

'Ryan Murphy announced as 2017 winner of UCD Maeve Binchy Travel Award'.

Congratulations to Ryan Murphy, graduate of the School of English, Drama, Film and Creative Writing, who is the 2017 winner of UCD Maeve Binchy Travel Award'.

This award, sponsored by the Binchy/Snell family, commemorates Maeve Binchy, her love of travel and her world-celebrated creative writing. The Award, worth €4,000, is open to a UCD humanities student (undergraduate or postgraduate) and was inaugurated in 2014. Previous winners are Henrietta McKervey, John McHugh and Aaron O'Farrell. Ryan, from Gorey, Co. Wexford, has just graduated with an MA in Creative Writing from UCD, following a BA majoring in English.

On the receipt of the award, Ryan expressed his warm appreciation: "This award has allowed me to combine my creative passions with my love for the natural world in an extraordinary way that still feels surreal. Being able to travel to paradise to write freely about things I love is a gift from one of Ireland's most beloved writers and Maeve Binchy's legacy of generosity is humbling. I hope one day I'll have written something she would have enjoyed reading."

The judges of the 2017 award were Niall McMonagle, Éilís Ní Dhuibhne and James Ryan. Congratulating this year's winner, Professor Margaret Kelleher, Chair of Anglo-Irish Literature and Drama at UCD and chair of the selection committee, said: "We are delighted to celebrate the fourth year of this award, generously supported by Maeve's husband Gordon Snell, on behalf of her family, to mark her creative legacy. Ryan is a very deserving winner of his award and the judges were deeply impressed by his ambition, vision and commitment. We wish him a marvellous journey."

Here is Ryan's account of his winning project: "So much of the language within environmental literature is suffocated by lamentation, doing little to inspire solutions to environmental problems. I am setting myself the challenge of writing an environmental poetry collection in Indonesia filled not with despair but hope. And utter rage. The poems will follow a childlike animal speaker named Terminarch, the last of its kind, who ventures across a devastated environment meeting other animals suffering through it. Elephants, tigers, orang-utans; all creatures Terminarch will seek to help, searching for the answers to their plight, becoming their messiah on a journey ending in the ultimate sacrifice for a speaker who refuses to die quietly. My own journey through Indonesia's national parks in search of endangered wildlife, from Sumatra to the Komodo islands, will be the inspiration for the writing and I hope whatever I create will be seen as a homage to the ecology of Indonesia, and a poetic plea to save it."