

# Time to Listen

Poetry Day Ireland 2020

With Cavan Library Service  
and writer Heather Brett



Poetry  
Day  
Ireland  
Thursday 30 April 2020  
www.poetryday.ie

There Will  
Be Time

## Triptych Oh Ireland, Mother, Night Shift [About the poems](#)

*These three poems for my mother.*

### **Oh Ireland**

*This is the story of my mother at 21 when she and dad decided to emigrate to Newfoundland where her sister and brother-in-law lived. Mother's sister Katie died from TB while she was away and of course she couldn't return for the funeral. It is also where they adopted me. Married 7 years they thought they couldn't have any of their own. However as is often the case, mother got pregnant 12 weeks after this and my sister was born on my own birthday. Due to heavy snow we didn't get christened until I was nearly 3 and my sister Lorraine nearly 2. They came back to Ireland when I was around 4 and I remember years of the inevitable parcels from Newfoundland, and thin airmails from my aunts and cousins there.*

### **Mother**

*Through the years my Mother has been a force to be reckoned with. A strong character, she had a great memory of her life in Ireland and it was always tinged with the death of her own mother when she was just three years old. Weekly we'd drive to Slemish and into the hills of Antrim and along the coastline of the north as she'd tell me stories of her childhood. Only in 2016 did she begin to suffer with the onset of dementia - at age 87!*

### **Nightshift**

*Now 91, my mother was diagnosed with vascular dementia after a stroke last August. This is now the focal point of looking after her 24 hours a day. She has retreated to a time she remembers most, when her sisters were her world and she was around 8/9 years old. My sisters Lorraine and Anne live close and they get the brunt of the work. She no longer knows us and thinks we are nurses or the daughters of old friends. She continuously asks me how my mother is. Now with the virus I haven't seen her in over 6 weeks. Nightshift was written one night when I stayed a few months ago. She can talk all night and frequently does. But Mother always wants to know there is someone there.*

Heather Brett