

10 ANNIVERSARY 2010 - 2019



# Live encounters

BOOKS - REVIEWS

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Two friends hanging out at a local eatery in Luang Prabang, photograph by Mark Ulyseas.



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Live Encounters is a not-for-profit free online magazine that was founded in 2009 in Bali, Indonesia. It showcases some of the best writing from around the world. Poets, writers, academics, civil & human/animal rights activists, academics, environmentalists, social workers, photographers and more have contributed their time and knowledge for the benefit of the readers of:

*Live Encounters Magazine* (2010), *Live Encounters Poetry & Writing* (2016), *Live Encounters Young Poets & Writers* (2019) and now, *Live Encounters Books* (August 2020).

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Om Shanti Shanti Shanti Om

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## CONTRIBUTORS

It is only in *quietness* that true passion can exist to create life sustaining memories. In the *quietness* of reading books we inhabit memories of other worlds, worlds beyond the doors of *our* Time.

Books are here to guide us on our journey through these doors. And writers and poets are here to create these books for us.

Let us be thankful and buy books to read and share with the world.

– Mark Ulyseas

ANNE KARHIO / GRAHAM ALLEN  
JESSICA TRAYNOR / EILEEN CASEY  
DEREK BEAULIEU / SILJE REE  
KATERI LANTHIER / ANNA YIN  
ALI WHITELOCK / FERGUS HOGAN  
MARGARET HOGAN / EILEEN CASEY  
DEIRDRE HINES / GORDON MEADE  
MARC DI SAVERIO / PETER O'NEILL



Graham Allen is a Professor in the School of English, University College Cork, Ireland. Professor Allen is an award-winning poet. His poetry collections *The One That Got Away* and *The Madhouse System* are published with New Binary Press, as is his ongoing epem *Holes* [www.holesbygrahamallen.org](http://www.holesbygrahamallen.org). His new collection *No Rainbows Here* will be published by Salmon Press in 2020.

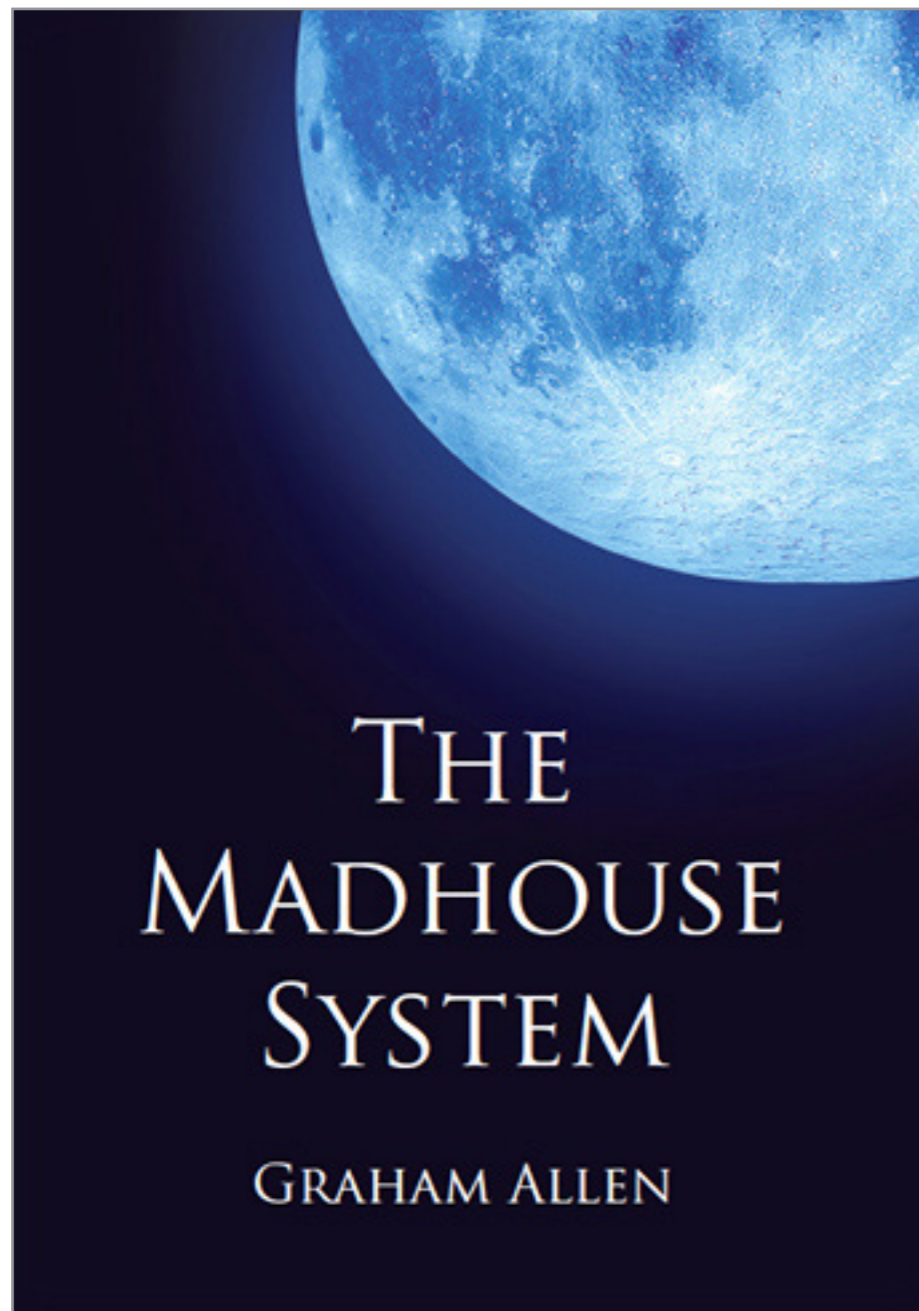


Anne Karhio is a graduate of the Universities of Helsinki and Galway. She has worked in a number of European institutions in Finland, Norway, France and Ireland. She has been a postdoctoral researcher and the holder of the ELEVATE Irish Research Council International Career Development Fellowship, co-funded by Marie Curie Actions. Her research project on Irish poetry and landscape and on human rights and Modernist poetry was carried out in the National University of Ireland, Galway, and the University of Bergen. Her work focuses on the impact of new media technologies on literary representations of landscape in Irish poetic culture. The project covers poetry in both print and digital formats and also examines the relationship of poetry to visual and audiovisual arts, music and other forms of artistic production. Karhio is the author of *Slight Return: Paul Muldoon's Poetry of Space* (Peter Lang, 2016) and co-editor of *Crisis and Contemporary Poetry* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2011),

## ANNE KARHIO Review of GRAHAM ALLEN'S *The Madhouse System*

Allen's collection takes its name from the nineteenth century barrister and civil servant Richard Paternoster's similarly titled 1841 volume, based on the author's experiences in William Finch's mental asylum in London. Paternoster was incarcerated as a result of a financial dispute, and Allen's frequently bleak poems, too, consider "madness" as a socio-economic or political rather than clinical affair, or as a Foucaultian construct, a counterweight for civilization. In poems such as "Celtic Twilight" and "What Falls", those living in 21st century Ireland and beyond become patients of a "madhouse", yet insanity resides not in the individual but in being entrapped in an institutional and political system.

After the two first sections of the collection, "The Madhouse System" and "The Return", the third and final one, "The Spells", recalibrates the collection's perspective. The penultimate poem "Bright Star, Elegy for David Bowie" is a culmination of the volume's repeatedly expressed tension between everyday minutiae and cosmic life, and presents the life span of a human being and that of a star as purposeful processes of "burning". It is Bowie's death that finally unveils a view of life as release of energy: it becomes an invitation to "Imitate the life of the sun". Thus the call of the concluding poem "The Spells" – to "Start over. Start again." – is less a Beckettian invitation to "fail better" than an insistence on responsibility and resistance, through creative action. It also sends the reader back to the beginning, and asks them to revise their initial encounter with madness, now less as confinement and more as refusal of one's assigned place in the system.



<http://newbinarypress.com/product/the-madhouse-system-by-graham-allen-paperback/>



Eileen Casey, born in the Midlands, lives in South Dublin. Poetry is published in anthologies by Dedalus, Salmon, Poetry Ireland Review, The Stinging Fly, Lisburn Linen Museum (edited by Lynda Tavakoli), among others. Poems have also published in outlets such as The Sunday Tribune, The Ulster Tatler Literary Miscellany, Poetry Ireland (*Future Perfect*), *Great Expectations* (Transition Year Students textbook), *Correspondences* (co-edited by Jessica Traynor and Stephen Rea). Awards include The Oliver Goldsmith International Prize, The Hanna Greally Awards (Roscommon Libraries) and a Katherine and Patrick Kavanagh Fellowship. She published five poetry collections (New Island, Arlen House, AlTenTs, Fiery Arrow). Two of her collections (*From Bone to Blossom/Reading Hieroglyphics in Unexpected Places*) are collaborations with County Offaly artist Emma Barone. *The Lea-Green Down*, a response anthology to the poetry of Patrick Kavanagh and featuring works from over 60 poets was published in 2018 by Casey's small press Fiery Arrow.



Jessica Traynor is a poet, dramaturg and creative writing teacher. Awards include the Ireland Chair of Poetry Bursary and the Hennessy New Writer of the Year Award. Her debut collection, *Liffey Swim* (Dedalus Press, 2014), was shortlisted for the Strong/Shine Award and was named one of the best debuts of the past five years on Bustle.com. Her second collection, *The Quick*, was a 2019 Irish Times poetry choice. She is Poet in Residence at the Yeats Society, Sligo, and a Creative Fellow of UCD. Current projects include a commission from Offaly County Council and The Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government to write a poetic history of the town of Banagher. In 2019 with Stephen Rea she co-edited *Correspondences: an anthology to call for an end to direct provision*, raising funds for MASI (Movement of Asylum Seekers in Ireland).

## JESSICA TRAYNOR Review of EILEEN CASEY'S *Berries for Singing Birds*

*Berries for Singing Birds*, the new collection from poet Eileen Casey, showcases a roving intellect that captures vivid details in its bright beam. From contemporary New York, to a Luas stop on a bitter morning, and across the seas to Australia in the wake of the Earl Grey orphans, Casey brings us on a memorable journey. These poems are keenly attuned to humanity, ageing, vulnerability. Casey is at her strongest when bearing witness to the small injustices that thin our society out, as is demonstrated in *Man Melting* to keen effect, where a homeless man is ejected from a tram on a freezing morning: 'each passing mile/ takes us further away from a man's broken shoes/ flapped against filthy under-soles; a man melting.'

A sequence of poems imagining the journey of the Earl Grey Orphans, groups of vulnerable young Irish women shipped to Australia in the wake of the Famine, strikes a deep chord with Casey, born in the same midlands from which many of the young women were forced to emigrate. Casey explores the restorative power of art and learning, practicing the same crafts which allowed these women to provide for themselves - and in some cases thrive - in the beautiful but harsh new land that awaited them: 'Sister/ teaches sister teaches sister to sew./ First tack rows the cloth. Ship shears/ ocean's weft, warp.'

The thread that ties these diverse poems together is an unwavering belief in the resilience of the natural world. Naming the plants of the midlands and Australia becomes a mantra that runs through several poems, tying the histories of both places together through their flora. The natural world continues, despite the many disruptions we face in life, and sometimes provides us with new language in which to tell stories of survival, as in 'The Lilly Pilly Tree Song' where a nursing mother writes new songs for her child.

*Berries for Singing Birds* is a compelling collection. These poems deserve to be read and re-read.



<https://press.syr.edu/supressbook-publisher/arlen-house/>

<https://www.waterstones.com/book/berries-for-singing-birds/eileen-casey/9781851322176>



Silje Ree is a Norwegian visual poet and artist exploring the interplay between words, languages and imagery through the medium of the book. She is a Visual Arts: Book Arts Postgraduate (UAL) based in London, and designs, creates and prints multilingual visual poetry books for her press, Mellom Press. Silje also curates Mellom Press exhibitions featuring international poets and artists. Her work has been published and displayed in places such as *3:am magazine*, *Live Encounters Poetry & Writing*, *Poem Atlas*, The Poetry Society, 5th Base Gallery and Museum of Futures in London, and *Lasso*, *Filologen* and Studio K in Norway.



Derek Beaulieu is the author of over 20 volumes of poetry, prose and poetics. Most recently he edited *Nights on Prose Mountain: The Fiction of bpNichol* (Coach House Books, 2018) and wrote *Aperture*, a volume of day-glo concrete poetry (Penteract, 2019). He is the Director of Literary Arts and Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity in Banff, Canada.

## DEREK BEAULIEU Review of SILJE REE'S *Melodilaust Tone Fall*

Silje Ree's *Melodilaust Tone Fall* (Sampson Low, 2019; European Poetry Festival Series Edition #4) is a multilingual exploration of the caves and excavations, the mines and strongholds of language. Each page works across diction and tongue – with handwritten and digital kaleidoscope visual poems accompanying pages of personal reflection of how language crafts identity. Sliding from Norwegian into English, Ree reflects on the challenges of pronunciation and immigration. Each page maps the challenges of wrapping speech – and here the page and the direction of poetic composition – over political boundaries. *Medlodilaust Tone Fall* consists of lightly composed pages, words drift like a burr on the tongue, the inflection of an accent, the slight shift of pronunciation which moves a word from *hear* to here. Pages play with expectation, “the difference between ‘e’ and ‘I’” where language speaks identity and home and the garden where trees – Ree’s central metaphor of branching language forms – provide shade.

With *Melodilaust Tone Fall* Ree quietly asks “if you do / recognize the language I speak / the words I tell you” the voices of a contemporary Europe draft across our streets like leaves on the wind.

Melodilaust tone fall



Silje Ree

The Sampson Low European Poets Series

<https://sampsonlow.co/2019/03/25/melodilaust-tone-fall-silje-ree/>

<https://siljeree.com/>



Anna Yin was [Mississauga's Inaugural Poet Laureate](#) (2015-2017) and Ontario representative to the League of Canadian Poets (2013-2016). She has authored five collections of poetry. Her poems/translations have appeared at ARC Poetry, New York Times, China Daily, CBC Radio, World Journal etc. Anna won the 2005 Ted Plantos Memorial Award, two MARTYs, two scholarships from West Chester University Poetry Conference, three grants from OAC and 2013 Professional Achievement Award from CPAC. She performed her poetry on Parliament Hill and has been featured at 2015 Austin International Poetry Festival and 2017 National poetry month project etc. She also teaches Poetry Alive workshops at schools, colleges and libraries. Her website: [annapoetry.com](http://annapoetry.com)



Kateri Lanthier is a poet, essayist, and reviewer. Her poems have been published in many journals, including *The Fiddlehead*, *Event*, *Hazlitt*, *Green Mountains Review*, *Arc*, *Grain*, *Great Lakes Review*, *Best Canadian Poetry 2014*, *Halibut Haiku*, and the *Literary Review of Canada*. She won the 2013 Walrus Poetry Prize and third prize in the London-based Troubadour International Poetry Prize. She is a Mentor in the MA in English in the Field of Creative Writing, University of Toronto. She delivered a TEDx talk on poetry at TEDx Ashbury College, Ottawa. Her essay "Lifelines: Of Heart, Lungs, Blood, and Ghazals" was included in the anthology *Against Death: 35 Essays on Living* (ed. Elee Kraljii Gardiner, Anvil Press, 2019; Montaigne Medal finalist). Her books are *Reporting from Night* (Iguana, 2011) and *Siren* (Signal Editions, Véhicule Press, 2017), longlisted for the 2018 Pat Lowther Memorial Award. Poems from *Siren* have been included in four anthologies.

## KATERI LANTHIER Review of ANNA YIN'S *Love's Lighthouse*

The poems in Anna Yin's *Love's Lighthouse* travel variously. Some ripple out delicately and diminish gently, while others swell to surprising heights, gaining force and moving far. Yin presents her poems in Chinese, each followed by her own English translation. This makes for a rich, authoritative collection that many readers will find fascinating for its linguistic juxtapositions. The poems "breathe in two languages."

Vivid images of snow, apples, pears, onions, trees, the moon, and shadows unite the work, recurring across Yin's free verse and haiku, as well as an insistent move towards mythology. Dream-like states and mild Surrealism characterize her poems, suggesting the influence of both Imagism and the long-standing Chinese lyrical tradition. Dreams evaporate on the brink of a realization or reckoning. Love, to Yin, seems subject to loss and deflation, or to a flaring re-emergence, like the beam of a lighthouse through storm clouds. Poems addressed to a defiant, commanding father figure ("My Father's Temple") reveal a powerful grasp of narrative.

Some of the strongest poems display sharp humour, as in "I Often Dream of Fish": "Wake up surprised / By my nudity. // *Fish is a symbol for sex / a specialist explains; / she offers a miserable look.*" Contemporary details ground "WeChat": "Angels are from heaven, not random results from Google, / too many and all kinds of: / *Angelfish, Angels trumpet, Angel Eyes, / Computer Virus Angels and Fallen Angels...*" While she evokes Western cultural figures (Van Gogh, Yeats, Robert Frost), Yin also dedicates a poem to Song dynasty poet Li Qing Zhao and to the memory of Cecilia Zhang, a child from Mississauga, Ontario whose abduction and murder shocked the community. She also references Canadian poets Gwendolyn MacEwan, Leonard Cohen, and Irving Layton. The latter receives an effective rebuke for his declaration that "poetry merely exists for showing the dark of our soul." Yin responds: "I long to show you the opposite: / Before poetry found me, / I was nearly drowned in dark." *Love's Lighthouse* reveals that the beacon is "not in the distance, but in your heart."



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or email: [anna.yin@gmail.com](mailto:anna.yin@gmail.com)



Fergus Hogan lives and works in Waterford where he lectures fulltime in Family Therapy and Narrative Storytelling Therapy at Waterford Institute of Technology. His poems have been published in the Irish Times, Channel, Feral Journal of Poetry and Art, Tiny Seeds Literary Journal, and Live Encounters. His spoken word poem *Consent* took first prize in Waterford's inaugural spoken word and slam poetry competition in 2018. His poetry chapbook, *Bittern Cry*, was published in November 2019 by Book Hub Publishing and is available for his publishers at [www.bookhubpublishing.com](http://www.bookhubpublishing.com) and it is also available for sale online from his local independent bookstores; The Book Centre Waterford [www.thebookcentre.ie](http://www.thebookcentre.ie) and Red Books Wexford [www.facebook.com/redbooksire/](http://www.facebook.com/redbooksire/)



Kateri Lanthier is a poet, essayist, and reviewer. Her poems have been published in many journals, including The Fiddlehead, Event, Hazlitt, Green Mountains Review, Arc, Grain, Great Lakes Review, *Best Canadian Poetry 2014*, Halibut Haiku, and the Literary Review of Canada. She won the 2013 Walrus Poetry Prize and third prize in the London-based Troubadour International Poetry Prize. She is a Mentor in the MA in English in the Field of Creative Writing, University of Toronto. She delivered a TEDx talk on poetry at TEDx Ashbury College, Ottawa. Her essay "Lifelines: Of Heart, Lungs, Blood, and Ghazals" was included in the anthology *Against Death: 35 Essays on Living* (ed. Elee Kraljii Gardiner, Anvil Press, 2019; Montaigne Medal finalist). Her books are *Reporting from Night* (Iguana, 2011) and *Siren* (Signal Editions, Véhicule Press, 2017), longlisted for the 2018 Pat Lowther Memorial Award. Poems from *Siren* have been included in four anthologies.

## BITTERN CRY

Fergus Hogan



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### ALI WHITELOCK Review of FERGUS HOGAN'S *Bittern Cry*

'I normally gravitate towards poetry that whacks me over the head and delivers an unexpected uppercut for good measure. The achingly beautiful, *'Bittern Cry'* is not that kind of poetry. The warmth in this work disarmed me. Its lilt and music are smooth as the surface of Lough Gowna on a calm summer's night and if it were possible for a poet's voice to taste of something, Fergus Hogan's would be that of a single Irish malt--perfectly balanced with honey, oak, peat and smoke. As I read, a tenderness slipped quietly like glucose into my cells and transported me to a small stone cottage that, *'stands on the hill shadowed by a few old trees worn thin'*. From there the poems motioned for me to take a seat in a cracked leather arm chair by a roaring log fire, and as I warmed myself at the hearth of this collection, Fergus took a fine tooth comb to his soul while guiding me deeper into my own -- *'When did you last dance?' he asks, 'When did you last sing? When were you last at peace in your silence? When were you last proud in the telling of your story?'* This collection weaves a gentle path through childhood, nature, home, a bottle of gone-off sun cream, an ill-fitting wedding suit and a series of heart-clutching lines such as, *'I forgot to even whisper/how beautiful you looked/dressed in white.'* As I read this work, I fed my own worries to the crows, *'my beautiful flock of silver eyed friends/my funeral of sin eaters'* while these poems wrapped me in a love I hadn't expected to find here. Turning the page on the final poem, I stumbled on a deeper kindness towards myself--and to the world.'





Eileen Casey, born in the Midlands, lives in South Dublin. Poetry is published in anthologies by Dedalus, Salmon, Poetry Ireland Review, The Stinging Fly, Lisburn Linen Museum (edited by Lynda Tavakoli), among others. Poems have also published in outlets such as The Sunday Tribune, The Ulster Tatler Literary Miscellany, Poetry Ireland (*Future Perfect*), *Great Expectations* (Transition Year Students textbook), *Correspondences* (co-edited by Jessica Traynor and Stephen Rea). Awards include The Oliver Goldsmith International Prize, The Hanna Greally Awards (Roscommon Libraries) and a Katherine and Patrick Kavanagh Fellowship. She published five poetry collections (New Island, Arlen House, AlTenTs, Fiery Arrow). Two of her collections (*From Bone to Blossom/Reading Hieroglyphics in Unexpected Places*) are collaborations with County Offaly artist Emma Barone. *The Lea-Green Down*, a response anthology to the poetry of Patrick Kavanagh and featuring works from over 60 poets was published in 2018 by Casey's small press Fiery Arrow.



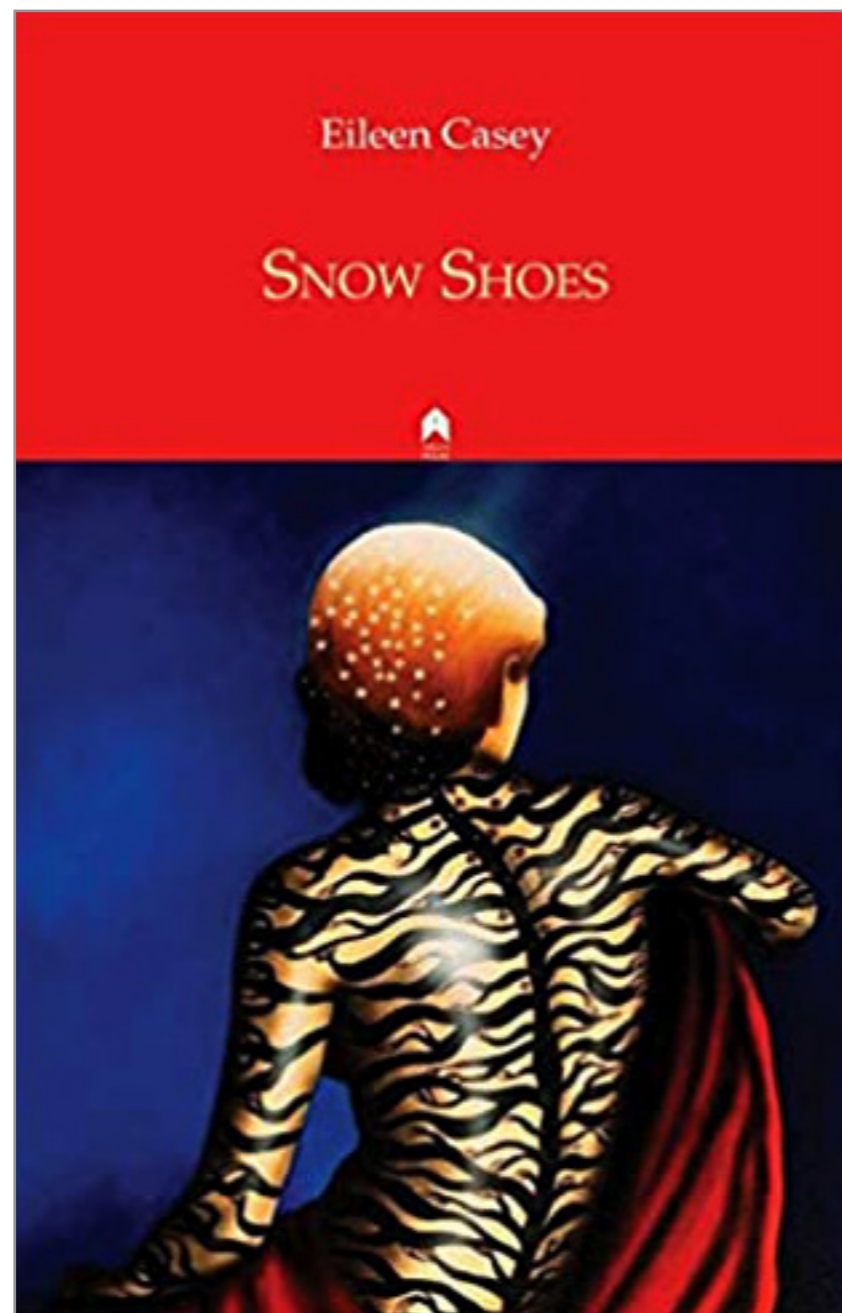
Margaret Hogan graduated from UCD with an honours BA in Major English, and chose the work of poet and artist William Blake for her MA thesis. She enjoyed teaching, especially drama and poetry at second level. She has spent most of her life in Birr, married to Tony for fifty years with two grown-up daughters and two grandchildren. She continues to research local history and the history of women in Ireland. She was the leader and principal writer of the online *Discovering Women* in Irish History for the Department of Education and Skills.

## MARGARET HOGAN Review of EILEEN CASEY'S *Snow Shoes*

*Snow Shoes* is a stylish production with attractive artwork by Offaly Artist Emma Barone. This collection of short stories includes 'Macaw' which won the Hennessy Literary Award for Emerging Fiction. She narrates scenes from real life, capturing the tensions faced by security staff in a supermarket, an old flame visiting a funeral parlour, a young couple with a colicky baby, a rejected wife obsessed with millions of ants crawling all over her house, a mother with a health secret, out shopping with her style-obsessed teenage daughter. In a reflective approach, a woman with a much loved eleven-year old daughter, contemplates an aged woman in North Korea who had been abducted as an eleven-year old as a military comfort woman, and who now lives with memories 'livid as a scar'.

Eileen has a wonderfully keen ear for dialogue and a feeling for the atmosphere of an impressive variety of locations. The reality of places, buildings, interiors and objects, is tangible. An infestation of ants is described as; 'slithering along the cat's dish by the back door' (Ants). Details are vivid: 'I see you reach the clearing in the long track that wound you into the forest like a silken scarf' (For Soon Ae Kang). Casey is also a well-known poet and her stories are laced with occasional sparks of poetic imagery that engage with graceful prose rhythms.

Characters are portrayed in great variety, mostly with empathy, often with laconic amusement or disapproval, seldom with condemnation, as she reveals them making their way through slices of life, narrated not with sentimentality but through controlled tension.



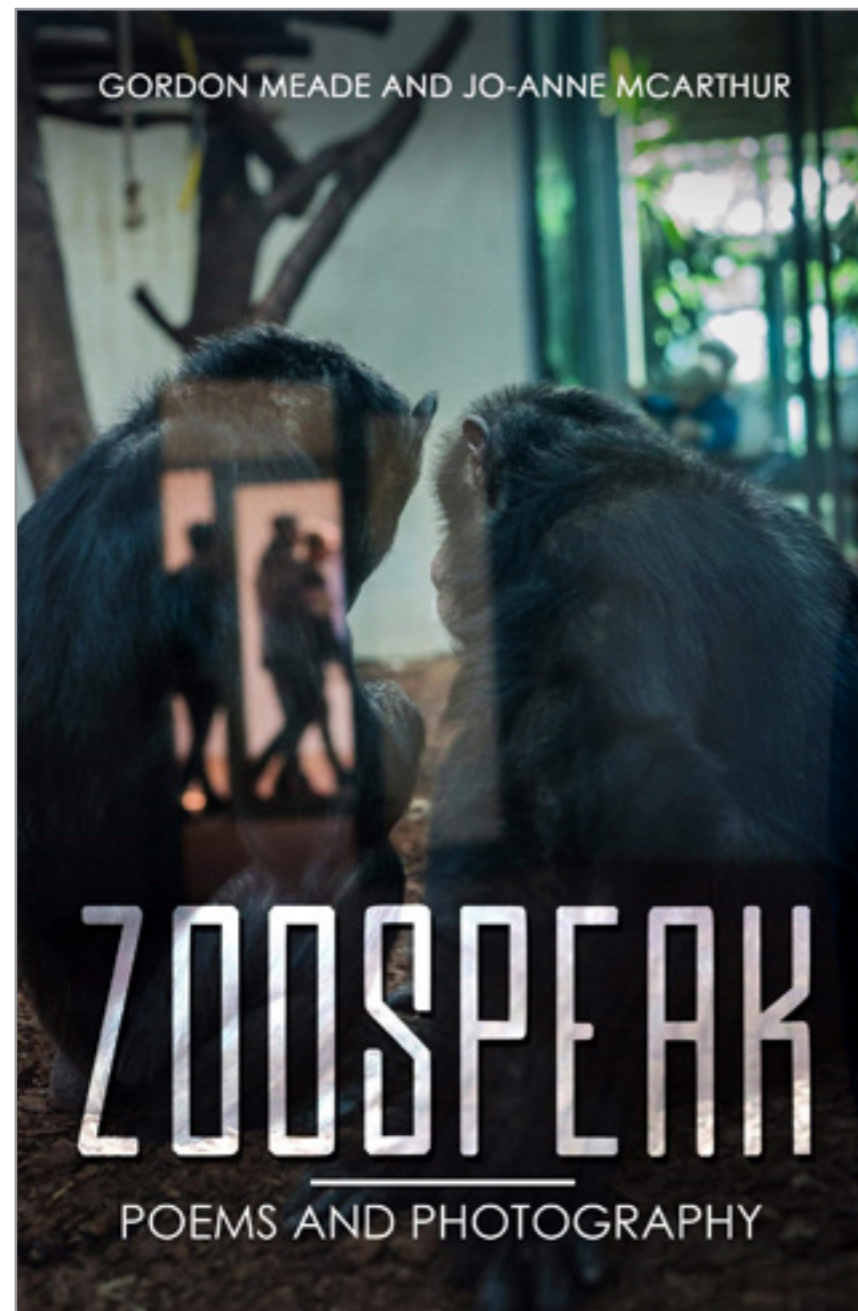
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*Snow Shoes* is available from [Arlenhouse@gmail.com](mailto:Arlenhouse@gmail.com)



Gordon Meade is a Scottish poet based in the East Neuk of Fife. His tenth collection of poems, *Zoospeak*, a collaboration between himself and the Canadian photographer and animal activist, Jo-Anne McArthur, which uses poetry and photography to examine the experiences of animals in captivity, was published in 2020 by Enthusiastic Press in London.



Deirdre Hines is an award winning poet and playwright. Her first book of poems 'The Language of Coats' was published by New Island Books (2012), and contains the poems which won The Listowel Poetry Collection Prize 2011. New poems have appeared in Poetry Ireland Review, Crannóg, The Lake, Elsewhere Lit, The Bombay Review, Abridged, The Honest Ulsterman, Three Drops From A Cauldron, Boyne Berries, & Ink, Sweat and Tears to name a few. She has been shortlisted in The Patrick Kavanagh Poetry Award 2010, The Allingham Poetry Prize 2018 and 2019, and in The Fish Poetry Prize 2020. Her poetry reviews have appeared in PN Review, Riggwelter, Sabotage and Rochford Street Review. She is a keen advocate of Children's Writing, and judges North West Words' Childrens Writing Competition since its inception. A graduate of Trinity College Dublin, she can be contacted for Readings and Workshops at [deirdrehines@hotmail.com](mailto:deirdrehines@hotmail.com)



<https://www.enthusiasticpress.co.uk/post/zoospeak>

## DEIRDRE HINES Review of GORDON MEADE'S (POEMS) & JO-ANNE MCARTHUR (PHOTOGRAPHS) *Zoospeak*

### The Faces of Others

Our first zoos began in the late 1700s, when animals were moved from the Versailles menagerie to a zoo in the Jardin des Plantes for academic study. Zoos have always purported to entertain and educate the public, although in modern times, their emphasis lies with species conservation and cutting edge methods of scientific research. One could be forgiven, therefore, in assuming that today's zoos would reflect every advance made in man's understanding of an animal's basic needs. Gordon Meade's tenth book of poetry, *Zoospeak*, shows and tells the inhuman and appalling conditions the forty eight living zoo animals between its covers are living in. All fifty poems in this collection are the poet's response to photos taken by animal rights activist Jo-Anne Mc Arthur of animals in various zoos around the world over a fifteen year time span, published in her book 'Captive'. It appears that the zoos in which these animals are housed are guilty of gross neglect at the very least, and bland indifference in the main.

Each of the images Meade has selected from Mc Arthur's book have an accompanying poem, and all of these images are in black and white. By choosing to photograph these animals in black and white we the viewers have no recourse to colour to soften their impressions. The poems that accompany each image are in the parlance of poetry speak ekphrastic, but there is something else at play here, which a persistent reader is rewarded with, and it is this; by bookending this collection with two poems that respond to dead animals (a deer's head and a calf), the poet seems to be saying that the other forty eight animals are experiencing a living death. Twelve animals comprise each section, ordered into the years Mc Arthur photographed them. All of the poems are written in the present tense, and use the first person pronoun, emphasising over and over again the individuality of each imprisoned creature.

Chronic captivity stress in wild animals is highly species specific. Zoochosis is a word used to explain the stereotypical behaviour of captive animals. The problem has been found to be most acute in polar bears, which have proved especially difficult to keep sane. They often show disturbed behaviours such as swimming for hours in small circles or as in Meade's poem 'Polar Bear, Canada 2008' ;

It is hard for you to tell  
whether or not I am praying  
for snow or just staring  
at an electric fence;  
and it is hard for me too,  
as there is no snow....."

To read at the end of this section about the minnow that has been motionless for two years, reminds us that a poet's eye does not exclude anything, no matter how small.

I particularly like the way Meade understands that animals should be given the means and motivation to practice a full range of behaviours, such as exercise opportunities-

....." On land, I was a member of a colony,  
In the sea, I helped to make a raft..."  
(South American Sea Lion, Cuba 2008)

and places to bathe or dust bathe-

....." In the wild, I would normally cover  
just under one hundred miles a day..."  
(Orca, Canada, 2013).

Cage size and density has long been understood to prevent the physiological changes that take place if there is no scope to move freely, and yet we have a silver fox, photographed in Sweden in 2010, that adopts the tone of a satirist in the following lines-

....." I think you have, as far  
as is possible, given the present  
circumstances, definitely succeeded  
in capturing my best side..."

As the collection progresses, the poems begin to comment on us, the human race. I particularly loved the voice of 'Brown Bear, Croatia, 2016' -

..." I am no more what you would call  
a 'proper' bear, in the same way as you are  
no longer what I would call a human being."

Lighting conditions are very important for visual species, and a child would know that the American White Pelican's natural environment would include the shifting seas reflecting blue skies has instead 'a sealed off light switch/ and an unpainted rectangle/ on one of the walls/ where a radiator had been./ There is a bale of straw,/ but no sign of fish at all.

The pathos gathers momentum as each poem accrues a deliberate consistency of repetition that forces the reader to transition their knowledge of zoochosis from our conscious mind to our subconscious. Each poem has seven verses in all, that have three, then four, then five, then six, then seven, then eight, then nine lines with each of these verse repeating the lines of the previous verse and adding one more. I found such a technique helpful in my imaginative realisation of captivity, and I think this is deliberate on the part of the poet. Using form like this brings home to the reader the confines of a cage, and the stanza has always been the perfect little room, though in this case, after reading this collection, I will no longer be an advocate of zoos.

There are many reasons for writing poetry, not least of which, is poetry of witness, Meade exceeds at writing about the natural world, but in this collection, he has taken up the cry of the most invisible of the oppressed, and written a collection which champions the cause of freedom in clear and accessible language, that lays bare our inhumanity toward our fellow creatures. In these Covid times, there may be a certain correlation between lockdowns that could soften the hardest heart.

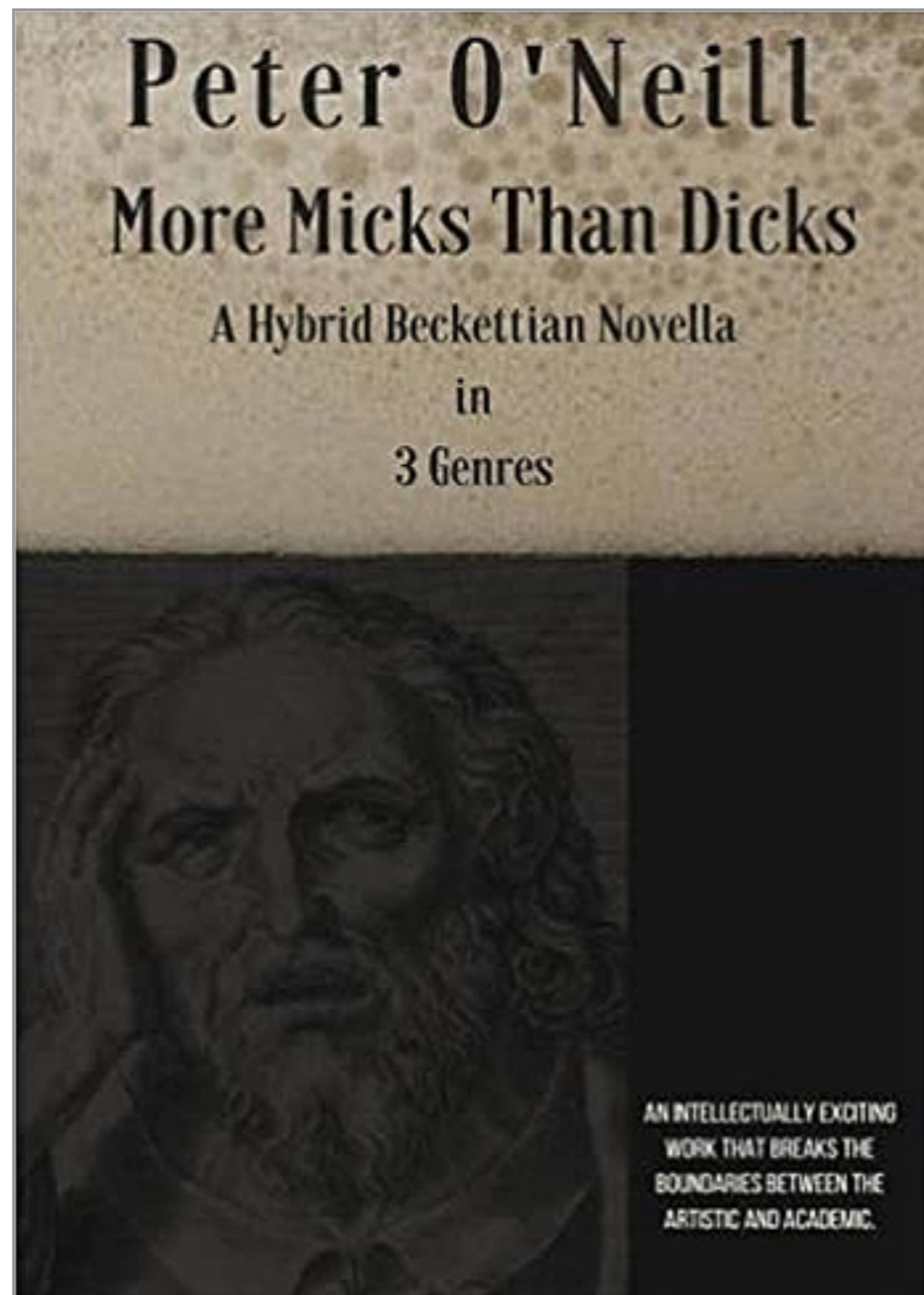
Thank You Gordon Meade and Jo-Anne Mc Arthur for taking the time to notice and to show us that in the faces of others we see our own faces reflected there. I loved it. A must have on your bookshelf.



Peter O'Neill is the author of several books but among them are his first selected works *The Elm Tree* published in 2014 by Lapwing in Belfast which contains extracts from *The Dark Pool* eventually published the following year and *Dublin Gothic* and *The Enemy - Transversions from Baudelaire*, also published by Lapwing. These three collections form his first great trilogy which is a homage to Baudelaire.



Marc di Saverio hails from Hamilton, Canada. His poems and translations have appeared internationally. In Issue 92 of *Canadian Notes and Queries Magazine*, di Saverio's *Sanatorium Songs* (2013) was hailed as "the greatest poetry debut from the past 25 years." In 2016 he received the City of Hamilton Arts Award for Best Emerging Writer. In 2017, his work was broadcasted on BBC Radio 3, his debut became a best seller in both Canada and the United States, and he published his first book of translations: *Ship of Gold: The Essential Poems of Emile Nelligan* (Vehicule Press). Forthcoming is his epic poem, *Crito Di Volta*. He is currently writing his first novel, *The Daymaker*. Di Saverio studied English and History at McMaster University, but never took a degree, due to illness. He is the son of Carlo Di Saverio, the scholar and teacher who studied Linguistics and Languages at University of Toronto (M.A.,1981). Di Saverio's poem, "Weekend Pass", was adapted into the movie, *CANDY* -- directed by Cassandra Cronenberg, and starring the author himself -- which went to the Toronto International Film Festival in 2013.



MARC DI SAVERIO  
Review of PETER O'NEILL'S  
*More Micks than Dicks*

*More Micks than Dicks* (2017), written by the criminally neglected Irish poet Peter O'Neill, is an epic hybrid novella told in 3 genres – is an astonishingly expansive, shamelessly daring, and compulsively inventive work of veritable art divided into four parts: *More Micks Than Dicks*; *the Trees of Ephesus*; *Sweeney Amok*; and *Orpheus*. O'Neill's epic begins in the genre of prose, at a Dublin pub:

"White was sitting behind the circular wrought iron cafe table, with the three crisp beer mats acting like Pythagorean points of reference, awaiting his stout. It was just after eleven, according to the old wooden clock hanging up on the wall beside the portrait of Samuel Beckett. Not an excellent physical likeness by any means, he thought, but that was not the point. It exuberated a flinty resonance in the light of the back room which received its luminance through the now curious architectural motif of the vaulted roof, rather akin to the stack one finds in a distillery, and it was this exact flintiness of light which corresponded so wonderfully with the tête mort of Beckett."

[https://www.amazon.co.uk/More-Micks-Than-Dicks-Beckettian/dp/0955685796/ref=mp\\_s\\_a\\_1\\_1?dchild=1&keywords=more+micks+than+dicks&qid=1600367731&sr=8-1](https://www.amazon.co.uk/More-Micks-Than-Dicks-Beckettian/dp/0955685796/ref=mp_s_a_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=more+micks+than+dicks&qid=1600367731&sr=8-1)

*continued overleaf...*

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Between this exquisite opening and the following end -- the end being in transversional verse as opposed to prose --, it is as though O'Neill has created an ultimate zibaldone, a work that is so mercurial, dynamic, and volatile in both subject matter and form, that the book almost feels uncontainable, even though it absolutely is -- the book feels like a biological specimen, always in flux, always amid innovative metamorphosis:

## II. The Albatross

*After Baudelaire*

Often, to amuse themselves, ship crews  
Brought aboard Albatrosses, those great birds of the sea,  
And who often were their indolent companions,  
As their ships glided upon the bitter waves.

And, almost as soon as they let them out on deck,  
How these great sky kings suddenly then appeared ungainly and awkward,  
Trailing piteously their great white wings  
Like proud useless oars behind them.  
These winged voyagers, how they appeared so out of place.  
Once the superb plungers, now they looked only comical and stupid.  
One shakes her beak about in frustration;  
Another mimes, as she clumsily walks, the infirm who fly.

The Poet is rather like these Princes of the Clouds,  
Those who would fly above the eye of the storm, smiling  
As they look down. Yet, exiled upon the earth, in the market place,  
Their great wings impeding even the most local movements.

In 2017, *More Micks Than Dicks* sold 1,000 copies, and was reprinted 3 times that year; however, due to poor investments, O'Neill's publisher went bankrupt, meaning *More Micks Than Dicks* is out of print, and without a house to publish the fourth edition. This book should unquestionably be reprinted, and fully celebrated as a masterpiece of English Language Literature.

I feel O'Neill's underratedness is a result of his choosing NOT to write in the same 50 year old box in which most poets choose to write, thus ensuring they are accepted by the Establishment, rather than everyone, with whom every poet should be striving to reach, delight, and enlighten, since we are living in an Emergency Present, and though poetry must remain an art that is perfected by the poet, the poet, now, to me, should be trying to perfect society, and in so doing, must reach all people, not just the Establishment. There was a time when poets could, like rippleless ponds reflecting clear skies, reflect humanity back to itself, but, now, the poets must not only reflect, but also boldly direct, humankind. The Literary Establishment is the thief of the reader's own transformation, if they do not have access to this book. *More Micks Than Dicks* is a clarion call that must be heard by Generation Z, and forthcoming generations, since, O'Neill's opus is one that was written outside of the electrical cages of political correctness in which other poets write, and, having escaped that electrical cage, O'Neill is writing in boiling blood, rather than in tepid water, which other poets write, leaving no impression. I highly recommend *More Micks Than Dicks* to anyone with eyes to see and ears to hear, since it is verily a great work.

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