



'Menu of Poems' is a project of Arts and Health Co-ordinators Ireland, managed and produced by Saolta Arts and kindly supported by the Health Service Executive and Poetry Ireland.

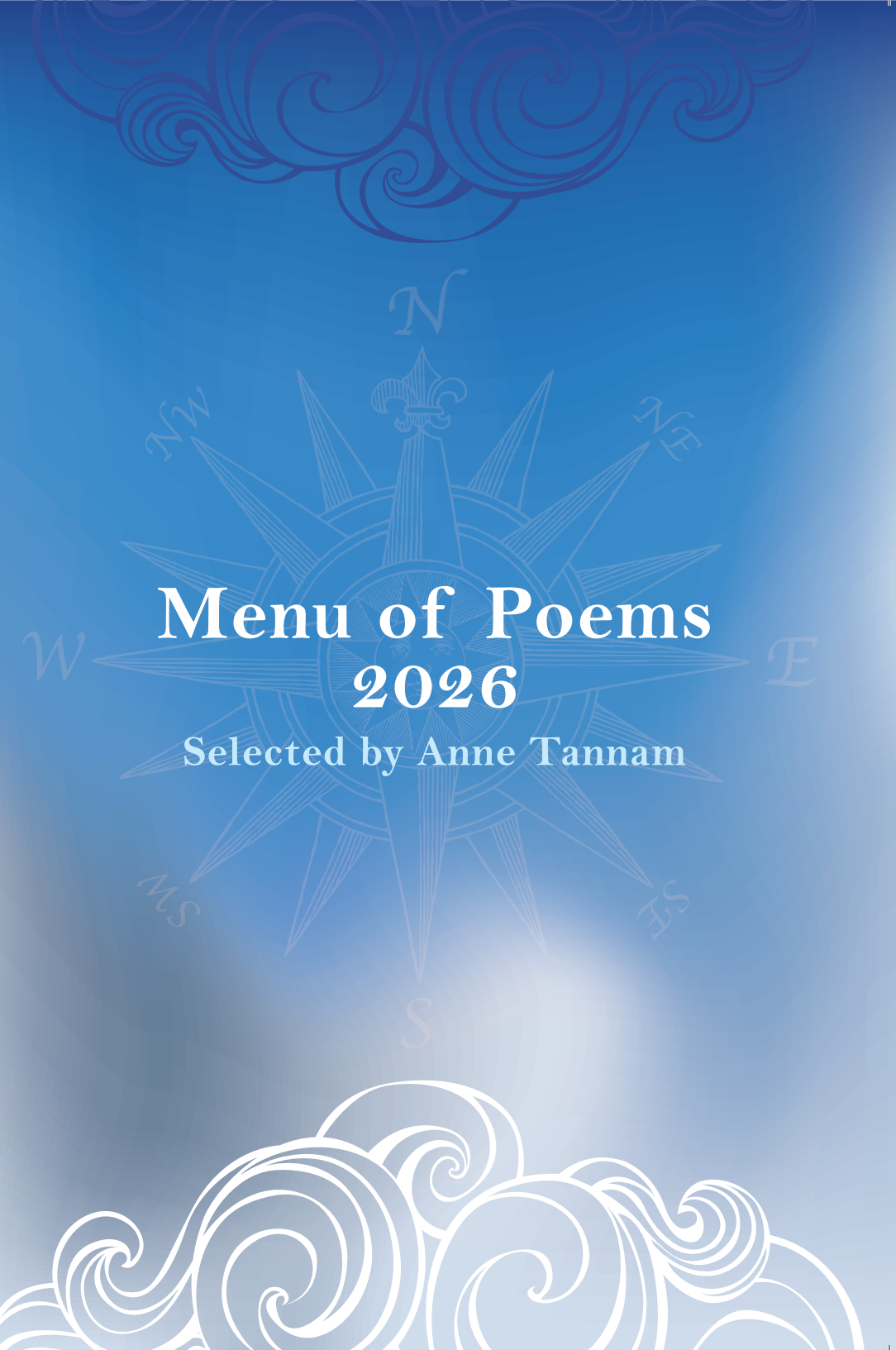
To listen to the poetry go to saoltaarts.com/stories/menu-of-poems/ where you will find a bonus poem *The Art of Listening* by Anne Tannam and the wonderful *My Delicious Hat* by Paul Timoney, which will be shared with children in hospital.



Please email your comments to: saoltaarts@hse.ie

In celebration of Poetry Day Ireland, *Menu of Poems* is intended for distribution throughout hospitals and healthcare settings in Ireland. This year's selection was edited by award winning poet Anne Tannam. For more on Anne's poetry, visit www.annetannampoetry.ie

Menu of Poems is a joint initiative between Arts for Health Partnership programme, West Cork; Kildare County Council Arts and Wellbeing Programme; MISA Creative Life at St. James's Hospital; Naas General Hospital Arts Committee; Saolta Arts for HSE West and North West; St Luke's Radiation Oncology Network, Dublin; St. Vincent's University Hospital, Tallaght University Hospital Arts Programme; University Hospital Limerick; and Waterford Healing Arts.



Menu of Poems 2026

Selected by Anne Tannam



Sometimes, life can be hard to navigate. And it can feel lonely, too. For me, poetry helps me to find myself when I'm lost, and to lose myself when I'm too much in my head, worrying about things beyond my reach. In difficult times, there is no kinder or more understanding companion than a poem, especially when it captures something of the fullness of what it means to be alive. Reading these poems, I hope you find pleasure and solace in their company.

Reunion

Marie Howe

The very best part was rowing out onto the small lake in a little boat:

James and I taking turns fishing, one fishing while the other rowed slowly —
the long sigh of the line through the air,
and the far plunk of the hook and the sinker —
lily pads, yellow flowers
the dripping of the oars
and the knock and creak of them moving in the rusty locks.

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Longitude

Luke Morgan

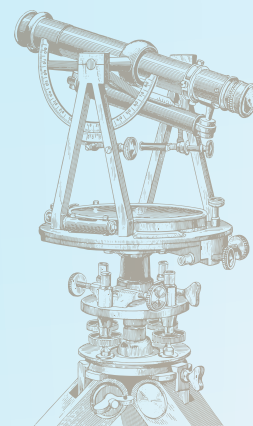
Long ago, navigators determined latitude by designing tools to map their ships with stars. But longitude without radars was a mystery – if you travelled west quick enough you could complete the trick of keeping a sun unmoving in its sky.

Stars have always used us as their guide. They move in one direction, we hurtle with force in another, each vying to meet on a course we only get half-right. Lovers cross continents, unknowingly part of a coin toss until by chance they collide

and light makes of itself more light. I can somewhat trace where I am, I think, with the latitude of lineage, paper and ink; I got here by Margaret Coyle, my North Star, and Margaret Keane, my South. What thwarts me in uncharted night

is the route I've yet to fulfil – should I row much faster, or stay calm in answer to that confounding qualm of keeping stars from disappearing because here I am, fervently steering to hold them up there burning still.

Published with kind permission of the author from *Blood Atlas* by Luke Morgan (Arlen House, 2025).



L M N O P

In Other Words

by Alvy Carragher

The car was a frosted red ornament.
Mother rose early to start the engine,
boil kettles, pour warm water on the windows;
ice cracked, and the car burst into hum.
In the backseat I fogged the glass,
refusing to look at my sisters waving me off.

Alone at the school gates I pulled up my socks,
smoothed the pleats on my stiff, grey pinafore,
hurried by the wall where big boys loomed.

Nobody told me what I was doing there
or how long I'd have to stay. Nothing made sense:
who to be without my sisters, the alphabet.

I couldn't say L without M-N-O-P or understand
how separate things might sometimes form a whole,
that letters lived both inside and outside words.

Nobody told me there were two languages,
or they did, and I didn't know what language meant.
Suddenly, there were two words for everything—

window and *fuinneog*, door and *doras*, Alvy and *Ailbhe*.
All winter the first name shook me from sleep,
and, in the car, I slipped the new name over my head.

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