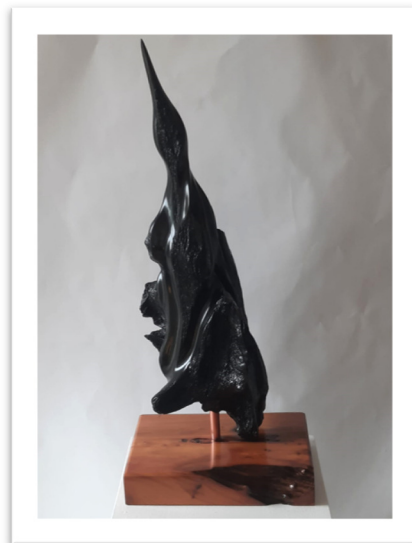


Scariff Community College

Presents..

# The Edna O'Brien Award for Writing 2023



Clár Éire Ildánach  
Creative Ireland  
Programme  
2017-2022



# Edna O'Brien

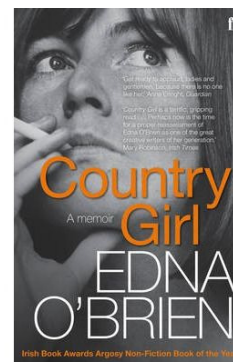
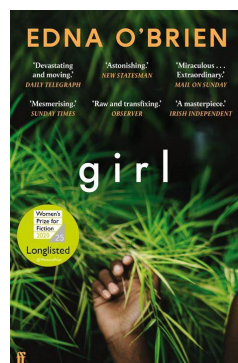
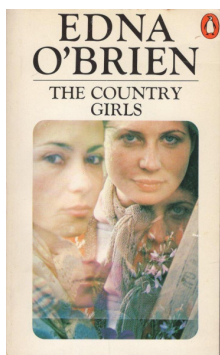


Irish novelist memoirist, playwright, poet and short-story writer Edna O'Brien was born on 15 December 1930 in Tuamgraney, County Clare, Ireland.

She was educated at the Convent of Mercy in Loughrea, County Galway, and at the Pharmaceutical College of Ireland. She married the writer Ernest Gébler (later separated) and moved to London in 1959. where she had two sons.

Her first novel, *The Country Girls* (1960), the first book in a trilogy of novels (with *The Lonely Girl* in 1962 and *Girls in Their Married Bliss* in 1964) about two young convent-educated Irish girls who rebel against their upbringing and run away to Dublin and London. Her frank treatment of sexuality in these and subsequent novels brought her into conflict with the Catholic Church, and these and several other novels were banned by the Irish Censorship Board.

She has written eighteen novels, eight plays, eight short story collections, eight non-fiction books, four books for children and one collection of poetry and won numerous international awards.

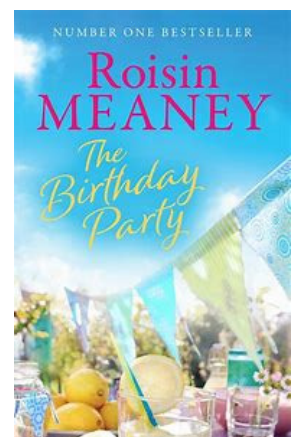
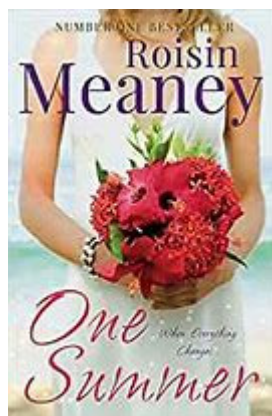
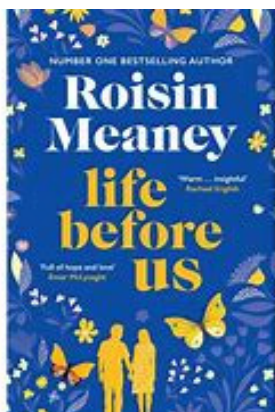


***“I want to go out as someone who spoke the truth”***

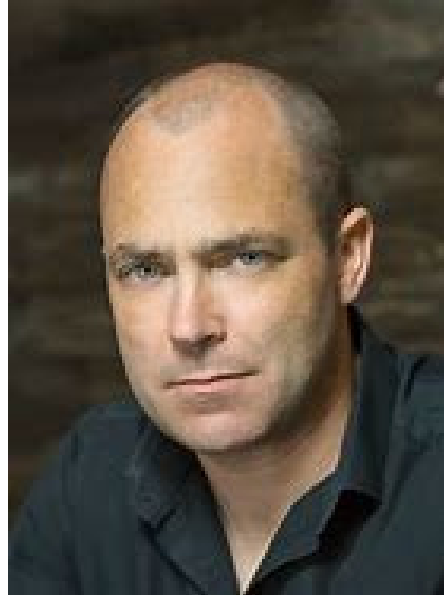
# Roisin Meaney



Roisin Meaney was born in Listowel, County Kerry. In 2001, after thinking about it for over a decade, she began writing her first novel, *The Daisy Picker*. It won a Write a Bestseller competition and was published in 2004. Four years and three books later she packed in her teaching job to become a full-time writer. Her books consistently make the Irish top ten bestseller list. She is the author of three children's books, and once a month she tells stories to toddlers in her local library. She divides her time between Limerick city and West Clare, drinking too much tea in both places. She is a fan of cats, spotty bananas and random acts of kindness.



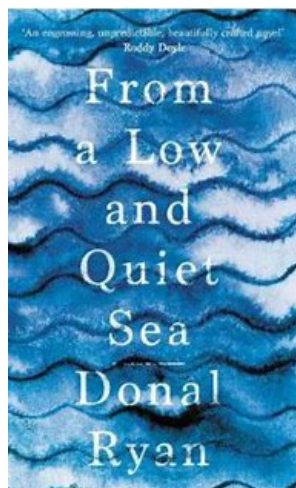
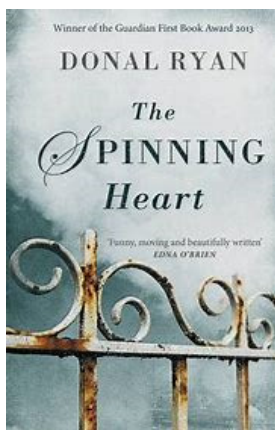
# Donal Ryan



Donal Ryan was born outside Nenagh, Tipperary, in 1976. He holds a degree in law from the University of Limerick where he now lectures in Creative Writing. He worked for the National Employment Rights Authority until April 2014. He is married and lives in Castletroy, County Limerick, with his wife and two children.

He has published six novels and one short story collection. In 2016, novelist and playwright Sebastian Barry described Ryan in *The Guardian* newspaper as "the king of the new wave of Irish writers".

All of his novels have been number one bestsellers in Ireland.



## Ian Kelly



Ian Kelly is an artist living and working in East Clare, specialising in bogwood sculpture. He is a past pupil of Scariff Community College.

He holds a Degree in Fine Art, 1991, graduating from the Limerick School of Art and Design.

Ian has exhibited throughout Ireland, North America, and Cyprus.

“My work involves bringing the ancient material of bog wood back to life in a new form. It is both a challenging and enchanting medium to work with. From its raw form to its highly finished state demands a physical and emotional investment.”

## Fiona McGarry



A native of Moneen, Castlebar, Fiona is a member of the editorial team at *The Clare Champion*, having joined the newspaper in Ennis after a four-year stint as producer of Morning Focus on Clare FM.

Prior to that she worked for various radio, print and online titles, including Newstalk, Maximum Media and *The Tuam Herald*.

Fiona's media career began in her native Mayo when she joined Midwest Radio.

She is the maker of a number of radio documentaries, funded by the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland (BAI).

She has also availed of the Simon Cumbers Media Fund to report on development issues supported by Irish Aid in Haiti.

Fiona won a Justice Media Award for a short radio series on the work of Bedford Row Project, which supports prisoners and families in the mid-west .

More recently she was the recipient of the 2021 Excellence in Teaching and Learning Award at NUI, Galway where she is a lecturer in Broadcast journalism.

# Luke Morgan



Luke Morgan has published two collections of poetry - *Honest Walls* (2016) and *Beast* (2022). He was writer-in-residence in Merlin College, Galway for the #WeAreThePoets initiative as part of Galway 2020. Since then, he has completed residencies in multiple secondary schools around the West of Ireland, from Galway to Roscommon to Scariff, Co. Clare. He ran a workshop for young people at the 2022 Strokestown International Poetry Festival.



**Ciara Cooney**

Fifth Year

### **Healing**

One day, you'll wake up and your mornings won't feel as heavy.

You'll get up and you'll pick out an outfit.

You'll let the sunshine tickle your figure and warm your thoughts to it.

You'll listen to the birds singing, except for once you'll feel like they're singing for you.

This is the day you'll realize today is a little easier than yesterday.

Time will pass faster, you'll smile more.

You'll look outside and feel a fragment of connection to the world you live in.

You'll turn on music and dance your heart out to it.

Because eventually

The healing will find you.

Ciara Cooney



**Eyla Lienhard**

Fifth Year

**Lost in Sound**

Find me in the silence  
In the space without sound

Where the music it soars  
And the orchestra pounds

When the violins play  
And the piano keys ring

My heart sings with glory  
At the sound of the strings

Find me lost in the chords  
My voice in the tone

See me dance to the beat  
With my soul in its zone

Hear the pumping of blood  
And the sound of our feet

As the music it builds  
And crashes complete

Eyla Lienhard

**Emily Chen**

**Sixth Year**

**You and me**

Connection is a thread that weaves  
Tight around our hearts, yet still granting reprieve  
Through every trial, and tribulation, we stand together  
Our love and support, an unending tether  
It guides us through even our darkest day  
And brightens our path and lights our way  
With every laugh and every tear  
Our relationship grows stronger, year after year  
Our bond unbreakable, shining so bright  
Illuminating even the mind's darkest sight  
We share a bond that's so hard to break  
But with so much reliance, oh there's so much at stake

Because sometimes even the strongest threads can fray  
Leading you far away from me and astray  
In a world that's so vast and wide,  
When you feel so hopeless, and lost, and alone inside  
Yearning for someone to lean on, and confide  
When all that pain and sorrow breaks through the surface  
And you feel like you offer nothing, living with no purpose  
When they ask you how you're doing, you know what to say  
With a laugh, "I'm fine" and carry on with your day  
Come hail, snow, wind and rain, when the sky is so bleak and stark,  
It never bothers you, inside your mind it's always dark  
Why bother going out and socialising with 'friends'  
When you can wallow in misery and lament to no ends  
Asking yourself the question, "Why am I like this?"  
Till it pushes you further into the depths of the abyss  
They say that there's a light at the end of the tunnel  
But does anyone want you, are you worth the trouble?  
When you're standing on top of the bridge, looking at the sunset  
Will tomorrow be the dawn of a new day, or one of agonizing regret

Will you miss me? Don't be upset, there's no need to fret  
Because at the end of the day, I'm so easy to forget

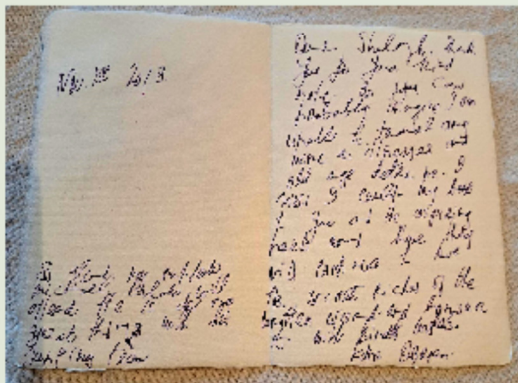
But

You must hold on, you must believe  
I'll be by your side, do you trust me?  
Afterall, absence makes the heart grow fonder  
I'll hold onto you tight, hopefully in your mind, I'll never wander  
There's no need to turn your back, there's no need to hide  
Our friendship is a bond that can't be denied  
And that's the power of our connection  
A bond so strong it needs no mention

I'm not sure, but I think there's a lesson here somewhere  
Learn to stand on your own two feet and live to dare  
Nothing is ever constant, don't take life as a given  
So learn to laugh and love, be bold, be brave and driven  
Only once you can live for yourself, can you live for me  
That is the only thing in life I can guarantee  
Depending and relying on one person will get you nowhere  
Don't let another bear your burden, it's just not fair  
No matter how much we disillusion ourselves, and beg, and pray  
Nothing lasts forever, I'm sorry, there's just no way  
So cherish the connections you have in your life  
They bring you joy, they help you thrive  
But only by yourself can you really see the change  
Don't worry, at first it will be a little bit strange  
So take my hand, and let's go on an adventure  
Of self-discovery and newfound pleasure  
Remember, I'll always be there with you  
Through thick and thin or whatever you wish to pursue

It's been a while, go outside, the sky is blue  
I just wish you could see how much you grew  
But I'll take my leave now, that you've found your rightful place  
So you can live to learn to conquer anything you ever face.

Emily Chen



*"My best to you and the  
aspiring poets and I hope  
they will continue to love the  
secret riches of the written  
word and honour it."*

*Edna O'Brien*

**Warm thanks to all who made today happen -  
especially all the young writers of Scariff  
Community College**