

The New Electric Ballroom

Patsy Side pg5-7

Patsy: Terrific news about nana Cotter, isn't it? A hundred years, God bless her, and a lovely letter from the President of congratulations.

A pause as the sisters don't answer.

To mark the occasion she got her hair done in a purple rinse and a party was thrown with all manner of vol-au-vents and trifle present.

A pause as the sister remain silent.

Poor love got a little excited and shit herself...

Yeah she's a great woman nana, all right. Little bones like Summer kindling, hands like pigeon's feet, hearing shot from years of working in the cannery but by Jesus can she eat trifle? Eat it? Like a Hoover!

Mr. Simmon's got his hip done. Looks a hell of lot more normal than before. Great to see him back all level. He's a sprightly ninety year old despite all his misfortunes.

Feck it, he's had that many trips to the garage, he's more plastic than flesh but to see his little cataract eyes lit up with renewed life...

Breda: You can go now we're busy.

Patsy: But what a lovely smell of coffee cake in here. Different houses have their own stamp. I could close my eyes and still make my way around town if the front doors were open. I'd be the first to say I'm not the sharpest knife in the rack and I'm no looker either. People have said I have the looks of a man who's been struck in the face by a wet fish and I couldn't argue with that for the truth is I have often been struck by a wet fish in the face. Several times in fact. But when it comes to smelling things....well boys!! You won't find a keener nose in the whole of the county! Obviously some people think that's an unfortunate ability what with me being a fish monger and they wouldn't be wrong...

Breda: *(snaps)* What is it, Patsy!?

A pause. Again he looks towards the open door and then back.

Patsy: Things are odd. *(slight pause)* Outside.

Breda: Tell him stop, Ada!

Ada lowers her head

Breda: Leave!

Patsy: I'm standing in the little shoe box I call my bedroom, Ada. I'm standing in my underpants. I'm standing there staring down on my little bed, the sheets all creased and...?...like skin. The pillow dented from where I lay my head. The shape of me marked out on the bed, mapping out my night's sleep. And for some reason that gets me nervous so that I have to leave the room. The house quiet as always. The little stairs groaning as always. Everything as always but for this ball of butterflies growing inside me. So I dress real quick and leave and off and out to work. I'm outside then. And the narrow cobbled streets of the town are a bit uneasy underfoot. The narrow streets narrower somehow. The houses on either side they're leaning in that bit close to me. They're squeezing me, hurrying me towards work. I come to the little harbor to gather up my fish from the boats like I always do. I say hello to Simple Paddy who helps out in the harbor tying up the boats. I listen to his dream from the night before the way I always do listen. It takes some listening because of his cleft palate but I listen all the same. Anyway I'm being smacked with that much spit that I have to look away. And I see over his shoulder that the seas are getting smaller. They're getting smaller. I look up to the cliffs and it really looks like the cliffs are receding. Can sort of feel the seas and cliffs being drawn back in and disappearing and becoming butterflies inside me. I have that feeling that today will be the start of my last day. *(he covers his eyes)* I see a picture of me running from your house. My heart's been ripped out and the ground underneath is loos underfoot. I'm running towards the harbor from this cliff. I can see the harbor being sucked into the sand and the cliffs pulled back like you would pull a curtain back. There's a great space now with me running over it toward nothing, toward no place. My heart's been ripped out, yet I can't stop running.

A pause. He lowers his hands from his eyes.

I see all this...and then I'm back on the harbor with Simple Paddy and his cleft palate spitting over me.