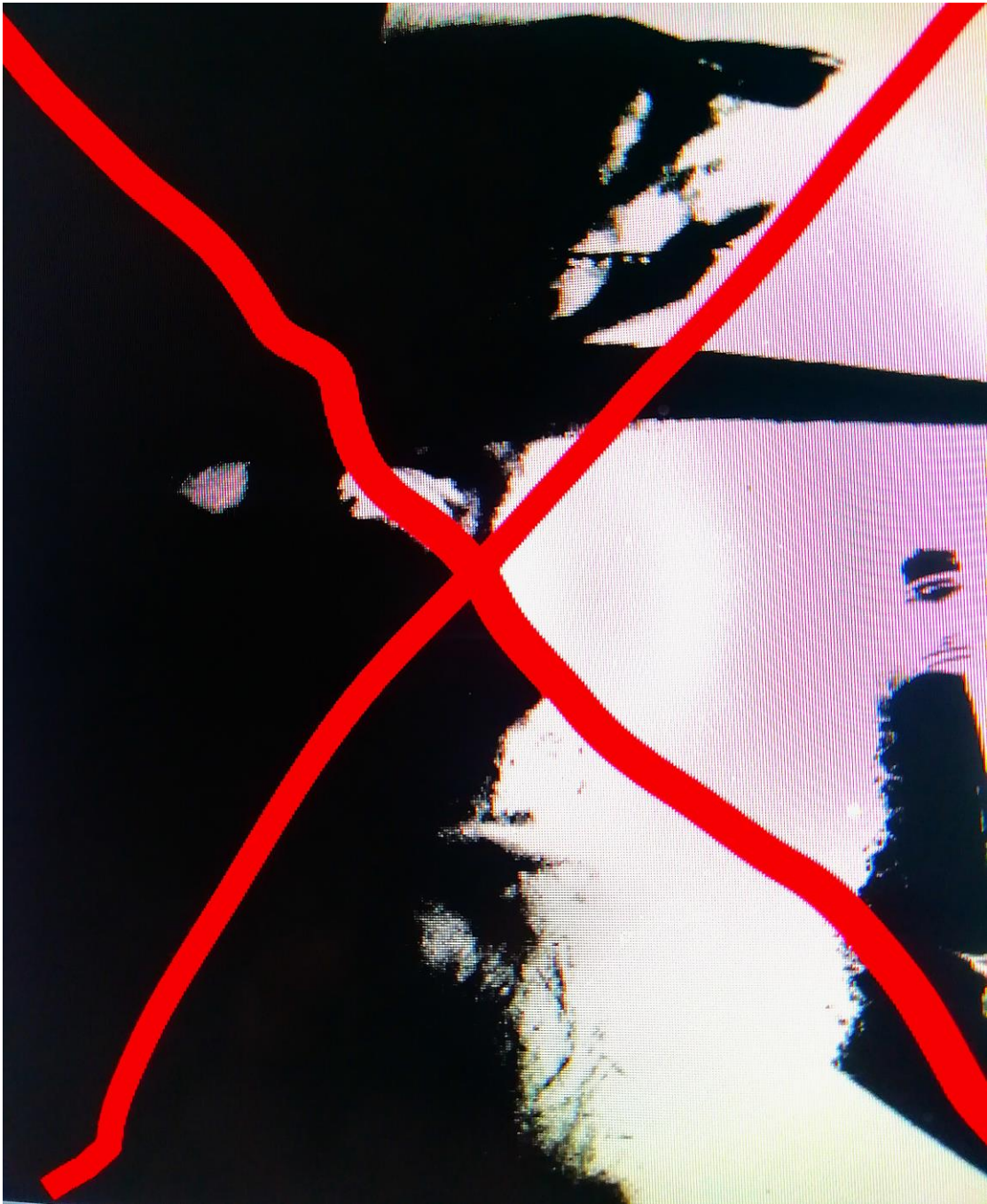


Cover Letter/Bio

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.

"... a wonderful day for an exorcism..."

Wake In Fright,
Cries And Whispers,
Mulholland Drive...

the hot, sweaty haze of boozy pasts,
Kafkaesque Moebius strip, hallucinating,
trapped in a nightmare of perpetual limbo,

hermetic bubble of familial bosoms,
draped in black cloaks, steeped in
the deep red shadow of death,

a return to roots, what
brought one to the dance,
possible divergent futures...

To paraphrase Scott quoting Albert,
I must remember those few things which acted as a catalyst, sparked a
candle in the dark, fire of the mind, triggered, lit a flame in my heart,
body and soul, initiating, ushering to prominence the holy spirit.

Six hours in twenty-four,
stylised ritual in celluloid, an ancient rite, 1543
for the contemporary day and age... 29/08/25

thus is the power, "a wonderful day for an exorcism,"
the magic of art, indeed...

a ways and a means to relate,
engage, perpetuate, derive meaning,
tell tales, stories, *all* tales, from here to eternity...

"... clutching at straws..."

Again, I digress.

The past four nights I've been thinking about what I'll write,
how I'll use the time, yet that particular snippet keeps coming to mind.

two nights, very little sleep,
on the second bus
(fourth of the day) up to
Botanic
listening to music,
shutting myself off from
the world outside, -

I just remembered being on this same train meeting an old school friend
and her daughter many moons ago. It wasn't long after I left the job if
memory serves me correct, but I could be wrong ("I could be right!").

- swept up by the stirring sounds
coming through my headphones,
thinking, thinking, thinking about
everything but still
wholly guided by
emotion.

I got the notion that perhaps my sanity,
grasp on reality, was futile,
that I was just
clutching at straws, -

which is what I've been doing all along,
really...

- fighting to survive,
simply to exist,
be,
in a realm I no longer recognise as my own.
I don't belong here, am not who they think I am.

I increasingly see life in a manner akin to science-fiction,
a quasi-diegesis, only those lavish sets, immaculate designs,
neon lights seen in years hence are
here, now,

our future dystopia an everyday thing we do not question but simply accept as the
natural way and order of things.

when I push myself beyond boundaries I get a glimpse of the other side.

It isn't always pleasant,

and sometimes I get frightened by the responsibility;
my life's mission is to depict this struggle,

use my body as a vessel, a conduit to
decipher the mysteries universal
to one and all.

Maybe that's why I'm reaching out,

looking for something to hold on to,
someone to walk with through the fire,
the valley and the shadow of death.

To go there hurts each time,
leaving more and more behind
a part of me apart from me
and I don't know if I can
keep going back,
without

You

there
by my side.

But then again,
I digress...

exit plan

Order Number 139517550,
Application Number 1768660987158
5th and
7th of June.

Between the numbers I
feel something coming on.

my exit plan is
falling into place.

For months I've been
planting seeds;
now
the harvest
is come to fruition.

Call me insincere, but
I've fooled everyone into
thinking I'm happy here, -

had I, really?

- content to do the hours when my intent
is not that of permanence but instead
a simple means to an end.

they
can use me as they please
but don't know that
the Faustian pact is
just for a little while,
that as soon as opportunity
presents itself,

BANG!

I'll drop the proverbial bomb
and it'll be fenito benito,
Jack!

When I look at the hours I'm going to clock up
over the next few weeks, it's scary to think
I used to live like this for months at a time,

years,
even.

where has it all gone?

pulled one way and impelled towards another,

bringing about an end to this life in order to start another.

If it means I've convinced myself
I'm the ultimate strategist,
a master manipulator
playing a part
as I divulge
and digress
into delusions
of grandeur, megalomania,

then
so be it.

Sometimes it is necessary to lose one('s/)self
in order to stay sane, get to where you need to.

Lord knows
I've had plenty
of practice.

No more the black sheep, drifter, Bobby Dupea, a gifted prodigy failing
to live up to expectations, letting himself become an underachiever.

Everything I've ever really wanted I've got through work,
grit and an iron will, which is why at 3am,
locked outside leaning against this
sealed hut
I get on with my business,
smile,
laugh at
the petty squabbles and resplendent bullshit.

I have goals. It
won't be long before
I get to achieve them...

0333 – Tuesday 14th 2019, Balmoral Show
1144 - Thursday 28th 2024, Home

Night Mus(/)e(ings)

I keep having to remove gloves to do things,
wonders for dexterity...

"Let's see me wield a pen,"
I said.

All the madness and mania of trucks and car parks trying to get sorted out
and all I have to do is sit back and watch gave me an objective outlook on
things,

relatively speaking...

Everyone is running around getting their knickers in a twist while I'm playing
at something between a moderator and a schoolchild. Let them,

"The world could burn so long as I have my cup of tea."

I talk, converse with folks who pass me by
as I sit at the gate waiting for U2's trucks to arrive.

Strangely,
I'm smiling.

Oddly,
I'm laughing, heartily,
with warmth, despite the cold.

I joke, jovially, randomly warbling about this, that and the other.

The chill of the wind off the Lagan threatens to freeze my bones, but
I don't care. -

For some reason the scenario of defending one of my younger cousins to
another boy's father comes to mind. Time is a strip, and sometimes memory
and fantasy roll back into one another, become one and the same...

- While most are beaten back against the elements,
I absorb the blows, roll with the punches,
come back bouncing,
grinning
like the Cheshire Cat.

Spreading my wings,
I fly,
though I shiver and shake,
with that of an angel's grace.

0138 - Saturday, 27th October, 2018
2151-2 - Saturday, 27th November, 2024

Man of Leisure

never thought I'd be a man of leisure.
I always thought I'd have to work and write on the side -
what was it that Chekhov said,
something about wives and mistresses? –
anyway,
as I sit out back in one of the red deck chairs,
reading and writing with a nice big cold beer,
smokes, perhaps, somewhere nearby,
in my vest, shorts and slippers,
resting in the warm shade,
retirement suiting me well,
the soft, caressing breeze of a summer's day as
the dog potters about his business,
I watch and think to myself,
"why would I ever trade *this* for a 9-to-5 I hate?"