

Poetry inspired by the stories of the Táin Bó Cúailnge

Warriors Kings and and Poets

Created by children from
Roscommon National
Schools to celebrate
the Táin March 2018.

With Chris Thompson



Thanks and Acknowledgements

In April and May 2018, I had the opportunity to offer workshops to schools in Roscommon, to help classes to prepare to meet Queen Mebh on Rathcroghan mound as part of the Táin March 2018. One of the main purposes was to familiarise the students with the great Irish Mythological story tradition and its Iron Age and early Medieval historical and archaeological context. It became clear that the Storyteller-Poets were central to the societies that created and told these wonderful tales. Without them, we would not still be sharing them centuries later. We created our own poems inspired by the stories. We hope you enjoy them.

Chris Thompson

Thanks to all the schools who took part in the project, through the workshops, joining Medb and her army on the mound and submitting poetry to be included here. Your enthusiasm was infectious, and the quality of the poetry speaks for itself.

Thanks to the staff and children from:

Ballinagare N.S.

Clooniquinn N.S.

Four Mile House N.S.

Tulsk N.S.

Ballagh N.S.

Clooncagh N.S.

Castleplunket N.S.

Cloontuskert N.S.

The project was supported by the Heritage Office of Roscommon County Council and the Heritage Council funded Heritage in Schools Scheme.

This project is supported by the Creative Ireland Programme, an all-of-Government five-year initiative, from 2017 to 2022, which places creativity at the centre of public policy. Further information from creativeireland.ie and ireland.ie

'I Am' ... Poetry

I am Wind on Sea,
I am Ocean-wave,
I am Roar of Sea,
I am Bull of Seven Fights, I am Vulture on Cliff,
I am Dewdrop,
I am Fairest of Flowers,
I am Boar for Boldness,
I am Salmon in Pool,
I am Lake on Plain,
I am a Mountain in a Man,
I am a Word of Skill.

From R.A.S. MacAllister's Translation: Lebor Gebala Erenn (Irish Texts Society, 1941)

This is one translation of part of a poem from the 7th C known as, The Song of Amergin. It is written in an old style of Irish poetry known as 'Rosca'. It looks very difficult at first, but the poet is using a series of metaphors based on images that show her / his skill, adaptability and flexibility with words.

The poet is demonstrating his suitability to offer advice and solutions that will uphold the 'fir flaithemon', the Truth of the King. He can be anything that is needed. We decided to bring the style up-to-date and find out a bit more about ourselves on the way!

In the time of the Early Irish stories the spoken word carried the authority which we give to the written word today. To break your spoken word could lead to a loss of honour and even a lowering of your status.

The word of the Storyteller-poet was the most important of all. She, or he, could carry the 'word' even between warring Túatha. They could transmit news, act as heralds and

Warriors Kings and Poets

even make treaties to settle disputes. Their 'word' was law. If you were the subject of one of their 'praise poems', then your status would be improved. However, if you did anything to damage your People or the Land, even if you were the king or queen of the tribe, they would speak a satire, a 'blame poem' about you. Red blotches would appear upon your face, everyone would laugh at you and you would not be important anymore. This was a disaster for a king or queen. They had to keep their poet-storytellers happy.

Of course, if you were trained as a storyteller-poet as well as a king, warrior, craftsman or brigiú, then you could create praise poems for yourself... Perhaps that explains why the first requirement for joining Finn McCumhail's famous warband, was to be very, very good at poetry.

That is what we decided to do in the workshops and here are a few of our poems.

"I Am Poems"



I AM GREEN AS A SNAKE

I am a dog sleeping in the sun.
I am thunder on a Spring evening.
I am a chair with green cushions.
I am a tie with a Boxer on it.
I am a ham and cheese pizza.

Alex Usher, Tulsk N.S. 2018

"I Am Poems"

I AM YELLOW AS THE SUN

I am a bird in a nest.

I am snow on Christmas day.

I am a hard table in a bright room.

I am a hat, a blue hat.

I am a pepperoni pizza.

Conor Beirne, Tusk N.S. 2018

I AM AS BLUE AS THE SKY

I am a griffin flying through the sky.

I am snow on Christmas day.

I am a unicorn pillow.

I am a pretty dress.

I am noodles so slippery.

Lily Burke, Tusk N.S. 2018

I AM AS RED AS BLOOD

I am a big cat sitting down.

I am snow on Christmas Eve.

I am a bed with lots of pillows.

I am a hat with a word.

I am an ice-cream with lots of ice.

Anna Feeley, Tusk N.S. 2018

"I Am Poems"

I AM AS GREEN AS THE GRASS

I am a bird flying so fast.
I am snow on Christmas eve.
I am a chair as comfy as can be.
I am a pair of shorts on a sunny day.
I am a warm pile of chicken nuggets.

Fiona Jones, Tulsk N.S. 2018

I AM BLUE AS THE DEEPEST OCEANS

I am an ape jumping from tree to tree.
I am sunshine over the tops of the hills.
I am a rocking chair in the corner of the room.
I am a tee-shirt with a dog on it.
I am a ready salted pack of crisps.

Patrick Staninski, Tulsk N.S. 2018

I AM AS RED AS FRESH BLOOD

I am a log sitting by the fire.
I am the sun across the desert.
I am covered in pillows.
I am a pair of Nike runners.
I am pizza covered in salami.

Sean Johnston, Tulsk N.S. 2018

"I Am Poems"

I AM YELLOW AS THE SUN

I am a cheetah lighting the mood.
I am lightning in the hills.
I am a saucepan with spaghetti.
I am a McKenzie top with lightning.
I am spaghetti, very wriggly.

Clodagh Hanly, Tulsk N.S. 2018

I AM AS BLUE AS THE SEA

I am a dog chasing a cat.
I am the sun on the horizon.
I am a coat keeping very warm.
I am a cheese burger.

Caoimhe Fintan, Tulsk N.S. 2018

I AM AS YELLOW AS THE SUN

I am a dog burying a bone.
I am the sun on holidays.
I am a dress with a bow on top.
I am a pineapple with yellow lines.

Katie Carthy, Tulsk N.S. 2018

"I Am Poems"

I AM AS BLACK AS A THUNDER CLOUD

I am a lion roaring to my pride.
I am raining with a cold breeze.
I am a table standing still.
I am a blanket warm and fluffy.
I am cake with cream dripping down.

Noelle Greene, Tulsk N.S. 2018

I AM AS BLACK AS A THUNDERCLOUD AT NIGHT

I am an elephant using all his might.
I am lightning hitting a tree.
I am a door with a golden key.
I am a hat to go on your head.
I am a pizza that has just been made.

Aidan Healy, Tulsk N.S. 2018

I AM AS RED AS BLOOD FROM A VAMPIRE

I am a Husky eating a cactus.
I am hail hitting the roofs.
I am a closet falling over.
I am goal keeper's gloves saving the ball.
I am steak with a crispy bone.

John Moylan, Tulsk N.S. 2018

"I Am Poems"

I AM GREEN AS GRASS

I am a horse galloping over the hills.
I am a thundercloud over the sea.
I am a soft couch covered in cushions.
I am a woolly jumper with a cat on it.
I am nice hot chips.

Grace Jones, Tusk N.S. 2017

I AM AS RED AS A ROSE

I am a gorilla fighting a monkey.
I am wind across the hills.
I am a bed in a bedroom.
I am a pair of Nike runners.
I am chips on a plate with curry sauce.

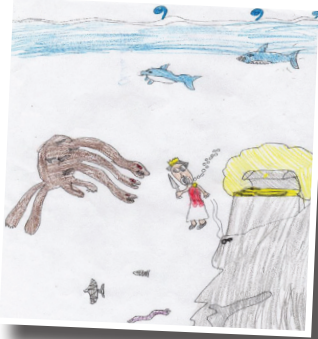
Megan Crean, Tusk N.S. 2018

I AM AS PURPLE AS FLOWERS

I am a parrot chattering.
I am sunshine in Summer.
I am a comfy sofa with cushions.
I am a cute top with unicorns.
I am a yummy pizza with no
pineapple.

Eva McGarry, Tusk N.S. 2018

"I Am Poems"



I AM YELLOW AS A SUNNY DAY

I am a unicorn flying.
I am a bright sunny day.
I am a comfy bed.
I am a necklace.
I am chicken curry with extra rice.

Cara Lawe, Ballyfeeney N.S. 2017

I AM AS RED AS THE DEADLIEST SNAKE

I am strong as a rhino.
I am lightning striking everything.
I am a leather jacket to fight everybody.
I am a peanut with peanut butter on top.

Ava Flynn, Tulsk N.S. 2018

I AM YELLOW AS DAFFODILS IN MARCH

I am a sheep eating a feast.
I am lightning scorching the ground.
I am a comfy chair in a throne room.
I am a cloak with a crown on it.
I am bacon that takes time to chew.

Rachel McCormak, Tulsk N.S. 2017

"I Am Poems"

I AM AS PINK AS FAIRGROUND CANDYFLOSS

I am a dog running in the meadow.

I am a sunny day in August.

I am a comfy bed in a cosy bedroom.

I am a warm jumper in Winter.

I am a Hawaiian pizza on movie night.

Katie, St. Mary's N.S. Strokestown 2017

I AM YELLOW AS THE SUN

I am a cheetah running fast.

I am snow on the mountain.

I am a chair covered in timber.

I am a pair of red socks.

I am a burnt roast potato.

Daniel Donogue, Tulsk N.S. 2018

I AM AS BLACK AS NIGHT

I am an eagle soaring through the air.

I am thunder rattling the heavens.

I am a throne fit for a king.

I am spice, fiery, furious and hot.

St. Patrick's B.N.S., Strokestown 2017

Describing Heroes

"In the chariot a fair man with long curling hair; his tresses tri-coloured: brown at the skin, blood-red at the middle, as a diadem of yellow gold the hair at the tips.

About him a soft crimson tunic, having five stripes of glittering gold.

A shield spotted indented, with a bright edge of bronze.

A barbed five-pronged javelin flames at his wrist."

This is part of a description of Lóegaire the Triumphant given by Mebh's daughter when she sees the would-be champions arriving at Rathcroghan.

(Translation by G Henderson)

In the workshops, group poems were created to welcome the heroes. We wanted to describe their super-hero magnificence so the groups all made good use of extended similes and hyperbole! The champions would have been delighted with these poems.

In the days when the Táin stories, including 'The Feast of Bricriu' were first told, each local and regional ruler gathered around him or herself a band of elite warrior heroes.

These champions were the super sports stars of the time. They were just like Olympic athletes. There are descriptions of them somersaulting on and off moving chariots, pole-vaulting with their spears, racing and juggling. There is even one text in which they start tightrope walking across the roundhouse for fun.

Back then there was no television or film to record their feats. There wasn't even a camera available to catch them in action. They had to depend on the storyteller-poets to record their astonishing deeds in words alone.

They were able to pass on sports reports and action-replays of all the fantastic actions of the elite champions. Everybody wanted to hear the latest story, or listen, again to some of the famous feats of past champions. Everybody wanted as much detail as possible. Here are a few of our hero reports.

Describing Heroes

HERE COMES CÚ CHULAINN

His horse was as fast as a ball of lightning.

His cloak as red as a forest fire.

His hair as shiny as the summer sun.

His robe as stunning as a sapphire.

His skin as pale as a white diamond.

Clooneyquinn N.S. 2018

HERE COMES LÓEGAIRE

His speedy horse is as fast as a mighty wind.

His dark eyes are as dark as the midnight sky.

His tough sword is as strong as one
thousand gold ingots.

Charlie Cryan, Ballinagare N.S. 2018



Describing Heroes

HERE COMES CÚ CHULAINN

His cloak is as red as a sea of blood
rippling in waves like a river.

His horses approach as fast as
an eagle hunting his prey.

His face is a façade of fury.

His hair glowing like golden sand.

The chariot races through the forest
like a raging bull.

***Conrad Finan, Éanna Moylan,
Katie Martin, Jessica Jones,
Tulsk N.S. 2018***

HERE COMES LÓEGAIRE THE TRIUMPHANT

The chariot wheels are as black as coal.

His shield is as shiny as a mirror.

His horses are as fast as lightning.

His cloak is as red as a ruby.

His sword is as shiny as polish.

His hair is as pointy as a pointy sword.

The chariot is as strong as iron.

Clooneyquinn N.S. 2018

Describing Heroes

HERE COMES CONAL

His long cloak is as green as an emerald stone.
His narrow sword is as strong as a shark's
tooth in the deep ocean.
His shield is as strong as a boulder
rolling down the highest mountain.
His speedy horse is fast as the blowing wind.

Peter Henry, Ballinagare N.S. 2018



HERE COMES CONALL THE VICTORIOUS

His horses are as black as night.
His sword is as blinding as the sun.
His shield is as bright as the stars.
His chariot is as shiny as a mirror.
His cloak is like diamonds in a cave.
His hair is like sparks of fire.

Clooneyquinn N.S. 2018

Describing Heroes

HERE COMES MEDB

Her cloak is as crimson as the red
blood from her enemies.

Her sword is as hot as a blazing fire from hell.

Her Chariot is as gold as the beach on a sunny day.

Her horse is as fast as a cheetah chasing its prey.

The Queen of the Hill and the Queen of Connacht.

Niamh, Ballagh N.S. 2018

HERE COMES CÚ CHULAINN

His horses are as fast as the speed of light.

His hair is as golden as the sun setting on
a hot summers evening.

His eyes are as red as the flames that burn in hell.

His cloak is as blue as the vast Atlantic Ocean.

His spear is as sharp as a cruel piece of glass.

Clodagh, Alanna, Alan and John,

Clooncagh N.S. 2018

Describing Heroes



HERE COMES CÚ CHULAINN

His horses are dappled grey, their hooves
like bullets flying on the ground.
Their manes and tails flying like eagles,
ears pricked forward, eyes staring ahead.
His hair is wispy, long and of many colours.
His body masculine and tall.
His robes fly in the wind like he is the only king.
His golden shield is by his side.

Clooneyquinn N.S. 2018

HERE COMES CÚ CHULAINN

His cloak like a river glistening in the sun.
His sword as sharp as the teeth on a shark.
His hair as dark as a black winter's night.
His horse as fast and strong as a storm.
His eyes fierce as a charging bull.

***Orla Conroy, Aishling Quigley, Patricia Guerin,
Joshua Cronin and Christopher Kelly,
Tulsk N.S. 2018***

Rosc Inspired Poems

The poet story tellers were not just entertainers.

They:

Recorded what happened

Gave news reports

Held talks and made treaties with other Tuaths

Made sure even the king kept the law

Knew about the history and geography of the land

Made praise poems and sometimes 'blame' poems (satires)

And told stories

Rosc is an ancient form of unrhymed Old Irish verse that uses alliteration and regular metre. Rosc is very old. The very first stories were told through this type of poetry. The form was used to describe both the setting of a story and the action. It was a good way of describing a battle.

It can be hard for us to understand today especially because they were originally written in a very old style of Irish.

It is likely that once upon a time, whole stories were told in poetry. Perhaps all the similar starting sounds, alliteration, as well as the regular rhythms, metre, helped the poet-storyteller to organise the story into word patterns that were easier to re-call.

We explored a very simple version inspired by the Rosc form. Each poem began with two words in a line. After that, each line kept one word, threw one away and chose one new word. It was easy and fun!

By choosing words with care, it was possible to create atmosphere, fast paced action or both.

Even with using no more than two words in each line you can still tell an action story.

"Rosc Inspired"

Poems about the Cave of Oweynagat

DARK SCARY

Scary eyes.
Eyes sparkling.
Sparkling death.
Death blood.
Blood dripping.
Dripping rain.
Rain falling.
Falling bats.
Bats flying.
Flying high.
High in the sky.

Samantha, Ballinagare N.S.

SCARY FEELS

Feels frightening.
Frightening people.
People scream.
Scream, chilling.
Chilling sights.
Sites foul.
Foul cats.
Cats attacking.
Attacking prey.
Prey fear.
Fear that turns your blood cold.

Katie Martin, Ballinagare N.S.

DARK DAMP

Damp gloomy.
Gloomy scary.
Scary creatures.
Creatures crawling.
Crawling there.
There and Everywhere.

Eóin Dowd, Ballinagare N.S.

"Rose Inspired"

CREATURES HIDING

Hiding quietly.
Quietly creeping.
Creeping stealthily.
Stealthily moving.
Moving closer.
Then, BOO! They attack.

Lyndsey Gibbons, Ballagh N.S.



EARS QUIVERING

Nose twitching.
Twitching eyes.
Eyes glowing.
Glowing cave.
Cave full of evil cats.

Orla Conroy, Tulsk N.S.

DARK DEEP

Deep cold.
Cold scary.
Scary shadows.
Shadows moving.
Moving creepily.
Creepily waiting.
Waiting to strike.

Sean Rohan, Ballagh N.S.

"Rose Inspired"

DARK SCARY

Scary creatures.
Creatures creeping.
Creeping spiders.
Spiders spinning.
Spinning webs.
Webs everywhere.
Everywhere hidden.
Hidden cats.
Cats scratching.
Scratching walls.
Walls damaged.
Damaged Souls.

Hannah Kelly, Balinagare N.S.

CREEPY CRAWLY

Crawly creatures.
Creatures watching.
Watching carefully.
Carefully treading.
Treading lightly.
Lightly stalking.
Stalking prey.
Prey running.
Running from danger
around every corner.

Eoghan Kelly, Ballinagare N.S.

MUSTY DUSTY

Dusty air.
Air gloomy.
Gloomy place.
Place scary.
So scary.
You would jump out of your skin.

Jack Heany, Ballinagare N.S.

"Rose Inspired"

BLACK SCARY

Scary creatures.
Creatures crawling.
Crawling everywhere.
Everywhere noises.
Noises coming.
Coming fast.
Fast cats.
Cats screaming.
Screaming loud.
Loud growls.
Growls from all around.

David Higgins, Ballinagare N.S.

CREATURES WAILING

Wailing cats.
Cats crying.
Crying widows.
Widows watching.
Watching bats.
Bats eyes.
Eyes winking.
Winking pigs.
Pigs flying.
Flying dragons.
Dragons spraying fire.

Jack Caulfield, Ballinagare N.S.



"Rose Inspired"

MYSTERIOUS DARK

Dark cave.

Cave scary.

Scary cats.

Cats purring.

Purring loudly.

Loudly crunching.

Crunching viciously.

Viciously chasing.

Chasing silent day.

silently creeping.

Creeping after you.

David Cox, Ballagh N.S.

MYSTERIOUS DARK

Dark caves.

Caves rumbling.

Rumbling rocks.

Rocks sparkling.

Sparkling gold.

Gold falling.

Falling wild.

Wild cats.

Cats black.

Black tails.

Tails flying.

Flying bats.

Ruairí Gibbons, Ballagh N.S.

"Rosc Inspired"

CAVE DARK

Dark black.
Black dirty.
Dirty water.
Water moist.
Moist air.
Air smoke.
Smoke fire.
Fire burning.
Burning monster.

Niamh Hanley, Ballagh N.S.

CAVE DARK

Dark damp.
Damp wet.
Wet muddy.
Muddy scary.
Scary cats.
Cats prowling.
Prowling quietly.

Micheal Farrell, Ballinagare N.S.

CAVE BLACK

Black cats.
Prowling paws.
Paws padding.
Padding slowly.
Slowly stalking.
Stalking pigs.
Pigs terrified.
Terrified eyes.
Eyes flaming.
Flaming heart.
Heart trembling.
Trembling at the sight of the
Cave of the Cats.

Áine Madden, Ballagh N.S.

"Rose Inspired"

DARK CREEPY

Creepy crawling.
Crawling coming.
Coming biting.
Biting spiders.
Spiders venom.
Venom flowing.
Flowing blood.
Blood dead.
Dead body.

Craig, Ballinagare N.S.

DARK GLOOMY

Gloomy wet.
Wet windy.
Windy horrible.
Horrible scary.
Scary cats.
Cats sharp.
Sharp teeth.
Teeth white.
White cat.
Cat attack.
Attack warriors.
Warriors attack.

Emma Kearns, Clooncagh N.S.

BROWN BULL

Bull flesh.
Flesh muscle.
Muscle lean.
Lean beef.
Beef grizzle.
Grizzle flavour.
Flavour lovely.

Dillan Casey, Clooncagh N.S.

"Rosc Inspired"

DARK DANGEROUS

Dangerous gloomily.
Gloomily smell.
Smell fear.
Fear around.
Around Loegaire.
Loegaire climbing.
Climbing out.
Out of the cave.

Keelan Cuffe, Clooncagh N.S.

DANGEROUS CAVE

Cave scary.
Scary cats.
Cats big.
Big long.
Long spears.
Spears fighting.
Fighting warriors.
Warriors are terrified.

Jasmine Gibbons, Ballagh N.S.

DARK CAVES

Caves big.
Big cats.
Cats prowling.
Prowling quietly.
Quietly looking.
Looking viciously.
Viciously pouncing.
Pouncing loudly.
Loudly rumbling.
Rumbling rocks.
Rocks pointy.
Pointy teeth.
Teeth clenching.
Clenching meat.
Meat of a warrior, so get out.

Anthony Cox, Ballagh N.S.

"Rose Inspired"



DARK GLOOMING

Glooming moon.
Moon bright.
Bright light.
Light steps.
Steps heard.
Heard eating.
Eating mice.
Mice gone.
Gone forever.

Katy Fay, Clooncagh N.S.

DARK SCARY

Scary dangers.
Dangers screams.
Screams mysterious.
Mysterious cats.
Cats tigers.
Tigers blood.
Blood claws.
THE CATS!

Harry Lavin, Clooncagh N.S.

DARK GLOOMY

Gloomy entrance.
Entrance opens.
Opens danger.
Danger lurking.
Lurking cats.
Cats growling.
Growling echoes.
Echoes the sound of death.

Alan Sweeney, Clooncagh N.S.

"Rose Inspired"

DARK GLOOMY

Gloomy walls.
Walls damp.
Damp floors.
Floors slippery.
Slippery slugs.
Slugs slithery.
Slithery snakes.
Snakes dangerous.
Dangerous cats.
Cats scratching.
Scratching attack.
Attack warriors.
Warriors dying.
Dying cats.

John Banahan, Clooncagh N.S.

DARK WINDY

Windy cold.
Cold bumpy.
Bumpy floor.
Floor walls.
Walls stones.
Stones clattering.
Clattering claws.
Claws attaching.
Attaching warriors.
Warriors screaming.
Out of the other world.

***Alanna Aristotelous,
Clooncagh N.S.***

"Rose Inspired"

Poetry can tell an "Action" Story

CHARIOTS CHARGING

Charging horses.
Horses turning.
Turning people.
People waving.
Waving flags.
Flags breaking.
Breaking chariots.
Chariots roaring.
Roaring fans.
Fans cheering.

John Banahan, Clooncagh N.S.



LIGHTNING FAST

Fast hooves.
Hooves moving.
Moving eyes.
Eyes sparkling.
Sparkling wheels.
Wheels turning.
Turning chariots.
Chariots trembling.
Trembling hearts.
Hearts wild.
Wild horses.
Horses darting swiftly.
Emily Ryan, Ballagh N.S.

"Rosc Inspired"

SLIEVE BAWN

Tall steep.
Steep outside.
Outside inside.
Inside mystery.
Mystery strange.
Strange royal.
Royal underground.
Underground lies.
Lies Queen.
Queen Mebh of Rathcroghan.

Jessica Jones, Tulsk N.S.

HORSES RACING

Racing hearts.
Hearts beating.
Beating strongly.
Strongly pounding.
Pounding hooves.
hooves clattering.
Clattering chariots.
All passing by.

Rachel Trimble, Ballagh N.S.

"Rosc Inspired"

CHARIOT RACING

Racing horses.
Horses hooves.
Hooves stomping.
Stomping spectators.
Spectators cheering.
Cheering charioteers.
Charioteers screaming.
Screaming as they cross the line.

***Alanna Aristotelous,
Clooncagh N.S.***

TREMBLING RACES

Race is running.
Racing chariots.
Chariot strong.
Strong Warriors.
Warriors battling.
Battling swords.
Swords clashing.
Clashing shields.
Shield protecting.
Protecting our
beloved country.

HORSE GALLOPING

Galloping tails.
Tails waving.
Waving crowds.
Crowds waiting.
Waiting racers
Racers racing.

Michael Farrell, Ballagh N.S.

"Rosc Inspired"

Fergus Mac Leite and the Water Monster

One class wrote Rosc style poems about Fergus mac Leite and his fight with a horrible water monster. It is not one of the main Táin stories but is still part of the background to the tradition.

GLISTENING WAVES

Waves crashing.
Crashing monster.
Monster slashing.
Slashing sword.
Sword red.
Red ocean.
Ocean safe.
Safe Fergus.
Fergus happy.
Happy people.
People cheering.
Cheering their king.

Lara Higgins, Ballinagare N.S.

WATER COLD

Cold evening.
Evening dusk.
Dusk dark.
Dark gloomy.
Gloomy lake.
Lake monster.
Monster weird.
Weird eyes.
Eyes glittering.

Fona Gighlan, Ballinagare N.S.

"Rose Inspired"



GLISTENING EYES

Eyes water.
Water splashing.
Splashing waves.
Waves cold.
Cold monster.

Isabel Kelly, Ballinagare N.S.

FREEZING WATERS

Waters gleaming.
Gleaming stars.
Stars beautiful.
Beautiful waves.
Waves fierce.
Fierce monster.
Monster eyes.
Eyes evil.
Evil spirit.
Spirit killer.
Killer fears.
Fears Fergus.
Fergus flees.
Flees to fight again.

Ronan Kearney, Ballinagare N.S.

WATER STILL

Still ground.
Ground trembles.
Trembles horribly.
Horribly huge.
Huge monster.
Monster fights.
Fights Fergus.
Fergus slays.
Slays monster.

Peter Cummins, Ballinagare N.S.



COLD WATER

Water gloomy.
Gloomy monster.
Monster staring.
Staring eyes.
Eyes open.
Open mouth.
Mouth teeth.
Teeth sharp.
Sharp sword.
Sword killing.
Killing the monster.

Mia Cryan, Ballinagare N.S.

WATER COLD

Cold evening.
Evening dark.
Dark face.
Face round.
Round eyes.
Eyes staring.
Staring monster.
Monster ready to attack.

Rachel Higgins, Ballinagare N.S.

Just a Little More ...

One class went on to visit another important local Iron Age site. This was the Corlea Trackway in County Longford. Then we spent a morning exploring the Old Irish tale Tochmarc Étaíne, (The story of Midir and Etain).

Part of the story is connected to the Trackway at Corlea.

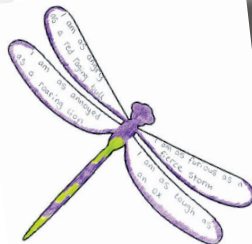
The Corlea Trackway was discovered in 1984 It is a well- built ‘togher’, an early type of road, formed from split oak planks fixed with birch rails and placed over piled brushwood. At least one km of road has been found, and there is probably more there, under the bog. The road has been dated to 148 BCE and was probably completed within one year. It was only in use for a few years.

The story of Midir and Etain is a long and complicated story with lots of unexpected twists. The tale stretches over one thousand years and features time travel and even a 'cloning' machine!

Poor Etain. She was selected by Midir, an important Otherworld judge, to be his wife because she was the most beautiful woman of her time. Then she is turned into a pool of water, a beautiful purple fly and a worm, by Midir's jealous first wife Fuamnach. 1000 years later she is about to be married to the Ulster king Eochaid when Midir returns. He and Eochaid fight over her by betting on games of Fidchell. Finally, Midir turns her into a swan and carries her away although Eochaid fights to get her back.

It is a romantic story, but the class felt that Etain was not offered much choice in deciding what she wanted her life to be.

Here are a few of the poems created to reflect our sympathy for Etain.



"Etain's Story"

ONCE I WAS A SECOND WIFE BEING BULLIED BY THE FIRST WIFE

Once I was part of pool of water shrinking by the moment.

Once I was a beautiful purple dragonfly blown
away by a powerful strong storm.

Now I am an ordinary girl about to get married.

Now I am feeling strange because a man tells me
tales of another world.

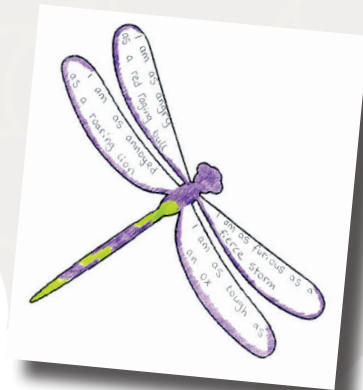
Now I am a graceful Swan gliding on the water.

I wish I wasn't a swan.

I wish I could be married.

I wish I could live in both worlds.

Della Cryan, Ballinagare N.S.



"Etain's Story"

ONCE I WAS A SCARED SECOND WIFE

Once I was a crystal-clear puddle of water.

Once I was a purple dragonfly.

Now I am a re-born child.

Now I am a wife to be.

Now I am a beautiful swan.

I wish I was normal.

I wish I was left alone.

I wish I could follow my own destiny.

Jamie Moore, Ballinagare N.S.

I AM ANGRY AS A RED RAGING BULL

I am as furious as a fierce storm.

I am annoyed as a roaring tiger.

I am as tough as an ox.

I am Fuamnach.

Niamh Gilmore, Ballinagare N.S.

I AM A HOWLING WIND

I am a raging storm.

I am Fuamnach.

I am furious thunder.

Caoimhe Dowd, Ballinagare N.S.

Notes



Notes





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