Scappy but happy

A priceless limited edition expressed in words and pictures by people accessing Simon’s services.
Dublin Simon Community is delighted to launch the 8th Edition of Scrappy but Happy.

Since 2011, the Scrappy but Happy series has showcased the amazing talent of those who access Dublin Simon Community's homeless and housing services with this annual publication of artworks and creative writing pieces.

At Dublin Simon Community we believe meaningful activities are central to providing structure, purpose, wellbeing, intellectual stimulation, self-esteem, socialisation and independence in the lives of people accessing our services. The Literacy and Personal Development Team coordinates and facilitates a range of different classes and therapeutic programmes to those accessing the service. The team facilitates arts and crafts, creative writing, dance, computers and gardening groups as well as literacy tuition and open mic nights to inspire creative thinking and encourage self-expression. In taking a holistic approach to learning the team aim to support participants’ individual needs and enable them to achieve their goals.

As the writer Brenda Ueland states; “Everybody is talented because everybody who is human has something to express”.

As humans, we are all creative beings – we are all unique, with original thoughts and ideas. We all have something important to give. This book celebrates diversity, equality and inclusion. It is a beautiful representation of the wonderful creative talents of those accessing Dublin Simon Community services.

A new addition to the Literacy and Personal Development service this year was a 10 week gardening programme on Airfield Estate – an urban farm and garden in the heart of Dundrum. Poetry and artworks inspired by the programme are included in this publication. Thank you to Airfield Estate for offering us the use of their fantastic resource.

The Literacy and Personal Development groups could not go ahead without the support of staff and volunteers in all of Dublin Simon Community services. Thank you!

We would also like to thank the staff and volunteers who coordinate and facilitate the classes:
Anna West, Denise Roche, Janis Potkis, Mary Lally, Ana Martinez, Louise Gambrill and Grainne O’Carrol.

Also, most importantly, a very special thank you to all of the incredibly talented participants who have attended classes and contributed artwork and creative writing to this book. Thank you for your commitment and openness in sharing your talents, your creativity knows no bounds!

Dublin Simon Community
October 2018
Hello to everyone who has a moment to stay still
And feel the power, it’s in your nature to feel free
And let ourselves share the same with others
And I like to say hello to others
Hello, stay still for a moment, please stay

Janis

Spring

I was asked one time about my favourite season of the year. I thought to myself and I said yes, Spring. After winter comes Spring. It can be chilly and cold, but with those lovely crisp mornings and evenings you can go for nice long walks. Also we see budding in our lovely daffodils, yellow and white and we can think of William Wordsworth. A bunch of golden daffodils. Also the lovely colour yellow is worn in Spring by young and by old. Yes, Spring is my favourite season.

Rita

Hello

Hello to everyone who has a moment to stay still
And feel the power, it’s in your nature to feel free
And let ourselves share the same with others
And I like to say hello to others
Hello, stay still for a moment, please stay

Janis
Steve, you don’t seem to fully understand. I have had to bring up Andy without him having a father, or me a husband, a lover and close male friend to share my life with. It has been hard, lonely and soul destroying, not knowing in the last few years, where we both will live, and how I will pay for our food. I have been frecking unwell all this week… and you expect me to keep a smile on my face… and pretend that our lives are normal and smooth sailing, like normal people, with a gaff, and income from a job or social, while facing the reality that no one really frecking cares, Steve! (as a tear drop rolls from her eye down her face). Jessica… I truly appreciate, respect and understand what your life must have been like for you, with no gaff, and often sleeping in Grafton Street with a sleeping bag. However, one thing you have to realise. You have found a person in me, who does really care about your happiness comfort, safety and future, without any strings attached, or wanting anything in return, other than to know that you are my friend.

Stephen C
As we stepped off the bus,
We left behind the daily rush,
Surrounded by the harmony of nature; the Dublin Mountains on our right,
And Airfield gardens within our sight.
The sound of the bees working amongst the flowers,
Like God’s keys, releasing his powers.
Walking through the garden you can hear the sheep bleating,
The birds cheeping, their melody completing.
The children and their families playing,
The trees in the summer breeze are swaying.
We set out with a sense of adventure, not really knowing what we’d discover,
Until we got there, a sense of freedom we did uncover.

Dublin Simon Community Gardening Group
Reality

I dislike reality cause I can't find normality
Yet still I struggle to find a strategy to help my sanity
What’s wrong with me ?
Stupid question, what’s right with me ?
I'm the cause of and solution to me,
I'm my own worst enemy!
Constantly up late,
Questioning my fate,
Overestimating the hate,
Inside me that I create,
And underestimating the odd few things in this world,
That are great!

Sarah
I'm used to living life on my own, with not even a hand that I got told I could hold,
Stuck on the streets with no place to call home, not even a friend that would answer the phone,
I know these streets in every which way, from the cracks in the pavement to the doors that we lay,
To the benches we weep at in murderous pain, that we're forced to endure as it eats us away!
So when you are hopeless and you can't see a way, you just sit and you hope, that help's on it's way.

Billy
May
All is dandy, fine, ok
First month of Summer, the month of May
Nighttime comes at the end of the day
Last night passed, now is the day
Yet Summer is here, that is true to say
Yippie yi yo, yippie yi yay

June
Half way through the year, good old glorious June
Comes mid–year, not a moment too soon
Mid–year, like a seasonal tropical cocoon
At the end of the month July will be brewing
At the end of the day comes the June moon
Covered in good weather as like a sand dune

July
Today we welcome in July
Across the sea I would like to fly
Up above the clouds in the sky, high
On each other we do rely
Cheery up no need to cry
With the boldest laughter we will reply

Summertime
Once again it’s already Summertime
Sparkling water with fluoride and lime
Don’t ask my name or who I am
God lifted a curse when he lifted a damn
He knew what he was doing making woman and man
May, June, July, wonderful Summertime

Gerry
CLOSED DOORS
Carefully never really knowing what’s behind
Carefully and bravely opening the door
Carefully quickly look behind
Carefully and sadly it’s empty.
Happily opening your eyes in the morning
Happily seeing our family
Happily seeing the sun in the sky
Happily birds playing in the sky

Janis

THE TRIANGLE
We called it the little triangle
It was in the middle of a big junction
It was like an island
For the kids in the city
A small piece of green in the middle of a concrete jungle
It is gone with the reorganisation of the city
Roads made it disappear
And now it is just a big giant avenue
No place for the kids of the neighbourhood
For them to play.

Ana
Having endured a forty-five minute lecture from her mother, Cassie stared at her phone. She couldn’t shake the feeling that this was a bad idea but she knew this was the only way her mother would finally get off her back. With the light from her phone illuminating her face she took a deep breath and tapped that tiny green button. She watched the green button disappear and stared. The thin grey line slowly started to turn blue bit by bit. Every second she watched that blue line grow longer and longer she worried even more. Her worried thoughts were soon interrupted when she saw the “Application installed” message on her screen. She pushed okay and there it was, the Tinder icon. She took a deep breath and opened the app. If only opening up emotionally was as easy as pressing on a screen.

After countless left swipes and a handful of right ones, Cassie finally got her first match. She scrolled through his profile. She smiled slightly when she discovered words like “dog lover”, “creative” and “passionate”. It was almost like they popped off his profile. She sat there thinking maybe this was what she needed all along but quickly shot herself down as to not get her hopes up. She locked her phone and placed it on her bedside locker. Just as she closed her eyes, her phone gently vibrated on the wood, the phone lighting up her room slightly. She shot up from her bed like a bullet. What felt like a thousand butterflies tickled the inside of her stomach and she felt like a child all over again. What if this was Tinder guy? What if he was asking her on a date? What would she say to him? She hadn’t talked to a guy since the “accident”. The excitement and butterflies quickly turned into nervousness and knots. A lump formed in her throat and she began scratching the back of her hand, eyes still glued to the phone. Her heart pounding louder and louder with each beat as her finger came in contact with the screen. The phone unlocked to reveal it was just her mother who sent the text to ensure Cassie got home okay. Quickly she replied and set her phone back down. She got back into bed and drifted to sleep.

The sun peeked through Cassie’s venetian blinds. Light steps could be heard in Cassie’s hall. Just as Cassie was about to awaken he was on top of her and showed no sign of getting off.

“Get off now!” Cassie screamed yet no results. His wet kisses covered her face. She grasped onto his collar and pulled him off the bed. “No! Bold boy Zeus!”. He looked at her with his big ol puppy eyes and this tug o war rope at his paws. Cassie flung the frayed rope out of her room and he was gone as quick as a whip. She picked up her phone to check the time and realised Tinder guy had messaged her. Even though she was nervous and the thought of the unknown scares her, she took a deep breath and opened it up. It was him. Tinder guy. Up until now Cassie only focused on his profile bio but now she was seeing the whole picture and boy, was that a good picture. I don’t know if it was his gorgeous blue eyes, his perfectly styled hair or his muscles bulging under his shirt but Cassie took a like to him. Cassie replied to his message and within minutes Cassie’s phone was buzzing more than it had since she had bought it.

Sunlight illuminated her face just enough to see each freckle dotted on her face. She looked so peaceful while she was sleeping. There was no mouth hanging open, no strings or pools of drool. So calm. As soon as her eyes open so was her new message from Tinder guy. Her hazel eyes moved like swift ping pong balls and her lips curved as she lay there reading it.

“How is this gorgeous morning treating this gorgeous girl?”

She felt herself about to blush. She shook it off as she was really trying to not get her hopes up, remember? “Good, thanks. And yourself?”

Okay, scratch that, her face is redder than red itself and those hopes might as well be the twin towers because they’re scraping the skies. Let’s just hope they don’t get knocked down.

**The Crush**

Anon
Slip Up
To see the light, lighting up the darkness
Leads us up to the greater progress
Cleaning up this whole mess, eating up to digest
Gliming around, like the point of a compass

Bubbly people are glibbing about good vibes
Broken down to claws, proud tribes
The onus on the one who holds the libes (liabilities that is)
None of this, that, or the other jibes

Hi dee hi, hi dee ho or so goes the greeting
Hi dee hi, hi dee ho, opens the meeting
Have a chair, there’s plenty of seating
Homeward journey, the ship is fleeting

I meant to write a story, but I made a slip up
At mass the Royal chalice, some say the cup
Take a sip not a sup
I made a mistake, but I’m not a pup

In doom and gloom there is darkness
My son, is there something you need to confess?
We aim to deflate you and not to depress
God’s light will illuminate every recess

Louder and louder, only making noise
God says he loves those that tries
Only the first degree of perfection he applies
Then he fills them up with positive good vibes.

Down Deep
Down deep, in the dark dark ocean
The cork gave in on a long awaited potion
And from the potion whirled a multi-coloured motion
Inhaled by all of the fish in the ocean
An from each fish there came a bubble
A huge colourful metallic shiny bubble
They rose to the oceans surface
Not long after they were hovering the earth’s crust
And from each bubble emerged a creature
Each one with its own strange distinctive feature.

If these wings could fly, my heart would follow,
Seeping blood but also hollow,
To find a way to fill this space,
With thoughtless thoughts all wrapped in lace,
To live a life where the mind it rules,
And look upon the past so pitiful,
But now it’s time to break these chains,
To pave a path that has no shame,
To gaze and step into the light,
If these wings could only fly.
Having largely settled in a community, by now, one complete advantage is stability. To have a fairly good idea where one will be, from one day to the next, is nothing short of miraculous, at times! For years, the road or the sea beckoned and the life of a wanderer seemed romantic; however, it was anything but, most of the time! There are many reasons why people take to the road. On one hand, you have the spirit of adventure but, on the other, there are feelings of panic and desperation. Work can tax a person but lack of it is no easier; days merge into one another and the only peace some of us do have is, for example, to do something like meditating at 3 or 4 am — the most depressing hour! At times you feel — this is depressing, but at least there is a roof. And then, the roof goes... Getting back on track is something so many of us could never have envisaged we would do. But taking this for granted and becoming complacent is foolish. An affirmation I suppose, would be to say to oneself quietly every day, “I have a home”. I did not really expect this home and it is a reason for hope.
It takes only one time to say no
To feel the power; you are in control
Come on, don't be afraid, just say no
Just say no if you cannot say yes
Just say no unless you are willing to say yes
Just say no and no again.

Just say NO

Janis
Coffee

Is a drug: a nice one that is permitted because it wakes you up, I love it and so do many of my friends, I used to have one day a week to drink coffee with my girlfriends, it was really fun, we would chat, drinking coffee, At the end we had to go back to our activities, We would have a new book, movie, or record, to read, watch or listen, We enjoyed it very much, we were like drunks but without alcohol, It was just coffee but it was very stimulating, like a drug, as I already said.
Many homeless won’t go into hostels,
Preferring the cold streets instead
Because they just can’t get their head around
How to make a hostel bed.
Duvet covers and pillow cases,
They’re the easy bit.
It’s that stupid elasticated sheet
That doesn’t even fit.
You get three corners tucked in
Then go for number four,
Suddenly there’s a big “twang”
And the sheets across the floor.
After several more attempts
Just after you’ve got it right,
Staff knocks for a room check
“Twang” the sheet got a fright.
You find yourself sneaking around the room
Don’t want to upset the sheet
Climbing ever so carefully into bed
Gradually extending your feet
Lying there happy and snug
Then comes a big big sneeze
The end of the sheet which was at your feet
Is now shooting past your knees
Half a sheet is better than none
But I knew it wouldn’t last
For when I got up to use the bathroom
“Twang” the sheet flew freely past.
So I’m getting on to the minister
Tell him of my plight
Sheets attacking homeless people
C’mon that surely isn’t right.
Homelessness is a sad thing, something you don’t want to experience. You meet all sorts of people, Good, bad, happy and sad. People from all sorts of backgrounds, Ones that hit the sky but then it was ground. At first they don’t know where to go, But all day long you get people who show. Show them things like where to eat, Then there’s people who show them where to shower, Places like Brother Luke’s and The Little Flower. There’s always places, you won’t go unfed, The main thing you’re looking for is a bed. You’ll feel there’s no-one out there like you, But believe me there’s not one or two. There are thousands of people sleeping out, People don’t listen, even if they shout. They come from all different backgrounds, Some from good, some from bad, Some from happy, some from sad. It’s the ones from the sad that you really feel sorry for, But always remember there’s more & more. I see homelessness as an experience some people go through, To some people its old and to some it’s new.
The Sound of Silence

I have to stay quiet, but I feel like shouting,
Cos she’s always taking selfies and her lips are always pouting.
Can’t stand one more minute of the silence that is shutting me out,
We’re back on the poison again, the two of us, silence brought my soul back out.

You see, we’d a battle on our hands and it had gone a bit rough,
But it couldn’t be any rougher than the past we’d gave up.
The roaring whispers came from silence growing stronger each night,
Went from overlords in our dreams to the sweats at first light.

Two hospital appointments that happened all in one week, said that;
“Our condition was disastrous and our futures looked bleak”.
Laid there in the bed counting dots on the ceiling,
The silence in my head and no answers to my feelings.

10 days later we were lucky they were letting us go,
To a realm of unforgiveness, then to a tent in the snow.
The silence inside me was begging me to leave,
But I’m carefree and I love her, I’ll wear my heart on my sleeve.

I tried to leave full of silence, I’d had enough of this life,
From the lies and the phone calls, to the trouble and the strife.
I shout from the rooftops that I’m free, Satan’s claws unbound me,
The lord had commanded him to release me and let this young man go free.

So from this day forth I’ll never go back, NO Way!
No more whispers in the silence that can be felt the next day.
I’m starting painting & writing and found an interest in modelling clay,
It’s all so quiet right now, silent mind is here to stay.

MARK
Just because I’m in a hostel,
It’s not all doom and gloom,
The place I’m in is a deadly gaff
With a key to my own room.
I’ve a nice telly on the wall
And an en-suite toilet too,
Plus a fridge and a microwave
And a kettle for me brew.
I get a massive dinner each day,
There’s stuff for a sandwich at night,
Although the only thing in my wee fridge
Is basically the light.
The staff I couldn’t praise enough
It’s a comfort to know they are there,
You can tell by them it’s not just a job
Because they really care.
Here I have a laugh at bingo
Where after a win or two
I’m skipping back to my room
Clutching shower gel and shampoo.
I do arts and crafts when I can
I’m currently colouring in an owl
I’m 5 weeks into this project
Couldn’t give a hoot I’m having a howl.
There’s a notice board on the wall
You’ll always find something to do
So it’s not all about doom and gloom
It’s very much up to you.

The Client, I

Ed

Artist: Anon