SEEING THE BIGGER PICTURE

border land between Belfast and Dublin

Sunset show’s over. Time to go.

The mammy told me twenty years ago headlights on a lonely road filled her with dread.

AND SHE WASN'T EVEN GAY.

"The Boys" would have asked if we were prod or catholic gays. When we said we were one of each we would have had proportionate beatings.
Look it’s the IRA! UDA! INLA! UVF! UFF!

SHHHH!

*Paramilitary groups

It’s undercover cops.

MILITARY INTELLIGENCE FROM OVER THE WATER.

Ghosts from the past.

HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA
ME MA AND DA RECKONED THEY WERE TAKING THEIR LIVES IN THEIR HANDS WHEN DRIVING THESE ROADS AT ANY TIME OF THE DAY OR NIGHT.

Helicopters circling. Sinister lookin’ watch towers on every high hill.

Check-points manned by God knows who.

EVERYONE WATCHING OR BEING WATCHED. NO ONE TRUSTED.
Hearts in mouths not knowin’ what was over the brow of every rise in the road.

NERVE STRINGS SO TIGHT YOU HEAR THEM TWANG. OR...

PING

FEELING THE FEAR AT THE TURN OF EVERY CORNER.

RELIEF WHEN A SPEEDING CAR PASSED YE BY AND DIDN’T PULL YE OVER TO LEARN YOUR BUSINESS.
Belfast became a ghost town.

The principled ones were interned.

Gangsters took over.

IRISH HEROES

Informers everywhere kangaroo courts and rough justice.

Or just some free-lance murder gang killing for kicks.
ALL IN THE PAST.

Back to Boomtown.

Greatest wee city in the greatest wee country in the world.

Home to George Best, Van “The Man” Morrison and Alex “The Hurricane” Higgins.

Belfast! An actual tourist destination. A modern, vibrant and, wait for it, attractive city.

WHERE A HISTORY OF RECENT VIOLENCE ADDS A FRISSON OF EXCITEMENT TO EVERY VISIT.
Yet ten minutes drive from the centre of town and the sectarian divide is as wide and deep as it's ever been.

How the hell does Europe stand behind a wee region as banjaxed as this?

Still all you get is guff about overpaid eurocrats in ivory towers.

Forgetting the EU's absolute commitment to the peace process.

And all them millions spent on integration projects that get torpedoed by bullying bigots at the first sign of progress.

Even then the EU will step straight back in determined to try even harder. Always taking the long view.
STILL FOR ALL THIS WEE PLACE'S FAULTS IT'S STILL HOME.

It's our own wee neck of the woods.

WHAT?

SCREAM! SCREAM!

ARDOYNE FAGGOTS GET KNEE-CAPPED.

WILL THE KNEE-CAPPING BE PROPORTIONATE?

One for you and two for me. They wouldn't want to be seen as non-sectarian.

IT'S PRETTY HARD TO SEE THE BIGGER PICTURE RIGHT NOW.

Still nice to think there is someone out there doing it for us.