

Inkslingers Blended Session

1st April 2023

The Prompt from The Bag Was:

“You Have Got To See This...”

And the Visual



Tornado

Matthew Tubridy

They go into the grounds of the school,
And there's a big tornado,
Concocted by the teacher,
The good students are picked up,
Along with secondary school table and chairs,
They families of those students picked up in the tornado,
Clap and cheer,
He was in school in Urlingford,
But he goes to Trinity College Dublin,
And deposited into university,
The tornado deposited him on the courtyard
of Trinity College,
Along with some school chairs and tables,
He says to other students 'I'm from Urlingford!'
Which tornado brought you here?
'I'm from Athlone!' Another student says,
The Geography teacher makes her own tornado,
The good students are taken up!
They go to Trinity College to do a geography degree,
They're from Ennis,
With the clatter and a bang Geography student 1 lands on the grounds
of Trinity College,
The lecturers in Trinity usher the students inside,
We will make you think complicated,
Can you follow what we say?

You Have Got To See This

Laura Alves

“You have got to see this!” he said. I went further inside the house to the next room where he was and saw the two birds walking on the floor with their cage wide open right beside them.

The windows were also totally open and if they had chosen to use their wings like they did all the time when they were inside the cage, they would have reached the windows and vanished into the wild big city with no possible return home.

Birds are not like dogs to sniff their way back home in a jiff. They could even find another caring home by chance and continue to have a half decent life, but chances are they would disappear into the chaos of cars, trucks and buses and when they couldn't hold their wings any more, would fall under their wheels with no mercy!

Instead, they were quietly talking to each other and, as I figured out what to do to guide them into their cage again so I could close the door, hunger struck and first one, then immediately after, the other one hopped into the cage to eat something and drink their water. I closed the cage door and said: “Cool!”

Family Meeting

Matthew Tubridy

And so there's a meeting of my parents and Aunties and Uncles,
What hornets fly around your head? Is asked,
What leech is sucking blood from your back?
I know your in the pool of water, with alligators in it,
Driving over to Tipperary,
My Aunt imagined a crash,
You could have the wrong hat on,
Rev up the engine of discontent,
The priest didn't tap you on the head,
The swarm of hornets rise up,
The wheel of your car got a puncture,
Ah crikey Jimony!
Stuck beside a wet field,
I want to get to a warm house!
If only there was a ice cream van,
Suddenly an ice cream van comes over the hill,
You all sit back and lick ice creams,
The ice cream van tows you go Tipperary,
You sit in your brother James house,
The heating is on,
In church ice cream man makes a speech,
Give out ice creams he says,
Everytime a car breaks down just bring them afew ice creams,
Those people, my Aunt, didn't want to be at the side of the road,
having the cows watch them.

Ball Hoppers Corner

Angelina Kelly

While visiting our local tennis club recently, at the invitation of my friend, who is a member of the club, I was amused to see a sign in the clubhouse restaurant that read “Ball Hoppers Corner”. My imagination almost ran wild as to what this meant. My friend explained that this area is reserved, exclusively, for the use of the people who collect the balls at each end of the court. It gives them a space to rant and rave, about the sport in general, but, specifically about the tennis players. This is their space to air their views and express either their like or dislikes about each player and the club staff’s handling of the day to day running of the club, in confidence, without judgement or recrimination.

The players are allowed to rant and rave on court – it’s expected of them – but seeing the Ball Hoppers on TV during international tennis matches, I perceived them as being reserved and emotionally controlled, it never occurred to me that they would actually have thoughts, feelings, and emotions. My friend agreed with me and clarified that they are well trained to hide their reactions but, acknowledging that they are human, they are given their own space to air and vent safely. There is only one rule – whatever is said in Ball Hoppers Corner - stays in Ball Hoppers Corner! I reckoned this was wise and prudent.

I took a picture of it on my phone and sent it to my husband saying, “You have got to see this...!”

Billy meets Bob

Matthew Tubridy

Billy meets Bob on the street,
Billy says it's raining penguins,
Bob says it's raining turtles,
They go to the zoo to learn about
all the animals that could rain on you,
A massive hippo would go flop,
You'd be squeaking after that!
Or the snakes fall from the sky,
Soon all the Animals are walking
around Dublin City Centre,
Zebras, alligators, peacocks spreading their feathers,
A monkey goes into Arnotts,
I want some perfume!
He says.

You Have Got To See This....

Tina Irving

What is it? Is it a man? No... it's too ugly. Is it a horse? No... horses are lovely. Could be a cow... or a pig. He says I "Grunt like a pig" when I speak. Oh, it must be... him... the object in no. 21. I have never seen anything so ugly in my long life as the thug downstairs. He thought he was God's gift to women... I soon put him straight by walking past him with my nose in the air, as though he was a bad smell. This combined with my posh accent soon put him off... or it might have been my strapping Armagh farmer friend. Oh god, he's drinking again. Eeek... that's really scary. Oh no, so is Catholic Benny who never touched a drop in his life (according to a neighbour) until he moved in. He must like me... he takes my photo often enough – even without my permission, but according to PSNI that's OK. PSNI objected because I called him a misogynist pig – probably because they (or him) don't know what it means.

My plants are beautiful under the window. He did not like them there. He complained at every possible opportunity, to PSNI, to the housing association. To anyone who would listen to him. So you just had to see his face when he thought he saw me cementing the plant pots into the walk way next to his seat where he sat night and day, drinking and smoking, just trying to intimidate me. Well.... That didn't work then, did it. Ignoring him was the best answer. The noise and attempts at intimidation didn't work, so they tried all kinds of other things... like none of them speaking to me. Ah well.... If they have nothing better to do than cackle downstairs about the benefits of putting red wine in the fridge, that's their problem. Then you just had to see this. An injunction on my plant pots. The housing association had told me to move them. I said "no" and if they touched them I would call PSNI. The boys in green called in for tea on a regular basis. If he could have his seat there, I could have my pots. They had already complained about me playing the piano. The "thing" reported me for talking to a friend in the garden, for watering my plants.... Anything really. I kept my cool and laughed... until I received the injunction, then I threw water over him when he was sitting on his seat. PSNI came round again. This time we had cakes as well.

The housing association backed him – an Ulster Union thug. Now they are facing a Human Rights Court in London.... If the Parliamentary Ombudsman agrees. No justice in Northern Ireland if you have any kind of intelligence, that's for sure. To put the word "justice" in the same sentence as "Northern Ireland" in a positive way is definitely an oxymoron.

Those who have known me for a while will know that I moved to Ireland to be with an Irishman, a Dubliner who had lived in the North for so long he didn't know it was not nice to bully women and try to take their money. That didn't end well. The Master in the High Court tried to let him away with £35,000 of my money. That was never going to happen. I self represented and won. The Master was impressed in the end... just not used to having a non lawyer in his court, I guess, especially as I was wearing a mini skirt, matching jacket and top, little tan boots and a beret. Bobbed blonde hair. The "suits" sitting there like vultures which they are. You just had to see that.

What you really have to see if you are in any way a journalist, is the inside of a prison, where they incarcerated me for 7 weeks without trial....harassment...uh... it was him harassing me Officer... in future to be referred to as "the little fat policeman" - I had not had tea and cakes with him... Maybe he was a bit cross. Anyway, the inside of Hyde Bank Prison is a whole new experience – but I survived the Belfast dykes who lingered there a lot longer than I did. Scary.. even for me, who had lived in Libya for six years.

What you really, really had to see was me in the interview with the little fat policeman. He was going to put me away anyway, so there was no problem there. The solicitor had a wry smile on his face as I ask if he knew what the Human Rights Act was. The little fat policeman was a sight to behold as well – pot belly, thug with a gun. I wound him up and watched him go. The girls in the jail said if my solicitor had not been there, he would have hit me. I said, "good, I would have hit him back. And he wouldn't have got up."

I wrote a poem about the little fat policeman when I was incarcerated. I'll find it and read it one day. It's amazing how creative you can be

when you are banged up 24/7 with no internet. When I was released I had 7 A4 size notebooks.. I am working them into a book – when “Nuala” is finished.

Open Gates

Matthew Tubridy

So Trinity College opens their gates to Brian Farrell,

Clontarf? Yes! They say,

Dalkey? Yes!

A kaleidoscope of posh areas around Dublin,

But then there's the boggers...

Up from Westmeath,

They try to put on a south Dublin accent,

And get rid of bogger accent,

Mick moves into Trinity Hall,

His Dad is a farmer but Mick was always good in school,

His Geography teacher was Ms Craig,

So Mick wanted to do Geography in Trinity,

Mick comes up to Trinity in his tractor,

'There's a few eskers on my farm' he says

'The river that goes across my farm...meanders'

From Annapolis to Armageddon (Part 4)

Gerard Keogh

(Further entries from the personal war diary of LtCol Thomas B. Schultz, CO, 2/1 (under the command of 1st MARDIV and I MEF).

July 14

Israeli F-35s and F-15s have attacked multiple sites across Iran. The primary targets were: the heavy-water reactor and spent-fuel reprocessing installation at Arak; the fuel-enrichment plant at Fordow, near Qom; the nuclear centrifuges and uranium-enrichment facilities at Natanz; and the main nuclear research complex and Uranium Conversion Facility at Isfahan. Air Force and Navy aircraft provided inflight refuelling, airborne early warning and control, electronic warfare, and suppression of enemy air defences, in support of the sorties flown by the Israeli Air Force. In addition, Air Force B-2s flew nonstop (with aerial refuelling) from their home at Whiteman AFB, Missouri, dropped their payloads on targets in Iran, and returned to base – all without being detected by Iranian air defence systems. The B-2s employed GBU-57 Massive Ordnance Penetrators against the underground facilities at Fordow and Natanz.

Initial battle-damage assessment suggests good effect on target for all of the operational objectives. In addition to the nuclear sites, there were also sorties flown against surface-to-air missile batteries; ballistic-missile production, storage, and launch facilities; numerous military bases; the headquarters of Quds Force and the other branches of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps; the command, control and communications network; key government ministries; the political and religious leadership; and the nation's critical infrastructure.

In response, Quds Force has launched a major counter-offensive through its proxies in the region. Hezbollah, Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, the Houthis in Yemen, and numerous militia groups in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and elsewhere in the Middle East, have all carried out attacks against civilian and military targets in Israel and against U.S. and allied forces in the region. In addition, Iranian fast attack boats and anti-ship missiles launched from the naval base at Bandar Abbas have succeeded in damaging several vessels transiting through the Strait of Hormuz, thereby

blocking this vital shipping lane and interrupting the export of oil and gas from the Gulf States.

Pre-dispersed mobile transporter-erector-launchers have fired ballistic missiles at Vienna and Budapest. These TELs survived Coalition attacks on the Tabriz and Bakhtaran missile bases, and continue to pose a threat to cities in Central and Eastern Europe, as well as to other locations within range of the missiles.

Close cooperation established between Russia and Iran during the conflict in Ukraine, as well as long-standing links between Tehran, Beijing and Pyongyang, have further complicated the strategic outlook. Russia may be about to announce a general mobilisation, and China and the DPRK are conducting ICBM test-firing exercises.

This situation is rapidly spiralling out of control.

July 15

In view of recent developments, the Commanding General of I MEF has announced an operational pause, the duration of which is unknown. My battalion is now in full force-protection mode in the middle of an extremely hostile enemy city. There is almost constant small-arms fire from positions all around us; regular, highly accurate indirect mortar fire is being directed by spotters located in the minarets of the many mosques in the area. Logistical problems are impacting the ability of my battalion to sustain the fight in the face of such determined resistance. Food, water, fuel, and ammunition are all in short supply. Orders have been issued to conserve ammo until the promised resupply column can fight its way through to our location in the city. The artillery regiment is providing the infantry with vital fire support. (Given the proximity of the enemy's forces to our own positions, most of those fire missions are danger close.) From aircraft carriers positioned in the Persian Gulf, close air support is provided by Marine Corps AH-1 Cobras and F-35Bs, and ground-attack sorties are flown by Navy F/A-18s and F-35Cs, with the AEW and electronic warfare tasks fulfilled by E-2D Hawkeyes and E/A-18G Growlers, respectively.

July 16

Following the ballistic-missile attack on its capital, Hungary has invoked Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty, under which an attack on one NATO member is regarded as an attack on the entire Alliance.

July 18

Hungary's invocation has been confirmed. As a consequence, NATO is now at war with Iran.

July 19

In response to the latest series of events, Russia has deployed large numbers of troops, together with their supporting vehicles, armour, artillery and aircraft, to its western borders with NATO member states, from the Barents Sea, to the Baltic Sea, to the Black Sea. In addition, it has put its strategic nuclear forces on their highest state of alert.

July 22

Between the West Bank town of Jenin and the Israeli port city of Haifa, lies the Jezreel Valley. IDF troops and armour are pouring through this area to reinforce units stationed on the Golan Heights, and to secure Israel's northern border with Lebanon. As they drive along the highway, some of them may notice the ruins of an ancient city. The Hebrew name for this place is Megiddo. We know it as Armageddon.

An Early Easter Gift

Bernadette O'Reilly

This Saturday morning I ambled up the road from O'Connell Street
Dublin
And into the Remembrance Garden
A glorious sight greeted me and other visitors
In front of me and to the left and right
A host of beautiful white tulips stood tall and stately in tubs
I sat on a nearby bench
Drinking in this sight and peace wrapped itself
Around me
I had received an early Easter gift.

Whiskey Swigger

Matthew Tubridy

Charles lives in Foxrock,
Swigs whiskey every night,
Charles has a swing in his back garden,
He thinks about the folks of Ballybough
Because he used to live there,
Before he won the lotto,
He drives threw Ballybough in his merc,
With tinted bulletproof windows,
Because Charles used to be a drug dealer,
Whenever his enemies try to get into Foxrock to shoot him,
A forcefield appears,
They are instantly given casual clothing,
And degrees from UCD,
Hi! I'm from Monkstown they say,
The enemies from Ballybough go on a boat and land on Bullock Harbour
in Dalkey,
Ghostly figures walking up to Foxrock,
But they hit the forcefield,
I went to UCD they say,
Studied Architecture,
I like Frappuccino!
Charles says 'Here in Foxrock we do a dance like...
Charles shows them the dance,
Mr Architect man follows Charles,
I'm from Donnybrook he says!
Charles asks 'Can you do the Wa Tu?'
Charles is a solicitor in Dalkey...
McGettigan Solicitors,
We will write your will!
It says proudly at the door,
Accident? Injury? No problem!
But more of Charles enemies, land open Bullock Harbor,
With machine guns,
They fire into Charles practice,

Charles is hit in his neck,
The enemies advance on Foxrock,
Hoping Charles has a stash of money,
But as soon as they get to the forcefield their weapons are turned into
pens, as they say the pen is mightier than the sword,
They get permed hair, casual clothes,
They set up Solicitor practices,
around South Dublin,
Then the immigrants land on Bullock Harbour,
The go to the forcefield and become like Rishi Sunak,
Mothers from Ballymun send their kids to the forcefield,
Lawyer! Engineer!
That forcefield is UCD, just follow what the lecturers say!

Ballhopper

Steve Huenneke

What in the world
Is a Ballhopper?
Or might it be,
Who is a Ballhopper?
It might be --
Someone who crashes
A place where there are ballroom dancers
You know --
Like a pool hopper
Or a driver
Who crashes into another car
At a street corner
The thing is --
It might be --
I don't have a clue
I say to myself
You don't have a clue, do you?
You have to see it
So I look it up
On the Internet
In a market
Where there were pictures of people
In a gym
Riding big balls like horses
Oh --
I have seen those --
Yes --
I have seen those --
For decades
It is just one more case
Of, oh --
It never occurred to me
It might be --
It might be good

To associate a name with a face
Or in this case
With this thing –
In my unmarked file
Which all the while
Can come bouncing by and be bought in any colour
This thing –
That got lost in some dusty peripheral corner
Of my mind.

A Second Cup of Coffee

Greg Fields

Cooney blew into his hands, then wrapped them around the mug of coffee that sat before him. James Dunphy occupied the seat across the table and sipped his tea. Cold enough it was to call for the warmth of hot liquid and the rush of caffeine.

Other than the two of them, the shop was rather empty. Apparently few felt the need to venture out on a bitter December morning. Cooney and Dunphy had little choice, though. They had spent the preceding night in one of the city shelters, scratching some sleep under tatty, worn blankets and flipping about to find some position of comfort on too-hard cots. But it was warm enough there, and the others who had stumbled in for the night remained quiet. Morning came, and it was back to the streets.

Cooney and Dunphy sought shelter in the small coffee shop that sat near the corner of their square. The servers here passed no judgment on their clientele. This was safe space, and on this cold morning, it was safe space that served what they needed.

“D’ye think we might head over to Georgetown today, Matty? I think I’d like to. Change of scenery, and all that, and maybe a bit of luck there.”

Cooney smiled across the table. Dunphy came as close as Cooney might claim to being a friend. Of similar years, of similar experiences, and Dunphy placed on him neither demands nor threats. Two old fools stumbling to a vague finish line that neither could define, but that neither feared.

“I think I’ll stay around here, James. I seem to be losing my hunger for new faces.”

“Ah, the same, Matty, the same. It’s just that a man has to do something to break up his days, you know? Otherwise he can fall into a rut,” and with that James gave a low and throaty chuckle. If there was anything that defined their hardscrabble existence, it was the sameness of their days. Some ruts ran too deeply, and they both knew it.

They sat in silence and sipped their drinks. People on the sidewalks outside bundled by with heads down and their hands in pockets. Wispy clouds floated upward as they exhaled into the cold.

Cooney was about to go back to the counter to beg a day-old bagel when the shop's door flew open and a man Cooney knew by sight but not by name dashed in, breathless and flushed. He ran to Cooney, grabbed his elbow and panted to catch his breath.

"Cooney. You got to come with me. Come on. Now, you gotta come."

James Dunphy rose to where they stood. "What is it now, Frankie?", for he knew this man. Another one from the streets.

"Can't say," and he went on through his pants, "Can't say. But you have to see this. Follow me."

Cooney looked at Dunphy and nodded to him. With that, the three went back out into the cold. Down the block and around a corner to a narrow alleyway, and then to the dumpster at its rear, the dumpster that sat in back of the restaurant that catered to the weekday downtown business clientele.

Frankie pointed, then turned his head away. Cooney went to the edge of the dumpster and leaned over the rim.

There, amid the discarded food and the squalling of the rats that sought it, the lifeless eyes of another young man of the streets stared up at him. Blood congealed around a wound in his stomach, soaking his shirt and exciting the rats.

Cooney recoiled, then caught his composure and turned to the others. "What is it, Matty?," whispered James Dunphy.

"One of us, James. One of us for whom it ended badly."

James stepped back. Frankie stayed to the side, his hand over his eyes. "What do we do?"

"We leave him here, James. We're not the ones to deal with it.

He'll be found soon enough, and then the right people will take over. He'll find a pauper's grave."

“Did you recognize him, Matty? ”I didn’t look too closely, James. Nor did I ask for identification. But I recognize him. I’ve seen him. Here, on these streets. With us. And I reckon I’ll see him again.” He turned back to them.

“Come along, both of you. There’s nothing for us here. I’ll at least buy you both another coffee.”

Fishing

Matthew Tubridy

Fish, hauled aboard,
Sliced from head to flipper,
Innards slip to the bottom of the boat,
We are on Little Killary,
In the boat,
Suddenly I see a shoal of mackerel,
You know there because they make a disturbance in the water,
I cast my line with glee,
I get 5 mackerel in that cast!
I haul them aboard,
I whack their heads off the side of the boat,
My sister is aghast,
She gets the mackerel blood from the floor of the boat,
And then rubs it into her face,
After we go back to the cottage,
My mum fries up the mackerel,
And puts it on the table,
My sister says 'Ew!
I remember Mathew banging those mackerel on the side of the boat,
Blood everywhere,
I'm not eating that!
Give it to Matthew!'
Next days Mum roasts a chicken,
'There was blood on that chicken!
Ew!'
Next time my sister goes to Lidl she buys
vegetarian sausages and chicken,
And Red lentils,
And so it began,
Vegetarian Christmas dinners,
Lentil lasagne.

21st Century Saunter in Dublin

Roni Moore

I wandered lonely as an asshole through the streets of Dublin town
when all at once I heard a crowd
a group of giggling Dublin young wans
and as they passed I studied their ass
as their skirt hems were higher than their bum cheeks
one looked back and hailed to me
what are you lookin at says she
I don't know says I, but its looking back at me
oh you think you're so smart you silly old fart the young lady said to me
and I thought to myself
isn't Dublin a wonderful place all the same.

We Do Things Differently In This Century

Tina Irving

This certainly applies to Northern Ireland – although it is not clear which century Northern Ireland are in. It would appear not when they don't know how to formulate professional letters, and don't know they have to be on headed paper. They don't even know how much they have spent on illegally removing an elderly tenant from her housing association property and banning her from the province. She is obviously too modern for these Lambeg drum banging thugs. I suppose they have done me a favour really – the interesting thing is they didn't want me to go to the Republic and join the hot heads down there, but on the ferry to Scotland. I had to go without passport which they "couldn't find". Eventually it was found in the depths of Craigavon Court, where the PSNI Officer had hidden it. It was sent in the post. At least that works.

As the DUP drag Northern Ireland deeper into the mire by refusing anything to do with Brexit, and oppose whatever anyone puts before them. I say "good" it's another step towards a united Ireland – once the bigots have left.

I just could not believe that they had given a journalist job to Arlene Foster, yes, that same Arlene Foster who brought Stormont to its knees before.

Well, I was never really accepted in the north, despite my accent (which went down well with the dykes in Hyde Bank prison – where I languished for 7 weeks without trial). I was just too energetic and loveable – as all of the Inkies know. To be clear, I was not "deported" - one cannot "deport" a British citizen from the UK, no matter what Carla Lockhart DUP says. It was because they did not like my plant pots. An injunction on plant pots, who puts an injunction on plant pots for goodness sake. Well, the little fat policeman got his thuggish way and put me away. For what is not entirely clear, as the "evidence" was non-existent. Not proper evidence. There were a few letters which were actually civil matters, but as Northern Ireland lives in the past they did not know that.

The case rattles on and now we are in Parliament – with the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee – and the PM who is desperate to keep his Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.

Radius will lose its charitable status, I'll get the whole thing overturned in England and there'll be a fat compensation package. How are we going to spend it guys!

Family Feast

Matthew Tubridy.

In this family we share the food,
Would you like a chop?
Hand buster a chop,
Mint sauce anyone?
Jelly and ice cream for desert,
Thank you Harry, or do we thank God?
With a prayer.

A Minor Indiscretion

Gerard Byrne

June and Maggie paid the twenty euro cover charge with much complaints before entering the nightclub. Both of them taking off their long cheap jackets to reveal the matching gold minidresses that they had decided to wear that night. Unfortunately it hung off June's bony frame, giving her the look of a drug addicted prostitute while Maggie was squeezed into her outfit poorly. Rolls of fat hung out of every part of her dress. None of which was her bosom, which unfortunately she lacked.

"Look at all the young talent on show tonight", Maggie nudged her friend in the ribs as she pointed at a six foot fella who looked like he worked out, "bet he could pick me up no problem"

"I highly doubt that", June sly eyed her friend's enormous figure, "think the poor fella would put his back out from even trying"

"Cheeky mare", Maggie protested, "hope there's a few seats free in here", she glanced around the nightclub, "these leather boots are made for show, not as much for practical use"

"You can sit in the ball hoppers corner", announced a bald bouncer who was standing nearby"

The two friends looked at each other in confusion, before Maggie asked, "why is it called the ball hoppers corner?"

The bouncer laughed, "because it's normally filled with desperate olde ones like you, who are only out to jump as many young men's balls as possible before the lights come on and the poor fuckers get a fright"

"Cheeky bastard", June already had her hands on her narrow hips, "think you forget. Adam right?"

The bouncer wearily nodded in agreement.

"Think you forget that your mother Deirdre was well known for ball hopping in her day. Even when she was married to your father. Come to think of it, you have pretty dark skin for a man whose so called father

was called Seamus and was from Donegal. You look more like Mario who owned the chipper down the town”

The bouncer’s face went red, “I’ll fuck you out that door if you keep talking shite like that”

“Promises promises”, joked Maggie, before grabbing her friend’s arm and guiding her away to the cloak room.

Soon they had their jackets gotten rid of and were now standing at the edge of the dance floor ogling all the young men.

“I’m getting fanny flutters from just looking at them”, June was glad that she wore her best knickers for the night out. The ones that she bought for Valentine’s Day five years ago. Yes, they had very little material and yes they were crotchless. But they made her feel good about herself.

“Only thing I can feel coming is a fart”, complained Maggie. She started to tense her body as she waited for it force its way out of her.

“Told you not to eat that second portion of curried chips”, June was waiting for the toxic smell to fill the air.

Maggie grabbed the counter in front of her and let rip. Unfortunately a lot more than just gas fired out and a large plopping sound could be heard over the loud music. A horrible smell filled the air which forced June to look down at the carpet below them. There on the floor was a steaming smelly liquid poo.

“For the love of god”, June tried not to vomit.

Maggie looked down at the floor behind her and shrugged her shoulders, “thing this is as good a time as any to go for a fag”

“I couldn’t agree more”, replied June.

And with that, the two friends disappeared off into the crowd as an unsuspecting young man slipped in Maggie’s poo and fell on the floor. Best thing they could do now was to pretend they knew nothing about it and hope that the security cameras didn’t pick up on their minor indiscretion.

Ballhoppers Fun House

Catriona Murphy

Mary was skimming stones across the canal, zeroing in on its ripple effects; the concentric circles gently swayed the reeds on the opposite side.

The setting sun burned between those rods, the orange blob cast her mind back to her fun fair days. Back to the hall of mirrors called 'Ballhoppers Fun House'. Back then, endless reflections stared back at a ten year old Mary.

Those were the days when her energy and vibrancy of youth had shone hotter than a star. The passing of time, however, had waned it. So Mary, in her late forties now, skimmed stones and tried to remember, but not remember, the raven that sat atop one of those mirrors, a burst of stardust that had her coughing, the room spinning so fast all her reflections had blurred into one.

Two of her emerged from the hall of mirrors that night, her doppelganger dashed into the trees, and her inner child pushed the memory from her mind to protect and preserve her sanity over the years. To cast aside the obscurities of that past.

Whatever forces were at work, when she ran from the place that night, she did not care to know. Compartmentalising was her specialty, or so her retail manager had told her, at her company's thirtieth year anniversary, where she'd received employee of the year for the fourth time in a row, ignoring the jealous looks from colleagues with struggling mortgages and marriages.

Mary had avoided those trappings, because she knew her double would come for her some day, knew it as much as the moon rising each night.

Whether it was turning at an ignorant corner, or absentmindedly taking her washing out of the machine or standing by a canal, she knew...

As Mary turned to go, to retrace her steps back to her one bed flat, where the electricity had been cut for the twentieth time (because retail doesn't pay well), and where the locks need changing from the amount

of times the front door had been kicked in, there stood her twin on the other side of the canal, smiling.

Her hair was white and her teeth were sharp and pearly white.

Dangling from her fingers was a shining pendant. Eyes dazzling, she said, 'You've got to see this.'

Mary's heart stopped beating.

Her time was up.

You've Just Got To See This

Mark L'estrange

Julie asked Paddy "How was your day" "Bit crazy I went to a superhero meetup, and it was like a Halloween party" Julie laughed "Ok I would say you fitted in well there." "Well not really I was the only one who had superpowers, so they said anyhow."

They were about to sit down for dinner when Paddy's phone rang it was the girl from the group she sounded very upset saying "I am so sorry to disturb you but you have to see this my dad's garage is under attack from these guys they seem to have powers too they are taking everything on us all our cars and they said if we don't let us have everything they are going to take my dad too."

"I will spin over now." He said, "Sorry Julie I will be back shortly, and we can go out to a restaurant of your choice I promise." "Ok just be careful."

When he arrived the garage was deserted, he looked around the place he found a stair case which led to the second floor, he climbed the stairs and saw the owner tied up in the corner of the office, he said to Paddy "This is weird they keep coming out of nowhere and taking more of my stuff."

He was untying the owner when one of the thief's appeared beside Paddy and pushed him to the ground, Spin Man jumped up and you guessed it put him in a spin he kept diapering and then reappearing in the same spin which gave him time to get the owner untied.

He said to the thief "Get all this man's stuff back or you will be spinning to prison with the rest of your friends." "You will have to find us first." Paddy saw a button on his belt he pressed it and the second he did the three of them appeared beside him along with all the gear they stole.

This in turn took away all their power and the Guards arrived just in time to take them away, but they took away Paddy as well saying "We warned you not to take things into your own hands call us first." The owner was furious saying "We did call you but there was no sign of you, so we called our friend Paddy who was super and I mean super help." It was no use they took him away with the criminals. The owner said, "Don't worry Paddy we will be fighting this in court, thanks so much for helping us."