



U3A Melbourne City Script Writing Group Recent Works - Monologues

RR2020_U3A_Recent Works_Monologues

[Music]

Welcome to the Victorian Seniors Festival, Radio Reimagined in 2020. This project has been produced on the lands of the Woi Wurrung and Boon Wurrung peoples of the Kulin Nation. We pay our respects to Elders, past, present and emerging, and welcome all First Nations people listening today.

As part of our music series, please enjoy some monologues from the U3A Melbourne City Script-writing group. In this episode, you'll hear the following stories: *A Certain Kind of Man* by Ron Irwin, *If Only* by Maureen Inkster, *A Sister* by Toni Purdy and *Pandemic Blues* by Caz Myles.

These stories were recorded by the participants themselves, at home, during lockdown on their personal devices.

A Certain Kind of Man By Ron Irwin

A day like any other.
An ordinary day, you might say.
That bright morning sun shone.
Caught my eye, through a chink.
A chink in the curtain you see.
Shielding my eyes with my arm.
My smart-phone alarm goes off.
Rolling over to one side.
My good side, you say.
Fumbling with the screen.
Silencing the intrusion, I lay back.
Laying back on my back.
Stretched out, staring at the ceiling.
Thinking, thinking, thinking.
Another workday done.
More of the same.
Insanity, headless chickens.
More of the same.
Chasing, those blue-arsed flies.

We all laughed so hard.
Until our sides ached.
So funny really.
When you consider the condition.

She found herself in.
Trying so hard, just to get on.
Not the way. I told her, you know.
So funny, considering.
She told me, to mind my own business and
She knew what she was doing.
No one looking out for you.
In this place. This work-place.
So funny really. Tears in our eyes.
Till our sides ached.
Laughing, laughing, laughing.

You were always good to me.
In your own way, of course.
Of course you were, always? Good to me?
It was the deal, wasn't it?
I mean you agreed, didn't you?
You really had no choice of course. Neither did I.
Now, coming to think of it.
Coming to think of it, now? How absurd!
We should have been thinking!
Thinking, not just feeling.
Eating each other up.
Like there was no tomorrow.
Touching, touching, touching.

Let's sit here on the grass.
You agreed, held my hand. So soft, so gentle.
Wasn't it?
There we two, holding hands.
Like it was yesterday.
I feel it, all, in my mind.
The lightness of your touch.
Your breath on my naked shoulder.
The sound of your voice.
Singing in my ears.
Like there was no tomorrow.
No yesterdays either.
That yellow sun illuminating.
The chink of your half parted. Lips, your half-parted smile.
Laying there, breathing in the sky.
Coupling, coupling, coupling.

On the street, on my way.
A homeless man grabbed.
My arm, 'good day mate'. Like he hadn't a care.
Offering me his hand. Black and rough.
Honest and dirty.
I shake this man's hand.
You're incredulous, you might catch something.
How could you? Your lip, curling at the edge.

Anger glowing in your eyes.

Those eyes that draw me in.
To your world, to your heart.
Had I taken a serpent to your bed?
Brought a demon. To your house?
I knew you, inside and out.
Was I mistaken?
Mistakes garnered for a future.
Reckoning, all failures, all errors.
Tallied, tallied, tallied.

I go to my garden, often, now.
A bit of greenery, you see.
Good for one's mental health, they say oh?
Don't they?
Well, I don't care much these days.
What they say or don't say, really?
Don't care for much either.
Well not, too much, anyhow.
The news and the views.
Really, seem like I've heard it all before.
That's the problem.
Isn't it? Haven't we all? Really?
I despair for you. Sometimes, to be honest.
Here! Look, how soft these petals?
Looking, looking, looking,

I see a man in a painting.
Rough hewn and proud.
Axe in hand standing amidst.
The Mountain Ash, those tall tree ferns.
A woman, staring off far, into the distance.
A wagon, a billy, a campfire.
A new land, a new world.
Land here for the taking, empty.
Not the world of the village.
Fearful and alien is this land.
Soon to be rid of all its foreign.
Things, conquered by the axe and.
A certain kind of man.
Destroyer of worlds.
Am I that man?
That certain kind of man?
Do I look into your eyes and see the village square, the green?
The men in their whites?
You planted your boot firmly into this soft ancient ground.
Prospering, prospering, prospering.

You might say, it was a day like any other, an ordinary day.
The morning sun broke through.

Shielding my eyes, I reached out.
To hold you, draw you close.
Turning to me, your good side, I know.
Smiling, smiling, smiling.

[Music]

If Only
By Maureen Inkster

(In the voice of a young teenage girl)

It's not that I don't like being a girl. I do. It's just that I've always wanted to do blokey things. I love doing things with my Dad. He's a baker, so I don't get to spend much time with him. He's either working or sleeping! Dad says that when I was a toddler, I carried a plastic hammer everywhere!

I still carry a hammer. I can fix most things with a hammer. Mum often hears the banging coming from the shed and she shrugs her shoulders and says, "that'll be Chris fixing something!". Mum thinks I'm odd. She doesn't understand that all girls aren't like her. I'm different.

I was born into this family of girls, you see. I have sisters, cousins and aunts and then there's Dad. I'm surrounded by females but I'd love nothing more than for Dad to spend more time with me and take me camping or fishing or anything really but he has to work silly hours!

Everyone thinks I'm a tomboy because I spend most of my time hanging out with the boys in the neighbourhood. I love kicking a football around the oval. I don't like girly things or anything remotely feminine, even when it comes to clothes, so I always wear shorts. And I love to play footy. It's such a great game. It's fantastic.

And I like boys too. I mean I really, really, really, like Jason. He likes me too. I can tell. He tried to kiss me behind the changing rooms after a game of footy last week. I was too shy. I will kiss him back next time. I scored the best goal last week and Jason was the first one to congratulate me after the siren. He said I played a blinder!

When Richmond won the AFL premiership last year, I was thrilled to bits and speechless. Dad was working and Mum was in the kitchen. Neither of them was even remotely interested. "Was it a good game?", Mum asked. A good game – it was an extraordinary game especially when Picket scored his goal. I couldn't contain my excitement - they didn't understand. I talked to Jason afterwards. He understood. He's a Tigers supporter too. We both love what Peggy O'Neal has achieved at Richmond – the first woman President of an AFL Club. She has succeeded in a man's world. So can I.

Now, I'm at an age where I have to decide on a future career and Mum is encouraging me to pursue a career in the healthcare sector. She probably wants me to be a Nurse. Me, a nurse, never! How can I tell my mother that I want to be a plumber? I keep telling her that I want to fix things. I've always wanted to fix things.

There are pliers, screwdrivers, cutters, hammers and even a monkey wrench in the shed. Someone should use these things. Dad doesn't. He's either baking or sleeping! I know - the whole family jokes about the fact that I fix everything with a hammer! I don't care.

We had a leak under the sink in the bathroom the other week. Dad was asleep, of course, and Mum didn't know how to turn the water off at the mains. When the plumber arrived I had to show him

where the stopcock was. He told me then that one day I would make a great apprentice plumber. I was chuffed.

How I wish that just one member of my family would understand that I want to do boy things. The other day, Mum brought up the subject of gender dysphoria. I ask you. What do I have to do to convince her that I'm perfectly happy? I'm not gender fluid - I simply want to pursue a profession in a male dominated occupation. That combined with the fact that I've never felt comfortable in a dress. How can I make my family understand? Surely, it's not that difficult.

Mum must think I want boys' bits – a sex change operation or something! I don't want anything like that! I don't even understand that stuff. I just don't like make-up and painted nails and Dior handbags! I have no interest in that but that doesn't mean I don't like being a girl. I'm really comfortable with my body. In fact, I love my body.

I like my long hair and my blue eyes too. In fact, I like all of me. I'm just misunderstood. I'm not your stereotypical girly girl, I suppose!

Jason understands that all girls don't dress provocatively and paint their faces and their finger nails! Jason loves to watch me play footy and I know Dad loves to watch me too. It's such a pity that he's always working. Bakers like Dad work such odd hours and they are usually asleep during the day. It's during the day that things go wrong and need to be fixed. Maybe that's where I got interested in all this stuff. I didn't want to wake my Dad. He needs his sleep.

I feel out of place in my family. Maybe life would have been better if I'd had a brother but that wasn't meant to be. I know that Mum and Dad love me in their own way. Mum just doesn't understand me. I think Dad does.

Mum can't understand a girl who wants to be a plumber. A girl who wants to fix things! Wish I could fix the world. It sure needs fixing!

A Sister
By Toni Purdy

[Music playing: Ella Fitzgerald, *Taking a Chance on Love*]

Is that Ella he's playing again? If it's not Ella, it's Miles Davies or Dizzy Gillespie.

What's that? She's asking for a sister again. In that 5 year old brain, it beats me how she figures she wants a sister. Aren't the kids across the road enough? Not the same, I guess. Now, they are talking about going to the Far West Home in Sydney. Let's try adoption, I hear them say.

I don't see another girl, so that wasn't successful. My guess is they are too old to adopt.

[Music playing: Glen Miller, *Moonlight Serenade*]

Now she's playing a Glen Miller classic. Don't you find it interesting that a woman of the '90s has a passion for jazz of the '40s.

These last decades, I thought she'd given up on the idea of a sister but then her Dad died and out of nowhere, popped a sister. Well, not really out of nowhere. I heard them reading the newspaper – something to the effect of "survived by wife, son and two daughters". "Who is this other daughter?", the guy she married asked. She had no idea.

Her Mum wasn't much help, either answering question in no more than monosyllables. Who is this person? How old is she? What does she look like? Why don't I know about her?

[Music playing: Billy Holiday, *I'm Pulling Through*]

That's Billy Holliday she's playing now. Seems appropriately melancholy. Her Mum died a few days ago. Now, she's got her own daughter and they are having her baptised tomorrow. Two of her aunts arrived for the ceremony, one of them her Dad's sister. I hear her ask if she knows anything about this other person who is supposedly her sister. "Of course I do, dear, what would you like to know?"

"She's 11 years older than you, lives in Melbourne, your Dad left her mother when she was 3".
"Why?". "She wasn't a pleasant woman. You must remember that this was the period between the Depression and the 2nd World War. Food was scarce, there was a lot of unemployment. Your Dad used to go with your uncle out into the country, rabbit trapping. It was their way of providing for their families".

"How does this relate to Dad leaving her mother?". "She accused your Dad of being a womaniser. She was relentless in her nagging. A bitter, jealous woman. Eventually, he couldn't take it any longer. He left".

"So why didn't I know about this sister?"

"Her mother told your Dad that if he walked out the door, he would never see his daughter again".

It seems she met her sister. Her aunt arranged the meeting. They hit it off and the resemblance was unmistakable. She asked her aunt if their mothers were alike. "Not in the slightest", she said. Yet they weren't like their Dad either. Not in looks, anyway. It had to have been their hair. Both having it permed into Afro curls.

They had a lot of catching up to do, learning about the lives they lived, their husbands, children, work.

Sadly, the sisters drifted apart not more than two years after they'd met. Their common thread being their father. The father she knew as loving and generous, her sister only knew as a despicable womaniser.

[Music playing: Glen Miller, *In the Mood*]

Isn't that Glen Miller's big band playing "In the Mood"?

The last time they bumped into each other was in Merimbula. At a jazz festival. Their Dad may have been many things. One of them, a lover of jazz.

Whether she likes it or even recognises it, the sister she'd always wanted, just like she, had inherited that love of jazz.

Today, she uses Spotify. What will she choose? Not Billy Holliday. Not Ella or Miles either. A good choice – mmm ... smooth and mellow - Cleo Laine.

Pandemic Blues
By Caz Miles

Della ... Married woman in her sixties, living in a suburban apartment near the city. Husband overseas at present.

[Singing: *Covid nineteen* to the tune of "Horror Movie" by Skyhooks]

[Singing: *Covid nineteen, right there on my TV, Covid nineteen right there on my TV, Covid nineteen right there on my TV, shocking me right out of my brain!*]

Yeah ... that's right, shocking me right out of my poor little brain! I hate this pandemic! This horrible, hellish virus, changing all of our lives! Bloody depressing!

And it's still spreading! Every day, we get the latest victim count! In comparison to other countries, we're lucky! Just under two hundred deaths! Not so lucky if you're one of them! I feel sorry for the families who've lost someone. They'd still be alive if good old Covid hadn't arrived!

Where's my bottle of red?

[Clink, pouring wine]

Aah... [sipping] that's better! Mmm ... good brew this. Couldn't survive without a little "pick me up..."

Where was I? Yes, all those poor people. Swept away by Mr over-friendly Grim Reaper! The tap on the shoulder you don't want to get! Stabbed with his scythe then sucked into oblivion! Mass graves world-wide ... heartbreaking! No wonder people are scared! I'm scared!

The authorities are doing their best ... stay home, they say ... cough into your elbow, social distancing, wear a face mask and wash your hands! My skin is red raw from continuous washing! Ah ... pass the hand cream please! Good thing it was on special last week. I have this nasty habit of picking at dry skin! My husband Mike always notices and says, "Pick, pick, pick ... you won't have any skin left!". Oh well, he's not here to keep an eye on me, but there's his portrait on the bench. Hi Mike!

My new hobby is sewing face masks and making a fashion statement with them! I feel funny walking around incognito, but everyone's wearing them now. It's like being a member of a tribe!

Dear Mike is stuck in Ireland, visiting his Mum. The pandemic hit and Australia closed its borders! "To stop the spread," they said. Now poor Mike is stranded! Don't know when he'll return. He's ringing airlines day and night to get a seat! Doesn't matter what route, even a roundabout one would do. Thankfully, we can still talk over the internet. Gee, I miss him!

I didn't go this time. Thought I'd stay and 'keep the home fires burning'. Continue visiting our cute little granddaughter! Babies grow so quickly. She's a ray of sunshine! Brings a smile to my dial every time!

We endured the nine-week lockdown here in Victoria. Thought we'd beaten the virus, but it got away again. Like that racehorse, Winks, galloping down the straight! Now we have another shutdown, to put the genie back into the bottle! I hope we can.

Unemployment's rising, businesses are stretched! People are getting desperate and some are struggling with mental illness!

I'm depressed! Living alone is lonely! We're not supposed to visit anyone! My world is shrinking around me! Mike, where are you? Wish you were here! Where's that bottle of red? Here we go ... [another sip] mmm ...

We're searching for a vaccine. This virus is like a psychopath, striking people in their area of weakness! At night, I watch the news and the Covid count! That's my day and week! Repetitious, but I'm alive! Alive!

Mike and his Mum are fine! My friends and family are kicking on, not the bucket! Oh no, no one I know is pushing up daisies or sick yet! We're blessed! So, it's, "so far so good and steady as she goes!" Amen!

[Singing to the tune of "Horror Movie" by Skyhooks]

"Covid 19 we're gonna beat you, Covid 19 we're gonna beat you, Covid 19 we're gonna beat you, Drop you right onto your head!"

I hope it's soon too, hic ... ahh... [sipping the wine]. Good brew this... Helps me let go of those pandemic blues!

Time's getting on. Will I ring someone, go for a walk, sew another face mask or shop? Decisions, decisions. I'm a micro-manager now!

[Music]

You've been listening to the Victorian Seniors Festival, In The Groove, Radio Reimagined in 2020. Thank you to Ron Irwin, Maureen Inkster, Toni Purdy and Carol Myles from the U3A Melbourne City Script-writing group, who've shared their stories today. This radio program was produced by the Radio Reimagined production team. Producer, Rob Gebert; Creative Director, Nat Grant; Technical Director, AC Hunter; and Post-Production Director, Michele Vescio

[Music]