

# Inkslingers Blended Session

18<sup>th</sup> March 2023

The Prompt from The Bag Was:

“When I am an Old Woman.. Jenny Joseph.”

And the Visual



*Scary Joyce*

## **Dollymount beach,**

**Matthew Tubridy**

Can you get cut out?  
Make friends with the seals,  
Swim into Dublin Bay with the seals,  
I don't need rescuing!  
The seals have a restaurant under the water,  
The chef seal is called Slippy,  
I learn how to breathe underwater,  
I surface again and watch the lights of Dublin?  
I think 'Do I want to live with the seals of go back to Dublin?'  
In Dublin I was homeless going to soup kitchens,  
With the seals I get food in the underwater restaurant,  
And I sleep on the sand under Dublin Bay,  
The seals are Slippy, Wicky, Nippy, Lippy,  
But then my Mum calls me and says you should be a fireman!  
No dilly dallying with seals at the end of Dollymount beach,  
She shouts threw the sea like whale song,  
I listen,  
Will I be homeless when I come back?  
She says  
'No! You can live with the fire brigade!'  
You can sleep in Phibsboro fire station!  
Thry rescue people who have fallen into the Liffey,  
Since you love the water so much you can rescue them,  
So then I had 2 lives,  
as a fireman,  
And in the water,  
Sometimes after I rescue the person I swim with the seals and they say  
'Well done! Well done!  
If you were still with us I'd give you a meal in the underwater restaurant,  
But the other firemen say 'Come back!'  
We have burgers and chips!  
My mother says  
'Go for the burgers and chips!'

## Balancing the Scales

Greg Fields

There comes a time of reckoning, the scales in balance or imbalance, the collective equilibrium of sins and charity, gains and losses, the hearts we claim and the hearts we break. Unavoidable, even if we do not recognize it, as permeable as air, and light, and time itself.

Gina Morelli turned the page on her sixth decade and clung to the notion of being in the full ripeness of middle age. She remained vibrant, committed to all the right things, and very much alive. Still attractive enough to lure her share of attentions from the men she encountered, still energetic enough to hold a stable of good friends of both genders, still sharp enough to pursue the best books and go to the concerts she fancied, still strong enough to take an occasional run through Rock Creek Park or spend an afternoon at the gym working the elliptical. Not young, to be sure, but certainly not old, Gina faced the days with grace and acceptance. She had always done so.

But as the calendar moved past 60, she reasoned that, given the unlikelihood of living to be 120, she was no longer middle-aged. She had buried her reflective tendencies years before, during the confusing times when Donal Mannion befuddled her intentions with his quiet charm and gentle wit. He had been an intoxicant for her, a man unlike any she had ever known.

He had wafted into her life effortlessly, seemingly making no effort to impress her or win her over other than being himself. There was no artifice to Donal Mannion. He was who he was, and would always be, and apparently Donal trusted that, whatever that was, that would be enough. He was drawn to her, clearly. The times they spent together were light, pleasing and devoid of the tension that had wrought Gina's previous relationships. They went on, it seemed, as weightless as two butterflies skittering between the flowers.

In the end, though, it was that very nature that undid them. Donal was effortless in his pursuit of Gina, and he was effortless in all the other aspects of the way he spent his days. Donal did not chase, or plan, or strategize. He drifted through life, content and discontent alternately tumbling within him, but neither causing the burn of a deep fire or the

crafting of a straight line. Gina could only do so much, and it would never be enough. He would drift beside her as long as he could, a remora clinging to a shark.

It ended, more with a whimper than a bang. Three years ago it was, and she had heard nothing of him since. Now, a birthday ending in a zero just concluded, Gina took time once more to weigh the balances of what had been.

“Regrets, always,” she told herself, “and they weigh us down like magnets dragged through the sand. Small enough so that we barely feel them at first, but they accumulate, bit by bit.”

She drank her wine and listened to the last movement of Mussorgsky’s *Pictures At An Exhibition*. “The Great Gate of Kiev” it was called, and she let the stirring and bold rise of the trumpets fill her blood. The piece lifted and exalted, celebrated the strength of the human character and finished with a crescendo of brass and timpani. The wine moved within her through the music.

“When I am an old woman,” she thought, “I will face down these regrets with the confirmation of who I am. I was always honest, and never false. I never cheated myself. I never cheated anyone around me. It was all I could do.” She drank more of the wine, then closed her eyes. “When I am an old woman.....” she whispered aloud, with no one to hear her. And when the piece ended, her room filled with the quietude of time itself.

## Tramore

**Matthew Tubridy**

Get a nice house,  
Like Kellsboro,  
Park your car there,  
Go on a spin to Dungarvan,  
Go down to the Indian restaurant in the town,  
Walk the Doneraile,  
Have photos taken of you,  
Then there's Nirvana,  
We had a good time in Kellsboro,  
Roast chicken,  
Pat and Frank,  
Sit out in the garden,  
But nothing lasts forever,  
Oh we had a good time in Tramore,  
We walked the beach,  
Heard the crashing waves,  
Watched the Amusements,  
Got candy floss and Tramore Rock,  
But time crept up on Pat and Frank,  
And no one can live forever,  
Time crept up on Jean too,  
She went from young woman to middle aged woman,  
One more catch the wave,  
One more greeting at the door of Kellsboro,  
Biscuits in the tin in the kitchen,  
Another year living in a luxury house,  
Then all the lights go out,  
Getting a pizza made up just for you in SuperValu,  
But time is getting on, for everyone,  
I used to watch Thomas the Tank Engine,  
Another generation rises up,  
With Samsung Androids,  
The watcher of Thomas the Tank Engine is given a suit and a scalpel,  
You can help them now, he is told,

Yes the sunny south east won't be around forever,  
So grab those biscuits when you can,  
Bob around in the waves when you can,  
Then there's freak accidents on the road,  
You don't even get to see the slow trajectory of time,  
One last biscuit,  
What got him in the end?  
A stroke?  
At least my Grandad lasted the longest,  
Sleeping in his bed,  
How many more days to walk down the town for candy Floss?  
To see the dodgems,  
There's a specific amount of days,  
You just don't know it,  
But don't drive your car too fast anyway.

## **When I am an old woman**

**Laura Alves**

When I am an old woman I will have gathered the experience needed for going through tough times in life.

When exactly can a woman be called old? From the point of view of a child, teenagers are old.

From the point of view of an octogenarian, you would probably become old at 100. Sometimes you see people in the street who are less fit and energetic than you, you refer to them as “those old people”. T

hen you look at their ID cards and realise they are actually younger than you...the poor things! Age is just a reference point and cannot be used to determine what stage in life you are.

For English speakers, everybody is old. You are born and in 30 days you are one month OLD! You are already OLDER than the newborn next to you. You can feel old from age 30 and when you get to 50 it seems like you were so young at 30... and at 50 you are still so young.

You imagine at 70 or 80 you will finally become old, but if you play your cards right you will turn 100 feeling great and will describe yourself as being 100 years young!

## Moriarty

Matthew Tubridy

Moriarty is told by his geography teacher,  
You'll never become anything,  
Moriarty grimaces at his teacher,  
In front of Moriarty is 10 teachers,  
'Why don't you?'  
Moriarty answers  
'Why don't I what?'  
'We want you to be a dentist' they say,  
But what does Moriarty want?  
Moriarty goes walking around Ireland,  
Says he doesn't want to listen to teachers,  
He camps in fields,  
As Moriarty walks he remembers his geography teacher,  
The teachers had a route for him,  
How could do geography in college,  
And so his classmates who followed the route walk around college,  
But Moriarty is in his little tent,  
Most people would think that's not a success,  
Moriarty sups on some soup,  
One of his classmates become a dentist,  
He knows Moriarty's teeth are rotting because he doesn't brush his  
teeth,  
The dentist taps on his tent,  
He's brought his equipment,  
Moriarty agrees to have the Dentist put in a filling,  
Dentist crawls into the tent and Moriarty lies down  
Dentist gives him a local anaesthetic,  
Does the business,  
Next day Moriarty strides along,  
As he walks along he sees Timmy who he used to sit beside in  
Geography class,  
Timmy is sitting at the edge of the road with some tin cans he is trying  
to sell,



When he was in school the teachers sat down in front of him too, they  
said to Timmy 'We would like you to be a psychiatrist'  
But Timmy became a psychiatric patient instead after the guards picks  
him up when he was trying to sell tin pots at the side of the road,  
Timmy is kept in cell,  
Moriarty is out in the same cell because he camped in a garden and  
freaked out a 10 year old girl who went into her garden to play with her  
dog,  
She saw the tent and shrieked,  
She saw Moriarty give her a cheeky grin,  
Because Moriarty had eaten her goldfish in her pond,  
He'd fried it on his stove,  
So the girls Dad rings for the police,  
Moriarty is taken away to his cell,  
He says to Timmy 'Jaysus how are ya!  
Remember the fun we had annoying our Geography teacher?  
When they sat us down and told us what they want us to be?'  
Thus followed a stint in psychiatric hospital for Moriarty and Timmy,  
The nurses say  
'Just be normal!  
Do a degree!'  
Walk the route they lay out for you,  
So Moriarty and Timmy break the window to get out of the hospital,  
They run free!  
Another of their classmates got into university and then got a job on  
Merrion Square...  
She writes in very small letters,  
Her name is Alison,  
She did sociology in university,  
Pay attention to words!

## Gay's Phone In Maureen Byrne



The line is bad, I can't hear you Gay,  
I can hear you fine, so fire away,  
I feel so bad, I wish I was dead,  
You should see the sunrise up at Howth Head,  
Listen Gay, there's a lot at stake,  
I must stop you there, time for a break,  
O Gay you know you're the housewife's choice,  
Thanks Mrs A you've a very young voice,  
Well Gay, I really can't agree,  
You mean to say you'd contradict me,  
Doesn't everyone know that I'm never wrong,  
Get back to the sink, it's where you belong,  
Now I could have gone to the U.S.A.  
But lucky for you, I decided to stay,  
For how could you manage without little me,  
With no Late Late Show, no Rose of Tralee,  
With no morning show things would grind to a halt,  
And then you would say it was all Gaybo's fault,  
So hush little woman, and dry off your tears,  
Like tax and the poor, I'll be with you for years.