

LET THE

WORDS

LOOK

AFTER

YOU



EDNA O'BRIEN YOUNG WRITERS BURSARY 2023

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**EDNA O'BRIEN YOUNG
WRITERS BURSARY 2023**

**MOLI
EDITIONS**

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FOREWORD

Now in its fourth year, the Edna O'Brien Bursary once again saw the museum rooms buzzing with the enthusiasm and energy of fifteen talented young writers from across the country.

MoLI is a museum that is also a part of University College Dublin, and the importance of education, particularly of young people, is central to our mission here. The Edna O'Brien Bursary affords us a rare and deep focus on immersing these amazing students in the possibilities of writing, and is a joyous experience for all.

That focus is only possible through the ever-generous support, wisdom and imagination of our patron Suzanne Lopez, who not only funds the programme but sprinkles it with new magic every year. We were privileged to work with Jessica Traynor as our writer-mentor this year, and to experience first hand her gentle yet razor-sharp artistic rigour. Thank you Jessica. The programme would not be what it is without the steering, cajoling, cheering and logistical juggling of Jennie Ryan, Lily Cahill and all our fantastic Learning Team at MoLI – a huge thank you to you all.

A final note to our young writers - thank you for applying, for coming to MoLI, for your creative work and for energising us all with your openness and creativity. You brought more to these old walls than you realise. We hope you always remember your time here with your fellow bursarinos, the community you have built around you and the community of yourself that is deep inside you, always full of potential.

Simon O'Connor

Director, MoLI, *October 2023*

A NOTE FROM THIS YEAR'S MENTOR

Working with this year's Edna O'Brien Bursary recipients was a prospect I'd been looking forward to for months. We were lucky enough to be embarking on this journey in the first true post-lockdown year, and to be able to share space together in a way some previous years had not. When we finally met in the beautiful surroundings of MoLI, the atmosphere simmered with nervous anticipation. I knew it was going to be a fantastic week – Jennie, Simon, Lily and the team at MoLI, along with benefactress extraordinaire Susie Lopez, had put together an absolute dream team of visiting writers, publishers, and theatre-makers to show this bunch of talented writers just what a wonderful place the arts world could be.

Although I was excited and nervous I thought I knew what to expect – that as special as the experience was bound to be, it would be a workshop scenario like any other – but I was surprised at every turn; the welcome surprise of discovering that I was still learning just as much, if not more, than the bursary recipients. True learning can only happen in an atmosphere of openness and generosity, and the bursary recipients effortlessly created that atmosphere; welcoming each other, bonding over similarities and differences, and forming friendships that I know will last a lifetime. I was privileged to be able to work with them.

Then onto the writing they produced. These young writers are a generation who are growing up in a time of great flux – politically, socially, environmentally – and sometimes it's easy for us members of older generations to forget how keenly those shifts are felt and

experienced by those on the cusp of adulthood. The stakes, for them, are always high. Reading these pieces developed by the group over the week, I felt immersed in that clarity of vision, and in that urgency.

In these pages, you'll find poems that infuse the English language with subversive bursts of Irish, darkly comic visions of a post-climate crisis world, disquisitions on the artistic process and the divine in nature, love & ducks, sky-scraping sea walls, male friendships and things unspoken, grief and its seasons, the intricacies of the human wrist, sensory overload and moments of clarity, post-apocalyptic robots, teenage notebooks, steampunk artefacts, breakup dialogues, and poetic exhortations to carry on no matter what life throws at us. The 2023 bursary recipients gave as much or more to me than I could ever have given to them, and I came away knowing I had been taught something indelible about creativity and curiosity. These are pieces written at the dawning of a new era; reading them, you'll have the chance to see this tired old world rewritten in newly-minted language. Reader, I envy you.

Jessica Traynor

October 2023

Béaloides

It's ingrained in our cultúr, our saol, and our stories.
A stóir, they said, where we would sit on the stony steps outside a
wrought iron door,
Counting the magpies.
One for sorrow, two for joy, on and on until we'd get to seven for a
secret that can never be told.
Kavanagh blamed the 'culchies', yet he believed the druids were
after him.
Ellen of 1926 wrote of her wishes to be a writer,
Yet Glenn Patterson told us 'they're getting younger (the writers), or
am I getting older?'
All of us, pieces of our lives, our hearts.
Yet what of our deiseanna?
Our amárach?
What will become of us? Yet to stain our fingertips in fola dubh
agus scarlet,
Our blood akin to that of ashy ink, sooted parchment pages
smudged with our words.
These buanna we still cherish, what with it shall we do?
These things I ask you.
For I am still searching in the morning dregs of my coffee,
Stirring for the memories to surface.
With the guilt that stings my 'wretched' heart,
For this, burning, unfeeling thing.
Of it I want no part.

Lavie Olupona is a poet from West Cork, so obviously she likes to fight people in thrift bargain sales and drink hot chocolate. She has two 'aqua babies' she has to be reminded of. Just like her homework.

Where Dreams Came True - Once...

In the year 3008, archaeologists, studying the late 20th to early 21st Century, made a shocking discovery in Florida.

A castle, buried underground by centuries of neglect.

But it wasn't just a castle.

It was so much more than that, it seemed.

There were metal structures, twisted and mangled beyond recognition, in faded colours that might have been bright once, and statues of children's characters with lifeless eyes that stared into one's soul.

Nobody knew what the purpose of this place was. I mean, where would you even start?

Scraps of fabric were also found, again in muted shades of red, blue and every colour in between. These, it was determined, were from robes worn by high priests or those of similar rank, judging by the quality.

Then came the music.

It took a while to make those old CDs playable - longer still to figure out what the hell they meant. Many recordings were simply too degraded to understand, but in some, the tunes seemed oddly nostalgic and familiar.

Voices. The *voices*.

Long forgotten, but nevertheless distinct. They sounded odd - not like normal people at all.

Then, a few weeks later, they found a statue of a mouse that, it seemed, walked on two legs and wore human clothes.

Its face, the experts reflected, had been everywhere in this place - this city, almost - as there was evidence of living spaces and sleeping quarters in some buildings.

Deeper still, they found tunnels that, they assumed, were used

by whoever lived and worked here to quickly get from one part of the complex to the other. There were maps and signposts there, but they were illegible.

Just our rotten luck, the investigators shook their heads, sighed, and kept working.

The investigation continued for months, *years*, but infuriatingly made very little real progress.

Everything changed when another place like this was found in California.

This was bigger than anyone could have ever imagined.

Teams of researchers were sent around the world.

Similar sites were found in Paris, Tokyo, Shanghai and Hong Kong.

Astronomers, historians, librarians - damn near everybody scrambled to find some kind of cosmic connection between these places, and what significance any of them held.

Cultural experts analysed other records for anything about the mouse god they seemed to have stumbled across from this, and the other figures they'd seen. They looked in their files of Greek, Roman, Egyptian, Aztec, Mayan, even Sumerian societies.

And they had all come up absolutely empty.

It wasn't until a decade after this had all started that they found something that could be clearly read.

The Mouse God had a name.

Mickey.

Isabella Curtis-Smith is an aspiring writer of prose and poetry from Leitrim. When she's not writing, she's probably playing piano, doodling in a sketchbook, or obsessing over Disney films and Broadway musicals.

Three of Pentacles

There were three of them in the tiny basement studio, the artist, the sculptor, and the model. There was work to do.

Shadows of charcoal danced across the paper, soft, barely there, capturing the curve of hip and jaw, committing her proud head first to paper, then to stone. A mark here, one there, that was enough. Her eyes, barely a smudge, were undoubtedly her eyes, capturing that strange stare, piercing nothing but air thick with smoke. The candles were dying, burnt down into stubs, wax dripping on the wooden floor.

The other artist stood behind, muttering, 'Almost perfect, almost right.' Reaching down, hand upon the first's shoulder, finger moving in slow circles across the bone, he pointed to the page saying, 'Softer here, almost, almost.'

Beyond the easel she stood, unclothed, her body, known only to her, every inch her own, being studied and discussed. Suddenly self-conscious, her eyes flicked downwards to the red drapes encircling her feet. She knew her flaws too well. Still, the artist worked, lost to the world beyond his own creation. Soon it would be ready.

After he would make a copy, then he would begin the real work. Taking up his tools from the altar, he made the first mark, then another, another. It was a performance, people came and went, murmuring praise for the artist at work. He did not see them, thoughts fixed only on the figure emerging before him. A 20th century Pygmalion, he stood back, his deity formed in Connemara marble, dust collecting at his feet. Already he had forgotten his model's shy laugh, enamoured with stone.

The other artist did not work from life. Life got in the way of things. The sketch was done, not by his hand, but it was enough.

Now he would commit the charcoal to glass, vividly stained, worthy of some grand cathedral. He toiled alone if he could help it, in his studio above the city. Glass to cut, to paint, to connect. An abundance of flowers, hand painted, a holy kaleidoscope of deep blues and scarlet, mixing the gothic and divine. Lead had invaded his lungs.

When the pieces were finished, she did not attend the first showing. Or the second. She followed reviews religiously, those twin geniuses reshaping the world in her image. The beauty of the unknown models were extolled. She should be proud, they said. You will live on, your image exalted by future generations. The artists will live on too, their names cemented in the cruel annals of history.

She visited the work at last, the cold gallery empty, no one to watch as she trailed her fingers along the marble, freezing to touch. She stood staring, trying to make sense of it. The saint enclosed in glass, the goddess contained in stone. Both her, neither familiar.

Sarah McGuire is 17-year-old aspiring writer from Down. She is forever lost down research rabbit holes while battling an endless to-be-read pile.

She Throws Clovers at my Window

I know there's a God,
she throws clovers at my window
laying holly at the foot of my bed
greeting daybreak with a kitchen of carnations
laughing lightly at sceptical wrens.

I know there's a God,
she weaves ivy in my ringlets
thrusting thyme to my arms at the door
scents of sage sneaking in through closed windows
stuffing honeysuckle through cracks of the drawer.

I know there's a God,
i'm not sure that you'll find her in marble
fallen grey chapels, smeared ashen stains
most often you'll find she's with me
plucking daisies, braiding chains.

Eva Lenihan is a 17 year old poet from Mayo whose ego is very much enjoying writing about herself in the third person.

Ducklings

Standing with you, by that Ranelagh pond
Peering at these small creatures.
Like little fat men on holiday
In Spain or in Greece
Dressed with orange flip flops
And drunk on foreign lager.
Tumbling into the pool,
upsetting all the oldies.

/

A bundle of brushed cotton, you rise and shine like a pea. My
curtains are too narrow, and a slant of sun gets caught in your eyes.
The brush of your eyelashes against my face is too whole to explain.

/

Walking around Tesco
Fairy powder on the list,
those wet *pat pat pats*
follow me.

Bray native **Lily Moore** likes to watch ducks and write poems about them.

The Wall

SEA LEVEL: +42 m. (+0.27 m in 24 hours)

WALL LEVEL: +56 m. (+0.10 m in 24 hours)

The day starts as the last did, and the one before, and the one before, laying identically over each other like the bricks in the wall. Eat, walk to work, climb the wall to begin my shift. A monotonous pattern forms as the day passes; lay the mortar and stack the bricks, holding back the ever increasing and ever hungry tide. Waves crash periodically, soaking me with the same salty spray that is wearing down the wall even as we're building it.

Ten bricks thick, and countless high. Far below, others like me are working from the bottom up, reinforcing the base and ignoring the silent city behind them. Layering plastic to stop the water getting through, hiding their fear in their work. They put in the effort so they don't have to wait to fall asleep at night. They make sure they're tired enough to not have to think at the end of the day.

Lay the mortar, stack the bricks, wipe the spray off my face.

Seagulls land as the day progresses and the sun gets warmer. They snap at us, pulling at our clothes when our backs are turned and knocking bricks loose, sending them crashing downwards to the shadows below the wall.

'You did this!' Their screams spell out to us what we already knew, 'You dragged these waters up with your own two hands.'

We replace the bricks they remove and continue with our work.

Lay the mortar, stack the bricks, wipe the spray off my face.

We manage close to one layer of bricks per day between the lot of us. That's as fast as we can lay them, and as fast as we can get them to the top of the wall. It's not fast enough. The city was all but evacuated weeks ago, not because they were told to go, but

because they knew there was no other choice. Anyone who thinks otherwise is kidding themselves.

I'm kidding myself.

17-year-old **Aoife Lawton** can commonly be found lying on the floor in Galway and thinking deep thoughts about food and cute animals. Their hobbies include video games, zoning out and pretending to write.

Thanks then

'Ah yeah, but like...'Pete took a long pause, a pause that indicated he was trying to come up with a good lie. 'You know, like you've lots of other good options like.'

Harry was barely listening to what Pete was saying. He only stared at the piece of paper that would decide his future.

'Harry mate, you do. Like I know Trinity together was always our plan, but like...it was never a given, you know.'

'It was always a given for you though wasn't it?' Harry continued to avoid eye contact, the piece of paper stole all of his attention.

'Right, don't start now.'

'Yeah no, yeah no it's grand. I'll have a lovely ol' future with my two hundred points and some PLC in Longford or some shite.'

'Ahh man, come on.'

'No, I'm sorry Pete, I'm ruining this for you now. Really, uhh you should be happy, I'll be grand like. You always were smarter than me.'

'No I wasn't.'

'Yeah you were.'

'No man, no. Jesus, it wasn't fair what happened.' He was bringing it up.

'Don't bring that up,' he muttered

'You can't act like that wasn't a factor.'

'It wasn't, it, it didn't matter, okay.'

'Your da died two weeks before the exams!'

' Ah yeah-' he shut his eyes

'Well done, thanks for reminding me.'

'You shoulda just retaken them next year man.'

'Thanks, yeah, that's really helpful now. Gowan so, change my past for me then will you?'

Pete dropped his head into his hands. He no longer wanted to even go to Trinity. He would miss his friend. He already did.

'You can change your future though still.'

'Not really though mate, because you know what the funny thing is?'

'What?' he said somberly.

'My doomed past has doomed my future. I'm not getting that course, I won't get that job, I won't -' He began to tear up .

'What Harry?'

'Ah no, it's grand, doesn't matter.'

'Harry?'

As he sat there, his hands lost all power and the piece of paper slowly drifted through the air and fell to the floor. The weight this paper had on Harry's life was dramatically different to its actual weight. He found that funny. The same way one finds a joke in a eulogy funny.

'I won't ever see my dad again Pete. Fuck the points. I won't see him again.'

Pete wanted to hug his friend but there were other lads around them. 'I know.'

Harry hid his face.

Pete tried to show him his.

'Your future doesn't have to be as doomed as your past though. I hope you can see that.'

Harry took a pause.

'Ah yeah well...sure we'll agree to disagree. Have the craic in Trinity anyways, so.'

Pete wanted to say that he wouldn't, he wanted to say that he would miss him every day.

'Yeah...thanks then.'

They both went home to different homes, with different reactions and with different futures.

Ben Lynch likes to romanticise sitting on the floor. He places an over-importance on most things in his life, he doesn't necessarily find this to be a bad thing. He's 16, of course.

Almost there

The spring is here and I am an open, vile, rotten bundle of pure and raw emotion.

Maybe that's not such a bad thing.

I feel so much and I have so much to say but we have such little time.

Can't we just rot in my room like we used to?

It's summer here soon, I miss you.

we got a new dog, the old one died. He bites.

But we can't blame him.

We taught him to bite.

It's nearly winter. It's almost time to go. I hope you read what i wrote, or even received it, or maybe i should stop entertaining the idea that we were ever really in love.

Kayleigh McCormack feels a lot of things. She's not quite sure if that's a good or bad thing. She'll leave that up to you to decide.

Wrists

I look at my wrists as they catch the light. Observe their curves, their creases, their miniscule imperfections. The purple veins showing through my thin pale skin, the muscle and sinew flexing. A marvel of creation. Perfectly mundane.

Wrists are fragile things. I picture all the pieces of bone that sit inside them, allowing them to bend and rotate. I picture how easily those bones would shatter. Countless ivory fragments forming an impossible jigsaw.

My wrists have been dabbed with perfumes, mostly cheap stuff, often borrowed or snatched. I hope it will cover up everything I wish I wasn't and say to the world 'Look at me. I am lovely.' These days my wrists are sprayed with 'English Rose'. I bought it myself - a fancy-looking bottle sold at a discount. The first time I wore it, I was meeting with an old friend. It still makes me think of her, now, when I use it for not-so-special occasions. The scent lingers.

I look at my right wrist and feel the twinge in it. It started with my mock exams - gripping the pen too hard and scribbling too quickly made it feel like something had torn inside. Even now it hurts from time to time. I have to be careful how much I carry, how long I lean on my palms.

Sometimes I see scarred wrists and I can't help but imagine what it would feel like, to drag a blade across the skin, to slice open those dark veins. I look at the wrists of others and I see the threat of the knife hovering over them. I want to grab those wrists and hold them tightly, wrap them up in bandages before the bleeding even starts.

I look at my wrists and think of all the hands that have grabbed them. Some were heartfelt: 'Stay with me, please.' Some were restraining, holding me at bay in a playful fight. Some were scolding: 'You're coming with me!' Some were frightening, to stop me from running.

I was ten years old and in Girl Scouts and our troop leader decided we needed self defence lessons. A lady came in and told us that if a man grabs our wrists, we should pull towards the thumb; there his grip is weakest. We practised holding each other's slight little wrists – we were just girls – we broke each other's grips easily – we did not have the strength of a man – I did not know why a man would want to grab my wrist – I practised and remembered.

I look at my wrists and the special pressure point to soothe a seasick stomach. I have held that point until my nails left crescent moon marks. I have worn bracelets – elastic and plastic – to hold it down all night so I could sleep and wake up with button-sized bruises. The spot is hard to find, but once I do it's like magic – a lid placed over a boiling pot.

I look at my wrists and place two fingers on them and feel my heartbeat. The blood courses under my touch in a steady rhythm. It's difficult to find, at first – I have to be still, quiet my breathing, push my senses towards feeling the beat. One day someone will look for my pulse and not find it. They will declare me dead.

My wrists have done a lot, felt a lot. What will they do in the future? Will they shatter or bleed? Will they be decorated with jewels, or maybe ink? What scents will I lay over them, and why? Will they be held gently, angrily, protectively?

Who will hold them last?

Ciara Higgins is, rather unfortunately, from Dublin. Her special interests change so often it would be futile to relay them here; however, she would be happy to hold you hostage while she rants about them.

This room is not trying to compete for my attention

This room is not trying to compete for my attention.

She is not speaking loudly, bombarding me with dopamine inducing phrases and sounds that will keep me hooked.

She is not speaking to me like a half deaf toddler, throwing away her dignity for one petty 'like' captured within my fingertips. She speaks as though her words are leisurely wading through the lush morning moss. There is no rush. She does not speak quickly, as though in desperate fear of missing a train or losing the spotlight.

Each syllable is caressed with a gorgeous English accent, the South East timbre drawing out each word. She does not care if this accent doesn't capture my eyes. She doesn't care if the pace bores me.

Her effort is channelling into the language itself, my perception is of no significance.

The music is not trying to compete for my attention. It has no spiralling dynamics or harshly loud drums crashing against your eardrums, desperately trying to regain your grasp. It does not pause for a moment, leaving you empty, desperately waiting for the sound to be filled.

It exists only as a drone . A simple, consistent drone. It appears content with this. It merely wants us to exist side by side.

I sit and listen but feel no preference, reach no climax.

Its structure does not compete for my attention. Its lack of furniture allows my thoughts to drift to other places. Places that have been deserted during other times, times that have been crammed with bright colours screaming 'buy me!' or 'pick me!' or 'look at me!!!' until blue in the face. Places that I have allowed

to be crammed. But here my brain is stripped bare. I am left, standing in front of my thoughts. I am left with the question of who I truly am when my brain is empty.

In the room that does not compete for my attention.

Katie Purtil is a 16 year old aspiring novelist (fingers crossed, man) who loves the little things in life and writing about them.

The Clinical Clack

It has been nearly a year since I've met another person. I haven't been able to. Each day I roam through barren city, accompanied by the creak of unoiled, metal necks swivelling as they follow me, watching. Making sure I don't follow the mistakes of my former peers. I haven't been able to. They don't let me out of their sight, don't let me break free of their routine. I live within the bounds of their binary code, constrained by the ties of their unwavering programming of duty. I do as they command, live a life the computers compel me to, as they watch, embedded in mounds of wires and encased by thick, buzzing hulls painted to mimic the flesh of who once walked on the unkempt roads I amble along. I let the rotting eyes they put in their sockets guide me, the ones they robbed from innocent bystanders, as I walk, and walk, and walk. Tiring me out in case I get the idea, get the strength, the inspiration, to rebel. I haven't been able to. I wouldn't win. I'd follow the countless souls before me who's blackened fingernails and scarlet stained teeth decorated the city, whose rotting bodies are inspected with clinical clack of painted metal against metal, who's disease-ridden eyes were stolen from them by emotionless creatures of our own creation. It almost feels like they want me to. They dare me to go against them with the everlasting whir of gears, grinding from artificial joints, with the faint click that thrum from their very being. I think that if they could choose, if they could wish, if they had been bestowed the gift to think past what they've been told to, they would ask me to. Beg me to. Plead for me to rip and tear and slash the rope that binds them to live this monotonous existence, urge me to permit the tangled titanium limbs the freedom, the privilege, to *choose*.

I haven't been able to. And I won't. And I wouldn't.

Often buried in yet another random Wikipedia article, **Caoimhe Mooney** is a 16 year old writer from Dublin who has a bit too much time on her hands.

Sixteen

When I was sixteen years old I kept a notebook. It was spiral bound, the delicate metal coils holding the gossamer leaves of paper tight, a promise to never let go, fulfilled. My slanted writing marched on each page, leaving little footprints of scribbles, misspelt words crossed out, doodles up and down the sides. This was the birthplace of some of my greatest ideas, of my worst ideas, an anguished attempt at making a mark. I was here. We were here. Were the Romans afraid of being forgotten when they built the aqueducts that stand today like towering dinosaurs of brick and stone?

When I was sixteen years old, I buried a notebook. I lay it flat in a metal box. It used to house cookies at Christmas time, the scent of vanilla and gingerbread hovered faintly, refusing to leave, refusing to stop reminding me of happy times. The lid fit, exact and unyielding, the faded print of a woman holding a child's hand looking at me as I pressed it down with a 'clink'. I dug a hole in the garden under the cherry tree, settled it down with a whispered wish that something beautiful would grow.

When I was sixteen years old, the future frightened me. I'd stare at the ceiling at night, glow in the dark stars holding onto the white paint resolutely, shining at me like nine little glimpses into a galaxy far far away. I couldn't sleep so I'd lean out of my window, crane my head upwards, crick in my neck, try to spot a real constellation in the neverending navy-blue. Planes flying misled me, minute flickering lights, off to distant lands, gifting the sky a pipe-cleaner trail of hope. "I'd go with you," I breathed, my words crystallising in the air, "if I wasn't so scared of what could be."

When I was sixteen years old, I remembered days of childhood, wobbly teeth and falling asleep by counting sheep, fluffy cloud-like creatures jumping over a fence like I'd seen in a cartoon, the DVD

scratched so that the same scene repeated interminably. A soft pang in my chest, a longing for the time when our messes were cleaned for us, when we were picked up and dusted off. I realised I'd left my optimism somewhere in my past and tried to unearth it.

The day before my seventeenth birthday, I excavated my notebook. Brushed soil off, and prised the tin open. It was still there.

Waiting.

Ready.

Giving **Ethna Vondrys** noise cancelling headphones was a mistake, because now if she is not playing tennis she can be found in her room blasting music, ignoring the world and writing stories with green pen in the margin of her Physics copybook.

The Steam Punk-er

“You see, right there! What is that now, Melly?”

I somehow manage to restrain my eye-roll as my father continues on without waiting for a response. Such is the life of having a mad-cap archaeologist as a father. Although I will forever admire his boundless curiosity and energy, there is one invaluable skill that I have acquired over my 16 years of living in his gravitational circle: the patience of the mythical Saints, nuns and priests combined. I think they would be proud, even though I don't believe in some God (whatever that is) watching me. It's a bit creepy, actually, that someone could be watching all the time. Like that old “TV show”, Big Brother.

“Wait a second, Dad. What is this anyway?”

“We'll be figuring that out, Melly. All I know is that this is a fascinating piece of history, an artifact that should be placed in the most prestigious of museums! This is from the 21st century, darling! Imagine, our ancestors were using this item over one thousand years ago. How curious, don't you think? The college will be so excited!”

His glasses almost fall off his long, thin nose with the excitement of it all as his head snaps around to look at me. I can practically see the cogs of his brilliant mind spinning at the speed of light. Shaking my head slightly, I turn back to his latest discovery. It looks like a metal jug with a plastic top, which isn't that interesting.

“I think I shall call it... the steampunk-er! Now, it's purpose is unclear, but we can figure this out through the process of...”

He's off again, yet another tidal wave of mind-boggling information washing over me like the numbing cream you would apply to a painful burn. Some people call him an “expert in his field”, a “leader of our generation”. I doubt most of those people have spent more than a couple of minutes in his direct presence. Trust me, the

genius gets boring after a while of dealing with it 24/7. I take a closer look at the odd-ball machine that is currently residing in my favorite comfy armchair.

Wait a second. There's another part to the relic. A bottom piece with some sort of connecting device.

Huh. Curious indeed. Wonder what that was for.

My interest piqued, I turn to one of the antique tablet computers on our “classics” shelf. Maybe the ancient search engine “Google” will provide some answers.

“You see, Melly, I believe that this device was powered by “electricity”. Remember, the energy source that humans used to power their homes in ancient times? Of course, now all devices run themselves with their own food sources like us humans, which is of course much more sophisticated and efficient, but-”

“Dad, I found it! The answer! I know what the steam punk-er is!”

He rushes to my side, tripping over his untied shoelaces halfway through. He's like an immature five year old in ways, never learns. He gets up and comes over, rubbing his soon to be bruised back as he does so.

“Oh well done Melly! What is it?”

“It has a very funny name. It's...a kettle?”

Eimear McCarthy is a seventeen year old murder mystery enthusiast from West Cork. She would be extremely content with eating sweet things, rewatching Derry Girls and various crime shows and mastering the art of procrastination until the end of her days.

More Than Noises

‘So, you don’t think this is important?’ Wilson asked, gesturing wildly with soapy hands. Clive blinked and looked up from his newspaper.

‘Of course not, why would I? This is your life, man.’

‘Yes! It’s my life! It’s a major step in my life and—are you even listening?’

Clive stared over the top of his newspaper, glaring at Wilson and the mess he was making. ‘I have no choice. You’re talking, and I’m sat three feet from you.’

‘Hearing noises is not the same thing as listening, Clive! You—you never listen, you never care about anyone other than yourself!’

Clive huffed and raised the paper once more. ‘Uh, yeah, I never claimed to be anything but.’

‘You’re—you’re so selfish! All the time! You know, you’ll regret this when I’m gone.’

Turning off the tap, Wilson stared from the corner of his eye for a moment, watching how Clive now looked up at him with apprehension. The newspaper was now limp in his hands. ‘Gone?’

Wilson sighed. ‘Clive, you aren’t exactly easy to live with. If this new story takes off...’

‘You’re leaving?’

Wilson placed the last sudsy dish on the drying rack, and turned to look at Clive. ‘Surely you saw this coming.’

‘Where are you going?’

‘I mean, there aren’t any concrete plans yet...’

‘But...’

‘But... my cousin has a place out in New York. He says he can rent it out to me while I get my bearings. Lots of crime out in New York, you know. Lots of potential articles.’

Clive stared up at him, eyes wide for a moment. And for a brief moment, Wilson began to rethink his decision. Surely there was some reason he had stayed so long? Yet, as soon as the look appeared, it left; Clive closed his jaw and took in a breath. He shrugged and righted his paper.

‘New York, huh? Expensive. And on your salary? Yeah, ok, Wilson,’ Clive commented, huffing a laugh under his breath. His anger was reignited once more, and Wilson turned back to face the sink.

‘Clive, you really are insufferable, you know that, right?’

‘New York...’ Clive muttered to himself, before shaking his head with a chuckle. ‘God, Wilson, you are funny.’

17-year-old blow-in living in Cavan, **Nikita Rance**, spends too much time over analyzing gay pirate shows and trying to come up with new and fancy ways to make themselves sound interesting.

LIVE

Your name is what you make of it
Not the words cut through your flesh
Like a knife, before you learned to spell

L I V E

What does it mean to live?

Blood. Sweat. Tears.
Tired tropes.

What does it mean to live?

L I V E

A four letter word.
There's nothing to it.

L I V E

The colour of your blood when you skin your knees in the
playground.

The first time your heart gets broken.
Every time you lose someone.
The day you leave the room that raised you.

L I V E

The choice to exist is not your own,
Your past is long gone
But your future is yours, yours alone.

A word of wisdom – live.

Sarah Kirwan is a writer from Westmeath . She is passionate about poetry and activism and can often be found crying over Oscar Wilde.

MOLI
EDITIONS