

ROOTS MENTAL HEALTH

Roots is a place for people with mental health problems.
Only Roots can help us all relax and give us reassurance.
Open everyday, five days a week and run in an orderly manner.
Teaching different courses to individual groups of people.
Some people prefer art, woodwork, sewing or creative writing.

Many people cannot read or write, but Roots is here to help us all.
Everyone gets on with one another so making friends is easier.
Nobody is ignored by any members of staff or colleagues.
Talking to each individual privately helps build confidence.
All the staff are here to help all people develop new skills.
Letting people discover how to achieve different goals, helps.

However, many people may not need certain help, but guidance.
Each individual chooses his or her subject on whatever they like.
All the staff at Roots are genuine and very thoughtful,
Looking and listening - aware of our needs,
Taking time to explain to each individual or group things they can do.
Happy-go-lucky, down to earth, and all very pleasant staff.

Alan McKittrick

Writing from Workshops

run by the **Windows Project** at

The Roots Trust

1996 - 97

Artwork by Roots Trust Art Group

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DON'T WASTE YOUR TIME

My mother and father said, "Pat, don't waste your time on street corners, find a nice girl and settle down."

"Ah, but Ma", I said, "I want to see more to life than that.

Tomorrow I am travelling to the Lisburn estate, and if I went to a cafe called Minny's we could maybe find something more to life there."

"What's to be found in life there son?" Ma said.

"That cafe could sponsor me to be a real footballer. When I'm famous and a rich man, the top footballer in Ireland maybe, I'll marry the most beautiful and wonderful girl in Ireland, Ma."

Sue Mulholland

NUMBER 18

Number 18 Hampden Road. The door slams with a rattle of the letter-box and knocker. Dogs bark and breathe heavily with excitement. The air is cold and sharp so the dogs' breath comes out in a white vapour. A car moves down the road trailing sparks behind from a broken exhaust pipe. The dogs look on warily. On the gentle evening breeze, autumn leaves fall, gold, red, brown: colours floating down.

The dogs pull eagerly on their leads, sniffing keenly at the tall lampposts and red postbox.

On the other side of the road, two teenage boys come racing along the pavement on multi-coloured bicycles, shouting and laughing, causing a man and woman, walking together, to hastily part. The man shakes his fist and curses loudly at the energetic youths who speed off into the night.

On the corner the dogs' ears prick up, tongues hanging out, their tails beating as they strain on their leads.

Terry McGee

THE BICYCLE

I bought a bike, a long time ago;
it only cost ten pounds or so.

It made me feel so fit and proud;
we travelled faster than the clouds.

It was there for me each day;
it really was my friend I'd say.

Now like a boneshaker, can't you see?
makes you wobbly, don't you agree?

It's lost its charm and its chain as well:
it's got no lights or even a bell.

Also missing is the pump:
you probably think it belongs on a dump.

Alan McKittrick

SPRINGTIME

Spring is the time of year
when daffodils and crocuses appear.
From their flowerbeds they slowly rise
heading for the sunlit skies.
Spreading rapidly each and every day,
pushing all the grey clouds away.
Colours of yellow, blue and red -
now they've grown from their flowerbed.
All so wonderful, beautifully bright:
standing proudly in the spring sunlight.

Alan McKittrick

SUMMER SEASON

Spring has passed and summer's here.
Dull clouds are gone, the sky is clear.
We're off to the beach in a crowded car,
joining the masses from near and far.
Onto the sand and into the sea,
the kids shout and scream, laughing with glee.
Stuffing their mouths with chips and ice-cream
while the grown-ups wonder, what does it mean -
coming back here, year after year,
to the same sad faces bloated with beer.

Ray Ambrose & Terry McGee

WELSH FARM

The outbuildings of the farm have been rebuilt into
seperate houses.
Welsh voices on the main road outside sound harsh.
Cattle mooing in the square one-acre fields round the white
painted farm.
Alex, the golden labrador, barking madly at the cars going
past.
Eggs and bacon cooking for breakfast in the big warm
kitchen.
The cats are sleeping on the chesterfield in the living room.

Edwin Jones

APPARITION

I'd never seen a ghost before, but one night in the woods I'd been to the caravan to sleep there all weekend.

I woke up in the middle of the night. I heard something banging on the doors and windows of the caravan. I looked out of the window but nothing was there.

No birds, no dogs, no cats, no rabbits. I thought it was a ghost. I could hear something moving in the trees.

I got back into bed. My nerves had gone. I could feel blood beating in my stomach.

David O'Brien

AUTUMN FALL

Autumn leaves fall gently down
from the treetops to the ground.

The whistling wind blows strong that day;
leaves dance around the streets and play
like children running in a ring
who shout and play and laugh and sing.

Alan McKittrick

WINTER SETTING

Autumn's gone and winter's here:
the snow is falling everywhere.

Children's hats, red and green,
set this chilly winter's scene.

Playing gladly in the snow
makes their toes and fingers glow.

Building snowmen - which one's best? -
as the sun sinks in the west.

Alan McKittrick, Terry McGee & Ray Ambrose

BAR `L' CAFE

Shivering from the cold Jack sought refuge in the `Bar L' cafe. As he passed through the door the warmth hit Jack in such a way as to make his skin tingle. His hands, face and ears soon turned a rosy red from the heat.

Jack ordered the breakfast special and a mug of tea. The aroma of frying sausage and bacon was enough to make Jack's stomach rumble and he glanced at the kitchen door impatiently.

From behind the counter fleeting shapes could be seen through clouds of steam, as waitresses hurried to and fro collecting orders and returning used plates and dishes, the sound of which was a constant background noise.

People chattered in animated voices about sport, shopping and local events mentioned in the newspapers.

After what seemed like an eternity but was in fact only minutes, Jack's breakfast arrived and he was able to then settle down and enjoy a much needed hot meal before scurrying back out into the carpet of grey slush which covered the street.

Terry McGee

NIGHT TIME

It is night time.
The girls are going
to their friends'
to talk about clothes
and listen to music.
They are waiting for a bus.
It is cold.

Liz Ogara

He passes Old Tom and waves his hand,
another memory from the past,
for he and Tom once joined a band,
but like most things it didn't last.

As he nears a tenement block
he hears the sound of lads playing.
His mind is on an imaginary clock.
No thanks, he says, I'm not staying.

They're kicking a ball, all eight of them,
just like he did long ago;
one lad shoots, "It's in, it's a gem,"
they shout as the ball flies low.

No time to stand or stare or talk
these days as time flies by.
He turns around and starts to walk
through streets with a wistful sigh.

Ray Ambrose

TENEMENT WINDOW

He looks out of his tenement window
and sees all the emptiness before him.
Was it all so long ago
that crowds filled the streets below him?

The memories come flooding back to him,
he nods his head and smiles:
those were the days he called grim;
and now his thoughts run wild.

"What happened to Mabel, Meg and Maria?"
He fondly pictured them now;
"Oh why couldn't they all be here
each taking their own love vow?"

Maria, he knew she'd moved out of town,
the sensible one of the three.
Mabel and Meg, he thought with a frown,
would stay and never be free.

"Don't think back to long ago,
the world won't stop for me.
I've got to get out, forget feeling low,
come back to reality."

Out the door and down the road,
at last he's made a start.
Dropping the past like a heavy load,
he walks with a song in his heart.

THE FARM

Everyday I go to the farm. I work with the horses - Max and Sam. Trisha works there as well.

I wet down the horses and wash them with water and soap to get rid of nits. It takes about ten minutes to wash a horse.

One girl stroked Max then rubbed her eye and she got a sore eye. She had a nit in her eye!

David O'Brien

THE WOMAN IN THE PARK

The woman of the park is running,
saying `Hello' to everyone.

Everybody loves to see her

Wondering about the time at one.

R. Orr

HEAT

I woke up earlier than usual; the heat hung like a heavy blanket in my bedroom, and although the window was wide open, there was no breeze at all.

Upon leaving the house the fierce glare from the sun was enough to make my eyes water and almost instantly my skin was covered in a film of perspiration - I need not have bothered taking a shower!

The streets were filled with people wearing brightly coloured T-shirts and shorts, moving about quite slowly.

The sun flashed like daggers off windows and off the chrome bumpers of all the cars. On every available bench people sat drinking thirstily from cans and bottles.

Pedestrians crossing the roads were surprised to find that, due to the intense heat, the tar on the road was melting and sticking to the soles of their shoes, and the pavements became covered in black shoe prints.

Terry McGee