

# THE NINE O 'CLOCK TROT

Written by

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**JAMIE**- MID-TWENTIES, LIVERPOOL ACCENT

**NIAMH**- MID-TWENTIES, IRISH/DUBLIN ACCENT

**BOBBY**- EIGHTIES, LIVERPOOL ACCENT

**MICK**- FIFTIES, LIVERPOOL ACCENT

**FUNERAL DIRECTOR**- FORTIES, FORCED RP ACCENT

VARIOUS SMALL ROLES THAT CAN BE DOUBLED.

/ INDICATES AN INTERRUPTION

// INDICATES AN OVERLAP

2000.

A FERRY MOVES THROUGH THE RIVER MERSEY. SEAGULSS SQUAWK OVERHEAD, THE FOGHORN BLOWS, PASSENGERS MIX AND CHATTER.

BOBBY

Are you listening to me? That's where I used to work. Cammell Laird shipyard. Spent most of my life sat right there on that edge. Dangling my feet at dinner time, getting stuck into the cheese butties your Nan used to make me.

WIND WHIPS AGAINST THE FERRY.

BOBBY (CONT'D)

I hated cheese butties. Didn't have the heart to tell her though. Jamie, are you listening? Here, look into the water. See the way it bobs and weaves...crawls and creeps. It's its own master. Stare into it long enough and it'll reflect back an answer, you'll find what you're after son.

THE SOUNDS OF THE FERRY AND RIVER MERSEY START TO FADE, THEY'RE REPLACED BY FAINT KNOCKS AGAINST WOOD.

BOBBY (CONT'D)

(softly, fading)

I love it here.

THE KNOCKS BECOME LOUDER.

PRESENT.

LOUD KNOCKING ON WOOD.

FUNERAL DIRECTOR

(muffled)

Are you...are you in there?

A LONG, PAINFUL SQUEAK AS THE LID OF A COFFIN IS OPENED SLOWLY.

JAMIE

I just wanted to know what it felt like.

(beat)

It's quite peaceful.

FUNERAL DIRECTOR

I'm awfully sorry but you can't actually get in the coffins. They're for//

JAMIE

Dead people?

FUNERAL DIRECTOR

Those who have passed.

JAMIE

Of course, yeah, sorry I just....

JAMIE AWKWARDLY GETS OUT THE COFFIN, WOOD CREAKS AS HE DOES.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

I drifted off in there.

SOMEONE IN THE NEXT ROOM BLOWS THEIR NOSE INTO A TISSUE. THIS TURNS INTO A QUIET SOB.

FUNERAL DIRECTOR

As I was saying, we have an exquisite range that covers just about every need you could/

THE SOBS BECOME LOUDER.

FUNERAL DIRECTOR (CONT'D)

Every need you could wish for. We have/

THE SOBS BECOME PAINFUL WAILINGS OF GRIEF. THE DIRECTOR RUSHES TO THE DOOR AND SPEAKS TO THE RECEPTIONIST WHO IS NEXT DOOR.

FUNERAL DIRECTOR (CONT'D)

(off)

Susan, could you? Please?

HE CLOSSES THE DOOR WHICH DROWNS OUT THE WAILING, THEN FIDDLES WITH A SPEAKER. AFTER A BEAT, SOMBRE BACKGROUND MUSIC STARTS TO PLAY.

JAMIE

Think I've heard this in Starbucks.

FUNERAL DIRECTOR

Poor woman. Husband and the dog on the same day.

JAMIE

On the same day?!

FUNERAL DIRECTOR

Extendable lead, dog ran right under a bus.  
Husband rushes to the dog, gets blind sided and...

THE FUNERAL DIRECTOR LOUDLY CLAPS HIS HANDS TOGETHER.

FUNERAL DIRECTOR (CONT'D)

Didn't see the second bus coming.

BEAT. HE KNOCKS ON THE WOOD COFFIN.

FUNERAL DIRECTOR (CONT'D)

So! You like this one?

JAMIE

Erm, well, I don't know much about coffins. I mean that's the first time I've been in one. It was comfy.

FUNERAL DIRECTOR

A coffin should be a comfortable final resting place, but it can be more than that.

JAMIE

More than that?

FUNERAL DIRECTOR

So much more. It can be an expression of pride, a remembrance of love, a celebration of a loved ones interests and passions.

JAMIE

I'm just after something basic/

FUNERAL DIRECTOR

If you don't mind me asking, did your loved one have a hobby?

JAMIE  
Erm...crosswords, boats, the sea...budgies.

FUNERAL DIRECTOR  
Budgies?

JAMIE  
Yeah, you know....keeping them, breeding them.

FUNERAL DIRECTOR  
Of course. Well....

**HE TAPS ON THE WOOD AND DRAGS HIS FINGER ACROSS IT.**

FUNERAL DIRECTOR (CONT'D)  
We could put a boat sailing across the sea with two budgies above it right...here. Maybe a crossword clue somewhere.

JAMIE  
Why would I want/

FUNERAL DIRECTOR  
We've got a really talented engraver who would have no trouble doing that. This kind of wood really lends itself to engraving. I mean, that's if you even want wood?

JAMIE  
Why wouldn't I want wood?

FUNERAL DIRECTOR  
Hmm. Wood coffins are the preferred choice of most families. The natural warmth evokes memories of home.

**HE MOVES ACROSS THE ROOM, JAMIE FOLLOWS.**

FUNERAL DIRECTOR (CONT'D)  
But metal coffins...

**METALLIC THUDS AS HE BANGS ON A COFFIN.**

FUNERAL DIRECTOR (CONT'D)  
Metal coffins offer even more than wood. They're more durable for a start, and they can include gaskets to help protect against the elements.

**(MORE)**

**FUNERAL DIRECTOR (CONT'D)**

You've seen the news- global warming? Hello? God knows where we'll be in a few years.

JAMIE

Jesus. I hadn't thought about global warming.

FUNERAL DIRECTOR

(earnestly)

No-body ever does.

JAMIE

They sound quite, well, really expensive.

FUNERAL DIRECTOR

Ultimately, we just want what's best for our loved ones, don't we?

**THE QUESTION HANGS IN THE AIR.**

JAMIE

And how much would something like this set me back?

FUNERAL DIRECTOR

Hmm, let me see. We could do the wood for sixteen hundred, excluding budgie engravings. The metal...mmm...let's say... two thou.

**JAMIE LAUGHS, CHOKES AND SNORTS ALL AT THE SAME TIME.**

JAMIE

They're a little bit out of my budget.

FUNERAL DIRECTOR

Okay. What are we working with?

JAMIE

Seventy five quid.

**SILENCE.**

FUNERAL DIRECTOR

We offer a range of finance options that can help pay/

JAMIE

I had a contract with Vodafone a couple of years ago.

FUNERAL DIRECTOR

Finance out the window then.

THE COFFIN LID BANGS SHUT. THE SALES PITCH IS OVER.

FUNERAL DIRECTOR (CONT'D)

What are you after?

JAMIE

Just a coffin, or a box, or something you know. Cheap but sturdy. Respectable... but cheap.

THE FUNERAL DIRECTOR RIPS A PIECE OF PAPER FROM A NOTEBOOK. A PEN SCRIBBLES ON IT.

JAMIE READS FROM IT.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

Compare the coffin dot com.

(beat)

Are you having me on?

FUNERAL DIRECTOR

You'll find something on there.

3

**INT. JAMIE'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM.**

3

A YOUTUBE TUTORIAL VIDEO PLAYS. A JOVIAL AND SOOTHING SOUTHERN AMERICAN VOICE FILLS THE ROOM.

A TOOLBOX IS RIFLED THROUGH. HAMMERS AND NAILS ARE REMOVED.

YOUTUBE TUTOR

(distort)

Handyman fifty five back in the workshop with part two on how to build your very own pine coffin. Now that we've prepared the wood and glued the boards, it's time to carefully drill and screw them together.

JAMIE  
 (searching)  
 Glue...glue...glue...ah fuck it.

JAMIE RHYTHMICALLY TAPS A NAIL INTO A PIECE OF WOOD. THEN ANOTHER. AND ANOTHER.

A DRILL BUZZES FROM THE YOUTUBE VIDEO.

YOUTUBE TUTOR  
 (distort)  
 Here's the holes I've drilled, and what I'll be doing is putting plugs in there so you can't see any of those screws. It's much more pleasing on the little old eye.

WOODS SNAPS AND CRACKS AS A NAIL BURIES INTO IT.

JAMIE  
 (to himself)  
 Shit.

THE RHYTHM OF THE HAMMERING BECOMES FASTER.

YOUTUBE TUTOR  
 (distort)  
 And I think it's always worth remembering this ain't an overnight project guys.

THE HAMMERING IS ERRATIC NOW- VIOLENT EVEN. JAMIE SMASHES THE WOOD TO PIECES.

YOUTUBE TUTOR (CONT'D)  
 (distort)  
 It takes time, patience...

THE CRUSH OF BONE IN JAMIE'S THUMB AS THE HAMMER LANDS ON IT. THE HAMMER DROPS TO THE FLOOR.

HE MOANS IN AGONY.

YOUTUBE TUTOR (CONT'D)  
 Some love and care.

THE VIDEO IS SWITCHED OFF.



HEAVY BREATHS ESCAPE FROM JAMIE.

JAMIE (V.O.)

The average cost of a funeral is four thousand one hundred and eighty four quid. Four thousand... one hundred... and eighty four quid. It bounces round me head all day. A cremation is a little bit cheaper but catholics and fire don't mix. I earn just enough from working part time/

4 INT. DWP CENTRE.

4

THE BUSTLE AND SADNESS OF A BENEFITS OFFICE.

BENEFITS ADVISOR

I'm sorry but your earnings exceed the threshold amount therefore you don't qualify for a funeral expenses payment.

JAMIE (V.O.)

And I don't earn quite enough to be able to/

5 INT. BANK.

5

THE UNNERVING SILENCE OF A BANK OFFICE, THE CUSTOMER ADVISOR CLICKS AWAY AT A COMPUTER MAKING VARIOUS NOISES AS SHE READS THE SCREEN.

BANK ADVISOR

Hmm...mmm...We've reviewed your application for a loan and credit card, and we're sorry to say we're unable to offer you these services at the moment.

6 INT. JAMIE'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM.

6

HE STACKS THE BROKEN WOOD.

JAMIE (V.O.)

The way they look at you in the funeral homes like...like your nothing. Like the one thing you should have sorted in your life is a few grand to bury someone you love. Like that's the only way to give them a proper send off.

HE PICKS UP HIS KEYS AND COUNTS OUT SOME MONEY, A FEW NOTES AND COINS.

JAMIE (V.O.)

Well...it's not.

7

**INT. PUB. EVENING.**

7

A FEW REGULARS CHAT TO EACH OTHER, ONLY STOPPING WHEN THE FOOTBALL ON T.V. CATCHES THEIR ATTENTION.

DRINKS AND SNACKS ARE RESTOCKED BEHIND THE BAR AS THEY GET READY FOR A BUSY NIGHT. GLASSES CLINK, PINTS ARE PULLED.

JAMIE COUNTS THE CHANGE IN HIS HAND AS HE WAITS TO BE SERVED.

CUSTOMER

If I catch them, I'll break their legs.

MICK

How many did they take?

CUSTOMER

It's not about that. It's the principle of it, they've come up my path and robbed my property.

MICK

That's six twenty please.

THE CUSTOMER HANDS HIS MONEY OVER.

CUSTOMER

And you're own Mick.

(beat, fading as he walks away  
from the bar)

Little bastards they are. It's Carol I feel for really.  
She's been looking forward to this new driveway for  
ages, she even picked the colour- monksbridge red.  
Gorgeous it was, looked like art/

MICK

(muffled with his head down)  
Alright mate, what can I get/

(clear as he lifts his head)

**(MORE)**

**MICK (CONT'D)**

Bloody hell! How's things lad? I thought you'd packed your bags and legged it to Tangier.

JAMIE

Tangier?

MICK

Tangier, Tenerife, Timbuktu- take your pick. I thought young Jamie had moved on to pastures new.

JAMIE

Still here Mick, unfortunately.

MICK

What're you having?

JAMIE

Just a lager please.

MICK GRABS A GLASS AND STARTS PULLING A PINT.

FROM A DISTANCE, WE HEAR THE SOUNDS OF BARRELS BEING CHANGED IN THE CELLAR.

MICK

You still living with Bobby? How is the old sod?

JAMIE

(nervous)

He's fine, he's sound, he's great. Yeah...still with him/

MICK

(serious)

Can I ask you something?

JAMIE

No...I mean, yeah. Well, it depends what it is.

HE STOPS POURING THE PINT.

MICK  
 Have you and Bobby stopped coming in because of  
 karaoke Tuesdays? I know some people weren't  
 happy about it, especially Brian, the little baldy...

HE SIGHS. THE POURING OF THE PINT IS RESUMED.

FOOTSTEPS ASCEND FROM THE CELLAR.

MICK (CONT'D)  
 It brings in a bit of extra money, know what I mean?  
 The twins are getting half decent at duetting Islands  
 in the Stream as well.

HE PUTS THE PINT IN FRONT OF JAMIE.

MICK (CONT'D)  
 And Niamh, well I didn't know she had a set of lungs  
 on her.

THE FOOTSTEPS STOP. LOUD THUDS ON THE CELLAR DOOR.

NIAMH  
 (off)  
 Coming up.

JAMIE  
 (confused)  
 Niamh?

MICK  
 Come on girl.

THE CELLAR DOOR OPENS AND NIAMH APPEARS BEHIND THE BAR.

JAMIE  
 (shocked)  
 Niamh?

NIAMH  
 Hello stranger.

SILENCE.

MICK  
 I thought you'd have...I thought she'd have... that  
 ones on the house Jamie.

8

**INT. PUB. LATER.**

8

JAMIE SITS AT A TABLE WITH HIS EARPHONES IN. HE LISTENS TO A YOUTUBE VIDEO.

VIDEO

(distort)

Enjoy the fresh air and incredible views of  
Liverpool's skyline with our famous Mersey Ferry.

HE REMOVES AN EARPHONE AND THE NOISE OF THE PUB FLOODS IN. IT'S BUSIER NOW,  
MUSIC AND CHATTER FILL THE AIR.

NIAMH

Got you a pint.

HE TAKES THE OTHER EARPHONE OUT.NIAMH SITS OPPOSITE AND PUTS A PINT IN FRONT OF HIM. SHE TAKES A GULP OF HER  
DRINK.

NIAMH (CONT'D)

What are you listening to?

JAMIE

Arctic Monkeys.

NIAMH

Latest album? Wild. A luxury resort on the moon?  
What a fuckin' concept.

JAMIE

First album. Before they sold out and he started  
speaking with an American accent.

NIAMH

I can still hear the Sheffield in him.

JAMIE

They'll never top the first album.

NIAMH

Sure they will, they already have!

JAMIE

Don't be daft.

NIAMH

AM. Far better than the first.

JAMIE

No chance.

NIAMH

They moved forward man, they matured and expanded. They grew!

JAMIE

They should have stood still for a while, realised what they had.

SILENCE.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

Didn't think I'd see you in here again.

NIAMH

Aye. Been back two months now. Was wondering when you'd show up. Mick said you haven't been in for months.

JAMIE

Keeping busy.

NIAMH

New girl?

JAMIE

You can't keep a part-time librarian off the market for long.

SHE LAUGHS.

NIAMH

How's your Grandad?

JAMIE

Old and poor.

NIAMH

That a condition is it?

JAMIE

Terminal one.

AWKWARD.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

How come you're back?

I missed it. NIAMH

What? JAMIE

Honestly? NIAMH

Honestly. JAMIE

NIAMH  
The pollo al forno in the Casa. You just can't get a pollo al forno like that anywhere else.

(beat)  
I got accepted on a Masters course, English lit.  
Couldn't turn it down.

JAMIE CONSIDERS THIS.

JAMIE  
It is a good pollo al forno.

NIAMH  
You haven't touched your pint.

JAMIE  
I don't drink Guinness anymore. Not since...

NIAMH  
You're joking? Since?

JAMIE  
Yeah, since...

NIAMH  
Did you throw all your green clothes away too? Burn your James Joyce books? Tweet your man Bono and call him a bastard?

SHE LAUGHS TO HERSELF, THINKS ABOUT IT FOR A BEAT.

NIAMH (CONT'D)

That's actually quite romantic. None of my other exes brought in a blanket ban on Irish goods.

WE ZOOM OUT OF THE CONVERSATION. THE NOISE OF THE PUB SOFTENS AND FADES. IT'S AS IF TIME HAS STOOD STILL.

JAMIE (V.O.)

She's joking, but I did rip me copy of Dubliners up. Bono hasn't got Twitter, and I don't believe in online trolling anyway. I mean, does he really need to be told he's a bastard? He must know.

HE LETS OUT A DEEP SIGH.

JAMIE (V.O.)

It's true I haven't had a Guinness since we split up. It just didn't taste the same. If I'm being honest, her turning up hasn't really helped me emotional state, you know? Look at her, sitting there with those blue fucking marble eyes...hair falling above the right one so you can't help but look into them. Smile that could calm a horse.

(beat)

I know she'd want to help.

THE ROOM BURSTS INTO LIFE AGAIN.

MICK RINGS A BELL THREE TIMES.

MICK

(off)

Last orders please! Last orders.

JAMIE

D'ya wanna crack on in ours?

9

**EXT/INT. JAMIE'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM.**

9

JAMIE AND NIAMH TROT UP THE PATH. BOTTLES AND CANS KNOCK INTO EACH OTHER IN A SHOPPING BAG.

JAMIE STRUGGLES TO GET THE KEY IN THE DOOR.



JAMIE

The house is a bit...

THE DOOR CREAKS OPEN AND THEY STUMBLE INTO THE HOUSE.

NIAMH

Christ. What's that smell?

JAMIE

Probably all the budgie shite, I had to bring them in the kitchen.

NIAMH

Why?!

NIAMH WALKS STRAIGHT INTO WRECKAGE OF WOOD FROM EARLIER. IT CRACKS UNDER HER FEET. JAMIE MOVES AROUND THE ROOM AND SWITCHES THE LIGHTS ON.

JAMIE

Was trying to build them a new aviary, it didn't really go to plan.

NIAMH

Yeah...I can see that. You were never the Nick Knowles type.

JAMIE

What's he got to do with it?

NIAMH

You know, building stuff an that?

JAMIE

Thought he was Mr Blobby? Then he swerved the suit and did that box game...Deal or No Deal.

NIAMH

That's Noel Edmonds.

JAMIE

Same thing.

NIAMH CRACKS OPEN TWO CANS AND HANDS ONE TO JAMIE. HE OPENS HIS LAPTOP AND THE COFFIN TUTORIAL STARTS TO PLAY, HE QUICKLY SWITCHES IT OFF.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

Come on DJ, what are we having?

NIAMH

I'm feeling a bit of...northern soul!

JAMIE TYPES AWAY AT THE LAPTOP.

JAMIE

You're not going to side step and spin all over the place, are you?

NIAMH

I'd be spending the rest of the night picking splinters out me feet if I did. State of the place.

JAMIE LAUGHS. HE PUTS ON A NORTHERN SOUL CLASSIC (SUGGESTION, SOMETHING LIKE --DO I LOVE YOU BY FRANK WILSON OR HERE I GO AGAIN BY ARCHIE BELL & THE DRELLS), IT'S LOUD.

NIAMH (CONT'D)

You'll wake your Grandad up!

JAMIE

(sadly)

He won't mind, honestly. Won't hear a thing.

NIAMH

Maybe just a little side step and spin then?

SHE SPINS ACROSS THE ROOM LAUGHING, SIDE STEPPING AND KICKING AS SHE DOES. HER SHOES SQUEAK ON THE FLOOR.

JAMIE

I've got some WD40 for them.

NIAMH

Dance with me.

JAMIE

No chance.

NIAMH  
Come on, dance with me. Get that little bony arse  
moving...

SHE PULLS HIM CLOSE. THE MUSIC SWIRLS AROUND THEM AND THEN FADES AWAY..

JAMIE (V.O.)  
Oh fuck. We're going to kiss. I've gotta be honest  
with her, haven't I? I can't just...

THEY KISS. THE MUSIC SWIRLS ONCE MORE. AFTER A BEAT HE BREAKS THE KISS.

JAMIE  
Me Grandads here.

NIAMH  
I know don't worry//

JAMIE  
I mean he's here, in the room.

SHE LOOKS AROUND.

NIAMH  
Errrr...he's not Jamie.

JAMIE  
He's on the couch.

NIAMH  
(laughing)  
Has your can been spiked?

JAMIE SWITCHES THE MUSIC OFF AND MOVES TO THE COUCH. HE PULLS BACK A  
BLANKET TO REVEAL BOBBY'S BODY LYING ON THE COUCH.

SILENCE.

NIAMH (CONT'D)  
(whispering)  
Why's he sleeping on the couch in a suit?!

JAMIE  
He's not sleeping...he's dead.

NIAMH  
Give over will ya? Bobby?...Bobby!

SILENCE.

JAMIE

He's dead.

NIAMH

Jamie...what's going on?

JAMIE

Look/

NIAMH

Oh God, is that what the smell is?

JAMIE

Listen if you just give me a minute I was about to get to the death part.

NIAMH

About to get to the death part? The death part? Start with the fucking death part Jamie!

(beat)

Jesus...I was going to sleep with you tonight. It would have been like...necrophilia!

JAMIE

No I think that's when you...well yeah it still would have been weird. Just let me explain.

SILENCE. JAMIE CRACKS TWO CANS.

NIAMH

I'm going to need something a bit stronger.

HE LEAVES THE ROOM, HE ROOTS AROUND THE KITCHEN FOR GLASSES.

NIAMH (CONT'D)

(to herself)

Come back for a drink he says.

JAMIE RETURNS, OPENS A BOTTLE OF VODKA AND POURS TWO GENEROUS MEASURES. NIAMH DOWNS HERS IN ONE.

NIAMH (CONT'D)

Keep it coming.

HE POURS AGAIN. HE TYPES INTO THE LAPTOP. 'WALK ON THE WILDSIDE BY LOU REED'  
STARTS TO PLAY QUIETLY.

JAMIE

I asked him what his favourite song was once, and he said this.

NIAMH

(shocked)

He was into Lou Reed?

JAMIE

No. He just loved this song. Had no idea what it was about, but he loved the 'doo, do, doo, do, doo, do, do, doo...' part.

(beat)

D'you think me Grandad was a pauper?

NIAMH

A pauper?

JAMIE

Yeah.

NIAMH

No//

JAMIE

Like we've never been well off, but would you call him a pauper?

NIAMH

Of course I wouldn't.

JAMIE

Well that's what they'll call him Niamh. That's what he'll be remembered as.

(beat)

**(MORE)**

**JAMIE (CONT'D)**

No memorial, no markings, nothing. They'll throw him a pauper's grave and that'll be it.

NIAMH

What are you goin' on about? They can't just do that Jamie.

JAMIE

They can, and they will, because I can't afford to bury him.

NIAMH

There must be other/

JAMIE

(voice cracking near the end)  
I've tried. I've tried everything.

(beat)

The nine o'clock trot they used to call it. You think they'd have moved on wouldn't you? Give people some dignity in death. But just in case someone didn't know... they give you the pauper's slot to make sure. Can't afford to live, can't afford to fucking die.

**HE DOWNS HIS VODKA.**

NIAMH

He wasn't a pauper Jamie. He doesn't deserve to be forgotten like that, nobody does.

JAMIE

You're right. Nobody does.

(beat)

And he won't be. He won't be forgotten.

NIAMH

You can't just keep him on the couch though...

JAMIE

I need your help Niamh.

**SHE SHIFTS IN HER SEAT.**

NIAMH

I mean, I've got a student loan coming in in two weeks but I really need that for/

JAMIE

I don't want money Niamh, just you. I need you.

NIAMH

Is this really the time to be talking about getting back together//

JAMIE

I need you to help me bury him.

BEAT.

NIAMH

You want me to help you bury him?

SILENCE. THE QUESTION HANGS IN THE AIR.

NIAMH (CONT'D)

Of course I'll help If I/

JAMIE SPRINGS TO HIS FEET. HE PICKS UP A HOLDALL AND UNZIPS IT. HE PULLS OUT SMALL DRIVEWAY BRICKS AND LAYS THEM ON THE FLOOR.

JAMIE

All he ever talked about was his time in the Navy. You heard the stories enough times. He adored the sea- the vastness, the calmness, the freedom of it. I mean he even got a job in the shipyard so he could look at it every day. He had to be close to it...it was part of him.

(beat)

There's a ferry tomorrow at twelve.

NIAMH

Yeah?

JAMIE

We're going to take him on...and bury him at sea.

(beat)

Don't look at me like that.

**(MORE)**

**JAMIE (CONT'D)**

We're going to tie these bricks to him, wheel him on, say our goodbyes, and when no-one is looking, we're going to throw him over the side.

NIAMH

Have you lost your fucking mind?

JAMIE

No. I haven't. I just want to bury him the way he would have wanted.

NIAMH

You think he would have wanted to be lashed over the side of a ferry in front of tourists?

JAMIE

Buried. At. Sea.

(beat)

You said you'd help.

NIAMH

Oh, I know I did. And you know what, Jamie? I meant it too. What I didn't mean was, do you need help throwing a dead body into the Mersey?

JAMIE

(emotional)

I don't care what you meant. I need your help throwing my fucking dead Grandad off the fucking ferry at twelve o'fucking clock tomorrow Niamh.

(beat)

You're the only person I've got...and I haven't even got you anymore.

**SILENCE. THEY BOTH DOWN THEIR DRINKS.**

NIAMH

I swear to God, Jamie, if we get caught doing this you've got to say you forced me into it.

JAMIE

I will. I promise.

(beat)

**(MORE)**



**JAMIE (CONT'D)**

I won't be telling any lies, we have been forced into it.

THE SAXOPHONE OUTRO FROM 'WALK ON THE WILDSIDE' PLAYS.

10

**INT. JAMIE'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM. LATER.**

10

JAMIE AND NIAMH ARE A LOT MORE DRUNK. THE SOUND OF AN EMPTY CAN BEING SQUEEZED AND CRUSHED.

THE TV HAS REPLACED THE MUSIC, IT'S SOME SORT OF EARLY HOURS QVC/SHOPPING CHANNEL SELLING MOPS THAT YOU CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT.

THEY SIT STARING AT BOBBY.

JAMIE

What d'ya think happens when you die?

NIAMH

In what way?

JAMIE

Like after your dead, the afterlife, what comes next and all that.

NIAMH

Never really thought about it. Not worth thinkin' about.

JAMIE

You're telling me you've never thought about dying?

NIAMH

No. Well...yeah. But I don't like to bother meself with all that, you know? What good can it do? I mean, no-one knows, do they?

JAMIE

Yeah but you can't just not have a view on it, you must believe something. Or at least think something.

NIAMH

I got taught this eye thing at school, that's always stayed with me.

JAMIE

What eye thing?

NIAMH

Ah it was in religious studies.

JAMIE

We didn't get taught no eye thing.

(beat)

Our religious studies teacher doubled as the dance teacher, she was more arsed about getting the moves to Saturday Night Fever right. Go on then, what's this eye thing?

NIAMH

Well, like, the human eye...it's perfect.

JAMIE

No it's not.

NIAMH

What d'ya mean no it's not?

JAMIE

It's clearly not perfect. If it was perfect there wouldn't be a Specsavers in every city, would there?

NIAMH

Don't you fucking start Jamie Riley.

JAMIE

Sorry, sorry. Go on...you can't just say it's perfect.

NIAMH

Darwin...Charles Darwin...the fucking Charles Darwin...was baffled by the eye. Even Darwin admitted that the complexity of the eye, the fucking wonder of it, meant he couldn't work out how it fitted into his evolution stuff.

JAMIE

Right. What's that got to do with the afterlife?

NIAMH

Our teacher said that the eye was so profound, so perfect, that it proved not everything can be explained by science. It proved that there must be a greater being out there.

(beat)

You blink like four million times a year or something, and every time you do, the eye cleans itself. I mean it's pretty fucking impressive when you think about it.

SILENCE. JAMIE CONSIDERS THIS.

JAMIE

First off, how can you remember so much from school? Secondly, did you have any blind kids in your class?

NIAMH

No.

JAMIE

There you go then. Do you think your teacher would be spouting that shite if there had been? D'you think she'd be banging on about the wonder of the human eye if Stevie Wonder was sitting at the back of the class?

(beat)

Would she fuck. Because Stevie would put his hand up and say 'sorry, your eyes might be alright, but mine are shite.' Or he might have sang it.

NIAMH

Obviously some go wrong or are diseased but that's still a minority when you consider//

JAMIE

So now you can just discount Stevie fucking Wonder from the argument? Because eyes are so great that means there's a God?

NIAMH POURS HERSELF A DRINK.

NIAMH

I didn't say I believed it.

JAMIE

Yes you did.

NIAMH

I said it's always stuck with me.

(beat)

So what's your great theory on the afterlife then? Is Darwin baffled by you?

JAMIE SITS UP, CLEARS HIS THORAT.

JAMIE

I doubt there's a heaven or hell like.

(beat)

In fact, I'm pretty sure that's all bollocks. But I had this thought ages ago that stuck with me...bit like your eye thing.

NIAMH

Go on...

JAMIE

Well...just like...your body rots and that doesn't it? Decomposes. But your brain, mind, soul...whatever is in there...that's always there. Just floating about. So I reckon when you die, your mind or soul just keeps going.

(beat)

So there's nothing left but your feelings and memories. Just them...and you...and the darkness. And you know, you're trapped in this darkness for eternity, and no matter what you can't escape your own thoughts and feelings. They just play on a loop forever. In like...eternal darkness...forever.

SILENCE.

NIAMH

Fucking hell Jamie.

JAMIE

What?

NIAMH

I prefer the eye thing.

JAMIE

Haven't you ever thought of that?

NIAMH

Why would I have thought of that? I'm mentally stable, I'm alright!

(beat)

So how the fuck does it end?

JAMIE

Which?

NIAMH

The darkness!

JAMIE

It doesn't end, it's eternal.

NIAMH

So that's it? There's nothing else?

JAMIE

Well that's the fucking point of eternity, it's eternal.

NIAMH

No. I'm not having that. I'm sticking with the eye thing.

JAMIE

We won't even need eyes soon. Apple with just bring out iEyes and those poor Chinese kids will have the pleasure of spending the entirety of their lives making the fucking things.

(beat)

Probably losing their eyesight in the process.

NIAMH

iEyes?

NIAMH STANDS AND CLAPS HER HANDS TOGETHER. READY FOR A DECLARATION.

NIAMH (CONT'D)

If there is an afterlife, and Bobby is there looking down on us, I'm certain he wouldn't want us talking about Stevie Wonder and slave labour.

JAMIE

He did like Stevie...

NIAMH

We should say a few words for him, you know like a bit of a eulogy.

JAMIE

Yeah...yeah I think he'd like that.

NIAMH

Have you got any candles?

JAMIE MOVES INTO THE KITCHEN AND STARTS TO ROOT AROUND. HE RETURNS, STRIKES A MATCH AND LIGHTS A CANDLE.

THEY MOVE TO THE COUCH AND STAND IN SILENCE FOR A MOMENT.

JAMIE

D'you want to go first?

NIAMH

Erm, yeah...okay.

SHE CLEARS HER THROAT- A COUPLE OF TIMES. STALLING UNTIL SHE CAN FIND THE RIGHT WORDS.

NIAMH (CONT'D)

Dear Bobby, I didn't expect...

(beat)

What's that smell?

JAMIE

It's the candle...it's flavoured. Mango peach salsa.

NIAMH

Suppose it's better than incense.

(beat)

Dear Bobby, I didn't ever expect...to see you like this. But would you believe, in death you've still got a smile on you face... honestly if you could see yourself now...well maybe you can. You were a good man, a nice man. Sometimes that's thrown back at people- they're too 'nice'. The world needs more nice people like you Bobby.

(beat)

Jamie's gonna see to it that you get a proper send off. You know, the first time we met you told me somethin' about him. I never really knew what you meant until today...you were right.

SHE STEPS AWAY FROM THE COUCH AND RAISES A DRINK TO HIM.

NIAMH (CONT'D)

Sleep tight Bobby.

SHE NECKS THE DRINK.

JAMIE TAKES A COUPLE OF DEEP BREATHS.

JAMIE

Alright Grandad... Listen, I know this isn't ideal and in a perfect world we wouldn't be...well you wouldn't be on the couch, but it's not a perfect world and/

NIAMH COUGHS, A POINTER- 'KEEP IT ABOUT BOBBY'.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

I just wanted you to know that these last twelve months have been some of the happiest times I've had- which sounds mad doesn't it? I know I had to start doing more things for you, but it was a privilege. You knew that didn't you? I hope you knew that. All that time I got to spend with you, all that time spent getting closer. You kept saying 'when I was younger I never had time for anything, now all I've got is time'.

(MORE)

**JAMIE (CONT'D)**

I wish you had a little bit more, just a little bit more  
so I could tell you that you meant everything to me.  
And I want everyone to know that you weren't a  
pauper, another forgotten name- you were my  
Grandad.

(beat, he starts to cry)  
And I love you.

NIAMH PUTS AN ARM ROUND HIM AND THEIR GLASSES CLINK TOGETHER IN HONOUR.

11

**INT. JAMIE'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM. MORNING.**

11

LOUD SNORING FROM JAMIE.

THERE ARE SOUNDS OF LIFE FROM OUTSIDE. CARS, PEOPLE PASSING, GENERAL  
MORNING BUSINESS.

THE TELEVISION STILL ON, BREAKFAST TV NOW.

HE SNAPS OUT OF HIS SLEEP WITH A START. THE DRY SLAPPING OF HIS HUNGOVER LIPS.  
HE GULPS WHATEVER DRINK IS NEXT TO HIM.

JAMIE  
Niamh?... Niamh?... Niamh?

HE GETS UP AND MOVES AROUND THE HOUSE LOOKING FOR NIAMH.

JAMIE (V.O.)  
Of course she's gone. I'm surprised she didn't run  
out the house last night. What the fuck was I  
thinking? I asked my ex-girlfriend, with a straight  
face, if she'd help bury me Grandad at sea.

(beat)  
She's probably on her way back to Dublin.

HE SITS DOWN, HEAD IN HANDS.

JAMIE (V.O.)  
What is wrong with you Jamie? Why did you think/

LOUD THUDS ON THE FRONT DOOR.

JAMIE  
Shit.



HE CREEPS TO THE WINDOW AND PEERS OUT.

AFTER A FEW MOMENTS HE OPENS THE FRONT DOOR AND NIAMH ENTERS IN A WHIRLWIND.

JAMIE (CONT'D)  
You look/

NIAMH  
If we're doing it we're doing it properly, black clothes. Respectful an all. This is all I had.

JAMIE  
It's perfect...

(beat, softly)  
You're perfect.

SHE UNZIPS A BACKPACK AND SHOWS HIM THE CONTENTS.

NIAMH  
Few cans for the trip too. Sure, what's a funeral without a drink anyway?

HE CLIMBS THE STAIRS. AFTER A FEW MOMENTS HE SHOUTS DOWN.

JAMIE  
Did we sort the bricks?

NIAMH  
We tied to them to him last night, somewhere in between Motown classics and post-punk alt rock.

(to Bobby)  
The sun is shining for you today Bobby.

12

**EXT. LIVERPOOL DOCKS. DAY.**

12

THE RUMBLE OF THE CITY CAN BE HEARD IN THE BACKGROUND.

THE SOFT BRUSHING OF THE MERSEY AGAINST THE DOCK WALLS.

THE WHEELCHAIR BOBBLES AND ROCKS OVER COBBLES. JAMIE STRUGGLES TO KEEP THE CHAIRS BALANCE...

JAMIE  
Sorry...sorry...sorry.

NIAMH  
Why are you apologising to him?

JAMIE  
It makes it look...believable.

THE HORN OF THE FERRY IS HEARD IN THIS DISTANCE.

13

**EXT. FERRY TERMINAL.**

13

THEY WAIT FOR THE TICKET INSPECTOR.

JAMIE  
(whispering)  
Just play it cool, nothing to see...

NIAMH  
Stop whispering, it looks odd.

JAMIE  
I'm just saying/

TICKET INSPECTOR  
Hello! Paper or digital?

JAMIE PULLS HIS PHONE OUT AND SWIPES THROUGH.

JAMIE  
I've got them here, just one sec...

NIAMH  
Lovely day for it.

TICKET INSPECTOR  
I can't remember the last time my skin felt the sun  
on it. Has it all gotten too much for him?

THE QUESTION HANGS IN THE AIR. THEY REALISE...

JAMIE  
He's/

NIAMH  
He's been up all night excited for it, hasn't slept a  
wink. Minute we bring him out, out like a light. But  
at his age you've got to grab those naps when you  
can.

TICKET INSPECTOR  
Oh I know all about that/

JAMIE  
There you go.

SHE SCANS EACH TICKET. BEEP...BEEP...BEEP.

TICKET INSPECTOR  
Have a lovely day!

NIAMH  
Thanks!

JAMIE  
(under his breath)  
Fucking hell.

14 **EXT. FERRY. DAY.**

14

ALMOST IDENTICAL TO SCENE ONE.

THE FERRY MOVES THROUGH THE RIVER MERSEY. SEAGULSS SQUAWK OVERHEAD, THE FOGHORN BLOWS, PASSENGERS PASS AND CHATTER.

A LIGHT WIND IN THE AIR.

NIAMH  
Are you alright?

JAMIE  
Yeah.

NIAMH  
Are you ready?

JAMIE  
No.

SILENCE.

JAMIE (CONT'D)  
D'you think I'm doing the right thing?

NIAMH  
D'you think you're doing the right thing?

BEAT.

JAMIE  
I want to know if you think I am.

NIAMH  
Trust your heart Jamie.

THE HORN SOUNDS AGAIN. RESONATES FOR A MOMENT.

JAMIE  
This is where he'd want to be.

THE CHAIR SQUEAKS AND RATTLES AS JAMIE TRIES TO LIFT BOBBY'S BODY.

JAMIE (CONT'D)  
There anyone about?

NIAMH QUICKLY CHECKS.

NIAMH  
No, I don't think anyone can see us.

HE TRIES TO LIFT AGAIN. STRUGGLES.

JAMIE  
I can't do it.

NIAMH  
You can Jamie, you said it yourself, it's what he would have wanted!

JAMIE  
No I mean I literally can't do it...the bricks...they're so heavy.

HE GRUNTS AS HE TRIES AGAIN.

JAMIE (CONT'D)  
Give me a hand.

NIAMH  
Jesus Christ.

SHE STANDS AND GRABS ONE SIDE OF BOBBY. THEY LIFT TOGETHER AND HAUL HIM TO THE SIDE.

JAMIE  
Ready?

NIAMH

Ready.

THEY STRUGGLE UNTIL THE BODY LEAVES THEIR HANDS, AND DROPS THROUGH THE AIR.

SILENCE FOR A FEW MOMENTS...UNTIL IT IS BROKEN BY AN ALMIGHTY SPLASH INTO THE WATER.

THE WORLD COMES FLOODING BACK IN.

BREATHING HEAVILY, THEY LOOK OUT TO SEA- A LOOK AT BOBBY'S FINAL RESTING PLACE.

JAMIE

Goodbye Grandad.

THEY SIT.

NIAMH REMOVES TWO CANS FROM HER BACKPACK AND CRACKS THEM OPEN. SHE HANDS ONE TO JAMIE.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

Guinness?

NIAMH

I think it's time, don't you?

JAMIE

(laughs)

Yeah.

HE TAKES A GULP.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

You said the first time he met you he told you something about me. What was it?

BEAT.

NIAMH

He told me your heart was always in the right place, even if your head wasn't.

SHE LETS THIS SIT FOR A BEAT.

JAMIE

They always have music at funerals.

NIAMH  
Put some on your phone.

JAMIE  
Will you sing something?

NIAMH  
(embarrassed)  
No, no I couldn't I'm/

JAMIE  
Please?

NIAMH  
Like what?

JAMIE  
Anything. I just want to hear you sing. He'd have liked that.

**SHE CLEARS HER THROAT. SHE STARTS TO SING...**

NIAMH  
Do not be afraid, for I have redeemed/

JAMIE  
Not that.

NIAMH  
Picky bastard.

**WHEN SHE SINGS THIS SONG IT'S SLOW, GENTLE, CALMING, BEAUTIFUL. THE WORLD  
FADES AWAY, AS DOES BOBBY, AS DOES HER SINGING....**

NIAMH (CONT'D)  
Life goes on day after day  
Hearts torn in every way  
So ferry, cross the Mersey  
'Cause this lands the place I love  
And here I'll stay...

**THE END.**