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Eudaimonic Well-being and Narrative Scaffolds
The Creation of Later Life Happiness and Well-being through the Story of Self

Volume Two

Doctorate of Philosophy Degree
Trinity College Dublin

Deirdre O'Donnell
2012
Declaration

I declare that this thesis has not been submitted as an exercise for a degree at this or any other university and it is entirely my own work.

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# Participants’ Reduced Narratives

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V2.1 Aoife's narrative

V2.1a Leaving the North Strand

1. I'm over fifty years in the house ...
2. and it was a culture shock for me
3. coming to Ballyfermot because
4. I lived in the North Strand
5. and my parents separated...
6. I was 21, now, when I came up so I wasn't
7. traumatised by the separation but em...
8. it was a big shock for me mother
9. because daddy had houses and...
10. in those years equality wasn't in ...
11. so she got nothing
12. and we had to go to the Corporation
13. so that's all finished... that's changed thank God,
14. that's one good thing about life now
15. you get so used to Ballyfermot, you know,
16. I couldn't imagine living on the North Strand there, you know
17. although you still cling to your old roots ...
18. you know, I'd often think about my friends,
19. I'd love to know where they are
20. [pause], I'm getting all emotional...
21. I was living in Ballyfermot four years and then I got married...
22. and then we bought a house in Beaumont and em...
23. thinking everything was going to be rosy
24. we were married in 1955 and em
25. I was back living in Ballyfermot in 1959 because we had to give up our home because [husband] lost his job,
26. and that was hard times then ...
27. like what we're going through now, you know
28. so I identify with the young people
29. that are losing their homes ... 
30. what's happening nowadays, we went through that
31. but we got this house and eh...
32. I won't say we were happy ever after, we weren't [laughs]
33. I have five daughters and I made my home here anyway, you know,
34. I love the people, the people are lovely, you know?
V2.1b  Culture shock

1. you see Ballyfermot was always... it's a working class area...

2. although the North Strand was a working class area as well

3. older houses, these were more modern,

4. there wasn't that division between people,

5. there was a lad on our road who was... in the Strand,

6. and he was a pilot, do you know?

7. there was a jockey lived two doors away ...

8. when I came to Ballyfermot, like

9. then you get used to that,

10. all housing estates like, what would you call them, Corporation estates, they're all the same aren't' they?

11. Yeah, and people get on, I mean,

12. you know they move... eh

13. what way should I put that?

14. Our lifestyles improve, you know, don't they?

15. like definitely Ballyfermot's a great place now, you know what I mean?

16. there's lovely people in it, you know?

17. yeah, like, they're... people of all walks of life, you know?

18. they went on to college, the children, some of the children, you know?

V2.1c  Stigma

1. because my youngest brother was only 11...

2. yeah and eh, we'd nothing,

3. you know, we had nothing,

4. like, people say they've nothing, we didn't even have a bed, you know?

5. but we were grand,

6. you know, once we were out of the trauma of the rowing, you know, yeah.

7. and, see, the judge had said to mammy,

8. he had said "Have you somewhere to go?" and she was afraid that he was going to put my brothers in the school...

9. so she said "Yes, my sister'll take us" ...

10. but who wants six, there was five of us, you know?

11. It wasn't fair, you couldn't do that on anybody ...

12. Ah, they were hard times and I'm sure people go through that nowadays

13. but maybe not as much

14. you see, it's a kind of...

15. it was a kind of a what would you say, a shame?

16. you know what I mean?
17. A stigma, exactly, that’s what I mean,
18. a stigma on her, yeah.
19. oh thank God it’s all changed hasn’t it? Coda

V2.1d  The development of Ballyfermot
1. I’m not too sure but Ballyfermot was built on a par with St. Mary’s hospital in the park
2. and you see it was the slums of Dublin, you know?
3. like, they’d only one toilet for how many, whatever
4. people had very little, they came from rooms
5. this was their first house, you know, you know?
6. the first time they had a garden...
7. I couldn’t see that because we always had a garden ...
8. and even me mammy came from, like, granny had a house and a garden do you know what I mean?
9. I’m not looking down on anybody
10. but you know the way there are a culture of people that live in flats, you know, you know?
11. I mean, apartments are lovely things nowadays but we’re talking about the slums, you know?
12. and sure, God love them they nearly, it was great,
13. I remember a woman next door to me mammy, ah, she’s still there, Mrs [name]
14. and she’d say “Oh, Mrs [name], I wouldn’t touch a flower,
15. she was in love with the earth, the garden”
16. never had a garden
17. ah yeah, it was a good thing, that was a good part of it, you know
18. they were housed
19. it’s three generations now, do you know what I mean?
20. so they’re well into houses and you know?
21. you can’t imagine how they lived
22. if they had anything that they didn’t want they’d say
23. they’d be kind enough and say “I have such a thing, would it be any good to you?”, d’you know?
24. rather than throw it in the bin or...
25. you can’t imagine it now sure you can’t? Coda
26. no need for that anymore

V2.1e  The Celtic Tiger
1. I joined everything that was possible to join, you know? AB
2. when my children were younger what we used to do was we had a street committee on each road in Ballyfermot.

3. yeah and we used to have a football team.

4. and we bought the stuff for them, their gear.

5. and we used to then bring the children to the pantomime, things like that you know, you know?

6. we'd a great time, you know?

7. and the kids loved it, you know?

8. then, like, I think parents were more involved

9. and I know they've gone through a time when they had loads of money and money wasn't scarce, we'll put it that way.

10. but it's not really great, sure it's not?

11. In the end it's not because, like, you miss out on having to mind your stuff and, you know?

12. you're happier, I thought we were happier anyway, you know?

13. I'm not saying you didn't want to be hungry or cold but for a while there it was a bit too much wasn't it?

14. Yeah, the Celtic Tiger.

---

**V2.1f  Ballyfermot has changed so much**

1. Ballyfermot has changed over the years, you know?

2. I think when we all... when people... when they came to Ballyfermot first, when first Ballyfermot was 1943, they started building, thinking about building,

3. when we moved to Ballyfermot of course we had nothing you know, my mother had nothing anyway God love her, she went to work too.

4. but most people didn't have anything and there wasn't the luxuries... it wasn't em

5. you know the way you can go out and buy things it's nothing now.

6. you know, God, clothes was scarce, you know?

7. if you had a good you kept it for Sunday or whatever the coat,

8. nowadays you don't keep...

9. I know I don't keep coats for Sunday, you know?

10. you wear your clothes all the time which is right ...

11. it was a different way of life and people looked out for one another, you know, well, they had to,

12. it was important.

---

**Experience is the stuff of life**

1. and I suppose I was very protected in a way,
2. I didn't experience anything before I was married! 
3. You know, I didn't experience a change in, like
4. a change of going into your own home and things like that
5. I think that's great
6. I do applaud the youth now, you know?
7. you see we couldn't and of course there wasn't money there or there wasn't...
8. It' a different life now, isn't it?
9. And it's good, it's better now, it is.
10. Yes, it is better now, yeah
11. people are more open, you know?
12. there was an awful lot of hush-hush and things like that you know?
13. but for youths that's coming up, they have it all!
14. and good for them and mind themselves.

V2.1g Dreams don't always come true
1. He was from the North Strand
2. we knew one another when we were 17
3. yeah, far too young!
4. Not a good thing,
5. not a good thing, no, no.
6. Far too young
7. I mean we didn't marry until I was, what, 25
8. it's not that... it's just no experience of life
9. then it had to be, if you hadn't got a fella, whatever... you know what I mean? Silly.
10. I do remember meeting him, my sister and I were walking down
11. we had... she'd a dog, Rover was his name
12. and of course she let the dog off the lead
13. and [husband] and his friend were whistling at us, you know fellas
14. the dog ran across the road and he was killed.
15. oh stop it, what a way to meet a fella, tragedy from the hour go [laughs]!
16. I wasn't even interested in him at all, you know
17. I was too young I was only 17, I was giddy, 
18. but that was us,
19. ah it was a bit... it's not great, it's not a great marriage, unfortunately
20. he's... he likes a sup of drink ...
21. Oh we are still together
22. just about, we live in the house, that's it
23. Ah, it's hard, that's what I say, it's
24. your dreams don't always come true, you know? Coda
25. you have to take the good with the bad

V2.1h  The return to Ballyfermot

1. See we were buying our house
2. we saved very hard for that deposit,
3. it was only £90 or something like that...
4. very small, but the wages were small,
5. he was earning eight pounds although he was a motor mechanic, you know?
6. but the rent on the house... the repayments on the house,
7. it was supposed to be for 35 years
8. was £8.90 something, it was, like, more than a week's wages
9. and I worked up to I became pregnant,
10. so we couldn't pay the rent and whatever so...
11. and then we got notice to quit...
12. so, [husband] isn't great at anything as regards saving or anything like that,
13. and I wasn't working and he didn't believe in you working and I could've worked,
14. I had a baby, you know ...
15. and by the time I came up here I was expecting [daughter]
16. you know but sure they're darlings, they're lovely, they are, I mean I wouldn't be without them
17. no, but the fact of the matter was that, you know
18. we couldn't manage
19. but em I came home to mammy and he went to his mother
20. which wasn't easy because it wasn't fair on my poor mother, you know?
21. and em... we were about six months before we got a house, you know, which
22. ... I mean, we were lucky
23. Yeah, but they were lovely, the neighbours,
24. they were lovely settled people ...
25. ... they were lovely neighbours ...
26. ... and then everyone knew me because my mammy was down the road
27. She lived down the other end, she lived in 28,
28. Isn't it funny the way our paths...
29. whatever is meant for us, you know?
30. and I was lucky because
31. actually the year I got married my mother had very high blood pressure
32. then she had a few strokes
33. ... but I was lucky I was here
34. I could run up and down to her
35. and as my little girls got bigger they’d be running up and
down to her, you know?
36. No, no, [brother], my youngest brother, he wasn’t
married
37. and he never married, he married... the year mammy
died he got married, she knew he had met somebody,
you know,
38. but em he lives in Beaumont would you believe now
[laughs]
39. there’s a twist in this tale isn’t there!

V2.1i  Facing fears

1. I thought I was afraid to fly.
2. ...that’s what my brother used to say to me,
3. “The day you fly Aoife and say you’re afraid of your life
4. then I’ll believe you!” ...
5. ... because I could’ve gone to Canada to meet me
sister,
6. she sent over the fare and all
7. and I was afraid of me life as I thought.
8. I had a hysterectomy in 1979
9. and my doctor said to me “Mrs [name] you need a
holiday”
10. five women, we used to go to the pub then, I don’t drink
anymore
11. But em... we used to save a shilling a week
12. but she said “Mrs [name], why don’t you save a pound a
week and go on holidays?”
13. and we did
14. we went away to Spain for a week
15. oh the fun, I’ve had some...
16. I’ve had a great life, you know?
17. not all happy but I’ve had a good life
18. yeah, yeah, I’ve had a good life,
19. but em we’d great fun.
20. we had a ball!
21. That was my first time in a plane.
22. ... and I was sitting beside [name], that was her first
time
23. and we were shaking
24. and sure, by the time I got there I was looking out the
window
25. Nearly every year, I love it
26. I love it, yeah.
V2.1j  Activities

1. I'm not very active actually at the moment, em
2. we had eight weeks of doing this Go for Life, did you hear of that?
3. and I found that brilliant
4. I need to do things like that, I em...
5. I'm not a real social person as such
6. not now, I used to be, I went out a lot when I was... a couple of years ago, I'd say ten, 15 years ago, do you know?
7. ...but I find I'm more contented at home, yeah.
8. I love television,
9. I like doing crosswords, I'm doing a jigsaw at the moment that has me driven mad! [laughs]
10. a lot of my friends have moved away, you know?
11. or some of them have died, you know?
12. ...so your life changes, you know?
13. I'm not very active I don't think
14. if it was warm and if it was dry I'd be in the garden
15. I love my garden, yeah.
16. and I've four daughters and none of them live near me so I'm more or less em...
17. whenever they come down, they come down and we might go shopping and things like that... but that's about all.
18. Very boring, amn't I?! [laughs]
19. Yes... I always have me ear open to things happening around but...
20. I used to be in a choir but then I gave it up you know and...
21. ...so that was that and I have no regrets, now, about that,
22. I sang long enough.
23. I'm active in the phone line, the Senior Helpline,
24. and it keeps you in touch with people over the phone,
25. now I know we don't, we're only a voice and that
26. but it is nice.

V2.1k  Recognition

1. I've a good... I've a good eh... I've a good...
2. I don't know what it is, image, people I know, they respect me
3. because I used to read in the church and things like that,
4. But, like, you know, no I know I have a good image in the church or in the community, not in the church
5. I've always been involved as I said to you before, I always did voluntary work, yeah
6. and I used to help in the school, young lads in the De La Salle
7. just reading or helping them to read, you know?
8. but we... I say everybody knows me and I know everybody
9. we have a young couple living next door, they're not long there, they must be about three years there
10. and she'd always come in...
11. I'm not saying she comes into me on any occasion or anything but the girl that was selling her house
12. said it to the girl, she said "Go in to Mrs [name] you want anything, she'll look after you", you know? CA
13. So I've a good name! E
14. It's nice to be trusted isn't it? R
15. Trust is an awful lot, isn't it? Coda

V2.11  Life begins at 80
1. I certainly don't feel 80 AB
2. and I remember before I... I was only 80 in September OR
3. I'd never tell anyone me age! CA
4. Never!
5. I remember then I was dreading being 80, I thought that was the end.
6. I really did, I said now when you're 80, Jesus how many years have you left, you start thinking this
7. I was at this thing, Age and, what was it, Opportunity, did you hear of that?
8. and I said it to them, I said "I always thought life stopped", I said, it only... they used to say it started at 40,
9. I said "No, it begins at 80!"
10. because you get such confidence. E
11. I did! I started to think, "Oh, isn't it great that I'm still here!", you know,
12. and I'm well, that's the main thing.
13. I mean, I would hate to be in a home or anything like that, you know
14. I wouldn't have the patience,
15. they'd have to tie me down! [laughs]
16. I never grew up!
17. no, I never feel old. R
18. Ah, sure... sure it's only a number,
19. that's what my girls always say, "Ma, it's only a number", you know.
20. It is, when you look at it,
21. life is now.
22. and I'm on loads of things for me arthritis and I've high blood pressure and cholesterol, all that goes with it...

23. sure I'm grand.

Coda

V2.1m  Life gives you confidence

1. Oh yes, I had no confidence when I was younger,

2. Oh, I'd be afraid to speak, like,

3. people'd look at you, you know, and your voice or something, you know,

4. I don't know why they would do that

5. and kind of clam up then and you'd get all dithery, you know, yeah, yeah.

6. Well, I told you... I went to work in this shop and that woman thought I was the best thing she ever met

7. and she gave me great confidence

8. it's life gives you confidence, you know,

9. I felt that I ...

10. there was more in me than I ever did,

11. I could have done better in life.

12. ... I don't mean with me children and whatever but

13. I could have got a better a job maybe, you know?

14. you see we were lucky to get a job when I went to work

15. and I stayed in that job until I got married,

16. ...you know, for 11 years I worked in printing,

17. very boring, there was nothing, I mean there was no science about it at all!

18. Taking tickets off a machine and checking them and tapping them up and all...

19. there's so much of that you can take,

20. ...but yeah I was glad to get home and

21. I mean I'd love to say to anybody "Don't ever worry if you're 80th's coming up", you know what I mean?

22. it's not that... I'm not cocky I hope ...

23. I hope I'm not cocky

24. I'm happy in meself, you know.

25. Oh it's great... confidence is great,

26. I'm not shy anymore, I used to be shy, even as a child I was very shy

Coda

V2.2  Bridget's narrative

V2.2a  The family in Ballyfermot

1. but life went on as something similar to my own life, I was strict and

2. I did everything, patched, mended, sewed, cooked, baked, you name it

3. and they got good dinners,

4. and that was the nicest part of the day, I would sit down with them doing their homework
5. and at that time the butcher wrapped your meat, you know, you went down and it's already pre-packed now...
6. ... but he would give you three or four pages of white...
7. sheets of white paper for the meat,
8. so I would carefully unwrap it and I would have three clear pages...
9. so cut them in half for them to do their rough work
10. but we did the homework altogether and
11. it was just time then for dad coming in from work
12. but he didn't come in on time with the drink
13. but when the money was all gone he completely changed,
14. it was like - not a temptation, "Oh I have to get rid of it", you know that way,
15. ...that you felt guilty about it or something?
16. But he em stopped off after that and if he did break out after two or three years
17. [thumps the table] I'd come down on him, "I'm gone, I'm leaving.
18. and he'd say "Well I'll go with you" and he used to make fun of it then,
19. but it was very serious with me because I didn't see it at home, you know
20. ...maybe it was there but I never... we didn't know, weren't told about it

V2.2b    The carer

1. I now have three living in Ireland and six are away
2. I miss them very much, I miss my husband, he's twelve years dead.
3. I nursed him from 1988 to 1997 and he developed Parkinson's
4. But then he developed senility which they call Alzheimer's today, like you know,
5. and em it's sad, it's a sad story, like,
6. I miss him so much because
7. and the children could never take his place,
8. it's not the same, you're on a par with your husband, like you know, and nobody will ever take their places.
9. a year went by of my life, my sister came home from England
10. and she had a mastectomy
11. but I looked after her for a year
12. and ah, she went on very quick after that.
13. I knew she wasn't going to get better but
14. we did everything for her like.
15. And so she passed away
16. and I lost track of the outside world
17. because all the years of me life was with [husband]
    looking after him
18. and I was disappointed in my life, we had plans made
19. I didn’t know what to do, you know,
20. but I didn’t know what to do when he died, I didn’t
21. or none of the family, it was like
22. the first time to do something like that, it’s so strange.
23. It was then I noticed after that
24. I had nobody to talk to

V2.2c  It’s hard work for a lady
1. so, anything I ever knew about baking, sewing or making,
2. was through my parents.
3. My father used to get up an hour or two before he went to work
4. and he’d do two hours’ work in the garden
5. sewing the vegetables, spuds and what have you,
6. and in the evening coming from work
7. he would cycle four miles to the bog,
8. so we’d be already there from school, we’d go straight from school up to it
9. and we’d have to turn the turf and we’d have to catch it
10. It was so hard, I hated it
11. and my mother knew, I told her, and she said “Hate is not the right word, say you dislike it,
12. it’s hard work for a lady” she would say
13. and that would cheer me up
14. But we did that from the time we were [gestures] that size
15. and we used to bring a can of water to school with us
16. and I told the nun what it was,
17. we were going to the bog and that was just to help us out until we got our dinner in the evening
18. and the nun use to give often me sandwiches, “You’ve no sandwiches”,
19. I’d say “No, we’ll be down till six because my father will come in and he’ll send us home”,
20. I made it up because I didn’t want to take anything
21. …from the nun for fear of my mother saying
22. “Oh, you must have been talking about home life or something”, you know
23. but no they were very good, very kind they were.
24. so my mother used to say “Go up there, you might as well be up with the boys as I’ve all the housework done”
25. and she wouldn’t… she wasn’t able.
26. She hadn’t very good health
27. it was sad looking at her and she went like that.
28. Bad, bad health and
29. I still think about her and wonder how she ever got so far

Coda

V2.2d  A lot of things are gone out the window
1. I have respect for everybody because that's the way we were reared, AB
2. my mother was at the end of the Victorian era and we were trained like those people, OR
3. you couldn't go arm's length to your mother, that's as near as you...
4. you couldn't say I love you because there was no such thing.
5. No, you couldn't say that or you couldn't ask questions
6. and we grew up with that strict form of living
7. but that is... and I carry that all the time in my life so I don't think that ever changed
8. and the way of manners
9. which I'm sorry to say on the television you see, CA
10. do you ever see them passing a piece of paper, and they slap it out, you know
11. ...there's no such thing as thank you when they take it.
12. And I can't understand that, they're looking... all the world is looking in.
13. That I can't understand,
14. I often said it to my son, "Ah", he says "Mam, a lot of things are gone out the window" he said "you must remember that", R
15. but he has his children the way he was reared.

Coda

V2.2e  Ballyfermot
1. When we moved into it, like, it was AB
2. really like a ghetto,
3. they came from all parts of Dublin,
4. swarms of people came out
5. there was a lot of houses being broken into
6. and things like that you'd never dream of, you know,
7. but nowadays Ballyfermot has settled down and it's a nice place now even though people are saying to me, my family, you have to get...
8. I made it my home, that is my home,
9. my doctor's here this side and I've only to walk to the pharmacy over there, OR

13
10. I can get anything I want in any of the shops there, groceries, a butcher is there - two butchers, and there's five pubs!

11. ...and then it had the name of drugs

12. and that's after putting it down, like you know, since the drugs came in.

13. today I think they're gone very vicious you know ...

14. I think it's not alone in our place, it's all over Dublin and down the country is the same.

15. But as I said, Ballyfermot's got great schools and shops,

16. if your there on a Wednesday at one o'clock there's a movie on for the senior people

17. and you get a cup of coffee or tea and a biscuit if you want and you go in and the movie's on then till half past two.

18. and the people are like us, good people, they've all reared their families and they came from good families

19. the school is so modern and the library is wonderful.

20. And I've all that, like,

21. I don't find it exciting to tell you but to me ...

22. it's really great, they have the Civic Centre and there's a theatre in there now.

23. But, it's very peasant to live in now

24. and I'm very pleased with the progress of it

V2.2f  It's done me a world of good

1. but as I said as I got older I've made friends here, it's done me the world of good because

2. eh I was at home, four walls, no three, a window, three walls, people say four walls!

3. see lady next door was younger than me and she went off to work

4. and the people that live next door left and new people came in, they were young, very young

5. but she's always saying now she will do shopping for me or whatever, you know, but I don't like to impose on her

6. because... I had to work out my own way, like you know

7. I've got so far as I have but I began to get a bit depressed

8. and I broke my leg last October

9. and I hurt this one badly, fell on my hands

10. I used to sit like that in bed, I had a bad bad time, very bad, now, I was sick,

11. sick from pain, really sick, that I didn't care what happened me.

12. One of the nurses came when I came out of hospital, you see they have it all on computer I suppose,
13. she said to me “You don’t look the best”, like, she knew what had happened me,
15. "oh", when she brought me in here everybody was waving to me because I already knew them from shopping
16. but didn’t know their names or anything
17. ...so that's taken place now and I nearly know them all off now, you know,
18. but it's done me a world of good, I am...
19. But when I came down and I saw the people and we started playing bingo that in ever knew existed such a game, like you know [laughs],
20. I’m shouting “Fix!” now and all the rest of it, you know!

V2.2g  **Their hearts are bigger than their bodies**
1. I fell in the street, it was the worst thing I ever got because
2. I knew I was badly hurt, I couldn’t grip anything, my hands were hurt
3. and a little lad came along from school and he said... got down on his knees,
4. says he “Mrs" he said "you’re like my granny"
5. ...and I said “I know love”, says he “Will you lean on my back and you might be able to get up?”
6. and he pulled me and I said “Oh my arm is too sore", I said.
7. So he went down and he went into the shop and he said “Could anybody make a phone call?"
8. and they all came, I was badly cut, they came and they gave me tissues and glasses of water,
9. I was a celebrity for the day, the children stood by me and one little one gave me a puppy to hold ``
10. and a man said “you’re very cold?” and he took off his jacket and he put it on me.
11. Now, that's Ballyfermot people.
12. So I mean, what can I say about it?
13. You wouldn't get that treatment anywhere because if you look at the suburbs and all the new houses, new roads,
14. you don't see anybody, you could be dead on the road, like you know
15. ...but it's much different, like I said their hearts are bigger than their bodies.
Great sadness in our lives

1. There was two very sad things in my life, well four actually,
2. a boy and a girl, [grandchildren’s names]...
3. But she went off anyway and how the little devil had matches
4. they were choked with the fumes, you see, this stuff was in the padding in the thing
5. So, the two of them died in two weeks.
6. That was a terrible, heartbroken, because I stood for [grandson]
7. and I loved him so much.
8. Now, we got over that, they’re buried up in...
9. one was [granddaughter], she was 30 ...
10. ... she lost herself somewhere in the world,
11. So she was taken out of the canal two Christmases ago.
12. And the other one was my favourite lovely grandson
13. he took his life,
14. he hung himself,
15. and they were the saddest days I had because what made them more sad was
16. All our hearts were broken
17. and that was the worst thing in our lives, like you know,
18. and I don’t think there could be anything worse.
19. but I can see them, they’re here, you know.

I was always a survivor

1. I’m 82 now.
2. But I don’t tell them that here,
3. I think I’m the oldest swinger in town! [laughs]
4. but I never thought I would achieve that,
5. and I go back to my sister,
6. I looked after her, she was a nurse for 39 years
7. I loved her to bits, that was one of my arms gone, she was great.
8. So she said to me one day “How old do you think you’ll live to?”’, “Forever!”, I said
9. and I’m sorry I said it, here I am, I’m still here, I might do the 90 yet, I don’t know.
10. They’re all saying I will, like, the family ...
11. I’ll be 90 yet, they say,
12. because they want me to go to 100, well I don’t think...
13. well maybe if I have my mind, if my mind’s okay
14. possibly, if I went to 100 I’d go to 103!
15. [laughs] I have that outlook, you know,
16. ...it never worried me, it never worried me getting old
17. and when I bought the house after [husband] died
18. Because the delight I had and the girl shook me hand and came out
19. and she said "What are you thinking?", and I said
20. "I'm so happy that I have done that, only [husband] wasn't here", you know,
21. ...and I'd none of the family to feel... express my feelings to them how I felt
22. but it was done later on, they all rallied around and "Lets see the receipt", and all the rest of it.
23. They're a little bit worried about me being on my own
24. but then they say I was always a survivor.

V2.2j  Who's the auld wan looking at me?

1. Now, the worst one is you're downtown, well now I haven't been in town, but I only go to Liffey Valley,
2. and you know the windows up there?
3. One day I was passing, "Christ", I said "who's the oul wan looking out at me",
4. and I said "I'll have to shake myself and walk straight",
5. so I had the walking stick with me at the time and I went back again so I had raised my head and squared my shoulders.
6. I see the state of meself, "From now on you dress - you've plenty of clothes, dress up!",
7. so, now I bring the good clothes out and to hell with the old clothes, so ...
8. the other is then when people help you on the bus and you're getting on and they get up for you and you sit down
9. and I say "Thank you so much", like you know, and then I said "Do you know I was 82?", you now, and I say "I'm old!"
10. But, I'm not sensitive about it.
11. I laugh, I laugh I say "My God Bridget, you know, you're a picture for an aul hump!"

V2.2k  A chunk out of my beliefs

1. It is, it is, but I'm very disappointed in it.
2. My sister was away in New York
3. and she rang me in the middle of the night and I answered and I said "Are you okay?"
4. said she "I want you in the morning to go out and buy an Irish Times and dance on it",
5. “Okay, I’ll do it” I said, said she “You’re going to be shocked. Sorry, go back to sleep”, she said.
6. and I don’t like to talk about it but it was about Bishop [name]
7. and it was a little while after that it came out,
8. I was very hurt and I said “That’s the end of religion” like that, lots of people were very hurt, lots of people left it.
9. but I always thought that was for life, but I still say pray, I say my prayers, I still go to church, holy communion.
10. And my heart’s not in it sometimes when I don’t see...
11. it used to take ten minutes... nearly ten minutes to come out of the church,
12. but I think the time the priests called themselves “I’m Harry, you’re John”, like that...
13. they broke the rules everywhere, their discretion, they done away with it because
14. but that... on the paper it was exposed so nobody could miss it.
15. It took a big chunk out of my beliefs, like.

V2.3 Debbie’s narrative

V2.3a A bit of quietness
1. and they sent me to Ballyfermot! I hadn’t got an idea where I was going!
2. I said “Oh my God” when I came out here, I was in the wilds!
3. I kept saying to me mother “I’m not going to live here, I’m going to come back into town”,
4. and then you come out here you were in the wilds and you were saying 'the wilds!'
5. and then... then you got then and you just settled after, you know,
6. I used to love walking down Gardiner Street with the pram
7. especially in the summer and up Dorset Street
8. and the old people’d be out, the man and woman
9. and they’d be having their little glass of stout sitting there and they’d drink it and smoke the pipe
10. and they were in good fettle.
11. You know, it was lovely to see that,
12. but then you came out to Ballyfermot, they weren’t...
13. it was all younger, like meself, coming out, you know,
14. there was no really old people in Ballyfermot...
15. like, you were coming out from the town with all lights and all
16. and then you were coming into darkness! [laughs]
17. As I say you get used to it
18. but I was the type of a person then I’d get used to it...
19. ... you see, I always worked in shop work and I think that's why,
20. like, day after day I don't think you mind it then,
21. it'd be more a bit of quietness you needed.
22. That it'd be more of a relaxation somewhere...
23. I think when you were always kind of out...
24. ... and mixing through, like em, different people
25. it was then a relaxation when you come anywhere else,
26. you were going out looking for a relaxation, you know? Coda

V2.3b We remember you
1. Oh some of the young fellas of today, AB
2. they’d meet me and I’d forget all about them
3. because they’d be grown up,
4. and they say to me “Oh, we remember you in Sesame Street”
5. and I’d say “Well I don’t remember you” or
6. they’d say “We used to go in there from school for our sweets!” ... [laughs]
7. ... and it’s nice to realise that, like,
8. you’re gone on in years and you forget now
9. ... it's nice like, to know, like,
10. I was in the church one Saturday night, I’ll never forget it.
11. ah, there must have been about 20 of them in the church OR
12. like, I just thought there was something just on
13. until this young fella came over,
14. and he tipped me so he did on the shoulder
15. and he says “How’ya Mrs [name]” CA
16. and I said to him, “Oh God, I don't know you”, I said
17. “You don’t know me?” he said,
18. “well, I remember”, he said “when you were in Sesame Street serving us!”,
19. my face was like that because E
20. the priest came out about the Mass
21. and they were there saying “We remember when you were in Ballyfermot, we used to go in with our two pence and three pence worth of sweets!”,
22. the priest started laughing! [laughs]
23. God, it was funny!
24. But sure I’d forgot about them ...
25. ... they were grown up ...
26. Yeah, yeah, but it was so funny ...
27. ... I said “OH my God, if I’d known that I would’ve waited till Sunday Mass!” [laughs] ... R
V2.3c  **To have someone at the back of you**

1. I never had any problems with either neighbours or with

2. I wouldn’t fight over children ...

3. ... so I’ve got to say, like, that I got on with me neighbours ...

4. but when *she* came out *she* came out at the same time as me

5. and *she* was great at cooking

6. for *her* own children and then *she’d* give all the neighbours’ children

7. scones and jam and of course they’d be all waiting for *her*

8. *my mother* would bring me up me potatoes, the Lord have mercy on her,

9. so we’d share,

10. we always shared...

11. Yeah, we were all the same,

12. like, at that time *the men* hadn’t got the wages as they have now, you know that yourself,

13. like, they hadn’t got...

14. so it was very hard to manage especially, like, when you had young children ...

15. so you had to have someone at the back of you

16. so I have to say my parents *was at the back of me* so I was never too bad ...

17. ... *I could manage*, like, you know, thank God.

18. *I could manage,*

19. *you go out there and you mightn’t know a person*

20. *and then they start chatting with you ...*

21. they might know, say, “Oh I met you years back *with your pram* such a place” ...

22. so that’s what I say, it’s a great community, Ballyfermot.

V2.3d  **I had to cope**

1. You see, I’m a widow of over 30 years.

2. and I never married again and I reared six of them

3. ... *my youngest* was only nine.

4. you didn’t live by the State then,

5. *you got* £30 *to live on and pay rent*

6. *I just had to carry on, the same as anything...*

7. *my grandfather* died when *my mother* was only four

8. *it gave me* encouragement

9. *that when my grandmother could do it, well, I could do it...*

10. so I think, like, it has to go back in your family

11. *it kind of gives you* encouragement
12. although I'd six of them [laughs] to rear!
13. But you get through,
14. yes, you get through, like, you know ...
15. Yes you get through... but it does encourage you ...
16. ... I think whatever's in the family does encourage you,
17. when I see what my grandmother could do
18. ... I could go out and do the same
19. ... you know, and realise, well, they're your children
20. and you're the one that brought them into the world so
21. what's after happening in your life, well, there's nothing you can do,
22. you just have to carry on.
23. There's nothing you can do, you can't fly in the face of God,
24. you just have to take things as they come
25. but I can't say I was that bad [laughs] ...
26. I always could put it out for them ...
27. you won't get it off the government,
28. you got nothing free and fire and everything and clothing,
29. you got no clothes, I never got a free book for them,
30. free clothes nor nothing, you got nothing.
31. it was up to you what you wanted to do
32. because they used to say that I was always inclined to be like my grandmother so I probably took it from her, like, that you just go out independent ...
33. when you have it easy in your life and anything happens to you
34. you're not able to compete with it
35. but I think if you have seen a bit of hardship in your life
36. because you're kind of able to deal with it better,
37. I had to cope anyway [laughs] ...
38. I had to cope, you know ...

V2.3e   You just have to

1. but when I became a widow, you see,
2. like, I was only in me 40s,
3. so I think it makes a big difference, you know,
4. because you have your children to look after...
5. and you have to carry on so I think it makes a big difference,
6. I mean you can't just let the children go out and run around or...
7. you have to provide for them ...
8. to the best of your knowledge, like, you know?
9. And educate them to the best of your...
10. so, I think it makes a big difference in that way, you know?
11. You see, when they go on so many years, 50 or 25, right,
12. I didn’t see me 25th [laughs]!
13. So that means a big difference...
14. I probably hadn’t time to think ...
15. because I you have to get up in the morning and get children ready for school,
16. bring them into school, come up and do a few hours work,
17. go back, and collect them.
18. bring them home, cook their dinner for them, make sure they do their lessons,
19. get them to bed, it’s time for you for bed
20. or either you’ve a bit of washing to do, clothes or clean the house...
21. so then, it does make...
22. but then at the end of the day it does you no harm.

V2.3f You’ve got to use your own head
1. I’ve been at shop work since 17
2. ...gave me a lot of confidence because you met different people
3. and then I think when you’re on your own
4. ...after rearing a family or rearing a family
5. it gives you a lot of confidence in yourself too
6. ...that you’ve got to look after your children
7. and sit down and think what you’re going to do
8. ...and how you’re going to rear them and
9. not let anything happen to them.
10. you’re depending all the time on yourself to do this,
11. when you have no partner to depend on
12. ...so I think it does make a big difference, like, yeah.
13. I think so, yeah, like you haven’t got, like, your husband
14. or your partner to come along and say
15. “Well, lookit, how are you going to do this or that”,
16. you’ve got to use your own mind to know what you’re going to do
17. and how you’re going to face your children
18. or what way you’re going to bring them up
19. ...or what you’re going to do for them
20. so I think it does make a big difference, yeah, when you’re left on your own.
21. I think it does because you can’t depend on anyone
22. ...so you’ve got to use your own head.
23. You’ve got to have confidence, yeah.
I'm more free

1. No, I think that you get stronger, AB
2. ...that, like, you might in the beginning be a bit weak
3. but I think as time goes on you get stronger,
4. Ah yeah, I'd say I'm still getting stronger at different things.
5. I'd say what I couldn't do years back I'm able to do now! [laughs]
6. Well, in shop work, like,
7. there was things I couldn't go much dancing or go to cinemas or go out for walks or,
8. you know, it was like from bed to work and rear your children
9. so I'd say now
10. that I'm more free to do what I want to do.
11. ...it is a good time in me life, yeah,
12. that you can go off and do what you want to do and you're free.

Everybody should have fun

1. I think everybody, young or old, should go out and enjoy themselves AB
2. and I think especially elderly people,
3. they should be able to get out and do what they want to do
4. ...and have that freedom,
5. and not be afraid of anything, you know?
6. Yeah, they're afraid to dress up, not like me the other night! Dressing up! [laughs]
7. they didn't know me! I dressed up as a police woman
8. I wasn't doing anything
9. ...and they were saying to me "Are you not dressing up?"
10. and I said "Ah no" and then
11. at the last minute I said "Oh here, for devilment I'll dress up and see will they know me"
12. and they didn't know me! [laughs]
13. They were all getting a good laugh,
14. and then on the way down I get into the bus with them
15. and I said to them "I'll get in before yous" and it was a coloured driver was on it
16. and I just got in, like, and I just said em "Oh excuse me I'm checking your bus upstairs and down"
17. and he says "Go ahead" and I said [laughs],
18. I just looked at him amazed [laughs]
19. and they all started laughing, they thought it was funny!
   [laughs]
20. and I said "I'm only joking!",
21. I said "I'm dressed up, I was at a party"
22. I had the shirt and I had the tie and I had the whole -
23. he didn't know, he thought I was a Ban Garda!
24. It was so funny
25. and then I went back to him and he started laughing
26. and I said "No" I said "I'm only at a party", I said "I'm only joking!",
27. and it's fun.
28. That's what I find, it's fun.

V2.3i  I don't plan nothing
1. No, well I just wouldn't want anything out of my life now,
   AB
2. I just keep going on the way I just feel myself
3. I wouldn't want anything out of it
4. as long as I have me health and I can go out that's the main thing in life,
   OR
5. ...that's the way I find it,
6. I'm quite happy at that, yeah.
7. I never think of the future [laughs],
   CA
8. ...that's one thing I never do,
9. I never think of the future,
10. I just take it day by day and week by week,
11. as it comes but I never plan nothing
12. or I never think of the future what's in front of me because none of us don't know ...
   E
13. ... so I don't plan nothing.
14. No, I don't plan or I don't have anything for the future coming,
   R
15. I just wait to see
16. ... yeah, what comes.
   Coda

V2.4  Emma's narrative
V2.4a  People getting control over their lives
1. I've always been interested in caring for people
   AB
2. and the development of people, I em...
3. I spent 11 years in Finglas working with women in the home help service
4. I was instrumental in organising lot of training for women,
5. giving them opportunities in life,
6. I love to see people getting control of their lives and doing things
and so I... to this day when I meet some of them it's a
great joy to see where they have got to, you know,
so I was 64 when I came here to live here and em...
this was a new estate so we were...
the Corporation asked us to come here
and it was to try and, you know, integrate the people
and help them to get
things going so that's where...
it wasn't a job as such, it was just being there for and
helping people...
being in the background and helping people
so now I find myself getting more involved with older
people in Ballyfermot
in the sense that it's with them, I do the Senior Helpline,
we were doing a positive ageing 8 weeks that was...
even though over the years I would have done a lot of
different types of training and that
but it's always good to do another bit and you get,
it's about positive ageing
[name] and myself started the Pal course which is the
Go for Life, you know, it's the exercise for older people
I'm always interested because I love walking and
I do a bit of swimming, I'm not a great swimmer but I do
love exercise really, I've always...
so I'd be glad to do anything that keeps me fit.

**V2.4b  Community development training**

1. Yeah, we did, we did a lot of training,
2. in those days there was more public health nurses and
there was more,
3. so, with her help... and then I had two other women who
em...
4. one was a marriage counsellor but she had done a lot
of personal development
5. and then this other woman did something else,
communications
6. then I had a local woman in Finglas who was a fantastic
housekeeper
7. and she used to do budgeting
8. we used to do six weeks training with them ...
equipping them to be home helps or carers and also,
but for their own life skills, you know,
...and that lasted a few years so that put a great
foundation
for the women ...
and then they were going in and helping other families,
14. how to budget and how to help them, you know?
15. Like, one woman that we had gone into was eh...
16. I think she might have been very depressed or something,
17. she was a mother of a family but she wasn’t coping
18. ...and we had sent somebody,
19. she was a home help but she was also geared for...
20. she was able to help her with budgeting and
21. helped that woman get back on her feet
22. and then she became a home help so it was a great ...

V2.4c You can only do your bit
1. I’d have a lot of concerns about the Church,
2. I’d have a lot of concerns about the state of the world
3. yeah, to where we’re going as a country.
4. Yeah, they’re the kind of global concerns that I’d have.
5. you can only do your bit,
6. your own little bit,
7. you can’t change anyone, you know what I mean?
8. what I feel about the whole area of peace,
9. if you can be at peace yourself well at least you can send out waves of peace, you know?
10. So that’d be my kind of philosophy in life.
11. No, I give out about them and all that!
12. But I mean there’s nothing I can do about them,
13. you know what I mean,
14. there’s nothing I can do about them, no.
15.

V2.4d Find your gifts
1. I’d be saying to young people, em
2. make the most of your schooling and education,
3. I’d also be very concerned about people maybe,
4. you know, who are struggling with school or that,
5. that, em you know, where are your gifts?
6. ...everybody has gifts
7. so develop their giftedness.
8. I have a young friend of ours whose mother had died
9. and he went through a bad old patch, he was 14 when his mother died
10. and dropped out of school and
11. was really starting to dabble in drugs and drink
12. but anyway... somebody... his mother was looking after him...
13. ... and now he’s got an apprenticeship as a carpenter and he loves it
14. and is making a go of life and I... you know what I mean
15. Obviously school wasn’t quite his thing
16. but now he loves his work, you know?
17. So, that’s what I’d be saying to them,
18. where are your gifts?
19. Develop your gifts, you know.
20. everyone has gifts but so many of them are lost,
21. it's sad when you see that, you know,
22. so that's what I'd be thinking,
23. encourage people to find their gift.

Coda

V2.4e There was something drawing me

1. and like, yet they didn't influence me,
2. they never tried to influence me
3. but they were very practical women
4. I knew my father, he was six months,
5. and I knew he was dying
6. and, like, I was looking after him so I suppose
7. nursing was coming into it in the sense I was doing a lot...
8. but em no, they never influenced me, I always felt that,
9. because I remember another congregation asking me did I know what I was going to do,
10. and I thought “I don't want to be a nun!”, you know,
11. there was no way, I didn't want to be a nun
12. but I remember em the Sisters, they were just such practical kind women
13. ...that that's what influenced me and it was afterwards then
14. after he died and he was buried and all that
15. and I had an interview with Nelly Mulcahy, the famous dress designer ...
16. I think I would have got a job with her alright but I didn't take it up
17. ...and shortly afterwards I entered, you know?
18. ... and I also would have said that I made this decision very quickly
19. but when I look back on my life there was something drawing me,
20. I don't know what it was
21. but I suppose I have a great interest in people
22. ...and I like working with people
23. and I've stayed there to this day so that's ...

Coda

V2.4f And I'm as human as anyone!

1. Then I would have entered in Clondalkin
2. because that's where the novitiate was ...
3. it was very strict in those days
4. and you were never to come home
5. and, you know, the religious life was very strict
6. and you weren't even meant to say who you were, you know.
7. Really when you look back you say "Thank God I survived it" that's the way I see it...
8. and I'm as human as anyone, you know!
9. But one of the great things about our work over the years was
10. we didn't have any institution,
11. we were always out working among the people
12. and I think that's what kept us ...
13. ... any way normal, you know what I mean?
14. I was only living down four miles away,
15. but you didn't say to someone else that entered with you, you know, the other Sisters,
16. who you were or where you were from, you didn't ...
17. and after Vatican II things started to change and we...
18. I was in the full habit and then
19. we still had a veil but we were showing a bit of hair
20. and we had a grey dress,
21. we were in black and white up to that,
22. we were grey that was so many inches from the ground, you know what I mean,
23. so it was kind of a bit more normal of a thing
24. and slowly by degrees it ...
25. yeah, some Sisters found it very hard ...
26. I think once I made up my mind I changed it and that was it
27. and then I got the choice of going back to my own name ...
28. which I was very happy to go back to because I had a man's name,
29. it was given to you, you know what I mean?
30. but em... then I got the choice
31. and I always loved my name
32. I was really pleased to go back to that

V2.4g Out of the institution

1. No, no, we came back out and I was out in Dun Laoghaire for a year
2. and I nursed on the district out there ...
3. we had motorcycles, we had Honda 50s ...
4. ... and we used to go out on our Hondas!
5. And I loved Dun Laoghaire, going up and down Dalkey and around,
6. I mean there was a great sense of freedom, you were out...
7. ...you might be out in all weathers on your bicycle but on a fine day it was lovely...
then I went to Ennis that's Ennis, County Clare, in 1971. That was really the highlight of my... I was living in a small house like this, it was going back out of the institution to a more normal life... And that was a great, then I had a car at that stage, so I really got to know Clare very well and I made some great friends in Clare... And that was a great, then I had a car at that stage, so I really got to know Clare very well and I made some great friends in Clare... that was a great time because it was really only building up the home help service so we used to do the training with the home helps but we also did personal development, you know, So over the years then I did different trainings myself, like, so I would have done a lot of work on myself, you know, I'm still working with the community in the sense that I'm involved in different bits and pieces of things and that you know I often think I'm trying to be a good neighbour and a listening ear and you know... you know, that's where the Celtic Tiger got in, they didn't see the need for training, the need for... but we got some grants for training but the women weren't interested... I found that different from, like, Finglas would have been in the 80s and the early 90s where they couldn't get enough of development and training, now, we put on a few courses here, you know, Just they thought they knew it all... they didn't have it, because you can see them now, some of them, they really don't know how to be mothers, they don't know how to be parents, Like, some of the children... you see them grown up now are drug addicts, you know what I mean?
18. And, like, we were to be a model estate when we moved in here,
19. there was rules and regulations about moving into this estate and there was to be no drugs and all of that
20. well, it's not too bad but there is, there is drugs and
21. I feel a real grandmother,
22. I've seen these young lads growing up,
23. are quite... I think one is even dealing now in drugs, you know what I mean?
24. And it's very hard, 17/18 and it's
25. very hard to see, you know...
26. the parents have no control over them
27. so that's the difference,
28. ...that's the difference, I would see
29. in the few years
30. that has made such a difference to them, you know...

V2.4i The poverty was unbelievable

1. there was real poverty then in those days...
2. ... it was like the early days in Ballyfermot ...
3. ... the poverty was unbelievable.
4. we'd go in, like, mothers were sick a lot ...
5. ... and they had their babies at home
6. half eight and you'd go up and get the children out to school and
7. then you'd clean up the house
8. and we'd come back again in the afternoon to cook them something when they'd come in from school, you know,
9. and em... but like sometimes you'd only have ordinary pudding rice, now,
10. ...You'd be making it on water to make them a dinner, you know?
11. But there was real poverty in those days, you know,
12. we came to Ballyfermot in the 50s
13. down in Sevenoaks we would have had a sewing class
14. and cookery classes and that, for the women
15. ...before, before the State
16. the State started to take over
17. even when I was doing the home help service
18. I was never employed in my life as such ...
19. ... my work was always done voluntary,
20. like, we might have got grants and things like that
21. you know that I have a non-contributory pension today,
22. ... like, we went into the homes,
23. ...but it was a great privilege to be going into people's homes, you know.
24. I just remember the real poverty, you know,
25. Oh there was real poverty now, the poverty was unbelievable, yeah.
26. It's come a long way, yes, it's come a long way, yeah.

**V2.4j  Reconnecting with family**

1. two stepbrothers and a stepsister, OR
2. the three of them would have always kept contact with me ..., CA
3. ... but the eldest of that family, E
4. his wife died and they were both 85
5. and I was only up the road from them
6. I'd drop down, I'd be able to drop down and have a cup of coffee
7. ... and I started going on holidays with him,
8. he had ten years,
9. he didn't die until three years ago,
10. ... but he lived life to the full that ten years,
11. so that was a lovely...
12. that was a very good experience for me because
13. I really, I got very close to him and that
14. so that was a good thing.
15. and I'd be very close and it's those three, the grandchildren
16. and especially that their granddad has died, I'm the senior and
17. they'd be very good to me, you know.
18. and it was only when he died,
19. it was the priest at the funeral said something about
20. his beloved sister whom he idolised
21. and I never realised
22. so obviously he had talked about me, what we had...
23. you know, so that was special,
24. yeah, he was a special man, yeah.
25. yeah, but I was very happy that that ten years, like,
26. we had ten wonderful years, you know,

**Coda**

**V2.4k  Grow old as you've lived**

1. and I'll never forget eh...
2. ah it's years ago, many years ago em...
3. I was a young sister at the time and
4. I was talking to this old lady,
5. a very wise woman I would call her,
6. ...and I was just feeling a bit down in myself
7. she just looked at me and she said,
8. ...and she said "I'm sure you know a lot of old people
9. who are disgruntled and unhappy with life and that"
10. and I said "Oh yeah, of course"
11. and she said "I'm sure you know plenty that are happy"
12. and she said to me "Well, you've a choice now,"
13. you'll grow old, how you live your life".
14. So it's something I never...
15. I do think there's a lot of...
16. there is people that are sad and lonely
17. Now, it might also be that they've lost family and they're very alone and that,
18. but there's also very resourceful people
19. ...who will cope with life
20. ...and cope with the difficulties of life and yet keep the bright side out.
21. you grow old as you've lived your life,
22. If you've been someone that has been grumbling and complaining and sad all your life
23. you're probably not going to change when you get older.
24. Yes, it would be a philosophy, yeah.
25. as I grow older I'm much more contented in myself and that.

V2.4i  God is all around me

1. It's a deep faith that really came OR
2. I'd say my dad was the main... you know,
3. ...a great belief,
4. I have great belief
5. that there's somebody there looking after me.
6. and I've a great belief in the people that have died
7. they're also looking out for you
8. ...and that's something that yeah,
9. that's something that's very deep in me ...
10. Oh it has grown deeper, CA
11. ...it has definitely grown deeper,
12. it's definitely grown deeper, yeah, definitely.
13. On a day to day basis it's just part of my life E
14. and like it's not about just [thinks],
15. oh it's very hard to describe it...
16. ...my faith is all around me, you know,
17. ...like, if I go for a walk nature,
18. ...people I meet,
19. you meet God all around you in everyday life,
20. ...you now, that's where...
21. ...it's part of life, R
22. it's part of my life,
23. I don't put... it's not in an apartment,
24. you know what I mean,
25. ...it's just part of life,
26. it's just part of my life and it is meaning
27. and it's somehow...
28. I find it very hard to describe
29. ...but it is part of my life
30. it's all around me, it's part of me, yeah.

V2.5 Gillian's narrative

V2.5a Anxiety

1. And I've a hearing aid AB
2. I get afraid if I hear a noise so I put it back in to see what the noise is, you know OR
3. ... it could be my own footsteps on the ground CA
4. but it frightens me, you know, it just frightens me. E
5. So, when I was in hospital the last time
6. I told them how I was feeling, like, I was just feeling sick, being sick,
7. I know there's millions of people like me
8. ...but I just didn't want to do anything
9. ...and I said I would have liked to do something
10. And this is why they sent for the psychiatrist for to talk to me and see, like, what was going on in my mind.
11. But it's something you can't explain to somebody.
12. it's just a terrible queer feeling, like,
13. ...it's a feeling of isolation
14. and it's a feeling of wanting to be able to do something that you were able to do years ago and you can't do it
15. ...and it's eating you, it's really eating you away because you can't,
16. ...you just want to be able to do something,
17. some of the little things that you used to be able to do years ago
18. but some days I do try
19. ...and then the next day I'm dying.
20. I'm afraid to tell them anything in case they put me into hospital somewhere, you know ...
21. ... I'm afraid to say anything in case that it might be just, R
22. hopefully it's not something that's getting worse,
23. it's something that's... a phase I'm going through in my age ...
24. I know you're doing a survey on old age but it's part of old age,

V2.5b It stops you going out that door

1. I used to enjoy going to Galway ...

Coda
2. ... I went to Galway maybe three or four times a year
3. and... with neighbours ...
4. and before this thing started in me chest
5. and I remember going down and I got this pain
6. and I went to a doctor and she gave me an injection and she told me it was a trapped nerve...
7. "Well", she said "go home to your rest... to wherever you're staying, your hotel, and go to see your own doctor when you're home".
8. ...and when I went to the doctor again he said it was an irregular heartbeat and there was no cure for it,
9. ...that it would come and go and it'd...
10. it could knock you for six, kind of, strip you off your feet and no cure
11. but it's the worst thing that I can explain that has happened to me
12. ...because I wake up during the night with the pain
13. ...and I put the machine on, I put the oxygen on and I lie there in the bed,
14. it's like someone with a rope putting it around here and pulling it and pulling it
15. and I can't catch me breath and I can't breathe and I can't... no matter what I do
16. I'm fighting with God and I'm giving out now and I'm praying at the one time.
17. I have it all the time, I was in James' five times in three months,
18. ...the people that I used to go on holidays with, I can't go with them ...
19. ... because I couldn't expect them for to be ...
20. ... there for me like, if anything happened during the night
21. so it means I go nowhere.
22. You know, it stops you going out, going out that door.

V2.5c Panic attack
1. Yeah, I would love one thing in me life if I could have it, would be to walk down to the shops ...
2. I just can't... I've done everything,
3. but I couldn't do it.
4. I would love to be able to just put my coat on and walk to the end...
5. I mean I walked up it millions and millions of times bringing the children to school, going to the shops
6. and it's only in the past two or three year,
7. I was knocked down with a dog ...
8. I was coming from the shops and I had two bags of em... messages
9. ...and the dog run at me, knocked me down, cut the two knees out of me,
11. I started screaming and the dog run off with one of the bags with the meat in it
12. and that was the first of my panic attacks, I started to shake, I started to cry, I wet myself...
13. ... oh God I was in a terrible state and my husband wasn't there at the time
14. so my son [son], he came down and he said "What happened you Ma?",
15. but he just said "Ma, you want to try and get over that because if you don't get over that now"
16. he said "you're never going to get over it"
17. and I said, "Yeah, I will. I'll be grand tomorrow" but I wasn't,
18. every time I thought to put me coat on to walk down that road,
19. I'd get a panic attack and I'd start crying and I'd...
20. so I never walked down...
21. ...and that's three year ago.

V2.5d  Coping with pain
1. To be sick is the worst thing because at your age, you say, this could be it.
2. I'm not worried about dying ...
3. it is a desperate pain, it's...
4. I have an irregular heartbeat and every so often it beats too fast and it has the muscles around me heart are sore and bruised from beating so hard and then the pain is absolutely...
5. so that's why I've been in hospital four times now in the past four months and ...
6. I just said it, like the way I'm talking to you I said it to one of the doctors one time
7. and they were saying how many out of 20 would the pain be and I said 20
8. and he said "Oh my God, is it that bad?"
9. and I said "yeah, it is bad" and he said "What way do you feel when you get it?",
10. and I must have done the actions,
11. I must have done everything because he was able to tell me afterwards, I don't remember,
12. he said I said "I'd love to fucking cut the thing out",
13. And he said "Your whole expression changed, he said he said "we sent for ...", that's why they sent me to mental health
14. ...because they were afraid that I would... he said to me,
17. like, "And then you die if you cut it out, like, I mean, you die" and I said
18. "Yeah, I know, but I wouldn't care, the pain'd be gone"
19. he said "But you'd be gone too, like, you'd be dead",
20. I said "Yeah, but wouldn't I be better off? No pain,
21. sure there's no use in living", I said "if you're living in pain all your life".
22. I said "I'm in fear every day I wake that I'm going to get this pain"
23. ...and I have given out to our Lord, to God, to Padre Pio, to every saint that ever was
24. ...and I prayed to them and I've done everything I could, angel on your shoulder and all that and I've asked the whole lot of them,
25. ...but for the past two years they were giving me the wrong medication.
26. there were only giving me 1.7 heart tablet and I should have been on 7.5.
27. Two year and that's how I was in hospital four times in four months
28. so that was that and that's my one great wish,
29. That's the only thing I would want.
30. I wanted that pain to stop.
31. I don't care what else.

*R*

V2.5e  *It's not worth rearing them*

1. Yesterday I was... went to the shop with my daughter in law
2. and I happened to be looking at the headlines on the *Evening Herald*
3. and this woman came over
4. and she said "Oh you're lovely and warm, your hands are lovely and soft",
5. now, I wouldn't say she was much older than I was, I am,
6. ...but God help her, I felt so sorry for her, she was like that...
7. I'm not perfect but she was dirty,
8. I'd love to bring her home and give her a good wash, put clean clothes on her, you know that way?
9. And she looked at me and she said to me "You look lovely" and I said "Thanks very much"
10. and she said "You're spotless" and I said "So are you",
11. and she said "No I'm not",
12. she said, "I'm not able to wash meself now" ...
13. she said "Don't get me wrong, love but" she said "have you got a family?"
14. and I said "Yeah" and she said "They're not worth rearing"

*Coda*

CA
15. and I thought maybe that there was something wrong with her, maybe that she was going a bit queer or something
16. but she said “Do you know what it is love” she said, “they are all very selfish”,
17. like, I didn’t know what to say, I said “Yeah, I know”. Em...
18. “Do you remember”, she said “when your mother was alive?”,
19. and I said “I do, I remember well”, I said “I loved going to my mother”
20. and I always had something for her and she’d say “God Bless you”, ”God bless you”
21. and this woman, she said “My family will come in and they’ll say ‘Hello Mam, how are you?’, give me a kiss on the cheek,
22. they haven’t got time for a cup of coffee,
23. and I said to her “Most of them work,
24. ...have young children” and
25. she said “No, don’t make excuses”, she said “Yours might be like that but mine is not”.
26. And I said “No”, I said “they’re all the same, mine is the same”,
27. I said “they come in ...”, you see the car coming, oh that’s grand, here’s somebody”
28. and em... “Just dropped in for a minute Ma, been up in such a place ... how’s me Da?
29. We’re going now, cheerio, God Bless, bye”
30. and I say “Well, that’s a visit”.
31. I said “they all do that”
32. and she said “my God, she said ”isn’t it terrible?
33. Imagine all the years you put into your life, into rearing them?”
34. And I said “It’s sad”, that there isn’t the same community now as there was years ago.
35. You know, like, I remember if I went to see my mother I’d go for the day
36. ...you know, I wouldn’t just walk in and say “How are you Mam”,
37. I used to love being able to buy her bits and pieces
38. get her bits and pieces
39. and her face’d light up when I’d walk in

**V2.5f**  *There’s no community*

40. ...it has changed an awful lot,
41. when we moved up there we were all teenagers, well I was only 19
42. ...and most of the people were young with young children,
43. ...bringing them to school in the morning, going down and collecting them at lunchtime and bringing them home in the evening
44. and out talking and mixing with the neighbours and maybe helping them
45. ...if someone was sick we'd help each other
46. but that's gone.
47. There's no community in Ballyfermot.
48. there's actually only three people on the road that was in it when I came up,
49. the rest of the people have all died
50. so there's nobody to talk to,
51. you see no-one when you open the door ...
52. ...only young faces of all the young couples that's moved in
53. so there's no community whatsoever in it, no.
54. at times I do say that I hate it.
55. Yeah, I do hate it because there's nothing.
56. there's nothing, like years ago you'd walk out the door and someone'd pass by and say "How are you Gillian?"
57. and the woman across the road would say "Gillian, are you coming over for a cup of tea?"
58. or "I'm going to the shops, do you need anything?"
59. but they're all gone
60. ...and it's very sad to walk out your door and see all strangers,
61. all young people that we don't know and they don't know us
62. ...and we're never going to know them because we're too old for them to talk to us, you know that way?
63. but, like, today you wouldn't even see anyone going to the shop,
64. ...you could be standing at your door all day waiting to see someone that you know
65. and no-one would pass by only strangers
66. so you couldn't say to a stranger, like, "Could you get me a message?".

V2.5g  Things can come back
1. ...so we went to live in East Wall and as I said I was still the only girl
2. ...and I had two brothers and then me dad took sick.
3. And he was in hospital, he had TB.
4. And I remember I must have been about eleven, 12 maybe
5. and I remember going up to see him in hospital
6. ... and I remember going into the hospital and looking at him and he had his jaw bone sticking out of him.
7. I'll never forget it, I'm 80 years of age and I'll never forget it.
8. he said "If you don't stop crying" he said "I'll get you put out and I won't let you come up to see me anymore" ... CA
9. ... and I... I mean... what an awful thing to say, E
10. I remember coming down the North strand and I remember saying...
11. I was with me pal
12. and I remember saying "If my Da dies I'm throwing myself in the Liffey".
13. And years and years and years after my son done it, R
14. my son committed suicide.
15. In the water, in the canal,
16. like, it was a speech that I said when I was twelve
17. came true when I was 50.
18. Yeah, the way things, like, come...
19. ...can kind of come back, you know

V2.5h You never forget
1. I would have had ten children. AB
2. I had seven then and em poor [son] then
3. ...he just flipped God love him.
4. ...people will say to me, "Oh time, you'll get over all these things",
5. you do get over them
6. ...but you never forget them.
7. You know, they're always there and there's always something,
8. ...to remind you of it
9. and I wouldn't take him back... I wouldn't ask God to bring him back for the world.
10. Not the way things are going now.
11. Well, I mean first of all his marriage broke down...
12. ...he'd one baby and his wife changed her religion to Jehovah Witness...
13. Lovely wasn't he?[looks at photograph]
14. He was a real natural, he'd beautiful blonde hair, big blue eyes...
15. he left his wife, she wouldn't change,
16. ...and she wouldn't get her baby christened
17. it was upsetting us but it wasn't really up to us
18. ...he wanted to get his little girl christened but
19. she wouldn't get her christened, anyway,
20. So he tried and he did try to accept the way things were going
21. and he tried twice, twice ...
22. he tried it and then...
23. then the third time...
24. and it was a beautiful summer’s day,
25. and he was passing by, he wasn’t living with me
26. and um... I said “Where are you off to?”,
27. he said “Going fishing tomorrow Ma”, he said “I’m going over for a lend of a life jacket”,
28. going for a life jacket and that night he drowned himself.
29. Where’s the... there’s no logic in it, is there?
30. You know, there’s not

V2.5i It was a lot to take on
1. Mam was after having [sister], my sister,
2. and she was only something like four pound
3. ...when she was born because me Mam was pregnant with twins
4. and she lost one of them.
5. I remember I went into me mammy’s room and blood on the floor
6. and she said to me “Gillian, run up quick and get Mrs [name]
7. and tell her to bring clean sheets, I’m after walking on a nail”
8. and I run, and I mean run,
9. What really happened her was cigarettes were rationed ...
10. ...and hers were gone, and my dad still had some in the wardrobe
11. ...and she got up on a chair and she tried to prise open the top of the wardrobe
12. and when she did she broke the...
13. ... but I didn’t know what... as I said, I was that innocent
14. because I’d no sisters, I’d no-one to talk to, to tell me anything
15. ...and I was out in the street all that day,
16. I didn’t know what was going on,
17. doctors and nurses and that coming and going,
18. and I was brought upstairs to see them
19. and the next morning I went in for to see them and there was only one baby,
20. The little boy died, he was the biggest and he’d died during the night
21. and then [sister] was only a little... about that size,
22. the smallest little thing I ever seen
23. Mam was very sick for a long time
24. so it meant I'd to mind the baby and look after me Mam,  
25. look after me two brothers and the house  
26. and it was a lot to take on, like, for a... only 12 I was at the time...

**V2.5j History repeating**

1. it was like history repeating itself,  
2. I'd five children and I got TB...  
3. and I was taken to Ballyown sanatorium and I spent a year there.  
4. and when I came home then the children didn't know me...  
5. ... the baby was only four months, 4½ months and when I was going away my Mam took him  
6. and that's the lad that committed suicide...  
7. I remember being in the hospital  
8. ...and they said as soon as I started putting on a bit of weight they'd let me home.  
9. and I couldn't... I couldn't even take to the treatment,  
10. so I remember one night a neighbour off the road wrote to me  
11. and said that me husband wasn't minding the children...  
12. ... [whispers] he was drinking.  
13. ... and I broke down and started crying  
14. I just asked them "Will you let me go home for a day? Just one day"...  
15. and em... they said "On one condition, that you come back at six and not attempt to sleep with anybody"  
16. ...so I promised them faithfully that I would  
17. but when I went home I looked at all the little faces,  
18. ...no way could I go back.  
19. I never went back  
20. so I never finished me treatment but I was very, very lucky  
21. ... I had caught it in time,  
22. but I was only home and I was pregnant  
23. and I wasn't strong enough, I lost it.  
24. And then after about three years I became pregnant again  
25. and I lost it again.  
26. Yeah, I lost three.  
27. so maybe it was God's way of giving me a break...  
28. But, I didn't have another baby for five/six years.  
29. And then I had another one then six years later again
30. and then another one six years later but the one six years later died.
31. But, out of the whole lot then I would have had ten.

**V2.5k  Only a woman with seven children**

1. .. yeah, well we never got an extension
2. ...but we never extended because,
3. I don’t know, my husband never kind of settled down, you know that way?
4. Never wanted to put another brick in the wall that
5. ...you know, just an odd kind of a person,
6. everyone else extended their houses and buying cars and ...
7. ... I’d sit looking out the window, “Oh Mrs-such-a-body’s husband’s after buying a car,
8. Mrs-such-abody’s after getting an extension,
9. he never... he never... I don’t know what kind of a man he was, like,
10. and I kind of was too young,
11. he’s eight years older than I am
12. he never wanted to improve anything.
13. ...you know, just get on with life, just put up with it.
14. Like, if I was pregnant and “Oh it’s only another child, another baby, and it’ll have to be reared and all”,
15. it’s now I kind of look back...
16. ... what should have been
17. ...how it might have been if I had’ve spoke up
18. ...maybe I was too soft for to...
19. ...yeah, I was too soft, for to let things go.
20. I never fought up for myself.
21. You know that way, I just kind of went along with...
whatever he said was right.
22. I can’t do anything about it, I can’t change it, like, who was I?
23. Just a woman with seven children so...
24. I had nothing, I’d no way of doing anything
25. but, like, other women were more outgoing
26. it was probably too the way I was reared,
27. and I was a daddy’s child, a daddy’s girl
28. ...being the only girl
29. then when he went then as I was saying
30. I didn’t have much of a life,
31. ...you know, I’d nothing... no-one to talk to ...
32. ... Mam never told me nothing about sex, about periods, about anything
33. so I was kind of ignorant
34. ...you know, I think an awful lot of people years ago was like that.
35. it was the Fifties
36. That was life and everyone’s life was the same,
...and there was nothing, there was nothing,
so I suppose we were lucky to get by,
to get through it.

**V2.5I  Marriage**

1. I told you in the last... the last episode I was talking to you he was...
2. he was an alcoholic and then he changed over then he was a gambler,
3. it was a big worry on me because he was losing a lot of money gambling
4. ...and he was coming home and he was taking it out on me.
5. but in the meantime wasn’t I taken into hospital again?
6. And I blamed it on him because he upset me that much
7. that I got myself into an awful state
8. and I brought on an attack
9. so when he came up to see me in the hospital he looked a bit sheepish
10. and my son said to me “Mam, I had a talk with Da and he’s giving up gambling”.
11. because what I used to do was I was a member of the Credit Union ...
12. I’d get a loan of 20,000 and I’d give him 10,000...
13. I would... what I done was I paid €3,000 for the windows in the back of the house out of mine
14. and bought bed clothes and bits and pieces and that’s how my money went
15. and he was gambling and gambling and gambling and lost every penny,
16. so there was a lot of disturbance in the house, like, over it
17. and I was saving for a shower you see,
18. because I’m not able to get into the bath,
19. ...so he... about a month ago he just said “Will you do me a favour?”
20. and he’s nice when he wants anything, you know that way
21. He doesn’t give me any money towards the housekeeping...
22. he keeps his old age pension and I have mine,
23. Em... I said “What? What do you want me to do?”
24. he said “I want you to go down to the Credit union and get a loan”
25. so me son had said “Mam, no matter what me Da asks you, say no,
26. ...say no because he’s going to do the same thing again”,
27. so I said no.
28. So, he started roaring and shouting and all this business
29. so again, I took an attack, I was taken to hospital again because I can’t stick him, I just can’t look at his face,
30. like, he wants everything...
31. and I’m saying to myself, like, I gave up cigarettes to save money to get a shower,
32. I still haven’t got the shower.
33. All the money he has spent I could have bought a whole shower place,
34. I could have bought the whole building!
35. Instead, I’ve nothing for it,
36. so when he started off on Tuesday morning I...
37. “Will you please do me a favour? Lend me a few hundred pound”,
38. and I handed him €500 and I said “There you are”,
39. and I’m saying to myself “there’s me shower gone”,
40. like, I won’t be getting that for a long time if I ever get it
41. so he has this habit now of saying,
42. leaving his cigarette for it to burn on the side of the thing and I said,
43. em I said “Look at your cigarette” and he said “Nobody died”,
44. so this is a new thing now.
45. he’ll say “Nobody died”,
46. so I just say “Right, right, right, nobody died

V2.5m  I’m getting the better of him
1. Just be happy, just be happy with their life
2. and don’t be always wanting and wanting and wanting
3. because that’s what’s wrong with the youth today,
4. they get married, they want this, they want a washing machine, they want a dishwasher they want...
5. ... I mean, we’re 60 years married, we didn’t...
6. I still don’t have a dishwasher ...
7. and, like, we still got on, we still...
8. so I mean my advice would be to be happy and agree with each other
9. ...you know, the same to you now when you get married to your chap
10. ...but it is like that, if you go against somebody you’re making things worse for yourself ...
11. like, if your boyfriend says to you em... “We’ll go to such a film tonight and we’ll see it”
12. and you don’t want to go to that say,
13. well how do you get out of that?
14. there’s a certain way of saying it to him...
15. ... like, if you say to him "Did we not see that film before?"
16. I'm sure we seen that, would it not be better if we went to see such a thing
17. try and not cause a scene or an argument ...
18. ... and just make a laugh of it.
19. I'm doing that now and I find I'm better off, ...
20. when he'd say something to me I would react like and roar back at him
21. ... now I don't, when he says something to me I say "That's right, yeah of course, you're always right [husband], yeah"
22. and I turn me back and say "you old bastard!"
23. like, he does say to me "Are you gone queer or something?"
24. and I know I'm getting the better of him by saying it.

V2.6 Jessica's narrative

V2.6a Loved Ballyfermot from the Beginning

1. Yeah, well my life really started when I met [husband] ...
2. I was six years going with him before I married him,
3. I was only 16,
4. he lived here for four years before I married him,
5. he got this house out of a condemned area, his parents were dead ...
6. Moved out here as a bride end em.. 22 years of age ...
7. I went to Wicklow for my honeymoon ...
8. came back after three days, I missed my mammy so much
9. we had ten shillings in our pocket between the two of us coming home off our honeymoon,
10. there was no such thing as getting a taxi home ...
11. ... yes, came home on the 79 bus off our honeymoon
12. and of course people around on the avenue knew [husband] because he lived here for so long ...
13. ... and em... they were all out with pots and pans and banging them and hurray and all this business
14. and I thought in the door I'd never get
15. ...and me with me little beige suit and me little red feather hat on the side of me head, you know,
16. but I loved Ballyfermot from the very beginning.

V2.6b Neighbours

1. But the neighbours I have to say, they're wonderful neighbours,
2. I'm the longest on this road ...
3. and they’re wonderful neighbours,
4. [name] next door to me is 94
5. she gets Mass every morning, winter, hail, rain or snow,
   that lady goes out there and gets a taxi over to Mass
   and back home again,
6. the two girls that live next door to me, they’re very kind
   and Mrs [name] ...
7. and we never... now we never travel in one another’s
   houses or anything, like, we know we don’t,
8. we know we’re here... ...if I need them, you know, or if
   they need me I’m here as well
9. I remember asking the neighbours in before the
   Christmas for em... a coffee morning, you know,
10. and there was a woman here down two doors, Lord rest
    her, Mrs [name],
11. now, she was a mad hatter, you know,
12. but the coffee morning turned into a drinking morning
13. and by half past four there wasn’t a dinner made for any
   of their husbands, they all went home and just went to
   bed,
14. it ended up a drinking session ...... with them and we’d
    a lovely time, we were out on the steps and all
dancing...
15. ...and the cars were beeping and we were waving our
    hands to them and all, you know,
16. but eh... we’d good times like that now with the
   neighbours but we seem to have stopped all that, like,
17. there was never one the same after that, that was kind
    of a surprise, the first one, you know ...

V2.6c I dug my heels in
1. Came out here as a bride
2. ...we done a lot with the house just trying to make it
   comfortable for the kids, like, and ourselves,
3. ...you know, tried to make it as comfortable as we could
   ...
4. me sister lived in Pearse Street as I told you
5. and she’d only one room and a room down the bottom
   of her house as well where the kitchen was
6. and we liked going to Killiney, that was a favourite spot
   of ours
7. and she said “why don’t you move into my place”, she
   says, “because it’ll be handy for Westland Row for the
   train”
8. so I stayed but I thought back here to me house I’d
   never get...
9. so I kind of settled down then, you know, I really dug
   me heels in and just said this is my home...
10. ...and I wouldn’t leave it, I just wouldn’t leave it,
11. my son keeps saying it’s too big for me, try and get one
    of the senior citizens’ places up here ...
12. I said too many memories of all, every one of them in every one of these rooms, you know,
13. ... he said "you can bring your memories",
14. I said "No [son], you cannot bring your memories,
15. I'm staying here until I die", I said, you know ...
16. you can think back alright but you can't bring your memories with you into a brand new place ...
17. .. it's not the same.
18. no matter what you touch, presses or anything, like, you'd be thinking of your old presses and,

V2.6d  He was A1

1. 16 years of age, I'd seen him playing football in the park OR

2. and I said to my friend "you know him?", OR
3. she said yes, says I "What's his name?", said she "[husband]",
4. you know, and I said "Oh, he's mine"
5. .and that night I met him on the queue for the pictures
6. you know, but I went with him on the sly, me mother never knew, my sister used to cover up for me ...
7. ... I'd meet her and then go on home, you know, with her,
8. but she caught me one night, me mam,
9. and I often say it's a good job I didn't stand to kiss him or anything because I would've been...
10. I'd've been belted around the place, you know,
11. you weren't supposed to go out with anyone until you were 18 or 19, you know
12. ...but they loved him and the family loved him, you couldn't but like him, you know ...
13. ... you couldn't but like him
14. but we were always together, we had our little ups and downs like arguing and that but other than that...
15. I think it was meself that always started the arguments [laughs] ...
16. ... it wasn't [husband], it wasn't [husband] at all, you know,
17. but em.. he was just A1 now, A1 he was, you know ...

V2.6e  Nursing

1. He had the stroke so quick, AB
2. like, I was sitting there and he was sitting there and... OR
3. he got up and made me a cup of tea that Sunday afternoon and eh...
and he let the cup fall and I started laughing, you know,
and then I seen him groping for bits of glass that wasn't there
I got a bit serious then and I just walked over to him and I said "[husband], are you alright?"
and he just fell into me arms, his mouth was all twisted and everything
but he survived it and I taught him how to speak and I taught him how to walk and all meself when he came home,
so I did every day and taught him how to say the words again and all, you know,
and he was wonderful, great memory, great memory,
It was horrible feeling to see him all twisted, you know,
because he was quite a good looking fella, there he was when he was younger ...
... there he is there now with his grey hair, still with the big smile on his face ...
We'd wonderful times.
He was 69, we had his 70th birthday arranged and all ...
and [daughter] was with me that Saturday night and I said "Do you like the looks of your dad?",
she said "No, mam, he doesn't look too well, you know, at all",
I said I don't think we'll surprise him with his 70th birthday [daughter], I don't think he'd be able for the surprise, you know,
I think it was the following Monday he had a stroke to the bowel
and then he died, you know, he didn't even get to see his... he was 69 when he died.
I was two years younger than him, I was 67, I was, you know,
he'll be ten years dead now in February please God.

V2.6f   Widowhood
1. Oh there's a lot I'd say... there's a lot of widows now I meet and they do say 'isn't the evening's very very long Jessica' you know,
and like nice people
That they've lost their loved ones, you know, even men now
men often say it to me, you know,
that I know from the club
I'd say 'how are ye getting on?'
'Alright Jessica you know but, miss her terrible you know so lonely'.
It is very lonely when your family leaves ye
9. ...you know and especially if you lose your partner
10. It's very very lonely
11. The nights are very very long, you know
12. Some nights I've no interested in the telly even, you know.

V2.6g  I was a skivvy
1. I was the youngest of 14.
2. The shakings of the bag [laughs]!
3. Well, we were all reared in the one room believe it or not,
4. I don't know whether we all slept in the one bed, all I can remember is one bed, you know, in the room
5. but, like, things were slow, I used to have to go for the turf for me mammy and all, like, you know,
6. and I left school when I was twelve ...
7. ... no inspectors came after me, you know ...
8. ... which I was raging I never kept on in school but so far it hasn't done me any harm, you know ...
9. Well, I was a bit delicate, you know,
10. well I think it was an excuse for me mam because I used to run and do all the shopping for her and all, like, you know ...
11. ... I was a kind of skivvy, you know,
12. when I was 14, she dropped me off at me first job ...
13. ... and I started off in a gents' tailors ...
14. ... and I came... I left the gents' then and went to ladies'
15. and I worked until just before [daughter] was born,

V2.6h  I kept myself going
1. you know, I used to do work for a man in the morning times and I had...
2. he had a factory and I used to run up the sleeves for him, have them ready for the next morning, you know...
3. ... I'd leave the kids down to school, come back and prepare the dinner and finish another bit of sewing
4. I'm not saying I'm the greatest now or anything like that because I had me moments where I'd do me little war dances,
5. I kept myself going ...
6. You weren't supposed to do it, like, in those days, you could be reported and your rent'd be raised, you know...

7. ... there was two evictions each side of me when I moved out here first

8. which I pitied them, I really pitied them, you know,

9. Mrs [name] now, she'd a lot of young children and they were all sitting out on the step

10. and I said "God, I can't leave them children sitting there",

11. you know, so I brought them all in, made them a cup of tea and gave them all toast, you know,

12. Evicted because they couldn't pay their rent.

13. They used to put them out, you know, down to Keogh's Square or out to Ballymun or, you know,

14. I went away for a weekend with the senior citizens down to Cardiffstown,

15. and Mrs [name] was there,

16. they lived in Keogh's Square and back down living in Landon Road

17. she has a son a doctor, believe it or not,

18. and they were really poor, poor...

19. we were, like, [husband] and I, we were well off to those people,

20. they'd so many children ...

21. ... so many children, you know, they just couldn't live

22. ...you know, and I mean the rent was only half a crown a week, you know,

23. but they couldn't afford it, couldn't afford it and they were just thrown out ...

24. they had to wait then for the van to come to bring them down to Keogh's Square and put them in there somewhere, you know,

25. but it didn't seem to do Mrs [name's] family any harm, she said she reared a lovely family,

26. I was delighted for her, like,

V2.6i To bury one of your children

1. Well, a girl used to come to me, she was lovely,

2. But she done wonders for me ...

3. ... wonders for me she done,

4. I used to look forward to her coming every Tuesday, here you know,

5. and we'd sit and chat ...

6. she was from James' hospital, now, you know

7. but she was wonderful, wonderful ...

8. ... so I didn't bother with counselling after [son] ...

9. ... I'm going to fight it meself, you know

10. ...it's the only way you can do it.

11. I'm still fighting it now, there's days now that I just want to cry...
although I haven't cried in a long time ...
... it's a long time now since I...
I was always crying but I haven't cried in a while now, thank God,
I think it's since I started saying a little prayer to him every day
... you know, as me daughter said "Don't be crying over him, Mam" said she "start saying a little prayer to him every day to help you"...
... and I find since I done that now I'm not as bad as I was...
... but I'd love to be able to start going out and mixing with me friends again
I keep telling "Oh, yeah, I'll see you on Saturday night, I'll see you ...",
... I kind of lost faith in a lot of things now when [son] passed away because it's terrible to bury one of your children
...it really is, it's terrible to bury one of your children

**Maybe someday he'll knock on the door**

1. I'm a bit down now, I've one son...
2. But he's married now and he has a girl, she was 21 there a couple of weeks ago
3. and seven years ago I... I discovered it was her birthday, I had forgotten,
4. and I had forgotten his son's birthday,
5. so I put the two cards in one and money in both of them...
6. and he swears they didn't get them,
7. and he hasn't spoken to me since
8. ...and it's breaking my heart, absolutely breaking my heart,
9. ...it's em... the girl he's married to, she just doesn't like me,
10. now we never had words...
11. ...never, ever had words,
12. but she just never could take to me, you know,
13. ...and em... I just told him to be a man and stand up for himself and he didn't like me saying that you know
14. and I miss him, I do be saying 'maybe some day he'll knock at the door'
15. but he's after having a big operation last Christmas, open heart surgery he had,
16. So I rang to see how, how he was, and she said 'don't you dare ever ring this number again'
17. she said 'your son just does not want to speak to you and neither do I'
18. ...and eh I was very upset over it...
19. now sometimes that just gets to me, when I know the home they came from
20. ...you know, and all we done for them, not just for [son] alone...
21. but [son] he was a very very good lad, very good lad,
22. but it's only, it's coming out on him now, he's suffering with his nerves and everything...
23. but she's not a nice person, definitely, definitely not a nice person at all
24. I don't know how people could be so cruel
25. If I had words with her, yes, but I never had an argument or anything with the girl
26. ...but it has me that low sometimes that I just don't want to go out
27. So say a little prayer for me when you're saying your little prayers
28. you know that, that he will knock on me door sometime

**V2.6k I'd love to wave a wand**

1. like the family can't understand me not... because I was
2. the bell of the ball I won't say, but I didn't care,
3. I always got up and done me bit of dancing and I have a bit of a laugh
4. ...and em... [son] the son that died, he was the very same, very same manner as me...
5. ...you know, but I've loads and loads of friends,
6. really and truly ...loads of friends
7. ...and they keep saying 'Jessica, please won't you come up?'
8. 'won't you come up' you know
9. but I ring them, I always let them know that I'm not going...
10. Oh I would, I'd love,
11. I'd love for a magic wand just to wave over me head and say you're going back to the same person you used to be
12. ...you know, and some mornings I'm going out and I'd say 'no I'm not even going to say good morning to anybody this morning'
13. that's the way I feel,
14. but as soon as I see someone 'ah hello, how are ye' you know
15. and then its a little chat, and I kind of forget then
16. ...until I get back home
17. ...cause it's just the long evenings you know?
**V2.6l I dreamt about him**

1. Well I won't go in the bus, I haven't been in the bus now since I was, since me birthday you know...
2. ...this year yeah,
3. I'm kinda nervous getting off the bus and getting onto it and that,
4. it's just something comes over me, you know
5. ...and I suffer with the vertigo, it's not very bad now,
6. it's not very bad, I won't complain I only take one tablet a day
7. ...you know, but I'm on anti-depressant tablets
8. I was only on one until...
9. I had to go on two after [son] passed away
10. ...you know. I dreamt of him last night
11. Full length. We were on holidays
12. and eh... he passed by again and he just looked at me.
13. And I said 'you're very like my son' and he said 'am I?'
14. and I said 'oh God [son] it's you' you know...
15. ...but it was lovely
16. ...lovely it was yeah, that's the first time now I've really dreamt of him
17. It made me feel good this morning, yeah.
18. Made me feel good.

**V2.6m If I wanted to, I'd do it**

1. Well I have because [husband] and I like didn't smoke or drink until we were in our 30's
2. ...but we used to love to go out
3. ...you know, where there's a bit of music, I love
4. But don't give me going out now and just sitting chatting over a drink, I don't like that...
5. Oh I love... yeah I love a bit of entertainment
6. ...because we're great now together, the seven of us you know, the way we always get up
7. and people always say 'God yous always have a great time' you know.
8. ...you know, we went to Glasgow a couple of years ago
9. and eh I dress up like an auld Scotch man, I bought the Andy Cap with the red hair hanging out of it and all, I took me teeth out,
10. They didn't know who was walking into the room
11. ...you know, now things like that I miss
12. I miss doing that, you know
13. Like it never bothered me to do anything like that
14. Well if I wanted to, I'd do it now.
15. Like now I bought a Santa Claus outfit down there in the shop last week only
16. and I'm going to dress up in that for me dinner...
17. and eh... I nearly always win
18. I nearly always get first prize for what I make and what I do

V2.6n I don't have the heart
1. No, no I've lost that. I pray a lot
2. I pray a lot now but I don't go down to mass anymore
3. I never thought I would ever, ever stay away from mass
4. ... because when [husband] was in the wheelchair I used to wheel him down in the snow, down to the church
5. ... you know, I wouldn't miss mass and [husband] wouldn't miss mass either, you know...
6. but em... it's not that I've lost faith, but I don't think God should have taken [son] on me
7. [husband] like had lived his life, and he had a wonderful life
8. ... and I cared for him for six years
9. ... you know which I... it was a pleasure to do
10. ... but [son] went too quick on me, altogether
11. It's not nice to have to bury one of your children.
12. Not nice at all, you know.
13. I've no heart to kind of, to do the things that I've always done
14. I do be too sad when I go to mass
15. I like to go into the church when there's no one there
16. ... and sit and just think
17. ... and pray
18. ... but mass...
19. there's so much things happening now, too, it's kind of knocking people off their faith
20. There's an awful lot happening you know...

V2.7 Kitty's narrative

V2.7a It was dreary
1. it was a very cold wintry day in January, the snow was on the ground and slush everywhere
2. my father and my brother went ahead to put the furniture in and get things ready for us before we arrived in.
3. So Mammy and I got the bus
4. and I was home from work because I had a very bad cold and Mammy had too...
5. we got onto the bus, 79 bus, and we'd never heard of Ballyfermot until we got the word that we were to go to Ballyfermot,

6. we lived in Leinster Avenue in the North Strand,

7. we were living, lodging in a terraced house which was lovely and we loved it

8. and we used to love in the summertime going for a walk along there, we missed all that

9. so leaving was breaking our hearts

10. ...in the month of January, breaking our heart to leave Leinster Avenue and the North Strand.

11. and we got the bus at Aston Quay and we were in the bus and we were in it for so long, where are we going? We were going up the hills of Dublin,

12. and I said to Mammy, “I don’t know, we’re going far, aren’t we?”, no stop yet,

13. so we were told our stop was the last stop, there was no further,

14. so we got off the bus and we turned around

15. and we saw the Avenue and we where [number of house],

16. and we would have loved the first few houses because in Leinster Avenue we only had around the corner to go and we were in our house,

17. this one is far different, much worse, so far away, and so wilderness...

18. oh a wintry January day...

19. and as I said to Mammy ‘God [number of house] is down the whole way’,

20. and I said to Mammy “God, I hope we won’t be long here”,

21. “Yeah”, says she “I hope not either”, she hated it the minute she saw it!

22. There was no shop around, there was no shop, only galvanised shop where the shops are now,

23. and we walked down the avenue and it was [number of house] and we saw the end...

24. and we walked in, the candle was on, no electricity for the first few days

25. and we had candles and they had paper up on the walls

26. and Mammy couldn’t know what style of curtains to get so they put newspaper up in the window

27. and we went into the house and we had the fire lit

28. and it was kind of, you know, dreary, kind of you know, walking into an empty house ...

29. ... the furniture was in alright but it was dreary kind of looking kind of...
30. so it was a terrible place, dreary and slush everywhere

V2.7b  Baby Face

1. I could have been married if I'd wanted to...
2. but I went with this chap before, when I was in Blackrock,
3. and he was a very nice chap, [name],
4. and [name], he was a tailor by trade and he played for Griffith Rangers soccer team
5. so he had arranged to meet me that Tuesday and he was to bring me out two books to read
6. so I went down and there was no sign of him
7. so I went down to the landlady of course,
8. like he said "Go down to her if I'm never there, don't stand around",
9. he collapsed in the field playing football that evening, that day
10. He came home but he was up the walls with the pain in his head
11. and we had to send for the ambulance to bring him to Jervis Street hospital.
12. His people are all up there now", she said "Go",
13. so I got there and they were coming down in the lift,
14. and the mother and the sister and all that, there was seven of them in the family,
15. so they went up again, brought me to see him, he was in a coma
16. and he knew I was there and he held my hand, ah terrible, and his head...
17. so I went up the following Saturday to see him
18. his sister said "you'll have to pray" she said
19. "You can't go up today, he's having an operation"
20. and they didn't want me to see him in that state
21. so I got very upset over that
22. so I phoned up again two days later and I was told over the phone he had died the night before at ten o'clock ...
23. so I was broken hearted, I don't know how...
24. I was at the GPO and I just put the phone down,
25. I went out and I crossed the road without even looking, I could have been killed, I could have been killed,
26. I was so shocked
27. and [name] was lovely, oh he was lovely, a handsome man
28. and very respected... very sensible type of fella, you know?
29. so I never got over that, you know, I was very broken hearted over [name]
30. but I did go with two or three fellas after that but I never seemed to take much interest in them, you know that type of way?
31. I was lackadaisical about them and they thought I didn’t want them, you know that kind of way?
32. ... and I ended up not married,
33. and I’d loads of chances, I’d chance with a very well off man, you know,
34. but I didn’t grab the chance, I just...
35. ah I wasn’t able for it, I would never be able for it,
36. I was afraid of my life then, “I’m not able for that now”,
37. I got nervous every time, you know
38. my confidence kind of went so em...
39. I went to Ballyfermot too as well,
40. and then we ended afterwards, then we went to Ballyfermot in that early January 1951,
41. [name] died in 1950, April 1950 he died, he died in 1950
42. and so I was only very young then, he used to call me baby face,
43. I’d a real young face and freckles,
44. and he used to call me baby face and sing the song to me “Baby face”

**V2.7c  He’s your kind**

1. then I went with this fella for three years and a half,    AB
2. he was from Inchicore OR
3. and I met him at a dance at the...
4. and he got into the police force,
5. went down the country and he met a girl there
6. and he came up to see me from time to time, wrote me a letter,
7. and said “I’m getting married in the morning at such and such a time, on Tuesday at such and such a time”,
8. just like that, after being with me,
9. we going out, he never told me, he was going with her all the time and got married to her!
10. He was a bit of a... Ballyfermot wasn’t good enough for him, you know,
11. yet he was... he wanted me to be with him as much as possible, you know,
12. so I was going along with him,
13. he was training for a year down in Chapelizod and he got me in with this very nice Guard,
14. himself and himself were training and they had to spend a year in Chapelizod before they were moved down the country
15. and [name] was a very nice chap, very nice young man,
16. and I liked him, I still liked your man even though now,
   would you believe it?
17. I did. Isn't that strange?
18. and [sister] said to me one day,
19. she met me one day and she said "If you ever, ever
give him up for that other fella" said she "I'll never
speak to you again",
20. my sister said to me "I'll never speak to you again!", and
   that's what I did!
21. I gave up [name] to go back with your man, he asked
   me to go back with him
22. and down the country and this other girl got married to
   him,
23. isn't that an awful thing to do?
24. [name] was my kind, [sister] said to me “He's your kind,
25. the other fella's not your kind”,
26. she used to tell me off, oh she told me off,
27. "I don't like him", she said, "I never liked him", she said,
28. and "You're too good for him, too nice for him", she said
   that to me,
29. when the year was up he went down the country and
   took [name] from me
30. and I never seen him again,
31. wasn't that an awful thing to do?
32. [name] was a gentleman, a gentleman, looking back,
   he was a gentleman, a gentleman,
33. I made a terrible mistake there alright, poor [name]
34. so I never seemed to take an interest in fellas very
   much then after that ...
35. ... I kind of was always feeing that em...
36. I don't know, I could never settle for anybody...
37. I was conscious that they would do the same thing that
   your man did on me,
38. maybe I liked him too much and I forgave him, you
   know that way?
39. And that's it.
40. That's my life story.

V2.7d  I've made me own life
1. Since this flu I was a bit afraid
2. Otherwise now I'm always on the go
3. and people do say "Why don't you have ...?" –
4. ... trolleys, "Why don't you get one of them?",
5. in the city you see you can't go and bring the big big
   thing into the bus and you can't manage it, it's
   awkward as well
6. so I don't get one of them, I don't need one of them, so
   far anyway.
7. So I can walk straight without falling,
8. you see these people can’t walk and they fall, they always seem to fall.

9. But I, thank God, so far I can walk straight without falling.

10. and then I go here as well, Social Service one day, they came and asked “Would you like to come here?”

11. I said “I’d love to”.

12. I didn’t ask them but she asked me.

13. She knew I was having this and that I was living on my own with no relations living near me,


15. I have to make life a bit happy for meself,

16. I’ve made me own life and make it as happy as possible.

17. I could come here now three days a week but the time being one is enough to settle meself in

18. and then maybe later on I’ll go for the second one and be choosy

19. because if I go for three I wouldn’t be able to go to Mass then,

20. so I’ll stay where I am at the moment and see,

21. I’m looking forward to it, it’s great.

V2.7e Sacred Heart

1. No, well I had two break-ins, you know, last year.

2. So they came through the window,

3. luckily enough they could take nothing

4. and they went out the way they came.

5. Two weeks later they came into my bedroom,

6. lucky I heard a squeak at night and I got out of the bed,

7. put on my coat and I said I’ll wait now, I said, maybe it’s my imagination

8. and I heard the squeaking noise again

9. and I was going to just get the phone the police

10. and before I had time he was in my room,

11. he went right onto the bed and onto the floor where I was,

12. “I won’t harm you”, he says “but tell me where is the money”

13. And I, lucky enough I had my handbag on the chair

14. and I said just pointed

15. and he opened it up and took out the purse and he was...

16. lucky enough there was about €70-80 in it,

17. it satisfied him.
18. Now, he thought I had phoned the police, he wasn’t sure if I had phoned the police or not
19. and he was rushing to get out
20. and he held his hand over my face
21. and he brought me out to the landing
22. and I’ve a Sacred Heart picture in the landing
23. and I said to the sacred heart "please save me from all harm, please save me from all harm" here I was, in my mind,
24. so he brought me right into the room again still holding my mouth
25. you see, he thought the police would be outside,
26. I said to the sacred heart "help me" so he got the courage to go out, to get out of the house and he got out.
27. Twenty to five, and wasn’t it a miracle that I woke up or he would have been in my room and worse because I knew I was...
28. he wasn’t sure if I’d rang the police or not
29. but he’d have known I hadn’t rang the police and he’d be looking for money and God what else he might do.
30. That was prayers and I always throw holy water around every room, every night going to bed now and the stairs,
31. keep harm away...I always do that, so that saved me as well.

V2.7f Wrapped up in themselves
1. I think they’re sad... they seem to be... they’re always...
2. they have a pain here and a pain there
3. and there was one person that I know and I very seldom see her but she’s a nice person now, very good neighbour, I say,
4. if I wanted anything or anybody to talk to,
5. but she’ll talk about herself, she’s always moaning, oh this and that’s wrong,
6. and I’ll be telling her about the Dystonia that I got 14 years ago
7. when I have it sometimes I’ll make faces like that, I look miserable when I have it.
8. So, I phoned her one day, you know, how she was keeping,
9. she was not well before that and I said I’d phone her up to see how she is,
10. "oh", she says em... her husband [name] said, “Oh, you looked very miserable looking the other day at the door”.
11. I looked very miserable looking
12. but you see, that's because of my Dystonia, that she didn't tell him...
13. she was so much wrapped up in her own
14. ...she didn't even realise what I was saying about myself.

**V2.7g  Lost opportunities**

1. I look forward to coming here for sure
2. I look forward to getting Mass when I can whenever I can, love going to Sunday Mass of course always
3. and I look forward to going to maybe... the summer, I love to look forward to the summer time
4. and the simple things like that now makes me happy and I look forward to.
5. No. I don't look back on it, I look forward! [laughs]
6. Well there's nobody really without something that they regret,
7. I regret a little few things alright that I could have been doing, and saying to people
8. and I lost out then on good opportunities where I didn't snatch up in my life
9. I don't want to think about them but they do come across my mind and I think "Oh God, I wouldn't be like this today if I had reached out for those chances."
10. Take every day as it comes and make the best of it
11. and any opportunity you have, good opportunity, always look to them and make the best of your opportunities.
12. That's what I'd say. [laughs]
13. I'll say I hope that I won't die alone.

**V2.8  Mabel's Narrative**

**V2.8a  I didn't like him at first**

1. I knew [husband] as a child... you know.
2. I didn't like him [laugh]
3. I was going with a lad
4. and em... I liked him but he was very possessive
5. and em... I gave him up
6. So eh... [husband] used to eh... be knocking around our... Plimlico,
7. and one night he come over to me and he said to me 'are you not with your boyfriend?'
8. I said 'no'.
'Why not? I see you go out with him'
And I said 'I don’t em... I gave him up'
he’s too possessive, watching everywhere I go'
I said 'I don’t like it'
and he said, [husband] said to me ‘oh that’s not right, that’s bad’
then he said to me 'I’ll tell you what' he says ‘seeing that you’re not with him, why don’t you come out with me,
and if he follows you, I won’t be long about telling him off’
So that’s how I started going with [husband]
and in the beginning I was saying to meself, ‘oh’
I said ‘I’m not going out with ye anymore’
I used to say ‘no’ every time he saw me, ‘how about a date?’ says I ‘no, no, no’,
ah go on... you know. So eventually I went out with him
And my mam was very fond of him, you know, she says ‘why don’t you bring him up for tea?’
and she liked him because he didn’t drink first of all,
and secondly, he was in the Legion of Mary,
She grew very fond of him,
And, [husband] used to annoy me,
one Sunday I was em...
we were going to the pictures,
and he never turned up, and I said to me mam I said
‘that’s it, that’s it, not doing that to me again’.
And when he turned up, half seven,
the priest in the parish,
and brought him up to James’s Hospital, to visit all the old people up there,
and me mam said ‘now I knew [husband] wouldn’t do that to you, I knew something happened’
we went out to buy our engagement ring
and eh I said, coming home,
I had an argument with him and I took the ring off ‘here’
I said ‘bring that back to the shop’
I was a bitch! [laugh]

**V2.8b That’s how we ended here**

1. But then we got married and I was only what, 20,
2. 21 when I got married,
3. [husband] was 23, 24,
4. you know where we went... we’d no... we’d no money,
5. we went to Bray on our honeymoon,
6. Bray imagine, the train out to Bray.
7. I was married at half 9 in the morning,
8. and we had breakfast in the Shelbourne,
9. there was only 10 people at it, mam and dad and this and that,
10. we went to Bray
11. and the best man and the bridesmaid came with us,
12. and we went to the cinema
13. and we went in and had something...
14. ah a bit of cake and coffee and this that and the other,
15. and we come home
16. and em the crowd that had been at our wedding was up in the room, that we were going to live in
17. we were looking for one of the cottages up the square, but there was no vacancies,
18. so where [husband] lived there was a dairy, people Ms [name],
19. she was a very nice person,
20. and she owned the tenement houses and she says eh,
21. [husband] 'she said 'take one of the tenement rooms, CA
22. it will be only 3 shillings a week,
23. and' she says 'they're going to be condemned and you'll get a house after it'
24. so we did, we got a house after it, R
25. and this, we ended out here.

V2.8c The community games
1. God we used to have a right laugh out here, AB
2. they were great neighbours in them days
3. And [husband] said, 'there's nothing out here for kids' he says,
4. and he says 'we have to do something about this'
5. and I said 'and what do you suggest?'
6. he said 'bringing these kids to the seaside on the bus' CA
7. ...and he got a couple of men off the road to help him,
8. so this was an annual thing
9. and it got so big the kids from the other roads, E
10. and they'd come 'Mr [name] can I go on your outing?'
11. And it went that he had to hire a bus to take the kids out
12. and it ended up hiring four busses
13. and getting helpers from the Legion of Mary to help him on with the kids
14. and the mothers would be left at home with the babies
15. like you'd meet them now later on in life and they'd say 'hello'
16. ...and 'remember your outings Mr [name]',
17. they'd be married themselves you know
18. And that was start... R
19. he worked a lot for the community, you know, Coda
20. and he done a terrible lot and then
I forgive you

1. I remember my father, my own father, the last time I saw of him was on my first holy communion,
2. he gave me a half crown.
3. I do remember that, and eh... he was going to England to work, it was before the second world war,
4. and [adopted mother] his sister that reared me, she said... she used to bring me to the pictures a lot
5. and I remember her saying, and she said 'do you see that man there, take stock of that man'
6. he was a famous actor
7. and she says 'that is a double to your father'
8. and I always remembered and I watched... it was in a film
9. and she said 'there you are, there's your dad now, there's his double'
10. and that stuck in my mind
11. he was gone from the time I was seven years of age, he didn't see him till I was 25 years of age,
12. and I was talking at the gate to somebody
13. and I saw me mam and dad, that reared me turning the corner
14. 'Jesus my father is with them, that's my father coming up with them'
15. you see he had come home,
16. I was saying to myself 'what am I going to call him?' so I was talking to my dad [name] that reared me
17. and he said 'yes' I said 'no, I'm talking to me other dad'
18. I said to me own father, you know,
19. but he had come home like for good...
20. my brother see was in Sundrive Road, well that was me dad's house after he gave the shop up
21. my father kind of said 'well it's my house'
22. and moved back in to live there,
23. and he lived with them for a good while
24. I never... that half crown was all I ever got from him, you know,
25. but then when me father died eh... he had money
26. and of course, me eldest sister kind of got a lot, you know,
27. I said 'no I don't, I don't want anything from him'
28. he died in the hospice,
29. he was in his 90's when he died,
41. yeah, I remember going, I remember going to his funeral
42. I remember picking up the paper,
43. [husband] was reading it and he put it down
44. and I said, 'good God, my father is dead'
45. and I remember kneeling at the end of the church
46. and I said 'I forgive you, if you think that you have neglected me'
47. this was all going on in my head
48. 'and I forgive you, and I will always pray for you'
49. and I said 'the aunt that you left me with, I had a very happy childhood'
50. I remember saying that in the church you know,
51. 'a very very happy childhood'.

V2.8e  A great childhood
1. I'll tell you something...
2. there was a shop called Nanny Craden's in Thomas Street which sold toys
3. and mammy was eh...
4. I went down shopping with her in Thomas street
5. and I run up,
6. near Catherine's church where this shop was,
7. and there was a doll in there
8. and it was, it was a beautiful doll
9. it had the red dress, and a red bonnet and white shoes
10. and used to, I used... glue meself to the window
11. me mammy used to come up past Frawley's and she's say 'what are you looking at?'
12. and I'd say 'mammy do you see that doll there? If I had her I'd call her Sandy'
13. I said 'isn't she beautiful?'
14. 'Ah yeah' she says 'she is'.
15. So the next time that I went down to Thomas Street,
16. the doll was gone out of the window,
17. and me mammy found me crying outside Nanny Craden's
18. and I said 'me doll is gone mammy'
19. and she said, 'oh right... maybe Santa has a doll like that, write to Santa' you see.
20. So I used to write,
21. and there'd be a fire lighting, I used to... I just put it up the chimney
22. pray to holy god that me letter got to Santa, childlike you know,
23. But she had gone up and she had left the half crown off it,
24. and I got that for Christmas, and I always remember that, you know
25. You know, childhood memories
26. But I had a great childhood

**V2.8f She was very good**
1. And me Mam, God rest her,
2. she was very good to people, she done people good turns
3. And she never spoke about them.
4. Later on in years we found out, you know,
5. I don't remember my own mother, she died at my birth
6. "My mammy said that Mrs [name] not your mother",
7. And I started to cry
8. and I remember her taking me up on her lap and she says
9. "That is right, Holy God took your mammy and you have em...
10. she said “Your Mam was a lovely person and she was one of my best friends”
11. And she explained all that to me
12. ... and she said “Your Dad is in England”, you know, she explained.
13. and when I was starting school
14. and she said “Start school now,
15. I have to tell you something, you'll be known as [name] because that is your name
16. so I was called [name] in school.

**V2.8g Messages from God**
1. But I prayed to...
2. did you ever hear of Edel Quinn, she was a Legion of Mary
3. so when it come to eh after [daughter] was born
4. I was taken into the Meath hospital the day after I came home with her,
5. I didn't know what was wrong with me, up came blood
6. and I was in it for, nearly for nearly a month,
7. my bedroom... covered in blood, the baby's cot and everything
8. ...oh I thought I was finished,
9. he was after been in with me and he come home
10. and he said to himself 'this is it' you know,
11. so he got a taxi into the hospital
12. he stopped on the way back from hospital when he was sent for,
13. and he went into the lower church
14. and he said he didn’t believe in saints... go to the master not his saints,
15. and he says 'Edel, I’m asking you please, spare my wife to me and my 8 children' and it was a miracle.
16. When I went in with the aneurism, I prayed to Edel Quinn
17. I went down to have a cup of tea with a couple of women,
18. and there was a girl talking at the desk to the man on the desk,
19. and she... her eyes were dug into me,
20. I was going back up into the ward
21. and she made a beeline for me, and she says 'hello Mabel'
22. I said eh...she’d a black coat on her, and a white woollen scarf thrown across her shoulder, it was in March,
23. but she says 'I want to tell you something, you’re undergoing surgery and you’re going to be alright',
24. so anyway, I overed my operation
25. and I had dream coming towards the end of me stay in the hospital
26. and I had a dream it was in this house,
27. and I went into the room and there was a girl dressed as the girl that came in
28. and I thought she was crying
29. and I went over to her and I said ‘are you alright dear?’
30. and she looked around,
31. she’d the clothes that the girl had on her but she’d the face of Edel Quinn
32. and she said ‘did you get my message dear?’
33. And that was all, the dream ended.
34. So I mean, there is such things as messages from God, you know,

V2.8h Always presents under the tree

1. but the kids are very good now,
2. I don’t buy presents for the adults,
3. I buy for the children and grandchildren
4. but I’ve two grandsons that’s not married,
5. well, they’re in their early 20s but they’re not married yet
6. but I’ll give them a few bob,
7. they all come down here on Christmas morning ...
8. I do look at them and say “Janey Mack! I didn’t rear all them!”,
9. they'd be coming down with their grandchildren, you know,
10. and no matter what the kids get for Christmas off Santa it's always,
11. "Are we going to down to nana and granddad's now?"
12. ...cause there's always presents under the tree for them, you know...
13. oh it was very happy, you know

V2.8i  Great joy out of rearing them
1. Well, I did miss the Liberties when I moved out for a long time
2. but when the children started coming along, you know,
3. and I had room for them ...
4. and I just threw myself into rearing the kids
5. and I got great joy out of rearing them
6. and they're all very good,
7. most of them live in Prosperous and only one girl now in Ballyfermot and I've a girl in England
8. and... but they take you out for dinner over Christmas
9. and we go... next year, "No, I'm taking Mam and Dad this year",
10. you know, and they're all in here on Christmas morning.
11. And when I look at them I think I didn't give birth to all them men did I?! [laughs]

V2.8j  Who you think
1. Ah no, I don't drive.
2. Walk around to the shops
3. ...walk down to the Bingo
4. Now I remember walking down to the Bingo one night and it was one of the dark nights
5. and there was a fella behind me
6. and I said "Oh my God" because, I mean, it was like... as I thought
7. But when we got to the end of Claddagh Road to go across to go down the laneway for the Bingo
8. he got a hold of me... he got me by the elbow and I...
9. he said "It's alright Ma'am, I'm not touching you, I want to get you across the road with this traffic",
10. so I mean who you think, you know ...

V2.8k  Sure we won't see that
1. So quick, every year is quicker
2. Yeah it is, definitely every year is quicker
3. we had [son's] 50th birthday there during the summer, 13th of June
4. and I said "Please God let me live for it"
5. and the only reason I say that is
6. I don't want to spoil their enjoyment that things has to
   be postponed because Mam died,
7. Well, it does, when you start getting old and you're
   afraid that you're going to end up in a wheelchair or end
   up with cancer or end up in an old folks home
8. The way them old folks homes are now, you know?
9. I'd rather be gone than that.
10. Yeah, there's lots of things now affect you, the things
    that are on the news
11. and they say in five years' time now things should
    improve and I do say “Sure we won't see that”,
12. Things like that.

V2.8I  The mother-in-law in a home

1. First of all there's a lot of people afraid to go out after
   dark in the winter
2. and secondly they're afraid to answer the door at night
3. And there is a lot of people very lonely
4. I know of a particular woman
5. who sold her house and went to live with her daughter
6. and she says she's no comfort.
7. and she says the kids can be very noisy
8. and they look at things that they want, "I've nowhere to
   watch me soaps"
9. and she smokes
10. and she says "Now I'm put out into the back garden to
    smoke, even in the rain".
11. Oh, she regrets it,
12. she said “Don't, if you're left on your own don't ever
    sell your house”,
13. "Well", I said "I'd never dream to go and live with any of
   the family", because you've got to remember they have
   their lives to live
14. ...you're a mother but you are also a mother-in-law to
    somebody
15. so she says “I had to get out of it because I couldn't
    watch what I wanted to watch” ...
16. She lost her freedom, yeah.
17. And she said "Now I'm after getting a little flat..."
18. "...and I'm delighted with meself, I can go in and out
    when I like" ...
19. ... "And if I don't want to go out I won't go out".
20. As much as I love my family
21. I wouldn't want to become the mother in law in any
    home.
22. And you've got to remember it's mostly boys I have
Sally's narrative

How I started my life

1. I know I'm near the end of me life.
2. I started life anyway being adopted in em...
3. I was born in em... Holles Street hospital
4. and I didn't find this out until about twenty years ago, I went searching
5. and I've got all that I want to know out of the search, yeah
6. but when I was born my mother was in the bed
7. and there was a priest there,
8. there was a social worker there
9. and there was the woman that she worked for there,
10. she worked for a lady in Rathmines minding five children
11. and here she was giving away the sixth one, me,
12. but she was only minding the woman's children,
13. the woman pleaded with her that she'd...
14. one more wouldn't make a difference
15. and the social worker said "No, that wouldn't be right"
16. and then the priest wouldn't hear tell of it
17. because the lady she was working for was Protestant
18. and I had to be brought up a catholic
19. and I could have gone to a home with five children and been well looked after
20. but because they were Protestants that wasn't going to happen
21. So I ended up in some convent or other
22. and then people from em... Cabra,
23. they had two boys already
24. and they wanted a little girl
25. and seemingly they were going around the cots looking at all the babies
26. and my brother that's...
27. picked me out because I had big brown eyes
28. He picked me out of all the kids
29. And em... to me they were very old people,
30. and my mother didn't like travelling anywhere unless I was hanging out of her
31. and em... my sister in the meantime had gone over to England to be a nurse,
32. she was adopted as well
33. but she wanted to be a nun
34. but she couldn't be a nun because she was adopted,
35. you were barred from being a nun if you were adopted
36. and em... she liked it there so she's a nurse all her life now
V2.9b  I was abandoned

1. That prompted me to search
2. and she was a nun in her day
3. but she was going back to do art because she found
4. and she was a lovely person
5. and em... she just said "you seem like someone with a
   weight on your shoulder"
6. and I said "I'm quite the opposite,
7. I haven't got a weight on me shoulder",
8. but I did but I hadn't told her...
9. this thing was in me head
10. "Where did I come from? Who owned me?", you
    know?
11. It was all going through me head,
12. that was the blackness, you know?
13. and the thing was my kids didn't know.
14. Well in a way I thought they'd think little,
15. they wouldn't think the same about me.
16. Yeah, that was my way of thinking
17. but it's not their way of thinking.
18. I mean I was abandoned,
19. it's not a nice feeling.
20. I mean I have five children, I love every one of them,
21. I wouldn't abandon me children, you know? [Voice
    upset]
22. And then as I didn't know at the time,
23. it's only when I started searching.
24. then I realise like I mean she was going,
25. leaving the hospital to mind five children and giving me
    away?
26. That didn't make sense at all ...
27. but I did meet up with her,
28. didn't like it at all ...
29. no, not an ounce of feelings for her ...
30. none, she was too old,
31. she was em... nearly 90 when I met up with her
32. ... we'd nothing in common,
33. she was a hunchback at this stage,
34. I'll never forget that ...
35. .she had a curved back
36. that frightened the heart and soul out of me!
37. with the results that I always,
38. my foster parents always taught us to...
39. I had a very good upbringing with them
40. and manners meant an awful lot,
41. and "Hold your head up straight",
42. "Keep your shoulders back"
43. and when I'd be going out the hall door she'd be doing this “Come on, shoulders back”!

44. And it stood to me
45. and then when I seen me mother, just curved neck, curved back, “Ah”
46. I said to myself “I'm glad I was told to keep me shoulders back!” [laughs].

Coda

V2.9c Finding my birth mother

1. I did eventually get a birth certificate,  AB
2. not the original one from Holles Street ...
3. but to me that was a document,
4. the original, the one at me birth I wanted ...
5. you know? I can't get that.
6. em... my mother and father never told me I was adopted ...
7. because, first of all they were two old people that had adopted me,
8. there was no way they were going to be able to have a child, you know
9. ... and, but I will get the birth certificate...
10. my friend that was a nun came out of her profession
11. and I told her, I could tell her anything but you see I knew she was in a convent
12. but, like, she was after being a nun and I could trust her with me life like, you know?
13. and that's how I went searching,
14. a friend of mine lived in Chapelizod
15. and her husband worked in Lombard Street
16. and he got all the books out that was... thick books, you know,
17. but in the end I got to the bottom of it [laughs] ...
18. you won't believe where she lived.
19. Twenty minutes away from here
20. so then I had to get a social worker
21. and em... she talked to the social worker
22. and she blew the bottom out of her world saying I was looking for her [laughs], you know
23. and then I started going to see her every Tuesday
24. but then I was kind of linked into the family,
25. there was nephews getting married,
26. there was nieces getting married,
27. I was being brought to weddings and brought to funerals
28. and I was part of the family then
29. they got her a new bed
30. and the worst thing that could have happened was getting her that new bed,
31. on Christmas morning I had my son from Chicago and my son from Long Island,
32. I get a phone call to say my mother was rushed to hospital
33. so I dropped everything, I don't know who got their dinner that day
34. but I was missing for the next two or three days
35. because she died ...
36. .yeah, she fell out of the bed and never recovered
37. I was at the hospital all the time,
38. my family knew nothing about this ...
39. so anyway she died and I told [son]
40. so I asked him would he come to the funeral
41. and then he told [husband] ...
42. his da, so [husband] came to the funeral as well, the two
43. and introduced to the family and all
44. but I kind of have broken away altogether from them now,
45. people looking at me as if I was something from Mars, you know,
46. country people, “That’s [name’s] daughter that she had before she was married”,
47. and all this crap, you know ...
48. and I didn't feel comfortable at these meetings, you know,
49. so... I kind of decided to lose contact altogether,
50. I don’t make contact at all now,
51. it caused a strain in the marriage
52. but there was a strain there because he was drinking a lot anyway
53. so I didn’t see the point in telling him ...
54. ... you know, he drank a lot, mmm.
55. It didn't make any difference to [son] or me family.
56. like, they all had their own lives, you know?

**V2.9d First baby**

1. I was married about two years,
2. two and a half years
3. and I was still working in the Hamill Lane Foundry
4. boss called me for something
5. and em... I couldn't walk,
6. I got such pain up here,
7. I didn't know what happened to me
8. and in them days you didn't know where kids came from,
9. you didn't know about periods or anything,
10. you just done everything naturally, you know
11. and he said “What’s wrong with you Sally? You’re very pale”
12. and I said “I don’t know”,
13. I just couldn’t move me legs,
14. couldn’t move any part of me,
15. so he said “Could you be expecting?”
16. and I said “I don’t know”,
17. because he was a married man so
18. and anyway he said “I think you should go to Holles Street”
19. and I went to Holles Street
20. and they kept me in there and then
21. But I was haemorrhaging all the time
22. so that was the 31st of August
23. and I was in hospital for August, September, October, November... December,
24. Yeah, they let me out on the 5th of January,
25. 1965 I’m talking about now
26. now, by this time I knew I was expecting a baby
   naturally after all the bleeding and everything you know,
27. but the point was I had polyps growing
28. and that was causing the haemorrhages all the time,
   you know,
29. and em... they sorted me out and I had the baby

V2.9e  Five children in six year
1. Well, I had me one child
2. and I had such an awful experience I said never again
3. and the next year after
4. I landed myself in the same place
5. and I was terrorised
6. because like I went through so much over the first one
   ...
7. ... but it was a drink of water
8. and he was only 9 ½ lb, [son],
9. and I was happy enough with that
10. and then the year after another child!
11. But it was not a drink of water this time,
12. it was all [son] all over again,
13. the first birth all over again
14. ...taken in till the baby was due
15. but em... you see we had no contraceptives in them days,
16. like, I’m talking 40, 50 years ago, you know what I mean?
17. And em... you just managed whatever way you could manage,
18. avoiding it or...
19. you know and if you got pregnant, well you accepted it and that was that.
20. Anyway, I had my fourth child then and she was brilliant,
21. no complications whatsoever
22. and a year after I had another one,
23. so I started having babies in 1965
24. and ended in 1970
25. with five children in six years...

V2.9f  Knitting
1. they're very close knit family, you know
2. but they all had jobs,
3. they all got themselves jobs
4. and if they hadn't got jobs I had jobs for them here,
5. I used to knit Arran sweaters...
6. ... and you got the wool, not in balls, in hanks
7. and it was the old Arran wool years ago
8. with the oil all through them,
9. you know, it wasn't cleaned,
10. the smell... the kids used to hate the smell of the oil
11. ... because they'd have to get the kitchen chairs
12. and wind them around the chairs
13. and then wind them in balls for me
14. and I'd hand knit them then,
15. I was getting £2.50 for doing a 44 chest, man's chest, jumper...
16. You got the pattern,
17. you worked it out yourself
18. and she'd leave the work on Thursday,
19. she'd come back the following Thursday to collect it
20. and leave you with more wool,
21. now, I could do a lot with that £2.50...
22. ... because times were hard,
23. I couldn't go out to work
24. so I had to get the work brought in to me
25. and then my kids were all starting to go to school,
26. and my own kids advertised for me
27. because they all had knitted clothes on them...
28. .... and I was always getting... always knitting,
29. I'm still knitting
30. and I don't have to do it now, you know...

V2.9g  Didn't care what kind of a house
1. Em... well, it was well established when I came,
2. it was 12 years old, Ballyfermot, this house
3. and there was a lot of kids this side and a lot of kids
   that side
4. and they all wanted to know who was moving in,
5. and sitting on that railings and gawking at us coming in
   [laughs].
6. And we’d really no furniture or anything
7. because we had to get out of Haddington Road
8. because of the houses falling in Holles Street.
9. ...it was terrible, two little children swinging on a lamp
10. and a house falling on top of them ...
11. [Laughs] There was no question of getting back,
12. you were here and that was it
13. because it wasn’t established, Ballyfermot,
14. There was a little corner shop at the roundabout
15. and Dirty Aggy’s used to be up there ...
16. but not real shops, now you know what I mean?
17. they had a little kind of a wooden chapel down there
18. and the kids used to have to go to... not me,
19. not my kids because I came up here with [son] as six weeks old
20. but the kids that were here used to Haddington Road
21. and they were brought to Haddington Road school
22. every day ...
23. but then em... the chapel was built in 1950 ...
24. and then the schools came after that,
25. now, I have to say they were great schools, brilliant.
26. we were just told “you’re getting a house in
   Ballyfermot”, didn’t see it,
27. but the point was we didn’t care what kind of a house it
   was, you know ...
28. I mean I’m 50 years here,
29. I wouldn’t leave it, no.
30. This is the quietness, it’s like this all day, day in and
    day out.
31. because I can do anything I like,
32. paint, knit, draw, have the telly up!

V2.9h  I found confidence
1. and the Christmas parties are coming up,
2. you know, there’s one on the 4th of December in
   Drumfin
3. and there’s one in the Civic Centre on the 11th of
   December
4. and I heard of two during the week
5. so there’s four parties
6. but last year I didn’t go to any parties because I wasn’t
   part of the...
7. I didn’t join any clubs.
8. because I went on the Partnership
9. and em I realised that I was losing out a lot on things
   because I wasn’t in any club
10. So when I got to a few meetings of the Partnership
11. I found confidence in meself
12. and decided to go to these clubs
13. on me own and not wait for anyone to ask me.
14. So there was one in the library
15. and I went in and I said hello
16. and sat down,
17. and they were playing Bingo
18. then I went to the one in em...
20. that was on a Friday
21. and then someone else told me about Matthew's Club
22. and then I went on a Wednesday to that
23. I had to be writing the things down in me book
24. because I was in three or four clubs at the one time,
25. you know?
26. I've never met such a nice crowd of women in all me life.
27. I went away to Wexford with them for a week.
28. age doesn't seem to make a difference with them.

V2.9i Part of the community
1. There's more than enough, yeah.
2. ...you need never be lonely with a library,
3. the library was my second home,
4. I was always in the library
5. And I still go to the library, up...
6. it's in the Civic Centre now.
7. And Tesco's,
8. if I did feel lonely, which I don't,
9. I go around to Tesco around,
10. say they’re open till ten or nine
11. and I might find the night real long
12. I'll go around and get a bottle of milk
13. and I know the girls around there
14. and I chat with them, they know me.
15. Yeah, and I feel good then coming back
16. I wouldn't be afraid coming up the main road, my road, no
17. I also know a few druggies.
18. Yeah. I seen them as babies.
19. I seen them as babies,
20. and they talk to me and I talk to them.
21. Yeah, because I knew them
22. and they call me Mrs [name].

V2.9j I wasn't always this way
1. Very, yeah, as I say it's a great place for old people

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and anything like the parties to go to
but it wasn’t always that way for me,
I went to a few parties last year
because I had started in clubs
and now this year there seems to be more parties...
and... but years ago I’d be sitting in the parlour knitting,

and I’d see these minibuses coming up and old people getting into them, my neighbours,
and I used to envy them all going off
and, like, here I was knitting, you know
And it was... they were all in clubs
and I wasn’t in a club
and nobody said “Ask Sally”,
no one ever asked me to anything, ever.
So, by starting... breaking the ice and going to the clubs myself

Going on the Partnership
and I explained it to the Partnership about the case of people being housebound
and being forgotten about
I wasn’t housebound
but I was still forgotten about, you know?

V2.9k Confidence

Well I seem to have got more confidence.
I fear nothing.
With age, I suppose.
No, because em... I was rearing me family
and my family was my whole life around me
and it’s just when they started to go one by one
I was kind of drifting
because all my kids were gone,
like, there was seven in this family
Me husband was gone.
me five kids was gone
but I’ve learnt... I seem to be happy with meself now.
An inner happiness, yeah, yeah.
I blamed meself for a while,
why are they leaving me?
Why are they leaving me?
But they weren’t leaving me, they were
going to better themselves, which they did,
they all have their own homes, lovely homes, yeah.
I’d say I’m a better mixer than I was,
I’m mixing more freely with people
and being happy in their company.
With the confidence I’ve gained.
In meself, believing in meself.
**Every day is a bonus**

1. I don't think I want anything else.  
2. I mean I'm after having my 14th grandchild  
3. ...that's a great thing.  
4. Two of my grandchildren,  
5. one's a teacher in France and the other one is a teacher in New York  
6. and, like, I didn't get over for their graduations,  
7. I'm sorry about that  
8. But I got over for their confirmations and their communions.  
9. You know I would have liked to have been for their graduations.  
10. I'm very proud of them, yeah.  
11. just live every day as a bonus.  
12. That's my future.  
13. I love to wake up in the morning and know I'm still alive  
14. to do all the things I want to do.

**No fault with God**

1. We had a terrible lot of scandals in Ballyfermot with our chapel, you know  
2. And, like, I knew the persons personally, you know?  
3. Mmm. I was in the choir for 18 years.  
4. Left it.  
5. Well, there was still priests running it wasn't there?  
6. And is.  
7. Em... I don't know, it was a terrible thing.  
8. and this was all done under our noses  
9. and he was saying Mass and everything, you know what I mean?  
10. Oh it was terrible, dreadful.  
11. But it doesn't something to your faith, you know,  
12. because at one time you told your sins to these people, you know?  
13. It done a lot of damage to everywhere,  
14. I mean the chapels are emptying out.  
15. I talk to God in me own way.  
16. I have nothing... no fault with God,  
17. He was very good to me.  
18. Because it's got me through from day one to 78,  
19. He's there with me all the time.  

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V2.10 Una’s Narrative

V2.10a You get it in the end
1. When I left school I worked at sewing
2. And then I went to London
3. and I worked in a stupid pub,
4. I hate drink and pubs [laughs]!
5. I worked in a pub and [husband],
6. he worked opposite the pub in another pub
7. but he’s been an alcoholic for nearly 50 years ...
8. but thank God, now,
9. now he... you know,
10. they had forms here, em...
11. care for women or something, you know
12. If you had problems
13. and I rang them
14. after all them years
15. and the girl came down and
16. when I said to my husband
17. he’d have to get out of the house, you know,
18. and of course he panicked and cried,
19. you know, the usual ...
20. but he promised so many times not to drink ...
21. but thank God he’s sticking to it this time,
22. so far anyway,
23. and I’m praying for the last fifty years! [laughs]
24. But they say you get it in the end, so ...

V2.10b A different man without drink
1. it’s only a couple of months ago.
2. As I said I’m after putting up with it for all them years
3. a card was on the shelf out there,
4. telling you want to do
5. so I rang
6. No, the girl came down here ...
7. but at the time I mean, he thought
8. that we were going to split up,
9. you know, after all them years
10. I was half dead, you know?
11. I never thought it was going to work out the way it’s worked out, thank God.
12. just once more and that is it, you know,
13. and, like, he’d tell you that
14. that he’s on his last chance [laughs]!
15. But he’s so good, you know,
16. like, he’s a different person completely
17. with drink on him.

V2.10c He was my favourite
1. Two of them live in Spain.
2. one lives in Canada ...  
3. and there's one who was always my favourite,  
4. he lives in Ballyfermot ...  
5. but we don't speak.  
6. I haven't seen him for over 30 years.  
7. I don't know if it was his wife or his two kiddies  
8. but it was Christmas week  
9. and you know the way you always have money in your purse,  
10. you know, extra ...  
11. and my purse went missing  
12. and the only ones that would take it was them,  
13. like, they had been in the house ...  
14. and so I said we'd better...  
15. don't ever come near here again  
16. so neither of them did [laughs]...  
17. but he was my favourite, you know  
18. I loved him, I did,  
19. but I got over it.

V2.10d  Moaning and groaning

1. She was only in the very early stages of it, you know  
2. Like, one night I was asleep,  
3. the next I heard the gate bang  
4. and I thought "God, who is that?"  
5. and I got up and looked out the window,  
6. quarter to three in the morning  
7. and there was my mam going out with her shoulder bag and all  
8. and then I'd to wake [husband] to run after her, you know,  
9. and bring her back  
10. but she didn't remember ...  
11. that was when they took her in to test her after that ...  
12. but she would have never  
13. have been contented not to be able to get out, you know,  
14. she was full of life,  
15. you would not believe she was 95.  
16. Me, I'm always moaning and groaning [laughs]  
17. about me health!  
18. Well, I have it about 35 years now  
19. and it never bothered me  
20. until in the last two years ...  
21. it's really, you know,  
22. after taking a grip but ...  
23. tiredness all the time, you know ...
24. usually when I sit down
25. all of a sudden I just go...
26. and yet I'm awake since about three o'clock this morning ...
27. I mean I did sleep in the day time
28. but I do it unintentionally, you know,
29. I just doze off ...
30. but sure we all have our complaints [laughs].

V2.10e Fear of break-ins
1. I suppose being broken into, you know, AB
2. that's the usual isn't it? OR
3. What I do now is OR
4. I put my pension money, CA
5. well I pay bills with it
6. and the rest I put away
7. and give it to the Hospice ... OR
8. and a bit earlier in the year
9. I'd over €4,000, you know, OR
10. I used to leave it up in the house,
11. I had it for the Hospice
12. two blokes came into the house,
13. they weren't robbing us, like,
14. they were after being in the post office
15. and in the bookies
16. and the police was chasing them
17. and they got over the garage roof and into the...
18. broke the back,
19. you know the door, the lock on the door, like,
20. Now, the girl over opposite...
21. and I wouldn't even know the girl
22. but she had a video
23. and didn't she see them get in
24. and she took it all down on the video
25. for the police .... CA
26. So that was very, very good. E
27. she had it on the video,
28. had them up in the bedroom and that ...
29. Yeah, the Guards caught them yeah. R
30. Oh, terrible for a while, you know, but ...
31. We were lucky because, you know, Coda
32. gosh I'd have been mad if they'd taken that money for the Hospice
33. that I'd been saving for them, you know?

V2.10f Only for here I'd never go out
1. Well, I tell you AB
2. I never knew about any place like this, you know OR
3. And when the social worker said about coming down
4. I said no way, you know,
5. and then she was at me for a while to come down
6. and I said I wouldn't and
7. then one Saturday morning
8. she said "Just come down with me and have a look
    around", you know
9. And I came down with her that Saturday
10. and I was to come on the Monday then
11. and when the priest said to me,
12. "What days are you coming?",
13. I said "Monday and Friday!", [laughs]
14. and you know before I left that day
15. I said to Father [name]
16. "What would I have to do to come every day?"
17. you know, I couldn't believe it was so nice.
18. Well I never did come to anywhere like this, you know.
19. Well, like, I knew I wouldn't know anybody and...
20. And I couldn't believe it the first day that I came.
21. Everyone is so friendly and
22. the food is nice so …
23. I'm friendly with people in there,
24. only for here I'm sure I'd never go out, you know.

V2.10g  I would have nothing without that
1. I just believe in what I believe in,
2. you know that kind of way?
3. Well I feel I'd have nothing if I didn't have that, you
   know?
4. Maybe in the last few years
5. it has got a bit stronger, you know.
6. Because I hope more,
7. what I believe is there

V2.11 Alex's narrative

V2.11a  People are afraid of one another
8. ...as I keep telling you it was a different world.
9. Everyone where I came from played a musical
   instrument
10. we lived in the cottages up there, there could be
11. there could be two of us or there could be 10 of us, it
    wouldn't matter
12. and we'd walk,
13. I'd say this without fear of contradiction, that we'd walk
14. six or eight miles in a night
15. every crossroads we'd come to
16. we'd hang around for a short period of time
17. and we'd see would any girls turn up, but now it was different...
18. no-one was into courting,
19. it was just that they were female and you enjoyed the conversation, enjoyed their company like you know
20. you knew them all. However, that wouldn’t happen anymore.
21. That wouldn’t happen anymore, like, because
22. people are sort of afraid of each other now,
23. that when I moved up here first, everyone was very friendly and very helpful to each other
24. but now they seem to be half afraid of each other.
25. They don’t help each other at all, like you know,
26. but nowadays that’s gone.
27. They’re afraid to get too close to people,
28. I don’t know why
29. but they seem to be afraid of each other or a bit wary, like you know.
30. I don’t know why

V2.11b She must have been a great woman

1. Well he married sisters...
2. me stepmother, she was a nun in Rome ...
3. She was there for a year and a half or something but she never took the final vows
4. and she came home anyway
5. and she married the father, and took over the four kids.
6. We’d no time for her,
7. we didn’t help her in any way, we only made things more awkward as we could being kids,
8. she’d say anything to you, “You’re not my Ma, you don’t tell me what to do”, like you know?
9. But, like, as I got older
10. and I said “You know”, says I
11. I said “[stepmother] is a great woman”.
12. she took four kids and she brought us up and not one of us ever got into any sort of trouble.
13. At that time as the fella says, if a girl became pregnant you had to get married, there was no ifs or buts, you had to get married
14. but thankfully it didn’t happen to any of ours anyway.
15. But I was never in trouble with the law or anything, and she had five of her own
16. and none of us ever got into trouble.
17. We all grew up, as the fella said, well, in my opinion
18. proper and right, we didn’t get involved in anything
19. I often thought of it afterwards,
20. she must have been a great woman to...
21. She put up with an awful lot, you know,
22. ...when I think of it, like you know,
It's man clean not woman clean

1. Well she was like all women, I was going to say she was meticulously clean, she'd give you a pain in your face cleaning up!

2. women never stay quiet, they never ever stay quiet... they're all the time doing something, even if they're sitting down writing like what you're doing there but a man and a woman come in from work and the man gets his dinner and sits down and the wife starts washing the delft, she tidies up the delft and all.

3. I'm going by my generation, I don't know about your generation, anyway your man is reading the paper and but reading the paper and she'd have the brush and be sweeping and "For Christ's sake, there's no-one here all day long, what are you sweeping for?", "Shut up, it's my job!" and she's sweeping the floor.

4. So then she's finished and she'll find something else to do, she's pottering around or something, like you know, and then suddenly she'll say to me "Would you not get up off the chair and go and do something?"

5. I'd say "There's nothing to be done", "You must be joking, look at the state of that garden, the paling of the house wants painting" and "For God's sake girl, just because you can't stay quiet doesn't mean I've to be the same!".

6. But yous are all the same, you never ever sit down and stop.

7. You just keep pottering,

8. the husband, he's sitting there doing nothing and he's happy as Larry doing nothing, reading his paper and nowadays it's probably looking at the television and she gets this bee in her bonnet, "Get up off the... and go and do something", like you know! [laughs]

9. and because they do it they expect you to do the same thing, like you know! [laughs]

10. A man's not made that way, like you know, like when people come in here

11. they have to excuse this, you know, and I say
"it's man clean, it's not woman clean"!
and me daughters do come in
see them pictures over there,
but they put Xs on them,
like that with their finger, and I say "What's that for?",
"Next time I come in I'll see did you clean the pictures"!
[laughs]
There could be five or six Xs on them, there'd be a long
time before I'd be dusting! [laughs]
That's the way life is now, you know.

V2.11d  Over and done with now

1. and my right leg...
2. I don't know what it was
3. but it got terrible sore, fierce sore
4. I went straight into bed and
5. I phoned [daughter], "[daughter], could you come
around and put mammy to bed? I'm just not able",
6. but when [daughter] saw my foot,
7. So she said "I'll phone the doctor" and the doctor came
anyway
8. and he said "That man should be in a hospital", he said
9. so anyway, my part about it was I went in, that was a
Saturday morning
10. And on the Tuesday morning me wife had moved into
the bed beside me,
11. but she was only there for a couple of hours
12. when they realised there was nothing they could do for
her,
13. so used to go down to see her but anyway, she died, I
think on a Sunday morning
14. as I say she died in there, but she wasn't in any pain.
15. Did you ever see anyone with Motor Neuron disease,
no?
16. communication between the brain and the muscles,
communication breaks down,
17. like eh... when you're diagnosed they tell you...
18. they give you three to five years to live, you won't live
longer than five years.
19. She died before three years was up anyway...
20. but if it had've went the full course,
21. when I put my wife to bed I'd have had to close her
eyelids because they wouldn't have closed themselves
22. and I'd have had to open them for her in the morning,
you know,
23. I'd have had to do all of that. I know it seems ridiculous
24. but she wouldn't be able to do absolutely nothing...
25. So, thanks be to God she died before
26. she had her dignity and that sort of caper, like you
know, which was a grand thing...
27. ...and so... but I was very pleased, like, that
28. she died before she got completely and utterly helpless, you know,
29. because it would a... it would have killed her to be so dependent.
30. but... ah sure it's all over and done with now. Coda

V2.11e I knew her so well

1. Ah, we had good times...
2. we set our marriage date in August '54 and in June '54 it was discovered she had TB
3. so they put her into hospital, St. Loman's,
4. It's now a mental institution
5. ...but that used to be a TB sanatorium
6. but she was in there for two years so we put the wedding back for two years
7. so we got married in August '56 instead of '54
8. I'll tell you a thing I never told anyone, I don't believe I ever told anyone before...
9. Mammy went into the sanatorium and you could only visit twice a week,
10. Thursday was 7 till 9 and Sunday was from 2 till 4 and that's all it was, that you'd be let in
11. and if the doctor walked in or a nurse walked in and saw more than two in there they'd put you out.
12. But anyway... I used to go over every Sunday and every Thursday
13. but I [laughs] I'd come home on Sunday, I'd be visiting her you see, and I'd sit down
14. and Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday and be... I'd write about five different letters
15. and I sealed them and I put them in a bouquet and I said to me mother,
16. well she was me stepmother, "Post them, one each day",
17. they were to [wife] in the hospital, you know,
18. it didn't matter what was on them, I would write anything...
19. but she would never write. She couldn't write but she could read,
20. but the girls out there used to tell me that she was as proud as punch that she'd get these letters! [laughs]
21. The mother used to say to me "You're mad"
22. and I used to say... I knew her so well,
23. I'd write a letter and I could write a letter on Friday and post it on Monday and converse with her...
24. write in the letter what we’d spoken about on the Sunday,
25. I’d know exactly what that woman would say to me, I knew her that well and I’d know
26. I’d tell her like that such a thing and such a thing related and as far as she was concerned I wrote the letter at home on Sunday night but [laughs].
27. There you are now.  

V2.11f The first girl
1. Ah that's a different story, I met her above in Clondalkin, in the village,
2. there was a cinema up there, they used to call it The Bibby
3. a crowd of us used to go to the pictures together, all the lads, no girls involved
4. The lads would say, "Who's that lassie?", and "oh, that's Mary Murphy", whatever her name'd be, "I bet you threepence you don't get in beside her",
5. so he'd get in beside her to win threepence!
6. But there was no harm in it ...
7. and he said "I bet you a tanner you don't get in beside her" and I said "no" said I "she's going with a chap",
8. "Ah that's broke off this months".
9. Now, I had admired her, like I had me eye on her,
10. then "will you go over and sit beside her" and I said "I will of course", I'm going in", I was feeling me best probably
11. and it was the first girl I ever met I was afraid to put me arm around her!
12. When I put me arm around girls I got a slap in the jaw but I didn't mind, you see...
13. but I was afraid, I don't know why, I was terrified
14. and I got so annoyed with meself, a thing I never done before in me life,
15. I made a date for Wednesday night
16. and went into the pictures and sat down beside her and again I didn't put me arm around her, just sat beside her, like,
17. I was terrified, it's hard to explain, you know ...
18. I wasn't physically afraid but I don't know what it was
19. and so, the result is anyway I married her! [laughs]
20. We often laughed over that.
21. She was the first girl I ever went out with.
22. I never went out with a girl on me own, she was the only one I ever went out with like, you know.
V2.11g  Not a friend in the world

1. My wife told me one time that I had more acquaintances than most men

2. But", she said "you haven't a friend in the world"

3. and I said "Well that's contradictory" she said "No.

4. A friend is someone that you can tell them private matters

5. Or" she said "if you and I had a big heave-up, a big row you could talk to your friend about it but", she said "you can't talk to anybody",

6. which is true, like you know

7. ....so you asked me have I got any friends but in me wife's opinion, no,

8. in my opinion I've hundreds of them but that's just a matter of opinion, like you know.

9. All the lads in the pub now, I'd say they're friends of mine ...

10. but you wouldn't talk about private matters, no I'd admit that like you know.

11. I suppose I'd talk to [son-in-law], that's [daughter's] husband now, he's a...

12. well I can talk to him about anything, like, I'd consider him a friend more than a son-in-law.

13. those lads now like I could chat to them but no there was never any...

V2.11h  Talked to my father openly

1. as I say life is mostly what you make of it yourself

2. and I tell you, when you get married you can make life terrible hard on yourself and

3. and awful lot of people do, especially the men.

4. Again, I talked to me sons about it,

5. a bloke... say a man who takes a few drinks, he goes out drinking two or three times a week and he gets married,

6. now at the start it doesn't matter a whole lot but the girl becomes pregnant, starting a family, like you know,

7. she needs company, she wants company but yer man wants to be a single bloke with the privileges of a married man

8. and that doesn't go down too well with the woman, like you know,

9. so it causes endless trouble

10. and generally speaking the man hasn't anyone to talk to because, like, I don't know why but
11. I never met anyone that could speak to their father the way I spoke to my father.
12. I just talked to my father quite openly about some problem, sexually, before I even got married at all.
13. So I told all my sons the same... my father told me when [wife] became pregnant, he said
14. "That girl makes an awful fuss of you" and I said "Why shouldn't she?", like messing, you know,
15. "Well" he said "I want to point out to you, when that babby is born you are only second best, the child takes top priority"
16. and the amount of lads that fell out with their wives because they didn't understand, no-one told them, they thought that the wife...
17. she had their babby now, "I don't want to know you anymore. I have me babby" and this is all...
18. but that's as natural as the day is long and when someone tells you that babby, that's her top priority now is that little babby
19. and when she gets the babby to bed at nine or ten or whenever it is his last feed
20. and then the man comes back into his own for an hour or two,
21. she'll give him a cuddle.
22. A lot of lads just didn't understand and no-one told them, like you know,
23. but I suppose probably something similar on the woman's side because it can't be all one-sided if you understand me
24. but I'm sure you can see what I'm talking about.
25. But [son], he's the eldest lad, says he "You know", says he "I often thought of you. I'd see lads and they're giving out about their wives, their wives don't give a care about them.
26. 'Now she has her babby she doesn't give a thought for me' and", he said "I try to explain to them but",
27. he said "It's too late, someone should've explained it to them before it happened", you know.
28. And it's sad, like you know.
29. And I do say to them "I'd nine of them, I was back... pushing me back further all the time!" [laughs].

V2.11i  Fostering
1. The one thing that the mammy loved was children, you see,
2. and when [daughter] was born she had the change of life around that time and there was eh... there was no hope of more children, like you know
3. but then [grandson] was born and that's the lad living with me, that's 30 year ago, 28 year ago...
and they wouldn’t let him out of hospital and Mam went up to know why and the doctor said “Well, his parents have no home to bring him to”,
they lived in an oul shack down on the Quays, down East Wall Road there, which I know, I’ve been down there meself
but you wouldn’t keep a dog in it never mind...
and so Mammy said “If I took him?”, “Oh you take him and Mr [name]”.
She came home anyway and she told me about the whole... and I said “That’s alright girl, you do one or the other, take [grandson] and forget about fostering children”,
so she said “Well, we’ll take [grandson] and forget about fostering the children”.
And [grandson], he was about, say about five years of age
and a girl that worked with [daughter], now [daughter] worked in a school for special needs children, whatever you call it
So, she took me out to have a look at him so anyway we got into the car, brought [grandson] with us and out...
[foster son] and [grandson] were playing
and the nurse said “That’s unusual” she says “he never plays with anybody, he’s very much into himself”
...so they were playing together anyway and he we came home and asked [grandson] “Would you like him for a brother?”, says he “Yeah, wouldn’t it be great Ma”,
so then we made enquiries so they gave him to us on a trial basis for, I don’t know, six months, it doesn’t matter now,
as he’s been here now ever since.
Well, his Ma’s still alive and she never saw him ...
... and a lot of people, women especially say “Sure what sort of a woman would desert her own child like that?”, you know,
and I look at them and I say “well I don’t know I had 7 kiddies, and I don’t know what the reaction had have been if Mrs [name] came home and said I’m after giving birth to a Downs Syndrome’,
I don’t know what my reaction would be.”
You know what I mean?
That woman, apparently she wasn’t in the best of health, she’s still alive
and she gave birth to the babby and it was a hard birth I believe
25. and she was told it was Downs Syndrome and she said “I don’t want to see him”, so she never saw him.
26. she used to send him oul clothes for, say, a sixteen year old and he was only, say he was an eight year old, you know,
27. and she’d have long trousers and all, like, [laughs]
28. they nearly fit me!
29. But we’d try again through the social worker,
30. his 21st birthday party was a big occasion and I had all my grandchildren, the whole lot of them, his friends and all
31. down in the local pub and we videotaped the whole thing you see and we made a couple of copies of it
32. so we got copies made of them and we gave them to the social worker to give to her,
33. now whether she got them or not I don’t know
34. ...but we did encourage his brother to come up to see him
35. but it’s not easy, like, his brother was in his twenties
36. but, like, he wasn’t a young fella anyway
37. but he couldn’t talk to him you see.
38. You’ve never met [foster son] but you’ll understand when I tell you,
39. the little babby and the babby talks to mammy, nobody knows what that child is saying only Mammy! That’s true.
40. [foster son] is the very same, [foster son’d] be here and he’d be talking to me and you wouldn’t have a clue,
41. So his brother anyway... he tried.

V2.11j  Words

1. I found out years and years ago
2. that if you’re walking out on the street, and this goes for a woman as well as a man,
3. if you’re walking on the street here in Ballyfermot and you see four or five young lads at the corner
4. and you cross the road and walk around, you’re in trouble then.
5. But what you’re doing is you’re putting them down as being mad dogs by walking around them like this and to keep away from them ...
6. so I found that out years ago, so I walk down the road and I see a couple of lads and eh...
7. I just walk straight up to them, “Excuse me, lads come on”, “Ah, sorry Sir”, you know,
8. and they let you through no problem.
9. As a matter of fact now I remember one Hallowe’en they had bangers ...
and there was about four or five of them and they were
throwing bangers and I said to one of the lads, "Come
here and I'll tell you" says I,

"I'm going over for the bus, don't throw one of them
bangers after me because I might as well lie down here
and die as die of fright going across the road", so ...

so, said he "would it have that effect on you?" said I "it
would, it would frighten the life out of me son"
you know, he was only a young fella, it was only about
two years ago
so he called out, "Now, look, did you hear that man?
You're not to throw bangers near that man",
so they didn't.
And if I hadn't have spoken, you see, they would have.

V2.11k  *If you think poor you'll be poor*

1. Well, *[laughs]* you see an awful lot of people and they
spend most of their life feeling sorry for themselves

2. ... and they create problems for themselves,

3. So there's not much anyone can do for them at all, it's
up here they have it, you know.

4. I was taught as a young fella, if you *think poor you'll be
poor*, there's nothing surer than that.

5. Remember that when you get married and you're short
of money and all of that,

6. if you think poor you'll be poor,

7. that doesn't say if you think rich you're going to be a
millionaire!

8. But never ever think poor or you'll be poor

9. but I have a pension and every oul lad my age has the
same pension,

10. But anyhow, I go down and get me pension and me
pension's €230 and some odd coppers it doesn't matter
there's €10 for the gas, €10 for the television and €10
for the pipe, wait 10 for the pipe, 10 for the gas, 10 for
the telephone. And €15 for the ESB, that's €45.

12. So I take €45 out of me pension and that leaves me
with around €185 right,

13. now the €85 would easily keep me in food for the week
easily, like you know, there's no use in saying
otherwise.

14. That leaves me with €100 for porter or whatever I want
to do with it ...

15. ... normally see I put at least €50 of it a week into the
Credit Union
16. so it left me, like, with around, say this week I’d have €70 in my pocket and next week I might only have €40
17. but, like, if I go down to my club down there and if I have four drinks, like, it’s €14/15
18. so I’ve enough there like for three or four nights, if you get me point?
19. But men, I hear them down there, “How the effing hell are you expected to manage on that! You couldn’t effing live on that”, like you know,
20. but it doesn’t make sense to me, like you know,
21. it just doesn’t make sense to me.
22. and the big thing about it is that those people are thinking poor.
23. And that’s... and, like, I can’t explain it to you
24. but it is true, if you think poor you will be poor.

V2.11l  Just get on with it
1. a lot of people like feel sorry for themselves
2. and they’re miserable sort of people, I don’t mean... I’m not trying to degrade anyone ...
3. but they have themselves miserable when it’s not necessary
4. Like, my knee is paining me at the moment.
5. Now, it’s the simplest thing in the world for me to curl up, “Oh poor me, my knee”, like you know,
6. and maybe look for sympathy off you or something, like you know,
7. but me knee is still paining me,
8. makes no difference whether you give me a big hug and a kiss, it’s still paining me, like you know ...
9. ... so why bother? Why annoy you about it?
10. Just get up and get on with it,
11. but as I said to sit down there feeling sorry for yourself is a waste of time,
12. a waste of effort and you’re only making yourself more miserable,

V2.11m  You never feel old
1. But you never feel old like,
2. eh... your joints tells you you’re old but you don’t feel, like, any different, like you know
3. ...if you were 21 years of age you didn’t feel any different to when you were 18 or 19!
4. But you knew you were 21, like you know,
5. but no you don’t feel any... I’m only talking for meself, like,
6. your joints, you’ve pains and aches and your fingers are all crippled, like, those things tell you you’re old.
7. But you don’t feel any different, like you know
8. ... and sometimes you get a bit of a shock when you realise that...
9. I just said to you a few moments ago it takes me 20 minutes to walk down to the shop.
10. When I discovered that first I nearly died, it's only what, a five minute walk! [laughs]
11. So, things tells you without anything else, you know... 
12. ...and I suffer from blood pressure now, it's a thing I never had in me life
13. and it’s a lady doctor down here now
14. but I said to her “I never suffered from blood pressure in me life and now”, says I “I'm suffering with it”
15. “Well”, she says “it's like everything else Mr [name], your eyes should tell you that”,
16. she said “you were never blind in your life” and I said no, “And now you are.
17. You see, your body doesn’t function the same now as it did years ago...
18. so that’s about it, like.

V2.11n Dependence
1. Having to depend on people! [laughs]
2. That’s the difference now, thanks be to God I’m alright now at the moment.
3. If the worst comes to the worst if [daughter] didn't come up to me I can still manage, like you know,
4. I can walk down, bring my shopping... walk down... a lot of people do it,
5. get the messages, put them in the taxi and bring you home,
6. taxi man'll bring them in for you.
7. Anyway eh... no, I think you worry about the day when you're not able to walk in my case...
8. me knee gives out and I won't be able to walk
9. ...and then I’ll be depending on young [son] to dress me in the morning maybe or something like that, like you know,
10. well that's the sort of thing that terrifies old people because we don't want...
11. I don't want some strange woman coming in here to help me out.
12. I’d say that's about the worst thing, to lose your independence and have to depend on other people, solely like depending on them, like you know.
13. Not but... you depend on them from the time you're very young because you couldn't live life on your own, you have to have some help somewhere, you know.
14. You know what I'm talking about anyway, really depending in them, like you know.

Coda

V2.11o  **Come away with an easier mind**

1. Very strong, very religious yeah.
2. Well it's important...
3. it should be important to everybody...
4. but it's important to me because
5. I could always go down to the church and...
6. I had me problems with my wife,
7. I mean, we all have problems
8. But her and I'd often have hells of rows, like you know, there were some fierce rows
9. but I have found that I could always go down to the chapel, as I say, and have a few words with the Quare Fella
10. and it made me feel better.
11. Like, people'd say it's a superstition, maybe it is, I don't know
12. but I go down to the church and I'd pray for a bit of light or a bit of savvy to understand what was going on
13. and generally you'd come away with a much easier mind ...
14. ... and you'd be able to come up and talk to her
15. ...whereas if I hadn't have been to the chapel you'd go home and abuse her.
16. So I found religion to me was very, very important and it still is.
17. Sometimes I see things with me family and I'm not too happy and I go down and have a word with that Quare Fella and ask him will he fix it up, you know.
18. So, probably it would get fixed up anyway
19. but I like to think that I had a hand in it! [laughs].

V2.12  **Danny's narrative**

V2.12a  **There was no idling**

1. I was 6 weeks idle in my whole life, I was 47 years working.
2. I was in Odlums now for the latter... I had a good record.
3. My father, the Lord have mercy on him,
4. Ye had to go to work
5. no matter what, ye had the flu or... 'ah it's only a cold'
6. Ye had to go to work,
7. this was the older people had this thing, you were lucky to have a job
8. I was never out idle in Odlams,
9. I was 15 years there
10. I was late twice
11. And I was never, I never missed a day in 15 years and...
12. that was the way it was then, you had a job you went to it, there was no idling.

V2.12b She's a little fire

1. I've one lassy who's a cabinet maker
2. She made that [knocks]
3. she used to follow me around with a hammer, and I used to give her a big lob of wood with a load of nails and she'd...
4. she wanted to be a carpenter, she always wanted to be a carpenter
5. and I was in the tech, I was on the board of management of the tech, the college there, before it opened,
6. one of the fellas was there and I was saying to him
7. 'I've a daughter down up there, she wants to be a carpenter, what am I going to do with her?'
8. And he says 'send her down to the night class'
9. So your man said, he was delighted and he said,
10. 'I'm going to put her in for... to get her an interview for ANCO'
11. But she... she's a little fire, you know, fire.
12. So she came back and she was, this was her,
13. 'male chauvinist pigs, they were'
14. so I said 'what was wrong' says she 'two fellas, they're eejits over there' she said, 'laughing'
15. she said 'these were asking me all these funny questions... what do you want to be a carpenter... it's a man's trade?'
16. And she, all this... and she was fighting back
17. and I said to her 'he was interviewing, they weren't, they were asking the questions,
18. he was seeing how you would react, cause you're going into a man's trade,
19. and they're all going to be men and you're going to get stick [daughter] no matter what you do or say,
20. you're going to have to learn to live with it or give it up'
21. But eh... she got, she done it.
22. they have her now in outreach, you know the FAS thing
23. You'd want to see her house, it's absolutely
24. the things she does with it you know...
I didn't want that for them

1. But we had the kids... we were struggling...
2. we'd have one of them in here and we had a heater up in the...
3. we'd no central heating now... we'd a heater up in the bedroom
4. you know you'd spread them out around the place so that they could study at night
5. they opened the schools at night so they could stay back and study at night there,
6. and that's what we did... I was saying to mine you know
7. 'unless you have a bit of paper at the end of your schooling to say that you done blah, blah, blah, blah you're going to end up with nothing'
8. cause it was different in my day, you got a job...
9. I know they were scarce and they weren't great jobs but you were never...
10. Starved... you'd make a living
11. but I didn't want that for them,
12. I wanted them to be... to be able to... you know, to improve themselves
13. So thank God they have, you know
14. They done... they're really great.

It used to make me boil

1. [Son 1] now, he left school at 15,
2. he never told me, he was a real quiet fellow [son1], tall thin fella,
3. I didn't know but he was getting battered at school
4. ...he had an alcoholic teacher he had down there...
5. so I went down to the brother and I said 'brother
6. I'm going to the solicitor' I told him,
7. I'm going about him' I said 'but you're as bad, you knew he had this problem'
8. and I said 'you let him loose among the crowd of kids'
9. and I said 'he'll never teach again'
10. and I said 'you probably won't either because when I'm finished with you'
11. he pleaded with me, the brother,
12. and I said 'you'd want to do something about him
13. because' I said 'I've another lad, [son2] coming up'
14. says I '[son2] is coming up' and I said 'he won't do that on [son2]'
15. he's a big fella and
16. we got he said '['son2] is not going into the same stream that he'd be getting that fella'
17. and [son2] said 'ah Da' says he 'all me pals in that class I'm with them for years, he won't touch me' he said,  
18. well I said 'promise me that if he does in anyway, not physically even, if mentally,  
19. you'll tell me'  
20. So that's it... there were never any problem with [son2] with him,  
21. eh he went to the tech...[son1]  
22. And he was getting on alright  
23. and he starting going with this girl, his wife now [daughter-in-law],  
24. and she's a school teacher  
25. and she got him, she taught him how to study and the proper method involved with it  
26. he got a degree in...  
27. ....stock taking and all that and eh he...  
28. and he got it and then he went for the contract manager  
29. and he got that... and he's grand, he's grand...  
30. it used to boil me up when I'd think of it you know  

V2.12e Christmas morning  
1. Ah God it's chalk and cheese like to what it was,  
2. during the war when we were in Mount Tallant and somebody had a bit of good fortune they shared with everyone  
3. You know, everyone was in the same boat  
4. There was no... no one better than anyone else they were all the same... everyone appreciated  
5. you would say to a kid 'get up to your room' you know you're sent up to your room,  
6. there was nothing in your room only a bed  
7. You know, and lino on the floor, it would be freezing cold.  
8. But nowadays you'd be delighted if you were sent up to your room, computers up there and playstation, very popular you know  
9. I remember when ours...  
10. Christmas, we always made a big fuss out of Christmas.  
11. we'd get... we'd light the tree and we'd go up in the morning with a candle, you know... they'd be all awake of course,  
12. 'I don't think he came, I didn't hear him' and we'd all come down  
13. and I used to love being in there with the camera,
14. and their eyes would be like saucers with the tree lighted,
15. Christmas morning was the first time the tree was lit, they saw it lit you know.
16. And they... it was mar... it was absolutely magic
17. and the place would be covered in paper...
18. the excitement it was absolutely... and it wouldn't be for all the things...
19. it was the build up to the whole thing, you know it was great
20. It was, it was great

V2.12f  No-one had any money
1. ...and things were bad during the war
2. There was no money, no-one had any money...
3. I'd holes in my shoes and it was lashing...
4. and I suppose at that time there was no children's allowance
5. There was no social welfare, there was nothing...
6. ...she said...the night before, pair of football boots
7. she took the studs out of them and polished them black,
8. and I wore them to school for a full week or more, a pair of football boots,
9. ye had to go to school you know
10. ...and em... you never...no one took any heed of ye you know
11. ...there was kids going to school then, in short trousers and not even a jacket or a coat...
12. it was about a mile from Mount Tallant to Terenure, up to nearly the top of Terenure, to get turf...
13. there was a big old garage and there was no cars you see and it wasn't used so they used to sell turf out of the garage
14. and this day we were queueing up, there was about 10 or 12 people, we were queueing with a sack,
15. ye had to carry it on your back, I was only a kid, I was 13, 12 or 13,
16. water flowing out from under the door of the garage...
17. they broke open the door, he was hosing the turf
18. so that it would weigh twice as heavy, you know they soaked it, it was by weight, this two stone of turf you know...
19. there was murder up there...the couple...yer man got a couple of clouts and we all took the turf
20. ...but it meant you had to carry it
21. ...and then you got home and she'd say 'look at your coat' it would be all wet,
22. what the heck could I do about it!
V2.12g  The scouts

1. A lot of them up here, Ivor Browne and Doctor [name 1] was with him
2. they were able to open doors to us that we never knew existed even like you know that
3. and point us in the sort of direction and eh...
4. we never done anything like this.
5. just said if we don't do it, nobody will do it.
6. Nobody's going to come along and offer to do it, we're going to have to get up and do it ourselves.
7. We were thinking of our kids growing up,
8. there would be no facilities, there'd be nothing, you know,
9. a lovely man. He was scout master in Merchant's Quay,
10. And he said 'why don't they have a branch up there' so
11. and they said we'll get the scouts going,
12. and they had to get permission of the parish priests,
13. ...and he wouldn't give permission for the Catholic Boy Scouts of Ireland
14. So you know, what were we going to do.
15. so we came back up and we saw, Father [name],
16. and we said 'we're looking for a hall',
17. so he set up a meeting with the brother and ourselves and
18. and the five of us went down and he laid down rules, had to walk in two-by-two, little boys you know,
19. we were in the back of the school, it was a bicycle shed years ago, big long narrow building, concrete
20. So we got into the place anyway and we were on our best behaviour and
21. this brother left and another brother came, he didn't want to have anything to do with us...
22. there was no signed agreement and this and that...
23. so one night he was going from the bingo hall,
24. and he was going across and the door of our long hall was open
25. and one of the kids, it was cubs, his mother had died and they said we're going to say a decade of the rosary for her,
26. and they were all kneeling down and they were saying the rosary
27. and this brother was passing by and saw, and popped his head in the door and looked...
28. and we were the greatest thing since fried bread...
29. couldn't do a thing wrong... and that was the only time they ever got down on their knees!
30. Just happened out of the blue that he walked by just as they were
31. he walked in and they were all looking real religious looking...
32. So we had the hall there for years...

V2.12h  You had to fight that sort of thing
1. now, I'd say, there's roads I suppose I wouldn't like to live on ...
2. ... and there's people I wouldn't like to live beside, you know what I mean, I suppose I've been lucky that way ...
3. ... but it's the same everywhere you go.
4. we got a terrible bad press up here in the beginning, when I came here first,
5. the things that were written about Ballyfermot was ab...
6. I was P.R.O. on the Association,
7. one time I went into this fella in the Press, the editor,
8. and there was an article in the Press on the front page of the Evening Press
9. and it said "Ballyfermot man gets six months for wife-beating",
10. so we investigated here ourselves
11. and we discovered it was up on the
12. ... so it was private land and he had allowed the travellers onto it, gypsies,
13. he was living in Cherryorchard, he was living on this site, this fella,
14. he was ten days in Ballyfermot, ten days he was there,
15. he beat up his wife, came home drunk one night
16. and it said in the thing "Ballyfermot man gets six months for ...", you know,
17. so we said "We want an immediate retraction" ...
18. he did run it... he put it on the... not quite as big but he put it on the... the retraction
19. but we had to fight this type of thing, you know ...
20. ... we got dreadful press, if something happened in Inchicore or Walkinstown, it was Ballyfermot, you know,
21. no matter where... even out, just out this direction, it was in Ballyfermot, you know?
22. ... there was a fire up there in one of the houses, I remember
23. but they wanted to move her out but she said "If they move me out to Bluebell or somewhere like that
24. they won't give me this house back again", you know, it'd go to someone else so, she was sort of...
25. and all the neighbours, about ten of them, they painted the whole house inside, up and down, wallpapered every...
26. and a week or two and she was back in her house, you can’t buy that type of thing, you know?
27. ... you know, that... you never heard any of those stories,
28. you only heard all the ones about the blackguards doing something, you know,
29. and this is what we fought for a long time
30. and it’s come around now,
31. there was a lovely article a while ago about the college down here, the animation, you know the... Disney ...
32. ... there’s ten or 12 people from Ballyfermot working there now ...
33. ... it’s very successful.

V2.12i  The last of the summer wine
1. Well, we couldn’t get any of the halls, the school halls, the parish priest there and we didn’t get on OR
2. and he wouldn’t allow the school to give us the halls for a meetings
3. so we used to get the dispensary, that was...
4. and we had a meeting every quarter there
5. and we’d invite the TDs, you see, up and people were asking questions and we’d say
6. “We would like to see such and such a thing”
7. ... I always remember there was a Mrs [name], she was a lovely woman, a real lady
8. and he was going on about “I know your problems, you have problems, I know your problems”,
9. and this woman, now, there was a sort of a pause
10. she said “You do in my arse!” [laughs] ...
11. ... she got red, she stood up, “Now”, she said
12. “You’ll have to excuse me but”, she said “it annoyed me, you have no conception of my problems”,
13. she said to him “you spend more on petrol than I have to rear six children, educate and clothe them,
14. you have no idea” she said, “so”,
15. why don’t you elect a Ballyfermot man to look after it, they’ll understand, you don’t know anything about Ballyfermot”, she said ...
16. ... well, the place came down for her, like, you know, R
18. but I always remember that [laughs], Coda
19. ... we met there a while ago,
20. it was quite accidental and somebody was coming by
21. and he knew us,
22. he came by and he said “Huh, there’s the last of the summer wine” [laughs]
V2.12j  I would never move

1. Seriously now, you hear people saying this but I really and truly mean it.
2. if I won the lotto tomorrow I wouldn’t move ...
3. .. now, that’s it, I wouldn’t move.
4. all my friends are here, all my...
5. what in the name of God would I be moving out to, you know?
6. There’s a man moved from
7. down the road, he’s about three years gone
8. two and three times a week, he’s there on Sunday at Mass and he comes up here for Mass
9. so what the heck did he move to Tullamore for?
10. I can’t understand it.
11. I’m very happy here, very content,
12. I’ve great neighbours here, always have had
13. and a lot of them are gone now, you know,
14. died or whatever but em
15. I love it up here, I’ve never had a bad moment up here ...
16. ... you know, and it’s been a very good house for us, you know,
17. the family were good, you know and everything
18. so and so I wouldn’t move.
19. I really wouldn’t, if I won the lotto I wouldn’t, you know,
20. so what the heck would I move for at my age you’re not going to meet new friends in a new area ...

V2.12k  What’s the world coming to

1. ... I was knocked down there a couple of years ago, AB
2. I was coming across O’Connell Bridge, walking, OR
3. and I was just walking along and this young girl, she was...
4. big stout-ish girl and she running and she ran
5. out from behind a fella and bumped into me
6. and knocked me flat on my back, you know I went down,
7. and I didn’t know where I was, you know, I got a shock
8. and a man went to pick me up and he called after her and he said
9. “Excuse me is a word, you know, you could say excuse me”
10. and she said “Ah I’m in a hurry, he was in me way”, and she ran on
11. I was really... she knocked the wind out of me, you know ...
12. ... and she said... I just said “My God, like, what’s the world coming to?”
13. and I was a bit shock up for a couple of days now after it, you know...
14. But, like, today it's quite normal,
15. you're getting on a bus or something and there's somebody elbowing you out of the way, you know,
[laughs]
16. ... but I - last time I went upstairs it was full downstairs
17. and I went upstairs and coming down the stairs is a nightmare ...
18. ...shoving and going, you know, so I said "I'll never go upstairs again", you know
19. I won't go upstairs.

V2.121 If you let your mind go

1. I was out of work then at 62, it was only a couple of years
2. they closed the packing here in Odlums and sent it all down to Cork
3. ... so eh... I was idle and I decided then I'm not going to stop working,
4. I didn't feel like stopping working, I wanted to... I felt I...
5. One fella sat back and he broke his heart laughing when I went in,
6. I was 63 and he was looking for a 20 or 30 year old and he said "It's a terrible pity
7. I'm looking for a man like you" I was in the warehouse and I could drive a forklift
8. ... he said "These fellas are... you're picking out stuff, an order comes in and
9. these fellas are shimmying up and down these things and throwing things down and they're putting them onto a forklift",
10. he said, "That's the only thing, you have it up here, all up there
11. but I have to have the physical end of it as well" ...
12. I never got a job, no, honest to heavens,
13. that was the only thing I regretted, that I didn't continue to work,
14. I was 47 years working
15. ...and I was six weeks idle my whole life ...
16. I never... my father, Lord have mercy on him, was terrible stickler for that,
17. "You have a job to go to, you have to go to work, no matter how bad", smothered with a cold ...
18. ... "you have to go to work", you know, "that's your job" ...
19. I was in the Credit Union at that time, on the board...
20. ... and it was great, you know, it was very interesting work, I was on the credit committee...
21. ... and eh... that was great, they gave me a couple of days, a couple of nights a week I'd be over there during the day even you know,
22. and it was very good...
23. OH yeah, keep your...
24. if you let your mind go, you know you're...

Coda

V2.12m I've no regrets
1. I have great security in the sense that, you know
2. I've done it all, I've done all I want to do,
3. I'm happy enough with everything,
4. I look back at the family and they're all well and they've all got good partners and all nice homes and they're all, you know,
5. and it's a great source of contentment, you know...
6. ... you can sit back and then,
7. God help some people get terrible things, like, you know,
8. children dying before you... you never think that any of your family is going to die before you, you know,
9. I'm very... I'm very content and very, you know...
10. and as I say, I look back on my life and things that I've done
11. and I don't regret anything,
12. ...you know, I didn't do anything remarkable or anything in my life, you know,
13. but I lived the life I lived and I lived it happy and I brought up a family
14. and they're all good and they're all...

Coda

V2.12n A grasp on religion is a grasp on life
1. it's terrible to see... to me the way people have lost
2. or to a degree ignore their religion no matter what religion it is, I don't care what it is,
3. but it's sad to see people
4. oh, a lot of it is only a show and there's a girl, there was a girl I remember and
5. she looked around about at ten churches before she found a church that she would like to walk down the aisle in, you know,
6. ...but she liked the backdrop for her wedding,
7. this is... this to me is sad,
8. I'd love to just, you know,
9. people come back to ordinary living, what we knew as ordinary living, you know,
10. and I'm not saying I'm a religious fanatic or anything like that but I've always been religious and I've kept up my religion all my life
11. you'll find that somebody who has a grasp on religion has a better grasp on life, now, you know,
12. because if you haven't got your religion or a belief you've nothing really, you've nothing, you know?
13. I take the sacraments and it gives me a great source of comfort all my life
14. but I've asked That Man for the impossible, that's a fact
15. and I got it, now, not directly...
16. ... if you look back a couple of months later and say
17. that's exactly what I wanted but I got it in a different way, perhaps, you know,

V2.13 Eric's Narrative

V2.13a  There would have been dead bodies

1. Going back to the war,
2. when food was scarce and bread was...
3. buying it on the black market, there was a flourishing black market in Dublin.
4. I'm reflecting now in a broad sense at that time, trying to give you a picture,
5. everybody had their own favourite dairy or shop or butcher
6. and if you hadn't got the money
7. you'd get it and it'd be put on the book
8. and they'd pay for it at the end of the week
9. and we'd all know we paid a little bit extra
10. Without that sort of situation there would have been dead bodies on the streets.
11. It was really third world,
12. and it would appear that politicians of the time and those who were in charge
13. didn't care, which brings me to another point
14. and I know things have happened within the church
15. and with children who were in orphanages and things happened them,
16. horrendous things, things that should never have happened
17. but by the same token I say with respect
18. without the input of the Church and especially the nuns
19. we would have been starving.
20. They had soup kitchens or, as we used to call them, the dinner houses,
21. we could get our dinner every day for a penny or tuppence,
22. a tin can, they’d fill it up with a stew
23. there were... wrong things happened but there were also good things happened.
24. It’s easy to condemn and many of the people who condemn know nothing of the past,
25. and without them, that input from the local convents and from the local clergy
26. there would have been dead bodies, you’d have been stepping over them
27. there was often nine and ten families lived in the big houses in Gardiner street and Dominic Street and that sort of thing,
28. So you can imagine the situation.

V2.13b The simple things

1. Like, I’ve an iPod,
2. I have a thousand pieces of music on it,
3. could you imagine in them days with a gramophone getting a thousand records? You’d need a lorry to transport them!
4. So, where it was limited it was explanatory, it broadened your mind,
5. And I think life was much more colourful,
6. we take food and everything now for granted,
7. at that time there was a perpetual hunger and anything you got tasted like, ah, Café de Paris!
8. Poor people used margarine which was a deplorable taste.
9. cart grease would’ve been handier!
10. But, if you got bread and creamery butter, ah!
11. Tingles were running down your spine,
12. I remember my father bringing me to the pictures when I was ten year old,
13. it was called The Last Days of Pompeii and a fella called Preston Foster was in it,
14. but to us it was absolutely brilliant, nowadays you’d look at it and say “Cripes!”, “
15. you’d know they’re all made of cardboard!
16. But it was, it was the greatest thing out.
17. The simple things in life,
18. there’s a saying, ignorance is bliss, to a degree that’s right.
V2.13c  We learnt to explain our case

1. Some of us then found problems when our children got older,
2. there was no secondary schools in the area
3. so in our case I had to go down to Goldenbridge,
4. I explained the case to the Sister in charge there and got in
5. as did others afterwards, we learnt how to explain our case
6. they were a little better prepared for the world than we were.
7. when we got a bite of the apple we found then that we could have muscle
8. and we had the power within ourselves to change things
9. by making the politicians sit up and take notice and those who were in charge.
10. we were paying at that time a differential rent,
11. one quarter of their wages went to the rent and payment of the house
12. so it became a very expensive house, you were paying a lot of money
13. because you had to get certificates every year to prove what money came into the house
14. and if they found... you could be evicted
15. So we decided we'd look at the possibility of buying our houses
16. another election was coming up and we made a deal with the opposition crowd
17. they didn't want to have anything to do with... because
18. a lot of the houses at that time were used as an electioneering stunt or
19. people thought that the only way you could get a house was through your TD
20. even though you had a right under law to get a house
21. depending on your circumstances
22. but they issue them out like as a “Vote for me and I'll get you a house”.
23. So we made a deal with the opposition parties and we won the situation
24. and in 1973 all Corporation houses, not only in Ballyfermot but nationally,
25. were sold to the tenants...
V2.13d  The forerunners to a revolution

1. ... and that’s one of the things that I think most of all, is the educational system that has grown up and the produce is being seen in a place like Ballyfermot,
2. ...but that’s a complete minority, we very seldom hear of the achievers ...
3. in fact next Monday we have to go over and talk about giving out grants to those who went back to school ...
4. ...some would be people who left school at 12 or thirteen and suddenly realise, and that I think is a great boost to the society ...
5. ... that we have these people who are ambitious ...
6. ... and I think education is the most important thing em we’re not a deprived people here in Ballyfermot, but it is bandied that we are deprived and deficient in many things,
7. we have the same capabilities but we haven’t got the same assistance that other places...
8. in fact the playing pitch is not level ...
9. ...and to me that’s an achievement that we’ve come through all of that ...
10. ...and the amount of people that have graduated over the years, and in that respect I can look back and say, yes, we were forerunners to a revolution in this country and I’d say 90 per cent of the people started to realise that they could do these things and live the life and have the life after they achieved the ownership of their own homes ...
11. ... each man had his own castle.

V2.13e  No blacks, no dogs, no Paddies

1. I had to go, I had to go, there was no work, I had to go. there was no subsistence from the Labour Exchanges. You’d to go out and look for work but there was no work.
2. I mean the country was literally at a standstill, regret and loneliness, loneliness was the biggest one they had a totally different culture,
3. like, I’m using these words now, culture and all that which I admit at that time in my mind just weren’t there.
4. that’s why drink became a terribly important part of the Irishman and Irishwoman but particularly Irishman, loneliness, it was the only thing you’d get solace out of, loneliness.
5. It was that sheer loneliness.
13. You were a Paddy
14. and it was a fact, on doors, “No Blacks, No Dogs, No Paddies”,
15. we were at the bottom of the pile.
16. when I was going into Britain for the first time to Holyhead the customs man
17. Handed you a slate, a board, “Read that,
18. but you’re a Paddy, you probably can’t read, I’ll read it for you!”.
19. I mean, you were judged before you were even...
20. as we were judged here in Ballyfermot.
21. You’re being judged all along the line
22. I became aware of my nationality.
23. I became aware of the lack of education
24. I had to overcome some of the arguments that were put up to me
25. but looking back with a little experience,
26. they were not arguments,
27. we’d have taken them apart in three minutes,
28. unfortunately our teaching at that time,
29. even the wealthiest have to be born into circumstances where they’re taught and enlarged and taught to think and evaluate and all that sort of thing,
30. it only comes from experience.

V2.13f From the wrong side of the tracks
1. Ah, that’s a story,
2. I met [wife] in the Garda Hall or recreational hall in the Garda Depot in the Park.
3. This is 1946 or... it must have been ’46, yeah, it was...
4. one of the lads we were knocking around with, all hard men at that time,
5. he knew somebody that knew a Guard who could get us into a dance on a Saturday night at nine o’clock till two in the morning,
6. going for weeks and weeks and weeks and dancing with this girl and the next time, next week dance again with her
7. So, one thing led to another, eventually asked her out
8. the first time I met her at Yeats’ Corner at the bottom of Grafton Street and we went to the Theatre Royal
9. and we paid one and thrupence each in
10. and I think that night I had three and sixpence in me pocket!
11. So it was enough to get a packet of cigarettes, a packet of sweets or something like that and enough to get us into the cinema!
12. And, it was three years before we got married, I think.
13. Saving, saving
14. and it has to be said and, I'll say it now... [wife]... I'm going behind any...
15. her sister and I never got on because I was from the wrong side of the tracks.
16. I haven't seen her for years but we sort of endure each other,
17. we had words early in life when we were saving up to get married
18. eh... we were buying bits of things and that sort of thing and putting money away
19. and we were picking a suite of furniture
20. and for some reason or other [wife] got sick and couldn't go,
21. and [sister-in-law] came along and when she saw it she said "Rubbish", you know.
22. "you shouldn't be buying it, that won't go with nothing",
23. and I had to say to her, you know,
24. "[sister-in-law], I'm not marrying you!
26. but em... this is all in life.
27. So we got married in Haddington Road on the 12th of July 1951

V2.13g Grandchildren
1. ... and I think my grandchildren,
2. eh... they're a great God's gift,
3. ...they all have different personalities
4. ...and they make you think and I think the secret of...
5. one of the secrets of staying reasonably young
6. is by learning the language and the attitudes of young people,
7. ...you don't talk down to them,
8. you listen to them as one individual to another
9. and in that respect they trust you and they can talk to you and look for counselling,
10. but never, ever attempt... I never do
11. and I think that's why I'm trusted...
12. I never try to make decisions for them ...
13. ... if they want advice they will get it,
14. if they tell me something that's confidential I respect that confidentiality
15. and their mothers and fathers know that there's no point in asking me
16. because they won't get it
...and I find great information coming because they're all interested in different things, my eldest grandchild, he's in media and eh... the youngest is just after doing her Junior Cert and thanks be to God she'd a good Junior Cert ...

\[V2.13h \ I have regrets and satisfactions\]
1. I wouldn't... I'm satisfied and yet regretful.  
2. I left so much of my life in a mess in respect to time with my children growing up with my wife we did talk about things and plan things but it was built around what I was going to do or where I was going or where I had to be... I'd have my clothes in the car dressing, wash myself wherever I was and off to a meeting and not arriving home till ten or half ten at night... ... em... but I do regret as I said the fact that so much of the time was spent away from them ...and yet it didn't seem to affect them because we did have our family meetings and family get-togethers and anything they set their mind to, or we sort of directed them in the way eh it bore fruit ... [son], my son, he had a terrible problem, he was very backward, very dyslexic and em... and unfortunately the wrong master was teaching him and instead of helping his students he was destroying them, and I remember working in Palmerstown Road with a Dr [name] and I explained to him about [son] and then he went to a child psychologist and that was the beginning of the end of his dumbness, he got into a school for, I'm not afraid to use the word, backward children, slow learners... and he went to the vocational school down the road... and he got his then Junior Cert, now we never thought he'd achieve getting his Junior Cert. and he got into the civil service then as a messenger ... and from there he started to move up in the service, he studied and worked in it,
31. he then got a move to the National Library,  
32. ... and he's moved along, he's a very, very good job  
33. his daughter is doing her doctorate too in haematology up in Coleraine University ...  
34. ...and his son works for some trade company,  
35. ... you know, it didn't retard him in anyway,  
36. in fact what he went through was cruel  
37. and all because of one teacher,  
38. like, it happened to myself in spelling, it's unfortunate,  
39. life can be very, very funny  
40. I do know they do it now, they have a training in psychology  
41. but certainly in my days it was an unknown word...

V2.13i I have my life in order
1. Yes, if I was to put them all out on the table  
2. I got more out of life than life didn't give me...  
3. ... I am satisfied ...  
4. I think, I'm never sure...  
5. I think I have my life in order...  
6. ...we've owned this house for many years,  
7. we've acquired that bit of property,  
8. my family have all done well for themselves  
9. and all of the grandchildren, thanks be to God, are all doing well for themselves,  
10. I don't think I could ask for anymore ...  
11. there's no more husbands on this end of the road, they're all dead,  
12. a few wives left...  
13. ...so we've seen a lot pass in the last 50 odd years,  
14. in fact Mrs [name] over there recently was saying,  
15. we were coming down from Mass  
16. and she said "God be with the days Eric ",  
17. "... when you'd all be fighting battles for to buy the houses and all the rest" ...  
18. ... and everybody round here owns their own house now,  
19. ...we never thought that when we were coming in  
20. and it's not just property, it's the self-esteem ...  
21. ... that you acquire from that achievement  
22. ...and they in their own way contributed to that,  
23. nobody was backsliding,  
24. some sat back and waited for everything to happen  
25. but that's going to happen in every man's army.

V2.13j It's easier to stay on top
1. Satisfaction is to see my grandchildren progressing...  
2. and wanting me to talk things out with them  
3. and respecting me in that respect, they don't have to.
4. read that out.
5. [reads the letter to him from granddaughter]
6. That explains it,
7. she's an architectural... third year architecture.
8. but that's why I believe when I see them
9. and when I see other children around the area that now
   have their Leaving Certs
10. and very many of them going to college
11. and that to me is a big achievement ...
12. ...and they will pass that on,
13. the frame of humanity is very difficult to get up...
14. ... very, very difficult to climb the ladder in life
15. ...but when you climb that ladder it's easier to stay in
   the top.
16. You very seldom come right back down to where you
   were, say, fifty or sixty years ago
17. ...because the training, the intellect, the ambition, the
   self-esteem and all is much higher.

**V2.13k  People are precious**

1. Oh walk as best I can
2. I was down the credit union today eh...
3. and I had to hobble down because I have arthritis in my
   left foot
4. but I'd rather walk down than get the bus down because
   I need the exercise
5. as I said go down, out to Howth, get the bus into town,
   get the DART
6. and then walk up the prom there right up as far as the
   harbour,
7. sit down or maybe have a cup of coffee or a cup of tea
8. ...and then walk back down and into the DART
9. and that's a good little walk and you're with people ...
10. ... it's important that,
11. in my opinion and I think psychologically to be with
   people...
12. ... if not talking to them just to be with people,
13. people are precious...
14. ... and it's lovely now to go through town
15. when you see so many obviously foreign people,
16. the integration of Chinese and Arabian people and
   Burmese people...
17. ... and different people of different cultures,
18. or restaurants, I like a good restaurant ...
19. I like Italian food, I like Chinese food but I like it good
20. ...and it's great, even Greek food is lovely,
1. I consider myself now to be doing what God meant me to do.
2. I didn’t always do it,
3. I did keep going to Mass and communion now and again,
4. I was not a strong...
5. but when you get to my age you’ve a lot more time to think...
6. and there’s a lot more to be thankful for
7. and a lot more to be regretful for
8. ...but overall, yes, I believe...
9. I think... it keeps me going, it keeps most of us going, that there is a hereafter ...
10. and I believe there is, I honestly believe there is,
11. there’s too many markers to prove that this is the case
12. I remember we were working out on a house out on Brennanstown Road,
13. ...and one of the electricians,
14. he said “I’m not working here anymore at night-time”, he says
15. he says “I was here, there was noises going round, somebody brushed against me
16. and I thought some of the lads were back and turned around to say “What are you doing”, there was no-one there”,
17. says he “there’s something in this house”,
18. so we laughed
19. and about a week or a fortnight after it was dusty,
20. dark, really dark
21. and I was skimming down a stairway
22. and I was sitting on the stairs, like, doing it from step to step skimming down the skirting board
23. and, as God is my judge, something went up by me,
24. I could feel the swish of the thing, the coldness...
25. ... I got out of the house bloody quick!
26. But, to continue the story
27. they found out that the owners of the house at one time was Bells,
28. they run a shipping company, Bells shipping company,
29. but that was Captain Bell’s house
30. and on the top landing window you could look up on the hill
31. and look down into Dun Laoghaire harbour and Dublin Bay
32. and it was said that she used to stand in that window
33. looking for his ship coming in from sea into Dublin Bay
34. and the people that took over the house,
35. he was a big shot in JFK, the auditors and accountants,
36. and they had to get the place exorcised...
V2.14 Fred's Narrative

V2.14a Looking after students

1. I started working then in the railways as an apprentice fitter...
2. ... and passed all me exams
3. and I was invited into Bolton Street to do part time teaching at night time
4. and then one day I was in the tool room...
5. I worked a skilled job in the tool room
6. and the foreman sent for me...
7. and the manager of Bolton Street was there
8. and they were letting me off one day a week with pay
9. ...to teach in Bolton Street
10. and this was going on for a year or two
11. and then the head, the manager of the Engineering School in Bolton Street came up one day and says
12. "Have you got your CV?", "yeah", so I gave it to him,
13. three weeks later I got a letter from UCD to attend an interview in Merrion Street,
14. attended the interview on Saturday morning,
15. passed it and started in UCD as an Engineering technician
16. instructing first year students, second year students and final year projects
17. and went on from that then to become a Senior Engineering Technician in there...
18. ... I went to Belfield and I spent just over 34 years in UCD
19. and I did very well in there, in UCD, right,
20. 34 years looking after people, boys and girls
21. I happen to think I changed... saved a girl's life in there.
22. This girl I had around the milling machine
23. and she went very, very pale in her face, you know,
24. and girls are a bit shy, you know,
25. especially when they're in a classroom full of boys
26. ...and I says to her "You don't look well, are you alright?",
27. "No", she says "I don't feel the best",
28. I let her out through the door for a few minutes to see would the air...
29. being faint, you know,
30. no better so I got another girl,
brought her over to the nurse,
the nurse seen her, straight into her car, straight down
to Vincent’s Hospital, operated...
operated on the girl straight away,
a burst septic appendix she had...
...and the operation saved her life
and the father came in maybe three months later to
thank me.
If she’d collapsed she was gone...
so you’re not only just teaching people,
...you’re observing them,
you spend a lot of time observing people’s expressions
but what they...
how you think that they feel, they look a bit off, you
know,
...and you learn this down the road, you know, right,
so observation in classes like that is very important.
I loved me job,
mostly research, I loved engineering research because
I developed a machine...
at one stage every hospital... every blood test had to go
to Earsfort Terrace,
says I “Well, I’ll develop a device for you so that you
can...
every hospital can have one”,
“You will?”, “yep”, and I did,
own every hospital has their own means of testing
blood
done engine research as I told you
and I developed a horizontal opposed piston engine,
but I developed them so that you could raise the
combustion
to save wear and tear on it,
I worked on that as well [laughs].
So I had a varied life what!
So two of my students that I had in there
have their own place now,
one lad has his own place now, an engineering factory
over there in the industrial estate,
another lad started out on the oil rigs and now he’s a
manager in Shell oil, you know,
so they’re doing well, you know,
I must’ve passed on something to them!
Even though I’m thick! You know!
I’m as thick as two short planks!
**V2.14c  For a Joe Soap**

1. ...me father wanted me to go to tech,  
2. and queued up, I done an entrance exam and I went to Mount Street Tech,  
3. and I was half way through my second year in Mount Street when the 12th of May  
4. I got an apprenticeship in the railway, right,  
5. and they let me off out of the railway to do me Group Certificate,  
6. when they were all over  
7. and all he was wishing me the best of luck, the principal,  
8. he was known as a hard man by the way,  
9. but to me he was nice  
10. when I went back to do the exams and he gave me a ten shilling note  
11. and me wages was only 15 shillings a week working 48 hours a week  
12. and he gave me a ten shilling note  
13. just for going in to do the exam and I passed that exam...  
14. when I finished my apprenticeship  
15. I was invited into Bolton Street to do the night time teaching and part time teaching  
16. and I ended up eventually being a full time engineering instructor in UCD for nearly 35 years [laughs].  
17. ... for a Joe Soap to get in there.  

**V2.14d  That's what I did**

1. My father, he never...  
2. he was a soldier,  
3. he never hit us, he was strict but fair... right,  
4. and he worked in the railway as well  
5. because when he went into the railway first,  
6. he joined the Railway Protection Corps  
7. which was riflemen protecting the trains from the Black and Tans...  
8. and then some minister or something  
9. asked him to join... because he had the experience  
10. he asked him to join the army as a fulltime soldier  
11. which he did provided he got his job back in the railway  
12. ...so he spent his 22 years in the army  
13. and then went back to the railway and then I got my job in the railway,  
14. he would encourage you rather than punish you...
15. ... that's what I did with my children,
16. I encouraged them
17. ...so my eldest son now, he's the Manager of IT department in Trinity College where you're from,
18. and my other son now is a Garda Sergeant waiting to be appointed
19. [daughter1] has a Diploma - [daughter1] and [daughter2] are in office management, now,
20. in charge of an office, the accounts department and all that

**V2.14e  Like a condemned cell**
1. Yeah, friends I'd socialise over in maybe Finnegan's with them, you know
2. ... have a drink at night time and look at the sport,
3. that's me night time, that's every night now
4. I tell you, being in this house on your own after 44 years is like being in a condemned cell,
5. ... so I go over to Ruby Finnegans at about half eight, quarter to nine,
6. talk to me mates, look at the match,
7. have two or three pints, that's fine.
8. It's nice, you know
9. ... now we mind our own business now, you know,
10. I mean I... they call it my seat, right! [laughs]
11. Yeah, and [name] and [name] and [name], they'd be sitting there
12. and maybe [name] and they'd be sitting there,
13. you know... it's cross-talk, you know
14. ... it's nice and social, you know?

**V2.14f  Playing the bones**
1. ... and I play a very, very old traditional musical instrument, the bones.
2. Now, I've done research, I went into the library in UCD
3. ... but way back in the centuries the tribes around the south west of Ireland,
4. they used the bones to transmit signals to each other.
5. And the bones were used from the Irish Wolfhound.
6. So, there you are now! Right.
7. now I... oh it must be 25 or 30 years ago I got a butcher,
8. he gave me bones out of a cow, right and there was meat on them
9. so what I did was I put them into a pressure cooker
10. and I boiled them for about 50 minutes in the pressure cooker, maybe an hour,
11. took them out, let them cool down, cleaned all the meat off them
12. and put them out on the windowsill to season for about three or four months
13. and there's a great sound off them.
14. Like that, like spoons,
15. put them in there and there, two hands,
16. I should have brought them over to you.
17. Tonight, I'll bring them over to...
18. they're only suitable for Irish music, you know, or ballads,
19. ...maybe somebody... the beat has to be correct,

**V2.14g Cowboys**

1. my father was born here in 1898.
2. Yeah, and I was born in 1934,
3. I've seen changes,
4. before the war when that was a field over there, a farm,
5. and about 1937/38 they knocked down the walls
6. and from Kylemore Road down they put roads in, right,
7. huge big cement mixtures,
8. a miniature railway system delivering the cement to the different,
9. Then the war broke out and all the building stopped
10. and all we had was fields with concrete roads going through them
11. ...and the farmer used to put the cattle out to graze
12. and we thought we were right ones, like John Wayne,
13. you'd catch a horse, get on your horse and heard the cattle!  [laughs]
14. Fourteen years of age, yes,
15. and then we'd see the police coming,
16. we'd jump off the horses, run down, hide in a ditch till the police were gone.
17. They'd never find you, we knew all the hiding places!
18. ...and we used to play football in the field
19. and this oul guy would come out with a shotgun
20. and fire two shots over our heads, right,
21. now the first thing you do is you wet your trousers and then you run!
22.  [laughs] That's a fact!
23. Oh we'd be down the next day!
24. And where we are now, in this field,
25. they were plots, allotments,
26. and we grew all our own potatoes, cabbage, scallions, onions, the whole lot
27. and every day we'd come home from school with a bucket, right, CA
28. ...and I'd come up and I'd fill the bucket full of potatoes E
29. Do us for a few days at home.
30. Oh stop, we were all reared on natural organic food R
31. and I grew up when TB was rampant in the Forties
32. only one person ever died of TB on The Ranch
33. and he got that TB in England
34. and he came home with it, right?
35. No-one else ever got TB on The Ranch.

V2.14h  A good outlook on life
1. It depends on their outlook on life, AB
2. I've a very good outlook on life, you know? OR
3. And some people now,
4. there's one particular person I know and we get on very well together, you know
5. ...and her husband died soon after my wife died,
6. and she's got very iffy now, CA
7. sort of cranky, you know
8. ... and she gives out about people unnecessarily
9. ...but I'd get on well with her, I mean she's okay.
10. It's her way, you know
11. ...that's the only person that I know of.
12. ...a lot of people... we get on great together, you know.
13. I think it's the way you come up in life, E
14. being active and looking forward to something else
15. and you just keep going on, you know.
16. see, when you were an apprentice on the railway and
17. an apprentice fitter
18. ...in the 40s, I was only 16 years of age,
19. you worked 48 hours a week
20. ...and you worked with all different men
21. you didn't realise this at the time,
22. working with narky men and good men, bad men, you know
23. all that and you didn't realise...
24. I got on very well with the whole lot of them, you know,
25. so it's something that you pick up,
26. you don't learn Coda
27. it's as your nature goes along.

V2.14i  If you believe in something strong enough
1. I do believe in Jesus Christ. AB
2. if I ever want a favour I talk to him, I don't bother about priests or nuns or anything like that.
3. Maybe I'm wrong but priests make mistakes, OR
4. they're all only human.
5. You know but I knew two priests,
6. and I used to have a drink with one of them believe it or not,
7. and he turned out to be a right ...
8. Right? So, that’s turned me...
9. they’re not all like that now, you know.
10. But they’re only human...
11. I think where the church made a mistake they should have allowed priests to get married.
12. They’d have something to occupy their minds with.
13. it turned me off priests, the human being, did not turn me off Jesus Christ himself.
15. It’s something you believe in, right,
16. and I get the philosophy, if you believe in something strong enough
17. you get what you want.

V2.15 Jack’s Narrative

V2.15a You did what you had to do

1. ...me mother and father, now, my mother died and she only 42.
2. A family of eight or nine
3. but I mean my eldest sister had to rear them all up,
4. but...she reared all the whole family up, all, the girls, the other two girls and she still does
5. but I mean at that time it was very hard, you know what I mean,
6. with the mother dying and the father trying to work and trying to keep the whole house going
7. ...and there was nothing happening because we were all young.
8. the work wasn’t there for people, you know what I mean
9. ...it was just living from hand to mouth, you know?
10. Me father got a job in Williams and Woods
11. and spent most of his life working in Williams and Woods, you know, in the oul sweet factory at the time.
12. Yeah, there was nine of us in the family, nine of us
13. but I mean it was a hard enough oul life
14. but you lived and you survived
15. ...and you did what you had to do and there was never any animosity, you know,
16. what I mean the neighbours, all the neighbours at the time...
17. you could go out and leave your door open.
18. ... which they did often you know what I mean,
19. the key was always in the door, they'd knock at the door,
20. cup of sugar or whatever the case may be
21. and they used to all amble then to the pawn office, including me mother and father,
22. you'd have a suit on you on a Sunday and on Monday you'd be in the pawn office [laughs]
23. that was the way it was done.
24. That's the way people existed.

**V2.15b  People die for less**

1. As I said I had a problem there
2. it happened me two year ago, about 18 months ago to be perfectly honest,
3. I came home here one night,
4. and I went up to the bed and I got a terrible pain just there in me thing
5. and it was a pain that I had hardly ever experienced and I wouldn't want anyone to experience it
6. the sons came down and got into hospital and it was a clot gone up onto me lungs.
7. Now I never felt a thing, I never knew, I never...
8. It didn't give me any warnings or blah, blah, blah
9. and your man, the specialist came up to see me the following morning
10. and he says "You were... another half an hour and you'd have died",
11. because the clot was gone into the lung, right,
12. and I was only out about three weeks and I got another one in me leg.
13. they didn't know what to be doing to be perfectly honest, but giving me warfarin and getting me blood levels down
14. So what happened was I have this enzyme in me blood,
15. now, it come late in life, I'm 72 and I was 71 at the time
16. ...it's just your blood doesn't thicken,
17. So he said to me "We'll have to put you back on the warfarin and all this type of thing and we'll have to keep an eye on you"
18. so that's the situation that I'm in now, I mean he said to me...
19. he was telling the missus, she took a dim view of it
20. but he was straight up with it, that's the way they do it now,
21. ...he said, says he "Your husband could have a clot",
22. he said "at any time, they can come at any time", you know what I mean
23. and he said "there's two things that will come out of it,
24. it can kill him" which is obviously
25. or "he can have a stroke".
26. Now, he told her and she started roaring...
27. "Look", he said "I have to be perfectly honest, that's the
situation"
28. but as I said, I mean, life goes on, it's as simple as that,
people die,
29. young people are dying for less.

V2.15c  I'm a man of many talents!
1. I worked for McCabe's, they were a fish place there in
Charles Street
2. and I was the messenger boy and the messenger boy
for years and years,
3. I went away to England, I went away to England, I went
away to Preston,
4. my brother, God be good to him, he worked over there,
he was a moulder
5. and I went and I was actually only 17 going away
6. and I had to do a man's job but I was getting a man's
money for it, you know,
7. in the foundry where my brother worked
8. and then I came home from them and I went back to
Birmingham,
9. I worked in Lucas' in Birmingham for a while,
10. came back home then again after two or three years
11. and I applied to the CIE and I got it
12. down here in Inchicore
13. ...and that was in 1961.
14. And I was there until 1996,
15. I had a... an artificial hip put it in
16. ...because I was complaining about me back but
actually it was me leg.
17. I got that done in 1996 so I decided to opt out of the CIE
at that particular time,
18. ...and then I got another thing, with a pacemaker,
19. I used to be a runner, this is as true as God,
20. and this Christmas I got a chest infection
21. and I went up to a doctor, not me own GP, another fella
up the road because he wasn't available
22. he gave me the medication and cured what I was...
23. so in the meantime he had said to me "I'll make an
appointment for you to go and have a stress test done
down in Tallaght",
24. Jaysus, I got on the machine,
25. now, I was doing this machine in the gym for about three or four years,
26. now, at a hard pace
27. ...so when I went up she put the things on me
28. and I was getting up on the machine and she said “No, we won’t be able to do you”,
29. and I said “Oh, what’s wrong?”,
30. she said “No, take them things off you”,
31. so I took them off,
32. she said “No, we’ll have to admit you”,
33. I said “For what?”,
34. she said “You have an irregular heartbeat”
35. and she said “Have you never noticed?”, I said no,
36. telling her I was after running a races and all
37. ...and she couldn’t believe it!
38. She said “you could have had a stroke at any time”, you know,
39. so they admitted me in and they tried all the usual things, the beta blockers and all these packets of things
40. and I was in for ten days and they decided then in their wisdom,
41. to put a pacemaker in.
42. So that’s seven years ago, that’s nearly seven years ago.
43. They put a pacemaker in [laughs], so there you are,
44. so I’m a man of many talents!
45. [laughs] An artificial hip... no,
46. that’s what I say, that’s what life is all about, years and years ago I would have been dead, you know what I mean,
47. ...even from the clots I would have been dead
48. because of all these types of things.

V2.15d  Working life

1. I was a messenger boy and I went and got a job as a messenger boy in McCabe’s
2. and I worked at that until I was about 18
3. and I went away to Preston to me brother
4. and as I said he worked in the foundry and I went and...
5. so I was getting a man’s money and I was doing a man’s work of course
6. and then I came home then, I was in me 20s,
7. and I applied for CIE,
8. it was only temporary work for about six weeks
9. and then they let me go
10. so I went up to Inchicore and they took me on there on a temporary basis
11. but I was always lucky enough for the want of a better word because after every six weeks they reviewed the staff and all that type of thing
12. and I just escaped
13. I was never laid off a day in it
14. so I was there for 37 years
15. ...so as I said the hip had to be replaced, now, the job I was working at was more or less clerical, you know what I mean,
16. but I couldn't see myself staying there, you know what I mean?
17. and the way it worked in CIE was that the more time you lost, out of CIE, you know what I mean,
18. your wages went down,
19. I'd have been on sticks for six weeks
20. so the money they'd give me would be down to little or nothing
21. so they gave me an option of going
22. I was only 57 I think when I retired
23. ...that's all I was but there was a lot of work left in me yet
24. ...but I just felt that way inclined,
25. there was no future in it, you know, I was just going in day by day,
26. ...you know it was a boring sort of job so, you know,
27. there was no future in it for me, you know,
28. so Jesus, you might as well pack it in, you know?
29. Get a few bob to keep yourself,
30. so as soon as I was getting the invalidity I was getting a few shillings on a regular basis
31. she packed it in.
32. So that's the way it worked out

V2.15e She's a worrier
1. ... she's very conscious of me,
2. ...like, [lowers voice] I can't go from there to there but she has to be with me
3. ...or I have to be with her, you know, and you're saying...
4. if I'm going up to the shops, right, if I'm half an hour away on me own she rings me up,
5. makes sure that I'm okay, you know...
6. it's a good thing in a way but a hassle in a way...
7. she doesn't want me out of her sight!
8. But she means... she's a lovely person and she means really well.
9. That's the type of thing because what actually happened when I had a clot,
10. it went to the lungs, right, and I was within half an hour
   this specialist said of being dead,
11. ...that's the reason why
12. so she's watching all the time
13. ...She's worried all the time
14. ...so the doctor told her "Don't be worrying, look it,
15. once he's on Warfarin he won't have clots anymore
16. ...and you needn't worry about that"
17. but as I said to you that's the way she is,
18. she's very conscious of everything, you know what I
   mean?
19. We go everywhere together, we go everywhere,
20. we walk down to the Oblate Church every morning, we
   leave here at nine, take our time down, you know
21. ...but she's there with me and if I...
22. ... she's a bit of a worrier but that's a normal emotion

**V2.15f  I'm happy in my skin**

1. I'm a very reserved person now as opposed to years
   ago,
2. I played football as I said to you years ago and I ran...
3. but I'm not able to do it now, you know what I mean ...
4. ...me life is sort of calmed down now as opposed to
   years and years ago when I was younger
5. I was always out running, I used to run, train three or
   four times a week, you know what I mean,
6. ... that was all done years ago
7. but that was stopped in 1996 when I had the
   replacement, I couldn't...
8. I couldn't do anymore, you know, I couldn't do anymore,
9. I'm happy in me skin, you know, if that's the word ...
10. ... I'm happy in me own skin,
11. she's the same, once I'm with her she doesn't mind,
   you know what I mean,
12. ...when I'm in hospital she goes to bits,
13. [lowers voice] she's a very nervous sort of person ...
14. ... she wouldn't stay here on her own, now, you know,
15. she'd have the kids down or bring them down or this,
    that and the other,
16. the first thing in the morning,
17. ...nine o'clock she's walking into the ward,
18. but she'll be there in the morning and she'll go home
    and come back then in the afternoon [laughs].
19. And as they say, that's the nature of the beast! That's
    the way she is.
20. She's a lovely lady, you know what I mean,
21. she's a great character.
V2.15g Every day is a bonus

1. Completely satisfied, completely satisfied, AB
2. I've no regrets, not one regret, OR
3. I've had a fairly good life, you know what I mean, CA
4. we married youngish, we married 22/23 E
5. and we reared the family and our family's reared and R
   away from us and they're settled in, Coda
6. ...you know, so in that respect we have no worries ...
7. ... and then taking it from there then as I said to you
   before
8. you have all the amenities around, the post office, the
   churches,
9. so we really have nothing to complain about,
10. we're happy enough the way we are, you know what I
    mean?
11. I just take it day by day, you know
12. ...you wake up in the morning and every day is a bonus,
13. that's the sort of thing, you know ...
14. ... that's the way life goes on you know what I mean?
15. ...all me family's all happy and there's no divisions or, 
    you know,
16. ... they probably picked it up from us I suppose!
17. ...and thanks be to God everything seems to be working 
    out well for them,
18. so that's a bonus, you know what I mean,

V2.15h Eucharistic Minister

1. Oh, I have yeah. AB
2. Exceptionally, yeah, yeah. OR
3. Ah, very important, CA
4. ...ah very important now, it is, it's the most... E
5. apart from the missus now, it's the most important thing, 
    you know
6. I love going to church and all of that R
7. and in the next five to six weeks which she doesn't 
    know about at the moment
8. I'm going to become a Eucharistic Minister. Coda
9. Yeah, in the Oblates, yeah, CA
10. I was talking to the priest there a couple of weeks ago 
    and there's a course coming up
11. but I'd like to do that from being in hospital E
12. I seen people there, 
13. I won't say craving for...
14. but looking for solace from the clergy but they don't come
15. ...but I’ve seen Eucharistic ministers coming in
16. maybe on a weekly basis and giving out the sacraments
17. and they look forward to that
18. ...and that’s what I want to do, you know?
19. That’s what I want to do.
20. but it’s just I wanted to do it from the time I left work
21. ...but sort of always in the back of me mind
22. the priest came over to me, Father [name], the parish
   priest, a couple of weeks ago...
23. ...so he said it could be directly after Christmas which
   is, you know,
24. ...this is January, this is into February now
25. so it could be fairly soon, you know what I mean,
26. that’s an ambition I always wanted to do and hopefully
   I’ll get to do it.

V2.16 Luke’s Narrative

V2.16a  Never learned anything

1. Well, it was just the start of the war and we had...
2. me father worked in the railway
3. ...and there was seven of us in it, seven children...
4. he hadn’t got a good job so we hadn’t got a lot of
   money, you know,
5. ...at that time, there was none of us working
6. ...and things were very bad during the war at times, you
   know,
7. ...and so I moved up to Drimnagh for a few years and
   then we moved back to O’Donoghue Street then after
   that.
8. I went to the... I was in Goldenbridge Convent in the
   school up there.
9. Me grandfather, eh worked at...
10. I never remember it but he worked in the Goldenbridge
    with the nuns,
11. he used to drive the nuns around in a horse and cart
    and me granny worked, done other worked in it.
12. I suppose that’s the reason we went to Inchicore!
13. Me father was from Wexford.
14. Yeah, I went to the Model School
15. never learned anything! [laughs]  E
16. As I say I didn’t learn a whole lot!
17. But, I worked for a Sisk, John Sisk up in Jamestown
   Road
18. he had a place up there and I started working then I
    went into the railway,
19. I was 43 years in the railway.  Coda

V2.16b  To know the engine like a person

1. and the steam engines, that was the worst of jobs.  AB
2. It was a hard job and then it wasn't just doing the work,

3. as I was saying before you had to maybe in your shift there might be 20 engines going out

4. ...in the shift you know, all different types and you had to have the engines in steam at the time they were going out

5. ...and well, you had to be thinking about each engine,

6. ...you had to kind of know each engine, like, you knew a person,

7. but there was always some difference in each engine and you had to watch that difference

8. ...or it'd cause a lot of problems.

9. The boilers wasn't always the same,

10. they were the same looking at them but some boilers would use up water quicker than the others

11. No, no engine was the same steam engine

12. ...but as I say the worst part of it was you were told to light the engine but there was nothing to light them with [laughs]

13. ...so you'd have to look for wood and everything to try and get them to ...

14. they weren't getting supplied with good fuel from England...

15. they wanted it all for themselves after the war

16. ...and the fuel was very bad and it was very hard to light the fuel in some of them.

17. Yeah I suppose it was better than when the diesels came in, like,

18. when the steam engines went out and the diesel engines came in,

19. there was different types of work, it was more cleaning and everything but there was no real skills to it.

20. Yeah, well looking back yeah, even though I say it was hard, yeah.

21. You had to make it kind of for yourself, yeah.

22. it was just when the engines come in to stop you just fill them up with fuel and move off somewhere else and then another one would come in,

23. that was it really, there was no skill to it,

24. you just filled up the tank and made sure it was full.

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**V2.16c  My Life was down to running**

1. As I say I was nearly 50 years running,

2. that's most of me life time I suppose I spent running.

3. Yeah. I was never any good at running but sure...
4. I was in a running club, Liffey Valley Athletic Club.
5. races when I was older, like, 70s, national races for over 70s and 75s
6. and I won a lot of... I got a lot of them,
7. of course there wasn’t many people competing at my age but ...
8. But, as I say I gave it up when I was 83, I gave up running.
9. I ran nearly continuous nearly all them years,
10. a lot of people in the club, fellas, they wouldn’t be doing as much as I was doing but they were getting injuries a lot
11. but luckily enough I never got an injury in all the years I ran.
12. As I say, I ran a lot of races in England, you know, the London Marathon
13. I suppose most of me life was down to running you know!

V2.16d  The running club
1. I don’t know why I decided to join a running club!
2. ...and so [laughs] there’s a plaque there on the wall, that’s 15 years of doing the Dublin City Marathon,
3. Just every year it’s just trying to do it,
4. I didn’t do... 3.22 is the best I done but... 3 hours 22.
5. I wasn’t, like, I was in me fifties when I done the marathon, you know.
6. And then I was over 70 when I done that there.
7. I think I done 26 half marathons
8. 2007, yeah.
9. I kind of, I suppose, I know I was training but I wasn’t doing an awful lot, you know,
10. I’d go out and do two miles and three miles or something like that
11. ...every day, not every day but most times a week
12. but why I really gave it up...
13. for years my blood pressure was a little bit high
14. and the doctor gave me tablets but I was alright to run, it wasn’t affecting me
15. but he was out and another doctor came along and he said “Oh, your blood pressure’s a bit high” so he gave me the tablets
16. and he said “I’m giving you another tablets but em...
17. I didn’t know at the time but I was feeling terrible and I was getting dizzy and everything
18. and I got... I just said to the missus “I think I’ll give up running now altogether, I don’t want to collapse in the park or something”
19. but I just decided to give up
21. and me daughter said "There must be something else wrong with you or there must be something else",
22. like, the way I was feeling, I could go down the road but I had to come back, you know,
23. so I went back to me own doctor, as I say, the doctor I was going to for years.
24. and he said, says I "I think it may be the tablets",
25. he says "Don't take any more", so he took them and I felt alright.
26. Yeah, I never went back to running after that.
27. I thought I'd be able to do a lot of walking but I seem to be...
28. the missus now, she's not able to do things and I have to help her now do different things.
29. but I walk a bit now alright but not as much as I thought I'd be able to do.

V2.16e Newly-wed Houses
30. I met her in a dance, yeah
31. I don't know where, off Stephen's Green,
32. the place is gone years ago.
33. It was a year, we got married the next year, yeah.
34. As I say we're 50... we got married the 5th of November '52.
35. We had a good life anyway.
36. I suppose you know, things don't go well all the time but we got on well, we got on alright.
37. but when the children came along then we... we drew... the Corporation...
38. we were looking for a house, were only in a big room
39. but the Corporation had a draw for houses, newlyweds
40. ...and we drew a house
41. Yeah, that's the house, the first house we got,
42. Yeah, well my wife never liked coming up this way but I think we could have got a house in Finglas
43. ...but that was maybe a bit far for me working,
44. she had two sisters and one of them's living in England but the other sister...
45. they were over far away from where she was and she didn't' see them that often, yeah, yeah, yeah.

V2.16f Missing grandchildren
1. Me son, that's his children up there on the wall,
2. he's separated and eh...
3. ...something happened, I don’t know what happened really
4. but he came home here, his wife kind of disappeared
5. and I don’t know where she is but I haven’t seen the grandchildren for about five years.
6. Me brother lives in Worcestershire, that’s where she was but... and his wife,
7. me brother said “You should see the children”, like, she didn’t want us to see the children
8. so they went to court, they got me to go to court over there to see the children
9. and the judge said we were to see them, “Just tell her you want to see them and you’ll see them”
10. but after that they just went off...
11. I don’t know where she is and the children.
12. me daughter, she has no children like you know
13. ...no and me other daughter hasn’t, no, only the three children, that’s...
14. Yeah, he’s living here with us!
15. He lived out in Lucan there for a long time but a short time ago he got laid off
16. and he couldn’t afford to say where he was so he’s come back here until he gets a job.

V2.16g  Not too up on things
1. Well, like, I was telling you that I was running years after I went on retirement
2. ...and I never done anything else only running
3. so I never took up anything that’s going on in the area.
4. but I ran for nearly 50 years, 34 to 83 is 49 years running, you know?
5. I thought, like, when I gave up running that I’d go walking in the mornings
6. but I don’t seem to be able to walk early in the morning
7. I’m up early but, like, sometimes the missus wants something done or something,
8. she’s not able to do it on her own,
9. ...she’s able to walk around but she’s not...
10. she can’t go out on her own,
11. even though she goes down to the club but the bus driver helps her into the bus.
12. Well, I never really went out in the evenings unless it’s something important
13. she wants someone here in the evenings and at night time,
14. she’s afraid of anyone coming in or something like that.
**V2.16h Community Clubs**

1. ...but there is a lot of clubs and all you know in Ballyfermot
2. and they seem to be mostly for women, or at least mostly women go I suppose, yeah.
3. I think you get run out of it as a man! [laughs]
4. I don't know, I got the feeling, like, that you wouldn't be welcome
5. ...but I don't know really meself
6. but me wife goes... in Markievicz House, you know Markievicz?
7. ...of a Tuesday me wife goes over there,
8. it was two hours and they used to do an hours painting and an hour's bingo
9. but the man that used to teach them the painting was cut off there a couple of months ago
10. and now they've really nothing to do.
11. I'd bring me wife over in the wheelchair and back again,
12. at the moment now it's only an hour over there,
13. I go and bring her over at ten and bring her back at 11.
14. ... like there's not a whole lot, there's... what is there, about eight women in it.
15. There's not in this area but eh...
16. down the main road there before you come down Chapelizod Hill there was a club here and I think men used to go and do bowls
17. ...but I never kind of ...
18. I never really thought about it,
19. as I say I was up to less than three years ago I was running
20. I never really thought of it.
21. Yeah, but she's... I'm able to go out at least anytime I want to,
22. at least I'm able to walk out anyway but she can't walk out.
23. Unless there's someone with her.

**V2.17 Mat's Narrative**

**V2.17a Get it off your chest**

1. I got a call the day the book was going to be launched
2. and he said "Mat, we'll do the publicity before the launch today",
3. says I "Where?", says he "Gay Byrne"
and they had just started and in the glass you could see Gay Byrne
so when we went in, there was a break and we were brought in
Gay said to me “Mat, you’re sitting with me”
and I said “Right Gay”,
he says “I know you” and I said “Do you Gay?”,
and I said “I don’t know you”
and he started to laugh, you know,
and he said “Oh yes”, he said “you went to school with me”
and I said “Don’t remember you, Gay” which I didn’t,
but he said “Oh yes” he said, “I remember you, you were one of the senior boys”
he said, “I’d never forget you”
we... he said to me “Who was your teacher?”
and I said “[name]”, says I
I had a drink with him years afterwards”,
says he “He was my teacher too” he says “He was a rough man”,
says I “He was”, says I “I went in to buy the wife a present one Christmas Eve”
and we’d always have the toys from about August in case anything,
you’d be idle or something,
you went in and bought the toys for the kiddies,
Christmas... Santy had to come, it was a must
and thank God he always came,
and I was looking in the window and I heard somebody saying “Is it Mathew or Maitiú
he was real Irish and he was a rough man, he was a Kerryman
and I said to him “Mr [name]”, says I “It’s Mat”
and so after a while he said “Are you thirsty?”,
“I am” says I, “will you buy me a drink?”, “No”, says he “I’m hoping you’ll buy me one!”
he asked for a gold label whisky and a bottle of stout
and I was putting it in front of him and says I “that’s for all the beatings” says I “you gave me”
well he nearly died and eh...
says I “you were one rough man” says I “and I’m delighted to say that to you”.
“Oh”, says I “you were animals”,
says I “There was no necessity the way you used to hit people”, says I
and “Oh it was for your own good”, says I “It never did me any good”
says I, the Jesuits had to educate me,
you taught me nothing” says I
“but I’m delighted to tell you” says I “to your face”
because the Jesuits always told us if you have nothing to hide just get it off your chest.
and then you can say a prayer for the person afterwards.

but if somebody does a dirty thing on you they deserve what you give them.

but anyhow, Gay was sitting there and next thing he said to me.

Gay said to me "He slapped me very hard one day".
says I "He slapped me every day".
so after it was over Gay says to me "Are you in a hurry?".
everybody was going out,
and we went back over the years
and they kept coming in and saying "Mr Byrne", "later", he dismissed them...

V2.17b To be a master of a thing

1. and I go swimming most mornings and I look across at the brick houses I built
2. you know, and you say to yourself where did those years go?
3. and I was in charge of all bin cars from the Salmon Leap of Kildare out to Rathfarnham... I'd 54 men
4. and burial grounds and dumps and all that,
5. I really enjoyed it, it was a time...
because I'd gone to the Jesuits to get educated I felt the need of it, I was starting to write ...
but I did very well in the Jesuits anyway
and I did a supervision course and that was wonderful
and the training I got with the Jesuits
and a boss came into me one time and he was only new and I was supposed to quake when these bosses came in,
and he says to me "Mat, I followed a bin car today, they didn't know who I was
and there's supposed to be four men and a driver on it",
says I "That's right"
and he says "I only counted two on it",
he says "I want you to look into it",
says I "I'm not looking into it" says I, says he "Why?"
says I "They leave here in the morning" says I "at half eight", says I
"I check them out, during the day I call in to see are they alright,
if I saw what you said two men, I'd pass them by, I'd pretend I didn't see them
20. because" says I "those men", says I "are probably after skipping their dinner hour and their tea hour"
21. says I "once they're in here before five that they don't have any overtime"
22. says I "one of those lads" says I "could be... his wife could be sick,
23. another fella could have a wedding and they knocked off early
24. but" says I "they're a group" says I "they work well together and one helps the other
25. and" says I "why should I interfere with that?"
26. and years afterwards we were at his retirement,
27. and he looked down and he said "I've been in the office so long I know many of yous",
28. "but", says he "I can only... the only one I know down there is Mat",
29. says he "And he gave me a lesson one time in supervision",
30. but isn't it amazing the way it comes back, you know?
31. yeah, but I've always enjoyed my working days, you know,
32. because... but you have to master the thing and then you're alright

V2.17c  Put her in her place

1. Now, I was in charge of bin cars and most of the bin men I knew were good men
2. and they weren't like the handy bin cars now they have,
3. they had to get up and rake it and people hadn't proper bins or nothing.
4. Now, one day the manager
5. sent me a letter "Mr [name], a lady in such and such" –
6. she was a doctor's wife,
7. "in such and such an area has kicked up...
8. the men are passing her house every Wednesday and don't pick up her bin,
9. please look into this and give me a written in reply",
10. so I called in the driver who I knew
11. and he says "Mat, every time we pass that house that woman never has her bin out and you told us if it's not out don't knock,
12. half eight's the time to put out the bin and",
13. says he "we arrive and the bin is never there
14. but when we're gone down the road she used to come out and say 'Men, you won't forget me bin' and the lads go back for it
15. but then you came out", he said "with a direction that you weren't to ever reverse the bin car",
16. "No", says I "too dangerous" says I "a child could be hurt and we're not insured for reversing except to turn",
17. “so”, says I “I’ll go with you this Wednesday”
18. so I sat in the bin car and the lads said to me “There’s the house Mat,
19. no bin”, right, time, nine o’clock or whatever time it was and I wrote it down, past the house,
20. so I’m happy... and the next I was talking to the driver and one of the lads said to me “Mat, that woman is out, she’s calling us”;
21. says I “You come back with me as a witness”,
22. so we went back and I said to her “Yes Ma’am”,
23. says she “The bins, they never lifted them”,
24. says I “I’m in charge of them”,
25. “Oh well, then you’re the man I want to see. They never lift my bin”,
26. “No” says I “because you hadn’t it out”.
27. “No” says she “I want them to carry it out for me”,
28. says I “No, we don’t do that” says I,
29. “we’re not supposed to go in on people’s property” says I,
30. “Yeah but that’s alright I’m the doctor’s wife”,
31. says I “I don’t care who you are” says I “I’m telling you”, says I.
32. “Anyway” says I “when you’re writing to the manager again” says I “you can tell him” says I “my name”
33. and I spelt it for her,
34. so I walked off because the Jesuits teach you and I knew I had nothing to lose,
35. I was doing right and she was trying to be the baddie.
36. So I was putting her in her place.
37. So I came back and I wrote out the whole thing
38. never got an answer off your man,
39. ‘hope this will satisfy your query as to why we don’t lift the bin at such and such a place’.

V2.17d  Passing on wisdom
1. I did lectures down with FÁS, they had a school for teaching young bricklayers ...
2. ... and me being an inspector
3. I was able to meet them on common ground, you know,
4. and eh... well I had been there and bought the t-shirt so yeah, because they didn’t know what life was like out on building sites and that
5. but you can’t really...
7. Somerset Maugham was a great writer
8. and he lived to 92 but when he was 90 I heard him getting interviewed on the radio one time
9. but he was asked in his old days
what could he pass on to young people after his years of experience of writing and colonialism and all that kind of thing,

He says "Without hesitation I can say, any chance you get of going to the toilet take it!"

and that is a depth of wisdom in that because no-one can live your life...

Because you don't see things as I see...

you see grass is green, I mightn't see it as grass is green at all,

you see beauty in that,

I could see beauty now in...

10. what could he pass on to young people after his years of experience of writing and colonialism and all that kind of thing,

11. He says “Without hesitation I can say, any chance you get of going to the toilet take it!”

12. and that is a depth of wisdom in that

13. because no-one can live your life...

14. because you don’t see things as I see...

15. you see grass is green, I mightn’t see it as grass is green at all,

16. you see beauty in that,

17. I could see beauty now in...

V2.17e  Breaking down barriers

1. I could be teaching down in the school at the moment...

2. I did it all my years

3. I used to meet young people off the drugs,

4. that was very satisfying financially and thing...

5. but it got too much, it was three years

6. and the you’d get another group in and you had to sort of explain to them “This is the written word”

7. “Why? What’s it got to do with me?” you know,

8. you’d say “My goodness we’ve a long way to go”, you know? "you and I"

9. And “We’re starting with a handicap”, and they’d say “What is it?”

10. I’d say “I don’t like you!” and they broke...

11. and I’d say “Oh, and another thing, I don’t tell lies”

12. and then it dawns on them that you’re... but it’s slow

13. ...and the penny doesn’t drop

14. and then I’d say “Now, we understand one another, I don’t like you and you’re ugly so we’ll start now!” [laughs]...

15. ... and "what do you think of me?"

16. and then... you have to break down barriers

17. And one time, I’ll never forget it, I was at something

18. and we were talking and this fella had been in jail a couple of times, he was rough

19. and next the girl came in that was in charge, we were in Clondalkin

20. and she says “[name]” or whatever his name was

21. “I told you you had to go to be assessed” or something,

22. she says “You’re late”,

23. “I’m not going, now”, he says,

24. “Mat doesn’t finish till half one” he says

25. “and I’m going to stay,

26. so put me down for some other time”

27. and he just sat there, you know, [laughs] and I didn’t even think he was interested, you know,

28. but it’s an amazing thing.
V2.17f Enjoy the ignorance

1. I remember my daughter,
2. and years after I was delighted a
3. I was saying to somebody one time, we were at some function and [daughter] and was over hearing it,
4. and she says to me, I was delighted, "I remember that Dad very clearly",
5. I was in charge of the burial grounds and there was snow out,
6. and I'd nobody to do the books and of course it fell to me and there was a funeral,
7. being country it was always of a Saturday
8. and it was snowing heavily and I coming home that Friday
9. and when I looked out Saturday morning
10. and I said to [wife], "I've a burial this morning,
11. I'd better get up there because I'll probably get as far as Tallaght and have to walk the rest of the way"
12. and I was young at the time, in me 40s
13. and [daughter] came down the stairs, she was about 12,
14. "Dad", says she "can I go with you?" says I "Tog yourself out"
15. so she togged herself out, wellington boots and that
16. and we went up and we got to the burial ground and we were early
17. and I was telling this person and I was delighted when [daughter] said "I remember that Dad",
18. says I "It stopped snowing
19. and", says I "there was a blackbird singing in a tree
20. and we stood to look up at it and with its vibration of its breast the bits of flakes of snow was falling off the tree",
21. now, if you could capture that ...
22. ... it was a moment, you know,
23. and then we saw about four or five little rabbits ...
24. ... and they were huddled and she was trying to tell if it was the mother or the father trying to huddle them and keep them,
25. they must have been away outside their burrow or whatever it was
26. and we stood looking a them, nature, pure nature,
27. that kind of thing makes you all of a sudden realise we know nothing.
28. But enjoy the ignorance of the moment, that's what I always say,
30. I used to go to writers' groups and they'd ask you "Did you read such and such a thing?",
31. "No", "Are you no interested?",
32. "I'm not, I'm quite happy,
33. you do what pleases you
34. because if you're confined to education,
35. it's hours spent to enhance your mind and to help you in your walk of life
36. but your spare time is so important...
37. ... so important to do what you want to do with it

V2.17g  You must be moved by emotions

1. the nicest things in life are the smallest things,
2. I always remember I was an inspector and it was about three days before Christmas
3. and I was up checking for this builder,
4. and it's one of my loveliest memories
5. and we were doing this little _cul de sac_
6. and next this little itinerant lad come over
7. and he was about that size,
8. could've been one of me grandchildren,
9. he says "How'ya mister and I looked up around"
10. and his mother had another child up in her arms and she was at the door talking
11. and I... he said "What are you doing?",
12. "Ah", says I "we're measuring the road",
13. says he "Can I hold it?" and I said yeah
14. and then I got talking and the builder was with me
15. and the builder had no time for the young fella at all
16. and I said to the young lad "What's Santy getting you?",
17. "Well, he's getting me nothing this year, you see, he got me soldiers last year
18. but I have a little sister now and mammy says that Santy can only bring one thing down the chimney at a time",
19. and I looked at the little lad
20. and he wasn't codding me, he was serious
21. and he says "But next year" he says "he might buy me a gun"
22. and I came back up and I said to the woman,
23. says I "That lad of yours was telling me about Santy not coming"
24. and says she "His father went off"
25. and I said "Now", says I "I'm after being meeting Santy up the road"
26. and the young fella said "Did you?",
27. "Yes", says I "he wants to know all about different places because in the dark he can't see,
28. he's getting old and he likes to come around in the daytime"
29. and he says “Mammy, Santy was here!”
30. and says I... and I took out €10 out of me pocket
31. and I says “He told me that he doesn’t know what you want and you never wrote to him”
32. “he told me to give your mammy this that she’s to buy you something for it”
33. and the woman bursted out crying ...
34. ... and I just handed it and says I “Happy Christmas, love” and I walked off
35. and the fella said to me “You’re an awful effing eegit”
36. says I “You’ve lost the whole idea of Christmas”, says I,
37. says I “Does it not”, says I “get to you?”,
38. “No” he said “they’re only codding you”,
39. says I “Whether they were or not” says I
40. “can you not see the genuine excitement and love in that young fella’s eyes?” says I
41. “because Santy had brought him something?”, you know...
42. there’s certain people, they exist but they don’t live ...
43. .. and emotions must come into it, hatred or otherwise,
44. you must be moved by emotions ...
45. ... and you should always give in to your emotions

**V2.17h You live out of them**

1. we’ve a little lad, [grandson]  
2. and he’s 12 and he got his school report and  
3. they live in Dunboyne and it was a great report  
4. but [grandson’s] a great footballer, he’s twelve  
5. but I do be telling him things, you know,  
6. I was telling him one day I fought a goat on the Naas Road  
7. and he says “What?” and I says “yeah,  
8. I thought it was a fella on a bike” says I  
9. "coming down" says I “bumping into me” says I  
10. “and I caught him that way” says I  
11. “thought it was the handlebars, tried to knock him off  
12. and” says I “turned out it was a goat” says I  
13. "and he bit me! But” says I...  
14. and he looks at me, I thought he’d laugh,  
15. and he said “Nana, is that true what grandda’s saying?”  
16. as much to say he never tells the truth! [laughs]  
17. But you live out of them, you know, they... I like that
V2.17i  *That means something*

1. Only that you won't see a lot of things like our young granddaughters growing up and getting married and living their lives, it's great to see it.
2. the little one pulled in one time here and Geraldine was bringing her in
3. and she had a dirty nose and she said "Mammy, I have a dirty nose",
4. she was telling this and she said "I'll go and get you a hanky",
5. "No, you needn't bother, granddad will have one when I go in"! [laughs]
6. You know, that dependence on you you know, when you hear them saying things like that.
7. One day we were going off up to the shops and one of the little ones, the younger ones didn't want to go
8. and she says "I want me mammy"
9. and [granddaughter] says "What are you whingeing for?" she says, "Aren't we with granddad?!
10. and you're listening and you're saying to yourself that means something to her...that you're here for her.

V2.17j  *We shared the one cup of tea*

1. My father and mother were great writers actually, but they always had a love of knowledge...
2. especially my father, he always regretted that he'd never done anything
3. and he never seen me even going to college or nothing,
4. it was sad but...
5. I always say he's there and he's never far away...
6. oh yeah, he never leaves me,
7. we worked together in Walkinstown Church
8. and when the two brothers comes home we go over to Walkinstown Church
9. I know the brick, the whole corner that we built,
10. yeah, and we go outside and we always tip the brick
11. and I say "Dad, did you do that one or did I?"
12. because he was my father until I got married
13. and then when we worked together on a few jobs we were mates...
14. and therefore we shared the one cup of tea and...
15. he had fallen off a scaffolding and broke his back
16. because he always used to say the man that shaved in the bed was shaving dead people,
17. he'd a horror of that
18. I jumped on the bus and I went
21. and he said "What are you doing here of a Saturday night?"
22. and I said, I was talking to him, only small talk
23. and then he said to me "Anything ever happens to me put it in the paper, 'Late of the Brick and Stone layers' Union",
24. don't just say the Bricklayers' Union", you know,
25. and I said "What are you talking about?",
26. he was telling me and I didn't realise,
27. I'd know it now, I'd pick it up, but eh...
28. I was only home and a policeman knocked at the door and said "Your da is gone"
29. and meself and the brother got up on our bikes and we went in,
30. six o'clock in the morning,
31. he was lying on a slab after rearing eight of us,
32. I had to straighten him out
33. and I got a pillow and I got clothes and I put them on him and mmm it was...
34. I was thinking of it for years afterwards but you come to terms with these things but you look back on them and you think of the good times

V2.17k  There's no comradeship anymore

1. It's isolated.
2. Inasmuch as the young people don't live the communal life that we led,
3. it's not their fault, it's in all estates now
4. There's no comradeship anymore,
5. they might say hello to you
6. but there's none come in and live with you,
7. Now that was the other extreme
8. but at the same time somebody might say
9. "Do you have a... I'm going to make a cup of tea and I've no milk, would you give me a drop of milk and I'll give it to you",
10. I'm not saying that they're mean, they probably will bring a bottle to you afterwards
11. you'd have no hesitation in asking for something, you know?
12. I remember a man coming one time and asking me for a pair of pyjamas!
13. He was going into hospital and never wore pyjamas, "Would you have a pair of pyjamas, Mat?"
14. and of course I gave him a pair and that was it, you know?
15. Then he gives you a new pair back
16. But that comradeship is all gone in Ireland.
17. We’re gone now in that we...
18. it always reminds me of the person, you know, keeping up with the Jones’
19. and they’re moving into a new house and this fellas lying across the wall, a neighbour
20. and he’s the raggedy old shirt and old trousers and all
21. and he says “My name is Jones you’ll have no bother keeping up with me!” [laughs]

V2.17I There’s no more hills to climb
1. and I went down for my pension this morning
2. and I met a lot of people
3. and we were all chatting at different kinds of things,
4. ...that’s great
5. and we talk alright
6. but I don’t feel an air of isolation now.
7. I think I’ve gone through stages I’m quite content with my own thing now
8. because I look back and I say
9. I’ve climbed the hills and there’s no more hills for me to climb.
10. and then you get to the stage
11. because when you look back on it you say to yourself, “I climbed them and I did what I wanted to do”
12. and I’m very happy with my life,
13. I have a few plays out and a few books
14. and I met nice people along the way
15. and what else can you do?

V2.17m It’s all about attitude
1. and people generally
2. most people I think are frightened and that’s a terrible thing.
3. They’re frightened of life, getting old,
4. they’re always... you know we’re on the bus but when we get off it’ll be raining, you know that sort of a way?
5. It comes back to what my father used to tell me about the fella after a night’s beer
6. and one fella says “God, I’ve a splitting headache and half me whisky is gone”
7. and the other fella, which was my father,
8. would say “Had a great night and still have a half bottle of whisky left!”
9. Attitude.
10. Some people are defeated,
11. you know, it’s like the fella that was training to be a parachutist
12. the bike was to be shoved out on another parachute
13. and when he got down he was told to take off his parachute
14. and get on the bike and go down to such and such a place,
15. ... and of course when he jumped out the bloody parachute wouldn't open
16. and he said "Bloody army is right", he said
17. "I bet you when I get down the bike won't even be there" [laughs],
18. you see, attitude?! And everything is attitude, you know
19. And if I was lying in bed dying, someone would say "Well, you're dying...
20. can you do anything for me?" [laughs],
21. "No", "Well, then don't tell me!" [laughs],
22. I'll know I'm dying you know,
23. people love to be the bearers of bad news.

V2.17n Positive thinking
1. because when you close your door you're isolated
2. And when you're young you don't notice that,
3. but you're isolated when you close that door
4. and some people put locks on them.
5. ... because of the television,
6. I went in to see a play in the new theatre a while ago,
7. and I was on the Quays on my own near Caple Street
8. and down comes a crowd of people,
9. turns out it was all foreigners but they were noisy
10. but if you were to say "Oh jeepers, I'm in trouble here",
11. they just passed by
12. and then the bus came and I got on it
13. but there's an awful lot "Ooh, I seen it on the telly,
14. this crowd'll attack you"
15. We've often gone, [wife] and I, to the Gaiety late at night
16. and we came back out afterwards, we were walking down
17. and we'd to go down to get the bus in Westmoreland Street, you know,
18. and it was just a walk.
19. Well, it depends on people's attitude
20. but I think an awful lot is built in because of the television
21. ...we're being fed this all the time
22. and the news is always bad news.
23. No-one ever says "Mr So-and-so won €40,000 and gave it to his neighbours".
24. it was, "Some woman was hit over the head"
25. and there are terrible things happening
26. but I could be murdered in the chapel!
27. But again, positive thinking.

V2.18 Michael's Narrative

V2.18a I was my own master

1. When I was a child I was a bugger! AB
2. I had a title and it wasn't spelt s-l-r, sir, it was spelt c-u-r, cur!
3. I was a terror, I had... no-one could control me,
4. now, I should say that my mother was never married ...
5. and in those days, you see, you were frowned upon ...
6. even by your own ...
7. which I was frowned upon by my own OR
8. but I always... I was my own master
9. and I did whatever I wanted to do
10. and I cursed like a trooper...
11. I cursed like a trooper,
12. Now, there was Swan Alley or eh
13. That was full of abattoirs
14. ... pigs
15. ... sheep, cows,
16. the whole lot was down there
17. and they all had to come down Hanbury Lane,
18. I heard, I don't know where I heard it
19. but I heard that they were bringing camels ...
20. "Bejaysus, I don't know about getting camels",
21. I was only about five or six at the time,
22. "They're not bringing camels down there, we're bad enough as it is
23. but eh... I heard a song,
24. "The camels are coming, aroo, aroo,
25. they are in me bollocks says Brian Boru"!
26. I'd run up in town CA
27. and I was only a youngster and the women were giving out stink because we were using the language E
28. but, you see, I got it all wrong ...
29. It was the Campbells ...
30. the Campbells are coming!
31. I thought they were camels and they were smelly oul things, you know,
32. bothering us so that was the kind of...
33. and, you see, the tenement houses were like...
34. you could run in and out the other one ...
35. in the backyard and things like that
36. so it was very hard to catch the kids ...
37. very had to catch kids.
38. And we did that R
39. ...we did a lot of things that we're not proud of,
40. I could go on all night about that but that’s enough to tell you

**V2.18b I couldn’t move...**

1. he lived in the tenement on the far side
2. and he was sent to Artane for four years ...
3. ... and I just barely escaped
4. from getting... getting sent to an industrial home because I wasn’t going to school ...
5. ... I couldn’t go to school,
6. I was learning nothing,
7. they were all talking about Irish at the time, you know,
8. and I said “Why would I learn Irish, there’s no-one ...”,
9. I didn’t know one person that spoke in Irish
10. and I couldn’t see why I should learn it ...
11. ... now, that was my judgement...
12. I hated school
13. and that’s why I hated it,
14. they were teaching me geography,
15. I wasn’t interested in geography
16. I hadn’t got the money to go out to Bray
17. and Jaysus they wanted me to study about China!
18. I thought that was ridiculous!
19. So I wasn’t going to learn anything about China or any of the other countries
20. because I couldn’t move ...
21. .If I went past High Street church,
22. .I was lost
23. That was the kind of education I had
24. And I wasn’t interested in Catechism or anything like that,
25. you’re made of one, God is one and all that kind of...
26. it was crap to me! [coughs]
27. Who wants to know who made the bloody world?!
28. That was my attitude!
29. it’s just we had to get through,
30. you were on your own ...
31. ... there was no assistance,
32. there was no-one to help you
33. and I saw pitiful things, you know,
34. I mean I wasn’t the worst,

**V2.18c He was the kindest Christian**

1. But the thing is we knew the difference between Protestantism and Catholicism,
2. and you’d know a Protestant,
3. but I never forgot the priest when he was giving us...
4. and he says "you know a Protestant by the Protestant look" ...
5. and I didn't think that was nice at all even as a kid ...
6. and then we had another priest
7. and he wouldn't let you sit with your backside sitting to the Blessed Sacrament,
8. all that kind of thing,
9. like, there was a terrible lot of things that I didn't approve of ...
10. and I realised as I was getting older
11. that I didn't approve of them ...
12. and then I joined the Legion of Mary
13. and that was a joke, [friend], my friend,
14. I remember ...
15. a fella coming over to me,
16. but he came over and eh...
17. he asked me to join the Legion and [friend] broke his heart laughing...
18. asking me to join the Legion of Mary!
19. but eh... the two of us went
20. I had to... you know[friend] put on his holy face,
21. as if he was moved, you know,
22. and he was worse than I was ...
23. we went to the first meeting in Thomas Street,
24. and three times I ran out of the meeting when they were saying the Rosary [laughs],
25. I thought it was very funny, cause I'd look at [friend]
26. and he was acting like a saint!
27. And I knew he was ready to laugh, you know,
28. and the two of us'd be put out
29. and then we'd go back into the meeting
30. and I'd be only sitting down and there'd be [friend] ...
31. as if he was interested in what was going on
32. now, at that time I was about 12, 13 ...
33. .and I ended up in the Legion of Mary
34. and it was due to one man
35. I was very fond of the man because he was very interested in people
36. now, he knew I ran out about three times because I wanted to laugh
37. but you'd never see it in his face ...
38. he was the kindest Christian
39. he was a marvellous man ...
40. marvellous man, I never forgot him,
41. I had to go out on duty with him, you know,
42. and some of the cases were shocking ...
43. and we couldn't accept money or give money,
44. that was the thing in the Legion,
45. I learnt about people,
46. You know, and I'm still learning about people
I seldom had shoes

1. there were children worse off than I am,
2. we hadn't got shoes at the time
3. and I had plenty of cardboard inside me shoes to walk around ...
4. I was turned down ...
5. because my mother wasn't married, you see,
6. and the Herald, they wouldn't give money to...
7. you know, if you had a child illegitimately,
8. now, my headmaster, Mr [name],
9. he was a very nice man, he was very nice to mammy
10. but that's why they turned me down,
11. I heard that from Mr [name] telling another teacher
12. and that's why I was turned down,
13. with the result that I hadn't shoes,
14. I seldom had shoes,
15. seldom had boots, boots were the big thing at that time.
16. That's it, that was it,
17. you know, we hadn't got clothes,
18. [sings] “Dicky, Dicky, down with your shirt sticking out,
19. four yards in and four yards out”
20. and that was your trousers, you see,
21. your shirt was sticking out the back ...

A lot of sad things

1. my mam
2. she worked in Gibson's,
3. they were paper makers or something,
4. I often went up to see her
5. and I would walk with her and her friends from work
6. and she worked seven and a half days a week for thirty shillings,
7. I sang in the Queen's,
8. I only sang at school programmes, one day
9. and I got the same amount
10. and my mother stood on her feet,
11. all day she was standing on her feet
12. making handbags, ordinary bags ...
13. paper bags, yeah,
14. and I remember one Christmas in embarrassment,
15. now you know the wages weren't great that Christmas ...
16. but she came home
17. and she had lost her wages, every penny,
18. and I lived in the same room with Granny [name] and [aunt] and mammy
19. four of us in a small room ...
20. and I will always remember that,
21. I just stood aside when all the women came up and sympathised her
22. and they made her go up and look for it
23. and a man came out and said he had
24. his son had found the wages,
25. he had found the wages on the ground and he brought it in
26. and I always remember it,
27. mammy gave him a shilling
28. and that was a lot of money in those days
29. she was thrilled getting her ...
30. .and to this day I still remember the relief ...
31. .you know, there she was for Christmas, not a penny,
32. I mean you didn't get much money at that time
33. and the Aunt [aunt],
34. she got a separate room on her own later on
35. she'd always come in to my mam
36. and say to her "We're alright for a week now",
37. I don't know where the money came from
38. but I was in a terrible state even as a kid I remember
39. ... but there's a lot of things like that
40. and there's a lot of sad things ...

**V2.18f  She thought the sun shone out of me**

1. Oh people would frown on you
2. and I'd know that,
3. I was a kid and I'd know that...
4. they were studying me when they were talking to her,
5. you know that kind of thing?
6. I knew all that and I was...
7. today it's different ...
8. completely different
9. but in those times
10. if you were illegitimate you were a bastard and that was the end of it, you know?
11. Well, I was aware of what... who I was
12. because a young one came up,
13. and I was swinging on the swings in the... on the lamppost in Hanbury Lane
14. ...and she came up and she said "My mammy said you've no daddy" ...
15. so I... mam was out working
16. and when she came in that night I put it to her that way
17. and she bursted out crying ...
18. ... and we had a black box at that time with all the photographs and things in it
19. and she took that box out
20. and there was a soldier in there and she just held it up,
21. I don't know who that was, I don't think she knew,
22. I was cute enough to know that
23. ...but she said "There's your daddy", you know?
24. and then, you see, when I was sixteen
25. I got appendicitis and nearly died in the hospital
26. and I believe she was crying every night at the door of the tenement ...
27. ... because she thought the sun shone out of me
   [laughs],
28. what a hope she had!
29. But God is good now.
30. But those times, they were tough.

V2.18g She had a tough life

1. Oh that was [friend], yeah, AB
2. he learned to be a painter there.
3. Oh there was... it was terrible...
4. but my mother had a terrible fear because she was much, much older
5. I was her pride and joy,
6. but Jaysus I couldn't be anyone's pride and joy ...
7. she always defended me, you know ...
8. and she wouldn't let anyone touch me,
9. Well, I think she suffered much ...
10. I often saw her at her hair,
11. they used to tear the hair out of themselves at that time ...
12. .you know "eeeh", like it was getting to them ...
13. but there was no cure,
14. Aw, like with frustration ...
15. now, at the time I told her about the lad, you know, CA
16. who told me I'd no daddy
17. and she just [gestures]
18. went at her hair and all like that ...
19. she was a small woman,
20. she wasn't an educated person ...
21. you know because at that time you left about 12 to get a job ...
22. and Aunt [name]...
23. I was very fond of Aunt [name],
24. she'd a great sense of humour ...
25. but they were all very good to me ...
26. and I never forgot my mother Coda
27. never to this day have I forgotten her ...
28. Well, she had a tough life.
V2.18h Things could be worse

1. Yes, well things sometimes don't go right
2. for instance, [wife] will say...
3. she has a face, you see, that tells you the weather
4. and she can put on that different face for everything that happens
5. and I know by just looking over at the chair
6. what form she's in or isn't in!
7. And especially, she'd look out and... say it's raining again
8. and she'll have her rainy face on, you know
9. and I'll say "Wouldn't it be worse if you were up on top of a Pakistani mountain!"
10. "Oh, don't be going on like that!", she'll say, you know,
11. but that'll quieten her down a bit, that's about it,
12. There's always someone worse than you
13. in worse circumstances.
14. You see my childhood was filled with toothaches and earaches.
15. And that was a terrible time
16. You know because I was always getting toothaches
17. and I was always getting...
18. and this was why I was missing from school! [laughs]

V2.18i I just had this determination

1. Oh I have seen so many...and what changes,
2. For instance, we wanted to build a community centre,
3. we looked for £2,000
4. that's many years ago
5. and the Corporation said if we got a loan
6. they would go guarantor
7. Of course we wouldn't get a loan
8. and they wouldn't give it, you know, either.
9. Now, they're after building a complex down there on Lagdus Road
10. and the cost of that was €54,500,000.
11. we started doing these things...
12. now, that's the kind of progress that has built up from our involvement.
13. but I wasn't a talker as such,
14. it had to be followed by action ...
15. that was my determination,
16. now, accidentally I got into the Association.
17. I didn't want to become involved in anything
18. I was at a meeting and [name] was President of the Credit Union
19. and [name] was sitting beside me
20. and they were asking for names, you know
21. And up pops [name], [laughs]
22. says he "I propose Michael!"
23. So, I was elected onto the committee generally then
24. and I was elected chairman,
26. and I was chairman of the Association,
27. I met Ivor Brown over in Grangegorman,
28. he was in charge of the hospital there
29. and he wanted to build a crèche first
30. and I said "No, we have to have a community
   association".
31. so... well we agreed then that a community centre had
to go up first
32. and the first centre we had cost around £2,000
33. and it was down on Ballyfermot Road where the
crèche is now,
34. where the Civic Centre is now
35. and we used to all meet there.
36. that was my beginning of involvement there
37. but I just had this determination
38. that these things were going to be overlooked

V2.18j  Faith is important
1. Well, I feel like me legs should move a bit faster
2. ...but they can't go faster than the age can
3. ...you have to take your age with you.
4. But outside that I have no complaints really
5. ...well sometimes you get the little complaints you keep
to yourself,
6. you know, you don't want to bother people.
7. but outside that we're lucky.
8. I think faith in God is important,
9. if you don't believe there's a God.
10. Now, for instance, Nuala Ó Faoláin,
11. she used to write for the Times ...
12. ... well she said she's going back to the darkness from
which she came from...
13. ...and I think that's very sad
14. Because if there's no next life
15. then it's blank.
16. And hell is not the hell of fire, there's nothing to burn,
17. I mean the body is gone,
18. ashes to ashes.
19. but you must believe that if Jesus Christ could walk on
   water
20. and he done all these other things
21. and he cured the sick and no-one contradicts him,
22. well then there must be an afterlife
23. That's the way God works.
24. We just accept that.
V2.18k  Forgiveness

1. I could never hold anything against a person that done
something on me
2. Because that's what we must do,
3. if God forgives us, we crucified his son
4. and he said from the cross, "Lord forgive them for they
don't know what they do"
5. and if he can do that with His own son,
6. I don't know how He felt, how God felt,
7. we'll never know that until we see Him as He is
8. If we can't forgive we're no better ourselves
9. unless you learn forgiveness
10. and forgive something,
11. unless you learn that and have it and hold it,
12. that's a goal.
13. It's an absolute goal
14. but if you don't forgive someone
15. you get worse in yourself because you get worked up,
16. I always remember a lad, [name]
17. I worked with him for years.
18. and he used to say "I hate that man down there".
19. And I said to him one time, says I "[name]", says I "look
at him"
20. says I "he's thinking of something pleasant, he's
smiling."
21. He was working at his bench, he was the foreman
22. and, says I "he doesn't know
23. that you're filling yourself full of hatred
24. he doesn't even know anything about that"
25. but he didn't like him and it turned to hatred.
26. Hatred, that was a terrible thing.
27. That can only... blow yourself inside
28. You can never hold something, never begrudge
people.

V2.18l  Time to develop what you believe in

1. You have to have time to develop what you have
2. and what you believe in.
3. Now, I did that all my life,
4. I went to the Catholic Workers' College
5. for four years
6. and I would weigh up whatever was happening
7. and I would always go that direction.
8. I'd take on your criticism if you were criticising
9. ...and I'd examine it
10. but if it wasn't good enough for me it wasn't good
    enough for me and that was that.
11. Well I'm confident in what I do.
12. I'm not saying I'm perfect ...  
13. ... and I'm not saying I'm correct in what I do.
V2.18m  Get on with life

1. Eh... you can't run.  
2. Yeah, I miss that because I used to run, you see.  
3. I was running when I was in St. Catherine's Club  
4. at eleven years, they called me the flash  
5. and [name], I remember going to see him,  
6. and I saw him when he was in the hospital, the Meath Hospital  
7. and he said "I'm going to get over this Michael"  
8. and he never did. 
9. There are things...  
10. there's a time to mourn  
11. there's a time to be sad  
12. and there's a time to wipe away the tears and get on with life  
13. And I think that's the most important thing,  
14. getting on, you have to get on  
15. but it's a fulfilment of life  
16. what you get on with  
17. because life is like that.

V2.19 Philip's Narrative

V2.19a  Those were the days

1. we'd bless ourselves at the thought of them throwing away food  
2. now, the attitude to food nowadays,  
3. I don't know "Oh that's not nice, heap that",  
4. we'd be glad of anything that was served up to us  
5. that was in the thirties...  
6. people are talking about a recession now,  
7. it's only in the ha'penny place to what we went through in the 30s...  
8. I was born in 1925 [laughs]  
9. there used to be a thing called The Herald Boot Fund...  
10. and one of the complaints of most children was stone bruises  
11. and how they got stone bruises was  
12. they'd no soles in their shoes and you had to put cardboard,  
13. as a matter of fact I had cardboard in mine the odd time, you know,
14. and of course you weren’t walking on nice concrete and tarmac stuff like now, OR
15. it was all chippings and everything in it, CA
16. kids had stone bruises, E
17. and I know the teachers, R
18. I’ll never forget it, Coda
19. they’re talking about Christian Brothers, OR
20. I didn’t go to a Christian Brothers school and I wet my trousers from the hammering I got, OR
21. you go home and tell your mother CA
22. “You must have done something wrong”, E
23. that was the attitude R
24. and now it’s all different, Coda
25. that was the attitude then of everybody, you know, OR
26. they’re blaming the Christian Brothers OR
27. ... times have changed [laughs], Coda
28. that was the attitude then but there you go, OR
29. but it was cruel OR
30. I saw that clown that gave me that... OR
31. grabbing a kid by the scruff and lashing his legs with one of them long canes ... OR
32. and they talk about Christian Brothers, OR
33. oh in the ha’penny place, the Christian Brothers, OR
34. all they had was a lousy oul strap [laughs]! OR
35. They hadn’t got the big cane to wallop you with [laughs]. OR
36. Oh, those were the days anyway OR

V2.19b  That was my mother
1. ... but I remember me father worked with the bins AB
2. and he came home one day, OR
3. and came home with a bugle, OR
4. so he gave it to me and me mother ate the head off him, OR
5. “Where’re you after getting that? Do you want to poison the child?!” OR
6. but horrors of all horrors didn’t I master it?! OR
7. [imitates playing bugle] Could you picture that woman OR
8. “Take that away from your lips, you’re going to die of poisoning!”, OR
9. now, what did she do? OR
10. She put Brasso on it one night OR
11. and she was watching me OR
12. the next time I took it up and she saw me face turn, OR
13. “Now, I told you ...” and she grabbed it off me and threw it away, OR
14. but now, I didn’t want to die and sure me mother was right, you know [laughs]! OR
15. So, that was the end of the bugle! OR
16. one of these lady spinster aunts, OR
17. she bought me a drum ... OR
18. [imitates drum playing] she had to get rid of the drum [laughs]
19. so one day...
20. we used to do the cooking,
21. cooking on a range ...
22. and we had to light the fire and, very funny,
23. my father before he'd go to work,
24. he'd be up at six
25. he'd be chopping [laughs] the sticks to light the range
26. to have everything right for me mother, we'd no gas [laughs],
27. but anyway she, this day I came down
28. and me drumsticks were missing
29. and me mother said "I know what's after happening,
30. your father is after mistaking that for the fire and he's after using that to light the fire",
31. well, I got a real sour,
32. me father was in the bad books you know with me,
33. me mother said "I know what I'll do,
34. let's go into the shed", she says,
35. now, going into the shed was like going into Aladdin's Cave
36. because we weren't allowed in the shed,
37. that was his workshop,
38. all the tools were there
39. so my mother said "Wait till we see what we get",
40. she takes down a claw hammer, and she hands it to me,
41. "Now", she says "use that for your drum",
42. me father's hammer, oh great,
43. so she said "Put the drum down on the ground and do it",
44. so I went bang,
45. so whatever comes into a child's mind when it sees a ding, it keepings dinging and dinging
46. so within two or three days I ended up with a plate [laughs]...
47. a tin plate [laughs],
48. so that's the way she got rid of that,
49. so that was my mother who couldn't read or write ...
50. very gentle and she got rid of them
51. and my father was back in the good books, with his hammer,
52. "I won't tell him you were using his hammer!" [laughs]
53. so that was the story basically! [laughs] Coda
V2.19c  We didn’t know we were poor

1. Yeah, there was a lot of poverty...
2. But the trouble about that was
3. we were all the same, we didn’t recognise we were poor.
4. It was only when we went to the top of the road
5. and saw this one walking a dog on a lead and la-de-da
   and a long nose
6. then we knew we were missing something!
7. But ... we didn’t know we didn’t know we were poor,
8. didn’t know we were poor.
9. As a matter of fact we lived in a house, two rooms...
10. it was supposed to be a house, two rooms,
11. my father split it in two and made two bedrooms out of
   the top portion
12. and he built a kitchen at the back ...
13. and he built... but it was outside toilet
14. and some people down the very bottom.
15. they had a communal toilet
16. and they hadn’t got the fancy seats we have now,
17. it’s just a bloomin’ board with a hole in it and...
18. but the wooden board and just a hole cut, you know,
19. now you can picture them...
20. how did we escape?
21. But I tell you what was very prevalent then,
   families were wiped out,
22. Tuberculosis ...
23. Families were wiped out,
24. I know of one family wiped out completely,
25. Tuberculosis.
26. That was prevalent and then kids were getting
diphtheria
27. and everything else they were getting, no wonder
   [laughs]
28. But I’d say the immune system must’ve been good.

V2.19d  That’s the girl I married

1. ...how I met Julie is very funny,
2. we used to go dancing then when we began to get
   uppity about ourselves, you know,
3. and eh... the guys used to have to go to the pub
4. just to get courage I figured.
5. You know, so they could ask a girl up, you know!
6. I got fed up because I was only drinking lemonade, you
   know,
7. at that time I was kind of a holy boy, I don’t know what I
   was!
8. so I’d leave them in the pub and I’d go in,
9. and I had the pick of the crop!
10. All women, maybe one or two fellas, that’s all, or three
    fellas
11. I was interested in dancing
12. so I just asked any girl up
13. so one evening I said "God, that girl I danced with last
time"
14. or the time before, she was a great dancer",
15. "Oh, I think she had a blue dress", says I "Oh yeah,
yeah",
16. so here I see a girl with a blue dress
17. and I asked her up and I made a mistake,
18. she couldn't put a foot under her!
19. "Don't be like that" I said, "we all have to learn,
20. I didn't start off like I'm doing now,
21. we all have to learn... forget about it",
22. so I brought her around...
23. so when it was finished she thanked me,
24. so during the night I said to meself,
25. now, that girl, I don't want her to feel out of place
26. so I don't want to let her think because she couldn't
dance I wouldn't...
27. so I went over and I asked her up again
28. and that's the girl I married.
29. [laughs] Very romantic!
30. And that was the girl I married

V2.19e Different from my attitude

1. They all loved school,           AB
2. I was surprised, they all loved school,
3. they didn't want to stay away.
4. and they'd be eager, you know?
5. That's funny isn't it?
6. Altogether different from my attitude, you know.
7. Though I regret about [son]...
8. the teacher said he was very surprised that he was
   really very eager, you know,
9. that [son] just chucked it in,
10. so he went off working in a laundry, you know,
11. he's now working in the Corpo,
12. so I found out afterwards about [son]
13. how he gave up school,
14. the teacher'd ask... give a problem
15. and [son] was always first up with a solution, a kid
16. ...and the teacher'd make a laugh of him
17. and then, you know, he's a child, I mean...
18. and all the other kids "Ah ha ha",
19. so [son] said "Well hump you",
20. no matter what he asked he wasn't going to learn.
21. I didn't know that,
22. if I'd have known that I'd have been up to that school
23. He's a child and making a laugh of him,
24. he'd volunteer an answer, you know,
25. he'd volunteer an answer
26. and instead of the teacher saying "No, you're wrong there [son]", this should have been the way it should be done
27. but no, he was making a laugh of him.
28. So, if I'd have known that it'd be a different kettle of fish
29. but he would have done well
30. because he is very bright ...
31. but because he takes a chance
32. and that's what enterprise is all about.

V2.19f That's the story

1. Oh she's 19 years gone now.
2. God help us, she was...
3. I was delicate all my life,
4. well that was the story,
5. I had a cist on my lung, I still have it,
6. and then [wife], any time I'd get a cold,
7. "What are you going out to work for?",
8. Oh yeah, she was worried about me now
9. and she said to me "Philip, you don't die before me",
10. she was saying, you know,
11. "Sure it's in the cards I'm going to die before you", I said
12. "I'm four years older than you
13. I'd better go and make room for you",
14. didn't happen, 19 years dead.
15. So, there you go,
16. that's the way it is.
17. She was always complaining with pain
18. and I'd say "What's wrong with you?", "I'm alright",
19. she was going up to the doctor every week,
20. says I "I want to tell you something,
21. you ask the doctor what's wrong with you.
22. You don't be telling him that you're alright the way you're talking to me!"
23. so eventually she did have to say it
24. and he took blood tests,
25. down to the hospital immediately
26. and opened her up and closed her again,
27. cancer had spread, could do nothing for her,
28. "you have six months to live",
29. she didn't last six weeks.
30. So there you go
31. Just before... we took her out on Christmas Eve
32. and she died then this month, February,
33. so that the story of poor [wife].
V2.19g  Out to the wilderness

1. ... and then we drew a lot in the what they called newlyweds.
2. here in Ballyfermot.
3. I never thought I'd get to live here at all,
4. It was very bleak
5. and the thing about that...
6. a poor girl who lived beside [wife],
7. where [wife] was reared was...
8. at that time people used to go in and sublet Corporation
9. and that wasn't allowed,
10. you'd be evicted immediately, subletting
11. But in being evicted the Corporation in law had to rehouse you.
12. In law they had to rehouse you,
13. so the used to send them up to Keogh Barracks.
14. Now, Keogh Barracks had a reputation,
15. but Keogh Barracks was going to heaven,
16. she had everything in Inchicore ...
17. all the shops and all,
18. Right, they had to be housed out of Keogh Barracks
19. ...so they had to be housed and she was sent to Finglas,
20. the poor girl had a breakdown.
21. She was sent out to the wilderness, you know,
22. we were sent out, we were out here too and there was no...
23. it hadn't got a shop, there was only a few shops here,
24. we hadn't got the shops there beside the church now, that's up there now
25. ...they weren't there or any of that,
26. so it was bleak for her
27. And when we'd want to go to the seaside
28. so we had to go up to the terminus and take our place in the queue.
29. Into town and then get another train out to Dollymount with the kids,
30. that's what we used to do, bring the kids out.
31. Now, there you go.

V2.19h  On the picket line

1. Moved to bally... I forget now,
2. and the snow was on the ground in 1958.
3. [son] was born and [wife] was in the hospital
4. and I on the picket line,
5. we went on strike for ten shillings.
but the police were on our side because “If yous get it, we’ll be getting it because you’re fighting our battles”. The police, even though they’d be sent out so there’d be no ructions or intimidating on the line, so we were only out for a week and we were granted... another occasion I think we were looking for a raise and we were really on strike. we were looking for a raise but there was negotiating going on for years, but they were coming and going and coming back and going and coming aback and going and eventually we were called to a meeting and we were asked to accept this, the secretary went through the rigmarole, “In 19so-and-so we went and we asked and they offered us so much and we said no and then we said we’d come back to yous and then they sent for us then in such and such a time and we said no [laughs] and then they offered so and so and you people said no but now we have come now with this thing and we recommend that you accept this, right, and the offer is”, we were waiting for it “30 shillings of a rise. Now all in favour”, we all put up two hands! Thirty shillings! Everybody put up two hands, here’s the trick, very funny this, it’s funny now and he says... that brought our wages up to £11. A lot of money. Thirty shillings of a rise, oh terrific. He said “I can see the day”, he says, “when the ordinary labourer in the Corporation will be getting £15 a week”, We said, “Who’re you codding?!”, That’s the - “Wooh, who’re you codding, don’t give us that, £15!” [laughs]! I think they’re getting thousands now. Very funny, ah well.

V2.19i The two sticks

Well I go for a walk now and again But I’m getting old now I’m in my 85th year, you know, and it’s...
4. I'm not as sprucey and unfortunately my *reflexes* are not that good.
5. You know when you get older your *reflexes*...
6. so if you stumble at all *[claps hands]*, you're down.
7. You don't even stretch out your hands to save yourself
8. your *reflexes* are poor, you know?
9. I found that out one time,
10. a friend of mine,
11. I was going over to Mass with him,
12. he's dead and gone now, he's over ten or 12 years dead now,
13. I used to go to Mass with him and em...
14. I used to walk him home,
15. he was feeling a bit dodgy
16. and I told him to get a stick,
17. "Oh, everybody'd be looking at you",
18. "Are you joking me?"
19. "If you like ....", I said, "I've a little fold up seat", I said,
20. "and I'll bring it with me and if you feel like having a sit down we'll open it and we'll sit down
21. and hump people looking at you!", you know ...
22. so eventually he got the stick! *[laughs]*
23. And we were walking home
24. and I tripped and I went *[claps]* down like that ... *[laughs]*
25. so I got up and he, "Where did you go?", *[laughs]*
26. he was looking around cause I went down like a log
27. I couldn't save myself
28. but I didn't hurt myself lucky enough, you know.
29. But he said "Where'd you go?",
30. and then I started admiring the stick and what did he do?
31. He bought me one too! *[laughs]*

V2.19j  *That would be the wild west*

1. And then again, old people living on their own,
2. they're vulnerable to young kids, they pick on them because they're vulnerable,
3. like, their houses might be dilapidated or something
4. and the kids will start throwing stones at it because it's not done up, you know?
5. Whatever gets into a child's mind, you know,
6. they're vulnerable and they're persecuted...
7. what annoys me is that the neighbours don't come out...
8. ... and why don't they come out?
9. "Oh they might start throwing stones at my house",
10. beat the head off them and hump the police,
11. that's my philosophy.
12. To hell with it,
13. if a fella starts throwing stones, then starts throwing them at you,
14. "I want to see your father send your father down to me and tell him I gave you a box
15. and if he wants to do anything about it I'll box him too!"
16. ... of course I'd better not say that now, I'm a bit too old for that [laughs]!
18. If the whole crowd came out,
19. the whole population just spilled out of their houses
20. and these guys'd shiver in their boots.
21. And they definitely wouldn't come there anymore.
22. But that's the best of the wild west!
23. but it's not like when I was a kid,
24. a person on their own, they wouldn't be persecuted or anything like that,
25. everybody would be worrying about them, you know,
26. "How are you on your own?"
27. but we were all grouped together, like, tenement housing.
28. All on top of one another that you couldn't ignore them! [laughs]
29. And if anyone stepped out of line, "Oh you little blackguard", you know,
30. everyone'd be on top of them
31. but nowadays they all have their own houses now and they're all independent
32. and that's what ruined the whole system

V2.19k  It's a mental thing

1. not everyone is alike, AB
2. and not everyone's outlook is alike, you know
3. and that's the trouble
4. they get this mental thing
5. and they won't even come out, you know, women,
6. it's called depression or something,
7. I don't know what the name of it is ...
8. For years they're inside,
9. they won't come out.
10. So what do you do in a case like that,
11. that's a mental thing,
12. people worry too much. OR
13. My wife used to say to me,
14. "You'll live forever, you worry about nothing!", she used to say to me
15. now I'm saying, "Is it going to rain before I put the clothes out!" [laughs].
16. God is on my side CA
17. and the reason why He's on my side, He won't let me win the Lotto!
18. Do you know why?
19. Because if you got too much money you'd go to hell with yourself! [laughs]
20. And no way is he going to let me win the Lotto! [laughs]
21. and someone like you comes along and wants to talk to me!
22. There you go, that's good isn't it?
23. Otherwise if I wasn't this age you wouldn't be bothered coming near me!
24. So that's one thing, all the young girls are after me!
25. For information!

V2.19i  The stakes are too high
1. Adam, the coward, was hiding, a man, hiding
2. and when he was collared what did he say? "The woman made me!",
3. a man, a so-called man wouldn't take the blame
4. and ever since women have taken the blame all along the line,
5. Now, what kind of a Bible is that?
6. Of course, it's all baloney, who's codding who, my God.
7. I believe our Lord invented the Lord's Prayer so I do say that,
8. and the woman gets blamed ever since, ever since ... 
9. she won't even be let be a priest.
10. I don't know, it's all baloney.
11. I believe in the Blessed Eucharist being transformed
12. and all that kind of thing
13. which is very difficult to believe
14. when the Catholics decided that was the case,
15. so it's very difficult when you're at Mass
16. to tell yourself that that's what's happening.
17. That it is sacred, you know
18. if you didn't it was a mortal sin.
19. Nothing in the Bible and New Testament tells you that's a sin
20. but the Catholic Church says it was,
21. also if you ate meat on a Friday, that was a sin,
22. the Catholic Church says it was.
23. So, the Catholic Church made rules and attached a mortal sin,
24. "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church,
25. But I can't see God saying to any human, 
26. "Whose sins you shall retained are retained", 
27. there's no way would He give that... 
28. and the way they go on in Mass and all, 
29. I don't think they believe their God is up on the altar at all, 
30. the way they go on talking and all and chatting and back biting, 
31. and God up there looking at them! 
32. And a lot of people don't bother going to Mass 
33. but they believe in God... 
34. there's a story I'm told about a minister of religion OR 
35. who happened to be an Anglican man 
36. and there's only two of them, 
37. but anyway they were sitting down 
38. and one was reading the races, 
39. and the other fella was reading the Bible, 
40. so they put them down and they began to chat 
41. and so he said "Are you a religious man?", 
42. "Oh no, no, no I'm not very religious, 
43. I don't go to any church at all", you know, 
44. "Do you believe in God?", "Oh yeah, I believe in God", CA 
45. "That's a bit curious, you don't... 
46. why do you believe in God?", 
47. "Oh", he says 
48. "I have to believe in God because the stakes are too high!"! [laughs] R 
49. Because if you don't believe in God and you're right, 
there's no such thing as God, you're okay, E 
50. you'll end up on a rubbish heap the same as I would who does believe 
51. but if there is a God, the stakes are a bit high, 
52. I'm okay because I believed in him! [laughs] Coda 
53. But if I don't believe in God I'm the same as your man, 
54. we both end up together in the same spot 
55. but the stakes are a bit too high for the atheists, 
56. I'd like to warn them the stakes are a bit high 
57. when they don't believe in anything!

V2.19m We're the church
1. I used to worry about the priests in America AB 
2. because there was so much allowed in law, like... 
3. like pornography and, like, all this, 
4. I used to say "How do the priests survive?" 
5. they didn't survive, they succumbed. 
6. Now that I know about it. 
7. I was pitying them, how did they survive with all the temptations, 
8. now, that's going back 30 years 
9. and now it's all coming out that they didn't survive, 
10. they succumbed.
11. Some of them survived of course, like here.
12. But they're giving out about the clergy, OR
13. I picked up the paper and there's a grandfather raping...
14. a father raping his...
15. it's all over the place,
16. not necessarily the clergy,
17. I mean talk about distaste, like, it's sickening,
18. that's one of my regrets you know.
19. and there's one thing, they're blaming the priests
20. you're not to expose another man's sin,
21. Distraction is telling of another man's sin
22. so the poor Bishops,
23. this bum of a priest will go to the Bishop and say "I'm terrible sorry, I won't do it anymore",
24. well the Bishop took him at his word
25. and moved him to there but the bum went and done it again
26. and he come back to... and the Bishop then, practising what he was preaching, again forgave him
27. and moved him to...
28. and he done it again so it's only...
29. it's in Church teaching that you don't tell another man's sin
30. and those men took advantage of that.
31. They still succumbed.
32. and if a man is that way inclined there's no...
33. this thing of getting a cure,
34. there's no cure for that at all, no, lock him up,
35. there's no cure if he's that way inclined.
36. Now, so I'm sorry about that, you seem to be...
37. I'm shoving it there in your face! [laughs]
38. It's to explain it, like,
39. that the Bishops were only practising what they'd preach and...
40. but the poor unfortunate victim,
41. he wasn't thought of at all, you know ...
42. and he done it again, he...
43. and there's another thing the parents going to the Bishop,
44. why didn't they go to the police? [laughs]
45. But then some of the girls...
46. or some of the women and the boys that were abused
47. they waited until they were adults before they mentioned it.
48. Because they were being cajoled by the priest, you know.
49. That's one of my regrets that...
50. that thing happened at all, like,
51. and the poor unfortunate good men in the Church ...
52. and bearing the brunt of the lot,
53. well I'm the church,
54. not the hierarchy,
55. me and others, we're the church
56. And the kids that were abused,
57. now unfortunately I couldn't tell them
58. but I'd like them to recite the Lord's Prayer,
59. if they recited the Lord's Prayer and mean it

V2.20 Tony's Narrative

V2.20a To say thank you to God
1. Now, from my youth, AB
2. I had stomach trouble,
3. I generally had pains in the stomach
4. but then it became chronic and I had to have urgent surgery
5. And for the first time in my life
6. I got up in the morning with no pain
7. and I wrote to my superiors
8. and I told them that
9. and I said I would go anywhere on the missions to say thank you to God,
10. that was after eight years in Ballaghadreen OR
11. and he wrote back and he said "We're opening a new school in Johannesburg
12. and you're just the right man for it",
14. And I came in and the principal asked
15. "What should we do to make this school different?"
16. and I said we'll make it a culture school",
17. I said "Music and drama",
18. said he "Who'll do it?",
19. I said "I'll do it" and the others said "I'll do it" and "I'll do it",
20. so we started there and then straightaway
21. and we did musicals,
22. and the parents just flocked in,
23. they flocked in and they painted the scenes
24. and it was fantastic, you see.
25. I started to introduce drama E
26. and got the other schools interested in drama
27. so we'd a drama festival then
28. and I found a leaflet R
29. so I took it up and it was from a local school
30. saying "We are thinking of starting chess in this school,
31. we would like if we could get parents to come and help"
32. and gave it out to my class
33. and the following day I had four mothers in
34. and we started chess.
35. Now, that chess is still there
36. and it produced national chess players in that township

V2.20b A wonderful idea

1. John 23rd, a former pope
2. with a smile that size
3. came and he said we'll have a Vatican council,
4. Significantly, he opened up a window
5. to blow away the cobwebs
6. and to let in the fresh air
7. and that was the first time a ecumenism came in.
8. and he wanted us to find out as much as we can about each other
9. and to do away with hatred
10. and bring in co-operation
11. and I was very much into that
12. and I went to bed one night,
13. and said "What can I do to introduce ecumenism?"
14. and it suddenly dawned, I loved teaching,
15. the children are the only ones who have no bigotry.
16. They don't see colour, they don't see difference
17. I said "We will organise a Christmas carol service",
18. we all have the same hymns,
19. we all read the same bible
20. and the following week then there was a parish council meeting on,
21. and in the process I produced this master plan
22. and the parish priest said "Oh no, they aren't fit for that yet, we aren't fit for that",
23. this was in South Africa
24. and of course everybody was "I agree with Father. I agree with Father. I agree with Father"
25. and I had no support
26. and there was a young curate
27. and he said "I think there's great merit in what Tony has said.
28. I think it's a wonderful idea",
29. "oh, 'tis Father, it's a wonderful thing Father",
30. the pawns!
31. So, the parish priest said "Well will the two of you get that organised?"
32. and I said 'yes', so your man comes along anyway
33. and we... I told him my plan
34. and there were so many applications we decided we could only take the top class from primary school,
35. so, oh it was fantastic.
36. and our church would hold 2,000, it was a new church,
37. but we’d to build a special thing for the 1,100 choir
38. ...you see, and we sang all the Christmas carols
39. and all the ministers of the various religions came in
40. and they all stood in front of the Catholic church,
41. it was the first time they’d ever met
42. so it was a fantastic experience.
43. It made all the news headings of the day

**V2.20c  You do what you’re told**

1. South Africa then there was apartheid,
2. I mean whites had all the privileges, you see
3. So, I was noticing that Mozambique,
4. while I was there it was white, it's black,
5. Botswana was white, it's black,
6. Rhodesia was white, it's black,
7. Angola was white, it's black
8. and here is South Africa, [sigh]
9. So I decided that I’d hire a black teacher
10. to cultivate the language
11. so that when apartheid would fall
12. we’d have the language
13. and it was a heading the papers, a big heading.
14. So, I got a letter from the Department
15. stating that if I don't abide by the rules of the country then the license will be withdrawn from the school,
16. So, I was persisting ...
17. and I’m the new boy in
18. and I am doing all these revolutionary things
19. so they obviously panicked
20. and well I suppose they wrote home to Ireland
21. And em... and next thing I got a phone call from Ireland,
22. it said “Tony, we are thinking of
23. recruiting South Africans to join the Brothers to continue
24. because we in Ireland won’t be able to continue sending people there
25. and we think you are the ideal person to do that job”.
26. Well, in the Brothers the rule is you do what you’re told.
27. so we had our annual Brothers’ meeting, you see,
28. and I was introduced as the new recruiter for South Africa,
29. now South Africa was a very touchy place you see because of apartheid,
30. so they asked me for my plan
31. and I had made up a map of Southern Africa
and it showed, what I say all black and now this place was all white

and I said "As sure as summer follows winter
South Africa will be black in the very near future",
"Oh no. You couldn't take that risk!
We'll lose everything!"
and of the 25 present only one said "I think Tony has a plan, you know",
"Oh no, no, no, it will never work".
So, nobody said anything to me
it was coming up for my time to go back to South Africa
and I was working over in Finglas in the school there
"Tony, telephone, it's the provincial",
"Tony" he says, "we've run into a fierce problem in Mauritius,
so would you ever go and fill in the gap there?".
I said "Of course, yeah",
"Are you sure?"
"you wouldn't have asked me if you expected me ...
So that was Saturday and the following Friday I was in Mauritius

V2.20d The greatest achievement

1. So, my mother had an accident
2. and the provincial went to see her
3. and he said "Well, Mrs [name], can I do anything for you?"
4. and she said "Well, I have two boys out in Africa"
5. and she said "I'd like if you could to bring one of them home to work in Ireland"
6. So they wrote to me and they asked me to come home,
7. so I came home in Christmas '78
8. and on the 6th of January I got the keys and walked through the school
9. the smell of it you see
10. and I wanted to see life
11. and the only thing I saw was one small bit of a hymn,
12. and I said "This school is fairly dead, isn't it, huh?"
13. So, anyway, this particular class, 39 in it
14. and the guy before, he was only in his 50s now, he was 59,
15. he went in and they broke him between September and...
16. and the first day the mockery!
17. And this fella stood up and he was being the clown,
18. I couldn't do a thing.
I mean, I wasn't going to bully them out
and I tried everything,
and they were all looking at these clown boys you see
I went to the principal
and says I "I can't control him,
I want him out of my class",
"Oh no", says he "you'll take what you get".
so I went down and put him outside the door "Fuck off!"
and I said "Now, if you obey the rules you come into
this class",
"I'll go where I fucking want!",
I said "When you're ready you can knock on the door
and I'll be with you",
so after about an hour he said "I'll do what you want
me to do",
and it was tough, now.
But I'm sort of handy at the poetry
there were nice kind of poems they could learn.
And I could teach singing all day.
And then I used to draw things on the board, you see,
and let them draw
and it turned out to be a beautiful class, you know?
so anyway I would regard that as one of the greatest
achievements of my life, you know
Like they were so good at the end
but it was a tough battle now.

V2.20e I'm keeping him

And then I got in a class,
and we were getting along fine you see.
And this Ma appears at the door one morning
and she says "I'm taking out [name]",
"Oh" says she "I want to send him to Artane",
says she "I was 46 when he was born
and my husband left me
and I have three other boys in Artane and they're doing
fine",
I said "Mam, you could send me to Artane,
but you're not sending [name]",
"I don't give a damn whose child he is, I'm keeping
[name]",
"And who's going to mind him?",
I said "I'll mind him", "I'm not giving him to you now.
He's my child!",
I said "I don't care, I'm not giving him to you!
[name] is staying in my class".
So I came on anyway,
and I can teach now and I can talk
but to keep my desk tidy, no!
so, I always got fellas to tidy my desk,
21. so I said “Look here, look at that desk, look at the mess,
22. I want someone to keep that desk in law and order”,
23. and they were all forcing their hands up!
24. So, [name] puts his hand up,
25. so [name] took that job very seriously,
26. he was in the special class
27. he used to go the remedial
28. but the blackboard was clean,
29. the chalk was there and the duster was there
30. and my book was ready
31. and it was fabulous!
32. I had them, you know, for fourth right up.
33. So, when we were in sixth class then
34. we were going for our outing,
35. there were two sixth classes,
36. so the morning the busses were leaving
37. and this [name] now, he was in sixth class,
38. he was walking up and down like the headmaster of the school
39. and he said “look, the two of you teachers,
40. the two of you can sit together and chat
41. and I'll mind the other bus”,
42. so we said “okay!”.  
43. and chatted and we were just coming out when the other teacher said to me
44. “Oh” he said “that [name] is some man isn’t he?”
45. “Is he the most intelligent guv you ever had?”
46. I said “He’s in the remedial class!”
47. he said "I don't believe it!

V2.20f  The goodness inside
1. So then I went working with the dropout teens,
2. the Christian Brothers have a school for the dropout teens in Pearse Street,
3. so I went there teaching you see.
4. And there was only ten pupils there
5. I'll just give you an example of one,
6. [name], he was in the intensive care at Christmas for drunken brawling,
7. he was in intensive care on St. Patrick's weekend for drunken brawling,
8. now, I was doing English with him...
9. and it was about a destructive youth, you see,
10. and like, it was in the programme for the JC
11. And it was there and it was in the book
12. and we were looking at it you see,
13. and this guy now had done everything that your man had done
14. and eventually his mother is throwing him out you know,
15. And he said “Tony, that will never happen to me”,
16. I said “Why not?”,
17. he said “I'd just grab me Ma and I'd hug and I'd kiss me Ma and I'm sorry”,
18. I said “Well that's what she's waiting for”.
19. But what I can't get over this guy who...
20. when he trusts you like that,
21. that he could be such a baby,
22. such a child, like, the goodness inside in him coming out...
23. ... no fear.
24. And this other fella now I knew him...
25. and we were chatting
26. and he said what do you think I should be when I grow up,
27. I said “A chef”,
28. I said “You should be in a hotel”,
29. But” I said "you'd have to learn to read and write”,
30. “Okay”, I said “We'll get a book”,
31. second class book from primary school
32. and he read it
33. and he made a few mistakes, 16 pages ...
34. he said “That' the first book I've ever read in my life”

V2.20g Never been put on my feet since
1. so the new Provincial then,
2. he said to me “You're drinking too much”,
3. so I said “Okay, I'll give up the drink”,
4. so I didn't drink during the summer
5. and he called me back,
6. and he said “I'm sending you to Castlebar
7. and you'll do home school liaison”,
8. you know, that's traveller children ...
9. I'm good at that sort of thing.
10. so we arrived in in Castlebar
11. but anyway, when the school came
12. he said “Where are you going?”,
13. I said “I've been sent here to do home school liaison”,
14. “There's nothing here for you to do!
15. and he's in charge,
16. I mean I was disillusioned, I mean I'm a human being
17. And I used to nip into the pub and get a drink, you see,
18. you see, when the demon gets on here he's a very dangerous fella,
19. and he said a very wise thing to me,
20. he said “If you go down now and buy a bottle
21. and just take a nip down then
22. rather than going in there and spending”,
23. So I went down there anyway and got me bottle
24. and that was enough to do me now for a month
25. and then I'd take a nip before I went to bed,
26. take another nip then it was one bottle a week
27. and the next the week was two bottles
28. so I became an alcoholic, you see?
29. And, but I was a functional, like
30. Do all my work, I was functional
31. I've never been put on my feet ever since except by myself,
32. and I was transferred up to Ballyfermot
33. but I never allowed into the school,
34. I was never allowed into the school.
35. When they... that report, that came out,
36. it was very meaningful for me.

V2.20h He's found

1. Anyway I was fine now
2. and I was off the booze
3. and I was getting these fierce storms in myself
4. and irregular bowel movements and blood ...
5. and the doctor rang up James'
6. and James' said "Come back for a full test",
7. So, anyway, when I came through this beautiful lady,
8. and she said "Tony, we found a lump,
9. you will have surgery,
10. you will have a bag,
11. you will have chemotherapy,
12. you will have radium
13. and you will be in a nursing home",
14. but I was so relieved, if she said to me "You're back on the booze",
15. I would have died
16. but it's only cancer, sure that's nothing!
17. the waiting then, how to cope
18. and, you see, if you're married or if you have a partner, you share it...
19. now, you can't do that with men,
20. they'll think you're cracked
21. if you talk about your health there's something wrong with you! [laughs]
22. So, I came back to my room here, you see,
23. and then I thought of when Jesus was with them all drinking,
24. he said "The shepherd led out his hundred sheep
25. and when he came to the place he found there was one missing
26. And he searched and he searched and he found it
27. my father is the man who had two sons
28. and the younger guy said to him “Father, give me my share,
29. I want to be off”,
30. and he’s coming home now snotty
31. and dishevelled
32. and the father runs to him
33. and embraces him
34. so I just thought about some of these stories...
35. so I said “That’s my father”,
36. So anyway I waited for my six weeks,
37. now, the best I’d ever hoped for
38. was to recover from the operation
39. and be in the nursing home for the rest of my life,
40. So, the first one to come in then in the morning was my counsellor,
41. and I said to her “the bloody bag is there”,
42. she said “That’s not a bag at all, that’s only the tube,
43. you’ve no bag”,
44. That’s great!”.  
45. So, I was down in Castletown in Portlaoise
46. now, goes along a year, you see,
47. and one day I’m passing a pub
48. and I said “Now, I am 75 years of age
49. and I’m on chemotherapy
50. and I’m probably going to die anyway”,
51. I said “Why I can’t go in and take a pint like an ordinary person?”,
52. so I went in and asked for my Paddy and a pint and came home,
53. and I’m back where I left off, not stopping.
54. So, anyway, I was transferred back into Patrick’s hospital here, you see,
55. and I was only testing to see is there an age limit
56. and the thing is till death do us part,
57. you cannot go back and have one drink
58. but I’ll never again touch the drink, now I know the temptation.
59. but anyway, I address alcoholics,
60. I go to Sister Consilio’s every second week on a Friday
61. and I take all the newcomers
62. and I have my own story for them and that’s it.

V2.20i  When you get out of the pit
1. I’ve had a happy life but many don’t...
2. but you see unless you have downfalls,
3. unless you fall into the pit...
4. ... you'll never appreciate it,
5. it's when you get out of the pit of depression or alcohol or anything else,
6. when you get out of the pit
7. and you get going again
8. then you see the sunshine,
9. like, people'd be out in Africa saying "Oh the sunshine, ah the humidity", [sighs]
10. see, and now "God I'd love a bit..."[laughs]
11. Ireland's climate is illustrative of a person's life ... E
12. where you have the sunshine and the snow and the floods and the everything
13. And you keep going and it's a good life.

V2.20j  My Romance
1. I must tell you about my romance. AB
2. when I was in Ballaghadreen in the west of Ireland OR
3. but the secondary school girls would be
4. standing against the wall chatting
5. and the day that this look took place, you see,
6. this girl [name] and myself,
7. and all the others were there but there was only one
8. and we never met now because that was in the Fifties
9. I mean, murder would be decent,
10. but not a meeting.
11. and I went down home for my holidays, you see,
12. and I was only 20 years of age
13. but the chat and the craic and the fun.
14. And then it came for me to be go back to Ballaghadreen
15. and a long winter ahead
16. I felt so lonely
17. I said "If I meet her now I'll stay on the train and I won't get off",
18. so I was reading away anyway,
19. I was stopping at every station to look and see could I see [name].
20. and I got off at my destination
21. and who should jump off the carriage next to me? [name]!
22. And when did she get on?
23. When I was reading the paper!
24. but the moment I met her on the station
25. I got the message, you know.
26. "she is your friend, not your lover, she's not for you."
27. And immediately then we became great friends
28. And I went out to Africa then
29. she got married
30. a couple of years ago, I was down there
31. her husband, he said "Are you Brother Tony?",
32. he said "You're not welcome in this house",
33. I said "I understand, okay, goodbye".
34. Well you can understand she must have spent her day talking about Tony!

V2.20k  To neglect a child
1. ...in my school, now, that I went to the country school,
2. there was one Guard and there was one nun and one priest,
3. no teacher, no nurse, nothing except,
4. that was up to 1945
5. and then this teacher came in then
6. and then everything changed after that
7. but that was the kind of school we went to
8. and they're talking now about Artane
9. and the Brothers school and...
10. now, I have four brothers at home illiterate.
11. Four brothers at home, that when they left school...
12. and they have never read a book
13. and that happened for everybody that went to that school
14. and there was 120 in that school.
15. But when I hear them talking about
16. the Brothers were too hard and the Brothers were too...
17. I mean everyone that went through a Brothers school were educated
18. and nobody ever says what about those teachers who didn't teach those pupils?
19. I mean, they were cruel,
20. to neglect a child is cruelty.
21. and one of the teachers used to wallop us, flake us,
22. and the very first day I went to school, you see,
23. I was five and I saw him beating my brother,
24. that was part of the living,
25. like, nobody bothered with talking about it,
26. we didn't bother taking about being walloped
27. because everybody was walloped
28. but you see when a lay teacher does nobody says anything.
29. But when a Brother did it or a nun did it, it'd be very serious.
30. I don't hold any resentment against that now.

V2.20I  Nothing better than teaching
1. Now, I am very satisfied,
2. I am happy but,
3. like, the scandals that have happened in the church
4. the revelations were necessary
5. but now when I look at my brothers now,  
6. and I see them with their grandchildren  
7. and their great grandchildren  
8. and I think and I say like it’s a terrible thing,  
9. you know, in a way, it’s a very sad thing  
10. that I’ll have nobody to cry at my funeral,  
11. and nobody, like, my own family,  
12. nobody to come and visit my grave  
13. when we were all young and innocent and they were saying  
14. “Oh you’ll go out and you’ll bring the people to God and you sacrifice yourself and you give up everything for the people” [laughs]  
15. but God said a different thing to Adam and Eve  
16. but that would only be very secondary in my life ...  
17. I would never have had the opportunity of being a teacher  
18. and there is nothing better in the whole wild world than teaching  
19. that you’re taking these children’s...  
20. and that you’re teaching them to read  
21. and you’re leading them on to greatness  
22. And I was walking the street  
23. and the guy jumped out and came up,  
24. he said “Are you Brother Tony?”, I said “I am”,  
25. he said “I’m [name]”,  
26. I said “Aren’t you playing for Mayo?”,  
27. “I am”, he said “because of you”, I said “Why?”  
28. “Do you remember the day you walked across and touched my shoulder and said ‘you’ll play for Mayo?’”,  
29. he said “you said that” says he “and I’ve never forgotten it” ...  
30. imagine the number of people you would say things to

V2.20m Don’t hold the since of other against me

1. if those scandals were there 40 years ago  
2. I would never have joined the church ...  
3. because I wouldn’t have joined the church knowing that that kind of thing was happening, you see,  
4. and the only thing I can say, like,  
5. from my own life I think  
6. that nobody will point a finger ...  
7. they say... we all make mistakes ...  
8. that’s human  
9. and that terrible things  
10. but you did your best for us ..  
11. and they wouldn’t hold others’ sins against you.
...and I feel quite confident,
I mean I'll stand up anywhere
and I'll meet anybody,
I was very shy when I was in boarding school, you see,
I didn't know how to play football,
I had never been in a choir,
I didn't know how to serve Mass,
didn't know anything
And all the others seemed to be able to do everything
I met a fellow down in the west of Ireland,
and this very quiet man was the boss, superior,
and only three of us in the school
and he took me as an equal
I was a teacher and he showed the same respect for me as the fellow who'd been teaching for 20 years
and he gave me jobs like,
we had a school band, a good school band
and he asked me to do the tuba band,
now, and I couldn't play music, that didn't matter
and then we started doing musicals, stage productions
and I was in it, producing drama
and 'twas I doing most of it,
I'd never done it before but with his encouragement...
... so I'd eight years of that,
all my formative years
but the one thing it did, it made me awfully independent
because he treated me as a total human being, you see?

Honest to God he was the greatest man I ever met in my life...