



TODAY'S D8

Art, Writings and Film from RADE's programme 2008/09



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INTRODUCTION

A finger-numbing cold, or the steady thrum of rain on the roof, together with the plaintive tinkling of the Chinese music that accompanied the Tai Chi imposing its relaxing focus on the class: these are the abiding memories of my session with the RADE Creative Writing group throughout the autumn and winter of 2008 and the early Spring of 2009.

Your first morning: you face a group of strangers, strangers to you but not to each other; no strangers to the routine of the Monday morning workshop however. They know where the pencils are kept, how to erect the flip-pad on its wobbly stand, how to maximise the heat from the radiators, and – very important – how to time the tea-break. They are open, laid back, totally accepting of you. Their enthusiasm is palpable.

We worked tentatively at first, each trying to assess the other; the shadow boxing that measures the depth, the commitment of each other. One thread runs through the warp and woof of each session and that is the humour. Wry humour, caustic humour, gentle humour, bawdy humour – all seasoned the work like spicy herbs added to cooking, adding a boisterous piquancy to the work.

The Monday morning three-hour session flashed by in a blur of chalk-and-talk, the frisson of no-holds-barred workshop sessions, the palpable concentration of writing under time pressure and the tangible relief of the tea-break. How much did the participants get out of the class? The workbooks tell their own story. Starting with hesitant and stumbling paragraphs and progressing through the weeks to fluent and well-formed work, the handwritten entries pick up momentum. What follows is but the skimming of a solid body of work.

We had a loose theme for the workshop: it was DUBLIN 8 – the only postal address that traverses the River Liffey. But such a simple theme drew forth a wide and rich response.

I was proud to be part of the workshop and I am certain that the courage, determination and burgeoning creativity of the class of 08/09 has enriched me. I wish all the participants the best of luck with their future writing.

JOE O'DONNELL

Tutor Creative Writing Module RADE 08/09



FAMILY



Paul Longworth
SON MEETING

‘Hello there, Patrick. My name is Paul and I am your son from thirty years into the future. I know you’re on your way to the barracks, but if you had just a few minutes to talk it would mean a lot to me.’ ‘Go and get lost. You are not my son. My son is at home with his mother and he’s only two years old so beat it.’

‘I am your son. Look, here’s a picture of me and my mother from a few years ago.’

‘Oh my God, you’re telling the truth, so why am I not in the picture?’

‘Well, you died when... I can’t tell you ’cause it would change the future. I came back to get to know you, as I didn’t get a chance when I was growing up.’

Mark Kelly
DROWNING

My worst nightmare is a fear of dying, and the way it would be is drowning while being on holidays with my family at the beach and my kids watching me in the water swimming, getting a cramp in my leg and starting to go under the water slowly.



John Davidson
A FEW SURPRISES

Little did I know there was going to be a few surprises. The first one was my Auntie Jean. She came home for the first time in 20 years from Canada and she brought me a music box. The next was Uncle John; he bought me a nice jacket and gave me £20. I also met my dad’s brother, Uncle Bill, for the first time ever. He was cool; they were all having a good time drinking and singing. My step-uncle John was a good singer, as was my Auntie Jean. It was the first time my dad had been sober in months.



**THE NEXT WAS UNCLE JOHN;
HE BOUGHT ME A NICE JACKET AND GAVE
ME £20. I ALSO MET MY DAD’S BROTHER,
UNCLE BILL, FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER.
HE WAS COOL.**



Edward Geraghty
THE BIKE

Didn't see a bike. I didn't want my parents to see me upset, so I went over to the tree. My present was in a shape of a box wrapped very well. I ripped open the wrapping paper and, to my surprise, there was a lock and keys. I looked at my mother and she started to smile. My father wasn't in the room. The door opened and my father walked in with a lovely blue bike. I went out on it all day. I left it outside when I went in for my tea. After my tea I went out to have more fun on my bike and, to my shock, my bike was gone.



Glenn Farrell
WHEN MY DAD CRIED

My father's brother was found dead in his flat in Pearse St. He was my dad's only brother and my dad was the one that found him. That was the first time I had seen my dad crying. He was really broke up over it. Then what followed was the blame game. Why didn't his sons call in and keep an eye on him? My father told my mother how, when he found him, he had maggots on him, and all the windows were closed.

John Davidson
THE PICTURE ON THE WALL

My dad loved that picture on the wall, but the rest of us could not stand it. I could swear that picture on the wall with the cold face would stare back at you as you walked around the room, frightening everyone but him. We tried everything, us kids and ma, to get rid of that picture. Would that picture fall from the wall? No way.





CATERING

Stephen Brady
THE TURKEY'S COOKED

It was nearly time for dinner but Aunt Millie hadn't come. Mother was in the kitchen shouting that the turkey was overdone. I went in to her and told her to relax and to have a sherry.

- It'll calm you down; all you've to do to the turkey is turn it off if it is done.
 - She does this on purpose, it's the same every year, she'll stroll in the door half cut and going on like a fucking nut. Where's your father? I want him here.
 - Ah Ma, leave him alone, he is in next door having a beer.
 - Look, look here they come, the in-laws are here and my dinner is done. It's your father and Millie who are ruining this day.
 - Ah Ma, relax, it's Christmas Day.
 - Fuck, quick, open the door.
 - Hello Tom and Mary, and a happy Christmas to you. You're very welcome, come in and sit down by the fire and Dan will get out the gin.
- There is a knock at the door
- Tim, will you get it?
 - It's Aunt Millie, Ma.
- And so it goes.



John Davidson
DINNER

It was ten years ago. My dad was pissed out of his head. He had made the dinner. The cat had been at it. As far as I was concerned, the world could end right there and then. God, take me now from this hell. I had to put up with it, I had nowhere to go. Could this day get any worse? Yes, it did – my brother came round. Me and him are like night and day. My step-ma was pissed as well, everybody was out there half drunk – sisters as well. I was the only sober one. I had no friends and nowhere to go.



**SHE'LL STROLL IN THE DOOR HALF CUT
AND GOING ON LIKE A FUCKING NUT.
WHERE'S YOUR FATHER? I WANT HIM HERE.
– AH MA, LEAVE HIM ALONE, HE IS IN NEXT
DOOR HAVING A BEER.**





Jimmy Wynne
CHRISTMAS PUDDING

In 1988, just after my mother had died, I became homeless. I remember waking up Christmas morning in a doorway, drinking a bottle of whiskey. I sat there all day. 'What was Christmas for?', I was thinking, as people walked by all dressed up to the nines, with presents under their arms. The day was so long; I wished it was over.

I found half a ring of white pudding in my pocket from the day before. That was my Christmas dinner. As night fell, I could hear people singing, passing in their cars, beeping their horns. 'Happy Christmas,' they would shout.

Happy, what's happy about it?

Ken Farrell
BY THE WAY

Food is needed
Clothes are necessary
T.O. is not necessary
Your room is for one only
Birds are lovely
Smoking is not good
Cleaning is necessary
Football is sport
Music is soothing
Politicians are running our country
Men are hard workers

Paul Longworth
SEPARATE HOSTELS

When my son and his mother came over from England, we had to stay in different hostels, separated from each other. I spent Christmas in a room, eating bread and butter.

I FOUND HALF A RING OF WHITE PUDDING IN MY POCKET FROM THE DAY BEFORE. THAT WAS MY CHRISTMAS DINNER. AS NIGHT FELL, I COULD HEAR PEOPLE SINGING, PASSING IN THEIR CARS, BEEPING THEIR HORNS.



BIRDSEYE



Jimmy Wynne
IN THE MIDDLE OF THE CITY

I am Anna Liffey; my home is in the Strawberry beds. I flow right down to the sea. I am right down the middle of Dublin, I separate North and South. I have been here for thousands of years, I started as a small pool, but the tears of wars have made my river deep. I have seen a lot of death from suicide and I hold them in my bosom. I have seen many great people walk beside me: Pearse, Connolly, Emmett, the great Jim Larkin would sit beside me and, yes, his tears too would fall into me. I have seen happy times too, people would swim with me on those hot summer days we had in Dublin. There have been a lot of changes since I was a small pool. New bridges have been built over me, the last being the James Joyce. Oh, how happy I was when I heard that. I remember him reading and writing as he walked alongside me. New buildings have sprung up, but how sad I was to see the older ones go.

Olivia McTiernan
THE RIVER

When I was a kid, I loved going into town with my ma; but the best I liked was looking out the window at the River Liffey. It was beautiful with all the different birds in it. But now as I am older, I live just facing it. It makes me sad to look at it, with all the rubbish thrown into it every day. Even when my kids would go by, they would say, 'Mammy, the dirt in it...' There are also no birds there anymore. When I was younger the kids used to swim in it, but it is so dirty now I wouldn't let my kids swim in it. The only good that came from it was all the new bridges that are on it.



Douglas Smith
REFLECTION

Along the bank of the canal, where the water ripples up to the stone bank, I stood and stared at my reflection, watching my face and torso twisting and changing with every ripple the wind lightly blew. Then out of nowhere, 'plonk' went the noise, as some kid threw a stone right through my reflection. And in an instant I was gone, all that was left was the water rippling up the stone bank.



REFLECTION



Jimmy Wynne
THIS IS YOUR LIFE

Now: I see all the hard work I have done has paid off.
Then: Are you trying to be funny?
Now: Look at yourself, a wreck. When did you start smoking and drinking?
Then: About three years ago, after I married her.
Then: Married who?
Now: Oh, I forgot you haven't met her yet. You are going to be in for a shock. You can forget going to the gym.
Then: No way!
Now: Oh yes, and all that money you have saved up, it will go on what she wants and golf with your mates, forget it.
Then: Tell me who she is so I can avoid her and not turn into this wreck I see before me.
Now: Can't do that, this is the life in front of you. Oh, by the way, enjoy the gym.

Mark Kelly
LOST ME JOB

When I was eight years old I wanted to be a fireman. As I got to the age of ten I decided to become a policeman, and when the years went by I got older and my circumstances changed. I started to steal and get into trouble with the police. That gave me a criminal record and it stopped me from becoming a fireman or a policeman. Now I have a family and I am a father, and I will be able to show my children my mistakes so they can learn from them and not go the way I went.

Emma Ryan
TALKING TO MYSELF

Then: It's your destiny to get to where you want.
Now: What do you mean?
Then: Look, if you hadn't done all the things you had, I wouldn't be here talking to you.
Now: I still don't understand.
Then: Well, for one thing, I wouldn't exist.
Now: So, do I keep doing what I think is right?
Then: Yes, you need to make your own mistakes, your own choices, right or wrong because your heart is in the right place. You might not feel it now, but things will get much better
Now: I feel stuck right now.
Then: It will pass. You need to keep going because if you do, everything will turn out the way it's supposed to.
Now: Then why do bad things keep happening to me. Why?
Then: I know it hurts. Just keep going along and you'll get there in life.
Now: And will I be happy?



**I STARTED TO STEAL AND GET INTO
TROUBLE WITH THE POLICE.
THAT GAVE ME A CRIMINAL RECORD
AND IT STOPPED ME FROM BECOMING
A FIREMAN OR A POLICEMAN.**

LIGHT



John Davidson
A DAY OUT

I went to the zoo
I will never live it down.
The monkeys sniggered
the giraffe was a snob.
The lions roared
and the birds soared.

John Davidson
THE SERVANT

When she walked into the room, I knew there was something about her. When our eyes made contact, she was different from the other ladies I had met in my life. I wanted her to come over to me but she was busy, chatting away to the major and his wife and Captain Black. She would not have any time for me, I was just a servant.



Darren Balfe
MEMOIRS OF A LONELY MAN

I'm writing this to let people know that it was a mistake writing my autobiography. I would like to say sorry to my friends and family. But I'm not sorry for taking all the politicians down for taking the brown envelopes. Some people say I exposed all the corruption because they didn't give me enough money. Not true.



Edward Geraghty
THE DOG'S MEDICAL CARD

We had a lovely longhaired German shepherd called Sheila. When she was 12 years old, she started to get very sick. We brought her to the vet, but they just told us it was old age. My father couldn't accept it. We all knew she was dying. I was looking at her out the back one day, and all she was doing was walking into things. I told my father and straight away he said that we must bring her to the vet, but not back to that vet who told us it was just old age. My father drove me and my brother and Sheila over to the vet. My father went in with her. When he came out, he said to my brother

- Do you have a medical card with you?
- Yes, why?
- The vet gave me this prescription for tablets and told me Sheila is getting blind. You might be able to get them cheaper.



Jimmy Wynne
THE STRIPPER

When she walked into the room, I knew the DJ was going to play 'Patricia the Stripper'. Joan had been a stripper for 60 years. Today is her 80th birthday. All her friends were there, some in wheelchairs, some on crutches. They all came to celebrate with the woman who had entertained them for all those years and, yes, she did one last strip to 'Patricia the Stripper'.

Glenn Farrell
WHEN MEMORY'S THE ONLY FRIEND THAT GRIEF CAN CALL ITS OWN

When I was 14 years old, I was a keen football player. I had been training with my local team when I met this girl. We started going out with each other. All of a sudden, the football was out the window. Before long, we were at it in the morning, when we were meant to be in school. The sex was great.



DO YOU HAVE A MEDICAL CARD WITH YOU? THE VET GAVE ME THIS PRESCRIPTION FOR TABLETS AND TOLD ME SHEILA IS GETTING BLIND. YOU MIGHT BE ABLE TO GET THEM CHEAPER.





DARK

Anon

UNTIL DEATH DO US PART

Well, Mary, here we go again, enjoying another day in the Moloney house, another fight, another row. When I leave this house I am never coming back, for what? To take the blame again? No way. I'm glad I'm out of that house because I don't think I would be sane now with Jackie running off and getting pregnant. I am not going to make that mistake, I hope.

Well, I thought wrong about that one. Look at me now with 3 boys. I would never have thought it. As for that fella Patrick, always bashing me. Well, I got my own back on him when I stabbed him in the hand. He never hit me again after that. My mum and dad have come a long way since that, they seem to love each other now. There was a time when they could not stand each other, I'm happy for them. I hope my marriage lasts long.



Darren Balfe

BLIND MAN WALKING

It's two steps to the left, eight forward. I'm at the door. I put my hand out for the banister. Got it. Down the stairs I go. Now I'm off to the shops. I know I'm walking towards the traffic lights. I can feel the air on my face like a big whooshin' from cars going by.

Beep, beep, beep

I can cross now.

'Can I give you a hand there?', a kind woman asks. I say, 'No thanks.' Sometimes it can be patronising, but she was only trying to be nice. She must be in her sixties. She has an old perfume on her that I recognise.

I'm in the shops now. The smells are beautiful. I wonder if people who can see take time to smell the beautiful aromas.

'Hiya, John.' It's Mags, the nicest smelling woman I've talked to in a long time. I wonder would she go out with a blind person. I wonder...



AS FOR THAT FELLA PATRICK, ALWAYS BASHING ME. WELL, I GOT MY OWN BACK ON HIM WHEN I STABBED HIM IN THE HAND. HE NEVER HIT ME AGAIN AFTER THAT.



Ken Farrell
DUBLIN 8

I'm happy to be in Dublin 8
The homeless people lying in doorways
Searching for a way
To escape this very long day
I'll have to get something to take me away
Ah fuck, sure I may as well stay and have another
drink
Get scattered and out of my head
I'll sleep a night in the gutter and have bread on me
butter
Put on with me knife instead of me spoon
Because I'm on the street I don't give a crap
I'm only a scumbag who drinks and takes crack
Please don't look at me like that
I have a monkey on me back

Jimmy Wynne
ST BRENDAN'S HOTEL

It's been 50 years since I set foot on these grounds
that used to be Grangegorman Lunatic Asylum, now
a five star hotel. As I booked in, a shiver went down
my spine – the reception was where Unit 8, the
notorious lock-up ward, stood. I spent a long time in
that ward, a young 23-year-old, being held down and
put in my straightjacket. I thought I had put all that
behind me. The porter, a young happy-go-lucky guy,
brought my bags up to the room.

'Can you hear that?' I said.

'Hear what?' he said.

'Ah, it's ok, it's nothing.' But I could hear the
screams of all those years ago.

Frank James
INTERVIEWING JIMMY WYNNE

Straight to Unit 8, which was published yesterday, is a slice in the life of somebody
who's been there. I spoke to Jimmy, the author, earlier and asked him about his 27
admissions over the years. Unit 8 is the lock-up – padded, straightjackets and knock-
out medication. As Jimmy was always sectioned by the police he could not leave and
was always sent immediately to Section 8, without being examined by a
psychiatrist. These lock-ups lasted for 3–6 months at a time. I asked him what it was
like and why he was always in lock-ups. He told me that because he wouldn't take
any medication he always wound up being sent back there, even if he had been let
out of the general ward. He told me the medication just turned you into a zombie
and that it served no purpose.

I also asked how he kept winding up in an asylum. He told me he was an alcoholic
and his arrests were always drink-related. I asked about the reaction of family and
friends. He told me he was blanked, But his mother always stuck by him, trying to
get him released. Without success. It's a riveting read, and I strongly recommend it.





SPOOKY

Mark Kelly
HATCHET HARRY

I am a 30-year-old and I have lived in Dublin 8 all my life. When I was 10 years old, my dad told me a story about a man who lived in a house where a family was killed, and that the father of the house came back as a ghost. His name was Hatchet Harry, and how he got his name was because of the way he killed his family. Now he can be seen wandering around the house with the axe in his hand, calling out for his family. It is now lying in a derelict and rundown state. On dark nights, he can be seen at the window when you pass by.

Emma Ryan
BLOOD ON THE CARPET

I knew by just looking at her pale waxy face. She had finally snapped. My friend who had been verbally, emotionally and psychologically abused had done it this time. After years of abuse from her second husband, she had forced a ten-inch kitchen knife into his chest and twisted it. She had said in the past that she would do it out of anger. Now she walked through my living room with the knife in her hand, the blood still dripping from her hands onto the carpet, and she kept saying over and over: 'I did it. He's dead. He's finally dead.'

Des Walsh
AUDEON'S PARK

There's a story of a lady called Alice Cabb, who died in 1970 at the age of 42. She slept in Audeon's Park every night. She was very loud and always screaming at the kids who would laugh at her and call her names. She used to collect scrap, whether it be copper, aluminium, plastic. She used to have a cat with her in her carrier bag. It's said that one evening in October when it was very cold, she set up her cardboard and blankets to settle down for the night. As she slept, the cat moved up towards her face to get some heat, and it lay across her mouth. The following morning the groundskeeper found her dead. Still to this day, people say that her ghost circles around the park and that you can hear the cries of the cat. And parents in the area tell their children that if they stay out late, Alice will get them.



**AS SHE SLEPT, THE CAT MOVED UP
TOWARDS HER FACE TO GET SOME
HEAT, AND IT LAY ACROSS HER MOUTH.
THE FOLLOWING MORNING THE
GROUNDSKEEPER FOUND HER DEAD.**



Par

The Art Row Workshop
by
Pom Boyd

1 Int. Doctor's rooms - DAY
The Doc, an eccentric character in a cravat and spectacles,
sits opposite Patrick peering at him.

I feel terrible anxious.
About?
PATRICK
THE DOC

Everything. Getting on a bus...getting
hair...talking to you.
PATRICK
THE DOC

ZOZIMUS

Jimmy Wynne
BALLAD OF ZOZIMUS

Well how do you do, young Zozzy, my friend?
Do you mind if I listen to your ballad again?
You sing about things that happened that day
Do you really think Dandyorum was gay?
You sang of Stoney and his deep pocket
If he took the stones out, he'd take off like a rocket
When Owney the Fool took you by the hand
To Werburgh St you sang your ballads grand
Up for a drink to the Bleeding Horse, a pint of
porter...
Well years have gone by so tell me, man,
Did you ever throw your leg over Peg the Man?

Mark Kelly
ZOZ RETURNS TO DUBLIN 2009

Zoz and his gang of cohorts, Peg the Man and
Stoney Pockets, Dandy Orum and the Fool, thought
they were on the road to heaven, but when the
clouds started to clear, they were still walking with
Zoz banging his big stick off a car. He jumped with
the fright as the car's engine roared and pulled off.
Oney the Fool grabbed Zoz and told him it was a
metal beast. Stoney started to throw stones from
his pockets, but missed every time as the beast
sped away.

Des Walshe
ZOZIE'S SPEECH TO THE PUBLIC IN 2009

How's it going, is every one here?
I've come back from many a year.
These streets have changed so much.
I can't see a thing but I can tell by the touch.
There's cars, buses, trams and trains
Instead of the old broken down lanes.
We've all come back: Dandy, Peg, Owney and Stoney.
But you won't hear them say a thing, it's me speaking only.
That there is Stoney; he's as light as a feather,
But there's stones in his pockets to keep him together.
This here is Peg. Some could call her Peg the Man.
I hope by the look of her you might understand.
And that there is Owney. Some think he's a fool
But he's not really, he's as deaf as a mule.



DUBLIN 8



Stephen Brady
COOK STREET

As I walked through the church, it dawned on me that I had the leaves to sweep up on Cook Street. I went to my shed to get my rake. I glanced out the door and all I saw was the rain. Shit, fuck, I have to get it done as Father Ulick said he wanted it done rain, hail or snow. I went outside and began to rake as I thought of that prick inside on his break. It made me mad. It made me think I was a fool outside in the rain, trying to rake leaves in pools of rain. I thought to myself, I'll get Ulick back. I'll plug in all the mikes just before mass.



Emma Ryan
A RAINY DAY IN DUBLIN 8

A rainy day in Dublin 8
Was once a place that was not safe.
People standing in under shelter
Or holding each other to keep some heat.
Walking by Meath Street
They could hear the chatter of teeth.
If you hear slushy feet waking from behind you
Be aware of their pace because they're
Probably out to harm you.
When it's wet and cold out there
There's only one place to be
And that is inside a warm house with me.

Douglas Smith
PATRICK'S PARK

It's called Patrick's Park, named after our well-known saint. It is said he baptised people from a well that is located at the first entrance to the park on the right hand side as you walk towards the city centre. The hot breeze to be felt on my face. I could feel the sun shine heavily on my left side.

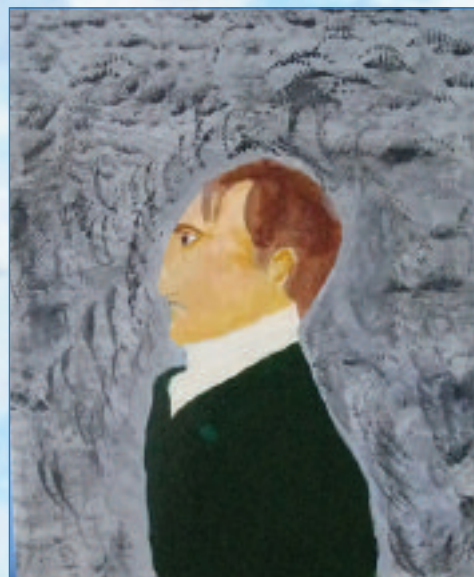


**FATHER ULICK SAID HE WANTED IT
DONE RAIN, HAIL OR SNOW. I WENT
OUTSIDE AND BEGAN TO RAKE AS I
THOUGHT OF THAT PRICK INSIDE ON
HIS BREAK. IT MADE ME MAD.**

Stephen Brady
THE GHOST OF ADAM AND EVE

Finally, mass was over. The doors opened and people descended from the church. I always hated this time as I had to lock up the church and we had a coffin waiting for its funeral mass the next day. As I went around locking the doors and turning off the lights, I felt a cold breeze brush by me, the hair on the back of my neck stood up. Through the flicker of the candles, I could see what looked like one of our monks.

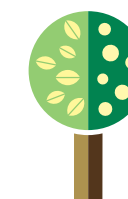
I called out, 'I'm locking up now, Father.' I called again, but no response. I walked down to blow out the candles. As I got near, there was no one there. I felt my heart racing as the coffin was to the left of the lighted candles. I blew them out one by one and headed back to the main door where it was badly lit. I walked up the aisle with my hands sweating. I felt a cold breeze go flying past me once again.



THANKS



SOUTH INNER CITY LOCAL DRUGS TASK FORCE



ESB ELECTRIC AID
IRELAND





RADE

RECOVERY THROUGH ARTS / DRAMA / EDUCATION