

Inkslingers Blended Session

27th May 2023

The Prompt from The Bag Was:

“When Life Gives You Melons, You Might Be Dyslexic”

And the Visual



Joyce On A Wall

The Dyslexicon

Stephen Brady

When life gives you melons, make melonade
An agnostic questions the existence of Dog
Always look before you peel
Art everyone with the same brush
And press ahead: heedless of the garden
When you can't see the wood for the steer
Remember: to each his now
And you can heal the sick, the halt, the maul
For every god has his day,
And all good things must come to a den.
But one day you will learn the Meaning Of File
And your name will vile forever.
So when life gives you melons, make melonade
And you will be the one to swear the clown.

Our Backs Are To The Wall

Mark L'estrange

Ten minutes had passed and Stephen said "I feel a bit sick you spun me too fast." "Sorry for that I just wanted to make sure it worked." They heard some shouting going on outside Paddy said, "Remain calm Stephen they don't know I have my powers back we can get out of here."

Next thing the door burst opened it was the police joined by the crooks who took Paddy and Stephen away. Paddy said. "Thank God you are here these guys locked us up here, are you going to arrest them" It turned out the cops were involved in the whole thing.

They said, "You are not going anywhere like our friends said we have some work for your friend Stephen and you can help to Paddy." "I certainly cannot." Their backs were against the wall and they were both worried because the amount of police and they were all armed to the hilts.

Paddy whispered to "Stephen here is the plan when I say three you make a run for it and I will get them spinning." He got to three and like lighting he had the whole lot of them spinning like a roller-coaster Paddy and Stephen ran to one of the cars luckily they left the keys in the ignition they spun away really quick. Paddy said. "We better get out of here quick before they stop spinning." "That was amazing how did you get them all spinning." "Don't care to be honest just glad to be out of there."

Paddy was thinking how on earth are we going to get out of this country, he rang the superintendent and explained what happened he said. "Here is what you will have to do go to make your way to the Irish embassy I will send you the location they will organise your repatriation home." "Ok thanks this is a mad place" They noticed there were police everywhere Stephen suggested we they get a disguise so they found a costume shop in a local town and as they did they went inside.

Stephen saw an Elvis suit and said, "Can I get this I am a big fan?" "No we are not going to a fancy dress we will stick out like sore thumbs dressed like that." Paddy saw a few hats and fake beards "Lets grab these and some sunglasses, and I think we should ditch the car and use public transport." "Good idea Paddy."

He got the message on his phone of where the embassy is so they went to the nearest train station they looked for Goldsmith 53, Piso 4, Poanco. That is where the Irish embassy is. Luckily there was a train that went directly to that area, but it was a four hour journey. They were both happy because they need a rest.
To be continued.

Beneath blue skies
Deirdre Powell.

Beneath blue skies and heat hazes
Lie the dreams of sunnier climes;
The chance to go exploring,
the promise of adventures,
tales of the unexpected.

Beneath silken skies of crystalline blue,
I lie down, at full stretch,
Soaking up rays of sunshine
The heat haze descends unrelentingly
Mad people in the midday sun.

I dip my toe in the sea,
The sand crunches under my feet,
The waters filter around my toes,
I feel its Mediterranean glow
More relaxed and refreshed than ever in months.

Beneath blue, silken skies and heat hazes,
Lie sandcastles decorated by seashells
Crafted by children and would-be kiddies,
There is no sense of the passage of time,
Only the beauty of a precious present.

Joyce On A Wall

Magda Velloso

I was walking down the street in a very small town where I was spending the week end visiting a friend when, turning a corner, I was surprised by this huge drawing on the wall of James Joyce's famous photo where he has his hands in his trouser pockets. I knew the portrait well – it had been part of the life I have been sharing with Joyce from childhood.

As a young girl, I often heard my father boast of a photo of his youth saying "Look! This is the portrait of the artist as a young man!". Of course I couldn't fathom the fact that he was quoting Joyce's novel. But I was reminded of it as soon as I started reading his works when in my post grad adventure.

And there I was, facing the man I would choose as my academic companion for life. I was soon reminded of the fact that when life gives you melons you might be dyslexic, but I was not to be ambushed by that, for life had presented me with Joyce, and that's where I would fix my umbrella, as Brazilians use to say when you are committed with someone or something for life.

So, both my thesis and my dissertation were focused on Joyce – and soon found myself immersed in traditional songs of the 18th and 19th centuries, inserting them in my studies of this great writer, discussing Irish history and culture and the works of Joyce. My work was not directed at Irish people, of course, for I could never write things the Irish did not know. But it made me very happy to mix history, culture, politics, songs and Joyce.

He was the large melon life gave me – and I think I made a palatable juice of this melon.

When Life Gives You Melons, You Might Be Dyslexic

Tina Irving

Instead of writing an “inspired” piece, I started doing some research as to why this prompt. As I am now a University student again, studying the Economics of Renewable Energy, my writing will be back to the journalistic and academic style I have been trying to get away from for all the years I have been with the Inxies. I found lots of references such as the book “When Life Gives You Melons You Might Be Dyslexic: Funny Life Moments Journal and Notebook for Boys Girls Men and Women of All Ages. Lined Paper Note Book. Paperback – 24 July 2019 by Janice H McKlansky.

Another source on “Another Way Round” states that “When life gives you melons instead of lemons, initially you actually don’t know any different! You are blissfully unaware! You feel confident with what you have and just get on with life. But then as life goes on you do notice that perhaps you don’t have what the person next to you has... LEMONS! You question it a bit with yourself, but seem to be doing okay with your melon – so you continue, maybe a bit cautiously and maybe you don’t tell anyone you don’t have lemons, you keep that bit hidden! Then one day someone asks you where your lemonade is? You don’t know how to respond – because you never had lemons and had absolutely no idea that they made lemonade!”

Life throws you curved balls at the most unexpected times such as matters in Northern Ireland. One just has to face it, but not necessarily accept it. If dyslexia means that one has an enquiring mind and likes to keep things moving forward, I am definitely dyslexic.

PS: Great news about the PSNI investigation. Though watch this space. I am not holding my breath that it will be complete any time soon, and the National Crime Agency and Westminster may have to step in first.

Dyslexia

Bernadette O'Reilly

At school I was never good at maths or Geography.
There was not much interest in history
And no interest at all in learning Irish
Me and a few others made use of our Irish class To play X's and O's.
Back then I did well in religious classes also English.
I would come home in the afternoons with stars In my copybook.
The advent of technology and the passing years Have slowly robbed me
of my ability to spell
And now my best friend is Mr Google.

Joyce with his back to the wall.

Ciaran O'Melia

'I wonder, has he a few bob on him?' Joyce thought.

While the guy with the camera thought, 'I know well he is broke, what did I ask him to pose for? Now he going to touch me up.' He started to gather up his books for class. 'I could blame it on the wind, but fuck that, there is no wind in Dublin today. I could empty my pockets and show him I have nothing. That is the trouble with friends; they know all the tricks, and me with ten bob in my shoe.'

"Tell me," Joyce said in hushed tones, more in confidence than anything else.

Gogarty raised his eyebrows in a quizzed manner.

"Tell me this," he leaned forward, "Do you have the lend of a tenner, or anything, just till I get the check from the Feis?"

"What check it that?"

"Oh, you haven't heard. I came second in the mansion house. I got two pounds for a second, although I should have won. My piano accompaniment hit a bum note. It put me off."

"I'm tight meself," after some thought, he said, "I'll bare a search."

"Now, there's no need for that, I am loth to ask you this, but I heard the jingle of coins as we walked into the garden."

'Bollox', thought Gogarty, 'he's a whore to sniff out money. "I've only four half-crowns, and that's the rent."

"Listen, it's only till I get the check, and besides that, me back is to the wall.

"Will you promise? I need this to pay off the landlord."

So with that, Gogarty opened the lace of his shoe, took out the warm money, and said, "

Five shillings for each of us."

“One last question.”

Gogarty stood with an open mouth. ‘Could he ask to take the other shoe off.’ Before he could say anything, Joyce said.

“Are you going for a pint?”

When Life Gives You Melons

Anna Horgan

When life gives you melons you may be dyslexic,
Or the lemons may be playing a trick
So afraid of being squeezed
They foolishly feeled
That the melons had much better luck.

What a wonderful ruse
They foolishly muse
As they sit in your bag feeling snooty
We've avoided our fate
And will sit on a plate
As a decorative object of beauty.

Alas and alack
Their plan is in vain
The horrible knife is en route
Falling in pieces they fizzle with spite
For vengeance-the wedge that you bite
Will be bitter - you killer of fruit!

The Vision of Closed Eyes

Greg Fields

It was on a plane crossing the Atlantic when Conor Finnegan felt the first pangs of age. He did not know how much longer he could do this, how much a body and its tattered spirit might be able to take.

For two weeks he had been chasing the wind, carting to the remote rural districts of India and Bangladesh, watching sunsets over indescribable shades of green he had never before seen, or even imagined, and swatting away insects that flew larger and angrier than the ones back home. All part of the job it was, this rummaging after the small organizations that hid in the shadows, those that grew from a community's conscious to care for their own, those on the far edges, those that lacked resources other than passion and idealism and a commitment to the most vulnerable among them.

He recalled the days in West Bengal and the visit to the group working with girls and young women in the rural villages, those who sought an education rather than an arranged marriage and the virtual enslavement of living in houses not their own, or the possibility of being sold into an even worse fate. Those with the courage to run away from it all and find a place that might give them another chance. When he arrived, the girls had gathered on the lawn, all of them, wearing traditional celebratory colors. They danced for him, and sang gentle songs which he could not understand, but he was told that all this was based on respect for their visitor who had come from so far away. Conor's organization had funded this group for three years, and when he walked away three days later through the hugs of the girls and their teachers, through the tears of mothers who saw the chance for something different for their daughters, he recognized the value of the investment.

In Mumbai he was hosted to similar dances by the children of prostitutes who came each night to a center where they might sleep while their mothers plied their trade, where they might get some warm food and make a few friendships outside the stigma of their poor status. Where they might once again be young boys and girls, at least for a while, rather than witnesses.

Now, Conor's legs ached with a dull throb brought on by too much walking, too little sleep and the plague of deep emotion. He stretched his back as well as he could in the cramped seat, then turned a bit to his side, but there was no comfort in this, no relief.

On his lap sat his current read - James Joyce, *Finnegan's Wake*, that jumbled, tumbling, skein of words, images and thoughts, a literary ball of yarn to be pulled apart string by string. Conor had picked it up specifically for this trip, thinking that the dense, figurative levels of Joyce's prose would distract him from the squalor and sadness of his working days, might even provide an antidote for any insomnia. It had not worked like that, not at all, and now Joyce sat on his lap, a reluctant co-passenger on this journey.

A flight attendant came by. "Blanket, sir?", she asked, and Conor nodded. She pulled one from her cart and handed it to Conor with a practiced smile and grace. Conor unwrapped the blanket and pulled it around himself. This would be a long flight, Mumbai to New York, and he needed to find some sleep.

He closed his eyes, and, for reasons he could not understand, saw once again the young girl, no more than 11 or 12, come through the crowd of young women in West Bengal. She had knelt before him, then rose to stand on her tiptoes and pin a lotus flower to Conor's shirt. Stunned by such grace, he did not know how to respond, so he bowed to her. From that he won a shy smile. Then she turned and went back to her life, something as fragrant to her as the flower was to Conor.

And through the memory, through the coming stuttering sleep, Conor *Finnegan* recalled that it was Joyce who had written in *Ulysses*, "Shut your eyes and see."

James Joyce on a wall.

Donna Hunter

When life gives you melons, you might be dyslexic....

Hey you, what you doin standing there, lookin sulky, hands in yer pockets an yer head tilted to one side beneath yer old man cap? It's a sunny day around you, yet your lookin pretty dull to me, miserable in fact. Are you not well? Mad at someone? I can't tell. I don't know ye.

And what are you going on about, ye big eejit? 'When life gives you melons.....' Ach, catch yerself on, will ye?

Tell me more...why are ye wearing that suit? Is it even yours? Is it borrowed? Course it is. Are ye off on a date? Yer lookin mighty sharpish. Yes, that's the word. Sharpish and serious; serious, yet sultry. You remind me of me brother, without the sultry look, mind. I couldn't be saying that about me brother, even though it's true! Can't imagine me brother being drawn on a wall, mind for looking that way. Mind you, he's as tall in stature as you. You'd make a fine match for each other what with yer highfalutin words that catch an ordinary man out – or a woman. Let's not forget the women. Words, words like looks can dismantle you.

Dyslexic? Melons? Sure, melons are a fine thing what with their endless curves. There's no end to until their bitten into after slicing through, releasing the juices and the annoyingly hard to swallow pips.

The dyslexic head feels like one big ripe melon. The ideas be spilling out of it, but they're hard to get a grip on, hard to pin down, hard to write on a blank page to a prompt that you make no sense of, and if there's no sense to it, what's the sense of it? Ach, don't worry, I'll get there. I'll catch up one way or the other – just give me time.

Oh, I know...questions then more questions. Sure, I'm never done asking questions. Asking them, but not listening - not always. It's fine. Sure, what else would I be doing on a sunny afternoon besides hanging loose and rambling on to infinity on a blank page to a sultry man on a wall, named Joyce? Well, I will be rambling on unless someone here in this room hits the timer and tells me to

STOP!

James Joyce Hanging About.

Emma Prunty

I'm pictured right there on a wall. Giant sized! Imagine that! My hands are in my pockets, thrust deep into the heavy linen trousers from Arnotts my Ma, God bless her, bought for my graduation - a modern high waisted pair that would see me through springs and autumns, she said. They'd even do you for when you're looking for jobs, she'd say to me, her eyes piercing me over her glasses as she'd be sitting by the fireplace with her mending. I'd nod yes Ma. A good job, mind, in Laverty's or even Fry's down by Blackhall Place, or with Grogan's financiers at Fitzwilliam Square. Those were the two lines she had running for me, thanks to her brother at the bank.

Hands in my pockets - that's how you all seem to remember me. My fingers fiddling with me balls, more likely - just so you know - a pen or my watch or some coins I'd keep handy to throw into the poor box the odd Sunday I'd make it to Dominick Street church.

The waistcoat's a nice touch all the same, that makes me look smart. And even, smart. A little tight around the middle, even there, but I'd go on to wear that look for as long as I could, even when it started to get too warm for me on the Continent.

That jacket now, that was my uncle's - God love the poor man. He'd been down in the home in Kildare a couple of years at that point, and my Ma, even the older sister, had kept his jackets hanging at the back of Da's wardrobe, keeping them in good shape, putting in fresh mothballs every September. Sure, he's a full grown man, they'll still fit him whenever he gets home, she'd say. My Da had long given up contradicting her - better leave her to her wishful notions, that her baby brother might one day be let out into the world again.

Looking at it there now, the mural of me, the collar is a bit tight. I would put on a cravat and collar only when I was going to have my photograph done by the likes of Ernest Donovan. It looks more mature Mr Joyce,

he'd say, gives you an air. And air of what exactly, he'd never tell me. But, in truth, I fancied the idea.

You did a nice detail of the street in the background there. It's a bit cleaner-looking than it would have been those white lines would haven't have there, sure didn't the cars drive any direction they liked, along with the horse and carts.

All in all, you did a dacent job, fair play. I'm a grand looking fella there, towering over those double yellow lines.

But one question for you - did you really have to put a feckin window right there by my crotch? It's not flattering lads, seriously.