

ANSWERING TO A



HIGHER POWER

For Tolü Makay, the local Pentecostal church in Tullamore was community, social life, refuge and musical education. This is where she learned to perform. Now, as her debut EP, *Being*, is released, she talks about faith, shyness, and finding another religion in music



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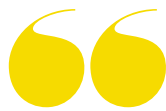
Singing a powerful song

Singing has always followed me,” says Tolū Makay, Nigerian-born Irish singer who has just released her debut EP, *Being*. “My mom, she said she could tell when I was happy or sad, depending on when I was singing. It was the way I expressed myself. You need to understand how shy I was,” she adds with a laugh. “I couldn’t talk! Even within the family, I was very shy. I used to say I had teeth like Nanny McPhee. Going through primary school and secondary school, I used to talk like this,” – she puts her hand in front of her mouth (we’re Zooming), covering it so that I can see only her nose and eyes – “and this was how I laughed. That was already me blocking myself... Those were things that I had to unlearn gradually.”

Knowing this makes listening to Tolū singing all the more amazing. She has a voice that is pure and true and filled with years of experience that, still in her early 20s, she couldn’t possibly have lived, and yet the echo is there (one of her teachers used to say, “you have such an old soul”). There are hints of Nina Simone, Amy Winehouse, Billie Holiday, Beyoncé.

Tolū may be young in years but it has been a remarkable journey for her to get to this point. *Being*, she says, is about “taking account of my life and my journey. It was a gift to myself, and to people that are like me. Motivating people to realise that if you don’t have faith in yourself, you’re not going to go far.”

Tolū moved here from Nigeria when she was five. “My dad brought me and my younger brother. My mum was already here with my younger sister; I don’t know how long my mum was here before us – she was in Direct Provision for a few years. But she wanted us to be comfortable, so she got herself situated by the time we got to Ireland.” The family lived first in Wexford, then Waterford; eventually they settled down in Tullamore, and Tolū went to various different schools. “My mum wanted to see where I would



I was a really shy kid. I didn't have a voice. I didn't know how to speak up for myself, and when you're like that, bullying happens. I was very shut down. I didn't sing for years

do best. My childhood feels like constant change, going from one place to another just to see where we fit in, where we could have a place to call home.”

Amid the moving, the local


Pentecostal church was a constant; a fixed point. “It was more than a church,” Tolū says. “It was a family, a community, a place to go. My life was structured with religion in it. Mondays were prayer meetings at the house. Sunday was church, Saturday was choir rehearsal, Friday was night vigils, Wednesday was something else...”

The church was also a musical education. “That’s my earliest memory of singing, with the choir. But after a while, I stopped, because it was a mandatory thing, and if it’s a thing I’m forced to do, I’m not going to enjoy it.”

As a child, Tolū had no real idea of how exceptional her voice is. “You don’t really realise it until somebody outside that family circle tells you. So I was about 10 and there was a lady, a voice coach, and she came into school to teach. She asked all of us to sing *Happy Birthday* individually, and it came to my turn and I sang and she said, ‘Oh my god, wow, your voice...’ and I was like, ‘What? It’s just *Happy Birthday*...!’”

And yet, Tolū stopped singing for several years. Partly because she stopped going to the church choir, perhaps more because of unhappy times at secondary school. “I went to boarding school for two years. I didn’t like it there. I was a really shy kid. I didn’t have a voice. I didn’t know how to speak up for myself, and when you’re like that, bullying happens. I was very shut down. I didn’t sing for years.”

The school, for some unknown reason, “instead of using my first name, they used Elizabeth. So I felt very detached...” Tolū says. When I ask why the school would do such a thing, she shrugs. “It was easier.” By which she means, it was an easier name to say. But it wasn’t her name. “Being a kid, not having my own voice, I accepted it. I didn’t say anything against it but when I left and went into Tullamore College, I made sure to let people know my name is Tolū.



Singer Tolū Makay; “I’m always trying to understand ‘why?’ I’m kind of like the silent watcher”



With Nigerians, our name is a very important aspect to our being; of who you are, who you're going to become. My full name means 'All Glory Be To God' and 'Don't be in a rush for wealth'."

Tullamore College is where she began to shine. "Until my brother came in, I was the only black kid in the entire school. But honestly, that college, it was so accepting, it challenged everyone equally in how we accept people. That was the first time I felt welcome. I made friends, friends I still have. I was able to express myself a lot more. And I started doing [singing] competitions."

Why, and how, does she think she found a way to break out of her shyness? "In Tullamore, a lot of the black families, I think, found community within ourselves. If my mum wasn't around, I knew that I could go to my aunty – I mean a female family friend. I knew that no matter where I was, I was OK and someone was looking after me. The church was a really huge aspect of my life as well, that was another community I could rely on. I was singing in the choir willingly from the age of about 14, because I found my faith in Christianity and that really gave me some form of purpose.

"Finding religion and singing in church," she continues, "it wasn't just singing; it was about the passion, the connection I had with spirituality. Having a gift that made other people connected to God; realising I had that gift gave me more reason to sing, and that opened up my confidence."

At the age of 15, Tolū was made assistant to the head choir mistress. She learned how to be in front of an audience. "It taught me how to perform without me knowing what performance was," she says. "I was so connected to what I was singing, because of the message it held and because of how I wanted to relate to other people. Understanding that element of performance definitely helps me in connecting with how I write my songs now, and the way I sing and perform, for other people to relate to my singing. If you don't believe in what you're singing »

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» how are other people going to believe it?”

After school, Tolū moved to Galway, to study psychology and philosophy at NUIG. “I was curious about the human mind and human behaviour and why we act the way we do. I know from myself, I’m quite introspective about anything that happens. I’m always trying to understand ‘why?’ – I’m kind of like the silent watcher,” she laughs. “That’s me.”

In Galway, she joined a church and sang in the choir there, and then, in 2016, she entered a national gospel competition, *Treasure Unravelled*. “I won that,” she says, “Happy! What came with that was a different side of music, one I didn’t know. I got a one-year management contract; they help you release a track. That was very professional. Having to learn how to write and produce my own songs. I was able to go around Ireland and sing in different churches; that was part of the contract. That made me realise this could be a full-time thing. Before, it was just me singing because I love singing. Because it made me feel so happy. It really nourished me as a person – that’s why; not for money or notice or for people to see me. But realising there was actually an organisation to help me, for other people to hear my voice, that’s when I started looking at music differently.”

By this stage, Tolū was in her last year at NUIG, combining studying with singing and travelling to churches. She also broke up with her partner of three years, “I was like... sh*t! I was by myself, on my own...” These things interfered with her studying to the point where she thought she’d fail her final exams. “The last semester, I wasn’t even in class. But I got a 2:1. I thought, ‘If I hadn’t let this break-up upset me, I could have got a 1:1! I was so upset about that!”

It was enough to get her into Trinity, for a two-year post-grad in psychology, but she couldn’t keep going with it. “Thank god for SUSI [Student Universal Support Ireland] because my mom wasn’t able to afford my college life, so

SUSI helped in that regard. I got the full one for four years so I didn’t have to work to pay my rent for the first year of the post-grad.” In the second year, however, “I was working part-time, in college full-time, doing music full-time... It was too much. I had to drop out.”

In 2019 she went to work in Accenture, and then Google. She also released two tracks, *Reflection* and *Goodbye*, a gorgeous soul anthem that is a timely reminder “to let go of the negative people or energy around you”. The response, she says, “was really good. *Goodbye* has 800,000 streams on Spotify.”

And yet, that was a tough time. “Even though I had got the job [at Google], I knew within myself I didn’t feel fulfilled or happy. The money is amazing, but it taught me that money isn’t what will bring me joy. To a certain extent,” she laughs, agreeing that, “lack of money doesn’t bring joy either. At first it was, wow, people rejoicing around you, but within yourself you feel so numb. That was a year of numbness, and trying to figure out what the hell it is I wanted. I had two episodes where I just kind of broke down mentally.”

What brought this on? “I was doing too much. I was having three or four hours sleep each night because I was working, trying to record music, rehearsing with my band... On top of that, I had an iron deficiency. I didn’t know I was burnt out.” And so she decided to “try music at least for a year”. She saved as much as she could, left the corporate world, and moved home to Tullamore. The result so far is the exquisite *Being*.

Live music has been one of the worst-hit industries through the Covid-19 pandemic, and the arguments around this have been largely economic. But for Tolū, it’s far more than that. “When I sing in church, it feels like heaven just opens. When I perform, it’s the same feeling. Which is why it hurts that there are no gigs, because of Covid-19. I’ve been doing some live streams, being part of Irish Women In Harmony, doing collaborations, but if you only sing to a camera, you’re not experiencing the transference of



Tolū pictured onstage. Singing in church taught her how to perform ‘without knowing what performing was’

energy in a room. You have to look within yourself, and when you do that, it takes out so much from you, energy-wise.”

These days, Tolū’s relationship with the church is more distant, but her sense of spirituality is intact. “I still respect the church. My background with Christianity and religion, that’s what formed my morality, my sense of justice. That gave me a very good balance of understanding what it means to love your neighbour as you love yourself. Those are very important, integral things I’ve taken away from religion. But the type of person I am, being very inquisitive, I want more depth. I want more understanding. So with that, I had to step away from the church. I took a step back and started singing my own songs, about my own experiences. But I still have the same sense of spirituality, the same sense that there is a higher power that I don’t understand. Because when I sing, I still feel that.” ●

“It wasn’t just singing; it was about the passion, the connection I had with spirituality

Find Tolū Makay’s music, including her EP *Being* on Spotify and Apple Music; Instagram: @tolu_makay



‘Life is not a movie, baby’

Sharon Stone has led a dramatic life – so much so that being struck by lightning is a minor chapter in her gripping new memoir. In this emotional interview, she talks about a childhood of poverty and abuse; her strained relationship with her mother; and her MeToo experiences in Hollywood

Words by
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Photography by
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CPI Syndication

It’s St Patrick’s Day when I interview Sharon Stone, and this turns out to be a good thing, because her Irish identity (she’s from a family of immigrants from Galway, who settled in Pennsylvania) turns out to be, not just important from a ‘belonging’ point of view, but also a fascinating kind of psychological behavioural shorthand.

“I’m so happy to talk to somebody Irish,” she says, over Zoom, “because only Irish people know that we scream at each other, and then tell each other we love each other. You scream and cry for a couple of days, then you’re all, ‘We’re OK again,’ and everyone else is like, ‘What’s wrong?’ Nothing’s wrong, we’re good now. We’re Irish!” She says it like it’s a touchstone, a piece of something solid in an otherwise shifting, chaotic world: *We’re Irish, this is what we do.*

Read her new book, *The Beauty of Living Twice*, and this will make more sense: there’s been a lot of chaos in her world – touchstones are important.

Sharon Stone projects the kind of self-possessed, sophisticated, golden self-confidence that makes her seem like she came from money. When we first said our hellos on Zoom and I admired the beautiful

flowers in a vase behind her, she said, “They’re from Prince Albert. I’d just like to brag a little, because it makes me feel fancy; even though it’s not a fancy relationship because I’ve known him for a thousand years. He’s like my stepbrother,” she says. “At dinner parties, we eat off each other’s plates because we never like the same food, so we’re, like, ‘You eat this and I’ll eat that, and they’ll think that we ate it.’”

Much as I love this – the idea of Prince Albert and Sharon Stone coming together, in a Jack-Sprat-and-his-wife kind of relationship, to hoodwink ‘them’ over the matter of dinner – and seamlessly as it fits with the kind of background befitting a Hollywood A-lister, the reality is oh-so different.

The Beauty of Living Twice is an astonishing read. Partly because it is very well written (I’m not a bit surprised when Sharon says she’s written “so many” short stories, poems and songs), but mainly for the many dramas of her life.

Second of four children; what she calls “kitchen-sink Irish,” rather than “lace-curtain”, she comes from, as she describes it, the kind of poverty many of us still have trouble believing exists in America.

Her mother, Dot, was brought up in “the »

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» kind of hillbilly Depression-era poverty that made America into the greedy America it is today.” When she was five, Dot’s father began to beat her badly – with berry-bush branches – and abuse her, so that she was sent to live with a couple for whom she became cook, laundress, grocery-shopper, all at the age of nine. At 16, Dot married Joe Stone, Sharon’s father, who was from a rich oil-drilling family who lost all their money, so that Joe, as a child, for a time lived “in people’s barns, in their horse stalls, so they could work for food and blankets.”

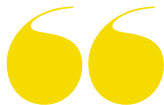
Sharon and her siblings may not have been as poor as their parents, but they were far from rich. Their upbringing was tough, and strict. As a child, Sharon was slapped, and made to sit at the kitchen table all night as punishment. There wasn’t much affection, but there was loyalty and a strong sense of unity.

“They did a horrible, beautiful, awful, amazing job with us,” she writes. And later: “We came from poverty and violence... We were tough, we were Irish, we looked richer than we were... We had pride, if nothing else.”

The drama didn’t stop in childhood. She was struck by lightning; had her neck cut almost through (a 14-inch gash) while breaking a wild horse as a teen; an abortion when she was just 18, after which she bled badly for days, but couldn’t tell anyone. Later: three miscarriages, all at five-and-a-half months; a gamut of MeToo encounters; extensive surgery to remove benign tumours from both breasts; and in 2001, a brain bleed that very nearly killed her, and left her unable to walk, unable to read for two years, with damaged hearing and black holes of memory.

She delivers all of this in the book in a way that is almost deadpan – events that might have earned a page in anyone else’s book, merit just a line in this.

Was it difficult to revisit all this, for the book, I ask? “F**k yes. It’s like pulling your brain through a sieve,” she laughs, adding, “and then all of sudden you’re supposed to explain it to people, and it’s »



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» like... 'Ok, well my family's nuts. My family's insane, and you're going to see more of that as it comes to press...'"

Are her family OK with the book being published? "Well," she says, "you have an Irish family, so you know... They're OK with it, and then they're Irish. They're so into it, and they get so OK, and then they get Irish. They're being Irish right now."

What does that mean? "They're all over the kitchen right now. They did that thing of, 'Write the book, you gotta write the book. This is the greatest thing ever!' And then they didn't want to read the book. I read the book to my mother, and then I re-wrote the book putting her things in it, and then she's OK, but it's not like... How do I put this? It's too late for her to unwind that road."

Sharon's relationship with her mother is vivid and painful and evolving. She writes movingly about her mother's difficulties in showing affection. Dot was an impressive homemaker, who taught Sharon how to cook, clean, sew, bake, garden, put on make-up.

"If I sassed her, she slapped me into the next week... I grew to hate her," she writes. "Not only for that but for her coldness."

Her struggle to understand her mother, to connect with her and be loved by her, are a constant through the book.

"It's like I tried to explain to her the other day that the people she was living with when she was nine were using her like a slave," Stone says now. "Buying groceries and cooking dinner and making the beds and cleaning house, walking two miles to school, and not being paid, is child servitude and it's not OK for any kid, ever."

"And she was like, 'I got paid.' I said, 'What do you mean?' 'How do you think I bought my coat?' And... That's a really complicated mindset. She got a nickel to take the bus to school in the morning, and she didn't take the bus. She walked the two miles and saved her nickels, and bought a coat. A kid should have a coat. A kid that's your slave should have a coat. You know." Stone's eyes are red and she is crying a little.

"Taking care of her for these



Clockwise from top: Actor and philanthropist Sharon Stone (Photograph: Michael Muller); In an iconic scene from 1992's *Basic Instinct* (Photograph: TriStar); with Elton John and then Secretary of State Hillary Clinton at a charity banquet in Washington in 2012; winning a best actress Emmy for her role in *The Practice* in 2004

decades that I've taken care of her, is something she can't acknowledge," she says. "I say, 'Mom, I put money into your account every month', and she goes... [Stone turns her face abruptly away] She won't hear that I put money into her account, that I've got her back, that she's safe, that she can have a better life than the one she's choosing. The best she can come up with is, 'I'll throw the money out the f**king window.'"

So does she not spend the money that Stone gives her? "She does, but in a frugal and not particularly healthy fashion. She'll support my knucklehead brother who won't get a job. I say to my mother, 'Don't send me thank-you notes, tell me that you love me: give me a hug.' It's not a system that she can relate to. She can't relate to: 'Please just love me, give me a hug,' because 'love' is not what you do. You write a thank-you note. And it's hard to accept, at 63, that none of these efforts will ever be able to let my mother feel free to just love."

I say that I felt like, in the book, there were moments where she and Dot reached this place of understanding. "There were moments where I felt there was that little hand peeking out through the... and I really felt that I got to touch it. But life is not a movie, baby. And then your therapist says, 'Stop trying to get hugs from somebody who doesn't have arms...' And you cry, and go to bed for a couple of days," – she is properly crying now – "and then you get up and get back to it. And you realise that breaking the chain is breaking the chain with you, and you go around and snuggle your own kids." Stone has three adopted sons, aged 14, 15 and 20.

Why did she want to write this book? "Like many things in life, I'm not really sure we decide. I almost feel like life comes at you, and it's with how much integrity you meet life. As you can see from the book, I get set some pretty big challenges. I just decided, OK, now's the time to take that challenge. I felt like I was ready."

But let's go back a bit to where she began. Sharon was always beautiful – none of the gawky



Make-up artists tell me it's gotten better; that men have stopped taking their penises out in the make-up chair – yay! Things do change with the temperament of the times. Maybe they become more concealed? I don't see prostitutes on set any more

ugly-duckling stuff for her – and was a county beauty queen while at school, as well as an exceptional student, fast-tracked to college. She went to New York, to model, and found her way to Eileen Ford, who, she writes, said: "She would like to throw me down the flight of stairs I had just come up and bounce the fat off of my ass. But that she would take me."

In the end, she went with Wilhelmina Cooper.

She got cast as an extra in Woody Allen's *Stardust Memories*, and then had that bumped up to a small part. She moved to Hollywood, made a few forgettable movies, had a few tiny roles in better ones, then got her break as Arnold Schwarzenegger's secret-agent wife in *Total Recall*.

Then, aged 32, after 18 movies, she got cast as Catherine Tramell in *Basic Instinct*. Not that it was as simple as that – 12 other actresses were offered the part, and turned it down. Only then was it offered to Sharon. And after all that, when the film was made and edited, she claims now that the first she knew of 'that shot' was at a screening full of agents and lawyers.

Up to that point, she had, apparently, been told: "We can't see anything – I just need you to remove your panties, as the white is reflecting the light."

So what happened next? "That was how I saw my vagina-shot for the first time," she writes. "Yes, there have been many points of view on this topic, but since I'm the one with the vagina in question, let me say: the other points of view are bullshit."

First, she went to the projection room and slapped director Paul Verhoeven across the face. Then she called her lawyer. She had some decisions to make – take out an injunction and prevent the film being released? Get her union, the Screen Actors Guild, involved?

In the end, "I thought and thought and I chose to allow this scene in the film. Why? Because it was correct for the film and for the character, and because, after all, I did it."

Elsewhere in the book, she writes about being pressured to sleep with a co-star, and a director who left her to sit on set all day

and wouldn't direct her because she refused to "sit in his lap". There's even a section where she describes the reconstruction that followed the surgery to remove tumours from her breasts – the cosmetic surgeon, she says, decided "that I would look better with bigger boobs", and without consultation, simply gave her a cup-size larger, because they "go better with your hip size."

We don't get to talk about 'that' *Basic Instinct* shot specifically – there is so much to ask Stone – but we talk about MeToo generally, and whether conditions are improving within the entertainment industry.

"I don't know how it goes for everybody else," she says, "but some of the other women I have talked to tell me that it's never changed. Make-up artists tell me it's gotten better; that men have stopped taking their penises out in the make-up chair – yay! Things do change with the temperament of the times. Maybe they become more concealed? I don't see prostitutes on set any more. I don't notice that as much any more. But I certainly have seen loads of that."

It is astonishing, I muse, that wonderful art gets made from such squalid circumstances. "I don't know that wonderful art gets made from those circumstances," she says. "I would say that wonderful art does not get made when all that crap is going on. The wonderful directors – the Marty Scorseses, these people – they don't do that shit. They're not those people."

"When I went and worked with the great directors – maybe I was asked some questions: 'Do you want to have sex with this person or not? You need to let me know, so I can handle it.' But I was never put in a precarious situation on a good film. The situation doesn't really shift, but they handle it with a whole lot more factual aplomb."

"Someone will come in and they will ask you the basic questions: 'Do you want to sleep with your co-star? Do you want to do this, do you want that, do you want it like it this?' And you say: yes, no, maybe... There isn't the pressure on good films. There is not an »

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»expectation, I would say.” One of the most artful pieces of writing in the book is around sexual abuse, specifically, the sexual abuse of Sharon’s sister. “I was the witness, not the victim,” Sharon writes. “The little eight-year-old witness of my five-year-old sister being robbed of her innocence.”

Her grandfather was the abuser, enabled by his wife, who stood guard in the doorway: “My grandmother, who was beaten every day by the devil in the room, made a devil herself.” This was something she and her sister “never talked about it until we were in our late 20s and our mother was not there.” And the question Sharon asks right here is: “Why had she left us alone with a monster?” The answer? “Our mother later said she didn’t know about her father’s perverse behaviour...”

It is, I say now, a very hard thing to read. How has it been for her, to confront that? “I wouldn’t say I had the full picture even when I wrote the book,” she says, “but now that everybody under the sun is so interested, it forced everything to come to the surface for me. And as horrifying as that initially was for me – I don’t know why I picture it this way – but I picture it like you’re in a library, and one of the bookcases falls on you, and then they all go boom-boom-boom and it’s the nightmare you were imagining would happen. And all the books are everywhere and you’re laying on the ground and you think that it’s going to kill you. But, actually, the only thing that’s happened is that all the bookcases fell over and all the books are everywhere. And then you get up and you’re like, ‘Jesus! I never really thought that that could happen. I just kept trying to make it not happen. And now it happened, and it made a really big sound and it scared me a lot in the moment, but I’m OK.’”

And, she says, there have been unexpected benefits. “It occurred for me a couple of weeks ago, when the pressure got so much that I blew. I then came to in this new place, feet firmly on the ground, and I looked around me and it became clear to me, all these people around me; who was

bilking me, who was manipulating me, who was messing with my head; who was really my friend, who was really my family. And they’re not always the people related to you.”

She reads out a poem sent to her by a friend – *Allow*, by Danna Faulds – with the lines: *When loss rips off the doors of the heart, or sadness veils your vision with despair, practice becomes simply bearing the truth.*

And suddenly, she’s crying again. I don’t know if Stone is always this emotional – as well as crying, she laughs a lot – or if it’s because of the book and all it has stirred up, but she tells a story that might illuminate this a little.

I ask if it was difficult to access the childhood memories – many of which are remarkably vivid – so many years later, and she says: “I’ve had a lot of therapy. I’ve done many different types of therapy. I read the book on EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitisation and Reprocessing) and then I found the lady that invented it.

“I called her and she was retired and she said, ‘Go away.’ I told her there weren’t a lot of people like me, who’ve been trained to access my emotions so specifically and thoughtfully. And that I would drive to where she lived and rent a house. That I know a lot of people, and I have access to a tremendous amount of people even if I don’t know them, and that there must be three people she had really hoped to change their lives – to try this on – and that I would get her access to them. So we made a deal.

“I went and I worked with her for five days, night and day, and it was awesome and really helpful. And then I gave her access to the people she wanted.”

Stone won’t say who those people were, but really, the point of the story is more the idea of Stone being trained as a kind of emotional Navy Seal. Maybe that’s what great actors are?

But clearly, in her case anyway, it doesn’t come without a price. At one point I say that she seems like someone with a very developed sense of responsibility for others – not just when it comes to her humanitarian work (in 2013, she



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was awarded the Peace Summit Award, for her work with HIV/Aids sufferers), but also those around her.

“Well let’s call that co-dependent,” she says with a laugh. “Let’s call that what it is.” She adds: “I think of the work I’ve done in the world – it’s strong, solid work – but there’s a point where you have to leave it outside your door. And you have to let the people in your inner world... you have to have healthy relationships; relationships where people love you, you’re not just the gas station, and you’re not the bank. You have to cut that off and let people arrive as adults into your life.”

Time is up, but before we go, Stone says: “I’d like to ask you a question, because you’re in Ireland and because it’s St Patrick’s Day.” Of course, I say.

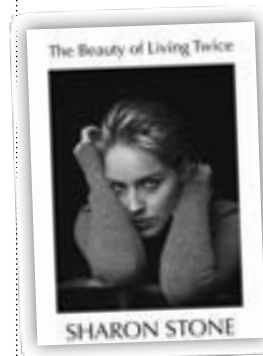
“Can you tell me more about the genuine meaning of St Patrick’s Day?” I scabble a bit, trying to remember my nine-year-old daughter’s homework, and say something about St Patrick working to unify Ireland spiritually.

“Well,” she says, “let us take a moment here today. This necklace that I’m wearing” – she leans forward and points to a silver pendant around her neck – “is from my ‘godmother’, Betty Williams” [Williams was the Northern Irish peace activist who, together with Mairéad Corrigan, founded Community of Peace People and was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1976; she died on St Patrick’s Day 2020].

“Betty gave it to me the last time I saw her – I came to visit her in Belfast just a couple of months before she passed away. I know that Betty’s real desire was unity and that’s what she hoped for. She hoped that the mothers would step forward and create unity.

“And I’d like, on her behalf, to suggest that we all just take a moment and remember St Patrick, and we remember Betty Williams, and Mairéad Corrigan and what they tried to do, and we as women and mothers take just a moment out of our day, and create a little bit more unity than we had before.”

It’s as good an exit line as any. ●



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