

IMAGES THROUGH THE AGES



The boy who looks out at me from Ballagawne farm looks austere and solemn

In keeping with the others, they do not smile at the camera

The age of the Great Depression and the crash, of dark clothing and sepia

The young man from the College football team is square jawed, high cheeked

He folds his arms seemingly in defiance, a little more certain of his place in the world

The RAF squaddie looks tough; perhaps it's the slit of the eyes, the look of the Crowes

The wedding photo with his angel from Cork is beautiful; the proud groom and bride: a wide smile; a true choice, the chance of happiness

The man in the year photo of Peel School has his arms folded, but not so certainly

A softer look in his eye; is it real or imagining in my eyes?

Henley as Dad looks proud of his brood; we begin to see him in colour.

The moustache, the career, the glory years; he knows really how to smile now: he has found his place in the world

Pa, as he is to me, stayed handsome right up until he died; the high angular cheekbones of youth softening into the blossoming of the middle years, and the gashing lines of older age.

I stroke his hair at the Mortuary, looking at that face I know so well,

And realising that at some time over the next few months and years,

I will not see its changing form, but will desperately hang on to that, so the lasting memory isn't one of him in repose