

## Feile Luimnigh 2019

### SVG13 (Born 2006)

#### Marmalade

*By Peter Dixon*

He's buried in the bushes,  
with dockleaves round his grave,  
A crimecat desperado  
and his name is Marmalade.  
He's the cat that caught the pigeon,  
that stole the neighbour's meat...  
and tore the velvet curtains  
and stained the satin seat.  
He's the cat that spoilt the laundry,  
he's the cat that spilt the stew,  
and chased the lady's poodle  
and scratched her daughter too.

But –

No more we'll hear his cat flap,  
or scratches at the door,  
or see him at the window,  
or hear his catnap snore.

So –

Ring his grave with pebbles,  
Erect a noble sign –  
for here lies Marmalade  
and Marmalade was MINE.

#### The Girl Who Makes the Cymbals Bang

*By X.J. Kennedy*

I'm the girl who makes the cymbals bang-  
It used to be a boy  
That got to play them in the past  
Which always would annoy  
Me quite a bit. Though I complained,  
Our teacher Mister Cash  
Said, "Sorry, girls don't have the strength  
To come up with a crash."

"Oh yeah?" I said. "Please give them  
here!"

And there and then, I slammed  
Together those brass plates so hard  
His ear-drums traffic-jammed.  
He gulped and gaped, and I could tell  
His old ideas were bending -  
So now me and my cymbals give  
Each song a real smash ending.

## Feile Luimnigh 2019

### SVB13 (Born 2006)

#### **Dirty Face** *by Shel Silverstein*

Where did you get such a dirty face,  
My darling dirty-faced child?  
I got it from crawling along in the dirt  
And biting two buttons off Jeremy's shirt.  
I got it from chewing the roots of a rose  
And digging for clams in the yard with my  
nose.  
I got it from peeking into a dark cave  
And painting myself like a Navajo brave.  
I got it from playing with coal in the bin  
And signing my name in cement with my  
chin.  
I got it from rolling around on the rug  
And giving the horrible dog a big hug.  
I got it from finding a lost silver mine  
And eating sweet blackberries right off the  
vine.  
I got it from ice cream and wrestling and  
tears  
And from having more fun than you've  
had in years

#### **Late** *by Judith Nicholls*

You're late, said Miss,  
The bell has gone,  
Dinner numbers done  
And work has begun.

What have you got to say for yourself?

Well, it's like this Miss  
Me Mum was sick,  
Me dad fell down the stairs,  
The wheel fell off me bike  
And then we lost our Billy's snake  
Behind the kitchen chairs.  
Earache struck down me Grampy, me  
Gran  
Took quite a funny turn.  
Then on the way I met this man  
Whose dog attacked me on the shin -  
Look, Miss, you can see the blood,  
It doesn't look too good,  
Does it?

Yes, yes, sit down -  
And next time say you're sorry  
For disturbing all the class.  
Now get on with your story,  
Fast!

Please Miss, I've got nothing to write  
about.

## **Feile Luimnigh 2019**

### **SVG14 (Born 2005)**

#### **Who?**

*By Charles Causley*

Who is that child I see wandering,  
wandering  
Down by the side of the quivering stream?  
Why does he seem not to hear, though I  
call to him?  
Where does he come from, and what is  
his name?

Why do I see him at sunrise and sunset  
Taking, in old-fashioned clothes, the same  
track?  
Why, when he walks, does he not cast a  
shadow  
Though the sun rises and falls at his back?

Why does the dust lie so thick on the  
hedgerow  
By the great field where the horse pulls a  
plough?  
Why do I see only meadows, where  
houses  
Stand in line by the riverside now?

Why does he move like wraith by the  
water,  
Soft as the thistledown on the breeze  
blown?  
When I draw near him so that I may hear  
him,  
Why does he say that his name is my  
own?

#### **First Word**

*By Jan Dean*

They wanted to hear 'Mummy'  
They wanted to hear 'Dad'  
But I fancied something altogether  
Bold and big and bad.  
So, I goo-gooed and I ga-gahed  
And gurgled like a drain  
While I brewed a monster word up  
In my big bad baby brain.

They waited for a word from me  
And I wasn't there to fuss  
When the first thing that I said was  
There's a duck-billed-fatty-platypus  
Somersaulting underneath that bus  
And I don't think I have ever seen  
A creature so preposterous.  
My mother promptly fainted  
And my father crossed his eyes  
In a quite absurd expression  
Of absolute surprise.  
Once recovered, they ran off  
To tell the world about their genius child  
(Who was in fact a genius)  
While I just sat and smiled.

When they came back with an audience  
I gave them of my best –  
I ga-ga-gooed and goo-ga-gahed  
Then threw up on my vest.

## **Feile Luimnigh 2019**

### **SVB14 (Born 2005)**

#### **The Armpit of Doom**

*by Kenn Nesbitt*

Today I walked into my big brother's room,  
and that's when I saw it: The Armpit of Doom.  
I wasn't expecting The Armpit at all.  
I shrieked and fell backward and grabbed for the wall.  
The Armpit was smelly. The Armpit was hairy.  
The Armpit was truly disgusting and scary.  
I wanted to vomit. I wanted to cry.  
I wanted to flee from its all-seeing eye.  
My skin started crawling with goosebumps and chills.  
My brain began screaming to head for the hills.  
I tried to escape but I knew I could not.  
In horror, I found I was glued to the spot.  
"Will somebody help me!?" I started to shout,  
till fumes overcame me and made me pass out.  
And that's why I'm here in this hospital room;  
it's all on account of The Armpit of Doom.  
I'm still feeling shaken. I'm queasy and pale,  
but lucky I lived and can tell you my tale.  
So take my advice... If you ever go near your big brothers room, bring a whole lot of gear:  
A gas mask and goggles, a helmet and shield,  
or maybe a space suit that's perfectly sealed.  
And then, only then, when you're fully prepared,  
step in very slowly and hope you'll be spared.

But, if you're afraid of the Armpit of Doom,  
stay far, far away from your big brother's room.

#### **Space Shot**

*By Gareth Owen*

Out of the furnace  
The great fish rose  
Its silver tail on fire  
But with a slowness  
Like something sorry  
To be rid of earth.  
The boiling mountains  
Of snow white cloud  
Searched for a place to go into  
And the ground thundered  
With a roar  
That set teacups  
Rattling in a kitchen  
Twenty miles away.  
Across the blue it arched  
Milk bottle white  
But shimmering in the haze.  
And the watchers by the fence  
Held tinted glass against their eyes  
And wondered at what a man could do  
To make so large a thing  
To fly so far and free.  
While the unknown Universe waited;  
For waiting  
Was what it had always been good at.

## Feile Luimnigh 2019

### SV15 (Born 2004)

#### The Fire Monster

*By John Foster*

Deep in the boiling belly  
Of the Volcano  
The Fire Monster sleeps:  
Wisps of smoke from his nostrils  
Squeeze through cracks  
In the crater's mouth.

Deep in the boiling belly  
Of the Volcano  
The Fire Monster stirs:  
Bubbles of larva from his lips  
Foam through crevices  
And simmer beneath the surface.

Deep in the boiling belly  
Of the Volcano  
The Fire Monster wakes:  
Jets of lava gush from his throat,  
Squirting through fissures,  
Bursting the crater's dam.

Deep in the boiling belly  
Of the Fire Monster roars:  
Huge chunks of rock spit from his mouth.  
Red torrents of lava shoot the sky,  
Then stream down the crater's sides.

In the village in the valley,  
The watchers wait  
For the Fire Monster's anger to abate.

#### Nora

*By Gabriel Fitzmaurice*

Nora sits in the Old Folk's Home,  
She's very old and all alone;  
She doesn't even know her friends,  
This is how the twilight ends.

Her mouth's a hole where once it smiled  
On me and every little child,  
Her eyes are open wide and stare –  
She doesn't even know who's there.

But Granda sits and holds her hands.  
He says that Nora understands,  
He sits like that an hour or more;  
Sometimes her breath is like a snore,  
She wears a thing to keep her head  
From falling down before she's dead.  
He sits beside her in her chair  
He doesn't talk, he just sits there –  
Granda sits and holds her hands,  
Sometimes she looks and understands.

## Feile Luimnigh 2019

### SV16 (Born 2003)

#### The Early Purges

*By Seamus Heaney*

I was six when I first saw kittens drown.  
Dan Taggart pitched them, 'the scraggy  
wee shits',  
Into a bucket; a frail metal sound,

Soft paws scraping like mad. But their tiny  
din  
Was soon soused. They were slung on the  
snout  
Of the pump and the water pumped in.

'Sure, isn't it better for them now?' Dan  
said.  
Like wet gloves they bobbed and shone till  
he sluiced  
Them out on the dunghill, glossy and  
dead.

Suddenly frightened, for days I sadly hung  
Round the yard, watching the three  
sogged remains  
Turn mealy and crisp as old summer dung

Until I forgot them. But the fear came  
back  
When Dan trapped big rats, snared  
rabbits, shot crows  
Or, with a sickening tug, pulled old hens'  
necks.

Still, living displaces false sentiments  
And now, when shrill pups are prodded to  
drown  
I just shrug, 'Bloody pups'. It makes sense:

'Prevention of cruelty' talk cuts ice in town  
Where they consider death unnatural  
But on well-run farms pests have to be  
kept down.

#### Hunger

*By Robert Laurence Binyon*

I come among the peoples like a shadow.  
I sit down by each man's side.  
None sees me, but they look on one  
another,  
And know that I am there.  
My silence is like the silence of the tide  
That buries the playground of children;  
Like the deepening of frost in the slow  
night,  
When birds are dead in the morning.  
Armies trample, invade, destroy,  
With guns roaring from earth and air.  
I am more terrible than armies,  
I am more feared than the cannon.  
Kings and chancellors give commands;  
I give no command to any;  
But I am listened to more than kings  
And more than passionate orators.  
I unswear words, and undo deeds.  
Naked things know me.  
I am first and last to be felt of the living.  
I am Hunger

## **Feile Luimnigh 2019**

### **SV18 (Born 2001/2002)**

#### **The Housemaids Letter**

*By Clare Bevan*

Dear Mum,  
My life is very fine here  
Far from the village  
And the smell of home.  
I have a room in the roof  
Painted blue as a blackbird's egg,  
And a whole bed to myself,  
Which is lonely  
But so clean  
The sheets crackle like morning frost.  
And I have tried  
Truly  
To make you proud of me, Mum.  
I work hard all day,  
Cleaning and polishing this great house  
Till it sparkles as brightly  
As a butterfly's wing.  
Then I disappear down the Servant's Stair  
Like a small, sweaty,  
Fairy Godmother,  
Unseen and unknown  
By the golden ones above.

And I am happy enough, Mum.  
The food is good  
Though swallowed in silence.  
The other girls smile  
At my clumsy ways  
And Cook can be kind  
If the milk is sweet  
And the butter cool.

But sometimes,  
When the Sunday bells are ringing,  
I still miss the warmth of the little ones  
Curled beside me in the tumbled darkness,  
And I hunger to hear  
The homely peal  
Of your lost laughter,  
Mum.

#### **The Hero**

*By Siegfried Sassoon*

'Jack fell as he'd have wished,' the Mother  
said,  
And folded up the letter that she'd read.  
'The Colonel writes so nicely.' Something  
broke  
In the tired voice that quavered to a  
choke.  
She half looked up. 'We mothers are so  
proud  
Of our dead soldiers.' Then her face was  
bowed.

Quietly the Brother Officer went out.  
He'd told the poor old dear some gallant  
lies  
That she would nourish all her days, no  
doubt.  
For while he coughed and mumbled, her  
weak eyes  
Had shone with gentle triumph, brimmed  
with joy,  
Because he'd been so brave, her glorious  
boy.

He thought how 'Jack', cold-footed,  
useless swine,  
Had panicked down the trench that night  
the mine  
Went up at Wicked Corner; how he'd  
tried  
To get sent home, and how, at last, he  
died,  
Blown to small bits. And no one seemed  
to care  
Except that lonely woman with white hair.

## **Feile Luimnigh 2019**

### **SVAD (Born 2000 or earlier)**

#### **The Prayer**

*By Leanne O'Sullivan*

Night after night I turn off the light  
having done all I could have done,  
yet my sister reaches above our bodies  
to turn it on again. Then she toddles over  
to the window to draw the curtains,  
the lambency of the full moon  
exhaling on her small face.  
God bless Mommy and God bless Daddy,  
she whispers as she gets into bed with me,  
her sleepy weight nuzzling into the womb  
I have prepared for her. I look down  
and see her staring at the moon,  
her white hands clasped tightly,  
palm to palm, holding her prayer up  
to the burnt out sky, as if all her blessings  
were held in that chamber, and she's delivering  
their names to the care of some guardian;  
God bless my family and all my friends  
and my Nana in heaven  
and my Granddad in heaven.

My God I love this child, one knee  
raised as if she is kneeling before  
her listener, the steady throb  
of prayer from her mouth, wrist,  
palm, offering what she knows,  
lying in utter abandon with the sheets  
thrown off her, as if she's driving away  
anything that might smother her,  
her chest rising in righteousness, her hands  
uplifted like one who hasn't given enough.



## **For Rita with Love**

*By Pat Ingoldsby*

You came home from school  
on a special bus  
full of people  
who look like you  
and love like you  
and you met me  
for the first time  
and you loved me.  
You love everybody  
so much it's not safe  
to let you out alone.  
Eleven years of love  
and trust and time for you to learn  
that you can't go on loving like this.  
Unless you are stopped  
you will embrace every person you see.  
Normal people don't do that.  
Some normal people will hurt you  
very badly because you do.

Cripples don't look nice  
but you embrace them.  
You kissed a wino on the bus  
and he broke down and cried  
and he said 'Nobody has kissed me  
for the last thirty years.'  
But you did.  
You touched my face  
with your fingers and said  
'I like you.'  
The world will  
never be ready for you.  
Your way is right  
and the world will  
never be ready.

We could learn everything  
that we need to know  
by watching you  
going to your special school  
in your special bus  
full of people  
who look like you  
and love like you  
and it's not safe  
to let you out alone.