

Bust Companions

The Curious Friendship of Patrick Kavanagh & Brian O’Nolan

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Patrick Kavanagh and Brian O’Nolan were the odd couple of twentieth-century Irish literature. On the surface, they had very little in common, except similar lifespans, strong Catholicism, and tragically bad timing. Yet somehow, they had enough fellow-feeling to sustain a sort of comradeship, bordering on the friendly, that lasted to their deaths. Of this curious alliance, the collaborations on *Kavanagh’s Weekly* were a microcosm.¹

The year 1939 was pivotal in the ill-starred chronology of both men. It marked the appearance of O’Nolan’s brilliant debut novel *At Swim-Two-Birds*, whose general neglect was not helped by the war, but whose particular rendezvous with the German incendiaries that destroyed Longman’s London warehouse a year later lent a cruel twist to that modern metaphor for a book’s failure: ‘bombing.’ As for Kavanagh, it was in 1939 that he made his formal entry into Dublin literary circles: an act it would later suit him to claim to be the greatest mistake of his life. There had been occasional visits to the city before that, and indeed he had also attempted to bypass the Irish capital in favour of launching himself on London instead. Now he too committed himself to a Dublin that was about to become even more cut off than usual from the outside world, thanks to an event known locally as ‘the Emergency.’

Kavanagh’s official arrival in the metropolis was almost as much a work of fiction as Flann O’Brien’s debut. Although his peasant-poet persona was partly autobiographical, he also played the part knowingly, like an Abbey actor, hamming it up for the benefit of George Russell and other potential investors. But those who mistook it for the real thing were quickly disabused, none more so than O’Nolan. The skittish, pseudonymous *Irish Times* letter with which the future Myles na gCopaleen mocked Kavanagh’s agricultural themes was not one of his better efforts, anyway: it was more suggestive of old-fashioned urban snobbery than of wit. Even so, Kavanagh’s eventual reply to that, and the many other letters he had provoked, was unusually restrained by his later standards while telling some hard truths about his mockers. It was an early warning to anyone who paid attention that, contrary to initial

appearances, the Monaghan poet was the owner of a thoroughly sophisticated mind: one that spelt trouble for Dublin's complacent literary set. O'Nolan learned the lesson early and never tangled with Kavanagh again.

Detrimental as the war was for both men, it was also their common misfortune, at that same time, to have to follow in the outsized footsteps of a departed literary giant. The year 1939 began with the death of W.B. Yeats, whose shadow benighted a generation of poets after him, including Kavanagh. James Joyce lived a little longer, until 1941. Alive or dead, however, he too was a vast, intimidating presence for the Irish novelists who followed, who could neither ignore nor – as Flann O'Brien did – emulate him safely.

O'Nolan never completely mastered his Joyce problem, despite attempts that ranged from reinventing the great man in his own image – stressing Joyce's humour and his ear for Dublin dialogue as his (only) true genius – to the comic revenge of *The Dalkey Archive*, wherein he condemned the genius to purgatory, serving time as a Skerries barman while intent on purging his Catholic guilt *via* a late vocation with the Jesuits. Kavanagh fared a little better in his attempts to do a Christy Mahon on Yeats, even if the biggest beneficiaries of his struggle were the generation of poets who succeeded him, most famously Seamus Heaney. To the end of Kavanagh's own life, he had to make do with being 'the most significant Irish poet since Yeats,'² which can also be read as shorthand for 'not as good as Yeats.' But even if it was of little financial benefit to him, Kavanagh did at least live to succeed Yeats as the pre-eminent public man of Irish poetry, a life-long ambition in which *Kavanagh's Weekly*, short-lived as it was, played an important part.

Their parallel sufferings aside, Kavanagh and O'Nolan appear artistically, temperamentally, and in almost every other way to have been utter opposites. The contrast was even physical. Kavanagh was big and shambling; O'Nolan was small and neat. Kavanagh dominated any room he was in, corporeally and otherwise. O'Nolan stayed on the edges of crowds, invisible. Although they shared a general calling as literary men, their specialities were mutually exclusive. After his UCD Master's thesis in old Irish poetry (dismissed by himself and others as shoddy work), O'Nolan never took much interest in verse again. If anything, he was intolerant of the genre. Kavanagh was in turn suspicious of satire, and, insofar as he thought he had a talent for it at all, considered it an urge he should resist.

O'Nolan was generally impatient with all talk of 'art,' a word he liked to quarantine with inverted commas, or to mock with a capital 'A,' as he did when seeking the approval of the best-selling English novelist Ethel Mannin for his early fiction. Kavanagh, by contrast, never tired of discussing art – that, indeed, was the initial spark for O'Nolan's mocking letter – and of declaring himself a member

(Ireland's only member, he sometimes implied) of the caste whose responsibility it was to produce it. Somehow, even Myles na gCopaleen forgave him his pretensions, as he forgave no one else.

Even their names are a lesson in contrasts. O'Nolan – or O Nualláin, as he was for civil service purposes – constructed so many layers of false identity that the effect was almost to annihilate the real man, who was indeed better known as 'Myles' by the end of his life. Conversely, much of what Kavanagh did – most famously with *Kavanagh's Weekly* – was to promote his actual name: although of course there was a great irony in that. As Antoinette Quinn explains, Kavanagh was not the poet's 'real' name at all. But bequeathed out of wedlock, his proper patronymic, Kevany, was forever buried, accidentally or by clerical sleight of hand, in the Inniskeen parish records.³

Yet another stark difference between the two men, apparently, was the conviction in their own self-worth. If this quality had been shared more evenly between them, arguably, both might have benefited. Instead, O'Nolan took his setbacks quickly to heart, for example burying his 1940 masterpiece *The Third Policeman* on the back of one or two rejections. Had it been published even after the war, the book might have rescued him from the *impasse* into which his writing career had already settled at that point. But it remained in a drawer until his 1960s revival, and he only dusted it off then to cannibalise parts of it for a much inferior work, *The Dalkey Archive*.

Kavanagh, on the other hand, never seemed to waver in the conviction of his own genius. Publicly, at least, he maintained that his neglect by Ireland was as much the country's problem as his own. That, indeed, was to be a running theme of the *Weekly*. It was his apparently sincere belief that he was owed a living by any country that dared to consider itself civilised. In the meantime, he dreamed of marrying a rich woman, or of finding a job that would be both well-paid and undemanding, leaving him free to devote himself to his art. Pending either eventuality, he was never embarrassed to accept short-term sponsorship, whether it was the price of a drink or the \$2,500 savings that his brother Peter sank into *Kavanagh's Weekly*. Although he claimed to be 'horrified' by those 'bohemian rascals living it up in basements',⁴ he did a better job of dropping out of the rat-race than O'Nolan ever did.

It may have been part of O'Nolan's tragedy, ironically, that he did have a day-job for most of his writing life. In that, too, his timing was unfortunate. As Anthony Cronin notes in his biography, *No Laughing Matter: The Life and Times of Flann O'Brien*, the day O'Nolan was made permanent in his civil service job was the day his father died, leaving him as the main breadwinner for a family of twelve.⁵ He assumed the responsibility without protest. Thereafter, the acquisition of a wide-brimmed hat – the uniform of priests and writers in mid-twentieth-century Ireland – was his only

concession to Bohemianism. The suit and tie he wore under it were at least as much part of his identity. Unlike the 'Monaghan toucher,' as in his less charitable moods he called Kavanagh,⁶ O'Nolan always paid his way, and paid his family's way too.

Amid the multi-layered comedy of *At Swim-Two-Birds*, there may be a fleeting hint of the real O'Nolan's bourgeois and familial sense of propriety. The narrator's uncle – who, in *loco parentis* (the circumstances are never explained), has taken responsibility for the young man's education – rewards his nephew's examinations success with undisguised happiness and a second-hand watch. In a novel otherwise devoid of pathos, the narrator's recognition of his uncle's 'pathetic [...] humility' provides a brief emotional climax, before the literary pyrotechnics resume.⁷

It may have been, in part, the result of his financial burdens, but another area in which O'Nolan differed utterly from Kavanagh was his lack of engagement with the world beyond Dublin. The Monaghan man romanticised England, London in particular. Indeed, as noted already, he tried to establish himself there first and remained a frequent visitor over the years. His travels also took him to Rome, for a writer's conference, and to the United States of America; throughout his life he remained aggressively internationalist in his outlook and ambitions. O'Nolan, by contrast, was utterly rooted in Dublin. After a trip to Germany in his early twenties, it seems, he never left Irish shores again, except in his mind. It is easy to imagine Myles na gCopaleen hobnobbing with Sartre and de Beauvoir, as Kavanagh claimed to have done in Rome, but in Myles's case it would have been an entirely fictional encounter, dreamed up for comic effect.

Even in their approach to journalism, Kavanagh and O'Nolan were at odds. It is well known, and used to be lamented, that O'Nolan gave his best years and energies to the *Irish Times* column, at the expense of the books he might have written. Latterly, at least among some more recent critics such as Carol Taaffe, the column itself has come to be considered not just as literature but as a sort of free-form masterpiece that can stand alongside the best of his more conventional literary works, and it is certainly more worthy of consideration than his later novels.⁸ In any case, the brilliance with which it was written was matched only by the fastidiousness of O'Nolan's approach to language, something that scarred many an *Irish Times* sub-editor who dared to 'improve' the original. A now-veteran columnist at the paper, Michael Viney, recalls the arrival, during his first year on the job, of an irate postcard from the famous O'Nolan. Viney's offence had been to write the line 'there is an alternative, but it won't be me who suggests it,' in an item in the *Irishman's Diary* (a column, by the way, that had nothing to do with O'Nolan). O'Nolan's postcard read: 'It should be "it won't be I who suggests it," you ignorant bollocks.'⁹ For an unfortunate sub-editor who dared to tinker with *Cruiskeen Lawn*, by contrast, perhaps to 'correct' one of Myles's multi-layered puns or jokes, the abuse would not have been so mild.

Whatever about his poetry, Kavanagh had no such preciousness about journalism. It was central to his worldview that journalism did not matter much, anyway – it wasn't art – although he nevertheless wrote a great deal of it. In terms of word-count, his output for newspapers and magazines far outweighs his poetry and novelistic prose. But he was true to his disregard for journalism in one sense: he never invested much of himself in it. Even his most passionately argued newspaper pieces have a scatter-gun, off-the-top-of-the-head quality. He rarely stuck to the same point for a whole article. To paraphrase Gerry Smyth in his essay, 'The Moment of *Kavanagh's Weekly*,' some of his the poet's pieces might have been edited transcriptions of a pub argument.¹⁰ And to judge from the *Weekly*, a magazine on which there were no sub-editorial layers between composition and publication, his attitude to grammar and syntax was just as careless.

Had anyone else, while setting himself up as an authority on writing, committed the mistakes Kavanagh did in his eponymous publication, Myles na gCopaleen's judgement would have been merciless. In the event, when *The Irish Times* upbraided the *Weekly* for its sloppy English, it was in the less mercurial person of 'Nichevo,' pen-name of the long-time editor Bertie Smyllie, who delivered a short, pompous lecture on the theme from the *Irishman's Diary*. Myles was also drawn on the subject, and with typical wit, in the *Weekly's* own pages. Kavanagh duly replied. But the gloves on both sides stayed on, Kavanagh being especially respectful to 'our brilliant correspondent.'¹¹

The exchange in that case concerned the Irish language, yet another area in which the two men differed utterly. Kavanagh had spoken it fluently in his earlier years, and in fact his native South Monaghan was one of the last bastions of the language in the eastern half of Ireland, with native-born speakers in Inniskeen well into the twentieth century. But at some point, Kavanagh wilfully relinquished his Irish and thereafter became adamant that the government should abandon it, too. O'Nolan, although he could not abide most of the language's public champions, loved the thing itself and used the multiple errors in the *Weekly's* English to lecture Kavanagh on the educational benefits of multilingualism.

To some extent, the enduring friendship, or at least lack of enmity, between the two men can be explained in reductive terms: not having any pretensions to the status of poet, or even of artist, O'Nolan was never considered a threat by Kavanagh. The record suggests that anyone the poet *did* see a threat would be assailed in print, sooner or later. As Cronin notes, even by the normal literary standards Kavanagh was exceptionally intolerant of achievement by others. Besides, in his ambition to replace Yeats as the main man, all potential rivals had to be eliminated with extreme prejudice.

When an *Evening Mail* critic wrote that the first issue of *Kavanagh's Weekly* 'hit

the town last Saturday like a blast from a sawn-off shotgun,' it was not the first time the Monaghan poet's critiques had inspired violent imagery. Five years beforehand, Myles na gCopaleen had awarded his inaugural Order of the County Manager's Hat to Kavanagh for 'sustained literary terrorism in 1947, when I was personally too busy to look after such tasks.' That was a reference to Kavanagh's work in two journals, *Envoy* and *The Bell*, wherein, like a literary Michael Corleone, he assassinated the literary characters of most of his perceived rivals in turn. But O'Nolan remained a non-combatant in Kavanagh's rules of war, then and later.

One of Kavanagh's admiring readers, who took to visiting him in the late 1940s, recalled that Kavanagh 'seemed to adore Myles' and would refer to him on occasion as 'a saint.' The supposed sanctity related in part to O'Nolan's self-sacrifice: submitting himself to 'virtual beggary' (Kavanagh's reported words) to feed and educate his inherited family. But that sacrifice and O'Nolan's perceived artistic failure – as the consensus by then had it – also allowed Kavanagh the luxury of pity for 'poor Myles' or 'that poor little na Gopaleen,' as Cronin recalls him saying.¹² No doubt the pity was mutual at times. For all his blustering self-assurance, Kavanagh *circa* 1950 was hardly to be envied. The same visitor described him as 'tortured by the fact that the world put more regard on a bank manager or civil servant than on any poet' and was amazed to find that such a famously independent mind was 'bewitched by dreams of ordinary safe life.'

Severe alcoholism aside, O'Nolan's life was still ordinary and fairly safe then. He remained a civil servant when *Kavanagh's Weekly* appeared (albeit not for much longer). He had already given a hostage to fortune in 1951 when allowing himself to be photographed as part of his celebrated campaign against the Fianna Fáil Lord Mayor of Dublin, Andy Clerkin, and his stopped clock, thereby confirming what everyone knew but might have had trouble proving: that Myles and O'Nolan were one and the same. Soon the patience of his political masters would run out, and he would have the status of a full-time writer belatedly thrust upon him. But at the time *Kavanagh's Weekly* appeared, as it happened, he was not even a part-time one. Through a mixture of ill-health and ill-feeling, he was absent from the pages of *The Irish Times* throughout most of 1952, taking his leave in February with a piece about agricultural Ireland's dependence on New Zealand butter, a theme that would be taken up in the *Weekly*.

So, O'Nolan too was at a loose end for media outlets at this time, although if he was not exactly written out by then, his need for self-expression was hardly as pressing as Kavanagh's. When the poet's brother, Peter, having already committed them to produce the first issue within a week, broke the news that this would require the writing of 10,000 words, the poet was undaunted. He had enough ideas for ten times

that amount, he said: not a bad estimate, as it turned out, of what would prove to be the life of the paper.

It seems significant that Kavanagh's most famous and most outspoken adventure in journalism coincided with the return to power of the hated Fianna Fáil party, after the short-lived experiment of the first inter-party coalition between 1948 and 1951. Kavanagh's dislike of de Valera's faction probably had its roots in the class structures of his native Monaghan, where twenty-five acres and his father's cobbling business combined to edge the family into both the demographics – strong farmer and shopkeeper – from which Cumann na nGaedheal and later Fine Gael drew its core support. But he remained a 'Blueshirt,' in the loose sense of the term, all his life. In *Dead as Doornails*, his memoir of post-war Dublin, Anthony Cronin recalls an encounter at the Phoenix Park races once wherein a star-struck Kavanagh greeted the former Free State premier W.T. Cosgrave as a personal hero. When the admiration was reciprocated, the two men shook hands and lapsed into a mutually contented silence.¹³ By contrast, Kavanagh's innate distrust of Fianna Fáil had deepened into something worse during the eighteen long years of that party's first epic stint in power. And in 1952, they were back in control of a country with seemingly intractable economic problems and what the historian Joe Lee called 'the most intellectually stultifying society in Northern Europe.'¹⁴ So, while affecting to demur from any endorsement of the opposition parties, the *Weekly* was in no doubt that the sepulchral de Valera and his crew were at the root of most of Ireland's evils. Even Seán Lemass, then the leader-in-waiting and now considered one of the founders of modern Ireland, was dismissed as a no-hoper.

Constrained by his official role, and by temperament, O'Nolan's contributions to *Kavanagh's Weekly* were not overtly political. Indeed, they were rather peripheral to the main event. They added humour, which was much needed. Even though the Kavanagh brothers weighed in with features on the Irish ass population and the country's alleged shortage of goats, the overall tone of the journal was hectoring and shrill. And the best of the Myles na gCopaleen pieces – his lampooning of an on-the-make businessman offering to buy a consignment of 'Tostals' from him at a big discount – was not only welcome comic relief, it also skewered both the eponymous tourist festival and a certain class of entrepreneur more deftly than any of the main editorials.¹⁵

As part of the magazine's voice, however, Myles was a lot less noticeable than that of the 'other' Kavanagh, Peter, who was responsible for some of the *Weekly's* most notorious items, including 'Diplomatic Whiskey' – an onslaught on the country's representatives overseas that, according to Peter, made Patrick 'shiver' involuntarily when he first read it.¹⁶ Although it was an act of brotherly love by Peter to devote his

savings to the project, a certain amount of ego gratification on his part is obvious too. He had at least as many fierce opinions about Ireland as his poetic sibling and must have enjoyed getting them off his chest in what he later recalled, for the US publication *The American Mercury*, as 'My Wild Irish Weekly.'¹⁷ Significantly, by issue 10, it was deemed necessary to add the qualification 'edited by Patrick Kavanagh' below the paper's masthead, in order to remove any confusion about which Kavanagh's weekly it was.

But O'Nolan's involvement was important in that it happened at all. Editors apart, his was the only well-known name attached to the journal: the absence of any other notable Dublin writer was a testimony to the many bridges Kavanagh had burned even before the *Weekly's* pyromaniacal spree.

The stated reasons for the journal's eventual closure must – if we believe them – seal its uniqueness in the history of Irish newspapers. The most plausible reason is that, as Peter Kavanagh wrote in his biography of the poet, he and Patrick were 'utterly exhausted' by the undertaking, as indeed they might well have been. Also, they had by then run out of Peter's savings, which was always to have been a brake on the project.¹⁸ But the farewell editorial began by denying that either lack of money or circulation was the key problem. On the contrary, in Peter's account, the *Weekly's* sales had reached 2,000 copies by the end, so that it 'could have become a commercial success, but what value would that be?' The aim, he claimed, had been to create a paper backed by a 'wealthy patron' and read by a 'discriminating few.'¹⁹ To this end, conventional success was a failure. The 2,000 sales meant a readership of 10,000. And as he asked himself: 'How could this be when I knew well that there were no more than 500 intelligent people in the whole country?' The only hope, he had thought for a while, was to get rid of the unwanted readers over time, while 'training an intelligent group' later.²⁰ But that would have been a long-term plan, clearly, and in the event the brothers had neither enough time nor energy to persist.

What Myles na gCopaleen thought about such lofty principles is, to my knowledge, sadly unrecorded. It is true that, in the conversations with his own stubbornly persistent readership, *The Plain People of Ireland*, he too had sometimes implied a lack of intelligence on their part. But far from growing more elitist with age, he seems to have developed a certain sympathy with the masses in later life. Taaffe cites a 1944 column, which saw him take on the pretensions of Frank O'Connor, as an early switch to the side of *The Plain People*. As she adds, it was a viewpoint he would find 'increasingly congenial.'²¹

When their *Weekly* folded, both the Kavanaghs found it advisable to quit the country for a time: Peter went back to America, Patrick to London. O'Nolan eventually resumed his association with *The Irish Times*; his days with the Irish civil service,

however, were numbered. In 1953 he received an offer he couldn't refuse, and soon after he was free to dedicate himself to the life, such as it was, of the full-time writer. A few years later again, and with belated encouragement from publisher Timothy O'Keeffe, he managed to revive his novel-writing career.

O'Nolan remained a newspaper columnist till the end. Ironically, 1960s Ireland, with its first surge of progress on the back of the Lemass-Whittaker economic plans, was not as conducive to Mylesian brilliance as the petrified 1940s. There were other factors too, no doubt, including the drink, ill health, and general burn-out. But at a time when even The Plain People of Ireland were getting notions about themselves, O'Nolan's comic touch was not as sure in 1960s Ireland.²²

Kavanagh was facing big traumas immediately ahead too, after the demise of the *Weekly*: first his doomed libel case when, in a doubly-bitter irony, he was eviscerated by the former Fine Gael Taoiseach, John A. Costello, now returned to his day-job as a barrister, and proving to have been a very close reader of the *Weekly*, if only in the interests of discrediting the witness. Then came the cancer and with it, apparently, the 'Hejira' of Kavanagh's later life and poetry, which in his view superseded everything that went before.

It should have been a consolation to those who suffered from his violent criticisms, in the *Weekly* and elsewhere, that Kavanagh periodically declared worthless everything he himself had previously written. Thus, in his late-career manifesto, *Self Portrait*, first broadcast by RTÉ on 30 October 1962, he dismissed much of his early career, and also *The Great Hunger* – by then widely considered his masterpiece – in favour of the new carefree poems.

In the great game of musical chairs, he had ended up on a Canal Bank seat. And as the winner always is in musical chairs, he was sitting alone. As Cronin writes, he had succeeded, for better or worse, in his dubious life-long aim of becoming Ireland's *Ard-Fhile* (High Poet). In the process he had relocated his sense of isolation from Inniskeen Road to Baggot Street Bridge, where he was again 'king of banks and stones and every blooming thing.'²³ Not that he cared, by his own account. Central to the final myth he constructed for himself, and summed up in *Self Portrait*, the older Kavanagh had learned the art of not taking himself seriously. 'Humourosity,' as he put it, was now the keynote of any real poet. And this too touches a curious difference between him and his diminutive, saintly friend.

O'Nolan at his best may have been the funniest writer in English since Mark Twain, at least on the page (Twain was also a big success on the lecture circuit). Seventy years on, his descriptions of Ireland in the 'Emergency' years can still make readers 'LOL,' in modern parlance, and this has helped to keep his cult alive among young readers. Yet by the common account of those who knew him, he was not a man

much given to laughing, or to provoking laughter, in person. Kavanagh, on the other hand, for all his fearsome prose and reputation, could be a mirthful companion. 'There was more genuine laughter in [his] company than in Brian's, whose laughter signified a somewhat mechanical apprehension of the funny side of things' wrote Cronin.²⁴ That mechanical apprehension worked better in print, clearly. And in Kavanagh, despite all the anger and bombast of *his* writing, it may have found an especially welcoming audience. 'I am not in the least bit bitter [about life],' the Monaghan man declared in *Self Portrait*: 'In fact I am always in danger of bursting out laughing.'²⁵

Notes & references

¹ *Kavanagh's Weekly: A Journal of Literature and Politics* 1–13 (12 April–5 July 1952).

² Antoinette Quinn, *Patrick Kavanagh: A Biography* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 2001), 395.

³ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁴ Peter Kavanagh, *Sacred Keeper: A Biography of Patrick Kavanagh* (Chicago: National Poetry Foundation, 1986), 347.

⁵ Anthony Cronin, *No Laughing Matter: The Life and Times of Flann O'Brien* (London: Paladin, 1990), 80–1.

⁶ Cronin, *No Laughing Matter*, 193.

⁷ Flann O'Brien, *The Complete Novels* (New York, NY: Everyman's Library, 2007), 214.

⁸ Carol Taaffe, *Ireland Through the Looking Glass: Flann O'Brien, Myles na gCopaleen and Irish Cultural Debate* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2008), 205.

⁹ Michael Viney, 'Memories of Myles,' *The Irish Times*, 18 October 2011.

¹⁰ Gerry Smyth, 'The Moment of *Kavanagh's Weekly*,' in *Patrick Kavanagh: Irish Writers in Their Time*, ed. Stan Smith (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2009), 68.

¹¹ *Kavanagh's Weekly* 10 (14 June 1952): 5.

¹² Cronin, *No Laughing Matter*, 193.

¹³ Anthony Cronin, *Dead as Doornails: A Memoir* (Dublin: Lilliput Press, 1999), 91–2.

¹⁴ J.J. Lee (ed.), *Ireland 1945-70* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan), 24.

¹⁵ Myles na gCopaleen, 'How Are You Off For Tostals?,' *Kavanagh's Weekly* 5 (10 May 1952): 4.

¹⁶ Quinn, *Patrick Kavanagh*, 311.

¹⁷ Peter Kavanagh, 'My Wild Irish Weekly,' *The American Mercury* (September 1952), 87–91.

¹⁸ 'Story of an Editor who was Corrupted by Love,' *Kavanagh's Weekly* 13 (2 July 1952): 1–6.

¹⁹ Peter Kavanagh, 'My Wild Irish Weekly,' 91.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 90

²¹ Taaffe, 146.

²² See Frank McNally, 'Notes from an Irishman's Diary,' in *'Is it about a bicycle?': Flann O'Brien in the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Jennika Baines (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2011), 157–66.

²³ Patrick Kavanagh, 'Inniskeen Road: July Evening' in *Collected Poems* (London: Penguin, 2005).

²⁴ Cronin, *No Laughing Matter*, 194.

²⁵ Patrick Kavanagh, *Self Portrait* (Dublin: The Dolmen Press, 1964), 18.