
David McLoghlin

INDEPENDENT COMMISSION FOR THE LOCATION OF VICTIMS' SILENCE

When I was at Glenstal in the '80s, you liked
to boast about your brother, the Sinn Féin councillor.
And the thought emerges, like a fossil out of marl:
he knew the ones that gave the order.
Two hundred miles south of the Belfast Brigade's field
of operations, brindled cows cropping both sides of the Anglo-
Irish avenue, a brook whispering under a low bridge, electric fence
the only filament I.E.D. glint of a trip wire In the parlour
you were saying your mother – "ah, sure God rest her" – had
hosted the Army Council in her living room
and served digestive biscuits.

As noduled fingers took the cosy
off the pot, they asked: "So what do you think, Mrs. H?" Stooped,
she might nod – or, would she suggest juicier targets? You loved that
they loved her for that. Republican Matriarch,
their own personal Mother Ireland.
"Ay, they respected her – and sure, she herself a little old lady."
I imagine her going back to her rosary in the kitchen, goitred
with her sons' internment, and the long war's soiling.

My father hated the IRA so much
he was almost a Catholic Unionist. I was perverse,
half-proud of your connections – your spadework.
I thought I knew everything about you, Chaplain of the blood
of Pearse, Connolly and Slab Murphy.
But until I was 33, I didn't know you'd disappeared me
yourself, into the ground of my body in several monastery rooms
while the whole country was sleeping

and detectives were sent out in plain clothes
and bullet proof in search of the Border Fox
Uzis and handsomeness at check points in West Limerick.
You were a rogue cell, condoned by the others, who nodded
as they passed us with their psalters and eyes' omertà.
There is no taut white archaeological string to mark the pit.
We know that it happened, and we know that they did it,
but not everyone has been recovered.