

How It Is That Such Is So (amiable version)

A text by Sally O'Reilly

Sally O'Reilly writes and makes things for the page and for video and performance – things which might end up in magazines, galleries, lecture theatres, opera houses, industrial greenhouses, open-air swimming pools, train tabletops, bathing machines, virtual pubs, caravans on dairy farms...

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O— has a detached retina, and cannot fly. D— is grounded by his principles. They travel together on buses, sitting far apart, talking loudly and mishearing one another. 'This is us!' they say as they get up for their stop, carrier bags swinging.

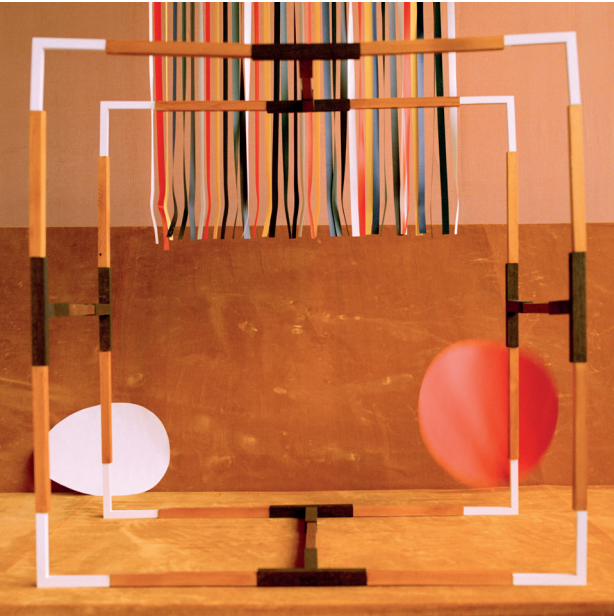
It's a short, pleasant stroll to the sunny spot on the back step, where O— and D— take their leisure when they can. Beneath the gold velvet lies shuttered concrete, pocked like a slab of feta cheese. Up above is the cupboard where the treats are kept. To the left, a grapevine clammers among the sage and thyme; to the right is unmemorable. Over the shoulder, a lower dimension with a murky palette stretches back and out.

'In this world, everything is held together by bribery,' D— says sadly, his smudged violet parka the spit of his aura. In the past, he has bribed people to bring him food or to let him enter their building. These days, he is in the pocket of hunters on the trail of luxury's hideout.

'Oh you sad melt,' says O—. His trousers are the colour of pale ham, their secret pouches bulging with gambling chips and love eggs. He can see how the small thrill of people doing what you tell them to do, and even what you gently suggest they might, is a gateway thrill. When lying beside someone, he is often struck by their simultaneity but ultimate separateness. That he ever reaches anyone at all seems chance of an unspeakable magnitude. And then he says 'come' or 'go', and they say 'how far?' or 'how much?'

D—, on the other hand, feels the world as a part of his body he cannot move at will. The world is his hair.

But together at the sunny spot on the back step, everything is simple. All handles off which to fly have been removed, all obstacles abridged. Contrast is notched down. Cold colours liquefy in the warmth. The world moves and can be moved and moves them and they don't mind either way, because for once, in that moment, they are composed.



Brian Griffiths and Frank Kent
Mr Dot & Mr Oval, 2022