

Nina Kane, *Wallpaper - Roses - Reposes*, Master's in Writing for Performance, University of Huddersfield, April 2008.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

The author warmly thanks the University of Huddersfield Drama Department for the Master's in Writing for Performance, and for the bursary supporting my attendance on this course. I thank Tim Moss for his excellent development of the course, and the lecturers and mentors whose advice and encouragement helped me along the way: Linda Taylor, Judith Adams, Deborah Levy and Carola Luther. I extend additional thanks to Deborah Levy for her wise and insightful mentorship on the writing of this, for her warmth in encouraging me to extend its poetic languages, for validating my impulses with regard to the risks of the work and for encouraging me to go deeper into those risks and find out why they were necessary to take. Thank you for your calmness, your intuitiveness, your willingness to talk things through and for your kindness. I thank Deborah Middleton and the University of Huddersfield for the administration of the course. I additionally thank the Arvon Centre at Lumb Bank for a very intense and unusual week in February 2008, and for providing a supportive writerly space very different from anywhere I have encountered. I will remember the sound of the rain in the shed pods and the warmth of the hot water bottles for a long time. This play would not have been written had it not been for my fellow students on the MA 2007-2008 programme. Their courage, kindness, generosity, warmth and willingness to risk their work and speak honestly on mine was nurturing, challenging and healing, and part of me loves you all and hopes you are all well in the world wherever you are. Thanks to my extended family who provided me with inspiration for this play. Lastly, thanks and love to Jules, Dante and Emily for being there xxx
June 2014.

Wallpaper - Roses - Reposes

by

Nina Kane

Cast List

Rosita: Irish woman in her 80s, suffering from dementia, in care home

Regimenthe: English man aged 79 or whatever age the director wants to make him as he has 'passed over' but is onstage for most of the play

Cast Iron: aged mid-fifties, eldest daughter of the above, runs an advertising agency, Mother to Teepee

Salvata: 2nd daughter, mid-fifties, teacher, married, 3 kids

Eleusis: 3rd daughter, late-forties, married with 7 kids

Scrap: Youngest daughter, mid-40s, unmarried, writer, no kids

Teepee: Cast Iron's daughter, early 30s, runs an organic food shop

Amy: Rosita's niece

Farther: Catholic priest, in his 80s

Voice From the Hearth: ghost of a dead child living in the chimney

Bird-at-Dawn: he who spins feathers and speaks for the dead

Old Aggie: ghost of an old woman living in the washing machine

Swill: Dog, a loyal old Bassett Hound, aged 56

smallprint: Estate Agent, in his early 20s

This is a 3-cycle play, intended to run for hours at an all-day and if necessary all-night performance. It is suggested that the full cycle is repeated three times back-to-back, and that whilst there are intervals between 1&2 and 2&3, the action of the play from 3-1 should be unbroken. I would also suggest that the audience are free to come and go as they wish throughout the performance.

Notes on Cycle 1.

The repeated words that appear as a chant in the opening section 'Tapet' etc are words for wallpaper, both as a noun and verb, in different European languages. I would recommend / it is my writing intention that they be read in the actors' natural tone of voice as a spiritual chant, rather than accorded linguistically-defined accents. Of course the director / actor should interpret them as she or he wishes and find what works best for their production.

Cycle 1: Wallpaper

The scene opens in a living room. There is an open fire and a crucifix over the chimney breast. The room is in a state of re-decoration with wallpaper partially stripped off the walls. **Salvata** and **Teepee** strip wallpaper, scraping with concentration, and pulling reams of it off with gusto. **Cast Iron** sits in front of a computer, impatiently tapping as she waits for it to open up. **Eleusis** wanders in and out carrying cardboard boxes. She stacks them on one side of the room.

Regimenthe sits in a corner, side-on to the audience. He has passed over, but returns frequently to his family home to sit in his favourite chair, watch telly and suck polo mints. **Swill** lounges at his feet. The sound is turned down and the television has permanent 'snow' on it. Intermittently the TV comes into focus and we see **Rosita** in the care home through it. The screen shows a pale blue interior, bare save for a large mirror, a single vase of flowers and a floral armchair. Rosita wears a pale blue dressing gown. She is the only person present on the screen.

Regimenthe and **Swill** are the only ones who can see Rosita through the telly screen. The women are unaware of Regimenthe's presence.

The opening 9.08 minutes of the play is performed to a piece of music - *Winsor Blue* from the album 'Burnt Sienna' by 2nd Outlet (Nuscope, 2004). This piece fades to a radio voice-over and a chant sequence leading to dialogue, as written below. It is important that the sound-score is kept in balance with the activity - a backdrop, allowing for improvised speech / sound from the actors - and played at a level easy for the audience to listen to, with little amplification. The following activity should happen at the following points of the sound-score:

0 - 4.00 mins

Salvate and **Teepee** sponge the walls down with water and strip bits of wallpaper off the walls. **Cast Iron** stares at the computer

occasionally clicking at the mouse. **Regimenthe** sits watching telly.

4.00 - 6.00 mins

Rosita appears on the TV screen seated in the floral armchair. At 6.50 mins she gently tears a piece of the pale blue wallpaper and starts to shape it with her fingers. The TV fades back to 'snow'. All other cast members continue as before.

6.20 - 7.50 mins

Cast Iron taps furiously at the computer in frantic hurry. **Salvate** and **Teepee** pull huge swathes of paper off the walls bringing chunks of plaster off with it. **Eleusis** continues back and forth with cardboard boxes.

7.50 - 9.00 mins

They revert to the action of the 0 - 4.00 mins section. At 9.00 mins the radio voice-over comes in and the *Winsor Blue* music fades.

9.03 mins: There is a radio playing a repeated chant, which the characters recite as if in prayer, meditation or conversation with each other.

Radio: Tapet, tapet a, tapetes, behang, tapetti, tapetai, tapet a, tapet

Regimenthe: My wife wants to put wallpaper on the walls but I would rather paint them.

Radio: Papel de parede

Cast Iron and Radio: papel de parede

Salvate and Radio: Tapetes, tapet

Cast Iron, Salvate and Radio: Tapetes, tapet.

(They continue in silence for a moment. **Cast Iron** taps furiously at the computer keypad. There is a 'ding' as it opens up the software she wants. She appears stressed and in a hurry)

Cast Iron: At last! Behang!

(She types something in. **Teepee** and **Salvate** continue to pull strips of wallpaper off in large chunks)

Eleusis: Por papel de parede!

Salvate: Forrar parede com papel!

Cast Iron: Behangen!

Teepee: Papel pintado

Salvate: Tapetti.

Teepee: Duvar kâğıdı.

Salvate: Veggfoour!

Teepee: Kertas dinding

Cast Iron: Behangen!

Eleusis: Tapeetima.

Teepee: Tapeta, tapet, tapeta, tapet.

Radio: My wife wants to put wallpaper on the walls but I would rather hang them.

Cast Iron: Tapeta, tapet, tapeta, tapet.

Regimenthe, Cast Iron, Salvate, Eleusis, Teepee and Radio: Tapet, tapet a, tapetes, behang, tapetti, tapetai, tapet a, tapet.

(There is a sound of television interference and we see **Rosita** pottering about. She stops and looks closely at the vase as if seeing something reflected in its surface. **Regimenthe** watches her on the screen. The women continue their activities unaware of the picture on the TV)

Rosita: Rose - eat - a.

(The television goes snowy and the sound fades. **Cast Iron** taps furiously at the keypad, stops, reads an e-mail she has written and clicks the mouse with some satisfaction)

Cast Iron: Right! Another job done!

Salvate: Another job done!

Cast Iron: The estate agent is *finally* booked and will be coming round in exactly (she flicks open her diary and looks, then checks her watch) - thirty-seven hours and forty minutes.

Regimenthe: Tick, tick tock!

All: This wallpaper needs *shifting*.

Cast Iron: And it won't do itself so -

All: Get your skates on!

Salvate: And what will you be doing, Lady Muck?

Cast Iron: Running around like a blue-arsed fly!

Regimenthe: Blue-arsed fly.

Cast Iron: Working hard for my pension!

Teepee and Salvate: Pension! So hard!

Cast Iron (to Salvate): We don't all get six weeks holiday you know.

Teepee: Mum -

Salvate: Ha! Don't worry, Sweet Pea, your mother was always jealous of my career and its hard-earned privileges. I'm used to her jibes.

(**Cast Iron** grabs her handbag, takes out a comb, runs it through her hair)

Cast Iron: JJJSH! Ignore your aunty, sweet pea, she was always a dried up old fish -

Salvate: Fisssh, swish...

Cast Iron: Sitting around pool-eyed, glaring at others.

Salvate: You go too far! I work sixty hours a week and I'm damn proud of what I do!

(**Cast Iron** puts her comb, phone, diary and purse into the handbag)

Cast Iron: I only speak the truth. If there's a cushion nearby, you'll warm it! God knows what you'd do if you *really* had to work for a living. Teepee - it took six phone-calls to get Aunty Sal to help you today -

Salvate: I have a bad back, and I -

Cast Iron: Scrap can help with the high bits. Some positivity *please!* Right! I must fly!

All: Copy to write, accounts to organise, money (all blow kisses) - to make!

Cast Iron: (to Teepee) Good luck, sweet pea. (She points to a section of wall Salvate is working on) Trout - you missed a bit! Come on!

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(She exits laughing. **Salvate** stabs her spatula into the wall, and digs at a stubborn bit of wallpaper. **Regimenthe** sighs, unwraps another polo mint and sucks it. **Swill** yelps a bit and settles at his master's feet)

Teepee: She shouldn't have said that to you, about your job. She can be a bit of a cow sometimes.

Salvate: Don't talk about your mother that way, sweet pea, she's an unhappy woman. I have already forgiven her. (she scrapes in silence for a moment) 'Scrap can help' Ha! As if!

Scrap (from offstage): I can hear you!

(There is the sound of teapot and cups rattling)

Teepee: She can hear you.

(The TV screen lights up and we see Rosita again talking to herself)

Rosita: She can hear you, you know, she's there.

Teepee and Salvate: She's there.

(TV back to 'snow'. **Scrap** enters the room carrying a tray of tea)

Scrap: Ok, here comes the tea lady. You'll be parched with all that gossiping. Get it down you! Has Cas gone?

Salvate and Teepee: Yes

Teepee: Can't you hear the silence?

Salvate: Are we not sitting down, *grateful* for the feel of a sofa beneath our bottoms?

Teepee and Salvate: She has, most definitely, gone!

(Enter **Eleusis**)

Eleusis: Did you remember to put sweetener in mine?

Scrap: I did, my dear, I am here to provide for your every whim.

Regimenthe and Swill: Whim!

Teepee: Sweetener gives me a headache.

Salvate: Thank you, Scrap, that's lovely. (Drinks tea)

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Eleusis: I can't believe this is the last time we'll ever decorate this room.

Scrap: It won't feel like home when it's finished.

Salvate: (Points to a bit of green wallpaper peeking out) Do you remember when the lounge was like that, green flock?

Scrap: With the blue blinds and grey carpet! It was like being underwater, even in Summer.

(There is a sound of distant cricket being played)

Salvate: Especially in Summer.

Eleusis: Remember Dad closing them, to keep the sun off the telly

All: So he could watch the cricket.

Regimenthe and Swill: *Keep the darned blinds shut, I can't see the ball!*

Salvate: And him shouting at the box when he watched the old war films

Regimenthe: (sings) *Bang bang - I shot you down!*

All (sing) *Bang bang, that awful sound, bang bang - my baby hit the ground!*

(**Old Aggie** walks in with a bunch of odd socks. She bends down and wedges one under a radiator pipe. She nibbles a hole in another and stuffs it down the side of the sofa. The women are unaware of her presence)

Scrap: Was the room like that when you lived here Teepee?

Salvate: Before her time, surely.

Teepee: No it was like that. I used to love that picture, the one of a lady in a red dress.

Salvate and Scrap: Ooh yes!

Scrap: Dad's Hawaiiin Queen!

Salvate (mock-sings from *South Pacific*): *Bali hai!*

Old Aggie: (sings) *..is calling! Bali Hai...*

(She winks at **Regimenthe** who grimaces in return. She exits)

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Scrap: (joins in)*Bali hai!* Yes, red against puce-green, it was bloody awful! (Scrap passes Teepee the tea)Here take your tea, I put organic honey in it - Manuka - I can do healthy!

Teepee: Great!

Scrap: I bought it from your shop actually. I came in on Wednesday. Thought you could treat me to a veggie roll, but they said you'd gone to lunch with a young man!

Salvate: Aha!

Regimenthe: Young man, eh?!

Salvate: Lunch with a young man, how exciting.

Eleusis: Come on, sweet pea, tell your old aunties - *all*.

Regimenthe: Maybe not all.

Teepee: There's nothing much to tell. It was a lunch meeting really. He's come in to help with the veggie box scheme, and I just wanted to go over some of the orders with him.

Scrap: So where did you do that then?

Teepee: By the canal.

Scrap, Salvate and Regimenthe: The canal!

(Screen shows **Rosita**. She is feeling her way around the walls as if looking for something and talking to herself. Her speech overlaps in part with the dialogue of the others, as does **Regimenthe's** in places)

Rosita: If you go there in Summer...

Scrap: A *picnic* lunch! How romantic! What did you make?

Teepee: Mediterranean roasted vegetable wraps.

Salvate: Very exotic!

Rosita: Some people will bamboozle
you, refusal you, misual
you..

Teepee: He couldn't eat them, I'd put butter in and he's a vegan.

Scrap: Oh.

Rosita: The dog! You've forgotten the dog!

(**Teepee** instantly regrets telling them anything about it)

Salvate: How rude of him not to pretend to like them.

Regimenthe: Pork Chop Hill, Gloster Hill, the Hook...

Teepee: He did like them, he just can't eat dairy

Salvate and Eleusis: Can't eat dairy?

Teepee: He's vegan.

Salvate: He could have pretended the butter wasn't there.

Teepee: He tried. He ate a bit of it.

Scrap and Regimenthe: Sounds a right pain in the backside!

Scrap: What happened to Roger?

Regimenthe: Fairy Roger.

Teepee: Oh, he's - gone. To Thailand. I might see him when he gets back.

(**Teepee** stands up, and pulls wallpaper in big strips off the chimney breast. The aunts look at each other and motion to say nothing. The radio begins to repeat Tapet, tapet a, tapetes, behang, tapetti, tapetai, tapet a, tapet. There is a faint sound of birds twittering from the chimney, and a flap of wings as if a flock of birds has flown quickly up into the air).

Eleusis: Do you remember Mum always moving the rug to that exact spot on the carpet so you couldn't see where I burnt it with the iron?

Regimenthe: I told you to use the ironing board!

(**Scrap** reaches up, pulls a bit of the green wallpaper off and puts it in her pocket.)

Rosita: And were the cracks there then?

Salvate: I'm reconciled to the fact that we're selling the house now. I prayed about it, you know. (Scrap tries to look respectful but is secretly exasperated by this) She won't last forever, it had to happen sometime.

Scrap: But she could move back here! I'd look after her -

Salvate: Don't start, you know it won't work.

Scrap: But we didn't really give it a go.

Regimenthe: Pokang, Hankung, Chosan, chosen..

Teepee: Am I doing this on my own then?

(**Scrap** and **Salvate** pick up a scraper each and scrape at the walls. They work for a moment in silence. **Eleusis** stacks the final box and joins them at the wall. The radio chant, birds and tv image fades)

Salvate: So Roger's flown away to Thailand. Men! And veggie-box Valentino, making such a fuss about a bit o' butter.

Regimente: Salvate -

Salvate (sings): 'Got to getta a betta bit o'butter on yer knife - didn't your mum work on that one?'

Teepee: Yeah, she wrote the jingle.

Eleusis (hisses): Sal!

Salvate: Poor sweet pea. You've had it hard.

Scrap: Shut up Sal.

Salvate: I'm empathising, I know what it's like! She deserves better! (To Teepee) Focus on your career, darling, forget all about men. You should go out and have fun, not cast your pearls before swine!

Scrap: She is having fun. More fun than us.

Eleusis: Lucky sweet pea, two men on the go.

Regimenthe: Lord save us!

Eleusis: You dark horse, you.

Salvate: Trust you to lower the tone!

Teepee: It was only a work meeting. There's no 'two men'

Scrap: That's it! Turn into your mother. Work, work, work. Deny your body, your passion! -

Teepee: Jesus! I wish I hadn't told you!

Salvate: (tuts) These days it's all - bonk, bonk, bonk!

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Scrap: And what's wrong with a young woman having a bit of fun -

Salvate: She's not like you, swinging between Arthur and Martha -

Eleusis: She's *right* to express herself, to embrace her needs, her desires! -

Regimenthe: Desires! Needs!

Regimenthe and Swill: They'll hear you down the front garden!

(Rosita is back on the TV screen. She has moved to the mirror and is peering into it)

Eleusis: (giggles) *Bonk!* Salvate!

(Salvate shrugs. They continue stripping wallpaper and fall to an easy silence. The sound of distant cricket returns. Rosita appears on the TV screen)

Scrap: Do you remember Dad papering that wall? The Summer we had all the ladybirds.

All: It was so hot, you couldn't take your sandals off. You could fry an egg on the pavement. The tar in the roads bubbled, like broth. Children sat, mindless of cars, popping the tar with their fingers. Everybody's clothes were damp, slung like seaweed around chests and legs. And we all smiled. And moved slowly.

Regimenthe: And there were ladybirds everywhere.

(Old Aggie enters and sits near the hearth. She has a bundle of odd socks and pulls or nibbles a hole in each one occasionally rubbing it along the floor to make it more threadbare. She eyes Regimenthe covetously and listens as he speaks)

I stood on the ladder - the room was shimmering, it was so hot. The wall paper dripped with paste. It felt heavy to hold and flopped this way and that, I wobbled on the rung. The flock swam before my eyes

Rosita: Green like a meadow.

Regimethe and Rosita:

If only I could go outside
lay my head in the grass,
feel the cool fronds on my cheek,
the sun holding me close round my shoulders.
If only I could stop and think of - nothing.

Eleusis: Mum came in with the instant coffee. She walked right into the ladder.

Regimenthe and Rosita: *In the name of St Peter!*

Salvate: We came running in and there they were on the floor -

All: All wrapped up in paper and paste. Cocooned together laughing. They suddenly looked like children again. And they said:

Regimenthe and Rosita (talk over each other): Go and play in the sandpit / go and play in the paddling pool / put your bikini on and play with the hose / help yourself to ice-cream and take it next-door to Auntie Joanie's -

Salvate, Scrap and Eleusis: And when we came back later the sitting room door was closed.

(Old Aggie scowls, throws a sock or two up the chimney and feeds one to the dog. She exits.)

And that evening we had chips for tea as a treat, and Mum and Dad kept smiling at each other, and the wallpaper sat on the table for days, and Dad came out -

Regimenthe and Rosita: And played rounders instead.

Regimenthe: Though I got back on the job once the weather turned. You can't leave these things sitting around too long.

(Eleusis runs her hand over the wallpaper)

Eleusis: To think. His hands were here. All over the room. (She pulls a bit of the green paper off to reveal some orange underneath) I can almost feel his fingertips on the wall.

(Rosita moves to the lens of the TV screen and puts her fingers up to the surface peering out directly through the frame)

Scrap: Dead skin cells, fragments of hair, tiny atoms of breath and sweat dried into the glue.

Rosita: Reg! Reg! Are you in there?

Regimenthe: Hallo, love!

Salvate: Remnants of his body, echoes of his touch.

Rosita: Where are you?

All: Dust, dust

Regimenthe: I'm in the house next door, love. By the sea. I've missed you.

Eleusis: All that time

Rosita: I knew you'd go back to the sea.

Eleusis: Falling to the floor like bonfire ash.

Rosita: Where's the house? I don't know where it's gone.

Regimenthe: It's just next door, love, not far.

(Rosita begins to hammer at the TV screen. Regimenthe falls asleep in his chair. The screen goes black. There is silence then we hear Rosita's voice over the radio)

Rosita: There you go, darling, there's Golden Melody for you, and Show Girl, a Tally Ho and a Mrs Sam McGredy. Put it in your buttonhole Charles Gregory. Monique, there's Red Wonder for you, a Tivoli, Pinocchio, a Golden Jewel and Border Coral. How many times can you see another June? How many sweet June blues will you see? The blue of the skies and the blue of your eyes? Tivoli, Pinocchio, sweet Golden Jewel.

(A bundle of feathers falls down the chimney and into the empty hearth. The women speed up with the wallpaper stripping. Regimenthe wakes, then stands next to each of his daughters watching them. In turn he places his hand next to theirs on the wall and pulls at the piece of wallpaper they're working on, helping them tear it off)

Salvate: It's coming more easily now.

Regimenthe: There's something you need to find.

(He helps **Salvate** pull at a large piece of wallpaper and a crucifix falls off the chimney breast with it. The women stop and stare. Written on the plaster underneath in a child's handwriting is the name - AMY).

Salvate: (gasps and crosses herself) It's a sign!

Scrap: It just fell off.

(Teepee picks up the crucifix, cleans it with her sleeve, kisses it, and puts it on the mantelpiece. Rosita is on the screen. She is agitated.)

Rosita: I had a dress like that once. I had one. Have you seen my dress? I've lost it, I've lost my dress.

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(The women look at the chimney breast. A huge crack has appeared in the middle of it. It runs down, and along the side of the fireplace).

Scrap: It's nothing, it doesn't mean anything.

Salvate: But it says 'Amy'.

(Rosita begins to cry silently)

Eleusis: It was a long time ago, anyone could have written it.

Salvate: No, it's Amy. Helen's daughter. (to Teepee) Your nana's sister, the one who drunk herself to death -

Teepee: I remember Amy.

Scrap: You can't.

Teepee: But I do. She had blonde hair and a mole on her cheek. When I lived here with Nana and Gramps, we used to play on our bikes.

Scape: You must be thinking of someone different.

(Salvate, Eleusis and Scrap look at each other)

Salvate: I don't think she knows.

Scrap: Hasn't your mum told you about Amy?

Rosita: (crying) It's gone, my dress, my green dress. I had it somewhere, I don't know where it is.
Did I ever ask your opinion
on anything but velvet?
Did I ever -

(Teepee shakes her head)

Salvate: Amy had gone by the time you were born. She'd be grown up and left home. She was our cousin. Aunt Helen needed to leave -

Scrap: Ran off with a married man.

Salvate: Mum said she'd have Amy.

Rosita: Did I ever ask, and why, in
my quest to understand
the midnight blue of your eyes, did I ever -

Eleusis: We were really poor. Dad was sent to Korea to fight. We got word he was killed. Mum fell apart, she couldn't cope.

Regimente: (crying) My wife wants wallpaper on the walls but I would rather paint them. Tapet, tapet a, tapetes, behang, tapetti, tapetai, tapet a, tapet

(The radio picks up the refrain and repeats it in a low murmur, until the end of the cycle. **Regimenthe** exits)

Salvate: Cast Iron remembers it. There was no food in the house. She asked your nana for a sandwich and got split peas and a knife and fork to eat it with.

Rosita: Crivellated and crenalled
Fritegoed and frascated
If you didn't pay your rent, they'd burn your house down
My wallpaper
Flock to me and the lawns and awnings will be yours
But he'd gone in a soup green dragon
If I allowed myself I could
go on like this all day

Radio: Hamking - Hungnam, poking Chosan, the battle of the golden hook, the land of morning clam, a pestilential area of smells...

Salvate: Mum put the baby in a box. Said she'd parcel her up, send her to Korea in a brown paper package -

Eleusis: Cast Iron went crying to Mrs Leary. She fetched Farther and the doctor. There was no-one else you see, Nanny was in Ireland and Dad's lot were dead so she didn't have anywhere to turn really.

Salvate: She went into hospital, we went to a home - and when we got back, well, they'd given Amy to the young Irish couple who couldn't have children. Farther took on power of attorney, you see, there wasn't anyone else around.

Scrap: And then Dad turned up alive. They'd got the wrong bloke. And they said it was best to leave Amy where she was. So the family just got on with it - in that awful, button-lipped way people did back then!

Salvate: Mum always wondered what had happened to her. I think she felt guilty.

(Rosita sobs on the TV screen).

Eleusis: And then Helen came back. She turned up one night, drunk, demanding to see her daughter.

(The faint flapping of bird wings is heard, and the lonely echo of a seagull's call)

Salvate: And when Mum couldn't tell her where she was, she went and jumped in the canal. She was washed up further down.

Teepee: That's so - awful. Oh God!

Salvate: Mum was convinced she'd see Amy before she died, she always talked about it.

All: She'll come back. Just like Helen.

(The women shiver. The opening phrases of *Winsor Blue* echo around. The women resume the positions they occupied at the start of Cycle 1 and start the opening sequence again. Rosita is seen on the TV screen looking in the reflected surfaces of the vase, the mirror and the TV screen. She looks out from the TV screen and addresses the audience directly)

Rosita: When the pomp and rhythm of
circumstance eludes you
You'll find it eliciting
itself into corners, riveting
you, to attention with its eyes.
If I allowed myself I could
Go on like this all day,
The kids would flail in the pail
The ironing piled high
Would not get done
The buns would burn
Themselves out in the oven
Michigan London Amsterdam
And Tehrannesta
Would fall.

I would get nothing done at all.

Your fine places!
You can't just crunk these words out, you know!

Blasphemy!

How can you explain
How can you explain the -

How many words swirl
Racing around my head?

What is the meaning
Of life after pie?

sweet apple, sweet apple, sweet apple of my eye

Who are these people?
Skip twice and when the rope turns -

Once I had a bundle, a bundle, a bundle,

All: Once I had a bundle, a bundle so fine

Eleusis: The conversations in these walls

Salvate: trapped in plaster for so long

Scrap: Now flying free

Eleusis: The hands that touched these walls

All: Crumbling like pollen

Salvate: Old words from the past

Scrap: We're breathing them anew.

All: My wallpaper.

My wallpaper.

(Sound of flock of birds flapping away, and the chirruping of sparrows)

Radio: My wife wants to put wallpaper on the walls but I would rather hang them. Tapet, tapet a, tapetes, behang, tapetti, tapetai, tapet a, tapet... (fades to sound of aerial interference. TV screen goes to 'snow'. Blackout. Exit players and audience.)

End of Cycle 1.

Notes on Cycle 2 - Roses

General notes:

Much of Cycle 2 revolves around two or more performance languages being presented to the audience at once, and there is an almost constant layering of dialogue set against action, as well as parallel processes of spoken and gestured languages being played out. Sound-play, and the evocation of environment / narrative/emotional timbre through sound is an important feature of this cycle, as is colour. The action and narrative of Cycle 2 shifts imperceptibly between time-frames and repetitions. It requires flexibility, precision and openness-to-flow on the part of the actors. It is useful for the cast to consider Cycle 2 as a large, wild, rambling rose with trails of branches, flowers and buds going everywhere. The bush itself is, however, deeply rooted

in one place, and the cast could explore the tensions and freedoms of this image as a way into the work.

Sound points / Use of British Sign language in Cycle 2:

I am interested in processes of translation and in disrupting the conventional transmission mechanism of written word / actor speech / audience hearing. I want to present the audience with a theatre language that has gaps and multiple resonances, allowing some things to be unheard - a theatrical bi-lingualism which shows / evokes rather than tells. I also want to force the frame of the action to allow the audience to 'hear' things differently and elicit meaning through different use of the senses. With **Voice From the Hearth** and **Bird-at-Dawn** I have created a structure whereby the audience do not hear the text written on the page in spoken English, rather have to elicit meaning for themselves by witnessing a combination of sound, gesture and the conveyance of a written English intention / meaning through non-English language (British Sign Language, and Medieval Gaelic).

Voice from the Hearth and **Bird-at-Dawn** have a symbiotic relationship. They essentially speak 'as one'. **Voice From the Hearth** is unseen and 'speaks' from behind the chimney breast. **Bird-at-Dawn** is visible onstage and uses British Sign Language to communicate their scripted lines, non-vocally. **Voice From the Hearth** communicates through sound alone. I have written a sound text to indicate vocalisation, but this is a prompt only. The intention of the sound is given underneath and **Bird-at-Dawn** translates this intention to the audience physically / gesturally through BSL. The sound, intention and gesture need to be performed together.

Note to Director / Sound / BSL Worker:

I have constructed Voice from the Hearth and Bird-at-Dawn's lines with this internal structure -

Voice From the Hearth (Sound Text):

Voice From the Hearth (Intention, not to be spoken):

Bird-at-Dawn (Intention performed using British Sign Language):

With text lines the emphasis is this -

Voice From the Hearth (ST):tsssh, waaar, tsssh

Voice From the Hearth (I, non-verbal)*I fell asleep*

Bird at Dawn (I, BSL)*I fell asleep*

On the page of the script, it will appear like this -

Voice From the Hearth (ST): tsssh, waaar, tsssh

Bird at Dawn (I, BSL): *I fell asleep*

Essentially the theatre effect will be an abstract sound 'tssh waar' from behind the chimney and a physical gesturing in BSL of the words 'I fell asleep'. At no time will the audience hear the written words - 'I fell asleep'- in spoken English from either character. The intention is shared by both characters, speaking as one. The intention is generated by Voice From the Hearth, and translated by Bird-at-Dawn for her. He must follow her lead in this.

I have constructed Voice From the Hearth's Sound Text on the page as an aural prompt - sometimes as an arrangement of consonants and vowels to be played with, sometimes in Gaelic to be spoken (see note below), sometimes with an associative direction to be interpreted by the performer (given in brackets - eg. flame-like, wind-noise, rainfall) and in the closing sections of the cycle, nearing the spoken word as the character breaks through the chimney - 'chheemney'.

Obviously, the actress and director will develop the sound beyond this and it is my intention that the actress should develop a complete sound language of her own for the part, using the ST and Intention, but also in collaboration with the actor playing Bird-at-Hand and his BSL interpretation of the intention. As British Sign Language has its own language structure there will inevitably be a different process of interpretation happening between the language of the intention on the page and the BSL signing that is performed.

Where Gaelic words are included in the Sound Text, however, it is important that the actress should vocalise these as read. Subsequent sound developments at these points should endeavour to keep the Gaelic words in the structure of the delivery as they function as signifiers in the deeper fabric of the theatre image and have been placed there for reasons beyond their actual sound.

Authorial note to actress playing the role of Voice From the Hearth regarding development of a 'sound language' for the character:

She speaks from behind the chimney breast in a language built of
birds-nests
feathers
trinkets and
brick-dust.

Her voice is a stream of
chirrup, whistles, murmurs,
smoke, brass rumblings,
rain and burning twigs,

she counts stars when she speaks
she looks to the sky
she speaks with the eager milky suck of a baby
feeding at its mother's breast.

Her inner language is poetry and her voice is signed to the audience by **Bird-at-Dawn**. He will use British Sign Language for this purpose.

Develop an expressive vocal language - a 'sound-language' that can convey the essence and emotional timbre of the character's 'Intention' through sound, musicality, percussive uses of the body and poly-vocal play. Become fluent in your own crafted 'sound-language' and use it flexibly to translate and perform **Voice From the Hearth's** 'intention lines' within the script. If you lose your way in this process, return to the authorial note above as a 'touchstone'. Gaelic words must be spoken as read and kept in the performance of the script at their given points.

I would recommend that **Voice From the Hearth** be played live in performance by a performer, rather than a sound-scape being pre-recorded as she needs to have spontaneity, presence and a live (alive)connection to the action and rhythms of the other performers.

Note on Gaelic:

The non-English words are in a literary Irish Gaelic. They form part of a written vocabulary of Irish words occurring in Irish Syllabic Poetry of the 1200 - 1600 period. They should be spoken as read. I have listed a glossary at the end of the play but recommend reading them for sound, rhythm and resonance first and only look at their English translation / 'meaning' after you have finished cycle 3. The poem at the centre of the cycle was written in 1360 by Gofraidh Fionn O Dalaigh and its title translates as 'The Child Born in Prison'. As mentioned in the sound-note above, it is important that the Gaelic words remain in the structure of the play where placed as they have a deeper function in the overall assemblage of theatre languages played out in the work.

Cycle 2: Roses

(The stage is set as before but is lit in red, orange and yellow gradually building to bright daylight as the opening progresses. There are paper roses strewn around and rose petals fall from the 'gods' as the audience re-enter the auditorium. The aesthetics of post-World War II colonial army films informs the lighting/set/costume design of this cycle. Characters are dressed in brown, white, khaki, olive, light blue, peach, mustard-orange, pale pink, and yellow emulating the chromatic scheme of a 1950s medical/military thriller. The roses break the film aesthetic and come from an older time. They are in vibrant crimsons, dark

purples, blues, burgundy and a deep wine red with bottle-green leaves. **Regimenthe** and **Swill** sit facing the audience.

There is a raucous cacophony of tropical birds, squawking and cackling from the chimney breast, punctuated by a violent flapping of wings as the audience enter. Once the audience are seated, **Bird-at-Dawn** rolls onto the stage wings-over-beak. He is followed swiftly by **Old Aggie** who beats the ground behind him with an old hearth rug, shouting - 'Shoo! Shoo!'. **Bird-at-Dawn** scuttles up the chimney, leaving a few feathers floating back down after him. There is a commotion in the chimney which settles to a low murmuring. **Old Aggie** shakes the hearth rug muttering to herself. Enter **Teepee**. She sees the feathers dropped by **Bird-at-Dawn** and picks them up. **Cast Iron** enters and rummages through a box of paper roses scattering them in haste. The squawking of tropical birds fades to a distant murmur and the **Radio** comes in with a low, continuous, chant. **Bird-at-Dawn** creeps back down the chimney and settles close-by).

Radio: ...tolg...tocht...tolg...tocht...tolg...tocht..

Voice From the Hearth: (ST) Fwwwooooo, weeeesh, fffwwwoo

Bird-at-Dawn: (I, BSL)*It's very cold behind here, I don't know when we last had a fire*

(**Cast Iron** finds her mobile at the bottom of the box, kisses Teepee and exits. Teepee tucks Bird-at-Dawn's feathers under her jumper, then kneels at the hearth to clear out the grate)

Old Aggie: Clickety click-click Cast Iron quick-quick! Zooming away to find the words to sell butter. Never had to churn a day's milk in her life. Milking it, though - oh she's great at milking it. *Where does she get her energy from?* That's what Rosita always says. *Where does she get her energy from?*

Voice From the Hearth: (ST)ffwisshh fwoooooo, fffwha..

Bird-at-Dawn: (I, BSL)*From you, Rosie, from you.*

(Old Aggie fetches an ironing board and sets it up. Scrap and Teepee are unaware of her presence)

Old Aggie: I've always been of the opinion - and I've seen a lot of things through this (sneezes)

Voice from the Hearth: (ST)..kechik kechik,kechik...

Bird-at-Dawn: (I, BSL) *pile of bricks and mortar over the years*

Old Aggie: - that Regimenthe isn't telling us something.

(Regimenthe slumps lower in his chair, Swill whines.)

There he sits, sucking on his mints - and the perversity of the fellow -

Voice from the Hearth: (ST)kerchikachangchang, kerchikachang, fwheeeze...

Bird-at-Dawn: (BSL)Stubborn as a boot!

Old Aggie: Well, we never get a straight answer to the question. Take Scrap, now, once she asked him '*Dad, what was it like being so far away from home?*' Now, she was asking about his feelings of course. And he says,

Radio (overlapping with Reg's speech): uallach.. uall-chath .. umha trein-niadh... teagar.. treoir. ..Teagar...trial uall-chath, tiompan tall-od... Tim tigim trocaireach... oig-mhflidh uamhan.. uallach, teann.

Regimenthe: I was called up in 1952 - was it 1952? Our Tommy had gone the year before as he'd turned 18 that December. They sent you down the drill hall to get you all kitted out. No hanging about. They'd boot you up and then they'd boot you off!

(**Scrap** enters as he talks. She places a plate of cakes in front of the hearth, then settles on the sofa to write. Distant sound of a lawnmower).

Old Aggie: To his mind - conversation over. Unwraps his polo mint, sucks it slowly. Meanwhile, Scrap, all ears and heart and waiting for the point says -

Scrap: (spoken)But how did you *feel* about it?

Voice from the Hearth: (ST)chikchikchikchikchikchikchik

Bird-at-Dawn: (BSL) *But how did you feel about it?*

Old Aggie: And he answers.

Regimenthe: All the lads went. It was just what we did.

Old Aggie: And goes back to his telly.

Voice From the Hearth: (spoken)teachta teid-bhinn..sul-ghlas..sur

Bird-at-Dawn: (to audience, BSL)*So off she went, to her grandmother's chest, and brought him a coat, of the very, very best, and the soldier put it on -*

Swill: Conmhaor

Voice From the Hearth: thoosh wittawittawittashheeee foofoo...

Bird-at-Dawn: (BSL)Dogkeeper

(**Scrap** turns the radio up increasing the volume. **Teepee** sweeps the ash into a shovel. She stops to pick feathers from it, blowing the dust off them with a gentle breath.)

Radio: Tolg...tocht...tolg...tocht

Old Aggie: traighim, traighim, tolg, tocht

Radio: toradh, toradh, taradh, torrach..

Teepee: triallaim, torrach, toil, tocht

Voice From the Hearth: (spoken)torchur, turchurtha

Bird-at-Dawn :(signs, BSL) windfall

Radio:toil, tocht

Voice From the Hearth: (spoken)toil, turchurtha

Bird-at-Dawn (BSL):windfall

Teepee (spoken):Sea-waif

Old Aggie: turchurtha, torrach

All: toil, tocht, tolg, tocht.

(**Old Aggie** noisily sets up the steam iron. She fills the iron with water and takes pleasure in releasing the steam into the air of the room, waving it near her face and basking in its warmth. She presses the iron into a shirt, long enough for a brown mark to appear then holds the shirt against her face enjoying its heat. She sprays more hot steam into the air and continues ironing.

The radio crackles and fades. We hear the sound of watery sobbing, sniffs, glugs and gurgles from **Voice From the Hearth**, punctuated by spoken words in Gaelic. This sound-text continues in a flow. The voices in this section should be played close together overlapping at the ends of each others' speeches)

Voice from the Hearth: (ST) ...ionmhuin...ionmhuin..

Bird-at-Dawn: (BSL) *I am the dead baby in the fireplace. Time has eaten my flesh. I watched it slip away as I grew. From the moment I died the blood, poo, salt tears, snot, and the watery dreams of my eyes poured out while I shrunk like a prune.*

Radio: ...the 38th parallel...port of Pusan...smelled like dung in the summer, winter so cold. A man's hand would freeze to his gun...

Voice from the Hearth: (ST)...ionmhuin....

Bird-at-Dawn: (BSL)...*listening to it settle... thin and crackling... behind and beneath me. ..Bereft - in an opened womb - the slash of light - amniotic sac exploding...*

(Old Aggie sprays more hot steam into the room with the iron, and chews a button off the shirt she is ironing)

Radio: ...The Glorious Glosters, Big Nori, Old Baldy, Jane Russell, The Brown Bastard. This profusion of hills. War fought for a principle. Like a dung heap in Summer...

Voice from the Hearth: (ST)...Ionmhuin..

Bird-at-Dawn: (BSL)*Nothing was holding me.*

Teepee: (spoken)Nothing was holding me.

Radio:..Hamking - Hungnam, Pokang - Chosan, the land of morning calm

Scrap and Teepee: Beloved

Voice From the Hearth: (ST).....(*ongoing sounds*)....

Bird-at-Dawn: (BSL) *My body sank into the bricks. I had no words to describe this.*

(**Teepee** suddenly sees **Bird-at-Dawn**. They watch each other for a time)

Radio: ...Gangrene and crops fertilised by human shit... The land of morning Calm...the 38th parallel. .Battle of the Hook, a pestilential area of smells...

(Sound of a pneumatic drill digging up the road outside)

Voice From the Hearth: (ST)...lacht...geisim...gair...gair..

Bird-at-Dawn: (BSL)...then a shock of soot shook down the chimney and a randy old crow screamed -

Old Aggie (sings): Dance, dead chimbley baby, dance! Or the wood-pigeons will peck out your eyes

Voice From the Hearth: (ST).. (sounds -*sparky, crackling, brick-like, smokey*)...

Bird-at-Dawn: (BSL)*Dance dead chimney baby dance! Or the wood-pigeons will peck out your eyes!*

Voice from the Hearth: (ST)..(*ongoing sounds*)...

Bird-at-Dawn:*So I danced myself from the slop...*

(**Old Aggie** exits leaving the iron burning a hole in the skirt on the board. Sound of tropical birds increases and we hear the steady rhythm of a wooden post being hit into the ground with a mallet).

Radio: .. Orientals.. Monsoon. Three months of torrential downpour..the Americans were caught with their pants down...

Voice from the Hearth: (ST)...geag-nuaidhe..gleannach..iodhan

Bird-at-Dawn: (BSL) ...*and built myself a rather lovely shape, all points, grey fire-ash and dust. Look for me, look for me, I'm dressed in orange and red.*

(**Scrap** notices the iron and rushes to take it off the skirt. She lifts it up to reveal a hole. She picks up other pieces of laundry ironed by Old Aggie - there are small holes, brown marks left by the iron, buttons missing and a trouser leg ripped in half. She folds up the board and exits with the laundry basket and iron).

Radio: No helmets, boots on one foot, with vest and without, some with shorts but no trousers, and vice-versa. Some with neither..

Voice from the Hearth: (ST)...(ongoing snuffles and sounds)..

Bird-at-Dawn: *I never had much time to yearn. I was only little when I died.*

(The light changes from Midday sun to a late afternoon haze.

'Winsor Blue' starts from the beginning and plays for the whole 9.08 minutes of its cycle. The TV screen comes on and we see

Rosita dressed in a pale blue overall with feathered duck-egg hat on her head. The walls of the interior are white, and her floor is strewn with pale blue paper roses made from the wallpaper in the care home. She is peering into the mirror, vase and TV screen. She can see home in them.

Enter **Salvate, Cast Iron and Eleusis**. They resume the places they held at the start of Cycle 1 re-run the scene silently, repeating the action with the same rhythm, pacing, stage directions and emotional expression as in the earlier scene. They start the re-run from where Cast Iron says 'Right! Another job done!' however they do not speak aloud or whisper but mouth the dialogue silently to each other, still maintaining the time-frame and pacing of the original scene. This is played within the new backdrop of sounds, voices and voiceovers until the direction of cycle 2 changes as indicated in due course. The Radio and character lines weave into and overlap with each other in a brisk, easy, flow. There should be little break between the voices. There is the sound of tramping boots on sand and of travelling vehicles).

Regimenthe: The Americans got fat in Japan.

Voice From the Hearth:(ST)...(*huge, gulping, sucking sounds*)...

Bird-at-Dawn: (BSL).. *It slaps you fresh and slow, like a wet fish licking you with long, grey, tongue... I'd see her little curly head poke through and call...*

Rosita: Let's ambush the English!

Swill: The Americans got fat on boogie-woogie, bat and ball and baseball,

Voice From the Hearth: (ST)...(*ongoing sucking sounds*)...

Bird-at-Dawn: (BSL)... *tiny sandwiches, cheese and pickle, marmite and jam - little lumps of bread, a chocolate éclair, chocolate from her easter egg, little orange jelly babies and cup-cakes..*

Regimenthe: Hot dogs, hamburgers, Geisha girls, taxi girls, call girls and waitresses.

Voice From the Hearth: (ST)...*swwweetsuckkkkksuckksuck..*

Bird-at-Dawn: (BSL)...*I loved the things Sweet Pea sent me.....*

Rosita: Put your head back if you feel sick. Sit on a newspaper.

Radio: Hostesses, professionals, enthusiastic amateurs..

Voice From the Hearth: (ST)*sheesheesheesheesheesheesheesthuuu*

Bird-at-Dawn: (BSL)...*your eyes unseeing, your nose, squashed, and straightening all that out takes some weeks of living to do.*

Rosita: Give me a gun, I'd have 'em any day. Don't take the biscuit, don't come the. Don't take the biscuit with me sonny, I'll have a raw ripe fart the size of a wet fish slapping your brawny chin if you - burn your house they will-

Voice from the Hearth (ST):...(*ongoing sound*)...

Bird-at-Dawn: (BSL)... *then she got too old to call. stopped sending me things. found a new best friend, played roller skates, plaited hair, sent letters through the post on yellow and pink paper.*

Regimenthe: Hot dogs, hamburgers, Geisha girls and waitresses, some of these guys, some of them

Voice From the Hearth: ...(*ongoing sound*)...

Bird-at-Dawn: (BSL) *I saw her through the chinks in the wall. I was too big to fit for I was growing too.*

Swill (in the voice of an American Major-General):

Some of these guys / some of these / some of these guys are so fat they can hardly walk/They've forgotten what it's like to put their own pants on/The Geisha girls do it for them/ If this man's army ever goes to war there'll be 4 guys in the line and 8 bringin' up the coca-cola!

(Enter Old Aggie chewing a sock)

Old Aggie: (sings gleefully) *Knitting holes in socks for soldiers*

Voice From the Hearth:(ST)*pmppmpmpalupl,pl,pl,pl,plBoo.Boo.Boo*

Bird-at-Dawn: *Plump little chickens... just chickens they were... jingle-eyed... Baby-face tin heads... Bye Baby buntings... Cried*

Nina Kane, *Wallpaper - Roses - Reposes*, 2008.

like wet dogs to be parted from their boogie, their boogie-woogie boogie, their boogie, their boogie ...

Rosita: Don't cry, we'll soon be there.

Voice From the Hearth: (ST)...(sucking, gulping, gasping sounds)

Bird-at-Dawn: (BSL)*Things were getting a bit crowded so I moved out. Out of my mother's warm, velvety, plum-house. Hard. Felt my head implode, my crown folding in and passing over itself; felt a warm slip of hair, flesh and thighs rub against my cheek - then oomph!*

Radio: Charlie Ridge..Plum Pudding..Tap 'a Dong...Hungnam

(All - wail like a newborn baby)

Voice From the Hearth: (spoken)Ionmhuin

Bird-at-Dawn: (spoken and BSL) Ionmhuin

Teepee:(spoken and BSL) Beloved.

(**Regimenthe** and **Swill** fall asleep. The lawnmower, drill, tramp of boots, tropical birds and hammering cease. **Salvate, Scrap, Eleusis, Old Aggie**, etc. stop the action of Cycle 1 at whatever point they have reached and exit. The only sound is a faint lapping of water and the occasional call of a bird.

Teepee and **Bird-at-Dawn** having been watching each other for some time. **Bird-at-Dawn** comes to where she is kneeling and rolls lightly over her and around her, rubbing her arms, legs, shoulders, face, back, front, neck and head with his own until she is covered in small feathers. They nuzzle for a time rolling, sitting and kneeling against each other - never completely prone, but as if unable - or unwilling - to raise themselves far from the floor. **Bird-at-Dawn** blows her face gently in soft, small, breaths then disappears up the chimney. There is a brief flutter of wings. **Teepee** sits for a moment, hands on her belly. She brushes off the feathers, scoops them up and puts them in her pocket before exiting. **Rosita** looks out from the screen)

Rosita: I am a rose of Sharon

A lily of the valleys

If you wash your hands in my bowl

Don't come a-mocking

I've a free-range larder just waiting for that treacle-pudding
you're making

I'll measure you ounce for ounce

With flour and love

What's the time in Venice?

What's the time when the lights go down and the boats drift their
way out to sea,

slipping from the moorings, loosening
As so many will
The garters of their stockings?

(She leans forward and taps on the screen, looking for a way back home. TV screen fades. Regimenthe wakes. There is a sound of soil being dug with a spade)

Regimenthe: Let me tell you about Rosita. She's short and plump. Her cheeks have cherry veins that meander across her skin like rivers on a map. Her eyes are a curious blue. Always looking from side to side like a bird.

(Screen lights up. Rosita is sitting in the armchair holding a bouquet of pale-blue paper roses)

Rosita: I know birds. I know what they are. They nest each year above me.

Regimenthe: She came over from Ireland, a little village in Sligo. I forget its name. It was back in the 40s and she got a place with the nuns cooking dinners, sewing wimples. England was so boring on a Sunday. It was different back home.

Rosita (on screen) and Daughters (offstage): *Back home, Sundays were your best day. You went to Mass, had dinner and then in the evening you'd all go round to the neighbours' houses and they'd be playing music, telling jokes, dancing. This would go on way past Midnight, even when we were small. And then you'd walk home in the dark across the fields and no-one would ever bother you. Not like in England.*

Regimenthe: When Rosita first came here she saw signs in shop windows saying 'No Irish, No Hawkers, No Blacks, No Browns, No Dogs'. It made her very quiet.

(Sound of wooden post hit by mallet returns)

Rosita: You didn't tend to speak up so much, you know, only to friends and family, and church. You kept your thoughts to yourself.

(Clatter of saucepans from the kitchen, the bump of kitchen cupboards being opened and closed)

Scrap (offstage): Can I get to the sink?

Regimenthe: She brought the children up -

Rosita and Daughters: *Never tell anyone you're Irish. If you have a form to fill in asking where you're from, tell them you're English.*

(Sound of a kettle being filled and switched on followed in time by hot water bubbling)

Regimenthe: She'd tell them stories from back home, the good ones, the ones that made us laugh.

(Enter **Cast Iron**, **Salvate**, **Eleusis** and **Scrap**. They open the cardboard boxes finding them full of paper roses on string. They pull the strings out and begin to disentangle the roses between them. The lighting changes gradually to a dispiriting blue-white north light, like an early grey Spring day in England. **Bird-at-Dawn** hops back down the chimney and into the room)

Daughters: And we learnt to say

Radio: (a quiet chant under the voices)..Pusan, Poos'n. A major port, a sprawling slum, rice, paddy muck, mud walls, rotting garbage....

Cast Iron: *Fewer not less*

Voice From the Hearth: (ST)Congbhaim

Bird-at-Dawn: (BSL)I maintain, I keep up

Radio:.. Human shit. People went in the streets. Flags, banners, streams and brass bands...

Salvate: *To whom not to who*

Voice From the Hearth: (ST)Confadh

Bird-at-Dawn: (BSL)Rage

Radio: ..Welcome the Yankees kicking the ragged assed commies...

Eleusis: To write in full sentences

Voice From the Hearth: (ST)Confadhach

Bird-at-Dawn: (BSL) Spirited

Radio:.. Salt mines and shrouds in an avalanche of glory...

Cast Iron: To pronounce our t's.

Voice From the Hearth: (ST)Ceilim

Bird-at-Dawn: (BSL) I conceal

Scrap: Even the BBC get it wrong these days.

Voice From the Hearth: (ST) Cosnaim, canaim

Bird-at-Dawn: (BSL)I contest, strive for, I sing, say

Daughters: Misuse of apostrophes / Disgraceful/ Infuriating!

Voice From the Hearth: (ST)Comhlonn, comhradh, conghair, caithreim!

Bird-at-Dawn (BSL):At night I look up and wink at the stars. Sometimes the wind holds me and rocks me to sleep.

Regimenthe: Listen to them - the girls when they speak

Radio:... Well fed and brown in the sun... a few pints of ice-cold, gaseous San Miguel... Beating the commies..

Daughters (whisper): Our t's are clear but the tongue rests soft behind the teeth. We don't rest too easy.

Radio:... *evil and directly opposed to the teaching of Christ...*

(They disentangle themselves from the web and rewind the strings of roses. **Scrap** pulls a few off as she puts them away, secreting them into her large overall pockets)

Regimenthe: Rosita filled the house with books. The children drew pictures with crayons. She was a dinner lady at the school, she got them from there.

Daughters: We tore secret scraps of wallpaper
from the green insides
of the corporation bedroom cupboards
and drew and wrote on them.

Swill: But the house was always clean and no visitors could have had a cause for complaint. For the family were very generous with the little they had.

(There is a distant sound of a church bell calling parishioners to Mass)

Regimenthe: Poverty was a shame, Ireland a boggy mess of dark fields, farmers and grey-eared priests. There was nobody there to marry.

(Enter **Teepee**. She kneels by the hearth and repeats the choreography of her earlier dance with **Bird-at-Dawn**, solo. **Bird-at-Dawn** watches mournfully)

Rosita: There was nothing for me there. I wanted to come to England. (The TV screen goes to snow then clears. Church bell stops)

Radio: : khaki drill shorts /sweaty hose tops/ ammunition boots. Long toughening marches/ the hot afternoon sun/ long back-breaking digging /wiring up and down mountains.

Voice From the Hearth:...(rattling sound like a snake)....

Bird-at-Dawn:...hot afternoon sun....

Rosita:I want to go out! I want to dress up, put some shoes and make-up on, go out on the razz! (Tv interference / snow then clears)

Nina Kane, *Wallpaper - Roses - Reposes*, 2008.

(Enter **Old Aggie**. She brings a warm Mistral wind with her.
Lighting: a warm Summer glow).

It's not fair! I'm stuck in here, dodging soot, birds crapping on my head! The straw from their nests as it falls in early autumn, well it falls on my hair and makes me itch! Eaytch! Eytch!

(TV interference. **Old Aggie** picks up a pillow and bites a corner spilling feathers everywhere. The wind picks up a pace and blows through the room scattering feathers and paper roses everywhere. These gradually drift to one side of the stage. **Teepee** reaches for them whilst repeating her dance and hides them in her jumper).

I can't tell you how dull it gets sometimes.

Regimenthe: I came back from Korea,
grizzled and scrawny,
beard down to my knees, and I told her
- you're my map,
my compass,
my mountain,
my river.
I won't leave you again.

Rosita: I can't tell you how sweet it gets sometimes

(TV screen goes off. The stage is completely blacked out and the wind drops. There is silence followed by the sound of bricks being chipped away at.

Cast Iron (from offstage but as if speaking from very far away, possibly through an amplified medium):

A bird flew into my windscreen as I was driving. In a narrow country lane, the fields, lightly frosted; enthusiastic early morning sunrise and - oh my God -

a swift smooth flight followed by wild flapping...!

little concertina fan of light brown silhouette and boom!

Gone!

Reeling on the road.

A stone, a soft small mound receding from view as the car travelled on.

Poor bird.

I hope the death was quick. Maybe it needed to go quick. Skidding to a halt, not able to twirl and change direction in time...

The hearth is illuminated in a soft red light and a brick comes away revealing a torch light and a holy eye peering out from behind the chimney breast)

Farther: Regimenthe? Reggy? Oh. Minty, are you there?

(Farther bashes at the bricks and they fall away. He scrambles out of the hole, dishevelled, his hair covered in straw. He addresses the audience)

Good morning to you.

And you must say - 'Good Morning Farther'. Shall we try it again?

Good morning to you. (cups his ear to the audience and repeats until he gets 'Good morning Farther' in response) Yes, good morning to you.

I'm Farther. Farther by name and Farther by nature. And no, I'm not Father Ted, or even his little rosy-cheeked drunken friend. And I'm not the funny one who wrote the book. But I am a bit covered in brick dust, my hair's mat-full of straw and I've mud all over me boots. So it may be a bit hard to tell the difference, but that's your problem not mine. People are always watching too much telly these days. They can't tell a real man from a character in a soap.

I've been in this chimney a long time. I'm beginning to kick off a bit now.

(The stage is still in blackout except for the light on Farther but we hear the other voices)

Regimenthe: Is she in there with you, Farther?

Farther: No, she's gone.

Regimenthe: Have you come over to this side then?

Farther: A sweet nuisance. I was mid-way through Lent. I always wanted to make it to Easter.

Salvate: The sin of wanting too much.
Death in the Spring, buds we never see bloom

Regimenthe: Salvate, is that you? Will you make Farther a cup of tea?

Farther: That'll be grand, Salvate. And I could do with a biscuit if there's a couple in the tin?

Salvate: I'm sure we'll find you something to nibble on.

(**Old Aggie** appears with a basin of water. She kneels in front of **Farther**, removes his boots and socks and begins to wash his feet. As she does, she is overcome with hysterical giggles)

Old Aggie: I can't bear it - ooh, I can't look, ooh! Feet! Feet!

Farther: Are you laughing at my gnarly old toes?

(Old Aggie is hysterical with giggles. **Salvate** enters into the light and hands Farther a cup of tea and a plate of biscuits)

Old Aggie: I just can't bear it!(she convulses)Here, Salvate, it's your turn! (She crosses herself, snatches up the socks and runs off)

Farther: Lord, have mercy.

(Salvate kneels, and takes up the feet-washing. She is solemn and careful. She reaches into the dark and brings out a bottle of oil. She takes her hair - which is greying and swept into a magnificent bun - and unrolls it. She crouches uncomfortably down, pours the oil over Farther's feet and wraps her hair around them)

Salvate: *And I'll wipe it away with my hair, she said, I'll wipe it away with my hair.*

(They remain entangled rather awkwardly for a moment, then she unwraps the hair, lightly kisses his feet, crosses herself and exits)

Farther: Lord, have mercy.

(Blackout. Enter **Bird-at-Dawn**. TV screen goes on. We see **Rosita**)

Rosita: Now if Mary Magdalene had had short hair, what would we have done? If she'd had a little bob, or a crop, Lord save us -

Scrap (still in darkness): Or shaved or gone bald -

Rosita: Scrap! But think about, will you. If she didn't have, that beautiful, long, red hair to wrap around the feet of the Lord - I'm asking you seriously, now, what do you think mi-

(Lights brighten and distant tropical bird sounds return. Enter **Scrap** writing in a book of wallpaper pieces. Rosita is peering at the mirror looking for home.)

Rosita:

Now I can see
The window so bright
Such beautiful panes
Ah the glorious pains!

Eleusis (offstage):Has anyone packed the sherry glasses yet?

Rosita: I had eight glorious pains once

Nina Kane, *Wallpaper - Roses - Reposes*, 2008.

Radio:...sunna...sriobh-fhann...teid-bhinn...tigim....(This continues in a low murmur)

Voice From the Hearth: (gurgling, burping, cooing sounds)

Bird-at-Dawn (ST):*The shock of the morning. Tipped upside-down and slapped on the bottom!*

(All wail like a new-born baby)

Old Aggie: Eight glorious pains in the backside!

Rosita: I called them 1, my husband, 234567, my children

(Enter Eleusis. She opens an under-stairs cupboard. Enter Salvate and Teepee. All groan aloud)

Voice From the Hearth: ...(ongoing sounds)..

Bird-at-Dawn:..*you're so be pleased to be you...*

Scrap: I really can't be arsed with this!

Voice From the Hearth:...(ongoing sounds)

Bird-at-Dawn:...*with a white woolly coat,towelling nappy and pin, your pink little toes with booties on! You're out! Gurgling into life!*

Rosita:Except 1. Not counting 1.

Eleusis: Where's Cast Iron?

Salvate: Having some 'me-time' at the gym.

Scrap: Let's just get the bastard thing done!

Radio:...sunna, sriobh-fhann, teid-bhinn, tigim, blath, cumraidhe, Dreach-bhoig-geal, cion,cion,cion (Radio stops)

Voice From the Hearth: Broid

Bird-at-Dawn: (BSL) Until -

(Salvate steps into the cupboard and pulls out a large stuffed tiger. Swill starts barking. Eleusis and Scrap follow and they pass more taxidermic objects to Teepee - deer-heads, panther, birds, rabbits and squirrels. Farther calls Swill back over to Reg's chair and settles him down).

Rosita:A nice fixture. This mirror.

So clear you can see the year

(She sees Scrap in the mirror)

Scrap! Scrap! (she bangs on the mirror)

Nina Kane, *Wallpaper - Roses - Reposes*, 2008.

Scrap! Tear a bit more wallpaper off! Write me a poem!

Don't tell your dad. Keep it in the box. We'll write it out neatly for him when we get you an exercise book.

Good girl, Scrap.

Voice From the Hearth: ...*(sing-song, wistful sound)*...

Bird-at-Dawn: (BSL) *I love the presents Sweet Pea sent me*

Rosita: She's a great girl, Scrap, always bringing me my blankets and tea things.

Voice From the Hearth: (ST)...*(ongoing sounds)*....

Bird-at-Dawn: *Rose-petals in Summer*
Buttons from the button-box
Gold rings from the fairground
And a necklace from the sea

Rosita: Ah! My reading glasses!*(puts them on and feels round the edge of the mirror, peering at the sides)*

Regimenthe: Camels...Chesterfields...Lucky Strike..

Regimenthe, Farther, Swill: Plum-Pudding, Tap'-a-dong, Pongdam-dong, Hungnam

Voice From the Hearth: (ST)..*(ongoing sounds)*.....

Bird-at-Dawn: (BSL) *I keep them on a ledge where the chimney kinks up and away to the stars. They catch drops of moonlight at night, and in Winter, when the old ghosts rattle around, they keep me safe from harm.*

Regimenthe: Those North Koreans could run like antelopes over the mountains. But we were lost, our maps were old. Roads ran in to bogs and marshes; tracks ran into rivers; flatland became mountains, craggy and impenetrable..

Rosita: There must be a way back in...

Farther: ..Blinded by the sun, blistered by the bog. Our boots fell apart; the leather so polished, cracked and decayed. We knew they were laughing at us...

Voice From the Hearth: (ST).. *cion..anam...anam*

Bird-at-Dawn: *The blue of the skies and the blue of your eyes*

Rosita:A small cave in an ingot of wood

Regimethe: Hiding in the mountains. Leaping like young gazelles from rock to rock. Ready to strike.

Regimenthe, Farther and Swill:

Nina Kane, *Wallpaper - Roses - Reposes*, 2008.

fury, **Teepee** and **Scrap** follow her leaving **Cast Iron** and **Eleusis** to put the animals back in the cupboard with some haste)

Regimenthe: When the call to halt came.

(Lighting becomes very bright. There is a thin whine and the sound of heavy digging in wet sand, grunts and groans)

Voice From the Hearth and Farther: (ST)is leir dhuin ar ndiol soillse

Bird-at-Dawn: (BSL) *we have all we need of light*

Regimenthe: When you were still alive.

Voice From the Hearth and Farther: (ST)na biodh ar th'uidh attuirse

Bird-at-Dawn (BSL): *let not sadness be in your mind*

Regimenthe: When you saw the dawn come up

Big Nori, Jane Russell Old Baldy.

you didn't know who you'd killed.
You just knew you were alive.

Farther and Regimenthe: Lucky Strike. Chesterfields, Camel. The Brown Bastard. Rough stubble, choking dust.

Christ.

Job done.

(There is the sound of rushing water and the rattle of army vehicles)

Shaving in the morning. Tin cups.

(**Old Aggie** spies **Bird-at-Dawn** cowering and screams at him)

Old Aggie: Quuuuack quack quack quack quack quack! here! Feather arse! Geyit!

(She chases him up the chimney. Enter **Cast Iron**, **Salvate**, **Eleusis**, **Scrap** and **Teepee**. They resume the action of cycle 1 from where they left off last time, again in total silence and mouthing the words silently to each other).

Radio: Plum Pudding, Tap' a-dong. Pongam-dong. Pack horses, heavy mortars. Personal weapon. Eating bowl, metal spoon, waterbottle, sewing kit, tea. If lucky, a small pork pie. Pork Chop Hill.

Rosita: (She whispers conspiratorially to the audience)

This is a funny sort of hotel, you know. The waiters - they haven't much time for you.

(The sound of rushing water increases)

Rosita: Cast Iron said to me in the car

Cast Iron: You'll love it, Mum. Lots of people your own age. No use rattling around on your own in that big, old place.

Cast Iron, Rosita: *No use rattling like a roll, rattling, shaking and rattling on your own, like a shake, rattle and roll - rolling pin, swinging on some old Marge D'Arcy's apron strings. Shake your tail feather over there, Mother she said, And swing it like a peacock!*

Rosita: Worse than the fear of death, was the fear of noise.

Regimenthe and Swill: We didn't know where we were going.
Boots uncomfortably full of feet.

Rosita: I had a cock once

(The daughters laugh)

Rosita: I had a cock in the country. We lived by the stream, and it was always crowing all over, crowing about his breakfast, crowing about his lawn, how neat he'd trimmed his hedges. And I said...

Old Aggie (offstage): *Is that a bird you're shaping me there? Shape me anything but a magpie, or if you do, make it two.*

Rosita: I feel I must take care now. This talk of magpies is making me -

All: Caution! Concealed entrance!

Radio: ..pushed across country by the wind...wide dust pedestal kicked up on the ground..

Old Aggie: There was once a magpie flew down and tried to steal my pink cameo brooch, but I fought the pye-coat bravely.

Old Aggie and Rosita: I'll defend what's mine.

(The tramp of boots begins again, and a fast digging of wet, heavy sand. We hear soft grunts from the diggers and the groan of heavy lifting)

Rosita: There must be a way back in.

Ah. Now I can see where I'm going (she looks at her reflection in a vase)

See how the room morphs...swivels around - Go closer to it -oooh! There looms my shadowy face. Step back from it.

Go to him. I said. If he's all you've got, go to him. You can leave the child with me. She's like one of my own. Leave and try to light those liquor fires with milk of more substance. I'll wait for you with her. She's like one of my own.

Voice From the Hearth:...(wails)...

Bird-at-Dawn: (BSL)Medic! Medic!

Rosita: Did she ever find her way home again? They asked me. Did she ever?

All: Did she ever find her way home again? They asked me. Did she ever

(Silence)

Rosita: They found her in a bag. Face down. A long thin naked fish. A slip of a girl, slipped in. Face down. Like she'd gone home. And that night I dreamed, I dreamed I'd seen her. On a long barge, face up - all covered in bandages. And I knew they'd wrapped her in bandages, from head to toe, then beat her with sticks until the red of the blood started to seep through and they knew they didn't have to hit no more.

And there she was, floating down the river.
Floating down the river Kwai with you oooh! Dong dong!

(There is a fevered whispering. Rose petals drift across the stage)

Never go down to the empty sheds. The rows of cabin upon cabin. Be careful. Take your hankie! Wear clean shoes when you walk to Farther's house. Don't go close to the bushes. Wipe your nose. Say your prayers.

(She has moved to the TV screen and is banging on the lens)

I feel this is the right way home.

Reg! Reg! Are you in there?

(Women stop the repeat of cycle 1 and exit. The only light is on Rosita's TV screen and Regimenthe's chair.)

Nina Kane, *Wallpaper - Roses - Reposes*, 2008.

The following 5 lines, repeated from the earlier section, are conveyed over the radio. Reg's monologue is spoken live in parallel to this and continues after the radio voice-over stops)

Radio Reg: Hallo love!

Radio Rosita: Where are you?

Radio Reg: I'm in the house next door, love. By the sea. I've missed you.

Radio Rosita: I knew you'd go back to the sea. Where's the house? I don't know where it's gone.

Radio Reg: It's just next door, love, not far.

All: Machine gun, rifle and hand grenade.
With you at all times
Stuttering, stuttering.
Living with death for many days.
Our faces grey with it.
Shouts of 'medic' for the men who were wounded.
Piper playing highland laddie.
The 38th parallel.
Those commie commie commie commie

Radio: Inch'on. The Nankong River. Baker Ridge, Charlie Ridge. Carrying machine guns and mortar. Getting rid of the commies. Worse than the fear of death was the fear of noise.

(Regimenthe falls asleep in his chair. Farther and Swill sit by him, with their own thoughts.)

Rosita: Let me in, let me in! I want to go home!

(She breaks through the TV screen and crawls through it to the stage. The chimney breast cracks further, another brick falls to the floor and a handful of rose petals falls down the chimney into the hearth with **Bird-at-Dawn**. **Old Aggie** enters with the steam iron spraying it around the room and warming herself. **Rosita** stands up and brushes herself down.)

Oh dear, I think it's broken. (to audience) Don't tell them it's me, will you. We haven't got a license for it yet! I'll hide it in the shed, later. Oh! (points to an audience member) Your face has a rose growing on it. A Golden Melody, it goes (sings) Aie, eee aia ia ai ai ai. Don't let anyone pluck it, will you. You keep that one for you.

There's roses everywhere now. I'd not noticed them growing.

Can you smell them? Smell the air. It's cold Summer's end. I can taste blackberry in the wind. Sharp frost coming. The roses are crystal cold. Their insides are shivering. Look at them. They're ready to shake off the petals and give themselves up! Little hard nubs stuck out to the sun. They die wretched.

I'm irritated - tired. I'm lost. The world in my pocket is too dense. Let's lose some of these stones.

(She pulls a handful of pebbles from her pocket and shuffles up and through the audience leaving a trail of stones behind her. She changes her mind about exiting half-way up the stairs and starts pushing her way along the aisles of the audience, to an empty seat, whispering as she does. She repeats this for the rest of Cycle 2, changing her seat every 5 minutes or so, quietly, muttering to herself and subtly disrupting a different section of the audience. This should be done as quietly and unobtrusively as possible, and only involve small, random disruptions, with the main focus directed to the action onstage. As she does so, **Swill** tells a story).

Swill: There was a mouse lived in the Nevada Desert. Raw-edged rogue he was. Matted fur, bright eyes, always on the look-out for grain. Hard-working. Very hard-working. Every day he'd pitter-patter out of his hole looking for - a crumb here, a crumb there - what seems to you and me like a speck, an atom, a nothingness - to him was a feast.

If you go to that spot today you'll see
a trail of small mouse-prints / scurried into the sand / leading
from a hole to an ear of corn / suddenly appear to stop

If you look to a rock close-by you'll find
The shadow of a mouse.
Who turned around in a glare
Seeing in a second
As his eyes crumbled to ash
And for the first time in his life
The tiny pockmarks he'd travelled
And the long, long, long way home.

(**Teepee** crouches near the hearth and calls up the chimney)

Radio: ...The family traits of explosives are....

Teepee: *Amy! Amy! We're going on a picnic!*

(Teepee takes a cake from the plate and throws it up the chimney)

Voice From the Hearth: (ST)ssshhhhhfwooo...

Bird-at-Dawn: (BSL)Feed me.

Regimenthe:

Rose-petals in Summer,
buttons from the button box,
gold rings from the fairground
and a necklace from the sea.

Radio:...fire, and some kind of smoke and noise of course...

Swill and Rosita:

I have them all here.
I keep them on a ledge where the chimney kinks up and away to the stars.
I love the presents Sweet Pea sent me.

Voice From the Hearth(ST:She is learning to speak English and the words come through the cracks in the hearth)

caaatsh...moon...drops...winter...ol...raaaaatttttle..say

Bird-at-Dawn: (BSL)They catch drops of moonlight at night and, in Winter, when the old ghosts rattle about, they keep me safe from harm.

Farther:

They talk of leaving.
They should stay here.

Regimenthe:

I'm tired
I need to go with them
But I don't want to leave

Swill:It's ridiculous. This is where we all live.

Radio:...the snow-white frosting of condensed water vapour...thin pancake of crystals above the crown...distinctive dirty-brownish stem...a climbing fireball trailed by the stem, soon to be torn and strung up by the wind...

Voice From the Hearth: (ST)muuuusssssssshrrrrruuuuueeee

Bird-at-Dawn: (BSL)..dirty- brownish stem....

(**Old Aggie** pulls out a long line of washing machine tubing. She runs her teeth along it looking for a good piece to bite. Exit **Teepee**)

Farther: Look at Old Aggie. standing by picking at her teeth. She was always hovering around Reg and now he's dead she sticks to him like a limpet. Ha! She's building her hopes up a bit high there - he'll never leave Rosita.

Voice From the Hearth: (ST)waaaaatsshhh ceeeer stt-rr-ooowwoo-kz
Haaaaa-a-a-ar

Bird-at-Dawn: (BSL)He watches her in the care home, strokes her hair when she's asleep. He watches the old films

Regimenthe: Takes me back, takes me back

Old Aggie, Farther, Rosita and Voice from the Hearth / Bird-at-Dawn: He won't talk about Korea.

(Regimenthe taps his temple knowingly)

Regimenthe: Got it up here, keep 'em never-knowing, love. Best way.

(The stage darkens and stars appear. There is a scuffling and a scraping and more bricks fall from the chimney breast. Muffled singing and choking sounds give way to clear tunes and sounds. The **Voice From the Hearth** speaks. Her mouth appears in the hole left by the bricks. It is huge, orange and dusty with old, yellow teeth. Her speaking is accompanied by huge creaks and grindings as she struggles to form the words and send them through the clear air)

Voice from the Hearth: Aaaat night when Ieyeyeye look up

I iieyegch-i wink at the styyars.

Sometimesczzs the wind

huuuuloldths me rockschzs meeeto sliep.

IAay'm reeeeeally too

Ffhthin forra g-g-g-yurlirl of my agegggse.
want busts ... no ctchshest , no hayyr in my arms or on my
fanney. I'vvv outgruwnown my wellcuoume.

Bird-at-Dawn (BSL):

I wonder if I'll grow so tall I'll not fit any more. My head is already bumping the birds and I have to keep skipping to stop the fires from licking my feet.

Scrap: (reading from a book of wallpaper scraps - Bird at Dawn translates scraps of the words into BSL as she reads)

Bean torrach, fa tuar broide
Do bhi i bpriosun pheannaide
Bearer dho chead De na ndul
Le leanabh beag sa bhriosun

Ar n-a bhreith do bhi an macamh
Ag fas mar gach bhfochlocan

Nina Kane, *Wallpaper - Roses - Reposes*, 2008.

Da fhiadhnaibh mar bud eadh dhun,
Seal do bhliadhnaibh sa bhriosun

Voice From the Hearth: (ST) Sccccccreeeeeeethhhh
cthhhhheeeeeeeeeeth, mamamamamshuuuuuuuuuuubbbbbth, shorrrrrr

Bird-at-Dawn (BSL):

Pregnant woman..a sorry fate

Prison for your penance

..God...fitting

To be having your babe in prison

Where is that young noble man

Young...and impetuous in anger..

and we who are witnesses...obligation..

Possess ...precious birth-giving...prison...

(**Teepee** walks across the stage with a mound of feathers stuffed up her jumper. She releases them at **Bird-at-Dawn's** feet. They stare at each other in silence. **Old Aggie** bites a hole in the washing machine tubing and looks pleased with herself. She exits. The lights go down low on the stage. **Rosita** stands up in the audience)

Rosita: You need to go. Out! Go on, out! You should be ashamed of yourself. Look at the state of you. Go on, go. Drink yourself dry. Go on! Go!

(She exits. **Scrap** is left on the stage alone. She is holding a large book made of wallpaper scraps. She writes something on a piece just torn from the wall, and slides the book back under the sofa. She picks up a biscuit from the tea tray and places it in the hearth. A rosy-gloved hand comes down the chimney and takes it. The lights go up in the auditorium. The audience are asked to leave. Interval)

Cycle 3 - Reposes

(The room is stripped of wallpaper. It is neat and tidy with boxes stacked in one corner. The cupboard door is closed. Regimenthe and Swill are in the armchair facing the way they were in cycle 1, Farther sits next to them. The television is gone and they stare at the wall. The lighting is a natural, sunny, daylight and the cast are in everyday clothes as in Cycle 1. Enter Cast Iron and Salvate with smallprint):

Cast Iron: This way. Through here.

smallprint: So this is the -

Cast Iron: Lounge. 48 feet by 25. Two main windows. Antique tiled fire. Plug points there- there - there - there. Cosy ambience, characterful with original features. Best photograph it from that corner.

smallprint: Are you leaving the decor like this?

Salvate: Oh no, we're -

Cast Iron: Good God, no. We'll paint it cream. It will be done by Thursday.

smallprint: Good. Houses always sell better with a neutral theme.

Cast Iron: I quite agree. Coffee?

smallprint: Please.

Cast Iron: Salvate... (nods her towards the kitchen)

Salvate: Oh, of course. (calls offstage) Teepee! Teepee! The gentleman would like a coffee. (to smallprint) But don't you think people would like it with a few flowers on the wall, maybe just a border..?

Cast Iron: Neutral. Neutral sells houses better. Not everyone likes flowers.

smallprint: *Chuck out your chintz!*

Cast Iron: I like a man who knows his adverts!

smallprint: (rather pleased with himself) *Chuck out your chintz.*

(Teepee pops her head round the door)

Teepee: Milk, sugar and biscuits?

smallprint: Please, all three.

(Scrap enters)

Scrap: Don't forget to put a doily on the biscuit plate (winks at Teepee, shakes hands with smallprint). Hallo.

smallprint: Are you the vendor - do you live here too?

Scrap: In a manner of speaking, yes, and I don't really want it sold.

Cast Iron: (hisses) Scrap! (to smallprint) We're selling. The dining room is through here. Please. Come this way.

Salvate: (places a hand on smallprint's arm) Can you smell the coffee? I've told Teepee to make it extra strong so the aroma will carry. I've got some home-made bread on the go too. I've read that

Nina Kane, *Wallpaper - Roses - Reposes*, 2008.

the smell of coffee and bread baking will always sell a house. Do you think it will work?

smallprint: Whatever makes people feel comfortable will work. People buy a house they see themselves living in.

Scrap: Unless they're property developers.

smallprint: Well - yes, unless they're property developers -

Scrap: Or landlords.

smallprint: Or landlords. But at the right -

Regimenthe: Price

smallprint: I've seen houses go for a nice price round this way

All: We had one on Blackman Lane that went for -
And you'd never have thought it had the -
And you never can tell what the market will -

Scrap: Have you looked at the under-stairs cupboard?

Cast Iron: No need.

Scrap: Have you looked at

smallprint: The under-stairs cupboard?

Salvate / Cast Iron (said at the same time) It's full. Jam packed.
Don't look. / It's full. 10 foot. No need.

(smallprint opens the door to the under-stairs cupboard)

smallprint: Better have a look - oh! (jumps back in alarm)

All: Full.

Of stuffed
Animal heads.
Deer.
Old tiger.
A full perched squirrel.
Deep
In the
Bowels.
A dusty menagerie.

Salvate: It's our father's collection.

Cast Iron: Bit of a hunter.

Nina Kane, *Wallpaper - Roses - Reposes*, 2008.

Scrap: In his own way.

Cast Iron: Just a hobby

Regimenthe: In 1953 in Korea -

(silence)

smallprint: The eyes on the - look real - You'll empty it of course.

Cast Iron / Salvate: We shall /Of course

Cast Iron: We have four bedrooms upstairs. Salvate. You bring the-

(Teepee enters with a tray and hands smallprint a cup)

Teepee: Coffee.

(smallprint takes a glug of coffee and almost spits it out as it is too strong)

Cast Iron: Ok, ring Eleusis instead, chase up what's happening with that emulsion (Salvate exits) And Scrap - ?

Scrap: Yes?

Cast Iron and Regimenthe: Don't you have some sanding to do?

smallprint: I feel grainy.

Cast Iron: Upstairs!

(Cast Iron and smallprint exit. Scraps sands the walls).

Scrap: Slick-suited dick.

Teepee: Bad news.

Scrap: Crimpolene. There was something crimpolene about him. Looked us up and down like we could do with a good wash. Sniffing at the house like a dog.

Swill: Don't take my name in vain!

Scrap: Errant. Obtuse. Stark- staring dull- man. Dour. I hope Dad's cupboard scares him off.

(There is a sound of pipes gurgling)

Teepee: Cast Iron's showing him the bath taps.

Scrap: Twiddling the knobs.

(They laugh. Scrap sits down at the hearth and places a cake there. A rosy - gloved hand comes down the chimney, picks up the cake and disappears back up the chimney. Swill growls).

Teepee: She's still there then?

Scrap: Oh yes.

Teepee: She's growing. Where will she go when we leave?

Scrap: I don't know.

Teepee: I didn't think she was still there. I stopped -

Scrap: Don't worry, I looked after her.

(Teepee looks sad)

It's alright. You've got a shop to run. You've grown up. She's fine with me. Honestly. She's fine.

Radio: When Jesus Christ was a child, he had a garden small and wild, wherein he cherished roses, weaving them into garlands.

Scrap:How do you think Salvate's looking?

Teepee: Alright. Bit tired.

Scrap: You know he's retiring, don't you?

Teepee: Keith?

Scrap (shakes her head)The other one.

Teepee: Jeff -

Scrap: Shhh!

Radio: One Summer, a troop of pilgrims came along the dusty road, drunk, reckless and dry from the long journey, and they saw the roses and longed to smell the sweet fragrance of them

Scrap (conspiratorially): 30 years loving a man who isn't your husband.

Teepee: I thought that was all -

Scrap: No. She's still as mad on him as ever.

Nina Kane, *Wallpaper - Roses - Reposes*, 2008.

Teepee: Have they ever -

Scrap: Shh, nooo, of course not!

Teepee: But didn't he -?

Scrap: Poems, just poems. Nothing else.

Teepee: You'd have thought -

Scrap: They wouldn't do it. Neither of them would.

Teepee: He's retiring -?

Scrap: And his wife wants them to emigrate to Spain to live with their daughter. They're going in September. Shh now.

Radio: They climbed up the tree and plucked the roses merrily, shouting, greedily, drinking in the sweet smell. Then they saw the boy with flowers in his hair, and poured scorn on him. The boy humbly offered them the garlands saying, 'Take them. Take all but the naked thorns away'

(**Salvate** enters with a loaf of bread and wafts it around)

Then they made a thorn of crowns and pressed it down with rough cruel fingers. And on his forehead, his sweet, fair, young forehead, red drops of blood, like roses sprung.

(Enter **Eleusis** carrying paints, rollers and wallpaper lining. She has her head wrapped in a scarf)

Eleusis: The traffic was appalling!

Salvate: What's the headscarf for?

Eleusis: Ah, careful! Nit alert! We've an epidemic!

Salvate: Stay back from me, I'm on half-term! I've done my combing.

Eleusis: Sure, it's awful. Do you get a lot of them at your place? (Salvate nods) Every term! The minute they get back to school, it's nits galore! Scratching the minute they get in, I do them every night, comb, comb, comb - really big critters, you can almost see the eyes on them.

(They all involuntarily begin to scratch their heads)

Every solution under the planet, nothing works, took it to the PTA, we've got a working group going. Bring back the nit nurse, I say - ooh, it's got me scratching just thinking about it.

All: They get right under your fingernails!

Eleusis: So how are you getting on? Cast Iron cracking the whip?

Scrap: She's with smallprint now.

Eleusis: I can't stay long, I've got to take -

All: Joseph to violin, Moira to swimming and the twins are off shopping.

Eleusis: I've meeting them at three.

Teepee: How's Anthony and Roisin?

Eleusis: Grand. Roisin got -

All: Four 'A-stars' for her A-levels, she's off to Trinity Dublin, and Ant's trekking round South America on a donkey.

Teepee: That's great.

Scrap: So you've not come to help sand walls then.

Eleusis: No, I've got loads on at home, but I got you the paint cheap. Michael. Deal at work. He's starting another extension.

Scrap: How big's your house going to get?

Eleusis: I don't know! You know Michael, finishes one bit, gets bored, starts round the other side. I can't get into the sitting room at the moment; I'm practically living in the bedroom!

Scrap: Sounds good to me!

Salvate: Scrap!

Regimenthe: Lord save us.

Eleusis: Chance would be a fine thing I never see him! Anyway, I'm past all that, seven's enough, I've done my bit. (whispers) *We talked to Farther about it and he gave us some good advice.*

Farther: Abstinence makes the heart grow fonder.

Regimenthe: Farther's good advice.

(Swill barks).

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Eleusis: Quiet, Swill. God, he's looking so fat, I hardly knew him. (Rubs the dog's tummy) Look at you fatty, fatty, who's been feeding you polo mints?

Regimenthe: Me.

Eleusis: You know, he has n't moved far from that chair since Dad died. He's expecting him to come back. Poor old dog.

Regimenthe: I'm still here.

Swill (to audience): A year in a dog's life is equivalent to eight in a human one. I am seven years old, which means in doggy-human terms I'm 56. But ghosts. And lost children in a fireplace. How old are they?

When I was a puppy, I bounded around chasing balls and peeing everywhere. Many a puddle led the way to my hiding place. But now, I am old, they all know where to find me. Slumped by the chair. At my master's feet.

Who knows how big the child will get. And where will she rest her weary flesh once old?

(Eleusis walks to the chimney breast and looks at a large picture on it)

Eleusis: What's that doing there?

Scrap: We had to hide the hole -
(Eleusis looks under the picture)

Eleusis: Jesus-Lord. How did that happen?

Scrap: We came in this morning and it was like that. Bricks and dust everywhere. The wallpaper must have been holding the bricks in.

Salvate: Put it back quick until that smallprint's gone.

Scrap: Cast Iron's furious. And the washing machine's kaput too. Leaking all over the shop.

Eleusis: I'll ask Michael to take a look.

(There is a sound of a phone ringing and footsteps overhead) Right, I'm off before I get collared. See you later.

(Exit Eleusis)

Cast Iron (offstage): Scrap! Teepee!

Scrap: Oh, Sweet Pea, go and see what she wants. I'm desperate for a fag.

(Teepee nods, exits)

Meet you in the garden!

(exit Scrap. Salvate is still wafting the bread around religiously and sniffs the air. Swill sits up hopefully.)

Salvate: No no, Swill, it's not for you. It's to help sell the house! (she squeezes the bread) There - a squeeze there! That should do the trick! (she looks at Swill who is still raised up with his tail wagging.) Oh go on then, just a bit! (She breaks a bit off the end of the loaf and throws it to the dog. Exit Salvate).

Regimenthe and Farther: Never can resist an old dog. Good girl Sal.

Swill: The bread is warm. It sticks to my teeth. It cloy to my tongue. For a long time after my mouth will taste of wheat. Nostrils will smell the thresh of corn, the tramp of harvesters, the whirr of rolling machinery. I can hear Salvate now. She is talking to herself, under her breath. But to me. It's clear as a whistle.

(Salvate is talking to herself offstage. We hear her words through the dog's ears.)

Salvate: The thane of Fife, she had a wife.
No use flogging a dead horse, or so they say.
But I've flogged many a dead one.
Many a one.
Ready.
To fester.
Flog a dead horse.
And your muscles get strong.
Your head sweats.
You feel it on your arm.
There's a burn in you.
Thwack.
Thwack.
Thwack.

I don't listen to what anyone else has to tell me.

I remort myself.
Castrate as the wild old Eunuch.
And amort myself

Besporting among the pigeons.

(Cast Iron strides into the room)

Cast Iron: Shitting hell! Am I the only one doing anything of any use here? Sal? Scrap?

(smallprint runs in after her)

You have to go, I can't deal with this now. You have the measurements, I've given you the copy -

smallprint: Don't worry Miss Brown. I have photos of the outside and main bedroom. We'll have it up on the web by this afternoon.

(shakes her hand) It's been a pleasure.

(exit smallprint)

Cast Iron: - But I want to check the - and it's 'Ms' not 'Miss' - (under her breath)arsehole! SALVATE!

(Enter Salvate)

Sal, she's gone. They've lost her.

Salvate: What?

Cast Iron: That prat from the care home rang. They don't know where Mum is.

(Blackout. Then spotlight on Salvate who stands wearing a crown of roses)

All:

Who knows where the wild wind
And the wild herd blows.
The rusticated morphoses
The ramblings and the roses.

(Blackout. Spotlight on Scrap and Teepee feeding cakes to the hearth. The rosy-gloved hand reaches and takes them)

Scrap, Teepee and Voice from the Hearth Bird-at-Dawn:

At night I look up and wink at the stars. Sometimes the wind holds me and rocks me to sleep.

(Blackout. Then spotlight on Old Aggie. She has socks in her mouth and races across the stage scowling, whipping the ground with the mashing machine tube-piping. Blackout. Spotlight on Regimenthe, Farther and Swill standing round a figure, bandaged from head-to-foot with blood seeping through, blackout. Spotlight on Cast Iron

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seated in front of a plate of split peas trying to pick them up
with a knife and fork. Blackout on stage. All exit)

(Rosita makes her way through the audience to the stage)

Rosita:

Why are there cracks on the wall?
Who is the dead baby in the fireplace?

You can't just crunk these
worlds out.

How many words twirl
bracing me round my head?

Quick stalk in the park is what you need.

What is the meaning of
life after pie?

Who are these people?
Can I see them?

Oh you're a fine fellow
In your marble
In your marble

OOSThst - my head
It's creakiing

Why are there cracks on the wall?
Who is the dead baby in the fireplace?

Did I ever ask your opinion
on anything but velvet?
Did I ever ask, and why, in
my quest to understand
the midnight blue of your eyes, did I ever

And were the cracks there then?

And what is to come of my flowery
garden, my rose petals, my
soft-sweet-smelling gems
cascading to the floor in
a smooth swift-wrinkly
flutter?

I am tall and my breasts are
Sweet shower
See the dandelions
Poking their head above the parapet

say

How many times can you see another June?
How many sweet June blues
will you see?
The blue of the skies and the
blue of your eyes?
How many much more will
you see?

Some people will bamboozle
you, refusal you, misusal
you

Sweet, shy, musical, you.
Clip me on the head with
A skyward glance.

Clip me on the head with
a board game.
Let me slither up the
Ladders and snakes of your
Pear trees

Where's the game?
Where's the game?

I have a monopoly on
your time. Your quick
sure eye in the eyer-glass
watching, ever-watching.

Crivellated and crenalled
Fritegoed and frascated
I'll bet my bottom dollar you'll mark your territory with a spade.

How come the automatic hedge-trimmer worked no more?

After the bees and the camellias
Had rushed and ruzoned
on down the path
I fought a frugal battle
Finding myself ecstatic
And exalibrating on the immense enormity
Of my pingdalling.

I'd love one of those dear.
One of those sweet and
gentle French Fancies.
And yet when I bite -
I feel I'm taking the roof off my mouth.

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Hiding the life of the cake
Under shards of icing.

Creaming the moment to a
dull, wooden, spoon.

And a ripe old early obituary.

Who knows what can
gather when the
moss rolls in.

Who knows what will
gather
When the heather's
heather
heather
rolls in.

Beckoning me like a beacon
A frugal frustellation of time
I remort myself.
Castrate as the wild old Eunuch.
And amort myself

Besporting among the pigeons.

Who knows where the wild wind
And the wild herd blows.
The rusticated morphoses
The ramblings and the roses.

My wallpaper
My wallpaper

Pomp and rhythm
you'll find it eliciting
riveting you to attention with its eyes.

If I allowed myself I could
go on like this all day,
Kids would flail in

Ironing not done
Buns burn
themselves in the
hot gas oven

I'm sorry we parted that way
I'm sorry
We'll find her.
I promise.

I am the rose of Sharon
The lily of the valley's
No-one comes to my father's house
Except through me

Reg keeps watching the films
Takes me back, me back
I know how he eats his polo mints.
He sucks them in a very particular way.
It goes in - *attten-tion!*
He swings it once around his mouth - *to the left!*
And back to the right - *about turn!*
Pokes his tongue through the hole - a bayonet swivvle, he jiggles
it around. Then he holds it between his left teeth - *steady!*
Holds it in his right teeth -*aim!*
And FIRE! - he bites right through and smashes it to smithereens.
I'm the only one who knows this.
They all think he's just sucking polos.

Careful! It might be poisonous
The rows of cabin upon cabin.

One morning I woke and looked at my window
A huge great vulture hung its wily head, just outside on the sill.
It had droopy red giblets quivering right under its neck.
The day was lobster pink.
It turned its gleedy wet eye toward me and a monkey then two
joined it, and they peered in at me. Then the glass was gone from
the window and they crept in. The hairy-faced, red arsed monkeys
and the drooping smooth bellied vulture.
Not a word of this is a lie.
And most of it is true.
He'll never talk about Korea.
Helen is gone to the soft sea bed.

(She reaches the stage. Lights up to sunny daylight. Regimenthe is
waiting for her. They hold hands and look at each other in silence

Regimenthe and Rosita:

May the road rise up to meet you
May the wind be always at your back
The sun shine warm upon your face
The rain fall soft upon your fields
And until we meet again

May God hold you in the palm of the hand.

(They kiss. Regimenthe exits. Rosita settles herself into his
armchair)

Rosita:

Got it up here.

Now I can see where I am going. Yes, this is the room. Small round. My gold ignot of shining children. Sweeping smiling faces blinking morning from their eyes

(Enter Cast Iron)

Hallo, darling. How was school?

(Cast Iron bursts into tears. There is a loud crack and the chimney breast falls down completely bringing most of the ceiling with it. A woman, taller than the house, uncurls herself from the rubble, yawns, stretches and walks away. Teepee, Salvate and Eleusis run in and stare. Scrap kneels down and gently lifts a bundle of bones from the rubble).

(Enter Eleusis dressed in black. As she speaks, brown-suited figures unravel 'Police - Do not Cross This line' ribbons across the space of the stage. A little white forensic tent is placed over the hearth)

Eleusis:

There were reports of strange sightings on the day we found the bones. John O'Leary, resident over the other side of town and two miles away swears blind he heard the crack of our chimney breast, and a woman three streets down rang the Earthquake hotline.

Then Moira ni Connell, off out to buy a top-up for her mobile saw a huge red and orange giantess walk out of our house and saunter down the street.

Voice of Moira on Radio: She was a bit of a cool customer. It was like she owned the place. She took her time about it. Dressed in red and orange with these long gloves and a top hat. She wasn't all that floaty neither. She was wearing these big clodhoppers, you know like the teenagers round here wear; all block heels and attitude. And eating a French Fancy. Pink. I'd guess she were about 15. She was that tall she reached the first floor windows. And silent as the grave. She just walked down the street and disappeared.

Eleusis: Then a woman walked into the launderette and opened the doors to every washing machine in there. They couldn't work out how she did it, but the locks were all broken. Milly Darton saw her and said she had these huge rats teeth and wild eyes. She was soaking wet, pasty-faced and a bit green around the gills. Water flooded out for hours into the street, everyone's clothes got all mixed up. It was like the magic porridge pot, apparently. They just couldn't get the water to stop coming. People mixed and matched their socks for days. The woman who did it disappeared into thin air. Someone saw her heading for the river, later that day. She was chasing after the red giant girl. Some saw a tropical bird flapping and rolling along after them.

Then Henry Smith saw our dad down the bowling green at about 3 o'clock. And Mrs White swore it was he went in to her shop and bought a packet of polo mints a little after. And both had been at his funeral. We reckon he'd come back to get Farther. Help him over to the other side.

They found Farther dead that afternoon. They broke the news at evening Mass. Fell asleep at his lunch; his chicken wings and broccoli were left untouched, and that's not like him because he loved his food. But that sent everyone panicing because hadn't Michael and I seen him that afternoon in the home stands of the Town match? And Anthony, in his e-mail says he saw a blinding flash of light in the sky near Lima. He nearly fell off his donkey and that would have been 2 o'clock our time when Farther was sitting down to lunch. And that evening, Sheila Marney saw the water of the canal turn blood red. It was making weird sounds, singing, hissing, burping. The dog's hair turned grey after swimming in it. It's a daft mutt, that one. Can the dead burp?

(Exit Eleusis. Rosita is sitting on Reg's armchair centre stage in a black suit. Enter Scrap and Cast Iron, also in black and both on mobile phones. Their conversations run in tandem):

Scrap: Yes Mr smallprint, we will be taking the house off the market...no, nothing to do with...no, ...well it's got a bloody great hole in the chimney breast and we've police ribbons everywhere...yes, we're now a crime scene...yes, not very neutral...Ok, I've got to go, we're off to a funeral...family friend, priest, in the army with my dad...no, I won't be available for a phone conversation tomorrow evening...no, she's off to Thailand...no, she's moving to Spain, yes moving...no, she's spending some time with our mother...no, thank you though... goodbye.

Cast Iron: So she's staying here...yes...no nothing to do with the home, it's absolutely lovely. In fact I've recommended it to some of my friends...yes we'll pay for the wallpaper, yes and the television (rolls her eyes).. we're keeping her here with us...yes, in the house of bones - what is this? No, it's no-one we knew. It was the skull of a baby, 100 years old. And they've just found another. A woman. There you are, you heard it first from us... No idea...yes, same age, old, very old... yes, they'll be digging for some time but we'll manage...Yes, we can trust our neighbours!.. Thank you. I'll be in to collect her things. Thank you. Goodbye.

(Enter Salvate)

Salvate: There's a woman at the door. Forensic.

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Cast Iron: Well what's she doing stood out there? (calls offstage) We're in here. Come in.

(Enter Amy. She is blonde with a mole on her cheek. She is dressed in forensic overalls made of brown paper and string)

Rosita: Amy.

Radio:

Repose...repose...reponere...repauser...repausare...ripouz...ripohze
..repausare...ripouz...repose..repose

(Winsor Blue is played in full. Then the cast leave the stage).

Note: The play now reverts to Cycle 1 and the action begins again. When the play reaches the end of cycle 3 for a second time, the play reverts to Cycle 1 and begins again. When the play reaches the end of cycle 3 for a third time ...

Reference notes:

The music for the opening section is from the album 'Burnt Sienna' By 2nd Outlet, track 1 'Winsor Blue' (Nuscope, 2004)

The quote by the American Major-General voiced by Swill in cycle 2 was real and is referenced on p13 of Tim Carew's 'Korea: The Commonwealth at War'. My notes on Korea -particularly lists of names and descriptions of the terrain - were largely drawn from this source.

The radio descriptions of the 'family traits of explosives' at the end of cycle 2 are taken from a United States Air Force film used in 'Training Programs for Ground Observers' (not for public release) entitled *Recognition of Nuclear Explosions* (1956, Film USA 128, courtesy of the Imperial War Museum)

The Gaelic text in the work comes from 'Irish Syllabic Poetry, 1200 - 1600' by Eleanor Knott (pub. Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1st ed. 1957, second ed. 1981). Bought in a second-hand shop in Claremorris, Co. Mayo in 2002, I am grateful to the unknown person who owned the copy before me and usefully translated interesting lines of Gaelic into English in biro on the page! Some of this has made its way into the text.

Here is the glossary of words used in the play with the English translations:

Tolg - a swell, bulging
Tocht - 1. Silence 2. Coming
Uallach - haughty
Uall-chath - m. Proud warriors (uall - pride)
Umha - bronze
Trein-niadh - strong champion
Teagar - (needs an acute accent over the first 'e')protection
Treoir - vigour
Triall - gen. A- setting forth, faring
Tiompan - a musical instrument, tympanum
Tall-od - away yonder, long ago
Tim - weak, timid
Tigim - I come
Trocaireach - merciful
Oig-mhflidh - young warrior
Uamhan - fear
Teann - stiffness, sternness
Teallach - hearthstone
Teachta - verbal of necessity of tigim - I come
Teid-bhinn - sweet-stringed
Sul-ghlas - gray-eyed
Sur - seeking, exploring
Comhaor - dog-keeper
Traighim - I ebb, dry up
Toradh, taradh - fruit, crop
Torrach - pregnant
Triallaim - i fare forth, journey
Toil, tol, tal - love, inclination
Torchur - windfall, sea-waif
Turchurtha - m. Windfalls, sea-waifs; fruitful
Ionmhuin - dear, beloved
Lacht - m. Milk
Geisim - I cry
Gair - f. Cry, shout
Geag-nuaidhe - f. Fresh-limbed
Gleannach - of hair, undulating, wavy
Iodhan - pure, clear, bright
Congbhaim - I keep up, maintain
Confadh - m. Rage
Confadhach - spirited
Ceilim - I conceal
Cosnaim - I contest, strive for
Canaim - I sing, say
Comhlonn - m. Combat
Comhradh - m. Converse, speech
Conghair - f. Shouting, clamour, bustle
Caithreim - battle-roll; battle-course, fighting career
Sunna - here
Sriobh-fhann - of placid streams
Blath - blossom
Cumraidhe - fragrant
Dreach bhoig-geal - of soft, bright, countenance

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Cion - love, regard

Broid - f. Bondage, sorrow

Anam - *soul*, as term of endearment, *darling*

The prayer 'May the Road Rise Up to Meet You' is a traditional Irish prayer (anon), traditionally quoted to and by Travellers when setting out on a journey, and as a general prayer for protection and well-wishing. Nina Kane, 2008