

Lines, not recollected in tranquillity, but whenever another flash came via Facebook of Nadya's imprisonment in murderous hard-core Mordavia, response wanted then and there, *yesterday*, in the manner of Rihaku, or the Old Irish Filidh, drop in the ocean yet with enough of us worldwide to make a wave, a bothersome comber, verse to "punk" it with the women, stay the prison governor's boot in the gut: my great joy, as father-to-father, to see my "Jubilate in Punk Minor" *Liked* by Andri, Nadya's father on Facebook, when he exclaims "Wow" on seeing his daughter combing her hair safe and sound in Krasnoyarsk . . .

for Nadia, Katya, Maria

What you did is the best icon for our times

For the Galilean, long lost in credal factions, arguments over bread

Who strode in like yourselves, Hooligan, caused a riot in the temple,

For that droopy-eyed female of the males his mother's long become

For self-serving artists hosting after finance from the sanctuary,

Mary who called her other kids after revolutionaries the Romans killed.

But when you climbed up under them to punk on the altar

Where the Blasphemer, and his apostle Voltaire linger still -

I will defend to the death your right to say what you will -

They might have added where, and if one could sing it all the better

For Putin, Kirill, caught up in their own whirlwind.

But you'll endure, even if caged all day in the mind

Crushed now to apologise. Nor will he matter, Nikiforov,

Nadia will, and Gera, lost these dark days for her love.

(On 18th of October in penal colony IK-14 Nadya met her ex-lawyer Violetta Volkova. Nadya become suspicious of her and asked her to leave. After, Nadya gave her Lawyer a letter/statement: I, Nadia Tolokonnikova, born in 1989, refuse the services of lawyers: Volkova VV, Polozova NN, Feigin MZ for the reason that I suspect them of personal

contacts with the leadership of Federal Penitentiary Service of Russia. Signed Nadia Tolokonnikova, 18.10.13)

... *from Introduction To Nine Lives We Hope, Poems for Pussy Riot*

No space, or time, to tread softly in the house shoes of poesy. *Put on yer stomping boots.* Lift your knees. While Yeats was writing his early stuff on Innisfree, even at the end in his phallic tower, Lady Gregory's tenants were paying the bills. Easter 1916 was written when it was politic and advisable to do so. Future of the big house and all that. Poem a tat overblown. A wax museum. Even the revolutionaries didn't see themselves in such a green light.

The people like Masha's, limp in the grip of Privilege and Religion. Mostly descendants of ex-tenants. Yeats's cold eye and his hopes for Eugenics would sort out their futures.

Caithlin Ni hUallachain, in kimono, could then be adored without trespass on every clearance on every hillock, mountain and plain.

The Chinese poets of the middle ages had more in common with ordinary people than many current poemsters.

Years ago, Paul Durcan wrote a collection of poems entitled *Going Home to Russia*. In both places artists with any dare are caught in the closing pincer of state and church. Kavanagh grows old eating out of the paw of McQuaid for a tosser or two. Clergy close in like jackals at his funeral, the afters of his verse. The censer-swingers come out in force playing the altar for our dead nobel laureate. Nauseous. *Nausea*, come back Sartre. An episcopal retiree stands at the altar rails preaching O'Driscoll. Lucky my hearing's poor. Bells, bells, bells galore. An Egyptian export. Every corner of the country. Bards, O'Brudair's line, continuing into the corporate beyond. Academia Ltd. Aosdana. Ltd. The Indomitable Irishry.

I want to write poems like the paintings artists painted on the rough walls of the catacombs. My kind of gallery. Continuous with what went on, goes on, above. Praising the halo-slipping saints of the real. The women, if they wanted to, officiating as equals. Female bishops further safely down. Mary of Magdala, between clients, ranting at the eleven. Her partner tucked in an ossuary. Their kids making their own way. Keeping their heads down among the Ebionites. Orpheus and Yeshua breaking bread together. Acting David and Jonathan if they wanted to. They knew the Day of the Lamb wouldn't last. Basic Instinct. Handelic Victory and Power and Heavenly Kings and Queens. Byzantium Abú. Emperor, Fuhrer, Duce. Czars. Papas. One language, that of the smiling jackboot walkabout. Speak free like Diana and be left to die in your car. Your innards ripped. Nobody the wiser. Ever.

Off-rhyme, half-rhyme, bad rhyme, pathetic fallacies, no rhyme, parallelisms, dissonance, doggerel, OBERIU snapping at the heel. Poems, immediate, the present continuous. Scant A4 for the toilette of reflection and tranquillity. Out with commemorative manipulation of what is. Cop out. The worst is happening now: the kicks in the gut for Nadya if we don't shout up together. And even then. The majority need helplines to an authority beyond themselves and would rather opine forever on a few women let loose in the golden sanctuary. At the reading in Dublin for Pussy Riot, the argument ran: keep the verse moderate or it will further antagonise Vladimir (if he, or the antennae of his advisors, even

advert to critique). No, assail him at every corner. If the reported words on Mordovia are anything to go by, the latter strategy was the correct one. Verse, art, music and outcry do make a difference, if coordinated. At least to date, neither Nadya nor Masha has become another statistic like Anna Politkovskaya, one of Putin's more stringent critics, murdered and her body dumped in a lift on the president's birthday. The president's reported comments on her murder: "She was a nobody anyway."

Russian Officialdom is right when it refers to the public outcry over the Pussy Riot knees-up in the sanctuary. In the same way in Jerusalem the crowds that cheered Yeshua riding on his humble hinny into the city were yelling within days *Crucify Him*. His running amok in, and taking over with his mates, of a sacred precinct for the whole day, disrupted their Passover Schedule, what they'd looked forward to, travelled from afar to, and probably saved for the whole year. Yeshua and Nadya live on different planets from those caught up in the backwash of their antics. Yet, within a few weeks, the mood in the poorer streets of Jerusalem changed; babbling together in different tongues, people began to acknowledge what Yeshua stood for. Closer to these parts, when news of the 1916 executions reached the ears of the Irish MPs at Westminster, they cheered with the news of each death and banged fists on their benches in approval. But by the time the authorities had shot an injured James Connolly in his chair just to finish the job, clean up the mess, bagging quicklime on him too, their tide had reached a high point. Consigning Bin Laden to the depths ensures he will rise again. By the time the Moscow show trial ended for Pussy Riot, orthodox supporters in tears outside the courtroom were praying for the women from booklets of prayers long compiled for Russian prisoners. Too late to save Nadya from Mordovia or Masha from her fate.

Authority. Magnanimous in Victory. Were there not four of the Pussy Riot twenty-two in the sanctuary? One slipped the net. Another was freed (well, really, she was reportedly apprehended by security before she reached the sanctuary) with an admonition for good behaviour in the future in holy places. Masha had seriously disrupted the plans of prime minister Meredev to build a mansion for his wife in a major nature reserve. Putin admitted in an interview with Merkel that it was the ringleader Nadya he was really after. The Orthodox Establishment, cute as christians, promised to pray for the women and to forgive them. Who knows in time, they might even elevate them, suspend them on high, in Christ the Saviour, up beyond eye level, like bothersome Elizabeth, who'd campaigned for a return of the female diaconate. Or have their hack sculptors give them doleful eyes like Magdala.

Verse in the face of this shit can only have the quality of a D-Day bombardment. It would have been politic if the warships in the Channel could have yelled through their megaphones: "Go back to where ye belong" and the Nazis obliged as asked. Saved tens of thousands of brave lives who came across the Atlantic, laid down their lives for people, us, they'd never know. Sometimes the act of rebellion against the status quo is called for, the excising of one more tumour from the body of humanity. Which is why we have whatever freedom we have today in these parts. I have tried to come to terms with this fact in the poem "O When the Saints . . ." in a country which sees as a joke the aphorism "Which side were we neutral on?"

But the job was not completed. Within months, the Vatican was facilitating the escape routes of its soul sprites to Argentina and elsewhere, according to documentary after documentary. If one thinks that a line like "Putin and his Kirrill snot" is harsh, then he or she forgets that failing to excise a cancer will in time lead to the spread of devastating secondaries. The bombardment must go on. Until universal human rights are won. Those of women are a case

in point. It is no accident that the stated purpose of Putin's recent visit to Francis in the Vatican was a closer all-male linkage with the Russian Orthodox. This at a time when the latter is held in growing universal disdain for the part it played in the incarceration of Pussy Riot. Such means little for a man that fraternised with Videla, while Benedict, no White Rose, before him slipped out of being a Nazi only on the news of Hitler's death. No news either, that Francis was runner up to Benedict at the latter's manipulated conclave. That we have this Snowden-like glimpse into the impenetrable darkness that are the conclaves, is indicative of a gleam of hope. But whether there is any infant Yeshua to clean out the stygian stable that is the Vatican is unlikely. The St. Peter's mob is too busy chanting *Francis, Francis* to worry about the Videla figure at the upper window. Though, better PR, and a camera over the shoulder, so that the left hand knows what the right hand is doing, and the odd quickie selfie work wonders. Pity the Galilean wasn't so equipped. But he gave the Videla of his day the perfect answer when frog-marched into his presence. Silence. Refusal to acknowledge.

Ultimately, Christ the Saviour in Moscow is the People's Space. Not Kirrill's. Ditto, the Vatican. Not the Pope's, the cardinals, that of the dubious oldies with voting power. Vatican 11 established the People principle. But it's with John XX111 long in the grave. Space for people to vent or pray, or both at once. With no caveat on dress, or none. Headgear, or none. Play the wild Galilean there, who dares, like Pussy Riot.

“He[the Galilean]is demon-possessed and raving mad.”(*John* 10 :20).

At a certain stage in life, one can be excused for “being young and foolish”. Sixty-nine is stretching it. The journey of these poems with Nadya and Masha from the sanctuary in Moscow to **Krasnoyarsk** , however it ends, and wherever it takes, has been one of realisation for this one person. I don't speak for others. I've learned that the concept of DIY extends to more than the trade of stone mason Yeshua. When I summoned the persona of the Galilean to Nadya's side in her dark cell, there was neither bread nor wine. At many a battle front, there was scarce either, but those present made do with scraps to hand. Shared and ate and wet their lips.

I saw all Nadya had to hand was prison slop, but I knew she was communing deeper than any.

Ultimately she'd no need of a priesthood, male or female, or mixed. Not that the boys will ever accept this. Having set it all up for themselves millennia ago, in cold and adorable print, they'd be well on the way out of a job for starters. And those above them. And those above them. And . . . the House of Cards Francis refers to.

My first poem written for Pussy Riot was “For Nadya, Katya, Maria” (quoted) when I spotted the eerie similarity between the Pussy Riot of the Muscovite and the Yeshua of the Jerusalem sanctuaries. The poem was featured in the anthology *Catechism Poems for Pussy Riot*. Critic H. Giles, in a review of the book, referred to my poem and interpreted the “I” as some variant of a lyric “me” and not the omnipresent Voltaire *persona* I'd intended. He made the unanswerable point that the verse seemed “a little limp in the face of Pussy Riot's Punk”. He was probably too polite to say that at best such verse is irrelevant, at worst, patriarchal.

If you can't punk it, in some measure, —as these poems attempt to do, —with Pussy Riot, forget it.

Because you are neither hot nor cold . . . Sunday 20 Oct 2013

Read where Kirrill is concerned about the loss of faith in Russia —be of good cheer — he needn't be, it's D-Day again and some American Evangelicals are winging to his aid—those that believe in modern-day crusades to rid them of bothersome

Heathens so the Christian juggernaut rolls on across the highways of the mind, there are Videlas to be bowed and curtsied to by Francis, Benny has his anti-aircraft guns to man, not ask the names of the latest helpmates from Dachau

Doomed while the kirks, chapels and cathedrals they will fill and empty, all the more intimate spaces where hymnsters meet to praise You-Know-Who, clerics indifferent as the temple head honcho who clambered up that much-trodden hill, saw with his own eyes, through lenses of relief, just one less wannabe-messiah

Nailed for the common good, and now he can hammer the other eleven ranting and wandering the wastes of Judea or wherever, well, I've good news for you lot, as bees still live in their hives

Nadya lives, Nadya lives, Nadya lives, Nadya lives, Nadya lives, Nadya lives . . .