



**Druid**



**Druid: 20 Days of Poetry**  
Teachers' Pack



An Educational Resource for  
Secondary School Teachers

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## About Druid: 20 Days of Poetry



Druid: 20 Days of Poetry is a free online initiative for secondary schools as part of our Coole Park Poetry Series.

With access to the **Coole Park Poetry Series** (a series of filmed poems available to view online), Druid hopes to inspire a new generation of poetry enthusiasts to watch one short poetry film every school day for twenty days, beginning on Poetry Day Ireland – **Thursday 28 April 2022**.

With educational resources to accompany the poetry films, we hope that students will enjoy this introduction to poems by some of the greatest Irish poets of the past century, as well as the opportunity to explore the work of poets working in Ireland today – and it just happens to be useful preparation for the Unseen Poetry question!

Poets featured in the series include Eavan Boland, FeliSpeaks, Seamus Heaney, Seán Hewitt, Patrick Kavanagh, Derek Mahon, Paula Meehan, Eiléan Ní Chuilleanáin, Doireann Ní Ghríofa and W. B. Yeats.

These short films, performed by a group of poets and performers, bring poetry to life on screen for secondary school students.

## About the Resources

The aim of these resources is to break down the barriers that might hinder students' enjoyment of poetry, to provide an opportunity to experience poetry for poetry's sake, and to inspire students to get creative – and it just happens to be great preparation for the Unseen Poetry question!

Contained in this pack are **tips on engaging with poetry** by poet Darren Donohue, as well as information on the 20 poems and **discussion prompts** which can be used to inform classroom discussions on each poem.

The **calendar** is designed to help you to chart the 20 days of poetry.

The **video interviews** with poets FeliSpeaks and Seán Hewitt provide simple guidelines and tips about how to engage with poetry, and an opportunity to learn about poetry from two of the most exciting poets working in Ireland today. These interviews can be found on the [\*\*Druid: 20 Days of Poetry webpage\*\*](#).

To encourage students to discover their inner poet, we have provided a **creative writing prompt** (full details on page 34).

**A note to teachers:** The poems in the Coole Park Poetry Series were originally curated for general audiences and not secondary school students specifically. Some of the poems explore sensitive subject matters. **Please watch or read each poem before sharing it with your class** to ensure that they are safe and appropriate for your students.

## Benefits for Secondary School Students

These resources provide an opportunity for students to:

- engage with poetry in a new way, hopefully fostering a new appreciation for it
- practice identifying and expressing their personal response to unseen poems
- practice using vocabulary that will be useful for both the unseen poetry question and for their prescribed poetry studies
- practice identifying key features of poetry and the devices that poets use
- tune in to the language and rhythms of poetry
- hear from two poets about life as a poet, and gain tips on engaging with poetry
- get creative by engaging in a creative writing prompt



# About the Coole Park Poetry Series

In collaboration with the Adrian Brinkerhoff Poetry Foundation, Druid's Coole Park Poetry Series is a collection of short poetry films shot by Matthew Thompson on the grounds of Coole Park in County Galway, home to Lady Gregory.

The collection consists of two editions – 2020 and 2021.



## Coole Park Poetry Series 2020

This poetry series involves poets of different cultural backgrounds living in Ireland, reading both their own work and the work of poets associated with Coole Park, including Lady Gregory, W. B. Yeats and J. M. Synge.

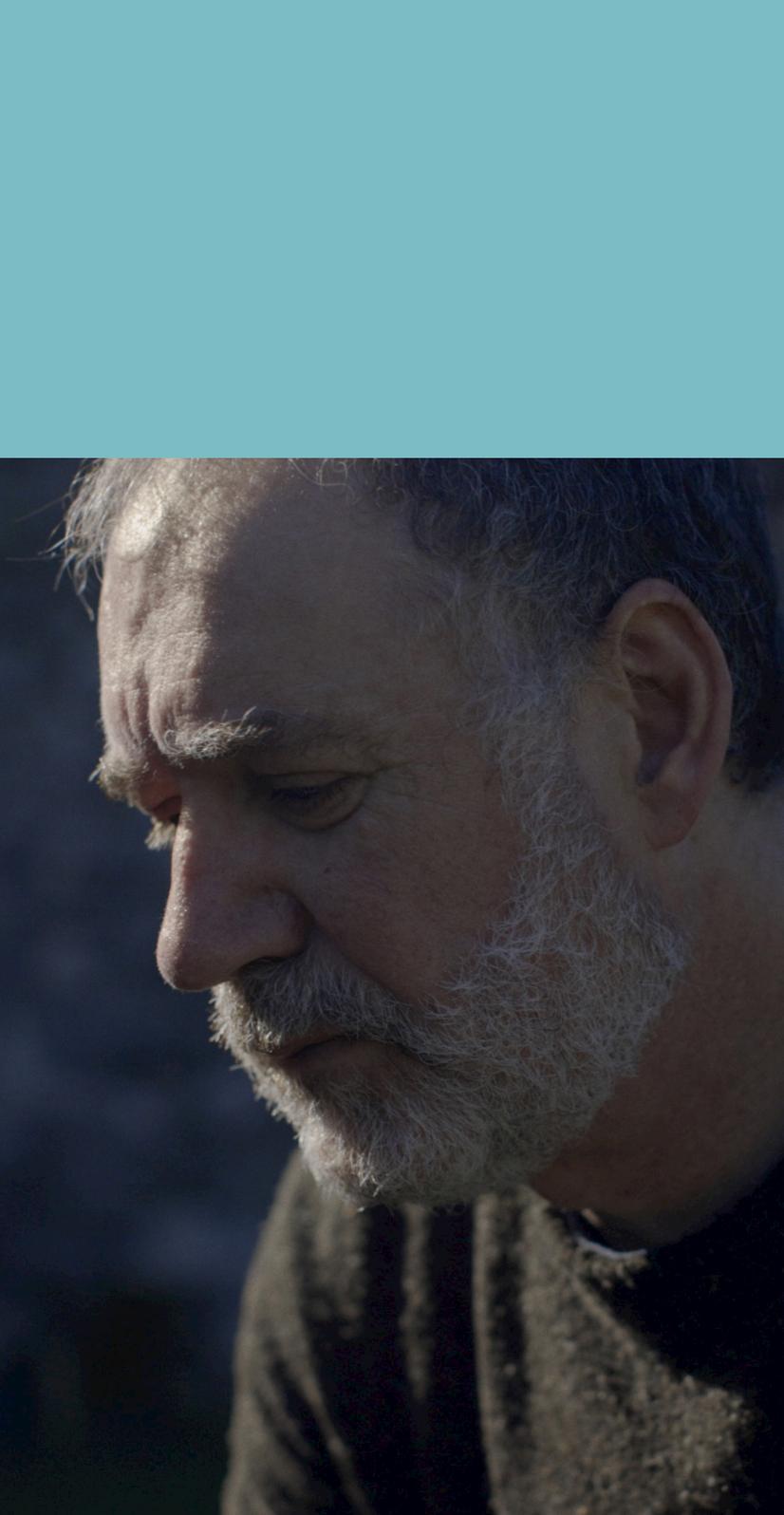
An artistic conversation between the past and present, these readings were filmed in the grounds of Coole Park during performances of DruidGregory in 2020.

The poets filmed are Seán Hewitt, Doireann Ní Ghríofa, FeliSpeaks, Evgeny Shtorn and ATMOS Collective.

With thanks to our friends at the National Parks and Wildlife Service and Coole Park Nature Reserve.

## Creative Team

Films by	Matthew Thompson
—	
Music by	Gerry Horan
—	
Performed by	Doireann Ní Ghríofa FeliSpeaks Seán Hewitt Evgeny Shtorn ATMOS Collective



## Coole Park Poetry Series 2021

This is a second edition of the Coole Park Poetry Series, celebrating some of the greatest Irish poets of the past century.

These ten short films, performed by a cast of 11 actors, were curated by Colm Tóibín in order of the poets' birth dates.

A note from Colm Tóibín:

*I choose the poems because I love them and want to share them, and wanted also to see them in a new context. Part of this context is Druid, but part of it is also Coole, the house and estate where Lady Gregory, as a writer and a translator, began to re-envision Ireland, creating imaginative space for the writers of her own time, and for the writers who came after.*

## Creative Team

Films by	Matthew Thompson
—	
Curated by	Colm Tóibín
—	
Artistic Director	Garry Hynes
—	
Music by	Gerry Horan
—	
Cast	Andrew Bennett Venetia Bowe Brian Doherty Clare Dunne Jade Jordan Seán McGinley Aaron Monaghan Marie Mullen Rory Nolan Marty Rea Tommy Tiernan

## About Coole Park

Coole Park is a large country estate in county Galway that was once home to one of the most important figures of the Irish Literary Revival – Lady Augusta Gregory. Lady Gregory was a poet, playwright, folklorist, founder and director of the Abbey Theatre, and a passionate advocate for the arts in Ireland, and for writers in particular.

Lady Gregory opened up her home, Coole Park, to many great Irish writers. Writers would come to Coole Park to find inspiration in the beautiful woods of the estate, or in the colourful walled garden, or by the lake. When writers visited Coole Park, Lady Gregory invited them to carve their initials into a tree in the walled garden, now known as the Autograph Tree. Some of the signatories include: William Butler Yeats, George Bernard Shaw, John Millington Synge and Seán O'Casey. Poems by some of these writers are celebrated in the Coole Park Poetry Series.

To learn more, visit the Coole Park official website [here](#).



## The Coral Reef

## A guide to poetry exploration by writer and poet Darren Donohue

As the film's end credits roll, my fifteen-year-old daughter asks, why did you suggest we watch that? I mumble something about its influence on me when I was her age. In her next breath she says, it's the best film I've ever seen.

The movie was *Dead Poets Society*, the story of a teacher attempting to instil a love for poetry in his teenage students. Arriving into his new class, he faced a difficult challenge. The students felt alienated by poetry, the old poems expressing complex emotions they couldn't connect with. But the teacher knew a secret – poetry is about what it means to be human. And the poets were fearless explorers of the human spirit. So, whether a poem was written one hundred years ago or last week, it was the same continuing story, documenting the moments that light up our lives.

Watching the movie, my daughter laughed at the teacher's first class exercise. He encouraged his students to rip out the pages from their text book that explained how to analyse poetry. But this was more than merely vandalism. The teacher knew that before a poem could be examined intellectually, first, it must be felt emotionally. Nobel laureate T.S. Eliot teaches us that, 'A poem can communicate before it is understood'.

So, how do you emotionally engage with a poem? Well, I try to have a little fun with it, imagining that I'm a detective finding clues to discover the poem's meaning. I ask some key questions – what was the inspiration behind the poem? What was the poet feeling? Have I ever felt this way? Why was the poem written at this time? What metaphors did they employ to explore their theme? What is the poet trying to tell me? I remind myself that every poem is a new door opening into a new world. And that I'm gaining an insight into the poet's inner life.

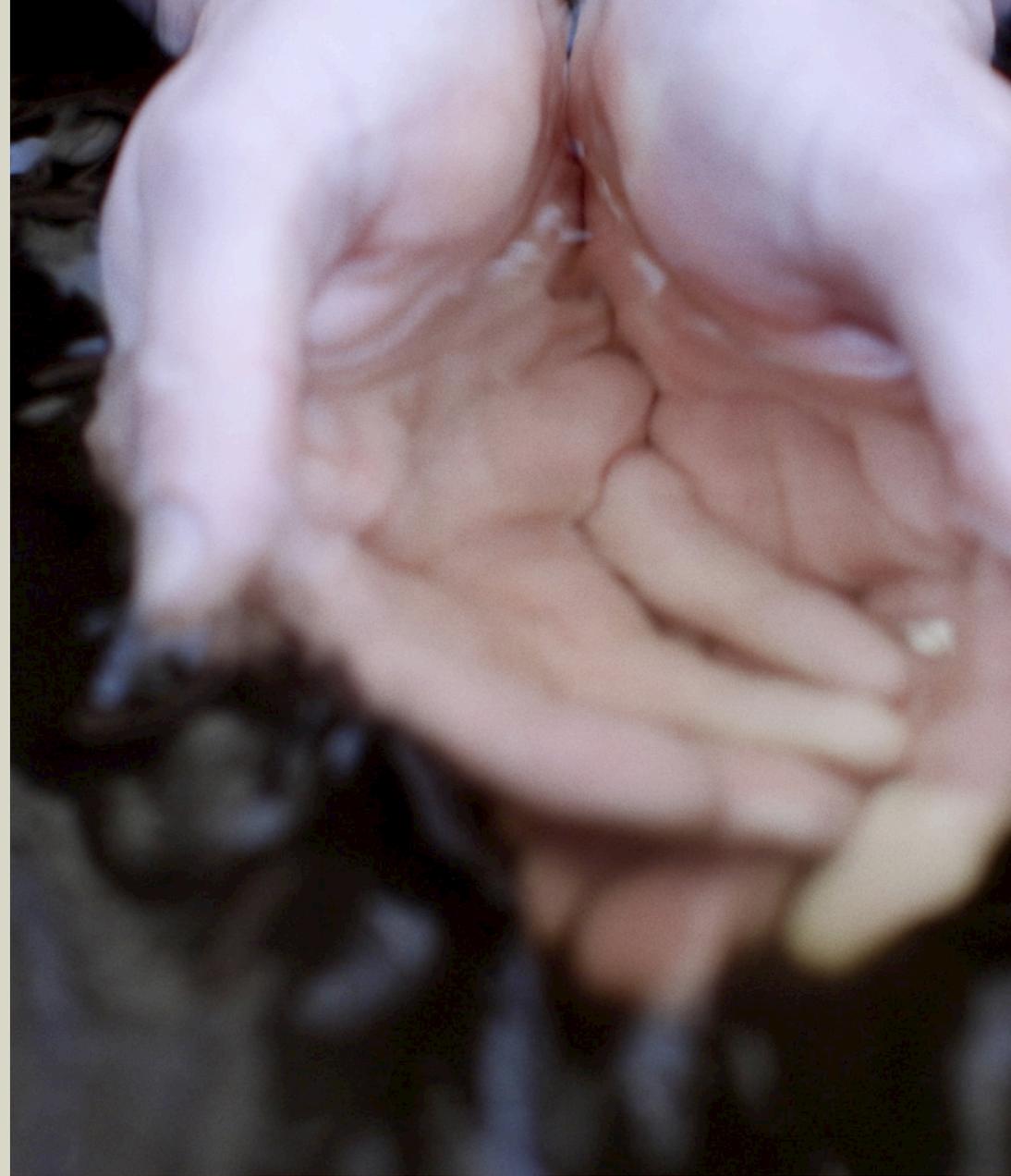
In *Dead Poets Society*, the teacher asks his students to stand on their desks, to observe the classroom from a new perspective. He hoped to demonstrate poetry's extraordinary ability to help us see the world through fresh eyes. Poetry can shake us out of stale complacency, deepen our outlook, and heighten our sensitivity to the world around us. As W.B. Yeats beautifully explains, 'The world is full of magic things, patiently waiting for our senses to grow sharper'.

In Mary Oliver's poem *Wild Geese*, she writes, 'The world offers itself up to your imagination'. With their vivid imaginations and carefully chosen words, the poets included in *Druid: 20 Days of Poetry* help us navigate the modern world and make sense of our place in it. And, the more poems you read, the clearer it becomes how poetry has helped shape our society and define our values. American poet Archibald MacLeish addresses this theme in his poem, *Reasons For Music*. The invisible influence of poetry is artfully expressed in the stanza below.

*Why do we labor at the poem?  
Out of the turbulence of the sea,  
Flower by brittle flower, rises  
The coral reef that calms the water.*

In their own unique way, poets seek to grow this fragile coral reef – flower by brittle flower – deep within us.

**Darren Donohue**  
(Author, *Secret Poets*, Turas Press)



# 20 Days of Poetry Calendar

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
25 April	26 April	27 April	28 April 01:58 <b>Day 1</b> <u>The Heart of the Wood</u> – Augusta, Lady Gregory	29 April 03:55 <b>Day 2</b> <u>Brightening</u> – Doireann Ní Ghríofa	30 April	1 May
2 May (Bank Holiday)	3 May 01:32 <b>Day 3</b> <u>When You Are Old</u> – W. B. Yeats	4 May 02:37 <b>Day 4</b> <u>What Heaney Said</u> – FeliSpeaks	5 May 02:12 <b>Day 5</b> <u>Queens</u> – J. M. Synge	6 May 01:46 <b>Day 6</b> <u>Barn Owls in Suffolk</u> – Seán Hewitt	7 May	8 May
9 May 01:08 <b>Day 7</b> <u>The New Faces</u> – W. B. Yeats	10 May 01:50 <b>Day 8</b> <u>From the Confinement</u> – Evgeny Shtorn	11 May 01:49 <b>Day 9</b> <u>The Fisherman</u> – W. B. Yeats	12 May 04:56 <b>Day 10</b> <u>The Illegitimate</u> – ATMOS Collective	13 May 03:06 <b>Day 11</b> <u>The Echo at Coole</u> – Austin Clarke	14 May	15 May
16 May 02:18 <b>Day 12</b> <u>The Hospital</u> – Patrick Kavanagh	17 May 03:03 <b>Day 13</b> <u>Another September</u> – Thomas Kinsella	18 May 06:12 <b>Day 14</b> <u>Station Island VII</u> – Seamus Heaney	19 May 05:05 <b>Day 15</b> <u>A Disused Shed in Co. Wexford</u> – Derek Mahon	20 May 02:22 <b>Day 16</b> <u>The Architectural Metaphor</u> – Eiléan Ní Chuilleanáin	21 May	22 May
23 May 02:33 <b>Day 17</b> <u>The Lost Art of Letter Writing</u> – Eavan Boland	24 May 02:15 <b>Day 18</b> <u>Tullynoe: Tête-à-Tête in the Parish Priest's Parlour</u> – Paul Durcan	25 May 02:58 <b>Day 19</b> <u>Caitlín (Cathleen)</u> – Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill	26 May 05:17 <b>Day 20</b> <u>This is not a confessional poem</u> – Paula Meehan	27 May	28 May	29 May

## How to Access the Poem Texts

We have provided links to the text of each poem on the following pages.

Alternatively, the poem texts can also be found on the website of the [Adrian Brinkerhoff Poetry Foundation](#) by entering the title of the poem in the search bar.





## About Days 1 to 10

In the first ten poems of the *Cooler Park Poetry Series*, five poets read two poems each – one poem of their own, and one poem by a poet associated with Lady Gregory and Coole Park. Bringing together the new and the old begins an artistic conversation between the past and the present.

# Day 1

## The Heart of the Wood

Written by Augusta, Lady Gregory

Read by Doireann Ní Ghríofa



This poem was translated from Irish to English by Lady Gregory.

**Lady Gregory** was a playwright, poet, folklorist, founder and director of the Abbey Theatre, and a passionate advocate for the arts in Ireland. Learn more about Lady Gregory [here](#).

Lady Gregory opened her home, Coole Park, to some of the greatest Irish writers of her generation. They would come to Coole Park to find inspiration and to write. Each writer would mark their visit to Coole Park by engraving their initials on a tree in the Walled Garden. This tree, now known as the Autograph Tree, still stands in Coole Park today.

Coole Park, because of Lady Gregory's passion for supporting Irish writers, played a very important role in Irish literary history. Some of the poems in the Coole Park Poetry Series celebrate writers who had a strong connection to Coole Park – including Austin Clarke, W. B. Yeats, J. M. Synge, and Lady Gregory herself.

*(See page 7 for more information about Lady Gregory and Coole Park).*

### Discussion Prompts:

- What feelings does this poem create in you? What is it about the content or style of the poem that creates those feelings?
- Is there a line or image that particularly appealed to you?
- What is the poet trying to suggest through their imagery?
- What kind of world does the poet describe in this poem?
- What do you notice about the rhythm of this poem? What choices has the writer made to create this rhythm? Pay close attention to the punctuation, word choices and structure.
- Does anything stand out about the style of the poem?
- How does the poet bring the poem to life by appealing to the senses?
- What is your understanding of the title? Does the title tell you anything about the theme of the poem?
- What do you think the writer is trying to say with this poem?

Watch Poem

Read Poem

## Day 2 Brightening

Written by and Read by  
Doireann Ní Ghríofa



The poet, Doireann Ní Ghríofa, wrote *Brightening* in response to a poem by Austin Clarke called *The Planter's Daughter*.

More information about Austin Clarke and his relationship to Coole Park can be found on page 24 of this pack, accompanying his poem *The Echo at Coole*.

**Doireann Ní Ghríofa** is a poet and essayist who writes in both Irish and English. Doireann has written six critically acclaimed books of poetry, and her recent book, *A Ghost in the Throat*, won Book of the Year at the Irish Book Awards.

Read more about Doireann Ní Ghríofa [here](#).

Watch Poem

Read Poem

### Discussion Prompts:

- What feelings does this poem create in you? What is it about the content or style of the poem that creates those feelings?
- What pictures does this poem conjure in your mind?
- Is there a line or image that particularly appealed to you?
- What clues does the poet give you about the world of the poem?
- How does the poet appeal to the senses?
- Who is speaking in the poem?
- What do you notice about the structure of the poem?
- What techniques is the writer using in this poem? Can you give examples? What is their impact?
- What do you think is the writer's attitude to what they are speaking about? How does this inform the tone of the poem? Does the tone of the poem change as the poem progresses?
- What do you think the writer is trying to say with this poem?
- The poet gives us a first-person account of the fire. What is the effect of this choice?

It may be interesting to read *The Planters Daughter* (available [here](#)) and to discuss the connections between the two poems. (This is useful preparation for the creative writing prompt – see page 34 for details).

## Day 3

# When You Are Old

Written by W. B. Yeats

Read by FeliSpeaks



This poem was written by **W. B. Yeats**, a prolific writer who wrote dozens of poetry collections and plays. Yeats is celebrated as one of the major English-language poets of the 20th century.

Lady Gregory was a great supporter of Yeats. They often collaborated on projects together. They were both founding members of the Abbey Theatre, and leading figures of the Irish Literary Revival. Yeats spent a lot of time with Lady Gregory in Coole Park and wrote poems about his time there.

Read more about W. B. Yeats [here](#).

Watch Poem

Read Poem

### Discussion Prompts:

- What feelings does this poem create in you? What is it about the content or style of the poem that creates those feelings?
- What pictures does the poem conjure in your mind?
- Is there a line or image that particularly appealed to you?
- What do you notice about the structure of the poem?
- What techniques is the writer using in this poem? Can you give examples? What is their impact?
- What effect does the writer's choice of tense have on your experience of the poem?
- Who is speaking in the poem? Who are they speaking to?
- What do you think the poet is saying?

## Day 4

# What Heaney Said

Written by and Read by  
FeliSpeaks



The poet, FeliSpeaks, wrote this poem in response to two poems by Seamus Heaney – *Digging* and *Requiem for the Croppies*. The first verse is an excerpt from *Requiem for the Croppies*, and FeliSpeaks' poem also includes excerpts from *Digging*. More information about Seamus Heaney can be found on page 27 of this pack, accompanying his poem *Station Island VII*.

It may be useful to read *Digging* by Seamus Heaney (available [here](#)) before watching this poem.

**FeliSpeaks** is a poet, performer and playwright. While studying English and Sociology at Maynooth University, FeliSpeaks' talent for poetry was recognised when she represented Maynooth in an intervarsity slam competition. FeliSpeaks' debut play, *Boy Child*, earned her the title of Best Performer at the Dublin Fringe, and she has performed her poetry at festivals and events across Ireland. FeliSpeaks' poem *For Our Mothers* is featured on the 2021–2023 Irish Leaving Certificate.

To learn more about FeliSpeaks and about this poem, watch her video interview 'Meet the Poet: FeliSpeaks' on the 20 Days of Poetry [webpage](#), and read about FeliSpeaks [here](#).

### Discussion Prompts:

- What feelings does this poem create in you? What is it about the content or style of the poem that creates those feelings?
- What pictures does the poem conjure in your mind?
- Is there a line or image that particularly appealed to you?
- What effect does the writer's choice of tense have on your experience of the poem?
- What does the title tell you about the poem?
- What do you think the poet is saying in this poem?
- Can you spot some of the direct comparisons made by the poet in this poem? What are they comparing, and what is the effect of these comparisons?

It may be interesting to read *Digging* (available [here](#)) and *Requiem for the Croppies* (available [here](#) – the text of this poem is the verse in italics at the start of *What Heaney Said*).

Discuss the connections between these poems and FeliSpeaks' poem. (This is useful preparation for the creative writing prompt – see page 34 for details).

Watch Poem

Read Poem

# Day 5

## Queens

Written by J. M. Synge  
Read by Seán Hewitt



**John Millington Synge** was a playwright, poet, a founding member of the Abbey Theatre, and an influential figure in the Irish Literary Revival. His plays are widely celebrated to this day, and have had a lasting impact on the landscape of Irish theatre.

Lady Gregory was a significant supporter of Synge, in fact it was Lady Gregory who helped Synge to unlock his writing style. He frequently came to stay at Coole Park, and he and Lady Gregory worked closely together at the Abbey Theatre.

Learn more about J. M. Synge [here](#).

Watch Poem

Read Poem

### Discussion Prompts:

- What feelings does this poem create in you? What is it about the content or style of the poem that creates those feelings?
- What do you like about the poem? What do you dislike about the poem? Why?
- Is there a line or image that particularly appealed to you?
- What do you notice about the rhythm of this poem? What choices has the writer made to create this rhythm? Pay close attention to the punctuation, word choices, line length and structure.
- What effect does the rhyme scheme have on the poem?
- What impression do you get of the speaker? Who do you think they might be speaking to, and how are they trying to make them feel?
- Where does the speaker locate themselves in the poem, and what do you think they are trying to achieve by naming these historical queens?

## Day 6

# Barn Owls in Suffolk

Written by and Read by  
Seán Hewitt



**Seán Hewitt** is a poet and academic. Seán's critically acclaimed debut collection, *Tongues of Fire*, was published in 2020. He is a book critic for *The Irish Times* and teaches Modern British & Irish Literature at Trinity College, Dublin.

To learn more about Seán Hewitt and about this poem, watch his video interview 'Meet the Poet: Seán Hewitt' on the 20 Days of Poetry [webpage](#), and read about Seán [here](#).

Watch Poem

Read Poem

### Discussion Prompts:

- How does this poem make you feel? What is it about the content or style of the poem that creates those feelings?
- What pictures does this poem conjure in your mind?
- What clues does the poet give you about the world of the poem?
- How does the writer create a sense of time in the poem? Do you feel that time is moving quickly or slowly in the world of the poem, and why?
- What effect does the final image have on you? What effect does it have on the poem?

# Day 7

## The New Faces

Written by W. B. Yeats

Read by Evgeny Shtorn



**W. B. Yeats** wrote this poem about Lady Gregory and Coole Park. He mentions features of Coole Park within the poem – the ‘catalpa tree’, the ‘scented lime’, and the walled garden. This poem shows his deep connection to Lady Gregory and to Coole.

W. B. Yeats was a prolific writer who wrote dozens of poetry collections and plays. Yeats is celebrated as one of the major English-language poets of the 20th century.

Lady Gregory was a great supporter of Yeats. They often collaborated on projects together. They were both founding members of the Abbey Theatre, and leading figures of the Irish Literary Revival.

Learn more about W. B. Yeats [here](#).

Watch Poem

Read Poem

### Discussion Prompts:

- How does this poem make you feel? What about the poem creates these feelings in you?
- What pictures does this poem conjure in your mind?
- What do you notice about the rhyme scheme? What effect does it have on your experience of the poem?
- What do you think the poet is saying in this poem? Who are they speaking to, and what impression do you get of their relationship to one another?
- How do the writer’s emotions inform the tone of the poem?

## Day 8

# From the Confinement

Written by and Read by  
Evgeny Shtorn



**Evgeny Shtorn** is a poet, scholar, and LGBTQ activist who writes in English, Russian, and Spanish. Shtorn has contributed to several poetry anthologies, most recently *Writing Home: The 'New Irish' Poets*, and *Correspondences: An Anthology to Call for an End to Direct Provision*. For the National Gallery of Ireland, Evgeny coordinates a project entitled 'Something from There' which explores the idea of home by gathering materials and stories of people seeking asylum in Ireland. In addition, Evgeny works as the manager for Queer Diaspora Ireland, supporting LGBT people in direct provision and recently received the GALAS Person of the Year Award 2020 from the National LGBT Federation of Ireland.

Read about Evgeny Shtorn [here](#).

Watch Poem

Read Poem

### Discussion Prompts:

- How does this poem make you feel?
- Are some of the concerns expressed by the poet familiar to you?
- What pictures does this poem conjure up in your mind?
- What clues does the poet give you about the world of the poem?
- What do you notice about the rhythm of this poem? What choices has the writer made to create this rhythm?
- What mood or feeling do you sense in this poem? How does the poet create this?
- What does the title tell you about the poem?
- What do you think the writer is saying in this poem?

# Day 9

## The Fisherman

Written by W. B. Yeats  
Read by ATMOS Collective



This poem was written by **W. B. Yeats**, a prolific writer who wrote dozens of poetry collections and plays. Yeats is celebrated as one of the major English-language poets of the 20th century.

Lady Gregory was a great supporter of Yeats. They often collaborated on projects together. They were both founding members of the Abbey Theatre, and leading figures of the Irish Literary Revival. Yeats spent a lot of time with Lady Gregory in Coole Park and wrote poems about his time there.

Read about W. B. Yeats [here](#).

Watch Poem

Read Poem

### Discussion Prompts:

- How does this poem make you feel?
- Is there a line or image that particularly appealed to you?
- What clues does the poet give you about the world of the poem?
- What do you notice about the rhyme scheme? What effect does it have on the poem?
- Do you notice any repeated words or images? Why do you think the writer repeats them?
- What do you think is the writer's attitude to what they are speaking about? How does this inform the tone of the poem?
- What does the title tell you about the poem?
- What do you think the poet is saying in this poem?

# Day 10

## The Illegitimate

Written by and Read by  
ATMOS Collective



*The Illegitimate* was written about Mother and Baby homes, from the perspective of artists currently experiencing the Direct Provision system in Ireland.

**ATMOS Collective** is a group of Galway-based artists from culturally diverse backgrounds who work with music, film, spoken word, and theatre to promote social inclusion and cross-cultural friendships.

Learn more about ATMOS Collective [here](#).

Watch Poem

Read Poem

### Discussion Prompts:

- What feelings does this poem create in you? What is it about the content or style of the poem that creates those feelings?
- What pictures does this poem conjure in your mind?
- What clues does the poet give you about the world of the poem?
- What do you notice about the rhythm of the poem? What choices has the writer made to create this rhythm?
- Is the pace of the poem fast or slow? What effect does this have? Does it tell us anything about the theme or tone of the poem?
- What do you think is the writer's attitude to what they are speaking about? How does this inform the tone of the poem?
- What does the title tell you about the poem?
- What do you think the poet is saying in this poem?



## About Days 11 to 20

The next ten poems were curated by Colm Tóibín to celebrate some of the greatest Irish poets of the past century. In order to chart the development of Irish poetry from the time of Lady Gregory up to now, they are arranged in order of the poets' births.

# Day 11

## The Echo at Coole

Written by Austin Clarke

Read by Tommy Tiernan



Austin Clarke set this poem within the Walled Garden in Coole Park.

In the poem, he refers to famous figures who frequented Coole: George Moore, Edward Martin, and Yeats. The catalpa tree and the Autograph Tree (into which important guests would carve their names) also feature. Within the poem, Clarke claims that Lady Gregory would drive to the lake every day 'to count the Swans for Willie', referring to W. B. Yeats. Clarke continues the connection to Yeats by referencing one of Yeats' poems – *The Man and the Echo*. The bust that Clarke mentions – 'Maecenas crumbling on his pedestal' – is a statue that was brought to Coole Park from Italy by Richard Gregory, Lady Gregory's grandson.

To learn more about the walled garden at Coole, visit the Coole Park official website, [here](#).

**Austin Clarke** was a poet, playwright, novelist, and critic. Many of his works were banned in Ireland for their anticlerical views. He is considered one of the major Irish poets of the generation succeeding Yeats.

Austin Clarke was born in **1896**.

Read more about Austin Clarke [here](#).

### Discussion Prompts:

- How does this poem make you feel?
- What pictures does this poem inspire in your mind?
- What clues does the poet give you about the world of the poem?
- What do you think is the writer's attitude to what they are speaking about? How does this inform the tone of the poem?
- What do you think the writer is saying in this poem?

Watch Poem

Read Poem

## Day 12

# The Hospital

Written by Patrick Kavanagh

Read by Aaron Monaghan



**Patrick Kavanagh** was a celebrated Irish poet and novelist. In addition to his writing, Kavanagh worked as a journalist for many years, and lectured at University College Dublin. He is seen as a major figure in Irish poetry and is a favourite among Irish readers.

Patrick Kavanagh was born in **1904**.

Read more about Patrick Kavanagh [here](#).

Watch Poem

Read Poem

### Discussion Prompts:

- What feelings does this poem create in you? What is it about the content or style of the poem that creates those feelings?
- What images have lingered in your mind after hearing the poem?
- What kind of world does the poet describe in this poem?
- What do you think is the writer's attitude to what they are speaking about? How does this inform the tone of the poem?
- What do you think the poet is saying in this poem?

# Day 13

## Another September

Written by Thomas Kinsella

Read by Seán McGinley



**Thomas Kinsella** was a poet, translator, academic and editor. His work as a university professor meant that he spent much of his working life moving between Dublin and the United States. Kinsella founded the Peppercanister Press, which focused on printing and distributing early versions of poetic works in progress, and he has received many honours for his poetry.

Thomas Kinsella was born in **1928**.

Read more about Thomas Kinsella [here](#).

Watch Poem

Read Poem

### Discussion Prompts:

- How do you feel about this poem? What is it about the content or style of the poem that creates those feelings?
- What images linger in your mind after hearing the poem? Is there a line or image that made a particular impression on you?
- Is the imagery literal or abstract, and what is the effect of this choice?
- What clues does the poet give you about the world of this poem?
- What do you notice about the writer's use of personification throughout the poem? What effect do you think this has?
- How does the poet bring the poem to life by appealing to the senses?
- Does anything stand out to you about the style of this poem?
- What do you think this poem is about?

# Day 14

## Station Island VII

Written by Seamus Heaney

Read by Marty Rea

A prolific poet, **Seamus Heaney** wrote intensively, and his work earned him several major English-language poetry awards, including the Nobel Prize for Literature. He taught at several colleges, including Harvard University. In addition to writing poetry, Heaney also ventured into prose and poetics. Seamus Heaney's poetry is celebrated around the world.

Seamus Heaney was born in **1939**.

Read more about Seamus Heaney [here](#).

Watch Poem

Read Poem

### Discussion Prompts:

- How does this poem make you feel? What is it about the content or style of the poem that creates those feelings?
- What did you like about the poem? What did you dislike about the poem?
- What pictures does the poem conjure in your imagination? What images made a particular impression on you?
- What clues does the poet give you about the world of the poem?
- What do you notice about the rhythm of this poem? Is the pace of the poem fast or slow? Does this tell us anything about the theme or tone of the poem?
- Does anything stand out about the style of the poem?
- What do you think is the writer's attitude to the poem's content? How does this inform the tone of the poem?
- What do you think is the relationship between the two characters in the poem?
- What do you think the poem is about?

## Day 15

# A Disused Shed in Co. Wexford

Written by Derek Mahon

Read by Brian Doherty



**Derek Mahon**, a poet, translator and educator, read English and French at Trinity College, Dublin, where he served as editor of the student literary magazine. Mahon lived in cities across the United States, Canada and Ireland, working variously as a reviewer, screenwriter, journalist, editor, schoolteacher and lecturer. He is widely considered to be one of the preeminent Irish poets of the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Derek Mahon was born in **1941**.

Read more about Derek Mahon [here](#).

Watch Poem

Read Poem

### Discussion Prompts:

- What feelings does this poem create in you? What is it about the content or style of the poem that creates those feelings?
- What did you like about the poem? What did you dislike about it? Why?
- What pictures does the poem conjure in your imagination?
- Is the imagery literal or abstract? What is the effect of this choice?
- What kind of world does the poet describe in this poem?
- What comparisons is the poet making? What are they comparing? What is their effect?
- What do you notice about the rhyme scheme in the poem? What is the effect of the sudden introduction of rhyme at the end of the poem?
- Discuss how the poet appeals to the senses.
- What techniques is the writer using in this poem? Can you give examples? What is their impact?
- What do you think is the writer's attitude to the subject of the poem? How does this inform the tone of the poem?
- What do you think this poem is about?

# Day 16

## The Architectural Metaphor

Written by Eiléan Ní Chuilleanáin

Read by Venetia Bowe



**Eiléan Ní Chuilleanáin** is a poet, translator and academic who has garnered great acclaim over the years for her poetry collections. In addition to writing poetry, she publishes academic work and has translated poets from Irish, Romanian and Italian. She is widely considered to be one of the great contemporary Irish poets.

Eiléan Ní Chuilleanáin was born in **1942**.

Read more about Eiléan Ní Chuilleanáin [here](#).

Watch Poem

Read Poem

### Discussion Prompts:

- What feelings does this poem create in you? What is it about the content or style of the poem that creates those feelings?
- What do you like about the poem? What do you dislike about the poem? Why?
- What pictures does this poem conjure in your imagination?
- Is the imagery literal or abstract? What is the effect of this choice?
- What clues does the poet give you about the world of the poem?
- How does the poet appeal to the senses?
- What do you think is the writer's attitude to the poem's subject? How does this inform the tone of the poem?
- What is your understanding of the title? What does it tell you about the poem?
- What do you think this poem is about?

# Day 17

## The Lost Art of Letter Writing

Written by Eavan Boland

Read by Jade Jordan



**Eavan Boland** studied English literature and language at Trinity College, Dublin, and went on to become one of the youngest lecturers in Trinity's history. Boland worked in various educational institutions, and in 1996 she began a significant relationship with Stanford University which led to her spending much of her working life moving between Dublin and the United States. Eavan Boland, Ireland's first major female poet, transformed the landscape of Irish poetry and her work is celebrated around the world.

Eavan Boland was born in **1944**.

Read more about Eavan Boland [here](#).

Watch Poem

Read Poem

### Discussion Prompts:

- What feelings does this poem create in you? What is it about the content or style of the poem that creates those feelings?
- What did you like about the poem? What did you dislike about the poem?
- What pictures does this poem conjure in your mind?
- Is the imagery literal or abstract? What is the effect of this choice?
- What clues does the poet give you about the changing world of the poem? What changes does the writer observe?
- What do you think is the writer's attitude to the change they describe? How does this inform the tone of the poem? Does the tone of the poem change as the poem progresses?
- The poem is full of metaphors. What is their effect?
- How does the poet appeal to the senses?
- What does the title tell you about the poem?
- What do you think this poem is about?

## Day 18

# Tullynoe: Tête-à-Tête in the Parish Priest's Parlour

Written by Paul Durcan

Read by Andrew Bennett & Rory Nolan



Critically acclaimed poet, **Paul Durcan**, is celebrated as a major voice in Irish poetry. During his career, Durcan has collaborated with several musicians and artists. Durcan has received many honours for his poetry and several of his poems appear on the Irish Leaving Certificate.

Paul Durcan was born in **1944**.

Read more about Paul Durcan [here](#).

Watch Poem

Read Poem

### Discussion Prompts:

- How does this poem make you feel, and why?
- What did you like about the poem? What did you dislike about the poem? Why?
- What clues does the poet give you about the world of the poem?
- What do you notice about the rhythm of the poem? What effect does this rhythm have?
- The poet uses repetition throughout the poem, what effect does this have on the rhythm of the poem?
- The writer chooses to include more than one voice within the poem. What is the effect of this choice?
- What do you notice about the language used in this poem? Is it formal or colloquial? What clues does the writer's choice of language give us about the speakers of the poem?
- What do you think is the writer's attitude to what they are speaking about? How does this inform the tone of the poem? Does the tone change as the poem progresses?
- What does the title tell you about the poem?
- What do you think the poem is about?

# Day 19

## Caitlín (Cathleen)

Written by Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill

Read by Marie Mullen



**Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill** is an Irish language poet, educator and essayist. She has taught in universities around the world and has received many honours for her poetry. She is widely considered to be one of the foremost contemporary poets writing in Irish.

Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill was born in **1952**.

Read more about Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill [here](#).

Watch Poem

Read Poem

### Discussion Prompts:

- How does this poem make you feel?
- What do you like about the poem? What do you dislike about the poem?
- How did engaging with this poem in two languages change your experience of the poem?
- What do you think is the writer's attitude to the subject of the poem? How does this inform the tone of the poem?
- How might you describe the relationship between the speaker of the poem and Cathleen?
- What do you think this poem is about?

## Day 20

# This is not a confessional poem

Written by Paula Meehan

Read by Clare Dunne



Poet and playwright, **Paula Meehan**, is one of Ireland's most prominent living poets. For Meehan, writing and social justice are intertwined and this is evident throughout her work. Meehan has written poetry for film and dance, and songwriters have set her poems to music. She has received many honours for her work.

Paula Meehan was born in **1955**.

Read more about Paula Meehan [here](#).

Watch Poem

Read Poem

### Discussion Prompts:

- What feelings does this poem create in you? What is it about the content or style of the poem that creates those feelings?
- Is there a line or image that particularly sparked your imagination or caught your attention?
- Is the imagery literal or abstract, or both? What is the effect of this choice?
- What clues does the poet give you about the world of the poem?
- What do you notice about the rhythm and structure of this poem? What is their effect?
- Is the pace of the poem fast or slow? What effect does this have on our experience of the poem?
- How does the poet bring the poem to life by appealing to the senses?
- What do you think is the writer's attitude to the event described in the poem? How does this inform the tone of the poem?
- What is your understanding of the title? What does it tell you about the poem?
- What do you think this poem is about?

# Creative Writing Prompt

Doireann Ní Ghríofa and FeliSpeaks were directly inspired by the work of other poets when they wrote their poems *Brightening* and *What Heaney Said*.

Now it's *your* turn.

Out of the 20 poems, choose one that inspires you – perhaps there's one line that caught your attention, or an image that struck you, or an idea that sparks your imagination.

Write a poem of your own in response to the poem that you have chosen.

You may want to repeat an image, line, or idea from your chosen poem – perhaps changing it slightly and adapting it to fit into your own work.

## Worksheet

There's a printable worksheet for this Creative Writing Prompt available [here](#).

Please consider the environment when printing this worksheet. We recommend printing double-sided where possible.

## Creative Writing Preparation

To get you started, observe how Doireann Ní Ghríofa and FeliSpeaks were inspired by and made direct links to their reference texts:

*Brightening* by Doireann Ní Ghríofa, was inspired by a poem by Austin Clarke called *The Planter's Daughter*. The text of this poem is available [here](#).

*What Heaney Said* by FeliSpeaks, was inspired by two poems by Seamus Heaney – *Requiem for the Croppies* and *Digging*. The text of *Requiem for the Croppies* is the verse in italics at the start of *What Heaney Said*, which can be read [here](#). The text of *Digging* is available [here](#).



# About Druid

Founded in 1975, Druid is a touring theatre company, anchored in the West of Ireland and looking to the world.

Druid passionately believes that audiences have the right to see first class professional theatre in their own communities. The company has toured the length and breadth of Ireland as well as touring internationally to the UK, USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Japan and Hong Kong.

Production highlights include: *The Beauty Queen of Leenane* (1996), in a co-production with The Royal Court Theatre, which went on to win four Tony Awards, including Best Director for Garry Hynes, the first woman to win an award for directing in the history of the Tony Awards; *The Leenane Trilogy* (1997) (also with The Royal Court Theatre); *DruidSynge* (2005) – all six John Millington Synge plays in a single day; *DruidMurphy* – Plays by Tom Murphy (2011 & 2012), a trilogy of *Conversations on a Homecoming*, *A Whistle in the Dark* and *Famine*; *DruidShakespeare: Richard II*, *Henry IV* (Pts. 1&2), *Henry V* in a new adaptation by Mark O’Rowe (2015) and *DruidShakespeare: Richard III* (2018); *Waiting for Godot* by Samuel Beckett which opened at Galway International Arts Festival in 2016 and by the end of 2018 had toured Ireland twice, played at the Abbey Theatre, Edinburgh International Festival and several US cities. In 2020, in a first for Irish theatre, Druid’s

production of Anton Chekhov’s *The Cherry Orchard*, in a version by Tom Murphy, was broadcast live from Galway to 34 cinemas in Ireland and the UK.

Druid is a writer’s theatre, re-imagining classics and premiering new work annually, while exploring ambitious projects such as *DruidGregory*, a production of five of Lady Gregory’s one-act plays in 2020, and Thomas Kilroy’s *The Seagull* (after Chekhov) in 2021 – both of which were performed outdoors in Coole Park, County Galway. During 2020 and 2021, the company introduced *Druid at Home*, a new way of connecting with its audiences in Ireland and around the world, through presenting work on the digital stage. Notable successes include the company’s first live stream production, the world premiere of *Once Upon a Bridge* by Sonya Kelly. Since March 2020, Druid has reached audiences in 130 countries with our ticketed and free-to-view *Druid at Home* productions.

The company continues to nurture playwrights and the next generation of theatre makers through its new writing and other artists support programmes. At the heart of its artistic programme is the Druid Ensemble who work closely with the Artistic Director and the Druid team to deliver a varied and ambitious body of work.

### **Vision**

Irish performance for the world.

### **Mission**

To be a touring theatre without peer, anchored in the West of Ireland and looking to the world, producing and presenting the best work, both new and old, with boldness, agility, passion and flair.

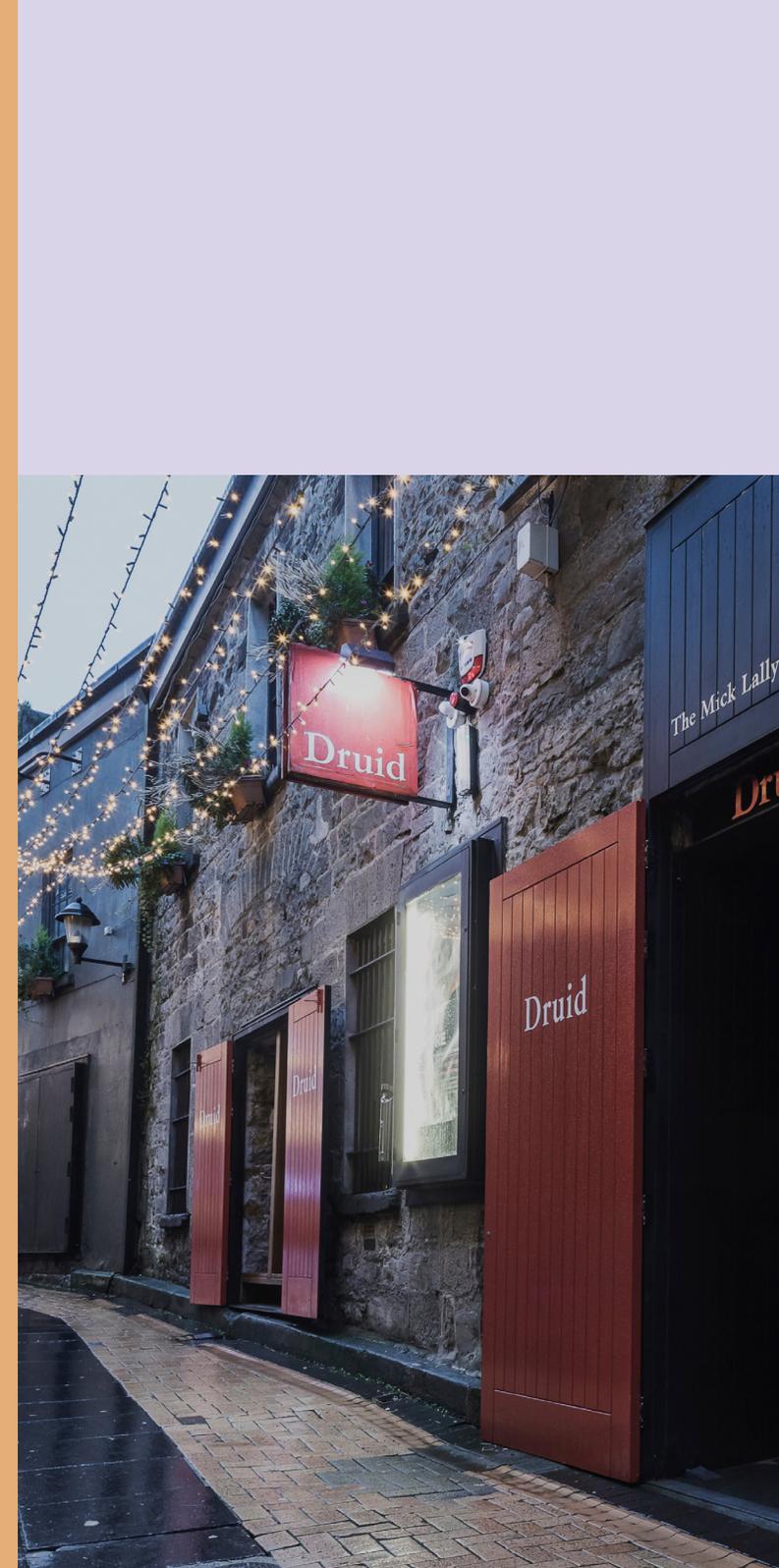
### **Values**

**Originality:** We offer new perspectives and are original in our thinking and our practice.

**Community:** We work in the community, for the community and as a community.

**Respect:** We value and respect our people and place, recognising both to be essential in the making of good theatre.

**Boldness:** We are confident and courageous, always willing to take artistic risk in our pursuit of excellence.



## About Druid's Community and Education Programme

Druid's Community and Education programme aims to deepen engagement with professional theatre within education and local community settings. This award-winning programme is focused on inclusion and access to the arts, community togetherness, and artistic and cultural expression.

The programme is made possible by the support and partnership of Galway company Aerogen and The Adrian Brinkerhoff Poetry Foundation.

During 2022 and 2023, the Community and Education programme will span all of Druid's planned programming activities, renewing the engagement with communities and schools throughout Galway and the West, as well as on touring locations.

The programme will focus on encouraging creativity in schools through direct engagement and free educational resources, and increasing public engagement with the arts by making theatre more accessible.

## About Our Programme Partners

### Aerogen

Aerogen is the world leader in acute care aerosol drug delivery. The Aerogen Solo is a closed-system, single-patient-use aerosol drug delivery technology<sup>3</sup> that mitigates the transmission of patient-generated infectious aerosol during ventilation. As the only globally available closed-circuit system, Aerogen technology has been used to treat over 14 million patients in 75 countries worldwide, playing a critical role in emergency departments and intensive care units.

### The Adrian Brinkerhoff Poetry Foundation

Established in 2016 by Peter and Cathy Halstead, the Adrian Brinkerhoff Poetry Foundation is a literary nonprofit bringing great poetry from across places, eras, and traditions together. The Foundation's aim is to expand access to poetry for audiences worldwide to enjoy. Brinkerhoff's focus is on filming actors, poets, and regular people reading and performing poems.

Thus far, films have been made in Ireland, England, and New York. In 2020, the foundation launched its website and film series, and continues to develop programs in partnership with organizations including Poetry Ireland, 92nd Street Y, Poet in the City, Druid, and the Academy of American Poets. The Adrian Brinkerhoff Poetry Foundation has a robust social media presence, sharing content on Instagram (@BrinkerhoffPoetry), Twitter (@BrinkerhoffPoem), and YouTube.

# Contact Us

Would you like to know more about  
Druid's Community and Education  
programme?

Do you have feedback you'd like to  
share with us?

We'd love to hear from you.

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[@druidtheatre](https://twitter.com/druidtheatre)

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# Partners

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## Community & Education Partners



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## Funding Partners



Academic Partner