

The waking of mom

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Mom was an Irish woman who stood 4 feet 11 inches and had seven kids. Her life was more colourful than most and this book serves to give an insight into a family of Irish Immigrants who grew up in the time of the troubles. 1960 onwards



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Chapter one

It was raining, you know that soft rain that occurs in the early summer when it is too warm to dress appropriately. As we, [my brother David and Tom] arrived at moms house, we could easily get a sense of the solemnity and the anticipation of what was to become the most significant event of all of our lives.

Abbeyfield Rd, the place my family and I began our real lives in England after a series of moves beginning with the Ferry trip from dear old Eire. The only thing I

recall about that trip was the sky, probably because I was laying down in a pram during it or maybe the visual is one that I can only conjure up in my mind because I was too young to have learned any way of communicating other than to bawl or look with a pleading panic in my eyes. Who knows what the real memory is but I like the sky to this day.

There were some very familiar faces gathered around moms front

door that sullen, dreary morning, I recognised all of them but at the same time could not accurately place names on many of them, some of them were my brothers, my

sister, some uncles and aunts ,some friends of moms and others, well maybe they were just here for the spectacle.

â I have to go in and see Paul and Noel â I said to David because on this visit I had not yet seen them

I live in the USA you see and I was not really planning to come

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over till the autumn when I could cobble the funds together, but true to her style, mom was not going to wait for me to make the decision she just went up and died without any consideration for my financial well being. â My Jesusâ I thought [or did I say it out loud} when I saw Paul he looked old and tired like a man who has tried to make it all worthwhile and had given up trying,â you look goodâ I lied ,â how're thingsâ ? I ventured, wondering what had caused such resignation in his face.He lit a cigarette, â Allrightâ he said as if not interested enough in the question to provide an exciting answer.

I hug, my family are less comfortable at it but I do attack hugs so their choice is limited, a nervous pat on the pack usually ensues when I launch myself on

them, Paul had an indifferent hug but a hug nonetheless. He used to be the good looking one, the one who women would gravitate towards and leave us in his dust trail. Paul was the baby that Mom, [for some reason known only to herself and my dad]left behind in Ireland whilst moving to England on a Job scouting extravaganza carrying me in her womb.It must not have worked out so well that time because she came back after around a year with me not having yet been born. On reflection I must have been concieved in Jolly old and she must have decided I needed to be an Irishman because that is where I came into this world. I remember Paul being the slower of the bunch and Lazy to the point where he couldnâ t even be bothered to walk or talk till well after the age of 2 years.We had a lot of fun as toddlers with him though,he was easy, a very peaceable young chap with not a mean bone in his body so as we grew up he would become the butt of our not so peaceable targetingâ .Palouka â ,mom called him,I never understood her nicknames for

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us but she had them and they were clearer in her mind than were our actual names, Mine changed over the years. from curly top to flute amooney and finally on to the wandering hippy. Pauls front teeth were missing, he had had a triple bypass three years ago and had also developed eplipsy which caused him to fall over when a siezure struck ,this was how he had lost his teeth, hitting hard things as he crashed unceremoniously to the ground. It made him look that much older but he still had the sad but kind eyes of my slightly older brother. Shuffling from room to room in the house with its nicotine stained walls and the living room as if suspended in aspic, the way it had been for the thirty years since I left. Mom had taken to living in one room where the tele was on 24/7 and her ashtray was always just a flick away, the kitchen had the same look about it but had been more recently decorated so was brighter than the yellow walls of the living room. Funny how that term Living room becomes an oxymoron after the death. The rain persisted and it was still an hour away from the time the funeral cars would come to take us all to her final performance. Paul, as a young child had a magnificent head of Jet black, straight hair that resembled a helmet { which is maybe where the nickname Palouka came from } He had a sense of Humour right from the beginning and it served him well in his early life. One of the memories I have of him is when an old cabbage faced nun came into my class { we were in a catholic school } and singled me out to clean up the green phlegm that my slightly older brother had expelled onto the floor in the corridor of the school. She explained that though he had done it he wasnâ t prepared to clean it up so she would make an example of him by

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summoning his younger brother to do his duty. God knows where the logic arrived in her mind to incorporate this as discipline but she had me do it anyway. I had a very brief thought to defy her too but my fear of the nuns was greater at that time than my sense of fairness. I was provided with a mop and did what I was ordered to do, afterwards the nun [Sister Marie was her name] let Paul know in no uncertain terms that I was the good boy in this family and he was basically destined for hell or at the very least purgatory. Paul knew no such fear of the nuns and smirked when he saw I had been made to clean up after him. I would one day wreak my revenge on both the nun and my brother, I didn't know how yet but at least one of them was going to suffer a painful demise. My time in St Chads was marked by many offenses like this but of all of them Paul's greeny stuck out the clearest. My first day at St Chads I remember like it was yesterday, The whole of the new contingent of 1st year pupils were gathered expectantly in the Hall waiting for instructions on how to begin our lives there. I noticed the hall floor had been polished to a glasslike state and in my infant mind thought how brilliant a sliding surface it would make so I launched myself into a sprint from which I then dived onto the floor belly first. It worked like a charm I hit the ground Like a puck on a shuffle board sailing towards the now gathering nuns, I was unable to stop. When I finally came to a halt it just happened to be right underneath sister Marie's habit. The shocked silence in the hallway was palpable and to this day I can still hear the gasps as I slid to a slow and very delicate stall underneath her habit.

I had become used to being dragged by the hair at this point since it

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was the preferred method of rage display that my mother had made a practice of, but this was different because I was in the beached whale position and that meant I had to be dragged to an upright stance, I remember it hurt a lot but I also remember thinking God wouldn't do this to one of his children, I think it was the beginning of my atheism. My first day at St Chads was spent standing in the Hallway outside of Sister Maries office. I never looked up when I was underneath the habit so I still to this day don't know if nuns wear Knickers.

CHAPTER2

David wants me to play the tin whistle on the procession in front of the funeral cars, He says "she always called you flute amooney and it would be what she would have liked", the trouble is I have not brought a whistle with me, we found a music store up the road from where moms house is, so I purchased one for 3 pounds fifty, "cheap" I thought, though they are called penny whistles so they should cost a penny, I wonder if that could be deemed false advertising in this day of rampant lawsuits over silly things. We arrive back, the rains have increased, forty minutes before the funeral, the crowd has increased, Richard is there with his wife Diane. Richard is the oldest brother and he has been MIA since dad died 25 years ago. he always had resentment for my mom and had not been around to watch her swift demise since she developed c.o.p.d from the chain smoking, my mom loved her fags, she stubbornly refused to give them up even after the diagnosis, her reasoning being, the damage is done and would not be undone by stopping

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now. There is very little logic to the self abuse some people hold onto during their lives and this one simply had no root in reason.

Richard walked up to me and gave me a hug,he had mad eyes,the kind you see in a psychopath just before they switch off and cause immeasurable damage in their altered state. I had spent the first part of my visit with him down south in Somerset where he lives.He had called David [whose house I had landed at after my trip] and David quickly passed him on to me.Richard had been avoided by the rest of the family all but for David who had offered him a place to stay briefly on his release from prison.He had gotten himself drunk in one of his previous marriages and tried to set fire to his wifes house,the neighbours had alerted

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