

## Chasing Danny Boy

Love hides where? The question dogged Dermid on the hunt. His gang of lads, slumming through Dublin, looked for love hiding inside the pubs, revealing in doorways, cruising through the pathways of St. Stephen's Green. Across the clipped lawns and cobbled quads of Trinity College. On Bachelors Walk beside the black water of the Liffey flowing under O'Connell Street Bridge. Night times, pissing in a construction dumpster on the corner of Dame Lane where one door led up to a Turkish sauna and another door, guarded by beefy hooligans, opened into the crowd of lads at the Wilde One's Pub.

Chasing scores down in Dolphin's Barn Junction, the south inner city, where a crowd beat some AIDS junkie to death. Right in the street. Fifteen rib-kicking anti-drug vigilantes cheered on by a scrum of women and children. Steel-toed boots striking sparks on the cobbles. Junkie blood on the steel shutters. In the Barn, anyone who risked the vigilantes and dared the dark streets turfed out by the dealers could score grass, acid, ecstasy.

Dermid and his boyo's were full of themselves with the success of their hunt. They had outsmarted the dealers and outstepped the vigilantes. Inside the Wilde One's, the queer pub air hung thick in a silken blue cloud of smoke that shimmered with the thump of the disco beat from the dance club upstairs.

"Was that love?" Dermid, at twenty, was a pub-wonder at discussing a premise in detail, standing with a pint among his friends. A pearl of foam hung on his short-clipped dark red goatee. Not a single freckle marred his perfect white face or cheeks ruddy as rowanberries.