

*A Collection of Writings*  
*by*  
*Learners of*  
*Core Skills*



Bord Oideachais & Oiliúna  
**LUIMNIGH & AN CHLÁIR**  
**LIMERICK & CLARE**  
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# COLLEGE OF FURTHER EDUCATION & TRAINING

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College of Further Education and Training  
Ennis Campus  
Clonroad Business Park  
Ennis, Co. Clare, V95 KT95

Your comments and suggestions are very welcome.

Please contact 065 689 7646

Co-ordination team: Karl Quinn, Pauline Murphy, Katie Lewis, Margot Walsh, Máire Dempsey, Mary Flanagan, Collette O'Brien, Laura Barrett, Pauline O'Mahony, Amanda O'Connor, Kerry O'Sullivan, Margaret Lynch, Mary Mullane, Michelle Madigan, Sandra O'Malley, Therese McGoldrick.

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## Foreword

Welcome to the 33<sup>rd</sup> edition of *Simply Said*, the annual collection of writings by learners taking part in programmes with Core Skills, which is part of Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board. This issue marks 33 years of published writings, which is a wonderful achievement for our learners. As the last couple of years have been disrupted by the pandemic, this year's publication is a combination of stories from 2021 and 2022. We launched the 2020 publication online in December 2020.

The writers of *Simply Said* attend classes across our centres in County Clare, North, South, East, West and Ennis. This year we also have stories from our colleagues in Limerick. The stories are remarkably poignant, personal and uplifting. There are stories about farming and travelling, tips about life, hobbies, sports, living in Ireland and education.

The cover picture on this year's book is called *Faoi Choimirce Runda na hOíche* which means *In the Stealth of the Night*. The picture was created by Mary O'Sullivan in the Painting and Collage course delivered by Kathleen Moroney. The art of collage and painting allows learners to explore their own interpretation of landscape or place. Learners designed and created their own collage papers using paint and drawing materials as well as newspapers and photographs.

*Simply Said* 2022 is dedicated to our late colleague Laura Rowland. There is a tribute to her within these pages. There is an image of a yellow rose on the back of the publication. Yellow roses symbolise friendship. They are used to cheer up friends and relatives. This yellow rose expresses our heartfelt appreciation of our beloved colleague and friend, Laura.

Thank you to all the tutors, especially the volunteer tutors who encourage learners to value the knowledge and life experiences they have, and support them on their learning journeys. Thanks to everyone for the planning and production of this year's publication.

Congratulations to everyone who has contributed to *Simply Said* in 2021 and 2022 and we hope you enjoy this publication.

*The Core Skills Team*

June 2022



### **Laura Rowland**

This year's edition of *Simply Said* is dedicated to our dear friend and colleague Laura Rowland who passed away on 10<sup>th</sup> August, 2021.

Laura was hugely admired by all who worked with her. She taught many subjects during her 14 years with the adult education service in Co. Clare, but it was her interest and knowledge of all things computers that she will be remembered for during our work days. Laura really was our 'Digital Champion'.

Laura had a talent for designing, delivering and supporting in-service training for staff and learners all across the county. She was such a skilled teacher that she put everyone at ease with digital literacy, smart phones and new technologies.

Laura was also an active member of the Amber Flag positive mental health initiative and her work is still visible around the Ennis campus, giving people a much-needed lift at the right time.

Loved by everyone, Laura will be remembered as the kind, caring person she was, who was committed to helping others learn, colleagues and learners alike. She went above and beyond many times to help others, especially as more of our classes moved online during the pandemic.

Laura's sudden passing affected us all, but her smiling face and positive attitude will remain with all who knew her. She is missed by us all.

Rest in Peace, Laura.

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### **Three kicks to the door**

When I was about five or six years old, my sister who was seven years older than me, now and then used to go visiting our next door neighbour. Sometimes she would take me.

In the country, next-door could be anything up to a mile away. Cathy was about a quarter of a mile away. Now, looking back - she must have been in her late seventies, a tall lady with wild grey hair who used to dress in a modernised version, of then Victorian style clothing. Her little cottage was very neat but in need of repair. Furniture was scarce!

I remember an old dresser, which held all her possessions. I would say everything! There were three súgán chairs with the paint flaking off them, now that would be the height of fashion!

She lived there on her own but she had her pride and joy - a dog called Bun. She would explain how clever he was - on the command of 'lie down and die Bun', down, flat out, he would go! He knew there was a biscuit coming up. As she walked to the local village, she continuously chatted with Bun, the same as if he was an old friend she hadn't met for years.

Cathy spent all her working life with a farmer just down the road. She milked cows by hand, fed calves and helped with all of the jobs on the farm. She said it was nice there because she was treated as one of the family.

Almost across the road from her lived Bill, a big burly man who lived a similar life to Cathy. His wife had passed away some years before and I think Cathy had an eye on him because of the affectionate way she would give out about him!

The magic part of the visit for me (as she would always walk us to our front gate) - was the locking of her door. She had a big key, like an ornament it was.

She explained everything to Bun. 'Now I'm locking the door', that kind of chat. Once it was locked - she'd stand straight with her back to the door and give three kicks of her heel faster than any machine gun to the bottom of the door to make sure it was locked! Then she

would walk out the narrow path to the little gate open it and close it.

Next, she would look back at the door through the worn opening in the wild privet hedge and then she would go back and repeat the whole ritual.

I had forgotten all about Cathy from the passing of time and the living of life, until a few days ago I found myself checking at the door handle making sure it was locked, just stopping short of kicking it three times. It woke up the memory of Cathy all those years ago. I said to myself if Cathy is looking down - She will be saying 'did you see that Bun?' with that smile in her eyes.

*By Tom*

## **5:25 to Dublin**

'Tom, they're calling this evening.'

'Who is calling this evening Sinead?'

'Tommy and his wife from Australia.'

'Who are they?'

Tommy was a friend of my mother and father. It was my father who drove Tommy to The Junction to get the 5:25 to Dublin.

'What do you mean by the 5:25?' Everyone knew in those days that the 5:25 from The Junction only meant one thing; that one was catching the emigrant boat to England, which Tommy did in the late sixties.

Tommy was in his late teens and was recovering from the sorrow of his mother's passing away. My father knew Tommy would do well in London. He was a very good worker, as my father knew well from the year that Tommy worked for him, and, even though my father offered him way above the going pay for that time to stay with him, he said 'No, I have made my mind made up.'

Tommy went to England and was getting on very well working in the buildings. He saw an ad in the newspaper the Australian Government was subsidising a ticket to Australia for £10 pounds to go and work there for a minimum of two years. So, he headed for

Australia, with his ten pound ticket and a dream in his mind and, as expected, he got on well with the work and the people.

Before long, it was 1970. The two years had gone to three and in his mind he could hear his native Knocklong, County Limerick calling, 'Where are you Tommy?' So he headed once more for his native village. This time to decide, to say hello or goodbye was the question on his mind, to the village and the people that he loved. He talked it out with his heart. What was the best for him to say?

On another day, sad in a way, he said goodbye to Knocklong and the people that he loved from childhood. Tommy was back on the 5:25 from The Junction, the start of the long journey back to where he would now call home.

It would be many years before Tommy and his Australian wife came back to visit Knocklong. He came back this time with the reality that time had passed - a lot of time since Sinead's father had driven him to the 5:25 from the Junction.

Even now, time has faded the relevance of the 5:25. Airports now are the new 5:25 from The Junction!

It's 2013, once again, Tommy is back. This time to say a final farewell to the brothers and sisters that are still alive as he feels time may not let him come back again. Let's hope such a fine decent man with a beard like Ned Kelly is wrong and he will be back!

*By Tom*

## **The £20 note**

When I was eleven years old, or a bit with it, like all Catholic boys I got my Confirmation. I should have said boys and girls. Also I was going to say good Catholics but looking back all those years now, it didn't matter good or bad you got it. There were lots of nice things about it. For a few days before, and a day or two after, you were made feel special, which wasn't something that was ever wasted on you.

Anyway, to come to my point for the Confirmation, one got a present of money from aunts and uncles and friends of the family. It was a tradition - anything from half a crown to a pound. You'd feel like a millionaire - you would. Sure, you wouldn't have seen money since your First Communion that you got at seven, which was four or five years before. The money, the new suit, even if it was a hand-me-down, it was new to you. As I was saying, the attention, I think that was the best of all. The attention as it was scarier than the scarce money. There was something bigger and something that I didn't understand until I was much older and my uncle Jack said I wouldn't, and he was right.

Uncle Jack was different to the ordinary man of that time. After milking the cows and delivering the milk to the local creamery, he would always call to the shop for the paper and twenty cigarettes. He would come home on the horse and car, have his breakfast, which was performed nothing short of a ritual. Even the topping of the boiled egg would be said nowadays, to be poetry in motion.

After breakfast, he would place the paper in a way that it caught the most light it could in the darkish kitchen. Then he would light one of his *Goldflake* cigarettes, in a way that it seemed only his right hand knew about, as he didn't have to look at the opening of the box or lighting up of the cigarette. His eyes never left the paper.

Coming back to what he said to me, I will explain. You see he didn't give me a half a crown or a pound, no, he gave me a twenty pound note, with instructions to put it in the post office until I finished school, which most people did at that time at fourteen. 'Now', he said, 'Let me explain, I have given you your legacy from me, no more will you get or have I to give you.' Uncle Jack, I can't thank you enough.' It would take my father two years to earn that loading bags of coal in the coal yard. 'Ah, but I have given you something else', he said, with an air of wisdom in his ageing voice. I looked at him confused, trying my best to come up with the answer. He left me to struggle like someone trying to swim in a pond of mud. I will tell you he said, 'That twenty pound note is like a map of life. The life that is before you'. Now I was even more confused.

'You see' he said, 'You can spend it many ways. It can be spent cautiously? It can be spent foolishly? It can be spend cautiously foolish? It can be wasted? With thinking it can be made good use of. If you don't spend it - it becomes worthless.'

'But, to make it valuable you have to think and the same with your life!'

*By Tom*

### **A day out in Fanore**

I woke, looked at the clock with one eye and had a think. Oh yes, today is Sunday; no work, appointments, commitments or anything. Ah, I am going to have the laziest of days ever, I just know that I need it. So I just turned over, felt the sunlight on my face through the window. This is the life. I obviously dozed off as I woke suddenly to the sound of the telephone ringing. I looked at it, again with one eye open, thinking, 'Who the hell is ringing me on a Sunday morning?!' I picked up the phone and said, 'Hello,' in a sleepy voice. The voice at the other end was my very good friend Mary. 'Hi, are you up?' I said, 'Yes, Mary I am up, up in bed'.

'Oh!' she said, in a chirpy voice, 'Get up you lazybones, we are off to Fanore for the day. It's a lovely summer's day and I am driving so it will be a change for you, no driving.' I said, 'No Mary, thanks all the same.' But, she said, 'I am not taking no for an answer. I will be at your front door in ten minutes.' 'I am still in bed', I said. 'OK then, 15 minutes', she said. 'I will collect Marie and Bridie first. Chop, chop!' With that she hung up.

Isn't this awful? I don't want to go. I got up and got ready and had the front door open when she pulled up in the car with the girls in tow. I hadn't even had my breakfast yet and said 'Why don't ye head away?' 'No chance', says Mary, Bridie and Marie - the full chorus! 'Come on, we will get breakfast on the way. This is going to be our day out together.' And so, I thought to myself I may as well give in now and not drag this out and I grabbed my bag, coat, keys, etc. and into the car I got.

We were only about six or eight minutes driving – when Mary turned in for Thomondgate. We all asked, 'Why here?', and she burst out laughing. 'Oh my God! I am so used to collecting Bridie after Annette that I forgot I collected her already. Nice one!', says Bridie.

We had a good bit of slugging and began to remember several (actually) many, many times we did the wrong and silly things. The time we took the wrong turn on the Coonagh roundabout and ended up in Tesco car park, and we were all dressed up for a night out! The time we changed buses and waited at the bus stop for the airport bus with our suitcases, and a lady approached and asked, were we getting the bus to the airport? We said, 'yes'. Then she pointed out that the bus stop was further down. On looking up at the pole we discovered that we were standing at a speed limit sign! On and on we went with the memories as we have seen half of the world together.

Mary then pulled in and parked and we had breakfast 'al fresco' in the glorious sunshine. There was a park about five minutes walk down the road and we strolled there and spent time admiring the flowers, shrubs, bees, and even two or three butterflies were spotted. Back to the car, had an ice-cream, and then we set off for the final leg of the journey to Fanore.

We arrived and Mary's mobile home was very welcoming to us. We met up with fellow residents, friends and cousins of ours. A stroll on the beach, into the sea up to our knees. We gathered some shells and a big 'balk' of rotten wood that Marie said was 'very interesting' – she is very artistic and no doubt had a plan for it.

Evening was beginning to fall and we had a bit to eat before the journey home. It was salad that we had purchased on the way down. The chap next door and his wife called over to us. They had a bottle of wine and he had a guitar. We are not wine drinkers but had our own minerals and said to him 'Play a tune, sing a song'. Before we knew it, we were singing along to old songs and the neighbours came along and joined in. They brought their own chairs, drinks and food. One neighbour brought over a chiminea so we were warm and the smoke kept the midges away. One song he sang was, 'Watch The Sun Go Down On Galway Bay'. I shed a tear

as that was my Mam's party piece, her favourite song. When I relayed this, Paddy said, 'If you go over there and climb to the top of the dune, you will be looking out onto Galway Bay, and the sun will be setting within the next 20 minutes.' I thought, Oh! My God! How wonderful this would be.

Gradually we got organised and proceeded to the top of the dune. As the time slowly passed the group got bigger and I think we all ended up watching the sunset. The chap Paddy had his guitar and played all old Irish songs: 'Three Green Fields', 'If We Only Had Old Ireland Over Here', 'The Hills of Clare', 'Paddy Reilly', 'McNamara's Band', 'I'll Take You Home Again Kathleen' and, the final one as the sun began to lose its last rays, 'Watch The Sun Go Down On Galway Bay'.

Here's to you Mam, I hope heaven is as nice as Galway Bay.

*By Annette*

### **A memory of my beloved Dad**

My Dad passed away on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of February 1995. It was in January that he took a bad turn. My two brothers and my youngest sister were minding him that morning. They thought he had passed away and my younger brother said to the other two, that Dad hadn't told us what arrangements he wanted as regards his funeral. They were sitting around the bed and suddenly a voice said, 'I want the same arrangements as your mother', without even opening his eyes. Well, that gave them a worse fright. I often think of that memory and smile as that was typical of my Dad. I still miss him.

*By Maureen*

### **My music**

*Meatloaf* was born Marvin Lee Aday in September 27<sup>th</sup> 1947 and he died on January 20<sup>th</sup> 2022. He changed his name from Marvin to Michael in 1984. *Meatloaf* sold millions of albums. His 'Bat Out of Hell' album in 1977 is one of his best. *Meatloaf* was an American

singer and he was an actor as well. He made over 50 movies and television shows. He was one of the best rockers. A legend with some of the best songs. Such songs as 'Two out of Three Ain't Bad', 'Bat Out of Hell', 'For Crying Out Loud' and, 'Dead Ringer for Love' which he sang with *Cher*.

*By Alan*

### **Some tips about life**

Hi there! I'm Aline from Brazil/Bahia state. I have lived in Ireland for two years. I came to Ireland because I have always wanted to speak English and although I have tried, I have never learnt to speak English fluently. I would like to talk a little about my life journey up to now. I have learnt some things that I want to share with you and I hope it contributes to you in some way.

1. If you are thinking about something every single day, for example, learning another language, or opening your own business or starting a family, don't give up; keep going and trust your feelings.
2. Get up and believe that your day will be wonderful! Be grateful always for another day to be alive.
3. Enjoy your life, every moment! Wear your better smile, take care of yourself, take a deep breath, love your partner, family and friends. Life is too short.

In my view, happiness is not at the end. The way happiness is for me is on the journey and in the simple things. Observe around you and you'll understand that you have everything that you need to make each moment special.

*By Aline*

### **Treasures in a handbag**

When I was a child my mom and I went to see a doctor. There was a lot of people there. We had been waiting for a very long time. I



was tired and I was cranky. My mom opened her bag and gave me a sweet. Of course I calmed down. This event was repeated often in my life. I always knew that Mom had a sweet that would help me.

I grew up and today I have three daughters. A few years ago I heard the girls say that they also knew that in my bag there was always a sweet that helped them.

I would really like my daughters to have treasure in their bags for their children.

*By Inna*

### **My story**

The worst day of my life was when my dad died. My heart was broken so badly that I fell into a depression for a long time.

After a while I left Albania and I went to France. It was the first time I wasn't living with my family. I stayed in France for two weeks and then I went to Spain. I stayed there for two days and met my husband's sister and we both came to Ireland. When I came to Ireland first I didn't like it but after I started English class I made friends.

*By Besjana*

### **My different hobbies**

I was thinking about what topic I should write about. I decided to write about my hobbies. My hobbies have changed with my lifestyle and maybe I have changed with my hobbies. Back in school my hobbies were related to art. I enjoyed painting with watercolours and acrylics. I really liked to draw animals, fruits and vegetables. I have visited various exhibitions of painting, sculpture and folk art.

Then when I started working in the field of design my hobby also changed. I liked to create my own décor elements in my interiors; murals and mosaics. I love when the interior is handmade. I feel the warmth of it.

I also like to come up with logos for different companies. This is a small graphic element that many companies cannot do without. Going from big projects to small ones is very interesting but now I don't do it anymore.

Now, I like to cook dishes from different countries. I have more time for it. I look on the internet and see what is interesting for me and my family and then I cook it. I prefer Asian food. I have learned how to cook Japanese rolls, Korean kimbap, sweet and sour chicken and much more.

In Ireland I have a new creative hobby-making pictures with crystals. This is a very small but interesting technique.

*By Tatyana*

### **My dog story**

I would like to tell you about my dog. My dog's name is Aby. She is a greyhound lurcher. She is around seven years old. I found her in the Tesco car park when she was a puppy. She was in very bad condition. She was a stray. My friends and I asked some people who lived near the supermarket if we could take her to the vet? Four adult men said to us 'Who are you?' We had to think quick. 'We are Limerick Animal Welfare and we would like to take this dog to the vet because she is sick'. They said, 'OK'.

The next day we went to the vet for a check-up. Aby had scabies on all her body and she needed three weeks of quarantine. After three weeks I took her home and now she is with me for seven years.

We have had good times and bad times together. Sometimes I could kill her because she doesn't listen to me. I get angry but then a few minutes later, she comes to me and gives me the paw and everything is good again.

If you want to adopt a dog I would highly recommend a greyhound type because they are very calm and they love cuddling and sleeping in a warm bed.

*By Wioletta*

## **My culture shock**

I came to Ireland about ten years ago. The plane landed at night and my husband told me that there was no public transport at night. It was a shock for me. We had to spend all night at the airport. In the morning we left the airport to go to the big city, Dublin. There was another shock for me when we asked a man about what time the bus started and he didn't want to answer us, so he started shouting at us. I felt so sad. I was crying. It was bad luck I think.

It took a few years to meet the right people. Now everything is different. I am so happy to live in Ennis and not a big city.

*By Síham*

## **War and innocence**

I will never understand why wars happen so often. I know many innocent people who have lost their lives, family members, businesses and homes. They become immigrants. Many children are growing up with psychological problems. Does anyone have the answer to why these terrible things are happening to people?

*By Aícha*

## **The important things in life**

Three of the most important things in life are things you can't buy with money.

All people have their own ideas of what is important and what is not. For some people the most important thing in life is having a lot of money, for others it is love or family. In my opinion the most important things in life are invisible because they are not material things and can't be bought. The first of these things I have in mind is good health. There is nothing more precious than health. People usually start to value their health when they are sick. Then they realise that good health is important to live properly.

The second thing is love. Love is something everybody needs to be happy. Having someone that loves you makes you feel safe and wanted. People need to love and be loved. The gift of love is on

our DNA. We can love people, we can love animals, art, music and a lot of other different things.

The third thing which I consider very important in life, is friendship. Having a really good friend is like winning the lottery. Friendship is a great value in everyday life.

The three things I have written about, good health, love and friendship you can't buy with all the money in the world.

*By Beata*

### **My life in Ennis**

I flew from Lithuania to Ireland, to the town of Ennis. I got a job with a cleaning company, cleaning Tesco and a hotel. I like the town of Ennis. It is quiet and calm. There are many shopping centres and a museum.

I don't like that there isn't a hospital like the one in Limerick city. You need to be able to go to the doctors. I'm currently studying English at school, but I'm not very good at studying.

My hobbies are swimming and travel. Travelling is my favourite hobby. In Ireland, with my friends, we travelled to many cities and visited the sights of Bunratty Castle and the Cliffs of Moher as well as the national parks. In Dublin we visited the attractions and the zoo was fun.

*By Rima*

### **My story and my treasure**

Hi, I'm Mohammad. I will tell you my story. My story is the same as any Syrian person. I left Syria for Jordan to live in safety and to complete my studies. I studied in government schools and for the last stages of my studies, I went to a private school. In 2019 I came to Ireland. I could not finish my studies.

Now I still have my student card from Jordan. I keep it. It may not be important to someone else but it means a lot to me. I cannot give it up at any cost because it contains many memories both positive and negative. I will try to save that student card forever.

*By Mohammad*

### **The best things about Ennis**

I came to Ennis in October 2013. I found that Ennis is a small town. You don't need to use a bus inside it.

All services are reachable by walking. First, I lived in Sandfield, which is very close to the hospital, the gym and shopping centres.

The people of Ennis are very friendly.

Ennis is a very clean town. It has beautiful scenery like flowers in the roundabouts and roadsides. There is also a small river crossing it. In Ennis there is a bus and a train station to connect it to other parts of the country. I love Ennis and I can't imagine living anywhere else.

*By Amína*

### **My treasures**

Before I got married my husband sent me letters from time to time. I still have them to this day. I have kept them for 23 years. I can't lose them because they are my treasures. They make me very happy when I see them.

*By Khadija*

### **My life in Ireland**

Before I came to Ireland my husband had told me a lot about it. When I first came I lived in Ennistymon for 15 years. Then I came to Ennis and I lived here for a year and a half. I like it when the people are always smiling and helping others. The only problem I found in Ireland is the weather as it's raining most of the time.

*By Khadija*

## **Holy month of Ramadan and Eid**

Ramadan is a holy month, it is the month in which the Quran was revealed to the prophet Mohamed.

Ramadan represents more than abstaining from lusts and sins, it is the month of mercy and forgiveness. Every Muslim must adhere to all the conditions of fasting to get the reward from Allah.

The month of Ramadan has Alkadr night, which is considered by Allah better than a thousand months. Fasting the month of Ramadan has many health benefits on the human body. It helps the body to get rid of toxins and pollutants in it.

Eid al-Fitr is considered one of the most important subjects to write about. Eid al-Fitr is a religious feast celebrated by Muslims. It starts after Ramadan and goes on for three days. It is the feast when Muslims break their fast after the month of Ramadan.

*By Asim*

## **My life in Ireland**

Fourteen years have passed since I came to live in Ireland. When I was last aware of it I was shocked at how quickly this time passed. I first came to Ireland to visit my friend. Over time this friendship turned into something more, love. I admit the first few months were very difficult for me, a foreign country and a different language to the one I had used all my life. Despite all the language barriers, I tried to move forward. Friends helped me to find a job. I started learning the language. From the very beginning I was impressed at the beauty of the local nature and the stunning views around us.

It turned out that the Irish are very open-minded and kind people, always ready to help. The worst thing that I couldn't and can't get used to is the weather. It rains almost all the time. Over time, I know that you can get used to everything.

After a few years of living together we got married and we had our children which changed my life again. While living together in Ireland we planned to return to Poland. Unfortunately, now it is

difficult to decide to return. Now our children are at school, and when we ask them if they would like to go back to Poland their answer is 'No', because this is all they know. Here they have their friends. Yes, they mostly miss their grandparents, aunts and uncles but we spend every summer holiday, and sometimes Christmas, in Poland so they can enjoy the time spent with their family.

We currently live and work in Ireland and we enjoy our life. I hope that maybe someday, when the children grow up, we will return to Poland for retirement.

*By Monika*

### **Faadumo's story**

My name is Faadumo, I'm from Somalia. Now I live in Kilrush. I have been in Ireland for seven years. I like learning English. I want to sew clothes and I hope one day I will go on holidays.

*By Faadumo*

### **My story**

My name is Omar and I'm from Syria. I will tell you my story. I don't know if you will like it or not but I will tell it anyway.

I went to Lebanon in 1996. My age was 16 at that time. I went over there for work to help my parents because my family was poor. After I arrived in Lebanon I spent one week looking for work. I found work with a kind man. He helped me. I did a lot of work with him for about five years. Then I went into the army for two and a half years. After the army, I went back to Lebanon and I worked there until 2016. The war in Syria began in 2011.

I always got back in to Syria every time I wanted to, but in February 2012 the police caught me and put me in jail for a month. I don't know why. After one month I got out of jail but I only stayed in Syria for one more week. Then I went to Lebanon again. Since that time I have not returned to Syria. My brother died and I didn't see him.

Today, it's 10 years since I've been in Syria. For 10 years I haven't hugged my parents.

The war has killed everything, the trees, the stone buildings, and the people. It destroyed everything. Finally, I would like to say, hopefully the war will end and everything will return as it was.

*By Omar*

### **Happy to be in English class**

My name is Adjo. I was born in Africa. In 2015 I came to Ireland. I lived with my friend in Ennis. It is a lovely country but my concern is my English. For the moment I am not working. I need to be better with my English. I am a student in the Adult Education College with my classmates and our teacher. It is nice to meet them and it's a lovely class for me.

For two years I was looking for a house but now I got one. The weather is so bad but very soon I will have a car and everything will be good. I'm happy because I can express myself in English more than before.

*By Adjo*

### **Green dream**

There once was an ambitious girl who lived in Algeria. Fatima grew up in a traditional family. She always wanted to be an actress but knew she couldn't because her parents planned her life for her. Secretly she took her brush and pretended she was acting in the movies with lots of her favourite actors. In front of the mirror she transformed into many different characters. She was very annoyed at how she couldn't live her dream and do what she loved.

One day school was organising a play called 'Joseph and the Story of the Prophet'. She was very excited and signed up for the main role. To her surprise she was picked. She couldn't believe it. She practised in front of the mirror until the big day. She wasn't nervous or scared. She played the role like a professional. The people who were invited and her teachers were amazed. She acted like a big actress. She was very happy to hear the compliments all around



her but she knew that she couldn't do acting because her parents didn't agree with her for choosing this career and they wouldn't let her travel alone.

A few years later when Fatima was married and lived out of her country, in the USA, her dream still lived with her. One day she was invited to a ceremony of a friend's son. At this ceremony she met a group of people. Fatima talked to them but she didn't know that one of the men of the group was a producer. Her husband made a surprise for her. He arranged with the producer to make an appointment for his wife. The producer invited Fatima to do a casting and see if she was any good at acting. She gave all her talent and she got the role available for her. They made the movie. It was an iconic film. Fatima became one of the most famous actresses in the world. She was an inspiration for women, proving that they could do anything if they put their mind to it.

Dreams do come true. Dreams are like grass, they grow until they are green. Don't give up on your dreams.

*By Nadjat*

### **Ennis - the good and the bad**

I like the school. I like the centre and the shops. The roads are good. I like the people in Ennis. They are good.

The houses and the hospital are good. The social welfare is good.

I like the hurling matches. I like the sun and the wind in summer, it's very nice. The Gardaí say, 'hi' to me. All of Ennis is good. We are very happy here.

I've never seen something bad in Ennis. Ennis has no problems, no fighting. The only thing I don't like is the weather. Sometimes there is too much cold and rain.

I miss the weather in my country. We miss our families and friends in Ghana and Somalia.

*By Charles and Shire*

### **I felt nervous when the game began**

It was 2013 when Co. Clare played Cork in the All-Ireland Hurling Final. I was with my friend Kevin, who is originally from Cork. We watched the game in a pub in Ennis. The score in the game was very close all the time.

Everybody in the pub was screaming for the Clare - only my friend kept whispering, "Come on Cork".

For the whole game I was very nervous that someone might hear him. Finally the game finished and Clare were the winners! We went back home. I was very happy, but my friend Kevin was very sad.

*By Beata*

### **Margaret's story**

I like going for walks with my sister Nora. I also enjoy knitting and crafts. I love to go back to Liscannor to visit my family.

*By Margaret*

### **Climb the tree**

Let's climb the tree  
as we climb up the oak tree  
we come across a few bumps and bruises  
along the way up as the sun  
brightly shines on us  
trying to blind us from the journey  
we lead in the past and present  
Hydrating the world from its calmness  
and its intelligence.

*By Lisa*

## **As I Bend in the Wind**

Trees remind me of people. Both have various shapes, sizes, colours and personalities. Both thrive in groups where hugs and laughter are plentiful.

Have you ever hugged a tree? Why not try it and feel the joy! In the following poem about one of my trees, I am reminded of myself. I hope you enjoy reading it as much as I have enjoyed writing it.

As I bend in the wind  
My spine in a curve  
My branches keep shaking  
While the ground it is quaking

I look out on the world  
With my curvature view  
The scenery all tilted  
Slanted and skewed

The winter is here  
With snow on the ground  
My branches are sleeping  
While my trunk remains sound

The sheep in the fields  
Have their woolly coats on  
While they bleat and they bleat  
Their sheepy sad song

The hedgerows are quiet  
And the birdsong are few  
As we huddle together  
In our own little shelter

I do sleep a lot  
In winter, that's true

While waiting for springtime  
To come into view

The wind it is howling  
While the snow is all melting  
The awakening of nature  
Is around me and brimming

As my trunk and my branches  
All start to sway  
Saying 'Wake up, wake up now, it's a lovely new day.  
It's time to start budding  
The spring it is coming'.

When next you see a tree, ask yourself, 'Does this tree remind me of anyone?' You just might be surprised at the answer.

*By Marian*

### **My photography**

My name is Beata, I am from Poland originally. I was a primary school teacher for 12 years before I left Poland. I decided to move to Ireland with my son who was 12 years old at the time. It was a hard decision to make at the time. I only wanted what was best for my son's future. I have lived in Ennis since 2007 and I am very happy living here and now regard Ennis as my home.

After I arrived in Ireland, unfortunately, I was diagnosed with cancer and it was while recovering from this and while undergoing treatment, I discovered my passion for photography. I found photography was a great way for occupying my time.

From the time I started photography I wanted to use my own style and develop new concepts in the world of photography. My inspiration for my photography sometimes reflects my life experiences and events happening in the world. I believe photography is like art and I like to use new techniques that give

my own signature style of art.

I like to work with small groups of children on a voluntary basis, introducing them to the art of photography. I also do art photography with men and women of different nationalities. I am most happy doing fine art photography with children as in Poland I was a primary school teacher.

My photography is well recognised around the world. I really only entered competitions to see if my photographs were any good. I have represented Ireland in many international competitions. I have won many international awards and since July 2021 the FIAP Gold, (Federation of International Art Photography), PSA Gold (Photography Society of America), and GPU (Global Photography Union) medals. I have two Blue Pin Awards, which is the best award a photographer can get in an international competition. My photos have received other awards and have appeared in exhibitions in countries like: Canada, India, Iceland, Georgia, Sri Lanka, Romania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Luxembourg, Montenegro, Portugal, Cyprus, Ukraine, Tunisia and North Macedonia to name a few. I have received the GENIUS (G.APS) Distinction Award from Agile Photographic Society in Bangladesh.

I would like to create fine art photography, doing exhibitions in Ireland, showing my work to the Irish people and hopefully selling some of my art.

I would also love to do workshops passing on the knowledge and expertise that I have picked up over the last 15 years about fine art portrait photography. As I also love working with children I would like to continue to teach a children's photography class. I get my inspiration and my ideas from my own life experiences moving from Poland to Ireland, recovering from my illness, raising my son and all that life throws at a person. I use my imagination and also take inspiration from artists from the past such as Da Vinci and Rembrandt.

I would like my future work to reflect fine art with an Irish influence from Irish poets such as Yeats and Heaney that will appeal to Irish people and which people will like to look at. Finally, I would like to

thank the models in my photographs and thank you to all the staff who have helped me in the College of Further Education and Training in Ennis.

*By Beata*

### **My interesting hobby**

I would like to share my hobby with you. It is unusual but fascinating. I am interested in aftershaves and colognes from all over the world and I collect them. It is a very interesting journey during which I discover interesting, inspiring and sometimes surprising smells and learn about different cultures and the history of extraordinary places, events and people.

In addition, I am interested in, and also collect, shaving soaps from around the world. These two things, aftershave and shaving soaps, create an unearthly climate of the diversity of so many countries, cultures, places and personalities of the people who create them with passion and dedication. This journey is a passion that lasts for several years and, importantly, it is never boring or obvious. My hobby leads me to the essence of fragrances, relaxation and a little reflection. This is my little world of discovering what is beautiful in fragrances and things hidden in nature.

*By Daniel*

### **Dancing in Dromkeen**

It was a lovely bright evening when we arrived at the dance hall. A hazy evening like you'd expect for the month of June and this was only early April. Anyway, the big band took to the stage at 11:00pm. When they struck off their first hit there was a frenzy across the hall, to ask the girls to dance.

I was taken by the current to a good spot, down the hall, where I had a long parade of girls to ask. Next the current turned from the end of the hall facing for the stage.

Then I saw her, the girl of my dreams! As I whizzed, or the stampede whizzed by her, I asked her to dance. She said, 'No'. I was broken hearted. I pushed my way off the floor to the side of the hall, where I met who I considered a wise old neighbour. He must be wise at his age. He was 23!

I told him my terrible news. 'Ah, but you have to ask her three times', he said. I looked at him in amazement at his wisdom! Above all, he was giving me hope! 'How do you mean Pat?', I asked.

'Well, it's like this', he said. 'The first time you asked, she didn't see you, because she was looking at the fella of her dreams.' 'The second time you ask, because she is still there, it means the fella of her dreams has chosen someone else. This time she will look at you before she says no'.

'The third time, ah, this is it. Because she has seen you from the second no, you're not exactly what she wants, but, you've shown great interest and determination and if that don't swing her, you're goosed!', he said. So, that is why you have to ask her three times. Which I did and she danced and danced with me for the rest of the night.

She had travelled with her brothers to the dance and I was so proud as I walked her out to the car.

She was wearing a black coat with big silver buttons. I asked her out and she said, 'yes'. I knew then what the quote in the paper meant when it said, 'Our biggest fear is not of failure but of success.'

It was around this time my father had got in the phone, as her father had and she had given me her number. I often sat on the floor in the hall for over an hour that summer talking and dreaming with Carmel.

In those days there was no shortage of festivals with big marquees for dancing and we went to many of them. I had the full license and my father gave me the car and the deal was, her younger

brother or brothers would chaperone us. This was great as the brothers encouraged her mother to allow us to go out. We had the date and the boys got to the dance

I think it was July or August she went to Irish College in Kerry, and to make a long story short, some 'cute hoor' from Kerry blew me out of the water. I was broken hearted. This was it, never again would I love. That was my story until I met the next girl. And so love lived on.

*By Tom*

### **My dad**

I remember when I was working nights in Dell, I came home one morning as usual, and saw that my dad had my breakfast ready for me. When I saw him sitting at the breakfast table, he said, 'I didn't do it straight away.' He asked me to sit down and told me he had something to tell me.

When I sat, I told him, 'Please don't bring another woman into this house because I'm not going to call her Mam.' He said, 'It's nothing like that Love, I'm thinking of becoming a priest.' I can't say I was surprised as my dad was always a religious person.

Dad had to do five years away from home. He did one year in England and four years in Rome. I went to England the first year he was away. I missed him terribly as I was very close to him. That first Christmas was very lonely for me, as Mam had died in March and by September Dad was gone to be a priest. He made a good priest as he knows how to live life and was helpful to couples in trouble.

Dad used to be a bus man. When we were young, I used to go with him as he was a tour bus driver. He used to drive the American tourists around Ireland. They loved him as he could be very funny at times. I remember asking him once, 'When you become a priest do I call you Dad or Father?' He told me he would always be my dad, but this way he could be everyone's father.



When I got married he walked me up the aisle and then went into the sacristy to put on his vestments. He wasn't ordained so he couldn't marry us, but he gave us the host and wine and a blessing. When he said his first Mass in St Munchin's Church in Limerick he introduced himself. He said, 'Hello everyone, my name is Father Fred. I'm a great grandfather, a grandfather, a father and now a Reverend Father.'

He christened my son and my nieces. When I met my new partner, he told me that Dad had christened his daughter and his nephews. I was very proud of my dad. He did well in his life and found his calling in life after my mam died. He was ordained in 2003 and, being the oldest man in Munster to be ordained at 69, he saw out ten years of priesthood until he died in 2013.

*By Helen*

### **I love animals**

I love all animals. All my life growing up we had animals at home. I remember we had two dogs, eight cats and a budgie called Joey. My dream job is to work with animals, so, in September I am starting a course in veterinary skills. I hope that I will learn everything I need to know about the care and welfare of animals. I hope that maybe one day I will work as a vet's assistant in a vet's practice.

I would also like to work as a volunteer in an animal shelter that looks after animals that have been abandoned or not treated well.

*By Carmel*

### **Lord's Valley**

One of my favourite places to visit is Pennsylvania, in a place called Lord's Valley. It is about two hours' drive from NYC. Some of the wildlife that you might see are bears and cubs. They come around very early in the morning. The bears and all the wildlife can freely walk through/around your property, most houses do not have fencing on their property. No matter the time of day, you will get

to see deer and young fawns standing in your garden. The animals can sense that they are being watched. You need to be super quiet not to spook them.

If you are out walking, look closely to the edge of the road you might get to see orange lizards. They are very tiny and are called Eastern Red-spotted Newts.

*By Deborah*

### **'Flying Without Wings'**

I love music. My favourite band of all time is *Westlife*. My favourite *Westlife* song is 'Flying Without Wings.' This song reminds me of my relationship with my mum. My mum has brought me up on her own. She gives me so much love, help and support each and every day. With all her love and encouragement every day I feel confident and happy just like I am 'flying without wings'.

Flying Without Wings (Song Lyrics)

It's little things that only I know  
Those are the things that make you mine  
And it's like flying without wings  
'Cause you're my special thing  
I'm flying without wings

And you're the place my life begins  
And you'll be where it ends  
I'm flying without wings  
And that's the joy you bring  
I'm flying without wings

*By Annmarie*

## **Yana's story**

Hello, my name is Yana. I am from Ukraine. My daughter Anhelina, my mother Tanya and I came to Ennis. We were forced to come to this country as a war started.

It's very very beautiful here and everything is unusual for us, not like at home. The people are very friendly and kind. We were well received and helped in difficult times for us. We will never forget this. Ireland - thank you so much!

*By Yana*

## **Computer course**

As we come to the end of the computer course year I must say, I thoroughly enjoyed it and learned so much. Thanks to the tutor for her patience, which she needed plenty of at times. I'm so looking forward to the next course.

*By Mary*

## **Louisa's story**

From basic family cookery to award winning pastry chef with Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board.

Our children went to school in Holy Family National School Ennis. Thanks to the school and Mary at the Adult Learning Centre in Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board, there were opportunities for parents to attend various life skill classes. We were offered classes in learning English, yoga, cookery, make-up, helping with homework, etc.

In 2016, I began a cookery course in the school with Nora. I loved the class, learning from Nora and cooking tasty nutritious dinners one morning a week for about six weeks. I kept my eye out for the next class which was with Noelle. I learnt more new recipes, had plenty of banter with the other parents and enjoyed the food. I was very sad when the classes finished - I was hooked on cookery!

I registered with [fetchcourses.ie](http://fetchcourses.ie) and discovered another branch of the ETB in Limerick, at the top of O'Connell St. It was ideal as many of the cookery courses were part-time, usually one day a week so I could balance home life and enjoy heading to Limerick every week for my cookery 'fix'. There, I did culinary skills with Jenny, a course on breads, pastries and desserts and short order cooking with Tony. There was a bit of homework involved with these courses but the chef tutors were always very helpful. The courses were always very practical and my menu repertoire was continuing to grow.

In 2019, I had the option to apply for a BA in Culinary Art. It was a full-time course, which would be a difficult commitment for me while raising a family. At a Limerick and Clare ETB career show, I came across the City and Guilds Diploma in Professional Patisserie and Confectionaire. I was in my element learning under the direction of Will in the Roxboro and Kilmallock Road campuses of LCETB.

I got to do so many different types of techniques – hot and cold desserts, sugar sculpting, pastillage, all types of pastries, icing and decorating cakes and presenting desserts worthy of a five-star hotel. I passed my exams with distinction and am now a professional pastry chef!

This year I enrolled on a chef course, again with Will. I was selected to go to Salon Culinaire at IFEX in Belfast in March. I was competing in the Chef Open Class Restaurant Innovation Dessert of the year. I made a lime and ginger baked soufflé on a bed of peanut caramel sauce with cardamom and vanilla ice-cream served with honeycomb. It was a great experience and I was overjoyed to be awarded a silver medal!

*By Louisa*

### **How I felt when I learnt that I was going to have a baby**

In May 2018, my partner visited me in Kosovo and we went for a holiday in Montenegro for a week. We spent a good time together and really enjoyed our trip. My partner then returned to Ireland and

two weeks later my period didn't come, so I went to the pharmacy to buy a pregnancy test. I did the test and it turned out I was pregnant. I was so very happy. I couldn't believe it. When I told my partner that we were going to have a baby, he was excited and happy too.

A few weeks later, I went to the doctor for a check-up and that day was the best day ever for me. That was the day that I heard my son's heart beating for the very first time. For me, it felt like all my dreams had come true.

Now, my son is three years old and for me he is everything. I can't imagine life without him. He is like an angel. If I start to write about him, I'm scared that I can't find the perfect words.

In the end, my hope and wish for everyone who wants children is that God blesses them.

*By Blerina*

### **This is my story**

My name is Charles. I am from Ghana. I live in Ennis now.

I work in Shannon, in the Shannon Springs Hotel. I work in the bar, in the kitchen and the bedrooms. I am a kitchen porter and I do the cleaning. I like it. I take the bus to work. It is very important in life to make money.

I like football. I like watching soccer on TV. Messi is my favourite player. He plays with Barcelona and Argentina. He is the best player.

I am happy to do classes and to learn how to speak and read. This is very, very important to me. This year I did online classes because of coronavirus. I am happy to learn in online classes. This is very, very good. I continue to do reading all the time. I will pray one day to be able to read and write better. This is my dream.

*By Charles*

## **George's story**

In September of 2019, I started my journey into Adult Education. I started at level 3 and since then I have worked my way up. Through hard work and determination, I am now doing a QQI level 5 in Addiction Studies. My hopes and dreams are to work my way up to go to LIT to do a social care degree and to become a Social Care worker.

None of this would be possible if I hadn't met with two of the loveliest ladies from the Core Skills Department. They both welcomed me with open arms and a gentle smile. They have taught me invaluable life skills that I will carry with me through life's journey. They believed in me and my hopes and dreams for the future. They encouraged me every step of the way. It was so much more than showing up and doing classwork. They helped me to mature into the woman that I am today. They have empowered me through education. I will always be so grateful and thankful to them both for the love, support, guidance, and immense kindness that I was given.

Every student can learn just not on the same day or in the same way.

*By George*

## **About Eid celebrations**

On Wednesday I cleaned the house. I did a little shopping for fruit, chocolate and little sweets.

Thursday was the first day of Eid. The boys went to mosque with my husband. When they come home we had breakfast together. We all wore new clothes for Eid. We had a special breakfast of eggs, beans, cheese, butter, jam, olives and hummus. We had bread with oil and special savoury spices. We drank tea.

After breakfast I cleaned and had coffee. My friends came to visit my home. I called all my family to say 'Eid Mubarak'. I was on the phone for 2-3 hours. For dinner we ate food that I have made the day before Eid.

On Friday at 3:00 pm in the afternoon my friend and her family visited my home. We had tea and coffee and sweets and biscuits.

After that I cooked dinner for my family and we visited my friend's home in the evening. On Saturday afternoon we visited my friends in Ennistymon.

On Sunday afternoon I went to my friend's house and we cooked together. In the evening we went to visit my friend in Ennis for a big dinner with three families. I am very happy that we were all together for Eid. After that I came home and I sat down at home.

I'm very happy and very tired after Eid.

*By Mayssa*

### **Its Spine**

Sitting down on the green grass  
the sun shining down over the lands  
colours of misty rainbow hits your skin  
the waters shines brightly across the river  
as it comes rushing down; its spine  
thinking how can life be a struggle free one  
as you watch each wave passes by with force.

*By Lisa*

### **Distance and face masks**

In 2021 I feel like it is 2020 because it is the same situation. We are still in lockdown because of Covid 19. We know how to keep safe from this horrible disease but we have good things. We study English online and it's a good idea. Another good thing is all the world is starting vaccinations for Covid 19.

I hope this disease will definitely stop and we can live a normal life again.

I hope it will be soon.

*By Aícha*

## **Mayssa's Syrian Pancakes**

Ingredients:

2-3 cups flour

2 cups water

1 big spoon of sugar

Half a teaspoon Bicarbonate of soda

1 small cup of semolina

1 big spoon of milk powder

A pinch of salt

Method:

1. Get a big bowl
2. Put all the dry ingredients into a big bowl and mix.
3. Add the water and mix again with the electric mixer
4. Leave for 30 minutes
5. Come back and fry in a dry pan for 2-3 minutes. Turn once.
6. Serve and eat immediately

Or when pancakes are cooked you can fill with cream, cheese and nuts and fold it close and seal the edges.

Fry for 5 minutes in hot oil

Serve with syrup and eat

*By Mayssa*

## **Moving to Ireland**

I was born in a small village called Kouhaiz in Morocco. I never thought I would leave this village. I thought I would stay there, marry and make a life there, but life never stops to amaze you.

About 20 years ago my father and his cousin got an idea to leave Morocco and try a better life in Ireland. I stayed with the rest of my family in my village. Life was not easy without my father. In 2009



everything was going pretty well for him. Then he sent tickets for us to come to Ireland. After this I met a Swedish man in Ennis. We got married in 2012 and we now have two children together.

It has been a huge change for me to move from a village in Morocco not very far from the Sahara Desert to a little town on the west coast of Ireland, but I am happy here. I feel at home. I have friends and family here and I'm trying to learn the language.

*By Samira*

### **My family**

My family consists of six people, my mother, my father, my brothers and my sister.

I love them very much. My mother is the most important thing in my life. She is the source of my strength. She is the ideal mother and best friend. My father worked so hard for us. He taught us to help others and he loves me so much because I am the first daughter after my two brothers.

My brothers were with me in the most difficult circumstances. I miss them so much and hope to see them soon.

*By Duaa*

### **Tofik - the school cat**

Hi. My name's Tofik. I am a cat. I am eight years old, but in cat years I am forty-eight, just like my mummy. I was born on a large farm in Liscarroll, Co. Cork, so I have a Cork accent.

One day my mum came and took me. I was a little kitten then. This is how my life with a new family in Ennis began. When I was a kitten, my mummy would take my pictures a lot. I was not surprised. I am a beautiful model. I will explain more about this later.

When I was young, I travelled a lot with my mum in my travel box around Ireland. I do not like my travel box, but I love to see new

places in Ireland.

My mum sometimes calls me a thief. I do not understand why? I don't often take food off the table, but it is all mine anyway.

I remember when I was one year old, I had a stuffed animal called Moo Cow. I loved to pick him up in my mouth and take him around the house with me. Mummy thought I was very smart when I took three pieces of sausage off the table. I ate two and left one in front of Moo Cow's mouth, so it looked like he took them. They were very nice, and I was surprised that Moo Cow did not eat any. I watched him for quite a while.

When I was young, I wanted to help pay the rent with my mum, so I would go out and catch mice and bring them home, but now I am retired so I do not catch them anymore.

My mum's name is Beata. She is Polish so I have learned the Polish language. That was very easy for me. My mummy Beata is learning English. Her English is cat-astrophic!! I have to correct her all the time. English is my first language, so I want to help my mummy learn English, but she does not understand when I speak except when I say, 'Aah'.

Last year because of Covid 19 the schools were all closed. My mum started learning from home online. I made the decision to help her learn. When my mummy starts her lesson online, I sit with her, and we learn together. I like my class and my teacher Amanda. I think Amanda likes me. She took our class picture online. I was very happy to be in the picture. I help my mum learn a lot, when I am not too busy fighting with my stepbrother Gingero. I explain to him all the time, that everything in this home is mine, because I was the first to live here. He does not understand my Polish or my English language.

There are a few ways I like to help my mum learn. I like to push her pen on the table, so she can see where it is. I also like to lie down on her books when I think she needs a break from learning too hard. I think it is nicer when the books are warm for her, only she will not let me lie on the computer - I am not sure why? It is not easy for me when I do not have my mom's attention during class, so I push her

with my head but this only works for a few seconds.

Not long ago, my mummy wrote the answers for her English exam. She really wasn't careful, that is why I watched her all the time. I pushed mummy to stop her, when I knew she was doing it wrong. I hope she passed her exam, because I do not want to be unhappy with her!

For the finish of this year's education, my mummy had a good idea to give Amanda a card to say thank you. Mummy wrote my name for me, but I wanted to write it myself, so I was very happy to put my footprint on the card, using food colouring. I hope Amanda was happy with it.

At the beginning of this story, I said I would explain more about my modelling career, so here we go. My mummy is a photographer. She likes to take pictures of me. Most of the time I am happy to help, but last year she put me in a Buzz Lightyear costume. She bought it especially for me and sat me beside, a big LEGO Saturn V rocket from NASA. I really did not like it. Touring Ireland is enough for me. I do not want to be the first cat in Space!

In December 2020, my mum bought a new hat and scarf for Christmas for her son Norbert. Of course, they decided to put them on me and took my picture. Norbert put my picture on Instagram. I must have looked very beautiful, because one Polish artist painted her version of the picture. I was very proud when my mummy bought the painting for me.

For all budding artists out there, I am available for modelling. I work for tuna, cat treats and milk. I like to be paid by the hour!

I hope in the future to write more of my adventures for you, but for now I must go see what my mummy is writing for school tomorrow.

Have a mice day.

*By Tofik*

## **My long-term goals**

I would like to learn about animals to do a job and develop new skills. I would like to work and do veterinary assisting skills and to get qualifications to go and do more things like customer service and work with people. In the long term, I would like to work with a vet and work with a lot of animals and go on training on animal welfare and look after all the animals.

*By Carmel*

## **Novak Djokovic**

In one small country called Serbia a boy was born who is now the best tennis player in the world. His name is Novak Djokovic. His life wasn't easy. He lived in a middle class family. His parents worked very hard and invested everything in Novak's career.

Novak is also a very caring person. He helps many people in need with his foundation that builds schools. He gives every child the chance for education. He inspires me. I like that he is generous. It makes me happy that he wants to make a difference to the world.

When he was five years old journalists asked him what he wanted to be in his life. He told them he wanted to be the number one tennis player in the world. Today he is living his dream and is the best tennis player ever in the world. Dreams do come true if you really believe and work hard.

*By Míra*

## **My perfect run**

I like to run. I enjoy it so I aim to run twice every week. I usually plan to run in the morning time or sometimes in the evening, depending on the weather situation, but I always get it done no matter what. I drive back from my house to Doughmore beach for my run. This is honestly my favourite place to go for a run because it is so peaceful and energetic.

I get to the beach. I start doing a warm-up to prepare my body for the run. Then I start on the trail that leads to the beach before I start my run. When I get off the trail, I automatically can see and smell the sea. I'm on the sand and I'm on my way ready to run. While I'm running I'm looking and enjoying the view of the waves crashing and floating in and out of the sand. When I see the view of the full sea there is an immediate smile on my face. I love being on Doughmore beach.

My run roughly takes me around 25 minutes. But while I'm on my run I'm listening to the waves and I'm focused on grounding and re-centering myself again. To me, there are many reasons why I like to run, especially on the beach. It is good for my overall health and fitness. It helps to give me headspace and in my opinion, it is just healthy to be by the sea. After I am finished with my run, I do a cool-down. This consists of a small slow-paced walk and some stretching to free out my muscles. I also do some kicking hold exercises by the water to improve my balance and coordination. Then to finish up and relax, I sit down on the rocks to watch the waves come in and out. This is my perfect run.

*By Keehan*

## **Love in Covid**

The news broke – Covid 19 is here – it is rampant – everyone is asked to stay at home for the next two weeks. Do not go out unless it is absolutely necessary. Over 60's stay at home – younger people only venture out if necessary and do check on older people, i.e. parents, family, neighbours, friends and anyone vulnerable. The first few days were great – phone calls, 'How are you?' 'You OK for everything?' 'Do you need anything?' 'I am only a phone call away.'

I thought to myself – this is great! A two-week holiday at home and no work, shopping, visiting, classes, callers etc. Heaven! I will make the most of this, and I did. I pottered about, rummaged in drawers, presses, under the stairs, re-organised all sorts. I got rid of stuff that had not been used for years and never will be. Going through junk in the shed was funny - finding bits and pieces that were kept 'as

these were good parts' and the rest had been chucked out. What they were good for is anyone's guess. Well, you can guess where they are now? You have it, in the bin!

Before the two weeks were up – more news – we need to stay at home for another two weeks. Now the novelty was beginning to wear off. Genuine people were by now still in contact every day. Some of my friends had dropped in food parcels, everyday items that I would have need for. Many asked regularly, 'Do you need anything from the shop or chemist?'

One memorable show of kindness was from my special friend Stephen, who always checked that I was ok, ever before Covid came into our lives. Third week in he dropped in 4 bags of top soil, 2 rose sprays, garden gloves, watering can and 6 trays of bedding plants and said 'Here, this will keep you busy for a while'. He was so in tune, he knew I loved pottering in the garden and this lot would keep me busy for the whole summer.

Top of the list for kindness is my good friend Caroline, who never asked, 'Do you need anything from the shop?' It was, 'I am in the queue going into the supermarket. What will I bring to you on my way home?' This was a defining statement - I am here for you and I am bringing it to you!

Covid has brought out the best of love and kindness in genuine people.

*By Annette*

### **Trip to Galway**

On 1<sup>st</sup> of May we went up to Galway by bus to see Bishop Michael Duignan installed as the new Bishop of Galway. We had a good time on the 1st of May.

We left Lisdoonvarna at 1:00 pm and we arrived at 2:30 pm. There were over 50 priests on the altar. Mass started at 3:15 pm and ended at 5:15 pm.

After Mass, we went to the Menlo Hotel for dinner. The staff were very nice to us. The food was nice. We had a choice of beef or salmon.

We sang 'Happy Birthday' to a friend of ours.

The bus left to come home at 8:30 pm and we got home at 10:00 pm. We had a great day in Galway.

*By Martin*

### **Life is what you make it**

We are all on a journey through life until we reach the end of it. Life can be hard for some and is not always easy. We will have good and bad days but we have to make the most of it. Life is very short and opportunities will not always come our way so when they do we must be ready to take them. We all make mistakes and fall down from time to time but we have to pick ourselves up again and keep going.

We can't be too serious. It's nice to take some time out and have a laugh. We need to be nice to others, smile at people, it doesn't cost anything but could be the making of another person's day. Some people are so serious, they wouldn't give you the time of day!

We also have to believe in ourselves, if we don't then no one else will. Don't let anyone ever put you down.

It is always a good idea to do a good deed for others if you can. Drop in to see a person who lives alone, they might love a visit or someone to talk to and you might really brighten up their day. A person with a kind heart will always see the best in others and will also like to help others.

Selfish people are never happy no matter what they have or what others do for them. You see a lot of self-centred people today. Sometimes in restaurants you see people who will not even say a thank you to the waiter or staff who are looking after them.

The secret to happiness is to think less about yourself and give a little help to others you meet along the way. Enjoy the small things, have a laugh and thank God for the wonderful gift of life and everything and everyone He has surrounded us with.

*By Margaret*

## **Lockdown**

When lockdown started all the restaurants closed and the one where I am working closed too. No one knew when the restaurant would reopen. At the start I was happy that I had a few days off but as the days went by and we still didn't know when the restaurant would reopen. I'm the kind of person that likes to work but what could we do when we were in lockdown?

I don't know why and how but I picked up paints and paint brushes and decided to start painting. I really enjoyed doing that and started to paint some more. I started painting pictures and after that I started making lots of different gifts. Now I am making cards for different occasions.

Because of lockdown I found a new passion. After four months the restaurants reopened and I went back to work but to this day I am still painting.

*By Anetta*

## **Most inspiring teacher**

This piece of writing is for my great and most inspiring teacher, Laura R. She was an amazing and thoughtful person. I was always extremely encouraged by her. Her passion and dedication are beyond words. Her teaching style was very motivating and sincere as she was very caring, polite and friendly by nature. She earned a special place in my heart. She is gone but will never be forgotten. She will be forever in my heart.

*By Uzma*



## **My best friend-a laptop**

I recently bought a new computer. I really like it. I replaced an old, really slow work one. I can now use it for several things. I love attending LCETB English classes online. I also read books, listen to music and watch movies online. With the development of science and technology, I now realise we must update our computers to serve us.

Some time ago, I bought a Huawei mobile phone in China. I couldn't use Google play in Ireland. I couldn't understand why not. I checked it on my new computer and found out how to install the software. Now, I can use it as normal in Europe. My computer is definitely one of my best friends. It helps me solve many problems. I really like it.

*By Hong*

## **Trip to Galway**

On 1<sup>st</sup> May we went to see Bishop Michael Duignan installed as the new Bishop of Galway. We left Lisdoonvarna at 1:00 pm. We arrived in Galway at 2.30 pm. There were over 50 priests on the altar for the Mass

Mass started at 3.15 pm and ended at 5.15 pm. After Mass, we went to the Menlo Hotel for dinner. The staff were very nice and the food was very good.

After dinner we sang 'Happy Birthday' to a friend of ours. The bus left for home at 8.30 pm and Martin sang 'Spancilhill' on the way home.

We got home at 10.00 pm. The bus driver was very nice and friendly to everyone.

*By Marie*

## **Acorn's Dream**

An oak tree tall as Brian Boru  
Rests in me and rests in you.  
A million, 'mazing, random dreams  
Litter the floors and rush 'the streams.

What fall of rain and sunlight spark  
Will wake the genie buried dark,  
To sing a song as yet unheard,  
In verse, in rhyme, in written word.

Bravely sit and calmly wait  
At the forest's magic gate  
To 'wake in me and 'wake in you  
A new song, fresh and green and new.

Our souls let shine and insight clear  
To sing the joy of being here.  
To live this day in wind and rain.  
To live this life of joy and pain.

Autumn, Winter, Summer, Spring, ———  
'Midnight to noon and round again.  
Each day that's new and ever been  
Sing the oak and sing the green.

*By Maria*

## **My father and the cat**

One day, my father came from the market and brought some fresh fish with him for lunch. He usually liked to cook it alone without help from anybody. He put the kettle near the wall and while he was busy frying the fish, a big homeless cat came and stole the biggest one. He then jumped on the wall. When my dad saw it he started to scream and tried to catch it, but the cat was very smart. It

jumped up to the wall of the building and my dad was still trying to catch it. When I saw that, I started to laugh with my whole family - the thief cat and the flying father!

*By Sayed*

### **Technology course**

I was sceptical about starting this course, as I had been self-taught from Wang Word Processor through to Microsoft Word, I have bits and pieces of information about today's and tomorrow's technology - well I thought so. Required by work, September rolled around and I attended. I was surprised that it was a small class but that was a comfort to me. I have to say now, as it is ending, I shall miss it terribly and hope that we might have a year two course, as there is more to learn. I am now able to use technology and not be afraid of it. I have a healthy attitude to online security and I am aware of some of the fraud issues that are around, as I understand it more fully thanks to this course and the tutor.

I have this year renewed my car and house insurance online instead of using the standard line of 'I'd like to speak to a human being'. This was my fear talking, I have overcome that hurdle and I am able to use scanners in stores and have online store card rewards on my phone, which have produced savings. I am using my mobile for more than just calls and texts and it is a completely new world. I would highly recommend that anyone who has any fears or anxieties regarding technologies or just has not had the time to take notice to take this course to improve your outlook and help in your pocket.

*By Madeline*

## **My first caving trip in Ireland**

In Thailand, I usually visit temples and tourist attractions. I travelled to other provinces and countries for most of my spare time. I went with my friends and my family. We liked to walk and took lovely pictures of the exciting places and food. When we went on our trips, we had to prepare our outfits to match the places where we were going! So we had thousands and thousands of pictures to look back at!

About my exercise? I just walked at the park and went to the gym to avoid the sun during the day. That's all!

Then I got married. My husband is an expert cave diver who loves hiking and caving. He always asked me to walk wherever we went in Thailand. I started to enjoy walking more than before. He bought me a sports watch to count the steps and monitor my heart rate, which helped remind me to get moving each day. Day by day, my body was getting fitter until I moved to Ireland in December 2021.

We are living in Ennis, which is the capital of County Clare. The first thing that I needed to start with was to improve my English language. I registered for an English language class, the intermediate level, at the FET Ennis campus. As I was not allowed to drive a car yet, I usually walked to the college because my husband had to go to work. It took me almost two hours or eight kilometres, starting from the house to the college and back. My watch counted 12,000 steps each day. My legs were shaking when I arrived home on the first day. I had to go to the college three days a week. After one week, my legs were getting stronger.

Besides walking to town, he always brought me to walk in the parks on the weekends. I always enjoyed walking with him and never complained, so he thought I was strong enough to do something more advanced.

St. Patrick's Day arrived, which meant he had a few days off. After we went to see the parade in town, we returned to the house, and he asked me, 'How about we go caving tomorrow?' 'Let's bring Ammy caving tomorrow!' 'Me?', I said. 'Oh yes. Let's go, but please bring me to an easy one.' He said, 'Sure, trust me.' Then he

prepared the caving gear and let me try on his outfit. Everything was all set, including food and drinks. 'Let's go to sleep and be ready for tomorrow', he said. I couldn't sleep well that night because I was excited about it. What was going to happen tomorrow? Would I make it tomorrow?

On the 18<sup>th</sup> of March 2022 - I remember this day well as it was my first time caving ever. We had a full breakfast in the morning. My husband invited two friends I knew well, as they also liked caving. There were three experienced cavemen and one inexperienced cave lady, that's me!

We arrived at Pollnagollum cave at 10:00 am. It was windy and sunny, but that didn't matter for caving. When the two friends came, we started to get changed and ready to go in. I wore four layers of clothes. My husband dressed me up like a child, helmet with a light, gloves, and boots. All right, it was time. Let's go!

I enjoyed going in with them. But wait! Before we got into the cave, we had to abseil down from a cliff. It was about four metres high. Three men were helping me with the ropes, taught me how to balance myself, and I made it. Yeah!

I imagined that we could easily walk into the cave entrance, but it was not! It was a body-sized hole where I had to put my feet first to get into the cave. Then I got to stand inside. The ground was full of small rocks. We followed the flow of the water down the tunnel. Some parts came above our knees. Yes, it was cold. We walked in between two walls, which were a bit wider than body sized. Sometimes the tunnel was wide enough to walk sideways. I enjoyed looking at the walls. The formations were so unique. I only saw it in pictures or documentaries.

A few exciting parts, a big rock got in the way, and we had to either crawl into the water on the floor or climb over it. My husband climbed up there, and I had no idea how he could do that? One friend stood facing me and put his hands together to let me step on him to get up, while another friend was pushing me from the back, and my husband was pulling me up. I got over the rock safely. Oh dear, that's teamwork.

Exploring stalagmites and stalactites in the cave felt like walking into an art gallery. I could spend a day looking at all the details. There were three small waterfalls inside. We stopped at the last waterfall, sat on a big rock right in front of it and had a cup of hot jasmine tea.

On the way back, my husband checked on me again. 'How are you doing?' I said I was good. I was walking at their speed and never complained. 'So, he said, 'OK, let's go out another way. It will be more beautiful.' 'Sure, let's go!', I said. He stopped halfway and looked up the wall, a ledge of 3.5 metres up. Then, he got up there in the blink of an eye.

'Hey, how did you get up there?' I said. 'Ammy, it's your turn. Get up here', he said. I was looking up and down and said, 'How?' I couldn't see any steps to get up there. Then, one friend bowed down so that I could step up on his back while my husband pulled me up. Oh, my Buddha!

It was amazing up there. The walls looked like it made from marble. Wow! I hopped from one big rock to another and I had to climb over a two metres high rock. My husband and friends were not helping me this time, but they were cheering me on instead. 'Ammy, you can do it! Come on! Step one foot on the right and push yourself up.', he said.

I couldn't make it. Then they said, 'You can do it. Let's go outside.' My energy was getting low. I was hugging that rock for a while and tried one more time. I finally got up there! 'Woo hoo!' 'You made it Ammy!' 'Well done!' Then, we were walking for a little while until we arrived at the cave exit, low and wide so we had to crawl out. I was the last one out as my husband wanted to take pictures of me while I was crawling out. You can see how dirty I am and hardly smiling in the pictures. After that, we had a little break in the jungle.

Do you think we finished there? Not yet! Remember, we started by abseiling down so we had to climb up the cliff with the ropes. I felt exhausted halfway, but I had to fight to get up there one last time. Yeah, yeah finally, I made it! 'I am so proud of you', my husband said. 'Will you come again?' 'Umm, sure! I definitely will.'

Why did I decide to experience caving? Because I truly trusted my husband. He is a cave rescuer, so he could save me if needed. I was sure that he would not bring me to a dangerous place. I asked him how did you know that I could do this? He said I could see and feel that you could do it, and you did it.

What did I get from the caving experience? Firstly, I conquered myself to try new things that I had never done. Even though I couldn't sleep the night before. I tried not to think negatively. Secondly, I liked the teamwork environment. Caving is challenging. You have to listen to your coach about what to do and the 'how-to' moves. I am sure that everyone can do it too. Get your heart and body ready, necessary gear and go together with a fantastic team. Then you will get to explore the incredible beauty of nature and improve your potential to the next level.

Never be afraid to try something new. Remember, others can do it so I can do it too.

*By Ammy*

## **My first impressions of Ireland**

### **1. People**

The openness and friendliness of the Irish people is very impressive. It's not fake openness to people from another country and I find that it is captivating. This is an indicator of happy and loving people.

### **2. Weather**

In Ireland, rainy and windy weather are quite common. I do not like rain, I am more pleased with sunny days, which bring me joy. It is amazing how one day in the morning it can be winter and you are in a warm jacket, and in the afternoon it is already summer and you are already walking in a t-shirt.

### 3. Nature

Ireland has the most amazing nature that I have ever seen. Every corner here is picturesque. The Cliffs of Moher and the shores of the ocean are amazing places where you can connect with nature.

P.S. Thank you very much to Ireland and its people for your warm welcome to the people from Ukraine.

*By Yelyzaveta*

### **Ahmed's story**

My name is Ahmed. I'm from Sudan. I'm 25 years old and single. I came to Ireland in September 2020. I live with my family here. I love Ireland because the people are good and friendly.

What makes me happy? My family makes me happy. All my teachers make me happy and many other things make me happy.

I like doing sport. My favourite sports are football and running. I want to be a hairdresser. I would love it.

*By Ahmed*

### **Kitty's story**

My name is Kitty. I'm from Brazil. I've been living in Ireland for almost one year. I came to Ireland with my husband, who is Brazilian too and also has Italian citizenship. We decided to move here and live new experiences. One of the reasons for coming here was the English language. My husband speaks English fluently and it's very important for me to learn it too.

As well as that, the weather here is good! Not too hot and not too cold. Nature and the surrounding countryside inspire us. We are living in Shannon and we love it here. We lived on an island in the south of Brazil, called Florianópolis. There are 42 beaches there and



stunning, natural beauty everywhere. So, it was important for us to keep close to nature.

I'm studying English with support from LCETB. I want to improve my English to go back to work soon.

*By Kitty*

### **Olena's story**

My name is Olena. I have a husband Igor and three children, a four-year old son and baby twins.

My husband and I had our own travel agency in Ukraine.

We are at war in our country now. That's why we moved to Ireland.

We live in Ennis. There are very good and kind people here. They helped us a lot. I go to English classes. My oldest son goes to school.

*By Olena*

### **My perfect job**

My name is Anna and I am from Ukraine. There is a war in my country and I had to flee the country. Before the war, I had a perfect job. I worked as a business manager in the Ukrainian community. The club where I worked united businessmen in different countries: Ukraine (Kiev, Lviv, Odessa, Kharkiv, Dnipro) USA (New York, Miami), OAE (Dubai). The main goal of my work was to unite entrepreneurs and help them in solving their business issues. For example, if you produced a product in Ukraine and wanted to sell it in Dubai, my task was to introduce you to a person who was already doing it in Dubai or knew how to do it. I would make a request to the person in Dubai and arrange the first meeting with them. At this meeting, my task was to agree on a partnership with them. The club had more than 1,500 members worldwide.

I loved this job very much. It was very interesting. I hope I can find such a job here in Ireland when I speak English well.

*By Anna*

## **My son, Santa Claus**

Joel was only seven when he overheard his older brothers talking about the tooth fairy. He was shocked to discover it was actually mummy and daddy leaving the coins under his pillow. That explained why a couple of times the tooth fairy had been late!

Joel came running into the kitchen, glued his eyes to mine and asked solemnly, 'Mum, is the tooth fairy real or are you the one giving me the money?' I really didn't want to tell him the truth, but he saw it in my eyes and so magic left our house that day. The tooth fairy stopped flying, the elf on the shelf became lifeless and Santa lost his presents. Joel felt so furious and betrayed that he cut the legs of his beloved elf, Cookie, in the hope he would be proved wrong. Cookie didn't move.

It broke my heart to see my youngest child so devastated, Christmas would be spoiled for him this year. I stitched Cookie back together, praying that Joel would soon get over the disappointment. Within a few days, Joel's smile was back. He had realized he could keep the magic going for others. He started moving his friends' elves when they weren't looking, and took pleasure in seeing their surprise. He felt proud to be 'in the know', winking secretively at bemused parents.

And yet, there was still the matter of Santa Claus. Joel would receive presents, but there would be no milk and cookies left by the fireplace. I needn't have worried, though – Joel decided to play Santa himself. He used his pocket money to buy us all little presents and I showed him how to wrap them on Christmas Eve.

Christmas Day Joel couldn't wait for everyone to get up. More than opening his presents, he was dying to give us the gifts he had carefully chosen and to see the look on our face. In the end, it turned out to be the most magical Christmas of all.

*By Luisa*

## **My story**

I am Volodymyr, I'm 17 years old. I hope in the future to find an activity that I will like. So far, I don't know what it could be. I am also afraid to live a boring life in which nothing interesting will happen. I would like to have a job that will be both my favourite thing and also bring money. However, I like physical work more as I don't like to strain my brain too much.

*By Volodymyr*

## **My Ukraine**

Everyone has a homeland. It is where they were born and raised.

My homeland is Ukraine. This is my home country, and I am happy to have been born in Ukraine. She is wonderful, beautiful and powerful. My favourite piece of Earth where I want to go back to again. I really like the picturesque Ukrainian nature, boundless blue sky, bright sun, thick grass, flowers and slender trees. Wherever I was, everything reminded me of her. I am Ukrainian and I am proud of that!

*By Alina*

## **My wake-up call**

My name is Hui. I have another English name Ada. I'm from Shanghai in China. I have been in Ireland for 18 years. A few months ago, I was diagnosed with high blood pressure. The doctor gave me medicine to help lower it. I felt nervous. I looked up information about high blood pressure and found that I was overweight. I decided I had to change my eating habits. I gave up my favourite sweets and sugary foods. I started exercising more, walking, jogging, cycling.

Now, a few months later, I feel great! I've lost weight. My blood pressure has come down. Most importantly, I realise how important it is to have a healthy lifestyle. We can be our own doctor.

*By Hui*

## **New toys**

I've always liked words. I liked to play with them. In Portuguese I was good but now I have a new toy, actually, I have many toys and I don't know how to play with them. Today I'm feeling like a child.

I started to play again. I'm learning another language and every day I learn new words but I still can't play with them all. I hope that soon I can play with my new words the way children play with their toys. As the saying goes 'Believe that this will happen'.

*By Vanía*

## **Night Sky**

A plane flew under the moon tonight  
I'm telling you it did, I saw it, myself  
The sky was so clear, not a cloud to be seen  
And as I looked up at the beautiful stars  
then I saw it as plain as day  
the flashing lights and it seemed to be in a great hurry, on its way  
I know my eyes played a trick on me  
but it looked so real  
that I couldn't sleep  
thinking and dreaming that some day  
it will be for real!  
A place up there will be found  
good enough to till the ground  
of course I won't still be around  
but someone will see in the far off sky  
what I saw  
this beautiful night

*By Tom*

### **Michael's story**

I am going on holidays to Meath in the summer to my sister. I get to spend time with my niece and nephew. She takes me shopping for new clothes and we have lunch out. We enjoy going bowling and to the cinema. I am looking forward to going.

*By Michael*

### **Tabbouleh**

Ingredients:

- 1 cup of chopped parsley
- 1 chopped onion
- 1 teaspoon chopped mint
- 3 chopped tomatoes
- 1/2 cup lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1/4 cup bulgur
- 1 tablespoon salt
- 1 tablespoon chili sauce

Method:

1. Mix bulgur, chili sauce, mint, lemon juice, olive oil and salt.
2. Then add all the other ingredients together.

*By Aroba*

### **Susie's story**

My name is Susie. I live in Lisdoonvarna with my sisters. I have lots of new neighbours from Ukraine. They are very friendly and say hello to us every day. The town is very busy.

*By Susan*

## **Labasheeda**

The farmers would milk the cows by hand, in the morning and evening and, bring the milk in cans to the creamery with the donkey and cart long ago. They fished from 1<sup>st</sup> May to 30<sup>th</sup> July. They went to the local shop in the village for the messages.

They would go to Mass on a Sunday and after Mass the people would talk about the weekly news of the parish. They sometimes went to the local football matches and in the evening, they would go dancing in the local hall to hear the band playing on a Sunday night.

The farmers would walk the cattle to the local fairs that would take place in the village. People would take part in local sports in the village on a Sunday afternoon.

We are living in different times now with cars and tractors. Gone are the days of the horse cart. The simple way of life is gone.

*By Tony*

## **Covid 19 notes April to June 2021**

21<sup>st</sup> April

I was phoned about the Covid 19 jab by the surgery. I got the jab and I had to wait for 15 minutes afterwards. When I was OK, I was allowed to go. I got my first jab and I will get my second one in a months' time. I got my card about the jab (Pfizer Biotech Covid 19 vaccine). The first jab was on the 19<sup>th</sup> April 2021 and I get the second one on the 21<sup>st</sup> May 2021. They stamp the card and sign it to let you know you have the vaccine. People can now travel at home and away for a holiday.

10<sup>th</sup> May 2021

The country will open after Covid 19. The shops, hairdressers and barbers will be opened to the public. I hope people with hospital appointments will get their appointments now. It was a long time

for older people to be at home since Christmas. They can go out now.

20<sup>th</sup> May 2021

Health system paralysed for days by cyber-criminal gang

Appointments cancelled for thousands of patients. Tens of thousands of patients, many ill with cancer and heart disease will have their life saving treatments disrupted for days because the health system has been crippled by the cyber-attack. It is expected to be well into next week before the HSE is able to restore services after the cyber crime break-in. The HSE confirmed that it had a significant Bitcoin ransom demanded by criminals but insisted it will not pay it. Around 17,000 hospital patient appointments a day will be affected. Taoiseach Micheál Martin vowed that no ransom will be paid. It comes as specialist Gardaí have braced themselves for further cyber-attacks. This type of crime is the number one international threat at this time and cyber-crime will cost up to €5 trillion globally before the end of this year a senior source said.

10<sup>th</sup> June 2021

The HSE Green Certs

The green certs for travel will be issued this year for EU countries. You have to apply and fill out a form for the green cert at the HSE or the Department of Transport. People who are fully vaccinated will be able to apply for the green cert.

*By Tony*

### **Marie's story**

I am delighted that Covid is over. We were not able to go anywhere for almost two years, apart from going for walks. We had to wear masks and they were very uncomfortable.

*By Marie*

### **Martin's story**

I live in Lisdoonvarna and it is a nice town. My girlfriend is from Lisdoonvarna. Marie is her name and she is very good to me. Many people have moved here from Ukraine. We meet them when we are out walking. They seem very friendly.

*By Martin*

### **My sister Claire**

My sister Claire is going to have a baby in June. She does not know if it will be a boy or girl, so it will be a surprise. Claire lives in Dublin and I am going to help her, as she will need loads of rest. There will be a celebration when the baby is born, so we will have a party.

*By Mary*

### **John's story**

My friends and I went to Galway at the weekend. There was a ceremony for the new Bishop of Galway, Bishop Michael Duignan. The ceremony was in Galway Cathedral. The Mass was nice, but very long! Afterwards, we went for a meal.

*By John*

### **Seamus's story**

I like to work in my polytunnel where I grow tomatoes. There are lots of jobs I have to do so that the tomatoes will grow big and juicy. I prepare the soil by rotavating it. Then I put down fertiliser and plant the tomatoes. When they are ripe, I will sell them at the Farmers' Market in Ennistymon.

*By Seamus*

### **Patrick's story**

My name is Patrick. I have a window cleaning business for the past seven years. I have ten customers, all in Ennis. I have a business card and hope to get more customers.

*By Patrick*



### **William's story**

I like to go to woodwork classes. I also enjoy gardening. I go to a fitness class in the Falls Hotel. I like to meet people for lunch and a coffee in Danny Mac's in Lahinch.

*By William*

### **Michael's story**

My name is Michael. I like swimming. I am involved with the Special Olympics. I won several medals over the years. My last competition was in UL in 2019. I have not been able to compete for the last two years because of restrictions. I hope that I will go back competing again soon. In the meantime, I like to swim once a week in the Woodstock Hotel.

*By Michael*

### **Hobbies**

One of my hobbies is playing games and watching DVDs on the computer. I like to watch wrestling. My favourite TV programmes are *Mr. Bean* and *Fair City*. I am also interested in cooking and gardening.

*By Stefan*

### **Land of rain and warm hospitality**

Travelling makes our life better and happier. There are a lot of countries I wish to visit. One of them is a wonderful island situated in Western Europe: Republic of Ireland. This country has many natural features. It is famous for its landscapes: green fields, picturesque valleys, breath-taking cliffs, amazing lakes and beautiful rivers. The climate of Ireland is mild and humid. It is influenced by the Atlantic Ocean. As a result, the weather is changeable. The tourists are attracted to Ireland with its huge castles and ancient historical

heritage. The friendly attitude of Irish people makes it a great choice.

*By Kate*

## **A toolmaker**

To become a toolmaker, you must learn manufacturing techniques such as drafting, lathe turning and milling, before processing and manufacturing a pair of moulds. Moulds are used to manufacture various computer accessories.

Many years ago, I was also a toolmaker. I had to make each piece by hand, mill a part, complete all accessories and assemble them together. It took about half a year to complete. It was very hard work and I often did overtime. But all that changed, machining became automated, all parts were manufactured by the machining centre and we could complete a mould in two weeks.

I haven't worked as a toolmaker for many years, but I like DIY so I often make some tools myself to fix things like the water pump.

*By Hong*

## **Playing with words**

Under the theme of parents are natural teachers, our group experimented with words and sound patterns. We sang traditional nursery rhythms, and then decided to create our own.

We also played with the sound of our own names - creating descriptive names for ourselves. The group name of each mother is written under the child's rhyme. I hope you enjoy our nonsensical verses as much as we enjoyed creating them!

**Bo** - Age 4 months

Hey Bo,  
don't go so slow,  
row with the flow and let yourself go.

*By Enthusiastic Emma*

**Neveah** - Age 1 ½

Heya Neveah  
she's a baa baa slayia,  
and a fun toy playia.

*By Self-reliant Skyla*

**Cameron** - Age 12 months

Little lamb Cam,  
loves his chicken and ham,  
but not as much, as he loves his Mam.

*By Shiny Shawna*

**Rosa Jane** - Age 3 years

My name is Rosa Jane  
I like books and playing games  
I love to hide in the library nook  
Before I head home down the lane.

*By Natural Naomi*

**MB** - 8 months

MB lives in Mullagh  
Where he likes to see the bullocks  
He heads out to the fields each day  
To help Daddy with the hay.

*By Natural Naomi*

**The person who I admire**

I admire my uncle very much. He is 71 years old, and he is a great contemporary botanical artist. People know his full name well as

Phansakdi Chakkaphak because he signs his name on every painting. He has worked as a freelance botanical artist since 1999. His paintings have been exhibited in Bangkok, San Francisco, and New York.

One day, Dr Shirley Sherwood came to Thailand and saw his work in the hotel hair salon. She is the founder of The Shirley Sherwood Gallery of Botanical Art at Kew Gardens in London. My uncle used to dream about having his work exhibited there and his dream came true! She asked the owner of the hair salon to set up a meeting with my uncle. After they met, she bought some of his paintings and my uncle donated some to her. Now, 44 of his paintings are included in the Shirley Sherwood collection. My family and I are very proud of his talent and success.

*By Phaphassorn*

### **Dear coeliac friends**

Dear coeliac friends,

Today I want to tell you an anecdote that happened to a friend of a friend who is a coeliac. The story happened recently at a popular restaurant in Ennis.

My friend told me that this girl, let's say Mary, wanted to go out for lunch. Previously, she had been struggling to find somewhere to eat considering her condition. So that day, she arrived at the restaurant and sat excitedly at the table hoping to finally find gluten-free food suitable for her. She took a look at the menu and chose a delicious dish next to which a very serious asterisk said: 'suitable for coeliacs.'

She decided to ask the charming waitress a series of questions to be sure that, despite the reassuring presence of the asterisk, she would not get very sick from eating the food.

Mary probed the situation with a simple opening question.

'Is your food really suitable for coeliacs?'

The answer was immediate.

‘Are you very sensitive or slightly sensitive to gluten?’

At that moment, poor Mary already knew that her delicious food was receding over the horizon away from the asterisk randomly placed by some irresponsible hand.

Despite everything, she decided to ask once more.

‘In the preparation of your food, do you take cross-contamination into account?’

The answer, full of good intentions but unsatisfactory for Mary, came like a cold wind.

‘We do what we can, but I’m afraid not.’

Because of the expression on the waitress’ face, Mary wasn’t sure if the lady knew what exactly they were talking about.

Mary thanked the waitress for her kindness, got up from the table and went to her house to eat. As soon as she arrived, she sadly crossed out the last restaurant on her list of possible restaurants suitable for people who, like her, are coeliac.

The very next day, my friend told me that Mary told her that in Ireland there are more than 40,000 people diagnosed with this condition (not disease). And she wondered why there is still so much lack of information about it.

A coeliac cannot be very or a little sensitive to gluten. It’s like pregnancy. You can’t be a little or a lot pregnant. It is a condition. Cross-contamination means that gluten-free foods become contaminated with gluten during their preparation. This can only be avoided having a secondary kitchen to prepare the gluten-free food. When a coeliac person consumes the contaminated food poorly protected from the gluten, their effects are often not immediately visible, but instead accumulate inside the body in the

form of an autoimmune response. Some coeliacs will go to hospital after accidentally eating gluten; some will be swollen like balloons and brain-fogged; others will have headaches and hives. If the consumption of gluten is maintained over time due to small intakes masked by erroneous menus from poorly informed restaurants or other reasons, the coeliac can develop diabetes, osteoporosis or cancer.

Dear coeliac friends, don't be convinced by the asterisks, no matter how serious they may seem. Always ask the security questions that Mary asked in the restaurant and be sure.

The truth is that, to this day, Mary has not yet been able to find a single restaurant in the town of Ennis where she can safely eat food suitable for well-informed coeliacs.

Do you know any? Are you really sure? Mary would like to know.

*By Arantxa*

### **My trip to Brazzaville**

I was in my first year in lower secondary college in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo. That was the year I crossed the Congo River for a guided tour of Brazzaville, Republic of Congo. I was with some of my former classmates and our dean of studies. We met our guide at Brazzaville inland port and he took us to places of his choice.

He explained to us all we needed to know about the whole city. He revealed that Kinshasa and Brazzaville are the two nearest capital cities in the whole world. Although I am from Kinshasa, I never knew that. He also told us about the two African capital cities that share the same name: Sierra Leone's Freetown and Gabon's Libreville, which means 'free town' in French.

*By François*

## **A special year**

Covid 19 has gripped the world for two years, causing fear and frustration. Unfortunately, I also contracted the virus. Last month, I went to the Emergency Department at University Hospital Limerick where many of the patients were elderly people who were quite sick. The windows and doors were closed. The air could not flow. I stayed there for five hours. Although I was wearing a mask, when I returned home I had a sore throat, so I did a test and I found I was infected with the virus. Other symptoms included sneezing and a runny nose. Even though I've had three Covid vaccines, I still felt scared. I kept drinking plenty of water and after ten days, the symptoms subsided. After another four days, I got tested again and it came back negative.

Although this experience didn't have a serious result, it made me realise that health is so important. From now on, I'm going to start to pay attention to exercise, such as walking often, and eating healthy food. Take each day of your life very seriously.

*By Hui*

## **Mayssa's story**

I love cooking and making desserts. I walk one hour every day. My kids like soccer. Every Friday I go to Shannon for shopping. My favourite shops are Dunnes and Penneys. I love to learn to read and write. Last Saturday I went shopping. Last Sunday I had a small party for my kids. Last week I went to the doctor. Today I went to my friend's house. Today my husband is working in the garden. Today, I'm going to a school meeting for my kids.

*By Mayssa*

## **A day at the zoo**

My daughter often asked me to go to the zoo, but it was difficult for us to find time for this: sometimes it seemed to us that the weather was not good enough; sometimes there were restrictions due to the Covid 19 pandemic; sometimes other things seemed more urgent.

It was Sunday when we went to the zoo. At last, we had the opportunity to see an elephant, a tiger, a bear and monkeys. They all lived in their enclosures, surrounded by a strong metal fence, which upset us a lot. Upon leaving the zoo there was a playground where my daughter was happy to run with other children.

After leaving the zoo, my daughter said sadly that it would be much better for animals to have the same opportunity to play as her and the other children.

*By Oksana*

## **A big spoon**

It happened more than thirty years ago. I was a student of Kyiv school and was going to visit my grandma during the summer holidays. It's worth mentioning that she lived near the beautiful salt lake Issyk-Kul situated among the high mountains, Tian-Shan in Kyrgyzstan Republic. I was fond of kayaking and I planned to have some training on this lake with my friends from the local kayaking club.

I booked an air ticket to Almaty Airport and agreed with my uncle on a time to meet at the arrivals hall. Only then, I remembered that I hadn't thought about transporting my favourite kayak paddle, which was very light so I decided to take it as hand luggage on the plane. Luckily, the plane I flew in (an Il-96) had two decks. On the lower deck, there was a place only for hand luggage. I put my paddle there and during the flight, I went to check it several times.



When I arrived at Almaty and met my uncle, the question he asked me first was if it was my big spoon for having dinner? From then on, my paddle was named Spoon. I had some wonderful kayak trips that year and my spoon served me very well!

*By Oksana*

### **Why we enjoy sewing in Ennis and Kilrush**

I find it relaxing and I enjoy learning new skills and making something that's useful.

*By Peggy*

It's something new to do and I'm upgrading my craft skills. I enjoy meeting the class every week, swapping new ideas and making things.

*By Mary*

It's my dream world, time to create.

*By Johanna*

It focuses my mind and allows me to concentrate on my work without other distractions.

*By Eileen*

I love choosing colours and creating something nice.

*By Mary*

It's relaxing and helps my concentration.

*By Mary*

It's relaxing, it's enjoyable and no pressure.

*By Catherine*

It gives me space as my happy place, and beautiful things come together.

*By Maria*

It's my escape.

*By Níamh*

It's my relaxing time.

*By Shelía*

The outcome is very rewarding.

*By Majella*

I love seeing how things are put together and the end product gives me satisfaction.

*By Maureen*

I've learnt so much about sewing and how to use my sewing machine. Nicola is our tutor and is very helpful. I am enjoying it. I look forward to my sewing class every week and meeting up with new friends.

*By Mary*

It's relaxing and I enjoy having the chat with other learners.

*By Marissa*

We learn so much about fabrics and the history of materials.

*By Anne*

I find it relaxing and I look forward to seeing the finished product.

*By Brigid*

I like to make things, but also, after Covid, I like to get out to meet people.

*By Kirsten*

It helps me relax and I can see an end product.

*By Margaret*

I find the rhythm soothing.

*By Luisa*

I have learnt a new skill and it has opened up a new set of friends for me. The tutor is the best.

*By Patrícia*

It's a wonderful way to pass the time, especially on a rainy Irish day.

*By Elizabeth*

It's kind of magic.

*By Ekaterina*

I like to make dresses for my daughter.

*By Sarbjee*

### **Rama's story**

Last week, I went shopping for a sofa. Yesterday I was cooking. Last month, I went on a trip to Mayo. Today, I am going to school. I am cleaning. I am watching TV.

*By Rama*

### **Sewing class**

Coming to sewing class for me is a happy day. I enjoy meeting my new friends, it makes my head fresh, stops me thinking and gives me confidence to be able to do something for myself.

*By Siham*

### **Through my window**

Through my window I can see the white clouds in the sky, the red and orange colours of the sun setting behind the houses, the kids and a small white dog playing ball on the green lawn and my little tree with pink flowers. I see my grey car and my daughter's blue car parked out front of my window.

Through my window, I can hear the noise of cars on the road in the distance and the singing of birds. The laughter and happy screams of the children and the dog barking. It's not very quiet, but nothing disturbing.

When I go outside, I feel the cold breeze on my face. Gratitude for another day of victories. I have a beautiful family, my reason for happiness. My wish for today is one, may God take care of me, you and all of us.

*By Sonia*

### **Abir's story**

I went to the appointment at the right time. I am in class now studying. I cooked my favourite food last week. I sat with friends for a long time and had fun with the kids. I feel cold now.

*By Abir*

### **Story about my Fatima**

My friend's name is Fatima. She is married. She has six children, three boys and three girls.

We live in the same village. We go for a walk around the village together everyday. We meet every weekend and drink 'bobori' tea and eat sweets together at the same time.

We go out to Limerick or Ennis and do our shopping together.

*By Mayssa*

### **Paulina's story**

Hello my name is Paulina and I'm 30 years old. I'm from Poland. I came to Ireland 8 years ago. I like spending time with my family. I have a son who is 6 years old. His name is Nathan. My hobbies are reading books and cooking. I like animals especially dogs. What I miss in Ireland is my family and good weather.

*By Paulina*

### **A day in my kitchen**

The kitchen is the place I stay in the most. As everyone already knows, I make Brazilian snacks to sell.

When I wake up at 7:30 am, I prepare breakfast for my husband, my son and myself and I feed my cat. After everyone leaves, I start my work.

On Monday, I take an English class with my teacher, Ana. Afterwards, I start making the filling for snacks. Then I clean and make my kitchen smell lovely. I love my kitchen!

*By Flávia*

### **A day with my daughters**

My daughters' names are Michelle and Elizabeth. They are very active at the weekend. They wake up at 7 o'clock when they don't go to school. They ask me for everything to eat until they manage to wake me up! Oh dear! They are continuously playing and, after they have their breakfast, they want to get dressed.

Elizabeth always wants to wear a dress and Michelle something a bit warm. They have very different personalities.

Some weekends, I teach them some words or letters in Spanish. After, when they finish, they go to ride their bike or scooter, if the weather is good.

They always want to do something, whether it is playing, eating, dancing or learning. They never stop!

I need to have a free day just for myself!

*By Elena*

### **A day with my children**

I have three children, one daughter and two sons. My daughter is 22 years old and she's working. She wakes up early every morning. She doesn't like to have breakfast. She like to sleep in her free time.

My middle son's name is Nolawi. He is 20 and lives in Cork because he is a 2<sup>nd</sup> year student in UCC.

My youngest son's name is Tinbite. He is 16 years old. He is a 5<sup>th</sup> year student in the Ennis Community College. He likes sports and he plays basketball.

*By Genet*

### **A day at home**

I usually wake up at 9:00 am. Then, I make my bed and have some breakfast. I usually eat bread with eggs and coffee and some fruit. After that, I feed my two cats, Aslan and Pandora. They are like babies to me. I love them so much! I play with them for a few

moments. Then, I make lunch and dinner for my husband and myself.

My husband arrives from work at 5:30 pm. When he arrives, I'm not at home because I go to work at 3:30 pm and I am back home at midnight. After cooking, I wash all the stuff and organise everything.

When I am not lazy, I do some exercise. Afterwards, I eat something before I go to work. I have a shower and go to work. I work at the factory in Shannon. I like my work. I work from Monday to Friday and have the weekend to rest.

*By Thamyres*

### **A day at work**

I have worked in a factory for four months. I go with my friend, Lilian, every day. She drives the car with two other friends and me.

Every day we go at 3:50 pm and, on Friday, we go at 3:20 pm. We start work at 4:30 pm and finish at 12:00 am. I make alarms. I work with disks and thermostats and weld them to the boards.

It's a very good job but it's very tiring.

*By Camila*

### **The crimson blouse**

I just had to pop out, to have a minute on my own. The church was full, in the Irish lingo 'a good turnout.' A real source of pride to have a large funeral. Me – I believe funerals should be by invitation only, but, we are where we are!

It was 1992. Many would believe that wearing such a colour to a funeral, crimson no less, to be disrespectful. Even my sister attempted to dissuade me with the offer of her designer blouse, 'More fitting for the occasion', she suggested. She was quite offended when I respectfully declined.

You picked this for me, in Penney's, because it was the same colour as your favourite dress. I was chuffed you wanted us to match. We are matching now, you in your crimson dress and me, in my blouse, although others can't see it.

We are at the graveside. Though not far from the church, it took what seemed a long time to get here. Thankfully, the others have dispersed.

I wish I could stay with you Katie. Unlike Rhett Butler I'm not worried about you, as you were never afraid of the dark as his Bonny Blue was. You, jumping out and shouting 'Boo!' Terrorizing your brothers, begging for more ghost stories as you kept charge of the torch around the mock bonfire.

As hard as it is to leave you here, I know that you know we have to, these boys need a lot of looking after yet. You are not truly down there anyway but wearing your crimson dress in my heart, under my crimson blouse, forever.

*By M*

### **A day in Dromore Woods**

It's a grey day, but the birds are singing in the forest.

I am alone but complete. I find myself in the small daisies that cover the immense green with white and yellow, but also in the lilac, blue and pink of flowers that I do not recognize.

I see two yellow butterflies flying intertwined among the colours of the forest and I feel that today I am complete.

Tomorrow, tomorrow will be another day.

*By Arlete*

### **A day in Lisbon**

I go to Lisbon every year. It's normal to go and see my family. We usually take a walk by the river to the Terreiro do Passo.



We go to the zoo. My daughter loves animals. I don't like the cable car but, in the afternoon, we go to the Oceanário and see the different fish. It is very big.

We visit my cousins, who take us to a beautiful place in Lisbon, called Palácio Baldaya. That is how we finish the day.

*By Mafalda*

### **A day in Ireland**

My name is Tanya. I am from Ukraine. I arrived in Ireland with my sons on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2022.

We were happy that we have the possibility to be alive and we can live.

Thanks a lot to the Irish people for their kindness and help. This emerald island has become our home. We feel at home. Thank you!

*By Tanya*

### **The Busker**

He busked on the street  
with the voice of a few  
and sang songs like he had lived them through  
this young man that life had made old  
he had what it takes but didn't take what he had  
this story for many so true  
If only he changed what is to what if  
I'm sure he would be some one every one knew  
I wonder what is the link on the chain that eluded him too  
But he sang his songs  
With dreams in his eyes  
And a few coins of fame  
At the toe of his shoe

*By Tom*

## **The Canvass**

Morning has come again  
as mornings do  
but this is so quiet  
with little to do  
the excitement of the canvass  
like the team is dispersed  
like the fog that lifts in the morning  
when the sunshine comes through  
but there is no sunshine  
just a clear view  
as the wait begins to see who came through

so another day of fleeting excitement  
can be rescued by reheating what was done  
and what should have been done  
but the time is peeping like  
the hills in the near  
when the lives that are full  
get fuller with lots to do  
and the canvass is put away  
with the next pair of shoes  
but time is so precious  
it can not be bought for silver or gold  
but like silver and gold  
if not used it won't hold  
and tomorrow becomes yesterday  
with nothing to be told

*By Tom*

## **The Cliffs of Moher**

'Impressive!'

This is what I said to myself the first time that I saw the Cliffs of Moher. That was on a poster in a motorcycle shop in Spain. I thought then they were very beautiful, but I never thought that 30 years later, I would be able to go and see them with my own eyes.

However, there I was.

Impressive!

And there I was...walking. At one point, I approached a higher point and with great care and respect, I took a look below.

The final word is...impressive!

*By Jeff*

## **Through my window**

I can see the landscape through my bedroom window, but in summer it enchants me more, whether it's the bird song or the beautiful blue sky that matches the colours of the flowers.

I hear the sounds of birds singing, dogs barking, children playing in the street and people doing gym outdoors. They are noises that don't bother me but make me believe that people are making the most of summer. As we know, in Ireland we must take advantage of good weather as it can so easily pass by.

*By Elení*

## **Through my window**

Hello my name is Maria and I'm from Poland. My story is about what I can see through my window.

Through the window in my apartment, I can see green grass, green trees, cherry blossoms in pink, red tulips and yellow daffodils. I can

also see cars driving on the road, Tesco, birds flying and signs of spring.

I hear cars driving on the road and birds singing. I hear sounds of animals, dogs barking, cats meowing, people walking and talking on the sidewalk and children returning from school.

When I go outside, I have a lot of space near my apartment. I can sit and observe the surroundings and rest after work and relax.

My wish is to have one day a small white house with a garden, to have my own dog and a small garden with vegetables and an orchard with fruit.

*By María*

### **Through my window**

I can see my own backyard and my neighbours' backyards. I can see a big garden centre and I have a view of the whole town. I can also see a gym that, sometimes, has a lot of people.

The street where I live is very quiet, but I can usually hear the sounds of people buying flowers and the gym staff getting ready to go for a run.

I live on a dead end street. In front of my house, there is a small garden. Most of my neighbours are elderly and very quiet, so I feel good living there.

My wish for today is to go to school after work, Ha! Ha!

*By Udo*

### **Trip to Galway**

On May 1<sup>st</sup>, we went to see Bishop Michael Duignan become the new Bishop of Galway with the Faith and Light Group.

The bus left Lisdoonvama at 1:00 pm and got to Galway Cathedral at 2:30 pm. There were many priests on the altar for the service. The music at the Mass was really nice.

It was my first time in Galway Cathedral. There were lots of people there. After Mass, we went to the Menlo Park Hotel for dinner. We had soup, a choice of beef or salmon and apple tart and cream for dessert. The food was very good we sang happy birthday to a friend of ours. The staff there were very nice.

We left for home on the bus at 8:30 pm. Martin sang a great version 'Spancil Hill' on the way home. We got home at around 10 o'clock.

*By Stefan*

### **Good things about Ennis**

Good class, good friends, good teacher,  
Family and friends.  
My husband and son in Ireland,  
No war.  
I'm very very happy.

Ennis is a quiet town. It has good shops, Aldi, Lidl, Dunnes, Tesco and the Halal shop. It has good playgrounds for the children.

We like the nature in Ennis. There is a beautiful river and lake, cows, donkeys and ducks. There is clean fresh air and good people. It is green.

We don't like the wind, rain and the cold that lasts for a long time.

*By Batol, Fehima, Lubov, Sanaa & Hari Kumari*

### **Words and quotes of encouragement for Volodymyr and Ukraine**

- Don't be afraid of going slow just be afraid of stopping /standing still.
- A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.
- Our greatest glory is, not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall.

- Start by doing what is necessary, then do what is possible and suddenly you are doing the impossible.
- Hope has two beautiful daughters 'Anger and Courage' Anger at the way things are and the Courage to see that they do not remain as they are.
- Better to fight and fall than live without hope!
- When man meets foes in fight, better a brave heart than a sharp sword.
- Often times it is not numbers that win the victory but those that go forward with the most vigour.
- No one can make you feel inferior, without your consent. Never give it.
- He that does not punish evil commands it to be done.
- An aggrieved army is sure to win.
- God fortunes the brave, may God bless you all.

*By Jim*

### **Full moon and flapjacks and four a.m.**

I was watching the moon last night.  
 Clock ticking between songs.  
 The silvered roofs of the dormers opposite  
 The full moon.  
 Light mottled clouds formed a protective translucent pouch.  
 Filaments perfectly framing the shining satellite.  
 Cups of tea.  
 Flapjacks that Sophie had baked & brought that day.

*By Matt*

### **Kilrush**

Kilrush and its surrounding area is the most beautiful part of County Clare. It includes beaches like Kilkee and Doonbeg. It is located where the river Shannon joins the Atlantic Ocean.

*By Sadia*

## **The Best Days?**

Grey stone pillars, wrought iron gates with crucifix  
Impressive architectural building with decorative features  
1856 home of the FCJ Sisters  
Later tutors to boarders and day pupils

Nuns in long flowing black garb  
Veils framing faces hiding both hair and forehead  
Thick holy cross hanging from bended necks  
Rosaries pulled right around well-fed waists

Snide remarks, heads aloof, canes in hand  
Boarders looked on like royalty  
Some day pupils treated like shit on shoe  
Fear upon fear day after day

Doing ones best to stay insignificant  
Beautiful food cooked in home economics  
All packed up and taken to them  
The aroma still trails in my nostrils

Day pupils' mothers down on bended knees  
Rubbing, scrubbing, cleaning nearer to God  
Bobby doing the huge gardens  
Beads of sweat dribbling to his waist

He takes a break to admire work achieved  
More to be done, no pleasing those Faithful Companions  
The smell of polish and melted candles

All heads bent, kneeling in a row  
Rosaries hanging from virgin white hands  
Praying in rhythm to God's word  
Hoping to get through the gates of Peter

A place of worship and education long gone  
No nuns, students or prayers today

Fear no longer for those who come here  
Now somewhere to celebrate, get married in style or even play  
sport

Laughter fills this once horrifying spot  
Slapping, bullying, degrading now lost  
Its new use serves God better this way

*By Breda*

### **Benefits of LCETB Core Skills courses**

I have just completed two courses. One on computers/IT and technology, and one a cooking course for men. The first goal I achieved was 'that I could learn and understand the content of the course'. The teacher also opened doors to a new world of technology for me. It dispelled fear – fear of the unknown and replaced it with confidence and surety. We are now familiar with the CPUs, IP addresses, search engines, data storage, and iCloud. This was all brought down to earth by our excellent tutor. It shows that, with everyone moving forward together, success takes care of itself.

The cookery class provided us with a social meeting and get-together as well as learning culinary skills. The class was presented on an everyone involved basis which developed and nurtured team spirit and worked to produce some beautiful dishes; soups, brown bread, salad, and pastries. All were produced from basic ingredients and healthy produce. We learned a lot from our chef – we no longer need to rely solely on sausage beans and chips. This leads me to the advice 'When the diet is wrong, medicine is of no use. When the diet is correct, medicine is of no need.'

Courses like these are good for your health and wellbeing mentally and physically, long may they continue to better society. They boost your confidence, morale, and well-being. They open new doors to opportunities and applications. It is a job well done by all.

*By Jim*



## **Buddy and me**

My name is Johnny. I have dogs all my life at my home in Sixmilebridge. I feel a house is not a home without a dog. My first dog's name was Rocky. I had him a few years when a car hit him. The same happened my second dog, Rambo. I had a lovely grey sheepdog, Jessie. She was too big so I gave her to my uncle Mick. He has land up the mountain so she can run around there. He renamed her Skippy.

We had a rottweiler for a while but had to leave him to the dog home in Ennis. A man from West Clare then took him. I got a stray dog from my uncle Paddy and we called him Chase. I had Toby 'Mark One' for a few weeks. He had something in his blood and died one evening by the fire. Toby 'Mark Two' was my pal and I had him for 15 years. He was a 'westie'. I have a jack russell now and he is great fun and great company when family members are away.

I have a friend called Jenny she loves dogs as much as I do. We have a great passion for dogs.

*John and Jenny are characters in the book 'Marley and Me'.*

*By Colm*

## Exile

I'm on the scrapheap at fifty.  
Who'd have thought.

No room to talk  
Much less to listen.

No use for language  
Beauty and words that glisten.

They only speak  
In text  
And Snapchat  
WhatsApp  
And latest app.

A language I don't understand.

Where am I now?  
Where is my country?

I am in exile.  
In my own land.

*By Maria*