

For Kerry the purpose of her counselling work leaves her unequivocal on this point, "Peer counselling and education is the key, going to the streets and the pool halls and giving people something to do, and inviting them to contribute to discussions about politics. We need to make politics more interesting to young people, many of whom have a lot to say."

Claire adds, "Courses like this help a great deal toward making things better in the future."

What role can the economy or education play in promoting peace? What else can bring people together?

For Claire, "Integrated education is very important." Diane agrees, saying, "In university, because everyone isn't wearing school uniforms, clothing no longer becomes an identity badge. People can get to know one another on another level." Claire adds, "Another important thing is bringing in more equal opportunity hiring laws, so that the box you check off on your job application asking what school you went to doesn't decide whether or not you get it."

How do you react to the way your culture is perceived here in Canada?

The girls smile as they recalled going to see the film *The Van*, an adaptation of the story by East Dublin writer Roddy Doyle, finding it peculiar that the audience was "raging with laughter at things we thought were normal."

The girls tell me they have found that practically every Canadian is at least part Irish, so people are very friendly and keen to find out more about where in Ireland they live. All the girls have found however, that once they say Northern Ireland, Canadians generally "hush right up" and get uncomfortable asking any more questions.

Diane is the only participant in the group to have had a bad experience confronting Canadian prejudice. When she was working down by the waterfront speaking to a group of primary school kids, a teacher heard her accent and confronted her, asking, "Are you from good Ireland, or bad Ireland." When Diane told him she was from Northern Ireland, he grabbed the group of kids and ushered them right away from her in disgust. Recalling the incident Diane explains, "I was really upset, but you know, with someone that ignorant, it does no good to say anything so you just try to forget about it."

Claire smiles as she recalls overhearing some people at her work placement talking about her behind her back. One asked the other where she was from, and when they heard Belfast said, "Well, she must be used to ducking."

Fiona MacCool is a graduate student in Women's Studies at York University. She is currently working with Routledge Press on the Encyclopedia of Feminist Theory.

This article has been made possible by the generous support of the CIBC Wood Gundy Children's Miracle Foundation.

DONA STURMANIS

41: immortal

I.

The delirious orange red yellow of aspens
the moment before all leaves fall

Where are those red berries?
Must find those red berries
buried in the middle
of flaming yellow leaves.

Quick, pick them up—
they're still loud lemon.

Quick, quick, press them
into waxed paper
at fullest bloom of colour.
Seal them immortal.

All this
late autumn drama
before the first snowstorm.

II.

High in September Rockies,
you're driving too fast.
Stop. I'll stick my face
in that burning bush.

Freeze, freeze, me in the frame:
set me on fire
in this autumn colour,
capture me on the film.

I want to be preserved
iridescent and screaming
before I go.

Dona Stumanis recently bought a house with her husband, Stu, and her 14-year-old son, Leif, in Peachland, British Columbia, the tiny, perfect town in the valley of their dreams. She has spent 25 years working professionally as a journalist, editor, publisher, and writing instructor. She has been published in several journals, including New Quarterly, White Wall Review, Antigonish Review, Grain, and Dandelion. Her second chapbook, The Book of Death, will be published this fall (The Word is Out Press).