

SCRAPPY but HAPPY TOO!

A PRICELESS LIMITED EDITION
EXPRESSED IN WORDS AND PICTURES
BY PEOPLE USING SIMON SERVICES.



Dublin Simon
Community



INTO THE LIGHT

You're OK Sean today, I don't want anything more than what I have right now. Just be myself and I'll be fine, despite what my head might tell me, that's all untrue and lies, and is trying to keep me down. So my choice is not to listen to it and listen to the other positive people I have recently met. I'm tired of trying to work out life and the world. It's too hard and leads me into darkness. I'm slowly now coming into the light and recovery is not an overnight instant fix, but a never-ending process.

S. F.

Foreword

“Another word for creativity is courage.”

(George M. Prince, 1918-2009)

“Scrappy but Happy Too!” is another extraordinary collection of artwork and creative writing produced by people accessing Dublin Simon Community’s *Meaningful Activities Programme*. It contains a wide variety of visual media - découpage, mask-making, mosaics, paintings, photography and sketches.

Meaningful activities are central to the learning and development support provided in the Simon Community, promoting wellbeing, intellectual stimulation, self-esteem and independence. Activities focused on creativity open participants to a whole new dimension of self-expression.

Découpage and mosaics are decorative art forms. Découpage transforms everyday items into original pieces by decorating with paper cut-outs and paint or gilding. The photography course, “Framing Stories”, focused on how images give a narrative, whether conscious or unconscious, of the photographer. Creative writing liberated participants to write in stream of consciousness and discover their voice. Seeing their ideas take shape into stories or artwork gave people self-belief by recognising their pieces had value and meaning.

Participants thoroughly enjoyed the activities and felt proud, appreciated and more confident. The activities gave structure to their day and brought out their artistic skills. They all escaped from their problems for a few hours; instead channelling their energies into new creative endeavours. Those involved supported and encouraged one another, embracing the opportunity to socialise with other people and reduce their loneliness. As a result, the collection demonstrates invention, imagination and originality with every chosen piece reflecting participants’ personalities.

We would like to sincerely thank our staff and volunteers as well as the tutors: Cormac Browne for photography, Alan Daly for mosaics, Róisín Keane for creative writing and Sandra Popovaite for découpage; and above all, the participants for their honesty, courage and involvement.

Enjoy our book!

Dublin Simon Community

August 2012



Sunshine Days

When I was 10 years old I went to Sunshine House for a holiday. It was great. It was on the beach. We used to make sand castles. We used to get rock. We went swimming. We used to go into the town and buy rock. It was a lovely time.

T. Timmins



Artist: Anonymous

MY STORY FOR ME AND MY BOYFRIEND

Last Thursday my boyfriend went into detox and I am so sorry that I was not there. I was in hospital. He is doing well off the drink. I hope I could do it myself, and my boyfriend is going to help me do it. I do miss him badly but we do see each other day by day. Sometimes though, we don't get to see each other for very long. When the two of us are off the drink we would like to live together because we would like to be like everyone else.

C. McCord

IMPRESSIONS OF IRELAND

I have lived in Ireland all my life. I like my Ireland; it's a very friendly country. People that come to Ireland say the Irish are great craic. The weather is always raining and cold. Our transport is good; we have the wheelchair bus and taxis to get around. The wheelchair taxis have a special lift. We have good shopping here in Dublin for the tourists. We also have our lovely parks; they call it the greenery of Ireland. Part of our parks have some lovely flowers.

T. Redmond



Artist: T. Byrne

MICHAEL
COLLINS

ALL SOULS' NIGHT

It had been my first mass as the new parish priest. The church was full to the brim; it was All Souls' Night after the mass which was in the evening. I had a lot of tidying up to do and things to write up. It was about 10.30pm when I started to make my way back to the parish house, which was just outside of the town. It was a foggy night so I took my time and drove slowly just before I reached the house. This small child ran across in front of me. I slammed on the brakes, got out of the car and saw the child slowly walk up a laneway. "Are you okay? What are you doing out this time of night? Where is your mother?" She turned around with a gesture of her hand and beckoned me to follow her. This is very strange I said to myself but did follow her. Trying to catch up with her was difficult as she seemed to be way ahead of me all the time. She stopped at what seemed to be some sort of waste ground. "Are you lost?" I said. She pointed and as I looked suddenly all these little children appeared. "Who are you?" I said. "Where are your parents?" The girl in the red dress said "We are the lost souls who died before we were born. We need to be remembered." That was five years ago. Every year I go back and say Mass with them.

J. Wynne

THANK YOU MAN IN BLACK

A picture tells a thousand words, or so it's been said.

I think about the man in black, and all the worries on his back.

But when I was sick and doing cold turkey,
it seemed like all his words were for me and me alone.

I thank you Johnny Cash 'cos you eased the pain.

The long nights got shorter, and somehow you brought a smile to my face,
not forgetting that a pain is a thing to embrace.

Now you're gone to the stars above,
and I thank you J.C. for showing me how to love.

Notnif



OUTSIDE the BOX

J.O'Brien

Artist: T. Kean



THE TRIP ON THE BOAT TO SEA

One morning at the Simon, we went on a boat trip out to the sea. Myself and a couple of others from the Simon went. When we got on the boat, we went out to sea and I got a chance to steer the boat. It was funny. I was all over the place. Then I got the hang of it.

The Captain gave us tea and sambos. It was good on the boat. We got to go fishing but knowing our luck, we caught fuck all. It was a nice day out but on the way back it rained a little bit.

D. Meleady



THE LOVES OF THE WOLF

Once upon a time there was a man who used to cut wood in the forest. He was tall and well-built with dark hair and blue eyes; a nice looking chap. All the women in the village were mad after him but he had only one love, his wife.

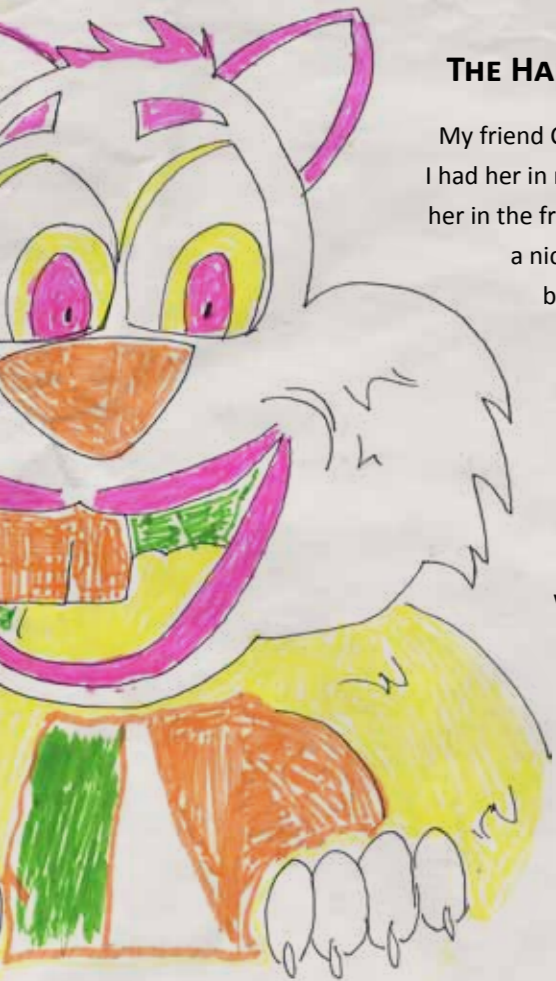
One day he went into the woods to chop down some trees. It was an autumn morning. There was a thick fog and he could hardly see where he was going. As he was walking he looked for big trees to chop down. When he saw a big tree he began to chop it down into pieces.

As he was walking, a wolf was watching him. Suddenly the wolf jumped out and bit him. Grey and black hair began growing out of his face and all over his body. His teeth became pointy like a wolf's. His hands and feet became paws. Soon he was a wolf.

The first wolf began to smell him and it was then he realised it was a female. The two wolves ran off together, deep into the dark forest. After two nights of love, the second wolf woke up to discover he was a man again. He picked up his hat and went home to his wife. When he knocked on the door, the wife asked where he had been. 'I got lost in the forest,' he said. 'I couldn't see where I was going in the fog.' She took him back, but a few nights later he disappeared again.

With the she-wolf he made baby wolves and with the woman he made human babies. And in this way he lived happily ever after.

C. McCord, J. Murray and T. Timmins



THE HAMSTER

My friend Chloe the hamster died on Monday. I had her in my hand when she was dying. I buried her in the front garden of the house. She was a nice quiet hamster. She was grey and black. She was my best friend and I miss her. I am sure she is in heaven now, getting looked after.

I got a new hamster and his name is Billy. He is very cute but he jumps around a lot. I like him a lot. He is very quiet at night. He drinks a lot of water. He is very clean-looking. He cleans himself all the time.

He doesn't bite at all when I put my hand in. He knows I am looking after him. If anyone puts their hand in the box, it will get bitten.

J. Murray

'Billy' Artist: J. Murray

BILLY'S NEW HOME

'Hi I'm Billy and I'm a hamster, I used to live in a shop with lots of other hamsters. In my shop there were also lots of other animals like birds, goldfish, rabbits and even big scary snakes. I was scared of the snakes cause their eyes where green and evil and their teeth were long and sharp. I liked living in the shop but to be honest I was a bit bored and lonely. There wasn't much to do everyday and I really wanted a good friend and lots of space to play around in. One day a fun looking guy walked in wearing a cool hat, funky shades, smart jeans and he had a walking stick. He looked like he'd be a great friend to have. Before I knew what was happening and to my utter disbelief he had chosen **me** to be his new friend. I was so excited. My new friend bought some stuff for me in the shop like yummy food and nice comfortable bedding for me to sleep on. Then the two of us set off on our new adventure together to see my new home. When we got there I was in total shock at seeing my new home; it was the biggest box imaginable and inside there was a little wooden house for me to sleep in and lots of space for me to play around in. Everyday my friend makes it nice and clean for me. He talks to me and tells me stories. He brings me outside to get some fresh air and he always looks after me. I really love my new home and most of all I love my new best friend who is so kind to me and looks after me everyday.'

J. Murray

MY STORY OF HOPE

My story really began at the age of 15 when I ran away from home after one of my many fights with my parents. I experimented with drugs at a very young age and my life in and out of hostels began then. I was a confused man hurting; I had an unhealthy relationship with my family.

I spent the next couple of years living in and out of hostels and on the streets. I can remember vividly the cold harsh nights and the boredom of trying to pass the day. I had to beg many a day to feed my drug habit. I had a terrible fear my life was wasting away and would become nothing. I feared dying on drugs and felt lost with no hope.

One particular day, when I was very unwell I came across Gideon's Bible and it introduced me to Jesus Christ. I have learned since, the bible offers hope in this life: John, Chapter 3, v. 16 – "For God so loved the world (homeless people) that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (NIV). This gave me hope of a better life off the streets and away from addiction.

I am 12 years free from addiction at the present time. Jesus sets prisons free. The Simon Community were very good to me in my homeless years. They fed, clothed and provided a roof over my head. I was dependent on them and other charitable organisations who were also kind to me.

I am working for the last 10 years after many years of unemployment. I encourage anyone who may be reading this leaflet to let Jesus help you have a new life. It is always worth it in the end. He has proved to be a true saviour to me personally. I presently live in Dublin Simon apartments today and I am very happy, so you too can be with Jesus' help. Amen.

P. McCann

'Love Hate' Artist: S. Dunne

CRY

Hear our cries

See our tears

Hear us call

See us fall.

But we'll keep up the fight,

We'll soon see the light,

After all!

Time is a great healer.

G. Prizeman



'Free Mind' Artist: P. Losty

LISTEN

Thank you for always being there,
To listen and understand me.
I appreciate all you did for me.
And all you still do.

Thank you for making me feel whole again,
For putting my pieces back together.
I appreciate you putting my life back together.
You saved my life.

You may not understand,
Why i do what I do.
But you never criticised,
You just helped me through.

I knew I could come to you when I was down,
Cause I knew you'd always be there
To pick me back up.
And say everything will be ok.

Anonymous

RIPPLES *and* REFLECTIONS

M. Kelly



WHEN I AM OLD

WHEN I AM OLD I WOULD LOVE TO
CONTINUE DOING WALKING AROUND.

I LOVE TO KEEP MY MIND
ACTIVE AND USEFUL BUT NOT
USED, AND TRY NEW THINGS
AND TO MIX WITH ALL AGES
YOUNG AND OLD.

I WOULD LOVE TO BE INVOLVED IN FOOTBALL.

P. MURRAY



Artist: J. McG.

MY FIRST HOLY COMMUNION

I made my Communion when I was 7 years old. On the day I made about 200 pounds. I made it on 21st May 1982.

On that day my mam was pregnant on my sister Jessica. My dad stayed at home while the whole family went to Priorswood Church. My eldest brother Mark was there and my Auntie Betty was there too.

Then my dad drove my mam and me around. He had a white Ford Fiesta. First we drove to Ballymun to see all my mam's family. My Uncle Norman was alive then. My dress was lovely. It stood out. I also had a cream coat. I had curls in my hair. I had all my teeth, not my baby teeth but my adult teeth. They grew up just in time.

Then that evening all my family and my cousin Joanne, went for a meal in Malahide. The meal was delicious. The name of the restaurant was The Grand Hotel in Malahide. I can't remember what I ate, because I was full up, as everyone was giving me cake in their house. I had a wonderful day on 21st May 1982.

S. Mooney.



Malahide Park

I was in the Malahide Park;
and me and Jackie had tea in
my house.

I was watching the football
match on the TV.

Jackie and her Dad was in the
house today, I'll ring her later.

P. Murray



The residents of our Harcourt Street Emergency Shelter designed and created this beautiful mosaic table top for their community garden table. The group produced a number of designs before opting for a seaside themed design.



Artist: T. Fitzsimons

THE CAT WITH NO TAIL

Max was an adventurous cat who often went for long walks to see new things and make new friends. He was on one of these journeys when he passed a pond and stopped to look at all the ducks swimming. He meowed a hello and they quacked in response.

A little fluffy duck at the back started laughing and pointing at Max, quacking “Look, look, that cat has no tail!”

“Oh yes I have” said Max and he ran round and round in circles trying to find it so he could show the little duck until he got very dizzy and had to stop.

I must have a tail thought Max, by now feeling very sorry for himself.

The Mummy duck swam over to Max and told him that he must have lost it on his walk and then she wished him luck on finding it.

Max walked away looking here, there and everywhere for his tail until a small puppy interrupted him.

“What are you looking for?” he yapped.

“My tail” meowed Max, “have you seen one?”

“No” said the puppy “but I can help you look for it.”

The puppy ran around and around in circles until he soon got dizzy and yelped with glee saying “I’ve found it, I’ve found it” and he did indeed have a tail in his mouth, but it was his own. Max thought this was very funny and forgot all about being sad at not finding his tail.

The puppy heard his Mummy bark for him to go home so he wished Max luck on finding his tail and went on his way.

Max heard his mummy call for him and she saw immediately that Max was not happy. So she asked him what the matter was and he told her. She began to laugh. “Max, Max, you are a funny little kitten, you are a Manx cat and we do not have tails!”

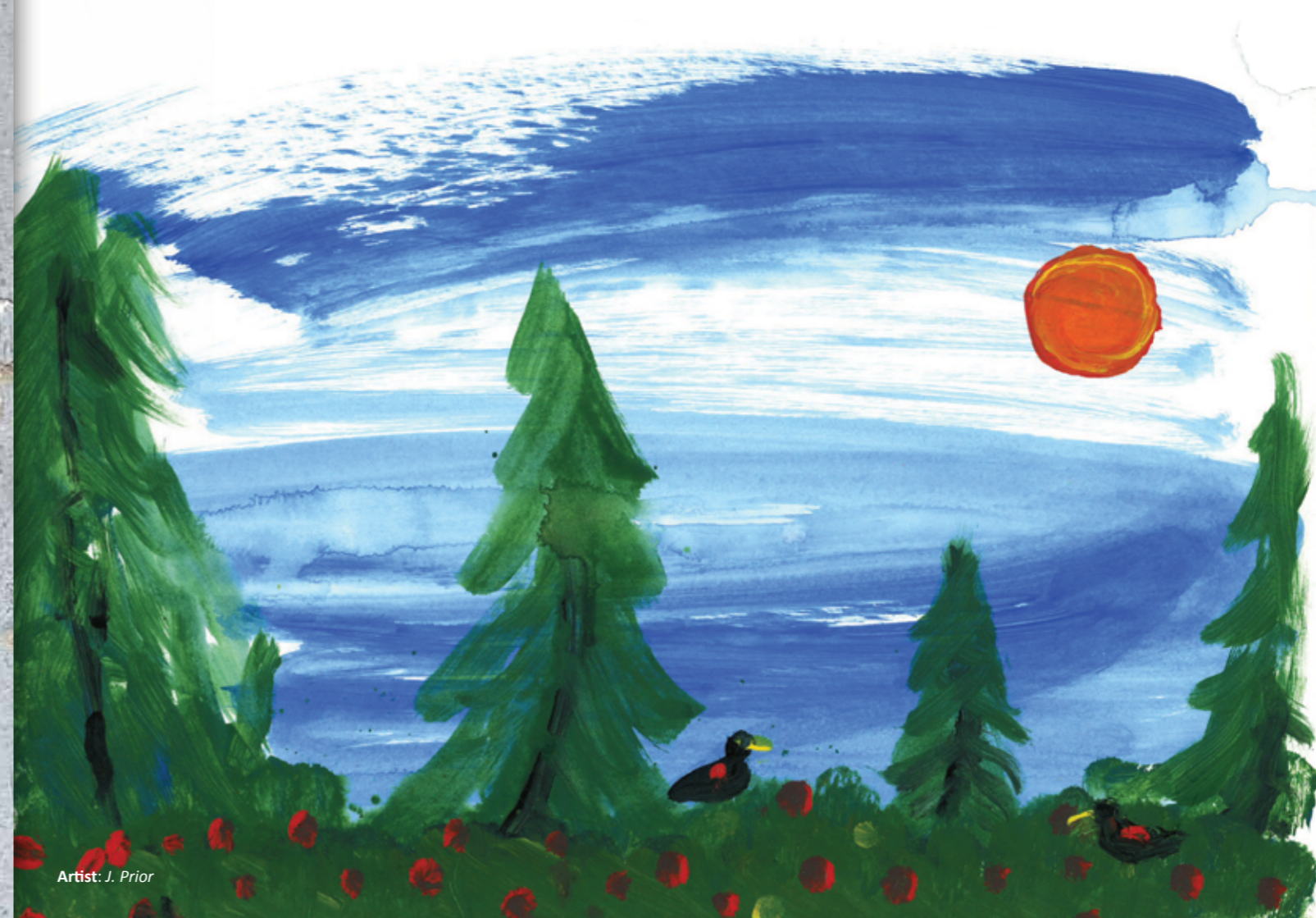
A. Pipe



Artist: J. Murray

FLORA and FAUNA

N. Byrne



Artist: J. Prior

THE GUNGA, LUNGA PENDANT

“THE ADVENTURES OF AN AIRBORNE SOLDIER”

By Private Mitchell

Date: June to October 1955

Parachute Regiment, 1 Para, C Company, 8 Platoon

We had just completed an urgent mission in Immazaz, a most mountainous region of the Hindu Kush, Afghanistan, when we were hurriedly deployed to the Chinese Northern Province of Tetoweke. This was to hinder and delay the invasion of Tibet by Chinese Communist insurgents. We were ordered to attack the enemy held village of Holyphuk, which was most trying as the fleeing villagers were constantly in our lines of fire.

It was while engaging a strongly defended enemy position, I was told that a hostage was being held in the schoolhouse, a 16 x 14 foot shack at the side of a temple. It was after clearing the enemy from their strongpoint that I entered the schoolhouse carefully, being wary of booby traps, that I found the hostage in a corner, a most pitiful figure, kneeling on the mud floor; head bowed, gagged and bound hand and

foot, awaiting and expecting execution, utterly resigned to his fate. He was very old, very thin and very weak, attired in a dirty, torn saffron coloured robe. He was a Tibetan priest and also the schoolmaster. I quickly freed him and made him as comfortable as I could, and left him with a Medic and a mug of hot green tea mixed with Yak butter and what was left of my ‘C’ rations.

Some two hours later we were still slogging it out with the enemy when I received an urgent message that the priest wanted to see me. Amidst the crash, smoke, shock and pandemonium of battle, I found him at the side of a helicopter, about to be evacuated to hospital and safety. On seeing me, he became very agitated, frantically beckoning me to him. Whilst grasping my sleeve with one hand he reached into his shabby, threadbare robe and produced a silver

pendant with a red stone. In a faint, halting voice and in poor broken English, he made it clear that the pendant had been blessed by the Dalai Lama, and would bring Health, Happiness and Good Luck to whoever wore it.

However, its influence would only be felt if the wearer softly murmured the words ‘Gunga Lunga’ when putting on and taking off the blessed pendant. After telling me this, he took my helmet off and while rubbing fresh Yak dung in my hair, gave me his own blessing. He was then placed in the helicopter which took off immediately. I never saw him again. I made enquires in the village and found that he was 82 years old and that the name of this venerable and gentle old priest was Tow Pong Teeow Tikka Pok, which roughly translated means ‘a handful of rice is nice, but a bucketful is better’ remember him?

Artist: J. Murray



MIRACLE IN 2007

I was homeless on the street. One day I had a few drinks in Temple Bar. I was watching a match and someone attacked me. I ended up in hospital with head injuries. I was in a coma for 3 months in Beaumont Hospital. I was flown to St. James'. I woke up there. I saw my family all around me and stayed for about three weeks.

The doctor told me I was very lucky because I died three times. And maybe I was very lucky, because I also had double pneumonia and I would have died on the street if I hadn't been hospitalised.

In one way I don't like the person that hit me but in another way, he was an angel. I was very angry with him but now I am not angry any more and I forgive him. I don't think that he should have gone to prison.

People say "John, why are you always laughing?"

And I say, "I don't know!"

But I do know, because I seen life after.

John Boy

FRESH PERSPECTIVES

P. Hughes



Corporate Clown

I remember back, to days of yester,
When all I wanted was to be a jester.
I would clown around all day and night,
It was such a jubilant sight.
Until one day my heart did break,
It was the 'real world' that did take;
And replace my smile with a frown,
For now I am a corporate clown.

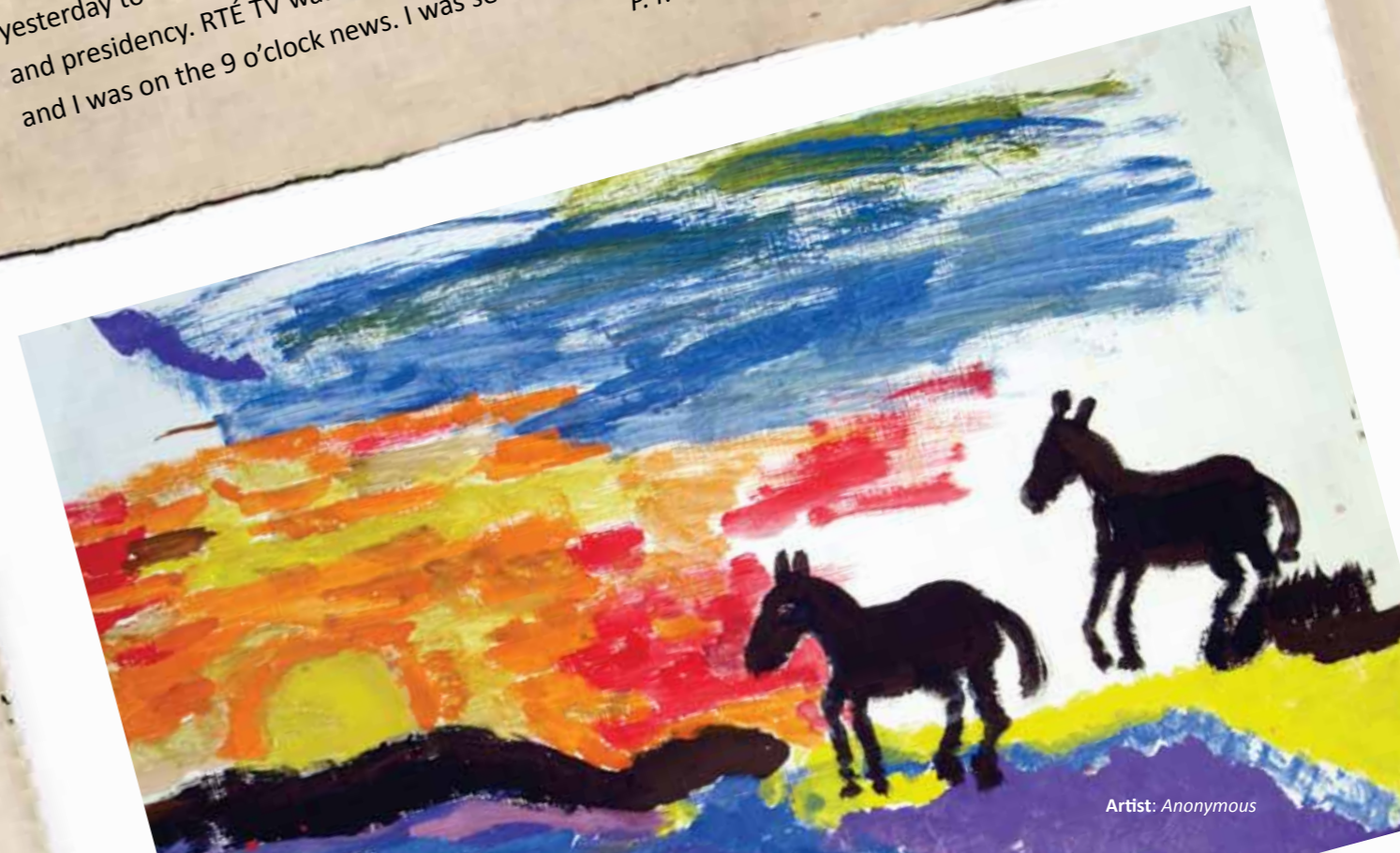
An. Pipe



D.A.L.C.

Michael D. Higgins came to D.A.L.C.
yesterday to talk about the right to education
and presidency. RTÉ TV was there to see Michael D. Higgins
and I was on the 9 o'clock news. I was seen on TV.

P. Murray



Artist: Anonymous

THE DARK SIDE OF THE BLACK STUFF

In James's Street,
In Dublin 8
In behind the big black gate,
A constant process, that never ends
And millions in a trance does send,
And many upon will depend,
To search for it there is no need,
As from Dublin 8, there is a constant feed
Of the Black Stuff.

Eating and drinking in it they say
Rich and poor have a fondness
For the Black Stuff.

In poverty and hunger
Many children they were raised
Wi' rags in tatters on their back
An' snotters on their face
Empty bellies and eyes of sorrow
And from the man their mother borrowed
Just to pay the rent,
All the money it was spent
All for the cause of the Black Stuff.

Down the welfare she would plead,
Just tae get her wee'uns a feed,
Eating and drinking, but not for them
All for the sake, of more Back Stuff,
In their hordes, they congregate,
In O'Connell Street they wait
From near and far they celebrate,
Wi' gallons o' the Black Stuff.

Marching bands and coloured floats
This huge procession does promote
The milling of the Black Stuff
Wi' painted faces and hair o' green
An extravaganza only seen,
But once a year,
Fills the nation with great cheer
Song and dance all around
And merriment does abound
Think we'll try another round of,
The Black Stuff.

All that glitters is not gold,
Many tales they will be told,
Songs and stories will unfold,
Inspired by the Black Stuff.

Generations come and go,
And pleasant memories will surely flow,
In the presence of the Black Stuff.

D. McManus



Patricia

Artist: Patricia



'The Lighthouse' Artist: R.M.

SECOND CHANCE

It had been 8 years since Daniela had come back to the streets of Napoli. Her father waited with open arms on the cobblestones as she left the taxi. The sun and sweaty forehead reminded her of her first memories as a child, until her mother took her away to New York and left her sister Maria and father behind. Her father hoped she'd decide to stay for good. He missed her so much; there was always an awful longing as if something was missing. Now she was home; her mother back in New York and her father's chance to rekindle those lost years. He had so many plans. "What would she like to do?" "What would she eat?" He had so many questions and wondered how to please her most.

J. Stowe



Artist: M. Finney



A selection of Découpage projects undertaken by residents of NCR, Canal Road and Dorset Street.

Nothing feels right, it all feels so wrong

Even my writing is shite, but I'll still try to go on.

The detox is near the end and the withdrawals are at their worst

They say it's from the cannabis and that the Librium won't work.

The dose has been dropped daily, as quick as lightening

And to tell you the truth, it's very, very frightening.

I've given up on hash before and didn't shake as much.

The withdrawals that I had, was no sleep or crave for a month.

They say my blood pressure's quite high, to go see my G.P.

He's on the other side of town and I've had nurses and doctors all around me.

I asked for help, coz I really wanted and needed it so much

I don't feel like I'm getting it and I'm really close to giving up.

A drink to stop the shakes, a few joints to laugh it off

Back to square one, even though it's really not what I want.

It's not a drink I crave or a joint I need to have a laugh

It's the withdrawals I need to stop, before they drive me mad.

The tears are falling so easily, because the withdrawals won't go away

And the shame is there for all to see, coz the shakes are as clear as day.

L. Cahill

WITHDRAWALS



FRAMING STORIES



N. BYRNE – FLORA AND FAUNA

Love and lore of the natural world around us, even in the middle of the city, is captured in this series. The loving detail of plants and animals reveal life's simplest pleasures through the character of a defiant robin redbreast or the delicate bloom of a wild flower on an early spring morning.



J. O'BRIEN - OUTSIDE THE BOX

The images in this series expose hidden insights and overlooked perspectives, often with humorous results. Careful observation allows the most unlikely of subjects – bread rolls floating in algae – to take on new lives and stories of their own; requiring the double-take of an uncannily familiar landscape!



P. HUGHES – FRESH PERSPECTIVES

The abstracted geometric shapes in this series take features architectural and natural out of their context and present them anew – given fresh perspective. The subjects are rendered, in a way, blank canvases. The viewer can appreciate the shapes and forms of the isolated details, or imagine their own new narrative.



M. KELLY – RIPPLES AND REFLECTIONS

These works explore the mirroring effects of water's surface and the subtle play of light across it. From the refractive chaos of a gushing spray to the dark otherworldly quality of the reflected city and skies. The minimal composition allows for multiple interpretation; bringing to mind the saying that still waters run deep.



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Art Direction: Johnny Rothwell



These Masks
were part of
a group project
by our NCR
residents.



Bonfire