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Thank you all for being here to remember my mum, Deirdre Brennan — our Dee.

It still feels impossible to say she died suddenly at 58.
Born on 22 May 1965, she packed a lot of living into those years, and somehow always left a bit more for the rest of us to carry.

Dee was a Galway woman through and through.
She studied fine art, then opened a tiny gallery off Shop Street where the kettle was never cold and the walls were always changing.
If you walked in nervous with a portfolio under your arm, you left with her phone number, a plan, and usually paint on your sleeve.
She mentored young artists like it was a hobby and organised local exhibitions like it was a sport, with lists on the back of receipts and a laugh that got people saying yes before they knew what they'd agreed to.

She was partner to Liam, mother to me and to Cian, doting aunt, and the best dog-mam Rua could ever have wished for.
At home she was a painter and a curator; out in the world she was an advocate for public art, a volunteer with Tidy Towns, and the reason schools around here have splashes of colour where dull walls used to be.
If there was a blank space, she saw a canvas.
If there was a meeting, she brought biscuits and left with volunteers.

My favourite memory is simple.
Early-morning swims at Blackrock — the kind where the wind does the talking.
We'd shiver back to the car, wrap up in towels, and make tea from the boot, steam coiling up as the sun tried its best.
We'd laugh until our sides hurt about absolutely nothing important, and everything important.
Those were our best collaborations.

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Dee was open-hearted and quick-witted.
Endlessly encouraging, even when encouragement was just a raised eyebrow and, “Go on, give it a lash.”
She walked into rooms like a splash of colour — not loud, just certain.
You always knew when she approved of a day: there’d be a smear of cobalt on her cheek and a plan to catch the trad session on Friday night after a swing by the farmers’ market for “something nice for the table.”

Her values were plain and sturdy: creativity, fairness, and a stubborn belief in community spirit.
“Leave places brighter than you found them,” she’d say, and then proceed to literally do it with a brush.
She didn’t talk about resilience; she organised it.
A rota, a banner, a small grant application, a cuppa while the paint dried.

We will miss her paint-stained hands.
We will miss that big laugh that bounced off gallery glass and kitchen tiles.
And we will miss her knack for turning grey days into adventures — a swim, a song, a shortcut that was never shorter but always better.

To Liam, to Cian, to all of us who loved her: we were lucky to be in Dee’s frame.
She taught us that art isn’t a thing you hang; it’s a way you move through the world.
Today, in her honour, we’re wearing a touch of colour.
Later we’ll play The Whole of the Moon, because of course we will — she always aimed for the wide view.

Mum, my favourite collaborator, thank you for the drafts and the do-overs, for the courage to start, for the permission to finish.
We’ll keep the kettle going, the brushes in water, and the door propped open.

You made this place brighter.
We’ll mind that light.

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