22nd–25th October

Waterford Writers Weekend



2026

Fáilte

Welcome





Waterford City and County Council is pleased to present the Waterford Writers Weekend 2026 under the curatorship of Margaret Organ, Arts Officer. This year check out the Curator's Choices and the Early Bird Offers. Our events are low cost or no cost, for readers and writers alike in Waterford city and Dungarvan.

We hope you enjoy the weekend.
Bain taitneamh as.

Dialogue for Collaboration

Workshop with Sara Matthews

Thursday, October 22nd



Sara Matthews leads a conversation driven workshop on studio visits, dialogue, and collaboration between artists, curators and writers.

Old Market House Arts Centre, Dungarvan

22nd October 2026

11am to 1pm

€5 for non-Mór members on the door.

Dialogue for Collaboration
Workshop with Sara Matthews

Canadian Writer, Sara Matthews will lead an engaging, conversation driven workshop to explore the dynamic relationships between artists, curators and art writers. Centred around the familiar yet often unseen experience of the 'studio visit', this session invites participants into the heart of creative exchange, investigating how dialogue opens new directions for collaborative, practice-based work.

In partnership with the *Mór Artists Collective*, supporting artists living and working in rural East Cork and West Waterford. *Mór* is facilitated by Greywood Arts and supported by the Arts Office of Waterford and Cork County Council.

Sara Matthews is a Canadian writer whose work moves between curating and research-creation.

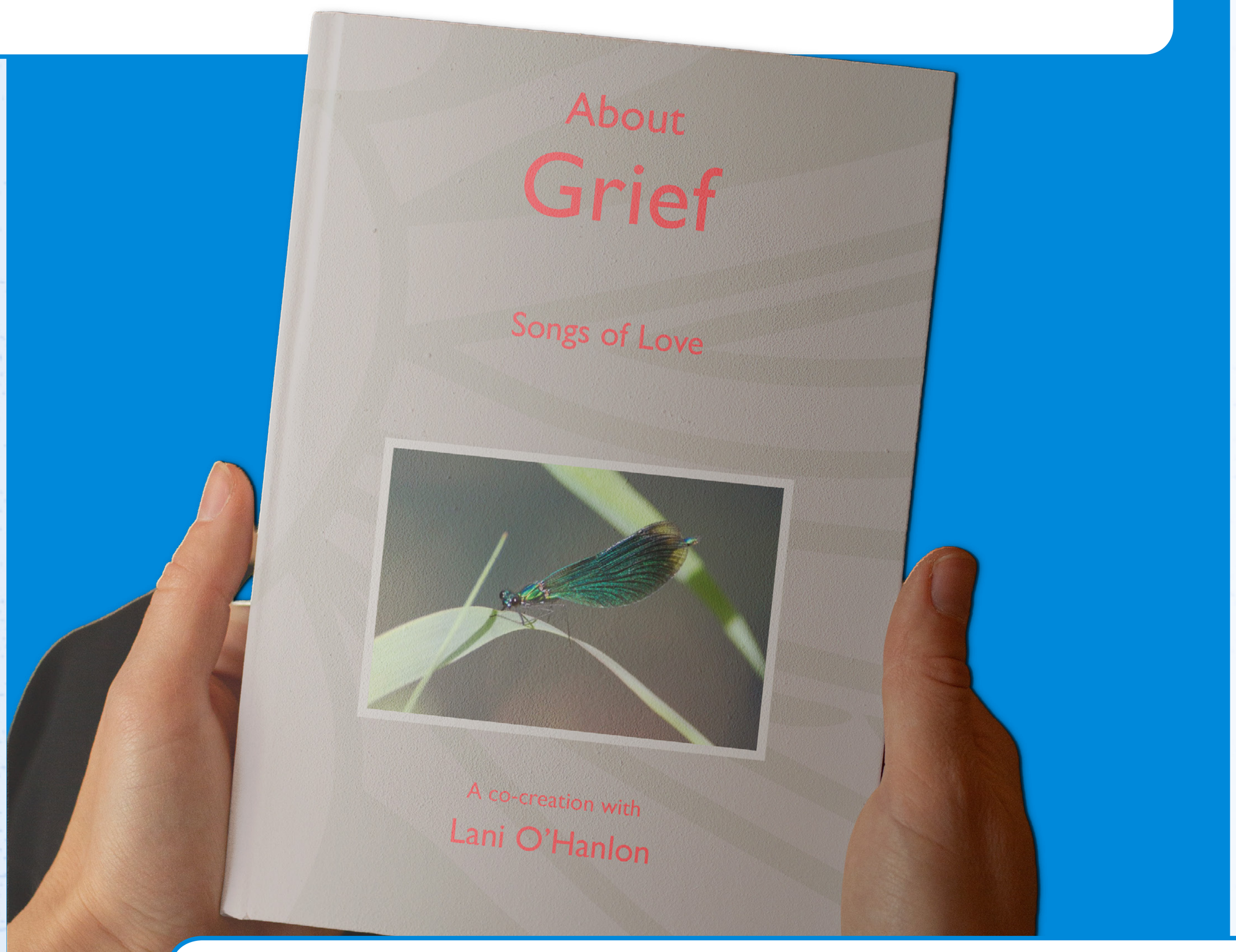
Her projects trace how encounters with conflict and loss emerge as new forms of futurity, material expression, and collective life.

She is currently developing a collaborative project exploring the enduring scientific, environmental, and cultural legacies of the world's first atomic bomb test at Trinity, New Mexico.

CURATOR'S CHOICE

‘About Grief’ Songs of Love

Thursday



Uplifting readings from *About Grief – Songs of Love*, with Lani O’Hanlon and original music by Fergal O’Connor.



Old Market House Arts Centre, Dungarvan

22nd October 2026

7.30pm to 8.30pm

Free event but pre-booking required
(limited seating) To book, contact:

waterfordwritersweekend@gmail.com

‘About Grief’
Songs of Love

For the past three years, this project has evolved with writer Lani O’ Hanlon co-creating a book of poems, written in collaboration with people with a life limiting illness, bereaved or working in care.

This evening will feature uplifting, moving and inspiring readings from the book and original music performed by Fergal O’ Connor.

Lani O’Hanlon, has been practising and teaching meditation, creative writing, dance/voice and somatic movement for over twenty-five years. She works as a poet in mental health and in palliative care with *Réalta*. She has an MA in creative writing from Lancaster University and has received awards for her work, including the **Gregory O’Donoghue International Poetry Prize in 2025**, and was nominated for the **Forward Prize in 2026**. She is the recipient of bursaries, mentorships and awards from the Arts Council of Ireland and Waterford’s Arts Office. Her work is published nationally and international and she is regularly broadcast on RTÉ’s *Sunday Miscellany*. The co-created poetry collection, ‘About Grief – Songs of Love’ was released in 2026.



Fergal O’Connor is an Irish-Indian singer-songwriter, composer, and experienced music facilitator whose work blends tradition, soul, and healing. With roots in Indian Classical music and African drumming, his musical journey is deeply informed by a lifelong practice of meditation and a belief in the restorative power of sound. He has composed for RTÉ Radio and TG4 documentaries.

Masterclass
with Conor Kostick



Join Conor Kostick's content packed masterclass for novelists: ten proven tips on voice, theme, drama, dialogue and characterisation.

Old Market House Arts Centre, Dungarvan

23rd October 2026

10am to 1pm

€25 on Eventbrite

EARLY BIRD TICKETS

Masterclass
with Conor Kostick

A *Writers in the Region* Masterclass in association with the Irish Writers Centre.

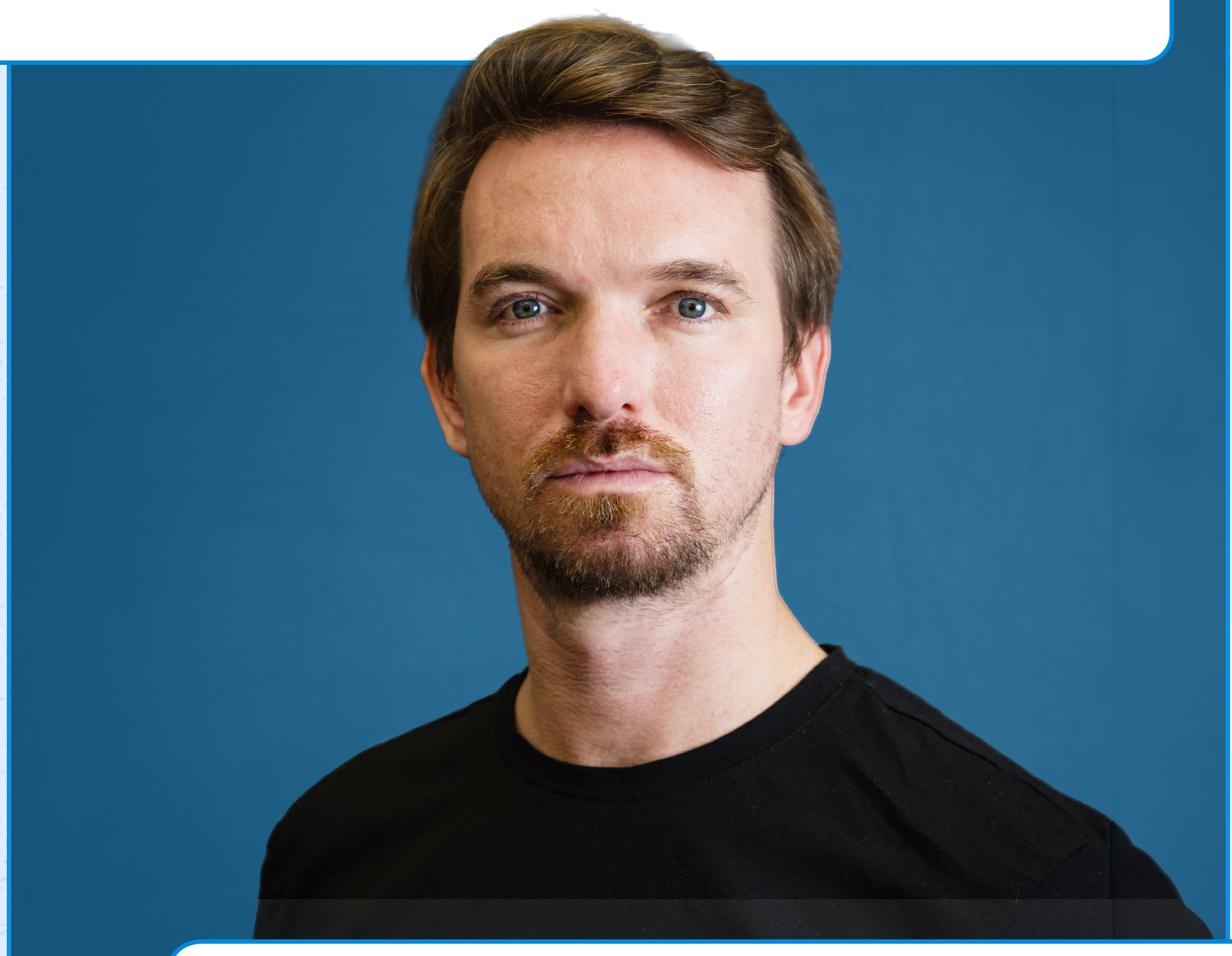
For over twenty years Conor Kostick has been teaching his *Finish Your Novel* course at the Irish Writers Centre. For this masterclass Conor will distil the experience of the hundreds of writers who have participated in the course to give the top ten tips that he feels have proven to be the most helpful to novel writers. Concerning narrative voice, theme, writing drama, dialogue, characterisation and more, come and get the condensed, content-packed version of this celebrated course.

Conor Kostick is the author of *Epic*, an internationally acclaimed SciFi novel. His other novels include *The Retreat* and for younger readers, *The Book of Wishes* and *The Book of Curses*. A long-time mentor and teacher with the Irish Writers Centre, Conor is often called upon to judge new works, twice being **president of the Irish jury for the EU Prize for Literature**. Conor was a **nominee for the Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award 2012 and 2013**.

As an advocate for authors, Conor has served as the **Disputes Officer for the Irish Writers Union** for over a decade. Conor was a **board member of the National Library of Ireland** for seven years and is currently a **board member of the Irish Copyright Licensing Agency and Reading Services**.

Irish Writers Centre
Áras Scríbhneoirí na hÉireann

Writing Clinic
with Dr. Patrick Holloway



Feature

A practical writing clinic with Patrick Holloway: strengthen submissions, target journals, and learn what editors want from emerging writers.

Waterford Gallery of Art

23rd October 2026

3pm to 4.30pm

~~€25~~ on Eventbrite

EARLY BIRD TICKETS

Writing Clinic
with Dr. Patrick Holloway

Get your prescription for how to get your work noticed and tips for your writing journey with this clinic offering a practical and engaging guide to navigating the many pathways to publication. Aimed at emerging and developing writers, the session will explore how to strengthen your work for submission, identify suitable literary journals and magazines, and understand what editors are really looking for.

Participants will be required to submit work in advance. The focus will be on practical "dos and don'ts" that writers can immediately apply to their own work, making this an informative and supportive session for anyone looking to take the next step in their writing journey.

Dr. Patrick Holloway is a **prize-winning writer** of fiction and poetry. His debut novel, *The Language of Remembering*, was published in 2025 to critical acclaim. His second novel is forthcoming in 2027 with *Eriu*. His work appears in *The Stinging Fly, The Moth, The London Magazine, Southword, Carve, Overland, The Irish Times* and *The Irish Independent*. He is the **winner of The Bath Short Story Prize, The Molly Keane Creative Writing Award, The Raymond Carver Contest, The Allingham Fiction Contest The Flash 500**, among others. He is an editor of the literary journal, *The Four Faced Liar*, and is the **2026 Writer in Residence at Maynooth University**.

SpeakEasy

with Nick Laird and guest musician

Friday



Step up to the mic at SpeakEasy, featuring poet Nick Laird and a guest musician for an energising night.

Phil Grimes

23rd October 2026

8pm

€5 on the door

CURATOR'S CHOICE

Masterclass with Nick Laird

Featured Masterclass



Advanced poetry masterclass with Nick Laird, exploring tone and voice through diction, register, workshop discussion and guided exercises.

Waterford Gallery of Art

24th October 2026

10am to 1pm

€25 on Eventbrite

Masterclass
with Nick Laird

Looking at tone and voice in poems and trying to work out what control of diction and register can achieve.

Participants are invited to bring one of their poems for workshopping in this session for advanced writers. Poems will be discussed and guided exercises undertaken.

Nick Laird was born in Co. Tyrone. He has published two novels and three collections of poetry. He is the recipient of many awards for his fiction and poetry. He **teaches Creative Writing at Columbia University in New York** and is the **Seamus Heaney Professor of Poetry at Queens' University, Belfast**.

Life in Colour:
Writing Poems
with Jessica Traynor

Textures



A generative workshop with Jessica Traynor, using colour as a prompt to unlock intimate, politically charged poems and fresh visions.

Waterford Gallery of Art

24th October 2026

2pm to 4.30pm

€25 on Eventbrite

EARLY BIRD TICKETS

Life in Colour: writing poems with Jessica Traynor

From the 'wine-dark sea' of *Homer's Odyssey* to contemporary poets like Mary Ruefle, Ann Carson and Maggie Nelson, poets have used an obsession with colour to unlock visions of the world that are both intimate and politically charged. If, as Kassia St. Clair tells us '*Colours should be understood as cultural creations*', what of our own culture and life experience can we bring to our poetry by approaching it through our own understandings of colour?
This generative prompt-based workshop is perfect for writers looking for inspiration.

Jessica Traynor is poetry editor at *Banshee* and the author of four poetry collections. Her third collection, *Pit Lullabies* (Bloodaxe, 2022), was a **Poetry Book Society Recommendation**, an **Irish Times book of the year**, and a **Guardian Best Summer Read of 2022**. It was **shortlisted for the Yeats Society Sligo/ Irish Independent Poetry Prize**. *New Arcana* (Bloodaxe, 2025) was an **RTÉ and Irish Independent Book of the Year** and was **shortlisted for the Pigott Prize**. She is a **2025 EU Press Prize Laureate**, was **2024 recipient of the Tundish Award** from Field Day for contributions to the arts in Ireland, and the 2023 recipient of the **Lawrence O'Shaughnessy Award for Irish Poetry**.

This is her second year as the adjudicator of the Waterford Poetry Prize.

Words Get Naughty / Éiríonn Focail Gránna

Aeveurofest



Artist-writer Pippa Sweeney introduces her bilingual picture book, helping children choose words well through playful word-and-image storytelling.

Old Market House Arts Centre, Dungarvan

24th October 2026

2pm to 4.30pm

Free Pop in Event for parents and children

Words Get Naughty / Éiríonn Focail Gránna

Pippa Sweeney's new bilingual children's picture book *Words Get Naughty/Éiríonn Focail Gránna*, aims to help young children understand and articulate the importance of using words well.

Join her with **Jacqui de Paor**, who translated this book into Irish and has a wealth of experience and expertise in the early learning and care, and school age childcare and childminding sector, for an afternoon of fun and creativity.



Pippa Sweeney is an artist and writer from Dungarvan. She loves to combine word and image when creating her books which include *A Meander in Beijing*, *Little WW* and *Words Get Knotted*, the latter being published by Bloomsbury and **won the UK, BESA Special Education Needs award**.

Pippa's new bilingual children's picture book *Words Get Naughty/Éiríonn Focail Gránna* aims to help young children understand and articulate the importance of using words well.

Jacqui de Paor, who translated this book into Irish, has a wealth of experience and expertise in the early learning and care, and school age childcare and childminding sector.

CURATOR'S CHOICE

Kit de Waal in Conversation...

Readings



Kit de Waal reflects on her writing life and the influence of her Irish roots.

Old Market House Arts Centre, Dungarvan

24th October 2026

8pm

€15 on Eventbrite

EARLY BIRD TICKETS

Booksellers on the evening is Eason, Dungarvan

Kit de Waal in conversation...

Kit de Waal, born to an Irish mother and Caribbean father, was brought up among the Irish community of Birmingham in the ‘60s and ‘70s. Her debut novel *My Name Is Leon* was an **international bestseller**. Kit is a **Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature** and of the **Society of Authors**.

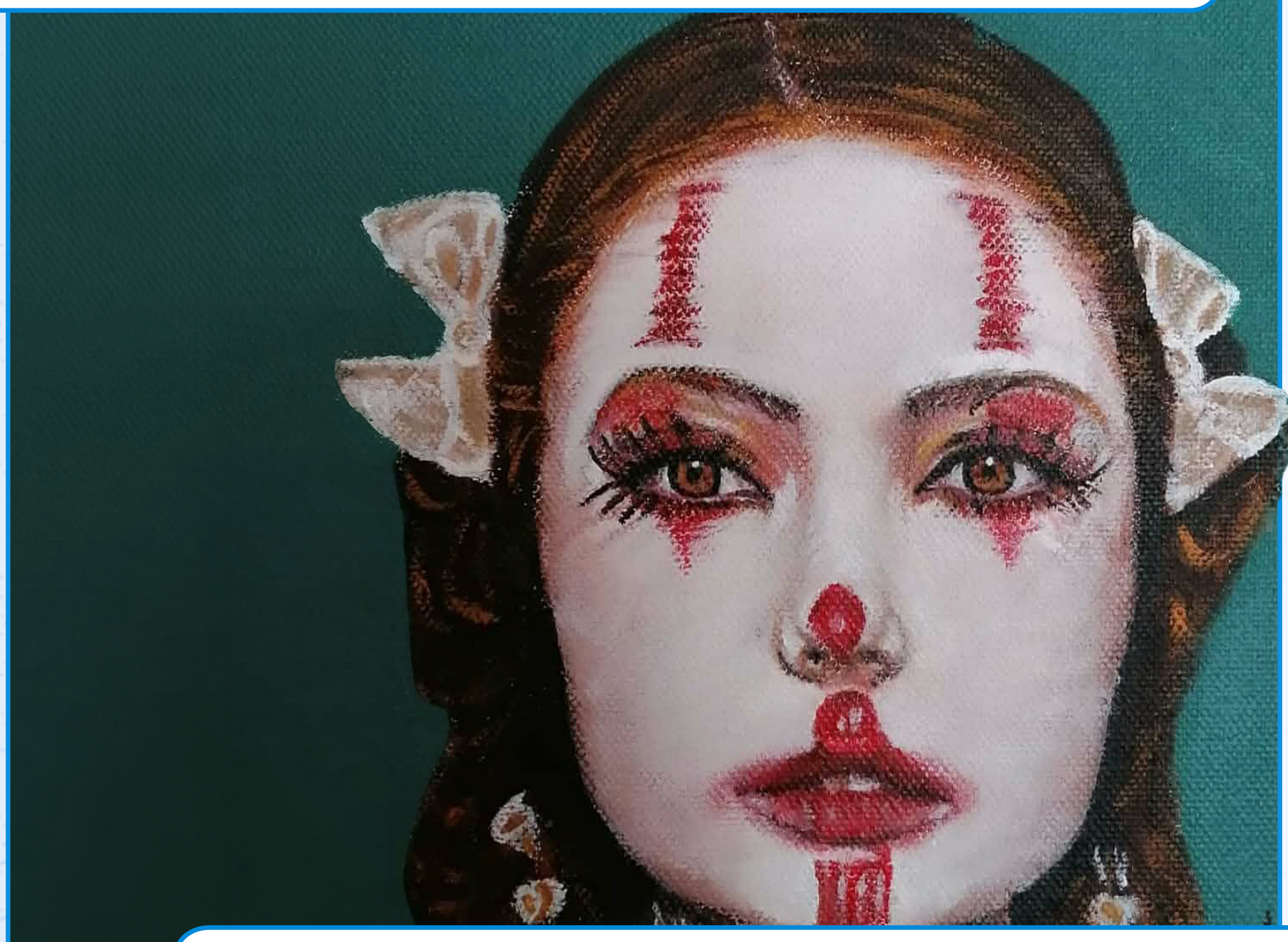
Her latest novel *The Best of Everything* was released in April 2025 and has been **long listed for the Women’s Prize for Fiction 2026**.

This conversation will speak about her writing life and the influence of her Irish side on her works with **Mary Conway**, City and County Librarian and Head of Culture, Waterford City and County Council. Mary has been passionate about books and reading all her life. She started the Writers at Waterford Libraries programme in 2023.



Waxed Lemon 11
Journal launch

Tuesday



Celebrate Waxed Lemon 11 with readings, coffee and chat...
...plus the WATERFORD POETRY PRIZE winners announced by Jessica Traynor.

Waterford Gallery of Art

25th October 2026

11am to 1pm

Free event with complimentary refreshments, no booking required.

Waxed Lemon 11
Journal launch

A firm favourite, the Waxed Lemon is now launching edition 11 under the stewardship of editors Joanne McCarthy and Derek Flynn.

This Waterford literary journal publishes poetry, fiction, art and píosaí as Gaeilge freisin and has attracted submissions from around the world.

Come along for the **closing event of the festival** weekend with readings, coffee, sweet treats and chat. Supported as always by the Arts Office.

This event will incorporate the **announcement of the winners of the national Waterford Poetry Prize 2026** by writer and adjudicator Jessica Traynor.

An online link to join this part of the proceedings at 12 noon will be available on our Facebook page closer to the event.

CURATOR'S CHOICE

Swinging June

by Katie Honan



Katie Honan presents *Swinging June*, an empowering short film on dance, ageing, Parkinson's and creative adaptation.

Garter Lane Arts Centre

25th October 2026

2pm

Tickets €10 from GarterLane.ie

Swinging June
by Katie Honan

June, a formidable woman in her eighties is desperate to dance at her granddaughter's communion, but afraid her aging body will be a barrier. She fights for strength to swing on the big day with her best friend. An empowering story of how dance can enhance the movement of people living with Parkinson's.

Waterford premiere of the short film *Swinging June* by Waterford writer Katie Honan. Followed by a public interview with KT exploring her process and learning as she adapted from theatre writing to scripting a film.

Katie Honan is a Waterford writer working across theatre, film and radio. She has received support from Waterford City & County Council, the Arts Council and Garter Lane Arts Centre. Her **radio play HURL won at the RTÉ Radio 1 PJ O'Connor Radio Drama Awards**.



In 2025, Katie was a *Six in the Attic* Artist with Irish Theatre Institute. She joined Dublin Theatre Festival's *Slingshot* residency with *The Far Away Sun*, awarded an **Arts Council Project Award** and **premiered at Project Arts Centre with Dublin Fringe Festival 2026.**

Supported by the **WC&CC Screenwriter and Producer Award**, it engages with *Move4Parkinson's*, the Waterford Association of Parkinson's Ireland and Trinity Laban.

Young People

The Arts and Library Service of Waterford City & County Council is pleased to offer a full free programme for Young People at the Waterford Writers Weekend.

During the weekdays of the Festival we are pleased to present the following Authors and Illustrators in the city and county.

For enquiries about the Young People's Programme email:
waterfordwritersweekend@gmail.com



Sophy Henn

Sophy Henn is an award-winning author and illustrator with a masters in illustration from the University of Brighton.

She is the creator of much-loved characters *Ted and Pom Pom*, the *Everything* picture book series, the *Bad Nana*, *Pizazz* and *Happy Hills* fiction series and the Lifesize non-fiction series.

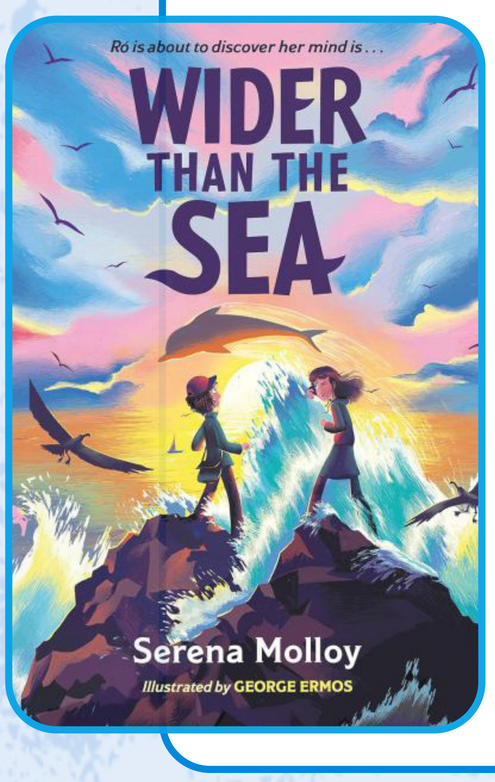
Her debut picture book *Where Bear?* was nominated for the **Kate Greenaway Medal** and shortlisted for the **Waterstones Children's Book Prize**.

Sophy was the **World Book Day Illustrator** in 2015 and 2016.



Serena Molloy

Having struggled with dyslexia as a child, Serena's novels are a celebration of neurodiversity, empathy and the power to change. Her work has been long and shortlisted for multiple prizes.



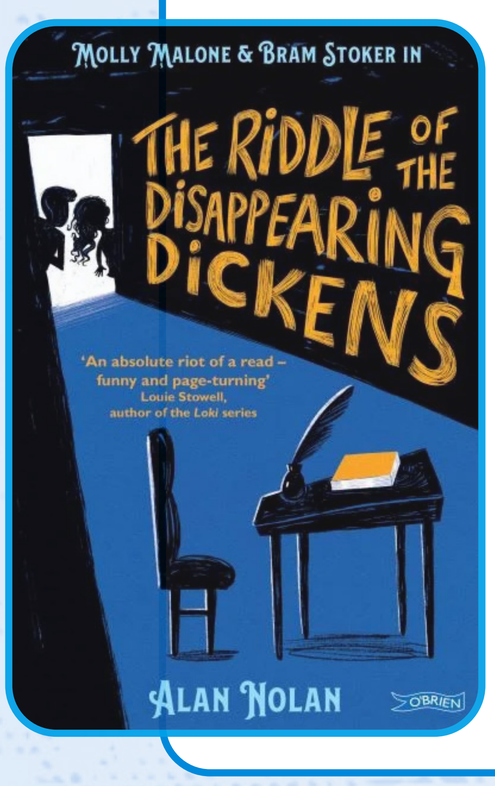
Wider Than the Sea is inventive, playful and incredibly moving detailing the powerful tale of a girl who feels broken, and the dolphin who makes her whole. A story of friendship, hope and self-discovery.

It won the prestigious Eilís Dillon Award.



Alan Nolan

Was awarded the **2024 Children's Books Ireland Annual Award** for his outstanding contribution to children's books. He is the author of the Molly Malone and Bram Stoker series.



He is also the author and illustrator of Fintan's Fifteen, Conor's Caveman and the Sam Hannigan series, and is the illustrator of Animal Crackers: Fantastic Facts About Your Favourite Animals.

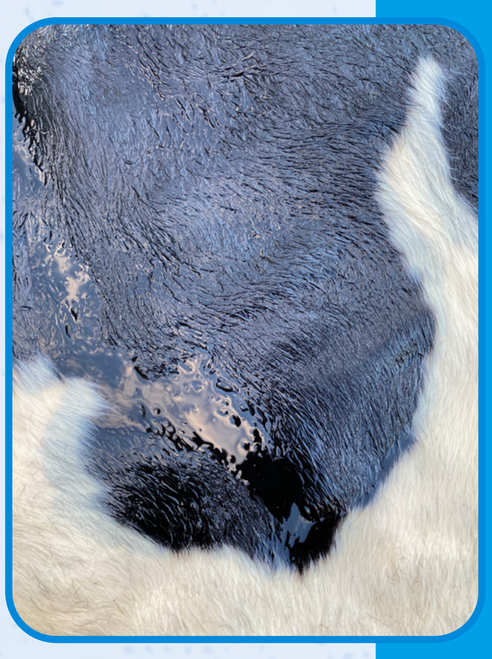
Fighting Words Waterford

Fighting Words Waterford in association with Waterford Youth Arts is providing the Fighting Words Friday experiences for secondary schools on Friday 23rd October at WYA, The Arch Barrack St., Waterford city.

Exhibition partners 2026

We are pleased to have the following venues as Exhibition partners for 2026.

Entry to all is free and we hope that you get a chance to see some artwork during the weekend.



Waterford Gallery of Art

O' Connell Street, Waterford city.

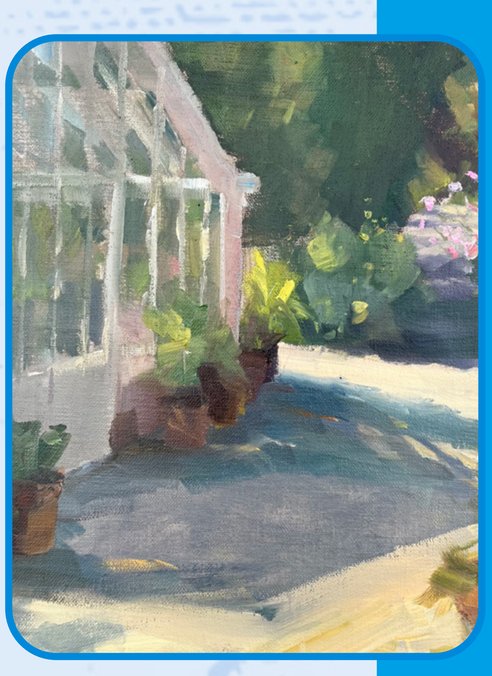
- Áine Ryan: 'All she could do was moo'
  Until January 30th 2027
- Waterford City Perspectives
  Until February 27th 2027



GOMA

Lombard St., Waterford city.

- Rayleen Clancy: Wild Wisdom from a Grúagach's Lair
  3–31 October 2026



Old Market House Arts Centre

Lower Main St., Dungarvan.

- Marcella Meagher: Solo works from En Plein Air
- Paintings from the Waterford Arts Collection
  Until mid November 2026

Venues

Garter Lane Arts Centre

22a O'Connell St. | Waterford | X91 DX57 | (051) 855 038

GOMA

6 Lombard St. | Waterford | X91 F2XP | 087 196 1923

Old Market House Arts Centre

Dungarvan | Co. Waterford | X35 NA02 | (058) 48944

Phil Grimes

60 Johnstown | Waterford | X91 AF10 | (051) 875 759

Waterford Gallery of Art

31-32 O'Connell St. | Waterford | X91 RR2R | (051) 849 983

Waterford Writers Weekend



Comhairle Cathrach
& Contae Phort Láirge
Waterford City
& County Council

22nd–25th
OCT
2026