

# Inkslingers Blended Session

## 2nd March 2024

The Prompt from The Bag Was:

**“Getting Mythology Wrong Is My Hercules Ankle ”**

**Olaf Falafel**

**And the Visual**



## Howth

Matthew Tubridy

Escape to Howth,  
and Howth Yacht Club,  
And Sutton Dingy Club,  
When you go past Sutton Cross,  
If your from Ballymun your rejected,  
If your a true Howth man,  
It lets you threw,  
The machine sees your Helly Hanson jacket,  
Let you threw like a ticket in a train station,  
Another time the people of the Howth Peninsula would stand on Sutton  
Cross,  
With big spears,  
Like Braveheart,  
It filters out the Northsiders,  
Because the Howth residents all have flying machines to go over,  
They're like eagles and perch on top of the head of Howth,  
He screeches,  
The sound goes all over Dublin,  
You want to come Dublin?  
They pigeons of the Inner City hear a screech,  
They all try to fly to Howth but the Eagles have put glass over Dublin  
Bay,  
The pigeons fly in glee,  
They're getting away from the inner city,  
Except for a few pigeons who roost above Mountjoy Square,  
They like the history,  
The like there's Zen Meditation,  
But when the pigeons try fly to Howth they whack into the glass,  
Eagle screeches,  
Haha you may not enter Howth,  
Eagle sails a dingy,  
But the the government go to Howth,  
See a pile of pigeon bones,  
The eagles of Howth,

One is a solicitor, another a banker,  
One built Leinster House,  
The government builds a special prison for eagles in Killbarrick,  
Their punishment is they can see Howth,  
And the boy with his Helly Hanson jacket  
sails in his dingy,  
The water makes an arc,  
His Daddy is a banker in AIB,  
One of the eagles of Howth,  
Goes to the Yacht Club,  
He puts his boy on the counter of the bar,  
Orders the boy a Lucozade,  
This boy will be an eagle of Howth!  
He will be a psychiatrist!  
But the first brain he studies is an Eagle of Howth,  
Boy is given a Golf Club in Howth,  
He builds apartments on it,  
His friends the eagles roost on top,  
Some of his friends like to roost on Mountjoy Square,  
Due to the historical buildings,  
They fly towards Howth,  
But boy takes down the glass,  
Those eagles have babies  
'Howth Mountjoy babies'

## **The Big Blue ball**

**Heloisa Prieto**

Gabriel woke up and jumped out of bed. He was already ve years old, but he still enjoyed taking his nap after lunch.

On this warm, summer afternoon, he felt his body owing, ying and then falling back to bed.

Was it a dream or a nightmare?

He touched the bed clothes, looked around and heaved a sigh.

Inside his bedroom nothing had changed.

Except for the ball.

There it was. Leaning against the door. The big, blue ball, with tiny, sparkling stars.

Still sleepy, holding the ball, Gabriel walked into the living room and asked:

“Is this for me? Like a gift?”

“Yes! Sure! Do you like it?”

Gabriel smiled, dropped the ball and kicked it. All he wanted to do was to show how happy he was. That gift was so special, the big blue ball had pulled him out of his nightmare.

His family lived on the third oor and from the window they could see the playground.

It so happens Gabriel’s kick was so strong, the big, blue ball ew out of the open window.

“Where’s my ball?” screamed Gabriel.

So his whole family went out, down to the playground, looking for the ball.

The ball was blue with tiny, golden, sparkling stars, and little, four year old Andrea saw it falling in the middle of the playground. The girl looked

up to the building's windows. It was high summer. All the windows were open. Where did the big, blue ball come from?

The big ball rolled, crossing the patio and stopped right at her feet.

The girl smiled, took the ball and said:

"This is so beautiful. Is it a gift?"

But then she heard someone screaming:

"This is my ball!"

Andrea had already met Gabriel in the lift, she had also seen him in the parking lot. But they had never played together, nor talked before.

"Ok! Take your ball back, then!" she said, and her voice sounded a bit sad.

The girl placed the ball on the ground and kicked it towards Gabriel. Yet, where did the ball go?

It landed inside the baby's trolley, parked beside the red seesaw.

"What a mess!"

"Be careful! Oh dear, there is a baby in there!" screamed aunt Jade.

"But I want my ball back!" screamed Gabriel.

"I kicked the ball back to you!" said Andrea.

The ball was big and blue with tiny, golden sparkling stars. It went up in a curve and landed inside the pink, baby trolley, parked in the patio, next to the bench, by the seesaw.

On the bench there was Judith, baby Lina's mother, from the fourth oor, Hector, a 15 year old kid, from the sixth oor, Stella, 14 years old, from the fth oor. All of them stood up and ran towards the trolley, as well as aunt Jade, Gabriel, his parents and little Andrea.

What a big surprise! Or relief?

There it was: the big, blue ball with sparkling little stars.

How about the baby?

She was sleeping in her mother's arms, who was chatting with her best friend Clarice, from the seventh floor. Both of them had their backs turned to the garden, so little Lina did not wake up, nor did the ladies see everyone running towards the pink trolley, nor had they heard the screaming, the turmoil.

"I am so glad the baby did not wake up!" said aunt Jade.

At this very moment, Gabriel thought about his nightmare.

"Aunt Jade?" he said "Did you know I had a bad dream today?"

"Really? Good thing I brought the ball today!"

Hector and Stella sat on the bench and, for the first time, talked to each other.

"I have always wanted to be your friend..." said Hector smiling, but you never even looked at me.

Aunt Jade took the ball from inside the trolley and overheard the teens' conversation. She felt happy about it. Making friends is the best thing in the world!

"Can I play with you some other time?" asked Andrea to Gabriel.

The boy smiled and handed the ball to his new friend, his parents were proud of his generous gesture. Aunt Jade held her nephew and looked around. She heaved a sigh of relief and satisfaction. Next, she kissed Gabriel's head.

After all, on that sunny afternoon, her gift had pushed away Gabriel's bad dream, had gathered all grown-ups in the playground, had helped two teens to talk to each other, had brought about laughter, frightful screams, chatter and, most of all, the beginning of new friendships.

A great big, sky blue ball, with sparkling little stars.

## Getting Mythology wrong is my Hercules ankle

David Walsh

In English class, staring at Sarah's burgeoning baldness.

I felt a kick to my back, crumpled paper strewn with snot.

What laced the moment was a flavour more egregious. The inept were being lined up to line and line be sizzled in barbeque shame.

The English Teacher had called Connor to read atop the classroom.

Connor was shuffling out, cramming his bum like a tidal wave.

The teacher pranced to the side, mouth held frozen, head bobbing.

This was the crusade, this was what the teacher lined up. Best served cold. He raised his leg up onto the desk, slinging his crotch in an invite. Split the legs to carry a pose of nonchalance was his eyes gleamed opposite.

All the teacher's dead poetry, all his adolescent vigour now compacted to this electric moment. Poor little bully Connor, reading poor little hobble hobble spatterings.

To give Romeo and Juliet, a book about teens from mid 16th century, to present it to a 21st century teen whose last sustained reading was Pornhub titles, it was a battle as old as time. Power games.

To call Connor a prince, was to understand his lineage and also be terrified of the inevitability of his ascension.

Too slow for sports and academia.

But the brazen thing about life, it arranges itself in sorted human dynamics, and he carried the Trump wit, to downsize any strength and upsize any weakness.

His life was destined to meet and marry money.

I stared now at Sarah's dandruff dome, and the horror of last month when Connor named my shame, caught looking at Isabelle.

I reckoned Beatles knew pretention when they said Michelle my belle, the true belle was Isabelle, peroxide blond hair and sharp petite face. She spoke in kindness, an edge of anxiety insistent upon niceness.

She laughed about my theory that Connor was predictably unpredictable on the pitch. A mistake.

Connor had filmed me longingly looking at her incandescent yellow locks. The sniff of opportunity arose.

To mention James Cameron's Titanic as a masterpiece, you acknowledge the music. Connor knew not how to read with fluidity. But he could slice a tiktok with Celine Dion. My earnest teenage looks and acne, diced in 10 seconds perfection when "I will always love you" roared in a complementary dance, a rhythm of my misery. Easily breedable virus for the phone playground.

"Now read page 6" The teacher, hands on hip, jostling slightly forward.

Silence. Connor had strode up to the top, he had assumed the position, blushing a strawberry head, veering towards the colour purple. He would never forgive this teacher. But maybe things could change. He didn't look at the page and began:

"O Romea, that she were! Oh That she were

An open arse, and thou a poperin pear" Connor acclaimed.

Shock.

"Connor!!!" The teacher seized together.

"O happy dagger! This is thy sheath! There rust and let me die!" Connor said.

"Young man, well done, you know some lines. We are all excessively shocked today." The teacher spoke slow, trying to let the noise drown to the abyss. A fervour had oxygen

"Ohh Shakespeare yes, I know what to say:

I am one sir, that comes to tell you your daughter and the moor are now making the beast with 2 backs," Connor sang.



“Get out of the class right now” he started walking giving birth to a tomato visage.

“Villian, I have done thy Mother” Connor rapped

“Leave now” teacher biting his lip.

Connor laughs, “Excellent; it hangs like flax on a distaff; and I hope to see a housewife take thee between the legs”

A violence caught the atmosphere. A second piece of paper rocked my head, yet I looked, the teacher had dropped the book, the chalk, and pivoted his hand in a twist to grab and hold Connor.

He rammed him against the wall

Connor smiled “Getting Mythology wrong is my Hercules ankle, I just mixed up shakespeare”.

Since this was 2024, the phones videos were not mixed up, the teachers career was not either. Like Shakespeare it was dead.

## St Patrick's University Hospital

Matthew Tubridy

He's an inpatient in, St Patrick's University Hospital  
For the 10 years before he dies,  
The nurses calls him James,  
The police found him sleeping beside the canal,  
James gets a bed in the Special Care Unit,  
For 10 years until the day he dies,  
There's a youngster who took LSD whose doctor is begging St Pats to let  
him in,  
James pees on his bed,  
To make sure no one else would want to sleep in it,  
The nurses call him the pissing puppet,  
James is put on Serroquel,  
But remember the story,  
James will die in St Pats,  
One day James gets fed up and deserts to Heuston Train Station,  
He sits down in the station and decides where to go,  
He decides Mayo!  
But he's in his pyjamas,  
And it says St Patrick's University Hospital on his back,  
A rail worker approaches James,  
Aren't you supposed to die in St Pats?  
We've had people like you before!  
James was going to give the staff an apple to get on the train to Mayo,  
When he got to Mayo he was going to hike!  
He tells all this to the rail security,  
They put him in a taxi and back to the hospital,  
That evening he says to his fellow patients  
'You'll never guess what happened to me today!'

## The Contents Of The Case Revealed Three Secrets

Angelina Kelly

Jackie's mother's death was no surprise, she had been sick for some time and the family had taken it in turns to visit her each day, to keep the house clean and attend to her needs. The timing of her death was a surprise, however, today was her birthday and, as it was a big zero birthday, her family planned to make it a special day. Being the middle of January, it was too cold for an outdoor celebration, so Jackie arrived at her mum's house early that day and got a big, blazing fire going in the living room fireplace. She pulled her mum's chair close to the fire and made sure her blanket was ready to wrap around her. Happy that the room was cozy and warm, she then went into her mum's room to prepare her for the day ahead.

Normally Roseleen was awake staring at the ceiling, talking to her angels but, this morning she lay in bed, eyes closed, still sleeping. Jackie quietly approached the bed and gently placed her hands on Roseleen's arm shaking her. There was no response. For a moment Jackie thought the worst but shook her mum's arm again. Roseleen's eyes fluttered as she turned her head towards her daughter.

"Oh. Good morning, dear," Roseleen said in a feint voice, opening her eyes.

"Mum, are you alright?"

"Of course, I am. Why wouldn't I be?"

"Your eyes were closed, and you didn't respond when I shook you."

"I was talking with my angels."

"Normally you do that with your eyes open."

"They were in a different place today and I had to find them."

Jackie didn't understand what her mum meant but decided not to question, she was an old woman and saw things differently."

"Well, no matter, you're awake now and it's time to get up and wash."

"No, dear. I don't want to. I'm tired today."

“But it’s your birthday. You have to get up for your special lunch with the family.”

“Is it?” Roseleen’s eyes took on a faraway look and she seemed to exude a silver glow. “No. I don’t want to get up today. I’m tired. I want to rest.”

“But the family will be here in a few hours, and we need to get you dressed and ready.”

“No. I said. I don’t want to.”

“Alright. Perhaps I’ll make you a cup of tea and maybe that will revive you.”

“Yes, that’s a good idea. You do that. Thank you.”

Jackie, gently patted her mum’s arm and rose to her feet. She went into the kitchen and while she was waiting for the kettle to boil she heard her mother talking to someone. A few minutes later, with a cup of tea in her hands, she returned to her mother’s bedroom and saw her parent lying in the bed with her eyes closed and a peaceful look on her face. As she approached the bed she noticed the silver glow shone more brightly around her mother. Carefully she put the cup on the bedside locker and shook her mum. This time there was no response.

After a few minutes it became clear that her mum had passed on and was probably with her beloved angels. She rang her siblings and informed them of their mother’s demise. They decided they’d go ahead with the birthday celebration anyway and blow out her candles for her. To close the ceremony, they toasted her with a shot of her favourite tippie, Southern Comfort. Her siblings then returned to their homes and Jackie stayed with her mum. She noticed that the glow had left her, and her skin was cold.

Walking over to the wardrobe she opened the door and found a suitcase inside. Taking the case out she placed it on the blanket box at the end of the bed and opened it. There were only three items in it. A photo of a young child, playing on the street, lined with tenement buildings. The face of the child bore a resemblance to her mum and written on the back, in child’s handwriting, was the single word “Home”. Jackie was perplexed at this, as far as they all knew their mum came

from a location on the northside of Dublin, but this picture clearly displayed a city centre street.

Lying beside it lay a teddy, with one eye missing. A small hole in the side where the stuffing leaked out and shaggy fur. A little piece of paper lay underneath it with the name "Bibby" written on it. Again, Jackie was surprised, she had never seen her mum express any interest in cuddly toys.

The last item in the case was a single leather shoe, badly worn with holes in the sole. Her mum had always worn expensive shoes, she believed they were worth the expense because they would fit better, and last longer. Inside the shoe was a small piece of vellum paper, written on it, in calligraphy, were the words "Never forget where I came from."

This was a revelation to Jackie her mum was always elegantly dressed and well turned out. Now she saw her mum from a completely different perspective. Looking at her mum lying serenely in the bed she said "How far you have come, and what you have achieved. Now I see why you provided us with all our needs and pushed us to always do better.

Closing the case and returning it to the wardrobe she walked over to the bed and placed a loving kiss on her mum's forehead saying, "Thanks, Mum. We will forever be in your debt."

Walking over to the door she closed it gently behind her and left her mother to rest.

## **Heroes Often Fail**

**Steve Huenneke**

Herod hectored John the Baptist to bring him the head of Medusa as a wedding gift, but instead Medusa performed a dance so pleasing to John the Baptist he fell in love with her.

John the Baptist let Medusa cut his hair and that led to his downfall after he rode a Trojan horse to Paris to fight like Hercules in the Hundred Years War, where he died in battle when he fell off his rather large horse and sprained his ankle.

Even so, the spear of John the Baptist -- placed on a plate -- was preserved for centuries as a holy relic in the Vatican.

## **This Weeks story.**

### **Mark L'estrange**

When people in the court saw what was happening they all evacuated the building except for the accused gang the security where about to wrestle Stephen to the ground but Stephen shouted "I am still normal I just look different now, please believe me."

One or two didn't listen and were going for him, Paddy reacted quickly getting them spinning, then the judge banged his hammer saying "Everyone stop now this my court." Then one of the reporters approached Paddy and said "I saw someone sneak something in to his drink." Paddy went straight to the judge to tell him who said "That makes sense and proves Stephen is telling the truth."

Paddy stopped the officers from spinning and said he was sorry to have to do that. Stephen was still talking normal even though he looked like anything but. Then the judge asked Paddy "How long does it take this to wear off him?" "He learned some technique to speed up the possess if it ever happened again so hopefully only an hour."

"Ok I will adjourn the case for two hours just to make sure all is good, keep me posted please." "Will do thanks for being so understanding."

## **The Beasts of Before**

### **Cillian Fearon**

The vegetation ran wild and rampant across the ruined husks. Mounds of twisted metal beams, red and raw from exposure. Picked clean as it was from those who came before, now like all things, it belongs to the trees. As they picked their way across the cracked and broken path, the two travellers came to a rare sight.

Before them stretched a field of tattered ivy, strangling and choking it's way across mounds of sun burnished metal.

"Grandfather, what are these?" the boy asked, peeling away the knotted leaves across the paint flecked metal. Each mound sat nearly two people long and one person tall.

"Have I never told you of the great metal beasts of the time before?" grandfather replied, sitting down and removing his hat to wipe his brow. He pulled out a jar of ground aloe vera and smeared some on his cheeks and nose. The sun made his skin prickle. It was an especially hot one today. "Come here and put this on while I tell you."

As his grandson squirmed as the aloe vera was applied.

"Now, way back if I recall, there were once great herds of these metal beast that roamed the desert flats. You sometimes see their tracks where the trees have not covered them up. Great black stretches of hard earth covering the land."

"But what were they?"

"Metal beast my boy, terrible roaring things."

"Where they dangerous?"

"Oh my yes, I believe they used to hunt down people like you and me." His grandson edged closer to him and looked cautiously at the metal lump.

"No need to worry dear boy, they have long since passed on."

"But why are they all here?"



“Well, the legends that my grandfather told me from the times before, where that our ancestors worshipped them. Used to try to tame them and control them. Eventually they needed no masters and ran free all on their own. But all things pass on in the end.”

Grandfather fixed his hat atop his head, and passed his grandson a flash of water. “Drink up.” He said ruffling the boy’s hair. The sun was already scorching his skin. They had best move soon before the heat got too unbearable.

“These great metal beasts had their own funeral rites, same as we do. They would group together among their own kin in a place called a ‘Car Park’. Then other metal beasts would visit them and move around, possible looking for a place to rest themselves. There are not many places like this left, not yet taken by the jungle.”

He looked out at the vast mounds ahead of them and felt his skin tingle under the heat. “Come now, we must move or else we might rest here with the dead.”

## **Berlin.**

### **Ciaran O'Melia**

Berlin 1944, we are a Jewish family and prone to the christian beliefs of our neighbors, in the house which is a multi family unit.

All is lost we, as we are taken away by the Hitler Youth Movement, we have known the leader as he lives nearby, he is the same age as me, in fact we were in the same class in primary school, and on the same football team. He drifted over to Hitler Youth

Movement. We marched down to be killed he told us.

The nazi on this street, were trying to find out where we lived, to blunder what remained of our possessions, our guard the son of a neighbour, drove them away with a whip savagely with the words "No talking to the Jews".

There was 6 in our family, my mother and father, with bubba and brother and sister, I am the eldest. My father and I decided to jump him when he least expected. Then it happened, you see I was in slippers and the rush to move was paramount to the young Hitler Youth Movement, I lost one slipper on my left foot it started to bleed as I hobbled along, a bad ankle.

We were in Wilhelmstrasse, I could see a laneway. The guard mysteriously directed us down the lane, we thinking to be shot, but as usual getting mythology wrong is my Hercules ankle. In the deep lane he directed to a lockup garage, again we thought to be shot, but here he gave us food parcels, clothes, and documents. Enough to make sure we survived the war.

Why am I telling you this now it is the year 2010.

I, now an old man in the state of Israel, the troops are clearing away through the olive grove. A neighbour of mine with his family are looking for help to stop the troops as they bulldoze their way through the grove. He pleads with me for help I notice a wound on his left heel.

This I cannot understand.

## **Myths and Perceptions**

**Elaine Reardon**

Where do we draw the line between what is unseen, but still real? We perceive things from a viewpoint of being human, and usually consider that humans are on the top of the heap.

Yesterday on the news I was surprised to hear that in India groups of elephants were observed carrying their young who had died to a special place, and burying them there. They carried the young elephant by wrapping their trunks around its legs.

A few months ago on streamed nature show I watched a group of whales protect a grieving mother whale whose baby had just died. Mother and child were attacked by sharks; the sharks prevented the child from rising to breath. Sounds of distress brought these other whales that protected her and the baby while sharks circled. After some hours passed the whales were joined by more whales from further away. They escorted the mom and her baby away from the shark infested area. Such compassion.

Why, I wonder, with the evidence that continued attack on Gaza/Palestine has given us, do we hold the myth that humans are superior?

Myths are part of our cultural fabric. Some ideas held are easier to hold onto than others. For the first six years of my life I dont think I ever played outdoors without half an eye out for a leprechaun. There are also stories of the washerwomen and banshees that have been handed down. Its said in the United States that some banshees and fairies came over here with particular families on the ships and settled in as the humans did. Those that are able , see, in these forests and towns, a mixture of Native American fey along with those from Ireland and Scotland. With my minds eye Ive seen the same ones all my life. I never questioned their nationality.

Perhaps 30 years ago I was in Kinvara, a small town south of Galway, staying at camp; theowner told us that the woman who lived across the road was dying. There were crows lined up on her roof, and that was all the proof she needed. The next day the owner heard the banshee,

and then the woman passed. It was an unusual story to my ears, one I wondered at.

More years passed. I was living two hours from where I grew up in Boston, and was given a strong prescription medicine that knocked me back. After a week I was more ill and went to my primary care who did blood tests stopped the medicine immediately. He said it had caused my liver to fail-- I was on deaths door, literally.

Later that day I received a phone call from my Godmother in Boston, originally from Sneem, Kerry. who I hadnt spoken to in a couple months. She said, &quot;Whats going on? I heard the banshee wailing for you last night.

Now I think of banshees in a kinder light.

## **Mythology**

**Bernadette O'Reilly**

Mythology

Fanciful

Out of reach

Not into mythology at all

It's enough to cope with

The here and now

## Dreamer

Michael o brien

The never-ending dreamer her mother had called her once, if she played football she was gonna be the best in the world, if it was music she'd be a popstar, in the school play she fully expected a Hollywood agent to be accidentally in the audience to discover her and right there and then whisk her off to movie stardom. Mary had a natural sense of the extraordinary and dreamt these things all her life. Sometimes when she sat in the garden in the early morning the bird song would fill her with a wondrous almost rapturous expectation that something wonderful was going to happen.

There were many times she closed her eyes and asked God or whatever was out there to deliver this hidden promise to her, she had laid her dreams out beneath the sky many times now. Every boyfriend she had was going to be the one, her husband was prince charming, her marriage would be a fairy-tale. She could name all the old movie stars and the movies they were in, she loved music and could name all the old singers and knew the lyrics of all their songs, she always shied away from learning to play music as she was afraid if she learned how to breakdown a song it would lose its magic to her, she wanted the mystery, she wasn't interested in the outtakes, just the illusion.

Mary closed her eyes now and let out a long sigh, she hadn't sat in this garden for years, she remembered all the times as a young girl she had sat here in the mornings before school, then work, dreaming of what could be, the amazing things that could happen. She sat still between breaths, with a slight frown looking at the grass, she was middle aged now, divorced, working a dead end job and her two teenage boys were challenging to say the least, when she thought of the Yeats poem she couldn't say all her dreams were tread on, but maybe just ignored by whatever heavenly deity she prayed to.

As she sat as still as a tree, the birds started their morning chorus. The scent of a thought wafted through her mind, maybe the birds weren't singing of great things to come, but of the great things that were already happening, maybe she'd learn to play an instrument after all, better late than never, dreams were chocolate, nice but in moderation