



April Newsletter.

WELCOME!

Welcome to the April Kildare Writing Centre Newsletter. I hope this finds you all well and feeling the energy of the season pushing up through the soil and rising us all with it.

Since the last issue, on a personal level, I have had the delight of being able to announce the launch date of October 1st for my novel, *Charlotte & Arthur*, published by Merdog Books. This book has been an idea of mine for quite some time and so, to see it finally realised, is relieving, and releasing, as I have lived in dread of someone getting there, with the same concept before me. Phew! More about that at the end.

In this issue you will find:

- Information on April and May courses at the centre.
- Competitions with April/May deadlines.
- Festival news.
- Tips on editing your work.

The 'In Praise of...' section for this issue is a shout out for MOLI.

NEXT COURSES AT KWC.

<https://kildarewritingcentre.com/courses>

As I suspected, when I was sending out the flyer last week, all the April courses are now fully booked, but it was great that a couple of you got registered before the window closed.

May Courses.

Online Short Story: Writing stories that leave an Impression.

- Description
- Voice and Style
- Theme and Plot
- Editing and common errors.

This course will suit participants from the first course but as it is a stand-alone course, you will not have to have completed the first course to be eligible to attend.

There are a few already signed up, and a lot of interest has been expressed from former students so I am taking the bold step of putting this course on two nights, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays, starting May 11th.

Early Booking advised

In Praise of MOLI (Museum of Literature Ireland)

In September 2019, Ireland's first Museum dedicated to literature opened in what had been the Victorian assembly hall, the Aula Maxima, of Ireland's first Catholic University. The university was founded by Cardinal Newman in 1854. This Hall, part of what is now called, Newman House, 85-86 St. Stephen's Green, was the precursor to UCD, before it moved out to the Belfield campus. MOLI's doors opening was the culmination of nearly ten years of planning between UCD and the National Library of Ireland to have a space where Irish Writing and all Irish writers, the literary descendants of James Joyce could be celebrated. And MOLI is that and so much more.

<https://moli.ie/>

While we cannot go there in person just now, by going onto their website you will see all the ways you can engage with the museum online. And in saying that, I know how jaded we all are by that word, 'online', but there are some really special events that I would encourage you to check out. When it reopens, and we are being encouraged once again to do staycations, I urge you to treat yourself to a visit to MOLI on St. Stephen's Green. Bring a packed lunch to have in the Iveagh Gardens to the rear of the museum, bring your book, but most importantly, bring your pen and notebook, because you will be inspired, and you will want to get your thoughts down before they get lost in the traffic on the way home.

MOLI also has a radio station, Radio MOLI <https://moli.ie/radio/> where you can listen to podcasts on all things writerly. One of my favourites is a lecture by one of the founding sisters of the museum, Professor Margaret Kelleher, and even if you think you have only a passing interest

in the Irish Famine, I guarantee, after listening, you will be scrambling for most of the books she references throughout.

If you are a *Ulysses* fan, or like me, are still making your way through the chapters, there is a special installation on the website, Alan Gilsenan's filmic response to the novel. There are eighteen short film episodes responding to the eighteen chapters, so you can dip in and out. Maybe challenge yourself to read a chapter a week and then watch the appropriate film, what better cultural way to see out this pandemic!

Perhaps one of the most exciting, upcoming events is the launch of a new initiative, a digital platform for contemporary Irish Writing: <http://www.contemporaryirishwriting.ie/> The site describes this new platform as, '**must-use resource for readers, book club members, teachers and enthusiasts!**

Make sure to book your place for the launch, April 1st at 7pm here, <https://www.crowdcast.io/e/contemporaryirishwriting/register>

And a final word on MOLI, it is pronounced 'Molly', with a tip of the hat to Molly Bloom.

Museum of Literature Ireland

Competitions

There are four competitions with late April/early May deadlines that I want to highlight because they are Irish based, and the prizes are wonderful, for 2 and 3 below the winner gets a stay at The River Mill Writing Retreat...heaven!

1. <https://www.rte.ie/radio1/francis-macmanus-short-story/>

This 'for radio' short story competition is free to enter and is only open to Irish residents or holders of an Irish passport. The word limit is 1800-2000, and the closing date is Friday, May 7th.

2. <https://cairdefestival.com/cairde-word/>

This is an inaugural short story competition for the Cairde Sligo Arts Festivals. It is €10 to enter, but if this is a barrier to you entering you can contact them, which sounds like a lovely gesture. The word limit is 3000 and the closing date is April 30th.

3. <https://belfastbookfestival.com/mairtin-crawford-award>

There are separate poetry and short story competitions here. It is £6 to enter. You can submit 3-5 poems and the word limit for the short story is 2,500. The closing date is midnight on May 2nd.

4. <https://www.themothmagazine.com/a1-page.asp?ID=8227&page=25>

The Moth short story competition has a retreat in a French Writing centre, Circle of Misse with a travel

stipend as the top prize. The word limit is 5000, the entry fee is €15, and the closing date is June 30th.

Circle of Misse



<https://www.circleofmisse.com/wp/writing-retreats/>

Seats by the stream at The River Mill Writing Retreat.



<https://www.the-river-mill.co.uk/>

Upcoming Events

It is very encouraging to see that festivals are beginning to make some noises about the possibility of offline (I am going to come to cherish that word) events happening a little later this year.

- The Cúirt International Festival takes place April 21st to the 25th. This is happening online, and they have a superb line up. Tickets are pay what you can, if anything, and I know I am looking forward to Nuala O' Connor speaking about her new novel *Nora* and Billy O' Callaghan on his new novel, *Life Sentences*.
<https://www.cuirt.ie/>
- The Dublin International Literary Festival will be announcing their programme in April, but they have done a pre-release for three events (online) that are worth checking out. The three are in late May. Those of you interested in memoir may enjoy the talk with Vivian Gornick, who I reference in the memoir course.
<https://ilfdublin.com/events>
- Listowel Writers week, June 2nd to the 6th. The website tells us that further details will be announced over the coming weeks! <https://writersweek.ie/>
- The Borris Festival, known as the Festival of Writing and Ideas, 11th to the 13th of June, have tickets on sale at a price that indicates it will be happening 'offline'! You may still have your ticket from last year which carries over.
<https://festivalofwritingandideas.com/>



April Writing Tips on 'Sound'.

Writing is not just about getting a story across it is also about how you get it across. A story has a sound, a rhythm. The poet knows all about sound and it is often the reason that they make good prose writers too. A line of prose, just like a line of poetry should be beautiful to read and beautiful to hear.

When you are writing a story, your focus is to firstly get it down and perhaps worry about the big things like character, plot or setting. Sound is something you should look closely at when you are in revision mode.

A sound problem can be the hardest one to diagnose because what happens is, we become accustomed to the sound of the piece and we are no longer objective about it. Often reading your work aloud will help you detect the sound problems. Here are the most common ones as outlined by Noah Lukeman in his book, *The first Five Pages*.



1. **Poor sentence construction.** If you have to read a sentence twice or pause in the middle to get the gist of it, there is a problem. Maybe it is too long or too short. Often the underlying cause is that the sentence is not well divided, and the root of this poor division is the misuse of commas, full stops, colons, semicolons.

Here is a rundown on how to use the ones that cause the most problems:

- **Semicolon:** This is used to connect two (or more) sentences or ideas that are distinct but closely related. If they are similar just merge them with a comma and a conjunction or if they are very different, separate them with a full stop. The semicolon is also used for listing and numbering ideas.
- **Colon:** The colon is used when you want to offset a point clearly. It can also be used to replace the phrase 'that is'. Here is an example from Lukeman.

'All of his actions pointed to one thing: he was a mean man.'

You should also use the colon before listing things, as in 'I bought three things in the shop: soap, toothpaste, and a bar of chocolate.'

2. **Echoes.** The echo problem comes in three forms
 - (a) a character's name being used too much.
 - (b) 'He' or 'she', to avoid using a character's name, being used too much.
 - (c) An unusual word that you get fixated on being used too much.
3. **Alliteration.** This is where you have two or more words beginning with the same letter in the same sentence. Do not overuse alliteration, it can make your writing seem forced. What works in poetry does not always transfer well to prose. And as for rhyme—avoid.
4. **Resonance.** This is all about subtlety. If you want a sentence to resound, to stand out, surround it with contrast. For instance, the long sentence amid shorter ones or the short sentence amid longer ones. Or a one sentence paragraph.

Solutions.

Sound is hard to fix but you can give yourself a fighting chance by:

- (1) Giving it to a trusted reader and asking them to focus on the sound of it for you.
- (2) Read it out loud and note where you stumble.
- (3) Cut out the problems caused by echoes, alliteration, rhyming and poor sentence construction.
- (4) Simplify. A complex idea or thought does not mean a complex sentence. **Simplicity means clarity.**

Over to you!

Take any one paragraph from your current work in progress and reformat it on a page as if it were a poem.

- Where do the stanza breaks go?
- What words are you changing when it is a poem?
- What do you delete?
- What do you add?

Then put the paragraph back together as a piece of prose and see if you can implement any of the changes. Sounding Better?

Book News!



Merdog Books.

Independent Irish Publishing

BOOK ANNOUNCEMENT - COMING
SOON

Charlotte & Arthur by Pauline Clooney,
October 2021

Description

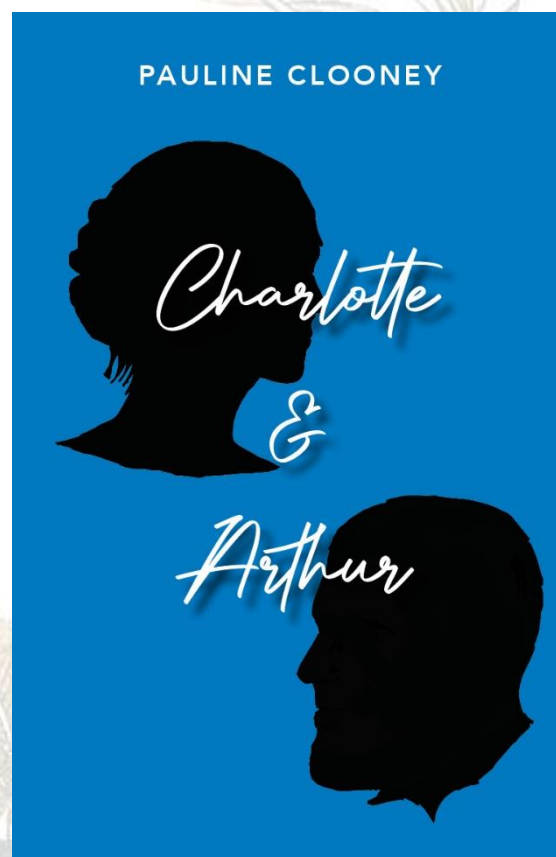
Charlotte & Arthur by Pauline Clooney

It is the morning of June 29th, 1854, here is the groom coming up the cobbles in Haworth, for his nuptial appointment with Charlotte Brontë. Only a handful of guests have been invited, and you, dear Reader, are one of them ...

Charlotte Brontë, the celebrated author of *Jane Eyre*, has married her papa's Curate, Irishman, Arthur Bells Nicholls. At thirty-eight years of age, and the unlikelihood of there ever being further proposals, Charlotte's dread of the lonely life of the spinster has convinced her that this is a calculated risk she must take.

For the month of July, the couple's itinerary brings them from the castles of Wales to the most popular tourist attractions in Victorian Ireland, spending some time along the way with Arthur's family in Banagher, on the banks of the River Shannon. Set against the backdrop of the recent famine, their tour exposes the contrasting lives of the poor and the privileged of Irish society.

Charlotte & Arthur, invites the reader into the heart and mind of the revered author, and it allows that reader to walk beside her as she realises that to have Arthur as her husband was in her own words '...better than to earn either Wealth or Fame or Power.'



Available to pre-order at
<http://merdogbooks.com/product/charlotte-arthur/...>

*Wishing you all a happy
Easter.*

