

# Poetry for Peace

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**A collection of anti-war poetry  
in written and video format to  
celebrate peace and non-violence**



**Hosted by Smashing Times International  
Centre for the Arts and Equality**



**SMASHINGTIMES**  
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## Success is counted sweetest

By Emily Dickinson

Success is counted sweetest  
By those who ne'er succeed.  
To comprehend a nectar  
Requires sorest need.

Not one of all the purple Host  
Who took the Flag today  
Can tell the definition  
So clear of victory

As he defeated – dying –  
On whose forbidden ear  
The distant strains of triumph  
Burst agonized and clear!

## **First They Came**

By Martin Niemoller

First they came for the Jews.  
And I did not speak out because I was not a Jew.

Then they came for the communists.  
And I did not speak out because I was not a communist.

Then they came for the trade unionists.  
And I did not speak out because I was not a trade unionist.

Then they came for the Catholics.  
And I did not speak out because I was not a Catholic.

Then they came for me.  
And by that time no one was left to speak up.

## Dulce et Decorum Est

By Wilfred Owen

Bent double, like old beggars under sacks,  
 Knock-kneed, coughing like hags, we cursed through sludge,  
 Till on the haunting flares we turned our backs,  
 And towards our distant rest began to trudge.  
 Men marched asleep. Many had lost their boots,  
 But limped on, blood-shod. All went lame; all blind;  
 Drunk with fatigue; deaf even to the hoots  
 Of gas-shells dropping softly behind.

Gas! GAS! Quick, boys!—An ecstasy of fumbling  
 Fitting the clumsy helmets just in time,  
 But someone still was yelling out and stumbling  
 And flound'ring like a man in fire or lime.—  
 Dim through the misty panes and thick green light,  
 As under a green sea, I saw him drowning.

In all my dreams before my helpless sight,  
 He plunges at me, guttering, choking, drowning.

If in some smothering dreams, you too could pace  
 Behind the wagon that we flung him in,  
 And watch the white eyes writhing in his face,  
 His hanging face, like a devil's sick of sin;  
 If you could hear, at every jolt, the blood  
 Come gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs,  
 Obscene as cancer, bitter as the cud  
 Of vile, incurable sores on innocent tongues,—  
 My friend, you would not tell with such high zest  
 To children ardent for some desperate glory,  
 The old Lie: Dulce et decorum est  
 Pro patria mori.

## In Dark Times

By Bertolt Brecht

They won't say: when the walnut tree shook in the wind

But: when the house-painter crushed the workers.

They won't say: when the child skimmed a flat stone across the rapids

But: when the great wars were being prepared for.

They won't say: when the woman came into the room

But: when the great powers joined forces against the workers.

However, they won't say: the times were dark

Rather: why were their poets silent?



## The Sorrow of Sarajevo

By Goran Simic

The Sarajevo wind  
leafs through the newspapers  
that are glued by blood to the street  
I pass with a loaf of bread under my arm.

The river carries the corpse of a woman.  
as I run across the bridge  
with my canisters of water,  
I notice her wristwatch, still in place.

Someone lobs a child's shoe  
into the furnace. Family photographs spill  
from the back of a garbage truck;  
they carry inscriptions:  
Love from ...love from...love ...

There's no way of describing these things,  
not really. Each night I wake  
and stand by the window to watch my neighbour  
who stands by the window to watch the dark.

## Suicide in the Trenches

By Siegfried Sassoon

I knew a simple soldier boy  
Who grinned at life in empty joy,  
Slept soundly through the lonesome dark,  
And whistled early with the lark.

In winter trenches, cowed and glum,  
With crumps and lice and lack of rum,  
He put a bullet through his brain.  
No one spoke of him again.

You smug-faced crowds with kindling eye  
Who cheer when soldier lads march by,  
Sneak home and pray you'll never know  
The hell where youth and laughter go.

## **“Turn Back, O Man” 1916, Anthem for Peace and Anti War**

By Clifford Bax

Turn back, O man, forswear thy foolish ways.  
Old now is earth, and none may count her days.  
Yet thou, its child, whose head is crowned with flame,  
Still will not hear thy inner God proclaim,  
Turn back, O man, and quit thy foolish ways.

Earth could be fair, and people glad and wise.  
Age after age their tragic empires rise,  
Built while they dream, and in that dreaming weep:  
Would they but wake from out their haunted sleep,  
Earth could be fair and people glad and wise.

Earth shall be fair, and all its people one:  
Nor till that hour will God's whole will be done.  
Now, even now, once more from earth to sky,  
Peals forth in joy the old undaunted cry—  
Earth shall be fair, and all her people one.

Earth could be fair, and people glad and wise.  
Earth shall be fair, and all its people one.

Performed by Sabina Higgins

Link to poem: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rdpnzp9NmiM&t=2s>

### **Biography of Author**

Clifford Lea Bax was a versatile English writer, known particularly as a playwright, a journalist, critic and editor, and a poet, lyricist and hymn writer. He also was a translator.

## The Poet as a Hero

By Siegfried Sassoon

You've heard me, scornful, harsh, and discontented,  
Mocking and loathing War: you've asked me why  
Of my old, silly sweetness I've repented—  
My ecstasies changed to an ugly cry.

You are aware that once I sought the Grail,  
Riding in armour bright, serene and strong;  
And it was told that through my infant wail  
There rose immortal semblances of song.

But now I've said good-bye to Galahad,  
And am no more the knight of dreams and show:  
For lust and senseless hatred make me glad,  
And my killed friends are with me where I go.  
Wound for red wound I burn to smite their wrongs;  
And there is absolution in my songs.

## The Death-Bed

By Siegfried Sassoon

He drowsed and was aware of silence heaped  
 Round him, unshaken as the steadfast walls;  
 Aqueous like floating rays of amber light,  
 Soaring and quivering in the wings of sleep.  
 Silence and safety; and his mortal shore  
 Lipped by the inward, moonless waves of death.

Someone was holding water to his mouth.  
 He swallowed, unresisting; moaned and dropped  
 Through crimson gloom to darkness; and forgot  
 The opiate throb and ache that was his wound.  
 Water—calm, sliding green above the weir.  
 Water—a sky-lit alley for his boat,  
 Bird-voiced, and bordered with reflected flowers  
 And shaken hues of summer; drifting down,  
 He dipped contented oars, and sighed, and slept.

Night, with a gust of wind, was in the ward,  
 Blowing the curtain to a glimmering curve.  
 Night. He was blind; he could not see the stars  
 Glinting among the wraiths of wandering cloud;  
 Queer blots of colour, purple, scarlet, green,  
 Flickered and faded in his drowning eyes.

Rain—he could hear it rustling through the dark;  
 Fragrance and passionless music woven as one;  
 Warm rain on drooping roses; pattering showers  
 That soak the woods; not the harsh rain that sweeps  
 Behind the thunder, but a trickling peace,  
 Gently and slowly washing life away.

He stirred, shifting his body; then the pain  
 Leapt like a prowling beast, and gripped and tore  
 His groping dreams with grinding claws and fangs.  
 But someone was beside him; soon he lay  
 Shuddering because that evil thing had passed.  
 And death, who'd stepped toward him, paused and stared.

Light many lamps and gather round his bed.  
 Lend him your eyes, warm blood, and will to live.  
 Speak to him; rouse him; you may save him yet.  
 He's young; he hated War; how should he die  
 When cruel old campaigners win safe through?

But death replied: 'I choose him.' So he went,  
 And there was silence in the summer night;  
 Silence and safety; and the veils of sleep.  
 Then, far away, the thudding of the guns

## Freedom

By Mary Moynihan

**Freedom is my way to speak out against the atrocities of war and intolerance and the destructive impact of greed on our world. Democracy is not a given and it can be taken away. The poem is a way of acknowledging the darkness of our world and the power of people who dance together for peace and freedom.**

What price we pay to appease the hawks  
Who claim fate as an artefact,  
As their armies stalk those against the pact  
Of a new world order decreed by human Gods.

We follow war hungry leaders, and believe, against the odds,  
The beguiling sophistry of educated men  
who promise victory in loud decrees –  
They will not falter until all are bled.

Politician, banker, imam, priest, sitting down to feast  
On the womb of hope as our voices cease  
Each sucks the marrow for their own end,  
For power and glory they crook and bend.

Body bags and battering rams,  
Coffinless graves for gentle lambs.  
Soldiers die for Lords on high,  
Women and children for you and I.

The billowing smoke on our TV screen  
Marks the place where women scream  
To lament the child vaporised  
By a bomb made by you and I.

In the rubble a tiny hand reaches for the stars  
That now lie blasted in the sand.  
Blown to the west and east, the light is dying  
as the savage beast of a rich man's creed  
rises from the ash unseen –  
Belief is still as the voice of a Saviour once followed  
is now apocryphal.

Yet overnight seeds are sown.  
Quietly thousands gather all unknown,  
To raise a whisper against tyranny of greed –  
From sorrow deep are humans freed.

Winds of change whisper peace,  
All are equal, corruption cease.  
I reach for far-flung specks still in sight  
Our dreams as glimmers in the blackest night –  
They may one day burst into fire  
To rekindle faith, to inspire.

Will you be the mad one to remind me I am sane,  
Life still grows in a wasteland scorched with want and pain  
Meet me at the stomping ground of freedom,  
I will stand you in good stead,  
Dance with me and sing  
In memory – of the dead.

Copyright: Mary Moynihan

## In Time

By Mary Moynihan

**'In Time' is a poem film written and created by artist Mary Moynihan and reflecting on a vision of hope for the future. The artist says 'In Time is my personal response to the changing landscape of our world today in a time of pandemic and is my dream for the future'. Mary wrote 'In Time' as a poem after experiencing a serious form of Covid-19. Shortly afterwards, the poem was transformed into a poem film, co-directed with Mark Quinn, performed by Carla Ryan and Kwasié Boyce (pictured above) with original music composed and performed by Lisa McLoughlin-Gnemmi. 'In Time' was presented as part of the Emotional Landscapes exhibition in the Dublin Arts and Human Rights Festival 2020.**

In time . . .

In time we will recover.

In time there will be a vaccine and we will be able to go outside, to work, to the park, to the mountains, to meet our family and friends, to travel to the ends of the earth if we wish.

In time we will rebuild our world.

We will create an equal society where people count – our family, friends and co-workers, and all those who provide services and look after each other.

We will get our values right, our priorities straight and create a world for what really matters – people, the planet we live on and dignity and respect for all.

In time we will meet each other in the darkness of a theatre space and know again the magic of a connection that is invisible yet truly felt.

In time we shall hug those we love and have missed.

In time we shall mourn and remember those who have died. In time we shall bear witness.

In time we will breathe calmly again.

In time we shall create and imagine what if. . .

In time we shall reject governments that do not respect people or act on our behalf.

In time we shall create respect for the planet we live on and know that our atmosphere is clearing up and soon the world will be able to breathe again.

In time we shall be true to our inner selves, hear the inner voice of our own souls and follow our heart's desire.

In time we shall serve ourselves and equally, at the same time, serve others.

In time we shall fight the good fight and at the same time, let go.

In time we shall enjoy life and be present in the moment.

And perhaps one day, in time, we shall realise . . . there is no time.

Copyright: Mary Moynihan

## Biography of Author

Mary Moynihan (she/her) is an award-winning writer, director, theatre and film-maker, an interdisciplinary artist and one of Ireland's most innovative arts and human rights artists creating work to promote the arts, human rights, climate justice, gender equality, diversity and peace. Mary



is Artistic Director of Smashing Times International Centre for the Arts and Equality and Artistic Curator for the annual Dublin Arts and Human Rights festival implemented by Smashing Times and Front Line Defenders in partnership with Amnesty International, Fighting Words, ICCL, NWCI, Irish Modern Dance Theatre, Trócaire and Poetry Ireland, funded by The Arts Council. Mary's work has won a number of awards including the Allianz Business to Arts Awards, a GSK Ireland Impact Award, a Dublin Bus Community Spirit Award, a National Lottery Good Cause Award, the international #ArtsAgainstCovid award, an Arts Council Project Award and an Arts Council Agility Award.

## The Dead Kings

By Francis Ledwidge

All the dead kings came to me  
 At Rosnaree, where I was dreaming.  
 A few stars glimmered through the morn,  
 And down the thorn the dews were streaming.

And every dead king had a story  
 Of ancient glory, sweetly told.  
 It was too early for the lark,  
 But the starry dark had tints of gold.

I listened to the sorrows three  
 Of that Eire passed into song.  
 A cock crowed near a hazel croft,  
 And up aloft dim larks winged strong.

And I, too, told the kings a story  
 Of later glory, her fourth sorrow:  
 There was a sound like moving shields  
 In high green fields and the lowland furrow.

And one said: "We who yet are kings  
 Have heard these things lamenting inly."  
 Sweet music flowed from many a bill  
 And on the hill the morn stood queenly.

And one said: "Over is the singing,  
 And bell bough ringing, whence we come;  
 With heavy hearts we'll tread the shadows,  
 In honey meadows birds are dumb."

And one said: "Since the poets perished  
 And all they cherished in the way,  
 Their thoughts unsung, like petal showers  
 In flame the hours of blue and gray."

And one said: "A loud tramp of men  
 We'll hear again at Rosnaree."!  
 A bomb burst near me where I lay.  
 I woke, 'twas day in Picardy.

## Soliloquy

By Francis Ledwidge

When I was young I had a care  
Lest I should cheat me of my share  
Of what which makes it sweet to strive  
For life, and dying still survive,  
A name in sunshine written higher  
Than lark or poet dare aspire.

But I grew weary doing well,  
Besides, 'twas sweeter in that hell,  
Down with the loud banditti people  
Who robbed the orchards, climbed the steeple  
For jackdaws' eggs and made the cock  
Crow ere 'twas daylight on the clock.  
I was so very bad the neighbours  
Spoke of me at their daily labours.

And now I'm drinking wine in France,  
The helpless child of circumstance.  
Tomorrow will be loud with war,  
How will I be accounted for?

It is too late now to retrieve  
A fallen dream, too late to grieve  
A name unmade, but not too late  
To thank the gods for what is great;  
A keen-edged sword, a soldier's heart,  
Is greater than a poet's art.  
And greater than a poet's fame  
A little grave that has no name.

## This Sleeping Heart

By Féilim James

'This Sleeping Heart' is a poem about indifference and inaction in the face of suffering, and the destructiveness of the human condition.

I can't remember the beginning.  
 No one can.  
 But all I'll say  
 Is that anyone who says the world hasn't ended  
 Is a fool.

The thunder-clamour of gas chambers;  
 The scorched, steaming plains.  
 Who claims the end hasn't come and passed?

Who is that idiot smiling, pacing  
 Purposefully down the street. Street  
 Thronged with people. Street  
 Empty as hell.

Does anyone else hear a drum beat?

No. No one can.

The fact of the matter is, if I haven't lost it entirely,  
 Is that this body –  
 Our body, our own pulse –  
 Has been laid grossly to waste  
 Again and again and again.  
 Cyanide, napalm, atomic bomb –  
 We know them all already,  
 Know them all  
 As fact.

But to feel?  
 To feel,  
 To wake and all amnesia forget,

To care  
 And wake this sleeping heart?

No.

No.

Copyright: Féilim James

## Biography of Author

Féilim James is a writer from Dublin, Ireland. In 2020, the Arts of Council of Ireland awarded Féilim a Literature Bursary Award to finish his debut novel, *Flower of Ash*, as well as a Professional Development Award. He also received an Arts Bursary from Dublin City Arts Office in 2021 to finish his first poetry collection, *I was a river, lost*. His short fiction and poetry have appeared in numerous

journals, including *The Fiction Pool*, *The Galway Review*, and *Icarus*. His work through Irish, under Féilim Ó Brádaigh, has won seven Oireachtas na Gaeilge literary awards. [Visit his website](#).

## Teifeach

Le Áine Ní Ghlinn

Sula bhfágann sí an chistin leagann sí póigín ar an gcupán sin a thug a máthair chríonna di mar bhronntanas breithe tráth. Cuireann sí siar isteach i bhfolach i gcúl an chófra é. An mbéarfaidh sí arís lá éigin ar a chluas? An ólfaidh sí arís óna bhéal nuair a fhilleann?

Dúnann sí an doras ar a seomra codlata. Ar na seilfeanna leabhar. Iad lúbtha faoin ualach atá fós le léamh, faoin ualach leabhar ar mhaith léi iad a léamh arís. Féachann sí ar leathanach oscailte an leabhair atá á léamh aici faoi láthair? Críochnóidh sí é nuair a fhilleann.

Ceann ar cheann, cuimlíonn sí na hornáidí beaga ar mhatal an tseomra suí. Ar chúis éigin nach dtuigeann sí féin, scuabann sí amach an teallach. Suíonn sí uair amháin eile sa log sa tolg san áit inar shuigh sí gach uile oíche le breis is triocha bliain. An mbeidh an log fós ann nuair a fhilleann?

An mbeidh an chistin ann? An cófra? Na leabhair? An leabhar sin ar an mbord cois leapa? An mbeidh sé fós oscailte ar an leathanach céanna? An mbeidh an tolg ann? Casann sí an eochair sa doras tosaigh. An mbeidh an doras, an teach féin roimpi nuair a fhilleann? Sé sin má fhilleann ...

## Translation

### Refugee

By Áine Ní Ghlinn

She kisses the rim of the cup her grandmother gave her for a birthday long ago. She hides it carefully, way back in the back of the cupboard. Will she ever get a chance to hold that handle again? Will she drink from it again when she returns?

In the bedroom, she casts an eye across the bookshelves heaving under the weight of books still to be read, the weight of books she would like to read again. She glances

at the book half read on the bedside table. She'll finish it when she returns.

One by one, she touches the ornaments on the sitting room mantelpiece. For some reason she doesn't quite understand she cleans out the fireplace. She sits in the hollow in the couch where she has sat each night for more than thirty years. Will the hollow still be there when she returns?

Will the kitchen still be there? The cupboard? Her books? The book on the bedside table? Will it still be open on the same page? What about the couch? She turns the key in the lock in her front door. Will the door, the house be there when she returns? That is if she returns...

## **Biography of Author**

Poet, children's writer and Laureate na nÓg 2020 - 2023

## **Cryptography**

By Caroline Bracken

I look out at the Irish Sea  
the wind writing on water  
frantic scribblings  
long lines  
blown South then West  
in a language I can't decipher.

The message is urgent  
it skirmishes around boats  
moored in the bay  
comes to a full stop  
at the pier wall.

In the East  
boys my sons' age  
wear khaki and Kalashnikovs  
prepare for the front line.

I think of their mothers  
listening to the wind  
trying to decode

words written  
on water.

## **Biography of Author**

Caroline Bracken's poems have been published in The North, Gutter, the Irish Times, Poetry Jukebox, Best New British & Irish Poets 2019-2021, Belfield Literary Review, Skylight 47 and elsewhere. She was selected for the Poetry Ireland Introductions Series 2018



## **The Last of the Human Freedoms—an imaginary conversation with Victor Frankl**

By Diarmuid Cawley

Sitting by the swollen river. Charged water  
sliding over the weir, the rain chasing after.  
He spoke about a dark thick forest; I imagined  
the roaring river clearing a path, knocking trees  
like toy Nazi soldiers. Then I asked him  
what he thought of Sligo—he liked the river.

II

—Do you know anything about freedom?  
—Human Freedom?  
A newspaper crimped in the wind, an elderly woman  
cursed loudly struggling to tame the blowing pages.  
We both smiled—she had answered my question;  
it is about choosing your attitude in circumstances,  
about choosing your own way.

### **Biography of Author**

Diarmuid Cawley won a Poetry Ireland bursary in 2021. An Irish poet and writer from Sligo, he lectures about wine, food studies, and the cultural aspects of beverages in TU Dublin. His work has appeared in *The Martello*.

## Morocco, March 2022

By Mark Roper

Petals out of the blue –  
a flock of night herons.  
They settle in a palm.

Eagle owl in a cave.  
Or, the suspicion  
of an eagle owl.

Almond blossom  
in cold mountain air.  
Almost, you can't hear the war.

Stone curlew chicks  
on a landfill site, wide-eyed  
under black kite shadows.

Bustard eggs,  
bred for Qatari falcons –  
the nest numbered.

Buried in sand,  
camel bones and the bones  
of slave trains.

Film lots in the desert  
at Ouarzazate –  
Troy, Luxor, Jerusalem.

In each of our photos  
the grief-note  
of a hoopoe lark.

Back home, red sand  
on the windscreen –  
old blood, sick of being spilt.

## Biography of Author

Mark Roper's most recent collection, *Bindweed* (2017), was shortlisted for the Irish Times Poetry Now Award. *A Gather of Shadow* (2012) was also shortlisted for that award and won the Michael Hartnett Award in 2014. A new collection, *Beyond Stillness*, is due out from Dedalus in October 2022. [www.mark-roper.com](http://www.mark-roper.com)

## **End This War**

By Michael 'Charlie' McGee

A softly spoken wish,  
Cast upon a shooting star,  
Was left floating in the air,  
Its journey now too far;

An innocent looks on,  
Hope drowns her pleading eyes,  
The endless woes of pain,  
'Please End This War' she cries;

The wheels of time continues,  
With death a powerful tool,  
No mercy shown to the many,  
Who fall to a tyrants rule;

But with evil all around her,  
And danger at her door,  
She'll gaze towards her heavenly body,  
Putting faith in her wish once more.

## **Biography of Author**

Michael 'Charlie' McGee is the author of one novel (Scorned) and he also had seven short stories published in four anthologies. He studied journalism in Rathmines College and graduated with a 1.1 Honours Degree in Media Production Management from DCU in 2010. He was the co-founder and chair of the Nenagh Silent Film Festival in 2013 and he has worked in the area of Multimedia since 2012. He had an anthology of his short stories and poetry launched on Amazon in 2016 (A Touch of Prose) and he is currently working on his second novel.

## **The Golden Flute**

By Sri Chinmoy

A sea of Peace and Joy and Light  
Beyond my reach I know.  
In me the storm-tossed weeping night  
Finds room to rage and flow.

I cry aloud, but all in vain;  
I helpless, the earth unkind  
What soul of might can share my pain?  
Death-dart alone I find.

A raft am I on the sea of Time,  
My oars are washed away.  
How can I hope to reach the clime  
Of God's eternal Day?

But hark! I hear Thy golden Flute,  
Its notes bring the Summit down.  
Now safe am I, O Absolute!  
Gone death, gone night's stark frown!

### **Biography of Author**

Sri Chinmoy was born in East Bengal in 1931, he spent 20 years in a spiritual community (ashram) in India before moving to New York in 1964. In 1970, he began offering peace meditations at the United Nations. In 1987, he founded the Sri Chinmoy Oneness-Home Peace Run, now the world's largest torch relay run for peace, planting peace trees en route. With prolific, visionary and unique style, Sri Chinmoy's writings stand out in offering an optimistic view of the future of humanity.

## Lungs

By Patrick Deeley

When a bomb explodes,  
fire chases the air  
that will sustain it, enters,  
bursts the lungs.

Whether the lungs are  
the “right” or “wrong” lungs,  
or a mixum-gatherum  
in scraps and tatters

flying in all directions,  
or even if no lungs  
are spared, militarists cite  
collateral damage.

As to where bombs hit,  
here is a street,  
here a school, here a path  
walked by a shepherd.

## Biography of Author

Patrick Deeley is a poet, memoirist and children's writer from Loughrea. He has published seven collections with Dedalus Press. His poems have received many awards, including The Dermot Healy Poetry Prize and The Lawrence O'Shaughnessy Award.

## **Father weeps for mother lost at sea**

By Mohamed Faisal

Of the many things  
the butterfly waking  
shedding alien skin  
finding a lost smile  
on father's face.

Of the many things  
the cloud that wait  
for the winds from the east  
in a brief moment  
the world churns.

Of the many things  
the wave that hurry  
onto shore or the side  
of a boatload of people  
escaping their nightmares.

Of the many things  
a baby lost  
in curious play  
as father weeps  
for mother lost at sea.

Of the many things  
the cloud that weeps  
for the butterfly that  
found a hidden smile  
on father now also lost.

### **Biography of Author**

Mohamed Faisal is from Maldives and is a diplomat by profession.

## **A Death of a Star**

By Mirjana Rendulic

Youtube link to poem or video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LZygnQFISVI>

## **Biography of Author**

Mirjana Rendulic is a multidisciplinary artist based in Dublin. She has been creating own work as well as facilitated arts in community all round Ireland.



## Someone said

By Siobhán Flynn

I'm listening to Messiaen's Quartet for The End of Time,  
and trying to write,  
someone said writing about music  
is like trying to dance about architecture,  
I keep thinking about war.

Someone else said all art aspires to be music,  
purged of everything but itself  
what we hear is all there is.

I hear sorrow,  
I hear someone saying  
Here I am,  
here we all are,  
this is beautiful  
despite our death-wished hurtle  
towards destruction.

There is no reason for war,  
just excuses

for the scenes on our screens;  
overturned prams,  
blood-streaked faces,  
hatred and despair,

a horror film,  
except actors are willing participants.

Someone said we need the bad guys;  
like William Pratt, a London boy,  
transformed by the silver screen  
into an icon with an Eastern European name,  
Jack Palance, America's favourite villain,  
son of Ukrainian immigrants,  
Ivan Drago, Rocky's evil Russian opponent  
played by a Swedish actor.  
The bad guy role is open to all.

Someone else said the way to start writing  
is to start writing.  
The way to stop war is to stop fighting.

### Biography of Author

Siobhán Flynn is a poet from Dublin, she is the winner of the Cúirt New Writing Prize for poetry 2022 and in 2021 she was selected to take part in the inaugural Dedalus Press Mentorship Programme. Her work has appeared in The Irish Times, The Poetry Bus, Drawn to the Light, Amsterdam Quarterly and others. She is working towards her first collection.

## FLIGHT

By Paul Edmondson

May each mother and father, son and daughter,  
sister and brother unyoke the tyrant's rein.  
May the displaced gain freedom - by foot, bus, lorry, train,  
to share the shape and span of a warm hand.

May each hand touch safety across borders  
with universal air and a dozen white doves.  
May the first loving word spoken be  
Ласкаво просимо, fáilte, welcome.

May the uprooted root, and that root form a flower  
of ordinary sorrow. May the sons and daughters  
of ordinary sorrow surf the crest of the wave  
of their mother's tears, to ride free from fear  
and rest as a feather on the lament of the slain.

May love stand waiting under the prophet's  
lantern. May the suffering cast by nations'  
spilled blood kindle a perpetual peace.  
May time wrest peace from pain, and gently  
turn its telling truth on each stumping question.

### Biography of Author

I am a Founding Member of Waterford Writers group. Published in two Waterford Writers Anthologies and Deise Voices. Performed at various public events, including Poetry Ireland, Culture Night, and charity fund-raising events.

## Sweet Oblivion

(Remembering July 1st 1916)

By Gerard Donnelly

The guns fall silent as starlight wanes,  
and with the first grey streaks of dawn  
comes a terrifying calm.  
In the eerie silence  
you wait for the whistle's blow,  
tightly gripping the rifle stock  
to still your trembling hands.  
And while you wait, you stand and stare  
at the eight feet of cold, dank earth,  
all that keeps you safe  
from oblivion beyond.

What fools have sent you  
to flounder in this dark abyss,  
your final sunrise stolen  
by smoke, and dust, and scattering earth  
churned up by pounding shells?  
They can't hear  
the deafening rattle of enemy guns,  
or know that sanctuary is a crater  
filled with the limbs of dead and dying pals.  
Why have they unleashed this madness,  
this chaos, evil of man's design?

Beneath these grey summer skies  
all life is squeezed from this godforsaken land,  
a land forever soaked  
with the blood of twenty thousand souls.  
My tears are tears for you, my friend,  
but my dread is for those you leave behind;  
for those who have witnessed slaughter  
and now yearn for sweet oblivion.

©Gerry Donnelly, July 2020

## Biography of Author

Retired civil servant. Aspiring novelist. Enjoys writing and reading poetry.

## **Grangegorman Military Cemetery**

By Helena McGanney

Link to poem: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O0QklwIQgSU> (Viewer discretion is advised)

### **Biography of Author**

Helena McCanney designs learning for a living and writes to experience life more fully. She was born in Dublin and lives beside Phoenix Park, which she thinks of as her holodeck – a safer alternative to reality. Helena recently completed an MA in Creative Writing at Dublin City University.

## This Mad World is Exploding

By Alice Owens

Colossal burnt-out peg boards scar the skyline.  
Phosphorous plumes corkscrew.  
Al fresco visible through blank square voids.  
Ragged curtains flap from the apertures.

Phosphorous plumes corkscrew.  
Grotesque arabesques tattoo the blue  
curtains flap from hollow apertures  
cinders drop like withered moths.

Grotesque arabesques tattoo the blue.  
Sunflowers, standing cheek to cheek, canker in the fields;  
petals drop like withered moths,  
ballistic seeds burst and scatter.

Sunflowers, standing cheek to cheek, canker in the fields.  
Mass graves pile with bin-bagged bodies.  
Ballistic warheads burst and splatter.  
Monograms splinter, cyphers shatter.

Mass graves pile with bin-bagged bodies.  
Invader rolls in: tanks emblazoned with bottommost 'Z'.  
Monograms splinter, cyphers shatter.  
Insignia dragged from the dregs of the alphabet.

Invader rolls in: tanks emblazoned with bottommost 'Z'.  
Colossal burnt-out peg boards scar the skyline.  
Insignia dragged from the dregs of the alphabet.  
Al fresco visible through blank square voids.

## Biography of Author

My poems are published in anthologies, newspapers and broadsheets. I've also been invited to read my work on national radio, Poetry Ireland, the New Theatre and The National Concert Hall. I am a past winner of the National Poetry Competition, Shinrone, and runner up in the South Dublin Library Competition 2021 and the Fingal Poetry Prize 2022.

## The Carpenter

By Csilla Toldy

i.

The hand without the grenade  
became an empty cup  
scooping the moonshine,  
idly waiting.

ii.

The sun rose  
and by midday the fields became dry clay.  
You pulled the beams high, all day,  
fingers glazed by splinters,  
your body singing  
about vigour and willingness -  
the song of the tree in your sinew.

First a seed  
a forgotten core  
but given the soft darkness of the soil,  
the sap rose, bark hardened,  
the branches nurtured the leaves  
and they called upon the buds.  
The blooms burst into colours  
drew on the bees,  
the fruits nourished man  
and made  
him proud.

The tree, when it aged  
ring for ring  
layer by layer  
succumbed to the years  
and one day it was timber  
resting,  
waiting for you.

iii.

So, your hand lay down the grenade -  
now more like a pregnant bug  
turned into a glistening, sliced mango cheek  
full of hope.

## **Biography of Author**

Csilla Toldy's publications include: poetry with Lapwing Publications Belfast, and in UK and Irish literary magazines, such as Snakeskin, Ink Sweat and Tears, The Honest Ulsterman, Crannog and Cyphers, the Stony Thursday Book. Her poetry was anthologised by Demeter Press (CAN), Dedalus, Arlen House, and Recent Works Press (AU) and Seren Books. She was short-listed for the Bridport Prize and nominated for the Forward Prize for a single poem by Pamenar Magazine. Her first full collection *Healing* is forthcoming with Salmon in 2023.



## Feather collecting

By İlhan Sami Çomak

Translated by Caroline Stockford

With my conscious dark, I correct my writing

Why did I clap and come into this world?

hear me

I asked the world whilst in your presence:

why did I land?

These days my mind is seeded with flight

Not with the static stare of stone, but degree by degree

with a flight that denies the road

With the boundlessness that opens the woven cage of sky:

frighten me

Prove me the stars' slightest movement!

My consciousness I refresh in the darkness

Bird feathers I collect for you

At the sound of wings the pomegranate cracks

from the hoop that is love to the palm of the leaf

I came from the stratum of rain in the conscious-raising roar

I drank water

From this stairway of no sound and into the world

why did I come?

I sing songs with the distant dream of flying

my name suits well to blue, and you

your name fits the distances

the wind blows, the wind is blowing, shadows leaning

I collect up the blowing, the footstep sounds of morning

the clear destiny of laughing to your heart's content,

yes, in this realm of sheer habit why did life

come to me?

the limitless law of flight is steeping in your warmth

the lightness of embracing my awareness refreshes

what meaning has flying

I have bird feathers I have the sky

a heartbeat that is washed by your smiles

I have that.

## **Biography of Author**

İlhan Sami Çomak is a Kurdish poet and Turkey's longest-serving student prisoner. İlhan was arrested while studying geography in Istanbul in 1994 and sentenced to life in prison for the alleged crime of separatism. The European Court of Human Rights has since ruled that Çomak's conviction was unlawful. He has twice appealed against his conviction. He has published nine collections of poetry. In 2018, Çomak won the Sennur Sezer poetry prize for Geldim Sana (I Came to You). In 2020, PEN Norway began to campaign for his release and invite poets from around the world to write for him. His latest collection, Separated from the Sun, has been published in 2022, edited and translated by Caroline Stockford. In 2022 he has been awarded the Metin Altıok Poetry Prize and the Norwegian Freedom of Expression Award.

## Spring cleaning

By Antje Stehn

My spring cleaning is an ancient ritual  
 as I wash the windows  
 and find the yellow sand of the Sahara  
 on the rag  
 and somehow remember  
 Desert Storm, the Gulf War and Madeleine saying  
 that a hundred thousand children killed  
 were a price to pay...  
 and I pause and look out the dirty window.  
 And I see the cidonia covered  
 with thousands of flowers  
 bright red like fresh blood  
 as if this abundance gathers all the strength  
 of all the springs before  
 like every new war contains  
 all the previous wars  
 and what was behind us  
 suddenly stands in front of our doors  
 raindrops falling into the open eyes of dead  
 blood seeping away in poisoned farmlands  
 and they coat our eyes with butter and denies  
 fill our ears with salt and lies  
 we stick in the plaster  
 no way out.

## Biography of Author

Antje Stehn, Germany, resides in Italy. Poet, visual artist, art curator, member of German Exil- PEN. Since 1980 she has been showing her artwork in international exhibitions around Europe and the US. Since 2014 she is organizing poetic-artistic performances. She is part of the international Collective "Poetry is my Passion". Co-editor of the poetry magazine TamTamBumBum, Los Ablucionistas and Teerandaz. She is member of the direction committee of the Piccolo Museo della Poesia of Piacenza, Italy. In 2022 she published her most recent book "Grotesk" with Expeditionen Verlag. Her poems are translated into ten different languages and published in numerous international Antologies. Since 2020 she is curating the art-poetry project "Rucksack a Global Poetry Patchwork which involves more than 250 international poets.

## Thinking of You

By John Liddy

We walk amongst hundreds of names  
in a Sorian graveyard and stop to read  
Machado's words for Leonor, wreaths  
from Associations and Government  
freshly laid on her tombstone, the poet  
buried in Collioure speaks his lament  
with iris and rose picked from the plot  
by the Duero, where the poplars unbent

With lovers' names, shapes as dates,  
grow out of its waters along with hill  
and verge, a world downsideup, states  
of disarray, a silence before the kill,  
habitats under siege, bodies stacking up,  
another exodus from far off Ukraine  
where life withers beside a buttercup  
as the river brings in a slanting rain

And we ascend to the warm Parador  
named after the poet, our fingers  
in a love-knot for the climb to our  
food and wine, and coffee outdoors  
in the evening chill makes us almost  
forget the moment we are living in,  
but not so my dreams of a ghost  
with thousands of names and one.

## Recharge

By Sara Boyce

Waking to the throb of traffic  
I listen for the radio pips,  
fingers crossed that I'll hear  
Belfast has been evacuated,  
that every man, woman and child  
has been forced to up sticks,  
not due to natural disaster,  
volcanic ash spewing from Divis,  
encrusting the Hatchet Field,  
torrents of molten rock  
catching the sleepy hamlet of  
Dermot Hill on the hop,  
or the Farset, long entombed,  
cracking city concrete  
to gush through entries and  
submerge City Hall;  
not some bright boom town  
now reduced to faded ghost town,  
the end game for an Empire  
that's quietly crumbling;  
I don't want to witness  
markets turned into mortuaries  
bodies buried in mass graves,  
civilians fleeing for their lives,  
a frantic piling of furniture  
onto the back of milk trucks,  
flames licking red brick  
as soldiers sip tea.

No more tearing down,  
no more building up,  
I simply want this poor city  
to have a chance to draw breath,  
the time to shake its shoulders,  
so it can feel more at itself,  
revive with sea salt from the lough  
before reclining on its sandy shore,  
caress its contours with cooling linen  
while listening to the blackbird  
whistle from the tip of his bright yellow beak.

When they return,  
its people will speak more softly  
and marvel at the slant of Napoleon's neb.

## Biography of Author

Sara Boyce is from Donegal and now lives in West Belfast. She was shortlisted for the Aurivo North West Words Poetry Competition in 2019 and longlisted for the Seamus Heaney Award for New Writing in 2018. Most recently she has had a poem shortlisted by Candlewick Press for their Christmas Competition 2022.

Her poems have appeared in various anthologies including Brown Envelope Book: Caparison (2021), Her Other Language; Arlen House (2020), Children of the Nation, Culture Matters (2019) and four editions of the Community Arts Partnership annual anthology, including the 2022 anthology Threshold.

She has been a participant in the Crescent Arts Centre Poetry Workshops over the past 15 years. She has also participated in a range of workshops and programmes run by the IWC, most recently the Northern Soul Road Show, facilitated by Fiona O'Rourke. Sara was awarded two course bursaries by the IWC between 2020 and 2022.

## The Outcry of the Streets

By Robyn Sheehan

January 2022

Wake, Turn on the news.  
The wells have run dry,  
Bombs are dropping from the sky.  
Can you hear the outcry?

Power, Greed, Oppression,  
While the children pay the price of your aggression.  
"The youth is the future"  
Were Hopeless,  
You've killed them.  
Paying for the sins of our governments.

You're only young once,  
Smile and have fun.  
But Darling all the moneys gone.  
7 houses each as we drown in poverty  
Can You Hear the Outcry of the streets?

Stay Indoors,  
There's another war.  
Have you not taken enough already?  
We scream, we cry, we preach  
You turn the other cheek.

Temperatures are rising,  
As are the people.  
We will not stop until we are equal,  
"Nothing Changes, if nothing changes"  
I pray for world peace

### Biography of Author

My name is Robyn Sheehan. I am 20 years old living in Ireland. I have been writing myself for many years but I am yet to publish work which I have decided to pursue this year. I write poetry and I enjoy song writing.

## Siopa Bróg

By Orlaith Ní Icí

Táim faoi chomaoín ag  
Mo phink flip-flops  
Nach dtuilleann rochtain  
Ar Shlí Fhírinne Fhíona.  
Nach bhfuil iallacha acu  
A gceanglófaí thar sreang theileafóin,  
Nó na taca murnáin orthu,  
Le bheith aimsithe i sclaiɡ coillearnaí  
Ach go leor stuála iontu,  
Chun na sóide loiscneach fúm a sheachaint.  
Díreach a sáith bán dearga chun iad a aithint,  
Chun soineantacht a shábháil.  
Cén cinn a roghnófa?  
Ní dhéanaimse na cinntí sin a thuilleadh.

## Biography of Author

Orlaith Ní Icí is based in Dublin-based Irish-language poet. She won a prize in Ó Bhéal na mBan 2021's poetry contest with 'Croitheadh Láimhe' agus she is to be published in Poetry Ireland Review 137 (Lúnasa 2022) with her poem 'Cúirt na Cóirhrádála'.



## Cargo

By Polina Cosgrave

Every night I hear planes  
 Flying over our house  
 I count them like sheep  
 One, bringing death to a village  
 Two, bringing death to a city  
 Three, bringing food for the soldiers  
 Who will finish the job  
 Four, bringing back the bodies

Every night I hear planes  
 Flying over our house  
 They hum like a swarm of bees  
 One, making a U-turn  
 Two, heading back at high speed  
 Three, what if this one is coming after us  
 Four, aren't they all

Every night I hear planes  
 Flying over our house  
 I asked around, no one else is bothered  
 Every night I hear planes  
 Flying over our house  
 Not once they woke up my child  
 Smiling in her sleep

Every night I hear planes  
 Every day I hear planes  
 I shout over them  
 What I can't whisper into your ear

## Biography of Author

Polina Cosgrave is a bilingual poet based in Ireland. Her debut collection 'My Name Is' was published by Dedalus Press in 2020. She is a recipient of the Arts Council's Literature Bursary Award for 2021. Polina is featured in the Forward Prizes Book of Poetry 2022.

## Tank

By Adele Evershed

as they roll away  
she looks  
for the silver pocket-watch  
she dropped in the dirt

the frazzled sky  
pitches everything  
into oddments  
thieving the street—  
rolling it up  
cobble by cobble

the clattering—  
bags of bones  
louder than the sirens  
is still too muffled  
by trigger warnings  
to travel  
on an air wave  
to us  
in this place

instead we marvel  
as she uses a jar of pickles  
to take down a drone

(all we've managed in our still life  
is to pickle a shark and called it art)

maybe we still think  
we have the blessing  
of being born too late

so we press  
our watch forward  
and leave her  
to count all the things  
she has lost

in the tracks of our silence

## Biography of Author

Adele Evershed was born in Wales and has lived in Hong Kong and Singapore before settling in Connecticut. Her prose and poetry have been published in over eighty online journals and print

anthologies such as Every Day Fiction, Free Flash Fiction, Ab Terra Flash Fiction, Grey Sparrow Journal, High Shelf, Wales Haiku Journal, Shot Glass Journal, and Hole in the Head Review. Adele has recently been shortlisted for the Pushcart Prize for poetry.

## "Somebody's brother, someone's son"

By Ade Couper

They called them "cowards"- no matter how  
We'd call it PTSD now,  
They marched them into fields or barns,  
Taken out to be shot at dawn.

Three hundred and six died like this,  
Their names from records now dismissed,  
Marched across fields, cobbles, lawns,  
Taken out to be shot at dawn.

All of them were kin to someone,  
Somebody's brother, someone's son,  
Facing their comrades with weapons drawn,  
Taken out to be shot at dawn.

Who of us will remember them?  
Young lads who's terror just brought shame;  
Forgive their fear, which led them down  
Like cattle, to be shot at dawn.

### **Biography of Author**

Ade Couper, 57, living in Worcester UK: mental health worker, writer, performance poet, human rights activist, Worcestershire Poet Laureate 2021-22, lives with M.S

## Smash

By Rob Fairmichael

Peace is in pieces,  
Smashed to smithereens in so many places,  
And all out war is only one  
SMASH.

Paul Brady sang that we are still at it in our own place  
But only a few bombs or deaths  
Doesn't make for peace,  
That is constructed  
Of stronger material.

Tommy Sands changed "the answer is blowin' in the wind"  
To "the answer stares you in the eyes".  
"Ready for peace, prepared for war"  
Is not just a loyalist slogan  
But a government dictum,  
And being prepared,  
It happens, again and again and again and again.

When they learn  
That nonviolence can move  
From perceived weakness  
To great strength,  
The supposedly impossible  
Becomes a probable.

The course we are on  
Of course leads to ruin.  
Can we stop  
This way to oblivion?

Johnny hardly knew what hit him,  
And the Bantry girls will still mourn  
Until we get our act together,  
And take pride in a white feather.

But that feather leads further,  
To standing tall  
With no weapon in hand,  
And no head in the sand.

Take the pike from the thatch  
And it's a garden ploughshare,  
Take the shillelagh out  
To walk a new path.

But it is an old path,

The people of Céide  
Had it right  
Aeons ago.

Living peacefully,  
They strode the earth,  
To meet their needs  
And not to do violent deeds.

Gentle men, learn the way  
To move on from your past,  
And women don't emulate  
Their old macho posture.

We can make a future for all,  
Links to violence severed,  
But we have to learn first  
How violence is tethered.

That way is no secret  
Though dismissed as impractical,  
As if violence today  
Works like it says on the packet.

Nonviolent struggle  
And nonviolent snuggle  
Are the way ahead  
Out of this great, violent muddle.

### **Biography of Author**

An oul fella living in Belfast

## One Day

By Aoife Reilly

Twisted, knotted  
Pulsating veins.  
Shrieking, squealing  
Rusty chains.

Blood red rivers,  
Stench of death.  
Tangled corpses  
Poisoned breath.

Smoked out lungs,  
Bloodshot eyes  
Gasps for air,  
Promises, lies.

Tries to speak,  
Silence or slaughter  
Mothers, sons,  
Fathers, daughters.

No way out.  
Nowhere to turn.  
Watch out homes  
Crumble and burn.

Dreams of a future  
A life of hope.  
Images of terror.  
A neck, a rope,

A gun, a shot,  
Greed, dismay.  
A world without horror,  
Maybe, one day.

## Biography of Author

Aoife Reilly, drama teacher, actor, and writer

## Blessing Blossom

By Erkut Tokman

Their name were listed as victim  
under bloodshed hiding their love in its innocence  
like those roses and their pedals that smelled  
your perpetual love

there upon was breeding  
your entity to reborn in terra incognita  
reached out of this world as in baby universe  
wrapped you up in a star like silk cocoon,

therein you endured some eternal and earthly places  
becoming a change for unknown dilemma,  
in your slavery they captured you  
under digital visions and evilish devotions  
you decided hanged up your angel wings  
In the wardrobe of soul dressing up pains and hope  
that once seaked for the profane bless of creation

once upon a time you were flapping that wings  
in hope of peace and forever bliss  
now in exile to return to Goodness,  
demanding consciousness and your freedom  
lost in that labyrinth of life  
on the map of this world, that you, lost traveller  
my transparent peaceful river  
you, that lost wisdom  
once open forever your heartfelt seas and islands  
swimmed in that perpetual cosmic necessity:  
Dwelling revolution  
where happiness of children and poor and divided nations  
were no more under claw of vultures  
For your love to all, in that Utopia,  
bleeding your blamed love  
Between war and so-called humanity  
Between peace and hope, still living  
In your eternal and blissful blossom as your dream!

## Biography of Author

Erkut Tokman Turkish poet, editor, translator, visual and performer artist. Member of Italian and Turkish PEN, The Poetry Society and Exiled Writers Ink of U.K . He has five collection of poetry book: The latest one "Lupoc" has triggered discussions on Turkish poetry scene. He interviewed Orhan Pamuk, Adonis, Aslı Erdoğan, Milo De Angelis, Joyce Carol Oates, Alice Notley etc. Winner of Quasimo Jaci Poetry Award and Italian Ministry of Culture-Translation Award.



## Blow Wind Blow

By David Collins

Blow wind blow  
Tell me what I need to know  
Follow me down this lonely road  
And let me live again  
Time they say can heal the heart  
Standing alone in the dark  
Passion runs through my veins  
I see a world that is full of pain  
I don't need money, I don't need fame  
I'd gladly give my life to end children's pain  
So let me live again

Blow wind blow  
Time seems to move so slow  
When your standing alone in the dark  
Peoples reactions are fast  
For something they don't really know  
And I cant put on a show  
They look at me like a piece of dirt  
For the love I need it's like a thirst  
I want to be the first of my time  
Just left alone to live my life

So Blow wind blow  
Tell me what I need to know  
Follow me down this lonely road and let me live again

## Je suis Ukraine

By Vincent Holmes

I am Ukraine  
And sit helpless  
Watching your agony  
And defiance  
Pummelled by thoughts of  
Why?  
Annihilation of reason  
Of tolerance  
Genocide and madness  
Why?

I am Ukraine  
Sending karma  
And blessings  
For a new beginning  
Where defiance  
And war are  
Replaced forever  
By the humanity  
That extols  
Kindness and tolerance

Forgiveness will take  
A while longer.

## Zelenskyy

By Vincent Holmes

name your newborn after him  
the hero of our times

let his name be forever  
etched in our minds

his simple call for  
freedom  
such a noble  
call

his heroism, leadership  
a *cosán* for  
us all

Name your child  
Zelenskyy  
to perpetuate  
this seer

let this name be  
the prayerful call  
to ward off  
all our fear

*An Úcráin abú!*

## Why War?

By Jack Baker

Why War? How did that become the choice?

For these leaders so ignorant, lost little boys;

Determined; driven by greed;

One must ask, what more do they need?

An ever-present, desire for chaos, to destroy others' sense of peace;

Ungrateful for, the preciousness of life, and the tranquillity, to breathe with ease;

Looking over ones shoulder-

As war rolls on, we become much older;

Than we should; were we sat in peace;

That ability to breathe, breath with ease;

So who are these imposters-

and what do they cost-us?

As they drop bombs of trauma-

That continue to haunt ya;

What happened in their life, to condition them so?

To rock the world, to and fro;

Both close to home, and far away;

These despicable leaders, cast dark on the day;

And the darkness they cast;

It lingers from the past;

As we do our best;

Best to digest;

The great big mess;

But why – is anyones guess?

So listen to us leaders, search inside;  
For that little part of you, you're trying to hide;  
That inner part, that innate human joy;  
That may allow you to put the guns down, to behave like a good boy;

Give up these childish dreams, of power;  
Let us all breathe easier;  
From now, to the next hour...

## Black and Tans

By Mary Guckian

Before my Mother died  
at eighty nine years of age  
I wanted to ask her if she  
ever heard of the Black and  
Tans, she was born in 1918,  
the eldest of nine children.

Telling me that on her way  
home from Mass, she could  
have been only three or four,  
she had this memory of walking  
along the wall of the farm and  
seeing men in some sort of lorry  
driving all over the golden field of  
wheat, flattening it into the ground.

The hard work of my grandfather  
after ploughing, harrowing, sowing  
seeds, summer weather growing  
the stalks, now all ruined lying  
flat in the landscape and I began  
to wonder what makes men do  
such nasty things to a small farmer  
doing his best to feed his children.

Today I see men forced into soldiering  
by a bully and getting them to flatten  
buildings in beautiful towns of Ukraine.  
Why they cannot walk away,  
leave the homes for mothers and  
their children, many of the soldiers  
are dying, was it not better they died  
for a moral cause and stop wars.

## A New Life in a New Country

By Mary Guckian

Walking towards a better tomorrow  
millions of people are on the move  
with no safe place in Ukraine.  
Their homes all flattened from  
constant attacks and bombings.

Some try to shelter in bunkers and  
underground spaces, dark, damp,  
with no lighting or running water.  
afraid to leave or look for food,  
They could be shot or wounded.

The only way mothers try to save  
their children, they move elsewhere.  
Take thousands of mile journeys,  
walking, buses, trains, good people  
giving them lifts in vans and lorries.

We see pictures of them every day  
in the newspapers and television,  
babies in their arms and trying to  
drag cases, children carry what they  
can manage, helping their mothers.

Few men are with them, stay behind  
to fight a war that should never  
be happening, all because a bully  
wants to destroy their country  
controlling his own people by lying.

Those who have arrived in Ireland  
exhausted from long journeys,  
children find space to lie down,  
are made welcome in our schools,  
hoping to start a better tomorrow.

## Hope has two beautiful daughters

By Jemelia Moseley

Hope has two beautiful daughters; their names are  
Anger and Courage.

When we cut we bleed the same but we have different hearts  
represented by the many differences that push us apart  
Some of our differences may leave us with scars  
issues of self-consciousness  
issues of unfairness  
issues of unlawfulness

We could be pushed backwards and we could be failed because of all the injustice

Equality and learning from past history is imperative, it's all informative

We need to eradicate injustice

We need to stop practicing racism, sexism and all the other negative isms and love and promote our  
unique individualism  
the aim is that the future generation will have a better and clearer vision  
and be free from this mental prison  
and the future will be free from all the torture of the injustices of our socialism

We could be angry at the anger and hate that we see,  
let it consume us and be unhappy  
we can turn a blind eye and be apart of hypocrisy  
Or we can,  
be hopeful like St Augustine's  
Hope.

Hope has two beautiful daughters;  
Anger and Courage.

Anger at the way things are and Courage to see that they do not remain as they are there can be  
change, we can be the change

Our wonderful differences- we need to embrace and encourage,  
grow and nourish,  
water and let it flourish,  
like the birds, clip their wings and let them fly  
the world is our oyster, we can reach the sky  
let go of all our inhibitions  
reach our full potential and fulfil our dreams and ambitions

We need positivity  
stronger connections within the community  
help for our families  
understanding and unity  
let's avoid munity



We need equality  
and learning from past history is imperative, it's all informative.  
We need to stop practicing racism, sexism and all the other negative 'isms' and love and promote  
our unique individualism.  
We should,  
be hopeful that the future generation will have a better and clearer vision  
that they will be free from this mental torture, social prison  
of all the injustices of our socialism.

Grant us the serenity to accept the things we cannot change, the courage to change the things we  
can  
and the wisdom to know the difference.  
Let us be the change, let us be the difference

## **A Beautiful Pathway to Peace**

By Jemelia Moseley

I see a pathway of the brightest light.

Granted, there's so much scope, with endless rope but there's always a honest pathway to beautiful hope.

Air raids, modern slaves, any form of abuse and equality,  
we cannot not look away,  
including starvation/child emaciation/evil and dark temptation.

We can overcome any feeling of desperation;  
with love and kindness, understanding and appreciation/ for each other. We can fill the gaps and end our social segregation.

No more wars, children dying on floors and in desperate hospital wards.

Let's not succumb to what we cannot change but walk together towards what we can.

Let's look towards a pathway to peace  
an unknown, unwalked journey that's undoubtedly steep.

There's a way out even when the rivers are deep.  
When you feel like you're drowning just keep treading, floating, keep your head above the water,  
find your inner saviour and swim to the other side-to the pathway of peace,

Let's be that pathway to peace.

### **Biography of Author**

Jemelia is a Poet and Spoken Word Artist from London, England.  
She loves all things poetry and spoken word and loves to see her work all over the world.

Jemelia's poem 'United' was published in 'The Fly On The Wall' Magazine in September 2020, her other poems have been published in other publications. Jemelia has more work forthcoming, has published her poetry book with Alien Buddha Press and has won first prize in Hatton Libraries poetry competition 2021 and third prize in Waltham Forest Poetry Competition 2021.

## History

By Julie O'Reilly

War is our history and is it to be again our destiny?  
Destiny, is what we are born from and to.  
War for our destiny should never be inevitable.  
It should meet the warm blade of love and honesty.

Love for those yet to be born from and to destiny.  
Let the thoughts of war but be history.  
A lesson learned from crown and glory.  
Let men and women walk in unity not side by side in uniform.

Peace to war and let war rest well in the ash of ego not nuclear disaster.  
God has sent no Angel to decide upon war and who shall be righteous in his name or be it on the  
Devils breath.

Go and seek out destiny and let it be one of peace and love.  
Hail to the dawn of moonlight flavoured love.  
Down with the lust of power and gain.

Destiny, let it be free.

## Biography of Author

Poet and writer.

## Sunflower Seeds In Your Pocket

By Robin McNamara

Ukrainian proverb:

'Love thy neighbour, but pull  
not down thy hedge.'

We sheltered  
from the wings of war  
with their missiles.

We're fated to our destiny  
a father leaves to go battle  
this is our future history.

Now

the skies scream down evil

the last goodbye:  
it was never our intention  
it was never meant to be  
our final destination.

In the metro  
sleep the future generation

hearing a new reality of war  
it was never God's intention

for them to hear death  
so near so soon. Although

the world still turned  
and houses still burned

we're fated to waiting  
for Fredsbringer

with sunflower seeds  
in our pockets.

## **Happily Ever After the War**

By Robin McNamara

Do not recoil from the good light  
Or explain a bullet's reluctance  
    To pierce skin and shatter bone.

God misplaced his trust in humanity  
Angels fear to tread the ground,

Surrounded by sleep of the dead in the  
Playground/ in the park/ in the streets,

As the west eats dinner on their laps, widows  
Of war shelter on a rainy day in Mariupol.

Maybe one day the bombs will fall outside  
Your window and you'll understand:  
There's no happily ever after the war.

### **Biography of Author**

Robin McNamara is an Irish poet. His debut chapbook *Under a Mind's Staircase* was published in June 2021 (Hedgehog Poetry Press UK). His forthcoming full collection, *Monochrome Heart* is being published in late 2022. He was nominated for the Pushcart Prize for 'Apple Picking Season' from *Under a Mind's Staircase*.

## Sorry for Your Troubles

By Kate Ennals

'As I was watering my olives one day, the hose stopped its flow.  
My neighbour, who had moved in not so long ago,  
had diverted the water to his azure blue, swimming pool.  
I went to the authorities to complain — for I've lived here all my life  
But my new neighbour told me I needed a pass.  
I didn't have one, so he pulled out a gun,  
told me to move on. He beat up my son.  
Put him in a prison. Hung him on his wall.

My home is now a hovel. My garden is scorched earth.  
People see the injustice but turn the other cheek.  
My neighbour's teeth get brighter, his swimming pools more blue  
The only life he shares is his piss and poo  
which he pours from his window into my street below.

I protest the best I can, seek support from the world  
Who when they come across me, cast their eyes down low  
I nod when they mumble 'Sorry for your troubles'  
And thrust into my hand comradely poems.

I try to read them while my olives shrivel in the sun.  
They are a comfort, though I do not understand them.'

## Pathways to Peace

By Kate Ennals

Syrians, Somalians, and Eritreans  
risk the Med or traipse the Balkans  
Afghanis trudge from the East  
forge ahead, past the Algerians.

Boys from Senegal and Morocco  
tramp across Europe from the North  
In between, lies a path used by women  
and children from Cameroon.

If it was you who were a refugee,  
Tell me, what would be your route be?

I would walk the Dublin Road from Cavan  
And head towards Killiney Beach  
Assuming someone there  
would have set up a business  
to smuggle people across the Irish Sea.  
Then I'd walk the UK land bridge  
To liberte, egalite, fraternite  
my final destination.

Already, it seems daunting...  
all the borders, seas, police  
immigration, questions, customs  
raised hackles, suspicions.

Maybe, it would be better to risk  
Being imprisoned, beaten, raped  
in my own home  
a place  
I'm supposed to feel safe.

I'll contact Pathways to Peace,  
an international UN agency

I read on their website that it has been busy  
'actively making peace a lived reality.'

I wonder what language that is  
or if such a place exists.

## **Biography of Author**

Kate Ennals is a poet and writer and has published poems and short stories in a range of literary and on-line journals (Crannog, Skylight 47, Honest Ulsterman, The International Lakeview Journal, Boyne Berries, North West Words, Crossways, The Blue Nib, Dodging the Rain, The Ogham Stone, plus many more). Her first collection of poetry *At The Edge* (Lapwing) was published in 2015. Her second collection, *Threads* (Lapwing), was published in April 2018. Her third collection, *Elsewhere* (Vole Imprint), in November 21. Her fourth, *Practically A Wake*, will be published next year (Salmon Poetry).



## **Holding It Together.**

By Mary Howlett

I wish I could express the fear,  
terror as gun and bomb blast draws near,  
I do not want to appear weak,  
young man's voice shudders when I speak.  
I'm very frightened, very scared,  
for death eternal I am not prepared.  
My eighteen years I've toiled and kneeled  
beside my father in sunflower fields,  
those fields are flattened no longer tilled.  
Blood of my neighbour I'm expected to spill.  
Song of bird I no longer hear,  
only screams of children as they shed a tear.  
There's always a reason, there's always a cause  
it doesn't make sense this senseless war.  
Too young to die for another's debt.  
A flicker of hope is all that's left.

### **Biography of Author**

Mary Howlett is retired and lives in Waterford. Her writing journey began when she joined a creative writing group in 2021. Her creativity has blossomed through writing poetry and painting. She explores themes of family, loss and personal reflections. Writing poetry has opened up a new world for her.

**COTE D'AZUR – 14 JULY 2016**

By Agnieszka Filipek

for you I will cry  
salty tears I will gather  
lightning down from the sky  
and throw it angrily  
at the guilty one  
I will cry right and left  
and my tears like rain  
will flow down  
the Promenade des Anglais  
and will be washed by the wave  
from the Mediterranean sea  
which will cry beside me  
on the azure coast

(First published in Windows Publications Anthology, Ireland, 2017.)

## **BIRD OF UKRAINE**

By Agnieszka Filipek

How can I build my nest when soldiers  
are attacking my trees? Their march  
shakes the ground till leaves are falling off.

They break the branches with weapons  
and damage the roots with their bombs.  
The cities are in ruins. There's no crumbs

under the tables, no water in fountains.  
I'm singing songs of peace to lull  
frightened children. I want to escape,

but the evil will follow, until there's no  
land left with yellow fields and blue sky.

(First published in Wordpeace Journal, 2022.)

### **Biography of Author**

Agnieszka Filipek is a Polish-born poet living in Ireland. Her work has been published worldwide. Her poems have appeared in Amsterdam Quarterly, SAND Journal, Capsule Stories, Local Wonders Anthology, Lucent Dreaming, Black Bough Poetry, Crannóg, Headway Quarterly, Marble Poetry Magazine, and elsewhere.

## Puerile (Was is Good, Actually)

By R.J. Breathnach

He has been typing for hours,  
his chair groaning under the weight  
of his sense of self-importance.  
His fingers hit the keys and carve his sermon  
into the walls of the World Wide Web.

"You are puerile. War is not immoral.  
You are immoral for not supporting the war.  
You are a child, and I am a man.  
A grown man who understands that war is good, actually."

He is pleased with himself.  
He stands and makes his way to the fridge,  
feels the frigid air brush his cheek as he grabs a beer.

Far far away,  
that frigid air hits the colder cheek of a teen  
half buried in the snow,  
with his other half dangling from a tree.  
He had just text his mother  
that he was scared and war is bad, actually.

Another bomb drops.  
The fireball sucks all the oxygen, and more than a few babies,  
from the scorched city streets.  
The babies never wanted war.  
Neither did the teen texting his mother,  
or the grandfather volunteering to die on the front lines.  
They must all be immoral too.

But he is assured of his morality,  
sitting back down at the sleeping screen.  
A mirror of shadow, in it he does not see himself  
balding, fattening, well past his prime.  
He sees the soldier that he knows he is.  
He drone strikes computer keys and enters combat  
from the safety of his sitting room.

"War is good, actually.  
Stop being so puerile."

### Biography of Author

R.J. Breathnach is a Wexford-born journalist and writer based in Dublin, Ireland. His work has been published in The Madrigal, Tír na nÓg Magazine, and The Honest Ulsterman, among others. His

debut poetry chapbook, *I Grew Tired of Being a Zombie*, was published by Alien Buddha Press in 2021.

## Giuseppe

By Roderick Ford

My Uncle Giuseppe told me  
that in Sicily in World War Two,  
in the courtyard behind the aquarium,  
where the bougainvillea grows so well,  
the only captive mermaid in the world  
was butchered on the dry and dusty ground  
by a doctor, a fishmonger, and certain others.

She, it, had never learned to speak  
because she was simple, or so they'd said,  
but the priest who held one of her hands  
while her throat was cut,  
said she was only a fish, and fish can't speak.  
But she screamed like a woman in terrible fear.

And when they took a ripe golden roe  
from her side, the doctor said  
this was proof she was just a fish  
and anyway an egg is not a child,  
but refused when some was offered to him.

Then they put her head and her hands  
in a box for burial  
and someone tried to take her wedding ring,  
but the others stopped him,  
and the ring stayed put.

The rest they cooked and fed to the troops.  
They said a large fish had been found on the beach.

Starvation forgives men many things,  
my uncle, the aquarium keeper, said,  
but couldn't look me in the eye,  
for which I thank God.

## Biography of Author

I am an autistic poet with two collections so far.

## The Outcry of the Streets

By Robyn Sheehan

January 2022

Wake, Turn on the news.  
The wells have run dry,  
Bombs are dropping from the sky.  
Can you hear the outcry?

Power, Greed, Oppression,  
While the children pay the price of your aggression.  
"The youth is the future"  
Were Hopeless,  
You've killed them.  
Paying for the sins of our governments.

You're only young once,  
Smile and have fun.  
But Darling all the moneys gone.  
7 houses each as we drown in poverty  
Can You Hear the Outcry of the streets?

Stay Indoors,  
There's another war.  
Have you not taken enough already?  
We scream, we cry, we preach  
You turn the other cheek.

Temperatures are rising,  
As are the people.  
We will not stop until we are equal,  
"Nothing Changes, if nothing changes"  
I pray for world peace

### Biography of Author

My name is Robyn Sheehan. I am 20 years old living in Ireland. I have been writing myself for many years but I am yet to publish work which I have decided to pursue this year. I write poetry and I enjoy song writing.

## Eloping Inhumanity

By Lisa Gannon

It shouldn't take much  
For humankind to be kind,  
To be 'humane', as such.

Now overtime I find  
It has become so hard  
To find the kind in 'humanfind'.

How can it be so hard?  
To want to spare lives, spread love?  
Instead, they choose to bombard.

Innocent lives taken,  
Societies, homes, people, gone.  
Worlds utterly shaken.

I wonder how the rest  
Of this humane race will respond.  
Their humanity put to the test.

Some continue, moan, complain.  
Others empathise, help, campaign.  
Yet we are all born the same?

And no one of us is to blame.  
It took an entire humanity to get us here,  
Mundane, unkind, inhumane.

But this is a message of love,  
And definitely one of hope  
For an end to the atrocities above.

And while there is still hope  
To be humane, to find the kind,  
From our inhumanity we must first elope.

There is always hope.  
Bask in the light of hope, Humanity,  
Of freedom - of eloping inhumanity.



## **War or Peace**

By Lisa Gannon

Wounded soldiers and wasted lives.  
Acts of terror – who dares, dies.  
Reigns of power, but limited supplies. An

Oil painting of humanity. But perhaps in another  
Reality, a powerful

Picture of peace could be painted and  
Erected on the stained glass window of life.  
And there would be no question of war or peace, it would be one. But  
Can we ever change our tainted ways and  
Escape, lest not prevent, what has already been done?

## **Biography of Author**

This poem is a plea to humanity, a message of hope, and eloping inhumanity.

## Untitled #XIII

By Derek Kelly

Party members march triumphantly under the Brandenburg Gate  
 Torches blazing and flags unfurled  
 I've seen it in so many documentaries  
 In black and white and colourisation  
 About how Britain won the war  
 Shown as a warning, they parade  
 Like legionnaires must have done  
 When Rome was ruled by the Caesars

Governments all over the world admire marching soldiers  
 Presidents, Prime Ministers, Kings and Queens  
 All like a spectacle which reminds them of Rome  
 (Or is it Byzantium)  
 And the glory that can be theirs  
 If only for awhile

Politicians in the east and west  
 Like to commemorate soldiers of past wars  
 All of whom died for democracy  
 Or to keep their country free  
 (I forget the narrative)  
 It helps to exorcise the ghosts  
 While doing deals behind the scenes  
 With those who would be Caesar

When I was a child, I played with toy soldiers  
 Lined them up and shot them with cannon  
 The figurines came in various action poses  
 None were modelled as maimed or dead  
 Or civilians or suffering from PTSD  
 And all were stamped as Made in China

Sitting on the living room floor of our corpo flat  
 A war film playing in the background  
 John Wayne or Clint Eastwood, I forget  
 My mother serving us ox-tails for supper  
 My father searching the sports results  
 Butter spread on bread as if it were marmalade  
 Washed down by mugs of tea

My brother stationed in Osnabruck was keeping sentry.

## **Biography of Author**

Derek Kelly is a writer based in Dublin. He began writing poetry / short stories while in college but, apart from publishing these works in now defunct college magazines, never pushed to have them published elsewhere. Married life and work overtook. During the pandemic he began returning to writing.

## **Our Falling**

By Winnie Ward aka Sligo Style

Why send our troops to the battlefields,  
No thoughts for their lives with no shield,

No understanding or compassion in what they have to face,  
Blown up to bits without a trace,

The ones in charge does it just for greed,  
While our troops don't get recognised for doing a good deed,

Men and women put their lives on the line,  
Knowing they could be killed at any time,

With the blood dripping off them as they hide behind barbed wire,  
Trying to defend themselves in the crossfire,

For a fight that was fought that wasn't even theirs,  
Every second of everyday they are feeling pain, hurt and fear,

They part with their loved ones for civilization,  
There's too many lives lost across our nation,

So before you send them out, bare this in mind,

Think of all their loved ones left behind.

## **Biography of Author**

Author.

## Interdependence Day

By Pete Mullineaux

So when visitors from space arrive  
and give us a fright, challenging  
our right to manage the Earth –  
we must show we are worthy  
prove ourselves ‘earthy’; drop  
our weapons, hold one another  
tight for all we’re worth – show  
we are worth it – how we can be  
true to our souls, deliver those goals.  
Sighting their impossible star-ship,  
respond with partnership, joined-up  
thinking and feeling, symbiosis not  
psychosis; “all is interdependent,” the  
Dalai Lama says, so make amendment  
change our ways, be just one part of  
Nature alongside plants, animals, bugs  
and bacteria; be like fungi mycelium,  
entangled but not strangled by too  
tight a grip; nurture more respectful  
relationship with air, water, fire, soil –  
without which we perish; cherish, put  
an ‘s’ back in front of oil – the number  
of microorganisms in just one living,  
loving spoonful is more than all human  
beings that have ever lived. Return from  
hubris to humus, forgo the pesticides –  
agri-genocide, flinch at each plastic spoon,  
cruel harpoon – say no more dead whales,  
powdered rhino horns, pangolin scales ...  
Show our visitors we understand the urgency,  
that we’ll emerge from this emergency with  
competence and empathy – find inspiration  
in Brigit, imbibe the flame of her spirit, affirm  
how we are in this together; together – gather  
and tether – show our true meithal...

And when they say our time is up, even  
as the credits roll on this planet B movie  
rise from calamity, reclaim our humanity –  
show we are sustainable, that we are able,  
say “Hiya” to Gaia, re-soul – plant another  
tree with Afri at Féile Bride, a heart-seed  
of hope and kindness – awareness along  
with humility. Can we survive any other  
way – it has to be Interdependence Day.

## More!

By Pete Mullineaux

(The opening song from 'Oliver' updated and aligned to the law of diminishing returns)

Chickin wing, onion ring, curry sauce on everything  
 chip, dip, egg flip – pumpkin seed and apple pip  
 meat, sweet, sugar-beet – can you hear the sugar beat  
 in the beat box, cereal box, booze on rocks in the ice box  
 ice box, iced tea, wake on up and smell the coffee!  
 Fish soup, spaghetti hoop, watermelon, cantaloupe  
 Sunday roast, cheese on toast – feeding hunger, coast to coast  
 deep fry, shepherd's pie, reach up for that pie in the sky!  
 Chocolate muffin, turkey stuffin', shovel it down can't get enough in  
 fill the space, fill the gap – fill the void when life feels crap  
 more and more – wondering why and what it's for  
 feed the rich, starve the poor – some get less, some get more  
 feed the rich, starve the poor – then go off and start a war  
 cus those at the top want more and more  
 who knows what the hell it's for  
 just keep grabbing more and more  
 more and more  
 more and more  
 more and more....

Youtube: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PKs\\_xSCNIEM&t=6s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PKs_xSCNIEM&t=6s)

Performed By: Grainne Malone

## Biography of Author

I live in Galway and work teaching global issues in schools through poetry and drama. I've published four collections with a fifth due out this November. This poem 'Interdependence Days' was specially written and performed for Afri's Feile Brid Festival 2021, to launch their publication:

'Interdependence Day - Teaching the Sustainable Development Goals through Drama for All Ages'.

I've been involved in anti-war projects for many years - in an earlier incarnation my single record 'Disposable Tissues' won the City of London Poetry/Song contest and the proceeds from the record went to the Greenham Common Peace Camps. Other poems have been anthologised in publications such as Baer Books (USA) Silver Lining Poets against War and Poems for Peace (Pluto Press).

I wrote this poem 'More!' as part of a play devised with a group of transition year students that was performed at Afri's Feile Bride Festival in Kildare. This came out of a schools project 'Just a Second' exploring the costs of war and weapons against the need for peace and human needs. The performer of the poem Grainne Malone is a youth activist involved in peace movements and the Irish Youth Council - she wanted to do a video version of my poem, (included here).

## Oligarchy Malarkey

By Enda Magennis

All this oligarchy malarkey  
While all world leaders stay starkly  
Embarking on the same dark path,  
Well, mark me  
For I have heard what Zarathustra hath spake  
Make no mistake  
God is dead, for we have killed them  
Why then must we continue to kill men?  
Have we not conquered all?  
No  
They still question if the climate is a concern  
As the world burns  
And yet it still turns  
That is what drives them  
These objectivist pike-men  
Poking the world until it stops  
Hoping for an infinite return on their stocks  
If its the stocks they want  
Perhaps it's the stocks they should get  
Or better yet  
The Jacobins

## **Inner Peace**

By Thomas Macmahon

Is it wise to dismiss  
An ear that is ever at hand  
Comfort for the lonely and confused  
A friend for your darkest hour

And in minds eye we do expand  
Injustices and negativity  
Take some time to say a prayer  
And cleanse the mind of the wolf

And when near a house of sanctuary  
Enter and be seated in the silent peace  
A serene spirit will enter you  
And your inner lover will be released

St Luke's 2020

## **Biography of Author**

I write poetry as a hobby.



**Haiku (for Julian Assange)**

By Gabriel Rosenstock

Filmed by Masood Hussain

Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=feeVR5XDisE>

## **Bracketing**

By David Atkinson  
for Lynsey Addario  
Irpin, Ukraine, 7th March 2022

Bracketing - a method of adjusting fire in which a bracket is established by obtaining an over and a short along the spotting line, and then successively splitting the bracket in half until a target hit or desired bracket is obtained.

Bracketing - the photographer takes several shots of the same subject using different settings in order to obtain the optimum exposure. Useful in situations that create difficulty in obtaining a satisfactory image with a single shot, when a small differences have a comparatively large effect on the resulting image. It is typically used for static subjects.

“their luggage was left scattered about, along with a green carrying case for a small dog that was barking”

## **Biography of Author**

David Atkinson, Belfast poet, with work published nationally and internationally, and broadcast by the BBC. He has published two collections, *Thomas* (2005) and *Black-eyed Peace* (2014), including the Pushcart nominated poem “Hunting for the Aurora”. He was long-listed for the Seamus Heaney Award for New Writing 2017

Twitter @ablackeyedpeace  
[www.davidatkinsonpoet.wordpress.com](http://www.davidatkinsonpoet.wordpress.com)

## 16 Days in Spring (Hill 937)

By Gerard Donnelly

Who am I to speak of these things?  
 And who am I to be heard  
 over the voice of brave and valiant men?  
 And who am I to judge  
 what peace is worth?  
 Or whether it was earned  
 because one man died  
 for every fifty feet of jungle gained?

Jungle.  
 Dense but no so dense  
 as the impressive minds  
 of men who planned this struggle  
 for a piece of land  
 that has no name.

Who am I to say that this was madness?  
 I never saw an enemy,  
 never felt the brush of warm air  
 as his missiles whistled past.  
 Or the pain of torn flesh  
 when the whistling stopped

Who am I who must imagine?  
 the toil, the sweat, the tears,  
 the grime, the mud, the noise,  
 the blood, the guts, the body parts  
 the fear, the hate, the death.

The pain, the grief, the loss  
 the hopelessness, the pointlessness, the senselessness.  
 Light fading into darkness  
 and then,  
 the memories.

Does peace require such suffering?  
 Does freedom fall so hard?  
 And what of questions never asked?  
 Why? What for? For whom?

To walk away again,  
 after 16 days in Spring?

Gerry Donnelly 2018

## Where Even The Deaf Can Hear

By Gerard Donnelly

There is a place where time unravels,  
 where past and present mingle  
 and where ghostly figures dance  
 in the shadowy recess of hollow buildings;  
 where chirruping birdsong amongst Arcadian ruins  
 evokes untroubled innocence.  
 When across the shimmering divide,  
 the silence ruptures, then comes  
 the echo of tramping boots,  
 and orders barked by angry men  
 for whom these souls  
 have borne no malice.  
 Outside, on the abandoned street,  
 powerless masts stand tall,  
 their prescient plaques proclaiming  
 'danger du mort'.  
 I cannot take my eyes from the grasping hands  
 of ghosts who are not dancing now.

There is a place where the edge of time is frayed,  
 torn asunder not by some imagining  
 but because we dare not forget;  
 a place where skeleton walls stand silent  
 but where even the deaf can hear  
 the distant whisper of rattling guns, of crackling flames.  
 and the tortured screams of innocents.

Note: On 10th June 1944, Nazi Storm Troopers entered the French town of Oradour-sur-Glane and, without provocation, murdered more than 600 innocent men, women and children. Before leaving, the troops set the town ablaze and burned the bodies so that relatives were unable to identify the remains of their loved ones. The town was never rebuilt and, frozen in time, is now both a memorial to those who died and a reminder of mankind's capacity for evil.

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## War

By Gerard Donnelly

The skies are growing dark,  
the landscape scorched and bleak.  
In the shadow of a tyrant  
fear is a damp invading mist  
that envelops, chills the bones  
and the stench of evil clings  
to blackened ruins and charred remains.  
When a bear wields its claw,  
lions roar and an eagle flaps its wings.  
They talk the currency of war  
but fail to stir the heavens  
so what becomes of the slaughtered innocents?  
When light is gone and life extinguished  
what hope remains for those who linger?  
All tyrants must fall  
but who will drive the spike  
into this tyrant's heart  
and what will unfold when this hour is past?

©Gerry Donnelly April 2022

## Biography of Author

Retired civil servant. Aspiring novelist. Enjoys writing and reading poetry.

## After Lepanto

By Denis Stokes

For B.W.P.

In memoriam Steven Heighten

Returned from that crusade, afterwards, all he could recall was the huzza of the emptying battle, blood stinking, each unnamed child's hasty grave, over crosses, the crows landing on his hacked, unreaching arm. Not just his shame's losses he carried back to disturb the sultry joys of la Feria, back to the shrines of those beheaded saints, lovely, young, foolish in their trust, love, their miraculous surrender. It was the moon's eclipse, the moon of blood flowers heavy with the air-less weight of the earth's songless umbra, a hard patient shadow of goodbye. There was love lost, unwon- as evening cooled, he'd dream her tending the hearth, pouring wine, even as from his travels, each town's mosaic walls, flames rendered images of each screened dulcinea. He would wake to nightmares of arms- this one, her brief sweet flesh that had lost its reach, or that farmer too close to mechanicals and scythes, alive with his lying faith. Gone from wars, he knew the wars would keep waiting. Held by the patient frames of what?- some room, undiscovered yet, in the heart of Bachelard, or by the page's whitewashing mirror... he found a friend, pot-bellied open warmth, also lowly as he'd become, offering a slight glimpse of friendship's quipped wisdom, the travel into the land which betrayed itself as it ached to turn into itself. And like a bandit, one-armed, he'd keep stealing hope moment by moment beside some river's bridge light he could hardly see by, or even see, while the same dragon within himself, his own jihads, fitnas, contended over his own gold as across Water once, Beowulf descended into the wargod's cave. The Andalusian sands kept lifting with light, flying towards him and near the coasts, waters would move and move and move. Memory's slave, time's fool and thief, always, with his own weak sword he would swipe away at each unknowing cloud of page, at winds moving the circling blades, each dun grain slipping through dark glass, shaping a face, unheard waves, armies charging shores somewhere, each tide, moon-moved, blood-dimmed, always about to swell.

## Anthems

By Denis Stokes

perhaps it is just...a part of language here is the grackle's cackle the starling's scratching at sky as the blackbirds bloodwinged lightwinged reach out from low trees or cattails not quite beside my window reach out in a language of love beneath the harsh urgencies of beauty in their presence directed need all have a voice with a common root ground though over years many i imagine their blood remembering each of their songs have changed perhaps in their struggles suffering though i believe they have escaped most hunts other than their own...unjust ease decisions about the weather or even the sheer joy of being a starling iridescent as dawn with dawn's brief silence in a garden under a maple as with this field of vision here or the grackles knowing in their little maps within their brains hearts that since they can only be beautiful to themselves at least why not be loud with their sacred noise and who can guess what they are screeching at discussing in civilized tones who can penetrate their prayer or discover in that boisterous chaos all cacophony glad protest the vestiges of prayer and if so what god do they believe would be listening would want to ...not i each spring moves me each goose honk each black spirit with flamed epaulets taking wing excited to find love build a nest again as each stalk in the marsh of the ghost moose trembles oh how animals claimed the Nipissings can reclaim us towards the human if i close my eyes i can hear my friend singing his last song greeting the april ice whereon he commenced his pilgrimage another friend every word divinely ordered to each page from her lovely all too brief body another his song a witness against the implacable border that justice crosses conscience all frontier as across all waters crossed volcanic ash, his lost country's forgotten whiffs of napalm i will sing of you my friends you whose heart gave out oxtongue trail two years ago you who gazed out towards the bay the heron a gray blue question mark i will listen to a voice gathered out of your every song i woke to the morning sequence after lake winds rain sang all night crows gulls geese ducks and always midjis of the blood breast which begins gathers it the starlings blackbirds warblers and throughout cries from the loon about to remain or like my friend walk on water about to leave and listening to each gift i thought of tongues bantu bearla athabaskan gaeige joul ...slavic tongues I wondered if brodsky god bless him was correct worthy or true in our anthropologies (rift cave step) the song's necessity itself crying out saying someone is here singing here it is unbearable the responsibility the grace of it frank smith your readers here now far away i do not mean to disturb you.



## In My Heart, Hong Kong, 1942

By Denis Stokes  
For Bryce Craig

For the past two days  
I have witnessed the life  
of prisoners, their war  
humorous until...Until...

Now everywhere I look,  
I'm clubbed by foreign orders.  
Fate has become a wind  
beating me into a shadow.

I am working in a mine  
near north Point. I am only  
weight and dust. Welding  
in a shipyard, I help enemy vessels

head off to sea. I see feet dangle  
above sharpening shards. Salt  
is shoved carefully into each wound.  
I am waiting for death with strangers.

### Biography of Author

Denis Stokes was born in Toronto and grew up in Scarborough. He was educated at St. Mike's, U. of T., F.E.U.T. and Vermont College (MFA). He is a dual citizen of Canada and Ireland. He is the author of the chapbooks *Scarborough Poems* (Wordwrights Canada), *Dublin in the Sunlight; With Adam, Gathering; What the Street Knows and Peace Comes Dropping Slow* (all with Alburnum Press), plus the books *Tunnel Jumping* (Scarlet Leaf Press), *The Blackstock Children* (Scarlet Leaf) and *A Wolf Rages Down the Little Jocko* (in final preparations in a search for a home.)

His work has appeared in such journals as *Descant*, *Queen's Quarterly*, *Quarry*, *CVII*, *Arc* and various anthologies in Canada, the U.S. and Ireland. He was the winner of the Northern Ontario Writers Award in Poetry (1995, Nipissing University). His work has been nominated for a Pushcart Prize and a National Magazine Award.

Denis has lived and taught in the GTA, northern B.C., northern Q.C. and northern Ontario, often involving students from First Nations. He has been teaching Fac. Ed. courses and Writing courses at Nipissing University. His interests include fastball and other sports (ardent fan for teams in T.O.), canoeing and hiking, the theatre and activist concerns. He organizes and hosts the Conspiracy of 3 Reading Series in North Bay, ON, one of the longest running series in Ontario.

He is married to a very patient woman who has blessed him with four kids.

## Watching the Commemorative March

By Noel King

Inside a window shaken with time he watches:  
has seen many parades;  
a woman he loved march;  
many a St. Patrick's Day;  
and an army to war.  
Children watched with him once,  
delighting in their view.

His legs are stilled now  
but still he takes the trouble  
to struggle to the window  
and watch it all over again;  
the drum roll calling him,  
a rhythm he taps with his thumb.  
while the palm of his other hand  
rubs a spot clean on the glass.

© Noel King

## The Watch

By Noel King

As I placed it on the desk  
little did I know  
that in watching it  
death was at hand.

Little did I know  
that as that wrist watch sat there  
the plane was already in the sky.  
Little did I know  
that the pilot was at suicide  
and little did I know that my watch  
would never be wristed  
on me or anyone again  
as the bomb hit.

© Noel King

### Biography of Author

Noel King was born and lives in Tralee, Co Kerry. His poetry collections are published by Salmon: Propheying the Past, (2010), The Stern Wave (2013) and Sons (2015). He has edited more than fifty books of work by others (Doghouse Books, 2003-2013) and was poetry editor of Revival Literary Journal (Limerick Writers' Centre) in 2012/13. A short story collection, The Key Signature & Other Stories was published by Liberties Press in 2017. [www.noelking.ie](http://www.noelking.ie)

## C.D Marketing

By Mairead McKeown

"We need a simple title that the public's sure to buy:  
The choice of words is crucial so we'll really have to try  
To use a little subterfuge but avoid a downright lie -  
Joe Public's far too busy to ask the question "Why?"

There are words which can't be chosen - they're not in the best of taste:  
"Death", "destruction", "devastation", "innocent civilians" have no place  
In the euphemistic language we'll employ to make our case.  
For this P.R. operation, we must present our "caring face"

There's bound to be some damage if the odd bomb goes astray;  
(Body bags and burials are not images to conjure up today.)  
Can we come up with an adjective that will describe this in a way  
Which won't expose the reality behind the words we say?

YES! That's a stroke of genius, the gem of all smoke screens -  
The term "COLLATERAL DAMAGE" conceals more than it reveals  
Of the toll of human carnage, the anguish and the screams:  
People, when they hear, it won't know exactly what it means.

Congratulations everyone, your choice was really wise.  
We'll start marketing this package, if the media will oblige.  
It's the very latest C.D., let's hope the public buys -  
It conceals death and devastation in a very neat disguise!

Justice not Terror Coalition October 2001

## Ray of Hope.....

By Mairead McKeown

That little moustache dominated the land,  
Fashioned the laws for the Masterplan.  
Only those who obeyed and worked for the Reich,  
Whose bloodlines were pure and their skin white as white,  
Could be deemed lawful citizens, obligated to fight,  
To rid Fatherland of the source of the blight.

Those who questioned the edicts were outside the law  
Ostracised , demonised, criminalised all,  
Unfit to be part of the perfect State,  
Dispatched on sealed trains - the hell camps their fate.

With the wisdom of hindsight, who would condemn  
The few who attempted to rescue those women and men  
By damaging bridges and digging up track  
Or acting like Schindler behind Hitler's back?

Now faced with the prospect of nuclear war in our time'  
And Peace Dividends spent designing components online,  
Do we salute the job creators, bomb makers, profit takers today  
And condemn those who protested by locking them away?

.....or RAYTHEON?

MAY 2008 for those on trial for protesting at the Raytheon Complex in  
Derry

## **Ireland of the Welcomes**

By Mairead McKeown

We welcome worldwide travellers coming here by plane, boat, train and bus;  
"Cead, mile, mile failte" if you see eye to eye with us.  
But our law is less inviting, if you've come to make a fuss.  
Peace activists with wire cutters, don't take action, even if you feel you must!  
For it's "Failte" to the jumbo jets filled with passengers - and more;  
Authorities assure us that they bring prosperity to our door.  
If they're transporting arms and untried prisoners, sure that we can ignore!  
But should you be a U.S. citizen who has come to try to right what's wrong,  
You could find yourself arrested and your valid passport gone;  
Facing a lengthy trial, stranded here alone.  
Thank God you won't be sent to Guantanamo to face torture on your own!  
But it's "Go dte tu slan" to the military aircraft as they depart the Shannon base;  
You'll always find a welcome here as you protect the human race.

Mairead - a tribute to two American pensioners.

### **Biography of Author**

Retired. Member of Pax Christi involved with other groups in the past.

## **You Can Bank on US**

By Joe Ordinary

When spoils of war are up for grabs  
They reach out with greedy hand  
Take all the profit they can nab  
Bringing it back to the promised land  
When there is riches on foreign shores  
They'll spin a web of lies  
Fight and fund imaginary wars  
To get their hands on the prize

Always seeking a chance to "globalize"  
Claiming to be purveyors of liberty  
Invade so they can monopolize  
Extract profit under the illusion of democracy  
When there's a chance to kill in the name of progress  
You can bank on U.S.

### **Biography of Author**

Joe Ordinary is a young so called punk poet from Enniscorthy in County Wexford. He started writing over Covid. He has been spitting and spewing his poetry to anyone who won't listen ever since. Joe also features in the band Peer Pleasure and the Work Allergics.

## Taira's Angels

By Tom Tracey

Three months inside that  
prison  
looking at  
nothing but thistles  
and sky

then angels  
sailed to me  
bringing their news  
of the well-healed  
and the heeled;  
something to feed on,  
live by.

### Biography of Author

Tom Tracey is a writer from Dublin who has published and podcasted poetry in Ireland and internationally. In 2018, he was selected as one of Poetry Ireland's 'Introductions' Series poets. In April of this year, distressed by the Russian invasion, he organised a local Football Fundraiser in aid of UNICEF in Ukraine, raising €1350 in just one evening.

The poem's title alludes to Yulia Paievska, the brave Ukrainian paramedic, onetime POW, and founder of the eponymous ambulance corps (Taira's Angels).



## **Destruction**

By Rachael Stanley

What is to be done about  
history repeating itself?

Around the world's streets  
civilians huddle in shelters  
to flee from the mayhem  
and madness of murder.

Soldiers attack, soldiers defend  
babies die, streets run red.

Aggressors sit in their bunkers  
of paranoia, all they can see  
lines on maps, chunks of territory,  
politicians look at strategy, some  
look for solutions,  
but children die and streets run red.

What is to be done about the human  
propensity for evil, for destruction?

The sun is unfailing in its generosity  
as it casts its life giving rays upon earth  
air keeps us alive, water sustains us.  
What is it that we cannot see?

## **Ukraine 2022**

By Rachael Stanley

Upon this Hellish earth  
Kissing death  
Razing its cities to rubble  
Anger tearing lives to shreds  
In all of this  
Needless violence  
Endless night descends.

### **Biography of Author**

Rachael Stanley's poems have been published in journals and anthologies both in Ireland and abroad. She is a member of Rathmines Writer's Workshop. She lives in Dublin.

## Post War

By Sylwia Klus

the amount of pain I have seen god  
when I believed  
you were looking over my shoulder  
did you see your own reflection in that puddle of blood  
my head was deserted  
and my stomach was already emptied too  
I couldn't hold in any food  
I wish all the emotions would come out  
just as easily as that vomit did  
I shat acid and potato peels on the wall and my dress  
god were you with me when my stomach was sick from hurt  
when like an open wound oozing  
it was shooting acid god  
were you with them who terrified held guns  
directed at their neighbours  
impersonated distinctions  
god where you were not to whisper in their ear  
stood by  
or spirit-like lingering did you soak up their despair

there is nothing left except  
a woman  
feeling sick by the smell of blood

## Biography of Author

Polish/Irish academic and writer, working in the NGO sector in Ireland.

## Every Hour

By Claudia Crampton

Guns flailing, babies wailing  
An appeal for peace denied  
He's not a soldier but a son  
Now she's a mother without one  
History thought it had taught us how not to treat each other  
Now a blind man seeks refuge beneath the body of his brother  
They can't afford to stop the war but have every intent to fund it  
A government for the people will kill its people and dig the hole  
Their incessant need for greed, like a weed we can't control  
Somehow they succeed in exceeding my expectations  
The means to which they obtain it has no limitations  
Money-hungry politicians quench their thirst with blood  
Try to justify murder as if they're just misunderstood  
As if remorse is really something that runs through their blood  
Media corporations are happy to comply  
As long as the cheque is big enough they'll turn a blind eye  
Misinform, misrepresent, skew portrayals and then deny  
Who do I trust if everywhere I look it's a lie  
The world is many colours, why do some people hate it?  
Reap inspiration from the past and feel the need to recreate it  
Take what they don't own, disrespect and desecrate it  
Don't stop to rethink it, reconsider or debate it  
Until the desire for peace tames the need for power  
We'll be grieving every second, every minute, every hour.