

If I didn't go this summer I would never go. And I had all the instructions where to look and what to discover. The letter had done it, the love letter that **had** to be buried with her. I had searched to find it the night before she died, and yes there it was written on the shores of Mullaghmore, August 1946. A year after the war had ended. A love letter written by Jack recording the moment he had proposed to Maureen that summer as they lay on the beach, the sand dunes caressing their youthful limbs, the tufts of grass tugging in the breeze and the warm sun gracing their expectant faces. This was the Wild Atlantic Way, Ireland's west coast.

The love letter was soft and glowing and Jack really had it bad for Maureen. Blinded perhaps, or simply captivated and in love the way he had remained until the day he died. And now it was Maureen's turn to join him, and she requested that the letter go with her and of course I found it, pored over it, absorbed it and then prepared to bury it tucked safely in her prayer-clasped hands. And in the months after she passed, Mullaghmore stayed with me. Was it really as wild and as energising as Jack's letter had described? Was it really the atmosphere that had sent him into a tail-spin of love? I had to go.

'Peace she supposed was contingent upon a certain disposition of the soul,' these words resounded in my head. By Elizabeth Goudge, an English writer....'the gift that only detachment from self made possible'. It's what we all search for in the end I suppose. Peace. To Rest in Peace. It was what Jack's proposal had expressed, to live in peace with Maureen till the end of his days, and to rest in peace with her, spirited into timelessness by the eternal shores of Mullaghmore. Maureen had taken her time to accept. He had waited, assured that he was doing the right thing, and the love they shared at that moment would last forever.

And so what did I find in their much adored and talked of Mullaghmore? Expansive Atlantic Ocean? Yes; winds horizontal and stiff? Yes. And a humble little harbour with a dozen or so boats, some motor, some yachts, bobbing safely in their little haven. One was painted a teal turquoise, the same colour as the handful of harbour restaurants. I wondered if it belonged to one of the restaurants. Or had the boat owner been offered a deal on the left over paint?

And so we went for lunch in one of the teal painted restaurants. Tired yet sweet faced women serving honest tasty food. We ate prawns and rice and potato salad and beautiful Guinness soda bread – homely, hearty food, and healthy, generous portions. And then we walked along the exposed expansive beach. Deserted apart from half a dozen fellow strollers (dots in the distance). The tide was far, far out, a few shells protruded the wet claggy sand

and the drier inland area was surrounded by the familiar tufted sand dunes. This was not your pretty sheltered bay or rocky cove, with fish nibbling at your toes. This was an exaggerated landscape, inhospitable and yet all-embracing. It had a primal elemental force, as powerful as any rocket blasting into space, and into worlds beyond.

And as we floundered in its force, danced in its whirling spin tail, we clung to each other as we slowly made our way back to the shelter of the harbour. The ice cream shop was doing steady trade in the late afternoon sunshine. So we ordered two '*pokey hats*' as Jack would have called them, with lashings of raspberry sauce and topped with a chocolate Flake. And we sat on a teal painted bench watching the boats bobbing, safe in the knowledge that Jack and Maureen had truly surrendered their mortal coils and found peace within the roar of Mullaghmore shore.