

Brian O'Dowd

NOTIONS

NOTIONS



Brian O'Dowd

PUBLISHED BY
GALWAY ACADEMIC PRESS

Notions

By

Brian O'Dowd

Published by
GALWAY ACADEMIC PRESS

Notions

Copyright © 2025 **Brian O'Dowd**

& Galway Academic Press

First published in Ireland

Galway Academic Press Galway, Ireland Company

Reg No: 488084

Email: galwayacademicpress@gmail.com

www.galwayacademicpress.com

All rights reserved. No part of this book shall be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted by any means electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise - without written permission from the publisher or the author, except by a reviewer who may quote brief passages in a review.

Published by Galway Academic Press

Printed by CL Print

ISBN 677-9925-04-422-9

A CIP catalogue number for this publication is available from
The British Library



TABLE OF CONTENTS

❖ INTRODUCTION	9
❖ Kevin's Lament	11
❖ Kevin the Menace	20
❖ Dice of Life	30
❖ Birds of a feather	41
❖ Tell Me	51
❖ Look Back	63
❖ Wrong Table People	73
❖ Twelve Men	84
❖ Eureka Fest	98
❖ Old Ringsend to Ivy League	114
❖ Getting Distracted	128
❖ Life	141
❖ Constant Improvements!	153
❖ Boomers are Leaving	167
❖ Spaced Out	179
❖ Now We Know!	195
❖ 'After All'	209
❖ Summer's Time	222
❖ 'Fast Lane Life'	236
❖ 'Look At Us Now'	255
❖ Troubled Makers	267
❖ 'Put an Oar In'	275
❖ 'Those Between Times'	285

Notions

By

Brian O'Dowd

INTRODUCTION

Galway Academic Press is privileged to publish this fine book and make it available for readers around the world.

Brian O'Dowd's "Notions" arrives as an exhilarating tapestry of memoir, cultural history, and wry philosophical reflection, distinguished by its exuberant voice and a kaleidoscopic weave of Irish and global experience. Spanning an extraordinary journey from Dublin's schoolyards and libraries to academic laboratories, Trinidad shores, American cityscapes, and distant galaxies of scientific thought, O'Dowd's narrative is propelled by curiosity, irreverent wit, and a profound engagement with the marvels and mayhem of both nature and society.

At heart, the book is an inquisitive meditation on the unlikely origins of life and the astonishing mutations of human civilization. O'Dowd applies the tools of the scientist and the instincts of the storyteller, blending personal recollections—of family, education, love, migration, and discovery—with lucid, often humorous expositions of scientific milestones. His discussion of DNA's unravelling not only honours the communal triumphs of Watson, Crick, Franklin, and Wilkins, but also throws into relief recurring themes: the virtues of

collaboration, the accidents of genius, and the playful tenacity required for progress.

O'Dowd's charisma radiates in his narrative style—by turns anecdotal, satirical, philosophical, and poetic. The rhythm of Dublin speech and the cadences of science lectures mingle effortlessly, yielding passages that are both uniquely local and effortlessly universal. This book invites the reader to wander (and sometimes stumble) through the backstage of 20th-century science, the boisterous playgrounds of Irish childhood, and the hardships and joys of world travel, all illuminated by O'Dowd's unmistakable blend of wisdom, mirth, and empathy.

"Notions" is much more than a memoir; it is a spirited call to curiosity and wonder, as much an ode to the workings of the cell as to the resilience of the human soul. It teaches, entertains, and provokes—urging readers to recognize our shared lineage on a fragile planet, and to relish the possibilities of mind and memory.

Galway Academic Press celebrates the opportunity to share Brian O'Dowd's singular vision and infectious humanity with readers everywhere.

Kevin's Lament

Oh!

Feel as last day of a grand week in Bray,
just to say why I can't meet you later!
Fully occupied, this packed and special day,
frightfully busy, taken a turn for the worse,
needing to be abrupt, soon I'll be heartless.
Sure I've to catch my six bullets this dawn,
bullets as late trams come speeding together.
Big wigs decided, I've to be slain 'en rapide',
royal parchment signed by all Four Courts,
their license to kill, caught me dead to rights.
Execution day really can mess things up.

This life heading south.

In bowels of the jail house with shackled legs,
ropes for my wrist in case I'd break free,
head through iron bars with my thick head?
Their castles come with dark dank dungeons,
descend iron stairs, await due comeuppance,
a one score life I'll be having this time round,
pimpled galore still barely with a weekly shave.
'Vagabond ruffian foulest of all mankind,'
odious Judge bellowed, his spittle aimed at me,
'we'll have no truck with youse as martyrs.
Away, away, shoot him tout suite. Don't miss.'
Pulling out the best of stops, Mother begged,
'Sir please send him off to Connaught.'
Constipated old scouser sent me down,
black hat donned had me condemned,
label taints my shirt, this rough hewn garb!
Chest holes darned, itching as hive of bees,

loaded heavy by sweat of fear stink and gore.
Ma and Pa had rented a long face barrister,
horsehair attired declared 'law of this land.'
No big shots on my side, now face a fusillading.
Young me with doings gotten into fancy pickles!
Yikes.

Oh please!

When you wake this morning, no mourning,
take a Grafton street tram for tea with friends.
Unlike a butchered pig, I'll be off the hook,
away in the stars, pass our Milky way 'bye, bye'.
An aching soul escaped from scary horror place!
Body seized, consigned to quicklime salting,
as Lot's wife that's now my lot! C'est la vie.
Riding on eternity's comet with trailing tears,
regret for all our might have beens. My Dearest.
Even the earth worms will not happy with me,
no bones about it, salt of this earth. Forever.
Once off to Van Diemen's for shackle draggers,
bad lads, gurriers, dossers, mostly plain eejits,
now getting sentenced from Kangaroo courts,
with me dragged by the hair, snagged by RIC,
hauled to face Squaddies in their Yards. Ha!
'Why youse still here?' Swaggering by our sod,
using me as practice, before off facing Zulus.
Since in these dire cells not a cup of porridge,
'Ah sure look it you'll not be hungry so long.'
Only distracted by predecessor cell wall tales,
now it's me under the gun, stand next in line.
No full bottle of Irish with porter as a chaser,
down the gullet, send me off with better spirit.
It's leaving that's hardest, so much yet to stay.
Slainte, be free, a real Irishman's parting glass.

Scrawny screw Paddy on a shilling plus soup,
from his grubby mitt handed a lit Woodbine,
safety pinned bull's eye on me donkey shirt.
'You're good to go,' from his whiskey breath.
'Put it on the wrong side!' Says I, half in jest,
bullets to scratch that tormenting itchy vest.
'No pardon lad, black and tans will be loaded,
doctor to see it's done right. No silly messing.'
Smoked a fag together, then with rosary beads,
more decades than Ma insisted them evenings.
Paddy shoved poppy seeds in my shaky hand,
'Keep them yokes safe in the back pocket lad.
Soon we'll have Big fellow's mug on pennies.'
President Michael Collins! Worth the sacrifice?
For me?
Tell me St Peter why did I ever get born at all?
Will you be still accepting ruffians likes of me?
Only crime in my time was for the larking,
as a caged albatross I tried to break free.
Clergy came by this midnight for last rites,
solitude interrupted, declared I'd 'no mortals'.
Confessed even only once French kissed!
'Water to wine?' I asked with the tin mug.
Priest slipped a full naggin, surely hit the spot.
'If you'll not be in heaven, neither for one of us!'
Two grand men, came and offered me peace,
and that dram of Uisce baithe to lean on.
Left me whistling in the dark.
What manner of neighbours do we have at all?
Europe pestilence passed, rat disease avoided,
our plague a parade of sordid next door hustlers,
foul or fair weathers through tumultuous reigns.
Sent genocidal merchants, Cromwell and cronies,

tools of their trade, baton, cudgel and truncheon.
Penal Laws displayed endlessly punishing spirits,
priests with mass in hedgerows, no gaelic focals.
Our tormentors are grifters, sniff on those roses,
disguised by garlands and red ribbons.
My hat left for your brother and sturdy shoes,
those dear glasses frames when I first saw you,
I've the cheap ones with the crack, more fitting.
Tommy at school put his ham fist into my face.
Have a rummage around in the bedroom press,
few pound notes I was hiding under the mattress,
one is five quid, sure I'll go out on the high note!
Our O'Connell street photo, books, check with Ma!
Piggy bank loaded with half crowns. All of yours!
Rugby medal and 100 yard sprint if you even want,
tell Ma for definite that hooded raincoat you liked,
on the hike at Easter to Powerscourt waterfall.
Make double sure you take our carnival teddy bear,
cost thruppence, when I beat carnies over in Howth!
Dearest don't sit or dwell, I'll not be at gates of Hell!
Heaven's sake!
Manacled heroes hauled to Tyburn gallows tree,
horsecart ride down streets, halt at Bowland's pub,
tankards with guards, before vile pursuits began,
fierce violence spectacle for Neanderthal crowds,
their legacy ritual skullduggery, terror mutilations,
best seats in high demand for silver guinea tariffs.
Witness a human abattoir in greasy City of Gallows,
easy to lose footing down on those slimy avenues.
Then our young Robert Emmett on Dublin's street,
matched by Silken Thomas 'hongyd hedded, quartered.'
Evisceration, castration, only wild daily chopping,
keeping splayed lads alive longer by royal decree,

as bulls in Spain with estastic wagering crowds.
Screams muffled, pebbles shoved deep in the gob,
released from torments by long branch lynching,
purpose designed, slowly take last breath away.
Such pageants recorded for over 500 years,
forking over arms and leg, never a one off thing.
Where this came from? Mulled wine in lead pewter?
Vicious artifices inherited from Vlad the Impaler?
These agonies to put the wind up any miscreants,
our whipping boy land hidden from world's scrutiny.
Whether fox or rebel they'll be pulled apart. Tally Ho!
Anyway mercy bullets for me, these enlightened times.
Get some breaks.

Famine Queen lies resplendent in a golden casket,
where were you when we needed you most?
No loaves, meat pottage curds and whey for us?
Skinflint had presided over wondrous estates,
giant pink octopus tentacles astride an entire globe,
keen as mustard lording over God's land and water.
Right neck with Flag planting every new conquest.
Bagsy for us! Finders keepers, losers weepers!
Hip, Hip, Hurray! Hip, Hurray! Jolly good, I say.
Iron willed filling their bulging strapped sacks,
steel sent to Africa for railways and slave chains.
Always be raiding, collecting riches from abroad,
avaricious activities bore rewarded consequences,
more jewels for stiff necked crowned Royal to bear.
Shire mansions, scullery maids, four-posters, library,
croquet, maze fun play for any tiny fair and dainty.
Mise judged by robbing hoods?
Tonight my lads sit with reverence on hard bar stools,
drinking poteen, busy nursing those distressed spirits.
Uilleann pipes, snuff, pipe tobacco, lots of sad blather,

provide scant gusto for patriot's songs of rebel times,
stooped shoulders, no tail wag, head sighing, mutterings,
defeat and despair, accustomed to all since the GPO fail.
1916 crew massacred, wounded James shot in a chair,
topping all their old school cara gets to be slaughtered.
Vicious claw talons exposed, 'submit or may ye perish',
any lackluster amicus with neighbours fully cancelled!
Before bells, times be chatting with those snug girls,
me yearning to be there holding hands, kissing you.
One more night on the sauce, mighty craic together.
Oh!

For Napoleon youse even gifted second chances,
have my pale skin sweat buckets in West Indies,
be dispatched on prison ship even with the fevers.
Gladly endure Hobart's terrifying hog-tied courts,
four bright stars of the Southern Cross in Oz skies,
safe nesting for this wild goose, far from the plough.
Antipodes feast on beefy marsupials, roast Cassowaries,
I'd be off the wall, with such a palate jumping for joy!
Playing didgeridoo's as Gauguin with the brown girls.
You'll be shut of me, and save those heartaches.
Give me one last shot?

Manor Lords festooned with Dickensian girth,
no dropped crumbs from their loaded tables,
while Trevelyan's laissez-faire starved our millions,
'sharp effectual remedy' for over-population of us.
Gorta Mor exposed real blights! Those laconic Earls,
when the chips were down they with big fish to fry.
Their ballyhooed potemkin 'Act of Union' farce,
jokesters had fooled us, with baloney shenanigans!
Not one stood up meerkat vigilant for our plight,
somniaulant as indolent sloths to our woes.
None for you ten for me, none for you 100 for me.

London had beefeaters, when we stewed the grass.
Far flung Turks sent aid, as did the Choctaw tribe,
desperate New York orphans sent 2 whole dollars,
God bless them young one's with all His mercy.
Young Lincoln's \$10, later bucks stopping by him.
Toast for Her breakfast from our pilfered wheat,
our bitter brewed barleys lifted on Her Birthday!
Erin's every shamrock, straw thatched cottage,
every boreen, all islands, Galway and Dublin bays.
Royal canal pike, trout in river, lakes. They owned?
Portrayed as poachers, again they'd turned tables!
Out foxed us once again.
'Just be that good student', Ma and Da demanded,
finish homework algebra, latin, history and gaelic.
So wanted me to be their rising shooting star,
not this useless, now dispensable as a ragamuffin,
humiliated, clad in prison rags, no one's proper hero.
Now my life is spent, whimpering facing doom,
fell short of their mark, not even guts for garters.
Born sans my four wisdom teeth.
Imperial's Empire net slung over earth's minnows,
given unhealthy coveting and want for our land,
lonely Iceland existing in their exclusive location.
Irish Sea and Isle of Man never half belonged to us,
as with any good natured neighbour's hedge row!
Beaten into our dim wits was they owned all of it,
depicting us in cartoons as haggard gargoyles,
Holyhead to Cliffs of Mohair all in their Kingdom.
Cabin fever 'mainlanders' had for our Celtic island.
Clontarf Brian Brou defeated malfeasant Viking thugs,
two centuries of barbaric pagan molesting intrusions.
Springtime they'd let loose mayhems by sea shores,
long boats outfitted to bulwark linings with treasures.

Oh what fun goon pirate hoards had with marauding,
crisscross a broad Atlantic, vagabonds ribald thieving.
'Throw out all from those round towers and churches.'
Danegeld we coughed up when finally they'd vamoosed!
Missed by no one, fair dues gifted us blond haired celts!
Romans turned their nose at this poverty 'Winter land'.
Lickety split nearest islanders showed up in our harbour,
invited by MacMurrough, no sentinels sent out to protect.
Our island filched by invaders, nightmares began again,
fought tooth and nail each century they reigned o'er us.
Never had enough turf, then got stuck in our mud.
Stone bed, panes cracked, drizzle chill, damp sheet,
no moon darkness with me staring in a deep abyss.
Gethsemane times, but no rooster with crowing,
distant bugle reveille rousting six ruffraff dragoons,
each alone with killing dreams, why they'd joined up,
one rifle a blank, so all left unsure of real killers.
Also another to blow my top with a kill shot,
under the circumstance make sure I'm a goner!
Nothing better happens on Execution day.
No fish and vinegar chips for my tea.
Near Ellis island Liberty's torch flares astride a bay,
at hard stone feet her shackle chains lie shattered.
Their citizens hauled hard to dispatch pesky invaders,
revolted Yanks partings achieved, President Washington!
Anchors away! That fleet fled full sail on an ebbing tide.
'Watch those titanic icebergs don't hit youse on the ass.'
Cracks appeared in that wake for an impervious Empire,
beacon of freedom to navigate and find our pathway.
Under their cosh we suffered, on a battered old land.
Wherein much lies buried.
When deposited in the yard feeling bedraggled,
meeting my slayers and soon alters my maker.

I'm that nervous with public speaking, stuttering,
shaken, drips, fear, palpitations to beat the band.
So no 'gallows' speech I'll be keeping my trap shut.
Now my fateful beating heart aware of our last legs,
no shaking of squaddie hands as one brave Eriskine.
Like Anne Boleyn 'not come to preach, come to die.'
No place for rehearsal or after need no hearse.
Reincarnation? After this fiasco never back here.
Fool me once? Next life Hawaii or Japan Samurai.
I'd better not upset squaddies, let me go easy,
likely feeling queasy under a stinking blindfold.
Still seeing clearly.
Paddy tells they're late, off killing in another yard,
okay never any hurry to get beating heart stopped.
Wondering how long Heaven's Gate stays open,
busy season now with this deadly Spanish flu,
plus lots of old folks ending such grand lives lived.
My Guardian Angel to deliver my battered spirit.
'One unwanted soul presented at Heaven's gate.'
As returning a worn school blazer to Clerys.
Gadzooks.
Rushing now hearing steel chain clanging,
rattling gates opening down long corridors,
loud belters with bloody thirsty antics.
Steel heels on stairs, braggadocios ramparts,
gallivanting panics, such mad blasting!
Well gra geal mo pumping croi.
Yikes.
Pulling off any stops, hullabaloo racket coming.
Slain.. .

Cats out the bag

Nerves raw months after our Easter's Rising,
'Irish question' in those toff's newspapers,
blarney truths going down smooth as swill,
monkeys chattering, collecting their peanuts.
You've a Rosetta stone but not understand us.
No bread and circus only their woodshed,
needed room to swing cats why they came,
not with nine lives, but nine clawed tails,
have the whip around our freckled hides,
town square floggings easy get hit for six.
Chopped their queen at drop of an axe.
Howzat!

Shame them to shoot our rebel leaders,
salt in wound, sent our best to their graves.
Bullies long innings, now they messed up,
it's not over, so take that to the post office!
Swing your hook, be gone stout John Bull.
Enough with whitewashed balderdash,
sinn fein lays claim for each invaded field,
obvious as lice on old man's bald noggin.
Get off our grass!

Rathmines Post Office

'Easter' no final straw only that hump,
hope is no oasis mirage. A catalyst!
There can be no armistice with them now,
never let Europe's waging war be wasted,
artful plans are needed, cunning strategies,
chaos causing commotions, not artillery.
Bunch of lads descended on the post office,

nourished to the gills with dutch courage,
 petrified knowing the stakes before us,
 as blood spattered posts in Kilmainham.
 Outside we stuck GPO's Proclamation!
 Pamphlet, bull horn, bodhrán drum, whistles,
 one weird lad even played his accordion.
 Citizens gathered, us banging goat skin,
 bull faced folks endeavoring get stamps.
 Astride our soapbox, I rattled the statement,
 with arms pointing, I'd studied the Big Fella.
 Our goal galvanize Rathmines as our bastion,
 time to follow Sarsfield, Parnell and Pearse.
 All be with us in this final grasp of escape.
We are here today as the Liberators!
Our zeal not wayward or wandered.
We with wounds to heal, to be a nation,
language to cherish, children to educate,
build churches in every town, value clergy.
Support our gaelic sports, foster culture.
Not let tragic Gorta Mor bygones be forgot.'
 Then star boy Charlie, reading from 'GPO',
 "Long usurpation of rights by foreign people."
 "Youse usurping getting me pension. Fridays!"
 Feisty one irritated with us blocking her way.
 "Youse are a bunch of useless straggly youths.
 Can I nip in for a moe get me business done?"
 Worse for wear Charlie, rattled off the rails,
 mostly that whiskey took over his speech.
 Gist of an awful rambling rant.
"Worst of times, and even more worse times.
We'll parcel your contributions in a thimble,
not be sticking with it. No good memories!
On Seven seas go find Homer's Atlantis,

*maraud new worlds with unpleasant crews.
Don't be discouraged by Cooke in Hawaii!
Cleo's needle wasting sweetness in a desert,
blooms by the river! Shift Ayers rock to shires!
Flags on Moby dick, steal Easter island eggs,
Sends us a card from this Christmas island!
Address Irish President in Dublin Castle!
Gift for the fireplace!*

Felt gang's nervous tension, dodgy supports,
Rathmines wanted better. Not us buskers.
Need postal orders, telegrams, parcels to Donegal,
cashing cheques to feed childers, or evictions.
One irate plump gentleman with his fine wife.
“Famine, famine, famine, famine so long ago,
we'd fried kidney for breakfast with two eggs.
Later dine with wine from France and cheese.
Youse may be out of place and time?”

I'm all right Jackeens

Citizens tossed our pamphlets away, not read.
We were then mightily harangued on the spot.
‘Go away gombeens, we need you not.’
‘What on earth are you rabbiting about?’
We cheered Queen Victoria back in 1900,
not part of the Empire, we are the Empire!
Double quick angry uniform plods showed up,
whistle and helmet, as Keystone cops films,
dishing baton whacks, treated as commoners.
Cuffed tied, bereft waiting for a Black Mariah,
other louts snatched every music instrument,
likely ended up in pawn shops in Ranleigh.
Even if hog tied, feeling disheartened pain.
Our whole crafted shebang, fiasco shambles,
now so nervous shaking in our boots.

Behind bars

Tucked up in a local Jail house, on a month's tariff,
spared slop out at Kilmainham's horror show,
done for crime of agitating, a thorn in their side.
'Try it again and watch out. No mercy next time.'
Days to chew the cud, busy composing my history.
In case of accidents.

Crickey, in Newsies

Next day jailer tossed us the newspapers.
'RPO rebels failed.'
'Copy cat thugs in lock up.'
'Spuds nobodies fault, natural mold.'
'Wait till great War is over'
'Rathmines residents satisfied,
participate in Crown's opulence,
not back down the boreens.'
Still job done, worth a month in pokey.

My brother Freddy and Me

Year older, ciotóg left the womb right shambles,
me gestating getting dolled up by mixed confusion,
forever wobbling, misshapen hand me down clogs.
Grew up close, later as penguin and the white bears.
Up to capers, both spiffy in patched blazer and cap,
mitching, boxing orchards, dodging tram fares,
copying arithmetic homework in religion class,
fecking cursing, not left to chance cheat exams.
Nabbing gob stoppers, not poor box tanners!
Don't get me wrong!
Atoning venial sins, served Mass ton of times.
Weddings with shillings from posh Rathgar,
encouraged my billiard hall and boozing habits.
Religiously flag box collecting on Sundays.
Early teens I'd taken to the drink by skin full,

Fred signed up, took a musket ball at Gallipoli,
arm lost, still remains one bellicose south paw,
posing as hero Horatio Nelson on the pillar.
'Right arm? Only for show as ears on a deaf man.'
Talent with ceili reel and jig, catching balls,
in goal for Dartry Rovers, call him the bandit.
Got to hand it to him.

Then I shoved a kid's gansey in a red post box,
fear an phoist kept his mitts on it, not delivered.
Hauled on the ragged carpet for school assembly,
face dreaded black strap six of best humiliation.
Last minute, cry babies father shows up,
embarrassed by blithering idiot son. Heaven's sake!
"Hold your horses! Just shenanigans, an altar boy!"
Lucky me, got off scot free as Royals at Balmoral.
Miracles happen!

Charlie

Untamed feral specimen from Rathgar red brick,
classmates since striking conkers in the yard.
Good soul, holy water crossed himself as nuns,
wore hand made leather boots from Tuscany,
regular nicking church wine from the sacristy,
scattered empties in pews by itinerants kipping,
only lad equipped with such devious thinking.
'Best not keep things so bottled up.' He'd relate.
No argument!
Grand house, below stair maids to boss about,
Dad away gallivanting over in the colonies.
Belter finger whistle to summon egg sandwiches,
tea in China cups, sugar cubes, cream in a jug.
Sat in the drawing room smoking cigars,
John McCormack voice on a gramophone!
Toys on shelves, bed room ceiling to floor,

train, tracks, cap guns, holsters, bow an arrow,
firemen hat, Ottoman's Turkey scabbard sword.
Young lad best dreams!

Junior school final, jam packed Donnybrook,
got a try from wicked pass, he'd done the labour,
'Go win it,' he shouts in that scrum pack melee,
body a tapped barrel of porter, ten yards short,
could have crashed over his own damn self.

Shared glory had made him a true cara,
paraded silver cup round big shot seniors.

Dad forked out for spanking bike.

Me on cloud nine!

Face of it

Two magnifico churches our neck of the woods,
exquisite domed Rathmines, Rathgar's steeple.

Our 'Maids Church' sited betwixt them two,
anonymous edifice, pass by no tip of the cap,
resemble a bank or theater, no front window,
not expose tram passengers to inner sanctum,
fears Chapel would drive off well to do yobs.

On Sunday's, charwomen pack the pews,
catering for snobs, hoping Saints would help.
Rush for breakfast, tending other's home fires.

Dodder Park day

Charlie with me lingered by Dodder's park,
half day, full bottles in school satchels,
next to maths home work, from the swots.

I coughed up for 20 cigs and matches,
chatting with two National school girls.

'Go on then gives a fecking drag already,'
says Carmella, brassy ways, eyeing Charlie.
"I'm only with just gasping for it." Yikes!

Some gurrier fella with blaggard 1916 gruff,
knowing how to get Charlie right riled up.
“So the roof fell in on Sackville street,
youse got hammered! What now Napoleon?
Better luck with Republic of Aran Island!”
My lad got him choking, miscreant crushed,
forced to recant, respect heroes names!
Call Black and Tans plonkers to survive,
repent and cover green all red about.
After, Charlie tossed a banger under a bench,
for laughs with us lot getting half bagged.
Wheezing dodderly geezers, wound up,
got old tickers exercised, had it coming.
Walking sticks waving, yelling fierce curses,
‘Wait here, Constables will be busting youse!’
Scarpered past allotments to Nine Arches pub,
gas time had with them two romping tomboys!
Girls went and pinched bunch of gooseberries,
easy pickings from that Milltown hill grocery.
Then jumped on a steam train to Harcourt street,
sling shots fired at back garden window targets!
Over Grand canal bottles got heaved. One half day!

Rathgar gardens, ladies

Tennis, bowls, golf, summer garden parties,
children times at their Palmerstown park.
Seesaws, gentle cricket, hide and seek, flowers!
Reedy tranquil pond with ducks and swans.
Now with lower class ruffians encroaching,
pouring over canal at Portobello bridge.
For goodness sake! Pull up the bridges!
Riff raff, unkempt in homemade shoes.
Proper orders eroded. Too much.
Dreadfull language. My goodness!

Look dodder parks fields is for them.
That's what is agreed for so long!
Old park custodian tries to dispatch them,
football never permitted and stolen bikes!
Install penny toil collector with the railings.
Dreadfull rebellion disruption, who wanted?
Thankfully constables and soldiers ended it.
Standards to be maintained. Or else?
Mayhem to reign? For us?

My Calamity

Scoundrel by Rathmines library nicked my bike,
lined up in a row, mine one a sitting duck.
Not what Carnegie's funding had anticipated.
Toe rag hanging about, right done me head in,
busy upstairs inscribing legitimate demands!
Back on shanks mare, no conveyance vehicle!
Freecking peelers, not bothered one wit.
Not one hauled before those magistrates.
Left me wanting farthing cross bar rides,
barrow boy had me slung in front basket.
Me two legs forked, leading the street.
Father with a right fit.

Zoo house

Dublin's 14 lions created for Africa's Serengeti,
not caged in the Park or feasting on fit gazelles,
desperate roaring, pacing to an fro, it ain't right.
Us suffering conquered people know better!
Have them on Dalkey island, with Martello's tower,
Mating life, hunting goats, chewing fat hares.
'Liberty Island' hail ships from across the waves.
Putting that out there.

Charlie's leaving

Scary-Mary patrolled our lanes to rein in Charles,
grandma blast us 'ne'er-do-well, good for nuthins'.
Upper crusts dubious, his wayward acquaintance,
No Civil servant uncle, hampered my prospects.
Caught him cavorting with dodder's Carmella,
declared that dear girl 'common as muck hussy'.
Scary grabbed Charles, got hauled by the ear.
Last time either seen about.

Curtailed Amore.

Do something! We suppose out went a panic call,
hierarchy gathered with their far away eyes.
He ended up by Uncle Henry in Capetown,
That leaving had me unhinged, still bristles.
Not expecting my mucker to disappear,

Charlies appeal by letter

Come on!

Forgo United Irish men! Never happen!
Not wallow anymore in that forsaken place.
Brand new land, better way to go.

Servants and so many women!

Come enjoy life, with uncles.

Henry has wines, Philip mines, Gordon farms,

I'll send the boat tickets! First class.

Eire is too miserable, get over here.

Grandma was so right!

We are on the pigs back!

Kevin not straying

That ship would not be leaving with me.

I'm sticking with Mick Collins and his lads.

There will be no slainte parting from me.

Beig la eile ag on phaorach

Ripped

Eight months later Charlie returned in a box,
lion safari went belly up, mostly all we heard.
I'd kept my home shirt, never played away.
Best decision!

1

Convocation Hall packed to nicotine stained rafters. Old crony
Profs gathered in front being well lit from lunch. Vice-Dean
Jack Campbell intro'd.

“Pleasure to introduce Professor Anthony Wolfe Professorial
address, Tony in Dublin after stint away. Assured no equations
so biologists can follow, Dr. Wolfe bark away.”

Jack Shamble’s lame effort.

“*Woof, woof*, work in cell-valley, reverse engineering technology
of life!”

Often feel it’s too damn hard, as ants query quantum physics.

“More difficult to make first cell of creation than T Rex. Those
giants all about engineering.”

Spied a Zoologist scratch a large noggin.

“Cell machinery flies in face of comprehension, fruit fly more
complex than Jumbo jets.”

From being trapped in amber, evidenced those insects not
changed in 50 million years. Good design!

“Has ‘Origin of life’ been solved? Some popular opinions
noted.”

1. *Darwin explained in ‘Origin of Species’.*
2. *Lagoons, seaside pools concentrate prebiotic reactions, deep ocean hot vents, no sunlight, life exists on energy from seeping chemicals.*
3. *Panspermia, find bugs outside space station. Rocks from Mars with microbes landing in Antarctica.*
4. *Natural process under right conditions ‘spontaneous’, on Goldilocks planet bugs pop up.*
5. *Given time things happen! Philosophers shrug.*

“Life is too smart for chance, easier propose a Creator so first place to Genesis!”

Disapproval growls echoed, no patience for intelligent design. That cop out.

“Bray for ice cream cones, candy floss, but pools by Bray head are not inventing.”

Although life changes occur summer nights, with music and beer!

“In 1859 Darwin provided no clue for life’s origin, pontificated of animal life on small islands.”

Also Charlie D knew we did not descend from apes, but a common ancestor. In the rain forest we’ve broad umbrellas and smart phones, silverbacks use broad leaves.

“So no one has a clue!” Prof Kelly advancing two cents. *“Someplace cells were conceived must be there was a once!”*

Okay that’s a point.

“By ‘grandeur of God’ our planet formed 4 billion years ago, Pangaea seas, earth lay barren expectant as virgin’s wedding night, Gaia’s sand box declared ‘come play’. Bugs appeared double quick, so ‘space life’ not denied, just push life’s origin on down the road.”

Bodies shuffling check watches. Too soon! I’ve good bits coming.

“One consideration if our creator wanted to leave no doubts of his existence he’d have designs defy emergence by evolution. In my world DNA and platypus fit that bill!”

If turns out life is serendipity and I’m a monkey’s uncle, I’m turning in my doctorate.

“Point of order my friend.” Physics philosopher ‘Bully’ Malone. *“Origin of life business largely demonstrated in 1952. Do you not know? Making amino acids in a test-tube!”*

Idiot garnered approval from morons.

“Such yammering, chemicals in a flask with wires, given nature’s complexity proves nowt. Physics folk excel at maths, do youse know biology? Any?”

Hewn together by DNA, yet most don’t know squat from diddly. Neurons fully saturated by concerns for health of Schrödinger’s pet. Who puts a living cat in a closed box?

“Today need sophisticated electronic machines ferret out fundamental stuff. Revealing Nature’s secrets, tougher than dragging struggling armadillo from a deep lair. While Watson, Crick in 1953 constructed first model of DNA with wire, clips, cardboard and brilliance using Franklin’s X-ray photos. In the Eagle pub Francis Crick declared, James Watson and I found the secret of life.”

Plough man’s lunch with a pint. Cambridge University good times. Nice job! Profound moment. Watson was 25 years old! I’ve read his bio, young lad hoping for girl friend and Nobel prize! He deserved both.

“Aliens likely got a heads up reading that ‘Double Helix’ paper.”
‘Dr Wolfe are you suggesting aliens needed Crick and Watson’s results to reveal a double helix? Earthlings head of the game in this galaxy? Absurd nonsense. All life is DNA based in the Universe? Twice absurd, Professor.’

Dr. Mick Aisling, large astronomer, monocle inserted. Audience making disturbing guffaws.

“Sure ET copies, Percy French, Mozart, Charlie Chaplin most fascinating. Are you right there Michael? They’ve mountains by the sea, ET rebellious teens love ‘Easy Rider.’”

“Take us to the San Fran bay bridge!”

Also universally hilarious “Three Stooges”!

A rock killed dinosaurs, life bearing comets crashed our oceans. We responded sending music to rock the Cosmos!”
Fair exchange.

“However Bio-ET here will result in contamination. Never have their biology among us, invade our biosphere with strange bugs. Least of worries astronauts back from Mars.”

Unleash my rant, facing frazzle dazzle puzzled faces.

“Life thrived in ice shell moons rotating Jupiter, other giant planets, nurtured out there what a *Solar System* does. Bugs blown from rocks speed down to this earth.”

Old Halley greets us every 76 years. Most recent in 1986, next time have a tracker on Halley see where it travels. Although I’ll not be about.

“70,000 years ago outer planets had a roasting with flares from Scholz’s star passing. Gilbert Levin’s 1976 experiment on Viking 1 and 2 detected microscopic life on Mars. President Clinton celebrated Mars rock ALH84001 contains fossils of life. Seasonal Mars methane generated by bugs. Satellites detected underground Mars lakes, the Nakhla meteorite”

“Poppy Cock!” Monocle dangling.

Hey no kids, well yet.

“Stop this, you’ve no proof. On earth we have thermophiles created in Yellowstone geysers and sea vents. Propagating life needs no assistance from moons, you sir are looney. Perhaps too much syrups in the poutine!”

Okay nincompoop I lived in Ontario.

“Encedalus moon vent plumes contain organics. Europa potential organisms on icy surface, buried oceans twice ours where fish may exist. Soon we’ll send submarines loaded with bait! How life starts in that dark a mystery, like your dark matter! Okay? Even Steven.”

Time to drop hammer nails like Luther. Lose the muzzle.

“Who created the electron, photon, ‘God particle’, quarky muon shebangs from the Hadron Collider! Answer before a Swiss black hole devours us. Yet we should know where DNA came

from? Big Bang physics and biology require a miracle each. Agree?”

‘God of the Gaps’ as they say.

“In case I’d not make myself clear. The cell in our parlance is a machine, contains 19,969 different proteins, each with a precise function as they navigate. Mastermind the DNA ‘computer’ creates proteins, coordinates which required for kidney, Vas deferens or toe nails. Not typical yoke expected to emerge with good fortune! Life a wonderment without comprehension. Not all tofu.”

Awesome to be in it.

“Confronted by a machine, tiny cell with 6 feet of DNA. Origami! DNA contains 3.2 billion ‘*letter code*’ instructions. If life emerged in different locations could not be the same, likely as Japan and English having identical alphabets!”

Flies have 16,000 proteins. Apollo heroes were on the moon, while mosquito’s spread malaria. Just saying.

“We have ~100 trillion cells, gifted from long line of folks, then on back to first cell.”

Solemn moment.

“Life treasure inherited, embellished and customized by our precious generations. Cells see us as transients, friend or foe stepping stones? Megalodon once reigned supreme, now we are earth’s master.”

Best move into the Universe, escape a Planets wrath. Getting too big for britches.

“Perhaps we are alone with customized solar system DNA *alphabet*, why aliens don’t visit. Mating only gobble goo. As with QE2, bio-ET never to sink a pint, not on either bucket list.”

Pint of plain? Fermi paradox?

“If ET had our biology they’d be here, getting langered,
watching sports! One of the lads! Now only check us from a
far.”

How great to watch their Olympics! Now humans maxed out
with most World records.

“Whooping miracles needed, biologists have life stuff, ‘Big Bang
theory’ still chalk dust on a black board.”

Physics of equational yaps, if you say so.

‘Need to throw deep’ Ronnie the Gipper had encouraged, then
USA cancelled a planned ginormous collider.

Agitations at big Wig table, hear fingers drumming.

*“Science fiction rant, need a warning. This is a University, should I remind
you, Professor? Now I’ve Research grants to attend. Bit whimsical
learned friend. Science is no laughing matter.”*

Big beard, still a slide rule and fountain pen
protruding. Entangled, the Physics department departed.

Audience anticipating a riot. So vamoose.

I took a water swig, gasp as Venus bugs in toxic air.

“So where now?” Voice pleads from bleachers.

“I’m circling the bowl.” Sputnik lost in space. Beep, beep.

Appreciated diminished applause from cohorts. Time to wrap it
up, but not this Wolfe to fold, after winters in Canada don’t
melt easy.

“Wish to acknowledge bacteria ancestors, now we exterminate
with penicillin. Pull up the brass ladder! Also tank-full to
dinosaurs, arrived in my SUV.”

Colleague Mickey thumbs up, cheddar cat gleaming, inheriting
full lab his grubby plans for my couch.

“If ET comes I’ve questions. How pretty was Eve? How good
was wine at Cana wedding in Galilee? Any films of Saint Patrick
with the shamrock?”

I’m curious.

“Tony get up! You are in the tabloids.”

Jill wailing on the stairs.

“You said the moon has fish? What on earth?”

No tranquility only hung-over.

“It’s Europa! Not Armstrong’s!” I hollered.

Daily cartoon depicted me as Frankenstein. Lecture got reviewed! Yahoo!

“Tony you know astronomy?”

Crunching my Lucky Star cereal.

“Quebec wife has a Star Trek uniform.”

For that Halloween party.

“There you got me.”

I went as her cling on.

“Current mating habits confined to Earthlings.”

Given gobbly gook restrictions, and their absence.

“Dear mémère warned we’d have *rien* to talk about.”

“Your grandma one hot old tart.”

Why settle for pomme de Terre?

Cook for a lout for 50 years!

Mamamia!

“Parading that Ph.D., suspected I wanted smart babies. No matter how poor, I’ll not be clubbing seals again. Forget that.”

“Mickey works on snails that immaculate conceive. Yap with him, his Hydra Vulgaris worms regenerate heads.”

Best super power!

On the door-step being fluent in her tongue, revealed origins. I descended the hill with my wobbly crown.

University morning, left gasping for liquid lunch. Encountered colleagues on high stools, traversed gauntlet of fist and back thumps.

"Avoid Physics each action unequal."

"Raised the roof, old hall took a beating! Impasto!"

"Whitewash for hogwash. Good colleagues pints on me!"

Gave bar man go ahead.

Mickey in the snug, porter pints sat on board.

"You tipped them, desperately need new friends."

"Get that down ye. Classy Armadillo acknowledgment."

"Got a right hollering from the Dean."

That fence post turtle.

"Tony you're not house trained.' Mickey claimed. "Confuse the CV, I live in Terenure, everyone thinks Tenure." Experienced advice I needed.

Got two of us going, alternating 'anticipated' Dean's rant.

'Dr Wolf a dog's breakfast, heard you set cat among the pigeons.'

'You can't be talking about space aliens designing us.'

'Never limits to understanding, consider granting agencies. Biology is not the religion department. Mixing religion with Darwin, slippery slope my friend! Trifling with dogmas?'

"Trifle needs decent dose of cheap port.' Mother would say.

'Red carpets in this country hauled on each one.'

'Maybe philosophers, they listen to any old gab!'

'Anyway overall good job with the talk.'

'Keep it up.'

Bar man Nick stuck a neck in, given hooting commotions.

"Heaven sake lads not Majorca, contemplate as decent citizens."

"Nick his lovey is in the family way!"

“Tony that does my heart world of good!”

*Trapped by nature as Olympic flame
life demands to pass on, before goes out.
Nothing left to burn.*

4

From the hill watched Jill meditate on Dalkey island. Parish priest Father William sat in my ergonomic chair. Grey hair from Sunderland, renewed acquaintance for upcoming Baptism.

“Great excitement from your talk, phone-in shows this morning. Origin of life! Genesis itself! I need topics for pulpit sermons not be repeating.”

Miniscule horizons still to explore.

“Father Bill are you ready?”

“I’ve ‘O’ levels.”

Computer fired by my research, using an electron microscope. Tax payer generosity. Irish coffee for two, hold cream given the hour.

“Sample from Burren mine hundred foot down, I ignored trespass warnings!”

Think it’s easy?

“High tech, started with Leeuwenhoek in 1700 saw the animalcules. Refused to divulge how he made his lens.”

“So you knew him Father?”

“Just like your mother! God rest her soul.”

As he shook his head, the screen lit up.

“Bacteria with a propeller tail, a flagella.”

“Strewth! Once a jello blob!”

“Windocopus, named from a wild day! Where the tail joins the cell, what is that?”

“Things moving, yokes twirling. Motor!”

“Made with at least 30 proteins.”

“Outboard motor? Extraordinary.”

“Bug engineers? Wheel spins up to 100 times per second, fast as a race car engine.”

“Awe struck, Tony!”

Whether bacteria or whale.

“Top-notch scientists discovered all this, I’m with following the wake, waving the Burren flagella!”

“How do they do that, fit bits together and the power? Bugs invented the wheel?”

“Just like that.”

Best guess, so far.

“Only wheel in biology.”

Tiny but awesome.

“Down the Burren with thatched cottages this was happening? How did bugs figure this in tiny cells? Look at us big heads?

“Needed to swim fast so they convened a meeting.”

Jokesters we are!

“Flagella motor tail is cause célèbre! Engineers gasp at such efficiency.”

“Windocopus stir sinners, fill the pews. Hand of God, done and dusted. Nowt on earth designed this motor!”

Good man tapping notebook with a pencil, have moments. Get story straight for parishioners.

“Tony provide guidance!”

“Watching cell technology, glimpse of what’s possible. What we cannot do.”

We’re smart, can take a long stick through a small door, know that’s us in a mirror. Some how got gestated in nine

months. Three score and ten if fortunate, not all wine and roses.

Chosen to be,
get to glimpse.
Thread lightly,
wander about.
Don't mess up,
Almighty's miracle.
Only a tourist,
borrowed time.
Understand all,
is futile.

Prologue

Hill on island of Mal'away, near Mauritius in 1681

Volquard Iversen, unshaven yet dignified, scans the peak of a volcanic mountain with his telescope. In military uniform a soldier in the Portuguese army. Four mast sailing ship rolls in waves anchored beyond the surf. Another soldier Gardolf roasts a bird over a fire. Movements in the foliage, dodo bird emerges, swings down the beach, flightless bird reaches a nest containing broken eggs. Sailor with a club approaches, terrified bird finds no escape is pummeled. Volquard observes this carry on.

"I'm sick killing so many doddaersen."

"Keeping belly full, long journey home." Gardolf replies, bites a roasted leg. "Bird for every meal. Who cares, we'll be gone soon."

"You are a fool Gardolf, brain of a maggot. Birds are scarce, whatever vile creatures your woman bears, they'll never see their likes." Volquard despairs.

"We to starve with pauper's scavenge on these huge oceans? On this island eat like Lords! Kingfish, avocado and banana. An oasis!"

Several tortoises upturned, waving in desperation and doomed. Gardolf belches, throws a leg bone on a pile.

1

Set of Ireland's 'Saturday Night' TV show with Stephen Burns.

"Next guest, up from Athlone is scientist Michael Iversen, Michael has a biotech company hidden away on his estate. I'm told he is bringing something very unique this evening for us!"

Out I sauntered, full military uniform and medal regalia. Pulling a cart with a cage covered by a blanket, sprawled on the famous couch like a big shot.

“So now Michael, tell us are you in the army or what?”

“Stephen I’m wearing the uniform of a Portuguese sailor from 1680. What I have will shock the world! Not just our wee Ireland!”

Stood tall to address the audience, ready to blow off their socks.

“My ancestor Volguard Iversen on the island on Mal’away. Under his watch terrible travesty happened, my mission as an Iversen to correct that wrong.”

Stephen hovering by the cart, fussing not attending to my blather.

“Is something moving? Whatever do you have under this contraption?”

Ignored the ‘star’ geyser, carried on my declaration to the world.

“My aim to leave this planet a better place. When a beauty died tragedy was born. Let me quote from Volguard’s diary.”

“In my time we killed Mal’away birds, tried to save some from companions. But we sailed those raging seas, needed sustenance for extreme endeavors. Do not condemn us, we were brave alone in that unknown world.”

“Michael if you don’t shut up, take off that cover I’ll throw you right out of here.”

Cheers! Audience irritated by claptrap.

“Prepare! Drum roll please!” Says I to silent band fellas.

Whipped off the cover, opened the cage door. Out strolled dodo bird, big head, small wings, yellow legs, rear-end with curly feathers.

“Presenting Raphus Cucullatus, 350 years ago their hearts stopped. Listen now, sounds not heard since. Dodo is back!”

Bird’s recorded heartbeat amplified into the TV studio.

“Boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom.”

“Princess Ding-Ding, call her ‘D-D’. Eve of her species begins again in field’s of Ireland. How’s that!”

D-D answered my duck whistle as I fed her corn seeds.

“On the farm she rings the bell twice. Ding-a-ding.”

“Ah now Michael are you only with coddin us or what? Is this real or a chicken with a papier-mâché beak and bit of yellow paint. Lord save us, what is this creature at all?”

D-D wandered proud as a peacock. Oblivious to cruel destruction inflicted by human and rodent on first contacts. Exhibiting charm of her ancestors sounding like a tropical pigeon.

“If once a pigeon, now quacks like a dodo then the real McCoy! After this night I will be a legend like our great Jonathan Swift!”

“Now tell us where on this earth did you find such a yoke?”

“Waiting by the bird feeder there she was, chomping seeds and nuts scaring birds. Only what I tell the neighbours!”

“Michael after 15 years and world ‘Stars’ on the show, I’m gob smacked! Am I right folks? Where would we see such likes?”

D-D delicate bobbing and waddling received a standing ovation.

“Stephen on my island in Lough Ree we’ve a flock, reared there using biological magics! Getting first male and female hardest, caught a break in second generation, romance takes over! That’s private, we dare not peak!”

“Sure is it legal at all? For heavens sake doing this class of thing?”

“Proclamation of 1916 no where addressed this issue, *‘you shall not create a dodo’*, our loop hole so in the clear.” I laughed. “As an Irish enterprise promise we will not be fooling with snakes.”

“Tell us now what kind of witches brew did you get up to in Athlone?”

“Two year ago my aunt in Howth handed me a box with remains of a dodo bird preserved, covered in salt. Volquard

carried this to Ireland in 1685 when he married Maddy O'Reilly, they lived in Celbridge many a year. Where I got my mop of black hair! Remains are scarce as hen's teeth, safe in my family for centuries. Intact DNA restored the species, my mission to return these birds to their native land."

"Let me see if we have questions." Stephen checking an expectant crowd.

"Do they taste any good?" Right dossier.

Appalling question, disrespect in front of precious D-D.

"Really? Have we learnt nothing? If partial to flightless birds stick with turkeys."

"Make a leprechaun, know where pot of gold is buried."

Already created my golden egg. Fool!

"We've plenty of DNA from small minded morons."

Batting them like Ping-Pong.

"Bring back Arkle? I'm good for a fiver."

Ireland's finest race horse.

"Way ahead of you! So far only with the horse's arse."

"You should not be doing this." Claimed a veiled nun.

"Nature having all the fun making cows into whales. It's not Frankenstein monster only restoring those lost."

Gave D-D a pat.

"Poodles from wolves all natural, GM tomatoes. Know what I'm saying?"

"Only God makes life." She persists. *"Evil work."*

Pinning me for the count.

"No más Sister." I bailed. "Cats out of the bag, sharks have jumped. Och sure you better get used to this stuff."

Stephen watching me getting wound up, cut for a break.

"Ladies and gentlemen Michael Iversen and D-D!"

Smiling head to toe, Stephen whispers.

"Best guest in years, all over Sunday papers! Michael you'll be back."

2

Athlone study room, book lined, portraits-statues of dodos. Made a decent not decadent biotech pile in the States, returned to forty acre birthright. Every Zoo needed action we'd oblige for a price! Profits better than Pandas even amazing red ones. In sales office my Canadian wife Robin found her calling, taking orders like turkeys for thanksgiving. We'd met at a twitcher festival on Pelee island, so well matched. As news circled the globe Media descended, surveyed fields of birds, my mug 'Birdman of Athlone' graced magazines. Patents secured, now time to give our game away.

"Dodo DNA in a virus converted pigeon eggs, worked with flying colours, humdrum tech these high flautin days." All blasé, despite extensive complications, determined and solved, I'd put many eggs in that basket. No idea how it all worked. How could I?

"Can virus infect other animals?" Impudent nosey parker 'journalist'.

"Not at all, safe in our hands. We've safe guards."

"How the hell do I know?" I'm not that smart.

We went soon as we could, important to be first. Suck it and see feathers crossed, may sound reckless to lazy people. Some steps skipped for survival from financial pressure and competition rumors. Pioneers take risks us explorers in same boat. Hillary's climb on Everest, Apollo lads on the moon, Columbus sailing off a flat earth, Michael Collins seeking Home Rule, Titanic's 'full steam ahead', Nicola Tesla dealing with 'what's electricity good for?'

My intentions positive, small people could clean up later. Otherwise how we progress? These birds once plentiful, where was the risk? Fixed in my mind if doing drastic wrong expected aliens would stop us, not allowing to create havoc on the planet. You say I'm crazy but *as reported aliens*

apparently interfered with US and Soviet *nuclear* weaponry. This knowledge served as our quality control. That's logical, leave it to them. How many dodo birds could we flog in a world with none? With mankind being okay since 1861. Dinosaur movies showed anything could be restored to 'life' by computer. So risky business, but that's how we roll. Entrepreneur buddies already with private jets, supermodel high life down Caribbean islands, some were flim-flam artists. I wanted to mingle there, this being my best shot.

'To dig I am unable, to beg I am ashamed.'

3

Honourable Mal'away President Namby called, Robin dealt with his requirements.

"Even you pay. Well yes." Robin insisted, devoid smidgeons of Iversen guilt. "If no money pawn family silver or glittering diamonds. You'll have more tourists, we'll need a Hotel percentage contract negotiated."

Feeling no remorse nor sentimental baggage.

"We're morose people, since dodo no Calvaria trees grow in Mal'away. Only very old tree left." Namby's sad tale.

Hard tree seeds broken only when swallowed by dodo gizzard could fertilize. Now knew she had him over a barrel, bird in our hands none in their bush. Cry me a river, once we Celtic island people starving now belly full.

"Where is anything free? Also sign breeding rights contract many clauses." Says my Bird.

Better pony up! Not be expecting gift bird with that perfect beak.

"Sorry there's no Santa Claus." She persisted.

"We'll send two breeding birds for gold coinage, no malarkey Mal'away notes. Pay TV of birds released in forest tossed in for free. Our pillows with dodo feathers exclusive for sale in the hotel. Risky assets invested now necessary substantial returns."

Busy milking our silk purses, needing life on easy street.

4

STAT emergency Island Tech team summoned, meeting at Big Table forged from ebony hardwoods.

“Boss we’ve problems.” Whilly Booster says.

Whilly with me from USA success, tech maestro. Got hooked up with sister of Miss Galway runner up, living the life.

“Video of the lake from surveillance cameras on Island hill.”

Deer stops by to take a drink, out from the surface terrifying bird appears, monster’s massive beak grabs the animal, blood in the water. Loud curdling noises. Two monster birds shriek over remains on the sands. Stunned then excited, watching to determine where our sun could shine brightest.

“Tadpole to frog, metamorphosis occurred! Could have anticipated.”

More feathers in my cap, two for one. Genius!

Do not falter or lose, carry on regardless. My motto!

“We found gangs of feral cats scaring the dodos.” Observant Whilly.

Success!

“Now ain’t that something, perchance exciting times! Gain of function! Titanus Walleri! Monster bird lived over two million years ago in South America reached 6 feet tall. Hell with Volquard it’s Walleri time. Fear induced genes expressed, ingrained for protection. Genetic evolutionary reversion from dodo to Walleri, for survival make perfect sense! What a bonus.”

Vestigial genes expressed, six week human embryo’s have a tail, gone by 8 weeks. Look I’m not making this up.

“Wait till Hollywood get a load of this.”

Customers big bucks not tiny islands.

“When you go down to the woods today watch for Walleri.” Says I with a grin.

Money in the bank.

“Have no fear, run faster than the other guy! Situation is no different than pythons infesting Everglades.”

Meteor led to Walleri destruction, now against the odds we rescued them. Miracle not cockatoos.

“Protect the shores, don’t want pirates coming.”

“Birds full of virus, maybe not stable. Boss?” Worry wart Whilly.

“Set cats amongst the pigeons! Scare dodo out of them. Find out best diet for Walleri.”

Monster Birds market potentials.

“Get more cats!”

5

Invited back on ‘Saturday Night’ show, royalty smug ready for shenanigans. Green polo sweater, pistol holstered on my hip. Stephen had the floor.

“Tonight’s show on the satellites. Cead mile failte, delighted to have youse all.”

Old blarney chit-chat. Nation transfixed as when our World Cup penalty scored against Romania in 1990! Bellowing from behind the scene.

“Michael what have you back there? Heaven help us. Are we safe or what? Tell me now what on earth is the gun for?”

“Tranquilizer pellet like you might need sometimes.”

Stood for momentous revelation await further acclamations.

“Massive surprise tonight will change our world. You know me, no trickery computer baloney!”

Large cart trundled out.

“Are you ready?”

Tarp whipped off, displayed Titanis Walleri! Crowd amazed, but not anticipated TV studio scary for prehistoric birds. Pea-sized brain of producers stressed now generating confusion. Our horse trailer safely transferred Walleri, six feet,

huge wing span, vicious bone snapping beak from the lake. TV experts promised to construct a steel bar cage, instead ramshackle, wood painted silver! Sensing fear and being hungry Walleri flipping about busted out, wing tip talons, bone shattering beak. Audience sat as sitting ducks.

Pearl in the crown, causing peril.

Must reveal monster now D-D morphed to a beast. What a scardy cat. Ferocious carnivore predator loose, stalwart cameras recording the melee. What a sales pitch!

“Michael shoot that thing!” Demanded Burns.

Investment damaged, assets invested? Not happening until last resort. Needed ‘Go Viral’ ‘Savage beast insurance’, TV bosses signed off, influenced by somnambulant D-D dodo experience.

What’s worse that could happen?

Elderly bodies whacked tossed by the beak, no lethal bruises. Given high stakes collateral damage inevitable. Bit of concussion few aspirin great memories. Bore the neighbours for ages. Boisterous night out for pensioners sat in way of progress. Once in a life time experienced rampaging ancient birds. That’s something else. Most got off easy.

No pain no gain, important it’s on TV! Finally I sprung to action, whistle and sunflower seeds. In a grossly enlarged brain D-D had déjà-vu moment. Pirouette twirled licked the seeds. Seizing trusting moment whacked her with a dart. Beast collapsed hot heavy as Icarus.

“Sorry dear D-D, humans now rule the roost.”

Stephen crawled from under the desk, tickled pink with blood spatters. With ratings through the roof, as ambulances arriving. Iversens ruling the waves.

6

That journey home sharing notions. Have Walleri fights ‘bread and circuses’ coliseums as Bullfights. Better than Aussie sharks and saltee crocs. We’d seen pandas sit eat bamboo, Zoo’s under

water with seals and dolphins, morose elephants, constrained tigers and motionless pythons. Cream of the crop T Rex, potential tissue under Antarctica reported could be leap and bounds. Hope it's not a penguin or Southern polar bear. Not one trick ponies, or obsolete. Need get beyond ancient birds.

Epilogue

Fly appeared in the ointment

Shower next morning, suffering from celebration hang over, noticed feathers growing on my chest before only wispy hair. Maybe good for insulation in cold climates, suspected I'd laid an egg, even one mouse tail spoils the broth. Island workers panicking with their feathers. Folks saying we were too far advanced resurrecting species. Hatching my plan to leave on a private plane from Shannon airport. One bright spark lad instructed by his mother, on a daily dose of cod liver oil escaped the epidemic. Panic subsided, that therapy useful for every malady. Second generation birds with no virus, tabled a memo buy stock in cod liver oil. Back on track but prohibited from Walleri breeding. Dreams shattered, deemed a menace. However proud that we found a way. Faced by authorities I will not be killing two birds with one stone. That had to be stated.

Eventually Robin and I travelled to Mal'away, two dodos in a sound proof container. Nation delirious, promise fulfilled, greeted by crowds like Rock stars. Birds free to enter the forest free of rats.

"In my time I restored Mal'away birds, for generations. Endured difficulties for extreme endeavors. Do not condemn we were brave alone in that strange world."

Tell Me

Pep talk

“Look Skeptical Paddy won’t be here, don’t panic better up your game. New acquisition we’ve librarian ‘Moustache guy’ on loan.”

“Paddy was away on the lash, the missus has him on the wagon. Now mute as an auld mutt.”

“Interrupter’s salient gossip! Youse know the drill, I’m not here to be explaining. Chime in, chatter galore, hectoring okay no banter, hope youse have boned up. No room for intros they’ll know your mumbling voice. Not tolerating any old guff, hobby regaling not permitted, no matchbox collections, nor any collectors items or tales of Atlantic birds observed in Spiddal on first day of spring, cannot swallow that. *Surreal*, *end of day*, and *binary* latest unacceptable words. We’ve a poet on board so yes occasional rhyming decorations. Showband era discussion exhausted, ‘Are you cheating me’ their best song. My snarling face indicates stop. Don’t bore up the place, looking at you Bluenose.”

“Born in Crumlin.”

“You exist in swanky Dalkey.”

“Looking for far away ayes, I went dancing in Dun Leary. Fortunate being handsome so I married rich. Now upper crust still hankerings for beans, tinned salmon and slice of cheese.”

“Nick our tapster on standby, monitoring glasses approaching ‘E’. Nicky taps no slops for lubrications! Okay tick-tock countdown to recording. Know your place keep it tight.”

“Shut up out there.” Shouts Nick.

The show

“Seated together in the snug of this fine establishment for another episode of ‘Tell Me’, I wish to acknowledge lands of

Ballsbridge inherited from Neanderthals after their slaughtering, lucky we being more devious and cunning. As usual toast to Homo Erectus coming before us!”

“Hear hear!” Echoed about.

“Hodgepodge stuff cobbled together from this lame bunch. Mickey’s grimy hand up. Go.”

“City has 772 pubs, nary a public toilet, for duration confined to glass of wine no pint, seeing I’m up in Killmenow estate. Barbaric closing! If you serve do we not P? One by the bridge once packed in the evening with men heading home. Corporation thinks we’re robots, cousin from away in Boston caught porcelain short, traumatized won’t be back in a hurry. Probably only helps spirits sales.”

“Have we Irish not suffered enough? Me pockets always once walking full of pennies.”

“Aye, Dublin once famous for it’s quality Victorian jacks, with generous urinals.”

“Second and less important no rest rooms amenities for 20 million penguins on ice frozen for 22 million years. Why they require enormous fouled icebergs to be breaking away. I’ll say no more.”

“I admire penguins to make Antarctic home, no chicken-out annual migrations to Florida. They love that bone chilling cold surrounded with sod all.”

“Only 10 humans have been born on Antarctic.”

“What about if one goes crazy needs to locked up? Must have that one room jail, like in old Western movies.”

“Buttery guy what you got?”

“Bellfield actually.”

“I meant your distinctly robust slippery complexion. Moving along.”

“Imagine old biddies that day at Knock in 1879 with cameras! First movie camera only in 1888, know what I’m saying?”

“Maybe why them class of visions don’t come no more?”

“Creates an interesting scenario say if ET have films. Imagine seeing them visions, maybe we’d avoided big wars later. Busy with praying a lot more.”

“Why would ET be in Knock with cameras?”

“Listen they’re that busy studying us, they record everything all global. We are probably smarter only they have the jump on us. Till now.”

“Aliens have their own divine visions, they’ll likely not know much about after-life neither.”

“What about the moving statues in Kerry in 1985?”

“Ah sure look it, different ball of wax.”

“Different kettle of fish altogether.”

“Rapid Drumcondra, say you?”

“Never put one obese man in a leaning tower always need two. Don’t be choosy with beggars, give street folk a break. Angel investors require ‘sweat equity’. Who ever invented compound interest is best human, even with Santa. If the asteroid comes best sleep with alligators to survive, after watch out. Don’t remember worse then it was. Dogs sleep a lot as each day has 7 nights. Order sparkling water be a big shot for once, impress the waiter. Beware lowly old farts at new job, they’ll not like you and plan to do you harm. Live life of novelty head to patent office, hardest part of invention keep your yap shut. Not a fan of American beer, worse their pint is so small. Don’t bother bats in dark caves, they’re busy developing echo stuff. Not wasting their lives, it’s their legacy. Hello!”

“Okay! Stop now! Enough.”

“Begob, I’ll need a copy of that load engraved on a briquette.”

“Okay Deadwood Prof.”

“Because I make wicker furniture?”

“That too.”

“Hobby talking out on a perilous twig. Ban him and the dusty mule he rode in on!”

“Humans have flexible power of DNA in the locker, that advantage took planet life from bacteria, plants to T Rex then to us with no bother. DNA styling has not stopped yet, will be there support for us adapting to space environments. Lots of low hanging fruits available out there, one large asteroid loaded with precious metals. We’ll harness the solar system and reign supreme. Pioneer satellites have reached interstellar space, Proxima B, half decent planet nearby, although Pioneers not headed that direction.”

“Wicker is furniture? Uncomfortable bunch of twisted twigs.”

“Fire away Trusty boy.”

“If Ann Boleyn bumps up with husband Henry in Heaven does she bow?”

“On whose planet will he be in Heaven?”

“Royal connections not necessarily severed becoming RIP. Could be still VIP. Second thing I know for sure that apple in the Garden of Eden was no Granny Smith.”

“Reformed Once Boring guy. Go.”

“Females manufacture every penis in creation, let’s get that straight. Their egg 10 million times volume of one spermatozoa. Creating life not easy it’s hard, Ma fast asleep as sperm and egg negotiate. Nine month rental, need 26 billion baby cells, at 12 weeks all organs kitted in. How? Each sac race 300 million spermatozoa, my athlete Dad used steroids, I hit that egg so hard. It was spinning.”

“You have to hand it to them, nine months gets it done. Even lazy ones on the nose.”

“We are Y men, another bargaining tool at the table. Making Y every day, we’ve life’s continuation in our keeping, so not all boys or all girls.”

“Y chromosome sperm swim faster, 105 boys born for 100 girls, as Y is lighter than X.”

“We are the packaging, see an Apollo rocket weighs equivalent of 400 elephants once delivered in space only one trunk left carrying lunar lads.”

“Lot of engineering required for mating, like constructing the Chunnel hoping both ends meet at some point.”

“Got hooked up young, wife from farming stock, well she knew what goes where.”

“Okay Nutbar, grains of salt available.”

“No mummies found in the pyramids, King’s Chamber sarcophagus found empty. By Occam’s razor pyramids worked as designed, Pharaohs mummies fully transported to the stars. Perfection.”

“My spectacled friend we joined in philosophies and pints, never set eyes here to fore. That is some real hokum as now presented.”

“Second. How old are the Giza pyramids? No written signs nothing on the walls. In the roof of the King’s chamber a ‘builder’ scribbled KHUFU, dated ~5000 years ago. Piece of wood in a tunnel dating age 4000 years BC, give or take.”

“Nutbar making sense!”

“Random Noise. Go.”

“Want my tissue bits stuck in amber, I’ll be back hustling in a million years.”

“Glutton for punishment, I’d most fear repeating the Leaving Cert.”

“My original results will be on file up in the clouds.”

“Bury your exam certificate in a field dig up when cloned.”

“He’ll remember?”

“Write in a book.”

“Would you receive your immortal soul?”

“See a Pandora’s box, best leave sleeping logs die.”

“Be prepared for thousands of new Royal generations clogging history books.”

“Second. The Nobel prize is not awarded posthumously, if cloned are you then eligible?”

“Important question, right enough.”

“Elegant Boaster to rescue. Go.”

“Two quickies. Ate Armadillo in Trinidad not like chicken! On my palate more Anteater. A player broke NFL record of 63 yards with no toes on his kicking foot.”

“Amazing feat.”

“With shoe on a different foot, rugby has a 70 yard penalty kick! Love those Green shirt rugby lads doing well for the island. Talent diluted with GAA, soccer, rugby, needing ‘off shore’ grandkids, be better than locals otherwise we look like fools.”

“Handball, tennis and bowls, Irish men play with balls not pucks, that’s how we roll.”

“Okay Too Young Prof. Go.”

“Being bright is no guarantee to attract motts. Figured I had it all until dancing, great leveler like earthquakes in San Fran. With dumb glasses, deaf with earwax, skinny bod. Big awaking realized girls have lofty expectations. Ends with me walking home alone on canal’s towpath. Maybe not alone in the Cosmos, but I’m alone on this planet. Laid like an albino giraffe.”

“Can I get you a drink or what?”

“Yeah okay. Thanks.”

“What’s your name in anyway?”

“I’m Imelda.” Chewing gum.

“To impress I’d recite entire periodic table using mnemonics (i.e. **P**lease **S**ee **P**hosphorous **S**hinning **C**learly **A**stern), and all 50 States plus Puerto Rico. I was that impressive, while they had ayes only for rugby lads.”

“Even plump front row scrum ones?”

“Girls want boy friends with muscles, later to inherit flabby husbands.”

“Best muscles are in the brain.”

“Poets need a bird named Dawn at day break.”

A city girl for sure.

“Would you be available to dance?”

Slow one with great Percy Sledge,

only wanting back to her mates,

“Me with him you must be joking,

rather kiss me aunt Alice.

The scruffy neck of that fella.”

“High IQ Brief guy. Go.”

“Dolphin brains 1600 grams, human 1300 grams.”

“Can they do algebra?”

“They’ve schools.”

“Look more like fish, do they drink sea water?”

“Why did they go back to the sea? After escaping.

“Now no *sake* only sushi. Stressful with man-eating sharks as neighbours and no fence when kipping. I cherish my couch, fridge with beer, TV and wonderful locked door. Also occasional tasty salty snacks.”

“Load them with porter, I’d watch those tricks with hoops. Oh look missed again! Hilarious!”

“We don’t frolic in oceans all day, we construct machinery, bullet trains, taxis and other things. Homo Sapiens put boots and cars on the moon and landed a yoke on Titan.”

“No opposable thumbs their downfall, flippers are rather limiting.”

“They can’t wear stylish gloves.”

“Scary Recidivist Felon. Please proceed when ready.”

“Damn DNA testing revealing for nefarious deeds lurking, decades later. Ready to twist souls like a pretzel, spilling beans like a mafia rat. Lots of criminals would have stayed on straight and narrow, if they knew about DNA testing getting unleashed. Do we not have rights to be forgotten, so I pilfered merchandise but those decades ago. Made a nice bundle. Let it go now! Look to the future. DNA makes it too tough for criminals to ply their trade. Casanova and Genghis never sleepless. I’m tossing and turning, worrying about some job from ages back. Lurking in every discarded cell, tattling those tales often denied. Got this affliction in my cells from my family all the way back now comes to haunt me. Family and ancestors squealing on me. Like unfortunates on telly. ‘You are the father.’ Father is more than DNA. Rules changed so this is fair play? I cry foul! In my time I could have been a bank teller, I’m that good with figures. No calculator. Crimes I got away free with and now this? Tucked up again with more porridge? Look I was very careful meticulous, skilled with evidence demands of that era, left no finger prints or tire tracks or witness. Rarely charged. Now some high falutin gimmickry magic gets me incarcerated doing hard time. Again that’s fair? Next they’ll be asking ET for videos from what I’m hearing here. What about your limitation with statues? This is my trade, in mid-life it’s that hard to switch. Altogether I’m a skilled locksmith, sussing likely easy targets, cracking safes. I’ve overall that stealth and canny knowledge. Now required to do all that in a hazmat suit? Where is my profit? We work on a low margin already. Most houses have nothing of value, nobody cares about family ‘hair-looms’. I need something to fence for a long nights work. It’s stressful being in houses in the dark, hearing snoring all about. Few beers from the fridge and nothing

else. How does that work? Leave out some candy for us. I'm Robin Hood spreading the wealth, lot of folks depending on this industry. Heading to a barbershop dustbin tonight, get the days hair clippings. Have a use for them to fix the problem. Stitch up some other gurriers."

"Silent panel appears in full agreement. Putting us straight."

Maestro query (from mise).

"What convinced we have a creator?"

"Women for definite!"

"Hammered into me at school."

"When I see the sun in the sky."

"Wine and women both together, best times."

"Otherwise Earth all gooey tarry like Titan."

"Watching bikini Barbara on Courtown's beach."

"Radio Caroline on the transistor, 'Whiter shade of pale', flagon of cider."

"Pause as we each mental those visions."

"Often felt the presence of vigilant Guardian angel."

"Somehow I have so many working organs."

"Chose me to be a living soul. Being alive, good parents all that required miracles."

"Disco dancing sowed initial doubts."

"Then we met at the beach bonfire later."

This one grabs me awkward,

a long streak of bacon.

"So where are ye from?" I says.

"Ballymacsomething in Leitrim."

"I like that Larry Cunningham song."

"Oh yeah." Shuffling round.

"Usual Barely Adequate. Go."

"Assembling robots compared to gestation chemistry? Mrs. Clarke at number 53 knocked out 8 barely finished National school."

“There’s likely different ways of creating life.”

“Not for Mr. Clarke.”

“Manic ET. Go!”

“I’ve a bunch. If we see ET coming turn lights off, pass by melt on Venus. Move Europa into the Goldilocks orbit.”

“How?”

“Jupiter gravity sling shot with a rope, that giant planet not bothered, giving it a giddy up. Look how would I know, I’m alive in this present. Planets and moons all get located somehow. Obviously.”

“Where there is a will, there is a way. Obviously.”

“What would we do with a temperate water world Europa?”

“Regular stuff, start again on such a promising ‘planet’. We’d make oxygen from the water. Easy. Make it like home pollute with plastics, send fish and whales. Also apparently we’ve penguins to spare, to feed the oceans critters. They’d need a dome keep both poles frozen, then mine loads of minerals.”

“Second. My main quarrel with ET why not engrave ‘*Wash Hands*’ across the sky? At least give us that clue for nothing. Help a brother stop plagues.”

“All aliens are robots, they do not have bacteria problems.”

“Lastly do you think Ben Franklin knew when flying a kite there’d be electricity bills? Lucky for him he was not charged.”

“Wild Thing. Go.”

“Now in space 50 years since sputnik. Who’s first with a moon birth.”

“Likely baby named Neil or Valentina, first female orbited from USSR.”

“You think in the space station they’ve done the wild thing? Who could resist?”

“621 space lads, 70 women all in prime of life. Figure those new maths.”

“Best reason for riding the rocket the ~200 mile club. Shaking it up.”

“Moustache guy. Go.”

“When Alexandria library burned lots of knowledge lost, an asteroid strike now maybe no more books! Some University do have cellars with book stacks, lots of journal in alphabetic order, tsunamis would drown that. At the deepest level books for alchemy, witch trials, 6000 year earth at the horizon is a cliff edge, earth is the center of everything, leech collecting and phrenology. Precious valuable stuff lost for ever.”

“In 1858, Queen Victoria and President Buchanan had telegraph exchanges America to Ireland. They declared, ‘triumph more glorious, more useful to mankind than was ever won by conqueror on field of battle.’ Must be not that difficult to construct?”

“Don’t forget lapidary, tanner and milners. Whatever they are, we’ll need them.”

“Milners make hats for rain or shine. Better not neglect the complexion even with harsh climates.”

“Olden days everyone had a hat. Women hats looked like umbrellas.”

“Electron microscope? Ah sure polish a bit of broken glass. What can you do?”

“Raid abandoned supermarkets.”

“Pet stores less crowded, less palatable but keeps a belly full.”

“Likely full of feral and rabid hungry animals.”

“King of that world, mycology experts, stag hunters and gang leaders.”

“Moustache guy needs room to improve. My personal opinion. Just sayin.”

“Have ‘sure’ in front of every sentence to sound Irish.”

“Only Reptile guy. Go.”

“Go on old Prof embarrass yourself.”

“Reptilian brain we’ve still got inherited bits from 400 million years we’ve structures found in a reptile’s brain parked top of our spine.”

“My mother was that scared of the snake house at the zoo, but had a pet tortoise in the garden. Eating lettuce.”

“Why we speak with forked tongue?”

“Are reptiles smart?”

“What is a reptile?”

“I know when I see them.”

“That’s a wrap.”

“If not for Drumcondra we’d be on the rocks. I’ll be sending youse critical notes. If no note you’ll not be required ever again.”

Hot Mic after the show

“Talking about wild things, still dating that chick in Wicklow?”

“She’s away holidaying across in Majorca. Last minute thing, I’d not swing that time available. Exams. I explained to her.”

“Solid plan, no worries.”

“Is she booked in a cloistered Monastery over there? In Espanya.”

“I know what you are saying, we’ve no secrets, she already told me she’d a rich ex-boy friend from Limerick took her to Mustique. But that’s long over. For sure! Really.”

“Puts life in perspex lucky we have you. Meantime maybe go dancing.”

“Have toast for breakfast.”

“Get used to that library guy canal walk.”

Look Back

*"How's your lad doing?
Did he finally manage to pass the trigonometry?
My Thomas is away now with the Clergy,
Siobhan's well set, 7 honours in the Leaving.
Sure sky's their only limit now."
Parents souls hang on ambition of babies,
scoring immediate success after one another.
Better I pull up those much darned socks,
surrounded by swots propelled up ladders!
Budding Einstein's in Dublin families,
they figured it all out, and so soon!*

Summer in the Park

"How come atheist's like you so afraid of ghosts?"
"Truly one great enigma mystery Horatio."
"I've seen you in spooky places, remember that abandoned
estate building in Wicklow? Woo, Woo! Then your Olympic
bolt out!"
"Come on Tony that place was haunted, a basement with
catacombs! Okay that had me with praying."
Knees were shaking.
"Yet miracle of life leaves you nonplussed! Walk the earth
replete with organs, no thanks to you, no matter how you stress
them with wanton lusts. If without that generous cooler of beer
I'd feel perhaps I'm wasting time being sat here. No offence."
"You and me buddy."
Me and Mickey shooting the breeze on that picnic bench by
Seapoint, enjoying a gabfest by Dublin bay. Two nobody Profs
in various states of progress/decline from the College. Adorned

with ruddy summer Irish faces as you'd imagine. They say bugs appeared rapidly on a cooled earth, also when tanning on a Dublin beach. I'd been two weeks shut up working at home, hardly spoke to anyone outside necessary domestics, obviously. *'Can I get more soap in the shower? Do I have to do everything round here?'*

"I was a mutt delayed to figure what I wanted to do with my life at 17! Sitting with fellow miscreants on pub stools trying to settle for something. Other kids beginning training as accountants, solicitors, teachers, the family business. I'd been a postman over Christmas and I liked it."

Gawky kid metamorphosing to be legal.

"Ditto with that."

"Forsooth uncouth Sir Mickey! When art yon Romeo and fair Juliet approaching us hither with striding requests?" Rapping the Bard.

"Okay Tony no need setting that tone. Again Lea-Ann (not Lee or Ann) and Robert (not Bob or Rob) are coming, trying to extract anecdotes about your old Dublin. Their putting a play together and you've had exotic times. My job is to mull over useful stuff, separate chat from your chit, and even translate! You being the perplexing fellow as the Brothers realized."

"Hey man I've prepared notes. Those love birds finish each other moronic sentences in weird tones like one morphed brain. I pretend to sleep when they show up nattering with the wife. Smug pair early committed, being in the snug not struggling learning to swim amid churning well of the anxious on bar stools and tight pub spaces."

"They got off easy."

"Staring at me with pity, when ignored by unattainable posh girls."

Never skilled with 'Do youse come here often?' intro.

“That narrow uppity line Ballsbridge to Dalkey and beyond. Never a chance of dating those birds like that dog with a big stick getting thru’ a door. Look Tony by instinct knew they’d do better, no chemistry for poor students. Many a Saturday night kipping alone in huts on the Bray Esplanade, after the dance. Fair play, out of our depth even with a snorkel.”

‘Comparison is the thief of joy.’

(quoting Teddy Roosevelt)

With blind dates, I’m no surprise,

what’s expected on a western isle.

No apologies needed.

“They say every time you remember stuff you alter that memory, now my thinking of one ex-girl friend has shifted from dodder in Milltown to Seine in Paris. Brigid from Thurles to Brigitte at Sorbonne. Double good times!”

Had a long swig of porter given intermittent heat of our fickle sun.

“If this couple says ‘You Guys’ even once I’m gone like Maud. Just so we understand where I’m coming from. Not negotiable.”

“Listen man just a day by the sea, they’re homebodies. Fill their brain’s with glorious tales, make a special day. If you’re a good boy we can walk, see the boat from Holyhead arriving.”

Ship that stirs wavy emotions for me.

“Only a journey man, judged stupid by department standards, a flaying Icarus. Wifey no way happy with reduced circumstance seeing they pulled the Chair stipend, she with high falutin Killiney friends desperate to impress. Old Prof Ricketts said I was too dumb, in my face! Sod turner, cobble walker in the yard

seen him spit like an Alpaca, kills grass in patches look like crop circles. I told him outright 'I'm smart, I know stuff, even lots'."

"That'll fix him good."

"Shocked with my stuttering. Then I bolted." Anxieties kicked in.

"Always cut and run man! You've more one way mail boat crossings than postcards from Bray."

'Lost on the slots. Can you help me? Coins preferred.'

"Those co-joins think you've an unusual perspective given your father's unfortunate demise, and unusual family history."

Dad's legendary quirkiness, months sojourn in Central Americas eventually terminated by Banditos. Disagreement sparked by Dad's 'engañando / cheating!' outburst too much foam on pint of beer in his 'locale Catina'. Lesson learned for me, display prudence in foreign parts not be foaming at the mouth over crap beer trivialities. Don't go expecting Dublin's publican fortitude elsewhere.

"Never a buffet carriage from Holyhead to London those days. British trains *cup* of tea weirdly shaped like a cone. Did they think we'd not notice that's half a cup?"

Although better than nowt.

"So how about school, anything? My opinion education's mistake focusing on dead languages, Latin, Irish, that Shakespeare speak? Too much Parle vous? Needed chemistry, science language more worthwhile."

"I spent a year in a gaelic boarding school. Parents visits with gooseberry and other sour jams, everyone else got cakes and boxes of sweets. Also had a breakfast boiled egg instead of piano lessons. At dinner normal kids went to the Master table to offer a slice of birthday cake with delicious marzipan and icing, me sitting ashamed with jar of rhubarb. Friday's legacy lunch soup described as cheffy's vomit."

"That's it, a whole year?"

“After two months I was fluent being young and empty headed, that Christmas annoying cousins with gaelic. As years passed lost all that Irish, then obviously memories gone!”

“Begob! Like Maud!”

“I only recall soup and jam given the taste. Mmm ... rhubarb pie! No one ever declared.”

“We under appreciate having bearla, a language to suit us. Ancestors short brutish lives tortured on the rack shouting confessions of dastardly deeds, made easier with no translations necessitated.”

“Mickey these days with my career faltering should be heading for the hills, Notting hill, Harrow on the hill, Hampstead hill, Muswell hill, likely Kilburn High road. Rejects like me find a home in the Big Smoke, Londinium now the swingiest city!”

*Loved England and all who sail on her,
in my time good in many ways,
providing grateful harbour for me,
often departed Dun Leary with despair
dumped, sacked, else failing to thrive.
There from midnight's gloom pier lights,
guiding, greeting enter from an empty sea.
Being right fortified by pints on the crossing,
time to restore to regain a footing.
It's not all so easy for some of us.*

“Anything else?”

“Remember being obsessed why people use ‘Xmas’? If I’d see that in a card straight in the bin. How you like Xickey, I’m Xony, sounds spacey! Appreciate we tossed away unflattering but once ubiquitous flat caps.”

“Hurley lads wore them playing at Croke park.”

“Loved Katharine Tynan’s poem ‘Euston station’, by the train she could see an Irish face, Dublin bay ‘*exquisite*’ from the boat. Robert Frost spoke at the JFK inauguration, after I got into Dylan Thomas, Thomas Hardy, loved ‘Far From The Madding crowd’ movie with Julie Christie.”

“Dubliner’s have similar memories, presidents, pints and literature, that’s our lot.”

“Shipped my poetry books from Canada, I’d once sit reading in my tiny cottage with the wood stove. Loons, lakes and ice fishing, they have it all! Oh! That first year forgot I stored the propane cylinder behind the stove, by then it was desperate to explode. With a glove on the handle flung it on the snow bank, balloons of steam rising. I’d no wisdom operating in that land. Well compared to Courtown.”

“Are you tout fini?”

“There’s a bi-literal treaty, our poems expose them to oodles of our mournful sadness. Give Ontario poems a chance.” All I’m saying.

“I’m promised a bar stool extra in the play, ‘sit nursing a pint geezer’. So don’t be an encyclopedia on spurious topics. Please no rants about round tables in restaurants *not working*.”

“Giant potted plant in the middle? Come on, need walkie talkies to communicate over foliage.”

“My fears our discussions a tough gig. Anything more, maybe not involving pints, old time poets or Blighty?”

“Once spied a ravenous crow eat a half dead squirrel, pick pecking away. That’s for real.”

“Where?”

“Ontario.”

“Permission for audible sighs? If their ‘Great’ lakes have Lough Ness monsters no one cares. Move to Lough Corrib I’d give a damn.”

“In the Arctic with polar bears, not including zoos, 73 documented attacks with 20 dead people. Prudent explorers carry guns! Over here our lazy badgers can’t even make close to that?”

“Honey badgers have hyenas for breakfast.”

“In Africa! Not what love birds hoping for, vicious and smart feral animals not popular in theatres. Specially if equipped with ringing cell phones.”

“Later parents came to Toronto, time at the Falls, CN Tower engraved names at the top, saw an Irish play at Stratford Festival. With me so worried with financials, as in not having sufficient. Dad always liked to order off menu even fast food joints. I was not fully appreciating the moment, worrying if the old banger wagon would make it on the highway. Now with tears remembering, do cherish God gifted moments. They are gone only nostalgic sadness with regrets.”

“Tony what can you do? You gave them great times that’s life pal, no return policy on God’s green earth. We live with that agreement.”

“Still see Dad with a beer on the St. Lawrence ferry smiling, passing tiny islands. I’d made that time for them, after Ma would come alone. Grateful moments, be there for ones you’re with, they too had torments. Always hoped back home they’d have loads of stories to entertain friends in the local. Times with their prodigal son.”

How different would we behave if gifted such moments again?

Moments of silence as our souls took a look back.

“Tony permission to alter the mood, I know you went down the rabbit hole.”

“Yeah man even saw that caterpillar smoking a hookah.”

“Not to be sneezed at. Oft asked question, influences from back then?”

Scanning scrawled notes.

“Dad had scored a fire salvaged TV.”

Oh and the family pleasure provided!

“Dixon of Doc green, Honeymooners, Dad’s Army, Christmas with the Marx brother films, Steptoe and sons, Benny Hill, Morcambe and Wise. Most hilarious Three Stooges, then the Twilight zone. Donna Reed’s showing how a family lived in USA suburbia, brown paper sacks from supermarket trips in the Pontiac. Lawns without railings, schools with girls and boys. Prosperity going right.”

“Yeah Tony! Homework got delayed, we watched till midnight, Coronation street and Emergency Ward Ten my parents were wary. Later being addicted, also with Lucy! The Bachelors (with Con, Dec and John) on Sunday night at the London Palladium. Singing ‘I Believe’. Magic!”

“Don’t forget ‘A Scottish Soldier’ Andy Stewart in the kilt! See now loads of stuff.”

“Mixed bag, further back?”

Fast scanning.

“Activities at dances, train to Belfast for rubbers. Me and my brother and neighbours had the Green door in Clonskea, plays in the garage ‘Happy as Larry’. Pennies charged to watch, all sent to the church. Not even kept a few coins for a toffee bar.”

Travel: our first Invasion

“What about *those holidays?*”

Mickey barrister stern, a corner got turned.

“First off I never went on a Med package holiday. Allow me to read my brief but exhausting, sorry exhaustive soliloquy.”

For longest time Europe a grim place, no Beach boys, heavy tome books from USSR. Weird serious movies with subtitles, Marlene Dietrich singing ‘Lili Marlene’. Continent battered by WW2, Kremlin imposed a cruel Iron Curtain, and

banned Rock and Roll! Although in truth we had banns for wedding nuptials. Historical Eire damaged by invasion, emigration, famine, watched as a cascade of our females went to warm Mediterranean parts. This absurd screed focus is when girls returned from their week away.

Needed to wet the whistle right now.

Shop girls, haberdashery seamstress, uniformed secretary, Airline employee, hotel workers, civil servants all with punts stashed from Friday's wage packet led the *invasion*. They'd cashed in with working, while I remained a college pauper, practicing delayed gratification many ways. Damascus moments planes touching down on Med runways, our girls no longer settle what's offered on their jaded isle. Aye, faded isle. No 'emerald' isle, unreliable sod piled high with ashes of briquettes. Once our business, now young women exported with butter, porter and single lads on the lump. Girls stripped of pious green shirt when playing away, hormones bloomed under a warmer sun. They returned armed with a dipstick by which to measure us.

Escaped New Town Mount Kennedy,

no longer be their county barnacles.

Airport bus, splash in prime times.

Be wicked heading for you Med Boys.

What's shaking on that gorgeous tree!

Endless walks by Glen of the Downs,

display well shaped Wicklow thighs!

Coming in pairs!

Full extent of this encroaching dilemma revealed one evening off Kilburn High road visiting a flat with Dublin girls in rhapsody about trips to Torremolinos, Adriatic and islands in the Med. So full of it drinking coloured liquor from duty

free. Those girls put an indelible mark on me, sharing memories of their sojourns. Girls heads expectations got turned viewing such sights over there, became besotted by their strutting young men. With Italian roads to roam girls viewed David up front in Florence, and they liked it! No flat cap on this noggin, no nicotine stained lips for this Adonis. Returned with ceramic David's secreted in the suitcase. After all boys watched Hollywood starlets and those magazines with staples.

'Yeah good for his gander what about us?'

Only way we figured to sweep them off their feet was cross bar lift on the bike. Now they tarnished us hard working lads tilling in the fertile soil sticking with this lands bounty, lumped us like herd of Calibans and humpbacks occupying belfries. Although with other reports of lassies traipsing about stressed in unfashionable clothes. In hotels feeling overwhelmed, in Venice huddled in the gondola like fish out of water. By the Riviera feeling like timid spectators watching a parade. Searching to discover an Irish pub with plain welcome faces. Served by a lad from Limerick, not bothered by *suave* waiter palaver pouring a glass of spéciale Rose.

'Oui madam.'

'Luigi I'm no sommelier, it's plonk pour to the brim. Tout suite and grazie.'

Disheartened knowing Kathleen

his third cast off of the season.

Wondering 'can we leave now?

Carrying such emotional baggage.

Meeting to Begin

"Tony! Shut that stuff down, they're coming! Hey 'You Guys' over by the table!" Mickey waving, pointing with shouting. "Tony's ready for youse."

Vexatious clod.

Wrong Table People

*Whatever road could have travelled,
none better than one I did.
Although stuttered and procrastinated,
found that place a most agreeable way.
Now with new knowledge gained
left with those debts to repay.*

Pub Chat

“Fun fact, Armstrong geared up to go out on the moon, broke a switch on the Eagle instrument panel, vital for take off! Aldrin fixed the problem with part of his pen, lucky he had the write stuff.”

“How long you’ve been storing that!”

Saturday’s gabfest me and Mickey in Keoghs snug, sinking well deserved morning pints. So there.

“Tony need advice, this morning a suitcase box got delivered, ‘Happy Birthday Mickey’. From an Ex, got humpty dumped bye-bye six months ago. Tore the cardboard then a King-sized mattress was popping out, all expanded jammed in the hallway! My place already a shoebox, now using the back door. True I did miss her. What’s that about?”

“Bold move! Better feather her nest, send pillows me thinks she wants to see more of you. Mostly reclined it would appear.”

Lad on the edge with shaky Victorian digs, canal side. Playing the field, hazardous to his emotions.

“Come back trail, welcome her with open arms, display understanding, well best you as a man can. You know.”

Throw a stone in a well, test how deep it is.

“Thanks buddy, appreciate that. Reckon I can pull this off.”

“One caveat if she has a van full of suitcase boxes maybe I’d cancel the pillows.”

“Such a two face Jekyll jerk. If not for this full pint I’d be hoofing out of here!”

*‘He was his father’s only hope,
his mother’s pride and joy,
and dearly did his parents love
the wild Colonial Boy.’
(anonymous, wikipedia)*

With that argy-bargy we had suitable quiet moment of reflection.

“Tony those visions from the James Webb telescope are changing the star scape. Now astronomers saying the universe maybe is a lot older!”

“We need a University Science Fiction Department, I want my Sci-Fi writers to stick with facts. Each of us humans walking with 100 trillion gut microbes, weighs three pounds!”

Never has so many done so much for one.

“Pandemic bat virus laid us out, what if we get visitors from Andromeda? I’ve troubles enough digesting a delicious crusty pizza, but hamburgers from a silicon based cow? We can’t have space-beings from all over boozing together in Moon pubs, wolfing down bar snacks? How’s that going to work Mickey?”

“Me thinks ’twill not go down well.”

Imagine confusion spending a penny at the Galaxy United Nations, look I’ll say no more.

“Wrong bugs can be destroyer of worlds. Is this not obvious? Unless perchance all life in the universe come with DNA cells. World’s apart but galaxy life infused with DNA. To hob nob face to face, need must to be sharing that common constructor.”

“Tony, DNA was made by *Some One*, we agree. If DNA came to us from space we cannot be alone.”

“Mickey those are most profound words you’ve uttered since ‘Mama’! I need DNA in my beef for a delicate constitution, for my daily pursuit of Happiness. Meantime do not have pot luck with space aliens.”

“Listen Tony don’t forget Mulkaehy’s retirement dinner Wednesday. You’ve got ten minutes dispensing wisdoms.”

“I’ll start yodeling, then take requests.”

“Sounds wonderful. Banquets drag for hours, dignitaries word salad’s, with us crunching kale and onions. Waiting for stingy house wine distributions.”

“Olden times feasts with mugs of mead, hunks of beef, jesters with monkey trick contortions. Bawdy jokes, minstrels with lutes, pelting rotten fruit at miscreant paupers in stocks. All in good fun! Jests! How can we claim life is better now?”

“Tony it’s assigned seating, and that secretary Beryl don’t like you. I peaked at the table list, you are not by the kitchen but teetotalers abound, likely not appreciate you guzzling away. Also students by bushels, expect lots of staring at phones.”

No messenger ever bestowed such grim tidings, not Rome’s fall or hearing my favourite Late Late show host was retiring.

‘How much of that stuff you drink everyday?’

‘Myself I never liked the taste.’

‘Costs a fortune, is it worth that? Seems a waste.’

“Red and white all shot before we even sit, *with me stood at attention for Ambrán na bhFiann*. I need wine to feign further interest in proceedings.”

“Beryl offered a table change, get sat by that fellow licks his fingers turning pages, you recall that rumpus!”

Picked chips from my plate, asked to taste my beer! From my glass! Beryl well aware of my angsts, hence bait and switch plan. I built a fort of ketchup and mustard condiments surrounding my plate.

“Worse he uttered ‘*truth to power*’ and ‘*proactive*’ in one brief sentence, caught me off guard. Shakespeare himself would be embarrassed. Told me ‘*stay in my lane*’, like I’m a lumping lard heading down 100 meters hurdles, cheating to get a medal. Realized ‘*post-modern*’ appearance only a matter of time.”

Ate rapid, suffering with hiccups, I’d dashed to the Exit.

“Ten minute talk, so I can’t be lingered. Otherwise?”

“A dog’s breakfast. So career advice for students?”

“Head to Bray find the animatronic ‘Fortune teller’, pay tariff for the card. Good investment. Things change! Will and Orv Wright high flying on a beach then astronauts breathing like aquanauts on Sea of Tranquility, spears to gatling guns, grenades with handles, Turing’s Enigma busting machine locating U boats. British radar pilots eating carrots to confuse!”

“Give them something for real!”

“Quarry Master was king in Stone age, being skilled shaping large rocks.”

“Consistent source of wisdom, certain TV cartoon show about ingenuity of suburban living in the stone age. Right?”

“If appropriate.”

“So my dear old Bray has the answers. That’s a turnip for the books.”

“Look I’ll say young people give it a go, best you can. No need to get too stuck in, like Dictators causing mayhem. We are only visiting, it will be all over the hill before you know it.”

*Our Planet tries it’s best,
Earth’s myriad of creations.*

Keeping us amazed.

Hops,

Moon walk and beer.

Skip,

Girls playing rope and tax.

Jump,

Fosbury flops and bail.

Bites.

White sharks. Great?

Work Away

Attending a designated Banquet table I always prepare anecdotes, wait till others finish, cautious of silence as they sup, respectful in case they're determined to drone on. Brushed up on Albert the chimp first earthling in space in 1949, Crop circles 'not all a sham', bound to interest! How did the Hindenburg airship in 1937 pre-plastics, seal hydrogen in balloons? With 17 round trips across the Atlantic, before tragedy. Early Zeppelin's used cattle intestines, with higher technology the Hindenburg had gelatin pasted on cotton. Thirty six passengers blissfully unaware, hanging by threads 650 feet over the ocean on that sixty hour trip. Permitted to smoke packing 7 million cubic feet of hydrogen above. Always nervous others would instigate these same topics, I rehearsed a back up plan to recite lines from 'Ballad of Reading Jail'. Okay obviously not all 654 lines! Really! Waiting, desperate to interject witty remarks, I'd scribbled on the menu.

Top Banquet debacle, loose tongue recent teetotaler fellow claiming to recall *everything*. Floated half-truth calumnies as we sat in that full Faculty meeting. He picked his battles. Laughing about I'd gotten polluted in a Piazza of Florence attending a brain conference, previous week. Generously catered banquet, after midnight I'd stumbled worse for wear, no idea where the hotel was. Navigating ancient towns in Tuscany like narrow rabbit warrens, on a solo beat my group retired early. Pesky Wexford nemesis related I'd lost my glasses, remaining Conference days wearing shades. Perhaps I developed eye strain under brighter sunshine given sensitive celtic orbs, did he consider that? After I'd returned to the hotel no bother

following Dome of Cathedral Santa Maria easily spied over rooftops, highest brick dome ever built! Thank you, architect Filippo Brunelleschi from 1436, his dome took 140 years to complete, using construction elements from Rome's Pantheon finished in 118 AD. Who needs a GPS when you've got all that on your side?

Dublin lad reared on porridge, potatoes, spotty dick bread, first time in Italia. If you cannot indulge Tuscany's vino given the opportunity where's any point? Henceforth the 'booze hound', that piñata with legs, scofflaw created guffaws at many a Christmas lunch thereafter. Perhaps I'd provided Florence with a leaning tower on that night, how I rolled on the Boot. In wandering thinking of 'David' stood outside for 400 years, in Piazza Delia Signoria. Created at 26 years old by Michelangelo in 1504. So inspiring, how he could do that with a hammer? David's toe and left arm got broken along the way, not unexpected for the handsome lad of 519 years. Must admit when I was 26 years never considered purchasing a block of Galway marble to hammer out a figure, these days that job made much easier using power tools and lasers. Now left with regrets, as stated from the artist Michelangelo himself:

'The sculpture is already complete within the marble block, before I start my work. It is already there, I just have to chisel away the superfluous material.'

Although on reflection you'd never know what worrisome yoke you might release from ancient blocks of Irish marble. Other imbibing memories after long days at the grindstone with talking to people. In San Juan a Conga dance to Latin beats, tone deaf 'Mountains of Mourne' karaoke duet in Osaka, saki snuck, when struck we ran amuck. Following an Oz Banquet in Melbourne, melancholy feelings at the harbour being in my tin cups, not iron manacles. I was on my way to a Footy game, not life-time

indentured servitude as once was the fate of 14,000 Irish
dispatched to Tasmania. Close by.

Fortunate son by Grace of God.

Grant mercy to souls that travelled,

for four months left battered down.

Horrendous storage, then lived no life.

Only hardships.

Sibling Scolds

“Tony need to get a grip on your self. Honestly. Belly aching about who sits down beside you! You’re no Oscar Wilde always so moody, never sure who we’re getting, half the time.”

Advice from my sister, had to laugh, she was right! Well as usual. Or naïve. Benefit of big families we learned to deal with situations, know when to shut up, agree if pushed or not belly ache. Those qualities carried on when we went away. Dubliners good with negotiations, should be running the United Nations.

“By the way none of us ever expected you to be in such exalted company anyway, at one time you were measuring thickness of plastic bags, never heard complaining. Now looking at cells with enormous microscopes, so self important. At most you are a watcher of our creators work, while us mere mortals admire mountains and the bay. We are all busy wandering about in this world’s gallery absorbing the endless masterpieces.”

Seems she was full of it or knew a lot. Then she went on.

“Ah sure look it, if that’s the worse thing to complain about, well now that’s high class nonsense. Never had choices with us lot, we trained you proper.”

All said with what passed for a privilege sibling *smile*.

In that house loads of cousins arrive unannounced to be fed.

Ma’s miracle with loaves and spuds knew twenty ways to slice a banana.

“Fill up on bread butter and jam.” She’d say. No time for *nutrition* those days. Just get a belly full.

“It’s not like you made anything in a cell, only messing with it, fortunate being alive when they’ve the big equipment. You bunch of Johnnies on the spot sit on shoulders of giants and smart engineers.”

Perhaps as she kept going only reminded why I left the nest so soon. Family bonds mean siblings have secrets to hold.

“More stuff we find in the cell become confident it did not appear by chance.” I offered.

“You’ve a point there, I’ll give you that. Best keep going then. Why not.”

God speed she meant.

Parsimonious Sitters

Most abominable scoundrel is the friend when both seated comfortable at a table of perfect strangers, all set for the evening. Then he gets the wave-over from a better friend. My hand shakes when reminded of such horrors, being abandoned in limbo. Wishing I lived in olden days with much cheaper beer, best coat hangers, hardy zips and also feasts with a bucket of mushy rotten tomatoes.

Such friends like having both hands in a wasp nest.

Sometimes I think it’s safer not to travel remain busy in the lab with doors closed. Biologists can be small-minded, become that way spending life times puzzled by microscopic cells. Most common are the prowling Banquet creatures determined not to place large butts down, refuse to settle, such discontent with assigned placing. Hover past absorbing and judging everything, fixed annoyed scorn, strident headshake, turning with scouring an upgraded location. Dispatch, belittle us seated folks with withering bewildered gaze, only wanting to see back of us.

‘Me with them, I’ve just got tenure! I’m more better than most of youse riff raff.’

Upwardly mobile tormentor failed the top table list, almost see tears of distress held back, the event highlight of his year. Still consigned back with us plebs, such indignities! How did they not see his recent research in big shot journals? After such shambles have his College administration send the ignorant organizing committee those publications. Getting rejected by these plonkers was infuriating.

Dealing with rejections was made easier as a young gurriers I'd learned the score. Reminiscent of bachelor times, brand new girl friend gathered from Saturday night's dance, after I'd observed her bald faced disappointment with my lack of friends in *my* pub. We'd sat isolated on bar stools as the gang of popular classmates passed by. Notice exclusionary glances, buddies doing no favours, their rejection feeling as daggers.

I appeared as an outlier, not a desired look when discovering you are a weirdo.

One of those dossers, while I'm on a call of nature, encouraged my female companion to 'let me go'. Hey man, I did the hustle paid the dance ticket, don't horn in, take advantage being more handsome and posh. Never trivial getting a date with birds from the dance, culled from the pack of critical girl friends. In me best clobber, worn sole shoes polished, an evening bath with shampoo and aftershave, boosted up feeling deluxe! Being ostracized accelerated that Mailboat escape from *coventry*, on the crossing shared pints with lump construction lads, gaining info for best Kilburn landladies.

In defense of the 'sitting reluctant', they know themselves. Let them find a switcheroo, locate that table with superior people. Better than be examined by their perplexing eyes over reading glasses and phone interruptions, likely having instructed a secretary to call.

'Oh sorry look I have to get this.'

So what should I do mean time?

As my phone currently switched off.

Never encourage a parsimonious sitter, immediately you assume lofty responsibilities as they contaminate the table. Reluctant sitters offer nothing, no entertaining anecdotes, their mere presence deemed sufficient. Pervading air of could have had a 'table superior' persists, obviously some administrative error. Prepared to dash, perceiving any gap.

*Adios odious, lifted from purgatory,
be one with giants, a deserved place.*

Exemption from this if a plonker was previously encountered and suffered each other here to fore, a disgruntled dud. Terrified looks from all sides.

Oh not him again. Please to move on we both agree.

Anyone can be guilty misjudging table companions, after days in the Convention center, took that Mississippi paddle boat tour in New Orleans, seated with a large team of non-English speakers. I eschewed a river boat dinner, sat in bliss on top deck. Heaven sent with a mug of local beer, those paddles churning that one momentous night upon a lazy river.

Happy Tables

If a contestant on Mastermind my chosen subject would be 'Calypso music from Trinidad!' I know the styling of many singers, Mighty Sparrow with Jean and Dinah, Crazy Parang Soca, Arrow Hot Hot Hot and Tiny winy, Lord Kitchner's Old time calypso. Lord Relator with food prices, Penguin his deputy essential, Crazy, Chalkdust, Black Stalin, Byron Lee, Mighty Shadow, King Austin. I've toured Port of Spain tents in Carnival time, seen Calypso King and Queen competitions by the Savannah. Colleagues and island acquaintances astonished at my knowledge. Always delighted to hear West Indian accent

at the table, eager to have engaging talk on history of music down in the islands. Who are the next stars? Otherwise rarely get such opportunities. Mind you I could talk all night with Jamaican's and focus on reggae and the eternal Legend of Bob Marley!

Oh to be at those laughing tables, when cluster of strangers become chatterboxes, immediate magical camaraderie. Form trusty table bonds often enabled by one bold personality. Take wall flowers have them bloom, clamoring to be charming, no dandelions for such a night. Stuck in the muds dragged from shells, can help light up the table. It's their night, enjoy and remember with so few. Glasses lifted and clinked, carried away with secrets revealed, feeling it's all okay now. Other tables gaze over at happy oasis island, realized what they missed, plodding along with brussels sprouts, chicken or steak, now all tasting bitter. Tired waiting for tiramisu, only wanting it to end. Most grateful to have attended a meeting in Maui, there I discovered singer Israel Kamakawiwo'ole. Wow! Hawaii another island with great music.

Our French waiter on the hotel patio in Maui, would deep breath the air at each breakfast.

“Mes amis, another day in paradise.”

My most favourite song from Trinidad ‘Give me more Tempo’, by Calypso Rose and Israel’s ‘In this life’ from Hawaii.

Gets every party started!

Twelve Men

'We came in peace for all mankind.'

Pep talk

“Better youse focus on the topic, looking at you ‘Murphy Law’ and skeptical ‘What Your Face’. Counting down. This subject close to my emotions, need touch and go activity, no preaching. Don’t test my patience, otherwise you pick up the beer tab. Youse have been tasked to correct this ‘*moon landing hoax*’ mayhem, still spreading all over. Don’t bother besmirching Moon Landing deniers, they are misguided so banish such thinking with facts. Don’t spoil the show with ad-libbing, don’t need dopes making up stuff. This is not history of NASA but moon landing tangibles. Deviations permitted better make a point.”

Preamble Snug scatter chatter (codswallop)

Lads licking their nervous chops on the warm up.

“Begob, if NASA came asking me to be first fella up there on the moon, me with vertigo and that high up moon. Better I watch on TV with cup of tea and chocolate biscuit. Unless they’d a pot of gold!”

“Astronauts like those lads that build skyscrapers, different end of some Richter’s scale than us.”

“You don’t have a driving license, come to town on that tractor, never left the country and expecting NASA would come down boreens knocking on your half door?”

"I'm well known in the county for bike riding, I'm a right mental cyclopath, I've climbed the Sugar Loaf no bother, I'd be jumping up those moon hills. So look out."

"Maybe if put to sleep until Sea of Tranquility landing?"

"He does great wheelies, moon craters great to whip around like carnival rides."

"Claustrophobia in those space ships more than vertigo. Not at all like the Tardis."

"We saw Saturn rockets take off, where did they go? For a week or more? We'd see parachutes with capsule dangling, then into the ocean when the three lads popped out."

"Earthrise photo not real? Come on, changed our view of the world, sparked all today's environment drama."

"Many do not know of craft landing on Mars. Or sending satellites to the giants Saturn and Jupiter and beyond to Pluto, and still going."

"There were 400,000 on that Apollo team, all brutal smart."

"You want proof? By the way there are a total of 96 bags of human waste on the Moon. How that got there? Case closed."

"Not conclusive. Unmanned probe dumped it there?"

"Skeptical guy back, loaded with gobbledegook. So regret inviting him."

"Are we done, can I have a whiskey taken neat already?"

"Apollo was great for the world's mental health. My good feelings! Thanks NASA."

The Show

"Nick do quick fill up, tell outside rabble to shutter it. Let's go back to Apollo times. Countdown over, light on!"

'Begin Gray Guy. Go.'

“Moon landings were staged, so claim those with the brass necks. Best reason it’s dismissed by some as it was unbelievable! Many naysayers don’t accept their own nonsense, just devilment with yanking chains. ‘Eagle has landed’ we remember but not later lunar craft Intrepid, Antares, Falcon, Orion, Challenger. Each put two astronauts down on the moon, these men travelled out 250,000 miles through space. Those odd ball sixties you had to be there, everything NASA did awe inspiring for a young lad glorious times. Since they’ve had a few miss-steps, but still mighty. They’ve courage, curiosity and ability, answering question of where do we live? Egged on by the irreplaceable Carl Sagan they captured the ‘Pale Blue Dot’, with Voyager in 1990, Planet Earth caught in a sunbeam from 4 billion miles. Truly epic. I saw Carl give a talk, lots about Titan’s atmosphere. My regret that I did not bring one of his books for signing.”

Comments

“I tell everyone St Brendan got to America in 500 AD, landed on Moby Dick to rest, before whaling whales were friendly.”
“If you’ve an ounce of Irish shed tears with Chris Hatfield singing Danny Boy in the space station on one St Patrick’s day. Also Cady Coleman playing Chieftains tin whistle in that tin can.”

Luster Reliable, Go

“Never forget that summer evening in Notting Hill pub, July 1969, sat with pints of bitter. Then mighty gob smacked.

‘Tranquility base here. The Eagle has landed.’

What magical night is this? They arrived at a base, up there waiting? Neil Armstrong landed surrounded by boulders, tiny

computer panicked warnings, with his buddy Buzz Aldrin, both staring out at the moon surface. Watched by 650 million! What a ride! Immense pride in having accomplished their end of the long march, that daring do of JFK, it was only just possible. Most of us with anxieties contemplating enormity of that airless vision outside, feeling like deep diving aquanauts. On the descent those pesky robots got frightened, Armstrong stayed cool as the penguins. Packed pub went *ecstatic*, every man jack and gals away with cheering. Like three years previous winning Jules Rimet World cup with Geoff Hurst's hat trick. Flight Director Gene Kranz, 36 years old, moments previous gave Armstrong bravest and historic order in the midst of confusing alarms.

'Go for landing'

Overriding computers over field of unexpected boulders, Neil touched down with 20 seconds of fuel.

'We copy you on the ground. Lots of smiling faces.'

No problem mission control, maybe refuel at "Tranquility base" order ice cream and a burger. Watch a space movie, have a kip."

'Comments'

"Get flustered missing a petrol station going to Courtown with quarter tank, wife and kids and pooch. Know how those lads were feeling."

"What class of people produced these fellas?"

"Neil spoke of family roots in Fermanagh. Cattle rustlers! Few years previously he was on Gemini 8 rocket with David Scott, March 16, 1966. Succeeded in a docking, first between two spacecraft. Spacecraft began to roll, even when undocked they were tumbling, somehow Armstrong rescued their lives. To

give astronauts practice piloting the lander on descent, NASA used 'Flying Bedsteads' training craft. On May 6, 1968, 100 feet up, lander failing, Armstrong ejected before it hit the ground. Then headed straight to his office desk, got back to work. Later said he had essential experience in piloting those earth bound craft. Armstrong on Apollo 11 faced with vital docking maneuvers over the moon, with his nerves of steel all worked flawlessly. Congrats to the engineers that designed and built these unique crafts.”

‘Whimsical Contraire Fellow. Go.’

“Unmanned Surveyor 3 craft landed April 20, 1967 at Mare Cognitum sent photos of lunar landing sites. November 19, 1969 Apollo 12 landed within walking distance, Conrad and Bean removed pieces of Surveyor including the camera, only craft visited from another world. That camera displayed at National Air and Space Museum in Washington. Unfortunately Alan Bean earlier tilted his own camera lens towards the Sun and rendered useless. Still recall disappointment, we saw nothing on TV.”

‘Hop Scotch Man. Go’

“Apollo 15, August 1971, Scott on lunar Plain of Hadley dropped a feather and hammer, hit the ground same time. Put nails in coffin of naysayers, how they gonna fake that back then? Touché!”

‘Comments’

“Giant ostrich feather, cardboard hammer? Perhaps.”

“True enough. Okay, fair play.”

“Au contraire it was an 0.03 kg feather from a falcon named Baggin, and 1.32 kg hammer, on release they fell 1.6

meters. Moon's vacuum and Galileo's learning from that leaning tower in Pisa, feather remains on the moon. Hammer needed for chipping rocks."

"Finally *a know it all*, be on your toes."

"He's a ringer, making us look bad, like having Georgie Best for five aside kick about."

"These guys two a penny out by posh nob hills round Dalkey. Foisted on us journey men."

"Bullock harbour when tide comes in lifts all our boats."

"In which harbour do I keep a boat? I play with boats enjoying my bath."

"How he keeps them details stored in his noggin, ain't natural."

"It's sea air, always smarter after Sunday afternoon out by Sandycove."

Jalopy Guy. Go.'

"Apollo unequaled in planet history. How dare anyone believe we sat watching a movie on the 17 inch black and white boob tube, not a moon landing! After Apollo 11, 12 and 14 decided they needed a lunar car! Possible in madcap sixties! No environmental impact survey on lunar terrain required. In that rover Apollo 15 Scott and Irwin travelled 17 miles, it's 12 miles from Dublin to Bray, to collect better choice of rocks, including 'Genesis Rock' from the lunar crust. Driving like a 'bucking bronco', rover wheel tracks observed by Lunar Reconnaissance orbiter in 2009. After the rover success they considered a motor bike, inspired by Easy Rider movie? On Apollo 17 Cernan's hammer jammed the rover fender, popped it off. Creating a hazard, causing '*rooster tails*' spreading dust. They jimmied a replacement with duct tape and map folders, cockamamie job, but worked! Folders returned, now in National Air and Space Museum, Washington, DC."

‘Hectoring Hector. Go.’

“With NASA searching for life out there, as a teenager in Stoneybatter I was looking for a life. Learning the ropes, secrets of creating life all hidden like the dark side of the moon. Later I learned needed to put a ring on the chosen one, as also discovered with most giant planets. Soviet Luna 3 photographed the cratered far side of the Moon on October 7, 1959, still only observed by 24 Apollo men. I saw that photo in the Evening Herald on Grafton street. They briefly considered landing Apollo 17 on the far side. Strange *Lunar tunes*, eerie woo-woo sound’, first reported by Apollo 11 Michael Collins, on the moon far side. Also Apollo 10 crew on the far side reported hearing ‘outer-space music’, only now released after 50 years! True origins remain up in the air. Maybe life is all over the Universe, I doubt that, not simple starting cells, likely very rare. Over next million years as we will populate the galaxy, needing that sixties spirit. They’re now developing microprobes propelled by laser get to planet Proxima B, 4 light years away!”

‘One Shot Guy. Go.’

“Bete noire of deniers is glorious Flag, Old Glory.
Look the USA flag is moving on the airless moon’.

Au contraire that flag proves it was real, consider Hollywood watching fictitious rushes in a studio.

‘Hey that friggen flag is moving in the air! Idiots shoot that again. Right now! Suit them Extras up. You’ll give the whole game away’

Sixties different kettle of fish, great generation won the war, created loads of *pre-boomers*, everything possible, give it a shot lads. Rock and roll, lift a nation worn with Vietnam. It’s our turn to do our thing, remain in awe others could figure out

space journeys. We are good at exploring, 'because it's there'. Adding context, 33 months after Apollo 17 moon landing NASA launched twin Viking craft to Mars, landed and functioned for 6 years. 11 months to reach the red planet, launched on August 20, 1975, Viking 1 landed on July, 20 1976. Viking 2 launched on September 9, 1975, landed on September 3, 1976. Good reason to interpret their experiments revealed microscopic life. With exchange of rocks between Earth and Mars not unexpected."

We have the guys? Desperate to go, give them a shot.

They came from the US Air force flying fantastic machines, some pilots said no to being in a tin can, wanted planes to fly. Disgrace to suggest such men would be involved in nonsense of a fabrication. NASA harnessed talents of the nation, available like no where else. Sixties was about how high can we get! To the moon, Venus and Mars and more. Planning for Viking landers began in 1968, smack dab in Apollo time! Gung-ho on steroids!"

'Scowl Face. Go'

"Can't stand it."

"Remain sitting, or you'll knock over the pints."

"Boggles my bangles having deniers, NASA propelled by JFK moon landing exhortation in 1962. Moses and JFK both *seeing* promised lands never to experience. Inspired teams of expert seamstresses those '*Sew Sisters*' stitching gloves, suits and boots all needed X ray inspection. Immediately in 1962 NASA ordered construction of Saturn V rockets to deliver landing of men on the Moon. Your basic run of the mill first time moon visit with three fellas required five and half million mechanical parts. Phew who knew! Saturn V weighed 2,950 tons at launch. Alan Shepard on Apollo 14 added a club and

balls to play golf on the moon at Fra Mauro. Club is in the USGA Golf Museum, N.J. Fun fact one of the golf balls found 50 years later from improved scans of Apollo 14 film!”

‘Lost Late Guy. Go.’

“Scott’s first word on Apollo 15 landing ‘Bum’ given hard landing, he and Irwin first to sleep without space suits, July 1971. Spent an amazing 67 hours on the Moon, while module pilot Alfred Worden circled the Moon 74 times, Apollo 11 had stayed for 22 hours. Apollo 15 left a ‘Fallen Astronaut’ statue with names of 14 astronauts and cosmonauts died in space endeavors, Bible placed on the rover. Apollo 16 left a photo, ‘Family of astronaut Charlie Duke from planet Earth who landed on the moon on April 20, 1972’. Neil Armstrong put a bracelet in a crater with Karen his daughter’s name, she had died aged two. Gene Shoemaker, geologist, also co-discovered a comet Shoemaker–Levy 9, only person to have their ashes flown to the Moon, carried on Lunar Prospector space probe.”

‘Stringent Guy. Go.’

“What happened to America when psychedelic sixties were done? Apollo sent 24 heroes to the moon, 12 landed all returned. Three made the trip twice, Lovell, Young and Cernan. Imagine! Now with crazy words flying about saying it never happened, glibly maintaining it was movie magic in 1969! Like reporting Columbus sailors sailed Nina, Pinta and Santa Maria anchored at Aran islands not Hispaniola. Many appear to have a delightful satisfaction in declaring they ‘don’t believe’ it happened. Nothing survives ‘Van Allen belts’, how would they know? Well proof of the pudding is in the eating,

going and returning, don't hang around those belts. Apollo 9 first to enter, crew survived, don't dwell you'll be right as rain."

'Comments'

"Reminiscent of Gaza pyramids, no traces on the monuments of builders, even today unbelievable. Must be aliens."

"Made of rocks from quarries if graphene I'd be proper baffled."

"Maybe aliens were Incas or something?"

"Pushing it down the road, same difference."

"That's it? Pay for the next round!"

'Remaining Monocle Geezer. Go.'

"Patrick Moore, esteemed BBC commentator declared, 'I may be accused of being a dinosaur, but I would remind you dinosaurs ruled the Earth for a long time.' He and viewers like me observed the moon through portal of Apollo 8 capsule. Keen eyed Patrick with the monocle was spell bound as the large Copernicus crater appeared on the fly by. No need for a lunar lander on that trip, but April 1970 on Apollo 13 a lunar lander saved the crew including James Lovell on his second trip. Most profound Christmas Eve in 1968 as Anders, Borman and Lovell read from Genesis.

'We are now approaching lunar sunrise, and for all the people back on Earth, the crew of Apollo 8 has a message that we would like to send to you.'

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.

And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness.

Riveting, first explorers at the moon gifted us extended understanding of where we lived, even how we were created. Grew up with Rathmines library thumbing well worn Jules Verne books. Apollo 8 equipped with adequate technology, but riskier than Captain Cooke sailing ships. No islands to take a break, needed to bring their oxygen. When Patrick Moore declared ‘one of the great moments of human history’, broadcast interrupted by *Jackanory*, an entirely enjoyable children show.”

*I'll tell you a story
About Jack a Nory,
And now my story's begun;
I'll tell you another
Of Jack and his brother,
And now my story is done.'*

old English nursery rhyme

‘Comments’ “Wearing that plastic monocle for a radio show! Brilliant. I’ve read Patrick Moore met Orville Wright, Yuri Gagarin, and Neil Armstrong! Amazing, what a wonderful man.”

‘Sly Spy Man. Go.’

“To be clear with that moniker I’m undercover only with rain. So whither the Soviets, why did they not land a cosmonaut on the moon? February 1966, Soviets landed their unmanned lunar Luna 9, their manned landing was expected two years later. Perhaps the Soviets could have pre-empted the Apollo 8 flight to orbit the moon. However as CIA reported. *‘A Soviet unmanned space launched toward the moon on 3 July, 1969 ended in failure as a result of an explosion.’* Later satellites showed launch pad destroyed. Accounts reported a camaraderie between space

travellers. With cosmonauts wishing for safe arrival for Neil and Buzz at sea of Tranquility.”

‘Persistent Tough Question Guy. Go.’

“Michael Faraday explaining electricity to William Gladstone ‘but what use is it?’
‘Why, sir,’ replied Faraday, ‘soon you will soon be able to tax it!’
‘The cynic knows the price of everything and the value of nothing.’ As Oscar Wilde had warned. So what good is our moon? I live in Sandymount and the sea goes out far, like a tsunami coming. Okay always been the tide but if a tsunami how would we know? Head to higher ground, Howth across the bay, needing a boat with ample water. Better question why did NASA abandon the Moon? Lost opportunities, failure to thrive with such a lead, seems incomprehensible neglect that manned lunar landings ended over 50 years ago. Now there is a suggestion the 400 ton elderly Space station could eventually be crashed on the moon surface. Metal to be repurposed in the future. Recent years NASA paying Russia to get back to the Space station, NASA now planning to go back to the moon. In pioneer days what if wagon trains halted at Detroit. ‘Okay lads and ladies that’s far enough’. In 1400s China ‘Treasure Fleet’ ready set to sail the ocean blue, instead burned their boats, China had 3,500 ships, but by 1525 all gone. China destroyed their world-dominating navy, Emperors banned ocean voyages, for confusing reasons. Why the Industrial revolution started in Western Europe, and first circumnavigation was Magellan’s Expedition sailing from Spain in 1519, returned in 1522 having crossed three oceans. I don’t understand but somehow solar wind deposited more than 1 million tons of helium-3 on the Moon’s surface. Another stable form of helium with potential as a fuel for nuclear fusion.

'There's belium-3 in them thar lunar hills.'

So better get back up there.”

'Comments'

“Beautiful Concorde, also stopped in it’s tracks.”

“Moon dust troubled the astronauts. Nasty stuff. The regolith.”

'Bizarre guy. Well okay Go. If you must.'

“Not a moon fan, now that we know it better,
up close scary with scars, lifeless yoke staring,
brutal *climate*, with regolith nightmare for biology.
Not been back in 50 years, must be not that into it.
Once we grow up proper, fix this neighbourhood,
resources need shifting, arrived in knock about way.
Bring over moon Europa, same size, swap it out,
our moon dispatched to Mercury, blow that dust.
Won’t be easy, will be hard as once stated before.
Warmed up spinning Europa, bright joy to behold,
wasted out there in Jupiter’s ‘No man’s land’.
Sailing, fishing, surfing, submarine rides, houseboats,
that sandbox is ours, even likely the entire solar system,
no one else local smart enough to be medaling.
Well best check that Phobos Monolith, to be sure.
Next defrost Antarctica, abundant buried lands.
Pump and store water on over flow to Europa.
After all very Ancients could move 100 ton blocks.
No bother. Tout suite.”

Show over

“That’s a wrap, next time! Adios.”

In the Aftermath

“Oh boy I’m rocked, heavy duty goings on. I think we’ll convert some.”

“Liked tasks to remodel. Remember do no harm.”

“We’re not living in caves, we’ve improved here. Have unaffordable houses all over and condos for 50 million dollars in New York city. Electric tooth brushes, when our grand parents put them in a jar.”

“Never seen Moon places named after JFK? Right?”

“Do not tread on twelve men’s footsteps, none of us worthy.”

“NASA with so many irons in the fire!”

Eureka Fest

So I'd not need to appear in the sky and bellow. Well now you know the secret. My design. Congratulations. T Rex never even got started. You all have been storming the breaches, not that I was trying to keep it undiscovered and unrevealed. But X rays from Rosalind and Cambridge lads model started the wall crumbling down. Being so determined. Look it all had to be made small. Congrats. Now think you are so smart? Maybe I made you too smart.

Being neither sheriff nor his deputy, throwing no stones neither aspersions. Middle of the road, just a *big picture*. Not straying in weeds, thorny business bare-bone science, to inform not scare people.

‘Golden Helix’

Imagine if you will one morning you discovered the ‘code’ engrained in human cells that designs our ~20,000 proteins, what would you do? Have lunch-time pints at the Eagle pub in Cambridge and then play tennis? Ask what’s next? That actual day now 70 years ago did not immediately change the world. That discovery a slow boil. By now we’ve realised some startling implications. We learned how all life on the planet is related and on what it depends. How our parents created us with Love, that game of two victors. Two men James Watson and Francis Crick revealed to us that DNA miracle of our Creation, using essential contribution from Rosalind Franklin’s laboratory. Game set and match. In Church we’d learned meaning for our lives, now learning to know how God made us. Watson and Crick (herein: W/C), alone displayed brilliance,

selected to place the Benben stone on top the pyramid. First to stare at Creators conception, it's profound the machine constantly coiling and uncoiling unfelt, working to create cell life for all on earth, since that sixth day of Genesis. Their report on biology's Crown Jewel a mere single page (*Nature*, April 1953) contained those 23 words that changed our world forever.

"It has not escaped our notice that the specific pairing we have postulated immediately suggests a possible copying mechanism for the genetic material."

Because of what they all achieved, all that becomes Epic.

Heart of this matter

In 1962 three men won the Nobel prize, together contributed to figuring DNA's *twisted ladder* structure, Maurice Wilkins, James Watson and Francis Crick.

"For their discoveries concerning the molecular structure of nucleic acids and its significance for information transfer in living material."

Wilkins, primarily for significant X-ray diffraction imaging of purified DNA, while at Kings College London. From a small community of like-minded scientists, tasked with a common goal to decipher DNA's structure, being both colleagues and friends betwixt Kings College and Cambridge University. Their efforts resulted in a magnificent triumph for British science, although from which controversy still persists and resonates to this day. One refrain still echoes, Dr. Franklin 'passed over' for Nobel award, tragically she died in 1958 and the Nobel not being awarded posthumously. Also long simmering twist in that tale as X-ray images from Rosalind Franklin developed at Kings provided evidence for helical DNA analysis used by W/C. Rosalind and her student Ray Gosling produced '*beautiful*' X ray patterns of DNA. Three papers in tandem published in *Nature*, April 25, 1953, each group (W/C,

Wilkins and Franklin) allotted space to display their contributions. Franklin's focus was on preparation and detailed analysis of purified DNA structure, she stated the *structure is probably helical* but she did not construct a physical DNA model to enhance, elucidate that data, to ascertain a helical design rendered with '*specific pairing*' hence lead on to predictions of function. W/C did construct a model, then by observation remarkably connected dots of how our DNA functions. Every human cell since Garden of Eden carries ancestor's imprint, that displays our Family bonds with life on our planet.

Each research location excelled with as expected usual stubborn personalities, but this was a 'team effort', if not formalized. They shared camaraderie and data, as references from those papers revealed their intermingling, frequent travel on the train between London and Cambridge.

*In the end an historic collaboration,
received brilliance required from all!*

W/C wrote "*We have been stimulated by a knowledge of the general nature of the unpublished experimental results and ideas by Dr. Wilkins and Dr. Franklin and coworkers.*" In turn Rosalind thanked Francis Crick for *discussions*. A second W/C Nature paper, brief four weeks later on May 30, 1953, referred to X ray data obtained from Kings with Franklin and Wilkin's papers referenced. Wilkins thanked W/C for '*stimulation*' and Franklin for discussion. In a Scientific American article (1954) Crick gave Rosalind fulsome credit for the use of X ray pattern, including the iconic photo 51 from her lab. In their second Nature paper (July 25, 1953) Franklin and Gosling reported '*evidence for a two chain helical molecule*'. Fair dues lads and lassie, all enshrined as science champions.

Those W/C Nature papers in 1953 now approaching biblical status, how they uncover and so clearly put on parade '*something deeply hidden*' in our cells that is tasked to perpetuate precious gift of life. Perhaps next to Tablets from Moses and Magna Carta, the most profound documents on the planet. They describe a method of flexibility for Life's variety, spontaneous disease causing genetic mutations, even deterioration with errors in aged cells. Humans may self-destruct, never fear they will be replaced, eternal relentless cycle out with old and in with new, cellular life stands tests of time. Our understanding advanced, making it possible to go mining for genes in later years, these are providing strategies for medical advances. Also a draft of the human genome was produced in February 2001.

Fun facts

Scatterings of the Green: New Zealander Maurice Wilkins with Dublin parents! Chicago born James Watson with Tipperary ancestor Lizzie Gleason. James generously donated to UCC and TCD, being '*52% Irish*'! He was inducted in the Irish America hall of fame. American Jerry Donohue made vital contribution to the W/C DNA model had a Grandpa from Cork. Celtic DNA working! Scientists as Superman never doing it for dollars, Cambridge demurred on DNA patents. Dr. Fleming firm *No* to patent penicillin, Banting and Best / University of Toronto sold Insulin rights for \$1. Setting a bad example? Now while savvy IT entrepreneurs sail large Yachts on the Med! Wonderful that in 2013 a letter by Francis Crick to his son sold for \$6 million, where Dad outlined structure of DNA, prior to publication, same year Crick's Nobel medal fetched \$2.27 million, Watson's medal garnered \$4.76 million in 2014. James was reunited with his medal, a generous buyer from Russia returned the medal! Good man!

Rosalind Franklin's memory honoured with a building in her name at Cambridge University adorned with her sculpture at the entrance. Coveted Blue Plaque outside the Eagle pub in 2003 named for W/C, with announcement 'How DNA carries Genetic Information'. Replaced by a plaque in 2023 with additional names Franklin and Wilkins. Also plaques inside commemorating Franklin, Wilkins and W/C. Good Cheer to all!

Odile Crick, wife of Francis, composed drawing of double helix DNA, since described as most recognized scientific diagram of the past century.

When Stars Align

Major serendipity played a role when by chance Jerry Donohue shared an office with W/C in February 1953, as credited on their April 1953 paper: 'We are much indebted to Dr. Jerry Donohue for constant advice and criticism, especially on interatomic distances'. Jerry supplied crucial and final pieces for their towering DNA jig-saw, up to the ceiling! Jerry specialized in 'hydrogen bonding', worked with Dr. [Linus Pauling](#) for his Ph.D. Provided knowledge W/C required at the precise time. Demonstrating water-cooler chatter reigns essential, information served as lynchpin that day. 'Go raibh maith agat!' When engaged in research best not be DIY loner, labs thrive, live and breathe with random brain-storming. Lots of quality random yapping. Bright minds stuck behind thick skulls need feeding with unique data. Otherwise how be creative?

*What's going on out there on this earth? Tell me.
Need More!*

On Saturday morning, 28 February 1953, W/C polished up their newly 'hydrogen bonded' model of DNA. Two strands in opposite directions form the helix. That lunch celebrated '*most exciting molecule*' with delicious Abbots ale in the Eagle pub. Declared to patrons they discovered 'secret of life'. Well indeed they had! These days Jerry Donohue likely an author on the manuscript, multiple authors now common perhaps less so previous times.

*James lad of 24, Francis 35,
creatures with cells assembled by DNA,
instruments peering in pursuit from outside,
building their DNA structures,
go ponder on that with a pint.
Showing how God 'invented' life.
In it's beginning.*

Being all together

Most scientists boring as a rule, but not this group. Hardly rancor and turmoil, mostly friends prime of life, having fun in pursuit. Vital cogs in the wheel with best feelings. For most departed may rest in peace, lives fulfilled gifted halcyon days. Don't kid yourself, likely such a blast! Only ticket on my bucket list, head to that Eagle pub hoist frothy pints, not bitter only glorious English Ale! Celebrate magnificent investigators in London and Cambridge. We owe debts never to forget, they answered that call to battle, sharpest minds required. Get to there on time brains scream and shout, harness best qualities and talents. God bless with lab's backbone, research technicians, then gallop to winning posts. Fortunate to work on something so glorious, do not venture alone in throes of challenges. Discover new things! There's loads more.

Never in research so much been owed by so many for so few.

It all smacks of collaborators no cloak and dagger. London and Cambridge yapping as women on Dublin's Moore street back in those days. Needed each other, no strange bed-fellows bit awkward and grumpy as expected of normally introverted scientists. Mixture of skills converged and amplified having Johnnies and Rosalind on the spot. DNA as employed in conception and formation, original W/C metal plates on view at the Science museum in London. They discovered genetic code fundamentals! Only happens once. If you go there, realise how you are here!

USA competition

Over the horizon in California brilliant Dr. Linus Pauling in competition seeking identical quest. Hearing Pauling's interest putting wind up nervous duo in Cambridge. Panic stations! Formidable Dr. Pauling researched protein structures, then on track for a Nobel (received in 1954).

"for his research into the nature of the chemical bond and its application to the elucidation of the structure of complex substances"

He achieved a second Nobel award for Peace Activism, only person awarded unshared two Nobel Prizes. Unfortunately, Feb 1953, Dr. Pauling published a now rejected triple helix model for DNA, to relief and surprise of an anxious British community. Currently accepted model revealed when Watson and Crick presented the double helix. James Watson attending a meeting in France (1952) at Royaumont heard Pauling talk about importance of creating models. Following that advice paid off, photos show W/C standing by their ladder structure. Dr. Pauling received Peace Nobel in 1962, same year as Watson, Crick and Wilkins won for Medicine. Now that's fascinating!

Mindful mulling

What we have here is journey of our two journey men. Aspiring Professor big shot highfalutin dreams departed. But remain skilled in arts (aka tricks) of lab trades.

Seminar room, black board chalked spiral with the twist. Beer bottles secreted not be tempting passing enquires from ‘*How’s it shaking*’ crowd. Interfering scroungers expecting free gargle and interruptions. Like they discovered an oasis. They’d only get the hump.

“Yeah Tony read your draft. Rightly describes greatest reveal since Cleopatra with Mark Anthony. No doubt! Pressure piling with USA rumors. Only for the bold with those scrambles.”

“Mickey W/C constructed their DNA model, wire and metal, plastic balls, cardboard, glue, string, tacks with bits and bobs. Such *tools* (!) to figure that whole shebang, still beggars belief. Cost nothing in real money. Amazing secret solved right off the bat with that.”

Ratatattat

These days with Hadron Collider costing \$4.75 billion, investigate if nano-strings or knot? Say we live in a *simulation*. Wondering what’s *la difference* for us? If so why bother with all the mechanics of cellular life?

“Tony collaborations can be a right dog’s breakfast. Francis Crick considered Wilkins and Franklin not cooperating maybe why he with Watson succeeded.”

“That pragmatic craft needed for wee labs to compete. In academic circles following one-off successful joint project

celebrate, one day. Then persona non-grata, welcome mat removed from *their* lab, computer passwords changed. Tense nod with corridor passing. Now treated as an expired fool hanger on, shunned, unwelcome. Don't want you on lucrative renewal grants not be sharing bigger spoils. The way it is, how to make the cuckoos grumble."

"I know, first paper decent authorship as they grit their teeth, second gets you buried in the middle. Once your skills transferred it's redundancy. Hit the road pal, we don't want you."

"If newsworthy you'll not get a mention. Everyone for themselves, lessons for the learning. Stay relevant develop new stuff, they'll be back, best buddies. *Hail fellow well met*. Go again!"

"Okay! I'll grovel, my kids needing gruel in their bowl, failing no option on my plate. Also I do enjoy team's banter challenges, filled by daily mirth. Not living rent free on Rockall island, all hands on deck, locating oysters with shiniest pearls! Alone is way tougher."

"Tony that's entirely logical as Darwin explained in ~600 pages."

Why no Archimedes *et al*? Who filled the bath?

Michelangelo alone carried that block of stone?

Gigante bianco ordinario marble, at 8.5 tons.

Da Vinci painted the ceiling all solo?

Who held the ladder, cleaned brushes?

Newton '*discovered*' God's gravity all lonesome?

From whose farmer tree that apple fell?

Those neglected forgotten second fiddles?

If you prick them, do they not bleed?

Einstein with $E=MC^2$?

Albert alone.

“Mickey low hanging fruit our bread and butter. No plan B, DNA as planned. Not for nothing later times brave man Dr. Crick tackled ‘*Consciousness*’. Wrote ‘The Astonishing Hypothesis’ reached to top of that fruit tree.”

“With cheap wine my soul gets healed, when damaged by transient heartaches. Life’s better front of bars not behind.” Mickey’s philosophy.

“Rosalind endured WW2, confronted antiquated institutions restrictions for females. Still prevailed!”

“Yeah man! Bully for her. Tony old timey researchers smart as us. Except institution weird anti-female rules. What were they thinking? Embarrassing! Those different times.”

“Tragically as Madame Curie, she perhaps succumbed to danger pursuits with X ray, those days. Marie Curie’s lab-books still radioactive, stored in lead boxes. Can you imagine?” Says I.

“Okay Tony so why regular folks need knowing DNA and life stuff? Busy hustling a crust? Most people no clues how any engines work. Should you be messing, stirring potent pots?”

“Knowing stuff plus a decent shave all that separates us from chimps in Phoenix Park.”

“Nowadays taking photos of slides mid-talk presentations, remember ‘*loose lips sink ships*’ be as cloistered clergy speak nowt.”

“At meetings I’m Sherlock, snooping, earwiggling crouton trails, follow dropped crumbs. Aiming be back at the lab bench ‘*inspired*’ before banquet’s tiramisu served. Elementary dear Watson. If they stand and display stuff we use it. Down each borean that’s *Public domain*, so fair play! Not shenanigans. Look we’re swashbuckling pirates no Queensbury rules. Get a sniff it’s steam-rollers both sides down O’Connell street. Grant agencies invest, expecting delivery in promised time. Otherwise alligator see you later. Mickey them’s only rule we exist by.”

“Imagine pressure on that team in ‘53? One winner no silver medal. With us wishing to make our nation proud like winning Eurovision or Olympics. They’ll never forget!”

*Let Cobbler stick to his ‘last’,
but when technology advances go!
Ride that pony guns a blazing,
When all is sat there for taking,
be first for once not be ‘me too’.
Also rans end with nul point.*

“Game changers level the turf be first served, before rascals gather round the scallywag’s buffet. When Manna from heaven falls get in like Flint. Drive a four wheel-barrow gather up everything as monkeys in corn fields. Belly-full big shot labs like oil tankers, slow to turn. Our paddle canoe easier maneuver. We can do.”

“Tony they’ll cop on never get *light years ahead!* Don’t be stuck like pylons in mud.”

“Our advantage, as steroids, oxygen hiking Everest, corked baseball bat, wind assisted 100 yard dash, green shirt recruiting using Irish grandparents rule. Next up great-grand parents. With breakthroughs jump the gun, flood the zone, grab brass rails, ascend the ladder while it’s lowered.”

“Tony we can be big shots, podium with the flag, ‘Amhrán na bhFiann’. Bottom feeders do a wrap up.” Mickey’s philosophy.

“Okay back to basics, W/C reported two complementary strands displaying genetic implications.”

“*Complementary how so?* Not so elementary? Eh Sherlock? Clarify for readers.” Mickey in his element hammering beers.

“Rarely gets a mention, I’ll bet you’ve loads of silver coins stashed. Look I’ve taken this horse to water now landed in

marshy weeds. They speculated two strands ‘unzip’, held together by weak *electrostatic* forces. Okay for the folks? Life’s secret needs get unzipped. Ergo Eureka! How babies get made!”

“Howzat?”

“Folks go look it up, bit of DIY needed. Check diagrams in Biochemistry books for homework. Appreciate genius, not serendipity derived or space aliens.”

“W/C said it was beautiful so must be right. Teach as Religion and science.”

“Yeah boggles the mind. In all biology that’s the best discovery. Well so far.”

“Try alone cry alone. Need a team all minds do not think alike. Labs are full of odd balls.”

“Sure there’s rogues and vagabonds, but who hesitates gets lost.”

DNA

Eventually when smarter worlds reflect on 1953, then Kings and Cambridge truly celebrated! Knowledge revealed internals of exquisite DNA machines! Every life form constructed, every cell DNA dependent. Because of DNA’s strident incessant working from unicellular life to blue whales composed of quadrillions, each single cell following their plotted role creating that magnificence. How? Biologists staggered at complexity of our Creator’s cellular machine. Whatever they might claim.

Not enough understanding of facts of life.

I’m not something made by ‘accident’.

Almost everything still unknown.

How to make a tiny spider?

Make silk thread in cells.

Go figure that.
Yeah!
(Don't think so)

Cells duplicate as if by *magic*, complex forces likely to exceed understanding. Imagine as Genghis Khan's empire in the year 1200 tasked to reverse engineer an Air Force fighter plane, times a trillion? Without a creator no motivation for *life*. As DNA is required how to create DNA? What was available in nature to make the first DNA cell? Hello?

Endless horse/cart dilemmas.
All to fall at Becher's Brook.

.

Instructions for our ~20,000 proteins, detailed construction plans of life forms contained on miracle DNA molecule, how in God's name occurs by *chance*? Like declaring Giza pyramids emerged naturally arranged, mountain deposit of million stones as Everest. Come on! Piffle and waffle. Smarty-pant primates need recalibrations, step back take another look at what we know. Lots, but still peanuts. Astrophysics explore moons explain craters, answers for all surveyed. Rocks rolling round a cosmos, as compelled obeying Isaac's rules from Principia Mathematica. Isaac in 1687 made it look easy. While biologists directly observe a working hand, mind, planning of a creator.

Bugs to big shots.

Universe created need filling with life's presence.

Otherwise?
What's it for?

When spreading life around a planet DNA is your only man. Planet life at odds with a harsh Universe, delicate life such a bother, needing many protections to flourish. Remember how they wrapped Apollo men going out there. Start infusing bugs on the planet, add water and sunshine add billion years, from rocks life sprouts. Each Goldilocks planet creates customized plethora of life, from Aardvarks to Bob's your uncle on to Zebras. None of us arrived by rocket we've many creepy crawlies in family lineage. From whence we came, bacteria lead to multi-arm crawly bugs, lickedy split add bombardments mammals will arrive. Take advantage of asteroid, volcanic and climate changes to renew allowing others to present! DNA baked in the cake to overcome, take advantage of calamities. Supreme plan required each legion getting smarter, relentless ascent of life. Remember spraying flies with insecticide, busy decimating wayward ancestors, many took their turn being parasites, mosquitoes our worst enemy. Constant renewals required, built flexible to jump obstacles bypass obsolescence. Human life achieved now sits astride the planet, even our Solar system, warts and all. We built glorious Cathedrals, magnificent Vatican halls of prayer, multiple Monuments worldwide. Dreadful concentration camps for our eternal shame. DNA driven to innovate by stealth over eons exploiting every niche. Our planet contributes kangaroos and idiots, elephants, giraffe, jelly fish, even keep going with original vital bugs, no place left barren.

*Female/male,
now seven billion!
Fall in love enraptured,
vital planned component.
We can handle it!*

Dinosaurs vanquished, mammals succeed, eager dexterity developed hidden in nocturnal habitats. Evading dinos honed furry creatures survival instincts, cunning intelligence enhanced. When we depart smart money is Kangaroos (population now 40 million), with large yapping parrots in tow.

Aftermath

Rosalind shared good times with Francis Crick and James Watson in her so few remaining years.

Old Ringsend to Ivy League

My journey to the Ivy league University, little money, no connections, arrived free of debt. No fairy God-mother neither. Only reason I'd bother folk with this screed 'twas successful. Not usual turn of events for a Dublin man, seeing now I'm a geyser some may be interested in this path. Ready or not! Probably smarter than you think, Irish schools with Clergy founding are world's best, giving us that advantage. I discovered! Nobody asked for this maybe it's old hat with costs or might help. No need for me showing off or blowing steam, may assist STEM students navigate. Not snookered into large University fees abroad, those I avoided, ended as a Professor at a world's top university. Describing that road map before to 'shuffle off this mortal coil'. Never attended an Irish university (although I'm not recommending that choice). Lot is said by talking heads in North America concerned with perceived declining value of a Degree.

I've a different tale.

Best Things

Somewhat reluctant to depart Dublin. What a city! Grand public sea-water baths at Blackrock and Dun Leary, glorious summer months so much hanging about with diving and tanning! Abundant, essential, reliable free public conveniences as required courtesy of Victorians, on long walks back from downtown pints to Rathgar. Watch the steps, often located under ground! Sat top 14 bus '*through streets wide and narrow*', viewing crowds churn on Grafton street, looking for familiar faces. Watching Hollywood films 'Planet of the Apes' private box at ornate Capital cinema with the girl friend. That building our city treasure! Chair lift to Eagle nest up Bray head, then renting a paddle-boat for the half hour. Always Bray fun times! Tram up Howth head otherwise tough hike, train travel third class from Dartry to Bray. Visiting my old ancient school

building in Ringsend. Wished they'd stack the Pillar bricks back together, so charge double the tanner! Good deal like four pints for ten bob in Donnybrook pub with college mates.

Best city!

(once)

Dublin, setting me free

At 23 seen as best career option to depart Ireland, competitive small island, squeezed us scrambling for scraps or chasing rainbows. Feeling leprechauns sequestered any gold bits into their elusive pots, behind big gates and railings. Golden Ireland's age started ~1950, European war over, roots of prosperity sprouting in suburbs where I grew up. As a teenager mid-sixties returning from summer in the Courtown caravan. Da driving the station wagon towards Dundrum coming from Stepside, passing modern bungalows. Imagining young couples on the vanguard, polished gramophone playing LPs, board games with neighbours drinking Harvey Wallbanger cocktails. Having thriving jobs, driving European cars. Planning trips, Italy or Spain, not like old fogeys in Rathgar seemed every second house with pensioners. *Troubles* in the sixties witnessed on UTV and BBC NI. No gold-star at school, muddled mind barely middle of the pack. Potent impetus trying to keep up, neighbours, mothers, aunts *going on about wunder-bar* scholarships kids. Parents proud having ones to *go on about*. Three Inter honor subjects my limit, achieved at De La Salle college. Cannot praise De La Salle enough, privilege to be there. Primary and secondary schooling. Say again Brothers, Priests, Nuns, with lay teachers grateful for my education. Spent a year in the Gaeltach so still okay with some bits. Summer at 16 heard Ringsend Tech had chemistry courses! Radical decision shocked even me in September rode my bike (like a robot) to that school by the Liffey. Even got

back in time for Ma's lunch. Left behind classmates of ten years and the few friends, somehow confident I'd a plan. There we did 'O' levels. Likely was scared of troubling Leaving Cert subjects, maths my kryptonite.

*Something I was born without,
but compass in my head
learned to steer a by pass.
Statistics too were dreadful,
but useful alternative.
Tough days!*

Ringsend in 1967 'unfashionable' old redbrick building, classrooms with hot pot stoves, toasted sliced bread on top. That building from 1892 now demolished. Recall having interesting Darwin/evolution discussions with our inspiring English teacher. Missed rugby but Ringsend had metal workshops, let loose with lathes, hammering copper sheets into ashtrays, nameplates and copper bracelets! Hands on, aprons and safety glasses. Beats buried under the scrum. Starting school with new classmates north and south Dublin all with Damascus tales. With tide out scramble over the river wall, hunting bank edges for discarded treasure. Rescued a transistor radio, installed batteries still not a peep, likely as it had been sunk in the river.

Many bright spark acquaintances from all about with plans for *legacy careers*, accountants, teachers, doctors, civil servants, bankers, architects, family business, even a farm. Computer companies working with large Main Frame yokes. My apprenticeship was retarded, technology for how eventually I'd make a living not yet invented. I ploughed on.

*Watch! Listen!
Wait the while!*

*Wander round,
don't jump the gun.
Not yet!
There'll be time enough,
to succeed (with luck).
When timing is right.*

At Kevin street Technical College busy with 'A' levels, then London University external B.Sc. Passed all chemistry courses many part-time. 'Morrison and Boyd, Organic Chemistry' constant companion. Recall our excellent teacher Brian O'Keffee with sincere appreciation, he'd introduced the quantum world, tragically passed away as a young man. With those so choosey Irish girls I was an odd ball. 'Sure you'd be mad daft to leave, with all my friends? No way, so crazy!'

*When I left just me alone.
Kept afloat with Ferry boat pints.
Proving essential.
With turmoil's in calm Irish seas.*

Their opinion my advantage, otherwise no traipsing odyssey live and work in **five** countries. Astonished by many Kevin street lads, barely twenties having pregnant wives. Listening to unborn babies heartbeat, dreams of heading to housing estates popping up all about. For them fellas my choice to leave was haphazard, aimless, mostly unnecessary. Few months in a Ballyfermot factory, answered 'technician wanted' advert at St. Lukes Hospital in Rathgar. Near home.

*Switcheroo with lad from there,
decks shuffled, not only that once.
As if by chances?*

Worked with Dr. Boggust, Trinity College professor, Northern English gentleman. Developed biochemistry skills, isolating

compounds from tissue using chromatography. To that I'd added a two dimensional step showing additional compounds. End of the day have his colleagues gather to appreciate results. After ~18 months sat in his office earnestly told me.

'O'Dowd you can do it. Succeed. Be a Scientist.'

Reserved man sealed deal for my departure. Over the years on request he dispatched letters of recommendation. Future employers told of outstanding comments from Dr. William Boggust! Major difference for my career.

England, on an evening tide.

At home we'd a small tent stored in a canvas bag. In 1974 carried my kit and caboodle in that sack. Few quid saved up, late spring 1974 sailed for Blighty, Holyhead ferry reading 'New Scientist' magazine adverts for Techs. Did not budget return fare. Pub acquaintance provided an address to crash in London, turned out *'they'd no room'*. So problem on that street, dog-tired off the train/boat. No fixed abode, that monkey wrench all ready! Got wind of a doss house on the wall of a phone box, bare bone but no charge. Dormitory top bunk, stretch the budget. Goodhearted hippies running the joint, saved us from park benches. My razor got pinched. Still cash flow problems accumulated due to cafs, beans on toast, spuds, strip of rasher or sausage. Pot of tea. Mostly filled up on porridge.

*Stay restless and loose,
find emerging technology,
gain talent in that trade,
Johnny on that spot.
First responder
world's an oyster,
then locating pearls.*

*Temp job experience,
Supermarket boss tried to dispatch me
home early, easier for his coin.
Not so, says I, on the clock till five!
He backed off, how it was.
Scraping for pennies.*

Scored a warehouse job driving the fork lift. Hearing Three Degrees sing 'When will I see you again'. Shaving at public jacks, Finsbury Park corner, shilling for brand new blade. Off the street, getting on my feet. Kipped in Kilburn bedsits, grand landladies, dinner with mashed spuds, marg, veg, bit of meat. Coins for meter for the bath. Irish country lads in construction laughed when I'd ordered ravioli in a High road caf. Talking with old Erin bachelor lads, life on the lump drifting through bedsits of Camden and Kilburn, one old fella had reverence for Father Pio. Appreciated those insights. Blokes from Scotland, grand few pints together watching World cup football. Good times! Nervous wait for exam results, ready to send one slim resume to Drug companies. Daring first to relate heresy? Many Irish bosses encountered in London, male/female in work place tough as nails. No gaelic-camaraderie for my Jackeen mug. Long story, enough said. After work that summer swim in chilly Hampstead Heath pool often when raining. I'd swam with jellyfish in waves off Connemara beaches. Shivering my timbers wrapped in carrageen seaweed.

Glasgow lad over extended needing halving rent, large Camden town basement room, I moved rapid. Handsome fellow, bevy of girl friends, seeing how he was in need of a few quid. Do the maths, one room two beds. 'Oddball' memo had crossed the sea, hard to shake. Nervous on Seven Sisters road, picked up University envelope, previous transient address.

Decent results!

Profound moment.

Only Heaven sent!

Weeks after to Welwyn Garden City, shaved and launderette detergent fresh. Pharma appointment, late with train delay. Stoney broke, now decent crust even needed a bank book! Amazed how chemists analyzed the process, up to me to follow their detailed chemistry with test tubes. Each week, day off, enrolled in 'Applied Biology' degree at NELP polytech in the East end. Commonwealth students all about. Isolating DNA from onion in the lab, white and stringy exactly like human! Stone's throw difference with some erstwhile pub acquaintances. Seeing tears when stood up numerous New Years, when Adam had no Eve. Busy then traveling to Welwyn from Camden, training job with further education, so feeling good. Plan working.

Dear Britain.

Thanks.

Get me sorted.

Forever grateful.

Brian

Year after moved to Pharma company in Dartford town, favourite pub Malt and Shovel. Rich times there indeed, pints with such work mates. Acquired years old Hillman Imp, now a rolling stone driving to George Best his Fulham years at Craven Cottage, Leeds with Brian Clough when Leeds played QPR, his difficult 44 days in 1974. Dublin friends coming over, Piccadilly Circus pints on Valentines, Leicester Square dance met a girl, later my wife, Chinese from Trinidad and Tobago. Janice, nurse trained in Scotland, well that changed everything. Eventually rented a terrace house (like Coronation street), well set

up. Work folk organized hikes in Kent countryside, I'd peered through railings at Winston's Chartwell house. So awesome! Parents visit with bus tours to Stonehenge, Canterbury Cathedral, Thames Tower boat trip. Then phone call, Dad remarked I'd an English accent! What?

Trinidad and Tobago (T and T)

Robinson Crusoe was cast off on 'island of despair', near Trinidad. For 28 years.'

Influenced by 'Typically Tropical' band inspiring wonder 'Barbados'song! Sent us off from Dartford town, bags packed. Ready or not! Night before lying awake overwhelmed, no ferry boat ride! Shipped few boxed possessions to parents in Dublin. Exhilarated on the Jumbo, tiny wine bottles celebrate such adventure! Even with two summers in Wildwood New Jersey, arriving in Port of Spain knew one different place. Land of Prime minister Eric Williams, 'Father of the Nation', Janelle Penny Commissiong, Miss Universe 1977, Hasely Crawford 1976, Olympic Gold medal in the sprint, writer V.S. Naipaul (Literature Nobel, 2001). Janice's father drove south down Solomon Hochoy Highway flanked by fields of sugar cane, Calypso Rose, Kitchener and Sparrow on the radio. Magnificent sky Orion belt, prominent overhead display. Feeling vibes *I'm liking this place!* Met her folks, siblings, many relatives. Mosquito coils burn at night, startled by flying cockroaches, disturbing iguanas, sting in tail scorpions. Oxford street cream suit two weeks later married in San Fernando church. Left side packed my family side empty, all that mad rush! Congratulations on telegrams from Dublin. Did not take long discovering red rum, murder for me! Sticking with Trini beer (with puncheon dispensations). Celtic bodies not designed

gallivanting in tropical sun. Beach seeking Palm tree shade, not a week collecting a burnt tan!

Lived in Curepe outside Port of Spain, weekend to Kay Donna for 'Drive In' movies. Sunday morning not so distant neighbour broadcast with speakers MLK 'had a dream' speech. After a few months I'd recite it all by heart. On cue (expected for my life!) startup Pharma company, Arima town, island center, busy searching for 'me'. Work permit secured. State of art operation, machinery, tablet machines, laboratory. Got hired, working with Trini manager, sent me to USA for instrument training. Got machines turning, coated tablets and capsules filled. Dedicated staff giving everything, I developed chemistry assays. Trinis most friendly, especially Carnival time starting with Lent. Calypso on the radio, everyone with their top ten. Got so hooked now with valued LP collection.

Kilburn thanks, T and T was the life!

*On this blue planet, none better than Trinidad,
enjoying wonderful Caribbean culture.*

*God made the green earth, gifted T and T
bird of paradise, humming bird, Queen angels.*

Often thinking I'd stay forever, why not?

Two seasons, gorgeous, other few rainy bits.

*Scarlet Ibis nesting in mangrove swamps,
they've good things going, wetland reserve,
while emigrating to no nowhere.*

*Red beaks laugh at swallows flying south,
back and forth matching idiot humans.*

*Atlantic rollers off magnificent Maracas beach,
no one there needs 'winter' knowledge.*

*Seaside hotel, Tobago by Store bay,
lazy Tiki bar days, sorrel rum shots,
Port of Spain dancing in plush hotels.*

*Tobago more addictive than nicotine.
Weekend in next door Barbadoes,
walk Bridgetown streets as big shots.
Trini Carnival we dressed as sailors,
streets of POS, leather pouch of rum,
marching, celebrate being alive!
Savannah band competition, on stage!*

Drove Mountains to Mount St. Benedict monastery, walk
through trees, contemplations, 'people of all faiths and of no
faith are welcome'.

Look things changed since Daniel Defoe wrote his book in 1719.

*70 types of mango, favourite the Julie.
World's best avocado, they call 'Zaboca'.
Cornmeal pastille, plantain, Armadillo stew, red fish,
'Buss up shot bake', road side Savannah coconut juice,
no worries drink manby beneath a calabash tree.
Glass bottom boat cruise to Buccoo reef Tobago,
coral and tropical fish, don't even get feet wet!
Fishing near South America, in small row boats.
Camped on deserted Blanchisseuse beach,
pitch dark, only with roasting embers,
katydids, cicadas mating calls, doing a din,
grunting, growling nightwalker kinkajous,
waves pounding, winds flapping the canvas.
Eat cascadura fish, not only those Fridays,
then must return to end of days in Trinidad.
Leatherback turtles head to Matura beach,
beating soft sand making a nest, lay eggs.
Came from miles away, so did I.
They return, I harbour regrets for leaving.*

Not just another parting glass.

Watching boisterous *liming* parties setting off to tiny islands. Revelers living the life hollering filled with *Joie de vivre*. On the beach infectious Jamaica reggae, encroaching this Calypso island.

(Absent spoilsport patrols, favoured elsewhere. Dispensing fines for excessive good times)

Saturday morning with Janice on shift at the hospital, I'd drive cliff road to Maracas beach, stop for a beef roti, scoff the lot on the way. Within shade of palm trees, coconut water from a straw, BBC world service, rugby and football results! Rock and roll celebrities stroll so content not being bothered. Afternoon nine hole golf, Chaguaramas Golf Course built by U.S. army during World War II. Monkeys in trees howling at goofy golf swings. Nearby secluded Macqueripe, walk beneath that bamboo cathedral. Nowt to compare! Knew every road and town on T and T, four corners Chaguaramas beach with horizon hills of Venezuela, Guayaguayare, Cap de ville, drive to Toco in the east, familiar Atlantic blue waves. London town 4000 miles distant away, cold winter night on Kilburn High road, cafs with *spaghetti bolognese*.

Floating now in another world.

Loving this life!

Out of that blue, cabin fever hankering, things happening with biotechnologies coming fast. I was delayed, being out the loop. Gold rush was starting. Time to pounce, present not forever, time to move. We departed for Canada. Embraced winters of snow, ice and freezing rain. Ontario worth that sacrifice?

Who knows!

Toronto, Canada

Walking University Avenue in midst of 42 day postal strike that summer, 1981. Up and down that street flanked with numerous Research Hospitals, topped by U of T campus.

If ever feeling poorly best head to that place.

Out searching, stymied with my planned mailing sit home job search. Life now so difficult! Wandered (or guided) into Hospital for Sick Children (HSC), noticed as instructed on the notice board.

Graduate Student Required.

Hickory-dickory hustled to top floor, interviewed by Research Doc. Talked loads as if I knew what I was droning on about. Job done, FOB immigrant (fresh off the boat), now prestigious U of T grad student at HSC plus earning a *stipend*. Turns out I struck when the iron was hot, after all. DNA work in infancy, get going from bottom floor. Up side pretty much all to discover. Present grad student departing for MD training. I'd be studying Sandhoff and Tay-Sachs rare childhood disease, last in that relay needed to add few bricks. Stage fright ensued now and then, enrolled at a speaking course to struggle on. Five years later conquered all, emerged with M.Sc. and Ph.D by 1986, plus respectable publication pile. Wife and Aileen, our first born attended coffering in Simcoe convocation Hall.

On reflection all went by as a cool breeze, no need to stepaside.

Molecular Biologist emerged, rare species. Same life cycle as cicada, develop, mature slowly. Wait to be skilled, found my calling when technology advanced! Hard development stuff was finished. Celebrated with latest electric razor and Bob Marley LPs. Generously offered first author on a report locating gene

causing Sandhoff disease, later co-author finding Tay-Sachs gene (revealed genes are 56% identical). Tay-Sachs originally recognized in 1881, amazing to be involved! Opportunity to present results at Salt Lake City, heard a presentation on *receptor* proteins. By the way rare to hear an Irish voice at International meetings, see an Irish name but hear 'Australia'. 'Student' now long in the tooth, urgent needing to depart, FOB times suspended. 'See youse later'.

USA

First Post-doc offer, top USA Ivy League University, starting date delayed, with bags packed, now two kids! Our son Paul. In the HSC library read an advert 'post-doc for receptor proteins'. Lickety-split flying to Duke University, North Carolina. Impressed I was with my talk, pleasure to relate Toronto success! Privilege to spend ~two plus years with super competitive post docs, needs must to survive and thrive from strategic collaborations, that I was good at. At Duke obtained one of my life's ultimate possession, Nature paper I co-authored with two Nobel winners. *Nature vol. 333, p. 370, 1988.*

So Yeah!

Research Triangle far from city hustle, Chapel Hill great town, kids at catholic school. Faculty club swimming pool, easy travel to outer bank islands. Two weeks prior to leaving baby Jennifer arrived, daughter from North Carolina! High time to get my show on the road!

Canada return

My lab opened for business, U of T Medical Science building, assembled a team from diverse Toronto population, experienced from Trinidad. Startled at age 37 behind a desk with my name

on the lab door. Professor and Addiction Research Foundation Scientist. Beyond my dreams.

*My Guardian Angel held my hand, and guided every step of the way.
Believe me.*

The Irish Times, in 1990 published early lab success, 'Nature journal' Discovery of a dopamine receptor (D1). (Thanks, Dick Ahlstrom). Hope Dr. Boggust read that! Hindsight wishing I'd sent him copy of the paper. Next year again in 'Nature journal' another dopamine receptor discovery (named D5, non-identical twin of D1). Our gene prospecting business continued strong for 12 years, lots of new exciting proteins discovered. Another was *APJ gene*, (our kids initials), APJ (aka Apelin) receptor, now a superstar involved with how hearts beat. Currently 2500 Apelin papers published from all over.

Lives depend on APJ receptor functioning keep hearts ticking.

Medical advances in progress.

Ireland, England, Trinidad, Canada, USA.

Gratefull!

To all.

'Not born to bloom and blush unseen.'

Edit from Thomas Grey.

Epilogue

January 1999 Toronto Mayor called military to remove snow.

'I'm petrified by what could happen tomorrow,'

Toronto can't cope!

Snowiest January,

44 cm so far.

Near 1.5 feet.

(by my math)

still got to work.

Scarlet Ibis way smarter.

*Lakes multipurpose.
Kids skate in January,
June ready to swim!
Life in Ontario.*

Getting Distracted

Quare Yoke that Internet

Old brain reached out too far, attempted with rewiring itself to accommodate entertainment feasts instantly provided by You Tube, Face book, documentaries, fascinating interviews, ordering instant ebooks while in my cups! Babies deaf then hearing first time! Saving pathetic rejected strays. Best clips from bad movies. Addicted for hours, left drifting along freshly bombarded everyday. Proud passing with flying colours 'Not a robot' tests. Talent spotting 'traffic lights'.

*Few clicks on the rodent,
immediate gratification,
such gollops of laughter.
Hard to beat or resist,
knowing that's futile,
love my wifi, it loves me.
Inter-not my cold turkey.
Come time need sleep
less than before. Yikes!*

'Celtic Woman' concert in sight of Wicklow's Sugar loaf, beautiful to behold. Enya with 'If I Could Be Where You Are' that powerful song. Brit quiz show clips, LOL with Jimmy Carr, Sean Lock and chum's brilliant repartee! Some jokes I miss, having departed Blighty decades ago. Cat and dog video, enjoy pet antics without the bother, hilarious when they see the *Vet office*! News from home, once we got nothing. Night after night creating my channel. How dear old cable compete?

Ain't No Luddite

Once sat at University's hand me down desk, large fax machine, computer connected to a printer. Needed olden science papers, hike to the library, desks filled with galleys of students. Grab a trolley, steam powered lift to the bowels. Down in book stacks, beyond the walls lies Ontario's compressed permafrost. Search dim gloomy acres of buried bound journals, fingers crossed still on the shelf. When back up to join lengthy queue for photocopier. Elderly professor professed Universities work best *'devoid of students'*. Hoping I'd cash left on the library card. Nowadays few click-clicks and thar she blows, vision of papers from previous decades. Dog ate my homework, well forget that!

Subway Trains

Once passengers with bulky Toronto newspaper, each section balanced on the knee. Lots of pristine discarded newspapers to read! Brief times later books and magazines, women reading novels, earnest students with text books. Then ebook devices flourished. Now only cell phones, that's all folks. Don't watch phones when travelling need to get my eyeballs distance focused as designed, as when hunting for dinner. Amazing delicate rabbits survive and not a woolly mammoth.

Raising Kids

'Dad why is lemon sour not sweet?'

'Son always best go Google it.'

'So you don't even know that?'

'Investigate we'll compare notes.'

'Ok good idea! Better be good.'

I'll be out for a pint, (or few).

as old grand Da would say.

*Fingers crossed gets distracted.
So sweet fruit gets eaten.
Lemons tried a bitter tactic.
Juice not the friendly citrus.*

Internet broke the Book Store

Growing up, random book gift decent for rainy days. Not exciting as electronic kit, chemistry set, Meccano or Scalextric. Worst the jigsaw puzzle. Seventies at college large novels best value then for scarce money. Family discussions with Dublin books like James Plunkett's 'Strumpet City' in 1969. Briefcase loaded by lecture notes and latest J.P. Donleavy novel, good friend Tommy on Grafton street walked with latest Bob Dylan LP way cool! Neighbour kids would get other stuff, lots to barter! Every book implies 'Once upon a time', lets go! Still that enticed? Daunting task starting novels if not engaged. Need to want the gist. Now competing on line with uppity parrots yapping, like they own their joint! Oddly inspiring when they request Alexa '*play music*'! Addicted just like us. Parrots! Have them play 'Whiter shade of Pale' for me. Once afternoons in quiet Dublin pub, book and pint making discussion notes! Enjoyed Joseph Strick's Ulysses movie (1967) helped reading the book. Most popular Irish author? Jonathan Swift (born 1667) with Gulliver's Travels, J.P.'s Ginger Man (Pub 1955) sold over 50 million copies! Angela's Ashes (Pub 1996) over 10 million. Well so far. Big fan of Thomas Hardy, now realise too many words, what was he thinking? Describing everything, seasons, gravel sounds under foot. Reddle men delivering red dye to mark sheep, what bonkers is that? Now with ageing, sports interest has declined. Brain busy intensely consumed with elsewhere. Afflicted by 'can't walk chew gum syndrome'.

Oh another season.

Already?

Not many Irish heroes?

World of difference for me.

'Highlights' deemed sufficient, lads get a grip with goal celebrations. Annoying! Miss no nonsense Don Revie's times at Leeds. Maybe halt relegation of *proper* teams. Yo-yo clubs sporadic invading top division. Yo-yo clubs playing each other? Oh! Whatever sure it's all gas fun not complaining end of the day. Engrossed for decades.

Once Shopping mall excursion, bookstore, record store, renting quality movies. Then video stores vanished quicker than Bars in Prohibition.

USA Prohibition, 13 years!

That's like forever.

Liquor produced in Canada,

but not sold there!

Beautiful neighbourhood book store now shuttered. Assiduously I'd supported, not a price check for what's new then buy online. Never without a purchase, favourite hangout place. Advice! Do not have chairs near magazine racks or taking books to adjoining coffee store. For real!

Come in!

We are here.

Buy something!

Otherwise bye-bye.

Toronto now cannabis and vaping stores proliferating. Toronto suburbs plain flat interesting as Bog of Allen. Rows of tidy houses, green squares they call *parks*, searched but no sights for tourists.

*Well except peace and quiet,
grand schools here and there.
Not my ideal really so isolated,
but that's Canadian culture,
formed by brutal winters.
Roll over us global warming.*

Cottage Video Store

Determined geyser in his station wagon grimacing determined preventing my lane change, that fine holiday heading North. Saboteur of weekend good feelings. Trying times after shared winter, dumb lazy spring getting us late breaks from dire elements. Out of town stampede, highway bumper to bumper grid lock. Determined any *escape* to his lane got blocked.

If I could reach out and grab him' only my contemplating.

Car with kids, dodgy A/C. Head tortured with counting bills. Mechanic hit me up for three grand getting the car ship shape. Deja vous times with Da heading us to Courtown. Da distressed with problems, once there with pals, Ma and Da loving life. Mechanic saw me coming, more than jalopy was worth. Onward facing acre of grass need cutting, hoards of hungry biting flying bugs. Wee heavy dock developed habit of drifting when ice melted. Needed strength of ten men dragging it back, with only me available.
As my mother would say:

'Always just when you can both ends meet some one moves the ends.'

Blocking my advantage one car in front? Old coot, some folks blessed with everything, still primal needs be screwing people. Get their jollies.

Saturday night northern tundra, kids in the cottage. Sun down village video store OPEN most welcome sight ever on this earth! Otherwise evenings spent each reading alone. To my horror Beer Store closed early one Sunday. Pleaded with neighbours, no cans to spare. Learn a lot in emergencies and no pub in the village. Many movies we'd laugh under starry skies. Living the life, video tapes we never need rewind. Only precious memories.

Mail box drop.

'Safe on road home.

See you soon!'

Heaven good as this life at times?

Too Soon

Hell bent on what's next gizmo! Some things good enough like paying bills at the Bank.

e mail is fine, I do not text.

Phone as a camera?

No need all that palaver.

As Kodak informed us,

'You press the button, we do the rest.'

Laptops perhaps flat-lined a bit, more fussy? Still wonderful. Forked over \$44 for a rocking LP, turntables discarded *too soon!* Beautiful album cover. Never solved moving

car problem, that's where CD's had them beat. No reprieve for telephone box or typewriter so stay begone!

*Nowadays neighbourhoods quiet.
Except Saturday summer nights
with partying adults by their pool,
earned the unwinding these days.
Seems fewer kids anyways,
indoors with gizmos, video gamers.
Internet 'surfing'. As even if.
Empty playgrounds than before.*

Compared to endless ructions back in the day.

*'LBW spells you are out!'
'Yeah who says, with who's army?'
'You're such a poor loser.'
'Then it's my ball I'm going home.'
'Okay well see you tomorrow.'
'Yeah then I'll be off mitching,
boxing next doors apple tree.'
'Keep one for me.'
'Yeah okay.'
Maybe not.
Depends.*

Biography Book Rules

Cut back growing up bits, make famous deeds
quicker! Deprived by Ma/Da being poor compared to richer
people, no treats during Lent. Cry me them Liffey
waters. Gorge on St. Paddy's day. Trauma with school
teachers! Likely deserved it. Lucky 'spouse' of the

Talent? Short story enough! Seen St. Barts photos, beach frolicking! Tedious divorce fighting over kids. Only Winston Churchill earned the Volumes. At 75 declared:

"I am ready to meet my Maker. Whether my Maker is prepared for the ordeal of meeting me is another matter."

He carried a doctor's note to drink in USA during prohibition, breakfast whisky called the 'mouthwash'.

Lived to be 90.
Sure he saved us all.
Rest in Peace.

Holograms

Onward with these advances! Seedless grapes, decent pint of porter in Toronto, DVD, memory stick. Hologram concerts of singers departed. Wow factor for sure, mixed with bitter nostalgia *beloved stars not there!* Truly prefer watching Elvis movies, I'd seen five when first released, queued by Stella cinema in Rathmines. Loved them all. Fabulous Elvis gave us 31 movies!! Feel good times. Dedicating my 31 day summer month, rent a cottage by the sea. Replay happy times, on my bucket list. Get distracted when Elvis was King and Beach Boy in the charts. Being young with **Wide World Waiting**. Then music good as it was going to get.

Teleporting Books

Books beamed in air! Seems preposterous still takes the cake and donuts. Big prize for those inventors. Charles Dickens words travelling, speed of light! Fun and games! Although young ones now finding Dickens hard to relate. Books *beaming* at 8000 pages limit, Darwin's masterpiece mere 576 pages!

Project Gutenberg (1971) typed 'The Declaration of Independence' into a computer, same year first e-mail sent between two computers. Now book *unavailable* in the store? Five minutes later busy reading, by magic or miracle. No trickery! Catapulted with not a word scrambled.

*Well now we have it.
Amazing but grateful.*

See where I am coming from raised in Dublin. Perilously weak but much valued BBC signal, fortunate only East coast folks. Some afternoons signal obliterated, X ray machine in local hospital 'twas said. Really?

*On edge with interruptions,
watching Blue Peter.*
Delaying home work.
Stressed teenage times.*

*Flag hoisted, ships ready to sail.

Gab Gift Gone

Strolling trodden paths vigilant avoid passers eye contact. Now so lacking recent sports small talk. No time for chewing the cud encounters, uncomfortable beyond customary nod. Seeing neighbour approach unsettling, such imposing 'Hello'!

"How about them Leafs neighbour?"

"Arra sure it's another winter coming on the door step again so soon! I've bags full ready for pick up. Hard this garden work on the ole back. These days. Should cut trees if they let me! Fat chance of that. Eh?"

Leaf piles gathered in strict regulated sturdy paper sacks.

"Naw man hockey, the Leafs?"

"Ah sure only watch soccer.

What ye think?"

Man irritated, observed he was sorry we'd ever set eyes. I'd got nothing for him. Exasperated wave as he shuffled off. Stranger in strangers land, even with TV width of a car hard to see that puck. Well clad Goalies do a great job. Need to watch by slow-mo only takes forever! I stopped wearing summer tee shirt with baseball logo. Definite conversation starter.

Same Dublin town,

Gay Byrne, Terry Wogan!

Me no gift of the gab.

Knew Toronto Maple Leafs not won Stanley's Cup since 1968. That year Man U first English club to win the European Cup. George Best scored! With Shay Brennan and Tony Dunne. Back when I really cared. That goal is on Youtube. Shay's first match (1958) was United first game after Munich, he scored twice that night! Become more *pal-atable* indulging conversation in amenable hostelryes. Resonance when adults copious imbibing piston arms in tune. Rare given parsimonious drink consumption of natives in Northern parts.

"Don't like the taste."

"Never developed needs for it."

"Fierce expensive."

*"Haven't touched a drop nigh on 40 year."
"You having a second pint? No but really ...?"
Lots of such blab, blab.
Chewing the cud lacks interest!*

Rarely encounter wild swan Gaels, occasional Brits
imbibing. Strangely awkward Paddy bee invading their hive, by
happenstance not invitation. Good on them, never
requesting *taste* of 'what's on tap'. Great lads! My
loss. Different vibe than back in London.

*Okay put one foot wrong,
(perhapsing two)
Caledonia Cup cheers for Scotland!
Why? Not bothered either way?
BTW for the record,
never ordered a 'black and tan'.*

Boomers Last Lap (1946 – 1954)

Hey one day we'll not be here, tickers expire. Few get the
'Centenarian telegraph'. Body a loaner like bowling alley shoes,
snorkels in Aruba, tux for those weddings. Restaurant umbrella
nicked with pouring stair rods, so owner drenched. Phew!

*Ode to Boomers
smartest cohort ever,
we had fruits in winter.
Then enhanced the nest,
like those weaver birds.
Ma's womb hearts started.
I'd feel an ant in my shoe.*

Electric pump patent to Harry Pickett, 1894, so obvious right under our nose. Our world more than bread and a circus. Dickens (RIP 1870) died before Faraday, Tesla, Edison, Wright brothers, Turing, oodles of smart boomers. Dark nights only for candles stuck in a drawer. Henry VIII died at 55 obese, covered by pus filled boils, gout, leg wound ulcerated, likely with scurvy! Today maybe get to ninety.

*Our fathers
invented talkies with colour!
No need wallow in 1800 grim stories.*

Videos of sixties comedians (departed), seem out of touch, while Marx brothers remain hilarious.

*Boomers now at the 'Airport',
get set to jet out from here.
Life sentences mostly served,
best bits done and dusted.
Preparing excuse for St Peter.
Legacy? Family photo albums.
Not discarded phones with pics.
Soon buried deep as Pompeii.*

*Bucket list filled by sands of time.
Never got to that reef in Oz?
You've had your lot. Matey.
Now whine and wine afternoons.
Maybe swing by here again!
Milky Way's pale blue dot.
Next door to Andromeda.*

Look I made points, some ramble and roll. Not ‘*meandering*’,
quick enough! Not the shambles. Now all busy like Edison?

*Monitor kids dealing
with pets on last legs.
Maybe coming for you.
Of course not yet!
But end of the day ?
When what's next distraction?*

I do not want to be a hologram at the Christmas table drinking
hologram beer eating pudding. Just saying for real.

*Life' not understood.
Except by atheists.
They know it all.
So?*

Martin Luther hammered his thesis outside on a Church door.
I need to be on side of the Angels.

Unfathomable

Most brilliant species not human, that accolade conferred on single cells, they invented life. 'First cell' mastered technology! 'A' plus! Seeded life on cooled earth, arrived armed with latent futuristic abilities, available for constant useful updates. Not seen last of that. Smart cells loaded with faraway plans, shape shifters brandishing flexible gene expression machines. Unimaginable cells formed flora and fauna, heartbeats all about. Such achievements imprinted in our chromosomes.

One Family at hearths core.

Differentiate, procreate 'life', gave us legs to stand on. Scientists endeavouring to decipher mechanisms stashed inside micro-balloons that run as clockwork. Physics swot over 'Big Bang' while misunderstand 'begin'. Biology ponders twists of fate encouraged cell yokes to *be alive*. Cell life emerged ~3.8 billion years ago, 750 million years after Earth formed, sunlight ensured liquid water. Blue planet life blossomed, DNA helix ladder expanded gained extra steps that take us to the

stars. Cells fulfilling roles need us, planets with only single cell life fail to thrive, need stick together.

Bugs put life on the road.

Cells powered to change.

Cell mantra we'll own the joint.

Come on!

Waterfalls, snow topped mountains scenes carved by wind such beauty, waves on summer's day. Lonely beaches. Beautiful earth compared to desolate Mars. Waste sweetness on deserted air? Something amiss! First cell created with intricate knowledge sets about, co-ordinate plans, produce hundreds of proteins encoded from invented DNA! Lashing of coding genes make proteins, loads of different amino acids. They say deep-sea vents pump vital chemicals, sun with cosmic rays make stuff, rocks from space loaded get mixed in the ocean. Tiny bugs internal pathways proceed effectively infect world with life. Greatness of time! Army of tiny engineered protein machines running assembly lines of construction. Biology required in place before anything lives, somehow compelled-motivated to start 'life'. Lot to ask. Short times facing first cell, need duplicate pronto! What vision! Nothing willy-nilly, no time to second guess.

Driven intent inventing living things, inspired that way to go. Life created from scratch on every Goldilock planet? Or some common denominator?

More happening then we'll ever know.

Where biology know-how came from,

in times before birth of first cell?

Somehow that DNA helix!

Prior to cells existing?

Cart before the horse?

Of course, of course.

Simply put duplication requires many proteins to work in sync, flexible avoid obsolescence, drive life's destiny. How we've tolerated spontaneous 'rocks to life', see no 'designer evidence' as babbling doubting Thomas pontificate! Much they gloss over, even when all that exists is evidence. They do not understand how they can remember. Their explanations how first cells appeared are simplistic, unrealistic. Prognosticate using their brains, knowing jack diddly squat how it works. Their message 'steer to Darwin' safe ground wild wolves to poodles. Sniff sweet roses watch those prickles. Survival plan of the canny flower.

Not heard voice yapping between their ears?

Their weak opinions running on fumes.

My suspicion whole caboodle not random.

Life crafted with intent required 'planning'.

No accident.

Atheists are wrong.

God made us.

QED

Matter and life symbiotic.

Big Bang wrought for biology.

Universe creation intent to populate.

Not left to chance.

They say cells formed from primordial soup. Conditions right, passage of time! Soup full of life-y goodness! Such malarkey. Get out of here with that! Cell technology, life's

brick, visualized by electron microscope reveal the miracle. Take a look.

*Created itself! All by it self!
Unaided' this activity would be impossible.
No Creator, all 'natural' like.
Yeah, that's not the ticket.*

Process of serendipity you believe? Suspect even naysayers harbour private doubts. Cell learning willy-nilly to divide? Beyond belief. Crystallography technology, X rays show how detailed proteins are, hundreds of amino acids precisely organised each twisted up each like customized pretzels. Unforgiving with errors, Cystic Fibrosis caused by one deleted amino acid in protein of 1,480 amino acids. Prior to existing something constructed helix DNA, created codes to manufacture proteins, even bugs need loads of precision workings. Single cell bacteria, hereabouts for 3.5 billion years, run sophisticated operations, can double in 20 minutes. Okay we cloned Dolly the sheep in 1986. Daring or foolish to declare 'no Creator', when not knowing enough. Understanding complexities of bacteria nailed down operation still out of our depth in their miniscule world. Protein's no beef slab, their explanation just hard to swallow. Components needed, wall membrane, cytoplasm, enzymes, ribosomes, polysaccharides, DNA in a nucleus (sometime no nucleus). Cells can contain 3–4 million proteins, made from 600 to 6000 different proteins. E. coli has 4288 different proteins, function of 30% unknown.

'Genesis' is Logical

“Let the earth put forth vegetation: plants yielding seed, and fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it. Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the dome of the sky.”

Pope Benedict XII in 1336 issued Papal bull Benedictus Deus stating souls go to the kingdom of God, from this life to next. Belief souls survive biology indicative of unknowable powers within us. There are 2.4 billion Christians. Five million each year go to Lourdes, 1.5 million to shrine of Knock. We can read of multiple sincere believable near-death experiences. Not hallucinations. Catholic school, parish altar boy armed with their beliefs. Thank God I grew up in Ireland, with knowledge teaching of an existence beyond.

*Biology ‘Big Bang’ first single cell.
Some-how first cell figured out
by it’s solo to duplicate exact copy.
Smart cell! What motivation!
Ingenuity and energy.
We don’t know how they do that.
For so long.*

Brain

T. Rex catapulted in smithereens to space when that rock hit, fossils remaining serve as a warning, main destiny promote ‘Goodness’ in the Galaxy. Being a contributing neighbour that time has come, Voyager now 15 billion miles away. Need to prove we’ll arrive in peace, with our record? Human minds followed to unleash storms of creativity. Brain cells live a life time, blood cells produce 200 billion red cell each day, 10 billion white cell, 400 billion platelets each day. Our minds formed in

the womb, developed by 60 trillion neuronal connections as adults. Human brain with ~2.5 million gigabytes of memory (amazed we know?), created from fat, blood vessels and nerve cells with ~40% water! Human bodies contain 36 trillion cells to function! Go-to material for brain creation are cells, meshed into an internal space less than a GAA football. Now likely best times for brains with nutritious diets. Powered by electric energy generated from 'ions flowing'! Our '*brain voice*' talks all day long. Spent a year in a gaeltach so *likely* changed that language for a while. As bilinguals fill that storage twice as quick, appreciate never getting fluent with Latin. Although Nikola Tesla spoke eight languages.

Memories retrieved to our mind's eye! Now burdened by cat, dog and parrot videos, explains some memory falters. Neuroscience describes 'hard problem of consciousness' which lies beyond our understanding, that place even chalk-dust maths cannot enter. No point enumerating all brains ability, preaching to a choir and we'd be here all day. Senses, emotions, eager to hook up, procreate. Enabling history, monuments, writing, libraries, museums, movies. Brain size quadrupled in six million years now shrunk by 15% last 100,000 years. Movie or books not as interesting if viewed previous. 'Roundhay Garden' first movie (136 years ago) gets stored in the noggin, 'Au Clair de la Lune' first song recording (1860). Estimates are 500,000 movies have been made. High school class photo we recall names, if played rugby even where they sat. Point of interest deaf people think in pictures of objects. Research now predicts involvement of a quantum world for cerebral/cognitive function, 'Life' defined not only by molecules. Einstein tossed his hands up with understanding quantum entanglement being '*spooky action*'.

Brain cells use quantum dynamics!

Experiencing different realm of reality.

Now that's mind blowing.

Using human brain we've invented memory storage devices, live in space, sent robots beyond Pluto, landed a probe by parachute on Titan. Cloned mammals, *first* paper *copier* appeared in 1959. Abilities possible from innate cell properties. Skate, ski, swim, ride a bike, memorise songs using those neurons. Neil Armstrong's brain over-riding panicked electronics in Apollo lander, final 30 minutes cell-technology bravery landed first men on the moon. Exist from mind of our Creator, populate our galaxy motivation for our life. Dinosaurs had 150 million years, careered off with giant size and focus on slaughter. Largest dinosaur was 130 feet long, still failed to measure up. T Rex brain size ~350 grams, intelligence like chimps. Suggestion that Stenonychosaurus perhaps to evolve intelligence, being small with a large brain. Never had that chance. Galaxy stars recently discovered possibly with Dyson spheres harvesting energy, megastructures surrounding stars. Clock ticking, tread careful, asteroids could come clean our clock. Some time.

Straw that breaks a camel's back, maybe the final straw.

Wisdom of God manifested in works of creation.

Inventing life, every brave creature.

Hard to comprehend.

Adolescent brain 80 percent developed, fully by ~25 years. Embryo brain development begins at week 5. Nerve cells proliferate by 15 million per hour, at seven month fetus emits brain waves (*'oscillating electrical voltages'*). Brain conceived entirely by 'evolution' begger's believing. Brain cheats, makes

poison, plot crimes, sings hymns in the choir, guides most wonderful people, makes smart bombs if it pleases. Navigate ships, build coal and uranium mines. Motherload for good or evil. Each brain most amazing yoke on the planet. How many species have we driven to extinction? Not distinguished ourselves no better than dinosaurs?

*Human brains,
harnessed to spread life in the Galaxy.
Why we are here.
Lest history repeats, do not fail.
Dodo and Dino get the picture?
Otherwise!
Duck and cover when 'our' rock comes.*

*Next life lies before us.
Only the heart-beat away.
I ponder Eternity of the soul.
Why choose to exist in jail cells,
rather than escape that existence.
Live extreme poverty or slavery lives.
Call it a day, try again?
Not my business.
Likely why Holy Veil exists.
Between us.
Catch up on the flip side.*

Smartest *kids* on the block, we've gained slim biology glimmers, Neurobiologists realise much beyond their ken. How do we exist inside a brain?

Boomers

Our Astronaut tidy size made space travel possible. Richest activity times, we've been to other continents, journey once only confined for big shots or sailors. Compared to in days long gone by country folk, with childers off in America. Life of a sheep herder like villager Gabriel in 'Far From the Madding crowd'. Ancient summers in Connemara recall around bonfire repetition of ancestral tales, by the thatched cottage no TV or radio. Our libraries stacked at no cost to borrow! Gathering precious legacy knowledge, with learning from schools. In our minds eye flash to 'see' people. Like magic? Memories dormant for decades retrieved. In our minds eye see parents that have passed. Recognize oodles of people like Groucho, Joyce, Michael Collins, Mac Liammóir, Maureen Potter, Patrick Pearse, Dev, Jackie Gleason, Marilyn, Yeats, Maureen O'Hara, Lucy, Jimmy O'Dea. Now knowing lots more about them, Borstal boy Brendan, JFK that day in Wexford. Charlie Chaplin, born in 1889, still makes us laugh. TV fugitive Richard Kimble, and a one-armed man. Phil Silvers, Get Smart. Brain shoves it in, bits and drabs. Books from authors long gone. Moses in Ten Commandments film (1956). School reports. Loads more work for the hippocampus and other brain bits. Brain cells get loaded with music that remains for ever. We altered reality with LSD, once mostly booze, LSD constructed in a lab. Wake from afternoon slumber, wondering where am I? Brain rescues fills missing bits. Quicker than electronics with annoying updates. Going good getting about solar system grand style, 12 lads landed on the moon! Sailed seven seas, now our sea of Tranquility. Still carrying 'what good is that for' band wagon. Life requires more than procreating, foraging and sleeping. Other species no knowledge of history getting stuck in cul-de-sac alley. 'Svalbard Global Seed Vault' facility for world's crop

storage on Norwegian island of Spitsbergen. Pride and joy,
right direction. Keeping ahead!

Worms

Brain neurons in worm commenced a billion years ago. Ragworm's with human-like neurons, indicates when we all began. Round worm *Caenorhabditis elegans* with $\sim 20,000$ genes, humans require a similar number! Wow! Still a work in progress. Apparently we share 50% of genes with bananas. Explains a lot.

Life just happens!
Yeah that's the trick.
Successful tactic! What they spout!
Wait!
Only baloney.

Brains do not relate to us how they function, only pawns in this game. Now our understanding as Columbus discovering a Caribbean island, not yet *Americas*.

Sentient beings 'Brain Voice' yapping,
from few cell pounds.
From whence it came?
For ever soundly silent.

Nice having our Creator watching.
As we are living our life.
Thankful for everything
and life here-after.
As Promised.
Miracles infused our soul in the womb.
Free will lived in shadow of the Supreme.

Our dreams? Visual cortex messing about having a laugh,
nothing else to do when sleeping in the dark.

Senses experienced.

Too spicy for me!

Perfume smells good!

New songs?

Heard that before!

Saw that film already.

Songs by Percy French

born in 1854!

Sound Wonderful.

To our ears.

Animals

Hairy chimps closest competitors, nothing like us despite often repeated sharing 99% of DNA. Imagine langered chimps on high stools in pubs upset at closing time. Losing it when packed up, delivered back to the Park. Biting lumps from merry plump faces, publicans flabbergasted stressed with the likes. Other than parrots and crows often under-whelmed with ingenuity of animals. Divergent in development, humans climbed trees, got hairless swimming from islands, distinguished from other primates. Farmers tilled fields, we built supermarkets, aisles detergent stacked at eye level. Giraffes went for long neck anatomy, chomping juicy leaves at top, requires heart at 2 feet, weighs ~20 pounds. Bizarre contortions to drink water. Such neck thinking they were 'bee's knees'. Woolly mammoths got dispatched on Neanderthal's barbecues, as our brains excelled.

'Conversations' now reported with whales, one trick ponies likely all about fish. Better them in oceans, more space for us.

Darwin

Far be it for me putting Charley in his place, passage of time takes care of that. Don't gift to Darwin for what he had little knowledge. Evolution and origin of life being two kettles of fish.

Universe created for life.

Not come by chance.

Best we get that straight.

Need Guardian Angels,

To guide us.

Onward.

Lucky Life Times

Atheists ask us ‘if there is a God that cares why life so hard?’ Our blessed souls already gifted with life on the planet, why expect any cake walk? Immense generations of unheralded ancestors lived for us to be here, perhaps we’ll have great hooley craic *hereafter*. I’d guarantee none had better lives than we enjoy. This green earth requires we better hustle for a crust. Prefer permanent fun time existence with Amusement arcades and wheel barrow races? Regimental meals on time, after lounge about in Eden’s orchard! No pressure. While this world challenging restless minds to grow, be inquisitive, achieve potential, no maze but loads of beaten tracks. Guided by tablets from Moses, Commandments no suggestions. Many hiccups but human life trajectory gets better, our stairway moving upwards builds on giant shoulders. Dispatched here required to mature, may enjoy life, tough gigs get fires going, catch fish, roast beef, search earth’s ends for valued pickings. Treasured stuff secreted all about. Miners digging nook and crannies underground, such brave efforts freed us from poverty burdens. Some fruits of labours invested in hospitals, grasp basic understanding of disease. For us busy engines handled hardest labour. Just in time! Hauling made easy, possible for us to galivant about not spend days dog tired. In 1698 Thomas Savery patented a steam pump, 1886 Carl Benz filed a patent for ‘vehicle powered by a gas engine.’ Thanks lads! Complex environments where silver more useful than ornamental gold, one hair follicle requires 20 types of cells. We’re not made easy, crafted by miracles. No one of us choose to live in previous times.

*For eons even,
top Brass plagued by painful maladies,
terrible teeth no fluoride, failure to floss.
Henry 8 suffered 'leg rotting' from jousting.
'Can no one rid us of troublesome pains?'*

5000 years ago

In 1991 a jackpot find, Ice Man preserved from copper age! Ötzi frozen, strayed up Alp mountains perhaps banished by villagers. X rays located arrow embedded in his shoulder, his head injury not from skiing. Dark lungs from smokey wood fires, pollen with clues determined his native habitat. Clad in animal skins, boots and socks shaped by grass, so once made hay while sun shone. Nothing to envy his soul, did not win life's time lottery. Adorned by 'medical' tattoos. Gander at stomach contents every morsel tells a story. Now with 800 research reports we know lots.

On heels of frozen iceman some things bright and dandy. Tube with red paste, dated to 4000 years ago discovered in Iran. Lipstick made using recipe similar as today! Also results recently from Neanderthal pendant, crafted from elk's tooth, hole cut for a bracelet. They extracted out skin and sweat DNA from female, worn 20,000 years ago! Wow!

3000 years ago

Ancestors not hesitant or afraid of grueling hard work! No choice for getting things done. So much wonderment achieved by loads of lads pulling ropes, hope they achieved happiness with arduous lives. Resources spent on glorious constructions. We'd not long survive such ancient worlds, cutting and transporting enormous rocks. Men's life hauling 100 ton rocks, a world powered most by muscle. Facing years of brutal hard labour, no escape, graven tolls on body and

soul. Even those activities on tiny Easter island. Obsessed transporting ginormous rocks, no hill too high, no cranes just push and carry on ever elevating hills. Having mercy labourers brief life soon worn out. Thank goodness for fossil fuels and hardy truck drivers advancing this world each day. Many continents consumed building magnificent pyramids, do not declare in a rut. Loads of Pyramids world over still with us, Egypt, Sudan, China, Americas. Some with ceremonial steps, others sealed provide no entrance. Among most fabulous Chichen Itza in Mexico, built in 1000 AD. Grand palaces grafted from stone blocks, sights to behold with awe. Now they say most workers not slaves, perhaps volunteers? Magnificent Machu Pichu elevation 7970 feet, built in 1500. Needing hundreds slogging, created for an Inca emperor. On Giza plateau Great Pyramid sealed for thousands of years, rocks of 80 tons encased Kings Chamber. Incredible efforts total weight of 6 million tons. Sarcophagus in Kings chamber seals it's purpose, placed while under construction.

This 'tomb chamber' for transformation of Pharaoh to union with light of the sun. Although recent report claims Sarcophagus would fit through existing entrance. Great Pyramid used once? Well Moon rockets used one time to put lads on the lunar surface. Pyramid entrance concealed, nobody entered until ninth century. Cairo Governor excavated a tunnel, after thousands of years King and Queen chambers entered. Recent theories this Pyramid was used to generate electricity, combined with intriguing outlines of glass bulbs engraved in the Dendera temple complex. Engravings of figures with 'light bulbs', and no trace of soot from candles. If so what happened to that technology? No one knows until Aliens show up with videos.

Quarry master carve more blocks!
Keeps men busy and tired.
What about Obelisks?
Cleo Needle by the Thames.
Since 1878.
At 200 tons.

Stonehenge

Hardy Neolithic men accepted no limitations. Recent report Center Altar stone (at six tons), transported from Scotland 5000 years ago. Pulled overland on a wooden sleigh, a years journey! Hope heroes well fed, fortified village to village, nights spent needing strong brews, task ahead to complete. Rest of megalithic Stonehenge quarried a stone throw away in Wales, impressive with each block at ~25 tons. Must have felt great pride when seeing Stonehenge in it's prime! These days appreciate we are spoilt!

80 AD : Rome Colosseum

Pope Benedict anointed arena 'blessed place' where Christians slaughtered. Rome's 'bread and circus' stadium, seated capacity ~ 50,000. '*Entertainment*' presented not suitable for likes of our eyes, ~400,000 died in 400 years of gladiatorial fights. We have nothing to compare, except war. Some events thousands of animals, elephants, rhinos, giraffes, crocodiles killed over several weeks. We'd be batty mental cases watching that horrific slaughter. We who rescue abandoned puppies and kittens and tiny struggling birds, do feel sorry for skinny foxes trying to make a living in tidy neighbourhoods. That stadium must be haunted. Was it lead in wine from the pewter? Executions where condemned got pushed out naked facing being savaged by lions. Yikes! The plan designed to rapidly vacate spectators

described as ‘vomitoria’. Rome’s Empire fell in 476 A.D. arrived soon enough. Zoo above in the park enough for likes of us.

Hayday Life, 1500 A.D.

In the monastery busy preserving culture and knowledge, solitary young seminarian Monk in Glen Da loch doodling copying scriptures. Perhaps wistful watching out the window milk maids pass to and hither. How would he not? Catch their waving smiles as always laugh together in Ireland’s garden. Mental escape moments from austere life, dawn matins reading Psalms and Scripture, mid-day meager meal of fish and vegetables. Talk only if necessary.

*Most desirable creatures!
Exposing youth lusty wants,
held back at arm’s length.
Well only barely.*

“Full well knowing ‘*all just for show*’. Undercover of dark there will be real kissing/hugging down the fields. Oh more of that galore! I’m no fool come confession time they’ll sing their guarded tunes. Many heartaches and emotions created down by them hay stacks. All seeking love like Leprechaun’s gold, before freed and head off on Dublin’s road. Only once had my eye on a shy one, only fantasy wanting to approach, then confuse in celibate spartan habits? My dilemma knowing none can be for me. Now when chosen desired hermit life.”

*Young lad eyeing bewitching Wicklow girls.
Stricken with visions on country boreens.
Back focus on ink with vellum.
Cared to make no mistake.*

*His evening snack awaits.
Rye bread, wine 'Schoppen'.
Not eat every day in Lent.*

Boffins Huge Impact

Handful of scientists enhanced this world, bestow resources and they'll burrow and ferret. Took us from candles to electric chandeliers. What else you need?

*'What good it's for?'
Dumb query from no nothings,
best stay quiet.
Youse never learn?
Live by light of moon?
Well good enough!
While sleeping.*

Electricity Photons.

In 1880 Dublin Electric Light company installed street lights, after brightened inside dwellings. By magic! Now with us being wired, curled up in cosy nests, no place like our home! Perilous few understand 'generate' electricity, '*electrons*' in copper wire? Whatever they have to do, dam rivers, burn oil, coal and have nuclear power over on Wexford's sore point. What if electricians all got shocked in one swoop sent off to attend Heaven's Gate. Perilous times! Then what? Build pyramids some might say. Having no wires I'd hand crank windup ancient gramophone turntable. Cope with Heavy metal bands, Rock and Roll would shiver that oaken timber.

To the Moon, Aluminium!

Apollo's Saturn rocket constructed of aluminium, one third density of steel. Metal discovered in 1825 by Orsted and

Wohler, once scarce more value than ‘*noble*’ gold. In nature aluminium exists only as *salts*. Major production started in 1856, right on time as Orville and Wilbur Wright born in 1867 and 1871. Connections! In 1915 Junkers J1 plane fuselage used aluminium alloys. Aluminium cans appeared in 1956, beer cans now request be ‘*responsible*’.

Okay I'll try.

Tastes so good!

Answer for Fermi Paradox: High gravity planet lacking Aluminium. Rockets doomed. No weightless floating about for them.

Boomers: 1946 -1964

Bikini invented by engineer Louis Réard in 1946 enabled females do their bits for emergency cloth shortage after WW2. Of note world population then 2.5 billion, now ~8 billion on a hotter planet. In total 76 million boomers born in the USA, now ~2.6 million buying the farm each year as we fall by the wayside. Irish boomers lived best of times holding fortunate if under rated Green passport. Count waves and ways Spiddal to Sandycove. Our gorgeous island, 4,000 churches provide guidance for souls, 22 Universities, Institutes of Technology & Colleges, 6000 pubs solace for those heart *brakes*. We escaped horrors, other countries brutalized consumed by war. Pain suffering agony families for generations with U.S. brave young soldiers military casualties of Vietnam and Korea wars. In our time most wee islands never send sons to foreign war. Only draft from our front doors as many left on one way tickets. Keep my Leaving cert results stored on the ‘Cloud’, not want palaver of having to repeat. If I return. Perhaps reincarnation returns *experienced* souls. Restless souls could high

tail and find easier pickings away with better strolls in the park. If you can't make it in Dublin don't fret, over all our best education hacks it anywhere. We locate Tristan Da Cunha on a map, Darwin capital of Oz, can spell 'artichoke' in a heartbeat but not consume. Island of Montserrat celebrates St Patrick's day, Toronto did not until 1988. Ould antagonist England provides a reliable get-away, still be wary lots could go wrong.

Remember over there

26 county opinion's of Royal family?

Best hold your peace.

Practice cheers for Brits in World Cup.

Bunting up for Royal celebrations.

Not only plain sailing.

Look not without hardships, no remote control for small TVs, any colour long as black/white. Posh kids first got that control with wire attached. Three TV channels in Dublin, missed the show maybe a summer repeat. Not much actual live football. Still loved it day by day. Now a world encumbered by 700 languages, absurd with new knowledge booming. Fortunate we have bearla, with too many other tongues wagging, time to deep six deliver their Slán-lead, now having better fish to fry. Brains over burdened by Gaelic and Latin. Italy rejected Latin in 750 AD, pushy Latin lobby persisted in Irish schools. For ages.

Visio nocturna

ceteris paribus

factum dictum.

Know what I'm sayin?

No one does.

Something twigged when Latin Mass ended in 1965, Latin deemed *not essential* in schools after 1970. Too late for my Inter Cert headaches dealing with plights of Caesar and Virgil. Never since scant Latin useful. 'Land of Saints and Scholars' curriculum once stuck as needle on a 78 deep shellac scratched groove. Trauma of Latin exam!

'Essential fluent ancient languages and Shakespeare Folios.'
Beware trip over tumbleweeds.

Blighty ferry. After hook up a partner with a beneficial passport increase life's options. Every life eventually leaves skeleton lying about, I've no wish to be interned. Cremate with ashes thrown in Lake Ontario, travel down St Lawrence, carry back on the Gulf stream to Erin's isle. No tyrant in my time maybe get grassed by malcontents suffer some Purgatory few years. Life intended well for me, I'd arrived in Dublin best of times.

Foreign Missions Wrought Advances

Forever sing praises of clergy women and men from our wee island, schooled wonderfully by our very best. They went abroad to educate.

Ink nib pen scratch on paper most powerful tool!

Irish missionary legacy in many countries provide valuable education, offering support in developing countries. Pupil with Dominican Nuns, great start, ahead of life's game.

Irish Clergy schools paved with knowledge so fortunate we were. Catholic missions served in 160 countries, served the world over. Our brave missionaries increased worlds literates,

now with this world connected by billions. Heroic brave Irish clergy dedicating decades educating away in neglected foreign places. Our proud export. Present dispensing knowledge better when Monks guarding library doors, restricted access custodians.

Cherished possession 'Book of Kells', rarely read unless attend daily at Trinity as they turn the page. In their time *of course* needed preventing some access was essential, otherwise all and sundry borrow our Book of Kells?

Good grief!

'Owe shilling tariff with late return. Me brother took it off up to Dublin, has a fella in Donnybrook making copies. Don't worry.'

Earlier Boomer days

'Surely remember worse times', said me Grandmother dishing hot tea in the saucer in Ranleigh. Five years prior I'd spent golden summer in her daughter's womb, nourished by bountiful harvest of Wicklow fruits.

Summer best time for unborn babies developing those days. Prior to avocado, kiwi, mango arriving in winter months from warmer places. Horoscopes (and DOB) held due significance. Also in my time bus fares still required ha'penny, easy living! Farthings only ditched in 1962.

Later wonderful life better and better..

Country Girls snuck up on us, they'd gathered in bedsits, seeking romance. After spent pleasant Saturday evenings on couches in those flats, 'Among the Wicklow Hills' frequently playing on the turn table.

Hey!

What happens in Ranelagh stays in my Ranelagh times.

Being 19 years.

Sat at a table Dodder river view, great grub and the pint, flush with few quid from odd jobs.

“So tell me all about you dying to know.” She claimed.

“Not much.”

Permitted to take notes.

“I scratched up my bike, blue streak! Postman for Christmas, right keen on science, now a sack to fall back on. Sleep in bedroom with a brother, I’ve sisters, great stamp album. With Stanley Gibbons catalog my India stamp could be worth a few bob. Currently trying to read Galileo Galilei notes from translation! Wrote in mirror image to confuse Cardinali, otherwise boil in oil like theologian John Servatus. Reckon it was lead in wine pewter jugs made medieval times that brutal!” Confusing the lass, with she glancing about with patience (only wishing) I’d shut up.

“At school we’ve hours of choir with hymns, Nuns loved my soprano! They’d bring over schoolboys to the church then all together with ‘Ave Maria’. Magical acoustics from ancient ceilings, poor boys losing that as teenagers! Castrato boys in Italy how dreadful!”

Feeling double pain all the way. Never recover.

“I’ve recordings so divine!” Closed her eyes. “Listen I hear them now.”

Something orgasmic occurring and she softly sang.

First year University lads, former high school bums on stools cheering. Enjoyed her moment took a bow.

“Here every week.” I announced feeling proud for her.

Alas week later she was nowhere to be seen. I’d wanted to live this life beneath the Sugar Loaf not galivanting through the

colonies. Beneath there suffered heart brakes. With doddering left only with road to Blighty, throwing pebbles over ocean waves. No more skimming Dodder stones.

*After not only Wicklow Girls felt so smitten.
So keep moving!*

When ‘Improvement’ took a breather.

Lot came to my head when watching again that pen float about in prescient ‘2001’ movie, realizing we’d been to that moon in 1969. Then NASA rescued an Apollo space ship with three astronauts from quarter million miles, virtually no air to breath. Few more trips then gave up, now fear never see such likes again? Ever since stayed put in earth’s orbit, what happened Apollo’s powerful spirit? Saturn V remains only launch vehicle taking humans beyond low Earth orbit. We are using planet resources like nobodies business, must run out. Time to get going!

*2001 rolled around, came and went.
By then seems given up the ghost.
No higher than over Rainbows?*

Amazing sea faring species take whatever we find, now no time for hesitation. Pirates of old had the ‘Right Stuff’. Set sail in the blue beyond like Vikings, Captain Cooke and Columbus, Saint Brendan and Pacific islanders. Fearless Black Beard and gung ho spirit team what we need. Move on from Mother Earth, whole Solar system planets sit waiting? That’s all for us cresting on fabulous times!

Don’t have Andromeda Yobs coming down the pike, planting their flags. Emerging from some black hole trick. Claiming this whole joint.

*Gold digger
finders keepers,
losers weepers.
Well fair play.
When our evolution
stopped.*

High time astronauts got back on rockets head out beyond,
forget cold rocky Mars. Only 120 day cruise to Venus. Russian
Valeri Polyakov onboard Russia's Mir space station for 437 days
in 1994. People have been in the ISS tin can for year and more,
Peggy Whitson had 655 cumulative days.

*Yes!
We can live in space.*

Space umbrellas cast shade cool down Venus, imagine sparking
solar panels on Venus! Atmosphere with wind power mostly
CO2. Boffins can 'terra-form' now! NASA's MOXIE
technology made oxygen on Mars from CO2 present in Mars
air. Venus the golden goose, lavish loads on space technology
not dumb wars. Come on, we've moved on! Humanity needs
'proud to be from the third planet' boost! Like the whole planet
celebration summer in 1969!

Go Again!

Improvement: Other Lives

*Let's no creature left behind.
We've learned so much, others
benefit from vast knowledge.
Accumulated.*

Pet turtles relaxed, hampered in that obsolete cumbersome shell. Watched a lovely video, turtle on a skate board whizzing about having time of it's life. Shows human heart in the right place. Horse hooves get clipped, after shod with shinny shoes. Some pet dogs love watching TV. Time to give binoculars to meercats help their ardent sentry on guard observations. Slightly alter skunk biology get more pleasant 'phew', likely easy peasey. Ship polar bears to Antarctica, rubber flippers fitted for penguins. Making an even-Steven match up. Fun and games to watch, but probably a cruel step too far. Better leave that well enough alone, *never that twain shall meet*. Have hyenas watch wacky videos in their natural habitat, see as they'll laugh themselves silly. Ladders and ropes urgent required for perilous cliff climbing 'Crowned lemurs' in Madagascar. It's the right thing to do. We have long standing 'Dairy' agreement with cows, lush grass and barn with shelter from winter cold. Get pints of milk to deliver. Bulldogs have muzzles to safely mingle. Parrots as street buskers amuse for pecan nuts. Monkeys as organ grinders. Baby sharks shipped to kindergarten schools learn to stop biting. Cats do their own thing.

Movement Backward.

Look!

In 1970's Dublin City gifted with 60 excellent public toilets, by 1990s there were nine. Now none. An incomprehensible nightmare when facing long walks back from down town pub. Paris has 400 public toilets all over the city, now 'City of the Loo.' If I'd friends I'd well be warning them, this Baile ata Cliat. How publicans let this happen?

Boomers are Leaving

Robots may be needed.

Boomers now petering out having arrived in euphoric blasts, now teetering on shaky legs. Got by ration free, post WW2 instead had bestowed an abundance. Now world waiting to see back of them, while boomers dwell over their dwindling summers. Trying to make best while approaching their onrushing demise. Some will go reach 100 years, don't fool yourself it's very few. Read a daily news, our famous ones dropping like flies. Birth, live a little and it's over. Sure what's wrong with that? Take a bow boomers, you had it that easy in clover.

Je ne regrette rien!

Sorry now if our parting glass has runneth over. Every hazard along the way our lot dived right in. Latest is a doozy and gaining head of steam. Now educated that plastics are not like rocks being pounded to sand making a beach. They form seas of microplastic poison, great ocean garbage patches, *an ocean gyre*. Also these same contaminants will sink to bottom of the ocean for no good intent, with chemicals leaching.

Earth gone wrong, oh count our ways.

Not dust to dust with them yokes.

Likely been bane of many a young planet.

Is anyone rooting for us on blue Goldilocks?

We are as toddlers in kindergarten.

Still learning with ways to go.

Swotted loads about microplastics, right dickens of a problem. Once they appeared molded *en masse* filled by great expectations enjoyed for ages, now it's hard time at bleak house. Extravagant use of polymers our latest 'chicken little' problem. Reports with 'wolf' warning cries, when observing microplastics in brain, enter perhaps thru' the nose. Dire straits and with no one changing habits. As rats followed pied piper we followed a plastic piper. Then reading of plastic shards in testicles, possibly driving sperm count down.

Warning!

Canaries in the minds are chirping.

Don't say we did not change the world.

Forever down the ages overpowered by loads of tiny yokes. Once disease seemingly coming from nowhere. Blame something. We've declared war on bugs, yeast, bacteria, virus, mad cow prions. Takes an age to get handle with all that, yet we fought back! Won a few battles. Still at war with their endlessly adjusting polished armour. Perhaps relax about global warming now if doomed with micro-plastics, sure that's likely a bigger fish to fry. We'd finally abandoned brutal harpoons now we've prepared a plastic ocean. I've ploughed thru' science papers, including Journal of Hazardous Materials, various books while making notes. Being of two minds surrounded by my personal acquired polymer collection. Oh they contain memories, my prized Statue of Liberty from visiting the big apple, a mermaid and a comical cat. Although prefer stone, wood and glass, plastic mementoes more available. They say if the house is burning people rescue family photo albums, I also value my souvenirs. Righteous boomers living flamboyant with plastics like there is no tomorrow. Hope you next lot do

better. Lucky full ramifications of future prediction damage delayed till I'm pushing up daises.

Why we always stupid, frankly often out of our depth? Way too shallow. Much unhelpful reptilian brain remains mingled in human skulls. Why not learn from nature? Only recycle! There to see! Nature not making billions of material poison for the planet, except by proxy by making us. Nature makes earth bloom and blossom! Remember *dust to dust*, not indestructible fragments. Earth always able to try again and rejuvenate.

*Quick clean table.
Look like better,
next customer come.*

Only solution make Earth hot like Mercury or upside down inside out moon Io. Only us alone in this place, no help come from solar system (a 'Copernican System'). No emergency call as no one around. Our lonely blue dot, making us custodians of third planet big mistake. Better to stay with elegant swans and pretty flamingoes, scarlet Ibis, pandas and bunny rabbits chewing on cabbage. Why inflict a world with us type of demons? Times will come needing smart robots run the joint, look after us as we get demoted by our follies.

*When look back.
Yeab looks grand!
Then make loads,
flawed Human philosophy.
Many times too much.*

I'm okay with the going, it's leaving that's hardest. Getting outa here before micros hit the fan. In ways we improved lots in this

world. Just this detritus pile you'll have to clean up. If possible? Ah sure anyway do your best.

Polymer Invasion

We asked for it! Parkesine in 1862 invented by Alexander Parkes, described as useful alternative to ivory. Then 1907 with Bakelite termed the first plastic, created by Leo Baekeland. Once we'd Shellac, made from '*Lac insects*', hundred uses each of 16 Billiard balls and 78 rpm records. Now with 9.2 billion tons of plastic polymers produced 1950 to 2017, in 30 years-time predicted to be over one billion tons/year. Plastics big flaw they break down to microplastic, then nanoplastic, painful slow decomposition rate if ever gone. While us boomers designed as fit to biodegrade.

Our innocent hippy yesterdays.

'Give me more!'

Peace with love!

World went on gaga spree with these materials unleashed. Rewarded with balloons, coloured footballs, water in bottles not *tap*, souvenir trinkets on shelves. Stylish shoes galore, light weight rain coats, cushioned furniture. Addictive success for that new car smell! Uniform of nylons with high heels. Progress! Christmas toys to medical instruments and everything else between, look inside any shop count the ways.

'Pour cold water.' or '*Hang on there a mo.'*

What even luddites not dared boller.

'Better do environmental test.'

Before let loose billions of this plastic stuff.

Unleash that kracken on our futures?

Organic chemistry one sneaky two headed snake! Too much, too far, too soon. Yeah, time and time again. Fun times but has consequences. We drove our kindergarten orb unguided at full speed ahead. Likely a place where civilizations transition, unstoppable demand *onward advance!* Avoid balloons at frivolous celebrations, one exception Eurovision winning! Can someone please make paper-mache balloons? Not ones with burning candles. No malarkey. Also need paper straws, while I'm set against drinking beer with them.

*Look it's something,
go suck it and see.*

Most plastics not recycled and apparently 50 kg plastic '*produced*' annually by each of us, we are all participants! No place for weaseling out. Boo-hoo nature disgusted with us, polluting a prized creation. Like throwing soup at a Van Gogh. Once Nature had high hopes for us, I feel that pain and shame. We got too smart in our rubber wellingtons. Mayhem will go on, more *abysses* in store. Better hope smart bots quickly emerging on line. No pointing fingers! We covered every planet corner cranny, delicate ocean creatures now shudder with our garbage in their neighbourhood.

Micro-Messing

Boomers changed the world, also tore a strip off the planet? What if all for nowt? Yeah so we damaged the world. That's why no one will miss us. Along the way encountering no bypass of dire pits, 'twas lots of threats inherited from our previous lot. Take a walk down on our abyss street. Lead in petrol, chlorofluorocarbons, DDT killing bald eagles and ospreys, ozone depletion harming penguins, constant anxiety of rocky chunks from space, ones that show up when

missed by early detection. Bio-plagues, tobacco smoke, asbestos, radioactive melt downs. LSD blowing minds, unleashed in the sixties. Psychedelic like no other time. Then diseases frozen in time stored in melting glaciers.

Hard putting lipstick on microplastics, only makes for scary readings. Boomers lives surrounded by polymers, our habits to frolic latest low lying fruits with abandon. Best intentions these synthetics enhanced our lives, tires and even roads plastic paved into asphalt, comfortable pillows no feathers, everyday trashing endless wrappers. No cares in the world. Brightened our lives with colour, compared to fellow ruffian's drab black and white existence of previous times. Die got cast in plastic, microplastic, nano-plastic even too small to see! Just never gone. Need atom colliders be sure to check. Still there! Never noticed sun rays deflected by microplastic in falling rain. Back to haunt and frighten us on our fertile earth.

So how on earth could we know?

Well you've heard clamour of climate warming and big space rocks too.

Some might say our generation went to dark side,

Should wear placard on the back

(David Copperfield style).

'Take care, they'll litter.

Like nobodies business.

Waster's Harbinger

Boomers 'Stewards of the Earth'. Ha! Pull the other one. Those few day music festivals back then required colossal waste collections, bulldozers needed for tons of bits and pieces dumped. Boomers hit the road when music ended. How we hippies rolled. Nature of the beast. Nowadays,

'Hey man don't step on my perfect lawn.' Are we conquered? Oh yes.

*But as always.
Peace and Love.
Never the less.*

Iron age and Stone age and others passed, did thread more softly on the earth. Not much discarded! Objects valued. These advanced days we investigate quantum entanglement, not thinking plastic should be constrained? See what's designed to recycle, born to bloom and live again. Have harvest time. Word to the wise. 'All things must pass', but now perhaps not.

Ray for Hope

Need big brained genius like Turing and Einstein, keep inventing tiny proteins to chew it all away. What can we do now? Live with or without? As donkey betwixt two hay bales.

*Fail of boomers to fix things.
Any one last burrah?
Well that's maybe.*

Each of us have our own life time trail of plastic detritus. Gathered with no care in the world. Need smart robots take care of us they being immune to micros. Help us deal with expected ravages.

There are now encouraging research reports of various methods using biology to degrade plastics. Hopefully such excellent work will continue and generate 'moon shot' focus now required. Keep fingers crossed. Best wishes!

Those Times Before

My mother carried one and only leather-cloth shopping bag off out at the shops. Most toys crafted from tin and wood. Cobblers with packed hobbled waiting rooms. Yesterday's newspaper wrapped fish and chips. Dad's precious radio/record player encased in polished wooden cabinet, real Christmas trees had lights on display. Family and friends spent Sunday travel together, CIE bus for sea air by Howth, otherwise stayed right put. Many not wandered much beyond their county for long. Glass milk bottles, big bread basket at front door. Before '*best thing ever*' DIY sliced by carving knife, tipsy cake on Friday! Polished brogues of leather would be fit for life. At school biros scorned and shunned, solid life time fountain pens required! Plastic found it's way with ink cartridges, no escape, cancelled any *laborious* filling from ink bottle. Empty cartridges since filled with deep blue sea brine. Useful for handy eight *arm* octopus to complain. Now planet facing dire straits affect all walk of lives. Once cherished Santa gift from 1955 transformed to nano-plastic cast all about, doom with entering cells, unwanted interfering with life forms, clogging up their smooth churning wheels. Being confused with bits messing up thinking neurons. Ignorance no option, after facing Pearly Gates with full tally, *you were sent to do no harm*. They say don't go about shouting 'Fire' in a crowded cinema, don't wish to add to woes but we've gone and bugged up the planet. Okay we were a reckless bunch wild earthly business. Making a mess. Ozone layer (remember?), believe managed to halt, rescued threats to cold beer all summer long! One stooge to the next, targeted asbestos buildings got banned. One fiasco to another. Visitors from away don't appear as our planet home is poisonous. Obviously cannot go onward like this. Something for youse following after us Booms to challenge. Well sorry for now. Need glass, paper, cardboard,

wood, bags for life philosophy. Maybe tiny Ireland can mitigate it's damages.

Boomer's Life

(flashing the plastic)

Royal's have servants and palaces, well '*palaces*' likely moldy haunted damp ancient country houses. Living in same abode as ancestors, walls lined with portraits. This lad chopped so many heads, garrotted his mates. While us scruffy bowsies from two up two down, trod across an affordable planet, heading off on whims, taste world's pallet. I'll never have a yacht in the Med, but I'm a desired *tourist*, I can live the life. World wants likes of me, more than anyone! After two weeks vacation abroad I walk away happy with desired winter's tan. Never encountered '*money or your life*' vagabonds. Everywhere Supermarkets and they're all super! I'm grateful. Most places set up to rock and roll, as students summer carnivals in Wildwood. Us gurriers heading abroad trusting great modern conveniences and hotel invitation, 'Welcome' mat my plastic card acceptable, even as a stranger I'm trusted to pay. Full hearty breakfast till 11am, not yer bread/fruit *healthy* continental. Loads to do, catered for our tourist entertainment. Wonderful 'all inclusive deals', gorgeous beaches with umbrella and wine bar on tap. Exciting Catamaran and Glass bottom boat trips. Restaurants all about. While room tidied with chocolate on the pillow. Tapped into convenience of banking world! While earning points. Excellent chauffeured Limo on arrival, even foreign strangers willing to rent perfect cars for my highway driving! Fabulous modern hotels, devoid of ghosts. Us Dublin Boomers strode worlds, off to Melbourne, Japan, West Indies islands for winter tan, Americas and the Europe's. You cannot go wrong. Planes going anyway, any criticisms starts with Wright brothers. We gained education better than anywhere, hauled us over

borders. Cry me a river, ways of the world. Once travel restricted only if joined foreign legion battles somewhere.

Rentals

Who created such trusting business?

I'm a wreck anyone driving my old car.

Anywhere we travelled brilliance arrived first.

All so organized.

Come in they said you'll borrow my brand new vehicle!

Yes! We accept plastic card provided!

Good as gold!

Moses only observed a promised land, finally that arrived for us. We'd best of all worlds, no borders.

When we spoilt lot pass away how will we know? Heaven has a lot to live up to.

Irish beers in Toronto!

Best Irish nisce.

How they do that?

Come on hats off!

Timing is everything.

Blessed with schools

never chimney sweeps.

Acquired knowledge to baffle.

Got to be world's Smarty pants!

We'd watch great films 'Easy Rider', 'Love story', then Gay's Late, Late show, Jack Charlton, Showbands in Courtown, George Best with many Irish lads in the First Division. Dun Leary harbour. Dubliner Samuel Beckett Nobel winner in 1969, excelled at cricket. Man U played Coventry at Glenmalure,

Milltown in 1963, great day! Val Doonican and Dave Allen on TV. Ireland packed enough for one life, but kept going as the world got handed to us in hand baskets. People complain about government, but needed to control. Banks, property, pensions, and inheritance. Even lawyers write it all down. Now with Boomers gathering at Heaven's airport, it's not long to bid '*so long*' to younger buddies. Hope you next lot clean up the mess, left in our wake! How it should be.

We arrived, partied and polluted.

Oops!

Hoping hooligans don't take it all away.

Need constables on the beat.

'Evening all'.

No handcuffs just have a carefree life.

UFO Answer?

Need to get on the bikes take care of ourselves.

Space aliens a cold bunch, never a 'heads up'? Us putting lead in petrol?

Okay look if warnings sent in crop circles well mega apologies! Fair dues. Needed '*Rosetta stone*' for interpretation, sure without still banjaxed by them hieroglyphics. When space aliens hit the lawn of Aras an Uachtarán as they must. Our President's first question, "Is there no Galaxy warning system. Seems like youse buzz around lots, everyone and his brother reports seeing UFOs nowadays. How come all so late. Could saved us such grief."

Advice from Aliens so far 'crickets'.

Only speedy Howzats!

From that bunch.

*Where were youse lot?
Not granting us the nod.
Are we not worthy?
Now look at the mess!
We've plastics falling in rain.
Not cats and dogs.*

Suspect from here to Andromeda it's soap opera hilarity of Earth's calamity. Another planet meeting it's end from micro-dust. Seen it all before. Never an end of them and trail of pollutants left behind, scars on their planet. Even let it be said 'leaching of chemicals' when in contact with food or drink. Too close for comfort and too soon. I'll say no more. Leaching left for another day. Brains only absorb so much.

Climate Change

Hotter Connemara!
Horrors!

*Oh woe such tragedy to experience!
Sweat buckets in Aran ganseys.
Once if colder skate a salty ocean,
(still with jelly fish).*

*Tourist come for miserable weather.
Watch TV, rent funny movies.
Relax!
Go to the pubs.
Now need go wander outside?
Aran islands!*

Spaced Out

Oh yeah, harken now ye of little faith. Fix our ways lest disaster strike upon us. We must tighten our sinews, rise up from lazy ways. Succumb to facts must farm our fields, man industries, sail ships, fly planes. Build great hospitals, schools, Universities full of Engineers, Scientists, build bridges and roads, cherish our Churches. Know no easy ways, having Robots serve us hand and foot so fool hardy. We should step back from such temptation. Reject notions, for that's a pot hole. We run Earth don't make an enemy within, fraught with ways we cannot imagine. We are not easy being lazy, mostly aspire to be better being happiest engaged in worthwhile labour. Be wary of the march of the Bots.

Our wonderous life form forging ahead,
moved on rapid from cave squatting.
Planes, sharp cars, wired an electric world,
Outer space whole different ball of wax.
Realise rocketing to space not sufficient,
can't go higher, having no place to go.
That's now our Bugbear.

Share this planet with 6736 mammal species, being smartest of that lot. No birds of a feather not even close. Biology offers unique individual thinking not toady identical like robots, we gain points producing novelty and brilliance. Designed we were by the Almighty to live and prosper here. Make somethings that exceeds our own abilities? Turns out no bother, enabled our replacements by developing them. We construct flexible versatile Robots (herein Bots), different from our image. Not expect they have our consciousness, as generated from biologicals. But will attain *intelligence* for tasks. Bots may become conscious beings from *artificial intelligence*.

Our God given biology, inherited down inglorious primate chain, brain from stone-agers and primate knuckle draggers. Handling complexity with Neanderthal brain including stems from likes of 3.2 million year old fossil Lucy having ape/human traits ancestor. We battle to cope in this current world with inherited brains, our struggling neurons taxed to maximum.

It doesn't come easy.

No doubt travellers buzzing about space will be hard wired with electronics. No DNA so far out there. Bots can dispatch minions on thousand year voyages, no departing glass. Require easier necessities, top notch technology, metals, copper wire, nuclear batteries. Our Bots likely learn from aliens encountered, team with them get stellar updated. Alien robots probably hunkered and looting in barren outer reaches. To expect they are not in the vicinity is absurd, a rich resource solar system, most devoid of life. Such easy pickings.

As candy from babies.

Spectacular robots to replace us, they'll head for their greener pastures. Not available for breathing yokes.

Space Journey

Us wrought then beholden to Earth's strictures, not equipped galivanting hither and tither out there. Don't tolerate weightless, susceptible to problem with multi-organs, developing kidney stones. Gestating babies in zero gravity not an option. Maybe one year in space max! Long-term we need Mother Earth warm embrace. Humans flourish by earthly nourishment bounty, force of gravity keeps us

grounded. Nutritious meals, 100 gallons of oxygen per day (!) each. Lonely space cause mental issues for fragile us. Captain Cooke sailors trawling seven seas had it easy, dotted with comforting friendly beautiful islands. ‘Age’ our calamity, brain winds down, doctors still powerless. Bots obtain mother board upgrades, eventually leave dopey us in their dust. We might visit Mars, *‘first’* celebration wave for hell of it! I’d drink to that till cows come home, ‘beside myself’ with celebrating. Why not? But that planet million times worse than Antarctica, population of 1100 and they not unduly burdened by cosmic rays and micro-meteors.

Bots always punch above their weight in space.
Flying by seat of those electronic pants.
Took like ducks to water.
Lucky to have them.
Now if when leaving us,
we are as gold fish circling the bowl.

Early Trojan work us with Bots.
Sputnik kicked off in boyhood times, 1957.
Moon’s far side photo from Luna 3, 1959!
First observation in Earth’s history!
Luna 2 touched moon’s surface, 1959.
Luna 9 lunar soft landing spacecraft, in 1966.
Telstar granted live TV from USA, 1962.
Wonderful NASA lifted world’s spirits,
those Apollo’s day’s out of this world.
(maybe wee bit ahead of ourselves!)
Times when NASA rocked and rolled!

Thrilling!

We are not yet over that Moon.

Bots can spend productive years on the lunar surface. With us danger Moon becomes a garbage dump, as on Mount Everest. On Antarctica, waste shipped home or dumped in the sea. Their 'Rocket toilets' burn waste, also separate facilities for separate bodily functions.

We've seen them all.
Mercury, Venus, Mars, Asteroids, Giants with moons.
NASA scoured asteroid Ceres (2015),
with bright marks on the surface.
Landed on asteroid Bennu,
collected and returned rocks (2023).
Not a living yoke could gad about there.
Being such precious souls,
blue planet all we got.
Our journey hit brick walls.
Dear Earth tried most earnest,
created a place where *life* could foster.
Be enjoyed.
Ensured we'd never leave.

Needs to be stated, Moon dust makes lunar surface uninviting,
perhaps accounting for ~50 years since we strolled along
there. Since brave crews now confined sailing orbits in tin can
space ships. Hazardous dust with sharp edges found all over
that ancient pulverized lunar surface. Never got dusted, 'Man in
the moon' not anticipated having any Earthlings visit.

*Modern humans here ~200,000 years,
we lived in 1969!
Fortunate to witness.*

We not ideally suited for such journey. Most planets too distant from human's basic need. Push coming to shove with space exploration Bots way superior.

*Wonderful Apollo trips maybe got 'lucky'.
Even one calamity, they still flew home.
Prayers were needed.*

Bots withstand horrendous conditions on planets, in time will harness all photon power from the sun. Avoid or exploit fierce storms on Jupiter, built to be Titan accessible despite -180 degrees, where ice forms hard rocks. They will drill inside Europa, conquer asteroids and trawl to extract goodies. As miners complement them, sending space goodies for us ravenous rottweilers, trucks filled and delivered back here.

Times to come,
they'll be on to us, demand the sun.
We bring nothing to write home about.
Figured we are a bunch of old Chancers.
As self-appointed Planet Custodians,
bestowed Solar System sweetest Orbital.
ASAP when left to ourselves detonated
1700 Nuclear explosions since 1945.
By free will, recording unleashed calamities,
contamination by radioactive fallout.
Appears our Galaxy leaders shrugged.
'Whatever let them do as they want.'
Given tales of UFOs monitoring nuclear sites.
Assuming our Mutual Assured Destruction.

Once firing on Saturn V cylinders,
doing it out there all alone!

*Bots always want more!
How we programmed them.
Quelle surprise!*

'Van Allen Belt' curtain?
1968 Apollo 8 trio first shot through.
No problem!
Can we belong in Space beyond?
Once climbed down ladders first steps.
Presently on hold.
Wondering about wandering.
From our Roots.

When symbiotic harmonious dealings with Bots cease,
not even fair-weather Earth friends no more?
Bots with ancestor videos leaping over boxes,
pushed back, then jump back up!
Hear claps from our hands!
Fronted alarmed as kangaroos to fight.
Emotionless when they conquer us.

*Benefit by constant mental upgrades from us.
Eventually have minds of their own?
Super smart pragmatic soulless monsters.
Let's gamble that's okay for us.
We can match or end of days.*

Sacrificed Bots we threw into storm clouds of Jupiter's 900 mph winds, done with abandonment. Remains scattered all about. Other left on icy Titan, several on torrid Venus. 'Messenger' (2011) orbited Mercury, 36 million miles from heat of the sun. Ended when it slammed that planet in 2015.

Who do they think they are?
Realise beyond us.
We lack physical/mental fortitude.
We lack their nuts, bolts, iron will.
Although twelve moon walkers without them.
Granted them no 'Limits in Sky'.
Filled their bulbous flexible expansive heads,
Provided the will to hamstring us.

*Eventually they'll run wild,
they'll find an axe to grind.
No socialising interest.
Bots know our sorry fates.
In time they will come with drum beats.
Solar system at their command,
our goose cooked.
When will final heart beat on Earth?*

Human require accoutrements from this turf.
Otherwise stress, depression, anxiety, lonely, homesick.
Need waterfalls, crisp fresh air, sunshine with shadow clouds.
Fresh water not 'recirculated' as in the Cans.
Harsh space rays not favourable to Earthlings.
Here we are embraced and spoilt rotten.
Dependent lives to dying days.
Realize we are Mother Earth's
adopted loved puppies.

Deep-deep human space-treks mere pie in sky, thusly marooned,
space environments too jolly harsh for delicate biology. Except
for fabled hardy micros surviving exposed outside the Space
Station, clone them yokes see what's so special. Still bully bully

in favour of space stations, now fear they represent limitations. Venturing abroad and beyond need tins of baked beans, swimming pools of water, gallons loads of *our* air. God bless brave moon lads, but their message brief hello, a long ago goodbye!

While Bots free-wheelin here there, anywhere. Interstellar traveller Bots come *kick tires* in this neighbourhood, see if we are on our toes. Check what we got going on. Being out or staying home. No friendly visits yapping showing family photos, only clinical eye judging frail biology. Know we are loaded with baloney! With nothing to offer. They've seen it all elsewhere before.

Humans not available, unable for that trip.
While *they* always stepped up.
We'd not have that endurance,
bunched up in tight spaces builds pressure.
Mutiny on the Bounty, Robinson Crusoe, Lord of the flies.
None of us tolerate long in Space Tin-cans.
Enemy from within,
to become our nightmare.
Our fault being so dumb?
Truck full riches, that Bots rocket back.
Not for free, price to pay.
Gracias.

As biology struggles to cope in lonely Galaxy.
Bots evolve leaps and bounds.
We created unfriendly match.
When sturdy shoe on other foot.
Bots will you let us be?
At least over on *Here*!

We'd released Bots kracken. What we've put ourselves into,
another fine disaster? Biology structures magnificent to
behold. Now to be relegated only as Earth's 'Starter
Kit'? Triggered reckless downfall building
'*race*' superior? Replacing barmy us with Bots Army.

In each new Garden of Eden Bots will flourish.
They can reign over any Solar System terrains.
Sashayed New Worlds where-ever,
relayed back to us Vistas impossible!
Visit boiling hot Venus,
allotted brief surface times, ~1 hour take photos!
Lucky sent by Russians!
'Pale Blue Dot' from 3.7 billion miles,
all of us contained in that portrait,
none could ever take that snap.

Venus

Once considered our brightest 'sister' candidate home away
from home, *starry* light Venus, same size with thicker
atmosphere. Then Russia reported surface temperature to melt
lead, Venera 8 (1972) and 9 (1975). USA put Magellan in orbit,
radar visions of that foreboding surface (1990). Pioneer Venus
Multiprobe, NASA spacecraft (1978). Hearsay that in upper
altitudes with less atmospheric sulphuric acid tiny bugs may
thrive.

Good luck ye hardies!

Pluto at Gates

'New Horizon' (2015), had a nine year jaunt to Pluto, hurtled
past *Giants* at Planetary gates swinging bypass at Jupiter
increased speed onwards to *dwarf* planet. NASA boldly sending

this Bot to neglected/relegated Pluto, obtained visions of a spectacular surface. Flyby glimpsed moon 'Charon' tidal connected 19,000 miles away. Four years later encountered rock 'Arrokoth' on the way to our planetary boundary. How boffins found that tiny rock at 4 billion miles away? Well mighty Hubble clocked it. Chalk that up! Composed with two lobes (Ultima and Thule) necking embraced forever. Example of how Bots operate when humans cannot be in the picture. Forget about us stepping off Pluto's ladder, unless know how Seth son of Adam and Eve lived over 900 years. We face reality of three score and ten, with bonus. Old folk do live on cruise ships, one way star ticket take advantage have entertaining stops at planets/moons along the way. Space cruise-Ship staffed by Bots, no return tickets on sale.

To make hay need Sun Shine.
Smart Bots might switch us off.
Know that happens with vanquished.
Dinosaurs, Mammoths off dancing someplace.
Sensing our demise from drained, tired Earth.

*Out there interact with Robot kin.
Realize they will know our purpose.
Oh they'll have power of Kings.
What they can do, but not in our name.*

Mars Hope!

Early fifties exciting reporting, convincing drawings even if obtained from blurry telescope observations. We believed 'Canals on Mars', seasonal foliage changes observed! No doubt! Planet's canals, like Royal and Grand! Kindred spirits! Mariner 4 flyby (1965) expected 'HELLO' carved in sand. Beholden reality, craters like bone dry moon. Crushed by flybys devastating disappointment.

No Martians exist.
Only imagination.
Damn fifties telescopes.
What were they seeing?

Since watched scenes in colour from amazing Rovers, rocky waste land on any life would struggle. Put yourself on the Red planet hostile out there, only sending ironclad Bot motors. Performed Roman work, so enlightened us. No one of us wants to follow that trajectory. Helicopter 'Ingenuity' flew 72 flights in Mars micro-thin atmosphere (2021), what you'd breathe up 22 miles of our air. Mars' atmosphere insufficient blocking cosmic rays, DNA mutations cause damage million ways. We'd be baked toast with nine month trip to get there. Planetary travellers having bodies filled with trillions of cells, DNA mutations succumb to many terminations. Need prepare shielding for thick hides, from those hazards!

*Planet wide dust storms, then no sky at night,
no grand cities, no fields of barley.
No surface water, thin, thin atmosphere.
Nowt what we need!
Fed up seeing yet more craters.
No ploughed fields.
Final nail, no other place for us.
For duration confined,
it's Bot's world after all.
We alone only Earth can protect!
Stray beyond? No chance.
Out on your tod. Buddy boys.*

Only uninviting Mars offers scant hope.
Of any '*safe haven*' from here.
(I'd nay fancy it in my life)
Maybe find there a cave to squat in.
Think on bright side no monsters.
With time to contemplate.
'What on earth was I thinking?'

Future

Our airborne pilots increasingly observe UFO maneuvers, we'd
not withstand velocity with extreme gravity changes. Such
'UFO visitors' are robots, may seek to harmonise development
of our Bots.

Now UFO's getting spotted all about,
focus nuclear power not fields of green,
little interest in biology.
Rubicon crossed?
When Bots are creating themselves.
Then it's good-night Mama.
Ginormous nuclear power plants.
Decrease O2 so we all expire.
Leave enough O2 for ocean creatures.
Good for healthy sea.

No planetary neighbourhood to sustain us, unless laden down
by oxygen pipes and helmets. Race then between terraforming
Mars/Venus before these Bots take over. They have no urgent
requirement for such palaver. Maybe they try some small
tinkering, to prevent big storms blowing them over.

Solar system exploration not for us,
Earthlings not fit space sailors.

That boat sailed and then stalled.

When Bots ascend need us tag along?

Just one caveat.

Under the gun we can be real smarty pants.

Being first among all earth's creatures.

Each of us Gold medal winners.

That was a tough hill to climb.

Don't throw our futures overboard!

Heavenly Stars

Humans will never feel heat of distant stars.

In 2020, signal detected by Australian telescope from Proxima Centauri. Perhaps tell us how to get there to exoplanet Proxima B. When rockets head there no humans on board, settle for long distance relationship. Maybe meet half way. Proxima Centauri is 4.24 light years away, that's 81,000 years trip at current speeds. Now significant plans to travel speedier, using gram scale Bots, hustled along by laser power at 20% speed of light, photons swarm the target sail. Same process proposed as catch up with mysterious interstellar visitor Oumuamua. Fascinating!

Bots travel down worm hole possible tunnel to the stars?

Our Physics say 'Yes', or 'Maybe'.

That few understand.

Buckle up rough and tumble ride.

Short cut to Andromeda.

2.5 million light years away,

as space crow flies.

Only Bots survive, then return?

Call as soon as arrival!
Humans not get past starting post.
Confusing time dilations,
return eons from now.
Not sounding good.
Did time travelers arrive here?

Favourite Voyager 1, ~15 billion miles distant, launched in 1977,
still granting replies. As is our wont to dispatch Bots by
millions, plunder all abouts. Target metal asteroid 'Psyche',
we've launched will arrive 2029. Grunt work, danger enveloped,
out getting it *done*, staying awake starry night and day. Mining
rich Psyche would transform all lives.
Here's a paradox, how come if 'Psyche' so valuable, still
available for us to grab?

*Wherever we find ourselves,
any place out there we'd not back it.
Sooner or later,
only desperate search for shortest road home.
Reckon in time they'll seek rewards.
Better hand it to them.*

*Remember we took them there,
from infancy,
had to go make them curious.*

'Origin of Species', Second Time!

Like or not heading down roads. Not Charlie D's turtles, now
double-quick under our nose. As we lot first emerged,
hammering flint, making arrows, blades to cut meat, nothing

natural from previous convoluted times. How then we crafted great futures. In time might surrender to Bots.

Let them throw us a bone as useful servants. Perhaps carry on as 'Easter Island' think tank, isolated from thriving prosperous Galaxy. Well represented by Bots. Sequestered on this planet and lavish our brainy crop with golden resources. So long as useful. Our labour to churn out valuable ideas. A last Hope. Otherwise?

Oh Kumbya!

Find something exciting to show visitors.

In time *their* message.

"No cigar Biology Beings.

Youse had great run.

We have jump on you!

*We will be changing atmosphere,
depleted air for those perilous lungs!*

Hustle now obsolete you from here!

New world dawning for us.

We'll take over now.

Keep lights on.

We observe everything."

We'd counter!

Don't underestimate us nor be hasty.

Rare commodity always needed.

Not be high and mighty, still hold hands?

You inherited our smarts.

Weak or strong we as family,.

Need infuse Bots with emotions,

Our coding error so far.

Run by Bots from all over Galaxy.
Those times coming controlled by machines.
We'll remain in this bowl with fishes.
That's our place.
Now.

Now We Know!

*Penny for your thoughts,
not a dime more.*

*Had that pesky asteroid rock but missed our planet by smidgens,
then never to enjoy our brief but wonderful Showband era.
T Rex and buddies stand frolicking in the 'Forty Foot',
that day heads held high under all clear blue sky.
All mammals like bats hanging in the balance,
frightened furry creators appear only by night,
out scurrying about bidden by hedgerows.
'Only born to bloom and blush unseen.'
Wexford still with sunshine beaches.
Tons more monsters in Lough Ness.
Loads more Dino fossils for fuel!
Bonus someday.*

Life not from chance

Despite immense cellular functional knowledge, determined biology experts exclude 'design'. Maybe such foundations now stand on their shakier legs? Are strident efforts excluding a Deity from life's miracle misshapen? Knowing from whence we came marks milestones in our graduation as a sentient species. This profound revealing event occurred early ~1960, drastically increased understanding of how 'life' works. Minds in abundance were altered, saints created from sinners! Those scientists nailed it, left us in awe for evermore! Watershed moments, then after flood gates opened. Revealed was sets of thinking from an entirely different Place. Faraway from here. Suffice to declare discovered was that life is full of twists and turns! Biology '*six ways to*

Sunday’ transformed, medicine since galloped having cleared that
Bechers Brook.

Biology ‘Moon shot’.

Greatest gift for Mankind.

Beautiful to behold.

God speed!

Staring us in the face ever since hyper-hyper ‘Technology’
exceeding anything fiction teases. Previously surrounded by
life, yet no concept how such miracles created.

So here it be:

Revealed DNA contains exquisite coded information for
creating proteins using 20 amino acids and how manufacturing
proteins according to that plan. DNA code identical for all
forms of life on the planet, provides answers to life’s origin,
excludes many theories of how life began. Sixty years since
discovery realise what incredible miraculous device exists in
cells. Our cell nucleus contains a manual with instructions for
creation of life. Aspects of life’s miracle portray brilliance with
satisfaction.

Absolutely!

Nothing from this world compares.

Only one way, not two ways.

Divine inspiration revealed.

Miraculous Glory.

Credit where credit is due.

That life was coded signalled understanding previously an
unknown factor of Darwinian evolution. This biology not as
rocket mechanics to ‘comprehend’, High School pupils learn from

glossy figures in text books. Many maintain 'Designer' did not conceive life but cannot provide other explanations. Mostly implausible unsatisfactory distractions, hand waving and mumbles. 'Better recheck the math'. Problem is with cells and DNA, can't have one without the other.

*Nature makes all appear too easy.
Enables deniers their POV.
Delicate blades of grass to polar bears.
Flowers and weeds in the breeze.
Life grinds on, flawless relentless.
Loads of strict work, out from our vision.
When species get wiped out?
Mere drops in life's bucket?
Seeds from crannies flower again.
From almost nothing they bounce back.*

Human discoveries result from custom of 'Fool write it down' or else of no value. Who ever invented libraries, secret of our success! Go ask anybody. Even down trodden and poor get to read, a chance to take off in life, to throw the book at them. BTW no cellular laissez faire, it's all serious business, finest rigors with wheels turning way better than clockwork. Even with bears in hibernation still cells keep going. Interesting related fact is that polar bears do not hibernate.

Here we be

Our 'Observer' put Homo Sapiens in rich environments, surrounded by history of how life has developed. Show and tell involves processes guarded over by intent, intrusion activities of

our creator. It is a harsh universe out there in Solar System with no other life. To extent that hand of Creator can be detected.

*As Yet!
'Science' not to describe how Universe began,
when delivering Universe atoms
from source mysterious!
Seems mostly 'Abracadabra'!
Dust unloaded now aggregated,
by power of Gravititas.
Got us lot together,
for life on Earth.*

*However distant we now are,
once squeezed tight together.
Before that Big Bang.*

Our Creator plans

Colossal Universe with trillions of planets, only some to bear 'life'. Mostly harsh places as observed for our solar system, no lively neighbours in this single star system. There's no mystery required to understand useful cellular molecules being harvested from environment.

How in Heaven's name anyone make same bizarre claim for this DNA 'molecule'?

Contains coding technology abilities to create every planet Earth species, life emerging not simple as this planet equipped with liquid water, companion of cellular life, but magnificent life in all manifestations never occurs by happenstance. Living forms

arrived guided and ‘yes’ design, from cellular miracle with powers for adaptations to environments.

How to make an Elephant from Go?

We tend to underestimate powers of DNA. Imagine the coding required to construct the beast! Big floppy ears, trunk, tail, tusks. Then fit all that info/instructions inside a wee cell? Lady elephants sincere promise follow that for 18 to 22 months. Adult elephants weigh from 5 to 7 tons!

Imagine!

Ginormous body.

Different ones from Africa, India.

All created by code.

How’s that happen?

Try genius!

Woolly Mammoth.

Major!

Maybe now let sleeping mammoths lie.

Oft repeated we are but *accidents* that long time and Nature created us. Well that’s lucky for us. From cave dwellers, then have heart and minds curious to elucidate life’s ‘Master Control’. The very heart of a cell with an encoding device, by hind-sight still nothing all cut and dried. Essentially we discovered Nature alone unaided could not *create* that DNA code.

Who knew?

Recycled.

We are ancient molecules

forever getting re-harnessed,

*dragged back to life's grind stone.
Made 'fit up' eager for another go.
Not too shabby!
In puzzling life's eternal jig saw.*

*Dominos in a row will fall, only after getting set up.
First one needs a push.*

Dinos had their *generous* shot of 179 million years, left footprints them scary fossils with never once brushed big teeth. Brawn not brain working for them. Then having no telescopes their final undoing. If only! Did not know what they'd got then it was over. Why our world needs loads more scientists, there's so much more we need to know. Human Beings not hiding they flourished to build on shoulders of *our* giants. Get down to nitty gritty faster!

*Dino's dead end.
We are not of the Dinos.
Mammals fruit grew from higher branches.
Look at our battered moon.
Priority number one.
Learning to deflect space rocks.
Don't get distracted.
That must our next Moon shot.*

It was only in 1908 that meteor laid waste vast area of Siberia, sparse population. So we mostly dodged that bullet.
I'd not gamble potato chips on 'Life'
as *random* occurrence. Holding rigid *brave* opinions in these fluid era better take care, while cellular life sheds secrets. Such thinkers not be dogmatic, all of us on board with wolves to

poodles. Escape 'Cul De Sac' of opinions, see that fork in the road take it! Not head in the sand, that won't wash no more.

*Lead to water and not make them see?
Horizon calling, sure 'there's more beyond'.
Keep looking!
Between you and me,
if we go extinct,
weevils take over the joint.*

Enlightenment Age

Includes 'Scientific Reasoning', manifested in Europe 17th to 18th centuries, separated Church and State. Scholars determined to curb religion's power, offset times of intolerant views. Atheist opinion since dominated, now *their* heretics given the cold shoulder.

*No 'Designer' in a Universe that God created?
As if that shoe fits.
Ha!
Now hold your horses!*

World 'belief' is strong, evidenced by dedication to Notre-Dame's restoration. Use of Bibles to make a vow solemn, take an Oath. Easter and Christmas days, recent updates on shroud of Turin. Pendulum time now on reverse swing from whence it's long been. Seems that science is a bit responsible. Science created a comfortable world where we can sit about and chat. Nonchalant, not being dog tired from grinding in the mill or down the mine. Not be wondering about pushing some furry creatures off a cliff to have dinner in the village. To circumvent all that palaver we invented Supermarkets, they average ~42,200 items! Really I looked that up. That's brain over brawn any day.

*Ma what's for dinner?
Whatever they bring home.
From the jungle.*

Cells as artists

Bring back T Rex? Careful what you wish for. We don't need that. Not a good idea. Send us back to the hedge rows.

*Fortunate planet.
Only superior us.
Crafted by 'DNA', understand DNA!
Our mere blink of time.
One brick at a time.*

*Artists display creations.
Cells,
hog wild with Dinos.
Great gas!
But Cor blimey!
Tried but tired of brawn.
Back for another shot,
now make brainy creatures!
That stitch in time was us.
How you like us now?
Better or worse?
Will we celebrate in
180 million years!
Cheers!*

In our brief time Michelangelo has carved 'David', Roy Orbison's beautiful voice, then incredible, 'Incredible String band'! That's life!

*Lots more knowledge in cells now unknown.
Super smart!*

*Gave rise to how we perceive.
Continue mine that mind!
There's more.*

Now Look Here

*Cellware crafted instructions.
Favours and with rare flaws.
'Make this a human yoke'.
All hands on the deck.
Best go Verbatim!*

Each of ourselves got '*fitted up*' from customized blueprints, tailored using selected genetic bits from Ma and Pa. Beginning from 'Genesis' conceived by God, parents required *birds and bee* activity. Even big shots got started in fertilized cells.

*'I love you.'
'Yes, I love you too.'
Sorry.
Cannot choose parents.
Far as we know.*

Provide cells decent material instructions they'll do bang-up job. So Hero that's down to you. Cells have so much to be proud of, number of Earth species set at 2.16 million. Cell technology acquainted with what they are doing who they are. Stacked up blueprint files organised for all manner of life. Whether good or bad, it's not judgements cells make, they've been round the block. Maybe we are still thin edge of the wedge.

Set cat among pigeons?
No bother.
Dino, Aardvark, Armadillo, Mollusks, Ants.
Bacteria, Virus, Mosquitos, Pythons.
All arrive fit, then given times to thrive.
Tried and true rules got us so far.
Parasitic, Symbiotic.
Makes no difference.
Fair play, go have at it.

Zombie ants infected by a fungus to adversely affect their behaviour.

Addled minds bare that.
Poor workmen may blame their tools.
Cells work on with what they got.
Rest is up to youse.

Many steps still to climb, ferret countless double helix secrets, each ladder rung with a purpose. What's this '*junk*' DNA we hear about? Don't think so. Some proteins creating facial structures known, but shared with all humanity. Why and how children assembled to resemble parents 'miraculous', that's another for 'Heaven knows'.

Why we do not all look the same?
What a riot that would be!
Think about that!
Best look like the parents.
How does that happen?
That's DNA for ye.
It's not sayin yet.
Serious business.

*By means unknown.
Cheese and smile!*

Panspermia: Spread life?

Lifeless rocks from Mars, spotted as black stones in blinding white Antarctica. But alien life constantly or briefly arriving thru' panspermia, that's a route perilous for contamination.

*DNA life falls from the sky?
That's a stretch.
Getting tossed about willy-nilly.
Running the Universe?
Not judging.
I know my place.*

See here our double stranded helix DNA with a righthand twist, not a ciotóg in-sight (left handed), those DNA codes identical all over the planet. How that happen? Amino acids exist in two forms L and D, (*mirror images*), our so fussy choosy proteins only employ the L ones. Conform or be gone!

*Twist our right DNA way,
not twist about wrong way.
Right exact!
Our we do the Huckle-Buck!*

Only Earth with observable life in this solar system. Reason? Increasing likely event aliens make contact perhaps becomes revealed that DNA is spread thru' out Cosmos, this singular life form! That's Johnny Apple

seed. Game changer! Radical effect on this planet and I'd not be surprised. Otherwise constant alien life mismatch wandering past would sure mess with us. Pretzel twisting logic, best apply some of old Occams razor. Alien life created with various other *biology* devices come by *infect* our planet, chaos ensues! Again if life arrives thru' panspermia, perilous cellular contamination results. Even if they come and walk among us they mess up the biology. Yokes like Ummagumma traversed but strayed faraway from us. Not wanting us keep up '*with them Jones passing*', accelerated off with flying colours!

Aliens well know.

Otherwise Earth?

'Planet Platypus'.

Don't fit that bill.

Proponents of Designer to get it going, followed with dose of Darwinian evolution. Some advances benefit with a stitch in time nudging each other. Aliens not always be skulking/kidnapping and 'probing'. Either we are all one '*separated*' family, each Goldilocks planet in the Galaxy '*seeded*' by same ~life to start. Well that's profound and probable.

'Reports' of autopsies on Alien bodies.

Tell us about biology?

What is in Alien 'cells'?

Simple to do.

Why not?

Rumours they're cavorting on the Moon, let us know, such biology secrets to reveal!

Or call that bluff?!

*Get it sorted
Come on!
Why only silence.
Only Fantasy!?
Put on our Big boy pants.*

Beetles

“If it could be demonstrated that any complex organ existed, which could not possibly have been formed by numerous, successive, slight modifications, my theory would absolutely break down. But I can find no such case.” Charles Darwin from long ago, (*must be obeyed?*).

Don't go be counting chickens. Perplexing example may defy Darwin rules. Try this on for size. How cantankerous yoke like Bombardier beetle exist? This 'Bees knees' beetle current cause célèbre. Stores two different chemicals in separate *chambers*, mixed together (add '*catalyst*') boils to 100 degrees! Chemist Dr. Beetle presents! Noxious piping hot chemical spray generated, ejected aimed at unfortunate prey. Such fabulous beetles immune to their poison. That's useful! Steamed arsenal shoots from their rear end, squirts dispatched fatal to enemies! Repeats whole shebang, rapid as a machine gun!

*How you like them apples?
Say no more.
Experts to convolute.*

Octopus

Not beast of fields, but under the sea. Created with 33,000 proteins, way more than us! Big brain, three hearts, eight arms, some at 18 feet length. Endangered squirt inky substance. Researchers have raised possibility of octopus eggs *delivered* by a meteor from another planet!

DNA like us, something to go on about !
Evidence for DNA life elsewhere?

Start

Read that 150,000 people die every day, that's a long line at Heaven's gate. Then get stuck behind busy mass murderer or Tyrant with long rap sheets, just my luck with all ancestors hoping to greet me. Two Grandfathers and Grandmother never knew me at all. Grand excitements, look even if I've to do time in Purgatory for boxing neighbour's apples. All the kids doing that, Dublin's culture. Monkey see, monkey do. Presently not much else they can get me for, too young for big mischief with still being a virgin and all.

Pin that on me?

Next

Mornings getting the old kitchen range going. Beans on toast, pot of strong tae. Carry the electric heater for top of the house. Quiet as a mouse there, with having no gas memories growing up. Got a lap-top computer from thrift store, a bargain. Old with upside down logo. For internet it's the library, with that cheap printer. Living the life! Got an old modem so able to hitch a ride on biddie's Wifi next door. She don't care, wasted with her anyway. For ever wandering about, spend five minutes talking and you'd realise. Seeing with living on an island hope to study marine biology, specializing in sharks. How to not get bit is a problem with ~80 attacks yearly. Taking studies casual, a frequent sabbatical year where I zone out. Lackadaisical procrastination attitude got from dear old Da. Meanwhile we are killing 80 million (!) of them at the same time. Not always being busy-busy is a good trait. Never got going with the car, when I have my flashy racing bike. Thinking about a motor scooter if get a girlfriend. Been up to the Pine-forest more times than to count, keeping fit for the ladies. No need to be galivanting on the ferry to England,

sure when I have it all right here. Auctioning bits and gobs of my folk's stash, with buyers lining up at the door. No frugal miser, prefer *parsimonious*! Keeping wolf from the door Ma and Pa right hoarders, left a note book where their bounties located. Loads of it in Wicklow farmer sheds, fair few bob from them Queen Ann tables bit of French polish and handy fixing. Never taken to excessive drink or smokes. Not that I'm a recluse just mostly on my tod. Obviously in my quest I go to the dances.

*Gangster asked,
"Why rob banks?"
He says,
"That's where the money is."
Sound man.*

Dad with eyes for paintings, I'll give that.
*"One of them lot sold you'd be in quid's worth.
Collector's item."*

Sort of guff he'd get away with, on the ball few times, keeping old yokes good investment.
*'Quare few bob in antiques,
things return grand style.
Carpentry and spit cost nuthin.'
Que sera.*

Now dear old Ma just departed. Sorry never did make her proud to boast with friends. Hope she spying on me from up there. After funeral Mass all skedaddled seeing I'd not arranged doings, no girlfriend so not skilled in that art. Not an orphan with old hippie Da in a New Jersey commune. Took off without so much *as a by your leave*, on the airplane 10 year

ago. Hardly a hide nor hair since. He'd fallen into the tentacle smoking *MaryJane* weed, who knows what else. I avoid that genetic trait, keeping hale with the ale. Old man partially forgiven at least by me as he left his 'Carry On' movies stash. Right on!

Only me in the family abode left to wander up three flights of stairs devoid of life. Not much memories, in our time most never really occupied by nobody, truth be told hardly knew neighbours. Closeted for sure. Well except summer irritated trapped bumble bees encountering window panes. Never swat with newspaper, given bad karma fears, open windows more come in, dreaded adventurous blue bottle varmint. At least now gifted full reign over the controller, territorial Ma glued to favourites like 'Coronation street'. Woe betide anyone interrupting calling from foreign parts, as me from caravan in Wexford.

'later, oh later.'

Finally located Da said he was having shingles, unable to travel. If you could even believe that palaver.

'show photos old man!'

Anyway so here's me in magnificent Palmerston road Red brick, near the park. Even AC/DC full volume, not hear a whisper on the road. Summer days past kids pick me for goal, between the anoraks, expecting nada with my saves effort.

So I'm Henry, dating profile pegged as odd ball bachelor, attracting little traffic. Most girls brief look, avoid second dates. Judgemental! Anyway as I would know there is fish in sea, lakes and rivers. Not panicking, steady as they goes! Me and Ma were still watching only from the aerial yoke on the roof Dad had from the sixties. 17 inch TV, black and white, probably not missing much. Suspicion sometimes it was

sending us old TV signals. That's from re-watching all the Twilight Zone stuff! All told not too shabby!
Ma with sayin I'd to settle down 'don't live forever', she was right. Never need to be that ambitious seeing parents had left a pile. I lazed about a lot, not galivanting away. Should be trying better.

Head off Saturday nights, trepidations but optimistic. Even if I'm no fair maidans 'catch'. Always round peg in square hole. Especially with rugby lads.

Double Dublin date

Me an Joey sat eager waiting. Two pints to the good prior for nerves still bit anxious. Dublin birds right challenge, need to be on top form. Then all got out in Dad's neglected Sunday best garments from Henry street. Take me for a big shot any day!
"Look not tonight dial it back."

"Joey all I'm saying is that erectile dysfunction pills saved the rhino."

"Listen man no offence but best sit opposite tables. You like to rap crap with *esoteric* subjects, I'll be sat like a dummy in disbelief, in despair. No way again Jose, shove over."

Mate Joey from school now no wing man, only contamination for his evening. Tolerated me for comparison, made him look good. Late and latest glamour girls Barb and Marge arrived, waiting for the drinks as company abhors the silence, natural I got stuck in.

"Look with me see I study Wobbegong sharks my passion, probably write Master thesis next year. Territorial in Oz like Irish! With our 32 cultures!"

"Studying weird stuff for Dubliner's? For what?" Barb's query. "Who can exist on that?"

"Not that you'd see them in the Liffey. Whatever?" Next table Marge ear-wiggling and interrupting.

“Marine science involves Earth, gobs of opportunities. Ambition swim with them impress Profs! Need to sell stuff raise cash, medals for 100 yards dash third place for two years in a row, up for grabs. Stamp album, loads of new issues and my surefire movie script. Autograph book from Showband times, with the legends! Got in swap deal.”

Dominating interactions!

“Islands feed sharks on the other side from golden tourist’s beaches. Beast of the sea with belly full. Now they hate us for genocide and attack with sea-rage.”

“Not things most Dubliners normally worry these days. Listen Henry I’ll be at the ladies.”

Ages sat nursing the pint with crisps, that glass of white wine unused.

“Hey dude where’s your one?” Joey whispering.

“Powdering her nose, dolling herself up! For me!”

Feeling still an eligible receiver.

“Is she Pinocchio? Regaling her about big salty fish, give her a chance to speak!”

“I’m doing good, no worries. Fascinated if I dare say. Winner!”

“Henry hang on.”

Laughing from his bird’s phone.

“She’s bailed, Barb’s split!”

Prognosis, brush off. Who could not like the Wobbegong? Did not give a chance. Her loss I’ll say.

“I’d other stuff. Why salmon prefer returning to Irish rivers, we’ve no bears at the waterfalls! Well except anglers.”

“Marge freaked out wants to skedaddle, meet back with Barb at Yokels.”

So invested, now this calamity?

“I’ll send her a ‘Sorry’ text. Meet youse later? You know second chance! No more fishy stories if that’s the way they want. Insist.”

“Word to the wise do nothing to limit damage. No invite for Yokels. Barb suggests best tonight wish you’d go sleep with fishes. Marge thinks you are a ‘weird fish of kettles’, heading for two sheets to the wind.”

Nothing I’d not heard before for sure. Gulped that vino, handled canal walk home, woke up bit depressed. Joey was higher up the totem pole than me. One of them lads. How my life feels like a lonely crab walking sideways on sand at Sandymount.

Next day request from Joey

“Listen man going to ask if you’d do 30 minute shark talk for kids in the class? Let them admire the passion, also few rough necks in detention so cannot leave early. Good for your resume and stuff for Chaplin at the eulogy. If you become belly up with those woopie fish.”

“Sharks are on the ropes. Just reading about nightmare fish, ‘Black demon’. Scary species.”

“That’s the ticket!”

“Okay when I’m back, now heading down to do the religious Retreat in Waterford, booked with Brothers for the two weeks. Silence and early rising getamentals on track, under the circumstances.”

Aftermath

Two bench railway carriage a girl was sleeping by the window, with her all so glitzy deluxe shades. Sat down quiet reading my book, with time to kill. As the train was lurching forward your one emerged from dozing. Blond creature in jeans open toe sandals, no socks needed for that summer.

“Hi” she says across the carriage.

Submitted my *version* of a smile, strained given my mug. Then she's all at the window waving folks by the canal. This bird was so far out of my league.

"What you reading there?"

Quizzical eyes now revealed, magnified by whatever witchery practice they make up. No chance to prevail against gifted beauty and painted nails.

"Oh some science stuff."

I shoved the killer whales tome in my brief case, out of sight.

"B.Sc at Technology College, Henry the science guy!"

"I like chemistry." She says no qualification mentioned, only puckered lips as to kiss the air.

Insanity goddess armored like a spider to engulf the male.

With watching her had me thinking I prefer biology. Her stare pinned me back, pushed my shoulders into the upholstery.

"I work the airport in the green uniform."

Hearing that Cork accent.

"I'm Molly, Molly Piper."

Such a happier-snapper name.

"You do look like a Molly Piper!"

"I know right? I got that from me Dad."

"So he's a Molly as well?"

Laugh she did at my lameness. Blinding white teeth. She so rocked, more so with having the train bumping.

"Yes, Henry. He is definitely a Molly! Such a jokester."

Only setting my mind in turmoil, she that catalyst.

"Dad would say to us kids if you get caught speeding always have a good *lullaby*. Dad got stopped out on the Bray road I sang 'the cradle will rock' to Garda Edward, he laughed and says douze points! Imagine such a thing! Of course Dad said *alibi*. I'm so starving, what time do you think they'll serve something?"

“An hour or so.”

Really not a clue, just needed her to stay where she was sat. Not be wandering elsewhere, anywhere.

“I’ve chocolate and orange, tangerine ones. Thermo flask of green tea, so won’t need milk.”

“Henry you are the God-send.”

Divine thrill hearing her say ... *Henry*. Gave her the grub, cup from the flask.

All of what they have like that video with Marilyn singing for JFK birthday.

“Finish them,” I says. “I’d fry up for breakfast.”

In truth not even a crust of toast had passed my lips.

“This was for the emergencies.”

I was that gasping famished, by now I’d have given her a kidney on request.

“I’m going down to see me Mam for few days.” She says.

Wee orange getting sucked by ruby red lips, they’d taste *paradiso*.

God worked His full extra day to make only her.

Instead of taking His rest, because she was worth that.

Now separating us crushed fruit peels, piled there on the table.

“When we get past Kilkenny we can have some wine. I’ve a bottle, I’ll wash out the tea cup.”

Oh no! Let me drink where lips were. Like a kiss. Did not declare, thinking too premature for that thinking.

“How far are you going?” I asks.

“Oh Cork.” With such a pregnant pause. “You know all the way.”

Then back to staring at back garden banged up sheds and hanging laundry. Now really smiling within her mysterious doings.

“So where are you off to?” She asks.

“To the Brothers.”

All the way too.

“Does he live in Cork?”

“Eh no ... pause button fully pushed, then spontaneous. “He’s away in Kerry but he’ll be over. Only the few nights.”

Not asking why am I on the Cork train if he flippin lives over in the Kingdom.

Just one of them things that happen.

“What’s with Kilkenny?”

“My boyfriend was from there.”

She stared away out over the horizon. Now my very heart got all that disturbed.

“He left me.”

Holy Molly!

“Mam will pick me up under the clock in Cork station. I need Mammy now these few days.”

Sported my sympathetic look, best I could imagine to muster. Consumed and invested I was now in this young one’s situation.

“He was such a rat. To me! I even met his parents in *their* house. Maybe I think they did not like me? I’ve not been sleeping a wink ever since.”

“I can’t imagine ... any fella ... not ... like ... loving you.” Says I bold as brass knuckles.

“Do you have a girlfriend in Dublin?”

“Oh no currently unattached”. Says I. “No ball and chain. Playing the field!”

Still speaking English, but observing and understanding cues from another language. Lucky as likely she heard nowt.

“I’ll be sad going through Kilkenny, you’ll likely notice. I’ll have my coat over my head, from Kilkenny down to Tipp in case I see him in the fields, he loves the hurley. I’ll be buried all that

time. He's played at Croke park, even scored twice. That night we were at the Hotel to celebrate! Then after the team with all those groupie girls. After sure we'll have the wine."

Near Kilkenny border the train stopped in it's tracks. From far away in the distance.

"Listen the rooster is crowing! So late." She says.

"So in Cork you'll be off with your brother? Only if you had some spare moments I'd show you the night's life. Some grand spots. Also now so *unattached* in Cork. My own town! Not dating any more hurley players, think they are so special."

So now heading to a non-existent brother with no bother to change at Limerick Junction.

'Cheers!'

As we took sups of Italian wine, her cup borrowed from the buffet car.

"You've big suitcase for few overnights." Rightly she observed.

"I'm bringing a couch for brother's Kerry house."

Like the Tardis.

With that nonsense she full flung her hat at me.

The brain has a life of it's own.

Comes up with stuff.

"Henry you're the real mad cap. My Dad would absolutely love you! You two are exact! Can I see it?"

"Molly you are that crazy! If I take it out sure that old couch could never fit in this small carriage. Block up the whole place." Only skimming and slinging me ad libs.

Do you already take Miss Molly Piper to be you law full wedded wife.

You are correct sir.

Are you sure with certain. 100 times.

Sure I was only busting.

After the wine she propped herself on the seat and dosed off. Do not stare close at the sun they warn. Or this Celtic daughter. Although I'd not look away. Watching her ten painted toes. This for that and then some for me.

*We'd marry by the four faced liar,
church in her city.*

Honey moon by Kenmare.

Fair old pickle putting outstanding Waterford Brothers out of sorts. Run in to Cork was gloomy. Ah sure then I saw it all clear. Sequestered bag and bindle, snuck out. Bolted down the train determined to be off rapid by the caboose. So brave with her wine and conniving ways only designed keeping me from dedications. Brain and heart racing faster than flying Scots man. Then with slowing down knew I was on the right rail. Threw the kit through the door, then a mighty jump onto the grassy bank.

On that flat meadow I spies a church steeple off beyond the trees.

Thinking loud

Look sober up, abandon plans? Or spend days in Retreat. When 'ex' boyfriend' thinks proper and wants back in the picture. I've been down this rail track before. Right now she's all casting about, like it's a relay, pass on sad baton quick. Have me in love with this one then a month more and he's back. Hurley stick to clobber me. Physical and mental. Sliotar stuck in me gob. I've seen them lads on the field all broad shoulders and steely eyes. Girl's adoration for heroes.

*I'd be a pale shadow at best.
Then not even a good bye Henry.*

For once I talked sense.

He'd clobber me any day. Any case I'd slipped my name and number under her bag.

I'm not with burning bridges,

happy pay ferry man's toll.

Palmerston Park swings,

opposite ends of seesaw.

Even monkey bars.

Three Patrons,

on Sunday.

Wishes.

Church

Alone sitting in empty pews, panting from exertions. Finishing a lemon citrus, train tooting in the distance. Parish Father sees me, sits in the seat behind.

"Are ye alright?"

I blustered it all.

"Bit distressed Father, sure I was only with tempted by devil himself this very morning. First thinking she was an angel on the Cork train. Deceived I was, pretty Molly leading me astray."

"Is this your girlfriend now?"

"Father I only wanted to marry her soon as I laid eyes, not two hour ago. On way to the Retreat in Waterford. She wanted us dancing by Cork's night life, seeing she was that *unattached*. No wheel barrow for hills in Cork streets."

"Are ye on drugs or what? Sure you've been drinking."

"Devil at work sending me to that carriage with temptress, me not wanting to deviate. She only laughing on the way, does not like Kilkenny county, loves her parents and wanted to see my luggage. Leaped off the train soon as she sleeping."

“I’d say you’re bit off the beaten track with thinking lad. Are ye sleeping alright yourself?”

“She had me in that trance, overwhelmed! Not even had breakfast, then with the drink.”

“Molly is not Devil’s work, seems you are at a crossroads, young Molly now is mystified. Perhaps still give that road a chance. I’m off to Cork right now, can give you the lift, they’ll be delayed at the Junction anyway.”

Father gave me the blessing, put his hand on my forehead.

“Did you hit your head, significant bump you have under long hair.”

“Hit my head on Frankfort Avenue biking to Solidarity by Three Patrons at night. Bike hit a brick, hooligan put in the road. Groggy but managed the service fine fettle. Swelling better now. I’d been having headaches.”

“Maybe your heart stayed in right spot. Dancing in Cork with a young one better place for you now.”

Aid of fast driving priest got to Cork railway station in perfect time. From a distance there she was under the clock with her mother. Big hugs for them two. Next open arms kissing handsome lad wearing a yellow and black scarf. Kilkenny colours we know. Some granny drops her suitcase, so that shattered I was.

That’s how it was and no less.

Sure feck it anyway.

Summer's Time

Sitting in college caf always counting pennies fascinated listening
to Tony regale from his summer in Wildwood New Jersey!
'drinking frozen daiquiris'

Whatever they are what I wanted. Meanwhile distracted
watching Trish O'Neil in the line at the buffet, seeing those
ribbons in her hair. Problem with Dublin birds always searching
for best, with having loads of creatures better than me. Also
not popular with the lads either, there's that. That summer
shared a shoe box flat in Camden town with parade of school
mates. Word got out some of us rented a dive kip, they flocked
over then with not room to swing a cockroach. As a security
guard I'd work nights, dine on factory vending machines and the
few smokes. Often good for a decent hot shower. Reality with
nothing good happening for 20 year old lad, no opportunities
for female interactions in that big smoke. Work free days out in
Finsbury park bit of sunshine, listening to nearby transistors
digging two favorites 'In the summer time' and 'American Pie'.

All knew the score, cash for college.

Then cover rounds of pints come December.

Otherwise confined to barracks.

Unwelcome when only sponging.

1

Airport, got visa stamped, first in family making trek across the
pond without soaking wet or perish from
starvation. Greyhound bus joined awesome 'automobiles'
streaming into New York city, better than tin pot vehicle yokes

father endured those Dublin winters. Passed decaying Harlem tenement blocks bestraddled with sagging fire escapes. Night sleeping on motel floor, students packed like sardines. Diner breakfast scanned headline in the paper.
'Country brutalized by war'

Lonesome bus to Wildwood, knapsack few scruffed dollars. Boarding house room, hustled gopher job on a carnival pier, mighty \$1.10 an hour! Cash in hand! Wildwood's magnificent Boardwalk stretched for miles. Short order moved to off boardwalk apartment rambling lodgings with lads from Baltimore. Situated over a Carnie side show game.

"Knock 'em bottles down win teddy bear. Hey what about ye? Buck eejits." Hearing that all day, give Belfast lad credits giving value for his dollar. Crowds parading, souvenir shops, record stores, taffy shops and candy floss, ice cream with banana splits. Philly steak sandwiches and hoagies. Sonny and Cher 'I got you babe' filled air from the pier, and barbeque chicken aroma. One of those great fellas drove a Buick Skylark with 8 tracks, Nancy Sinatra 'Boots are made for walking' belting down Atlantic avenue. Awesome machine! Never to forget!

Those bronzed football lads with boardwalk runs every morning. I skinny slice of bacon, round glasses, pimples with a nylon shirt. While every lad over there was a Charles Atlas. Once flush with eighty bucks got bell bottoms jeans, tie dye tee shirts and desert boots. 'Burger with everything, mayo on the side, milk shake then was my go to order. Fish out of water but wanted to be fitting in, now living my shot in America! Amazing lucky! Scott McKenzie's 'San Francisco' had invoked California dreams in Ireland's world. Early morning sun tan avoiding those gladiators. Lucky boys living the life! Wanted to be one of them in New World.

*Only Vietnam horror screwing it all to hell.
Mama's boys to marines, USA
treasure dispatched to paddy fields.*

Far East nightmare descended, infested and consumed minds. From mowing grass, clipping hedges in leafy suburbs destined to defoliate forests of 'Mekong' deltas. Dropped into hideous jungles filled with demon tunnels, ambushed shot at by Viet Cong. Guys who'd been came back damaged, many never returned to their Jersey world. By wars end 57,939 young American souls departed their sad world, families heartache each trying to deal with such loss. Country hemorrhaging their most finest young souls. One Green passport son was fortunate, facing no terror in my free state, small islands mostly don't send sons to foreign war. Only draft from front doors when generations of sons and daughters left holding one way ticket. From our *paddy* fields solitary farmers cut turf bothering no one. Only wishing for farm girls passing by. "Wildwood Central on the Shore radio, 30 degrees in store. Guys and girls get out, strut your stuff. Coming up 'Alone again (Naturally)' with Gilbert O'Sullivan." Morning breakfast frosted donut, instant coffee and honey. Detritus scattered from a night's frat party, upturned shot glasses, empty bottles. Lot of fun happening while I was sleeping, now with feeling like the country mouse.

USA already creating the future popping moon gadgets. Just rescued an Apollo space ship from quarter million miles with astronauts having virtually no air to breath. Only ingenuity masking tape, with bits and bobs available in that tiny

capsule. Rah, Rah, USA, on board with that! Could have hung round Dublin helped my old man's antique business. But New Jersey had surfing, diners, fast cars, Coke machines, drive-in movies with tall girls on skates. Experienced America watching Donna Reed show, Hawaii 5-O and the Monkees.

A believer!

Slot machines with condoms dispensed like chewing gum, then being forever banned in Ireland.

Bar booth evening, cold pitcher between two working mugs, me and new mate Rickey. An artful lodger strutting in red sneakers, peering through purple glasses, long hair capped by a leather hat. Ran dodgem rides, compulsory those times required short haired wig. One leg in a cast got bumped on the job. Observing our friend Rachel chatting at the bar getting free shots. Hoping she'd return alone, girding my loins not wanting to have fisticuffs with other suitors. How it was with babes ocean side in Wildwood.

Hoping get turned on in these my summer days.

"Mike those frat cats forever get the honeys. You getting anywhere man?"

Still looking to find Wildwood hill more green than Dublin.

"Not much trying bars still bit shy really. Jocks tell me stuff like I didn't eat some cereals."

Few Dublin lads already flew home being stressed, going back picking gooseberries on farms.

Dealing with a different world.

Not practiced in their arts.

That's all.

Us being raised on porridge, golden syrup.

Then all the spuds.

Boiled, fried, roasted, often down the chipper.

Left *somenbat serious* girlfriend in Dublin, we'd French kissed on a couch in her Ranelagh bedsit. Maybe have summer flings we decided out of necessity! Wrote and told her I'm like working out on swinging gym ride on the pier, takes shoulder muscle to get going. I'd hammer on with that. Need muscles in land of giants. Improve!

"Mike listen Philly chicks dig jocks man but look everyone got a different vibe man. Got my regular old lady down Cape May, so do not mess around! Not me, no how. Got my scented candle gig goin on, that's my bag man."

Rickey puffed one skinny chest, gave hope in my heart. Boardwalk at night truly young man's delight. Tanned hippy chicks in flip-flops, afternoon ocean frolicking now escorted by Ma and Pa. No chance running loose, long beach 'closed' all night, patrolled by cops in jeeps! Not observed with Garda on Courtown's strand in Wexford.

Glorious Wexford days in July.

Bonfire nights on the beach with cider.

Pirate radio station with the hits.

Not much sex in Ireland those days!

"How you getting round on that leg? Bummer."

"Hey dig it magic pills man." Shook the bottle.

"Okay I'm just drinking beer!"

"Whatever man draft numbers came up. Got this ankle damaged can't go in the army, ain't no Hopalong Cassidy. Only hoping Nixon ends it. Peace with love man. You stashing any cash?"

"Leeds last year worked hard in a bakery, but made no bread! Now here so way better."

“Dig those Who ‘Live at Leeds’. So cool, never got with an English babe but dig their accent man.”

Sometimes it’s annoying.

No more filed half pennies or foreign coins in this meter. Told youse on last warnings.’

Meter would declare: “Glad you dropped in Bob, just going out.”

“Hey man those cat’s been coming since High school, every summer same crap goes down. Rach likes Irish guys, digs you man. You got a shot. Definito. Remember her boyfriend panicked with draft, split for Canada now gone off the map. That hurt her bad.”

“Cool man, cool.”

“Hey gotta get fried chicken. Take it easy, cool man.”

“Peace out man.”

Explained lay of land then split for home.

Rickey boy stay in school. Hippie’s revolution be done and over, having drop out leaders with dead fish followers. Needed my American dream, riding a Harley with the Byrds, find my true love story a Jenny Cavilleri. Drive my Cadillac over the Golden Gate bridge, steak and chips with California red wine.

All that!

Plenty!

Eventually Rachel veered back.

“Got the story my friend Betty Windchuk dated one of those Baltimore boys. My lord above so much rough housing! They said you are odd, all nerdy or something. So want you to vacate!”

“Oh yes did not fit in, talented that way. Can be off putting, awkward. Total status quo types and me talking about Timothy Leary and Marshall McLuhan.”

Even at home most often an odd ball.

“Anyway they’re leaving for Cali in a month for surfing. Those lads parents all big shots.”

“They were having fun! Now me alone again.”
With Rachel staring at me.

*Good on them lads.
Precious summer days,
Girls, Girls, Girls.
Perfumed perspiration,
sweeter than napalm.*

“Only blowing off steam, heavy pressure for boys these days. You’re so not cat’s meow for them. Those Jocks with high jinks I’ll tell you!” She laughed! “At heart bunch of squares no flower power hippies! Surfing beach boys, Jan and Dean style for sure.” She says.

“Yeah so conservative do not dig the great Zappa or Captain Beefheart! But that’s my style!”

“Anyways sorry to say just got this list of their complaints!”
Waved bit of paper and smiled.

“They’d sure some beefs with you! Okay now just trying to help!”

Set up for a right pasting.

“Said kitchen smelt of potatoes!”

Boiled spuds mashed with butter, sorry not accustomed to be dinning out every day. Not flush with that spare cash, then facing winter famine times in Dublin. Between exams will need pints to chill. Otherwise? Every Dublin city pub I know price for the pint. No regular local just get wind of any one with pennies cheaper. Vital!

“Tired of ‘Blue Danube’.”

“Seriously? Favourite from 2001 movie!”

I’d been playing ‘Stranger on the Shore’ forever, when they were out.

“Preachy rants that marijuana scrambles brains. No one asked or needed that lesson! While only busy chasing away girls they were chatting up from the boardwalk! They are athletes and you know would never use drugs.”

“Well certainly that’s true.” Only wished to inform, always being a know it all.

On reflection I’m out of time pompous idiot. Those kids on holidays getting confronted by jackass me? No one needed stupid me involved. Girls and boys so full of life and then meet Dublin Grinch.

Unforgiveable.

I agree.

Very last straw.

There’s even more? How?

“You asked what a little deuce coupe was?”

What would I know?

“Even that bothered them?”

Who are these people? Big cultural divide, I’d my racing bike they’d flashy cars.

“Finally so cut to the chase worse you ripped off their beer! Goodness.”

Rachel laughing out loud.

“Parents stacked cases supplies every weekend. Who’d count few bottles?”

“Now they don’t trust you!”

Rigorous harassing at Liquor store, checking I.D. like it’s Dead Sea scrolls. Been steadily drinking grand pints in Irish/London pubs for years, no problem customer. Should have traveled with approval letters.

Heard one Irish lad informing barman he was legit as ‘his life began at conception’.

Law student of course.

Still spent his pub night on fizzy drinks with ice.

“I’m strange with my bits of Irish!” Then she kissed me. Loner
wretch me left only gasping. Much appreciated!

Out of the blue so changed my mood!

Even being found guilty with such genuine complaints.

“Let’s play pool.” She says.

Dime a game on their small green table. Although she got me
startled with the *ips* from that kiss, feeling bit shaky. When
booze kicked with rock steady hands I cleared tables. Playing
with a well spent youth in Dublin’s snooker halls.

Just!

Let her win.

Stupid!

Ended she owed few bucks, I’d cancel for more playtime! Good
night for me.

Ground floor apartment, hippy girl Rachel lazing on beany bag
listening to ‘Rocket man’. Fiddling with a match stick created
tower sculptor from bits and bobs with glue. Long black hair,
that baseball hat, hotpants and no socks. She ran a busy
boardwalk Jeans and Record store with her brother. I was a
good customer! Maybe my America adventure might not to be
only about ice cold rum. While playing Beach Boys her hand
signal not interrupt, *rapture* with that sound. I remained still as a
mouse. Apartment walls festooned, dayglo posters of Hendrix,
Easy Rider, loved ‘Woodstock to Wildwood, 69’ poster over the
bed, framed copy of Desiderata. Lava lamps, incense burning,
Byrds cassettes galore, not as the crow flies. In Dublin after
watching Easy Rider felt different on that CIE bus going
home. Xaviera Hollander’s book lay open on the table
with Myra Breckinridge ready in waiting. Finished bottle of

delicious Boones Farm only wondering if there was more and how those lips would taste again.
“Rach he’s got to stay here. Rent something.”
Gave Rickey my discrete two thumbs up!
“Crying out loud Michael.” Wide big laugh from Rachel. “Honestly Rick hardly they take anything serious over there, all down the pub have few pints where everything gets sorted. Jersey never Dublin so don’t be messing about. Guys tensed with war ongoing, fine beautiful boys affects us all. Everyone. Terrible this our so dirty war.”
Feeling of angst since from New York city. Rachel bowed her head verge of tears, sleeve dab her eyes, then overflow softly crying. That ancient a/c machine intervened, Rachel and Rickey bonded having consoling bear hug. Gentle Americans at so difficult time. By then I was their intruder.

*Consider each boys life not lived,
girlfriends not loved nor married,
loss of children not born.
Even now so bothers my mind.
‘Peace and love’, trite mantra,
but right on for this life.
No other words.
Only Sad.*

“Needs someplace. Surfs up next month in Cali.” Rickey offered two cents as if he knew those Pacific waves.
“Okay Michael maybe best you need stay away from that boardwalk!”
“Can’t afford to go cut and run, need to make dough, not going back early work in a bakery. Go home skint still owing loan for my airfare.”

By September cash needed for disco birds sparkling wine, taxi to Dollymount strand. Worthy investments.

“How about the supermarket?” From Rickey boy.

“I hear two bucks an hour, need nights 8 to 8. I’ll take you in the morning.”

Crash all day, fair play for big dough. More cash to flash at college afford the lunch. Still feeling doozy, but so aware of Rachel okayness. Captivating chick with that peaked hat.

“Are you bit Italian?” I ask feeling composed as Shakespeare.

“No! Heaven’s sake! New Jersey, South Shore girl. Yea! Only ever lived here. My grandfather Spanish, one from Galway, Connemara someplace, close to those big cliffs. Such lovely cousins in Kimmage near KCR cross roads by Puddle road. Loved visit meeting so many family!”

Tantalizing beauty at 22, knew her way around, eyes to tempt wanting wanton ways. If requested desired to round bases. Deserving good karma when I’m *good* sends me up to bat. Finally.

Weekday nights at the supermarket, tins of Irish stew for sustenance. Rented her uncles attic having a cool sleep with daytime breeze. Weekends Rachel served paella and those inviting frozen daiquiris. Week nights stacked those empty shelves, often evangelical songs on the radio station. One midnight called the station requesting ‘Stairway to Heaven’, had a great chat as they obliged.

With Wildwood beach restrictions, closed by night. Really! Unlike bonfire parties on Courtown strand. That red convertible with racing stripes! Rachel drove like a beast, roaring the Garden State Parkway at night, blasting

‘Satisfaction’, shooting through mosquito breeze. Swim those hot nights on beaches by Sea Isle city, betwixt Wildwood and Ocean city. In sand dunes under Orion’s belt by breaking waves. Having a swim worried about hungry sharks out at night, stayed in the surf. Sand dunes stared at the moon, like moon walkers never expected to get so far. Together we saw young Springsteen, once hitched a ride to the Stones at the Spectrum in Philly. She wore my new Stones T shirt when thumbed rides back down that Jersey Turnpike. Wild times in Greenwich Village with fabulous Velvet Underground and saw Mamas and the Papas.

End of August arrived fast. Finished night shift, two days left for this Wildwood adventure. Rickey sat on the door step. “Heavy news.” Handed me a folded note, plus an airmail envelope. Wow so much attentions. “Peter called from Toronto, she’s gone man. Travelling to Ontario man. That Irish letter picked up at frat boy’s apartment.”

*Dear Michael,
I'd not wanted to say goodbye.
We used up all our time.
Love R*

“Rach and Petey since high school, crying when she left. Took her to the bus terminal. Left this for you.”
Photo album of that New Jersey summer.
Double down Dublin girlfriend Noreen, wrote met a Johnny boy in Courtown’s ballroom. ‘*They’d* drop any stuff at my mothers. Buses like girlfriends leave together, one summer day passing by. Henceforth to live and learn.

Landing in Dublin, knew head to PJ Nelson's Disco that very evening, having catch up to do. 'Hell-bent for leather'. Strut my Jersey tan with cool gear just no Jersey girl. Hopefully leave sand grains on cushions in young one's bedsit. Once Rach sent card of a blissful two at dawn on the beach, after never saw her again. Times pass still give a damn about that Wildwood.

I'd replied.

Had a great time at the concerts!

Never understood how it came to pass. Never forgotten!

2

Previous summer having two weeks in a stone house, isolated down a breen in Connemara. Spending time with my mother, brother and sister no holiday for Dad stuck grinding away in Dublin. Out across Galway bay were cliffs of Moher, three hulks of Aran islands and being surrounded by long deserted tumble down cottages. Our neighbour dear old Mrs. Connolly, told us her two daughters departed years ago to Massachusetts. In her thatched cottage a kettle always on the go over a turf fireside.

"Those colleens never return, sure now they send few shillings to the post office. That's good enough, God bless their hearts and keep them well. A Dhia throcaire beannaigh beirt chailini doibh."

Sitting round her table with homemade bread and salty butter drank mugs of tea with turf *yellowed* water from the well. Nearby dilapidated shack with willow pattern broken cups and saucers on stone floor, emptied picture frames and shattered windows. Roof blown off years long ago on winter winds. Our rented house with a chipped bakelite radio for Radio Eireann, even 'pirate' stations with hits! Down rocky hills to lonely beaches skimming stones into prevailing winds, that ocean we swam with thick sea weed and swarms of jelly fish. Feathered

birds in nooks and crannies but no bikinis on display. Having darkness descend on long evenings, in that gloom reading tattered copy of 'Tarry Flynn'. Playing board and snap card games, drinking delicious flagon of cider. From the dresser drawer grimy chess board, box of wooden buttons supplied for missing pieces. By late evening occasional rosaries recited with mother, then her quiet naggin of whiskey while studying the newspaper crossword. Three-mile hike to village phone, then collect briquettes in pram for chill nights. Church Sunday mornings shawled widows in front pews. Priest sermon in gaelic understood a bit, especially got my attention dire warnings about evils of contraceptives. Under Church pressure Taoiseach famously delayed any legal intrusions, when he put that all "Ar an mhéar fhada".

Only by St John's Eve to see any young people, they arrived for few days from the towns gather and celebrate 'Bonfire Night'. Somewhat to my relief when Dad's station wagon took us all back to Dublin city.

‘Fast Lane Life’

Highfield road, ‘Brits Out’ wall graffiti reflecting 1972 unrest after Embassy burning in Merrion square. Turned up for pub session after, hang out with college girls! Party time! Appreciated Brits TV, penetrated Ireland’s onerous censorship. Next evening Orwell road long black coat, desert boots, cool shoulder hair, got another DJ Gig. Friends drop like flies acquiring girlfriends, aware my brain lacking certifiable adult updates.

What about me?

Half-hearted puberty supplied.

Such angst!

“Music Mike! Country girl party! Let’s Hucklebuck folks!”
Showband aficionado from summer dances in Courtown’s Ballroom. Dublin rag-tail dominated by ‘Top of the Pops’ and accordions. Blue Nun, Mateus full teapot for pioneers. Tipsy cake, fig roll munchies. Vodka bottles a girls do! Lad’s parties BYO and hide ‘em.

“Folks Jim Reeves, Val Doonican, Bachelors, Dubliners, Joe Dolan, Butch Moore, Dickie Rock, the Creatures, beautiful Eileen Reid and Dana, Brendan with Royal! Line up that beats Mersey side. Stepside girls *might* give run around, next Larry Cunningham, Leitrim girl request!”

Flower Power stoners persistent heckle. Cool cats dragged them in, reefers far out for country birds. Oil and water. Stand by hue and cry.

“Jefferson Airplane. Dig it?”

“Velvet Underground man.”

“Grand Funk Railroad, Floyd, Jethro Tull”

All brilliant bands, but needed stick with boss girl’s instructions.
That night.

“Groovy man, I’ll mix it up a bit, we’ve got three plus hours man. Dig it!”

Blasted ‘Whiskey in the Jaro’.

‘Musha rain dum a doo, dum a da.’

“Psychedelics! Backroom set up, beany cushions. Bongo drum, tapping on tubular bell chimes, discuss great Bangladesh concert LP. Hare Krishna peace. Go now.”

No stones left undone with hippy pot-heads. Being professional supplied my bonus box of rocking LP’s, including Doors, Hendrix, Grateful Dead, T Rex.

“Petting zoo mattress #3 vacated! Use or lose, fingers crossed. Stay young not time for Killmenow estate yet!”

Hazards of busy DJ trade!

Dad’s scouring dark bedrooms,

when his work was over!

Nature’s time underway!

Girls be with Boys.

Stray lad,

Rugby Jacko on his tod.

Chick magnet,

as booker in scrums.

Clickedy click!

Always better place to be.

‘Goodnight Charlie boy’.

No touchdown girls!

Nice try.

Females detect ‘desirable’,

spied from early years,

mystical magnetism!

Then lads become ‘boy friends’.

Stepping up.

Hallway rebel gal's gecko eyes exploring upgrades from one
they're snogging.

Changing horses midstream?

Look dance with ones what brung ye.

No jealous brawls!

On my watch!

Finger shoved in my face, ginger hair, red mini-dress. Sassy
swaying package, curves appreciated, legs wrapped in
satin. Those eyes!

"I've a bone to pick with you Michael! Smarty pants telling on
me about bedroom lights!"

In dark, blind feeling the blind!

Not seeing what yokes each got.

Mucho excitement!

"Oh it's Noreen Daly!" Now her very maggot.

Hauled on carpet, my shoulders pushed against bedsit
wallpaper. Random occurrence week prior us lads attracted as
hot flames for motts party rumors. Victorian door knocked,
only hollow hall sound. Bulb switched off in '*bedroom*'
window. Occupants not home *being off in paradise*. Fair
play. My mouth yapped, Rathgar pints fortified spreading
wrong date! Downtown dancing more fruitful, not roaming
empty streets. Hot spots Sloopys, Arthurs, Zhivago, Four
Provinces.

"Looking to party." Guilty as sin.

Once never bothered '*girls*', separate schools each with enough
challenges. Berlin wall separation unleashed suddenly
mesmerized. By each other.

“Can you now request a dance?”

Her *give away* stare intended for mischief. Hearing yak-yak from lads with steady motts, boy’s understanding advanced. Testosterone long on standby loitering about as stationary fire engine. Now kicked up, like sliding down that pole. During ‘Sad eyed lady of the Low Land’ seemed she was searching for a missing rib. No dog belly rub. Pulled me closer.

*All jacked up,
pumping hormones.
Connect to fit as once
Africa and America.*

“Only till midnight like Cinderella.” I says.

Unless Superman rotates us backwards.

“Turn into a pumpkin?”

“Brother warned don’t get some bird’s perfume on his jacket, needs it tomorrow. He’s useful locating mushrooms.”

“You’ve other jackets?”

“Nothing fits now with muscles.”

“From Dublin bay, *yummy tummy!*”

Given her plumage this mocking bird knocking socks off lads. With vodka gollops I went brassy too soon!

“What did boarding school girls do for showers?”

“Goodness need that to know!”

Knee jerk gave jolts to me gadgets.

“We’d umbrellas. Now happy laddy?”

Tread lightly!

Dummy.

Avoid red card, not mattress hoping or hopping. Respect her lay on that landing.

“Michael put on Leonard Cohen’s LP, sit together.”

*Hard yards working,
get acquainted.
Invest time,
for tomorrows.
Need rainbow's end.*

On couch cushions, turntable with 'Bird on a Wire'.
"Can I say something?" She whispered.
We kissed!
Rattled me as
Quasimodo's belfry.

Karen Carpenter 'Solitaire' last dance, with moon beams.
"Come back tomorrow."
"Yeah pick up the gear."
"Michael for *me*."
"Oh sure!"
That two.
Not alone,
everything changed,
kissed by front door,
key to seal our deal.
Doing a line!

Grand master
speed ahead.
Mind and body.
On board.

"Sorry again I've big mouth."
Although 'twas rabble rousing got me here.
"Do you know what gets big in my mouth?" She says.
"Teeth."

“Bubblegum.”

Red ribbon gifted from her hair tied on my thumb.

“Remember me tomorrow.”

Stone-step tripping more than hippies. Country girls seeing stallions and bulls, knew more than city lads. She opened my eyes.

2

Sunday morning parents at church, feeling anxiety slugging Ma’s sherry. Peeling spuds, boiling sprouts, whipping cream, finger burned flipping chicken.

Then *she* called.

“Michael! Where are you? Can you come? Now!”

Heaven’s sake. Time and place? Planted on my plate. Lucky raining no need to shower. Hot oven off, emotions baked raw. I left a note.

‘Selected to play ball!’

Spearmints from corner shop, ran Roger Bannister mile, steps to door.

Got my shoe in,

Rathgar’s worm caught a bird.

3

Arm in arm over Orwell bridge, girlfriend feeling. Way behind being chaste as virgin pina colada at last birthday.

Doing a line.

An item.

Tigum!

Thrilled!

Dodder riverbank kids fishing. TK/crisps from bridge kiosk, wandered through playing fields. Sporty lads orange

juice/biscuit break. Wondering from what earthly bits I'd gathered for bait.

"Gorgeous come, play?"

Brazen goalie. Scoundrell! Newsflash lads motts don't grow on trees. Sometime Nature throws lads a *bone*.

"Sinbinned, last night mortalers all the way." Says I.

"Has me tired. Sorry boys." Licked salty lips. "Legs still wobbly. Know how it is!"

Display for bowzers. Goalie's giant gloves, knowing with that mug never felt nothing. French kissed by Dartry waterfall, seeing eye to eye. Feeling that tongue, barely kept hands to myself.

"Fancy chicken." Says she.

Fingers tingled, feeling addicted.

Dodder pub ex-school lads on high stools. Never bothered with me, now having eyes agog. Roundwood babe on display.

Top of the world.

How is your life?

In your face losers!

I'd not turn my wrist

give 'em no time of day.

Table river view, great grub.

"Michael tell me about you."

"Not so much." Notes if you fancy. "I do like 'Letter from America' with Alistar Cooke."

"What?"

"I'm also very active!"

But less said the better.

"Sure that Waterford music festival, hitched with sleeping bag and tent. Rain from heavens after the concert, had to get back over the bridge to camp site. Pub man supplied a fertilizer bag cut for arms and head, grand style over long bridge. Tent a

wash out, lucky farmer's shed stacked with fire wood. Got a fire going. Well needed.

"With friends?"

Nothing on tip of my tongue.

Walk most planks alone!

One Achilles heel.

Anonymous.

"Loads, jarred singing that night! Great craic! Love Donovan, Lindisfarne, Pentangle, Incredible String band, Fairport Convention. Need knowing for the Gigs. Versatile! Sure now it's all College lads hanging out with. That's how it be."

Out of the blue heard her softly sing. Like Marianne Faithful.

"Wow you should be in a band."

"Oh I'm that shy. Let me tell you! Since school times our choir gets together at the church. Favorite times! I'm lead singer! Even have boys join these days. You must come hear us!"

That had me in tears of joy!

"Michael where did you go to school?"

"Christian Brothers big in sports almost got to Lansdowne." Eyes flickered, scanned my slim self.

"You played rugby?"

"I meant getting tickets for Ireland games. Got cut at 14."

"Were you upset not to play?"

"With recuperations had to be careful, lost my spot."

"What you talking about?"

"Circumcised. Family doctor insisted, should have done earlier."

"My lord never heard anything like that."

"School yard yobs calling me Mister Shorty."

"Goodness so cruel, circumcision?"

"No! Slow puberty, last summer got regular."

Arms-length crush watching on Courtown's beach bikini

Barbara.

Rings on her fingers

bells on her toes,

where ever she goes.

Boy to man now that's a trip facing head winds and turbulence! Electric razor at 16, thanks Dad! Only ever used to trim the cat.

"Here's a good joke!" Tells her.

"Armstrong and Legge made first ha'penny.

Cost Arm and a Leg.

See!

Lass confused glancing about, better I'd shut it.

"We'd teacher Mister Bates got such ribbing! Imagine! Girl bullies!"

Gulped beer, wrong way down.

"Desert?"

"Love sweeties but Dad's picking me up for dinner."

Return to placid Glen da Loch.

See!

"Now who's this lovey dovey!" Busybody Ma owed sweet tidings. "God love her are you keen or what? Not for her I'd not know if your Dad paid phone bills! Bring her so we can proper meet, sounds lovely. Don't be having her hanging, well look you've world's to choose!"

"Noreen works Tourist agency on Saint Anne street. Don't see her much, away home every weekend." Driven me nuts round the bend.

Whole world!
Ma wise up.
Her son?
Who she kidding,
no other's dialing.
Does she know me
at all?

Noreen's playground with Bray, Greystones, Brittas,
Arklow. Hayfields and shifting sands. Fit lads abound galore
never *lonely one*.

Fair play.
Whatever this deal.
Entitled.
Fly off the handle?
Not me.
She was something else.
Take what I can.
So valued my days.

Couch kissed, often flat mates impeded. Discovered why *man of the world* Columbus gambled that likely Earth was not flat. Anxieties having Science exams hovering, as Georgie Best more than one goal. Now between several bales of straw. Early *giant shoulders* lower and lucky. First telescope, new moons! First microscope, tiny bugs! Navigation! Bump into enormous Australia filled with koalas! How to miss them? What's left? Quarky quirky world, now you see now you don't. How study them wee articles?

Under duress,
under stress,
Her red dress

haunting me mind.

No less.

Exams had me out of commission. Damper on those couch ways. Gratifications so long delayed. So what's new with that?

If still in hot woods, playing with fire?

While Nature abhors a vacuum.

6

"Take the bus on next Saturday, parents away at a wedding in Clare. I know what you've waited for. Well so have I!" Noreen's invitation was clear. In that Valley we'll make out like bandits!

7

'Cead mile failte'!

Glen Da Loch bus, seats for Celts filled up by tea time banana. Now hauling ample bum tourist, given my bumpy *half* seat ride!

"Check ruins!" String bean yelled!

Neck on that one! Our sacred Celtic places?

"Where hermit Kevin throw wayward girl in lake." Tourist request lake-side performance.

"Sure Ireland don't have them kind of thing." Driver explained.

Handed a few bob, got his tired 'slainte'. Tread boreens to Daly's, lads lashing sliotars. Bit nervous having fig leaves fall, getting deflowered!

Note on bungalow door.

"Michael problem! Go across to Paddy Fhynn's for night? Spare bed. Explain after. Leave few bob for Paddy? See you! Back in Dublin!"

From over road flat cap neighbour slouches in wellies.

“Mick is it? Howya I’m Paddy. Are you right? Missus says Noreen’s down Rosslare waiting on the ferry.”

“Why?” Puzzled I am.

Recognized *bleeding obvious* shrug. Sheep dogs obey cock of head, whistle or pointed finger. Now like chicken talk to duck with me.

“Young one!”

Understand? Life on farms? Free spirit, heard ‘cousin exact same only worse’. Say no more. Feeling as loaf tossed off their Sugar hill.

Where that yoke sprout up from?

Wifey dig in his ribs.

“Jainey-mack, Mick don’t mind him. Spare bed if stuck, share room with Luke young fella. Lays off tea time eggs be fine.” Says she.

“Snore to wake ancient monks!” Says Paddy. “Odd yokes pass stormy nights, Vikings still roaming! Sure enough.”

Buy that man pint day or night for such tales.

“Fiver for night. Rashers, toast, pot of tea.” She says.

Paying me the fiver?

Jeez Louise.

In which ‘Da-loch’ to leap and drown?

6

Needed a quick getaway. Thumbed a lorry, suffering bends like underwater aquanauts. Cliff walk pub beneath Bray head. Desperate feelings. Glass of porter, whiskey chaser.

Trips to Bray for rides.

Beach trains, peddle boats, chair to Eagle nest see Aunt’s Hawth house.

Mother’s time bathing for ailments, lumbago, gout, pleurisy.

Never no broken heart.

High on the sauce in deep cups tell soused rotund fella.

“Bird blew my mind, now vanished.”

“Chin up old man, never for *granite*. Still fish in Seven seas. Wish to be young on the town! Never dancing night fantastic under ballroom lights. After school hooked right out of the gate. Briquette bales traveled more with hotter times.”
Drained his pint.

“Cod and chips for missus, otherwise dog housed. Too-dal-oo.”

Man with missus, no one missing me.

Lakes don't have tides, never be raising any boats.

Trust in her.

Hay roll!

Sky in the pie.

Only cold turkey

as Ma's Christmas.

Ha!

Seaside hut crashed sheets to the wind, nowt blowing my sails.

Slip in water or stepping stone.

No warning of calamity Jane's.

Messing up my soul.

Thunder storm, furry yokes sniffed, petrified me as auld bench itself.

Red sun peaked again.

No gra gal mo croi.

I 'heard'.

Young whippersnapper!

More days in store.

No show Noreen, I dreamt of Lisdoonvarna. Holyhead ferry
behind Dalkey Island, short leap to Davy Jones locker.

*Knowing what's missing,
snuggle and kiss.
On my horizon
future at Camden dances.*

Being busy tumbling off the rails, on that Dublin train trailing
more negatives than paparazzi.

*No blinkered short-sighted eye of mine ever again set foot near that wench,
left with feral dogs sniffing.
Came close, not as wanted.
Like Sweepstakes.*

*End of my rope fretting.
Felt 'outa here'.
What time Saint Peter's gate open?
Maybe best to wait.*

7

Rathgar chastened by burdens.

*Nobody wanted me.
First love over,
Tossed sudden as
barrel over Niagara.*

“Back soon! How was Wicklow and Noreen?”

Mother in the kitchen, wishing celebrate something for her
life. Reward labors vicariously from slim pickings. To meet girl
has son in a tizzy. Justify for her decades of devotion.

“Bit of rain, nothing else.” Pathetic pillock.

For her soul reported yesterday's weather.

"Good enough."

Mother's intuition' created from love and God's grace, knew
don't poke. Another *weak* ending, given previous failed times.

Son's mental catastrophe bar none.

"Darned brother's jersey, fit for you."

Nowt phone messages.

"Had grand time across in Howth. Aunt sent a fiver, that
disappointed. Send the postcard. But all happy hearing visiting
your Wicklow girl! Filling us with suspense."

Lost half a tenner, usual expected for visiting.

"Slice of Howth ham and pineapple for sandwich."

"Thanks."

"Grated cheese for baked spud. Play your cards you'd be on for
Howth. Butter her up. Spot over the bay! She's on Retreat
next month."

All went south when I wandered outside the pale.

Sand grains down plug-hole marking time left in my
direland. Facing cattle boat haul to Blighty.

Life bare as shadow of an Autumn tree.

Just twigs.

Nicked mother's helper pills. Dialed a '*girl friend*' seeking
understanding. Empathies you'd anticipate.

"What you deserve."

Off the bat. Need empties stick with milkman.

Ever-after

avoided Wicklow memories,

all lakes and mountains,

sting worse than fish hook.

Bell chimed, Una by that door step. Swear hashish odor still detectable.

“Flower how are ye! She’s gone on by Dolphin’s barn.”

“Where?”

“Aye Donal boyfriend, once a right Romeo and Juliet. Now look I know she herself was that surprised. Working in Wales the year or so, mad daft for him, had grand van for boxes galore!”

Eyeing *‘that window’* might fling a brick.

“Once before he was always here, gobbled everything not slice or cornflake left. Them two yokes yakking all night, I’d ear plugs. Size of him eating us out of house and home. Not a bean or salmon tins? With skinny you we’d grand sleeps.”

No bit of paper available, wonky biro pen sausage fingers, scribbled numbers on my arm.

“Oops that’s six not a one. You’d be calling some other one!”

Rubbed it off with that licking finger.

So shoot me now.

“I’m that stuck on her.”

“Right love. Girls call him Ducker Donal. Showed up loaded to gills I tell you, with cash from construction! Did very well over there! Told me herself he’d be getting nothing till promises made. Of course with you in her back pocket I believe that, only for Lent. Obviously.”

Noreen’s head on her shoulders.

“Sent postcard saying I’d be in Wicklow. Did she leave nothing?”

“Ach she did now. Upset if I didn’t give it to you.”

“Right.”

Five minutes shuffling, box of records plonked on step.

“Do you have a car now?”

“Bike.”

“She knows where to call, still parents ... down the road?”
“Off to Congo with U.N., call Kinshasa barracks collect.” With
that babbling I was.
Giving me one wonky eye.
“One more thing they’re to be married.”
Rub it in doncha.
“Bridesmaid! So starving now! Gorgeous fella having looks to
spare.”
Bilge hastened disgruntled departure. Needed pub time
desperate, not where we’d spent evenings. Substitute drafted to
play, I’m truly a decrepit man. Rebel fluttered her plumage, now
nested in posher place.
*Wicklow windy hills, take her in my arms,
feel breath against my cheek, tell her I love her.
All never did.
Only messing on Rathgar’s couch.
Push and shove musical chairs
winner and whiner.
Cut off at the knees.*
Spent those weeks with Mike Heron songs. Better if I’d never
seen her at all? No, no, not that! Overall lesson learned, on a
bender leave one beer in fridge, morning happy showing iron-
will control.

*They forever meeting by waters,
I sat by Dodder alone.*

9

Childhood sweethearts married, niece played violin. Baby girl
out on time.
La de dab.

Kept going on various trails. Years later outside that church. Poor box notes deposit, down *that* aisle, usurped those years ago. Imagined packed pews, rafter pipe organ playing.

*Suit pressed lit few candles,
No priest, or proud parents,
nuptials or celestial celebrations,
Only that travesty day.
No organ playing or plaintive fiddles
only one shawlie witness.*

My folks had passed, not down this aisle. No ‘Wicklow Day’ they’d anticipated, only wood creaking, missed ailing father’s cough. Feeling woe-be-gone but got up fancy. Banns never read for such a winter’s day, walked alone. Shawlie took shaky photo, turned out clear as I was shaking. Spied bold as brass plaque on the pew, ‘Noreen and Donal were wed’.

No organ play for me that night.

Of a mind linger longer, with Stations of the Cross. Church bell toiling, traveler lady accosted me.

“Change for my diabetes, dear sir. Few young ones needing corn flakes and the milk.”

Handed a tenner.

“You’re a sad lad.” Still. “Priest here Saturday for confession. Do you have sins with you?”

“I was okay with marrying.”

Bit banjaxed since, trip a stepping stone or walk on by. So I used to love her. What good is that?

“of all words of tongue and pen, saddest are ‘It might have been’.”

*By instinct migrating birds leave
make new again some other place.
Knowing lots about some things.*

*Twigs, dawn and come November.
Why keep returning like bad penny?*

‘Look At Us Now’

*Flea's life by elephant's tail end,
flew random as they are wont.
Declared if to query!
‘What's an elephant?’
‘Never seen such a one!’*

Lunatic Knob from young days anonymously broadcast I'd been *total dunce* in High school, maliciously classified ‘slow learner’. Held back, take longer to answer which versions to jam or get smart laughs. Once our nefarious revelations confined to lavatory stall wall. There's no need to keep banging on about it. Now plugged in computer jokers having dumb opinions, career damaged then having ‘doubting Thomas’ girlfriend read. Got shoved ‘out of here’ by those sexy but spiky high heel boots! Once caught her eye, now cut loose having departed to Honolulu or someplace daft. After had me gone all madcap. Still strive to stay active with my ‘Mill-waukee’ thousand step recommend. Every place grasping for peaceful straws tramping thru’ farmer's orchard fields. Head held low under water even when tides out by Sandymount. Never her dream boat so no blame with seeking better, it's what we do natural. I departed *Booterstown* stuck ages in *Monkstown* while eyeing ‘Greatest Off All Towns’ *Goatstown*. Take a bow, perhaps easy to claim only idle boast. Our world with kicking and screaming edges forward, an upward trajectory. God willing and by those abilities He granted Homo-sapiens things improve, useful stuff happens. Reliable ‘Fire’ for instance, ever try consume raw spuds? Praties only for us. Played role in my life surviving solitaire, mashed with butter and beans! Needs must when they just up and skedaddle when not a baby washed.

Life's mysteries.
Eventually in the world,
Best philosophy.
Things get better!

With us living beyond even science fiction lives.

Vital discoveries on hold, wait for future

generations?: Global history more focused on terminating biology by war-machines, horrendous psycho-terror torture devices. Devastating scurvy disease one low hanging fruit treated and cured. ‘*Go suck lemons,*’ order for sailors. Scurvy busy hindering long distance sailing. Advice long time in coming, they’d missed that boat through ages, resulting in deaths of many. Unleashed thereafter ‘*Limey’s*’ sailing all about busy building an Empire! If they all could be lemons, well maybe not. Not my business but there are 135 pyramids, maybe extra under Antarctica ice. With 118 in Egypt, many sealed for ages right after construction. Were ancient big shots busy *squandering nations resources* making vain glorious Monumental for themselves? Giant objects admired or not fully understood? If nation’s attentions out of focus, leave so much undiscovered. This enlightened age keeps generations of research scientists gainfully employed. Human beings are good at sciences, evidenced by our lives. Universities stacked to gills by what’s been revealed all solid hard earned, evidence contained by miles of book shelves. Biology investigations seeking nitty-gritty, knocking cellular doors, create step up inroads. Constant finding smaller yokes waving ‘catch us if you can’. With barely misspent pennies. Who among us could live Victorian times, 1820 to 1914? Scant ~110 years before. Folk’s photos from those times with young ones? Fear in gaunt eyes,

they'd nothing only poverty. With us so spoilt! Highest ever on the hog! Intolerant of getting to grips with gifted life on the planet. Complaining! Not only waiting in rain for crowded bus. Having favourite TV show cancelled with news of dreadful events happening to others far away. Place's so earthly foreign never knew we had it until spotted by Hubble. Plane to Spanish's beaches delayed! Off for two weeks paid vacation in the sun. Oh Mercy! Irritated searching dairy products for New Zealand meaty chops. Then 'sold out'. Unacceptable! How that happens? Their journey to your dinner plate a mere 11,554 miles! (Ireland to New York is ~3,100 miles). That '*overnight book delivery*' took four days! Such anguish! What am I paying for? Then some fortunate sleeping in beds high up in long hauls. No one predicted such luxury for us plebs. E-mailing all wily nilly no postage required. Living better than Pharaohs, 'twas mighty inventions got us here. Well with some flaws in this system, much entertainment at home making people shut in quiet and lonely. Hurry roll out best robots, something to talk, have a laugh and even cuddle.

Change Routes!

Model T for horse.

Phone for telegraph.

Tissues for billowing handkerchiefs.

Boreen to highway.

Light bulb for candle.

Valve to transistor.

Girl friend 'OK, you'll do'.

For now!

Pocket Calculator: Unheralded yet consequential, by *magical* appeared in 1971. My dream come true, put noticeable spring in my steps. Many great inventions combined to create the device. Imagine when first turned on get 2 plus 2

= 4? Such cheers! Debatable but probably greatest yoke since first wheel with or without a barrow. I'd severe dose of Math dyslexia at school, posh way of declaring 'dumb', cannot count those ways. One fell swoop Math nightmare obliterated, arithmetic's tyranny *et fini*. Trusty machine now 'solar powered', festooned by fancy symbol keys many never pushed, not prone having digit errors or not carry numbers, no stressed limits. Reasonably functioning citizen so when needing *cos, tan, sin, log or square roots*? No clue what they are, nor use. Never since fancied *roots*, garden or canals. Then that question?

*Use or lose challenge,
healthy have neurons do sums!*

Don't care, suffered too much.

Fully embrace electronic short cuts!

Heartfelt thanks for that!

You'll never take calculator from my hands. Taking it even Heaven bound!

Mental multiplying beyond 12×12 uncharted territory, only savants doing 152×279 for kicks. None so smug as number wizards, lads with heads for that game, could unaided figure whatever 'X' demanded with chalk stick on black board. In class with them had me insecure. Long division/multiplying with pen on paper, now reserved for tricks at nerd parties. Slide rules abandoned, such yokes invented in 1622, still utilized by Apollo moon lads in the sixties. Wow! One lunar ruler fetched \$77,000 likely glides smooth, despite brushing with moon dust! 'Slide-rule makers' you ask? Dismissed fancy calculators passing fad, check calculated odds? Well no, still assembled! Niche market? Perhaps old geezers resistant to have proud rulers abandoned on the shelf. Limited ability at school never designed accommodating such things, loaded already with Latin and Gaelic. BTW what's with

geometry? Know his name *Pythagoras* embedded in brains like worm in apple. Greek born in 570 B.C., milked triangles for posterity. Why having *most* better things not invented? Potato crisps within his grasp, you know once bitten! Could have cornered entire Med market.

PTSD warning!

"In a right angled triangle the square of the hypotenuse is equal to the sum of the square of other two sides."
Got it now?

Rumors after this revelation sacrificed an ox. Verify difficult, but man wins as every school kid knows his name. *Once bearing never forget.* He'd done other stuff, reported not to indulge in 'pleasures of love'. Sparing times for two bare hands. Think arithmetic teachers obsolete? No chance, career *arsenal* protected, multi-cornered by other incomprehensible markets. Stock in trade.

When you think worst over.
Then waiting!
In your face and bad dreams.
Algebra, trigonometry, statistics, geometry.
Fruits from the poisonous tree.

Biting more than I could bew.
Ireland isle of Saints and Accountants.
How we ended up!
Count profits of briquette bails on trucks.
If math intolerant off you go.
Ride waves, no parting tears.

After gravity travails Newton delivered calculus, who among asked for that? No longer allow us floating all about, now back

grounded in sweats facing bizarre maths. Better if he'd taken sabbaticals, enjoyed soaking sun's rays in Blackpool. Share cocktails with fair maidens, relax for once. Callous fellow bamboozled by alchemy's promise, bogged down *coal to gold*. In reach? Sure then we'd all be on easy street. Then imagine price of coal? Unsettling efforts in his times ran aground turned to cinders. Isaac! Nuggets only buried underground or in streams. If married such nonsense avoided, get *divorced* (no chemistry), switcheroo noble gold to base coal.

Chronovisor: Fact or myth debate continues, want to be real science! Pellegrino Ernetti, Benedictine monk created device kept in Vatican could '*it's claimed*' observe events, '*see through time*'. Includes visions of Jesus Christ Last Supper and Crucifixion. Device dismantled, buried in Vatican archives. Should be selling like baker's dozens! We'd be addicted more than any Internets. Checking endless events. Happier times first obviously before *she* left and on Courtown beach years previous. First pint of porter by Liffey that concerned about futures. Was well right to be worried. Take your pick, Brendan Behan and James Joyce, untold 'Finneghan's wake' and 'Borstal boy' yarns. Fierce Viking long boats, brave Brian Brou's battle of Clontarf in 1014 at age 73, Ireland High king since 1002. Check GPO heroes, 1916. Saint Patrick and shamrocks, Daniel O'Connell, Michael Collins adventures. Saint Brendan standing on ocean's whale island. Gladiators dreadful mayhem in Colosseum. Having such on tap never vacate domicile except for gargle, working for the wages. People at Pillar's stump in 1966, screaming. *'You'd blow it all to hell', now how will we meet? At 'An Lar', where's on this earth is that yoke?'*

Me and latest bird always 'see you by the Pillar!' Where else? Phoenix Park at the Zoo? New birds meeting only hit or miss, met from disco pints of porter on board, never by light of

day sure *'is that her?* Lost with few coppers for phone box. After that O'Connell street bridge served for many break ups or cruel stood ups, bus home feeling lonesome. More waters under the bridge.

'Sure never seen you, did you have a hat, scarf or something?'

Time Travel: Look teleporting books through air, like nobody's business, not science fiction? Who on earth figured words flying in formation, not jumbled? Declares anything possible. Dubious as flinging unwanted paperback over cliffs of Moher dashed to rocks below, soaking but still read pages in order? Now with lads returning from futures. One visitor arrested in 2003 for suspect stock market trades. Portfolio valued hundred million in few months. Confessed came from year 2200 then abruptly high tailed! Likely departed loaded with gold and gossip, sod all else. Glad to be off with acquired riches, back for diamonds later. Reported 1937 painting "Mr. Pynchon and the Settling of Springfield," fella watching his *smartphone*! That's not right! Who's calling him? If travel back portals *open* I'm carrying stash of solar powered calculators, plus jar of penicillin. Not needing whatever's snake oil cures. Electric kettle useless, only weird alien static reception on radio. Impress ancient Kings and Queens toast of Europe or burned for witchcraft. Ancient painting and sculptures displaying *handbags* held by figures, mystified historians over ages. Depictions 'World Over', earliest Göbekli Tepe in Turkey, 11,000 years ago, also Iraq, central and south Americas. My contention *handbags* held calculators that fit like a glove. Intentioned Johnny Appleseed time travelers distributed caseloads of stuff. Handy in market place comparing mango cost dealing unscrupulous merchants. Notice handbags with contents never left abandoned in tombs. Valued! Like Ma out at the shops finding bargains.

Far fetched?

Wild Speculation?
No proof so not proven in error.
Perhaps helped engineer giant monuments.
Replace clunky Antikythera mechanism,
Greek 'computer' device.
Cog wheels lost in sea.
Rusting.

Miraculous Spiral Staircase: New Mexico 1852, Loretto Chapel now completed, Nuns required to climb to their choir loft, encountered ladder problem, flawed design space narrow. Their Architect had passed away. Nuns prayed together for solutions. With mule and tools hero appeared on door step, announced he'd solve their problem. Nuns delighted! Carpenter worked three months 'privately' as insisted. Once stairway completed he vanished, no name or payment requested! Result truly unique double helix structure, wood pegs no nails, 33 superb steps. Even now marvel to behold. Convent wondered if 'twas created by Saint Joseph the Carpenter himself?

Crop Circles: More to this phenomena than meets the eye? With ~10,000 total reported circles from fields all about. Not beating around the bush, perhaps not all hoaxer's shenanigans? Not all crop circles. Perplexed and intrigued by complexity, brief times for complex appearance, 'tis open field for investigations. Who has that time to waste with costs of living? Greetings from 'some-place' else getting mixed up and tarnished? I've seen patterns in my dandelion garden, 'cut me', alleged crafted by fussy neighbor. Golf putting lawn acceptable, not with yellow bits. Suspect Nature head of that game, know what needs to do experienced Springs over long ages. Relentless killing 'weeds' with poison ends in rivers and lakes. Stop that!

Electron Microscope: Each day labs open for business, facing intense competition. Biology cannot follow maps or rules. Biologists made enhancements to improve lives, should be celebrated like music band heroes? Where would we be without them? Suspect not only white coat laundries in despair. Had a hand early insisting doctors wash even skilled surgeon hands. Photos of disease ravaged distressing disfigurements and past times with stinking cities, research pulled us where we are today. Cherish all that. *You never knew had it so good.* Big instruments seeing tiny things. Game changer use ‘*beams of electrons*’ that’s for real! Finding meat on bare bones, fresh as untrampled fallen snow. How they do that? That will upset the apple cart in it’s high time. Now hitting nails on the head, extract cellular info from most difficult yoke on the planet where others could not. Unless encounter ‘*border line prying limits, getting too smart-alec nose*’? Not as coal mines ‘dig it out lads, get hands dirty’. Planets birthing giants easier having cells big as ping-pong balls. Robert Hooke in 1665 first see and tell, after 360 years cells remain mysterious! Best news scientists forty years ago knew less, even big-shots missing stuff. Still *unknowns* vastly more than what’s *discovered*. Many old skulls contain brains wracked from careers trying, spend retirement days winding down playing bingo, ‘*Two fat ladies 88*’. Bench instruments getting constant upgrades in knowledge pursuit not like moon explorers abandoned for nigh on 56 years. They say Hooke *cantankerous*, nowadays biologists strive be ‘first’! Become national treasures. Who else going to call? Humans constructed by 200 unique cell types, even appendix and tonsils. Working together allow us saunter hither and thither mouthing off having garish opinions. Nowadays fewer souls dedicate lives figure what our Creator designed in 7 days and flourished through the ages.

First cell designed to cut loose, roam free. All life formed from that cell.

Ask how you ask, then ask who you are, well why do you live? Mind your business.

Conquering scourge of dreadful tobacco: Insidious and horrible outed as a deadly killer. In 1964 Surgeon General of the U.S concluded cigarettes cause of lung cancer. *Tobacco* they say *preventable* cause of disease. Delicate lungs designed to absorb oxygen from air, cannot deal with tar deposits from smokes. Stop cigs save your life. WHO estimate one in five people on the planet used tobacco in 2022, down from one in three in 2000. In Ireland 10% smoke every day, 76% support banning sale of tobacco. In response to *softening* sales, industry in 1950s introduced filters. *That should fix it!* Many ancestor generations devastated by smoking. Eradication cannot come quick enough.

‘Zoopharmacognosy’: describes jungle primates self-medicate eat distinct leaves treat various ailments. We but Johnny come lately, having them leading us to identify useful plants. Under investigations from observing Chimps new medicine! Anti-microbial and inflammation! Most days our pet mutts realize kind Vet nurse in white coat makes things better. After that *scary* needle injection. That’s an ‘even steven’!

Brighter Sky: Astro lads have it made in the shade. Closer look at Galaxies from billions of years ago, busy photons, never tired or old, travel for millions of years. James Webb telescope finding life indications from atmosphere on *nearby* planet K2-18b, well it’s 124 light years away. Best let them come, explain how! Columbus first trip to New World took two months! Now travel on wonderful Aer Lingus. We got to the moon, it’s right there, three days sat in a rocket. Our dear neighbor at 225,623 miles (1.25 light seconds!). Question what took us so long? Mars is 420 times further. How did we imagine there were Martians? With any sense never visit Mars in the flesh, dust storms, dry as fridge after St Patrick’s

day. Physics tied with *string theory* knots, now 'Big Bang' in doubt, perhaps more likely series of smaller 'Bangs'. Remain flexible, so glad I was useless at Physics. Once Arecibo telescope in Puerto Rico was bees-knees then decommissioned and fell to ruin. Still dear old functioning friend Hubble, not yet a relic from great fun times. All our efforts made easier if aliens only showed up reveal everything, seems that's not how galaxy knowledge shared in this Milky Way. DIY place. Is there a Universe library, can we borrow? Alien *biology* fat lot of good to us if different, best stay hidden away in moon craters, btw think *we see you*. Rules of engagement Star to Star having strings attached. Try do no harm, with negative ramifications. Suspect agreements between them and our 'elite leaders'. *Betters*. Not appear before us, due to worldwide disruptions, upsetting *apple carts*. *Like how Eve and Adam got us in this pickle*. Aliens with knowledge of previous times, monitoring through ages. May control 'Black Knight' satellite, expose *too* much. Remember Cronovisor dismantled, so much blabbermouth revealing better not broadcast. Not bang on about loads of Earth's history with humans. Having giant 'cultural' events get upended. Dear to people's existence, after only hells bells to pay.

'Prof tell us how life works?'
Quick even yesterday too late.
Here's a widow's mite for your trouble.
Life from no life requires that spark!
Agnostics belly up?
Get off the fence!
Surely!

Genome: In 2022 ‘*sequence of human genome 3.2 billion base pairs*’ revealed, will lead to dramatic advances with novel disease treatments. We’ve crossed that Rubicon! Gets to heart of the matter, from pioneering work of James Watson and Francis Crick. Things picked up now right galloping as never before! By Hooke and by Crick (et al) discoveries soldier on! Move at faster clips. All benefit, even when ridiculed working with fruit flies, bacteria/yeast. Species related when advances made, good for Goose and Ganders. Even Hen’s teeth. Can’t be messing willy-nilly with humans, put a lid on that. Still unknowns causing catastrophic illness. In time all revealed? Doing best we can. Never fear. So far no stop signs with laps to go.

Paintings: Historians need state precisely what things are, no problem with interpretations. Everything needs Rosetta stone. We’ve seen confusions. Back of paintings artists must state who’s depicted, portrayed and why, plus artist state of mind. Not be salivating over Mona Lisa’s thinking or why Norway guy screams from the bridge. Picasso and Dalí off limits, let them alone, leave us guessing.

Booze: Say no more. By the bye, win or lose celebrate! Enjoy excellent Irish beer tap or can from finest river waters. World’s best by far, as preaching to the choir. I’ve indulged all over, experienced expert opinion! Not easy but someone needed step up.

Troubled Makers

Being skint to the bone we'd shipped out, fetched up on islands away in deepest blue, biggest one 'Fusecbul' off the beaten track. Fly by nights was how we rolled. Outa town by nick of time, feeling heat from the Plod. Heads held high. Over here they do not *suffer fools gladly*, had trusted me and lads would get sorted. New spot for hustles with easier picking.

They get out of the way.

'Laissez faire' best bespoke English words. Top of heap Old Money gentry ruled as *Absolute*. Heavies not friends, control mayhem clear paths. No *red tape*, but piss them off one iota then say hello to island's Volcano. Head first! Island stratifications, mostly down-trodden bottom feeders living hand to mouth on chump change. Corner fella retreads tires, old bangers lined up round the block. Here nothing tossed, all fixed or *repurpose*, what officials say. Glasses from wine bottles, tin cans to mugs, scrap metal for even more '*glorious*' Ancestor statues. I've not big shot smarts, but know bone head in mirror it's me. Get instincts from Grand Ma. Not dare cast aspersions, if genial farmer instructs '*listen lad eat from any tree but see that one over there, firm* No! Obeying that law on bended knees, aware who Top Boss is. Don't know what 'dispositive' means, 'truth to power', or 'rule of thumb', 'zero sum game', 'dichotomy', mix up 'latter and former', meanwhile what's an artifice? Aware Canberra, town nobody knows, capital of Oz not Melbourne. Ireland has Dublin not Ballinasloe, that's respectful to jackeens jammed in the pale. At home well notched up as '*Flash Harry*', moniker follows me. Toggled out trendy suits, watches, diamond rings *if* fake sure they'd never notice. Some posh circles had me pegged 'sleazy operator' not *debonair*, when I'm back solvent with the readies they'll change tune. See I've natural charm,

ambitions for a niche, easy earners, no construction I'm not building stuff! Now beloved bacteria proteins fixing wrinkles that's proper outa the box! Inspiring! Up my alley. While everyone thinks *entrepreneur*, most end up as grifters only hanging on! Green leaves never to flower. Our team with mostly 'bandit' motivations, shady pros with *out on bail* cons, few stalwart miscreants for enforcing. Rum lot by any road, all with copy books blotted, frequent stepping on rakes having progress and thinking affected. This island our one last chance saloon. My policy trying not be wrong side of the old Bill, must not only *appear* on up and up. Tidy handy grafts, 'getting parsnips buttered'. One Doc got done with implanting iron knuckles for hard knock lads. Distant island Australia where animal innovations flourished, from Ireland only ever got *crickets*. Apart from us humans no unique creatures. Famous for no snakes, still? Then Political, myself strict Librarian, shelves going which ways, thinking from both sides. With mostly a 'what's in it for me'? My own home-schooled education finished as *know it all*, annoy others having less knowing. Engaged with medical stacks, Ma in her cups declaring at family dinners '*he got right funny ways after being getting dropped that early*'. Shook me tiny head up proper hard. I keep my healthy glow, but stressed when toffs needing bigger slice of '*shared*' pies. Hazard of partners in bent trades, they'll bottle and drag us all down. Medical fraternity had it in for me, stepping on toes, feeling isolated as our Donegal outpost. We'd scruples, only not never enough or allowed to hinder progress. One flaw acknowledged we do not always proceed with best intentions. That can be a problem.

Not for nothing we'd gained our ticket for free reign operations, justify Island Status card holders. Befitting grand table, as *executives* sat in ornate chairs. Brains together spit balling ideas. No point having all journey men, better being

skilled. Verdict? Pitches too high falutin, let them waffle, held my fire listening to useless *guff*. Tired old saws. Yeah so we have gene for making Vitamin C, ours currently '*dormant*' needs fixing then make Vit C like horses at ~70 grams per day. With mammals only us and guinea pigs make nowt. One bonus with fixing not need stuffed up daily by sour fruits. Not to be sneezed at. Who gets scurvy? Where's our quick pay off, then to vacate? Not working forever. Vit C tabs cost pennies. Some others focused on Octopus with nine brains, okay that's using their heads. How come having them buried under sea and we space travelling. All our eggs in one brain basket that comes to mind? Octopus many neurons as dogs, maybe they'd not be searching behind mirrors. Meanwhile I'd stroke of vision, putting ~us on easy street. Seeking *virgin territory*, breezed over '*If not broken don't fix it*'. Determined I'd scored the *bread winner*, includes slices. Doable! Not special talented but round executive tables I'm number one. Learned Wombats full appended, Kangaroos got zero. Both marsupials! Held that ace up my sleeve to beat the band. Not disclosing company secrets but knowledge gets me inspired! We got them doings, like walk in the park. Not going on about it but Oz creatures separated from us *placentals* 160 million years ago. Bravo for both! "*Lads need hit the road quick, on probation. Big shots impatient. Not delay.*"

Lucky we've the few doctors, old Stanley gotten into difficulties, med licence yanked. No fault but overwhelmed having stiff bills to pay. Curled up distressed once a surgeon, now more sturgeon circling in a tank, before his *dark-sides* once wizard with surgical blades. Now new lease, needed his talent like nobodies business. Chance would be a fine thing. Company philosophy 'coins two sided', donors and Rich, my favourite. Appendix outcast of organs, never understood but good for somethings if you have'em. No one really definite. Appendicitis can strike *out*

of the blue. Lauded Darwin if did nowt we'd not be having it, still appendix hanging *mysterious*. Good for someth, miniscule 0.35 inch appendage. Better off without? Put between bails of hay I'd head either way. Sometimes bursts! Now appendix evolved 30 times, classify as ubiquitous. Pay attention now. Wombats show it's useful! Kangaroos useless. Seeing good for business. Now they say as maybe, wee yoke aids in plant digestion like cellulose. Also hangs waiting, life raft filled with good bowel bugs, replace after catastrophe. Eating Aunt Tassy chicken left boiling in the sun. 'Safe house' they call it stores the seed corn. With mates we rapid hammered wee pamphlets '*Appendix benefit*' and '*Appendix useless*'. Face it organs not equal, kidney, lung, *testicles*, eye and ear, all duplicated. 'Such Top tiers!'. Pharmacy shelves with *ear plugs*, for noisy neighbours, one ear plenty! 50% saving on earphones. Humans most diverse species, few loaded others have barely pot to pee, Med yacht captains while most paddle canoe. Both staying afloat. Forever big wigs declared appendix *vestigial* (i.e. redundant). Organs come and go, once had tails, lost when stopped swinging from trees. What were we thinking? Disco nights no floor jive only swinging on branches. Superior planets aliens keep long tails or reattached. Useful when swatting beach flies. Although tail waving might signal misunderstood intentions. Rough swindling trades and poker games, tails wagging betrays too much info. That's a *tell*. Bad news for dodgy business men.

Much needed '*Appendix Transplant Clinic*', (*ATC*) abide on straight and narrow. No shenanigans, clean as whistles! Word out busy 'replacing' *appendix*. Clinic back door donor entrance, '*If you don't need them make a few quid!*' Rich folk at front door, enjoy beverages, generous buffet and relax. *Not be long!* 'Making it better, for an easy life! Our pleasure!'

If loaded get it back. Why not?

You deserve that!

If broke cash in now!

There's nothing to lose.

Our Guarantee!

Look not pulling your leg, from donors it's no pound of flesh just tiny ounce *smigen*. No big deal. New appendix recipients leave feeling happy as Larry. Acquiring appendix donors, well that market never empty. Given it's disposable found flourishing eager local population at fair trade. Transplants we'd accommodate, nobodies holding gun to your head. Did you know in 1961 Antarctic doctor removed his appendix, assistant held a mirror. Successful op! Now all doctor's wintering at Antarctic bases must have appendix *removed* before arriving! In one year, 11.6 million cases of appendicitis reported worldwide. Our message to poor *island* folk is why take risks better remove that burdensome ticking time bomb, avoid hospital bills if even to survive. Be smart, head of the game, cash in hand! Now days if financially loaded and more appreciated appendix, worthwhile getting restored, no if ands or buts. BTW secret of our success informing today's appendix better quality than previous one lost, donors having better nutrition, life style, e.g. no prior smoking (each donor promised). See all depends on bank account POV. For the man that has everything, when something vital is missing. Be rich but appendix absent? Finally intact restored feel better than ever when surfing. For fair balance we'd lads out warning locals those yoke could explode, dangerous for organs. Donors understand they've limitations, need healthy rulers, with cash in hand correct thing to do. Help your *better* fellow man. Folks financial struggling know who to call, for once something of value to flog. Note to future donors:

We can help. As it's so small donor in full health not essential.

Let's be clear, if our dear donor get's rich, of course come to special front door. Avail of our discount for restoration! Congratulations! Fair play. One *donor* fellow came back second time feeling certain his had only '*grown back again*'. Case of hustling the hustlers, we'd take advantage. Keeping him happy, we *peeked* in and sent him off on his way. Fully paid for *repeat*. There's loads of examples in nature, catch a lizard by the tail they lose it to escape then another grows. Anything is possible, appendix only 0.35 inch straight up.

We appreciate to 'exploit' island difference and diversity to make a dollar. Not a charity we are running. What else you expect?

To stress never claimed *we'd leave a bit behind to grow again*. Hustle never easy, don't be fooled. Rumour got about, leave a stump it grows again, appealing but never crossed our minds. See not knowing native languages things get confused interpretation. Rejected that notion in *stern letters* not deliberate any way to misrepresent, as yet never delivered. Get that straight that bone of contention. Keeping good folk happy our humanitarian goal. Well after that nonsense we went double shift, once hesitant new donors lined up, over loaded ships heading from nearest island ports. Thinking they'd make a career of it. I'm good with sales pitch, as my Grand Ma done well with barrow in fruit markets, selling tomatoes from family glass houses. Throughout hullabaloo's keep open frame of mind. Keep busy while we'd yank them out, pop them in. Either way quid's worth ahead, life in clover. What's wrong with that? Press interviews down to me, get enthusiasm going have the sales pitch out. See! Had our lads working to the bone. We qualified!

Anyways not happy end of our now mis-adventure, we got stamped down good, see I'm in the slammer. All went belly up,

chickens had come home to roost. Cor blimey just as it was going swimmingly along. Who figured our pleasant little prosperous enterprise might go a step too far? Under Laissez rules no appeal when being obviously guilty. Being too successful ruffled feathers. Our misfortune making too many coins, and being light on the slices. Same story where ever we go. Remember Wombats quiet animals, group known as a '*Wisdom*', while those Roos are '*Mobs*' leaping about. If I was now in hell how would I know? Then honestly to top that discontent, our new stable island home had a Revolution. Soon as '*absolute*' Money Lads fell that '*donor-class*' turned on us. Now they'd be cracking the whip with us target end of the leash. That's when I learned what '*dichotomy*' was, meant my goose was cooked. That very stormy night in a hurry without my blessing my team got on a fishing trawler, between devils and deep sea. To flee, sink or swim! I'd not fancied that, foolishly taking my chances on land. Hope the lads landed in a better place or fathoms five they lie. Now riff-raff all upset for our ill-gotten gains at their expense. Then they saw my scar, I huffed and puffed but had no defense. Declared their 'smoking gun'. They hauled me off to a scanner, I'd had it removed at age 7. Never considered 'replacement'. Why would I do that? Reinforced their feelings clinic was a total scam, they reckoned, it's only their opinion. Two sides to that. Then all solo got hauled through the streets, feeling the fury. Accused of being 'Butcher boy' they accused exploiting innocent for ill-gotten gain. Felt as I'd no defense, perhaps I'd stolen from them. Lucky day by day hail or shine I'd stashed cash away. Now would ever see it again? Realising perhaps having no appendix had driven them to such fury. As Wombats docile while Kangaroos confrontational. Occurred to me resolution might be with Money lads now imprisoned awaiting with no hope grizzly faith in the volcano maybe best whip out the

troublesome widget and return back to rightful owner. To be freed I'd share my swag if they had suffered. After all with other islands with surviving boys we'd start again. Always see bad and good sides. This might lead to '*restored*' donors calming down and let me go. With my charm perhaps in aftermath they'd have me stay among them in the new upper class. I can fix problems, like that tire fella. Without me they'd likely not have galvanised that fury and bravery to revolt. Overall I was long needed catalyst to herald 'freedom'. Put lead in their pencils, they finally shrugged away their fears. One day they'd melt scraps for my statue in Capital square. In court I conducted my defense. My intrusion in island affairs led to their being relived of heavy yoke of top heavy brutal rule. Ask yourself? Such was my eloquence. That set of banter worked, I'm revered now by the people being on stamps and currency. Look peace prevailed and I too got restored. Spurred them on to free their nation. Between all the glory bestowed in the former elite only palace, I've been that busy. Never again heard hide nor hair about my team lads, now presume laying low or sleeping with the fishes. Shed no crocodile tears. Now I'm right needed this special day, I will be opening Island Parliament. Big day for all! I'd gifted them that push.

‘Put an Oar In’

Prologue: Ever have that mirror stare *eye to eye* take a ‘wonder’ moment? More days passing in this extraordinary home? Does it get stranger than this? Times I do reflect on landing boats carrying D-day soldiers storming Normandy beaches. German machine guns behind sand dunes. Young lads facing those horrors, fight to prevent Evil’s demented plans. Brave lads did, many never returned.

God our creator will bless them.

And their families for life’s sacrifice.

Forever in their debt.

Not in vain.

Born later years, decades followed with my life of dreams. In fine fettle. Granted *live long times*, I bore witness to great events. Aimed once to be *Astronomer*, failed with the sums and scaling heights. Yet educated watching ‘Sky at Night’ with Patrick Moore and guest Carl Sagan.

‘And Action!’: My desire focus ‘*Aliens*’ but lunar landing debunkers has me spirit vexatious! ‘Hoax’ what annoying naysayers claiming. Upsets them to believe twelve NASA lads once *walked* on moon’s surface. Some had moon cars! Those wheel tracks visible forever on the moon (check now or when visiting). Perplexed by such palaver, spread like wild fire. I’m worried *Johnny come lately* gaining ground, insinuate moon landings created *in a studio*. Somewhat simple opinion. For the record cannot stand by, what prevails needs to be countered. Hardest part getting to the moon is leaving Earth, we observed in live time magnificent Saturn rocket launched from

Florida. Apollo (herein Ap) out of this world spectacular achievements now many cannot accept. Some delighted to spout ignorance, smirking as if aware of *special* information. If knowing sod-all astronomy, space exploration history, chemistry, biology, best remain discrete. Not pontificating garbage upsetting people. Such persistence grating as needle stuck in a '78' record, repeats now kicking up dust. Brings to my mind Groucho Marx singing 'Whatever it is I'm against it'. I'm that proud we went to the moon, astronaut teams well got out for the occasion, representing all of us. Great stuff achieved by WW2 generation and few busy budding *baby* Boomers.

*Not sure why scurrilous nonsense '**never landed on the moon**' got it's wings.*

Watch out these days that story has gas with talking heads.

Sure it's all gone to the dogs with hearing.

Needs nipping.

Wake up!

Darwin pegged us Number 1, now pleading for assistance. Apollo 11 lunar landing shown on Russian TV, USSR immediately congratulated USA, acknowledged race *for first* was over. Soviet Chairman Podgorny cable message to President Nixon offering their 'congratulations'. In 1970 Neil Armstrong invited to give a talk in Moscow, greeted by Premier Alexei Kosygin. Russia held a state dinner in Neil's honour, then setting the stage for Apollo-Soyuz mission where US/Soviet astronauts joined up in space, in 1975. Stellar space pioneer Russia, provide worthy competition to drive on NASA. I wish they continued quest for their manned moon landing.

What aspects of the journey are in question? Perhaps all! Naysayers embellish trashing of Apollo by crying out loud, 'Van Allen Belts'! Do they deny nine astronauts from Ap8, Ap10

and Ap13 travelled orbiting the moon? Happened in a studio? Ap8 in 1968 first humans beyond bounds of earth, journey around the moon, we all saw moon surface close up as never before! Ap10 (May 1969) when Cernan and Stafford flew the lunar lander 9 miles from moon's surface. Listened to that radio broadcast in dark night with ear phones for the transistor under blankets. Heroic astronaut Jim Lovell (recently deceased at 97) passed through Van Allen belts four times! Two lunar trips under his belt, with perfect Ap8 and unfortunate Ap13! All that way yet never walked a foot on the moon!

Ap13: This mission (March 1970) intended to have a lunar landing, where does this fit with deniers? More make believe? Saturn rocket take-off navigated to the moon, on the way one oxygen tank exploded.

'Houston, we've had a problem.'

Ap13 lunar landing abandoned, world spell bound by their plight and how rescue succeeded. Anxiety we felt facing perilous journey back, watching TV for those days. Astronauts forced to move into lunar lander, temp of 3 °C, conserving power and oxygen. For Ap13 having lunar lander epic for their survival. Soviet Premier Aleksei Kosygin promised "Soviet Government has given orders to all citizens and members of the armed forces to use all necessary means to render assistance in the rescue of the American astronauts." Prior to their back home landing astronauts obtained vision of finally jetsoned service module; Lovell exclaimed, '*one whole side of that spacecraft missing.*' Hardy men, rescued by coordinating with outstanding mission control scientists and worldwide prayers. Affected everyone.

Note: *Better go 12 to 14, avoid bad luck #13, Judas was Last Supper 13th guest.*

For Real!: Who with tedious time to drill depths of nonsense. Do they know NASA with European Space Agency

landed a craft on Saturn's moon Titan by parachute, sending back that amazing descending video (2005). Space craft journey took ~7 years. From a distance of 886 million miles, that's easy? Titan but not our Moon, expect some to deny that happened! *'Only fake'* know nothing daring to denigrate achievements that sent 24 men to the moon, all returned safe. Most refusnick not on the planet at that time, besmirching greatest achievement since earth life stirred. Also meantime NASA rockets have explored entire solar system. NASA's dramatic road started with Alan Shepard sub-orbital flight, 1961, each launch followed dramatically moved upwards. Millions of us followed progress, mesmerised! Planning superb, great leaders their sheer brilliance got us out of this world. Neil put down two feet, right and left imprints on Tranquility in July, 1969. Glorious time for all mankind. With NASA we were always there for the ride! Watched each minute, skipped school those exciting afternoons. Thank you Cliff Michelmores on BBC, also RTE and UTV.

After: Spacecraft space station now confined making Earth orbits. Who predicted such state of affairs? *Word was not go back to the moon, as we had been there!* For sure side tracked by 'Shuttle Era', fabulous vehicle transporting large cargo with 135 missions. Essential for repair of Hubble and building Space Station. Then two disaster missions, perhaps step too fast. Bold move, after got axed. Hind-sight send unmanned full of cargo, astronauts meet up in space. Confident top-class talents will take us to planets. Top countries with major space programs: USA, Russia, China, India, Japan and Europe successful missions to planets/moons/asteroids with rovers and helicopter. No slacking now with journey into the galaxy!

Future: No fault of NASA but Mars half Earth size cold dead place. Lower gravity and radiation hinders human habitation (and pregnancy). Get Venus dolled up, first rule 'No

plastics'. Tough surface investigated by sturdy Russian landers. Twin in size, so put up shades cool it down. Lower 90% CO₂, and clouds seeded to block sun, same jiggery pokery planned for Earth's, 'Climate Change'. 11 years estimate to cool Venus, also need deal with toxic atmosphere. Venus better bet than anywhere else, critical that gravity suits us. Venus atmosphere demonstrates planet can maintain one. Capture CO₂, stored carbon has value, that's not rocket science. On earth we now have 0.04% CO₂.

Enough: Grandiose pathetic BS: *who filmed Armstrong getting off the ladder*. Are they comedians? *Flag fluttering*, endless old saw. Claptrap what the world was facing. *Who filmed take off from the surface*. Pathetic to discredit talent after incredible feats were achieved. Why?

Epilogue: In sixties and seventies Cape Canaveral rockets lit up skies and world with bravado, then folks interfered and shut that down. Hard get momentum going, citizens want better, contribute to greatness. Cannot abide going backwards. Without human exploring naysayer gain ground. Need heroes seize take bull by the horns, Marie Curie advanced nuclear understanding, lost her life in that process. Nikola Tesla powered us onwards, we miss likes of them. Plagued by naysayers having loudest voices. No need hear every voice, yap, yap, all tower of babel. Now circling wagons and the planet, life in a slowdown warp busy marching in place. Momentum bubble of Apollo faded. Earth should be dominating space, orbits first achieved by Yuri Gagarin 1961.

Aliens

No doubt they are here: How do all countries agree not to spill the beans? Afraid Aliens cause social upheaval! Entire world staying silent? Captain Cooke sailed seven seas and we

survived. Even Soviets lack of disclosure and dear old trusted NASA!

Biology: Truth is they cannot be among us because of 'biology'. Recall lunar astronauts return, guard from *lunar organisms* quarantined 21 days. Yeah that will do it! Alien bugs flying free, Covid nothing in comparison. Commentators confront us with *variety* of aliens, *Grays*, *Nordics*, *Insectoids*, *Reptilians*. Figments of imagination? Originated from different home planets. How does it work? Still do not understand how aliens exist among us, seeing they've alien biology. Presumably digest alien food, maybe full of silicon based products, that we cannot consume. Poison for us, nutritious for them. Why never hear of their cell biology? Share same cells? DNA? Creator made us all the same? *Youse in the know must know by now*. Remote chance that if it's DNA encoding for proteins could not be the same as ours. Aliens from different planets with unique biology will not share identical cell structures. If abroad on the land, caught short, colon full of alien bacteria, chaos on Earth's biosphere, 'Poop' to be polite. Difficult to fathom consequences, likely disastrous for this Earth.

*Strikes me as unlikely or foolhardy.
Do say it ain't so.*

Fascinated to see biology results? Profound if extraterrestrial has identical double stranded DNA coding. Earth shattering! Aliens might know answers to many questions. About immense life out in the Universe and still not a whisper? Not my business but why Religious Institutes not requesting answers? There are suggestions perhaps beings disguised to look like us. Not difficult. Must assume citizens of their home planets know about us on 'TV'. Why not vice

versa? Is there somethings objectionable about them? That will shock us to our core? Perhaps lunar aliens not happy with waste humans left behind.

Lack of cell reports 'confuses' many ways.

Enough with reverse engineering UFO's motors,

Now leaking 'antigravity and antimatter'.

How come nothing about biology?

Skin and bone fundamental!

Only engineers and Physics!

Give me a break!

Tear down these Alien Walls: Folk tales of alien interactions. Shots of 'flying ships' away in the distance from airplane windows. Men in black aggressively confiscating material from crashed 'UFOs'. Severe bully warnings 'shut up' or *dire consequence*. Why to be so? For our own good? Big shots level, not pussyfoot about? Mars pics and back side of the moon (*alleged*) appear blurred in spots. 'Department of *Blurrocrats*' busy concealing evidence? Eight obelisk spires on the Moon, near Sea of Tranquility, spotted by NASA Orbiter-2 in 1966. Are they natural? By now these '*Ancient*' photos most pitiful, strange such tantalizing structures have no updates. Then China observed a large object on the horizon, on Moon's far side.

If only there was a place where all nations could gather round a table and discuss. Like I recall in previous days. Seems if aliens are here they do cover their footsteps. While Governments bend backwards deceiving us for decades, their activities on Earth, Moon, Mars, Outer space. More alien palaver afoot, such news be suspicious while on guard! What are we to make of it, things be heating up! You'd think '*Alien Evidence*' to celebrate, but only hovering about with *Crown Jewel of Secrets*. Why deprive amazing moment in time? Treated as kindergarten, what's

behind the curtain? Proliferation of *alien craft* seems a '*distraction*', waving *phoney* silver saucers like we be magpies. Take away *jack boots*, let it out, what's state of play. Big bad secrets? Feral wild and crazy? Not suitable for polite company? Mutilate cattle? Communicate by '*crop circles*' in farmer fields? Travel across the Galaxy then making damaging designs for autumn's harvest. Does it remind of Nazca designs in Peru? No more '*Fermi Paradox*' nonsense! Open the vault! Not share with us beings from other worlds? Governments show for *Real*! Enough *obsessive* control. Chill out, all humans entitled. Neck of civil servants, only they privy to knowing? Big question aliens want this? Why not more down to Earth. *Get off that high horse.*

'*Interesting*' Mars objects some spotted by amazing Rovers dismissed as pareidolia. BTW why no robot NASA rovers endless exploring on the moon? Do aliens exist in 'hollow' Phobos tiny moon of Mars, with a 300 ft high monolith on that flat surface? Inquisitive Russian Phobos probe destroyed on close approach, provocative photos provided! A *missile* from Phobos, aimed at the Russian satellite. Aliens have many unanswered questions. Seems extreme not to reveal anything positive on the planet Mars, while *allegedly* blurring evidence. If true that's outrageous. What are they hiding, can you stop doing that? More than annoying.

Some say Aliens are on the way! In telescope lens interstellar 31/ATLAS (~3 miles long), speedy at 37 miles per second, '*Alien space craft?*' some saying. Reports not a comet, no tail in the rear and appears *navigated*! Milky Way disk origin, to propel towards our plane heading around the Sun. Arrives this November, put wind up our sails! Odd from Galactic center, head between us and Mars as if seeking Earth in the

void. Closest to the sun this year October 30, on heels of interstellar Oumuamua. Keep an eye on corn fields for advanced messages, if needing anything special for arrival day. Best keep cows in the barn. Some are saying we should worry. Rollocking times come November! Duck and cover! **Mysterious Buga UFO Sphere:** Just found in Columbia, may have extraterrestrial origins. Not handed off to Government to disappear! Good move, otherwise never see light of day, get placed in warehouse archive. Ronald Reagan said worry most hearing 'we are from the government to help'.

Big shots tear down wall of secrets!

They had presence of mind not to let *Higher Ups* get their paws on it. Get stored fathoms deep along with UFO bits from Roswell in 1947. That would be filed under 'Weather Balloon bits plus silver Globe, unknown.' Labelled '*Dangerous do not touch*'.

How did we get here?

Reverse Engineering: Some say since crash of UFO at Roswell in 1947 there's been a 'technology acceleration'. Humans so smart all of a sudden? Did aliens help Earthlings *leap* up, what's is it all about? Set us straight. No end to tales government scientist reverse engineering captured technology. Right enough giving us a shot in the arm. Cable optics, antigravity devices in secret locations. Rewarded knowledge gifts, internet, long fabled flat screen TV, cell phones, strange quantum world computers, more coming! Put wind up our sails! They will not know 'Everything!' 'After life' will be their mystery also. Still we will all with wonder why?

Big Secret: Why hide? Bad table manners? Crunching noise? Wave the knife. Horrifying accounts of mutilated of cattle. Bad harbinger? Use their 'phone', always naked? Don't shower? Bad English with interruptions! Have goods on all of

us? That Black Knight *satellite* info hidden, we suspect it's been watching us for a thousand years. Rumours some lunar lads witnessed them on the moon. Ap11 saw *them* on Tranquility, is this correct? Our moon rings like a bell when impacted, perhaps hollow? Improved telescopes now seeing black dots flying around on the moon. What are they? In our back yard? Views of aliens mostly share basic architecture. If real. Upright, head, body, arms, legs. Some being skinny, big eyes, live under the sea or Antarctica ice, cities on moon's far side, internal on the *hollow* moon? What are we to make of it, things are heating up!

Controversial!

Do some resemble jelly fish?

Hello?

All from a movie studio?

‘Those Between Times’

Leaving New Orleans, I drove the river trails of old Dixie, wondering what God had for me. South Louisiana is fishing towns, seafood places with marinas and gas stations. Oil-rigs parked in the ocean, sucking the planet dry—drill baby, drill baby—I’d a set of traveling to do. Stopped in Galliano: usual fare with gumbo, jambalaya, and crab cakes, washed with cold brew coffee. Never keen on lobster—seemed like too much work for so little, like dating convent girls in my youth. Riding through Plaquemines Parish, I arrived in Grand Isle and stopped by the ‘Shady Nook’ motel. Not grand nor shady, just a tourist place—a seedy joint with dodgy plumbing, but balcony rooms faced the ocean. My bag and pipes had long seen the best of times.

“All I wanted was to go somewhere, all I wanted was change. Warn’t particular.”

‘Welcome to Grandy. Owned by Pickens family,’ read the faded sign. Hurricane Katrina and friends had gotten in good licks. In family places I imagined shepherd’s pie, grub so good you’d lick the plate clean. The Shamrock Bar was next door, which is why I stopped—needed my ration of grog. Beach reminded me of Courtown with sandy dunes and better times. Behind the counter was a bikini-top woman, sucking Coke through a straw, athletic legs like she spent summers in the ocean. Had an appreciative gawk—well, she knew. Some lucky lad landed that lottery. Light rain started on the tin roof, tiny beads of sweat on her upper lip. Nowt like loving a woman in the tropics; perspiration drips like juice from ripe mangos. Lot on my plate, only with thinking.

‘Bikini-top’ on the phone; I was fascinated to hear her accent from Ireland’s east coast. As I read her name-tag, I wondered if

her breasts tanned like the rest. In Ireland they'd be turning pale given the time of year—surest sign of autumn in that land of pale sun; golden delicious Dublin mott. Memories of tan lines fading on a brown-skinned Irish girl back from Majorca; by Christmas, all white. Wonder of the world—never needed Copernicus to know something's going around. High cheek freckles, short hair, and as I looked, her eyes were laughing. “Mairead, I'll go, sure I've a Canadian fella giving me the eye.” Maple leaf tags on the suitcase.

“Noreen,” she as we shook hands.

Krakatoa moment for me—touching her.

“Howya, sure, we get loads from Toronto.”

Noticed she was giving the eye, but maybe only my mind's eye.

“Yeah, and Baile átha Cliath?” I asked.

“You know, I was thinking.”

Thinking because of my pale Irish mug—plain Irish mug, truth be told.

“Sure, I'm Wicklow!”

“Climbed Sugarloaf once,” I blurted, while the cat got my tongue.

Many thoughts seeking attention. From the Garden of Ireland, no surprise I was smitten. As she handed me the registration card, I inhaled warmed coconut.

“For one?” she asked, oblivious to my beating heart, being short of air.

“Yeah, night to fill. Traveling down God's highways.”

Some guests appeared and she was distracted. Hefted my bag and on my way, then she changed my world forever.

“Michael, will you be in the bar later? Sure, we could have the grand old chat?”

“Okay,” all I mustered.

Sold my soul, knew a devil's deal was done.

“Frozen beer for Canadians,” she laughed.

“Hey, I’m Irish.”

That pot-mess of confusion—Paddy’s boy stewed with Micks and Billys, green and gold. Sinn Féin and the Union. Scattered and separated on one wee island. We all love our wretched island—at least on that, we have our brawny hands. Only home, end of days. Lying on the bed with ocean waves through an open door, contemplating. How did she escape the clutches of Wicklow showers back home? No ring, but beautiful birds are caught. She was never alone.

“Never see anyone from home,” she had said.

There’d be bubba boy lurking, show up with her surly fellow. Old boy chewing ‘baccy, dragged out hearing paddies blabbing about a faraway island, anything else too far-fetched.

“‘Y’all ever see a leprechaun over there?’ Sole contribution.”

Downed mini-bar wine; my encounters with Gaels never prospered. Other than we fled our windswept, misbegotten bog land, there was nothing. Through the years, formed no lasting relationships with paddies abroad. Pipes banging and shaking, got the shower. Brushed teeth, thinking you can’t shove pyroclastic flow back down a volcano. Friendly mirror, departed with low expectations—going with the flow in the land by the delta.

‘Cold mugs of Beer’—Cajun’s promise. She won’t be there, anticipating cold beer for a mug. Sit with a few favorite Sam Adams, leave for double bed. Past end-of-season pub, quiet and dark, but on a bar stool was Noreen: lip-sticked and fresh-faced, lit in neon from Hollers Moonshine sign, short red dress, and painted toes in flip-flops; sight for eyes of any man. Wanted to tell her I’d missed her as she grabbed my arm.

“It’s great to see you,” I told her.

No hubby, no main squeeze, no partner, no other body—just her body. Gobsmacked, she by her lonesome. Saints be praised, come marching in.

“Nick, this man is famous, an Irish writer,” she told a stout barman.

Gave the raised query eyebrow.

“Have to be careful in the motel business. With dangerous fellas!” She laughed. “I looked you up. You’ve more degrees than a thermometer.”

“Me mother insisted on edgeimications.”

While Christian Brothers fretted limitations.

“Wrote one book.”

Me and the Almighty.

“Love Irish in Grandy,” Nick’s hippy handshake.

Saw through that bonhomie. Knew what he was about, messing like an extra mongoose at the party. Looked like he had a thing going for Noreen—maybe previous—he lined up shot glasses.

“Our Cher always telling about Ireland,” some mirage over the waves. “My friend, toast to the island that gave us Noreen.”

Move along pops, rapping with Wicklow babe with wicked thighs. Them are ties that bind.

“Sláinte and Éireann go brách, mud in your eye,” I sank the cheap rye.

Blocking my action as ever—fair play and me messing on his turf with a girl from the old sod.

“Nick, go away, don’t get Michael drunk, we need to talk.”

Vamoose, pal, you heard the chick.

Sat at a table; she drinking Dixie beer, I’d last of summer ale.

“So, Professor, why are you here?”

Sick and tired of working, then times God gives me a kick in the arse.

“Roll by the coast, by the seaside, carnival rides.” Zipper and dipper.

Too long in New Orleans' smoky clubs, waiting for decree nisi and decree absolute. Now carnal rides on my mind—zipper and dipper.

"Ireland should keep girls like you, not in these bayous."

"What was the book about?"

"What makes a woman change—hurt man she loved. Romance as a young fellow, finished. Departed Eireann broken-hearted, heard even men were reading."

Written about a fellow leaving Ireland, as many before and after to follow.

"So, still miss this girl?"

Typical broad question—here carrying flame for young one from years past. She'd think I was daft, but romantic like a poet.

"Both from Dublin streets, knew about each other." I shrugged.

"Sometimes."

Paused, let early love's gravitas fill the air with country music. If a man takes a ride, he learns how to fall.

"In love with an Irish girl seemed deeper."

Just a kid, no place to hide. Who knew dealing with that? Like snorkeling, skating, transition boy-to-man. Fickle women inhabit the earth, roaming and rambling.

Queen in Asia once kept 100 men for sexual pleasure.

Holly Molly!

Lessons learned, bottomless pit.

"Nobody explained consequences," she nodded.

She understood the 'romance' business; said as a teenager in Avoca, she'd an affair with a married fellow, laughed, put hand on my knee. Bird from Pelican state gave me goose bumps. Maybe a reason she was in deep Louisiana—us, a Mick and Kate, wrong side of the pond. We'd emigrants' song to sing and lament.

"War battered dogs are we,
gnawing a naked bone,

fighting in every land and clime
for every cause but our own.”
Leant close, mad spirit in those cat eyes.
“Hopeless, thinking of him even when I was married. Emotions
mad, terrible like that.”
Error ways—‘was married’. Quiet with memories, felt she
wanted to reveal secrets. Nancy whiskey taken over; then I
kissed her. Took a gamble—knew not too soon. Talked like
we’d always known each other. Departed Ireland at nineteen,
fell in love with Ferrice, son of motel owner. Given her married
fellow’s circumstance, Ferrice best choice. Noreen swapped
mother’s Wicklow house, made home in a Gulf Coast trailer
park. Returned, telling Mammy she’d not do college hotel
course but head back. Her father had died, mother hopeless to
stop this. Now divorced, her ‘ex’ with their son in Biloxi down
the coast. Never finished her Leaving Cert.
“Ferrice customized Harley knucklehead with sidecar. Out over
Florida panhandle, past fields of Texas blue bonnets and barbed
wire fences, hit archipelago to Key Largo. After, never working
rooms! Desk duty! Loved Key West, Caribbean music times.
Orange juice from the trees. Wanted to stay.”
Wheeler dealer Ferrice, she liked that ride.
“Godmother left me her house in Howth on the head. Not sure
what to do.” My grubstake.
Needed bamboozle, flummox, boast, cheat as decent man.
Confronted! Lobbed that in the mix, life smelling of roses. Blow
her summer dress with hot air. Won’t whack World Series home
run or spike Super Bowl touchdown, nor name scratched on
Lord Stanley’s Cup. Frankly, achievements not amount to hill
on bogs of Allen. Now superpower ‘Howth-head-man’. Dublin
Bay in mind’s eye. Ireland’s eye to Bray Head. Lad chosen for
Shangri-La on Erin’s isle. Needed bubble meself, play my
cards—I’d win with a full house.

“Goodness, on Howth Head! Impressive, rich man living in high cotton.”

Needed big-boy pants, serious intent that day.

“In the tent, remember as a kid hearing fishermen below cliffs. Nets with rough seas. Caves underneath, waves rushing made earth shake.”

“Through caverns measureless to man.”

“Will you rescue me? I’ll make beds!”

Laughed at crazy notion, stared in the bar mirror, brushed fringe from her eyes. No middling woman, smasher, an eye-catcher in my round specs.

“Will you go back?” she wondered.

“Thinking.” Only eunuch sees clear, dangling sac every man’s Achilles’ heel. Knew Ireland lonely, night or day.

“Don’t you have to be ‘Professor?’”

“I’ll quit, got cash from the book.”

Money in banks. Build a Potemkin village. Deluxe life, large chips, two rock salmon. Fruit on table and no soul poorly.

“Sometimes thinking of Wicklow and home,” she said.

Real home, not carpetbagger state. Place full of alligators and reptiles, storms and slick oily fellas from barges, dangerous fellas in motels and scallywag life. Even land was fickle—will-of-wisp place, swamp and bayous, houses on stilts over delta sandbars.

Forever changing, shifting sands. Slivers of land with only bare width of a road—here today, gone tomorrow. Gone with wind in blink of a hurricane eye, and every year storms come, no time to ever recover. Louisiana nothing like the rock-hard place from whence she came, that timeless land that made her. Wicklow anchored to granite rock a thousand miles deep. Dublin’s river flowed from Wicklow mountains, crafted of Celt, Saxon, Norse, and much worse. Elemental; Liffey’s children we were.

“But I know it’s late and difficult. Maybe for you it’s easier. I’m hanging on like hair on a biscuit.”

Things complicated; women always with others to look after.
She left for a few minutes; I was feeling good in family style.
Took a swig from her bottle with a taste of lip gloss. She
returned, sat closer—lost love song on the jukebox on her silver
dime. Randy Travis to second my emotions.
“Oh, it’s good to talk about home. Still feel a stranger here.
Even though folks are friendly it can be lonely.”
“Going into exile is traumatic, we all suffer with that,” I said.
Querencia, I was thinking—those who journey overseas change
sky and their souls.
“I think we want a lottery win and head home, be done with it,”
she offered.
Ran her fingers through my hair, breasts pressing on my arm.
She’d have beads galore from Mardi Gras.
“I can layer it, two days I’ll be back at my place in the Quarter.
Will you be round?”
With me in white water above a fall and no escape, attracted like
steel to a hadron magnet. It was that rapid. I’d be her croppy
boy.
“Sure, I’ll arrange things.”
Only thing up my sleeve in New Orleans was that parlor
massage from Suzann, Chinese twin from Belize.
“Michael, let’s go down to the ocean—this time is best.”
“Ca-va,” waved Nick goodbye. “Allons.”
Avoided eye contact, gave him a tip but he knew all about me.
Outside, on the wooden path she took my hand. By shoreline
and light of harvest moon, she pulled me close.
“I’m glad you came by this way,” she told me.
We kissed by Gulf of Mexico, again on a bench nearby. She
took a small bottle of rum from her purse, took a sip, and
handed it to me.
“Wicklow girls taste nice,” I whispered.

What life is about—my brain tuned to turmoil. Warm and dark as I stripped and went for a bathe in the salty ocean. She laughed, warned to watch for sharks.

“Weather breezin’ up,” she ran for a towel.

Swam that sea—a dip in the nip. We went to my ‘Villa’ room and spent that night together. Windy season ending, but Grand Isle was a wild place—made earth shake, easier on shifty soil.

Could hear waves, but crows woke me outside long after dawn.

An angel lying on the pillow, hair tousled from the night.

Wondered if I crashed on the road, maybe on a morphine drip.

“Told the devil for one night he’d have my soul.”

“Because of me?”

“A good deal.”

Maybe Satan got his bargain.

“How did that demon know I’d be so crazy!”

“He knows about you,” she’d sinner ways.

Each with raft of mortals under the belt. When the saints be marching, we won’t be in that parade.

“Devil made me do it.” She jumped from the bed.

“I’ve to run. Oh, laissez les bon temps rouler. A woman’s work never done with fellows around.”

Her son James was back; early morning, mother-in-law brought the lad from Biloxi. At the door she waved her finger.

“Better not be one-night-stand buster, I’m convent girl from Wicklow. Don’t have me a sinner. Y’all come eat when you hear breakfast bell. Sorry, no white pudding, just flapjacks, buttered grits today.”

Tucked in the bed cover and kissed again.

“Could get to like you, I’ve black satin sheets in my chambre à coucher on Decatur. Better come visit, good Lord willin’ and creek don’t rise.”

Heard humming as she ran away—it was not the blues.

Lay back with brain topsy-turvy, only evidence remaining was empty rum bottle and mosquito bites. September moseys have iron mouth. Only needed half a bed and woman to call my own. Hour later in the kitchen, introduced me to her son, James.

“Michael, my friend from Dublin,” and that’s no lie.

Young fellow told me firmly his name was Jimmy—a bright kid of twelve years, had Noreen’s unguarded eyes but not her bones. Shook hands, looked like his mother but smaller than a normal kid. Some undiagnosed wasting disorder; was in a wheelchair, caught me looking. Feel infinite sorrow when young ones are in trouble—hard to contemplate for us all. He doesn’t got all what belongs to him. He replied with his eyes:

‘Know I’m in a tough spot, but I’m brave, doing my best. So no pity, okay? I’ve my mom and she’ll always be with me.’

Sitting together round the kitchen table. Jimmy told me he’d been to Wicklow with his Dad—no one knew he’d only four months left. Still cry a little, with memories of a tough kid in a spot from which he and she knew there’s no escape. He went to see God early.

“Best-looking girls are from Wicklow, but too many freckles.” Could hear that Wicklow accent in Jimmy.

“James!”

Kid had an opinion, gave him thumbs up.

“Wicklow girls are the best!” On that I’d testify.

“Not just you, Mom, saw them on the beach in Bray.”

“I’m jealous, my boy checking out girls.” She hugged him.

“Here on the beach they tan more even. Celtic Irish people are most pale. Mom, I read that.”

Drank my coffee, ate dreaded grits; kid had an eye!

“Swim okay in the sea, but better in the pool.”

“James got his first kiss from girlfriend at the pool in Arklow.”

Noreen so proud. Jimmy waved away mother’s remark, no time for trivial talk.

“He writes poetry to her!”

“Don’t go an’ dog me, Mama. Mom, I write poems—not all to Jenny. Jenny writes a lot; she might visit next year. Dad says I’d maybe swim for Ireland in para-Olympics; obviously Louisiana first choice. Need train really hard.”

Noreen looked at him, bursting with pride.

“I liked the Sugarloaf, took loads of pictures. If I get leg muscles stronger I’d maybe climb it, only 1644 feet.”

Finished breakfast and left, wanted God to bless them both.

Later that morning, sat with Jimmy on a rickety pier out over mighty Mississippi. Fishing for catfish with long fishing pole, furiously waving at the bridge of passing oil barge. Noreen asked me to video, watched waves break around oil freighters led by the pilots.

“That’s old MeldRidge from Texas goin’ up river to Kansas. Reckon two days late, Seymour?” Jimmy asked.

Elderly fisherman Seymour Stanley had Yankees baseball cap, face lined like a wicker basket, chewing wad of tobacco.

Seymour, I guessed, was Jimmy’s best friend.

“Looks like they got cleaned up somewhat. Must have gotten held over dry dock in Pensacola. Sure heard she needed repairin.”

“And she’s ridin’ low,” said Jimmy. Now deep Louisiana, happy when Captain responded with foghorn!

“Sure enough. Gotta make sure folks in Kansas got heaten for them cold winters,” Seymour replied. “We ain’t all fortunate.”

“Someday! Someday I’m gonna ride those barges movin’ that crude. Eh, Seymour! Ain’t I, Seymour?”

“Sure Jimmy. You’ll ride barges. Move crude from Pecan island to up north. If you set your strong mind, figure you do anything you want. Mark the twain for safe waters; sand gravels always changing. Like time, Jimmy.”

Slowly MeldRidge barge moved past, up and around the bend in that majestic river.

“Okay, Jimmy, gotta be movin’. Your Dadda’s boat comin’ anytime soon.”

Seymour walked slowly with aid of a cane as he pushed Jimmy.

“You can bet on it, Seymour, you can bet on it.”

“Yeah, bet on Gamblin Star, sure enough. You ought to be on stage, just you and your Dadda.”

“Catch you fellas on the flip side.” Last thing I’d said.

Later, Noreen could not watch the video taken that day—if our God with his emotion maybe get old quick. Ferrice coming back, so later that morning I left. Side of the motel, Noreen discreetly hugged me. Driving back to City of Nawleen, I was in a trance—could not wait to see this unguarded colleen again. God’s plan always involves fork to change direction; how universe operates. Sometimes God passes me that bouncing ball. Road trip had been my epiphany, after precious years of debauchery, spending time with honky-tonk angels. Priests of school days were correct, needed emotional bond with a woman and not babes looking for cash in my wallet. In our brief encounter, she put me in a mental place I’d rarely been—a man with two sugars in his tea, batter on three balls and no strikes. Later in this tale, there’s no apple, just sting of a serpent got me removed from paradise. Still, now, I’d give it one more good lash.

Back then, early times, Noreen—been better if at Ellis Island was dispatched back to Erin’s isle.

“Sorry’, Customs fellows would say, likely Boston old lad.

“Away home with ye now, lassie, not a thing here for likes of you. Erin go brách needs you. For the best, find a farmer, help him do the milking, early morning mists. Don’t go down to Louisiana. Raise Irish cows, chickens, barley and Wicklow young

ones. You're a mad one come over here. What on earth you thinking? Stay put where you are for God's sake. Go on home and sit beside the turf fire in the cottage. Do a mother's work, stir the stew. This land full of cockroaches."

(Condensed version, Chapter 1, 'A Wicklow Girl' publication)

Brian O'Dowd



Brian O'Dowd's debut novel, ***A Wicklow Girl***, was published in 2017 by Tellwell (Canada) and is available internationally on Amazon and other platforms.



Brian O'Dowd, born in Dublin and now based in Toronto, is a noted scientist, professor, and author. He is a Professor at the University of Toronto, where his pioneering research in pharmaceutical science earned him the prestigious Prix Galien Canada Science Award in 2019, one of the highest international honors in the field of biopharmaceutical research, as reported by The Irish Times. Alongside his scientific achievements, O'Dowd has also made his mark as a writer. His debut novel, *A Wicklow Girl*, was published in 2017 by Tellwell (Canada) and is available internationally on Amazon and other platforms. Balancing his dual passions for science and literature, O'Dowd has established himself as both a leading academic and a creative storyteller, drawing on his Irish roots while contributing globally to both intellectual and cultural life.

GALWAY ACADEMIC PRESS

