

DIVERSIFYING IRISH POETRY

POETRY CRITICS OF COLOUR IN IRELAND



IRISH RESEARCH COUNCIL
An Chomhairle um Thaighde in Éirinn



Maynooth
University
National University
of Ireland Maynooth

Diversifying Irish Poetry: Poetry Critics of Colour in Ireland (DIP)

DIP is a project generously funded by the Irish Research Council's New Foundations scheme, aimed at establishing a sustainable mentorship programme in Ireland for reviewers of poetry from underrepresented ethnic groups who identify as non-white, and whose access to critical culture is hindered by structural racism and migration.

Led by Dr Catherine Gander (Maynooth University) in partnership with Poetry Ireland, DIP will foster new critical voices across the island of Ireland's literary scene, leading to publication in mainstream print and online platforms.

DIP also provides a robust data gathering and monitoring mechanism, which will feed into a project report on diversity, equality, and inclusion in Ireland's reviewing culture and broader cultural landscape.

DIP is run in collaboration with Ledbury Poetry Critics UK, the hugely successful mentorship scheme founded in 2017 by Sandeep Parmar (an advisory board member of DIP) and Sarah Howe. Ledbury has made a measurable difference to UK reviewing culture, and has helped launch the careers of several BIPOC/BAME writers, who have since published reviews in *The Guardian*, *The Telegraph*, *The New Statesman*, the *Times Literary Supplement*, *Poetry Review*, *Poetry Wales*, *Poetry London* and many other magazines and journals. Several of the mentees of the first Ledbury cohort are now in full time editorship or reviewing roles at high-profile publications. Information on Ledbury Critics can be found here:

<https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/new-and-international-writing/emerging-critics/>

DIP adapts Ledbury's model to the specific contexts of Irish poetry and poetry criticism. Targeted towards budding critics with a keen interest in literature, and poetry in particular, the programme aims to usher in change to reviewing and commissioning cultures.

The programme

Before applications close, DIP and Poetry Ireland will host an online workshop on Introduction to Poetry Reviewing, led by Dzifa Benson. This will take place in June, and details are currently being finalised. Please check [@DIPoetrycritics](#) and the Poetry Ireland website for information.

From late July until the end of the year, selected applicants will work closely with a mentor who has significant experience reviewing for national journals, magazines, and newspapers in print and online. Our DIP mentors are: Dzifa Benson, Seán Hewitt, Chandrika Narayanan-Mohan, and Kimberly Reyes. Applicants will avail of:

- At least 6 hours of one-to-one mentorship meetings (conducted via Zoom or similar) with an assigned mentor.
- Constructive feedback on their work.
- A two-day residency of workshops, presentations, and networking opportunities toward the end of the year (dates pending) at Maynooth University or virtually, depending on Covid-19 restrictions.
- The opportunity to pitch work to editors of high-profile publications such as *The Stinging Fly*, *Poetry Ireland Review*, *The Tangerine*, the *Irish Times*.
- Advancement opportunities beyond the programme (such as further activities with the DIP and Ledbury co-organisers)

For updates, please find us on Twitter [@DIPoetrycritics](#), on the Poetry Ireland website, and at <https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/DIPoetryCritics>

Eligibility

- This pilot scheme is for those who self-identify as a person of colour/non-white.
- The scheme is open to applicants over the age of 18.
- The scheme does not require applicants to have already published one or more reviews—although if you have, that's great too—but does require applicants to have a keen interest in entering the field of poetry criticism, and to exploring issues of diversity in Irish poetry, reviewing cultures, and the Irish literary landscape more broadly.
- This scheme is open to people resident on the island of Ireland, or who have significant ties to Ireland through family, study, work, or migration. Irish people of colour who are currently living abroad are also eligible to apply.
- At present, this pilot scheme is for reviewers writing in the English language. However, Poetry Ireland and DIP's advisory board are working on future plans to broaden reviewing opportunities for those writing in the Irish language.

Application

Please send, via email only (no hard copies are permitted due to ongoing pandemic-related restrictions):

- A **cover letter** of no more than 500 words, outlining who you are, why you are interested in the programme, and what you feel you would gain from DIP's mentorship scheme. The cover letter should reference any experience you have writing critically or creatively; this includes academic work and published work (unpublished or published, online and/or in print).
- A **sample review** of a poetry book or pamphlet, or a live performance of poetry you have attended. This review can be published or unpublished, can stem from an academic essay or a blog, and should not exceed 800 words.*
(Sample reviews published in *Poetry Ireland Review* are available on request. You are strongly encouraged to access other poetry reviews of this length in publications such as the *Irish Times* and *The Guardian*.)

*An Introduction to Poetry Reviewing workshop in June is designed to aid potential applicants in their application, as well as introducing beginners and emerging critics to writing poetry reviews. We encourage applicants to sign up to take part in this free workshop.

Please submit the cover letter and sample review as one document (Word or PDF), to Catherine.Gander@mu.ie by **1st July 2021**. Applications received after midnight on 1st July 2021 will not be counted.

Please email any queries to Catherine at the above address.

Our board of advisors:

Catherine Gander (chair)

Poetry Ireland: Niamh O'Donnell (director), Elizabeth Mohen, Paul Lenehan

Supriya Dhaliwal

Seán Hewitt

Ken Keating (MEAS: Measuring Equality in the Arts Sector)

Ailbhe McDaid (MEAS: Measuring Equality in the Arts Sector)

Chandrika Narayanan-Mohan

Sandeep Parmar (Ledbury Poetry Critics)

Nidhi Zak/Aria Eipe