

FUNKY CÉILÍ

(BRIDIE'S SONG)

I met her at a dance in Rathmines, pissed out of my head on cheap cider. I watched her refuse all comers and moved in on the first notes of a smooch. In a frantic effort to impress her, I motor-mouthed a monologue, laced with self-deprecatory wit and subtle male braggadocio. Less than impressed, she declined my offer of a drink. But I had taken an imprint of her body and would always remember her firm young breasts and green Atlantic eyes.

A few weeks later, I saw her crossing Merrion Square. I had been reading a novel of Leonard Cohen's, in which he declared his love to a beautiful stranger. I threw caution to the wind, marched up to my country girl and inquired if she'd like to be buried with my people.

She threw back her head and laughed uproariously. Then she smiled and I was decimated by the gentleness in her eyes. "Meet me at Patrick Kavanagh's bench," she whispered, "tomorrow night, at eight".

This was easier said than done, since I didn't know the poet from a hole in the wall, nor the location of his bloody bench. But love and the Irish Tourist Board conquered all and we soon began "doing a line", as she so quaintly put it. She was an Edna O'Brienite and modeled herself on the "Girl with the Green Eyes," right down to having a bawdy flatmate from Connemara.

We were sleeping together within a month, which was faster than greased lightning back then. Meanwhile, the Connemara sexpot was shaggin' half of Dublin and, since their flat consisted of one room, thus was I introduced to communal sex of a Celtic nature. Strict decorum was observed - we undressed in the dark and blasted Radio Luxembourg to muffle our caterwauling. When not making love, we sang "So Long Marianne" and planned our own exile on sunny Hydra.

Disaster struck and we never made it to Greece. You should have come with me, Bridie—we could have found Hydra in Manhattan. You could have been as contented as Edna O'Brien and I would have been as happy as Leonard Cohen.