



A Traveller's Home

Story by Conn Mac Gabhann
Illustrations by Niamh Merc



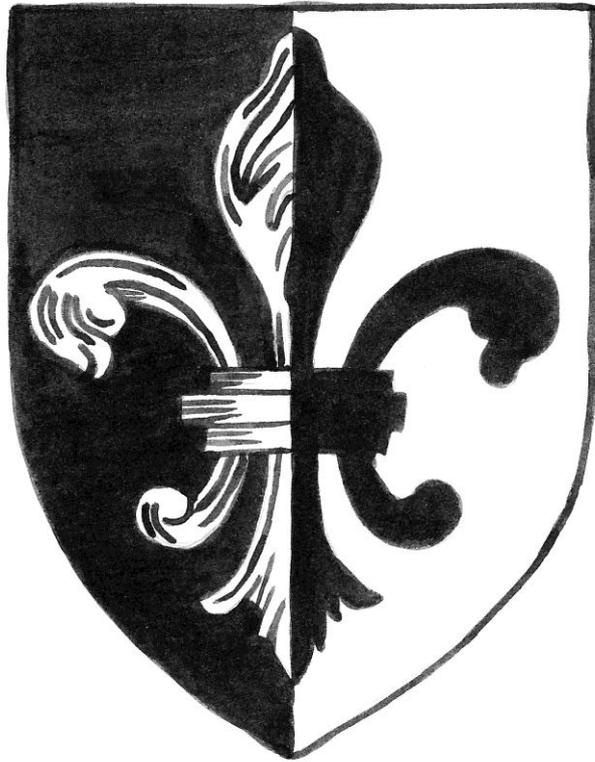
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John lives in Dublin.

He lives in a place called Finglas.

He is seventeen.

He is not like everybody else.

He is a city cowboy.



John had good friends.

His friends loved cars.

They loved drinking. They loved running after girls.

And they loved talking.

They loved talking more than anything.

"All they do is talk."

"I want to do something."



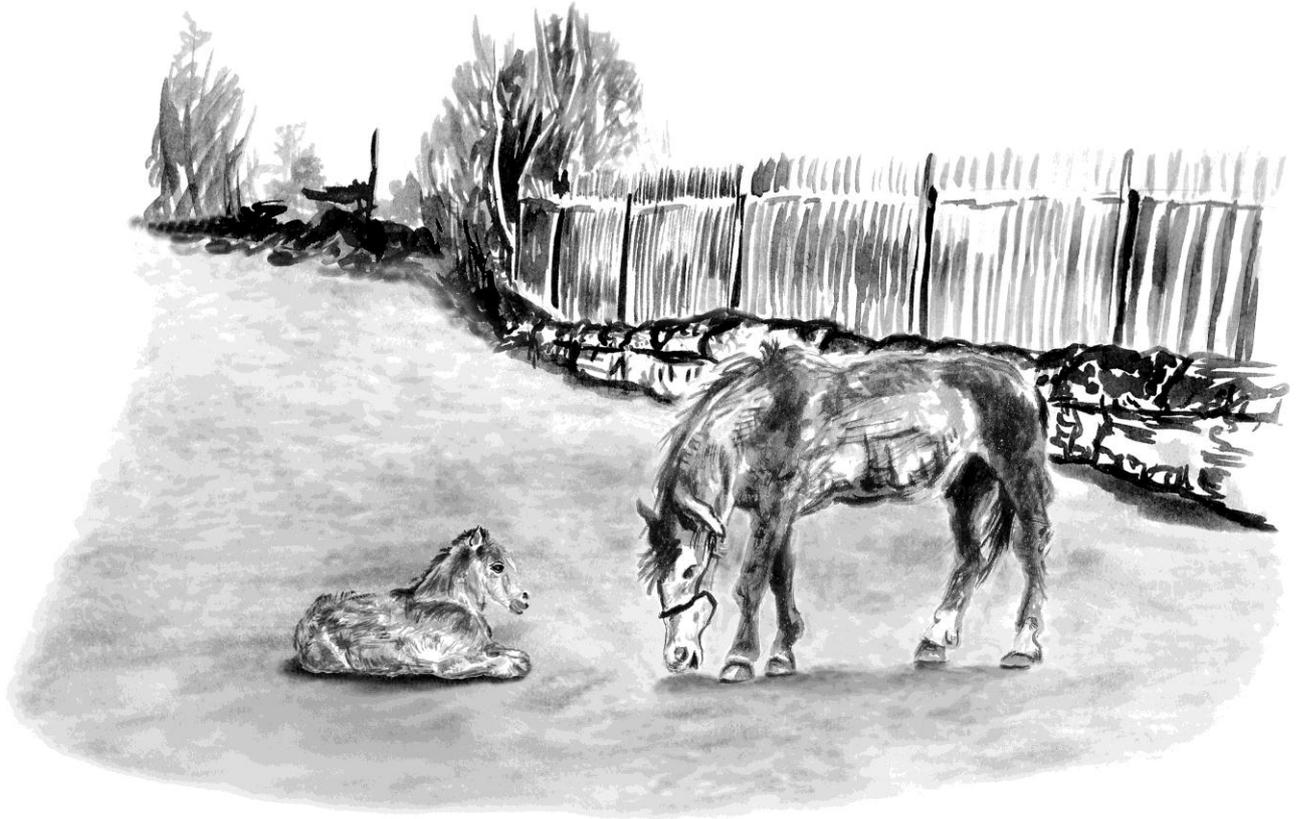
John loved horses.

He really loved horses.

He didn't have to speak.

He understood them.

And the horses understood him too.



John had two horses.

One was a great old horse called 'Patsy.'

The other one was a young pony called 'Boru.'

Patsy and Boru loved John.

John fed Patsy and Boru in the morning.

He brushed the horses in the afternoon.

And then John fed Patsy and Boru in the evening.



Patsy and Boru loved John.

But they didn't like the city.

The city didn't have grass.

The city had too many cars.

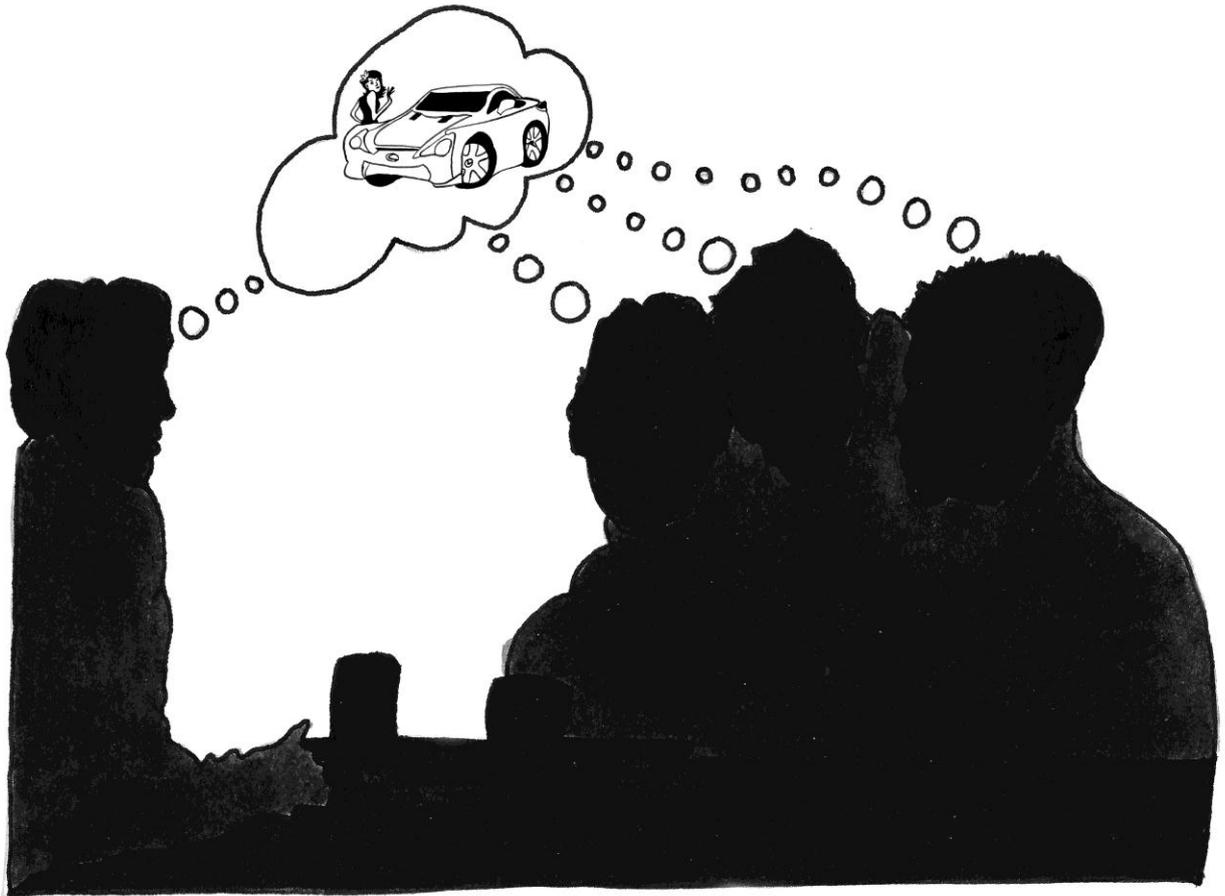


John's friends met at the canal every night.

Tom, Mac, Martin and Rancher were all there.

They drank and they smoked.

But the stories were the same every night.



John had heard it all before.

"Then she did this."

"Then she did that."

"It was wild!"

John didn't mind the lies. But it was boring.

Tom, Mac, Martin and Rancher didn't know any girls. Not really.

The only wild nights they had were in their heads.



Tom asked, "What's wrong, John?"

"Oh, nothing," John said.

"Well, you don't seem yourself today," Mac said.

John kicked a stone into the canal and said, "I'm just bored."

"I want adventure."

"I want to get out of here."

They all looked at one another.

They said nothing.

"I want to get out of here now."

"Goodbye, lads," John said as he walked away, along the canal.



The next day, John said to his mother, "I have to go away, Mam."

Then John spoke like an American, a real cowboy.

"I have to go to the Wild West."

"I have to do what a man's got to do."



John went out of the house. He went to Patsy and Boru in the field.

He got the old saddle from the shed and put it on Patsy.

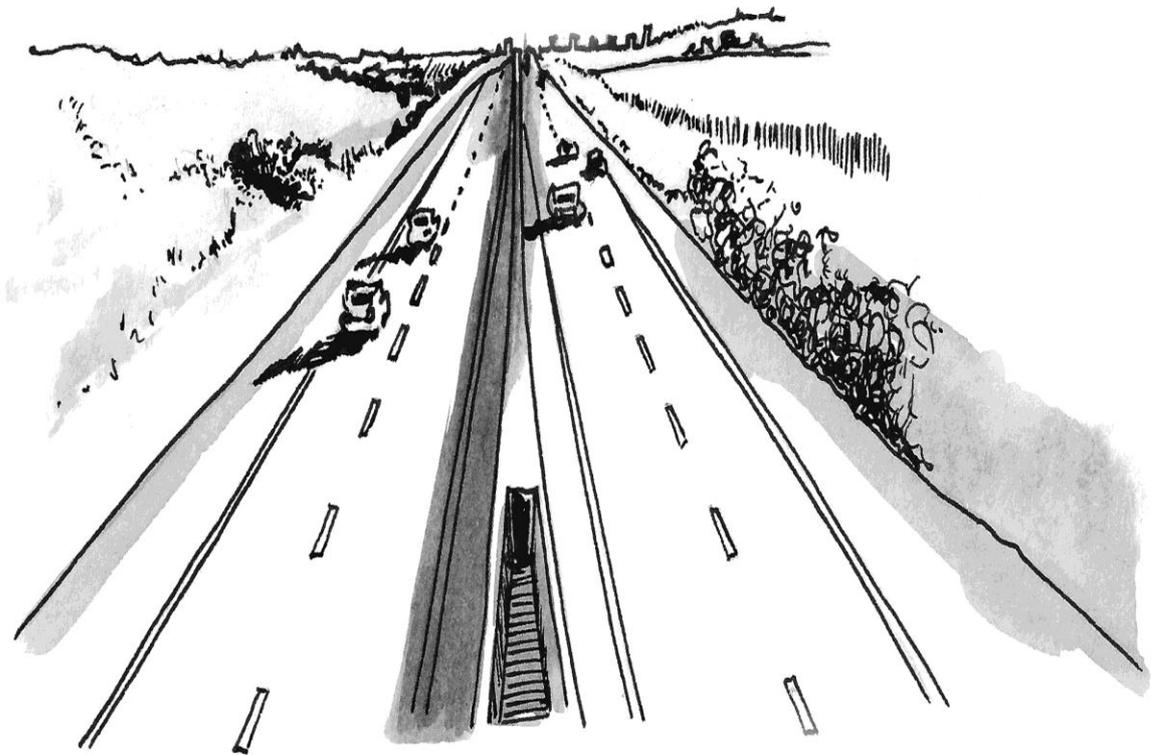
"We're going out west, Patsy."

He put a bag of food and a blanket on Boru's back.

"A new start. Open spaces. Fresh air. A new start for all of us."

John got up on Patsy's back.

And with Patsy and John at the front, Boru followed behind.



At the end of the road they stopped.

"Where now?" said John.

"With the sun on our back!"

They trotted slowly along the side of the motorway. Into the West!



John, Patsy and Boru went down the long road.

"Let's sleep here."

John sat on the grass.

Patsy and Boru went to sleep.



When they woke in the morning they saw it.

It was big. Very big.

It was a mountain.

It was The Reek.



John had heard of this holy place from his dad.

"I am going up The Reek."

So John went up The Reek.

But on the way up, John fell.



John sat on the hill.

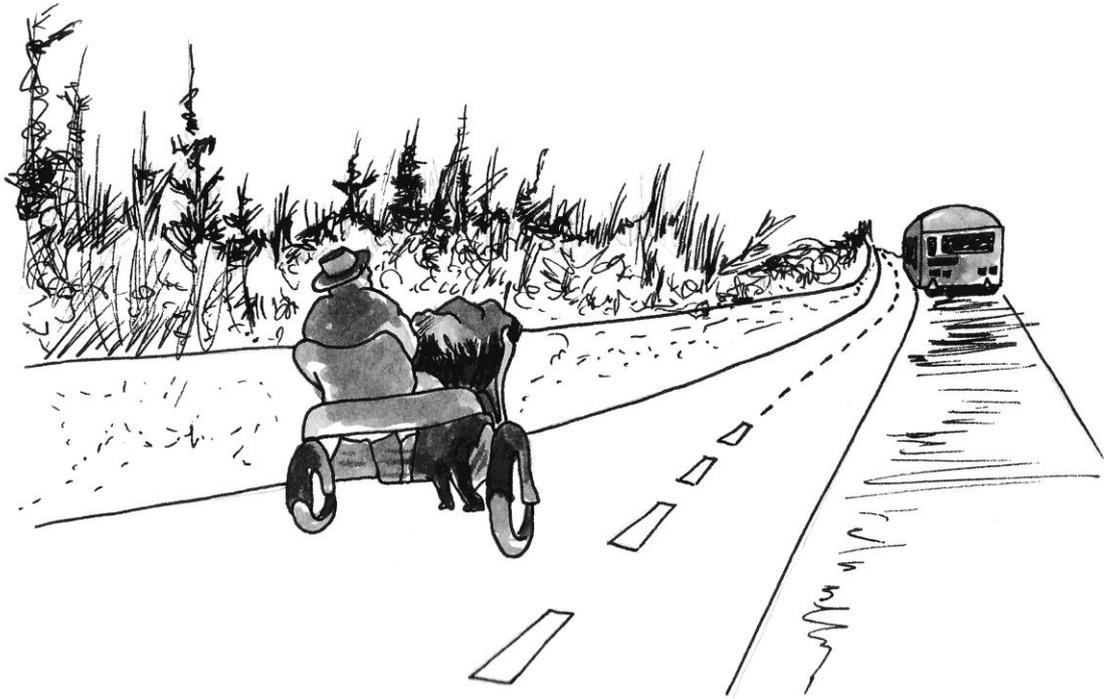
He was crying. John said, "I wish I was home."

Then he saw a man playing the pipes.

The man stopped playing.

He said, "A Traveller is always home."

Then he was gone.



John stood up.

He walked to the top of The Reek.

When John got to the bottom, he said, "Let's go back."

Then John, Patsy and Boru set off on the long road to Dublin.

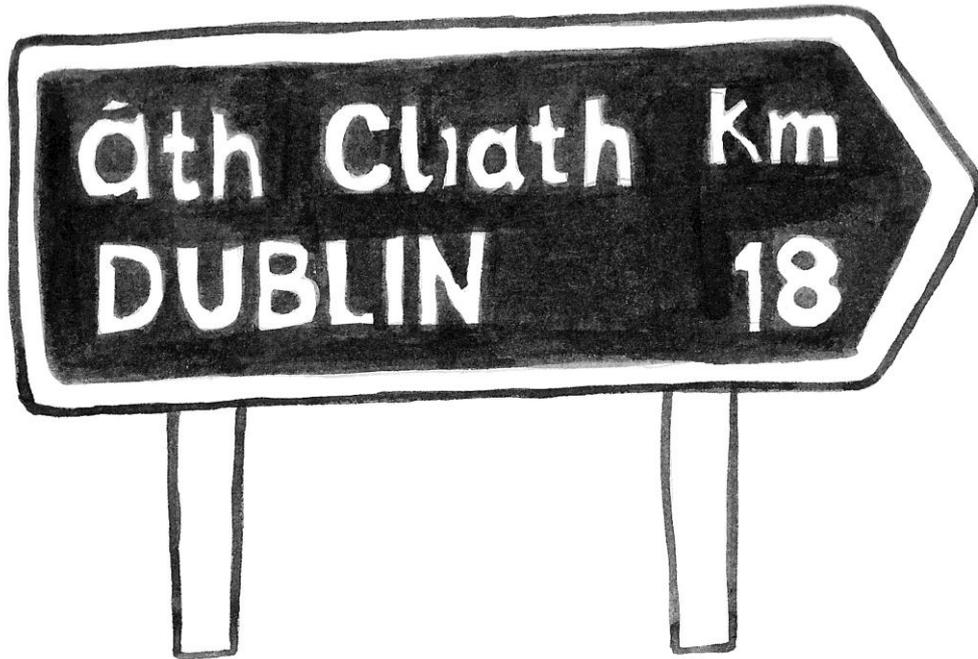


John, Patsy and Boru got to Dublin at night.

John fed Patsy and Boru. Then he closed the gate.

He went to his door. His mother hugged him.

Then John went to sleep.



The next night he met Tom, Mac, Martin and Rancher.

Mac told the same story again.

But John wasn't bored.

The piper's words came back to him.

John said to himself, "A Traveller is always home."

This book is part of a series developed and produced by The Irish Chaplaincy in Britain. The series aims to produce interesting reading material for adult early readers from Gypsy and Traveller backgrounds.



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