

RADERS OF *the táin*

Writings, Art and Drama from RADE's programme 2007/08



RADE Recovery through Arts / Drama / Education
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Design and layout: Oldtown Graphic Design & Typesetting



INTRODUCTION

According to William Shakespeare's much loved tragedy, *Romeo and Juliet*, the love of learning, philosophy, is the 'sweet milk' of adversity. According to the old English philosopher, Francis Bacon, adversity discloses virtue, where prosperity procures vice. In the *Twilight of the Idols*, the German philosopher, Nietzsche, suggests that hardships endured make for better men and women. Doubtless, in our own mundane suffering, we often feel cynical about such demanding literary and philosophical ideas. Pleasure and prosperity suit most of us better, but tradition, whatever our particular sense of living a life spent in luxury, or leisure, valorises difficulty and suffering nonetheless. Against our more self-serving inclinations, could the tradition be correct? Does suffering make us wise? Do difficulties make us better?

At RADE, Recovery through Art, Drama and Education, through service to community and service to the arts, one point seems to stand above all else, namely: No matter the extent of the hardship, no matter the depth of the adversity, no matter the apparent intractability of a given individual's difficulties, the discipline of the imagination, the catharsis of the theatre, the creative impressions of the plastic and pictorial arts can bring the most forlorn of us back within grasp of a life worth loving, a life worth living, in short, a life full of love and learning. If we deviate from a desired course in life, the creative will, and perhaps the will to create alone, can, according to RADE participants and practitioners, set us right.

At RADE, this philosophical lesson is practically demonstrated, on a daily basis, and from year to year, in the old OLV building, Cathedral View Court, in Dublin 8. A home from home amongst the creative, however temporarily dispossessed, displaced, or discouraged, recovering substance users of Ireland, RADE transcends daily, weekly and monthly doses of adversity to bring, not hope, because occasionally, at RADE, one finds that the light of hope flickers, can be fleeting, and, like a candle, or an innocent life, can be snuffed out easily, but courage, namely: the capacity, creatively, to continue, to advance just one step more, just one reach further, even when all hope appears lost, or gone.

I write this forward, therefore, to thank Averyl, Christine D, Christine R, Damien, David, Denise, Dougie, Eddie, Eoghan, Jimmy, Joanne, John, Ken, Maime, Mark D, Mark K, Matthew, Mick, Olivia, Paul, Robbie, Robert, Sara, Sine, Tony and Wendy, including all RADE participants and practitioners past and all RADE participants and practitioners future, for building RADE, showing up at RADE and showing me the courage of so many creative wills; wills striving, contriving and imagining a better present from a rekindled future on which basis, in happiness, RADE continues to reshape adverse and difficult pasts. In short, RADE reminds us, in agreement with the ancient playwrights, that happiness is a choice. It is a choice, as the ancients remind us, which requires a little effort. The effort and the choice, the ancient tragedians, RADE and the friends of RADE caution, will be measured from the grave. With this in mind, I extend my sincere gratitude to all of the people at RADE and all of the friends of RADE for helping me, creatively, to rethink the measuring stick with which we advance, courageously, from the cradle, and on, through hardship and difficulty, to a happy, well appointed and generously apportioned resting place, or grave.

Fate is forged in advance.

Therefore, scorn it.

Reader, read on.

Steven Bourke, RADE Creative Writing Facilitator



TWO WORLDS

CUCHULAINN

This is how the stage was set in Ireland when I was born. And what a birth that was.... Three times I was born... it took three births to deliver me. I don't even know the name of my first mother and father. All I was told was that they appeared among a flock of birds with their house in the night and gave shelter to the King and his sister. I was born and the next day they were all gone, the house, parents, the birds, the lot. Deichtine, Conchobar's sister mothered me for a short while and then I died. She was distraught. She took a drink and some creature slipped in through her lips and made her pregnant. [From 'Raiders of the Lost Art', 2008]

Ken F
TWO WORLDS

We lived in Ireland in the 80s for no money, boredom lots of time to turn to crime and all the wrong things
In life to learn towards getting a skill to be able to provide myself with the basics, like paying your keep in the house. Be able to dress one self.
One world leads to another. You get older and meet other people. I left Ireland to get a skill like lots of Irish.
One world to another as I did. The 80s passed, things got a lot better, employment. But property out of my league.
I met a partner and had a great honeymoon, for two years employment, money, a skill.
Under myself my world was different. We had a child and a small council house. Life was happy for many years
Until another world came to my spirit, which was the demon outside, was he inside? Was he there in many worlds?
But I seem to have found one of peace and tranquillity and to be just in a sound mind and health and no fear or sad excuses.
Look to the future.



Ken F



Wendy R
I HAD A DREAM

I became so relaxed I fell into a beautiful sleep. My mind wondered into a weird but wonderful place. It was like my body was being lifted very gently by someone so strong. I then found myself on a bed of warm and soft leaves and there was a sound of water running. I looked around and there was this big beautiful waterfall. From the waterfall, came a man with shoulder-length hair shining silver, big blue eyes and a big muscular body. He said to me, go into the water; don't be afraid. He told me I would turn into a mermaid. I said to him that I cannot swim, and he said back to me as he slowly disappeared, you will swim like a fish. That was always my wish! Then suddenly he gently pulled me under and my body changed. My legs turned into a big fish tail and my hair grew down my hips. Then I was flying under water with millions of mermaids and also my son and my daughters. I could not believe I could swim at last; it was like being in heaven with castles of silver and gold. I did not want it to end. Until I was awoken. I thought it was real. I was in a bath full of freezing cold water with the kids banging on the door.

Sara G
WORLDS APART

Confusion not knowing where you are or where you stand. Unhappiness.
I have a gap in my life full of depression and loneliness. Feeling like I can't talk to people about all the shit in my life I am trying to juggle.
Disgusted at myself for being me. Friends dying I truly cared about. If only I was there it wouldn't have happened. My godmother, the closest person to me in the world had to die on me. The only one that understood me. I hate this fucked up life with her gone.
I'm fighting on my own. Nobody understands. Can't wait to have kids but wait, don't think I can.
Thought of doing myself in but what about all them people in hospital that are fighting for their lives to be with their loved ones, HIV, cancer, pure cruelty.
I'm fucking trapped.



Jimmy W



Des W

Mark D POSH TOWN

It was late and everyone had left except the old man, who sat at his table reading his paper and drinking his cup of tea.

On a cold drizzly winter's night, people were rushing to get where they were going. Some people were holding brollys in their hands. There were couples huddled together and trying to stay warm, but there was one man who had a t-shirt on and everyone could see how cold he was, but he didn't seem to care about the weather or what was going on around him. All that was on his mind was where he was going to sleep that night. He knew that he wouldn't find anywhere where he was as he was in the posh part of town.

Paul L WORLDS COMING TOGETHER

This story began 9 years ago, in 1999, when I was bad on drugs. One day I was going to get some drugs as I was sick. We got our drugs and we walked down to take what we had got. Suddenly my phone rang and my aunty was on the other side and she had something to tell me. That something was that my ma had passed away. I was in shock and I felt I needed a change. Two to three days later my brother came over from the UK and asked me to go back with him. So I did. I got to the UK and got on a clinic and had a flat within a month. One year passed, nearly to the day, and I met a girl called Catherine. She came from the same place I came from. Eventually we got together and became partners. A year went by and we found out we were going to have a baby. To me, that's me coming from one world into another. Catherine and our son brought our two worlds together for me. Now I am living in one world.

Christine D TWO DIFFERENT WORLDS

My father, growing up, didn't come from a wealthy family. He came from a family with a lot of addictions and crime in it. He would have been involved in a lot of crime and drugs, and in and out of prison. I don't have a lot of memories of my Da, because he died when I was 11 years old, but the memories I do have of him are good ones. Anyway, before he died there was a battle going on between him and his brother. It was very serious. My dad's brother feared my father. He knew that my dad was going to kill him over what he had done to my brother. So my dad's brother went into hiding. About two weeks later, my dad was scoring in Thomas Street outside the Labour, when the bags where £40. He went back to my auntie's house in the Grove to take his gear but it wasn't gear. It was rat poison. His brother had got somebody else to sell it to him. So my father died in pain. I always remember the funeral. It was packed with people. As we were coming from the church in the black cars, the police were driving by, laughing out at us. I do believe he went to heaven. I believe in life after death. So maybe he's out there somewhere with a completely different lifestyle and a good life I hope.



Tony K ADDICTION

As I awoke from that life called addiction, I became aware of how much I'd missed out on. All of my senses. Waking up of a morning, going to my window to greet the day whether it be warm or cold, just grateful for being alive. Opening the window in order to feel the breeze on my face. To see nature taking bloom and showing me that spring is here. The birds gathering twigs and dead branches in order to freshen up their nests. Then, to go out and greet my neighbours in order to show that I'm still alive and grateful for being so. Thankful that I'm free of that existence called addiction. To be free to come and go as I feel, and not a slave to a life of addiction. Waking up of a morning, not caring when was the last time I'd changed my clothes. Just the need to get dressed and get to a cubical in the toilets of the hostel before the queue gathered. Then going out the door to start another day of being invisible, walking from one side of town to the other trying to steal anything that I saw as money for my next fix, unaware of who or what was around me. Just that blue shroud that would put a stop to my gallop. Then to turn whatever I had stolen into cash so as I could go and see Doctor Death in order to keep me in that existence, dead to all senses.

Dougie S
TWO WORLDS

In my youth, I grew up in a concrete jungle, not knowing what lay beyond the grey and sullen area I called home – day after day, year after year. My whole world revolved around this concrete jungle, with its shabby houses, its broken paths and potholed roads.

Then in my late teens, after much asking and thinking what I was here for, I boarded a boat and it sailed out of my jungle to a new world. I reached England, first to a place called London and I was awestruck with the amount of people and its neon lights. With each day, my hunger grew, realising there was a much bigger world waiting for me to explore. I travelled to Dover to get another boat to France, where I got a job working with a long-distance haulage company. Gone were my thoughts of a concrete jungle.

While I travelled around France, through the Alps, I will always remember the sights and smells as I drove up to the border of France and Italy. Snow-capped mountains with their twisting and winding roads and bridges that stretched for miles from one mountain to another and the scenes were like something I had read in books back in my concrete school.

I will always remember sleeping in my truck on top of the Alps, with the fresh crisp air and natural spring water flowing down the mountainside, and not a grey concrete jungle in sight. To be able to drink from that flowing spring and see all the rich beautiful colours that surrounded me, proved I was a long way from where I started. Now, all I have is the memory of all the different countries, people, food and sights and smells that will stay with me forever, and to me it was my two different worlds.



Dougie S



Anne Marie McG



Dougie S

Olivia M
TWO WORLDS MEETING

It was a bank holiday weekend so myself and my fella decided to go away. We booked into a lovely B&B. That night we went out on the town and had a great time. We came back to the B&B and went up stairs. He stopped and went white. I looked towards what he was looking at. There at the top was a ghost of an old woman who waved at us and then went to the toilet. We were shaking so we ran into our room and jumped into the bed and pulled the covers over us till the morning. We got the fright of our lives.





THROWING SHAPES

FORGALL

He's a war monger and dare devil. He has a temper that is unnatural. Have you not heard how he changes into a grotesque monster and how this warped spasm overcomes and contorts him? [From 'Raiders of the Lost Art', 2008]

JOHN B DRESSED TO KILL

He rises, they called out, as Setanta walked through the lines of men towards his prize war chariot, already packed with his favourite swords, spears and shields, which were the finest in all of Ulster. As for Setanta, he had his safest under garments on before he put the rest of his armour on. He wore three leather hides, sown together with such precision and strength that they would withstand his enemies' sharpest arrows or any other sharp objects that may have penetrated his outer armour. The outer armour was also made specially for Setanta. It was stiff hide laid over in such a way that it was impossible to penetrate with steel and stone. He wore his battle boots that had spikes four inches long, and he would finish off his enemies with a boot to the throat if they were still breathing by the time he got near them, but more usual than not they would be decapitated.



Damien M

Wendy R FIGHT

When the stupid fuckin bastard lost my money it was like the warped spasm took over me, I could only see red. Blood will be spilled. My fists clenched, elbows bent. I pulled my fists up towards my shoulders. I could feel my blood rush towards my head. I could feel my eyebrows frowning and the muscles in my neck tightening up with the veins in my neck pushing out and the whole of the back of my shoulder blades jumping out of my top. I was purple in colour. My face was shakin'. It was like I took a few E's. My teeth felt like they were stone, with the force of them biting together. I could stab someone with my fists, as they were like a knife, and pull out someone's fucking organs. I then could have sliced up someone with my hair as it was standing straight, hard and sharp, like blades with one hard movement of my head. My heart was like a washing machine, my blood rushing madly; I could have fought an army of women.



Wendy R



Edward G HIS SHAPES

Each hair on his head stood up like a spike, each line on his forehead was like a road full of sharpened stones. His right eye was black and long. It was like looking into a never-ending tunnel. His right eye was red, a burning like the depths to hell. Each nostril of his nose was pointed like a razor wire. His mouth was opened wide and each tooth was pointed like a sharpened knife. His jaw bones stood out like big boulders that you would include in a quarry. His chin was rounded but the point of it stood out like a prow. The veins on his neck and ears stood out like ropes that you would tie a ship down with. His chest did not stick out that much but you could see each muscle and bone. Both arms were shaped the same, like big trunks of a tree. Each leg was shaped like a big tall building, the skin on him looked rough and ready.

Dave F
THROWING SHAPES

As I was born south of the border, I did not suffer the pangs of birth, so this great warrior asked me, a humble farmer-come-smithy, to take a stand for my adopted Province. It was Ulster. Here is my chance to prove myself I thought. I tensed up my muscles, covered myself in cow dung, stuck briars to my freshly shaven head and all over my face. Around my neck, I put a necklace of skulls and bones. Some skulls still had half-rotten eyes in them, from heroes recently fallen in battle. Upon my upper torso, I adorned a flexible but very strong, impregnable shield of armour. Around my upper and lower limbs, I adorned impenetrable chain mails. On my feet, I carved out of bone some very sharp shoes which could do severe damage, and similarly I made a helmet of bone. Then I took my stand beside the hero of heroes, the great Cú Chullainn. He took one glance at me and nodded his approval. With that, we both wailed the chant of the Morigan, making the enemy's ears bleed and we charged fearlessly into the unknown.



Jimmy W
WARPED SPASM

You could see his big red back from the top of the road. His hair shaved off on the left side of his head, snots hanging down from his nose. He had just one tooth in his mouth, it was long and sharp. As he walked, his hands hung like a monkey. One of his nipples was cut off. He wore shorts. He had stumpy little toes on his feet. Every now and then, his head would spin around. He had one eye at the back of head. His tongue stuck out of his belly button. Out of his mouth came his dick. He was now ready to do battle. Now as he walked he got taller. All his bits and pieces went back together and he became handsome again.



Wendy R
THE SHAPE I'M IN

When I want to show someone who I am, I kinda' do a few things with my body. For instance, one day I knocked for the person who I used to go scoring with and she was not in so I had to go up to the flats on my own, as I was so sick. I also did not want to be ripped off, so I plucked up the courage and off I went. As I came near to the flats I walked a bit slower. I then used my hips in such a motion that with each hip turn one leg moved, which made me look cooler. Then the hands slipped into my jeans pocket, not all the way in, slightly hanging out. From my foot to my hands each side, they would all move together. Then my chest would stick out more than usual and my shoulders would tense up, so they would be higher. I would move my head slightly tilted back, with my eyes I would tell ye, 'don't fuck with me'. In my mouth I would be chewing a rigely's and blow a bubble now and then with a bang when they burst. I would see some heads turn but I would just look straight ahead and keep my cool calculated walk. I think if anyone would say anything to me I would cut them in half with my look. 'What's the story' I would say, 'anything around' and they would say 'yeah, over here'. I think I would have shit myself if they had ever started with me.



Rory S





HOUSE

Conchobor had three houses: The Red Branch, where he kept the severed heads and the spoils of battle. The Twinkling Hoard, where he kept the weapons from past famous warriors. The Ruddy Branch where he lived.

Dave F MY HOUSE

My house is on a hundred acres of land. One has to cross several moats, each one ten times thicker than the last one. As you approach the house, you are almost blinded by the glittering golden pillars which are intertwined with precious jewels. The windows are all beautiful stained glass, made by Harry Clarke's ancestors. Precious carpets adorn the floors, and silks are in abundance on all the pillows.

There is a small room, made of mahogany, for meditation. This room is designed to the principle of less being more. A loincloth for sitting on to meditate, a beautiful deity of Lord Krisna takes centre place; it is crafted in the finest gold imaginable.

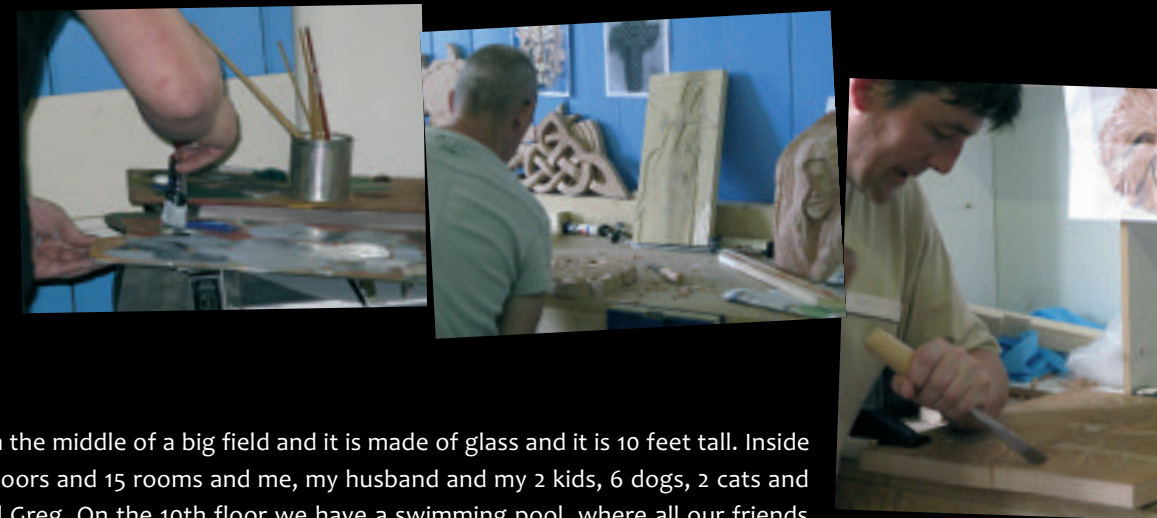
The kitchen is the heart of the house. Scrupulously clean it is, and all the utensils, all of which are at hand's reach. The finest spices are there: saffron, cumin, turmeric, cardamom and a secret spice, a gift from the King of Spices. The unique quality of this spice is that it may give any flavour the chef so desires.

All the pots and pans are stainless steel. The food is cooked on a perpetual flame.

The temperature of the house is in automatic syncopation with the needs of each inhabitant. Nice and cool if you're hot, and warm and cosy if you're cold.

The bedrooms are on the second floor. A magic carpet elevates each guest to their designated chambers. Each bed is of the desired design and comfort for the guest's conveniences and comfort.

There is a smell to suit every occasion, and each guest smells their favourite scent, or the scent they require to suit their mood. Welcome to my mansion. The only cost of entry is your freedom. You can check in any time, but you can never leave.



Christine R MY HOUSE

My house is in the middle of a big field and it is made of glass and it is 10 feet tall. Inside there are 10 floors and 15 rooms and me, my husband and my 2 kids, 6 dogs, 2 cats and a snake called Greg. On the 10th floor we have a swimming pool, where all our friends come over every weekend and have a pool party. The 3rd floor is my bedroom, and the bed is in the shape of a heart. It is huge and it is lovely. It has pictures of my kids on the wall and it has a mirror on the ceiling. The colours in my room are cream and brown, and it is really somewhere to chill out.

The kids' rooms are on the 5th and 7th floors. My son Mitchell's room is blue because he follows Chelsea, and the room has a lot of Chelsea stuff. You can barely get into the room because there is that much stuff. He goes to all of their games, both home and away. On the 4th floor is my daughter Jodie's room. She has all her dancing stuff in her room, as she is a hip-hop dancer and does majorettes. She is great at both of them, but Jodie loves her music and her dancing.

JOHN M MY HOUSE

My house has a ¼km driveway up to it. It is a grand looking gaff, with 5 windows on the top floor, 4 windows and a porthole in the centre of the building, and the ground floor has a solid oak double door with 2 windows either side. When you enter, there are solid suits of armour either side, each with original 3¼ feet solid gold swords. 3 steps in, it opens into a big gaming area, with games to the left and an old Italian-style kitchen to the right, with a grand spiral staircase leading up to the upper levels of the house. On the 2nd floor is my own private cinema, with room for 30 people (*no wankers*). Across the hall is one of the 5 bedrooms which is kept pristine by huge open windows and constant air conditioning. My own private room, which is 2 rooms into 1, has a solid-oak 4-poster bed, the main piece of furniture in the room. A nice 50-inch plasma rises from a mock trunk at the end of the bed. To the right of the bed is an en suite, with a Jacuzzi that has room for 4 people. On the left is a pole with a hole in the floor, which leads to my private sitting room-come-small kitchen. Decorated around the walls and the halls of the gaff are antique suits of war. My favourite is the ancient samurai outfit outside my room. The top floor is a bar and chill-out room, with a small club for about 100 people. In the basement is a decent-sized swimming pool, with a sauna big enough for 6 people.



DICK STRAIGHT UP

(AFTER THE POEM BY TED HUGHES)

EMER

Yes and how it happens when he is fighting for what he believes in. How he becomes invincible. How he lays layer upon layer of exact protection over his perfect body that no weapon can penetrate. How he makes a stand with all of his might and more to protect all the pillars of honour. [From 'Raiders of the Lost Art', 2008]



KEN F
MR. SQUIRES

He was a man of great past, but nowadays his memory slips.
He was a strong man, only one arm. Worked cutting logs and loading the horses cart, in his big field with weather like howling winds, with rain, some days even colder.
If he worked well, like three cartfuls for the day, Mr. Squires would have a break. He was getting on in years.
We would play a game of chess and drink hot soup, or tea.
We had an old sleep there in the field. Mr Squires was a quiet man.
Had time to show us the way of life he was able to live. We were the young men with hot soup.
Mr Squires was a wise old man, and had told us stories of the days gone by. The field was a village-like thing. We had the hut. Was like a house in a village.
We did peep out for Mr. Squires when we wanted to stay dry.

Mary
PLEASE MA

I would see her walking through the chapel at Seán McDermott Street, baby in a buggy and her six-year-old son beside her, holding onto the pram. She turned and went into Jerry's Shop. Dylan, her son, spotted the football cards straight away and his eyes lit up. 'All the other young fellas had them, Ma,' he pleaded. She looked down at him. It was Tuesday and she didn't get her book till Thursday. Dylan was hopping about by now, really excited, 'Please, Ma.' She tried calculating roughly in her head. She budgeted every week and every penny was accounted for. Well, she could leave her hair dye till Thursday. It would be the first time she'd put off buying it. Jaysus, her roots are down to her ears. 'Of course you can, son,' she replied.

Tony K
MY GRANDMOTHER

My grandmother always used to tell me about my family tree. For instance, how, as a child, she used to sit on the window sill and look at the Abbey actors arriving at the Abbey Theatre, and how she so aspired to becoming an actress. One day, she got as far as being a go-go dancer in a theatre. The name of it, I can't recall. It was how she met my grandfather. She would tell me of how her father sold the newspaper on either side of O'Connell street, and how my uncle would sell the evening newspapers to some of the actors in the local pubs. Her brother, my great-uncle, became a tailor and used to make the suits for some of the Abbey actors, and when he got on in years he used to do the alterations for Louis Copeland, a famous tailor who had a shop in Capel Street. In the year 1843, both my grandfather and great-uncle joined the English army and marched all through Europe, and fought right up to the end of the Second World War. Brendan Behan came into our house one time. Spike McCormack's wife shouted over the balcony to her husband that Spike and Brendan were not to bother coming up as they wouldn't be getting in and, later, Brendan had my uncle on his knee, while my grandmother was preparing them something to eat. We moved from a top floor flat in North Great George's Street to Abbey Street, across from the Abbey Theatre.



Tony K



FACE OFF

BROWN BULL

They legged it, one way or an other. They stopped off on an island for a bit but then they came home to face Conchobar. Fergus was meant to have turned up, but he'd gone on the piss. His son Fiacha came instead. The showdown happened on the green in Emain Macha. Fergus's honour had been betrayed and his son killed. All hell broke loose when he got the news. [From 'Raiders of the Lost Art', 2008]

Ken F
CONFRONTATION

There was an adventure to go to another country, Canada, where there was lots of snow, tobogganing and ice skating. Going to big valleys on the Ski-doo to see all the sights of a lovely land, and the wildlife. Like they have snow foxes, deer and muses. A lot of birds of prey, sea eagles, hawks, cornments. A big plus was to see my family – it was over ten years. There was an emigration officer at the airport and they found that I didn't have a lot of money. She was a sour woman, the officer then took me to a room for an interview. She asked me a thousand questions. I felt a confrontation coming on between us. The officers asked me to show all my money. €2.00. They said that that's not enough to live on while I'm in Canada. She said there is a plane going to Eire in one hour and I'll be on it. I tried to get in touch with my brothers too. I did, and they came to the airport and spoke for me. The emigration was so nice to me, I felt really relieved to be able to stay and not have a real confrontation with the officer, and be with my family for one month.



Ken F

Olivia M
PUNCH UP

He slams the door, the glass breaks, a piece of it goes into my eye. I start screaming cause there's blood coming from my eye. Then my brother jumps up and punches the guy and they start fighting. I get up to try and stop it and so does my other brother. Then the three of them fight each other and all hell breaks loose.

Paul L
THE HOSTEL

One day, I left my hostel to go to my CE course. When I came back from my course, I went to my room, only to find some property missing. I confronted the manager of the hostel to let him know there was something missing, and asked could I look at the CD from the security camera. He would not let me look at the CD or would he look at the CD himself. To him it was a waste of time, so I confronted each person on my landing and asked if anyone had seen the property. They all said 'No.' I confronted the manager and asked to be moved out of the room I was staying in, because I don't think my property is safe in that room. He said he would move me as soon as a room becomes available. But that still does not get my property back, and this is the second time this has happened. So until I get moved, I won't feel safe in my room.



Edward G SKINHEAD

It was when I was about 12 or 13. I loved my football, especially Liverpool. My father went to England one year to watch Liverpool vs Aston Villa. Liverpool won 1-0, which I was delighted to hear on the television. When my father got home, to my surprise he had a football signed by all the Liverpool players, which I would say he hated doing because he was an Aston Villa fan. My older brother was all annoyed because he got nothing. Anyways, he follows Man Utd. That Saturday, I went out to play football with all my mates but I didn't bring my signed football out. I told all of them about this football. Most of them believed me except for one fellow. This guy called Bong Clarke. This guy always thought he was smarter than the rest of us, and he thought he was better at football as well. He always wore a Wrangler jacket and jeans and his fourteen-hole Doc Martins. Most of us were a bit afraid of this guy. Also, he was a skinhead. We were all afraid to ask our mothers could we get a skinhead because we knew they would say no way. This is why we were a bit afraid of him. That Saturday he came over to me and said, 'I heard you have a signed football from Liverpool players.' 'Yes,' I said, and he said, 'Go in and get it and I will believe you.' But I said, 'No,' to him. He turned to the rest of the lads and said, 'I told yous he didn't get a football from the Liverpool players.' So to get one up on him, I went in and

got it. When I brought it out they all looked at it and said, 'Nice one, Ed.' I could see he was sick. So he said to me, 'Give us a shot of it.' I was afraid to say no. I could see the rest of the lads looking to see what I was going to do. He got the ball and kicked it down the road. 'Go down and get it,' I said, shitting myself. He said, 'No, you get it now, fool.' So my blood was boiling. I went straight up to his face and loafed him straight in the head. He fell to the ground and I started kicking him and I said, 'Get that ball or else I will kick you around.' So, with a little moan like a little mouse, he said, 'Yes, I will get your ball.' He went down the road and got my ball and brought it back and said, 'Sorry, Ed, for that.' Ever since, I don't fear anyone by their looks, plus I got a pat on the back from the rest of the lads.



Wendy R THE MORIGAN

Earth mother in your beautiful coloured gown with your long flowing locks of charcoal black hair. Goddess of slaughter transformed into a crow's head with the body of barbed wire and a heart of stone. Down the water's edge, washing your raggy clothes with your crow hands and rotting nails, with blood in your eyes and shaggy grey hair to the ground, with death in your voice. With a blink of an eye, you slide into the water. With your slimy worm-shaped body, you come out of the water, with evil red eyes, ready for slaughter.



Tony K



Joanne W

JOANNE W CONFLICT

I spent one Christmas in a psychiatric ward in St. Patrick's Hospital in Dublin City. I remember it clearly because Christmas Day is my favourite day of the year, and for the most part of it I was locked away in a place I didn't want to be in, but a place that had people who would fix me and make me well again.

The hospital let me out for a few hours to spend with my family, but I had to return that evening. It was horrible to spend Christmas night in a psychiatric ward, but I wasn't well so for me it was probably the best place to be at the time. Looking back on it now, that was my worst Christmas ever, because I wasn't free. I was trapped in the hospital, but a million times worse, I was trapped in my illness.



Jimmy W

Jimmy W STRAIGHT TO UNIT 8

What this story means to me is that in 1976, as someone in a mental hospital, I had no rights under the mental health act at the time. The mental health act of 2001 says: In making a decision under this act concerning the care or treatment of a person (including a decision to make an admission order in relation to a person), due regard shall be given to the need to respect the right of the person to dignity, bodily, integrity, privacy and autonomy.

None of this was given to me in 1976.

The two Gardaí jumped on me as I cut my neck with a broken bottle. I was drinking up a laneway and they started to kick me. I was pissed off. I was rushed to hospital where they stitched me up. As I got up to leave, the two Gardaí sat on me as the doctor gave me an injection in the arse. That was just a taste of what was to come. It was 1976. I was 23. Four Gardaí and two nurses from St. Brendan's hospital put me in the back of a Garda van. I kept telling them to let me go. They told me I was committed. I kicked out, they held me down.

'Give him another injection,' said the Garda.

'I can't,' said the nurse. 'He already got a dose that would put an elephant asleep.' As the van stops they take me out, lead me to a building. They open the big door, lead me up the concrete stairs to another door. Inside, I get the stench of urine. Some people were walking

around in circles. Others were rocking back and forth in the corner. I'm taken to an office. A psychiatrist is sitting in a big chair. He asks me some questions; I refuse to answer. He tells me I'm committed and shows me a pink form. I lost my head. I pick up a chair and went to hit him with it. They grab me, hold me down and give me another injection.

The next morning, I woke up in a padded cell with a straight jacket on and two nurses stand over me.

'Are you going to behave?' I nod, yes. They give me some medication, Largatill. I'm like a zombie, walking around. My mother comes up every day to see me. My father would not come to see me. He came to see me in prison, but he didn't want to see his son in a mental hospital. I did not want my mother to see me every day, because I knew it was breaking her heart to see me there. One day she lifted my tee-shirt. I was black and blue.

'My god, what have they done to you?'

'I'm ok, Mom, I'm ok.' She went to the doctor.

'I want to take him home. I want to look after him.'

'He is committed. He has no rights, nor do you.' She slumps in a chair. I'm led away by two male nurses. I'm angry. As she is led away, I call, 'I love you Mom.' There are tears in her eyes. The panic alarm sounds. Nurses come from all wards. I know what's coming next. I lash out at every thing and everyone around me. They hold me down. Another injection in the arse.

This time I wake up on the bed in the ward, but I'm doped up to the eyeballs. This goes on for a few weeks. I can't eat, piss or shit by myself. I find a cigarette in my pocket. I ask the nurse for a light.

'No,' he says. 'You did not do any work. Sweep the floor, wash some cups.' I eat the cigarette.

'Fuck you.' They bring this doctor, a short fat bastard of a psychiatrist.

'He looks almost catatonic,' he says to the nurse. I say

to myself, what do you expect, you have me doped out of my head.

'Give him some Haldol.' More tablets. After a few weeks, they relax the medication. I play their game, sweep the floor, wash the cups. They begin to trust me. One day a nurse from another ward opened the door.

'Hold it,' I say. 'I want to get the dirt out of the corner.' He leaves me for a minute. I run down the stairs.

'Please god, please let the door at the bottom be open.' It is. The sunshine hits my eyes. I'm disorientated. I jump behind some bushes. I hear people running around. Later, I hear Garda walkie-talkies.

'Five-eight, blue jeans, white tee-shirt. I sit and wait. It gets dark. I get over the wall and make my way to T May's Off-Licence. Two bottles of Old Cellar, at the end of Infirmary Road. I drink them. A Garda car pulls in. They jump out, handcuff me and bring me back to Unit 8. Next day, they take my clothes, put me in pyjamas, give me more medication. I pretend to take it; put it under my tongue and spit it out. Every Sunday, patients queue up to go to Mass. They would never let me go. One Sunday, I cannot believe my luck. Four new nurses come onto the ward. I rush into the toilets, give a patient five cigarettes for his clothes. I queue up with the rest, on the way to the chapel. I make a run for the gate. Up the Grangegorman Road. I stop, take a ten pound note out of my sock. It's stuck to my foot, almost faded. I make it to T Mays, a bottle of Jameson. I open it. It tastes good. I make my way to Rathmines. I fall asleep. I wake up to a kick to my side. Two Gardaí and an ambulance. I'm taken back to St. Brendan's assessment unit. A young female doctor looks at me. 'I'm sorry,' she says, and shows me my file writing. On top of it in bold letters, 'STRAIGHT TO UNIT 8'.

I had 27 more admissions to that unit. It has been 31 years, but the summer of 1976 still haunts me, but today I have taken back my power and the healing has begun.



DATES

BROWN BULL

This story about the Tain would have been lost if it hadn't a' been for Senchan Thorpeist. He got it writ down in an around 700 AD.

FINBENNACH

Up till then the great epic of Ireland had been passed on be word of mouth.
[From 'Raiders of the Lost Art', 2008]

Mary R

1969: On the 14th December 1969, I was born to my mother, Mary O’Shea, and Michael Reidy.
1990: In the year 1990, I gave birth to my daughter and named her Kathleen Margaret, Kathleen after her father’s mother and Margaret after my sister and grandmother.
1995: In the year 1995, I gave birth to my second child. It was a girl and I named her Lauren Rachel.
1979: In September 1979, the Pope came to Ireland and it was a time of great celebration for everyone except for my family. For my family it was a time of sadness because my granddfather died. His name was James O’Shea, but he was known to people as Chink O’Shea because he had very fallow skin. I went to see him in the death house and there was a dead woman there too. She was wearing what I now know was a shawl. I was afraid of her, it was the first corpse I had ever seen. My mother lifted me up to give my grandfather a kiss goodbye. I was shocked at how cold and how still he was, and at the hardness when I reached out and touched his face. As we knelt down to recite the Rosary, a tear ran down his face. My grandfather was 82 years old when he died. I was only 9.

Christine R
DATES

1976: This was the year I was born.
1980: I started school and I was afraid.
1983: I got my first dog, her name was Pricen.
1985: I met Mother Teresa and she blessed me.
1990: I made my confirmation
1991: My brother got 10 years in England.
1992: My family went over to visit him.
1993: I met my fella and I’m still with him.
1995: I had my first child. It was a girl. I named her Jodie.
1996: I had my second child and it was a boy. I named him Mitchell
1997: My fella got locked up for 6 months.
2000: This was the year of the Millennium



DENISE J
DATES

1972: I was born and I was a very spoiled child, and I am still spoiled at the age of 35 years. Only for my mother and father, I would not have what I’ve got. They helped me with my three children a lot.
1974: That’s my partner’s date of birth, and it is a special day for me and the children.
1992: I had a baby girl and I was very happy with her. She was 7lbs 11ozs. I was 18 years and her father was 16 years. He was only after coming home from Clonmel after doing five years. After all that, I called my princess Jade Lorraine.
1993: I had another baby, and this time it was a boy. Me and the father were happy we had one of each. He was really happy. He wanted a boy. His name is Clayton Lee.
1995: I had another boy and called him Jonathan Brendan after my father and his own father, because I said I wouldn’t have a another baby and I didn’t. Oh, don’t speak too soon...
1996: I lost a sister that I was close to. She was on drugs and died over them. Her daughter is the image of her. My mother took Chantal because my sister loved her drink and drugs, and my mother would call the police for her because she’d be drunk as well as on drugs. After all the shouting she’d be doing, she’d come back the next morning.



Rory S



Rory S

PILLOW TALK



BROWN BULL

Meanwhile Fergus and the exiles got settled into Connaught. They kept poking away at Ulster, raiding cattle and becoming a right pain in the arse for Conchobar. They were staying with Queen Maeve and her husband Ailill, who had their own problems. One night they were lying in bed...

**Denise J
WHISPERS**

I am talking about myself and partner about pillow talk. I know when he wants to get into my tong. When we lie in bed, he would talk about the time he got me a gold warrior samba, and then the little whispers in your ears, and then it would all start. I was getting wide. But I was a slapper so what could I do, I would go along with him. I enjoyed the gold and the pillow talk, that was my scene. The life I had was great, and can't complain about it. The pillow talk was great when I would be in my embroidered underwear. That would really bring the pillow talk in, because it was the best sex we used to have, when I would wear my embroidered underwear. We would suck on beads but it was great.



Christine D



John D

**Matthew
PILLOW TALK**

– Who the hell do you think you are? This is my house not yours, so count your cards lucky your bags are not packed, because I own this house and every thing in it.
– What have I done to deserve this? he asked. She replies
– Just looking at you makes me sick, the way you talk when you're in the beerhouse, bragging about the way you tell your drinking pals you own this and that. And another thing: don't bring anybody home to my house and expect them to be fed. I cook and clean all day. I don't want you to bring them home, or else you will be packing your bags and leaving with them.
– I have no problem getting someone else as my mother.



THE END



EMER

The Ulster warriors were absolutely bollixed. They had their pang things that they suffer from.

NES

They were all roaring in agony, screeching out of them as they clutched their tortured bellies. They all thought they were having babies.

EMER

They were a mess. They were bleedin' useless.

MACHA

Macha's curse had rendered every one of the Ulster warriors to their beds.

CUCHULAINN

All except one mortal man, untouched by the curse. I, Cuchulainn, stood alone to defend Ulster against the rest of Ireland.

Wendy R
THE END OF THE WORLD

Darkness came all of a sudden. I looked out my window. The people were panic-stricken. Everyone, men and women, rounding up their families. ‘Come on quickly,’ I said to my children. ‘The time has come. You know what I have been talking to yis about for the past few months.’ I tried to prepare my family as best I could. You could hardly see your hand in front of your face. The bunker we had built was only big enough for five of us, so that meant I would not see my mother and father, brothers and sisters again. But we had all said goodbyes. It was so hard to let them go. I knew their fate, and so did they. I had grabbed the last few things we needed to survive this. Down I went. It was 30 feet below ground. I had just closed the small steel hatch. Then I heard the bang. With the force of it, I landed straight onto the floor of the bunker. Many days had passed; our food had run out, the generator had stopped days ago. My children got so ill I did not think they would make it. The end of the world had come. I opened the hatch and a big ball of blacky grey ash met me in the face. I eventually pushed my way out. I was the only thing that was standing. Every building, big or small, every last tree was burnt to the ground. I looked over towards my mam’s house. There was nothing left, everything was turned to ash. Every living person and animal wiped out. Only me and my children had survived. I was then wishing we had gone too. I could not cope with the devastation, it was too much. I then took out the big bag of pills I had saved up. I could not get them to my mouth quick enough and then forced my children to take them. We all sat close, arms around each other, and fell asleep.



Emma R



Joanne W

TONY K
MY GRANDMOTHER’S RING

It was a very short journey we had to travel. My mother got impatient. I went back around to the cab office and there were two men standing in the waiting area. I asked for the cab. The response was, there were none at the moment, or words to that effect. I began to plead in a panicked state, that I know it was a short journey, but it was for a person with cancer. They just looked blankly at me, shrugging their shoulders. I ran back around, to find my grandmother on the balcony. I shouted up that there were no cabs available and she pointed down at me to wait there. She shut the door and came down the stairs. At first she was walking pretty normal; by the time we got half way on our journey, she was arched over like an old woman. I walked behind, almost crying, wanting to carry her the rest of the way. It was the 16th of December, so it was the height of winter. She went up to my other aunt’s flat, and spent the rest of the day in bed. The following day, she passed away when I went up to my aunt’s flat, where the rest of the family was. There was an atmosphere in the room when I walked in. My great-uncle put his hands on my shoulders and said, ‘Go up and say goodbye to her,’ which I did. A couple of years later, I noticed a ring on my cousin’s finger. I commented on it, and he said it was a keepsake from Nan. I said, I never got one. His response was, his sister even got one. So I let it go. A few years later, my uncle, who is my grandmother’s son, was walking up town and he commented of the times both me and my grandmother walked this street to help her with the shopping. I said that I never got a keepsake from my grandmother and both my cousin and his sister got something. From which, he took off my grandmother’s ring from his finger. I refused of course, but he insisted. I treasured it for years.

Joanne W
THE END

The curtain closed. The sun went down as the night arrived and the day said goodbye.
I took my last breath as I fell asleep and left this earth.
The car stopped and turned around as it came to a dead end.
I took my last bite as I came to the end of my chocolate bar.
Who knows where the end of the world is, will I ever know?
I can see the end of my nose better when I close one eye.
My favourite time of the year is at the very end, because its Christmas time.

Christine D
MY MOTHER

I always admired my mother till her dying day. She had a lot of struggles in her life, with her addiction and coping with us, her children, and her mum. She was an unmarried mother and always had struggles. She would always go out shoplifting for money to feed her habit and to feed us, and she would get charges and be locked up and worrying who was going to look after us. My Aunt Trisha would always step in and look after us while she was in prison. I always remember her last time in prison, and I found out I was pregnant at 15. My mother was living across the road from the Bridewell in 1993 and I moved in with her. I had my son in 1994 and it was then she was a great help with me and my son. I always look at them last 4 years in her life before she passed away. How close we had got. We moved into the same house in Rathmines. She lived under me. I lived over her with my 2 children. She was on methadone at this time. I knew she was sick and had the AIDS virus, but I don't think I really appreciated how ill she really was. I had 3 jobs at this time, and she always looked after my children. We were so close, like mother and daughter, sisters and best friends. Then one morning I was having a laugh with her while bringing my son to school in Rathmines. My mam was pushing my daughter in her buggy. Then that night I tried to get into her flat and I couldn't so next door kicked the door in for me. I was shocked to see her on the bed with her coat and gloves on, and when I turned her around she was dead. She was that ill that she died from her methadone. Each night at her grave, we have 2 lights that light up in the dark.

Ken F
THE END

A new thing happened on a day in 1983. I tried to get a job but our country, Ireland, was in a real recession. At the time, I was trying to get an apprenticeship at plumbing, carpentry, motor mechanic but it was so difficult to gain any type of trade or job. Ireland's people were leaving like the time in '84. Going by the US Embassy, the queues of people for visas to the US. People were desperate for wages and work. I was not working, had left secondary school with my Group Cert, and it was not helping. The recession, it's biting. I didn't want to leave Ireland. I am Irish and wanted to stay in Ireland. But to be nothing and to have nothing helps the mind to wonder, and I wondered about Canada. I have family there; sisters, brothers, sister-in-law, brothers-in-law. I'd leave for Canada, from one door closed, to one door opening.



Dave F
THE END

I entered that rehab, feeling like a rabbit in the headlights, sheepish and each of my opiate-starved cells crying out to be fed. Such a foreign atmosphere, the smells that remind one of certain places. Today, the smell of floor polish brings me back there. The worst thing for me about withdrawals is the inability to sleep. Lying there with your thoughts and cravings, shall I stay or should I go. Thankfully I was strong enough, and at rock bottom, that I knew if I left, what would happen. I would use and then feel guilty, have no place to stay, and likely to be in jail within a month.

Gradually I began to get over the withdrawals and started to throw myself into the doctrine of the rehab. I began to go jogging. A great way of feeling endorphins in a natural way. This speeded up my recovery, and soon I felt that my four basic needs according to William Glazier were being met. Namely, fun need by way of natural interaction, freedom from heroin and all its slavery, power need by taking my will back and being in control of my life and belonging need by having 30 other people there making a great feeling of camaraderie. Having completed phase 1 in 9 months, I moved to phase 2, namely job-seeking. I got employment as a receptionist in Brunswick House. After 4 months, I moved into a flat with a fellow-member and we would go up to rehab for a support group, and to give the mandatory urine to prove we were still abstaining. Finally, after 4 months, I was told I would graduate in two weeks in Patrick's Cathedral. I was joyful, yet sad to be leaving. Almost fearful I had become reliant on rehab as a crutch. Now I would be out there in the big bad world 24 / 7, but I knew I had my supports.

When I was called up to collect my diploma of graduation, it was one of the proudest moments of my then still young life, thus all was well that ended well. 1 year and a half well worth the effort. That time in rehab in early 92/94 still stands me good to this day. A hope of endless possibilities as opposed to an end of life through drug abuse. The end runs into the beginning and the beginning to the end, that's what I believe and live by today.



Jimmy W
THE DEATH OF CHRISTY

How things have changed in 40 years, since the first day you came into the Simon, a young 40-year-old with a head full of ideas. What did it feel like to be the first to get a bed there? My body was weak from sleeping rough. He said my mind was gone from drink, but the feel of a soft pillow eased my soul. He said on his death bed, 'Do you remember when we had to sneak drink in?' He said, 'You would go in and lower a pillow on a string out the window so I could put a bottle of whiskey in and most times we would be caught drinking it in your room and we would be put out for the night. But it did not stop us trying again and again, and when we would wake up in the mornings, full of mice, we would look at each other and say, 'Oh well, they will keep us company.' We would walk the street, drinking and begging, until we got back in at 6.30. How things have changed, now you can stay in all day, drinking, eating good food, and clean sheets on the bed. My heart was heavy the day you died. 20 years we knew each other. You thought me everything.



Jimmy W

Olivia M
THE END

We all got dressed up to the nine's. Got our coats money. We were all only 16 at the time. My friends all told their mothers that they were sleeping over at my house that night. At 12 o'clock we climbed out my window, onto the extension, and we were on our way. We got to the club – 'The Asylum', it was called – we took drugs called 'E' for the first time, and had the best night of our lives. When we got back to my house we had to get back in the same way we went out, which was a lot harder after dancing all night till six in the morning. The five of us got into my single bed and passed out. It went on like that every weekend, then the place closed a while later and that put an end to the best times we all ever had.



Eddie G and Mark K
THE END

Our father, he was 5 foot 7, with a small build, not stocky but just the normal build. Every day I remember him in this way, he would greet you with a smile and ask how are things going for you. 'Grand,' I would say and off he would go. When I was small I remember when I would ask him for things like toys or bikes or anything like that. He would say to me, 'Son, the money is not great this week, maybe next week.' 'Alright,' I would say. Come the following week, I would be waiting anxiously for him to come home from work to see if he had anything for me. He would come home and say, 'I haven't got what you wanted but here's a little gift anyway.' So from then on, I knew he hadn't got much money to spare so I stopped asking for things every week. My brothers and sister were the same, asking for things all the time. They didn't understand money wasn't great, and I could see by him he hated saying no, and he would always try get what they wanted. As we got older, we started to understand that the money wasn't great so we stopped asking for things all the time, but he would still get us something small. I remember the day well I was in town with my mates, getting some shorts and tops because we were going to Lanzarote. My phone rang and my mate was on the other end, saying, 'You better come, there's something wrong with your dad.' So I jumped into a taxi and headed straight for the flats. As I was going in, there was an ambulance going out. I knew he was in the ambulance, so me and my brothers went over to James's Hospital. We went in and the nurse said, 'Sorry, your father's just passed away.' That was the end of our lives.



Mark K



Mark D
THE END

I was in the Back Lane hostel for 1 year and 3 weeks until I got kicked out. Now I'm in the Dublin Simon Hostel on Harcourt Street, which is a mixed hostel. There is one girl that I have become very close too. Her name is Sue, and I have very strong feelings towards her, and I'm hoping that she feels the same way towards me. Yesterday, we got the bus to Inchicore to collect her money, and on the way back, the two of us had a good talk on the bus. I wish we could have stayed on that bus for a lot longer, but the bus had to pull in to Dublin, so that was the end of the journey.



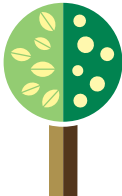
Dougie S



THANKS



SOUTH INNER CITY LOCAL DRUGS TASK FORCE



ESB ELECTRIC AID IRELAND



