

BOOKS

The hearts and minds of 1916



West Cork Festival: Novelist Zadie Smith.

Zadie Smith and Nick Laird in West Cork tomorrow

THE West Cork Literary Festival has been running in Bantry all week and continues until tomorrow. Free events include Tina Pisco in Bantry Bookshop at 11am and Claire Kilroy in the town library at 2pm.

Tomorrow evening at 5.30pm writer Liz Nugent is in The Marltime Hotel (adm €16), while there's an evening with Zadie Smith and Nick Laird at 8.30pm in the same venue (adm €18). Smith won the 2000 James Tait Black Memorial Prize for fiction for her novel *White Teeth* and was shortlisted for the Man Booker for *On Beauty* in 2005.

Laird is a Northern Irish novelist and poet who has been shortlisted for a number of awards, including the Poetry Now Award in 2006. See www.westcorkmusic.ie/literaryfestival/programme.

Deadline close for Ó Faolain short story competition

JULY 31 is the deadline for the Munster Literature Centre's Sean Ó Faolain Short Story Competition.

The annual competition is open to writers from around the world, with submissions accepted from May to July annually. It is dedicated to one of Ireland's most accomplished story writers and theorists and is sponsored by the Munster Literature Centre.

The winner will be presented with his or her award during the Cork International Short Story Festival (7-11 September 2016). First prize is €2,000, publication in the literary journal *Southward*, and a week-long residency at Anam Cara Writer's and Artist's Retreat. There are also runner-up prizes. The judge this year is Danielle McLaughlin.

For full details see www.munsterlit.ie

Shaghnessy at Ó Bhéal

LORNA SHAUGHNESSY is the guest reader at Ó Bhéal's poetry night next Monday, upstairs in The Long Valley on Winthrop Street, Cork. Shaghnessy was born in Belfast and lives in Co. Galway. She has published three poetry collections with Salmon Poetry, *Torching the Brown River* (2008), *Witness Trees* (2011) and *Anchored* (2015). Her work was selected for the Forward Book of Poetry, 2009.

She is also a translator of Spanish and South American Poetry. Her most recent translation was of poetry by Galician writer Manuel Rivas, *The Disappearance of Snow* (Shearsman Press, 2012), which was shortlisted for the UK Poetry Society's 2013 Popescu Prize for translation. Admission is free.

Atlantic Way from the air

A SPECTACULAR new book from Curragh Press takes an aerial look at the Wild Atlantic Way as it passes through County Clare. Clare's *Wild Atlantic Way: An Aerial Perspective* features magnificent photos of the Clare coastline by landscape photographer Patrick G. Ryan who photographed the Irish countryside for more than 30 years. Sadly, he passed away while this book was in production. The book costs €24.99 and all royalties will be donated to donated to Cahercalla Hospice in Ennis.

Some of Ireland's finest writers have contributed to a book which takes us deep into the minds of the Easter Rising rebels

FROM the moment Emma Donoghue's Nurse Elizabeth O'Farrell takes her first steps out of a fishmongers on Moore Street — the headquarters of the leadership of the Republic — to deliver Pearse's surrender orders to rebel garrisons across the city, we know we are in the guiding hands of some of Ireland's greatest writers, who take us back to the living, breathing, bloody streets of Dublin at Easter 1916.

"Commandant Pearse chose me to deliver his message," she tells us, "because a man would be shot right away, no matter the colour of his flag."

Donoghue's opening monologue is the first of eight in *Signatories*, published by UCD Press and containing the script of the play performed recently at venues across Dublin, including Kilmalsham Gaol. It is a vivid dramatisation of the personalities of the men who signed the Proclamation, evoked by novelists and playwrights, with the added inclusion of Elizabeth O'Farrell who braved the gunfire to act as Pearse's messenger.

As she walks her 'penitential stations' she meets Markievicz: how can I tell her it's time to "give over all our grand schemes" and the deluded De Valera: "This is a hoax to undermine our insurrection when it's on the very brink of triumph."

Thomas Kilroy takes us into the mind of Pearse, to his childhood and to the GPO, where his actions haunt him, while Joseph O'Connor brings us into the cell of Joseph Mary Plunkett and his painfully short marriage to Grace, who could never compete with his mistress — Ireland.

As a series of monologues, *Signatories* allows for a tightly-focused re-imagining of the revolutionary — even fanatic — mind, as well as its doubts and dedication to a cause, as with Rachel Fehilly on Tom Clarke: "And Oh, what a glorious fight it was!"

Signatories, directed by Patrick Mason, received critical acclaim at its premiere in Kilmalsham gaol and has since been performed in various venues around Dublin.

Hopefully, we'll see it in Cork soon. In the meantime, this publication from UCD Press is the closest it is possible to get into the hearts and minds of those behind the revolution.

Des Breen



Writers Thomas Kilroy, Frank McGuinness, Rachel Fehilly, Marina Carr, Hugo Hamilton and Joseph O'Connor at the launch of University College Dublin's (UCD) world premiere of *Signatories* in Kilmalsham Gaol. The book of the play, which is published by UCD Press and also includes contributions by Emma Donoghue and Éilís Ní Dhuibhne, consists of artistic responses by writers and playwrights to the events of 1916.

■ Straight Jacket is a moving call to the rainbow-flag generation

Straight Jacket: How To Be Gay And Happy by Matthew Todd. Bantam Press (HBC18.99)

■ In the watershed 1970 film *The Boys In The Band*, a character remarks, "Show me a happy homosexual and I'll show you a gay corpse."

These sardonic words reverberate through Matthew Todd's sobering assessment of the mental health crisis impacting the LGBT community, which the author candidly refracts through the prism of

his self-destructive behaviour before and during his editorship of the influential gay lifestyle magazine, *Attitude*.

Straight Jacket is a cri de coeur for a rainbow flag generation living under a dark cloud of self-loathing and body dysmorphia, for which Todd accepts some blame by promoting images of gym-toned perfection on *Attitude's* front cover.

In his enthusiasm to share a polemic of exhaustively researched argument about toxic shame, addic-

tion and escapism, Todd overloads early chapters with quotations from estimable sources.

Clambering through dense paragraphs of expert opinion reaps rewards, including shocking accounts of bullying at school — from teachers as well as pupils — and young people committing suicide to escape their torment.

In these moments of unvarnished, heartbreaking truth, Todd's call to arms strikes an undeniably moving chord.

