

AGENDA

BROADSHEET 11

Welcome to Broadsheet 11 which demonstrates the tremendous life, music and talent in young poets, and artists.

The artist represented here, **Áine Ní Chiobháin**, 27, and **Greg Delanty**, whose 50th Birthday is celebrated in the parallel Atlantic Crossings issue of Agenda, Vol 43 No 4/Vol 44 No 1, both come from Cork. Áine's paintings shown here illustrate her vision of the sea and of Cork City in Southern Ireland.



Faraige agus Scammal

Áine trained in Fine Art at the Crawford College of Art and Design, Cork, and found inspiration in film and new media. Cityscapes flickered through a symbiotic relationship between traditional painting and film installation.

She draws her inspiration from the instances of pagan ritual still extant in urban settings, from the rugged Kerry landscape, to the backstreets of Cork and the urge to document the beauty of stillness.

With a parallel working life in film production, she has spent the past years immersed in a grimey, urban world of night-shoots, giving her urban paintings an urgency and authenticity ripped from the streets. She filters a knowledge of the syntax of the moving image back into her work with paint and representational images.

Her work can be found in the Greenlane Gallery, Holy Ground, Dingle, County Kerry, Ireland. www.greenlanegallery.com

Geraldine Walsh (25) graduated from University College Dublin in 2004 with a BA (Hons) in English and Greek and Roman Civilisation. She has just completed the Postgraduate Diploma in Information and Library Studies from Robert Gordon University, Scotland and works as Senior Library Assistant in Dublin's Rotunda Hospital medical library. Geraldine writes poetry, prose and short stories and was short-listed for the Fish Publishing One-Page Competition in 2008 for her very short story *Big Sister*.

Lessons Learned

I shuffle behind my mothers DVT legs,
Laughter crackling to the rooftops
Of the seven doors house – I counted –
Seeing the old lady's aura, a pink and red
Flickering glow, dance vibrantly behind her
Purple washed hair, netted in curtains,
Her hands withering, clasping onto the
Sofas hard-edged armrest, fingernails
Ripping at the lace coverings that avoid
Tea stains and chocolate on the arms,
Hiding the natural colour of its ten years.

The voice that beckons tea to be made,
Biscuits to be placed on Wedgwood plates,
And soft drinks to be poured for the "childers,"
That's "children" to you and me – apparently –
Shouting, "Watch the crumbs" as I place
My five year old hand beneath my chin, noticing
The morsels that dash from her mouth, bound
With the old woman's saliva, hitting the fire grate,
Thinking, if she eats anymore the fire will go out,
You were seventy-five, the oldest teacher I had,
That was the day I started spitting on the fire.

How to put words to this sentiment

It's like everything has become dispersed and is floating high over the tops
Of the MacGillicuddy Reeks, dangerously close to no oxygen

And it's like your bones are packed so tightly into clean jam jars waiting
For next seasons blackberries to be picked from O'Grady's Farm

It's like blindly looking for Malachy's field with the one-shoed horse, by the calves
To the left of the rusted barn with overgrown ivy to the east, with ease

And it's like remembering what they said to you when you were five
Standing in the rockery of your grandmothers garden painting gnomes

It's like getting to the top of the Laxey Wheel and realising you are afraid
Of heights, looking down and feeling your stomach was left below

And it's like wondering if he will ever call, or if it will snow or if summer will come
Early this year, or if it is really bad luck to cross a black cats path

It's like ears pricking at the sound of thunder and watching for lightning
Through the browning net curtains of the small kitchen window

And it's like letting the gale force wind push you down the hill or allowing the sun
To burn only your left side as you drink lemonade on someone else's porch

It's like watching the grey hairs of your loved one spread from the top of their head
To their eyebrows, whiskers and the light hairs on the top of their left foot

And it's like skipping stones on a smooth lake, leaving dust clouds behind you
As you roll down sand dunes, or scraping your knee when you're seven

It's when you don't know how to put words to this feeling but it's bubbling
In the tips of your toes forcing you to stand on tiptoe like a soft-footed dancer

It's innocence and truth, hunger and thirst, pain and pleasure, agony and hope
It's every feeling you've ever felt tightly tied in bubble wrap waiting to be popped

David Owen is 20 years old, and in his third year of a creative writing degree at the University of Winchester. His home town is Penge, a south-eastern suburb of London. Next year he plans to take a Masters degree in Writing for Children.

Eight Easy Pieces

A brawl between Eastenders and Corrie
has broken out amongst the beds,
fizzing like cats when the signal dips.

I cut an orange into eight easy pieces
that Dad won't eat
because I've touched them.

He isn't like a cancer patient in a soap,
thumbs twiddling in a private room
til the extras turn him loose.

His face is torched and melted,
hands like inflated latex gloves.
It wasn't him the first time

I looked round the curtain,
just the dregs of him -
bald, anonymous, proud.

Why can't your sister keep a job?
Does your writing have any point?
He moans a lot; he's healthier than he thinks.

I talk rhetoric about the weather.
He says he hears school children in the morning.
The ward does not have any windows.

Amused Panda

Sandra wishes she could read
a book while she walks.
Her arms are steadied on the counter
of the Denmark Hill *Amused Panda* Chinese,
the oily waiter packing foil tubs
into a Tesco carrier bag.

Sandra becomes the girl in the dress,
firm-calved on the Bakerloo Line,
feet decoding her headphone fuzz,
someone who could find the words
to trace the loosely braided tendrils
of a river into a song, a poem.

Sandra lifts a strand of chow mein
and coils it on her tongue.
If only she were good at rhyming.

Let it Thunder to the Tune of Greensleeves!

An ice-cream van slips through a downpour,
chimes rattling to the tune of Greensleeves.
It feels for the kerb but does not stop;
no child braves a dash through the rain.

*Alas, my love, you do me wrong,
To cast me off discourteously...*

Stranded shoppers breathe smoke into
the hazy air, rub coats in shop fronts.
Idly they sink fag ends, fingered and spent,
into greyed deadpan puddles.

*Greensleeves was all my joy.
Greensleeves was my delight...*

Forgotten washing sags under its burden of water,
strains at the pegs that cling to the line
like children tugging their mother's sleeve,
attention starved and thirsting for home.

*Now I remain in a world apart,
But my heart remains in captivity...*

Thrown open by the steady insistence of rain,
a recycling bank sputters to the brim,
lifting wine bottles for a final toast
as they come apart on concrete.

*And even so, I still remain,
A lover in captivity...*

Littered and dog-fouled, an overgrown field
purls in the wind, the shape of someone, pressed into the grass,
shaken free as enough blue sky
to make a sailor's trousers find the horizon.

*For I am still thy lover true,
Come once again and see me*



Bonfire Night I

Ryan Pugh is 24. He has been writing poetry since college, though only started taking it seriously at University during his creative writing course. He has since been involved in helping to organise a local writer's group and often recite poetry at readings in and around Norwich and North Norfolk. He has recently started a band called *Characters From Books*. He has found writing lyrics a very good way of getting poetry heard by a broader, younger audience.

Stickers

Primary School playtimes in June
The tops of the trees are washed in light
By a sun
That turns red roof tiles golden

My black shoes slam on the tarmac
I throw my leg into the mix
And score the winner

My celebration
Takes me close the girl's bench
Where they sit and pretend not to notice us
I jump
Once
Twice
James climbs on my back
And we fall down
Into a mess of laughter

– Ah, did it ever get any sweeter.

Caroline Clark, 32, was a chosen Broadsheet poet in the *Lauds* issue of *Agenda*, Vol 43, Nos 2-3, and her essay, 'What Lies Ahead' comprises the Notes for Broadsheet Poets 11 in the double *Atlantic Crossings* issue of *Agenda*, Vol 43 No 4/ Vol 44 No 1. She comes from Lewes in Sussex, has lived in Russia and now resides in Montreal.

Family Likeness

We pass occasionally on foreign stairs, perhaps
one day we'll sit and talk. "We're almost twins
you know, born two generations apart." I'll seek
to break the bond. Born on the first of the month
true, both with two brothers, but me in the middle.
Languages, yes, were all we could do but look
at the places they've taken us. "Now ask, now ask." And I ask,
am I to leave my bones abroad like you?

Your legs, your legs, she'll say, what I'd do for such legs.
The accent's there. Forty years of foreignness
keeping her apart. Walkéd, talkéd, touchéd.
Betrayed by tongue each day. Lengthen those vowels,
contract your past tenses – walked, talked, touched.
"And what of your future children?" Alright, are they
to have an accent not my own? Be born in a place
not my home? "So you know home is not where you make it?
Enough now with tempting fate. Just you wait, just wait."

Now the Tides have Run

For Lewes

A shadow by half past three
darkens the land to yellow

liquid slats of light
sketch across the sky

as the molten winter sun
sets through blackened trees;

a blackbird's stuttered cry
darts from house to fence,

for now the tides have run
from hill to field to furrow,

now the tides have run
the lantern moon has come.

Flint Finds

С чего начать?

Всё трещит и качается...

Where should we start?

Everything cracks and reels...

O. Mandelstam

I walk
the chalk track west
(familiar ground)
to watch the sun flare red,
the silvering of the sea.
Overhead
a plane offers up last chance prayers,
promises never to leave again,
be happy with the things we have –
the trees press through
darker, violet, gold –
to love the things we know.

I reach
higher ground
(forgetfulness or flight),
flint nuggets
dusty as bones
erupt into my land.
Secret finds
waiting to be unearthed,
cracked, split open
stone on stone.
Fault lines run deep
inside this flinted world.
All things ignite,
this night, galaxies streaked with milky stars;
we'll strike new sparks from the things we know.

Morandi's Dream

Noon arrives on Via Fondazza, siesta
lulls the shuttered air with rosemary, pine,
melon skin, rind, pockets of thyme, and crests a

wave across earth-worn streets and skyline
to find him caught inside the midday maze
of absence. He watches a bottle of wine,

vases, jugs and jars. A cool wall. A haze
of dust. Stark sunlight. Shapes stir then emerge
as still life caught mid-life flounders in his gaze;

one touches the tip of another, lines merge
with subtle intent, blossoming lives of their own.
Love unfurls, turns upwards and out as the curve

of a petal thin rim tracing unknown
folds of life. Likenesses flourish and wane,
saying *never alone, no one is ever alone*;

*and never the same, nothing is ever the same
twice over.* The tree outside his window
presses its weight against the milky pane

with human curves and softness. Long hollow
in his corner bed, he watches figures meet;
the people that are never there follow

on in pairs and trios. Conceit, intrigue, defeat
and death. A cluster of three take the floor,
retreat. Conceal a secret centre. Repeat...

As siesta tugs him away from shore;
he whispers: *I know these things, am these things,*
and signs his name, pleased but wanting more.

Gavin Goodwin was born in 1977 and grew up in Newport, South Wales. He studied English and Creative Writing at Cardiff University. Gavin's poems have appeared in *Fire* magazine, and the 2008 Cinnamon Press anthology, *Black Waves in Cardiff Bay*

Lift

On his knees in the walk-in fridge breathing
pink detergent, he scrubs under shelves of food
with numb hands. The relief of cleaning the deep fryer,
feeling still warm fat sludge through his fingers,
digging out brown wrinkles of potato and batter.

He watches the clock above the bins
he empties after every shift, when the pans
have been scraped clean, the floors swept and mopped.
On the bus home, his head tilts against the cold window –
night falls – his reflection shivers.

Walking from the stop, looking at the ground,
something crackles from the hedgerow. Through dark
he sees a thrush trapped, panicked in leafless mesh.
He pushes his hands in, and pulls lightly at the web
of prickled branches.

The bird fights free, lifting
above the rooftops and telephone wires, vanishing.



Bonfire Night II

Nicola Lewis was born in Cardiff in 1987 and lived in Sully and Llantrisant until she was five when she moved to Milton Keynes. When she was 18, she moved back to Cardiff to study English Literature at Cardiff University. She gained a 2:1 in 2008. This is her first poetry publication.

Redundant

Redundant.
Such an ugly word –
the idea that you're now officially
useless and wasteful.

To see you arriving at my school on a bike,
just cut right through me.
The loss of your car symbolised it all –
your lack of power, mobility, and choice.

But to see you so fiercely determined
to act normal made me admire you
rather than feel pity.

Even now I don't know how you put up with it.
Not working must have driven you insane.
I know you barely slept those few months,
because I often heard you roaming the house at night,
feeling too guilty to enjoy a good night's sleep,
as though it was your fault that we had to make sacrifices.

When I signed on to the dole after finishing Uni,
I can only imagine how much worse you must have felt
walking into that same room full of drunks,
pregnant teenagers and lazy chavs.

Even now, though you've got a job,
I still feel uneasy when I hear that word 'recession'.
My rich friends have no qualms discussing it
as they debate over dinner the causes for the rise in redundancies.
They are so far removed from understanding
what that word can do a family, it just make me feel sick.

Rory Waterman, 28, was born in Belfast but has lived most of his life in various parts of England. He is currently studying for a PhD at Leicester University, and lives in Bristol with his wife. His poems have appeared or are forthcoming in various magazines including *PN Review*, *Stand*, *Staple* and *Obsessed with Pipework*, and he has recently published critical prose on Philip Larkin, Charles Causley, Elizabeth Bishop and John Betjeman. These poems were written in 2006 and 2007.

Stopping for a Moment on Exmoor

An eye-shifting gunburst of warbles!
A flush of starlike trembles
then instant space,
a bobbing twig-branch;

then the trill of a distant wife,
hands-on-hips, compelling me on,
reclaiming me into her life.

Note to Self: Chip Shop Battered Sausage and Other Meat

Though I know it's full of shit
I cram it in,
savour disgusting grease-swill with my tongue,

prod fat-damp batter detritus
with spit-slimed stumps,
and hoist to bird-like upturned open face.

I've seen boys flexing pecs
in dwarfing mirrors—
been one, almost: sought advice on 'loading'

from a brute on a twenty
egg-white diet;
bit lip through curls, each muscle-altering.

I'll take an island. Fat, alone, I'll sit
cross-legged outside
my tent, de-shelling winkles,

the radio half-hissing
football results.
Scanning sea, sand-footed, thinning

to essence.

Walking Through a Lincolnshire Village at 8pm in Late December

This is my county, ever to be home,
now always strange. Seldom visited
by me; for others unitineraried:
too unspectacular a detour, just.

Where rotting barns huddle against churches,
a gunshot of starlings burst from a holt,
cold earth fastens in tractor-wheel chevrons,
and boys come home from universities
on battered Hondas, full of elsewhere.

New houses sprawl where I once kissed a girl
in meadow grass, then practised on my hand.
Half-known faces sip pints down the Lion.
My name will not be called in Orchard Close.
What might have been of me has atrophied.

No. No, that's too romantic. This is where
the bullied schoolkid no-one seemed to know
ripped out a TV cord, stood on a chair,
and kicked, and hoped the banister would hold,
and changed his mind, perhaps. He'll never know.

In that same glowing room now, as I pass,
a bed-robed woman files her nails,
a bald man sips his tea, points the remote...

Fulfilment hovers between
what we are, immutably,
and the silent mass we see
part lives of, in bright windows
on winter evenings, vacant-eyed at tellies,
and would not choose to be.



Bonfire Night III

Omar Sabbagh, 28, is a Lebanese/British poet. His poetry has appeared and/or is forthcoming in many journals, such as *Poetry Review*, *PN Review*, *Stand*, *The Reader*, *Poetry Wales*, and *The Warwick Review*. His first collection, titled, *My Only Ever Oedipal Complaint* is forthcoming with Cinnamon Press in September 2010. He graduated with an MA in creative and life writing from Goldsmiths in 2007 and is currently in his third year of a PhD in English Literature at King's College, London, where he is writing on the representation of time in Conrad and Ford.

Some Do Not...

For Claudia H

The blue jeans again, the blue abyss
Where memory lands on what is redoubled
And doubled again
As red.

Birds cannot sing, my love, birds just can't...

Where memory alights
There and also thence, and also...
I'm the tweezers that are the tweezers
Depending from every pore of skin
So deeper: *with a wail everything begins*

But then, that was then, and birds *can't* sing...

Berry-Alive

For Tariq Ali...

If you bury me, you'll slit the slitful of berries,
I pray. Wouldn't want to be a live wire, worrying, worrying
For all those agonistic days like a stick in the mud.
They've meddled with me, my love. Their medal-love
Like no other (no *other*.) Bother and bore and bury, yes, bury,
Against a brother of the berries and other
such fruit.

The Uzbek Waitress

For the Uzbek waitress at Cyrano's. Holland Park...

I was wandering in knots, down hills,
I was wandering in platinum which is
Grey and blue and sheen and shine, and, secretly,
all

The colours, all the violets and lavenders....
I'd a ball in the ball of wandering what
Way to seduce her: all my swords were blunted
But one –

The rapier said to me, gauntlet and less,
*Be the sheen of her lone skin, or the air
That rustles it; be the skin's soft melody, its
Leather, a tight, bright, relieved and living*

music.

Unreduced, produce for her, the rapier said.

The Rioja went minty when she told me this,
The oak got bitten. I said to the Uzbek waitress:



Clochar

