

# WRITERS inSCHOOLS

Poems written by students of St Genevieve's High School,  
Belfast during a residency with poet, Kate Newmann.

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An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha agus Trádála  
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

## Tierna Crossan

### MYSTERY

Yesterday I was doing homework in my room, and the window was closed. I was sitting with my little sister and I smelt my granny's perfume. I looked, and I was confused. I said to her *Nicole, did you spray perfume?*

She said, *No.*

Because she was colouring in, I acted as if it was nothing, but I smelt it again – as if someone was spraying it in front of me, but no one was there.

I listen, and process every word.

Silence chooses me.

The apparition is a butterfly showing itself to me.

The difference between bone and breath is solid and air.

### MY GRANDA

He is a ten pound note that is hidden behind the lyrics of a song.

He is a crossword puzzle book that fills in all the blanks for you.

He is a downfall of rain, followed by sunshine.

He is a rich seafood chowder bubbling in a pot.

He is a raging flame that wouldn't go out.

He is his own song that he had written for himself.

### LANZAROTE

The words sink deep under the water.  
The blazing sun glaring down at me is beyond my reach.  
The heartbeat speeds up with all the excitement.  
My pocket's distended because of all the seashells I collected.  
I grow tired of the heat pounding down on me.  
The longest voice is the man in the restaurant telling the specials.  
I had forgotten the fun I left there.

### BLACK MOUNTAIN

It means *Let's drown your sorrows*.  
It speaks through the stars.  
The mountain fears being forgotten.

### I AM

I am the way that my dog waits by the back gate for me to come home.  
I am the time when I was told my daddy was staying home.  
I am the day when my little sister came into my life.  
I am the way that I fly in the air when I'm doing gymnastics.  
I am a unicorn emerging from the shadows.  
I am a volcano about to erupt.  
I am Peter Pan and I can take you to Neverland.

### MY MOTHER

My mother battled cancer and won. I love her with all my heart. She makes all my wishes come true by just being there.

### MY NAME

My name is Irish. It means 'Lord'. My nickname is TT. My Confirmation name is Michaela after my daddy Michael.

## Tara McCann

When I was younger, my dog died. I got no thing back from his death, not a body, not ashes, nothing. All I had was a ripped red collar which I treasured. The grief was hard to deal with, but one day I was outside and I saw a black canine zoom past me. The shine of its coat caught my eye. I knew what it was; who it was, Pal, and even though I didn't get to say goodbye, I never forgave myself until I saw him. I knew at least one thing – he had forgiven me.

Silence chooses me because it knows I'm comfortable in its environment. An apparition uses its heart, although it isn't beating. Its love is so strong that it has the power to show itself.

### MY GRANDA

Is called Gerard, but everyone calls him Gerry. He is a very soft person. I've never heard him shout at anyone. I love his sense of humour, and how he sings. Deep down, though, he is really strong, as he has fought cancer and is still here on earth where he belongs.

He is a hundred pound note hidden in a birthday card.

He is an old scrapbook that has the meaning of life inside.

He is a sunny day with bubbles floating around that kids have blown.

He is a fresh minced meat pie still hot from the oven.

### BLACK MOUNTAIN

A dragon eye that is black and purple.

Its language is time.

The mountain fears to be alone.

### MY NAME

My name is special. The first part means 'a hill'.

My surname means 'wolfcub'.

So I'm part wolf ...sort of.

My name is very short, and for that I have my parents to blame.

## Francesca Smyth

I remember when I moved house, and we had just got settled, though still plenty of boxes to be unpacked. Yet we all decided to put a movie on and snuggle up together in the bare, untidy, yet cosy living room.

I could see car light shining in my window now and then.

### MYSTERY

My auntie had died. She was so close to me, and after she passed away I started seeing her, not in a ghostlike form, but when I was shopping I would see her. I would get a quick glance, but by the time I looked back she would be gone. IT didn't scare me. It was just unusual, because I saw her so many times.

I would see her in the town anywhere, and it seemed as if she was shopping and getting groceries, but would be gone if I looked twice.

I listen with fascination, yet scared for what had happened; like a dog waiting for a treat.

Silence chooses me because it knows I hate it.

My aunt looked exactly the same as before although a lot more happy.

Bones are the skeleton of the dead body and breath is the voice that tells us they are okay.

### MY NANNY

My nanny doesn't knit or make scarves, but she does go out on a Sunday night and boogie.

My nanny doesn't make homemade bread, but she does serve a good frozen pizza.

My nanny's favourite shop for clothes is Primark. My nanny is seventy-four years old.

My nanny is a two-pound note: very rare but when you've had it you never wanted to spend it.

My nanny is snow-sleek yet fragile.

My nanny is a lovely cup of tea that is warm, with Rich Tea biscuits.

My nanny is the black high heels she wears when she goes out dancing.

My nanny is the fire in the fireplace that brings the whole family together.

My nanny is an upbeat country song waiting for everyone to dance.

## HOLIDAY

The sounds I heard were palm trees in a sea breeze.  
The sight of people dancing and bright lights everywhere and the stars in the sky.  
The smell of seaweed and salt water mixed with a sweet smell of food.  
The feeling I got when I jumped off the rocks into a cold swimming-pool.

## SOUNDS

The sound of people walking up and downstairs and banging doors for I lived in an apartment.  
The sound of kids laughing and getting asked *Do you want to be my friend?* in Nursery.  
The sound of splashing water and coaches giving orders for me to start swimming.  
My aunty saying she loved me before she passed away in hospital.

## BLACK MOUNTAIN

Black Mountain is a place to clear your head and leave behind and it goes into the rocks – all your deepest secrets.

## I AM

I am the day that my sister told me she was having triplets.  
I am the time when I won a competition for swimming.  
I am the feeling of when I was sad, and my family hugging me.  
I am an otter, who holds hands with friends and will never let them drift away.  
I belong in water, where everything is possible and we become weightless and free.

## MY NAME

My name is Italian. I've always wanted to go to France, and the word *FRANCE* is in my name. My middle name is Martine, which is my mummy's name as well. My name is never on any of the personalised gifts you get in shops.

# Caoimhe Smyth

## EILEEN

I listen as I feel shocked and as pale as a banshee.  
Silence chases me, since it knows I'll expect it.  
An apparition takes the form of their true self – angel or demon.  
Bones is a person with no breath.  
Breath is a person with no bones on show.  
I believe that my nanny is my family's guardian angel watching over us.

She was a rare fifty pound note hidden away at the back of the safe.  
She was a Thesaurus stuck on the page with *beautiful*.  
She was a calm night sky in winter, with small delicate snowflakes.  
She was a chocolate fudge cake and everyone liked it.  
She is the flame of the cinnamon candle.

## HOLIDAY

The sound of the salty waves crashing against the grainy sand.  
The smell of the chlorine in the inside pool.  
The taste of chocolate ice-cream.  
The feeling of happiness on your way home, knowing this is something you'll never forget.  
I had forgotten the smell and scent of my bed.

## REMEMBERED SOUNDS

The sound of my mama singing to me.  
The sound of my granda humming.  
The sound of the birds chirping the first time my daddy and I bird watched.  
The sound of me falling into a puddle when someone pushed me in Nursery.

## BLACK MOUNTAIN

The rain on Black Mountain is tears of all those who are mourning.  
The light dances Swan Lake as it crosses over the mountain.  
The mountain fears the humans will destroy him.

## I AM

The way my cat runs to me when I open the back door.  
I am the time my best friend made the tears stop.  
I am the day my little brother came into my life.  
I am a dream you forget about as you wake up in the morning.

## GRANDA

My granda has had three strokes. He took one when I was an infant, and I was afraid of him and couldn't understand what he said. I can still hardly understand him, but he is my best friend, he's my guardian angel, and I am what he calls 'his little devil'.

## MY NAME

My name is Irish, and it means Princess. My middle name is Criosa, which means Christina in Irish. My Confirmation name is Rose, after my great granny who looked after my daddy when he was younger, making him a great man. She was an amazing woman.

## RED

Red sounds like evil trapped in the good.  
Red looks like a tomato blushing at a salad dressing.  
Red smells like blood when you cut your toe.

## Aoibhinn O'Hanlon

### HOLIDAY

I remember the day I couldn't speak when I was in Tunisia. I had caught a life-threatening disease which made my mummy assume I was dying as the doctor wouldn't speak to her in fight and frustration.

### MY PLACE

My place is the place where my parents found each other.  
My place smells like the manure sitting in a field when you have to wind the windows up.  
My place tastes like Nambarrie teabags and chocolate Penguins.  
My place remembers where my daddy was born and raised.

### MYSTERY

My granny had a miscarriage very close to birth, but on the day she went into hospital, her mummy was in a different hospital dying. Nobody told my granny. She arrived at her mother's house to find out she was gone, so she was told that her mother was in hospital, and as my granny was in the taxi, she prayed that there would be someone with her mummy at all times in the hospital as she hated being alone.

My great-granny said *Look at that beautiful girl out there*. And her children said *That's the sky, mummy. There's no girl.*  
*There!*, my great-granny said, *look! She's telling me to come with her.*  
So now everyone says it's my auntie who died, Ann Marie.

Silence chooses me to sit and listen to words in my thoughts.  
The relationship to breath and bone is the life and death –  
from being a skeleton to having a breath every second.

### MY GRANDA

He always would say *Good luck* any time I would give him a hug and a kiss goodbye.  
He is the page you stop at in the dictionary, where you find your word.  
My granda loves his garden, and my granda loves MacDonalds.  
My granda has eight children and my daddy is named after him.  
MY granda is the falling-slowly song.



## MY PLACE

Smells like the crepe me and my sister got every night.  
Tastes like the salty water you accidentally swallow when you wander deep into the sea.  
Feels like the scorching sun sitting on your shoulders waiting to burn them red.

## BLACK MOUNTAIN

It dances through our veins as we reach the top and lose all our fears.  
It fears the deepest secrets.  
It speaks the language of our own broad Belfast.

## I AM

I am the day that my granda took a stroke.  
I am the time that I got my first dog.  
I am the way that my cousin is in *The Script*.  
I am the feeling I get when Man City score.

## MY DADDY

Is a strong bond that gears my family together. Throughout life his skills were unbreakable, but not in cooking – only at stuffing, casserole and French Toast. He is a man of kindness, abrupt, and he is my daddy.

## MY NAME

My name, Aoibhinn is Irish. A midwife chose my name. It means black beauty. My middle name, Marie, is after my aunty Ann Marie, who passed away. My Confirmation name, Anne, is after my granny O'Hanlon.

## GREEN

Sounds like Celtic chanting.  
Smells like home-sweet-home.  
Looks like The Fields of Athenry.

## Confidence Nich

### NOTHING COMPARES TO YOU

Your voice in my head telling me to keep going.  
You are the sunshine rising through my darkness.  
You are like maths – filled with your riddles that only a few people understand.  
You are like a map giving me different directions.  
You are like PE, pushing me to my breaking point, which is why I love it.

### I REMEMBER

My seventh birthday when we had a party at home.  
I remember my Holy Communion when I was dressed in white.  
I remember the feeling of butterflies in my stomach and praying that I would not be the one to trip.  
I remember the time I got hysteria and the ghostly voice of my mother beside me.  
I remember the day when the world went silent as I lost one of my senses – the hollow sound of the sea always in my ear – the sound I once loved, but now I came to hate.

### APPARITION

Waking up – no, not quite awake.  
I slept the guilt away and arise from bed.  
Silence.  
Nothing but the clock ticking, stuck at the same time – eight fifteen.  
Stuck like my French grades.  
I open the door.  
The darkness is blinding though I saw something move.  
I fill the glass, feel a presence around me, behind me, with me.  
I believe in ghosts.  
The dead are undead.  
I his under my quilt like a child scared of the dark.  
I got down on my knees and prayed for the banishing of spirits.  
You listen because those are lost souls wanting to be heard,  
or an image of your imagination of the person you can't let go of.  
Silence chooses those whom it knows will listen.

## MY PLACE

I remember times of innocence, stress-free life.  
Adventure times of just us on an island.  
The island now as distant as the shore.

## GRANDMOTHER

My grandmother is old, but she is priceless to me.  
She tells stories of her past – of the cruel treatment of her ancestors.  
She likes to cook – basically everything in her kitchen is her kingdom, and her pot is the magic.  
She teaches you to value the things you have.  
Every time I see her I feel sad and happy, because as I grow up, she gets older and older.

She is a book you could not judge by the cover.  
She is the sunshine at the end of the storm.  
She is the rainbow that helped you through the rain.  
She is the sweetest plantain in the bunch.  
She is the old music you still keep because it reminds you of who you are.

## AFRICA

The sun that towers above you, threatening to turn you into ashes.  
You pick your way through the children who sit in poverty, begging you with a sorrow in their eyes.  
The heartbeat that dances to the native Ebo language filling your ears with the rhythm of African music.

## I AM

I am the time that my sister put me in hospital.  
I am the day that my cousin got hit by a car.  
I am the way that I'll never see my granddad.  
I am the time that death wanted me.  
I am the day that we won Northern Ireland Basketball.  
I am the last sweet nobody wants.  
I am the fire you will never put out.  
Let me dream in a place where my past will not follow.  
I am like hope, you don't appreciate me until I'm gone.

# Lauryn Kelly

## MY PLACE

It sounds like the seagulls swooping down to try and scavenge left-overs from our picnic.

It looks like my dog – how he ran straight into the ocean and ran straight out again.

It smells like the greasy fish-and-chip van, that in the summer, like clockwork, opens its doors at twelve and closes them at eight.

It tastes like the salty sea water I choked on when I when too far out.

## GHOST

A ghost just appears to you, like the rain...unexpectedly, but just reminding you it's here and always will be.

It wants you to hear the gust of wind although no windows are open.

It uses your presence to lean on, making the hairs on your neck stand up, aware someone is with you.

Breath lets the bone know that the bone is still alive.

## SHE WAS

She was someone's favourite book that was read multiple times.

She was a sun shower that made the sky dark and gloomy, before clearing up to show the light.

She was like Marmite – you either hated or loved.

She was the annoying pieces of thread that always came out of a woolly jumper.

## HOLIDAY

The unnerving sound the plane's engine made mid-flight.

The excitement on my cousins' faces when they saw me enter their home.

The fresh smell of sea salt as I opened the door.

The butterflies in my stomach when the plane made an abrupt landing.

Pick your way through the mountain of barbequed food.

Heartbeat beats faster for the love of wonderful sunny culture.

My pocket is full of the Australian rocks and pebbles that are being transported back to remind me.

The light whistling wind that you thank for coming around to cool you down from the overpowering 40 degrees heat.

## SOUND MEMORIES

The screech my cat made.

The fearsome noise of our car brakes before they stopped working and we crashed into a ditch.

The sound of pebbles being tossed about as my daddy's van drove up the lane.

The peaceful quietness when my brother left to stay at my granny's for the night.

The whoosh of the waves as they crashed into our camping gear and dragged it out to sea.

## BLACK MOUNTAIN

The sky is the same colour as the mountain.

The light does a waltz over the lumps and bumps and jagged edges.

It speaks to me with sorrow.

It fears the future and what will happen.

## I AM

The day that I found out my mummy was pregnant and I went upstairs and cried for hours.

The time that I fell off a wall and gave myself concussion.

The way that I always know when my mummy is pulling up, by the creak of her car.

I am the emotional wreck that can easily fall apart if not handled with care.

I am the amazing sensation dancing in my ears when I hear the first musical sound through my earphones.

I am like a printer that overworks itself, then breaks down.

## NOTHING COMPARES

Nothing compares to your own bed.

Nothing compares to a summer's day when you have no school.

Nothing compares to a cold ice lolly on your way to the beach.

## Chloe Doherty

### NOTHING COMPARES

To waking up smelling bacon being cooked in the kitchen.  
Nothing compares to the feeling you get in your stomach just before lift-off.

### MY PLACE

My place sounds like the sausages crackling away in the pan.  
Feels like being surrounded by different countries, as you grab strawberries imported from Spain.  
My place remembers the pile of dishes I leave as I try to be Mary Berry.

### PRESENCE

You have to believe that there is something or someone there.  
It wants you to hear every crack and creak in the floor.  
It send shudders up your spine.  
The relationship between bone and breath is that they are long lost siblings waiting to be reunited.  
It's like an overjoying sensation that once you start, you can't stop.

### HIS NAME IS PATRICK

He has a sweet jar that I sometimes steal sweets from. He loves fishing and fly tying, especially in the River Lagan. When I was younger, he would take me fishing with him, then after we would go to his favourite café in Hillsborough. He hates aeroplanes, although he loves traveling by boat. Throughout the year he travels over to Glasgow to visit his sister. He loves cutting the grass, and the smell of freshly cut grass, and his favourite food is an Ulster Fry.

He is the huge jar of 20ps that hides in his closet.  
He is the fishing books that line the old dusty bookshelves.  
He is the calm sea that sometimes smashes against the rocks.  
He is the small tea-cakes that fill the cake stand. When I tried to take one he stopped me.  
He is the green fleece coat that he never takes off, even in the summer.  
He is the fireplace that me and my sister, when we were younger, stuck stickers on, and they're still there today.  
He is the old country music that plays non-stop on the kitchen radio.

## HOLIDAY

The smell of freshly baked pancakes in the humid morning.  
The sound of people screaming as they turn upside down on the rollercoaster.  
The sight of the fiery reddish orange sunset from our balcony.  
The taste of sour sweets that made me purse my lips.

## OLD TOWN SQUARE, PRAGUE

I pick my way through the amazing foods that line the cobbled streets in small stalls.  
My heartbeat plays along to the tunes of buskers on Charles Bridge.  
My pocket is full of memories.  
I grow more tired of the deathly heat that follows me everywhere.  
The voice of the clock rings out every hour.  
I had forgotten about the beautiful sights I woke up to every morning.

## SOUND MEMORIES

Clip clop of horse riding at the shore.  
Barking of my dog when he was stuck behind the garage.  
The scream of my sister when she fell out of a tree.

## I AM

I am the way that my dog knows when I am leaving my house.  
I am the day that I got my dog and I just knew he was the best.  
I am the way that when I hit one note on the piano an excited shudder goes up my spine.  
I am the times when me and my friend laugh so much we go silent.  
I am the budgie that constantly chirps until it's told to be quiet.  
I am the sloth that when it knows it's morning, goes back to sleep.

# Mariea McKeaveney

## I REMEMBER

That it was a warm day when we went to visit giagia and papus. We had just had a long and tiring car journey up to their farm in the Cypriot mountains. Riana and I were running around looking at the chickens, and giagia called for us, telling us dinner was ready. When we sat down to eat outside, it was like a buffet of Greek food, and on top of your plate was a fly-swatter to swat the flies away. Everyone was there, even Marios and his family. The table was alight with both Greek and English words.

## MY PLACE

It smells like the cigarettes my granny used to smoke, and no matter how hard we try, the smell still lingers.

My place tastes like the apple crumble that is both soft and hard.

My place feels like the comfortable sofa beneath us as we took that one horrible Christmas photo.

My place remembers when my granny was still alive, and her still thinking her grandchildren were beautiful, even though she couldn't remember them.

## SPIRITS

I stay calm and open my mind and let the spirits fly in like a downpour of rain. Silence chooses me to keep the memory fresh and alive.

An apparition uses a memory of love and hope to stand up before you.

The relationship between bone and breath is like yeast to ovens – the yeast helps you rise, and the oven helps you come alive.

## GRANDA ROBERT

He was a baker. He was the youngest in his family. His mother died when he was just a boy, so his sisters raised him. He told my granny Kathleen he was dying so she would marry him. They had five children. He loved to sing, and died doing what he loved. None of his family were there, so we don't know what song he was singing, but he died on stage of a heart attack, and I never got to meet him.

He was a ten pence coin nudged between the lining of your purse.

He was a glowing sun behind some shady clouds.

He was a fresh loaf out of the oven.

He was a warm red cardigan.

He was the song that lives on through your heart as his stopped.



## MEMOIR

First line: I died when I was a child, of my heart stopping.

Last line: The journey of life isn't as simple as a straight line.

## HOLIDAY

Christmas in Switzerland

Warm roasted chestnuts and hot mulberry wine the adults drink.

Ripping presents open with my cousins on Christmas day.

Christmas dinner and the marshmallows we roasted.

The feel of the ice beneath my fingertips as we all attempted to skate.

The sight of the snowy hills me and my cousins went sledging down.

## BLACK MOUNTAIN

Crystals and gold and the darkness that protects them.

Black mountain speaks in ancient Irish.

The language of those who died not knowing what the future held.

Black Mountain says nothing. It holds too much grief.

## VENICE

The words jumble up, stretch out, and lie back as your eyes first take sight of what is before you.

Houses of the past, and unknown lives are sheltered just beyond your reach.

You pick your way through narrow streets and secret passageways.

The heart beats in synch with the flow of water.

Your heart beats at one with the heart of Venice.

You grow more and more tired of the fact that you will have to leave.

You will have forgotten the taste of ice cream as you eat gelato.

## I AM

I am the day of my granny's wake, when all the adults looked at me, because I just sat by her coffin, trying to look in and see her.

I am the day that I was pushed into a wooden fence and got a block of wood through my ear and part of my neck.

I am the year of my aunt's fiftieth, when we were all in France and I had a chest infection.

I am the day I was born and had to stay in hospital, because I was very small, especially for being ten days late.

I am the wolves when they gather together to howl at the moon that they will never reach.

## MY NAME

My name is Mariea after Saint Maria Goretti. I was named after my aunt and Our Lady because I was born on Our Lady's Day and the name day of Maria also lands on my birthday. My dad wanted to call me Antionette, because he is called Anthony. I am called Lucinda for a middle name. I chose Kathleen as my Confirmation name because my grandmother was called Kathleen.

## ORANGE

Sounds like holidays in my aunt's house in Cyprus.

Looks like my hair.

Smells like the green tea in Zen.

Tastes like an orange Staedtler marker.

Feels like a warm burrito.

# Ciara Flynn

## I AM

I am the day that my nephew was born.  
I am the first time I held him.  
I am the day I got y first pet.  
I am the way my family comes together in time of need.  
I am the balloon that easily blows away.  
I am a gun that never runs out of bullets.  
I am a time bomb that is constantly ticking.  
I am the flames in a fire.

## MY BROTHER

Is my role model. He has a very bad temper, but is very funny, and always knows what to say to me when I am in a big bad mood. He is easy to talk to and is understanding. Sometimes he gets angered by me easily, but in the end he calms down and he makes sure we never fight or fall out for a long period of time. He can be extremely annoying at times, as he always calls me, looking for help, or looking for me to do something.

# Rachel McNama

## MY PLACE

It sounds like memories getting ready to be made.  
It smells like a place full of food and laughter.  
It remembers the times when it's been empty, but also the times when it has been full.

## PRESENCE

When I walk up the stairs there is someone behind me. I feel its presence. I hear things when I'm alone. I feel stuff touch me when there is nobody there. This happens to me occasionally, and when it does I try to believe it's not real. When it's dark, I see things that nobody else can. I see shapes that aren't really there. I think I just imagine it, but I can never be sure. And when it's dark and I am out alone, I feel as though someone is following me, and sometimes I feel like someone's watching me. I open my mind to the negative thoughts that I try to control.

I let out the fear.

Silence chooses me because it feeds on those who hide their thoughts from those closest to them.

Apparition uses the shadows.

Apparition brings my fear before me.

The relationship between bone and breath is complicated: they both help each other, but they are both able to kill each other.

## MY GRANDA

My granda is a very enthusiastic man. He looks at the positive things in life. He loves desserts, especially if it has chocolate in it. His son died of cancer. He went to jail when he was younger. His name is Sean in Irish, but people call him John. He loves dogs and he has a flat in Ballycastle.

He is a ten pound note under the carpet waiting to be found.

He is a hardback cover, but full of soft pages inside.

He is the soft warm inside of a chocolate cake covered in hard cold icing.

He is the last living spark of the glowing flames.

He is the song that not everybody knew, but those who did know kept it in their hearts.

## MEMOIR

First line: I ran out of time.

## NEWCASTLE

The words are thrown around bouncing on day right through to the next.  
The thoughts of the unknown waiting to happen.  
I pick my way through the narrow doors of shops to get a look at stuff that interests me.  
I grow tired of the bumper-to-bumper traffic.  
I'd forgotten how bad the weather can be.

## SOUND MEMORIES

I remember the rooster sounding his alarm.  
I remember the sound of a baby crying as I first saw my brother.  
I remember the sound of pens hitting paper while doing summer exams.

## I AM

I am the way my dog waits for me to come home from school at the right time, except for Tuesdays.  
I am the day that I survived when I could have died.  
I was on my bike without a helmet, and fell off and hit the kerb.  
I was lucky.  
I am the time I got my first medal in boxing.  
I am a girl that lets her dreams take her to places unimaginable to most.

## MY BROTHER

My brother was born three months early and because of this he had breathing problems which needed to be monitored regularly by nurses so nothing bad happened. Because of this I didn't see him much, but now he is on the road to recovery and is much more lively. He can sit on his own and play with his toys. He doesn't have to be monitored constantly any more, and I get so excited to see him.

## MY NAME

Means EWE (lamb). It's Hebrew. You can spell it three different ways, but mine is Rachel. My middle name is Mary, and I was named after my nanny. I have three nicknames. McNama is shortened from the name McNamara. I was going to be called Alicia, but when I was born my mummy said I didn't suit it.

# Rebecca Adams

## APPARITION

Once there was a door creaking, the light flickering on and off, the walls getting tighter and tighter, and the room getting darker. I began to panic. Then I saw a black figure creeping in and realised it was my aunt Suzie.

## MY GRANNY'S HOUSE

It looks like a place you'd want to stay in forever.  
It tastes like the sweet tea my granny used to make me.  
It smells like the stew she always used to make.  
It sounds like the kettle boiling.  
The house remembers me knocking on the door, waiting to come in.

## MY GRANNY KATY

Was a kind person.  
She was a pound coin flipping up and down with joy.  
She was the number one in the charts.  
She was like a heat wave and thunderstorm mixed together.

## SOUND MEMORY

The howling sound of the dogs barking.  
The whining kids falling off their bikes.

## I AM

I am the way that the homeless man was smiling when I gave him money.  
I am the day that I fell off a wall and broke my leg.  
I am the day that I burnt my hand with boiling water.  
I am the way that I care for everyone even when I don't like them.  
I am the day when my granny passed away.

## MY COUSIN

My cousin is always there for me when I need her, and I can tell her anything, and I know she won't judge or tell anyone.

## Emily Nolan

### NOTHING COMPARES

The way your blonde mop brushes against your face.  
How your cocoa eyes shine in the spotlight.  
Your lyrics making me feel special.  
I hope you can see this too,  
But nothing compares to you.  
You can make any day brighter and you can bring the stars to life.

### MY PLACE

The smell of dulce de leche.  
The sight of the family's photos makes me feel like I belong.  
The taste of freshly squeezed orange juice fills me with free spirit.

### GHOST

Whatever you believe in is seen in everything you look at.

### SARAH

Her name is Sarah. That's my Confirmation name. We have the best of times.  
Every Sunday she comes round with the dog and my granda. One story she has told me always sticks in my head. She said that one day she was walking down the road where the hunting lodge is when she and her friends apparently saw the Beatles in a car. She says it could have been four random men. But it doesn't matter.

Whenever we go out for something with my family, we always sit with each other and have the best of craic. No matter what happens she is always just a few blocks away – literally.

She is just like a new five pound note, always showing the same value.

She brings out the sunshine in my miserable feelings.

She is a new potato.

She is the force bringing warmth into my heavy dirty soul.

## HOLIDAY

The sound of the water along the city.  
The smell of their drink, mate, sweeping the streets.  
The taste of rock hard candy from the candy shop.  
Looks like I have been brought to where I belong – Buenos Aires.  
The palm trees covering the streets and protecting the people from the sun.  
The heartbeat grows great as the tango grows strong.  
The heat of the sun beaming down all year round.  
The peso causing the pocket to bulge.  
The seagulls fat – they're all around MacDonalds.  
There is no escape.

## SOUND MEMORY

Talking on the floor above.  
Barking of the neighbour's dog.  
Stairs steps – treading upstairs.  
The old car starting up.

## I AM

The way that my friend always hugs me.  
I am the day that my world became dark.  
I am the time that music got my soul.  
I am the day that you darkened my life.  
I am the time that it all went wrong.  
I am the day that they got hit.  
I am the time that you left him.  
I am the way that you hurt her.  
I am the way that she gets annoyed.  
I am the time you hurt my weak soul.  
I am superstitious.  
I am disenchanted.  
I am awake from this dream.  
I am repeating days.  
I am not the only one.



## MY SISTER

Is that one person who can do anything such as singing, dancing, acting, smart stuff and all sorts, unlike me, who can barely pass any class without needing any help with subjects like English, Maths, Science – but not History or French - and she can always please our parents no matter what she does. She can clean an entire house in the time it takes me to get up, and can have a good time without trouble.

## BLACK

Black like my soul.  
Dark like the type of humour.  
Smells like pudding.  
Tastes like liquorice.

## MY NAME

My surname is Nolan. I personally don't like it as it seems to be quite common here. My friends know I really like Castillo (CAST-IJJOH) as it means castle in Spanish, and it is the surname of my book's main character. The name makes one feel close to my love for Spanish and South American culture.

## Ciara Hillock

### EARLY MEMORY

When I was eight, my granny wasn't very well. She was in hospital a lot, and when she wasn't, nurses always came to her house to see how she was. There was one time she was in hospital and she was very ill, so my sisters, brother and I couldn't really go to visit her. My cousin was sleeping over at our house so she could mind us while my mummy and daddy were at the hospital. The next morning, mummy came back to the house by herself, and she told us that during the night, granny passed away.

### GHOST

I was lying in my bed at night, and I wasn't moving. So, I was just lying down and then suddenly I felt a hand touch my leg. My sisters were asleep, so I knew it wasn't them. When I felt it, I moved my leg because it creeped me out, and the feeling went. I could tell it was a hand because I could feel the fingers touch my leg one by one.

I also heard a child whisper my name when I was going down to my living-room, but when I turned around to see who it was, there was no one in the room and the room was empty.

You listen to the silence and you don't make any noise.

Silence chooses me because it wants me to know that I'm not alone even when I think I am.

It uses the silence and darkness so you feel its presence.

The relationship between bone and breath is that bone and breath are both inside you.

### MARY

She left school when she was young to start work in a mill. She was fourteen. She was alive during World War II. She has been married to my granda for almost sixty years. She has six children and twenty grandchildren. She is a breast cancer survivor, and has been in hospital quite a few times. She can't walk very well and needs a walking stick. My mummy got her a wheelchair to make it easier for her to go out, but she doesn't like it. She doesn't really leave the house much, because she can't walk very far.

She is a two pound coin in my hand, given to me after bringing dinner round.

She is the backbone that held the book together.

She is the long skirt that is worn so often.

She is the flame in a candle that can never be blown out.

She is the Irish music that is played on the radio in her house.

## MEATH

The words.

The huge hotel and the houses that sheltered the place I was staying.

The heartbeat is strong because of the amount of people that love it there.

My pocket is filled with the money.

The longest voice of my parents telling to get out of bed.

I have forgotten the faces of the people, as they described how they love that place.

## BLACK MOUNTAIN

It means that the sky is upset.

The light dances with big leaps, leaving a bit of their shine.

The mountain fears the thought of not seeing the sun.

## I AM

I am the day my granda got out of hospital.

I am the day my granny passed away.

I am the time that I found out about my cousin's engagement.

I am the rainbow that comes after bad weather.

I am the darkness you see when you close your eyes.

## NAME

My first name means 'dark and mysterious' in Irish. My surname basically just means 'hill'. I was originally supposed to be called Caragh, but my name was changed to Ciara on my birth certificate. My middle name is Una, and it is after my granny Agnes, because that's what it is in Irish.

# Shelly Fenton

## EARLY MEMORIES

The days my granny came up for her dinner.  
The first day of Nursery.  
The morning my sister was born – I woke up confused wondering where my mummy and daddy were.

## POLEGLASS

My place looks like burnt-out cars, bikes etc.  
My place smells like the petrol from motorbikes and bonfires.  
My place feels like the vibrations of the speaker.  
My place tastes like the Chinese down the street.

## MY GRANDA

My granda is called John. He is a caring and friendly man. He has three kids, one girl and two boys, and seven grandchildren.  
He is the old songs he always listens to.  
He is the sun rising in the morning.  
He is the loose change he slipped into my pocket.  
He is the worn-out jumper he never takes off.

## HOLIDAY

Looks like the sunburn on my back.  
Tastes like the salt water.  
Feels like people touching my sunburn.  
As the plane flew, children started to scream.

## SOUND MEMORY

The sound of my sister crying.  
The sound of people screaming outside.  
The sound of stolen cars.

## BLACK MOUNTAIN

The light Riverdances down the mountain.  
The heart of the mountain is inside the rock.

## I AM

I am the day that my sister was born.  
The day that my granny died.  
The time that I realised who my real friends were.  
I am a bomb ready to explode.  
Let me dream that I will meet my granny again.

## MUMMY

Who looks after me and makes me feel safe. She also buys me everything I want, even if it is the last of her money and she couldn't get what she wanted instead, because she always puts me and my sisters first, to make sure that we have everything we could ever have.

## MY NAME

My sister picked it. I was meant to be called Jade, but the midwife put my mummy off it.

## BLUE

Tastes like a slush puppy in the summer.  
Sounds like the beach  
And feels like the rain hitting off an umbrella.

# Caragh Pyper

## EARLY MEMORY

I remember every Sunday my granny was obsessed with this song. I've forgotten the name, but she would always pick me up and dance until the song was done. Afterwards she would put it back on and make an apple tart.

## MYSTERY

I was five years old, not knowing what a shining golden handled box meant. Sitting there, my granny sleeping. I sat playing with her hair.

I stayed in my other grandparents' house for a night. I was standing at the bottom of my aunty's bed, talking and smiling to what my aunty thought was nothing. When she asked what I was doing, I said, *It's only granny.*

## MY GRANDA JOHNNY

When he was young, he was sporty: football; tennis; hurly; swimming, but now he is older he isn't so fast or athletic. He was alive during the time of the war, which I think has made him how he is now. He is very funny, though he has been caught by cancer too many times and this time it won't give up.

He is the breeze in the sun that keeps you cool.  
He is a warm scarf to keep you from freezing.  
He is the candle that lights your way through dark times.

## HOLIDAY

The sound of people laughing going down the waterslides.  
The taste of bubble gum ice-cream.  
The feeling of the scorching sun on my face.  
The sight of baby turtles on the beach at night.

## DISNEYLAND

I am too small for the height of the rides.  
The heartbeat lives inside the highest room in the tallest tower pumping magic.  
My pocket bulges with the tickets for rides.  
I had forgotten the happiness this place brought to me.

## BLACK MOUNTAIN

The rain means it's going to wash away your fears.  
The light dances like music being played ever so softly.  
It speaks to me in the night when the moon is bright.  
It fears that people will begin to forget.

## I AM

The time that I was with *One Direction*.  
The day that I found out that my granda would be okay.  
The day that I got my tickets to see my favourite band.

I am the music that you dance to when you need to be free.  
I am the white rabbit hopping around with the mad hatter at the tea party.  
I am the pick that pulls the strings of my guitar.

## MY NAME

My name means 'friend' in Irish. You can spell it six different ways. I wasn't always going to be called Caragh. I sometimes get called Ciara. My name is pronounced a certain way.

# Holly Daly

## FIRST MEMORY

The first time on stage and feeling sick in front of my family and having to be taken off stage with my granny Elish by my side.

The time when my granny Elish passed away when I was in Nursery and the school had a memorial service for her because she was a dinner lady, and I had to carry a picture of her to the altar of the church.

## MYSTERIES

The messages they want you to know so that if you listen carefully you can hear.  
The silence chooses you to tell you something important.  
They feed on your fear to make them stand tall whilst you are scared and small.  
The breath can haunt in a voice, but a bone can haunt through movement.

The ghost that pushed my uncle in his pram when he was a baby. All was still and quiet while my grandparents sit alone. The baby starts to cry. When my granny went to get him, the pram was being pushed. The baby was silent. The pram rocked back and forth and we don't know who the spirit was or where they are now.

I always hear my name being called and it brings the fear that something is wrong. I run down the stairs. My mum just looks at me in surprise. The voice that calls me sounds like the air hostess on the microphone.

## MY BEDROOM

My place sounds like creaking floorboards as I try to sneak out of bed.  
My place smells like nail polish and perfume – getting told to open a window to let out the ghastly fumes.  
My place feels like the getaway from a bad day.  
My place remembers the family members who owned the room before me, and the memories they left behind.



## GRANNY MARIE

She survived a bomb, but not cancer. She always had a sweet treat. She had four boys and two girls. The porcelain dolls surround her walls – the looks that pierce you. Even though I was scared of them, they comfort me now as a memory of her. I have her name in mine as she is part of me.  
If the memories she left was money, I'd be rich.  
I know you watch over me like the sun.  
You make my heart melt like ice-cream in summer.  
You light up my life like a shooting star.

## ORLANDO, FLORIDA

The people talk with waves and smiles as if like words.  
The bed you wake up in feels nice, but not like home.  
Picking my way through the crowds to find my favourite rides, but hope to not lose my family.  
Your heartbeat and time forever frozen with the snap of the camera.  
I grow tired with the thought of leaving.  
I forgot the time, as it felt as though it was frozen still.  
The voices that stick in your head are of people screaming when the roller-coaster goes upside down.

## I AM

I am the imagination that creates dreams.  
I am the songs of the birds.  
I am the voice of a politician, loud and controlling.  
I am like the internet – I am everywhere.  
I am the light that protects you in the night.

## MY NAME

Holly is an evergreen bush that is mostly used as decoration at Christmas. I was born at Christmas time and I have ginger hair and ginger is called red, and an evergreen holly has prickly green leaves with red berries, so the red of the berry represents my hair.

# Caragh McAuley

## NOTHING COMPARES TO

The way you make sure I'm never lonely.  
The way you always put my pyjamas into the tumble dryer to make them warm in winter.  
The way you sing in the car.

## EARLY MEMORIES

The day of the funeral of my baby cousin, when I didn't fully understand what had happened at the time.  
The day I finally learned how to ride my bike.  
The day we made jelly in Nursery.  
The day of my aunty's wedding, when someone re-broke my already broken toe.  
The day that a bee stung me in the neck.

## MY PLACE

Poleglass sounds like police sirens.  
POleglass looks like crowds of teenagers.  
Poleglass smell like burning rubber.  
Poeglass tastes like Frank's Chippy.  
Poleglass feels like the cold steps we sit on.

## MYSTERIES

I was sitting in my living-room. No one else was in the house. Suddenly I heard from the kitchen a noise as if someone was pulling a chair across the floor. I went to the kitchen and found one of the chairs pulled out about a metre from the table. I ran out into my front garden crying and didn't go back into the house until my mum came home.

Sometimes when I am falling asleep I imagine someone touching my hand, but these things only ever happen when I am alone, or everyone is sleeping.

I love listening to people telling me stories of ghosts because I strongly believe in spirits.

Silence chooses me because I believe it is my granda letting me know he is with me.

## MY GRANNY

My granny is called Bernadette. She has seven brothers and four sisters. Her daddy was killed by British soldiers. She has five children and sixteen grandchildren. She grew up in New Barnsley.

She is the secret ten pound notes she gives me, reminding me not to tell my daddy.

She is the sun shining over the Mourne Mountains as we walk to Newcastle from her caravan.

She is the food that she always insists I eat, even after I tell her I'm not hungry.

She is her purple jumper that she always wears in winter.

She is the old songs she sings while reading a magazine.

## SALOU

The words speak Spanish.

Just within my reach are the oranges growing on the trees.

In this place, you pick your way through endless ice-creams.

My pocket is distended with the shells collected on the beach.

You grow more and more tired with the constant burning of your skin.

In this place, you forget about the rainy days in Belfast.

## BLACK MOUNTAIN

The daffodils are starting to grow.

Light does an Irish dance routine.

It speaks the Irish language.

The mountain fears the day there will be no people enjoying walks in the rain.

## I AM

The day that my nephew was born.

The day that I moved house.

The day that I came to St Genevieve's.

The day that my brother came home from hospital.

I am the smoke rising from the flames.

## MY MUMMY

... is my carer, taxi-driver, cleaner, chef, best friend, role model and the person who make me laugh when I don't even want to smile, all put together to make the perfect person that I would ever want.

## MY NAME

Caragh is Irish and means 'friend'. My daddy got to pick my first name, because he liked how it was spelt, but you can spell it lots of other ways. I was nearly called Aoife.

## PINK

Looks like a breast cancer ribbon.  
Tastes like strawberry ice-cream in summer  
And feels like holding a newborn baby girl.

# Menna Curley

## EARLY MEMORY

When I was four, I got a Dora the Explorer bike and scooter and it was bright orange, and on my sixth birthday I got a Mario Cart cake and I heard a knock on my door and it was my granda who I was very happy to see. When I was the same age I heard a phone call very early in the morning. I gave it to mummy and she told me to go back to sleep. When I wok up she said that my granda was dead.

I remember my long journey to Kilarney, and when I got there, seeing that there was a table up the stairs. The next morning, I had cocoa pops up there, and discovered a park up the hill.

## MY PLACE

Smells like a candle slowly dying.  
Looks like a comfy place.  
Tastes like our dinner from earlier.

## PRESENCE

A couple of weeks after my granda died, I smelt my granda's pipe smoke surrounding me, so I knew he was watching over me.  
Silence chooses me to make the story more scary.  
Bone is solid.  
Breath is air.  
Belief soaks everything up like a sponge.

## DONEGAL

I pick through bushes leading to the holiday home.  
My pocket is distended because of the irregular shapes and sizes that's been there.

## SOUND MEMORY

I hear Sponge Bob's high-pitched laugh.  
The squeaky sound of my daddy's car reversing in from work.  
The sound of dog's barking outside.  
The sound of a football hitting against the wall.

## I AM

I am the time when the snow was up to my shins.  
I am the moment when I held my new baby cousin for the first time.  
I am a lost cub finding my way.  
I am a wave in the ocean bobbing along.  
I am a hyperactive dog who loves to play.

## MY COUSIN

MY cousin is affectionate, aggravating.  
She is boastful and cautious.

## MY NAME

My name is rare because no one has it.

## RED

Red sounds like bed, and I love my bed.  
Red looks like a sticky lollipop.  
Red looks like cranberry juice dripping on my t-shirt.

# Heather McTaggart

## EARLY MEMORY

I remember my mum dropping me off every morning at the crowded Nursery.  
I remember having a silly argument over who got to be MUM or DAD when we played house in school.  
I remember the choir of birds singing in the early morning.

## MYSTERIES

The clock was ticking in the kitchen as we all sat staring at the phone. My mum, chewing her nails, filled with nerves. It took us all a second to realise that the clock on the wall had fallen and smashed onto the floor, because we were all so focussed on the phone. Then – the phone is ringing and my mum jumps up to answer it. My aunty was calling to say my granda had just died.

When someone tells you they've seen a ghost, you listen filled with anticipation, chills running up your back.  
Silence chooses me because I am the only one who wants to listen.  
An apparition uses skill and technique to stand upright.

## HOLIDAY

The sound of creaks from the noisy stairs where my parents would sneak down to put out presents.

## SLIGO

The words are a maze I have to find my way through.  
I pick my way through the fogginess of my mind to get to those happy memories with my family.  
The heartbeat in Sligo is calm and relaxed, for it knows.  
I grow tired of my inability to relive there.  
I grow tired of being homesick, and I wish I could appreciate the beauty of the place before it disappeared.

## SOUND MEMORY

My parents playing music at night.  
The squeak of my front gate.  
The sound of a bus stopping.  
Hearing my mum read books to me.  
Conversations.

## BLACK MOUNTAIN

The rain means to wash away any bad things from the mountain.  
The rock holds all the secret of the mountain.  
The light dances with anticipation, waiting to shine a bright light on the darkness.  
Black Mountain speaks mysteriously to me.  
It lets me sit in silence and allows me to clear my head.  
The mountain fears the day no one will want it.



## Zoe McKeown

### MEMORY

I remember when I was younger when we would go on holiday with friends and family and my second cousins would fight over who knew me best, as we climbed through nets in the Kids' Zone.

The first time I had an all-nighter at my cousin's birthday, and I was the only one who was awake all night, only to be woken the next morning to be told my cousin had chicken-pox.

### MY PLACE

My place smells sweet and savoury like a hot dog.

It remembers summer when the sun is out and its gates are open.

### SHADOW

A shadow that came every night. She would pull the covers over her head and fall asleep in fear...It stood in the corner, all black, watching, staring. She talked to her parents and they told her what to do the next night it came, and she sat up bravely. *Go away. You're scaring me.* She said the words and pulled the covers over her head as usual. The next night, no shadow spirit came. It was gone.

I listen using my imagination, putting myself there, feeling the fear.

Silence chooses me because it is quiet, and violence is loud.

An apparition in my mind has no feet, for it is a shadow, and it is simply there.

Bones and breath both are creepy and ghostly.

Belief is words being said to wash your fears away.

### GERALDINE

Sick from the day we first met, a sickness that took you away. I remember visits to the nursing home. I had to be lifted to kiss your cheek. Your smile was small yet kind, and you could write a thousand words about it. The call I got ... I didn't go to school that day. I just cried.

She was a lost twenty pound note.

She was an imaginary book – one you keep in your mind.

She was the silent rain that drips down your window.

She was hospital food – that's what she had known for most of her life.

She was a robe that people wear on their last days.

She was a dimming fire, slowly withering from the day I saw her.

She was a sad song on the radio, which not many knew, but those who did know it, cried when they stopped playing it.

## BALLYCASTLE

The words, they are twisted and shaped to form the country slang.  
I pick through the crowds of strangers at the fair.  
The heartbeat only gets stronger listening to the Irish music.  
My pocket is distended due to a load of coins living there.  
I grow tired of the cold from the caravan.  
I hear the voice of my grandparents who started the tradition.  
I forgotten the first time I walked these grounds, and the person who walked  
with me.

## SOUND MEMORY

The mixed sounds of children playing out in the school yard.  
The sounds of different languages and accents.  
The splashing of water in Spain and Florida.  
The illusion of covering your ears and hearing the sea.

## BLACK MOUNTAIN

The rain on Black Mountain means mud for those who tread its ground.  
Inside Black Mountain is a collection of footprints from centuries past.  
Light travels over it, softly and gracefully, like a ballerina.  
The language of kindness as I walk across its grass.

## I AM

I am a hand – touching the screen, waiting for a reply.  
I am a whispered secret which gets jumbled up along the line of gossip.  
I am a life that is in a time of sadness.  
I am a dream of a perfect day.

## MY NIECE

Loves to play in my room with toys – of which she has a lot. All of them were  
moved to her new house, which is down the hill from my granny's. She visits  
granny's and steals all the food like marshmallows chocolate, apples and  
oranges.

## MY NAME

My full name is Zoe Christina Frances McKeown. Zoe is Greek. Christina is my middle name, chosen because my dad is called Christopher. Frances is my Confirmation name. There are two dots above the 'e' in Zoe. There are fish and lions in the McKeown family crest. Zoe means 'life' in the Greek language. My dad said he chose my name as he thought it was different and original.

## Danny Rafferty

### NOTHING COMPARES

The rock was different and jagged. It took many by surprise. That rock was given to me on a cold winter's night. I greet a sour expression as the rock is thrown angrily into the back seat of the car. The rock was small and soft but in time it grew, and with that so did my love for the rock. The rock cracked as it fell into the ground, and with that, so did I. But we slowly tried to make do with the rock we now had, because in the end it was the same rock. The rock and I cracked together, and before I realised it was breaking, it was taken away and deemed broken.

### EARLY MEMORY

*It's ripped*, I sigh, poking the ball with my foot with the utmost caution. I became aware of the brisk air that nipped my skin and the distant sounds of cars and children that were able to dive headfirst into an abyss of games and sport. I pick it up and inspect it with blazing restless eyes, the adrenalin emptying like a broken bucket of water. Like a ripped ball. I sigh, *It's ripped*.

### APPARITION

I see an undead apparition before me, put there by the tricks and torture of my own withering mind.

I see a comforting and familiar face, his eyes reassuring all that is lost will be found again, and that he is only a thirty minute car drive away, only an unreachable, unbearable car drive away.

I see the looks of pity, mockery, doubt and anger staring back at me, trying to make sense of what has happened and why.

I see a hug that I didn't want to let go of and a hopeful embrace of nothing but mid-air, the most disappointing reminder that the realities of my own mind have dashed and overlapped.

I see the jingle of a collar slowly padding away, which vanishes with the blink of my tired eyes.

Silence chose me because I was the only one who knew to listen to the repeating whisper of *Loss is the biggest killer of innocence*.

## MY PLACE

The echoes of the singing voices beside me and the rumble of the speaker above us, enlightening all that in just three minutes, all of this will draw to a close.  
Cold lingering taste of a hotdog and the bitterness of the wind on my tongue.  
The smell of petrichor, grass and alcohol consume the air around me.

## HE IS

the rumbling mocking laugh which I hold so dear.  
He is the stern, wise voice which I never questioned.  
He is strong and persistent, despite his brittle bones.  
He was the voice in his head that told him there was much more work to be done. Yet another room of the house, and I quote, *unfinished*.  
He is the distant passionate voice that tells me about cars, golf and the memories he can't bear to leave behind.  
He is the folded five pound note in my back pocket as I head for the door, accompanied by a wink and a small smile.  
He is the over-read newspapers that lay folded in the corner that would soon be set ablaze.  
He is the man that walks beside me, rambling about how nice the weather is, grinning as, like his black sunglasses, he absorbs the surroundings.  
He is the over-toppling plate that is never left unfinished, and frequently refilled.  
He is the same great songs at Christmas, the thing that felt most familiar.

## HOLIDAY

Walking aimlessly around the streets.  
The bright warm rays making me feel infinite.  
The weary anticipation as I sit on the plane, listening to the mumble of the air hostess, resisting the urge to put on my earphones.

## MANCHESTER

The words are elegantly drowned in a sea of horns and wind.  
I pick my way through a wall of excited friends I'm yet to meet, united by one colour and the same love.  
MY heartbeat quickens and throws itself aimlessly against my ribcage in excitement.  
I grow tired of the never ending walks to a destination I am yet to find.

## SOUND MEMORY

The strange lonely song that seems to follow and make those around me restless.  
The comforting yell of my father at the TV screen.  
The frightening laughter of children enjoying a summer's day, always a wall  
away.

## SEAN KEANE'S RENDITION OF BEYONCE'S *AVE MARIA*

HE WANTS TO SAY *I LOVE YOU*, BUT LEAVES IT TO *GOOD NIGHT*,  
BECAUSE LOVE WILL MEAN SOME FALLING, AND SHE'S AFRAID OF HEIGHTS.

## I AM

I am the lost familiar howl as I reach the door.  
I am the times I spend laughing until my lungs are sore.  
I am the embracing taste of tea that takes too long to make.  
I am the days I spend with my friend, which end too soon.  
I am too many lingering glances.  
I am a torn book that doesn't wish to be read.  
I am one who lives through their dreams but never sleeps.  
I am the ruined stump of a tree that only started to grow.

## RED

A violent burning flame.  
A crisp, burnt cinnamon aroma.  
A familiar jersey, uniting many.  
A distorted eye through a broken lens.  
An ache and weight on one's chest.  
A liquid that ignites – gives life to us all.  
Colour of the guilt on a murderer's hands.

# Chelsey Ginn

## FIRST MEMORY

The funeral of my granny, unsure of what's going on, and confused.  
The day I moved to Poleglass, clueless of where I was.  
The first day of school, wanting to go home and pretending to be shy.  
The day of my Communion, when I thought I was a Princess.  
The day a wasp went down my throat when I was eating a digestive biscuit.

## MY PLACE

My place sounds like motorbikes and stolen cars up the top road and sirens in the distance.  
Looks like an area where teenagers stand, but get nothing but grief.  
Smells like the bonfire which is lit in August.  
Tastes like the chippy.  
Feels like the steps we sit on, cold and rough, with the vibrations of the speaker.  
Remembers the music from the teenagers, who are hated. But yet they've nowhere to go.

## MYSTERY

My aunty Kelly and myself came up the stairs to go to bed, from watching a movie. She always feels eerie in my house, especially my room. It was her granda's birthday. He is dead. As she got into the bed, she heard someone call *Kelly* twice. She walked past the stairs and glimpsed up and she thought she saw her mummy, who is also dead.  
I listen eagerly, yet shaking with thoughts of my own, looking round me.  
Silence chooses me as it wants me to think, yet it frightens me.  
An apparition uses noises of banging and creaking and stuff moving to frighten us.

## MY GRANDAD

My granddad is called Patrick, usually called Paddy. He has always been hard working. He's very fit and thinks he's not ageing. He has two brothers and seven sisters.  
He is the clump of money he handed me.  
He is the bright sun, but annoying sometimes.  
He is the homemade food he makes and takes pride in.  
He is the pride of the uniform he wears.  
He is the sparks of the fireworks on New Year's Eve.  
He is the repeated chorus of his favourite song.

## HOLIDAY

The sound of the cockroaches in my ears.  
The sight of the calming beach as I looked from my balcony.  
The smell of suncream everywhere.  
The taste of the unflavoured cold water.  
The feel of my hands as I got out of the water.

## MARMARIS

The words go through the many people's ears.  
My heart is calm and relentless – it has nothing to worry about.  
My pocket is misshapen with money.  
I grow tired of waiting to float in the cold pool.  
The voice which tells me to hurry and get ready every night.  
I had forgotten what it was like to have worries.

## SOUND MEMORIES

The sounds of the shrieking trains.  
The sound of my brother yapping for juice.  
The sound of motorbikes spinning.  
The sound of stones thrown at police jeeps.

## BLACK MOUNTAIN

It's time for the grass and weeds to sink beneath.  
The light does a Riverdance on the mountain.  
The mountain speaks in the whistle of the wind.  
It says nothing.  
It is lonely and dull.

## I AM

I am the way that my nanny died, which will hurt me always.  
I am the day that my daddy died, which I can't really remember.  
I am the day that my cousin was born.  
I am a volcano which is ready to explode.  
I am a lion, ready to pounce on anything that blocks my way.



MY NAME

It is a football team.

It is a place.

My daddy picked it.

My aunty suggested a Y at the end instead of an A.

I was supposed to called Chloe, but my cousin's mummy stole it.

# Grace Thompson

## NOTHING COMPARES

Your smile makes the stars look dim.  
Your eyes make even the clearest waters look grey.  
The moonlight cannot compete with your shine.

## FIRST MEMORIES

I remember how the breeze felt when I rode my bike up the hill.  
I remember turning round to brace myself when I reached the top, and build up the courage to push off and whizz down.  
I remember the amazing feeling of pushing off, and the sudden fear and shock when I saw the car round the corner getting closer and closer to me.  
I remember the bike brakes not working and the scream I let out when I hit the car, was launched off the bike and through the car's windscreen.  
I remember the muffled voices and hands of someone picking me up and asking which house was mine.  
I remember how close my mother held me and how much she was shaking as she asked me if I was okay.

## MY PLACE

Sounds like the paintbrush bristles pressing against the forlorn canvas.  
Looks like the room filled with many more memories than you would think.  
Smells like the burning incense.  
Feels like your secret sanctuary of peace.  
My place remembers who I am, and reminds me when I have forgotten.

## FIGURES IN MY MIND

When I was younger I always felt a cold breeze when I was alone. I would go to sleep and wake up in the middle of the night, sounds and faces consuming my ears and vision. I used to always see them out of a corner of my eye, watching me. I tried to block them out, and tried to remove the presences, but nothing worked. Eventually, on my tenth birthday, they weren't there. None of them. They left and haven't returned.

## MY GRANDA

My granda used to let me help him with his gardening. He was always out in the backyard planting and watering. He used to always ask what each flower was to see if I remembered. He was a very DIY person, even if some didn't go to plan. When he got cancer, I was too young to understand. I just knew that I wasn't allowed to see him, and then one day we all went to his house for a wake, though I didn't know what that was. I was devastated that I never got to say goodbye to him, but, so he could remember me, I put a gold medal I'd won an Sports Day that day, into the coffin.

He was the windy sunny day where everything felt like a simple breeze.  
He was the repeated song no one could get out of their head.

## HOLIDAY

The smell of the sand in the park where kids are always seen playing.  
The touch of the next page in my book while lying beside the water.

## ENNISKILLEN

The words become thicker and faster, mentally tripping over them.  
You pick your way through the busy street noises below, searching for something, not always sure what that is.  
Your pocket is distended from the forgotten receipts and sweet wrappers.  
You grow more and more tired of the reality that is not your home.

## SOUND MEMORY

The sound of my parents laughing.  
The sound of the plane taking off.  
The sound of the vacuum cleaner.  
The sound of the muffled voices when my head was underwater when I swam.

## SEAN KEANE'S RENDITION OF BEYONCE'S *AVE MARIA*

I'M SCARED OF THE MEANING IN THE MADNESS  
I AM THE DAUGHTER OF THE SADNESS  
I AM FORBIDDEN BY THE LONELINESS  
I AM ABANDONED BY THE NOISE.

## I AM

I am the way that the sky is always there, never ending.  
I am the times that my love for my family exceeds the boundaries of love.  
I am the feeling of content I get when I turn the page of an interesting book.  
I am the exuberant feeling of excitement when the wind brushes your skin.  
I am the stampede of air that fills every corner of your lungs.  
I am the irrelevant little fish that has swum out of the ocean and grown legs.

## MY NAME

My name was chosen because of the day I was born – a Tuesday. Tuesday's child is full of grace. It's Latin for graceful. It's plain and simple and not exactly significant, but it's mine and that's all that really matters.

## BLACK

Black sounds like the abyss and silence.  
It looks like darkness.  
It looks cold and unwelcoming and depressing.  
It smells like burnt food.  
It feels cold and empty as if it is trying to coil away from you every time you show it affection.

# Holly Mulhern

## NOTHING COMPARES

Your voice is the tentative music that engulfs the static noise and your skin is made of stardust and broken guitar strings. Your smile is music and your eyes are rain.

## SEAMUS

I heard him breathing, my stepdad. One month after his death it started. Each night I'd lie awake in the dark, aching for sleep that would not come. Around the hour of 3 am it would start. It wasn't normal breathing; it was as though he was sleeping. Time and time again I would try to dismiss it as lack of sleep teasing me. But one night the silence stayed. I remember deciding I would get up to reassert the normality of my house, and as I walked up the landing I passed my mother's open bedroom door, the darkened room empty of her but full of her sadness, that refused to sleep in a bed without him, destined for the lumpy sofa. He stood in the eerie light cast by bedroom down the hall. He stood there and then I blinked, and he didn't.

I listen like the insomnia that plagued us.  
Silence chooses my volatile understanding.  
The relationship bone and breath share, is rhythm and empty promises, once full now impossible.  
Belief is the moment when you remember someone's meaning on a normal day and you see your reflection in the glass of your back door for a moment and the emotion of your own face pounds its fist into your chest sharply.

## GRANDFATHER

He was a shameless handful of silver coins and the weary twenty pound note in return.  
He is a windy torn day, clouds stretching across the sky like sleeping cats, and a face full of your own hair.  
He is a thick old worn history book bursting with knowledge and retold stories.  
He is hunger.  
He is a musty smelling coat bought out of a charity shop, ill-fitting but worn often.  
He is a raging forest fire, angry and raw, but this makes me a redwood tree nourished by the flames.  
He is lacking in lyrics, bursting with meaning and thick, fast, violent music, challenging your feet to keep pace.  
I have a box of letters under my bed about how to 'be'.

## HOLIDAY

The first things I see in my first few steps into this world is the distance between my airport and my hotel.

The taste of homesickness, bitter and sharp on my tongue.

The feeling of the humidity, like being trapped in a massive gloomy box.

## BARNFIELD

The words in this place wrap themselves around you, warming you with their torrent of meanings, just beyond my reach the cusp of understanding shelters teasingly and I want nothing more than to grasp it.

I pick my way through shattered memories, terrified to touch them until they are smooth like beach glass in my head.

My pocket is distended with the phrases I wish I had written. They drown out all of my creative shouts into the void.

## SOUND MEMORY

The sounds on a Sunday morning of the frying pan sizzling, my mum's shrill laughter and my dad's warm laugh were the things that woke me.

The first time I read a book alone, the satisfying scrape of the pages turning as I grew more and more enchanted with the story.

The first thunderstorm I'd ever heard. I remember my face pressed against the cool glass of the window, and the gentle rumblings.

## BLACK MOUNTAIN

The rain means this day will one day be a memory, but for now it's a moment. Held inside the rock are the wishes you make from a loose eyelash.

The light does not dance. It illuminates the face of the mountain, warming our backs and making us turn our faces towards it, grinning.

Black mountain does not speak to me. It sings in beautiful whistling melodies, making my diaphragm hurt from lack of air.

It says what I want to hear.

The mountain knows not fear.

The mountain believes in its graceful stand, alone.

## I AM

I am the way that I'm able to love myself into the words of a book.

I am the way that music envelops me.

I am the way that rain soaks through my clothes into my skin.

I am the day I cried for the first time in months, and it gave me back my emotion.

I am a dripping swirling mess of meanings and definitions, the need to explain.

I am rotting wood, drowned in an endless torrent of pounding rain.

I am a yearning, whiny, angry shout into the void.

I am an overflowing bath-tub, water screaming around my ankles, senseless violence erupting from water taps.

I am the messy, senseless, lost, drug-addict shrieking, sobbing, lacking substance, searching for grandeur, finding only bear traps.

## MY NAME

My name is a plant, a plant with bristles and pretty berries. I feel like it reflects my personality. My name reminds me of home. I like that my name has no hidden meaning or origin, no secret lost deep within forgotten languages. It is simple, short, and says what it means. When asked, *What name would you pick, if you could pick any name?*, I'd never choose anything else.

## GREEN

Green sounds like rain pattering against a thick canopy of trees.

Green looks like getting on a bus and seeing your friend unexpectedly.

Green smells like petrichor and stagnant water.

Green tastes like blood and out-of-date cereal.

Green feels like shaved hair and blisters on your ankle.