

Inkslingers Blended Session

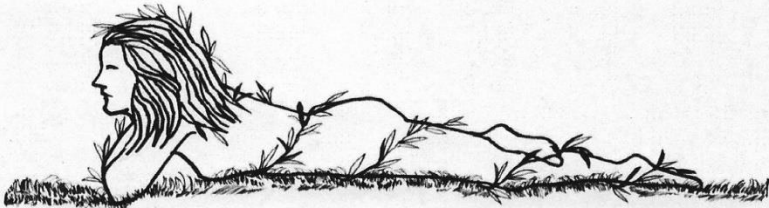
13th January 2024

The Prompt from The Bag Was:

“Why did the Owl Quit it’s Job?. It didn’t Give A Hoot”

And the Visual

My Postcard to the Future



Clontarf Glacier

Matthew Tubridy

The glacier approaches Clontarf,
Spurred on by climate change,
It comes from the Irish Sea,
It gets to the Garda station,
The scientists say it's going 10 times faster than in the 50's,
All the coffee shops are covered,
David Attenborough flies over the scene in a helicopter,
The ice gets to the alter of St Antony's church,
But the firemen hose it with hot water,
For the Catholics of Clontarf this is very important,
The priest adjudicates,
Th ice gets to a play school,
The staff get out pick axes,
They put the ice in the children's orange squash.

The Machine

Bernadette O'reilly

I do not wish to engage
With a machine
That does your thinking
For you
That spells for you
That creates art
For you
That creates writing
For you
That creates film
For you
What about the human brain
The human hand
Are we humans becoming
Obsolete now.

A Full Confession

Greg Fields

When it came time to board, Willie Meadows shuffled his feet reluctantly through the line, barely lifting them from the sticky, dirt-stained tiles. He felt constricted, his breath coming either in small sips or deep sighs to compensate for the oxygen his body needed but his lungs seemed uninspired to give. A memory came to him as he pressed along the line toward the attendant checking tickets. He was a young boy again, Saturday afternoon, plodding to confession with Fr. Michaels, whose dour, unforgiving forgiveness left him feeling sorrier than when he had entered the confessional.

The train north would take him through the worst parts of Baltimore, Wilmington and Philadelphia, the tattered landscape of junkyards and old buildings and stores that had nothing left to sell. Broken bottles in broken fields, thrown there by broken people with broken lives. If he were fortunate enough, he might close his eyes and sleep a bit, ignoring the debris both outside the train, and that inside his own fractured soul.

And when the train finally came to its rightful stop, when they rolled into the New Brunswick station, Willie would grab his bag and get off, descend the ancient concrete steps and go out the front door to find a cab that would take him to the point of this distasteful journey.

Willie's mother was dying, or so she said. She had told him this several times before. It was a heart, or asthma that took away her breath, or a flurry of aches and pains that would not subside. Always, it was to be the last of it, the final chance for Willie to make his penitential journey to sit at her bedside and silently, tacitly seek the same forgiveness that Fr. Michaels would begrudgingly bestow.

He had no idea whether his mother's ailments this time were real, but she had called him and asked him to come. "It may be the last chance you get to see me, Willie. I'm not well. So weak, and so tired, and I don't hardly get out of this bed. Come see me, Willie. If only to say goodbye."

Manipulation, it was, and Willie knew it. But he also knew that one of these times it would in fact be final. His mother was in her eighties, and

had done nothing to take care of herself. She smoked, she drank, and after Willie's father passed away ten years ago, she spent her days watching game shows and eating fast food. Just a matter of time.

Willie found his cab, crawled into the back seat and gave the address. Mom lived on the outskirts of the city, an area untouched by urban renewal or renovation. The university had spawned a revitalization of downtown and a spasm of new housing around it. Willie's mother lived in the same old house that Willie had left when he was 22, freshly graduated and finally free of his mother's daily tendrils. The same place, and he would once again have to climb the three steps to the front door and pull open the same doorknob that he had released all those years ago.

"This the place?", asked the cabbie as he slowed to the curb. An overflowing garbage can sat beside the narrow driveway, and Willie noticed shards of a broken bottle on the sidewalk out front.

"Afraid so," and he gave the cabbie his card to process.

"Coming home for a visit?" the cabbie asked as he returned the credit receipt.

"How would you know that?"

"No one comes to this neighbourhood that hasn't already lived here."

Willie shook his head as he exited the back seat. "Right. Well, thanks," and up the stairs he went.

His mother, inside and feeble, claws still sharp and resentments fresh and full, and Willie now on the steps outside. He would have to go in and face the guilt she sought to provide, the self-pity that stemmed from her life left behind while his moved forward.

She might really be dying this time. She might. But in his heart, Willie knew that he really didn't give a hoot. It was a job, that was all, this business of being a son. And that realization burned within him more fiercely, and more painfully, than anything his mother might present.

Willie knocked twice, then pushed open the unlocked door. "Mom. It's me. Willie."

Arctic Igloo

Matthew Tubridy

How is Christmas for a dude in an igloo?
In the Arctic circle,
He shoots a Musk Ox,
And eats it,
He has a camping stove,
He has a penknife which he cuts up the Ox with,
He fries it in his frying pan,
He has some fat for the pan,
The other day he shot a seal
and that's where he got the fat,
And spreads the Ox meat on the ice,
He is on his own but he has a phone,
He rings his wife in Oslo,
She is called 'Sindra'
Sindra says 'Have some meat'
Man cuts off a bit of meat and chews it,
He listens to 'I wish it could be Christmas everyday!'
I watch music videos on my phone,
My phone is great!
I have a portable charger to keep my phone alive,
At night I look up at the Northern Lights,
That's my Christmas!
I ring my son in Oslo,
He got Lego for Christmas,
He's too engrossed in his Lego to talk to me,
He's making a pirate ship,
They're having roast Turkey and ham,
While I'm eating frozen Musk Ox meat!
I peel the skin of it,
I delve into the meat with my penknife in the ice

The Desecrated Land

Catriona Murphy

Glaciers and snowy peaks marked the top of the world. The volcanoes could be seen erupting, spewing their orange fluids into the cobalt blue oceans.

But Alice hadn't travelled to the desecrated land to watch the natural spectacle. If one went too far in the feared, frozen place, one was said to have walked off the earth, vanished to the cities that were sometimes glimpsed in the sky this far north. Skyscrapers and parapets appeared between the folds of the northern lights during the darkest nights, but Alice didn't believe in ignorant folk tales.

Her supervisor gave her one week off from her brain-numbing retail job and few days were left to find the tree.

He had tapped his watch, then the roster and said, 'You're allowed 5 annual days Ms.

Wickens, if you're late next Monday you're gone.'

Selling dog treats wasn't her life passion, but she knew the elixir to escaping her life sentence lived somewhere between the icy mountains.

It was the songs that gave the path away. The nursery rhymes and faerie tale hymns that left the clues for all of her people's freedom.

Jeff didn't know she'd headed to the Arctic, he'd been left comatose after his superior had beaten him for punishment of leaving his plane in the middle of the airfield.

If she could write a postcard to her past self, she'd tell her to pull Jeff the fuck out of the airforce. He'd always been scared of heights, anyway.

She locked in her skis, pulled her goggles down and skimmed for miles across wild terrain. She saw bonfires and ignored them, apparently they were lit by carnivorous natives that lived high in the caves.

She found it, on day 6.

The island.

It sat in the middle of a glacier blue lake, in the heart of the north.

The sun stayed in the same spot of the sky, despite 62 hours had passed.

She pulled out Claire's latest invention - a wheelchair device that when pedalled, allowed someone to cross water.

Half hour later she hit the black sand of the island.

She fought through dense vegetation and heat, despite being polar, the island was a tropical jungle with its own climate.

She found the tower.

It rose over 200 feet, covered in symbols and etched from the before times. It oozed a magnetic heat, like a nuclear power plant, and ran like a scar in the landscape.

An owl was painted on the doorway, matching the lyrics from the coded songs she'd studied.

She took a step but found herself pulled upside down.

She screamed and realised nearby trees had come alive and taken her body prisoner. Their vines wrapped around her from head to toe.

Breathing heavily, she stopped moving, knowing resistance was futile. A hole opened up in the ground, and she was dropped inside.

Summer

Matthew Tubridy

Come the summer,
The Daisy looks at the sun,
The primary schoolchildren make daisy necklaces,
The teachers bring their pupils to jump in the lake,
But their attached to a rope so they can pull them back to shore,
The pupils have to learn how to jump in the lake,
If they jump right they get into St Andrews College,
If they do a belly flop they go to Ballymun Comprehensive,
The students in Trinity College Dublin go water skiing in Grand Canal
Dock!
The whole measure of success is how you jump in the lake,
The children in North Ireland have to jump in the sea!
There's rescue boats out there,
For any of them who can't swim,
Those children are thought to have special needs,
Go to an island in the sea or lake in the case of Ireland,
The Trinity students waterski around the island, some come ashore to
help out
They have badges on their lapels,
Some Trinity students come ashore and build big houses overlooking the
lake,
Mr Big gets out his binoculars and looks at the students jumping in the
lake,

A Date which will Live in Infamy

Gerard Keogh

The twentieth century is replete with famous (and infamous) dates in history. In chronological order, here are just a few of them: November 11, 1918; September 1, 1939; May 10, 1940, June 22, 1941; December 7, 1941 (“...a date which will live in infamy...”); June 6, 1944; June 22, 1944; May 8, 1945; August 6, 1945; October 4, 1957; November 22, 1963; July 20, 1969; July 16, 1979; January 28, 1986; November 9, 1989; and December 26, 1991 (“The end of history”). Those of us who are of a certain age will recognise many of those dates; they have been burned into our collective memory by nuns, Christian Brothers, and lay teachers. For anyone who struggled to connect the title of this piece to the attack on Pearl Harbor, there is Wikipedia. There may be some who think that Germany invaded Poland on November 22, 1963; for them, there is no hope.

One of the above dates marks a catastrophic event in the life of Anthony Armstrong. To the rest of the world, it means absolutely nothing. Outside his small circle of family and friends, no one has ever heard of Anthony Armstrong. When he dies, he will be just another of the countless billions of human beings who have ever lived. His family name will die with him, as will his DNA; women think of him as “nice,” but they’re not looking for nice. In the great game of life, this guy is a loser.

Fifteen of the above-listed dates are associated with events that shaped the world in the twentieth century; the sixteenth amounts to a whole load of nothing. The following is an account of Anthony Armstrong’s personal Pearl Harbor and its aftermath. Although based on a true story, the characters and events portrayed herein are fictitious. Any similarity to actual persons and events is entirely intentional.

Chapter 1

The Imperial Japanese Navy

Anthony Armstrong ascended the steps of the head office of the Department of Justice at 72-76 St. Stephen’s Green, Dublin. This was his first day as a new recruit to the Civil Service. Top of the list of things to do was to sign the Official Secrets Act. Prior to his appointment, he had

been vetted by An Garda Síochána. As a civil servant, he could not get directly involved in party politics. He could be dismissed if he were to be declared bankrupt. Before being confirmed as a permanent civil servant, he would have to complete a probationary period of two years. His starting salary was roughly £46 per week (long before the euro came along). Oh, and by virtue of having signed his contract of employment, he automatically became the target of an endless stream of vitriol emanating from the news media in this country, much of which was lacking somewhat in the truth department. At a time of economic hardship, the Civil Service and its employees were easy scapegoats for many of the ills that plagued the State decades ago. He quickly discovered that it was a good idea not to mention his occupation when in the company of people from the private sector.

The Imperial Japanese Navy (hitherto known as the Department of Justice) executed its deliberate and unprovoked attack on a small group of unsuspecting civil servants, who had no idea of the horror that awaited them just a short drive away. They were bundled into a minibus and driven across the River Liffey to Riverside House, a typically nondescript office building that summed up the monolithic nature of the government's bureaucratic machine at the time. The driver of the minibus left his passengers in the care of someone who looked as bemused as they did. They were sent here by head office, so why did it seem as if no one was expecting these new members of staff? It turned out that Riverside House was the home of the Motor Taxation Office, which was part of Dublin Corporation, later to become Dublin City Council. They should have been taken to the Parking Fines Office, in Lisburn House, just a few minutes up the road. (To be blunt, Lisburn House was a dump. It probably should have been abandoned years before, but was deemed adequate to accommodate a group of people who didn't know any better, so were less likely to complain about their surroundings.)

From the very beginning, it became clear that the work Anthony and the others would be expected to do was repetitive and soul-destroying. Whatever youthful enthusiasm he may have possessed at the start of his time in this place was quickly extinguished by the nature of the work and by the poisonous atmosphere into which he had been deposited. If

artificial intelligence had been around then, there can be no doubt that the AI would have said, "Nah, I'm not doing that." There was constant pressure from bosses in head office for the staff to process more parking tickets, while at the same time insisting that the enforcement of parking laws was not a revenue-raising exercise. Sure. To this witches' brew should be added the outside ingredient of the angry motorist.

The largest fine was £12 (for stopping on a clearway). By today's standard, it would amount to no more than a slap on the wrist, without even the threat of being clamped weighing on the minds of car-owners back then. Nevertheless, the nasty verbal assaults to which Anthony and his colleagues were subjected on a regular basis, created a siege mentality among the staff in Lisburn House. To the person who had found a £5 parking ticket sandwiched between the windscreen wiper and the windscreen of their car, they probably obtained satisfaction from giving an earful to some faceless bureaucrat who sat around drinking tea all day at the taxpayers' expense. For anyone on the receiving end of such an attack, it (and all the others) had a corrosive effect over time on the mental well-being of someone who had a face, a name, was also a taxpayer, and subject to the same emotional frailties as anybody else. (Please bear that in mind the next time you feel like ripping someone to shreds.)

There was no training that would have taught staff how to deal with difficult members of the public. They were simply thrown in at the deep end. It was sink or swim; and Anthony sank.

Of all the adjustments he had to make in his new job, there was one that was foisted upon him which felt most peculiar. For the first time in his life, people started addressing him as Tony. He didn't feel like a "Tony"; he had always been Anthony. Another major change to his circumstances was the fact that he was now surrounded by women to whom he was not related. He had attended all-boys schools, so when it came to knowing how to interact with women who were not his mother, his sisters, aunts, or cousins, he was clueless. It proved to be a difficult skill to master, one that he would continue to struggle with for the rest of his life. It also led to some very dark moments. The ways in which women showed that they were not in the slightest bit interested in him

bordered on cruel and unusual punishment. For Anthony, it almost amounted to a death sentence (a self-inflicted one).

Animal Crackers

Stephen Brady

Why did the owl quit its job?

It didn't give a hoot.

Why didn't the chimpanzee go to the ball?

He forgot his monkey suit.

Why did the giraffe leave the bar?

They were out of longnecks.

Why did the gorilla rob the bank?

He wanted his silver back.

Why did the snake move upwards?

He wanted to scale the wall.

Why did the camel go off on his own?

Something gave him the hump.

Why did the hyena rob the traffic cone?

Anything for a laugh!

Prompt: Why did the Owl Quit it's Job? It didn't give a Hoot!

Hannah Stern

Someone is poking me with a stick, which is a lot better than stepping on my head again, so I'm not sure how to react. Normally, I wouldn't react at all, but Leonid kept me up late last night and I'm more than a bit grouchy right now. All I really want to do is be left in my mud patch to sleep, but oh no! Nooooo, not when there's children about!

"Quit it!" I don't mean to shout, but again: sleep deprived. The girl with the stick falls back into the mud, splashing it around me and disturbing my bed.

"Who said that?!" she looks around, everywhere but down. Humans; always thinking the important stuff is big and bright. I sigh.

"Down," I say.

"What?" her nose wrinkles just a bit. She could be 2 or 12; I have no real measuring stick for human ages.

"DOOOOWN," I repeat, quite patiently if I do say so. She looks down at the lovely, cool, muddy puddle between her feet. She leans in closer and I can see the coloured rings in her eyes. Only the two eyes, mind you. Humans: total weirdos.

"Are you a talking rock?" she seems less frightened of me now. Pity. I can feel her hot breath starting to dry out the cool mud around me, so I rotate and face away from her.

"I am **not** a talking rock! I am a mudmouse, and you are in my mud house." I have flipped my tail now, which in any civilised species signifies that the conversation is over and I expect her to leave. She does not.

"A mudmouse. Is that a type of ferret?"

"A WHAT?!" I look back over my shoulder to glare, "A type of WHAT?!" A ferret, she says?! As though I would be some sort of long, hairy paper towel tube of an animal instead of the majestic, magical being before her! I watch her put down the stick and gently reach out a finger to touch me. Which naturally is when Leonid makes his grand entrance, flying gracefully down over her head and landing head first, directly into the old picket fence near my mud patch. I sigh. This day is not getting better.

"Typical," I mutter, as the girl is startled back again. Leonid rolls down the fence and then jumps up, wings stretched and beak open wide in

what is, no doubt, a terrifying attack pose, so long as his victim did not just see him sustain a minor head injury.

"Release the mighty mudmouse, madam! Or prove yourself worthy of the power he possesses"

Leonid is trying to screech but has to stop at least once to pull a splinter out of his wing before restarting his speech again. The human girl, in the meantime, has sat up again and is watching his impassioned challenge with a mildly suppressed grin.

"Are you ok little owl?"

Leonid splutters, building his response, but I interfere.

"Don't start, Leonid. She thought I was a ferret. A FERRET! I won't be letting that go any time soon!" I shoot back at her. To her benefit, she looks mildly chastised.

"I'm sorry, but you *are* very hard to see in all that mud." She's right, and I burrow in deeper.

"I am not just an owl," Leonid begins, but then seems to think better of it. "But... thank you for your concern."

"You're welcome," the girl says. "And I wasn't going to steal any power. I was just sitting in the garden until the rest of the grownups leave." I look up to see her face turn a bit sad now, and I'm certainly not in the business of comforting humans, but maybe the mud patch slightly closer to her looks a bit nicer, so maybe I move over there. But not because she's there. And maybe she reaches down to touch me again and I don't stop her. And to his credit, neither does Leonid.

"Well..." he starts, "that's good. Because I'm his guardian and it wouldn't do to just go around stealing power." His feathers ruffle and settle again. "Are you ok?" he asks.

"They're here for my dad's funeral," she says, still stroking my head. She pulls her finger back, ponders it, and then wipes it on her black tights.

"You can't be sad on a lovely day like today," I say.

"It's a misty, foggy day," she says.

"Precisely!" She's clearly not as thick as all humans. I continue to let her sit in my mud patch.

"I could tell you a joke!" Leonid starts. He's nearly bursting with the thought of it. After 800 years, the only person he's had to tell jokes to has been me, and there's only so many times you can hear owl jokes

before you realise the answer to all of them is something “hoot”-related.

“No,” I say.

“Why not?” Leonid and the girl ask. Leonid is slightly insulted; the girl is more curious. I change the subject. “If you’re sad, maybe I can help.

Then we can all go back to wallowing in our own mud patches,” I say.

“You can’t help,” says the human. “My dad is dead.”

“That’s not really an issue for me,” I respond. “What? What do you mean?”

“I told you. I’m a mudmouse. Tell me your problem; let’s take it from there.” Prompt: Why did the Owl Quit it’s Job? It didn’t give a Hoot!

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“I am not just an owl,” Leonid begins, but then seems to think better of it. “But... thank you for your concern.”

“You’re welcome,” the girl says. “And I wasn’t going to steal any power. I was just sitting in the garden until the rest of the grownups leave.” I look up to see her face turn a bit sad now, and I’m certainly not in the business of comforting humans, but maybe the mud patch slightly closer to her looks a bit nicer, so maybe I move over there. But not because she’s there. And maybe she reaches down to touch me again and I don’t stop her. And to his credit, neither does Leonid.

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Great Outdoors

Matthew Tubridy

I go into Great Outdoors camping shop,
But I say to a staff member there I have no money!
The shop ring up government,
Can we get a grant of 500 euro for this individual?
Government approves the grant,
I get a pair of scarpa boots,
A woolly hat,
I get a tent,
One of the female staff members agree to sleep in the tent with me,
She's called Josephine,
The give me coffee making equipment,
Me and Josephines it outside the tent,
But then Josephine's parents learn she is living with me
in a tent,
She was only working in Great Outdoors as a summer job,
So her parents told her to get back to Trinity College to
do her physiotherapy degree,
Josephine is sad to leave me behind,
She walks back to her parents car,
She takes a photo of my tent,
And sticks it on her bedroom in her parents' house,

Why did the Owl Quit it's Job?

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“I am not just an owl,” Leonid begins, but then seems to think better of it. “But... thank you for your concern.”

“You’re welcome,” the girl says. “And I wasn’t going to steal any power. I was just sitting in the garden until the rest of the grownups leave.” I look up to see her face turn a bit sad now, and I’m certainly not in the business of comforting humans, but maybe the mud patch slightly closer to her looks a bit nicer, so maybe I move over there. But not because she’s there. And maybe she reaches down to touch me again and I don’t stop her. And to his credit, neither does Leonid.

“Well...” he starts, “that’s good. Because I’m his guardian and it wouldn’t do to just go around stealing power.” His feathers ruffle and settle again. “Are you ok?” he asks.

“They’re here for my dad’s funeral,” she says, still stroking my head. She pulls her finger back, ponders it, and then wipes it on her black tights.

“You can’t be sad on a lovely day like today,” I say.

“It’s a misty, foggy day,” she says.

“Precisely!” She’s clearly not as thick as all humans. I continue to let her sit in my mud patch.

“I could tell you a joke!” Leonid starts. He’s nearly bursting with the thought of it. After 800 years, the only person he’s had to tell jokes to has been me, and there’s only so many times you can hear owl jokes before you realise the answer to all of them is something “hoot”-related.

“No,” I say.

“Why not?” Leonid and the girl ask. Leonid is slightly insulted; the girl is more curious. I change the subject. “If you’re sad, maybe I can help. Then we can all go back to wallowing in our own mud patches,” I say.

“You can’t help,” says the human. “My dad is dead.”

“That’s not really an issue for me,” I respond. “What? What do you mean?”

“I told you. I’m a mudmouse. Tell me your problem; let’s take it from there.”

Fifi

Matthew Tubridy

Fifi goes bounding along Clontarf Prom,
She stops in Kennedys Dog Cafe,
She orders a Pedigree Chum milkshake,
She sits down,
Under her table is a tray she can poo and pee in,
Beside her is a Dalmatian,
He is slurping some water,
Fifi says thanks to the owner of the cafe,
A Great Bernard,
Behind the till,
Fifi pays for her milkshake with doggy treats,
She gets a few doggy biscuits as change,
The Saint Bernard must pay her staff,
She gives them Pedigrees chum food
as they leave they evening,
One of them, a Rottweiler sleeps inside
the door at night,
For security,
A few cats prowl past the door he growls at,
The cats run the hairdressers across the street,
The cats name is Sindy,
Her hair is perfectly groomed,
Sindy the cats employees arrive into work at 9am,
They got the bus,
They get out their scissors,
Their customers are cats,
But then Fifi the dog comes in,
Short back and sides she growls,
Sindy goes 'A dog in my saloon!'
Fifi goes ,'Yeah and what of it!'
Get out Get out! shouts Sindy,
Fifi goes to a barber down the street,
For dogs,
She gets a rough cut,

It cost 15 euro,
Next day Fifi prowls down the street,
With clipped hair.

The girl in the tall grass.

Ciaran O'Melia

The girl lived in the woods, she dreamed of what it was like away from her strict father and mother.

As she daydreamed in the tall grass, it entwined in her body. Yet she saw this too late.

“Where is she?” Her father said in a gruff voice.

“She was out there at the back garden, near the forest.”

“Well, she needs to lend a hand at the work, getting firewood in the shed; it is Spring and we need to replenish our wood supply.”

“I wonder if we were too hard on her; after all, she missed the company of others, you pulled her out of the class,” she corrected herself, “we did.”

“You agreed with me over that; I might remind you.”

The mother lay on the kitchen sink in thought, ‘Silly me, but had I known the harm we done?’

She gave a sigh, which the father picked up on.

“Now look, you agreed with me,”

“Yes, yes, but I now look at her; she is near to being a woman, Jesus. What have we done.”

Although she blamed herself, ‘he was the dominant force in the family, and at 5 to pull her from school.’

Alma loved her parents; they were kind and considerate of her needs. She could go into the woods. In fact, this was where she met Johnny, the woodcutter. He was a wild thing and unlike her in every way.

The grass worked its way between her toes and fingers, in her hair, and eventually, she was covered.

The parents looked for her in the forest, and the woodcutter joined them. broken-hearted, all to no avail.

January

Gerard Byrne

A palette cleanser, a fresh start, a reboot switch to all life's problems,
A new me, a new you, a chance to leave the demons of the past behind
us,
Weight, gambling, drinking smoking, damaging relationships, friendships
and relatives,
All that shit left in the past,
Well, at least till February, that is.
Enjoy the peace,
Lap up the freedom,
Because reality is just around the corner.

Lost and Found

Heloisa Prieto & Victor Scatolin

A catalogue of mysterious objects

Messages in a bottle

Words usually express themselves through sounds, gestures, and breath. Every word holds multiple meanings, constantly shifting according to their uttering voices.

Printed words in a book can be objectified. Yet they belong to the pages in a magical, mercurial manner, because each reader is able to imprint new meanings and tones. To free words from their objectified state, by reading them out loud is the same as casting strong spells. Every listener should, in their turn, seize the sounds of spoken words in their own particular way.

Words ask questions and find answers through myth, lore, beliefs, jokes and quotes.

This book will challenge you, dear reader, to unveil secret connections, to find words hidden beneath other words, as in a literary game, you may play at self-discovery, self-oblivion, self-knowledge, self-learning. Mental memories are not the same as mementos, objectified remembrances. Reading as a way to constantly get lost and find oneself again. Reading as a writing tool. This is the best gift and the main secret of words thrown away at the sea of life as messages in a bottle.

A Postcard to my future

Mark L'estrange

The Super contacted the Mexicans the next day to let them know they have the gang in custody, the officer said. "Thanks for contacting us I am glad you caught them, as you know it's close to Christmas, we will make sure we will come over and get them early in the new year is that ok?" "Ok we will keep them in Mountjoy prison for the holiday season, it will be a postcard for their future."

Paddy phoned Stephen to tell him the good news, when he heard he said "So I can definitely go home now can I?" "Can you please hold off till tomorrow because we are questioning this gang and we want to make sure there is no more of them hanging around the area." "Ok but it's Christmas eve I was hoping to spend the day with my family?"

"I know how you feel I felt that way when I was stuck in Mexico being without Julie and the rest of my family although when I got home I found that everything was fine I didn't have to worry because I knew I was safe."

"Thanks Paddy I know what you are saying better safe than sorry isn't it?" "That's right I will ring you as soon as I am sure we have all the gang in custody."

Paddy rang the Super to fill him in about his chat with Stephen the Super then said. "Let's hope we can get him home by tomorrow I have been talking to the guards in HQ and they seem pretty confident that we have all this gang so fingers crossed, have a nice Christmas, is it ok if I ring you tomorrow to give you the thumbs up so you can ring Stephen." "Of course you have a nice Christmas too."

To be continued.

My Postcard to the Future

Venus Crow.

I promised the moon I wouldn't give in
That I would stay to bring you to the trees to hear the music they make
as the wind waltzes with the leaves.
As the door of a new year quietly opened
I raised a glass to the dancing shadows and watched as they spun into a
sacred truth.
Gifts, hidden behind the face of monsters, the ones that I had told they
no longer held sway.
Had disappeared with the closing of the year.
So I vowed to the stars to continue the dance with devils and shadows,
until I can dance them into truth and light.
and i promised the moon to bring you to those dancing trees full stop
And I promised the moon to bring you to those dancing trees.
To look for diamonds hidden in the dark earth and to waltz with you
until we are drunk with love.

Postcard To The Future
Bernadette O'Reilly

I bag each minute
Of everyday
I cannot bag
The future
Uncertainty grows
So
One step at a time
Into whatever the future holds.

Future Postcard

Miguel A. Rivera, Jr.

The postcard had sat on Sally's dresser for weeks. Unattended and now beginning to collect dust as the odd Santa Claus on-a-rocket depiction, stared back at her. She knew last night's party was most likely her last since she'd been "Job-reduced" out of employment and now a healthy two months behind on her rent. She fully expected to be escorted out of her apartment at any moment in her underwear by highly desensitized Court Officers, due to the multiple unanswered summonses for eviction hearings.

Marijuana bags and empty bottles of vodka decorated the untidy room she was in. She felt dizzy, her eyeshadow made her look like an escaped zoo-racoon, and no two hairs on her head were flowing in the same direction. Like her apartment and physical appearance, her life was in classic disarray. In the blink of an eye, she'd gone from a perfect 4.0 N.Y.U. graduate and star at her work office, to what she now saw in the mirror as a "bum". But just as that wonderful self-audit was being conducted, there was a wrap on the door. It was not the customary, toxically authoritarian, knock of the Police or other government representatives, but a short three-tap burst neither hard nor timid.

She opened the door and the last person in the world she expected, stood before her. It was her Aunt, Betty DiBenedetto-Warner. Super-crazy, Aunt-Betty. The one she'd assumed was locked safely away in a padded room by now due to her insatiable thirst for the paranormal, U.F.O., and technological nonsense. Even amidst the raging storm of a hangover that was assaulting her brain however, Sally could sense something had changed with her Aunt. Changed drastically!

"Got my Christmas card, kiddo?", was Aunt Betty's first question, even before crossing the threshold into her niece's untidy abode.

"Uh, no Aunt Betty.... please come in.", was all that Sally could verbally muster. On the heels of that, eight Cops in uniform along with the building's super and a City inspector were proceeding loudly up the hallway, warrant in hand. Panic swept over Sally, who was still in her pink underwear and "My little Pony" tee-shirt. Betty seemed oblivious to

their advancing presence and said “Damn, now we have to do this the hard way. Darlene will be so mad.”, With that she waved her hand and the entire entourage of government workers collapsed to the floor seemingly lifeless but still breathing.

“AUNT BETTY, WHAT THE FUCK!”, Sally screamed, briefly picturing the two of them being strip searched in the women’s prison wing of Riker’s Island. With that Betty made a gesture with her hand yet again and Sally’s window flew open. She then grabbed the postcard, ripped away the stamp and retrieved a black, microscopic dot from beneath. She attached it to Sally’s aching forehead, and then the two of them were whisked through the open window into some other world.

Postcard

Elaine Reardon

I'd like you to know-

Here in New England spring started softly,
with rains that warmed the soil
In early March the winds would rattle
down oak's last leaves,
by May violets began to show.

Lilacs opened and invited the bees in
Kids played outdoors, explored
with no sunscreen all day.

We didn't know better then,
washed cars in the street,
washed so many loads of laundry,
took showers every day. We drank
water from the tap, even straight
from a well, we never thought
we'd find it precious one day.

Anyone who had enough money could buy a car
to drive around. Air was clean, except in large cities,
We weren't sick from water, or the air that we breathed.
We didn't think.

Storms were small, followed patterns of movement,
Didn't wash our towns away. The sun was safe,
winds meant spring. Winter meant cold and
that there'd be a blanket of snow that covered
the ground, and we'd shovel into heaps and play.
And trees grew tall,
We never thought
that would change