



PLAYS
IN A PEACE
PROCESS

DAVE DUGGAN

GUILDHALL PRESS

About the Author

Dave Duggan is a writer and director living in Derry. Between 1996 and 2007, he wrote and directed plays and sketches for Sole Purpose Productions which is the work included in this book. *Plays in a Peace Process*.

Waiting... has been seen in New York, Liverpool and at the Edinburgh Fringe, as well as in Ireland. The *British Theatre Guide* commented that, 'Dave Duggan has been nominated for an Oscar and from the quality of his writing in this edgy political drama, one can see why.'

AH 6905 was used by Dal Teatar Belgrade in their latest production, and an adaptation and production of the play took place in Kabul, Afghanistan, in early 2008.

Dave's other work includes *Spike Dreams*, a Derry Play-house production, which toured Ireland in 2003. *Bubbles in the Hot Tub*, a comedy for Blue Eagle Productions, opened in the Millennium Forum, Derry, and toured regionally in early 2007. His stage play in Irish – *Gruagairi*, for Aisling Ghéar – opened in Belfast and toured nationally in the autumn of 2007. He was awarded the 2007 Stewart Parker Trust / BBC Award for writing in Irish.

His radio drama credits include *The Man with No Ears*, *The Blackbird's Last Campaign*, *Scenes from an Inquiry*, *Joe's Agaimne* and *Painting the Loft* for RTÉ Radio 1, and *From a Great Height* for BBC Radio 4, described by the *Daily Telegraph* as a 'funny, odd, touching, original play'.

Dave has written a number of original screenplays for short films for Raw Nerve Productions, including *Cú Chulainn* and the Oscar / Academy Award-nominated *Dance Lexie Dance*. He wrote and directed a short film called *Tumble Turns* for Raw Nerve.

Lagan Press published his *Shorts for Stage and Screen*. Guildhall Press published his novel *The Greening of Larry Mahon*, which *The Guardian* described as 'an engrossing study of shifting rootlessness'.

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Foreword

'Art should cause violence to be set aside,
And it is only art that can accomplish this.'

Leo Tolstoy

A protracted period of historical conflict between Britain and Ireland erupted in violence, centred on Northern Ireland, in 1968. Moves towards peace began in 1994, culminating in political agreements that led to a locally elected legislative assembly. *Plays in a Peace Process* brings together seven plays and four sketches I wrote between 1996 and 2007 as a contribution to this Peace Process. I wrote other plays, films, radio drama and a novel, but the works in this book are the core of my artistic work in that period, because, like all my fellow citizens, I was living through the Peace Process, and writing is what I do. This work was professionally produced and toured, nationally and internationally, by Sole Purpose Productions. I am indebted to Patricia Byrne, in particular, and to the many actors, producers, designers, musicians and technicians who ensured these works were realised, while often taking considerable personal risks.

Imagine a room in the Indian Cultural Centre in Belfast. The set for the play *Waiting*... – a bus stop with a bench – is in place. Myself, as writer and director, and the two actors make final preparations before our audience arrives. In a corner of the room is a beautiful large-scale representation of the Hindu elephant god, Ganesha. Remover of Obstacles and Patron of Arts and Sciences. We smile gently to ourselves as we talk about a phrase that had become common in those years. 'The elephant in the room' refers to problems that cannot be faced, that cannot be spoken about: sectarianism, cultural stand-offs, the impact of violence by the state or by paramilitaries, collusion by police officers with paramilitaries, the search for truth. So many elephants in so many rooms.

The play starts. A political ex-prisoner meets the husband of a woman she blew up. The audience, drawn from unionist and nationalist communities, watch intently, under the benevolent gaze of Ganesha, as obstacles to discussion and engagement between a victim and perpetrator of violence are removed – as peace is built.

The plays and the sketches in this book did not arise from processes of analysis and reflection. Rather the press of public events as they happened drew them out of me. The plays grew out of pressures on my sensibilities, pressures that led me to respond artistically, to find forms that could contain the impulses to make theatre, to find language that could give voice to those pressures, to create characters that would make manifest my responses to the Peace Process occurring in my society through that time.

Because the main resource I bring to bear at all times in my work is imagination, and because theatre is a visual medium, I ask you to imagine once more: a small church hall at the edge of the village of Kesh on the Fermanagh–Donegal border, in the north-west of Ireland. The local Community Development Association is hosting a performance of *The Stopper and the Boy*. It is a glorious June evening. Standing outside the hall, we hear larks singing high in the summer air. A machine is cutting grass for silage two fields away. Preparations for the performance are made, but the local hosts are worried. Earlier that day, the remains of an RUC police officer shot dead in Lurgan were returned to his family home near the village. There is a quietness about the people. Some think it would be a bad idea to go ahead with the play. Some think no one will turn up. Some say we should go ahead, that the play, which dramatises the difficult issue of loyalist marching, needs to be seen. I wait with the actors, saying we'll perform or not as the Community Association decides.

Gradually a large audience starts to gather – from the village, the surrounding area and across the border in

Donegal. There are brief nods of recognition, some easy greetings, polite acknowledgements, a delicate tension. The crowd is muted, diffident, but ready to see the play. The Community Association decides to proceed. The actors prepare. The set is in place. The play begins. The actors appear and march with a trunk around the space. The Boy steps forward, faces the audience and declaims, 'No surrender!' The Shopper steps forward and declaims, 'Tíocfaidh ár lá!' The audience sits forward and engages. There is space, time and a focus to face the elephant in the room.

An audience sees real people close up, grappling with painful and difficult matters, with resolve and imagination, in poetic characters who are mirrors of themselves. The truth, that questions can be more important than answers, is laid out. Poetic, intelligent language in the mouths of ordinary people offers possibilities. The Shopper and the Boy express their contending desires as manifestations of nascent negotiations. Negotiations need space, and theatre has given a public this space, shown instances of the space being used, shown negotiations occurring on the basis of respect, not mere tolerance.

This can be seen as part of the processes in peace-building described by Azar, Burton and others as Track 2 Diplomacy, unofficial processes at public and community levels that parallel formal political diplomacy. These are necessary because, as George Bernard Shaw said, 'Social questions never get solved until the pressure becomes so desperate that even governments recognise the necessity for moving. And to bring the pressure to this point, the poets must lend a hand to the few willing to do public work in stages at which nothing but abuse is to be gained by it.'

Imagine yet again: a working-class housing estate in Newtownards, a town just east of Belfast, with a perceived unionist population. My play *Without the Walls* is in the form of a Greek tragedy, drawing on the Antigone story, using rhyme and masks to dramatise the question of how

a society moving out of conflict might police itself. An audience is engaged by an act of debate, education and entertainment, and when the tragedy is delivered and the woman is dead, two women sitting near me have tears running down their cheeks. Moments of catharsis in theatre prepare us for moments of resolve in the world; in this instance, strengthening ourselves to face the changes that a new policing order will bring.

By the year 2000 the Peace Process was well underway, stuttering and staggering as the political process moved and stalled at different points. I have always taken the view that the Peace Process is a continuous thing. Not something that started in the early 1990s with the Hume-Adams dialogues and the ceasefires. The Peace Process continues for as long as the violence is manifest. People in different ways seek to move things on by non-violent means, trying to keep avenues of dialogue open, striving to maintain contacts, advancing actions for the securing of human rights and dignity. By the end of the 1990s the phrase 'moving on' was being used by politicians and other public figures in Britain and Ireland. The notion of our society being in a post-conflict situation was in the public domain. Prisoner releases were happening. Demands were being made of victims and perpetrators of violence to turn away from the past and to face the future. I wondered how individuals, deeply affected by the conflict, through loss or imprisonment, might actually address, in real terms, the need to move on.

Imagine a hushed audience in the wonderful studio space of The Market Place Theatre in the beautiful city of Armagh. In my absurdist version of the meeting between a bomber and a victim in the play *Waiting*.... the gravity of this meeting, the searing import of what could be a real meeting on the streets of that city or any city, town or village in Northern Ireland, stills the audience. The two characters struggle to articulate their experiences in words I wrote to impress hope on the world. Hope, but not sentimentality.

Theatre has given that audience a collective experience that will support the private and public processes that must happen when individuals and societies do indeed move on in a meaningful way. For that audience and for us all, the challenge remains to live as fully as possible in the present, with the past, and for the future. It is one of the powerful qualities of theatre that Arthur Miller says it is 'the art of the present tense', and being with characters as they wrestle with the reality of moving on in a society coming out of conflict provides a collective experience that strengthens us all and contributes to the Peace Process.

I recall a performance of *Waiting...* in a small theatre in New York in 2002. I was standing in the wings, watching the two actors go through the familiar moves, reciting the familiar lines. And as I listened to the audience laughing at the absurd opening dialogue and then settle into quiet attention as the characters revealed more and more of their lives, pain and hopes, I knew that once again theatre was providing a collective experience that augmented the lives of the people in that theatre, that city, and in a small way was contributing to peace-building in the face of awful violence and vengeful public language.

One of the significant complications in the Peace Process in Northern Ireland is the fact that the state is a protagonist and a perpetrator of violence. The Saville Inquiry into the events of Bloody Sunday in 1972, when fourteen people were killed by state forces on the streets of Derry Londonderry, is still continuing. The way the Saville Inquiry proceeded had a profound impact on me. I found myself sitting in the public gallery transfixed by the witnesses and their stories, the dry language of the legal teams, the formal discourse of the judges and the layout of the room. It was self-evidently theatre to me and I felt the impulse to poeiticise the activity of the Inquiry, to elevate the language of the testimonies and the questioning so that something of the greater human experience might be made public.

I wrote *Scenes from an Inquiry* with the support and participation of the Bloody Sunday Families. I later did a radio drama adaptation at the request of RTE through which the public poetry of the imagined witnesses reached a national audience in Ireland. It was the power of poetry I was seeking – the universal poetic voice that cries out in the face of awful violence, that salves and heals in the face of the utter hopelessness of death and loss.

In this way, a piece of theatre has offered healing of great pain, has acted as a balm to wounded hearts and minds. It has assisted in the breaking of taboos by offering some people a different view of the world. A unionist member of the Policing Board attended a performance and spoke to me afterwards saying he enjoyed it and found it thought-provoking.

Family members spoke of the truth of it. That's the ironic thing. A work of fiction and imagination evokes a sense of truth. Something of the power of the unashamed subjectivity of theatre is evident here: the way theatre deals with feelings and experiences and, in this case, poeiticises them, so that it makes a contribution to the Peace Process as an agent of healing and truth seeking.

In the final analysis, the plays are entertainment. Going to see one is a good night out, a guarantee of a good time, in a wide-ranging sense of that phrase. And with violence still a fact of life on the streets amidst a stuttering political process, entertainment is an important contribution theatre makes towards peace-building. The very existence of such plays indicates what Bertolt Brecht described as, 'A powerful social movement which has an interest in free discussion of vital problems, the better to solve them, and which can defend this interest against all opposing tendencies.'

As the Peace Process bedded down and politics started to take over from violence in the early twenty-first century in Ireland, social and economic problems came to the fore, still in the context of a society coming out of conflict.

Where will the jobs come from and on what conditions will we gain employment? What hopelessness drives our young adults to recklessness and death on our roads? I continued to write plays, because of the need for a place where such matters could be put under sustained artistic scrutiny.

These plays and sketches work as art in the first instance. They are not acts of politics or social work in the direct sense of those words. They are instances of the application of imagination to public events, attempts to find beauty and order amidst chaos and present them to audiences who will make up their own minds about them. And when it works, as director John McGrath said, 'We come out feeling exhilarated: we are more alive for seeing it, more aware of the possibilities of the human race, more fully human ourselves.' In the face of the extreme violence – great public tensions, traumatic separation of people, betrayal, subjugation and loss – that occurred in Northern Ireland, theatre penetrated into the darkest zones of terror and despair and made light present in the darkness.

That theatre could contribute to peace-building should not surprise us. After all, conflict is at the heart of good drama. We may in fact be seeing an example of what peace researcher Johann Galtung means when he talks about conflict as positive and negative energy, vying and contending across the realms of human endeavour. Theatre offers conflict as positive energy and as American dramatist David Mamet asserts, 'What you and I want from art is peace.'

Peace can only be built if we give attention to our irrationality, give attention to the deepest, often most troubling, urges and impulses that make us human. In so far as politics engages with power, art and, in particular, theatre, engages with pleasure, so that while facts may be disputed, fictions can be enjoyed, relished and savoured, used to bring truth to bear and thus build peace. Theatre work like this, in a variety of forms, both tragic and comic, is happening all

over the world in places where peace processes run in parallel with war processes.

As current events slowly become history in Ireland, these plays exist as a contribution to peace-building internationally. They now exist in the wider world in support of such efforts. I gave permission to theatre-makers in Kabul, Afghanistan, to adapt and translate my play *All 6905*. They reported to me that the performances, first in Dari and later in Pashtun, took place in early 2008 in the ruins of the Russian Cultural Centre, a legacy of a past conflict.

During the performance, echoes from life outside could be heard through ripped-out walls and holes caused by projectiles: a policeman's walkie-talkie, the siren of an ambulance, a kids' quarrel, and the continuous hum of a concrete mixer, for in Kabul building goes on everywhere. And when the performance was over, a sudden gust of wind ripped away the fabric that was covering the holes in the walls, and, together with clouds of dust, daylight forced its way in.

Dave Duggan
June 2008

—
*And now, History and Time have stopped,
as if they were cogs in a great engine
turning the century and I stuck my little
finger in there. So they're stopped.*
—

Production Details 1

The three plays in this section – *Waiting...*, *The Shopper and the Boy*, and *Without the Walls* – show characters striving to negotiate their way out of difficulties as the Peace Process got stuck on issues to do with prisoner releases, loyalist marches and changes to policing. Intimidation was, and is, a problem, and the sketch *It's Only a Brick* was commissioned for a conference dealing with that issue.

Waiting... was first produced by Sole Purpose Productions at The Playhouse, Derry Londonderry, on 4 February 2000. The director was Dave Duggan, set design was by Jan Vaclav Caspers, set construction by Jim Keys, and the company was Patricia Byrne and Jonathan Burgess. I acknowledge the influence of Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* in this dramatisation of the meeting at a bus stop between a victim and a perpetrator of political violence.

The Shopper and the Boy was first produced by Sole Purpose Productions at Foyle Arts Centre, Derry Londonderry, on 20 June 1996. The director was Dave Duggan, the set designer was Jan Vaclav Caspers, and the company was Patricia Byrne and Darren Greer. It dramatises the cultural and physical clashes between a loyalist Apprentice Boy and a nationalist mother. The last speech echoes Bertolt Brecht's play *The Good Person of Szechwan*.

Without the Walls was first produced by Sole Purpose Productions at Foyle Arts Centre, Derry Londonderry, on 16 March 1998. The director was Dave Duggan, the set designer was Jan Vaclav Caspers, set construction was by Jim Keys, and the company was Patricia Byrne, Jonathan Burgess and Jim Keys. I acknowledge the influence of Sophocles' play *Antigone* in this dramatisation of the challenge of policing when the state is changing due to political conflict.

It's Only a Brick was first produced, under commission from WAVE, by Sole Purpose Productions at Cullybackey, County Antrim, on 1 October 2003 for a conference on intimidation. The director was Dave Duggan and the company was Patricia Byrne and Dave Duggan.

Woman What was?

Man What you were thinking about. Twenty questions.

Woman Naw. It wasn't a weed. I was thinking about a seed. A seed. We have to move on. Ourselves, I mean.

Man It's very hard.

Woman It is. We'll always be waiting.

She takes up her suitcase and leaves.

Man Always waiting...

Sings.

If I had money enough to spend
And leisure time to sit awhile,
There is a fair maid in this town,
That sorely has my heart beguiled.
Her rosy cheeks and ruby lips
I own, she does my heart enthrall.
Then fill to me the parting glass,
Good luck and joy be with you all.

He leaves.

The Shopper and the Boy

Shopper and Boy enter, carrying a trunk. *They carry it round the space a few times. They put it down facing the audience and Shopper turns her back to the audience.*

Boy No surrender!

They pick up the trunk and walk through 180 degrees so that Shopper now faces the audience. They are still holding the trunk.

Shopper Tioctaidh ár lá!

They turn once more for Boy to repeat 'No surrender!' then he faces backwards. They take the trunk back and put it down. They end with a big shoulder-shrugging sigh in unison. They open it and draw out a long length of strong blue cloth. It is as wide as the trunk. This is the river between them. They gaze at it, walk up and down its banks, gaze over it, skim stones on it, but their eyes do not meet. They take up the positions of the statues on Craigavon Bridge in Derry Londonderry, two figures with outstretched hands, not quite touching. They return to the trunk and Boy takes shaving foam, a towel and razor out of the trunk, claims centre stage, still on his side of the river. Shopper sits on her end, facing away.

Boy *(He is preparing himself for the day. He is lathering and shaving, humming "The Sash".)* Da da dah dah dah daaah da dah.

He performs a little strutting walk, holding the foam and razor in front of him, draping the towel round him like a sash. He faces front and sings loudly.

It was old, but it was beautiful,
And the colours they were grand...
The sash my father wore.

Aye, my father. (*He now appears to be talking to the mirror he is shaving in.*) I mind the first time he took me, I mind standing at the top of Bond's Hill, looking down at all the buses and the crowds milling around outside the train station. Like a great army, they were. Battalions of them in all their finery, and the river behind them sparkling like a jewel in the August sunlight. My hands started to sweat. My knees began to knock. (*Pause.*) Ach, I was only a nagger. (*Looks at his palms and his knees.*) And me da said, 'That's us, son. Remember that. Our people. Our people.'

He hums again, towelling off the remaining soap, turns and steps back to the trunk as Shopper rises and comes forward to claim centre stage, on her side of the river.

Shopper Our people. (*Pause.*) Our people picked the pennies out of their hair, picked the abuse out of their ears, then picked themselves up off their knees, to gaze bewildered and amazed at the mighty walled city. Our people looked aghast as the march went past in a blaze of triumphant colour.

Boy comes forward in line with **Shopper**.

Boy Our people marched in time and history. Our people stepped out in tradition and power.

Shopper Our people looked on.

Shopper / Boy (*Facing each other.*)
Another year marked out in stamping feet.

Another year marked out in shoe leather.
Another year trodden underfoot.
Another year.

They walk back to the trunk, stand at opposite ends and face away from each other in The Bargaining Position.

Shopper You first.

Boy No you.

Shopper Okay, then. (*Pause.*) I want to be able to go up the town and shop in peace. Now you.

Boy I want to march with my brothers in our regalia on the Twelfth of August. Now you.

Shopper (*Pause.*) Let me tell you about regalias. Uniforms. Let me tell you about uniforms.

She reaches into the trunk and tosses out a selection of clothes belonging to her eleven-year-old son. She comes to the front. Boy sits on the trunk, facing front.

I have a wee fella going into secondary school. Michael. Same name as his da. Quiet young fella, with kind of mousey hair. Wonder where he got that? (*Touches her own hair.*) He's the first. A big pile of love came out of me and every time I look at him, I get a lump in my throat. (*Pause.*) Anyway, he got the eleven-plus, so he's going to the College. Black blazer. Black trousers. Lumpy school bag.

Pause. She has picked up all the clothes.

You can't get a uniform without money. You can't get money without work. And Michael, the da, he's not

working. No, that's not right. He is working. And so am I. Just not getting paid for it. Always working. (Pause.) Trying to get something to put a uniform on the boy's back.

Boy (Still seated on the trunk.) Aye, the uniform's the thing. The braid on the shoulders. Aye. The cap and the brass buttons. The shoes, black and shiny as tar bubbles on a summer road.

He comes forward and Shopper goes back to the trunk and sits. Boy sings / declaims.

Oh! for the bandsman's uniform,
The braid, the button and the sash.
Oh! for the day out on the bus,
The beer, the music and the cash.
Oh! for the weltering heat of it all,
The sun like a fiery eye.
Oh! for the sound of the fife and drum
And the blaze of banners in the sky.

Shopper moves back to the trunk and puts away the clothes. **Boy** moves forward and lies down, hands joined behind his head, as if he is looking at the sky.

I mainly remember the stars, jewels for the Eleventh night, bright eyes staring down at my bare belly, rounded out with cider and beer. (Pause.) And the big fire, cackling and spurling. All the fellas running around mad, throwing things on the fire and running round it, trying to jump the lower reaches of its might, orange flames licking their arses. Cheers going up. (Pauses.) God it's great.

Turns on his arm and faces forward still lying down.

When I was a wean, ach, years ago, we used to build a hut near the bonfire, to guard it. That was the best bit. Just three or four of us, cramped into a wooden crate, so close we could smell each other's sweat. A tangy sweet smell. And Sammy Hamilton's ma sent over big jam sandwiches, door-stoppers, and our mouths got covered in red, like lipstick carelessly daubed on. (He gets into a sitting position.) Now I just turn up with my carry-out and feel the warm glow of it all. Seeing all the people, their faces lit up by the fire, drinking in the heat of history. All one big crowd. (Pause.) Together. And then the cops come.

Shopper (Seated on trunk.) Uniforms. Every place has them now. All the shops. It's all uniforms. Trying to make everyone look the same under cover of trying to make us look smart. (Pause. She comes forward.) That's one thing I like about the credit union. No uniforms. Everyone's different. They treat you like a person. Like you're someone who needs money for a uniform. (Pause.) They don't wear them but they gave me the money for Michael's.

Boy stands up.

Boy Our people got jobs with uniforms and marching and the rule of law.

Shopper Our people tried to go to college. (Pause.) Well, some of us anyway.

Shopper/Boy (Chanting in unison, facing each other.)
Another year marked out in stamping feet.
Another year marked out in shoe leather.
Another year trodden underfoot.
Another year.

They return to the ends of the trunk, facing away from each other. The Bargaining Position.

Shopper You first this time.

Boy Okay. *(Pause.)* I want your people to stop calling it 'the College' as if there was only one. *(Pause.)* I want to be able to get a job. The army's all right, but I want to be able stay in my own town. And call it what we want to call it. Londonderry.

Shopper I want a job, too. But not for peanuts. And not in a uniform. You put on a uniform and they think they can push you around.

Shopper *takes out a baby carrier, a baby and a credit union book.* **Boy** *lifts a carry-out bag, blue plastic with full cans in it, from the trunk.* **Shopper** *sits down, facing forward.* **Boy** *lurches forward. He is slightly drunk.*

Boy *(As to friends.)* I'll talk to them. Leave it to me. It's all right. *(He comes forward to talk to the cops.)* Yes. What about yeez? Someone has to work on the Eleventh night, I suppose? Do you want a can? *(He proffers the bag, jokingly.)* Only kidding, officer.

Shopper *(Comes forward, talking to a credit union clerk.)* Aye, she's the youngest. No more after her. *(Laughs.)* Aye, I know what you mean. If it's not one thing it's another. At least that's the uniform for the eldest sorted out. Aye, give me cash.

Boy *(Talking to policeman, glances back over his shoulder.)* Ach, no. It'll be grand. No way is it going to reach those wires. Complaints? Yeez have had complaints! Noise. Ach, yeez can see for yourselves. It's

all under control. A bit of a laugh, that's all. Anyway, we always have one round here, every year. Yeez know that. Hail, rain or shine. Yeez did it yourselves. It's a tradition and I don't need to tell you, officer, how important that is. The ties that bind and all that. Gives us something to be proud of. Stiek out our chests. And our bellies. *(Stricks them both out, laughs, then muses.)* We're drawn to the fire like beautiful moths, warmed in the pride of doing something we have always done.

Shopper I know what you mean. But what use is pride to people like us? You can't boil it, grill it, fry it, steam it or bake it. Weans don't grow fat on it. *(Pause.)* Fivers would be great.

Boy Look, what do you want us to do? Put out the fire and huddle in the darkness? Hide ourselves in the shadows where no one could see us? Go into the wilderness and wander like a lost tribe? No way. We have more pride than that. You mightn't be able to eat pride, but it can fill you up. And everyone needs something to be proud about. You're proud of the law, aren't you?

Shopper You're right. There's one law for the rich and another law for the poor. But that'll not bother the likes of me too much. Anyway, whoever makes the law rules the roost.

Boy Exactly. But do they know what it's like to be out on the Eleventh night and to feel that this is the Big One. That all you've ever wanted was to keep this night going, this night and every night stretching on into the future, with everything staying the same and everybody knowing where they stand and everything worked out.

Shopper Naw, we can't go back to that again. Things'll have to change. *(Pause.)* Anyway, I have the money now

and I'll be able to get the uniform. Better get it today. Money is like water. It'll run through your fingers before you know where you are. (*Pause.*) Ach, you're right. They're marching today. The town will be blocked off.

Boy Look, a few of us could block off the top end there and make sure no more stuff is put on it. We'll keep the wee lads away from it and make sure the noise is kept down. (*Pause.*) You want it put out? You're calling the fire brigade? Do you want a riot?

Shopper Riot Corner. I always knew it as that. William Street and Rossville Street. A battleground.

They stand facing forwards.

Boy Erne Gardens.

Shopper Quarry Street.

They continue in this way, reciting a litany of street names from different parts of the city.

Roulston Avenue	Lislannon Park
Lapwing Way	Elmwood Road
Scymour Gardens	Moyola Drive
Wapping Lane	Cable Street

Shopper / Boy (*Chanting in unison, facing each other.*)
Another year marked out in stamping feet.
Another year marked out in shoe leather.
Another year trodden underfoot.
Another year.

They return to the trunk, put props away and take up The Bargaining Position.

Shopper I want to be able to walk the streets in safety whenever I want, wherever I want.

Boy I want to be able to live anywhere in this town if I want to.

Shopper I don't want anyone telling me I drove them away.

Boy And I want to be able to go into the city centre and be myself.

Shopper I want to be able to call the city what I want to call it. Derry.

They return to the trunk and they take out Laurel and Hardy masks. He puts on a cowboy hat and comes forward.

Boy (*Sings joyously, line dancing.*)

Oh! for the blaze of coloured lights

That dance in the river that night.

Oh! for the crowds all gathered round

Dressed up to make a sight.

Oh! for the bangers, the beer and the laughs

The costumes, the colour and the craic.

Oh! for the Hallowed eve that falls

Across the city so black.

Dashing about, gazing upwards.

There's a big one. Listen to that. Just above the clock of the Guildhall. Whooo! That's class. Did you hear it? You see them before you hear the bang, like the two weren't connected. Like the bang came from the hulking hills behind there. That's where my da said his family came from. (*Points.*) Catherine Wheels. In mid-air. How do

they do that? Ooooh! A big starburst, going off like a radiant bomb, sending shards of itself into the sky so I can see the faces of everyone around me, hanging onto these railings, at this roundabout, looking over the river to the centre of the city.

Steps forward and takes off his hat and speaks directly to the audience.

Why? Well, you get a better view for one thing. You might think there would be more craic over there in the Guildhall Square with the bands and the crowds, but you get a better view from across here. You're up a wee bit so the fireworks don't seem to press over you so much. It doesn't mean that I'm letting the city to them over there. Just because they're filling up the Square and listening to the bands. We like dressing up as much as anybody. It's just that what you see depends on how you look at it. And where you look at it from. So that the same thing can be different. Like the river itself. (*Looks down at blue sheet.*) Different, depending on what bank you live on.

Puts the hat back on again, points upwards.

Brilliant! Fantastic! I hope there's another one of those starbursts.

He makes his way back to the trunk, sits and looks away, hat off. Shopper comes forward with the mask in her hand.

Shopper Tearing up sheets to make a ghost. Ripping up a black dress of my mother's to make a witch's cloak. He had to get wee rushes and twigs to make a broom. Ach, it's for the weans really.

Points upwards excitedly

Oh! Look at that. They're like dangling jewels, beacons gliding in the black sea of night. Ah! that's lovely. Fire bursting. Fire works a miracle. I love it. You can put on things. Layers. You can be yourself, but amplified like music coming out of great speakers. You can be on a stage. You can be an actress. You can be someone. A ghost. OOOOOOO! A devil. Come burn with me! A vampire. Let me drink your blood! (*Puts on mask.*) Laurel...

Boy (*Puts on mask and calls out.*) ... and Hardy.

He gets up and comes forward.

Shopper / Boy (*Chant, once each, then once together.*)
Another fine mess you've got me into!

Shopper / Boy (*Facing each other.*)
Another year marked out in stamping feet.
Another year marked out in shoe leather.
Another year trodden underfoot.
Another year.

They return to the trunk, put away their masks and take up The Bargaining Position.

Shopper I want something more than bread and circuses.
I want something more than a spectacle. (*Pause.*) I want esteem.

Boy I want celebrations, with flags and emblems, bands and marching feet.

Shopper I want to see the tricolour flying in the wind.
High up.

Boy I want to have children and know they'll be proud to be British.

Shopper I want my children to know who they are and where they come from.

Shopper *lifts a listening device from trunk and pins it to her shirt. She flicks the pause button on the tape player inside the trunk and we hear baby sleeping sounds. Breathing and snuffling. She puts a green tea towel over her shoulder and comes forward, arms crossed. Boy sits on the trunk.*

Shopper She's bad with asthma. That's why we got this thing. The other part of it sits on the top of her cot and I go round the house with her breathing in my car. *(Pause.)* Washing up, drying up, cooking. And listening to her breathing. Like a death rattle put on hold.

Clasps her neck with both hands and prays.

Please don't let her die. Let it be a cot, not a coffin. Let her grow up strong and tall to run around with other wee girls. Swap friendship bracelets, braided coloured strings on her tiny wrist. Skip rope. *(Pause.)* I did it myself.

She smiles in remembering and she twirls the tea towel as in skipping and chants the rhyme.

Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear, burl right round.
Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear, touch the ground.
Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear, show off your shoes.
Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear, that will do.
Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear, run up stairs.
Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear, say your prayers.
Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear, switch off the light.
Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear, spell goodnight.
G-O-O-D-N-I-G-H-T.

Swinging on poles, skipping on ropes and 'Play the ball against the wall'. Someone taught me all that. I don't know. Maybe it was just in the blood, like we were born into it.

She looks back to the trunk.

I want to tell her so many things, so many things she should know about who she is and who we are. I want her to have more chances than me. Michael's all right, but we were too young. Anyway, there must be more to life than bringing up kids with a man on the dole. *(Pause.)* I want to teach her to dance, but she's a bit young yet. I was a champion myself, you know. Yes. Ach, all right, then.

Dances some Irish dance steps.

I've started singing her songs. Songs my mother taught me. Just sounds really, because I'm not sure what the words mean. Something strange happened to our language. It became more beautiful the more we lost it. Maybe she'll learn it properly. I hope so. *(Pause as baby sounds become crying.)* Ach, wait. Wait a wee minute now. Wait a wee minute.

She goes back to the trunk, takes the baby out, wrapped in a blanket. Boy takes out a bowler hat and an umbrella and stands on the trunk facing backwards. She sits on the edge of the trunk and sings a lullaby.

Fill, fill a rún ó,
Fill, a rún ó, is ná himigh uaim.
Fill orm, a chuisle's a stór,
Agus chifidh tú an glóir má thilleann tú.

Boy *comes forward and Shopper drops her voice, but continues to croon the lullaby.*

Boy There were no lullabies in the trenches. No sleeping, with the scurrying of the rats, the dankness of the water, the smell of death and gas everywhere. How could you sleep with that? When we marched in answer to our country's call, did we know our sacrifice would be a bloodbath?

I am the last Old Contemptible.
For the first time ever I was alone at the cenotaph
And the "Last Post" was played for me.
The drizzle and the drone of the trumpets hemmed me in.
I looked at the wreath and stepped back, putting one foot
firmly in the grave.
I'll be dead by Christmas.

I have a son in Canada.
His children sound like television to me.
My daughter, in England, she'll come home to bury me
and cry.
And return to England, leaving no one to tend my grave.

But I will make no surrender to the bleak bliss of death.
I will rage quietly to the end though that end will be a
blessed relief.
A relief from the shells and the groans.
And my friends calling to me.
I hear them.
Tommy Watson, Vernon Lumley, Cecil Harding.
I am coming soon.

Tommy Watson -- he always had to be smoking
something.
Always had a smoke of something.
And he shared it.
We shared everything.
Food. Shelter. Fear.
The stench of fear makes me tremble even now.

Tinnitus, the doctor said.
Twerp.

The noises in my ears were old age, he said.
The fool didn't know they had the freshness of youth.
The rawness of boys out on a spree
And the bitterness of young men dying
Like flies swatted lazily in the summer.

The noises got worse after Tillie died.
Then Thiepval roared in my head
And the slime of the Somme slurped around.
But I marched on.
Each year at the Cenotaph as my last comrades faded
around me
Until now I am finally alone.

I march on even now, always marching
Ceaselessly slogging forwards and downwards.
Down to death and waste.

I came to manhood in waste.
Tommy Watson scythed by shrapnel, Vernon Lumley
gassed,
Cecil Harding on a barbed-wire spit.
My God left me that day and never returned.
The horrors drove him out and the shame kept him away.

Will they be there? Will they have marched on yet
further?

No! They'll be there.
Tommy, Vernon and Cecil.
And Tommy will have a smoke of something like always.

I will make no final surrender.
I will make a reunion and I will go forward to my
comrades,
Ever forward to my comrades.

And Tillie.

And the quiet! Oh, the sweet quiet!

Shopper's voice comes back up and she sings the lullaby again. **Boy** returns to the trunk and puts the bowler and the umbrella inside. She puts the baby and the listening device away also and they come forward and face each other.

Shopper / Boy (*Chanting in unison.*)

Another year marked out in stamping feet.

Another year marked out in shoe leather.

Another year trodden underfoot.

Another year.

They face forward and click their fingers to begin a synchronised dance routine as they chant / rap.

It's the Big One.

It's come at last.

The one we've waited for.

It's the Big One.

The relief of Derry.

The boom goes up today.

It's the Big One.

Get my uniform.

Step out onto the street.

It's the Big One.

August Twelfth.

Gather up the bands.

They return to the trunk and take up The Bargaining Position.

Boy I want to celebrate my civil and religious liberties.

Shopper I want respect. Not mere tolerance. Respect.

Boy I want to march my traditional route.

Shopper I want to do what I have to do and I don't want to be abused doing it.

Boy takes a trowel and a brick out of the trunk and comes forward. **Shopper** sits on trunk.

Boy I'm an Apprentice Boy. (*Pause.*) I'm a boy apprentice. Or at least I was. You see, I was just out of my time when they let me go. Thirteen of us. The Brave Thirteen. Bricksies. Chippies. Sparks. All the houses were nearly built anyway. No more work for us, they said. It had nothing to do with the fact that they'd have to pay us men's wages. Nothing to do with that at all.

He goes down on one knee, scoops mortar and generally works as if laying bricks.

I love the heft of a brick in my hand, the weighty lump of it. And the way a wall would build itself in front of your eyes, all regular and solid so you could look up at it and be amazed. Feel protected. Secure in its mortared embrace. Neat, eh? Like the clip of a trowel. Spare and regular.

He softly sings a snatch of "Derry's Walls" as he lays the brick, continues humming the tune as Shopper speaks from standing on the trunk.

Shopper Walls of police and soldiers. Walls of bricks and mortar. Walls to keep you in. Walls to keep you out. Walls to look up at. Walls to look down from. Walls to go

through the gates of. Walls to walk along in the sun. Walls for marches. Walls for protests. Walls for graffiti. Walls for murals. Walls for us. Walls for them. Walls for everyone.

Boy I remember all apprentices. The ones who shut the gates. The ones who built the ships, the factories and the bridges of this great country.

He puts the brick in the centre of the river, fixing it with the trowel.

It's the big day. Time to get the uniform on.

He returns to the trunk. She gets down and takes out the chest carrier and the baby. He takes out an Apprentice Boy's sash. They put them on and come forward.

Shopper (*Talking to a soldier.*) Look, I tried to explain to you, Corporal Clod. Ferguson's on William Street doesn't have his size.

Boy Yes, Vernon. How's it going?

Shopper I have the money today and I want to buy it today. It's not a big thing. I don't need the whole town blocked off just so's I can buy a uniform for the boy.

Boy Yes, Tommy. What about ye? Any fags on ye, son?

Shopper You've a grand uniform on you. Does it make you feel bigger? More of a man?

Boy Cecil. Haven't seen ye in years. Great day for it, eh?

Shopper Look, why don't you go back to your wife and weans over in Birmingham, or wherever it is you're from,

and not be bothering me. I have to get up to Carlisle Road. To Moore's. They'll have the uniform.

Boy Andrew. John. Wilson. Ian. 'Bout ye, big fella? Form up there, lads.

Shopper Look, I'll just go up around the walls, then? They're all blocked off, too. Right, then. The Diamond it is.

Boy Right, then. Move off.

She begins to move round town. He crosses the river; marching and waving. They are choreographed to pass each other and not meet. The noise of his marching feet increases to a crescendo as she waits to cross the street through the march.

Shopper There's Moore's. Can I cross now? Is there a gap? I'm going now.

She dashes forward, he marches on and they collide. Freeze and hold. Then they return to the trunk. They take off props and de-role, coming forward.

Woman We know this is no way to end a play. But we've gone as far as we can go.

Man We've said all the things that we can say. We've shown you all the things we know.

Woman It's more than about shopping.

Man It's more than about marching.

Woman Can people change? Can the world be changed?

Man How could a better ending be arranged? (Pause.)
Will we leave it to them?

*They both look at the audience, then back at each other,
then face forward, smiling.*

Both (Confidently.) Yes.

Without the Walls

There are city walls. Chorus appears from behind the walls, two men and one woman. They are wearing lengths of coloured cloth – red, green, orange – draped over their black costumes, signifying they are elders / leaders.

Chorus

Without the walls, there is no city.

Without the walls, none of us could live here.

Without the walls, there is a body.

Within there is order and law

But also disorder and dissent.

There has been a war.

A bloody conflict of divided loyalties

That has left the city beaten, transfixed.

Now is a time of change,

Some even speak of healing

For the pouring on of balm

And the licking of wounds.

It is a delicate time, fragile as spring shoots,

Delicate as gossamer.

We face so many problems

And we hardly face each other

Where lately our sons and daughters fought each other.

Over barricades, in bombings,

Late-night shootings, the raiding of houses,

The shoot to kill,

The shoot to maim.

We have seen so many bodies

And bits of bodies. That one more

Without the walls is no surprise.

AH 6905

Danny is in pyjamas, slippers and dressing gown. He is dozing in one of a scatter of three chairs in a room at the end of a hospital ward. He comes to after a few moments. It is visiting time.

Scene 1

What kept you? (*Beat.*) Didn't fancy visiting the Lion's den? You've finally come to see Daniel in the Lion's den. (*Yawn.*)

Right. I was just... I didn't think there'd be so many. (*Beat.*) I didn't think there'd be so few. I... (*Yawn.*)

Naw, we won't go back to the ward. I'm the only one here. Sit where you are. We're fine here. (*Beat.*)

You can smoke, but don't you bother. (*Beat.*) Well, here we are. You. Me. The Lion. Arrrgh. (*Roars and laughs.*)

I suppose you want the latest bulletin. Well, it's tomorrow. Yeh. Tomorrow! How many are there? I haven't a clue. All of them I suppose. The full Panel. They said - Daniel, it's got to come out. You've had it for the past thirty-odd years. We've got to cut it out.

Truth recovery they call it.

Ach, I know. I'm riddled with it. The past. The truth. The truth of the past. All through me. Stuff that happened between 1969 - remember that? - when the country collapsed into crisis under its own weight - and

2005 – with the stuttering Peace Process continuing. All that stuff is lodged between my ribs, behind my liver and across my kidneys. Whole episodes of slaughter, mayhem and callousness are scattered among my vital organs. Shootings, bombings, maiming – all through me. Over thirty years of it.

Then there's the complications. The things themselves were bad enough, but the complications are harder to deal with. The cover-ups, the denials, the disappeared, the lost files, the negligence. Dosed with complications I am.

Everyone has a right to life, liberty. And security. If I thought everything was sorted and secure, I'd be a lot happier about this truth recovery. It's because everything is still so up in the air that I'm struggling with it.

Daniel, they said, we need to give you a number. AH 6905. A number? You're not making a statistic out of me, I said. I didn't come in here to have the truth cut out of me and stuck in a file. Don't worry, Daniel, they said. It's a truth recovery process. It's for your own good. You're 1969 to 2005. That'll cover it. We'll cut it all out of you, Daniel.

Chants.

Oh! Danny boy, the pipes, the pipes are calling. (*Laughs.*)

Pause.

Well, I told them to forget it. I'm not going through with it I said. I'm out of here asap. You can't force me. I told them. I'm telling you. You can't make me.

He looks up as if he hears voices around him.

No. Stop calling me. Don't. Don't. Please no, not now.

The dead abound, the dead abound.
How do we keep them in the ground?
The past remains, the past remains.
How do we satisfy its claims?
The truth cries out, the truth cries out.
How do we still that urgent shout?

What do you want?

A spasm of pain hits him.

Twinkle, twinkle, little car,
How I wonder where you are?
Blasted high into the sky,
There I go now, see me fly.
Twinkle, twinkle, little car,
How I wonder where you are?
Now I ponder who did this?
Killed me with their bomber's kiss.
Broke me so they might be free.
Did they ask this price of me?
Tell me, please, that I may know,
Then to heaven I will go.
Twinkle, twinkle, little car,
How I wonder where you are?

I'm okay. I'll be grand. They just possess me every now and then.

(*Sings.*) Bewitched, bothered and bewildered, am I.
(*Slight laugh.*)

Scene 2

The more I think about it, the more I realise that the big question is, 'Why did it happen?' (*Thinks, beat.*) People do bad things to other people. All sorts of reasons. Defence. Fear. Hate. In the name of loyalty. In the name of law and order. In the name of politics. Desire. Change. Will I ever know why it is that people did those things? Except that... people do bad things to other people.

I know that's not enough. I know it's not.

No, I did not have a good night's sleep. I can't sleep at night. Because of the affront. (*Beat.*) Yes, the affront. That's right, the affront. I have the right to know the truth. Who's going to keep it from me? Ach, now, Daniel, it wouldn't be good for you. Let us be the judge of how much truth you could take. No one could survive that much truth. Not even you, Danny boy.

From glen to glen, eh? Great hordes of the dead and injured marching from glen to glen and down the mountainside, blood dripping from them, their wounds gaping wide, great mouths screaming the wrong done to them. Yes, I hear you. Look, there they come, massed tighter than trees in a dense wood, mouth wounds wrenched open, begging me to find the who and the why.

He looks up as if he hears voices around him.

Leave me be! Leave me be! I can never get the truth for you. What use is the truth to the dead?

The dead abound, the dead abound.
How do we keep them in the ground?

What do you want to know?

A spasm of pain hits him.

When the crisis became occupation
Resistance rose to be an option.
It became a matter of defence.
How could I sit upon the fence?
So I swore allegiance to an ideal.
Pledged all my honour and my zeal.
I learned the ropes, the bombs, the guns.
I joined with Ireland's risen ones.
I took my place beside the others
Bright-eyed friends, sisters, brothers
Rallied now with grit and pride
Standing there at Ireland's side.
Until the day they put me down
On a bloody street in my home town.
My rifle hot, my bullets spent
I fought the fight by my intent.
Then the cortège, flag-draped, proud,
They harass, pummel, flank and crowd.
I was a soldier stern and gave my life
In this ragged post-colonial strife
But know me now and the cause I served.
Acknowledge this, as I deserve.

It's okay. Just the infections. Gives me a high temperature. Under control. Under control.

Scene 3

You must be joking. Who's going to stand up and say that the truth of the past is that he was a soldier? Who's going to say that? (*Beat.*) Apart from his family, his neighbours and his comrades? (*Beat, thinks.*) A good number of people.

I know stuff like that needs dealt with.

Scared? You try being brave with the voices of the dead raging in your head. You try skipping and hopping at the thought of having the truth cut out of you. 'Course I'm scared.

I should be okay about it. I've had bits of it looked at already. The odd inquiry. Stuff buried in my spleen. I got a pile of information; yeh, no doubt about that. But the truth?

I know. I know. I was one of the loudest clamouring for it. We're all born free and equal, I said. We're all equal before the law. Who did it? Who pulled the trigger? Who gave the order? Who buried the file? It's complicated, because the dead are all equally dead but, in their dying, are they equivalent?

And the dead are crowding round me now.

I'm scared, yeh, but I do want to lance the boil, plunge the scalpel in and gouge the poison out. The dead have infected me. All the dead. Over three and half thousand of them. I'm well infected I am.

He looks up as if he hears voices around him.

Please. Why me?

The dead abound, the dead abound.
The truth cries out, the truth cries out.
How do we still that urgent shout?

Do you want truth?

A spasm of pain hits him.

I'm a son of the soil from Lancashire.
Wondering how I got to be here.

I'm know I'm supposed to defend the realm,
But I have some doubts about the men at the helm.
You see I joined up under economic duress
And I didn't expect it to be such a mess.

I should be at home eating hotpots
Instead of guarding this border and ducking potshots.
I have some respect for the ones out there taking them
I mean they're volunteers, nobody's forcing them,
But what if one gets real lucky, has a go and hits?
There's not much 'land of hope and glory' about this Blitz.
No one in Westminster will stand up and take it,
They'll duck and dive and bob and weave and fake it.
I mean, does my truth have any rights
Now the potshot has come in and shut down my lights?

No. No worries. I'm fine. A wee turn, that's all. But, I ask
you, would you go through with it? *(Beat.)* You see my
position.

Scene 4

Pain? Of course there's pain. It's consuming me.
Supposing I did go through with it tomorrow, would the
pain lift? Everything taken out and then I'm pain-free? I
tell you one thing. I'm terrified I'll be worse off. I know
there's no cure for this. A set of procedures and that's
it? 'Course not. I'm petrified I'll be hurt by all this truth
recovery.

Maybe it would make me better. *(Beat.)* Maybe it would
make me worse. Would it make me stable? All I really
want is stability. Do I want peace? What the hell is peace?
I just want stability.

I suppose if I went through with it at least I'd have the records. The files. The testimonies. The witness statements. The full facts. The knowledge. No disputes. No queries. Comprehensive. It's only when you really know something that you can put it behind you. (*Beat.*) Right?

Then maybe I could say, Danny boy, you brought the dead close to you. And you survived. All the dead. The soldiers, the civilians, the volunteers, the comrades, the guilty, the innocent, the malign, the benign, the yours, the mine.

Pause.

Things would come out that were better left buried, wouldn't they?

If I open my innards to this truth recovery and let the world listen to the thrum of blood in my heart, the gush of bile in my spleen, the susurrations of air in my lungs, the drip, drip, drip of urine in my kidneys, the clatter of corpuscles and platelets in my arteries, when I sound them all from deep inside where the dead reside, will I be healed?

'Course I'm weak from it. Weakened by it. What do you expect?

I know I have a right to a fair and public hearing that is independent and impartial. I'm not stupid. And I say there has to be a form. Procedures. Terms of reference. Who set up the Panel? Who's paying for it? Who's on it? Who benefits from it? You can't just dive in any old way, poke among my innards, pick out one juicy morsel of tripe and suck the truth out of it willy-nilly.

It's the records I want. Give me the records. The knowledge. The who, the why, the where, the when and the what happened? Simple enough questions.

Pick one. Go on. Pick any part of me. The thigh? The shoulder? The belly? The heart? Ah! The heart! Go on. Pick one. Take yourself back to 1969. The year I was born. To the very start of it all. Then run with time's arrow from 1969, and all the way through the murderous Seventies and into the pitch-dark Eighties then on again into the stuttering Nineties. Right up to now. That's it. Focus on the dead now. The memory of the dead. The ones who died violently. And ask yourself these questions. Who? Why? They're the killer ones. When? Where? Maybe those two are easy enough. Maybe even 'What happened?' is doable. I'll give you a minute. I need a rest.

Sits. Pause.

You have some of the answers. Maybe even all of the answers. What's missing? (*Beat.*) I know. What's missing is the person. The person. The person is missing. And is the truth. What's missing is the truth. Knowledge is one thing. Truth is something else.

Pause. Stands.

I just want someone to stand up and raise his or her hand. You remember, like we used to do in school, when we wanted to go to the toilet?

Something intimate and revelatory like that. Just stand up, hold up their hand and say:

Excuse me.

Yes, that's it, nice and slowly now, so we can all hear.

Excuse me.

Lovely.

Excuse me, but...

Ah!

Excuse me, but I...
Yes?

Excuse me, but I did it.

Is that it? Is that what all this is about? A mound of knowledge, then admissions? Will that cure me? Take the sting out of all of this and put the record straight when we hear it cried out – I did it.

I shot, I bombed, I raided, I shredded, I disappeared, I planned, I colluded, I orchestrated, I planted, I targeted, I informed, and I ordered it.

I'll be going through this truth recovery for a long time.

Okay, so you did it. What now? *(Beat.)* You want to say you're sorry?

He looks up as if he hears voices around him.

No! Not now. No! Please!

The dead abound, the dead abound.
How do we keep them in the ground?

You want prosecutions?

A spasm of pain hits him.

Drive by, drive by.
Scatter shot flying.
Pool of blood,
Is that me dying?
Drive by, drive by.
Stop and count.
I rise up now

And seek account.
Feud, feud, feud, feud.
The whole bloody thing got screwed.
Take him out, wrong three letters.
What's this? Insults his betters?
Used to be comrades, Red Hands linking
Always loyal, never thinking
The change would come and I'd be Other,
Victim of my own brother.

Feud, feud, feud, feud.
The whole bloody thing got screwed.
Take him out, wrong three letters.
What's this? Insults his betters?
Oh! Some did well with their flashy cars
And some did time behind prison bars.
Me? I fester in the ground
And watch the latest burl-around.
Feud, feud, feud, feud.
The whole bloody thing got screwed.
Take him out, wrong three letters.
What's this? Insults his betters?

Stand up and say it.

Put the cards upon the table.

As Cain lives so I was Abel.

That much I ask so I can rest

Among the ranks of Ulster's blessed.

It's okay. I'll be fine. A visitation, you could say. I'm fine.

Scene 5

Prosecutions? Could be inevitable. I'm not making any predictions.

You know as well as I do that apologies mean nothing unless they mean making sure it doesn't happen again. Unless you can say you'll endeavour – no, not endeavour – ensure – that's it, ensure – that it never happens again, then keep your sorry. Your sorry is no good to me.

But stand there now and hold your hand up. That's it. Repeat it.

Excuse me, but I did it. And I'm sorry.

Good. Go on.

I was wrong.

Be specific.

I did it and I was wrong.

Did what?

You know.

Spell it out.

That's what they want me to do tomorrow. Spell it out. Spill it out. (*Beat.*) No way.

You're surprised there's no one here except me. But, then again, any one of you could be where I am. We've all got it inside us. The truth of the past.

So don't ask me to do it on my own. Don't ask me to do the truth recovery while you stand on the sidelines muttering 'get on with it'. (*Laughs and points at audience member.*) I knew that thought had crossed your mind.

It could be any one of us.

Yes, you. (*Points at audience members.*) Does your heart ache with the truth of the past? Do your joints creak at the pain of memories? Do your body cavities throb at the unsolved murders, the lost files, the buried remains in the bog? My very being shudders with it all.

I know. You've said it before. I take it on too much. Daniel, you said, let it go. Move on, Danny. Yes, people do bad things to other people, but it's in the past.

I am trying to let it go. I am trying to prise its steely fingers from around my neck, one by bitter one, lift the nails out of the flesh, prise back the knuckles, loosen the wrist and unclasp the grip. So I can breathe my fullest again.

I know. I know. You always took a different view from me on this. You said that if we go back into it we'll only disturb it. Best to let the Lion sleep you said. Don't go there you said because when you go down into the blood sludge and stir your truth recovery into it all, you'll only make it worse. You'll only waken the Lions of hate and arrogance who lurk there and you'll give them the light they need to flourish and ravage once more. And this time they'll ravage our children.

He looks up as if he hears voices around him.

Will you never let me be?

The dead abound, the dead abound.

How do we keep them in the ground?

The truth cries out, the truth cries out.

How do we still that urgent shout?

You want justice?

A spasm of pain hits him.

Wrong place, wrong time.

Your place, not mine.

Take this, take that.

Rock, bar, brick, bat.

Waste ground, no frills.
Bust head, hate kills.
Last breath, faint cry.
No hope, just die.
No more, last one.
What's done is done.
Come clean, call time
On war and crime.
Say that it's true
That is my duc.

It's okay. No worries. They come to me, that's all. I'll be fine.

Scene 6

You're right. How can we ever get to the truth of the past when we can't even agree on what the past was?
Is. (*Beat.*) I think I'm going to have to go back on the cigarettes. I gave them up. About a fortnight now. Doing the patches and all. (*Laughs.*) No, it's not part of the preparation for this. If you thought giving up the cigarettes was bad, wait till you start the truth recovery. You haven't one on you by any chance? No. Better not. Only a step backwards. Have to keep on keeping on. As the song says.

Some of it hurts more than others. 'Course it does. And the Panel — they just tell me to stay calm.

I am calm.
You're not calm, Danny.
Calm as can be. Cool as a cucumber.
You're not calm, Danny.
I am calm. And I'll tell you how calm I am. I can look

you straight in the eye and say I want my tax money back. Don't tell me you have no money for these procedures, when you spent my taxes killing fellow citizens.

I am calm. Drugs? 'Course I'm on drugs. It's the twenty-first century, isn't it?

I do want the wrongdoers brought to book. Certainly brought to book. Called to account.

Swear on the Bible. Swear, swear, and swear. Swear to tell the whole truth and nothing but the truth, so help me I will, I will, so, help me, please help me, because I'm melting in this. I'm a wax man burning from the inside out.

Danny boy, the pipes, the pipes ... 'tis you, 'tis you must rise. Rise, I say, and take me to where I can find rest and ease.

Yes, I know we're not going to get at everything. But at least enough to make a difference overall. Can I at least try for that?

He looks up as if he hears voices around him.

Once more, I beg you, leave me be!

The dead abound, the dead abound.
How do we keep them in the ground?

Is it revenge you want?

A spasm of pain hits him.

With rolling thunder, shattering glass
The brimstone claimed me in one pass.
My clothes, my flesh were all consumed.
A flaming stench the world perfumed.
And stronger still the smell of Time
That layered itself upon the crime,
Till now it lingers over all
In wisps of smoke that rise and fall
To cover up the wrong was done
And blind the eyes of everyone.
But if the truth it be made clear
Then I will take my rest right here.
I want a solid cure forever
That this fiery pass of brimstone never
More will in this place be found.
Acknowledge this and I'll stay in the ground.

No worries. I'm fine. No, just a spasm.
Of course I'm calm. Calm, but not cold.

Scene 7

Sometimes they go on at me to tell stories. Tell us,
Daniel. We promise not to doze off. Tell us a story. A
good deep one, full of anguish, blood and broken people.
Oh, the more gory the better.

And I tell them one. I go into it. The details. (*Beat.*) The
tyre marks on the road. Footsteps. The lights. Gone. A
broken cup. Great darkness. Then, too soon, a hearse
puffing grey exhaust fumes. My feet. Shuffling. Pills
shaped like torpedoes. Tremors in the glass of water in
my hand.

I tell them everything. All the scraps I know. And for a
while I feel good. There's a raw place where I dug it all
out. They dug it out really. Gave me the scalpels. A raw
place, still oozing pus and blood. Then that dulls a little
and a scab forms. Blood toughens and builds itself into
a plug. And it holds there. Later a throb grows. A dull
thump rises to the steady hum of something not properly
addressed.

And they say, that's good, Danny. You told your story.
And we heard you. That's good, Danny. Have a rest now.
Rest now. You'll feel better after a rest.

Pause.

Except I don't. When I come to, I sense it. I've told the
story, so I feel different. But do I feel better? I know I feel
vulnerable. Because now, so many more people know the
details of the past within me. So many more people know
me as victim. And what have I gained? It has to be more
than just telling stories. It has to be.

No, we're not all victims. Some people did things. Some
people had things done to them. Some people, well,
they're a bit of both. There you have it. Three options.

Option A. I did things. No doubts. No arguments. Option
B. Things were done to me. What do you mean it's not
clear? (*Laughs.*) 'Course it's not clear.

The truth of the past. Violence. Death. Wrongs. Option
A. You did it. Option B. It was done to you. Option C?
Option C is a combination of A and B.

Option D? What? Option D? Right. You're just there and
you're wondering what all the fuss is about? Yeh, you

know there was bother. Trouble even. You saw it on the telly, but you got used to switching it off. You got away to the sun for as long as you could when the summer madness took off.

I don't know what to do about Option D.

All I'm saying is we're not all victims and we're not all perpetrators and I have to see how the truth of the past affects me. And if I want to go into it, let it be because I want to survive. I don't want to wallow in it all the rest of my days and be a burdensome, bothersome old man who spilled his past into the future and spoiled it.

I'm not innocent. I'm not naive. I've seen a thing or two. Done a thing or two. Option C. And I'm angry. too.

(*Agitated.*) Oh! Danny boy, the pipes, the pipes, the pipes, the pipes, the pipes, the pipes.

Did none of you bring grapes? Isn't that what you're supposed to do? Bring grapes. Or a bottle of Lucozade? Did none of you even think to smuggle me in a drink? Ah, don't worry about it. Can't have it anyway. Have to be sober for this.

I went into the Panel and I said, hold your horses. Grab the reins there, partners. Let's get the politics sorted out first. Get the old guns and government stuff in the bag before we go down the truth recovery road.

They didn't like that. They want the whole thing over and done with. And so do I, but the problem is our past is not like anywhere else. We're at a kind of jagged stalemate here. It must be the longest endgame in the world. No check. No checkmate. Just stale, stale, stale. (*Beat.*) Mate.

We start throwing truth recovery in among all that and who knows where it could go. Boom! Boom! Ka-boom! Check and mate and goodbye. Danny boy! See you again in another thirty-odd years.

Forget about it? Is that what you want me to do? Just forget about it. Just let the past wander off somewhere and get lost in the woods, so we can all forget about it.

Until the day the children come running out of the trees, their eyes bulging, their teeth chattering, their little hearts jumping out of their chests, screaming Lion! Lion! Lion! The dead abound! The Lion is awake!

The Lion is awake and he's dripping wrongs and memories and he's yowling for vengeance and he's picking up the children in mouthfuls and tossing them this way and that, so that they turn one upon another in their panic and begin to maul and wreck and trample, hurt and beat each other and once more *they* become the Lion and it's as if we, you and me, never lived at all. Never hoped that our lives could be better. Never said to ourselves, let's get things sorted. Once and for all.

They must be off their heads if they think I'm going to go through with it. They can't force me. No one can. I won't participate.

Pause.

I know. The complications. And the children. I keep coming back to them. The children.

He looks up as if he hears voices around him.

Will you not give me peace?

The dead abound, the dead, the dead, the dead, the dead,
the dead.

A spasm of pain hits him.

I expected more.
They're supposed to be professionals, upholding the law.
They shot me down with it.
Here's your law and order.
Rat-tat tat-tat tat.

They lied about me.
They said I had a rifle, loaded and cocked.
So they had to fire at me
As an act of self-defence.
Rat-tat tat-tat tat.

I had no rifle.
Twenty years old, an upright working man.
I paid taxes.
I paid for the bullet that killed me.
Rat-tat tat-tat tat.

They proved nothing.
Just made claims, shut up shop and got on with it.
Closed ranks, closed the file.
Kept doing it.
Rat-tat tat-tat tat.

So what now, then?
It was thirty-odd years ago, too late to uncover.
The forensics were negative.
The moths ate the file.
Rat-tat tat-tat tat.

Someone should stand up.
Someone needs to say it was wrong, all those years ago.

Say it won't happen again
Even though it does.
Rat-tat tat-tat tat.

Not just anyone.
I mean top dogs, people with position and power.
Who have the file and the law.
You know who I mean.
Rat-tat tat-tat tat.

Okay, I'm fine. The restless dead are with us. (*Beat.*) Just
give me a second.

Scene 8

I'm glad you came. You've made me reconsider. The
dead deserve the respect. I know that. But I won't be
having the truth cut out of me for them. If I do it, I'll
be doing it for the children. So they won't have to. So
the record can be made and set in stone. Gravestones.
Tombstones. Milestones of history that are behind us.

Who am I kidding? (*Laughs.*) Acting like I've got it all
worked out. Acting like I'm as right as rain about this
whole truth recovery process. I am not. But I will go
under it. Some day. And in a whole variety of ways.
Because if what this is about is closure – this being the
end of the thing – then I want to be sure they get it all.
So I can survive. Scarred, scared, battered, red raw and
ravaged. Show my face. Call my name. Daniel. Out of the
Lion's den. Daniel. Oh! Danny. Danny boy.

Sings.

Oh! Danny boy, the pipes, the pipes are calling
From glen to glen and down the mountainside.

Scenes from an Inquiry

No. 1 A Cartography

Counsel You say you heard the shot while you were in the van?

Witness Yes.

Counsel Did you get out then?

Witness Yes.

Counsel And would you say the shot came from the east?

Witness I'm not sure.

Counsel (*To technicians.*) Can we have map M104.3 on the screen? Thank you. (*To Witness.*) You said you were near the junction of William Street and Rossville Street? Did the shot come from the east of this position?

Witness The sun rises in the east. I know it comes up over the park and the river and, if there's no fog, we see it.

Counsel Quite.

Witness Then it rises above the city, crosses The Diamond and heads out the river before vanishing behind low hills.

Counsel In the west?

Witness Between Creggan and Killea. Your map doesn't stretch over the ground. It doesn't contour into the spaces, the hollows, the crevices and humps that make a city.

The summers gone, and all the roses falling,
'Tis you, 'tis you must go and I must bide.
But come ye back... (*Breaks down.*)

Speaks.

But come ye back.

No, it's okay. I know the dead are never coming back. I never could manage the high notes.

'Tis I'll be here. In sunshine or in shadow.

Oh! Danny boy, the pipes, the pipes, the pipes, the pipes indeed.

And the winter hushed and white with snow, covering us all in a blanket I will lift, if only to let in a feeble light.

Can you hear them? The gentle dead? Never coming back.

Okay, I'll talk to the Panel again tomorrow. I'll tell them that we've had this chat. Best to keep them informed. Keep everybody on board as they say. Yeh. Let's try to get some sleep and then in the morning, we'll see. Because, you know, it'll be different in the morning. We'll all be stronger. For facing the past full-on, so our children can have their future. They'll have their own hurts, but let's be honest now, we don't want to bequeath this stuff to them, do we?

(*Gets up to leave.*) No. No need. I'll make it all right. Thanks for coming to visit.

Yeh.

I'll talk to you tomorrow.

Yeh.

Tomorrow.

Danny leaves.