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Adult Published Category
A RITE

I swaddle the child and place her with her mother. Eve, she says and rocks her softly, softly.

A cry gathers, wave like, inside her, and when it is released, this woman, sorrowing, is both raging sea and capsized emptied vessel.

She is held off from the peril of herself by her partner, who in his turn clings to calm. But, losing his grip against her spindrift, he too tastes sea salt.

The Chaplain can offer a blessing only; Baptism is for the living, and not this innocent who remains with original sin. We invite him to leave. And then,

following a ceremonial bathing of mother and child, we cleanse Eve, by intention, and with water.

Eleanor Hooker
I have grown accustomed to questions:

where do you come from, how long
are you here, why did you leave?

My answers say little but seem to satisfy;
how to describe sunrise across the savannah,
my father and brothers following a herd

of camels and goats or seated at noon
beneath thorn trees for shade? Who would believe
why my mother took me away,

that some morning after prayers, the women
would come for me, hold me firm for Maryan
who wields the stone-sharpened blade?

How to imagine the darkness of days in the hut,
the mat of long grasses, the ointment of myrrh
offered with love to stem the blood?

Jane Clarke
Adult Non-Published Category
The children from El Chorro were so much like adults with their outfits and their hardships; the main distinctions being bowler hats, stamina, the length of plaits.

They rushed up to examine us, prodding our rucksacks like alien illnesses with Aymara hecklings and muddy index fingers: momentary bridges between existences.

I stopped in my tracks to greet them, suddenly foolish in woolen clothes coloured by the blood of cochineal bugs and gore and sewn by too-small hands, too much like their own.

Their eyes drew towards an unopened Snickers in my glove like a love letter – its unseen, foreign parable might have been so much more than coco, sugar, caramel.

I am sure those pieces of our encounter were torn asunder later by too-small hands, too many muddy fingers waging war with cochineal blood beneath the nails, and a new taste for wayfarers that leave nothing but creases in Cholita skirts and sugar-coated leftovers.
MY HANDS

They’re starting to look old
now my Mother is in them.
The skin folds in her way;
in the way she sees herself
through stained glass knuckles,
mapped decades of veins.
And the skin owns everything
I have yet to give up.
It holds onto everything
I will never be.

Niamh MacAlister
FRIDAY’S CHILDREN

Two fresh from the bottle today,
both no doubt cloaked in love.
Their fresh eyes have yet to behold
what lies in front.

For now possibilities are endless,
their trails will soon begin to crush
the long grass underfoot.

And yet one filly is granted a
head start for no reason other than
where she landed.

The finest of the fine can never compete
with merely making do.

But uncertainty has sown the soil and
made the grass grow strong.
Neither shall thread an easy path.
If they never know ‘good’, they
shall never bask in the warm pool
of prosperity.

They are not alone.

That pool has run dry and all must ape the
Zuni in hope of a return to fertile times.
The cause must, in turn, solve
two fresh from the bottle today, who
know not how to ask.

We must be their interpreters.

Mark J. O’Brien
Schools Post-Primary Senior Category

Transition Year, 5th and 6th Year
Gan ann ach an domhan iomlán
Roinnte ina dhá chuid -
Ag an ainmhí ar a dtugtar
An cine daonna.
Roinnte ina phéire
Idir shaibhir agus daibhir.
Saol na ndaoine contráilte dá chéile
Ag stádus an tsáibrís
Iad bocht gan chúis
Gan deoch i bpluais
Sceanta leis an ocras
I bhforais i ngan fhios
Fágtha ina n-aonair
Ag sochaí an lae inniu
Claonta ina n-aghaídh
Ag teorainn an tsáibrís
Muíde anseo ag maireachtáil gan stró
Ag déanamh leathshuim
Dóibh siúd ar an ngannchuid.

Cian Ó Fátharta
Schools Post-Primary
Junior Category

1st – 3rd year
INNOCENCE

Innocent minds, innocent words
Their delicate brains are moulded by those around them like soft clay.
Seen as: naïve because of their curious minds
careless for their disregard of valuable trinkets

Careless attitudes, simply skipping alongside the breeze
Knowing it will take them nowhere and everywhere.
A sulk turns into a smile in the blink of an eager, bright eye.
Too freely to trust, a thing wished for by many.
Forever seeing the good in all people
Looking past what may be seen as odd
And seeing someone just like them
Two eyes, a nose and a mouth
They are what we should all be
Perfection

Easily influenced,
They are developing weapons or future heroes.
They will grow as quick as words on paper
And become what they will.
They could do great things and be great people.
They are the continuation of us.
So please do not let them lose their
Innocent minds, innocent words.

Priscilla Obilana
Primary Senior Category

5th – 6th class
HEAVY LOAD?

On his strong, sturdy shoulder,
A school bag heavy as a boulder.
All the way from the car,
To his desk, it’s way too far.

Carrying a jar filled to the top,
Filled with water, she cannot stop.
For miles and miles she walks alone,
For she must take this water home.

Complaining and weary, he reaches his desk.
He puffs and pants, he needs a rest,
He has to carry all these books,
It is such a chore, it really sucks.

Just another mile to go,
In this heat she’s sweating so,
But she must carry on, be brave,
Her baby sister she must save.

On the Trócaire box he sees the girl,
Carrying water from the well.
She is about his age, about his height -
Suddenly his bag seems light.

Pádraig Power
SAFE IN OUR HANDS

Today we might just be children
And stuck in class all day.
But tomorrow we might be leaders,
Or go on adventures far away.

We could all be astronauts,
Floating away in space.
Or a great scientist,
Whose brain works at a completely different pace.

Or maybe just a fisherman,
Floating on the deep blue sea.
Who’s also an environmental activist,
Minding all the turtles there ever could be.

Or maybe a great singer,
To harmonize the world.
Or maybe a peacekeeper,
To stop the bombs being hurled.

But I’m just a kid,
Who waits to see what the future holds.
Like plasticine, it changes.
Only we control how it moulds.

Dylan Mangru
Primary Junior Category
TODAY’S CHILDREN, TOMORROW’S WORLD

The key to the land
Of tomorrow
Lies in the world
Of today
Some people believe
All must live in the now
I believe if we look
We can find tomorrow
All around us today
In the little people
Our parents gave everything
In this wonderful time
Of new to us
We are special because
We are today
We are special because
We are tomorrow.

Saoirse O’Connor
HOPE FOR THE CHILDREN OF TOMORROW

Look around the world today,
Is there equality? What do you say?
Countries rich, countries poor,
Countries with less, countries with more.

Look at third world children,
Working through the day,
They’re not getting food,
They’re not getting pay.

But it doesn’t have to be like this,
We can help them out of their dark abyss,
From helplessness, poverty, despair and tears,
To hope, smiles, easing of fears.

“How can we do it?” I hear you say,
Its simple, easy, there’s a better way,
Gather your change, large and small,
Into the Trócaire box let it fall.

For you it means an ice-cream less,
Saying no to a treat or not making a mess.
One small gesture during the season of lent,
And to the third world some hope is sent.

Hannah Kate Heffernan
Poems from Zimbabwe
Summer, autumn, winter, spring
Changing seasons, changing skies
Past to present, onwards to the future
What we sow, we’ll reap in plenty.

Here we have been cutting down trees
Damaging young shoots and young lives
Destroying our beautiful climate and inheritance
Demolishing our hopes of tomorrow.

Imagine if people would plant instead of cut
Recycle instead of burn
Nurture instead of neglect
Conserve nature, develop culture,
And prioritise children’s rights.

By turning abuse to good use
Rights and responsibilities being our main purpose
We can change ozone depleted skies
And change children’s lives.

We could achieve healthy blue skies
All seasons occurring at their rightful time
Children realising their rights and potential
Changing skies, changing lives.
Come young and old,
It begins with us!

Starlight
GET MARRIED MY DAUGHTER

My daughter, get married to Spears
So that we get cattle to plough with
My daughter, get married to Spears
So that we get bags of maize meal
There is no need for you to continue with school
Now you can cook well and clean the homestead
And that’s enough for a woman.

Go get bathing my daughter
Mr Spears will be here soon
Start preparing good meals my daughter
Mr Spears will be here soon.

Unique
40 YEARS AGO

I was not there but I care
To tell others what my father told me
He was young, nine or ten
White boys like him he had to call Baas (Sir)

Grandfather had to call them Piccaninny Baas
A poor white man called Baas and the wife Missus (Mrs)
White man and his wife called me grandfather boy
Grandmother was called Nkazana (girl).

Father says he grew up in a whiteman’s farm without a school
He went to stay with his uncle to attend school
Where he ate inadequate meals because Uncle did not care
Father’s uncle used a big stick to beat up my father.

Mother says during the liberation struggle
Many people died
Many children became orphans
And some schools were closed down.

Schools were few but fees were affordable then
Grandfather sent my father to a boarding school
He had many cattle to pay for fees for all his children
Father and his brothers always ate meals.

Grandfather says he had a tractor
He got $9 per month from whiteman
Why is he 99 years old now
When his cousin died at 87?

Ba’mcane
MY GRANDMOTHER, MYSELF AND MY DAUGHTER

Only but yesterday you were not
Seeing this light that I see today Grandmother,
Yes indeed, you are the light in the dark
The most special thing to have
Happened in the life of a child
You were trapped inside mixed emotions
Commotion they caused in your life.

No one can understand why
Throughout your youth you
 Tried to solve equations of unsettled sums
Why? When? How?
All these questions
Are bottled up
In a cup
That overflows with pain and sorrow.

But the most whirling question is
Where were your rights?
They could only be smelt from
The man next door
From the door of the landlord
The door of the colonizer
You tried to move from
Coast to coast
Yet you could see no way ahead.

Did you ever get a chance
To show people
Your talents and abilities?
No!
But wait, wait a minute
Someone sees a green light!
Your granddaughter, myself!
You tend to have been trapped
But your granddaughter is
Released at last
I have achieved a green light
See!! All the mysteries and equations
Have been solved
No agitation
I access education
Illumination
My rights!

My daughter can also taste
And as well add ingredients
To spice the recipe
Her rights will be attended
To excessively.
Technology will be her song
Education her priority
And with all being said and done
Such rights and opportunities
Are passed from one generation to another!

*Resistance*
THE KIDS ARE ALRIGHT

There has never been a more perfect time to be a child
Than 40 years from now
Take it from me, it is pure bliss.
It’s funny how crimes like treason and perjury
Have lost status on earth.
Prevention of Child abuse is the real deal.
Now everything is centered around the child,
This is the way it should be.
For at last adults would recognise us.
They now admit kids are alright.

This is so good it’s funny.
I am not complaining, I just never imagined
It would be so good.
We even have kids who are leaders.
Children are no longer punch bags for our parents
We no longer follow unjust orders,
But we do what we want, when we want and
How we want, responsibly.
The kids are good, the kids are smiling
The kids are happy, the kids are enjoying life.
But most importantly, the kids are alright.

The Bold
ELEANOR HOOKER’S debut collection of poems, *The Shadow Owner’s Companion*, was shortlisted for the 2012 Strong/Shine Poetry Award, for best first collection. She is Programme Curator for the Dromineer Literary Festival.

JANE CLARKE is widely published in poetry journals in both Ireland and the UK. She has won many awards, the most recent being the inaugural *Poems for Patience* competition run by Galway University Hospitals Arts Trust in 2013.

CAOILINN HUGHES is an Irish poet and novelist, currently completing a Ph.D. at Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand. Her debut collection, *Gathering Evidence*, which won the 2012 Patrick Kavanagh Award, will be published by Carcanet Press in February 2014.

NIAMH MACALISTER lives in Dublin and was selected for The Lonely Voice and Poetry Ireland Introductions Series and shortlisted for the Hennessy New Irish Writing awards in 2012.

MARK J. O’BRIEN grew up in Tallaght and lives and works in Dublin. When he’s not writing poetry he likes to read, play music, visit Donegal and solve the world’s problems in good company.

CIAN Ó FÁTHARTA is seventeen and attends Coláiste Cholmcille, in the Connemara Gaeltacht. He developed an interest in writing poetry while in transition year, inspired by his teacher and a local writer. His other interests are reading, Gaelic football, handball, cycling, and fishing.

PRISCILLA OBILANA moved from Nigeria to Ireland in 2005 when she was five. She lives with her family in Westmeath and her hobbies include reading, writing and sports.

PÁDRAIG POWER is 11 years old and lives in Tipperary. His inspiration for this poem came from a picture he saw in a newspaper of children in the developing world struggling to get to school.

DYLAN MANGRU is a 6th class student in Lucan Educate Together N.S. Dylan was born in the U.S.A. but has lived in Ireland all his life. Reading is his favourite hobby and he likes the Narnia series.
NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

SAOIRSE O’CONNOR is 10 years old and lives in Skibbereen. Before she could read stories to herself she began to write her own, patiently asking to have each word spelled out for her to write down. She also likes reading, acrobatics on her trapeze and foxes.

HANNAH KATE HEFFERNAN is 10 years old and lives in Tipperary. She has shown a flair for poetry, having already won a local poetry competition and had a poem published in We Are Writers, a schools publication.

The five young Zimbabwean writers have chosen to use pen-names. STARLIGHT, RESISTANCE and THE BOLD are all from Bulawayo. BA’MCANE is from Matobo and UNIQUE lives in Harare.
On All Ireland Poetry Day, 6th October 2011, poet Rita Ann Higgins launched the first joint Trócaire and Poetry Ireland poetry competition on the theme of ‘Imagining a Just and Free World’ in the Irish Writers’ Centre, Dublin.

It was so successful, that we ran another competition for Trócaire’s 40th anniversary, this time on the theme of ‘Today’s Children, Tomorrow’s World’.

Both competitions were open to writers ranging from established poets to young schoolchildren. Poets across the island of Ireland rose to the challenge and enthusiastically explored the themes of justice, freedom and the future through verse.

In parallel, one of Trócaire’s partners in Zimbabwe, the Africa Community Publishing and Developing Trust (ACPD), ran a community project for young poets, with guest editors and poets Albert Nyathi and Musa Zimunya.

The judges for this year’s competition were John F. Deane, poet and former editor of Dedalus Press and founder and Director of Poetry Ireland, Trish Groves, Campaigns Officer with Trócaire, and Mary Shine Thompson, former chair of Poetry Ireland and former Dean at St. Patrick’s College, Drumcondra (Dublin City University).

Trócaire and Poetry Ireland are proud to present this booklet of winning entries from Ireland, together with the work of five young poets from Zimbabwe, and hope that it will stimulate your imagination as we work together to create a just world for everyone.

JUSTIN KILCULLEN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF TRÓCAIRE
JOSEPH WOODS, DIRECTOR OF POETRY IRELAND

TRÓCAIRE
Trócaire envisages a just and peaceful world where people’s dignity is ensured and rights are respected; where basic needs are met and resources are shared equitably; where people have control over their own lives and those in power act for the common good.
www.trocaire.org

POETRY IRELAND
Poetry Ireland/ÉigseÉireann is the national organisation for poetry in Ireland and also runs the Writers in Schools Scheme the mission of which is ‘to empower the participant by facilitating a magical and memorable experience through the imaginative, emotional and intellectual energy and belief in language that the writer brings to the classroom.’ We serve all 32 counties and receive support from The Arts Council of Ireland/An ChomhairleÉalaíon and The Arts Council of Northern Ireland.
www.poetryireland.ie

Cover Photo: Brid Dunne/Trócaire - Insiza District, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, 2012