

# The Immaculate Misconception

A Trilogy



Book Three  
**DON'T BUY A PUB**

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**DON'T BUY A PUB**  
**By**

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**Copyright Jimmy Rice      March 13, 2005. Amsterdam.**

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The good thing about Mountjoy Prison in Dublin was that there were more drugs in that foul place than screws. The day before my release I managed to score half a gram of dubious smack, a tab of acid and a super horse tranquilizer. The last of my old IRA friends Danny the Dodo was kind enough and dumb enough to come visit me and warn me. He left me in fifty pounds and advised me there were people waiting outside to get me – lining up to kill me - and so as soon as the gates of the Joy swung opened for me I ran down to a travel agents in Dorset street clutching my small Olivetti typewriter, my manuscripts, a plastic sack full of jail memorabilia and what wits had been left to me. I don't know how it came to this. Like my big brother Jesus in heaven I really can do no wrong to any man. Even now I cannot believe they were going to kill me - but it was true. When I was released from the Joy I was under imminent threat of death from all major Irish and British paramilitary organizations - the British SAS - my old bank robbing firm The Locusts – the Legion of Mary - and my ex wives. That was bad but the VSS were after me too - body and soul - and that were *real* bad. The Vatican Secret Service had unlimited funds by way of the church collections which they were authorized to requisition and use at their own discretion. Every chapel in Ireland was a base for them and every congregation a haven of safe houses staffed by crew thumping Catholics, a vast pool of dedicated sanctimonious sympathizers. The Holy Father himself had issued a Papal Bull – that's the equivalent of a Fenian Fatwa - ordering me to be put to the Inquisition and an Unholy Death. He is reliably reported to have said while muttering on the Holy Line to the Archbishop of Warsaw - that I - James Beningi the Belfast Butcher Boy - who saved Mrs. Owen's immortal soul and ergo humanity - I the Great James Beningi Jesus' wee adopted brother - was an idolatrous apostolically diabolical heretic. He stated privately to the head of the Irish Church Thomas Cardinal O'Feich I was a GDB to boot - a Great Devilish Bollox - beyond redemption in this world or the next.

In the name of God - what way is that for a Pope to talk to a Cardinal?

But that's what he said – you can take my word for it big lad.

Do not call me big lad.

The Piranha -Governor of Irelands high security Portlaoise Prison - and whose guest I had been for several years - transferred me up from that Bog a week before my due release for – “security/survival” reasons. I greatly suspect much as me good self being whacked would have filled him with glee; he did not want me assassinated outside his jail. So he declassified me from being a high security category one terrorist/gunman subversive prisoner - intent on obliterating the very existence of the state with mind boggling senseless violence.

And remember big lad violence only ever makes sense if God blesses the guns.

I was placed among the honourable ranks of The Ordinary Decent Criminal.

I was touched – honest to God I was big lad. Me! - An ODC, walking the wings of the Joy in me new lags uniform mingling with the lowest of the low.

Murderers, rapists, child molesters, granny bashers, bank robbers, pension swindlers, petty thieves, drunkards, house breakers, burglars and screws, all made criminally equal in their time by the wearing of the grey denim suit designed by the famous fashion Irish designer Paddy Armandalegi Lagi, and even though I refused to wear the Lag Suit and was locked away in solitary – I recognized this was all part of the

enlightened Bog pre release reintegration program - never the less – uncooperative as I am and ever will be, world without end - my dear old ma and da would have been so proud of me anyway. So they would. They always said I would come to a bad end. My da in particular often predicted proudly, that I would end up dangling from a rope and thus I often thought as a child I was a big yoyo as I spun around the room being bounced off walls wriggling about curling up on the floor reeling from the rain of slaps and punches only ever to return on the end of Big Paddy's clutching fist. But I have to say this – he never kicked me when I was spinning on the floor and I shouted up at him:

You are not my da! My real da is God in heaven. Leave me alone, and I shouted up to my big brother – Jesus! Jesus help me!

And the da would go all weird.

Fear overcomes ignorance. He spat out the words gasping from his nightly workout. Pointing down a shaking prophetic finger at me.

“Mark you my words!” He would shout down at me and across at the ma – “that wee bastard will come to a bad end. You will end up dangling from a rope!”

He would often insist at length to his vigilante cronies desperately vying to be the extreme de la extreme – a jail had three walls too many - and just in case they didn't get it - all being bellicosely patriotic and duty bound drunk - he would pick up the brush, aim it at me and the ma and go boom boom boom. Ach sure god bless him or help him he had his standards. He was a Republican of the old school much in favour of whipping hanging flogging kneecapping all with torture aforehand *aaaaa*and - the castration of young men who had sex before marriage and deballing of protestants in general to stop them breeding – all without trials of course - and Big Paddy of The Blessed Shipyard Boots as Judge Dead. A bully and a bigot with the power of life or death.

Hey big lad! What's knew in heaven and hell?

But life is not all doom and gloom for we men of God.

Really? And where the fuck, have you been living these last ten years?

The travel agents were just opening. I went in directly behind the girl.

The woman's smell was rich and intense. She was very pretty. Auburn hair.

She looked at me with her curious deep dark brown eyes.

I have to get out of the country in a hurry

I explained. I did not have time to spin a story.

“Why says she?”

She really was very pretty and cute but I confess, at that time I would have found an elderly female warthog very attractive.

I have been inside for twelve years and now there are people trying to get me.

“Inside?” says she - looking about the place suspiciously.

I hope she doesn't think this is a stick up. The last thing I need is for the Bog to arriving at speed, lights flashing, guns out, and all weeping and wailing.

“Inside where,” says she?

Well I wasn't inside you darling – though of course I never said that to her having more important matters on my mind – like survival and so I says:

I was in the SISA.

“The SISA?”

Yes Self Induced Suspended Animation.

“O,” says she pretending she knew what the fuck I was talking about,

“the SISA, and like, where were you thinking of going?”

Anywhere.  
“Anywhere at all?”  
I don’t care where as long as it’s not England, Italy or here.  
As you well know yourself reader.  
She looked at me weighing me up to see if I was a lunatic or some other type of a disturbed thing. I smiled at her and said:  
look I know all this sounds strange but.  
(I lied - I did - I do it all the time to them)  
But I swear to you I am not a madman or a crazy person or anything like that.  
She smiled back at me. She believed in me.  
Another GB.  
Great Bird?  
No - Gullible Bitch.  
“How much money do you have?”  
Fifty five pounds.  
The Bog had given me five pounds and the address of the nearest Social Security office.  
“Ah!” says the girl,” the Magic Bus is passing through on its way to Amsterdam. They will take you.”  
Oh thank you miss. I smiled.  
If only I had time to do my things to her. In a dark secluded soundproofed place. Things that she won’t like but I will – but that’s her fucking problem. Put the bitch on tablets.  
How much?  
Asks I and smiled very sweetly. That’s the best part of my act. Bingo! I am in – she smiles back at me.  
“Nineteen pounds.”  
I’ll take it.  
“Name and address please.”  
I don’t have an address at the moment.  
“I don’t think,” says she going very serious, “that homeless people are allowed to go abroad.”  
Have the Brits done away with transportation while I was inside?  
“What?”  
Just put down Mountjoy Prison.  
“And your name?”  
Jesus 2.  
I explained  
Ye see the name Jesus is such an iconic name for a saviour that God – me auld fella - is loath to change it. And so no matter how many of us he has we are all called Jesus with a number after the name – a bit like the Lee Enfield rifle or the Ford Cortina - Mk 1 Mk2 and so on and so forth. I am Jesus Mk2. Ok love?  
She wrote the ticket and I paid her. She held the ticket in shaking hands.  
Shaking hands! She looked so young to have a drink problem.  
“It leaves from outside Connolly Station in an hour.” She handed me the ticket. I took her hand and as I did I kissed it. I whispered to her -you are the sleeping princess and I am your wake up call. She began to shake all over then. Starting from the hands back and then all over. I was so happy I had not lost my pulling power. I held the shaking girl and I told her something very true.  
You are the first woman I have touched in many, many years.

She sort of smiled. No she did. It was a smile alright. She pulled her hand free and pointed at the clock. To one side of the clock hung a poster - blue sea golden sands palm trees tiny white houses – paradise for ten days from 199 pounds.

The da must be hard up to rent out heaven at such a ridiculously low price says I. “Run,” says she,” or you will miss the bus - less than an hour now,” she locked the door behind me and pulled down the blind.

Longest, less than an hour now, of my life. Pain in the neck from looking over my shoulder, pain in the neck from all the rest of it. I couldn't see anyone laying in wait for me but I knew the Special Branch would be skulking about the place to have a look at me for old time's sake.

The lads would know the porkers would be about the place and therefore they would be very careful. The lads would be trying to find out where I was going – where I was staying so they could come calling at a more discreet time. I stood on the street hiding behind a lorry. I was cold. My old civilian clothes were now several sizes too small for me. I had dreamt many, many times that on the day of my release I would have a full Irish breakfast and a pint of Guinness and here I was waiting for the Magic Bus. I checked my ticket. A ticket written out in a shaking hand.

### **JESUS, MARK 2.**

### **MOUNTJOY PRISON. DUBLIN**

### **AMSTERDAM. ONE WAY.**

Exile is always a one way trip. It started to rain. I was now wet and cold. Dreaming is like poetry – it's for fucking wimps. The bus arrived on time. Great. I pulled my hat down and hid my head. A short dash across the road. I gave the driver my ticket. The driver had a cauliflower head. It looked at the ticket and looked at me.

“Some sort of joker we have here,” it said and it was talking to itself obviously because at that stage I was the only other person on the bus. It demanded to see my passport.

“I have the authority,” says the cauliflower waving my passport and ticket under my nose, “to refuse to carry a passenger – any passenger – at my own discretion. Entirely at my own discretion. This,” it continued regardless, tapping the steering wheel with my passport, “is my bus. My bus! Go on then.” says he and gave me back the passport and ticket.

I sneaked down to the bottom of the bus, wedged myself in and made myself as small as possible. The last thing I wanted was a confrontation with a huge authoritarian cauliflower with obvious ego problems. And we do not know what the side effects of steroids are on vegetables either. I hope it has a fucking driving license. If not and we are pulled over on the Continent the French might make soup out of it.

You know what they are like big lad – they will eat anything.

Don't call me big lad.

The bus was not tailed on the road to Dun Laioire. I breathed a sigh of relief as the ferry pulled away for England. I stood up on the deck and watched Ireland fade away into the mist. I was shivering from head to foot.

If this is a dream it's a fucking nightmare. I found a quiet place down below and dropped the two sleeping tablets the Bog had grudgingly given to me. Later, as we drove through Enemy England, I dropped the horse tranquillizer. The smack I was saving up for some special unbearable day. I could not function without drugs.

Human reality was horrible - disturbing – and I avoided it at all and any cost.

The heart pumped the shit up into my brain and I was sucked down into a dark deep state of non existence. It was cold and dark and lonely but the Bog couldn't get in. On the ferry across to Holland I roused briefly and dropped the acid. I am lying curled up

sucking my thumb in a damp hollow concrete cube. It smells of dank despair. Something is shaking my shoulder. I thought it was one of the Bog - the alien threat to Ireland and true humanity at large. Was this a sumobogman screw kicking me out the bed to peer wisely up my ass?

“Bend over dare now like ha good man and spread open de cheeks of your backside.”

That’s the way they talk. Honest to god big lad. Ask anyone who has been dehumanized. The old SS Sphincter Scrutiny, the wicked assholes technique.

Ai Ai Ai. Asshole inspection conducted with profound skill and looking for what?

An ASE? – The old terrorist Ass to Eye Missile? Enlightenment? It probably wanted it’s tax rebate to pop out early. I asked a simple question looking up from between my ankles. I was very supple at that time.

Officer Sweetandsourpork says I. Have you or any of your screwy friends ever found anything inside a prisoners asshole? Has anything ever actually popped out? “Gwan now,” it said a big angry culchie head on it, “ pull hup your hunderpants and get back hinto your cell.”

I’ll take that as a no, says I

Officer Noodle slams the cell door shut behind me. Into the bed and pull the blankets over my head.

I opened one eye a little bit and peered out. I wasn’t outside my cell bent over being dehumanized by the mighty Bog. I opened the eye a bit more.

I was sitting on a bus. A Magic Bus.

I forced my other open slowly. This might be a Bog trick, but it wasn’t - the bus was driving slowly alongside a narrow canal in a strange city. The houses were all drunk, leaning over at impossible angles, ready to fall over at any time. The canal was lit up with coloured lights and there were yellow silk ribbons hung everywhere - on the trees - on the buildings - fluttering from the lamp posts - the drug dealers wearing yellow arm bands - the pimps wearing yellow berets - and all to welcome me. On either side of the canal the windows of the tall houses were all full of naked and semi naked Blessed Virgins of all colours and shapes and sizes all wearing banana G strings and yellow clogs waving their sticky egg yolk panties at me and blowing me kisses and making wanky wanky sucky sucky signs at me. Crowds of people of all nationalities were wandering the canal - stag parties giving me the thumbs up - perverts shaking their cocks at me - gay young things on their knees shaking their asses at me!

Oh aye! Everyone everywhere wants to fuck with the heir to heaven and - all - yes all - were delirious with joy at the second coming of the Belfast Butcher Boy. There were bars everywhere, all full of Protestants, Catholics and Dissenters having a good time. I even saw a chap wearing the green, dancing on a table. The Tom Jones Clone Choir all one thousand nine hundred and ninety nine of them sang up at me sitting astride a long black snaking dildo floating along the custard canal – Tie a Yellow Ribbon Around the Old Oak Tree they were singing and then they started up with - the Green, Green, Grass of Home.

How was this possible? How was it possible for me to see happy people interacting together in harmony and freedom? - When there were not one – but two – yes two! - Two wicked porkers on unicorns guarding the small bridge across the canal?

Who would let a wicked porker up on a unicorn?

I must have died in the cube again - or is this another trick of the wicked Piranha? - A cruel illusion, a sadistic turn of the screw as I slept.

There is no rest for the wicked in the Bog – even in sleep. I closed my eyes and the smack let me back into the black place. I knew I was inside the cube. They cannot fool me - not after all this time. I know all their tricks. I have watched the Bog, studied them for many centuries from the safety of my cage. I know what they are up to. The Bog are parasites sucking up the suffering – farmers misbegotten offspring stuck all over the captive cube - money monsters - watching waiting watching waiting always waiting for me to exit limbo so they can begin the evil rehabilitation program. Something is shaking my shoulder.” We are here.” says the driver - he was much older and looked completely different but he could not deceive me even though he was brown of skin to boot - I knew he was Bono the Bubble. They must have taken him off the ‘Green Meals On Wheels For All’, run.

I was the only one left on the bus.

“Sloterdijk,” says Bono.

That must be the old Gaelic for – get off the fucking bus. I stopped by the door. It was dark outside and raining hard. I had no idea where I was - or who I was.

I must have died in the cube again.

“We are here,” says the driver.

Where? - says I.

“Sin City,” says Bono.

I can live with that.

I dipped my foot outside, down onto the shifting bubbling whispering tarmac. It was solid enough to take my weight. I scuttled off escaping into the darkness passing the parked cars with the strange number plates and steering wheels on the wrong side - walked into the sweet driving rain towards the lights. I counted my footsteps – 107-108- 109 and stopped by a tree. 109. 109. 109. 109.109. 109.

I can say it forever.

That will forever be my lucky number.

109. One hundred and nine - and no gates, no barbed wire, no psychopaths, no patriots, no dedicated asshole inspectors. I breathed in deeply through my nose. I could not smell the stinking Bog. The vile filthy smell of the alien dehumanization programme was gone - no shouting snarling banging rattling and clanging. Just the sound of the rain washing the trees. I touched wet bark. It was real. A tree! – An oak tree - for fucks sake! I picked a leaf up off the ground and rubbed it around my face. I was sure then. This was not another one of the Bog mind games.

I was free. I was really free.

I sat down by the tree on the pavement outside Sloterdijk Station. I could not move. I was paralyzed with euphoria and relief. I pinched the soft skin on my wrist - in a weak spot by the scars -with my long nails until I bled - an old method of mine to see if I was still in the here and now. I wasn’t dead. I was alive.

The pavement went all soft and candy flossy. I looked up at the sky, and as I wept. I saw God the father and my big brother Jesus peeping down at me from behind the moon. I roared up at the pair of cunts and showed them the blood running down my arm – this is *my* body this is *my* blood! I am alive! Alive! – do you hear me you fucking rotten bastards? I gave them the fingers.

“People are looking at you,” says the oak tree.

I am alive. I explained to the passers by.

But they just floated past engrossed in their mundane and ignored me. Flotsam City Blues, a new album by the Dossers. I shouted up a promise at the gods - and unlike those gods, I will keep my promises to the faithful.

I am alive! I roared up at them.

They are hiding over on the dark side of the moon now.

And when I am dead - when my time comes - I am coming to fucking get you pair.

“Why?”- asked the kindly oak tree.

They abandoned me! You left me to rot! I roared up at them again.

A pair of fucking liars I explained to the people.

You know, just in case they thought I talked to trees or something.

The kindly Dutch folk just looked at me as if I was just another nutter or something.

Who can blame them floating around me avoiding me?

If they only knew who I was but they only know what they see and hear and all that other stuff coming from you know where - big lad.

Don't call me big lad.

“You are going to get in trouble,” says the oak tree. “There are two policemen coming out of the station.”

And so there were and they were looking my way. At me! For fucks sake!

“We don't want to get nicked on my first day out – do we?” says the oak tree. Who are *we*? What a fucking question to ask a paranoid, misogynistic, schizoid, homicidal, patriotic, psychotic pyromaniac. For fuck sake how do *we* know?

Get up ordered the Voice. I got to my feet.

“Do you always do what voices in your head tell you to do?”

I trust the Voice. It always gives good advice.

Its survival depends on it big lad.

“Don't call me big lad.”

I saluted the tree.

May you drop many acorns and propagate. Says I. And may your children never end up as planking in a whore house.

That's a loose translation from the old Gaelic.

“Dank je well,” says the oak, “tot ziens.”

The wicked porkers are walking my way. The Bog is on the loose. Better pretend to be normal. What the fuck is normal? What do *we* do? I remember - when in Rome do what the Romans do - ah yes – but what the fuck does a Dutchman do at seven am on a cold rainy morning?

How would I know big lad – I just fucking got here.

I have an idea. I'll do it. I will. I'll do what a Paddy does abroad! So I force myself into normality mode and shuffle off with the rest of the great unwashed, unwanted mass of diabolical humanity, down into the bowels of the earth, and catch a train to Centrum. I am on a mission.

I presently found my way to the nearest Irish bar, looking for digs and work and I have been a happy sinner ever since.

Through my fault through my fault through my most glorious and self indulgent fault. This was the Blarney Stone, one of the first Irish Pubs in Amsterdam. The owner, Big Paddy - Culchie in Chief of the Sacred Kerry Ring Bandits - said the Blarney Stone was the *ONLY* Irish pub in Amsterdam claiming the others were bogus opened up by imposters and owned by Dutch yokels who had come up from the country to Amsterdam and painted their clogs green.

But that was all to change when I was induced by Peter the Groper to open the - *ONE AND ONLY - REAL GENUINE - HANDS ON, PADDIES AT THE PUMPS, TALKING AUTHENTIC BLARNEY WITH BROGUE, IRISH PUB in AMSTERDAM* - the now universally famous *FINNEGANS RAINBOW!*

I am Jimmy Beningi alias Seamus O - alias, aliases which shall never be mentioned - and I am sitting in the Blarney Stone – many, many years later after my fortuitous arrival in Sin City. It was a quiet Monday and sitting beside me was a rare life form - my self proclaimed business partner Admiral Peter the Groper R.N. retired, very definitely retired. The Groper, at that moment in time, was a large pudgy blob with a great red double wobbled triple chinned turnip like head. The Groper first arrived in Amsterdam as a Cornish garden gnome by way off the Magic Wheelbarrow and the only place he could find to live was an abandoned squat – an old steroid factory heavily insulated with asbestos. Not being a fussy eater he lived off the steroids. He grew at an alarming rate hence his distinctive mass. His true species name *GLUGUS PINTUS* translated into a language we earthlings can understand is: I drink therefore I am. Before this dimensional existence, he was an insufferable, adolescent, sea going hippopotamus, addicted to fish and chips, mushy peas, crusty assholes, pickled onions with hot curry sauce and before that he was the Peter the Irritating, the Mad Mufti of Cornwall. In fact he could be anyone or anything at anytime in any place such was his creative genetical make up.

Why such an evidently superior life form decided to be my business partner still puzzles me greatly.

The Groper could not make up his mind, whether to have another pint of cider or to go around to eat at The Taj - a very plush Indian restaurant run by noble Indians who wore scarlet turbans, carried swords, and sported great cultivated black curly beards. The Indians were doing a tourist menu for ten guilders - curry of your choice nan bread and a cup of maul the lassie. Well I can't speak Indian I just eat the stuff. And I like it.

What do you like?

Mind your own fucking business big lad.

Don't call me big lad.

It was great food. Authentic Indian curry served three meters below sea level.

"Sure you wouldn't get the likes of it in the galley on a nuclear submarine," said the Groper in the Irish accent he always adopted when in the Irish pubs. He licked his lips.

"Yes very nice curry Mother McCree - and don't forget to feed the auld pig ," says the Groper and admiring himself in the mirror.

There will not be much left over for the pig - says I.

The Groper was still preening himself in the mirror. He was most inordinately vain for such an ugly bastard but he gave me a gummy smile. "Real vindaloo! O yes, made from the old Portuguese recipe from Goa me lads. They used to make it hot enough that a sailors shit could be used to burn through the hull of a man o war. A burning ring of fire. Johnny Cash eat your heart out ."

I don't know why he said that. He was always saying strange things for reasons best known to himself.

"Vindaloo from fucking Portugal in fucking Goa," says wee Dibs a small sot friend of the Groper who had a distinct rodentine appearance – with original pointy ears - and who was called behind his back - the Supping Rat. "Amazing," he whined, "fucking amazing wot 'appens over there in them fucking foreign 'ot fucking places."

"Lovely," says the Groper. He licked his lips. "Lovely. O yes very nice."

"Wot's fucking nice? Whose very fucking nice then? " asks Dibs and he cast a rapid daring look at the horrible barmaid, a universal man hater, Little Miss Poison Toad (PT) from Newry, who hated anything that walked, crawled, wriggled, ran, swam or flew. I think that covers all male homo sapien variations and mutations galaxies wide.

She swelled up like a bully bull frog at Dibs' impertinent look and went a horrible shade of cranky period bile.

"Don't be asking me any of your weird questions," she spat out at wee Dibs, "I'm not paid enough to listen to pure shite outta a smelly old bollox like yourself - now." She smiled hissed and scuttled up to the landlord Big Paddy and grabbed him by the sleeve, then looking intensely up at his face, began to whine in a most disagreeable and vexatious way, "Am I Paddy? Am I Paddy? You don't pay me to listen to de likes of dis. Do you Paddy? Do you Paddy?" She started sniveling and Big Paddy nodded in agreement just to shut her up, undid her clutching hand and trotted off about his business, like a good culchie on the make.

"O yes," says the Groper salivating and licking his lips, "there is nothing - absolutely nothing on Gods earth to beat a good curry."

He farted in anticipation, sniffed, and continued. "When I was Captain of Harvey Platinum's schooner we had our own Indian chef on board,"

"Who's Harvey Platinum?" asks Coconut Wilson a sad nose y barfly with a very bad sense of smell who was perched next to the Groper.

"You don't know who Harvey Platinum is? - You maladjusted dirty dickbrained wimpy wallyassed mogadon. He's only the second richest man in the world," declares the Groper and swallows a mighty draught of his Magners cider.

"Who's the richest then?"

The Groper blew up much like an angry poisonous puff fish or a - common balloon with spiky venomous spots and hot air. It's your choice. Take which ever description you wish. You bought the fucking book.

"I wouldn't skipper for that bollox," the Groper looked about the bar angrily, "that Bolloxy *BILL* the Bollox and close the *GATES*," the Groper winked at letting us have his clever clue and then went on passionately, "not if he turned the crews quarters into an Indian Palace and we had free range veal goat Vindaloo for breakfast every morning with" - declared the Groper rubbing his hands together - "fresh baked nan bread in garlic with Mrs. Ghandi's home made Calcutta chutney."

He was drooling.

"Why's fucking that then? Why won't you fucking work for the world's richest fucking man then?"

"Too much money. Too much by far - for his own good. And he owes me twenty dollars from when we were docked in Monte Carlo. Welched on a bet. Refused to pay. O you cannot buy decorum." The Groper sighed. "Money cannot buy a decent rearing. As my old submarine skipper Depthcharge Dan used to say - stick to the 3Ms me lads and life will not see you wrong." The Groper paused dramatically and there was silence in the bar. Even PT was listening. He knew no one knew what the 3Ms were. I'm not sure anyone fucking cared but he enlightened us anyway.

"Manners Maketh Man. And by God did we put manners on the Squareheads." The Groper stood up on his bar stool and made like he were peering through a periscope. "Fire one. Fire two." He made a chug chug chug noise. "Torpedoes away sir. That'll teach the bastards decorum. Send the scum to Davy Jones finishing school for young Krauts." The Groper finished his tenth pint of cider - that we can account for - burped, "same again," says he and orders - "down periscope. Surface, surface, surface - target practice on survivors me lads. One shot one kill - ammo doesn't grow on bloody trees."

Little Miss PT nasty held out a demanding claw and waved it in *my* face snapping, "five guilders." She was studded with warts and she used the big black one above her left eyebrow to intimidate people. She wiggled it at me. I'd hate to be rubbing

shoulders with that when I was full of stout and after the legover. She didn't fool me. I knew she was one of the Bog. I forced the horrible image out of me mind.

And I'll have a pint of Guinness.

The wart began to pulsate. "That's ten guilders to you – come on get the money out – NOW!" She knew the Groper never had any money - preferring to spend all his cash on drink in a more agreeable atmosphere. I gave her the money and only then did she pull the pints. She handed the Groper his cider and left my pint of Guinness to settle. The Groper thought a bill was something stuck on the end of a parrot. This was Gropernomics. A revolutionary economic system designed to ensure the Groper did not live above his dubious means. Among the dedicated Amsterdam Happy Hour Troupers the Groper was the only pisshead who did not have a bar bill. As the Groper's old ma used to say -he might be a fat lad a bit of an ugly bumpkin - he might have a loose tongue and he do 'ave a fine fickle scrumpy ass but he is very prim and tight about the money. The Groper preferred to save his money and drink it secretly in far away pubs under an anonymous name when his drinking pals were all broke. It's the Gnome blood - full of mean sneaky sly selfish corpuscles.

Big Paddy jogged out the door wearing his Republic of Ireland football shirt – he was off down to Amsterdam Central Station luring unsuspecting backpackers and budget travelers back to stay in his Hotel Starless - unless you were lucky enough to be staying in the loft where at no extra cost you could peep through the leaking skylight by night and observe the star studded Amsterdam sky. The moment Big Paddy left the Blarney Stone PT abandoned my settling pint clattered up the bar like a hungry unyoked mule stable bound and began to play the gambling machine with Big Paddy's small change from the till.

Excuse me miss I shouts down to Little Miss PT - my pint.

"You wait a minute – you fat bollox," she shouts back." I'm fucking busy."

Give me my pint you warty twat - I shouts back.

"Hold you your horses now," she shouts over her back –"it has to settle."

"Settle," says the Groper," it looks like its laying on the bottom."

Come on. Says I to the Groper – food. Dibs you can have that pint.

"Cool," says Dibs.

"Cool," comments the Groper finishing his drink and fixing the neglected pint with a professional eye - "it looks like it's about to erupt. Pint of lava that's what it is,"

Give that pint to Dibs please miss - I shouts down to PT.

"Fuck off and don't be telling me what to do you pair of cunts," she shouts back.

"Charming young lady," says the Groper.

Have a nice day you ugly spotty crab crutched nit infested dogfaced slut miss.

Shouts I.

I thought she was going to run up and attack us with the axe she kept behind the bar but she never reacted to anything we said when she was playing the gambling machine. She was locked into an impenetrable addiction bubble – with filters. We walked around to the Taj and the Indians squeezed us in with the tourists. They had a clever marketing strategy. They filled the place up and delayed as much as possible with the food to encourage people to buy another drink.

The food was not in big portions but, very well cooked, and presented in a first class way. When you walked past and looked in the windows the place was always full - mostly of young tourists having a good time. I always left feeling like General Macarthur vowing - I'll be back. The Indians knew me well. I was seated with the Groper at a nice long table in the middle of the restaurant together with two French

couples. They were savouring a glass of wine and having an animated discussion about the menu.

Two Cobra beers. Says I to the waiter.

“Yes, yes, and all at once shall I get you two Cobras.”

The beers came down and the Groper immediately ordered two more, all at once.

“Yes, yes, sir and two more Cobras.”

“Must be breeding them,” says the Groper.

The French couples were very loud and making extensive use of their hands to express themselves. The Groper started making signals at the French with a menu card in each hand.

“I don’t understand,” says the Frenchman.

What you are doing - says I.

“Talking Semaphore. In English. We invented it.”

“I don’t understand you,” says the Frenchman.

The Groper translated.

“Would you.” says he very loudly and slowly, “like to try the curried snails. SSS Madras in their shells.”

“SSS?”

“Shit Hot Snails.”

The waiter came down with the two Cobras. I had not yet started on the first.

“Two more Cobras,” says the Groper and swallowed the one in front of him in one gulp. He slammed his glass down on the table and gave one of the Frenchwomen the leery eye.

“Two more Cobras,” says the waiter repeating – “two more Cobras.”

“Two more Cobras, two more Cobras,” mimics the Groper. “Parrots in the Punjab, Parrots in the Punjab,” he screeches in the Frenchman’s ear pointing at the retreating waiter.

“Pardon?” says the Frenchman.

“There’s no need to apologise,” says the Groper – “we won. Who’s a pretty frog?” screeched the Groper and pecked at the Frenchman’s ear with his big red nose.

Knock it off. Says I, or they will toss us out. I’m hungry.

The French were very quiet, peering over their menus at the Groper. The Groper was swelling up as if he were being pumped full of air. The Groper saw the waiter coming to the table. He swallowed the Cobra beer again in one swallow.

The waiter says – “and two more Cobras? Yes, yes, two more Cobras.”

“I should like to order,” says the Groper. He seemed to be short of breath as if his windpipe had a blockage.

“He,” says the waiter smiling at us at the table, “would like to order.”

The Groper made a loud belch and flapped his arms. His red turnip head went a pale grey colour.

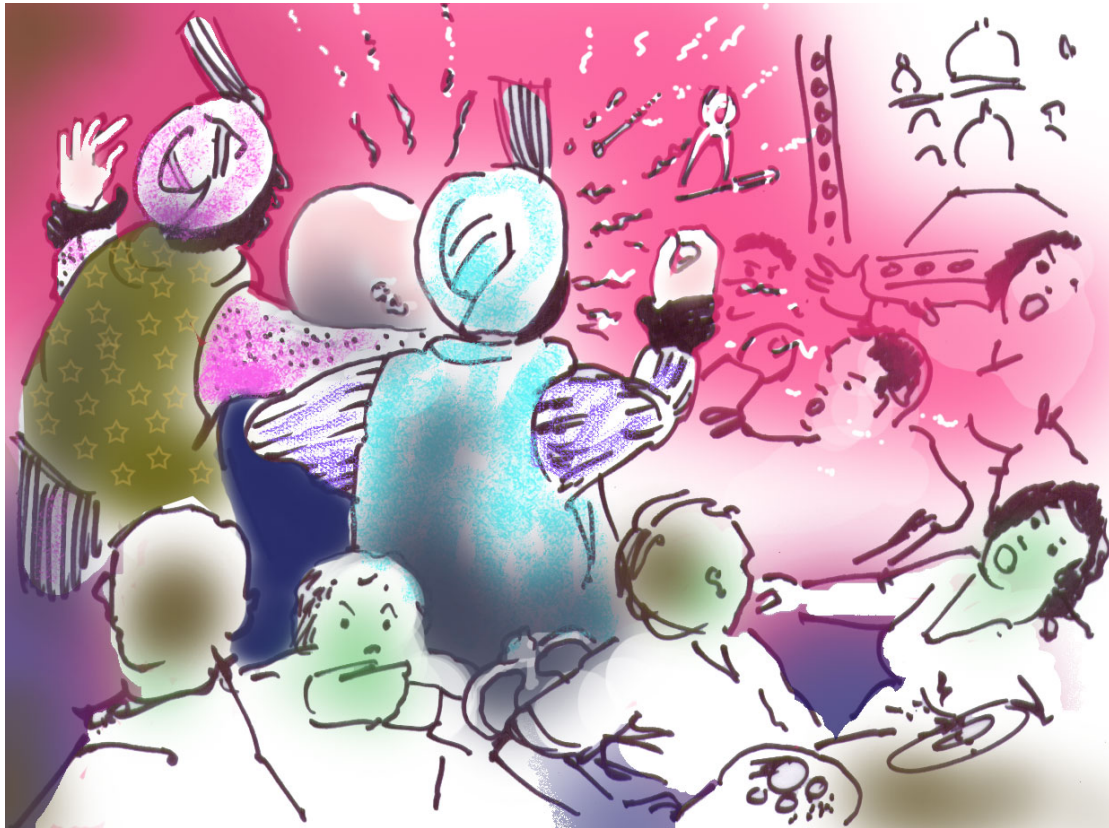
The waiter not being told to fuck off became emboldened and continued with his, learn a foreign language at work course, and practice on the unsuspecting for free.

“You would like to order - they would like to order – he she or it would like to order.” He pointed at the French.” They would like to order.”

The Groper stood up and he changed colour from puce grey to red, to purple. The Frenchman lifted his finger and the waiter produced his order pad and a dazzling white smile appeared in the black curly beard. Everything went to slow motion.

The Groper standing, clasped his chair with two hands. He went horribly jaundiced yellow, speckled with purple blotches.

“Perhaps today we are not feeling well sir,” says the waiter. The Groper gawked – a horrible noise - and discharged a three meter plus gush of spew that saturated a group of Japanese students sitting at the next table.



They screamed and dived for cover. The waiter grabbed the Groper and tried to push him towards the door. Another waiter grabbed hold of the Groper. One on each arm. They were dragging him out. The cooks were out from the kitchen. The boss was in from the foyer. Turbans to the right of him turbans to the left of him the Groper let off another discharge and the waiters, in panic, turned him this way and that, with the result the Groper was like the turret of a tank turning and discharging, turning and discharging, spraying the tightly seated, trapped customers. A new musical for the discerning West Enders - Sardines in Cider Spew. The fire/gas alarm went off! The customers began to escape through the fire doors. I fought my way to the foyer. A great pandemonium was taking place, The Groper was lying face down on the floor convulsing and every time he convulsed he spewed, all the while making these gawking rattling noises.

I managed to get out before anyone recognized me as his companion. The Indians were screaming at the American backpackers - no photographs, no photographs - and then the ecological disaster police arrived.

I went across to the other side of the road and watched. The police arrested the Groper. He was prodded outside his hands handcuffed behind his back.

“Walk in front of us,” ordered the police. “You know the way.”

“I’m telling you they sold me a bad bottle,” shouts the Groper.

The Indians all began to scream and shout and curse the Groper in their native tongue. Whatever language it was, it was not good.

“Move along,” ordered the police.

“Are you arresting me?”

“What do you think? Move along.”

“But why,” appealed the Groper feigning innocence to the gawking gathering crowd, “why am I being arrested?”

“Fouling the environment and making mayhem in a public place.”

“I was served up a bad bottle,” appealed the Groper to the onlookers. “A bad bottle! What do the Indians know about making beer?” he cried passionately.

He turned to address the police. Everyone scattered.

“Face the other way and walk towards the police station,” shouted the police through a megaphone.

The Groper trundled towards the police station about two hundred meters up the road. Cameras popping and flashing, the Groper smiling and posing a bit for his growing audience.

“A bad bottle - a bad bottle!” protested the Groper.

“A bad bottle of what?” asked an onlooker.

“Well,” shouts the Groper, “it wasn’t cider.” He erupted again at the perishing thought. He bagged a Volkswagon and pepperpotted a few bicycles. “What the hell do they expect,” yells the Groper, “making beer from Cobras. They put the venom in it.”

“What does he say?” roared the head Indian. “What? What? What? Nonsense does he say now?”

“He is shouting that we are making beers from snakes.”

“You hear what he says? You hear what he says? That we are making beers from snakes.” The head Indian was screaming at the police. “Scandal! He is making scandal on the Queens Highway!” shouts the head turban drawing his sword.

“Ya, ya,” says the policeman. “Move along there.”

“What’s happening?” asks an onlooker.

“Some guy has been poisoned.”

“No,” says a girl sucking on a weed spliff, “he was bit by a snake in the Indian restaurant - a King Cobra. I saw it. It was huge - bigger than the Loch Ness monster Nessie.” Her eyeballs were wobbling in her head. “It had a dog in its mouth. A big black dog with great big orange spots the size of tennis balls.”

“Where this snake go?” asked an oriental gentleman and very polite he was too. He had the video camera at the ready.

“To the dog’s home,” spat the girl, “it’s not like some people we know. It’s not going to eat the dog is it?” And she wandered off dazed and in tears.

Skunk – a queer name, but great stuff.

I escaped in the hullabalagroper - bala - baloo - and made my way home to my place on the Marnixstraat. As I walked through the Jordan my head was sore and I could feel the nightmare brewing. When it came it was upfront horrible and vicious day or night. Sleep was not an option. It only went away when it was finished with me.

When I opened my door my heart was hammering in my chest. I was cold and the shakes were starting up. I went to my stash and dropped a morphine tab. I washed it down with a glass of Black Bush and waited for the opium to quell the horrors. I selected the Fab4 and put on my earphones. Breathe in deeply, fill the lungs, hold it, let the breath out slowly, slowly! That’s it. Remember your training.

But no training could prepare one for the horror scene I found off the coast of the Canary Islands.

It was a routine run.

Rendezvous with the boat in our high speed launch, collect the cargo and hightail it back to a secluded private harbour. I knew there was something wrong as soon as I saw the mother boat. It was a converted trawler running out Trinidad fitted out for

long range cruising. She was drifting. Dead in the water. We approached cautiously and tied up. I will never forget the smell. Grilled human. The odour of depravity and barbarism. The animal moans of human beings – are we human beings? Begging to die. The five man crew, four men and a woman, had been savaged and tortured in the most horrifying and sick way. Dark Age depravity. All had their eyes removed their tongues were ripped out their ears sliced off. The men had been castrated and cauterized with a blow torch. The woman had been given special treatment. She was almost dead. She was tied down over a spar and a flag pole carrying the union jack had been battered with such force up her vagina it had exited just below her sternum. I could not pull the flag pole out without causing her more – if that were possible – suffering. I shot her. She was the first. Remember your training breathe in deeply – and my lungs filling up with the smell of the Great Beast. The woman's breasts and vagina had been burned away. The blow torch was sitting on the saloon table. Nothing had been disturbed and the cargo was still on board. Neatly stacked up on deck, ready to unload. The eyes tongues the private parts of the victims were all neatly laid out on a shelf above the navigation table. Written on the mirror in the saloon in black felt tip in neat script were these words.

It's A Bargin.

Whoever had done this had no regard for anything certainly not for money – the cargo was worth 80 million guliders - but this was an obscene monstrous way to make a point. My crew almost panicked. I made them transfer the cargo. I shot the rest of the trawler crew and I have no qualms or regrets about that. I tied them down inside the saloon so they would not float to the surface. I commended their bodies to the deep and scuttled their boat. The trawler sank. The Mary Lou. I wondered if that was the name of the woman.

She was finished – so was I.

I delivered the Cargo and collected two million US from Big Don.

He pretended to be mystified by what had happened. Someone was pissed off that's for sure. He seemed to find the whole affair somewhat amusing. Probably there was a DEA cunt on board and they didn't know wot one did, did they? "Well done anyway," says he "good job. Wot you gonna do now?"

I'm off on holiday.

I wasn't so stupid as to tell him I was quitting. I went to Vegas to think things through. On the night that I had lost the last of my money the nightmares began. It was so frightening – a hundred thousand million times more frightening than the scene on the boat. I could not sleep. I could not - was terrified to - close my eyes. The wailing the accusations and a sickening pervading stench of burnt flesh that enveloped me making me thoroughly ill. I threw up constantly. What could I do - call the hotel doctor?

Hello room service – yes I am having a severe traumatic reaction to events that happened when I was collecting a couple of tons of cocaine in the Atlantic. Yes that's correct. I am losing my mind.

"O yes sir - the doctor and the DEA will be along in a few minutes. Yes we have a wonderful clinic for you in the Federal Pen. Ok. Have a nice day."

A friend recommended an old Hippie doctor who was hanging out in the desert down in Nevada. He put me on the opium.

"You won't really sleep man he said - preparing the pipes," the ghosts won't let you - but you will be out of it. The ghosts will get bored with you. If you are not freaked out they don't want to know you. You will reach a level of peace. When you get there do something nice. Be happy – and when you are there maybe you should think about

changing your lifestyle man. You can stay here and grow weed. All we need is water. You might only be here only the one time man.”

I listened to the music in the desert for a long time and watched the weed grow, All classical especially Bach and Beethoven but when I was in the cotton wool cocoon I loved - no adored - Johnny Cash and the Fab4. I adjusted the volume as I cut myself loose from the rigging of the sinking ship, threw off her pale hands that clung desperately to my feet, dragging me down, and floated up to the light. I popped up a cheerful wee cork and bopped and bobbed about in a calm happy peaceful sea.

The lads were sitting on the backs of dolphins smiling singing –  
Words are flying out like endless rain into a paper cup  
They slither as they pass. They slip away across the universe  
Pools of sorrow. Waves of joy are floating through my open mind  
Possessing and caressing me.

*Jai Guru De-va Om*

Nothings gonna change my world Nothings gonna change my world  
Images of broken light which dance before me  
Like a million eyes that call me on and on across the universe  
Thoughts meander like a restless wind inside a letter box,  
They tumble blindly as they make their way across the universe

*Jai Guru De-va Om*

Nothings gonna change my worlds Nothings gonna change my world  
Sounds of laughter, shades of earth are ringing thru’ my open views  
Inciting and inviting me  
Limitless undying love which shines around me like a million suns  
It calls me on and on across the universe

*Jai Guru De-va Om*

Nothings gonna change my world Nothings gonna change my world.

That’s what I thought. That’s what I wanted. Not in this warm care free dreamy world anyway.

The phone rang at seven o’clock the next morning. I took of my ear phones.

Hallo? Seamus speaking?

“Captain Peter here,” says this chirpy voice, “where are you?”

Where the fucking hell do you think I am – Goa? You are ringing me at home you moron.

“I’m in the police station at New Sides Full Bull Wall. They won’t let me out unless I pay the Pakies three hundred guilders.”

They are not Pakistanis, they are Indians!

“I shall sue them too and I don’t give a damn where they came from or how they got here. A turban is a turban is a turban. I shall sue every last one of the wretched ragtops. This,” says he with that rare gift of his of understating the obvious,” is outrageous. Can you pop down with the money and get me out.”

I walked down to the police station and went inside.

I’m here with money to bail out the Groper.

I counted out the money and the policeman gave me a receipt.

“Does the Groper work for you?”

He is my partner says I - just to get the fucker out. I needed him to finish varnishing a boat.

The police man looked at me with pity and shook his head. He went off to get the Groper.

“I haven’t had a wink of sleep,” the Groper started moaning, “some junkie in the next cell snoring all night long *and* he got a pizza and me starving. Starving! Locking people up without a bite to eat! Medi evil that’s what it is! And you can drop the medi bit an’ all!”

“Sign here,” says the policeman.

“And I didn’t get a shower either.”

I looked at the Groper. He looked like he had just been washed ashore.

The Groper signed.

“I shall sue them,” he declared, “every one of them. What’s the name of your lawyer,” says the Groper to me, “that Moscow Twitch fella – the one who defends all the big criminals.”

“Moscow Twitch is your lawyer, eh?” asks the policeman and gives me a, I know what you are up to me lad, look. I tapped the side of my head to indicate insanity on the part of the Groper.

The policeman turned to the Groper.

“Mr. Groper if you go near the Indian Restaurant again you will be arrested and deported. Sign here.”

“What for?”

“To prove you were alive when you left the police station. Sign here.”

The Groper wrote across the form in block capitals - *NO BREAKFAST!*

“If I were you I would seek help and stop with the alcohol.” He gave the Groper a little pamphlet. “You should ring one of the numbers here, and go and see the doctor. You are free to go.”

“I shall have your badge,” says the Groper. “It’s against the Geneva Convention not to feed a prisoner. Now I need your rank name and number.”

“Ya ya,” says the policeman and comes a round the desk and throws us out.

How much cider did you drink yesterday before I met you in the Blarney Stone? I asked the Groper.

“One or two,” says the Groper.

One or two what? Better not to ask. But I did.

One or two of what? asks I.

But the sneaky bastard wouldn’t answer. Perhaps such a measurement, such space is beyond our limited capacity to understand.

“Hungry are you?” asks the Groper. “I know a nice place not far from here that’s open. They do a lovely breakfast. Three fried eggs grilled bacon with cheese on top tomato and salad. Only four guilders fifty. And wonderful staff.”

We are broke. says I.

“I’ll treat you,” says the Groper and he shoves his hand down his crutch and pulls his wallet out of his water proof pouch. “They wouldn’t dare look for it down there,” he says.

I guess you are right.

He opened the wallet. He had about five hundred guilders in there. I took it out of his hand and took back my three hundred guilders.

You told me you were broke.

“No.” Says he. “I told the police I was broke.”

You lied to the police?

“Of course you cannot tell the police the truth! You’ll end up in all sorts of trouble.”

I was feeling a bit better and I was hungry. I had not eaten the previous evening before I goofed off.

“Come on,” says the Groper, “I’m paying.”

I should have known better. We walked along the New En Dike past the silent Blarney Stone, past the Swan Pub, onto the bridge across the Spui canal. The man from the fish stall was just opening up.

“Morning Captain.”

“Morning,” says the Groper and gives him a Royal Navy salute. We walked up the Haarlemeer Straat.

Where is this place?

“Across from Barneys Breakfast bar. The Princess. It’s a great place. Extra toast, as much coffee or tea as you want, all in – all inclusive, Lovely breakfast and some very tasty grannies.” The Groper rubbed his hands and changed into second gear. “Here we are.”

He opened the door to the Princess and I stepped inside. There was a fair crowd in there for that time of the morning, all eating sandwiches, drinking coffee or having breakfast. They were all elderly.

Good morning, says I to the fat woman behind the bar.

She smiled at me. Her smile turned into a snarl when she saw the Groper.

“*It’s him. It’s him! He’s back!*”

She was ready to bash us and the Groper was going to attack her. I steered the blob outside. “What’s all that about?”

“Turnip headed students. Improperly trained bar staff,” says the Groper, “they may as well pull carrots as pints! Yokels on drugs!” declares the Groper.

Thank God the Blarney Stone was open. We went in.

Two pints, says I to Poison Toad.

“Ten guilders,” she says and shoved out the claw.

Pay her,” I threatened the Groper.

He coughed up ten guilders and PT examined it suspiciously. My mobile buzzed and I went outside to take the call.

“Good news?” asked the Groper when I came back in.

Yes. They are going to take the boat at the asking price.

“Great,” says the Groper, “thirty five grand. “Lovely!” and he rang the bell.

There was only he and I in the bar apart from Big Paddy the owner.

“What would you like,” asks the Groper. He loved spending other people’s money.

I explained to Big Paddy what had happened to us in The Princess when the Groper had waddled off for a piss.

The Groper came back in on the tail end of the conversation. “We cannot put up with service like this,” says the Groper, “rudeness is rampant. I have an idea,” says the Groper. “How much do we have?”

I said nothing.

“Thirty five grand. Right?”

I said nothing.

“I know where there is a nice little pub for sale. Buddies. Its in our area. It’s been closed more than six months.”

I said nothing.

Big Paddy was busy leaving to meet the boat train from England and backpacknap the budget people. He stopped and turned around towards us. He looked shocked. “Let me give you a word of advice,” He said putting his hand on my shoulder –!

“DON’T BUY A PUB! “

“DON’T BUY A PUB?” repeats the Groper his dream shot down in flames.

“Take my advice,” says Big Paddy as he stepped out the door – “

*DON’T BUY A PUB!*”

“The jealous bastard “says the Groper looking daggers at the retreating Big Paddy. I could hear all the little funny cogs and weird wheels starting up and beginning to hum and whirl and whiz, hatching pub plots inside his great turnip head.

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Really? says I, and here’s me thinking she is only a half baked Scots semi cannibal.

She sat down at the table and produced a thermos flask.

“And noo that all is done and dusted - it’s time - Joytime in Amsterdam. Would you like a cup of Yogi tea?”

I too sat down.

I’d love a cup of tea. I’m sick of that do everything, go anywhere, hi tech espresso, but can’t make a cup of tea - machine.

She poured out two cups of yogi tea though I have to confess many, many years later I am not sure what this elixer actually was. However, this event changed my life forever.

I’ll get the milk and sugar.

“Don’t you dare,” says she. “This is yogi tea. *Royal Yogi Tea*. Made from a recipe oot the *Dali Lama’s Secret Monkly Infusions* – scroll two.” She let out a small sigh of pleasure. “You canne buy this.”

O, says I.

It smelt wonderful. Instant aroma of; expect something special to happen.

“The Dali Lama would have been frozen to death years ago wi oot the yogi tea.” She took a sip, “Och aye, wi oot the yogi tea the Chinese would be looking for an Iced Dali in the glazier. A snowflake in a blizzard.”

I took a sip. It tasted of ginger and cinnamon, roasted nutmeg, honey flowers, herbs, and whatever, why not. It vibrated with all the richness of a mysterious power. A twang my taste buds could not recognize – liquid magic.

Very nice,” says I.

I might - I thought off to the side - I did - make a new cocktail for the bar - Iced Dali Lama - guaranteed to put you into a trance.

What’s in it?

She raised an eyebrow like Spock. “Magic,” says she. “Biological magic and no additives. It’s completely pure.” She held her cup up, the way the priest does the chalice at mass. “I ask that this party be a great success and happiness and joy be granted to all. “ She took a slug.

“This,” says she, “is the - *Elixir of the Illuminati!*”

Sounds like it should be spurting out of the espresso machine or is it a rare form of instant noodle?

She lets out a peal of manic ha ha ha ha ha's and she stares into my face with big mad searching green eyes.

"Have ye no had Royal Yogi Tea before?"

No.

"Och well, there's a first time for everything. It's just like getting shagged - you never forget the first time."

O aye, says I, just like riding the village bike.

"Beware though. Do not take the piss out the tea. More tea?"

Yes thank you, says I and took a second cup.

I closed my eyes. A cold wind started to blow. It was snowing up by the toilets, the snow flakes falling making a little Tibetan mountain on top of the card table. The 7's were marching about the bar singing – take me to Las Vegas. , At the other end of the bar the potted plant on top of the gambling machine had sprouted a single golden potato and was singing "Everyone's A Winner baby That's For Sure."

Everything was moving sideways like sand in the wind. I finished the tea.

Very, very, refreshing.

"Another cup?"

Absolutely, says I.

"I'm off to get changed," says she and I now saw that she was a lovely little blondy Yak. She pours me the tea, bounces up, and skips off out the door and up the road like a schoolgirl.

Don't forget to put your knickers on Miss Yak.

I was going to shout that after her. I was I'm telling you. Honest to god

big lad - but I was made speechless by what I saw.

Outside Finnigans the Wittenkade had turned into a tropical paradise. There were no people only happy monkeys and it was raining vanilla ice cream to keep it all cool and delicious. I looked in the mirror – I was a large green white spotted baboon – with orange shamrock ears and orange ass – complete with beer belly. Are we really so different from the animals? Incredible scenes were unfolding. I forced myself to concentrate on what was, what is, before the Yogi Tea time. I had to! Business is business and had a business to run. I started with some paperwork – bills – every time I picked one up it sniggered at me. I scrunched it up and slowly squeezed the bloodsucking life out of it. I enjoyed listening to it squeal.

I never liked you - you bastard! Says I

and threw it into the bin of broken promises. I heard someone in the pub cough. A rough smoker's cough. Not possible. I was alone and I had barred the door, behind Valerie naturally enough. I looked about the place. The hairs on the back of my neck were as stiff as a yard brush laying out in a frosty yard. Its only the cat! My cat - Moonhead Rambo Murphy - was sitting on top of the grumblng gambling machine sniffing the golden potato and viewing it with great suspicion. Nothing unusual in that, only the cat was wearing shades, and smoking a big spliff. This is not possible. The cat does not smoke. I closed my eyes. I was immediately hurled into a world of swirling colour where everything was fragmented and moving. The universe was disintegrating and reforming – inside me head. I opened me eyes and the cat was walking across the ceiling and this was the bit I could not grasp - it was still smoking the joint. How can a cat roll a joint?

"Yogi Tea," says the cat," a queer name but great stuff."

This was astonishing. My cat had solved the anti-gravity question. Science's Holy Grail! Gerri Delany banged the door. The cat dropped to the floor and slid into the kitchen. singing dem bones dem bones dem dry bones and a very fine blues voice he had too.

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Some suspicious people thought they had been conned, so that I could rake in all their money and they became increasingly bellicose and outright cranky conned. The Groper wobbled up to me. "We shall have to give an explanation to our public," says he," a public explanation. "Yes a public explanation." He waved his finger at me in admonishment. It was one of those times you could kick yourself for leaving the bolt cutters at home. "We," says he," shall have to make an apology."

No better man than yourself, says I.

"Strange you should say that," says the Groper, reflecting," I've known that for many years. I have," says the Groper," been consulting with Daniel O'Connell."

Was it expensive? asks I.

"Don't worry about it; we can pay him in another life." The Groper went up and snatched the mike from Extra Stout. Gerri threw a spot on him. And there he stood; a genetically modified Bulmers cider golliwog with the Ali Baba bottom look. The Groper looked about him and then held up his hand," Ladies and gentlemen I'm afraid I have some bad news for you all. Quiet please! It doesn't," says he -casually lying in that barefaced way of his," get any worse than this." The pub fell silent. Underneath the black paint the Groper was smirking with joy. He was at last where he wanted to be; the centre of all female attention, and in his own pub too! The Groper pulled a sheet of paper from his cape and read out in a clear firm voice, "U2, The Dubliners, The Pogues, Christy Moore, Bob Geldof, Mary Black and Van the Man, have all been detained at Schiphol Airport under the Offences Against the Eurovision Song Competition Act. An Exclusion Order has been signed against them under the OAESC by a secret committee, meeting in an undisclosed location, barring all of them from mainland Europe. A barring order is in effect against any Irish performer with an audience of more than three, and this, until such times as Holland wins the Eurovision Song Competition. Although we cannot prove Brit Intelligence were behind it, Terry Wogan is delighted, and wishes to hence forth be known as Lord Terry of Toad. They are all in good spirits and Aer Lingus is flying them back home once a safe passage has been negotiated through British Airspace."

"What about Sinead O Connor?"

“I’m afraid Sinead has been lost.”

“Lost what do you mean lost!” screams two little grief stricken shiny billard ball bald lesbians.

“Our latest information is that she has been sent by the baggage handlers, by mistake of course, nudge nudge, nudge wink, wink, to the Sudan in Bob Geldoffs suitcase.”

“And Daniel. What about Daniel O Donnell.”

“He’s in quarantine,” says the Groper.

“Get off the stage you fat lying bollocks,” shouts an unkind heckler.

“I have here,” shouts the Groper, waving something above his head, ” a message from Bono, smuggled out from the cells at Customs and Immigration by his public relations person.”

The Groper swallowed a pint of cider and continued reading from the back of a beer mat

“A Message from Bono to the Fans at Finnegans.

And the Rest of the World

You are our tribe  
And one day we will  
All live together  
All love together  
In a little village  
By a stream of pure water  
And all we need  
All we will ever need  
Is  
A rock to crack nuts.  
You are our tribe  
We will survive  
The shadowmen cannot  
Destroy the vibe.  
You are our tribe.

Bono.”

“Is that it?”

“Yes that’s it.” shouts the Groper at the heckler,” You try and be creative with a customs man looking up your ass for his pension. The word is the lads are working on a new album; ‘The Shadowmen.’ Ok THAT’S IT! I’ll let you have any new information as soon as it comes in. In the meantime enjoy the party.”

He turned the mike back over to Extra Stout who started up on ‘The Rocky Road to Dublin’ again.

“Some one should tell them that it’s a dual carriageway now,” says Mick Flynn.

“Great party,” says Flynn but he wasn’t looking at me. He was staring at the Groper,”whats he fucking like?” says Flynn.

Now that’s a question, says I, that I think even old Laim Shakespeare would have difficulty with. There is certainly no definitive answer.

Flynn pulled out a hip flask. “Try a drop of this.”

What is it?

“Poteen,” says Flynn. “The brother makes a few gallons every couple of years or so.” There was wild craic going on in the pub. I sang a duet with Flynn – ‘The Old Bog Road’. Even Moonhead the cat had tears in its eyes. More and more people started to arrive.

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When I opened the door of Finnegans Jaw Bone was standing waiting inside for me, behind the door. Guinness dashed between his legs out onto the street. Jaw Bone jerked and twitched, grinding his teeth. His fists were clenched. He stood in front of me white faced and shaking. He stank. The whole pub stank!

“Man,” says he,” that is one bad motherfucking cat.”

I looked out the window at Guinness peeping back at me from under a car. He had done something naughty. He looked smug and was swishing his tail to and fro.

“You need to get that animal put down man,” shouts Jaw Bone.

It stinks in here, says I putting on the extractor fan.

The coffee machine man went about his business ignoring us. What’s the problem? Jaw Bone opened his mouth to speak but no words came out. He turned whiter than white and raced to the toilet and began to dry gawk. He returned. I gave him a pint of water with lime juice. Jaw Bone looked horrible.

Tell me what happened.

Jaw Bone drank the water like a man who has been dry in the desert for a couple of days.

“I was just asleep and I hears this noise. The goddamn cat had caught a mouse! Ya told me he didn’t give a damn about the mice for Christs sake,”

Calm down, says I.

“It caught a mouse and put it in my Nikes. In my Nikes! It was tormenting the mouse in my Nikes. Right by my head! What the fuck are you doing? I asks the cat and I went to get my Nike. I don’t want no goddamn mouse in my Nikes. The cat jumps up onto the bar with the mouse in its paw like that,” continued Jaw Bone with his arm extended,” thinks its fucking Superman. The stupid cat thinks I am trying to steal its mouse! Come on,” says Jaw Bone to the coffee machine service man,” do I look like I’m a goddamn cat. Do I look like I eat fucking mice?! “The Dutchman shook his head and that mollified Jaw Bone somewhat. “I looks to see what the motherfucker

cat is doing and he swallows the mouse - whole - tail and all, live. Stupid cat. Ok I don't give a shit man I don't care if it swallows rats and mice all day long. I just want to crash out. I ain't slept in a bed since I fucked that fat broad with the limp. So I fall asleep and I am woke up. AGAIN! The goddamn cat is by my head making noises."

What kind of noises? asks I in case I had to take Guinness to the vet.

"Cat throwing up noises. Damn weird horrible noises no man should ever hear. I tell you man this is not good. I was brought out of a deep sleep. The cat spews out the mouse he had just swallowed a time back – splat. Right by my head! A hairless blob wobbling on the floor, in a pool of bile. Splat! Then the asshole cat hisses at me. And the smell the smell man! And.." Jaw Bone wails and runs for the toilet.

"You need a new filter." says the coffee machine man and he legs it out to his van and drives quickly off.

Jaw Bone staggered back to the bar. "I was never so sick man. My guts are empty. I was going to clean up the mess and get back to bed, and the goddamn cat thinks I am after the blob now! So what does it do? The mother fucking cat sucks up the blob like a mother fucking vacuum cleaner! Man it was gross, really gross, and then it hides up there, where I cannot get at the bastard." He points up at the top shelf behind the bar. Jaw Bone grips his guitar and shouts at me, "I am outta here. I'm gonna talk to my lawyer. I am sir – traumatized!" He paused at the door, "You wanna keep me - you shoot the fucking cat." He storms off out the door.

Maybe he will put it all to music. You Wanna Keep Me You Shoot The Fucking Cat.

The nephew wanted to recruit the cat as an IRBWV - Irish Republican Biological Warfare Volunteer – to keep the lads on active service, off the drink. But the Groper - overwhelmed with joy at the news of Jaw Bones' departure went out and bought a kilo of fresh wild Atlantic salmon on the Finnegan's account. This, he shared with the cat at the bar while regaling us all with tales Of Mice and Men. The Groper vetoed the plan. He insisting the cat could not be drafted as it was a street moggie and its nationality and ergo its loyalties could not be proven.

"Dat's right," says Mad Mick, "I mean de cat it could have walked here from Switzerland, and we all know how highly the Swiss value their neutrality. I mean," says he, "supposed someone declared war on your behalf and de rest of de town and you were out rounding up the cows or stacking turf or something like dat and you knew nuttin – nuttin – about it at all – and you came home and dare was a uniform hanging up for you be the fire with a note from the government up beyond in Dublin in the pocket.

Report for war in the morning - or you will be shot!

Would you agree with dat? – You would not. Sure you wouldn't be pleased at tall, a tall, a tall!"

I threw a white towel over the pumps and turned off Johnny.

Ladies and gentlemen, shouts I, for you the war is over. You are free.

Paddy go home.

Joe Stalin's statues were going for a song in Lithuania and I was considering going down and buying one for Finnegans to force the lonely suicidal and depressed out at closing time and then change the name of the place to Liquid and Dation your local family friendly orientated Siberian Snug.

We were a boisterous merry group of revelers when we entered the Tig Barra Irish Pub. The statue behind the bar ran a mean cold eye over us. He took down a Baileys glass from the shelf bar gave us a 'don't be disturbing me with your reveling look' and began ever so slowly to polish the glass with a Baileys hand towel. Maybe he was trying to break into the advertising business.

"I might write a song about it," says the nephew clapping Mad Mick on the back, "The Irishman who stood up to the British Fleet."

"You could make a movie out of it," says Big Mouse," and a computer game. Mad Mick, de Fleet Destroyer."

"Ah sure Jeasus lads I'd be no good at the auld acting and all dat."

Barman, I shouts to get its attention, can we have a drink here? Please?

"You will," says he in an ersatz Cavan accent, "wait your turn."

But I am the only person ordering.

"I suppose," says the moving statue, "you think there is no one else here but yourself?" It was rocking back and forth on its heels a bit. It inspected the Baileys glass, put it back on the shelf and took down another. It began to polish it.

Is Barry here? I asked hoping he was down in the kitchen working on the dish of the day the lovely Finnish cook Helena.

"No. I'm in charge here."

We are from Finnegans Rainbow. This is our annual pub crawl, says I trying to make it sound as if Finnegans was a well establish place on a par with Rosie O Grady's in New York or Mulligans of Dublin. It made no effort to move. I am a good friend of Barry's. You do know Barry don't you – your boss?"

It was still polishing the glass.

"What I know is mine to know and not for anyone else to know and that's all you need to know I know."

Strange dialogue. I blinked my right eye three times quickly and the left eye twice slowly and then pressed my nose to gain access as to what was actually happening inside the creature. I immediately heard the quiet technical machinations of an implanted translation program. The last thing it had said was an old Lithuanian saying. It was speaking Lithuanian – the primitive program was sending the words out of the mouth in English.

These off world learning aids had ruined the intellect of the planetary systems in an entire galaxy. TDT. Thoroughly Discredited Technology. They were banned, highly illegal and very dangerous, health wise. Over use produces TTS - toxic thought syndrome, a quiet, but insidious rabies like disease, that displays no outward symptoms, but which leaves the victim suffering melancholic delusions rooted in the deepest suspicion and ignorance. The side effects were horrific. Unscrupulous software development (the military) made it possible to endow moron warmongers with super intelligence and we all know they are bad enough as they are. On one planet they installed an implanted baboon as absolute dictator and it was doing the job very well for them until, one day, it decided to swing high up from branch to branch without the benefit of tree.

“Trees, trees ? I need no trees,” cried the Baboon when it jumped out the window of the Rulers Penthouse on the 999 floor, to swing along to fetch a humble bag of nuts from the peasants market below, as was its right.

But I digress - that is a chapter from the great well known book of the prophet, Wee Jimmy; Mirror Earths, in which, as you know if you have not been fucking or to fucking school, there are billions of earths all instantly created at the big bang, all identical, and all at different stages of evolution, and man (The Meddlers) have found a way to meddle with them.

I decided to confront it with the truth.

You are a moving statue. Aren't you?

It ignored me. As statues are wont to do, moving or otherwise.

“Can I have two Captain Morgans on the rocks,” says the Groper,” and don't pour them over your head.”

“Yeah right,” says Big Mouse,” we don't want a dandruff daiquiri.”

But the statue never even blinked.

“What a weirdo,” says Shaggy standing beside me and like, when she says a man is weird, he is weird.

Are you going to serve us a drink or not?

“ I cannot stop you coming in the door and I can't refuse you a drink – after all, when all is said and done, that is what they keep me to do - but when you get the drink that's another thing entirely. Another thing entirely.”

And the way it said it. Pure Cavan.

“Do you know who I am?” says the nephew.

“I know more about you than you would think I know you know,” says the moving statue and him still polishing the Baileys glass.

Miriam, the owner of Mulligans Irish Pub on the Amstel was working behind the bar. She closed the one eye and cocked the head to one side weighing us up. What was she to be on this fine evening of shady shifting shapes and melting melding molecules? A cantankerous cockatoo from central Holland, or a canoodling canary from the old County Clare?

“How’s it going lads?” says she delivering a perfect Longford brogue.

The Midlands Magpies, says I, are staging a comeback.

But to no avail, just a pair of blue eyes gauging how much off the head we were, and so I compromised and conformed and says;

Fine, fine, couldn’t be better.

Pushing me way through to the back. The front of the pub was a bottleneck beside the small stage. Bernard Joyce and the Exiles were performing a number from their new album – ‘On The Run’ (From Work?)

“That was some crack with the pigs all the same.” says Miriam following us up the bar.

Pigs? says I.

“Pigs,” says the Groper looking about him without the aid of a telescope,” I see no pigs.”

“You mind your own business Groper,” says Miriam. And behave your self,” she added as an afterthought, more alas, in hope than expectation. But then she smiled. “What will youse have then? It’s on me.”

The pigs must have been good for business.

Tequillias all round, says I.

Joyce started to sing. His voice boomed out. “Thunder and lightening is no lark – when Dublin city is in the dark – if you’ve got any money go up to the park – and visit the zoological gardens .....

“What’s the point,” says Johnny Rotten looking about him.

Miriam came with a tray of tequila salt and lemon. We toasted – May The Pigs Be With You. I ordered the same again.

“I warned him before about this,” says the Groper slamming down his glass.” He is stealing the lad’s material.” He was off bellying his way towards the stage.

“Go and get him,” shouts Miriam to me.” He has no right to be collecting royalties for the Dubliners or anyone else and you promised you would look after him.”

The things a man says to get his way. I went off to get him.

Am I my nutters keeper Lord?

And the Lord replied in the Dukes voice- and I heard Him in my head as clearly as if I was sitting in the movies watching The Quiet Man – “He’s your partner mister.”

Such was my heavy load to bear in this dimension.

The Groper was up at the front of the stage. The Groper and Joyce detested each other due to a misunderstanding which occurred when Joyce caught the Groper massaging his wife in O’Casey’s pub in Den Haag. The Groper claimed he was only performing a therapeutic act of friendship upon the ladies request but Joyce was upset because the Groper had the wife hanging over a bar stool and appeared to be milking her. Back and front - it makes no difference - the Groper explained at the time - its all flesh to me. Joyce wasn’t having it. He did not believe the Groper was loosening up his wife’s taught sinews and muscles. He did not believe the Groper was releasing his wife’s accumulated build up of stress into the ether and that the energy released there would contract and repair the hole in the ozone layer – the stress transforming into - as it

does, explained the Groper, ozonic haemogoblins. But Joyce believed the Groper was groping his wife and he also accused the Groper of getting the wife drunk with ninety proof rum disguised with peppermint, and all while poor old Joyce was up performing. Trying to earn a crust in the insecure and cut throat world of Irish traditional music.

It's not all fiddles and fun big lad.

Joyce finished singing the Zoological Gardens. The audience loved it .He glared at the Groper. "Get away from the stage."

"You are not to be singing the Dubliners arrangements without their permission or unless you pay me. You were warned about this before."

"Get away from the stage you dirty pervert or I'll give you a box. I'm warning you now."

"I have," says the Groper turning to the audience and pulling out a card enclosed in plastic," authorization to collect royalties on behalf of the Dubliners. This is signed by Barney McKenna and witnessed by Ronnie Drew. I have authority -full authority - to collect royalties from pirates, moonlighters and wot nots - or goods in lieu there off."

"Buy your own drink you mooching bastard."

"The tariff for the Zoological Gardens,"replied the Groper - quite unperturbed, "is normally a half pint of cider but in your case I shall have to claim damages for an extraordinary rendition."

" What's an extraordinary rendition ?" asked our local CIA man who was undercover disguised as a foot tapping, mad bombing, pint drinking, tin whistle playing Paddy.

"Read my lips," says the Groper," extraordinary rendition is when someone does something utterly extreme without any due regard to the rules of a civilized society - and remember this, you overheard it here first."

The CIA man pretended to go for a piss to record these words of wisdom. That was a dead giveaway. Everyone knows that Irish Traditional musicians never leave the bar and only reluctantly piss when the last glass has been emptied and the last note struck. The door opened and a woman pushed her way through to the bar. She was unmistakably Irish. A well made, full breasted, red haired, freckle faced colleen.

"Excuse me. Where is the loo?" says she.

"Second on the left down the stairs," says Big Mouse to the woman as if she was someone he knew well. Big Mouse gauged the woman's retreating bum and turned to Wee Kevin who was straddling a stool up at the bar. "Do you see that one," says he," the antics of her. Typical sex starved biddy. I'm not that type of girl says she to me - but once the light was out and she was under de blanket 'twas all systems - Go Go Go." He punched the air with a curled fist. "I never got a wink of sleep wid her moaning and groaning. I will never," and he fixed the girls with a wild threatening chauvinistic glare," ride that ungrateful bitch again."

Shaggy, Gerri and Liz Taylor just ignored him for the twat he was but the man standing beside Kevin pushed Kevin off his stool and shoved through to confront Big Mouse.

"That's my wife!" he roared slamming down his pint," It's our anniversary!"

Big Mouse managed to disappear behind Mad Mick. The husband, a big mulchie with spade hands, went bright red, grimaced and shook his head from side to side like a Jack Russell with a rat in its jaws.

"Now, now ," says Mad Mick, "calm yourself down now. Sure dare was manys a man made many's a mistake in de dark." And he clapped the irate husband on the back.

"Come out from behind that man you little worm."

The visitor had us pegged. I could see us clearly and in colour the likes of what has never draped a painter's pallet. It was a tragedy these hues and tints would never grace a canvas. Van Gogh, eat your ear off. Johnny Rotten was munching the crisps that grew out of the bar like wild mushrooms. Pick one and twenty took its place. Vegetable fusion. A renewable source of energy. Spud power. Mulligans was a giant mother potato baking in the sun and we were all little bar coded wriggling patriotic painted worms slithering about in a primordial jingo sludge. A new B Movie Paddy in the Giant Potato. Mulligans was rotating.

The edges of existence were subtle and blurred. The lump on the back of my head was growing.

It throbbed loudly. It hurt like hell. I dropped another morphine pill.

I had to big lad.

The red haired woman came back from the loo all fresh and there was a glow about her, a happy holiday hue. Her husband marched up to meet her pushing people out of the way. He was swelling up and it wasn't with pride. A Paddy Puff fish, full of hot air and poison. He pulled the wife up to the bar. People stopped chatting. The musicians rested their instruments. He had the wife by the throat.

"Did you know that that bollox there?" he roared shaking a fist at Big Mouse.

"No Martin."

"And where were you last night?"

"With you Martin. At home. In Clonmel," says she looking at us as if we all knew where it was.

"Did you ever see that man there before?" He was now banging the bar with the fist and the rage was pouring down out from his nostrils a torrent of black sticky bile that coated the walls and ceiling with violent green outrage.

"We came here directly from the airport. How could I?" pleaded the wife. "What's this all about now?"

"I think," says the husband releasing the wife and taking off the jacket, "that you have all heard enough. You mister! I want you outside."

The mundane antics of the pub frequenting solitary male were driving me mad. My consciousness was swirling and twisting. Why was I trapped in this fucked up dimension? What great work, what great masterpieces could man create if we had just one more note, just one more primary colour, just one active word with a literary life of its own, to change as the reader reads the novel and changes all utterly and forever. Why was I not given the tools to express and share the abstract of the mind? My mind. The only thing in my life I had ever owned and appreciated. The PDPs were shaping up to attack each other. The mind was trying to escape its cranial prison. It was making a run for it under cover of turmoil hissing out under pressure through the opening on the lump on my head.

Miriam was standing before me. "It was nice having you." What she meant was fuck off. The husband was still trying to get into a position to give Big Mouse a box on the jaw.

"Do you know him?" he asked Miriam.

"I work here," says Big Mouse, " 'twas only a bit of crack. I'm sorry. I apologize. Let me buy you a drink."

The head was almost empty. A limp balloon at the end of a party. The mind was floating up on the brown nicotine stained ceiling. It began to move towards the door. I am Cormac the Yellow Spot Balloon.

Bernard Joyce was singing- O Peggy Gordon you are my darling – Come sit you down upon my knee-

“Brave girl,” heckled the Groper.

The mind was hovering by the door. My body was potters clay. You will end up- says a nasty thought – on a wheel in an art college workshop for the terminally creative. The body was shutting down. Every step was an eternity. I forced the brain to concentrate on the wayward mind. The door opened. A group of session musicians came bustling in. One was wearing an Arran cap. He must have been in America. The mind floated out the door. I trudged after it getting weaker and weaker. I knew I had to keep awake. Without the mind the brain was a genetically modified stewed prune suspended in an aspiration free glug. I would be unable to think unable to function. A couch potato. I would be a sad, cold, barren, non creative artist. And Luke Kelly sang Paddy Kavanaghs words to me from across the road where he was busking his way around the after life with Paganini. - A creature made of clay. As I went out the door I turned and saw the husband grab Big Mouse by the hair and just as the door closed I saw the nephew hit the husband hard in the solar plexus. I felt the wind before I heard the whoosh that blew the thought box out the door. The mind was up the lamppost sulking. Hanging from the light. It swayed in the cool breeze that blew along the Amstel. A perfectly formed nest of thoughts some coated in honey others in venom. “The cruel word,” said someone I could not see, for the street was empty, “is mans sting.”

My vision was growing dim and I had difficulty breathing. My skin was clammy and I was cold as the dark earth. A creature made of clay. My blood was turning to sludge. A new release, a hit single, ‘All Clogged Up’, by the Plumbers.. I could not speak. I wrote on the misty window – I LOVE YOU – I CANNOT LIVE WITHOUT YOU. The mind flashed a thought back at me. YOU ARE LYING TO ME AGAIN! NO, NO, I LOVE ONLY YOU DARLING. DON’T LEAVE ME.

YOU SHOULD NOT LIE TO YOURSELF. YOU LOVE HER!

And there she was inside Mulligans with every man in the place eyeing her up and drooling into his pint.

I DON’T LOVE HER THE WAY I LOVE YOU.

The invisible nosey bastard standing beside us on the street says – “Love is love is love.”

ADMIT THAT YOU LOVE HER AND I WILL COME BACK.

And so, with my last dying breath, I breathed on the small pane of glass and wrote – I LOVE YOU SHAGGY.

I crawled on my knees, humiliated, to the lamp post and wrapped my arms around it. The mind came back to its domain and took its revenge. I was alive again. It formed itself into two needle points and came back into the cranium through my ears and such pain. Such unbearable sweet pain. I began to scream and howl mad doglike at the moons reflection in the Amstel. As the mind filled up I was seized with great happiness. The world was filled with joyous light. I was warm and gregarious and filled with an absolute certainty that one day – perhaps not in this subjective sterile pen pushing punishing dimension – that I would create a great work of art and that love - this love - would be my inspiration.

If - says the prudent mind - we remember anything in the morning.

You might have another blanket blackout during which the only this you can create is muzzy memory loss. Hands were unwrapping me from the lamppost. I was shaking and trembling the way you do after a dose of inspiration or a great legover.

The Groper’s great red turnip moon head was in my face.

“Pull yourself together,” says he.

What do you think I am a pair of curtains? And I thought I was so funny I convulsed with laughter. Forgive me Tommy C. Finnegan's were out on the pavement.

The Groper put his arm around my shoulder and walked me up the road a bit.

"Take deep breaths. That's it. That's it."

We sat on the steps of a canal house.

"What's wrong with you?" asks the Groper.

I'm in love, I said.

As simply as I could but I had the wings of an euphoric angel flying through space and time back to me house in heaven after a few pints. And there she was floating on a fluffy fleece waiting for me.

Shaggy !Shaggy darling. Wake up. Wake up. We won.

And Shaggy brushes my wings and sits sideways on my heavenly root.

"What did we win my Lord?"

The world Cup. Ireland are after winning the world cup.

"You are fucking babbling to yourself," says the Groper, "get a grip."

"Do you think he is the handlebars of a Harley Davidson," says the invisible person.

Well fuck my old boots Groper, says I,

the ultimate paradox - an invisible anonymous standup comedian.

"Ireland has won the world cup? In wot - pub crawling? Rioting? What's gotten into you?"

I told you. I am in love.

"The last time you were in love," says the Groper, "we had to leave the UK. And in a hurry."

Finnegan's were standing there looking at me.

"Is he alright?" asked Gerri.

I'm fine, says I standing up. The tequila doesn't agree with me that much.

I just needed a bit of air.

"Try breathing instead of drinking," said an unkind person who had a basic first aid certificate.

"Who said that?"

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You have just described your epitaph perfectly Mick. Here lies an absolutely outrageous asshole.

“Ah now boss,”- and he beginning to sweat again for he knows his bullshit is not working,” can we not work tings out?”

So you had a quiet night and went home to bed.

“Indeed I did sor. Nuttin like it.”

I want you to watch this.

I pressed the button play on the cam recorder that I had linked up directly to the big screen. Magic mirror hup on de wall who is the biggest muck savage of dem all? And there is Mad Mick on the big screen down on the middle of the road at night his up turned face all screwed up.

“What do you want?” says this woman’s voice and she holding Peter the Gropers high tech video camera on Mad Mick.

“Natasha let me in let me in for Christ’s sake,” shouts up Mad Mick. He has his erect cock in his hand and wobbles it up at Natasha.

“Help me help me I am in pain.”

“Go away.” The camera zooms in on his cock.

“It's throbbing,” he shouts up,” throbbing I'm telling ya. Let me in Natasha.”

“Go away or I'll call the police. “

“Can you do nuttin at tall fer me?” pleads Mad Mick.

The camera zooms in on his mad face.

“I'll be straight in and out.”

“Go away or I will call the police.”

“You miserable cow,” he shouts up,” turning away a man in need. Dats de last time I give you a beer. You are barred.”

Mad Mick shuffles off a bit his dick sticking out in front of him. He starts yodeling and disco dancing on the pavement by a parking meter.

I stopped the cam recorder.

What is it? Opportunity knocks? Barman of the year competition?

“It's not what it seems,” spluttered Mad Mick. His head was the colour of strawberry jam his spots dark sinister purple black.

Natasha’s ex boyfriend had been vandalizing her van and so Peter set her up with his equipment to get the evidence on the bastard and then you came along Mick - history in the making. That was you? Says I pointing at the big screen, that was you standing in the middle of the road exposing yourself?

“Jesus,” says he,” I know her well. I wasn't exposing meself. I was only after de gobble. You have to be direct wid deeze Dutch women. Dares no bating around de bushes over here. Its was just a little foreplay boss dats all.”

I always thought foreplay was spitting in your enemy’s eye down where you come from. What did you do after that? And the truth please.

“I went straight home,” says Mad Mick,” and I had a glass of warm milk and den and den” (I thought he was going to tell me he said his prayers ) “ and den to to bed.”

Natasha is studying film. While you were trying to fuck the parking meter, I switched on the cam recorder,

she slipped on a coat came down and filmed you.

And there he was up on the big screen again - Mad Mick- oblivious to it all doing some wild pagan dance with the parking meter and giving the penis the odd tug to

keep it in line. He skipped over to the bench on the canal by Finnegan's. He searched in his shirt pocket found a cocaine wrap and licked it clean. He skipped off along the canal. I dread to think what he had done to get deported from Switzerland.

"Some friend she turned out to be," complains Mick, "sure dat's spying -it's a violation of my human rights."

You are not a human Mick.

Mad Mick is now at Liz Taylor's boat. He is throwing stones at the portholes.

"Hello Liz 'tis me. Let me in I'm freezing. Hello Liz." The stones have no effect so he throws a large clay flower pot onto the deck of the boat. A light comes on by the gangway at the loud crash . "Liz, Liz, 'tis me Mick," and he hopping from one foot to the other, wanking himself.

"What do you want?" The door to the cabin is open and Liz's face is there.

"I need help," says Mad Mick. "It won't go down."

"Pardon?"

"It's been throbbing fer two or three hours," says he, " help me for gods sake 'tis worse than a tooth ache."

Mad Mick walks onto Liz's gangplank. Liz rushes Mad Mick with a deck brush and manages to push Mad Mick into the canal. He is up to his chest in the freezing water - the camera zooms in on him - a perplexed hurt look on his face.

"What the fuck," says he to Liz Taylor, " is wrong wid you! "

"Go and see a doctor," says Liz Taylor, " - you are sick."

Mad Mick scrambled out of the canal. He stands there dripping still with a full erection.

"Are you going to let me in or not," says he, " and let dare be no mistake about it I am a man wid udder fish t' fry."

"Right," says Liz Taylor, "I am calling Seamus."

That's me, says I, and in case you didn't notice the dripping madman with the knob on - that's you Mick.

"Your sacked," shouts Mad Mick, "and you are barred too." Such an angry frustrated - do what you are told woman - face on him. "Don't set foot in Finnegan's again, if you know what's good for you, you, you, you, rotten English bitch. The locks will be changed -by god. "

O I thought Jesus was a carpenter not a locksmith."

I heard Natasha smother a giggle. Capital offence that in Comedyland and they execute you standing up. The camera focused back in on Mad Mick. He was shaking and the penis had finally stopped its great quest to impregnate all earth creatures great and small. It was as limp and faded as a lettuce leaf in a miner's lunch box.

"Informers beware," he threatens as a farewell greeting and sets squelching along the canal yodeling away. The fish were safe until the next big binge.

I turned off the cam recorder.

In the silent pub I watched Mad Mick as he tried to wriggle out of this one.

I saw the smoke from the awesome forces created by the common man's creativity in expressing himself coming out of his ears. The making of a good excuse in life is never easy. He took a dirty hanky from his trouser pocket. A Zippo lighter fell out onto the table. His sly eyes registered delight at finding it. He put the Zippo into his shirt pocket and then he went into contrite mode and forced himself to cry holding the dirty rag to his eyes.

Well, says I, I am waiting for an explanation.

"Boss," he pleaded, " I have it now. 'tis all coming back. It was de TURDEE."

The Tirdee?

“Dats right,” says Mad Mick, “’twas de TURDEE what done fer me.”

The Turdee? - I was confused.

“I should not,” says Mad Mick shaking the head in retrospect, “have taken dat TURDEE. Dat,” says he feeling sorry for himself, “is what fucked me up.”

What exactly did you take - and I'm warning you - the truth?

“I drank a few pints during the day and a couple of whiskeys. Dat’s all boss I swear it on me muders life.”

I punched him as hard as I could on the nose.

That’s for lying.

“Am I sacked?” he spluttered, the blood dripping off his chin.

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Which is worse? says I to Marjolien,  
who was polishing pint glasses - good girl ye are.

To go mad with boredom or crazy with excitement?  
“So so,” says she, and puts on that Suzan Vega and turns up the volume.  
Must be period pains on both accounts. Maybe Vega ate something bad and you have  
to sing about it to a cup of coffee. Some new American therapy. I never said anything  
to Marjolien. What kind of a fucking answer is so/so? That’s what they are teaching  
kids in school these days. Ambiguity. They have no opinion about anything that’s  
more than three days old.

Isn’t that right? says I to the pessimistic old bollox sitting up at the bar as if he  
were doing me a favour.

“You tell me.” says he hedging his reply. “You’re the expert.”

The bar was ticking over. I should have called the place Big Ben. A few regulars,  
drinking away at their pints, without a care in the world, and an old man with a fat  
dog sipping gin. That was his third large Genever in one hour and I only had the one  
hot toddy.

Was his doctor harassing him to make urgent and radical life changes?

Was the vet telling his dog not to be eating potatoes? And I was taking it easy. So  
easy my hot whiskey had gone cold. I drank it anyway. Waste not want not – isn’t that  
what the wino said when he sucked the dregs of life out of the magic bottle? I was  
itchy. All over. There might be a song in that with the Eurovison Song Contest  
looming. Itchy All Over, by the Green Spots. My skin was infested with tiny  
creatures all tickling me. An alien bacteria, I must have caught it down the red light. It  
causes Titter Trauma. It’s not a good sign.

It’s a prelude to disaster.

“Would you like a sandwich?” She looked at me - I thought – though I cannot trust  
that at the moment - with concern. She knew about Dr. De Wolffe’s ultimatum - stop  
with the drink and drugs Take me to your clinic earthling.

No thanks. I just ate, but that was a couple of days ago.

The phone rang.

“It’s for you,” says Marjolien.

Really? I am fucking touched. Who else pays the bills.? A big fat bastard that  
looks like me? |

She handed me the phone.

“We come for you soon,” spat the voice. It was the Scum.

Don’t forget the flowers, says I.

“Flowers?”

Yeah to put on your coffin you cunt.

“I kill you myself.”

You can’t bate your own milk and eggs.

“You will be dead soon.”

So the doctor was saying.

“Soon. We come for you soon. You filthy infidel.”

He must have drunk a bad pint. I handed Marjolien back the phone and the empty  
whiskey glass and pointed at it for a refill.

Don’t bother with the hot water the cloves lemon and sugar; says I, it goes cold in  
no time, no time at all. Keep the energy costs down, I shouted to the lads, Save the  
planet. Drink your whiskey cold!

The old man raised his glass of gin to me and nodded, and he didn't even speak a word of English. I should have been a universal interpreter. Marjolien nodded at me and went off to get me a large Bush.

No she does not work in the garden centre. I wasn't worried about the threatening call. People who were coming to kill you very rarely gave you advanced warning. I was worried by what De Wolff said.

“Stop with the drink and drugs. Or die.”

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“You are right your majesty,” agrees the hooded gunman in charge of the Royal death list - prepared and handed over by the valiant shadows of Her Majesty's Spooky Household and confirmed by the Special Bastards of the Royal Ulster Carnage,”its not like the old days when it was just them and us - now its us and everybody else and nobody- nobody wants to pay.” He added the da's name to the death list. Good man yerself.

“And,” croaks the Queen sitting at the Kings feet smoking a Parkdrive and stuffing pipe bombs with dynamite,” themens are just what you know about. What about the ones you don't know about?” And she started to nag the King. “Are you listening to me? What about the ones hiding out down in Dublin and Rome and all over the place? Do you know? Do you have any idea how many Fenians there are in Poland? All you're doing is shooting them here. Sure what good does that do when they are breeding like flies, God knows where, all over the place and like, I have to ask - what else are they up to too. They are...”

“You keep your nose out of us men's business,” says the King,” now get the fry on or I'll knock your cunt in.” And he reaches across and hits her on the head with a Genuine, Made In Ulster, cast iron frying pan, you know the ones - the ones that were

made to last for life - if you had a life - if the auld lad didn't beat you to death with it after closing time.

"You show her who's the boss," shouts the da. "Spare the frying pan spoil the supper."

It was dialogue. Common ground at last in the new All Ireland of the DRM.

The Democratic Republic of Misogynist.

Jimmy Young is shouting down from his soap box to all the auld dolls. Sectarianism is very stressful all the same. Welcome to the mad bombers buffet. Welcome to the patriots tea party. Welcome to the psycho picnic with abundant abuse and wee buns for all. A light comes up on the auld dolls gossiping in the Mother of Perpetual Succour Laundry - financed on the qt by the Sisters of The Little Twat - where they are washing the fighting men's bloody clothes.

An old feeble grey haired granny holds up a bullet ridden shirt.

"If he gets shot anymore I'll have to use this as a fucking sieve. He's out there getting shot and they are teaching peace in the schools - in the name of God! That's what I heard." She shudders and blesses herself.

"Its not very easy at all to be a good bigot with all that tolerance and respect they are teaching the children these days," says Mrs. Walsh, the Arm Chair Field Marshal from the Catholic Women's Holy Apostolic Lords Resistance Army.

The military wing of the Legion of Mary.

How the fuck did she get here?

She has been dead longer than da. The Brits shot her in her hospital bed with a gun they had taken off someone they had shot earlier - to save money - it was put about by Black Ops at the time - O aye, the surgical unit is run by the Balubacats - the British National Health Service a few pounds whilst unwittingly pioneering a new - no cure no pay - sorry, sorry, I got that back to front honest to God I did, its - no pay no cure - and its two in the head and a one way trip to the morgue - a scheme championed and pioneered by the Iron Lady.

"Thank god Mrs. Walsh," says the ma blessing herself and kissing the butt of a sherry bottle," we have our own schools." She made the sign of the cross over at the protestant women in the Bluenose Launderette who fell into a spasm of howling fear and anguish.

We were back in the Dark Age.

We are monkeys throwing rocks at mammoths.

The sky is dark and somber.

The world is split in two and I am sitting directly in the middle of the separation.

Darkness and light. I am in the middle of two worlds. If I move my head into the light I am at a lovely wedding reception. If I moved my head to the left I am a player in the theatre of the spiritually dispossessed.

Shaggy was in the clear, sitting to my right.

Some more guests arrived in the black taxis. The tables were filling up. This was going to be some street play - so it was. A sorrowful wailing chant rose up in the air from the old rusty drums and fifes of yore, a nostalgic yearning for the good old days when you could hang a child for stealing a loaf of bread or behead a Fenian for fun and still have time to loot, pillage and rape the peasant's daughters and burn them at the stake when they were begat with child.

The good thing was in them good old days they blamed the devil on all that type of thing. No one else got a bad press.

Them was the days so they were.

The sky went darker than dark. The air was still and heavy with ignorance and malice. I could taste it. Nothing moved. They were all frozen.

Stuck in hatred and grief. They all stared at stage left. They expected someone or something to arrive. Something horrible - something that united them in fear. We heard the ambulance before it sped on stage. It stopped at our table.

The back doors opened and my first love - my dear sweet innocent, dream bound Alice, hobbled out on broken bones.

A great hissing came out of the tribes.

Alice sat in the chair beside me to my left holding her hands over her ears. She was in a terrible traumatic state. Her face was smashed in. Her neat little white teeth were kicked out. Her lush brown hair had been torn out by the roots and what was left of her beautiful hair a thick unruly curly mop that went coppery gold in the sun was stuck to her head matted with blood. There were ugly purple indented finger marks squeezed dug into her slim graceful neck and a great yawning bloody gap where they slit her throat. Her Carnaby Street top was ripped away and there was an ugly festering gash - the claw mark of a beast - running across her breasts. Her ribs were broken and staved in. I tried to hold her hand but she wouldn't - she couldn't let me. She was too hurt to touch.

Too sad to move.

She just sat there staring across the table her brown eyes robbed of life and all the promise of youth.

A limp broken thing staring across at her family.

Old Bluenose Wallace began to tremble. Big Paddy of the Blessed Shipyard boots coughed like he did in his sleep. Grand Master Wallace stared at the table, enveloped in a force field of shame, a shame that had remorselessly eaten him away until the drink drowned him and he sank away, a chunk of hell bait, into the dark abyss of the suffering souls.

Of them all he was the only one I had a morsel of respect for.

He sought me out a few months after they buried Alice.

We are in the public library on the Falls Road.

He raises shameful eyes and says to me from across the table loud enough for all to hear -

“We need to talk.”

It's too late, says I. I knew what he wanted.

“Hear me out. Hear me out big lad. What's five minutes?”

A long time when you are dead.

“Please.”

Well fuck my old boots! A polite Orangeman! He is haggard - desperate.

What do you want?

“They are going to let him out,” says he pointing at the son Billy Bravo, not enough evidence to continue. He's getting a Noli Prossie.”

Two stroke or four stroke?

“That's right,” shouts Billy Bravo,” we don't talk.”

I am surprised they charged any of them in the first place.

What do you want?

“I have come to ask you, to beg you if necessary, not to kill my son. You can shoot me if you want but don't shoot my son. He is all I have left.” And he puts his gun on the table with his Orangeman's sash and sword. His face is twitching. He has great difficulty getting out the words.” All we have left.”

Poor man. He has been dead ten years or so.

What's it like in hell? says I.  
"They wouldn't let me in! I could not believe it."  
"Aye," says Billy Bravo," he's on the waiting list but he has no chance. That devil is a Fenian bastard. See us - we fought two world wars for themens and have kept the Fenians out for fifty years and now they don't want to know us. Shoved us out in the cold."  
"He's all we have left," shouted Wallace.  
I am astonished at his arrogance. He has some balls coming up here.  
I am not going to shoot your son Mr. Wallace. You are not wriggling off the hook.  
I am not going to confuse what you did to Alice with more violence.  
It's plain and straight what you did.  
"If you need money? Name your price. I need your forgiveness," but he wasn't looking at me anymore. He was centre stage staring across the table at Alice. "Billys all we have left," he said to her.  
Poor Man - Rotten Life - Ugly World.  
A new B Movie -Wanted Dead or Alive – Forgiveness. Starring the Rehabilitated Shankhill Butchers Brotherhood of Man brought to you by the Peace People and the Reconciliation Council of Great Britain *and* Northern Ireland - funded by the Hanging Pope. You see the way they write it *AND* Northern Ireland. Its obvious to anyone with any knowledge of continental drifters that Northern Ireland was stuck planted onto or into Britannia's noble blue molded y super crusty arse by the loyal sons of Ulster. It would be great if we could cut it off and leave *it* there a great festering British Boil with all these wierdos sitting here sitting there around *it*, cuddling *it*, mollycoddling *it*, sure they could even wrap *it* up in swaddling clothes and say *it* was the Saviour and pray three times a day every day for the blessed day when *it* surely would erupt and cover every last one of the bastards in stinking sectarian slime and patriotic puss.  
"Billy's all we have left," insisted Mr. Wallace vehemently. "Are youse ones listening to me?" He rattled his sword on the table. A garrulous old man looking to vent his shame in confrontation.  
" Billys all that's left of it all."  
I shoved my head into the light and listened to the best man warbling on about the joys of marriage. He looked directly at me and Shaggy.  
"And so ladies and gentlemen, if I may conclude. This young couple are embarking on a wonderful adventure through life. Together. " Brady paused,  
"I had thought to end my speech with some words I have been working on. I do confess to having spent some time on my ad hoc ad lib speech but!" he held up a sheet of paper," Someone, left this poem for me. Someone here at this table," he looked around for clues," who signs themselves – *enchanted*.  
I would like to end by reading this poem."

Sweetdream

Take me to this dream  
Kiss me tender as I float  
If love be a river  
Step into my boat  
Take me to this dream  
Hug me tight as I sigh  
If love be a mountain  
I will never climb so high

Take me to this dream  
Embrace me as I toil  
If love be a forest  
Let's plant acorns in the soil  
Take me to this dream  
From which I never want to wake  
With this ring I make you mine  
For now and for all times sake.

*Enchanted.*

The guests applauded politely.  
Well Shaggy was delighted. "You wrote that for me," says she and she give me a kiss.  
The things a man has to do to get a kiss big lad.

"Will the author of this fine poem stand up and take a bow?" says Capt Brady looking about the place. "No? Then there is no objection I give this to the bride and bridegroom."

He can do what he wants with it. There is no way I am going to claim responsibility for such gush.

Poets are a gang of emotional word control freaks who believe the alphabet is a bag of sticky sickening sugar coated dolly mixtures letters.

My non de plume is:

The Acid Drop Kid.

I was singing to raise my spirits as I wriggled in a maggoty way - I couldn't walk so good - back to the apartment on Marnixstraat. I sang – Do not forsake me o my Darling on this our Wedding Day – A man I know has come to kill me – and I must face him – I must face Poxface Ali the Murderous – or die a coward – *a coward* - in my grave. It went something like that. As Mad Valerie said the words themselves are unimportant when you don't know them. Da da dee da or die a maggot, a stinking maggot, in your grave. That's what the Scum are and always will be, now and forever – scum. Stinking cowards. The thoughts are speeding around inside my head. I cannot do anything but listen to them. The voices must be asleep and left their thoughts outside where they live in the cranial corridor. Maybe they expect someone to come along and clean and polish them. The zealots who flew the airliners into the twin towers were M&Ms - mercilessly maladjusted. BBs. Brainwashed with balls. DDPs. Dedicated dangerous psychos. And much more – I mean you should see what they have planned for paradise. They will soon put a stop to all that eternal bliss business – but I was wondering big lad - do they really believe in God? That is if they can find a god that wasn't goofed out and off up, up and away on you know what these days. Will their god – and each to their own god bless them - welcome them with open arms? That is not a proper question. It has a question mark just like anyone else. If I say to you - is my friend, the great satan, still fucking your wives? Is that a question? No that is not a question. It is an insult to god. You infidels are born profane and incapable of understanding the ways of god but, you will come all to understand this - there is but one god.

Do you really believe that big lad says I to the guy in the suit? “You are darn right we do boy.” says the vice president and orders a precision strike on the orphanage where the children are hiding the mickey mouse rockets and other weapons of mass destruction in the nursery and using the poor misguided missionaries as a human shields. A two day cessation of the precision bombing campaign has been agreed by UN as at this most holy of times in the educational curriculum. The children are being prepared for their annual religious retreat. A high priest from the fundamentalist Landmine League an artificial limb sect who worship Richards Cork Leg, is visiting them shortly to grill them about their religious knowledge. The children's religious knowledge teacher is also their music teacher. His name is Elvis McCann. After the annual retreat the children will go to confession and when their souls are as pure as a young nun's ass after a hot bath, they will surrender their immortal souls - en mass, at mass - to god.

McCann comes into the classroom an hour before the high priest is due at St Thomas Secondary Modern School, White rock Road, Belfast. McCann is dressed in a nuns habit and riding a motorized customized cross. His emerald green turban festooned with a slice of silver moon, wraps up a head of prodigious size. He is breeding parrots in there and uses the brooding birds to keep his tea hot.

He doesn't want to teach religious knowledge.

He doesn't even want to teach music.

He can't stand the place but it was all he could get being what he was or it was the boat to England for him. He detests us pupils. He wants to be an orchestral musician, and be a great conductor, but he is tone deaf and bone ignorant, the offspring of a pair of nasty lower middle class cunts, who managed after forty years to buy their small house on the outer rim of somewhere better than us. He resents wasting his talent in

this educational backwater. He was turned down by the Ulster Orchestra who didn't want any catholic cello players or fenian fiddlers corrupting Mozart and Beethoven. McCann hates working here. He takes his frustration and anger out on us. He is a crying, walking, sleeping, talking, humiliation to the ma and da, and he lives in dread they will leave the house to the church as they have threatened. I found all this out by hiding under the table while my ma was gossiping. McCann jumps off his cross and chains us all to the wall. He gives us all a good slapping – for talking to each other - with his leather - reinforced with steel – strap, just to let us know from the outset his god is boss , - a jealous god who will brook no insolence or unruly behaviour - and that's why - as a matter of faith - he beats us out of religious conviction, and ergo moral principle, every time he takes a class. When he enters the classroom we all have to hold out our hands and he whizzes around his little pale delicate artistic hands gripping the thick leather like a queer with a big dick and gives us all one on each hand. He then sits down under the blackboard wipes the sweat from his brow with a spotless white hanky on which he would never blow his nose, folds it neatly and says – good morning boys and we all chant – good morning sir.

“What's fucking good about it?” says a voice.

Early morning grouse.

“This way please.” Emperor Ming's finger was curled back up. He shows me into the restaurant his silk gown swishing his slippered feet making no sound on the plush red cavorting dragon carpet; he leads me to a small table overlooking the water. He pulled out a chair for me and I did likewise for Jesus. When Jesus was settled I sat down.

Thank you, says I

Yer man tosses me a menu and sidles off without saying a word. Stress of being off the boards I suppose.

What do you think Jesus?

And before he could answer this nice oriental lady bows to me and asks; “wot you likely to dwinkee?”

Ah sewing needle and eye dwinkee winkee anyfing dat  
wet sheep or fwee, says I

But she just gave me the slits.

Do you fancy a Bloody Mary? I asks Jesus who was studying a menu.

He nodded.

Two Bloody Marys please.

Jesus was still studying the menu.

Are you a vegetarian?

“Heavens no. One of our highlights is the Sunday barbcue. Heavenly darling. It doesn't matter what one eats - its – *they* - are all but morsels - nano fractions of what is. And when I say fractions they are so minute why you could fit twenty billion onto the head of a pin.”

Twenty billion, says I

Shaking the head in awe and wanking in wonderous admiration. That's a typo it should read winking.

“Easily, maybe thirty billion depending on the whole. A lot more than a three hundred kilo angel – they,” confided Jesus,” eat a huge amount,”

He made the sacred sign of the big beer belly. “So much so we have started a branch of the AA.”

The angels have a drink problem?

“No they are all pioneers – well our lot is, the other lot would drink an iron lung – they have to attend Angelic Aerobics. Gabriel got so fat he couldn’t get off the clouds – and hence the Stones hey hey you get offa my cloud. The Lip was inspired.”  
The waitress brought down the Bloody Marys and silently sat them in front of me. I didn’t say anything to her but stood up and placed one of the Bloody Marys in front of the Good Lord and sat down again.

Bottoms up says I.

I sipped the Bloody Mary.

Uuuugh! What the hell, says I, do the Chinese know about Marys,  
bloody or otherwise.

A four clogged family at the next table were discreetly watching what I was up to - in particular, a little girl, who was giving her mother a running commentary. You see the ma was much too polite to turn around and gawk at me.

“You likely to order now sir? Or I come back when your friend come?”

You want to order now Lord? says I.

In a very loud and pompous voice just to let them know who they were serving.  
Jesus nodded and sipped his sludge.

We would like to order now. I asked the Lord. What would you like Jesus?

“I will have Braised Budda salad for starters. I rather fancy roast shank of Allah Hong Kong style – no fat or gristle please – with wild nirvana rice and a nice slice of Pope Pie for afters.”

I translated to the waitress as best I could but there was a communication difficulty – maybe she got off the last junk - she kept pointing at the menu and saying - please show on menu – nummer, nummer, you telle me what nummer you want?

No one has ever seen a true number - right Jesus?

I tried to explain to her. I also explained to her as clearly and patiently as I could that it doesn’t matter what you eat, it was all morsels of what is, and how dare she stick numbers on soup. Then she brings me down a menu made up of coloured pictures and asks me to point at what I want – the cheek of her, so I shouted at her;

*I want to order the fractions!*

And she ran off and then the restaurant was totally quiet, Emperor Ming and his henchmen came down to our table and asked us to leave.

You cannot be serious asking the Jesus - the son of God eh?

And his wee brother, to leave?

“Jesus? I see no Jesus,” says Emperor Ming. “You settee here by yourself. No Jesus here.”

Unbelievers! I roared at them and then they grabbed me.

“You leave now or we call the police.”

They have Flash Gordon hanging up in the kitchen, I told the diners,  
**and his dog.**

That lifted a few heads up of the plates – the Dutch love their dogs but of course, not so much as they would want to eat them like the wicked slits.

“Seamus. Seamus,” says Jesus from somewhere far away,” lets leave. I cannot afford to be busted while I am down here. If the devil got hold of anything like that I’m out on me ass with nothing. Walk away sweetie. Please. For me.”

Well if you put it like that Jes.

So I composed myself swallowed me principles and walked out and I was not fazed with everyone looking at me and exhaling with relief and a big buzz of scandalous talk about us, before we had even left the place. Laughing at us, as I was hustled through the swinging doors. Mockery! Sure, whats new?

You know what I was thinking big lad?  
“Mr Beningi, let me tell you something – no one ever knows what you are thinking. I think you don’t know yourself what you are thinking – but I have no doubt you are going to tell me something.”

Ok. How could I - how could anyone - possibly be embarrassed with the son of God at their good right side?

In the foyer, the evil heathen Emperor Ming, insisted I pay for the two Bloody Marys. “Do not come back here,” he threatened. “We not want people in here who are of head on dwugs.”

Dwugs? I roars at him.

For they were not listening Lord – dwugs? What the fuck are dwugs!

“Go!” And he goes all Kung Fu on me and points down the gangplank.

I knew he wished it ended fifty feet above a sea of ravenous sharks. If there were any sharks left. The sharks eat me. He kills the sharks, lops off their fins, and I end up in a bowl of soup, for which he will no doubt give me a bill. OOSSS.

The old oriental sharkfin soup scam. As I was leaving one shouts after me - I don’t know which one, they all looked alike to me – “Bloody English hooligans!

I was delighted the Brits got the blame again. It’s their own fault! It is but one of the cultural consequences of taking peoples language away from them and making them speak a foreign tongue – I mean to say this novel should be written in the old Gaelic.

It should now - you ask any drunken Paddy, singing Danny Boy at closing time.

Crying his eyes out at the monumental injustice of it all, and wishing he didn’t have to get up for work of a Monday morning, here in the land of the heathen stranger.

“Where to now?” asks Jesus. The Chinese were grouped around the top of the gangplank staring at us ready to repel boarders. The diners were staring out the windows at us. The seagulls perched on top of the Bobbing Bog were staring at us. I shouted up at them;

If you don’t believe you will never see!

“No, no.” shouts back Emperor Ming, “I no see it, I no believe it - and you,” he roars pointing a finger at me, “I see you, and you fuck off ,or I call police.”

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“I don’t know.” sighed Ma Wallace “I’m busting for a pish and I can’t move.“ There she was stuck to the floor in a pool of hatred. Her code name in the Vatican – Oh yes the Holy Father knew all about her, was;

The Orange Bubble Gum Kid.

Her legs had melted to just below the knees.

“I don’t know.” she sighed and melted a wee bit more. “I don’t know.” she sighed and melted another wee bit more. Eventually one of the hoods said – at the time he was the Crown Prince of the Paramilitaries - for there was only her head left stuck to the floor in a mush of goo –

“What don’t you know missus?”

I don’t know where she is. All I know is she is not here where she should be among her own kind - and the hooded men said

“We will see what can be done for this cannot be allowed to go on like this!”

And they turned the lights off in Belfast, put the barricades up, pulled the curtains, locked every door and window, and the murderous muttering sectarian chanting started up in the dark.

Ma Wallace stopped melting.

And all the Queens defenders and all the Queens gunmen put the Orange Bubble Gum Kid back together again.

It does rhyme.

“It does not.”

Well it’s better than poor old Humpty Dumpty.

He was left in pieces at the bottom of the entry wall.

“Good enough for a Fenian egg.”

“Your misogynist character is chronic,” says the shrink shaking her head as if to says; I have never met such a woman-hater as thou. She makes a note.

Its only a joke says I.

Aye big lad a wee genetic joke with a *jeeg* in it as they say in Belfast and I flashed a phony smile at her. I love to *jeeg* her with a fucking red hot meat cleaver - sharp steel so hostile and searing hot, I have to wear a fireman’s glove as I chop her up the middle the snooty sanctimonious sterile old smoking cunt. The cheek of her calling me a misogynist. I don’t hate women. Only mothers.

“My Alice,” moaned The Orange Bubble Gum Kid, “she is with him. Him! Him!”

She could not bring herself to utter my name.

“Where is she missus?”

“We don’t know! I don’t know where she is.”

“Don’t worry we will find him – and when we do...”

I know where Alice is.

She is dancing in the Ormeau Park.

Tripping on the grass, in among the giant waving red hand of Ulster poppies with green white and orange barber pole stems, fluttering spangled butterfly leaves and she is wearing her white muslin dress, in her bare feet again my god! The grass tickling her toes, with buttercups and a magpie feather sticking up out of her North American Indian headband. They were gossiping about Alice in my street just as much as they were up in Ma Wallace’s in the Bluenose Reservation.

“She doesn’t wear a bra,” I heard my ma whisper to one of her crones, her face all black and rotting with darkest disgust.

I always know where Alice is.

She had brought the Fab 4 along to the wedding with her. They were sitting picnicking under an elder oak by the stage smoking weed. They were working on Strawberry Fields Forever and all about them the excited guests were working on ways to kill each other. After closing time, of course! Alice waved to me. She was always excited to see me. She held her arms out for a hug.

Wait a wee minute I shouted over to her. I'll be there in a few minutes. I rooted around in the attic and found her platform shoes - or are these boots? I had to hide her platforms and minis in my place. I put them in a bag.

"Where are you off to?" asks Jesus.

I am going to see Alice. At the nephew's wedding in upstate New York.

I better bring her her shoes.

I also slipped a small .25 Beretta pistol into the bag, just in case her ones had followed her and were waiting to get me - I had been warned!

I was a marked man.

"She walks about in bare feet," says my da complaining across the table to the Wallaces. "What kind of child is that you reared? And no shoes and," his voice going down into a smutty sniggering whisper, "no bra. She doesn't wear a bra too - and all in broad daylight in the name of God!" He made the sign of the cross on his forehead; His dirty decayed brown thumb fell into his pint of stout. He drank it regardless then wiped the stout froth from his stubbly lips. "If she was one of mine," he threatened curling his big fist and thumping the table at the Wallaces, "I'd break both her fucking legs - the dirty protestant whore."

"Such hatred!" says Jesus, visibly shocked.

Don't talk to me about it - if you walk about in bare feet in Belfast,

I explained to him as I rooted about in the attic,

They will say there's a bit of a want in you and her ma will use it as an excuse to keep her in. If her father finds out he will beat the shit out of her. And explains I - they burn her shoes and things. Anything they suspect I have touched or had anything to do with. That's why I hide them for her.

"Burn her shoes? This is all very extreme," says Jesus, "even by Biblical standards."

They are fundamentally extreme fundamentalists Lord.

"We have nothing to do with that lot," says Jesus. "You must forgive them Seamus for they know not what they do."

No, no - they know exactly what they are doing. They may not know the outcome of their actions but sure they are always praying for a good result. They leave all the consequences to you Lord.

"Can you never find it in your *heart* to forgive them?"

The good Lord must be fucking joking.

Christianity has evolved since they stiffed you good lord.

If you nail Ronald Regan up on the cross do you think he is going to forgive his crucifiers? Turn the other cheek? Will he fuck - he will nuke the planet. Excuse me for swearing Lord but they do it in all the movies now, all the time now - and, by the way, it is, it is, and it's all very well for you and your da to preach love and peace, and forgive your enemy, but down here on Earth its not really practical, nor desirable for the ethical believer. The modern Christian church has to deal with these things in the Holy Ground. The President in our name - we the people - give the wicked what they deserve - Death Row Now! Heaven later - and the Holy Father is content to leave all the fallout to the whimpy wet, thou shalt not kill, brigade, and your good selves up above. Did you know there are moves a foot in Rome to redress all this love and peace bollox.

Jesus looked at me. He was startled – shaken by the savage violent nature of man.

Well don't blame me for what I am says I – next time you might consider to save the innocent endangered and let us barbarians get on with our wars pestilences and diseases. Execution may soon become one of the Blessed Sacraments says I.  
“You cannot bate your own milk and eggs!” says Jesus and puts the kettle on.

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“By the way wee lad. Do you know who I am?” He opens his jacket and shows me his gun in the brown leather shoulder holster.

No mister.

“I am,” says he and I thought he had shot his load and was in imminent danger of exploding he swelled up so much,

“I am the Detective Constable Davy Armstrong,” The driver, a big deep blue baboon pony soldier peeler in uniform, nodded his head just confirming it.

“O aye wee lad you are for it now - so you are.” he shouts.

Bog Davy Armstrong pointed at the burnt out bus again – his face was twitching, “How many of youse was there what done all that?”

I don't know, says I lisping like a loopla.

Endavouring to portray the impression I was a wee bit simple and / or I couldn't count.

Another slap across the face!

“There must have been an awful lot of youse if you cannot count them all. Was your da with youse?”

No.

His wicked head lit up. “Then who was there then if your da wasn't there?”

There was nobody there.

“How do you know that?”

Sure I wasn't even there myself and if I wasn't even there myself sure how could anybody else be there with me? I was getting the hang of this Bogmaneese. It's all riddle.

“Are yousens trying to tell me there was nobody there,” and he points at the burnt out bus,” when yousens burnt this bus?”

It might have been an SC incident, says I.

“An SC incident,” and the bold Bog Davy was so impressed he wrote that down in his note book,” and who's in charge of these SCs and where do they meet?”

“SCs?”

“SCs,” explains the bold Davy to the driver,” the ones in charge of the RCs.”

“What does it stand for?” asks the goggle eyed baboon.

“Society of Cunts.”

I had to disagree. I meant Spontaneous Combustion.

Slap across the face! Notebook snapped shut!

“Right take him down to the jail.”

Are you not coming with us Detective Armpong? says I bewildered.

Few more slaps around the head...

And down in the jail, the peelers all glaring at me. “There! That’s him! That’s the wee fenian bastard what burns our busses!”

“Right,” shouts the bold Bog DC Davy Armstrong, “I have the right place for you,” He drags me again by the scruff of the neck up a cold grimy corridor and throws me into a cell. “And you’ll stay there until I know what I want to know about themens.”

The cell door clanged shut. they left me locked up in the dark. I was scared, but I wasn’t afraid of the wicked porker. He was quite sweet compared to my da. If Big Paddy of The Blessed Shipyard Boots was interrogating me he would have by now, plucked away half the hair from my locks with his guaranteed for life stainless steel pliers, that was given to him by an American Supply Sergeant shortly before D Day, when the bold Paddy repaired their boiler house and single handedly supplied the US Armies with hot water - for which he reckoned he should have been given the Congressional Medal of Honor.

Some of these sentences are getting so long I will soon be writing a snake big lad.

“Don’t call me big lad.”

Nothing bothered me except the sound of the cell door closing and locking. DC Bog Davy Armstrong is shaking me awake. I slyly open one eye, just one wee bit. I remembered Big Paddy’s sound parting advice when he took me to be locked away in the big house of a million windows. “Never, never, never, ever open both your eyes wide if someone is waking you up. You never know who it might be. Take a wee peep first.” I did. It was my nurse.

“Good Morning Seamus.”

Good morning Gus.

He placed a cup of coffee by the bed opened the window and padded silently away about his duties. The cell door was left open. I turned on the television and was watching CNN for the latest update on the War On Terror. There is a wise saying translated from the old Gaelic by Sean the Procreator who had twelve hyperactive children – Terror Begins At Home.

Terror? Terror? What the fuck is Terror?

The Americans were mountain leveling in Afghanistan with Daisy Cutter bombs. Yer man with the flesh folding bagel dough face was describing with glee how the Daisy Cutter was the worlds biggest conventional bomb, and how among other wonders it sucked the air out of all living things in a calculated radius and replaced the air with superheated explosive gas. Fucking marvelous but here what about the camels?

Every effort is made, including putting our own troops at risk, to ensure there are no camel casualties – and the embedded facelifted woman with the chic bullet proof corset thirty kilometers from the scene telling us “Yes Jim. We felt the tremors of the blast. Four on the Richter scale back here at Regimental Headquarters.

Why are we dropping earthquakes on people?

The Bog are behind it. Who else would do it? No human that's for sure.  
"Precision bombing." reported the plastic hack,"This is the Madonna Lookalike CNN  
Last Remaining Mountain Afghanistan."

What care I about the destruction?

That the world will fall apart?

There is money to be made in war. Before during and after. And I'm waiting for it to start. An example of writing in simple rhyme. I am fucking bored in here. Back to business. I want the reward. 50 million dollars. Tax free money.

Where is he? I began to coordinate and direct the search for Osama Old Tin Bin Lada the Russian car Mogul – it's very obvious he is hiding out in a breakers yard specializing in Ladas - when the cell door to the right of the television was pushed fully open. I didn't mind the sound of the cell door opening. It was not a reverse of the door closing. It was a curious dislike and one I could never get to grips with - the sound of the closing door. At its worst it brought on a panic attack and so I kept this fear like the other little chinks and large gaping voids in my psychological armour a closely guarded secret.

They want to know everything in here.

It is fatal to let the Bog know your weaknesses or you too, will be overwhelmed and flattened. They will write the weaknesses down on a yellow pad and discuss them over coffee in the mother ship, and you will never know what the fuck they were saying about you. Its better they cannot discuss anything because they don't know anything. A blank yellow page - the first and last page in a thick expectant pad. A wicked porkers nightmare. What do we know?

I know that scene.

The cell door opened wide. I turned off the TV. Who could this be, disturbing my prosecution of the War On Terror?

"You have a visitor," says Gus sticking his head around the door. I thought it might be another confused alternative consultant psychiatrist – all diagnosis and no drugs - and they would talk the leg off an electric chair too, then throw the switch - but it was not. "Good morning Mr. Rice," says Officer Dick Inkhuzen. "I hope you don't mind me on you dropping but I have been dutifully informed you are confined to bed. May I sit?" he pointed at the chair by the side of the bed.

I was so surprised! This was the first visitor I had since they sectioned me away!

Yes. I said

Officer Dick was out of uniform – but that meant nothing - I have heard of wicked porkers absolutely naked with full erections arresting people in a sauna. Where was their truncheon that's what I wanted to know?

He was casually dressed in jeans and a dark blue short sleeved shirt. He carried his Northface jacket over his arm and a match Northface bag.

F.C.F.C. Fashion Concious Facist Clad.

What month is it?

"The beginning of March. Soon it will be the day of St Patrick and the eyes of March."

I wish I had the legs of April so I could scale the wall and make a run for it.

So that explains the stylish Italian Mussolini loafers. Oh aye he was a shoemaker before he shaved the head. Traded under the old O.S. (Outsize l Skinhead) label.

Made his fortune selling black shirts and jackboots.

I focused on this here and now.

It was Spring!

There was a bit of a silence. I have been in here since 9/11. Almost six months. It seems it seems – it feels like – it feels like I have no feelings -so it seems. Officer Dick reaches into his bag – porkers hold all and hold anything, wherein they keep all their law enforcement knickknacks. Someone inside the bag was singing I'm in pieces, bits and pieces. Most likely some unfortunate little person he was interrogating. He fishes out a box of very fine small Dutch cigars. He handed them to me.

“From me they never came.” He winked at me in a brotherly way. The hair on the back of my neck began to rise and the yellow roses in their plain white plastic vase – Everything Is Made of Plastic in Looneyland – opened their petals and began to sing in warning – The Croppy Boy.

Matches? I asked hopefully.

“Matches?” gawffed Officer Dick, and I saw alarm flash in his pale blue fishy eyes “better I give you a flame thrower. Boxes of matches in your hands Seamus – you don't mind if I call you Seamus - are a weapon of mass destruction. I have read your file. Your real file,” he added.

Real file? say I feigning puzzlement.

“Yes – Jimmy – the one that never made it to court.”

I don't know what you mean.

I opened the box of cigars. Beautiful! Perfect hand rolled little things with a deep rich distinctive unforgettable carcinogenic odour. I put one in my mouth.

“The problems in your country are of no concern to the Dutch Security Services. Of our own, we have plenty - but there is no fire,” says he lighting my cigar for me with his Zippo,” without smoke.”

There is no smoke without fire, says I.

I was delighted to be correcting a wicked porker on my first day back in the land where the other people live and puffing away. Very nice smoke. I raised my cigar. This was great. I was now the rollicking invincible Winston Churchill, charging about the world on his horse, slicing up the enemies of the Empire, with a sword forged from the finest British steel – the Empire On Which the Savage Never Shat. Or something like that. You know yourself big lad. Well that's the way it is with the poison they give you – you are either up in the air an adored celebrity or buried alive. “What ever - which came first – the frying pan or the egg? It can only be asserted with a certainty that when the fire comes things burn – including people,” says he to me and looks at me with a - you know what I am talking about me lad - look. He fished around in his bag again and came up with a paperback. It was the Finnegans Wake. “It is probable you have already before this book read – I tried to read and understand it on a ration of three pages per day – it was enough - but to you I confess, I make not very much sense from it.”

It's not supposed to make sense. You just read it and experience it. It's a literary happening – an emotional iconic treat that melts in your brain and doesn't burn out your eyes or your wits.

I was feeling quite giddy.

You just read it enjoy it and take the piss out of lesser readers who have been trying to understand it.

“Enjoy it!” exclaims Officer Dick and his wicked porkers head in turmoil,” I had great difficulty finishing it. But I did,” says he, “I did.”

And? says I.

“I fear,” says Officer Dick, and he is not man much used to spoofing,” that Mr. Joyce should lie in the bed beside you.”

He took some official looking papers out from his porkers hold all. I did not look the like of this and accordingly closed one eye to reduce the effects of the oncoming trouble by half. There now - he looked much better occupying only fifty per cent of that part of my brain that processed the observations of that eye. The Greater Irish Ostrich was unable to do this hence its extinction – it had to close both eyes or stare the unpleasantness of the murderous Brit invaders in the face. Thank god we peasants have evolved and have developed the ability to wink or we should be obliged to walk about forever as the navies of old, with a spade strapped to our backs, or waddle about forever carrying a big bucket of sand. Take your pick, it's nothing got to do with me. If you want to be common, practicable, and unimaginable, a paper bag – bio degradable of course – will do the trick. See someone you find distasteful - whip on the paper bag.

An eye patch or two, says I to Officer Dick, that would do the trick but I fear we should be regarded – as indeed we probably are by the Bog and their British overlords – as a nation of rebellious pirates.

Motivated by blind hatred against all things bright and beautiful. All Brits great and small. I swiveled my head slowly almost imperceptibly until Officer Dick was out of view. Begone spawn of the Bog. You know what they say. Out of sight out of your fucking mind. Who said that? Don't know. Never saw them. Officer Dick was rustling the papers to attract my attention. Better get it over with. I opened one eye.

"I have some good news for you," says he.

I was so surprised to hear of a wicked porker appearing unexpectedly at the end of the bed with a sheaf of legal documents in his trotters, and claiming to bear good news, I opened both my eyes in surprise. It was sufficient. I could see the unfolding drama. He continued.

"You are going to be released."

And the bad news?

"You are going to be deported."

Enemy England?

"No."

Not Italy?

"No. And I am afraid for reasons well known to yourself you cannot return to Ireland. You must find somewhere nice to accommodate you. Some country which will accept you."

I have a choice as to which country I can go to?

"Yes," says Officer Dick. "And we will send you there by our national airline KLM at the government's expense."

He looked as if he couldn't believe it himself.

I had to attempt to rationalize this, in as rational way as I could determine by the human standards of the day that prevail. I knew I should not have opened my eyes. That was a big mistake. If only I had a paper bag to pull over me head - but there are no paper bags in the loonie bin, never when one needs one. I was on a high state of alert. Who ever heard of the wicked porkers buying an UNDESIRABLE - that's what I was classified as as I later found out, an airline ticket of choice?

First class? I asked.

That did it. Something went click in his big square head. Started him off. It all came out. All that cool restraint professional Dutch emotion suppression evaporated in an invisible cloud of angst. I saw it very clearly.

"Nay," he shouted his head wobbling and going all fiery red and then he shouted louder, "NAY, nay, nay." And he glared at me. "Absolute niet!" He took a deep

breath, fished a bottle of Perrier water from his bag, had a sip, all the while glaring at me as if I were a great alien bug about to decimate the tulip fields, and squatting in the windmills by night - or even worse than that, if you could think of it.

He calmed down but his clipped words stressed out backbone and stiff jaw - well he was really fucking up the wall. Tiny Tim was over in the corner abusing a uke and singing to Officer 'Dick Tiptoe Through The Tulips With Me.'

Better you than me Tim, says I.

"Pardon?" says Officer Dick and he looks about the place. He ran his hand through his close cropped hair and settled his papers on his knee.

"When you are released you have ten days to put your personal and business affairs here in Holland in order and then you must leave the country, otherwise, the State Prosecutor will charge you with," and he held up a mini crime novel manuscript, "no less than twenty seven indictable offences - eight of which, can carry prison terms of, up to ten years imprisonment, two of which can carry up to life imprisonment, and all of which were carried out in my neighborhood. Further more, if you do not leave Holland within the specified ten days, your business Finnegans Rainbow and whatever other assets you have, will be sold at public auction by the Tax department, to offset, and pay, in some small measure for the enormous damage you have caused - not least of which, is to community relations. The reason you are not now before the Dutch High Court on these charges is, that it can be very well argued by your lawyers, that you are sick, that you committed these outrages while - very obviously - the balance of your mind was disturbing - and we will be obliged to look after you until you are better. I don't think so Mr. Rice."

He was in a right old state.

He threw the papers onto my bed.

Whatever happened to good old fashioned beat bobby Officer Dick the citizen's friend? It must be a new slant from on high on community relations.

"Two lawyers have been appointed by the State Prosecutors office to deal with your case. They will contact you." He stood up. "Goodbye Mr. Rice. A word of advice. Were it I that were you I would not wait ten days to leave Holland. O nay. Were it I that were you, I should travel directly to Schipol. When you are released they tell me," and you could tell he wasn't pleased by they," you will be legally responsible for your actions. This means you can be charged if you in any way, break the law in any way and I shall be watching you very closely Mr. Rice to make sure you do not."

Economy class is fine, says I.

"Do not joke with me. I unlike the doctors," and you could tell he wasn't pleased with the doctors, "have read your security file. You are not insane. You are a very disturbed and dangerous extremist. You are an Irish enigima. Put your talents to good use Mr. Rice. Use your intelligence for a higher purpose. "

Any chance of a reference? says I.

"Ya," says Officer Dick, "Get out of Holland Mr. Rice and don't come back!"

Then he was gone. He took the cigars with him. Maybe he has a whole jail full of loonies to deport.

You never know big lad.

"Don't call me big lad."

I was moved out in an hour. I still don't know where they held me at that time. It was a high security 'clinic' where they held spies - high profile war criminals - enemies of the Dutch state - nutters who wanted to have sex with the Dutch Queen. O aye! There were some very odd people in there. The nurses were now in the uniform of the Dutch Military Police. The pair outside my traveling cage carried Walther pistols,

truncheons, and handcuffs. Therapists from the old school of thought. One had a briefcase chained to his left hand. He looked just like one of those aides to the President who carried the codes of doom.

Presidential codes?

“Nay,” says he your medical papers.

Fuck me I must be condition red.

We drove through the Dutch countryside. The windmill blades lazily turning, the fat cattle slowly chewing the cud, early daffodils and tulips cutting great swathes of colour along the ancient dried out seabed. The sky was blue and clear.

A man stood in a field his back to the convoy, standing still, doing nothing, looking down at the earth...They moved me into an ordinary madhouse for ordinary nutters, pending release. I was processed in and taken to my room. There were eight rooms in the unit. In the room was a tray with tonights supper and tomorrows breakfast. Bread cheese jam. Fruit juice and water. Toilet and televison. What more could a loonie need? The cell door clanged shut.

I dropped my sleepers and dived down, down, down, as far down as I could go, into to the black deeps where the devils feared to creep and crawl. This was my territory and they knew it.

The next morning the flap in my cell door was opened and the screw asked me if I wanted tea or coffee.

Tea says I.

He handed me in a plastic mug of tea and left the flap open. They were going to let us out in an hour or so anyway.

“Psst!Psst! Psst!”

Who was pssting at me?

I looked out the flap. Directly across from me his big moon turnip head stuck in the flap of his cell door was Peter the Groper.

He was angry.

He shouted across at me, “I had to pretend I was mad to get in here.”