

Dubious Appetite

by Mathew Paust

Looking back now, examining from a distance the sequence of events I failed to connect as anything beyond queer happenstance, I acknowledge my debt to the heritage and training that has given me a dual perspective in viewing the occasional metaphysical questions that have toyed with me over the years. I credit my father's dogged "kick the tires" skepticism keeping gentle rein on my mother's feisty Celtic spirituality for making this retrospective possible, as I could well have been hearing confessions at St. Plunkett's or on the road somewhere with "The Scottish Play," instead of practicing criminal law during that week.

At the same time I cannot deny my Irish blood and the vision my mother so earnestly and persuasively ascribed to it in making sense of phenomena that would have stumped Clarence Darrow. While ordinarily I have insisted upon rational solutions to even the most raveled mysteries, yet I've never been able to peremptorily shrug off occurrences that seemed above mortal ability to decipher. Indeed, I have allowed, albeit reluctantly, a small, cloistered corner of my mind to remain open to the possibility of cosmic surprise, and as such in this telling, if only to honor my mother's memory and our Irish kin, feel obliged to accede some leeway to at least remark a plausible ethereal intimation. Had I been so inclined upon waking that morning, the rare chilling sweat I felt on my pillow likely would have registered as a portent of what lay ahead. Especially as I began mulling the terse message that moments before had been left on my old-fashioned flip-top cellphone.

