

LEON  
URIS

# TRINITY

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## NOVELS BY LEON URIS

BATTLE CRY

THE ANGRY HILLS

EXODUS

MILA 18

ARMAGEDDON

TOPAZ

QB VII

TRINITY

## NON-FICTION

EXODUS REVISITED

with Dmitrios Harissiadis, Photographer

IRELAND: A TERRIBLE BEAUTY

with Jill Uris, Photographer



TRINITY

THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED TO  
MY WIFE, JILL  
WHO IS AS MUCH A PART OF THESE PAGES  
AS THE IRISH PEOPLE

*I wish to express my heartfelt appreciation to my associate, Diane Eagle, whose research and devotion constituted a tremendous contribution, and to the Denver Public Library.*

*There are others, tens of dozens, whose interviews and expertise made this work possible. Sheer weight of numbers precludes my thanking them all. Unfortunately, some of these cannot or do not wish to be acknowledged, for the story of Ireland goes on. Those who did help me know who they are and have my everlasting gratitude.*

"There is no present or future—only the past,  
happening over and over again—now."

EUGENE O'NEILL—*A Moon for the Misbegotten*

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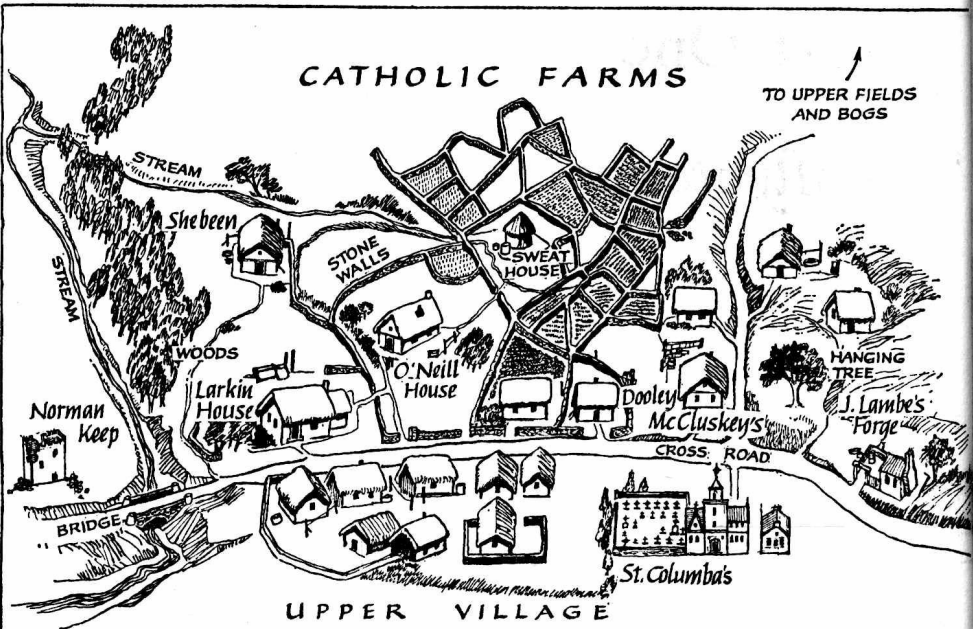
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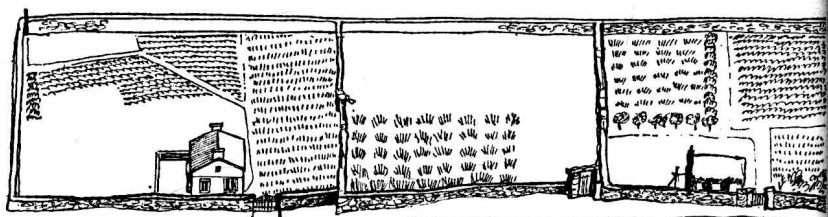


# Part One

## *Ballyutogue*



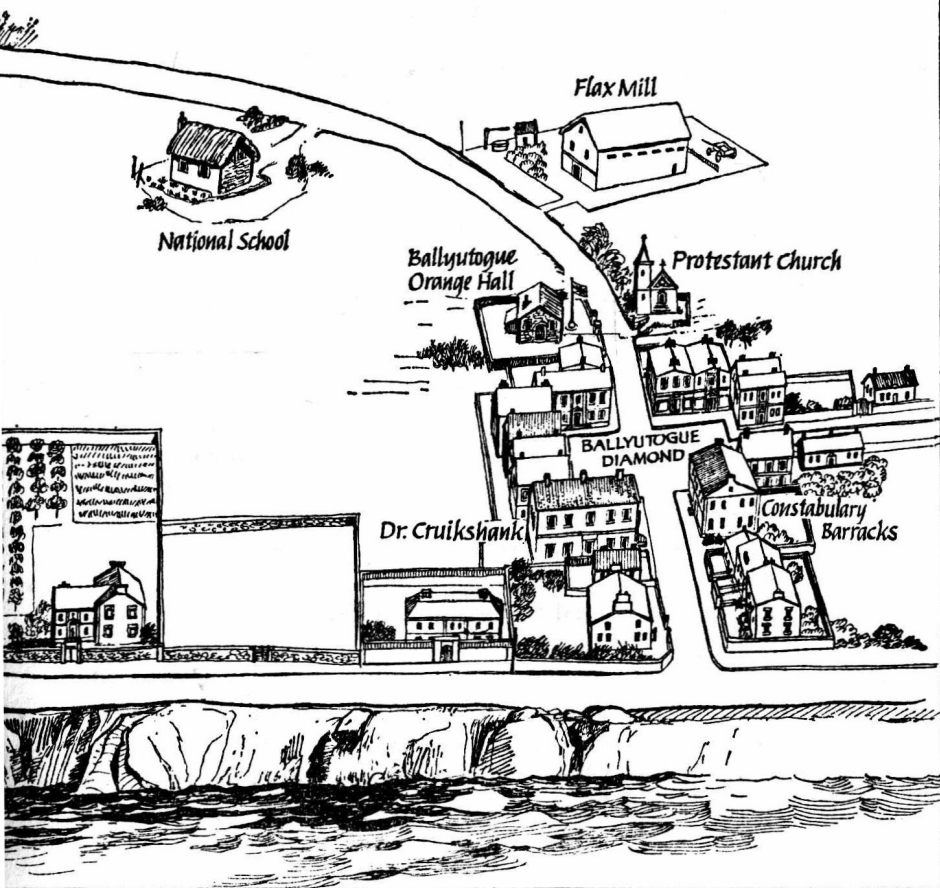
## PROTESTANT FARMS



ROAD TO DERRY

LOUGH FOYLE

# BALLYUTOGUE





## CHAPTER ONE

MAY 1885

I recall with utter clarity the first great shock of my life. A scream came from the cottage next door. I rushed into the room, as familiar as my own home. The Larkin kids, Conor, Liam and Brigid, all hovered about the alcove in which a mattress of bog fir bedded old Kilty. They stood in gape-mouthed awe.

I stole up next to Conor. "Grandfar is dead," he said.

Their ma, Finola, who was eight months pregnant, knelt with her head pressed against the old man's heart. It was my very first sight of a dead person. He was a waxy, bony specimen lying there with his open mouth showing no teeth at all and his glazed eyes staring up at me and me staring back until I felt my own ready to pop out of their sockets.

Oh, it was a terrible moment of revelation for me. All of us kids thought old Kilty had the magic of the fairies and would live forever, a tale fortified by the fact that he was the oldest survivor of the great famine, to say nothing of being a hero of the Fenian Rising of '67 who had been jailed and fearfully tortured for his efforts.

I was eleven years old at that moment. Kilty had been daft as long as I could recall, always huddled near the fire mumbling incoherently. He was an ancient old dear, ancient beyond age, but nobody ever gave serious consideration to the fact he might die.

Little Brigid began to weep.

"Hush!" her ma said sharply. "You'll not do any crying until Grandfar has been properly prepared. The house has been surrounded by fairies just waiting to pounce and your weeping will encourage them to break in and snatch his soul from us."

Finola struggled to her feet, going into a flurry of activity. She flung open the windows and doors to let the evil spirits out and quickly covered the mirror to hide his image.

"Liam, you be telling the news. Be sure to go to the byres and the beehives and let the cattle and bees know that Kilty Larkin is gone. Don't fail or the fairies will take his soul." She wrung her hands and sorrowed. "Oh, Kilty, Kilty, it was a good man you were." And then she turned to me. "Seamus!"

"Yes ma'am," I answered.

"Get to your ma. I'll need her good hands to help lay him out. Conor!"

Conor didn't respond, just looking on at his grandfather. She joggled him by the shoulder. "Conor!"

"Aye, Ma."

"Go up to the bog and get your daddy."

Brigid had fallen to her knees and was crossing herself at a furious pace. "Off your knees and be helping me, Brigid," Finola commanded, for the corpse was a woman's work.

Liam bolted first into their own byre. I could see him through the half door speaking to the Larkin cows as Conor backed away from the alcove slowly, his eyes never leaving his grandfather.

Outside, I punched him lightly on the arm. "Hey, if you come to my house first, I'll go to the bog with you to fetch your daddy." We scampered over the stone wall which separated our cottages. My own ma, Mairead O'Neill, as all the mothers of Ballyutogue, will be remembered by us bent over her eternal station at the hearth. As we tumbled in she was hoisting the great copper pot by pulley chain over the turf fire.

"A good day to you, Mrs. O'Neill," Conor said. "I'm afraid we are in sorrow."

"Kilty Larkin croaked," I said.

"Ah, so it is," my ma sighed, and crossed herself.

"And sure Mrs. Larkin will be needing you to lay him out."

My ma was already out of her apron. "Conor, you stay here with your brother and sister tonight," she said.

"I was hoping to mourn at the wake," he answered.

"That will be up to your ma and daddy. Are you carrying salt?"

"Oh, Lord, we all forgot in the excitement."

Ma went to the large salt bowl in a niche on the side of the fireplace and doled out a pinch for my pocket, for Conor and for herself to ward off the evil spirits.

"I'm going to the bog with Conor," I said, bolting behind him.

"Be sure you tell the bees and cows," she called after us.

"Liam is doing that."

Our village started at an elevation of three hundred feet above Lough Foyle and our fields crept up into the hills for another five hundred feet, all sliced into wee parcels of a rundale. Some of the plots were hardly larger than our best room and very few people could really tell what exactly belonged to whom. Each plot was walled off, making a spider web of stone over the mountainside.

Conor ran like he was driven on a wind, never stopping until he cleared the last wall gasping for breath. He sat sweating, trembling and sniffing. "Grandfar," he said shakily.

Now Conor Larkin was twelve, my closest friend and my idol, and I wanted very much to be able to say words of comfort but I just could not manage much at all.

My earliest memories had to do with the Larkins. I was the youngest of my family, the scrapings of the pot. My sisters were all grown and married and my oldest brother, Eamon, had emigrated to America and was a fireman in Baltimore. The middle brother, Colm, at nineteen was eight years older than myself when Kilty died.

Conor and I waited for a time, for seldom was the day as clear and the view as splendid. Ballyutogue, meaning "place of troubles," lay grandly on the east side of Inishowen several miles north of Derry in County Donegal.

From where we stood we could see it all . . . all the stolen lands that now belonged to Arthur Hubble, the Earl of Foyle. The vista this day sparkled so we could make it out all the way over Lough Foyle to County Derry and up and down the coast from Muff to Moville. Directly below us at loughside was the Township and on either end of it the long, perfectly proportioned rectangular symmetry of lush green Protestant fields, each holding a finely built stone farmhouse of two stories and a slate roof.

The Upper Village where we Catholics lived was "in the heather" with its crazy patch-quilt labyrinth of stone walls creeping up the savage hills.

Conor was biting his lip hard to fight off the tears.

"Do you think he's in purgatory yet?" I asked.

He shook his head to say he didn't know, then scooped the ground, picked up a rock and slung it down the hill. I threw a rock too because I usually did what Conor did.

"Come on, runt," he said, and turned and trotted up the path into the mountain bogs. It was nearly an hour when we arrived. The bog warden directed us to the area where Tomas Larkin and my own daddy, Fergus O'Neill, would be clamping turf. At this point the cut of the bog was deep. Four-man teams worked their slanes with the precision of machines, digging out and slicing bricks which were raised up by pulley and stacked like cottages to dry. When the water finally oozed out of them weeks later, they had lost most of their weight and were ready for burning. The dried bricks were loaded on a string of donkey carts and taken to a warehouse in the Township.

Our people got fifteen per cent of the turf for working the bogs, with the balance either going to Derry to fire up his lordship's factories or sold to Protestant farmers, shops and homes. Conor was already working the bogs from time to time and in a year or so I would be joining him during the dry clamping season in May.

Tomas Larkin was not hard to spot, being half again the size of my daddy, who dug alongside him. A great show of a man he was. On seeing Conor he set his slane aside and waved broadly, then immediately sensed his son's intensity.

"Grandfar," Conor cried, running into his daddy's arms.

"Aye," Tomas Larkin sighed from a terrible depth, "aye." He sat himself on the ground, taking Conor onto his lap. I envied the Larkins so. I truly loved my own daddy, of course, and my ma and Colm and my sisters, but in thinking back I never have a remembrance of an embrace. None of the families in Ballyutogue were much for showing outward affection except the Larkins. They were different in that way.

The word drifted around the bog in scarcely a whisper and one by one the slanes were set aside and the men filed past Tomas and Conor and doffed their caps and moved on down the mountain.

The long walk back was dirgelike and wordless with Conor holding tight to his daddy's hand and both of them clench-teethed. It seemed half of forever before we reached the crossroads where Conor and I waited every morning to have the milk collected. Here at the three-hundred-foot level the Upper Village began with the main road twisting down to Ballyutogue Township and the lough. It was a neat, square, solid Protestant Ulster town below with an array of merchants, flax and flour mills, the dairy and their homes. In the diamond, the town center, the Royal Irish Constabulary barrack and crown offices attested to the omnipresence of Her



Britannic Majesty. All of it down there, the town and the Protestant farms, was once O'Neill land either grabbed by Lord Hubble's ancestors and planted by imported Scots or doled out as a reward to the soldiers of Oliver Cromwell's army.

At the crossroad stood the one prosperous Catholic merchant, Dooley McCluskey, himself, proprietor of a public house and wee inn. The Protestants were rabid in defense of temperance and wouldn't dirty their hands running such an establishment. However, McCluskey's was beyond the eyes of their roaring preacher men and those thin-lipped, pinched Presbyterian wives. Why, we've seen temperance Presbyterians so tore they could be put to sleep hanging on a clothesline.

Most of the Catholic drinking was in the nature of poteen, a white mountain dew stilled in illegal stills which could be broken down and moved in minutes ahead of the excise tax collectors and the Royal Irish Constabulary. The actual partaking was done in a shebeen, a converted byre buried in our village. Tradition in Ballyutogue and many other towns of Inishowen was that the stilling and selling of poteen be given to widows who had no other means of livelihood.

Across the road from McCluskey's stood our second mighty establishment, St. Columba's Church, named for the blessed founder of Derry and overseas missionary who converted thousands of heathen English and Scots to Christianity centuries before. Just about half of the holy places in Donegal and Derry were named for him.

To look at St. Columba's you'd think we were in the shank of prosperity. Why, St. Columba's was half again the size and double the beauty of the Protestant Lord Houses in the Township. Coming from our own stark cottages, it seemed like a preview of heaven. You'd be given to wonder how and why people living on a diet of potatoes and salted herring would be putting up such grandiose monuments to the Almighty.

For generations we were not permitted to worship in our traditional manner. Penal laws by the British forced us to hold secret mass in caves and hidden places in the high pastures. When the religion was emancipated earlier in the nineteenth century, mother church went on a building spree despite the fact that it kept the peasants in a state of dire poverty.

Father Lynch (God bless County Tipperary which gave him to us) ruled the parish like an avenging angel. The first thing I ever