



Picasso's Left Ear

Issue 16



The Korean Demilitarized Zone

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The Korean Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) is a strip of land running across the Korean Peninsula that serves as a buffer zone between North and South Korea. The DMZ cuts the Korean Peninsula roughly in half, crossing the 38th parallel on an angle, with the west end of the DMZ lying south of the parallel and the east end lying north of it. It is 155 miles (248 km) long and approximately 2.5 miles (4 km) wide, and is the most heavily militarized border in the world.

That's it in a nutshell. The main reason for writing this is in response to a piece written by Mr. Eamon Yeung on the diplomatic ties between North Korea and the majority of the rest of the world. He dealt with the serious "hope they don't enrich uranium for the bomb" side of things. However, the place mentioned above, is not the same as the North Korea we have all come to know and love. It is perhaps, the most insane place on Earth. The DMZ is the result of the Korean war of 1950-53. The armistice was signed in what is now known as the DMZ. Technically, the two countries are still at war with each other as no peace deal was ever signed. The agreement stated that both armies had to move back 2000 metres which gives us the present DMZ today. The military demarcation line officially divides the two countries. In the DMZ this boundary is just a raised line of concrete, half a foot tops. On the South Korean side, only men who are over 1.8 metres tall are allowed patrol next to this line. Only well fed North Koreans are allowed patrol on the other side. This is where it gets weird. Two NK soldiers stand next to the military demarcation line, guarding not only it, but each other. The NK government had a real problem with people defecting, even their own soldiers. So these two guards face each other, if one tries to defect, the other must shoot to kill.

The area's history is dominated by acts of aggression from NK. During the 1970s, four tunnels were discovered underneath the DMZ. These had been dug by NK and would allow 50,000 troops to pass through in an hour. One was even big enough to allow a tank to pass through! These tunnels were quickly shut down but it is believed that there are still over a dozen tunnels that have yet to be found. One of the landmarks of the DMZ is "The Bridge of No Return!" This bridge was originally used to exchange prisoners after the Korean War. Several factors contributed to its now redundant state. The SK outpost CP#3 was located on the southern end of the bridge. It was only visible from one other outpost; the rest were blocked by trees. Numerous attempts were made by NK personnel to drag SK guards across the bridge. The outpost was nicknamed "the loneliest outpost in the world". The axe murder incident led to its closure in 1976. Two American soldiers were killed for trying to cut back a tree blocking their view of the NK outpost. The NK troops justified this saying the tree was one of President Kim Il-Sung's favourites. The Americans later sent in a commando team and with a ridiculous amount of explosives, removed the tree.

Both sides maintain peace villages within sight of the DML and each other: Daeseong-dong on the South side and Kijong-dong on the North. The North Koreans made their village with bright coloured buildings and electric lighting, a privilege unheard of in rural Korea in the 1950s. It was meant to be the most recognisable sight on the border. However with modern telescopic equipment, it could be seen that these buildings were merely concrete shells. No interior rooms, no glass in the windows and the only people were the skeleton janitorial crew. Until 2004, each building had huge mounted speakers that blared out propaganda to the South.

The North is constantly trying to one up the South. In the 80s when the South built their freedom hall to reconnect families that had been separated during the war, The North made all their buildings taller. The South erected a 98m flag pole in Daeseong-dong, the North built a 160m flag pole in Kijong-dong-the tallest in the world!

The one place inside the DMZ where any bit of civil conduct is carried out is the Joint Security Area in the west of the DMZ. This is where all negotiations since 1953 have been carried out. Several people have defected here as they hedge their bets that they will receive shelter from the south in case of pursuit by Northern guards. The DML runs right through the JSA, through the conference buildings and through the conference table; North on one side, South on the other. Though many lives have been lost since its establishment, the DMZ is home to one of the most preserved nature habitats on the planet, because if anyone tries to enter it they are shot!

By Adam Noonan

Poetry

This page, reserved for the absurdities of poetry, permits no play of reason or logic.
The infallible are not welcome here, the absolute should stay away.
The poet is not born of logos, it is emotion which holds his sway.

The Wisher's Dove

*The thoughts of my memory I keep in
My head,*

Under my pillow, on top of my bed.

The dates in History repeatedly said,

*I wish there was light that I could
Shed.*

Wishes are probably truly granted,

If you need them so,

If YOU granted a wish that THEY may have wanted,

Wishes will often show.

By Eoin Kiernan

Fancy in Nubibus

*O! It is pleasant, with a heart at ease,
Just after sunset, or by moonlight skies,
To make the shifting clouds be what you please,
Or let the easily persuaded eyes
Own each quaint likeness issuing from the mould
Of a friend's fancy; or with head bent low
And cheek aslant see rivers flow of gold
'Twixt crimson banks; and then, a traveller, go
From mount to mount through Cloudland, gorgeous land!
Or list'ning to the tide, with closed sight,
Be that blind bard, who on the Chian strand
By those deep sounds possessed with inward light,
Beheld the Iliad and the Odyssee
Rise to the swelling of the voiceful sea.*

By Samuel Taylor Coleridge

The Picture Of Dorian Gray

By Oscar Wilde

“THE artist is the creator of beautiful things. To reveal art and conceal the artist is art’s aim... those who find ugly meanings in beautiful things are corrupt without being charming... Those who find beautiful meanings in beautiful things are the cultivated... They are the elect to whom beautiful things mean only Beauty. There is no such thing as a moral or immoral book. Books are well written or badly written, that is all... We can forgive a man for making a useful thing as long as he does not admire it. The only excuse for making a useless thing is that one admires it intensely. All art is quite useless.”

These wise words come from the very beginning of a novel called ‘The picture of Dorian Gray’ by Oscar Wilde, and explain, to some extent, the vast theme of said novel. The story goes like this:

Dorian Gray has found the secret to eternal life. His portrait holds his age and debauched acts, and withers with each year and evil act. As those around him age, he remains young and beautiful. Knowing his actions have no consequences, he lives a wild life of passion, breaking heart after heart. However, he treats the woman that he loves, actor Sybil Vane so badly that she kills herself. It is then that, eager to turn his life around, the picture now near totally destroyed, he starts to do some good, expecting it to improve. However, he returns to find it even worse...

‘The picture of Dorian Gray’, a prime example of modern Gothic Horror, was badly received at the time of printing due to a violent plot and perceived homoerotic undertones. Its portrayal of moral decadence caused controversy and ensured a bad reception by readers of the time.

One theme of this book is the way an artist paints. Not literally, but figuratively. An artist does not only work with paints and canvases. The artist works with the soul. The artist puts more than paints onto paper, he infuses his work with himself. In art, we see more of the artist in his painting than if he were to be standing in front of us, discussing his life. *‘To reveal art and conceal the artist is art’s aim...’*. In concealing himself in his painting, the artist reveals his thoughts, ambitions, and desires. He shows us what drove him to paint the painting.

For example, in the book, Basil Hallwards’ painting of the young Dorian may be attributed to his obsession of him, his underlying love for him, and the fact that he sees in Dorian everything that he isn’t. This is alluded to from the start in the book, with Basil putting so much emphasis on the painting, which is said to be his finest work. It also served as evidence for the later accusations of homosexuality which ended with Wilde’s imprisonment.



This book is one of the best I’ve ever read and comes with my highest recommendations.

By: Avery Thompson

I see dead people... no, you don't.

One thing I did not expect to see on Friday night- something which made for hideously compulsive viewing- was "Michael Jackson: The Live Séance" on Sky One, in which Derek Acorah, the Liverpoolian scam artist (no surprises there), held a séance with four psychos- sorry, *fans*- of the so-called King of Pop. "I'm getting' the resid-uil memory of Michil, like, from his hat like. Don' even have ta whear it on me hed, like. It's like his spirit's infused into it like!"

The goal of this sham- sorry, *séance*- was to get in touch with Michael's spirit, like. Or perhaps to make a load of money from the memory of a dead man, it wasn't very clear. What was clear however, and rather scary too, was how seriously the four psychos- sorry, *fans*- took Acorah's lies- sorry, *spiritual interpretations*.

Acorah has been proven to be a liar numerous times in the past. Known mainly for his work on "Most Haunted", he was fired in 2005 by LivingTV when he was fed false information and pretended to have a spiritual connection (the name he was given was Kreed Kafer- an anagram of Derek Faker) with the made-up ghost thingy.

"Bless you Michil. Come on san. He... yes... okay... LOVELEY CRYSTAL!!! Samuel and Lovely Crystal are together again! Oh an I wish my friends, the jour-nalists, yeah... Verna knows the truth... will someone say hello to Quincey Jones for me? ... Why... why..."

So there was Acorah, the money-grabbing, scamming thief (sorry, *medium*) saying really random things, and four red jumpsuit-clad idiots sitting around the table, hand in diamond encrusted glove, bawling their eyes out. Then David Guest, that beacon of charm, that shining example of normality- pardon the sarcasm- came on to steal a slice of the glory, vainly exploiting Jackson's memory. "Oh yes, Michael and I were supremely close, yes," he slithered sibilantly, forked tongue flickering. "What was his favourite performance, I'd like to know," asked one psycho, who had clearly been listening to too much Enya.

"He remembas very clearly, about the race course, where his per-formince was so live so unique, in England, the race course, the race course," Acorah replied, plopping an easily researchable platitude into the dark room. "Darren, you got soul. He'll help ya. Now he knows ya, and it'll be his quest, his quest..."

"We're running out of time Derek"

"Thank you Michil, from all our hearts. Please go on your journey to your lovely realm. In the power of love..."

Of course he'd thank Jacko. He's making a fortune out of the exploitation of the memory of dead people and the dim-witted. Believe what you want to believe- I know what I think, and I'm probably not allowed fully express that opinion within these pages. [Damn right you aren't. Censorship! -Editor]

What is scary is not the obviously fake "contact" with dead spirits; it is the fact that there is a market for that kind of thing- brain-dead tools who believe in UFOs democracy, and Cecelia Ahern's literary talent. Surely five seconds of using rational thought would eliminate any belief in such things- but then again, these are the kind of people for whom any thought more developed than "the telly is talking" or "David Guest is weird" gives an immediate migraine of epic proportions. I personally cannot see any reason to watch such bilge, a bottom of the barrel exercise in how to be a pointless and awful television programme. That'll have to do for now. It's time for the X-Factor...

By Niall Brehon