



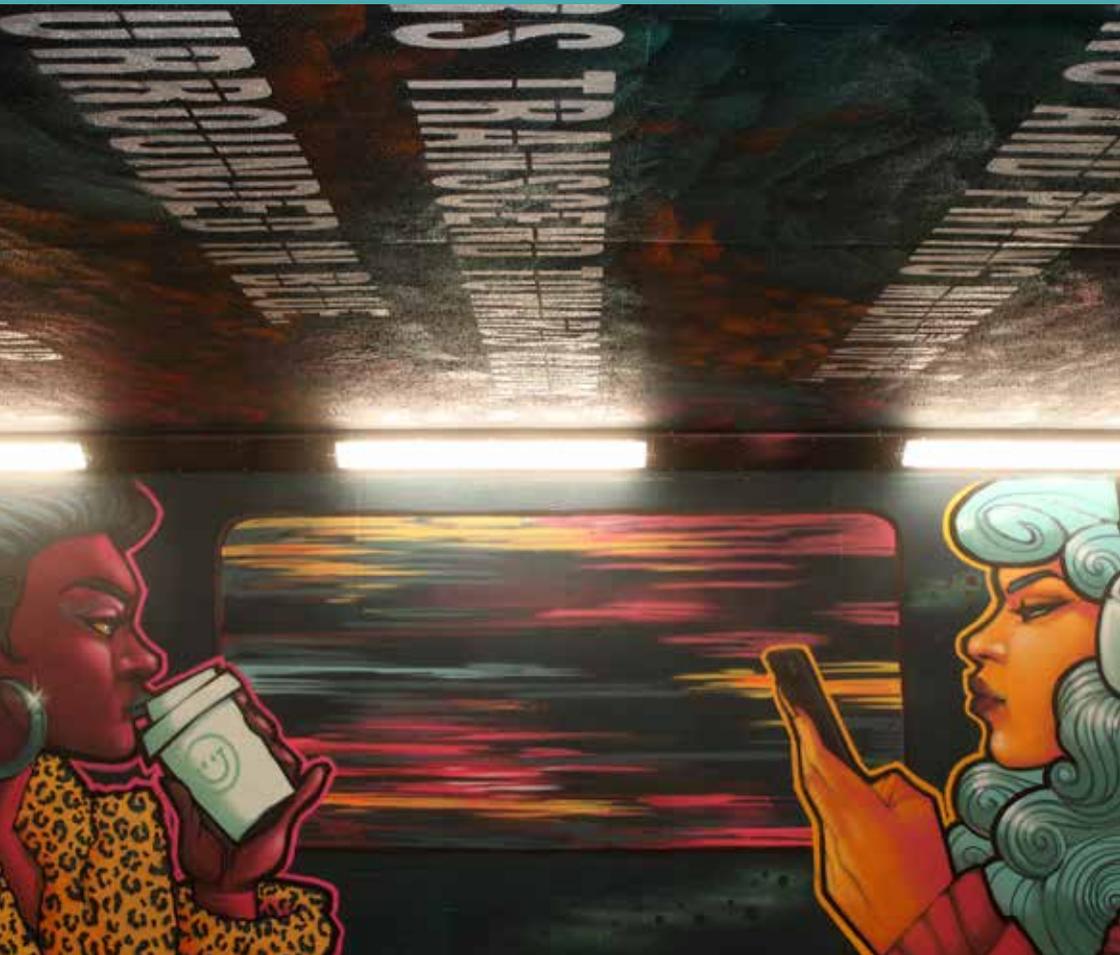
**Translink**  
Better. Connected

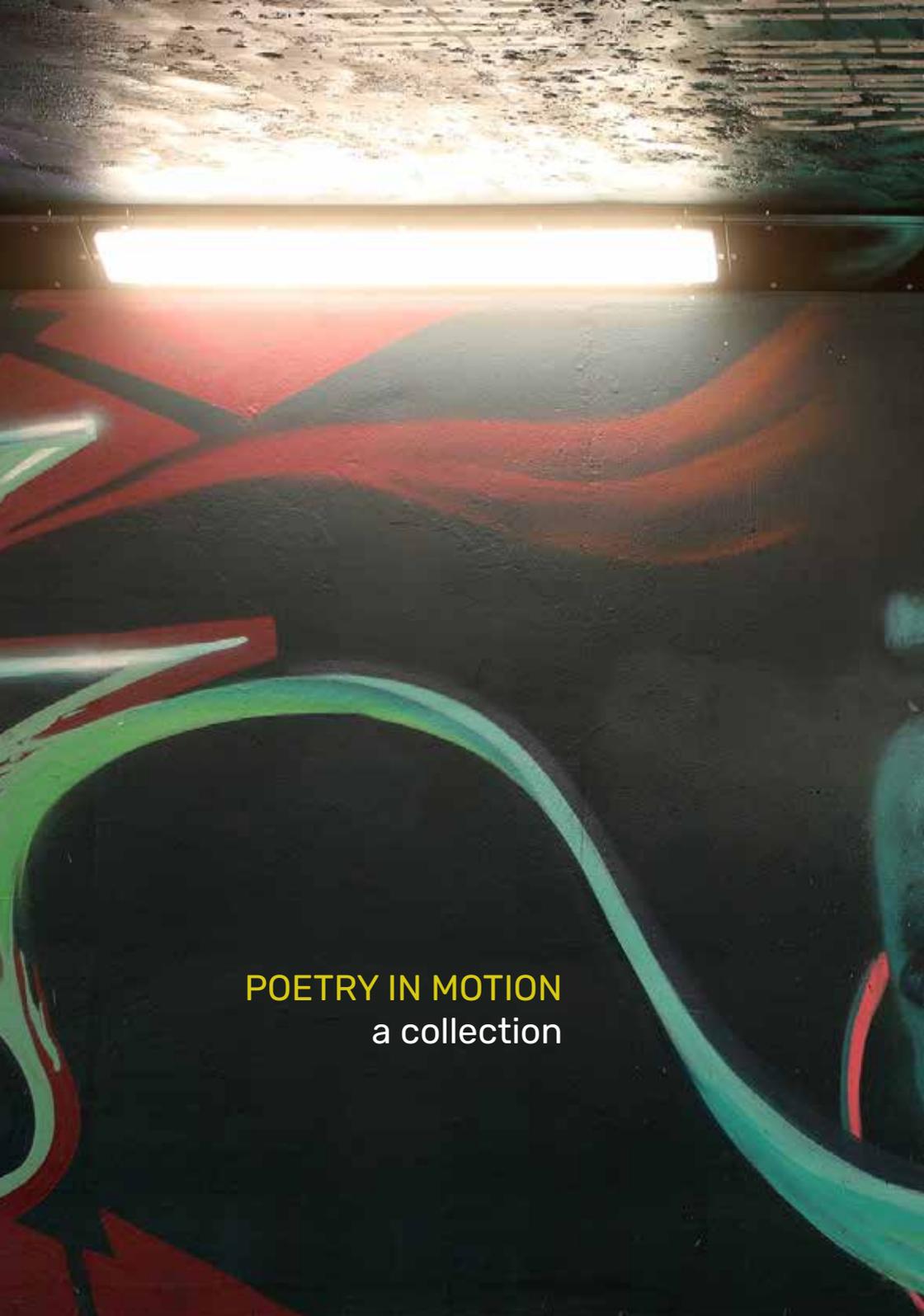


Ulster  
University

# POETRY in motion

a collection



An abstract painting featuring a dark, textured background. A bright, rectangular light fixture is positioned horizontally near the top, casting a glow. Below it, there are large, flowing, organic shapes in shades of red, orange, and green, set against a dark, almost black, background. The overall composition is dynamic and expressive.

**POETRY IN MOTION**  
a collection



# INTRODUCTION

from Dr. Frank Ferguson, Research Director for English Language and Literature, Ulster University

The *Poetry in Motion* project has been an extraordinary collaboration between Ulster University and Translink. Through this campaign, rooted in UU's **People, Place and Partnership** strategy, we have witnessed the transformative power of poetry in connecting individuals and communities across Northern Ireland.

From school poetry workshops at Malone Integrated College, Belfast, Oakgrove Integrated College, Derry~Londonderry, to readings and workshops at Belfast Grand Central Station, Ulster University Coleraine, York Street Station and the North-West Transport Hub, the project has enriched public spaces with the creative voices of our poets and Translink's passengers throughout the region.

I am especially proud of the participation of our Poets in Motion, all Ulster graduates, whose voices and experiences are woven throughout this book. As they travelled across Northern Ireland by bus and train, they captured their journeys in poetry, reflecting on the landscapes, people, and moments encountered along the way. Through their words, readers will embark on these journeys with them, experiencing the unique perspectives and emotions that shaped their writing.

It was equally inspiring to see so many submissions from local writers and members of the public. This booklet not only reflects their individual experiences but also tells a collective story—one that illustrates how public transport connects us, not just through the places we travel to, but through the shared moments and stories that unfold along the way.



# WELCOME



from Jacqui Kennedy, Chief People and Corporate Services Officer, Translink



Welcome to the **Poetry in Motion** booklet, a celebration of the voices and creativity of our passengers, staff, and poets who have travelled across Northern Ireland on Translink services.

This campaign has brought poetry to life on our buses and trains, showing how public transport connects us—not just to places, but to each other and to the beautiful, diverse landscapes and seascapes. We are thrilled to have received more than 100 entries from across Northern Ireland, all contributing to this unique collection.

Translink's **Better.Connected** strategy illustrates the important role public transport plays in building relationships, strengthening communities, supporting the economy, and sustaining the

health, wellbeing and education of local people. Increasingly, it also has a vital role in tackling climate change and improving our environment, as well as our relationship with the planet that sustains us.

Working in partnership with Ulster University to create **Poetry in Motion** has highlighted the cultural significance of public transport as a space where stories, creativity, and communities come together.

Thank you to everyone who participated, and I hope this collection inspires you to keep writing and reflecting on future journeys.

# FOREWORD



## from Niamh McNally, Poet in Residence, Belfast Grand Central Station

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It has been a privilege to serve as the Poet in Residence for Translink at both York Street Station and Belfast Grand Central Station. Through the **Poetry in Motion** project, I have experienced firsthand the power of words to create better connections. Whether you are a seasoned poet or someone who has never written before, poetry is for everyone—it's about capturing the moments that move you, the journeys you take, and the spaces in between.

This poetry booklet is not just for reading and enjoying the wonderful writing of people from across the country; it is also an invitation for you to have a go at writing yourself, using the poetry prompts throughout the booklet. Everyone has a story to tell, and we can't wait to see how you put your journey into words.

Travelling across Northern Ireland on Translink services, I have been inspired by the landscapes, the people, and the stories I've encountered. This collection is a testament to that, and I am thrilled to

share the work of so many talented poets from all corners of the country.

In taking workshops at York Street Station and Belfast Grand Central Station, I've collected cards and received emails from passengers sharing their writing and stories with me. I've seen children pretending to be on a ghost train, while at the same time the hourly Enterprise Train departs the platform. Black Mountain serves as a beautiful backdrop to Belfast Grand Central Station, symbolising ecology and a full-circle reconnection to the land.

I recall my own daily train journey to UU in Coleraine, where Dr Frank Ferguson guided me in editing and crafting my work.

Poetry has the ability to transform the ordinary into something extraordinary, and I hope this collection inspires you to reflect on your own experiences and perhaps put pen to paper.

## Goldliner / 212 - Niamh McNally

Tubular sounds dip as green does  
both mid-air and mid-road.

Higher plain double-decker is a coyote  
rummaging its gold nose through

terrain as a buffalo might run,  
unfolding as it escapes the city's bow.

Arrows keep us right on horizonless  
landscape, passing cut offs to mid-lands.

Toome Bridge is a Stegosaurus statement,  
painted in concentrated blue.

Imagining arms in full flex and bog as  
audience, these limbs fail to pluck such thick

strings that can't reverb along An Bhanna.  
Another country would have wheat straw,

segment suns in the distance, and  
limitlessness, but I wouldn't recognise  
its turns off the motorway.

## Castledawson Park & Ride

Women doused in language walk up the stairs.  
Their excitement mixes with proverbs.

Their nervousness is combed into blow-dried hairs.  
Their tongues hold Glens in every click.  
Their valleys restrict local raised syllables.  
They'll have the same order in that same

Saturday café, after a day hopping between  
Richmond and Foyleside Shopping Centres.

## The Walled City

Family ties draw my eyes to the  
Old Forge at Ardmore.

Next, Drumahoe, Harberton Park.  
We enter from the background of fortified sounds,  
echoing around the Oak Grove sides:  
Water / City / Bog

## Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Pines are locked fingers of giants  
as our carriage enters:

Glenshane  
Gleann Seáin  
'Shane's Valley'...  
Are you hiding in those layers of autumn

Peeking out from under blanket bog?

As we move, I watch for yellow pin prick eyes  
in the Sperrins amidst gorse / whin

and can only see trees glancing  
eerily back at me.

Those vast routes. Motels. Dusty sweet space.  
Horses. Saloon doors.

## Foyle Street

All of them, all at once, fly above  
this picnic bench towards a mental box.

A peace flame provides heat, centring me.  
There's a couple kissing between trying to dodge

pigeons who are intermittently flying then perching  
on a run of Georgian walls,  
looking towards The Guildhall.

'The Peace Bridge must sway  
ever so slightly as to not collapse.'



# Translink

Better. Connected

At Translink, we understand the importance of connections in our daily lives. Being better connected means more than just getting from one place to another; it's about creating opportunities for people to come together and experience all that Northern Ireland has to offer.

We are dedicated to providing reliable and accessible public transport that makes your journeys smoother and more

enjoyable. Whether you're commuting to work, exploring new neighbourhoods, or visiting family and friends, our services will help you get there.

With our continuous improvements and investments in infrastructure, we aim to enhance your travel experience. From convenient routes to modern facilities, we strive to make public transport a practical choice for everyone.



Connections Photo by Sean Vill



Connections Photo by Briega Young

POETRY in motion

# SECTION ONE



Public transport is more than just a way to travel—it is where lives intersect, stories unfold, and communities come together. Poetry in Motion a Collection - is a celebration of these everyday journeys, capturing moments of connection, and reflection.

Danny Kearney • Paul Quinn • Sam Dunn • David Hyland Mitchell • Peter Easlea • Gary Egan •  
Mikala Smee • Niamh Busby • Malachy Duffin • Jim McParland • Helen McCormick • Siobhan Flynn  
• Morna Sullivan

**Early Rise Bangor Bound - Danny Kearney**

Early rise, gentle light, smooth sea,  
 Bangor bound curls rise with the sun,  
 swimmers ripple dappled water.  
 Walking dogs and waking plans.  
 Bangor stop, chat starts,  
 return journey to Marino halt.  
 Day's plans in train.

**Wallstead - Paul Quinn**

My train of thought comes off the rails  
 along the line after Cullybackey.

We pass the ruined farmhouse  
 with a few sentinel trees.  
 All rushes by, soon out of sight.

Yet after, my mind runs on...  
 what existences within its walls  
 today long-forgotten?

By Ballymoney, I'm back on track.  
 Ready for Coleraine, the end  
 of my line.

**Morning Commute - Sam Dunn**

So fragile, thin  
 Like skin, leaves shiver  
 In invisible wind.

With the train paused,  
 Close-up, through glass,  
 They look frail; futile

Each tracing-paper blade  
 Hangs downcast  
 Nothing to blow about

As we move again  
 In dawn light, I see  
 A new perspective

Autumnal tones tremble  
 With kaleidoscopic colours  
 Of coffee and gold

Individually, in mourning.  
 Together, a beautiful morning  
 Breaks, and glory fills my soul.

**Pregnant - David Hyland Mitchell**

My wife would have an answer but  
 has anything been as pregnant  
 as this station platform  
 where I wait  
 for her?

**Translink Incorporated - Peter Easlea**

The "5.02" is rarely late  
 And has become a somewhat reliable mate.  
 All aboard the regular 9.20,  
 Into Bangor for the folks that are plenty.  
 We arrive on time down at the station,  
 No need "to book" your pre-destination.  
 A walk around town and do - what - you - do,  
 Or will I catch the "3" and head to Balloo?  
 The sun comes out as we head to the resort,  
 To you and me, it's little Groomsport.  
 All very pleasant, an afternoon of fun,  
 But get to the bus stop and catch the last run.  
 Arrive at Abbey Street and make a quick dash,  
 Fumble in my pocket, no need for cash.  
 Jump on the train, it's always First Class,  
 And produce my shiny "60" smartpass .  
 "Good evening, Sir, what is your request?"  
 "Take me home please, to little Bangor West."

### Missing Connections - Gary Egan

I try to miss them on a regular basis  
– buses, trains, ferries, flights.  
I find it makes life more interesting.

I miss it when I don't miss them  
and I suspect those who never miss them  
are missing out, big-time.

Stranded, I'm obliged to kill time  
rather than being its obedient servant  
and what happens next becomes less obvious.

Not accustomed to being treated this way,  
the look on time's face as it dies is disbelieving  
but new connections are already disembarking.

### Under the Dome - Mikala Smee

They come in waves at ten, one, and four.  
Great metal machines  
carry them to port.

A sea of accents and languages to enjoy.  
Conversing as best we can, with  
our saviour, Google translate.

For a moment, travellers consider me local,  
but the illusions soon crashes,  
my own accent telling.

I inform them of the town I've made home,  
then reminisce of my Australia,  
of the place I was born.

We bond as tourists do, in this faraway place,  
finding hints of home,  
in the unknown.

And together we observe the skyline capturing  
roofs lined with bright specs as  
if the night before, stars fell,  
Christening the slates of Belfast.

### Conversations - Niamh Busby

Conversations happen in ways I don't  
expect as the train leans itself through  
trees and along the sea. Lads in  
Adidas talk music with an older  
man in dark blue denim, or a punk  
with green hair discusses gardening  
shows with a prim and proper pensioner,  
or a student chats to a four year old while  
their harried-looking mother sleeps  
against the window. These connections  
surprise me and delight me, little reminders  
of existing, of our need to reach out,  
on a train bound for a city.  
I'm reminded of this when someone  
sits down next to me and asks me  
a question. I smile, connecting.

**Maiden City Flyer - Malachy Duffin**

Pulling out of Glengall Street  
 - heart of Belfast town,  
 Maiden City Flyer,  
 Maiden City homeward bound;  
 Passengers have paid the fare,  
 safe and sound on board  
 Driver gave a helping hand  
 to get the luggage stored.  
 Rolling up the M2,  
 past The Cavehill, Belfast Lough,  
 We settle down in comfort,  
 each one to our own lot.  
 With iphones, ipods, ipads,  
 while others take a nap,  
 Young ladies read the Agony Aunt  
 in the latest glossy mag. On board...

The Maiden City Flyer,  
 from The Lagan to The Foyle,  
 The Maiden City Flyer,  
 back to our native soil;  
 Oh, The Maiden City Flyer,  
 come rich man, poor man, squire;  
 She's The Queen of every highway,  
 The Maiden City Flyer.  
 Rolling thro' the countryside,  
 past Glengormley soon,  
 Templepatrick, Antrim, Randalstown,  
 The Shining Bann in Toome;

At the Castledawson roundabout,  
 folk board her in the frost,  
 A man rolls up his sweater  
 to make the window soft.  
 Then gently up The Glenshane,  
 come hail, sleet or snow, never fear,  
 The Flyer's here,  
 she'll see us safely home;  
 Up thro the lofty Sperrins,  
 those rolling sheep-clad slopes

As we pass thro sweet Dungenen  
 hey folks we're nearly home.  
 On board... Drumahoe, Altnagelvin,  
 three church spires come to view,  
 A young girl on her mobile says  
 'dad, I'll be there in two'.  
 Next to the Craigavon Bridge to cross  
 the silver Foyle Journey's o'er,  
 safe once more on our own  
 beloved soil. On board

**The Enterprise - Jim McParland**

The Enterprise eases out so slowly  
 On Monday morning from the southern station  
 On a mystical journey north, of joy and wonder  
 For a six-year-old on a Halloween vacation  
 Gathering speed, the fields and trees rush by  
 As happy ghostly costumes walk the coach  
 The curious child is asking the questions  
 While the guard and trolley slowly approach.  
 "Are we nearly there", comes the initial query  
 Where is this, or that, amongst other things  
 Wide eyed staring out the window then,  
 "Can spiders run out of their web strings"  
 In the warmth and rhythm of the carriage  
 I close my eyes and my memory journeys  
 Down unseen tracks to a happy childhood  
 To a steam shrouded platform in the Sixties.  
 My father alights, old brown suitcase in hand  
 Back from England with hugs as he holds us tight  
 Lifting me up as the old train puffs gently away  
 Slowly and surely back into the night.

**Gentle Beat - Helen McCormick**

On silver rails from Helen's Bay  
 Curving through the sweet, green land  
 With sudden glimpses of the sea  
 The ferry boats, the long flat strand  
 I sit in comfort, in my seat,  
 and watch the world go by.

The steady wheels' sure, gentle beat  
 Bringing memories of the past  
 Of times my love and I would meet  
 And board the train, he held my hand.

From City lights, trains brought me home  
 The stations bloomed, the flowers gay  
 Like all my generations past  
 Those constant trains defined my day.

## Shared Enterprise - Siobhan Flynn

The view from the viaduct was so blue  
the man sitting opposite praised it with me  
and by the time we got to Balbriggan harbour  
we were well into it—young people,  
God love them, caught in the web,  
tethered to the job, emails at all hours,  
no free time or fresh air, nowhere to live,  
the price of houses, stuck at home.

There were people in the sea at Laytown.  
They should all go to Donegal and plant trees.  
The swimmers? No, the young people of Ireland,  
native trees, broadleaf, oaks and such like.

I took in a breath, he held up a finger,  
Whisht for a minute, I've thought about this,  
they can build log cabins to live in.  
He was putting the oak before the acorn  
but I went with it, we had tea now.  
As we were crossing the Boyne  
I suggested hydroelectricity,  
wondered about available rivers.

The Foyle, he shouted,  
like he'd discovered the Amazon.  
Log rolling competitions, I said,  
searching rivers of Donegal on my phone.

By Portadown, we'd built trains, tracks,  
streets, schools, libraries and bookshelves  
for our arborists, lumberjacks, teachers  
and log-rollers—environmental pioneers all.  
As the train pulled into Belfast  
our city gleamed in the distance.  
We said goodbye, then hugged,  
emotional at our brave new wooden world.

I like to think of him striding through Donegal  
with a knapsack of saplings  
and a bucketful of delusions.  
I still think it could be done.

## The Journey's Home Soundtrack - Morna Sullivan

You've caught the bus or train – on track  
From coffee date at Ballyhack  
Or girls' night out at the MAC  
Swaying to Roberta Flack,  
A dentist trip removing plaque  
Omagh news en route to Lack  
Visiting Gran in 'Cardiac'  
Earbuds in, will it be Bach  
She's listening to, or Fleetwood Mac?  
Alfresco lunch at seaside shack  
Black, The Knack, Massive Attack,  
Shop in Ards from Ballyblack  
Watching YouTube Shakatak  
A lads' jaunt to the greyhound track  
Beanstalk panto with young Jack,  
A funeral – all dressed in black  
A trek to buy an anorak  
Wild goose chase, there and back  
Shopping stashed up on the rack  
Bulging bags of bric-a-brac  
Out pop carrots, celeriac  
(like goodies from a party pack)  
Scones spill out and a barmbrack  
Rolls down the aisle, and with a thwack  
Hits tourist with a huge rucksack.  
Small schoolboy with big backpack  
Listening to the lad's wisecrack  
Jolly conductor, best of craic!  
Commuter chats, yackety yack  
Laptop worker, clickety clack  
Phone ring tone's Burt Bacharach  
Admiring her red nails (shellac!)  
She'll not be one to get the sack  
Old man reads thumbed paperback  
Immersed in classic Pasternak,  
He's humming to some Offenbach  
Sipping coffee with quick snack  
Crunching crisps, oat flapjack.

This is the journey home's soundtrack  
Sit down...breathe out...and...relax.



Connections Photo by Julia McNiece

Join the Journey

# POETRY PROMPTS AND REFLECTIONS

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1. **Journey**

Write about a trip you've taken. Where were you going, and what did you see or feel along the way?



## 2. Connection

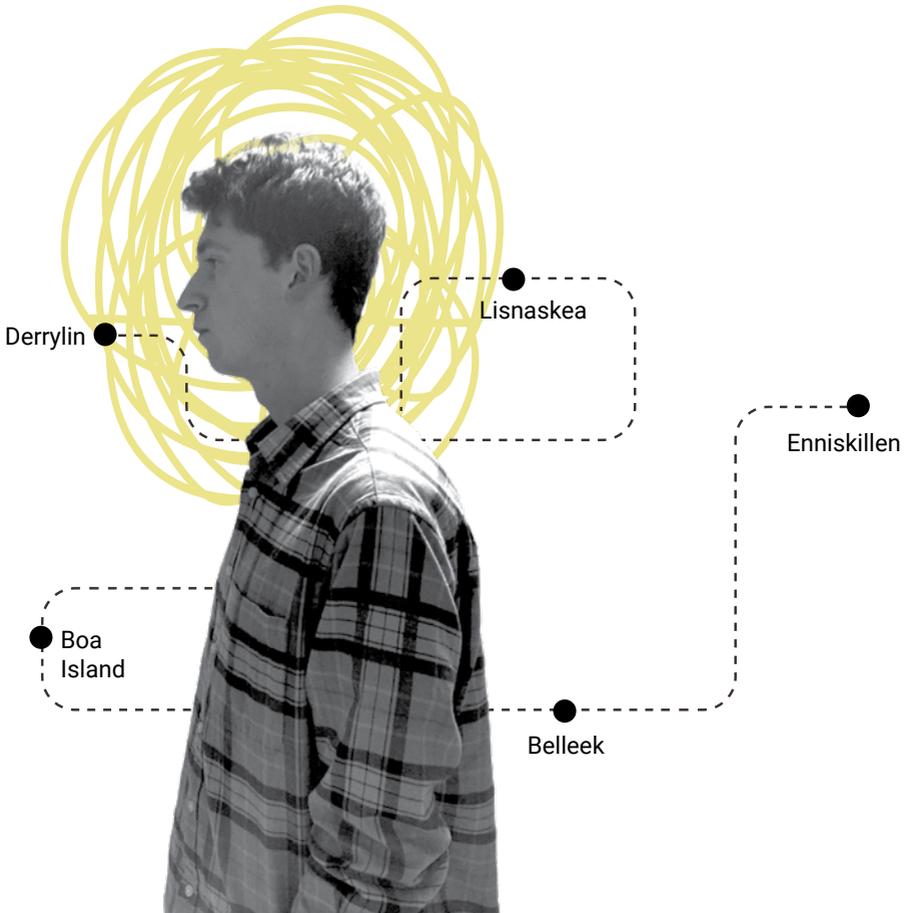
Think about a moment when you felt connected to someone or something while travelling. Did you meet someone new, or notice anything special?



# POET IN MOTION

Take in the views of County Fermanagh's famous lakes and waterways and enjoy the striking architecture in the town of Enniskillen and the beauty of its surrounding villages.

## KEILAN COLVILLE



## Fermanagh Meditations - Keilan Colville

1.  
Enniskillen, that point of origin  
From which voices come and go.  
Litany of fields, clouds, water-song.  
Old castles, kings and lords long gone.  
Ghosts of Beckett and Wilde  
If you care to look for them.  
Sometimes there's a dream.  
It plays like a film in the dark.  
I'm there on the loughshore  
And there is no reason to be afraid.  
There is hardly any need for words.  
But the dream is only a part of things,  
And there are reasons to be afraid.  
And so, there are words.

2.  
Up at Castle Balfour  
Men are digging graves  
For Holy Trinity Church.  
The Castle ruins are closed up.  
Lisnaskea was built around this castle.  
You wouldn't think that if you saw it.  
In the distance, towards Derrylin,  
Birds on the wire,  
And the morning haze.  
As I walk back down the hill  
One of the men nods at me  
And I nod back.

3.  
It's funny how things  
Change so much  
And yet not at all.  
I'm still taking buses in and out  
Of Lisnaskea,  
Grey clouds above almost static.  
I can see myself there,  
seven years younger,  
Sitting across from me  
Scribbling into some notebook.  
We're different people  
Writing different words,  
But we're still on the 95,  
Still making words.  
Maybe he's reading King Lear  
Or Emily Dickinson  
And I'm reading Seishi Yamaguchi,  
But the magic is happening.  
The water is running down the window

4.  
Rain against the windscreen  
On the Pettigo road.  
Mind among the blurred trees.  
The lower Lough Erne  
Is singing something.  
Silent song.  
Let the wind contain it, possess it with emptiness.  
It's a small song, it matters.  
Across the hills, the world  
Becomes an oil painting,  
Its own moody poem  
Of blue and grey darkening together,  
Swimming through eyes that perceive  
And create as they brush landscapes  
Into being.

5.  
In Belleek, the rain gets heavier.  
The thatched coffee-house is almost full  
When I step in, so I take a seat  
Somewhere in the back  
Next to the stacks of old books,  
Next to the photos on the wall:  
Men holding fish, small sketches of streets,  
A portrait of James Joyce.  
There are three women talking quietly  
Over their coffees.  
An older couple sit in silence drinking tea  
As their little dog sleeps on the floor.  
Sometimes the poem has to wait.  
Just sit awhile.

6.  
Mist clouds, quite distant,  
Moving sleepily away –  
Crossing Boa Island.

7.  
On the way home  
The skies clear  
And the late sun looks down  
To dry the rain-slaked roads.  
Through the glass  
The sunlight makes shapes in my eyes.

8.  
When night comes  
I'll look out at the moon.  
I'll listen to the silence.  
I'll write these words.

POETRY in motion

# SECTION TWO



Climate change is the greatest threat we face, and an efficient, integrated public transport network is essential to reduce air pollution, improve health, and ensure a better quality of life for future generations.

Alec Gourley • Rachel Toner • Ruth Parkes • Helen Torr • Colin Beckinsale • Lorcan McQuitty • William O'Whittney • Rosaline Callaghan • Robert Boyd • Christina Henneman • David Bailie • Nicky Cahill

**Alighting - Alec Gourley**

Self-propelled.  
 Under my own steam.  
 On board,  
 Bordering on movement,  
 Then hoarding the quickening vista.  
 The click clack track of wants not wishes.  
 "Next stop" stops me from moving further  
 Into dreams with no destination.  
 Buffer. Not suffer journeys untaken.  
 A light. Alighting at the station.

**I Don't Have the Time - Rachel Toner**

I don't have the time to write.  
 To write, I don't have time.  
 I don't have any time at all.  
 At all, I don't have any.

Have any? I have plenty.  
 Plenty of time, I find to scroll.  
 To scroll, I find the time.  
 The time to waste, I make it.

I make it worth the waste.  
 Wasting time, still takes time.  
 Time takes its toll.  
 Its toll on me.

"On me," I say, we down another.  
 Down another path together.  
 Together on this train.  
 This train, we're here again.

Here again, another day.  
 Another day, no time.  
 No time like the present.  
 The present, at peace with time.

With time, we will make time together.

**You Can Choose - Ruth Parkes**

You can choose

Station names between the gaps,  
 Or towns you've known from the maps.  
 Relax and enjoy the lovely views.  
 With whom and where, you can choose.

Give me a bright day,  
 So I can get away.  
 Take the train to Belfast City.  
 Botanic Gardens are so pretty.

Remembering when we were apart.  
 It nearly broke my heart.  
 Descending from the train,  
 Into your arms again.

**The Journeys We Make - Helen Torr**

While travelling on public transport  
 On any given day  
 Do you ever stop to think about  
 Those who help us along the way?  
 The teams of men and women  
 Working hard behind the scenes,  
 Those who fix and repair,  
 Manage or clean  
 The buses and trains  
 At the depots and stations,  
 And not forgetting all the bus stops,  
 The roads and railway tracks  
 The bridges, hedges and ditches,  
 In order to prevent  
 Any accidents or glitches  
 So, we can arrive safely  
 At our chosen destination.  
 Now when we travel to and fro  
 Whether through city or countryside  
 Remember to offer up our thanks  
 Then sit back and enjoy the ride!

## Our Public Transport Provider - Colin Beckinsale

Translink NI, our public transport provider  
Bus train and coach  
Even a glider

Travel around without watching the road  
Secure safe and warm  
And sheltered from cold

Look at the scenery  
The fields and the trees  
Instead of auld traffic  
Much better, yes please

With people to talk to  
If even just a hello  
Wondering where they all came from  
And where is it they go

My journey is planned  
Jordanstown, Trooperslane  
Counting the stations  
On my way home again

Clipperstown, Carrickfergus  
Not so far as Whitehead  
A cup of tea and a biscuit  
And back to my bed

I sat at the back  
Like I did as a lad  
The click clacking track  
Brings back good times I had

The windows reflection  
Shows I'm much older alas  
But I'm still just as thrifty  
Tickets cheaper than gas

Translink N.I by day and by night  
It's a thank you from me  
In this poem I write

## A Sonnet - Lorcan McQuitty

The train glides forth,  
a serpent swift and sly,  
Roving a canvas of sun-kissed land,  
Salty spray adorning the shining sky,  
Waves embracing shores  
home to golden sand.

Cliffs jut from quarrelling navy waves,  
Their ancient faces  
lashed by brockish sea,  
Blossoms sway, wind whistles  
from lonely caves, in patches green,  
where wildflowers dance with glee.

Inside, the hum of voices weave stories,  
Rich tapestries of love, joy and laughter,  
Strangers share this voyage, basked in glory,  
Divine rays blessing passengers, gathered.

Vistas passing, shaded by weather,  
One journey, one people, travel together.

## A Road Trip to Northern Ireland - William O'Whitney

On a journey to the sea,  
No others bound but you and me.  
We travel the roads  
of granite and gravel,  
You speak of your studies,  
but to me it's just babble.  
Your hand is interlocked in mine,  
and I think to myself that things are fine.

Over a pothole we suddenly drive,  
My car makes a sound like an angry bee-hive.  
Air rushes from a gaping gouge in a back tire,  
We wait for the AA while  
standing in a bog like Grimpen Mire!  
You lose your left shoe to its muddy embrace,  
No look of amusement appears on your face.  
I try to reclaim it, but how could I blame fate,  
When mud covers me all after I fall.

Oh, it was such a fuss,  
I wish we had just got the bus.

**Belly of the Whale - Rosaline Callaghan**

I know the black-pitch dark  
 in the belly of the whale  
 I've tried calling the Minister for Loneliness  
 The lines unflinching engaged

If words cajole experience into shape  
 and delineate its edges  
 let me own the contours of forlornness  
 offer radical compassion  
 to embarrassment and shame  
 Let me wheedle three words into utterance  
 smash the silence of stigma to smithereens  
 Let me tell you  
 I am lonely

Even in the whale's belly I foster curiosity  
 make room for wonder  
 sculpt space for small joys  
 Catch the train from Castlerock to Derry  
 Eavesdrop on one-sided susurrations  
 of ordinary lives  
 Surrender through the arched barrel vault tunnel  
 under Mussenden's folly of aching sadness  
 to surf and sand of Downhill Strand  
 and mindfully in the moment  
 join the conversation  
 between railway track and shore

I cannot claim exclusivity to loneliness  
 or to hearing the glacier's groan  
 of ice fracturing from ice  
 There are other searchers  
 and seekers in deep time  
 perpetually moving forward  
 carrying moraine of memories and loss  
 not pretending to know who we are  
 not pretending to know where we're going

**Beauty, without name - Robert Boyd**

Ceo ar maidin,  
 Is draíocht na farraige.  
 Áilleacht, gan ainm.

**Translation;**

Mist in the morning  
 and the magic of the sea.  
 Beauty, without name.

*This haiku was inspired while  
 travelling on the bus one morning  
 from Ballyhalbert, looking out  
 over the Irish Sea toward Scotland*

**The Matchmaker Bus to the City Centre  
- Christina Henneman**

The bus doors open. I pick a seat  
beside two elderly ladies:  
very clean, very neat.  
Their chattering envelopes me  
as the doors close.  
I feel less lonely as my ears grow.

Have you seen Colm recently?  
The O'Donnell's youngest?  
Yes, he's just got home for Christmas.  
Yes, yes... he's very good lookin'.

The bus creeps along a queue of cars,  
collects students from the university.  
I picture Colm among them, glowing  
brighter than the city's fairy lights.

Yes, he's very good lookin'.  
Very good lookin'!  
Yes. He's very good lookin'!  
Mhm. Very good lookin'.

The bus stops at the church.  
One of the ladies hobbles to the exit  
with her walking stick. Don't go,  
I want to call, but I bite my tongue.

Take care, Mairead! Stay safe!  
Bye Clíona, bye, bye, bye!

Mairead gets off the bus.  
Clíona stares out the window,  
still nodding, until we stop at her doctor's.  
We both get out, march  
to the practice side by side.

Jeez, you're a beauty.  
You'd like my neighbour's son, Colm.  
He's very good lookin', I say.

We laugh and she pats my arm.  
I've just found my first friend in Galway.

**A Wish in Motion - David Bailie**

I have a wish for you: that the  
Next stop on your journey is

Magical and better than you could ever dream  
Of. And that someday, maybe  
Ten years from now, that  
I'll bump into you again on platform 8.  
Only this time, you're  
On your way into the heart of Belfast  
and you'll, nod to me with a warm smile,  
and I'll know that you made it.

**Winter to Winter - Nicky Cahill**

The kestrel circles over murky mudflats  
 Piercing calls oscillating, with a C Minor simplicity,  
 Held in the density of air.  
 I board the train at Ballycarry,  
 Through the window,  
 brent geese nestle in saltmarshes.  
 Muted tones twinkle, frost jagged in the shadows.

Whitehead, my awareness heightens.  
 People board.  
 Schoolboys living in loose time.  
 Like bottles of bafflement, knowing themselves  
 only through what they see online.  
 Unaware of the fragility of time. At Whiteabbey,  
 I notice a robin watching an eyelined girl alight.

York Street, pupils pour out  
 under pierced picture canopies,  
 Reflected in the window I see myself. Years ago,  
 Scratchy navy blazer, preposterously pleated skirt.  
 Onwards, she disappears.  
 Two stops until the doors reveal reality.

Lanyon. Workers in suits and trainers,  
 scramble, smart and scruffy  
 Towards glass tower boxes.  
 Daytrippers from Dungloe join the fray.  
 These are the people who come  
 in and out of my day.  
 Glad of their company, their lack of  
 probing and poking, questions.

My stop. I alight and walk towards  
 clean lines and glinting glass reflecting light.  
 The Northern Ireland Cancer Centre.  
 Sign luminous.  
 The nurses tell me; they've never seen a gown  
 look so glamorous.

Later, on the train sitting at  
 the platform at Lanyon Place,  
 I stop and stare. As they appear.  
 The Starlings' murmuration.  
 Birds ravel and unravel, reshaping the sky.  
 Beauty pure, poured out. Mysterious.  
 All Aboard. Pulling away from the birds  
 Moving in rhythm, to the tracks

Here in the carriage, we are  
 connected in commuter community,  
 Passengers sustain me, I steal glances,  
 Here we are equal.  
 Travelling into a tunnel of unanswered questions.  
 Here, I can be free. Be me,  
 all the while; my body pays the hiking rents,  
 Of the ever-hungry Big C.

Individual lives on display.  
 The thrum of bodies seeking home.  
 My internal scene unseen.  
 My public face serene,  
 embracing the safety of my knowing,  
 on the train I am hugged in a crowd. We roll on,

Downshire. Venus rising, a teardrop  
 to the wolf's full moon  
 seeping reflections into the Irish Sea.  
 A crying sky.

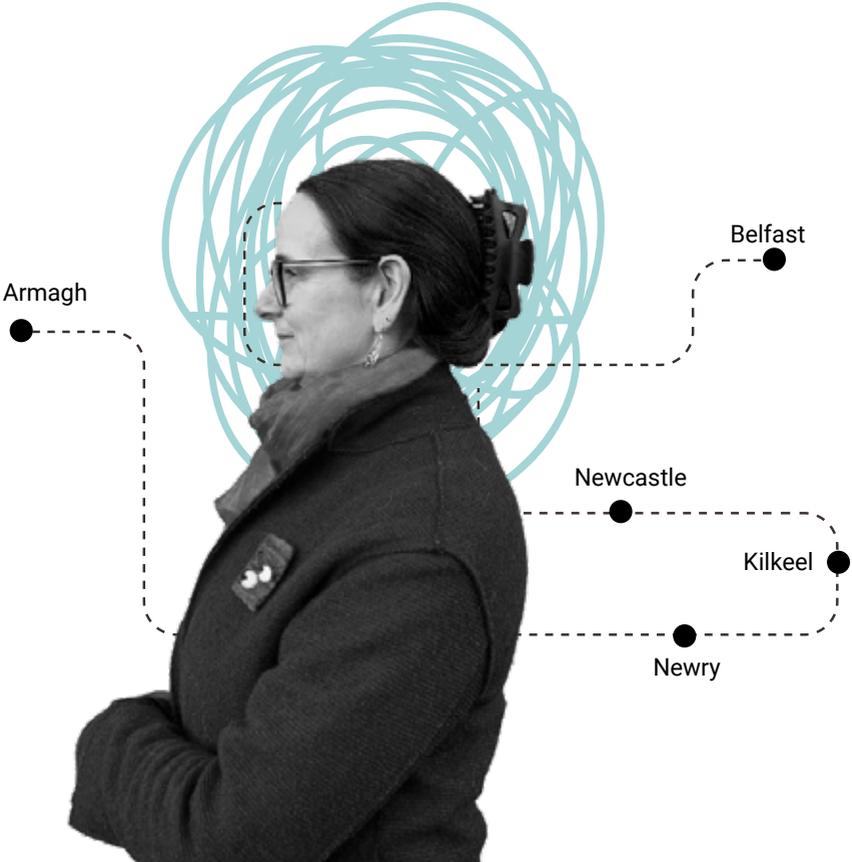
Spring drifted. Summer surged.  
 Autumn arched. Winter clings, haunting.

Ballycarry, twilight. Waders forage along the shore.  
 Winter to winter, what's changed when,  
 so little will ever be more.

# POET IN MOTION

From the rich Georgian heritage of Armagh to the stunning scenery of Kingdom of Mourne there's lots to take in from the window of a bus.

## ADELINE HENRY CUMMING



### **Bus #251- Adeline Henry Cumming**

The sharp blue sky and bursts of white  
shock my eyes.  
The M1 slides by  
through shining air.

Stuck for weeks in the house -  
Breaking my wrist was a sentence -  
But today I have a free pass:  
Richhill Portadown Belfast.

My phone charges in the USB port,  
My feet under the seat in front,  
Bag on the seat beside.  
People walk on down the aisle,  
and sit alone, plugged in.  
Not coddled in a car  
but in a moving, communal room.  
I'm back in the world again.

### **Bus #237**

On Sunday school trips to the coast  
I would feel sick on the bus.  
Those twisty roads.

Going to Mountnorris Primary  
bare legs stuck to red plastic.  
Big boys messed.  
Crossing the bridge  
I seized the silver bar.  
Home was near.  
Now in Newcastle and Dundrum  
seagulls circle chips and they're gone.  
I smell the ozone.

No bad days – a yellow sign  
in the Railway Street Café  
reminds me it's time  
for the next bus.

Yellow and blue and white  
sky and clouds and sun.  
I note the sand and stone,  
the metal bar along the prom  
and buy a wine-red jumper.

### **Bus #39**

Kilkeel Annalong Rostrevor.  
Schoolgirls in makeup,  
a schoolboy's banter about  
every suspendable offence  
he didn't get caught for.  
Buses keep going  
past grey granite walls.  
These ever-changing, moving rooms  
were sometimes burned  
but never consumed.



POETRY in motion

# SECTION THREE



At Translink, connecting communities is at the heart of everything we do. Our services are here to support, and enrich the lives of the people who rely on them every day.

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Ewen Glass • Rosemary Adams • Tierna Sloan • Alan Pepin • Patrick Murray • Carmel Smith • Ann McKay • Olga Dermott Bond • Vicki Dunn • Beckie Stew • Rachele Sproston • Catherine Kay • Gráinne Tobin • Gail Calwell • Teresa Ludlow • P6 Class Fane Street Primary School

**Goldliner Notes - Ewen Glass**

Laughter unspools at the back;  
 pockets of birthday money,  
 simple presents. Simple presence,  
 together we're carried back from the city  
 with compact discs and cassettes.  
 Decades on, phone in hand,  
 I travel back to see my mate.  
 His life is squared up for moving;  
 he and his family lean far.  
 We'll still have messages  
 but there's warmth beyond binaries,  
 Goldliner-notes to albums' worth of trips  
 when we were teenagers,  
 friendship travelled stout.  
 We see kids waiting for a bus to the city –  
 thrifting, charity shops –  
 and feel second-hand pleasure in the  
 trips they're yet to take  
 and the trips we have.  
 And I hug my friend goodbye.

**The Train, As Ever, Passes By - Rosemary Adams**

It's the long carriages  
 that take us back in time  
 to days when smokers lurked  
 and death happened  
 behind uncertain blinds.  
 The smoke's no longer there  
 in smoke stacks chugging high  
 and little boys no longer linger  
 to number count each passing chuff.  
 But magic is there if you can look  
 and see back in time  
 to factory workers' outings and office workers  
 weekendening to seaside resorts.  
 You used to dress up,  
 fancy boots and hat, now you  
 slouch as fields and sheep pass by.  
 Some things do die.  
 The train, as ever, passes by.

**The X1 Xtra Special - Tierna Sloan**

"Wake up, we're going now" whispered my mum.  
 It's finally here, the day I've been waiting for  
 The countdown is over!

I grab my new backpack, full of activity books,  
 headphones and Janie, my teddy.  
 Off we go, all aboard the X1 to Dublin Airport.  
 I can hardly wait!

The journey has just begun.

Looking out the window  
 as we go down the motorway  
 looking out for all my landmarks,  
 Sprucefield, Hillsborough, Newry, and the toll,  
 ticking them off as we get ever closer to the airport.

Sitting back wondering what we will get up to  
 during our special time together.  
 Connecting again with my American family.  
 Connecting with my daddy, running into his arms.

Our adventure awaits...

**Return Ticket, Student Card - Alan Pepin**

The Sunday swing of study returning  
 is distant in your Friday mind as you home in  
 on your family and friends and freedom

And the sky is a window of flashing blue  
 Reflected inside that mirrors you  
 As you rest your head on flashing glass

And the rush of the green goes fast  
 In every turn or hill that's past  
 And nearer and nearer we come

To blink again with the break and hum  
 Of a familiar rumble and exhalation of doors  
 Into an old town so freshly yours.

### The Translink Bus to Belfast - Patrick Murray

The Belfast bus glides  
eagerly down the slip road,  
Hums happily along in the  
freedom of the carriageway.  
Lulled by its movement  
and the passing vistas from  
raised seats, we stare dreamily  
at whitened fields, Veils of  
swirling sleet whipping  
magically around our windows  
Before a watery sun behind  
heavy clouds, suddenly dazzles,  
Lights up white gables,  
trimmed hedges and church spires  
And a few sheep on the side  
of a sheltered hill,  
Statuesque in the bleak fields  
That have their own beauty, Like blankets  
stitched down neatly from heaven  
To swaddle each slumbering  
hill that retreats as we pass,  
Before another rises up to meet us.  
And now our Goldliner whines at slowing down,  
But revs up the slip road under the underpass  
And rides proudly into Dromore.  
Passed smart new houses,  
turnkey ready with tiled drives,  
stone facades and shiny roofs  
But we have come from another place  
With neither lock nor key,  
Where roads wind through  
ancient town lands  
Each with their own mythologies.  
Where hedge rowed lanes carry me to  
age old farmsteads with leafless trees  
that stand silent waiting,  
For the stir of another Spring

### Where are we Going? - Carmel Smith

Tickets and stations  
Platforms and vacations  
  
Planning routes  
Timetables to suit  
  
Handbags and suitcases  
Backpacks and briefcases  
  
From day to night  
Country sights and city lights  
  
Anger and frustrations  
Tensions at relocations  
  
Hugging at meetings  
Kissing and greetings  
  
Rushing and rambling  
Seating with sighs  
  
Napping or chatting  
Or tears in their eyes  
  
Solos or partners or groups of friends  
Babies, children, teenagers, stag parties or hens  
  
Coffee breaks or dinner dates  
Meeting others, out till late  
To examinations and graduations  
Congregations with celebrations  
  
Airports, concerts, shopping trips, days out  
Weekend breaks, sporting events,  
it's the way to travel about

**You Sit Where You Are - Ann McKay**

Forenoons the Derry~Londonderry train  
to Belfast moves out from the west,  
coasting northwards, swinging east,  
pushes towards the sun rising up.

You depart at eight-and-thirty minutes  
past the hour, drawn first along the Foyle,  
from the old bridge, through the Peace Bridge,  
and the new bridge, to beyond.

Past coal boats docked at Lisahally,  
past forted Culmore on the other side  
where Inishowen looms, diverges,  
flagged in its own weather, Atlantic-bound.

From Eglinton where the London airport's marked,  
through fat flat sloblands,  
raised from sea and farmed intensively –  
grazed, ploughed, planted, fertilised, harvested –  
round the seasons, through the years.  
You witness how the fecund earth's  
abundance never disappears.

By land-and-water's edges claimed by birds  
year-round ducks and waders  
absorbing northern hordes,  
in autumn, of geese first, then swans.

Some migrants come and go,  
some stay – like egrets, southern formerly,  
that stand out there with kin,  
outstandingly chic, part of the scenery.

By Myroe, Bellarena, Binevenagh, Magilligan to –  
a glimpse of ocean – waves! horizon!  
Often vessels, seemingly anchored.

Betimes, mirages – magical isles like  
Hy Brasil emerge from mists,  
betimes the real Paps of Jura.  
Manannán mac Lir makes  
flashing dazzle of surf and sands.  
You'd burst your way out at Benone

into such bright freshness,  
but for sudden blackness  
cliffs/a tunnel/cliffs/another tunnel –  
Castlerock, discreet resort for  
sand-rabbits and, in season, bluebells.  
The train glides up the tidal reedy side  
of the river Bann, lurches over  
at Coleraine, swerves inland on  
a compass change, from north to east.

Before you, as if determining direction  
of your travel, the arising sun  
strengthens over Ballymoney,  
Cullybackey, Ballymena, Antrim.

A dragging longueur, the middle stretch  
between departure and arrival,  
Mid Ulster variously: railway-cutting bankens;  
close-fenced back gardens;

sloped green grazing; parkland trees;  
piney bogland; distant hills ...  
Slemish mountain where trafficked  
Patrick shepherded sheep,  
thought long and hard.  
You sit where you are.

The train descends – between significant cliffs  
persistent shipping lanes –  
turning urban, bridging Lagan.  
You gather yourself together.

At the terminus, a bit stiff, you brace, steady, flex.  
The platform outside immobilised, concrete.  
New place, new time and in a different light,  
you – different now and new – alight.

**No 11: Belfast to Comber via 1989**  
- Olga Dermott Bond

Our Ulsterbus is blue, full of yawning  
school girls, seats stiff with itchy zigzag  
fabric that bristles the backs of our legs.

On rainy days, the inside is dimly lit  
with a smell of damp green blazers,  
echoed with a faint halo of petrol.

We don't need to talk on the way home.  
No phones, so we scroll through  
glaucous fields searching for something

we can't quite reach, use our sleeves  
to squeak a grey temporary rainbow,  
squint a little further out, watch

as tiny clouds creep back together,  
shudder on, as Janet smudges  
a masterpiece of her ex-boyfriend,

creates a tiny lake of tears at the bottom  
of the window. We take for granted  
this reluctant communion of everyday,

an awkward ritual of PE bags, folders  
hockey sticks and scarves, the comfort  
of knowing exactly who gets off where,

even if we don't know their name.

**Smells of the City - Vicki Dunn**

Stop, Alight, Squeeze past the people  
marching along the polished floors

I pass a grey-haired gentleman  
slumped over his styrofoam cup  
looking uninterested in life and  
tired from the night before when  
he was full of it

I pick up my pace taking giant steps  
through the station feeling  
taller than normal  
as the intense aroma of  
Cuban coffee beans raises me higher

I step down into the city  
to greet the man who sells Jesus  
in the early hours of the morning  
when I'm slapped in the face  
by a nicotine cloud laced with cynicism

The sun is in hiding waiting for the wind  
to sweep away the musk of the moonlight

In the end I tip toe up the stairs  
and sit quietly at my desk

Until lunchtime when the aroma  
of freshly baked bread and soups  
become a blanket which cover the morning air  
I skip through the city forgetting the fumes below

### Liminal Space of Buses - Beckie Stew

My father, who has always loved trains,  
 knew intimately every  
 estación in southern Spain, rode  
 the hauptbahnhofs of north Germany  
 but I, who have invariably preferred  
 character over machinery,  
 adore the liminal space of buses,  
 choose them always for  
 their lottery of companionship,  
 their conviviality of thanking the driver,  
 even with their heavy braking,  
 each passenger graciously peering into the cabin  
 somehow saying home now,  
 because of you - a very Irish thing.

I remember my return from  
 abroad after many years  
 the great swathes of field and birds,  
 the ones I'd forgotten the names for  
 all rushing by as the X4 swept me north  
 a great mouth of rare sky  
 stretched open and blue  
 as I cried softly into the  
 strange familiar beauty of it all.

My father boasts of coastal views and leaving,  
 forever leaving the urban sprawl behind,  
 the smoothness of the rails, the food cart,  
 but my heart loves the janky bus  
 the humid jungle it becomes after rainfall  
 which is often, too often,  
 as teens clutching phones  
 admire their manicures  
 falling into each other in peals of laughter  
 which are the bells of girlhood,  
 beautiful and self-conscious.  
 A couple with syrupy children  
 jostle in the back,  
 a toy tugged and dropped,

a loud conversation,  
 and a man who may be  
 the loneliest soul on earth  
 in fabrics and flat cap from another era  
 weary, gentle, who I sit next to  
 and talk at length with,  
 sharing clove rock, toffee pennies,  
 listening to his stories, of which there are plenty.

Thin as railings, I believe  
 I'll never see him again,  
 but the next month  
 he's there at my local Tesco  
 wrapped against the cold and winter mist,  
 another time outside Mountpottinger Methodist  
 and another glimpse on Chapel Lane,  
 close to the parish, wondering if the bus  
 brought him this far and if he remembers  
 our chat on the 5A from Braniel,  
 how the whole city was renewed  
 in our sitting backwards.

### Her Time to Go - Rachele Sproston

As I watched her board the bus  
My mind wanders back to us  
I have watched her grow  
now it is her time to go

Her little legs stepping up  
I dare not turn back as my eyes fill up  
I watch her take her seat  
acting like such a grown up

I watch as the bus pulls away  
Taking my little girl for the day  
Will she stay strong all day  
or like me will she pine away

As I head to the car  
My phone pings loud  
Don't worry mom I'll be fine  
After all it's my time to shine

How did I have such a caring child  
Never once complaining about her fate  
I knew she must be feeling scared  
But not once has she dared to be late

How little she looks in among the others  
The youngest on the bus by far  
At home I hide under the covers  
Until it's time to get in the car

As I stand among the mothers  
My heart starts to skip a beat  
A bus is approaching us, among others  
I see my girl sitting on the seat

I try my hardest to hang back  
To wait for her to come from the back  
As she steps down onto the ground  
My heart starts to settle down

Finally, I have survived the time  
That my little girl has been gone  
Home now until the next time  
The school bus takes her on

### Waiting for the 212 Goldline - Catherine Kay

Belsonic babes prop up one another  
backless tops compliment sprayed on jeans  
Derry June prickles their spines with goosebumps  
lifting their sequenced faces to the light

Belfast bound hens clamour with glamour  
Strappy stilettos scrape concrete bumps  
North wind arches a fake veil upright  
bobbing life into their inflatable groom

Tourists traders swop guidebook info  
Twangs muse pub snugs and peace walls  
Foreheads crinkle at the Translink schedule  
adding grumbles to the concourse meleé

Luggageless woman perches patterned metal  
chapped lips blow froth on lukewarm latte  
A clunk and hiss mark the 212 arrival  
scanning dark windows with anxious eyes

Fresh funnel of travellers mount the Goldline  
Bright filigree thread connects mother to son  
Bus beeps a sharp reversing staccato  
accompanying each brassy Guildhall chime

And the weary woman navigates  
difficult fire doors pull and shove  
work against her again  
Her hope refreshed with cream horn and coffee  
ach, she might as well stay now  
and check the 4.15

### The Big Blue Bus Goes Round and Round - Gráinne Tobin

The world is here, and I am in it,  
watching and listening like a three-year-old,  
buckled into an aisle seat, as the Goldliner  
thrusts out of Newcastle towards the city.

Next to me, a stranger smiles straight back.  
She's had her bus pass years ahead of mine.  
There is no good alternative to living  
wide open to it all. Hello? Hello.

Turns out she plans a weekly expedition,  
takes herself off to see how things have changed  
in places she hasn't visited for years,  
since long before her husband died.

Two buses out, a café with a loo,  
a wee nosey round and two buses back  
to the sheltered flat where last month she  
unpacked an abridged edition of her life.

The sky put on a lightshow at Knockbreda  
for the shopping centre and the graveyard.  
We never let on that we noticed.  
We just kept talking while the wheels rolled past.

### Baggage - Gail Calwell

Always carrying bags,  
substantial and sturdy bags  
Packed full of items for 'just-in-case' events.  
Stretched out across the landscape of my back,  
Building muscles on my shoulders for later.

Sometimes I forget that the bag is there,  
I go home and begin to cook,  
Or sit silently on the chair.  
Then I remember and become aware.  
At other times its weight is there  
long after I physically remove it.  
I feel my back push against and  
resist something that is no longer there.  
I must find time to rest.

Always busy, busy, busy,  
Running between distances  
Railway tracks, bus routes, walking the roads.  
Exhaustion and exhilaration  
sometimes both at the same time.  
Carrying all these everyday objects on my back,  
My precious belongings:  
Pieces of paper and pens,  
jumpers and gloves,  
Food and tea for the journey.

My bag - its tattered exterior  
Disguising my utilitarian treasures.

I am now an expert packer  
Anticipating what I will need,  
and the possibilities that I might encounter-  
the people, the places, the weather.  
I have learnt the hard way.

I sit shoulder to shoulder with fellow travellers,  
Unable to resist curiosity  
when they open their bags.

Occasionally sharing a knowing smile  
of preparedness for the journey ahead.  
For the real traveller knows  
insecure pockets would never do.

## My Sister Sharon - Teresa Ludlow

My sister Sharon in her platform shoes  
jumps on the train to Belfast.  
At 8.30am sharp every Saturday morn'  
she walks to the station after breakfast.  
She could catch the bus outside the library  
but the station's closer  
to the house and the bakery.  
She buys a wee bun and some fresh crusty bread.

On a Friday takes the train to Whitehead  
to visit her granny  
to swap the wee bun for a steam train story.  
Oh, it's such great fun.  
You see, her Granda drove the steam train  
and he's my Granda too.  
He's up in the museum with pipe in hand  
in a photograph or two.

My sister Sharon loves to shop  
and visit Magherafelt on her day off,  
the Mid Ulster town where she gets off the bus,  
as there are no trains but she doesn't make a fuss.  
You see, Translink looked after her  
when she had to get to work.

When the Covid time was grave  
and the carers very brave,  
they gave her free travel tickets,  
and this is where she found  
that in a cost of living crisis  
Translink helped her stretch her pound.

My sister Sharon loves to visit big shops,  
Meadowlane and Foyle on the 212 she pops.  
She flies up and down that new motorway  
to spend a pound or two.  
On a new pair of skechers  
or some woolly jumper too.

She visits friends in Bangor  
when her holidays are due  
and takes down to the marina  
and looks out at the view.  
In the Summertime, she takes the train to Portrush  
wearing her brand new coloured skechers  
as her platform shoes now crush.

My wee sister Sharon is 60 next year  
and with her free Senior Travel Pass  
she can visit places far and near.

My sister Sharon phones her family overseas,  
she tells them Translink trains and buses  
really are the bee's knees.  
If you want to know your Irish History,  
then Translink has it all.  
They even have bus and train stops  
outside the Uni wall.

My sister Sharon, this time next year,  
will be able to take the bus.  
The one outside the library  
and travel from dawn 'til dusk.

## Ghost Train Journey - P6 Fane Street Primary School

I look out the ghost train window  
and see ghosts dancing on the train tracks.

The smell of dried blood fills the air and the  
creepiest thing is spiders  
crawling up the windows!

I hear tapping on the windowpane...  
Now, glass shattering!

The air tastes sour, like rotten apples.  
The gruesome monsters who work  
on the train serve us cups  
of Coca Cola and goblin's blood!

*Written by pupils from Fane Street Primary School as  
part of a Translink Spooky Poetry in Motion Workshop  
at Belfast Grand Central Station, facilitated by poet  
Niamh McNally.*



Connections Photo by Diana Nersersian

## York Street Station Underpass Transformation



**This is a vivid project led by Translink in collaboration with Seedhead Arts, through engagement with the vibrant and diverse local communities.**

**It celebrates York Street Station as a key gateway for journeys into and out of North Belfast.**

Through collaboration and engagement between street art crews from Belfast and Derry~Londonderry, poet Niamh McNally, the local communities, and Ulster University, the underpass has been re-imagined as a welcoming, safe thoroughfare, rich with world-class artistic expression.

Each side of the underpass reflects contrasting city and countryside landscapes, symbolising the diverse journeys passengers embark upon from York Street Station. Part-funded by Arts and Business NI, the project brings art and poetry into the public realm, featuring a powerful ceiling poem by Niamh McNally, that invites moments of reflection and connection here in the heart of North Belfast.

Through the creative vision of Seedhead Arts and Translink, this transformed public space now serves as a free art gallery for everyone. It stands as a testament to the power of community led art to welcome people and inspire their everyday journeys.

The **Line Work** installation at York Street Station allows moments of reflection, showing how art and poetry can stop us in our tracks, even if just for a moment.

## Line Work - Niamh McNally

In that golden hour, when timed-  
light is softened through glass,

piles of railway sleepers rest above  
**Sailortown's** underpass. A beacon blinks

as ghost seamen spot the shine of docklands.  
Indigo shadows shape form and shade pages

that are pressed in heritage of place.  
The last train breaks - halting above us.

Our echoes dance then reverberate,  
deep within the underpass, deep within

the heart of **North Belfast**.

Magic whispers to mystics in this piece.  
Artist voices converse from **marginalia**,

brushing, spraying, and dipping **York Street** in ink.  
Sheet fields are zipped with speed as primary

colours illuminate melded metal, forging  
arterial routes skyward.

Connecting and prying midair open,  
their colours transcend towards clouds,  
surrounded in blue.

Off grid tapelines gently slip  
into sprayed sounds.

Enchanted arrows and crowns  
whisk us off to faerie **Mourne**,  
whispering names into ears with concealed  
lettering.

Crimson diagonal stripes with white gaps  
snap the speed of liminal express.

A barrier lens brings momentum into focus.  
Index pressing motions cut back reality

for beauty, foreshadowing **Binevenagh**, opening  
our eyes to sea from within a cliff,  
under **Mussenden Temple**.

Vast quietness coats **Glenshane's** winter canvas.  
Brush strokes capture roads  
who kiss **Lough Erne's** mossy banks.  
Water-colours wade in tides above outlined  
bridges.

Journeys ceaselessly distract us  
with transience.

Train curvatures at dawn awaken **Belfast Lough**  
as we travel toward taped cityscapes.

Communities are painted in tonal ranges  
along the water's reflection.

Commuters travel after sunrise, alongside the  
twitching eyes of **Cave Hill**, still tucked in.



Join the Journey

# POETRY PROMPTS AND REFLECTIONS

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### 3. Journey

Write about a trip you've taken.

Where were you going, and what did you see or feel along the way?



#### 4. Connection

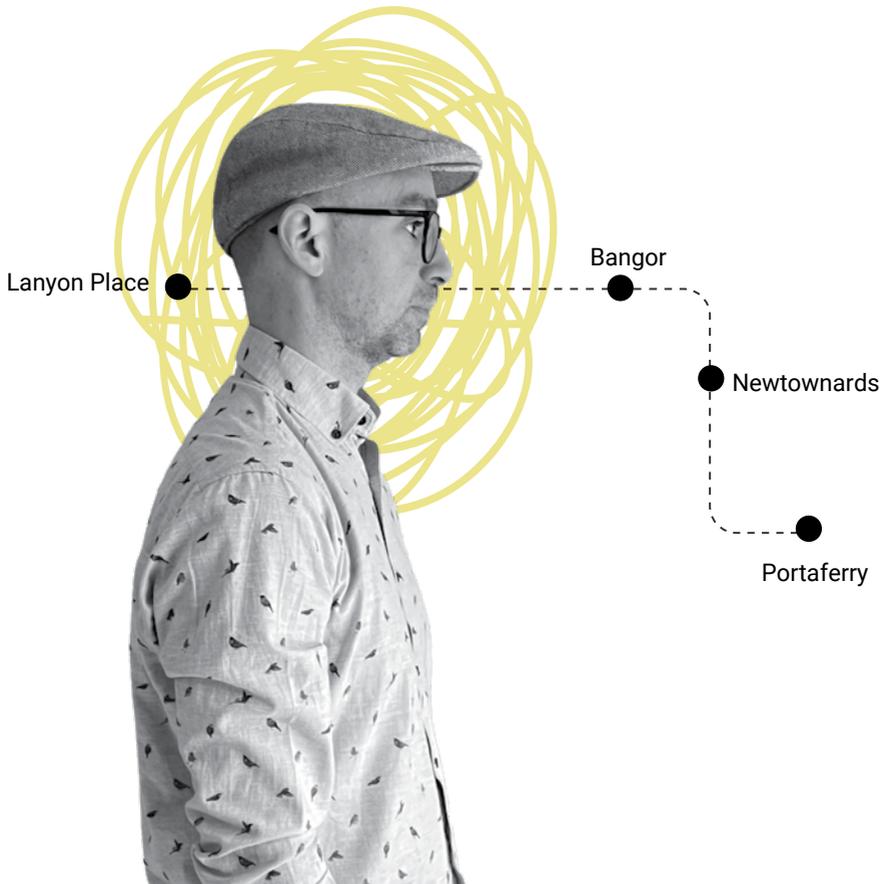
Think about a moment when you felt connected to someone or something while travelling. Did you meet someone new, or notice anything special?



# POET IN MOTION

Enjoy an exploration by bus and rail of some of Northern Ireland's finest water ways including Bangor and the Ards Peninsula which is recognised as an area of outstanding natural beauty, with hundreds of little islands and islets.

COLIN HASSARD



## Night Bus - Colin Hassard

On the night bus from Lurgan to the University  
in Coleraine, two young women are laughing

about the man from the night before shouting  
'Rice and pea' in the high street. The last thing

their friend in the opposite aisle seat recalls before  
falling asleep is hearing Build Me Up Buttercup

for the millionth time. And worst of all was how early  
the alarm sounded. In the seats behind, men talk about

tactics and players the Óg's need to change because  
the club's in a terrible state, so it is. Soon we'll pass

the sign for the 'Secret Place' and leftover  
shrapnel from cash-in-hand Saturday jobs will jangle

on speed ramps. Though we're in this together,  
the only man we've all spoken to sits beyond a line

We're forbidden to cross. Improbable as it seems,  
he's driving the only northbound vehicle unaware

that some poor critter who was about to give up hope  
may have just seen headlights appear on the horizon.

## Take It All

Take the photographs of journeys yet to happen  
and how you can call anything a lost art. Take  
your scrapbook of train, plane and concert tickets;  
the lonely nights when one was a crowd.

Take the lonelier mornings when instead of single,  
please, you wanted to say to the driver, just drive  
until I feel better or someone sits here who wants  
to talk about something other than the weather.

Take the plans never made that your mind runs over  
like a tongue on a missing tooth. Take the anger  
at the boy racer passing in a blur and remember  
your blood boils but won't evaporate.

Take the hard shoulder you use in emergencies.  
Take tomorrow's lesson on love you'll attend  
with yesterday's notebook. Take it.  
Take it all and make poems.

POETRY in motion

# SECTION FOUR



Translink is proud to support education, inspiring learning and creativity by connecting communities and fostering opportunities for future generations.

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Cara Leahy • Ryan Richardson • Harry Smyth • Malone Integrated College • Nathan Elout-Armstrong • Hannah Baxter • Dermott Maguire • Jersey Harris • Susan Farrell • Mari Maxwell • Seamus McDermott • Marilyn Ennis • Frank Ferguson

**Napoleon's Nose - Cara Leahy**

Do you think Napoleon knows  
about Napoleon's Nose?

I realise that I love you on the bus.  
Your head rests on my shoulder  
and I can smell the strawberry shampoo  
that I lathered between my fingers just yesterday.

We are looking at Napoleon's Nose. Do you think  
Napoleon knows about Napoleon's Nose?  
He's dead. You know what I mean.

I would scream your name from his tip if it  
meant you would love me forever. But I won't  
because I think you might love me anyway.

The bus gets closer and the Nose gets larger.  
He would love this, you know what they  
say about big noses. Big Empires.  
You kiss me and the bus fills with light.

**This Journey - Ryan Richardson**

This journey  
A many of landscapes I do see  
To halt my worries,  
of which there are many  
I gaze to the window, head limp,  
my own reflection  
Against the green  
A blur in never-ending motion,  
just about seen.  
The people aboard,  
a nonsensical eruption of chatter,  
In my own corner,  
away and unseen — a coldness  
The shadowy landscapes grey and dull  
To the other side of this the carriage  
the sun sizzles and brights  
I reluctantly look to this view,  
allowing the rays to reflect and brighten  
Soon I feel that heat,  
I had forgotten it so,  
This gentle sway of the tracks, left and right  
Upon my destination I do arrive,  
finally out of the night.

**Entwined - Harry Smyth**

A crone sits upon a chair,  
Her wrinkled hands weaving a tapestry.  
She knows it won't be a Hastings,  
But she's sure it'll be appreciated.

She has weaved time and space  
Like a spider weaving a web,  
Her eyes flick back and forth,  
With each bob of a thread.

A camel could not enter the eye of a needle;  
As we do now,  
For the thicket we weede.  
Time ticks on; a tapestry twisting to life.

Finally, a stop. Entropy.  
The door opens wide; the crone lowers her needle.  
To step down the woven path,  
To meet the road ahead,  
One must become entwined  
in the shimmering blue thread.

**Journeys – Year 11 English Class,  
Malone Integrated College**

Blue, my favourite colour.  
Green seems sad to me, as the train  
passes through smoke, towards the sun.

Quiet, vintage clouds combine sadness  
with darkness, as the Translink bus journey  
opens onto a beautiful beach.

Colourful and bright, the lines from a plane  
overhead match the speed of a train  
going under the cliff.

She sits on the bus listening to music.  
The scenery is sky blue  
and the woman is beautiful.

Blue then blends an array of colours  
as mountains poke through the clouds.  
The man witnesses all of this from the window.

*This poem was written collectively by Year 11 English  
pupils at Malone Integrated College, during a Poetry  
in Motion workshop facilitated by local poet Niamh  
McNally.*

### Venturesome - Nathan Elout-Armstrong

First, picture the scene:  
 1839, long before the Age of Steam.  
 New knots of rail  
 blaze a bold trail from Belfast,  
 when personal travel on a scale this grand  
 was as strange and  
 as audacious as the dawn of AI.  
 Suddenly a trip that would've taken a day  
 could be spun in the blink of an eye.  
 In first or in third,  
 rivet and ballast fuel new  
 futures from a ticket in-hand.

Now, tell me it's not that  
 same sense of the venturesome  
 meeting you as your train  
 makes an unplanned  
 stop at Whiteabbey,  
 when a medical emergency  
 whisks a stranger to safety.  
 Out of the urgency of the situation  
 you're soon in conversation  
 with a beaming dad,  
 who's just finished building  
 a TARDIS bed for his daughter  
 (she loves Doctor Who).  
 He swipes through the photos  
 and says, "that's what we do  
 y'know, in our own wee ways,  
 build for the future".

Does that strike you as true  
 as the hens come cackling  
 down the carriage in pairs  
 wearing sparkly pink  
 and looking for the loo,  
 and a couple a few rows  
 back to the left  
 sneak a quick public peck  
 and a giggle or two?  
 Everyone here has somewhere to be:  
 a destination to call at,  
 a future to claim,  
 junctioned by much more  
 than the span of the journey,  
 who, thanks to the journey,  
 are never the same.

### Passengers - Hannah Baxter

The bus always comes,  
 day and night, snow or hail,  
 bright and constant as  
 the spinning sun warming  
 breath-fogged windows.

Seeded in seats, people grow,  
 a schoolgirl admires a beaming  
 grandmother's knitted baby blanket,  
 curating careful shots for her Instagram.

A pinstriped businessman's fingers  
 drum lively against his briefcase,  
 the weary woman in front comes alive,  
 dangling acrobatic from the leather hand loop.

Change rattles like tambourines  
 muffled inside lint-lined pockets,  
 accompanying humble driver's hum  
 brass engine blurs the world beyond,  
 a cityscape symphony.

Strangers become friends,  
 different fish swimming  
 in one shoal, a roving rock in  
 an asphalt ocean,  
 a home on the road.

### Bus - Dermott Maguire

The sanctuary of a bus.  
 Letting go of the need to do or say,  
 a book, newspaper, ipad,  
 or a nap if you may.  
 The patchwork of colour:  
 grass-greens, shed-greens, tree-greens,  
 hedge-browns, roof-reds,  
 all sorts of garden beds.  
 Light and shade and blur,  
 a passing world beyond touch,  
 beyond all urgency,  
 beyond responsibility.  
 Removed from all smell,  
 sound of birds, cattle,  
 dogs and heavy machinery,  
 you passively accept the view.  
 Cushioned from the world's spiel  
 you let your imagination free-wheel.

**At 5 Years Old - Jersey Harris**

At 5 years old, you sat on  
 the train seat for the first time  
 with your mother,  
 her fingers woven through your own  
 and your legs kicking in excitement.  
 Perennially fidgeting  
 as you witnessed the fast blur  
 of trees and ocean waves  
 that you passed

At 11 years old, you'd find yourself  
 in the same position on  
 a bus seat, yet this time  
 that chaotic young childish  
 energy had dissolved.  
 Hands now alone and somewhat cold  
 from the winter air as they  
 anxiously picked at the navy sleeves  
 of your school jumper and  
 one foot tapping at the floor  
 repeatedly as if the noise of  
 your shoe against the bus floor  
 would cancel the sonorous sounds  
 of your peers around you

At 15 years old, you squeezed  
 in amongst the group of those  
 same girls you once deemed  
 "loud and annoying"  
 just to find that you would now  
 class them as your closest friends, the  
 people that know you inside and out.

Laughter booming and  
 filling the long walls of the bus  
 as your stomach twisted in  
 bittersweet pain from the  
 blitheness that escaped from your  
 mouth. Your body language  
 so much more free and limp  
 compared to just four years ago  
 where you seemed so  
 uptight and frightened.

At 18 years old, you stood  
 on the same train station platform  
 from 13 years ago with a  
 death grip around two suitcases  
 in hand and a bag strapped to your back  
 that carried each and every one  
 of your belongings that you had managed  
 to squeeze into them. Your teeth dug into  
 your bottom lip as you anticipated  
 that long journey to university  
 observing the people that blended  
 into the crowd you were a part of,  
 you questioned their jobs  
 and what titles they possessed,  
 you wondered what their homes  
 and families were like and which one  
 you would inevitably end up like.  
 Finally, that line of thought  
 was finished as you stepped  
 into the opening doors of the train,  
 suitcases following not far behind

### 39 from Newry to Rostrevor - Susan Farrell

The upper deck of a Translink bus  
is the grandest place in the world to be  
For in South Down along the coast  
it's a fun day out for you and me.  
Carlingford Lough and all its legends  
Finn McCool, Vikings, three famous castles.  
Mountains, forests, many harbours as well  
from the front seat at the top, you can see it all.  
On a level with herons flying gracefully slow  
Gliding inland at sunset,  
to roost where they know.  
weather's good, sometimes it's bad  
but the view from the bus  
means you're never sad.  
In the 'Point you can see right down the Lough  
before turning right where the seagulls flock.  
Next Sandy bottom,  
where swimmers dip every day.  
Why called Sandy bottom? We better not say.  
Guillemots bask in the warm sea wall glow  
watching currachs on their weekend row.  
Stormy high tides come over the wall  
splashing the bus, it never stalls.  
You might spot an otter or dolphin or seal  
from a car, there is no such reveal  
Coming to Rostrevor, we can see the oak wood  
all that greenery does your heart good.  
There's magical Narnia and boats in the harbour  
the view from the bus just gets better and better.  
Why not alight here and spend the day?  
Later catch the last bus home and be on your way.

### Taking Time - Mari Maxwell

Days end, homeward bound on  
the Belfast to Derry commuter train.

Heads bent, tasks to complete,  
mobiles, laptops buzz.

Sky afire with wings and feathers,  
tips of Dresden china blue and salmon puffs.

A woman roused from her novel, stilled like me,  
gaping through murky panes.

Two women of a certain age  
lulled by this moment and the rock-rocking.

Nature's bared soul  
igniting our every pore.

### Journey - Seamus McDermott

from tear duct in basalt face  
train windows blink alive one by one

boat floating in an art student's eye  
coloured from palette of sea and sky

her heart beating to wheeled tracks  
water popping off clinker-ed boards

wave cast from ember bright oilskins  
quenched by north-westerly swells

train vibrations shimmer the water  
filling his net with fish

waves roll colours into an elusive eye-blue  
painting the strand with a reflected journey

haloing herring gulls snowflakes floating  
against silhouetted land of Eoghan

catch on board, tiller in hand  
wind on his back sailing with the tide

maybe she'll be standing on the pier  
when bow waves peel into harbour's heart.

**Linear streak - Marilyn Ennis**

Train by the water.  
 Silver and blue but not the sky.  
 Linear streak.  
 Windows unspool like a reel of 35 mm film,  
 reflecting sky and clouds in the morning light.  
 The heron stares at the water.  
 A ripple, she might live another day.  
 Inside, other glassy eyes on glass,  
 but none observe her.  
 They scroll and click on a virtual world.  
 Disturbed she turns, the wind lifts her feathers,  
 and the smell of salt draws her to the sea.  
 My phone rings.

**The Late Night Glide - Frank Ferguson**

Pro tanto quid retribuamus \*  
 For the late-night Belfast city bus  
 That's taking everyone it can  
 Home safe by Translink charabancs.

City Hall is the compass rose  
 For every traveler who knows  
 White marble points municipal  
 Direct to every citizen's domicile.

The last bus's glorious transmission  
 Of souls on their home place expeditions  
 Whose yearning engines white horses plead  
 To unshackle streets for its passengers' needs.

Then glides victorious over blue-lit bridges  
 As greenways blossom by Lagan's edges  
 Silent motors through silent streets  
 Knitting up frayed ticket holders home to sleep.

*\*Belfast City Motto: "What shall I render unto the Lord  
 for all his benefits toward me?"*

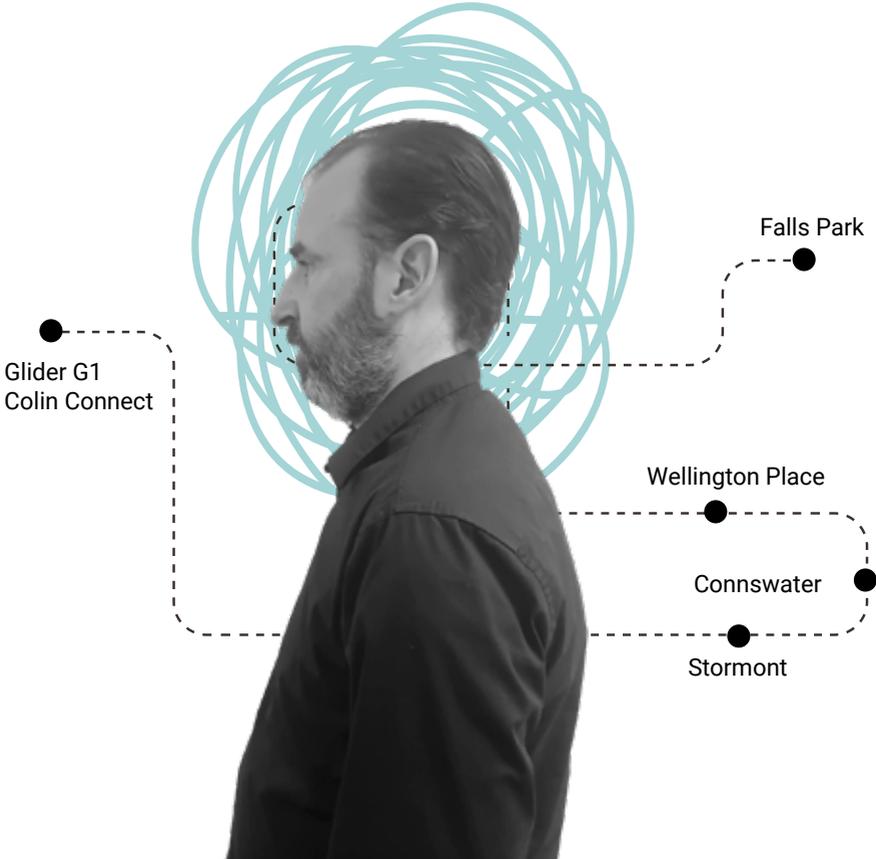


Connections Photo by Jonny Hanna

# POET IN MOTION

From Glider, Metro and Rail, the choices for travelling across Belfast City and its neighbourhoods are vast and often the journey and the people you meet are equally as interesting as the destination.

## MARTY MCKENNA



## Time Slows - Marty McKenna

### 10m, eastbound

in the misty morning mountain,

i wait for the ten. i forget my skin  
and stare into the greater distance.  
all this movement today will soothe me,

puts me on my way. time slows  
as i head into the centre to hold  
a morning coffee, and my breath;  
i'll take you to the last stop, then back

into the beating heart of the east,  
the familiar ring of the glider  
as it arrives across from unfamiliar shops,  
the fresh breath of movement

calms my nerves as i head into this  
the spreading wide of calloused hands.

### g1, east

trees begin, the east is more leafy  
than i expected. the poets  
and those who tattoo these walls are asleep.  
as i pass the hack club, the art

and the old churches vie for attention;  
the elderly are going places,  
everyone is counting stops.  
perhaps i'm the lucky one

with a route past these bigger houses,  
these bigger trees, this famous building  
and estate. i'll jump here for a breath  
i had long since forgotten to quit.

We're almost there.

### before the 10k home

among exposed tree roots  
shattered glass sparkles  
like the disappearing dreams  
we once had, these back streets

is where i do my time, perhaps  
boring to your eye, but  
i can tell you, for the soul  
it's a michelin star meal.

this day is ours, mi amour.  
this night i'll sleep to dream  
of our time then, but now,  
solitary and silent all day

i take a glass at the high stool,  
put them away, pray.



POETRY in motion

# SECTION FIVE



Translink champions physical and mental wellbeing by promoting active travel, facilitating modal shift to sustainable public transport, and bringing people together, fostering connections that enhance community and quality of life.

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• Milou Paulissen • Stephen Douglas • Ellen McKenna • Sarah O’Grady • Colette Marquess  
• Chris Kerr • E.V. McLoughlin • Roland Inman • Christopher Hodkinson • Suzanne Burrell •  
Shauna Healy • Seán Maguire • Alex Cregan

**Connections - Milou Paulissen**

The carriage shakes, vibrates, groans,  
lurches round the bend  
balance lost  
our hands touch  
apologetic smiles

a moment so fleeting  
yet our whole lives  
led to us connecting  
if ever so briefly  
and never again.

**Glider - Stephen Douglas**

Have you ever been swallowed  
by a big purple dragon and ridden  
in its belly east to west of the city?

Have you ever stood in the joint of its tail  
and tried not to tumble as it swishes  
this way and that around corners?

Or perched on the soft seats of its cheeks  
and watched queues of cars pass by in a flash  
from the windows of its eyes?

I have with Daddy, who loves to leave  
his car at home because everyone knows  
it takes a dragon to cross a city.

**One Journey in Time - Ellen McKenna**

A bus, a time capsule on wheels,  
Travelling steadily from A to B,  
Transferring passengers to their destination.  
They all have a place to be,  
Work or school, shops or visiting friends,  
Their timetable is important to them,  
Their plans take precedence in their minds.  
Each person is cocooned in their own space  
With individual hopes and expectations  
Swirling in their heads.  
Some pander to their vanity, applying makeup  
Before pouting for yet another selfie.  
Others quietly chat, or read a book,  
While some appear lost in thought  
And gaze with unseeing eyes  
At the world beyond the window.  
The bus stops, the doors sigh open,  
This set of customers disperse out into the world,  
And the time capsule takes on  
its next allocation of travellers.

**One Way Ticket - Sarah O'Grady**

My wife died last winter  
That's what he said to me  
Now my life is directionless  
I just travel for the company  
To see the mums with their little ones  
All dressed and ready to go  
It reminds me that life goes on  
And that my spring, from winter will flow  
You see, when she was alive,  
I thought the world was ours  
Just waiting for us to take our fill  
But now that she's gone, and I'm left behind  
It's the other passengers that  
remind me there's life past this hill  
She was always the more outgoing of us  
Made friends wherever we went  
She'd think it silly I travel with no stops  
And not one postcard home have I sent  
But I don't travel for adventure  
That part of me died with her  
No, now I travel for the connection  
The balm that soothes my hurt  
I don't know when I'll get to my stop  
And join her on that platform  
So, until then I'll keep travelling  
For this is where I feel at home

**Conversation on the Bus - Colette Marquess**

"I talked to her on the bus this morning," I said,  
Pointing to the photo in the Belfast Tele.  
"We had an interesting conversation  
about education".  
"You did what? my husband spluttered,  
"But you don't even know her!"

I looked at him and smiled.  
He doesn't understand.  
The big pink bus connects us:  
That person sitting next to you has a story to tell,  
Anxiety to offload, or  
Excitement to share,  
If we would only listen.

The regulars nod sagely:  
They know the value of an open face  
And a friendly comment.  
So, pass your time with purpose.  
Who knows?  
It might just make your day.

### **The Sweetest Delay - Chris Kerr**

We sat and stared;  
As the train swayed side to side  
My thoughts on edge  
My perceived opponent sighed;  
Glaring.

"What do they want?"

"What can I do?"

It's then they made a move  
It unnerved me, between me and you...

Hands on the table.  
Eyes focused on mines  
My mouth it went dry  
It's then they sighed:

"Daddy, can I have another sweet?"

"Of course you can!"

Our minds meet.

Will my six year old ever understand  
what 'Daddy Daughter' days mean to me?  
My choices will ensure that as a guarantee.

Travel, treats, hugs and chat; memories made.  
I do hope today that the train is delayed...

### **Who would I want to travel with me?**

**- E.V. McLoughlin**

in the darkness of this city  
lights are the river  
in this carriage  
a man's beard is so white  
all the film tickets were sold out

listen here!

I have seen abandoned stations -  
when the lines run backwards  
go home.

The silence here screeches and hums,  
the cars are always dark inside,  
but I will do you one better -  
a reclining giant, a thunder of light...  
Don't worry! Arithmetic is mental -  
there are always more stations  
between here and home.  
Now sit down.  
This is your castle -  
four seats to yourself

### **A bus at the stop - a train at the station**

**- Roland Inman**

The daily routine, a calendar for travel,  
Attention to detail one must devote.  
To stand and look up, timetable unravel,  
Conveyed from districts, far and remote.

Gone are the flangeless wheels on a wagon,  
Past is the carriage once drawn by a horse,  
No more 'Steam trains' that smoke like a dragon,  
For transport has found a new energy source.

The station or stop, a place to assemble,  
And stand beside one's suitcase or grip,  
The network of buses and trains to untangle,  
Before you continue on your precious trip.

Belfast, a hub for an 'Out of Town Visit',  
Tourist traffic to all 'Beauty spots',  
'Ulster Life', is just as one sees it,  
Planning your route by 'the marking of dots'.

A public depends on the advantage of transport,  
Reformed and improved, a system for use,  
A full bus or train one is glad to report,  
Efficient in condition and free from abuse.

I have tried them all, the train and the bus  
With one exception, the bisected glide,  
Each service I've found works without any fuss,  
So, with thanks, I report my joy when I ride.

**The Railway Lines - Christopher Hodkinson**

A cathedral built  
 Spacious for travelers, trains and buses  
 The third station in a changing lifetime  
 The arched entrance for the G.N.R  
 Then a shopping mall in hybrid mode  
 A fusion of connections  
 And now a lung to clear the air  
 And bring a love for getting there.

The grey unassuming, snake like train of coaches  
 Flashing red and green and a whistle sounding  
 Takes my longing mind and resting body  
 To where I want to go.  
 On any sunny day to the East Strand  
 and the Whiterocks  
 Or delightful Castlerock  
 for some kite flying and handmade chocolates  
 Swing dancing at the City Walls  
 or in Ebrington Square  
 To Sea Bangor on a sunny harbour day,  
 dancing en plein air.

On Platform 2, Antrim Station,  
 anticipating an orchestral lunchtime  
 With family Goldlining it from out of town  
 and meeting at the Ulster Hall  
 Later, sharing lifetimes  
 over knife and fork and spoon  
 And where the Ulster Orchestra took each one.  
 Then goodbyes and do it agains  
 and time for home.

Like railways are in my soul, a settling place to be  
 From days of steam in childhood ways  
 An aid to education and change  
 at junctions of my life  
 And now with the Smart one in my wallet  
 Enjoying the freedom and changing points  
 and signals green  
 Journeys to fun and tunnels to new lifescapes.

Gliding from Wellington Place to Lanyon Station  
 With the magic of Mozart  
 sounding sweetly in my head.  
 Home again for ten past five  
 The tickets of the day a shorthand of my travels  
 And how the day has been for me.

**Who Forgot the Turkey? - Suzanne Burrell**

We all set off to spend Christmas in Cushendall,  
 The kids, the presents, the tree and all.  
 Off to our cosy cottage for a yuletide feast,  
 The car packed full of tinsel, wine and treats.

We drove and drove through ice and snow,  
 A December winter wonderland with lights a glow.  
 At last, we arrived weary from our travels,  
 Little did we know  
 how things were about to unravel.

Christmas dinner prepared in advance at home,  
 Simply put in the oven and the job will be done.  
 Roast potatoes, brussels sprouts,  
 carrots and stuffing,  
 But where was the bird, somehow it was missing.

We looked at each other,  
 Assured our lists had been checked.  
 Only to find out,  
 The turkey had been left at home, on the shelf.

What to do, I hear you cry,  
 Well, it all turned out ok, by the by.  
 A phone call or two and a plan was conceived,  
 Put the turkey on the bus dear sister please.  
 Buy him a one-way ticket  
 and pass him to the driver,  
 Ask him to look after this very special VIP rider.

So the turkey arrived safely by bus,  
 A look of great amusement on the driver's face,  
 as he passed him to us.  
 Many miles the turkey travelled  
 to be with us that day,  
 A very grateful family is all I can say,

Thank you Translink for saving our Christmas day!

## Enchanted Travel - Shauna Healy

I know a wizard that travels by train  
His mother, a witch, she thinks him insane  
When she wishes to voyage,  
she hops on her broom  
But Willie the Wizard,  
he opts for legroom  
He rests back on his seat with his Book of Spells  
"I'll get there before you," he hears her yell  
And then all is quiet,  
there is peace in solitary sailing  
The countryside caresses him,  
he avoids the witch's wailing...

He watches a mother feed her baby  
Wonders if his future holds  
the patter of tiny feet... Maybe, just maybe.  
An older couple snuggle as one  
He hopes, he too, will one day find the one.  
A group of energetic boys close in age,  
Tumble onto the train,  
in joyous laughter they engage  
Wrapped in football scarves,  
their team must have won  
Of ball and sporting knowledge,  
Willie always had none  
Despite the pushes and prodding of his Mum;  
Within the chaos of competitiveness,  
Willie struggled to find fun  
He didn't wish to repeat her chaotic, crazy life  
He prayed for calm and serenity  
and an equally peace-loving wife...

The train glided smoothly,  
sliding through luscious fields  
The sunset kissed the sea as Willie  
slipped into a dream  
He dreamed of a red-haired woman  
offering him a cup of tea  
There was one baby, no, two,  
oh my goodness, there were three  
Her smile could cure the world of ill  
He knew he was dreaming, he stared at her still.

The train slowed to a stop,  
Willie wakened as passengers got off  
A fresh batch entered the cabin:  
Tall, stout, with bags, without  
Just as the doors were preparing to close,  
on leaped a lady with hair as red as a rose  
She stumbled down the aisle, feeling a little silly  
Which seat do you suppose  
she stalled at, the one right next to Willie  
"Hello there," she smiled. "Can I sit here please?"  
Willie's smile reached his eyes,  
the pair shared words with ease.

As they shared her flask of tea:  
On her broom, Willie's mother flew by  
She watched a fire glow between the two,  
it was time for her son to fly.  
She slowed her broom, enjoyed the view too...

Maybe life is not about the race  
It is the connections we make along the way  
When we learn to travel at our pace.

**Ticket to Ride - Seán Maguire**

I ran as fast as I could, the Belfast platform vacant. The 7.20 train had just left the station.

Missed the morning rituals.  
People sitting in the same seats, talking, knitting, reading.

The blonde-haired girl glued to Harry Potter. The three civil servants, sleeping to the clickety clacking rattle of the engine.

My novel plan, the final chapter of Trainspotting parked for tomorrow.

**The Quiet Year - Alex Cregan**

We came here in the quiet year – the step between what was and what could always be.

I liked the company, not having to cycle  
My own worst impulses alone anymore,  
stuck in loops and circling my own gone sanity,  
My eyebags growing, grey.

I don't know why you liked it, but you did;  
Rambling like a railroad track,  
letting me be your echo.

I think we both needed someone then,  
no longer baby girls held in  
the swathes of our mothers,  
If we ever were.

I know we talk about the possibility  
of baby you meeting baby me and not being  
Afraid anymore. The promise that 'Of course,  
Of course I'd play faeries with you.  
Of course you could be the flower,  
Or the water one.

I always wanted animal powers anyway'  
We walked around that shattered path for a while,  
Past the lilypond, surrounding the carp that darted into the deep.

There was something beneath it that  
We couldn't name. Not yet, anyway.

I watched you grow when you were away,  
Like a sunflower that shrunk in the shade  
But maybe to you I stayed exactly the same  
Like a marble statuette, short in frame or  
Like the old oak bough that held you,  
Steadily  
Swaying.

# GUEST POET



## Maureen Boyle, Irish Poet

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Renowned poet Maureen Boyle brings her distinctive voice and deep connection to place to this collection, contributing two original poems that beautifully capture the essence of travel, connection, and community. Her support enriches the project, highlighting the transformative power of poetry and public transport to celebrate shared journeys and bring people together.

Maureen is the author of three books of poetry. The most recent, 'The Last Spring of the World' was published in June 2022 by Arlen House, Dublin. She has received various awards including the Ireland Chair of Poetry Prize; the Strokestown International Poetry Prize, the inaugural Ireland Chair of Poetry Travel Bursary and the Fish Short Memoir Prize. She is a poetry and memoir mentor with the Irish Writers' Centre and lives in Belfast.

### The Bus Home - Maureen Boyle

Because we lived in the high house on the bad bend  
 a mile outside the village, we had our own stop.  
 There was no sign, just a layby decorated  
 with painted tyres our neighbours made  
 and when very small, in the first years of school,  
 a woman called Rosie took us home on the bus  
 and across the road to our house while the driver waited -  
 the bend so dangerous, the road so busy.  
 I had forgotten her entirely, a woman who held my hand  
 every day after school, who my mother knew somehow  
 was travelling in the same direction, until one day,  
 I caught her name on the radio from all that time ago  
 and thought of her kindness in putting two little girls  
 across a busy road while the big bus purred behind her.

### On the Omagh Bus - Maureen Boyle

The blue and white bus hoves into view every morning  
 and wends its way up the road. I wait in the layby,  
 and if you have been able to hold a seat for me,  
 feel the mood of the day shift with the hiss of the doors.  
 Then, we sink into plush, put our knees on the seat before us  
 and somehow fall into a cell where the chatter and noise  
 of morning disappear and we talk about all we are learning.  
 Meursault and Tess are there and St Augustine, on being chaste  
 but not yet, the quotation that seems to promise something  
 beyond this intimacy of sitting. In winter, we have time  
 to see the whole of sunrise together – the blood red sun  
 making a scarlet ribbon of the river. I never want  
 the journey to end, and if it takes the long way  
 round Drumquin, it is a gift of extra time, snaking  
 the country roads past little farms and frosted fields,  
 the fir forest at Baronscout the set for a fairy tale.

On the way home there is the same excitement to see if  
 in the rush of school bags and blazers we can share the journey.  
 Sometimes you will have been busking, smell of vodka and smoke  
 and then we'll talk of music, bouzoukis and blarges,  
 what Andy Irvine has brought back from the Balkans.  
 Even with four younger brothers I thought your time away from me  
 a mystery, couldn't imagine you doing the mundane.

I wrote a whole book of poems for you that year  
 and eventually read them to another boy.

Join the Journey

# POETRY PROMPTS AND REFLECTIONS

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5. **In Between Places Liminal Spaces**

Think about waiting at a bus stop or train station. What do you think about or notice while waiting?



## 6. Blurred Visions

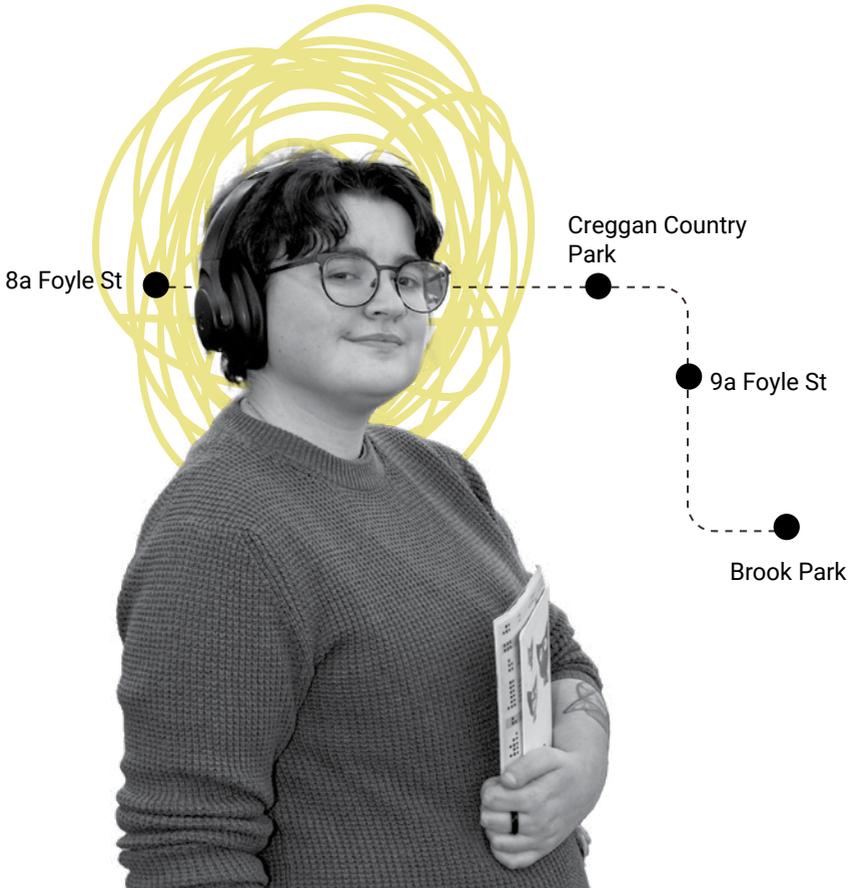
Look out the window while you travel. What do you see outside, describe the landscape, its colours and how it makes you feel?



# POET IN MOTION

Take the popular 212 and explore Derry~Londonderry, the home of Ireland's only completely intact historic Walled City, the Derry Girls, award winning museums, and some of the greatest outdoor festivals in the world. With Translink's much-loved Foyle Metro service, it's so easy to explore everything the city has to offer.

ALEX CREGAN



### Vesper's Visit - Alex Cregan

She always says "When I come here,  
I never make plans.  
You all just take me places."  
And maybe that's true,  
Like you on the train and on the tracks,  
in commotion or motion until these reunions  
Wherever they come - Dublin or London,  
Derry or buried in the field with the snowdrops  
And daffodils, or in the pages  
of the notebooks you both bring everywhere.  
You have matching pens, pins, stares, cares  
and carry one another with the same level  
Of love, or something like it.  
Your souls are siblings, you're sure  
As you trek through winding streets  
chasing the tail of a tale or two in circles.  
There is always a moment like this,  
babbling over coffee, recapping months  
Of breathing without the other,  
every sight and drama dissected by someone who  
Knows you. The sun could cycle  
a few hundred times, the lights could die,  
Everything around you could  
Wither, bloom, wither, bloom,  
And you couldn't bring yourself to mind.  
From there, the streets would unfurl,  
like tangled ferns or shy mazes.  
She said you always take her places,  
following the usual routes she swears  
Run away from her when she's alone.  
She says the city feels alive, and maybe she's right,  
But it seems to like you alright enough  
So you'll be her guide  
Until on the tracks again, and her on the train,  
You both stay there,  
waving for hours. Or decades,  
'til her amber-pink sky takes her home.

### For R, At Home - Alex Cregan

Peace is all devouring,  
ivy woven into daisy chain goodbyes -  
Each meeting pierced through the past  
like sutures stitching us up and together.  
Is it better that we've decided this,  
or is it too much to say forever?  
It doesn't matter.  
Every road in this city connects me to you,  
every tree-eaten path guides me back to your door,  
Your dog, your red table mats,  
the bats in your rafters.  
We watched them one night,  
After years of you dragging me out  
by my too big sleeve just a touch too early,  
the sun still thriving.  
I think, at first, that night I thought they were birds.  
Their silhouettes' wingbeats  
reminded me of screeching seagulls,  
Or of soft bodied starlings  
But you grabbed my hand to point  
up at one's faint, fuzzy shadow.  
Your voice danced on violin strings, gasping  
"See, see!"  
Your eyes were brighter than the stars, sleeping,  
the ones that soon  
would shine into your bedroom.  
Secretly, I was jealous,  
though of who or what I couldn't see.  
My old leavers hoodie barely fit me,  
but I think I like this better.  
This scene where we're both who we need to be,  
the cobalt sky soft enough to dream.



Join the Journey

# POETRY PROMPTS AND REFLECTIONS

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7. **Destination**

Write about your plans for the day - what are you going to look out for when you arrive, what are you wondering about?



## 8. Affirmation

Write an affirmation for yourself - Today I am going to ...



POETRY in motion

# SECTION SIX



Public transport is the backbone of a thriving economy, connecting people to jobs, businesses to customers, and communities to opportunity.

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Kelsey May Daly • Seán Ó Dálaigh • Nicholas McGaughey • Lorna O'Lynn • Florence Forbes • Ben Keatinge  
• Catherine Brogan • Ivona Coghlan • Callan Michael • Naomi Toland • Luisa Aparisi-Franca • Briegean  
McGivern • Phoebe Morrow

**Connecting the Dots - Kelsey May Daly**

I didn't know before that,  
where I placed my feet as I walked, mattered.

That with every step  
I found myself grounded by the cracks,  
that connected the now to the past;

when lamplights were candles,  
trees infantile, and...not so wise.  
I didn't know before that,  
my reflection in the Estate Agent's window  
as I waited for the green man, mattered.

That the road systems and wall stickers,  
graffiti and tall towers all,  
imprinted on the blurred figure  
that stared back at me.

I didn't know before that,  
I was not an individual,  
but a sentence in a passing conversation  
between neighbours and store workers  
that bounced from doorsteps to train stations.

That I was the smile or scowl on strangers' faces  
as they daydreamed, differently  
on their way to the same places.  
And we didn't know before, what matters,  
is that, we are pegs on a string woven

by the day to day of breakfast, lunch, dinner  
and unfinished laundry.  
Attached by sewer pipes and terrace houses,  
tram lines and wifi that link us.

And yet we remain divided  
not by gates and blackout blinds  
not by the spheres of our private lives  
but by opinion polls and bank accounts  
and who in the estate owns the fanciest car.

**Raindrops - Seán Ó Dálaigh**

Cobwebs across the  
Bus window catch raindrops  
That glisten like pearls.

**Artist on The Bus - Nicholas McGaughey**

I notice her smile, queuing:  
red scarf hooping her hair up,  
silver leggings and an envelope  
big as a coffee table  
leant against her hip.

And being north of sixty,  
I sit three seats in front,  
and ponder at what might  
have been in '84  
with my little plait and Zippo.

Not him! Bandana boy!  
Barely has cheek kissed check,  
(the bus still boarding)  
than he's jettisoned-in  
with all the grace of a flying squirrel.

She laughs, too polite to be cold,  
as he notes her number and street,  
tells her he's an artist too!  
Lives down the road.  
Life-drawing...portraiture....  
Love to do you...

How to avoid his portfolio?  
Tralee's three hours away...  
Four...

### **Times Flies - Lorna O'Lynn**

Plug socket - the bus is a rocket  
Don't even need a ticket in my pocket

Online, on the bus, no rush  
Just Us  
Wi-fi, airport, I fly, bye

### **I love our bus passes - Florence Forbes**

Off to school go lads and lasses  
Smart uniforms, in their masses  
While I go to the Zoo  
With a grandchild or two  
Oh how I love our bus passes

### **The Book - Ben Keatinge**

I kept this old miscellany,  
stories dimmed by dust, but true,  
the spirals on the cover  
gave me blessing, Celtic marrow,  
solace on the District Line  
as I tunneled, daily, through  
the bright cascade of morning,  
my cup, my schoolday ritual.  
At Victoria, the spinning board  
clicked the names of stations  
in south London. Heading to  
the furthest glades of Dulwich,  
I held to daftness, read the book  
more fiercely than Cúchulainn.

### **Train Time - Catherine Brogan**

Flicking screens at the train  
station. The gap, the wait  
for the journey. I was visiting family.  
Squeeze in coffee, hear the approach,  
quick, before the doors close.  
Lines rumble, it's limbo time.

My capsule of writing time,  
but now they've come to train  
me. Now before I write, I wait.  
Perhaps track back to family,  
think of how to approach  
the deadline, it must be close.

Do they want to hear about the close  
where I grew up, stoning time?  
Where my father's tomatoes train?  
Fifteen years the girder had to wait  
in the boggy field to join our family  
greenhouse, all reclaimed. I approach

buddleia broken glass, approach  
my neighbours, sometimes they get close.  
We fiddle through this stolen time,  
but now my own tendrils need to train,  
to catch the lattice that can't wait.  
Harvesting the fruit of family.

Dad is the carpenter of our family tree.  
Filming old people, his approach,  
to catching stories before eyes close.  
He embalms Brogans, maps the time  
when our brightest would train  
for religious orders or wait

on ladies, lords and children, wait  
to see their own weeins, to feed family.  
Head down, work hard - their approach.  
Now I think we're getting close,  
the engine slowing, in time  
with my sestina. I start to train

this approach to family time.  
Train my pen to close lines, to wait.

**The Train Will Carry On - Ivona Coghlan**

"There will be a short delay  
due to leaves on the track.  
Thank you for your patience."

The train is not moving  
Not forward, not back  
PA says the issue is  
Leaves on the track

"Come on," groans Nick O'Shea  
With a huff, with a puff  
"A wee leaf stop a train?  
How could that be enough?"

I nod along with Nick  
But the truth is I know  
How I get derailed  
By the gentlest of blows

From the weight of a straw  
The camel's back breaks  
And no-one but the camel  
Feels the impact it makes

a little leaf, one  
Tiny sting in the tail  
Can swerve you, can slow you  
Can halt you wholesale

Nobody but you needs  
To decide what is hard  
A leaf or a boulder  
A marathon, a yard

Still...

The leaves will be cleared  
The train will carry on  
No matter why you paused  
The journey shows you're strong

**School Bus Games - Callan Michael**

Autumn comes as summer leaves  
The blowing trees, the choppy seas  
Standing in line as the bus pulls by  
A cheeky boy with the mischievous smile

8.00am as the engine roars  
My mind's unfolding the opening doors  
Filled with cheer, laugh and sound  
"Doors closed." You hear so loud  
Chat filters around the bus  
The chaos, excitement, the rush, the fuss  
Music ringing in my ear  
Blocking out the deafening cheer

Conkers ready all varnished with a glow  
Emotion intense from head to toe  
Crowds gather along the back seats  
All unite like a moving fleet

The game begins, the tension is high  
Staring him down with my cheeky smile  
Two shots to him as he cracks through the lace  
Misses with a swipe to the buses delight

All eyes on me as I take the floor  
The moving motions like clashing doors  
The crack of the whip is heard so loud  
I've hit a worldie as I gaze at his frown

Looking down at the shattered nut  
His aggressive look with a gaspingly tut  
The shake of a hand as he sinks like sand  
The noise all around can be heard so loud

The crowds cheer, the school bus erupts  
I have won my glory in the shape of a chestnut

**Not Knowing What's Around the Corner**  
- Naomi Toland

Let the journey begin  
Not knowing what's around corner  
Can get us in a tisy  
Thinking about worst cases  
Our minds can get busy

Will it work out?  
Tell me right now  
Before it's begun  
We want to know how

But the answers only come  
If we let the journey begin  
Enjoying the ups,  
Taking the downs on the chin

Right now, in all the unknown  
I have the first step fear  
But as I keep moving forward  
Things become a little more clear

Even though I struggle  
To see which path to take  
I am beginning to trust  
The decisions I make

Feeling a little scared,  
I believe I will be okay  
And my future self will be  
Grateful I took this step, this day

**The Clockwork of my Life - Luisa Aparisi-Franca**

I've always thought of roads as dead veins  
covered over with asphalt  
new life only being breathed into them  
by movement  
as I board the train  
on my way to you  
the clockwork of my life  
dedicated to the small hours in between  
the ride from Dublin to Portadown—I love  
how green it is here  
Americans are always flooded  
by anything that isn't  
choked up by cement  
or our own sense of urgency.

I like the slower pace of things here  
my excitement at discovering  
wild garlic on our walks  
or learning about the seasonal allergies  
rapeseed can cause  
as bright yellow blotches  
blur past my window

My pulse quickens at everything I see  
Alverno House standing stolidly  
on the shores of Co. Meath  
with its bold black lettering  
letting me know  
that I'm halfway there  
black-faced sheep kneeling in the grass  
and deep, white water-filled gashes  
no doubt left behind by a farmer's tractor.

**Translink Had Our Back - Briegann McGivern**

Living life by the sea, peace and tranquility  
 Until devastation struck, oh wasn't that my luck!  
 Uprooted in a fluster,  
 120 miles to travel day by day...  
 School run and structure,  
 I doubted I would find a way...  
 I set the alarm for first thing in the morning  
 No time for red sky or shepherd's warning  
 As the sky was still pitch black,  
 but Translink train raring to go on the track  
 All we had to do was pack, Translink had our back.  
 Translink Station we arrive first pop,  
 a friendly face always there to greet,  
 a nice warm cosy station,  
 as I have a wee coffee and take a seat  
 But the worries start to flood my mind,  
 Five days a week for school,  
 how will I afford this cost all combined?  
 Thanks be to God, my fears and worries  
 were met with helpful solution,  
 as I listen to what Translink had to say....  
 I was recommended the ilink card,  
 oh this was like a genie in a lamp to me  
 Weekly travel discounts, travel more affordable,  
 for the kids and me!  
 Translink have been unreal,  
 so supportive, during this difficult time  
 Providing their magical wonder,  
 genies in lamps with wheels,  
 creating the flow to this rhyme  
 Through availing of the Translink service,  
 Translink staff all ready to help out  
 I can get the kids to school so far away,  
 their fantastic service I could not be without.  
 Kids arrive at school each day,  
 all safe and well, always before the bell  
 Perfect time for me,  
 to explore in nature and be free  
 Back off on the train I go,  
 Stress free, allowing the adventures to flow...  
 Translink provides access  
 to beautiful places for me to go

**My Translink Days Out - Phoebe Morrow**

Take the bus or the train,  
 Translink Metro is the name

Age is just a number don't sit about and wonder,  
 Catch the bus into town  
 but take it slowly, don't fall down.

Meet with friends, have a chat, talk about this  
 and talk about that.  
 A cup of tea and a big cream bun,  
 getting older is good fun.

Tomorrow on the train to Hollywood,  
 it's my turn to pay for food. We like to sit and  
 have a rest before I go for my eye test.

I'm the oldest aged 76 who likes  
 George Ezra and Little Mix.

The Glider is our favourite bus,  
 The driver loves to talk to us,  
 people talking on the phone,  
 missing their stop on the way home.

Our blue bus pass is like a piece of gold,  
 it's the only good thing about being old.

At heart, people are good.  
 Through our city, passing familiar streets  
 connecting the disconnect.  
 Small kindnesses make our journey easier.

Join the Journey

# POETRY PROMPTS AND REFLECTIONS

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9. **Write about a time you felt the world slow down** as you waited for a bus or train.  
What did you notice while standing still?



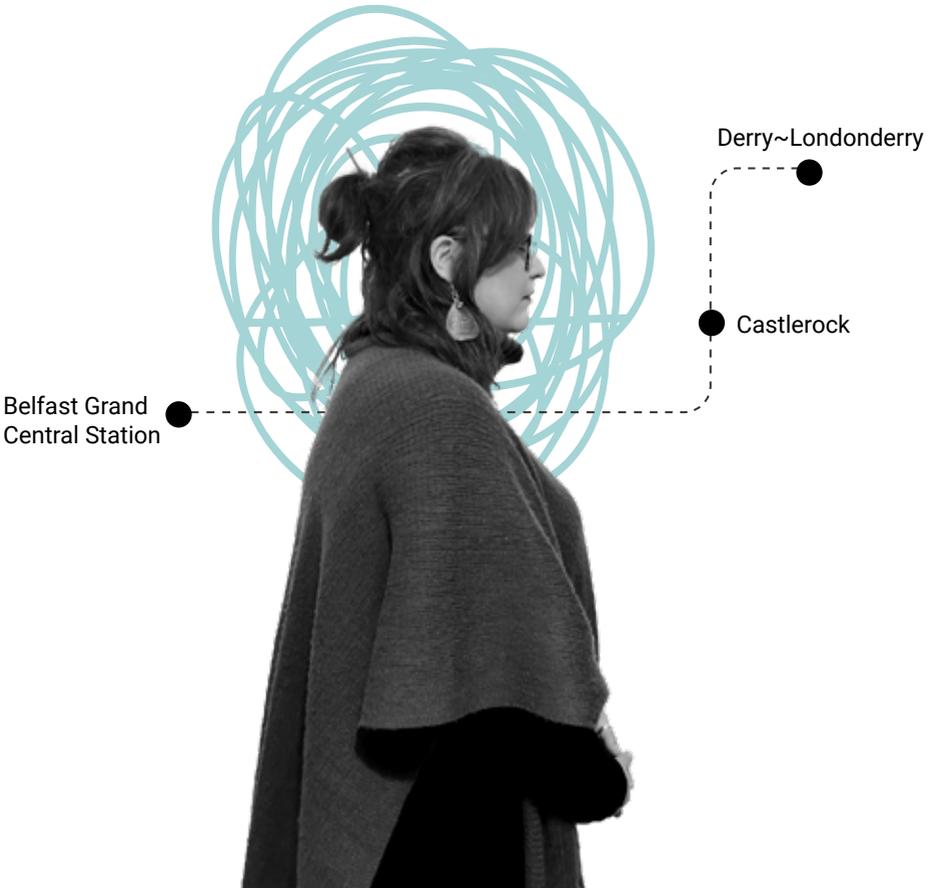
10. Choose any line from one of the poems in this book and use it as the start of your own poem ...



# POET IN MOTION

It is not hard to see why Michael Palin described the train ride between Derry~Londonderry and Coleraine as "one of the most beautiful rail journeys in the world". Why not take in the views for yourself?

NIAMH MCNALLY



## Castlerock

And there it is, unravelling an image  
in clouds of space. Atlantic shine holds

a flat scrape roll of oil paint. I squint and  
see a quick press of white onto the tips of waves

shaping and breaking onto glassy sand,  
lightening their sound.

Thick, pike-like wood lines a path into the sea.  
The remnants of Car Paravel before the

seven o'clock bell tolls. I close my eyes  
and a Victorian Sleeper takes me home.

## The Inishowen Curve

Running alongside the curve and point,  
tracks whisper as they pass Bellarena's

secluded nature. Mirrored by a harsh splice of  
water, Benone tides reflect Donegal's wild heather.

My eyes pan in The Moor Trails,  
in search of a Willow-the-Wisp

off the Scottish Coast or a rope  
from a shipwrecked armada.

Before I'm taken; straw, buzz nettles  
and thorn bushes nip my legs,  
holding me onto this cliff, at Mussenden.

POETRY in motion

# SECTION SEVEN



Public transport is more than just a way to get from A to B—it connects lives, stories, and experiences. From chance encounters to daily routines, these poems reflect how shared journeys bring people together, creating a better connected and vibrant world.

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• Molly Farrell • J.Wells • Eilín de Paor • Chris Gee • Poppy Henderson • Jeanie Parris • Susan McKinley • Rosemary Tumelty • Sam Dunn • Aoife Maguire • Jacqueline Brady • Denisa Hasieberova • Sarah Cantillon • Fred McIlmoyle • Bronagh Mallon • Marlene Pickett

**Coming Home for Tea - Molly Farrell**

I've been thinking about home a lot recently.  
 And where exactly home is.  
 Maybe, home is my big sister taking my hand,  
 "Do you know where we're going?"  
 "... no."  
 "Alright."  
 Sitting on the bus to Newcastle,  
 Watching housing estates give way to the sea.  
 "Tell mum we'll be home for tea."  
 I never knew where I was going really,  
 but it's alright,  
 I had my big sister there with me.  
 Recently, I've been thinking  
 about going home for tea.  
 How I left at 17, can I still go home for tea?  
 I travelled all over the island,  
 but I suppose Derry became my home.  
 Taking that 273 through Omagh,  
 Taking the train to Coleraine,  
 Sitting on the bus on my way home for a funeral,  
 Hiding my tears from the passengers.  
 "Get it out, dear,"  
 A friendly pat from the lady beside me,  
 tissue in hand,  
 I didn't get to go home and have tea  
 with my granda before he died.  
 Suppose Derry became my home, sure.  
 But you know, my granda built those railway lines.  
 From Pennyburn to the Moy,  
 And when I can't quite remember his laugh,  
 I take the train to Derry,  
 Remember him telling me, 'I built these tracks.'  
 Recently, I've been thinking  
 about where home is,  
 All the different places I've ended up,  
 Yet, there's always a bus to get from a to b,  
 There's always my dad  
 waiting to pick me up.  
 Tell my parents, aye,  
 I'll be home for tea.  
 Tell my grandparents,  
 I still think of them on the trains.  
 Suppose home is wherever I end up,  
 But home is definitely where  
 there's a warm cup of tea.

**A Seat Beside the Window - J.Wells**

With staff both polite and efficient,  
 A winning combination  
 for a traveller's journey.  
 A seat beside the window,  
 All the better to observe  
 the passing glimpses,  
 of sea, over field and look,  
 a majestic viaduct.  
 All too soon destination  
 Sure tis more glorious to journey than arrive.

**Saving up for window blinds - Eilín de Paor**

I grew to know the top deck bus crew well  
 those mornings from our bedroom  
 on the main street.

I was early if I saw the boy  
 with the white Sennheisers  
 the corners of his paperback  
 kinked like butter curls

late if the lady with the teal beret  
 and elegant nose passed  
 before I had the last layer  
 of my make-up done

just in time if I caught  
 the man with a miniature pinscher  
 adjusting his browline glasses  
 in my direction.

I missed our wordless conversation after—  
 the daily statements of a micro-nation.

**TRANSLINK - Chris Gee**

Transported by rail or road both fast,  
 Reaching destinations many and vast.  
 A migos we meet along the way,  
 New friends we make both night and day.  
 Super for journeys either up or down,  
 Linking villages, cities and many a town.  
 In comfort we travel across this land,  
 New countryside seen, beaches and sand.  
 Keying in memories, small and great,  
 Translink and You  
 Making tracks – it's a date!

## Love on Tour - Poppy Henderson

The train hums quietly beneath our weary feet,  
Worn and tired, yet electrified,  
As if the afterglow thrums through our veins,  
And the pulse sounds oddly  
like our favourite song.  
The lights flicker softly—  
No one notices.  
Pink feathers drift languidly to the floor,  
We lie limp, a tapestry of lost exuberance,  
Knowing these moments slip  
away like whispers in the night.  
Glitter glimmers on our eyelids, outfits aglow—  
Like kids playing dress-up,  
lost in dreams we used to know.  
The train sways like a lullaby,  
Rocking us between reveries and reality.  
No one notices.  
Friends huddle around a phone,  
Flicking through the memories  
like an art gallery.  
The delicate light dances across their faces,  
Their cacophony is undeniable,  
But to them, it's the sweetest  
sound they'll ever know,  
Later, parents might chide the noise,  
Perhaps laugh and roll their eyes fondly,  
But in this moment, with the train  
humming along to their melody,  
No one notices.  
The city blurs beyond my window,  
Colours twisting, swirling, dancing  
Like I was moments (maybe hours?) ago.  
But here, we are alive, steady and constant,  
Tied together in this tranquility,  
And still, no one notices.  
We know soon we'll part ways,  
Step into the cool night air,  
Letting reality wrap around us,  
foreign yet vaguely familiar,  
But, for now,  
We wrap ourselves in echoes of what once was;  
and I'll notice - a little too late -  
how it was woven through  
the quiet hum of the train,  
The tragedy of how we were all here,  
With a train bringing us together,  
Only to carry us apart once more.

## 7A - Jeanie Parris

A Monday morning in Autumn,  
there is a chill in the air.  
The bus stop is busy,  
hands cool in my pocket  
as I jingle my fare.  
The 7A meanders down the  
busy Ormeau Road.  
Nameless shadows in windows  
as it carries its precious load.

Dutifully following its route,  
majestic and bright.  
Every day, same streets,  
same houses, a familiar sight.  
It carries a sea of souls who are  
beginning their day.  
Some joyful, some tired, all making their way.

A confident wave beckons the bus to stop.  
Strangers alighting and boarding, heading up top.  
It offers a welcome to all, in company or alone.  
Bathe in all that is human  
and look up from your phone.

A mother whispers words of love  
to her young child  
An elderly couple holding hands,  
sit side by side.  
A flash of colour, the blazers as  
students head to school.  
A snapshot of humanity,  
in this diverse human pool.

New and familiar faces  
share surreptitious glances.  
Life in fragments, brief,  
yet full of opportunity and chances.  
Each day, 7A is a silent witness  
to this effortless flow.  
Connections, of love, of life,  
and of where we all go.

The soothing hum of the engine  
is steady and low.  
Taking me to my destination,  
where only I know.  
And for this moment in time,  
this solitary journey is my own.  
My daily moment of travel,  
where I'm never alone.

## Adventures and Explorations - Susan McKinley

I just love the chosen concept of  
poetry in motion  
As a regular train passenger,  
I give support to this notion  
As a retired non driver  
with plenty of time to kill  
Rail journeys are exciting and  
help my days to fill  
Along the route I take to Belfast  
from Bangor where I dwell  
To a curious, observant traveller,  
there's many a tale to tell  
You're invited to behold  
the uniqueness of our land  
Its picturesque coastal scenery  
with pathways through the sand

Gazing out of your window  
as you pass through each station  
You see clues to the history and  
culture renowned by our nation  
And from stops nearing Belfast;  
extra facts to explore  
Its industrial heritage,  
its architecture, museums, and more  
So, rather than your journey  
just being a route from A to B  
Why not make it an adventure,  
as often times like me  
So, instead of a virtual reality  
from a screen of some device  
Enjoy the world outside your carriage window

and experience real life  
Why not engage all your senses  
and educate your mind  
Choose a station to disembark from  
and leave all cares behind  
Visit the Folk & Transport Museum  
when you get off at Cultra  
And absorb the wondrous re-creation  
of how we lived in times before  
Or consider Titanic Quarter  
for a unique museum experience treat  
Learn all about the Titanic voyage  
and the sad story of its fate  
And hear accounts of how Belfast  
once received worldwide acclaim  
For building ships and famous  
for being leaders in their game

But if you travel this route repeatedly  
and for you there's nothing new  
I hope you still enjoy your journey;  
find creative things to do  
You may find pleasure in relaxing,  
prefer being on your own  
Read a thrilling novel or  
you might even write a poem  
One thing's for sure and certain,  
that when you reach your destination  
You get to soak up the  
pure magnificence of entering the new station  
It's so modern, vast and captivating;  
would be easy to pretend  
You're in another world entirely,  
now you've reached your journey's end

## Rural Connectivity - Rosemary Tumelty

The rhythmic hum and rumble  
wheels upon an unseen track  
a pre-determined path, and yet  
an unknown journey in life.  
Companion's bodies together,  
though, distant – life-stories varied,  
yet similar – but never the same.  
Mist on the inside of the windowpane  
reveals a love heart – initials indistinct  
and draining from their boundary.  
Who were they, I wonder,  
my former travelling companions  
Are they, like the drawing,  
bleeding into each other's lives  
taking their love to new dimensions  
or draining out of love?  
External darkness creates misted  
pearlescent reflections on the glass  
as an innocent voyeur,  
intimate hazed scenes unfold  
A mother breast-feeding her baby  
smiling down at its contented face  
Students boarding all in a flurry, bags,  
rucksacks, coats, books,  
tablets and phones waved aloft like flags,  
faces glowing crimson from autumn winds,  
animated in happy conversation  
as they fall gladly into seats  
conversations of philosophy and poetry,  
medicine and comedy – a couple arguing  
over time, a precious commodity –  
another whispering of the  
many forms of love –  
A guide dog in high-vis vest  
his head resting on his owners lap  
her hand feeling for his ears,  
then gently petting his golden fur,  
a gentle smile playing on her lips,  
her eyes closed, safe in  
their silent companionship  
A riotous hen-party intent  
on painting Dublin red,  
exuberant dancing and singing  
at the head of the carriage,  
pink sequin cowboy hats and feather boas  
floating over heads and shoulders,  
Shania Twain declaring,  
in untold decibels,  
how great it is to  
'Feel like a Woman!'  
Gaelic supporters heading  
for a weekend in the capital:

Up for the match.  
A pride flag – a man in drag.  
A father with two young children.  
Other seats filled with avid book readers,  
cheer-leaders, and earnest truth seekers  
A class of eleventh graders  
Arrogant stock-traders  
Lovers and cheaters  
Even those eating noxious,  
pickled-onion Space Raiders!  
A collection of Alternates  
lurk at the far end of the carriage  
the serious calm moodiness of Goths  
the first of the barbarians  
to develop a literate culture  
to them we owe our gratitude  
This weekly journey, North to South  
rekindling our love of all  
that is poetic and beautiful  
encompassing all edges  
of this unique island  
From the order of our  
ancient Gaelic Bards of the North,  
Art McCumhaigh and the harper,  
Padraig McAlinden,  
to the contemporary John Hewitt,  
Louis MacNeice, and Michael Longley,  
over to Yeats, Joyce, and the myriad-minded  
man himself, AE Russell.  
Young male students stand on seats laughing  
and call out amusing or lude lines of poetry,  
vying for attention from the hen-party  
a poetry verses music face-off, if you will!  
A cacophony of life's masses, and yet  
strangely harmonious, as beautiful and messy  
as only humanity can be!  
These encounters, a reaffirming of life,  
this melting pot on wheels: life's cauldron.  
Staring into the deep blue eyes beside me,  
a gentle composition of an easy smile and  
radiated warmth words unnecessary  
I glance down again at our hands entwined  
a soft caress of thumb over fingers.  
With a change in the sound of the wheels:  
the clatter over numerous sidetrack joinings  
subtle braking as we near the station  
anticipation of endless possibilities  
Our future awaits.

**17:15 - Sam Dunn**

Like a canary  
trapped in a call centre cage,  
nine to five. Until . . .

sailing rails that lead to Larne,  
. . . my spirit lifts like a lark!

**Train of life - Aoife Maguire**

The figure comes to life when the  
train leaves the station. Gaining speed  
as we move faster, faster. Nature blurs past  
in a haze of green and blue

As trees morph and the sky changes colour  
the figure is in the distance, always there.  
A constant companion on the train of life.

Now as I glance out of the winter-infested  
window at the cold, dreary landscape;  
I wonder where all  
the innocence of childhood went.  
Did it depart on the same train I arrived on?

**Driver - Jacqueline Brady**

Hands on the wheel,  
Singing your tune.  
Sure of the route,  
That lies ahead.

Blue skies frame,  
Clouds scudding over,  
The winding road  
Flashes by.

Driving with me,  
your co-pilot and friend.  
Our journey began,  
Decades ago.

Our maps have changed,  
Roads have become potholed.  
But with you at the wheel,  
We arrive unscathed.

**I Often Halt at the Opening - Denisa Hasieberova**

I often halt at the opening,  
when the early express pulls in  
to Bangor, the clatter of

automatic doors revealing space  
between platform and track,  
between voice and footstep

and still, sleepy passengers  
usher me through narrow aisles to a seat.

It is all choreographed, each time  
I choose the right side, facing North  
so I can watch the sea air

blow inland and the wing-flaps  
of hungry gulls in the half-dark  
while I am unhearing,

lost in thought, past Carnalea,  
and then the silent void as  
the signal drops near Marino,

before the world unfolds again  
to grey sunrise and noise,  
past the mudflats of Holywood,

its water reeds a hidden stage  
which holds so many beings -  
oystercatcher, curlew, turnstone,

each stopping there from their long  
journeys, shoulder to shoulder  
like a curtain call,

their cries echoing into verses  
and stories of their border lives.  
As the steel rails quake us awake,

I often see it - the white heron,  
ankle-deep and unmoving,  
home and far from flight.

### Summer by Bus and Train - Sarah Cantillon

I travelled far and wide this summer.  
In June, I took the train to Portrush with my pals  
from the day centre. Oh, we laughed out loud as  
we went on the rides. We shopped till we dropped,  
went on the big wheel and stuffed our faces with  
ice cream.

At weekends, I took the train to Portadown to  
see my dad and his partner Nola. We sometimes  
frequented the local Indian. Boy, the food was hot.

Early in the summer, my pals and I  
took a bus to Dublin Zoo. It rained terribly but then  
the sun came out. We trekked the whole zoo, it  
took two hours. The animals were cool.

In September, the same pals and I took the bus to  
the Tayto factory, we got our picture taken with Mr  
Tayto. We got crisps and tasted some.  
We saw how they were made in the factory.

Finally, I took trips to Newcastle on weekends to  
see my mum... We shopped, took the dogs out  
and sat in the garden. It was idyllic. Later on, I saw  
my sister had coffee with her and played with  
Louis my nephew in her garden. Tonight, I will  
sleep for what seems like a hundred years  
dreaming of that great transport journey by bus  
and train that very summer and beyond.

### Connections - Fred McIlmoye

I find my seat - relax - unpack.  
My mind turns off, unwinds, drifts back  
To childhood days on local trains  
With all my friends, complete with names.  
We'd pass the hours in vibrant chat  
While the rolling wheels went clickety-clack.  
Our annual 'trip' was long awaited,  
Now it was here and breath was bated.  
But that was all a long time ago,  
Life's recent pressures have left their woes.  
But once again I sense that old refrain  
As I feel the driver take the strain.  
A broad rolling sea of ripening ears  
Through the window now appears.  
Amazed I watch it turn to gold  
As I drift off to sleep like in days of old.

**Gliding - Bronagh Mallon**

Neon pink lights of the local service fill the night  
 then the passionate purple streak  
 of the G streams up,  
 Our spandex bendy bus zips from corner to corner  
 across the compass of the city, hot 80's on the roll.

Behind me a giggle of schoolgirls  
 holler at the latest exploits of 'The Ex'.  
 Three seats up pink ears slump  
 into a black hoodie, wincing for his mate.

At the front two old friends  
 coincidentally coming together – always a treat,  
 a catch-up with nods and mumbles  
 unspoken history brims out in knowing glances.

The young man standing mid-section sees  
 the buggy approaching the whooshing doors,  
 hurries to help the burdened mum  
 lift her precious cargo.

At heart, people are good.  
 Through our city, passing familiar streets  
 connecting the disconnect.  
 Small kindnesses make our journey easier.

**The Last Train North - Marlene Pickett**

The longest day, still light at eleven,  
 milky stars seeping, strewn  
 across fields in the nearly dark.  
 Dangled in the distance, a dog's bark.

And the big trees breathe;  
 heavy, creaking, thick with leaves,  
 dry grass shifting in the night heat,  
 Midsummer's Day falling asleep.

Out of the hush an oncoming hum;  
 steady, closer, the beat of a drum  
 and the last train north in a flash of its lights  
 surges from darkness, gorges the night,  
 away to the last light, away to the sea,  
 to arching Atlantic infinity,  
 cackles mechanically down the track,  
 racing for home with the day on his back.

Then silence soothes, the noise spent,  
 air soft with honeysuckle scent.  
 Moth wings rasp on a window sill,  
 drowsy with nectar, summer filled

# POET IN MOTION

With stunning scenery to enjoy from your bus or train window, a trip to the North Coast is an amazing adventure at any time of year, regardless of the weather.

## CASS NORTH



## A Passing Season - Cass North

At the end of summer  
with the thistles in bloom  
and the blackberry ready to ripen  
let's meet each other once again  
at Portrush harbour.

Let's ride the bus around the coast and reminisce;  
as children on our first school trip  
when we climbed the Dunluce castle stones  
and you declared us Pirate Kings of Ulster.

Let muster all our childhood wonder  
and once again touch the giants stones  
and dream of Finn and Oonagh  
and loves salvation.

Now further to that old rope bridge  
where fishermen once roamed; Carrick-a-rede,  
where you held me close and kissed me,  
legs shaking in the waking winds.

Let's take the bus.  
Let's ramble into memories made once  
in front of blades of grass and wildflowers  
and the whole coast road an open path before us.

At the end, let us part again at Portrush harbour,  
knowing how the land tends love  
long past the end of summer.

## Fáilte - Cass North

Who owns this land?  
Who keeps these cliffs we pass?  
Who bought the star-eyed fields of flowers -  
cowslip and red clover;  
who made them bloom through summer?

The stones are ours, they say -  
basalt by ocean foam, myths made  
in rock and Ogham  
forged beyond time.

Ireland; your beauty is the  
rough breeze on the cliff side  
pushing me forward.

There is no lease; no locked door.  
The wind of your valleys hits the heart  
and welcomes all who enter.

## Causeway Ramble - Cass North

def. Ramble, /ræmbəl/ v.  
to wander for pleasure,  
to explore idly,  
to roam without care.

We rambled through the little town,  
We rambled through the glen.  
We rambled down the country road  
past field and fern and fen

and as we rambled past the ports  
and rambled by the sea,  
we rambled on, our merry group  
about what each stop would be.

You rambled on about the clouds  
that rambled in the sky  
and rambled whether it would rain -  
I reckoned it would try.

We rambled our way off the bus  
and rambled through the grass.  
We rambled 'til our legs got tired  
along the coastal path.

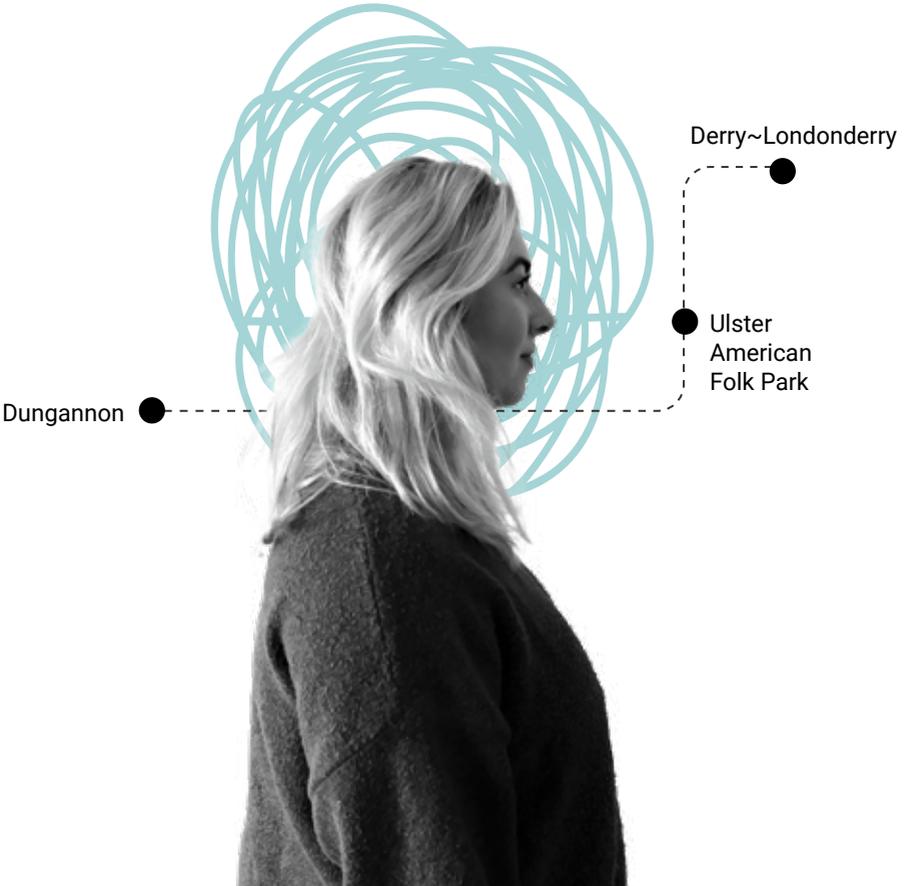
And finally, our hearts content  
we stopped to have some tea;  
free from care or time, our peace of mind  
renewed in rambling.



# POET IN MOTION

Explore the rural connections between Mid Ulster and Omagh on the 273 which stops near the Ulster American Folk Park to explore local history and connections.

## AOIBH JOHNSON



### Conversing at the Bus Stop - Aoibh Johnson

"Did you hear there's a festival in Irvinestown?  
We go to it every year.  
Me and her, we get the bus over.  
It's really not that dear."

"There's music and dancing and food stalls.  
The place bes hiving with people.  
And we stay in a wee B&B in the town,  
Next door to the church with the steeple."

"We're always doing wee trips like this.  
It's lovely to get away.  
And sure it's handy too,  
and sure it's somethin' to do,  
Even if it's just for the day."

"Where is it you're going yourself?  
Ah, Derry, it's a great city, isn't it?  
Real easy to walk around that city,  
We've explored every inch and bit of it."

"And we'd often go up to Belfast,  
Great for a bit of shopping.  
Christmas time is when we'd mainly go,  
And the place, it does be hoppin'!"

"Pure handy just getting the bus.  
Takes the stress out of it, doesn't it?  
No worries about parking or getting directions,  
This last few years we've been loving it."

"Right, that's our bus arriving.  
We'll maybe see you again.  
You should try get to the Irvinestown festival,  
Sure, maybe we'll bump into you then!"

"And enjoy yourself in Derry!  
The people there are great,  
They're some talkers, they never stop,  
The minute they meet you, they're your mate!"

"It was nice to get to know you anyway.  
Remind me, what was your name?  
Sure, I might see you and if not,  
It's been great chatting all the same."

### Carrying Me Home - Aoibh Johnson

I sit cosy in my seat,  
With my earphones nuzzled,  
comfortably in my ears.  
The soundtrack seems to bring my land to life,  
All worry and doubt disappears.

For these few moments, an hour perhaps,  
There's nowhere else that I have to be.  
Nothing to do, or achieve or make,  
Nowhere to go, no one to see.

I can get lost in my reverie,  
Sit back and watch my world whizz by.  
I can be at one with my thoughts and hopes,  
I have time and peace by my side.

This same seat has gifted me sunsets,  
Starlit skies at night,  
Views of my own, sweet landscape,  
Not normally in my sight.

Time to just watch and ponder.  
Space to reflect and be still.  
Moments to quiet the chatter,  
A place for my cup to refill.

And when the time does come to leave here,  
And return to life and its noise,  
I hold these sweet moments in my back pocket,  
And I walk with more joy and poise.

My sunset and starlit memories,  
Come with me wherever I roam.  
Because there's nothing more  
sweet than the stillness,  
Of the bus that carries me home.





Connections Photo by Sarah Hagan

## Eight Decades - Aoibh Johnson

Her wrinkled face smiles at me,  
As she strains to board the bus.  
Each step an Everest, a Kilimanjaro,  
But this lady makes no fuss.

She flashes her well-worn bus pass,  
Gives the driver a well-practiced wink.  
Then settles in her favourite seat,  
Her plump cheeks now turned pink.

"I'm 83", she tells me.  
"A grand age", I tell her so.  
Her eyes glint gold with pride,  
She says, "That's over eight decades you know?"

She's "going for a look 'round the shops."  
Though she "often doesn't buy a thing."  
But instead, she fills her day with familiar faces,  
Comforted by the joy that they bring.

"There's a lovely girl works in the chemist,  
She always bes asking about me.  
And a wee fella works part time in the butchers,  
Always gives me a bag for free."

"Then I'll get a wee cuppa in the café,  
I might bump into some friends.  
But if not, I'll keep the waitress company,  
Sometimes I sit 'til her shift ends."

She stares, contented, out the window,  
Looking forward to what her day will bring.  
And I look at her with admiration,  
As the stop-bell it does ring.

I thank her for our conversation,  
She'll never know how much it brought me.  
She steadies herself against my shoulder,  
And squeezes it goodbye, just softly.

And I watch her from the window,  
Walking proudly towards the main street.  
Such grace and love and joy and hope,  
Beaming from her head to her feet.

And I can only hope that someday,  
I'll be on this bus again, at 83.  
And I'll tell the young woman bedside me,  
"The shopkeepers always be asking about me."

And I'll go to the town every week,  
But I'll "often not buy a thing".  
And maybe, just maybe, I too,  
Will make that young woman's heart sing.



# THANK YOU

Thank you **to every person who submitted a poem, joined a workshop, or shared their words and ideas.** This project would not have been possible without your enthusiasm and willingness to engage. Your involvement made it a truly shared journey.

This collection was inspired by **Translink's Better.Connected** strategy and **UU's People, Place and Partnership** strategy. Through poetry, we hoped to create those rare moments of pause and reflection in our often too-busy lives. Public transport offers a unique opportunity for these quiet spaces, and poetry gives us a way to capture them.

We hope that as you've read through this booklet, you've found inspiration in the words of others and that it has encouraged you to take your own journey with poetry—whether by writing, reflecting, or simply noticing the world around you.

Our collaboration with **Ulster University** was essential to the success of this project. We are deeply grateful to **Dr. Frank Ferguson and Nuala Dualz** for their support and partnership throughout.

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We must also extend our heartfelt thanks to the incredible **Poets in Motion - Keilan Colville, Aoibh Johnson, Colin Hassard, Marty McKenna, Alex Cregan, Cass North, and Adeline Henry Cumming.** Their words have captured the essence of connection, travel, and community in such powerful ways.

We are also proud to include the stunning photography from the Translink **Connections Photography Exhibition** which showcased

public photographs from across Northern Ireland highlighting the connections made possible through public transport. Thank you to all the talented photographers who contributed to this visual exploration of connection.

A heartfelt thank you to **Adam Turkington, and Seedhead Arts**, and to the talented artists who formed the street art and graffiti crews from both **Derry~Londonderry and Belfast.** Your creativity and imagination have transformed the York Street Station Underpass into a place of beauty and reflection.

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To the **students of Ulster University**, thank you for taking part in our workshops, and public readings.

**Last but not least, thank you for picking up and reading this Poetry in Motion collection.** Public transport is where journeys unfold, stories begin, and people connect. Every bus, and train carries voices, memories, and movement, shaping the rhythm of daily life. Through poetry, we can capture those moments—fragments of conversation, fleeting landscapes, the quiet hum of travel. We hope it has not only inspired you to read but also encouraged you to write your own poem using some of the prompts in this collection. All it takes is one word, then another.



Forestsideside 6a

Forestsideside  
6a

Connections Photo by Jonny Hanna

