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Kilkenny man's poetry collection set for debut

'Significant debut': Johnswell Road man's poems well received

A Kilkenny native will next week launch his debut poetry collection in the London Review Bookshop in Bloomsbury, London.

Niall Bourke, originally from Johnswell Road in Kilkenny City, now lives in London. His debut collection, *Did You Put The Weasels Out?* is already receiving positive reviews.

Bourke graduated from the Goldsmith's University of London Writer/Teacher MA in 2015 (with distinction). Since then, he has been published widely in a number of journals and magazines in the UK and Ireland, including The Kilkenny Poetry Broadsheet.

The past pupil of CBS Kilkenny writes both poetry and prose and has been longlisted for The Short

Story Award and shortlisted for The Over The Edge New Writer Of The Year Award (2015, 2016 and 2017), The Bare Fiction Poetry Prize, The Costa Short Story Award, The Cambridge International Short Story Prize and The Melita Hume Poetry Prize for best first collection for a poet under 35.

In 2017, he was one of twelve poets selected for Poetry Ireland's Introductions Series.

On March 1, Eyewear Publishing will launch *Did you Put The Weasels Out?* An epic for an age without heroes, it is a celebration of the modern mythology that takes place in every small town.

A modern update of the 8th Century Gaelic saga 'The Táin', written in Alexander



Kilkenny man Niall Bourke's debut poetry collection, 'Did You Put The Weasels Out?'

Pushkin's fiendish 'Onegin sonnet', Bourke takes strict form to the extreme, and turns it into a hilarious, sharp-sighted satire of ordinary people's neuroses, indulgences and four-AM fears. Abandon your preconceptions: Bourke's prose-poetry operatic-verse-novel breaks all the rules – while managing to keep to them at the same time.

Both traditional and undeniably of our time, *Did*

You Put The Weasels Out? is poetry that celebrates the playfulness and uncertainty of being alive.

Poet Theo Dorgan has described it as 'a significant debut'.

"Should you happen to have weasels to put out or bring in, actual or metaphorical weasels, you can entrust them to Niall Bourke – and all the better should they be weasels with an appreciative eye for the human comedy, its quirks

and its dark corners," he writes.

"Genuinely innovative in its bravura mastery of form, a genre-breaker that comes at the reader from some alien point of the compass, *Have You Put the Weasels Out?* is impressively sure of itself – and it earns the right to."

The book will be available at Dubray Books, Kilkenny City and online.

For more information, visit the website niallbourkewriter.com.

Book Launch

Celebrated horseman to launch debut novel in Book Centre, Kilkenny



Joe O'Flaherty

Author and celebrated horseman, Joe O'Flaherty will be in Kilkenny Book Centre on Tuesday, February 27th (3-5pm), for a special signing of his debut novel, *The Sand Hogs*.

A well known sportshorse breeder and producer, the author has many friends from the equestrian world in Kilkenny and is looking forward to meeting up with them.

The book is a compelling tale that gives readers an insight into a world we might otherwise have never imagined.

Set in New York City, it is a dramatic account of a resilient woman's struggles and focuses more on what isn't said, encouraging the reader to look deeper into the story.

It had already been described by one critic as: "A must read for anyone who has had to overcome challenging circumstances by relying on only their inner-strength."

It takes its title from the term that was used to describe the legions of mainly Irish men who worked on the tunnels for the subway deep underneath the famous US city.

Today the author lives a quiet life with his beloved wife of fifty plus years, Norma, on the outskirts of Longford town.

Get Cracked in The Red Door, Thomastown



Brian Hamilton, Frank Kelly and Ado Regan who will appear in the play, *Finn and Tilly* in the Bridgebrook Arms on March 2 and 3

THEATRE

The second instalment of the sell-out phenomenon that is *Cracked!* will be staged on Friday March 2 and Saturday March 3 at The Red Door theatre in The Bridgebrook Arms, Thomastown. It promises to be captivating.

Be My Baby by Gillian Grattan concerns two souls waiting to depart to their next destination, one refuses to leave.

Listing the grievances, the souls are informed that their path is ultimately in the hands of a higher power.

As they fight to the bitter end for what they believe in, they strive to determine

their own destiny.

Another short play being staged is *Kitty's Map* by Órla McGovern and entails a good gossip over a shampoo and set and a decent cup of tea.

But add an old woman's secret and a young woman's sense of adventure to the pot, and the road takes an unexpected turn.

Órla McGovern is a writer and performer based in Galway. Her plays have been produced around the world in boats, forests and of course on stages.

She is an actor, storyteller and improviser. She has done some tv, radio and film work.

FINN AND TILLY

Finn and Tilly by Eamon

Dolan is set in a theatre as a play comes to an end. Tilly is bored.

Finn explains that to enjoy such a classic, one needs to suspend reality. And when reality is indeed suspended, Tilly embraces it with open arms while Finn cowers, unable to accept his own advice.

FORTY SHADES OF GREEN

Forty Shades of Green by Joe Murray is the story of two middle-aged men having a confused conversation in their local about Johnny Cash, Jesse James, Michael Collins' transgender sibling and dirty books, in other words, a typical public house conversation.