Liam Horan wins Gerald Griffin Literary Award

The Limerick Writers’ Centre is proud to announce that Co Mayo native Liam Horan has been named the winner of the 2025 Gerald Griffin Competition for First Original Adult Fiction with his manuscript novel submission “On the Way Out”

[On The Way Out will be launched in Ballinrobe Library on Saturday, November 22, at 7.30pm. More](https://liamhoran.info/event/launch-otwo/) [HERE](https://liamhoran.info/event/launch-otwo/)

The official announcement took place on Thurs, September 18th at Dríacht Art Gallery, Adare, Co. Limerick, where the author was recognised for his outstanding submission to Ireland’s newest literary prize.

[A group of men holding a certificate

AI-generated content may be incorrect.](https://liamhoran.info/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/Ciaran-ODriscoll-Liam-Horan-Dominic-Taylor-scaled.jpg)“We are thrilled to recognise Liam Horan’s exceptional talent,” said Dominic Taylor, Director of the Limerick Writers’ Centre. “His manuscript distinguished itself among a strong collection of submissions, reflecting the rich diversity and creative energy that characterises contemporary Irish fiction writing. The quality of entries demonstrated how Irish authors continue to explore fresh narrative territories while drawing on the country’s deep literary traditions.”

The prize for the winner is to have his manuscript published by Limerick Writers’ Centre later on this year.

Judges Ciaran O’Driscoll and Kerry Beth Neville, both figures with a distinguished literary pedigree, were particularly impressed with Horan’s work.

**Ciaran O’Driscoll stated that:**

“This entry has a deft coming together of the strands one expects in a novel: an engaging story, interesting characters, an ability to bounce the reader with its steady movement to a conclusion. Its wit and savvy of small-town politics and atmosphere will appeal to many readers.

There are also the more subtle devices of the art of fiction, such as the writing style itself and the use of sub-themes such as pilgrimage and the Kenny Rodgers motifs of gambling and the need to fight for one’s rights.

The importance of dialogue for the health of society, as well as the need to take chances, are deftly and wittily handled, but not without driving home the gravity of the situation with which small communities are threatened. We get a glimpse of self-interested power-play which threatens to wipe out a segment of the charm and livelihood of a small town, a street and its citizens, but the solution recommended is not violence, but wisdom and canniness. *There’s decency in people once you don’t back them into corners,*as Louise emails Matt. But occasionally it helps to talk quietly and carry a medium-sized stick.”

**Kerry Beth Neville  said:**

“The author of *On the Way Out* navigates the lives of ordinary people with tenderness, wit, and acuity. This debut novel captures the complicated and often sticky web of small-town life: overlapping conversations in community halls, wary bonds formed in half-heated meeting rooms, gossip that can be both kind and cruel. The town itself is a character—a bit ragged but full of possibility. Each chapter alternates between characters so that their lives echo and refract off each other. How will Louise’s struggle with her shop bump against Matt’s attempts at connection? How will Tríona’s breathing exercises help these residents catch their breath and continue on? The dialogue is sharp but not heartless, funny but also reveals the ache of loneliness and grief. *On the Way Out* offers heartbreak and heart mending, showing us that we are, indeed, bound together in community”.

The Gerald Griffin Competition, named after the acclaimed 19th-century Irish novelist, aims to discover and promote new voices in Irish literature. This competition is part of the Limerick Writers’ Centre’s ongoing efforts to nurture literary talent and expand awareness of its activities beyond the local area.

**About the Winner Liam Horan:**

**Liam Horan** lives in Ballinrobe, Co. Mayo, Ireland with his wife Noreen. He is a former journalist who worked in a variety of publications, including as Gaelic Games Correspondent of the *Irish Independent* (1995 to 2000).

He has recently completed the MA in Creative Writing at University of Limerick. In 2023/2024, he achieved a First Class Honours mark in the Creative Writers in the Community module for his work with [Ballyhaunis Community School](https://liamhoran.info/ink-and-imagination/).

He is the creator of the Championship Man series of essays on RTÉ Radio One (Drivetime and Countrywide programmes).

**About Limerick Writers’ Centre:**

The Limerick Writers’ Centre is dedicated to fostering and promoting the art of writing in all its forms. Through competitions, workshops, and various literary events, the Centre plays a crucial role in the cultural landscape of Limerick and beyond.

Pic above shows: (Left to right): Ciaran Driscol, judge; Liam Horan, winner; Dominic Taylor, organiser, Limerick Writers’ Centre

On The Way Out is a Savoy Editions publication by Limerick Writers’ Centre – available to buy [HERE](https://liamhoran.info/shop/)