

James A. Kelly

Wednesday, 11 July 2007

It 's been nearly ten years now since I had a summer job in the town of Ennis in the West of Ireland

Working in "Brogan's Bar and Restaurant" as a kitchen assistant, making sandwiches etc. I had decided to stay a little longer in Ireland after spending a year at Uni in Limerick.

It was on one of these days when the chef kept sending me out to the shop to get this and that and whatever else it was he needed, so I ran back and forth loads of times, always clad in my greasy kitchen apron. I noticed this man on the street, wearing sandals and a thick overcoat (it was July), with a big bush of curly hair on his head, selling his poetry book at the top of his voice. I passed him about three times, always in a hurry, and each time I sort of threw him a helpless smile, as if to say, "Sorry, I'd love to stop and buy your book, but I've got to go and get this and that for my pain-in-the-arse-boss, and I don't even know why I'm killing myself doing this for 2.50 an hour", which he likewise answered with a helpless smile as if to say "I know you'd love to stop and buy my book, but I can see you got a crappy underpaid job and are being exploited endlessly since you don't even both taking off that horrid apron when going out on the street."

When I got sent out the forth time, I finally stopped and asked to have a look at his book. I cannot remember exactly what we chatted about, but I do remember that his book cost £3 and I only had £1.50 on me, and he left it to me for just that little. He also signed, and from this day, this book has been my companion wherever it was I moved to. I love these poems. They create a mood, are full of beautiful imagery without sounding corny, they are critical and straight to the point . It's James' poems which have evoked a real love for contemporary poetry in me.

About eight years later, I came across a couple of his poems on the Internet, and decided to email the administrator of that website. I few weeks later, I got a booklet of new poetry from James A. Kelly with a note saying he could not believe that I remembered that episode back in Ireland when I bought his book and whether this was a German thing :-)

I have written a little poem as an hommage to James and a thank you for his poetry which have accompanied me for so long.