

TAKING FLIGHT

A MENU OF POEMS
IN CELEBRATION OF
ALL IRELAND POETRY
DAY 2014

We have cooked up this menu of poems that take flight in many ways. Birds, bees and falling stars, all are inspiration for our contemporary poets. We hope this selection appeals to various literary tastes and appetites. This menu is intended for distribution throughout a range of healthcare settings in Ireland. Enjoy reading them and let your own imagination take flight.

With warm wishes,
Kate Dempsey, Editor
& the local steering committee

THE HAWK

Nessa O'Mahony
Her Father's Daughter (Salmon Poetry 2014)



They circle the ridge,
loops widening,
narrowing,
swooping low,
two shadows inscribe
two arcs on singed grass.

They seem choreographed,
dancers mirroring
their story in curves,
rotating round
without intersection,

like you, arms stretched,
hands curling like a supplicant's,
or me, the marionette
bobbing my head
as I tell my story,

you, yours, wide-limbed,
using all the stage,

me on the one spot,
turning my tight curve.

1969



Damien Smyth
First published in Mesopotamia (Templar Poetry, 2014)

That was the summer they got in everywhere
And in numbers, not the odd specimen;
So what had hitherto been quite rare
Was making broadcasts out of the bread bin

In a nasally and indistinct voice
As if the battery was running down
Or the set was picking up news from space.
Bees on the turntable in the gramophone,

NURSING A STAR

David Mohan
First published in Ink, Sweat and Tears 2010



They said it was a piece of broken rock.
I said a meteorite. My dad threw
it up, then let it fall - a dead comet.
I knew it slept. At night, I felt it shine.
Inside, it was a prehistoric egg.

To me, it was sky-born, space-flung,
was bred out of star dust.
To me, it had held court
to moons, worn dresses of lavish light,
danced round each
sunset in ballrooms above.
Held up, it appeared as dry as granite.

I knew it was resting on our planet,
that it would last, out-live millennia
until the time of bursting suns. I tried
to feed it histories, reports from earth;
I left it outside to breathe our climate.

But it sat silent, prophet to nothing.
When asked for a glimmer it sat dumb in
my hand, its lamp put out, but I swear it
glittered underneath, was latent outburst -
primed as the spark that hatched
the dawn of time.

Bunched on the floral curtains in tassels,
Suspended from the coal-house roof in ropes.
That was the summer of rockets and measles
And Mr McKee's hives and giant leaps

And ghettos in Belfast in quarantine
And falling asleep with a bee in the room,
A dead soul on the dark side of the moon,
His signals awry, a few feet from home.

HAIKU

Maeve O'Sullivan

First published in *Initial Response* (Alba Publishing, 2011)



behind the willow curtain
the pen builds her nest
twig by twig

showing me his cream bib
for the first time
- the cormorant

first glimpse of a kingfisher changing the river
forever

two thousand acres
of Lough Currane -
mosquitoes on the windscreen

south Kerry sunset
sandpipers graze
then take off as one

icy wind
geese moving slowly
- spring tide

swallows
glancing the river's surface
- midsummer

between orange sky
and diagonal rain
- the heron

September night
I shake out the damp sheet
a swan drifting...



CURRAGH OF KILDARE

Traditional

The winter it has passed,
and the summer's come at last
The small birds are singing in the trees
And their little hearts are glad,
ah, but mine is very sad
Since my true love is far away from me

And straight I will repair to
the Curragh of Kildare
For it's there I'll find tidings of my dear

The rose upon the briar by
the water's running clear
Brings joy to the linnet and the bee
And their little hearts are
blessed but mine can know no rest
Since my true love is far away from me

A livery I'll wear and I'll comb back my hair
And in velvet so green I will appear
And straight I will repair to
the Curragh of Kildare
For its there I'll find tidings of my dear

All you who are in love,
aye and cannot it remove
I pity the pain that you endure
For experience lets me know,
that your hearts are filled with woe
It's a woe that no mortal can cure.

Menu of Poems' is a joint initiative between Galway University Hospitals Arts Trust, Waterford Healing Arts Trust, Naas General Hospital Arts Committee, Arts in Health at Cork University Hospital, St. Lukes General Hospital Kilkenny, Wexford General Hospital and the Kildare Arts and Wellbeing Specialist. Taking Flight has been coordinated by the Arts and Wellbeing Specialist in Kildare with support from Naas General Hospital Arts Committee, the Kildare Arts In Context local steering committee and editor Kate Dempsey.

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To download a copy go to: www.artsandhealth.ie; Please email your comments to: menu.of.poems.2014@gmail.com or tweet @ArtsInKildare #MOP2014 with your comments

