

RANCID IDOLS PRODUCTIONS PRESENTS

SEA

24 HOUR CHAPBOOK
CHALLENGE II

Published in Northern Ireland by
Rancid Idols Productions

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Cover image: modified detail from
Two Crabs (1889) by Vincent Van Gogh

Inner photography by Colin Dardis

rancididols.weebly.com

Foreword

Welcome to the second in our sporadic series of 24-hour chapbooks. The idea for this chapbook you're now reading came from a simple thought: would it be possible to write, format and release a booklet within the space of just twenty-four hours?

A callout for poets to take part when out of social media at the start of the week. They signed up, only knowing that a prompt would be received at some stage that week. On Sunday 1st May at 6.30pm, the prompt was sent: just one word, 'Sea', and a picture: *Two Crabs* (1889) by Vincent Van Gogh. The painting is a personal favourite, although only one crab is featured on the cover here – the crab on the left of the painting is displaying its underbelly, and is not as visually pleasing, but the picture had already inspired two poems from myself previously, so it must be doing something right...

What you read now is the combined efforts of all the poets; many thanks to all of them for agreeing to take part and sending in their work.

Colin Dardis, Editor

Crab

No one has ever held my carapace
close to their ear. Mine is no spiral conch
to swirl the air, echo the water's race.
or charm you back to some primordial space.

But I've my art: the theatre of my shell,
swashbuckle struggle as I crack and swell
to break my armour, extricate
my naked body from its citadel,

back off the stage; sidestepping to my fate:
a mouthful for a fish, a haul for bait,
or given the chance to grow my shield again,
belly to belly coupling with a mate.

I may not sing to you but, soon or late,
you'll clock your image in my zigzag gait.

Catherine Ann Cullen



Far from the Sea

May Bank Hol. 2022

Far from the sea these grassy plains,
these pink, blossom-blessed verges
and paths.

Far from the sea the morning filled
full of warbling, the lilting of lost
and remembered trill-ease.

Far from the sea days of slumber,
of early summer, of holiday rest
in buttercup's palm.

Far from the sea a memory
of mountains, coast blue in distance,
beyond the valley 'v'.

But, close to the sea a swirl of passion,
of summoned, sifted clay, sparse and fragile imagery.

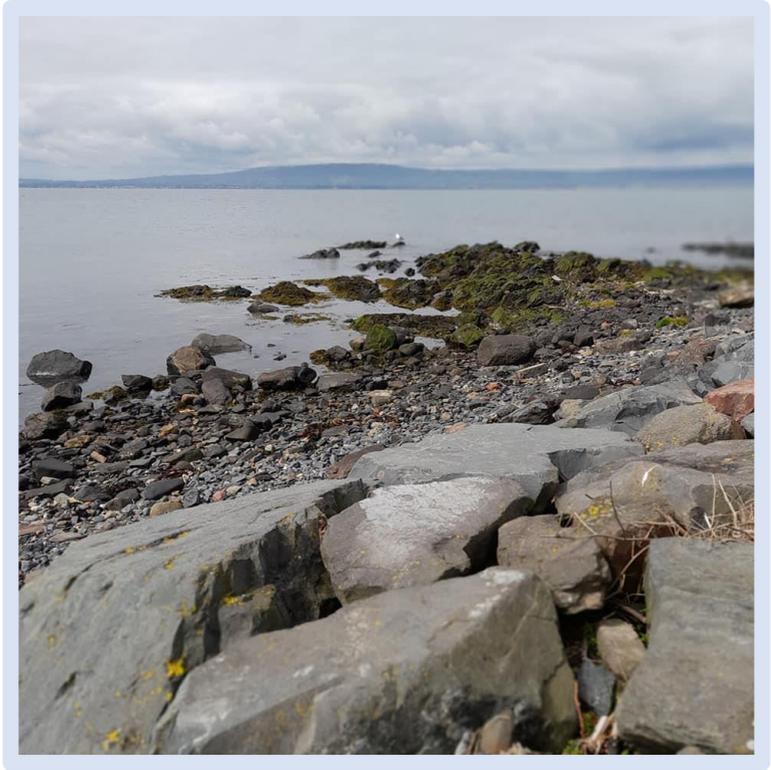
Orla Fay



Sea Poem

Vast is the ocean. Constant its motion.
Endless in span. Pre-dater of man.
Never-ending breadth. Fathomless its depths.
Home to mysteries, throughout history,
inspiring tales of monsters and whales,
adventure and strife. The seabed is rife
with skeletal crews swallowed under blue
skies and starless nights unmoved by their plight,
while high above waves dance across their graves.
Unanchored, the tide, wed to its moon-bride,
is pulled to and fro as night's gravity grows.
Comes as no surprise while sea levels rise;
it'll have its revenge and our world will end.
We've brought our own doom. Apocalypse looms.

Mark Russell



I Was No Water Baby

Island-born in broken waters,
my sea legs never had a chance to
come in. The storm had a head start,
and then I arrived, head spinning,
heart in my throat, and now I sit,
toes dipped in rock pools,
wondering if this calm is the end
or the eye.

Ellie Rose McKee



Crab Clause

Lotus positioned meditative guru
Clampers damp is how I fare
Cracked claws gritty - brittle - sift in water
Crepitus joints free from care -
Trawler traded crunchy crushed
Frittered in a salad
Mini maulers hit with bucket and spade
Mob rules - giant tools - add to the ballad
Late sun reflecting – save our souls
Crock – cockle - buckle – scuffle
Shuffle and crawl
Bring on the tide - let the wet flow
Crusty ocean innocents home afore
Crepuscular cover blown.

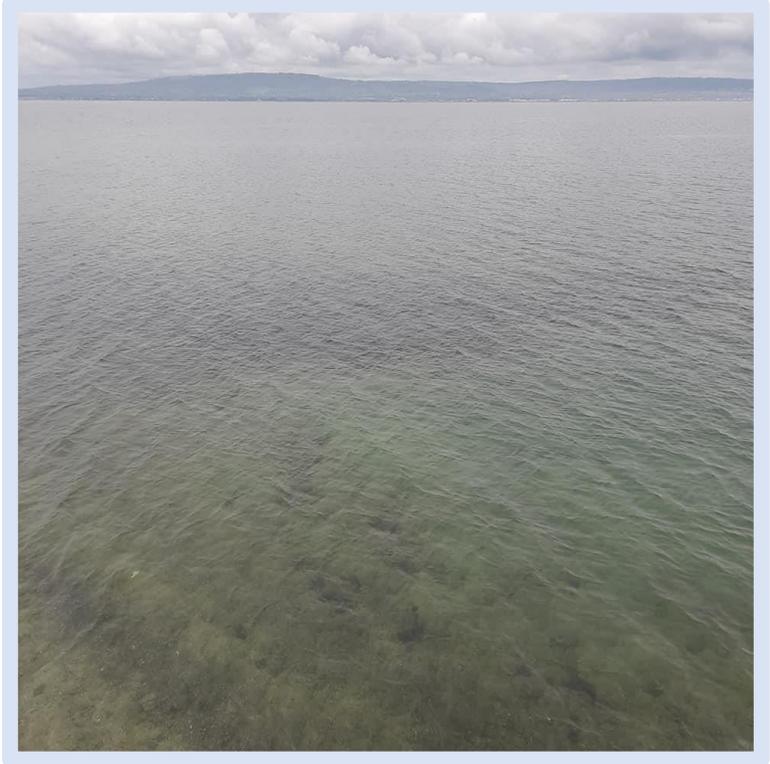
Wendy Young



Craving

After two years you ventured
out, forgetting the sudden rush
of sound as you get close to breaking
waves. Further down the beach
you hear the *lop, lop* call of water finding shore.
A swimmer of strength you peel
away from pebbles into the seas
embrace. As it holds you, memories
pool, recalling your weight,
the shape of you, the strawberry scent
of your shampoo; how will it ever
let you go again?

Geraldine O'Kane



untitled

this sea works me into sand,
i lie facing it, my belly, sand.

this sea is love and death,
the love and death of all of us.

this water falls from my eyes,
carried from shore to shore;

lines cavernous, lines bold,
this beach a place to hold

you. at last a place for your feet
to shuffle through my remains;

soon to brush past me,
past me into this sea.

Martin McKenna



The Shore

The kelpie gallops out to sea
But I am stuck on rocky shore -
Empty crab shells at my feet,
A hollow heart cries out for more.
Seaweed foam laps itching toes.
Freezes bones. It's not enough.
I want to feel its baltic throes,
The bite of icy water's cuff.
To see the world through kelpie eyes
And chase the wind that tastes the Mournes,
Skim rainbow reefs and algae skies,
Breathe moonlit mists and sleep in storms.
But I am stuck on rocky shore,
Heart lost upon the ocean floor.

Sandee Bree Breathnach



The Sea

The Beautiful Sea

Its colour reflects the sky

And its own seaweed

Some places, it's an ocean

Or merely a small channel

Its inhabitants

Small fish, crabs, whales, sharks, dolphins

Compete for their place

Not forgetting the corals

Climate change causes bleaching

It's another world

That we're oblivious to

We must look after

Consequences if we don't

Andrew Ward



Portraiture of a Drowning

tossed as seaweed / old rope
nothing solid to barnacle

current too too too
much / fast / strong

impossible swimmer
one arm saluting the waves

one arm waiting
for a hand

one arm going under
joining the rest

full-fathomed body
near-phantom limb

last sighted at
a wave / a grave

Colin Dardis

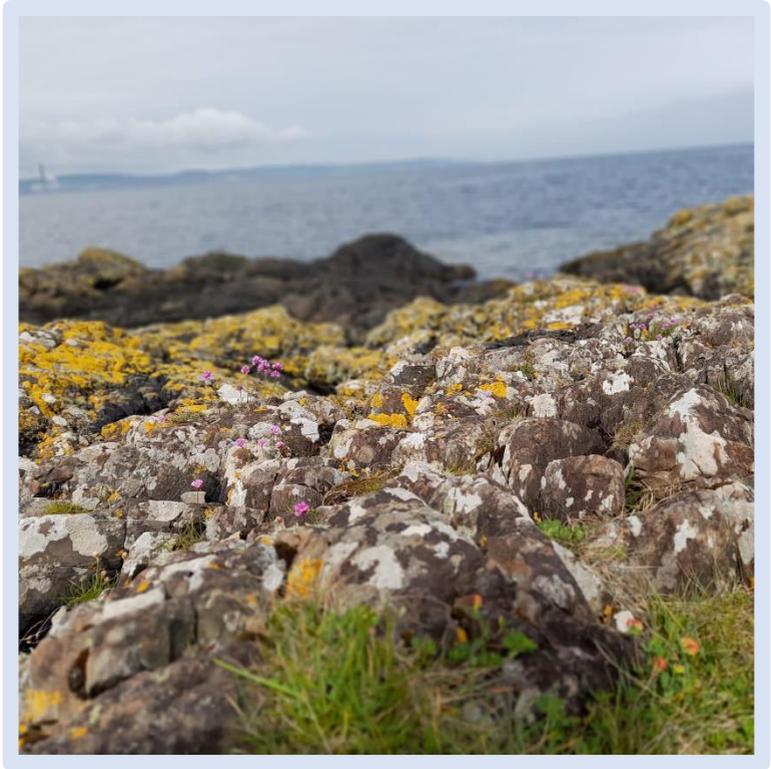


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Azure-teal synthesis,
Take me to your depths.

Enshrine me in your pure, salt arms
Whisper white noise, secrets kept.

Claire Burn



Crab Claws

were always a treasure found on *Newcastle Beach*,
and there'd you'd find me, with an *Around-a Pound*
bucket and

spade, (aged eight), wading through rockpools of
camouflaged stones,
shifting under shades of mossy, brown rocks and pastel-
coloured,

sea glass. Powdery-white, cone-like barnacles scraped
our toes when walking barefoot. Ankles twisted around cold

boulders and my soles slipped into 'what I imagined,' pink
anemones and shooting starfish, spotted in their sea-sky,

avoiding my red, plastic spade. I was in a *County Down*
Caribbean
looking for pirate-necklace-crab-claws, and wondering why

there were so little crabs attached to them or where abouts
they were running around sideways, with no arms.

Niamh McNally



Thalassophobia

Some say you're lovely to behold,
But I find your calmness cold,
The freezing foam you can keep.
To me your beauty's just skin deep!

Far below cruel creatures lurk,
Monsters hidden in the murk,
Terrors making me believe,
Your surface flatters to deceive.

To dip a toe in you's too much,
I must avoid your crab claw clutch,
Clay feet in safety on dry land,
On you my solid rock I stand.

Stephen Knox



Searching for Sea Glass

On spring cold days
we walked on Sandymount strand
ignoring the rumble and threat of waves,

feeling the dribble of sand
through damp fingers
as we sought elusive sea glass

You tell me its real names:
mermaids' tears,
fairy pearls, giants' teeth.

I am five:
whatever you tell me is truth.
Even when we leave empty handed
I am happy.

Pauline Fayne



untitled

And as a day bled out
I waded into salt water
I saw the scuttle of crabs
A mass exodus
From the pathway
Of an intruder
The ignorance
In my squeals
Gave way to silence
As I remembered my pain
Momentarily suspended
As a sky waited for her moon
And a heart continued to break

Helen Hastings



Japanese Debris Field Arrives On B.C. Shores After 2011 Earthquake

When Stephen Hawking lectured in Japan, he was asked not to mention that the universe had a beginning (and therefore would possibly have an end), as this would affect the stock market.

Like Masfield, I feel a sea-fever, an impulse to go down to
the sea again and again, to Tonquin Beach, where
we once lay together all those years ago
and we glowed when the moon
rose up like a
sun over
us.

To Tonquin Beach where, now, I find a toy, perhaps a
Styrofoam cup, shoes (many shoes), a red spatula,
a baseball cap, an empty miso jar, all oddly
beautiful in the glow of Fukushima's faint
assurances. Cesium-134. Trace amounts.
Subclinical. Of no
concern.

P.W. Bridgman