

An Ambush for the Imagination

I'm a big fan of writing workshops. It doesn't matter to me what the genre is; I find that I can always learn something new about the craft of writing. I write poetry primarily so, naturally, I am a little more excited when the session is tutored by a poet. In August 2018 Fermanagh Writers hosted well-known Dublin poet and writer Colm Keegan for a full-day workshop. Colm called it *Poetry in Motion* and during the course of the day he certainly kept our pens in motion. He also said it was *an ambush for your imagination* and that was very true in my case.

Colm has a definition for poetry that I find intriguing; he calls it:

ELEMENOPY

The free and easy feeling of just going with it and not caring. You're thinking Happy Days! I can do this! I'm almost there! You don't care, you're just in it. That's Elemenopy. That feeling. The secret ingredient in all great poetry, all great writing, and all great art. If you catch a moment right, and put it into words, it can live on, it can live longer than you. When you record those moments, that's poetry. Have you ever caught a butterfly? You do it with care, it is a considerate act. You can catch your feelings and your memories the same way. Good writing isn't just about words, it's about Elemenopy. Put the feelings first. Start with the heart and the art will come.

He has an enormous enthusiasm for passing on his knowledge of writing and poetry to anyone who will listen. He certainly had a willing audience on that August Saturday. He got all of us to attempt to write six poems in an hour that day and most of us obliged. I managed to write six and I will share two of them with you now. The first is a serious poem about my father and the second is a whimsical memory from my childhood.

My Dad Didn't Cry

*I left all my tears on your sister's coffin,
he took me in his arms and whispered
when I asked him
Daddy, why don't you cry?
I barely remembered her.
Too young to understand
that he was always grieving,
I carried on believing
that my Dad didn't cry.
Years after he died my uncle
told the story of Patricia's funeral.
I'm sorry daddy
now I know why*

you didn't cry

The Reader

My siblings always interfered
so I found a place to be,
where I could go inside my mind
and set my spirit free.
I used to lock the bathroom door
to keep the world outside,
and explore a universe inside
the book upon the floor.

John Monaghan