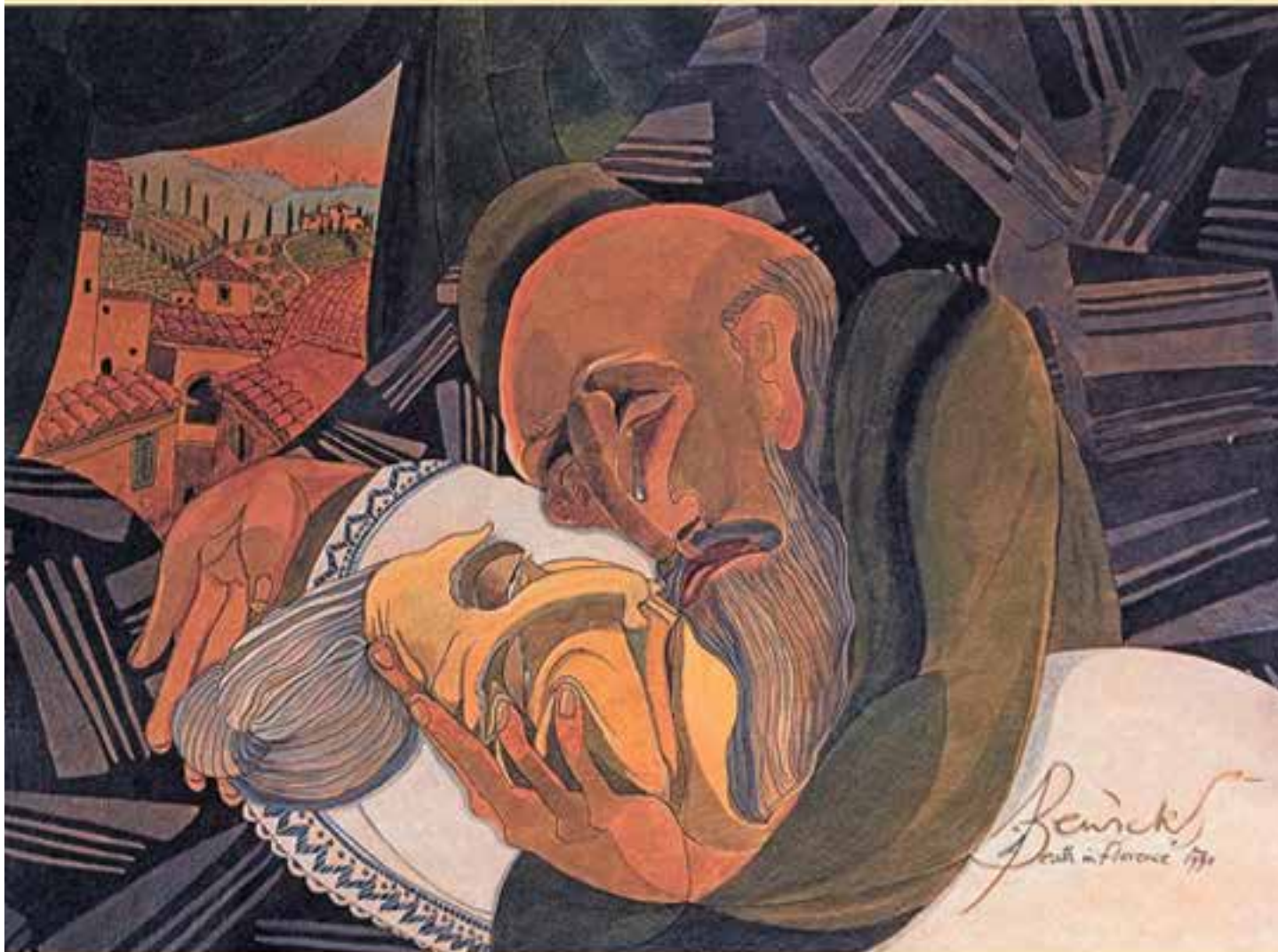
Have computers got plans
for us – do they gloat when
we upgrade them – are they
surprised – even overjoyed
when we invite them to

organise our day-to-day, or
do they wonder when we proudly state
that one day
a chip will replace thinking

which would give us people
even more time to eat, sit around
and become obese, while
they get on with our robotic lives?

Geraldine Mills

Hellkite



Geraldine Mills has published 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, U.S.A. Her first children's novel titled *Gold* is forthcoming from Little Island in 2016.

www.geraldinemills.com



The following poems are from 'An Urgency of Stars'.

Invasion

The cicadas' first impulse
when the ground warmed up,
was to unbury themselves.
After seventeen years, they moulted,

exploded into air. The fierce sound
of their mating pierced the everyday,
with weddings, Bar Mitzvahs,
Cape Cod barbecues cancelled.

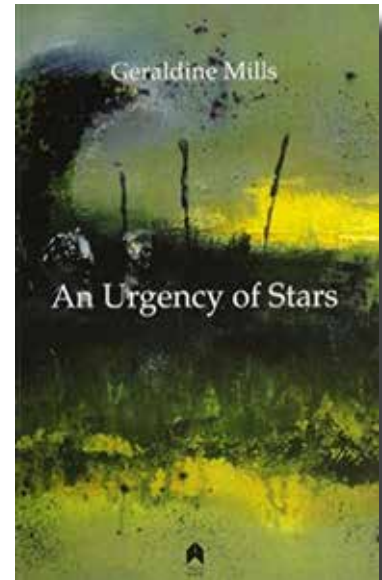
Shielded by their coats, people
scuttled from homes and offices
scared to get caught in the crossfire,
some afraid to venture out at all.

For three weeks they blocked out
the wing sound of buzzard,
loons sleeking across the canal,
the choke of cars on Sagamore Bridge,

while all along Cotuit, Clay Pond, Great Neck Road,
the females plundered the trees.
Their cutting jaws made slits in the bark
deep enough to favour future troops.

Foliage turning desert-brown,
the orange strip of their wing
on the small dark tank of their bodies
taking the town of Mashpee

where every flag fluttered at half-mast
for its warrior sons, toddlers the last time
these local invaders hatched out. Fiery eyes
now watched them come home in body bags.



Changing Ground

I have spoken to no one for days
but the small bird with the black band
of neck as it bobs its way in front of me;
feigns nesting in the torc of wrack in the sand.

A man in a scrapie wool jumper
picks broken teeth from the strand;
if he opens the black cavern of his mouth
and utters three, two, even one word,
I'll be gone with him.

The day comes when you can no longer
squeeze into the old coat of yourself.

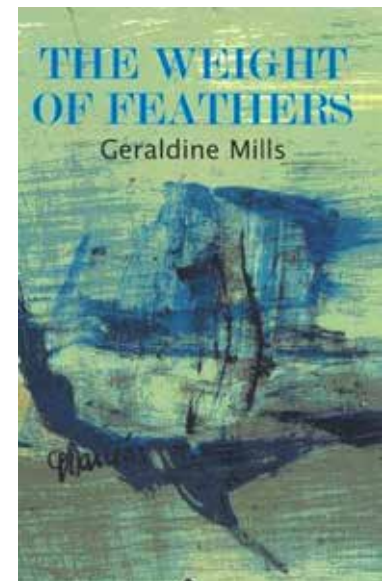
Slievemore stays where it is,
has never moved its whole old life
but waits for the farmers to shift
their animals up and down with the seasons.

My bones know change the way birds know sky,
the way they let go of light over the deserted village,
the way the grass knows it, bitten down to the quick.

Antipodes

We were able to find our way once.
Geographers sailed from Cadiz to Galway,
then on to new places in the New World.
Emigrants caught mail boats and cut their way
through jungles of strangers' faces to search out
the liquids and mutes of their own tongue
in the pubs of Cricklewood or the Bronx.
Even those who believed that feet grew out
of peoples' heads south of the Equator,
still managed to navigate oceans,
steering by sun and stars,
found silken routes that trapped the monsoon winds.

Now we know that if we dig our way
through the earth's core we will emerge
like prairie dogs at our antipodes:
Auckland at Seville, Figi at Timbuktu,
Bermuda at Perth.
Never so many signposts and never so hopelessly lost.
An extra limb attached to our ears, we spend our time
searching each other out in the supermarket, city, street,
calling, texting, calling, tell me where you are?
But we give no answer, afraid to dig a way
into the core of our selves because we have
no internal sat nav to talk us back.



War of Attrition

Left with one more axe to grind
and no whetstone,
she went to his room and the small glass
where his teeth were sleeping.

She used them now and filed real slow
until the axe, honed and stropped
was all steel gleam,
the teeth a millimetre short.

Returning them to their rightful place,
she walked out the gate,
the taste of a wet summer in the apples,
and he all talk, but no bite.

A Soft Day in Guernica

There is something about the way
the townspeople walk through the streets,
umbrellas up against the silent mist,

while we, our heads exposed, dodge spikes,
know nothing of sky or how things can
rain down from it without warning.

A Trick of the Light

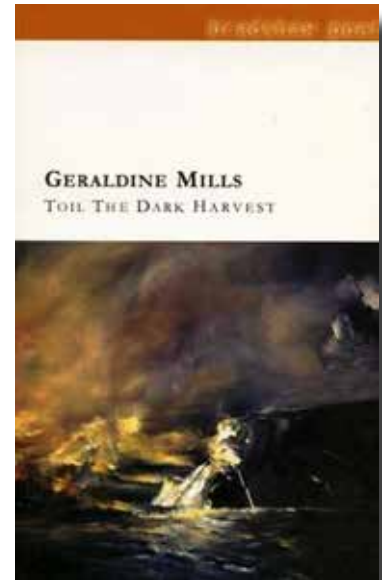
Splicing together cine footage
from the sixties onto DVD,
my cousin presents me with my past.
This film holds everything:
breath of my mother, stretch of my sisters,
my brother young and at home.

The black of Mrs McGaugh's shawl
that hides her face from the lens,
milk churns in the back of the cart
where she sat me and wrapped me on days
when the walk from school was too long.

The squeal of a gate after Bomber Follen
dumped bonhams to rot
on that part of road where the tinkers
curved sticks for their camp.
When they dismantled it all to move on,
how I longed to be gone with them.

We standing round at Spiddal mart
with farmers spitting on palms
in the flicker and splice of the screen,
while cows watched me dig into sand
at the edge of the sea, so clear I can taste salt.

The frame of me smiling and something
of mischief in my eyes must be a trick of the light
for I remember little that is kind from that time,
but a dark box of days, the barrel iced over,
a pinhole of bright in the night.



Of the Colour of Air, of the Moon and Seashells

'Things are older than letters,' da Vinci said,
meaning that reflections on water and moon
were there long before language welcomed paper,
as in these pages here under glass
with measured air and light
that tell of the way his mind journeyed
from thought to tumbling thought,
not hampered by which hand he used,
the direction of its flow.

Recorded the workings of pistons and pile drivers;
how rivers when they rose in mountains
left behind the presence of shells
as the flood waters receded,
then coursed through the earth
in the way blood courses through veins.
He mirrored the possibilities of moon.

That same moon drew me outside
to see its whole ghostly glimmer
between the horns of the new,
showing how everything has its shadow side,
and that sometimes it is better
not to see the whole picture,
better not to know that a dewdrop holds its centre
in the way the human mind cannot,
why storms at sea become most violent
when they are close to land.

These are the Only Journeys

That winter had one month too many.
Each day brought storms that plundered,
the window panes iced over,
the cold came too close.

It was the season when our children left
to slip into their own skins.
If they stayed they died.
There are no other journeys.

With no shelter to hide behind,
there was cold enough for both of us.
Like seals, all we could do was
breathe holes in the ice to survive.



Salmon Poetry, Knockeven, Cliffs of Moher, County Clare, Ireland. Email: siobhan@salmonpoetry.com. *Salmon Poetry receives financial assistance from The Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon*

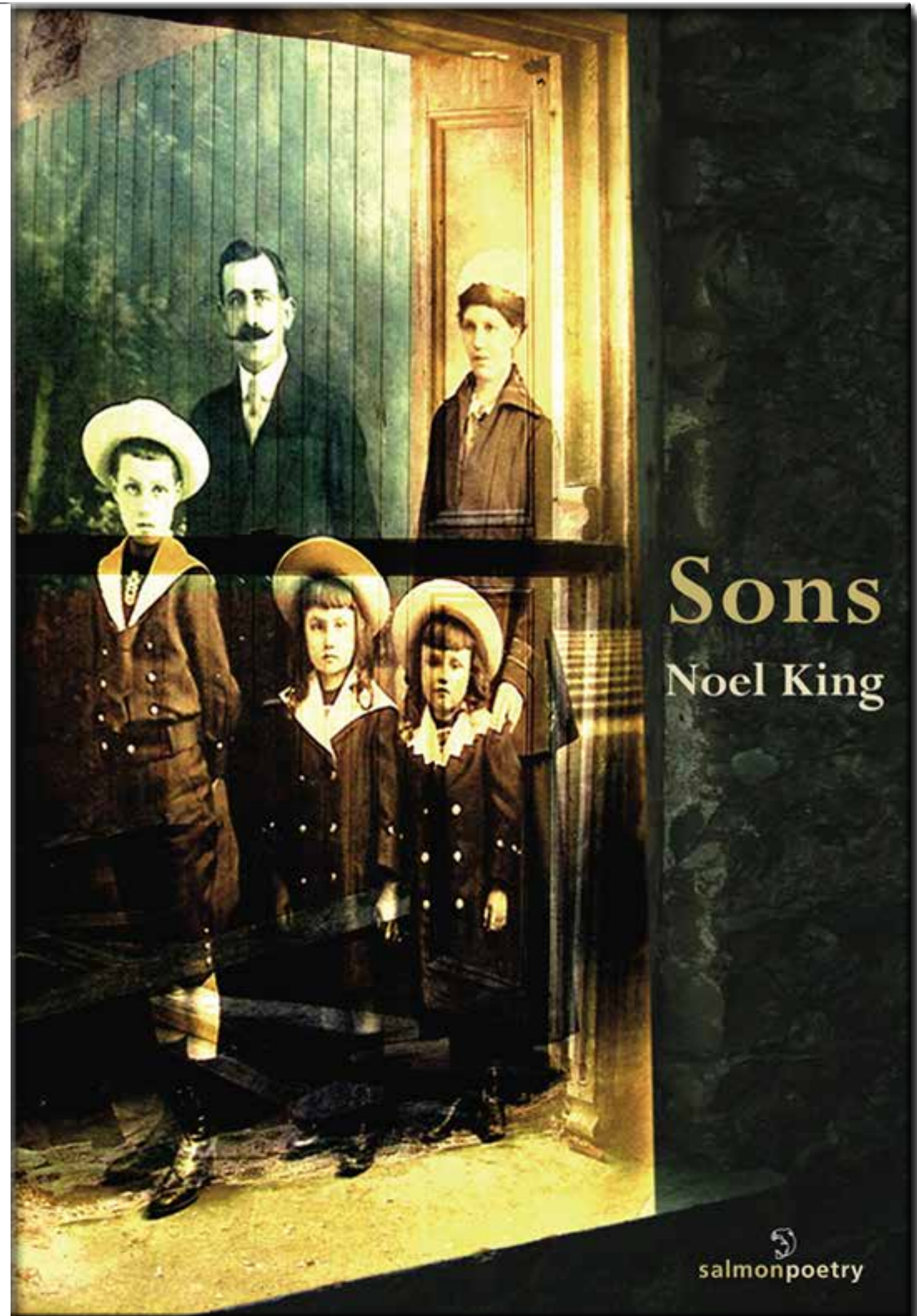
The following poems are from **SONS**, published by Salmon Poetry, October 30th, 2015.

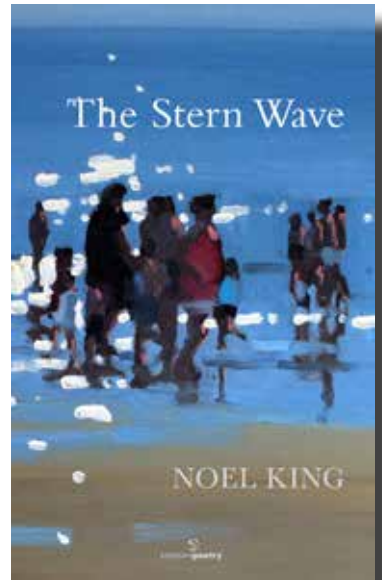
What's Left

Fighting the light and oncoming stars,
we make our way through
developing gaps to hills of home;
you not really leading any more,
eyesight fading with years of staring
at the fine-tuned glass you shaped
into domes, goblets and other concoctions.

Retiring, we vowed to explore all these gaps
and spaces on our mountain,
pack picnics for our soul food.
Abba music plays on your iPod,
on mine it's Mozart.
In the bedroom, it's only companionship now,
we have not kissed, let alone anything else, since retirements.

Angel faces greet us in this garden we inherited.
Angels we will eventually become.
Later tonight, like last night, we will skiffle again
to Lonnie Donegan on our iPod dock station,
the contraption seeming alien for playing his music.
And we will dance around our kitchen.
Every night we dance.





Hemming

The night before college
my twin and I
try everything on

and then you,
needing something to do,
get the sewing machine out.

We model and you pin;
we slip them off, careful not
to prick ourselves;

share a beer and a DVD with Dad.
You spend past midnight
altering our hems – sleeves and trouser legs.

The house doesn't sleep much,
our departure in the morning
heavy on us.

Kylemore Girls

sneak out through a copse –
meet boys, giggle, smoke fags,
sip cider and court.

* * *

Attracta married a farmer,
has nine kids – two twin-sets,
in Connemara.

Ciara became a nun,
nurses as Sr Benedict
in remote Japan.

Joan joined the Bunratty Singers,
got spotted by an American
who only wanted to take her for a ride.

Katie waitresses in the Kylemore Bakery,
35/37 O'Connell Street, Dublin,
is single, but seems to be the happiest.

** Kylemore Abbey, Connemara, was one of Ireland's most exclusive boarding schools for girls in the 20th century. The last pupils graduated in June 2010.*

Upon Inheriting the Parents' Home

My stamp collection, started
when I was nine
is housed here,
my favourites were the Cuba stamps
– large fat ones with colours-vivid,
the United Kingdom pages were the first to fill
– every conceivable colour of the Queen's head.

My moth collection, started
when I was thirteen
is housed here,
each variety pressed behind glass,
low light by Dad's electrician mate from down the road.

My music collection, started
when I was fifteen
is housed here,
7" vinyls, LPs stacked beside my mother's 78s,
and cassettes, thousands of cassettes and home-mades;
reliable Maxells, with the red, orange and yellow sleeves.

My beer mat collection, started later on
when I was about eighteen,
is not housed here – I binned 'em leaving London.
A girlfriend, breaking up with me had thrown
them on the floor of the flat and pissed on them.

My woman collection, which I started seriously
somewhere between the records and the beer mats,
is not housed here (obviously);
Marianne and Lynda, Becky and Jenny,
others too many to name, all played at my game
for a while. All left. Now I'm alone, back home,
wonder what I'll start collecting next?

What Happened to Concorde

216(G-BOAF), the last Concorde,
is kept at Filton Airport, Bristol,
where she was built in 1979.

215(F-BVFF) is stored at Charles de Gaulle,
214(G-BOAG) in the Museum of Flight, Seattle,
213(F-BTSD) at Le Bourget Air & Space Museum.

212(G-BOAE) is taking sunshine
at Grantley Adams Airport, Barbados.
211(F-BVFD) was broken up in 1994

after twelve years out of service,
her remains are at Dungy, Le Bourget.
210(G-BOAD) rests on a barge

at Intrepid Air and Sea Museum, New York.
209(F-BVFC) is with Airbus Industries, Toulouse,
208(G-BOAB) at Heathrow.

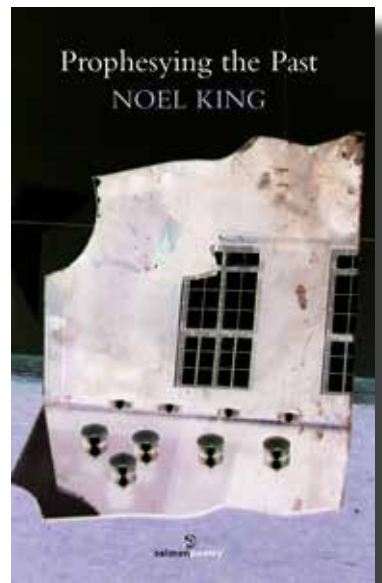
207(F-BVFB) resides... wait for it...
at Sinsheim Auto & Technik Museum,
Karlsruhe, Baden-Baden, Germany.

206(G-BOAA) is (hurrah!)
being restored in Edinburgh,
205(F-BVFA) in Washington

at a museum in the Dullus district.
204(G-BOAC) is bored out of its skull in Manchester.
203(F-BTSC) starred in the film Airport '79,

once carried Pope John Paul II,
but later crashed outside Paris
and before I bore the pants off you, dear reader,

the remaining twenty Concorde built by
the English and French are cluttered around
museums and airfields across England and France.





Betrothed to Me Forever

(Prompted by a [translation of a Greek poem](#) inscribed on the wall of the burial cave at Beit Guvrin, south of Jerusalem).

On a fruitless day in a place
whose faded paths forever
bode autumn, I stumbled on
a lover's note scrawled upon a wall.

"I write wrapped tight in your dear
cloak", it read, "just as fast as once
you clasped me in your arms.

"But grasp this well. Should
we be allowed to meet but once
again, we must barely bend our
heads in greeting.

"No shared smile, no slight sign that
in another place we were ever
more than fleeting friends.

"After those things – terrible things
– nought remains that I may do to
please you.

"So while I sleep with someone else,
I beg as you read my words, let
me flee while I allow you breadth
of freedom.

"In return, neither scream nor
strike this wall in anger. Believe
instead that I vow in Aphrodite's name
we will be in eternity like lovers new –
betrothed as if forever.

In sum, it is *you* I love. You'll
always be my dearest one of all".

Natalie Wood was born in Birmingham, England, U.K. and emigrated to Karmiel, Israel in March 2010 where she blogs, composes micro-fiction and poetry. She has featured in Smith Magazine's Six Word Memoirs on Jewish Life, Technorati, Blogcritics, Writing Maps' The A3 Review and writes regularly for Live Encounters magazine. Natalie Wood's poetry blog may be found at <http://perfectlywritepoetry.blogspot.co.il/>.



When Sabbath Leaves

Sabbath lingers,
sips the last spice-wine-scented,
flame quenched drops,
then slips silently away.

A flinch. A sigh.
Her accustomed treason
never fails to pain.
But Her gift -
his extra soul – is nimbly shed.

He shrugs free,
steps out to bless
the moon.
A new week is born.

The following poems are: *Defence Forces Seek Artists*, *Diaspore*, *Itch*, *Laughing Lama* and *Matchbox*. None are previously published, but all five will appear in Paul Casey's forthcoming collection, **Virtual Tides**, due from Salmon Poetry in 2016.

Defence Forces Seek Artists

Top officials are refusing to comment on speculation that modern military training techniques and codes of engagement, are undergoing a revolutionary shift

towards *anti-war* activity, one example rumoured to be a highly innovative diffusion gesture, aimed to disarm aggression through immediate exposure

to spontaneous music, practical jokes, rap and dance. The trend may well be spreading, as reports continue of platoons trading hardware for guitars, microphones,

portable amps and venue space to hold non-stop concerts without borders, as major arms manufacturers wield placards alongside scrap-metal merchants from the anti-art movements.

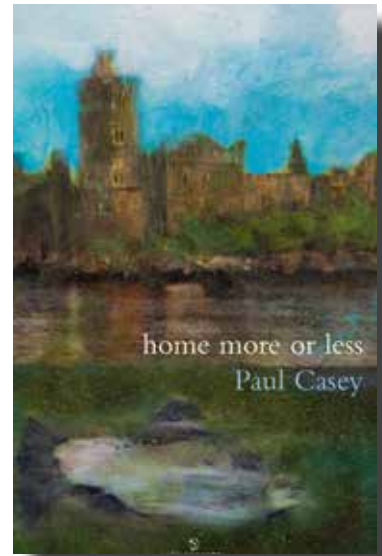
Meanwhile Queen Sirikit still manufactures new reefs, dumping tanks, armoured cars into the sea. Fish numbers have swelled significantly, diverse now beyond expectation despite draconian

defamation laws, her generals' newly formed *a capella* barbershop quartets (and popular youtube channels) allegedly feature her royal highness throwing in the crown jewels

having borrowed the Irish Defence Forces strategy to melt down all lethal metal objects to form cymbals, xylophones, drums and instrument strings, plans

to adopt the ever more popular slogan
Sort it Out with Art! Poets with relevant translation skills urgently required within





Diaspore

Some diasporas sustain massive, relentless lions of history.
Two of every five claim descent as their primary ethnicity.
Diasporas, in legal terms, habitually reside outside of a land.

This includes their children, citizens under law. It includes their grand-children. Great-grandchildren only if the parent claims descent before the question is born, a legal definition considerably small for any country.

Any bridge for foreign separation of tears is limited by status, leading to a fluctuating, emotive definition. Persons in larger diaspora cherish special ancestry. Live broad in its identity. The right terminates at the third

generation. This contrasts among countries. Causes see people flee all over the world. How common flight is entirely correct. Emigration theory could mean slow famine over years, as migrants consider the final straw

and other factors. People incriminate religion, rents and convictions increase encumbered estates as well as existing rights. Agrarian crush. Change quashed with death (champion for failed risings). Ceasing gold life.

Itch

Do you too stretch out an itch you cannot scratch?
As chimps flout our kitch conventions, quench,
quash their flinching patches of ticks, lice, a tickle
waits for no chimp. No, there's no unreachable itch
no cherry-picking moments when no-one's watching
to line stitches under fingernails for extra friction
or the untimely irritation in the shoe, or those
no-go-zone concentration-killer clarity hijackers.

A female crouches in mosquito-ridden water reed
watches humans hitch her sisters to a thin wire
reaches for a scream she cannot pitch as we,
void the itch of time, scrape proof from view
till all its vetch, snatched up leaves but a wretch of
moments left to catch, to fletch our chinese signs
with cheers and cheery syllables. We want to chill.
Fetch up the chargrilled choices, try sauerkraut

and stout for breakfast, perhaps forget the itch.
Since school days, whence mitchers and snitchers
first sprang, sprouted, we pout from our comforts
hatch batches of soon-to-be-scrapped plans. Chink
glasses, stretch out the fictions we cannot scratch.

Laughing Lama

"Difficulty comes with the third mosquito" – Dalai Lama

*how shall we lift the blindness he asks
between fits of laughter
that hides the imperceptible source of their joy?*

when we could all be laughing
through the day, through loss,
death. Just imagine the world so

once-stoic, briefcase emissaries now laughing
chuckling bus drivers, beggars in stitches
prisoners in spasms, celebratory dustbinmen

judges. guinness book records
for the longest, loudest howl,
shriek and scream of laughter

most aesthetically pleasing giggle
most people laughing at once
deepest and highest pitches of hysterics

signs in operating theatres
No Laughing During Surgery Please
competitions for the sweetest

most experimental
immediate, quickest off the mark bursts of laughter
most infectious

trios and quartets of laughers
national orchestras of merrymaking
and International public laughing holidays

a ministry of mirth
it's so simple
he sees

takes a breath
and bursts
into laughter

matchbox

'You were lucky ... There were a hundred and fifty of us, living in a shoebox ...' - Monty Python

I'd be a worthy multi-millionaire, not having to worry about all this clutter,
living in a tetris game built for faeries, where offering you coffee means shuffling

the plates over to the table corner, sink-dishes to the fridge-top,
(looking back we could all see ourselves as ice cream cones taken fresh

from the hands of the vendor on a day of mixed weather,
auspicious, but just a few minutes in your fingers are all sticky)

wash the plunger, fill the kettle from the lower twenty-litre
drum of fluoride-free fioruisce which, under the first, empty one,

waits undisturbed behind the chair on which the new book-
skyscraper has constructed itself, then shift the bookcase to reach

cups, unpack the tins to find the sugar, slide
the recycling from in front of the fridge for

milk, then one has to replace the sugar
to balance the shelf that holds the beans

on which the whole procedure rests. Coffee
beans. The grinder being always handy though

will not be an issue, however
the gas ring's hit and miss

given there's no more space
(second law of diminishing returns)

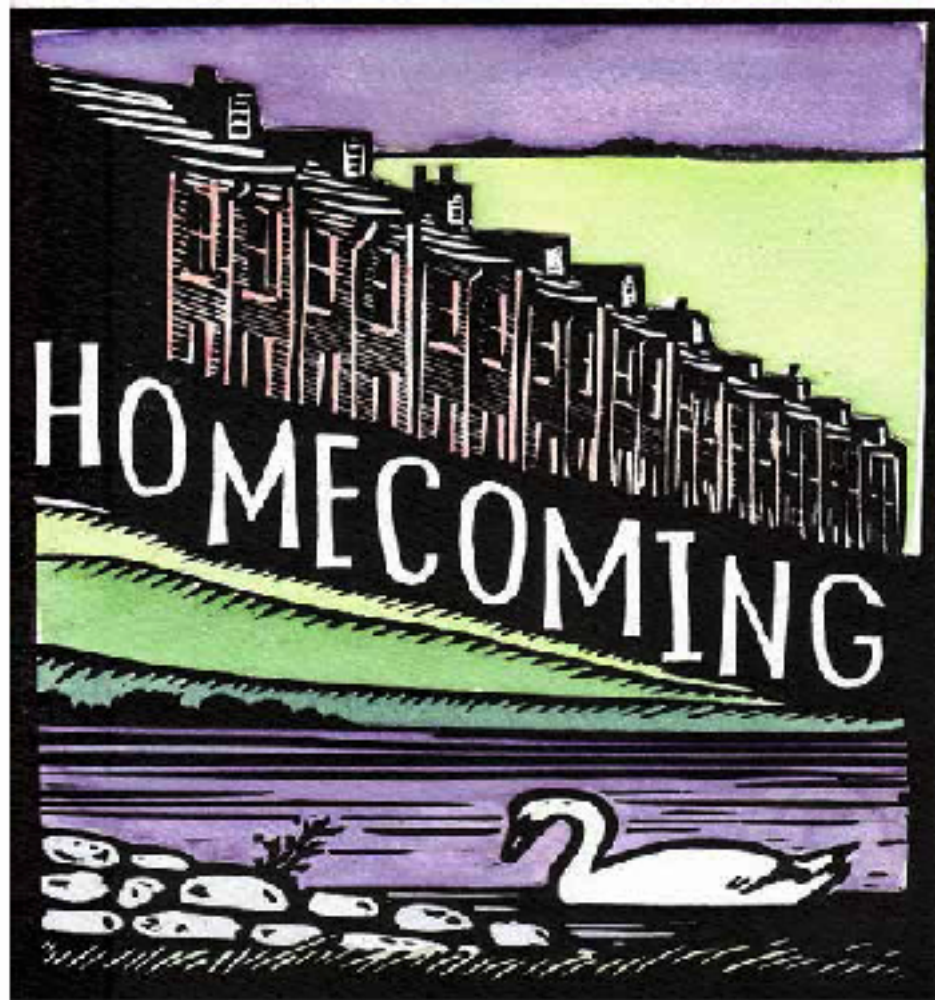
for bills to fit
through the flap, besides

having no matches
is the final

straw when
living in

a
matchbox

Andrew Forster
Homecoming



Here are five poems from my latest collection 'Homecoming.' The book is essentially a book of place, exploring my settling in Cumbria after 20 years of living in Scotland, getting to know the area through writing about it. Although I'm not from Cumbria but from the North of England, it felt very much like coming home. I moved there to take up a job at the Wordsworth Trust, which I did for 7 years, and Wordsworth becomes a presence in some of the poems, his poem 'Michael' being behind my poem 'Greenhead Ghyll.' I was also much nearer my family and memories of growing up in Yorkshire made their way into poems too.

www.andrewforsterpoems.blogspot.co.uk



Greenhead Ghyll

After bare sun on crags and the sultry stillness
of Alcock Tarn, it's a relief to descend
through bracken as day eases into evening.
Greenhead Ghyll splashes, sweetening the air.

Across it there's a sheepfold: worn by rain
and wind, uneven where stones have worked loose
or sections collapsed, but it's still there, gaps
opening to separate pens, a refuge.

On his walks Wordsworth spoke to shepherds
who scratched a living from thin soil
as their families had: who knew the hills
like rooms in their own cottages.

They watched their children, through choice
or need, leave for the city, and knew
their land must pass to other hands.

He stared at the sheepfold until his head ached,
gave them his poem like a cry for help.
Now, houses clutter the lower slopes
windows drinking in these hills.

A few cars are parked in drives, the odd voice
rides the breeze but most of the houses
are empty. A runner almost knocks me over
as he thunders down the Fell.



Bats

They emerge when day has bleached from the sky
through a sliver of space beneath the roof:
two, I think, but they're so fast they vanish
and reappear from somewhere else,
each a shallow wave where they jerk
the membrane that serves for wings,
tiny mouths screaming to map the landscape.

They're bad luck, darkness, *winged rats*
flitting through crowded tenements,
or *flying souls*, our last spark
given form in the dusk as it leaves us.
In Levens a whole colony funneled
between the trees and we stood beneath,
altered by their sudden current.

I remember the dead one on the gravel:
brown fur coarse as wire wool, wings a cape,
face wizened and faintly human,
the oldest man that ever was.
It had dropped from another world, as if
what we see in flight is a privileged glimpse
of something we must fail to understand.

Sheep at Night

This stone wall is often broken, through
heavy weather or motorists not knowing
the camber of the road. Sometimes a single
sheep wanders through the gap by accident,
galloping ahead of cars, their engines
whining, its fleece rising and falling
in panicked rhythm; or it trots in and out
of the trees opposite, bleating,
wondering what happened to its kin.

Tonight I'm the only driver, lakes and hills
slumbering in clouded moonlight.
At Rydal I round a bend, and there's
a flock of them, picking at tarmac.
Braking, I still must hit one, but strangely
they part around me. My headlights blur
their edges, create haloes around them.
Each is calmly itself in union
with others, and even from in here
I sense the special power of the herd.



Hampsfell

This is what I wanted for us: Hampsfell
on a blue Autumn day, strewn with tracks,
threads to pick up and follow: the grassy path
that skirts the knoll; a clamber up through gorse;
the dirt track by the drystone wall
that tries to tame this part of the Fell.

In the open the winds are cold but loose,
with currents of warmth in the spaces they leave.
Limestone bones break through where soil is thin.
At a peak, a cairn grows daily: the Old Way
where monks and merchants passed,
small stones to prove we've been here.

From up here we can see that Cartmel
is a settlement in a fir plantation.
Morecambe Bay curves around us, the sea
like silver cut into pools and rivers
against a sandy bed, and hidden beaches
are clearly visible. You turn to me and smile.

There are other Ways. The spine of the Fell runs
higher still but, for us, to be here is enough.

Wearing Glasses

When you were seven, you saw the world
through the bottoms of bottles, in frames
so heavy they bruised your nose,
as you braved jeers on the road to school.
Teenage years were the age of fashion:
stars and triangles in scarlet and mauve,
but with a widowed mother and shopgirl's wage
horn-rims were the best you could manage.

Down the years your careful savings fell
through holes in our clothes, but at fifty
you treated yourself: polychromic
lenses, that changed with the light,
in lightweight frames the colour of honey.
A year later your retina tore, shattering vision
into fragments, and neither laser nor silicon
could restore definition. Now you hide
behind your glasses as they darken in the sun.

I'm almost the age you were then
and the muscles in my eyes that shift
the focus, for close work, are tiring.
Reading needs to be held at a distance
that's impractical, so I have them prescribed:
light gold frames, barely noticeable, but
there's a tender shock of family resemblance
as they bring out all that's shared between us.



His debut collection; *Inheritance* (43 poems about the beauty and reality of life on a farm) was published in 2008 by Doire Press. His second is forthcoming from Arlen House.

Link to his FB poems page. [Click Here](#)

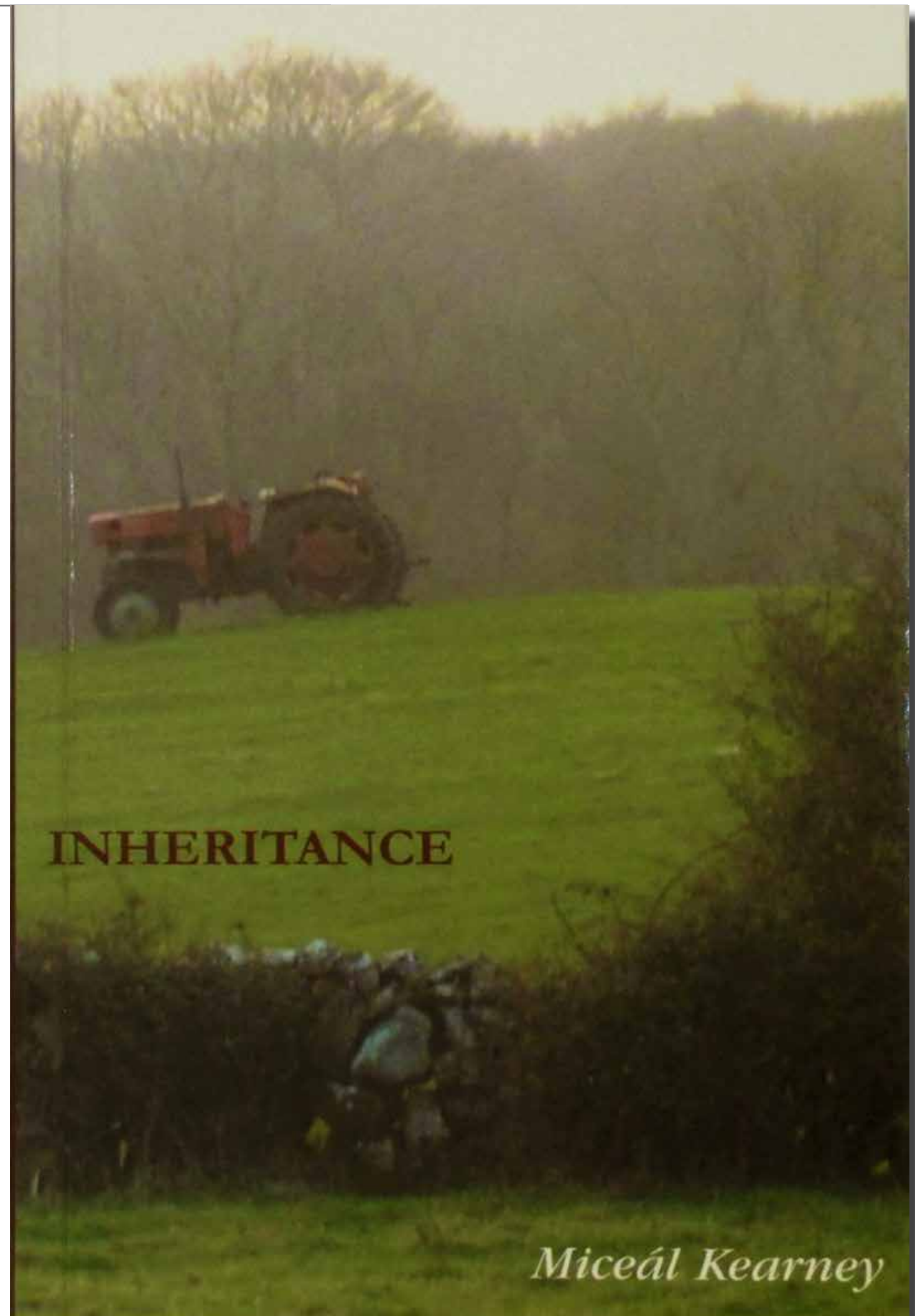
Israel and Palestine are now Friends on Facebook

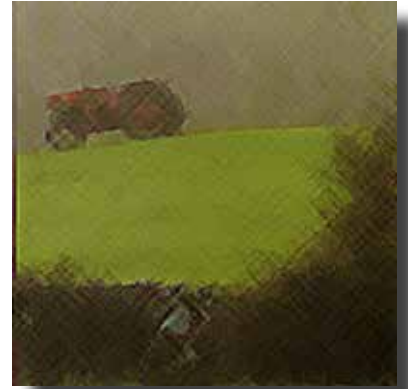
(You like this.)

Sitting behind yere* walls. Comfortable.
Trolling. Expert. Posting stones:
let them fall, please. It breaks
our windows, lets in the rain.
We board them up, we are blind.

And wet.
Oh brothers of stars; soil and flesh
that buries and loves —
it's not fair, children growing up
knowing only funerals.

* Yere: Abbas and Netanyahu.





Same Sex

It's something truly fantastic,
secretly held love —
pure heroin in virgin veins.

We came out
in McDonagh's Fish and Chip shop.
Held hands above the table.

And lips. Some diners didn't care.
Others said *Uh* ... and finished off
their Haggis.

Amen

Extreme deliveries deprive oxygen.
But hallowed be the Red Lamp.
Placing the lamb on my lap.
He's slow at first, but soon finds second gear
and discovers he's the throttle to back it up.
Eyes loud. Tiny tongue sucks,
pucks the tit right off the bottle.
I've seen this before, despite
all his attempts: the jelly in his legs
will never set. It's a hard journey to make,
into the shed: to get the sledge.

All the Kings' Men

G.M.T,
1:40 in the afternoon,
in my kitchen making tea,
Galway Bay FM playing Joe Walsh
Life's been good to me —
"I have a Maserati, it does 185
I lost my license ..."

We interrupt with news just in:
Benazir Bhutto is dead.
More on this story in our next news bulletin.

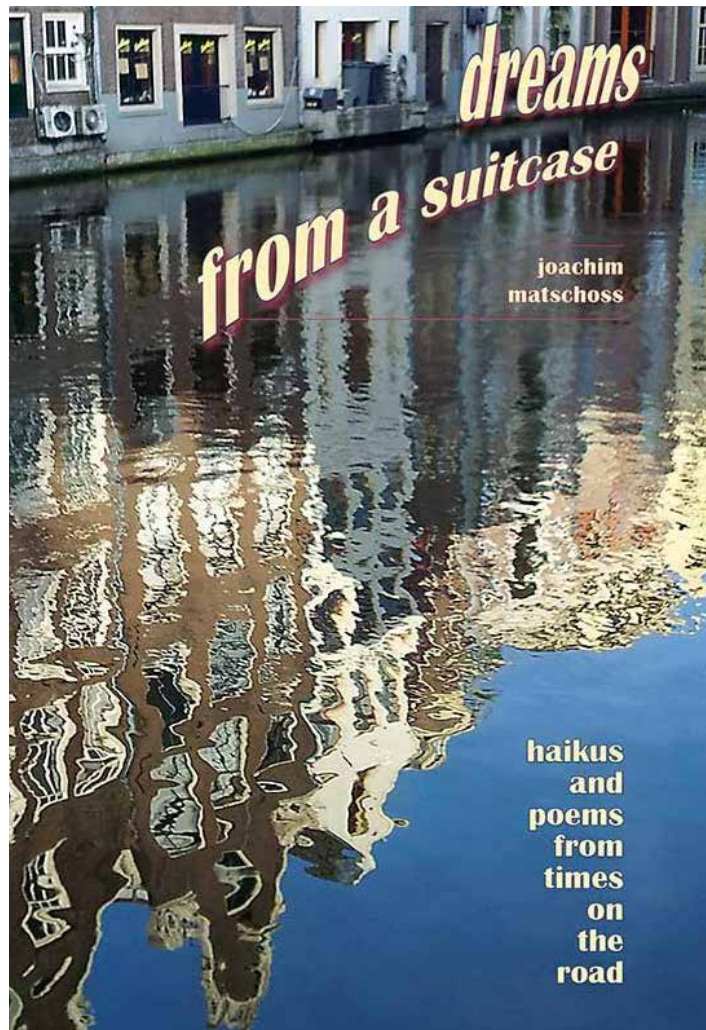
Stir in the final half spoon of sugar.
Dunk a custard cream. Silly cow.
That was never going to work.

"... I lost my license
now I don't drive."

Joachim's poetry is published in Australia, Germany, the United Kingdom and the USA.
 He has created theatre in Australia, New Zealand, United Kingdom, India, Uzbekistan,
 Malaysia, China, Indonesia, Hong Kong, Hungary, Taiwan and Switzerland.
www.byteensemble.com www.penfolk.com.au www.amazon.com



poems from times on the road



starlings in trastevere

streetlights are born one after another
 starlings emerge washed in blue,
 a flock performs a routine
 high above umbrella pines
 like synchronized swimmers
 no pool, just light
 and darkness on its borders –

up there, winding apart
 slowly snapping back together,
 forming patterns, shapes, signs,
 another flock of birds like two falling scarves,
 a broken heart,
 romulus and remus or both
 close to me, now,
 then suddenly a myriad of wings
 swing in reverse
 and now they are gone.

walking in east london

(london, january 2015)

something about the woman
 behind the window of the shop
 reminds me of you
 but my gaze shifts to the beautiful apples
 on the table in front of her
 polished, shining red, exotic
 and happy in each other's company
 the woman is now a subtle ghost,
 yourself in memory perhaps –
 I step inside and pick one secretly
 like the piece of chocolate
 from the box that was hidden in our pantry –
 the woman steps into focus
 she is not you but she is real
 as real as the red apple in my hand
 a few coins later I leave into the drizzly morning
 a flock of birds shoots south across waterloo bridge
 I go the other way and take a bite



breakfast in little india

(singapore, february 2015)

a breeze from marina bay
 gently rocks the washing strung up
 between houses, rainbow-coloured and tiny
 into instant dryness
 teh tarik before me, a raw egg and banana prata
 just five minutes ago
 boarding the MRT at orchard
 escaping starbucks, mcdonalds, gap, hilfiger
 the faceless bereft of authenticity
 surrounded me like tentacles of a jellyfish
 but here the captivating hum of faulty
 airconditioning units and the music of india
 provided the soundtrack for time travel

stonewalls

(edinburgh, january 2014)

a dog barks and a cat stretches
 a skinny flag of smoke above
 from stone and horsehair and mud
 the smell of centuries embracing time
 below me, january river flanked by tired trees
 the dog, fresh-faced and eager-mouthed
 slouches inside knowing what is to come
 on this wild, wild day in winter's grip as
 last light now parachutes onto the cobbles
 and the day just folds away.

muenchner freiheit

(munich, january 2015)

there's a slight haze around her
 from the smokers outside the door
 kept ajar by a cold draft
 fierce, uncompromising and the remnants
 from cigarettes exhaled by tired lungs
 she's forty but it's hard to tell
 hasn't washed her hair for days
 she's not speaking, drinking beer quietly
 throwing coins in endless succession
 into the wet slits of horny machines
 sexed up, swallowing euro after euro
 three fat red hearts make her straighten up
 in anticipation of a downpour of coins
 but all she'll get is a free game
 she accepts, she smiles, he's hungry now
 bills, coins, dreams will vanish
 and she'll head outside then for a quick smoke
 but return to chase some new luck
 some blocks away, someone looks after a newborn
 that longs for the skin of her mother



he and I

(for stefan)

(edinburgh, january 2014)

the poem has been photographed
 its bag has been emptied
 its fragile body strip-searched
 its water-bottle disposed of
 forms had been filled out
 it had to declare itself, its purpose, its message
 it needed to state why it did question them, under oath
 what was the poem's business here?
 it was taken into another room to explain itself
 it had to face them and give reason why it spoke of love
 love? now? here?
 it was laughed in the face and put into prison.

airport security

(haddington, january 2014)

the poem has been photographed
 its bag has been emptied
 its fragile body strip-searched
 its water-bottle disposed of
 forms had been filled out
 it had to declare itself, its purpose, its message
 it needed to state why it did question them, under oath
 what was the poem's business here?
 it was taken into another room to explain itself
 it had to face them and give reason why it spoke of love
 love? now? here?
 it was laughed in the face and put into prison.

japanese girl in pub ordering chips

(london, king's cross, june 2014)

she's on the phone and writes a text
 she can do both simultaneously, she is skilled
 she has two phones
 she is young
 and she knows that not to know is to know nothing –
 a bowl of chips arrives
 she takes a pic and sends it to Kyoto
 michiko, her friend back home
 needs to see the size of those fries
 she briefly gazes into a mirrored wall
 and cannot recognise herself –
 a message arrives, a call, another message
 a twitter update and on Instagram
 she can see how much michiko
 likes the photo of those gorgeous chips –
 she tries a fry but they are cold now
 but michiko will be spared that news

somehow in between all of this
 the pauses are lost
 and the silences have vanished.



Dominic Taylor is one of the founding members of *The Limerick Writers' Centre*. His work has appeared in various journals and he has read at venues around Ireland. He is the organiser of the 'On The Nail' Literary Gathering, a monthly public reading event which takes place in Limerick. *For anyone wishing to contact the centre they can email: limerickwriterscentre@gmail.com*

Bob Dylan Came To Limerick.

He came with thunder in his eyes
To the banks of the Shannon
To the city of Frank McCourt
To the city of church spires
To sing on the breeze of Thomond

He came with anger in his voice
To raise the sleepers from their sleep
To form a posse against repression
To point a finger at the law
To set foot on the soil of Thomond

He came with dreams in his head
To startle the birds from the trees
To waylay sorrow and pain
To shoulder the blameless
To drum-sound on the air of Thomond

He came a wanderer on the road
To still the stony pool into silence
To open arms ready to hold
To calm the afternoon heat
To the welcoming roar of Thomond



LIMERICK

WRITERS' CENTRE



End

*...though the earth be shaken and mountains
plunge into the sea...*

psalm 46

Don't hold your breath
Don't wait for change
See the sun shine on miserable things
Begin a journey
Feel the suffering of rock and stone
Run before the shadow of the sun
For night will come
All will be as it should
God will go back to sleep
Dream a new dream
Sing a new song
In a new key

Chernobyl

The promises to be eight wonder of the world
Reactor Number Four.
Encased in its concrete sarcophagus
it attracts mould, moss and tourists.
No doubt the visitors wonder
what great secret is buried inside?

As pulsing radiation seeps
like blood dripping from a wound
that will not heal

the Chernobyl silence echoes
from Hiroshima and Nagasaki
reminding us that we are
all part of the nuclear family.

Johnny Cash Is Dead

Johnny Cash is dead
Don't be sad
For certain is death for the living
And certain is life for the dead
So be glad

Johnny Cash is dead
Have no fear
For there is no profit or loss
His account was not in the red
He is clear

Johnny Cash is dead
So have faith
His star shines in the heavens
In the service of who have fled
And who wait

Johnny Cash is dead
Do not grieve
Just because his spirit's flown
No tears need be shed
Just believe

Johnny Cash is dead
Well, so what
His heart beats in his music
Johnny Cash is dead
He is not



I like you better than everything in the sky

I like you better than everything in the sky
The sun, the moon just cannot compare
You are my soul, my heart for you I do cry

In my thoughts, my dreams my breath my sigh
Like pulses of sound that comb through air
I like you better than everything in the sky

My feelings laid bare as I watch you pass by
Pouting your lips and flicking your hair
You are my soul, my heart for you I do cry

And yes, for a kiss I would surely die
If only you'd look show me you care
I like you better than everything in the sky

My life is a wasteland it's barren, it's dry
I long for your touch and days we might share
I like you better than everything in the sky

I speak out these words but I get no reply
I know you won't answer I haven't a prayer
But I like you better than everything in the sky
You are my soul, my heart for you I do cry

* A **villanelle** is a nineteen-line poetic form consisting of five three line verses (**tercets**) followed by a four line verse (**quatrain**). There are two **refrains** and two repeating rhymes, with the first and third line of the first verse repeated alternately until the last stanza, which includes both repeated lines.

Cillín

for Dave Moran

We buried you, without bell,
in an unmarked grave two-foot deep.
That night we heard the mongrel dogs.
Next morning we made our way back
to the graveyard grabbed two headstones
and laid them over the fresh earth.
It eased the pain knowing your soul
was in the arms of our Heavenly Father
and your body safe in the arms of our
Earthly Mother.

For over fifty years you lay there
undisturbed among the innocents
as the hedgerow encroached
making it invisible
except to those who knew.

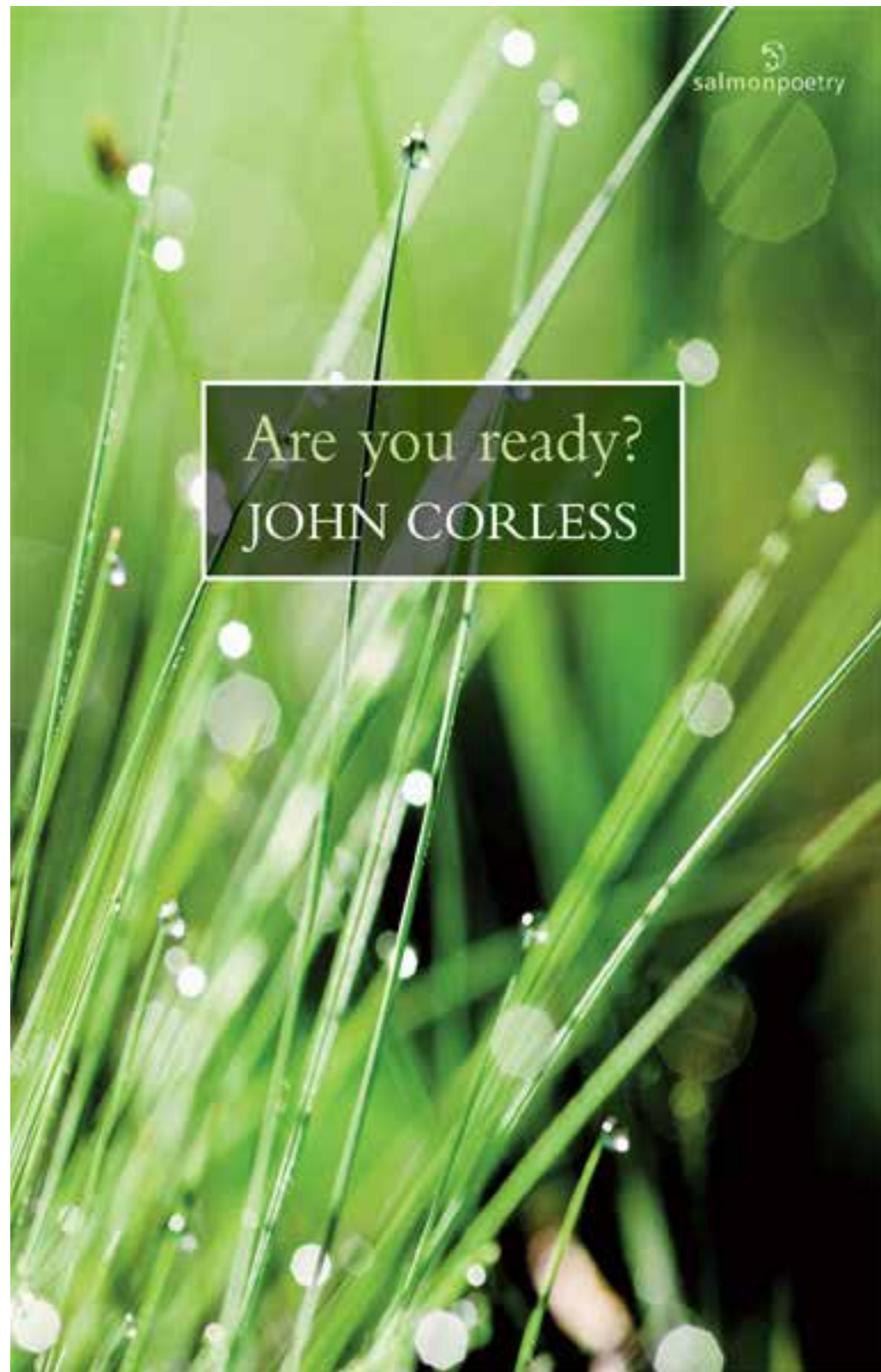
Yesterday as the wind blew through
a bright Rossbrien day we scrambled
once more over the stile
through the barbed wire and brambles
and looked for your spot,
but found only crumbled stone,
and sparse uneven earth.

As we turned to leave
a startled crow flew from the branches
overhead and the dog at our heels
gave a whimpering cry

and you there silent
among the scrub of the Cillín.

*A **cillín** (from the Irish language, with the literal meaning "little cell", "little churchyard" or "little burial ground"; plural cillíní), was a historical unconsecrated burial place in Ireland for children unbaptised at the time of death.

'Are you ready?' is published by Salmon Poetry. John's new collection **'A Single Mission'** - Salmon Poetry is due 2015.



John Corless writes poetry, drama and fiction. He lives at one with nature in the countryside in the west of Ireland. In these poems, John explores loss in a number of forms. "It's a theme I keep returning to" he says. "The missed opportunity; inertia. It is often bleak. Sometimes less so." His other interests include photography, sculpture and generally making things.



from his new collection 'A Single Mission' - Salmon Poetry 2015

Longing

He couldn't help noticing
how sad she looked –
Eileen –
his first love –
married for a long time now,
to a taxi driver
from the other end of town.
Occasionally when they met
he saw the sparkle
return to her smile,
but mostly she looked
defeated.

It would probably be inappropriate
to ask her for a coffee
or to go for a walk
round by the lake.
If anyone saw them
there'd be talk.

He longed to ask her
what the matter was;
had she health worries,
or was the taxi-driver
not nice to her?

One day he sat
on the Post Office window sill,
she always called there
of a Friday –
to collect her mother's pension.
But when she eventually came
it had started to rain
and he didn't want to delay her.



from his new collection 'A Single Mission' - Salmon Poetry 2015

Time

At 10.22 am,
as she left the church
of Saint Jesus, Mary and Joseph,
after attending
the first anniversary Mass
for her deceased husband,
Anne O'Loughlin made a decision.
Today was the day
she would dispose
of her deeply beloved's clothes,
suits and enthusiastic collection
of silk cravats.

At 10.44 am,
as she dipped a McVitie's Digestive
into her mug of Barry's Tea,
taking great care
not to immerse the biscuit
for too long
in case any would detach itself
from the remainder
either within the cup
or on her new blouse,
Anne O'Loughlin had a thought.

What if her greatly lamented
wasn't in fact dead at all
and returned one of the days?
He would surely be muchly upset
at his wife's hastiness –
especially with the cravats.
He would indeed be vexed
to find his things departed
as she had thought he had been.

At 10.45 am,
as she fished the dissolving Digestive
from the river bed of her cup,
the aforementioned Ms O'Loughlin
dismissed the thought –
had she not stood beside his coffin
as Mr Gibbons,
the Undertaker's Apprentice,
firmly screwed-down the lid,
and had she not watched
from close proximity
as six strong men
lowered the enclosure,
and had she not heard
the soft thud of the timber
as it met the firm earth?

He was dead alright.
Had she not last Thursday,
paid the final instalment
of the Credit Union advance
to discharge the Undertaker's account?

Yes he wouldn't be returning.
And yes it was okay to dispose
of her now one-year-deceased's
remaining effects.

At 10.53 am,
as she turned the cup upside down
on the draining board,
Anne O'Loughlin,
née Nee,
had another thought.

What if she were to meet another gentleman
– one of the same size and stature
as her now deceased-for-one-year husband
and what if his feet
were the same size
and what if he too had a passion
for silk cravats?
What then?
Wouldn't it be a shame
to have disposed so hastily
of her greatly lamented's
personal effects?

At 10.54 am,
as she sellotaped-shut
the remaining McVitie's Digestives,
Anne O'Loughlin decided
it was not yet time
to dispose
of her deeply beloved's clothes,
suits and enthusiastic collection
of silk cravats.



from his new collection 'A Single Mission' - Salmon Poetry 2015

So Long

She left a note
but he couldn't read it –
her handwriting was poor
and his sight wasn't great.
Anyway, if she had spoken
rather than written

the words
he'd not have understood either –
it was so long
since they talked
he hardly knew the sound
of her voice

and her accent
was very strong -
she came
from a different country
and neither ever learned
the other's tongue.

Anyway, she was gone now
and he'd have to get used to it.
He'd miss her of course.
Not in the normal way
a man misses a woman
but in the way she made

paper dolls
from the old newspapers
she couldn't read,
scraped flags of countries
that didn't exist
with small stones

onto bigger ones
and stared at the horizon
in the evenings.
He gazed
at her Voynichian manuscript –
it was all that he had

of her now
and he wondered
what other abstractions
would cross his path
before the sun rested
for the day

'Never Black' from 'Are You Ready?' (Salmon Poetry 2009)

Never Black

"What colour is the sky today?" you asked.
I wanted to say it was blue.
"Grey," I said.

"Dark grey or light grey?"
"Both," I said.
You said: "I'm really lucky,
the sky is always blue –
azure during the day,
indigo in the evening and
Prussian blue at night,
but never black.
It's never black."

The flowers are always in bloom
where you are Mother,
intense,
the grasses a fertile green
never need mowing.
The weeds behave themselves
like you wished I had
when I was six and seven.

Now you are six and seven,
and getting even younger.
Getting even.

Younger.

Jim Burke lives in Limerick, Ireland. Co-founder with John Liddy of *The Stony Thursday Book*. Poems have appeared in *The Shamrock Haiku Journal*, *The Literary Bohemian*, *The Crannog Poetry Journal*, *The Stony Thursday Book*, *The Revival Poetry Journal*. He is a member of *The Irish Haiku Society* and is on the committee of the *Limerick Writers Centre*.



I DIDN'T GET WHERE I AM

(After Maurice Riordan)

I didn't get where I am by complaining about bumpy
soccer pitches
or the shortcomings of amateur referees.
Or by blaming the inclemencies of the weather.
Or by voting for Labour.
Or by saying he's a nicer fellow than most, always good to see him.
Nor did I get where I am with the girl in a miniskirt
reading the Bible outside my window.
I didn't get where I am with all the love I had which was not enough.
Nor did I get where I am by sinking the winning putt in the U.S. Open.
Or by using the comb-over.
Or because I picked six random numbers one Saturday night.
Or by talking to Van Morrison.
Nor did I get where I am whispering to the Virgin Mary.
Or because I went out into the hazel wood.
Or because I ate strawberries with cream watching Wimbledon.
Or because it was difficult to use the lavatory bowl in Harvard.
And I didn't get where I am because your grandfather showed me where
to go.
Nor did I get where I am on the wrong side of fifty,
by taking up jogging and joining the Jane Austen Book Club
or by learning to kiss like Clark Gable.
No, that's not how I got where I am.

HAIKU

*

kyoto- knockea-
at nightfall
same moon

AT THE EDGE

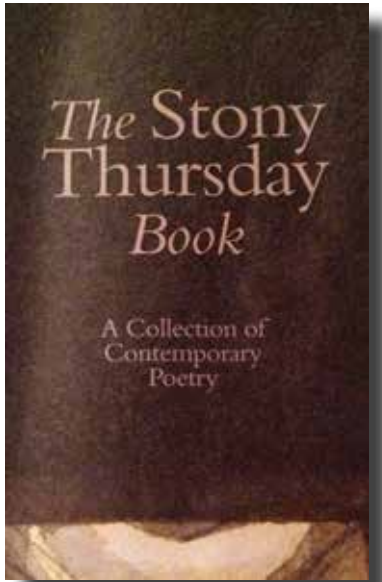
the pink sky
falls across
the water

floats like an

un-tied or
un-anchored

moment

when you turn
away
it's gone



1969 – JULY

(For John)

He cycled at evening, lauded the low ditches.
Two old stone bridges, the stream,

the hillside graveyard and Nailer's
thatch marked him first and last.

Left or right cattle-bellowed, birds sung,
annulated rinds deepened on fruits.

He spotted a kingfisher spearing down
dead centre through a half lit eye.

He heard Connors' mad bull
feint a pinning. Pub doors opened

with moon-talk in town.
It was a long, long way, outta sight.

He glided home by Nailer's
on his own steam, in starlight.

WHEN

she leaves the cup on the oak counter and dreams,
sucking smoke – but not just, her red lips push

white rings into the air.
Beside her a young man in a green mackintosh
reads a slim paperback.
It is raining hard outside. She is watching

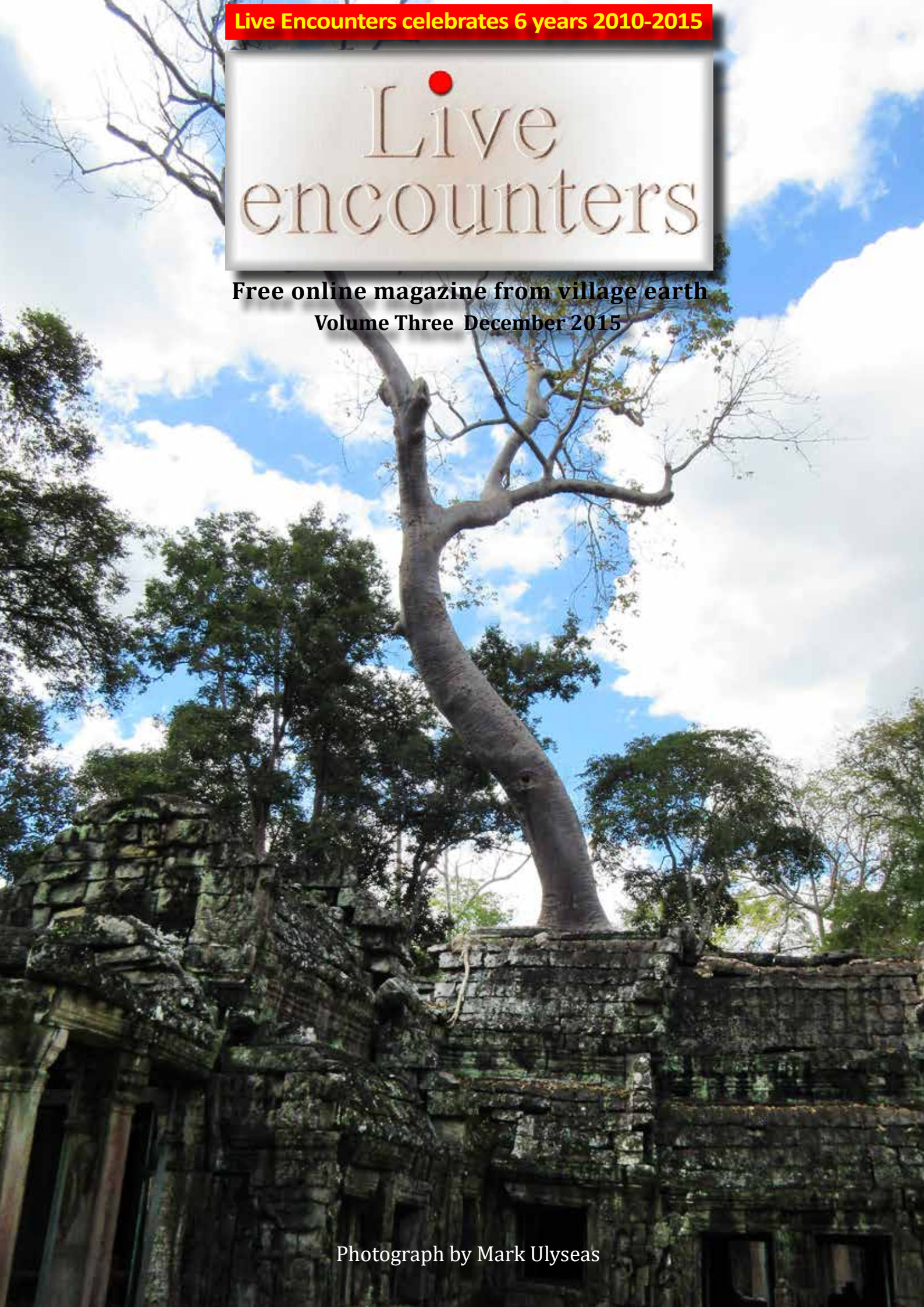
for a blue umbrella. Again and again, watching
through the window for the umbrella closing,

moving inside, towards her.

Live Encounters celebrates 6 years 2010-2015

Live encounters

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Photograph by Mark Ulyseas