

Blue in the Tiergarten

For Dr K

One man slept on the grass,
one on a bench. A third sat
awake, with his dog asleep
beside him. Then came the blue
square on the trunk of a tree,
and a sign forbidding ballgames.
Pleasure boats waited on the Spree
to fill with tourists, while joggers
whizzed past in reds and yellows.
I sat on a bench to rest, watching
one swan caress another, while a
woman broke off bits of a baguette
to feed them. The blue square—
what did it signify? If I'd traversed
every metre of the Tiergarten
would I have encountered others?
Was an artist obsessed with blue,
and with the shape of the square?
I immediately wanted to copy him
or her, and paint squares of
the exact same shade of blue
on every tree in the Tiergarten,
till all the joggers wore blue,
the boats were resprayed blue,
the leaves grew out blue, and
the sleepers woke up, smiling.

Matthew Sweeney

Creativity and Contemporary Critical Theory in the MA in Poetry Studies at Mater Dei Institute in Dublin. He is an acclaimed performer of his own work and teaches writing and performance to children, adults and special groups. He can be contacted at davelordanpoet@gmail.com.

Alan Jude Moore is from Dublin. He is the author of three collections of poetry: *Black State Cars* (Salmon Poetry, 2004), *Lost Republics* (Salmon Poetry, 2008), and *Strasbourg* (Salmon Poetry, 2010). His next book, *Zinger*, will be published later this year. He is online at www.alanjudemoore.com

Sinéad Morrissey was born in 1972 and grew up in Belfast. She read English and German at Trinity College, Dublin, from which she took her PhD in 2003. Her five collections are *There Was Fire in Vancouver* (1996), *Between Here and There* (2002), *The State of the Prisons* (2005), *Through the Square Window* (2009), and *Parallax* (2013), all published by Carcanet Press. She has lived in Germany, Japan and New Zealand, and now lectures in creative writing at the Seamus Heaney Centre for Poetry, Queen's University, Belfast.

Billy Ramsell was born in Cork in 1977. *Complicated Pleasures*, his first collection, was published by the Dedalus Press, Dublin, in 2007. He has been shortlisted for a Hennessy award and a Strong award. He has read his work at many festivals around the world, most recently in Shanghai and San Francisco. Ramsell was awarded the Ireland Chair of Poetry Bursary for 2013. He lives in Cork where he co-runs an educational publishing company.

Tadhg Russell lives in Doneraile in north Cork. His work has been published by *Southword*, *Cyphers*, *The Stony Thursday Book*, *West47*, *The Stinging Fly*, and *The Sunday Tribune*. He was also on the shortlist for the Patrick Kavanagh Poetry Competition in 2010. He won second prize in the 2011 Gregory O'Donoghue competition.

Born in Lifford, Co. Donegal, in 1952, **Matthew Sweeney** lived principally in London from the mid-seventies until the late nineties. Since then he has lived primarily in Berlin, Timosoara, and more recently Ireland. The latest of his numerous poetry collections is *Horse Music* (Bloodaxe Books, 2013). He has also published poetry books for children and two children's novels. *Writing Poetry*, which he co-wrote with John Hartley Williams, appeared in 1997. He has held several fellowships and writer-in-residence positions, most recently at the Munster Literature Centre.

He won the Prudence Farmer Prize in 1984, the Cholmondely Award in 1999, a Henfield Writing Fellowship in 1986, and several bursaries from the Arts Councils of Ireland and England. He was nominated for the T.S. Eliot Prize for *Black Moon* (2007). He also frequently works with filmmakers.

Brian Turner (editor) won the Beatrice Hawley Award for *Here, Bullet* (Alice James Books, 2005), a poetry collection based on his experience as a soldier in the Iraq War. He has also been awarded Lannan and NEA Fellowships and the Amy Lowell Poetry Travelling Scholarship. He serves as Director of the low-residency MFA program at Sierra Nevada College. His latest collection is *Phantom Noise* (Alice James Books, 2010).

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