

S C E A L S  
A N D

A N T H E M S  
O F

O U T S T A N D I N G

L I V E S

Written by the Women of SAOL



[www.saolproject.ie](http://www.saolproject.ie)

## SAOL AND CULTURE

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The SAOL Project has always used and explored culture – poetry, music, painting, sculpture, photography, drama – to work with our participants on reflecting and expressing their life experiences, their fears and hopes, their solidarity with others, and their journeys towards recovery from addiction. These poems, so individual and expressive, are a sample of what our present group of women feel and think about their lives, but they also stand for the 240 women who have passed through our welcoming doors since 1995.

Self-expression is a proven therapy in recovery; often there was no-one to listen to how our women felt or thought before they came to SAOL, and allowing this essential human capacity to blossom has been a revelation to the dedicated staff who work with the women, and a source of great joy to all. We are delighted to be able to produce this small publication to honour the courage and talent of our women, and we are thrilled to have a wonderful poem by one of Ireland's most distinguished poets, Dermot Bolger, as a foreword to the collection. His poem embodies hope for the future, one of the hallmarks of the SAOL Project. May many more beautiful poems be written by SAOL women, both in and after recovery.

**Catriona Crowe**  
Cairperson  
SAOL Project

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# Possibility

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Just leave yourself open to the possibility  
That one dawn you wake to find your mind clear,

One dawn you win back the love you derailed,  
One dawn you will kick the habit of blaming yourself.

One dawn you will wake to hear a clear signal,  
A wavelength unmuffled by inference or static,

You will recognise the DJ's voice as your own  
Advertising a unique extravaganza treasure hunt  
Where each clue is a signpost through your past.

You will walk through a maze of sleeping estates,  
Collecting golden tickets concealed amid mistakes  
You made when addiction stopped you thinking straight.

That dawn, when figures emerge amidst the chaos,  
You will walk forward, unafraid to embrace happiness.

Dermot Bolger

*Dermot Bolger is a poet, playwright and novelist from Finglas who, among other topics, writes about the experiences of those who often feel alienated from society. His most recent book of poetry is 'The Venice Suite - A voyage through loss', was published in 2012; and we are thrilled that he has kindly permitted us to include this poem in this collection of SAOL poems.*

## Hope for the Future

---

Born into poverty  
It's a role with no say  
No escape - No relief  
Barely making each day

The waiting the needing  
The children need feeding  
The begging and crying  
The constantly pleading

Poverty, misery  
In the world of today  
No one should be starving  
In this day and age

We're living in hope  
As bad as it seems  
Through struggle and worries  
We still have dreams

Leaders don't care  
Causing despair  
With power and oil  
Young lives they spoil

Famine and greed  
Has ravaged the people  
This modern disease  
Our voices please heed

Hope for our future  
Belief leads the way  
Courage for our children  
Strength for today



# I Am Here

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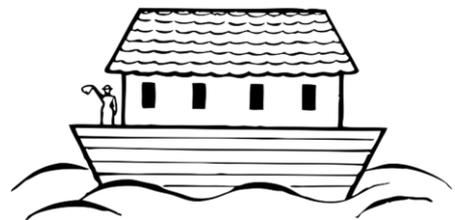
I've been through addiction  
Been out of control  
Been homeless, felt worthless  
But never lost my soul,  
Or my hopes, or my dreams  
I've kept my faith.  
I am here, I am strong  
And it's not too late

Glamour has always  
Been important to me  
As a woman, my appearance  
Is for all to see

Being a mother of three  
With responsibilities and drive  
Has tested my strength  
And kept me alive

I have always taken pride  
In what I stand for  
With courage and strength  
I will gain a lot more

I do believe women  
Should stand as one  
Through politics and struggles  
Life can still be fun



## 7 Visits Home –

---

The first time I went home stoned  
My mother ran me a bath  
I just got sick on the toilet mat  
She didn't know what was wrong with me  
But I was 15 and on drugs you see...

The second time I went home  
She asked why I was doing this to her and cried  
So I cried too, "I'm doing great now, ma" I lied  
But sure what's the point, they're all dead wide  
Just see what I can get and then run a mile  
So I ask for a lend and phoned my dealer with a cheeky grin  
Hah, no matter what I do they'll always give in!  
Not knowing when I leave my mother's in tears  
Cos now I've brought back all her fears  
Every day and night she cries  
Waiting for that call to say I've died.

The third time I went home my sister wouldn't let me in  
But cried looking at me, I'd gone so thin.  
My brother called the Guards. I know for him that was hard  
But I couldn't blame them, they'd had enough  
Me coming and going, robbing their stuff  
So now that's it, they've all given up.

The fourth time I went home, feeling all alone  
Passing the houses all nice and cosy  
Families all together having their dinner  
I sit in the cold having a nose  
The streets are empty, no one out, not a sinner  
They all start to leave with a hug and a kiss  
I sit with tears, cos that's what I really miss  
How's my family doing, I start to wonder  
Do they think about me when it's lightning and thunder?  
Sleeping in a doorway waiting for a fix  
But then why should they, when all I ever did was leave my mother in bits.  
So many years worried where I was  
And I didn't give a shit, I was me own boss.

14 long years living here, there, everywhere  
How did it take so long to see what I lost.

The fifth time I went home I was clean  
But my fella rang  
And the doubt in her eyes I didn't want to be seen  
And I was doing well, two months clean  
But here I go again, back on the streets without a bean  
Thinking of my family who for me would always care  
Even after all the hurt and pain I caused  
And all I could do was live in shame  
Any reason to stay on drugs, 'play the blame game'.

The sixth time she visited me in hospital  
My fella had left me black and blue  
So she took me home – what else could she do?  
I caused nothing but pain and misery  
But was too stoned to see  
A whole family was falling apart  
And all because I was breaking their hearts  
What can they do? How can they help?  
When right now all you care about is yourself.  
You never stop for a second to think of how they felt.



The seventh time I went home, she hugged me tightly  
Cos many times I'd sworn I was clean  
But to me - it was only a dream.  
Now I know dreams do come true and when I've finished reading this, you  
will too!  
Cos I'm doing great now – yes, I'm one of the few.  
You see, starting SAOL changed my life in ways I never knew  
I've learned how to forgive and be forgiven  
And how the drug changed every part of the life I was living  
Family, friends, housing and health  
All these I'd forgotten about, but now I know my health is my wealth!

And living life to the fullest, with my family all around me  
This is the happiest in my life I've ever felt.

## Twisting the knife

---

Hoping for a better life,  
But others just dig in the knife,  
Afraid that you'll change for the good,  
They're nosey bastards in this neighbourhood,

They love to see you on your knees,  
Begging them for help saying, "please, please"  
They look down on you with sneers and grins,  
Twisting that knife and digging it in.

Then comes the day you decide to change,  
And they're looking at you acting strange,  
But you keep up the work,  
And wait for the day,  
When they bow their heads and walk away.



# Ambivalence

---

Don't grieve for me  
For now I am free  
Free from this infection  
Inside of me



No one can see it  
Not even me  
It's selfish and evil  
Won't stop till it kills me

It's very clever  
And it knows what hour  
To kick in a raise outta me  
"Up, Out, Coward"

When it's happy it will  
Lay low and let me be  
But not for long coz  
It's addiction and very clever you see

But I know I'll stay free  
I've cracked it you see  
I'm no longer addicted  
To what nearly killed me

## Last Happy Christmas

---

I didn't know what to do I was very scared  
All I could hear was screaming and banging  
And I saw my sister run for the stairs  
What's going on I think, as I follow Lorraine  
I can hear Mammy shouting to get her a chair  
I look down and Daddy's asleep at the end, on the floor  
What's wrong with him, why won't he get up and open the door?



My sister is up on the chair opening the door  
And then suddenly I hear Mammy roar  
Lorraine started crying, Daddy was still lying on the floor  
Then all the neighbours flooded the hall  
I didn't know what to do or who to call  
So I sat on the stairs and cried and cried  
And kept on crying till I grew tall.

## Being a Woman in Recovery

---

Being a woman in recovery means to me  
Having a lot of responsibility  
For myself and how I cope with life  
Planning, working, oh the worries and strife

Being a woman in recovery means to me  
Being a mother, a carer for my family  
By guiding my children every day  
Watching them grow in every way

Women with partners who don't chip-in  
Are left with nothing, don't know where to begin  
But being a woman in recovery  
Has made me the woman that I want to be

It's been a long journey and I'm almost there  
With my family beside me, I'll make it I swear



## Duet

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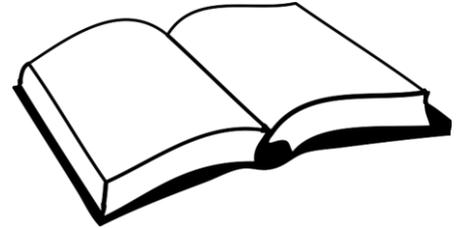
Maybe I am silly  
Maybe I am wrong  
But when I play our favourite song  
I am sure you are there singing along.



## The Girl from Malahide

---

While you lay in your hospital bed  
I know you could hear every word I said  
I took a page out of your book  
And started to tell you a story  
I know you could hear me and  
You were laughing deep down inside  
'Cos you were one of the girls that was from Malahide.

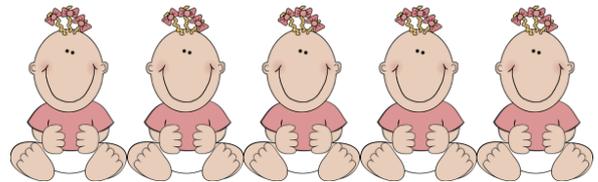


After my story the rest of the family came in  
And started to sing your favourite songs  
By the one and only John Holt  
And that's when you slipped away fast asleep  
And we knew it was not your fault.  
It was time for you to sleep and rest and go to that wonderful place.  
Love, miss and will never forget your beautiful face.  
Xxxxx RIP Sis

## Innocence:

---

Up all night smoking away  
 trying to catch the dragon but he just keeps running away,  
 Back and forth from me to my gear buddy the devil went.  
 I looked at the clock,  
 'oh no, I can't believe it's 11 o'clock,  
 I've to be home to baby sit'.  
 Great, can't wait I'm going up North.  
 Goofing off in the back of the car,  
 "Are you tired, Elaine? Late night??"  
 "Yeah, was on the drink all night"  
 When we got there I was fine,  
 the wedding the next day and I'd have 5 children to mind.  
 Next day still felt fine, a bit sniffy and watery eyes  
 but still thought I was fine.



Off they all went and the house was quiet.  
 But he had me on a hook and I just didn't know it.

Ohh, now had to mind these kids,  
 he's taken my patience,  
 and tolerance  
 and this wasn't me,  
 What was wrong with me?  
 Why did I feel this way?  
 Nobody told me the gear would make me feel this way,

Bedtime, thank God it's here but it only got worse from this time in  
 I tossed and I turned from left to right  
 the agitation had just set in  
 but not chasing the dragon tonight.  
 Coming to realise that this was his time,  
 He'd caught me now.

## Waiting Wednesday:

---

Wednesday again a cold damp day,  
 Sitting on the path with a bottle,  
 Why can't it be Thursday? I pray,  
 Week to week, day to day.  
 All I can think about is my pay,  
 Sitting there begging as my bottle is empty  
 Hoping for Monday, hoping for plenty.

Wednesday again a warm but dull day,  
 As I sit in my flat waiting for pay,  
 A bottle I hold in my hand,  
 But for a different way to help me leave this land,  
 I can taste it on my lips, feel them numb,  
 Wishing for Thursday, God why won't it come.



Wednesday, oh God, here we go again,  
 When will this stop? Please god when?  
 Lying in bed, I lay here so still,  
 Picturing it there, that small, little pill,  
 I say how I don't need it but I haven't the will,  
 How many times I've tried to stop,  
 But I need them to have that gap fulfilled,  
 To help the pain and agitation,  
 I just want the pills and no complications.

Thursday has come and I wake with a frown,  
 Bills to pay, people to see,  
 I won't have a penny left on me,  
 And I waited all week for this like a clown.

## Role Model

---

My family and their health  
Mean the world to me

My mam's recent illness  
In my eyes has opened a new gate  
Watching my mam suffer has taught me to cope  
With thought.

Watching her loss, her sadness, her pain  
Her inspiration, her strength  
I hope I will gain

And turn out to be even half the woman she is.

She's shown me a lot  
And now I stand before you,  
a mother of three  
With responsibilities and hope  
A mother, a daughter, a sister, a friend.  
Faith without end.



## Drink:

---

Drink makes me late,  
It makes me angry,  
It makes me impatient,  
It makes me happy,  
It makes me fight,  
It makes me nothing,  
It makes me lazy,  
It makes me isolated,  
It makes me forgetful,  
It makes me unpunctuated,  
It makes me blocked,  
It makes me cry,  
It makes me unemployable,  
It makes me not want to (go into recovery).



## Ring a-ding-ding!

---

'Give me a ring a- ding-ding',  
That's all I get when I'm going out;  
In the morning,  
going home,  
at lunch.



Sometimes I do,  
sometimes I don't,  
But for now I just fucking won't give you a ring a ding-ding,  
All you do is make my life miserable,  
but why do I go back ?

# Smile

---

Looking at the tree  
looking at the lights  
just reminds me of  
how bright you would  
make the room with that  
lovely smile you had.



## A Walk at Christmas

---

I walk up town  
There's light everywhere  
I think to myself  
What's going on here?  
I stopped for a minute  
My feet would not move  
I looked up and down  
When I saw all the people  
Rushing all around  
I said to myself "Where have you been"?  
Christmas is coming  
It's not just a dream



## Golden Brown:

---

Never a frown with golden brown,  
Always had my way and felt sound,

20 years of nightmares and tears,  
Family life a slide that makes me stop  
Learning to cope without the dope  
Be aware of my dares and face my fears.

Never a frown without golden brown,  
Only if I moan or show I've not grown,  
Keeping it real and shed all my tears.



## Cancelled

---

I'd been longing for this day for what seemed like ages  
The announcement of your visit was the reason to keep living  
Every part of me was filled with joy and happiness  
That I was walking on air

But suddenly, I felt a pain like I've never experienced before  
Someone had reached inside me and taken my soul  
You had cancelled your visit never to return  
And left me in sorrow that even death couldn't cure



## Taking Her Away

---

Oh, how much I hated you  
 A sickness the doctors called you  
 But evil is what you are to me  
 If you can make people feel the way you do  
 You take them over body and mind  
 And leave them spiritually broken  
 And leave just their body behind –  
 That's what you do!

And in come the doctors and specialists to tell us it is MANIC depression,  
 Here're some tablets for you

There were blue ones,  
 red,  
 yellow,  
 black  
 and blue ones,  
 big ones and  
 small ones



to keep you at bay  
 and when that didn't work they'd take her away,

Down to a hospital where you really took her away  
 Electric shock treatment took you so, so far away.  
 They swop and change her tablets and try to keep you at bay,  
 But only sometimes did it work and you take her away again.

## 100 years further on

---

It is easier now than in 1913  
When we couldn't vote  
Or sit on a jury  
Or work if we married  
Or use contraceptives  
We earned less than men  
For the same work  
There were no barring orders  
From a violent partner  
We had no domicile  
Except with our husbands  
He could sell our home  
Without our consent  
Even if we were the bread-winner  
In the eyes of the law  
We were no one at all

But today we are free  
In this country  
We are strong, independent  
Thanks to women like me  
Who fight for our rights  
For our family  
For our children  
Our health  
And our community  
We've learned all the lessons  
From our sisters who went before us  
Who lived through the hard times  
And fought for these changes  
So the next generation  
Could live happy and free



## Holding Your Hand

---

You had your good day  
You had your bad  
And when you were good, you were here  
And when you were sick, you were in bed

But I remember how, when I was small you'd make me feel so special.  
Sitting in my class, my name would be called.  
"Elaine, please come to the door"  
I knew it was you, half day from school  
It used to make me feel so cool!



Down the stairs I would run and see you at the door.  
Ooohhh yes!! I'd be saying, off to Roches now.  
We'd walk down together, you holding my hand.  
Up the escalator and into the restaurant

And all the big cakes, pink, yellow and with cream.  
"Pick!", you would say, my mouth watering with the thought,  
And I could get whatever ice cream I wanted,  
A big dollop on the side.  
Tea and a cream bun for you,  
And we'd sit and we'd talk of what we were going to do.

Now finished and stuffed and all warm inside, and holding your hand,  
That feeling again Mammy, I'll never find.

Miss your hand, love you.

## Christmas Time with Kids

---

3 months, 4 weeks and 16 days is the time that I am clean  
It's the best feeling in the world now the kids are being seen  
Our first Christmas in years  
And at last they won't see me in tears  
I grow stronger day by day,  
Their sweet faces keep the demons at bay  
As I walk through the streets of Dublin with all the shops  
There is a buzz in the air  
People rushing everywhere.



## Christmas Dinner

---

Turkey is only for Christmas day  
The table cloth decorates the room  
The smells fill the room, and makes me happy  
The door bell rings and family members arrive

Dinner is over, it's clean up time, the place is wrecked  
I'm angry because I've no help.

(First published in Brass Munkie, Christmas 2012)



## Substance Abuse

---

Being a teenager wasn't easy for me  
 Because alcohol surrounded me  
 All my friends were drinking it  
 But I just wasn't into it

Then one day I found a taste  
 Of another substance that I really couldn't waste  
 It was a brown powder on foil that I could chase  
 And I loved the feeling that that gave me

There were lots of paraphernalia involved  
 But that was half the buzz I loved  
 To get the foil together and everything fired up quick  
 Was nearly as good as the drug buzz itself

But little did I know  
 What this drug was doing to me  
 It took me over so quick  
 That I just couldn't even see me anymore

Soon I was injecting + shit  
 And I started losing everything over this shit  
 I lost my home and family to it  
 Over the way I was behaving on it



It was so small a substance  
 And even its name, heroin, was growing old  
 'Cos I destroyed my liver and body with Hepatitis C  
 But that's nothing compared to the psychological damage it's done to me

With this great substance that I thought I'd found  
 It ran my life into the ground  
 With homelessness, isolation and the violence involved  
 Hand on my heart I just should never have got involved

## Tick-Tock, Tick-Tock

---

Tick, tock, tick, tock.

Time's dragging by, it's knocking on the door, I need my Phy'.

Missed the doc', what will I do?

Go and score or sweat and cry

Can't go through another day of feeling so crap

What can I say?

Excuses, excuses, I'm used to them

He turns his phone off like he always does

I have the money, I don't have the time

It's knocking on the door. It has arrived

Aches and pains what will I do

Knock on doors

"Have you any spare Phy'?"

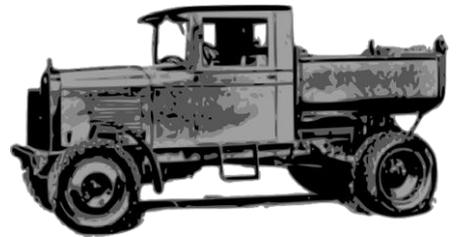
Sick of this, sick of life.



## Your Truck

---

I remember those lovely green eyes  
Always shining with a smile  
All the kids loved going in your truck  
Looking up at the bright blue skies  
Then while you worked we'd play in the muck.  
You'd shout at us not to get dirty  
But you never had any luck.  
You'd finish work and we'd head home,  
All of us dirty but happy again  
'Cause we loved those days going in your truck.



## Our Twins

---

Twins, twins, twins,  
They thought they could win  
God came today  
And took them away  
Matthew and Gerard were their names  
Now things will never be the same  
They moved and cried  
But then they died  
About quarter to eleven  
They went to Heaven.



## How did it start?

---

Sitting on a bench  
In a public park  
Having a laugh, thinking you're smart  
Getting out of your face with the bottle of gas

Moving on up a bit for a better hit  
Taking pills and tripping to bits  
Next add in the rest  
Dope that gave me false hope

Codding and robbing the ones you love  
Ripping and fucking the ones you could  
Not to mention the first rave I went to  
Full of E out of my gee

On the bottle smoking smack  
Next am in the brothel looking for crack



# The Concrete Jungle

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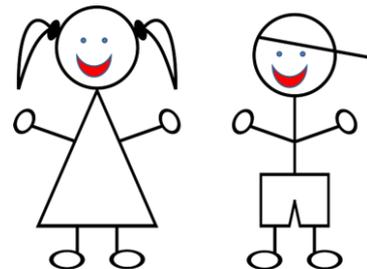
The concrete setting says it all  
That the road through had to change before the foreigners called  
Beside the airport it had to go  
The concrete jungle setting was too big and tall  
CRASH! BANG! Came the buildings  
We watched history fall and the lives that these buildings claimed  
Good friends and all.  
Now the taxi drives through it and the foreigners say,  
“Oh God, would this be a nice place to stay?”



## When you were here

---

When I sit down and go into deep thoughts about you and the life you lived  
I am more likely to smile, giggle or laugh  
I just think of all the things you did when you were here  
The way you would brighten up any room with your smashing smile.  
You never hid anything about your life  
That's why I loved to listen to you all the time.



## Sunday Morning

---

We all and have our toast and coffee  
The tree is bare and we spend the day making ornaments  
Out comes the glitter, glue and felt  
Out comes the mess, the laughter and the arguments  
At the end of the day, the tree looks wonderful and we're all proud of what  
we did together.

The presents are wrapped and put under the tree  
The family is tired including me  
We have had loads of fun and all are happy  
Except for the 3 year olds' crappy nappy!



# I Stand A Strong Woman

---

Being in recovery  
Has opened my eyes  
To what's expected as a woman  
Without living with lies

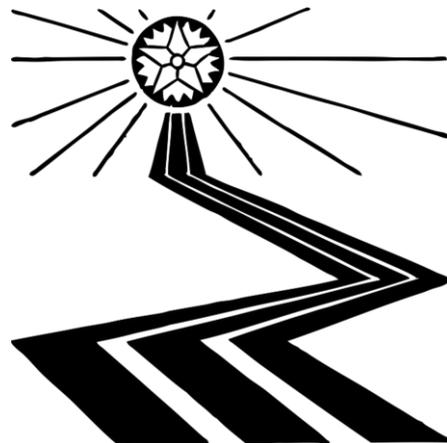
I've learned to be honest  
Responsible and more  
By being the mother  
I always hoped for

Over the years  
I thought I was doing right  
Didn't do what I believed in  
Couldn't stand up and fight the right fight

Now I have found  
My place in life  
Hope, strength, empathy  
I now have my family

Being a single mother  
With expectations and dreams  
I've got through addiction  
Hard as that's been

No more being controlled  
Manipulated or deceived  
No more obstacles to defeat  
I stand a strong woman.



## Each Day

---

Every minute is like an hour, an hour like a day  
No longer caring whether it's night or day

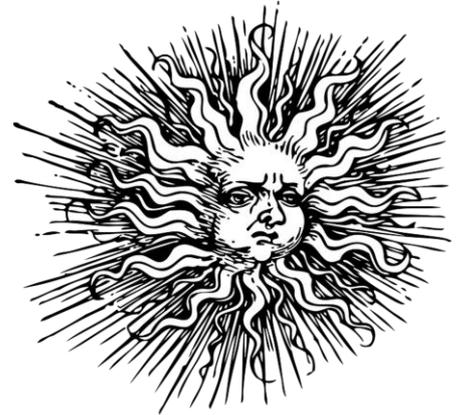
I'm no longer part of the living.  
I'm numb, not caring whether I live or die.

I want to scream, shout, hit out.  
How is life going on for everyone? Yet all I do is cry  
I have been given a life sentence full of heartache,  
guilt and excruciating pain.

There is no God.  
If so, why would he torture me in the cruellest way?  
Wave after wave of guilt hit me full of pain

Confusion of not knowing has now replaced the anger and numbness  
Ever so slowly the days seem a bit brighter  
The hazy cloud of grief is starting to lift

Maybe there is hope for me yet, boy!  
In your honour, I'll live each day to the fullest with the utmost joy.

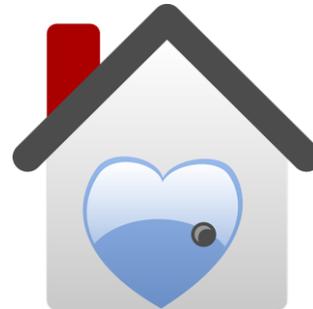


## Four Years On

---

Four years have passed  
I hope the grief will not last  
The pain I feel when I think of you  
The memories, the laugh  
I know won't pass

I think of you every day  
John, what can I say?  
You made me happy when I felt sad  
But now I'm angry and so mad  
I know you're in a better place  
What keeps me going is to see your face.



## Stupid Cow

---

My jeans won't fit me anymore  
 Cause I'm 8 months pregnant  
 And all I can think about is going out to score  
 I always wanted a baby but I didn't want it now  
 I know people with no kids would call me a 'Stupid Cow'  
 My ma's in the kitchen, I'm sneaking out the door;  
 I open it easy before she lets out a roar.  
 She knows well what I'm doing, she's no fool

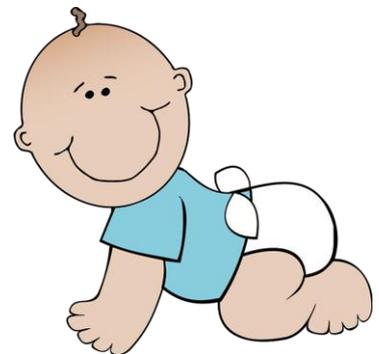
I'm running down the road to meet my dealer  
 When I get a bad cramp and grab the wall  
 I look at the ground, I'm standing in a pool.

"Shit, what's happening? It couldn't be! It's too soon!"  
 So I'm shouting for someone to get my mum  
 It's mad, anything that happens, to her I always run  
 She's always there to help me, no matter what I've done

We get to the hospital, me screaming in pain  
 My baby was coming, no waiting around  
 And I'm like a mad woman, I look like I'm insane

Wednesday November 18th, 7:17am, my son  
 Into the world he came.  
 When I saw my little beauty I was so ashamed.  
 How did I not care about this little bundle of love?  
 And all the time I spent taking drugs  
 Now I'd to pay because all too soon I'd to say goodbye  
 To my little boy.

So I brought him to his new family, trying not to cry  
 When deep down inside, I just wanted to die.  
 All over drugs I lost my little boy,  
 My joy.



# Guardian Angel

---

I know I have a Guardian Angel,  
Someone looking over me,  
Someone holding my hand,  
Someone just loving me  
Sometimes life is hard and people just can't be trusted,  
So you need someone or something,  
Someone you can rely on

I know I have a Guardian Angel,  
She's always there,  
But especially when I call on her,  
When I feel like I'm in despair.

She lets me know I have an inner strength  
That I can use when things get tough,  
But just knowing she's there can be strength enough



## Not 1913

---

It's very different now to 1913  
When women had nothing, it's like we weren't seen  
Women had no voice in 1913  
Told we had no rights, that men were like kings

But now in 2013, women are everything  
Because of strong women fighting for us  
Fighting for our rights,  
Some women even died for our equality

For me now, being a woman in 2013  
And what it means to me  
It means I am equal  
And that I am free

I am a woman  
Living in 2013  
I'm a recovering drug addict  
And I'm nearly clean

I'm so glad we had women  
Like Grace O'Malley  
To fight for us and our liberty  
Her leadership, accomplishments and outspoken ways  
That's shown us women, that we can be free  
That we are amazing and we are alive

I feel now I have the strength  
The ability to learn  
That I can accomplish  
Whatever I yearn

That I am amazing, I have stability  
And I can be what I want to be  
I am liberated, optimistic, outspoken and outgoing  
In 2013  
Not 1913



## Affected:

---

“I’ll explain it on the way to Tallaght”,  
“Ma, I swear I didn’t take anything”,  
With my eyes just closed,  
“Well you’re not in that state on nothing”,  
“Ma, I got no sleep last night”,  
“I often didn’t sleep for two nights and I wouldn’t be like that”,  
“Ma, you were younger than me when you had three children”.



## Christmas Time

---

Some people are dying,  
Some are homeless,  
Others left alone,

And most of the people don't seem to care.  
All they are worried about is their own kids' toys and clothes.  
Drink too.

I know there are some people out there helping out  
But just for once I would like to see people giving each other a hand out,  
Going out on the streets to see what it's really like.

It really breaks my heart to think people don't care.



## These Days

---

These days the people are so cold  
No warmth in their eyes when they look at you  
Only get out of my way or I'll hit you  
It really is true,  
The old days were the best,  
People who lived then were blessed.  
We may think we have everything we need.



## Addiction:

---

Addiction is a full time job,  
It consumes your every being,  
And when it's in your head and hands,  
Nothing else gets a minute.

When the drugs get hold of you,  
You have to get them into you,  
Your safety you forget about,  
Because drugs have a hold of you.

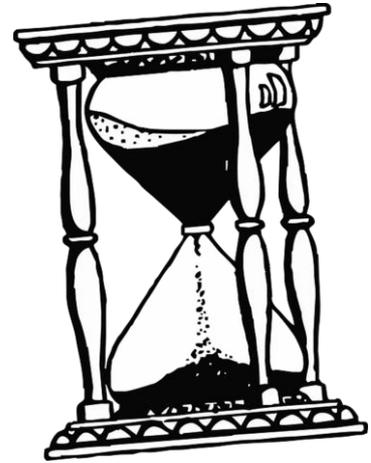


## Time:

---

Every time just like the last,  
Daydreaming about the past,  
Sick of dreaming of the way things were,  
It's not as if things were better then,  
It's like time puts on blinkers,  
Makes you think those days were the best.

Look to the future, that's all people say,  
What about the present? What about today?  
I know life is short,  
I guess that's why I always feel like I'm in a hurry,  
To get somewhere; somewhere but here!



# Colours

---

Children playing in the park  
Climbing trees and all that lark  
There's magic in the air.  
The clouds in the sky look like diamonds  
That are so clear  
Beautiful colours in the sky

And that is why I feel so high.



## Costing Christmas

---

The drugs, the life that I have led,  
Have cost me every Christmas of the last 10 years

Now that I am getting clean, it is becoming more a dream.  
Now I see the lights shine bright,  
There's music playing lately,  
The laughter of the Christmas shoppers  
As I stroll by proudly.

To see my children's faces smile,  
I will observe for a while.  
As we eat,  
Laugh and play

So now, as I'm looking out,  
My little brother lets a shout,  
"Come on Rachel it's your turn to open your presents"  
This is a feeling I want to keep forever.



## Story?

---

What's the story?  
How is it going?  
Who cares? Whatever!  
You're stoned, again

Will you ever stop?  
How long will it take  
Till you drop?  
Or will you always be a snake?

Tablets, drink and other drugs  
How much more can you take?  
Coming home itching with bugs  
Your skin shedding, you're a flake!



## Darkness

---

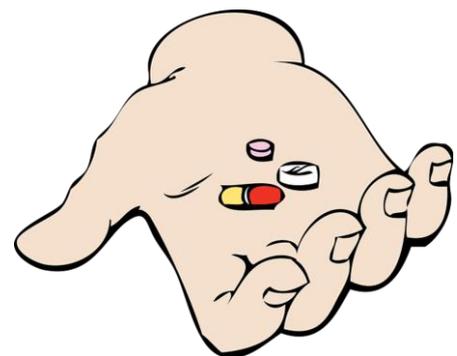
Drugs, drugs take us far away  
Alcohol and tablets can do the same  
Needing and looking for help today  
Before we're too bad and found down a lane.

Help is there but do I want it?  
We go looking, make sure not to find  
Give us some more drugs, just a small bit  
We are all the same, just one of a kind

How much more and longer can we go on,  
Hurting and robbing the ones that care  
It's like a riddle, it's like a song  
Will we stop or go elsewhere?

Projects, counsellors and clinics alike,  
With the support and doors open wide  
For help or for a clean spike,  
Off to get stoned on the street side

Liars, robbers and just pure selfish!  
That's what addiction is to you all  
Where we can't see the foolish  
But yes, others can and it's off the wall.



## Struggling for Better

---

Education not important  
Moving around to different schools  
Leave school early without a choice  
No one listens to a woman's voice

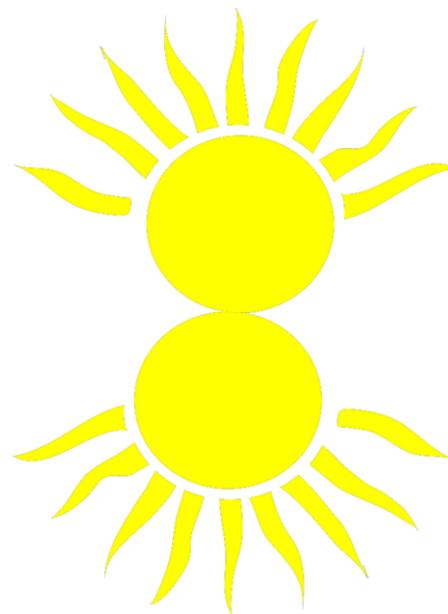
Marry young - still a child  
Don't know how to read or write  
Parent's say that he's the one  
Marry him or else you're gone

One or two kids; not enough  
The more the better; you get more cash  
A woman's job's to cook and clean  
And listen to all the kids scream

In my culture there are no drugs  
We don't do that kind of thing  
Taking drugs is not accepted  
You'll be cast out and rejected

When I decided to look for help  
It all came out; it was not just me  
Brothers, cousins all addicted  
Family came together to help us

Being in SAOL I feel accepted  
Getting up each day with purpose  
I'm on my journey to recovery  
The future's looking bright for me



## Devil in the Detail

---

There was a young girl from Town  
Who was always diddling around  
And always acting the clown  
Which never showed the fear behind her frown.

She was always having a laugh  
But then soon she was on the gas  
Cos' she was confused by her parents' past  
And she was always till last.

She'd be sitting on the park bench  
Full of fear and in defence  
So she started the hash and gave robbed cars a bash  
And found herself hanging from the prison fence.

So mammy got her bail  
And she was soon out of jail  
She was back to her old tricks and soon telling tales

Then she was having a blast;  
Smoking the grass, it wasn't enough  
And wanted other, stronger stuff.

Pop a few E and dance yourself thin,  
Snuff and snort to Fatboy Slim.  
Tripping to bits, 'Am I at Mass?  
'My head is up my fucking ass".

Here, here, ah leave it out.  
All I wanted was a good night out.  
Me mate said not to worry  
We'll get you down from that trip in a hurry.

Take this, it's called a Q  
A few lines and you'll be brand new  
Not a bother  
Like you said.  
Next thing I was falling for my bed.

Didn't know what the future was to bring  
I found myself robbing all my mother's good things.  
Jesus Christ, what is this shit?  
All I want is hit after hit.  
I hate this shit.  
I know it's not right.  
And back on the street, night after night.  
This drug is a horrible thing.  
It's making me have a one night fling  
Oh God, I feel dirty  
There was a time I felt worthy.  
I rob and cod all the ones I love.  
And sell my body to the devil if I could.



## The Battle:

---

The battle lines have been drawn,  
Both sides are gathered,  
Waiting with bated breath,  
As they know this is going to be a battle to the death.

Only one side can come out undefeated, good or bad,  
In their hearts the good hope justice will be meted.

God is there willing them on till the very end,  
No one can ask for a mightier friend,  
The low humming of prayer can be heard everywhere,  
Begging for the lives to be spared.

As the battle commences and the bloodshed begins,  
fear grips the heart and hope is all gone,  
courage is waiting, it looks like the bad side is going to win.

All but a few of the good are left standing,  
all the weapons have been used,  
it looks like victory for the wicked,  
a miracle is needed,  
with my very last ounce of courage,  
I fight the temptation to take drugs anymore  
and I destroy my destruction,  
NO MORE, NO MORE.



## I am a Woman, that's Me

---

I am a woman, this is me.  
Dishes, working, cleaning, that's me.  
Deadlines, demands, work,  
That's all I can see.

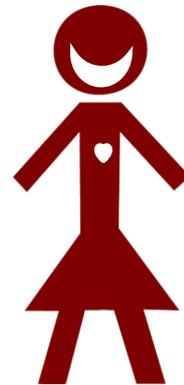
I am a woman, that's me  
A face behind a husband,  
A son and a daughter  
But most of all a face that carries the world on her shoulder

I am a woman, that's me  
Never ending days never ending  
Loads of never ending worries that no-one ever knows

These hands that clean,  
These feet that trail  
Always doing her job without fail  
I am a woman, that's me  
Hope clothed like a tower of strength  
Loving her family always well spent  
Yes, being a woman is hard  
But being a mother is best by far

But one thing she'll never do  
Is give up on women like me and like you.

I am a woman, that's me  
Not just a cleaner, a slave, a babysitter  
Or even a taxi  
But one thing she knows  
There's no one else she would rather be  
I am a woman, that's me



## Finding Me

---

I found my place in my family growing up  
 I was one child of five, in the middle you see  
 But my mammy was sick with depression and nerves  
 So my sister helped take care of me  
 Oh how I looked up to her  
 But life had a different road for me  
 Which wasn't so nice, I still lived through it  
 But addiction got a hold of me  
 At first it was great, E's, Coke and dancing  
 Got my leaving, yippee off to college I go  
 But I had a little problem holding me back  
 Heroin had come in and took over, then methadone and the clinics  
 At seventeen they told me I was pregnant  
 This wasn't a nice scene  
 It took away all my plans, deeper into addiction I went  
 Till I lost all my loved ones  
 God blessed me with two beautiful young girls  
 I love and reared them as much as I could  
 But then I met crack and with this drug I lost them  
 This made me stop, look, see what I was doing  
 I was ruining my family, me, such a changed person  
 One I didn't like, I wasn't the woman I wanted to be  
 I fell to my knees and asked God for the strength  
 To change, to be a mother like my sister was to me  
 I didn't know who I was anymore  
 Elaine, a stranger she was to me  
 From that day on I decided to change, it wasn't easy  
 I need help to accept my responsibilities  
 And now I am working on my addiction and finding  
 A new me and what I like to do  
 Things I enjoy, and most importantly  
 My two girls, fighting to get them back  
 To be their mother, show them Mammy's better now  
 I'm here for them now, to finish the rearing



## Baby Amy

---

You never got to see this world  
Taken from us all  
So beautiful, so precious  
Though taken too soon

You're an angel now  
So precious, so small  
We understand now  
That it was just your time to be called

Baby angel Amy, always in our hearts  
You're in God's hands now  
Growing up in heaven  
Looking down on us all

You just were not meant for this world  
Why, we still don't understand  
Baby angel Amy, we will never forget  
Your precious angel face

You're in heaven now, it's just not fair  
Such a beautiful angel now  
It's true what they say  
God only takes the precious away

*Rest in peace, Baby Amy*



# Drugs

---

Drugs the ruination of all,  
 Heroin what a joke  
 You'd think you're great when you have a smoke  
 Tears and pain are what you gain  
 Nothing but a drought on  
 Every day is a struggle  
 Just more drama and more trouble  
 To take away your fear and your worry  
 You want another bag of gear.



The Hate!  
 The Pain!  
 Being on the stuff for years

Heroin, the devils right-hand man.  
 You'd think God would just make the pain go away.  
 The pain and strife is taking over my life.

What shame; only myself to blame.  
 Worried about my next fix,  
 Got to go and pick up my crucifix.

Addiction is not fiction, it controls my head,  
 I know it will lead to me being dead  
 We're going and it's going to lead us all to death!

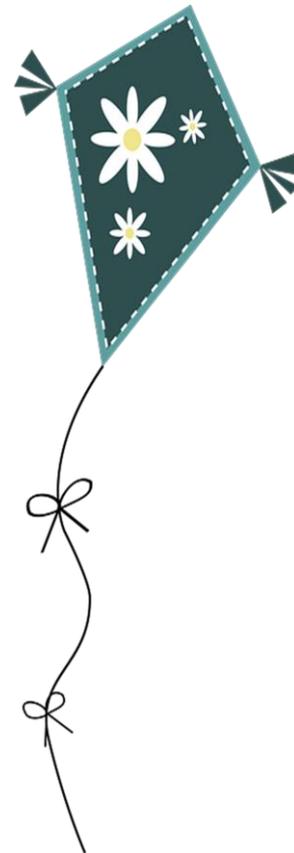
## Women are so great

---

Women are so great  
And they like to date  
Great role models they are  
And the places they go to will be far

Women are caring in so many ways  
And are great at acting in plays  
We are so much stronger than men  
In many ways out of ten

We are very good at cooking food  
Even when we're not in the mood  
Over all women are genuine ladies  
And all love to pick fresh daisies



## Hard Life

---

Cuts, cuts and cuts  
It would drive you bloody nuts  
We can barely survive on what we get  
No smokes, no beer, not even a bet

Kids need to be clothed, fed and dressed  
And even though we do our best  
It's never feels good enough  
Never enough to pass our test

No food, clothes or heating  
Just another beating  
Life is so hard for us  
But still we don't make a fuss



# Saol Project

---

Saol is a place I love to go  
When I'm depressed and feeling low  
I learn an awful lot when I'm there  
So all welcome, come in, we're all here  
They calm me when I'm nervous or full of fear

We learn so much in computers  
With the help of our lovely tutors  
Belinda and Theresa are lovely  
So nice and kind and bubbly

I love all the people in my group  
They're fun and nutty but can send you round the loop!

'Reduce the Use' is good  
With Barry and Ger in the hood  
It's a great class, I attend all the time  
I love to write riddles and rhyme

Gary is the main man  
He'll help you and do all you can  
He's a very funny fella  
But watch because he'd buy and sell ya  
But if it was raining he'd let you under his umbrella

Mary O and Sue's cooking is yummy  
And it fills that gap in your tummy  
Over all I'd rate it ten out of ten  
It's the place where I first learned to lift a pen.



The SAOL project runs person-centred, community-based programmes for women in treatment for drug addiction. It aims to create positive meaningful change in the women's lives through integrated programmes of education, rehabilitation, advocacy, childcare provision (with a focus on early childhood education), progression and aftercare supports. The project's ethos is informed by respect for the dignity of each woman.

We are very grateful to the agencies that fund us for our daily work (see below), but we are particularly grateful for the charitable donation that allowed us to produce this book of poetry. Thank you