

They did not surrender gently into the night. Carbon copies in body; yet born to disagree. My childhood saw the aunties as ageless beings in perpetual motion, magnificent, unyieldingly bossy. Their youth endured the pilgrimage of time. How fortunate to have the looking glass as a best friend. Both were charismatic and prepossessing. They danced with the language, those loquacious Irishwomen.

My aunties, Aunt – Cestor, and her twin sister, Aunt – Tique, embraced for the last time before they flung themselves out of a perfectly good airplane in celebration of their ninety-fifth birthdays.

Dying is a full-time job. Neither one of them had the patience for illness or dementia. They died as they lived, with a stomach full of birthday cake washed down with a generous amount of Mum’s Champagne. Fast and furious, it must have been grand altogether. I imagine the sun was going down at high-speed in the western sky when they jumped towards life’s end.

Tonight’s wake would have made them proud. A great deal of whisky was demolished in their names, followed by maudlin songs, followed by rebel songs. All of us were bollixed up, crying, and whinging for the ladies. Story after story, tale after tale, some of the yarns could make a man blush. Of course the aunties always had a way of mortifying me with their compromising adventures; and now that I think about it, it seems they spent a great deal of time accomplishing just that.

Their home has a colorful history. The house was built in the mid 1800's, full of Gingerbread and Chantilly cream. In my mind's eye the beautiful people play croquet on the lawn, men in seersucker, woman in eyelet. Oh, this era would have fit them perfectly.

But the house has a color of a different kind now, the color of death, where shadows merge with darkness. Nothing moves but the tears down my cheeks. As I walk through the close of the day I ponder my own destiny, my life, my very soul.

A small wood plaque hangs on the pine-paneled wall. I hadn't read these words in years, and yet, they summed up the aunties perfectly. *Life is not about waiting for the storm to pass. ...it's about learning to dance in the rain.*