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Look What The Wind Blew In

by Stuart Carruthers

The view from the top of the lane was how I remembered it.

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Before dawn. Eyes clamped shut. Mother stirs. On naked skin Jack Frost welcomes youth to a man's world. I follow her into a pitch-black atmosphere. No words spoken. Routine embedded into an inevitable life.

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I knew as soon as the door opened. That long walk from the back of the class. Their eyes followed me. Uncomfortable hand on shoulder, adult words in youthful ears. The walk up the hill in the rain took forever. A man not a boy walked in the front door that day to see her.

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Stretching a creaking spin as the school bus passed down below, they had forgotten me. Only a stubborn woman would take on his role. Unfolding cloth wrapping to tuck into freshly baked bread with Jam, washed down with pure gold from McCluskey's herd.

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Tightrope walking between anger and love, this wasn't for me. She never stopped. You could trace the story of her life on the granite stone floor of the kitchen. Till death do us part and so it was they abandoned her. Feral children toughened by the Atlantic air.

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“I was born to fall in love with someone like you” I remember him say one drunken evening as the kitchen exploded with laughter. I sensed her embarrassment. A giant of a man. His shoulders sculptured by westerly winds. Thirty-three. No age to say goodbye.

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I knew she knew. No words spoken, just a stare that cut me in two. The door slammed. From the window I watched her trudge in mud and shit to the top of the field to tell him. I was gone before she returned.

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The view from the top of the lane was how I remembered it. Closing my eyes, deep intake of West Inishowen Peninsula air and smile as memories comes rushing back.

I had a dream that you were alive.

