



“Writer’s Studio” Q&A, Brown University. Screen capture of Zoom session by Doug Cumming.

Scholar-Practitioner Q & A . . .

An Interview with Dan Barry*

Tracy Breton
Brown University, United States

Doug Cumming
Washington & Lee University, United States

Dan Barry has been a writer at the *New York Times* since 1995, working as a city reporter, national reporter, sports reporter, and columnist. He has published several nonfiction books and won numerous awards for his *Times* stories, which he has filed from all fifty states. Barry has a gift for emotionally powerful stories about common people enmeshed in the news. In an essay that *Times* reporter Sarah Lyall published in March 2021 about what she has missed being exiled from the *Times* building for the past year, she wrote: “I miss how, no matter what time you leave the office, Dan Barry always seems to be at his computer, agonizing over another sentence. I miss the little fish in his little fishbowl who lived in one of the meeting rooms on the third floor.”¹

On February 8, 2021, Barry was featured in a Q&A “Writer’s Studio” for Brown University’s Nonfiction Writing Program. In a ninety-minute Zoom session with a score of undergraduates, six professors, and five of his former colleagues from the *Providence* (Rhode Island) *Journal*,² Barry answered questions led by Tracy Breton, one of those former colleagues and professor of the practice who leads the journalism portion of the Nonfiction Writing Program in Brown’s English Department.³

Barry explained the foundations of his approach to narrative nonfiction. One of these was his parents—a mother from Ireland who would ask him to

* Material from Brown University, Nonfiction Writing Program’s “Writer’s Studio,” Q&A interview with Dan Barry, February 8, 2021, used by permission.

mow the lawn by taking fifteen minutes to tell a story, and a father who was poor and unlucky in life, but smart, well-read, and funny. “I would say his default emotion was anger and a sense that the bullies had the upper hand in society.” Barry himself developed an enmity for bullies. “It’s hard to believe, looking at me now,” Barry says with characteristically self-effacing sarcasm, “but I used to be a scrawny kid who got beat up a lot.” And, finally, he credited the way his early ambitions as a “smart-alecky,” wannabe Hunter S. Thompson were humbled and matured by years of local daily news reporting, especially his four years at the *Manchester (Connecticut) Journal-Inquirer*. He also earned journalism degrees from St. Bonaventure University and New York University.

“Journalists, particularly journalists that are starting out, forget how much power they have over another person’s life or story,” he says. “When you start out, you forget that the name you’re typing into the computer is an actual human being, and it’s kind of easy to maintain that distance between a printed name and an actual human being. I think at least in my case, as I grew older, I had a much keener appreciation for the human being behind the name and being then very careful with the adjectives I would use . . . and also making sure that when people gave me the gift of their story that I treated it as such, that it was a fragile gift and that I did right by them in telling their story fairly and accurately.”

During the Zoom session, four particular stories came up for explanations of origin and craft. One of these was “Circle Line Somberly Views Altered Skyline” (2001),⁴ a poignant perspective on 9/11. Another was “The Lost Children of Tuam” (2017),⁵ which is about a woman who persisted in learning about babies buried in a Catholic home for unwed mothers. Another was “The Case of Jane Doe Ponytail” (2018),⁶ a co-written investigation into the life of an undocumented Chinese prostitute who fell to her death during a police raid. And finally, there was “The Epicenter” (2020),⁷ about two weeks and six characters at the early explosion of Covid-19 in Queens, an 11,450-word montage he and a colleague spent eight months working on, following the model of John Hersey’s *Hiroshima*, which itself was modeled on Thornton Wilder’s *The Bridge of San Luis Rey*.⁸

Here are those portions, edited for clarity:

Tracy Breton: Some of my favorite stories you’ve written about are those where you zig instead of zag—that’s the term that Jerry Lanson [Barry’s writing professor at New York University, who was in this Zoom session] taught me—you manage to find these angles or perspectives to report on that other reporters overlook. For example, the story you did about the corpse that you

found in New Orleans that was lying on the street,⁹ or after 9/11, you decided to go to the place where they were taking all the remains,¹⁰ and what the Circle Line was like after 9/11,¹¹ and the story about that little town in Upstate New York where the factory was getting shut,¹² which meant that the whole town was going to die [financially] as well. Are you always thinking in kind of universal themes like love and hate and loss and hope and resilience when you're seeking out stories, or are you just trying to find angles that no one else is writing?

Dan Barry: First, I studied under Jerry Lanson at NYU. He put up with me, that's for sure. Zigging instead of zagging, right. I don't like people. [Deadpan. Faint smile.] No. I don't like being in a media scrum, okay? I don't like being with others trying to do the same thing. Whenever I can, I break apart from the crowd. I'm always challenging myself to tell a story that might be familiar in a new way. An example of that is the Circle Line.

Less than a month after 9/11—those of you who were in New York at the time will remember—it was a profound sense of trauma, and disbelief, and *we'll never get past this*. If you remember, Graydon Carter [editor of *Vanity Fair* at the time] said it was the end of irony.¹³ Well, that didn't turn out to be the case. But it did feel like it was the end of something, and there were questions about whether New York would ever recover, and so, of course, slowly, the city began to.

So on the day of 9/11, I got into New York City. I live in New Jersey. I got into New York City by driving like a mad person to the Hudson River. I had to dump the car. I ran down a hill, and the Circle Line, which usually goes around Manhattan Island—it's a tourism attraction—now was ferrying people from Manhattan into New Jersey, including people who didn't live in New Jersey—they just needed to get the hell off the island. And so, 600 people would be on the Circle Line coming to Weehawken, and then it would go back, and there would be six people, the crew. And so I ran through the crowd as they were disembarking and asked the captain if I can get a ride over to Manhattan, and he said, "Knock yourself out." So I was on the Circle Line as it went back to Manhattan, and as we looked, it paused in the middle of the Hudson, waiting for a berth to open up, and you could see the funeral pyre down at the bottom of the island. And so, that's how I got into Manhattan.

The next few days were a blur, and then, a few weeks later, I'm trying to think of how to tell this story of Manhattan, how to tell the story of New York in a new way, and I remembered the Circle Line. And I checked, and they had just begun to resume their tourist attraction rides around the island. So, what's that like? They have to go past Lower Manhattan. They have to go past the Battery Park area. What are they saying? How do they incorporate in their patter, you know, what happened?

So I took that ride. It was twenty years ago that I wrote it, but what I remember most of all is that as the Circle Line was passing the smoke and what was called the Pile—and then became the Pit—there was a couple next to me, and they had been taking photographs a while and when they came to that moment in the ride, the gentleman put his camera down and he said it's too sacred to photograph. That's how my mind works. I can't help it. It's a fevered mind, but that's how my mind works—to look at what everyone is looking at, but in a different way. Try to find a way to tell it differently so that it becomes fresh again so that we don't become inured to someone blowing a hole in the bottom of Manhattan.

Olivia George (student): I was hoping you could chat a little bit about the story that you wrote on the mother and baby home in the west of Ireland. Specifically, I'm wondering just how you came across that story. I know your mother is Irish, but if you could talk a little bit about how you decided that was something you wanted to write about. And the second question, I was hoping you could chat about how you decided on the first sentence, "Behold a child." I mean, it's this big sprawling, intense story, and I'm just wondering, at what point in your writing and reporting process, that sentence that seems so simple and so powerful came to you as the place to start the story.

Barry: Thank you so much for even remembering the first three words. Right, my mother is from Ireland, from County Galway, and I've spent a lot of time in Ireland. Tuam is maybe 40 minutes from where my mother was born and spent her childhood. I read a lot about the case.

Ireland has been going through a real painful reckoning with its past for the last few years because, similar to the Magdalene Laundries that maybe you've heard about, beginning at the formation of the Republic of Ireland out from under British rule in the early 1920s, this new government was trying to figure out what to do with all sorts of issues, including social services. At the time, it was a heavily Catholic country, so what do you do with women who become pregnant out of wedlock? Well, you know, we have to hide them from the rest of us, because it's a shame; it's shameful. So, these institutions were set up where young women, oftentimes who were unwed and were pregnant, would go until they gave birth. It's a horrific thing. Not all of them were run terribly well, let's put it that way. In one institution, the death rate of these babies and young children was off the charts, and in this facility, which was a converted poorhouse dating from the 1850s, the nuns didn't know what to do with the bodies and, for whatever reason, they buried them in a retired septic system. They wrapped them in cloth and buried them in these tunnels beneath the facility that were once part of the septic system.

This became known because of one woman who didn't go to college. She was a local woman, and she was trying to do a feature story for the local historical magazine. She couldn't make sense of the numbers. Well, where did all these dead babies go? So that led her on this incredible journey of investigation where she determined that some 800 bodies, perhaps, were buried in the septic system.

I read a lot about it before going there, and I was, quite frankly, unimpressed with how this woman, Catherine Corless, was being presented. I didn't think she was coming across as fully realized. I wanted to know what motivated her. Why did she continue to pursue this even though the local newspaper was giving her a hard time, even though the local Catholic Church was giving her a hard time and lying to her, why does she keep going? And she agreed to talk to me. So the story, it's as much about this heroic woman as it is about the actual scandal itself.

As for the opening, "Behold a child," honest to God, I must have been taking hallucinogens. I don't know how that came. It seemed to me that I wanted to evoke a break in the sacred trust. I wanted to evoke something faintly biblical. You know, it sort of sounds a little like the Beatitudes. And I was trying to figure out how to begin it and, you know, you don't want to begin, "When Catherine Corless was seven years old, she . . ." I don't want to do that. I took a step back, and took a long walk, and then came up with that. I was very glad that the editor didn't cut it. You know, "Behold a child." Because it's about the children, it's about the loss of the innocent and the loss of a country to innocence in a way, right?

Marina Hunt (student): I have a few questions about the story that you wrote about Song Yang, which I spent maybe an hour reading. It was an incredible story to read. There are so many parts to it, so many different people involved, so many different angles into the life and death of this woman, and so I'm wondering how you began your reporting and then how you proceeded. And also, one specific thing I'm wondering about is how you structured the piece. How did you decide when to tell the reader that she had died? You wait a few sections before you arrive to that.

Barry: No. She dies in the beginning, doesn't she?

Breton: Can you explain what the story was about?

Barry: Sure. This story that Marina is referring to is about a woman named Song Yang, who was a Chinese immigrant who wound up working in the massage parlors in Flushing, Queens, not too far from "the Epicenter." That business had become such that women would stand out in the street and advertise for massages, which was really a cover for prostitution. There was nothing hidden about it. This entire street was taken over by this industry.

I got interested in it because one of the tabloids had written a brief story about it and the headline was something along the lines of “Fleeing Cops, Prostitute Leaps to Death.” Quite frankly, Marina, I got pissed off. I didn’t like the word *prostitute*; I didn’t like a life reduced to that word. And, by the way, I’ve never heard the term prostitute before, you know. It was a late-night tabloid headline person’s decision to label her as a prostitute. I got pissed off, and that’s how I got involved in it.

Well, who was she? And what is this world? Why is this okay? What drove her to this profession? I’m not making a judgment of whether it should be legal or illegal. It is, at this time, in New York illegal. But who was she? I mean, that’s the overarching question. How did she fall out or jump out of a window, and why? Well, the reason was the police were coming to arrest her again. They were coming up the stairs. She heard them knocking on her door, and she either slipped or jumped out the window rather than deal with the police. That would have jeopardized her hopes for a green card. That’s what was happening.

I don’t speak Mandarin, and I look like a cop, so I teamed up with another reporter named Jeff Singer, who is unbelievably fluent in Mandarin and also had many connections in the Flushing Chinese community. So, gradually, mostly through Jeff, we were able to insinuate ourselves into that world and hear the stories of women like Song Yang and where they came from and how they wound up doing this work rather than having them be these anonymous women on the street calling after men as they walked to the train.

As for the opening, I think, Marina, I describe her falling. Then we suspend her in mid-air and then provide context, and then she falls. The narrative trick was, okay, this woman, we’re not going to be cute about it. This woman died, okay. And then we retell the story. It’s almost like a film noir technique that you’ll see in movies from the ’40s, where the climax, in a weird way, is at the beginning, but you then are wondering—Well, how did it come to this point?—so we retell the story.

Breton: Going back to the story, could you talk about the process that you and Jeff had in gaining the trust of the sex workers and also how you were able to earn the trust of Song Yang’s family when they came to try and understand what had happened to their loved one.

Barry: As I said, I look like a cop or a dissolute, so I don’t enter easily into the world of Mandarin-speaking sex workers in Flushing. Jeff, who was fluent, and I spent a lot of time on the street trying, buying bubble tea in the summer and buying hot tea in the winter, because they would be out at two in the morning soliciting or calling out, “Massage, massage,” and so that really wasn’t going very far. But I got a sense of how fluent Jeff was. He’s a schlubby

guy from Staten Island. He and I would go to lunch, and he would order the food for us, because the waiters were often only speaking Mandarin and his fluency and his command of the vernacular and the slang and the way to speak was the opposite of academic and formal. He was very good at how people speak in Mandarin. And people would stop with their eating and look at him and compliment him and joke with him, and he would joke back with them.

So this came to bear one night when we were trying to ask a couple of women some questions. Also, we're disrupting their work, you know? If men were inclined to avail themselves of their services, it's not going to happen with these two knuckleheads standing there, right? So it was hard. So Jeff was trying to talk to a couple of the women, and another woman came over. She was like the boss lady in this little area, and she said, "If you're so good, where am I from?" And Jeff said, "Well, say a few more words." And she did, and he was able to pinpoint not only the province she came from in China but the city and almost the exact neighborhood where she came from, because there are different ways of speaking, similar to the way there are different dialects in New York, or there used to be, right? All the other women started laughing in appreciation and in wonder, and he was in. They invited him up for hot pot, and they talked to him constantly, and opened up to him, because they trusted him. And that's how we were able to do that.

Breton: When her family came over to try to discover what really happened to her and, obviously, they didn't trust that she had taken her own life, how were you able to gain their trust? You really captured not just her life but their frustration, too, and who they were as grieving family members.

Barry: We spent a great deal of time with them. The son, Song Yang's brother, spoke English, which was good for me so that I could be very active in those conversations.

I'll tell you the truth. At the very beginning, the son was convinced that the police had thrown his sister over the railing, and he was determined to prove that. I'll tell you that when I first looked at this story, that was absolutely among the options I was considering, because I didn't know what happened. I'm not going to assume that the police acted admirably, and I'm not going to assume that they acted horribly. I was open to that possibility, and so, in a weird way, the three of us, Jeff and I and the brother, were trying to investigate what happened. We developed a relationship as that went.

It became clear to me early on that the police hadn't thrown this poor woman over the railing. They had surveillance video showing what happened. But her brother refused to believe it. And he got upset with us that we weren't solving the case for him and proving that the police had killed his sister. There was nothing we could do with that, and we were not cute about it. We told

him, well, you know, Song Hai, we haven't been able to find that. But he came to terms with that. And, I have to tell you, in April of 2020, when New York was going through the craziness of the pandemic, of all people, Song Hai sent me a note from China to see how I was doing and wishing me well and saying he was worried. It was unbelievable.

Breton: I would like to spend a few minutes talking about the most recent narrative re-creation that you wrote for the *Times*, called "The Epicenter." It took eight months. It's 11,450 words. You chronicled what was happening to people who were really sick with the virus. You ended up at one of the hardest-hit hospitals in March and early April, and how Covid affected this diverse community of immigrants in five interlocking communities in Queens. This is a micro-world you capture, where there are 800 languages spoken among the immigrants who live there, many of whom are undocumented. So, this is a huge drawing board. I'd like to know, first, what was the genesis of this story, and how did you come to center it on these people or families that you were looking at?

Barry: This is my tip of the hat to Tom Heslin [one of Barry's former editors at the *Providence Journal*, who was in the Zoom meeting]. Every time I speak in public, I tip my hat to Tom.

If you remember in late March, so much was going on. We'd just come off the impeachment. There was the presidential campaign. It was, let's say, contentious. And there were so many things going on, on top of which there was a pandemic. Things were happening so fast it felt like we couldn't pause to consider what had just happened to us. This is how I felt.

Then in late March, the pandemic really hit Queens, and it lived up to its etymology in a way, right, because Queens is the world. Famously, thirteen people died in twenty-four hours at Elmhurst Hospital, which really was the first time that the United States understood that we have a pandemic here. This isn't just Wuhan, China. This isn't Italy. This isn't a nursing facility in Washington State. This is going to be hellzapoppin'.

So, a couple of weeks later, I was looking for something to do. I was overwhelmed by it, and I was looking for my way into this story, and I remembered John Hersey's *Hiroshima*, right, where he went back and really wrote the work that allows us to understand the human toll of that day—of that action. I said to Cliff Levy, who is the editor of the Metro Desk at the *Times*, we need to slow it down. That's Tom Heslin's phrase that he taught me almost thirty years ago: Slow it down. Go back.

And so, I suggested, why don't we go back to Queens in the neighborhoods around that hospital? We know that it's incredibly ethnically diverse. Pick a geo-specific stretch of mile along the 7 [Flushing] Train, which is a

subway—which is an extraordinary story in and of itself, the 7 Train—and use that as a spine with the hospital, and then find people weaving in and out of this defined space, including those who wind up going into the hospital and not all of them coming out. In other words, to try to figure out a way to make it alive, that you're experiencing it.

We did a lot of research, through knocking on virtual doors at first. And also looking at Facebook pages, GoFundMe pages, all sorts of social media avenues where there would be memorials or there would be money raised for a family who had lost a breadwinner.

We also wanted it to be reflective of what the experience was. The Bangladesh community was getting hammered. A lot of Bangladesh men drive the Uber cars and the taxis in New York, and that industry was being hit hard. People who are living in subdivided apartments where people that are doubling or tripling up in small, one- and two-bedroom apartments because of the economy—and imagine trying to be socially distant in a two-bedroom apartment where ten people were living like that.

So how do you do that? We thought about various ethnic groups, and we reached out to community advocates and politicians, and then we drilled down. I went to Queens several times, and, at the same time, we were working on the hospital to let us in. Finally, they consented. So, through a combination of bearing witness and going into the apartments and going into the hospital, but also doing a lot of work by phone because of the pandemic, we were able to recreate some approximation of what several families were going through at that time. So that's what happened.

Breton: So how did it work? You were working with another reporter on this.

Barry: Right. I worked with a wonderful reporter, named Annie Correal, who speaks Spanish, which was very important, and so we just divvied it up. I focused on the small funeral home director, who was overwhelmed with the dead. Everything was turned upside down. There was no place to put the bodies, so I focused on the funeral home director. I focused on a couple, a Thai chef and his partner, and drilled down on their experiences. I focused on a former Buddhist monk from Nepal who was an Uber driver. Annie focused on a family where eleven people were living in one apartment, and she focused on Yimel Alvarado, a woman who was a cabaret singer. She's in the lead of the story. She doesn't feel well the night that she's performing, so there's a sense of foreboding.

So we divvied up the responsibilities and then collaborated. Annie would write pieces; I would figure out where it went, and we would synthesize it as we went. It's two weeks in a specific place, and you follow these people as they go in and out of this area.

Breton: So when you were doing the writing, you guys were communicating by Zoom? Because you weren't sitting in the same room writing, right?

Barry: No, we were not. I would write drafts and re-drafts and re-re-drafts, and Annie would make suggestions, and then I would synthesize her suggestions. We had, you know, many, many Zoom conversations to try and make this work. It was difficult, it was challenging, but we had to bear witness, and so we went there.

Breton: Obviously, with these kinds of interviews, which are so intense and so intimate, you're not doing those interviews by Zoom. You've got to be there in person, and to create a sense of place, you've got to be there yourself as well, right?

Barry: Right. There was a lot of interviewing done by telephone. But then, after some things were addressed or some information was collected, then we would go to the apartments and spend time with the people and, say, for example, have Joe Farris show me his apartment and where his partner Jack had collapsed, and so I could recreate it in a granular way. So not only am I using my cell phone. I have to say, it took me a couple of years to realize that I could use my cell phone for journalistic purposes. Like, I was so trained to write everything down, and then suddenly I said, well, I could just take a photograph of it. But even then, I'm still madly taking notes, because if I'm writing about the hospital emergency room, for example, sure, I can take photographs, but I'm also taking notes, because I want to remember what things remind me of, so later on in the writing process, if I want to describe the gurneys that are in the hall, maybe I came up with a metaphor that was possibly usable. I want to write it down. So I have photographs, but I also have my contemporaneous notes, where my mind is open to association and ways to make it real for the reader.

Breton: And how were you able to reconstruct so much detail?

Barry: We created a Google Doc. It had notes in it, also what Mayor Bill de Blasio was saying. It was chronological, and it had specific dates. So then, under those dates from our reporting, we knew what Dawa Sherpa—the former Buddhist monk—was doing on this day. We knew what Yimel Alvarado was doing on this day, and we would have also what Mayor de Blasio said that day, what the CDC announced that day, what Donald Trump said—Donald Trump, who actually grew up maybe six miles from this hospital, I mean it might as well have been the moon compared to the lived experience in this neighborhood from where he lived in Jamaica Estates, but he lived very close to this facility in this neighborhood—and so we had that huge Google Doc and then my job was to come up with the opening scene that will draw you in so it doesn't read like another Covid story. We landed on Yimel Alvarado

performing in a cabaret that is *mostly filled with absence*, right when the full import of the coronavirus is being realized in Queens.

Breton: In your mind, what makes for a great story or, at least, what captivates your interest to jump in?

Barry: I'm driven by curiosity. I'm actually interested in a lot of things, so curiosity is always at play. I look through the tabloids in New York for what I might consider to be missed opportunities or if I look at a news story in the *Times* to see if there's something that could be teased out of it. The essential ingredient has to be some kind of tension, some kind of challenge, something to be overcome or dealt with. Once I see that, then I imagine myself in the skin of the person who is confronted with this challenge. And then, if that person will agree to allow me to question them, I will debrief them to a fair-thee-well, so that they feel as though I'm within their skin, so that, when I'm writing about the moment, I can make it as real as possible.

One example is from "The Epicenter." There was a guy named Joe Farris, and he was a partner with a man named Jack Wongserat. Jack succumbs to the pandemic in hospital, and Joe has to fill out the DNR [Do Not Resuscitate] and then Jack passes away in front of him, and then there is some paperwork that needs to be dealt with, and then his loved one is wheeled away, and so you could say, "And then Joe Farris went home." Right? So there was more to that, wasn't it? I had him walk me through what he did after that moment, and I was so grateful that he would talk to me, you know, someone who's grieving, and then reliving that loss, for my benefit, in a way.

He stepped out onto the street in Queens. It's a late afternoon and a cold, March day, and he's in frigging Queens and, yeah, he walked home. But he's suddenly profoundly alone, and I asked him what he was feeling at that moment, and he effectively said, "Everything and nothing." And so I interviewed him about that, and then I walked his walk home—he lived about a half mile from the hospital—three or four times so I could know what he passed, and I tried to imagine what that must have been like. I know that, in that longform narrative, a lot of people have paused at that moment, because it was so raw and human and relatable. So that's what I try to do.

But right now there is just Joe Farris alone, walking home through the gray afternoon. He heads down 41st Avenue, past a Spanish pharmacy, a Chinese church, and the old Lutheran church where people of Sherpa heritage are assembling Covid care packages.

He is in shock, his mind a jumble of every thought and no thought. All he knows for certain is that a pandemic in Queens has claimed his love. —
"The Epicenter"¹⁴

Tracy Breton is professor of the practice in the English Department at Brown University and leads the journalism portion of the Nonfiction Writing Program.



*Doug Cumming is associate professor emeritus at Washington and Lee University. He is the author of *The Southern Press: Literary Legacies and the Challenge of Modernity* and a 2013 article in this journal on the late Southern journalist Marshall Frady.*

Notes

- ¹ Lyall, "A *Times* Writer on Missing . . . the *Times*."
- ² Formerly the *Providence Journal-Bulletin*, the Pulitzer-Prize winning, Rhode Island newspaper dropped *Bulletin* from its name in 1998 and is now known as the *Providence Journal*. Parker, "Times Have Changed, but Mission Remains the Same," *Providence Journal*, July 20, 2019, para. 33.
- ³ Barry, "A Conversation and Q&A with Dan Barry."
- ⁴ Barry, "Circle Line Somberly Views Altered Skyline," 1, 34.
- ⁵ Barry, "The Lost Children of Tuam," 1f.
- ⁶ Barry and Singer, "The Case of Jane Doe Ponytail," 1f.
- ⁷ Barry and Correal, "The Epicenter," 1f.
- ⁸ Hersey, *Hiroshima*; Wilder, *The Bridge of San Luis Rey*.
- ⁹ Barry, "Macabre Reminder: The Corpse on Union Street," 1, 23.
- ¹⁰ Barry and Waldman, "The Landfill: At Landfills, Tons of Debris, Slivers of Solace." A1, B11.
- ¹¹ Barry, "Circle Line Somberly Views Altered Skyline," 1, 34.
- ¹² Barry, "A Mill Closes, and a Hamlet Fades to Black," 1, 25.
- ¹³ "The death of irony" idea following 9/11 is often attributed to Graydon Carter's quote in the now-defunct site Inside.com, around Sept. 17, 2001: "There's going to be a seismic change. I think it's the end of the age of irony." But the idea has many sources from the time. Randall, "The 'Death of Irony' and Its Many Reincarnations," para. 2.
- ¹⁴ Barry and Correal, "The Epicenter."

Bibliography

- Barry, Dan. "Circle Line Somberly Views Altered Skyline." *A Nation Challenged: The Circle Line*. *New York Times*, October 3, 2001, 1, 34. <https://www.nytimes.com/2001/10/03/nyregion/a-nation-challenged-the-circle-line-circle-line-somberly-views-altered-skyline.html>.
- . "A Conversation and Q&A with Dan Barry." Moderated by Tracy Breton. *Nonfiction!@Brown Lecture Series*, Brown University. February 8, 2021. Video, 1:30:15. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rq38LonWzsQ>.
- . "The Lost Children of Tuam." *New York Times*, October 28, 2017. <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/10/28/world/europe/tuam-ireland-babies-children.html?searchResultPosition=2>.
- . "Macabre Reminder: The Corpse on Union Street." *New York Times*, September 8, 2005, 1, 23. <https://www.nytimes.com/2005/09/08/us/national-special/macabre-reminder-the-corpse-on-union-street.html>.
- . "A Mill Closes, and a Hamlet Fades to Black." *New York Times*, February 16, 2001, 1, 25. <https://www.nytimes.com/2001/02/16/nyregion/a-mill-closes-and-a-hamlet-fades-to-black.html?smid=em-share>.
- Barry, Dan, and Annie Correal, "The Epicenter." *New York Times*, December 3, 2020. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/03/nyregion/coronavirus-new-york.html>.
- Barry, Dan, and Jeffrey E. Singer, "The Case of Jane Doe Ponytail: An Epic Tragedy on a Small Block in Queens." *New York Times*, October 16, 2018. <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/10/11/nyregion/sex-workers-massage-parlor.html?searchResultPosition=1>.
- Barry, Dan, and Amy Waldman. "The Landfill: At Landfills, Tons of Debris, Slivers of Solace." *A Nation Challenged*. *New York Times*, October 21, 2001, A1, B11. <https://www.nytimes.com/2001/10/21/nyregion/a-nation-challenged-the-landfill-at-landfill-tons-of-debris-slivers-of-solace.html?smid=em-share>.
- Hersey, John. *Hiroshima*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1946.
- Lyall, Sarah. "A *Times* Writer on Missing . . . the *Times*." *Times Insider*. *New York Times*, March 13 and 14, 2021. <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/13/insider/empty-times-offic.html>. A version also published in the *New York Times*' New York print edition, as "A Year Later, Homesick for Our Office," A2.
- Parker, Paul Edward. "Times Have Changed, but Mission Remains the Same." *Providence Journal*, July 20, 2019. <https://www.providencejournal.com/story/news/2019/07/20/times-have-changed-but-mission-remains-same/4631176007/>.
- Randall, Eric. "The 'Death of Irony' and Its Many Reincarnations." *Atlantic*, September 9, 2011. <https://www.theatlantic.com/national/archive/2011/09/death-irony-and-its-many-reincarnations/338114/>.
- Wilder, Thornton. *The Bridge of San Luis Rey*. New York, London: Harper & Row, 1927.