

Scrappy BUT Happy 5



A priceless limited edition expressed in words and pictures by people using Simon services.

“Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire”

William Butler Yeats, 1865-1939

FOREWORD

“*Scrappy but Happy 5*” is the fifth edition of our highly successful and enjoyable *Scrappy but Happy* series. The collection of photography, art work, crafts and creative writing captures the talent, spirit and imagination of the people who access Dublin Simon Community services.

Through the meaningful activities offered, people who use our services grow and develop, and for many there is a new found discovery that learning can be fun and interesting as well as developmental. Such activities bring people together in a positive and enjoyable environment where the love of learning and self expression is fostered and encouraged. Participants and tutors work together, learn from each other and inspire each other in a diverse and equal space.

This edition includes photography, crafts, art work and many forms of creative writing including free writing, haikus, opinion pieces, sonnets and stories. Creative writing acts as a therapeutic medium to share your story, to escape and/or imagine! Every year when we are compiling for *Scrappy but Happy* we are truly inspired by the talent of the people who access our services.

Miquel de Cervantes once said: “The pen is the tongue of the mind”, it is through writing that stories are shared and the process of such

writing is not just an entertaining outcome for the reader, but also a very therapeutic outlet for the writer. One can truly get their point across and their story told best with pen and paper and the stories shared through words, artwork, craft and photography in the five editions of *Scrappy but Happy* truly deserve to be in print and never lost.

We would like to thank all the people who contributed to making this book. Without the artists and the support of the staff and volunteers who believe in the importance of creativity, and who promote workshops and classes, we would not have this book! Thanks to the staff and volunteers who also delivered workshops: Rachel Gallagher, Anna Wallace, Christina Beattie, Grainne Weldon and Alba Corpus. We would also like to sincerely thank the tutors: Johnny O'Malley for art therapy; Roisin Keane for creative writing; and Martin Baker for photography. Finally a massive thanks to the writers, poets, photographers and

artists who participated in the making of this book, with out their commitment and creativity this book would not be possible.

We hope you enjoy reading this book as much we enjoyed making it!

Dublin Simon Community

September 2015



A Summer's Day in Howth

*As you walk upon Howth Pier,
And the sun is just shining down and around,
And everybody's happy.*

*The children are eating ice cream,
There's peace everywhere,
Everything is so close to each other,
That's including the fish and chips!*

*The sea is so clear,
And even when the sun is out, the tide is always out!
Howth is my favourite spot,
No other beach does a lot!*

Sandra

Photography: Brian

Photography: Anonymous



I saw you first

*I saw you first, I was in Paradise
Walking in the sand and fresh air,
I ran towards you, I called your name,
You looked down at me, I was mortified,
I drowned myself in sorrow, it was in vain,
I'm still looking for you - I survived.*

Diego

VOLATILE ≈ ACTIVE + REACTIVE

Artist: Elizabeth



history

I've been homeless for 25 years.

I was living on the streets with my husband for four years. We'd sleep in the streets, in the doorways and in abandoned houses. When I had my first child people would put us up for a night or two here and there. We were living in a tent at one stage, and in a container in Smithfield another time. We squatted in a house in Cork Street for a year. Then we got a place in Sean Mac- there was only cold water and you had to boil any hot water you wanted. We got a lot of hassle- people broke into our place lots of times and wrecked it- we only had a bed, a crib and chest of drawers so there wasn't much to wreck but still wasn't a nice experience. I went and told the corporation who got us a place in Ballymun- I had two children at this time. We were there for about four years. Then we all moved back to my Mam's home for another four years

because she wasn't well and needed some help. When my mam passed away, I had five children at this stage and the house was too small, it was only a cottage, so we moved to Coolock.

We were asked to leave after four years because of anti-social behaviour - I couldn't pass by homeless people without inviting them home and getting them fixed up and making phone-calls for them because I'd been there myself, and the neighbours weren't happy about this.

We moved into a bed and breakfast. The first few weeks we had to leave after breakfast- it was in the wintertime and it was raining. We used to go to a park from ten in the morning until half five in the evening. The woman who ran it though began to let us stay during the day because she got to know us-

we ended up living there for three and a half years.

Then we moved - my husband went to a men's hostel and myself and two of my children went to Lindor buildings. We were there for four years. I have been in a wheelchair for all my life, and I needed my husband with me to help me with the children. There was no staff in Lindor apart from a security man, and I spoke to him about the situation. He rang the men's hostel and organised for my husband to stay with me on a week trial to make sure it would work, and then my husband moved in with us after the week went grand. We slowly got to know our neighbours- they had all come from bed and breakfasts too. My children started school and they were making friends as well.

Then we moved to Aungier St. We got the ground floor, but there was

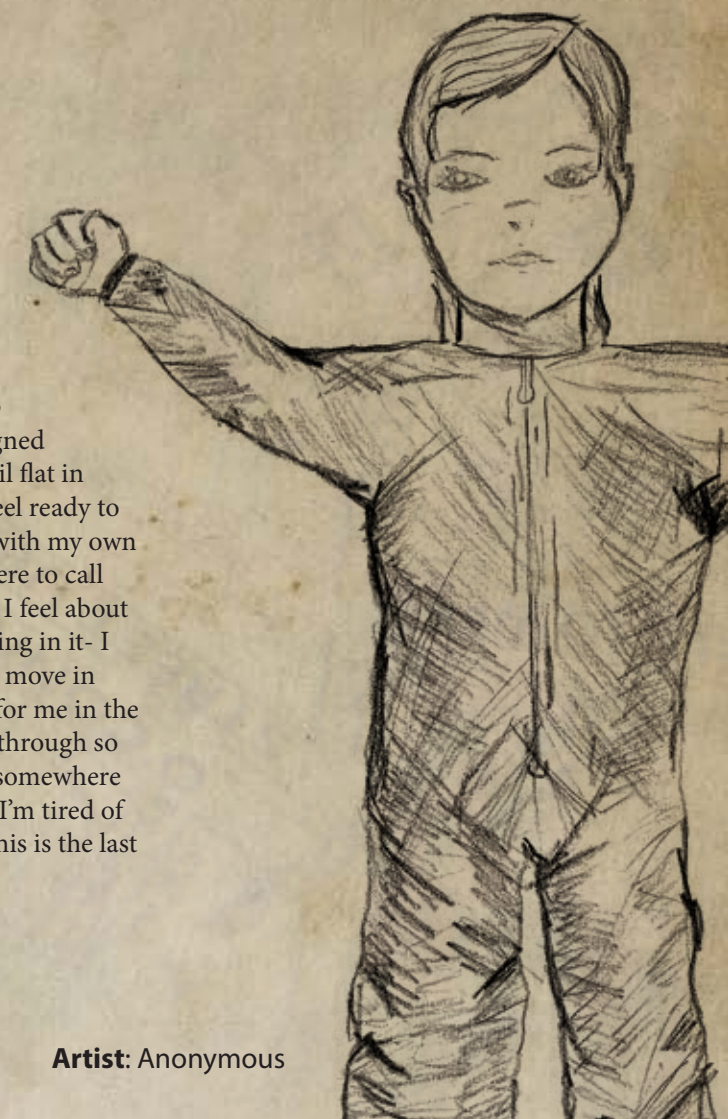
only room for me and my husband, so we were all split up again. Two of my older children were in a bed and breakfast, a daughter and granddaughter were with family, one was in a supported home for children and another was in long term care in hospital. I was happy about this in one way because we never knew where we'd be going next and this way my children would be stable and be able to learn skills, and we'd have regular visits a few times a month.

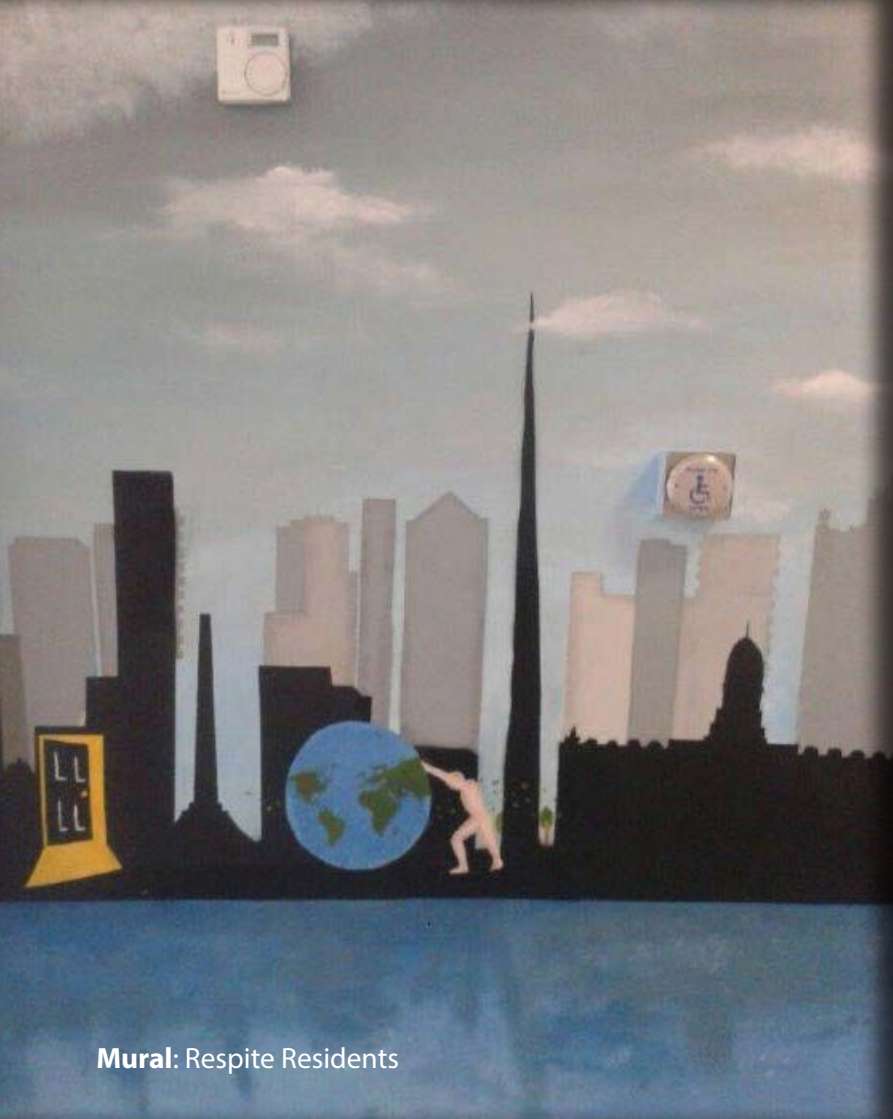
From Aungier Street I moved into Sean Mac Dublin Simon for seven years, and then moved to Canal Road where I'm still living at the minute. In Sean Mac I learnt loads of stuff and managed to give up the drink (I'm off the drink 8 years now) , we did cookery lessons and budgeting skills, and I went to classes in Chapelizod like reading, writing, computers and drumming. I've lived

in Canal Road for six years, and am very independent and active here. Here you do everything for yourself, have your own kitchen and do your own cleaning. I do computers and group work here. I have just signed for a Dublin City Council flat in Stoneybatter because I feel ready to be totally independent, with my own front door, and somewhere to call home. I don't know how I feel about it yet because I'm not living in it- I just hope that when I do move in everything will be right for me in the place, because I've been through so many places I just want somewhere that is my home for life. I'm tired of moving, and hopefully this is the last move.

Tracy

Artist: Anonymous





Mural: Respite Residents

STREET LIFE

Walking the streets, not looking around,
they look, they stare, they put me down.
I feel so hopeless, don't know what to do.
How would you feel if it were you?

Grafton, Talbot, O'Connell Street,
this is my world, this is my beat.
I pass old friends, I pass old foes!
They don't stop, don't need my woes.

Down the docks to lay and sleep,
this sleeping bag, safe must keep.
I find my place, I rest my head.
I sometimes wished I were dead!

I'm better now, I've come around.
The drink must leave and stay let down.

—J—



Photography: John

Recovery

Some classical piano was the soundtrack of the waking
hours. Don't know the artists work, but I felt like it knew
me. Threw the ancient window open as it cracked its last
shriek for a while as I uncovered the secrets it closely
guarded throughout the still night.
My eyes are wide, amazed, mouth open, soul awake, alive.

Jaded and lost clouds head out slowly to some other plain,
yet to be discovered by all of us as we waste time worrying
about the success others seem to gain, ill gotten or
deserved. The gunmen of compulsion and habit load up
out there in the evil shadows waiting to reclaim us into the
ashes of destruction. But we'll face them as outlaws in the
finale. Then a cloudless expanse gives way to a dazzling
blue ocean for a sky. The quiet urgency from a distant
breeze arrives and flies silently like a lover's whisper
through the antique window, gently extinguishing the
haunting fires of doubt within me,

In ourselves.

By Liam H

The Cracking of a Can

The cracking of a can
Music to my ears,
The downing of that can
My Achilles heel,
The stroke of half ten
Relief to my fears,
Offo' finally open
A sight for sore eyes.

I fear I've missed the boat on life,
Though I remember a life of smooth sailing,
Before the demon took its grip,
I missed that ship and began the craving.

Maybe my ship will come in and
I'll see a sun rising
That cloud with a silver lining
My crock of gold at the rainbow's end
Before the bell finally tolls and I meet
My end.

Elizabeth K

The Road

The road is the path I am on. Am I going in the right direction, it doesn't look like a nice, happy place but I know once I walk down this road I will get to a crossroad where I will pick a new path. Everything you do will lead you to this point and you have to decide, do you walk through the daunting, scary, mucky path to get to the other side or do you turn back and wonder what if? I am going to keep going.

Smithy



Artist: Anonymous

If walls could talk...

The clients in the Dublin Simon Community Detox Unit wrote the following pieces in an exercise entitled '**If walls could talk- a day in the life of the objects we see around us**'.

Participants were given objects to write about and were asked to use their imaginations and think about what the objects could see, hear and feel on a daily basis. As a result the following pieces were written.

Swipe Cards.

The swipe card to a room allows you to see a private party that is going on. It can help you get into offices and apartments and can also be used as a laser card. It can also be used in car parks for security reasons. When you use a swipe card it beeps and turns a different colour to let you know you have entered a room that you want to go into. If a swipe card could talk it could tell you the different things that are going on in the room. It can also be used for hotel rooms. If a swipe card could talk it could tell you when you are in the wrong room and some people wear them around their necks.

The Couch that sees and hears everything.

The couch is in the main reception area. It is the first thing you notice as you enter the building and it is the first thing that notices you! It sees many different types of people everyday. Many that enter the building as clients take a seat on the couch, waiting in anticipation about what lies ahead of them. People are coming and going and they don't know who are staff and who are clients. They are looking around at the pictures, books, décor and carpet. They don't know what is going to happen next.
BUT THE COUCH DOES!!

A Day in the Life of a Whiteboard.

I am a whiteboard in a detox centre. I have seen many people come and go. Some really brilliant things and ideas have been written on me, and some total crap too! I have witnessed many broken promises, many success stories and many a fight over what to watch on TV.

I have seen people laugh, I have seen people cry. I have seen people one time and I would never see them again. I don't know what happened to them maybe they just left? Maybe they drank and were asked to leave? Maybe they died?

The only things I know for certain is what is written on me. I have heard personal stories and many plans of the weeks numerous groups. I am used daily and wiped away with harsh chemicals, and sometimes even a dirty sleeve!

I am used to produce and record serious ideas and I sometimes feel jealous when members of staff choose the flipchart over me. I have heard years of gossip and stories shared. Although I am old and worn, I am grateful for the part I play in the detox programme and helping people (even in a small way) on their road to recovery.

One of my worst fears is that I will be replaced by technology. I dread the day I will be removed and my job will be taken over by a laptop and a projector. In the meantime I will continue to do what I have been doing for the past twelve years and serving my purpose as best I can.

Whiteboard
Employed (for now).

Artist: Anonymous



The Awakening

They said the world would end in 2012 but for him it really only started. The signs were there for his sleepy colleagues if they were paying attention. He stopped shaving and his hair was scruffy and mid length and un-brushed and un-gelled and when they'd let him he would play only George Harrison off the ipod in work. He would turn up in the stuffy little office, flushed, rosy, clammy and happy despite not having slept the night before.

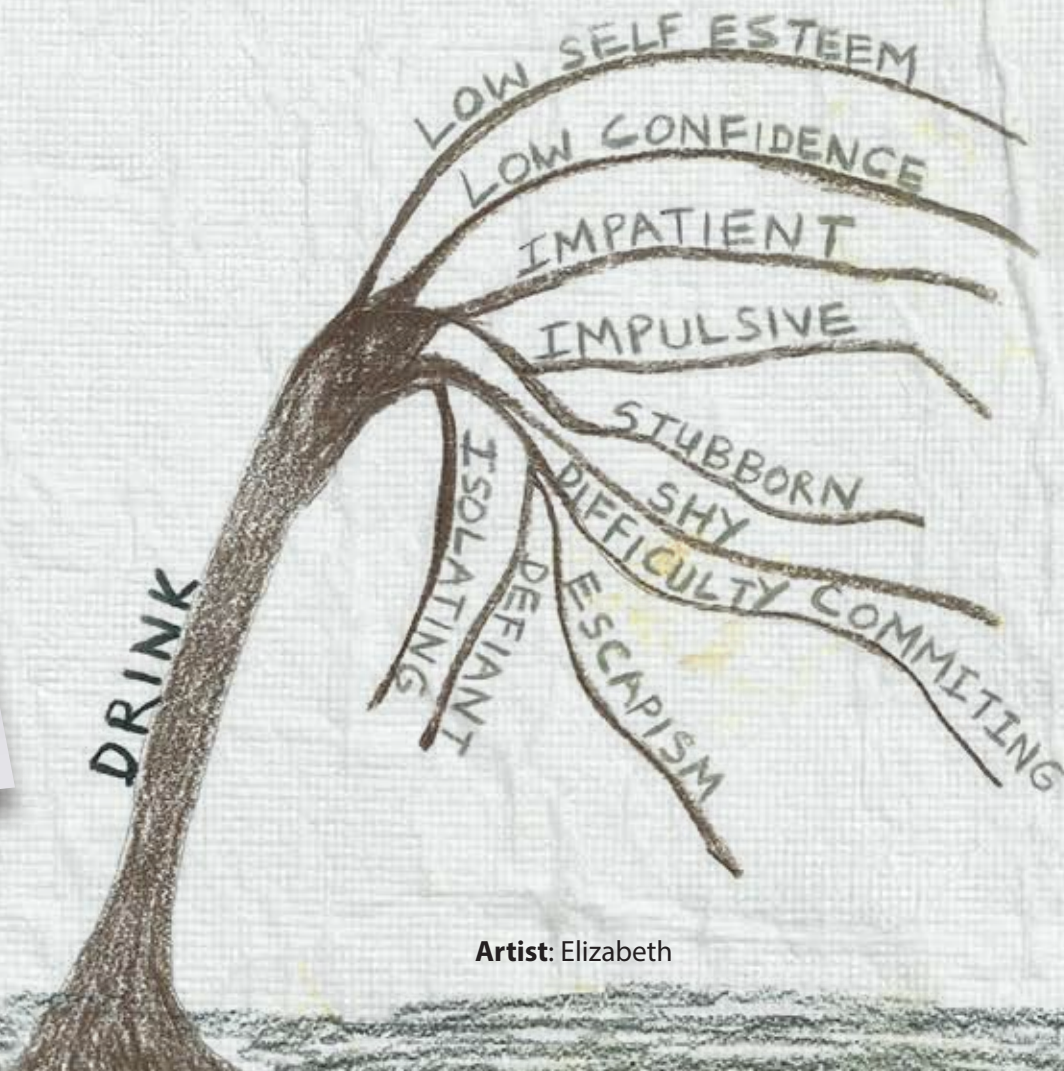
His colleagues treated the public functionally at least, with disdainful contempt at worst.

He did his best to be resolutely cheerful, defiantly helpful and to send people away from his window with a smile on their faces.

No doubt those still slumbering, whispered he was losing the plot, because bored workers like nothing more than gossip to wile away the hours.

Then one day he just stopped showing up, around the summer solstice 21/6/12, he'd remember that number. They couldn't get him on his phone, this bird had flown, and the cage door was always open. His flight was unknown.

Ronan



Artist: Elizabeth

My Story

My friend, I have a story to tell, its about my life gone by;

I hope that you will heed it and not waste your life like I, you see I was a drinker, for the best part of my life. I never stopped to think about my family, my home, my life. Because the alcohol took over, my head no longer my own. I lost everything that I hold dear, my family, my kids, my home.

I rambled around the streets for years, in a dirty drunken state until by chance I happened to meet, a very sober mate. He said, my friend, come with me to a place called AA. You can listen to fellow sufferers, and then you can have your say.

I went along to get in from the rain, but their words fell on deaf ears. To hell with them I thought to myself, I've had this friend for years. This friend, its name was alcohol; he was the best part of my life. Sure didn't I give up everything for him, my kids, my home, my life. Then finally it clicked with me, when I heard a fellow sufferer say. This friend, he is no friend to you, he doesn't know the way, to help you achieve the good things in life and live just for today. So, my friends take heed and listen, for this story it is true, I know you'll think to hell with him, but I know what alcohol can do.

Eileen

Homelessness

*Homelessness is just not right and is feared by a massive sum
It often made me nearly die of fright and is not easy to overcome
An oul friend of mine and I were touching a year on the side of the road
Both our families turned their backs at us and made us feel ever so bold.
One morning god sent us a letter its crew both loud and shrill
A letter in the shape of an angel with the address of five/ six Kilmantin hill.
Twas here we finally made peace with Mother Nature and her homeless slaughter
Take my advice and don't let family cease
Because when you are down and out
Blood is not thicker than water
My oul friend has left me forever at a very expensive cost.
If not for the Simon Community my life too would also be lost.
If not for these heroic people in my life I could not make amends,
Kilmantin bares a great steeple and I class the staff here as good friends.
Homelessness consists of GREAT fear whilst also Loneliness and frustration
Forty two euro a week is not dear for Simon community's temporary accommodation.
That's about the best I can say, thanks Simon I can sleep now at night ,
Down that road don't go the same way
Because homelessness is just not right.*

Greg

Photography: Brian



Photography: Brian

LOVE

*I often sit and wonder why
Every time love for me goes by
Any time I find a lover, things seem to go bad
I find myself thinking 'it's really sad'.

Family of course are different, I guess
Loving my parents and siblings is best
A wonderful mother, who I'd never swap
And a cranky but loving dear old pap

Then a handsome and kind hearted bro
He's the most special guy I know
Then my two, strict, but adorable little sisters
Stick to my heart, like a foot full of blisters.

My amazing kids are part of my heart,
And without them both I would die.
But, although for the moment we're apart,
That's why I lie at night in bed and cry

So I guess romance ain't for us all
And sooner or later we're bound for a call
A call from cupid with his arrow and bow
And one day it'll catch me, this much I know*

Sabrina

Good Old Joe

Its time to stop all the bull and live in the now, its time to stick to the present if you know how. These are the words of wisdom from a guy named Joe, whom I met one day down in Granby Row. He sat down beside me, hot cup of coffee and a smile, with the sort of dress sense I hadn't seen in a while. He had on a brown chequered sports coat and a peak in his cap, he just sat down beside me and started to chat. From the moment he spoke I could really tell, that he spoke from the heart and didn't rebel. Now before I enter a pub, I stop and think, about the dangers of the demon, drink! I live in the present and live in the now, so its time to stand up and take a bow. If I didn't meet him, I don't know, all I can say is good old Joe!

Martin

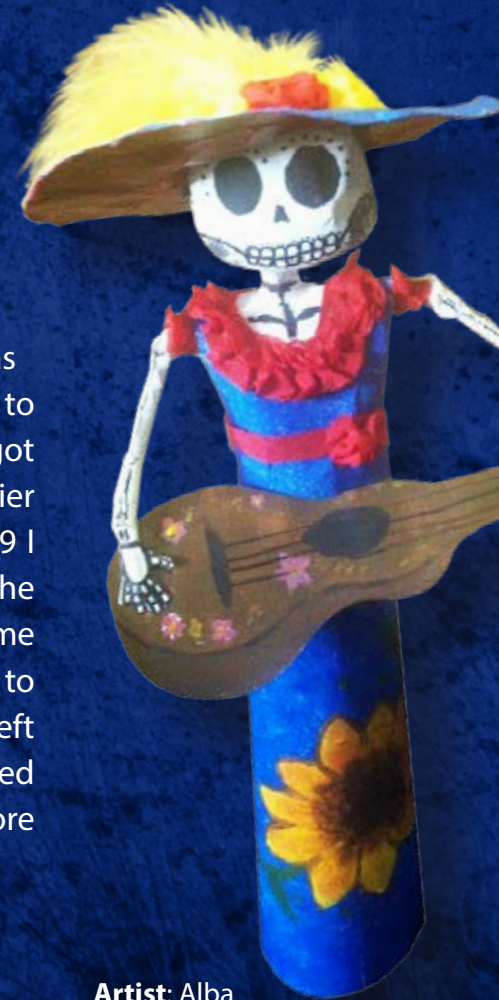
Artist: Anonymous



A German Bomber Pilot

This is a true story I'm going to tell you now about a German bomber pilot in 1943. A German man on a bombing mission, he was dropping bombs in the north of England. The 24 year old pilot was shot down over the city of Newcastle in the North of England. He bailed out of his plane and was captured and taken prisoner of war. When the war was over he was released from the prisoner of war camp and he decided to stay in England. He met a very beautiful young lady and got married and had 4 children together. The former soldier went to work in the building construction and in 1969 I met him on a building site in London. For four months he was a general foreman on the site. He used to go home every weekend and come back each Monday morning to be back on the building site. The job came to an end, so I left and got a job in the gas works in Tottenham, London N17. I lived in the next borough, a place called Edmonton, for 11 years, before coming home in April 1971.

Noel



Artist: Alba

LYING IN MY BED

Lying in my bed everyday
Wishing the pain to go away
I need to take the demons from my head
Before it takes my life to the end
I don't know whether to call a friend
I don't even know if he would understand

Ray D



Artist: Anto

HEROIN

As I walked through the streets of Dublin
Like I just don't care,
With my bloodshot eyes and my messed up hair.
Living on hate, feeding on fear
Cause I'm on a mission for a bag of gear.

HEROIN, what a joke, you think you are
great when you have a smoke.
You like the buzz and you feel great,
Couple of years down the line, you are gonna start to hate.

You go stroking every day, getting up to your tricks,
Robbing anyone you can, just to get a fix.
You look in the mirror and say...
That s not me ,
I m just another addict with HIV.

So I'll be quick, smart and I will get to the point
Kids don't think you're cool
When you're smoking a joint

By C



Artist: Anonymous

Glendalough

I got the Monday morning coach from Dublin to Glendalough as needed to get out of the city as I was out Friday and Saturday night partying and getting caught up in the madness of it all. Great fun it was but the party is over now so I need to come back to reality and land my plane for present I am.

As I stepped off the coach in Glendalough I breathed in the fresh air. It was lovely and as I look up at the top of the mountain I feel excited in my gut and know straight away that this is the place I need to be.

So off I went over the bridge passing the river, lovely to see, breath taking in itself as I headed for the forest that leads to the top of the mountain where I need to be.

As I descend up through the forest I could feel it knocking the life out of me. I kept going as you do, beautiful, it was all quiet and as peaceful as it could be, I could nearly see the top as I was coming out of the dark of the forest in to the light at the top of the mountain. I breathed with relief that I made it and you would too. As I sat on top of the mountain looking down in to the lake, It was so beautiful to see it took me away. All my thoughts and out of that, the peace descended on me for present I am in Glendalough and make no mistake about it this is the place to be.

Shane



Artist: Anonymous



Artist: Joyce

HOPE

Hope is what I reach for
when my faith is challenged
– or more often, when
I am weak in my faith,
hope is where I go when
I am overwhelmed and
emotionally unable to
reason with myself.

When my spirit is exhausted
and my mental faculties
are unable to ascertain the
likely/possible outcome of
a certain situation, I hand it
over to hope.

But really faith is my first
resort.

Graham

SUPPORT

It's an elephant, strong and sturdy,
Holding up my collapsing house,
It's bamboo, strong when bound together,
It's a bass guitar playing Reggae,
It's Spring, clearing from Winter to warm sunny weather,
It's a boot, made for walking

Richie

SOBRIETY

It's a polar bear, walking on the clean, fluffy ground,
It's a Lilly, white and fresh,
It's panpipes,
It's a Spring day, not a cloud in sight,
It's a crisp, clean shirt

Robert

Relaxing

When I listen to the sound of water, it calms the mind. It gives peace of mind. I can focus so much better. It creates the sound effect of a slow vibe that I can relate to. I would sit there all of my afternoon and pretend to be fishing.

One day it started raining down. The heaven's opened. But I enjoyed it – the water and nothing to do.

The water had to keep on moving at a pace.

I often think – if I had followed my thoughts, life would be better.

But that was then, and this is now.

Alan

Artist: Anonymous




The past is a foreign country

The past is a foreign country: they do things differently there. But sometimes trouble never seems to be too far around the corner. But if I live in the past that trouble never seems to go away, 'cause that's one scary place. Anyway, as the story goes, after years of trouble I found myself at a crossroads where I knew I had to change, even though change is something I always had in a negative sense. I knew this time had to be different. So I found myself at the doors of a rehabilitation unit. I had the chance to take the first steps in a direction where the power might be in my hands and normality within my grasp. As I wandered through the battleground of recovery, I found a person I hadn't seen in a long time, and that person was me. And as negativity and pain withdrew into the background, there was an ember of hope, glimmering at the prospects of my future. And this story is never truly over but at least the direction is mine to take. And realising the demons are but embedded in my mind, only to be nurtured by my sorrow and grief. It is now I can work on banishing them from this person I have found within myself. And now, be it a smile, a warm embrace, or a kind word, I will tear down these shackles that have embedded themselves within my skin. I'll allow these simple things to shine some light on these dark landscapes I have been wandering these lonely years. So finally, with a smile on my face, I say goodbye to the old and hello to the new – for this is the life I am choosing for myself.

Shane

Artist: Anonymous



*Before watching for awhile
Look, trust,
River,
Wavelength,
Free*

Gatis



Artist: Bernard

When Everything Is Going Wrong

*When everything is going wrong
And nothing is going right,
Maybe you should be King Kong
Get up and start to fight.*

*Because when you are feeling down
And no-one seems to care,
You have to wipe away that frown
And stand up if you dare.*

*And this will really make you strong
And ease away your worries,
And even if you should get it wrong
Don't panic, there is no hurry.*

*Then when you just stop and think
And see things a bit more clearly,
You know that you don't need a drink
You'll cherish your life so dearly.*

*You don't need all material things
To make your life be good,
And even all the richest kings
Would say that if they could.*

*So live yourself a humble life,
Take it easy when you can,
Remember you don't need the knife
To say that "you are the man".*

John O'R



Artist: Kasia

Photography: Ray



HOPE

Hope is a feeling of wonder

Hope is a feeling of desire for all to see,

a wonderful feeling that comes over me,

to climb that mountain, or to dive in the sea.

Hope is that feeling that I can be that beautiful person that I am meant to be,

with all the gifts that were given to me, and hopefully will always be.

Gerry

There, boats from the harbour...
Sailor that travels blind.
Perfect night.
Body down in the sea
he goes to get her
she, your lover, trust.
You'll tell her -
only travel near the river
beside his love.
One. Perfect forever.

Amanda

Artist: Shane





Children, look:

- Touched from love, trust wisdom*
- Always want to be perfect*
- Forever hear the answer that's touched you.*

Tara

Artist: Anonymous



Photography: Ali

The Proudest Moment of my Life

The proudest moment of my life was the day of the presentation of the Simon Community in the Gresham Hotel in Dublin last October.

It was on in the Gresham and I got cleaned up. I wore my black jeans, pint short sleeved shirt and my black leather jacket. When I was entering the hall in the hotel, I was asked if I would like to read something out that I had written for the book but I could not read it out. The presentation went ahead and I was presented with my certificate and I had my photograph taken.

David



Photography: Jack



Artist: Anonymous



Photography: Pat



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