

## **2019 Ballyroan Library World Poetry Day Competition**

We had over 150 entries this year, and since the standard was so high, we have a number of highly commended entries which we have decided to also publish. As well as these entries we have 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and an overall winner.

Congratulations to all those shortlisted, and the winners!

**3<sup>rd</sup> Place Winner:**

***Hawk* by Sean Smith**

*Comment from the judge:*

Sean's vivid poem shows us a childhood where the children are little conquerors, little tribesmen, but where a difference in skill is illuminated – a teacher and a student, a grotesque first attempt to a skilled image, gimlet-eyed and soaring. This poem full of precise, deft images brings the hawk, both of them, alive and off the page, hovering like memory often does, right in front of us.

## **Hawk**

*(for Sean McSweeney)*

We gathered in the stove-warmed kitchen  
after chasing down laneways,  
picking frockens and blackberries,  
that left us purple tongued,  
our skin stained with indigo  
like some wild colonial tribe.

You gave us blank sheets of paper, whiter than  
fresh cow's milk and tried to teach us to draw.  
We'll start with birds, you said,  
A few lines for belly, beak and back.  
Mine took on the form of some grotesque,  
a distorted form that could never fly.  
But when you sketched the hawk in swift  
brushstrokes, delineated against an infinite sky  
I saw it hovering, gimlet eyed, as it soared  
over the hedgerows traced in the fields far below.

I see you now, hawk-still, keen-eyed, gliding over  
your Sligo bogs. Swooping down on the  
deep blues, greens and blacks hidden in the reeds  
to spear them, ink pricked, onto the cloud-white  
of your canvas, brushed with a feathered hand.  
Your fingers delivering each stroke with a raptors skill.

**Sean Smith** is a Civil Servant in the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation where he (hopefully) makes life better for consumers in Ireland. He is married to the beautiful Carmel and they have a wonderful 15 year old son Noah.