

The Workings of My Mind

by Stuart Finegan

I'll call for you after tea
Don't forget
I'll call at the back door
Taig wants to see you
Have you any money?
What, why?
Bring it, I'll get us served in O' Rourke's

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As two young children talked over each other, the radio struggled to get its message across. A warm loving scent of freshly baked bread slowly climbed the stairs of No 82 Fairview Road. Upstairs in silence, vulnerable naked toes lay motionless exposed to shards of warm summer sun as it searched for gaps in the curtains. Rowan was away with the fairies. On the floor beside his bed a small bottle, the evidence of last night takings. Mother had left soon after placing their steaming hot crusted bread on the table. She'd be back by supper time.

*

The street was asleep by the time Rita turned the corner. Up ahead a single dirty white light welcomed her home. She reminded herself the curtains were desperate for a wash.

Carefully opening the large red door she stepped inside. A cold damp silence greeted her. She knew the boys were in bed. But not Rowan. The kitchen light was on.

*

Rowan opened the side gate to No 37, the back door was unlocked.

Are you ready?

So tell me where did you get it?

Taig pass me the lighter, thanks

Is it real?

You idiot

Where have you hidden it? Don't get caught like Tommy Burns

Fool

I've a fiver, will we get into O'Rourke's?

Of course we will

This isn't one of your make believe stories is it?

Michael shut up, when have I ever not delivered?

*

Rita removed her hat and coat, kicked off her shoes and walked into the kitchen. The atmosphere lead straight to an argument.

That's all I said mother, why won't you...

How many times have I told you?

Aaaahhhh

I'm sick of your lies Rowan, stupid stories, whatever you call them, your just like...

Don't say that Mother

Then stop

I'm sorry, it's only a bit of fun, no one got hurt

You're wrong Rowan, people do get hurt, he lied from the first day I met him

Why did you?

What?

You know, why did you stay with him?
His lies offered me something I never had before Rowan
You believed him?
No, but imagine if id left you with him?
So why then?
Pass me the milk please
If you knew he lied to you
Rowan its not about me, I'm worried about you
But you once said
I said a lot of things back then, just promise me, stop this stupidity and tell them the truth

*

Tuesday 08:37. No 82 Fairview Road In the bathroom Rowan Byrne stared desperately into the mirror Today was the day.

What am I going to do, cry wolf?
One day I'll fall into that trap if I'm not already there.
I mean I've told them I have this thing, whatever this thing is.
Why didn't I just keep my mouth shut when Maria boasted about her brother's secret?.
One lie to many.
Jesus why didn't I just sit there and say nothing.
This attitude I've developed, keeping face to hide insecurities inherited from him.
How do I talk myself out of this mess?
Mother was right, she always is.
When Pat or Claire turn up I'll change the subject or just sit there in silence.
A conscience is that still small voice that people won't listen to.
Jesus what have I done?
Mother.

*

O Rourke's was full. Stepping into the unknown Rowan squeezed between the swaying drunk evening regulars. This was a real test. Fail and the embarrassment in front of his friends would be humiliating. Hands shaking, his mind a million words desperately trying to piece together a confident sentence.

Two...two pints please

In her eyes Rowan could tell she knew

How old are you?

What?

Don't lie to me

Why would I?

How old?

Twenty-two

ID

For what?

Your father lied for a living, you're no different, now stop messing about and let me see your ID, Rowan your life is one big lie!!

I'm sorry