

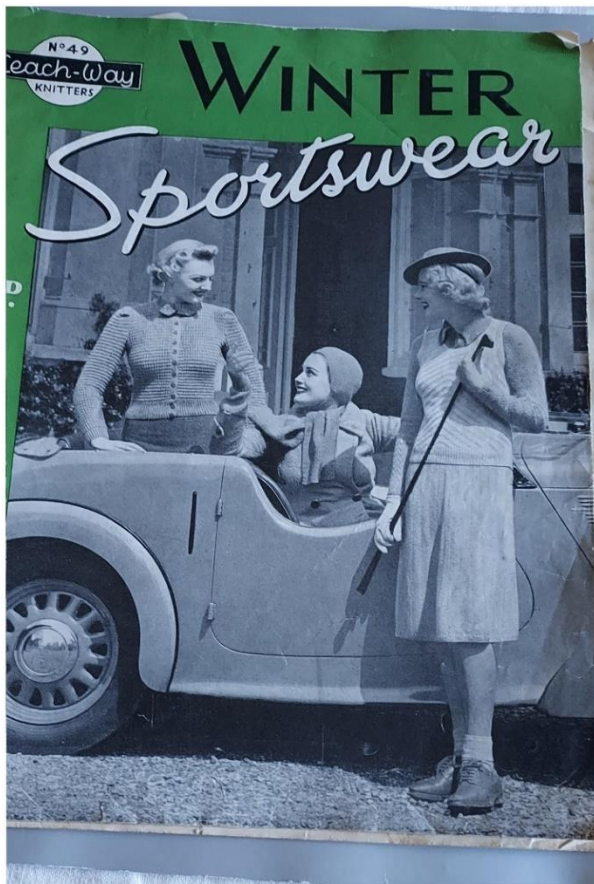
# Inkslingers Blended Session

10th June 2023

The Prompt from The Bag Was:

**"I Never Will Be Able..."**

And the Visual



## Along a Cold River

Greg Fields

Older than time, older than lust, as old as God Himself, there runs a tricklet through the hills of western Massachusetts. It begins small in the upper reaches, where no footfall ever breaks, a condensation of rainfall and snowfall, a runoff pulled down by the unseen forces of gravity and time. It begins in woods so thick that sunlight filters through as if hidden by gauze. It begins in the company of deer and raccoons and the occasional bear and the most beautiful of woodland creatures, the red fox. It starts its way to the songs of birds, twittering invisible in the dense overgrowth, the chirping of grosbeaks, the chattering of the aggressive jays, the laughter of the finches. It draws its way down slowly, a gentle line of pure water that grows with each new ridge, with each twist of path or course.

It begins in silence, unnoticed but for the forces that formed it, a necessary creation.

From its hidden, unseen origin it gathers strength as it is joined by more runoff. After a mile or so it becomes broad enough to forge its own pathway, finding the right spot where the pressures of the land give way to the pressures of the water. It forms a recognizable body, deep enough now to give life and shelter to small fish, deep enough for the native creatures to drink from it, wide enough to have what might pass for banks, and upon which grow the weeds and willows peculiar to a wet land.

Near the tiny Berkshire town of Charlemont it becomes broad enough to warrant the appellation of 'river.' No one can know when it became known as such. It has no other name. It is just the cold river that runs along the backwood line of the town, too large to be overlooked, too small to earn a name of its own. It is just the cold river. For generations children have played along its sides. Not a one in three hundred years has come close to tragedy there. No drownings, no slipped footing that splits open a careless skull along its rocks, no diving into water deceptively shallow. The cold river is too thin for swimming. Children run along its sides, drag sticks through the water, chase the tiny fish that skirt beneath it. And they drink from it, too. The water, as the name

implies, is pure, cold and fresh. It is the melted snow of a January morning, the icy rains of November, the cooled and settled mists of April. The cold river holds a full year within its sides, and has never claimed a life. The cold river is as benign and as peaceful as the gentlest human soul.

Dan Rosselli took the hand of his woman and walked her along the quiet shoreline. He knew this woman, but not well. She had a first name, a last name, and a story which blurred in his memory. She was one of many. But she was here with him this day, and she grew enraptured by the air, the swish of moving water and the chirping of the birds.

She grabbed his hand and turned to him. "Oh, Dan, I will never forget this day. I won't be able. This is all so beautiful."

Rosselli only smiled in response.

"I mean it, Dan," she went on. "I'm just a city girl," and she wrapped her arms around him and pulled him close. "I'm your city girl."

It was all working out so well, this day. They had made the drive north, around the city, and come here, away from all eyes and all sense and all considerations of right and wrong. To this cold and lonely river in western Massachusetts where the trees might hide them from the sky, might hide them from other eyes. Might hide them from themselves.

They drew back to their car and drove a short distance on to the place Rosselli had booked for the night, an upscale private resort in the dense woodlands. And later then, as the afternoon grew drowsy, they walked into the dense woodlands, unseen and unseeable, and found the place they had been before. There they entwined their bodies to make love almost desperately, a man and his lover, each running their own courses through their own landscapes, each as shallow as the stream that was a silent witness to their lovemaking, and each, unknowingly, as cold.

## **Anna Horgan**

### **Never in my life will I be able.....**

The woman was woken by the rays of sunlight through the partly open curtains of her bedroom .

Fifty..

Fifty..

Fifty..

The word echoed in her brain - tolling like a medieval warning bell.

It felt alien to be fifty.

She remembered the excitement of eighteen.

Then feeling a proper grown up at thirty.

Forty felt fine .

But fifty?

She couldn't make head nor tail of fifty!

In the bathroom she looked in the mirror.

Not toooo... bad for fifty.

She extracted the reading glasses from her dressing gown pocket and looked again..

She smiled and shook her head.

Laughter lines - ok she would take those.

Worry lines - with 2 sons- inevitable.

Frown lines- what can I expect with fifty years of living on the clock?

In the kitchen her husband was writing a list.

He read it to her.

Anything else for tonight? he asked

"Champagne "she said "I want champagne for all my birthdays from now on - it's the new me"

"That's it" she thought as she drank her breakfast tea.

I'll make a bucket list.

All the things I'll do now that I'm in life's second act.

An annoying inner voice said third act but she ignored that.

She picked up a pen and the envelope containing the rubbish collection bill.

#### BUCKET LIST

- train and run a marathon.

-climb mount Kilimanjaro.

- read Ulysses.

- get Botox.

- keep house as tidy as Marie kondo.

She felt her worry and frown lines deepening with each line she wrote.

Fuck it - I'll never in my life be able to do those !

I'm too fond of my comfort to bother running a marathon ,climb Kilimanjaro ,turbo tidy or read Ulysses.

And I'm terrified of needles so that's Botox out!

She scratched out the words bucket list and wrote in capitals-

#### FUCK IT LIST-

All the things I never want to do!

She felt much better

She decided to go for a walk.

She stacked her breakfast dishes on the kitchen counter.

She brushed her hair and

rubbed on a bit of face cream.

She climbed the hill near her house and looked at the sea, shades of grey illuminated by a fan of sunshine filtering through the clouds.

She was engrossed in a Marion Keyes book when

Her husband got home.

" I don't believe it "he said

"I forgot the champagne-

I'll run back and pick it up"

"Fuck the champagne "she replied

"We'll pop down to Centra later for the usual cheap fizz-

It's what I always have on my birthday and I really like it "

## **Trevor the Hairdresser**

**Matthew Tubridy**

Trevor is a hairdresser  
But he started looking at horror movies,  
So he decided that instead of cutting peoples hair he would chop off  
their heads,  
Do the next day Liam comes in,  
Trevor had sharpened his scissors to perfection,  
He plunged in into Liams neck,  
Blood spurted out,  
Liam fell to the ground,  
He got a big axe and drove it down on Liams neck,  
Soon enough his head came away from the body,  
Trevor put the head in the back room,  
On a shelf,  
A policeman comes in next,  
But Trevor didn't disinfect where the blood was on the floor,  
The policeman sniffs the air,  
In the back room the blood is dripping from the head,  
Short back and sides says policeman,  
He goes to sit down but slips on the blood on the floor,  
He kneels down and rubs the floor...  
Looks at Trevor,  
Trevor's hands are dripping with blood too.  
Policeman requests backup,  
2 of his colleagues arrive,  
Trevor is carted away.  
In prison he's know as Trev the mad hairdresser,  
He offers to cut peoples hair but they quietly decline,  
He smuggles scissors into the prison,  
Don't mess with Trev the scissors guy

## **I Never Will..**

**Bernadette O'Reilly**

I never will be able  
To wear sportswear  
I never will be able  
To climb a mountain  
I never will be able  
To ski  
I never will be able  
To swim  
I never will be able  
To scuba dive  
I never will be able  
To deep sea dive  
I never will be able  
To bicycle race  
I never will be able  
To run round a track  
I never will be able  
To hill walk  
I can be positive.



## **Things I Won't Ever Do**

**Laura Alves**

I never will be able to ride standing up on a motorbike, not even with someone else riding it, as I will never try that!

I never will be able to get a 147 break on a snooker table, as I don't think my life is enough practice time for that.

I never will be able to sing in The X Factor, just because I hate Simon Cowell!!!

I never will be able to write the book that has been on my mind for years, because I have too many ideas for it and can't start to get them to paper or to the computer.

I believe being able to do something involves too many things that are not on our control.

It is not just about having the capacity to do something, but also wishing to do it, having the time to get ready for it and even things like the weather and distance can prevent us from doing it.

But deep down I believe in the end it is a question of priority in life. If it is something you are really meant to do, concentrate on what you can and eventually obstacles will be surpassed and when you least expect it, you will have achieved the previously impossible!

## **The Car Park Attendant**

**Matthew Tubridy**

Rob is a car park attendant,  
He has a mean streak,  
He tells the drivers there's enough room in a spot,  
He enjoys the crunch of metal,  
And the squeal of the drivers,  
Large gashes in the car's exteriors!  
Rob didn't do well in the Leaving Cert,  
His Dad wanted him to be a vet,  
But Rob was adamant he would be a car park attendant,  
He wanted to sound of scraping metal!  
And he got it,  
One day he scrapped a BMW jeep,  
Also he gets the car drivers to give him their keys,  
When their gone he rips up their seats,  
When drivers come back their cars are a mess,  
Rob sells the messed up cars to a recycling yard,  
Eventually a government official comes,  
He ties Rob up in chains,  
Calls the guards,  
Rob is taken away in a Garda van,  
In prison he smashes toy cars for the buzz,  
The prison guards give him toy cars to smash to vent his anger

## **I Never Will Be Able...**

**Angelina Kelly**

Jacqueline met her friends outside the winter sportswear shop. It gave her a chance to show off her new automobile. She was the only one on her street to possess such a vehicle. Although she felt slightly guilty about that, nonetheless she decided to enjoy her newfound wealth and purchase items that, up to then, she could only dream about, and the car was her biggest extravagance.

Pulling up outside the shop she noticed her friends were already waiting. She tooted the horn to get their attention and was delighted to see the expressions of awe and wonder on their faces. Expertly she parked the car at the side of the road and greeted them.

“Hello, ladies... well what do you think?”

“It’s so big.” Maeve exclaimed.

“And looks pretty impressive.” Betty added.

“It was strange driving it at first but, I’ve got used to it now. I can’t imagine how I ever got around with it.”

“Is it comfortable?” Maeve enquired.

“It’s a bit rattley, but it’s faster than walking so it’s worth the little bit of discomfort.”

“I don’t know how you have the confidence to drive it.” Betty said.

“Practice. The more I drive it, the more confident I become.”

“But what if you hit something... or someone?”

“So far, I haven’t. But I will handle that situation when I do.”

Well, I admire you. I never will be able to drive.” Betty proclaimed.

## **Lester Rabbit**

### **Matthew Tubridy**

A rabbit goes from one side of his cage to the other,  
From the water drip to the feed tray,  
And back again,  
His name is Lester,  
He has a friend called Sofie,  
His owner is Freddy,  
Freddy gives rabbit a bit of burger,  
Rabbit sits in front of his large screen TV,  
Has a can of coke,  
Rabbit looks out his window,  
Rabbits walk past,  
Mammy rabbits and baby rabbits,  
All the make rabbits had to go fight in Ukraine,  
Rabbit goes to the shop like Freddy Flintstone,  
Rabbit goes to the swimming pool,  
His fur gets all wet,  
He complains to the pool attendant,  
Rabbit goes back to his water drip and feed tray

**Mr. Belkis**

**Miguel Angel Rivera**

Once Upon a time on a snowy mountain in Switzerland there was a hospital. The kind where the patients bore no worry about the costs of healthcare, as these were covered by an assortment of government and private funds. In that very hospital was a wing filled with patients from all over the world. Broken souls, whom most would regard as foolhardy for having come to this mountain seeking a skiing adventure but instead plunged headfirst into a very sad state indeed.

Some had simply lost an arm, an eye, or a leg, while still others were fully blind. One man in the corner was a quadriplegic. There was little hope of recovery for him among the medical staff, and his visits and calls had now dwindled down to the occasional birthday well-wishes or hastily bought Christmas cards.

That immobile man could however, speak. On this particular day he was yet again annoying Brenda, who lay on the bed closest and directly beside his.

“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”, The man recited over and over seemingly without end in sight, the verse from Philippians 4:13.

Brenda’s thumb was now thoroughly numb from hitting the button to summon the nurses, who had defaulted to taking turns ignoring her. They could and would do nothing to silence the man and had grown quite tired of burning calories in the walk from their station to Brenda’s bedside. Frustrated, Brenda briefly considered biting her own tongue off to end her misery, but being a double amputee had neither dimmed nor abated her stubborn American spirit.

Now at the height of exasperation, Brenda allowed the most blood curdling of shrieks to escape her mouth, in hopes that even the very inept nursing staff would have no choice but to listen. It was a guttural, animal-like, reaction, and one that she mentally had no expectation of resolving her dilemma. Much to her shock however, the man suddenly stopped.

This man, who'd laid next to her for weeks on end without budging, having his every biological need attended to day and night, turned his head toward her. It happened with a sudden, and quite disturbing motion, in defiance of all known medical studies of what quadriplegia should be. His eyes were wide open, glassy, green, and intense, like two blood shot jewels.

"He is coming.", Was the odd and sufficiently cryptic expression that left his mouth, while Brenda's hung open. The next moment he was gone. Gone from his bed, gone from the room, gone from existence. The bandages and hospital gown were still on his special bed as alarms began screeching due to his sudden absence.

In ran three distressed and now very pale-looking nurses, one still with lunch crumbs in the corner of her mouth. They searched the room but could not find a single sign of Mr. Belkis.

Brenda, meanwhile, lay staring at the ceiling in shock and for some odd reason felt a hot sensation of pain in her lower extremities. She uttered one fragment of a sentence. "I could never...."

## Out being a cyclist on the Camino de Santiago

Matthew Tubridy

Shouting and screaming,  
Gaaa!  
But then they go back to their home country and do the accounts,  
John'O cycles,  
Asks someone to take his photo,  
I'm a man with a beard,  
I Drabble in crypto cryptocurrency,  
I have a little scooter,  
When I stop cycling threw Spain,  
I go Whooo!  
As I get into the village,  
I slurp back a beer,  
I skid as I stop,  
I go Whooo!  
My wheels get me there,  
I wouldn't like to my wheel to puncture,  
I'd be walking like anyone else,  
I wouldn't be able to go Whooo!  
I'd take off my cycling clothes,  
I'd get blisters in my cycling shoes,  
I'd be last in the queue,  
for coke a cola,  
Mr Man throws away his bicycle,  
From now on I'm a man of the ditch!  
Until he goes back to Holland where he does the accounts,  
He goes back to his apartment in Amsterdam,  
Dreams of cycling, going waaaa!  
Sips his tea in his apartment,  
Waaaaa he used to go,  
In his Lycra,  
He goes to work,  
Does the accounts,  
Gets a coffee,  
He polishes his bike at night,

It's a cube, with big wheels,  
He books a flight to Bilbao,  
He puts his bike on the plane,  
In a cardboard box.



## **I will never be able**

**Mark L'estrange**

Paddy phoned Stephen, and explained what to do. "You need to keep your head down for an hour or so they are trying to arrange to get us to the airport I will keep you posted."

"Ok I will go find a place for something to eat and call you and let you know where I am." The ambassador said to Paddy.

"We should be ready to go in about ten minutes." He phoned him back and told him that.

"Ok I will move away from the station there is taxi rank close to here I will stand across the road."

Paddy and a few of the agents headed to the carpark and got into this jeep that looked very safe and secure to Paddy. They drove out of the carpark a secret way that led to them to a country road Paddy said, "We are supposed to collect Stephen where are we going I told you where he is?"

"Sorry we are under orders to just get you back safe your friend is classed as a liability to us all here in Mexico." "No you got to let me out of here I promised Stephen I would never be able to do that to him." "We have our orders we need to get you back safe Paddy."

"I understand can you at least stop somewhere and I can tell Stephen where we are and he can make his way surely it's not that far please?" The driver stopped and agreed to try help him he said. "We can only stop here for ten minutes at most because if we are spotted it could compromise the embassy."

He phoned Stephen "You need to be really quick I have sent you where we are you need to get here now because the lads can only stop for a few minutes."

"Thanks Paddy I am on my way google maps is working."

The driver was starting to panic saying "Paddy I am going to have to go now." Just then he saw Stephen running towards the jeep, he jumped in

and off they went. "You are a lucky man Stephen they were just about to leave." He thanked them all for waiting.

Stephen asked. "How on earth are we going to get through passport control?"

"Don't worry about that you don't have to go through that we can bring you to a secret way that will get you on the gangway that leads to the plane."

"How on earth did you swing that one?" asked Paddy

"Your guy at home the Super has being in touch with agents in the airport to make this happen." It all went to plan, they drove into the staff area where they were transferred onto baggage handler truck where they snuck on to the plane, as they got on Stephen said. "Flying isn't my favourite but will never be able to say that again"

To be continued.

## **Burgos Bus Station**

**Matthew Tubridy**

Tobbo we is waiting for a bus ticket,  
In Burgos Bus station,  
Big queue,  
Tobbo is Spanish so he's used to it,  
He sees Micko talking to the guy who gives the tickets,  
Taking ages,  
There's a big queue waiting for Micko to get his ticket,  
Suddenly Fergus steps forward,  
He smashes the window,  
He grabs a ticket going anywhere!  
But decides to go to Madrid,  
He jumps on the bus,  
Flashes his ticket to his bus driver!  
Says drive drive!  
On the way Fergus says Stop Stop!  
I must go to McDonalds!  
If you don't stop I'll smash the windows of your bus!  
He shows his fist to the driver,  
It has blood running down it,  
Driver stops right away,  
Fergus buys a chicken burger for everyone on the bus,  
They continue driving to Madrid,  
By fields and the great Spanish sun,  
When they get to Madrid,  
Fergus parks the bus outside his house,  
All the passengers disembark,  
A bit grumpy it didn't get to the bus station,  
There's Buddo,  
Who challenges Fergus to a fight,  
If I win the fight I get to park the bus outside my house!  
The 2 square up,  
But then Molly rings the police,  
5 squad cars arrive,  
The police subdue Fergus and Buddo,

They tow the bus back to the bus station,  
It's back belonging to the Spanish people!

## Winter Sports

Ciaran O'Melia

Grayson, it was the thing to do, took up golf late in life. Or at least he tried to.

The first hurdle up was the clubs; he did not have any, then the gear. He was the foreman of the workshop, and in the privacy of his office, he reckoned no one could hear him, but little did he know that the boys who worked with him or under him had set up a speaker; their attitude was more to see if the business would stay afloat. All is fair in love and war.

The second hurdle was related to 'where to play', easy that he drew on a map of Dublin a circle about 100 yds from his home, this soon changed to 500 yds, and then it changed again to one mile and eventually 5 miles.

He then set out to ring around, and the conversation went like so;

Out of the corner of his mouth, he whispered, "Do you do lessons."

"Funny that they hung up" he said it so softly the guy at the other end, thinking it must be an obscene call, hung up.

Never daunted, he tried more, but this time he spoke freely.

He responded, "Oh yes, we have a professional here."

He got excited, but it only lasted till he asked the cost; some hung up, their attitude being 'If you have to ask.'

Eventually, he hit on a response to his liken, "The first 15 minutes are free"

He interrupted the speaker, "Can you put me down." "Do you have clubs.?"

"Clubs, why no."

"Well, we do have rentals."

"How much are they?" Click, went the phone.

Grayson rang again. "I was talking to someone there and got cut off."

"Sorry, the phone slipped out of my grip. Now, what did you ask."

"You said we have rentals. I asked how much are they?"

"If you have to ask, then maybe the game of golf is not for you, but you need to know they are 75 Euros."

"That's expensive. I never be able to afford that. Do you have anything like one shaft, and as you go along, you screw in the head you will need for the next shot."

Click.

## **Pedro Sanchez**

### **Matthew Tubridy**

Pedro Sanchez, President of Spain,  
serves you a burger,  
You're in Spain now, he says,  
All the tourists are given burgers,  
They fly with Ryanair,  
Where's my luggage? they ask  
Holding my medication,  
Pedro Sanchez meet's tourists off their bus,  
Tourist come for the sunny beaches,  
Pedro Sanchez has a million people on his fingertips,  
Nuala comes for a Spanish beach and the sun,  
Pedro Sanchez flies her plane,  
Gives her watermelon,  
Carries her bag up to her room in the hotel,  
Drives her taxi,  
Pedro Sanchez cleans her room,  
Pedro Sanchez has a million workers at his fingertips,  
Pedro Sanchez cleans the runway of the airport,  
He squeezes the oranges to give Nuala orange juice,  
He picks rubbish off the beach,  
Nuala lies down on the beach,  
Pedro comes over to offer her an iced cold drink,  
All the Pedros get Nualas Visa card money,  
Taxi Pedro, runway cleaner Pedro,  
The Spanish government build a massive bed for Pedro Sanchez and all  
the tourists which come to Spain,  
Pedro Sanchez, leader of the Socialist Party of Spain,  
First to greet you as you come off the plane,  
First to give you a coffee,  
Drives you in a taxi,  
Brushes the sheets of your hotel bed,  
Disposed of the rubbish in your room,  
Places some yachts on the sea outside your bedroom window,  
Pedro Sanchez organises the council beside your resort,

To make a line of restaurants,  
Seafood, a pizzeria, burgers,  
Pedro Sanchez serves you up fries,  
And onion rings,  
Hires you a jet ski,  
And a windsurfing board,  
And after you get a pizza,  
And a lift back to the airport,  
He trains the Ryanair pilots,  
They're all called Pedro Sanchez,  
Pedro Sanchez,  
Drives the bus,  
Teaches in schools,  
Cleans the side of the road,  
Pedro Sanchez goes around in a big black car,  
Welcome to Spain! He says,  
As he serves a burger in McDonalds,  
In the body of Giselle,  
Pedro Sanchez stands for reliability,  
As he cleans the beaches of used plasters,  
He teaches children maths,  
Will Pedro Sanchez get to the moon?  
Pedro Sanchez also speaks in the Spanish Parliament,  
If you look at Spain from Space it looks like Pedro Sanchez's face,  
The name of reliability,  
And all the cakes in Spanish supermarkets look like Pedro Sanchez's  
face,  
Chocolate for his hair,  
Pedro Sanchez talks to the Irish Prime Minister,  
The Irish Prime Minister face is green,  
With a few brown boggy bits,  
They communicate,  
Pedro Sanchez is first to greet you off the ferry to Bilbao,  
He loops the rope on the dock.