



e moved in the  
summer of 1978.

I remember sun. Heat.

That light feeling you get when you go on holidays. Mam and Dad stopped the car in a place called Texas Lane, Texas Lane. It was like something off the telly. That's what I thought. Dad stopped the car and Mam pointed to a row of houses, tiny in the distance, across a green as big as the fields you get in the country.

My brother – two years my senior and deferred to by me and my sister on matters of note – opened the car door, jumped out and began to run, glancing back only briefly to see if I was following him. I was.

I turned and waved to Niamh who stood on the back seat of the car on her pudgy, two-year-old legs. She pressed her face against the window and watched us, perhaps thinking about the day when she too would be big enough to run across a green as big as the fields you get in the country.

My feet made no sound on the soft, freshly cut grass. It smelled sweet, like cake. I stopped when my brother did. We were at the bottom of the road. The one my mother had pointed to. The one she called a cul-de-sac, whatever that was. Children played in the middle of the road, strolling towards the footpath when a car approached. Their casual indifference impressed me. Made me nervous.

The grass in the back garden came up to my shoulders. There was a garage for our bikes and later, a hutch for the confused rabbit I called Ambrose and my little sister called Scamp. There was a place referred to as a utility room where Conor's mini-snooker table wobbled, on rickety legs. The floors downstairs were covered with bare boards and our footfalls clattered and echoed as we ran about in this new space. I returned to the room I had covered when we first came to view the house. It was because of the sea. The view of it. Except it wasn't really the sea. It was the Broadmeadow Estuary. But when you're eight, the estuary is the sea and the sea is the ocean and the ocean is something that is so big, it cannot even be imagined. The water stretched across the mudflats to Donabate where the sun caught it and spun it like gold.

I ventured out the front and stood on the driveway. I looked at the knot of children playing marbles on the road. They turned to examine me. One child with hair-like Michael Jackson smiled. Another spun a hoola hoop around her hips and blew bright pink Hubba Bubba bubbles as big as her face. One girl



I stood outside our new house, and looked at the knot of children playing marbles. They turned to examine me

now how she felt that day. In her brand new house. With her brand new hotpress that looked just like the one before. But you don't wonder about things like that. Not when you're eight.

I flew down the stairs – 14 of them now, more than I was used to. The cart was already in the garage, waiting for me. I pulled at its thick blue rope and it rumbled behind me, low to the ground, on four small wheels like the ones on my sister's pram.

The friends I made that day are still my friends. Caroline O'Reilly. Elaine McGrath. Nadine Ferris. Every time I learned a new name, I ran inside to tell Mam so if I forgot, she could remind me.

'Do they like the cart?' she asked, rubbing at the kitchen window with me but, even with the brightness of the new day fading into evening. I remember the ghost of her smile reflected in the glass.

I remember it still.

*Ciara Geraghty's novel, Finding Mr Flood, is published by Hachette Books*

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