

A Walk On THE SOUTH SIDE

A County Dublin Love Story



Conan Kennedy

GONE TO CANADA



ANOTHER BREAK OUT from the south side. H took a break from her job and we went to live in Canada for awhile. And while there went to visit our old home town of Glastonbury Connecticut. To remember, those times. And particularly the baby we lost there. The photo above

shows H at the swimming hole, the year after we married. She's sitting down because she's heavily pregnant with Siobhan. Parked nearby was our old Ford car.

And the other photo? Twenty years later. Same H, same swimming hole. The wood of the seat has rotted away some. Things change. H is a calm mature woman now, and not a pregnant girl anymore. And another thing different too. Because parked right there now was the open topped white Cadillac we'd arrived in. Vulgar? You bet. The only way to go back to a town where you had tough times. It's the American way.





H and CK, and the Glastonbury Fife and Drum Corps.

Who was she?

WHO WAS THIS GIRL he decided to marry, where did she come from?

And who would she become?

Men are easy enough to understand. Women are more difficult. They live in places between mystery and simplicity. And somewhere there in the middle is another place called truth. It's a complicated truth, that woman thing. And a man is only ever going to see the half of it. But not even that much on any one particular day. Or at a particular time in her life, or whatever age she is. No single day's snapshot reveals. In fact a day's glance can give completely the wrong impression. When I met the schoolgirl she was... well...she was a sexy schoolgirl. With big tits, throwing shapes, the way a sexy schoolgirl will. What does a guy know, what does he think? He doesn't. He doesn't know and he doesn't think anything really. Or if he does, it's not with the thinking part of his body that he's thinking. What does he know of this girl?



Nothing really. But he knows now.

She was the daughter of an Irish soldier. A soldier who had been killed while in the Irish army, doing whatever soldiers do. Not only that, she was the granddaughter of another soldier, a Dublin Fusilier. He had died at Ypres in the First World War. There was a pattern to that history. Just as her soldier father had been brought up by a widowed mother, she herself had been brought up by a widowed mother. And her mother's family came from republican people. They'd fought in the War of Independence, and in the Civil War. They'd gotten their reward.

Poor enough, they lived in a basement flat in Monkstown. It was damp and not that great. But they'd made the best of it. And there was a granny there too, and the granny too had her own story. Three generations of strong women. Cramped into a basement flat like they'd been collected. For some purpose, to illustrate, something. Not sure what that something is. But the pattern of the schoolgirl's history was of women, strong women. Doing what strong women do. Surviving.

A necessary skill that, particularly in Ireland. A country where the



This then is the place I grew up in in the 1960's. Looks peaceful enough in these photos. Less crowded perhaps, certainly less traffic. But none of that mattered. To most of us, and indeed to a great number of Irish people generally, the most important element of the town was that shown here below. The boat. Practically everybody I grew up with went away on that boat. And most didn't come back. But that is not this story. And nor are the words on the past few pages. Merely trying to set the scene. This is a love story.

