

Mary Guckian

OVERGROWN PATHWAY

Living on a farm
in the nineteen forties
we made pathways
in mucky fields
from black cinders
that my father shovelled,
on to the horse and cart
at Kiltoghert Creamery.

We spent Saturdays
spreading black cinders
then crushing crumbly
ashes into soft soil with
our wellington boots.

Raised boardwalks
give access to walkers
if not used regularly
growth thrives, sneaking
in and out of the joinings
clogging over, smothering
the raised pathway with
ferns and faded moss.

SACRED TREE

I love to stand in the graveyard,
underneath the hanging branches
of the old palm tree,
its broad arms sheltering
headstones that inform us
of lives now at peace.

At funerals, I hide from showers
under the sprawling limbs
of this majestic icon,
where earth is dry, protected
from hailstones and hot sun. Below
this sacred tree tranquillity reigns.

BICYCLES IN THE 1940

We loved getting away from the farm
cycling to the store with a bag of eggs
or taking lunches to the bog where
we cut turf, shopping at Carrick town,
visiting cousins and a spin on Sunday.

Well worn and rusty, Raleigh bicycles
for travelling country roads got us
to our destinations but rough pot holed
roads gave us loads of punctures,
having to push the bicycle home.

I was a mere two years old when
the young master came to teach in
our local school, the local priest
asking my mother to give him lodgings
until he could afford a bicycle
and go to live in the local town.

Later on, he never slapped me but
I cried a lot of the time, watching the
children suffer, the boys loved to mess
with his bicycle, it was the only way to
get back at him as he ruined their hands
with whining wallops from sally rods.

OUR CLOTHES LINE

Two plum trees
rooted in turf mould soil
held our clothes line.
We waited for the fruit to fall
to the ground when fully ripe,
rushing to find them before
hens nipped the purple skin.

The wind came across from
meadows around Kilmadderoe
Lake, we enjoyed the movement
when a giddy gust tore rapidly
through the apple orchard
blowing the sheets higher
and wilder as some garments
came a cropper on the ground.

With her bare hands my mother
washed clothes with Rinso almost
every day in the big tub that sat
on two chairs, scrubbing them
on a washboard, white shirts,
blouses and linen were later
rinsed in a Reckitt's blue mix.



Congratulations to
Ronan Gallagher, Lough
Rinn, Mohill, who
embarked on a music
career in the past few
years. He recently
released a CD of his
music, fulfilling one
of his dreams! Cur-
rently, several of his
songs are featuring on
radio charts across the
world, with two songs,
Cannot Find My Feet
and *Low*, included in
the Top 25 songs for
the end of year charts
on KB Country Radio in
Canada. Ronan writes
all of his own material
and performs regularly
with his band in various
venues. You can find him
on *Facebook*
@RonanGallagherMusic.
His CD *Always Broke,*
Never Broken, is avail-
able from Amazon

