

# YOUNG WRITERS AWARD

## POST PRIMARY LEVEL

Post Primary Winners

1st *The Lake* by Anna Connors 2nd Year,  
Moyné Community School,  
Age 14.

*Adjudicator's Comments:*

*This is a hauntingly beautiful story about the tender, loving relationship between a grandfather and the grandchild he called 'Princess'. The lake and its environs are the setting in which they both come together to fill their "souls with the happiness the lake used to bring". Stirring imagery flows lyrically from the landscape in which they were "both loved and protected by the trees and befriended by the birds". The use of very evocative visual, aural and tactile imagery creates a wonderful, natural backdrop to the simple but deep warmth that they shared with each other. The emotional impact of this story is a delicate see - saw between the happiness the lake used to bring and the "enigma" it has now become to her since it "stole" her grandfather. This is a very talented, young writer who can compose sentences such as, "It won't be long before the twilight captures the sun and releases the stars". A personal experience was handled skilfully and sensitively.*

## THE LAKE

**Anna Connors, 2nd Year, Age 14**  
**Moyné Community School**

Silent giants loom over this sacred land, protecting its beauty, the breeze gently rousing their leaves. Their skin, rough and hardened hold stories of mystique and wonder, their wizened faces hold knowledge. A thin lining of fog writhes around me, dampening the evening sun as it settles. The birds' chorus in delicate tinkles which sounds mesmerizingly haunting as it fills my ears. A glimmering silver hue seems to drape this forest, filling me with a feeling of awe. The air is crisp as I reach the edge of the forest and the pungent fragrance of pine welcomes me like an old friend. The soft swish of the lake in unison with the gentle swaying of the rushes at the banks and the rhythmic chirp of crickets is an orchestra, playing the perfect symphony. We used to come out here every weekend, you and I, and fill our souls with the happiness the lake used to bring. You would weave the delicate little wildflowers into a crown, and you would call me the princess of this place, and you would be King and the worries of the world would evaporate for a few moments.

As I look out over the lake, I see the sun fall behind the horizon, the sky smeared with blood red, tinged with salmon and peach with undertones of indigo and plum. It won't be long before twilight captures the sun and releases the stars. You always told me

that this was a golden hour - full of magic and allure. I can feel your presence with me, I can hear your laugh in the breeze. It is a year today that you departed from this world and yet it feels like it could have been this morning. The lake is glimmering under the ethereal glow of the sunset, making this place so heavenly, but how can it be after what has happened here? When I look out over this lake I see you - once so familiar, now so distant. The glimmer that was once in your eyes has now been placed onto the lake, the radiance of your smile in the sun. This was once a place I knew so well, but it has so many hidden depths it is now an enigma to me. The beauty and serenity of its waters masks a deeper suffering and pain, unknown to many who go there, but reflected onto you.

That night that you went down to the lake without me, the lake stopped bringing happiness to you and you never came back. I now weave a crown of wildflowers sprigged like the finest of jewels, and I place it on the water for you. I whisper my prayer for you and let the flowers drift away from me to be stolen away by the lake, like it stole you. I am now ready to leave this place, knowing that you are here Grandad, embodying the place we both loved, protected by the trees and befriended by the birds, I hope you feel that you are no longer alone, like how you felt when you came here to the lake, one year ago.

# YOUNG WRITERS AWARD POST PRIMARY LEVEL

*Post Primary Winners*  
 2nd 'A Haunted Story—The Cry That Always Returns' by Rachel Reynolds, 1st year, Mohill Community College, Age 13.

## *Adjudicator's Comments:*

*This story evolves very effectively from the reality of school-life to a tragic, surreal incident. The story is told in a simple, direct manner with no ornamentation or embellishment. This style deftly facilitates the unfolding storyline and its 'quickenning' momentum and rising tension. A well-written story.*

## A HAUNTED STORY

The cry that always returns...

**Rachel Reynolds, 1st year, Age 13**  
**Mohill Community College**

In a little sheltered town in Leitrim, a picturesque county in the west of Ireland, there lived a boy called Jimmy. Jimmy was twelve years old and he lived in a housing estate beside the local church with his two older brothers, and their mother and father. He was a fun-loving, joyful young boy. Being the baby of the family he was adored by both his parents and his brothers.

Jimmy went to school in the local secondary which he had just started a few months previously. This is where he met his new friends, Paul and Peter. He had not gone to primary school with them, but he knew them from playing against them in football. They were a little wilder than Jimmy's other friends but interestingly they got on even better. In early October of that year Jimmy noticed that the boys were getting into doing things that he himself would have never done. He would have avoided doing such things because he had always thought that they were wrong. Actually he didn't just think that these things were wrong—he knew for sure that they were. All the boys would ever talk about was what whacky or dangerous thing they could do next.

This made Jimmy anxious. It was the week of Halloween and he didn't know what they would do next. Jimmy had always loved Halloween, but he liked the innocent things like dressing up and playing all the games. He liked the traditional things. So when the boys suggested doing something different Jimmy didn't know what to expect. They suggested checking out the abandoned

house down the street. There had always been stories about that house and Jimmy had always found it very suspect, spooky even, but the boys had decided that was where they would go. Halloween came and Jimmy was apprehensive—he didn't want to go but he couldn't back out now.

He met the boys at 7 o'clock at the church. It was already dark. They went up to the house, the boys had figured out how to get in. They broke down a damaged side door and walked in. It was dark, they couldn't see a single thing.

Peter and Paul loved it. They were walking round like it was a normal house without a hint of fear. They walked into what looked like a kitchen, it was cold and eerie. Suddenly all the presses opened. The boys screamed, deeply shaken and quivering with a cold and creeping dread. Something screamed back. The boys were utterly terrified. One of them heard what sounded like a girl crying in the next room. Then they all heard it and made a communal dithery run to the door but it slammed shut in their faces. They tried to open it but it was locked. They began to panic, the windows started to crack, the ground began to shake and the cry was getting louder and louder. The boys ran over to the window and the curtains shut with a definite pivot. They were trapped. This house was haunted, no doubt about it and it didn't want them to leave.

As incredible as it is true—these boys were never seen again. Their families still sadly wonder what went on in that house. Sometimes on Halloween you can hear that cry, and the scurry of footsteps followed by the banging of a door closing firmly. Nobody knows who or what is in that house. Nobody knows what to do.

# YOUNG WRITERS AWARD PRIMARY LEVEL

*1st Prize My Adventure;  
Tess Longworth, 5th Class,  
St Patrick's National School, Calry, Co. Sligo*

*Adjudicator's Comments: MY ADVENTURE  
A charming, amusing story about a pencil named Purple and his adventurous activities involving his owner Amy, his pencil friends Blue, Pink, Red and Indigo and the fearsome, "big, black hoover". Purple has little time for a rest, never mind reflection, except to tell us that his owner, Amy, is "a good owner...and never sharpened my tip". It is an all - action story. An allegory, perhaps, for our busy lives. The writer gives full vent to his / her teeming imagination to create a tale that unveils a vibrant scene in almost every sentence. Well done.*

*Adjudicator's Comments:  
SHANNON, DIARMUID AND TIERNAN  
An interesting tale about how one of the seminal events in Irish history could have been thwarted if only people like Shannon, the story's main character, had been around then! A well-judged blend of dialogue and action presents the narrative in a compelling way.*

## MY ADVENTURE

**Tess Longworth 5th Class  
St Patrick's National School, Calry,  
Co Sligo**

I was on my own. Everybody was gone home. I couldn't remember where I was. The classroom was quiet and there was no one whispering. Suddenly something started to move, it took me a while to realise what it was. All my life I had been told to avoid the hoover. It was a big black machine that sucked up objects of all shapes and sizes. Then it started to come towards me. The hoover was even bigger than I had expected. I scrambled to find something to help me up from the ground. Then I saw the big metre stick and pulled with all my might. When I got up, I ran as fast as my little legs could

carry me. Then the hoover stopped making noise. Just then the door opened and somebody walked out. I jumped into the box of lost colours in the corner of the classroom. Purple is that you?" exclaimed my best friends, Blue and Pink." I had known Pink and Blue since we had been bought in the shop. Yes it's me" I muttered. "What is wrong with you?" said Red. "She was chased by a huge hoover and it was quite amusing!" Indigo laughed. The next morning when I woke up I wrote a note to Pink. This is what it said: GONE TO THE CLASSROOM. The reason I was gone to the classroom was because I was going to find my owner Amy. No matter what, Amy had been a good owner because she had never lost me before and she never sharpened my tip! When I reached the classroom I saw Amy, my owner, at her desk waiting for the teacher. I jumped on top the desk and straight into Amy's pencil case. Suddenly, someone opened the pencil case and a big grubby hand picked me up. Then I was being put into a big red bag. Where was I and how was I going to get home? I woke up and I couldn't remember where I was. Then I realised I was in a boy's room. I had to get away from here, but how? I looked around the room and saw that the door was open. I jumped out of the boy's hands and ran out the door. I ran down the stairs and walked straight out the front door. I ran down the street turned left and up the driveway leading to Amy's house. I noticed that the door was open just enough for me to squeeze in. I ran into Amy's bedroom and jumped into her schoolbag ready to go back to school. It was only until then I realised I was so tired. I fell into a deep sleep once my head hit the rubber. When I woke up I was in Amy's pencil case. I peeked out and realised I was in the classroom again. I had just about stayed alive during my big adventure.

## SHANNON, DIARMUID AND TIERNAN

**Rhianna Woods Age 11**

**St Hugh's National School, Dowra.**

"And that's why everyone blames Diarmuid Mc Morrow for England taking over Ireland, Now you can have your lunches." The tall thin teacher picked up her books, straightened her skirt and marched out of my room. As soon as she was gone the usual madness broke out.

"Kayla, Kayla!" Shannon came running over to her best friend's desk.

"What? What? What's wrong?"

"Don't worry, it's not actually bad this time".

"Shannon", cried Kayla, "Forgetting your maths homework isn't a good thing".

"No it's not that, anyway Maths isn't really that important".

"I've learned", Kayla rolled her eyes.

"You know I'm going to be an inventor, well I'm going to build a time machine and go back in time to stop Tiernan O'Rourke and Diarmuid Mc Morrow fighting."

Kayla stopped and tried to imagine Shannon trying to stop a fight...No it wouldn't work.

"Anyway I'm going to go and get my coat, see you after break", Kayla got up and left the table.

"Bye, see you later," Shannon waved to Kayla.

"Yeah, six right?"

"Yeah". Shannon watched as her friend walked round the corner of the building and disappeared out of sight. She sighed, turned round and started walking the direction of her house. When she arrived home she went upstairs to her bedroom to do her homework. She threw her bag on the floor and opened her Maths book.



# YOUNG WRITERS AWARD POST PRIMARY LEVEL

HIGHLY COMMENDED

*Dushlám an córas oideachais san aonú haois is fiche*

*Olivia Lipsett, 6th year Age 18,*

*St Attracta's Community School Tubbercurry, Co Sligo*

## DUSHLÁIN AN CÓRAS OIDEACHAIS SAN AONÚ HAOIS IS FICHE

**Olivia Lipsett, 6th year Age 18**

**St Attracta's Community School**

**Tubbercurry, Co Sligo**

Ní túisce a chonaic mé teideal na haiste seo ná rug mé greim ar mo pheann chun mo chuid tuairimí a bhreacadh síos. Go deimhin, is iomaí dushlám atá ag an Chórais Oideachais san aonú haois is fiche. Ní bréag a rá go ceist chonspóideach, chasta, phráinneach í. Ní lia duine ná tuairim ach creidim féin go pearsanta go mbaineann idir bhuntáistí agus mí-bhuntáistí leis an gcóras oideachais in Éirinn. Tá a fhios ag madraí an bhaile go mbíonn dhá thaobh ar gach scéal! Tá sé mar aidhm agam san aiste seo léargas suimiúil, réalafóich, neamhchlaonta a chur os bhur gcomhair.

Is é an t-oideachas gné bhunúsach atá thar a bheith tábhachtach i saol an duine daonna – is cuma cén aois, creideamh, aicme nó cén dath atá ar do chraiceann. Sa lá atá inniu ann, táimid timpeallaithe ag ábhar an oideachais, is cuma cén áit a bhfuilimid! Áfach má fhéachaimid siar ar phar na staire, is fadhb shíoraí casta é. Níl teorainn leis na fadhbanna a bhaineann leis. Sula raibh aithne air mar réabhlóidí, bhí clú ar Phádraig Mac Piarais mar oideachasóir. Cháin sé córas oideachais a linne féin, ag lochtú an tsiollobais agus an chóras scrúdaithe a bhí an ag an am. Is oth liom a rá nár tháinig mórán athruithe ar chúrsaí ó shin i leith. Cuirtear an iomarca brú ar scoláire mar bíonn an córas ró-acadúil. De bharr an gcúlú eacnamaíochta, níl ach coinínollacha neamhoiriúnach agus bíonn easpa áiseanna ar fáil go forleathan.

Meabhraíonn an teideal dom go raibh cáil an oideachais ar Éirinn tráth dá raibh. "oileán na Naomh is na nOllúna" a tugadh ar an tír sa Mhéánaois. Bhí an-mheas ag na cainteoirí ar

an oideachas ar oileán na hÉireann. Ar an lámh eile, níl aon mhaitheas ag baint córas na bpointí. Caithfear a rá gur mallacht uafásach ar an tsochaí is é. Mar is eol do chách, dáiltear áiteanna i gcoláistí tríú leibhéal de réir torthaí na hArdteiste agus tuigeanann gach duine sa tír chomh strusmhar agus míchothrom is atá an córas seo. Níl sé ceart nó cothrom. Cuirtear brú millteanach ar dhaoine óga chun cúrsa a fháil nuair atá na pointí ag ardú agus chun torthaí maithe a fháil. Bíonn gach rud ag brath ar scrúdú mór amháin ag deireadh na bliana. Is minic a chruthaíonn an bhrú seo fadhbanna sláinte i measc na daltaí Ardteiste.

Níl dabht ar bith ach go bhfuil méadú tagtha ar na fadhbanna a eascraíonn as na ciorruithe danartha go bhfuil an rialtas a chur i bhfeidhm in earnáil an oideachais. De bharr sin, Tá an cóimheas idir daltaí agus múinteoirí ag méadú go tubaisteach. Téann sé seo i bhfeidhm go mór ar chaighdeán an oideachais a fhaigheann daltaí.

lontas na n-iontas, dearbhaíonn an Roinn go bhfuil saor-oideachas mar cheart ag gach dalta in Éirinn. Tá an costas go dona i gceist maidir le dalta chun dul ar scoil. Admhóidh an saol go mbíonn dúshlám mhóra ann maidir le maoiniú hoideachais tríú leibhéal. Tá táillí clárúithe sa tríú leibhéal agus dá bhrí sin tá sé deacair do roinnt daoine óga dul chun coláiste mar gheall ar an gcúlú eacnamaíochta. Creidtear go mbeidh méadú as cuimse tagtha ar na táillí seo go luath amach anseo. Mar bharr ar gach donas tá an costas maireachtála do na scoláirí an-chóstasach ar fad. Sé mhíle euro do lóistín mar aon le bia agus iompar. Agus sin iad na riachtanais bhunúsacha inár saol. Do gach scoláire eile sa domhan, is fóir a rá go bhfuil na leabhair scoile an-daor. Cé go bhfuil an mhéanscoláíocht agus an bhunscoláíocht in ainm is a bheith saor in aisce, tá "taillí deonacha" nó "ranníocaíocht mhac léinn" tugtha isteach i go leor scoileanna ar fud na tíre. Ní féidir an scéal a leigheas gan athrú intinne suntasach sa tír agus rún daingean chun dul i ngleic leis an bhfadhb

Tá sé thar am againn súil ghéar a chaitheamh ar an gcóras seo. San aonú haois is fiche, caithfear réimsí níos leithne den intleacht a mheas, ina measc spóirt, drámaíocht mar atá á dhéanamh ar fud na cruinne le fada an lá. Tá roinnt mhaith tíortha den tuairim go dtugann córas bunaithe ar an measúnú leanúnach léiriú níos cruinne agus níos cothroime ar chumas, ar dhíograis agus ar iarracht an dalta. Ar an ábhar sin, tá measúnú leanúnach á mholadh ach tógfaidh sé tamall fada chun é a chur i bhfeidhm. Beidh deireadh leis an Teastas Sóisearach go hiomlán roimh 2020. Ach an mbeidh ár gcóras oideachais níos fearr? Is maith an scéalaí an aimsir!

Táim glan cinnte gur féidir linn an lámh in uachtar a fháil ar an gceist phráinneach seo. Is minic ciúin ciontach a deir an seanfhocal, bhuel nílmid chun bheith ciúin a thuilleadh. Ní ar an Rialtas amháin atá fuaiscailt na faidhbe ag brath. Caithimidne, muintir na hÉireann, ár gcion a dhéanamh freisin. Caithimid go léir go leor leor brú a chur ar an Rialtas réiteach na faidhbe seo a fháil, ar ais nó ar éigin. Dá ndéanfadh na polaiteoirí a gcuid oibre b'fhéidir gur scéal eile a bheadh againn. Dá gcuirfí an infheistíocht is gá isteach sa chóras d'fhéadfaí an fadhb a leigheas go héasca. Is fuascailt fadtéarmach é ach bímis dearfach agus feicimís go bhfuil solas ag deireadh an tolláin. Is de réir a chéile a thógtar na caisleáin!

*Adjudicator's Comments:*

*DUSHLÁIN AN CÓRAS OIDEACHAIS SAN AONÚ HAOIS IS FICHE by Olivia Lipsett.*

*Aiste sár Mhaith. 1. An-úsáid déanta ar sheanfhocail. 2. Tá líofacht / foclóir thar barr san aiste seo. 3. Tá an-eolas le feiceáil san aiste ar rudaí mar a bhíodh agus rudaí mar atá siad fé láthair na huair. 4. An-úsáid déanta ar an saorbhriathara. 5. Aiste sár - mhaith atá anseo.*