

Plan B

bealtainefestival
celebrating creativity in older age

for Bealtaine at Cork City Libraries

Issue 4: Friday 29th May 2020

Sebastian Barry, Laureate for Irish Fiction, 2019–2021, pictured on his visit to Cork City Library.



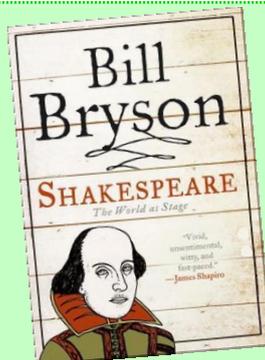
Danielle McLaughlin's stories have appeared in *The New Yorker*, *The Irish Times*, *Southword*, *The Penny Dreadful* and in *The Stinging Fly*. In 2019 she was awarded a Windham-Campbell Prize for fiction and she was Writer in Residence at UCC for 2018-2019.

THOSE THAT I FIGHT I DO NOT HATE

Ranelagh on a summer Saturday, the pavements scattered with blossoms, the air pulsating with the rhythmic thrum of lawn mowers. Kevin stood at the window of the Millers' living-room, watching a dozen or so little girls pose for photos in the front garden. His own daughter was among them, her blonde curls straightened and pinned in a plait, so that at first, in the midst of so many other plaited heads, he hardly recognised her. The Millers lived in a Victorian red-brick near the church, and Fiona Miller had insisted on the party. It was no trouble, she told anyone who attempted to cry off. It would be a treat for the children, and she and Bob were happy to host it, knowing as they did that not everyone was as fortunate as themselves. The girls shrieked and giggled, buzzing with sugar and summer, and then, remembering themselves, they smoothed the skirts of their white dresses and raised small, careful hands to adjust veils and tiaras.

'Lovely, aren't they?' Kevin said, turning to the woman behind the drinks table. The woman frowned. She wasn't the caterer, but one of Fiona Miller's friends, perhaps even one of her sisters, and this placed her firmly in the ranks of people who hated him. 'Great that the rain's held off,' he said, because she could hardly find that objectionable, but she began to move bottles around the table as if they were chess pieces, taking them by the necks, setting them down in their new positions with unmistakable hostility...

The rest of this story is available to read on-line at <https://www.irishtimes.com/culture/books/those-that-i-fight-i-do-not-hate-a-short-story-by-danielle-mclaughlin-1.2468775>



You might like to read...

I have just finished with great enjoyment *Shakespeare: The World as Stage* by Bill Bryson. I can't say I have just finished reading it as I have been listening to it as an Audiobook read by the author. It is from a series of short biographies of "Eminent Men" and is available

in book form also. I'm sure I would have enjoyed it as a book but there is great enjoyment and perhaps less loss of details, from hearing the author's voice. Bryson says that there is practically nothing that can be proved about Shakespeare, the man. He writes chapter after chapter about subjects like the world Shakespeare lived in, the first printed versions of the plays, attempts to ascribe the plays to aristocratic others and the provable 'facts' about Shakespeare. He is measured, critical and witty about them all.

I particularly enjoyed the little details he throws in; that the reconstruction of London's famous Globe Theatre is based on little more than the account of a Dutch tourist of the era who made a rough sketch of the building where he watched plays he couldn't understand, a building which was destroyed by fire, later reconstructed and flattened by German bombs. The great "O" was more likely not circular but oval, as Tudor carpenters had not yet learned everything about crafting oak.

You won't learn anything new in an academic way about the plays and poetry. However you will be entertained and educated in a different way. But then I must confess that I am definitely biased about Bill Bryson and everything he has written.

Claire Mee is a member of the *Second Tuesday Book Club* which meets in The City Library.

Short Story Writing with Sorcha Fogarty

Our final look at Sorcha's tips on mastering the written word!

Everything But the Eyes

Many of us are visually-oriented. We forget that others many respond equally well to a sense of smell or hearing. This creative writing session will focus on the sensory details of taste, smell, hearing, and touch. Anything except the visual. Many writers say they struggle most with appealing to one's sense of smell, yet studies say our strongest memories are linked to specific scents. Patrick Suskind's wonderful novel, *Perfume*, is a perfect example of a writer who can convey the sense of smell like no other – from oils and herbs to brass doorknobs and fresh-cut wood.

Three Tips for Improving Your Multi-Sensory Writing

1. Create a resource list of sensory-rich words

Sound Words - drone, buzz, bark, rumble, rustle, gurgle, bleat, bray, caterwaul, chime, chirp, chortle, chuckle, clash, croak, croon, clunk, fizz, gulp.

Touch ("feeling") Words – spongy, gritty, jagged, feathery, frosty, gnarled, knotted, leathery, oily, puffy, rubbery, sandy, sharp, slimy, smooth, sticky, velvety.

Olfactory Words (relating to the sense of smell) – acrid, earthy, fetid, floral, musty, pungent, rancid, rotten, effluvious, woody, mildewed.

Taste Words – bitter, dry, fruity, peppery, rich, sharp, sugary, sour, tangy, tart, zesty.

2. Expand your Vocabulary

To make your writing more complex and interesting, we need to know more complex and interesting words! Make a point of looking up words you don't recognize. While you are reading, write down words or phrases that speak to you. Make friends with a thesaurus! Download a "word of the day" app. Buy a "new word a day" daily calendar. Stephen Poole's "A Word for Every Day of the Year" 2019, is a fantastic and fascinating glimpse at unique and little-known words (available to order, Cork City Libraries). Be creative in finding new words and using them daily.

3. Be More Present in Your Life

We are consistently surrounded by rich sensory experiences – if we take the time to notice them! The first day of school after a lazy summer. Camping under the midnight sky. The sounds of a rugby/football match. The elderly woman inching her way across the street.

Become a keen observer and recorder of the sensory intricacies of life. Make it a habit to jot down your observations in a notebook, or on a memo pad app on your phone. Quick snippets like, "her hair was the colour of a liquorice shoelace", or "the elderly lady was bent over like a comma" can really jumpstart your creative thinking when you need it.

Sorcha Fogarty is a member of the Bishopstown Library staff



Diongbháilteacht

le Máire Ní Laoire

Seilmidí drúchta

Ag slímsleamhnú

Suas an balla

Chuig an bláthcheapach ardaithe

Ó d'éiríos as an gcath,

Póirseáil timpeall

Bhur gcuardach

I ndubh na hoíche

Lem lampa fóin,

Bhur gcur i mála plaistic,

Ach sraith cluthar teolaí de phiotail róis fúibh,

I dteach tórraimh an bhosca bruscair,

Táim fós im staic

Nach méanair daoibh,

Tig libh na lusanna croí

Fánacha atá fágtha agaibh a shú gan cur isteach

Nuair a shroichfidh sibh

Bhur gceann scribe

Peann agus Pár Irish language creative writing group meets monthly in The City Library.



Music to Our Ears!

I saw the leaflet for FREE ukulele lessons with the HSE in the library on the Grand Parade. I rang the number and hey presto I'm in. I thought it would be an interesting 9 hours. Well, it's been hours and days and weeks and years of fun now actually. But mostly it's been Life Changing. Memory is better. I have made nice friends and I am happier and I have more confidence. I am more than I thought I could ever be at this age. It seems to connect all the spaces in my head and in my life.

Rosarie Crowley confirmed my place on 2nd February 2018 and by 27th February we had the G chord which was a huge step forward. By 6th March we were looking for a name for the group. Charlie Ward coaxed the music into us. We hardly realised how much we were learning - he made it easy and fun. All this happened in the Hollyhill Library where they gave any possible support to ease us forward without hesitation. Always with a smile. The refreshments were key to our chats and bonding.

We are all very different people but there is glue in this group and we are still playing in the library every Tuesday morning (lockdown excepted). We got our taste for performance at concerts the library organised. We are the Holly Ukes and have been seen in gigs in nursing homes and other Cork venues. Lately a zoom group has emerged. Who would have predicted such a development! I recommend this ukulele course to all seniors. Treat yourself. Wonderful project! Thanks!

Maureen Cullinane is a member of the Hollyhill Library

PAUL GOLDEN

I honour Paul Golden who made us pay for our illusions,
But ended each of his shows with a reality check.
Just when our shredded souls had run out of all luck,
When the last Corkman had left for Cricklewood and Camden,
He came into town with a tall brunette, a bell and a book.
He made a two-year old child read Milton's *Paradise Lost*,
The Reagan lad, it was; and Jessie Gallagher crossed
Cappoquin bridge ringing a bell, crying 'Fire! Fire!' But it took
Real genius to make Sister Columba kiss the brunette.
For these sights, we give thanks, Mr. Golden. Such a state
We are in now, such a sorry state: we have illusionists,
Dear sir, casting spells around tribunals, but no reality check,
Nothing like a deluded working-man with a bell
Or a Sister of Mercy who was game for it –
Only this virus which has created such an awful stink;
Only a lockdown in the place where reputations rose and fell.

THOMAS McCARTHY

Poet and retired staff member of Cork City Libraries



**Cork
Film
Festival**

Cork City Libraries have teamed up with *Cork International Film Festival* to allow you to stay home - keep

up the social distancing - while also enjoying cultural cinema from across Europe. 45 films are available including short films by local and national filmmakers whose work was presented in Cork at the Festivals from 2017 – 2019. One particular film by local filmmakers '*Lovestruck*' is about an older lady unlucky in love and is a really charming short. Check it out!

Email patricia_looney@corkcity.ie for your pass today!



Silence.

All so quite now, where not so long ago, so many young men died.
The poppy flower bows in the wind, for the men of before I now cry.
Not a sound, not a peek,
now people want to remember they have nothing to hide.
As it took many years for people to remember these
fallen young dead.
We cry now for them, but for so long we deserted them,
not one of us we said,
But now they lie here, in plots they now call their resting place forever.

Chorus.

Just look at the cross's, look all kinds of names.
From England, Ireland and France,
from all walks of life, bog men, work men,
and others as well, who looked at this war as a game.
Just remember we can all maybe have someone we know
beneath a cross.
Then a padre steps forward and reads from the good book,
and says all that are lying here will have a better life in the
hereafter he swears,
but the thousands of white cross's that stand mute with
nothing to say, not a voice to answer their prayers.
When the padre is finished, we all stand to attention,
and offer up more prayers,
but my heart it is broken as I cannot hold back the tears.

Now Jimmy, and Willy, and Tommy too,
all rest here in their timeless tomb,
all brothers of mine all gone forever,
again no more playing in our home,
told they were hero's, just go there and kill,
the bad men from the Hun,
all bad the Hun they were told, and to watch them all as they run.
Now never again will I see them,
never to run through the fields so free,
as the tears fill my eyes, I cannot see.
The bugler steps forward and plays the last call,
no more will I see them laughing having fun,
as they now lie in the cold sod after the battle of

'THE SOMME'

Chorus.

Sent in by Finbar Bevan, Farranree, Cork.

Redeployed Library Staff Elizabeth McNamara



When Covid-19 closed our libraries, I, along with other colleagues, volunteered to be redeployed. My new job turned out to be with Friendly Call Cork run by Cork City Partnership. Before the outbreak, the organization had 220 clients aided by 27 volunteers; they now have 367 with 50 volunteers.

I've found the Friendly Call posting a natural fit for a library staff member. In normal times, chatting with your regular patrons, many of whom are older and may be a little isolated, was a regular feature of the job. Our links with housebound patrons also show how we actively reach out to vulnerable groups.

Working with Friendly Call has been rewarding. It's a humbling experience to be invited into someone else's life, as it fulfills a basic human need: to be somebody for somebody else. People who have found themselves feeling isolated, through bereavement, illness or because their children and family are living far away, really value the Friendly Call service. It's not so much the speaking as the quality of listening that matters, as I've discovered. Never underestimate the effect of a call and, when you hang up, you do so on that call and not on that person.

Friendly Call Cork is a free phone service, operating Monday to Friday. It is available in the Cork City area to older people and to anyone feeling lonely, isolated or vulnerable. Your friendly caller will chat to you about your day and check that all is well with you or a loved one. If you want to join, either as a volunteer or as a client contact:

brenda.barry@partnershipcork.ie or telephone: 021 – 4301700



We are Cork.

QUIZ TIME!

This is a cartoon postcard of a famous event.

What occasion does it commemorate?



Image courtesy of Michael Linehan

Email or text your answer to patricia_looney@corkcity.ie or 086 6061193. The person who sends the first correct answer will receive a copy of 'Movie Memories' Documentary DVD - articles from which we have featured in our previous newsletters!

Notes on a Nervous Planet

A follow-up to Matt Haig's internationally bestselling memoir, "Reasons to Stay Alive" (2015), a broader look at how modern life feeds our anxiety, and how to live a better life. This book is funny, heart-breaking, heart-mending, warm, insightful, intelligent and full of useful tips on how to navigate our way through life in the 21st century.

In "Notes on a Nervous Planet", Haig, with warmth and wit, shows us how to cope in a world where we are inundated by technology, which in turn can cause a heightened sense of anxiety. Our news is delivered to us 24/7 – as Haig puts it, "we live in a 24-hour society but not in 24-hour bodies".

Technology has increasingly taken centre-stage, as we scroll anxiously through our news-feeds, or wonder why we're not up at 5am yoga-ing along to the latest you-tube fitness video.

Of course, technology is all the more vital now, for staying in touch with loved-ones and friends during this difficult time of social-distancing. However, if we are constantly scrolling and face-booking and insta-gramming and mindlessly losing ourselves in the digital world, as Haig states, we are programming ourselves to put our bodies and minds at odds and setting ourselves up with expectations for our lives that prevent our happiness. The wonderful thing about Haig's writing is that it reassures and empathises without getting all schmaltzy or superior; a book that may sometimes reference yoga but also knows that at the worst times, nothing works except waiting out the pain, and being good to ourselves in the meantime.

"Notes on a Nervous Planet" by Matt Haig (2019, Canongate Books Ltd.) available now on Borrowbox.

Review by Sorcha Fogarty, Library staff, Bishopstown Library

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1800-222-226

covidsupport@corkcity.ie



Michael Lenihan is a member of our Glanmire Library staff

Bishop John Murphy

Bishop John Murphy was one of Cork's most celebrated book collectors. He was born in Cork in 1772 and was a member of the renowned Murphy family of Catholic merchants. In 1815 he was consecrated the Right Reverend John Murphy Catholic Bishop of Cork. He was afflicted with a chronic form of bibliomania, namely he could not resist collecting books and scoured the countryside far and wide in search of them. He was apparently quite a wealthy man in his own right. A good library at the time was the measure of a gentleman's wealth. His good taste and education and immense sums were spent procuring expensive books and lavish bindings in order to impress fellow companions. The Bishop often visited Dublin on his book buying sprees and booksellers were eager to sell their wares to him.

Indeed, the Bishop's fame spread far and near. Notable travel writers made it their business upon arriving in Cork, to call to his house in order to meet him. Charles De Montalembert notes from his account in 1830 that he was tired of rushing around trying to visit Bishop Murphy. Eventually, he found him and discovered him to be a fat little man, joyful and very intelligent, who spoke fluent French. In 1843, Johann Georg Kohl gives us a vivid description of his library. "The Roman Catholic Bishop of Cork has one of the most interesting collections of books I have ever seen. This learned and industrious man has turned his whole house into a library: not only has he converted his sitting rooms and dining rooms into book-rooms, but even in his bedrooms, every available space is filled with books. His attendants, even his maidservants, sleep in little libraries; the staircases are lined with books along the walls; and the corridors, which lead from room to room, have full bookcases at their sides; everywhere books are literally piled up, even to the garrets. He observed that this is the largest private library in Ireland and contains many interesting and costly works".

The Bishop was also responsible for sponsoring many Cork poets who he commissioned to write Irish poems in Gaelic which were then transcribed. These manuscripts have been preserved in the library at Maynooth. His wish was that his collection would remain intact and housed in Cork but the auctioneers hammer fell and the library has been scattered to the four corners of the world. Indeed, the collection of upwards of 70,000 books was so large that it took a year to auction and many of the books were sold off by weight. Bishop John Murphy, a literary giant, had amassed one of the greatest collections of books in Ireland in his lifetime, which has never been surpassed.

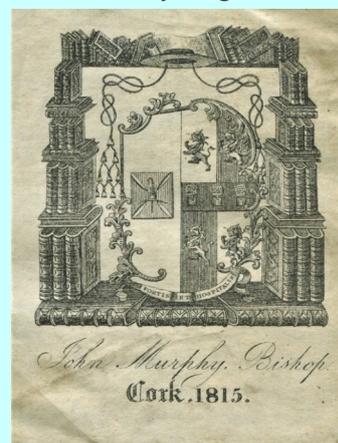


Image courtesy of Michael Lenihan



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