

## **The Journey** by Diana Flaherty

We'd pile into the car, a Morris Minor  
FI6490; Four of us in the back,  
no seatbelts but cars on the road  
were few: we'd count their colours  
red, white and blue.

We knew we were near when we saw  
the stonewalls, and people came out  
to wave; and Mammy sang 'The Boys from  
the County Mayo' or said dreaded words,  
'We'll say the Rosary'.

We'd turn into the narrow boreen,  
bumping into each other on the rutted road.  
Excitement barely held, until my Dad  
speeded up, and raced down to appear  
to drive into the sea.

Loud squeals, last minute sharp left and  
On along the road past the abandoned old  
house, the hay shed, Sweeneys and then  
up on its mini hill the house; a gang  
waiting on the doorstep. Mayo!

Walking barefoot, copying country cousins.  
Tender feet pick and hop, squealing down  
the pebbly road: then left past the hayshed  
and down the hilly path to the stream  
where rush boats grow.

Over the bridge and into the hayfield, long  
and hilly, a Mayo drumlin which sees  
my parents with shirt sleeves rolled  
and summer dress, hair blowing:  
smiling, happy, free, home.

We might stay here awhile helping  
or walk on up over the hill: and there  
the sea, over an old stone wall, a country  
sea shore to which you could say  
you belonged.

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