

too is gone—an' the warm light always goes with it—an' Momma says the rain will always find the wedding, the bride, the mud, the dull lace dragging like gaps of blue earth into carriages gone to hazard—into the horses bespeckled with steam an' slop—into the sound of hoofs poundin' like a lost ancient music in the catacombs of dull-hearted girls named Caithleen.

Is that what you mean?

CAITHLEEN. Aye. How long will I feel that?

CAIT. Only always. Only then.

Start *Pause.*

CAITHLEEN. You talk strange.

CAIT. You get used to it.

CAITHLEEN. An' you're old.

CAIT. I plan to be older—no thanks to you. You coulda spared me all this, you know.

CAITHLEEN. How?

CAIT. Are you havin' me on here—

CAITHLEEN. No, I'm only—

CAIT. (*Overlapping.*) —can you really not venture a guess 'bout the road that gets traveled between you an' me?!

CAITHLEEN. But you can't know the future!—no one can.

CAIT. Every woman knows the future if she's got the nerve to look! Aye, it's a fact beyond dispute: women can see an older version of themselves walkin' across the road an' say, "Oh look what's to become of me!"

Can you imagine a man sayin' such a thing?! Not on your life! If a man saw his older self across the road, he'd say, "Thanks be to St. Patrick that I'm never gonna end up like *that!*"

Silence, and then...

Caithleen slowly walks over and sits down beside Cait.

They sit there for a good long while.

CAITHLEEN. What time is it?

CAIT. It's none. It's No o'clock.

CAITHLEEN. There's no such time.

CAIT. Sure there is. An' when there's no time there's time enough for a girl an' herself. An' that's infinite, you know. There's no end to a girl when she's left alone with her thoughts. Like Molly Bloom. Like you sittin' here with me, Caithleen. Right in the endless here an' now. Here where it's No o'clock.

Pause.

CAITHLEEN. It's sorta nice.

CAIT. 'tis.

Pause.

CAITHLEEN. I can ask things, I suppose.

CAIT. That you can. But be smart about it. There's a lot in the future that no one should want to know.

CAITHLEEN. What happens to Michael Finnerty?
(Off Cait's look.) You said I could ask things.

CAIT. Michael Finnerty is robbed in north London. Beat up by hooligans. Left for dead.

CAITHLEEN. It's awful...

CAIT. *O this nuisance of a thing—I hope they'll have something better for us in the other world—for the love of Mike I don't care what anybody says it'd be much better for the world to be governed by the women in it—you wouldn't see women going and killing one another and slaughtering—when do you ever see women rolling around drunk like they do, or gambling every penny they have?—because a woman, whatever she does, she knows where to stop*

CAITHLEEN. He was so kind to me. He'd wait out on the road. Just to walk with me.

CAIT. Michael Finnerty's in a better place now. I've put him down by the Liffey on a warm day. Danglin' his big feet—remember how big his feet were? It was truly strange the size of that man's feet. But I've got him right there, wearin' his good blue jumper, the sun nice upon his face.

CAITHLEEN. Is the bakery still there?

CAIT. Just the name. Fella named Stimson runs it now, with his wife. Say they are kin to the Finnertys—but they're not. They're just in there. Usin' that big beautiful oven. Makin' those rolls under an assumed name.

Pause.

CAITHLEEN. An' Robbie?

CAIT. Do you really not know?

CAITHLEEN. He was gone when I came back.

CAIT. Aye. An' you don't hear another word from 'im. You go back to Sweny's an' McDaid's—you look for him all over Dublin—it's embarrassin' really how you make a scene over some boy we only kissed that one time.

CAITHLEEN. What do you mean "we"?

CAIT. I was there, Caithleen.

CAITHLEEN. No, you were not!

CAIT. I kissed 'im right along with you!

CAITHLEEN. No, you most certainly did not!

CAIT. Suit yourself.

CAITHLEEN. Robbie wants *me*—wants to take me home with him—

CAIT. (*A laugh.*) Oh, there'll be plenty o' that, after this day! Plenty a goin' home with the boys—

CAITHLEEN. What are you—

CAIT. (*Overlapping.*) —'cause you become a bit of whore, Caithleen. (*Off her look.*) Yeah. There's no denyin' it. For so long you were such a good girl. Stupid, that. To be good for a world that takes no notice of it.

CAITHLEEN. An' then?

CAIT. Then you make up for it—and how! Dublin boys. Tourists. Young 'n' old. Married 'n' not.

CAITHLEEN. No—that can't be true—

CAIT. *Let him have a good eyeful to make his micky stand for him—serve him right—if that's all the harm ever we did in this vale of tears, God knows it's not much!—what else were we given all those desires for, I'd like to know*

CAITHLEEN. I won't do that. Won't whore around like you said.

Cait just smiles.

It would kill our Ma to know I did that!