

Cover Letter/Bio

Callum J. McCready is an Irish artist. Previously based out of Fisterra and Galicia, he has recently returned to Belfast. When not working by day he moonlights as a writer.

Published in both poetry and prose across numerous journals including *A New Ulster*, *Bindweed Magazine* and *The Galway Review*, He has a number of projects in the works and an intention to cross over into other disciplines.

When not bound by the ball-and-chain of his desk he enjoys gardening, exercising, reading, listening to music, watching movies and spending time with family and friends.



Por mi otra madre. Joan, te amo y te extraño. Muchas gracias. Que triunfes.

the last patrol

a truck goes by
up the street outside,
the houses opposite standing silent:
it's the first time I've seen a squad car the whole time I've been
here

even though I know it's not
the last patrol,

it sorta feels like
the end of an era,
the dawn of a new beginning.

i write
 by torchlight
trying to recall
my footsteps.

I go over old ground,
the same I've covered
so many times before.

walking slowly
over the tracks,
 long grass,
tarmac,
plastic cover on top,
I want to be able to
recall
 the memories
 at a later stage,
how it felt,
how it feels
when I do these
walks around site

come the time I'm no longer here,

seeing it all in the rearview mirror,

looking back to remind myself of
everything I fought for,
worked for, clawed for,

to get to where I want to be,
where I need to be,

where I *will* be –

where I am!

- always will be...

I take a drink of
the semi-skimmed milk
in my cool flask,
play the track over

again.

alone

in the dark,

I

feel the warm breeze

on my face,

stop to look at myself,

the reflection in

a murky puddle,

crouch low,

watching the slow patterns swim

as they dance,

glance,

rippling as they wheel along across the surface.

i'm reluctant to let this end,

feel like I'm wearing concrete

shoes of lead, my head hanging down,

the weight of the world on my shoulders.

limp, weak, prematurely aged,

the boy i was a lifetime away

from the man I've become. –

I've found him again. He never was that far off, really...

- It's not an easy decision,

probably

the hardest

to date.

though circumstances aren't the best it's what I'm used to.

It's all I know.

School didn't teach me anything about life and how to live it.

while I may be

venturing into unknown territory,

uncharted waters,
I have an idea
of
what's on the other side,

and when I think of

that

it fills me with the
confidence and strength
to carry on.

I'm not afraid to walk under ladders, -

(do so just out of badness)

- march through the valley of the shadow of death,
dance with the angels round a ring of fire.

though the flaming inferno burns,
pains with each step I take

I hold my head high
with pride, dignity, honour and respect,
and though these demons
follow me everywhere I go,

i will be no martyr
for a futile cause,
another lost soul
sunk inside himself,
deep in the black tar pit of a personal abyss
before disintegrating,
fading away...

The birds outside are
chittering
away.

The sun's coming up.

It's the start of

another new day

(and I'm grateful for each and every one of them...).

0403, May 30th, 2019. Ward Park, Bangor.

(Not too sure if I've done everything to
catch a semblance of the feeling, but it's
the

best I can do. For now...)

karoshi

the first thing I do when I get on the train
after a 13-hr shift, an 88-hour week,

is check for personal shift requests.

I don't know how to switch off, can't...

it's a sin that grinds you down to
the bones of what you believe and is
inherently without meaning in the long run.

It'll end someday.

I know it must.

I just don't know how or when.

I feel like doing something wild. –

Who knows, maybe
one day I'll change the world?

0941, Sun 2nd June, 2019

F9 PBS;
I laugh,
thinking about

P B S
E Y H
R S E
C S L
Y H L
 E E
 Y.

F9 PBS,
Phoenix Setra, EST
(electro-shock therapy);
walking back then forth
between the trucks
gives you a different perspective
for each one -

Reading Midnight Express,
I think of revisiting
One Day In The Life of Ivan Denisovich -

which I did

- when Billy Hayes on the next page,
paragraph even,
is sent a copy
by his friend Patrick.

Once again, I'm
guessing the cod(e),
seeing ciphers,
connecting the dots,
 mind maps,
 mental patterns
ahead of time.

it all adds up to something.
It must.

People walk around
as hours and minutes
 pass me by.

in a world of my own design,

I put my head in a box,
guard the fragile contents
behind a reinforced steel framework
for a little while longer

before
I let go.

1308 - Sat 8th June, 2019.

so damn beautiful

the future is no longer certain, but
that's what's so damn beautiful about it.

the last day

"five hours left,

a shift at the Arena..."

I say to myself
once it hits 3 am.

it's one of those
Jedi mind-tricks,
a practical habit,
like using three sandwich bags
instead of two to space out your meals,

make things tolerable,
more sane.

at least
that's what I would have said,

two-thousand, four-hundred and forty-three days.
219,715,200 seconds,
3,661,920 minutes,
61,032 hours,
363 weeks and 2 days,
696.71% of a common year (365 days),

God,
and so much more.

How does one encapsulate
seven years to a single page?

you don't.

Words, indeed, are
very unnecessary.

I got up
from my seat
in the forklift,
zip covers not quite sealing,
gaps letting
cold air in from outside,
a cool chill before
morning sunrise,

had a bite to eat,
smoke,
walked round a bit
to warm up,
did perfunctory checks,
went back on myself,
made a cup of tea
and took a piss
before sitting down again.

I could do this
till the
cows come home.

I'm risking everything,
walking away from
guaranteed money,
a living wage,
job for life,

but
at some point
you have to
push the button,
pull the trigger,
stop being greedy,
thinking of the bottom line and
be willing to
leap, take the extra step.

I don't know if I can say
I'm ready.

I haven't had time to think, much less process,
let alone do, have it really hit me.

Maybe it will.

We'll see.

I think I am,
anyway.

I'm a man who, in my own way, is
ferociously ambitious, goal-oriented,
has big dreams, wants to do things.

There's no upward mobility here,

least none I'd want. That kind of
responsibility is a poisoned chalice.
What can one get from something
essentially worthless,
without meaning?

On my next birthday I'll be 28.

I haven't been been off for my birthday since I turned 20.

In two years
I'll be 30.

I'm done tired being
unhappy, unfulfilled.
I've so much I want to do,
contribute to the great tapestry.

Though I approach everything tentatively,
the clock keeps ticking, rapidly encroaching.

The birds start twittering
about twenty minutes
earlier than usual.

It's as though
nature is in unison,
synchronising their harmonics
with my line of thinking.

Soon,
the sun will rise,

as will

I.

0449, Fri 21st June 2019, Botanic Gardens