

## Strings Together

By Damien Duggan

Two strings together ok, four strings together a little bit trickier, more of an effort yes but a beautiful rhythm, as if all sections of my tiny eardrum are working as one to the beat. My fingers rubbing against the smooth brown spruce, erotic in a sense, as if tickling my soul with the very tip of a feather. Coins drop in my James Cagney type hat, my favourite and no accident that it resembles a young James Cagney's. I picked it up while absent mindedly strolling the local pier one bright sunny morning a few weeks ago. I came across a man in a fancy dinner suit asleep on one of the paint chipped benches, no doubt a casualty of alcohol the night before. His hat was strewn across his chest and a manicured palm holding it tight to his chest. As I walked past this delightful scene I gently and discreetly stooped down and took it from his sleeping grasp. It now collects my change on a daily basis, as I said no accident that it resembles James Cagney's. I could have chosen from hundreds of hats on my morning walks but this was the one for me.

In my mind's eye im a talented guitar player, it's how I make a living I think, some people wouldn't call it living, but I'm alive so that's enough proof for me that it something is working. I would call myself artistic but not in a tortured self-loathing way. I'm happy enough, I have routine, I drink a bit much, but I don't do drugs, not for me, no way. Women admire me, but I think at times they look at me the way women look at kids in an orphanage, in an ooohh... those poor kids, I'd love to help but don't have the time sort of way, it's definitely pity, ive no doubt. Though im immature I live without responsibilities. I eat very little as I don't enjoy stealing, believe it or not ive a good heart though many including my family who ditched this old penny many decades before. I do drink and sometimes, well maybe more than sometimes I lose control, not in an aggressive way mind you, I become more melancholic when in the grip of the drink. I drift into sad times and look at life moments in a skewed sort of way, as if all of life is an ailment to be nursed. I sit on the same street every day, like I said, I like routine, and I like

# Writing Raw

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this street. It's beautiful in a gothic sort of way. It's a French town called Lyon, sort of eastwards or is it central im not sure, I didn't listen much in school, probably down to following my heart a bit much, but maybe that's just a romantic shiny way of looking at desolate circumstances. The evenings are truly something to behold in this town and don't think im being over the top when I say this. The shadows meet the street as if a free to the public pantomime takes place and im in the front row, did I mention im a dreamer, but in a good way trust me when I say this. I begin my drinking about lunch time every day, but of course without the lunch. The beginning is always mostly stimulating. It numbs me just enough to feel really good about myself, I suppose ridiculously good you could say, after that its really downhill. I remember nothing when I wake the next day. Tired and nursing a sore head ill make my way back to my favourite street, start on one string slowly and make my way back to four, on very good days I play the six string to its full capacity and back to my childish wanderings I go. Sometimes im in a rock band, other times I play intimate venues with a small crowd listening intently. On the cobbled street that supports my thighs and backside I sit and play with not a care in the world. Couples stroll past hand in hand; some couples elderly and some young, living their lives the way they choose to. I'm happy yes, but im no fool either I don't have a choice in what I do and I believe that deeply.

The End

**Damien Duggan bio:** My name is Damien. I am a 31 year old hobby writer I suppose I should call myself living in Limerick in Ireland. I work full time at front office in a busy hotel and I am the father of two incredible young boys. I write mostly for enjoyment and to appease the soul. I have had one story accepted for publication recently which will be published in Silver Apples magazine around mid-May.