

# YOUNG WRITERS COMPETITION

*This competition is designed to encourage new writing. All scripts are submitted as anonymous texts to an independent adjudicator.*

## PRIMARY LEVEL

**Winner of Prose Category :**

**'Mo Mhamó agus Alzheimer's - An Nasc Nach Féidir a Bhriseadh.'**

*Comment: In recent times, the spectre of Alzheimer's Disease / Premature Senile Dementia has become a haunting presence in all of our lives. This story is a very valuable addition to our collective experience of the horrors that this condition imposes on the victim and his family. Written in beautiful Irish, this story covers unflinchingly every aspect of the inescapable decline into a very painful oblivion for the sufferer, and the subsequent trauma endured by his / her family and friends.*

### FIRST PRIZE

#### MO MHAMÓ AGUS ALZHEIMERS — AN NASC NACH FÉIDIR A BHRISEADHE

by Caoimhe Nig Ualghairg

Aois: 10 Rang a Cúig Gaelscoil Chluainín

IS MISE Caoimhe agus táim ag mothú brónach agus beagáinín ísle brí faoi láthair mar tá mo Mhamó go dona tinn l'Alzheimers. Tá sí i dteach altránais anois. Inseoidh mé duit níos déanaí conas a thóg mise faoi deara go raibh rud éigin cearr le Mamó!

Ach, ar dtús ba mhaith liom go gcuirfidh sibh aithne ar mo Mhamó sula bhfuair sí tinn. Ba í an cócaire agus an báicéir is fearr a bhfaca mé a riamh. Bhí gach rud a rinne sí chomh blasta. Bhí sí cineálta, cneasta agus fóir flaitiúil. Thug sí cabhair agus aire dom nuair a bhí ar mo thuistí a bheith as baile. Chuimhnigh sí í gcónaí ar mo bhreithlá agus níor dhearmadaigh sí riamh ar an Nollaig. Chuir sí an-mhachnamh isteach i gceannach na mbronntanais do gach ócáid. Ba Mamó iontach deas a bhí inti.

Ach, foraoir, ní chuimhníonn sí ar rud ar bith anois, ní chuimhníonn sí ar mo lá breithe, ná An Nollaig, ní bheadh sí in ann aire a thabhairt dom ná cabhrú liom in aon bhealach. Ní aithníonn sí mé fiú, níl sí in ann m'ainm a rá. Is brónach an scéal é!

Seo mar a thóg mé faoi deara nach raibh Mamó mar a bhí: Dhá bhliain ó shin chuaigh mé agus mo Mham ar cuairt chuici agus thug sí litir do mo Mham agus dúirt sí "tabhair é sin

do do Mham," Mhínigh mo Mham gurb í féin a Mam. Ach an-thapaidh chliceáil sé le mo Mham gur cheap Mamó gurb í mo Mham - mise Caoimhe! Is ar an lá sin a dúirt mo Mham liom nach raibh rudaí i gceart in inchinn Mhamó.

Ní raibh mórán eolais agam ag an bpointe sin ar an ngalar Alzheimers. Ach léigh mé go leor ó shin faoi. Is galar a dhéanann dochar do d'inchinn, déanann daoine l'Alzheimers dearmad ar mion rudaí, ar ainmneacha daoine, ar ghnáth rudaí laethúla. Cailleann said a gcuimhne. Is galar fíor-bhrónach é. Tá sé go forleathan i seandaoine anois, ach buaileann sé daoine níos óige chomh maith. Dar liomsa tá tionchar níos mó ag Alzheimers ar an gclann ná ar an duine l'Alzheimers.

Anuraidh bhí Mamó ag dul in olcas agus is minic a chuir sí an cheist céanna ormsa " Cé thusa?" Bhí mé an-bhrónach nár aithin sí mé níos mó. Is minic a lig mé deor i ngan fhios d'éinne!

Tharla sé lá amháin i mí Bealtaine 2013 go raibh ar Dhaideó dhul faoi scian san ospidéal. Ar an lá céanna fuair Mamó an-tinn agus tógadh isteach san ospidéal í freisin. D'éirigh sí níos measa agus tar éis mí a chaitheamh in dhá ospidéal, bheartaigh Daideó ar í a thógáil abhaile chun go dtabharfadh sé aire di. Ach rud nár thuig sé ag an am ná, go raibh Mamó an-dúshlánach anois, nach raibh sí in ann aon rud a dhéanamh dí fein níos mó. I ndiaidh coicse bhí cruinniú ag mo Mham agus Daideó le baill ón detach altránais agus fuair leaba di ansin. Mhóthaigh mo Mham agus

Daideo an-chiontach mar cheap said gur theip orthu. Níor theip, ní raibh aon dul as an gcineadh.

Bhí mise ann ar an lá a bhog Mamó isteach. Cheap mise go mbeadh sí ag caoineadh agus buartha. Ach, ní raibh! Níor lig sí fiú deor síos, bhí sí ag fágáil an tí inar chaith sí 56 bliana pósta le Daideo agus níor thóg sí faoi deara go raibh sí ag fágáil an tí don uair dheireanach. Chuaigh sé sin go mór i gcionn ar Dhaideo agus orainn uilig.

Tá sí anois tar éis bliana a chaitheamh sa teach altránais. Níl sí in ann labhairt níos mó, agus is ar éigean go naitníonn sí éinne. Tá sé níos brónaí ar mo Dhaideo ná aon duine eile. Is eisean mo laoch. Caitheann sé gach uile lón léi ag tabhairt an bhia di.

Uaireanta tagann sé abhaile agus bíonn sé ag caoineadh agus buartha. Ach tá sé féin 88 bliana d'aois agus mar a dheireann mo Mham leis, caithfidh sé aire a thabhairt dó féin freisin.

Is galar úafásach é an Alzheimers. Ní muidé amháin atá ag fulaingt leis, tá na mílte clainne ar fud na tíre agus ar fud an domhain sa chaoi céanna. Níl aon réiteach nó leigheas faighte air fós.

Guím gach lá go dtiocfadh duine suas le réiteach ar an bhfadhb seo.

Ach an rud is deise faoi chás Mamó ná - go bhfuil Daideo fós iomlán i ngrá léi, cé nach naitníonn sí é ar laethanta agus níl aon chaidreamh eatarthu - fós tá sé saite i ngrá léi.

Nach iontach an rud é nach féidir, fiú l'Alzheimers, an nasc 57 bliana pósadh a bhriseadh!

*Prose Category (Primary): Second Prize  
'Music and Me'*

*Comment: A very interesting, well-written account of a young boy's debut and subsequent progress in the inspiring but chancy world of music. In a short space of time, he took up and trumped the challenge posed by the tin-whistle, guitar, keyboard and ukulele. Even at such a young age, his love for and his dedication to his music is apparent in every sentence that he writes.*

**SECOND PRIZE  
MUSIC AND MEE**

by Matthew Connolly

Age 10 Fifth Class Gaelscoil Chluainín

Hello, I'm Matthew and I'm going to tell you my story about one of my favourite hobbies, music. I started music when I was six years of age and have been playing ever since. The first music instrument I learned to play was the tin whistle and my first song on the tin whistle was "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star". At eight years I got my favourite musical instrument, the guitar. I got it for Christmas from Santa and on Christmas day I remember going out to my great Auntie and Uncles house for Christmas dinner and after dinner I took out my guitar and started playing random strings. At the time I thought I was brilliant but looking back I really didn't know how to play music on it at all.

Guitar lessons started in our school and I decided to join and really enjoyed the lessons but I didn't like the teacher, but I carried on for a couple of months. Then on my ninth birthday I got a keyboard and the first song I learned on that was the theme song from EastEnders TV soap. My mum was watching it at time and at the start of the programme the theme tune came on and I stopped everything and listened and then started playing it slowly. I got faster and faster until I could play it perfectly. A few months later I started new guitar lesson with a new teacher and I loved him and the bonus about learning with him was that he gave us an orange chocolate sweet after each lesson. I practised most days and gradually got better. The first song I enjoyed learning was Eric Clapton's *Wonderful Tonight*. During the summer my family and

I went on holiday to London. My Nanny managed in a British heart foundation charity shop and she bought a guitar there. A few weeks later I entered a busking competition at a local festival in Dromahair. I was very nervous as this was my first time to play in public but the more I played and people chatted to me the more confident I got. A man and his wife came to talk to me about my music playing and my guitar. He asked where I got it and I told him, he then told me do you know I have one those makes of guitar and that there were not many of those versions made in the world. This made me very excited. He said it was worth a lot of money more than my nanny had paid for it, I was very surprised and pleased by what he had told me. To make my day even better I made some money from my busking and won second place in the competition and the prize was twenty Euro.

I asked my mum to take me to the music shop where I bought myself a Ukulele and a badge for my guitar strap. I play the Ukulele a little but haven't got any lessons for it yet! My Guitar teacher finished giving lessons in my town so I had to move to a new teacher who I'm still with now. For Christmas 2013 I asked Santa for an electric guitar and he brought to me. It's white and the same make as my acoustic one. It's very loud or so my family tell me...but luckily my uncle gave me a cool little vox amplifier for my birthday which allows you to listen on headphones. No more noisy evenings in our house.

So I hope this tells you a little about me and my love for music and I hope it encourages anyone who's thinking of taking up music to give it a try. Music makes me happy and it may do for you too.

**Highly Recommended  
'The Leaves'**

*Comment: A gem of a poem in its simplicity, conciseness and in its capacity to kindle the reader's sense of wonder about and fascination with Autumn.*

**HIGHLY RECOMMENDED**

**THE LEAVES ( A Poem )**

by Louis Cameron.

Age 10 St Martin's Primary School, Garrison-  
Class: P 6

When the leaves came tumbling down  
The hill of motionless grass  
I wondered if autumn had begun.

There is no bill for nature,  
I have observed.  
Autumn comes when it comes.  
Summer cannot be preserved.

I was anxiously waiting,  
Hoping to find  
An autumn like we had before,  
Rough to the touch, smooth in the mind.

When the leaves come tumbling down  
The hill of motionless grass  
I know that autumn has begun.



■ LEITRIM ICA CHAMPION KNITTERS  
Caroline O'Kelly Lynch, Glenfarne ICA Noreen Lunny  
Manorhamilton ICA & Irene Delaney, Aughavas ICA

POST PRIMARY LEVEL ENGLISH

**Winner of Prose Category : 'Death By Reality'**

*Comment: This poem addresses one of the most destructive and, in some cases, deadly phenomena of life today - cyber-bullying, the use of information technology to hurt, damage or persecute others in a wilful, premeditated manner. The first half of the poem succinctly describes the scenario in which this evil practice ferments - "the bullies", "innocent people", the abuse ("witless comments") and the inevitable, awful effects. The second half of the poem challenges the bully - "Why YOU wrote this nasty stuff...through the online devils of the Internet". A provocative, disturbing poem the likes of which has to be written and read and heard by and for all of us. A gripping view of a distressing reality.*

FIRST PRIZE

DEATH BY REALITY

by Sophie-Katie Blackwell

St Mogue's College, Bawnboy, Co. Cavan, (5th Year)

Age 15

Death, Suicide, Self Harm,

These things should be raised to alarm,

The bullies who hide behind the net,

Insulting innocent people, they have never met.

Weird, Stupid, Ugly, Fat,

"Why you even here, you're just bloomin' shat!"

Why do we even put this to someone we don't even know,

Insulting them, mocking them, calling them a hoe.

Writing all these Witless Comments online,

Is actually classed as a wicked crime,

Which can lead to suicide,

And if this happens you must decide:

Why YOU wrote this nasty stuff -

Why YOU thought YOU were being so tough -

Through the online devils of the Internet,

Through that network profile that YOU set,

Through the messages YOU sent to that girl or to that lad,

That laugh YOU got when they were sad...

Now they've took their own life.

Hanging is rife.

Do YOU feel guilty? I would too -

Because the reason for their death is just, simply...

YOU!

**Prose Category: Second Prize**

**'First Day of First Class in My First School in Ireland**

*Comment: An evocative, skilfully-written account of the writer's first day at school in Ireland. This writer has a natural talent for telling a story, conjuring vivid images ("my teacher", "my desk") and for describing gestures, actions, facial expressions, etc in an unpredictable way—"The teacher gave me a smile that I recognised as the same smile that my Dad gives when I do something stupid." Above all, this story gives us a graphic insight into the difficulties and, indeed, positive responses encountered by our 'foreign nationals '/' new Irish' on their first tentative steps towards integration.*

SECOND PRIZE

FIRST DAY OF FIRST CLASS  
IN MY FIRST SCHOOL IN  
IRELAND

by Amy Yu

Age 17 5th year. School:

Sligo Grammar School

I remember sitting in the foyer of the primary school, waiting with my mum for someone to come and tell me where to go. It was my first day in first class in the first school I had ever been to in Ireland. We must've arrived really early because after forever and two days the school principal came to greet us. I really can't for the life of me remember what he or she looked like but I remember being fascinated by how

much taller they were compared to my mother. I was brought to the classroom at the end of the hall on the left. I could hear all the people playing and talking outside in a language that I was struggling to learn. Then I saw my teacher, a small woman with short blond hair and thick glasses that made her eyes look huge. She showed me to my seat and my mum left. She left me to fight my fears alone; she shouldn't have, I was losing. Before I had time to panic, children of all different hair colours poured into the classroom. My teacher sat everyone in their seats; then she lit a candle and placed it beside a small statue of a woman wearing a long blue dress with a shawl over her head. She called me up and handed me the candle. I felt suddenly really important, like I was holding the crown for

the soon-to-be-crowned king. All the children bowed their heads and started chanting. I didn't know what to do; I mean, what were you supposed to do with a candle when people were chanting anyway? It wasn't my birthday, but it was my first day at this school, so maybe it was just a weird tradition. So ... I took a deep breath, held it in for the eternity that they spent chanting, and as soon as they stopped, I blew it out. The teacher gave me a smile that I recognised as the same smile that my dad gives me when I do something stupid. I carefully set down the candle and walked back to my seat, suddenly looking very interested in my shoes.

My desk had a hole at the top of the desk that I later found out wasn't made to store sweets, but to store ink for pointy feather pens. I carefully took all my new books out of my red Garfield schoolbag and placed them in a neat pile in the compartment underneath the desk, taking special care with the colouring book, a present from the book store person. Maybe it was because I couldn't understand what the teacher was saying, but before I knew it, lunch came by. After I finished eating this strange lunch called a sandwich my mum made me, I followed the train of children out into the hall and waited until the teacher opened the door to let us out. I was really disappointed; there were no slides or swings like in my kindergarten, but just a large, numbered square. All the children went into their separate groups and played tag and hide and seek. I walked from 1 to 100 and back again. Then someone tapped me on my shoulder. I turned around and faced a girl who was a little shorter than me, with soft brown hair. 'Come play with us,' she told me. I don't know how I remember what she said, when I didn't even know what it meant, but I do. She

tapped me on my shoulder again and said 'you're it!' For the first time that day I smiled and laughed. Too soon we had to go back inside, and too soon school was over. We lined up with our school bags on our backs and went out in single file to our parents. I saw my mum there beside the wall with my baby brother in a pram beside her. She gave me a warm smile and I ran to her. I waved goodbye to my teacher and to the brown-haired girl, and walked home with my mother. I told her about my day in great detail and she told me about hers.

As soon as I went home I ran to my parents' room and went to my dad's desk. I pulled out the maths homework we had for that day and started on it straightaway. My mum came in with my snack, saw the way my brows were knitted in concentration, and gave a small laugh. She pulled up another chair and sat down beside me and we started our quest, trying to figure what out the word 'solve' meant.

*Highly Recommended*  
**'Our Miracle Planet',**

*Comment: A strong, eloquent dose of reality for those of us who choose the fanciful view and irrational denial of the environmental calamity facing our planet.*

**HIGHLY RECOMMENDED**

**OUR MIRACLE PLANET (A Poem)**

by David English

Age 14 School: St Patricks College, Cavan.

The intoxicated gas that poisons all beauty,  
The disease that devours on innocent death.  
The acid that leaks on Mother Nature's purity,  
We are the killers causing all of these threats.  
Slaughtered souls slayed into extinction,  
Vastly vacating earth's cold corrupt surface.  
The demise of all creatures is a cruel prediction,  
Soon left lying, in history....to fade.

The ozone obliterated and annihilating atomics,  
Eradicating enormous amounts of our planet.  
Those monstrous madmen, using cruelty and chaotics,  
Have the evil to end this miracle planet.



■ **ART EXHIBITION IN TEACH DÚCHAIS, DRUMEELA in 1997.**  
*Back: Catherine McGovern, Kathleen McCabe, Mickey O'Brien, Niamh Baxter, Johnny Corrigan, Marie Therése McCartin & Pat Fitzpatrick.*

*Front: Deirdre Baxter, Emer Baxter, Deirdre McCartin, Monsignor John A Young, Josephine Maguire & Mossí Whelan.*