Ooh.

Ooh. Ooh.

Ooh. Ooh ooh. Ooh.

Well, over the rainbow. Way up high. And the dreams that you dream of. Once in the love of my.

Oh oh, oh. Well. Over the rainbow. Bluebirds fly.

Now the dreams that you dream of. Dreams really do come true. Hoo hoo hoo hoo.

Someday you'll wish upon a star. Wake up with the clouds of far behind.

Me. And trouble melts like lemon drops. High above the chimney top. That's where you'll find me.

Somewhere over the rainbow. Bluebirds fly. And the dreams that you dear to. Oh, why, oh, why can't I?

Hide. Well I see trees of green and red roses too. I watched them bloom for me and knew when the wink to myself. What a wonderful world.

Will I see skies of blue. And I see clouds away in the brightness of day. I like the dark. And I think to myself. What a wonderful world.

The colours of the rainbow. So pretty in the sky. Are so one facing of people passing by. I see friends shaking hands singing. How do you do, Mary Lee sing? I, I love you. I hear babies cry. And I watched them go. They'll learn much more than we'll know.

And I think to myself. What a wonderful world. Will someday wish upon a star. Wake up with the clouds of far behind.

Me. Trouble melts like a lemon drops. High above the chimney top. That's where you'll find your sky. Well over the rainbow.

Way up high. And above dreams that you dare to. Why, oh, why can't I?

Ah. Ooh.

Ooh. Ooh.

Ooh.

Where to start. 1971 The Haworth Art Gallery, Accrington, a gallery in a park, an Arts and Crafts house belonging to a mill owner bequeathed to the people of Accrington.

And I'm walking there with my dad to see the touring exhibition of the paintings of L.S. Lowry. We always walked. No car, no bus money, not for a couple of miles.

And we knew about Lowry the way we knew about Tiffany glass. There's a collection of that at the Haworth Art Gallery as well. Joseph Briggs, Accrington man, went to work for Tiffany's, New York. Who knew? Sent back a collection for the people. And we knew about Lowr the way we knew about the Empire State Building. Our bricks nor I bricks.

Hardest bricks in the world. Sent to lay the foundations of the tallest building in New York City. We knew about Lowry, a Manchester man. A painter painted us.

My dad left school at 14, and he didn't go much before he was 14. He worked in factories all his life, except for during the war and the D-Day landings. He was wiry, tough, misshapen, broken and mended. He had one week's holiday, a year at Blackpool, and that was the only time his skin ever saw the sun. Who was going to paint him, Larry?

You'll see a slide in a minute. Lodging House, 1921. So Lowry was studying painting at Salford Art school in the evenings. He'd already studied drawing at Manchester Art College, near private lessons, and was continuing his work obsessively.

Unteachable, they say, but stubbornly turning up to be taught. In later life, he eeminded snooty London critics of this truth when they dismissed him as self-taught or a Sunday painter. Lowry was in the working man working woman tradition of having to fund yourself and learn as best you could, wherever you could. He hadn't got on well at school, in spite of his mother's best efforts to make him come up in the world, and he didn't have a patron or a private income, he painted in his spare time by electric light.

But art is not an accident of birth. Art is what you do deliberately with your life. Lowry, the only child of a dutiful father and a professionally hypochondriac mother.

And he worked until his official retirement with a pension, aged 65. He was a rent collector for the Pall Mall Company, and renting was what working people did, either

from the factory owners direct or privately, like this Georgian house in the picture. Once a fine house, now come down in the world and home to single men families who might take two rooms if they were lucky, everyone sharing toilets and a water tap in the yard at the back. And there might be a wash house with a coal fired boiler. Look how everything happens in the bottom third of the canvas. The people are crowded into their lives on the street as they overcrowded into their rooming houses and crammed into the factories. Lowry had no studio.

There was no room for that. He painted in his parents house. Well, this is a dark on giving picture. Nothing of nature. The only green to be seen is given to a few of the figures themselves, and perhaps Lowry himself, the onlooker with something alive on his head. I'm sure it's more than a hat. A green man. Perhaps that ancient symbol of renewal always depicted with foliage on his head. Yes. It's something alive, something not killed by industrialisation. And that's something Lowry recognised and painted. And before anyone says, oh, it's just a photograph done without a camera and all that, anyone in this room would say that. But enough artworld muppets have done Lowry to death with their social realism rubbish. So before we go any further, have a look at this next one. 1921. That's Oxford Street, Manchester. Isn't it great? But that's what Lowry wasn't painting. It's 1921.

George V King. Britain's not far out of the Great War and the Spanish flu epidemic. About a million men are unemployed. And there's a surplus of nearly 2 million women, some of whom the ones over 30 and with property have got the vote. There's not a lot of money around to buy paintings. And so when Lowry exhibited both oils and pastels at a local architect's office, none sold. Though eventually a friend of his father bought the one you saw for £5. Lowry found it hard to sell his work for years. Was it money? Or was it Lowry? It's true. He didn't fit anywhere. He wasn't a surrealist. He wasn't a post-war return to nature painter. He hadn't been to the Slade. Like his contemporaries Paul Nash, Stanley and Gilbert Spencer, Mark Gertler, Dora Carrington. He wasn't a member of the New English Arts Club. Nobody invited him to Garsington or any other fancy house belonging to the cultured upper classes. He would never have slotted into an internship. The Bloomsbury Group's a meagre workshop. He wasn't London. He wasn't part of any set. He didn't have a following of students. He wasn't on any committees. Nobody would have chosen Lowry to represent Britain at the Venice Biennale. And they didn't.

It wasn't a true to life realist of the kind that made art seem accessible after the really annoying demands of Cubism. See, this is Gilbert Spencer. I hate this painting. Ratcatcher, 1922. Oh, so it's so patronising. So Lowry wasn't painting that, but he couldn't be called abstract either. He was no Ben Nicholson. He wasn't a modernist. He wasn't harking back to easy Edwardian ism. But he wasn't inventing the future either. And his mother, God bless her, hated the subject matter of his paintings. She said it was bad enough having to live amongst it, let alone bringing it into the house.

Looming building. Small, downtrodden people.

Look at this one. Street scene. Saint Stephen's Church, 1928. In this figure pitches us for the figures are squashed even lower, barely rising above the first quarter of the canvas. And Lowry worked this up from a sketch after the horrible church had been demolished. In its day. It seated a thousand souls. There it stands, unloved and unrecorded by the people with souls who were going about their business.

Already, Lowry was using Flake White for his backgrounds, lifting the figures out of his previous Victorian gloom, even though he wasn't yet letting them run loose all over the canvas.

But already the trademark red rebukes the blackness of the church. Here is the lifeblood of the city not its monuments, not its churches, not its factories, not its seedy rooming houses. The life is in the people. So, just for reference.

Have a look at this next one. This is called Morning by Dodd Proctor. And it's 1926 now, not Lowry, but a painting voted by the Daily Mail readers of the day. A painting voted by the Daily Mail. Readers of the day. Most popular in show at the Royal Academy Summer exhibition, 1927. The Daily Mail had a fit of patriotism and bought it for the nation, and then they presented it to the Tate, where you may see it today. Well, tomorrow. Now I've got no fight with Doris Brock, just painting Picasso and Henry Moore, who had put paintings of monumental women in the public eye in the 1920s. And let's hear it for monumental Women.

Yeah, well, you can't argue with Picasso, but I just wanted some contemporary reference points. Lowry was not a popular painter at this time, and he attracted little critical interest. He was not in the mainstream or the avant garde. He didn't have a grand unified theory of his work, and he called himself a simple man, no brains.

This wasn't going to get the art world excited, but he knew what he wanted to paint. Coming from the mill, 1930, Lowry liked this picture bought by the Salford Art Gallery, and he called it my most characteristic mill scene, and it fitted with his different versions of his vision. Different because Lowry was an excellent storyteller. You know, this story the story tells is of missing a train from Pendlebury into Manchester and being forced to trudge back out of the station when he suddenly sees the Acme Spinning Mill, a square red block lit up with yellow windows, little tied cottages running in rows right up to the gates, and he stares in rapture. He's found his subject. And it's more than his subject. It's like a muse, a big boned, sooty muse with millions of relatives, all with oversized feet. He's besotted. And sometimes the story is that he's on a walk passing a colliery. Other times he's with a man, a stranger, who points out the sight of tall chimneys, block buildings, cramped houses, teeming bodies. Well. whatever happened. And sometimes he laughed and said, oh, nothing happened. That was just for the papers. But that's the story too, because something did happen, didn't it? Here he is.

His mother had wanted a girl. She got a strapping lad over six foot tall when grown with big hands and big feet. And some of his detractors in the art world complained that Lowry's figures all are big feet. He replied that he had big feet and everyone he knew her big feet well, he really did have big feet. But the reason so many of the factory folks he painted have big feet is that they wore what shoes and boots they could find hand-me-downs, finds at the old clothes stores. My father's Sunday shoes were a good pair, given to him by one at church, and they there were two sizes too big. He stuffed them with newspaper and Loery. People walked everywhere, not in trainers, in whatever they had. Their feet were misshapen, sore, worked like the rest of their bodies. And so I believed the truth of the detail. But on the canvas, the realism takes on a symbolic value. It's the same for all of us, says the feet. Our life, hardship, the factories, the streets. But this is not the only truth about us. We are not an homogenised mass. We are not to be dismissed as the working class, as the lumpen proles, as cogs in the machine, as interchangeable as.

One of the strangest failures of literary criticism. By which I mean anti Lowry criticism is the failure to see the individuality, the eccentricity, the defiance. The

feet may be big, but these are people who are not downtrodden. Every single figure bears inspection.

A child could make up stories about any and all of them. And Lowry knows how to arrange groups the way a good opera director knows where to put the chorus on stage. But in a Lowry, there's no leading man, there's no main character, there's no hero. No, not in these paintings of crowds at work or at the seaside or at the market. Yes, it's a mass, but it's not a mass like frog spawn. It's up to us to look carefully at these worlds in little. And the closer we look, the more differentiated each figure becomes, bravely holding their own in poverty and struggle.

The children are always playing or scrapping. The dogs are tiny terriers eager for life. And when I look, that's what I see. What do you see?

I see life. The fight. 1953. I love this picture. And I'll never agree to talk about an artist unless I can use the word love. A picture is a place to go. It's like sitting down with a friend. It's important to know why it's good or might be. And that's why we bother with art criticism. But a picture is also a destination, a meeting place. We just be with it, not with what the catalogue says or what such a body says. Not with the price tag. Can we just be with it? The formal composition of this is so pleasing. I mean, look at the pairs. Five of them. Not counting the dogs. The two and the two. And the two. And the two. And the two. And the woman in red has one. Or is it two groups of four and a three? However you divide it, it's pleasing.

And the background is another rooming house. Maybe somewhere Lowry collected his rents. Probably even the usual Lowry dogs are ready to have a go. The faithful paste of Flake white once discovered, never more abandoned, that Lowry uses for most of his backgrounds, lifts this scene from a grimy punch up to a stylised bit of street theatre. This isn't a photo. If it were the buildings and the pavements will be black and the clothes will be grey. What's here isn't realism. What's here is energy.

The unstoppable energy of the north of Manchester, of working folks, of people who are always in relation to one another. And I think that's been a problem for critics of Lowry. The hugger mugger of street life, a factory life, a rooming house life.

It makes for a world that's far more horizontal than vertical. And Lowry's pictures are best understood on the horizontal. And Britain's always run on a class system that's vertical.

And as the great social historian E.P. Thompson remarked, class is not a thing. Class is a relationship. Class isn't a noun like horse or house. Class only works in relation to. But Lowry. People aren't bothered about the factory owners, the house owners, the people who think themselves above or better. Lowry gives us working people who are not in relation to anyone but themselves. Think of all those dreary portraits of bosses and nobs and their smug families. There's loads of them in Manchester. And where are the people who make them the money? Nowhere to be seen. Well, in the Lowry, the bosses and the betters are nowhere to be seen. Lowry has painted them out by not painting them in. It's a splendid insult.

The social realism factory paint a label is misleading. Larry's always highly stylised. He's not a photographer without a camera. His palette well known. Five colours only ivory, black, Prussian blue, flake white, yellow, ochre and vermilion. These were not everyday Manchester street colours. And even now, on a Saturday night, they're still not.

He took scenes he saw and he liked, and he worked them up to match what was in his head, in that his no different to any other artist. Lowry doesn't do a visual version of verbatim theatre.

Lowry does theatre. Let's have a look at this Blitz site 1942. So Lowry was employed as an official war artist in World War two, and this dark and ruined scene with no redeeming colour is an indication of how uninterested he was in realism. This is not faithful war art, not the kind required by the committee, but it is faithful to the kind of work required by Lowry himself. The work's brooding, upsetting, but it isn'ttethered to an event. If a viewer didn't know that this is likely after an air raid in 1941, the viewer could find other stories of the lives in here. What are they looking for? Those figures and the man on the edge. Is that Lowry himself? A similar figure often appears at the edge of the paintings, the onlooker. But this isn't detachment in any clinical or careless sense. Lowry's most important teacher, the French Impressionist painter Adolphe Valette, had taught his pupils the skill of seeing. Most of us don't have it. Life passes in a blur. We don't notice things. Lowry did notice.

And out of the jumble of events, random, incoherent, without a pattern. Lowry made his own unique pattern, his own vision of life. And not just the life on the surface. All paintings two dimensional. When it works, though, it does what William Wordsworth believed poetry is supposed to do see into the life of things. Very typical, isn't it? It's lovely. So colourful. Now a procession, 1938. But look, the pomp doesn't matter. The procession is a blur. What's here is the life of things. Lowry.

People live on the street because they're poor. He doesn't do interiors. Working class life is not genteel. There's no drawing rooms. And private spaces is our job to imagine what's inside their homes, inside their hearts. Lowry's Manchester viewers would have an idea his London viewers would not. In 1939, Lowry got his first London gallery show at Le Fevre. This was masterminded with the determination and cunning by a long time admirer of his work, the really tremendously named miss Daisy Jewell, and she was head of framing at Berlitz, the place all the fancy dealers used. And knowing that the owner of LaFave was dropping by, miss Jewel casually left some. Lowry's just lying around. She'd been trying with Lowry for years, and this time it worked.

Lowry got his show pictures sold. It should have been the best year of his life instead. 1939 his bed bound mother, who dominated his life since he was born. Not a girl. What do you think she did? She died. Bitch! The bottom dropped out of Lowery's world. He'd been waiting and painting and painting and waiting. And now, just as he's being seen for what he was. Look what she's gone and done. What did it matter to him that the Tate had bought a picture? His mother was dead at work. Lowry wandered about, asking rhetorically, rhetorically, what is the left?

And later, in his 80s. He was to say, painting's a wonderful way of getting rid of the days. Now, Lowry never had a girlfriend and he never married. Some of his landscapes do, though, include a hidden erotic beauty that he may or may not have understood. Let's have a look at the next slide.

And you catch on. A landmark, 1936. Well, what do you see?

Well, well, I see the bottom. The curve of a woman's bottom in the lower part of the picture. And above it I see a breast. So do you. And where the nipple would be?

Well, I have read that this is a phallic monument. Well, that's one way of putting it. To me, it looks like a small dick, determinedly erect, but totally out of proportion to these vast female forms of nature. These are forms of nature, and they are forces of nature.

This little dick will get nowhere in use. It will be swallowed up. It is likely that the only part naked female form Lowry had seen was his mother. He tended her bedsores. The female form in his mind was mysterious, unknowable, and powerful. Plant what you like on the top.

Here's another one. House on the Moor. 1950. 14 years later. And the same earth goddess green. And the house is wrapped in the female form. Tiny phallic chimneys valiantly smoking. The lake. 1951.

If that's not a vagina, I don't know what is. Well, look at it. Larry told his friend Monty Bloom that he was thinking of putting a mill chimney bang in the middle. Wonder why?

And then he said you didn't want to do it because the art critics would start calling him Salvador Lowery. I don't believe that we open up art any of it. Writing music, visuals, performance by using the blunt tools of biography and biology. There's a story to be sure and insights to be had. But when? When the hello magazine fascination is done, what are we left with? We're left with what we're looking at.

And when I look at Lowery, I'm drawn back to two writers the similarly strange, unmarried, careful of their privacy, clever in their curation of who they were.

Jane Austen and Emily Dickinson. Jane Austen lived right through the Napoleonic Wars and never wrote about them. Emily Dickinson, the so-called spinster of Amherst, Massachusetts, used illness more productively than Lowry's mother because while she got out of the hateful household duties and silly social rounds in order to occupy the corner room of the family home, she did it so that she could write. And that was what they did. Austin Dickinson, both of them not wild and in the world. Like the Brontes, they managed their tiny patch of life and claimed it with such passion and knowing that we know them now. Or so we think. In fact, we know their work, and no circumstances of their lives will ever unlock. Why them and not another? With Lowry his small tether. Round and round.

Tramping the streets, collecting rents. Living with his parents until both died, working until he retired, even though he didn't have to do that financially. Taking the bus or the tram into Manchester most days. And as he had more money and more time taking a taxi, sometimes in his carpet slippers to see friends miles away. The Lake District ones. There are many millions of men tied with a small tether. Millions of women doing tiny rounds of limited life. They're not artists. So what happens when someone has an inside so much bigger than their outside? Oh, it happens,I think. Portrait of Anne, 1957 Larry had many fans in his life not called an but fulfilling the an Function. His paintings of this woman, not woman, are closer to the Rossetti drawings that Lowry loved and later collected, hanging half a dozen in his bedroom. Lowry's worship and I think that is the right word. Of the Pre-Raphaelites and their beautiful women with abundant hair is part of his goddess infatuation. These women cannot be claimed, he said of the Pre-Raphaelites. These are not real women. These are dreams.

That's Dante Gabriel Rossetti. Prosser pin. Did these dreams help Lowry get through what he always called the battle of life? It's the title of a sentimental novella by Charles Dickens and likely read by. Or to Lowry. It's his mother's kind of thing. It's really awful. But what Lowry saw every day and painted every day was exactly that the battle of life. People doing their best to feed themselves and their children. Just putting one big foot in front of another. The beauty that Lowry saw and painted is far from the beauty of the Pre-Raphaelites. Yet what they saw nourished him. He found his female other in unusual ways, often helping and supporting young women artists at a time when women in the art scene were there to make tea and have sex. But when Lowry died, what came to light were not just previously unseen and portraits, but drawings made over a period of years of women in sexualised fetish outfits distorted and disabled, some in torture positions. Here's a couple. You've seen them turn them upside down. As this was the 1970s. A lot of attention was paid to this hidden part of the Lowrey story. Some critics, some writers have argued that it's this tortured sexuality that makes him an artist. It's a very male thing to say.

We don't know if he was tortured. It doesn't seem to have been. He was old, eccentric in some ways. He never grew up, and it appears that he was autistic. But as we now know, and it's recent knowledge, autism is a spectrum disorder. Is it even a disorder? I think it's a reorder. It affected how Lowery engaged with the world and

how he engaged with people. He was intense, but always formal. He was kind, but he could be impatient. Autism is not just genetic. Nothing is. Genes can be switched on and switched off. Our genes are not a story that has been written. They are a story in progress. Lowry's life experiences, his mother in particular, forced an introverted boy deeper into himself. And of course, his mother had wanted a girl, and she made no secret of it ever to anyone all the time. And Lowry looked after his mother in a way that is usual for daughters, and not at all usual for sons.

If Lowry had had a secret cross-dressing habit, it would not be such a surprise. I'm sure he didn't. Or maybe he did on the inside. I am sure that his puzzlement about femaleness was also a spectrum disorder or reorder. His protectiveness, his care, his willingness to help extended to all the women in his life. There's ample record of that. He liked women as friends, and he got on with them. His devotion to those beautiful Rossetti women was profound. His unconscious produced landscapes where the female curve is powerful and celebrated. And then there are the private drawings.

But must everything be a version of The Jeremy Kyle Show? And although Mark Zuckerberg has told us that privacy is an anachronism, and although data gathering aka mass surveillance depends on exposing everything that we do, where we go, who we know, what we see, what we buy, what websites we browse, innocent and not. I do not accept that model of human. So beautiful.

Mother and child, 1957. A painting of such sadness. An an image. The huge feet. Look at her feet and the boy's tiny legs and feet are. There's the only tiny feet in a lorry. Apart from on the dogs is the child Lowri, with the eroticism and red mouthed mother who makes no contact with him. Poor child, whoever it is. His yellow okra jersey, his only hope. The an drawings and the mannequins are connected there. What Lowery can't have perhaps what he wants to punish.

Perhaps something to do with the way his mother punished him, making him her captive, tight bound to him, hurting him, dressing him in ridiculous girls clothes as a young child. He loved his mother, but she kept him as a child. Emotionally. Sexually. You know those dirty drawings? A school boy, graffiti done with the skill of an artist. The kind of thing Lowry would have seen on public toilet walls all over Manchester. The drawings are not the best of him. They're not his legacy. They are a look behind

what he chooses to show to the public. But that does not make them a deeper truth than what he did choose to show.

He doesn't make them a deep truth at all, and we know he never threw anything away. He was always saying, he's about to have a bonfire and burn the lot. I'm going to burn the lot, but really, he kept the lot. Maybe these drawings were arousing. Maybe they released him in different ways. It doesn't matter. They don't make him more or less of an artist. To me, it's more to the point that he slept among the Rossetti's. Once his mother had died. Those were the women he saw first thing in the morning and last thing at night.

Larry. Self-Portraits, 1925 and 1938. I said that I do not believe biography and biology are sufficient explanations for how art happens, and that's partly because humans have made visual art since someone came home to the cave after a day's hunting and stuck a stick in the fire, cooking or burning the bison, and drew the bison on the cave wall. At that second, humans became more than biology.

Symbolic life begins. Symbolic life is when you watch the sun rising and you wonder what vast creature is pushing it uphill. When you tell a story about the man in the moon, when you recognise yourself as more than something made of meat, predator

or prey. And in our world now, we are regressing to a crude self-image of predator or prey. Winners and losers. The inner life, the life that creates symbols to express itself

is under threat. The outer life depends on status and acquisition. It depends on stimulus constant. Thanks to the smartphone stimulus. Dopamine hits from whatever is outside of you, from whatever is not you.

In galleries, people take selfies of photographs and paintings. What would happen

if they just looked at them? I suppose it might cause some kind of mental breakdown. But isn't a painting on the outside too? Well, yes it is. It's like the book you're reading. Or the theatre show. But what happens with art is that it doesn't leave you there on the outside of life. Art is a portal back into the self.

And this isn't solipsism or narcissism. Who am I? Why am I here? How can I find meaning?

These are questions that first and foremost are symbolic questions. Though responding to them will affect your life in practical ways. And religion sets out to answer these questions. And for millennia, art was in the service of religion.

And that wasn't problematic for the art or the artist, because for all its horrors and failures, religion accepts without question that life has an inside as well as an outside, that we live symbolically as well as practically. Its man shall not live by bread alone. It's the kingdom of heaven is within you. Secular art goes on doing the same symbolic work for our souls. It's not dogmatic, though. It's not creed, but it is a place of renewal and return.

Historically, the gatekeepers of art have been white men. Class and gender have been the landmines planted deliberately to blow up those not wanted on the journey. If biography and biology can't explain art, biography and biology can explain art criticism, connoisseurship, the Western canon. Why my Oxford English degree course From Beowulf to Beckett had only four women on the syllabus, and Virginia Woolf was not one of them.

Women painters have had a worse time than so-called Sunday painters like Lowry, and how the art world sneered when they discovered he'd been a working man all his life? That's why his paintings have no shadows. He paints by electric light. Imagine.

But Larry, figures don't need shadows. They come from the shadows, from the vast, unnamed army of working class people whose labour poured the money into the shining achievements of industrialisation of Western civilisation. These are the people nobody sees in the factories, in the basements, in the laundries, in the dark kitchens, in the offices at 2 a.m., hoovering up. They are the shadows.

Larry was so ahead of himself. Working class culture hadn't hit the world when he painted Sheila Delaney, 1959 A Taste of Funny Our Manchester Girl. John Osborne, 1956 looked Back in Anger Joe Orton Joan Littlewood she moved to Manchester in 1934 and later built her theatre down in London. Stratford East, dedicated to working class stories and women's stories. And not… because this had to be some tedious docudrama of how they live, but to find the vital life, the symbolic life so often shut it down, shut out. Coronation Street started like that. The world's first and longest running soap, it was created as a slice of working class life, but this life was vibrant,

eloquent. Those early have you seen them? The early Coronation Street ones. The dialogue there is as good as Pinter. This life had value beyond the money it created for others. And that's what Lowry saw before anybody else. And that's what he painted. The snobbery and the brutal personal attacks were typical of the class system in this country. God knows I've had enough of them myself. As Lowry got older and the landscape around him changed. He stripped the backgrounds from his figures. Now he's waiting for Godot. But Sam Beckett fitted the bill multilingual, lived in Paris, wrote in French when he didn't have to. Lowry didn't fit the bill.

And even when the public were queuing round the block to see the pictures or to buy them, one woman coming down to that Sotheby's sale with £60,000 in a handbag because she said she didn't think they'd take cheques from people like her. Even then, Larry was never an insider. The art establishment covered him in labels. Anything to explain him away.

He carried on painting, biography and biology won't turn you into an artist, but biography and biology can turn you away from being an artist. Just as biography and biology will say to an audience, this is not for you.

Lowry wasn't having any of it. He defied his mother. He defied his background. He defied his allotted place in this world. He defied his detractors.

His life on the outside was one of conformity. Nothing ever happened. It was Groundhog Day every day But his life on the inside was a vivid volcanic explosion painted by electric light. There's a little clip here. The receiver in the road to your failure, Mr. Lowry. The fact I was all too many pictures here on that.

And he said, give him 20 years for foolishness. I have nothing else to do. You know.

I've three times tried to stop him, though. After my mother died in 1939, I stopped about three months and said, if I don't get somebody, I'll go mad.

But he always said that his recognition came too late, and perhaps for him it did. But he couldn't see. He couldn't see that it came too late because he himself had arrived too early. Okay.

Thanks.

All right. Thank you. Thank you. I know it's Manchester. It's Saturday night. We all want to drink. I know, I know, but we've got just a few minutes for the Punch and Judy part. And so if anybody wants to ask a quick, quick question, do remember no monologue, man. And just keep it. Keep it short and sweet because they'll throw us out in a minute. I think we've got some roving microphones, but I don't know where they are. So if the spirit moves, you let it move, you know? I think, oh, there's a, there's a lady there and I'll come. Yeah. And there's a lady there. Yeah. I'll come to you first, ma'am, and then I'll come to you. It's you. What about his empty paintings?

You've just mentioned Beckett, and he had those. Wonderful. You had one at the beginning. Yeah, yeah, the MTC paintings. He loved the coast. I think it's again, we're back into the mysterious feminine, aren't we? That he just loved to watch. Watch the waves and brood over them. And he got quite angry sometimes if people that some of the, some of his prodigies students were sketching all the time when he just wanted to watch, watch the water, there's so much to him. And you know, because you're here, you've got this fantastic collection here at the Lowry Centre and you can come and spend your days looking at all the different versions of him, and I hope you will.

Let's try over here. How do you remember how young you were the first time you went to the accident scene? Do I remember how young I was when I first went to the Haworth Art Gallery in Accrington? Yeah. How? With art gallery in Accrington. Yeah, I went there a lot because, um, the person who was supposed to be the God was always asleep. And so and it was a beautiful arts and crafts building. It really was. And so was kids at that point, for strange reasons. We were living near there. So my granddad had a house near there.

So when I was little, I used to go up there quite a bit just to play in the park and go in the house and the God it was, you know, it was just so relaxed. Um, negligent actually, because we were just allowed to roam around and look at everything. We could just smash the place to smithereens, but we didn't. So it was nice because there's kids a bit, a bit, a bit. What really, um, was happening at the Whitworth, um, with Maria Balshaw just making it friendly for children because, you know, if you get children in early to see paintings. And Lowry's fantastic, isn't it?

Because kids think, oh, I could do that like they do with lots of Picasso's. Um, I can paint it and put it on the fridge. And we should say, yes, you can. You paint it and put it on the fridge? Um, because that makes the connection which kids naturally have, um, with art of all kinds. You know, there's no child yet born on this planet that doesn't want to paint a picture, that doesn't want to sing a song, do a little dance. Um, tell me a story and I'll tell it back to you. You know, toys make a kingdom out of pots and pans. That's the whole way. Creative human spirit. Send him to school. And they say, oh, no, it's elitist. Will knock that out of you. And then? Then they talk about art like a middle class pursuit you can only do on a rainy afternoon. Well, they haven't been to Manchester, but we've always got to be aware of the line, the lot of lies in the world now. But it's a lie that creativity isn't there in every human child, and that all we have to do is put them in the way of it and then good times begin. I think I won't take the second one. Oh, but then, of course, you know, I did go in 1971 with my dad to that. I don't know why we got the Lowry touring exhibition, but we did. And because we'd seen the documentary, some of which, Have you seen that was on Granada TV. Because there were only three channels then, remember? Um, we thought we'd go. Mrs. Winterson did not go because she didn't like modern art. Didn't like any art. I mean, we did have some of, you know, this. We did have some pictures at home that had been left to her by a dead uncle.

They were really innocuous watercolours and rather nice, but. So she had to hang them because that was filial piety. So she hung them on, on, on the the pictorial book back to front.

So all you could see was brown paper and tacks. And she didn't realise how modern her modern art was. You know, she should have just left us with the watercolours. Graven images, you see, forbidden in Leviticus. So I think, I think we should call it a night because it's just coming up to 9:00 and it remains for me only to, well, have two things to do. The first thing is to thank the Lowry Centre. It's their 25th anniversary and my God, they've worked hard to keep this place going for you. Um, it's a wonderful place, and I hope that you will use it to its utmost and show everybody is not lucky enough to live in Manchester. You know what you've got and why you want it. So thank you. 25 years of the Lowry Centre and for bringing me. And thank you to all of you. You could have been dressed up as a nun. That's the men. I've seen loads of loads of men dressed up as nuns tonight. Ladies, you could have been

dressed as cowgirls. There's all sorts of things you could have done in Manchester on a Saturday night that you didn't do. Thank you. Thank you for coming. And thank you for spending this time with with Lowry. Good night.