

# OUTBURST

Online publications such as *Outburst* have created space in the once excluding world of Irish publishing that presents their editors with a rare moment to actually make a difference.. How well that moment will be exploited depends as much on the vision, the courage and the integrity of the editor as on the material submitted for publication. For, make no mistake, we are at a seminal moment, a new dawn, in Irish poetry. Our awesome responsibility demands a fastidious dedication to our vision , on the one hand, for there may be a thousand blooms in this revolution, and the courage to challenge received opinion on the merits of Irish poetry heretofore, on the other. All around us this new dawn is breaking; in the many online journals like *Wordlegs*, *The First Cut* and the wonderful hard copy *Poetry Bus*, to mention a mere three worthy examples,. That many exciting new poets have been denied access to long established print journals is a shameful reflection on the editorial boards of those well subsidized publications, but does not seem to matter a whit to the poets, for in truth many have turned their back on

them and left them to their cronies from the past. *Outburst* is here to welcome the submissions of poets of the new era. We will be fastidious, but we will not ask 'what did you do in the war?'. In Eavan Boland's beautiful words

Stars rise.

Moths flutter.

Apples sweeten in the dark.

## ON HALLOWED GROUND

Those golden leaves, that trickled down,  
upon that hallowed, ancient ground –  
Those raven beauties, dark as night –  
The waking day, so dense that cloud.

I could see my world from that perch, high –  
A fading moment, lost in time –  
Winter's breath, ever one with mine –  
Knowledge – lessons of reason; myth; rhyme.

I was born too late, lived too early –  
It was reason – that reason kept me sane –  
Hope did not perch in my soul, but,

I heard her echoes, all the same.

Hold such moments dear, so dear –

Cherish them, each time you wake –

When it breaks you down, you see them clear –

James O'Sullivan

## AWAKENING

Your body is a dead weight against me

It holds me under like an angry swell

With hips that crush and knock

And buckle

Bone against bone

To the hymn of

An arduous grind

When I leave

There will surely be less of me

You are ablaze

But I am on the outside now

Having risen above elbows

Knees and the thorny ambience

I am peering down

On an almost bank of cloud

At two faceless heretics

That shift form

And blur at the edges

Before descending into a graceless repose

I can never be totally present with you

I splinter and break up

Filling the room

Becoming the walls

The ceiling

The fold in the curtain

Fixated on

Aesthetics and tangibles

When I at last emerge  
From this escapist's haven  
Back into our cocoon of aloofness  
I lie with you in the wearisome stillness  
Embittered and cynical beyond my years

Emma O'Dwyer

*Poem To The Field Workers Of Ireland And Britain*

Fear no more  
the heat of the  
sun  
For it is held captive  
over  
Australia  
By China  
accused of spying  
for someone.

Phil Lynch

## FIRST MARK

With this first mark,  
I make a path — stepping stone words  
through an otherwise empty space.

With this repetition, I strengthen,  
widening the space,  
invite others to follow.

Now that the path has been drawn,  
— the questions. Why here? Why now?

Each new poem exploring,  
this wondrous garden,  
where we weeds have grown.

Niall O'Conor

## THE ICE AGE COMETH

it happened slowly  
drop by drop  
my blood froze  
at first a slight tingle  
and then all feeling gone

I did not notice  
guarding my pain  
my boiling anger  
hidden deep inside  
  
one day it leaked out  
I raged, melted down

but then cool calm came

stopped the defrost

dead

fully frozen now

my rage has gone out

I feel nothing

but when I meet a fiery

body, the radiating heat

the painful throbbing

of a thaw begins

until I flee

in the shade of the mountain ash

I dig my fingers deep

into the snow

I seek the cold

|

## **A SOLE RIFF**

wimmin totter tipping

wimmin titter toppling

walking on high pitch

ground base space

left for the soft soled

light footed well booted

Fiona Bolger

**HOUSE INSPECTION**

The girlish faces of the new daffodils  
craned their necks, bowed their heads,  
dying to make the May altar;  
a carpet of moss spiked with grass  
was bulging out over the kerb;  
brambles, those cheeky trespassers,  
came streeling around the corner;  
windows of sunworn carpet  
shadowed the sitting room floor;  
graduate photographs stained the walls,  
kitchen chairs with their backs up  
were kneeling at the table,  
the duvets slack and cold  
were laid out on the beds.

The usual closing documentation  
to be furnished to the solicitor.

### **THE BEGINNING OF POETRY**

The sun crouching low  
angled a square of burnt light;  
  
the train gathering speed  
slung a full bucket of sound;  
  
a sheet flapping and slapping  
caught a full sail of wind;

nervous mouseleaves

scurried across the road;

the singular applause of the

pigeons clapped-out routine;

a cloud of skittish starlings

blackened out the whole field;

the sea coming and going

frothing its hems on the sand;

her face in the rear view mirror

wearing a blindfold of light;

the goosepimple rash

sprinkling across the night sky;

the calf words kicking their heels

bouncing in the abundant fields.

Liam Ryan

## SOME CAT HAIKU

sitting on the grass  
cat massages my back  
back and forth

summer pruning  
his claw marks still  
on the tree trunk

(For Brahms RIP)

Maire Morrissey-Cummins

## HAIKU

crane fly wanting in  
attracted by lamplight ~

we both shudder

moth caught in web

slowly its wings stop beating ~

no escaping now

perfect pink cloud

dips behind lamma hills~

birdless sky.

Aine MacAodha

## BORROWED

See fur-coated busker plucking  
with ballerina's grace.

Sonata in crisp autumn air floating  
above Wellington Place.

See dark robed preacher reciting  
(Cicero on a soapbox).

Hell-fire Psalms. Gesticulating  
bare knuckled rocks.

See salesmen, wool capped, shouting  
'Three for a Pound'.

Black market floggers. Everything  
lost *and* found.

See Hare Krishnas singing, swaying,  
clapping interminable.

On deaf ears music falls; competing  
all things electrical.

See bearded homeless reclining  
on doors (Staff Only).

Shoppers bee-line, avoiding  
the hapless and lonely.

See writers watching, borrowing  
images unsolicited,

noting IOUs: To wondrous living...

no harm intended. **Michael Loughran**

## PHONE

*Phone shaped like a ladybug.*

Your buzz makes my man

Stand to attention

His shifty eyes

Recalling an action figure

From the toy box long ago.

*"Who goes there?"*

A silent prayer.

An old friend, perhaps.

A wrong number.

The playful tingle

Of the text sounds

A breeding ground

For microbes and whispers.

Whispers coil in

Ears and snarl

In hair.

Reverberate.

Produce megaphones

For the double-cross.

*"Who goes there?"*

No one.

The phone is a cockroach.

Ubiquitous,

Obtrusive,

Omnipotent.

A full stop.

## **PENCIL**

You were not there

When the world fell apart.

I had no shoulders

But stood upright

Smooth on all sides

Like a pencil.

Heavy as lead

On the inside.

Why did you leave

Me then?

When one word could

Have changed

The meaning.

But there was no context.

What next?

I draw a thin line.

## MERCIFUL RELEASE

Day opens her piss-flaps  
Curling like some flower  
Dandelion  
And I recline  
Am folded by hands  
That creased me  
Wrung me  
I am marred by the collapse  
Of violence.

Your face  
A play on memory  
Pale and strange  
When I am underwater.

Yellow curtains  
Pathetic as Van Gogh's Sunflowers  
Heave and weep  
Urinous light.

Then you, humming bird,  
Kiss me.  
Sticky honey tongue.  
Hum hum  
Hum hum  
Hum cum Humdrum.

Ghosts linger in blue doorways  
Like the contrails of jets  
Walking the line  
In the sky.  
I fall from underwater.  
Or is it the sky?  
The sky is falling.

My sanity wears  
The Ladybird shell  
Avoids bright lights  
Bell jars and the  
Sudden movement of your hand.

## **BITTEN BY ITTEN**

Vampires are in vogue again.

Vapid dilettantes and academic men

Spin curses in the Horseshoe bar

Not far from Taylor's gallery.

If you could only see yourself

As I do. I hold a mirror up for you.

Let's quit this joint.

The ritual of superficial

Draws me too.

The creative artist's

Superglue for the super ego.

Let's paint the town red tonight

Talk beneath the Christmas lights

Of music and older friends.

I want to slide down your eyelids

Into your core, learn your language,

Cruise control.

Watch as you bend to reach,

A busker's guitar case on Grafton Street.

## EGGS

His poems are words upon words

Like eggs smeared with henshit.

They could be free range or organic –

Who knows? Too calculated to be risky.

I buy 30 for 1.99 in Liberties Market

And dodge small boys with girls' earrings

Who have never heard of Jackson Pollock

But make an impression on the

Bottom of Francis Street and day-trippers,

A stone's throw from the Bad Art Gallery

Which is pretty all right if you like

Mia Funk and well-built women

Doing dirty things with bananas.

That's the problem with men

Who are too into blow jobs

More words upon words

Like eggs smeared with henshit –

Stylised, idolised.

Karen O'Shea

## **ROAD TO AUNT BRIDIES**

A zoroastrian sky burst into morning

blitzing the Bradford skyline.

The scales of beauty in Yorkshire

tip heavily away from the

reality of Delph Hill.

Young lads needing something

stare from hoodies at the bus station.

We have an eye fight before I grab the

morning paper from the vendor.

Cerberus like dogs sniff at my jeans

their steely gaze fixed;

waiting the nod from it's trainer.

I fear the worst,

my heart races; I play cool

sort of read the headlines.

The estate gets scarier as I go deeper.

Aunt Bridies is sandwiched between

the heroine addicts flat

and a pensioner holding fort.

Her garden beams magically with

Geraniums and a summer seat

the young joiner made,

she deplores the word junkie,

looks on him as a man down on his luck.

## SUMMER BREEZE

the breeze is a welcome cape against aging skin.

Aine MacAodha

The breeze fainting through the window

brings heavy chimney smoke.

Gentle today, not like November

when it tore at the attic door

an angry warrior imprisoned with

tribal art unlike his own.

Not like March when the daffodils

had barely time to sprout

shaking them to the core

their yellowing heads bowing to his strength.

No, this May day wet and clammy

## **RESPONSIBILITY**

on the other side of the street

coupons of hope

were given away as a try-out

we even unleashed

crippled thoughts

they went to console their nerves

in a drive-in bar

coupons have been wasted

now we hide from

the consequence of the future time

let's take our souls

to people with different faces

and to the world of a drunk nature

it will look like

an overall tragic element

fades away

Ciesielska Julia

## HUNGER

Just give me the word. (What word?)

The word of who's next on the list – who's next to say 'yes'.

Just give me the word.

And I'll say no – nil by mouth  
but water and free speech  
speak of a man willing to break  
out of his own ribcage with no  
more than a whisper and sigh  
the blackness of coma and white  
prison sheet drawn over his eyes

Just give me the word. (What word?)

Nothing.

Nothing that can restrain like a screw

nothing that can prepare

like training for battle

with oneself

this regime

the terror of self-non-self

just give me the word

heat

heat that once coursed

through this body

with each breath

cold

cold as

cold as the grave of a body

in which to bury a self

cold as Voltaire

cold as a poker seems

when held long enough in a fire

to glow white-hot

so the end can be licked

without losing one's tongue

for the word to form in the mouth

just give

me the word

Alan Garvey.

## **GLOSSY WAX APPLES, HOLLOW**

Colm Delaney

A hand placed lightly on the faint orange glow of a sun-kissed (the bottle claimed) shoulder, it said I love you in the most inoffensive way; by placing a physio-territorial claim. The shoulder belonged to a woman. The hand to a man. The woman wore a deep emerald dress which was cut to her curvature, flattering to the eye. And both were approved recipients of the others' touch. It was pre-ordained, their meeting, and possibly this touch, certainly from the perspective of the man who had intended to place it there, delicately. They both had names. The man wore a suit with the faintest of pinstripes and a tie which supposedly matched the deep emerald of his counterpart's dress, but in all actuality was closer to neon than any tie should be. They both had high octane jobs with elevated positions which had been promised and then fulfilled, the woman held a lofty managerial position in an insurance firm while the man was a 'free-lance entrepreneur', primarily invested in a motor-sales company (his presence on the board was paramount after it was arranged, by no broken promise, that he should hold the weighted shares). Economically matched and reciprocally single, their inevitable meeting was a statistical anomaly in their respective

fields, though neither of them held the term 'fate' in high regard. Their chance meeting was organised by blindfolddate.com, a Silicon Valley start-up with the ingenuity to cater for the love/hate felt by sentient beings for surprises. An anonymous profile, which is drafted from a collection of personal information (with permission, and after a series of tests are taken in order to establish that, yes indeed, you are human and, no, not a psychopath) gathered from pre-existing social networks. It's a possibility, however slim, that the match is completely off; rendering the whole process obsolete. His mind was a maze of metaphorical gears, grinding and rusting off each other in an attempt to place this woman, he had definitely met her before. His gaze was familiar to her, it seemed blunt and unassuming, a vacant loft whose last tenant was a suicidal insurance salesman. Still, familiar nonetheless and she would perhaps perspire trying to locate it in her memory. It reminded the deep emerald lady of her previous date arranged by the site, which had gone disastrously wrong.

The waiter is evidently faking his French shell and underplaying the visual facts of his Italian extraction by wearing a necktie at a clichéd angle while emitting a poor, poor vocal improv (the diction and diphthong were incredulously misplaced). The light from the receding dusk forced an oblique shadow frame through the

window, giving the air a wispy layer of light dust which could easily conjure images from any Mediterranean adolescence. His mother's admonished scream of 'Vincenzo!' when she walked in on him and an acquaintance sharing a curiosity kiss which had lingered for a little while too long. How she, regrettably, upon the sight of her only son, blessed herself with the cross around her neck as though the prayers of retrospective woman could invoke the interest of an absentee God and encourage it to intervene on this singular occasion in the history of the world to 'convert' her son to a heterosexual . Not on Vincenzo's watch, sister. This character, Vincenzo, was nothing but an obscure memory to the entity which presided over the lover's table.

'My name hiiiis *Pierre*, haigh will be yougre waiterr this evening, please, take thise menus'

The hissing was a direct result of the universally acknowledged camp lisp which was born out of the monstrosity that was the 80's, in itself it whispers: I am comfortable with who I am. Pierre was a direct result of Vincenzo's inability to be himself. Pierre would have fought at length with Mama Scapatti, resenting her use of ardent Catholicism as a means of repression, he replayed some of the more dramatic acts of his life with 'Pierre' as the title role (for the purpose

of clarification it will be noted that 'P.V' is put in place of the original Vincenzo and the assumed role of Pierre, alter ego does not denote m.p.d: Pierre re-enacts actual events of Vincenzo's life)

Mama: Son, you know your mother will always love you

PV: Of course, Mama

Mama: Mama loves you but God frowns upon...

PV: Mama, God loves us all for who we are, not who we sleep with

Mama: Don't break your mothers heart Vincenzo! You are my child; I love you like the Virgin Mother loved her only son, like that beautiful painting, Madonna with baby

PV: Madonna with child? I'm sure it's beautiful, but the only Madonna and child I adore involves Guy Ritchie and a few adoption papers.

A smile broke across Pierre's face as he came back to take the order. She was having the Portobello mushrooms sautéed in a light garlic butter to start, followed by an entrée of shredded chicken risotto with a pesto garnish. Not a fan of starters, he had the fillet mignon, medium to rare, with coating of mustard and chive and a side of

pommes frites. House red for the gentleman and a mild chardonnay for the lady, following the meat to wine cultural obligations.

‘So “hepburn\_76”, if I may call you that, your profile said you were an avid skier, is that correct or did we embellish a little?’

‘Well “gen\_u\_wine\_6pack” I’d say all our little embellishments add to the mystery. I’ve been twice, but I’m quite a quick learner’

‘You don’t believe my six pack? Oh it’s there, under a protective layer of padding, to stop the other boys getting jealous at the pool.’

It was a tired routine, the dating scene both on and offline was so predictable. Katherine, that was her offline name, she does like skiing, but she prefers low-key holidays, right now she was wondering how much embellishment she invested in her profile, and at what stage she would come clean. She liked the restaurant though, the wood-panelled walls to waist length, the stonework which continued up from the edging, the tastefully misplaced curtains (not there to intentionally conceal either day or night, or indeed anything at all). Most of all the table, elbow room, rustic unscented candle, solid grounding with none of that irritating wobble and yet intimate

enough should the occasion arise, or should he rise to the occasion.

All in all, the situation seemed:

‘Charming’

‘What?’

‘Oh nothing, sorry, so...your profile didn’t mention your real name, do you have one?’

‘Of course, Nicholas, how do you do? And you?’

‘Katherine, I do quite well thank you for enquiring’

A little twinge of discomfort caused the muscles around N’s eye to contract, which was perceived as a wink. Katherine did not like winks. Full of flirtatious condescension. Prick. Nicholas did not like winks either. Shit. Think of something. But don’t admit you’re nervous.

‘Must be the heat, sometimes I react badly’

Pretend you didn’t notice. But don’t let the bastard away with it.

‘Quite alright, I’d never expect such a lecherous gesture from a man of your apparent stature’

## **Interlude in G major:**

### *Allegretto*

II: #nicholas, as a child, was born to relatively average middle class folk who regularly fertilized their lawn and harboured resentment toward each other with regard to how they each had prevented the other from becoming their true inner selves thus not only clipping each other's wings but causing the other to fly so ridiculously low that even Daedalus would have encouraged altitude. They also bickered regularly over bills and holidays, losses and expenditure and their menial income. Hell, they even complained when their lobster bisque was second rate. When #nicholas was 8 (s) he attended a birthday, which was housed alongside the unveiling of stone set grillmaster barbecue and adjacent garden dining area (a place for the parents to schmooze while the kids ate and prepared themselves for a period of intense hyperactivity followed by a sugar coma). The children played hide and seek and they had a treasure hunt. That night he saw something that would possibly alter his/her perception of relationships in later life. *Da Capo Aria* (replacing #nicholas with #katherine) :II

As it happens the entrees were delayed, but this was not a problem. Nicholas had read many guides and clippings on the topic of first date disasters and impressions; he knew that appearing either frustrated or impatient at this point could lead to an unfavourable opinion, a reflection on his life outside the restaurant. If the date goes wrong Nicholas knows that this Katherine, who could potentially be marriage material, would leave with that one unfavourable thought lingering. Over the course of the night and the next day she would dissect and question his actions, words, body language and demeanour with this sepia-toned outlook. This was not an option, appear cool, collected. Remember you chose the restaurant.

'It's not like them to take so long, Pierre?'

'Yes sir?'

'Is everything ok back there? Christian hasn't sliced his fingers off has he?'

'Oh, how funny, Monsieur! Heavens no, you know this man, he is a perfectioniste'

‘Well tell him that I’m hungry, less than perfect will have to suffice’

‘Of course’

‘Sorry about that, the service is usually quite prompt. I’m not sure what has gotten into Christian these days, I heard that his wife left him, but anytime a wife leaves him he throws himself into the kitchen with reckless abandon. His signature dish, the ‘Hunter’s Babylon’, the fillet of venison glazed with a quail egg wash accompanied by a Spanish onion and white truffle jus, it’s very rich I’ve only managed it once, was a direct result of his most tempestuous divorce. His ex-wife, Maria, perhaps the most beautiful export of the Iberian Peninsula, walked in on him and one of the waitresses, well, let’s just say, the man has many uses for that egg wash brush. Her temper flared and she lunged at them both with half-prepped sea bass, anyway, I jest, but I digress, tell me a little more about yourself’

I hate this question. I really do, it’s a date, not a job interview though some of the gradients between the two are as indistinguishable as deep blue and indigo. It’s a question of what I

can bring to the present company, my qualities and achievements. The bastard.

‘That’s a broad one, what would you like to know?’

Please God ask something interesting. What direction do I like my areoles massaged? Have I ever drop-kicked a child that was crying in a supermarket while giving the mother a backhander? Details and specifics, quirky and interesting.

‘What’s your favourite colour?’

Not too bad, It’s a risky move.

‘Indigo’

‘Why’

‘Because not everybody can see it, if it is a real colour’

‘It’s part of the spectrum isn’t it’

‘They say Newton had six and just wanted to round it to seven, so he made it up’

‘So what makes you think that you can see it then?’

‘It’s beautiful to see what’s not there, supposedly’

‘That’s an interesting take on things. But there is a chance that it does exist, and your private colour might not be so private after all’

Why does he feel the need to say that? He doesn’t know the significance of the colour, what it means to me, how my father used to describe Newton, Einstein, Hawking to me as fabricated bedtime stories with a little fantasy thrown in for good measure. It is my colour, it exists. Whether he sees or doesn’t is inconsequential.

‘I’m willing to share; I’m not greedy when it comes to the prism. Anyway, you seem like a nice guy. Why haven’t you been snapped up?’

‘I was going to ask you the same thing, but I think we both know. Busybodies have very little time for others. I’m a divorcee, twice over, thanks to my obsession with my job, according to ex-wife one, and because I’m aloof and impenetrable according to ex-wife numero duo. Naturally they claimed I was the cause and my wallet the solution. I wish them well.’

I was ‘cold, calloused and clandestine’; my ex-husband was one of the (il)literate, he had no money I could take, guess we’re just two

lonely souls. Searching, that’s what we do, looking for compatibility, that one other soul that fits snugly with yours. SWF seeking TDMM. SS Hope dashed against a rock after its maiden voyage. Maybe we’ve spread ourselves too thinly, as a species, maybe procreation with a virile knucklehead who’ll wear out his usage value by the time he’s 35 is an option I shouldn’t have ruled out. The bar, maybe I’ve set it too high, what woman doesn’t want a man capable of being cut like Gerard Butler, with the cognitive capacity of Stephen Hawking, and also the artistic nonchalance of Johnny Depp. While we’re at it throw in some three day designer stubble, an Italian tailor made suit and the empathy (and anti-solipsistic worldview) of Sir Bob Geldof. Hell, throw in the sexual prowess of George Best in his heyday and the consummate cheeky gentleman’s approach à la Michael Caine and we have ourselves a deal. If such divinity did exist, there’s no guarantee that I would be his type. Maybe I don’t have a choice in the matter, I heard a story once that we are beings who choose our forms and choose who we’re born to, and that our lives are laid out for us, and indeed a suitable suitor, it was just a story but, it’s something to believe in, oh nevermind.

‘Dessert?’

**Our warmest thanks go out to our contributors :**

**James O'Sullivan**

**Emma O'Dwyer**

**Phil Lynch**

**Niall O'Conor**

**Fiona Bolger**

**Liam Ryan**

**Maire Morrissey-Cummins**

**Aine MacAodha**

**Michael Loughran**

**Karen O'Shea**

**Ciesielska Julia**

**Alan Garvey.**

**Colm Delaney**

Thanks to all of you who have submitted your poems and short stories to us. Unfortunately we had to reject quite a lot, not necessarily because they weren't up to standard, they just don't satisfy our vision. Fiction is a real problem, as you see . We are not interested in the old fashioned narrative. Sometimes we think that Samuel Beckett didn't exist (all puns intended).