



FourXFour
Poetry Journal

Issue 20/21 Spring 2017

Special Double Issue for Poetry Day Ireland

Lizz Murphy Michael Conaghan Julieann Campbell

Patrick Taggart Aine MacAodha Nathan Armstrong

Willetta Fleming Gareth Osborne

Editorial

Welcome to a special double issue of FourXFour Poetry Journal, released especially for **Poetry Day Ireland** on 27th April.

The theme for this year's Poetry Day Ireland is "poetry connects". It's a main ethos of FourXFour, to discover and celebrate strong, original writing within Northern Ireland, and to connect the poets with new and wider audiences. The journal has been doing that for nearly five years now, and it's a pleasure to bring you once more not four, but this time *eight* further poets for you to explore and discover.

Four of our featured poets have published collections previously, while four are emerging names to watch out for. It's the perfect balance for our double issue, and we wish each of them the best with their writing and careers going forward.

Regards and happy reading,
Colin Dardis, Editor

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Lizz Murphy

Lizz Murphy was born in Belfast but has lived in Binalong a rural village in NSW, Australia for a long time now. She has published 13 books of different kinds. Her eight poetry titles include *Shebird*, *Portraits: 54 Poems* and *Six Hundred Dollars* (PressPress), *Walk the Wildly* (Picaro), *Stop Your Cryin* (Island) and *Two Lips Went Shopping* (Spinifex – print & e-book). Her best-known anthology is *Wee Girls: Women Writing from an Irish Perspective* (Spinifex Press).

She is widely published in Australian and overseas newspapers and journals including *Abridged*, *Blue Pepper*, *The Canberra Times*, *Cordite Poetry Review*, *Honest Ulsterman*, *Shot Glass Journal*, *Uut Poetry*, *Verity La*, *Wonder Book of Poetry* and in a number of print anthologies. Lizz' awards include: Anutech Poetry Prize, Rosemary Dobson Poetry Award (co-winner), ACT [Canberra] Creative Fellowship for Literature plus some shortlistings/special mentions. Lizz has worked in publishing/arts marketing and arts development.

Lizz blogs at *A Poet's Slant* - lizzmurphypoet.blogspot.com. Last year she posted new poems or art & text every day as part of the international blog Project 366 at project365plus.blogspot.com.au coordinated by Kit Kelen. Some of these poems are thanks to that experience.

Passing A Horse Paddock

Pedigree horses in white turnouts
trench coated detectives from old crime
novels or saints come marching in swinging
their white robes or the Ku Klux Klan their
unlovely eyes blinking from hooded faces

Blood Moon

You go black like a lid closing curtains
drawing on a show the end of a film
Nothing stirs or changes for a time then a
spark and your flickering edge It happens
just as I am about to leave it's like the credits
have begun to roll and I am compelled to
stay to read all those names

Out here I could honour them aloud
privately ceremoniously in the pleasant
chill under silent leaves all those people
who have offered a kindly word some small
praise a plaudit kept some thready person
tacked together one more day

There is one more flare a wreathing light
then the leaden cloud veils you charcoal I
go inside trusting in tomorrow

How's The Weather In Binalong?

for Kathleen McCracken

The sky in Binalong is clear blue crystal as
decimated sea El Niño is weakening to
neutral but the fire warning is still on alert
temps are increasing again in spite of
autumn we wish rain would drift our way
change our white hills verdant

Elsewhere Praise for heroes in the Brussels
blast warms hearts It was warmish in
Lahore when the Easter bomb went off in
that amusement park security forces
continue to collect evidence there is always
a child's shoe

Right Of Way

with thanks to Moyra Donaldson

A grey sunless building its bones arthritic
but on this day in that top window a goddess
child's face Architecture rattles me as much
as ancient dresses in a museum or an empty
iron cot This is a street in Launceston
Thought you'd like the architecture and the
park gates I liked the man on the corner
shuffling his glasses back into place and the
bare branches reaching like wrought iron for
the steeple nosing into the sky How many
plastic bags do you think a whale's stomachs
can hold? I could have felt alone driving
through the desert but each tussock spoke to
me and once in a while a road sign said yes
you are still going the right way

PS Of course the wind turbines always wave

Michael Conaghan

Michael Conaghan is a bookseller and poet who has been published widely in Britain and Ireland, most notably in *The London Magazine*, *Fortnight Magazine*, *Panning For Poems* and online anthologies such as Poetry NI's *Poems for Holocaust Remembrance Day 2016*. He was a regional winner in the Funeral Services Northern Ireland National Poetry Competition and was shortlisted once more in 2016.

He reviews both music and books for local publications, and recently a play he wrote with his journalist wife Jane Hardy, 'This Turbulent Priest', about Thomas Becket, was revived in Canterbury.

West

And then head west
Away from the hatreds
To your father's land

Where the sky is soft
With drizzle
And rainbows end

White horses
Nod a blessing
Near the Five Finger strand

As the sea
Sculpts your body
With a lover's hand

And then head west
Towards the music
With its keening sound

Its multi phases
And its dancings
In the round

To the very edge
Of the Atlantic
West again

Where memories
And love' s release
Will never end

Red Dream

In the presence of silence
That dream, the red fox
Scurrying across the slope
Ahead of you towards
The mountain in the trees.

You were woken up by music
Grumpily setting forth
But instead of the work day
A festival, as if the dawn
Heralded the still drunk night.

How much you wanted to play
Fingering the plectrum
Inside your trouser pocket
As the musicians whirled
Their instruments like fire.

Then, trying to return
You find your old life fading
Confused in your directions
A door, a glimpse of sky
The presence of silence.

Incident at the Demonstration

The Tuesday night chart run own
On phasing Radio Luxembourg;
Kid Jensen or Paul Burnett
Would announce the little victories.
Look out, kids, let's dance
To the rhythm of politics.

You went on that anti-war march,
Earphones blaring out the Doors,
Disappointed at the earnest Anti- Americanism
That was every speech's default setting,
Sensing, somehow that there should
Be something joyous
In declaring yourself for peace and justice.

God should smile, like that
Incident at the demonstration
Winding your way up Royal Avenue
As the rain relented and
The two women outside Barratts
Began to sing ' Amazing Grace'
And you exchanged ecstatic smiles
With the girl who failed to sell you
A copy of the Socialist Worker.

Muse

She took me by the arm
And called my name,
Dressed in Astrakhan,
As if for winter.

Where had I been?
Cast down and penitent
Among the shadows,
I had somehow lost her.

I had missed her chat
The friendly intimacy
Of her soft invasions
And charming ardour.

As she joked about
My Joycean cap
Gratefully tilted and
Doffed, in her honour.

Julieann Campbell

Julieann Campbell is an Irish poet and author. Born in Derry in 1976, the former reporter gave up the newsroom to concentrate on motherhood, poetry and collecting oral histories. Julieann's first solo poetry collection, *Milk Teeth* was published in 2015 by Guildhall Press (Derry), and she was one of many contributors to their vast 2008 compendium, *City of Music: Derry's Music Heritage*.

She co-edited the anthology *Harrowing of the Heart: The Poetry of Bloody Sunday* in 2008, and her first non-fiction book, *Setting the Truth Free: The Inside Story of the Bloody Sunday Justice Campaign* (Liberties Press, Dublin) was awarded the biannual Christopher Ewart-Biggs Memorial Prize in 2013.

Useful Balloons

Let go – like a balloon that’s lost its usefulness,
adrift and upwards, into places unseen

the float of forgotten dreams.
in riotous bounce, glancing, true to form.
The soiled sheets and sore thighs
of lovers’ anonymous.

This afternoon I heard wedding bells.
In the yard, where I sat, lukewarm coffee in hand,
reading Fahrenheit 451 yet again
and feeling Montag’s pain at the status quo.

Still in Jedi housecoat, make-up less & aged.
A real catch, still fragile from last night’s excess.

Raising my cup to the happy couple,
glad of crisp blue October sky, of tethered romance.
I felt their glow. I saw them gleam as guests
poured through Cathedral door, all air-kisses.

I picked up my book, and went on reading . . .

Sleep, Rainy Boy

I might have listened more,
had I known you were dying.
Yet you were, somewhere inside.

I'd have sat long enough
to hear what you had to say
and how you said it.

I'd have paid more attention
to your hare-brained schemes,
looked deeper, delved in,
tried to understand.

I'd have seen the beauty
in the shrine you created for me
all over your living room floor.
Not run for the hills.

I might have told you how it felt
to feel your mouth's intent.
Your 'kiss with eyes wide'
that once evoked poetry in me.
Poems I never let you read.

*

They found your car by Fanad lighthouse.
- keys in the ignition. I knew you'd gone.
Ironic. *Lighthouse* was our song.

*

I might have whispered to you more,
when loved-up and languishing.
When bodies lay parallel, and,
just for just a moment,
your purity shone through.

And, though I told you before
I would tell you again –

'This is you at your *best...*
at your most beautiful.'

Grianan Aileach

Up there's where the High Kings lived,
my mother whispered into cupped hand
as the bus passed the White Chapel.

I was only small, but five or six.

She pointed to a nearby mountain,
which, to me, looked more like a hill, easily conquerable
if we took to our heels and ran towards its summit.

From there, they ruled the land, she explained.
High enough to thwart a foes' approach on every side,
three counties spread out in submissive patchwork.

Eyes dancing, she gushed about the ancient ring fort
which, to me, looked more like a Lego-brick, forgotten
by some past giant who left it on a hill.

I remember wondering if giants played with Lego.

The hill seems even smaller now, as we hurtle
along the same old clattering Slievemore bus route,
voices lost to the din of rowdy back-seat teens.

She sits on my knee to see out the window.

I pull her close, and point into the distance.

Up there's where the High Kings lived . . .

.

Sanctuary

On the hour; every hour,
newsreels bring a claustrophobia, creeping
and I watch with helpless eyes.

Imagining the cramped,
clammy fear the mothers must feel, shushing
babies in lullaby whisper.

Shhh, it won't be long now,
I'm sure they say. Warm smile reassuring, confusion,
a travesty played out for strangers like me, looking on -
all tea and toast and sympathy.

They flee into unwelcome arms,
and sinking boats; crammed into trucks, no air, no light,
still begging those who swore safe passage. Treacherous palms
soiled with thirty pieces of silver.

Still they come – in their tens of thousands . . .
a male voice-over says in monotone drill, as studio guests
preen and feign empathy, as the armchair critics rise up indignant,
phoning-in, giving voice to the worst of us.

Cramped camps and barricades; military might.

A little boy found face down in the surf, his escape a world's
teardrop.

This is our time, they warn. Our exodus, should we choose to see it.

A neglectful legacy.

Patrick Taggart

Patrick Taggart was born in India, grew up in Ireland and England and now lives in Belfast. He was spurred into trying to find some form of creative expression in 2014 by his (now grown up) children, Ben and Emma, who are both talented in visual arts. A pen seemed more manageable than a paintbrush, so he decided to give poetry a go. Having little idea of how to get started, he turned to Stephen Fry's *The Ode Less Travelled*, an instructive but challenging guide to writing poetry.

Fry turned out to be a stern task master and, if it hadn't been for the encouragement he found in the Purely Poetry open mic nights, he might have given up. To date, Patrick poems have appeared in *Freckle*, *Here and Now*, *The Stare's Nest* and *Watermarks*.

Another World

Follow the dusty path uphill.
Veer off left where it curves right
and push through the spiny scrub until
you come to a rocky cove of delight.
Using the pock-marked limestone and
the little pines as holds, descend
down to the crescent of golden sand.
Walk into the sea, your journey's end.
Salt water stings your thorn-scratched skin.
Stand for a while, enjoy the peace,
far from the crowds of the beach where you've been,
then dive under water, see the rainbow fish.
This is another world.

Amongst the trees on the roundabout,
between the words they write or say,
behind the happy family façade
a smile away from crushing heartbreak,
a few steps off this path of sorrow,
over the headland from the crowded beach,
there is another world.

Bloody Poets

See them, out on the ice with their clubs,
heartless bastards, smeared with blood,
crushing the skulls of new-born words
before they've even once been heard.

"These words are no use," the poets say,

"If we let them grow up they'll get in the way.

They'll lie and they'll flatter, confuse and divert
or just lie about doing no bloody work.

They'll drive out our native, worthier words
and pop up on the back of some novel as blurb.

They'll appear in adverts for things you don't need
or dance off the tongues of those driven by greed."

The closer you look the more ruthless you'll find
are the poets. They kill all the words that don't shine.

No Lawnmower

When I was first married
to my now ex-wife
we were very poor.

Each week I'd cut the lawn
with our only pair of
scissors.

Now life is so much better,
I've amassed a vast estate:
no wife;
no lawn;
still no lawnmower;
but six gleaming pairs of
scissors.

Hollyhocks in May

Not yet in bloom, at first I couldn't say
what were these spires of green that lined the streets.
Perplexed, we pedalled by on omafiets.
And then I knew: hollyhocks in May.
In Amsterdam we had no cage of steel,
but joined the flow of bicycles that day,
relied on nods and smiles to smooth our way.
We wobbled, weaved and found we'd nerves of steel.
How would it be, I wondered, if back home
we exposed our vulnerability,
jostled elbows, smiled and made more room
for our fellow travellers going home?
Let's join the river of humanity.
Perhaps we'll see the hollyhocks in bloom.

Aine MacAodha

Aine MacAodha is a writer from Omagh. Her works have appeared in *Don't Be Afraid: An Anthology to Seamus Heaney*, a Doghouse Anthology of Irish haiku titled *Bamboo Dreams*, *Poethead Blog*, *North West Words*, *Glasgow Review*, *Enniscorthy Echo*, *Anthologia Poetica Internazionale*, *Turkish*, *thefirscut*, *Outburst magazine*, *A New Ulster issues*, *Pirene*, *DIOGEN Poetry*, *Episteme* and *Boyne Berries*. She was also recently a featured poet in the Blackwater Poetry Group.

She has published three volumes of poetry: 'Where the Three rivers Meet'; *Guth An Anam* (voice of the soul); and her latest collection *Landscape of Self* from Lapwing Press, Belfast. Argotist Online recently republished *Where the Three Rivers Meet* as an e-book.

Drumragh Graveyard

I spy the grey oak,
a giant holding the ground
with fingers gradually unfolding
in the light and shade of cloud.
Roots protrude like old knuckles
almost clenched in fighting stance,
guarding the ancient plots.
Should I fear this visit?
Is this grand specimen a knight,
a protector of past events,
a window tilting into yesterday
long forgotten by its future wars?

Consult the Oracle

I talk to my higher self on a regular basis
my guru is my own little voice
who steers my every move
whether I listen or not.

Sometimes it tells me to walk
along a path long forgotten
where ghosts appear in random
order, I dwell there a while
pay respect to the ones I met before.

Sometimes we have an argument
where my guru is always right
we accuse each other of being unloving
we seek comfort in each other
this guru knows me better than
I know myself

I consult this oracle before I leave
the house, thank it for the offerings ahead
to the nature around me, send love
to all I meet.

We are very much in love
my guru and I.

Mother

I seek you in the lakes of Tyrone,
The lesser known ones whose beauty
Remain unblemished by progress.

I look for you as summer coughs up
Its last songs of the season,
I seek your words in her breath.

In the secrets of motherhood
Asleep in the elderly, yearning
to be recalled once again.

I seek it too in the faces of youth,
In the songs they sing from
The concrete forests they live in.

I also seek it in me
When dark clouds
Gather up a storm.

Old Croghan Man

This island is a living carpet,
worn by clans of cousins who
weaved into the land
a pattern not for the
the untrained eye.

Old Croghan man,
baked in this oven of peat,
symbolizes our spent lineage
of boundaries and fields.
Beheaded and tortured,
he stood tall as a pine tree.

Who was this nameless lad?
A high king, killed in ritual,
or killed in a jealous rage?
Was it a warning to other youths
who may yearn for the new,
denouncing the old?

I wear a leather twang like his,
woven with love on May Day.
The hands of Croghan man
hold no labourer's welts,
but groomed nails, ideally cleaned.

He joins others that came before:

Meeybradden Woman

and Gallagher man.

They come to remind us

to read the bog chapter by chapter;

learn from ghosts of the past.

Nathan Armstrong

Nathan Elout Armstrong was born in Blackpool, Lancs, to a captive audience in 1989, and spent much of his early childhood in the Netherlands, where he began writing 'poems' at the age of seven.

He completed his MA in Modern Poetry at Queen's University Belfast in 2012, and has been writing and performing ever since for anyone who will listen. He has an ardent fondness for wit, pastry and all things Eurovision, and is secretly something of an apocaloptimist.

Silhouettes

'look!' you'd say,
 'the light –
 it
dances for us:
 teases us
 with modes of
shadow,
 undressing
the night-music
 of traffic
 and rain
in spluttered orange,
 & electric hum.'

*Colour for our
 b r o k e n c i t y ,
grey and dark with threnody.*

*Colour for our
 b r o k e n s h i r e ,
thick with plangent monody.*

...the stars were sultry
 smithereens on our watch,
their shatter-pattern
 splinter glow mosaic

mirrored on our ceiling
like an absurdist disco ball;
the language of a demimonde
of uninterpretable shards
to constellate the galaxy
of our small attic-room
with an impermanent certainty:
on/off, on/off
one zero seeks one one.

[Somewhere a streetlamp falters, flounders, fails –
darkness assumes the space between all space.]

Bit Part

You wake up to another line of code
A living string of predetermined action
And settle back into your human face
With an aloof, sardonic satisfaction.
It has sagged a little while you slept
Careworn through years of automatic breathing.
All time is merely borrowed; and that debt
Is even payed up while you're dreaming.

To you, this place has never felt like home.
Everything suffers for too long and dies.
There is something mathematic to that song:
Formulaic, stark. So we anaesthetise
Our own awarenesses with easy thoughts:
The grey sky that we see must be what is
And the limits of the cosmos keep us small.
Unformed words taunt the soul like tyrannies

This place is not where you belong at all.
Outside birdsong resumes in formulaic
Bits of barcode turned to amplitudes
With all the fractured beauty of mosaic.

Impression

Drawn. That's the word we use.
Taken by an unseen force
Into a space we come to know.

Sketched there by a strange eye
Shaded and coloured as though
We had been greyscale,

Wireframe inkblots.
Defined and redistinguished
From the ocean of off-whites

Creams and taupes
By our existence, thrown
Onto the canvas, left to iridesce.

Here is something.
Something that was not, and is.
A newness, a possibility blossomed

Out of the vastness of everything
Into a single consequence
Of shared imagining.

We call this beautiful

Or predetermined.

Being drawn.

Peculiar Sparks

You remember the day we walked
right past the spot where it happened:
memory's felled tree blooming there?

You talked as though stopping would force
an invocation, recanting the past
like a sad incantation laid bare.

No blue plaque glistened in admonishment
declaring 'this unique is gone forever.'

We stood there, more than a little aware,

swapping silence for bald talk about the weather.

Willetta Fleming

Willetta Fleming was born in Detroit, Michigan, USA, and adopted at a very young age by an older couple and raised in a loving home. She was an early lover of words. In elementary school she would write short stories in her passing time, a vivid imagination was her starting point.

Willetta came to Northern Ireland over thirteen years ago. She has now settled in a city outside Belfast with her two sweet daughters. Willetta released her first book *Finding Black Gold on the Emerald Isle* in 2014. The book is an exploration of her early life, and her self-discovery whilst living in Northern Ireland. Willetta also released her short poetry book *Tree Trunks That Hide The Elephant and The Whale* in 2015.

Coloured

My voice is coloured

It is stained from choice and consequence.

My voice is coloured by learning the hard way, the path my mother
said was my way.

My voice is coloured from years of love not staying... never
staying.

My voice is coloured from embracing my every curve and being
proud to be a woman.

If you say I am coloured I say you are outdated, because really in
these days of reminding ourselves that black lives matter, please
don't shoot days, I got my hands in sight days, no don't touch my
hair days, no I'm not a nigga days.

My voice is coloured.

Chance

We get the same chance that all lovers get. We just decided to choose it or perhaps we stumbled on the absolute magic of it in our meandering.

The previous times, when the innocence in your eyes reach for mine

The previous, when my gaze sustains you for days and my pen cannot stop writing poems of your stance. The chance we take teetering friendship and the wanting for more plays seesaw with my head and heart.

Yet it's these previous days that I could hang on the mystery of each tone of your voice, observe the way you walk with that little swagger, the way the sadness in your eyes change to tenderness when you look at me.

Before becoming lovers, or even hand holders, how quickly we choose to lose all of this to familiar ways, forgetting these most precious days.

Let us stay here for a while yet, let us be led by something a bit wiser than our cravings.

Before you taste the wine my lips produce in our first kiss and you realise I was the only vineyard you ever wandered into that you never wanted to leave.

Time

For everything there is a season, a time and purpose for everything
under heaven.

A time to be born and a time to die.

A time to plant and a time to pluck up that which was planted.

A time to kill and a time to heal.

A time to break down and a time to build up.

A time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to
dance.

A time to cast away stones and a time to gather stones together.

A time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing.

For a black man in America there is a season, a season that has
lasted far too long.

A time to be born is to know that if you dress the wrong way,
happen to walk with a sway, wear a hoodie it may be time to die.

For a black woman, a time to weep is raising sons to hold their heads up... their hands in plain sight, do not dare pick a fight.

A time to weep has brought many hearts together crying out that black lives matter.

A time to embrace as one people not allowing the hate of a few to take the majority vote, any longer.

We need to be strong and we need to stand together.

I know we can dance. I have heard the freedom song we sing.

The time for casting stones is over.

Let us gather the stones together to build strong homes.

Let us not settle for just one President, a few scientists, doctors, artists and authors.

I heard that joy comes in the morning...

We can be the change, raising our sons and our daughters to remember joy not only pain.

Our mourning has been heard and our laughter will lead the way.

For everything there is a season... and a time and a purpose under
heaven.

Our time for dying is over. It has come to an end.

Stand tall my brother and walk sure my sister. Our time is now.

To My Sister

To my Sister

I breathe in deeply and the reason is this.

I see God in you. I see Him in the way you smile freedom, in the way you move your feet. You get off your seat and dance.

Sometimes I smell death on the breath of people around you watching you sway.

But not you, you chose to live, to keep laughing despite others' jealousy of the royalty in your blood.

I see God in you.

Keep moving, keep living and painting colours well. The trail you leave will pull the dead back to life because of God in you.

Gareth Osborne

Born and bred in South Belfast, Gareth Osborne has always been around the art scene, but never jumped in. He is previously unpublished (possibly for a reason).

Gareth has provided a list of seven things you should know about him:

- I write poetry. Sometimes on purpose.
- My favourite word is Babaganoush. Babaganoush. Ba-ba-ga-NOUSH!
- I totally rock a waistcoat.
- There is a thin, toned, rugged guy inside me, waiting to get out. Probably more than one.
- I am a fantastic godfather to my nieces and nephews. They call me 'God' for short. I taught them that.
- I write mushy things in cards to my wife. I think I'm giving her type 2 diabetes.
- This is my favourite Mark Twain quote: "Don't you worry your pretty little mind, people throw rocks at things that shine and life makes love look hard." Okay, that was actually Taylor Swift, but she's got a point.

Why the Sky is Blue

Why is the sky blue? says seven-year old he.
Because it is, even when it's not, says I.
But why, says he, is it blue, not yellow
Or green, or some other colour?
Why isn't it glittery
Maybe with sound effects like
You get when you flick a ruler
Against the edge of your desk?
It would make that sound in the morning,
All shiny dawn, says he,
With a different sound at night,
I'm not sure what.

The sky is blue, says I
Because what we see is dust,
Suspended in a shell of air,
Tiny little prisms, shattering pure sunlight
Into a million squillion pieces.
Little pieces of red and yellow and orange and green
And violet and indigo and blue.
Blue is the colour that scatters most.
And that is why the sky is blue, says I.
Oh, says he. Okay.
Like you always have more Lego than you thought, says he.
Exactly that, says I, wishing for glittery skies.

Knockbreda Cemetery

In hindsight, it was a strange place
For your granny to take you for a picnic.
We would come here quite often
And sit by the little traffic island
Under a thin beech tree
Next to a leaky tap.

I would be munching on Veda sandwiches
As elderly women emptied vases
Of browning Peonies and Chrysanthemums
Stargazer Lilies and Daffodils,
Into rusted steel cages filled
With dead-heads and stalks and slugs.

The graveyard undulated over hills,
Like a counterpane thrown
Over sleeping husbands,
Whilst their left behind wives
Tended their beds and tutted and fussed
And mourned appropriately

Before crossing the road to Supermac
For the groceries.

Sidney Poitier's Good Friday Agreement

(paraphrased from 'Guess Who's Coming to Dinner')

You listen to me.

You say you don't want to tell me

How to live my life.

So what do you think you've been
doing?

You tell me what rights I've got,

Or haven't got,

And what I owe to you for what
you've done for me.

You listen to me.

I owe you nothing.

Because you brought me into this
world.

And from that day you owed me
everything you could ever do for me.

You don't even know what I am.

And if I tried to explain it the rest of
your life

You will never understand.

You and your whole

Lousy generation

Believes the way it was for you

Is the way it's got to be.

And not until the whole lot of you

McGurk's Bar
Bloody Sunday

The Abercorn
Bloody Friday

Claudy

Monaghan

Guilford and

Birmingham

Bessbrook

La Mon

Warrenpoint

Droppin' Well

Loughgall

Enniskillen

Teebane

Sean Graham

Frizzell's

Greysteel

Loughinisland

Docklands

Has lain down and died

Will the dead weight of you be off
our backs.

Manchester

Omagh

Easier

It would be easier if evil was a real thing,
Black and heavy,
That you could hold in your hand and examine.
But our history is our history.
Good or bad.
It's our own troubled history.

Our lives are not shaped by
Competing agendas built on the backs of the broken,
But by people being fundamentally
People.
Messy, confused, misunderstanding, people
All with misplaced longing for memories so ripe

They could be plucked straight from the vine
To keep their heart sustained.
But only for a while.
It would be easier if everything were black and white,
But there are no absolutes,
No easy answers,

And you can't sell that on the side of a bus.
It would be easier if they just hated us,
If they would just go home,

If they would understand.
But it's hard because we woke up today

Without those who didn't wake up yesterday.
It's hard because it has been that way for so long
And no one wants to admit
We have no idea
Why we are doing it anymore.
It's hard because we have lived apart

Beside each other.
It's hard because we remember
All the things we lost
In the fire
While we sit and watch it
Smoulder and reignite

All for the want of an exhalation
Of common breath.

Thank you for reading!



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Produced in Northern Ireland

A **Poetry** NI production

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