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Hello everyone,

Thank you for coming, for bringing your bright colours into the Clontarf GAA hall, for the smiles through tears, and for the small sketches and song lines already finding their place in Nim’s memory book.

I’m Maeve, Niamh’s older sister.
Her best pal since we were kids.
Her partner in mischief and in midnight chats that lasted until the milkman rattled past.

We are here to celebrate a life that turned up the colour on all of ours.

Niamh O’Sullivan, our Nim, was born on 22 September 1990 and left us on 28 March 2026, far too soon, just 35.
Those numbers are so neat on the page.
But her life never fitted neatly anywhere.
She preferred edges, splashes, the bit where a line spills into something unexpected and beautiful.

She grew up here in Clontarf, with Eileen and Tom as parents who taught us both the important things:
you show up for people,
you mind the sea,
you have the craic when it’s there to be had.

She studied visual communication at NCAD, learned the rules so she could cheerfully bend them, and came out a designer who could make a poster sing.
By day, she gave brands a heartbeat.
By night, she carried paint up ladders and left joy on walls.

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Schoolyards. Community centres. Places where kids arrive every day and deserve to see something bright that belongs to them.

She travelled widely, because of course she did.
New streets, new palettes, different clouds to stare at.
But always, always, she came home to the sea.
She said the horizon in Dublin Bay was the straightest line she trusted.

Nim shared the kind of love that makes a family bigger.
Aidan, you were her teammate and her soft landing.
Saoirse and Fionn, her favourite little people to spoil, and to hand back, buzzing on jelly and ideas.
Conor, our brother, partner in rolling your eyes at our plans and then secretly enabling them.
Mum and Dad, she adored you with her whole bright heart.

If you asked what made Nim who she was,
I'd say this: she was creative to the core.
Brave, cheeky, and generous with her time and with her praise.

She could spot a shy kid with a notebook and bring them right into the centre of things, a paintbrush pressed into their hand before they could talk themselves out of it.
She could look at a dull corridor and see a river of colour running through it.
She could look at a Monday and see a Saturday hiding underneath.

She was a cold-water swimmer, properly evangelical about it.
Cycling the coast with a scarf flapping like a flag.
Sketching strangers' shoes in cafés, because she claimed you could tell a whole story from the scuffs.

One of my favourite memories is the New Year's Day dawn dip at the Forty Foot.
We had tea in a flask and a plan that felt bigger than the tide.
It was still dark when we went in.

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When we came up, gasping and pink as raspberries, Nim's lips were blue and her grin was unfairly huge.
She banged her fist against the thermos and declared, "The year is ours."
No fireworks. No speeches. Just the quiet bravery of two eejits in the sea.
That was Nim's way—claiming the year with a splash and a grin.

She believed in saying yes to adventure.
Not the expensive kind stamped on a boarding pass.
The daily kind—turning down a laneway because it looked promising, trying the weird pastry because the baker's eyes lit up when he described it, taking the long way home to see if the light on the water had changed.

She believed in lifting others as you climb.
If she won an award—and she did, more than once—she brought the team to the stage in her head and named them out loud in the pub.
If a kid shyly showed her a drawing, she didn't just say "lovely."
She asked about the shadows, the idea, the bit they were proud of, and she meant it.

She believed art is for everyone.
She designed for billboards and book covers, yes, but the pieces that made her giddy were the murals you can't ticket.
Walls that belong to everyone.
She said kids deserved to grow up with colour as a given, not as a treat.

And she believed you never leave a beach dirtier than you found it.
I can't count the number of times we set out for ten minutes and ended up with a full bag of wrappers and seaweed that had somehow joined in.
She had a knack for making doing the right thing feel like the fun thing.

There was a cheek in her that kept us honest.
She could slice through a wobble with one raised eyebrow.
She wore colours like declarations—mustard coat, teal socks, lipstick that should have come with a warning—and she coaxed the same courage from the rest of

us.

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If you ever turned up in head-to-toe grey, she'd tap your sleeve and say, "Great primer. Now let's paint."

She had rituals, little anchors that made life feel made-by-hand.
Fridays were for a new vinyl and the first listen with the sleeves in our laps, her finger tracing liner notes as if they were treasure maps.
Sundays were for a swim or a cycle, a coffee, a sketch.
Mondays were for a fresh list with the daftest idea at the top as a dare to herself.

She taught workshops where the brief was simple and radical: make something for someone else, and watch how it changes you.
Kids who didn't think they were artists made backgrounds for murals and then stood a little taller at break time.
Parents who hadn't lifted a brush since school ended up with paint on their jeans and a grin they hadn't found in years.
It was never about perfect.
It was always about together.

At home, she was the friend you texted because you knew she'd answer with three options and a joke.
She gave praise like confetti but it never felt cheap.
"Look at you," she'd say, "that colour suits your mood."
Or, "You did a hard thing on a Wednesday—my favourite kind of heroics."

When grief tries to flatten us into one note, I hear Nim refuse.
She was a full chorus.
And she'd hate to be remembered only in the quiet.

So let's hold some specifics, the way she taught kids to hold detail:

The smell of fresh paint on a damp evening when she was racing the rain.
The clatter of her bike and the jingle of too many keys.

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The way she tucked her fringe behind her ear when an idea landed.
Her habit of leaving tiny doodles on receipts and napkins—shoelaces and teacups, little worlds that followed us home in our coat pockets.

She loved Aidan in that steady, loud-quiet way that builds a life.
She delighted in being Auntie Nim, producing stickers from nowhere, admiring every lopsided castle, teaching Saoirse how to draw stars without lifting the pen and showing Fionn how to make a boat from a cereal box.
She kept our family in a lovely kind of motion.
If there was an exhibition within cycling distance, we were going.
If there was a sky worth seeing, she had us outside.

And she never lost that habit of the midnight chat.
We solved and unsolved the world at the kitchen table, feet on the radiator, the kettle always somehow still warm.
Those hours were where her bravery showed up quiet and plain.
When something scared her, she said so.
When she didn’t know, she said so.
And then she did the thing anyway.

What will we miss most?
Her colour, of course.
On walls, in wardrobes, and in the way she made ordinary moments sparkle.
But also the way she noticed other people’s colour and turned it up a notch.
She made you feel seen in your own shade.

We’re here in bright colours because she asked us, in a hundred different ways, not to dim on her account.
We’re writing song lyrics and doodles in her memory book because she believed words and pictures are how we stitch ourselves to one another.

Today, we say thank you.
To Mum and Dad, who gave her the kind of start that lets a person roam and return.

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To Conor, who held the ladders and the stories.
To Aidan, who loved her in the way that makes bravery possible.
To every friend and kid and colleague who added a brushstroke to her days.

And we promise to carry her values with us, not as slogans but as habits:

Say yes to adventure, even when it’s only a detour to see if the gulls are playing in the wind.
Lift others as you climb, especially when they’re not sure they’re invited.
Make art for everyone, and keep it out where the daylight can get at it.
Never leave a beach dirtier than you found it.
And if a day feels dull, put on a bright pair of socks and go look for a corner to brighten.

Before we finish, I want to leave you with the moment that keeps replaying for me.
It’s dawn at the Forty Foot.
The year hasn’t started behaving yet.
We’re in the water, small against the cold, big against the fear.
We come up laughing like we’ve invented light.
Tea from a flask.
Blue lips.
A grin that could start a band.
And Nim saying, “The year is ours.”

So let’s claim this year, and the ones after, in her stubborn, joyful name.
Not by ignoring the hole she’s left, but by filling the space around it with colour and kindness and the sort of mischief that makes people brave.

Niamh O’Sullivan, our Nim—
Daughter of Eileen and Tom.
Sister to me and to Conor.
Partner to Aidan.
Auntie to Saoirse and Fionn.

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Designer by day, muralist by night, swimmer of cold seas, collector of songs, noticer of shoes, giver of praise.

You made our world brighter.
You taught us how to do it ourselves.

We love you.
We'll keep painting. We'll keep pedalling. We'll keep getting in the sea.
And we'll meet you in every splash of colour we add to the day.

Thank you, everyone, for celebrating her life with us.
Mind yourselves, mind each other, and before you go, leave a lyric or a doodle in her book.
She'd have loved that.

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