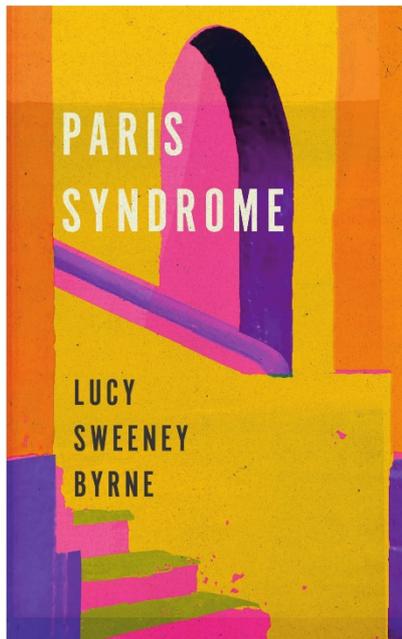


Episode 1: Narrating Millennial Disconnect with Lucy Sweeney Byrne

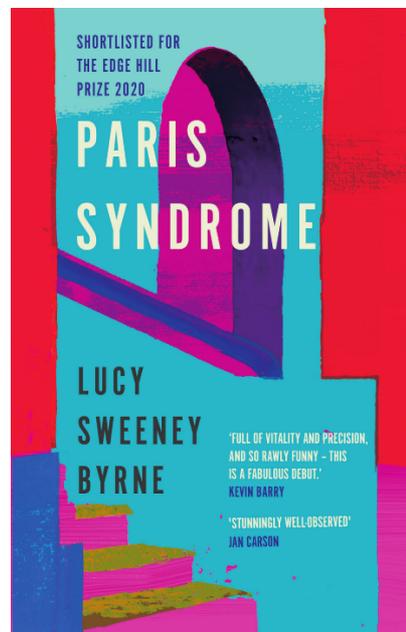
By Orlaith Darling

In this episode, I speak to writer Lucy Sweeney Byrne. Lucy is a writer from Greystones whose work has been published in *Banshee*, *Stinging Fly*, *Grist*, *The Dublin Review* and *3AM Magazine*, as well as other publications. Her debut collection of stories, *Paris Syndrome* was Banshee Press's inaugural publication in 2019, and a second edition has recently been released. Her work has been shortlisted for numerous Irish and international awards, including the Dalkey Emerging Writer Award, the Edgehill Short Story Prize, the Butler Literary Award, the Kate O'Brien Award, and the John McGahern Annual Book Prize.

Over the course of the episode, we talk about the theme of connection in her work – specifically, *Paris Syndrome*.



First edition (2019)



Second edition (2021)

We discuss internet culture and its overlaps with autofiction, drawing on Lucy's [essay](#) for *3AM* on the subject to delve into the ethics of that genre.

A not uncontroversial term among critics and literary scholars, autofiction refers to writing that blurs the boundaries between autobiography and fiction drawing these two types of narratives together into a hybrid form. It has historically been associated with women, queer and minority writers. Of late, autofiction has seen a resurgence in the works of Karl Ove Knausgård, Ben Lerner, Teju Cole, Sheila Heti, Jenny Offill and Rachel Cusk. For more about this complex term, see [this Culture article](#).

To me, terms like fact, fiction, and autofiction, are prime examples of language gone too far, of over-specification, or, more accurately, of thought-wankery. It's all just so irrelevant, so narrow, so needless, so lazily conservative, and has nothing to do with the making or receiving of great art, which, I think, is what we're all supposed to be striving for.

Excerpt from 'Real or Fake? autofiction and *the hills*'

We also chat about the term 'Paris syndrome' and how it might speak to the millennial experience of ennui and disenchantment within an increasingly globalised world.

In this episode, Lucy is eloquent on the topic of the literary canon, reading and what it might mean to be a political writer.

For more on Lucy's mother, Cathy Sweeney, and the mother-daughter writing combo, see [this Irish Times article](#).

For more information on *Paris Syndrome* and Banshee Press, follow this [link](#). You can read more of Lucy's writing [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#).

For more information about Orlaith's research, you can follow her on Twitter [@darling_orlaith](#), and view some of her work [here](#).