

## Undone, History The Book of FitzGerald, Chapter VI

Susan Andrews Grace

### Un trou dans l'histoire

Dans «Un trou dans l'histoire», Susan Andrews Grace met en scène une femme, Gilliosa, qui quitte l'Amérique du Nord pour l'Irlande où reposent ses ancêtres. Gilliosa est une figure à l'origine «impure» étant en partie Celte et en partie Normande. Cette femme a une mystérieuse dette envers les descendants des envahisseurs normands de l'Irlande. Et peut-être parce qu'elle a une identité hybride, Gilliosa est choisie et poursuivie par un esprit normand (une déesse de la mémoire?) appelée Ferry Woman. Ferry Woman a de troublantes questions à poser et des «leçons infernales» à enseigner à la fragile Gilliosa. Cette incarnation de la mémoire historique connaît les différents visages que la violence de l'impérialisme peut prendre: la «boucherie» de Cromwell, les mensonges du christianisme à propos des agneaux sacrifiés, les inventions technologiques masculines comme les forceps, etc. Ferry Woman a beaucoup à enseigner mais Gilliosa est distraite par les plaisirs matériels. Ce texte constitue le sixième chapitre de The Book of FitzGerald, qui fait lui-même partie d'un manuscrit plus volumineux intitulé Ferry Woman's History of the World.

### Punctuation Legend

- eternity, to indicate the irrelevance of time, not an ending or a pause but something that is additive, goes on.
- ◆ designates historical pause, the need for reflection.
- \* indicates something outside of the world, leading to other realities.
- ⊕ indicates hidden, lost, wild realities and usually indicating an other-world justice.

### **Ferry Woman tempt/tests Gilliosa FitzGerald**

⊕ Gilliosa has wormed her way into a big house. She's come from the snaky continent back to the green island, flown over the water, dreaded graveyard for many of her forebears and now she's wormed her way into a big house. Not since Cromwell, the butcher, have any of her family enjoyed the large rooms great wealth buys, hand-woven silk curtains, non-cooking fireplaces, grand furniture. She has a panoramic view of the lake, from the wide window, the one connected to the river, connected to the sea. Ferry Woman could find her here too but she's sure she won't. Not for a while. Meantime Gilliosa enjoys the great oak table, the linen, towels, chintz, art especially the one hundred year old needleworked angel carrying off a young girl, rare leather-bound books and bottle glass ○ Verdi, a scarf around his roman neck singing on the wall, maps of ancient land holdings. Oh, this is lovely, she says, sighs, thinks why not for always? Why have I wormed my way into this place, grovelled on its lintel, scraped and bowed and asked to be let in. Gilliosa would do almost anything for an ensuite bath, if truth be known. Gilliosa is consumed with material lust.

On the third day in the big house she's admiring her lovely pink and white fingernails, responding so well to the pure, soft water when she hears the clang of Ferry Woman's brass gong ⊕ Reluctantly she wanders to the lakeshore. She doesn't want to be bothered with all those questions, infernal lessons. She knows Ferry Woman will ask about her debt. The one she owes to Diarmuid FitzGerald, the celtic norman, the one who refused to believe his invader's background, ignorant of his unbelonging to the island, his back broken by the ground taken. Standing his ground, speaking his language only, playing his music on a pawn shop violin, his one treasure an Ancient Order of Hibernians watch fob. Gilliosa knows about the debt but right now they're cooking lovage soup and shell pasta with aubergine and feta cheese and there's a lovely strawberry cheesecake with dollops of cream and real flowers on top. She hates to miss it. And who cares anyway about the old esquire, his tweed cap dusty six feet under, his fobby watch fob in her aunt's underwear drawer.

Ferry Woman squints ⊕ She's wearing the old style cape, a light misty rain drizzles from the dusky sky. High wind knocking the boat about. Her cape is pulled close, against the wind, its donegal weave showing poppy red, turquoise, royal purple. The fibula at her shoulder is chased

and studded with yellow stones. Gilliosa knows this pin with her memory ○ pink ribbons attached to her sleep, knows where it is found centuries later. She also knows there is a birth sword that belongs with it. Ferry Woman squints at her, bids her enter the craft.

*Oh Gilliosa girl you need some hardening yet. It will be a while. Go back to the ensuite bath, the fluffy white towels, your covetous thoughts. Go back.*

Gilliosa does with a catholic guilt and a physical hunger for her beckoning supper.

This is to fulfil her mother's unwritten scripture that Gilliosa had pretensions and wealth would go to her head as well as her stomach.

### Shepherd metaphor shattered for the FitzGerald

Ferry Woman knows the lie of the lamb ♦ The one willing to be slaughtered. The silly, pretty boy. He's chased about by the bossy herd, pushed – rudely poked from behind, kept on the edge of the group. This is no innocence. In truth it is powerlessness. And it's time he grew up. And he will, shackled to her boat. The slaughter never happened, not the way the flock like to see it, their round woolly ways and bodies comfortable with the idea of the underling, the weak youth dying for their stinky, stupid, sheepy ways. Ferry Woman has seen the end of many things and many creatures and the scripture of the glorious triumphant lamb is a shining white lie. She has seen it in the spiralling of time, the many dead among her children, their spirits stars in many skies ☼

And now she knows is the time to expose the fighting, the useless combat that has come to threaten the very life of her well-known planet ☼ Even her life is threatened, tied as she is by the cords of her heart ○ silver umbilicus. She has chosen Gilliosa, in spite of her wavering motivations. Gilliosa still does not understand the importance, still does not see the other side of meanness and misery, does not see the difference between the crumbly Abbot and the mean Cavan man and that they are one. ♦ Gilliosa believes in romance, falls down on her knees in the gravelled ruins, not heeding the treachery. Not once challenging or flicking their swords from their hands ☼ as she well knows how to do, none of them remember to keep their thumbs tucked under, covered.

Gilliosa instead dreams of being pampered, supported by love and worldly attention. Ferry Woman is spending an eternity learning what Gilliosa needs to know. (She is sent by Nesta, who peopled a great portion of the world.) She bears responsibility and love for norman souls

and watches carefully over, clucking at their mistakes, feeling impatient. If there is a purgatory she is in its abyss, mopping up, teaching Gilliosa it's not her job to nurse the world. Instead to take responsibility, take the sponge and forceps, the surgical strike, throw them on the theatre floor and order the patient to be healed. Her will that strong the wounds are knit instantly.

But Gilliosa still wavers in her intentions. The landscape becomes misty and unclear, a watercolour landscape ghostly and unfinished and she cannot find her way.