

John Barton / THE TROUBLES

until what centres no longer holds us, we compose pictures along the Falls Road, our car stopped shoppers window-gazing and unaware of the feints of shadow and light we insinuate among pyramids of fruit or trail across headlines in the newsstand tabloids as we jump quickly in and out, frame time with our viewfinders, the countless murals we snap drafted by sympathizers on the long overexposed exterior walls of the steep-roofed, red-brick, soot tarred houses, grocers, haberdashers, and hardware shops, murals about strikers who, two decades ago in Armagh, starved to death by choice, the English prison not far from the seat of my mother's family who left the North years before the Famine, later Loyalists settled in Upper Canada west of Kingston the first house standing still in the plentiful winds gusting over the lake and Amherst Island, its crawl space scooped from shale damp with the panic felt

hiding with the family silver carried with care all the way from Markethill, Johnson's gang of Yankee sympathizers tacking across the lake, staging raids during what at school we labelled the Rebellion the unsettling climates trailed behind my ancestors becalmed into what is now a quaint four-poster bed and-breakfast where I would've taken you, another adventure in the *Boy's Own* story of Ireland we had hoped one day to expatriate, the history of two men who through their troubles unite as one, despite what might hold them apart, checkpoints and pipe bombs, this uncentred and sudden widening maze of streets turning us away from where we thought to go, visiting from elsewhere, driven by a friend who has lost any faith she knows where to take us so keeps us lost, hers an entire life of roadblocks and Guinness, having learned she is who she is where she is — the best and the worst — and, hoping

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to drive us clear of danger, turns us into the centre of a riot, the car dividing perspectives while rocks skid across a fragmenting windscreen, this woman at the wheel living in an eternal present that is not Belfast, her vision of this intensely passionate city a long-fallen capital where, despite every wrong turn, couples meet and love, where despite herself she drops us off so we can shoot murals to the dead mothers and their missed children — they shame her far more than they trouble us — these commissioned vigilante works of art vitalizing the Easter Rising and Civil War two stories high in green and orange or blacks and sombre greys in contrast to the coat of arms painted by paramilitaries at every corner of the Shankhill Road, the Red Hand of Ulster held religiously palm flat and forward, complex URLs of the UDA, the UUF, the UVF, and the UYM blazoned in scrolls beneath crossed machine guns

and mute black-masked men who through torn slits look at us while we block our shots, you filling up your throwaway until it consumes itself, my hands shaking, my Minolta unable to track however few exposures my film still can make accommodations for, both of us cropping similar photos of the same wayside towns as we are later driven cross-country on the grand tour, sheep-crazed and whiskey-wise the kamikaze switchback roads along the jagged coastline turning and turning us into unexpected vistas, promontories sharpening against the azure our separate records overlapping, as if something untoward will drive us apart, a gesture or veering look at a stranger, cognizant already of the troubles we might import and give anxious voice to at home love's terrorism, his sweet erasure so annihilating it undoes the existence first of one of us and then the other, the briefest of excursions across the most

faint of lines there is never any coming back from
the Republic a haven where the North goes to relax
the air on either side of the border acrid with turf
smoldering as it has for centuries in village hearths

the 1990s, the number of people in the world who are undernourished has increased from 600 million to 800 million (FAO 1996).

There are a number of reasons for this increase. First, the world population has increased from 5 billion in 1987 to 6 billion in 1997, with a further 2 billion projected by the year 2025 (FAO 1996). Second, the world population is becoming increasingly urbanized, with 50% of the world population living in urban areas in 1997, compared with 30% in 1980 (FAO 1996). Third, the world population is becoming increasingly aged, with the proportion of the world population aged 65 and over increasing from 5% in 1980 to 10% in 1997 (FAO 1996).

Fourth, the world population is becoming increasingly mobile, with the number of people who are mobile increasing from 1 billion in 1980 to 2 billion in 1997 (FAO 1996). Fifth, the world population is becoming increasingly diverse, with the number of people who are diverse increasing from 1 billion in 1980 to 2 billion in 1997 (FAO 1996).

Sixth, the world population is becoming increasingly educated, with the number of people who are educated increasing from 1 billion in 1980 to 2 billion in 1997 (FAO 1996). Seventh, the world population is becoming increasingly healthy, with the number of people who are healthy increasing from 1 billion in 1980 to 2 billion in 1997 (FAO 1996).

Eighth, the world population is becoming increasingly wealthy, with the number of people who are wealthy increasing from 1 billion in 1980 to 2 billion in 1997 (FAO 1996). Ninth, the world population is becoming increasingly powerful, with the number of people who are powerful increasing from 1 billion in 1980 to 2 billion in 1997 (FAO 1996).

Tenth, the world population is becoming increasingly influential, with the number of people who are influential increasing from 1 billion in 1980 to 2 billion in 1997 (FAO 1996). Eleventh, the world population is becoming increasingly respected, with the number of people who are respected increasing from 1 billion in 1980 to 2 billion in 1997 (FAO 1996).

Twelfth, the world population is becoming increasingly loved, with the number of people who are loved increasing from 1 billion in 1980 to 2 billion in 1997 (FAO 1996). Thirteenth, the world population is becoming increasingly admired, with the number of people who are admired increasing from 1 billion in 1980 to 2 billion in 1997 (FAO 1996).

Fourteenth, the world population is becoming increasingly feared, with the number of people who are feared increasing from 1 billion in 1980 to 2 billion in 1997 (FAO 1996). Fifteenth, the world population is becoming increasingly despised, with the number of people who are despised increasing from 1 billion in 1980 to 2 billion in 1997 (FAO 1996).

Sixteenth, the world population is becoming increasingly hated, with the number of people who are hated increasing from 1 billion in 1980 to 2 billion in 1997 (FAO 1996). Seventeenth, the world population is becoming increasingly despised, with the number of people who are despised increasing from 1 billion in 1980 to 2 billion in 1997 (FAO 1996).

Eighteenth, the world population is becoming increasingly hated, with the number of people who are hated increasing from 1 billion in 1980 to 2 billion in 1997 (FAO 1996). Nineteenth, the world population is becoming increasingly despised, with the number of people who are despised increasing from 1 billion in 1980 to 2 billion in 1997 (FAO 1996).