

LIVERPOOL IRISH FESTIVAL

LINES FROM LOCKDOWN

Liverpool Irish Festival have selected two poems, which we believe hold incredible relevance to the lockdown situation we find ourselves within during 2020.

Quarantine, by Eavan Boland, considers an aspect of Irish history that we will be leading several projects on over the coming years, An Gorta Mór also known as The Great Hunger or The Irish Famine. It reminds us of the politics involved in quarantine and the hardships people suffered, then and now. It makes us think about our gifts, our privilege and our heritage, reaching across the generations with love and a sadness that don't always make the right decisions. Sadly, Eavan passed away in April 2020 and so the video resulting from the use of this poem will be the Festival's tribute to her.

Stephen James Smith's *We Must Create* reminds us that we must create to stay well, to find connection and to feel. It commits us to thinking of others by considering our connection and heritage, in addition to what we can bring to the world.

Both are written by Dubliners in the first quarter of the twenty-first century; both provide many layers of meaning, which we encourage you to explore as deeply as you are able.

In the first instance, this project was created with *Sefton Park Palm House* for their *Palm Readers* group.

THE TASK

We would like to see your renditions of these poems, in whole or individual stanzas (numbered for easy identification). In the case of Stephen's poem, *We Must Create*, we encourage you to write your own stanza to add to the end, so we can share these with Stephen and our Festival audiences. We've given you a rough example below. See ***

- First and foremost, pick your poem -or poems- and decide if you are going to add a stanza to it for *We Must Create*. When sending your entry, let us know the stanza numbers you have covered for which poem. You are welcome to do all and both, but understand some would prefer to run shorter submissions
- Run a quick test on your camera, DSLR or phone, to make sure your speech can be heard and the image is as clear as it can be. Try not to sit directly in front of a light, which will either put you in silhouette or bleach you completely!
- Check you are filming in landscape and at the highest resolution your equipment allows
- Start by addressing the camera with your full name and current location. Be creative – if the whole family are involved, that's great – just let us know so we can credit you all!
- Focus on the feelings the poem(s) generates in you
- Once recorded, please send* your MP4 film to info@liverpoolirishfestival.com via [WeTransfer](#), with your name, age (in the case of minors), location and email, so we can credit you appropriately.

That's it! We will splice the entries together to create a full performance of the poems and may put individual entries up on our site for you to access later, if they stand out.

Deadline for entries: Sun 9 Aug 2020

First streaming of complete poem: Thurs 15 Oct 2020, at the opening of the *Liverpool Irish Festival*. Anyone submitting their email address will be sent the link.

General terms and conditions apply. You can see those on this page.

<https://www.liverpoolirishfestival.com/?p=2258&preview=true>

THE POEMS

QUARANTINE

Eavan Boland, born Dublin, Ireland 1944-died Dublin, Ireland 2020.

Stanza Stanza
number

- 1 In the worst hour of the worst season
 of the worst year of a whole people
 a man set out from the workhouse with his wife.
 He was walking—they were both walking—north.

- 2 She was sick with famine fever and could not keep up.
 He lifted her and put her on his back.
 He walked like that west and west and north.
 Until at nightfall under freezing stars they arrived.

- 3 In the morning they were both found dead.
 Of cold. Of hunger. Of the toxins of a whole history.
 But her feet were held against his breastbone.
 The last heat of his flesh was his last gift to her.

- 4 Let no love poem ever come to this threshold.
 There is no place here for the inexact
 praise of the easy graces and sensuality of the body.
 There is only time for this merciless inventory:

- 5 Their death together in the winter of 1847.
 Also what they suffered. How they lived.
 And what there is between a man and woman.
 And in which darkness it can best be proved.

From *New Collected Poems* by Eavan Boland.

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WE MUST CREATE

Stephen James Smith, born Dublin, Ireland 1982.

↩Stanza number/Stanza ↓

- 1 We must create to know who we can be
I say this for you, I say this for me
We must create to know who we can be
- 2 Early beginnings, heart beat warmth and you
First breath, eyes open a new point of view
Hands touch, ears hear, clocks ticking I am who?
We must create to know who we can be
- 3 Screaming out from within with a voice here
Notes flowing on air lulling the fear
Melody all around this atmosphere
We must create to know who we can be
- 4 Hearing truth in onomatopoeia
Boom, boom, belch, zoom, zap, playing with
grandpa
While cookie cutting, baking for grandma
We must create to know who we can be
- 5 From scrawling with crayons to Lego bricks
From knitting needles, soft textile fabrics
To air-guitaring auld Jimi Hendrix
We must create to know who we can be
- 6 There are creative accountants, CVs
Tinder profiles where you look the bees knees
But best not to force it, it comes with ease
We must create to know who we can be
- 7 We heard a song sung, it helped ease the pain
We didn't feel so lonesome as we sang the
refrain
We forgot that feeling until we heard it again
We must create to know who we can be
- 8 From nursery rhymes to white collar crimes
What have you to say in uncertain times?
Have you a chance to change the paradigms?
We must create to know who we can be
- 9 From nursery rhymes to white collar crimes
What have you to say in uncertain times?
Have you a chance to change the paradigms?
We must create to know who we can be
- 10 Do you remember the time you heard an opening
allegro
Or when that beat dropped and how it made
your head go?
Some things make no sense unless you're in flow
We must create to know who we can be
- 11 You may rise then fall, or fall then rise
An arc of a story contains no surprise
But how you tell it, therein the art lies
We must create to know who we can be
- 12 Artistry gives rise to community
We're all part of a changing tapestry
There's art history in identity
We must create to know who we can be
- 13 If you do it for the money you'll be called a fraud
If you think you're great company and you might
be God
Delusions of grandeur aren't that odd
We must create to know who we can be
- 14 There's all sorts of forms, disciplines, levels
To challenge yourself in the intervals
Where you'll find rivals and reasons for approvals
We must create to know who we can be
- 15 If it's saved you from yourself
And now there's no other way
It doesn't matter how it moved you, welcome to
the ballet
You've just found the peak of Parnassus, fair
play!
- 16 We must create to know who we can be
I say this for you, I say this for me
We must create to know who we can be
We must create to know who we can be.

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*** To get you going, we've given you a little
starter for 10...

Commit to the process; trust in your speech
Engage in the idea, tweak gingerly
Film it and send it; await now to see
We must create to know who we can be.