

Readings & Discussions

Journal & Anthology Showcases

Award Presentations

Video Presentations

SENAA AHMAD | JOHN ARMSTRONG | MARIE-HELENE BERTINO
RÓISE NÍ BHAOILL | DERMOT BOLGER | SIMON VAN BOOY
ROSS BROWNE | NIAMH MAC CABE | LUCY CALDWELL
RÓISÍN NÍ CHONAILL | KATHERINE DUFFY | EDELLE DWYER
RUBY EASTWOOD | KATIE FARRIS | ÓRFHLAITH FOYLE
ZSUZSI GARTNER | KIERAN HAYES | LOUISE HEGARTY
AMANDA HILL | LUCY HOLME | BRET ANTHONY JOHNSTON
TRISH KEARNEY | RÉALTÁN NÍ LEANNÁIN | LIZ McMANUS
EOIN McNAMEE | RAFAEL MENDES | LORNA MULVANEY
BILLY O'CALLAGHAN | JOHN O'DONNELL | UCHE OKONKWO
JOHNNY ROCHE | GUY WARE



Comhairle Cathrach Chorcaí
Cork City Council
Arts Ealaíona

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14-17 OCTOBER
2026

**Cork International
Short Story Festival**



Bookings

Bookings can be made by credit card through the website www.corkshortstory.net until Monday 21st September. Bookings by cheque to the Munster Literature Centre will also be accepted up to this date. Thereafter, all purchases must be made at the Cork Arts Theatre in person, by phone (021 450 5624) or online (www.corkartstheatre.com). The Cork Arts Theatre no longer issues physical tickets, so we advise arriving early to events to have your name checked off their list. Admission may be blocked after an event begins. Refunds will be given only if an event is cancelled.

Munster Literature Centre | Ionad Litríocht an Deiscirt

Address: Frank O'Connor House, 84 Douglas Street, Cork, T12X802

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#CorkStoryFest

This festival features subject matter of an adult nature, audience members should expect to encounter stories detailing all kinds of human experience, both traumatic and pleasurable. It would be inappropriate to bring children with you to festival events.



Those with symptoms of a respiratory illness are required to wear a mask. If you are displaying respiratory symptoms and don't have a mask, for the protection of the vulnerable we may ask you to leave the venue.



Programme Outline

Wednesday 14th – Saturday 17th October

Wednesday 14th

2.30pm, Cork City Library | Free, unticketed

page 6

Videos: *The Martyr* and *Larry*

Screen adaptations of Frank O'Connor's stories

4.00pm, Cork City Library | Free, unticketed

page 8

Stepsisters: Stories from the Irish as Gaeilge

7.30pm, Cork Arts Theatre | Admission €5

page 10

Stepsisters: Stories from the Irish in English

(moderated by Dr. Katie Ni Loingsigh)

9.00pm, Cork Arts Theatre | Admission €5

page 12

Zsuzsi Gartner

(moderated by Neleigh Olson)

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#CorkStoryFest

Thursday 15th

2.30pm, Cork City Library | Free, unticketed page 14

From the Well Showcase

4.00pm, Cork City Library | Free, unticketed page 16

Non-Fiction Stories from *Southword*

by Ruby Eastwood, Kieran Hayes and Lucy Holme

7.30pm, Cork Arts Theatre | Admission €5 page 18

Niamh Mac Cabe & Louise Hegarty

(moderated by Laura Cassidy)

9.00pm, Cork Arts Theatre | Admission €5 page 20

Eoin McNamee & Uche Okonkwo

(moderated by Danny Denton)



Programme Outline

Wednesday 14th – Saturday 17th October

Friday 16th

2.30pm, Cork City Library | Free, unticketed page 22

HOWL New Irish Writing Showcase

4.00pm, Cork City Library | Free, unticketed page 24

Órfhlaith Foyle & John O'Donnell

(moderated by Jennifer Horgan)

7.30pm, Cork Arts Theatre | Admission €5 page 26

Senaa Ahmad & Katie Farris

(moderated by Neleigh Olson)

9.00pm, Cork Arts Theatre | Admission €5 page 28

Marie-Helene Bertino & Bret Anthony Johnston

(moderated by Sarah Harte)

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Saturday 17th

3.00pm, Cork Arts Theatre | Admission €5 page 30

Ó Faoláin Prize Reading

4.30pm, Cork Arts Theatre | Admission €5 page 32

Lucy Caldwell & Guy Ware

(moderated by Patrick Holloway)

7.30pm, Cork Arts Theatre | Admission €5 page 34

Billy O'Callaghan & Simon Van Booy

(moderated by Laura Cassidy)

9.00pm, Cork Arts Theatre | Admission €5 page 36

Dermot Bolger & Liz McManus

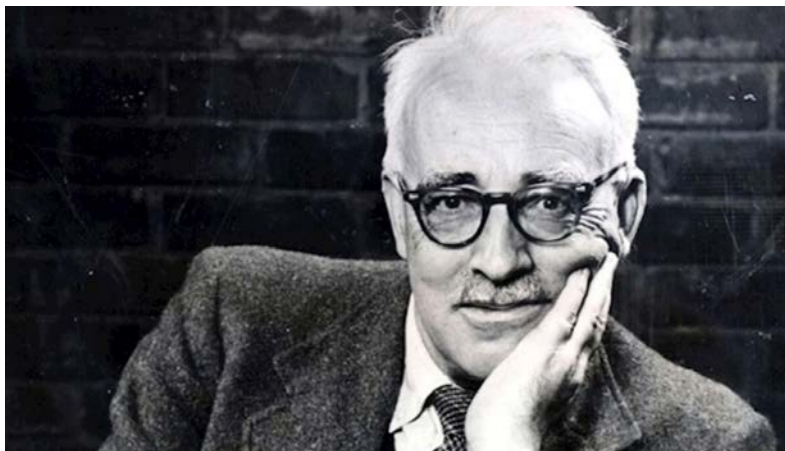
(moderated by Patrick Holloway)

Video Presentation

Videos: The Martyr and Larry

Screen adaptations of Frank O'Connor's stories

Wednesday 14th 2.30pm **Cork City Library** | Admission free



The Martyr (1954) starring Ronald Reagan and Lee Marvin

General Electric Theatre was an American anthology series which ran from 1953 – 1962 and featured different actors each week. *The Martyr* is an episode of the show adapted from Frank O'Connor's short story of the same name. 29 minutes.

Larry (1959) based on *My Oedipus Complex*

Larry is an adaptation of Frank O'Connor's short story *My Oedipus Complex*, a pilot presented by Irish Television Theatre for what was hoped to be episodic adaptations of various stories by Irish writers but ultimately wasn't commissioned for full series production. 24 minutes.

SOUTHWORD

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New International Writing



Dermot Bolger

Audrey Molloy

Nuala O'Connor

Anthology Showcase

Stepsisters: Stories from the Irish as Gaeilge

Wednesday 14th 4.00pm **Cork City Library** | Admission free

This anthology showcase of the Mercier Press anthology *Stepsisters: Stories from the Irish* features three writers reading their stories in Irish.

For the next event at the Cork Arts Theatre at 7.30pm, the same three authors will read their stories in English and participate in a discussion with Irish-language lecturer Dr. Katie Ní Loingsigh.

Scríobhann **Katherine Duffy** filíocht agus ficsean gearr. I gcás an fhicsin, scríobhann sí sa dá theanga, Gaeilge agus Béarla. Tá gearrscéalta foilsithe aici in *Combar*, *Oghma*, *The Sunday Tribune*, agus in *Best European Fiction 2018* (Dalkey Archive Press) agus *Stepsisters: Stories from the Irish* (Mercier Press, 2024).

Duaiseanna Oireachtais tuillte ag saothar dá cuid i nGaeilge; duais Hennessy agus an 3ú duais i gComórtas Gearrscéalaíochta RTÉ 2020 gnóthaithe aici i mBéarla. Tá saothar de chuid mhórscribhneoirí na Gaeilge aistrithe go Béarla ag Katherine, agus cuimsíodh aistriúcháin dá cuid in *The Quick and The Dead: Selected Stories of Máirtín Ó Cadhain* (Yale Margellos, 2021).



Is de bhunadh Rann na Feirste **Róise Ní Bhaoill**. Tá cónaí uirthi i mBéal Feirste, áit ar obair sí in earnáil dheonach na Gaeilge. Is údar í ar ábhar foghlama do dhaoine fásta agus do pháistí, agus tá eagar curtha aici ar chnuasaigh éagsúla aistí agus ar ábhar béaloidis agus ealaíne. In 2023, bhuaigh a céad cnuasach gearrscéalta *Imram agus Scéalta Eile* Leabhar Gaeilge na Bliana ag An Post Irish Book Awards i mBaile Átha Cliath. D'fhoilsigh Éabhlóid a céad cnuasach filíochta, *Idir an Dá Fhearsaid* a ainmníodh do Dhuais Uí Shuilleabháin. Thuill an cnuasach

filíochta is deireanaí aici, *Dordéan*, príomhdhuais an Oireachtais don fhilíocht anuraidh. Foilsíodh *Mo Chroí Gránúill*, aistriúchán léi ar bhailiúchán filíochta Fairsise le Mohsen Hosseinkhani anuraidh chomh maith.



Scríbhneoir aitheanta í **Réaltán Ní Leannáin**, a bhfuil idir pros, filíocht agus drámaí raidió faoina coim. Tá ceithre leabhar dá cuid féin i gcló agus is eagarthóir í den díolaim *Bláth na dTulach*, a bhuaigh Gradam Uí Shúilleabháin in Oireachtas na Gaeilge, 2022. Tá a gearrscéal féin, 'Maeirí', agus ceithre ghearrscéal eile ón díolaim sin ar chúrsa na hArdteiste. Cuireann sí an podchraoladh blath-na-dtulach.com. i láthair. Tá Éabhlóid chun cnuasach nua dá chuid gearrscéalta féin, *Trom agus Éadrom*, a fhoilsiú i mbliana.



Anthology Showcase

Stepsisters: Stories from the Irish in English (moderated by Dr. Katie Ní Loingsigh)

Wednesday 14th 7.30pm **Cork Arts Theatre** | Admission €5

"In a myriad of manners, means, styles and senses, [these stories] offer a mosaic of contemporary Ireland ... offering a more complete, more diverse and more nuanced vision of families, communities, society and nation throughout the island."

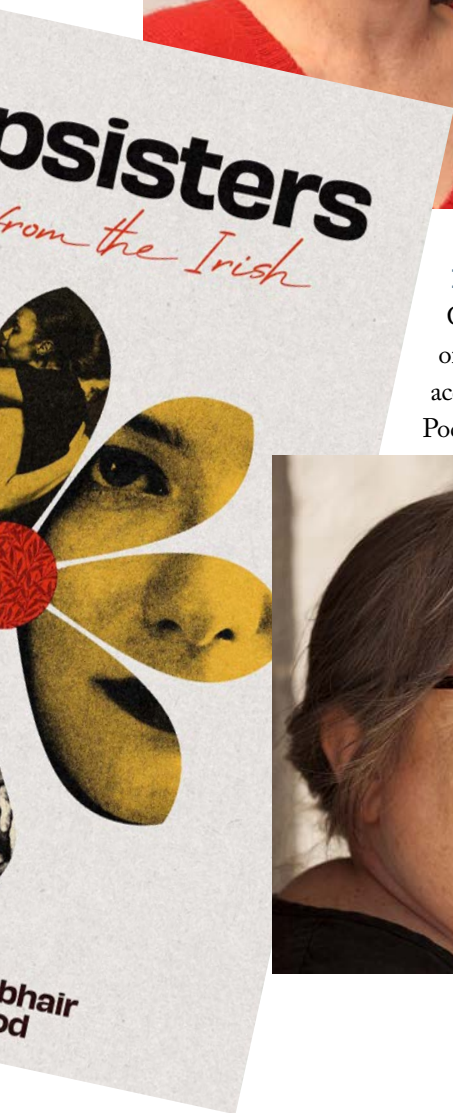
— Tara MacLeod
& Brian Ó Conchubhair

Katherine Duffy writes poetry and stories, the latter in both Irish and English. Her stories have appeared in *Comhar*, *Oghma*, *The Sunday Tribune*, *Best European Fiction 2018* (Dalkey Archive Press) and *Stepsisters: Stories from the Irish* (Mercier Press, 2024). Work in Irish has earned Oireachtas awards; in English, the Hennessy Writer of the Year Award 2006, and third prize in the 2020 RTÉ Short Story Competition. Katherine has also translated the work of leading Irish language writers, and several of her translations appear in *The Quick and The Dead: Selected Stories of Máirtín Ó Cadhain* (Yale Margellos, 2021).





Róisín Ní Bhaoill's first short-story collection, *Imram agus Scéalta Eile*, was awarded An Post Irish language Book of the Year 2023. Her poetry collection, *Idir an Dá Fhearsaid*, was nominated for Gradam Uí Shuilleabháin 2024. *Dordéan* was awarded Best Poetry Collection, Oireachtas na Gaeilge literary awards 2025. *Mo Chroí Gránúill*, a translation of the Farsi poetry of Mohsen Hosseinkhani was published last year. She has also edited collections of bilingual short stories, folklore and cultural essays and is the author of resources for learners of Irish. Originally from the Donegal Gaeltacht, she has mainly lived in Belfast since the 1990s.



Réaltán Ní Leannáin was awarded Oireachtas na Gaeilge's Gradam Uí Shuilleabháin in 2022 as editor of the short story anthology *Bláth na dTulach*. The accompanying podcast series was shortlisted for the Irish Podcast Awards. Her short story from that anthology,



'Maeirí', is on the Leaving Certificate Syllabus as well as others from the compilation. *Bláth na dTulach* and two of her own solo works have been nominated for the An Post Irish Language Book Awards in the last few years. Éabhlóid are to publish a new collection of her short stories, *Trom agus Éadrom*, this year.

Reading & Discussion

Zsuzsi Gartner Moderated by Neleigh Olson

Wednesday 14th 9.00pm **Cork Arts Theatre** | Admission €5

PHOTOGRAPHER: TOM GOULD



Zsuzsi Gartner is the author of the story collection *Better Living through Plastic Explosives*, shortlisted for the prestigious Giller Prize, and of the widely acclaimed collection *All the Anxious Girls on Earth*. *The Beguiling*, a novel with embedded stories, was a finalist for the Writers Trust Award. She edited the anthology *Darwin's Bastards:*

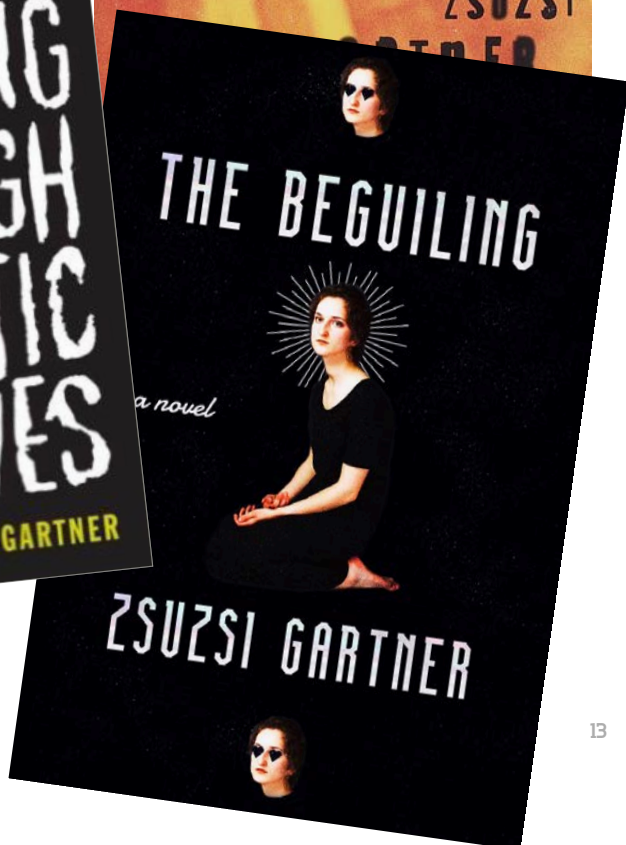
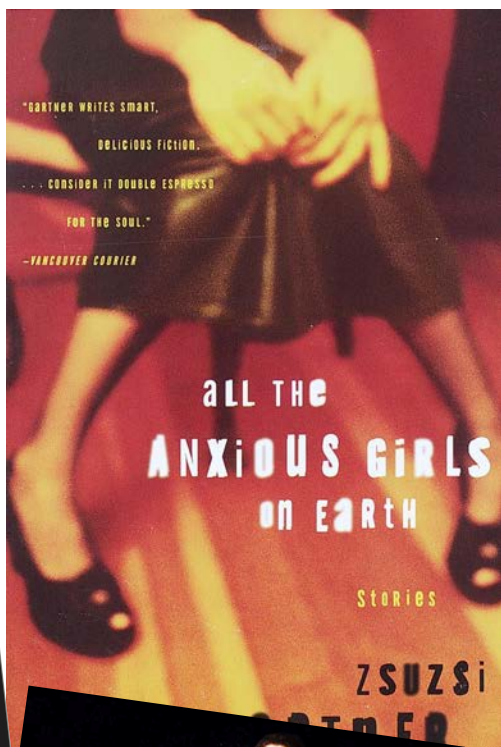
Astounding Tales from Tomorrow and was the guest editor of *Best Canada Stories 2026*. Zsuzsi was the inaugural Frank O'Connor International Short Story Fellow in 2016 and is thrilled to return to Cork as the 2026 O'Connor Fellow. She lives in Vancouver, Canada, and has just completed her third short story collection.

"I haven't read a book like this in some time. With its balance of entertainment and literary craft, The Beguiling, like Sterne's Tristram Shandy and Pynchon's The Crying of Lot 49, left me exhilarated and staggered, as though I've just fallen in love with words all over again."

— Peter Babiak, subTerrain Magazine

"A page-turner so compelling, so inventive, so weirdly weird, readers will feel like they've been to a party that leaves them wondering at the genius of the host who pulled it off... A book as full of imagination as heart."

— Writers Trust Jury

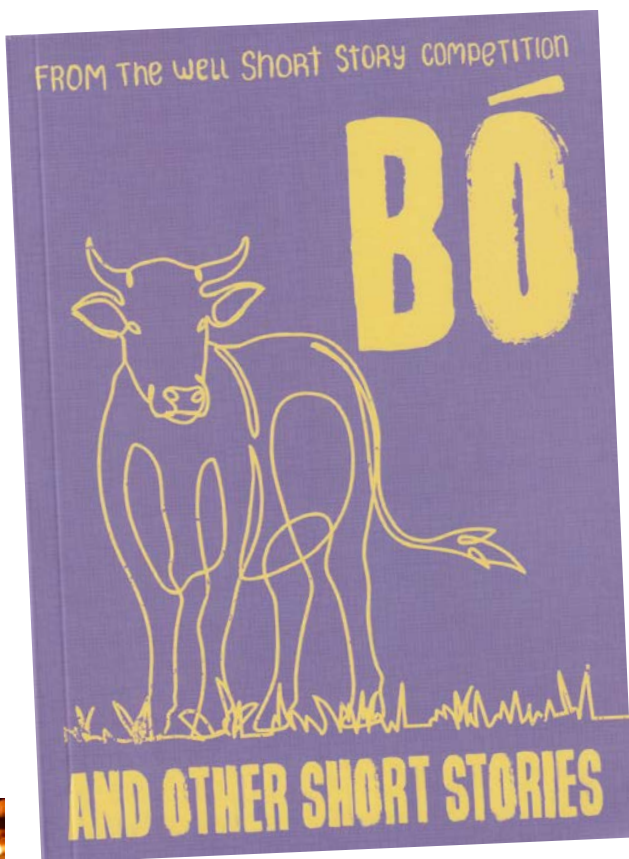


Anthology Showcase

From the Well Showcase

Thursday 15th 2.30pm **Cork City Library** | Admission free

In its twenty-second year of publication, Cork County Council Library and Arts Service's annual short story anthology *From the Well* received its highest number of submissions. Patrick Holloway selected twenty stories, five of which (including the overall winner of the competition 'Bó' by Róisín Ní Chonaill) will be read at this event by the writers.



Ross Browne is a writer from Cork. He writes for the hit BBC show *The Young Offenders*. His fiction is published in the *From The Well* anthology. He's an award winning radio presenter and comedian with a stand up special on Amazon Prime. He writes fiction, poetry, TV and film.



Trish Kearney is a writer living in Cork. Her memoir, *Above Water*, published by Hachette Books Ireland, reached number three in the Irish bestseller's chart. Her column, 'It's My Life', featured weekly for two years in *The Irish Examiner*. She is currently writing her first work of fiction.

Rafael Mendes is a Brazilian-Irish poet whose work has recently featured in *Banshee*, *Wasafiri*, and *gorse*. He was selected for Poetry Ireland Introductions 2023 and the Irish Writers Centre Evolution Programme 2025-2026. His pamphlet, *The Migrant Dictionary* (Howl New Irish Writing), was a co-winner of the Ireland Chair of Poetry Pamphlet Series 2025.



Originally from Kells, Co. Meath, **Lorna Mulvany** lives in East Cork with her husband and two children. She is a secondary teacher in CBC, Cork City, and a member of the Midleton Writers Group. Lorna recently published stories in *The Four Faced Liar* and in the 2026 *From The Well* anthology.

Róisín Ní Chonaill is a mother of two, living for the past number of years on the islands off West Cork, where tide, weather and the slow turning of seasons find their way into her work. She is currently in her final year of the BA in Visual Art on Sherkin Island. This is her first publication.

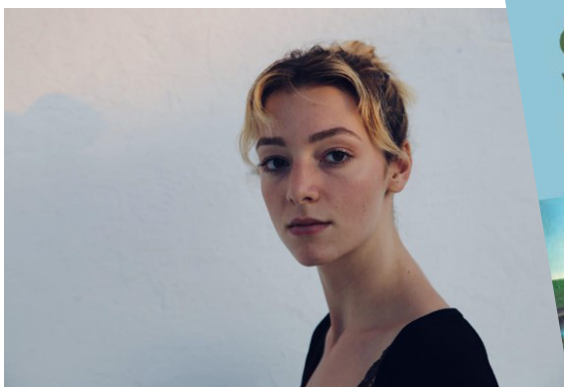


Reading & Discussion

Non-Fiction Stories from *Southword* by Ruby Eastwood, Kieran Hayes and Lucy Holme

Thursday 15th 4.00pm **Cork Arts Theatre** | Admission €5

In the last ten years, Simon Van Booy, Sandra Beasley, Thomas Lynch, Kim Addonizio & Yoko Tawada have all published creative non-fiction in *Southword*. Out of this commitment to the form, the Southword Creative Non-Fiction Award was founded to continue publishing compelling writing, as memoir or as innovative essays or as an admixture of both. Three writers whose work was selected from open submission to this award will read their non-fiction stories, which have been published in recent issues of *Southword*.



Ruby Eastwood is a writer and filmmaker from Barcelona, currently living and working in Dublin. Her essays have appeared in *The Irish Times*, *tolka*, the *Dublin Review* and other publications.



Southword 46

International Writing

Costello Katie Griffiths
Tom Harvey
O'Donovan Louise Watts



and 50



José Buera
Eileen Corroon
yer
ance



Kieran Hayes's

essay 'Orphans' was shortlisted for the 2025 Southword Creative Non-Fiction Award and is published in *Southword* 50.

Another of his essays, 'King's Gambit', was a finalist in this year's Wild Atlantic Writing Awards.

Kieran writes personal

essays, narrative prose and autofiction and is interested in contemporary society, mental health, voice and silence, mortality and nature. In 2024 he set up The Yessayists, a peer critique group for writers of creative non-fiction. A graduate of UCC in English Literature and Philosophy, he lives in Galway.

Lucy Holme is a PhD student at University College Cork. Her work has been shortlisted for the Mairtin Crawford Award, The London Magazine Poetry Prize and The Brotherton Award. In 2024 she won the Southword Editor's Award and the Cúirt Prize for Poetry. Her



debut chapbook, *Temporary Stasis*, (Broken Sleep Books, 2022) was shortlisted for The Patrick Kavanagh Award. A nonfiction collection, *Blue Diagonals*, was published by Broken Sleep Books in September 2024. Her poetry chapbook *Sardines*, written with Vasiliki Albedo, was published by Dialect Press in January. She is currently working on her first novel and full poetry collection.

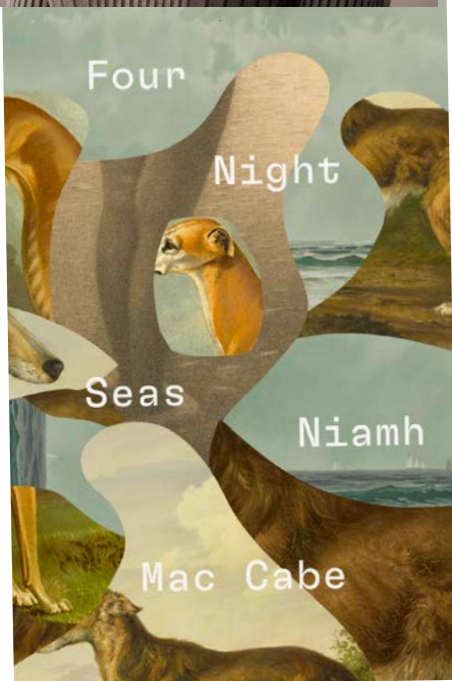
Reading & Discussion

Niamh Mac Cabe & Louise Hegarty Moderated by Laura Cassidy

Thursday 15th 7.30pm **Cork Arts Theatre** | Admission €5

Niamh Mac Cabe is an award-winning author of fiction, poetry, nonfiction, hybrid-prose, and plays. She's also a visual artist, and a lecturer on the BA in Writing & Literature, BA in Performing Arts, and Masters in Creative Practice at ATU Sligo. Dublin-born, she graduated with a BFA from The Corcoran School of Art, Washington DC. She worked overseas in the Animated Film industry before settling in Leitrim. Her work is published in literary journals and anthologies internationally. Her collection *Four Night Seas* was published by The Lilliput Press in March 2026.

"I was hugely impressed by the astounding vision and subtle control in Niamh's winning story, Four Night Seas. She unpicks the threads of a linear narrative to weave something mercurial and enticing and vast."
— The London Magazine's Short Story Prize Judges 2023

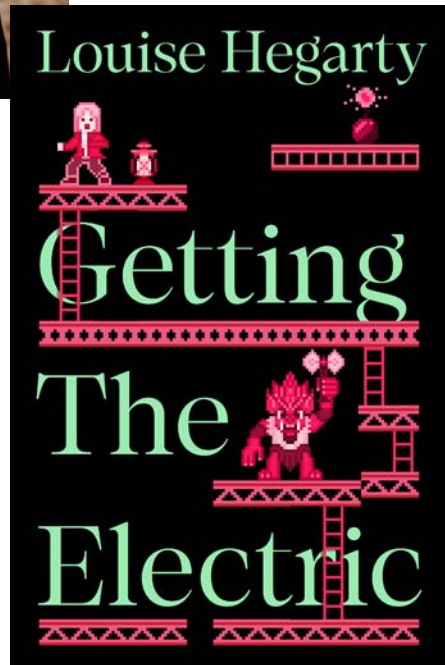




Louise Hegarty's stories have appeared in *Banshee*, *The Tangerine*, *The Stinging Fly* and *The Dublin Review* and have been featured on BBC Radio 4. Her debut novel *Fair Play* and her short story collection *Getting the Electric* are published by Picador.

"Melancholy, comic and tender ... Hegarty has a gift for constructing uniquely weird worlds with something dark burning at the core."

— Leon Craig



Reading & Discussion

Eoin McNamee & Uche Okonkwo Moderated by Danny Denton

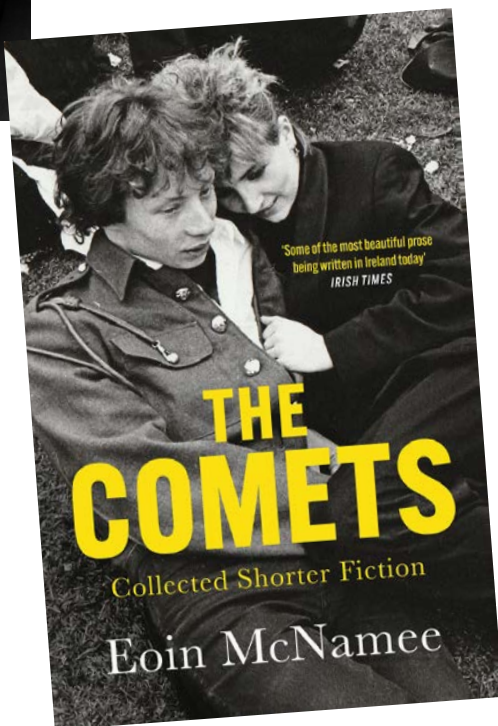
Thursday 15th 9.00pm **Cork Arts Theatre** | Admission €5



PHOTOGRAPHER: JAMES FRASER

Eoin McNamee is the author of eight novels including *Resurrection Man*, later filmed, and the Blue Trilogy. His work has been nominated for and won many major prizes including the Man Booker Prize, the Gordon Burn Prize, the Kerry Fiction Prize, the Imison Award and the CWA Steel Dagger. His short story collection *The Comets* is out in October.

“Achingly exquisite prose as concentrated as poetry, as unfailing an ear for the cadences and quirks of Belfast dialogue as Roddy Doyle has for Dublin and a fatalistic sense of suspense.”
— Sunday Times

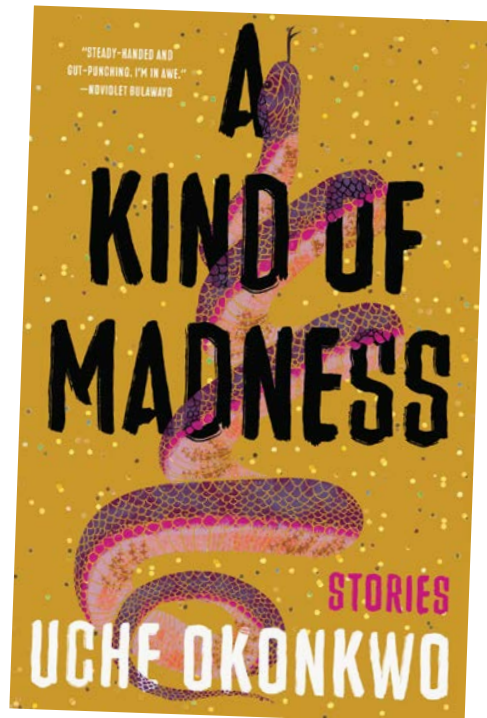


PHOTOGRAPHER: CHRIS COX

Uche Okonkwo is the author of *A Kind of Madness*, winner of the 2025 High Plains First Book Award, and a finalist for the 2025 NAACP Image Awards. Her stories have been published in *A Public Space*, *One Story*, the *Kenyon Review*, *Ploughshares*, *Zyzzyva*, *The Best American Nonrequired Reading 2019*, among others. She is a recipient of a MacDowell Fellowship, the George Bennett Fellowship at Phillips Exeter Academy, a Steinbeck Fellowship, and an Elizabeth George Foundation grant. Okonkwo grew up in Lagos, Nigeria, and is an assistant professor of creative writing at Oberlin College and Conservatory.



“Uche Okonkwo’s stories, set in contemporary Nigeria, have a gentle allure, drawing us into the intimate lives of characters and their worlds with elegant, assured prose and a deep understanding of the complex machinations of human manners and sentiment.”
— Kwame Dawes



Journal Showcase

HOWL New Irish Writing Showcase

Friday 16th 2.30pm **Cork City Library** | Admission free

HOWL New Irish Writing is a biennial literary journal dedicated to showcasing emerging and established Irish writers. Co-founded in 2022 by Róisín Leggett Bohan and Lauren O'Donovan, *HOWL* is a platform not only for writers residing in Ireland but also for the expansive international Irish diaspora. *HOWL* publishes stories and poems in English and as Gaeilge to celebrate the diverse and multicultural facets of modern Irish identity.



John Armstrong was born in London and raised in Castlebar, County Mayo. He holds an MPhil in Irish Writing from Trinity College Dublin. He lives in Dublin.



Edelle Dwyer's work has appeared in *New Irish Writing* (*The Irish Independent*), *Frazzled Lit* and is forthcoming in *HOWL*. She has been shortlisted for the Bristol Short Story Prize, the Oxford/42 New Writing Prize, the Wells Festival of Literature, and longlisted for the Brick Lane Bookshop Short Story Prize.

Amanda Hill is an Irish writer who regularly works (and borrows more than she can read) from her local Clondalkin libraries. She has recently completed an MA in Creative Writing in UCD and has been published in *Sparks Literary Journal* and *HOWL*.



Johnny Roche's writing has appeared in *HOWL*, *Tintreach*, and *Irisín*. An MA student in Creative Writing, he is writing his debut novella for the Gerald Griffin Competition, titled *The Fear*.

Reading & Discussion

Órfhlaith Foyle & John O'Donnell

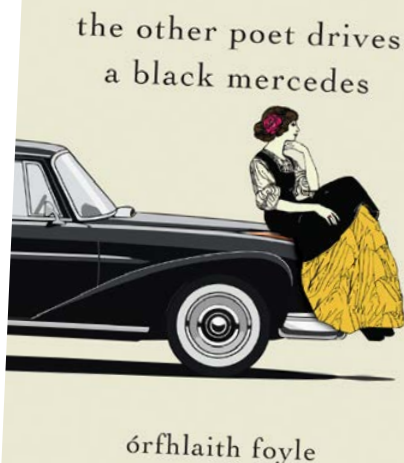
Moderated by Jennifer Horgan

Friday 16th 4.00pm **Cork Arts Theatre** | Admission €5

Órfhlaith Foyle is a short story writer, poet and dramatist and lives in Galway. Doire Press published her third collection of short stories *Three Houses in Rome* in September 2023. She wrote and directed the radio dramas *May's End* and *How I Murdered Lucrezia*, premiered on Newstalk Radio in October 2021 and 2023 respectively. Foyle received an Arts Council of Ireland Literary Bursary in October 2025 to assist her in writing her fourth short story collection *The Other Poet Drives a Black Mercedes*, published by Doire Press in autumn 2026.



“These stories are full of paradox and perception: violence and tenderness sit side by side, childhood language absorbs horror, and the familiar holds steady against emotional upheaval. Again and again Foyle offers us discordant, unforgettable images.”
— Sarah Moore Fitzgerald

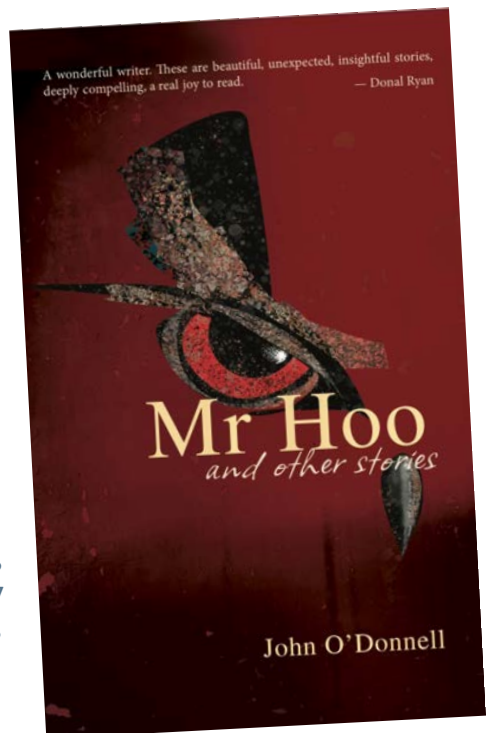


John O'Donnell's work has been widely published. Awards include the Irish National Poetry Prize, New Irish Writing Awards for Poetry and Fiction, and the RTÉ Francis McManus Short Story Award. He has published five poetry collections. His short story collection *Almost the Same Blue* was a *Sunday Independent* 'Book of the Year'. *Rainbow Baby*, an RTÉ radio play, won a New York Festivals Radio

Award. His documentary about the 1979 Fastnet disaster, *Back To The Rock*, was broadcast on RTÉ's Doc On One. An IWC Novel Fair winner in 2024, his latest short story collection is *Mr Hoo and other stories*.



"John O'Donnell captures us at our best and at our worst in a tremendously satisfying collection laced with devastating indictments, unexpected reprieves and emotional detonations that catch your breath."
— Claire Kilroy



Reading & Discussion

Senaa Ahmad & Katie Farris Moderated by Neleigh Olson

Friday 16th 7.30pm **Cork Arts Theatre** | Admission €5

PHOTOGRAPHER: CALVIN THOMAS

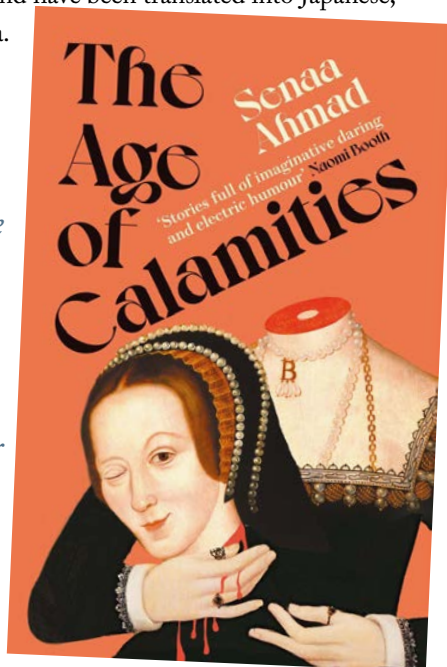


Senaa Ahmad is the author of the collection *The Age of Calamities*, named a Best Book of 2026 by *British GQ* and *Debutiful*. Her work was the recipient of a Pushcart Prize and the Sunburst Award, and a finalist for the National Magazine Award for Fiction. She's received support from the Canada Council for the Arts, the Ontario Arts Council, the Toronto Arts Council, and the

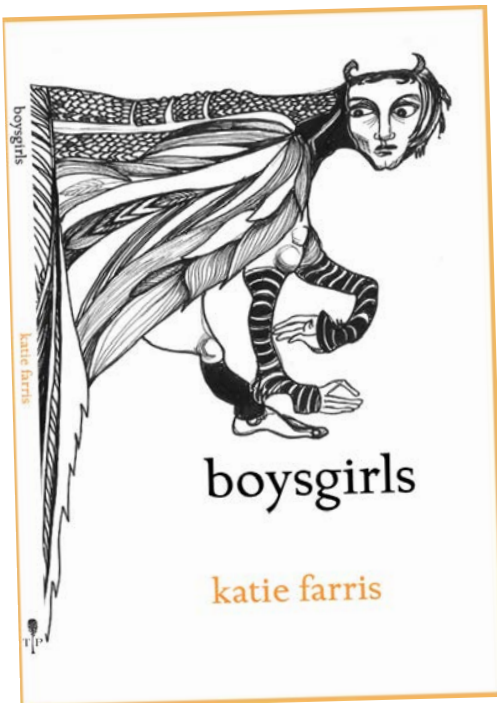
Speculative Literature Foundation. Her short stories have appeared in *The Paris Review*, *McSweeney's*, *Best Canadian Stories*, and elsewhere, and have been translated into Japanese, Turkish, and Croatian. She lives in Toronto, Canada.

"An astounding debut, so full of wonder, outrage, invention, fireworks, sheer brilliance. Ahmad breaks time and turns history upside down and inside out. This book is so beautifully written and so completely fresh, I was left stunned at the sheer originality of Ahmad's extraordinary voice. You have never seen anything like this before."

— Edward Carey



Katie Farris's most recent book, *Standing in the Forest of Being Alive*, from Alice James Books (US) and Liverpool University Press (UK), was shortlisted for the 2024 TS Eliot Poetry Prize. She's also the author of *boysgirls* (Tupelo Press 2019), and the co-translator of many works mainly from the Ukrainian, including Lesyk Panasiuk's *Letters of the Alphabet Go To War* (Sarabande 2026). Her most recent work appears in *Granta*, *Poetry*, *The New York Times*, and several Pushcart Prize anthologies. She is an Associate Professor of Creative Writing at Princeton University's Lewis Center for the Arts.



"In turns horrifying, hilarious, and awe-inspiringly gorgeous, boysgirls explores "the politics of metamorphosis": change is the driving force of this fantastic, phantasmal book. Gender turns us all to monsters, deforms us, molds us into shapes we did not consent to—but also offers new (im)possibilities, new opportunities for change and transformation."

— Chase Berggrun

Reading & Discussion

Marie-Helene Bertino & Bret Anthony Johnston Moderated by Sarah Harte

Friday 16th 9.00pm **Cork Arts Theatre** | Admission €5



"When a short story works, it can wield truly occult powers, exerting a force disproportionate to its dimensions. Through all of "Exit Zero" Bertino blurs the line between writer and magician."
— Molly Young

Marie-Helene Bertino is the author of five works of fiction, most recently *Exit Zero*, a story collection. Her novel *Beautyland* was an American Book Award Winner, a National Book Critics Circle Finalist, a New York Times Notable 100 and Time Magazine Top 10 Book of 2024. A two-time winner of the O. Henry Prize, she is the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship in Fiction (2025), The Pushcart Prize, The Iowa Short Fiction Award, and The Frank O'Connor International Short Story Fellowship in Cork, Ireland. She is currently the Ritvo-Slifka

28

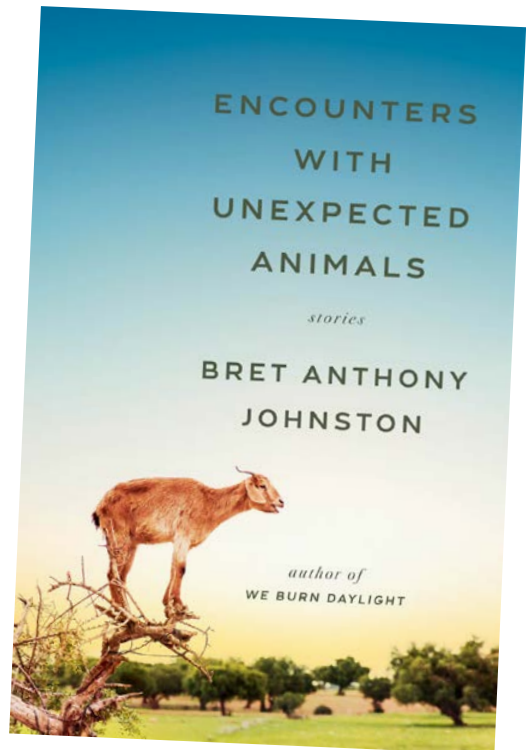


Bret Anthony Johnston is the internationally bestselling author of *Encounters with Unexpected Animals: Stories*, *We Burn Daylight*, *Remember Me Like This*, and *Corpus Christi: Stories*. Among his many honors are a Guggenheim Fellowship,



the Glasgow Prize, and The Sunday Times Short Story Award, “the world’s richest and most prestigious prize for a single short story.” His work has been widely translated and appears in *The New Yorker*, *The Atlantic*, *Esquire*, *The Paris Review*, *The Best American Short Stories*, and elsewhere. He is the Director of the Michener Center for Writers at the University of Texas at Austin.

“Johnston’s exquisitely drawn men and women are riders on the storm ... where the past is too easily washed away and the ocean has no memory ... Stunning and complex.”
— Los Angeles Times



Prize Reading

Ó Faoláin Prize Reading

Saturday 17th 3.00pm **Cork Arts Theatre** | Admission €5



The Seán Ó Faoláin International Short Story Prize is awarded to the best single story entered in competition from anywhere in the world. The first prize is €2,000, a featured reading at the Cork International Short Story Festival (with four-night hotel stay and full board) and publication in *Southword*. This occasion is an opportunity to hear the winning story as chosen by this year's judge Louise Hegarty.

Details of the winner, not yet announced at the time of this publication, will be posted on corkshortstory.net. Prizewinning and shortlisted stories from this competition will be published in *Southword* 52 (summer 2027).

"As I see it a short story, if it is a good story, is like a child's kite, a small wonder, a brief, bright moment. It has its limitations; there are things it can do and cannot do but, if it is good, it moves in the same element as the largest work of art – up there, airborne."

— Seán Ó Faoláin

Southword

Creative Non-Fiction Award

Open for entries

1 November 2026 – 31 January 2027

1st Prize

€1,000 & publication in Southword

up to 8 Runners-up

€400 & publication in Southword

Word Limit 4,000

Entry fee €20

Reading & Discussion

Lucy Caldwell
& Guy Ware

Moderated by Patrick Holloway

Saturday 17th 4.30pm **Cork City Library** | Admission Free

Lucy Caldwell was born in Belfast and is the author of four novels, several stage plays and radio dramas, and four collections of short stories: *Multitudes*, *Intimacies*, *Openings*, and most recently, *Devotions*. Elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature in 2018, she was the editor of *Being Various: New Irish Short Stories* in 2019. She won the BBC National Short Story Award in 2021 for 'All the People Were Mean and Bad'. Other awards include the Rooney Prize for Irish Literature, the George Devine Award, the Dylan Thomas Prize, the Walter Scott Prize and the

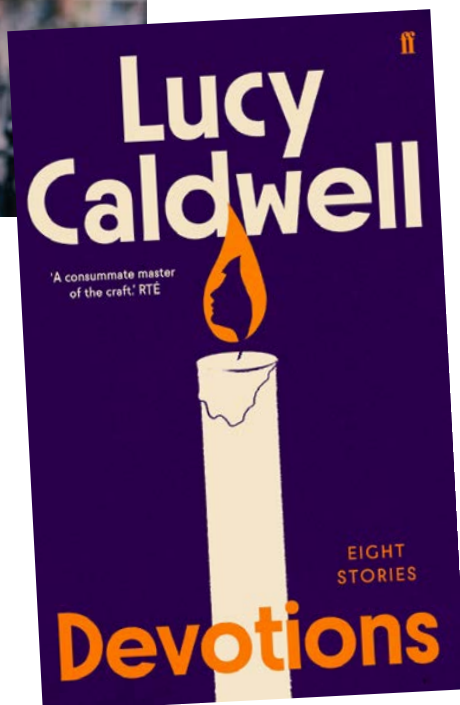
2022 E. M. Forster Award from the American Academy of Arts & Letters. She runs a popular online masterclass on the short story for the Faber Academy.



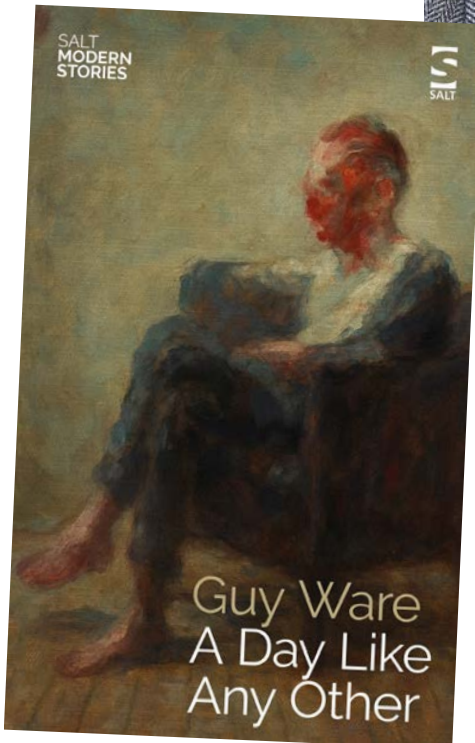
PHOTOGRAPHER: NEIL HAINSWORTH

“Devotions speaks to a fifth dimension – that of a collective human spirit, an emotional continuum. This collection is exhilarating, devastating, comforting, essential.”

— Claire Kilroy



Guy Ware is a novelist and short-story writer based in London. His first collection, *You Have 24 Hours to Love Us*, was longlisted for the 2012 Edge Hill and Frank O'Connor International awards. He won the London Short Story Prize in 2018. Guy is also the author of five novels, including *The Fat of Fed Beasts* (2015) – a *Guardian* 'Pick of the Year', and *Our Island Story* (2024) – a black comedy about our inability to face the climate catastrophe we've brought upon ourselves. His latest story collection, *A Day Like Any Other*, was published in June by Salt.



“A Day Like Any Other explores natural, assisted, promised and unexpected death with compassion, wit and a steady gaze. It is the perfect collection for anyone who’s going to die one day.”
— Salt Publishing

Reading & Discussion

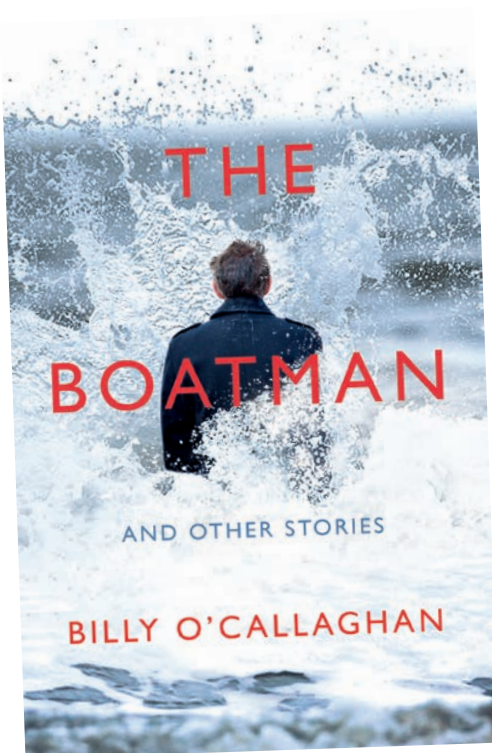
Billy O'Callaghan & Simon Van Booy Moderated by Laura Cassidy

Saturday 17th 7.30pm **Cork Arts Theatre** | Admission €5

Billy O'Callaghan, from Cork, is the author of four novels and four short story collections, including *My Coney Island Baby*, *The Boatman and Other Stories*, *Life Sentences* and *The Paper Man*. Winner of the Irish Book Award and shortlisted for the COSTA Short Story Prize and the Royal Society of Literature's Encore Award

among other honours, his work has been translated into nineteen languages. Recent short stories have appeared or are forthcoming in *Agni*, *Fiction*, the *Kenyon Review*, *Massachusetts Review*, *New Letters*, *Ploughshares*, *South Carolina Review*, *The Stinging Fly*, the *Threepenny Review* and *Winter Papers*.

"[Billy O'Callaghan] makes epics out of the unspoken, the barely said, the half-hinted at, the wordless nod ... This is O'Callaghan's quest, to reveal who his characters really are."
— Anne Cunningham



Simon Van Booy is the bestselling author of 16 books for adults and children, including *Sipsworth*, *The Illusion of Separateness*, and *Love Begins in Winter*, which won the Frank O'Connor International Short Story Award. He is the anthologist of three volumes of philosophy, and has written for the



New York Times, the *Financial Times*, and the *Washington Post*. Raised in rural North Wales, Simon currently lives in New York, where he is also a private book editor. In his spare time, Simon volunteers as an EMS lieutenant. His other joys include spending time with his wife and daughter, model trains, longcase clocks, and early music.

“Van Booy works an unusual trick of transubstantiation. In moments, in glances, in tiny flutterings of description ... He finds the expressions of sweetness or light in darkness, captures the precise weight of exhaustion in joy when it comes to those who have learned how rare and precious happiness can be.”

— Jason Sheehan



Reading & Discussion

**Dermot Bolger
& Liz McManus**

Moderated by Patrick Holloway

Saturday 17th 9.00pm **Cork Arts Theatre** | Admission €5



Dermot Bolger is an Irish poet, novelist, playwright and short story writer. His fifteen novels include *The Journey Home*, *An Ark of Light*, *The Lonely Sea and Sky* and *Hide Away*. His recent plays include *Last Orders at the Dockside* and an adaptation of *Ulysses*, both staged by the Abbey Theatre. His eleventh poetry collection, *Other People's Lives*, was published in 2024. His most recent collection

of short stories, *Imperfect Beings*, was published this year. As a teenage factory hand, he founded Raven Arts Press and in 1992 he co-founded New Island publishers.

“Bolger is to contemporary Dublin what Dickens was to Victorian London: archivist, reporter, sometimes infuriated lover. Certainly, no understanding of Ireland’s capital at the close of the twentieth century is complete without an acquaintance with his magnificent writing.”
— Joseph O’Connor



**Imperfect
Beings**

DERMOT BOLGER

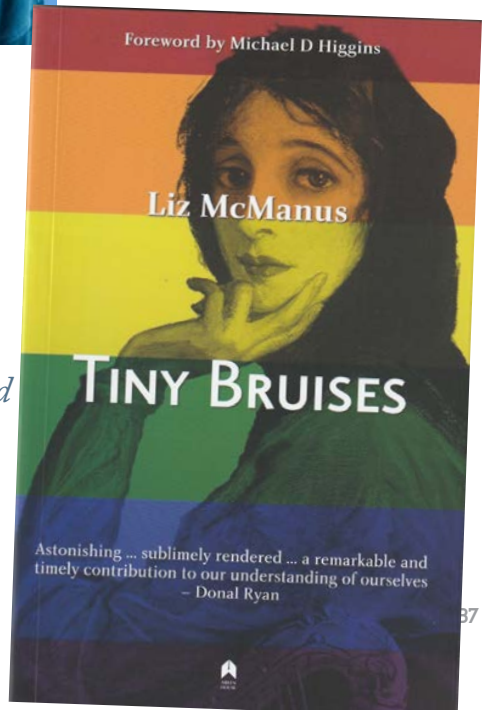
Liz McManus is a writer and former politician. Born in Montreal, Canada, she grew up in France, Holland, and Ireland and was a columnist with *The Sunday Tribune* for seven years. Her literary awards include Listowel (short

story award), Irish Pen (short story award), and a Hennessy Literary Award. Her short story collection *Tiny Bruises* is out this year from Arlen House. Her novels are *Acts of Subversion* (Poolbeg), shortlisted for the Aer Lingus / Irish Times award; *A Shadow in the Yard* (Ward River Press) and *When Things Come to Light* (Arlen House). She is a former co-chair of Irish PEN / Pen na hÉireann.



PHOTOGRAPHER: ANDRES POVEDA

“The depth and nuance of the individual characters’ stories in Tiny Bruises ... give pause to a study of our history’s broad strokes, forcing a realisation that the layers of complexity, contradiction, self-deceit and occlusion that characterised our progress as a young nation are still very much extant and as hard to fathom. McManus makes a remarkable and timely contribution to our understanding of ourselves.”
— Donal Ryan



Moderators

Laura Cassidy is a writer from Co. Kildare, living in Cork city. She is a co-founder and contributing editor of *Banshee* and reviews books for *The Irish Examiner*. Laura is the recipient of the 2025 Molly Keane Creative Writing Award along with several awards from the Arts Council.

Danny Denton (he/him) is a writer, author of the novels *The Earlie King & The Kid In Yellow*, *All Along The Echo*, and *Betweenness* (publishing April 2027). He was the editor of *The Stinging Fly* magazine from 2018 to 2022, and remains a contributing editor. In 2025 he was an artist-in-residence at Sounds from a Safe Harbour.

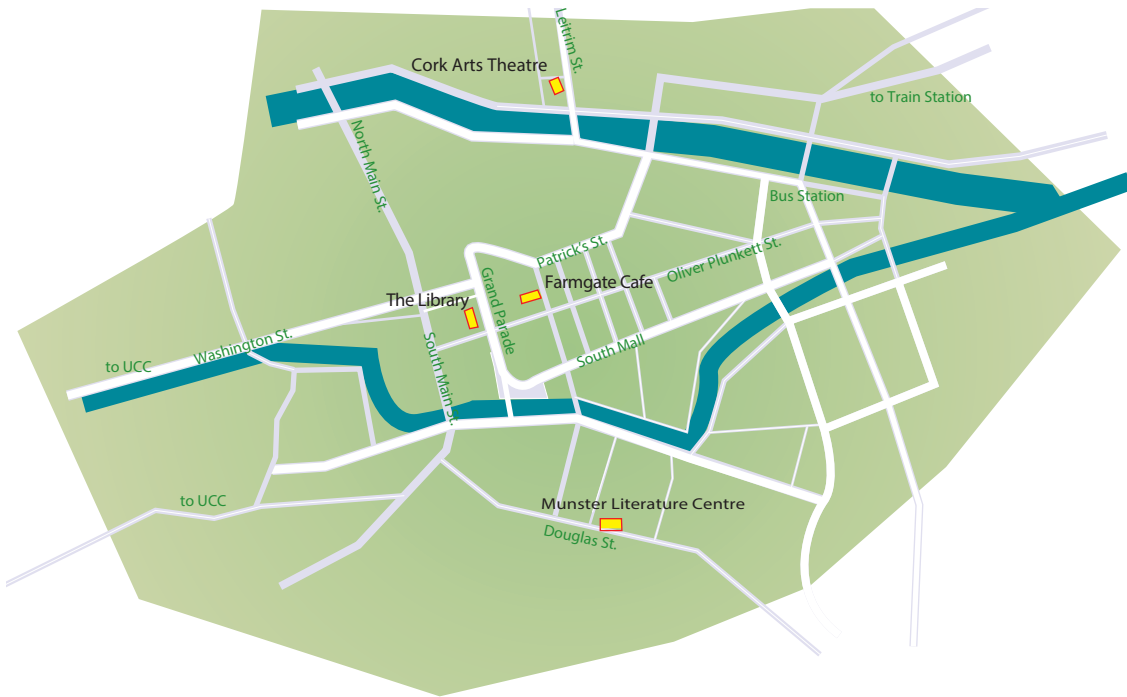
Sarah Harte has won or been shortlisted for prizes in Ireland and the UK including The Bryan MacMahon short story prize, The Bridport Prize, the Manchester Fiction Prize, the Seán Ó Faoláin International Short Story Prize, and the Fish Short Story Prize. She is completing a novel and is a columnist for *The Irish Examiner*.

Patrick Holloway is a prize-winning writer of fiction and poetry. His debut novel, *The Language of Remembering*, was published in 2025, his second forthcoming in 2027 with Bonnier Books. He is a frequent writer and critic for *The Irish Times* and *The Irish Examiner*. He is the 2026 Writer in Residence at Maynooth University.

Jennifer Horgan is a Cork poet, teacher and weekly columnist with *The Irish Examiner*. Her work appears in various journals including *Poetry Ireland Review*, *Cyphers*, *HOWL New Irish Writing* and *Abridged*. Her debut collection *Care* is published by Doire Press.

Dr. Katie Ní Loingsigh is an Irish-language lecturer in UCC who hails from Baile Mhúirne in the Muskerry Gaeltacht. Her research interests include modern Irish literature, Gaelic revival, literature and culture of West Muskerry.

Neleigh Olson holds an MFA in creative writing from the University of Kentucky and an MA in “The Beatles, Popular Music and Society” from Liverpool Hope University. She is a writer based in Louisville, Kentucky and is co-owner and Managing Editor at GreenHorse Books.



Venues

CORK CITY LIBRARY

Address: 57 - 61 Grand Parade, Cork, T12 NT99.

All events at Cork City Library are free and unticketed (no booking required).

CORK ARTS THEATRE

Address: Camden Court, Knapps Square, Carroll's Quay, T23 X72D.

Bookings can be made by credit card through www.corkshortstory.net until Monday 21st September. Bookings by cheque to the Munster Literature Centre will also be accepted up to this date. Thereafter, all purchases must be made at the Cork Arts Theatre in person, by phone (021 450 5624) or online (www.corkartstheatre.com). The Cork Arts Theatre no longer issues physical tickets, so we advise arriving early to events to have your name checked off their list. Admission may be blocked after an event begins. Refunds will be given only if an event is cancelled.

SPECIAL THANKS

We would like to express our gratitude to Sarah Bannan, Head of Literature in the Arts Council and to Michelle Carew, Cork City Arts Officer, for their ongoing support.

FUNDERS & CREATIVE PARTNERS



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Founded in 1993, the Munster Literature Centre (Ionad Litríochta an Deiscirt) is a non-profit arts organisation dedicated to the promotion and celebration of literature, especially that of Munster.

www.munsterlit.ie



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