

# Inkslingers Blended Session

6th April 2024

The Prompt from The Bag Was:

“A Happy Souls is The Best Shield For A Cruel World ”

Atticus

And the Visual



*Human Ancestor?*

## **Depressed Pope**

### **Matthew Tubridy**

Imagine a depressed Pope!  
Pope lugged into psychiatric hospital,  
Sectioned,  
When he tried to make a speech to the other patients the nurses would  
go  
'Whatever! Give his a depot injection!'  
Pops couldn't get out of St Vincent's Hospital Fairview in Dublin,  
He goes to the chapel and gets up on the alter,  
But the nurses throw scrunched up papar at him,  
'Bah! Get off the alter!'  
Eventually the Pope gets out, when he talks nicely to his consultant  
psychiatrist, Dr O'Doherthy,  
He goes to Fairview Park and the crowds gather,  
The Pope takes his anti psychotic medication before he talks to them,  
But there's Nurses in the crowd  
They go 'Bah! Get him off the stage!'  
The cops are called,  
The Pope has to endure another spate of imprisonment, in Store Street  
Garda station,  
As he looks out his window the crowds gather,  
Eventually the Pope is kept free,  
He wanders around Dublin, saying  
'I'm the Pope!'

## in Search of Balance

Greg Field

Willie Meadows shuffled through the open windows on his computer, looking for inspiration. A Monday morning, and he had lost whatever momentum he had built during the previous week. His assignments seemed stale, and if there had been a thread or a theme to his stories, those themes had vanished over a weekend that, despite being awash with alcohol, had been dry in all the wrong ways. He had spent most of it alone, or drinking with strangers at his local.

In the midst of his search for meaning, the city editor, the man whose job it was to guide his path, found him.

“Got something for you, Willie. This has your name all over it.”

Willie looked up at Danny, who, despite being a boss, came as close as anyone at the Post to being a friend. He enjoyed the man’s irreverence, and the simple fact that he never seemed to take himself or his work too seriously. Perhaps that was the key, Willie thought. Just do what you need to do, and don’t care too much.

“City police are holding a press conference. Seems there was a bit of a shooting over the weekend.”

“And this is news, Danny? Jesus, there’s a dozen shootings a day in this town.”

“This one’s different, or so it seems. Storekeeper shot down some poor unarmed black kid. Folks aren’t taking it well. The cops are explaining it all to us lesser-minded people. Conference starts at 11:00, so hustle up. Full report on it on my desk by end of day. We can put it online tonight and run something in the paper tomorrow.”

Across from him, Rosie Carter leaned forward. “I’m surprised you haven’t heard about this, Willie. Made the lead in the local section yesterday. People are upset.”

Willie looked at her. So Rosie, she was – young, and bright, and so idealistic, not yet bruised by the realization that all things must pass. “I try to stay away from the news on the weekends, Rosie. I prefer to pass my time in the singular pursuits of good scotch and bad women.”

Rosie gave a small laugh. She had become fond of Willie's cynicism, which, in her heart, she felt was cultivated solely for her benefit. No one could be that cold.

"This is different, Willie. Black kid shot in a neighborhood full of progressive white people. He didn't live anywhere near there. Came in just to rob this little store, or so it seemed. Got a bullet in the chest for his trouble."

"I expect the shooter was white."

"A little old guy who had worked at the store for years. He had a gun under the counter."

"What did the kid have? Danny said he was unarmed, but no one trying to rob anything can be that stupid."

"He had a knife. Not even a big one. One of those that might carve an apple or pare down a stick. A lot of people think the storekeeper had no reason to shoot. He just saw a black kid and panicked."

Willie stood to finish loading his bag before heading across town. "So we'll hear the usual justifications from the police."

"Ah, Willie, come on. This is different. Even I can see that. The way things are, the way things have been, this could light a fuse to something no one wants to see explode."

Willie paused, then looked down at Rosie, staring up at him intently. She was serious, that was apparent.

"Rosie, do you have a man in your life? Or a woman? A pet? Maybe an aged mother to take care of?"

"What the hell does that have to do with anything? Jesus, Willie."

"You need a distraction, Rosie. Something to take your mind off all this stuff. 'A happy soul is the best shield for a cruel world.' I think some old Greek or Roman guy said that. You get too wrapped up in it, and it'll set your brain at crazy angles. Balance, Rosie. That's all I'm sayin'. Find some balance."

He turned to the door. As he did so, Rosie picked up an eraser on her desk and flung it at Willie's back. It bounced off his shoulder, and when

it did so, Willie Meadows turned to look back at his young colleague. He smiled, then. "See what I mean, Rosie?"

Through the door, and then into streets that always simmered half a step away from anger, where there would be explanations, but no reasons, and certainly no balance.

## **Creatures of The FDeep**

**Matthew Tubridy**

Ricky is Simon Harris's most rebellious employee  
Ricky Pours orange juice over Simon Harris's head,  
In another twist to the story,  
Ricky is placed in a cellar deep underneath the Comeragh Mountains,  
There are creatures down there who can live in the dark,  
They have feelers, no eyes,  
Ricky is down there long enough to grow feelers,  
He turns into Gollum,  
There's a report into the incident,  
A photo is taken of Ricky eating creatures with feelers on them  
But there's a bigger creature in the deep,  
3 times bigger than Ricky,  
That creature sneaks up on Ricky as he sleeps... Ricky's bones get  
crunched up,  
The Dail convenes, they see photos of Ricky's mangled bones,  
The Army are sent out to kill the creature,  
Sergeant creature killer,  
In the past Irish people with guns would have killed creatures like bears  
and wolves.

## **A Happy Soul**

**Laura Alves**

A happy soul makes a person generally optimistic about life and that is the best way to go through it. Confidence and a warm and caring family environment help us follow through with our goals to achieve what we expect of life smoothly. There will always be obstacles and tragedies to go through and this really is a cruel world. So even with the perfect family and neighbourhood, life isn't always plain sailing.

If you have a rebel soul or an angry soul, you won't notice it when the solution to a problem comes your way as your instinct will always be to question what your parents say or to go into a fight with your neighbours. Only when faced with one of the cruelties of life will you realise your parents only wanted the best for you and your neighbour was trying to bring out a kind of strength you didn't even know you had.

So sometimes, if your soul isn't smart enough, you only realise how lucky you were when it's too late to acknowledge it to those who were good to you.

## **A Shield For A Cruel World**

**Max McCoubrey**

Lord Ashford Blair was almost unrecognizable from the picture of him on the net. His long tall body had become stooped and swollen with age and his fingers gnarled and bent. His face, once as smooth as porcelain, was now as lumpy as the road to Aran.

None of my friends went near him. His appearance scared them. I did. I answered his knock on the window when he asked me to take our two bags of papers to his green bin. When I went inside his home to collect them I noticed it was as tidy and loved as he must have been in his youth.

I sat, with the bags on my knee and gave him the most precious gift of all – time. My instinct told me this moment wasn't about the bags for the bin at all, it was about my giving him attention.

I looked into his charcoal eyes and saw a million memories. The wall of his lounge was peppered with photos from his life. I saw that he had been a businessman and academic who was a former chairman of a financial authority. He became a member of the House of Lords and was awarded an O. B.E. in the early noughties. Today he was simply my neighbour in need of a favour.

This great achiever had difficulty in putting his garbage in the bin. He was in need of a listening ear. His knitted sweater of a face looking at me, his audience, delighted to be the trigger for him to relive his halcyon days.

'A Happy soul is the best shield for a cruel world' he told me every time I sat with him from then on. I never forgot it. I learned that whatever life brings, it is important to keep your dignity and not burden anyone with our bitterness.

I stayed an hour that day and many days later. It meant a lot to me and it was only after his death I realised how much it had meant to him.

He made me his sole beneficiary.

I opened a scholarship in his name.



That way his kindness with live on in the young.



## **A poem**

### **Sean not Yates 2024**

I must go down to the booth again, to the lonely booth and cry;  
all I ask is some veritas from a leader who will not lie  
as the polls pull and stats surge as dismay is awaited  
A blank visage of indifference turns loathing into hatred

I must go down to the booth again, to stem any local slide  
This is a wild call, a clear call, that cannot be denied  
And all I ask is a polling day with new banners flying  
Where twilight is void and old creeds are dying

I must go down to the booth again, to see any signs of life  
Cadaver bonds with zombie give only eternal strife  
The charcs of Cinders slippers thrust into the eye of man  
Sightless and godless the deity's master plan

## Logical Solution

### Catriona Murphy

It seemed the logical solution.

Humans would go back to the wild.

The tarnished remains of a skyscraper stood like an alien monolith in the far distance.

Jonathan recalled the film *Arrival*, with Amy Adams. Those great, panoramic shots of large, non-earth objects hovering like a slash in a painting, not belonging and marring the splendor of nature.

He watched it from his perch on a branch, thinking of that logical solution.

The napalm still stung his nostrils, and sometimes he caught glimpses of spider webs not woven right, or a dog with 5 legs.

The sun hazed through a permanent ashcloud.

Memories of the before times flitted back. Barbecue on Saturdays, swimming pool on Sundays, bar drinks on cheap Thursdays.

But the New World wasn't so bad.

Vegetation thrived

And ancient rituals too.

For example, Marion, the ex-clerk who worked at Procter and Gamble thought it would be great to start moon dances once a month, and Terry an ex-janitor from the French company, Danone, thought that pushing antelopes into the fire would bring an end to the napalm burning the leaves.

The latest was an interesting one though.

Jonathan dropped from the tree and strode back to the village.

Doctor Kynes, a biologist working at an AI facility in south Hampton, had another mad theory about how to unfuck the situation.

He stood on the town platform, pointing erratically to a diagram of a chimpanzee.

'If we take the vaccine,' he said, throwing his arms wildly.

Jonathan sighed.

'If we take, it, we could reverse evolution and revolve into a different path. Where we live in harmony with nature and no longer have to share the same toilet and shower with Jeffrey.'

Jeffrey used to be in an asylum, and had no notion of hygiene.

A few people booed and threw old cans of Coke at him.

'We go back to being our ancestors, so we're born anew.'

Jonathan sat on the porch of the saloon, watching the spectacle unfold.

He took out his poetry book, and read some of Atticus. His stable focal point in a world where women were wearing bras on their heads, and the local priest was boozing by the river each day.

Maybe turning back to chimps wasn't such a bad idea.

In the grove that night, they lit a bonfire and arranged tulips in a circle, taken from the greenhouses they had left.

Jeffrey volunteered for the vaccine.

And in the firelight, everyone watched the syringe pierce his arm.

A few minutes later, he recoiled and raged on the ground, screaming and bellowing. At the end, he had one hairy arm and bulbous lips.

'The transformation was incomplete,' Doctor Keynes felt compelled to announce the obvious.

'Perhaps we should try birds.'

## **Happiness**

**Bernadette O'Reilly**

A happy soul is the best shield for a cruel world

Said Atticus

How can someone be happy when the world is Cruel to them?

How can someone not be happy when the world

Is kind to them?

Happiness is elusive most of the time

It plays a child's game

Of hide and seek and can stay hidden

From many people.

## **I'm Not A Chimp**

**Ciaran O'Melia**

I would be a happy soul if I reduced the size of the Human Ancestor as it takes you the whole screen. Everybody knows I cannot read my own writing when I write with a pen; hence, this is late.

Well, I must write after last week's prompt, which was, if memory serves me right, 'Go Write', so here goes.

To the best of my knowledge, I am not a chimp; I have never been and never will be. However, when I look at the antics of today or in today's world, there are some crazy people out there.

I want you to think about what would happen if the animals had guns. Jesus, they would go in for bigger and better guns. And start attacking different species. The elephant can't get his foot into the trigger, but at the same time, I would prefer to step out of the way if he charges. Then, the government, if they are around, would be up to banning guns.

You might say "He", meaning me, is against guns.

Well, I am, and I think I'm right.

Let us look at Finland, the happiest country in the world. This week, a child shot three other children, one dead. Where did he get the gun? If the parents were involved, they should be - - -?

Did you think I was going to say shot? Well, I wasn't.

So, what makes us who live in the US unhappy, divided, and afraid?

About what.

I met a couple of men recently as I walked in the woods.

They were young and asked, "How are you today?"

I replied, "Fine." On second thought, I said as I considered the state, "If the Governor was more liberal, I would be in Clover."

"What do you mean?" they asked.

"He is too conservative."

“I am a conservative.”

Immediately we parted, they lost a chance to discuss. this prompt:

A happy soul is the best shield for a cruel world.



# Energy = Mass x the Speed of Light squared

Gerard Keogh

## Chapter 2

### House of Peace/House of War

The idea that a group of men armed with box cutters could hijack four passenger aircraft on the same day, and then aim three of those aircraft like guided missiles at prominent buildings in New York City and Washington, D.C., scared the living daylights out of an awful lot of people in the wake of 9/11. If terrorists could execute such a plan so relatively easily against the most powerful nation on the planet, then which other high-value targets around the globe might be next? Someone in this part of the world looked at a map and stuck a pin in Sellafeld. What if terrorists were to fly an airliner – full of fuel – into the large pond containing spent fuel rods and other radioactive waste at the facility? PANIC, everyone. PANIC. The radio talk shows had a field day with it. What could we do to protect ourselves? Did the government have an emergency plan for dealing with crises of this nature? If not, why not? What about iodine tablets? Where could we get them? Why has the government not provided every household in the country with a supply?

This would have been amusing to the staff in Nuclear Safety were it not for a much bigger problem they were forced to deal with: the general public was now fully aware of the existence of the Nuclear Safety Division, and it was front and centre of the national news agenda. The phones started ringing much more frequently than before. Anthony Armstrong's honeymoon was over; it went straight to the screaming-children and the bickering-couple stage, and it was destined to end in a messy divorce. None of the civil servants who had to field these queries from the public had any formal training in the ins and outs of nuclear science; they had merely acquired a certain amount of knowledge on the subject as they went about their daily work. When they had to get expert advice on something or other (where the material they were working on had to be factually correct), they had the Radiological Protection Institute of Ireland to call upon.

[Quick story: Two of our nuclear scientists travelled to Chernobyl on an official visit. They both wore dosimeters to measure radiation exposure over the course of the trip. Including the time spent in the Chernobyl area, the highest radiation exposure for the whole trip occurred on the flights there and back. Prolonged exposure to cosmic radiation from outer space is a hazard for flight crew, especially on long-distance routes at the more northern latitudes, over the North Atlantic Ocean, for instance. For the rest of us, though, it's not much of a problem.]

Without looking for it, do you know where your little orange packet of potassium iodate tablets is right now? The answer is, it doesn't matter. They have long since passed their use-by date, so they won't protect you from the dangers of the radioisotope iodine-131 in the event of a nuclear attack or a nuclear reactor meltdown. And yet, the demand from the public at the time to get their hands on this prophylactic was intense. On one occasion, the Minister of State was interviewed on national radio about the government's response to any potential nuclear disaster. It was one of those car-crash interviews that lives in the memory for all the wrong reasons. As the staff in Nuclear Safety listened to the radio in their office, they implored the Minister of State, "Whatever you do, don't mention the iodine tablets." Of course, right on cue, he mentioned the iodine tablets. The interviewer pounced on this golden opportunity to nail the politician. "Which iodine tablets are those, Minister?" she asked. The collective groan from the bewildered staff must have been heard in faraway Chernobyl.

The ultimate aim of the terrorists who declare allegiance to al-Qaeda, ISIS, Boko Haram, al-Shabaab, Hamas, and all the other groups that didn't get the "coexist" memo, is to bring the entire world into Dar al-Islam by conquering Dar al-Harb (territory that is not under Muslim rule and in which Sharia is not the accepted legal system). That is what motivates them to do what they do. To their credit, they don't pretend otherwise; it is just that we refuse to believe them.

Regardless of the claim of al-Qaeda and the counterclaim of all but a few in the West, the events of Tuesday, September 11, 2001, propagated around the globe like gravitational waves emanating from a pair of merging supermassive black holes. These ripples in the fabric of spacetime travel at the speed of light and are detectable here on Earth, even though the cataclysmic event that caused them occurred billions of light-years away. Unlike those gravitational waves, however, the ripples in the global geopolitical pond post-9/11 were enormous walls of water that swept away many unsuspecting victims.

Anthony's boat was turned upside-down, and he wasn't wearing a life jacket. Five years later, he would be forced to choose between the war in his office and the peace of his home. It was an either/or choice. Both options would come with a hefty price tag: the former, a more intangible one; the latter, a financial one.

## **Human Ancestors**

**Angelina Kelly**

Human ancestors? Scientists and geneticists lead us to believe that we are 98.4% chimpanzee. Whether this is true or not I don't actually know, or care.

Through science we are learning that our ape-like ancestors were far more intelligent and capable than we give them credit for. Way back, in the year dot, they knew how to fashion tools and equipment. They had a language and structured society and everyone knew their place. They lived off the land and fished in the sea. They cooked their food and heated their immediate vicinity with fire and breathed the life giving properties that surrounded them. Life went according to plan until some people took the notion to explore beyond their territory and visited other places and either integrated or invaded.

Many millennia have passed and we have all moved on and become more sophisticated and accomplished – or have we?

There are many things that are not right with humans today and the way they live their lives. Regard, respect and consideration for each other seems to have become outdated. Wars continually highlight this affliction and when we see the atrocities being imposed by one country upon another it is fair to ask – why? What's it all about? Why reduce your neighbouring country to a pile of rubble and, almost wipe out its population, just to call the lands "yours" when it clearly belonged to them? Who benefits in the end?

I don't know the answer to these questions but, I sincerely hope that the governments and rulers around the world would come to their senses, accept and settle their differences and help each other to get along and thrive, as we should all be doing.

A utopian idea it may be but, surely we have now progressed as a species enough to actually make it happen. By now we should be able to move freely around the world, express our views and opinions openly, live in peace and harmony with each other, and nature, and accept our difference so that we can all benefit and prosper.

This is my prayer and deepest wish for this world and until it happens I continue to dream and hope.

## Humanity

Elaine Reardon

Is it human nature to look for difference,  
not only with other humans,  
but also how we care for Earth herself,  
So much profit made— who profits?

Who is harmed rivers dry, oceans warm,  
wind and ocean currents change, push storms  
of magnificent proportions across oceans,  
spawn tornadoes in climates that never saw them before?

When rainfall patterns change,  
forests become dry tinder,  
and food crops cannot grow.  
Who suffers?

I think of porpoise and whales, troops of monkeys, herds of elephants  
that wander earth, mostly cooperating, with no political boundaries.  
They reach agreement on who is leader, who is follower.

I watched porpoises protect a mother porpoise and her dead child  
from shark attack on tv. Her calf was prevented from surfacing and  
drowned.

Other porpoises came, surrounded her and her calf, kept her safe  
while sharks circled and she tried to revive her child, grieving.  
I think of Gaza, Artsakh, Sudan, and denial, how we turn from pain.  
If it weren't for Brazilian immigrant in Dublin, a father himself,  
who disarmed a man with a knife attacking school children,  
took a chance that he could help—

if it weren't this thing that happened in the midst of grief  
from Karabakh and Azerbaijan in mid-September, to Palestine,  
Gaza, Hamas, and Israel still—

I would perhaps rather be part of porpoisanity or monkanity.

But I still wonder, what do we think humanity is,  
how do we love?

## **Motorway Driving**

**Matthew Tubridy**

On a motorway, but it's just going downhill!  
There's 10 toil stations,  
Getting more expensive as you go...  
What you get in service stations are grey donuts,  
Made of ash,  
Your on your way to Belarus,  
There's guards every 10km,  
So you must go slow.



## Loneliness

Michael O'Brien

Richie sat at the kitchen table alone now, his daughter was gone, he adored her and loved when she came to visit, loved the last week they spent together. He looked at the coffee cup Kathy left on the sideboard and smiled sadly. When he saw the picture on the fridge of them both in the mountains during the week he almost cried with loneliness. He had to rally himself out of this looming depression, instead of missing his daughter when she was gone appreciate the fact she was here.

Instead of feeling lonely remember the good company. He looked at the pictures on the sideboard of the three of them together, all smiley happy faces, he remembered the day perfectly, they were in an amusement park in France.

Little did he know five years later his wife would be dead and his daughter eighteen now would be living away at university. "Annicha, Richie" he said out loud to himself, a Buddhist phrase he heard somewhere, all life is subject to impermanence, it's the clinging on that causes the suffering. But what about the "this too shall pass", when was the grief for his wife going to pass, not that he wanted it to.

It seemed so cruel, the three of them in that picture so happy, and there were countless days like that, why didn't he appreciate it more instead of worrying about money, or work or whining about some bullshit. The memory of him moaning to Sarah about her spending too much hurt him now, she just wanted Kathy to have the best.

It all seemed so normal, so permanent, dinner together every day, park on Saturdays, sports days, birthdays, anniversaries,. Happy soul was the best shield for a cruel world, he disagreed, appreciate your blessings and accept the rest. You can't have your cake and eat it, but you can truly appreciate each mouthful, so that when it's gone you are sated and grateful for having had it, instead of missing it now that's its gone. They both knew he adored them but he could have done so much more, taken more pictures, moaned less, not take them for granted at times. He was crying now, there was an unopened bottle of whiskey in the

press, he got up and opened it, turned it upside down and poured it down the sink

"no no no my friend, no more self pity city", he looked at the picture of his smiling wife, that was one of her favourite sayings, he cried hard now, he knew she was near,. He picked up his phone and texted Kathy, "how you fancy a curry next Friday",

"Great Dad see you then"

He looked at Sarah's smiling picture, at times the grief was unfathomable, overwhelming, but this was a flicker of light, of comfort, this all has to mean something, it has to lead us somewhere, it has to, it just has to.

## **Monkey Business**

**Miguel A. Rivera, Jr.**

Arnie Hill and his college teacher were at odds. While this semester's subject matter was about Darwin and the theory of evolution, Arnie regarded the concept as alien. Silly in fact, to an ardent bible-belt kid. He found the mere notion of his ancestors being tree-dwelling, banana-eating primates, amusing at best, no matter what the course taught or Mr. Darwin's assertions on the matter.

"You're an obstinate one Mr. Hill. I'll grant you that.", Professor Varner said with a smile. He'd been on the teaching staff for decades and now in his later years enjoyed the occasional, and ever-more-rare, creationist adherent that popped up among his students.

"I'll not engage you in a theological discussion, Arnie, but please tell me why you intend on writing your final paper on the holes in Darwin's theory and why I and others in our society, should blindly accept your creationist views. How is it even remotely possible that the entire human race was spawned from two people, as your bible states?", The Professor posed, while rubbing his right leg, a souvenir of the Afghan war that now forced him to walk with a cane.

"Not a problem Professor, and I will say that besides the missing transition skeletons from pre-humans to current homo sapiens, I'll point out the obvious. Darwin's theory is just that. A theory! When I've heard Mozart or watched old footage of men landing on the moon. When you watch the miracle of child birth, doesn't it lead you to consider the possibility that Darwin like many other theorists could be wrong?", Arnie said.

"Arnie, I, and at this point, quite possibly the entire campus, are aware of your stringent views. That said, this is a science class where we must approach things from the standpoint of what is likely, or even biologically possible. Conclusions made highly probable through repeated testing and results.", Varner responded, now taking on a bit of a condescending tone.

“Well Professor, I’ll wager that by the time we leave this room you’ll start to see it my way.” Arnie said, drawing a curious smile from his Instructor.

Arnie continued. “My dad is a Pastor as you know, and during my high school years I got in trouble. I used to sit in the front pew of our church. Secretly however, I hated my lot in life as ‘The Pastor’s kid’, and like many others considered myself a staunch, closet-atheist. Inevitably, I rebelled. At school, I stole a cop’s motorcycle and rode it down a hallway to impress a hot transfer student. I got punished and put in the back pew of the church. Turns out, that old, wooden pew was from Israel and had one of the nails from Jesus’ cross embedded deep within. Ever since, things began happening that no scientist on earth can explain. Now, I am a believer. One who can do things no one else can.”

Professor Varner looked at Arnie for a second or two, wondering if he were some emotionally unstable zealot who was about to produce a handgun, or if some other student would pop out with a camera advising him that this was all a joke for the never ending stream of YouTube and ticktock media that this current generation worshiped. He braced himself for either scenario, becoming the butt of some perverse joke or worse.

Just then, he began feeling a breeze. A warm and strange one. Odder still, this sudden, balmy gust made no sense since the windows and doors of this lecture hall were all closed. What followed was an intense, burning sensation in his impotent leg just as those years ago in the war. The sounds of a dozen chicken bones snapping at once echoed in the room as Arnie sat before him with a penetrating stare and unreasonably calm demeanour.

“Rise.”, It was the one-syllable word that Arnie uttered. Professor Varner did in fact rise, oblivious to the sound of his cane smacking the concrete floor. For the first time since his Humvee was attacked all those years ago, he was able to stand on his own two feet. He seldom cried in public much less in front of a student, but the tear that escaped his eye had a mind of its own. Arnie got an “A” that semester.

## Spinman

### Mark L'estrange

They both got back to the airport and boarded a plane back to Dublin. When they got off the plane, they were welcomed by the Super and a lot of Paddy's colleagues from the force, Julie was also delighted to see Paddy back safe saying.

"Thank God your home ok, don't think you will be in a hurry back there again will you?" "Certainly not I can think of nicer places for us to travel on the next flight."

Stephen's parents were both there delighted to see him, he said when he saw them "Thanks for coming to meet me, It's great to see you both, don't worry I think I can safely say I can get back to normal now." "That's great news son so nice to see you too."

The Super then said. "The president has invited you all to a reception at the Aras, to welcome you both back, and to honour Spin Man Paddy for all his great work."

Paddy said. "That is very kind, but then people would know about me then, and we don't want that, it could damage my work in the force would it not?"

"Don't worry we have managed to keep the media out of this so far, this will be a private event."

When Stephen heard this he said "I am starting to like going to see presidents first the Mexican, now the Irish, sounds like we are in for a good night."

They went along and had a brilliant night, Paddy even got a freedom of the city medal, when he got it he was speechless, for a while before saying.

"Thanks so much this is an honour to receive this, can I just say that Stephen deserves a medal too, for all he has being through, coming up good in the end let's hear it for him everyone." They all stood up and applauded him.

The president then said “I want to say a few words of thanks to Paddy for all his great help, and I can tell Stephen is a happy soul and that is a great shield for this cruel world, I can tell that has brought you through these hard times.

After that night things got back to normal for Stephen, he got a promotion in his job and he got to move into a nice apartment close to his parents.

Paddy continued to work for the Guards and remains one of their best assets in the force, stopping things from spinning out of control. So if you ever see a gang up to no good start spinning around, you know what’s going on don’t you.

The End

## A Poem

Sean not Yates 2024

The book of Deuteronomy  
make no reference to economy  
but give good advice to Moses  
about the tablets and what doses

Not using others money  
for promised milk and honey  
a commandment not to borrow  
would be a bitter pill to swallow

It's a house of cards built on sand  
when we let that invisible hand  
drive the economy of man  
without constraints within a plan

With boom and bust it's hard to trust  
policymakers not to discuss  
the pursuit of pointless greed  
I thought for those with greatest need

Perfect markets are the key  
the explain philosophy  
where pseudoscience is to the fore  
even when markets hit the floor

Supercomputers should be best  
to see when we should all invest  
but all fail then comes the time  
when with the tables we must align.

## Cheeto The Chimp

### Tadgh O'Brien

With guests arriving in just a few hours, Cheeto the chimp was deep in concentration making a casserole. An old favourite, fruit bats, gnats with dried nettle garnish. He stabbed a thumb in to the marinade and sucked it delicately. Something was not right.

What was it though? He gave it a sniff. No. It was something else. His ears piqued. Shoulders tensing up.

Why had the bird song halted? What was that sound? It was almost as if ... the whine of a human? He scuttled down toward the entrance.

Curiosity and trepidation mingled within. He cautiously made his way to a clearing in the forest. There, his suspicions confirmed: a human, disoriented and distressed, pacing in circles apparently without purpose.

Cheeto despaired. A stray human, loose in the forest, can cause all sorts of trouble.

Overcoming his initial apprehension, Cheeto approached the human cautiously. He met its strange anthropomorphic blue eyes. Fear flickered in its gaze. Careful not to frighten it, Cheeto made soothing purrs and whoops to ease its anxiety.

"What's your name?" said Cheeto, softly.

The human stammered: "Att.. Atticus."

"Let's take you home"

The human gave a nervous nod. Cheeto took its strange naked hand with the curious angles, and led it along the thick forest path.

As they approached the concrete reservation where the humans are kept, Cheeto gestured towards a dormer bungalow: "Here, you will find your clan inside that box."

The human nodded once again, then bolted inside, furiously locking the door to his own cage behind him.

Cheeto said to no-one in particular: "How we are descended from those poor creatures, I will never know".



He turned back to the forest, to find his casserole.

## **My Aunty Ann**

**Matthew Tubridy**

Aunty Ann, drives into Templemore,  
She stops at a shop and gets a real magnum ice cream,  
She sits back in her car,  
She's been looking forward to this ice cream for weeks,  
She had been eating canned food,  
Because she thought Ireland would be hit by a nuclear bomb so she was  
hunkering down in her cellar,  
My Aunt is very suspicious.

## **Bad News**

### **Miriam Tetford**

I couldn't sleep that night had very vivid dreams .I must stay awake or I won't remember them.

The dream was I was scribbling on a page doodling and it turned in to a masterpiece wow .maybe I am getting there in the end.

Work up as usual thinking do I have to go to work.

Then I got the dreaded Noel call the brother he never rings ,has to be only bad news.

"I am afraid it's bad news Ella".

I said how do you know? Don't just guessing .she's the oldest it's bound to be her. She is 75 after all .she's had a heart attack " not looking good....,

My only sister she went to Australia on a nursing contract. Only came home a few times .what am I now to her what is she to me.??

She wasn't able for the journey 48 hours flying.

God I had 5 brothers and you let me only sister go to the ends of the world how cruel. Had a hard time accepting this .She wanted to Sponsor me when I was a teenager to go out there but I was a home bird .I only made it as far as England.

I got on my international prayer Zoom to pray for her and the family for peace and comfort .my friend is an intercessor and we prayed the salvation prayer. He said they can still hear even when In a coma.

They say you can have a death bed conversion.

It's all I can do now for her it's so far away no one can go to the funeral .it will be live streamed soon so we can watch from afar. technology is handy sometimes.

My daughter and I picked out lovely colourful flowers on Interflora.

What message do you want. "Deepest sympathy from Miriam and Grace"

No she said Deepest sympathy from your sister Miriam . yahh your sister Miriam.....

I realized it will be the last time I will say yahh I have a sister She hated technology I tried to get her to set up face time etc.

She always said I will get my son's to do it but it never happened with the time difference as well. I email her but she only replied a few times a different generation.

I get it she was so far away from home and not having her own siblings around she probably switched off a bit I did all so was there any point.

I tried to explain to a friend I didn't really know her very well .

She was Ella at the end of the phone that's who she was she died late on good Friday night she would have found that funny so dramatic.

The veil between heaven and earth is getting thinner. I know I will see her again.

She was a happy soul all I can do is celebrate her life.