

THE STANDING STONES
A Poetic Triptych by Dennis Corcoran, July, 2010

Cast:

| | |
|-----------|--------------------------------|
| W1 | Female, any age, any body type |
| W2 | Female, any age, any body type |
| M | Male, any age, any body type |

Director Notes:

Lighting directions are suggestions intended to convey the idea I wish to express, not the literal lighting configuration. Hence, if the director wishes to have the actors seated or standing in a triangular configuration, and use flashlights, that's fine. The notions in the directions (fade up, down, spot on face, etc.) still apply. If the director wishes to use gels on the flashlights, that's fine, too, provided they are of the same color.

There is not to be introduced a "fourth character" – for example, if one were to make one face orange, one white, one green, the tricolor of Ireland, that would be introducing an additional character. That's not OK.

Thus, there is flexibility in staging. But, my request is this: read the directions; understand them; then implement a concept which, in your heart, adheres to the visual, conceptual, and emotive layers which lay behind the script.

[W1 in center. W2 to her R. M to her left.]

W1

[Light fades up on W1 face, a soft spot, but little else but face visible. Eyes closed. Face ashen gray, pale, ghostly. Before speaking, eyes slowly open. All W1's words are memories – not a story told to audience, rather spoken to herself. Eyes, therefore, make no contact with audience. Voice soft, airy, distant.]

A winter's day.
Damp.
Cold.
Like those before.
Like those to follow.

[Eyes slowly ALMOST close but not fully, like she is falling asleep. Then suddenly re-awakens and resumes speaking. So eyes almost close, slowly, then snap open again. A pause, memory resumes]

A winter's day.

My ...
Our ...
All the children.

Outside.
At play.

[Eyes slowly close as W1 sings 1st line of chorus. They open with a slow snap for 1st word of 2nd line, but immediately begin slowly closing again. On start of 3rd line, eyes open again, more slowly than on 2nd line, and not fully open, and immediately begin closing. On 2nd last word of 3rd line, they close. Chorus ends with eyes fully closed. Then light fades out.]

[chorus]
Agus och, och Érie, lig 's O
Éire londubh is O
Sé mo chroí tá trom agus bronach.

M

[Light up – no fade if possible – on M face. Eyes closed. A sharper spot, if available. Face in clown white – not ashen but white. Pause in light with eyes closed. Then eyes snap open. M sees audience – contact is made. Face snaps into a big, mischievous grin. Voice clear, resonant, strong, not loud but not soft and airy as W's voice.]

Have I told you the one about the cripple and the priest who ...

[realizes the audience is jolted by change of atmosphere. Face changes]

Don't bother about her.

Poor loser.

Weak sister.

She'll get over it – or not.

Doesn't matter.

[face snaps back into big grin as at start]

Have I told you the one about the old butcher?

No? Yes? Cat got your tongue?

[evil laugh]

There was this butcher. He made meats in the camps.

In the camps.

[pause, then restarts]

Have I told you one about the old butcher who made meats in the camps?

[Light begins to fade out at start of next line. Voice begins to fade, tapers off with light until light is off, voice is silent, before end of 2nd line.]

There was this old butcher who made meats in the camps.

He slaughtered ... and slaughtered ... and

W1

[Light fades up on W1 face. Same voice as before. Eyes closed. Then, once light up, eyes slowly open.]

The glen.
Echoes.
Children's games.

Warmth ...
Laughter ...
Woolen shawls ...
Plaids ...
Braides ...

[Eyes begin to slowly close, but stop. Then slowly open again as W1 speaks next lines]

It was then ...
Then ...
It was then it happened.

Sky ... blackened steel.
Wind. Fire. Choking smoke.
Drum beats.
Death drawing neigh.

[chorus]
Augs och, och Éire lig 's O
Éire londubh is O
Sé mo chroi
tá trom agus bronach.

[Same eye movements and voice as in previous chorus. Light out at end.]

W2

[Light fades up on W2, face only. Soft spot. W2 eyes closed. Head turned to 45 degrees from audience, angled up. Firm self-assured pose. Eyes slowly open. Voice firm, resonant, flighty. Maybe an air-head but educated, maybe a celebrity but not a celebrity. No contact with audience. W2 is speaking to no one, as she always does.]

The Carpenters are coming.
A bar-b-que on the patio.

They're important people, you know.
Bob, a banker.
Jan, in Junior League.

[turn to other 45 degree slowly]

We're off to the dog show Saturday.
Well. I am.
Richard plays golf.

Then to the opera.
Loge seats ... as always.
Next to the Eichmann's

[turns to other 45 slowly]

The Thatchers.

[turns to other 45 slowly]

The Bush's.

[turns to other 45 slowly]

The Milosevic's.

[turns to other 45 slowly. As doing, light fades. W2 speaks next line more softly, voice fading with light.]

The Netanyahu's.

[turns to other 45 slowly. Light fades to black on turn. No sound]

W1

[All as before, light, voice, tone, expression. Her reverie continues. A tragic reverie, or so it seems.]

The children.
Silent.
Unmoved.

Frozen ... in place.
Features turned to stone ...
Standing.

[Eyes close very slowly over next 3 lines]

A winter's day.
So many winters ...
Standing there, still.

[Pause. Then eyes open again slowly. A greater weight on W1 eyelids, on breath, on her words. She continues]

Seasons born ... and buried.
Families born ... and buried.
Hope ... born ... and ...

[long stare, eyes open. Then a very slow blink (close and open) and she resumes]

Reign of blood ...
Tears ...
Fire ...

Nothing inside me ...
Them ...
Nothing inside them moved ...
Save their hearts.

[chorus]
Agus och, och, Éire lig 's O
Éire londubh is O
Sé mo chroí
Tá trom agus bronach

M

[Light fades up on M. Eyes closed. Eyes snap open. Less contact with audience. Voice softer but still firm, clear, resonant. More “abstract” this time – the circus clown being a bit more serious than just a clown.]

Might makes right.
Not my rule.
Always was ...
Always will be.

Weak sister.
Crocodile tears.

[Big grin returns, becomes same personality as first time]

Listen to this.
Listen.

A Sasanach garrisoned in Trá Mór
Once sought the services of a whore.
On finding none about
Began to weep and pout ... [said with mock weeping and pouting face and voice]

[evil laugh, then said disgustedly]

Ah, screw it!

[pause, then big grin]

Did I tell you the one about ...?

[pause, turns serious again]

No. No good either.
Look. What’s mine is mine ...
And what’s yours ...

[big mischievous grin – play it with or without a laugh]

is mine.
Unless you can stop me ...
Weak sister.
Poor loser.

[evil laugh – eyes snap close, pause, then light cuts to black]

W2

[as before, head cocked, titled up 45 degrees, toward **W2**, same tone and demeanor as before, with appropriate facial expressions but without moving head]

Richard bought a yacht.
Not safe to fly ... he says.

[turns head to other 45 slowly]

How could they? Really.
Bomb my country.
The nerve.

[pause, turns head to other 45 slowly]

Gail is stopping by.
We'll do lunch.
Shop, perhaps.
She is such fun.
Quite wealthy, you know.

[pause, turns head to other 45]

All those nasty little people.
Not one a bit grateful for all they've been given.
Uncivilized, I say.

[turns head to other 45 slowly]

Filthy hovels.
Babies out of wedlock.

[beat]

Let them get a proper job ...
Like Richard ... or Robert ...
Uncivilized, I say.

[turns head to other 45 slowly]

Faces covered ...
Breasts bared ... all with AIDS, I suppose ...
Why, some of them don't even speak English.

[Light holds on face, **W2** maintains posture, then light fades out.]

W1

Their eyes.
Sometimes ... in early light

[long beat, eyes almost close, lost in memory, then slowly open again]

Can it be ...?

[long beat, a tear, if possible; if not, ok]

They stand ...
Unmoved.
Save for their eyes ...
Watching.

[eyes slowly close - begins on 1st line, fully closed on 2rd]

Waiting ...
Waiting ...

[eyes slowly open before delivery of the following]

These ... the children.
These ... the standing stones.

[long pause, lost again in memory, then resumes, starting over again]

A winter's day ...
Damp ...

[a full stop, a memory interrupts, now with weight and sadness]

So many names ...
So many names ...

[chorus]
Agus och, och Éire lig 's O
Éire londubh is O
Sé mo chroí
Tá trom agus bronach

[eyes close as each other time. Then pause, light fades slowly to black]

W2 and M

[W2, head at 45, facing W1, head cocked up. M, head at 45, facing directly at W1. W1 in darkness. Lights snap up on W2 and M. Eyes closed. Lights up for a pause, then both W2 and M's eyes snap open. M has big grin]

M

Weak sister. Poor loser.

W2

All those nasty little people.

M

Have I told you the one about the cat with three legs?

W2

Did you hear about Jim and Barb's new pool?
Quite nice, I'm told. Small, though.

M

There once was a cat with three legs
Who could catch no food but the dregs.

W2

All those nasty little people.
Yet, charming, in a quaint sort of way.

M

So, he ate what he could
Which did him no good ...

[evil laugh, continues through lights fade, loudness fading to silence with light]

W2

All those nasty little people.
Not one a bit grateful.

[Lights fade to black. Eyes close at the same time.]

W1

[she has moved to back of house or off stage, away from where she had been, giving voice a sense of distance. Ideally, this is done without audience aware of it. The main goal is for **W1** to change location and/or position substantively **WITHOUT** audience awareness. Whatever this takes should govern the blocking – no audience awareness of change. Final chorus sung in darkness.]

[chorus]

Agus och, och Éire lig 's O

Éire londubh is O

Sé mo chroí

Tá trom agus bronach