

Scrappy but Happy 9

*A priceless 50th Anniversary limited edition
expressed in words and pictures by people
accessing Simon's services.*



Dublin
Simon
Community



“Art is not what you see, but what you make others see”

Edgar Degas

Dublin Simon Community is delighted to launch the 9th Edition of **Scrappy but Happy!** Since 2011, the **Scrappy but Happy** book series has showcased the amazing creative talents by people who access Dublin Simon Community’s homeless and housing services with this unique publication of artwork and creative writing.

Dublin Simon Community is currently commemorating its 50th year. Throughout 2019, we have been highlighting that for 50 years, Dublin Simon Community has been supporting men, women and children to close the door on homelessness. In this publication you will see pieces of artwork and creative writing focusing on the theme of ‘closing doors on homelessness’. Participants share their personal experiences of how Dublin Simon Community has helped them close their own door on homelessness or on a chapter in their life.

At Dublin Simon Community we recognise the beneficial impact of meaningful activities on people’s physical and mental wellbeing. Our Participation and Development team offer a range of different programmes and classes to the people accessing our services. These include arts and crafts, creative writing, dance, gardening, music, art therapy and guided tours as well as one to one supports such as literacy tuition, study support and computers. In taking a holistic approach to education we aim to support participant’s individual needs and enable them to achieve their goals.

This year Participation and Development undertook a special collaboration with Dublin Castle’s Education Service to offer a creative arts programme to people accessing our services. A new songwriting programme allowed participants to write and record their original songs which they then performed at a number of

concerts. The hugely popular Dublin Simon Community gardening programme took place once again at Airfield Estate. A unique film and television workshop series taught participants how to use professional cameras and record their own short films.

In March of this year, the Participation and Development service were proud to win the AONTAS Star Award under the category of Social Inclusion for the work we do in assisting our clients to effectively engage with their local communities and contribute to social and cultural life.

The creative workshops and learning supports we provide could not go ahead without our dedicated team of staff and volunteers. We would particularly like to thank Anna West, Elizabeth Lebedova, Nico McNamee, Denise Roche, Mary Lally, Nora Kilcullen, Claire O’Sullivan, David Stone, Jenny Papassotiriou and Peter Moran.

Most importantly, we would like to thank the unbelievably talented participants who contributed their artwork and creative writing to this book. Despite facing huge challenges you have attended workshops and dedicated your time and energy to producing something truly beautiful. We are immensely proud of what you have created.

Sam

Sam McGuinness

Dublin Simon Community CEO

Dublin Simon Community
November 2019

Closing Your Own Door

Homelessness for me didn’t end when I got my own place. Now, I can call my place a home but a place doesn’t become a home until you’re at home with yourself. Connecting to more people through the arts, many from the same background as myself, that’s when I found meaning and sense of self.

I started discovering the healing from the arts later in life. I can really express myself through my artwork.

Loneliness is removed for many at the Simon, companionship is the order of the day.

Dezi Jay M.

50
YEARS
OF CLOSING DOORS ON
HOMELESSNESS



Dublin Simon Community's Participation and Development Service and **Dublin Castle's Education Service** are collaborating to offer a range of creative workshops to people accessing homeless services.

So far the workshops have included lino printing, watercolour painting, dance, clay, creative writing and guided tours of the castle.



Artist: Ryan



Artist: Anon.



Artist: Ryan



Artist: Dennis B.



Artist: Dennis M.



Artist: Dennis M.



Artist: Ryan



Artist: Noel

Ain't the sound of music that's made me tune
Or the box it went to wreck and ruin
They describe me as a looney toon
Rose in the garden man does prune
I'll see you in the corral at high noon.
Return to sender coming soon
Like the way they talk to the man on the moon.
Would he know about the needle and spoon
Back the track you've got the knack
What were you told about smoking the track
I've got the hang of this don't you miss
Kiss of death sealed with a kiss
What can you say your name was on the list
Your side of the story don't try and twist
How many miles must a man walk
Before you can make him talk
They claimed her he did stalk
On the blade the cue he did chalk
Bun in the oven left with the dirty dozen
Would they fare the way of his cousin
Mam wasn't sent in a coffin wooden
Forgive myself I just couldn't
When they grow they'll come to know
Why I've put on this show

Derek

Life Goes On

Every night I cry alone
For the reason I cannot live at home
Wishing this was all a dream
Wondering how people can be so mean.

I wander the street late at night
Struggling to retain my fight;
My fight to keep this pain away,
I cry and pray my days away.

So now it's time to soldier on,
This little lost girl is forever gone,
Forever gone but not forgotten,
Until one day my heart stops knotting.

Aisling



Artist: Martin

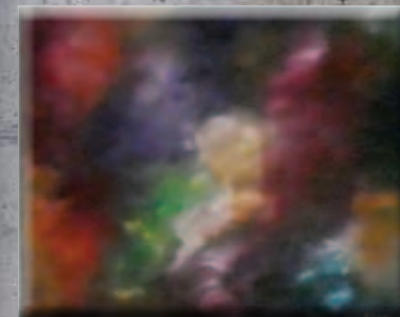


HEROIN

You see heroin, I see low self-esteem,
You see cocaine, I see fear,
You see alcohol, I see social anxiety,
You see track marks, I see depression,
You see a junkie, I see someone's son,
You see a prostitute, I see someone's daughter,
You see self-centredness, I see the disease,
You see a pill-head, I see over-prescribed opiates,
You see someone unwilling to change, I see someone who hasn't been connected with,
You see denial, I see someone hurting,
You see someone nodding out, I see God showing us they need help,
You see the end, I see the beginning,
You see a future success story...
You see them, I see me.

Gillian

Artist: Grego



Artist: Glen



The Hub Art Group.



Photo: Helen

Memories

When I was a boy, myself
and my friends used to
go robbing orchards.
I remember once when
I was getting home, who
should be in our house
but the owner of the
orchard!

Jimmy

Sharing is Caring

Sharing is caring but it's also much more,
Like when you share emotions you've opened up a door,
You've also cut your problems immediately in half,
What caused you so much anger; you can now look back and laugh,
But always try remember that it wasn't only you,
Cos to share is always plural which means no less than two.

Kevin

Shoes

My shoes they take me everywhere,
Left and right they make a pair.
They've led me downhill to use a pill,
And brought me back up with strength and will.
I hope I can continue to climb,
Not slipping back down at any time.

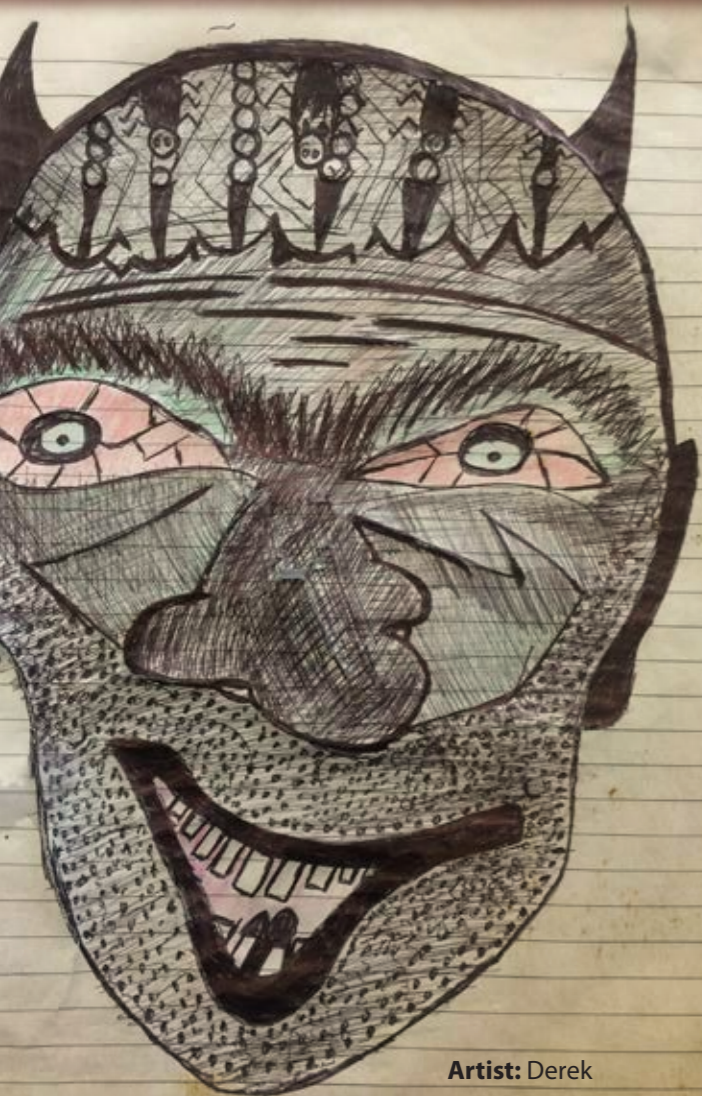
Lee



These chalkboards were made by the Dublin Simon Community gardening group in Airfield Estate. The group sanded down slices of tree trunks before applying chalkboard paint to create their very own chalkboards!

SAFE
WANTED
MOTIVATION
POSITIVE
LOVE
HAPPY

Artist: Adrian



Artist: Derek

I've been in addiction for about fifteen years,
This life gave me nothing but heart ache and tears.
The constant abuse of alcohol and drugs,
Sharing the chaos with addicts and thugs.

I'm now in Simon,
I've come here to Detox,
Just sick of the life,
Living sly as a fox.

I've had enough of the lies and letting down loved ones,
Breaking promises, hurting people without thinking.

Convinced it's just me on this boat that is sinking,
But now I want better for me and my family.

I just want a home and a job with a salary,
To rebuild relationships that have broken apart
Because aside from addiction I still have a heart.
Inside it I keep the people I love the most,
I'm more than merely a shadow or ghost.

The thing I fear most is another relapse
Because I honestly believe I would just collapse
And maybe this time I might not bounce back,
One more session and I'll end up in a sack.

I imagine my friends and family at my grave,
Wishing I was stronger and didn't just cave
To the devil on my side that wants me to fail.

I'm afraid that my daughters would mourn for their dad,
And that alone makes me so sad.

This time I'm determined to change for the better,
So my life and my kids are more than this letter.

I don't want my girls to have to say goodbye,
I want a life for us all full of life and of joy,
So I refuse to give up and just lie down and die.

The FEAR

Brendan

Mine Eyes are made the Fools by the other Senses

I was trying to be but the perfect boy. Cuttered hair and girlfriend to after school see.
I still remember my kicker shoes, the dearest they had to be.

My perfect uniform blue shirt and navy tie, top and slacks. English, Irish, maths, cutting wood,
drilling metal to all kinds of graphs.

Your first words Lady Macbeth to me had me plunged into the Shakespearean depth,
the way my brain but sponged. "Double double toil and trouble."

20 years later I sit here without the pressure of passing the English test. Now you are a loving
play that means so much more than faith of years not getting wiser but more an addiction
jest and mess. Macbeth, please confess, you scream to me.

My cauldron has a lot more than sugar, spice too I now detest. In my cauldron there is left foot,
sour tooth, and sweated Manchester United crest and my wisdom tooth. Two lover's hearts, two
souls side by side in a kiss booth. Tears of joy, past, love hate, to the darkest hour only to test.
Pills, alcohol, powder from white and brown. Stir this up and it will bubble with toil and trouble.
Brain cells also that I have gave unwillingly stirred sillily.

Lady Macbeth, you thought me of Shakespearean Power when I uttered your words the spell was
cast of 20 years of swell mad hell I swear right now to the hour cursed. Am I now more wiser nor
ignorant or am I destined to be a miser. Please don't shell your spell again. Ever to the death,
Lady Macbeth, or I'll fight myself to the death for I also love my own recipe, cauldron to spoil
your toil and trouble.

Paul



UNDERCOVER

I can't believe I've got it,
This little treasure is mine,
A priceless crafty work of art,
That's Scrappy but Happy Nine.
Even living in a hostel,
It's nice to see our creative side,
Just flicking through these pages,
Gives me one big sense of pride.
There are no rules in art for me,
The sky doesn't have to be blue,
And poems don't have to rhyme,
It's entirely up to you.
And when we put it all together,
To create this wonderful book,
"Don't judge the homeless
Stop and take another look".

ED

CLOSING THE DOOR

Homelessness and addiction has made me appreciate what it's like to close a door. Having a home should be a basic human right. And closing that door in your own home gives you a sense of security and belonging. Personally homelessness, along with a few other issues, led me back into addiction which I see as a very close connection. Whether addiction caused you to become homeless or becoming homeless caused you to become an addict, they have a strong connection which has a very negative impact on peoples lives and Ireland. With the help of agencies like Simon we really need to close the door on these issues. I think homelessness can be fixed but with addiction it will always be an ongoing problem in society. We can continue to address this problem by opening and closing doors for people to get the help they need and deserve.

LEE



Artist: Grego

The Circus

We become products of our own environment,
We don't have homes and can't afford rent.
We burn our bridges and reject affection,
Because our addiction is our first selection.
The company we keep and the places we stay,
Take us to hell and lead us astray.
We drink and use drugs to destroy ourselves,
And dealers don't care as long as it sells.
For the friends and the families that we grew and learned from,
Right from the birth we were ticking time bombs.
Nobody chooses to end up like us,
We seem to be destined for this kind of circus.
The clowns and the animals are just a distraction,
And that bit of madness is not but a fraction.
Of the lives full of chaos that was set out for us,
This is for the addict living in the circus.

Brendan



Artist: Grego

HAND of HOPE

Woke up, Jesus what a hangover. Looking around nothing, not even water. Mouth dry, throat is burning and them shakes, bloody shakes. I'm in the sleeping bag but I don't even remember where I am. It must have rained through the night because I am all wet. I was so drunk I didn't even feel it.

Don't know the shakes are from DT's or from the cold. It's 10 o'clock, another 30 minutes left to get another bottle of medicine. Head is racing. Kids, family, friends, my shit life, lost years, lost opportunities, plans, goals... and shame and regret coming. What could I do if... Stupid question, false remorse, just looking for an excuse to use another painkiller – Smirnoff, Huzar, cider, whatever. I could stop the pain but its too big, too strong, too overwhelming. Is it true or false, I don't know.

What is the reality and what is a drunkard dream. What is the truth and what is just justification, an excuse of an alco. Silence cry. First bottle and memories are getting even stronger, past and blame. Second bottle memories getting blurry. But seriously is it a life for me or who do I want to be. Robbed again, fighting again, begging for money, for food and drink, drinking, every day more and more.

I think I drink myself to death. I won't be the first or the last.

But then someone gave me a hand and showed me a different life, told me I deserve a better life. It was like a hand of hope. Now I'm sober, hard to say I'm happy but I'm getting there.

Thanks for the chance, thanks for life.

Marcin



Artist: Peter

Dandelion

A single vibrant Dandelion,
like the sun trapped in a cage.
Appeared in the yard where I exercise
in a blazing yellow flame.
It had three hundred and forty bright petals,
I know because I counted them.
I sit here on the ground
Reminded of a different time that seems so long ago,
when as a child I ran through fields
where Dandelions used to Grow.

Mick



Artist: Noel



Artwork by: The Hub Art Group.

Magic

Here it comes, there it goes
That's magic I do suppose
Morning matinees, afternoon and night shows
That's magic I do suppose.
From pulling rabbits from a hat, to disappearing on a mat
Ala Ka Zee, Ala Ka Zam, ciggies vanished with the smoking ban
In the morning I feel so old, as does the shroud of Turin
Magic's magic, unlike hide and seek
Can't understand, very strong unlike the weak
Sergeant Major says snappy, snappy, snappy
Some are tragic, others are happy
Me, I'm scrappy
I'm scrappy but happy
I'm rhyming with the Simon
For Scrappy But Happy.

Gerry

OPENING A NEW DOOR

Before I came to Riversdale House I was in The Granby near Parnell Square. There were 102 residents there. There was only 21 residents in Riversdale. It is more private in Riversdale. You have your own room and you have a lovely view from your window.

Jimmy



Artist: Derek

Keeping That One Door Open

There are a lot of things from my past which have tormented me for years including things from more recently. I feel that I have dealt with many of these problems with the help of the Simon, family and friends. Many of these obstacles I have closed the door on and have even locked them away and feel that they're behind me. Some doors are still ajar and I will eventually close them by staying positive and getting my confidence to a level where I feel secure in the real world. There is one door that I hope to keep open and that is the door to happiness and HOME.

Adrian

THE DOOR IS ALWAYS OPEN

It's up to me to live well and selflessly in order to maintain my sobriety and the emotions that lead me into active addiction. I have to live like this on a daily basis and realise it's not all about me. I have to watch obsessions, not feed into my own negative thoughts or beliefs and keep a spiritual connection with a power greater than myself.

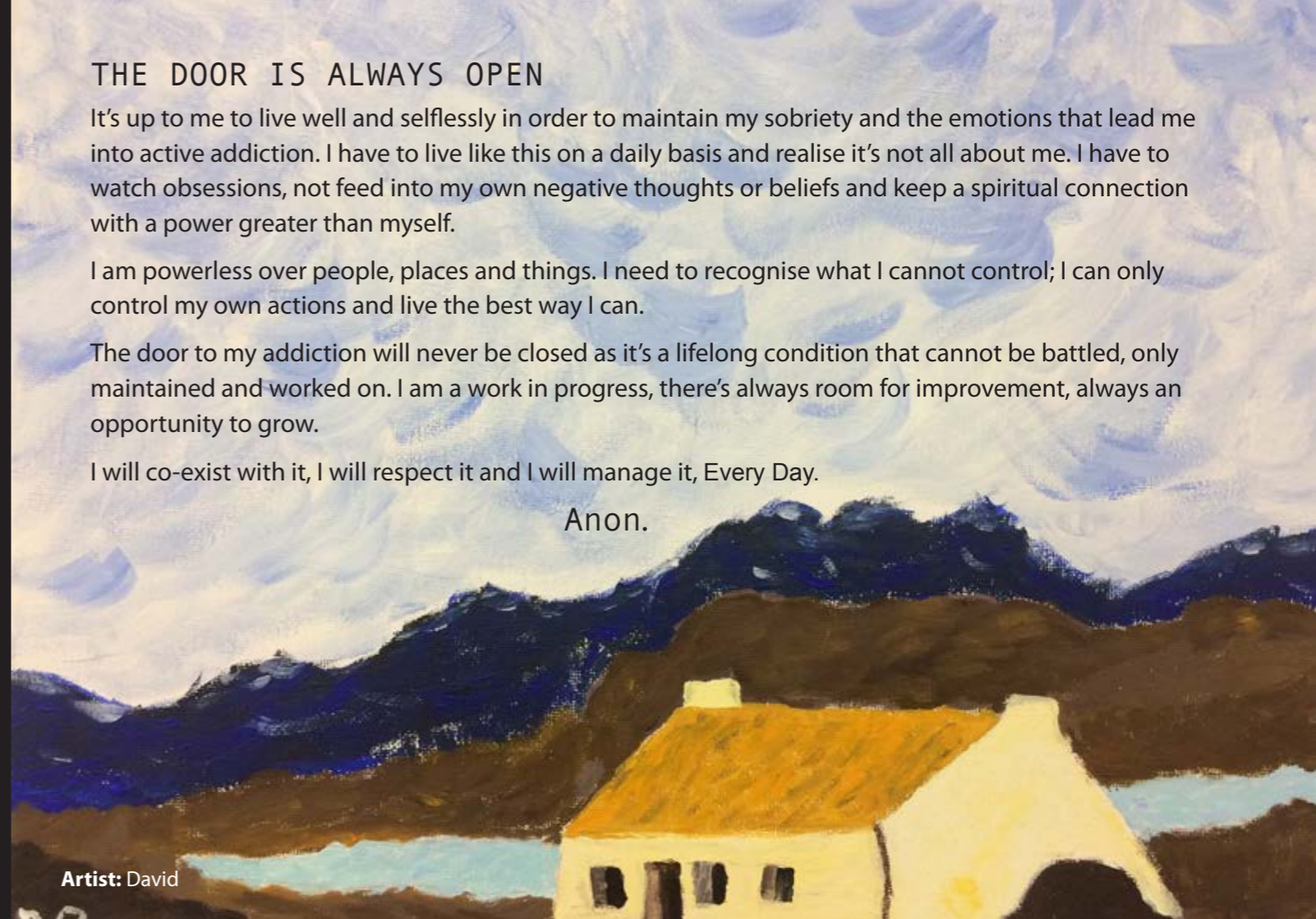
I am powerless over people, places and things. I need to recognise what I cannot control; I can only control my own actions and live the best way I can.

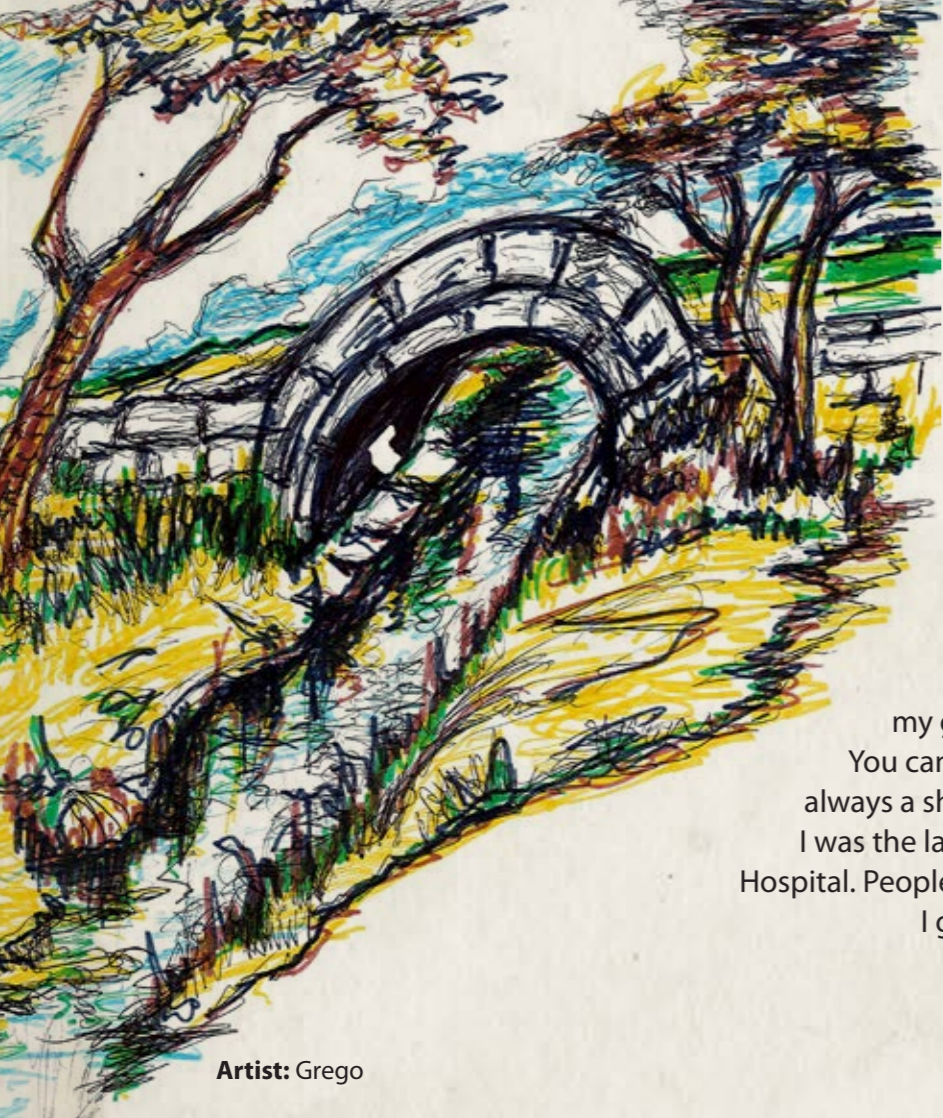
The door to my addiction will never be closed as it's a lifelong condition that cannot be battled, only maintained and worked on. I am a work in progress, there's always room for improvement, always an opportunity to grow.

I will co-exist with it, I will respect it and I will manage it, Every Day.

Anon.

Artist: David





Artist: Grego

I can express myself better through art than through words. Art gives me a sense of freedom that the streets didn't give me and I've been on the streets for 33 years. It hasn't been a waste though... because I've had my art. I've always felt quite private about showing my work but I feel ready to show it now.

These pieces tell a story about my upbringing and life in general. My Mother was a flower seller, so was my grandmother and so was I – as a child. You can see that reflected in my work, there's always a shamrock. My father was a war veteran. I was the last baby to be born in the old Coombe Hospital. People know me on the streets, everywhere I go. But they don't know me for my art.

Grego

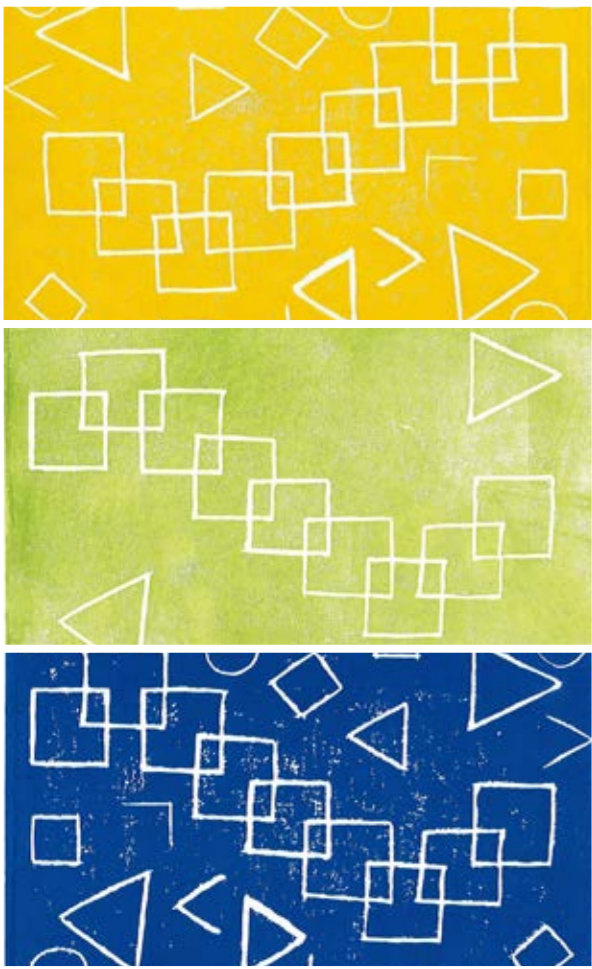


Artist: James

The Time of the Year

Winter is a time of the year when people dress in heavy gear,
A time when snow falls free from the sky, no time to think, no time to cry,
When people rush to where they're going, knowing full well the season is blowing,
The leaves, the rubbish and others things, Santa bells ringing on their ears,
A warm fire at home for the family, to keep them warm to keep them happy.
Water turns to ice and for me I find it nice.

William



Artist: Noel

Once Lost, Now Found

The sound of silence is like a lamb
Instead of shouting, which is impossible
He can't when his nature is ba ba ba
Mammy I'm the black sheep of the family
And you pass no remarks
When my hooves are trying to dialling
But before I'm coming back
I can't jump the gates
So am learning by flying
Miss you Ma and Dad and my siblings
Sorry for getting lost without the flock
Of my lovely brothers, sisters
Back grazing, am starving
Love the green, green grass of home.

Sláinte.

M.M.I.

Sleep tight my friends

Sleep tight my friends
Tomorrow never ends
To see it low as night goes so slow
Beautiful sights from a glowing flow

Sunset in Wicklow who dims with light
No better feelin' no better sight
To wake up tomorrow another day
Let the sun shine go brightly away

A burning red sky the heat from above
Life shown so much love
A flame so burning beyond the skies
Life is worth living no saying goodbye

Tomorrow a new day with so much life
No worries, no pain, no more strife
Oh beautiful sky where angels sing
Tomorrow, where life begins.

Craig



Artist: Grego

Number 7

Don't know what I'm doing,
I've no place left to go.

Nowhere to rest my weary mind, no place to call home.
I've pulled down all my bridges, there's no way back for me.
I am all alone, there's no one here but me.

An island fortress I've become
From the ruins of my bridges I've built these walls
Soaring high, thick and stout
I've built them strong to keep you out.

So alone I sit,
While skeletons of past relationships abound
lay broken and scattered on the ground.
A crunching carpet of forgotten dreams.

Deceitful lost potential that's never been fulfilled
So alone I sit
hunkered down in what has become my pit.

Mick

CLOSING THE DOOR

I am staying in Riversdale House for 5 years. Before I stayed here I had a chronic addiction to gambling machines. I could not stay away from them. Besides losing a lot of money it was wrecking my head. Then one day I woke up and decided to give up.

So it worked and I haven't touched them for 5 years. I don't know if it's the Simon Community accommodation but I have closed that door.

TERRY D.



Artist: Brian



Artist: Eamonn

A CHAPTER IN MY LIFE

1. *To speak of chapters, in one's life, is of course simplistic; however, it can be operationally necessary.*

At twenty-one (I've often referred to this), I became, shall we say, psychotically ill. Thereafter, I struggled with downward mobility; this was never fun.

Like any other undergraduate, from the age of eighteen to twenty-one, I experimented (drink, drugs, etc.): as for love, I was too in love. You will say that I was in love with a notion of abstract, perfect beauty, whereas I will proclaim, to answer you that I was in love with life itself.

The problem with inner space (such as we know it) is that the outer (space itself) impinges: space, itself, is fully depleted when one breaks; the self recedes, at a rapid pace, until there is nothing, but almost, 'death-stop'.

Schizophrenia is a fact of life, as fashionably bi-polar affective disorder is, too. There is a third major psychotic disorder, seldom alluded to; this

is, if you will, psychotic depression or depressive psychosis – those of us, who are alleged to suffer from this particular affliction, are between states; the only reason I am being this pernicky, I am sick of diagnostic nit-picking.

Idealists will speak of the medical metaphor, which is of course fine: look, idealists, when we crack... where are you? We can all trade in philosophic niceties, as self- (and world-) affirming intellectual drunks... can't we?

But, let's be serious and if not serious, be with the agenda. For all the poetic beauty of psychedelic theories of mental collapse...some of us really are screwed without boring medical intervention. I could talk at length of my existential malaise when young (I'm sure I could reach Sartrean and Laingian Heights), but good old-fashioned doctoring (and associated treatment) helped, when that really was the only help there was.

As for this next chapter in my life... I take my medication, I am compliant... yes I am imperfect (I drink alcohol and smoke cigarettes, but I do not

have truck with other drugs (cannabis etc.), and do not gamble) but, to be with an ideal – such as I understood ideals once – I am celibate.

A door I am closing is one, which led me to wilful subversion. The sometimes, virile antagonism of youth can be tantamount to passionate energy... but, equally, it can be utterly destructive.

Finally, to speak of the efficacy of psychoactive medication... well, there you do open a can of worms; but, as for alternatives (you psychedelic idealists) ...where are they?

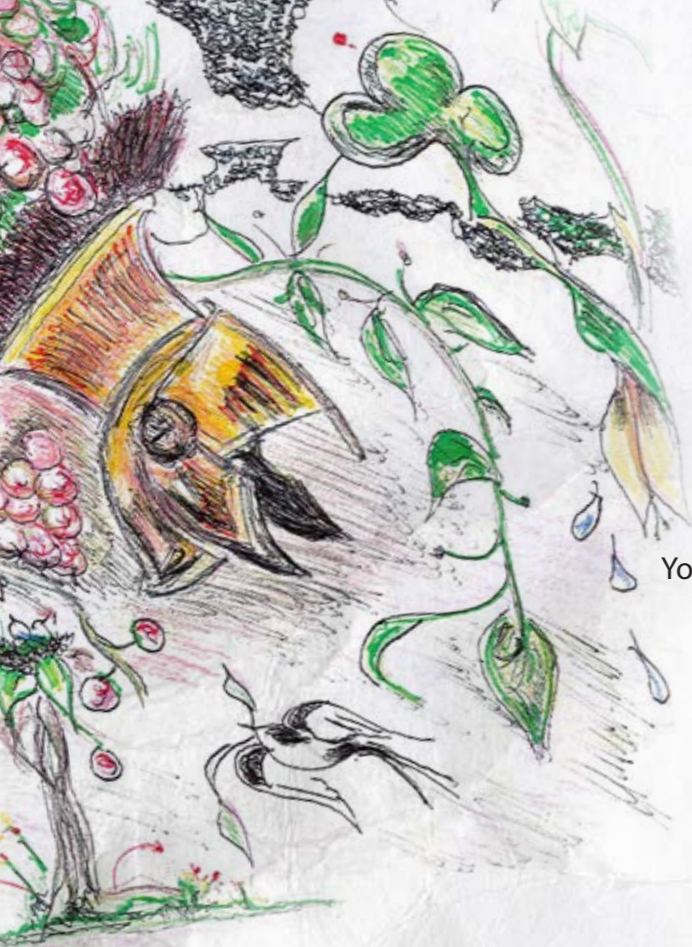
2. *I will not claim to be happy (or even free of bitterness) now, but I will swear that I am in ways content.*

Always fearing that declamatory road, that winding insinuation of Hell, the pull of Void, Itself... yes, you psychedelically inclined, you may have lovely ideas... real help, however, is usually, boring and practical.

I am alive today, not because of exquisitely poetic ideas... I am here because of the real (unaffected) love of those who cared.

Donal





TWO GOOD MEN

Oscar was a Wilde one, from Dublin he did hale
He liked to do his own thing, but he ended up in jail
My genius is a given, for anyone to hear
So don't take it lightly, for me I have no fear

George Bernard was a thinker, a champion of our time
Youth's wasted on the young he said, don't worry that's no crime
Life's all about the living, so kids don't shed no tear
That man he was a good one, we wish we had him here

These two men are my heroes, and Irish both so proud
Their words they are a blessing, I love to speak them loud
This song for them, a tribute, for me I hold them dear
And always in my heart, will quote them without fear.

Written by Terry M.
as part of a songwriting project.

Artist: Grego

The Swinging Door

I've closed the door so many times on all issues in my life,
But I had to keep on closing as it wasn't closing tight,
The hinge was loose, the handle broke, I thought I had a grip,
And every time I had it fixed I'd always have a slip,
So each time I called repair men, or counsellor by name,
I had now become the broken door, the problems in my brain,
We'd then sit down and talk and talk on specifically a topic,
We'd trash it out, resolve it, put the brakes on, then we'd stop it,
Cos I simply wanted closure, not only on the door,
But every time I closed it there was always so much more.

Kevin



Artist: Grego



Artist: Grego

Artist: Jeff

It's not nice to be alone
With no place to call your home
Find a place to keep clean
They don't want you to be seen

HELP THE HOMELESS

Begging to survive
Trying to stay alive
Please don't just pass those people by

There's children and their mothers in unliveable conditions
Let those people know that someone thinks about them

Begging to survive
Trying to stay alive
Please don't just pass those people by

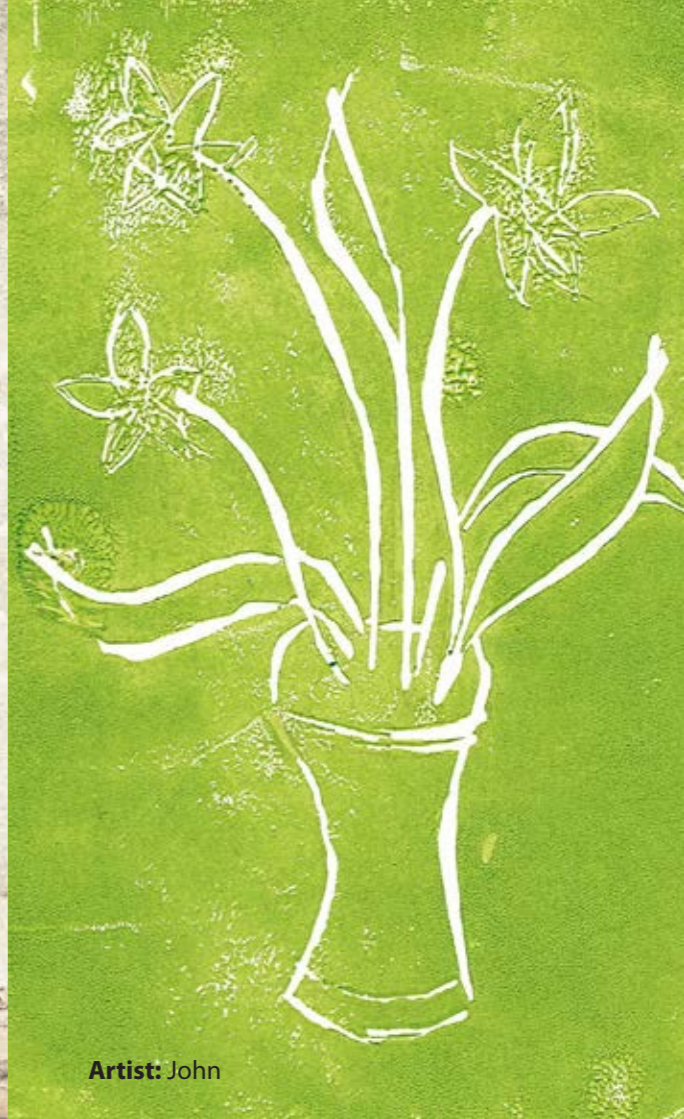
It's not nice to be alone
With no place to call your home
Find a place to keep clean
They don't want you to be seen

Begging to survive
Trying to stay alive
Please don't just pass those people by

*Written by residents of Riversdale House,
Dublin Simon Community High Support Housing
as part of a songwriting project.*

The fast were going to court
Not to worry if you run short
Troubles were rampant deep down north
A brighter tomorrow the youth will sort
In Q and A deny know matter what they say
For the damage done I will pay
With the enemy I had never lay
It is to be my way or the high way
Home is where the heart is there you must stay
Safe cross code get ready to load
Don't mind what they say about how long they can hold
It was more than a story you told
A touch of frost it's got so cold
To claim that they'd have broken the mould
Now they know your soul you wouldn't have sold
He'll ask you once do you hold or fold
Judgemental cover you're so bold
In the pit the dogs rolled
If the heaven's ever did speak what would they leak
No stopping you when at your peak
Way to the heart of a stranger from the manger
Steer clear when you feel danger
When on the job avoid the park ranger
From a land afar where they punish with scar
We'll fly in the pneumatic car

Derek



Artist: John



Artist: Michael

Through the Good Times

*Written by clients in
Dublin Simon's Respite Unit
as part of a songwriting project.*

Rolling in the wheelchair
Trying not to fall
I pushed him around, he pushed me around
He pushed me into the wall!

Through the good times and the bad times
I'll push you all the way
If you just won't leave me
And if you'll only stay

Mammy was fearful of the crowd
An independent woman, very proud

Through the good times and the bad times
I'll push you all the way
If you just won't leave me
And if you'll only stay

Maybe if you'd stayed a little while longer
Baby maybe we could have been a little bit stronger
Maybe if you'd stayed a little bit while longer
Baby maybe we could have been a little bit stronger

Through the good times and the bad times
I'll push you all the way
If you just won't leave me
And if you'll only stay

What's Behind That Closed Door?

I've had many doors in front of me in life, some open, some shut very tight. Some dark rooms inside, couldn't see, hear. It was so faint it nearly returned to being bright.

Like a wandering man, looking for something to see, something to guide me. Give me a match and a candle and I'll manage just alright. So used to fear now it comes as second nature. Awareness of nothing in particular. That room brings me close by, deceiving me with pretend brightness. Dangling a carrot in front of me. But I'm all too aware now of the dangers of that room. I don't need brightness to know where I'm going. And I certainly don't need an invitation into a room with absolutely no way out but to see things more clearly by setting my soul on fire. I closed that door just over a year ago. I have the benefit of being the key keeper. I can now enter that dark room and see it for what it really was. It was just a dark room. It was just fear of the unknown that compelled me to stay away.

But now I realise I have many keys to many rooms. An endless supply in fact. And I'm opening new doors every single day. My only belief and faith is that I always know which door must remain closed and which ones I choose to open. Only fear of the dark stands in my way. A box of matches and a candle will always show you the way.

Mark



Artist: John



Artist: Rita



Artist: Aisling



Artist: Carol

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50
YEARS
OF CLOSING DOORS ON
HOMELESSNESS



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