

Inkslingers Blended Session

1st July 2023

The Prompt from The Bag Was:

“Happiness Depends On Ourselves – Aristotle”

And the Visual



*The Goose is Too Small For Two
and Too Big For One!*

The Crystal Duck

Matthew Tubridy

Move the psychosis to following the nurses,
Like ducklings,
Deriding itself,
It was a massive statue,
Made of crystal
You couldn't fit it inside the ward,
Doctors,
Are brown,
Now psychosis is brown,
Be effing normal,
Who are you? A patient asked the receptionist,
I'm the receptionist he answered,
He's a pool of mud,
He's not a massive duck made out of crystal,
And the doctors are brown,
The doctors face is made out of crystal,
But the government gives him that,
A massive duck made of crystal,
The bin man,
Is just a bin man,
He was a massive duck Made of crystal,
Receptionist says I'm the receptionist,
Nurses say I'm just a man,
There loads of massive crystal ducks,
But doctors have faces of crystal,
Given to them by the state,
They smash up the crystal ducks,
Inside is the bin man,
And the nurses,
But in the process of smashing the crystal,
He got wounded,
Doctors face is made of diamonds,
Patients try to scrape it,
But they can't,

The pills come out of doctors mouth,
Like a vending machine,
The doctors give the nurses the diamond face when they dispense the
medication,
Nurse Rory,
Grabs the diamond mask,
He loves it,
A patient grabs the mask as it's being transferred,
He stamps on it,
But it can't break,
He tries to put on the mask but emits a toxic smell,
Maybe the MHS puts the patient back in the massive duck made of
crystal,
But make a hole and pump in Capasal shampoo smell in,
Bin man wants to get out,
Doctor obliges,
But patient changes his mind,
Doctor pumps in more bad smell,
Even one of the nurses wanted a massive duck crystal suit,
So he got a blast of bad smell too,
Doctor never needs a massive crystal duck suit, because he has a
diamond mask.

Heddie

Bernadette O'Reilly

Heddie is in the kitchen sweating, windows steamed up. Screeching the goose is too small, the goose is too small. Her husband enters the kitchen, to see what all the screeching is about. Did you burn yourself, he asks. The goose is too small .

Heddie screeches again. Twelve people will be here in two hours' time, expecting goose, Heddie informed him. Why did you invite so many? Her husband enquired.

I didn't, it all spiralled out of control. Okay, calm down. Heddie was just about to hit him when he grabbed her wrist and yanked her down on to a chair. Her husband reached for the kettle. Heddie started to screech again

Listen for once will you? Her husband raised his voice. I will drive into the city and purchase duck for fourteen with all the trimmings from that upmarket restaurant. They have a new take away service. Problem solved he said as Heddie's husband placed a mug of tea in front of her.

Martha

Matthew Tubridy

Martha is 41, she runs around an athletics track,
She could be playing a computer game,
When she gets to Level 3,
She gets a bonus point,
When she finishes running around the athletics track she gets a bonus
point too,
Next day she eats a donut,
At 11am,
She sits at her desk,
She gets a bonus point when she finishes the paperwork,
She gets a 50 euro extra,
That night she plays her computer game again,
Level 4... bonus point,
That night she wakes up,
She looks out the window,
Sees the youngsters dealing drugs,
She hides behind the curtain and calls the guards,
She gets a bonus point,
Next day she's walking along the street,
The donut shop owner says
You got to Level 4 last night,
Here's a free donut!
Martha jumps in the sea,
off Howth pier,
She swallows some fish as another bonus point,
She swims under a boat,
She gets out and goes into Findlaters pub,
For a burger,
She goes back into town,
Passes many bus stops.... extra points,
She becomes a DJ in a night club,
She facilitates 10 people snogging each other,
She buys a house in Foxrock,
She goes to UCD to study medicine,

She gets a scooter,
Which brings her into college,
Martha finishes her run in the track,
There's an invisible line, which gives her a bonus point,
It says she will get custard tomorrow,
Her athletics coach pats her on the back,
Because he will get custard too,
Martha works in childcare,
An extra point when she picks up a child who fell over and cut his nose,
Martha thinks she's constantly in a computer game,
She gets a big bowl of stew.

Running errands

Heloisa Prieto

(Excerpt from The Storyteller)

Akin wanted to rent a car. He did not want to depend on Giulia's rides. He seemed fascinated by the peripheral district school, principal Wagner and the kids. He wouldn't stop talking about it.

"So Kadu worked in a movie? Tell me about it! - he asked me in the uber, on the way to the rental shop. - I overheard you talking about him with Principal Wagner. But I couldn't really follow up. Kids kept on coming to give me drawings, to hug me, to tell me their names, I was so moved..."

I smiled. Akin had become some sort of instant celebrity at mr. Wagner's school. I told him:

"Wagner said Kadu was his best student. He was so clever his teachers couldn't keep up with him. He has graduated from high school and now he has two jobs: as a professional dog trainer and as the manager of a dog shelter. He trained the dogs for the Rescue dogs series and acted a small part as well. Now, He is

considering studying to become a veterinarian." "Wow! His family must be so proud!" - said Akin.

I shook my head and said:

"Apparently, Kadu has no family left. According to principal Wagner, he is the son of a homeless lady who was very affectionate and a wonderful storyteller. They lived on the streets, under the bridge for several years, collecting recyclable trash. Wagner tried to hire her as a cleaning lady, but she would rather be in motion, outdoors. Anyway, eventually, he helped them to build a house. He told me maybe Akin's mother had an education, because she knew all about Greek mythology and spoke in very polished Portuguese. When Kadu was eighteen, she vanished. No one knows her whereabouts. So Mr. Wagner hired Kadu to work at the school as a janitor. He lives nearby with only his dogs now." My brother seemed impressed. He said:

“Yes, his dogs! There is such a deep bond between them. Some sort of telepathy, don’t you think, Sis?” I nodded:

“In the mountains of Minas Geraes, where my grandparents live, people always talked about horse whisperers. But I believe one can establish a wordless communication with several animals. So this is Kadu. Such an unusual soul: he contradicts so many beliefs. I mean, how can he be so clever, so resilient? So grounded?”

Akin looked out of the window and pointed at Ibirapuera park.

“I want to visit this park! It is so amazing!” - then he went on - I have seen people like Kadu back home, in Nigeria. Very strong souls. I believe some people are gifted for life. Does that sound strange?”

I too gazed at the park and the fountains against the sunset were illustrated by little rainbows.

“Let’s visit the park tomorrow!” - I suggested. “ I love trees. We should also travel to the mountains of Minas. You know, some years ago, during summer vacation I met an old storyteller and healer. He told me some very ironic tales and gave me his blessing. I felt so good after, I mean I felt as if I had tapped into some magical well inside.”

“Anyway, Grandma told me a very rich landlord wanted to hire the man as his personal coach. So he placed the old healer in a very comfortable, luxury bedroom in the best hotel in town. Next morning, when he knocks at the door, he sees an empty bed.

He went to the bathroom and the shower had not been used.” “How so?” asked Akin.

“The healer felt terribly uncomfortable inside a luxury bedroom. He would rather sleep under the stars. He hated the shower, he was used to bathing in the river. Most of all, he couldn’t stand the artificial aromas of soaps, perfumes, and cleaning products. So he just left and never spoke to the rich man again.” Akin looked at me and smiled:

“You know? To comfort also means to take care of. But most people seem to forget that. I guess the healer reminds me of Kadu’s mother. He was loved by her and by members of his community, such as Wagner

and Claudia. Sometimes I think luxury hotels are really overrated... Or as Aristotle would say: "happiness depends upon ourselves..."

I laughed at his reasoning. Akin smiled back. Beyond brotherly love, we were now partners in the crime of having our own very particular way of thinking.

When we arrived at the car rental shop, Akin chose a vehicle and signed the contract very fast. He seemed so familiar with the procedures. I had never rented a car before, the truth is I haven't been brave enough to get my driver's license.

On the way back home, Akin and I stopped at a supermarket. Choosing vegetables, fruit, coffee, some cleaning products, everything about sharing small, everyday moments with my brother seemed to soothe me. Mourning, pain, fear, and an overall sense of solitude now mingled with brotherly companionship and an unexpected kind of happiness.

Happiness

Laura Alves

A famous singer once said something similar to: "I have five beautiful homes to be comfortable wherever I am, a luxurious car and a boat to have fun if I want to, a lovely family, plenty of good friends and enough money to go anywhere in the World.

Do you think I'm happy? I want more!!!!"

Some people are never happy with what they've got. Yet, some others are born smiling - when they should cry - they have two loving silly parents always ready to give them what they need even before they even know they need that.

They don't even notice that sometimes the parents don't eat because all of them, little people, have eaten it all, and if sometimes daddy shouts or even beats them it's because that's what they need too, even if they don't understand why.

Only when they start going to school and going out more they will start having other perspectives and start "wishing they were like Johnny, who has a new school bag each year, or like Susie, who goes to school in a big car with a driver".

Yet it is all inside each person's brain, whether they are always happy with what they've got and when they get more it's just some extra happiness or whether they are never happy with what they've got and there will always be something missing for them.

Happiness Is:

Gerard Byrne

Like flowers on a tree,
A lover's arms as strong as steel,
A will that will not break,
A heart that will never fear its day,
A bond that can never be broken,
A home you can never lose, that you are most certain,
Happiness means many things to most,
Don't knock others because you value yours the most,
Happiness is a state of mind,
Remember that state can quickly decline,
Into the bowels of misery,
Where escape can be futile and sometimes costly,
Cherish your happiness because one day it might be gone,
Nothing lasts forever, the plots in the graveyard will soon be home.

The Goose is Too Small

Angelina Kelly

Jacqueline and her friend Betty went for a walk in the local park. After a long spell of hot, dry weather, it had rained all weekend and had finally stopped. Both women now had cabin fever so, a walk outdoors was much needed and welcomed. As they both came from different directions, they agreed to meet at the entrance gate.

Jackie greeted Betty with a smile and a kiss on the cheek, "I'm so glad the rain has stopped, I was beginning to think I would have to build an ark."

"I thought it was never going to stop, it was making me depressed." Betty replied.

"Oh, Betty, don't let the rain bring you down, you can't allow the weather here to dictate your mood. Happiness depends upon ourselves. No matter what the weather is doing, we have to seek happiness inside ourselves, come what may."

"I admire you Jackie, you always seem to find the good in everyone and in every situation."

"It's the only way to be, Betty, otherwise, who know what would happen?"

As they started to walk towards the duck pond, a white goose strolled past them, its head held high, exhibiting a regal air of importance.

"Oh. Hello, dinner." Jackie exclaimed.

The duck gave her the side eye and quacked.

"Jackie." Betty admonished her with a playful thump on her upper arm. "That's not nice."

"Eating it would be nice. It would be a much better use for it than promenading around the park like it owned the place."

The goose quacked at her with a tone of disapproval.

"Jackie, stop that now."

“Mind you, it’s too small for two and too big for one.” Jackie continued. “You’d have to augment it with garnishes and potatoes with some plum sauce to make it a decent meal.”

The goose honked loudly at her, changed its course, waddled in her direction and quacked in a most indignant tone.

“Betty, I think I have just been given out to by a goose.”

“And rightly so. Jackie, that’s quite enough. I say we leave the goose alone, let it go on its merry way and we carry on with our walk. Afterall, it lives here, so it does own the park.” Betty said pulling Jackie, by the arm, away from the creature.

Jackie allowed herself to be led away but, she looked over her shoulder and licked her lips with a gleam in her eyes.

The duck turned its head, gave her the side eye and waddled away quacking indignantly.

Happiness depends upon ourselves

Bernadette O'Reilly

Happiness depends upon ourselves

Said Aristotle

We still insist on our happiness coming

From someone else

Independence means making ourselves

Fill with this elusive happiness

Why be a dependent?

A goose is too small for two and too big for one

Miguel A. Rivera

“A goose is too small for two and too big for one!”, Cheng whispered at his son as they peered through the crack in the door of the kitchen at their first guests of the lunch rush crowd. These were no ordinary guests however, and Cheng knew it. They were in business attire and gave every indication of being from the District Attorney’s Office. Cheng continued to stare at the strange note in his hand that was cryptic in its meaning and most definitely bore the subtle symbol of his new Triad partners. This part of Manhattan had always been more protected than any in China-Town eatery but now he had two people outside who worked for the government and at the same time, a note in his hand telling him in to poison their food.

The first fellow was tall with dark hair and a nose that could thread a needle. Worst of all he was Asian. Yet another traitor who worked for City government to keep his own people down. “Just another Uncle Tom in a fancy suit”, thought Cheng as he watched his son hacking up the two geese they’d selected.

With that Asian fellow was a well-fed, curly haired Caucasian woman in a plus-sized pant suit that could easily have come in spandex. She did not give the impression of having missed a meal in her life and in Cheng’s mind she was most likely accustomed to extorting the restaurant community for free grub.

Cheng’s strategy was that they would poison one and not the other, serving the appropriate meal depending on who these two were and who they really worked for. Cheng reflected on how hard he’d worked. Spending 18 hours per day for thirty years to cement his place in the big apple’s fine dining community and now with an “A” rating and good review on Yelp, he thought he’d finally expand with that second restaurant.

The covid had nearly bankrupted him however and now he was washing money for the most grotesque of China’s underbelly in an effort to stay afloat and keep his family alive. It had all gone smooth at first, but he knew. Knew without a doubt that the day would come when they made

some unreasonable, unethical, insane demand. It seemed today was that day...

Seafield road Clontarf

Matthew Tubridy

Living in a big house on Seafield road Clontarf,
Go down to Beshoffs,
Go to Nolan's supermarket,
Play tennis in Clontarf Tennis Club,
Walk the prom,
Go to Kennedys Coffee shop,
Your kids go to Belvedere College and Holy Faith Clontarf,
Your husband works in a bank,
You walk down the North Bull Wall,
Go into the Happy Out cafe,
But your cousin lives in a tent down the Bull Island,
He rings you as you sit in the Happy Out Cafe,
You fly a drone down the island,
You can see him from the camera on the drone,
You walk down and give him a pack of rashers, mayonnaise and bread,
And orange juice,
Cousin says he's doing surveys of wildlife of the island,
Specifically the Brent geese,
He's an honorary member of Birdwatch Ireland,
They bring him flasks of hot chocolate,
He says he saw a flock of Brent geese the other day.

To Smell a Flower

Greg Fields

Clifford Kay lived his life in contraction. Where others looked outward in regard and awe, or cultivated dreams that might define their movements and their thoughts, Clifford drew in upon himself, making his aspirations, his character, his very self smaller than it had reason to be.

Part of that contraction stemmed from the outside forces that placed him in boxes he would never escape. As far as he could remember, others defined him by impression, by environment, or sometimes even by malice. He carried the tags they imposed upon him – ‘slow’, ‘fat’, ‘plain’, ‘sloppy’, and so on. Friends, such as they were, viewed him through those predetermined lenses, which were never sharp or clear enough to see below the surface. His teachers, too, offered labels that stayed with him throughout his schooling – ‘limited’, ‘challenged’, ‘below average’ – and not a damn thing he could do would ever remove them, or translate them into something more promising.

His very name had been truncated. When his father’s father reached these shores from his native Poland carrying a multisyllabic surname with too many z’s and y’s, the customs official admitting him chose to avoid the task of transcribing something so challenging and just shortened the name to the phonics of its first letter. Thaddeus Krzyzanowski became Thaddeus Kay, and a name once redolent with the lyricism of the Silesian countryside became a bland and meaningless birthmark. Just another label.

His grandfather’s acquiescence in the butchering of his name set a tone for the family’s succeeding generations. None of the Kay males ever seemed to rise up against the pressures imposed by others, never asserted themselves for who and what they were. Grandfather Thaddeus settled into the Pittsburgh steel mills, working long hours with no overtime, sometimes covering the shift of a coworker who asked the favor without explanation or reciprocation, shying away from the union men who could bring trouble. He raised his family of two sons and three girls to be obedient and respectful.

“St. Ignatius told us that God looks for obedience and the denial of our own will,” he told his children. “Remember that, always. Obedience places us where we are meant to be.”

Thaddeus’s youngest son, Walter, absorbed the lesson well. When he finished high school, he apprenticed himself to a plumber. “A good trade,” his father told him. “Everybody needs running water. You’ll always have work.” After twelve years Walter earned his own licensure, took a wife from the next town over, and sired Clifford. He moved his wife, his baby son and his trade one state over, to Maryland, where he considered the rapid expansion of the suburbs north of Washington to be fertile ground for someone who could keep the water flowing.

They settled into a small one-story house in Kensington, a dozen miles from the Capitol Dome but quiet enough to feel like a hometown. Clifford Kay’s course had been set.

As he grew older, the very notion of ‘happiness’ wafted in and out of his thoughts like an elusive vapor. Mostly that vapor wafted away from him, outside his orbit, to be breathed into other lungs. The scent of lilacs, it was, but the flowers were grown by others, and not for him to enjoy.

It was his father who enlightened him on that reality. Clifford had just turned eighteen when Walter Kay sat his son down and shone a light on what it meant to be grown.

“What comes next, Cliffy?”

“What do you mean, Pop? What do you mean, ‘what comes next’?”

“Just that. You got done with schooling. There ain’t no college, and there ain’t no woman. How you going to make your way?”

“I’ll find something, Pop. There are things I can do.”

“I ain’t seen them yet, boy. You better start thinking. You better start finding those things.”

Clifford regarded his father, and said nothing. He looked out the small window that oversaw a tiny backyard, where no flowers grew. Only tufts of unruly grass, pocked with ugly weeds that would not die.

“That’s the best any of us can do, Cliffy. Find a spot for yourself and make the best of it.”

“So is that the path to happiness then?”

His father sighed, then gave a low laugh. *“What the hell does that mean? Happiness? That’s not part of the equation, son. No one gives it to us. And we almost never give it to ourselves. Happiness is a roof over your head and food to eat. Anything else is as phony as a politician’s promise.”*

With that, Walter Kay rose and left the room. Clifford stood as well and went to the window. He raised its sash, then stuck his head into the afternoon air. In the stifling, humid air of early summer, he sought the scent of flowers.

Christmas Turkey

Ciaran O'Melia.

It was a Saturday before Christmas, and I was out shopping for a turkey on Moore St; I was late, the vegetables were thrown around the place, with sweepers brushing them up.

I should not have gone for a pint in Coways, it delayed me about 5 pints ago.

Earlier that morning I heard her say, "Get a big bird, about 20 lbs, and do not get a male bird, they're too tough, and it would take forever to cook."

In Conways, I met Henry, and he brought me into the company with his gang or tribe. Ah, the craic was great, with slugging. I attempted to leave, but the pints came fast and free flowing. I bought a round and said to Henry I have to go.

"Go where," he asked

"I need to get a turkey."

"A turkey," he asked again, 'You're leaving it late, oh, we have ours on order. It will be in the house on Christmas Eve early that morning."

"Jesus." I gulped down the rest of the pint and ran out the door. Hence I was in Moore St, when I saw what I thought were Turkeys, and I could hear the dealer shout over the dwindling crowd, "Two for the price of one."

I knew I needed a bird, any bird, "Are they hard to cook." I asked

"No," The dealer replied

"What are they."

"They are gooseseses."

"How long are they dead," I asked.

"No, the two for the price of one are alive and well."

"How will I get the home?"

"On the bus."

It was dark as I entered the house, the slapping of their feet on the lino, they followed me. Herself was not one bit happy about the gooseseses. With the feathers and the shite, the children loved them and would not allow me to eat them, never mind kill them.

Roll on next year, as I bought a male and a female.

Happiness Depends... (Aristotle)

Magda Velloso

Aristotle is a very modern and popular self-help books writer, or perhaps I'm mistaken and people who flood bookshops with this kind of reading are only repeating with slight variations what he said so, so many centuries ago.

Well, Judy was this avid reader of self-help advice, and she spent her whole time immersed in such books. So much so that she did not have any time left to actually live her own life. As much as she read, she also went around distributing free advice to those around her. She became such a bore that neighbours never opened their doors to her when she rang and was recognized through the peep hole in the door.

While walking down the street one day looking for someone she could pour out her brilliant ideas on self-help, she was stopped by a stranger who invited her for a ride in the country to contemplate the blooming flowers of spring and the bluest hue of the morning sky. The stranger told her that a stroll through the corn fields was sure to bring her that quiet contentment one is always looking for.

She looked into the tender eyes of the stranger and in truth started to feel something different inside her mind – or her heart, she couldn't be sure which. She even felt she might fall in love with the creature, and that feeling brought promises of undying happiness. For some moments she contemplated that possibility, but soon her determination to lead other people into the idea that "happiness depends upon yourselves" got the better of her and she turned down the invitation to try to be happy herself.

Her mission was to bring happiness to others, not to be happy herself.

That's why she ended her life alone, shrunk inside her own home or wandering along the streets of the town searching for someone she could give good advice to. After all, the goose is too small for two and too big for one! She could never make a twosome or face happiness on her own!