

I feel a feather-gaze,  
meeting it I see  
a thousand rings  
in the eyes of a swan.

*From 'Reflection'*  
*by Colette Nic Aodha*





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**Mute Swan.** Our largest species of bird, mute swans are easily recognised by their white plumage and orange beak. Mute swans are found on rivers, lakes and ponds in Ireland all year round. Other swans such as the Bewick's and Whooper swans are winter visitors and can be distinguished by their loud calls and yellow beaks Photo © John Murphy



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I heard myself say  
no fox so far  
just before we'd find  
him sneak out of the wild grass  
into our lawn  
as if we were together drawn.

*From 'No Fox' by John Walsh*





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**Young Fox at Portumna Forest Park.** Foxes are found in all sorts of habitats from woods to farmland to city gardens and parks. They live in an underground den or "earth". They are nocturnal - most active at night when they feed on rabbits, mice, rats, birds eggs, insects, fruit, worms and even hedgehogs.  
Photo © Alan Poole



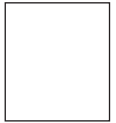
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Words will, always, only tell,  
never show that one  
moment when time stood still,

*from 'Ink Stains'*  
*by Miceál Kearney*



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**Recess Lake, Connemara.** The granite geology and mild damp climate of west County Galway supports a variety of habitats. Especially important are the mountain and lowland blanket bogs which cover much of the landscape, as well as the many rivers and lakes dotted throughout.

Photo © Ann Marie O'Brien

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Around the light bulb,  
Fleetingly, the evening moth;  
A ballet dancer

*Haiku by Mary Redfern*





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**Six Spotted Burnet Moth (*Zygaena filipendulae*).** A day-flying moth found on grassy areas. The adults feed on nectar and the caterpillars on the leaves of birds foot trefoil, clover and kidney vetch. Its bright colours warn birds and other predators that they are poisonous.

Photo © Maciej Boron



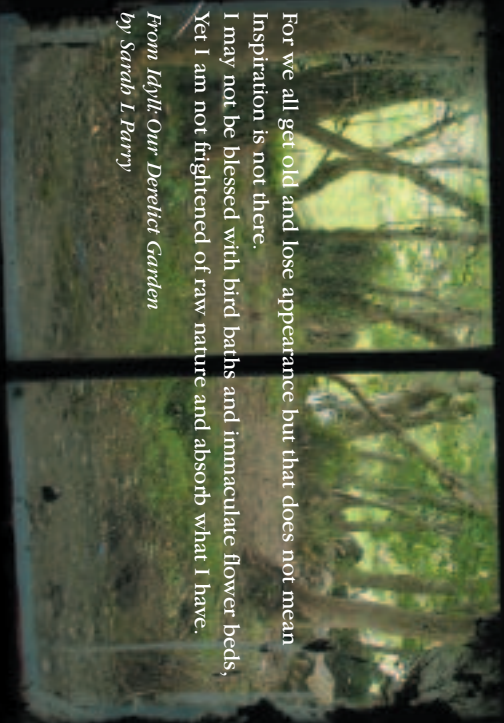
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For we all get old and lose appearance but that does not mean  
Inspiration is not there.  
I may not be blessed with bird baths and immaculate flower beds,  
Yet I am not frightened of raw nature and absorb what I have.

*From Idyll: Our Derelict Garden*  
*by Sarah L Parry*





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**Window on nature.** Biodiversity simply means the variety of all life on earth from the smallest bug to the elephants, amoeba to oak trees. County Galway has a rich biodiversity with many special habitats, plants and animals, but even our own backyards can be a haven for all sorts of wildlife.

Photo © Bridget Morley

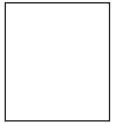
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Reels and jigs of rush and meadow thistle,  
Sunlight's fingers catching sprays of bogbean,  
A spider's stainless steel bridging bog-cotton  
And asphodel, the sundew's heliports?

*From 'Bog Standard' by Tim Cunningham  
In Unequal Thirds (Peterloo publishers)*





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**'Bog Bouquet' at Maamtrasna Mountains.** Bogs are some of our most important habitats for many animals including frogs, insects such as butterflies and dragonflies and birds like grouse, lapwing, golden plover and curlew. Typical bog plants include bog cotton, sphagnum moss, lichens and heather.

Photo © Karen O'Neill

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