

WRITER'S CRAMP – John Byrne

McDade (male monologue)

Dear Pam

I am writing to you, personal, and not to your solicitors as directed. Please forgive me, my darling, but I must implore you to reconsider your divorce proceedings. After all, hadn't we some happy times together? Remember Mrs Ripper's? Happy days. How we used to stroll along the towpath, me pushing the pram and you with your message bags. And what about that time I pretended to lock you and wee Polly in the coal bunker and the door jammed and it is over six hours before I eventually twigged? That was a scream, wasn't it? Don't those times mean anything to you, dear heart? Tell me, how is the little chap? He must be almost eight by now. Does he ever ask about me?

Did you get the cheque for the thirty pounds I owed you in maintenance? Sorry I had to post date it but it can't be long until Michaelmass.

Did you hear Sammy Fisherman read one of my poems on the wireless the other night? It was that sonnet about connubial bliss I penned in Brechin that summer. Do you know the one? But then, I don't expect you get the Scottish Home Service very clearly in Gibraltar.

Well, petal, I'll have to close here as the candle stump is starting to gutter and the pair of boots I set a match to this afternoon in a vain attempt to heat this hovel have long since gone out. I'll say goodnight no, my darling Pam ... I do hope you have a nice holiday in Antibes with Ralph.

Your adoring husband ...

Ex-husband, Frank

DEAD DAD DOG – John McKay

Eck (Male monologue)

Today's gonna be a good one. An' I'll tell you why.

Number one. I've got up. Thank you, God.

Number two. After watchin' most of my friends scurry south to weather the long winter of recession and repression, my efforts to hang on in the country where the action's at, but the cash is not, have finally been rewarded. That is, this morning I've landed an interview for a halfway decent job. At 10.30am BBC Scotland will be exposed to my irresistible charm and dynamic ideas of hotshot Alexander Dundee. By 10.45 I'll have ma own series.

(confidential)

Yesterday I got a card from ma pal Donald. Just started working for a trendy ewspaper in London. Says they're lookin for another writer. Says I should apply. Well I say ha ha no sell out.

Number three. M-hm, numer here, tonight I'm meeting Roseanne. So, if you hear a sound like a pneumatic drill, it's no Embra Corporation digging up the roads again – it's my heart saying to my brain, wise up greystuff, this girl makes me wanna play the bongos. Wah!

SATURDAY AT THE COMMODORE – Rona Munro

Lena (female monologue)

Went tae the bogs, gigglin' wi' each other, Nora was aye that clever, the sly wee things she said aboot folk, naebody could mak me laugh like Nora. I'm in haein a pee, hear the door,, Nora awa oot I thinks I says 'Wait on me ya cow' cam oot, Mingo's there, airms folded that look on her face, troube. I'd jist got in on Mingo's cfrowd then, jist a bit, they were the only crowd, the rest were ist trying tae get there, Mingo'd been there for years. Ken fit it's like, you stick in far your weel in, I wanted tae stick in wi' Mingo. She says, 'That Nora, shes a lezzie'. I says naethin' for a bit then I says, 'She's a'richt', jist quiet, mumbling it. Mingo says, 'Haw so you're a lezzie tae?' I says, 'Naw!'. She moves in on me, richt intae my face, naebody should wear pancake wi' freckles like Mingo hid but fa'd tel her? She says, 'Then fit wey are you gaein aboot wi' her?' I swallowed, I says, 'Aye well ken fit it's like, she used tae be my pal, I'm sorry for her'. And Mingo grinned, and I grinned back and she gaes 'God's sake you're fiel, you're saft, get rid o' her and cam away for a smoke, we're gaein doon the back o' the swimming pool'. And Mingo's awa oot the door back to tell the rest o' them the shape o' the world an' I turned roond an' there's Norah, 'cause she'd been in the bog a' the time an' she's jist looking at me agai. Jist looking. I tried a grin but it wouldnae stay put. I said, 'God....that Mingo....' She didnae even blink. I says, 'Och Sorry Nora ken' She walked awa

FOLK – Tom Wells

Sister Winnie (Female monologue)

Oh, it was fine. I mean: not fine fine – everything's..... I've been at the hospital, Kayleigh. I don't know if Stephen said. Getting some tests done. I've got angina. Which for some reason I keep calling: vagina. It doesn't help. It means, Kayleigh, no more fun. No more drinking, no more getting worked up, no more smoking, apparently – I'm ignoring that, obviously but. I'm getting pills, blood-thinners. They've showered me with leaflets.

The consultant basically said I could pop my clogs at any moment. Added to which: he was a very pale man, heavy-breather – I did wonder briefly if he might actually be Death, come to get me. But then one of the other doctors popped in, called him Nigel, mentioned something about badminton so I thought: probably not. It's hard to imagine the Grim Reaper with a shuttlecock. But that's not the worst bit, Stephen.

Picture this: I've been through all the sitting, the waiting, spent three pounds thirty-nine on a mediocre sandwich, been wired up to a monitor, jogged, et cetera, I've been jiggled about, prodded, pressed with some very chilly instruments, got released, finally, back into the world, with my clogged-up arteries and uncertain future, I'm in the lift going down, who should I bump into? Who should get into the lift with me on floor number seven? I'll give you a clue: he's got a bloody hernia. And did he ask how I was? No. He spotted me, took a deep breath, launched into another two-hour rant about what a rough deal it is – whinging, complaining, whining. I mean, I know it's not nice to have a bit of your stomach lining poking out, I get it, I do, but really – how much more is there to say?

Anyway, I'm sorry to be so late back.