Living Like Common People

A thesis submitted for the degree of
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The University of Newcastle

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STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY

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Christine Bellotti
March 2015
This thesis is submitted in fulfilment of the requirements of the Degree of Master of Philosophy.

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Abstract

*Living Like Common People* is a collection of seventeen fictional, interlinked, short stories focussing on the protagonist Kevin Sullivan. The characters within Kevin’s circle of intimate and professional associates provide accounts of his life. His decline into recidivism, the unravelling of his relationships and the increased brutality of his crimes are set within the gloom of the prison walls and the small community he inhabits during the short periods of his release. The stories explore these relationships and provide a description of the sub-groups which make up the prison population. The aim is to explore the nature of character motivation and the essence of violence. The exegesis explores the sociological ideas of punishment and sexual violence, as well as the themes of retribution, deterrence, rehabilitation and recidivism evident in the short stories. It also examines the role of prison narrative as a vehicle of reform, which makes it a compelling and vital genre.
“Out beyond the ideas of
Wrong doing and right doing
There is a field. I’ll meet you there.”

Jalaluddin Rumi

Dedicated to:

Rebecca Kochanski who gave me the confidence to find my ‘field’.
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