

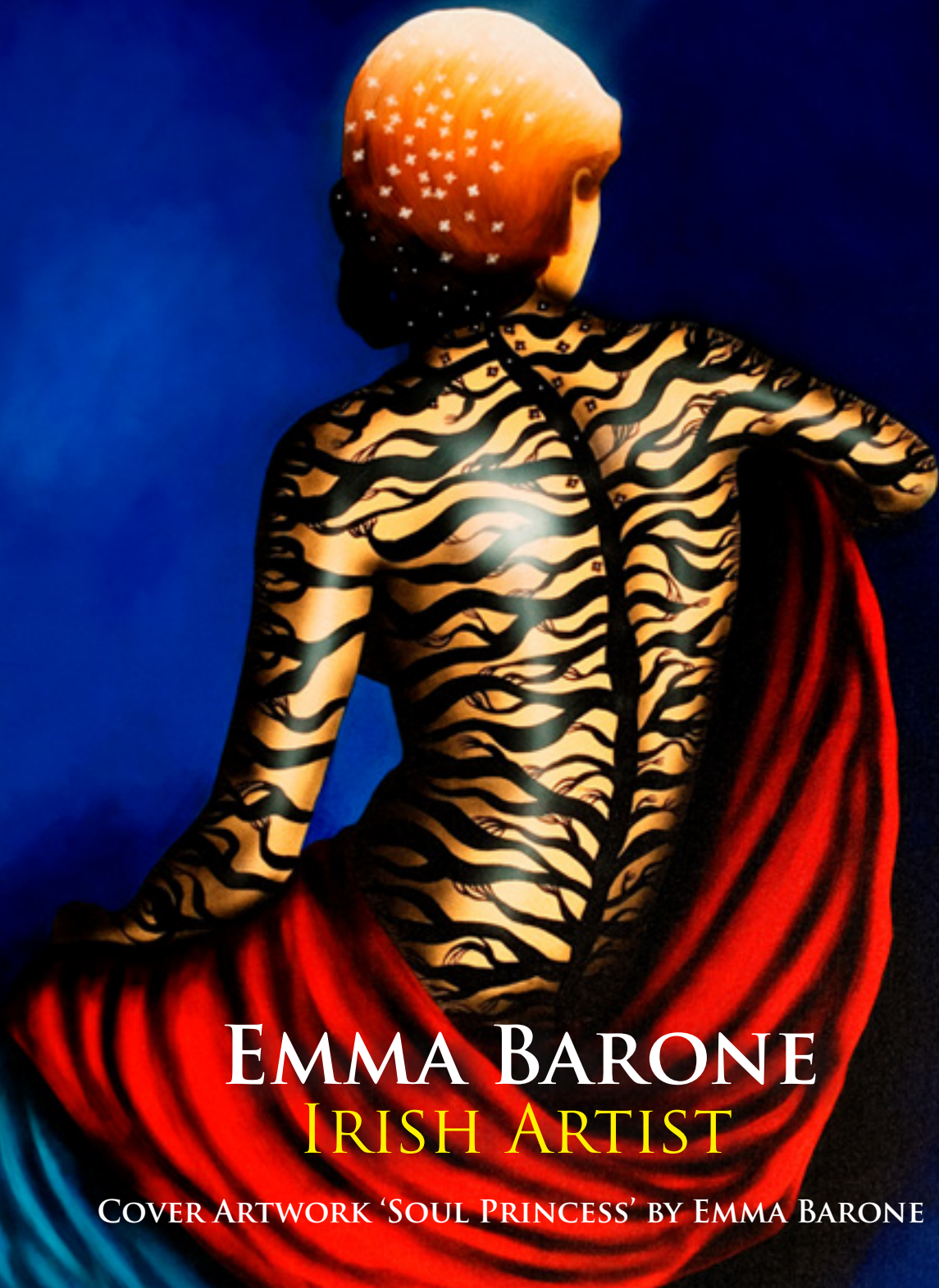
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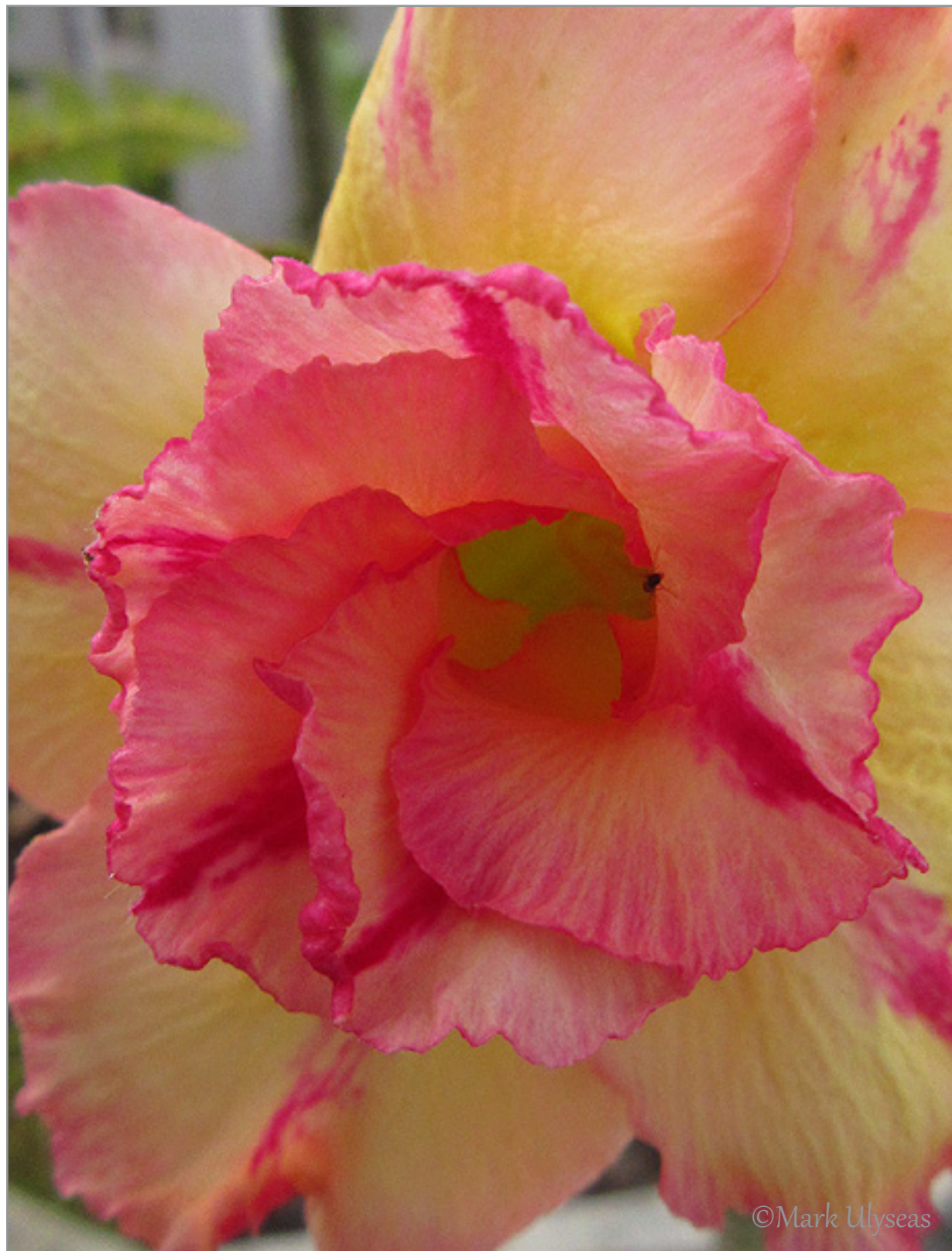
POETRY & WRITING

FREE ONLINE MAGAZINE FROM VILLAGE EARTH
MARCH 2021



EMMA BARONE
IRISH ARTIST

COVER ARTWORK 'SOUL PRINCESS' BY EMMA BARONE



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Luang Prabang, Laos, 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).

We are appealing for donations to pay for the administrative and technical aspects of the publication. **Please help by donating any amount for this just cause as events are threatening the very future of Live Encounters.**

Om Shanti Shanti Shanti Om

Mark Ulyseas
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Emma Barone is a contemporary visual artist. She makes still life and landscape paintings in acrylic on canvas. She studied animation and has an eclectic design background that ranges from interior design to architectural ceramics, and from stained glass to jewellery design. Barone's work has been featured in various publications including *Live Encounters Magazine*, *The Irish Arts Review*, *Senior Times*, *House and Home*, and the *Sunday Independent*; and she has published two books in collaboration with the Hennessy Award winning writer, Eileen Casey. Emma has exhibited extensively throughout Ireland, with 22 solo exhibitions under her belt, her work is in private and public collections including the Amsterdam World Trade Centre, Midlands Regional Hospital, Offaly County Council and Tullamore DEW Visitors Centre.

<https://www.emmabarone.com/>

EMMA BARONE

Irish Artist

Since 2016 Emma has contributed sixty-two of her original artworks for the covers of *Live Encounters Poetry & Writing*, *Live Encounters Young Poets & Writers* and *Live Encounters Books*. Her artwork has also featured in *Live Encounters Magazine*.

Over the years many poets and writers' names have graced the covers but never that of Emma. So I thought it fitting to acknowledge her contribution to *Live Encounters* and its international brains trust of poets and writers.

In these uncertain times Art in all its avatars gives us spiritual strength and a meaning to living in a world that appears to be confined within the four walls of our homes. Perhaps Art is Hope that emerged from Pandora's box.

Thank you Emma.

Mark Ulyseas



Emma Barone

She trained at the Royal Irish Academy and London College in the dramatic arts, also in the Irish Writers Centre and Patrick Kavanagh Centre, as well as several workshops at Over the Edge, Galway. She has also contributed to The Synge Summer School in Wicklow over many years. Iseult is published in the *Ponoma Valley Review* and *Fredericksburg Literary Arts Review* (USA); *A New Ulster anthology* (NI); *OfiPress* (Mexico); *Boyne Berries*, *Hidden Channel*, *The Cormorant*, *The Blue Nib* and *Poethead* (Ireland). She is a member of Poets Abroad, Ox Mountain Poets, Sandy Fields and A New Ulster groups. Iseult was also commissioned to write several screenplays. <https://www.iseulthealy.com/>



MERE MAN

I walked once in the wilderness of others
their drifting craziness of unsupportable insanities
that I mistook for fun, adventure and life's fabric
little knowing they would anchor me to their
revolving door of fecundity.

The shackles of sex and seed need to be shattered
scattered in smithereens amidst the debris
of mankind's bones in the dust of the world he
once inhabited. A mere mental pygmy, it was never
his creation, just his graveyard.

I walk with the gods, neither Greek nor Roman –
too young – they cannot understand the true totality
of power unleashed amid an ocean of space sparkled
with diamond thoughts, moons of emotion and
galaxies of powdered dust.

None shall stop me for none can. Nor will
I stop them. We shall swim in instant spaces
frolic in sky waters till satiated, then
pretending memory, forget, 'til once again
the bell sounds, sensations start to
build and balls of beauty are hurtled through
the eons to hit their target amidst the unknowing
souls of some strange place for us to conquer,
be winners and wanderers in search again
for what we are.

Iseult Healy

I COME FROM A PEOPLE

I come from a people who ate themselves in death

Whose hollow bellies gnawed within till
tongues shriveled and fell to the ground
whose hearts were denied heat, whose
rained-on-bones were scattered in silent
protest at their Masters and God.

I come from a people at Hungry Rock*
with Heaven's own view of sea and air
where grew the blackberry and nettle,
thistle, dandelion and hazel,
but a mere bird's belly fill after
their Masters and God took all else.

I come from a people that walk the roads unseen
whose pitiable cry for succour still
haunts the hills and begs an answer.

I come from a people
we are still here

*Hungry Rock, Sligo, Ireland. During the Great Famine of 1845 - 1851,
it was said that whoever threw a stone at this rock would never go hungry on their journey.

DON'T BOTHER, SHE'S HERE

My father calls her a clown
to me she is a full circus

Thick red lipstick
garish eyeshadow
unnoticed moustache

When she blows her top
others tremble
walk a tightrope
waiting for her to fall

She never does, teeters
at the end of her tether
clinging to no life-line
sheer doggedness

She loads her van
drifts from town to town
pitches her tent

One stop away
from a Halting Site*

*Halting Sites are purpose-built residential accommodation for Travellers provided by a local municipal authority. Travellers in Irish is An Lucht Siúil which means The Walking People (also known as Pavees or Mincéirs). Travellers are a nomadic indigenous ethnic group of Ireland.

IN THE PITY OF THE NIGHT

In the pity of the night
when sheep are white specks
shunning the abacus

When whispers are storms
thundering through my mind
and solace is nowhere near

As the careless clock
ticks my life away on its
endless rounds of nothings

While the world turns on itself
flings me on its journey
and I cannot halt a stop

I turn to the pitiful moments
of bleak night and embalm
myself in blackness

Shroud myself in the
soothing balm of nothing
beg pity from the God
of Dark and Death to let me
sleep awhile but not yet
forever

in painful hope of awaking
a different me

TUAM *

Ding dong dell
baby's in the well

Who put her in?

Little Sister Sin

Who pulled her out?

*Tuam, a small town in County Galway, Ireland, where between 1925 and 1961 the Bon Secours Sisters ran a maternity home for unmarried mothers and their children. In that period of time, 796 infants and children died from various causes (including neglect and malnutrition) and were placed in an unmarked mass grave. This was investigated in 2015. It may be true that some of the bodies were placed in a septic/sewage tank.

Bon Secours means 'Good Help' in French

THE GOD OF COLOUR

I gave you this gift for pleasure
so you could enjoy existence on your small world

I thought no harm could come to them through you
that you also would be safe with them

But what have you done?

Betrayed green in apple-snakes and envy
ripped my adored yellow for jealous small minds
splurged passionate red on dirty mouths, dirty beds, dirty people

You cry to all my blues
get browned off
seek brown truffles where noses were not meant to go

Holy bums sit and shit on my cardinal red
pontificate my purple

As for pink...
the pig has better taste than most lovers

And my rainbow
made to delight small children with tales of wonder
you created your own rainbow to divide and conquer the
white, yellow, beige, black, blue-black, red peoples

If Mona, Starry Nights, Girls with Pearls, a kiss from Klimt,
a drink from Constable, or a lily from Monet, cannot
bring your sights to sighs then

what hope my canvas?

the only colour you adore, the one you strive for,
the one that unites you all
is the one you invented yourselves

Black minds, black souls, black deeds
Black hearse
The enemy is always black, in a black hat, in a black back-alley
Black boxes to watch
Black boxes to find at ocean bottoms
Black print

Black blood

So black you shall have

Do not bother to ask
who turned out the lights

Jean o'Brien's last collection was her *New & Selected Fish on a Bicycle* (Salmon Pub. 2016/2018) Her new collection is due in autumn 2021 and is called *Stars Burn Regardless*. She was awarded a Patrick Kavanagh Fellowship in 2017/18 and recently had a poem included by the Irish Ambassador to Washing in his women poets month in February. She holds an M. Phil in cw/poetry from Trinity College, Dublin. Ireland.



NO SYMPTOMS

Again today on the App I mark myself safe,
No Symptoms, as we all play
the numbers game, dodging virus balls
like a perverse pinball machine.
Some go walking the shoreline,
coffee cup in mittened hands,
others stay indoors waiting it out.
A scattering of voices instruct us
on the radio, through our screens,
charting our levels, mortality numbers,
we are falling ill on an industrial scale.
Days are short and blur into one another,
we sleep, wake, eat, scan our screens,
exhausted we calculate the odds
of the loaded dice and see the sky
lighten with the dawn
and live another day.

Jean O'Brien

HEART BURIAL

*French Archaeologists have exhumed
five, four hundred year old hearts in lead boxes*

The pit was littered with them,
heavy, heavy as lead.
Little heart shaped boxes that have endured,
as the dead heart endures.
Its beat long stilled,
arteries hardened
from a malestrom of emotions
felt and suppressed
held in the downdraft
in an old loop of pain.
Each one with its own tale
and no way now of telling us,
except by its presence.
Nothing of how sunrise
glistened in the door
and the heart ripened
again in the gleam. At Vespers no telling
of voices rising and falling
singing the sun down
Salve Regina mater misericordiae
and how it shored up clusters
of loneliness
and days' blunted features.
The Lead slick from the clotted earth
it has long been encased in,
silent and unseen
blood scraps cling within.
We clean the magic boxes,
polish them to a shine with spirit breath
and raise them once more
like Lazarus to light, to love.

MERMAIDS' COMBS

White horses shimmer with breath-
bubbles rising like exquisite pearls.

Mermaids golden hair bobs
on the wave muscled surface, fan-

ning out on a bright bed of sargassum
seaweed, caught in the net of horse latitudes.

Where they rise there is no sight of headland,
salty sea washes over them as they slip

their skin and grow land-legs. The land-lubbers
cannot fathom them, regard them as sirens,

superstitions. Set their dogs searching
after the gleam of a dried-out parchment-coloured tail,

lying abandoned in the sand near the shore,
pools of green/blue scales drying like a dream.

The dogs slip their leashes and snuffle along
the tidemark, some half-remembered scent

luring them on like beachcombers, or is it snatches
of songs too high-pitched for men's ears that they hear?

Whatever, everyone man, beast or mermaid can feel
the fluid tug of the tide, the instinct for water.



R. Bremner has been writing of incense, peppermints, and the color of time since the 1960s. He appeared in the legendary first issue of the Passaic Review in 1979, which also featured Allen Ginsberg, and has appeared in International Poetry Review, Anthem: Leonard Cohen Tribute Anthology, Jerry Jazz Musician, Paterson Literary Review, Red Wheelbarrow, and elsewhere. Ron has published seven books of poetry, including *Absurd* (Cajun Mutt Press) and *Hungry words* (Alien Buddha Press). He has thrice won Honorable Mention in the Allen Ginsberg awards, and has featured at the Bowery Poetry Club in NYC, at the Brownstone Poets in Brooklyn, and elsewhere. He lives with his beautiful sociologist wife, son, and dog Ariel in wonderful Northeast New Jersey.
Pencil Sketches - <https://www.claresongbirdspub.com/featured-authors/r-bremner/>
Absurd (absurdist poetry) - <https://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/absurd-r-bremner/1129548558?ean=9781725983618>
(also on Amazon)
Hungry Words - <https://www.amazon.com/Hungry-Words-R-Bremner/dp/1724991140>

TRUTH

Truth, that silent terror
haunts your days and nights
when the skies are torn coats
worn over your forms and faults.
You want to luxuriate in lies
but instead find yourself squirming
and slithering in the truth.

R Bremner

WHY OH WHY

O Lord my God,
 Why oh why?
 Who asked You to sacrifice Yourself
 in an act of suicide?
 (I know. It was your Father.)
 It was not me. I never asked you
 to kill yourself.
 For my sins!
 Yes, You delivered Yourself
 into the hands of Your enemies
 whom You could have easily flattened.
 Or You could have made Yourself invisible.
 Escape was Yours for the taking.
 I'm sure Your Father would have forgiven you.
 What loving father wouldn't?
 Yes it was clearly suicide.
 Yet I can't emulate Your act!
 I can't follow in Your path!
 I am not allowed to kill myself.
 It is the one and only unforgiveable sin,
 Your Church and mine tells me.
 The act damns me for eternity.
 It's not fair. It's not fair!
 What's sauce for the goose, etc.
 It's my disgrace, dishonor, shame, sin
 to have You die for me.
 How can I go on with such
 guilt weighing me down,
 festering in my belly?
 But I can't ever assuage that guilt.
 Or free the shame.
 Because I can't take my life as You
 took Yours.
 It's not fair. It's not fair!

ISADORA

I am a ball of twine
 that rolls up crumbling mountains
 whenever I can.
 I wear a long, loud scarf
 around my neck
 and wish I had wrinkles
 to hide with it.
 I am a bag lady
 with bags of memories
 to tell me who I was
 before I was wise.
 Dresses buttered with flowers
 burden my bosom.
 Jewels on my fingers
 and fragile perfumes
 defy the dark grave
 that my unborn grandchildren
 pass around like a tray
 of hors d'oeuvres.

I know that I am as light and airy
 as Baby's Breath
 and shall be so forever.

E.J.O., JR., PART 2

He would unravel so mysteriously and so often
from a dazzling, incandescent gleam of brilliance,
in one moment unfolding to an aberrant wretch.
Needing sustenance, he would feed on my charity,
my honor, my dignity (his was gone in a flash (and
back again in another)),
such as it was, and it wasn't so much.
Or was it my faith, hope, and charity he sought?
They were far less than his own, which were always active.
A full scholarship to Harvard, and after he quit
came another full scholarship to the Eagleton Institute
at Rutgers – before this zany miscreant dropped out there too.
No peak was too high for his swaggering savvy.
But like Hector, he met his Achilles - and it was himself.
Trying to pick up the razed and tattered wastrel,
I failed miserably. If it were drink or drugs that bludgeoned him,
I could have managed – or even schizophrenia, that I
could try to beat...but no. It was just Ed, the Admiral's son,
the artist's son. The world's most logical yet most
ephemeral man.
An atypical rogue who found his darkness in the light
every time.

E.J.O.,JR., PART 3

Edward O
Messianic thug of puerile intent!
He seeks only to be loved, to have
a panoply of chums and admirers.
What friendship he can't coerce, he'll hinder.
A chimera of false friends and mocking cohorts
snidely surround his workaday existence,
dripping cynic drool and vitriol.
Poor Ed. Poor, poor Ed. Brilliant, superbly
educated, eloquent, loquacious, poetic even...
will no one take pity on this sprout of the
Groucho seed, this scion of Larry, Moe, and
Curly Joe? Or is he to be forever Shemp,
forced by the circumstance of being superior
to everyone around him into one fatuous
hejiira after another?

WASHED BY A SEA OF STARS

My life has been
a musical piece
written in a minor key.

The dark of my days
has been cluttered with
bourbon princesses,
the fruit of visiting ghosts,
superhighway drives to palaces of hell,
unrequited refugees from psych wards,
so many rendezvous that failed,
charmings of no regret,
the occasional cinnamon girl,
the tower which I cannot scale.

My dearest wish
for an ending
is to be washed clean
by a sea of stars.



<https://pixabay.com/photos/galaxy-space-universe-night-sky-11098/>

Richard W. Halperin holds Irish-U.S. nationality and lives in Paris. He has published four collections via Salmon Poetry, Cliffs of Moher; the most recent is *Catch Me While You Have the Light*, 2018; *People in a Diary* is listed for 2021. In complement, he has published thirteen shorter collections via Lapwing, Belfast; the most recent is *Under the Olive Tree: Three Poem Sequences*, 2020. His work is part of University College Dublin's Irish Poetry Reading Archive. He reads frequently in Ireland; scheduled readings for 2020 have been jumped to 2021. In 2005, Mr Halperin retired as Chief, Section for Teacher Education, UNESCO, where he edited *Reading and Writing Poetry: The Recommendations of Poets from Many Lands on the Teaching of Poetry in Secondary Schools*, downloadable *gratis* in English, French and Spanish. He holds a Ph.D. in English Literature from City University of New York; his mentor was Sears R. Jayne.



A COUNTRY I REMEMBER FRESH AS MORNING

A theme comes back. From 'Appalachian Spring':
"Tis the gift to be simple.' A country I remember
Fresh as morning. Words come back, as fresh
As when I first heard them. Our grammar school

Teacher's telling us that if we had trouble spelling
'Machine,' to think of it as Scottish, think of it
As MacHine – thus opening a door of language
That I still walk through.

More Copland: 'Fanfare for the Common Man.'
Opening hope. Opening hope. Opening hope.
I once saw Martha Graham coming out of
Saks Fifth Avenue, all of Saks Fifth Avenue

Becoming only a thing that Martha Graham came
Out of. A country I remember fresh as morning.

Richard W Halperin

RAIN AND BIRDS

Young Leonard Bernstein conducts the young Mahler.
A recording made in the St. George Hotel,
Brooklyn, a few steps away from the building
Where I later worked for sixteen years.
None of us knew what we would be like, old.

Last night here in Paris, rain and birds woke me.
I am at ease with that. I have come to think
That the sound of rain falling is the sound
Of God thinking. Of course, you have to be rain
To understand it. I speed forward, everything

Speeds forward, to the inevitable west. But
Every once in a while I get snagged on Brooklyn.

CORNELIA STREET, GREENWICH VILLAGE

Some of the best and some of the worst
Experiences of my life were on Cornelia Street.
Maybe for my pals, too. None of us was
Completely formed, although we thought we were.

We got old. We are still not completely formed.
Bur not completely formed old is not the same as
Not completely formed young. Hard to explain.
We cannot meet again on Cornelia Street. Death

Alters logistics. Some of us now aren't. So, coffees
Can be tricky. As I write these lines – Paris 4:00 a.m. –
A bird is chirping. Where is the bird, as far as being
Formed is concerned? The song is liquid, the song

Is completely formed, the bird is nugatory.
So were we, and so are we, on Cornelia Street.

I SAW HER DISAPPEAR

I saw her disappear, my mother, but not
 For long because mothers never disappear,
 She was stepping backwards as she sometimes
 Did when she was bowling, we'd sometimes

Go bowling together, her curly hair,
 Her sailor trousers, her sporty blouse,
 Once we saw Betty Hutton a few lanes
 From us, a cheerful wave at everyone,

A generation now farther back in time
 Than the 1890s was then, women full of
 The sap of life, never imagining
 That one day they could be old and if

They did get old, God would take care
 Of them, and God did.

OF EDGARD VARÈSE AND OTHERS

Hawthorn Street. It was and probably still is
 Part of my old neighbourhood in Chicago.
 Pleasant, like most streets around it,
 Lake Michigan visible to infinity beyond it.
 Blank infinity if you were a boy. I was a boy.

Varèse says in a radio interview taken in French
 In Greenwich Village in 1964
 That each person has a unique spectrum of sound.
 That composers are manipulators of sound,
 As painters are manipulators of light.

I was raised in two houses of divorce,
 Wishing my mother could find compatible sounds.
 I now know that her husbands wished they could find theirs.

Every street has its own spectrum. From the trees?
 From the people who live provisionally on it?
 From a boy who projects his own spectrum?
 From a man who remembers? These past days,

I had been sorry that no new poem had come,
 There is loneliness in that. There is loneliness
 In everything, including Hawthorn Street.
 'What is your name?' is always a shocking question.
 'A boy on Hawthorn Street' is as good an answer as any.

Tali Cohen Shabtai was born in Jerusalem, Israel, and is an international poet of high esteem with works translated into many languages. She is the author of three bilingual volumes of poetry, "Purple Diluted in a Black's Thick" (2007), "Protest" (2012) and "Nine Years From You" (2018). A fourth volume is forthcoming in 2021. She has lived many years in Oslo, Norway, and in the U.S.A.



BY THE FORCE OF MY DOOM

By the force of my doom
The outcast

The blood of disgrace
Is in menstruation.

And not upon
(A foreign)foreskin
In humility

And not as
A wife to bear it
In humility

For this
I give
No guarantee.

Tali Cohen Shabtai

IN THE IMAGE OF GOD

To whom will you imagine me and compare me to?

“For in his image he
created man.”

As worded,
I am
called a man (Adam in Hebrew)
named after the earth (Adama in Hebrew)
why was I named as a man after the lowest
part of creation?
For that I am flattered. In any case
the sky is not achievable.

And yet at the same time as a man I am
treated upliftingly and exaltedly that the Torah gives
me
for the Creator of the World who chose
me in his image and in this passes over
my futility
in front of God? I relish
ironic statements like this,
but

as long as I don't know
the sight of God

It does not interest me
that it's possible to simulate a shape to its creator
like clay in the potter's hand
and allow me to reflect on
this paradox:

hence, God can
wear my bra
snort a cigarette and confront
the forlorn thoughts that
visit me
in Jerusalem – where
the divine revelation in the world
resides, so to speak.

And if I was created in God's image,
from here it is possible to compare with the parable
about a craftsman who with does the material
as he pleases,
for which it is called “matter in the hand of the creator”
but should I admire
that I
am in God's hands like the matter in the hand of the artist?

And more than that, it is said
that I was created in his image.
Of course not.

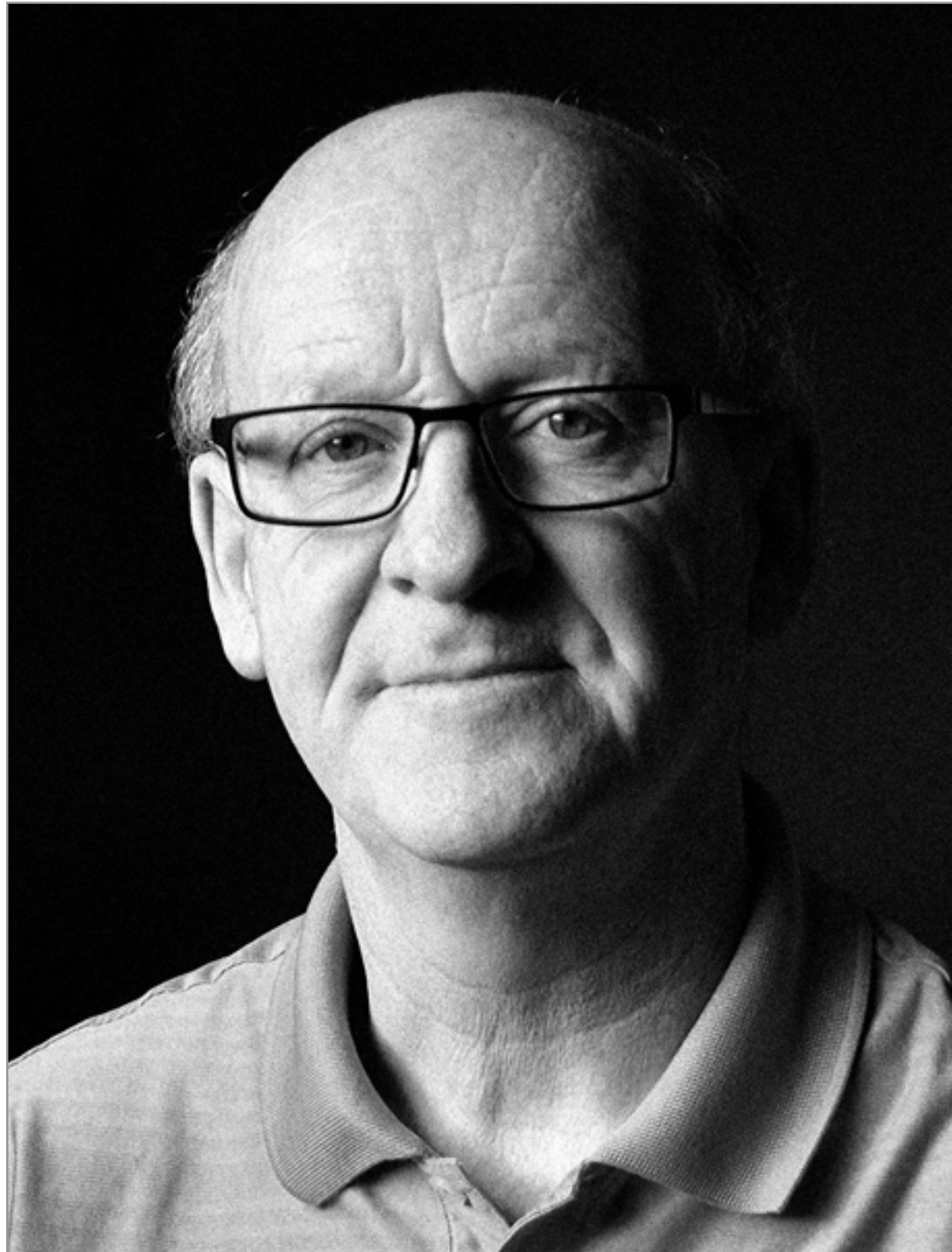
Peter McCluskey is a fiction and poetry writer from Dublin, Ireland and has published 4 contemporary novels to date. His first anthology of poetry, "The Flickering Tide" is due for publication Autumn 2021. For the past fifteen years he has been lecturing on the subject of the music industry/ music publishing and copyright. Peter is also a certified TEFL teacher and teaches English as a foreign language to students all over the world. He has a wide breadth of experience in providing articles and news stories to major print and online music and social media magazines and newspapers. He also creates and narrates videos for a number of his fellow poets. He previously spent some time as a music press photographer and also ran his own record label. He holds a Science Degree in I.T. and Diplomas in Advanced Web Design from Dublin City University. His fifth fiction novel will be published early 2022.

GIVING HANDS

Had I the hands,
The soft skinned hands,
Of youth and pace and life,
I would wield them high and catch the light
And wait for you to pass.

Take one look,
One glimpse at these,
My hands, the hands I give,
And lift them up to take your strain,
To hold you true on course.

I take my place,
I wait in hope,
My turn to speed the plough,
My giving hands, my hope to shine,
My gift to pass to you.



Peter McCluskey

VENETIAN KINGDOM

I stare at the ripple on the curling wallpaper
And your image appears as a youth
resting on the steps under the portico of The Ponte Di Rialto.
The fresh breeze plays a trick on my ears.
I've walked the Grand Canal side-streets for you,
watched the bustlers blunder about the Square, the locals agape, aghast, amused.
You vanish, you break to atoms of silence and I begin to drown on the journey home
to Murano.
I am unsure. I am listening for you.
The boats on the water tell me Kingdom is approaching from Treviso and Padua,
the population cloaked in silk and spice.



<https://pixabay.com/photos/venice-italy-city-urban-tourism-1933559/>

Polly Richardson Munnely is Dublin born poet, currently living and writing in Dingle co Kerry, Ireland .She continues to run the Bulls Arse Writers group Navan co Meath remotely and her Tuesday's Zoomers group of international of poets .. She has been published both nationally and internationally. Her debut collection *Winter's Breath* is out and available on Amazon. She is currently working on her second collection.



GOLDEN TIME

Light flickers sashaying on wicks swaying itself to brilliance
seducing air. They play. Seductively stirring shadows
to dance in rhythm with tocks from tic tic clock. Paws twitch in R.E.M
oblivious to my inhalations sewing this moment to the remembered.

Windows hold breath, look on,
already drawn in dusks falling kaleidoscopic streaks
holding it within frames,
arousing breasts pre tingle salute to approaching moon
and first galactical twinkle reaching land in eyes
stifling blinks,
in wide dilations lids stiffen
remembering complete bareness and morning dew,
when dawn licked flesh upon flesh while daisy's opened
petal by petal and sea lapped bleeding rainbows.

Polly Richardson, photograph by Geno Cussen.

DINGLE WILDS 14 - BOO

I find sun amongst the shimmers,
 whole worlds suddenly rainbow under salted laps,
 as if caught in hide and seek till sun and hiding sea-swells.
 Surface hushed bar lull of lapping
 its wilding whip slumbers, for now.
 And there, right there, blubber humps appear.
 Synchronizing breaking surface of this bay without a ripple
 contenting inner lion roars of glee
 as flipper stretches into cloud
 and seal sea-ballet commences distorting her golden beams
 fanning down claiming them as their own,
 while others decorate morning moored and bow's bobs softly
 clink -clanking hums tune to a whisper,
 matching silent calm crooning as they dive,
 spinning wonderful with waves playing peek -a- boo,
 their bobbing heads reappear momentarily turning east through west
 as shags match dive per dive applauding each morsel caught.
 Lone one stands less leg, more spread on left webbed foot,
 balancing whole self on rock and more, much more,
 silently gallant beneath the plume
 an amour of radiant spanning outer to wing tip
 far from removed yet eyeing performance of water laps,
 matching head turns,
 knowing he already caught catches of the days to come.
 His eye and mine danced.
 Whole worlds suddenly rainbow under salted laps.
 Sea will not leave waters quiet.
 As one life exits another finds its way.
 Own Mecca between Atlantic tides
 Only moon is constant and his knowing he will never hold sun.



Photograph by Polly Richardson.

Maria Del Castillo Sucerquia (Barranquilla, Colombia in 1997) is a literary agent, bilingual poet (Spanish and English), short story writer, proofreader, mentor, oriental medic (Neijing, Spain), ancient Chinese language student and a famous translator (from English, Italian, Portuguese, French, German, Greek). Her translations are one of the most reproduced and respected. She is Spanish translator of many writers around the world and is recognized for being the great bridge between writers and Spanish-speaking world. Her poems have been published in national and international anthologies, journals, websites and magazines, and have been translated into Canadian, Bangla, Arabic, Greek, Italian and English. She has participated in national and international festivals, recitals and webinars (Filogicus, Libresta, María Mulata, Bharatha Vision, Azahar, Atunis Poetry, El Herald, Muelle Caribe, Crisol, Uttor Kota, Sol y Luna, Sabdakhunja, The Poet, and other). She collaborates with translating and literary criticism in several literary magazines such as Altazor (Chile), Cardenal (Mexico), Cronopio (Missouri), Golem (Mexico), Vive Afro (Colombia), Palabrerías (Mexico), Raíz Invertida (Colombia), Burdelianas Poetry (Colombia), and other.

SLAYING LAMBS

I walked into a mine and
my hip was blasted away
they amputated my arm
and it fell into their perverted abyss
they cut off my ear
to offer it to a misogynist
they threw acid in my face
and I became unrecognizable
to my tribe
and to the mirror
they groped my body until
they were spent

How I laugh at those poor devils
they weren't even close
to touch my heart



Maria Del Castillo Sucerquia

AIR TEST

Their heart grew cold they let their wings down – Fragment of Sappho

Are love's wings real?
How long do they fly?

Could love be mislead by vulgarity:

What will purity he lavishes cost me?

What will I sacrifice for the

exotic flower altar?

What demands will I have to meet,

hand in hand with her virtues?

I am falling, my dear...

My wings fold
my misgivings insult
to your sacred rights
I glimpse the void

My wings fold
selfishness does not kneel
before your beauty
I meet the ground

His wings fold
the arrogant bird is silent
its melody does not touch the sky:

Pride leads to fall

THE WAITING

What a sad life!
How sad you are!
Under the scrub

you are an eager prisoner
for watching the rose blooming

Go and embrace the rustle
of her branches the whisper
of her icy grin

watch how rift walks in the
mud invading your soul

Ah my girl!
in your stillness the spring got lost

Open your eyes to
the ocher silhouettes
on the fallen leaves

learn to dance

MORNING GALLOPS

You fly on a horseback
in the sky
my cloud bites
the crystal of fire

it rains honey
of your vortices
a language is born
of the carnation

skip the sunset
for another sky
saliva mirror
lies at the center

a noon sun
is perpetuated
at dusk

UP TO HUNDRED

The love rite widens hearts
the good overflows with desire

The momentum of the river is transformed
to the magnificence of the sea

and the Lordship of the waves
is dancing in the explorers
revealing their skin far and wide
—They touch and kiss beyond the obvious

An ethereal wave rise
making way for an implosion

The world gets dressed in lava
and they contemplate it
from the dawn of dreams

ROMAN SACRAMENT

Love is the art
that combines body
soul and darkness
it is the work of a sculptor
who is used to enjoy and
endure pain from conceiving
so much beauty

FULL OF GRACE

Consumerism ignites fights
on the scaffolding of envy

to complete the shadows
like a bowl which was empty
the universe needs to sing

Gerard Sheehy is in his mid fifties and lives in Limerick City, Ireland. He has had poems in the north and south of the country such as *A New Ulster*, *The Stony Thursday*, *Revival* and *Boyne Berries*. He was one of the poets included in the inaugural *Trio book*, showcasing emerging writers, from Revival Press, the imprint of the Limerick Writers Centre.



GODDESS

Mother, Daughter
Sister, Aunt
Cousin, Friend
Lover
thank you for making me
the man who I am.
For giving me something
to believe in
for someone to praise
and for proving the existence
of a higher power
because of your divine intervention.

Gerard Sheehy

DARK HIBERNIANS

(Bog Bodies in the National Museum of Ireland)

Cut by crude caesarean
from the womb of the bog
they are delivered still-born
and without half their bodies
into the twenty-first century.

I go to see my cousins
my countrymen
and find them incubating
in glass cases and there
come face to face
with my ancestry.

The awful angle of a neck
is the first sentence of one story.
Murdered it says
for sin or sacrifice
and placed in the peat
to meet the desire of priests
or a tribal manipulator.
But it is they who have endured
and not any religious
or political ambition.

I notice one cousin's nails
planted like tombstones
at the end of earthy fingers
and from there I follow
the sinewy line of his arms
sensing their craving for an embrace.
Their skin is tanned by the ages
and the magic of the bog, and
when I examine the features of a face
I am struck by their familiarity.
A mouth is open
as if labouring to loosen language
and I almost stoop to listen,
but the arrival of another visitor
reminds me I am in a public place.

It will be later
in the privacy of my own thoughts
that words are heard.

Peter O'Neill was born in Cork, Republic of Ireland, 1967. After spending the majority of the nineties living in France he eventually returned to live in Dublin where he has been living ever since. He is the author of five collections of poetry, a volume of translation *The Enemy – Transversions from Charles Baudelaire* (Lapwing, 2015), and a work of prose fiction *More Micks than Dicks* (Famous Seamus, 2017) . His sixth collection of poetry *Henry Street Arcade* has been translated by the French poet Yan Kouton and will be published in bilingual format by Éditions du Pont de l'Europe as part of the 200th anniversary of the birth of Charles Baudelaire (1821-1867) in association with the Alliance Francaise in Dublin on the 8th April 2021.



From THE EROICA VARIATIONS Part 4

XXXVII

Richard Ford had been reading from his newly
Published novel *Independence Day*
Up in the mezzanine of *Waterstones*,
While you had been consigned to the bargain

Basement where you read, among other things,
Raymond Parker's *Wines of Bordeaux*.
That had been in the spring of 95.
After leaving Dublin in the summer

You set up on your own in Cork
Meeting her finally in the *Alliance Francaise*
At some exhibition you had gone to in order

To speak some French, having just recently
Separated from your wife,
Whom you had left with your son back in France.

.

Peter O'Neill

From THE EROICA VARIATIONS... contd...

XXXVIII

So, you were already going through the process
Of a divorce when you met her.
It was 'complicated', I think is the term that
They use on social media now.

She was six years younger than you.
She was the perfect picture of youth.
And although you knew that at one stage
She would eventually leave you,

You could not help yourself.
There was a force that was stronger than you
That you just had to obey.

And now, five years later here you were -
Back in Ireland after your time in Bordeaux,
A member of a wine club tasting an *Amarone*

XXXIX

Della Valpolicella. Having finally split with
Bordeaux, you couldn't even look at a bottle
For at least a couple of years. The Gironde
Was simply no go; Chernobyl is the term you used!

I remember you saying it, so many years ago.
It was not only a new year, but a new century.
The 21st and you were finished with not only her
But with France, after almost ten years!

It was all finally history! So, embracing
Your newfound freedom, you enrolled
In a wine course in the Dublin Institute of Technology

And discovered newer wines
From different countries, such as Italy.
Amarone della valpolicella was like nothing

From THE EROICA VARIATIONS... contd...

XL

You had ever had before. In a burst of cherry
And dark chocolate you left behind the
Metaphysical properties of the Médoc,
And with them your subsequent melancholy,

Only to discover the vitality and force of *Ripsasso*.
And rather like your situation five years previous,
After almost nine months spent most grievously,
You finally met a new companion in September.

Always in September, your birthday month!
When the summer is ending or turns Indian.
It is the month of amorous encounters,

At least for you. But this latest was to last
Far much longer than those other two;
Twenty odd years, and still counting!

XLI

But, I wish to go back some years previous.
Five, or so, to be exact, when you found
Yourself translating Charles Baudelaire.
Oh, it was approximately ten years ago

Just after the birth of your second child
And you were translating *Les Fleurs du Mal*.
Having spent over ten years living and working
In the city of Dublin, you found the 19th

Century Parisian poet completely astonishing.
How contemporary he was still,
Particularly in a period of financial boom.

As the German philosopher Walter Benjamin
Was to presume, in relation to the *Arcades*
And the *flâneur* poet revealed Living!

Liam is a member of the Tallaght based Virginia House Creative Writers. Poems have been published in Flare and Boyne Berries, Pendentive and on Dublin South F.M. Other work has featured in Tallaght Soundings anthologies.



TURN OF THE DAY

Sounds of early birdsong –
piercing and slight-
changes to the season,
more morning than night.
A similar day to others,
cold and damp, of late;
earth succumb to slumber,
spent leaves in its wake.

A difference in the light though,
not noticed before,
at the sight of naked trees
my mind has cause to pause
at ruptures, filial, pale,
creeping on a whim;
Spring's green elixir
a sprout upon bare limbs.

Birds in the garden gather winter's waste,
to build and for roost, time to make haste.
'There's a slight stretch to the evenings,' says
a neighbour across the way; his refrain
a reminder we've come through again.

Liam McNevin

WIND BLEW FROM THE SOUTH

Walking around a big oak tree,
once familiar to you and me.
A series of firsts since you went away,
the weather being fine I came here today.

Nothing seems changed though everything has,
the walk followed by a picnic on the grass.
Seeing couples on the water, bobbing about,
we recited Joyce's poem, *Watching the Needleboats*.

A bright day like last time yet different somehow,
ah yes, I remember, the wind blew from the south.
I like to think that wind took you away,
to places vibrant, not prone to decay.

FISHERMAN'S BLUES

A fishing rod in hand, he paid homage to the weir,
the waters roar and birdsong. Dressed in jumper
and old jeans, he cast in repetitive motion.
A flick of the wrist and now the line probed pools
on the far side, ceased and began again.

Is that difficult to do? I asked.
The fly on the line? he replied,
and put on a display maintaining
there was not much to it, then said
They won't be biting,
Some days are like that.

The two of us remained there, easy in each other's company.
What he was doing rubbed off on me
'for I thought: I get it why he's here!'

To step away from the routine of everyday
and let his mind wander at random.
It would be nice to nip a fish along the way.

2010 - 2020



POETRY & WRITING

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