



Maugherow

a much wilder place

Summer 2019

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Edited by Seán Golden

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This book uses the Caslon font that Elizabeth Corbet ‘Lolly’
Yeats chose for the Cuala Press.

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Front cover:

Ballyconnell Surf I, oil on canvas, by Póilín McGowan.

I may have been thinking of Moughorow, a much wilder
place, for the memories of one’s childhood are brittle
things to lean upon.

– W.B. Yeats, *The Celtic Twilight* (1902)

Dedicated to the memory of Peter Milne
orator, musician, hill-climber, activist, friend

At some point in life the world’s beauty becomes enough.
You don’t need to photograph, paint or even remember it.
It is enough. No record of it needs to be kept and you don’t
need someone to share it with or tell it to. When that
happens – that letting go – you let go because you can.

– Toni Morrison, *Tar Baby*



Awoke to the early gray dawn of a February morning in
a hostel near Belmullet to where the Ellen’s session, Peter
included, had decamped for a weekend of tunes and craic.
He was very ill as all knew.

His accordion was the only thing that stood out in that
weak light.

Peter shone as a human being For his friends his light is
undimmed.

– Mícheál Ó Cearbhalláin

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Foreword

As part of *Tread Softly*, the Bare Hazel is a new arts participation project launched with the kind support of Sligo County Council Creative Ireland Programme. Writers work with groups of artists from both professional and community backgrounds from County Sligo to create a series of written, visual and musical responses to the landscape. I was asked to organise an event commemorating Maugherow and proposed an overall vision of what this might entail:

Music and song, written word and spoken, images captured by neighbours of Maugherow and environs responding to the land- and sea- and skylines that shape the community. Surf and stone. Sun and storm. Flora and fauna. Hill and plain. Fossil and fort. Archaeology and folklore. Flock and herd. Wetland and pasture. Big house and cottage. Overflights of geese half the year.

Upon consultation with Niall Henry and Michael Carty, we decided to organise the event in Ellen's Pub, with the kind help of Michael, Padraig and James McLoughlin. For ten years now there has been a weekly session there that brings together many members of the community and this became our starting point, asking Dave McLoughlin and Moninne Fitzgerald to compose new pieces for the event ('Poulmagollum Cave', 'The New Road'), and inviting musicians from the session to participate. Mary Branley, Jackie McMullen and Micheál Ó Cearbhalláin did so. We contacted Des McFadden to ask for the collaboration of the Duneel Writers Group that he coordinates, including Mick Geelan, Karen Gilbride, Lucy Kennedy, Trudy Lomax, Liz Longworth, Brendan Marren

and Gerry Sheerin. They proposed the overall framework for the event. Martina Gillan and Malcolm Hamilton helped us to identify artists and songwriters active in the area. Among the artists, we invited Jonathan Cassidy, Paul Colreavy, Póilín McGowan, Tanis Gordon Smith and Martina Gillan to take part. Micheál Ó Cearbhalláin and Naoise Golden supplied photographs. Dickon Whitehead coordinates a group of singer-songwriters and he put us in touch with Imogen O'Connor. Mary Branley and Brian Leyden, established writers living in Maugherow and active participants in the Ellen's sessions, contributed work. John Sharkey provided PA and sound design, as well as recording the event.

Having recently lost Peter Milne, a beloved member of the group, we decided to dedicate the event to his memory. His recital of Eoghan Ua Conaill's 'The Battle of the Books' was a masterpiece, so the volume begins with that piece. Three iconic neighbours of Maugherow no longer with us were friends and mentors of many of the participants, so their names and works arose naturally and repeatedly in the design of the event and during the performance. Many of the Duneel writers had participated in workshops with Dermot Healy. The writer Leland Bardwell had been a regular in the sessions. Sean McSweeney had consecrated the landscape of Maugherow, becoming a reference for the artists. Since participating in the reading of all of W.B. Yeats' plays that Blue Raincoat Theatre Company organised in August 2015 as part of *A Country Under Wave*, we have regularly put on rehearsed readings in Ellen's and from this group Bernie Marron, Micheál Ó Cearbhalláin and Margaret Richardson read some of the authors' texts, as did Mick Geelan, Martina Gillan. Dave Lawless, Tom Carway and Rachel McLoughlin.

We would like to acknowledge the support we received

from Sligo County Council Creative Ireland Programme, Sligo County Council, *Tread Softly*, Blue Raincoat Theatre Company and Ellen's Pub. The reading of texts alternated with musical performances before a backdrop of paintings. A recording of the entire event, including the new compositions by Dave McLoughlin and Moninne Firzapatrick and the musical interludes by the session musicians, as well as the songs by Imogen O'Connor, Michael McTigue and Mary Branley, are available on the *Tread Softly* web site www.treadsoftly.ie, together with a digital edition of this book that Michael Carty helped us greatly to get into print. We would like to recognise the immense debt our approach owes to the unique and pioneering methods for promoting community involvement in self- and collective expression that Dermot Healy developed through *The Drumlin* and *Force 10*, as well as multiple workshops.

— Seán Golden

The Battle of the Books

Come students of history, legend and mystery,
Maybe you'll list a wee while to me song
About scholars and saints, about parchments and paints,
About courts and complaints, about deeds right and wrong.
It concerns Columbkil, whom we speak about still
So great was his skill in the writin' of words
And Finian, the friend he deceived in the end
And the books that they penned, and the crossin' of swords.

When Finian came home from his visit to Rome
He was luggin' a tome of a book in his trunk.
No meter could measure the peak of his pleasure
As he teased with his treasure each envious monk.
The ornamentation was such a sensation
The saints of the nation all came for a look
And the text was so thrillin' that Saint Columbkil in-
-Quired was he willin' to lend him the book.

With the book in his sack Columbkil hit the track
And he never looked back till he came to Drumcliff.
He went into his cell and he rang for Saint Mel
Sayin': Rub me down well for me muscles is stiff.
When you finish that caper I'll sweat in the vapour,
Then bring tracin' paper, a quill and a light.
Put ink in the noggin I drink me oul' grog in

For I think I'll start coggin' this very same night.
As the scratch and the clink of the pen and the ink
Made poor Columbkil sink to the depths of a thief
Unbeknowns to the author the book bore a daughter
That led to great slaughter and yet greater grief.
Now if you're still curious Saint Finian was furious
To learn how the spurious copy arose.

On revenge he was bent, so to Tara he went
The High-King to present with the tale of his woes.

I am High-King of Éire from Belfast to Bearra
And I'm goin' to declare a solution right now.
The judgement I'll tender will favour the lender.
Columbkil must surrender the calf to the cow.
Columbkil said: O Jaysus, of all the outrages
To saints and to sages you've beat them today.
Your views are so rigid, you stupid oul' idjit,
I declare to Saint Brigid I will not obey.

Now the hard part is comin', 'twas up at Cooldrumman
Saint Colum did summon his soldiers to stand
Watchin' over the bay till around Knocknarea
Came King Diarmuid that day with his warrior band.
Round the hill with the pyramid, mighty King Diarmuid
Carried his spear amid warriors brave
Who, to quote the Four Masters, incurred such disasters
That three thousand poor bastards gained naught but the grave.

As he strolled through the corpses of soldiers and horses
Saint Colum's remorse was too much to bear.
So great was his worry he fled in a flurry
To reach Innishmurray, his sins to declare.
To Molash he confessed, and you all know the rest.
At Molashes behest Columbkil had to roam,
So don't copy me song or it mightn't be long
Till to Scotland you're gone and you'll never get home.

— Eoghan Ua Conaill



The Mucky Place

Oil on canvas 2.5' x 3'

A small piece of beach, wild and free nestling amongst cultured walkways.

— Tanis Gordon Smith

Early Ireland

Magh-na-Eabha or Magher Eabha which roughly translates as the plain of Eve, and is known today as Magherow, was formed during the ice age. As the millions of tons of ice moved towards the sea, it pushed the big rocks upward out of the land to form the Dartry Mountains and Benn Gulbain (Gulban's Peak) or what we now call Benbulbin. The ice pushed all the good topsoil from these areas and deposited it on the plane below. This fact alone has caused, for many years, a lot of jealousy and resentment.

It is a great Irish tradition to take a fella down a peg or two when he has something that you want. I am sure there are lots of people here who were called spud-pickers or worse by the Grange ones or the people from the town. You see the Magherow people had the good land and were feasting on the best of beef, flowery potatoes and every kind of vegetable, while those to the east of the Bundoran Road had to do with watery scabby spuds and tough mountainy mutton. Magherow has traditionally supplied the Sligo market with vegetables, to the extent that a small pool in the stream to the north of the town was called the Magherow looking glass, because the country people used stop there and tidy themselves up on their way to market.

Getting back to the early people however, there seems to be some confusion among historians whether the Femorians or the Parthalonians were here first. Geoffrey Keating who wrote an early history of Ireland, tells us that there were six pre-Christian invasions of Ireland and that 'a tribe called the Femorians were here before any other people arrived'. They are described as a mis-shaped people who had only one arm and one leg and heads like sheep

and goats. We can probably take that to mean that they wore battle masks to scare off their enemies, and had some kind of shield covering one side of their body.

There is an interesting little story in the Ballyshannon Museum about the Parthalonians. 'When Parthalon, leader of the first colonisers came to Ireland he set up camp on Inish Saimer, below the Assaroe Falls, in Ballyshannon. One day when he came back from the hunt he found his wife with another man. In a fit of rage he took her pet dog Saimer and dashed its head off the rocks below. The island then became known as Inish Saimer'.

There is another version which says that the first people to arrive on our shores were a group who were a bit more interesting. Cessair grand-daughter of Noah landed here forty days before the great flood with an entourage of forty maidens and three men, Bith (her father), Ladhra and Fintan. These people had a very sad ending however, because they were all drowned except for Fintan who lived to be five thousand five hundred years old.

There are all sorts of legends about this group and another version says that Banba, one of Cessair's female warriors, married Fintan and that they were the ancestors of the Femorians. Because no writing exists from the pre-Christian era all history from that period is an oral one, handed down by pagan druids and bards. When the early monks started writing history, it was based on those songs and fables. The job of the monks was to Christianise the country so their histories refer to the great flood from the book of Genesis and a lot of other references from the Old Testament about Noah and his descendants. Different history books tell us that, there was a flood, possibly what we now know as a tsunami, in AM 3790. It overflowed the entire area around Magherow and the lower Rosses and farther down the west coast and wiped out entire settlements.

The next people to arrive here were the Nemedians. Wood-Martin tells us that, 'Nemed; eleventh in descent from Noah, arrived in Ireland AM 2850 and in 2859 Magh-na-Eabha, or Machaire-Eabhe; a large plain in the barony of Carbury situated between Benbulbin and the sea and celebrated for its fertility, was cleared of wood by these settlers'. They also brought the first horses and seem to have been peaceful farmers who wanted to get along with the existing people. The Nemedians came from Greece and were driven back there by the Femorians after a plague had wiped out most of their number.

The Fir Bolg, who also came from Greece, were descendants of the Nemedians and spoke the same language. They landed on the west coast of Ireland from Donegal to Galway and are probably the people who had the most influence on these parts. They had superior tools and weaponry and seem to have taken pretty much what they wanted. They were relatively unopposed and soon intermarried with the existing people and seem to have lived in relative peace till the coming of their cousins, the Tuatha de Dannan, who were also descendants of the Nemedians. These people were described as having 'Emerged from the sea in a great mist and possessing much magic and great trickery'.

I think most people have heard of the first battle of Moytura where the Tuatha de Dannan, using their four great magical aides, the Sword of Light, Dagda's Cauldron, the Spear of Lúg and the Stone of Fail, beat the Fir Bolgs. The losses were so heavy on both sides that they afterwards reached an accommodation where the Fir Bolgs were given the province of Connaught and the Dannan took the rest of Ireland.

All the Dannans' great magic however couldn't stop the final invaders, the Milesians. Those are the Gauls or Celts from which we Irish like to claim our lineage

although, here in the west, Irish family names like Mc Cuaille, O Hara, O Gara, Tuohy and Tuffy can all trace their lineage back to the Dannans and Fir Bolg. The Milesians came from somewhere around what we now call Asia, swept through Europe and finally reached Ireland from Spain. Led by six brothers they finally overcame the Tuatha de Dannan at the battle of Tailtiu.

According to legend, after the battle, Amergin; the oldest and wisest of the Milesian brothers came to an agreement with the Dannan. It was decided to split the country between them. The Tuatha de Dannan must now live underground and their victors would live over ground. The Dannans were then led down through a fairy mound by Manannán Mac Lir, where they became the Sidhe and from where they still occasionally emerge to make mischief on us poor mortals.

Of all the tribes who went before us the Tuatha de Dannan have left us the most in terms of myth and legend. Tales of heroes like Finn Mc Cuaille; who hunted the slopes of Benbulbin, love stories like Diarmud and Grainne and a lot of the great Irish sagas come to us from those people.

— Mick Geelan

Gone before Us

The first clans to pass through this area nearly ten thousand years ago were known as Mesolithic or middle stone age people. Mesolithic arrowheads, animal hide scrapers and middens of kitchen waste with shells, charcoal and bone have been found in the townland of Ballyconnell. They were a hardy, muscular, strong boned people that walked across an unflooded land bridge from Scotland to come here. They were hunter gatherers and lived in loose family groups of thirty to fifty people. The name Sligo means shelly place, and the shellfish beds that first attracted our Mesolithic ancestors still provide a livelihood here today. The average height of a woman was 5 feet, the men four inches taller, with an average life span of 35 years. Mesolithic clans were nomadic and lived in bowl-shaped tents of branches covered with animal skins and so left few traces of their dwellings on our landscape. They lived along the coastline and speared salmon, eels and flatfish. They hunted game, gathered shellfish, fruit, seeds and nuts, moving camp as the seasons dictated.

The early habitations of Maugherow that we are more familiar with date back from the late iron age to early Christian times. A *rath* is an earthen ring enclosure and a *lios* is the open space within. Cashels and cathairs were stone ringforts. A *dun* was any stronghold of importance and not always circular in form. At one time it is thought that there may have been up to 50,000 of these structures in Ireland, Maugherow having its fair share due to its location and natural food reserves. The building of forts stopped about one thousand years ago but they echo down the centuries to us and give meaning to the place names and townlands that surround us such as Doonowney, Doonfore, Doonshaskin, Lisadell, Lislarry, Rahelly.

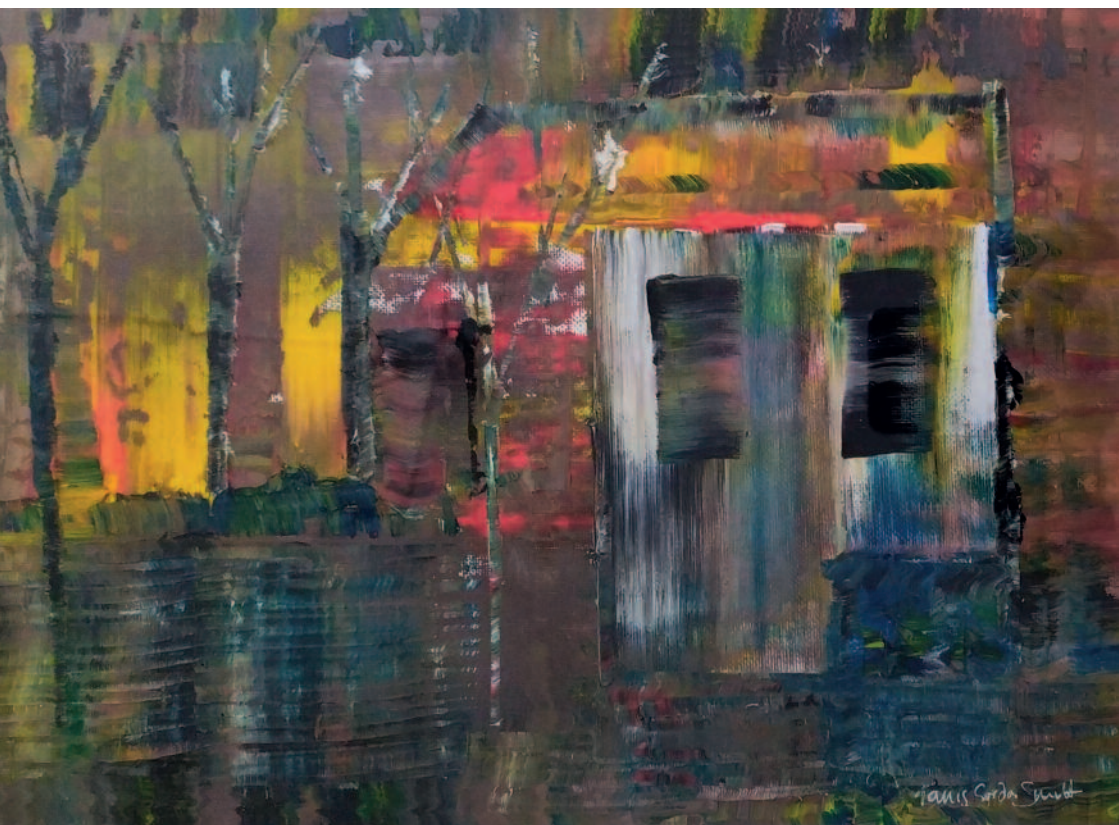
Thankfully, most early structures that gave us these names still stand sentinel over our landscape to this day, as it was considered unlucky to interfere with them. They were built for families and clans in defensive, overlooking positions, and constructed of one or more rings of clay or stone, topped by a tall wooden palisade. This kept livestock in and wolves and raiders out. The townland of Breaghwy in Maugherow means wolf field. Captain De Cuéllar wrote in his annals of the bodies of drowned comrades being eaten by wolves and crows on nearby Streedagh beach in 1588. One of the last recorded wolves in Ireland was hunted down on a Sunday afternoon by the O'Connor clan of Sligo with a brace of wolfhounds.

Souterrains are secret underground passages with hidden entrances and exits and were built for some forts. The entrance was usually in the defensive inner ring. They were commonly between ten and a hundred metres long and could be made in two ways: by tunnelling in rock or earth or by digging a deep drain and lining the sides and roof before covering it over and hiding the ends. They were used as cold storage for perishable food like butter and meat, and for hiding children and providing hidden escape routes in times of trouble. Most souterrains had narrow, easily defended, positions built in that would hamper and endanger those in pursuit. These included narrow places, sharp turns and sudden low stone lintels, all in the dark and deep underground. A lot of souterrains in Maugherow may well have been built in response to the Viking raids along its coastline and on nearby Inishmurray Island. Souterrains were known by the Irish term *uaimh* which means cave, and were built by an *uaimhrecht*. The standard cost for an *uaimhrecht* to build one was two cattle. Not all unwelcome visitors to forts were Viking however, as other Irish clans or foreigners were just as likely to carry out a raid. Robbery, murder or capture for

sale into slavery were the main reasons for raids. Slave trading was a booming industry in Ireland and abroad in early Christian times.

We have all heard the lines, 'we are only here for a short time', 'we are only passing through'. These are uncomfortable thoughts to dwell on, as we contemplate a sense of place. Our history tells of the progression of tribes that have been through our area, and in another 3,000 years we will have been one more clan that was replaced by a stronger and better adapted one. We are not the pinnacle of an evolutionary process, merely fortunate dwellers here at a period in time. We would do well to remember our insignificance on the landscape and should treasure every moment spent in this beautiful, wild area between Benbulbin and the sea. When we walk in the fields or across the sands of Maugherow, we walk in the footsteps of the first people here, over nine thousand years ago. Time reminds us that we only have the lend of the land, and as we live out our daily lives, we should indeed tread softly, for we tread on the dreams of past tribes who thought themselves the last people here.

— Gerry Sheerin



Marshland Cottage

Oil on Canvas 14" x 10"

Inspired by the many dwellings being left to slowly disappear within our landscape.

— Tanis Gordon Smith

Lissadell

(1989)

The Barnacle geese in season
from October on,
leave Greenland on a southern curve.
They navigate the skies and stay
all winter in Lissadell
in sanctuary. They used to say
the geese began as fish,
birthed by the barnacle
and then turned fowl.
I have no season here,
no privileged duality,
and lack a myth that might protect me.
Hunkered down in the smell of the sea
at low tide, slipping fingers under
moist and matted wrack,
picking mussels off a soft furred rock.
Their lips are sealed.
Constance raced her chestnut mare
across the silver strand,
Eva picked mussels here with Esther.
Hand in salty hand, we watch the sunset
coaxing light into another time.
The house is falling slowly down,
the name will die.
Perhaps some shrewd immigrant
with dollars from New York
will snap it up and start a golf course.
Local maids will trudge along the corridors
glad of the work, saved from the ship.
It's summer now
and the geese have gone.

— Mary Branley

‘Long live the weeds and the wilderness yet’

For Millennia the Barnacle Geese have come to the ancient area of the plain of Magherow. Flying in from Greenland, most of them settle near Raghly, but a certain number of skeins double back northward to Inishmurray Island. Centuries ago they might have seen St Molaise’s monks gathering at Staid Abbey on the Lislarry shore, and pitied their earthbound dependence on weather and frail boats to carry them over the four miles of rough water to Inishmurray Island.

Over time, the geese will have seen gradual changes, the most recent one being surfers at Lislarry, the swish and run of their boards replacing the sound of leather on wood as islanders’ heavy timber boats pulled out against the swell. The essence of sea and shore, sand, stone, marram grass, bogland and the lonely cries of curlews over the marsh will not have changed. The sounds of wind in the reeds, the sea birds crying, the roar of the big, gale-driven Atlantic swells will not be altered by mere men, or very much changed by the erosions of time.

Monks built on Inishmurray; men and women tilled the townlands of Magherow and made the maze of little roads that criss-cross the flat lands; dwellings were built, babies were born, people died, still the geese arrived at the end of September. Every April they became restless and by early May they would be gone, back to Greenland, Spitsbergen and elsewhere in the Arctic.

I like to think that fado fado, Inishmurray was part of Magherow and the geese that go there remember that there is a piece of the ancient plain still unspoiled, barely marked by monks, Viking raiders and the people who

built the Victorian fishing village along the sheltered landward side of the Island .

In 1881 Gerald Manley Hopkins wrote
*What would the world be, once bereft
Of wet and wildness? Let them be left,
O let them be left, wildness and wet
Long live the weeds and the wilderness yet.*

He, like the barnacle geese, had the vision to see the importance of the wild places to the survival of this weary world.

So, long may the ancient plain of Magherow remain ‘a much wilder place’ and the stalwart mile by a mile-and-a-half of it that stands four miles, as the geese fly, out to the North West, in the Atlantic Ocean, continue to be a very special haven.

— Trudy Lomax

Inishmurray

Capo Three

G A Bm
You've been my guiding landmark,
 G A
My line against the sky,
 G A Bm
The rock in half a decade's storms
 G A
That moored my restless eye.

 G A Bm
I saw you from a distance,
 C A
My slender isle of grey
 G A Bm
And thought I'd never meet you,
 C D
Who seemed so far away
 C A
Who seemed so far away

I faced the fear of the unknown
and followed the call within,
Which bore me on the ocean swell
To sit on your gentle hill.

A wondrous thing it was to tread
Your ancient flesh and bone,
To feel my breath entwine with yours
Until we breathed as one.

I thought I'd dreamt you up, my dear
Until you came to me
With pagan tongue to lick my heart
With earthy sanctity,

And while I've sailed just like the monks
Away t'wards Mullaghmore,
My imprint kneels beneath your dome
To praise your dark slabbed shore.

— Imogen O'Connor



Flag Irises and Bog Cotton

oil on canvas 90cm x 60cm

As you walk through Maugherow, you are struck by the open skies. Then you notice the carpet of plants and flowers at your feet - a counterpoint to the cloud-scape above. They have an intensity. An intensity more sharp after the dark days of sea mist, the gloom of winter storms, the drunken electric poles that remind us of failure and effort.

The flowers seem to whisper and shout about the presence of God: 'And yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these' (Matthew 6.29).

The two paintings here are from an ongoing project to try and capture a little of this glory. Each new Spring, I stagger about in the meadows and marshes between rusty lines of wire and hope this will be the year.

— Jonathan Cassidy

from **The Thick Skull of the Fortunate**

I

There is one seaboard district known as Roughley, where the men are never known to shave or trim their wild red beards, and where there is a fight ever on foot. I have seen them at a boat-race fall foul of each other, and after much loud Gaelic, strike each other with oars. The first boat had gone aground, and by dint of hitting out with the long oars kept the second boat from passing, only to give the victory to the third. One day, the Sligo people say, a man from Roughley was tried in Sligo for breaking a skull in a row, and made the defence, not unknown in Ireland, that some heads are so thin you cannot be responsible for them. Having turned with a look of passionate contempt towards the solicitor who was prosecuting, and cried, 'That little fellow's skull if ye were to hit it would go like an egg-shell', he beamed upon the judge, and said in a wheedling voice, 'but a man might wallop away at your lordship's for a fortnight'.

II

I wrote all this years ago, out of what were even then old memories. I was in Roughley the other day, and found it much like other desolate places. I may have been thinking of Moughorow, a much wilder place, for the memories of one's childhood are brittle things to lean upon.

— W.B. Yeats, *The Celtic Twilight* (1902)

Winter Nights

for Jimmy Foley

On winter nights
Myself and Jimmy Foley
Climb out of bed
And put on our wings.

Jimmy's for Ellen's;
I'm for the Horseshoe.
So we compromise
And settle for Carney.

Everybody there knows Jimmy.
They all come up
To admire the way
He is himself

And yet never
Leaves another out,
Not even me,
For when I want to go

He's with me.
We have to fly to a funeral,
We have to see friends of his
In Maugherow.

There's shopping to be done,
Fish gutted and salted,
People to talk to in Wine Street,
Women to see on Harmony Hill.

And then it's back
Through the clean cold air
Till we hit the mists.
In the mists we lose touch.

Well, we have an arrangement.
He goes to his house
And I go to mine,
And whichever of us

Has his light lit first
Can expect the other to tea.
Always it's Jimmy's lamp
Lights up,

And although I'm often
Tired enough
To want to sleep
And stay where I am

Next to the few things
I know best
By the time I fly to Jimmy's
I'm a new man.

We leave our wings
To the left of the fire
To dry out
And smoke Woodbines.

These are our winter nights
Flying over Maugherow,
Then sitting by the fire
Waiting on our wings to dry.

— Dermot Healy



John's Port Reeds

Oil on Canvas 20'x 16'

Along the coast between Lissadell and Clishe, stretches an expanse of beach from which the Lissadell River flows into the tide. A reed bed resides there, nestled with wildlife, flower and fauna. All that's heard is the stonechat and the river murmuring into the sea.

— Póilín Mc Gowan

The Derk of Knocklane

‘Dearc or derc [derk] signifies a cave or grotto’

– P.W. Joyce, *The Origin and History of Irish Names of Places* (1910)

Knocklane presides over *Trá Bui* as far as Raghley, over Ballyconnell Strand as far as Serpent Rock, in sight of seabirds and seals on Ardboline and Horse Island, dolphins in Brown Bay. Overflights of geese half the year.

From the summit *‘one sees the dark waters of the northern ocean receding from the view, which is bounded by the “prodigious” cliffs towering over Teelan Harbour, and Killybegs’*, wrote Thomas O’Connor in the *Ordnance Survey Letters* in 1836. *‘On the N. Western extremity is a fort hanging over the ocean, having a foss and mound on the S.E. side, and about 80 paces (farther to the S.) from this foss, is another foss and mound, both which run across the whole breadth of the hill in that part’*.

Turf has reclaimed the ramparts and moat, leaving contours where archaeology discovers a promontory fort, *Dún Iartharach*, a bastion overhanging the ocean. The surf has claimed what other walls there might have been, fallen to the rocks below. A gorge drops from the summit. There is a cave beneath. Gulls nest in crevices on the cliff.

When the airflow and angle of the wind are right, the mouth of the cave howls. Folklore heard the moan of wind and surf in the cave as the wail of Lady Letitia Gore of Lissadell. The Derk of Knocklane keens the demise of Letitia and the coachman she commandeered at gunpoint to drive horses shod with gold round the promontory at the height of a storm. She always wore white, the banshee bawn. To keep their children safe at home after dark,

parents fabled the ghost of the carriage into a nightmare roaming the roads of Maugherow.

The mind’s eye sees tendrils in the sand at low tide where rivulets of flowing water run off to the sea, landshed. Sometimes it’s a Fibonacci sequence that determines the whorl within a conch, or the spiral of seeds on a sunflower. Sometimes it’s mere chance that shapes braids, scales, ribs, ripples, herringbone, feathers into the sand. Patterns waiting to be discovered, or invented. Found art; found science; found folk tales.

Se non è vero è ben trovato.

It may not be true, but it sounds good surely.

– Seán Golden



Ballyconnell Strand, Summer 2003

– Naoise Golden

The Night's Empty Shells

I am always afraid
They will find me
Like the skinned arm of the child,

Break the joint between
The ulna and the radius,
Gouge out the mephitic matter,

Take the dance from my feet,
Splay the small bones,
Work the cement into the instep
Before I have settled the measure.

I am not here to ogle the sea,
Count the brent geese,

On the short strand below Ardtrasna,
I'm here to learn the light of Lislarry
Where shone the shebeen once:
A fisherman's star.

So sailed Praeger
After breakfast of poitin
And cold potatoes-a note
To the waves-a leaky boat,
A nod to the dawn
On the East of Innismurray.

For once on my gable
A beacon shone,
The end of the sea lane
To a safe hauling
Of the night's empty shells.

— Leland Bardwell



Cloonagh Rocks

Oil on board 61 x 46cm

Cloonagh, just alongside Ballyconnell has its own unique raw qualities. It's headland is fortified with staggered layers of ancient flagstones.

As a child visiting my granny, this would be my playground...children have no fear in hopping from one rock to the next.

— Póilín McGowan

A Single Rose

I have willed my body to the furthering of science
although I'll not be there
to chronicle my findings
I can imagine all the students
pouring over me
'My God, is that a liver?
and those brown cauliflowers are lungs?'
Yes, sir, a fine example of how not to live.
'And what about the brain?'
'Alas the brain. I doubt if this poor sample
ever had one.' As with his forceps
he extracts a single rose.

— Leland Bardwell

Ómos do Leland

Tá an geimhreadh tagtha
Is gearr uainn an Nollaig
Tá na soilse á lasadh
Tá na hoicheanta fuar
Ach is cuma faoin aimsear
Tá ár gcroí briste
Mar ní fheicimid Leland
In Ellen's go deo.

Curfá

*D'fhág sí a corp ag na hollaimh le scrúdú
Tá mé cinnte go bhfuair siad an 'brain is an rose'
Ach faraoir géar nó gur fhág sí muid cráite
Mar ní fheicimid Leland in Ellen's go deo.*

Oiche de hAoine bhíodh craic agus seléip ann
Is Leland sa chúinne ag aithris is ag ceol
Le Frankie and Johnny
Is an torchestra ag seinnm
M'anam-ón-deabhail go hfuair sí bualadh bos mór

Curfá

A Leland a chara, tá do rás rite tá cliú agus cáil ort mar
is cóir
Le Séamus is Dermot is na húdair mór eile
Tá tú imeasc na bhfili atá faoin bhfód

Curfá

*D'fhág sí a corp ag na hollaimh le scrúdú
Tá mé cinnte go bhfuair siad an 'brain is an rose'
Ach faraoir géar nó gur fhág sí muid cráite
Mar ní fheicimid Leland in Ellen's go deo.*

— Michael McTighe

St Brigid's Day 1989

The women's calls
go up across the lake.
On this still day their voices
whip the air — staccato notes
behind the reed-hushed margin.

Winter is writing out its past
before its time
while they trail the shore
anxious to gather reeds
for Brigid's Cross, bending
in all their different flesh-shapes
like shoppers to admire a bud,
an early primrose, a robin
shrilly calling to its mate.

Although I gather rushes
like these strolling women
I'm made conscious
of the decades that divide us
and that I should be celebrating
Brigid in her strength
of fruitfulness and learning.

I can only offer her the satchel of these years,
I too, will make a cross, for luck and irony.
Amongst the witches coven I will raise my glass
so my children's children's children
will gather rushes for her turning.

— Leland Bardwell



Ready for the Gathering

Encaustic wax and mixed media on board 30 x 30cm

'Ready for Gathering' was created using Encaustic wax and mixed media to capture the scene of an untouched reedbed, waiting to be picked. It was inspired by Leland Bardwell's poem 'St Brigid's Day', part of a collaborative exhibition organised by the Hamilton Gallery in Sligo.

— Póilín McGowan

Serpent Rock, Ballyconnell

Limestone perched on the land's edge; rock shelves jutting out. The sea bathes the stone, or batters it, in turns. The tide pulls away, returns, pulls away, returns. The stone resists, thrusts, a petrified throb of desire. The sea finds every entry; the undertow thwarts everything, save a rare gush from a spout hole, or the full force of a storm. Enormous slabs of stone cede to the surge of the sea, tossed about like chips.

'On the north-west side of Maherow, lies the Serpent rock, so called from the great variety of its curious petrifications, representing fishes, serpents, &c. of different sizes, and beautiful shells', wrote James McParlan in 1802, in his *Statistical Survey of the County of Sligo*. Those were pre-Darwinian times.

In southern seas, tectonic plates fused two bits of landmass into an island and shifted it north to become Ireland. Carboniferous coral reefs formed some 300 million years ago while it lay beneath tropical seas. Serpent Rock at the tip of Ballyconnell is a freeze frame in geological time of a South Atlantic teeming with coral, crinoids, sponges, snails; a stark reminder that it is we who will perish, not the planet.

Dermot Healy lived with Helen Gillard above on the Alt at Lochán, where Mick Coyle stitched outbuildings together for them with stone. As they lit a bonfire on St John's Eve, other beacons flickered up and down the coast: 'here we are'; 'one year more'. Serpent Rock surrounds the Alt. Constant storm surge consumes it. The County Council turned down a planning permission for 'an area of great natural beauty close to the coastline at Ballyconnell' because it was 'subject to storm water

damage by flooding from overtopping and breaching of the coastline together with flying projectiles in times of storm'.

To stall the ravages of coastal regression and land loss, he stacked gabions into breakwaters, filling the cages with stones that would shift about, dissipating and absorbing the force of a tide that annihilates the resistance of boulders. Inland, he built drystone walls meant to stand, to last, a promise of certainty. The shore required adaptation. His gabions were a bulwark against the sea, a defence never seen here before, meant to stand but not to resist, conforming to uncertainty; *who can read the signs ... knows no work can stand*.

He told me how a retired military man who regularly strolled the strand below fell to his knees at first sight of the new cages of stones, in memory of the gabions that had saved his own life in the Lebanon, absorbing the blast waves from artillery fire that should never have targeted his peacekeeping post there, the only neighbour who recognised them.

One day we walked across the fossils to behind the Alt. We stood well back from the edge, prudent. Not long before, the sea had taken a neighbour well used to the rocks who was fishing for mackerel. We gazed together, each on his own horizon, comradely, adjacent, when out from behind us through a cleft in the rock broke a wave clean over our heads leaving us dry. Freeze frame the pair of us, hunched, ripping the curl on a stock-still slab of stone. *Under a great wave's hollowing crest*. 'Jesus wept! Didn't see that coming'. A rogue wave spared us.

Now he is gone, blindsided by the shockwave of a rogue car hurtling across the road on the bend for home. *Ochón agus ochón ó*. It was from *the deep heart's core* of a neglected native tongue that the first immediate and most suitable words for grief emerged: *brón, marbh,*

uaigneas, ochón. I am bereft; bás in Éirinn no solace. We miss you, a Dhiarmaid a ghrá.

Step Back. Broaden the scope in time and place to another shoreline. Where the rock shelf brunts the open sea, themes coalesce. Let Roskeeragh do for Ithaca. Imagine a young man anxious to cross his own horizon; the long-suffering wife appraising the sea that lured her man away so long; a goatherd and a nursemaid recalling the worst of winter storms. Apart, only the hoary mariner who sailed the furthest hears echoes of Charybdis in the lapping of small waves on the shore.

Abutting the edge there are tide-pools hosting new life amid the fossils. Further back there are boulders, then stones the tide pounds into pebbles, then sand. Inland, grass grows, cows and sheep graze, farmers harvest; then a house appears, or a few, then roads, then villages, towns, cities, busy with day-to-day concerns, where sea and stone are far from sight, the sheer land's end far out of mind. But wind and wave still pound the rock, whether or no there be somebody there to feel the thud.

— Seán Golden



Ballyconnell Surf I

Oil on Canvas Size: 20'x 16'

The sea knows no boundaries there in Ballyconnell, all along this stretch every winter the waves break so high, they explode like geysers over the dwellings of the inhabitants.

— Póilín Mc Gowan

Lissadell: Earth Mother

Am C G Em
You call to me now as you called me before
Am G Am
And you'll call me again once more
C G Em
Your mouth is the half moon curve of the bay
Am G Am
And your heartbeat, the tide on the shore
Em Am
The trees of your brow have bent low to the wind
Dm7 E
Which comes and it goes as it will,
Am C G Em
Yet the lichen clad branches still reach for the light
Am G Dm7
And bear acorns and berries still.

I walked past the gate lodge and down t'wards the sea,
Washed by the silence of green.
My forebears did tend yonder forest and fields,
And built walls to keep out the thieves.

I came to a new gate which barred my way
No entry KEEP OUT of here -
And my heart made a fist and it pledged for to fight
To walk Lissadell without fear.

Then I heard your soft voice in the midst of my rage,
In the river, the wild wind and rain,
Your song is a song we can choose to ignore
But man's walls can never restrain

'You fools', I heard you say, 'I speak to you both,
Landowners and dispossessed —
I am Earth, I am Mother, the ground 'neath your feet
And each of you here is my guest'.

'Your title deeds are but misguided dreams
Of a land you can never possess,
I was here long before you ever were
And I'll remain long after you've left.'

Instrumental

You call to me now as you called me before
And you'll call me again once more.
Your mouth is the half moon curve of the bay
And your heartbeat, the tide on the shore

— Imogen O'Connor

Sand Sketch

I am actually out by furthest Rosses.
A land-voiding vein
of Glencar
races my pace and setter abounding in it,
outstrips us mightily, late for the low of low-tide
already mustering to turn again.

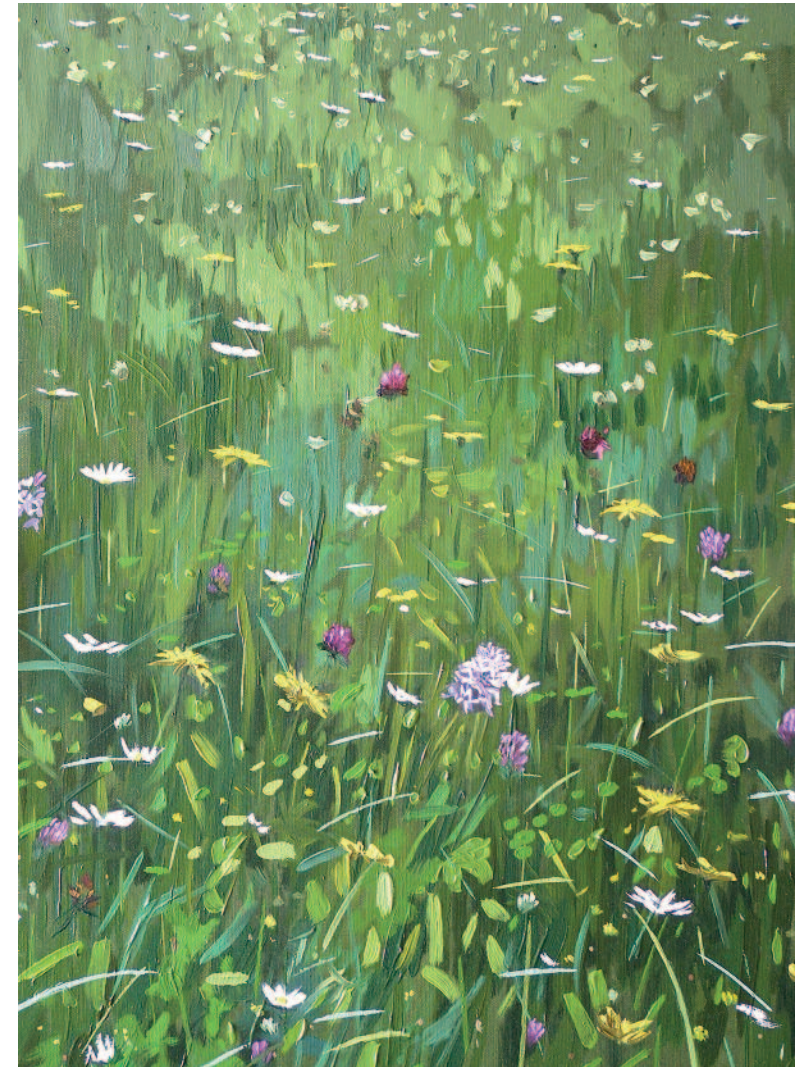
Because of haze
I am the tallest thing of all
Cathedral, height of horizon.
Mind a half-turn, stitching
sea to sky,
I'm asking a none-too-often-self why
you never hear a God looked skyward.

Perish, or simply losing the thought
my eyes fall to the sand,
where incompleteness is still being laid.

Today in the neighbouring crimps
it's a feather, half cracked whelk,
and a life abandoned crab — like someone's
simply dropped the leavers, climbed from the carapace
walked away saying 'fossilize that piece of junk if you want.
I'm away'.

And a jellyfish stranded in the middle of the sentence,
fly-spittle-bile bar-stooled father-creation would have
on its unfolding eternal narration.
Maybe knowing where to leave such soft punctuation
is the sting in the tale?

— Malcolm Hamilton



Ulrike's Meadow

oil on canvas 50cm x 40cm

— Jonathan Cassidy

Ragwort

A crumbling sea stone concrete shell
The old harbour custom house
Now sits abandoned in an abandoned pasture.

Yellow Buachaláns
Poisonous yellow Buachaláns
Pollute the pasture

The rattle of her bike stabilisers
Suddenly silenced.
She stands on peddles to peer over the briar hedge.

‘Dad look at that field’
‘It’s beautiful’
‘Look at all the beautiful flowers’

She pushes down on her peddles
Rattles off
And leaves me to reconsider my wisdom.

— Des McFadden

* Buachaláns – Irish name for Ragwort plant. Some species produce natural biocides to deter or even kill animals that would eat them.

Theatre of the Void

In Ellen’s bar a hay-saving tanned farmer with the tractor parked outside asked where we lived before we made the planning application to build a house in Maugherow. ‘Dromahair’, I said.

‘A wet auld hoor of a place’, he said, and saluted the wisdom of our move to the sunnier precincts of Maugherow.

From the green field we have bought we can see Knocklane Hill — a place-name derived from the Irish, *Cnoc O’Laoíghén* or Leyden’s hill. And I know that my father’s people were stonecutters from Streamstown on the opposite side of the bay, so my clan origins seemed to be coastal and from around here: a salmon following the river back to the sea.

Approached by a straight and narrow bog road like a causeway, the headland of Ballyconnell West looks and feels like an island. The stark intensity of the light. The wind-raked, bleached-out colours. The colossal dome of sky. The plush boughs of the Planter’s beech of Dromahair replaced by the native ‘*sceach*’: the lone hawthorn bush, stunted and leaf-deprived, its tortured branches leaning away from the prevailing wind.

The footings for the new house were barely in place when a woman said: ‘So you’re building a house where that village disappeared’.

‘What village?’ I asked, alarmed by her further mention of mysteriously animated cataracts of sand.

In Sligo Library I discovered how ‘800 rich and fertile acres’ of the Lissadell estate had become nothing more than a sandbank an eye-witness said, in consequence of the western winds which drifted blowing sands to such a height that ‘most of the miserable occupiers can only enter their cheerless dwellings by the chimneys’.

With the blowing sands on the move at Streedagh and Mullaghmore, the chief landholder in the district at the time, Lord Palmerston, began an experimental sowing of a hardy 'bent grass'. Planted in staggered rows, the bent trapped the sand and arrested the blowing movement to stabilise the dunes. Which explained why a perfectly straight road to the seashore was called the 'Bent Road', because it was the road used by the carters to transport the bent grass.

At the house where the peaked rafters were ready for slating the sound of the sea changed with the progress of the tides: a twice-daily flux of obliteration and accumulation, endurance and collapse, concealment and exposure.

There were days when the entire headland vibrated under the rhythmic grinding onslaught of a big sea, and spectacular curtains of white spume rose heavenwards like the Old Faithful geyser in Yellowstone Park. A sight that prompted the plasterers doing the inside walls to wonder if I should keep life jackets handy in the upstairs bedrooms.

Another day the western horizon was a tranquil shade of dove grey and pink. But I found a fisherman hauling his boat ashore, and noted how he had dragged the boat high up the shingle bank safely above the high water mark. When I looked out to sea I could spot nothing to suggest severe weather on the way.

Thinking he might initiate me into one of the ancient, local hand-me-down secrets of fisherfolks' coastal weather-lore I asked how he knew there was a big storm coming?

'[Www.atlanticwavewatch.com](http://www.atlanticwavewatch.com),' he said.

Ten years have passed now since we moved into the new house on the headland. In that time we have weathered through the blowing sands of the economic boom and bust, the bouncing along the bottom, the

promise of 'green shoots', the premature call to 'keep the recovery going'. And lately, across the country, like learning to dance at Lanigan's Ball, we have seen the developers step out, and NAMA step in, NAMA step out, and the developers step in again.

One day we are radiance-drenched, the piercing blue sky above the bog populated by pell-mell lark song. The next day we can hardly stand upright in the eyeball-bruising brunt of a caustic hurricane-force gale that whitens the windowpanes with salt.

Under restored blue skies the turbulent sea continues for days to boom and smash into the fossil-stamped limestone breakwater of the Serpent Rock, at the back of Coolimney, or Yellow Strand, as the stones of the shingle-banks crack and roll like old bones in a giant ossuary, under the slap and backwash of an immense Atlantic fetch. All told, life here inclines to the spectacular in this 'theatre of the void' where time teaches that you can either shrink or grow before the sea.

— Brian Leyden



Cloonagh III

Oil on Canvas 60 x 50cm

Observing the landscape is a continuous wonderful experience, where images are constantly recorded and the notion of the feeling, or essence of the landscape, rather than just the visual are conjured up from the familiar. The coastal peninsula of Maughers, sits proudly on the north west of Sligo and has everything a painter needs to keep the preoccupation of engaging with one's surroundings alive. The paintings evolve from layering, scraping, removing and reworking until the image reveals itself and is accepted as the resolution of the preconceived. I continue to interpret the land and water around me and can never expect to be finished.

— Paul Colreavy

A Pinch of Snow in a Black Velvet Glove

For Peter Milne

1

The miners' path stretched back
into the past for us, that January
morning and up Ben Bulbin.

The day was black and white
and every shade of grey
like a photo from the thirties,

with grim jawed, black shawled
long skirted women,
and children in bare feet.

We came to our grandparent's home,
Thurmore, Glencar,
still roofed but hearthless,

grooved in the valley and blind
to the lake, the slopes, the bay.

We remembered the story of their wedding day.

2

The best man was on the run and couldn't join them
at the altar. The church was ringed with soldiers,
so a modest labourer stood in, long socks to the knee.

The freshly married couple jaunted home
to the table spread with sweet cake and stout,
a spray of late roses from the wild briar backed by fern.

Because the times were troubled the bride was shown
how to hold a black revolver in her white wedding glove,
and steady her eye, her hand, brace against her husband.

She practised
on a plank of wood
all day.

3

Keeping on for the cleft in rock
we bowed like the rusted pylons on the right
to the left the telegraph poles

gasped upward. Stopping often
we traced the miners path
to the shut barytes shaft,

the outline of the hostel
emerging in the hard white mist.
Room enough for eighteen men.

4

From the litany of shadows
our fathers and our uncles
stepped out of the mouth of the mine.

Loose limbed men in fifties caps
beardless with their youth and hunger,
bitter from the damp,

eager for a rationed puff
from a red eyed cigarette.
A spume of smoke

as someone coughed and spat.
The lit end was pinched by finger and thumb,
stashed in a waistcoat pocket.

5

Seams of sleet and hail stones rained.
A shower of barytes clanged on metal,
heavy stinging drops.

As darkness closed on wheels and cogs,
on trespassers and innocents, on poverty
and martyrdom alike,

my cousin played 'The Foggy Dew'
on her silver whistle. All I could do was
take a pinch of snow in a black velvet glove

and feel the bone cold misery.
A raven free in a rain cloud,
passed over us, said nothing.

— Mary Branley

Ten Years Sounds Good

The rambling house was a place where our forefathers entertained themselves in days gone by, where people congregated for storytelling, perhaps a bit of gossip, and the odd song and dance late into the night. These houses served an important function in the days before radio, television and modern transport. We have rambling houses to thank for ensuring a lot of traditional lore, stories and music were passed on from generation to generation. But changes in lifestyle and social interaction have put pressure on rural traditions which Irish people and their visitors have long prized. Modern life and recent enactment of more strict drink driving laws also threaten the very survival of the Irish pub especially in rural Ireland.

However in Ellen's pub here in Maugherow in its small intimate setting reflective of the rambling house tradition and shortly to celebrate its tenth anniversary, every Friday night people gather in to debate the affairs of the day, entertainment mingles here seamlessly with artistic expression and odd snippets of education. Over those years somehow the tuneful and tuneless together with the noteworthy and note-less, the composer and the somewhat less composed have all managed symbiotically and miraculously to coalesce. When the lights are dimmed of an evening and the curtains drawn closed, the weekly session begins. The formal week over, it's another Friday night in Ellen's and anything might happen. The thick stone walls holding accumulated secrets of four hundred years with firm resolve and solid discretion resonate with music, poetry and stories. The kitchen and old bar embrace local and blow-in alike. Strangers, stragglers, the lost or dislocated and some returned emigrants have all found their way through the maze of by-roads and side

roads that still defy sat nav or Google Map. If you successfully navigate this matrix you'll discover here a quaint and neutral public space that still invites and encourages self-expression and a listening ear.

It's indeed a rare and wonderful treat in an increasingly digitised world to sit in this acoustic setting and savour soft harmonies, sweet traditional Irish tunes or the raw simplicity of the spoken poetic word. An environment of welcoming silence and broad acceptance only occasionally interrupted by boiling kettle, churn of dishwasher or the unexpected ring of the land line, an enquiry perhaps on the whereabouts of an errant husband. Once in a while a nod may be given grudgingly to modern gadgetry when a Wifi connection is called upon to aid a failing memory.

In an area which has long provided shelter from the open Atlantic there remains here a safe space in which to cherish, enhance and nurture the creative spirit. Experienced or novice, writer or musician can share their talents in a spirit of encouragement and participation. For we have been truly fortunate over those ten years to have shared the company and support of a few gifted established poets, writers and musical artists who in the footsteps of Yeats sought and found artistic inspiration and refuge under the shadow of bare Ben Bulbin in this unique and beautiful landscape that is Maugherow. Some of those already quoted and fondly recalled this evening have sadly recently passed on but in those ten short years forged lasting friendships before departing on one finale and leaving behind a much enriched legacy. For here old poets don't die they just 're-verse' while others remain to shield, cradle and strengthen an extensively fragile but living oral tradition. It's reassuring to know that whether it be local children honing their craft under guided tutorship or travelling bard in search of an audience, their span of five or ninety five years dwarfed and contextualised between

the ancient traditions of the past and the unfolding of an increasingly uncertain future they may all still find here safe harbour from shifting sands of change and erosion.

— Brendan Marren

We're having a session tonight

Quarter to eight
don't be late
get out your good clobber
and lip stick your gob
a spray of perfume
to sweeten the room
we're putting the eyebrows on

Chorus:

Fiddles and bows
elbows and toes
we're wedged in together as tight as sardines
Isn't it fine
porter and wine
we're having a session tonight

Mary and Bob
are out of a job
They're happy as Larry
with pints on the hob
Isn't it strange
they're coming from Grange
Jackie and Brendan and Dave

Chorus:

Fiddles and bows
elbows and toes
we're wedged in together as tight as sardines
Isn't it fine
porter and wine
we're having a session tonight

And if you're new
how do you do
Sit down beside us
and sing us a song
you can't go wrong
we'll all sing along
we're having a session tonight

— Mary Branley



Low Tide Finned

Oil paint on Canva 40cm x 40 cm

— Martina Gillan

Maugherow and Environs

There is some debate about the territorial definition of Maugherow. It is not a townland or a barony or a parish. In her book *Drumcliffe :The Church of Ireland Parish in its North Sligo Setting* (Drumlin Publications, 2000), Stella Durand writes, 'Maugherow was a generalised name for the whole peninsula in ancient times'. In 1802, James McParlan published his *Statistical Survey of the County of Sligo*, referring a number of times to 'Maherow', but without defining the territory. Michael Herity edited *Ordnance Survey Letters Sligo: Letters Relating to the Antiquities of the County of Sligo Containing Information Collected During the Progress of the Ordnance Survey in 1836 and 1837* (Dublin: Four Masters Press, 2010), where Thomas O'Connor recounted various definitions:

In this Parish [Drumcliff] lies the tract of Land Called *Machaire ow* by the English speaking people and [Machaire Eabha] in Irish ... The people vary in their description of the limits of this plain. A native and resident of *Drumcliff Village*, told me that [Machaire Eabha] was originally applied to a plot of land (in the P^h. of Drumcliffe), near the sea shore, comprising about 10 acres, in the middle of which a remarkable rock stood, and that the name is now applied to all the plain from Carney Village ... a line drawn from Carney Village, towards Grange, or ... Innishmurray would form its S. Eastern boundary, whilst the Ocean surrounds it on all other sides. The *Citizens* of Grange, do not grant, that *Machaire ou* is nearer to themselves, than the Doonan of *Breachmhaigh* ... calling all the tract (from that) as far as Carney village Southwards, which is bounded

by the ocean in all other directions (i.e. N. & W), by the name of *Machaire ou* ... those residing in the neighbourhood of Grange, say, that the whole extent of *Machaire ow*, is about 3 miles square. I consulted an old man, of the name of Michael Herachty, who resides in the heart's core of *Machaire ou*, about both the original and present extent of the plain according to the boundaries ascribed to it by the people, and about several other ... occurrences, respecting which, he could not impart the least information. As to the boundary assigned it by the people, he seemed to coincide in opinion with the people of Grange.

This venerable man told me, there was a field in *Ballymuldory T.L.*, about 1 1/2 acre in extent, having (in it) a remarkable *stone* ... called [*Cloch Eabha*], to which field (the name) [*Machaire Eabha*], was originally applied. The Citizens of Sligo, look on all those, who are residents of that tract extending from within 2 miles of the town to the N. ... (along) Benbulbin as far as Grange and to the ocean on all other sides, as *Machaireowians*. A Parish of this district according to the Catholic division retains the name of Machaire-Eabha. (There is no definite boundary of the plain. All the level plain lying to the north west of Benbulbin certainly is the ancient *Machaire eabha*. (pp. 101-103)

W.G. Wood-Martin's *History of Sligo* (1882) draws upon McParlan and O'Connor but adds a bit more:

In A.M. 2859 *Magh-n-Eabha*, or *Machaire-Eabha*, anglice Maugherow, was cleared of wood ... Not merely a fishing village as now, Maugherow was then the generic name applied to the large plain in the barony of Carbury, situated between the Ben Bulbin range and the sea, and anciently celebrated for its

fertility. ... The country-people vary in their description of this ancient plain; some reduce it to a small tract near the sea-shore, in the middle of which stands a remarkable rock, whilst others apply the term to the entire expanse lying between Carney and Drumeliff.

People might be more restrictive in their definition today, limiting the territory to the immediate vicinity of Maugherow Church. At the suggestion of Gerry Sheerin and in order to encourage discussion and debate on the subject we proposed a tentative list of townlands, which was immediately amended by residents. We supply the amended list here that the debate may go on.

Aghagad	Cloontyprucklish
Agharrow	Cooladrumman
Ardboline Island	Cullaghmore
Ardtermon	Doonfore
Atdtrasna	Doonowney
Attiduff	Doonshaskin
Ballineden	Drangan
Ballinphull	Finned
Ballintemple	Grange
Ballyconnell	Horse Island
Ballyconnellmore	Kilmacannon
Ballygilgan	Liggan
Ballymulderry	Lisadell
Ballyscannel	Lislarry
Barney	Munnineane
Breaghwy	Raghley
Carrigeens	Rahelly
Cloghboley	Silverhill
Cloghcor	Srarevagh
Cloonagh	Streedagh
Cloonelly	

Postscript

If you should leave before me

If you should leave
Before me, know this

We are one another
We have become a set of one
I am part of you
In you

Your flesh as well as in your heart
Part of me will go with you
Will always be with you
In the waterfall, the lake
The river past our home
In the sea, in the
Cycle of water and time
Together

And part of you will stay
With me
When I see the mountain
You will see it too
When I hear laughter
You will hear it too
When I feel our children's embraces
You will feel them too
When I smell the sea
You will smell it too
And when I taste a pint
You will taste it too
If one body remains

Two souls will dwell in it
You are not going alone
I am not staying alone
We are a Prime,
Indivisible,
Not fanciful, metaphorical
But actual.
You will see the new patterns
In the ancient sand
Through these eyes that remain open
Our eyes

We will see light from
Long dead stars and feel
Our minute insignificance
Together

We are melded
We have moulded
One another.
You will see and hear
And feel and smell and taste
Because you have taught me
To see and hear and feel
And smell and taste
As I have taught you
Through each other's senses

So it is not one of us going
And one of us staying
But half of a whole
Going early
The other half of the same whole
Staying for a flicker longer
That's all ...

— Bernie Marron, 2017

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