



Glac sos!

Glac sos! Take a break!

I needed a break.

I have been studying Irish or doing Irish language activities for no less than 5 hours every day. Sometimes longer. And I've been going on like this for over 9 months. By the time I reached the middle of June, I realized I had to have a break.

So I took one.

For two weeks.

In my world, of course, taking a break meant reducing my time devoted to Irish from 5 hours a day to 2 hours a day. And I still took time to sing and to finish writing my latest story in Irish: **Duilleog agus Cloch**. I'm including the story in this newsletter. I know some of you reading this don't know Irish. Copy the story and throw it into Google translate. You'll get a bad translation but it will give you the gist of what I wrote.

Strangely enough, during this "sos", I had my first dream in Irish. I don't know who I was with or what we were doing but all our dream conversation was **as Gaeilge**. What was most wonderful for me was that the conversation felt natural. In the dream, I took note of the fact I was speaking Irish but speaking Irish simply seemed like the normal thing to do. (Before I pat myself on the back too much, it could also have been my whole dream was gibberish and I only *thought* it was Irish.)

Bitesize Irish

I have been visiting Bitesize almost on a daily basis since I joined last year. I stopped. Well, not completely, but nearly. I went enough days in a row without going to the site that I received an automatic email from them: "Here's what you've missed." On June 18th, I sent a copy of my story privately to Bitesize Siobhán to see what she thought of it. She wrote "**Sár obair!**" (Excellent work.) That made me feel good and encourages me to write more.

Duolingo

I couldn't abandon Duolingo. I have been doing lessons here

for nearly 300 days straight without missing. I have to keep up my streak. There's no special prize for doing it. Making sure I learned something on Duolingo every day has been a marker for me of my consistent efforts to learn. Can't let that one go.

FutureLearn Irish 106

I allowed myself to fall behind in my work in the Irish 106 course. By the end of June, I am 2 weeks behind where I was supposed to be. I am not alarmed, though, because most of the material is still familiar to me. I plan to catch up in the first week of July. I'll have to put in some extra effort. I've already signed up for Irish 107. That course is supposed to start on July 5.

Gaeilge gan Stró

For this 2 week period, I discontinued listening to and reviewing all the audio in both the Gaeilge gan Stró books.

Listening and Speaking

Naturally, I've kept up my online Friday meetings with my **gaeilgoir** friend in Cork. They're only an hour or so each week but these meetings are a very sunny and bright part of my life. I continue to make progress. We work on Hebrew and work on whatever is most pressing for me in Irish. Verbal nouns. The genitive case. The habitual past. We touch on all of these in a gentle way that reinforces other study I'm doing on my own.

My Imaginary Long Walk

I'm still in the **Maigh Eo** (Mayo) gaeltacht and I expect to be here for the next couple of weeks before heading up to **Dhún na nGall** (Donegal) for the last leg of my virtual walk. I'm expecting to finish my walk in August. This, coincidentally, will bring me back to September, marking one full year of my intensive journey in Irish.

When I started out, I didn't imagine it was going to take me this long to go through the gaeltacht areas. As I went along, though, I found myself falling in love with each place and wanting to spend more time in them before I moved on. I've already decided, after I finish this first virtual walk-around, I'm going to do it all over again.

Scéal Nua:

I think it's a necessity for every language learner to try and use the new language creatively as soon as possible. I wrote my first little story - **Mo Scéal ó 1953** - for Issue 3 of this newsletter / personal journal. Here I am now, at Issue 19, presenting another little story. My Irish is not excellent but it has improved a lot since my original story.

There have been many opportunities for writing in the FutureLearn Irish courses from University College Dublin. I have been trying to write as much as I can. Along the way, I've made lots of mistakes - that's the natural order of things - but, after each set of mistakes, I have learned something new. I try not to repeat the same mistake over again but sometimes I do. One must never be disheartened. English is my native language and I hear native English speakers make and re-make mistakes in English all the time. I can afford to be compassionate, then, with my mistakes in Irish! I have made language mistakes in my story, **gan dabht**, and I ask you to forgive them.

I hope you will enjoy my little story.

Duilleog agus Cloch

"Coinín."

"Turtar"

"Tá tú ag stealladh brilléise. Is coinín é."

"Gabh mo léithscéal, sílim go bhfuil cuma turtair air."

"Ní thuigim conas a fheiceann tú turtar. Féach! Cluasa móra an choinín."

"Tá an turtar ag casadh a chinn le breathnú taobh thiar de féin."

"Bhí an argóint seo againn roimhe seo."

"Níl mé ag iarraidh argóint a dhéanamh leat. Níl ann ach scamall sa spéir. Feiceann tú a bhfuil tú ag iarraidh a fheiceáil."

"Bhuel, feicim coinín."

"Tá tú i do luí ansin. Feiceann tú coinín. Tá mé i mo luí anseo. Feicim turtar. Táimid difriúil, níl ann ach sin."

Cé go raibh roinnt scamall sa spéir agus cé nach bhféadfadh an bheirt acu aontú faoi choinín nó turtar, bhí an lá go deas. Bhí an spéir gorm. Bhí an ghrian ag taitneamh. Bhí an féar bog. Bhí an t-aer ciúin.

"Cén t-ainm atá ort inniu?"

"Duilleog is ainm dom."

"Thaitin d'ainm eile níos fearr liom."

"Duilleog is ainm dom anois."

"Go maith. Duilleog. Ar mhaith leat ainm nua a thabhairt dom, freisin?"

"Ní thabharfaidh mé ainm nua duit. Cloch is ainm duit fós."

"Is maith liom m'ainm."

"Is dócha gurb é sin an fáth go bhfeiceann tú turtar. Breathnaíonn turtar cosúil le cloch."

Ní raibh Cloch ag iarraidh argóint a dhéanamh le Duilleog. Bhí sé sásta luí sa ghrian léi. Bhí sé ag baint taitneamh as an lá. Ní raibh aon obair le déanamh. Ní raibh aon duine ag fanacht leo. Ní raibh ocras ar Chloch. Ní raibh tart air. Bhí an nóiméad foirfe.

Ar ndóigh, b'éigean do rud éigin é a mhilleadh.

Chuir Cloch é féin suas ar a uillinn.

"Tá duine éigin ag teacht."

Chuir Duilleog í féin suas ar a huillinn agus d'fhéach sí timpeall. Taobh amuigh den fháinne, chonaic sí beirt ag siúl ina dtreo trasna an fhéir: fear óg agus bean óg. Ní raibh imní ar Dhuilleog. Ní fhéadfadh an fear agus an bhean iad a fheiceáil.

"Tá ábhar imní orm ina thaobh seo." a dúirt Cloch.

"Sílim go bhfuil siad ag teacht go dtí ár bhfáinne." arsa Duilleog.

Níor thaitin le Cloch drochfhocail a rá os comhair Duilleog. Ní dúirt sé an rud a bhí ag dul trína intinn.

Dúirt Duilleog. "Tá an buachaill sin ag iarraidh an cailín sin a phósadh. Is féidir liom é a fheiceáil as seo. Tá sé ag iarraidh í a thabhairt chuig ár bhfáinne agus fáinne a thabhairt di."

"Dar bhrí na mionn, ní féidir linn breathnú ar an spéir i suaimhneas?"

"Cén fáth go ndéanfadh sé é seo? Chruthaíomar go leor piseoga. Cad eile a chaithfimid a dhéanamh d'fhonn roinnt áiteanna síochánta a bheith againn dúinn féin?" D'fhéach Duilleog ar Cloch. "B'fhéidir nach Éireannach é?"

"Éirigh suas." a dúirt Cloch. "Ná déan aon rud go tobann!"

"Caithfidh mé rud éigin a dhéanamh. Mura ndéanfaidh mé tada, ní chreidfí siad an piseog ar bith níos faide."

Tháinig an fear agus an bhean níos giorra. Sheas Duilleog agus Cloch suas agus chuaigh siad go dtí an taobh thall den

fháinne.

“Féach, a Sheoirse! Is fáinne sí é.” arsa an bhean.

“Tá a fhios agam, a Aoife,” a dúirt Seoirse. “Thug mé anseo thú d’aon ghnó.”

“Cén fáth? Tá fáinní sí feicthe agam roimhe seo. B’fhearr dúinn leanúint orainn ar shiúl, nárbh fhearr?”

“Níl ansin ach piseog. Tá an lá inniu speisialta dúinn.”

Sheas Seoirse isteach sa bhfáinne. “An bhfeiceann tú?” a dúirt sé. “Níor tharla tada. Gan fadhb ar bith. Tar isteach sa bhfáinne liom.”

D’fhéach Cloch ar Dhuilleog. Bhí sí corcra san aghaidh. Chuir sé a lámh ar a gualainn.

“Ní chuirfidh mé fiú aon chos isteach sa bhfáinne sin.” a dúirt Aoife. “Níor fhan splanc chéille agat!”

Arsa Duilleog, “Sílím gur maith liom Aoife.”

“Lig do scíth,” ar Cloch go suaimhneasach. “Fágfaidh siad i nóiméid.”

Thóg Seoirse bosca beag as a phóca. Chuaigh sé ar ghlúine amháin ar chiumhais an fháinne. D’oscail sé an bosca agus thaispeáin sé d’Aoife é.

“A Aoife, grá mo chroí, an bpósfaidh tú mé?”

Ag an nóiméad sin, tharla cúpla rud.

Ceann ar cheann, bhí cuma an iontais ar Aoife agus aoibhneas agus míshásamh.

Thug Duilleog faoi deara go raibh póca Seoirse fós oscailte. Chonaic Duilleog eochracha carr Seoirse.

“Is iontach an bobarún tú!” a dúirt Aoife.

Chuaigh Duilleog go tapa trasna an fháinne. Bhí sí chomh héadrom le cleite agus thóg sí eochracha carr Sheoirse as a phóca gan aon torann a dhéanamh.

“Le do thoill, a Aoife, déann mé chomh sásta le rí!”

“Seas suas! Seas suas!” a dúirt Aoife. “Tá mé ag dul ar ais go dtí an carr. Shiúil muid leathmhíle le haghaidh seo? Ní fáinne deas é fiú.”

Sheas Seoirse suas. An é nach raibh an fáinne sa bhosca go deas nó nach raibh an fáinne sióg go deas? Ní raibh a fhios ag Seoirse céard a bhí i gceist ag Aoife amháin.

Thuig Duilleog. Níor thaitin Aoife go mór léi níos mó.

Chuir Duilleog eochracha Saoirse ar an talamh. Sheas sí orthu lena cos. Chlúdaigh sí iad le féar.

Idir an dá linn, bhailigh Aoife léi ar luas lasrach. Rith Seoirse chun í a leanúint. “Bhí atmaisféar rómánsúil uaim!”

“Bhuel,” a dúirt Duilleog. “Nuair a shroicheadh siad an carr gan eochracha, beidh an t-atmaisféar rómánsúil cinnte.”

Chroith Cloch a cheann. Bhí rudaí eile a d’fhéadfadh a bheith déanta ag Duilleog. Caithfidh Cloch a admháil go bhfuil sé seo go maith.

D’fhéach Duilleog ar an spéir. “Deirim fós gur coinín é.”

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In closing

It’s important to take breaks. I say that as much for myself as for anyone else. If you run the engine at maximum power for too long, it will burn out. You will burn out. I will burn out. In this case, I don’t think I burned out but I do think, after all this time, I might have been on my way to burning out. In both Issues 16 and 17, I wrote things that, looking back, I should have caught as indicators I needed a little vacation.

Luckily, I finally recognized my need for a break and took it - even if “taking a break” meant doing less for a while rather than stopping.

I feel very good now, refreshed, ready to plunge ahead, morale high. Yes, I plan to go right back and study at the level of intensity I was on before. That’s who I am. Now, though, having “sat back” for a couple of weeks, I have a genuine appreciation for how far I’ve come on my Irish journey. I see success after success, movement from strength to strength. I know, one day, I will be as fluent in Irish as I want to be because I see how far I’ve come already.

I have to thank you, too, all those who read this newsletter. There is a saying **Giorraíonn beirt bothar** - Two people shorten the road. If you have companions on the road, they entertain and encourage each other. They make the travel seem easier and shorter by their company. While the journey learning and improving my Irish is a long one, you have also shortened the road for me by being there. I appreciate it very much.

Slán go fóill!