



Bray
ARTS
JOURNAL

Volume 1 2015

Hobokon by James Devlin

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The Bray Arts is delighted to present its re-launched journal, and hopes that you will enjoy reading it. The aim of the club is to provide opportunities for local artists to showcase their work, through performance at monthly gatherings in the Martello, and now hopefully through print in this journal. The response to our call for pieces to include here has been phenomenal and we have tried to include at least one piece from each person who submitted material for consideration. Obviously it was not possible, given space restrictions to include every piece and we would hope to include those we had to omit in future volumes. Thanks to our local library, to our local art galleries, to our local journalists and to the many local businesses who helped us to spread the word about this venture. Particular thanks to Graham O'Neill and to his colleagues in The Wicklow Voice for volunteering to take on the final design and layout phase of the work and to Brigid O'Brien for her wonderful illustration work. So get ready to be moved by poetry, both comic and tragic, by some flash fiction that DART users will empathise with, by celebrations marking our recent referendum, by advice on being creative, by a tribute to a great opera diva, by childhood memory of our town and by many more stories and poems. Enjoy!

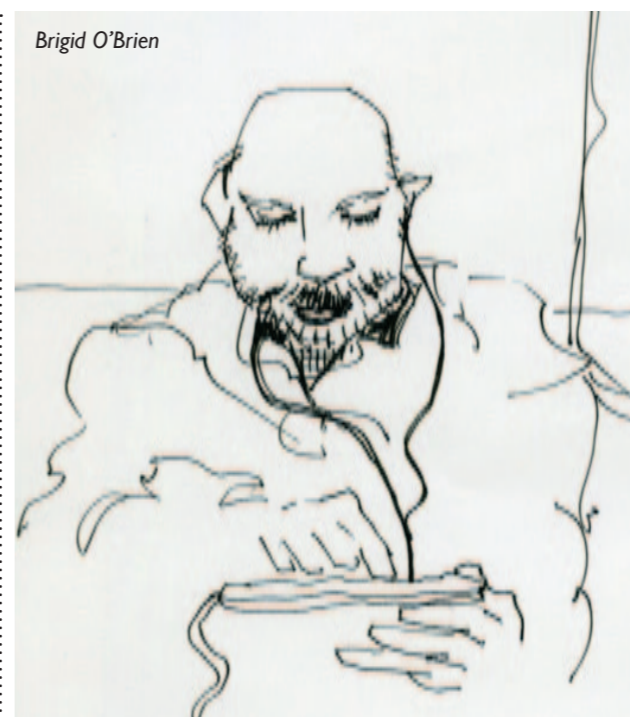
Michael G O'Reilly *Editor*
editor@brayarts.net

EDITORIAL TEAM

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Brigid O'Brien
Cearbhaill O'Meadhra
Padraig Ruane
Michael Ryan
John Walshe

Scattered To The Wind by Colm Brennan

"Mind." He told me. "It will pass you by." I think of him often, though I hardly knew him at all. "Do you take the weed yourself?" He asked me once as I handed him a packet of cigarettes over the counter. I had never heard it put that way before. He would smoke half of one and after his next pint finish it. He emptied some change on the counter and began to stack the coins by denomination. He was short the price of a pint but had enough for a glass. Quietly he ordered. "I'll get it." Ken said over my shoulder. Ken poured a pint and put it in front of the old fellow and without a word took the change to the till. He didn't thank Ken, but lowered his eyes and took a drink. "Is there a door open back there? You're going to kill me with the draft." I was up and down the steps all day closing that door for him. "My daughter has invited me for Christmas dinner, thank you. He proudly announced." "Is that right?" I asked. "Very nice." I knew, or overheard, that his daughter had moved away long ago and had children of her own he had never seen. "Well I refused of course, I don't want to be a burden to her at Christmas. She has her hands full. The last thing she needs is another mouth to feed." I pictured him at home on Christmas with his plastic bag and a bottle for the day that's in it. Alone, in a damp armchair among the smoke and peeling wallpaper. I looked away, annoyed at myself for feeling pity. "But maybe I'll go along for a while to see the young ones. Of course I wouldn't go empty handed." "No, I'm sure." "I have three grandchildren now." He told me. "It doesn't seem like any time since my own were that age." He looked into his glass. "How old are you?" "Twenty one." I told him, my eyes still turned away. Somehow the answer embarrassed me. "Well then you don't know." "No. I suppose not." "Saying that, you won't notice it now and tomorrow you'll be sitting in my place and I'll be long gone. Some bones in a box in the ground." I shook my head and half laughed. Ken let out a moan. "Jesus Christ. Would you ever shut up? What



is it you want? For us to go home and open our veins into the sink, I suppose." He didn't respond but grumbled quietly. When Ken left to change the barrels he wrinkled his nose and raised his withered hand after him in a threatening gesture. I smiled and emptied the melt water from the ice bucket. All day, from ten in the morning he was stationed across from me. He spent most of that time complaining. He had a lot of complaints. His health, of course, the cold, the price of a drink and the price of fags. The draught from the cellar. He always complained about Ken. And about me too, Ken said, when I wasn't there. We were trying to kill him with the cold. He complained about the doctors who had it in for him and conspired with his family to have him sent away. But in the evening time, when the place got livelier he forgot his complaints. When the room began to fill he listened for familiar voices. He watched the pub behind him in the mirror. "Here's your gang now." I would nod with a smile as they settled in one by one behind him. They occupied one of the high tables. Always the same space. Always the same routine. He shook his head and waved me away impatiently. He wouldn't be bothered with the likes of them. After a round or two some-

one at the table would include him in the next and he would dutifully take his glass and his plastic bag over to join them. Surrounded by his comrades he transformed. He listened to their stories and he laughed a laugh that resonated throughout the bar. It was a youthful, high-pitched sort of cackle that escaped before he knew what was happening and cracked loudly in the air above his head. And when he laughed others laughed with him. Those who weren't regulars would turn in their seats. Those who were would smile at each other. The younger drinkers would imitate the sound and snigger, that is, until Ken's threatening shadow descended on their table. The industry he had worked in had changed and he failed to keep up with new technologies. Sometimes he cursed about it into his glass. "No one has any patience anymore. No one has time to learn a craft, or time to wait for a craftsman to do a good job well." The cleaner told me his wife left him when he couldn't afford to keep her in the lifestyle she expected. But that was talk. I know he always drank. He told me that himself. To his credit he always had a job of some description. He stacked shelves for a long time and he gave her money for the children. And life went on. "They won't allow me to work."

He said, one day. The doctor wouldn't sign a form declaring him fit for even packing bags at the checkout. He had been sick and took a fall. "I told him it wouldn't kill me, I told him but he wouldn't listen. They're all in it together. I have a right to earn my own way. To keep myself busy. You think I want to sit here looking at you all day? Or him!" He looked at Ken and turned up his nose. Ken stormed into the back leaving the door open. "See what I mean? He is trying to get rid of me with that door open all day long." "I'm sorry." I didn't know what else to say. He coughed and took his half cigarette from his shirt pocket. A tweed jacket, a jumper, and shirt and tie is what he wore. In the winter he carried a raincoat. He slipped a fiver under the beer mat and empty glass. "If I'm not working, I'm here. And this is killing me." He turned away and went out the back to smoke. I finished up in the pub. One day a friend of mine sent me a text saying that the old man had passed away. Months later I stopped in for a pint on my way home from work. One of his lot came up to the bar to order. I caught her eye and we chatted politely for a moment. I told her I had been sorry to hear about his passing and made a half-hearted apology for not making it to the funeral. She smiled sadly. "Was there a decent turnout in the end?" "I'm not really sure." She answered. "He was a gentleman." I offered in an attempt to keep the conversation alive. She only nodded. She seemed guarded, defensive even but lingered at the bar for a moment. I thought she was about to add something and then she took the drinks back to their table. Later she stopped me as I passed them on my way out. "You'd miss the laugh I would say that." She told me. "God, I forgot the laugh." I said and the others at the table smiled when I said it. They started to do impressions of the old man laughing. Cackling at the tops of their voices. Some people turned to see what was going on but I don't think they knew. I saw Ken out of the corner of my eye though; he was pulling a pint and listening to their impressions, smiling to himself.

At Last by Lisa Reynolds



Brigid O'Brien

The 23rd of May 2015. The day the world became equal and right. The day I felt like that future I had always dreamed about was possible. For on the day after what would have been the great hero Harvey Milk's birthday his vision was realised and our dreams came true. Because of all those wonderful people from all backgrounds and sexualities who voted yes I was sitting here on the Bray seafront looking at the silver engagement ring inside its black box while waiting for my boyfriend Cody to arrive. My hands were shaking and I kept opening and closing the box in nervous, excited anticipation. It wasn't that I was nervous that he would say no. After six years I was confident he would say yes. It was just that this was special and it had to be done right. I wanted him to remember it as the one day that I at least showed my inner romantic side.

As I wait I watch the many families soaking up the sun and the atmosphere and think about how that will be Cody and I one day. One day soon. My blissful thoughts are soon interrupted by horror. The idea of him telling our future children how their father proposed. Daddy fell over a crab. Daddy got down on one knee and couldn't get back up because he hadn't been to the gym. No, this definitely had to be done right.

I watch him in the distance as he arrives, wave to him and think how part of my attraction to him has always been his bravery to dress in his

hippie clothing, to dare to be himself in a world which doesn't always appreciate that. I know that even if I was a hippie I wouldn't openly be. I think how gorgeous and kind he is and how lucky I am to have him. Thinking that I take him for granted so much but I guess that's just the way it goes when you are so long with someone. And then I think I better put this ring in my pocket or I'll completely give the game away.

"Hey Ryan.", he says, giving me a kiss and sitting down next to me. "Hi. Thank you for coming." "Wow, you're very formal today. What's the occasion? Have I forgotten our anniversary again or something?"

"No ... um, well, um ..." The nerves are building up inside me and I can feel them acutely. He takes my hand in his to steady my nerves. It helps. Well somewhat. "Hey, hey babe calm down.", he says gently.

“
Stop interrupting,
I'm nervous
enough as
it is

Kite by Brian Quigley

When you were with him
he flew you so high
you could touch the sky
and still feel rooted.
But he let go of the ropes
and walked away
leaving you at the mercy of the breeze.
I ran along the shoreline behind you
to try to pull you back
and reeled you in close enough
to give you back your smile
then off you went with it
to light up the world
and like the best way
to get rid of a cold
is to give it to someone else
I caught your broken heart

Toilet Roll by Michael Gordon

Life is a toilet roll. Seeming endless
In the beginning. But daily it is
flushed away with abandon. So careless.
And spinning round and round, each day unfolds
As pale, and bland and boring as the rest.

Those days of plenty, soon will be no more.
They disappear much faster towards the end.
Hopes unfulfilled; our days no longer soar.
Each one needs husbanding, till at the end
Discarded, they spin no more. Hollow core.

Concern comes over his face. "You aren't dying, are you?" "No! I'm not dying ..." His hand grips mine tighter and he breathes in and out deeply. "You smoke too much." "Well I'm not dying. I just thought it would be romantic if we spent the day on the beach where we met ..." "Romantic? You?", he playfully mocks. "Well it's rooted somewhere deep inside.", I smile. "Yeah, must be very deep ... well come on, what is it then? Why have you got all romantic today?" I make a mental note in my head that it probably isn't a good idea to get down on one knee and proceed to make my

future happen. "I love you Cody. You have been there for me through so much. Through my struggles to find employment and ..." "That's hardly your fault in this climate." "But you stayed." "Of course I stayed. You are too good of a lover." He winks at me seductively and I blush. "You aren't so bad yourself ... but let me finish ..." "Ok ok bossy boots." "You stayed with me through my struggles with depression after my father's death. Not everyone would do that." "Yeah, losers." "Stop interrupting. I'm nervous enough as it is." "I know. Why?" I take the box from my pocket and open it revealing the ring. "Is that ...", he begins with tears coming into his eyes. "Yeah. Cody I love you. Will you marry me?" "Yes.", he replies with tears engulfing his voice. I put the ring on his finger and begin to wipe his tears softly in my fingertips. "Those are happy tears?" "Of course they are.", he replies, cuddling into my chest. I hold him tightly. "I love you so much too Ryan." I kiss him on the head and watch the rays of the sun reflect off his long, golden hair and the silver of his ring.

Entranced by Nav Logan



Mermaids by Ariyana Ahmad

My birthday started the same as every other day, with me going for a swim. As I climbed the dunes I heard splashing and laughter coming from up ahead. There, paddling in the shallows was the most beautiful woman I'd ever seen. What was I going to do? Should I cancel my morning stroll down there and say hello? An idea hit me. Finding some courage I strolled up the hill, shouting, "Fido! Here, boy!" I pretended that I'd only just spotted the woman. She looked around and waved. "Hi there," I greeted. "Have you seen a mongrel? He's taken off again." "No," she replied, "He's probably chasing rabbits. I'm sure he'll return. You might as well take a dip while you're waiting. The water's lovely." "I wouldn't want to disturb you. I can head up the beach, if you'd like." "Nonsense! The sea's big enough for both of us." "Alright then ... If you're sure." I shrugged out of my t-shirt. "There's only one problem," she added. "Oh, what's that?" "I'm skinny-dipping!" I was flummoxed. Finally, I mumbled, "I promise not to peek." "Yeah, right, and I'm Mother Theresa! I think you'd better lose those trunks." "You've kidding!" "Nope." "How do I know you're really skinny-dipping?" I challenged. "You could be having me on." "I'll show you mine if you show me yours..." Jumping up, she flashed her breasts at me. Quickly, I shed my shorts and dived into the water. When I came to the surface, the woman had disappeared. I waited, looking around. By the time she finally popped up, farther out to sea, I was on the verge of panic. "Come on!" she urged. I swam out towards her with long confident strokes. "You swim

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Her head sank
beneath the waves
as she did a
back-flip

“
All your friends
will be there -
Every idiot
for miles will
be there

The Storyteller by Catherine O'Donoghue

Stories spill from your mouth
Like water
The excess falls down your chin
Slippery details unfurl
Curl and sling like eels
In your story-full sea bed
Eyes animate
Seeing ship and human wrecks
Flounder – swim – succeed
In them
Pupils dance in a twinkling
blue sky
Energised by another and yet another
Threading detail
Weaving the narrative tight
To catch the prize
The twist
The climax
The peak
The big reveal
In this,
Your expertly woven net
Full of ears
And suspended disbelief.

well," she complimented. "But I bet I can swim faster." "I doubt that! I've won swimming competitions," I boasted. "Are you up for a game of tag then? If you catch me, you'll win." "Win what?" I asked. "The bet, of course." "Yes, but what's the prize? A bet without a prize is lame," I pointed out. "I've got no money on me." "What about a kiss?" I suggested, blurring it out before common sense wrestled my tongue into submission. "You're a cheeky one. What do I get if I win?" "I didn't have anything to offer either." "I know!" she exclaimed. "I'll keep your clothes." "I didn't like the sound of that." "What's up? Are you chicken?" "All right! You're on." Her head sank beneath the waves as she did a back-flip. To my surprise, flippers slapped across my face. Blinking away the salt water, I was too stunned to move. For the briefest instance, I was sure her lower body had been covered in blue-green scales, ending in a large flipper. She popped up again, some thirty yards away, waves and then slipped back beneath the waves. There was no mistaking the nonchalant flick of her tail this time. She was mocking

me. Shaking off the fog that had enveloped my brain, I realised that the race was on. I swam after her. I couldn't afford to lose this wager. Apart from losing my clothes, I was not going to lose my chance to kiss a selchidh: one of Ireland's legendary mermaids. The selchidh was heading toward the buoy that marked the edge of the reef. I swam after her a little apprehensively. We were getting dangerously close to the rip tide. When she reappeared again, I yelled, "Stop! Wait!" I'd rather lose my shorts than have her sucked into that treacherous undercurrent. She sank beneath the waves, and I nervously tread water. I scanned the waves for any glimpse of her. "Come back!" I waited, but she didn't re-surface. Swimming as close to the reef as I dared, I frantically searched for my missing selchidh. Eventually, exhausted, I swam back to shore. When I reached the spot where my clothes had been, I found them gone. In their place was a note. It said, "I win!" I couldn't believe my eyes. Evidently, the selchidh was still alive. She hadn't been swept under by the rip tide. That was good

news, but my heart still felt heavy with loss. Where ever she was, she was gone, and she'd taken my clothes with her. I hadn't even won a kiss for my troubles. Naked, and somewhat bemused, I headed home. Peering through the shrubbery I spotted my mother making breakfast in the kitchen. My father must have left for work already. That left only my sister unaccounted for. After a few more minutes of waiting, I decided that I'd have to risk it. Dashing across the lawn, I slipped inside and rushed upstairs. "Is that you, Declan?" my mother yelled. "Yes. I'm just taking a shower." "What about a kiss from my birthday boy?" "Mum, I'm eighteen!" I protested, closing the bathroom door. "You're never too old to give your mother a kiss." A few minutes later, I re-emerged in a cloud of steam. I headed for the kitchen. "Where's your swimming trunks?" my mother asked, giving me a kiss. "I've a load of wash waiting to go on." "I'll get them later. I've got other things that need washing too," I dismissed, grabbing a slice of toast. "Where's Ciara?" "She's gone to town to get things ready." I rolled my eyes in response. My sister was organising an eighteenth birthday party for me down at the local pub, despite my protestations. Mum and Dad thought it was a great idea and had encouraged her, leaving me outvoted. Knowing my reluctance, my mother added, "All of your friends will be there." "Every idiot for miles around will be there! There's free booze." "Ach! Lighten up. You might even meet a girlfriend." "Oh, Mum, please! I'm trying to eat. I'd already met the girl of my dreams, but I hadn't even found out her name, let alone asked her out.

Day Trip to Bray by Maeve Edwards

It's high summer and the whole family is up early. My mother is at the sink chopping a pile of carrots and parsnips. The big aluminium pot is already on the stove and the air is filled with the scent of frying onions. She stops her chopping to hand me a wooden spoon as I pass. "Here" she says. "Give the pot a good stir!"

Everyone has a task. One to find the swimming togs and towels. Another to pack the cardigans. Another to mind the baby from running feet. Soon I'm at the table buttering a large sliced pan, which is an easy job as the butter is soft from the heat of the day. The dog watches us all from his corner in the kitchen, fearful that he will be left behind. His eyes and ears are alert to our every move. Anxiety fills the air around him.

At last, we're ready! My father carries out the large pot which is now filled to the brim with rich stew, places it in a cardboard box in the boot and wedges it around with newspapers. Everything gets packed in around it, the primus stove, the plates and spoons, the flasks of tea, the swimming rings, the picnic box.

And finally we're off! The dog lies scrunched up under our feet, his heart beating with relief and joy. He thinks he's going to Dollymount beach where he can spend his day chasing rabbits, but he's wrong. We're on our way to Bray! And what does Bray have that Dollymount beach doesn't have? Bray has The Amusements! We can hardly contain ourselves. The sight of buckets and spades and blow up beach balls hanging from every shop along the Bray sea front, thrills us as we park the car. My small brother begins to plead for candy floss, but is immediately distracted by the sight of Bray Head towering above us. We lay out our rug near the wall and place the baby upon it. He immediately reaches for the grey stones and bites down hard into one of them, while we sisters struggle into our elasticated

swimming togs and head for the sea. We can see the roof of The Fun Palace from the waves, and we know, once evening comes, that this is where we'll be, sliding our pennies down the ramps of the slot machines.

Next comes Bray Head! Filled with furze and heather and deep tracks and trails, we head for the cross with all the vigour and enthusiasm of Edmund Hillary on his Everest expedition. On the top, we stand mesmerised by the grand views stretching northwards to Howth and Lambay, and southwards to Wicklow and the Sugar Loaf. On our downward trek, my brother breaks into the song he's just learnt in boy scouts and though we tell him to stop, he sings it anyway:

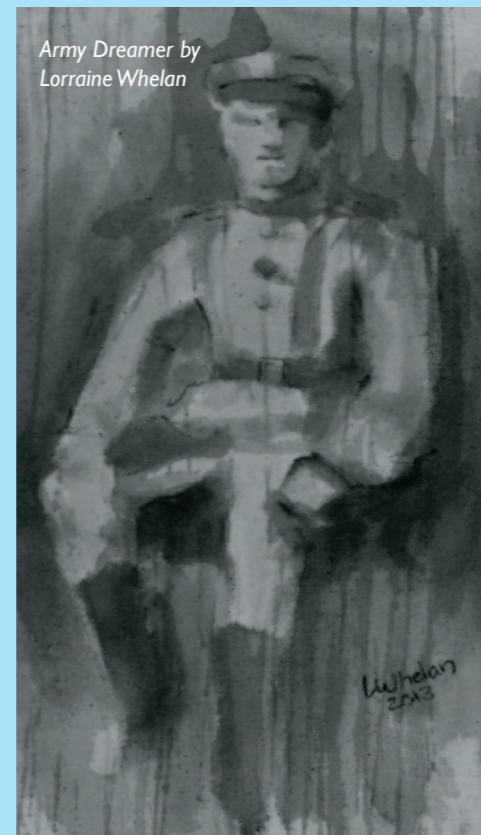
I love to go a wandering,
Along the mountain track,
And as I go, I love to sing,
A knapsack on my back...

The dog bounds ahead of us, checking every now and again that all of us are where we should be, right there behind him. We break into a run as we near our spot on the beach. "We're back! We're back! Can we have our picnic?" The baby waves his spade at us while my mother takes a wooden spoon to the stew where it's bubbling on the primus stove. Its aroma fills the promenade so that good humoured passers-by can hardly stop from asking, "You're not selling that, are you? It sure smells good!"

At last my mother takes the bowls, fills them to the brim and passes them round. The parcel of white buttered bread is opened and we reach to grab a slice. My father pours the tea into the plastic beakers and we balance them between our feet on the rug.

A silence descends as we sit looking out to sea, a bowl and spoon in every hand, the Fun Palace on the prom right there behind us, and everything we could possibly want in the world is right there for the taking

Façade by Simon Lewis



Army Dreamer by
Lorraine Whelan

Seated on a former pew, kneelers removed,
a local group take turns to thank a man

for the chance to read at a former altar,
each giving a sermon - the ex-army officer

remembering when a gun was pressed
against his face by a former schoolmate

and how he thought he was going to die
but was rescued by a fluke detection

of his lazy eye. Is that you Andy?
the final line of a twenty minute saga

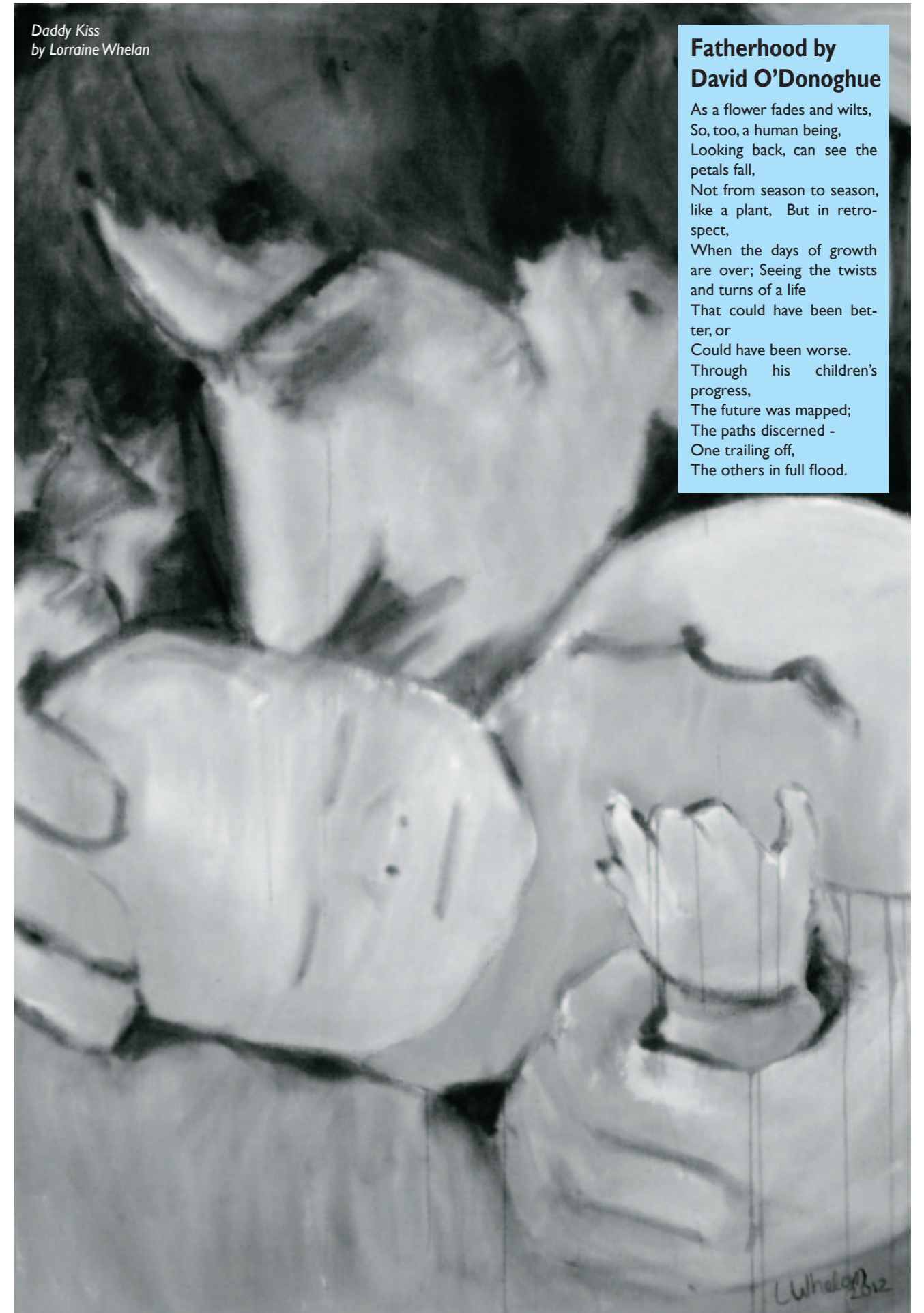
before the next guy traipses up
to bless me with an ornate ode to a tulip

in the former Yugoslavia. I stare
at stained-glass, the ceiling facade,

the remnants of a chancel leading up
to another boring remembrance and I wish

for a priest to take to the stage. At least
with Mass you knew when it would end

Daddy Kiss
by Lorraine Whelan



Fatherhood by David O'Donoghue

As a flower fades and wilts,
So, too, a human being,
Looking back, can see the
petals fall,
Not from season to season,
like a plant, But in retro-
spect,
When the days of growth
are over; Seeing the twists
and turns of a life
That could have been bet-
ter, or
Could have been worse.
Through his children's
progress,
The future was mapped;
The paths discerned -
One trailing off,
The others in full flood.

Brow Clutching by Catherine Brophy

We artistic types do love a good brow-clutch. We love the idea of being, not just artists, but tortured artists. And of course the summit of torture for every artist the Creative Block.

I recently saw a T.V programme about Louise Bourgeois - the artist who did the gigantic spider outside Tate Modern in London. She lived her later years in New York and, once a week, she held a salon for younger artists. They showed her their work and she offered comment.

"What is it about?" Louise asked an artist who showed her a painting

"It's about the pain of being an artist."

"Bullshit," snapped Louise, "to be an artist is not a pain, it is a privilege! Next!"

I love that attitude. Perhaps that's why she lived until she was 102 and kept creating new works until the end. She never suffered creative blocks.

The truth is that no writer, painter sculptor or poet suffered creative blocks until the late 1700's! Before that artists were artisans, employed by the rich to provide entertainment, education or decoration. They were no more important than the tailor or the cook. Even Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, the musical genius, had to eat in the servants' quarters. No person of noble birth would demean themselves by hacking stone, daubing paint, composing a Sonata or scratching on vellum - except perhaps in a dilettante way as a hobby.

But, by the late 1700's a wealthy middle class was emerging who were prepared to pay good money for the trimmings of nobility. Artists no longer had to depend on the patronage of a Prince, a Lord or a Bishop, they could sell their work on the open market. Members of the upper classes began to take up artistic and scientific pursuits. Gradually artistic ability became not just respectable but seen as something other, something extraordinary, something granted by God to a few special people. And artists, naturally, jumped on that bandwagon.

Artists began to feel special, more sensitive, more aware, more tender-hearted than the rest of lumpen humanity and



Brigid O'Brien

that's when they began to experience the Creative Block. Thinking.... I am a gifted, exquisitely sensitive being and my creativity is blocked by some malignant force.... Oh the horror! The agony! How can I ever survive in this desert? Here's how.

1. Creativity demands focus and attention therefore it is tiring. When you get stuck and no ideas are coming perhaps that's nature's way of saying: Take a break. Feed the dog. Go visit your friends. Watch X Factor. Go for a swim. Dance. If that doesn't work then...

2. Your greatest block is yourself.

One thing that is certain is, every writer, painter, sculptor, actor, musician will come up against their own sore spots, those tender areas we'd all like to leave undisturbed. Avoid them and your work will suffer or, worse still, you'll get stuck and stay stuck. So you need to find a way of helping yourself. And that will be different for everyone, some people run, some play sports, some meditate, some practise martial arts, some work it out through their work, some get counselling. Only you can decide what's best for you. So if you get badly stuck, check your sore spots and apply the salve that works best for you.

3. Inspiration is not always instant. Sometimes it is and that's lovely but, more often than not, it emerges from the ordinary. After you've taken a break and checked your sore spots go with the first idea that comes into your mind. It may not be the perfect. You may think it's lame. It may not have the pizzazz that you want. That doesn't matter. It's a starting place and it will lead to the ideas you like. So now, if you'll excuse me, I want to feel artistic and sensitive and superior to the rest of lumpen humanity so I have to go clutch my brow and contemplate the pain of being an artist!

Friday Evening Train by Rozz Lewis

I always reserve my seat on the train yet there is always some fool sitting in my spot when the sign above his or her face clearly states that this is not his or her seat. Of course, I ask that person to leave.

Oh, they always say, though they know damn well. Yes, I booked it, I'll say. Can't you sit there? They say, pointing to another seat that is less attractive.

I used to explain that if I did that, that if I moved, then at the next stop someone else who reserved a seat might get on and then ask me to move. But now, I just repeat that I would like to sit on my seat that I booked thanks. I always say thanks as you don't know the way some people might be.

This Friday on the train is full of the usual teenagers playing iPads or music far too loudly and it's always rubbish. It's never the good stuff.

It's full of annoying Mammies who are trying to be all "let's be a family" and have brought a board game that their kids have never played before and they don't want to play it but the Mammy will force them and it will all kick off. There's always a man who wants to talk and tell me everything about himself. I don't mind chatting to strangers on trains but I tend to get peeved when they don't ask me one thing about myself. Not one thing. They couldn't care less if I am a person or a seat or a blank space. They just want to talk at someone. How odd. There are no manners anymore.

There will always be a hen night or a stinky, loud, swearsy group of lumpy, sweaty men who are drinking Carling Label while the women are being classy, drinking cheap, sparkling wine in plastic glasses and calling it Champagne. Far from it you were reared. The smell of alcohol and the Tayto cheese and onion is awful. I read and read to avoid eye contact but I can't block the smell out.

I only ever go on a train for an hour from my hometown to Dublin so it is never too much

Brigid O'Brien



for me. I sound like a snob but I'd love if there was a quiet little old person on my carriage and that was all, just the two of us.

I could read and look out the window in a romantic way and the old person would occasionally look over; ask me what I was

reading and then go back to his or her interesting book. But, that never happens. Especially on a Friday evening.

The Notebook Project by Elaine Reidy

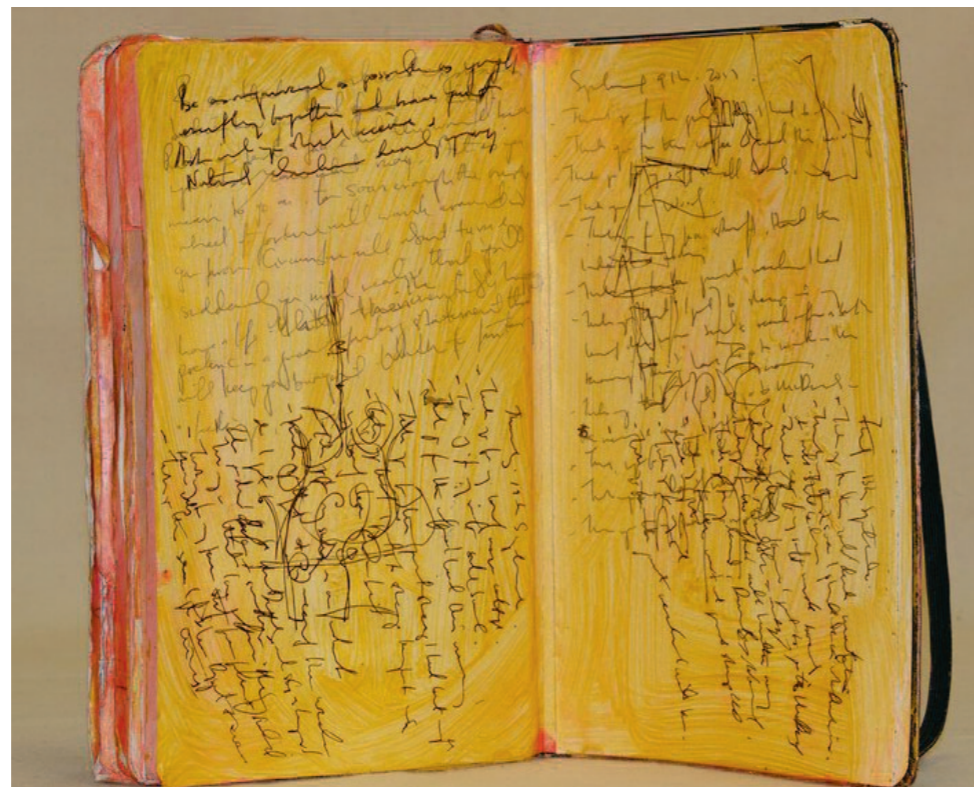
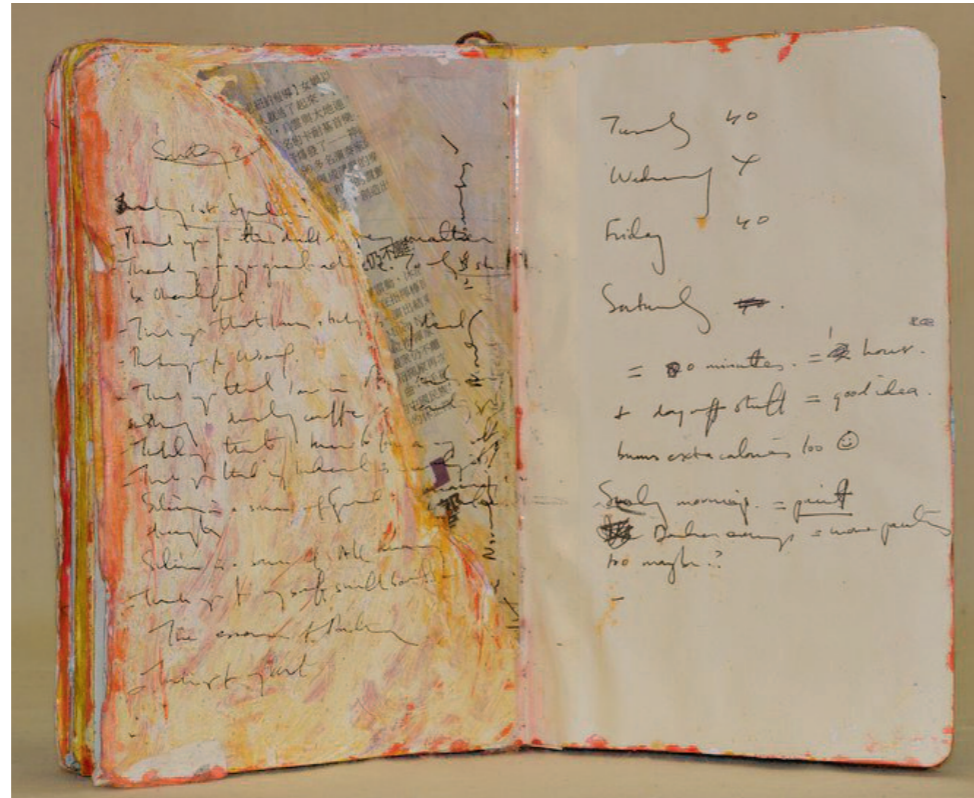
I see myself as a painter. As part of this I've always done a lot of my back up and source work in notebooks: drawing, coming up with ideas, making notes. While a camera phone can be great for documenting something interesting on the spot I always feel that it is in a notebook that you always have with you and can continually go back to that you can find the best sources for your work.

When a friend drew my attention to the Kildare Artist Notebook project I thought it might be interesting. I didn't realise it would become part of my life for the best part of a year and even change the way I work.

The Kildare Artist Notebook project was established by Kildare County Council Arts Service in 2011. Artists in all genres and at all stages of their career are invited to fill an A5 moleskine notebook in a creative way and then donate it to Kildare County Council Arts Service to become part of a permanent touring collection.

Notebooks can be filled with writings, drawings, paintings, photographs, notes, collage. The aim being that seeing the notebooks displayed collectively allows participants to experience how an individual thing becomes greater in the shared experience. It also gives the public an amazing opportunity to see what is going on inside the minds of the very creative participants.

From March to October 2013, the period of time I had the notebook for, I drew, I wrote, I scribbled. It became my diary. I made maps of my time. I painted, inked and collaged. Anything interesting I came across; pictures, articles, quotes went in. It went everywhere with me. I would write whatever I wanted about absolutely anything... then cover it up. I started with a light A5 Moleskine sketchbook that I could carry around easily. By October it was heavy, loaded with paint and paper, images and writing.



The notebook became a work in itself and went to Kildare to go on display as part of their collection not as part of the painting and drawing group. I was in the Scribblers Writers Group. The first thing I did

when the project was finished was start a new notebook. Now I go nowhere without one.

You can view Elaine's notebooks and find more information on participating at

<http://www.kildarenotebookproject.com/>
If you'd like to view more of her work please visit <http://elainereidy.webs.com/>

Maria Callas by George Fleeton



IF the Great Sugar Loaf Mountain in Co. Wicklow had a southern-lying shadow, which is astronomically impossible, that is where we'd find Calary Church, just off the R755, a 182 year old outpost of the Church of Ireland Diocese of Glendalough, less than forty kilometres south of Dublin.

SINCE 1999 at Calary Church there have been regular music events in what is an impressively and acoustically excellent performance space, capable of seating over one hundred people.

ON July 31 I availed of that space to produce and present my second Wicklow Prom, the Maria Callas Songbook, with special guests Mairéad Buicke, soprano and Anthony Byrne, piano.

IN all Mairéad sang nine operatic arias associated with Callas' performing career, which had lasted from her European début at Verona in 1947 until her final stage performance at Covent Garden in July 1965.

IT was to mark the 50th anniversary of the day her music died that I had developed this

extended and very well attended recital as part of the regular Music in Calary programme. Mairéad's sung arias were:

Wally's Ebben? Ne andrò lontana from Catalani's opera La Wally (1892);
Norma's Casta diva from Bellini's Norma (1831); Manon's Adieu, notre petite table from Massenet's Manon (1884), and The Countess' Porgi, amor from Mozart's Nozze di Figaro (1786).

THEN in part two, Mairéad's all-

Puccini selection comprised: Mimi's Sì, mi chiamano Mimi and Donde lieta uscì from La bohème (1896);
Tosca's Vissi d'arte from Tosca (1900);
Cio-Cio-San's Un bel di from Madama Butterfly (1904), and Lauretta's O mio babbino caro from Gianni Schicchi (1918).

Complementing these pieces from Callas' songbook, my choices of archive film of Callas in performance, taken from television concerts she recorded

in Paris (1958) and in Hamburg (1959 and 1962), were projected on to a screen in the sanctuary of the church.

THESE clips were:

Leonora's D'amor sull'ali rosee and Miserere from Verdi's opera *Il Trovatore* (1853);

Rosina's Una voce poco fa from Rossini's *Barbiere di Siviglia* (1816);

Elisabetta's Tu che le vanità from Verdi's *Don Carlo* (1884), and Carmen's Habanera and Séguedille from Bizet's *Carmen* (1875).

*After introducing and setting each aria in the context of both its parent opera and its place in Callas' performing career, I shared the following reflections on Maria Callas accumulated after having studied, taught and written about her voice for the last over twenty years.

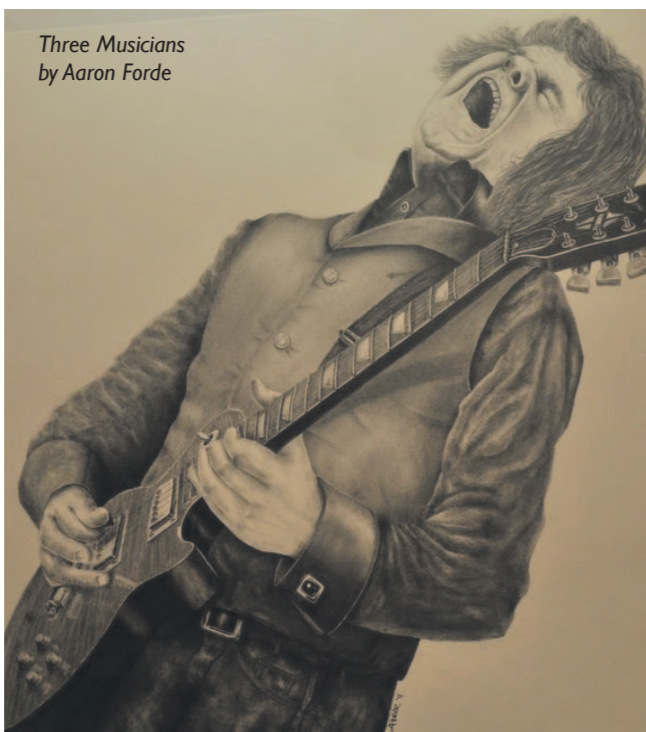
What we noticed in the film clips was that, even on the concert platform, Callas sang and acted with every fibre, drilling through to the essence of the music and conveying to us what she found there in ways not previously witnessed on stage and rarely surpassed since.

This gave us invaluable examples of opera's most iconic and influential singer-actress in action and glimpses of her supreme nobility, elegance, musicianship and engagement in performance.

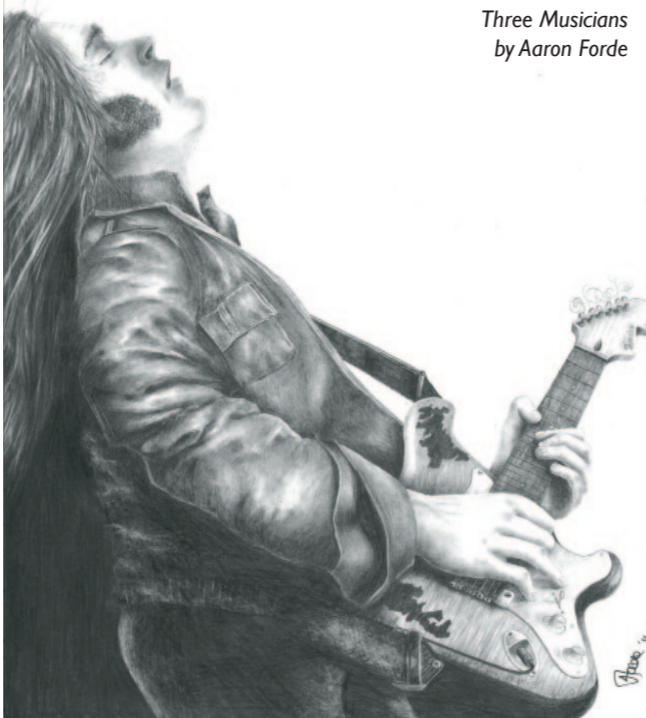
Unlike today's glamorous, song-bird divas, Callas had to deal with her voice as with a hostile antagonist, and her performances were frequently a battle with knowledgeable audiences, especially in Italy, where they could turn against her very quickly and did so.

Nearly every one of Callas' professional appearances in an opera was sung in Italian, so in our extended recital in Calary we made sure to listen to her singing in French (her fourth language), hence Mairéad's choice from *Manon* and my film clips from *Carmen*.

This more than made the point that, whereas most operas we attend are patently unrealistic, the voice – the queen of instruments – can paint human emotion and passion with unforgettable power and drama.



Three Musicians
by Aaron Forde



Three Musicians
by Aaron Forde

Opera wins us over when the tensions between the words and the music, the character and the singer, become dramatically convincing (in the hands of an imaginative director and an enlightened conductor, of course) and the end effect is to articulate our shared human experience in ways that only music can, so that our watching and listening become part of the narrative unfolding before

us.

In this Wicklow Prom we also explored the lighter side of the Callas voice, in those archival images of her enjoying herself as Rosina and, unexpectedly, as Carmen, totally at ease and light years away from the heavy weight roles so associated with her.

Callas sang about forty roles on stage, in over six hundred

www.georgefleeton.com

performances across eighteen years; not one of them was filmed – legitimately; all we have are a couple of hours of pearl and ebony television images, with static cameras, negligible editing and monophonic sound. She was the incomparable interpreter of the operas of Verdi, by far her most performed composer, ten of his operas in all.

Yet by age 35, as we now know and, I believe, she suspected then, her voice was on the edge of a precipice over which it fell in slow motion, taking a further six years to reach rock bottom, just as she was beginning to relish, as her voice darkened – but all to late – her new found mezzo-soprano agilities, which again served to underline her fearless and consummate musicianship.

What we particularly saw and heard that evening at Music in Calary, and in Mairéad Buicke's readings from the Callas song-book, was one of the signature talents that made Callas the diva assoluta of 20th century opera in performance, namely how she gave characterisation and interpretation the same weight as singing the music.

We know that she had an extremely unhappy personal life but she cloaked that in a parallel life of performance, heaped with admiration and respect which prevails thirty-eight years after her death.

My years of studying Callas and all her recordings have convinced me that her singing, her on-stage persona, her incredible insights into the music, her insatiable curiosity about her chosen roles in opera and her profound focus on study and preparation were all ultimately a Greek mask, both fierce and frail, volcanic and vulnerable, tragic and comic, and that her personal, life-long pain behind the mask infused the characters of Norma, Violetta, Lucia, Tosca, Aida, Medea and others with a depth and an authenticity never seen and heard before or since, and so Maria Callas changed irrevocably the way we understand and appreciate opera today.

The Island by Rita Ni Ghoilin



Untitled 2 by
James Devlin

Out, far out at sea, on a warm summer's day, people, some people, occasionally see an island. Some at first think it is Cymru, but it is not Cymru, for Cymru is even further away, and is not an island, unfortunately for itself, or rather it is part of an island which, once, it believes was all or mostly its own.

The island we speak of is rarely seen, but it is there, because if some have seen it, well of course it is there. Some see hills, some mountains, some even see the outline of palm trees, but these are not there, this is their imagination or this is their lack of complete confidence in their hopes. For this is Oileán an Dóchais, Hope Island. Here is where the tide, when we commit our hopes to the sea, takes them and leaves them, our hopes and our dreams packaged by the sea, so

that they can land and safely lie on this island until a day when we may reclaim them, when we

may be ready to ask the sea for them back. Then will Oileán an Dóchais release a package of

hope and the tide will bring it back to the one standing on the shore, ready to act upon the hope or dream.

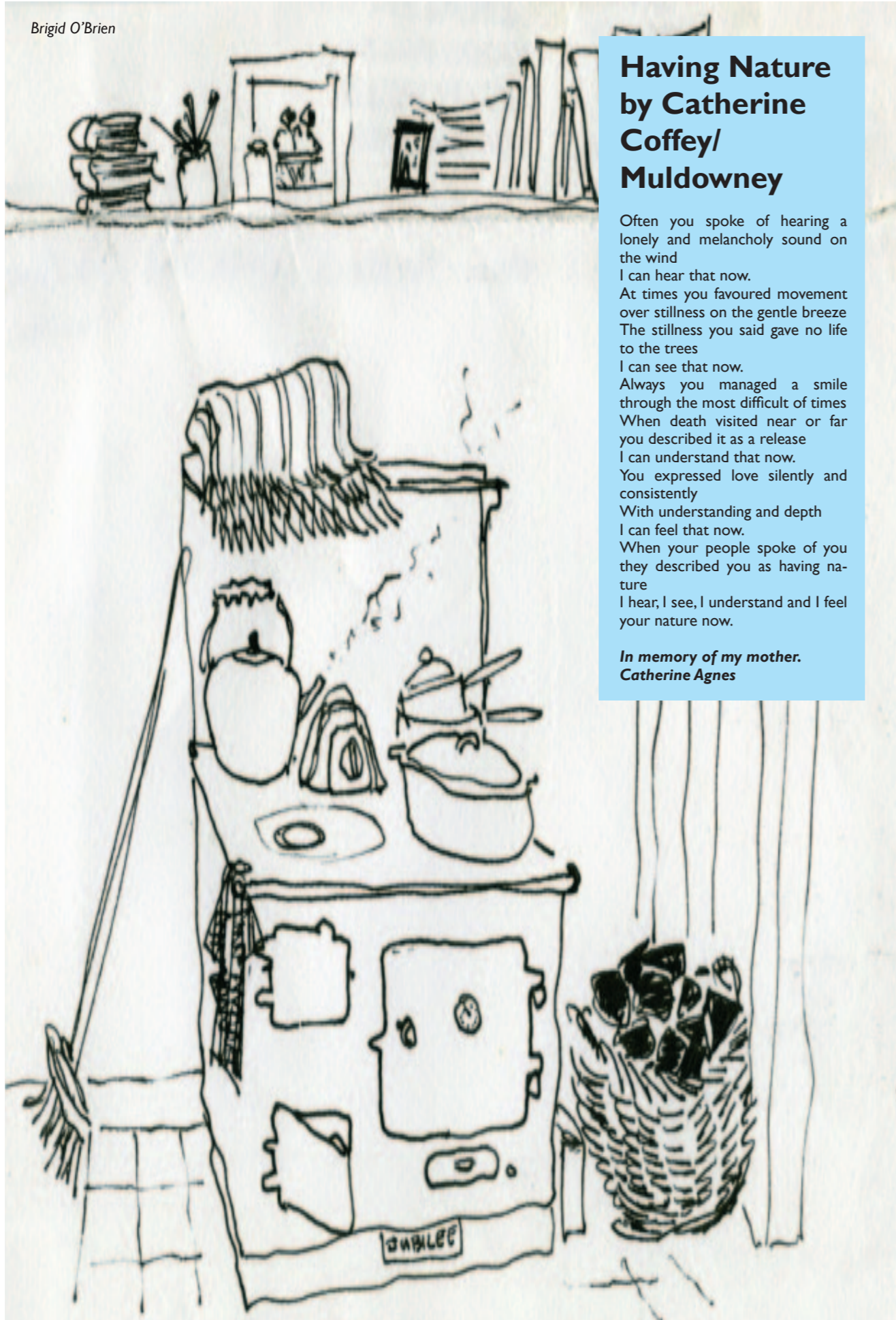
At The Belvedere Palace by Lorraine Whelan

At the Belvedere Palace, Vienna
The manicured lawns are of little interest
and the entrance scaffolding is a typical sight
in this cultured city, it seems.
But the palace contains the paintings
I have waited a lifetime to see –
the patterns, the lines, the colours,
the beautiful and lithe, the drawn figures,
the aloof, the erotic, the angry and the angst ridden –
the art of Klimt, Kokoschka and Schiele.

This is no ordinary gallery.
It is a window to the past.
I hear other tourists complain of empty rooms –
"nothing in here" echoes –
as I stare up at trompe l'oeil ceilings
decorated beyond my imagining
and five enormous chandeliers light the huge ballroom.
I am surrounded by the 18th century.
I hear the sounds of Mozart's music
and take my partner's hand for a silent waltz around the "empty" room.

Then must that person thank the sea and the island and commit his/herself to fulfilling that hope or maybe that person has already fulfilled that hope or realised that dream and is asking for an empty package back so that they, they believe, can create a space for another hope to take its place, theirs or another's - but these are mysteries and we cannot assume to know another's thoughts and mind and purposes. Nor can we expect that our own human restrictions and barriers and limitations apply to islands, and the tides, and the sea, for we live by our ways and they by theirs - and the two only meet when we have hopes and dreams.

Brigid O'Brien



Having Nature by Catherine Coffey/ Muldowney

Often you spoke of hearing a
lonely and melancholy sound on
the wind
I can hear that now.
At times you favoured movement
over stillness on the gentle breeze
The stillness you said gave no life
to the trees
I can see that now.
Always you managed a smile
through the most difficult of times
When death visited near or far
you described it as a release
I can understand that now.
You expressed love silently and
consistently
With understanding and depth
I can feel that now.
When your people spoke of you
they described you as having nature
I hear, I see, I understand and I feel
your nature now.

In memory of my mother.
Catherine Agnes

Bates Motel by Frances Browner

Brigid O'Brien



There's something about a motel in a seaside town in winter. Not as bad as the one in Psycho, but eerie, nonetheless. And March isn't exactly winter, but on the east end of Long Island, it's winter. I got there early that year, to set myself up, to sort out a job etcetera, to wallow in the solitude before the madness began.

Barbara was my supervisor in the Ocean View. Well, there was only the two of us and she liked to call me her subordinate. So, I let her. After all, she didn't seem to have anything else. She'd lived in Montauk for forty years, ever since she'd met Freddie and he'd whisked her away from her social life in New York City, from her family in Great Neck, her apartment in Brooklyn and her

downtown Manhattan secretarial job. "I used to have a life once," she'd sigh, her blue eyes electric behind even bluer cateye glasses. "Whereas Freddie," she'd shrug. "He hadn't been farther than the Sagaponack Bridge before he met me." Freddie fixed fridges so March was a busy month time for him. All of the restaurants and ho-

tels in the town had him ensure their refrigeration was up and running for The Season. The way Barbara said it, you knew she meant capital letters. With him away so much, she spent her spare time watching old movies. We started work in Reception at nine every morning, the Atlantic waves crashing onto the sand outside the motel's glass

doors. Not that there was anyone to receive yet, but an extra person was needed for bookings, Barbara had emphasized at our interview and the phone would be ringing off the hook, she assured me.

The phone did ring, but not the way Barbara had forecast. She wanted company, I figured, and to convince the owner of how busy she was. Barbara was very loyal to our mysterious boss. She was loyal to everyone in Montauk. Would only

buy her fried egg sandwich in Ronnie's Deli because he stayed open all year round. "Not like that Herbie who takes off to Tortola every January and February, not giving a damn about the Locals."

Another word that warranted a capital letter in Barbara's vocabulary was Locals, as opposed to the up-islanders or guests who graced the town with their presence every summer, whose money kept its habitants going the whole rest of the year.

The real reason I'd been hired I'd say was because of the Computer. That year, the owner had decided to use software for the bookings. All of the room numbers had to be entered into a System and whether they were double, single or twin. The OceanView didn't have any king-size beds or family apartments. There were drop-down boxes for how many people, another for the dates of occupancy – from and to – and finally whether they were smoking or non-smoking. When a prospective customer phoned in, we had to enter all of their requirements into the System and only then could let them know if there was a room available or not.

"I much preferred the Chart," Barbara would sigh several times a day. They used to have a large chart on the wall, she told me, which showed all of the rooms and their availability at a glance. "I'd be able to tell callers in seconds whether their dates were available or not."

"I'd be able to tell callers in seconds whether their dates were available or not"

The idea of the Chart appealed to me more and more, as the days wore on and my fingers and wrists were sore from the repetitive use of the same one, two or three keys on the keyboard. "Watch you don't get carpal tunnel syndrome," Barbara would caution me from her side of the Desk, engaged in her own hand movements with an emery board back and forth across her strawberry red nails.

There was a slight surge of activity around the 17th, for the annual Paddy's Day parade. Most of the rooms were booked and psychopathic guests swarmed the Desk waving remote controls at us, wondering how to work the TV, where the nearest supermarket was, what the weather was gonna be like, where and when exactly did the parade begin and end.

A hair was found on a pillow case, a spider in the bath, the toilet tissue wasn't turned the right way, there was too much noise, too little noise, they didn't get the sea view they'd ordered, how about that musty smell in the hallway?

Barbara placated them all in her stride, usually sent them away satisfied or at least wondering what the heck they'd been complaining about in the first place, never once raising her sweet voice or even an eyebrow above her blue pointed frames. I, meanwhile, wanted to scream at them to lighten up and have some fun. It was supposed to be a holiday, after all. One customer told me I had ruined his vacation because I failed to get him restaurant reservations on one of the busiest nights in town. Vacation? He was only booked in for two nights for chrissake? "Get a life," I muttered, as he walked away and Barbara nudged me with her elbow and nodded her head no. "Remember, the customer is

always right," she reminded me, pointing at a sign on the wall that had replaced the Chart. "From now on, you stick to the Computer and I'll take care of the Desk," she said. "Wait 'til summer starts, and then you'll see how really nasty these people can get."

But, I wasn't gonna be there come summer, I'd decided. Why take all this abuse for eight dollars an hour when I could be raking in big bucks in one of the diners dotted around town?

No sooner had the pre-season lunatics left when Barbara started getting ready for the Oscars. "Don't tell me they'll be back again?" I looked at her in horror. "Oh, no," she laughed. "Oscar night is when my husband and I have our own little holiday."

"You and Freddie?" "Sure," she said, "I get all dressed up in a gown and necklace, stiletto shoes, sweep my hair into a chignon, smear on the lipstick."

"A chignon?" I stared at the thick black bob cut in a straight line below her ears. "I wear a wig for the occasion," she said. "Drink martinis and listen to Freddie admire the pretty girls. Have to look pretty myself to put up with all that."

I thought of Freddie, squat and square, black bullety eyes, skin like putty, hair the same colour sleeked over his shiny skull. Me and a few of the chambermaids sat in our pyjamas for the 66th Academy Awards surrounded by candies and cup-cakes, watching Forrest Gump run away with six prizes. "What a load of crap," I groaned. "That movie is one giant cliché, Forrest and his blah blah blah voice. I just don't get it," I droned on and on, thinking of Barbara in her ball gown, beads and fake hair in a bun, red nails circling a dry martini, Freddie beside her ogling at the women. More like a scene from a fifties movie, better than any

being awarded that night. Next morning, I was in early to open up. Give Barbara a chance to recover from the red carpet. I made a din trying different keys, cursing until I found the right one, only to discover the door was open already. Could the elusive owner be here, not a figment of Barbara's imagination after all? I shuffled towards the Reception area, turned on the Computer, saw something at the edge of my eye, turned around and there she was passed out on the chair, her feet on the Desk, her dress up around her knees; wig and blue spectacles covering one cheek, lipstick and mascara smudging the other.

"Freddie's gone," she murmured when I shook her awake. "Gone?" "Yeah, he's left me," she said. "Left you?" "Yeah, for some woman who works along with Herbie." She sat up and straightened her glasses, fixed her hair into place. "A cashier or something." She shrugged and thrust a box of Hershey's kisses at me. "Wanna chocolate?" she asked. "Sure," I said. "I suppose you have a bowl of cherries too?" "As a matter of fact I do," she emptied the contents of a brown bag all over the Desk. As we popped them into our mouths, we started to chuckle, the tears streaming down Barbara's face, in rivulets of black mascara and red lipstick. Next thing, we were howling, drawing the attention of the chambermaids clattering their buckets, gaping at us wide-eyed through sea spray on the glass doors. "To hell with them," Barbara shrieked, as the phone started to shrill. "To hell with the whole lot of them." I took it off the hook, swung my sneakers up onto the Desk beside Barbara's stiletto and crunched a cherry between my teeth.

From now on, you stick to the Computer and I'll take care of the Desk,

Through the mystery of time I sensed the oneness of all. That day too I saw my lineage Communed with the ancestors By way of an old tin box And an ancient battered suitcase.

In a faded creased envelope Lay a green silken kerchief Cherished by a love struck maiden Love's young dream Forever held in a token given.

I glimpsed their fleeting lives Saw their pain and joy Felt their brokenness Touched their wholeness And gave life to their memory

Through the mystery of time I sensed the oneness of all. That day too I saw my lineage Communed with the ancestors By way of an old tin box And an ancient battered suitcase.

Yes, I believe it was for this Those men and women marched with pride For this the rainbows and the noise For this that Oscar Wilde stood trial And Norris, Katherine and Ann Louise A fight to live, but live and be free. Romantic Ireland's almost here With shame she hid her face for years.

Yet there were others we need recall Those exiled souls and those who stayed Children who could not dare to dream In all their loneliness and pain. Of such responsibilities, That tie of joy being recognised Romantic Ireland's needed now For all they gave and sacrificed.

Yes all those years have waited long For a moment on a summer's day When life will be more liveable And barely little else will change And we will smile less silently From east to west, from north to south Romantic Ireland's saying yes The nation's ready to come out.

What need we, being come to sense, But little use in empty tills And arrogant incompetence And prayers betrayed by all revealed But rise again in kinder ways For we were born for more than this. Romantic Ireland's calling us To love and live with Pant Bliss.

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An Old Tin Box And An Ancient Battered Suitcase by Dun Conaill



Through an old tin box
And an ancient battered
suitcase
I heard their distant voices
Echoing through time.
And in their callings
I sensed the myriads.

A sister's keep-sake told
Of a mother's darling son
Who took the King's shilling
For freedom and adventure
Now sleeps in a distant land.

From the Mother of
Parliaments
In faded handsome script
Gratitude for a life given
That saved a multitude
And left behind a mystery
untold.

In a faded creased envelope
Lay a green silken kerchief
Cherished by a love struck
maiden
Love's young dream
Forever held in a token given.

I glimpsed their fleeting lives
Saw their pain and joy
Felt their brokenness
Touched their wholeness
And gave life to their memory

Through the mystery of time
I sensed the oneness of all.
That day too I saw my lineage
Communed with the
ancestors
By way of an old tin box
And an ancient battered
suitcase.

Becoming the Ancestor at Downpatrick Head by Breda Wall Ryan

As in prehistory a woman
climbed down these
wave-fretted

cliffs and stretched to rest
on this shore,

so lay your cheek
on this time-worn stone
and, looking north
along longitude 9

to where the blue wind's knife
splits sea from sky,
follow its trajectory
from that birthing point

to your curious eye;
so learn, as she may have done,
how this earth curves,
and time.

from Céide Fields

Yeats Updated by Ursula Quill

What need we, being
come to sense,
But little use in empty tills
And arrogant incompetence
And prayers betrayed by
all revealed
But rise again in kinder
ways
For we were born for
more than this.
Romantic Ireland's calling
us
To love and live with Pant
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Those men and women
marched with pride
For this the rainbows and
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For this that Oscar Wilde
stood trial
And Norris, Katherine
and Ann Louise
A fight to live, but live and
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And barely little else will
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lently
From east to west, from
north to south
Romantic Ireland's saying
yes
The nation's ready to
come out.

Clare: A Memoir by Michael Gordon

When I left college I went working in England; in Dagenham to be exact. It was natural in those days; it didn't feel like emigration.. I did miss home and I used to go to the Irish Club in Camden to be among my own.

But they weren't really my own. I grew up in Bray and most of the people I met were from the West of Ireland, largely Mayo and Galway. It was there that I learned to appreciate Irish traditional music. I was fascinated by it and by the sheer exuberance of set dancing. I vowed I would learn to play an instrument and become a reasonable set dancer.

I started visiting the West of Ireland on holidays and it was on one of these trips that I first visited Clare Island. To say that I fell in love with it would be an understatement. I loved everything about it. I loved the peace, I loved the culture. I loved the magnificent views of the Mayo and Galway coast and the wildness of the rocky cliffs. Most of all, I suppose, I loved the pub life and the people I met there and became friendly with. I was fascinated by the history of the island and in particular with the exploits of Grace O'Malley

I met my wife, Mary, in London. She was from Mayo and after we were married we invariably took our holidays in Mayo, which always included a stay on Clare Island. When we had a child it seemed so natural to call her Clare. As she grew up, she also loved to spend time on her own special island. We had three other children and they always enjoyed the island, but not to the extent that Clare did.

I remember we drove down from Bray, where we had returned to live and work, on a fine Monday morning in July. Clare was thirteen and the others were like steps of stairs behind her. The view of Croagh Patrick was spectacular and our holiday mood started as soon as we passed Westport. We arrived at Roonagh Pier in plenty of time for the 1.45 crossing. The powerful red and white ferry was a familiar sight. The pier was bustling as usual with plenty of holiday makers, bikes, lobster pots and vans unloading supplies. There was an

all-pervading smell of fish. We parked the car alongside all the islanders' cars. They left their cars there all year round for when they came over for supplies. Mary was doing something with the bikes and I was stuffing something into my rucksack.

I cannot remember but I feel I heard a thud. I definitely heard the screams. I whirled around. I didn't know what happened. Some one said, "Your daughter. Your daughter." I panicked. I could see the three younger children. What had happened? The boat crew untied the boat at speed and pushed it away from the quay. People rushed to the edge to look down. I forced my way to the front. Had Clare fallen in? I could see nothing. There was a jumble of shouting. Two lifebelts were thrown into the water, but there was no movement.

I caught Mary's eye. She was distraught. In a blind panic I slid down the metal ladder and dropped the last few feet into the water. I swam furiously around the boat and beside the pier. I could see nothing. The sea wall was slimy with seaweed. I was blinded by tears and my walking boots were pulling me down. Frantic, I dived under the

water. I could see nothing. My clothes filled with water and I was in danger of drowning. Two crewmen pulled me out and made me go back up the ladder. I sat on a low stone wall and put my arms around Mary. She was crying helplessly. The three younger children gathered around us and burst into tears. People rang for an ambulance and a priest and a doctor. People in small boats searched the water.. One of the crew spotted the body and pulled her to him with his boathook caught on the belt of her jeans. He passed the body upwards through willing hands.

Clare was laid on a blanket and a passenger, who was a nurse, began CPR, trying to force the water from her lungs. I remember that I was filled with foreboding. I wished I could help, but I had never learnt the technique. I felt helpless. A man took over from the nurse. I remember thinking how frail she looked in her ripped jeans and white T-shirt. I did not think her body could withstand the rough pumping.

I was numb and Mary was crying piteously. She kept saying, "Her shoe is missing. She only has one shoe. Michael, we need to find her shoe."

They did not stop pumping until the ambulance arrived from Louisburgh. The ambulance men took over but it was obvious at that stage that it was too late. I knew it and so, I believe, did everyone else there. People gathered round. Some were only gawking but most were offering awkward sympathy. One of the crew pressed two mugs of sweet, hot tea into our hands. A priest arrived and administered the last rites. He tried to give us comfort, but there was none. Clare was put on a stretcher and carried gently into the ambulance. Once the doors closed the crowd began to disperse. It was the loneliest time.

We were cold and put on our jumpers and anoraks. A lovely local woman, Margaret, insisted on bringing us to her home nearby. She gave us tea and homemade brown bread I remember. We were all in shock. It was hard to take in. It seemed that a van had been reversing. Clare stepped aside, but in doing so stumbled over a coil of rope. She must have struck her head on the edge of the boat deck before falling into the water. It was a small consolation that she would not have suffered.

A policeman arrived with a lot of questions just as I was changing into dry clothes. The boat was delayed. He questioned the crew and a number of passengers who volunteered what they had seen.

The next few days were an awful blur of phone calls, visits to Castlebar Hospital, an inquest, a funeral. I remember her school friends formed a guard of honour outside the church. I don't actually remember how we got through it. I think my doctor must have given me something. I do remember pleading with the driver of the van not to feel bad. It was not his fault. Mary was a tower of strength and the children, in spite of their age, were little troopers. But the light had gone out of our life. Months later, we all travelled over to the island. We walked up to the lighthouse, from where Clare used to sit for ages admiring the stupendous view. There we scattered her ashes. We have never been back.

A Poem for David by Josephine Matthews

The syringe was still in your arm
when they found you.
They used the term "junkie",
but to me, you were just David.
Your smile shone brighter than any star.
Your eyes lit many a dreary day.
You were a victim of the mainline to disaster,
that bitch heroin, stole your mind and left behind an emptiness
that can never be filled.

You suffered the pain of guilt, you hid it like a dirty secret,
the dirty secret that it was.
It bled you dry of any dig-

nity and blinded your eyes,
to the suffering of your loved ones.
They are left behind to grieve for you.

You are free now, no more pain, no more suffering,
no more guilt.

You did not know, when you mainlined that poison into
your lovely young body,
that your world would end,
and you never meant to leave such pain behind.
Run free, dear David,
through fields of peace and health.
No one can hurt you now,
because you are totally free at last.