

FORWARD ARTS FOUNDATION IN CONVERSATION WITH MAURA DOOLEY

FORWARD ARTS FOUNDATION: When did you start writing poetry and what drew you into it?

MAURA DOOLEY: I've written poetry since I was a child. I've just always loved it. Both my older brothers wrote poetry, it seemed like a normal thing to do.

FAF: Please talk about your development as a writer of poetry. Tell us when you first felt you were a poet and how it went from there.

MD: As I say, it seemed like just another part of life: I started doing it...and I went on doing it.

FAF: What does being shortlisted for the Forward Prizes mean for you?

MD: It's a surprise and I'm pleased but I know well that plenty of wonderful poems go by unnoticed, never short-listed or awarded. As long as someone reads them, perhaps that's the main thing.

FAF: Please tell us about the genesis of this poem. Is it part of a collection or sequence? Where can a reader find more by you?

MD: This poem will be in my next collection, due next year from Bloodaxe. They have already published a few collections by me.

FAF: Which poets do you admire most and what do you value in their work?

MD: I love John Donne and Thomas Wyatt, John Clare and Patrick Kavanagh. I read contemporary poetry all the time so it's hard to single out a few. I have some amazing students where I teach at Goldsmiths – I enjoy reading them too.

FAF: What's next for you as a poet?

MD: Just the hope to carry on writing.

FAF: What advice would you give to anyone starting out in poetry today?

MD: Pay no attention to fashion. Read, read, read: read across centuries, traditions and continents. Don't get caught up in any of the silly arguments that spring up: read poetry, write poetry and don't forget to live a little.