

# Inkslingers Blended Session

20th January 2024

The Prompt from The Bag Was:

“It’s Either an Arse or an Elbow” He said”

And the Visual



*European Wolf*

## **A Grand Cup of Water,**

**Matthew Tubridy**

I drink it down,  
It goes down my throat,  
Instantly I feel rejuvenated,  
I was running around Santry Stadium,  
But I stopped for some water,  
The rest of my club keep running,  
I say 'Good luck to them!  
I sit on the stands eating a McDonalds burger and a milkshake,  
My fellow club members run around the track,  
The coach shouts  
'There's more in the tank! keep running!'  
My club and I go in a bus to the Pheonix Park,  
There's a race on there,  
But I'm lazy as usual,  
I get the bus driver to drive me to the Visitor Centre,  
I get a soup and brown bread and a pastry,  
I go back to the race, sit on a bench and watch my fellow runners,  
They're panting, panting, while I eat my pastry,  
Micko goes over the finish line,  
He slugs back some water,  
Micko is first,  
He comes over to me,  
Says 'Gerrup out of that bench!'

## The Way It Should Be

### Greg Fields

He had done what was asked of him. What was expected. A son could do no more, that he knew. The first step, perhaps the most difficult step, had been completed. He had mustered the will to board his train and come north, to revisit the torn borders and frayed fabric of his mother's love. His mother, older by the minute, sat across from him in her most comfortable chair, and there was no longer any pretense, any excuse, to duck away.

Willie had made her tea, then brought it to her with two biscuits he had found in an outdated package in the pantry. "What are these?", she asked as he set the dish on the side table.

"Biscuits, Mom. I thought they might go well with the tea."

"Oh, Jesus, Willie, I don't eat these things. Pasty and crumbly and dry. Go back to the kitchen and bring me that bag of Doritos on the table."

"Doritos, Mom? With tea?" And Willie rose to find the half-eaten bag where she said it would be.

"You're not eating real well, are you, Mom?", he said as he placed the bag in her lap.

"I eat what I want." She dipped a hand into the bag and brought forth a chip thick with its flavoring dust to bite into it open-mouthed. The crunch of it ran down Willie's spine like fingernails on a blackboard.

"Ah, but Mom, you need more than this junk. A vegetable or two, maybe. Some fruit."

It began at once. "So now all of a sudden you're worried about me, is that it?"

Willie sighed aloud. Just a matter of time, it was, until the guilt flowed down around him like a mountain waterfall. His mother had unleashed the waters earlier than usual. 'She must be especially bitter these days,' he thought to himself. But aloud he said, "I always worry about you, Mom. You know that."

His mother turned in her chair and sniffed. "I know no such thing. If you were concerned you wouldn't be holed up 200 miles away, doing God knows what."

"I work on a newspaper, Mom. A good one."

"You don't have a wife. You don't have a family. You should be here to look after me. To cook me those vegetables you say I need, or to peel a slice of fruit." She stared at a far wall.

"Ah, now, Mom, how many times have we been over this? I'm living my life. The way Dad would have wanted. The way any grown man needs to. I'm close enough to see to you. I'm here now, aren't I?" And then the lie. "I'll always be here when you need me."

Willie's mother turned to him with eyes as sharp and black as a midnight sky. "I need you every day, Willie. I have no one. A bunch of neighbors whose names I don't even know. A nurse that comes once a week to bring me pills and a heavy dose of aggravation. And your sister run off as far away as you. I'll die here, Willie, and no one will know it for days. They'll come find me when the smell gets too bad. So don't tell me you'll always be here when I need you. That's a lie, Willie, and you know it. You tell yourself that to make it all better in your mind. But in your heart you're forever gone."

Willie sighed again. "Not forever gone, Mom. Just grown up. I know the way it should be."

"I don't think you know your ass from your elbow. You should be here with your sick mother. You need to honor a son's obligation."

"God damn it, Mom, stop it! I'm not a goddamned slave, or a little boy's puppet. I have my life. You're a part of it, even if you think that part is too small.' He paused and sighed again. "I have my life, Mom. Let me live it."

Sarah Meadows said nothing, continuing to look at the wall, continuing to look away from her son. Willie watched her in silence. After a time his mother stood from her chair. "I'm going to take a nap. I don't expect you'll be here when I get up."

Willie thought to protest, but it would be a worthless effort. 'She'll believe what she wants to believe.' After his mother shuffled down the

hallway to her bedroom, Willie Meadows lifted himself to walk again to the front door where his bag waited in the foyer. He picked it up, opened the rusted knob and walked back outside.

He would go to his hotel and spend the night brooding. Maybe he would drink a bottle or two from the minibar. The next day he would return to his mother's house, and resume the argument. Resume the penitential act. It was the way it was, the way it had to be. Willie was there for her, as she needed him to be.

## **Carrantuohill**

**Matthew Tubridy**

Climbing up Carrantuohill,  
But he breaks his ankle,  
A goat comes to rescue,  
Called Billy,  
He has a rucksack full of paramedic gear,  
He kneels down beside me,  
Says Hi! I'm Billy the goat!  
The goat gets his friends to help,  
I go on the back of a goat,  
Down the ridge,  
We go to a hospital,  
The staff in the hospital  
say thanks to the herd of goats,  
The goats go back up the mountain,  
They monitor the human walkers hiking up Carrantuohill,  
The Irish government pay the goats to keep a watch on humans,  
Another day...  
You go to the top of Carrantuohill and find Bob! He is in a small wooden  
hut!  
You got here! He says,  
The wood for his hut was helicoptered up,  
Bob gives you a gold coin,  
He shakes your hand.

## European Wolf

Ciaran O'Melia

"Did ye know, it think that is a wolf. In fact, it is a European Wolf." He said to Clive, his walking companion.

"look at you, with your high fluting words. How do you know so much?"

"It is comfortable in its surroundings. See the way it curls up on the snow. It's a dead giveaway." He said.

"We can catch it and maybe sell it."

"The government is trying to repopulate the wolves in the area." He thought for a minute what Clive said, but he's not up to scratch on the news. So he decided to leave that alone.

"But they breed like rats, don't they? Soon, we will be in-an-dated, or whatever that word is, with them."

"I don't think so, you see, a fine balance comes out in nature. You come and walk with me every weekend, right,"

"I knew you'd bring that up."

"What."

"About last weekend, the wife was sick in bed. What was I to do?" Clive said.

"Jesus, what are you talking about now."

Clive got nervous, and he kicked some snow away. "Forget about it."

They walked for some distance, and then I said, "Ye know they are repopulating the wolves in counties Kerry, Donegal, Mayo, and Wicklow. Imagine that.

"I can tell you it's the very counties I will not visit on the Holidays."

"Why is that?" I asked.

He looked me over before saying. "You don't know your arse from the back of me hand."

"Elbow." I corrected.

"I get confused about the old sayings."





## Sunny Day

**Matthew Tubridy**

It's a sunny day in Dublin,  
Bus driver Tom turns his bus around the corner of Parnell Square,  
Ricky shouts out to passer-by's on O'Connell street- Donuts!  
In Arnotts Robbie advises customers on which underwear to buy,  
And the pigeon sits on top of the GPO,  
Looking down at everyone,  
He feels pretty smug that he's up there watching,  
The Taxi stops for Maria,  
She has 4 bags of shopping so it's a bit much to walk to the bus,  
Taxi driver Timmy asks her where she's going to?  
Botanic road, Glasnevin is the reply,  
And the people keep pounding, pounding, the footpaths,  
The council staff predict the footpath will crack in 10 years,  
They put a sign up saying  
'Thread softly, for your thread on my dreams!'

## **It's A Zoo Out There**

### **Fergal Canton**

Sacha found Dublin Zoo to be bewildering. Her dreadful parents, an engineer and an accountant had insisted on hiring the Event Venue in the zoo for her 16th birthday. This was because her mother, the accountant, was managing the Royal Dublin Zoological Societies accounts and needed to bring the balance up by €500.

So she had to send out an invitation showing herself to be an oppressor of poor, trapped animals to help her mother. Already she was finding little animal bars in her school bag. Some freak had slipped a raw half pound of sausages into her lunch box and removed the vegan salad she normally ate. She hid it all away and decided that she would punish her parents with silence, cunning and existentialism.

She spent the afternoon of her birthday locked in her room applying Kohl and white foundation. She ripped both knees on her best black jeans and buckled on her biggest oxblood Doc Martens. Her father was reading a green party pamphlet on rewilding wolves from the local councillor, his best buddy in the civil engineering office. He jumped up from his chair when he saw her. "Jesus, you're not thinking of going to the Zoo like that?"

She stared him down and gave a small shrug of her shoulders and as the coup de grace, blew a big juicy bubblegum bubble and burst it. "Moira, Moira, get in here and see what the child has done?" Her mother was titivating herself in front of the hall mirror, all twinset and pearls. From the hall she said "Tristan, she's not a child now she can make up her own mind, I'm sure she isn't that bad.

As she came round the doorway Moira paled "Mother of Divine Jesus, she exclaimed. Sasha grabbed her leather jacket and sat herself into the back seat of the Land Rover. Tristan and Moira gulped and got in the front. The traffic journey was in silence, occasionally punctuated by a cold front with sporadic bursts of bubblegum.

As they were ushered into the Event centre, Sasha overheard Marjorie Banks (who had gotten off with her ex boyfriend Snivelling Sylvester Spratt) comment on how lame the venue was. She saw red. Then she slipped out of a sidedoor for a quick fag. She noticed that they were next

to the European wolf enclosure. An attendant had wandered away to take a phone call without padlocking the bolted gate.

She saw a few crash barriers and the strangest notion took over. She lined up the barriers into a tunnel and opened the gate. Then she opened the fire doors. This lame party was about to get interesting.

Marjorie Banks was tragically the first and only casualty. The whole pack descended on her because she was screaming the loudest. There wasn't much left of her by the time the attendants had tranquilised all the wolves. A student pathologist was later perplexed at what he saw on the steel tray before him. "What is it?" he asked his attending coroner. "It's either an arse or an elbow." came the laconic reply.

## **Gargoyles**

**Matthew Tubridy**

Tommo stays in his flat,  
With the curtains drawn,  
The gargoyles pace the street,  
That's why he doesn't want to go down there!  
The gargoyles go down the manholes,  
And reappear,  
Tommo decides to go down with his kettle of boiling water,  
He pours it down the manhole,  
Ha! He says  
The gargoyles shriek,  
The gargoyles swim more into the pipes,  
Into a massive lake under Dublin,  
Where Gollum lives,  
One of the gargoyles smashed a jewellery window and stole a lot of gold watches,  
He gives one to Gollum who says  
'My precious!'  
The gargoyles must give Gollum rent for going to his lake,  
The gargoyles dance around in the lake,  
Splashing the putrid water around.

## **It's either an arse or an elbow**

### **Mark L'estrange**

Paddy got a call early the Christmas morning, it was the Super "Paddy very sorry to ring you so early, would you mind telling Stephen he can go home it looks like we have the whole gang" "I will ring him now, it will be a great Christmas present for him hearing he can go home."

Stephen was jumping for joy when he got the call saying, "Thanks so much Paddy I owe you a few drinks to say thanks for all your help, I am off to my family now, you enjoy your Christmas Paddy."

The day went very well for him spending it with his elderly parents who were really happy to have him home after such a hard year.

The whole week was great for him. Then came the second of January and the Super got a call from his Mexican contacts saying, "Sorry for only getting back to you, we will be sending a crew over to Dublin tomorrow morning to collect the gang from the prison." "That's great what time will you arrive so I can let the prison officers know?"

"We will be flying in at 10am Irish time, we will need to ask Stephen to fly to Mexico to identify the whole gang and maybe give evidence." "Is this necessary the poor man has been through enough?" "Unfortunately it is because there has been some accusations made, that Stephen was behind making the cloning machines." "Sorry but that is simply not true, he was the one they used it on which made him turn into a monster, my college spin man Paddy was able to help him change back to himself."

"I understand but what you must understand that the authority's over here need to investigate all the details."

He contacted Paddy explaining what was happening "That is outrageous they are obviously it has nothing to do with Stephen I have witnessed the way he was threatened by the gang ." "I know but we have to play ball with these guys would you mind going over with him again please?" "Of course I will."

"There is one of the gang that call himself the European Wolf that they believe is the ring leader of the gang, you probably seen him the last time you were in Mexico when the held you both hostage, that's why it would be good for you to go with him."

## **Fifi**

**Matthew Tubridy**

Fifi the chihuahua dogs likes to snooze,  
She likes some ham after peeing outside,  
Fifi wakes up,  
She needs to pee,  
You were making tomato soup,  
She jumps on the counter and pees in the soup,  
You were having redybrek,  
She poos in that,  
But I have an indoor litter tray for dogs,  
Fifi gets on the bus,  
Pees on the floor,  
A Roman Gypsy gets down on her knees and licks the pee,  
It's a delicacy in her country,  
Fifi is let into Leo Varadkar's office,  
Jumps up on his desk,  
Pees into the top secret folder.

## Let the Wolf Come

Steve Huenneke

Sitting in the family tree  
Like a bird in the spring  
Flying off to the highest branch  
Spending all summer being  
Like one of those jugglers  
Striving to impress others  
Like a leaf in the fall  
Seeing the stillness Something familiar  
Returning faster and faster  
Falling now to earth  
Waiting for inevitability  
Like snow falling after  
Covering everything about me  
But one wing sadly  
Looking  
Like a funny bone  
Attracting a wolf  
Who was a poor metaphor  
Happening by after  
Waking up  
Looking  
For a meal ticket  
Morning's here  
Now, no fear  
I am a soul Without ego  
A will  
Or a body.

## Homeless

**Matthew Tubridy**

There's a community of homeless people off Henry Street,  
The outreach workers bring them fizzy water with a fruit flavour,  
Homeless man 1 says 'I don't want this filth!  
I want a burger!'  
The Eddie Rocket van pulls up,  
With a government grant!  
Start serving Homeless man 1,2,3 and 4  
And homeless woman 2,3 and 6,  
They are very grateful,  
Leo Varadkar pops his head out of the van... will ye vote for me now?  
He shakes Homeless man 9 but he's already dead, because a pigeon  
pooed on him and he was so hungry he ate it,  
This was before the time of Eddie Rockets van providing them with  
burgers, chips and malts,  
The Eddie Rockets van drives away to get more supplies.  
It's like the night has come for the poor homeless men and woman,  
Next day the Eddie Rockets van comes back with the sun behind it,  
They give out Kellogg cornflakes and milk,  
And disposable bowls and spoons,  
The government grant is going along way and the Eddie Rocket staff  
want to be given the grant next year,  
They close a store to the public and let the homeless people in,  
Malts all round!  
The sign above the door says  
'Eddie Rockets homeless shelter'  
In big brown letters,  
Eddie Rockets becomes a semi state body,  
like the ESB,  
The heads of Eddie Rockets drive around in black Mercedes Benz's,  
A long line of them driving threw Parnell street,  
Their offices are opposite Cineworld,  
They are notified of gatherings of homeless people,  
The Eddie Rocket vans go to them.



## **Lost and Found**

### **Heloisa Prieto & Victor Scatolin**

9The Catalogue of strange objects0

#### **Balls of thread**

Ancient Greeks believed there were three ladies of fate spinning the threads of human lives. They were sisters and each one of them held a ball of thread in their hands weaving human existences. They ruled over birth, youth, adulthood and death. Clotho was the youngest one and responsible for the birth of babies, her sister Lachesis was the one who decided about the length of life and finally, Atropos, the oldest, was the one to cut the thread.

They frequently fought among themselves, Atropos accusing Clotho of being too indulgent and overprotective over her beloved babies. Clotho, on the other hand, complained about her sister Lachesis aloofness, because sometimes she granted long lives to undeserving humans, whereas cutting short the days of good hearted youths.

Yet, Zeus, the lord of the universe, was entitled to intervene and favor humans he wanted to protect, either untying fatal knots, or severing evil threads which could prevent people from having happy lives.

Zeus wanted the sisters to weave beauty, harmony and peace into the days of people, and most of the time they heard him, but whenever Zeus was busy and could not follow up on their affairs, the fates produced strange, uncanny tapestries winding human souls in the most puzzling struggles. Peace and harmony could only be reached if the three sisters, ruling over three phases of human lives, could, somehow, come to terms.

## **The Rich man's wife**

**Miguel A. Rivera, Jr.**

Bob and Marty sat in their surveillance car for what seemed the millionth hour, watching the infra-red sensors, the covert cameras, and listening with great interest for any signs of misbehaviour by their very wealthy client's estranged spouse. They were private investigators, gumshoes.

After hours parked on the street, they were sweaty, tired, and bored. Marty was particularly exhausted by the remnants of Bob's awful diet wafting through the car every time he sounded off with his body-trumpet.

Said flatulence-festival was often followed by a crude remark wherein Bob would say "It's either an arse or an elbow!" Marty tried to focus and concentrate on the task at hand.

Their target was none other than Mrs. Meagan Drake, of the very "well-to-do" Drakes who controlled oil, stocks, bonds, real estate, and a great many other inherited assets. Every blessing their hearts could desire save that of marital bliss.

Mr. Drake, in unambiguous terms, had expressed that they were to obtain "concrete evidence of infidelity", thereafter driving home his point by adding that in so doing, the pair of private eyes would receive a one-million-dollar bonus, because "money was no object".

Marty's eyes had nearly rolled out of his head when he heard such an offer and so here he sat, willing to inhale the fumes of hades itself in order to catch their prey in the very act.

A moment or two later their covert mikes picked up the sound of moaning and what sounded like flesh rubbing on flesh.

"This is it Marty, the big one! I can see those greenbacks already!", Bob unleashed as he rubbed his hands together, licked his lips greedily, and tooted his rear-horn yet again.

Suddenly, the lights of the apartment they were watching, cut off along with all their surveillance equipment. Marty leapt from the car and raced toward the building, camera in hand.

Bob tried to follow him, sandwich in hand. The two sleuths advanced to the third floor of the seedy edifice and battered down the door. To their surprise there were thirty refugee women in tights engaged in yoga with Mrs. Drake at the centre providing instruction. "Damn", Bob said, a tear sliding down his cheek as he broke wind again.

## Clozapine

**Matthew Tubridy**

Dr Miriam O'Doherty,  
Finds the right pills for the right person,  
We have a friend called Clozapine who is right for you, he will sit with  
you in cafe,  
He will be in the passenger seats when your drive,  
He will be a hat to wear in cold weather,  
The tag on the front of the hat will say  
'Clozapine'  
Dr O'Doherty was holding your head with her large warm hands,  
But suddenly you go to a warm place,  
And she takes her hands away,  
Quickly replacing it with the hat made by clozapine,  
The patients in her hospital all have different colour hats,  
Saying different brands on them,  
Olanzapine, Serroquel, Risperdal,  
They think of their warm consultants hands.  
Patient Roger used to have his head cupped by his mother, but then she  
died,  
He need the warm hands of a consultant psychiatrist,  
And the inevitable loss of that warmth.  
But he wears the Seroquel hat,  
He still thinks of his mother and cries,  
He lies in his bed,  
In his darkest moments his psychiatrist moves her hand towards Roger,  
His Psychiatrist understands Roger,  
When Roger is half asleep he thinks his mother is floating towards him,  
Psychiatrist stands where his mother is and clicks her fingers,  
Roger had taken off his serroquel hat to sleep,  
But Dr O'Doherty says he must wear his hat in bed,  
In university Dr O'Doherty was taught how to warm up her hands,  
Cup someone head,  
How to quickly take it away,  
The different hats to put on instead.

## **Tiny houses.**

### **Venus Crow**

Tiny houses, charcoal streets.

Knocking woodlice off damp walls while dreaming of magical worlds.

Imaginations confined to small rooms and stunted dreaming.

Learning instead to inhale cigarettes and stolen wine.

Dreams becoming darker ,wet puddle streets where we watched from doorways.

Framed snapshots with mystery behind them. Telephones, roast dinners, dysfunction too big to be kept inside, spilling into gardens to become little weeds. Stolen cars were steeds with bold boys who felt dangerous, yet we wanted one.

Tiny houses became places to learn that perhaps boy's lie

And that dreams sometimes die.

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