James Joyce

James Joyce (1882-1941), Irish novelist, noted for his experimental use of language in such works as *Ulysses* (1922) and *Finnegans Wake* (1939). Joyce’s technical innovations in the art of the novel include an extensive use of interior monologue; he used a complex network of symbolic parallels drawn from the mythology, history, and literature, and created a unique language of invented words, puns, and allusions.

James Joyce was born in Dublin, on February 2, 1882, as the son of John Stanislaus Joyce, an impoverished gentleman, who had failed in a distillery business and tried all kinds of professions, including politics and tax collecting. Joyce’s mother, Mary Jane Murray, was ten years younger than her husband. She was an accomplished pianist, whose life was dominated by the Roman Catholic Church. In spite of their poverty, the family struggled to maintain a solid middle-class facade. From the age of six Joyce, was educated by Jesuits at Clongowes Wood College, at Clane, and then at Belvedere College in Dublin (1893-97). In 1898 he entered the University College, Dublin. Joyce’s first publication was an essay on Ibsen’s play *When We Dead Awaken*. It appeared in the *Fortnightly Review* in 1900. At this time he also began writing lyric poems.

After graduation in 1902 the twenty-year-old Joyce went to Paris, where he worked as a journalist, teacher and in other occupations under difficult financial conditions. He spent a year in France, returning when a telegram arrived saying his mother was dying. Not long after her death, Joyce was travelling again. He left Dublin in 1904 with Nora Barnacle, a chambermaid who he married in 1931.

Joyce published *Dubliners* in 1914, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* in 1916, a play *Exiles* in 1918 and *Ulysses* in 1922. In 1907 Joyce had published a collection of poems, *Chamber Music*. At the outset of the First World War, Joyce moved with his family to Zurich. In Zürich Joyce started to develop the early chapters of *Ulysses*, which was first published in France because of censorship troubles in the Great Britain and the United States, where the book became legally available only in 1933. In March 1923 Joyce started in Paris his second major work, *Finnegans Wake*, suffering at the same time chronic eye troubles caused by glaucoma. The first segment of the novel appeared in Ford Madox Ford’s transatlantic review in April 1924, as part of what Joyce called *Work in Progress*. The final version was published in 1939.

Some critics considered the work a masterpiece, though many readers found it incomprehensible. After the fall of France in WWII, Joyce returned to Zurich, where he died on January 13, 1941, still disappointed with the reception of *Finnegans Wake*.

My Dove, My Beautiful One

MY dove, my beautiful one,
Arise, arise!
The night-dew lies
Upon my lips and eyes.

The odorous winds are weaving
A music of sighs:
Arise, arise,
My dove, my beautiful one!

I wait by the cedar tree,
My sister, my love.
White breast of the dove,
My breast shall be your bed.

The pale dew lies
Like a veil on my head.
My fair one, my fair dove,
Arise, arise!
Seamus Heaney was born on 13th April 1939, the eldest of nine children at the family farm Castledawson, Northern Ireland. As well as being a farmer, his father Patrick was also a cattle dealer and was a popular figure at cattle markets and fairs. His family were Catholic and he was raised in the Irish Nationalist tradition. Like others of his age group and background he played under-age football. In 1951 he won a scholarship to St. Columb's College, a Catholic Grammar boarding school in Derry. At St. Columb's he excelled at English, Irish (or Gaelic) and Latin. The poem The Ministry of Fear in his collection North refers to this period in his life. He spent a summer in a Gaeltacht area of Donegal studying Irish which is the first language in this area. One well-known poet of the Donegal Gaeltacht is Cathal O'Searcaigh some of whose poems have been translated by Seamus Heaney. When he was fourteen, his four-year-old brother Christopher was killed in a road accident, an event that he would later write about in two poems.

In 1957 Heaney studied English Language and Literature at Queen's University of Belfast. He began to write and during his third year at university his poems began to appear in the Queen's literary magazines. He graduated in 1961 with a First Class Honours degree. After qualifying he took up a teaching post in the autumn of 1962. The headmaster was the writer Michael MacLaverty from County Monaghan, who introduced Heaney to the poetry of Patrick Kavanagh. Access in Belfast to the world of English, Irish and American letters was "a crucial experience," according to the poet. He was especially moved by poets who created poetry out of their local and native backgrounds – authors such as Ted Hughes and Robert Frost as well as Kavanagh.

Seamus Heaney's first book of poetry, Eleven Poems, was published in November 1965 to coincide with his appearance at The Queen's University Festival. In spring 1966, Faber and Faber published his first full volume called Death of a Naturalist. This collection met with much critical acclaim and went on to win a host of awards including the Eric Gregory Award. Most of these poems deal with the young Heaney's responses to beautiful and threatening aspects of nature, the loss of childhood innocence and his initiation into adulthood. In the first poem of the volume, Digging, Heaney evokes the rural landscape where he was raised and comments on the skill and care with which his father and grandfather farmed the land. Heaney announces that as a poet he too will dig, but with a pen, uncovering layers of both personal memory and history.

Heaney was now 27 years of age. In that same year he was appointed as a lecturer in Modern English Literature at Queen's University Belfast and his first son, Michael, was born. A second son, Christopher, was born in 1968. Both sons were later to feature in his poem A Kite for Michael and Christopher, as was his daughter in A Hazel Stick for Catherine Ann. In 1968-69 serious disturbances broke out in Northern Ireland. Heaney, like many others, was to be greatly affected by the conflict. In 1969 Doorm to the Dark was published. The title is taken from the opening line of The Forge, one of the poems in the collection.

He spent the academic year 1970-71 as a visiting Professor at the University of California in Berkeley and returned to Queen's University for another year. In the summer of 1972 Heaney left his job and his home in Belfast. He moved to a rented cottage in Glenmore, Co.Wicklow in the Republic of Ireland. For the next three years he made his living as a freelance writer, presenting a radio programme called Imprint for RTE and doing occasional work for the BBC and for various journals. He was also writing poems and in 1972 his third collection Wintering Out was published. Over the next few years Heaney began to give readings throughout Ireland, Britain and U.S.A. He was appointed to the Arts Council in the Republic of Ireland in 1974 and became an elected member of Aosdána. In 1975 Heaney published his fourth volume, North. In it he addressed the ongoing civil strife in N.Ireland using images of the two-thousand years old bog bodies found in Denmark in the 1950’s.

In October 1975 he took up an appointment at Carysfort Teacher Training College in Dublin and in the following year he became Head of English, a post he was to hold until 1981. In 1976 he and his family moved from County Wicklow to the capital city, Dublin. Selected Poems and Preoccupations: Selected Prose was published in 1980. In 1981 he left Carysfort to become visiting professor at Harvard University – teaching one semester per year, to include workshops in creative writing. In 1982 he was awarded an Honorary Doctorate from Queen's University. Heaney was also awarded an
Honorary Doctorate from Fordham
University in 1982. At the Fordham commencement ceremony in 1982 Heaney delivered the commencement address in a 46-stanza poem entitled "Verses for a Fordham Commencement". In 1983, along with the playwright Brian Friel and actor Stephen Rea he co-founded Field Day Publishing through which "the nature of the Irish problem could be explored and, as a result, more successfully confronted than it had been hitherto" (Ireland's Field Day viii). In 1983 Field Day published An Open Letter, Heaney's "lyrical sideswipe" at Penguin Books for including his work in an anthology of Contemporary British poetry. In the same year Field Day also published Sweeney Astray, his translation of a medieval Irish poem about a king who went mad during a battle and was turned into a bird. A strong individualistic and meditative mood became evident in his work. In 1984 he published Station Island. He was elected to the Boylston Chair of Rhetoric and Oratory at Harvard. Also in that year he received the first of two civic receptions given by Magherafelt District Council. On that occasion the then Council Chairman, the late Paddy Sweeney, remarked that he felt it necessary to point out - to much laughter - that he was not the Mad Sweeney who was the subject of the poet's recent work Sweeney Astray.

In 1988 a collection of critical essays called The Government of the Tongue was published in which Heaney questioned the role of poetry in modern times. In 1989, he was elected to a five-year term as Professor of Poetry at the Oxford University, to give three public lectures each year. His inaugural lecture was published as The Redress of Poetry. The chair did not require residence in Oxford, and throughout this period he was dividing his time between Ireland and America. He also continued to give public readings, which were very popular. In 1986 Heaney received a Litt.D. from Bates College in Maine U.S.A. So well attended and keenly anticipated were these events that those who queued for tickets with such enthusiasm were dubbed "Heaneyboppers", suggesting an almost pop-star devotion on the part of his followers.

In 1990 The Cure at Troy, a play based on Sophocles' Philoctetes, was published to much acclaim. Visitors to Laurel Villa guesthouse in Magherafelt can view an actual programme from the World Premier of this play which was staged at the Guildhall in Derry. In 1991, Seeing Things, was published. In 1994 a ceasefire was declared in N.Ireland and this is commemorated in Tolland. Heaney was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1995 for what the Nobel committee described as "works of lyrical beauty and ethical depth, which exalt everyday miracles and the living past". In January 1996 he was given a Civic Reception by Magherafelt District Council in recognition of his achievement. Also in 1996, his collection The Spirit Level was published and won the Whitbread Book of the Year Award. In the same year he was appointed Emerson Poet in Residence to visit Harvard in non-teaching status every other autumn for six weeks. This was also the year Bellaghy Bawn Visitor Centre was opened to the public. This was originally a 17th Century fortified house which was built by the Vintner's Company of London. There are exhibitions on local natural history and history. In 1999 came the publication of Beowulf: A New Translation which achieved much critical and popular success.

This retelling of this 1,000 year old Anglo-Saxon poem was to win the Whitbread Award once more for Heaney, beating off stiff competition from J.K.Rowlings's Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban. In March 2000, Beowulf was the No.1 Bestseller in the UK and 60,000 copies were in print in the US. Many of Heaney's poems relate to his early years spent in the area around Mossbawn. The poem Mossbawn Sunlight gives an indication of the happiness and sense of security he felt growing up in these surroundings. His collection of prose, called Preoccupations, also emphasises the importance of Heaney's childhood memories of Mossbawn, Anahorish, the Broagh, Lagan's Road and other local places in the making of the poet.

In 2001 a new Heaney collection – his eleventh - appeared, entitled Electric Light. One of the best-known poems is called Out of the Bag. The following year (2002) saw the publication of Finders Keepers: Selected Prose 1971-2001. As well as being a selection from the poet's three previous collections of prose (Preoccupations, The Government of the Tongue and The Redress of Poetry), Finders Keepers includes material from The Place of Writing, a series of lectures at Emory University in 1988. There are also pieces not previously collected such as Place and Displacement, an essay from 1984 which dealt with recent poetry from Northern Ireland. Among those poets discussed were Mahon, Muldoon and Longley. The title of the collection is taken from an old saying common among local children in South Derry and elsewhere, that is “Finders keepers! Losers weepers!” As Heaney states in his introduction, the above phrase still expresses glee and stakes a claim, so in that sense it can apply as well to the experience of a reader of poetry: the first encounter with work that excites and connects will induce in the reader a similar urge to celebrate and take possession of it. Poets themselves, he argues, are also finders and keepers with a vocation to discover and be custodians for art and life.
Heaney won the Truman Capote Literary Award – the world’s most coveted prize for literary criticism - in 2003 for this book. In 2004 Heaney published The Burial at Thebes – a Version of Sophocles’ Antigone. In this most recent translation, commissioned by the Abbey Theatre Dublin to commemorate its centenary.

The fortieth anniversary of the publication of Death of a Naturalist in the spring of 2006 was marked by widespread interest in Seamus Heaney and his poems and commanded massive media coverage. This coincided with the publication of his twelfth major collection, District and Circle. In many of the poems of this collection, including Anything Can Happen we get a sense of the new dangers that confront people at the beginning of the twenty-first century. In June 2007 Gallery Press published a special limited edition of poems called The Riverbank Field. The Riverbank Field includes a sequence of beautiful new poems by Seamus Heaney which begins in autobiography, visits the world of the Aeneid and culminates in the birth of his first grandchild. One poem recalls a sports day in Bellaghy.

The Forge

All I know is a door into the dark. 
Outside, old axles and iron hoops rusting; 
Inside, the hammered anvil's short-pitched ring, 
The unpredictable fantail of sparks 
Or hiss when a new shoe toughens in water. 
The anvil must be somewhere in the centre, 
Horned as a unicorn, at one end square, 
Set there immovable: an altar 
Where he expends himself in shape and music. 
Sometimes, leather-aproned, hairs in his nose, 
He leans out on the jamb, recalls a clatter 
Of hoofs where traffic is flashing in rows; 
Then grunts and goes in, with a slam and a flick 
To beat real iron out, to work the bellows.
William Butler Yeats

William Butler Yeats (13 June 1865 – 28 January 1939) was an Irish poet and dramatist, and one of the foremost figures of 20th century literature. A pillar of both the Irish and British literary establishments, in his later years Yeats served as an Irish Senator for two terms. He was a driving force behind the Irish Literary Revival, and along with Lady Gregory and Edward Martyn founded the Abbey Theatre, serving as its chief during its early years. In 1923 he was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature for what the Nobel Committee described as "inspired poetry, which in a highly artistic form gives expression to the spirit of a whole nation." He was the first Irishman so honored. Yeats is generally considered one of the few writers who completed their greatest works after being awarded the Nobel Prize; such works include The Tower (1928) and The Winding Stair and Other Poems (1929).

Yeats was born and educated in Dublin but spent his childhood in County Sligo. He studied poetry in his youth, and from an early age was fascinated by both Irish legends and the occult. Those topics feature in the first phase of his work, which lasted roughly until the turn of the 20th century. His earliest volume of verse was published in 1889, and those slow paced and lyrical poems display debts to Edmund Spenser and Percy Bysshe Shelley, as well as to the Pre-Raphaelite poets. From 1900, Yeats' poetry grew more physical and realistic. He largely renounced the transcendental beliefs of his youth, though he remained preoccupied with physical and spiritual masks, as well as with cyclical theories of life.

A Coat

I MADE my song a coat
Covered with embroideries
Out of old mythologies
From heel to throat;
But he fools caught it,
Wore it in the world's eyes
As though they'd wrought it.
Song, let them take it,
For there's more enterprise
In walking naked.

<1While I, from that reed-throated whisperer
Who comes at need, although not now as once
A clear articulation in the air,
But inwardly, surmise companions
Beyond the fling of the dull ass's hoof
-- Ben Jonson's phrase -- and find when June is come
At Kyle-na-no under that ancient roof
A sterner conscience and a friendlier home,
I can forgive even that wrong of wrongs,
Those undreamt accidents that have made me
-- Seeing that Fame has perished this long while.
Being but a part of ancient ceremony --
Notorious, till all my priceless things
Are but a post the passing dogs defile.
Patrick Kavanagh

Patrick Kavanagh was born on 21 October 1904, in Mucker townland, Inniskeen parish, Co. Monaghan, the son of James Kavanagh, a small farmer with sixteen acres who was also a cobbler, and Bridget Quinn. He attended Keadnaminsna National School from 1909 to 1916 and worked on the family farm after leaving school.

His earliest poems were printed by the Dundalk Democrat and Weekly Independent, in 1928; three more were printed by George Russell (Æ) in The Irish Statesman during 1929-30. In 1931 he walked to Dublin to meet Russell, who introduced him to Frank O’Connor. **Ploughman and Other Poems** was published by Macmillan in 1936; soon after he moved to London in search of literary work but returned to Ireland when this failed to offer a living. An autobiography, **The Green Fool**, appeared in 1938 but was withdrawn after a libel threat from Oliver Gogarty. A long poem, perhaps his best, **The Great Hunger**, appeared in the London-based Horizon in 1942; its tragic statement of the mental and sexual frustrations of rural life was recognised as masterly by Frank O’Connor and George Yeats, who issued it in Dublin as a Cuala Press pamphlet; it seems also to have attracted the attention of the police and censors. Another fine long poem, **Lough Derg**, was written the same year though not published until 1971.

**A Soul for Sale** (1947) was followed by **Tarry Flynn** (1948), more realistic than the former autobiography, and called by the author ‘not only the best but the only authentic account of life as it was lived in Ireland this century’; it was briefly banned. With his brother Peter and financed by him, Patrick edited a paper, **Kavanagh’s Weekly**, subtitled ‘a journal of literature and politics’ (13 issues; 12 April–5 July 1952); he contributed most of the articles and poems, usually under pseudonyms. In 1952 a Dublin paper, **The Leader**, published a profile which depicted him as an alcoholic sponger, and he sued for libel. He was harshly cross-examined by John A. Costello, defending The Leader, when the case came to trial in 1954, and he lost. The following year he was diagnosed with cancer and had a lung removed. At this low point he experienced a sort of personal and poetic renewal; **Recent Poems** (1958), (Peter Kavanagh Hand Press, New York), was followed by **Come Dance with Kitty Stobling** (London, Longmans, 1960); these contain some of his best known shorter poems. His **Collected Poems** were published in 1964 by MacGibbon and Kee who also brought out **Collected Pruse** (1967). Tarry Flynn was dramatised by P.J. O’Connor and produced by the Abbey Theatre in Dublin and in Dundalk in 1967.

He married Katherine Barry Moloney in April 1967 and lived with her in Waterloo Road, Dublin. He died on 30 November the same year in Dublin. In 2000 the Irish Times surveyed ‘the nation’s favourite poems’ and ten of Kavanagh’s poems were in the first fifty. His poem ‘Raglan Road’, written to be sung, was performed by the folk group, The Dubliners, and remains very popular. **The Great Hunger** was adapted for the theatre by Tom MacIntyre, and produced in Dublin (Abbey Theatre, 1983). A second dramatic adaptation of Tarry Flynn was made by Conall Morrison (Abbey Theatre, 1997).
The Hospital
A year ago I fell in love with the functional ward
Of a chest hospital: square cubicles in a row
Plain concrete, wash basins - an art lover's woe,
Not counting how the fellow in the next bed snored.
But nothing whatever is by love debarred,
The common and banal her heat can know.
The corridor led to a stairway and below
Was the inexhaustible adventure of a gravelled yard.
This is what love does to things: the Rialto Bridge,
The main gate that was bent by a heavy lorry,
The seat at the back of a shed that was a suntrap.
Naming these things is the love-act and its pledge;
For we must record love's mystery without claptrap,
Snatch out of time the passionate transitory.