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Friends, family, neighbours—

thank you for being here with us beside Ciarán's resting place.

It means more than I can say to see the people he built with, laughed with, and looked out for, all gathered close.

My name is [your name],

and I'm Ciarán's brother.

To most of you he was Ciarán O'Sullivan or just O'Sullivan.

To us, he was Ciar—

older brother, first foreman of my life,

the fella who taught me the ropes,

from tying proper knots

to standing my ground when it counted.

He was born in Limerick on the 12th of January, 1974,

a winter baby with a spring sort of patience.

He learned early that hands could tell the truth,

and he spent the rest of his fifty-two years making things honest.

He apprenticed as a carpenter,

not because it was handy

but because it was right for him—

the grain, the heft of a chisel,

the sound a good joint makes when it seats home—

all of it suited his steady head and steady heart.

He went to London for a few years,

a young man restoring old townhouses that were clinging on for dear life.

He came home with stories about sash cords that snapped

the second you turned your back,

about paint scraped down to the ghost of a colour nobody makes anymore,

and about the neighbours who stood at the railings,
cup of tea in hand, giving unsolicited advice and the odd biscuit.
What he loved there wasn't the bustle or the big city bravado.
It was the chance to save things worth saving.

And then he settled in Tralee,
to raise a family and start his own workshop.
He did both the same way:
patiently,
without fuss,
and with an eye to what would last.
He built kitchen tables meant to see more than a few generations of homework
and birthdays and late-night heart-to-hearts.
He mended Georgian sash windows
so they'd open smooth as a song and close tight as a promise.
If you walked past his workshop early of a morning,
you'd hear The Pogues on low
and the steady rasp of sandpaper
like the sea pulling at the shore.

Ciar was a beloved husband to Nora—
his match and his anchor.
He was the proudest dad to Eimear and Darragh,
never missing a chance to stand at a sideline
or to fix a wobbly shelf in your rooms
and pretend it had been a fierce technical challenge.
He was the son of Bríd and Tomás,
who taught us the simple religion of turning up on time and keeping your word.
He was brother to me and to our sister Maeve,
and he carried us both like he carried everything—without making a scene out
of it.

He was a hurling man,
the kind who could still the rest of the day with the swing of a stick on the green.

He'd cycle the Dingle Way at the weekend
not racing,

just rolling the miles under his wheels until his head cleared.

Sundays, he baked brown bread,

flour on his jumper, oven mitts gone missing again,

the house filling with that warm smell

that meant the week would be bearable.

And when the bread cooled,

he'd slice it neat—no hacking—and hand you the heel with a look that said, this is the best bit and you know it.

He was meticulous,

but never precious.

If you made a crooked cut,

he didn't tut or make a grand show of fixing it.

He'd turn the piece, shift his grip,

and somehow draw the line again so the mistake disappeared into something sturdy.

He had a dry sense of humour that could air out a room without deflating anyone.

He was the neighbour you could rely on:

the one who'd spot you struggling with a gate

and be beside you before you had time to feel foolish.

One of my favourite memories is that treehouse we made in the rain,

up a reluctant ash that had no business holding our ambition.

I hacked and he hummed.

I measured, he smiled.

Every time I thought we'd call it a day,

he'd say, we'll give it five more minutes—

and five more minutes later,

there we were,

two drowned rats with a platform that leaned

and a ladder that pretended it didn't.

When we finally climbed up with our tea

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he tapped the floor with his boot and said,
well, it's not falling down today,
which is more than you can say for most things.

That was Ciar:

build what you can,
be honest about it,
and enjoy the dry spot you've made together.

He kept his advice short and serviceable.

Measure twice.

Sleep on it.

Ring back.

Pay cash if you can.

Don't make a promise you can't keep—best not to say it at all if you're not sure.

And he lived those lines.

He'd show up at 7 a.m. with a "you up?" text
before the kettle even thought about boiling,
and the morning would lift just hearing the vans on the road
and knowing he was already two jobs deep in the day.

He was fiercely proud of Eimear and Darragh—
of who you are, not just what you do.

He wanted you to be yourselves fully,

and he backed that up with lifts at unholy hours,

tools handed over even when he was pretty sure they wouldn't come home the
same,

and a belief that being decent beats being flashy every time.

He loved Nora with a quiet certainty

that left room for laughter,

for sharp words when they were earned,

and for quick forgiveness when they weren't.

To his club mates, serving as pallbearers today,

thank you.

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He never made a song and dance about the team,

but he wore the colours in his bones.

When he spoke about the dressing room, he'd say the best thing in it was the door opening and closing on time—

everyone showing up,

everyone doing the work,

no one making themselves the centre of the world.

You carried that with him.

You carry him today.

Ciar minded his community.

He kept spare timber stacked for the neighbour whose shed never stopped leaning.

He put up shelves for the new family on the corner without sending a bill,

and he fixed, for free, the sash in that cottage by the bridge

because, as he told me,

I can't in good conscience leave someone rattling in a storm.

Honesty, craft, keeping promises:

those weren't slogans.

They were the way he moved around the day.

People will miss his hands,

thumb nicked in the same place for twenty years,

the way his fingers checked a surface by listening as much as feeling.

They'll miss the sound advice,

those few words you could take to the bank.

They'll miss the early texts and the late ones too,

when he'd send a photo of a freshly planed board,

not to show off, but because he was delighted by the clean line

and wanted you to see it as well.

Grief has its own stubborn grain.

It doesn't always take the shape you expect.

If your heart is a bit lopsided today,
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if your thoughts keep slipping,

that's all right.

Ciar knew a thing or two about lopsided.

He'd say, turn it, look again, it might fit yet.

And when it didn't,

he'd make a new piece with calm hands and put it in place.

We'll do the same with our days.

We'll make new pieces.

We'll place them gently.

We'll sand the sharp edges when we can.

I keep hearing The Pogues in my head since we got the news.

A tune that's both rough and tender,

like he was.

I keep seeing him taking off his cap to wipe his brow,

leaving a clean stripe on a dusty forehead,

and then going right back to the hinge that was binding

until it swung true.

That's the picture I'm holding for now.

Not the last day.

A thousand ordinary ones:

bike leaning against the shed,

brown bread cooling,

him writing a short shopping list that he'd ignore the second he saw a better
apple.

Ciar didn't try to be memorable.

He tried to be useful.

And by doing that, he became unforgettable.

To Nora,

to Eimear and Darragh,

to Mam, Bríd, and Dad, Tomás,

to Maeve—

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we're wrapped around you.

We'll keep the kettle going.

We'll keep the texts early.

We'll keep the promises he would have kept,

and we'll mind each other the way he minded all of us.

If you want to do something in his honour,

mind your community.

Finish a job properly, even if no one sees it.

And if you're moved to make a practical gesture,

the family has asked that donations be made to the Irish Heart Foundation in Ciarán's name.

He would have liked that—

something that goes on helping after the hammer's been hung up.

Ciar,

thank you for the lopsided treehouse and the steady lessons.

Thank you for teaching me the difference between level and true.

Thank you for the kind of laughter that doesn't disturb the neighbours,
and the kind of love that does the dishes without being asked.

We're standing here in the rain's memory and the sunshine's promise,
and we're placing you into the earth you respected all your life.

You gave us tables to gather at,
windows that opened to let in air,
and a way of living that lets in light.

Rest easy now, brother.

We'll take it from here,
slow and careful,
with the grain,
and no shortcuts.

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