

God on Paddy's Night.

by Michael J. Maguire

Paddy's night arrived in the manner of finding a half torn fiver, initial anticipation usurped by disappointment before a chancer's edge suggested some craic might ensue after all.

A great crowd had gathered somewhere else, for under Hill street bridge there was only four young sons of Ireland, none ginger headed, not a step nor tune nor speech nor poem nor lyrical thought between them, but each an enthusiastic teenager of differing experience, serving his cider apprenticeship before graduating to black stout and eventual death. Four short arsed leather jackets lifting their doc martin feet at irregular uncoordinated rates and intervals, warming themselves by waving their arms, black invertebrate seagulls, keeping an eye on the empty railway line as it flitted and grounded their street lit shadows on an immediate metal horizon of wood, rust and dust.

"I mean God will turn up won't he ? inquired one particularly pizza faced young man.

"Furfucksake we're not in a Beckett play Benny, Shutdafuckup you'll jinx him"

Benny craved more reassurance: "Look Titch, What I mean is.. God knows we're here, doesn't he ?"

Razor approached both Titch and Benny and simultaneously slapped both of Benny's shoulders with deliberate force before sandwiching him by them.

"Benny, God has done this almost every week since Santy came, He's still going to turn up even though you're here." He then slapped out the following on Benny's Shoulders. 'Now' Slap, 'Calm' Slap, 'Yourself' Slap, 'Down' Slap. After the final slap Razor forced Benny down onto his hunkers, where Benny knew to remain.

"Yeah Kid" endorsed Titch from a safe distance.

Short silences were sporadically punctuated by cars revving out of gear as each crossed the crest of the bridge above.

"Look Razor, am not doubting him, its just that its Paddy's night, it might be a bit more awkward than usual, what with all those drunks around the town after the parade and all that."

There was a clink of glass bottles, a rustling of bushes and a huge hulking figure slid awkwardly, unbalanced and overburdened down the worn path from the embankment. It was "God Conlon", resplendent among the shadows in his huge black beard and long waving hair, the very features that had earned him his biblically based nickname now accentuated by gradations of the varyingly distant streetlights. He stopped himself from falling and stood erect.

Benny couldn't keep in his relief and excitement as he himself rose: "Oh ye of little faith, the lord doth bestow 'Merrydown Gold' upon us after all." God's descending razor-sharp glance when Benny stood up, conveyed the full bulk of God's person, who now seemed to Benny to be even bigger and more menacing than that Indian in one flew over the Cuckoo's Nest, that film Benny had seen just the week before. Benny stood shushed and static.

Razor futtered in his Jeans pocket for the assembled cash while placating God with an embarrassed smile at Benny's last remark and now stationary gobsmackedness. Razor noticed that God had an additional adornment in his hair, one that Razor certainly hadn't noticed sticking out of the top of his head before. It was one Razor was fully prepared to ignore.

"Whats with the Feather ?" asked Titch as the transaction of cider for money and money for cider seemed completed.

Benny became more rigid, he hadn't even noticed the large Feather when he made his mental photo-fit. He could see it now but his pumping heart interrupted his thinking as images of pimpled leprechauns tied to railway tracks being scalped for fun forced their way in there.

"Well Titch", offered God, "I was stopped earlier outside the off license you know, by none other than branch detective Peter McKeown you know, and do you know what he said to me Titch ? Do you know what he said to me Razor ? Do yous ?"

Titch threw his cigarette to the ground and shuck his head. For just a split second Razor contemplated dropping all the cider from his arms.

“No God, What did dear detective McKeown say ?” inquired Titch.

“He said to me, do you know what God. There's going to be no more young cowboys drinking cider under that bridge.”

Copyright© Michael J Maguire. 2010.

