



seeker



seeker

Theresa Nanigian







Theresa Nanigian **seeker**



Padraic E. Moore

Theresa Nanigian's *seeker* provides all those who engage with the project with opportunities for contemplation (focused and open ended) via written and spoken conversational exchanges¹. Comprising of several facets, the total magnitude of Nanigian's contribution can only be inferred from this publication, which constitutes its crystallisation. Perhaps the most significant facet of the processes which *seeker* entails involved the artist meeting and interviewing individuals unified purely by their status as non-nationals residing in Portlaoise – a context in which the socio-political issue of EU-nationals and asylum seekers immigrating is particularly contentious². Focusing upon this cohort was strategic in presenting an atypical portrait of the microcosm of an Irish town that has, like so many, undergone significant and dramatic change in recent decades. In addition to Nanigian's inference that these individuals are as worthy as any to represent the town in which they reside, an additional relevance to the artist's focus on this group derives from the dissolution of the prolonged spell of fiscal confidence that began in the 1990s. While the consequences of the downturn are widespread, the marginalised and disenfranchised are invariably most adversely affected. Economic recession is merely one of many difficulties non-nationals in Ireland must confront since the perceived scarcity of opportunities within the new economic climate can be directly linked to a potential escalation of intolerance, racism and bigotry.

The generation of meaning through the juxtaposition of seemingly contradictory situations, propositions and idioms is a recurring characteristic of Nanigian's work. In *seeker*, this is exemplified through the close coupling of austere statistical data (a principal ingredient throughout Nanigian's practice) with data of a more personal nature, gleaned from responses to the Eden questionnaire utilised by the artist³. Coupling cold statistics (many of which are rather bleak) with idiosyncratic information reveals vantage points that might otherwise have gone unnoticed. When contrasted with the 'personal' data the unstable authority of the stats becomes apparent as dissimilarities between the two modes underscore how demographic language can dehumanise those to whom it relates. This example highlights Nanigian's concern with exposing how quotidian structures – in this case the language that we use on a daily basis – are imbued with ideological meaning transmitted and inculcated so subtly as to be almost subliminal. However, her idiosyncratic deployment of *the aesthetics of administration*⁴ also illustrates, paradoxically, how such idioms may also be utilised to the opposite effect and infused with singularity. Equally deft is Nanigian's simple yet strategic tactic of abstracting the contextual frame and expanding the relevance of her project by making the local and nationwide conterminous. By blending information gleaned from individuals with nationwide statistics, Nanigian ensures local specificity is maintained but balanced with information of a more universal significance. This move counters the risk that *seeker* might be interpreted as relating exclusively to Portlaoise; a misreading that could obscure the fact that many of the matters raised are pervasively ubiquitous.

Though no claims were made that the lives of those participating in *seeker* might somehow be improved or enhanced by their engagement, the work was conceived with altruistic intentions evident in the reciprocal nature of its process. Individuals were presented with the pretext to envisage their dream of Eden and, in so doing, provided Nanigian with the material required to develop her endeavour. Throughout, the various participants' dreams of Eden permit insight into the lives of others that may incite a reappraisal of the viewer's own perspective. Reading these responses accentuates the fact that the label of non-national that each of these unique individuals has been given, casts them all in a somewhat negative, inanimate light. Moreover, the responses to the questionnaire – most of which depart from the regimented format of questions, draws attention to how the urgency and necessity of the search undertaken by the majority of those who responded to the *seeker* questionnaire is more challenging and indeed perilous than that undertaken by most of those who will read this ensuing publication. That Nanigian decided that the most suitable trajectory for this work should be a publication – available to be accessed and read in any place and at anytime – emphasizes how, in terms of ideas and information presented, *seeker* was conceived to expand the impact and the audience amongst the local citizenry. The tendency to cultivate ties and provide participants with a juncture in which they could literally dream of Eden connects *seeker* to work previously executed by Nanigian and the cluster of methods she has employed thus far links her with several of her predecessors⁵. However, though the legacy of conceptualism is certainly apparent in Nanigian's work, its true subject is the convergence between contemporary art practice and ethnography.

Perhaps it would be accurate to position Nanigian's practice as a permutation of what has become known as relational or dialogic aesthetics. Though it is not my wish to dwell upon that which has so recently been hotly debated, it would be negligent to discuss Nanigian's project without acknowledging the turn toward an emergence (or re-emergence) of what Nicholas Bourriaud repeatedly defines as the increasing artistic impulse not "to form imaginary and utopian realities, but to actually be ways of living and models of action within the existing real"⁶. Instead of a discrete, portable, autonomous artwork relational art is bound to the contingencies of its environment and audience – a quality exemplified in Nanigian's *seeker* project. Inserted into the context of living social relations, Nanigian's work places these relations themselves in an integral position. Theresa Nanigian typifies the contemporary artist whose practice is based not so much upon creating data but assembling and rearranging it in order to make clear that which was less visible. For many artists the corollary of this process is the subordination of the actual production of aesthetic objects. By contrast, what makes Nanigian's work so engaging and multi-layered is her resistance to such an eschewal of the material artwork. Every process and interstice (and in this case, every dream of Eden) is indexed in an aesthetically distinctive – and, in many cases, visually seductive – manner, confirming the truism that: "Without the idea there is no object but without the object there can be no idea"⁷.

1. *seeker* is a component of Unit, an artists residency conceived specifically for Portlaoise town and surrounds. The project comprises of five artists and four curators applying different methods to investigate the diversity of both people and place.

2. Nanigian intentionally included one exception in her pool of non-national participants – an Irish national who became a seeker herself upon emigrating to the UK before returning home.

3. In the case of *seeker*, Nanigian took as a framework not the type of questionnaire which one might encounter in the world of market research but rather a questionnaire titled "Everyman in His Eden" or a "Psychological Parlour-Game For A Wet Sunday Afternoon" devised by the poet W.H.Auden in which the individual is invited to consider and reveal their definition or dream of Eden.

4. This term was coined by Benjamin Buchloh.

5. Some of the methodologies implemented by Nanigian's work evoke those developed and utilised in a number of projects realised by Douglas Huebler and Dan Graham in the late 1960s.

6. Nicholas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics* Les Presse Du Reel, France, 1998.

7. Quote from Mel Bochner in conversation with the author, December 2007.

Everyman in His Eden: A Psychological Parlour Game For A Wet Sunday Afternoon, excerpt from *The Complete Works of W. H. Auden: Prose, Volume III 1949-1955*, edited by Edward Mendelson (Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, 2008). First published in 1955 by *The Grasshopper* (Gresham's School periodical).

Qui é l'uom' felice

or

Everyman in His Eden

A PSYCHOLOGICAL PARLOUR-GAME FOR A WET SUNDAY AFTERNOON

INSTRUCTIONS

Before attempting to answer the questionnaire, it is important to realise that it is concerned with Eden not with New Jerusalem, a prelapsarian Arcadia, not a post-judgment-day Utopia.

In New Jerusalem the conflict between Pleasure and Duty has at last been solved. In Eden this conflict has not yet arisen.

In New Jerusalem only being and doing what you should is fun: in Eden having fun is your only duty.

In order to answer the questions truthfully, therefore, you must ignore your conscience completely and put down accurately what, in fact, you like or dislike.

Suppose, for example, that you happen to dislike the sight of people with red hair. Then your answer to Question 3 should include the statement "No Redheads". In general, do not forget that it is as important to state what and whom you exclude as what you want included.

In answering such a question as 23 (Sports) you do not necessarily have to practise any sport you mention. You can, of course, if you want to, but it can also be simply one you would like to watch. This applies to several other questions.

It has to be assumed that the laws of Nature and of Logic are as valid in your Eden as in the real world. Thus you cannot simultaneously demand a temperate climate and tropical flowers growing out of doors. Otherwise, there is no restriction whatever upon your fancies.

Landscape

Very high mountains everywhere.
The tops of the mountains are covered in snow and look like sharp stones.
On the bottom are high and green trees, and a forest where I can take a big breath. The moss is everywhere, soft like a carpet. In the middle of the forest, I can see a lake, as clear as crystal and very deep. I see a wooden boat. I can see the sea and a small beach where there are always large, crashing waves. I see also a cave where access is restricted. There are no spiders or insects.

Climate

Three seasons: warm summer, autumn, winter, very cold.

Language

Nonverbal communication or different languages.

Religion

No different religions – everyone has self-religion and tolerance.

Form of government

Anarchy.

Size of capital city

No capital.

Sources of natural power

Sun, underground hot springs.

Industries

Agriculture, gardening, farming.

Modes of transport

Walk or use own ideas.

Architectural styles

Wood, farm style.

Styles of interior decoration

Minimal.

Style of dress for formal occasions

No fashion.

Style of gardens

Land left in natural state.

Methods of lighting

Daylight, moonlight.

Methods of heating

Fire, sun, underground hot springs.

Type of cuisine

Fresh, organic, vegetables, fresh fish.

Scales for weights, measures, currency
People only use as much as they need.

Calendar

Lunar calendar and crop calendar.

Educational system

Everyone has own teacher, preceptor.

Forms of public entertainment.

Martial arts, herbalism, survival skills.
The most important method is meditation.

Forms of public entertainment

Climbing, snowboarding, sailing, surfing, fishing, Nordic skiing, dog sled racing.

Forms of public entertainment

Dancing, singing, rhetoric.

Sources of public information

Word of mouth.

Any other feature?

Peace. Everything I do is my decision.
I am in control. I am independent.



Eden OT

Eden 02



In my Eden, body and mind are in perfect connection. We only eat vegetables and these vegetables have no chemicals. We do not eat meat and our bodies stay clear. We exercise through our hobbies. We live in homes made from basic materials such as stone and wood. Many of them use the natural landscape, built into caves, rocks and scarps, and are covered with thatched or moss roofs. There is no electricity, but a lot of modern equipment running on sun power. No one has to pay for their home because all natural materials are plentiful, and the world is not damaged.

Given that our basic needs are met and we have no worries, we concentrate on our minds. We are always in a state of meditation. The material world and status are eliminated. Ego is eliminated. If we have a need, we exchange our knowledge, our skills, our experiences to fill that need. In this way, we also learn more about each other. We are not just tolerant of each other, looking at each other through tolerant eyes. We actually help one another.

Without money and a monetary system, we have no aim to achieve. Without the aim to achieve, time is not so important. We are not always running. We do not work long hours. We only work to meet the basic needs in life. There is no rich, no poor. No one sees others and wants more. In my paradise, we only want for more experiences.

Eden 03



In my garden, my dream, my paradise, I am on a long stretch of beach. I am looking up. Everyone is looking up. I do not know how many people are there – there could be thousands.

We are looking up at the night sky. It is clear. The clouds, like flocks of sheep, that were there during the day are gone. There are millions of stars. They are winking at us.

Our eyes long to see this creation. Our eyes are hungry. Our eyes belong to a people who don't care about race, religion, language. We share a pure, genuine love – a love that does not expect anything, a love that is full of respect. We are one family.

All of our heads are looking up. We do not feel who is behind, who is in front, who is near. There are no boundaries, no territories. We all share the same view. No one is talking. We feel calm.

At this moment, we forget everything.



Eden 04



In my paradise, everyone likes each other.
Everything is peaceful.
You can go out anytime you like.
You can talk with anyone you like.
There is no racism.
People don't stand up if you sit down next to them.

People teach each other their language, and they want to learn.
People teach each other their best food so they can cook it
together. You know about me and I know about you.
People who don't speak the same language, can still talk to each
other and do things together.

In my paradise, there is no killing, no babies dying.
People are not afraid to go out at night, to visit anyone they like.
People are not afraid.



My paradise is a mixture of different tribes.
Each tribe lives in a small village like a big family.
We all practice our traditions safely.
There are no problems. We practice our religion.
We live peacefully, without fighting and without persecution.

Everyone lives in their own big house, but not more than five rooms.
Half of the land is a garden and a small farm for planting vegetables.
Half of the land is paved with tiles to use in the summertime. We put a
bed there and sleep outside. We can see the sky and the stars. In this
place - especially in the evening and the night while it is dark - we use
it to be alone and to think. Here, a man and a woman can write, can
dream. The family can also sleep here until early morning.
When the sun rises, we go in.

When we have a party, we use this place as well. Sometimes we
put a division to separate men and women. We dance and we
enjoy each other.



Eden 05





Eden 06



In my paradise, we have peace and religion. We have the fear of God in us and we want to live in peace with everyone. We obey his precepts and his council. We follow the Ten Commandments – love your neighbor as yourself, do not lie, do not kill.

Christ came across all manor of beating, all manor of violence. But because he had peace in his heart, he had to overcome. In my paradise, because we have the love of God in us, we don't want to offend another human being or commit any kind of atrocity. Because we have the love of God in us, we live in harmony, in peace.

Since we are at peace with each other, we understand each other more. Because we allow peace to rein, there is more tolerance. There are no cases of murder mentioned on the television. The police do not have a job to do. Because we are determined, God helps us.

Eden 07



I live in a wooden house with no paint, just natural wood. There are huge, huge windows. I look out on a big open space with a lake, a wooded area off to the side, and a mountain in the distance beyond the lake. I have horses and dogs.

In the winter it is difficult to open the front door. Snow has gathered behind and I must push at it hard to create a crack big enough to slip through. In the summer it is warm – I sit on my big wooden porch and drink tea.

Inside the house is a big family - my grandparents, my parents, my children. We are all glad to see each other every morning. We sit around the table eating pancakes. There is much laughter. There are no questions about who washes the dishes after the meal.

When I go outside, I say "Hello" to all of my neighbors. My neighbors are happy to greet each other. We don't put a hood over our heads and hide. There are no misunderstandings. There are no language differences, no religious differences, no economic differences. There are no barriers, nothing to create jealousy, nothing to separate people. The climate between people is warm and helpful.



1 in 10 residents are non-Irish

54% of migrants have a third-level qualification in comparison to 27% of the native population

172% increase in incidents of racism from three years prior

100% of funding cut for National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism due to government budget constraints

50%+ of economic migrants living in rural areas intend to remain in the State despite the downturn

1 best-selling author writes letter to Minister for Justice arguing against deportation of Nigerian woman in fear of daughters' subjection to female genital mutilation

892 immigrants treated for previous medical and psychological torture in the past year

1 in 3 people in prison are foreign nationals

1 in 520 gardaí are foreign nationals

952 deported, transferred or voluntarily repatriated last year

55.2% increase in persons of "other stated religions" since prior census now ranking 2nd highest category ahead of the Church of Ireland

38% of adults sleeping rough are foreign nationals

€19.10 weekly living allowance for asylum seekers who are also not allowed to work or seek third level education

28 adults and 50 children admitted for permanent resettlement under U.N. scheme after having lived in camps on the Burmese/Bangladesh border for 17 years

1 in 2.8 workers in hotels and restaurants are non-Irish nationals

5 trafficked prostitutes taken into care after gardaí raid nine suspected brothels

17,000 children hosted for treatment and recuperation by the Chernobyl Children's Project

129 different nationalities receive certificates of naturalisation last year

1 governmental apology given to immigrant Somali woman after her family was unnecessarily left in an Ethiopian refugee camp for three years

150+ people from 19 countries receive basic English language support from senior citizen volunteers

1 in 3.7 non-Irish residents are British

1 in 6.6 non-Irish residents are Polish

1 in 11.9 non-Irish residents are African

1 exonerated Guantánamo detainee refused resettlement in Ireland

1 national border information system approved for development to take action against "overstayers"

456,000,000 Europeans have the right to study, work and live in Ireland

230,000 attend Festival of World Cultures

419,733 residents born outside the country

3 in 5 migrant restaurant workers surveyed feel they are not respected or treated properly by their employer or supervisors

6,290 asylum seekers resident in 52 direct provision centres in 20 counties

45% of asylum seekers living in direct provision centres have been there for over two years including approximately 25% for over three years

89.6% of respondents said they would "learn more about them, be welcoming, make friends or campaign on their behalf" if refugees or asylum seekers were living in the community

1 Nigerian Catholic priest arrested, strip-searched and placed in prison cell overnight upon arriving in the capital city's airport to visit a relative

20,100 Irish return home in last recorded year

152 Eastern European and 46 Irish shops throughout the country carry locally published Russian language newspaper

15.4% of all persons in employment are non-Irish nationals

130,000 – 140,000 estimated English language students in Ireland worth €500,000,000 to the economy

2 university scholarships for students from "new Irish communities" offered by leading bank

1 ruling by the European Court of Justice declares that people seeking "subsidiary protection" because they fear for their life at home do not have to prove they have been personally targeted if the country is seen as sufficiently dangerous

295 new immigrants entered the State every day on average in 2006

€2 ticket for female-only catwalk show of stylish hijabs organised by the Federation of Student Islamic Societies

€17,500,000 contract awarded to build Automated Fingerprint Identification System with the first phase to allow for the electronic taking and exchange of fingerprint data on persons seeking asylum within the central EU fingerprint database repository

500+ Garda Ethnic Liaison officers appointed to implement the integration policies of the front line

93 out of 100 asylum applicants refused or returned to have their case processed in the EU country to which they first arrived

4.4 out of 100 negative decisions on asylum applications overturned

1 incident of racism reported every 3.4 days

80% of respondents agreed that it is good that children in Ireland are growing up in a multicultural society

807-word article in national newspaper titled "Africa is giving nothing to anyone – apart from AIDS"

Eden 08



The landscape is like that of home. Large forested mountain ranges rise from plains scattered with deep blue lakes and rivers meandering into the sea. In the winter, the countryside looks like an iced wedding cake, carpeted with powdery snow. Spring brings a kaleidoscope of colours in the flowers that speckle the meadows of the plains. The lakes reflect the azure blue skies in the summer and a warm sea breeze calms the fire from the sun. The forests become a myriad of copper and amber hues as the autumn leaves fall.

**In my paradise, I cook Amala.
I share with you.
You share with me.
It is cool – not noisy, not rowdy,
not stressful.**

**Everywhere there is no fighting,
no violence.**

**We talk with each other.
I am not afraid to talk with you.
You are not afraid to talk with me.
We do things together, in common.
I learn something from you.
You learn something from me.**

We are cool with each other.

Amala

Yam flour powder

Water

Egusi Soup

Honeydew melon

Red pepper

Catfish

Red oil

Maggi cube (dried spices)

Salt

Spinach (optional)

Place water on the fire. After water comes to a boil, measure an amount of Yam flour powder and stir into water with a stick. Keep adding powder and stirring until thick. Let simmer for about 5 minutes. Stir until smooth. Amala should be like mashed potatoes, but better at keeping its shape and very starchy. Place onto a plate and set aside.

Remove skin and seeds from honeydew melon and grind melon.

Remove stem from red pepper and grind pepper, including seeds.

Put red oil in a pot and add grinded pepper. Cover pot and bring to a boil.

Add Maggi cube and salt to peppers to give it taste.

After some time, sprinkle grinded melon over mixture, cover and boil for a while.

If including spinach (optional), wash and drain before adding to the mixture.

Add fish, then cover and let everything steam for 15-20 minutes until melon is well done.

Place Amala onto separate dishes and carve a hole in the middle of each dish. Place Egusi soup into each hole and serve. To eat, scoop and dip with hands.

Eden 09





My paradise is a place called "Peaceful Garden of Eden". The people living there love each other. There is one language, one religion and the same colour of skin. We spend the same kind of money. There is no discrimination, all are equal and social activities are multicultural.

People do not pay gas bills, electric bills or taxes. All men work without stress. There are jobs for all men and women stay home to work at home. It is a free zone for freedom and peace everywhere.

There is no pain, no death, no sickness, no panic, no crime, no suspicion, no war. There are no rules and regulations from the government. All are healthy and wealthy. My paradise is full of laughter, happiness, joy, love, peace and freedom. It is a great atmosphere. It is surrounded by guarding angels of God.

Landscape. I live in a house on a hill overlooking my large, private estate. There is a big garden where I grow loads of different flowers and fruit trees – apple, plum and strawberry – and where children can play. Out front there are two big pillars. I can lean on the pillars and see the view. At night I see many lights. When I go inside, I feel warm rather than cold. The inside is painted in bright, warm colours. There are pictures of my family and my homeland. When I step through the front door, it just feels like *home*.

Climate. We have lovely long summers with a lot of sunshine. It rains at night and I hear the peaceful sound of rain slashing against the window. Maybe we have thunder and lightning once or twice a year, but it is not strong. We have snow in the winter, especially on Christmas Day, but not too often.

Language. There is one main language so that everyone can communicate and understand.

Religion. Everyone has their own belief and religion, and the right to change their religion. No one is forced to do what they don't want to do.

Form of government. A democracy. The government does not rule everything or hold all of the power. People can say what they think and not go to jail.

Educational system. Boys and girls are mixed together.

Forms of public entertainment. One day each year, the entire country is involved in an activity. It could be drawing faces, making animals out of balloons or a market. We forget about work, relax and enjoy each other.

Any other feature. People are free. They can drive if they want. They can work if they want. They don't have to act in a certain way. They don't feel trapped.





My dream of paradise is a big, long land with no end in sight. The landscape is flat and green. The climate is hot all of the time, there is no rain or snow – just summer all year. The days are as long as possible to fully enjoy them and the nights are short, but very relaxing. Heating from radiators is not necessary because energy is provided by the sun, moon and stars.

People speak one language. There is one religion and many churches. Only one person is in charge of everything. He or she is very mature, smart and fair.

In my paradise, there are no cars, but a big lift that carries many people. If anyone wants anything, they get it through telepathy. If anyone wants to go somewhere, they just think of the place and they are there. Parents have as many children as they want. Mothers know everything they need to know when they give birth to their babies.

There is no money. Everyone works voluntarily. Everyone gets everything they want just for being a good person. Everyone is equal – there are no intelligent people or unintelligent people. Females are blonde, curly-haired and pretty. Males have black hair and black eyes, and are tall and handsome. Everyone is happy with their appearance and never jealous of anyone else. There are fashion styles for normal days, and fancy dresses and suits for special occasions. In their free time, people develop personal skills with many different hobbies such as basketball. There are many public entertainments such as theatre, museums and cinemas.

People are really happy with no troubles. People live forever, as there is no sickness. Everyone is welcome.



I live in a house near the sea.
I can see a big rock and very blue water.
I can see palm trees and coconut trees on the beach,
but no one is in the water.

My house is not an old house or a modern house,
it is a traditional home. It is made from wood.
Everything inside the house is made from wood.
It has several pillars supporting the roof and a very
large wooden door. The door folds out.
It is a very high quality, shiny wood and lasts very long.
There is a big garden out the back with a little park for
children. There are seven or eight children climbing up
and down a slide, but not all of them are mine.

The climate is more summer than winter.
Not too hot – from 25° to 29°.
There isn't much rain and no lightning.
There is an autumn, but it only lasts one month.
In December, snow and a little sleet fall.
Each month we have a barbeque with family and friends.
We fly kites on the beach.

Eden 14



Every Friday the entire family – brothers, sisters, aunties, cousins gather at the grandparents' house.

We take turns as to which grown child leads in cooking the food.

We eat a dish called kissra. It is made from maize flour, mixed together the night before and left overnight. It is in the shape of a circle and thin like a crepe. It is cooked in the morning in a special pan for one minute and put together in layers with dried ochre, meat, salt and coriander.

The others help prepare the meal – they grill the meat, they cut the vegetables. We place it all in a big tray and eat with our hands. We gather together and discuss different topics.

There could be twenty-five people.

The children play all around us.

We share.

Eden 15

My dream, my Eden is freedom. People tell me I should feel much more free here than in my home country because I can drive a car, because I can go anywhere I want. This should make me happy. But, in my mind, it's not a car that gives me independence.

I can stay in the same place and feel free. Freedom is what you are doing now that makes you happy – not shopping, not sitting on a beach. I don't need to be beautiful, use makeup, look good. I don't have to go out on a Saturday night instead of staying home with my baby. I don't need to do things because everyone else is doing them.

My idea of paradise is freedom in the sense that a person feels comfortable being themselves. It is to be happy and relaxed in yourself. If you can be yourself and strong in yourself, nothing can make you not happy. No one can give you paradise. You can't dream paradise. You must be happy inside yourself to have paradise.

Eden 16

My paradise is where there is love. God created everyone the same, but because of circumstances, people find themselves in a particular place. Back home, for example, someone may hit you because you have only girls. They ask, "Why have only girls?" Girls are nothing because girls will not carry on the family name. You can see a man marrying another woman because his wife has only girls. Why? Because there is no love. Back home – or even here – you have different tribes. A black person hits another person because he is in a different tribe. Why? Because there is no love.

Paradise is heaven. In heaven, there is no discrimination. Everyone is equal. Everyone is happy. In heaven, everyone greets with a cheerful face and a clear heart. Here, people greet with a cheerful face, but not a clear heart. In my paradise, everyone has love – one love.

My paradise is also where there is no death. Here, you love someone, but then they are gone. You may have a husband. You love each other, you do things together, you have children. Then he dies. You have no one to share with.

In my paradise, in my heaven, there is no death.

Eden 17



My mother and my father are always close. My whole family is together once a week. It is like a bank holiday. We pray together. We eat together. We share a little happiness.

We live together with all other people happily. We all joke, we all laugh. There is no shouting, no screaming, no crying. Just love and respect. We treat each other like they are our best friend – just laughing together and not shouting.

We go easy with each other.

€6,671,105,000 – €7,052,311,000 estimated increase in GDP
if all migrants were employed in work fitting their educational level

9 immigrants selected thus far by largest political party
to contest 1000+ local election seats up for grabs

30.7% of Muslims living in Ireland are Irish-nationals

39% of minorities surveyed feel unsafe walking in their neighborhood after dark
compared to 13% of the general population

374,753 Irish-born present on census night had lived outside the State for one year or more

30 out of 69 sample contentious complaints by migrant workers against employers
took in excess of one year to reach a conclusion

2.8 Africans for every U.S. citizen living in Ireland

€4,800,000 spent on Know Racism programme over three years

80%+ of Polish immigrants have arrived since 2004

43% of Chinese residents are students

47% fall in number of citizens from new EU States registered to work or access public services

55,000 kilometres traveled within in the State in one year
by Lithuanian salesman pitching tractors from Belarus to Irish farmers

16 deportation flights to Nigeria since 2002

100's of adult learners and tutors participate in
"Integration...we can all play a part" project, winning regional STAR award

1 Indian tourist complains of harassment and racial discrimination
upon arrival in the capital city's airport after winning the trip from Tourism Ireland
at an event in Mumbai promoting Ireland as a holiday destination

2 popular Polish pubs in city centre close in second half of last year

800+ attend Friday services at new mosque in capital

15 Palestinian school-goers visit Irish students to share what life is like back home

441 unaccompanied minors go missing from state care over a seven year period
with 338 still unaccounted for

65% of Irish people surveyed are troubled by the State's asylum policy

56 "Educate Together" multi-denominational primary schools in the Republic

50,000 net outward migration forecasted compared to 72,000 net inflow two years earlier

189 organisations involved in the 'new communities' sector

3 new directives in force in all 15 EU member states prohibiting
direct discrimination, indirect discrimination and harassment on grounds
of gender, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation

61% of all new arrivals are from EU accession states

4 segments judged in annual Miss India Ireland pageant –
evening gown, Indian dress, talent and question/answer

2,000 language support teaching posts
allocated to primary and post-primary schools versus 262 six years prior

94 different nationalities apply for asylum

4,314 asylum applications in Ireland in 2006 represent less than 1.5% of all
who sought asylum in the industrialised world and is less than the 4,545 applications
received by Malta with a population approximately one tenth that of Ireland

55.2% increase in persons of Muslim faith since prior census

99.3% increase in persons of Orthodox faith

67.3% increase in persons of Buddhist faith

96.3% increase in persons of Hindu faith

2 newest EU member states not given automatic right to work

4 extra High Court judges appointed full-time
to asylum hearings in attempt to get through backlog of cases

€700,000 disbursed by charitable trust to projects seeking
"the creation of a peaceful world, political equality and social justice"

2,279 child asylum seekers living in full board direct provision accommodation centres
never see a family member go to work or cook a family meal

€151,900 spent to deport convicted Ghanaian drug smuggler

59% of married male Poles living in Ireland do not live with their spouse

361 migrant-led churches and chaplaincies established in past ten years

11.7-fold increase in Lithuanians since prior census

7.4-fold increase in Latvians since prior census

167 languages spoken throughout the State

1,215 locals sign petition to stop deportation of Serbian family

300+ people sample food from 22 different countries in Food Across Cultures Festival

60% of respondents believe that "the traditional Irish culture and values"
are being lost due to the increase of non-nationals living and working here

1 Nigerian entrepreneur runs restaurant, bakery and car auction
with wife and business partner

2.8 residents from ten new EU accession states for every resident from the EU15
excluding Ireland and the UK

48 teams representing players from across the world
take part in 12th Annual Soccerfest hosted by Sport Against Racism Ireland

1+ foreign children adopted every day



My ideal place is a gorgeous island surrounded by crystal blue water and colourful reefs. There are long, sandy beaches, high palms and citrus trees. People can pick the fruit if they are hungry while they walk the beach.

Throughout the year, the weather is sunny and nice, with no strong winds. Warm, but not hot. Very calm and safe, with no catastrophes.

People live in harmony with nature, without rushing traffic and crushing in the supermarkets. They are friendly and congregate at the harbour. The atmosphere is magic. Life on my island is different than life in big cities today, where everything is about making money and no one has time for family or anything else. On my island, people treasure each other's values. People behave well, not because of laws, but because of their own rules. People are hospitable, pleasant, cordial and really selfless.

There is no problem with time, there is no problem with money – life is easy.

Landscape. Close to the sea or ocean with clean, yellow sand and beach.

Mountains with caves. Lots of green hills and a place where you can meditate. Forests and orchards with healthy apples, cherries, plums, oranges, grapefruits and lemons. Waterfalls with energetic water. Clean lakes.

Climate. Four seasons: spring, summer, autumn, winter. During the summer, a Mediterranean climate. The autumns are like home – sun, sometimes rain. Colourful leaves of gold, yellow, orange, red and brown. You can make a rustling noise when you walk through them. A scarf and sunglasses are required at the same time. Children make figures with the chestnuts and wooden matches. Winters are really cold with minus temperatures, snow and freezing. There are lots of tracks for cross-country skiing.

Ethnic origin of inhabitants. Large, racial, cultural differences with no problems between groups.

Language. Two fluent languages. The first is English for everybody, and the second is the language of origin.

Religion. All religions but no problems between them.

Form of government. A clever government who think about all people (although everyone doesn't really need looking after). Democracy.

Size of capital city. Not so big, not so small with rich cultural life: theatres, museums, good libraries with old historical books, philharmonics, centres for activities, yoga centre, restaurants with healthy food. No cars, only trams.

Sources of natural power. Wind, sun, hydro.

Industries. Only friendly for the environment.

Means of access. A bright road with a big gate.

Modes of transport. Ecological cars, bicycles and a special fast tunnel (for traveling at light speed).

Architectural styles. All old styles in the city – Baroque, Gothic, Renaissance. In the town, nice small bungalows surrounded by play areas.

Style of gardens. Mysterious gardens with lots of natural crystal, pure water for drinking, old benches, fountains, energetic places.

Methods of lighting. Candles, paraffin, electricity.

Methods of heating. Sun energy and lots of fireplaces.

Type of cuisine. Healthy cuisine. A lot of fruits and vegetables that change with the seasons. No fast food, no McDonalds, no KFC. Wine from Greece and Italy. Feta cheese, mozzarella cheese. Herbal tea, no cola, no Pepsi. Olive oil, sesame oil, linseed oil are all popular in kitchens. A lot of fresh herbs. All foods are prepared following the five phases of *qi* material transformation – wood, fire, earth, metal and water.

Style of dress for formal occasions. All variations but in good taste.

Educational system. Boys and girls study together. They learn about language, leading a healthy life, meditation, intuition, herbs, crystals, angels. Lots of workshops for everybody in dance, art, pottery, crystals, and healthy food.

Hobbies and sports. Everyone has a passion.

Forms of public entertainment. Theatres, dance, clever movies, workshops.

Sources of public information. Daily newspapers, but no tabloids.

Any other feature? Life without aggression. The main goal: To be happy every day, develop your skills and have peace in your heart.





In my paradise, there is a huge park. It is very green and colourful, not sad and grey like the world today. The park is filled with flowers from different countries, rocks, artificial lakes and diverse botanical gardens. There are flat areas – ideal for family picnics – with views of flowing rivers, rich dark green grass, trees humming softly and birds singing between the branches. Hilly sites are for jogging, climbing and brisk walks. There are places for lovers to walk and talk in the warmth of the sun and by starlight. Arbours surrounded by wooden walls and covered with ivy give them a feeling of privacy and complete safety.

There are many playgrounds and sports grounds for games such as basketball and volleyball. There are tables for draughts, chess and cards. Terraces with adjustable roofs provide shelter from the rain. The parents' happiness infects the children. They play peacefully with each other without aggression. Everyone feels there is plenty of space for all.

In this perfect world, people are happy, they carry less stress and have less hurried lives. There is no crime. Offenses only occur as a result of carelessness rather than revenge, and often cause more laughter than sorrow. Good intentions predominate. People meet each other in the street and in the park, not in the pub. They don't sit closed off at home, engaging in virtual relationships. They find the time to be together, to be with others. They approach strangers to start conversations. They learn to establish contacts with others quickly because society is kind, friendly and open.



In my dream I travel to different places and countries. I meet different people and learn many things. I learn different languages, different cultures and different ways of behaving.

In between my travels, I always return to my people back home.

There I experience the things that I know and that I love. We still do many things the way I remember. For example, we make oil from the palm tree.

The men bring the palm nuts down from the top of the tree and cook them. When cooked through, they throw them on a big, flat stone and the women begin to smash the nuts with their feet. Others throw water onto the women's feet so that the oil comes to the top of the water. Once the oil is separated from the water, they cook the oil and then it is ready for use. Coco yams and plantem, a fruit similar to bananas, are roasted with the oil. The cooking area is then cleaned and everyone returns home with their oil.

I hunger for a life such as this.



Landscape

A good mixture of everything: Mountains, plains, rivers, valleys, lakes, forests and vegetation.

Government

Reflective Democracy: A government that reflects the composition of the garden. All stakeholders in the garden are given an opportunity to have a go at governance.

Climate

A mixture of temperate climate with tropical climate. Not too hot, not too cold. Half and half.

Ethnic origin of inhabitants

It is un-important and unnecessary. Children grow up together, journey together and see one another as being from the same community rather than coming from different worlds. Colleagues at work see one another as an integral part of the society and all working for the overall growth of the economy. Employers look beyond the nine grounds in equality legislation and place emphasis on the ability of the person to fulfill the job. We all see the difference in our ethnic and cultural backgrounds as enriching and the more reason to unite and strengthen our relationships. It is a garden where ethnic and cultural differences are celebrated with a strong belief that we have a lot to offer each other.

Cold

Kill the bugs cold
Then warm
Not hot warm
Sit in the garden warm
Light breezes warm
Open the kitchen door warm
No need for the heat on warm
Go for a walk with the kids warm

Cinemas

Big screens, comfortable seats
Popcorn, peanuts, diet coke
Outdoor climbing frames, padded
Lots of curves
No jagged edges
A cure for Type 1 Diabetes

Different nationalities, different shoes
Different stories and rhythms
People, places and sadness
Loneliness and babies
Music, time and family
New country, new home, new shoes

Education, free inside or outside
Morning or nighttime
All your life
English through dance, Irish through art
Your choice

Leaving the foreign city
Peering out the airplane window
Green fields
Trees, green, dark, light, fields
Boundaries, fields
Cattle, fields
Farmhouses, fields
Home





The artist wishes to thank Padraic E. Moore whose curatorial support, collaboration and dialogue throughout the entire process provided a unique opportunity for exchange and learning.

Many thanks also go to Muireann Ni Chonaill and Sarah Searson who orchestrated the overall Unit project, to Bridie Keenan, Patsy Lynch and Una Collins for their support, and to the Laois County Council and the Arts Council of Ireland for providing the funding for the project.

Finally, the greatest thanks go to the people who participated in *seeker* and shared their dreams so generously:

Sandra Doyle
 Faosiat Bello
 Thuy Le Thi
 Oleg Perevoznyk
 Marta Moslaukiewics
 Adekemi Beatrice Sofola
 Victoria Okunga
 Jolanta Kowalska
 Thuong Thi Huynh
 Rotimi Adebari
 Edyta Szynanska
 Adetokunbo Agoro
 Ewa Szewczyk
 Pacharamas Behan
 Krystna Lechicka
 Awatif Hassan Idris
 Claude Kikueta Mbala
 Kamila Rozkrut
 Afaf Eltayaieb
 Tomas Kleinaltis
 Chidiebere Muojeke
 Lisa Atim Aboa
 Ingrid Francis
 Rabar Barar
 Anna Cedro
 Monika Debiec
 Jan Blaszczyk

Published by
 Frankfort House
 79 Mount Merrion Avenue
 Blackrock
 County Dublin
 Ireland

Book design and production
 Tony O'Hanlon
 Propeller, Galway

Printing
 Castle Print, Galway

© Theresa Nanigian
 and Padraic E. Moore, 2009
 © 1955 by W. H. Auden
 Reprinted by permission
 of Curtis Brown, Ltd

www.theresananigian.com
 ISBN 978-0-9560231-1-7