

TROUBLING IRELAND

Workmate
Dave Lordan

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She plays Farmville and pokes friends
on Facebook most of the day.

She scans a few sites for celebrity gossip-
the photos and headlines-

scrolling up and down independent.ie
every quarter of an hour or so.

At 15.10 she takes a break and lounges
for half an hour

with the other women on the scheme
eating brown soda with orange-and-duck-liver pate.

Then they sample black pudding
reheated from yesterday,

chomping fat and gut and gristle
over CSI, Dragon's Den, American Idol.

Each has something well worked-out
to say about the royal wedding.

Later on, closing in on 5pm- the goal-
she rises and jacks up the Korean office stereo

for Shakira, almost dancing
the way back to her chair.

She leaves max vol on
for the jingles and pitches

in the advertisements
for The Sound of Music in the Grand Canal Theatre,

for cut-price bananas,
for less-than-half-price toys,

two-for-one Rioja,
three mince-meats for a tenner,

for closing-down firesales
of repossessed furniture.

Some of these ads she has
autodidactically
learned

the dubbing of,
the how-to-hum-along-to

and when the DJ's billion-kilometre tongue flicks
through the speaker

and into the room
to put a question to his nation:

whether it is right to cut the benefits
of those who refuse a reasonable
offer of employment?

she damn near leaps from her desk with her very soul giving answer,
damn near levitates in an ecstasy with her arms and legs spread out,

damn near crashes through the roof, ascending
to the satellites
and the space debris

screaming

Yes, Yes, of course it is Yes,
Yes, of course it is, Yes.