

It is cold, wet and windy and I'm very annoyed that we have made this arrangement in the first place. The waiting room is also cold but – I'm in the car - it's the much warmer option and also more suited to mindfulness meditation. *Visualise you are in a quiet place* says the Buddhist monk. The rain beats down heavily on the car making it difficult to hear his calming voice. It's uncomfortable in the back seat doing the Lotus position but I am taking the usual precautions with a few added extras for the day that's in it.

I've checked the oil, the tyre pressure and for cats under the bonnet. But further to this, I'm deploying a new powerful visualisation tool recommended to me by my Mom, and an extra spray of super strength Vitamin D (which the pharmacist said you should really only use *one* spray of so you know it's good) - for luck.

I grapple with the parking app which seems like it's been designed by an evil capitalist leprechaun. My phone is pinging asking me to write a Google review for the 30 minute journey via car to the station. I heave a heavy sigh. The phone is slithery in my hand, as I try to type POT Ho Le S. I've left an out of office on all of my social media accounts

Thank you for your expression of like - If I don't follow you back right now it's because it looks a bit needy to follow you back so soon. When I'm somewhere with less on my hands for looking at my account I'll follow you back.

and I make sure the car is locked by pressing the key ten times in quick succession.

Today is going to be intense I decided. The rain breaks down hard on my shoulders and I silently congratulate myself for having bought such an expensive raincoat. Sounds start, signalling the approaching train and traffic barriers drop down as it pulls into view. I push the flashing button and the door opens ceremoniously. I breath out as I spot a solitary table. There is no sign of anyone. I still cannot log into the fecking mediation app. Time is limited.

Been looking for you *EVERYWHERE!* Curator 1 announces, as she plops gracefully into the seat beside me, projecting a mild warm mist upon arrival. A scent of some kind of molecule based perfume tickles my nose. She smells very strong. *I'm so excited* she says to hear what *YOUR UPTO!* She pulls out a copy of *Flash Art Magazine* and about 50 energy balls and smacks them all down like Serena Williams on the table.

I mutter something about not being *that interested* in the scene anymore *HAHAHAHA* she laughs loudly and it hurts my ears. I'm actually trying to be more self-sufficient in terms of funding models.

*HAHAHAHA* she laughs again and I wish I had left some wax in my ears to buffer her performative mirth.

The train chugs on down the road to Killarney and stalls as they do a kind of choreographed dance in order to reverse the train into the station due to only having one track. I glance out the window and see Curator 2 jogging lightly along the platform. Rumour had it that he had carved out his career in the back of a speed van. All those hours secretly studying the art market on the internet in the back of the van. I had always thought that robots clocked the fines. *Hello* said Curator 2. *How ARE WE*. His trendy feet opposite me are nudging against mine. He doesn't seem to notice. I try to nonchalantly get back into the Lotus position.

We all strongly and secretly suspected him of giving us all speeding tickets, heading down the EVA International back in 2009. I close my eyes and encircle him in the white light. *Are you tired?* he asks.

I squeeze my eyes tighter.

No catering on this train he comments, reaching across me from the aisle and plugging in his iphone creating a boundary fence across the carriage.

He is calling curator 3 on speaker phone. *HELLO!* He bellows: *Can you bring us a hot beverage?*

At Rathmore, Curator 3 alights hosting four cups of tea. (Fuck sake we all hate tea) but politely take one anyhow. They set the teapot down on the table and way too close to my laptop. I fake an air of *that's totally ok* and pop in a dissolvable vitamin C tablet into my cup, close my eyes again, and try to imagine it's prosecco.

You must be exhausted says curator 3. All that *speeding around*. I narrow my eyes and imagine him bursting into a ball of flames.

Millstreet Station is your next stop the conductor cheerily says.

Curator 4 hops on with a 52inch IMac monitor and starts to power it up. Curator 3 swirls the teapot dangerously around and offers him a cup. *YOU ARE TOO KIND* he says but I'll make do says he as he recycled aluminium flask made from old windows out of his bag. We all look hopefully at the flask. *Just had the Covid* he announces. My heart sinks as the aroma of coffee fills the carriage.

*What's the next stop?* Says curator 4

Banteer. We all silently nod. None of us - had ever been - to Banteer. Several years ago Curator 5 had organised a really unsuccessful biennale. The Banteer Biennale. No one had or ever will travel to this event and feelings had been tense ever since. We all nod tightly as he enters the train silently giving him the mega vibes so he sits opposite us. He is tightly gripping a copy of the artists way and Bono's new book.

At Charleville, Curator 6 opens a ruck sac and starts to unpack what appears to be a four course meal. An early bird Japanese meal from last night he tells us enthusiastically between mouthfuls of duck pancake and spring roll. I see globules of cold plum sauce drop on the tray table. My mouth waters uncontrollably. Curator 5 silently opens a bag full of ham sandwiches with the crusts cut off, an IKEA bag labelled *love Mum*. No one comments. All I can think about is cheese. Cheese blue cheese, big balls of Mozzarella cheese eaten like apples. I'd even eat a stingy cheese off a boot at this stage.

At Limerick Junction. We all get out of the train and have cigarettes in the rain. Curator 7 has recently quit but likes to have a pull on one of his straws. *Fresh air* he comments gazing up at the sky. *Though paper straws aren't so effective in the rain* he says quietly to himself. I feel a bit sick and headruchy as Curator 1 sidles up to me and asks me did I get the bursary. The sweat was mixed with rain as we charge back onto train like a herd of sucklers being sold in November. As I fly down past platform 2 from a failed attempt to buy half a flat white off a chartered accountant on platform 1, (he wouldn't accept cash). I could see the gang pegging it down ahead of me, splashes of coffee and crotchet and critical theory spraying from their midst. Who has that kind of money I wonder. I'd offered him a fifty... After an aggressive reshuffle and a mass charging of electronic devices; Mac book pros, ipad's and iphones are plugged in and are sucking juice or sending life. The train might be on a kind of electronic on dialysis.

The journey from Limerick Junction to Heuston is relatively peaceful. The train speeds on past several normal semi d's in housing estates posing as Art Centres, and paid for by generous Arts Council Project Awards. We pass a field of artists practicing jumps shaped like mid-tier galleries. At the Burren there are Arts Officers hiding amongst the furze bushes being aggressively fired by Paint-balling teams. It looks like lots of fun.

Curator 3, 4, and 5 appear to be asleep. Curator 6 is crocheting their own jumpsuit in a very non ironic way. Curator 1 was still beside me. I've been keeping tabs on her and I think she me. Her elbow was annoyingly pointy, her thigh was annoyingly warm. I tried not to think about half her body pressed against mine. I'm a person who although often lonely, very much likes there personal space. She has changed since Mallow - deleting 1152 Instagram posts, following and unfollowing and then following again. I check her account and see 10,000 stories and one post. I could feel her eyes on my fingers as I angrily typed a strongly worded and uncalm message to the meditation app developers whose app I still could not open. She has invited me to join her on Vero and deleted that also. We are both silently judging each other. I'm starting to feel a bit frayed.

At Dublin Heuston we ricochet off the train along with some of the energy balls. IMAGINE YOU'RE A MOUNTAIN booms the Buddhist Monk's voice as it reverberates off the walls of the station causing parents with young children to panic and causing us all to spill hundreds of euros worth of Butler's Coffees all over the station floor. Angry Irish rail works mopping at a ferocious pace to avoid the suing.

Jasus I'm back up and running.  
It must be said the meditation app developers do have a really good customer service.

With mouths full of complimentary chocolates we race for the Luas. Curator 2, 3, 4 and 5 all leap onboard. I visualise a swimming pool and launch myself into the lap of an unknown stranger. 6 and 7 are pegging it to the bus and 8 has gone rogue and jumped into a taxi. Our suspicions over the Basic Income for Artists are confirmed. Curator 1 is in my ear by my personal swimming pool. *Hello AGAIN* she says. *HAHAHAHAHA* Her perfume is starting to drive me mad.

Curator 5 signs the gallery guestbook *Director Banter Biennale*. I make eye contact with the invigilator, *you might find some peace in there* he says. I think you're not supposed to prescribe the work I think to privately myself.

In the gallery we are mostly silent. The gallery is filled with Curators; 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 - there are many more too many to count. Everybody takes pictures. I walk around, we all walk around. We stand a bit. We all probably have had a bit too much coffee. Ok says Curator 3 talking control; *Who made what here?* I get a follow notification from curator 1. *IMAGINE YOU ARE IN A CALM AND TRANQUIL PLACE!!!* Booms the voice of the Buddhist Monk. Everyone looks at each other in terror

nothing had been mentioned on the press release about anything participatory whatsoever *SIT DOWN HE SCREAMS*. We all rapidly sit down on the cold gallery floor.

*CLOSE YOUR EYES NOW* now his voice sounds quiet but threatening. God they must have done something weird to my app.

*TAKE SOME TIME TO LOOK AT THE FUCKING WORK*

A roll my bum onto my phone to try and silence Jon Kabat Zinn also known as Padraig O Morain, AKA the Buddhist Monk, who it has to be said is really coming into his own on this occasion

*LISTEN YOU NEVER - FUCKING LISTEN*

*JUST TAKING BAD PHOTOS*

*AND PUTTING THEM ON INSTAGRAM*

*AND TAGGING THE ARTISTS*

*JUST CLOSE YOUR FUCKING EYES*

***AND LISTEN***

I sit there with closed eyes in the dark. It's just me there.

And then I do start to hear things.

Outside sounds.

Being on the beach.

Something rattling in the wind

a bit.

It is

reminding me of somewhere.

*AFTER A TIME* says the Buddhist monk, in kinder tones

*You now can come back to where you are and open your eyes.*

We are all pretty subdued after this and we each mutter about needing to be at a meeting for a bit.

I use the toilet. I try to practice my visualisation in there but it seems unnecessary so I use the time to follow back Curator 1 and others I'd been neglecting like my Aunt. See you at the Station we said.

Later when I am slowly clanking down the long straight road to Heuston, I suddenly feel an inordinate heaviness has lifted but I am still weighed down by my tackling.

I have bought cans. Loads of them.

I pass by Mother's Tankstation and I beam them rays of light.

On the train we all still have admin to do.

*Do you know how to do that fancy font thing? Where you can make different words gothic or squiggley or scripty?* They asked.

I don't I said, over the top of the press release. I was feeling very tired. I had always wanted to do that *fancy font* thing too but I'm too stingy to buy an app.

*But if you dug that rock out;* said Curator 2 suddenly- *I'd imagine the holes themselves would be fairly imposing?*

We all closed our eyes and tried to visualise the giant hole.

Like the ones I drove through this morning causing tsunamis of water to splash onto oncoming cars I thought. My apologies.

*There are windows though, which is pretty cool. For the first few years there wasn't the money really or the energy either. Bad for keeping the bad energy in*

*and apparently it's rife in old buildings.* Curator 8 was now sounding slightly drunk.

*Well there were windows but they wouldn't open. And then I kept imaging there weren't any at all.* He's still on about the light.

I tried to visualise the train speeding through all the stations, faster and faster until it's just a very thin yellow streak.

At Limerick Junction Curator 5 said his partner was picking him up. He waves a cheery hand and hiccups as he disappears off into the darkness. We all secretly suspect that he lives with his Mum.

*Herzog's bag* said curator 4 suddenly.

*Well I suppose it really was Kevin Spacey's bag to be fair (and before that possibly Quinnsworth's)* interrupts Curator 7

*but then I remembered that cool film where Herzog narrates the soul of a plastic bag and he does it so beautifully. Plastic bags are having such a hard time recently* curator 4 added.

*As is Kevin Spacey.* Curator 5 added.

*I'd love to know what YOU THINK?* said Curator 1. Maybe she is interested in me after all.

*This rock, I said reminds me of the rocks up the hill. I don't know them super well but I spot them often you know. Like I'd recognise them but we don't really know KNOW each other. Twelve tonnes of monster rock, retired sumo wrestlers who once danced about on the mountain during the ice age. That must have been a thrill. It must have sounded really something... slowly thundering about like drunken Budweiser horses, or maybe they sort of grinded together vibrating the air around them and crashing into each other at eventual speed. The glen I imagine must have been a kind of amplifier - a mountainous sub-woofer. Yes I have considered dressing them I admitted. Nothing fancy, perhaps some kind of primordial garment? To keep the chill off and more importantly said I triumphantly - to protect them from the erosion!*

*HAHAHAHAHA* says Curator 1

*I never fully went through with it* I thought huffily to myself but I do contemplate it on winter nights. Some equestrian outlet might bespoke me something, a modified horse rug. We can let out a sigh here once it's feeling warm.

As the train reverses out of the Station, I see an older man struggling with a suitcase dressed in red robes. *Excuse me* he says *is there anyone sitting here?* I know this voice, it's familiar. I've been listening to it three times daily. FARRANFORE IS OUR NEXT STOP announces the disembodied voice of the train conductor.

CUSTOMERS ARE ADVISED THAT ONLY ALCOHOL PURCHASED ON THIS TRAIN MAY BE CONSUMED ON-BOARD.

It's time to go. *Perhaps the train never left the station.* Says Padraig O Morain

I stare at him as he untangles my wires which have become embedded in his robes. I thank him and disembark.

The cat is waiting for me at the platform.  
We both get back into my car and drive home. <sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The cans were also imaginary