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Friends, family, neighbours—thank you for coming to celebrate the life of my wife, Eimear Brennan—our Em.

Born in Dublin on 22 September 1987 and gone from us far too soon on 28 March this year, at 38.

Raised in Raheny, where she learned the two great arts that shaped her life—looking out for others, and laughing with her whole body.

She carried both into nursing.

At UCD she trained as a nurse, and at CHI Crumlin she became what so many families here will recognise—a fierce advocate with luminous kindness.

Em didn't just check charts; she knelt to children's eye level, sang a line of a song, and made the room feel safe.

She fought for parents when they were too tired to fight for themselves.

And, on night shifts, she baked brown bread for the ward because warm bread and butter can do what morphine can't.

We married in 2014 and built a warm, lively home—more shoes by the door than shelves could hold, the kettle never empty, music drifting out of the kitchen while something rose in the oven.

Aoife is seven now, Ruairí is four, and they know their mum's laugh the way some kids know lullabies.

They know her songs.

They know that when there's a wobble, you take a breath, you bend down, you meet someone where they are.

Em found her people in the sea and in song.

Year-round swims, even when the wind cut your face.

A thermos of tea balanced on a rock, and that laugh skipping across the water.

Community choir on Tuesday nights, carrying harmony home to us, trying it out

over the clatter of dinner, drafting us all into the chorus, whether we could hold a note or not.

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Hikes in Wicklow that were “just a short ramble,” which somehow ended up four hours later at a view that made the blisters worth it.

Recipe swaps that turned into friendships.

Neighbours who became family because she showed up—school raffles, meal trains, a quiet check-in at a door when the blinds stayed shut too long.

If I close my eyes, I’m back at the Forty Foot, before dawn.

We’re sharing flasks, watching the pink creep up from Dalkey, and she says, “Go on, Cian, in with you,” and I say, “It’s freezing,” and she laughs and dives and comes up grinning, hair slicked, teeth chattering, delighted with the sheer mad joy of being alive.

That’s the sound I will carry.

That, and the gentle clink of cups at midnight when the kids were asleep and we set the world to rights over tea.

What defined Em wasn’t a grand gesture.

It was small acts of everyday courage.

Compassion that didn’t flinch.

Fairness when it was inconvenient.

Inclusion that made space at the table and then added a leaf to the table when space ran out.

Boundless energy that turned a wet Saturday into a treasure hunt, or a hospital corridor into a stage for a whispered verse of a song.

We will miss her laugh.

We will miss her songs.

We will miss the way she made a child feel taller by kneeling down.

Em asked for bright colours today, and I can hear her approving the splash of yellow here, the bit of green there.

She asked for donations to CHI Crumlin in lieu of flowers, because she always put her love to work.

And our choir—her choir—will sing, because that's how she would want us to hold each other up.

To Em's parents, her sisters and brothers, her nieces and nephews—your daughter, your sister, your auntie loved you fiercely.

To Aoife and Ruairí—your mum is in every song you hum, every brave kindness you offer.

We will keep telling you her stories until they feel like your own memories.

I don't know how to end a life like Em's.

So I'll end with a promise.

We'll keep showing up for each other and our neighbours.

We'll swim at dawn and share the tea.

We'll bake the bread and pass it round.

We'll sing the harmony and make room for another voice.

Thank you, Em, for choosing this ordinary, extraordinary life with me.

For the early swims and the late-night chats.

For the courage, the mischief, the mercy.

Mo ghra, go raibh maith agat.

We'll carry you forward—brightly, bravely, together.

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