

The Last Quiet Morning

by Lucile Barker

Just another one of those cool spring days when you don't know what you should be telling the children to wear, give them money for fried potato wedges for lunch instead of the nutritious inedible meal that the school would feed them because this is a work day later, sorting clothes at the church jumble sale. Your daughter's coat is thin and getting too small, she complains that it feels like a boa constrictor when she puts it on. You think of what puberty will bring and think of a trip to Marks and Sparks on the weekend. "Go, go, you'll be late for chapel, you know how Father Mark gets when you aren't in your seats. And for the Lord's sake, can you stay neat until you come home and your Gran is here, no holes in those leotards, mind you, Mary, and James, keep your jeans clean." It's only two blocks and you don't worry, go and start the breakfast dishes with the stuck on marmalade and that cheap peanut butter from Tesco. Things don't happen here, life is so boring in this little Irish town. Until you hear that shaking boom, and you can see the smoke from the front window, and the remnants of that little blue vehicle, a Morris, a Vauxhall? You know it went past and now that you are on the stoop you know that it was a bomb, and there are flames from the school and you know that death is happening messily, and there is no way you could run any faster.

