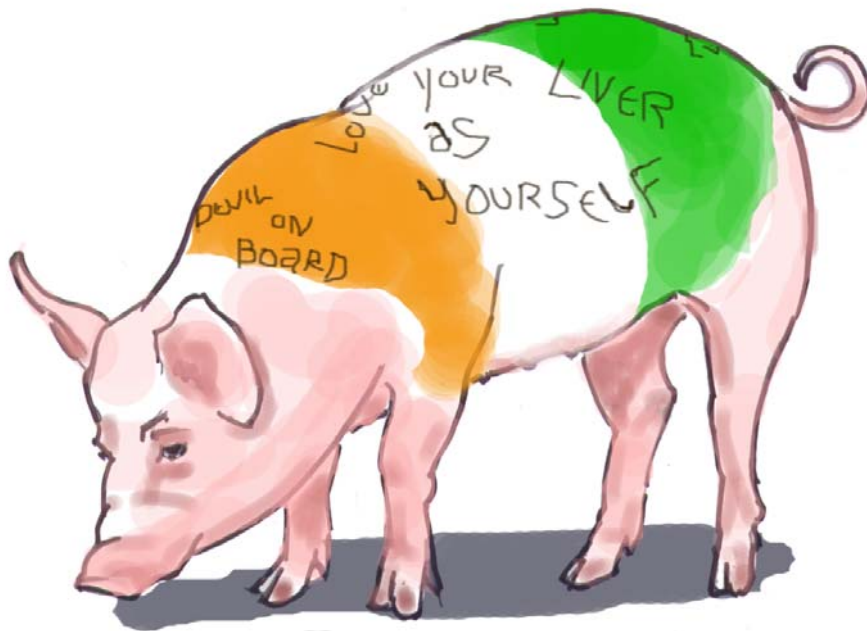


The Immaculate Misconception

A Trilogy



Book Two
THE BIG SMOKE

The Big Smoke or The Adventures of the Dummytit Kid

By
James Rice

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Continued from yesterdays exciting episode

2

Everyone is against me getting out of this madhouse. Me! Jimmy Beningi!

The Butcher Boy by Appointment to the Holy Family.

And I never gave the Pope a fucking free sausage.

“What are you saying son?”

Does it matter ma? If you don't like it go and read some other fucking book that suits your sensibilities, some recycled tabloid tittle tattle, a neurotic rag, a blunt base scenario that conforms to your preconceptions of a good read.

Get out of here ma! Fuck off back to the graveyard!

Or go and lay underneath someone else's bed.

I am tied to mine.

“What way is that to talk to your mother?”

You are irrelevant to me ma. What I have written is mine! A product of intellectual agitation of the greatest magnitude, that is not for sale.

“You are not right in the head shouts the ma – he's never been right. I knew it the first day I took a look at him. You will come to a bad end so you will – end up swinging on a rope or the boys will come along to school and shoot you. So you behave yourself. Act normal or else!”

I don't give a bollox!

I am what I am and I don't give a damn - I'm Jimmy the Ripper man – bleed, bleed. You humans are nothing to me. By the time you have read this I will be dead – hopefully - and you humans history -a disruptive blip in time. You are nothing more than what you get to eat and breathe but in my dimension I am what I write. I can hear the sumobogmen screws shuffling about in the fog outside my cell door. Better finish this page. I form each word, each sentence in that secret part of my mind they have been unable to locate with the probes - the small secure part they have not destroyed - and I exult in my restraints, sending each perfectly formed sentence hurtling away free. Up into the cosmos they flash where they are collected and neatly stored away by the Light speed Press - Milky Way and Associated Galaxies. My manuscript should arrive back edited hopefully with an intergalactical publishing contract when the first intelligent life forms from another planet land on Earth. God help them when they find what we have evolved into.

The Remains of Man – a new novel by Conspiracy O'Doom.

The sumobogmen alien stooges are out there behind the cell door.

Rooting, rutting. I can hear the pink, heavy duty, looney proof, plastic plates rattling about out there on the disinfectant saturated landing.

Somewhere is a normality called control.

“Where is somewhere?” asks the ma”

She will never know.

Over the rainbow, in the cuckoos nest, over the top and around the bend,
I shout,

It's not here – now fuck off!!!

3

There are other muted voices in the air. They are pumping canned music into my atmosphere. I adore Mozart, and in a lighter vein, if you could find a vein in here that was not full of holes - I love Johnny Cash but these very sick bastards are playing Mary fluttering fucking Poppins - again. Block it out. Bite my lip and switch on the pirate station, Radio Moon. No music, they are interviewing the president.

“Hi! I’m Mr. Cool of Insanity, the Last Frontier- Gossip Intergalactica - 29th century Earth. A question Mr. President - is it true the atmosphere here is controlled by JTJ? The Jumbo Thermostat Junta.”

“Who told ye dat?”

It’s a sign of the times. The President is a culchie. Let’s hear it for the intergalactical plumbers.

“Is it true Mr. President, you nuked the Muslims to preserve democracy and save the planet from heretics?”

“It ‘twas dare choice.” says the president. “Not mine.”

What would the movie industry do without Mr. President and The White house?

Breaking news! Oil has fallen to less than 5cents a barrel.

“Well we don’t need so much oil now after The Fallout and dares not so many people take to the road.”

I am visual now outside the UN bunker, No one knows where they are.

“Is it true Comrade Secretary General that the woman from the rain forest who found a cure for cancer was assassinated by UN Special Operations under the control of the Population Police?”

“I’m afraid under UN Rules we need the agreement and permission of the agency that melted her tribe and the rain forest, to answer that question. Hand me that banana my man. “

They are outside the Vatican now.

“Is it true Holy Father everyone hates Jimmy Beningi even the people who are supposed to love him?”

My ma started singing again,

“You always hurt the one you love the one you shouldn’t hurt at all!”

Ma! Be quiet! I’m trying to write a novel.

In the madhouse! Ha! Ha!

The central heating pipes started rattling, protesting, grumbling and gushing in spurts, the hot water gurgling on its way to hell. The devil is having another bath. I don’t know why he bothers. He is against me getting out of here too. They hide the pipes in the wall. The pipes run to the boiler house in the St Pats Institution for fine young delinquent Catholic boys. The boiler house is powered by the cadavers of the old priests and nuns and the corpses of boys who get lost looking for home in their sleep and are found dead in the morning with broken hearts and busted asses.

Waste not, want not! The Green Prodigal Son Pure Energy Company. And all to keep the boys nice and warm and secure in their little beds.

The motto of St Pats properly translated from the old Gaelic is:

Hail Big Papa! We About To Be Abused Detest You!

St Pats was paradise compared to this Inquisition.

Where do my thoughts come from mammy?

“Ask your da sure if he doesn’t know he can always give you a good beating. It’s for your own good. You have to learn the hard way. Sure if he doesn’t know something, why should you know anything - why should anyone know anything if your da doesn’t know?”

The da starts up then on cue – he is hiding in the pisspot.

“Don’t you ever think wee lad, you know more than me, or I’ll break your fucking skinny back, you backward dummytit sucking bastard!”

Yes da. You are right da. Have a nice day.

“Am I ever fucking wrong?” he shouts,

Challenging everyone, anyone, to disagree with him.

The cell fills up with the stink of stale rancid Guinness.

Apart from da’s pisspot this cell is completely empty.

The dirty crème horsehair stuffed canvas upholstery runs across the floor up the walls to the ceiling.

An upholsterer’s nightmare.

Its an empty hollow hidden space, apart from me laying on the looney-proof bed that they bring in at night and screw to the floor.

I have been a naughty loonie. I have been trying to escape by dying on them.

I am firmly secured with canvas straps that have a two ton breaking strain.

They used to restrain giants in the old days before they managed to genetically modify them and turn them into midgets. Ruined the circus industry. My big nipple is still working.

A new children’s story - Jimmy and the Pee Stalk. I am aching. I am pining. My heart is breaking and I cannot but suck my thumb. Everything is locked down here or secreted away. Out of sight. Out of your fucking mind. I’m in urgent need of a piss.

Come on and open up the door with its all seeing eye. They always open the door late. They want me to lie like this forever. Rotting plotting, plotting rotting.

The hatch opens and Hackett peers in at me. His sly bright rabbit eyes and his big donut dough nose sprinkled with blackheads, poking into the cell. The hatch frames his face perfectly. A passport photograph. I don’t think the Department of Infernal Affairs of the Republic of Hades will issue him a passport. Who will he get to sign the back of his scruffy head? He is relieved the golden loonie has not passed away in it’s sleep.

“Good morning Jimmy!

And that’s when Rembrandt should have painted him. A miniature, a masterpiece of insincerity. He peers at me wondering what I am up to - what I am thinking. All I have are my thoughts. There is no way he is getting his hands on them. They are created in liberty in the land of the free and I will guard them until death they do part. He opens the door and stands above me.

“I said good morning Jimmy!”

Uuugh! What is this thing? Let a big dribble of spit run down my chin. Yawn.

Oh good morning Mr. Hackett!

Before he unlocks my restraints he makes me drink the poison from Dr Flint’s evil alien laboratory. The poison rushes down to my left big toe and from there it reverses, speeds up the left side of my body to the heart from where it attacks the brain. By the time he undoes my wrists I am wrapped in cling film. I am stuck to myself. He is now unbuckling my feet. His throat is tantalizingly close. He smiles as he finishes the job. He turns and says there now all done. I am being toilet trained. He is undoing my nappy. The poison has felled my manhood. Largactol lumberjack takes a peek. I am dry and clean. The effort in not fouling myself is awesome. I am now a piece of burning shame, so hot I can disappear through a great iceberg faster than a hot knife through butter, faster than a butchers sharp knife disemboweling a pig spilling its warm guts onto the floor - faster than beheading a cunt.

Hackett really has no idea what I am going to do to him.

I am holding back the tears.

“Let’s get you ready for breakfast. “

Alright Mr. Hackett says I - playing the moron.

“Time for breakfast! Cornflakes and a wee drop of sugar Jimmy.”

O sugar goody, goody!

Outside the door he has two heavies in the white coats. What they would really like to get me ready for is suspended animation. Rip Van Jimmy the Loonie Butcher Boy Misogynist Extraordinaire- terrorized traumatized tranquillized for a hundred years. When Jimmy was kissed by the handsome prince in his padded cell, one day to the day after the century, the wicked doughnut dough nosed fairy shoved the big suppository up his ass – or was that the page after he was sedated - he woke up and fell dead of old age. I could just hear them at my wake.

“In all the years he was in here he never once broke up our poker game. We never had to leave the table. He never disturbed us when we were having a wee nap. Ach god help him all the same he was not much more than a child when he came to us and as loonies go he was one of the best. Once we stuffed his nightly barbiturate suppository up his ass he slept like a wee dote. Ach aye a wee dote. You could do anything with him. To him. On him. Beside him. Above him. Under him. Up him. And he never once complained just lay there staring up at the ceiling for a hundred years. “

Everyone is against me getting out of here. I am not worried about the devil . It’s the McKee’s. Mrs. Owens brothers, the three psycho stoogies Hairy Scary and Woe McKee have formed a committee to keep me in the criminal lunatic asylum to rot away forever inside my padded cell. Just because I slaughtered their sister and chopped her up into Sunday joints.

There’s nothing like a bit of Christian cracknel- ask any cannibal.

I asked the priest here to send the McKees a mass card offering my condolences and urging them to pray for the repose of her soul - I mean she is going to need it – but he wouldn’t do it. I then wrote a very nice letter to the McKee family offering my deepest sympathies explaining everything to them. The necessary details. The relevancies. The true facts in great detail - but the alien monster, my psychiatrist Dr Flint and his sumobogmen drones wouldn’t let the letter out of the grounds of the lunatic asylum on the grounds I was raving mad, but I’m telling ye something big lad. I’m sure Mrs. Owens is up in heaven in a perfect state of grace wearing one of her stupid fucking hats having a great time boogying with Jesus and all the gang of saints and scholars and here’s me shuffling about down here wearing a big nappy and a straightjacket. I can smell the boiled prunes. Psychological warfare! If it wasn’t for me saving the old whore and driving the devil out of her into Mr. McQuillens pigs – McQuillen is the only one wants me out but that’s because he wants to personally shoot me - dear old Mrs. Owens would be roasting away on a spit in hell and the Devil would have the whole of the Market by the balls. And man would live forever more in mortal sin. Mortal sin for fucks sake its worse than the best nerve gas you can get – the one with no antidote. I say to you, man will now live forever more - because of me. Me! For fucks sake! Jimmy Beningi, Saviour at Large. I saved humanity and they have me locked away in here. Misbegotten species. The Sons of Scum. Babbling Baboons. What thanks do you get for it?

“Eh! None son.”

You are right da.

“You are dealing with a shower of ignorant bastards son. I told you all this before.”

Yes da.

“It’s my fault. I never beat it into you hard enough. As old Father McCaul from St Malachys used to preach to us boys when we went on retreat – blessed is he boys, who expects nothing for he shall receive fuck all.”

You are right da.

“Am I ever wrong? “

It’s not easy being The Chosen One. It’s not easy being adopted by god. It’s not easy being Jesus’ wee brother.

The Committee for - the Cocooned for Eternity in a Chemical Straightjacket - did not want me back on the streets of Belfast. I was stuck in loonie time. Locked away in Librium Limbo. The Committee had placards. On one side was printed LOONIES FOR LIFE and on the other side, LIFE FOR LOONIES. Now I don’t know if they were being clever or if the cunts were drunk again. They marched up and down outside the Looney Bin on Sunday afternoon, in the pouring rain, chanting MADNESS MUST NOT PAY! I knew where they were coming from. The psychiatrists and psychiatric nurses were earning a fortune. Eh! Alright I could understand the McKee family protesting against me on their day off. They were still a wee bit upset. I could understand that. I’ve nothing against them. Lovely people. Live on their own. But they have always been a very moody shower of bullying inbred morons and they were not in possession of the true facts, or of a mood to listen to reason and logic and so I say unto you, when ignorant bastards don’t know what’s going on they say unkind things about people. Nice quiet innocent well mannered people like me. It’s well known. They said I was a sexual deviant. A pervert. A monster! Jimmy the Beast Beningi! The next thing they will be saying is their ugly sister is the Beauty! I don’t know what my da saw in her. I wouldn’t impregnate her with your big nipple, but you know what Brain the Boar is like. He will ride a crack on a plate. He once tried to do a granny at a chapel jumble sale. Trying to raise money for the pensioners Coal at Christmas, Fund. Broke her hearing aid whatever he was at. Awful man when he gets a few drinks in him.

“What are you telling people about me?”

O nothing daddy.

He hates me! They all hate me. Everyone is against me getting out of here. My family despises me. My own flesh and blood! Those that are not dead - not yet - avoid me like a nightmare. They shun me. They had never once visited me or contacted me - not even an anonymous Christmas card while I was in the madhouse. I don’t know why. Sure I never did them any harm. Did I? Me family were dead set against me getting out. The three I’s. Implacable Irish Idiots, and me old granny was the ringleader. Me own Granny! The only one I had. The other one was ate in hard times. She wrote a letter to the English Home Secretary – the traitor. Maybe if I can get word out to the IRA they will shoot or blow the old slattern up. I know where she lives. I do. She will be got. They will all be got. She sent the English Home Secretary, a registered letter - written on her behalf by a solicitor. The people of Belfast are a disgrace. Where else in the world would you find people spending money on spite? And they are all on social welfare. She would be better of buying a bar of carbolic soap – the stuff they wash me down with – and scrubbing her crack. She doesn’t wash. She wrote I should never be released on the grounds that I am a foul smelling insanely violent homicidal maniac with bad breath, athlete’s foot, herpes, leprosy and terrible highly contagious, murderous antisocial tendencies, with a very bad drink and drugs habit. Just your average rioter. She wrote if I was let out and managed to breed the one true holy and apostolic Catholic Church and ergo humanity, was doomed. Maybe the Loyalists will spring me and provide me with a harem. She held me da

responsible. She blamed him too. She hated him ever since he pissed up against the chapel wall at midnight mass when he was courting my ma.

“Bad blood!” she said. “Madness.”

She said I took it after him.

Maybe that’s why they put the big nappy on me.

So she did.

She suggested I be castrated as a matter of urgency - dick and all - the full slice - and worse, just in case - though I don’t know what could be worse. Do you? Me. For fucks sake! Their own flesh and blood. I walked slowly towards the toilet. I don’t want Hackett to know I am in pain, to relieve myself. Inside the cubicle I drop my Belsen pajamas. Everything comes out at once. My head spins in relief. I am a piece of debris being washed away in a thick dark brown mudslide. They put laxatives in the mush.

“Everything all right in there Jimmy?”

He is standing outside the door watching waiting, waiting, watching, terrified in case I try and escape down the toilet bowl along with the rest of the shit. That’s what my family thinks, I am a piece of shit. There is no chance of me getting out of here if my own granny is campaigning to have me kept here for the rest of my life. If it is a life. The only way I am going out of here is dead. Ever since the Blessed Virgin took a shine to me, the granny turned against me. They all did. Even people who had never met me. It was just an innocent crush the Madonna had on me. The peasants could not handle it. It was all jealousy fuelled by ignorance and superstition.. Nothing but narrow minded envy and good old green Irish spite by the BBB. The Belfast Begrudgers Brigade. Just because I brought the Blessed Virgin to a movie! I walked her up to the Curzon to see The Wizard of Oz. You should have seen their faces with the Blessed Virgin and me linking arms walking up the Ormeau Road with the Catholics crossing themselves and walking across to the other side of the road and the prods hissing and spitting at us. I don’t know what the prods have against the Blessed Virgin they must think Jesus’ mammy is King Billy’s horse! I bought her a bag of Maltesers. I warned her not to kiss me, not to hold my hand, in case people were gawking in the dark, but she just couldn’t help herself. She just couldn’t leave me alone. I am very good looking.

“Eat your prunes now Jimmy.”

Take a look at my photograph in the Belfast Telegraph or the Irish News of me being led out of McQuillens wee slaughter house if you don’t believe me. I could have been a pin up. I am the world famous Butcher Boy. I am in all the murder magazines. I’m famous. Ask anybody who knows me and they are all against me getting out except the Blessed Virgin. She stood by me until the end, but there was nothing she could do for me. I called her as a character witness at my trail but the Court refused to issue a subpoena. She was ordered not to appear. Her hands were tied. She was placed under house arrest in heaven.

“Open your mouth, there you are, now swallow it.”

How many times have I heard that? I would never have got out of this madhouse if The Voice had not been sentenced to look after me. On my one hundred and fiftieth birthday, they let me take off my nappy for the whole day. I was dressed in underpants, a vest, and a shirt, a pair of Wranglers, two odd outdoor slippers and big woolly socks knitted by the female loonies, or those that were not too sure of things. Blessed are the sexually confused! Something was stirring outside my eyelids. Space was being disturbed. I switched off the mind and battened down all hatches.

“Do you know what day it is?” says psychiatric nurse sumobogman Hackett

His thick Ballymena accent, confusing the seismographs in Japan. Hackett thinks I don't think. Hackett thinks I am with out thought. He thinks I live in his cocoon with nothing but cotton wool in my head. I could hear him rooting around somewhere out there in the fog. It was beside me now. I could smell it. Piss and porter.

I'm gonna let you know.

It's the fourteenth of January. Does that ring a bell? Kick start the part of the brain that deals with fun and games. Ok its running it's a multiple choice question. National bell ringing day? There's someone at the door? He's in love with a fire engine? How the fuck do I know what day it is? I don't know who I am or where I am or what I am. I am mentally marooned on a little tranquil padded island in a bullet proof, fire proof, earthquake proof, looney proof, exotic fish tank. There isn't even a plastic palm tree here never mind a fucking bell tower. I opened my eyes.

I give up. Says I to the great gay white blob.

"You're a queer fish Jimmy." says Hackett.

He holds up two envelopes, a big white envelope and a smaller blue envelope. A name was written on both envelopes in bold print.. No address, no stamps, just Jimmy. Jimmy, Jimmy, who the fuck is Jimmy? How many Jimmys are there in the cosmos? Millions billions trillions there might be planets full of them. Aye but your special says ma. Your telling fucking me. Hackett waved the envelopes and hummed "Happy Birthday. Your twenty five today Jimmy. You're a big boy now," says he talking slowly to me like I was a retard and he the great gay white blob coming from an area notorious for its inbreeding and whatnot.

"Aye you're a big lad." The cunt was in a good mood.

He had just moved to a bigger house and I was paying his mortgage. If they ever find a cure for insanity he will have to go squatting. Are you looking for a crazy career opportunity? Index link your mortgage to a madman. Invest in The Belfast Butcher Boy Benefit Investments Scheme. Long Term. That was me. A long term loonie. As long as I was in here Hackett's job would be a permanent assignment to guard me. He watched me very closely and I had found it so far, impossible to commit suicide. I was desperate to die. My senses had been ripped out examined dissected, discussed , analysed, cauterized, sterilized and then discarded, like the entrails of a sacrificial pig in the Temple of Doom. I was abused in my drug induced sleep. My spirit like the Harp that once hung on Tara's walls, had fled. Soul on the Run – I might put that in my collection of Novel Titles For Aspiring Authors - a book of Titles and one page scenarios- all that was needed for those aspiring authors without a shred of creativity to start their distinguished careers. Kinda like painting by numbers. I hope my suffering soul made it over the border. Maybe its interned under the Offences Against The Spirit Act, as amended by the Offences Against The Soul Act, as amended by the Conspiracy To Upset God Act!

"Happy birthday Jimmy!" says Hackett and he smiles at me displaying his shiny white dentures. He handed me the envelopes. The big envelope contained a birthday card made in arts and crafts by the basket weaving brigade. It was a piece of board folded over and Nurse Malone had let the loonies scribble on it in coloured crayons. A big treat! But on the back written in beautiful calligraphy - Hunger is an illusion. When you breathe in you are full. P.J. Pringle otherwise known as the Thin Man. Anorexic bastard. Beside that was the 33 times table written down by Punchcard Loughran who was the worlds first walking talking living computer. He adored Cliff Richard. That was before he crashed into an ambulance in the car park of the Royal Victoria hospital. His dead wife was found in the boot of his car. Gagged, bound hand and foot and most horribly tortured – he wired her up to a Kango hammer.

He said he had never seen her before.

“Not surprising,” said the Judge,” you are blind drunk.”

He still insists his wife with the help of her family and friends - who also hated him, committed suicide to frame him and fuck up his life. He’s a big hit in therapy. He is working with new software. Sponge slippers. Apart from a big dried snot the rest of the card was insult profanity and gibberish.

The card in the blue envelope was a regular card from a shop. It said WHOSE A GREAT GUY? And inside it said - TAKE A DAY OFF ASSHOLE! And on the bottom was written in scrawly ballpoint –

Many happy regards Jimmy, from the staff.

There was a poem on the back of the card.

I am me

I will always be me

I know I am me

Because I know

Who I am.

You are you

You will always be you

You know you

Because you know

Who you are.

Emily Thickenome.

All proceeds from this card go to the Society of Schizophrenics.

“And here’s a wee present.” The sumobogman - he preferred to call himself a psychiatric nurse - handed me a wee box wrapped up in second hand Christmas paper. They recycled everything in here especially brains. I opened it the wee box. Two Paris buns, five Parkdrive, a wooden yoyo and a wee coloured card of Padre Pio smoking a cigar with a prayer engraved beneath his beard. I thought it was Castro at first.

What can I say Big Lad.

“Don’t call me Big Lad!” says Hackett,

Very self-conscious about the belly.

You can’t really blame him. If he keeps expanding at his present rate he soon won’t be able to get through the cell door sideways.

“It’s from us all.” says Hackett waving his arm around the empty padded cell.

They had me in here for the past couple of years ever since I tried to rip open my wrist veins with my teeth. Hackett suggested they pull my teeth out and give me rubber dentures. Wouldn’t do for the mad golden goose to kill itself.

“We are going for a wee walk in the garden today.”

A wee walk we are for going.

Ok I am a depressed suicidal maniac killer but stop talking to me as if I am a, a fucking retard. A wee treat for you. For your birthday. Its your birthday. Probably the way they spoke at home. Northern Ireland bogmen. They displayed when they attempted to communicate all the syntactical and grammatical characteristics of the inbred. Bogman Brogguery Bebuggery Ha Begob Begorra Bedab and Bugger.

I opened the section of my mind attuned to the great outdoors. It was necessary to isolate and secure each section of the brain in here and develop the capacity to lock out the constant mind attacks. Once the aliens got into the brain it was ruined,

it would be plundered and raped and left abandoned leaving the mind a barren lonely place. Were they really going to let me outside or was this another inducement a treat in behavioural therapy. I went down through all the gates from the secure ward to the back of the looney bin. The air became colder and fresher. I'd love to live on an iceberg. O the smell of that frosty garden. The plants sleeping out the season. And the wild wind whispering freedom pushing over the wall gusting along the ground and out out and away. A light covering of snow. Hackett gave me a light for a Parkdrive. I was not allowed fire. Not a match. Me. For fucks sake! Denied the bare elements of life. All you need is love blah blah blah blah and a box of matches.. I sat on the small wrought iron bench with oak planks looking up at the high wall with the spikes and barbed wire running along the top. A Robin perched on a search light and looked at me. What is this thing doing in my garden?

"Fuck off!" it piped." I can't eat this strange nut. The price of nests will go down."

It flew away to blow the whistle on me to the Fine Feathered Friends Nest Protection Committee. I suppose they had enough problems with cats. Do not mention cuckoos. O and I ached so much to fly and die. Away, away up in the cold clouds up there, soaring, gliding, then turn down into a screaming dive to oblivion and peace. The Belfast Banzi Butcher Boy from the Schitzo Suicide Squadron, led by Scary, Hairy and Woe the Flying, Bouncing, Bombers. Disgruntled Stoogie Doormen Level Belfast. St Malachys Untouched. I touched the snow at the back of the garden bench. There was something sharp there. Careful! Hackett and a duo of out of work bouncers, short term close support staff, part time sumobogmen, were with me. It was a piece of broken bottle. A jagged piece of broken bottle. The neck of a stout bottle. I brushed the snow away gently and sneaked the broken glass down my woolen sock. Happy Birthday Jimmy. It was the best present anyone could possibly get. O thank you Padre Pio. The prospect of digging into and ripping out my femoral artery – I would be dead before they could do anything, if I done the job right – it filled me with joy. Ah yes a happy birthday indeed! I sat there. Thrilled! I'd hit the jackpot. I was at peace. Ok Jimmy?

Dead on big lad.

"Don't call me Big Lad. Call me Mr. Hackett or you'll spend the rest of your birthday in fucking bed!"

You see what moving up the property ladder will do to a man? He'll probably buy a set of golf clubs and practice on the roof. Down the chimney in one! Santa Claus on a fucking diet.

"Its time to go in now. We have to go in now Jimmy. You can watch cartoons after your lunch. Cottage pie."

Yesterdays leftovers minced up and disguised under a potato duvet.

"Popeye. You can watch Popeye. You like Popeye don't you?"

I do like Popeye, but I could not open the cartoon door in my head, otherwise old Popeye would surely come out pipe smoking, dripping spinach, and chin Hackett and I would get the blame. Everybody blames me. All the time.

Why can't I have spinach for lunch? I saw the fear in his eyes.

Me. The Butcher Boy! Sucking two ten stone cans of spinach through his pipe, busting out of his straight jacket, freeing the loonies, wrecking his madhouse and running straight through the three foot thick granite wall and Olive waiting for me in a getaway rocket.

And all the sumobogmen looking up at the vapour trail saying there goes Hacketts pension.

“Jimmy. Jimmy! Cottage pie! With Bisto gravy! Now I’m not promising you anything but as it is your Birthday I’ll ask the cook to see if there’s a wee bit of ice-cream left over for you from our canteen.”

Some chance unless it’s radioactive. And the fat cunt winked at me and held the door open for me. Why was he being so human? I shuffled back through all the steel gates. A beastly inhuman sound. Opening and locking, opening and locking, opening and locking. Always the same clanging, rattling, sound of imprisonment. A sound that stinks. A sound that can overpower the senses. A sound the prisoner can never forget as long as ye all can rot. High security ward. The wicked womb. What monsters are nurtured here?

Toilet please Mr. Hackett?

“Don’t take all day Jimmy.”

I’ll be as quick as I can.

“Right Jimmy. I’ll get your lunch. Strawberry.”

What? The ice creams strawberry!

O yummy I said and closed the door of the toilet.

The first thing I did was take the string off the yoyo and quadruple it. I dropped my trousers and made a tourniquet below my groin to bring up my artery. I gloated on the fact that not only was Hackett’s meal ticket going into the deep freeze in the mortuary, but he would almost certainly be sacked because he didn’t search me. I hope the cunt goes mad. He might end up here. The artery was coming up nicely. The glass was lovely and sharp. I might get a bit of rest. A night’s sleep without the drugs and thugs, the chattering daemons and despots, with their foul smelling pisspots.

The key turned in the lock. The cell door was flung open,

“Are you right now?” asks Turfhead.

He stuck his head around the door. His appearance fascinated me. Long rectangular peaty head with the screws cap shoved back and the ever changing eyes. Sometimes his eyes were currants, sometimes sultanas with little diamonds in the middle, sparkling away powered by whatever was taking place inside that extraordinary cranium. Today his eyes were little apricots with emerald pupils and his ears ginger iceberg lettuce leaves.

“Dare is a movie on after lunch.” says he.

Turfhead spoke the purest Bogmaneese I ever heard. PBB in morse. Pure bog brogue. He was ready made for Portlaoise Prison. I wonder where they made him. I sat up. It was an enormous effort for me to move. The wounds on my wrists were driving me mad with itch and I couldn’t scratch them in case I broke the stitches and they became infected. The Black Bonk, the jail depression was attacking my nervous system.

Turfhead put a tray of food on the small deal table.

“Jimmy,” says he - and his voice took on such a concerned tone it was evident he was being sincere - “dat’s ha lovely bit of bacon and cabbage - ha lot better dan hup hin de officers mess.” He moved his head from side to side like Paddy the Talking Donkey, the cousin of Ed the Talking Horse.

“And the movie is Audie Murphy’s - To Hell And Back - dare is loads of shooting and bombing wid tanks and planes and flamethrowers.”

Flamethrowers! Flamethrowers!

“Come on now! Hup houtta dat wid ya Action Man.”

He was referring to the circumstances of my arrest.

“Bacon and cabbage- some like it hot ha, ha. Marylyn Monroe, and who was de oder fella?

Tony Curtis. says I.
“You hit de nail hon de head!
He pulled a packet of typing paper from under his tunic and set it beside my Olivetti.
He took a ribbon from his pocket and placed it on top of the paper. He tapped the paper with the ribbon.
“Don’t be writing off vex a ta ty ous letters wid dis to the Minister for Justice or de High Court. It’s a complete waste of time. The only ting they want to read is dare names in the paper showing them in ha good light.”
His behaviour was very reasonable for a sumobogman screw – notwithstanding he was practicing home spun, tricky dickey psychological motivation, bordering on manipulation, without a license- but this I put down to him not being human, though what planet he came from and why he was here was a great mystery to me.
“Dare is nothing like a good film. Do ye know what I was tinkin’?
I haven’t a bulls notion says I pretending to be enthusiastically ignorant.
“Would you not have a go at writing a movie?
I don’t know how to write a movie.
“What odds,” say he. “Sure dat effing brother in law of mine – he’s from Cavan would you believe it! He blessed himself, “He built a four bedroom bung ha low on an acre of the best grazing land available and him a clerk in the creamery down below. Fine job he made of it too!
“Have a go hat hit.” says Turfhead tapping the Olivetti.
There was a blank page in there. A great canvas of universal proportions, spanning all the arts, confined, contained now to a blank, barren, bare, white, sterile medium. It had been in there in solitary on its own for two months. I had no urge to write, no will to reproduce.
The page was a mirror image of my head. Dead empty. Dead on. Dead ahead.
“Right now,” says Turfhead, “I’ll leave you to it.”
He paused just before he banged me up.
“By the way!” says he, and don’t quote me, “I heard up in de mess you have won first prize in a certain writing competition in a certain town in - pause – Kerry!”
The way he said Kerry well, you knew who he would be shouting for in the All Ireland!
“If a prisoner did win ha prize he would be hintitled to make an happlication on a, a half sheet, tru proper channels, to attend de Festival to collect his prize. You didn’t hear dat from me.” His winked at me his eyelid closing and clanging shut with the cell door.
“Stop! Don’t do that!”
It was such a sweet clear resonate voice, filled with power and charm. I looked at the toilet door. There was no one behind it. I will not allow you to kill yourself, or do your self an injury!
“Undo the string.”
I did.
“Throw the glass down the toilet bowl and push it around the bend. It must not be found.”
I did. I dried my hands with bog paper.
Who are you?
“I have no name. You may call me that what you wish.”
What are you doing in my head?
“I have been sentenced to look after you. There is going to be a review of your case and we are going to get out! I have no wish to exist in this ghastly environment.”

You're crazy!

"Perhaps. But I am not mad enough to want to stay here."

"Are you right there Jimmy? Now you know what the doctor said about you talking to yourself, it's not good for you. Come on out now. I have to eat too."

Yes Mr. Hackett.

"Happy Birthday!" said the Voice.

I went into my padded cell. My meal was sitting on the little table brought in and screwed to the floor. Plastic containers. Plastic cup full of weak tea and fuck knows what else. And my big plastic spoon with my number on it. Number 13. Was I hallucinating again? Where does vividness of imagination end and hallucination start? The cottage pie was behaving normally. Just sitting there rotting away, waiting to be scavenged and the strawberry ice cream was melting away, minding its own business, just like a wee iceberg floating into the sun with nothing to do.

"See you after lunch." says Hackett and locks me in.

Off he goes for a couple of pints of porter and steak eggs and chips, or a chicken vindaloo.

"What was that?" asked the Voice.

That's Hackett. He's a bogman. A sumo bogman.

"Is it one of your species?"

That's open to debate.

"It needs to be calorie restricted. remarked the Voice.

It needs to be oxygen restricted! Says I. Severely!

"How severe?"

Until he stops using it.

"Are you going to try it?"

Oxygen restriction?

"No. The strawberry ice-cream."

Can you taste it?"

"No. No, but I can appreciate the finer points of your existence."

It tasted delicious but it's always the same. Things do taste better when you dine with a friend.

So you have no name?

"No Name."

What are you?

"I am a recycled entity. I have been reduced condensed and confined within a secure perimeter to a particular and dedicated consciousness. Let me simplify. I live in your head.

Two peas in a psycho pod.

As long as you pay the fucking rent.

"Rent! I have right of salvage!"

What are you talking about?

"Look at yourself. You're a fucking wreck!"

I turned on the radio that was buried in the wall. The Animals were singing, We Gotta Get Out Of This Place.

Everyone was against me getting out. Except, my Uncle Alo and the Voice. Alo still loved me and The Voice loathed the madhouse and was desperate to escape. The best way to escape was to pretend they had cured me and let me walk free. The Voice deducted this was the only realistic plan of working and I agreed with it. The Voice felt hard done by.

“I don’t deserve this!” it moaned. “I’m not mad!”

Sure that’s what they all say. Even the psychiatrists. The probation services, the department that looked after loonies on license, made arrangements for me to stay with my Uncle Alo.

We were going to be released. We had done it! Uncle Alo even had a job for me, though I didn’t know what it was. I was worried I would be unable to work. The only tool I had in me hands these past twelve years was me own. I had, after years of solitary, graduated to playing with plasticine and making Easter egg baskets, and then as an integral part of decriminalizing my insanity, I was put to painting Irish Landscapes by Numbers.

“Simple!” it said. “Easy!” it said. “Every loonie should have one hanging on the wall of their padded cell.”

The instructions were in five languages. The last Authentic Irish Landscape by a Famous Author I painted was, Sunset at Loch Lomond. I won first prize. An apple, an orange, a banana, a few strawberries, and a small bunch of grapes. All in a wee basket.

I might paint a still life. Mother’s Miscarriage. Or an Impressionistic, The Albert Bridge With Suicide. What about Decaying Father in Kitchen With Maggots?

The Voice was not impressed.

“Smile!” it said, “And say thank you. Thank you Nurse Wier.”

Then it was time again for therapy. The Voice had made remarkable progress with me.

“We need to get out of this place and that means you have to be declared sane enough to be released. You must convince the doctors they, not you, are making progress. They must be reassured their treatment is working.

How?

“Pretend you are sane.”

What is sanity?

“The tendency to avoid extreme views.”

I went into the Therapy Room with my landscape under my arm so that Dr Russell, one of Flints protégées, could see I was a good looney and responding to his inspired and professional treatment.

“Sit down Jimmy,” said Russell pouring over my file. “I see here you have requested to be moved out of secure accommodation?”

He looked at me over the top of his glasses.

“Now why is that?”

I would like to mix with the other patients. Play games and things.

“Games? What kind of games?”

Scrabble.

“You can play Scrabble” Well, well. That’s a nice painting. Did you do that?

Yes Doctor and it won first prize. Maybe you could hang it on the wall?

“Send it home Jimmy.

I don’t have a home.

“I’ll tell you what; I’ll get one of the nurses to hang it up in the dining room.”

But sure I’m not allowed into the dining room Doctor.

Bingo!” says the voice.

“Well it’s a bit early to have you out of secure accommodation but I’ll recommend that you eat with the other patients in the dining room.”

Thank you sir.

“Now do you remember our last meeting when we talked about your inability to remember what you did to Mrs. Owens?”

Yes I remember.

“How can you remember now if you couldn’t remember then?”

The sneaky tricky rat, but, I was prepared. I had rehearsed and studied my lines.

I only couldn’t remember at the time I was doing it doctor.

“Doing what?”

When I was killing her. I didn’t remember anything when I was killing her.

“In what way Jimmy?”

Well there was nothing inside my head. Nothing. I mean no thoughts.

“Put your painting over there by the wall. I’ll see to it that it’s mounted.”

What did he think it was – Delaney’s Donkey? Did he think it was the ass that Jesus trotted into Jerusalem as odds on favourite in the Palm Sunday Handicap? Eh! What was the bastard thinking? That’s what I’d like to know.

“But you remembered afterwards Jimmy that you had no thoughts at the time?”

I thought it was very strange all the same. I mean I never said to myself Jimmy this is not right, or don’t do that, or get the fuck out of there!

“Why not?”

Well I couldn’t. There was nothing in there to make the letters to make the words to make the thoughts. I mean every head has an alphabet doesn’t it. Otherwise we wouldn’t be able to make the words in our thoughts. Somebody stole my alphabet! Gone! Just a blank page!

Just a blank page, he wrote it down. Aye like the great writers on a Monday morning but of course I didn’t say that.

“And you don’t remember anything when you were butchering Mrs. Owens?”

Nothing.

“Why was that?”

Writer’s chopping block.

“Do you remember now what you did to Mrs. Owens?”

Oh yes! Every day. I can’t get it out of my mind. It’s terrible. I feel terrible about it doctor. Poor woman!

“You must have been very angry at the time?”

I must have been.

“Why you were angry?”

She looked like my da when he dressed up in my ma’s clothes. I mean she even had the same colour shoes.

“What colour?”

Black.

“Oh! And your father dressed up in women’s clothes?”

Aye . Most nights when he came home from the pub, unless he was too drunk to get dressed, then he made me and ma do him up.

“Do him up?”

Aye, Zips, hook up his bra, eye shadow and lipstick, all that sort of thing.

“And you never told this to anyone before?”

If I tell anybody he wears my ma’s knickers to work he’ll kill us!

“Us?”

Yes. Me and me ma.

“Jimmy, your fathers been dead for years. And your mother too.”

I didn’t kill them!

“No you killed Mrs. Owens.”

Why did I do that doctor?

“That’s what we are trying to find out Jimmy. That’s why you are here. Now this blank page does it have a number?”

How did I perform?

“It wasn’t bad, says the Voice,” but you must learn how to fake better emotional distress. A few tears will not go amiss. Remember the crocodile - a remarkably refined and successful species. Been conning the big fish for millions of years and then had them for dinner – dead or alive. The psychiatrists are your prey and their weak points are arrogance resulting in delusional belief.”

What’s do you mean?

“They believe they can cure any lunatic no matter how mad they might be.”

Thanks a fucking lot!

“You’re a poor anguished soul trying to come to terms with the terrible crime you have committed.” It’s really helpful to know that. Madness, insanity, is defined by social norms. If you all butchered pious hypocritical middle aged women who were having illicit sexual relations with your fathers, and this was deemed a socially responsible and respectable thing to do, you might well be the Lord Mayor of Belfast, instead of sitting here in a padded cell - and if that were to be the case where would that leave the current human definition of madness?

I notice,

says I, not wanting to be left out of this simplified discourse,

that you use the term you and not we?

“I am not a statistic in this matter. You are! Now,” says the Voice up on its soapbox, “you are not really responsible for what you did because you were mad at that time.

Me? Mad? For fucks sake!

“But you were not born mad Jimmy - you were driven mad.”

Me? By who?

“Your da. The balance of your young mind was disturbed by the behaviour of your da and the neighbour Mrs. Owens. Blame it on your da.”

Well actually. You are right. Brain the Boar did make me mad, and he killed my ma! She didn’t jump. They pushed her off the Albert Bridge even though he was in the Bulls Head drinking porter and she was in St Malachys haunting the chapel. They drove her to it. But they couldn’t get me to kill myself. I just killed someone else instead. I just killed one of them. They made me do it! What do you think?

We have the bare bones of a plot. It’s better than a dancing skeleton.

“Skeletons cannot dance.” admonished the Voice.

Did you never hear of shake rattle and roll?

“No?”

It’s well known. For fucks sake!

And I started to sing - dem bones, dem bones, dem dry bones, dem bones, dem bones, dem bones, dem dry bones, o hear de word op de lawd, but the Voice had fucked off in a huff pretending it was playing chess against Karpoff and Fischer at the same time – blindfolded. Or, redefining existence as we may be able to understand it.

Understand it, that we may come to use it beneficially but I knew it was just hiding somewhere in a seedy part of my head intellectually abusing itself.

Uncle Alo was standing waiting to meet me when I walked down the gangplank of the Heysham ferry. I stood on English soil. If I had an old tweed cap I would have wrung it between me two hands and wept for the auld sod and my potato guzzling pregnant peasant partner - The Girl I Left Behind Me. I didn’t write it so don’t get pissed off

with me Paddy me old cocker. Alo stood apart and somewhat aloof from the crowd of cold dowdy people who shuffled on the quay in the early morning. The sea mist crept in, swirling down around their feet. They were stick people stuck in a salty fog meringue. I waved to Uncle Alo. He didn't recognize me at first, and then I saw the shock on his face when he looked at me. He waved back. We walked towards each other with me lugging everything I owned in the suitcase the welfare officer with bad breath and a sports jacket with leather elbows, had given me with the lecture and the veiled warnings about antisocial conduct or worse. What could be worse than bad breath a face full of pussy spots and leather elbows? For fucks sake! The cheap cardboard suitcase wasn't very heavy. Lunatics don't have a lot. I was ashore in England. I thought of Mickey Donnely - a kleptomaniac whose condition was so severe he robbed his own house and tried to fence the goods in the pub to the local hoods, He was caught and hauled up before the beak. He said nothing, being terrified the wife would find out what he was up to. O he loved her all right! Not even his name. He was then remanded to Crumlin Road prison. At his next court appearance his wife arrived and gave evidence, the items in court were the defendants own. "How can a man be charged with stealing and fencing his own property?" argued his lawyer.

"Indeed!" agreed the Beak

Mickey's spell as the hard line hood who wouldn't even give them his name, came to an abrupt end when his long suffering wife signed him into the madhouse. She had no intention of signing him out the way things were going between her and her milkman. Mickey was one of the only people I could talk to in the looney bin, and when he found out I was being released to go and live in England he gave me this advice – "Beware the bark of a mad dog and the smile of an Englishman Jimmy!"

I thought that was very unfair on dogs. I mean we all have our problems. Why not smile? And spread a little happiness as you go buy – please try.

Well! Here I was, standing on enemy territory. That accursed English soil, and not a mad dog, or a smiling person in sight, but Paddies to the left of me, Paddies to the right of me. Onward, onward, into the valley of the concrete mixers. Invasion of the Imbeciles! Here we come!

Alo stood before me. He hugged me. He smelt of pipe tobacco and very expensive cologne. He was dressed in black. Long frock coat and a top hat. He held his black leather gloves in one hand. His kind green blue eyes looked me over. Something in there must have taken him back a long way to another place maybe another dimension. Maybe he was playing Happy Hopscotch with his brother on a carefree sunny day on a planet with a good atmosphere. He cleared his throat.

"You are a spit out of your da's mouth Jimmy. Uncanny. You are his double."

Uncle Alo nodded an impersonal hello at the pair of sumobogmen who had shadowed me all the way from Belfast. They looked relieved that I was off their hands. It mustn't have been much fun for them tailing a certified lunatic who was so tired, weary, and shot full of drugs, that all he did was sleep, all the way across the choppy Irish sea on the Bounty. The sea rocked the boat and I was pulled deeper into sleep in my giant hammock in the bowels of the ship. The lads were going to mutiny tonight and put the captain in a whaler with those of his crew that remained loyal. I warned Crispin to cut all their throats and feed them to the sharks, but they wouldn't listen to me. Not that you could blame them either, because they had never read the book like me and didn't know how it was going to end for Gods sake!

Illiterate bastards!

The Master at Arms shook me on the shoulder.

“Show a leg sir.”

Bosun Funnywonder?

“We have docked sir.”

In Heysham?

“Heysham. Heysham sir.”

Not the South Pacific?

“Hey sailor! Are you a Paddy? Hey Sailor are you looking for a job ashore?”

The two sumobogmen were sitting in green leather armchairs by the locked and shuttered bar with a hopeful look slashed across and below their big porkers jowls. They prayed to the great porker in the secret torture cell in the Fairplay Police Station, (Unlisted) that I would run mad around the boat chopping the passengers into pieces and tossing them overboard for fish bait. The sumobogmen wanted to pull out their big Webley .455s and shoot me dead. They were discretely dressed in standard undercover trench coats and stout footwear, with the brims of their official issue Paddyhats pulled low over their all seeing eyes, but the big flashing neon signs stuck to their heads flashed on and off. UNDERCOVER COP, in red and the other one flashed in flickering Gaelic green FUCK THE POPE. I was glad to see that tradition had not died out in the RUC, even when our gallant peelers were forced to wear the garb of common Hollywood gangsters. I went up to them

Hey Sham is it? Are you following me?

They pretended not to notice.

Is this Hey Sham?

They pretended they were just passengers crossing over, they stood up quickly but they did not retract their flashing signs quickly enough and the neons crashed into the second class deck head and the second class passengers bar deck was strewn with green and red coloured glass letters.

Hey Sham. Is dis your first time ha cros de water? I says to him like a good bogman would.

“No no we are crew. Pirates. Mutineers. Murderous matelotes.

Hey Sham. Do you know any good digs in London town?

“Passengers have to disembark sir.” He shook my shoulder.

“You have to get off.” he said kindly.

I’m not a passenger. No. I’m a lunatic. A certified lunatic, for fucks sake! I’ve been released on license from the Big Garage so I have!

I was looking in me pockets for me license.

Its me first time across the water! But he wasn’t listening.

I’m Shamus Wittingunless off to make me fortune in The Big Smoke where the streets are paved with solid gold!

The sumobogmen walked quickly off up along the deck pretending to be ordinary passengers. Passengers for fucks sake!

Have you any idea where I could pick up a decent English speaking cat? I shouted after them, and make sure its not Dan Breen. You couldn’t bring him to

Buckingham Palace missus, sure, he might think Princess Ann is a black and tan!

I put a bit of music to that.

Princess Ann is a black and tan dooda, dooda, Princess Ann is a black and tan dooda, dooda, day!

I danced in the pile of flickering letters crunching the glassy gaseous splinters and then Bosun Funnywonder comes down and starts shouting at me, that I overturned the table and what was I at, dancing on broken glasses?

What do you think I am? A fakir?

“I wouldn’t like to say.” he said.

It’s supposed to be screwed to the deck!

“No.” says he. “It has gimbals.”

A gymbal! You’re a fucking gymbal! What planet do you hail from gymbal?

“Get off the boat! An anti social one obviously, isn’t that right missus?”

But she had gone as well, huddling up by the gangplank, trying to hide the kids behind her in case I ate them, or started singing to them.

I don’t know which the worst is. ,

Do I look like a crooning cannibal missus, do I?

Only in England five minutes and they are coming out with all these fancy Queen of England’s, English words. I waited by the gangplank. There’s my uncle Alo.

The genetical similarities were obvious. He didn’t look a day older than when I last saw him among the stacks of butterfly buns that terrible Christmas nine hundred and eleven years ago when da destroyed him.

The sumobogmen were looking at me and clutching their luggage.

Bosun Funnywonder was waiting to get into the whaler with captain Clegg and the loyalists.

Pain Crazily was at the helm handing out orange lifejackets with the insigne of the High Seas Loyal Orange Lodge, embossed on them.

“Watch out for floating Fenians!” he roars.

They were singing,

“King Billy rules the waves!”

The crew was glaring at me. What! I had a full looney license!

Did they think an Irish lunatic should wear L plates just because he was in England!?

Ha! Anti Irish Discrimination, and I hadn’t got off the fucking boat yet.

I went ashore. I was free at last!

24

“What’s the problem?” said a voice, dripped in plum pudding.

“Now that’s an Englishman.” says Alo between laughs.

“Two Paddies wi’ a coffin sir.”

“Drunk most like. It’s disgraceful absolutely disgraceful!” whined the plum pudding voice. “They are. It’s probably full of gelignite. We are going to call the police on you.”

Alo started up and pulled away.

“I hope not. We are cremating him at two, at the back of my house.” And then he gunned the powerful engine and I was away. Free as a Faze with clipped wings.

Gliding down the M6 English motorway on me way to the Big Smoke.

“I love the English.” says Alo and starts laughing again. “You wouldn’t know what they would say next or how they would say it.”

But I couldn’t laugh. Not yet. I’d have to learn all over again .If there was another all over again. Over here.

Paddy Beningi

The Markets

Belfast.

Dear Alo,

I am dead. I can't say I am not glad, because I am, and if I am, then why shouldn't I be now? At least I would hope so. If you know what I mean? I mean meant. Its very difficult when one is dead to be grammatically correct. I'm certain I have been dead since she left me. The very least you can say is, I wasn't alive anyway. If it hadn't been for wee Jimmy I would have been at the bottom of the Lagan too. God help Jimmy. He is a wee bit odd but a good child underneath it all. He's a great worker and gets on well with everybody over here. He's a credit to the Market. We all had great hopes he was going to take Holy Orders. I believe he was called by God but you know what it's like here, some jealous bastard reversed the charges. Alo get him out of here. You escaped the dirty old town. Alo its still the dirty old town. Out of them all Jimmy's the only one to have our blood, the Beningi blood. You know what I mea?. God help him. You were right. We should not have bred. You were always fucking right. Help him. Please! He has no one else. My lungs are like two stone bags of quick drying cemen,t and that lanky quack McSourley wanted me to go to Chemotherapy, but where would I get the money to go to Russia? And then he tried to trick me into going into the hospital. What for? To croak in a strange bed, in a room full of dying bastards? I am content to be dead. Alo I regret my life. Every fucking day of i!. I was plagued by jealousy every living moment. Aye the wee green monster ruled my days, all day, every day, sitting on my shoulder, shouting in my ear, riding me into the pit of tears. That's why I made a show of you. I was jealous of you. Why do you think I hated Satchimo and Eddie Calvert ? I loved them but I had to hate them because I was jealous. I loathed anyone in the limelight, They took MY spot. They stole MY light. So now big brother, you know, don't you know? Don't ask me now, well, you can't now anyway. Jimmy is a Butcher Boy, working for McQuillen who thinks very highly of him. They are going to give him an apprenticeship after his first year. He's saying mass at St Malachys too. The priest cannot speak too highly of him. Yes I am drunk but I am, I was telling you the truth. Good as he is doing, he's better out of here. He was very close to his ma. Some places grow on you but Belfast consumes you. It takes everything and turns you into a big grey flowerpot with the weeds of doctrine coming out your mouth and ears. I'm fucking rambling but my brain is jumping over the sticks and fences and hurdles at the last race in the last meeting. I hope when darkness falls I come home a winner. I have never asked you anything before Alo, never. Take care of Jimmy for me and his ma. Get him out of here before it is too late.

I am and will always remain,

Your loving brother, Paddy.

p.s. I am sending back to you the silver Dunhill lighter that you left behind when I was alive.

I handed the letter back to Alo. The Bentley was cruising quietly at eighty down the motorway. Alo switched off my reading light. Dawn was breaking fast now as we sped past well tended fields. The mist was lifting.

“Did you know your da was cremated?”

No.

“Aye one third of his ashes were buried with his trumpet with your ma, one third he had thrown off the Albert Bridge, and the other third flushed down the lavatory in the Bulls Head. By his drinking cronies. His so called friends. Dust to dust. Ashes to ashes. Piss to piss. What’s the country coming to Jimmy? How can you have a wake without a body?” Alo handed me the Dunhill lighter. “Read the inscription.”

The engraving said I AM SORRY. Alo shook his head.

“Your da could not say sorry. Never!” Alo pulled off the M6 into a services.

He parked the Bentley.

“He could never apologize. He felt it all the same but he could not bring himself to say it. He never once went to confession you know. I had to go in his place. Well if he wouldn’t say sorry to God he was unlikely to say it to man, woman,” he looked at me, “or child. So he had it engraved on a stolen lighter. Let’s get some breakfast Jimmy.”

At the back of the services, protected by a brigade of heavy lorries, was Norman’s Transport Café. It was packed inside. Steam and smoke rising and clinging to the ceiling and the all pervading smell of grilled breakfast. Bacon sizzling and crispy streaky middle back. I had not eaten bacon for a long, long time, not ever since someone, some doctor, some mean righteous health freak cunt, decided what was the perfect diet for loonies. Fat free, sugar free, taste free, pleasure free. Weighed, balanced, rationed, and forever steamed. What did they think I was? A fucking railway engine? A Flying Scotsman on a diet? And the greedy white coated nurses, living off the fat of the land in the subsidized canteen. No raw grated carrots and steamed prunes over there, just this tantalizing smell of fried bacon in the morning, every morning, all mornings, world without pork, amen. No fish fingers and beans and frozen chips at Christmas, but turkey and ham and goose and roast parsnips. No instant mash, but potatoes, plump and steaming, and screaming for a lump of butter. I thought Margarine was a French detective before the looneybin. Butter for fucks sake! My mind was in turmoil. Saliva was running down my twitching jaw. I ducked into the lavatory. Into the stall. I was back in the madhouse. In there, I spent every chance I got, in the lavatory. It was the only place to find a bit of peace. But they would sniff you out and chase you back out into the bedlam of a most disturbed existence. I closed my eyes and I was back. Back in the looney bin. I wiped my mouth with the toilet paper but it filled up with saliva again. I heard a sumobogman came into the lavatory.

39

Well that certainly wasn't the Queen of England's English, or my granny's cat is a cow.

Dr Sing had his shoes off and was polishing them intently.

"Of course my wife could do this, but, you see old chap, small menial tasks concentrate and can clear the mind entirely because of their mundane repetitiousness. And my wife would of course give the shoes to my servant, who in turn would give them to his daughter, who because she is studying very hard, also to be a doctor, would resent me, and perhaps spit very hard on the shoes, in the wrong places. Now you can see why it is a very necessary part of existence that we at times remove the grit and grime of life from our daily garments?"

He sat the unpolished shoe down beside another gleaming hand made shoe which rested on his table atop yesterdays Times.

"The English Times that is, for those were the days that were in it!" said the bog man to his donkey.

Dr Sing rose came around to greet me. He shook my hand as if he were working a sea pump in a holed ship.

"How do you do? I have been so much looking forward to seeing you for some time old chap."

He let go of my hand. The ship was saved by Popeye Sing!

Dr Sing looked more like Brutus. Six foot four, with a great, gray black beard that would have done a pirate proud if it wasn't so immaculately clipped and trained. His turban was dark red silk and he most definitely spoke the best Queen of England's English I was ever to hear.

"Do you mind if I continue as we chat?"

Shoe cleaning or philosophy? Go ahead Doctor.

"Shoe cleaning."

He rubbed the shoe with polish and let it sit to dry. He pulled my medical history out from under the Times.

"Do you know we had to threaten the National Health Service with legal action to get this?"

He waved it about.

"What do they think it is?"

A map of the minefields in Kashmir?

"In the end we had to pay for it. Disgraceful! We had to pay for patients medical records in order to treat him. Where will it end old chap? Now," says Dr Sing. "Yes very interesting stuff. And what medication did they give you when you left the hospital?"

It wasn't a hospital it was a madhouse."

In India there is not much difference. You see what is madness to a madman may be sanity to those who consider him mad, and, where do we go from there old chap?"

Are you a psychiatrist?

"I have a first class honours degree in clinical psychiatry from the university of Tehran, but the great British Medical Council thinks it came out of a Christmas cracker, despite the fact that my mentor was the most respected professor in medical history. But you know old chap I practiced in India, a country where people worship snakes and cows and where people live in sewers and live of other peoples excreta, a country, where they burn their dead in public, a country where magic and superstition, good and evil, are all strictly contained in a class system. I practiced in a country which regulates and accepts what the English would undoubtedly describe as

madness. That's why you see the BMC will not allow me to practice psychiatry, much as I would like to. How can I be trusted to treat you for your," he peered at my records, "hallucinations, when one of the gods I worship has the head of an elephant? I am also qualified as a professor of nervous disorders in India and believe me; we have many, many, many, nervous disorders in the Indian sub continent.

If I can diagnose you, I can treat you. But first I must examine you. Please to strip off to your underwear and sit on the bench."

Dr Sing gave me a thorough physical.

"You need to exercise. Your muscles have not been used for a long time.

You must eat healthy food. Have you ever had sex?"

No.

"There is no shame in being a virgin, but, I must proscribe for you to find a woman and have sex!"

Where am I going to find a woman? Are you going to get me a whore on the National Health?

"Mr. Beningi, I am a doctor not a pimp. You must have sex. I have read your records most thoroughly. You must have sex. Preferably with a woman. In India this treatment is very normal. Please get dressed. Now Mr. Beningi I am going to hypnotize you and when you are hypnotized I am going to ask your subconscious mind some questions. Even though you will be hypnotized you will realize that whatever you wish to keep private will remain private. I cannot force you to reveal anything you wish to keep secret. Not only would that be unethical it would not be hypnosis, but an assault on the intellect, mine as much as yours."

He produced a large ruby on a silver chain. He twirled it around. It was dark and red and full of blood.

"Look into the stone James. Look into the stone James. You are relaxing. You are very relaxed. All is peaceful where you are. It's very peaceful James. Walk into the stone. You are floating, floating up, towards the sun. You can swim in the sky. Can you hear me Jimmy?"

Yes. Yes ma. I bet you don't know where I am. No ma.

"Is that my Jimmy?"

"Yes Paddy."

"Do you know where we are Jimmy?"

No da.

He started playing the trumpet. The notes flashed by and caused thunder and lightening in the sky. Darren and I were walking across Belfast Lough towards the Dirty Old Town. He was so big and strong. He was perfect. A perfect person. I could see the Market down below. We walked down and I saw Mrs. Owens in the tin bath in her yard. She was having a bubble bath with a big man eating reptile.

"We need to talk about this." said Darren.

Da's trumpet played an ascending scale and we walked up the notes into a cloud for a bit of privacy, so they wouldn't be all out looking up at us, saying we were saints and all that old suppositious bollox!

The Blessed Virgin was hiding in the cloud.

"Where the fuck did Owens steal the crocodile?" she asked in an English accent.

When I awoke Dr Sing was rubbing his eyes. He was wearing a pair of golden earrings and he was sharpening his cutlass.

How did it go? I asked.

"You are, as the English so quaintly put it, as nutty as a fruitcake. The good thing is you do not have thermo nuclear weapons and you are not President of the United

States. You must not take these anti psychotic drugs again. They are not good for you not good for anyone. I am recommending old fashioned Librium to level you out, and I recommend you go down to the pub every night. You must socialize in the English way, play the darts and drink a few pints of beer.”

You have to hand it to the NHS, what a prescription!

“If you have trouble sleeping, you take one valiums before you retire.”

As I was leaving he said

“Don’t forget to have sex. Three times a day.”

Before or after meals?

“And please Mr. Beningi, do not kill anyone or anything.”

Anything?

“Yes, do not kill any aliens or their pets.”

I’m nutty as a fruit cake? He is as mad as a mongoose in a mangle.

“Find yourself a good woman and marry her,” says he,” for goodness sake!

Well goodness gracious, me married. For fucks sake!

71

No one needed a driving licence down here. And the muck lorry couldn’t come down the escalator into the carriage. I suffered greatly in the back of that muck lorry before I joined The Underground. The voice told me it was a great long gone civilization that hacked these tunnels out of the rock below London with their bare claws. Down here no one asked anyone anything. No one cared who you were or what you were. And it got you to work, to where you wanted to go. Cheaply. So, I sat there for hours, riding from one part of London to another, hiding in among the humans. Shortly after Guy Fawkes was tortured and executed for his part in the English bombing campaign, I was sitting in a carriage on its way to Marble Arch. It was Sunday morning and I was going to play a few tunes on the trumpet there. I was meeting up with an American clarinet player from New York. His name was Jeff Salingzer and he was clarinett’ing around the world. His granny wasn’t Irish. He told me there was an underground in New York. Codenamed, The Subway. It seemed to me this superior race of beings almost certainly Icerians reincarnated as Intergalactical aid workers, had dug tunnels in all the cities of the world. I’d love to see the face of the Lord Mayor of Belfast when the secretary of his lodge comes up and says,

“Lord Mayor, Lord Mayor, we have found a set of tunnels under the city complete with tracks and trains!”

“What! Bill the tax payer and put the fares up. By the way, say that my da built it.”

Across from me sat a big black lady. Her belly was swollen up. She was a big prune freshly boiled with sugar and left to cool. There was a wee plum in there getting bigger, growing, swelling up in its little universe, waiting to burst out and crawl up her body to the source of all life. Hail motherhood earthling. I needed to badly suck something. I told Dr Sing a polo mint is not the same. She started to stare back at me

as if to say what the fuck are you looking at you white freaky perv, but I just took me trumpet out and started to polish it. Then she spoke,
“You a musician man?”

You having a baby plumb woman? Be my mama. Mama, mama.
She started laughing. What the fuck was she laughing at? She was pointing at my trumpet case. I had a sticker on it, St Patrick Was A Ferry! And he never crossed the Mersey. I said to the big prune.

Its alright laughing missus, but it didn't go down too well at the Irish Club with the mucksavages.

“Mucksavages,” she says, “when was dis man?”

On St Patricks Day. The mucksavages went hostile on me before Id played a note.

Come here you Belfast bollox are you trying to take a de mickey outta de patron saint of Ireland? Ha? No, no, says I, trowing de bog, sure 'tis only ha joke like.

“Ha ha. Dares nuttin funny about blasphemy you black Norderm, black Belfast, black protestant, black bastard!!”

“That's racism.” says the Big Prune.

I said it to him.

Have you never heard of the race relations board?

And says he,

”there's none of my family ever did any fucking running!”

And me thinking the big prune on the Tube had problems.

“Here,” says he taking a small trowel out of his flies,” scrape that shite off dat dare trumpet case or I'll brake every bone in your body so help me God! Don't be ha taking de mickey outta me mothers auld country.

What the fuck are you doing Mickeen, digging trenches when your ma owns Ireland?

But the wicked red faced, red haired, freckled red necked, red assed ogre, had paused to drink his pint and look around for general absolution before he rendered me unconscious, so I hit him in the back of the head – I had to he was a baby giant in disguise, his shovel was an ice-cream spoon - with ye old oak bar stool and he fell over onto de ground so he did.

“What happened to Mickeen?” asked another Mickeen, rushing up to de bar and doing a bit of a bear dance. Did you ever see a grizzly bear with a sore head before the porter kicks in?

Ha? He fainted.says I.

“Fainted?”

And the grizzly is mortified with embarrassment.

“Fainting on St Patricks Day afore ten oclock.

Bedab he did sor fainted. It must be the music.

There was another mucksavage from the same gang singing Danny Boy in the corner.

Ah sure de good Lord works in mysterious ways. says I.

And the big mucksavage laying there on the floor, still grasping the pint.

The grizzly bear was getting ready to wreck the bar and me too,

“What?”

Ah sure 'tis a miracle.

“What?”

Look sure Mickeen hasn't spilt a drop!

Then all hell broke looses as the mucksavages attacked me.

Full charge! Me! For fucks sake! And they barred me from the Irish Club. Me!

For fucks sake!

“You Irish!” she says again and laughs and laughs and the other people on the carriage also started to laugh and say

“Cor Paddy!” and other strange English sayings like “Me granny was Irish born without shoes Paddy and my dads from Sligo.” And yer man, darker than the big prune across from me who started it all, God bless her!

The James Beningi Underground Fan Club. I played them a bit of Satchimo and when I stepped out at Marble Arch they clapped and cheered me. I was an instant smash hit like the potatoes where you only add water. It’s true. I saw it on the television. I was a Tube star. I got off playing the Lone Ranger theme song, just like Brain the Boar when he wanted attention, but the only attention I got was from two transport police. Transport Police. Transported from where? The planet Nasty?

“Ello ello ello wots all this then, people being happy on the Tube on a Sunday? We’ll soon put a stop to that. Do you know sir it’s against the law to play a musical instrument on the underground railway?”

No Trumpet No Tube by Mickeen Marley.

I wasn’t playing it I was teaching it to speak.

“Ello ello ello a dumb trumpet?”

Yes sor a black brass bastard.

“You oirsh. ‘ere paddy can yew play the theme tune form Harry Lime?”

No, but I know Billy Orange.

And I off I went playing the Skin My Father Wore. It was old and dry and wrinkled but it was beautiful. Ask the big pregnant prune. Her name was Venus and she only loved me and no one else. I could see it in her tits.

“I’m Reggie.”

“And I’m Ronnie.”

Another set of twins. Identical dark suits, white shirts, and black knitted ties with gold tie pins fashioned in an R. Maybe English women produced a lot of eggs with double yolks. I was in the office at the back of their illegal gambling den. It was known as, The Lucky Shirt. When you went in anyways. The locals called it the Concrete Factory.

“We we,” said Reggie and Ronnie, staring at a spot above my chest, it was my throat, “are are the the Bray Bray brothers brothers.”

Two talking donkeys with knuckledusters instead of horse shoes on their hooves.

For fucks sake. What can,

I didn’t know which one to address so I split the sentence between them,

I do for you? This bit confused them. Mr. Bray?

88

I was right about the frog spawn.

“What I am about to say to you,” he croaked over his pint, “is secret. If you repeat it to anybody else you will be shot! Dead!”

I’m not sure I want to hear it Danny.

And says Smith digging into the pint with relish

“Your brother too.”

Danny says, I, you have hidden depths.

“Well I wouldn’t go that far.” says he, but I could see his freedom fighters vanity had been tickled.

“Look,” he says, “you don’t have to be a clever, educated, big noise, to be somebody important, able to do a valuable job. You just have to read, believe and understand your orders thoroughly and carry them out to the letter, no matter what the consequences.”

He stared at me.

“I mean even psychopaths have a part to play in the struggle.”

Struggle?

“The war- look don’t be letting on you don’t know what’s going on, for you do, and you know it too. The Brits have set up a Loyalist murder gang to terrorize the catholic people. Every night there is a catholic found dead. If they catch catholics on their own. Anyone will do, men or women. They take them back to their social clubs - romper rooms, they call them - and they all have a big party torturing the catholic to death. A blind eye is turned on their activities and there is proof of collusion with the RUC the UDR and the Brits. They call themselves the Shankill Butchers. So the Movement has decided to fight fire with fire. We are setting up a specialist unit to catch and torture protestants to death. When we are fully operational we will do two prods to one catholic. If it comes down to the wire we will still have enough people to breed a new generation but the prods will be extinct. It’s up to them. The bomb’s in their court. Jimmy it takes a special type of volunteer to carry out this type of work – I mean I couldn’t do – I’m working six nights a week in the Royal Victoria Hospital.”

What do you do there?

“I’m an emergency relief worker in the spare parts store. I was part time until the bombing campaign started. Plastic knee caps ankles and shoulders, glass eyes – we do a lot of glass eyes with the bombs in shopping malls - artificial limbs all that sort of thing. The pay is not that good, but there is great job satisfaction. You know what I mean? At the end of the day you go home knowing you have helped someone lead a better life. Look, says Danny, when you catch a prod you can do what you want with it. The only thing the movement wants is that the body be found in such a mutilated degraded state as to strike complete terror, revulsion, and hatred into the average working class prod on their way back and forward to work.”

Why’s that?

“The Movement wants to link this counter terrorism campaign to our economic warfare strategy. If they won’t go to work in case they end up as diced sliced prod, it will be yet another drain on the English exchequer, and when they are butchering another catholic they might very well be thinking, this is all great fun and I know its all for God and Ulster, but do I have a job to go to in the morning? You have to understand what makes them tick.”

Says Danny, tapping the side of his once empty head. I didn’t know what was in there now, or who had filled it up with such bollox.

Why did you come to me?

“The movement is very short of qualified butchers. The job has to be done right. As Gerry says - it’s no use employing a bricklayer to bake a fruit cake.”

Eggs act lay says I pretending I knew the wise of the homespun sayings of Gerry all my life.

“You’d get twenty quid a week basic, plus, whatever you find on the enemy, is yours to keep.”

Enemy?

“O aye every one of them now, you see, once you are put on the list you are officially an enemy of the Irish people, and the prods for obvious reasons, are top of the list. Its all laid out in Army Orders.”

I’ll have to read these Army Orders.

“No way Jimmy. You wouldn’t actually be an official member in case it all blows up in our face and there is enough of that going on as it is. The Movement would have to deny all knowledge of you. We want to be in a position to issue a statement saying we know fuck all about you. We have a name for your unit. The SDLPB.”

Ah! says I, The Socialist Democratic Labour Party Belfast. Gerry Fitts gang of quislings.

“Fuck off.” He lowered his voice, “The Sliced Diced Lilylivered Prod Butchers” “What do you think?” says he and the big green blob, beaming all over the place.

I’ll have to think about it.

“Ring this number,” says Danny handing me a piece of paper,” we work on confirmation names. I know yours and mine is written down there. Remember phones are not secure, and as Wolff Tone said, Careless Talk Costs Lives. “

I thought the Brits drew up that slogan in the second world war.

“Catch yourself on big lad how could the English think of anything as smart as that. They translated it from the old Gaelic, and plagiarized him. Terrible death!”

He hopped off to the bar and jumped back carrying two large Black Bushmills.

“These are on the Movement.”

He squatted on his arse picked up a beer mat with his tongue and flicked it over to me. He sat the whiskey down.

“A toast!” says he. “Slainte! God Save Ireland!”

Indeed!

We drank.

“There’s something else to think about.”

What?

“You would get your own slaughterhouse. Fully equipped, all expenses paid.”

He whispered in my ear, “and you could make your own sausages on the side. Remember them sausages youse used to make in McQuillens. You can’t get them anymore. The sausages you get these days are all made in a factory. Aye protestant puppet butchers in the pay of imperialist monopoly capitalist control, every sausage in Ireland. It’s a sad state of affairs. The plain people of Ireland have to eat foreign sausages. You wouldn’t know what the hell they put in them. But them sausages youse used to make in McQuillens was the business Jimmy. Do you remember you used to slip me a couple of pounds of them in the Bulls Head. Real Irish beef sausages. Sure even the prods used to love them. Gold medal quality. I’m starving. I haven’t had a bite to eat since I got off the boat. Do they do fish suppers here?”

Danny they invented fish and chips here. This is England.

He looked over his shoulder-

“You wouldn’t know the difference between them and us until they start talking!”

Everyone was against me getting out of the madhouse, even meself when I could think about it, but when I thought about it, when I was able to think about it, I wasn't sure what to think and the Voice thinks – although it never said it to me - that thought is a device planted in the brain of humans to see what a primitive life form would do with it.

Thought is an internal biological mechanism abstractly engineered, multidimensional, unhindered by the laws of time and space and constantly evolving like a RAB. Rapidly Adapting Bug, that wiped out the dinosaurs for instance.

I didn't know that. You are biological warfare agents.

One day they will come and harvest you to infect other planets that have undesirable life forms and eco systems. Intellectual evolution is not based on logic and reason but survival of the smartest. This would explain why people say something when they are thinking something else. Duplicity is a common characteristic of the smartass.

Hackett came trundeling along.

“Are you right now Jimmy?”

I had my nose buried in the Dandy. Wouldn't want them to know I was reading Ulysses from back to front this time, to find out what Joyce really meant when he wrote the word, the, or, why, or, Dubliners. What was he thinking?

“Appointment with Dr McKenna this afternoon.”

Can I bring my comics down to the waiting room Mr. Hackett?

“Well I don't know.”

Oh please Mr. Hackett?

“Well. Tell me what you are going to say to the doctor.”

I don't know what I'm going to say. I don't know what he means half the time. He brightened up a bit.

“Only bring one or two and put them away when the doctor comes. You listen to the doctor. He knows what's good for you.”

That's what Hackett said but what he thought was:

“What is this cunt up to?”

You see, Hackett didn't want me in analysis and therapy. He wanted me a corner of despair with my thumb up my ass, sitting on my elbow singing, Old Man River to my shadow. He took me down, and the big sumbogmen with rabbit's ears, peering at me through the steel mesh before they unlocked the gates. I was sitting outside Dr McKenna's office reading the Dandy. Aunt Katie was baking cow pies for Desperate Dan . The way Dan was wolfing down cows horns and all they would soon be as scarce as the bison or a catholic in the Unionist Party.

Dr McKenna was always late. He was now treating me three times a week.

Somewhere, far away, Frank Sinatra was crooning, I Did It My Way. DIY Therapy.

My penetrating insights made communications with Dr McKenna very difficult, especially when I was trying to convince him he had performed a miracle and cured me. As cured as a kipper. Good enough tasty enough to be sealed wrapped in plastic and sent home. Safe enough to be sold to a public at large. I was the perfect thing to have at your breakfast table. Madman with toast and marmalade. I was a two faced gutless bastard when I was bad, but when I was good - and when I was, I was very, very good -you ask my ma - I was the closest living thing Ireland had to a Saint. St Jimmy of the Straightjacket! Matt Talbot throw off your sack cloth and streak up O'Connell Street wanking. Why not? It's a lot better than wrapping your dick in a hairy sock and tying a brick onto it before you lay down on the railway sleepers for the night. Well, I think so don't you?

“You tell the shrink anything you are really thinking and you won’t get out of your straight jacket.” said The Voice.

I saw McKenna coming so I held up the Beano for him and pretended to be engrossed in the antics of Biffo the fucking Bear.

“Good morning Mr. Hackett!”

“Good morning doctor.”

“Come in Jimmy. “

Hackett didn’t like this first name business.

This therapy and treatment is a big charade. I am forced to play the part of a lunatic, in order to convince them they can conquer insanity. I would be released because I was no longer mad. Now, I ask you, what the fuck do you think of that? Who needs therapy? And all they wanted to talk about was their own obsessions, not mine.

Things that were relevant, to them, to their professions, Like Dr Flint and the psychiatric students. All they wanted to talk about was Father Fiddly and me wearing the confirmation dress and the Easter bonnet. Sex abuse! All Dr McKenna wanted to talk about was Mrs. Owens. Dead years, the nosey interfering devil ridden bitch, and still causing trouble! Who cares? It’s all dead meat. It’s like my ma, I wanted to scream.

Gone! Water under the Albertbridge.

“What compelled you to chop her into joints?”

I did consider making Satan Sausages with her but the the mincing machine was around in the shop and I didn’t have the keys of McQuillens place.

“Do you hate pigs?”

They have every right to be here I mean after all, they were born here, but I mean to say, would you let your sister marry one?

“You butchered Mrs. Owens because you believed her to be a pig?”

But I said I couldn’t tell the difference between her and the pigs because I was so confused.

“Did she talk to you before you killed her?”

Couldn’t keep her mouth shut. Spilled her guts. I pretended to think hard.

The last thing she said was thank you. Thank you Jimmy, when I handed her back the bucket.

“The empty bucket?” says McKenna peeping at his sly notes.” Why did the empty bucket make you so angry?”

What the fuck was he getting paid for? Suppose you had to examine a patient, for instance a nutcase like me, and you opened up its head and found it to be completely empty. Ha? Nothing in there. Brainless. Nothing to muck about with. Wouldn’t make much of a name there eh? That will soon get rid of de id. As clean and smooth and empty as a white enamel bucket. You’d think admissions had conned you. What would you write in your famous thesis – therapy impossible, treatment ineffective. Unable to carry out lobotomy. There is no place in the madhouse at large for dull grey, hollow turnip headed people. Be off into society at once and free up that padded cell for a nutcase in need. Why did the empty bucket make you angry? I thought she was trying to get me sacked. Sacked? Aye, no swill no pigs, no pigs no job, no job no Bushmills for Brian the Boar.

“You believed your father was a pig?”

Everybody in the Market knew he was a pig. Everybody. Aye even people who weren’t there. Aye Porky Paddy Beningi,

“Why did you think your father was a pig?”

The house was a sty and he was always swilling.

“Swilling?”

Porter.

“Pigs do not drink porter.”

Go into Belfast any Saturday night. But that’s what I thought at the time Doctor. I mean I think that’s what I thought then.

He rubbed his eyes.

“And you gave Mrs. Owens absolution just before you killed her? Why give absolution to a pig?”

We are all God’s creatures.

I thought, even you, you Catholic cunt! But I said,

At least that’s what I was taught at school Doctor.

And waggled my head, the simple minded moronic way I had practiced in the window pane reflection. I was not allowed a mirror.

“We will talk about school later.”

107

They are, after all, only wee stones. One of the Chinese put a jewelers loupe to his eye and picked up a stone to examine it, and that's when all the shooting started. Three of the Chinese produced guns. The first thing they did was shoot one of the men they had been playing cards with and then they turned their attention to us. They managed to shoot the Chinese examining the stones and wounded the other one before Agatha shot two of them with the Uzi. I shoved Uncle Alo to the floor and lay on him. The third Chinese was still shooting. He dived towards our table and Agatha could not open up on him with the Uzi, The Chinese was standing over the twins screaming.

"You drop weapon."

"Fuck off!" said Agatha pointing the Uzi at him.

"I kill them. Fuck them too."

The twins were not pleased. He reached across for the diamonds and that's when he made his mistake. His head was no more than a couple of feet from me but watching Agatha. He must have assumed we were unarmed. I raised my hand and shot him in the head. As he fell I jumped off Uncle Alo and ran towards one of the Chinese laying on the floor. The cheeky cunt turned and tried to shoot me but I was behind him. I shoved the gun into his back and pulled the trigger. I shot the other one in the head just to make sure. There was a silence. Uncle Alo rose up off the floor and sat beside the old Chinese man. The twins had not moved.

"You owe me an explanation?" he said.

He rewrapped the diamonds and put them back in his pocket.

"I bring you back your property and you try to kill me."

I stood behind the Chinese. I had two shots left.

"They not try to kill you. They want to kill me. Lo San turn them against me. They also kill my son." He held up the photograph.

"And who is this?" says Alo pointing at the dead Chinese in the adjacent chair.

"He is nothing!" hissed the Chinese, "Only a jeweler."

He went over to the man laying dead on the floor by the poker table.

"Excuse me."

He had been shot three times, twice in the chest and once in the head.

"He my brother's son." He spat on one of the traitors. "Him too! Brothers." He sat down. "Bad blood in family."

Whose he fucking telling. He was an old man for a moment until he recovered his poise. His inscrutable mask closed over his face. He looked at Uncle Alo.

"We owe you a great debt sir. How may we repay you?"

"With with money." said the twins. Agatha was covering the hired gun on the door who just stood there with his pistol in his hand. Typical ordinary, decent, London criminal. He didn't know who to shoot so he waved his shooter at everyone.

"Put it away son." says Alo "For you the war is over."

The Twins nodded.

"And now to business." says Alo.

Elephant John was driving everybody mad. Not me of course. I am already mad, though you wouldn't know it until I got a hold of you. When he was the ganger on site he wasn't such a bad bastard of a tyrant if the work was done to schedule. His schedule. Now he was a roving ganger operating out of the big site at Islington. They took his muck lorry of him and gave him a station wagon motor car. It was his job to supply the other sites with mucksavages and make sure the gangers there got the work

done. What could he do? He had to stay at his post. There was prestige and status involved.

Elephant John was top of the picking order.

132

The pain was indescribable. I took deep breaths and managed to wriggle my toes. I must have seized up my muscles when I was in the dark lands. Bit by bit the muscles began to loosen up. At seven thirty two, Mrs. Mopps came along and cleaned the waiting room reception area, toilets and McId's office. I had the meter cupboard barred against them with a small bolt I installed myself. All went well and off they went. At eight thirty the receptionist arrived. My Dawn.

I love you darling.

I whispered to her and then changed the endearment into a barbed thought. I hurled the thought out through the door to pierce her heart but the bitch stood up and turned and all she did was scratch her ass where the barb had struck. It's all right for Cupid, he has a bow and arrow, and the asshole can fly. She checked her make up in the mirror, just before the great man, Professor Anus McId arrived at eight fifty. There was no need for her to check herself out. She is a very beautiful woman. Absolutely gorgeous! She could be a movie star. I could see men idolizing her, going crazy for her, dying for her, giving up the drink for her. And she is so crazy about me. I can tell, though of course she will never admit it to herself. Well not in this life. I wish I was her mirror.

"O magic mirror on the wall, who do I love most of all?"

Jimmy! I whispered. Jimmy! You love me!

Then the great man arrived and ruined everything. Fucking aliens! He smiled at her.

"Good morning Dawn!" says he.

Did he call her that all fucking day?

"Good morning Angus darling!

Darling! She was calling a hornet headed, bug eyed alien, Darling! I was almost sick! She rushes around and takes his coat and gives him a sneaky peck on the lips.

On the lips! I was stunned. Kissing an alien on the lips! What is this now? Love among the Loonies? A Stephan Sniffle movie? The great man went into his office.

She made McId a little pot of tea. While the tea brewed she went to a small cupboard above her desk and unlocked it. She took out a round tin and opening it, she removed two biscuits, it reminded me the way old Father Fiddly handled the blessed hosts before mass. She put two biscuits on a small plate. Two chocolate biscuits. She checked herself out in her small handbag mirror again and brought the tea tray into the office. She was in there until the nutters started arriving at nine o'clock, when she came bouncing out of the office. Now I ask you what the fuck is going on there? It certainly required further investigation. I didn't get out of the meter cupboard until ten thirty when Dawn disappeared for a break. I opened the door and creaked off down the stairs. No one took any notice of me on the way out. Everyone who went up and down these stairs was very odd. Everyone knew it was the nutters' floor but what's mad? Now, that's what I'd like to know?

We incinerated Hairy Mckee with full military honours, at Charlie's request. She respected him. His barbarous inhuman death had satiated Charlie's love of torture. For

a while McKees howls of anguish, the unbearable pain he was put through, the degradation, the filth, the degree of glee with which he was demolished as a human being, took ages off Charlie, She was animated. Her old junkie's eyes sparkled with life. Hairy McKee was accorded a solitary incineration with the Irish tricolour draped around his coffin, his black beret, Sam Browne belt and holster, on top.

181

In Kenya, or Cyprus, India, or Malaysia, they would have got away with it, but the problem was – although they had great difficulty coming to terms with this – the people of Northern Ireland were white, and citizens of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The very same country the Brits were defending.

Against who? That's what I would like to know, or as Sgt Hodkins says, "There is nuffin worse than white wogs mate!"

No wonder Tommy is confused. No wonder the Empire has disappeared. I was sitting in Bidy's, drinking some hot milk. I was famished. My jaws ached for a good feed. My new passport was on the table. It was beautiful. A green book with a golden harp. Bidy turned off the television. She had an old black and white set and could only receive RTE1.

"I remember de last Bloody Sunday," says Bidy. "They did this before. Not far from here. In Croke Park. Dey mowed de people down at the All Ireland final wid machine guns just because the IRA gave them a good hiding. They couldn't take it you see, de peasants had fought to the death and de Tans were de ones who were dead, and here, dey were over from Flanders and the Somme thinking dey were invincible and bullet proof. Or maybe dey tink de Irish couldn't shoot straight, but let me tell you dis, Michael Collins men could shoot a cigarette outta your mouth at a mile and tree quarters - at night." She pointed to the newspaper. "Dare will be trouble about dis!" There was! And I ended up in the middle of it. It was two days before my holiday ended. I had cleaned up all loose ends regarding the Father Fiddly affair. I buried the priests clothing and revisited the scene of the sacrifice. I made a minute forensic examination of the glade. All was in order. There were no traces of my having been here. I pissed on Fiddly's ashes and covered the fire pit with mulch and left. I began to enjoy the rest of my holiday now that my primary mission was at a successful conclusion. I located Sean MacStephoin one more time, and pointed him out to the Intelligence. The snooty professional spy bitch told me that it was enough, and to report in when I got back. She pretended to kiss me on the pavement but you could tell she wanted to snap my neck. I watched a few movies. I was having a couple of pints of Guinness and port in Toners pub when the general comes in.

"Are you ready for the protest?" he asked me.

What protest?

"Don't act the bollox wid me volunteer. Your lot organized it."

He handed me a black beret.

"Dares times when a man has to come out from undercover and stand up!"

Tell the fucking Brits!

I put on the black beret. The protest was outside the British Embassy against the shooting down of the people in Derry. So off we went to the protest up outside the British Consulate in Merrion Street. There were thousands of people on the streets and they were all very angry. The Garda were very much outnumbered. Outside the

Embassy, Seamus Costello from the Official IRA, made a rousing speech, attacking the Brits. It was great in the crowd. It was the first time in all my life as a man, I felt at home, warm and secure, because I knew there were no aliens here. We attacked the Embassy. I was one of the first through the window. There were no staff. They had fled. The demonstrators started to smash the place to pieces.

“Burn the place. Burn it!” they screamed and here was me thinking all this time that I was the only one who appreciated the power of fire.

No better man! says I.

So I fired a shot in the air.

Listen to me! This has to be done right! Do what I tell you!

The people listened to me because I put on the Belfast accent and I was pointing the .38 at them.

Go upstairs and open all windows and doors. Ok. Pile all furniture here in the middle of the reception room.

I busted open the Ambassadors liqueur cabinet. I poured the whiskey, gin and brandy over the pile of heaped up furniture. I uncorked his port and drank. Very good, very, very good, obviously an enemy to be reckoned with if he possessed such fine taste. I switched on the stereo and played, Land of Hope and Glory, full blast. In the kitchen I found oil margarine, and in one cupboard a few tins of paint turpentine and metal polish. All went on the bonfires upstairs and down and then some IRA people arrived with petrol bombs. Excellent! I lit the fires upstairs and ran down.

Clear the building! I yelled. Clear the building!

I had two petrol bombs. I lit one and threw it. Whoosh. My first petrol bomb! I just wished someone had of had a wee camera.

We all threw our petrol bombs into the front reception room. The stereo was belting out, Land of Hope and Glory. It was the last night at the Proms. The upstairs was already belching black smoke. That would be the mock leather furniture going up - toxic don't you know - and flames spluttering out the window licking up the ivy. A wee bit of air there and whooshy, whooshy. I saw the Garda assembling to make a baton charge run to try and save the Embassy. I called over the IRA man who seemed to be in charge.

Stop the peelers from getting inside I ordered him and stop the fire engines fighting the blaze.

We could already hear them coming in the distance.

“Who are you?” asked the IRA man.

I showed him De Valera's .38.

Do you know who owned this?

I pointed at Seamus Costello who was urging on the risen Irish people to mobilize and march on Dail Eiereann.

Ask him.

He came to attention.

“Oh!” says he “You are one of Costello's men.”

“He's a GHQ man.” he said to his unit.

I winked at him. I borrowed a balaclava and went outside. I stood on the steps of the blazing Embassy and raised the historic piece above my head with a bottle of the Ambassadors port in my other hand. I fired off the remaining five rounds. The crowd was delighted and the Garda went nuts. I saw Seamus Costello looking at me pointing me out to his aides de camp as if to say who the fuck is that and what the fuck is he doing. Thousands of people cheered me and whilst it was wonderful being a hero, I nevertheless took the precaution of ducking back into the crowd where I passed over

my.38, beret and balaclava to the general, threw the empty port bottle at the Garda and hid in the heaving throng. Some of the IRA people who were with me, stood outside and raised their fists in the air and posed for the cameras, as the Embassy burned, and burn it did, with the Garda, or the fire Service unable to do anything about it.

“To the North, to the North!” urged Costello.

A street battle raged all around him and the fire got a grip on the Embassy.

“To the North! to the North! March on Stormount!

All the outraged people turned and headed for the border, the Grada urging them on by beating dem on de backs of de heads wid der batons and the Blesed Virgin up the front leading the way in her Countess Markovitch uniform, playing the pipes. I loved her kilt. Most of them fell out and stopped for a pint on the way. The general came over to me. He saluted me. There were tears in his old murderous eyes.

“Well done son. The gear is gone.”

Cars were being overturned and set ablaze. They must have belonged to British undercover road users pretending to be Irish drivers.

192

We took Docherty out of the Early House in a chair - pretending he was a common drunk – though we treated him with more dignity and respect than the English when they carried Connolly out in chair to shoot the wounded man fifteen to twenty times and then dump him into an anonymous quick lime grave. Total humiliation!

Disrespect even in death. So you can appreciate why I could not bury Docherty in the nearest potato patch or abandon him to officialdom. We put him in the front passenger seat of the Hillman Hunter before the rigor mortis set in. The Hunter was the only car I could hire with a head rest. I put the seat belt on Docherty and tied his head to the headrest with one of Biddy’s old scarves. The scarf was printed with the sun going down on Galway Bay and I heard, as of old sitting with my da, when he was not the full pig by the wireless waiting for the pub to open listening to Radio Athlone and Joseph Locke’s beautiful rich tenor voice singing – but the stranger tried to come and teach us their way they tried to blame us just for what we are, but they might as well have tried to catch a moonbeam, or light a penny candle from a star.

You said it Joe.

I arranged it so the setting sun was tied up precisely in the middle of Docherty’s forehead. There now. The first Irish Kamikazie. The Devine wind of Donegal. Only dead a few hours and he was making the Guinness Book of Records. I’d done that

with him a few times in the past,, with the real thing only somewhere along the line the barman stopped counting and the impartial observer, the person of high standing fell off the wee stool. I ate the fifty small dried Wicklow mountain magic mushrooms a friend of mine from the Devine Light Movement had given me, but they did not seem to be having any effect at all so I dropped a couple of speed pills to sober up and I said my goodbyes to the wakers in the early house. I left fifty pounds behind the bar with Old Jerky to buy them a few drinks. Bidy said,

“Now you drive carefully and make sure he gets home safely. God help him all de same, him being a culchie and all dat.”

“Don’t worry son,” shouted the old black Crow,” if she is worth her salt she’ll wait for you.”

The General saluted, I drove out of Dublin in the Hillman Hunter and onto the Navan Rd. Docherty’s eyes were closed, I put a bogmans cap on him, low over his face. He was wearing an old mucksavage jacket, stained and encrusted with dried concrete, he looked like a man sleeping after a hard days work. I sang, It’s Been A Hard Days Night, for Docherty and then I hummed to him - for I don’t know all the words - The Hills of Donegal. One of his hands were on the dash below the windscreen and it didn’t look right so I stuck the tin whistle in it. There now. What could be more natural. An Irish traditional musician in a state of rigor mortis after a hard day’s work and a harder day’s night cultural activity. I might never have stopped for the girls and what happened next might never have happened next, but it was raining and they had a sign – and remember my friends, the words of the prophet were not always written on the subway wall – a cardboard sign reading, DONEGAL. So I did. I stopped for them. And it was nothing to do with their shape. It was nothing to do with their big broad praire asses or their succulent, fill me up tits, trying to escape, burst out into the four winds, pressed tight and uplifted by the rucksack straps, with the rain pinging off their nipples like sonar in a sea of mother’s milk.

Two lovely, wee, wet, lost, American girls. The rain was pelting down. I rolled down the window.

“Hi, hi, gee that’s real nice of you to stop!”

I knew this was my lucky day for I had found two reincarnated squeaky toys. Maybe they would sit on my knee and I could press their belly buttons.

“Where are you going?” they asked.

Donegal.

“Can we ride with you?”

No problem.

“All the way?”

Like a bat out of hell!

“Sure.”

That’s an American word for yes. They were very pleased. I got out and put their rucksacks in the trunk – that’s an American word for boot. I’m only doing this to annoy the advocates of Queen of England’s English, and in all fairness, which does it resemble most - a trunk – large box with hinged lid for carrying clothes etc on journey - or a boot – outer foot covering, often of leather, coming well above ankle - and these definitions are from the Brit’s own Queen of England’s wee Oxford Dictionary. The big one was a stolen by the Jocks and buried alive in Edinburgh. Is it any wonder teachers of the English language are unable to write, and are attacked on the New York subway in linguistic misunderstandings. I let the girls into the back.

“What part of Donegal are you going to?”

The mountain beyond Movill.

“Say. Movill is fine for us.” she said reading a map. “I’m Elli and this is my friend Babs.”

I’m Jimmy and this is my friend Danny.

“Hi Jimmy hi Danny. Is he asleep?”

Out to the world. He will be like that all the way to Donegal.

“Gee we better be quiet.”

No, no, ladies just carry on as if you were in your own little house on the prairie - nothing will wake Docherty when he is like this.

“As long as he doesn’t start snoring.” says Babs.

Well I’ll be surprised if he does.

Where are you girls from?

“Idaho. Idaho. You never heard of Idaho?”

No. Would that be the birthplace of Ivanhoe?

“No. Famous Potatoes that’s us.”

The weather was terrible for summer. Thunder boomed, lightening flashed, and the rain fell in torrents.

“Your friend is real quiet?”

He’s meditating says I. His consciousness is resting on the edge of an irreversible trance. It’s a method musicians use to digest new music. Very like the method of learning a new language by playing the lesson whilst one sleeps. It’s much related to educational hibernation.

“You mean like a bear in winter?”

Yes and the hibernating bear to all intents and purposes appears lifeless.

I patted Docherty in a brotherly way. He is a cunt to get up in the morning for work.

Your accent has changed. And musicians are half asleep at the best of times.

I didn’t see the Garda roadblock until I was on top of it. I pulled up and a sumobogmanporker came up to the driver’s window.

“Pull up dare like a good man. Where are ye going to?”

Donegal.

“Is this your car?”

No it’s a rented car.

“Let me see the papers and your driver’s license.”

I handed them to him, He read them briefly and handed them back.

“Who are ye?”he asked the girls.

“I’m Babs Washington.” squeaked one.

“and I’m Elli Eisenhower.” squeaked the other.” We are Americans. On holiday.”

Yes sir. The Hollywood Tubers says I.

“Whats in the boot?”

You see what I mean by cultural invasion.

Just the girl’s rucksacks.

“Open up the boot there like a good man.”

I got out in the pissing rain and opened up the boot. The Garda rooted around a bit like a hog on heat.

“Ok thank you. Have a nice holiday in Ireland girls.”

“Why thank you.”

I pulled away. We chatted a bit about this and that and I told the girls I was mad to go to America and meet all my heroes, Roy Rogers, Jean Autrey, Flash Gordon, Buck Rogers, John Wayne, Superman, Charlie Chaplin, Tarzan, and take a ride in a flying saucer, and eat hamburgers, and drink milk shakes with all the cowboys and Indians.

They told me they were going to stay in a hostel in Donegal and all I asked them was, were hotels expensive in Gotham City? They went a bit quiet for Americans. They said

“Do you like music?”

I love music says I.

“Do you have the Beach Boys?”

No but I will put on Wagner for you.

“Who?”

I think it’s Dolly Partons boyfriend.

I pulled into the services to get petrol, a piss, a sandwich and shoot up some smack. I needed something to defrost me. All my vital organs were freezing up. The girls went off to the rest room/toilet – and I filled up the Hunter with gas sorry, petrol, and I parked up by the small snack bar. I went into the men’s toilet. I knew then why motorists are always pissing by the side of the road. It was too filthy to shoot up so I just chased the Dragon before it flew outside and spewed up. The girls were in the snack bar engrossed in conversation. I had a cup of tea and a wee Free State bun, the girls were drinking coke. They were looking at me, a wee bit funny.

“Isn’t your friend coming in?”

No.

“Can we get him something? A beer maybe?”

No he has given up the drink.

“Oh. A soda?”

Tell you the truth his bladder has packed up.

We chatted a bit more and I had to ask them, the way they were fidgeting and looking at me.

Has anyone been saying anything about me in here?

“No.”

They looked at each other. We got up and went out to the car. They were standing staring at the car and it pissing rain. I opened the door for them.

Get in. says I,.

But they were stuck to the ground. Stuck fast.

What’s the problem? Get in.

They would not do what they were told, the bitches.

“We would rather stay here. If we could just have our rucksacks please?”

Docherty had let his cap fall off his head and one of his eyes had popped half open. A baleful slit. You could see his head was tied to the head rest and with the setting sun blazing out. He did look a bit disconcerting, I have to admit. I opened the door to put back on his cap and the whistle fell out of his hand and a big stream of foul gas that must have been bubbling up inside him – I mean he still had ten or twelve pints of stout inside him - hissed out of his mouth with his ass valve permanently switched off - and such a smell. Worse than walking on a dead maggoty dog. The pair of ungrateful bitches started to scream. Well I just threw their rucksacks onto the ground and got into the car.

If you want to get soaked, I shouted, that’s fine by me.

“He has a dead man in the car!”

The freak with the braces, glasses, and shark head paranoid green eyes, screamed.

I have a dead man making an unholy show of me and her friend turns into an intercontinental ballistic rocket with the stars and stripes and a present from America painted on her fat ass right before my very eyes, and starts zooming around the

forecourt pointing and screaming. She reminded me of a headless turkey in McQuillens abattoir jerking this way and that.

“Someone call the police!” she screamed, “He has a dead man in the car!”

It’s an automobile you white anglo saxon protestant potato breeding English bastard! I shouted back at her.

The people at the petrol pumps gawking at me. At me for fucks sake. I was only doing someone in need a favour - like Ivanhoe. I should have known they were weirdoes when they didn’t know who Simon Templar was, or in which state was Gotham City. I don’t think they were Americans at all. The way they were behaving I’d say they were a pair of jumping beans on the run from Mexico. So fucking dumb they think Pancho Villa is a time share apartment.

218

The site manager standing behind him had the complexion of Snow White - after she ate the poisoned apple, and the good prince discovered he was gay and she was left laying rejected and dead, and badly in need of rescue, in the forest for a few hundred years. I mean there is only so much magic can do,

“You are right son.”

I waved at Elephant John and he blessed me with the bog brush the way the Pope does when he’s in a good mood. I noticed a leprechaun - one of the wee McAlpines - on top of Elephant Johns head, hammering away at his cranium with a pneumatic rock hammer. Elephant John didn’t seem to notice. I pulled open the zebra skinned door to the cellar and went inside. The mucksavages were all shovels stick bodies and big flat culchie heads. Dancing away doing the shovel set dance shuffle to Val Doonegan singing Paddy McGintys goat.

“Bejaus! You can say what you like about the English Paudge,” says one.” but dey makes ha man ha great shovel!”

Paudge let out an amorous grunt of agreement and kissed the head of his shovel. I took out the tay tally book and went into the main cellar hoping to collect overdue tea monies. I should have brought my old friend Hieronymus Bosch with me. Devils in wellies. The archeologists had unearthed what they believed to be an old baker’s oven. The mucksavages had threw a few planks of wood into it, a drop of diesel and Paddys, Your Uncle, or Bobs a Bollox – whatever! The place was full of smoke. The gaunt faces of the starving shovel men turned towards me. The dead black eyes of the rag and bone men staring at me, looking to me for answers, hurt perplexity, the great question – why. Matchstick creatures and I not made of clay.

“Why are we here?” they demanded. “We about to rot despise you Caesar!”

Ask Lowery I shouted at them

And then the earth hopped, and all things universal went out of focus. The dimensions of everything changed and not just in size and shape, but in conceptual actuality.

Everything was changing. Constantly,. Remorselessly. Without rhyme or reason, on a great insane canvas. Hieronymus arrived out of breath and set up his easel to paint the scene shift. Matter was no longer solid. I saw what the students were up to with their buckets and spades and delicate brushes, patiently, painstakingly, removing the dust of history and the mucksavages flying by in the JCB roaring, “Do ye need a hand dare lads?”

Waving the mechanical arm at them with its thick sharp steel teeth and saying, “Back in the tay hut I’d horse dat one wid de ponytail and glasses.”

The outline of the fossil was very clear. The four wings, the outline of the scorpion tail. The huge empty eye sockets. The beasts had been here a long time. Perhaps humanity were the aliens. Fallen. Lost Icerians. Casualties of the great irresistible quest to reincarnate as a mighty Faze. Why was I exiled into this rotten dimension where the base aspects of any existence was a form of worship. I never gave the office staff any soup and they had no right to drink it. They were a mean, half a bitter and a cheese sandwich, lot on a luncheon voucher who thought they were a class above the common culchie even though in a good, week the mucksavages earned twice as much as they did. They were always drinking the soup and would not put a penny in the kitty. And they all wore ties and tried to speak the Queen of England’s English. Never give magic mushroom soup to a man wearing a tie. It’s well known. I was doing well. The mucksavages were actually paying up and throwing an extra few shillings into the kitty.

252

“Well what is hit?” asked the Piranha.

He looked just like Bill Sykes killer dog getting ready to devour little Oliver. That’s Twist not Cromwell!

“Speak up.” says the Piranha.

“Concentrate.” says the Voice.

I would like to apply for permission to attend the Listowel Writers Week to collect my prizes. says I to the Piranha.

His head twitched and such a look of disbelief came over his wicked countenance. He looked to his right where the assistant governor Ned the Donkey sat. He had a nice sun tan. On holidays again. Probably working the beach at Brighton. Well you know what culchies are like, moonlighting and all that black business. They smiled at each other.

I do believe there is a precedent.

“Precedent!” says the Piranha, “What Precedent?”

And they all began to slyly look about for it in case it had slipped in the door. The Piranha started to grind his teeth. That was the start of it. I was going nowhere except back to the cell. All last years winners of the Listowel Writers Week including Hugo Meehan from this prison, says they were allowed down to collect their prizes.

“Is dat ha fact now? Dat decision was made hup hat de Department. Not here.”

I would like to apply to the Department of Justice to attend the festival.

“You’re wasting your time and mine, and no one, no one mister, is hallowed to waste de time hof de Department.”

I don’t follow you Governor.

“That’s because your locked hup ya whore!”

They all started to laugh.

But you would, you would, if you had half a chance - every last one of youse – follow me, and murder me in me bed.

“Now.”

The Listowel Festival is over more than four weeks.

“Now,” says he delighted, “is dare hanyting else?”

Yes. Where is my manuscript The Immaculate Misconception?

I posted it off to the Bandon Press.

“You don’t post nothing. We post hit for you. You only wrote hit. We put de stamp hon hit, and I told you before dis his ha prison hot ha sub post office!”

The escort sumobogmen screws let out a mild titter at the Piranha’s wit.

Ned the Donkey whispered in the Piranha’s ear.

“Dat document,” he said document as if it were something distasteful, “hits hup in my censors hoffice. When hit has been duly hexamined haccording to prison regulations, as laid down by my department, a decision will be made – hin due course - as to weder hits let hout hor not.”

This is censorship! says I.

“Correct.” says the Piranha.

It’s unconstitutional and illegal! You cannot prevent my correspondence from leaving the prison!

“Every ting dat comes in hor hout of dis prison is censored for security reasons, and I’ll decide what his correspondence, and what his not. There are laws in this country habout dat sort of ting. Your correspondence is not being withheld it his being hexamined as per de regulations. Is dare anyting else?”

There was no point pursuing the matter with the Piranha. He was on record as stating my writing was blasphemous, slanderous, derogatory, libelous,, scurrilous, seditious and obscene .

He took particular objection to one of my scenarios in Novel Titles For Aspiring Authors. Page one – Asshole Inspector – A Career In The Irish Civil Service.

A simple tale of an insane prison governor obsessed with security who believed that the prisoners were laying Russian hand grenades and playing handball with them in the big yard. He appoints a crack security team to intercept the grenades, He needs to catch one of them in de act and den fly de hevidence hup to Dublin by helicopter to show to the Minister as evidence of a great communist plot:

“Minster dey har shiting handgrenades be de dozen!”

260

There was a knock on the pipe.

I stopped with my engraving and got down next to the pipe. I tapped back.

“What are ye doing in there?”

It was Eddie Gallagher. He was in the next cell also doing two months solitary.

Nothing much. says I.

“What’s all the scratching about?”

My balls are itchy.

I was sitting in the Underground, minding my own business, working on my plan to destroy the wedding and the wedding guests of Miss Dawn Bodell and Professor Anus McId. I could not let this wedding succeed or the wedding guests survive. They had to be exterminated. Logic and circumstances dictated that I get onto the barge and booby-trap it whilst they were all down at the registry office. I could get McId at his home. That was very easy. And I could see Dawn anytime I wanted. Sure haven’t I got her keys? Flint was the problem. It had proved very difficult to put Flint under observation, and his house was very secure, but they would all be together at the wedding reception. A small select family, a very close friend’s society affair.

The barge was perfect to blow up and incinerate. There was a three foot space running all the way along the barge under the deck. If the space fills up with gas and ignites - and I can have the place full of petrol well in advance – I mean, there is no one there all day but me sometimes - I’d say I’ll bag the whole lot of them Col. Bagshot.

“Bloody good show!”

So, I was sitting in the Underground minding my own business when these two sumobogmantransportporkers went and stood there, blocking my view of the trains and me watching to see if any aliens get off.

“Wots your name?” says one.

“Get on your feet!” says two.

“You are not allowed to drink on the London Underground!” says one.

I’m not drinking says I.

“Wots this?” says one.

It’s an empty port bottle says I.

“You can’t drink air or dey would be serving hup de auld Guinness in an aqualung!” says one

“Busking is not allowed on the London Underground!” says two.

“Wots in the trumpet case Paddy?”

Well it was such a stupid question that I says the first thing that came into my head which was:

There’s half a dozen pork pies in dare bobby, trapped all nine of dem sor, and de pickled entrails of George de 5th.

“Wots in the Trumpet case Paddy?”

Lunch says I.

“Right!” says one, “You hold im Reg.”

He opens up my trumpet case. There were three bottles of port in there, special offer at Sainsburys. Buy three get one free. Fair play, the Brits do get some good ideas.

“Wot’s this Paddy?”

Lunch says I.

“Got a receipt for these?”

And before I could answer number one says:

“Right! You’re nicked!”

I started searching my arms and hands for razor wounds, when the pair of cunts arrested me and frog marched me along the platform neon signs flashing on and off on top of their caps.

LOOK AT US – WE CAUGHT A LIVE PADDY!

They took me to the Transport Police office. They searched me and took all my belongings off me. Then they took my belt and the laces out of my shoes.

As they were putting me into their solitary cell I says,

Why have I been arrested?

Number One pushed me onto the bunk. He grabbed my hair and kneed me in the face. Something went crunch, number one grunted. I fell back on the bunk. My nose poured blood and I could not see.

“Do you know Birmingham Paddy? Booby traps you Irish bastard!”

279

“He is a very nice cat!”

What did the police want from me?

“They want to put you in prison. They say you are very fucked up. Maybe they want to hang you. In Greece we shoot motherfuckers like you after we cut off your balls! Why you bring the police to my place? My place is very clean!

Where are you? I want to come and see you, you know, drink some beer with you and talk with you. Good? Where are you? Hallo. Hallo. Where are you?”

I hung up the phone.

Hornblower had a tattoo behind his ear. I found it when I was examining him after I had given him a bath and fine stainless steel combed him for stainless steel fleas. I had no choice but to cut the ear off. I did it as humanely as I could but he did make a huge screech. I tied his front and back paws together. Then I wrapped him up tight in cling film and pinned him down onto the table with a canvas shopping bag. I heated up a new Stanley blade and leaning his head on my hard back copy of, All Creatures Great And Small, I amputated his ear. It was very neat and clean. I cauterized it with a soldering iron. That’s when he really started screaming.

He released a wailing roar of pain!

Scream all you want, but they who slyly put you to sleep to cut off your balls, those whom you love have deluded you and I know you will hate me forever, but I have loved you as no father has ever loved his son, and the terrible things I have done to you have been for your own good - so fuck you all. I have not stopped you from propagating. I felt very bad about it but I had to do it. I did. Honest to God big lad. If they found the cat it would jeopardize everything. That civilized person, that animal lover, the beautiful Ms Dawn Bodel soon to be Mc Id, tattooed a secret number into the back of his left ear. It had to come off. And they moan and groan about the Nazis! She had reward posters looking for the cat, stuck up all around by her barge the Jane Austin, but there was no mention of the tattoo. Sneaky bitch! You don’t know the half of what they get up to son. Things were not the same between me and Hornblower after that, and when I had to move out of Popadopalous’s I couldn’t find him. I woke up and his food was untouched and he was gone. No matter how much I called he wouldn’t come to me. Hornblower hates me and he will never forgive me. I don’t mind him not forgiving me but he will never love me again. Ever!

I gave Popadopalous ten pounds to look after Hornblower and my mail. Now the cops had arrested Hornblower for only having one ear. What did the policeman say to the one eyed one legged armless man?

“Eye, eye, eye, you look ‘armless, hop it! Or I’ll break into your house - bust you – or what’s left of you - and take you away in a cardboard box!”

I was lying in my cell in Portlaoise Prison reading my mail, that which the Piranha had withheld for the past two months. I had been in solitary confinement again.

The letters had just been given to me by a red haired somobogman Warthog with one golden bar on his epaulets. He said he was a principle officer. I’d say he wouldn’t know what a principle was if he hung it and swung on its legs as it choked. He had opened the cell door and dumped the correspondence onto my floor like he was dishing out fodder.

I’m not sure if he said mail or meal.

Erra! Don’t be feeding dat pig in de kitchen Mr. Ripsaw!

Says I to him,

Hit will shite all hover your father’s bed!

He stiffened.

Again!
says I.
“Are you right now?” says he,
Watching me warily in case I felt the urge to be John Wayne and he a pesky varmit
redskin that needed shooting off his donkey.

301

The OAS. The Odds and Sods. I dashed out onto the landing and poured my self a pot
of tea and filled up my Thermos with boiling water. Back into the cell, and then up
the landing with the pot of slops. Back to the cell to make a cup of coco. I was
running low on chocolate!
I better write the two mars bar poem for Eddie Gallagher.

The Mother of Democracy.

A man has died in principle,
In a long and painful fight,
The criminals who have debased him,
Maggie insists they are right.
Hear!Hear!
Order! Order!
For the Home Secretary.
Whip them, flog them, hang ‘em,
Shackles, uniform ball and chain
If they survive the punishment unbent,
By god sir! Intern them all again!
Because this lady is not for turning,
This government will stand its ground,
We have ways and means you know,
To put the Paddies down.
Hear!Hear!
Order! I say, Order!
Order! Order!
Law and order.
In Westminster no condolences,
No Christian respect,
In this rarefied atmosphere,
The Rt Hon MP for Armagh has died.
And the back benchers howl,

Hear! Hear!
And sing,
For he's a jolly good fellow,
An MP has died for freedom!
Reduced to a dried up tortured shell.
Stand your ground Prime Minister!
Let them starve in hell!
In the House of Commons,
Speaks the Mother of Democracy.
Order! Order!
The Prime Minister.
Although Sands was elected,
It was certainly not by you and me,
And therein lays the rub,
A criminal is a criminal is a criminal,
Miners, union's workers, nurses
subversives !
Paddies one and all.
Order! Order!
The Minister of Defence.
If the Army had their way, by God!
We would put them all against the wall!
Hear! Hear!
Order! Order! Order!
For the Prime Minister.
There is a universal truth to our system,
I'll explain to the House,
If I may be so bold?
The Irish can only participate,
In our democracy,
If they do what they are bloody told!
Hear! Hear!
Order! Order!
for the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.
To the men of violence,
I'm of a mind, to speak me mind,
We know how to deal with you,
And all your blasted rebel kind.
We have the men.
We have the whips.
And we have Maggie too!

And so, back to work.

I read the ode. It needed work. It needed to incorporate the baying effect of a pack of hounds just before the kill, the howling of the banshee, before a great sadness settles over our bloodstained land. The only way to achieve this says Eddie Gallagher is to write it in such a way that it's read aloud by a few people.

“What words are these Nedser - an epic for two mars bars?”

“What! Explain paleface.”

“There is only so much the written word can do. I mean have you ever heard the way those bastards in Westminster shout, scream and hassle each other?”

305

Well da. Her ating and riding and fly catching days are over.

Palefacebitchsquaw – no longer will you speak about me behind my back with forked tongue, for you the saloon is over!says I

I gave her a wee kiss.

Now the next time I ask you for a pint, you treat me with the same respect.

If you had been taught to treat the man with respect when you were young, you would not have turned out to be such a narky, bad tempered, stinking, anti social person.

“You are right son.”

Am I ever fucking wrong where women are concerned?

There now. Little miss Snotty Dotty, all hung up, and no one to serve.

I counted the money. A tidy sum me lads.

Now, if you had of left the money in the machines there would be no need for all this. I could have been long gone. It’s your own fault!

I shouted at her but she wasn’t listening.

There was no need to delay me like this. I told her.

I have bigger and better things to do, you stupid fucking cow!

We are all in danger. Mortal danger! The whole fucking planet! And I. Yes me!

Yours truly, am the only one who can save everyone!

“You may as well talk to the wall.” says da.

She was ignoring me, and the pub empty. I gave her a push and she started swinging. Da was right again, she wasn’t listening, just blood, dribbling out of her popped out eyes and down her nose. Very messy woman. Into the trumpet case with the notes. Time.

What’s the time Geronimo?

“Nine forty-five.”

I gave her another push, and as she swung, she started gurgling, swinging just like a wee pig on a rotating hook, Gurgle, gurgle, gurgle. I think she is trying to sing,

We’ll Meet Again. Aye, and I’ll buy you a pint. A proper pint! Have you ever been to Ireland?

“Me and your da went to Dublin on our honeymoon.”

Ma started to sing the Butcher Boy.

There is no time for singing now missus.

Uncle Alo is coming ma. I have a letter from Uncle Alo ma. Ma. What are you doing up there.

But she just swung to and fro, to and fro, yo, ho, ho, and a bottle of milk, fifteen men on a dead woman’s chest.

I says to her’

By the powers invested in me as Lord Lieutenant of Ireland I now give you permission Kathleen, Na Spotty Dotty, Na Bean Bitch Beningi Handme Mehurly, to address the Irish people. You may make a speech from the butchers block. Gurgle, gurgle, burgle, burgle, bloody bubbles, and squeak. Wash the ceremonial markings from my naked warrior's body.

Wash and clean the pint glasses, and stack them back behind the bar. I borrow her raincoat. Put trumpet case and my clothes into a large plastic carrying bag. Put her lines – the, I am sorry note - into the empty, piss saturated, cash bag, and lock it up in the fireproof safe.

That will give the lads at the lab something to puzzle over.

“Oh it's her piss alright Mr. Holmes and it's her handwriting too. Done at different times when she seems to be in a great rush, as if she is all speeded up!

I wonder what Hercules Pernod will make of it all.”

Pour a couple of bottles of whiskey over the floor leading to the bar. Give old Dot a couple of splashes. Turn on all the gas taps on the cooker and the oven. Turn up the blazing gas fire. Put keys back in her handbag. Go into the back. Leave equipment and clothes outside the door. Back inside. Lock up the back door. Go into ladies toilet. I squeeze out between the bars. I still have a hard on until my cock scrapes the rough cement of the window sill on the way out. I am outside. There is no one absolutely no one can squeeze through those bars. I dress. I stuff my bra with twenty pound notes. I have to have the two bumps. I will not look right without the two bumps.

It's well known.

On with my scarf and coat.

Walk, trying out my mincing, to the front of the pub. All clear! Walk in a womanly way towards Camden Town Tube Station. It's a nice walk. Just as the Irish Centre comes into view I hear a muffled blast. I hang around a bit. I'd love to watch the fire, but duty calls. Two fire engines roar towards the Gravediggers Arms. The Irish Centre is closed. An empty Paddy place, a way station along the enchanted way, and I said let grief be a falling leaf, at the dawning of the day... An empty day. A false dawn, the club empty, barred and all secured, with England safely locked away outside. Oh if the mucksavages could only see old Mother McCree now maybe they would let me back in, debar me, and give me a start. Down onto the Tube. PC Plod is so busy hunting Paddies - the anti terrorist squad briefed him what to look for – men pretending to be going to work with brogues hung around the neck, big ruddy faced individuals ating raw spuds on the march, wearing obligatory mud caked Wellington boots, carrying suitcase bombs and lunch boxes, stuffed full of corned beef and gelignite relish sarnies, in case they get peckish along the campaign trail. The porker does not even give me a second glance. He must be gay. Or is it my make up. I check myself out in a shop window. Just another scrubber, on her way to work. As I descend the elevator I can see PC Plod walking briskly towards someone carrying a tool box, someone who looks tired, vaguely disheveled, and working class. He still doesn't look at me. Maybe I need to go on a diet. At the bottom I walk past one of my signs, Burn the Beasts!

The words of the prophet were painted on the subway wall. On to the platform.

The iron horse rushes along the prairie. I step on board and sit among the palefaces. We speed off, away into the dark, hurtling into the wilderness, where my true love waits for me. She doesn't care what I look like. She loves me for who I am.

If anyone had seen me coming into the Jane Austin they probably would have thought I was the cleaner.

Jimmy, Mrs Mopps Beningi, Gizzardslitting Genkis Char Terror of the Doorsteps.

Just finished doing that Gravediggers Arms I 'ave.

Those Paddies leave a terrible mess they do. Must fink they are back home.

Bodies everywhere. Pigs that's what they are. Pigs! Me knees is killing me!

O yes they done me in both legs for singing,

Knees up Mother Brown, at Bodenstown. The place is a right old mess.

"You said it."

There's not much to do 'ere. That Miss Bodell is a proper lady. Her place is spotless. I only 'ave to do the polishing and dusting I do. She takes out 'er own rubbish too. That's what Mrs. Maggie Mopps is on record as saying at the char ladies convention, down at the Old Bull and Bush, when she read about it all in the Sunday newspapers, but Dawn liked to do her own cleaning, and she was very canny about the money.

"A wee bit tight Dr Finley."

"Her marital duties will soon loosen her up Mrs Manure, noo, pour me a wee dram, I have tae operate on Andy Stewarts sporan. Its clammed shut again."

"That's nothing new, Doctor Finlay."

"It is this time Mrs. Manure, he's left the family jewels inside!"

Ok I am safely in through the cabin door. Home sweet home. I love the smell of the Jane Austin. She does keep the place spotless. Honest to God she is a credit to whoever reared her. So she is. She does everything herself. Nothing goes to waste. She bakes her own bread and cakes. She is as good a baker as my ma and that's saying something.

340

And the Pearly King and Queen start to sing, Oi never 'eard anyfing like it in me life.

"Sentimental bollox! says Brian the Boar," And you sitting there listening to it!"

Cliff and the Shadows threw out Brian the Boar.

"You were always a whimp!" shouted the Boar." He sucks a fucking dummytit! He'll let you all down! I know him. He killed his da! I know. He killed me and I am dead now because of him!"

And there was a vision standing by the light. Christine, my teacher from my old school the Oasis. The only place in my childhood I was treated with respect and shown a bit of love and kindness.

"Nice dress." she said and dazzled me with a smile.

I I I could not find words.

"It's ok. No problems matey. I am not dead!" she held her hand out to me.

I got up on wobbly legs. I held onto the hull to stop myself from falling over.

When you are down at heart.

Problems, you don't know where to start.

You can't seem to make ends meet.

Take adversity as it comes.

Forget about the sums.
The balance of life is in your mind.

The music kept me on my feet. Up on deck the big band started up. I heard the cars pull up and then the pipers began to pipe the newly weds on board. It was time. The Walrus changed back to Byron. He stood in the light with the small boy. Chris held his hand the other was still held out to me. The pipers were piping,, Maries Wedding again and above their din I heard his voice. It gripped me hard. Professor Doctor Anus McId. I was compelled to look through the small lens. The place was packed with aliens. Packed close together, fanning each other with their invisible wings.

They were all standing there humming, communicating in a frequency outside our hearing range. I saw Flint posing in his thousand pound suit. And Dr Crow with painted lips, and half her tits hanging out. And the happy couple. Dawn hugged him and kissed him on the lips. She had no right to kiss him like that! I saw his massive alien head and the look on his insect like face. He was gloating. The aliens were gloating. A match made in hell. So he thinks he has pulled it off, and no one is any the wiser. Eh! He was holding on to her like she was his new golf clubs. I turned on the gas to fill the balloons. I undone the pipe for the central heating oil and let it run. The Composers Cliff and the Shadows, the small boy and Chris were all standing by the light weeping. There is nothing I can do about this. It's war.

"It's a wedding!" they shouted back at me. I threw a couple of handfuls of red headed matches onto the electric fire. I put the roller towel fuse over the bars and matches. I plugged in the fire. My friends disappeared wailing in despair like banshees. Hope had fled. I waited until I saw a bit of smoke coming from the elements on the electric fire then exited the hold. I pulled my rope and upended the jerricans of petrol. Well! All that worrying for nothing. No one took a blind bit of notice of me.
No one!

I walked through them all.

A flunky offered me a glass of champagne.

I was out and away.

Well away, up along the dock, before the Jane Austin went up. A huge whoosh of flame split the air. The barge exploded! The band, the chefs, the flunkys, were all jumping into the river. The captain of the party boat was screaming to cut the mooring lines to the Jane Austin, but there was a huge panic. The wicked porkers rushed past me to help. The central heating oil caught, and then the big propane tank. The Jane Austin blew apart and sank taking the now blazing party boat down with her.

The Thames was full of bodies, some swimming, and some floating. I saw them floating together bald black – the happy crispy couple.

"Until death do us part?"

You said it!

I could not see Flint. Can't hang around here. The porkers are always looking for weirdoes at the scene of fires. I stole a nice old Wolsley from a pub car park and drove out of London. Fire engines were speeding in from all areas. There was nothing they could do. It was over. We were striking back. They would listen to us now.

I pulled into a quiet little woods where I once picnicked with Meredith. It was one of her secret magic mushroom picking places. I had just enough energy to camouflage the car. I crawled into the back seat and pulled an old car rug that smelt of dog over me.

I fell into an exhausted sleep.

Hello Danny. It's me.
"O aye what about you big lad?"
You know that job you offered me in the meat packers? Is it still available?
"It is. When do you want to start?"
As soon as I can. I'm in a bit of difficulty at the moment.
"You're in trouble! Big trouble! Are you in a public phone box?"
Yes.
"Give me the number."
Ok.
"Have you got a pen?"
No.
"Go and get one and I'll ring you back at this number in 30 minutes."
I found a pencil in the Wolsley. I waited and he rang.
"Go to another public box and ring this number. Ask for George. Use your confirmation name."
Alright.
"He will be expecting a call from you."
I drove to another telephone box.
Hello this is Joe.
"Hello Joe George here."
He told me to stay put and he would come and pick me up. He arrived in an old Humber car. Well you should have seen his face when I stepped out of the Wolsley in my bridesmaids dress. He pulled a gun on me. I put up my hands.
"Who the feck are you? No what the feck are you?"
He had an English accent.
I'm Joe.
"Who was it that just called me to pick you up?"
Danny.
"What's his confirmation name?"
Peter. Danny Peter.
"What's your first name?"
Jimmy.
They didn't use second names. He put away the .45.
"Who owns the car?"
It's hot.
"What do you mean hot?"
It's stolen.
"We don't steal. It's been requisitioned. Are they the original number plates?"
Yes.
"Jesus! Burn it."
No problem. No better man! says I to him," you can't bate your own milk and eggs."
"Get a move on!" he snarls at me.
More sense of humour in a dead prod! Petrol cap off. Take out the the rotor arm so the engine won't start when it turns over. Disconnect fuel line from carb and stick it into a lemonade bottle. A wee starter. Turn over the engine until the bottle is full of that wonderful elixir – Petrol - The Forensic Scientists Nightmare. A B Movie by the new red hot director Neil O Sizzle.
"You seem to know what you are doing." says George.

I dropped down behind the Wolsley where George could not see me and soaked a couple of items in petrol. I fed one into the petrol tank. I put a few old newspapers and magazines under the front seats. I opened the windows of the car. I threw a blazing petrol soaked rag into the front of the car and lit the cloth running into the petrol tank. George was watching all this, taking cover from behind his car. Whoosh!

“That’s a good job!” says he.

I’ve seen better says I.

“You are not fecking driving beside me dressed like the Sugar Plum Fairy! Get into the boot.”

I hesitated.

If the police stop us - it’s a nightmare. A nightmare not worth thinking about.

“This is battle zone England, not a fecking Pantomine!”

He made the sign of the cross.

“It’s not going to happen. What are you doing dressed in women’s clothes anyway?”

He was very angry.

I was on an operation.

“What operation?”

Sex change.

But I didn’t say that of course, in case he got even more uptight than he already was.

“I’m in charge of Southern England. I don’t know anything about any operation. Why wasn’t I briefed?”

His lip was hanging a bit. He has PBDS. Petulant Big Dog Syndrome.

“What unit are you?”

I am sleeper.

“A sleeper!” he roared, “Dressed like Danny La Rue!”

“Trying not to draw attention to your self eh!? I’ll debrief you later.”

He opened the boot of his car. A very serious man. Lives on his own.

I knew he was an old fashioned IRA man when he said fecking instead of fucking.

That was the strongest swear word they used. They were non-drinking, non-swearing, chapel-stalking, dedicated, deadly, desperadoes and very strict. They always carried big .45 revolvers. They preferred Colts, or Smith and Wesson’s. They would shoot you with the British .455 Webley, but as far as possible, they did not like to handle anything, Made in England. The slightest transgression and they would shoot you. And you would not live to tell this tale.

I had to wear these clothes to escape.

“Do you know who I am?” says he gripping the butt of his .45 for comfort.

No.

I lied. I knew who he was. I knew as soon as he opened his mouth. His English accent was terrible. He was none other than the daring Commander Do from my childhood.

“That’s good.” says he, “lets keep it like that.”

He took a deep breath.

“Where did you escape from – jail?”

No.

From a wedding.

He was fiddling with the .45 again. He lit a cigarette. He didn’t offer me one.

“Get into the boot.”

I climbed into the boot.

“I don’t know what the IRA is coming to.” says he shaking his head.

“How in the name of Jesus did you end up on active service?”

He looked at me with contempt and loathing.

“You better pray your story checks out.”

And you better get a move on! says I.

The Wolsley was blazing away. It was touch and go, if he blew my head off in the boot and dumped me somewhere. I pulled my dress about me in case he peeped up my legs. I wasn't wearing any underwear. I had fed my petrol soaked bra into the petrol tank and threw my blazing knickers onto the front seat. My lovely Ascot hat, I used to set the engine on fire. I didn't want him to get the wrong idea on St Valentines Day. I mean to say, there is nothing sexual, or perverse, or kinky, or anything like that about me dressed in women's clothes, but he very well might have Roman blood in him. These IRA men, sure, you wouldn't know where they are from, and if people have dirty minds, that are their problem. I am as clean and pure as a new born God. The petrol tank blew.

“Jesus Christ!” shouts George, “didn't you ever hear about overkill!?”

He slammed the boot closed and the Humber took off at high speed. It's the strangest thing. It must have been that someone else was looking after me. I was very happy. Someone was responsible for me. A great weight was lifted from my mind. I felt like a man who has awoken after a much needed sleep.

I had an enormous erection!

A little, white blue, marbled, big nipple lighthouse, with a dark red, glowing head, throbbing in time to the tune of, Three Blind Mice.

I put one hand around the big nipple. Storm at sea! The movement of the car traveling at speed threw me this way and that, jerking my hand involuntarily and at random stroke up and down my big nipple, jerking it, massaging it. The Humber was running straight now but the pressure building up in my egg sacks was unstoppable. The lighthouse was perched on a smoking volcano. Better not erupt in here. Wouldn't want Commander Do to find his boot full of lava. I opened the boot a bit and pointing my big nipple out down the motorway I released my eggs. I let em have it all. Take that you rotten English bride. O sweet violent relief. I'm spurting hot molten rock all over the bitches face. Magic jerk on the wall, who is the most beautiful charcoal concubine of them all now? Eh! My eggs spun away down the M5 at the speed of light, up and gathering momentum, they flashed away, each a tiny egg star, away, away, far out deep into space. I sighed and was a rag doll. The Stones were singing Satisfaction in my head. What more gratification can a super divine hero ask - after he saves the planet - after he rescues the people he loves most dear from a fate worse than abomination? But that he knows he has fertilized the most barren reaches of the virgin universe that those enslaved peoples may have the seeds of divine intergalactic salvation. Oh my father in heaven I thank you for this joy. The boot flew up fully open. The Commander was slowing down, sounding his horn. I slammed the boot shut. He accelerated. My big nipple settled down now to a steady throb in tune with the motor. Let's hope it's a long journey. Larrie Cunningham was singing, We are on the one road, sharing the one load, we are on the road to God knows where. Off into the unknown. I put my dummytit into my mouth and had a good suckle. I hope the rebel Commander Do in the front doesn't catch me like this or my days on the rebel range will be over - but - as it is now, was, and will forever more be, until death us do part, or they catch me and put me back in the looney bin;

The Dummytit Kid Rides Again!