

The Dust of My House

A play for Radio, by John Currivan

FX- THE CHAT AND HUM OF A CAFÉ

**FX- A LOUD EXPLOSION AND SCREAMS
FOR TWO SECONDS CUT OFF
SUDDENLY.**

FX- EXPLOSION SOUNDScape

1 **SEÁN (N):** There's a hole in my hand. A hole not too wide but clear right through. Something has happened. Something bright and sharp has happened, pierced my hand. There is a warmth, a heat and burn. No pain. I don't feel any pain. It's like time has slowed down. I can see right through it like a window. I can't see the café, I can't see the other tables, I don't see this room. I see another place.

Somewhere familiar. Somewhere with green grass and paned glass and a thick wooden door. It's my house. I'm in the garden. The front door opens and I walk in.

FX- SOUNDSCAPE FADES

FX- DOOR OPENING

2 **SEÁN (N):** I'm moving forward without taking steps. I'm not
controlling this.
I'm in the hall.
In a pair of shorts and a little t-shirt.

FX- DOOR CLOSING

3 **SEÁN (N):** Everything around me is huge. High ceilings, and giant doors, the kind I've heard about in fairy tales and I have to reach up, practically jump to the handles. I run into the sitting room. I'm four years old.

And there's blood, blood everywhere on my hands, wet and red and bright and it keeps coming.

FX- 3YR OLD BOY, HEAVING AND CRYING

- 1 **SEÁN (N):** I'm crying, short of breath, terrified that this blood will all drain from my body and I'll shrivel up until there's no blood left in me.
My mother comes out to me. She's been doing the dishes in the kitchen. The sight of her drying her hands and throwing the tea towel over her shoulder makes me cry more. Fear wells up from my stomach and fountains out my mouth.....
- 2 **SEÁN (3):** Mammy, mammy I was out playing football and someone pushed me or I tripped up and I fell on the ground, hit my knee and it's bleeding so much and and and and...
- 3 **MOTHER** **(GENTLY)** Ah it's only a little cut.
- 4 **SEÁN (N):** She hunkers down and now we're eye to eye. I can smell the fairy liquid on her hands. She leans forward and kisses my head.
- 5 **MOTHER** It'll be fine darling, I'll put a plaster on it and make it all better. Yeah?
- 6 **SEÁN (3)** **(sniffles)**
- 7 **MOTHER** You have to be brave. Try not to cry, your brother's asleep upstairs in his cot. Come on, I'll get a clean cloth in the kitchen.
- 8 **SEÁN (3)** **(sniffles, wiping nose)**
- 9 **SEÁN (N):** My eye catches something on the wall. It's been there my whole little life but I'm only really noticing it now. I'm staring, not crying at all.
- 10 **MOTHER** What's wrong? You've gone quiet.... What are you looking at?
- 11 **SEÁN (3)** The picture.
- 12 **MOTHER** That's my picture.
- 13 **SEÁN (3)** Yeah?
- 14 **MOTHER** OK chicken. I'll wash this blood away and you can tell me what you see?

- 1 **SEÁN (N):** It's a painting of a girl. She's in a field of corn with her back turned to us. In a..... dress. In her hand she holds the string to a bright red balloon so big that it looks like she might float away with it. I point.

***FX- SQUISH AND DRIZZLE OF THE
DAMP CLOTH***

- 2 **SEÁN (3)** Her dress.
- 3 **MOTHER** What about it, love?
- 4 **SEÁN (3)** The colour.
- 5 **MOTHER** It's just a green dress.
- 6 **SEÁN (3)** No, mammy it's not
- 7 **MOTHER** It is look
- 8 **SEÁN (3)** No it isn't, look that bit is blue, and that bit is like black, it's mostly green but it's not just green. It's a mix. It not all anything. It looks just green.
- 9 **MOTHER** Well well, look at you my brave soldier. You know that I painted that. Back when I was a little girl in school. My own little artist, seeing behind the paint, noticing all that?"
- 10 **SEÁN (N):** And I have no idea how I noticed it but all the colours just jump out at me.
- Nothing is what it seems.
- Yellows aren't yellow, the greens aren't green, the girl's balloon isn't red and the sky, the sky isn't blue. It's white and purple and grey and everything.
- I don't even notice that now my leg is clean of blood and a plaster has been put over the cut.
- I'm looking around the room at everything, the sofa, the brown wooden cabinets and out the window into the green garden, my mother's red scarlet hair.
- Everything that was familiar is suddenly new. The shapes are strange and foreign.

1 **SEÁN (N):**

Nothing is one colour.

It's like all the parts of the world suddenly separate, and individually they make absolutely no sense and I see some magic secret that connects everything and holds it all together.

Gives it a reason.

My knee is fine. I should just want to go back out to play football again, to forget the painting. I should want to score a goal. But I stay staring at that picture picking apart its colour. I see that the world is full of colour and I have a hunger and urge to see more.

I start drawing, painting.

All the colouring books in my house are filled up within a week. No walls are safe because once I'm through with the newspapers I'll draw all over anything.

I go mad drawing and leave my mother to tidy up the trail of paper and broken crayons that I leave behind.

FX- EXPLOSION SOUNDScape

2 **SEÁN (N):**

The hole in my hand is getting bigger, wider, more ragged and I'm looking at my young self looking at the picture of the girl in the field, the colours burst from the frame and surround me the yellow and orange and brown and blue and everything.

There is another light behind my hand, piercing through, silhouetting. I can no longer see my first two fingers.

And it's changing.

The light coming through the window in my hand is changing and I'm leaving my sitting room, walking into the hall and moving up the stairs.

With every few steps the house shrinks as I grow and age by a year and the house gets older too.

1 **SEÁN (N):**

The carpets fade and the paint, less fresh. I reach my bedroom, just at the top and walk in.

There is one bed when I walk in, but the room changes the further I go.

A cot sweeps past me and settles itself against the wall and the first bed, which I recognize as mine, slides across the floor and stops. A poster appears, some stupid tv show that I used to like. The cot disappears and the room is rearranged again, my bed moves across and a new bed, my brother's big boy bed, because he is old enough for a big boy bed now, appears.

The Shorts and t-shirts are gone from off me and somehow I'm in my old pyjamas.

The cupboards and drawers are opening and clothes are flying out clean and landing on the floor dirty until the room is divided almost in half. Mess and tidiness. My side and his. My brother's.

Both our beds against opposite walls. His side of the room is like a museum all neat and organized and mine is a dump of clothes, paper and pencils.

FX- MUSIC FADES

2 **SEÁN (N):**

My brother is lying in his bed staring up at the ceiling, restless. I'm drawn towards mine. It's nighttime and I can still see the traces of the spaceships on my quilt. God I loved that quilt.

I find myself lying down under my cover of planets, stars and spaceships and tucking myself in. I'm asleep.

FX- QUIET WINDY NIGHT

3 **ANDREW**

Hey, hey, psssst. Are you still up? Hey! Are you asleep?

4 **TEEN SEÁN**

I was trying to sleep.

5 **ANDREW**

Oh! Sorry did I wake you.

- 1 SEÁN (N): He knows fecking well that I was asleep. He wants to wake me up.
- 2 SEÁN (13) What do you want?

FX- RUSTLING BEDCLOTHES

- 3 ANDREW How do you know if a girl likes you?
- 4 SEÁN (N): I'm only a few years older than him, but he's asking me with all honesty what I think, and expecting a good answer.
- 5 SEÁN (13) Why?
- 6 ANDREW Well.... There's a girl in my class.
- 7 SEÁN (13) Yeah and...?"
- 8 ANDREW She's really stupid, she's at me all the time annoying me and getting me into trouble, like just today. The teacher was up at the board writing something and this girl was throwing things at me. Bits of papers and pencils and rubbers anything she could find and every time something would bounce off my head she'd giggle and wouldn't even be quiet about it or anything. And the one time I turn around and throw something back the teacher catches me and I get into trouble....
- 9 SEÁN (13) I think I know where this is going.
- 10 ANDREW ...but she doesn't stop. She just keeps going on throwing and giggling and I can't turn around cos I'll get in trouble again.
- 11 SEÁN (13) And you think she likes you?
- 12 ANDREW I don't know, that's why I'm asking you.
- 13 SEÁN (13) Do you like her?"
- 14 ANDREW ***(DISGUSTED)*** She's a girl
- 15 SEÁN (N): But do you like her?

FX- WIND OUTSIDE

- 1 **SEÁN (N)** And somehow, through some instinct I knew to ask again
- 2 **SEÁN (13)** Do you like her?
- 3 **ANDREW** **(UNSURE)** Eh.... Eh... I suppose so..... she's a girl!
- 4 **SEÁN (13)** What colour is her hair?
- 5 **ANDREW** eh... I dunno. Blonde, brown blondey brown, kind of red
- 6 **SEÁN (13)** And what colour are her eyes?
- 7 **ANDREW** Her eyes are blue.
- 8 **SEÁN (13)** And how come you know that?

FX- WIND OUTSIDE

- 9 **SEÁN (13)** Hello? Are you still there?
- 10 **ANDREW** Yeah. Just thinking.....
- 11 **SEÁN (13)** So she has blue eyes.
- 12 **ANDREW** She's in my class, I see her like everyday
- 13 **SEÁN (13)** Do you know the colour of the eyes of any other girl in your class? Or even anyone at all?
- 14 **SEÁN (N):** Of course, he doesn't answer, just one long breath.
- 15 **ANDREW** **(PUFFS OUT A BREATH)**

FX- PURE SILENCE

- 16 **SEÁN (N):** For what feels like forever we sit in silence. The wind outside hugs in the trees and I swear even the clocks stop ticking. I hold my breath to hear what he says.

FX- BED RUSTLING

- 1 **SEÁN (N):** His bed rustles one final time as I hear him lie back down and turn over and I'm fairly sure I know what is going through his mind, but all he says is...
- 2 **ANDREW** Goodnight.
- 3 **SEÁN (N):** But I have one more question.
- 4 **SEÁN (13)** What's her name?
- 5 **ANDREW** Her name... Sarah.
- 6 **SEÁN (N):** The very next day my brother, only eight years old, does one of the scariest things in his life and goes up to that same girl and says hello. A few months later he comes to me asking for advice on how to draw. I ask him why and he says because he wants to make a valentines card to send to her.
- It's gas, my own little brother getting his first girlfriend because of me. Of course it doesn't last too long, both of them are laughed at and jeered at by the rest of their class so in the end they break up, but that doesn't stop him from asking her out again as soon as they hit first year. And they're still together.

FX- EXPLOSION SOUNDSCAPE

- 7 **SEÁN (N):** The light behind my hand is so much brighter now. My hand invisible it's only a shape and only a shadow, a black dark hand with a bright yellow outline but the hole in the centre of my palm is growing and the edges of it are beginning to sting, a sharp electric sting, that travels in jerks and jumps down to my wrist and up through each of my digits, only a mild pain but it makes me uneasy.
- There's nothing I can do.
- The light is too bright and I feel the heat like a wave all over and I know that it will only get hotter. So I need to distract myself need to find something. So I focus on the window stretched across the portal in my hand.