

KLEAR VOICES 2024



*A collection of poems and stories
by students*



KLEAR

An open door to adult
education & empowerment

KLEAR

Voices 2024



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is with great pleasure that I present this compilation of stories, poems and reflections from our students in KLEAR Adult Education Centre. Not only have our students from our Creative Writing class contributed but also students from our English Literature and Culture class, Communications, Irish classes and our English language students.

This year has been my first year acting as Adult Literacy Organiser in KLEAR and it has included many special moments which I have shared with the students and staff. We had our Awards Ceremony at Christmas 2023 as well as a Christmas get together with quizzes on Christmas songs and movies. We also had our St Patrick's Day event with access to a photo booth with props, quizzes, some singing and a team building exercise to make a St Patrick's Day headband.

I also was delighted to attend the DCU Library Creative Writing Competition 2024 as two of our learners were finalists. Heartfelt congratulations to Annette Rogers with the poem "Alone" and Gerard Loughnane with the story "The Empty man". Both entries are in this publication. It was with great pride that we watched them both read their entries. Many thanks to their tutor Lauren Leslie who guided them in their Creative Writing journey and who also was very proud to attend on the night.

Thanks also goes to Angela Smullen, a student of Lindsey Holland for her stunning colourful illustrations which she drew to reflect selected articles. I would also like to thank Phillip Elliott who did striking black and white doodles.

I would also like to give my warmest thanks to Adam Phillips who jumped up to the task of taking a series of photos for the book cover. Without him this would have been an arduous task. The addition of these contrasting contributions have really elevated the appeal of the publication.

I would like to extend my thanks to all the students and their tutors in KLEAR Adult Education Centre for their hard work during the year. In particular, I would like to thank Laureen Leslie, Marian Elliott, Honor Clynes, Stephen Byrne, Valerie Creegan and Rosarii Moran for helping the students with their work for this book. I would also like to thank the KLEAR administration staff who were very helpful in typing support when needed.

Lastly but not least I would like to thank Laureen Leslie and Marian Elliott for the hours of work in proof reading and compilation of all articles. They were also on hand to support Adam with the organisation of the photo.

At the centre of any organisation are the “people”. A big heartfelt thanks for all their work and welcoming attitude goes to our hardworking CE staff supervised by Louise Parsons. They are responsible for maintenance of the centre, running of reception and also our coffee shop which gives both staff and learners a great social space. Service with a smile!!

I would also like to extend a special thanks to Máirín Kenny our Adult Education Officer, at the City of Dublin ETB and the Board of KLEAR for their continuous support.

Finally on behalf of all the learners and staff at KLEAR I would sincerely like to thank Niall Ennis for his hard work in the compilation of this book for publication. There is no doubt that without his support and advice this publication would not have been completed.

Many congratulations to you all on this publication!!!!

Breda Hayes

Adult Literacy Organiser

KLEAR Adult Literacy Service

Cúinne na Gaeilge

Is olc an ghaoth nach séideann do dhuine éigin. It's an ill-wind that blows no one any good. When Covid struck I found myself without a base for the classes that I had previously had on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. KLEAR, where I had been working on a Thursday for many years, showed extraordinary flexibility and hospitality and invited us all in! My predecessor in KLEAR, Aideen Roche, had told me that I'd love working in KLEAR, and it's true: I do love it. Things work in KLEAR, the whole place is spotlessly clean (a shout out to the cleaning staff), the room is always ready with chairs and desks set out (thanks to the maintenance men), the office staff are very helpful, the fellow tutors are extremely friendly, the students are terrific, and the new coffee shop which is staffed by exceptionally friendly and obliging women offers gorgeous food at excellent value. You can also pick up very interesting books for €1 or so!

A special word of praise for the wonderful students who attend KLEAR. In my years working as a tutor in KLEAR, I have hopefully taught some bits of Irish, but, for certain, I have also learned a huge amount about so many topics from a great number of genuinely interesting people. I'd like to think that the most exceptionally nice and interesting students choose the Irish classes, but I have to admit that EVERYONE is lovely and very friendly!

Some participants of the Irish classes have written short pieces about their experience of learning Irish in KLEAR and I have provided a summary, rather than a translation of them. Every class is represented in the selection.

Mar a deirtear sa Ghaeilge: Go maire KLEAR an céad!

Honor Clynes

(Irish tutor)

Welcome to our English Language Learners

KLEAR, Kilbarrack, the neighbouring parishes and suburbs has offered English lessons to international protection applicants for many years, but September 2022 saw the arrival of a new group of students at the centre. They were mainly from Ukraine, mostly women, some of whom were already retired.

Have you ever thought how you, your parents, or your grandparents, would cope with leaving Ireland and being forced to flee with only the clothes on your back to a place where no one spoke your language and all at the age of 70 years old? Is this you? Your parents? Your grandparents? During the first lesson, one of the group members a 70-year-old pensioner stated, “I don’t want to be here in Ireland. I want to go home,” in his native language. We had to use Google Translate to try and understand each other on that day.

None of the group spoke any English. They started with the alphabet А Б В Г Д Е Ё Ж З И Й К Л М Н О П Р С Т У Ф Х Ц Ч Ш Щ Ъ Ы Ь Э Ю Я. Oh, I forgot to mention. They don’t actually use our alphabet. Upon their arrival in Ireland, they didn’t understand anyone. They couldn’t read anything. They couldn’t express themselves in spoken English or written word.

18 months later, this extraordinary group of Ukrainians many of whom are 65+ years with a sprinkling of other nationalities still want to go back home, to be with their families and surround themselves with all of the comforts that we take for granted. Now here in this publication, they generously share their stories in the English language of acts of kindness they have experienced and/or witnessed.

KLEAR as an organisation, Kilbarrack and the neighbouring parishes should rightly be very proud of the support it has given to its international students in trying to make their stay here in Ireland as safe and comfortable as possible.

Stephen Byrne

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The Box

By Clare Hayes

There was a knock on the door and when I opened it a man stood with a big box, 'special delivery' he said. I signed for it and took it into the hall. "What could this be?" I thought. The kids came running down the hall. "What's in the box? I don't know, it's for your Dad."

As the day went on, my thoughts kept coming back to the box. I wish your Dad was home from work, I'd love to know what's in it. When he came home from work he took the box into the front room and opened it. After a while I went into the room, he was sitting with the box on his lap and tears running down his face. "It's from England", he said and showed me the letter that was with the box. My husband was adopted when he was six weeks old and as much as we tried we couldn't find out anything about his family.

The letter said -

Dear Son,

If you are reading this it means I have passed. I didn't want to intrude into your life but I have kept a close eye on your achievements from afar. I came to your house a few years ago but I heard you were gone on holidays with your family so I took it as a sign it wasn't meant to be. In the box you will find baby clothes and a photograph I took before I sent you to Ireland for a better life. I always loved you and it broke my heart to have to make that decision. I hope I done the right thing and you can forgive me.

Your loving Mam

Little is Needed for Happiness

By Tetiana Zholobova

From the beginning of my life in Ireland something happened that showed me the character of the people from this country.

I was in Dublin for just a few days. I was sitting with some Ukrainian people in the restaurant in our hotel. Suddenly, one Irish lady came in and asked where the toilet was. Nobody knew where the customer toilet was and so I invited her to use the one in my room.

When we got back, she just asked my name and I asked her name. Maria. She said thanks and goodbye.

The next day a big surprise waited for me at reception. A big full bag from Maria with everything for life and even more.

So that you have an idea, I flew to Ireland with my disabled husband, passport and with pain in my heart because this is all that I could bring with me after living in the Ukraine for more than fifty years. That's why this bag means so much to me.

I didn't know her, and she didn't know me. At that time, it was very important for me that she had done this. How there is a big and kind heart from these people who allowed us to stay in their country!

The Old Apple Tree

By Anne Newman

The old apple tree stood in the centre of the lawn. Annie sat on the swing seat holding on to the rope, as she swung back and forth, watching the rustling leaves that danced in the sunlight. The apples lay on the ground where they had fallen and she remembered other days when she had tried to carefully gather, them while avoiding the wasps that were feeding on them.

How many times had she swung under that old tree, sharing her joys, her sorrows and her worries. The tree was such a big part of her childhood. There was a small wooden beam on its lower branches. Her father had put it there when her older brothers and sisters were small. It had been many things over the years, a fort, an aeroplane, a castle, a faraway island. Ohh, what great adventures she had had under the old apple tree branches.

Most of all she remembered Alice, her best friend and playmate. Alice was older than her and was great for giving her courage to do brave things, to climb a little higher, to climb up the tree a different way, to sit high up watching the birds flit from branch to branch. Alice often got her into trouble. There was the time she told Annie to tie the old plastic tablecloth to her ankles and wrists and then jumped out of the tree and fly. It worked but as Annie glided to the ground, her mum came running out of the kitchen shouting at her. Annie landed safely but her mum was not pleased and sent her to the house to 'sit in the chair, to quieten down'. Alice never came into the house, but Annie could see her peeping around the kitchen doorway beckoning her to come out

to play. It always puzzled Annie that no one else talked to Alice. They said she wasn't there. They couldn't see her. That always puzzled Annie.

She thought all had changed on the day that her mum had said her brother was coming home that evening and Alice was coming to tea. Annie was excited. Finally, they accepted Alice and had even invited her to tea. However, Annie got a shock when she was called in to tea and a strange lady was sitting at the table. "Hi Annie, say hello to Alice", said her brother. She looked at the lady and ran out of the garden shouting, "That's not Alice!"

Over the next few years, when Annie started school, Alice stopped coming as much, until eventually she stopped coming altogether. Years later, Annie remembered Alice and wondered did she imagine her. Annie did some research and discovered that the garden was once the orchard belonging to Bayview, an old house from the 1800s, now long gone. The apple tree was the last remaining tree of that Old Orchard. Alice had been a young girl who lived in that house until she died aged 9 from scarlet fever. That explained the strange clothes that Alice wore, a pale flowing dress, white pinafores and black laced boots. So now Annie understood why the grown-ups could never see Alice.



A New Lease of Life

By Ken Murray

I came here to KLEAR in September 2018. It was recommended by a counsellor. I had always promised my wife that I would go back to education to improve my reading and writing. When I came first, I met so many nice and helpful people, from the receptionist to the tutors, that I managed to settle in very easily.

There were so many different courses to choose from. I was happy to do my literacy course on a one to one basis with Mary and also in a group with Lauren.

Coming here to KLEAR has given me a new lease of life. I have made new friends and found a new confidence.

Thank you KLEAR

Cowboy Sunrise

By Dereck Hayden

The cowboy set off into the sunset
Leaving his former life in the past.
His trusted old steed trundled on
There was no reason to go very fast.
Dust and cactus before them lay
As the horse and rider rode their way
Over the hills and across the ridge
Where the Cherokee and Navaho by the river live.

The night set in with the fire lit
Cowboy covered up with pistol fit
Coyotes howled and wolves as well
But the flames roared like the flames of hell
The night could pass and fade away
The sun would bring another bright day.
Cowboy heading not knowing where to
But it didn't matter if he hadn't a clue
Life found him and strung him along
He went with it just like the words of the song.

Alt Molta

By Elizabeth Mawson

Tá áthas an domhain orm go bhfuil mé in ann ardmholadh a thabhairt do Klear.

Níl a fhios agam conas is féidir leo an oiread sin a dhéanamh don oiread sin daoine.

Caithfidh mé a rá go bhfuil na heagraithe thar barr ar fad mar aon leis an bhfoireann san oifig.

Tugann siad a gcuid ama agus a n-aird do gach duine. Dhéanfaidís aon rud daoibh, dá n-iarrfadh sibh orthu. Is foireann iontach í.

Cad a dhéanfaimis gan na mná sa chaife? Déanann siad ár laethanta níos deise le gach cupán caife agus a mbia álainn.

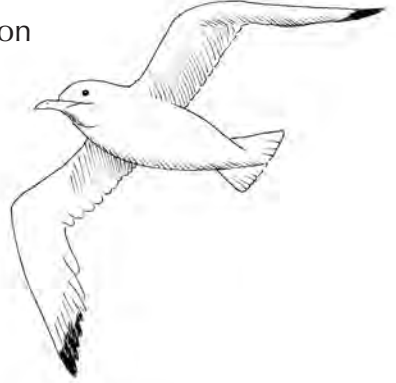
Ní féidir liom an nóta seo a chríochnú gan ár múinteoir, Honor, a lua. D'athraigh sí ár saol sa tslí a mhúineann sí an Ghaeilge. Cuireann sí spraoi go leor, fíor-ghrá agus cultúr isteach sa rang. Bíonn a cuid ranganna lán le daltaí díograiseacha. Is é mo thuairim gur chóir di “Bonn Óir” a fháil.

Tá mé an-bhuíoch díbh go léir.

Elizabeth Mawson, who attends Ardrang and Meánrang on a Tuesday, praises everyone in KLEAR for making her time there so enjoyable. She finds the staff in the office and the staff in the coffee shop so helpful and loves the food. She also enjoys her classes very much.

Binn Éadair

By Eithne Lannon



Everything gathers light;
sea-spray splicing air, slick
of eelgrass over green-laced rock,
spindrift breezing, and in the distance,
the sun rolls down Lambay's shiver
of strand, rituals of ocean, their rhythms
and spills, the kayak's foam-cuffed
trail now a vein of vanishing
ripples. Wave-pleats fold
and crease, while out
along the horizon, the pause
of settled light, brightness honed
to a scalpel,
and the whole world curves
to meet the cleave
of a sea-gull's wing.

Eithne Lannon

Is ball d'Ardrang na Máirt í, Eithne, file. Tá cúpla cnuasach filíochta foilsithe aici. Tá mé cinnte go mbeidh dán as Gaeilge sa chéad díolaim eile!

Cad as tú?

By Gillian Wray

Cad as tú? Cloisim tú a' rá

Cad as do bhlas?

As Ciarraí nó Dún na nGall?

Beagán den Déise measctha le Baile Átha Cliath?

An freagra ná gur cuma

Cár rugadh mé.

Is Éireannach mé go smior.

Ranganna le Honor leis na blianta

Anseo agus ansin agus anois i KLEAR

Is cuma cén áit a mbeirtear muid,

Ach a bhfuil inár gcroí.

Sean-Éireannach nó Éireannach nua

Cad as tú? Is Éireannach mé.

Gillian Wray, Ardrang an Déardaoin, muses about how people try to pinpoint her accent and says it's not a matter of where you're born but what's in your heart and that she's Irish to the marrow.

What A Dream!

By Elif Kir Cullen

It has been almost 10 days since he lost his job. It is not that easy to find another one for a modest artist, he thought. He knows it very well from the experience. At the end of the day, it was not either his first job or his dream job. However, drawing for a magazine was paying the bills. So now! He called his mother as usual. I would be lost without her, he sighed.

He made tea, as Turkish tea is the answer to all questions, and tried to relax on the sofa, in a flat which was a mess and smelly. He has more time for cleaning but less motivation. It must be one of the dilemmas of life.

He started thinking of the girl he had seen in his dreams every night since he lost his job; a pretty young girl with long hair and a charming smile. When she talks, it is like she is singing softly, and when she looks at him with her dark eyes, he feels that his heart is melting. They start laughing together happily, without caring about anything. It is like just him and her in the world. The dream suddenly ends at that moment.

This dream is so vivid that he has started setting an extra place at the table, cooking for two and shopping for two people. Maybe he was waiting for her to clean his flat subconsciously. Why not? First his mother did it for him, and then his future wife can take over it. He smiled cheekily.

Suddenly, he had an idea. He took his sketchbook and pens and rushed outside. He even did not wait for the elevator in the block and took the stairs quickly like a child. He felt a usual

sunny Istanbul day outside. So, it was a perfect time to sit in a park, maybe under a tree, and draw the girl in his dreams. She is my inspiration, he said. Did not men write poems for women? Did not men fight for women? For example, Troy. So this is my little tiny contribution to the men-women world, he smiled.

He started drawing enthusiastically. When he tired, he popped into a cafe for coffee. Is it real, what he is seeing? The girl who was serving the coffee is the girl in his dream! Shall I tell her that she is the girl in my dream? Don't be silly! What will she think of me? Everybody can guess what she will think, he whispered to himself. He quickly paid and left the place and the coffee untouched on the table.

He stopped by a market to get some snacks. The girl at the till, isn't exactly the same girl in his dream. No, no, does she have a twin? Shall I talk to her? Shall I show her my sketchbook and prove that she is the one in my dream? No, no, no he repeated. He left the basket and ran.

He felt very tired. "I can't walk anymore", he complained. He walked to the underground station and decided to take the metro. Luckily, it is every 5 minutes. Oh God! It is the rush hour. Lucky day isn't it? He asked himself, in a city of 13 million, the rush means the trains one after another are full of people, actually packed with people. I do not have any choice, I have to take the next train, he mumbled. People were flocking in and out. He was finally on the train surrounded by people, young, old, men, women and children. All of a sudden he felt a shock. He couldn't believe his eyes, they saw the same eyes; the girl in his dreams was next to him, travelling with him. He looked around to distract himself. The girl in his dream

is getting on the train from the platform. He turned his head and realised that the girl in his dream was reading a book in her seat. The girl who was talking on the phone is also the girl in his dream. How many of them? No, no, no! I am definitely going mad. I JUST WANT THE GIRL IN MY DREAM! He shouted loudly. Everybody in the carriage looked at him questioningly, including the girl in his dream.



Old House

by Anne McManus

I turned the key in the door
I feel I want to roar
What have I done here
Buying this mess of a house
As I nearly stand on a frightened mouse
It is so gloomy and dark
I want to run out to the park
It looked lovely from over there
But now I'm here it's very clear
I made a mistake
Suddenly, my mind changes
A smile comes on my face
I saw the beauty in this place
This is what I could see
When I sneakily climbed up that big tree
Just to have a look
Was I mad to buy it over the phone
I got it cheaper that way
Walking through the long grass I sway
As I see an old swing I used to sit on and play
I loved this little house then when I visited my Gran
I can't believe I own it now
No family member wanted it somehow
Oh, Nan, I will make it a lovely home soon
And polish all your floors and old spoons
I will sit in our garden, look up at the moon
Peace and quiet will be for me
Sitting here enjoying tea

Dole

By Deirdre Wilson

When I was fifty-three, I was made redundant from work. I worked there since I was eighteen. I had to sign on the dole for the first time ever, after working for thirty-nine years altogether. I felt so ashamed and embarrassed. I would sign on every month. They would give you a form now and then to ask potential employers to sign to prove you were looking for work.

Most of them would sigh and, 'sorry no vacancies at the moment.' Some would say, 'I'm not signing that, I don't know you'. I had one space left so I went into the undertakers and asked, 'Do you have any vacancies for the living? I'm looking for a job. Maybe I could make tea for the grieving families.' They were so nice and said, 'I'm sorry we have no vacancies, at the moment.'

Another day I went into the chemist where I saw a notice in the window, OTT experience necessary. I thought that was about computers, I said I don't have any OTT experience and am willing to learn. They sent me a lovely letter saying they were sorry; I didn't get the job.

Every now and then you would have to go to the dole office for an interview to see how you were getting on job hunting.

One day I went up and she said, 'We are going to assign you a case officer'. I felt like a criminal. Every now and then you

would have to appear for a meeting. 'Good morning Deirdre, how are you getting on? Have you found a job yet?' 'I've tried, no luck, do you think it could be my age?' I said. Another time, I went for a job, gave a good interview, I thought. Got a letter the following week, I'm sorry...

The case officer said, 'Why don't you ask them why you didn't get the job? I was feeling bad enough, I didn't want to know. I got a letter before Christmas to go down to the dole office. When I went down the man said, 'What are you doing here?,' I told him about the letter, he said they sent another letter, it never arrived. The fellow beside me said, 'I jumped out of bed to come here.'

Thank God, that's all behind me now. I'm an O.A.P and love it. I'm in Klear and doing two courses; a creative writing course and a course on how to use your smartphone. There is a great choice of courses here. Maybe take the first step and make new friends too.

Alone

By Annette Rogers

I put you on a pedestal, he said

But that was where you left me, I said

I worked hard for the family, he said

You played hard too but not with me

I was on my pedestal,

Alone, I said



Finalist DCU Library Creative Writing Competition 2024

‘Coileáin ar Díol’

By Paddy Littleton

Chuir úinéir fógra sa ghairdín ‘Coileáin ar díol’. Tháinig buachaill beag ag fiosrú fúthu.

‘Gabh mo leithscéal, cén praghas atá ar na coileáin?’

‘€15 duitse, a dhuine óig’ a d’fhreagair sí.

Bhí cuma bhrónach ar an mbuachaill. Ní raibh ach 5 euro aige ach dúirt an t-úinéir go raibh cead aige féachaint ar na coileáin ar aon nós.

Bhí áthas an domhain ar an mbuachaill nuair a chonaic sé 5 choileán áille.

‘Dúirt mo Dhaidí go bhfuil cos thinn ag an gceann sin.’

‘Tá, faraor’ arsa an t-úinéir.

‘Bhuel, sin an ceann atá ag teastáil uaim, agus muna bhfuil mo dhóthain airgid agam, íocfaidh mé píosa beag gach seachtain.’

‘Beidh coiscéim bhacaí i gcónaí aici’ arsa an t-úinéir.

‘Tá a fhios agam’ arsa an buachaill agus é ag tarraingt aníos taobh dá bhríste chun a chos bhacach a thaispeáint.

‘Níl mise in ann siúl go maith ach an oiread’ arsa an buachaill, ‘agus tá a fhios agam go mbeidh go leor grá agus cabhair ag teastáil ón gcoileán seo. Níl an saol éasca le cos bhacach.’

Leis sin dúirt an t-úinéir, ‘Tá fáilte romhat an coileán a thógáil mar tá a fhios agam go dtabharfaidh tú baile maith di, agus níl aon airgead ag teastáil uaim.’



A heart-warming story from Paddy Littleton, Ardrang an Déardaoin, about a puppy with a limp being given a good home by a little boy who also walked with a limp.

Patrick notes that it can be difficult to go outside one's comfort zone and join a group of people for the purpose of improving a skill. This is how he felt when he went to KLEAR to improve his Irish. He found great support and camaraderie. He found the teacher engaging and enthusiastic. He says it was worth the adventure. Littleton

Comhtharlú

By Sheenagh Geoghan

Maidin Dé Céadaoin go luath i mí an Mhárta i mbliana thóg mé an traein luath ó Chill Chainnigh go Baile Átha Cliath chun dul chun cara liom a fheiceáil agus é ag tabhairt cainte san RHA maidir lena thaispeántas ann. Ní raibh an chaint ar siúl go dtí a 5 agus mar sin bhí sé ar intinn agam dul chuig taispeántais eile timpeall Bhaile Átha Cliath. Thosaigh mé, mar a dhéanaim go minic, ag an áit is fearr liom sa chathair, stiúideo Francis Bacon i nGailearaí Hugh Lane. Agus mé ag siúl timpeall an stiúideo bhuaill mé le bean dheas darb ainm Maureen. Rinneamar gáire agus dúirt Maureen go raibh a garáiste i bhfad níos slachtmhaire ná an stiúideo seo agus bhí sí ag smaoineamh ar conas a d'fhéadfadh Francis Bacon aon obair a dhéanamh ann, rinne mé magadh agus dúirt mé nach raibh mo stiúideo ró-éagsúil leis. Timpeall leath uair an chloig ina dhiaidh sin bheartaigh mé dul le haghaidh caife sa chaifé agus bhí Maureen sa chaifé agus arís bhí muid ag caint agus dúirt sí liom go raibh sí ag fanacht le grúpa daoine a thagann le chéile chun labhairt as Gaeilge agus go raibh múinteoir iontach acu darb ainm Honor. Thart ar dheich nóiméad ina dhiaidh sin thosaigh an chuid eile den ghrúpa ag teacht isteach, an múinteoir, Honor, san áireamh. Dúirt mé gurbh aoibhinn liom é dá mbeadh a leithéid de ghrúpa i dTiobraid Árann agus dúirt Honor go mbuaileann siad go léir le chéile ar Zoom de ghnáth. Níorbh fhéidir liom a chreidiúint nuair a thairg Honor na sonraí a chur ar aghaidh agus dúirt sí go

mbeadh fáilte mhór romham a bheith páirteach sa rang. Sin é an scéal álainn faoin gcaoi ar aimsigh mé an grúpa iontach seo. Mar a dúirt Maureen, is múinteoir iontach í Honor, ar fheabhas i ndáiríre, ag réachtáil na gcruinnithe Zoom; déanann sí gach rud chomh suimiúil, reatha agus tarraingteach. Tá an-áthas orm go bhfuil an grúpa iontach seo agus an múinteoir iontach, cineálta, foighneach agus an-aireach seo, Honor, aimsithe agam.

Sheenagh Geoghan relates how she found out about the Irish Zoom class by pure chance when she met Maureen Bourke in the Hugh Lane Gallery. Sheenagh was putting in time visiting the Francis Bacon Studio and Maureen was waiting for her Irish group. As a result of Maureen's enthusiasm, by the time the rest of the group arrived, Sheenagh had signed up for the Zoom class.

Dé Luain – an lá is ansa liom

By Mary Russell

Bíonn daoine idir dhá chomhairle faoin Luan – tá deireadh leis an deireadh seachtaine agus caithfear filleadh ar ais ar an ngnáthshaol arís. Deir roinnt daoine go dtagann mothú míshuaimhneach orthu oíche Dé Domhnaigh agus an Luan ag druidim leo. Tuigim é sin mar mhothaigh mé an rud céanna ó am go h-am agus mé ciaptha ag an obair. Tá malairt an scéil agam anois agus tá aithne agam ar dhream áirithe a thabharfadh ard-mholadh don chéad lá den tseachtain chomh maith. Nuair a bhímid le chéile bímid in ann éalú ó bhuairt an tsaoil i ndea-chomhluadair agus is mór an leas é sin.

An chúis a dtaitníonn maidin Dé Luain chomh mór linn ná, sin an lá a bhfreastalaímid ar ár Rang Gaeilge i KLEAR.

Tá sé deacair cur síos a dhéanamh ar cé chomh hiontach is atá an rang sin. Caithfear bheith i láthair chun léirthuiscint iomlán a fháil ar an eispéireas ach déanfaidh mé iarracht blaiseadh beag a thabhairt duit.

I dtús báire tá múinteoir den scoth i mbun an ranga. Cuireann sí fáilte is fiche roimh chách agus tugann sí faoi ndeara pearsantacht gach duine. Déanann sí a lán ullmhúcháin chun go mbeadh an uile dhuine ar a suaimhneas.

Tosaíonn an mhaidin le sórt bristeoir oighir.....

Cúrsaí Reatha, Nuacht, Cúrsaí Spóirt, Drámaí, Scannáin, “Aon scéal ag éinne???”” agus bíonn i gcónaí, mar grúpa fíor-shuimiúil atá ann le go leor smaointe agus tuairimí

Scaiptear bileog ansin agus tugaimid faoi léamh agus éisteacht le hábhar an lae.

Smaoiníonn ár meantóir ar ábhair shuimiúla a spreagann comhrá agus díospóireacht. Baintear úsáid as gach meán chun an Ghaeilge a fhorbairt agus a bhláthú. Uaireanta tugtar cuireadh d’áionna spreagúla teacht isteach chugainn.

Brisimid amach i ngrúpaí beaga tar éis tamaill agus bíonn tú in aice daoine éagsúla gach seachtain. Tá flúirse eolais ar fáil sa seomra chomh maith leis an nGaeilge féin.

Maireann an rang uair go leith agus bíonn drogall orainn imeacht. Is gasta a théann an t-am thart nuair a bhíonn tú faoi lán seoil. Tá an t-ádh orainn, áfach, go bhfuil deis againn leanúint ar aghaidh ag caint agus ag foghlaim sa chaife gleoite taobh amuigh.

Ar bhonn cóimheasa a oibríonn gach rud agus tá cairdeas agus suim dílis go láidir eadrainn. Tugtar le tuiscint dúinn gur pobal muid sa rang seo agus mar sin seasaimid lena chéile bíodh sé maith nó olc.

Ach fan, níl ann ach leath an scéil.....

Gluaiseann an Rang Gaeilge taobh amuigh den seomra ranga anois is arís freisin, dár ndóigh ag baint úsáide as ár gcúpla focal i gcónaí.

Eagraítear dúinn turasanna go suíomhanna spéisiúla mar shampla Iarsmalann an Ghorta Mhóir, Gairdín na Lus, Reilig Glas Naíonníl aon teorainn leis an liosta. Taitníonn sé go mór linn dul go dtí an phictiúrlann agus an amharclann nuair a fhógraíonn siad taispeántais i nGaeilge.

Bíonn Lá Spraoi againn go minic, go háirithe um Nollaig agus i rith Sheachtain na Gaeilge. Arís eagraíonn an múinteoir gach rud.....Tráth na gCeist, ceol agus amhráin, rince, sólaistí srl.

Nuair a bhíonn lá breithe mór ag duine éigin is cúis cheiliúrtha don rang go léir é.

Mar a tharla, bhí seachtain an-sásúil againn díreach anois..... Lá Spraoi i Halla an Clasach Dé Luain seo caite, agus breithlá mór (nócha) san áireamh agus ansin, Dé Céadaoin léirigh Amharclann na Péacóige aistriúchán nua Gaeilge ar thraigéide Ghréagach Aeschylus, Na Peirsigh / Persians. Deis an-chorraitheach a bhí ann chun lán na súl a bhaint as leagan saibhir nua den dráma is sine san Eoraip sa teanga labhartha is sine san Eoraip, an Ghaeilge, (le fotheidil i mBéarla). Bhí slua mór daltaí ó KLEAR ann faoi chúram ár n-eagraí.

Murach na Ranganna Gaeilge agus ár múinteoir díograiseach ní bheadh na heispéiris sin againne.

Sin thuas roinnt de na cúiseanna go dtaitníonn An Luan chomh mór sin liom agus go dtéim isteach go KLEAR le hardú coirp agus meanman gach seachtain.

Tá áit do gach duine sa rang agus páirt le glacadh pé slí a n-oireann dóibh. Níl aon bhrú ná strus i gceist agus mana an mhúinteora i gcónaí ná”Ná bí buartha”

Nach méanar dúinn go bhfuil an rang seo ar siúl i KLEAR, go bhfuil sár-múinteoir againn agus go bhfuil togha daoine ag freastal le chéile?

Mary Russell, Ardrang an Luain, explains why Monday morning is no longer a source of dread for her! Mary enjoys the cut and thrust of her rang Gaeilge where we first sort out the current

issues of the day and then move on to a specific topic. There's always plenty to learn from the others in the class, who are so knowledgeable on so many topics. When the class time is up, the groups spill over into the 'gorgeous' coffee shop and continue the discussion. Mary also enjoys the special guests who come from time to time and trips and visits to places of interest. Recently we had both our 'Lá Spraoi' in Clasach in Clontarf (quiz, singing, dancing and lunch) and a visit to the theatre to watch the oldest play in Europe being performed in Europe's oldest language. All in all, Mary feels that far from dreading Monday morning her spirits are lifted when she comes in to KLEAR and shares time and knowledge with the best of people.

Cúpla Focal Faoi KLEAR

By Gerard Lockhart

Tá áthas an domhain orm an cúpla focal seo a scríobh.

Táim ag freastal ar Klear le trí bliana anois.

Caithfidh mé a rá gur breá liom an áit. Cén fáth?

I mo bharúil féin ceapaim gurb í Klear an áit is fearr chun Gaeilge a fhoghlaim.

Tá na daoine go léir an-chairdiúil agus bíonn a lán spraoi againn sna ranganna.

Níl aon strus ná brú ag baint leis.

Bíonn na ranganna an-suimiúil agus bíonn na bileoga den chéad scoth freisin.

Nuair a bhíonn aon rud ar siúl as Gaeilge cosúil le scannán nó dráma téann an rang chuige.

An bhliain seo caite chuaigh muid chuig Gairdín na Lus agus rinneamar turas as Gaeilge.

Nuair a thosaigh mé ag freastal ar Klear ní raibh ach focal nó dhó agam.

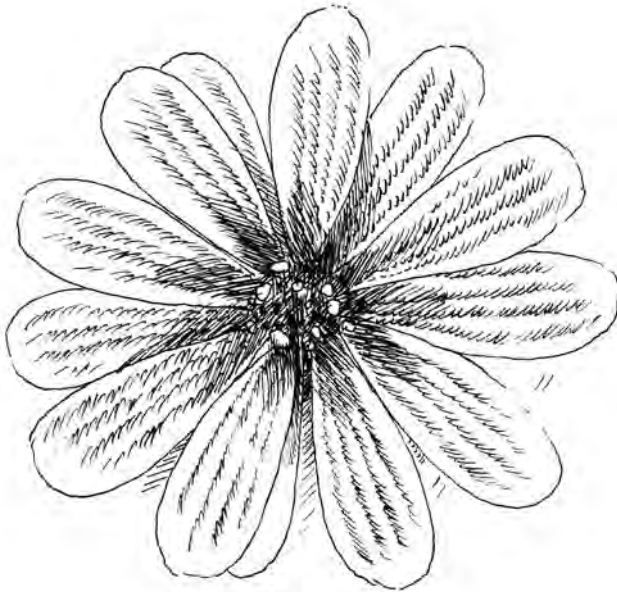
Le déanaí bhí mé in ann an scrúdú cainte Theastas Eorpach na Gaeilge meánleibhéal B1 a dhéanamh agus caithfidh mé a rá gur bheag an fhadhb a bhí agam leis.

Tar éis na ranganna bíonn tú in am dul isteach sa siopa caife agus cupán tae a fháil.

Tá an bia an-bhlasta freisin.

Gerard Lockhart, Meánrang na Máirt, is very pleased with his progress in Irish over the last three years in KLEAR. He even felt confident enough to tackle the TEG (European Certificate in Irish) oral exam at level B1 (and he achieved a very high score: comhghairdeas leat, a Ghearóid!)

After class he enjoys the tasty food in the coffee shop. He also enjoys going on trips, like to the Botanic gardens or to the cinema or theatre.



The Empty Man

By Gerard Loughnane

God! It was an awful night, wind bowling and growling down Moore St, then screaming like a thousand banshees, as it meets up with the wind on Henry St. The chimney pots come crashing down, bringing a dozen slates or more with them, smashing onto the footpath. Hailstones, big enough to fill a teaspoon, lash against the doors of Arnott's department store, and that's where I come in, or rather stay out, on Holy Thursday night. Here I am crouched at the entrance trying to get a bit of shelter from the elements, with Trinity, a lovely old fox who asks no questions.

Living rough is not for everyone and this night is beyond unbelievable. The cold is penetrating my very soul, my two feet are like lumps of ice, the rest of my body isn't much better.

How did I arrive at this point in my late seventies?

I'm not sure if I have the energy to tell you where it all started and when it went over the cliff. Working in England in the 70s was fantastic, with no end of work in construction and no end of money to spend on wine, women, and song. When you're in your early 20s, money burns a hole in your pocket. Friday night is hell raising night in London. I wasn't interested in alcohol but that all changed very quickly. Going to a pub in Shepherd's Bush with a group of lads from the building site, I was asked what I was going to drink. My reply was lemonade. "What kind of man are you with your lemonade?" I was embarrassed and I said quickly, "Just joking, I'll have a pint of beer." "That will make a man out of you." Then a chorus of laughter.

I thought the beer tasted foul. Drinking it on an empty stomach was a bad idea. Ten minutes later I was getting rid of it faster than I drank

it. If that was going to make a man of me, forget it. One week later, I repeated the same carry on, but that night I was getting a taste for it. Of course, I was told it was an acquired taste by some of the hard drinkers. Six months later, I was hitting the ground running, I was a fully- fledged hard drinker. I wrapped myself around alcohol like a long-lost lover. God, it tasted so good, so what if I had a hangover, it was worth it. I loved to go into the pub and look at the different array of bottles, the beautiful dark brown rum, mountain stream clear gin, amber coloured whiskey. Oh, so nice. Not forgetting my new friend, the pint.

Then I met a lovely girl who thought I came from heaven. Big mistake! It is amazing when you are young, fall in love and can't see the other people's faults or your own. My first love was booze and for a while I wavered. I got married, tried to be an ideal husband, but to no avail. I was told by my mother-in-law that I had a drink problem. My reply was, "You are so right, I haven't got enough money to buy alcohol and run a house." She was not impressed. I told her I could handle it. She said quietly go to AA. "Who me? Don't make me laugh, a crowd of people who can't enjoy a drink and don't want anyone else to enjoy one either. Oh my God what is the world coming to."

Two children later and alcohol was still to the fore of my life; missing days at work, staying out at night, not particular who I drank with, short of money for the housekeeping. I had more time for my so-called friends than my home life. Ignoring my kids, forgetting birthdays, not playing with them, no stories read to them, Falling asleep at the dinner table. One Christmas Day, I went face down on the lovely dinner. Things were getting out of hand. Helen, my wife, who normally saw no wrong in what I did, reminded me that my behaviour was disgusting.

Then came the day that tore the heart and soul out of the family. No money, no drink, no food in the house. Helen, my lovely wife, went out to borrow money from her mother. I was desperate, dying for a drink, then I saw my six-year-old daughter's Piggy Bank. There must be money in there. I gave it a shake, I am saved, or was I? I grabbed a brass candlestick and knocked the head off the piggy bank. Far better if it was my head that landed on the kitchen floor. Money fell out and I was just about to pick it up, when a lovely soft voice from behind me said, "Dad what are you doing?" I was saved and lost in five seconds. The words turned the blood in my veins into ice, all the fires in hell won't warm them.

I left home, never to return, with tears in my eyes. That was the last time I saw little Ella, and the last time I cried out loud. I have been crying inside ever since that fateful day.

After that I had no responsibilities. I just continued working and moving around the country, pubs, crack-that wasn't crack, just emptiness inside that all the beer in the brewery couldn't satisfy. Did I need help? Yes. Did I take it? No.

I longed to go home but I couldn't face my family. I just continued moving, my health getting worse, age moving on, can't stop the clock. I had enough of the UK. I came across to Dublin for more construction work, then disaster struck. I slipped on an icy floor and wrecked my back, and my working days were over.

What's happening to me and what's going to happen to me? Nothing good was the short answer and worse was to follow. I was now suffering from incontinence. My water department was in trouble. No cure for that, just wear a nappy like a baby. Oh God! Where did it all go haywire?

I have been living rough for the last four or five years, hostels don't have much time for you when you wet their beds, who can blame them.

This is where Trinity comes in. Ah, a lovely fox who resides in the grounds of Trinity College during the day and hangs around with me at night. A bit of a come down when you think of it. I smell like an open sewer and look worse. I just got a glimpse of myself in the shop window, when there was a flash of lightning and what I saw nearly stopped my incontinence. Matted Gray hair and beard merging together, eyes half closed and teeth missing, a threadbare old suit that I found in a bin, an old overcoat coat that acted as a blanket and a coat in turn. If the devil arrived and took a look at me, he'd say forget it, we're full up

I wouldn't mind a drink of whiskey now. That's amazing. I haven't had a drink since I got the water department problem. Too late, too late, it's all too late. Oh, how, if I could live my life all over again, it wouldn't matter who would say, have a pint, it will make a man out of you. Real men don't have to drink alcohol and can cry.

"Dad, what are you doing?" keeps echoing through my head time and time again, never ending. I can see my mother's silvery hair and my father with his spectacles perched on his nose. I can see Ella now and she says it doesn't matter about the money, just come home dad, you are still my dad. Sweet Jesus what have I done, if hell is worse than this I will be surprised. The unspeakable emptiness and the loneliness is unbearable.

What's it all about? It's time I said goodbye.



Finalist DCU Library Creative Writing Competition 2024

The Pictures

By Wes Gahan

When I was seven years old, I went to the pictures with my Ma and my brothers and sisters. We went to see the Rocky film in the Savoy cinema. The place was full with loads of us there, and it was great. The film was exciting and everyone there was loving it.

Rocky was fighting and for a minute I thought he was really getting killed, so I jumped up off my chair and start roaring at Rocky to kill the other fella. Rocky started fighting back and he won the fight. My brother-in-law pulled me back down on the chair and said to me, "Sit down it's only a film, take it easy."

When we were finished, we all went for dinner in McDonald's. It was a great day out for us all.

A Man's Best Friend

By Peter Murphy

Who would have thought that two small animals could mean so much to me, my two best friends, Cody and Gizmo.

They are so loyal to me, they do not complain, and they cheer me up when I am down. They make me smile with the little things that they do. Simple things like rolling around on their backs in their bed at the same time, or their reactions when they begin to jump around when they see me holding their leads to go out for a walk.

When I get up in the morning, they know it's me by the sound of my footsteps. They bark and sniff at the door waiting to greet me. They have a great sense of smell. They know when I am sad, and to cheer me up, they come over to me and lick my face and get under my arms, one on each side, as if to say we are here.

I love how, although brothers, their little personalities are so different. Gizmo, the dominant one, takes control as he loves his food and is a lot bigger than Cody. Where Cody is quiet and reserved, he likes his own space and playing with his ball all day.

They both love going for their walk in the park to meet up with their friends. I love the excitement and human-like smiles on their faces when they reach the park and see them. They are like two children running around rolling in the freshly cut grass. When it's time to go home after playing they can sense it. It's almost as if they never want to leave and make it difficult when trying to put their leads back on.

They really mean a lot to me from seeing them grow up from tiny puppies to now being fourteen years old and less able. They still have their cheeky, happy puppy faces like they had when I first laid my eyes on them. Their fur is turning grey and their eyesight is not as good, but to me they are my same best friends.

I know the day will come when they will no longer be with me like everyone in life. It's nice knowing they don't have the same thoughts as we humans, living every day as it comes. I cherish every day I spend with them.

Dogs are a man's best friend.



Goodbye

By Clare Hayes

They never even said goodbye

And for years I just wondered why

We spent many years of our life together

Running knee high through the purple heather

Our minds were filled with childish things

We didn't know what life lessons brings'

But just in a flash they were all just gone

No word. No goodbye or even a song

Is Aoibhinn Liom Klear

By Anna Martin

Is aoibhinn liom an t-am a chaithim in KLEAR ag foghlaim Gaeilge le Honor. Is múinteoir iontach í. Tá sí foighneach, cairdiúil agus cuireann sí a lán oibre sna ceachtanna.

Tá an t-atmaisféar i KLEAR mar an gcéanna. Tá an fhoireann ansin cairdiúil agus deas cabhrach. Tá na daoine san oifig chomh foighneach agus iad ag déileáil le cuid de na daoine ag teacht isteach ag cur na gceisteanna céanna arís is arís. Tá mise ciontach as an rud sin.

Agus na hábhair atá le fáil sa Klear tá siad go hiontach agus chomh difriúil agus chomh spéisiúil! Rinne mé staidéar ar gharraíodóireacht, ar an bhfón cliste, agus ar ealaíon na blianta ó shin. Tá sé deas bheith ag meascadh le na daoine eile

Agus is féidir leat bia álainn a fháil sa chaifé. Agus an iliomad bia le fáil tá sé go hiontach. Agus níl sé costasach.

Beir bua Áine Ní Mháirtín.

Anna Martin, who attends Thursday's Ardrang, is enjoying her course and finds the atmosphere in KLEAR great and very friendly. She praises the patience of the office staff and is amazed at the range of subjects on offer, she has sampled gardening, smart phones and art. She loves meeting new people and enjoys the lovely food in the coffee shop.



Léann

By Paddy Glavin

Na daltaí ag rámháocht ar an mhuir chiúin
As Cuan an Daingin
Go himeall na spéire, allas ag titim.
Caint 'is gáire san aer
Nuair a phreab deilf léim suas thar an mbád.
Stealladh, spré uisce glioscarnach ar dhaoine
Ionadh agus gáire ina súile.
An múinteoir ag machnamh ar an fharraige.
An léann siad aon rud?

Paddy

A reflection, in verse, by Paddy Glavin,
Ardrang an Luain, on learning. Here we see students rowing on a
calm sea, setting out from Dingle harbour when a dolphin jumps
over the boat splashing and spraying sparkling water over them
as wonder and laughter fill their eyes. The teacher is studying
the sea. Are the students reading anything?

Learning Irish in KLEAR

By Áine O' Neill

Hi there!

I never thought I'd be learning Irish in KLEAR at this stage of my life, it just happened accidentally. I had been going to Irish conversation for a short time before Covid in Donnycarney, but didn't return as the day didn't suit me. Then, I was in Coolock Civic Centre renewing my free travel card and my husband picked up a flyer for Klear, offering a variety of courses. I saw Irish for beginners, so I decided if I got a place I'd give it a go. I went on a waiting list and eventually got a place.

Firstly, I got a very friendly welcome from the receptionists while I filled in forms, and I have loved every moment there ever since. The course is all about conversation: getting notes on how to participate in general daily conversation. Showing how words are phonetically pronounced, which I love and find invaluable. This course also includes videos, songs and games all in Irish, having fun while learning our language.

Finally, I think Honor, our teacher, plays a major role in making this course so enjoyable. She is so dedicated to helping me enjoy learning Gaeilge again in a very structured and positive way, leaving all negativity about learning Irish in the past, where it belongs.

Many thanks to all involved in setting up this course.

Áine O' Neill. Bunrang

Meán Fómhair Seo Caite agus Meán Fómhair Seo Chugainn

By Maura Smyth

Meán Fómhair seo caite bhí mé i líne i scoil Klear. Bhí mé ag clárú do ranganna chun Gaeilge a fhoghlaim. Ní raibh aon fhios agam go mbeadh am iontach agam ag feabhsú mo chuid Gaeilge. Tá mo chomhscóláirí an-chairdiúil agus tá an múinteoir, Honor, thar barr. Bíonn a rang chomh suimiúil i gcónaí agus bíonn a lán rudaí le foghlaim ann.

Bíonn turais againn go rialta chuig an bpictiúrlann agus chuig an amharclann mar aon le tráth na gceist agus imeachtaí cultúrtha. Chomh maith leis sin tá féith an ghrinn sa mhúinteoir, Honor, mar aon le paisean don Ghaeilge.

Is mór an trua dom gur ghá dom seasamh sa líne chun clárú arís i mí Meán Fómhair seo chugainn.

Gan dabht at bith beidh mé ag barr na líne beag beann ar an aimsir.



Maura Smyth, Meánrang na Máirt, reflects on queuing to register last September, unaware of the enjoyable time she would have with her very friendly fellow students both inside and outside of the classroom. Regardless of the weather she'll be at the top of the queue next September!

Haunted by the Shade

By Annette Rogers

For Olive

Haunted by the shade of your protection
the feeling that you're always there.
I turn quickly to see you BUT you're not there.

You, who believe in me
And everything I said or did.
I turn quickly to see you BUT you're not there.

I miss the faith you have in me
Whether I was right or wrong.

Who believes in me now
Who will cast a shadow of protection
Shielding me from me
I turn quickly BUT you're not there.

I cannot see.
I turn quickly BUT you're not there.

A Spring Poem

By Anne McManus

Spring is the season of growth,
Not only in the ground
But also in the sky.
As the baby chicks start to fly
Up into the sky so high,
So off they go chirping away
On this fine day,
Their mums feed them where they lay.

Trees start to bud in the warm mud,
Daffodils, tulips and lots more,
Start to bloom at your front door.
Evenings get longer,
making you feel stronger.
With the chill gone away,
Right through the day.



Brutus the Bear

By Ben Pope

On a hunting trip in 1937, in the green lands and forested countryside of Montana, USA, a couple of friends named Daniel and Jess caught interest in bigger hunting trophies. The thrill of stalking, killing, skinning and then cooking their prey was electric to both parties. Daniel and Jess set up camp by a river, close to both water and a frequent source of salmon, when caught fresh, was delicate and delicious. Although a reliable supply of food, the catch was easy, unsatisfying and left the couple discontent. Daniel suggested: 'Why don't we go bigger?' to which Jesse immediately hopped on the idea.

It began with the elk, to which although a powerful creature generally did not approach humans and was oblivious to a distant man with a rifle. While Daniel and Jess hunted for game, thrill and trophy, they were fond of naming their prey before ending it. This particular elk was named Stanley and met its end painlessly from a bullet to the skull and through it. The duo was overjoyed with the kill as well as the taste of the fresh meat.

The elk, being so large, had the couple fed for weeks. When coupled with fresh herbs and mushrooms, allowed the two to naturally become comfortable, letting loose and then took a break still on the high of the kill. While Daniel and Jess knew the country, its inhabitants and surroundings, they let ego cause forgetfulness of another predator.

It was hibernation season for the brown bears, to which most (known as Kodiaks) had an active supply of salmon, nuts, berries and honeycomb, which caused them to hoard enough food as was

comfortable. There was one problem and an example of Daniel and Jesse's ego blinding reality. The Kodiak bear was located several 100 miles north of them, but there were still brown bears around, who were also not satisfied with fish. These were known as the Grizzlies.

The grizzly bear was indeed smaller than the Kodiak, however was horrendously more territorial, aggressive and above all hungry. Daniel and Jess finished the last bit of fresh fish as the elk, by now two weeks since the kill, was out of stock. The couple caught wind of an approaching animal, sounding large, but they were unwary of anything but another kill. They noticed a large grizzly, male and calm. To their excitement, Daniel and Jess got into position, rifles at arms and had their target in sight. Little were they aware of, but the grizzlies skull can endure shotgun shells and shrapnel, never mind a less powerful rifle. Daniel fired his shot hit the grizzly at the shoulder, which only enraged it.

Moments prior, they had named the bear Brutus, to which it suited, as the brutality of an angry, hungry grizzly is unmatched. Brutus rushed the couple with terrifying speed, which is almost equivalent to a speeding car, or at least it felt like so. The bear swiped Jess with its paw, crushing his skull instantly. Next Daniel, who was panicking, was caught by the bears mass, and then floored with a broken back. The frightening fact about Grizzlies is that they don't try to kill their prey, they eat straight away, dead or alive. Brutus began gnawing on Daniel's stomach, causing his internal organs to rupture and blood to flow out of his non-existent torso. It took around 10 minutes for Daniel's body to shut down, which to him felt like 10 hours, as the bear then moved on to Jess, fearing for its hibernation. While the couple met a terrible end, fate was brought upon them and the predator swiftly became prey. There is always a bigger fish, but the salmon was not big enough for the couple nor Brutus.

The Kraken

By Ciaran Page

As she sat down alone in the house she contemplated the sound of the sea roaring. In a strange way it was comforting to hear the sound of the ocean all alone in the house, like a wild companion to keep her company, 'Maybe I should stroll on the beach' she thought to herself.

'It might cheer me up from the solemn mood I'm in'. But walking or strolling on the beach the unexpected occurred to put it mildly, something caught the corner of her eye of what can only be described as a sea kraken, a mythological creature of a bygone era astonishingly seemed to be prowling in the breaking of the waves not too far from the shore, close enough that she backed off from the water's edge.

She realized she wasn't afraid though and started feeling a strange bizarre attraction to whatever was lurking in the depths. She wanted to investigate more as she was so sick of this life and thought maybe she belonged out there with the kraken solemnly to herself.

All of a sudden she stripped naked and began wading into the water, strangely excited by the closing kraken, but she wasn't afraid, it all made sense now, just her and the sea creature.

The creature shifted and snarled as she approached, but this did not deter her.

She plowed forward within reach of the tentacles, one of them wrapping around her leg, another tentacle wrapped around her waist, another clutched her arm, 'this is where I belong' she thought.

She surrendered to the beast's will and began to sink slowly into the murky depths of the fading light with each passing second, suddenly she awoke as if from a dream, her senses popping and alive, she was at the waters' edge, confused and exhilarated.

She was covered in seaweed and slime looking like a horror show then crawled onto the dunes naked and alone, 'what happened' she wondered but could not remember how or why she was here.

She glanced behind her and out of the waves she thought she saw something breaching the water beyond, each breath now felt invigorating, her senses feeling one with the surroundings, a renewed sense of meaning and purpose filling her veins, it all made sense now, 'this is my life's call, this is who I am'.

Rebirth and reborn from the abyss she rose, nothing was going to stop her now, a force of nature pushing through her, she ploughed forward naked but unashamed.

She entered an old beach house and there was a solitary chair in the middle of an empty room.

'Come sit' a voice said 'this is your destiny' she heard emanating from somewhere, and as she sat an apparition appeared in the form of an angel, a vision as clear as the day. She fell forward, as night panned into day, this was her calling and disappeared on wings of triumph never to return again.

Mo Chúpla Focal

By Joan Power

Thosaigh mé le ‘cúpla focal’ ach, anois tá cúpla focal eile agam! Agus, tá cúpla cara eile agam freisin. Mar bharr air sin tá a lán línte gáire ar m’aghaidh. Míle buíochas le Honor, ár múinteoir (Is í Cillian Murphy na múinteoirí í!)

Joan Power, Meánrang Zoom, describes how her initial ‘cúpla focal’ expanded and now she has a few more words, a few more friends and a lot more laughter lines on her face!



Meánrang na Máirt

By Louis Colley

Nuair a bhí mé ní b'óige, bhraith mé bród as mo theanga féin i gcónaí, go háirithe agus mé thar lear. Dá bhrí sin, nuair a d'éirigh mé as obair agus am agam chinn mé ar an Ghaeilge a fhoghlaim. Ní raibh ach Gaeilge na scoile, blianta ó shin, agam.

Bhí an t-ádh orm gur bhuail mé le daoine a raibh an dearcadh céanna acu agus thosaigh mé i gColáiste Dhúlaigh agus ansin bhogamar go KLEAR. Ón tús bhí an múinteoir an-chumasach agus an chuma uirthi nach bhfuil aon deireadh lena cuid foighne. De réir a chéile tháinig feabhas orm. Anois tá mé sa mheánrang. N'fheadar an mbeidh mé líofa go deo ach bainim taitneamh as agus tá mé tar éis bualadh le daoine áille ar an mbealach.

An sprioc atá agam ná go mbeidh mé in ann an nuacht ar TG4 a thuiscint.

Louis Colley from Meánrang na Máirt describes how the pride he always had in his native language led him to meeting up with like-minded people and classes first in Coláiste Dhúlaigh and then Klear. He's working his way up the ladder now and his aim is to be able to understand the news on T.G 4

Mo Thuairimí Faoi KLEAR

By Valerie Hehir

Tháinig mé go Klear cúpla bliain ó shin agus tá mé ag foghlaim na Gaeilge ann. Is í Honor mo mhúinteoir agus tá sí go hiontach. Tá go leor daoine i mo rang agus tá siad an-chairdiúil agus cabhrach freisin. Is aoibhinn liom an coláiste: táim ag baint taitnimh as. Tá a lán daoine ag obair ann agus tá an t-atmaisféar ar fheabhas. Tá caifé an-deas ann agus déanann siad bia an-bhlasta, agus níl sé ródhaor. Tá mé an-sásta a bheith ann.

Valerie Hehir, Meánrang an Déardaoin, is very happy with KLEAR, she enjoys the classes and finds her co-students friendly and helpful. She thinks everyone in KLEAR contributes to an excellent atmosphere and she has a particular word of praise for the tasty and reasonably priced food in the lovely coffee shop!

Harvest Moon Rising

By Anne Newman

We arrived at the beach as the sun was setting in the western sky. We already had our togs on, so it was a quick undressing and we headed for the deep blue sea. We weren't the only ones with the idea of a sunset swim.

The sun had now set, and the clouds were fiery red, as they picked up the last rays of the now gone sun. The deep blue water was cold, but we were used to it and slowly swam out towards the buoy with great anticipation. As we swam, the distant street lights started turning on one by one, as the sky grew darker. We turned to the deep blue sky in the east. Nothing yet, but it had to happen as it always did. Regular as clockwork.

Our eyes were now used to the dark and we could see the distant horizon, the line between the sea and the sky. Slowly, a wee sliver of pink appeared on the horizon, and slowly, little by little the moon freed itself from the dark blue water and rose, climbing higher above the horizon. We bobbed with the waves, looking in wonder at the rose-coloured harvest supermoon.

The mission accomplished, we swam back to the people's shore along the golden pink sea path made by the reflection of the rising moon.

We got dressed quickly and sat on the rocks in our dry robes, delighted to have been swimming in the sea at the rising of the August harvest blue moon.



Rang Gaeilge ar Zoom

By Marie Treanor

I mó thuairim go bhfuil buntáistí ag baint le bheith ar Zoom. Táimid ábalta fanacht sa bhaile agus freastal ar an rang ó sheomra suí nó ón áiléar, nó ón gcistin nó ó áiteanna eile. Tá sé níos éasca do dhaoine atá ina gcónaí i bhfad ó Chill Barróg.

Ní bhuailimid leis an rang go pearsanta gach seachtain ach, mar athrú, bíonn cóisirí, cuairteanna ar áiteanna spéisiúla, ar an amharclann nó ar an iarsmalann gach cúig seachtaine nó mar sin de.



Ar dtús cuireann ár múinteoir, Honor, an rang i ngrúpaí beaga agus bíonn comhrá againn faoi rud ar bith ar feadh cúpla nóiméad agus ó am go ham bíonn cúpla focal Béarla caite isteach freisin! Ina dhiaidh sin bíonn cleachtaí as Gaeilge gan Stró . Tá siad an-suimiúil agus clúdaíonn siad go leor ábhar. Bíonn amhráin, dánta, agus scannáin againn go minic freisin
Is maith liom Gaeilge ar Zoom!

Marie Treanor, who attends the Wednesday Zoom class, writes of the advantages of attending classes on Zoom. She can follow the class from any room in the house and she notes that it's handy for people who don't live close to Kilbarrack. Although the class doesn't meet in person every week, we do meet up once every 5 weeks or so to visit the theatre, a museum or to have a party. Marie explains how Honor puts the class into 'breakout rooms' for a chat, followed by lessons from Gaeilge Gan Stró, which she finds deals with interesting topics. As well as that we do songs, poems and films. Marie is very pleased with Gaeilge on Zoom!

Papa Hemmingway's Mangoes

By Marie Clynes

We stole and feasted on fresh, sweet mangoes
In Earnesto's lush, green gardens at Finca Vigia.
The rich, sticky, sweet juice ran down my arm,
A straw hat sheltered me from the Cuban sun.
We stood by his preserved, beloved boat, 'Pilar',
Witness of his bountiful fishing trips on the Gulf.

Hemingway's chair, books, and whiskey bottles
Are now dusted against damp and termites.
A faded copy of 'The Old Man and the Sea'
Lies on the quiet desk, muse and writer silent.
Twenty years of rich harvest he had here.
Uniformed custodians guard the treasures.
Visitors gaze in through open windows,
Watched by ghosts from the heat outside.

Copyright Marie Clynes

My First Day at Work

By Ciaran Page

My first day back at work after more than a decade of absence.

That day was an interesting one. It all started with an Eircode and discovering I was working in Airside Business Park with a company called Ingersoll Rand, what a terrible name! I managed to nab the job with the help of an employment officer who got me the cleaning job in the offices of the American company. I thought I was working for Germans with a name like Ingersoll Rand.

On my first day I was full of doubts and hesitancy as I was not really sure of my work capabilities with Tourette's. Will it impede me? Will I have seizures? Will it take over and impede my ability to work?

On the bus ride I was anxious and nervous and probably had 2 or 3 panic attacks with the worry, but I persevered. By the time I got to the office I was a mess and ready to turn around and go home. "This is not worth it" I thought to myself, but I took one last leap of faith and I went in.

To my delight and surprise, once I started working it distracted and calmed me down, taking my mind off the anxiety and the useless worrying.

Coming home I was pleased, I had done an evening's work and I was more capable than I thought I was, to work through the Tourette's.

As I lay down in bed that night I nodded off peacefully and content with my days' work and had a dream of a redhead girl on skis who sped up a halfpipe and catapulted miles high, at the peak of her jump I thought "she's dead, no way will she land" but to my surprise she nailed the landing without hurting herself.

Later the next day, I pondered the dream and then the penny dropped

"I landed a leap of faith". The sudden insight into the dream gave me a little kick that I managed to overcome that little bit of adversity, a small life lesson for myself.

Departs

By Gerard Loughnane

The year is 1912.

The party is in full swing. Uncles, aunts, grandparents, neighbours etc., were all there to make it a happy occasion for Mary, who was emigrating. The musicians were doing their best to keep it jolly, but it was bittersweet. Nobody likes to see anybody emigrating, but the west of Ireland has been used to it for years.

Money had been collected by the family to buy a one-way ticket to New York. Mary's boyfriend was trying to look happy, sitting in the corner talking to Mary and stealing the odd kiss when her parents weren't looking. Mary was doing her best to keep the tears at Bay. By midnight most of the goodbyes were said. Next morning the last goodbyes were at the railway station. More tears and embraces, then the train pulled out with puffs of smoke polluting the air. Goodbyes are never nice and this occasion was no better due to the one way ticket for Mary. After several stops, the train eventually arrived in Cork and onto Cobh. Mary was excited to be going at last. She was conscious of the ticket in her pocket and was careful not to let her travel bag out of her sight. Cheer tears were welling up in her eyes and she was wondering was this the best decision. But anyway, she was here now and that was that.

Then the shock and horror! She was greeted with the words- sorry miss you have missed the boat- it has departed.

The name of the boat was the Titanic.

Affection

By Agnes Fearon

Growing up I never had many lasting friends until I was nearly twenty-one. That's when I met my friend Anita who became my best friend. We met forty years ago on the 13th February 1984. We clicked straight away. It's nothing romantic or anything like that but I do love her as my best friend. We 'get' each other.

Anita has helped me so many times throughout the years. I can tell her anything and I know it will not go further. When I looked after my Mam over the years and when she got dementia, Anita was there. I could talk to her and life was better. Anita was there when my Mam died. If I need someone to talk to, she's there.

On 13th February 2024, Anita and I went to the Westbury Hotel for Afternoon Tea to celebrate our forty years as friends. It was lovely. We made sure to get our money's worth. We got extra sandwiches and even had a full box to take home along with extra scones. 'Well, that's my lunch sorted for today', I told myself the following day. Then I suddenly realized I forgot there's meat in the sandwiches and this being Ash Wednesday I couldn't have them. 'Well, that's my lunch sorted for tomorrow. I'll have the scones today though'.

Sometimes I think 'Is it really forty years since Anita and I first met?'. I find it hard to believe but then when I think of all that we have been through together, I realize it truly is long. Anita is my rock. I've told her that and she feels the same.

Caring People

By Anne McManus

Oh, the emotions for a person looking after a sick family member

It's ever so sad looking at them getting more sick day by day

The final journey for patient and carer can be a very sad time

Oh, to be able to put a little smile on the sad faces of both of them

To try and make their final hours easy and give them a little comfort

You can sometimes see a little smile between them both

They touch each other's hands as the final moments draw ever so near

To think of the loving care patients get from our wonderful doctors, nurses, carers and volunteers

It helps ease family members worries knowing they will always be in good hands

How lucky we are to have such wonderful doctors, nurses, carers and volunteers

So take a few minutes to say thanks to all of them now and then



Act of Kindness

By Tamara Bundur

When I came to Poland for two years. Help me volunteer with food. I was with my friend. It was amazing to me. After the volunteer took us to Warsaw Airport.

We gave money but everyone refused. You don't know what situation you are in. I wanted to cry. I believe the world is built on good people.

Act of Kindness

By Volodymyr Mikhno

Yes, I did give an act of kindness. I was volunteer when the war began in Kharkiv. My employees and I were engaged in evacuation for one month.

We were transported from bad places here, 9000 people to the train station.

I am so pleased that we helped save many people.

Act of Kindness

By Svitlana Khomych

Half a year ago, I was walking by the sea with my friend. We saw a dog that was looking for its owners apparently. It was looking at all the passers-by. I asked them if it was their dog and they said no. When my friend helped me call the appropriate service and we explained the situation.

The service workers came and took the dog and hopefully found the owners as the dog had a chip on its neck. I was very happy that the dog did not stay on the street. Before that, we gave it food. We said goodbye to him.

If I do not do at least three things on day of kindness, I think my day has been wasted.

Act of Kindness

By Serhii Pshenychnyi

Sometimes I leave donations for the homeless.
Treated friends and acquaintances with money.
I love to read and buy books which I later give away.
When I was young, I donated blood for the sick.
My village is 20km from the city and I often give rides to those in need.

My hobby is keeping bees and I share my experience of keeping them. I have been living in Dublin for almost 2 years and I share my knowledge and experience with bees with local beekeepers. Now I want to make wax for window candles and send them to soldiers in Ukraine to fight the Russians.

Act of Kindness

By Mary Dyado

I was at the airport in Switzerland and I wanted a drink of water. I did not have any money. The man bought the water for himself and gave it to me. I was grateful to him for his help.

There is a war in my country. I help in collecting money for the Ukraine Army.

I like to bless my friends with money. I leave an envelope with money under the plate on the table and they cannot see it. It's a surprise for them.

Act of Kindness

By Mykailo Kostomarov

I found a bag with a laptop and a phone number on the train. I called and gave the bag back to the owners.

I like to give fishing rods and reels to people who want to catch fish but don't have one.

I like walking in the forest and clearing up the rubbish in the forest. I give books to my friends.

A lot of Irish people help me to learn and practice English.

Act of Kindness

By Halyna Tkachova

I love helping other people. When I lived in Ukraine I had a very good neighbour – Valentina.

If she went to another city to visit her daughter, I fed her dog and cat and watered her flowers.

When she felt sick, I bought her medicine in a pharmacy. When I was sick with Covid, she gave me food and medicine.

Very often she treated me to pies and delicious dishes. She has a small garden and I often help her in the garden.

Now that I am in Ireland, she looks after my apartment and waters my flowers.

Act of Kindness

By Lucas Eduardo Goncalves Xavier

Ode to Mam

Thanks for all the support you give me every day and for all the things you do for me. It helps me a lot every time in everything.

Just thank you for being you.

Act of Kindness

By Olha Mykhailiuk

Many years ago, I picked up a stray puppy. He was thrown into the street. He was freezing from the cold and he was hungry.

I brought him home. My mother did not allow him to live with us, but then she agreed. I was very happy.

I liked walking him and feeding him. His name was Lucky.

Act of Kindness

By Mykhailo Buzhynskyi

This local tale was told by a retired man Ivan Petrovich Kozlov

Once he walked across the road in a random place. A big black car suddenly stopped so close that Petrovich fell down. He was frightened.

The driver got out of the car. He looked like a bandit. He lifted Ivan Petrovich and said to him 'There are a lot of pedestrian passes for people like you, Kozlov' then he went away.

Ivan Petrovich was impressed by the kindness of the strange young man. Ivan Petrovich told his friends 'that is interesting, how could he know my surname?'

Surname 'Kozlov' in English means 'Goat'.

Storm

By James Rooney

The wind continues its harrying fight
There are clenched teeth in its swing
As jabs of cold rain hit you in the face
Warn you, it'll be back, to unleash
Another pummelling, threatening to lift the roof
With hands reaching in to rip you from your bed
And throw you to the lions of the storm's agency.
We see this loveless imperative in men's hearts too,
Their need to impose, to dominate, to destroy
Lay waste to cities, fill graves, break bones of children
Desecrate women, crush the infirm
Then rest and
Let their storm abate.
In time, slowly gathering strength,
When the isobars of anger tighten
Their pulsing gales break loose again.

Courage

By Gerard Loughnane

Laureen, I'm worried, as everyone here has started off like the clappers. Somebody is bound to get a speeding ticket and the fine is €120. Slow down and give me a chance. I can't keep up with all the prose and poetry, for God's sake! So, just to be slightly different, I want to tell you a story about the Dublin footballer called Big Dan who got caught up in a time warp-yes, a time warp, and landed in America's Wild West, in a town called Tombstone. In that town was a notorious outlaw named Black Jack, who likes to rob the rich and keep the money for himself. Children were scared of him, men were living in fear and the ladies thought he was cool.

When Big Dan arrived in town, word got around that he was looking for Black Jack. Big Dan did not like bullies, and he had sorted out plenty of them in Croke Park. He marched into a saloon called the Half Chance, and ordered a pint of Coors from Mary-Lou, the barmaid who greeted him with a, 'Howya stranger'.

Word had got around to Black Jack, so before Big Dan could touch the pint, there was a shout coming from the street, 'Come out and take your medicine or are you yellow or what?'. It was Black Jack and he was angry. Big Dan took off his gun belt, laid it on the counter and the gun went off, destroying a mirror behind Mary, who shrieked, 'Oh my god!'. But it wasn't as loud as the shriek when Dan took off his hat, waistcoat, shirt and dark blue vests with 'up the Dubs' written across it. And then Big Dan dropped his jeans to display his bluer than blue underpants. Mary Lou was

in a state of shock, and she said in a faltering voice, 'What's that on your pants? It's very shiny'. 'Don't worry Miss, that's all my All Ireland medals, Nations League, Leinster medals and the O'Byrne Cup and half a dozen All-Stars. I wear them to protect myself from a stray bullet that could be aimed for below the belt, if you know what I mean'. 'I think I do,' was the faltering answer. Mary Lou then said, Excuse me, if anything should happen to you, can I have your underpants for my boyfriend, Black Jack?' That was the last straw. Big Dan could be heard muttering, 'Oh Jesus,' and then he replied, 'I promised my jocks to Michael D. He is a Labour man and a true blue'.

The sun had no mercy in Tombstone. The heat was at its hottest and Black Jack was at his meanest. He had heard that there was an Irish man coming to get him, so he called out, 'Are you a Galway man, a Kerry man or what? You have no guts.' That was worse than the last straw to Big Dan who said once more, 'Oh my Jesus.' Black Jack knew all about gunfighting. He had his back to the sun so his opponent would have to face it and be at a disadvantage. When big Dan stepped out of the saloon he turned his back to the sun. 'Turn around and face me like a man.' roared Black Jack. Big Dan turned fast and the sun's reflection from the medals seemed to blind Black Jack, who screamed, 'My eyes, my eyes! What have you done to me. Mercy, mercy, God forgive me for all the bad things I have done, and I apologize to all the people of this town.' Big Dan walked up to him and exclaimed, 'The Kerry fellas do that all the time. Come on, I'll buy you a pint. No hard feelings.

The two marched into Mary- whatever her name is- saloon. Big Dan ordered two more pints then he put his clothes on and strapped on his gun, which he had left on the counter. All he needed was his medals to win a gunfight! 'Where did you say

you were from stranger?’ asked Black Jack. ‘Oh I’m a Dub. Come to Ireland. All you have to ask is, -where is the Sam Maguire?-, and everyone will point you in the right direction. Sam loves Dublin and has no intention of leaving.’ ‘What are the women like in Dublin?’ asked Black Jack. ‘What are the women like?’ echoed Dan. ‘They are unbelievable. They are lovely and gorgeous. You should come over. Oops, sorry Mary Lou.’ smiled Big Dan. ‘Is your wife a Dub, Dan?’ demanded Mary Lou. ‘Of course she is. Only one problem-when we beat Kerry in the final, she felt so sorry for a Kerry man, she left me and ran away with him. She felt he needed TLC. Don’t worry, she will be back for the final again. She won’t be able to stay away from Sam.’ Now if you would excuse me, I have to go to Dodge City to sort out someone called Billy the Kid.

From then on, he was known as the Flashiest Underpants in the West!

Books! Books! Books!

By Deirdre Spendlove

I just love books.

My early reading was what most young girls read – “Heidi”, “Ann of Green Gables”, and “St. Clares”

I only ever wanted books or jigsaws for my birthdays and Christmas - still the same today - no desire for expensive perfume or designer shoes.

When my own lads were small in the 1980s, I started a book club (to escape the non- stop talk about clever children and 25 ways to cook mince). We met every other month and discussed/swapped books and ideas, where I discovered Jennifer Johnston, Brian Moore, Maeve Brennan, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Maeve Binchy, John McGahern, Margaret Atwood, William Trevor, George Orwell, Claire Keegan, Liz Nugent, - quite a variety.

The group lasted 35 years!

Over the last few years, I have enjoyed such well known poets as Paula Meehan, Seamus Heaney, etc., not forgetting Pam Ayres and “I wished I’d looked after my teeth”. What a party piece.

My most recent unforgettable book has to be “The good Earth” by Pearl Buck - an old one but a good one! As they say, you’re never alone with a book.



Horizons

By Jean Lynch

From the top of the hill Jack stared into the distance. If he looked up he could just see blue and if he looked down all he could see was green. He didn't know his colours yet but he did know there was a difference in what he could see above his head and what was under his feet, but then he was only two years old. He was out with his family on a trip to Malahide Castle and, as he was born with more than his share of curiosity, he didn't need to consider his actions and just knew that he had to explore the vast space before him. Putting one wellington clad foot in front of the other, he walked purposely forward, heading for the horizon. Jack's big brown eyes were his most attractive feature and they were almost hidden by his blond fringe. The rest of his head was covered by the hood of his dark green coat that reached the top of his boots. From behind he blended beautifully into the background. He had no fear as he wasn't thinking of anything except walking forward and, as yet, had no idea of the risks of wandering off on his own. The child's figure became smaller and smaller as he determinedly walked ahead.

He was surprised when he heard his father's voice, which sounded different and quieter than usual, and he didn't realise that the distance between them was the reason for this. Neither did it come into his mind that he should turn and look behind him; he determinedly walked on. His father was always looking out for him, with the best of intentions, but Jack always saw this as his style being cramped, without actually knowing what 'cramped style' meant. He was shocked, and a little scared, when his father

suddenly came up behind, lifted him and, putting his son on his shoulders, ran back to the family group. Jack couldn't understand the fuss his mother made and just sat on the grass picking daisies and wondering if he could eat soon.

A year later Jack was in a similar situation. When he looked ahead and raised his eyes he saw the pattern of a different shades of grey in the sky and under his feet there were different shades of brown made by the wet pebbles and seaweed in the sand. There was strip of very dark grey sea between the two. This time he noticed more than a large open space ahead. He could see where the sky and sea joined and really wondered what happened at this point. His curiosity, as always, got the better of him and off he trekked. By now he was a little wiser and so he checked that no-one was watching him who would avert his adventure. He purposefully started his journey.

Jack didn't look back and was convinced that this time he would carry out his important mission of discovery without interruption. Wearing another favourite dark green coat - he always insisted on green coats and his mother decided this was one battle he could win - he soon blended into the background. But this time, because the sea is so dangerous and his wanderings, or was it explorations and sense of adventure, had become more common, Jack's parents were actually very vigilant and he didn't get very far. He was restrained again by his father, but with a little bit less understanding this time and he accepted his lecture with resigned patience. However, he had learned not to make such a big fuss when he was stopped carrying out his own wishes because he was never allowed to make his point fully, and more importantly he was, albeit slowly, learning the lesson of keeping his curiosity in check when he suspected that he wouldn't succeed. He sat

down on the wet beach and piled up the pebbles. He wondered how much longer he'd have to wait for the picnic.

With maturity Jack was to realise that the hill in Malahide was just a slight crumple in the land and the huge space was only a green field; the place where the sea and sky joined was just that – a place where the sea and sky joined and called the horizon. As he grew older, Jack put his curiosity and energy into more useful activities that had a purpose and where his ambitions would hopefully become achievements.

As he passed through the years of childhood, adolescence and into manhood, this curiosity, imagination and natural intelligence led Jack to seek and overcome challenges in his life. Sometimes he made his own challenges and obstacles through his stubbornness and still wanting to do things his way – he convinced himself that this was character building. Sometimes he felt that the horizons before him were too distant and not worth the effort – he was saving himself for something worthwhile. In adulthood when he was just unfortunate and life threw up very difficult situations, he had learned to get through with fortitude and, instead of his father having to watch out for him, other people came into his life and he survived. More importantly, he became the person to watch out for others.

*

An old man sat on a boulder nearly at the top of the hill. It had taken a great effort to get there but he had a sense of achievement and felt very content and at peace with the world. As he rested his weary body against a wall, he raised his eyes and admired the clear blue sky that promised a day of sunshine. Under his feet the grass was green and wet with the morning dew, but his boots kept his feet dry. He smiled to himself as he remembered many previous visits to this place and wondered what was so special about blue sky, green grass, and hills. Funnily enough he had the same feeling standing on the local beach and looking out to sea when the tide was out, especially on a dull day when all he could see was different shades of grey and brown.

The old man pushed these thoughts out of his mind and continued to walk uphill towards the horizon which was broken by the occasional group of trees. Suddenly he thought that this expedition was a waste of time and too much like hard work. He would save his energy for something more worthwhile. He was feeling more tired than usual, but the promise to himself of a pint in the village raised his spirits and he strode purposefully onwards and upwards.

Halfway up the hill, Jack realised that he was feeling really tired and sat down on the trunk of a fallen tree and closed his eyes. He could feel the heat of the sun through his dark green coat and decided that he would stay in this peaceful place for a little while longer and rest his aging body. He knew that there wouldn't be too many more days like this for him.

His solitude was soon disturbed when he heard shouting in the distance.

“Grandad, Grandad, where are you?”

Jack slowly got to his feet and looked around to see his young grandson charging towards him, full of exuberance and vitality.

“What are you doing here all on your own?” asked the child,

“Just looking at the horizon and wondering what was out there” was the reply.

They stood in silence for a while, both staring straight ahead yet seeing different things there. The old man saw the struggle of getting up the rest of the hill and the child saw the challenge of the climb with excitement. Jack took hold of his grandson’s hand as they continued their climb before the descent towards the village.

“How about we get a life and call in to Starbucks for a late breakfast” said Jack, hungry as always but realising that he would have to postpone his pint for another day

“How about a Subway” said the child as their speed quickened at the thought of something to eat.

Jean Lynch



Ollscoil do Dhaoine Fásta

By Rosaleen Maguire

Tar éis dom éirí as obair agus dul ar scor thosaigh mé sa rang Gaeilge i Klear, Ollscoil do dhaoine fásta. B'é ceann de na cinntí is fearr de mo shaol.....

Foghlaimím Gaeilge gach seachtain sa rang ann. Ní raibh ach Gaeilge na scoile agam nuair a thosaigh mé trí bliana ó shin ach anois táim ábalta comhrá a dhéanamh, éisteacht le Raidió na Gaeltachta agus féachaint ar TG4!

Freisin bíonn a lán spraoi againn agus gach seachtain téimid go dtí an bhialann i Klear tar éis an ranga. Le bheith macánta bíonn a lán gáire agus comhrá le cheile againn agus muid ag ithe ár lóin. Fuair mé inspioráid agus grá do mo theanga i Klear. Mar sin beidh mé féin agus mo dheirfiúr ag freastal ar scoil samhraidh i gCorca Dhuibhne an bhliain seo chugainn

Is í ár múinteoir, Honor Clynes, an múinteoir níos fearr ar domhan agus tugann sí suim agus grá dom do mo theanga náisiúnta. Táim an-bhródúil mar tá ról lárnach ag KLEAR i mo shaol agus tugaim aghaidh ar KLEAR ar an DART gach seachtain.

Rosaleen Maguire from Meánrang na Máirt expresses her delight in discovering KLEAR after she retired and she cheerfully travels to KLEAR on the Dart every week to enjoy the chat and the laughs as she both hones her Irish skills (having arrived with just school Irish) and catches up socially in the coffee shop. She feels KLEAR has inspired her on her Irish language journey and she'll be heading to the real Gaeltacht in Corca Dhuibhne in the summer with her sister, Kate (Meánrang an Déardaoin).

Tháinig Spásaire ag Taisteal

By Seán Ó Ceallaigh

Tháinig spásaire ag taisteal
Ar a long i bhfad is ó chéin
Ba é na blianta ó shin
Ó thosaigh sé ar a mhisean.
Is os cionn sráidbhaile
Stad a spáslong san aer
Is chroch sé ar nós réalta,
i bhfad thuas, i bhfad thuas,
thuas sa spéir.

Tháinig sé anuas is lean sé solas
A bhí ag taitneamh
Ar bhothán sa sráidbhaile
Ina raibh máthair is a leanbh.
Thart ar a cheann
Bhí solas geal ag soilsíú
Cé go raibh cuma aingil air
Bhí eagla an domhain,
Eagla an domhain orthu.

Ansin, labhair an strainséir
“Ná bí eaglach”, a dúirt sé
“Is é mílte, mílte míle ó seo
Go dtí mo phláinéad.”
“Beirim teachtaireacht liom
Le haghaidh gach aon chine.”
Ansin líonadh an t-aer is an spéir
Leis an gceol, leis an gceol is binne.

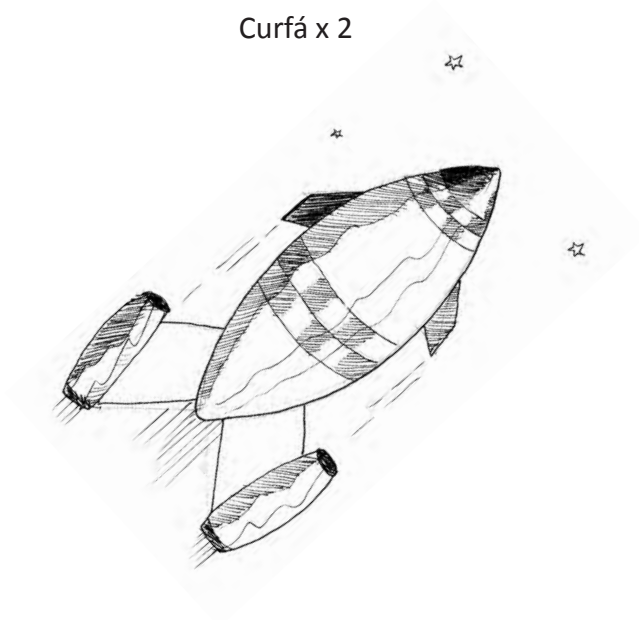
Curfá

Síocháin is dea-mhéin do gach duine beo
Mílte ina seasamh is ar bís
Ag feitheamh le leanbh eile le breith i gcró
Ag fanacht leis an gceol seo arís,
leis an gceol seo arís.

Bhí an ceol álainn seo ar crith
Ar fud na talún,
Dúisíodh na mílte
Nuair a chuala siad an fhuaim
Ar tír is thar sáile
Le cabhair ó sholas na spásloinge sa spéir
D’aimsigh siad an sráidbhaile.

Is díreach roimh an mhaidin
Roimh theacht amach na gréine
D’fhill an strainséir ar ais
Le rá gur gá dó imeacht
“tar éis seala fhada” dúirt sé
timpeall dhá mhilliún bliain
Tosóidh an ceol seo arís
Le leanbh ag caoineadh, ag caoineadh.”

Curfá x 2



Seán Ó Ceallaigh, Ardrang an Déardaoin, is the translator of Chris de Burgh’s song ‘A Spaceman Came travelling. Seán hopes all who sing this will find it enjoyable.

Tír Gan Teanga, Tír Gan Anam

By Bernard Keogh

This is most likely the wrong way to start my story, but here goes. I was in the city centre one day and a person walked up to me and asked me for directions in Irish. The first two words that came to mind, was “Tá brón orm ach ní thuigim “. His answer was “ceart go leor, go raibh maith agat.” Don’t ask me where my words came from and don’t ask me how I understood what he said.

That was the moment, I decided to take up my journey in learning my native tongue because I was actually embarrassed, not knowing my language. Then I thought to myself, if I could remember, how to say “I am sorry, but I don’t understand” and “ it’s alright, thank you”, I asked myself how much more of the language do I remember from my school days? One thing I do remember was the fact that I liked the Irish that I learnt in school because we did not get buried in grammar. You see, my teacher made up his own pages of Irish with simple short sentences like:

I got up.

I had my breakfast.

I went to school.

I met my friend.

We went into the classroom.

We opened our bags.

Took out our books, then we learnt how to join sentences. It made learning simple.

So, to get back to my story, I went to Eason’s to see what I could find. What jumped out at me, oh yes! you guessed it, “Buntús Cainte”. After that, “Yes, You guessed it again, “Duolingo”,

To my surprise, those short sentences came flooding back. Then I started to notice Irish signs around me, I took note of them, including dart station names, signs on the dart and then listening to the announcements. Anyway, I realised I was hooked.

I then heard about a school called “Klear” and a wonderful teacher called Honor from whom I have learnt a lot. When I mentioned her name at my home, my daughter told me that Honor was her teacher in Manor House and was a great teacher. I mentioned my daughter to Honor and she remembered her. Wow! it’s a small town folks!

Anyway, one day my attention was drawn to a Ted Talk. It was about the benefits of learning a second language. Did you know that it can reduce the risk of getting dementia and going senile and reduce the risk of suffering from depression? We are keeping our brains active and keeping those endorphins flowing. We get to meet lots of people and make new friends, which in turn improves our social life. It’s unbelievable the doors that it opens for us. My dream is one day to speak fluently if that’s possible. During my life, I gave up on a few things and didn’t see them through because of a busy life and other responsibilities and not following through: so many failed attempts.

Klear has made it possible and there are lots of other classes to take up. Many thanks to Honor and to Klear.

This time round folks, I’m never giving up. Come on, people.

Is ea, is féidir linn. Leanaimis ar aghaidh. Tá Gaeilge i mo chroí.
Yes, we can. Let’s keep going. Irish is in my heart.

Tír gan teanga, tír gan anam.! (a country without a language is a country without a soul)

The story of Japchae

By Kim Vlacheslav

A long time ago, Korea was split into three kingdoms. In the most powerful kingdom called Choson (meaning - Country of Morning Freshness) the King was resting from all the wars and was looking for some entertainment.

He found his master-chefs starting to repeat meals and asked them ' Why is this happening?'

They said they tried every recipe they knew. The King was very upset. So his adviser suggested to him to announce a celebration where everyone can bring any new dishes to taste for the King.

News about his event spread not only in the kingdom but in all other closest kingdoms, Silla and Kore.

One poor man was never in the capital and never saw the king's palace and he had a big desire to see all of this. But all he had was rice and vegetables from his garden. But his desire was so huge he decided to try and find more ingredients in the forest. And he found some wild mushrooms and one small bird in a nest.

So, for a surprise and to make the meal more unusual he made from rice, a powder and from this powder he made noodles. Then he put all the vegetables, mushrooms and meat all together and spiced it with soy sauce.

The King liked this meal so much that he promoted this poor man to Head of the Kingdom Treasures. The King wanted to eat this meal every day.

In modern Korea this meal is served at any celebrations like weddings and birthdays.

Recipe of Japchae

Ingredients:

Rice Noodles or Noodles from Sweet Potatoes. Meat (chicken or beef) Vegetables, Mushrooms, Stock, Soy Sauce, Eggs, Garlic.

Optional Ingredients:

Coriander, Chilli Pepper, Black Pepper, Sesame Oil, Sesame Seeds, Green Onions.

Preparation

Noodles must be cooked. Meat must be cut in strips. All vegetables must be cut in strips. Mushrooms must be cut in strips. Eggs must be boiled or fried, depends on style of Japchae. Smash garlic.

North Korean Style

Put cooked noodles in the bowl. Put cut vegetables on top of the noodles. Put cooked meat on top of the noodles. Put fried eggs on top of the noodles. Pour stock with garlic into the bowl. Decorate with sesame seeds and green onion. Add chili pepper (optional). Add soy sauce.

Presentation tips for North style

Separate vegetables to make more colour or mixed veg, fry in a pan, then roll it and cut in strips. For red colour you can use tomatoes or red sweet peppers.

Many colours means - Full of Life

South Korean style

Put meat in wok and fry. Add vegetables to the wok. When meat almost ready, add cooked noodles. Add some stock and garlic. Add soy sauce. When meat is ready, serve all on the plate. Decorate with boiled egg, green onion, chilli pepper.

Presentation of South Korean style

Add sesame oil to meat when frying to add some flavour.

RETURN

By Agnes Fearon

After my Mam died on 28th April 2023, I was encouraged to go back to KLEAR and the classes. One student texted saying: “all your extended family in KLEAR are thinking of you at this sad time.” A tutor texted to say “The next few days won’t be easy but we would love to see you back as soon as you can.” That gave me the encouragement to return to KLEAR and the classes.

I’m so glad I did. The support I got was amazing. The day I returned, tutors, staff and students all approached me, welcomed me back and sympathized with me over the death of my Mam.

I really felt very warm inside, knowing people cared. I did feel like I was returning to my second family – my KLEAR family, who made a sad time better. I thank them for that.

Passion

By Gerard Loughnane

Frosty morning, two days before Christmas, my mother grabbed the goose and removed his head with one chop of a knife. The goose took two steps and fell over- I took two steps and got sick! Not ideal for a 10 year old's stomach.

Christmas Eve we go to the church for confession. Country road, dark as the inside of a coal mine. Christmas candles lighting in the windows looked bright and inviting.

Got to the church in darkness. One sputtering candle throwing shadows which gave an eerie feeling. There was some more children sitting in the back seat-all there before the priest arrived.

A teenage girl rushed past us and went into the confession box. Surprise, surprise- there was a priest there already. I could hear some mumbled voices. "How long is it since your last confession? Oh yes, that's grand. And what happened then? Ohh that's alright. Adam and Eve were at that since they were teenagers." Then silence. Then the priest said, "What dance are you going to on Saint Stephen's night, Rose?" He knew her by name. Then a scream! It's you, Matty - get out of here and I will report you to the priest. It was a local trickster who would always be ready for some craic.

Both Rose and Matty jumped out of the confession box together and nearly took the priest with them, as they rushed out the front door. My goodness, what's the hurry? He said. Nobody stayed to tell him and I got out fast. That was enough for me. Going to bed that night, I said to my mother, "What's that story about

Adam and Eve been at it since they were teenagers?” “Go to bed and never mind about Adam and Eve or Santa won’t come tonight,” she said.

Christmas Day, I had no appetite for the poor goose.

The following day, Saint Stephen’s day, teenagers dressed up with masks on their faces, called, played music and danced around the kitchen floor. They were rewarded with some money and if they collected enough by New Year’s Day, they would have a party in someone’s house. Four musicians would supply the music, and this would be the real ceilidh house. There would be a few young lads like myself, and we were well supplied with lemonade and cakes. All was going well until someone asked where they got the water for the tea, which was flowing all night. No running water in that house so it was obtained from a concrete tank. All well and good until somebody said, “There’s a dead cat floating around in that tank.” My poor old stomach revolted!

Ten years later I was in digs in the South of England. I was in my 20’s and the landlady who was in her 40’s decided that miniskirts were designed for her - they were all the rage in the sixties.

There was an older Englishman there also and he informed me that Mavis, the landlady, had parted with two husbands and was on the lookout for fresh meat! Well Mavis asked me to hang up the mistletoe with her. I was holding the chair and she hopped up. My hands were shaking so much that she gave me up as a bad job. My girlfriend decided that I was in bad company and got me out. The elderly man, Burt, became husband #3 for Mavis. More fresh meat!

Ten years later I am standing in Moore Street with orders to buy a turkey. A trader with a twinkle in his eye shouted, “ There is a beautiful bird, sir. You won’t find a better breast this side of

Christmas day, if you know what I mean.” I said ‘what’ and he said ‘what’ ,and with all the ‘whats’ going on, the thought went through my head that the poor bird will drop her feathers and head for Arnotts bargain basement, and hope to get something decent to wear. Too late- the knife flashed and the poor turkey’s entrails landed on the pavement. My stomach churned and the turkey sandwich that I had eaten half an hour previously, joined them. As Shane McGowan might have said, ‘Happy Christmas my Khyber pass’. I had no passion left for the turkey dinner!

Blue

By Dereck Hayden

Beautiful blue sky, no wind just calm. Birds flying and chirping in the morning song with blue tits perching on a branch singing along. The serenity, the quiet peacefulness of heaven. The endless wide expanse of forever, stretching on endlessly into blue space way out past our world, our solar system, our galaxy, and on out into the universe, the beyond and foreverness. The sheer idea of it been endless is so incomprehensible to us. We can't get a handle on it at all.

Yet it's there, we live in it. Believe it or not. We tend not to let our minds wander off too far from the anchorage. Well, I do try and keep myself grounded, but there is the nosey inquisitive part of me still striving for answers, answers to the explained!!!

Yet there is someone who has them. How can they conceal it all from us, so many?

Can we test the water a bit and then retreat from it. Afraid!! Afraid of what?.....let sleeping dogs lie.....

But after a while the question arises again and maybe not in the same way. But there are so many unanswered questions in this world we live in..... and beyond!

So many questions swirling around our minds. Been asked over and over again and yet still remain unanswered.

Some day we will have all the answers to it all, when our minds can conceive it all. Maybe we are just not ready yet, but I have a feeling we are getting very close.

A bolt out of the Blue! Outer space? Alien worlds? The secrets of the seas or oceans? Heaven? Hell? Narnia?
Why? What? Where? When? How?

Endless streams of questions, that might be answered one day!!!

My journey

By Yvonne O'Brien

I left school early. I always needed help with reading and writing and spelling. I always knew about Klear and the work they did. One day I picked up the phone and put it back down again. I was very nervous and I felt stupid. I rang back and spoke to a lovely girl who made me feel at ease. She asked would I come down and have a chat.

I came down to determined to get started on my reading and spelling journey. I met Sian who made me feel at ease. She helped me fill out the forms. Sian wanted to know what I wanted to do and where I wanted to end up. I said I wanted to be an Special Needs Assistant (SNA). She suggested that I start with Laureen in a literacy course.

I started the class in September. I was a bit nervous but Laureen put me at ease. The class size was very small, and sometimes I was by myself, which really helped me with my confidence. I found out about myself that I was more than able to do the work, and Laureen always made me feel at ease about myself. When I would get stuck Laureen would help me along. I realised that I was not stupid. I was well able to learn at my own pace. I also found out that I was able to read and spell much more than I thought.

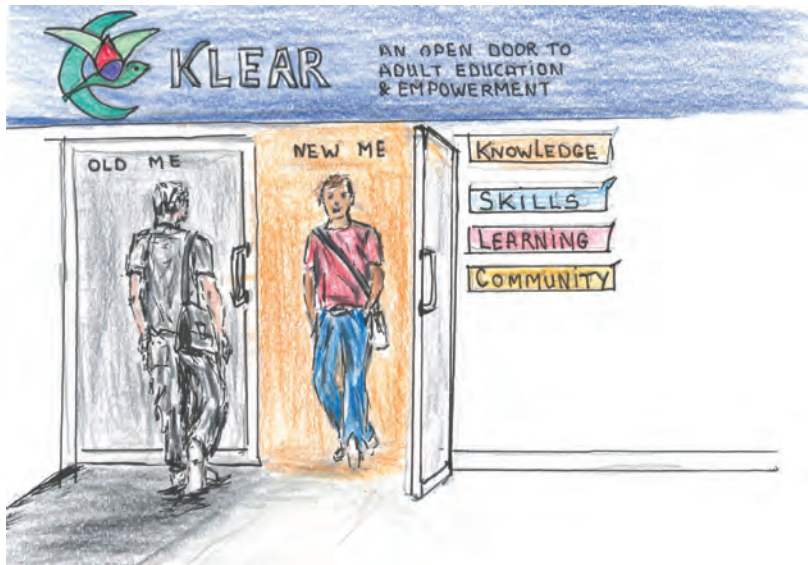
Laureen advised me to go and do the Communications course, level 3, with Marian, in Klear. She said I was more than able. I went and did the course for one year, I also received a certificate at the end of the year. This is the first certificate I have ever got. I am so proud of myself.

I am now doing a one to one literacy class with Mag. I decided to do this to build my confidence so I could go further with my education. I am with Mag just over a year. She has been a great support for me.

In May 2023 I applied for the SNA course. I went into Dublin Adult Literacy Centre, in Mountjoy square, for an introduction day where I had to fill out a form and I realized how far I had come. I filled out the forms as to why I wanted to be an SNA. I was well able to fill out the forms by myself.

Since September I have been doing the SNA course in DALC . I get support with my assignments there, which is great help and even when I find it hard I still keep going. I still come down to Klear for support with my reading and spelling. Mag sometimes helps me with my college work.

In May I finish the SNA course . Hopefully this will be my second certificate . It's been four years since I made the phone call to Klear. Sometimes it has been hard but I kept going on my journey to become an SNA.



SILENCE

By Agnes Fearon

When I think of silence I think of when I used to look after my Mam who had dementia. One thing she used to do was watch the television. When I was in the room with Mam she used to start talking while the television was on. Most of the time I didn't know what she was talking about. I would turn the sound down on the television to hear what Mam was saying. Then she would ask: "What happened the television?" When I said: "I turned it down to hear what you were saying," Mam wouldn't remember what she had been saying and wanted the sound turned up again. The same thing would happen over and over.

It could be very frustrating and mentally tiring having someone constantly talking in your ear. I would have loved to have turned off the television and to have had a lovely conversation with Mam but that wasn't always possible.

When I got home after caring for my Mam, I used to sit in complete silence for about half an hour or more, just to clear my head. Spending all day with a person suffering from dementia was mentally draining and the sound of silence was golden.

Now that my Mam has died, I can have too much silence sometimes.

Agnes Fearon

KLEAR in Kilbarrack

Return

By Dereck Hayden

It's when someone or something has left someone or something and then goes back to it them or it!!

For whatever reason, there doesn't seem even have to be a reason, it's just that they go back or return.

When you are going in one direction and then you do a complete U turn into the opposite direction.

RETURN.....its the magnetism that draws it back whatever it is that both things are magnetised to, like a stretched elastic, let go, returns to its original size.

Like the ebb of a tide when it goes out it comes back again.

Like sunrise and sunset, like the seasons come and go, like everything in life.

Except the hair on a bald man's head, that never comes back!!!!

Return Part 2

By Dereck Hayden

When there is a revisiting of something that may be special brings back ole memories and old joys of bygone days from the past, especially the good ones forever may be lost.

The happiness of childhood and the innocence too,

The imagination of children playing in a game that they can act out to.

And as we get older let us not forget

The teenage years of change and adolescence on the way,

The times we travelled through,

With lessons to be learned on the way.

Sometimes, it didn't seem right or fair that whatever it was that happened, that it should have been to someone else that's bad.

And that's the thing that makes this world mad.

But why should a good person take the rap

For someone else's load of crap.

Let the culprit get what's due

After being an idiot too.



KLEAR Voices 2024 is a collection of stories, poems and reflections written by our students. Our students also did the stunning artwork which you will find inside.

We hope that you take this book with you, whether it's to your sofa, local coffee shop, on a bus or on holidays and immerse yourself in the creativity and imagination of our students. You will be blown away by the high standard of their work.

We offer classes in KLEAR such as Reading, Writing, Maths, English language and Computer Skills courses at various levels as well as hobby classes. If you are interested in a course, please contact us!!!

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