

NIGRU ĠRAJJA

HARĠA 02 - AWWISSU 2024



Bdejna u hadna l-frott tat-tieni sena tal-proġett *Nigru Ġrajja*! Ġirja wara ġirja, ġrajja wara ġrajja, għadna ma qtajniex nifisna. Fil-verità, ġirja minn post għal ieħor u warajha ġrajja jagħtuna aktar nifs. Wara ftit tbissim, wara ftit imbut-taturi, wara ftit stampi, wara ftit ideat, il-kliem jibda jfur, u jekk għall-bidu forsi jillimita ruħu għall-arja, wara ftit isib ruħu fuq il-karta. U ladarba jsib ruħu fuq il-karta, ma jergax lura u ma jintesiex. U meta naraw hekk, minflok naqtagħu nifisna, nibdew naħsbu għall-ġirja li jmiss, u la nkunu ġrejna ... niktbu ġrajja wkoll.

Ma rridux naqtagħu nifisna għax hemm barra hemm hafna ġrajjet. Uħud minnhom jaf għadhom fl-inkonxju, oħrajn qed jippruvaw jitolgħu fil-wiċċ għax iż-żmien jgħaddashom 'l isfel, oħrajn għadhom biċċiet 'il hemm u 'l hawn u qed jistennew li jissenslu. Oħrajn jaf qed itektu f'moħħ xi hadd u jixtiequ joħorġu imma bħal ġirja bi ftit nifs jieqfu nofs triq. Il-ġrajjet kulhadd iħobbhom, imma ta' wħud joħorġu 'l barra u ta' oħrajn jibqgħu ġewwa. Ahna nagħmlu hilitna biex inwittulhom it-triq.

Għalhekk nittamaw li *Nigru Ġrajja* jagħmel xi ftit ta' differenza. Il-ġrajjet ilhom jiġu rakkontati u miktuba. Dal-proġett mhu jagħmel xejn ġdid. Li qed jipprova jagħmel differenti hu li qed imur għand persuni li rament iwasslu kelmithom, għax jew għadhom zghar wisq (itfal), jew kibru wisq (l-anzjani), jew m'ilhomx Malta wisq (l-immigranti). Kultant, il-ġrajjet ta' xi nies mhux biss ma jissenslux, imma meta jissenslu ma jinstemgħux għax il-kelma, u magħha l-ġrajja, mhux ta' kulhadd għandha s-setgħa tiġri l-istess. B'din it-tieni harġa tal-gazzetta bl-istejjer tal-partecipanti minn dawn it-tliet setturi tas-soċjetà, nittamaw li xi ġrajjet li ftit li xejn instemgħu, jiġru ftit aktar mal-erbat irjieħ u jirnexxilhom jaqbzū l-ostakli li s-soltu jsibu fi triqithom.

Għandna ġrajjet li jfakkruna fuq kif għexu dawk li waslu qabilna, uħud fost taqlib qawwi bħall-gwerra u kif pupa kienet ta' wens. Imbagħad hemm tfal li jirakkontaw kif pupu jieħu l-ħajja, u stejjer ta' oħrajn li m'ilhomx wisq jaqsmu l-gżira magħna u qed jippruvaw jifhmu x'għabhom 'il hawn.

Għandna ġrajjet li sa fl-aħħar harġu ... u nit-tamaw li se jiġru. **Jean Paul Borg**



It was a pleasure to return to Malta for a few days in May. The Inizjamed team are brilliant hosts. I had a wonderful night in the public library outside Valletta reading from my latest short story collection, *Quickly, While They Still Have Horses* and discussing the themes raised by the book. Thanks to everyone who showed up and made me feel so welcome. It was also a treat to see some sun. Spring and summer have been something of a washout here in rain-drenched Belfast. However, the highlight of my trip was definitely two afternoons spent with seniors living in a residential facility on the outskirts of Valletta.

I've been a community arts facilitator for twenty years. Here in Northern Ireland, storytelling, creative writing and facilitated listening sessions have played a huge role in bringing together a country fractured by decades of sectarian division. Writing together gives participants a valuable insight into each other's experiences. It's an opportunity to practice empathy and learn from those who've lived different lives to our own. In the last decade or so, I've specialised in facilitating workshops with older people and it was an absolute privilege to work with some wonderful storytellers here in Malta.

Our afternoons together were full of conversation and laughter. We used a variety of different prompts to reminisce about the past and craft new pieces of short fiction. Participants were quick to chat. They had ferocious imaginations and enjoyed sharing their lived experiences. In many ways they reminded me of the older writers from home; using stories from the past to navigate their way through the here and now. I was struck by their generosity; how quick they were to welcome and learn from a stranger. I'm very grateful to have spent time writing with people who've lived, and continue to live, such rich and interesting lives. **Jan Carson**

F'din it-tieni sensiela ta' workshops ta' kitba mal-anzjani ġewwa San Vincenz de Paul, ergajna offrejna l-opportunità li noħolqu l-ispazju intimu u l-kundizzjonijiet fertili biex niċċelebraw lir-residenti bħala persuni u mhux bħala pazjenti u, waqt dan kollu, biex nisimghu l-istejjer tagħhom mill-qrib u b'reqqa. Uħud mill-partecipanti tas-sena l-oħra kienu herqana hafna li jerggħu jippartecipaw u baqgħu jistaqsu tul is-sena kollha meta se jerga' jkollhom l-opportunità għal workshops oħra.

Bħal kif ġara fis-sena ta' qabel, jinħass ċar is-sens qawwi ta' rakkuntar ta' episodji minn hajjet il-partecipanti tagħna, għax huma l-istejjer li jagħmluna persuni validi, għalkemm mhux biss. Telgħu fil-wiċċ stejjer li x'aktarx kienu ilhom mirduma. Interessanti hafna li f'wiehed mill-eżerċizzji ma' Jan Carson kien hemm xi haġa għaddejja fuq livell forsi iktar inkonxju, jew saħansitra fuq livell metafiziku. Fi żmien u spazju differenti dehret tip ta' konnessjoni bejn nies minn pajjizi differenti li ntbaħna biha permezz ta' ritratt partikolari li tella' fil-wiċċ storja u emozzjonijiet. Fl-aħħar mill-aħħar, l-istejjer tagħna lkoll jafu jkun esperjenzi komuni li jgħaqqu n-nies tul il-medda taż-żmien. Fuq kollox, għal darba oħra, il-partecipanti hadu gost hafna u tiskanta kif oġġetti zghar mondani jew ritratti antiki jafu joholqu hafna opportunitajiet għal reminixxenza mill-ġdid. Grazzi wisq, Inizjamed! **Priscilla Cassar**



Darba niftakar li qbadtha ma' xi hadd (insejt min) fuq jekk il-kitba kreattiva tistax tiġi mgħallma. Sal-lum għadni naħseb li le, imma fl-istess waqt nagħti korsijiet u mmexxi laboratorji tal-kitba. Kultant nistaqsi lili nnifsi: Mela għaliex? Għax naħseb li bi ftit gwida t-talija tista' tiġbor l-ideat tagħha aħjar, għax naħseb li bi ftit spunti t-talija tista' tiġgenera ideat oħra, għax naħseb illi, bħal kull Prattika oħra, irridu niktbu ... biex niktbu. Ma naħsibx li kittieba tista' tinholoq mill-ġdid, imma l-ftit li jkun hemm maħżun, jekk ikun ikkultivat, jista' joktor. Il-laboratorji ta' kitba mal-komunità Torka fi hdan *Nigru Ġrajja* kienu esperjenza ta' kultivazzjoni għalija. Flimkien qsamna esperjenzi u ideat u tlaqna fuq vjaġġ; mhux biss għax hdimna bil-kunċett ta' mappep fiżiċi, psikoloġiċi u korporali, imma wkoll għax il-kitba missitna u haditna f'territorji godda tal-emozzjoni u l-hsieb. Konna spontanji. Irrakkuntajna l-istejjer tagħna, li jagħmluna ahna, ta' minn fejn ġejna u fejn sejin. Konna vulnerabbli u ktibna dak li nafu u kif nafu, kulhadd bil-livell tiegħu u bl-istil tiegħu. U għalija, dan hu laboratorju ta' kitba: spazju fejn kulhadd iħossu liberu bla preġudizzji, spazju fejn nimirħu anke jekk nibqgħu fl-istess erba' madumiet, spazju fejn jiġu inkubati l-ideat sakemm jitwiieldu f'pubblikazzjoni bħal din. **Leanne Ellul**



Darba waħda kien hemm tifel jismu Luke li fettillu jagħmel bravura ... u żewġ itfal oħra jisimhom Sam u Lilly, li għamlu waħda minn tagħhom. Jake kien kompliċi f'ċajta li għamlu n-nies li kienu jaħdmu mal-papà f'għeluq sninu! U Tony kien ġugarell speċjali, li, bejnietna, ma kien ġugarell xejn! Dal-hames sessjonijiet ma' hames subien għaddew donnhom holma, ġrajja oħra li ġrejna flimkien. L-istejjer bdew herġin donnhom illustrazzjoni minn ktieb minsi fuq xkaffa, b'temi varjati u sens ta' avventura. B'daqqa t'għajj għali għali ftehemna u jibda jissawwar karattru, nagħtuh isem u nibdew nirakkontaw dak li fettillu jpaspar u fejn ... rakkont minnhom saħansitra hadna sal-ispazju! L-ideat friski xprunaw rakkonti kkuluriti, kultant imqarbin, oħrajn b'taġħlima jew b'xi aneddotu li jġib tbissima. Kull tifel irrakkonta bil-mod uniku tiegħu; hjiel ta' dettall bħall-platt speċjali tan-nanna bl-għagin bil-pesto zied doza ta' toġhma tajba mal-ġrajja rakkontata. Inħolqu tpingijiet spontajni li komplew taw ħajja lill-istejjer. Il-partecipanti qraw ix-xogħol tagħhom lil xulxin; b'hekk taw vuċi animata lir-rakkont. Xi ċajta jew dahqa ma naqsitx imma fuq kollox spikka s-sens ta' hbiberija u għaqda fost dal-grupp helu, li x'aktarx għad iridu jkomplu jgħidulek ġrajja li tibda, Mela darba **Rita Saliba**

Everything passes

Enjoy the sweet moments while going through bitter days
 Every day has its flavour
 But different taste
 Whichever one comes to you
 Accept with good faith
 But remember
 Every bitter taste doesn't last forever
 It's just leading you to another day, another taste
 So, never cry over a sad day,
 It didn't come to stay.

Everything fades

The sun fades away when night comes no matter how bright and shiny it was by day.

The moon fades away when morning comes no matter how full and bright it was at night.

The snow melts away when summer comes no matter how frosty it was in winter.

That's exactly how the calmness of the sea and the smell of nature makes me feel. It washes away the blood from my bleeding heart as though it never bled, giving me hope to live another day.

..... **PRECIOUS OROGUN**

Hajti

Twelidit fit-12 ta' Frar 1938 il-Ħamrun. Kont iben waħdieni ta' Joseph u Helen Bonnici. Attend-ejt l-iskola tal-gvern mill-1st sas-6th. Ta' 16-il sena dħalt naħdem mal-Ingliżi. Tgħallimt insewwi r-refrigerators l-Imtarfa u wara mort il-Floriana R.E. Yard. Hdimt ukoll fil-married quarters, messijiet, barracks u cold stores. Kelli biċċa kbira x'niehu hsieb u għall-ewwel kont immur bir-rota biex insewwi fejn jibgħatni. Wara qaluli biex nitgħallem insuq il-muttur u tawni wiehed biex nigri bih.

Fl-1954 bdejt inkellem waħda minn Ħaż-Żabbar jisimha Krociċissa Corso. Wara xi erba' snin għarajjes iżżewwiġna. L-ewwel kellna tifla imma mietet wara gurnata u sbatax-il siegħa. Meta konna noqogħdu Bormla fi flat bejn tnejn, darba waħda jien u l-mara konna fit-taraġ u ngħalqilna l-bieb. Habbatna lil tal-flat l-iehor biex forsi jidhliha għax ma stajniex nifthu u ddecidejt li ngħaddi mill-gallarija tal-ġar b'sellum, għoli ta' tliet sulari għax jien mill-għoli ma nibzax.

Wara sena u nofs morna noqogħdu Ħaż-Żabbar. Kellna tifel ieħor u miet ta' erba' xhur u nofs. Meta telqu l-Ingliżi bagħtuni mal-Medical & Health tal-Isptar San Luqa fejn kont insewwi r-refrigerators tal-isptar, bħall-bank tad-dem, il-kamra mortwarja u l-cold rooms.

Jiena bħala passatemp inħobb il-muturi u kont president tar-Roti u Muturi għal 20 sena tant li fl-1990 kelli x-xorti neskorta lill-papa bil-muttur tiegħi mal-pulizija.

Darba meta kont l-Isptar San Luqa kont hloqt bank tad-dem għall-ITU. Dam jaħdem xi seba' snin u kien tneħha għax beda jissaddad.

Domt naħdem sal-1999 u fl-2020 jien u l-mara ġejna residenti San Vincenz.

..... **ALFRED GAUCI**

Darba waħda kien hemm tifel jismu Luke, li kien il-bandli fejn kien hemm ring tal-basketball. Meta ra r-ring bix-xibka, beda jħossha ssejjahlu imma ma kellux ballun. Għall-bidu beda jmur taħt ir-ring biex forsi jgħannaqha ftit. Luke jħobb jiċċajta ħafna u allura qal lir-ring, "Ħa ngħannqek, sabiħa." Ir-ring ma haditx gost u ma tkellmet xejn. Luke qal, "Jekk ma titkellimx, niġi għandek jien." Ix-xibka kienet nofsħa blu u nofsħa ħamra. Luke mexa ftit lura u beda jiġri u għamel slam dunk mingħajr ballun. Minħabba li ma kellux ballun, daħal fir-ring huwa! Imma Luke avolja kien jaqbeż ħafna, kien ftit boċċu, u wehel fir-ring. Għall-bidu Luke ħa gost, għax hassu qisu qed itir, u beda jara ħafna affarijiet li s-soltu ma jarahomx. Imma wara ftit ħin hassu qisu għasfur fix-xibka u beda jibki. Għadda ftit ħin ieħor u beda jgħajjat għall-ajjut. Imma ma kienx hemm tfal fil-bandli. Ftit wara kien għaddej raġel u xhin rah ħadlu vidjo u poġġih fuq You Tube. Meta n-nies raw lil Luke fix-xibka fuq il-You Tube tgħidx kemm daħqu. Il-mamà, in-nannu u n-nanna biss marru l-bandli bis-sellum magħhom biex isalvawh. Wara li salvawh, riedu jagħtuh lezzjoni. Ilkoll qablu li għandu jiehu kastig. Il-mamà ma hallitux johroġ għal madwar xahrejn. Luke ħa t-tagħlima u ma reġax għamel slam dunk mingħajr ballun!

..... **AARON, JAKESTON, KEN, LUCA U ZAINE**

Mapping sense

I believe that what I first catch sight of is my luck for the day. I step out the door, I dare myself and feel welcomed by different shaped and coloured doors.

Oh my God, I am so excited to find this, and unlike other days, I easily decide how I am going to proceed.

I notice a rectangular brown door, and then another one, white and yellow.

I then look up at the sky and see so many clouds, I almost stumble while looking up at this lovely art.

No worries, I am fine. Still feeling lucky and a winner, spotting curves and shapes on every wall.

Maltese limestone welcomes me at the entrance, the arch stretching itself between the walls. Bright shiny lights obstruct my view of the receptionist.

Oh, my eyes are dazzled.

I feel dizzy after so many bright lights, I'd better sit down.

I am here once again, welcome me.

..... **VILDAN KAYIR**

Il-mużika

Kont għadni zghira meta ridt nitgħallem il-mużika. Mort għand il-mamà u għidtilha, "Ma, għandi ħabiba jisimha Edwige u ommha tibgħatha titgħallem il-pjanu. Nista' mmur magħha?" Il-mamà wegħbitni, "Binti, biex titgħallem il-pjanu rrid inħallaslek u aħna fqar. Lanqas biss nistgħu nixtrulek pjanu." Malajr fhimtha għax konna għaxart itfal u jien kont il-kbira. Il-libsa li l-mamà kienet tħitli kien ikolli niehu hsiebha halli tintiret minn oħti ta' warajja u hi jkollha tagħmel l-istess biex tiritha oħtna ta' warajja.

Kbirt u għaddej għas-sekondarja u mort il-kulleġġ Mater Admirable, ir-Rabat biex nitgħallem kif għandi ngħallem ahjar. Kienu sentejn sbieħ. Konna nitgħallmu t-table tennis u xi loġhob ieħor ukoll.



F'daqqa waħda għabulna lil Ms Castle biex tgħallimna l-flawt. Bdejna bit-teorija u wara sentejn tgħallimt indoqqu.

Imma jien ridt indoqq il-pjanu. Kif se nagħmel? Is-sentejn għaddew malajr. Bdejt naħdem u bdejt naqla' l-flus. Qaluli b'waħda tgħallem il-pjanu, mort inkellimha u bdejna l-lezzjonijiet tat-teorija u l-prattika. Qaltli biex jekk irrid immur id-dar tagħha u nipprattika fuq il-pjanu tagħha, u hekk għamilt. Imma indunajt li kelli bżonn nixtri pjanu, u inzertajt wiehed second-hand li kien tajjeb ħafna u domt nitgħallem tliet snin. Imbagħad qbadt in-namrat u ma kontx insib ħin biżżejjed biex indoqq. Meta iżżewwiġna, morna noqogħdu f'post qadim. Kont naħseb li se jaqa' fuqna u ftit wara xtrajna post għdid il-Figura. Ma kellniex biex inħallsu u biex ma nidħlux f'ħafna dejn kelli nbigh il-pjanu. Il-mużika kelli nitlaqha, bejn ix-xogħol, it-tindif tad-dar u t-tisjir ma stajtx inkompli.

Imma l-mużika baqgħet f'moħħi. Qaluli bis-synthesizers u xtrajt wiehed, u ergajt komplejt. Kemm kont indoqq Christmas carols, il-Für Elise u l-Moonlight Sonata ma' ħafna oħrajn! Is-synthesizer għalu l-ħsara u ma sibtx min isewwihuli. Qbadt passatemp oħrajn bħall-ġanċ, it-tapizzerija, il-cross-stitch u edhejt bihom. Gejt San Vincenz de Paul u meta darba kont is-Silver Hub rajt pjanu. Ippruvajt indoqqu qabel ma nibdew xi sessjoni, imma indunajt li nsejt ħafna affarijiet. Waqaft. Imma x'se jiġri 'l quddiem ma nafx.

..... **THERESA XUEREB**

Għandi karozza Cortina GT tal-1969, bajda, imdaqqa, la kbira u lanqas zghira. Għandha body veru sabiħ, qisha karozza sportiva. Fil-bidu kellha riħa tal-gild. Bħala karozza sportiva kont inħobb intellgħalha l-ispeed: kont bdiltilha l-istearing u għamiltulha tal-aluminju. Qlajtilha s-silencer ta' wara biex tagħmel aktar hoss. Kont bdiltilha r-roti wkoll u għamiltomlha sportivi. Kienet dejjem tleqq għax kont inżommha nadifa.

Fil-karozza kont inhossni ferħan ħa ntir u għadha għal qalbi. Kemm indum haj tibqa' d-dar.

..... **ĠUZI SCERRI**

For my wedding, I had a cake named Baked Alaska, which was a present from my husband. It was a surprise which I really liked! It was a famous cake, which I enjoyed eating and our guests enjoyed it too. It was an almond cake with bits of chocolate. I felt so happy sharing it.

..... **CARMEN AGIUS**

Kien hemm żewġt itfal jisimhom Sam u Lilly. Mar-ru d-dar tan-nanna, għax il-mamà tagħhom kienet ix-xogħol. Waqt li kienu hemmhekk, in-nanna tal-bithom biex jgħinuha. Qaltilhom, “Ejjew onxruli l-hwejjeg!” Sam u Lilly harġu fil-bitha u raw il-habel tal-inxir. Għall-bidu qagħdu bravi u naxru l-hwejjeg li kienu kollha tan-nanna. Wara li lestew bdew jgħidu, “Issa x’se naghmlu?”

Lilly, li kienet tifla kreattiva, qalet lil Sam, “Tridx naghmlu tajra?” Sam mill-ewwel qabel. “Kemm inti intelligenti, imma basta thallini nilgħab biha wara.” Lilly weġbitu, “Kollox sew.”

Lilly malajr gabet il-karti u biċċa qasba u għamlet it-tajra. Imma kellha xi haġa nieqsa. Il-habel! “X’se naghmlu?” Lilly staqsiet lil Sam. Sam għall-ewwel beda jaħseb u malajr sab soluzzjoni. “Nużaw il-habel tal-inxir,” qal. Lilly qablet miegħu u bla telf ta’ żmien hallet il-habel tal-inxir wara li telgħet fuq spallejn Sam.

Kienu wkoll fortunati għax kien hafna hafna riħ, u t-tajra malajr bdiet ittir bil-hwejjeg tan-nanna b’kollox.

Dan il-hin in-nanna kienet fil-kċina ssajjar ftit għaġin bil-pesto. Bdiet thares mit-tieqa u f’salt wiehed rat il-hwejjeg tagħha għaddejjin. In-nanna telqet kollox minn idejha u saret hamra daqs tadama. Bdiet tgħajjat, “Sam, Lilly, ejjew ’il hawn!”

Sam u Lilly bdew jidhqu. In-nanna aktar irrabjat!

Qabdet l-ixkupa f’idha u bdiet tipprowa tigris warajhom imma bhala mara xiha ma setgħetx tilhaqhom. Il-hwejjeg bdew jitolgħu aktar u aktar ’il fuq u Sam harablu l-habel minn idejh. In-nanna kienet se tiġġennen. Qaltilhom, “Dawk il-hwejjeg irrid nil-bishom illejla, issa x’se naghmel?”

Sadattant kien hemm għasfur u daħal fix-xorz tan-nanna u aktar beda jitla’ ’l fuq u daħal fl-ispazju. Il-taqa’ ma’ spaceship u l-astronawta qal, “Mela anki fl-ispazju hawn il-hwejjeg!”

..... **AARON, JAKESTON, KEN, LUCA U ZAINE**

Meta kelli sitt snin, kellna bitha ftit imdaqqa. Kienet antika, kien fiha ċ-ċaġhaq u ftit umdità wkoll. Iċ-ċaġhaq kien fuq il-hamrija. Konna nħobbu nilagħbu fil-bitha u anki konna naghmlu reċti bl-ilbies tal-karti. Ġieli anki rreċtajna *The Merchant of Venice* ta’ Shakespeare għax konna tgħallimnieh l-iskola tas-sorijiet.

F’biċċa mill-hamrija kien hemm ponsjetta li telgħet wahedha u kienet kbira u sabiħa hafna. Telgħet mingħajr ma hawwilnieha u konna naqtgħu minnha imma kienet tibqa’ twarrad. Kull Milied konna naqtgħu minnha.

Meta missieri ġie biex ibiġh id-dar, irranga l-bitha. Kien tefa’ x-xaħx fuqha u wara poġġa madum roża. Kien iddispaċieni hafna għax kont tlift il-ponsjetta.

..... **MARY CARMEN AGIUS**

An island

There is an island in a city at the official border of Canakkale in Turkey, and it’s probably as big as Malta. It was populated by Turkish Greeks and Rums. It used to be called Imbroz, which in Greek means a windy island. Nowadays, it’s called Gökçeada, which is on the western edge of Turkey, the closest Turkish place to Greece.

I read about it in a book called *The Island where Dreams Died*, which tells the heartbreaking story of the island; the changes it endured in its culture and population.

Arriving at the island, a warm message welcomes you, “Slow down, you are in Gökçeada”.

It has famous dishes and cookies, and there time does not fly, only souls do ...

And I wonder whether it’s because of it that I decided to move to the island of Malta.

..... **ZIYAHAN ALBENIZ**

I have a cat called Ġiġi because he’s ginger, and now he’s living at the SVDP Sanctuary. He is not fluffy and is a normal sized cat. He is 10 years old, very active, and a leader of the pack. He learnt from the best! He is also very intelligent and a bit of a biter.

Ġiġi sleeps undercover, he always finds his own spot. He has a white mask and a slightly twisted tail.

I call him, and Ġiġi comes running. When I see a picture of him on my mobile, I think of royalty.

..... **JOSEPH SCERRI**

Nhar it-Tlieta, 23 ta’ Lulju kien għeluq snin Ġanni, il-papà ta’ Jake. Ġanni dejjem jaħdem, u huwa l-manager ta’ bank li jismu *Il-Bank ta’ Ġanni*. Kuljum jilbes qmis u ingravata biex jidher serju. Il-fatt li jkollu jilbes kuljum hekk, kien idejqu ftit. Kien ukoll dejjem inkwetat li se jitlef il-pożizzjoni tiegħu, għax in-nies li kienu jaħdmu miegħu ma kinux kuntenti.

Il-haddiema ta’ miegħu ddecidew li la llum jahbat għeluq sninu, jagħmlulu ċajta għax jiddejjqu jarawh dejjem serju. Kellmu lin-nies tal-familja tiegħu u ftiehm li jgħidulhom imorru jieklu go restorant li jismu, *Five Star Buffet*. Għalhekk marru kollha flimkien fir-restorant. Għall-bidu bdew jikkellmu fuq l-istokks u x-shares u liema share tela’ l-aktar, li kumbinazzjoni huwa ta’ kumpanija li n-nies li jaħd-

mu magħha huma kollha kuntenti f’xogħolhom. Meta Ġanni beda jisma’ dan kollu, beda jiehu gost, u beda jgħid, la l-haddiema tiegħi ġew miegħi, aħjar inhallsilhom l-ikla halli jkunu kuntenti wkoll.

Ftit wara qamu u marru jieklu mill-buffet. Il-papà u l-haddiema kollha tgħidx kemm kielu.

Wara li kielu kollox, reġġu bdew jikkellmu fuq ix-xogħol. Sadattant Jake taparsi mar it-toilet u min-flok beda jikkellem mal-kok. Wara, ir-restorant beda jdoqq id-diska *Happy Birthday* u l-papà kellu jqum biex jaqsam il-kejk. Il-kok għablu platt mgħotti u talbu jiftu. Imma xhin il-papà kixef l-għatu tgħidx x’qatgħa ha. Minflok kejk kien hemm ras Jake, li kien taht il-mejda li kien fiha toqba. Għall-bidu, Ġanni bjad. Imma wara, il-haddiema, shabu u l-familja tant bdew jidhqu li anki hu beda jidhaq u jgħannaq lil kulhadd.

Ftit wara, il-kok gab il-kejk ta’ veru taċ-ċikkulata b’hafna xemgħat. Ġanni qasam il-kejk u ta biċċa lil kulhadd. Il-haddiema tax-xogħol hadulu vidjo bil-mowbajl. Wara għaqqduhom kollha flimkien u Ġanni tgħidx kemm ha gost. Kienet ġurnata li baqa’ jiftakar. Jake għamel wahda tajba!

..... **AARON, JAKESTON, KEN, LUCA U ZAINE**

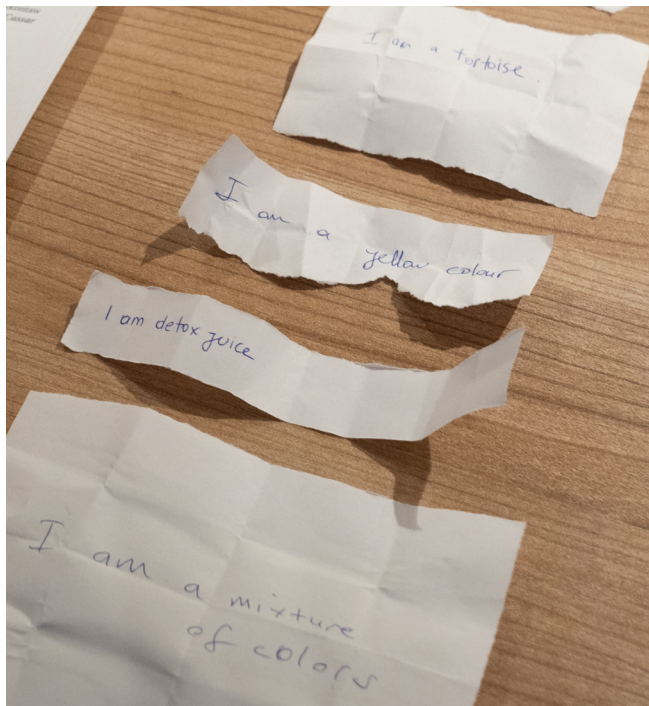
Meta kelli xi seba’ snin, is-superjur tal-mużew tal-abni naghmel il-prietka tal-Milied. Naħseb għażilni għax kien jaħseb li kont bravu. Tani l-prietka u wara l-iskola kont noqgħod nitgħallimha bl-ament. Fid-dar kellna skalapiża u kont noqgħod nistudjaha hemm. Meta beda jersaq il-Milied, il-katekist tal-mużew kien jibqa’ miegħi biex jara x’tgħallimt. Dal-katekist ġie anki warajja dakinhar tal-prietka biex iserrahli rasi li jekk nieħu żball jgħinni. Tant kien harrigni li ma hadtx żball wiehed. Kienet esperjenza mill-isbaħ u għamiltha sitt darbiet f’postijiet differenti bħal Had-Dingli u l-Imtahleb. Kien hemm qassis li qatt ma rajtu qabel u tani hames xelini. Meta mort id-dar, urejthom lil ommi u qaltli, “Ġib ’il hawn!”

..... **EMANUEL SAMMUT**

Meta kelli tlettax-il sena mort biex nitgħallim nirreċta mas-Sliema Dramatic Company tad-direttur Wally Cachia. Habbatt il-bieb u fetahli Dun Ġorg Zammit, u qalli li nhar il-Hamis ikun hawn l-atturi, bħal Twanny Scalpello, il-krema tal-krema. Lid-direttur għidtu biex jagħtini żewġ sentenzi li jrid hu u jien ngħidhom kif irrid jien. Meta għedthom qalli li jiena twelidt nirreċta!

..... **MARY GALEA**





The Story of Us All

Once upon a time, there was a tortoise living in Valletta that came across a genie. The genie was the keeper of the maps of Valletta. The genie thought the tortoise looked lost, so he decided to give him one of his maps. This map was the long-forgotten map of the alternative timelines. Now, the tortoise would be able to see the consequences of his choices. Initially, the tortoise was happy. With the help of this map, the tortoise could foresee and avoid the potential consequences of his choices, and he could create a new life for himself.

However, soon the tortoise realised that whenever he avoided a consequence, he was not able to succeed. If he slept instead of looking for food, he would starve. If he kept enjoying warm weather, he would have nowhere to hide when the darkness came. As time went by, the tortoise became lazy and miserable. He missed the days where he had no idea what the future might bring. After long debates with his conscience, he finally decided to return the map to the genie. The genie was surprised. The tortoise had chosen the ambiguity of the future over knowing everything. Moreover, the tortoise wanted to discover this little fish in the Mediterranean. If he dwelt on the map, he would not succeed in his endeavours.

This situation made the genie think of himself. He was the keeper of the maps of Valletta. He had always been. Yet, he had never seen anywhere else but Valletta. He knew every little detail about Valletta, but that was all. While thinking, the genie found himself in Eagle Street. He realised that with its stairs and pots of plants, there was a distinctive blueness about this street. Not only because the doors and balconies were blue, but because of the solitude that echoed down the street. Valletta was always a mystery with many stories and yet, Eagle Street had always seemed a bit distant, a quiet street to him. Here, he could find any shade of blue. Navy, mint, sky ... blue is a funny colour, he thought. This thought was both relaxing and sad.

When he climbed the stairs, he felt sad thinking of the realms beyond Valletta. He wondered whether his maps ever showed any of those places but no, they were all about Valletta. For the first time, in spite of living there for centuries, he felt he didn't know where he would end up. While climbing, he felt stressed, tired, anxious and nervous ... until he reached the top of the stairs. A gentle wind embraced him. When the genie turned to look down where he had climbed, he could not believe his eyes. The sad vibe of the blue colour on Eagle Street had turned into the most relaxing feeling that the genie had ever experienced. He discovered the joy of exploring; he had realised the thrilling sense of changing perceptions. At that instant, he understood what the tortoise had meant, he understood his dilemma. The

tortoise was a voyager, carrying his home on his back wherever he went. On the other hand, the genie was like an innkeeper; every subjective opinion arrived to him yet he never had his own.

He felt the urge to talk to someone who knew what it was like to discover. Of course, he could easily catch up with the tortoise since he only moved a couple of metres away after giving him back the map but the genie already knew what the tortoise thought. He wanted to know someone else's opinion, he craved for someone else's subjectivity. And this someone else was in front of him, a girl with happy eyes, button nose, talky mouth, tired eyebrows, and wavy but didn't-know-itself type of hair who was born outside Malta. This fascinated the genie. He had never left Valletta yet the tortoise wanted to discover this little island, and there were even others that were from other mysterious lands.

When the genie found the girl, she was enjoying her view from Lower Barrakka Garden. She was surprised to see the genie. In fact, she had no idea there was a genie in Valletta. She had never read about such things in tourist guide books. The genie explained to her that he was created in the Valletta Design Cluster. Ignoring her confusion, the genie kept talking and told her everything that had happened. The girl smiled. She said she knew that feeling. She had felt the same when she first came here. Yet, after almost a year and many places she had been to, she experienced and felt the same thing. She explained to the genie that it was okay to feel intimidated when you start something new, when you leave that place you think you belong to. It was okay to look for a device or a medium to foresee what the future might bring even though it could not promise anything or might even hinder you from going forward. In fact, she explained, we never start something new but we make progress building on our initial experiences. We never leave the places we thought we belonged to, we just let ourselves discover without pulling off our roots. And these roots are ours and ours only. They could both contribute to our progress and adapt themselves with new features we had learned during our experiences.

Last but not least, all of these experiences are intrinsically subjective but they eventually became one, the story of us all. The genie felt relieved, just like the blueness in Eagle Street. And now, he felt ready to fly like an eagle and explore the realms beyond Valletta, and maybe, he might create another map of subjectivity, this time one of his own.

Mela darba waħda, wara li qomt mis-sjesta, kont għadni qed nitbandal u ridt immur ingib il-ġugarell favorit tiegħi mill-gwardarobba li kien ma' ġugarelli oħra. Imma xhin ftaħt il-bieba kien hemm xi haġa mhux tas-soltu. Il-ġugarelli kollha kienu qed jiċċaqlqu u bil-qatgħa li hadt ġismi telagħli xewk xewk. Għalaqt il-gwardarobba, imma ffit wara ħsibt; jiena tifel kbir. U rġajt ftaħtha. Xhin ftaħt il-gwardarobba harabli ġugarell li mar hdejn it-tieqa.

Għedt bejni u bejn ruħi, aħjar nagħmel habib miegħu. Xtaqt inkellmu imma ma bediex ikellimni lura. "Isma', jien mhux ġugarell. Jiena tifel mohbi fil-pupu," kitibli b'sebgħu fuq il-ħġieg tat-tieqa li kien kollu trab. "Inti kif wehilt fil-pupu?" staqsejtu. "Kien hemm raġel veru kattiv u għamilli seher u dahħalni fil-pupu." "Veru?" "Mela." "X'jismek?" "M'għandix isem." "Trid intik isem jien?" "Iva." "Mela se nsemmik Tony. Jogħgħbok?" "Haġna." "Kif taf tikteb, inti?" "Kont immur l-iskola bil-mohbi fil-basket ta' tifel." "Trid tmur l-iskola minfloki?" "Tajjeb, imma l-homework trid tagħmlu inti."

Ftehemna u sirna ħbieb.

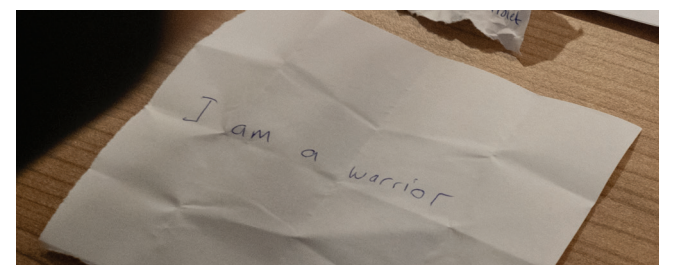
• • • AARON, JAKESTON, KEN, LUCA U ZAINE

Kelli pupa taċ-ċarruta u tant kont ferħana biha li kont neħodha kull fejn immur. Haġd ma kien imisshiel.

Kienet pupa fiha daqs tarbija. Il-wiċċ tagħha xtrawhuli u waħħaltu magħha. Minħabba li ma kellhiex xagħar, kont inlibbisha skufja tat-trabi. Iz-zija kienet hitithieli għax fi żmien il-gwerra ma kontx issib tixtri pupi. Il-pupa qatt ma kienet tibki, dejjem kwieta.

Meta niftakar fil-pupa niftakar f'meta kont għadni tifla. Jiena twelidt fil-gwerra u l-pupa kienet wens.

• • • • • CARMEN AXISA



• • • • • BUSE BARIŞ KATI

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