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THE HIND OF MORNING

She snorts and stamps upon the eastern hill, the Hind of Morning, longing for the day, the Hind of Morning, mad to leap away, and flings her head up, scorning to be still.

On high her hooves strike up a streaming fire, that wavers, slanting past the haloed peaks; her quick feet spurn the summits, and she seeks to trample night and burn it up entire.

The Hind of Morning leaps and will not stay, she stretches West and West with flinging stride, the Hind of Morning pacing in her pride, the Hind of Morning is away, away.

1932

HOMER

They say that you were blind, yet from the shore you saw the long waves cresting out at sea; before the climbing dawn from heaven's floor you saw the dark night flee.

The torrents whirling in the springtime thaw, the shady slopes of Ida many-pined, the curving flash of falling swords you saw — they lie; you were not blind.

1932
CUMHA RUARAIDH MHÓIR
LAMENT FOR RUARAIDH MÓR MACLEOD

Ruari dead - now Skye lament and wail your spoiling,
and the dread tale that I tell; and all slowly toiling
on your shoulders raise him - then never more.
He was your shield; across the stormy seas he led you
to the far fields of the foreign men; on spoil he fed you,
and your arms grew strong from the sword and the oar.

Quiet at their chains his long-boats lie, for past their sailing;
and their gear rots in the rain, and the cold wind goes wailing
through their straining shrouds as evening falls.
Now let them laugh that hated him and feared his coming,
and their wine flow, and in feeble cheer their tuneless strumming
make the echo wake on their castle walls.

Here will no harper stir his strings to music's measure,
nor the song ring in our halls; nor ever joy or pleasure
will Patrick bring to us ever more.
For what can we see or hear again with Ruari sleeping,
but the grey rain on the dreary hills weeping, weeping,
and the sea's mouth mourning along the shore.

FOR THE CORRIE

After her days are sad and cheerless;
that was a ship that was first and peerless,
ran through the midst of fear all fearless.

Tides rips snatched, and blind reefs fenced us
stark heads hurled their squalls against us,
storm winds wearied and sleep unsensed us.

Three reefs down and the long seas pouring
over her bows, with the North-West roaring
down from Kintyre, and the stays loud roaring.

Tramping along with the lee-rail dripping,
soft through the dark to an anchorage slipping,
anchor up and the dawn wind nipping.

Long days sailing, and long nights singing,
setting the shores of the anchorage ringing,
there we lay out our anchor swinging.

Staunch in squalls and sweet in steering,
smashing the waves on her way careering,
ready to answer the sly winds veering.
AISLING

Gàir nan tonn an raoir am chluasan,
leamsa 's truagh mo dhùsgadh maidne,
mi 'nam shuain air taobh Loch Fhine,
't na mo dhùisg an tìr na machrach.

Bha mi 'n raoir, a Dhia, am bhruadar
air a' chruaich os cionn Glac Calltuinn,
air a' chruaich os cionn na tròghad,
cnocán fásail, fasgach, crannach.

Chunna mi 'n sin an là 'glasadh,
grian a' lasadh air Loch Fhine;
chuala mi - 's bu bhinn am fonn e -
nuall nan tonn ri taobh na tire.

Nuall nan tonn ri tràigh 'nan leumnaich,
tighinn 'nan treud o Chaolas Bhreanain,
's ghabh i seachad, seud nam bàta,-
b'e sin thug bàrr air gach aisling.

B'e sin thug bàrr air gach aisling,
an darach cridhe tighinn 'na cabhag;
sloistreachd stuadh fo cheann mo ghaoil-sa,
fuaim nan seòl 'sa ghaoith ri crathadh.

Fuaim nan seòl 'sa ghaoith ri crathadh,
bid a h-aisnean, 's i fo shiùbhal;
cròn nan sunndach aig mo ghradh-sa
bhàrr gach bàirlein geàrradh shùrdag.

Cròn nan sunndach aig mo ghradh-sa
bhàrr gach bàirlein geàrradh shùrdag;
òran sùgraídh aig mo leannan,
's i 'na deann a' dèanamh ùspairn.

'Dèanamh ùspairn ris na tonntan,
bumadh trom le gualà laidir,
sochrach, eutrom anns na gleannnan,
air gach beann gu beòthail dàna.

Air gach beann gu beòthail dàna,
's gaoth le ràn 'cur luaths 'na casan -
och, chan ionnan sin 's an saoghal
th' aig na daoine so 'sa mhachair.

Dhè, chan ionnan sin 's an saoghal
th' aig na daoine so 'sa mhachair:
 gàir nan tonn an raoir am chluasan,
leamsa 's truagh mo dhùsgadh maidne.

1935
A VISION

The thunder of the waves last night in my ears, miserable this morning my waking; by Loch Fyne side in my sleep, but awake in Lowland country.

God, last night in my dreaming I was on the mound above Hazel Hollow, on the mound above the shoreline, a desolate hillock, sheltered and wooded.

There I saw the day dawning, sun gleaming on Loch Fyne; I heard - and what a sweet music it was - the raging of the waves along the coast.

The raging of the waves bounding on the shore, coming in herds from Kilbrennan Sound - and she came past, the jewel of boats, that’s what surpassed every vision.

That’s what surpassed every vision: the darling oak swiftly approaching; dashing of billows under the prow of my love, the noise of the sails flapping in the wind.

The noise of the sails flapping in the wind, the creaking of her ribs as she goes, a merry drone from my dear as she makes her leaps over every breaker.

A merry drone from my dear as she makes her leaps over every breaker, a playful song from my beloved as she fights on at full speed.

Fighting on against the waves, hitting hard with a strong shoulder, calm and light in the dells, on each peak spirited and bold.

On each peak spirited and bold, as the wind with a shriek puts speed in her step. Och, not the same is that and people’s life here in the Lowlands.

God, not the same is that and people’s life here in the Lowlands. The thunder of the waves last night in my ears, miserable this morning my waking.

MB
THE GAMEKEEPERS

Tired I walk the rough hills with the rainshowers lashing me, and roe or buck I've not set eyes on though I've been walking long; a rotten occupation is hunting, on the bare rockfaces with a gun, wandering since this morning without one spark lighting the powder.

I took my way down to that Lagan which is a favourite haunt of the red fellows; no gift of a trip that was for me, since even one doe I failed to catch; I walked round every pass and hollow, looking over my shoulder in case the gamekeepers should come upon me in the mist - a hard fate that would be.

O hi ho the gamekeepers, my grannie herself did a better job of travelling the moors and rocks, keeping a look-out on the wildernesses. Methinks it's you are the old wifes- not seldom have I gone shooting, out till early in the dawn, while you all slept soundly.

A crook they take with them and guns, and a huge big-mawed ugly hound; every boor of them has binoculars, but lacks a good pair of eyes in his head; as proud as princes when they parade along the causie, but see them now among the crags, how slow they are and bent double.
SIUBHAL A' CHOIRE

Thog sinn amach air a' mhachair uaine; chuirstinn a' Gharbhaidh ghabh'a ghrumach; leum o'n iardheas siontan cruaidh oirn.
Thog i 'ceann ri ceann nam fuarthonn, an tè dhubh chaol 'nì gaoir 'na gluasad; thog i 'seinn is rinn i ruathar.

Shin i'sgòd le cruas na cruadhach; shin i'taobh ri taobh nan stuaidean; shin i 'ceum a cheumadh chuantan.
Bhuail i beum le 'beul s i 'tuaingneadh; thug i sad le sgar a guailne; ghearr i leòn le 'sròfin s i 'luasgan.

Eilean Aoidh - gu'm b'aoibh a nuallan; Aird MhicLaomainn - a gaoir gu'm b'uaibhreach; os cionn na h-Innse sheinn i duanag.
Cha robh 'nar sùilean ach smùid a stràcan, cathadh is sloban o chìr nam Bairtinn; cha robh 'nar cluais ach fuaim a stàirneil.

1936

THE VOYAGING OF THE CORRIE

We lifted out on to the green plain; we weathered Garvel the tempestuous and scowling; hard rain squalls leaped upon us out of the south-west. She raised her head against the heads of the cold waves, the black narrow one who makes a clamour as she goes; she raised her singing and made an onrush.

She stretched her sheet as hard as steel; she stretched her side to the side of the breakers; she stretched her stride to pace the oceans. She struck a blow with her gunnel as she buffeted; she struck a dunt with the seam of her shoulder; she clove a wound with her beak as she lurched.

Eilean Aoidh - joyous was her roaring; Ardlamont - haughty was her shouting; up off Inchnamrock she sang a ditty. In our eyes there was nothing but the smoking of her strokes, spindrift and driven spray from the crests of the billows; in our ears there was nothing but the sound of her snorting.
AN GLEANNAN

Pàrrthas sith' an gleann suaimhneach –
dìon a chrann s a luachair lòin –
gleann is sèimhe sruth fo bhruachaibh,
an gleann feurach, lusach, uaine;
uain' a bharrach s a riasg ròmach;
clúain nam fiadh - còrr am fàrdach;
glasanach ciar binn an crònan,
bruidhinn am beòil s a' ghrian air fàire.

Trì fuinn as gnàth sa’ ghleannan –
geòir aig na tuinn 'teachd fann anios,
toird an uillt le sìos nam beannaibh,
gaoth bheag shoirbh a' seinn sna crannaibh.
Cromar cinn nan cròbh le chèile
a dh'eisdeachd nam port faondrain aice.
Ald na leacainn, buan a labhairt
anuas sa' ghlaic fo Chreag an Phasgaidh.

1936

3 gleann : glean  A (29)  
4 bellowing : roaring  all

THE GLENNAN

A paradise of peace the tranquil glen – the shelter of its trees and meadow rushes – glen whose stream goes quietest under its banks, the grassy, flowering, green glen; green are its birch tops and shaggy moor-grass; the meadow of the deer – no common one is their dwelling place; in the grey dawning light sweet is their bellowing, the speech of their mouths when the sun is on the skyline.

Three melodies that are habitual in the little glen - the thunder of the waves coming faintly from below, the roar of the burn down the slopes of the mountains, a small easy wind singing in the trees. The trees stoop their heads all together to listen to its vagrant tunes. The stream of the slope, everlasting is its talking downwards in the hollow below the Shelter Craig.

3 the meadow : meadow A (29)  
4 bellowing : roaring  all
ÒRAN DO’N OIGHRE

'S ioma gleann a tha fo’d làimhsa,
beanntan, 's àilein réidh 'nam bonn,
's ioma calamh seasgar, sitheil,
's acarsaid gu dìdean long;
strathan isol, sléibhteann, 's coillteann,
's coireachan an fhéidh 'san àird,
le cinn 's le ceart is fhuar thu t’fhéarrann
o’d shinnisir fhéin, 's gum meal thu à.

Gum meal thu fhéin t’oighreachd fharsuinn,
far nach faic thu fear a’ tâmh,
gach tobhta falamh, 's fàrdach fhuaraidh,
's goirtean luachrach gun fhàs,
scall amach, a thriath, ad' uinneag,
air na bailtean cruinn 'sa gheàinn,
far nach cluinnear guth no gaire, –
na làraichean gun mhuinntear annt’.

Gum meal thu fhéin do chàs 's do chor-sa,
fearram falamb, sporan gann,
mheud a chosgas tu 'ga chumail,
's gun tuath chumas ni riut ann;
peacadh 'n athar air a chlann-sa, –
's teann an lagh, 's cha bhacar à;
's ársaidh t’oighreachd sin, 's cha ghann i,
's ioma gleann a tha fo’d làimh.

1936

SONG TO THE HEIR

Many's the glen that you control, mountains with level plains at their foot, many a sheltered peaceful haven, and anchorage where ships can find safety; lowlying straths, hills and woods, and the deer corries up on the heights, assuredly and justly you have acquired your land from your own ancestors, and may you enjoy it.

May you indeed enjoy your vast inherited estate, where you'll see not a man resting, each empty ruin and cold hearth and uncultivated patch overgrown with rushes; look out of your window, great chief, onto the compact settlements in the glen, where talk or laughter are not to be heard - the ruined remains devoid of people.

May you enjoy your fate and predicament, a deserted piece of land, an empty purse, all that you spend on its upkeep, and with no tenantry to stand up to you on any matter; the sin of the father on his children - harsh is the law, and ineluctable; ancient and not sparse is that inheritance of yours, many's the glen that you control.

MB
[WHAT SONG IS OURS...]
[Incomplete composite draft]

In roussedness of fire, in flames roaring
passed in the night Priam's people;
wild through Troy the red sword wandered.
Their end is a song that men will mind of,
folk far off will sorrow for them.

What song is ours but a change-house chorus
cursing the sheep
They that browse through broken townships,
sleep in the rain on ruined thresholds,
bracken their bed on hearths that are harried.

These have the glens and we must wander
strange and unsought in a changed country,
walk like ghosts where once they were welcome
and now their friends are gash before them.

Dearer than hearths herds on the hillside,
stag and hind in the high carriesc;
dearer than men is money among them.

the rocks that have seen, speak they cannot
and the silent hills hide their knowledge
deaf to our questing, quiet, abiding.

Here you may go and none will know ye

1936 (-38?)

1-8: om. 3
10: followed by dearer than hearths... 3
11: om. 3
12-13: 13-12 3
12 changed: slain 3
13 where once they: that once 3
14: om. 3
18-21: om. 20
19 the silent hills: the hills unhearing unhearing, the hills marg. 3
20 abiding: unchanging corr. 3
[AN T-SÀBAID]

"Mur cum thu Sàbad Dhé, a mhic, cha n-éirich leat gu brath."
Mo thuraidhe, bhris Clann Domhnaill i aig Inbhear Lòchaidh là.

1936

4 Inbhear : Inbhir P14

[THE SABBATH]

"If you do not keep God's Sabbath, my son, no good will ever befall you." Too bad for the MacDonalds, who broke the Sabbath at Inverlochy. MB

[DÜRACHDAN NOLLAIGE 1936]

Bho'n tha Nollaig 'nar cois
bi gu sodalach éibhinn,
gabh do dheoch, seinn do phort,
gun sprochd us gun éislean
's nara thig a' Bhliadh'n Ùr
gum bi sùlas gach ceum dhuit.

1936

[CHRISTMAS GREETINGS]

Since Christmas is upon us be expansive and merry, have your dram, play your tune, banish misery and sadness, and come the New Year may your every step be joyful. MB
TIR THAIRNGIRE
The Land Of Promise

I’ve heard o a land that lies westward. Weel it’s set in the lee o aa the wunds that are but the saft Sooth. There isna hurtin in’t or the sting o a sherph mouthe, there isna woundin or greetin, they Cann’a grieve or fret.

Shinin evar in sun the slopes, bricht the sann; singin evar an’ laughter. They ken nae keen the people thonder. The Lord’s hand lies atween that fowk an’ daith, that fowk an’ Adam’s clan.

Thon was the land whar Brendan came; but his coorach’s track has fadeit for aye on the sea’s face. Folla ye may, but ye’ll folla no more than yere awn wish an’ the wund’s way; an’ the wish o man is wake lik a rash. Ye’ll but sleep in the wrack.

Summar an’ Wunter, a weary while, ye’ll run on yere rodd, wi many’s the dreich wundward bate, an’ yere eyes aheid seekin thon shore. On the sea’s groond ye wull herbar deid, for Brendan’s land is hidden from men by the hand o God.

Ye wull sail yere boat by flann an’ gale while her sides last, an’ yere eyes ostarein ayont the bows grow ridd an’ fey. But nevar thon coast wull leap lik a flame thro haar or spray; an’ then end o’t, a scraich. The big sea wull grup ye fast.

Ye wull druft wi the tides as they shuft an’ swing by the side o the land, an’ quate the fush wull glim at ye oot o cauld eyes, an’ there ye wull rock in the tangle an’ turn, till the deid rise, an’ the hunners that socht a shore that seeker nivar fand.
THE THREE BROTHERS

Thon night the three put the sails tie her, cheerily, heidin home from Ayrshir.
A gale o southerly wund came on them by the Cumbrae light, but they werena carein.

5 Oot thonder by Garroch Heids she trevellt, runnin lik smok, an her daicks streamin.
When the rip was risein roond her shoothers, seas that wad swalla, she didna heed them.

West she trampt, an the white ridges lik bauchkans oot o the night came breegein against her quarter. Slack they werena thon night, but the night had a sore endin.

13 It wasna the wave that the wund wakent, a steep-faced sea brekkin aboard her, or a white lump shaken over her shoothers, that fillt her so that she sank below them.

Ootside o Laggan Heid it struck her.
Dooon from the home hills came boondin a livin squal that whupt the watter.
It raxt her sail, an over it threw her.

21 To their folk's hoose came the hand o somethin, through the derk tie the door, an' clasht upon it three times. At thon uncanny knockin they couldna speak for the thoughts that were in them.

Their eyes stood in their heid, starein, an' they wisht they couldna hear the howlin that the wund made, or the soond o the brekkers doon on the shore. But it aye was louder.

29 They gazet in the fire wi gash faces, an' nevar talkt, for they couldna speak it. They werena for lyin doon or sleepin, an' they daurna say for why they werena.

Afore the brekk o day in the moamin, when it wasna derk an it wasna dawnin, from the rocks on the rudh' they heard a cryin, a céinteach's keenin. They kent their story.

37 They kent what thon sore cry was sayin, an' whose lair was laid in the wrack an' seaweed, an' they sat there wi the day brekkin, grey face on the men an' the wummen greetin.
2 Ayrshire: Ershir 38
3 gale ... wund: > gèl ... wunn 38 came: cem 38
4 Cumbrae ... carein: Coomra ... cèrin 38
5 Heids: Heid sic B (corr. 30) trevell: travelled 38
6 daicks: decks corr. 38 6 et passim an': and 38
7 shoothers: gunnels 38
8 trampt: tramped 38
9 came: cem 38
10 quarter: quarter 38
11 wund: wunn 38 wind sic B (corr. 30) wakent: wakened> wèkent 38
12 faced: > fessed 38
13 or: nor 38
14 sank below: sunk {below} belò 38
15 hills came: hulls cem 38
16 It raxt her sail: her mast bent lik a rash 38
17 came the hand: cem the hann 38
18 door: dor 38
19 starein: stèrin 38
20 wisht: wusht 38
21 shore ... was: shòr ... [grew corr.] 38
22 faces: fesses 38
23 never talked: /never nuvar/ taalked 38
24 or: nor 38
25 daurna: darna 38
26 céinteach: caointeach marg: caynyach? 38
27 day: > dè 38
28 face: > fess 38

310
LUINNEAG

Hug ò hoireann ò,
gura fada, cian fada,
hug ò hoireann ò.

B’e gairbhe na gaoithe
chum an raoir mi ’nam chaithris.

Gaoth á deas air Loch Fine,
’teachd gu flocbar le tartar.

Na tuinn chaoirgheal mu’n Gharbhail,
neart na fairge s a farum.

'S ann an raoir a bha’n nuallan
’na mo chluasan s m’in Sasuinn.

Gu’n tig fuaim an Uilld Bheithe
eadar mise s mo chadal.

Abhainn nan Gillean s a gaoir aic’
o Loch a’ Chaorainn ’na cabhaig.

Lagan Rhaig s Tràigh na Lùibe
eadar mo shùilean s mo leabhar.

Agus Rudha Clach an Tràghaidh
a’ snàmh air a’bhalla.

1937

CHORUS SONG

Hug ò hoireann ò, it is far, endlessly far, hug ò hoireann ò.

2 It was the harshness of the wind that kept me awake last night.
A wind from the south on Loch Fyne, coming fiercely with uproar.

4 Waves blazing with foam round Garvel, the might of the sea and its clangour.
Last night its roaring was in my ears, and I was in England.

6 The sound of the Birch Burn comes between me and my sleep.
The River of the Youths with its outcry, hastening from the Rowan Loch.

8 Lagan Roaig and the Strand of Loup between my eyes and my book.
And Ebbing Stone Point swimming on the wall.
FADA-GEARR

Bidh fear thall s a bhos ag cumail a-mach nach eil feum dhuinn ann a bhi cur chomharrnheadean air faidead agus air giorrad (no accents mar a ghoireadh dhiubh 'sa Bheurla) os cionn nam facal. Ach ma ghabhas sinn an comhairle bithidh móran troimhe-chèile agus dith chinnte againn, nach bidh? Feuch a-nis –

B'fheàrr leam gàd na ga, is clach r'a dùsgadh, 
Cuir âit an âite ait, 's is tearc gheibh tür ann, 
Ma tha thu gàghach gachach, mabach ciùrta, 
Mo chràdh do chàs, do chas 's do chab bhi brùite. 
Ma's càraid caraid, 's dithisd fear 'sa chùntas, 
Ma's gàradh garadh, 's lios gach creag 'san dùthaich, 
Ma's cóir an coireach, 's carach am fear fiùghail, 
'S ma's bòchdan bòchdan, 's tannasg fear gun iùntas.

No mar tig thu às do bharail le sin, cluinn seo –

Mo thruaigh do cheann, 's neo-Chriostdail thu 'charaid 
Ma's ionnann leat saibad is Sàibid; 
'S mo thruaigh an càigh, ní e suidhe neo-thaitneach 
mur toir sibh dha cathair ach cathair; 
Air mo shon dheth, nam b'fheudar dhomh triall that mara, 
'B'e bhochdadh tain leam bata airson bata, 
'S an 'am togail nan seòl, 's a bhi fàgail a'chala, 
'S e bu ghioireas dhuinn rac, 's cha bu ràc e.

1937

LONG-SHORT

The odd person here and there maintains that we've no need to write accents above words. But if we go along with that advice, it will give rise to much confusion and uncertainty, won't it? Have a look -

I'd prefer a crowbar to a withe if there's a stone to be shifted, put a place in place of pleased and you'll rarely make sense; if you're chop-footed and stammering, stammering and injured, I pity your sorry fate, with your feet and your mouth both poorly. If a friend is a couple, a man is two in the count, if a den is a garden, every rock in the land is an orchard; if the guilty are good, then the worthy are crooks, and if the poor man's a bogie, a spectre's a man without wealth.

Or if that doesn't make you change your mind, listen to this -

Alas for your head, you're no Christian my friend, if you equate the Sabbath with fighting; and alas for the King, he'll be sat none too comfortably, if you give him a peatbog for seat; for myself, if I had to cross over the ocean, I'd not want a stick for a boat, and when the sails were hoisted for leaving the port, it's a parcel would be of use not a rake.

MB

(The word-pairs translated into bold print are indistinguishable if written without the accent.)
A’ CHAS AIR TÍR

To sit at ease by day and through the night
to sleep unlet; careless though secretly
the cheating wind should veer, and morning’s light
break upon shores foam-girdled by the sea,
where shelter was; to go one’s way in spite
of storm or thwarting calm, unharmed and free;
we thought on this in wind-torn haggard dawns
when daylight came across the racing heads
of driven seas. And now this ease that awns
our head from windy skies is tried, and sheds
its sweetness. Now we’d hear her wake’s hoarse cry,
and nurse her heeled and straining, anxiously
groping among the curtained squalls, or see
the long swell marching ridged against the sky.

1937

MI ’FÁGAIL NA TÌRE
Leaving The Land

The way I went some spite had planned,
to know the homes of other men,
the time I turned to leave the land,
it was not well with me then.

That these old headlands falling back
could draw such dim eyes to their hold,
that hills beyond a steamer’s track
could hurt so sore, I was not told.

There Sleea swung away from me,
hidden by hills I never crossed.
I had not heard that rock and scree
and rain-scarred slope were precious lost.

My eyes on Laggan, and the sound
of homely waters loud astern:
that day the ancient grief I found
of songs sung lightly, in my turn.

1937

1 MI ’FÁGAIL : MI ’N DIUGH A’ FÁGAIL 45b
Leaving : I leaving P26 15
2-3 men, the : men; the 45a 45b 40 men. The 15
headlands falling back : headlands, falling back, 15
Sleea : Sliabh 45a Sliá’ 45b P26 12 were : are 45a
A LONG FAREWELL TO KINTYRE

A long farewell to Kintyre and to Loch Fyne that I love; a hundred farewells to the oceans - music for my ear every day were they; goodbye from my heart to Tarbert and the glorious, rough land.

Too swift to me was the boat high out on the loch, when she gathered speed in the morning very early. I lost sight of Garvel. My mood fell to melancholy.

That is the land that is not hateful to me, my own snug, little country; it has stretched its side to the oceans, it has stretched its hillcrests to the sky. Waves move about it of sonorous lowing.

What is your tale, you that have seen and travelled the land from the roaring tide of the Moyle to Slia’ Gaoil of the smooth flank? Every night your dream will be of the fineness that was there.

There was a time that I would not give in that I myself would have to bid farewell to my native land, but necessity knows no changing. A long farewell to Kintyre and to Loch Fyne after me.
TO A LOCH FYNE FISHERMAN

Calum thonder, long's the night to your thinking, night long till dawn and the sun set at the tiller, age and the cares of four and a boat to keep you high in the stern, alone for the winds to weary.

A pillar set in the shifting moss, a beacon fixed on the wandering seas and changing waters, bright on the midnight waves and the hidden terrors; the ancient yew of the glen, not heeding the ages.

Set among men that waver like leaves in the branches, still among minds that flicker like light on the water. Those are the shadows of clouds, the speckled and fleeting; you are the hill that stands through shadow and sunlight.

Little you heed or care to change with changes, to go like a broken branch in the grip of a torrent; you are your judge and master, your sentence unshaken, a man with a boat of his own and a mind to guide her.

1938
"THE GLEN IS MY OWN"

The glen where the thrushes would break into song unstintingly, the glen which offered bounteous provision of nuts from its trees, obstruction has been placed on frequenting it by threats and scowls, and foresters now keep watch - the foreigner is in the glen.

There was drink a-plenty from running water there with no accounts to settle, bird and burn with no refusal, and fat coarse brambles; the men of the world could enjoy there every comfort it possessed, but this miserly dwarf now forbids all right of way to the walker.

Let him forbid, refuse, begrudge, it'll be of little benefit to him, for who'll pay heed to the impertinence of every lad that comes to the place? By my own mantle, though he may be more prickly than the briar in his park, his glen is hospitable and comforting, and we will refuse no gift from his hand.
DO BHEITHE BÒIDHEACH

Neul a' snàmh air an speur,
Duilleach eadar è s mo shùil;
ùr, bàrr-uaine gruag a' bheithe,
Leug nan leitir cas mu'n Làib.

Thig an oiteag bharr an tuim,
A' toirt fuinn as do dhos;
Cruit na gaoithe do bhàrr teudach,
Cuisleannan nan geug ri port.

Àilleagan nan glac seo shios,
Siodbhrrugh do na h-eòin do dhìthris,
Thu 'gan tàladh as gach àirde,
Iad a' teàrnadh ort le sunnd.

Ceileireadh s e binn binn,
Seirm is seinn air a' chnoc,
Nuair a chromas na h-eòin Shamhraidh
Air do mheanglain s mil 'nan gob.

Is fheàràn na 'n ceòl t' fhàicinn fhèin
Air bhogadan réidh fo'n chnap,
Seang, bàrr-snlomhain, amlach, ùrар,
Is dealt 'na chùirsein air gach slait.

1938

5 Thig an oiteag : Oiteag 'tighinn rest
8 ri port : s am port ? marg. 54

TO A BONNY BIRCH TREE

In the sky a cloud drifting, leafage between it and my eye; fresh and green-crested are the tresses of
the birch, jewel of the steep descents about the Bight.

A gentle breeze from the knowe wins music from your crest; harp of the wind is your stringed top,
the tendrils of the boughs making melody.

Gem of the hollows down here, a fairy-mound for the birds is your close-set fastness; you charming
them out of every airt, and they stooping down on you with cheer.

Sweet, sweet the chorusing, carolling and singing on the hillock, when the summer birds alight on
your sprays with honey in their beaks.

Better than their music is to see yourself, gently nodding below the little scaur, slim and fresh, with
crest enlaced and plaited, and beads of dew on every branch.

1 In ... drifting : A cloud drifting in the sky rest
4 the/... making : as the/... make rest 5 here : there rest
7 summer birds : birds of summer rest 9 little : om. K
CUIMHNE NACH TÉID AS
A Memory That Will Not Fade

For though it were in Paradise
or the far islands of the blest,
the sound of water down a glen
would come between me and my rest.

If only over sleeping seas
one breath of wind should wander there,
straying from off the hills I knew,
I'd think upon a land more fair.

There is no Lethe that would drown
the longing or the memory,
whose kindly stream would bear away
my tears, if that wind blew on me.

For if I thought on sea and wind
and Sleea under rainy skies,
and minded of another land,
little to me were Paradise.

THE FISHERMAN SPEAKS

Along the shore the solans strike,
and rise, and strike again in spray,
and I myself, and all my like,
can curse our fate and look away.

On sheltered rocks the black scarts bask
full fed, and rise to meet again;
we bend our shoulders to the task
they threw to us like beggar men.

The skiff I had for thirty years
has gone to pay her debts and mine.
My son a stranger's cutter steers.
I delve the roadway by Loch Fyne.

From Kenmore south to Saddell Bay
the blind shoals wander in the sea.
I ply my spade and watch them play
-God, what is it but mockery?
LOOKING OUT FROM KINTYRE

Rest on the hill and look beyond the sea.
Eastward the smoke hangs over Clyde and Ayr.
Yonder is all that Britain is, will be;
the blossoming of years is garnered there.

Look from this widowed land, wed to the deer,
and see uprise the incense offering,
the smoky mist that chokes the stars, and hear
the thunder of toom barrels rattling.

Here is regret, and memory and song;
the long hills lie indifferent and smile.
Yonder the heirs of all their eras throng
their hives, with their inheritance of bile.

Had all our past and all our future, both,
to go like spindrift when the great wind blows;
had our green shoot to shrivel for the growth
of this gaunt sprawling weed that is their rose?

They sing no song. They see nor sun nor earth.
All are gone crazed with babbling. All shape ill.
Where is there mark for reverence, where is worth?
Where is the word that hand should yield to still?

There is no robe we should give back before,
no honour that should walk the causey’s crown.
Had this to be – that we should come once more
to iron counsels, long thought cassen down?

This is the end of precedent and gown,
of court, debate, procession, learning prim –
each will be quick to strike his striker down,
and he that bars the way, be hard with him.

1938
CINTTIRE

Sth o Dhia air màthair m’altruim,
le spreigeadh gràidh cha n-fhaigh mi clos;
sòlas duit Chinntr’ is sonas -
c’uim nach molainn crioch gun lochd?

Gnàthach sunnd is aobhachd inntinn
’san dùthaich ghaol a dh’àraich mi.
Gràin no gruaim cha tig ‘na còir-se.
Gàire s ceòl as dual di.

Ghràdhaich mi do mhuir s do mhonadh,
leom do chnoc fo ghuirm’ an speur.
Drilseach gréin’ air an slios taobhgeal,
lìos aosd’ as milse gasda gnè.

Binn guth gaoithe air do chruachan,
ag éigheach air an guaillean àrd;
gur riomhach do ghealchrios umad,
a’ mhuir a’ teannadh gu tràigh.

Seann tr ud air oir an aigein,
monmhur mara buan mu ‘Maoil,
còrr a sléibhteos cionn sàile,
réidh a tràigh, tonnhbhà a taobh.

Tr nan Òg nam fonn gun truimead,
iomadh tonn ’ga sgaradh ruinn;
Tr fo Thuinn gun sgur air gaire -
thugadh tic na’s àillidh dhuinn.

Is daor a cheannaich mi mo bheòshlaint’
ma’s e mo stòras fanachd uait,
crom gach là os cionn mo leabhair
gun amharc ort, mo ghoirtein uain’!

A bhith ’fuaradh Àird MhicLaomainn,
long s a lorg ’na gaoir fo ‘druim,
sléibhteos Ròaig romham a’ sineadh -
togail cinn is crìdeh siud.

Air ruigsinn dhomh á tir aineoil
gu crioch m’aithe o shiubhal thuinn,
cur mo chois’ air fòd mo dhùthcha -
c’uim nach pògainn úir an fhuinn?

Breugadh sùla do na chì e,
sgeul an tí a chuonnaic e,
slios fad’ àillidh an fhuinn shona,
oighreachd àrsaidh sliochd nan treun.

Cinneadh fain Mhòir, an curaidh,
Ille s Uladh ac’ am bann,
cleas nan neul gu’n deach iad thairis,
och, gun ach an sgeul Orr’ ann!
Is domhain a chaidh freumh do sheanchais,
luingeas Lochlainn, airm is trod,
Clanna Lir air Sruth na Maoile,
Calum Cille caomh 'nad phort.

Talla rioghalt cruadhlaich t'aonach,
cluasag shlioda fraoch do chòs;
is mils' an deoch e, deur o d'shruthain
na fion tìr eile an cupan òir.

Leannan mo shùgraidh is mo shuiridh,
fearann mo rUin, crò nàn sliabh,
leug is àlleagan gach tire,
seunadh ort is sìth o Dhìa.

1938

KINTYRE

Peace from God on my fostering mother, with the incitement of love I get no rest. Joy and happiness be to you, Kintyre - why should I not praise a land that is faultless?

Cheer and gladness are customary in the beloved land that reared me. Hate or gloom come not near her. Laughter and music are her heritage.

I have loved your sea and moorland, the bareness of your hills under the blue of the sky; the shimmer of sun on their fair-sided flanks, old pleasance of sweetest and finest nature.

Sweet is the voice of the wind on your summits, crying on their high shoulders; lovely your white girdle about you, the sea closing in on the shore.

That ancient land on the edge of the deep, the murmur of the sea ever about her Moyle; steep her hills above the salt sea, smooth her strand, wave-white her side.

Tir nan Òg, of the melodies without melancholy, many a wave parts us from it; Tir fo Thuinn with laughter unceasing - to us has been given a land more lovely.

Dearly have I bought my livelihood if my wealth is to stay away from you; bent every day over my book without looking upon you, my little green garth.

To be weathering Ardlamont, a ship with her wake droning under her keel, the hills of Roaig stretching before me - that would be a lifting of head and heart.

When I reach the country I know from a strange land, after traversing waves; when I put my foot on the soil of my native land - why would I not kiss the earth of my native place?

A charm to the eye of all who see it, the tale of the one who has seen it - such is the long, beautiful sweep of the happy land, the ancient heritage of the race of heroes.

The clan of lain Mor, the warrior, who had Islay and Ulster in bond, like the clouds they have passed by; alas, the tale of them alone remains!

Deep has gone the root of your tradition; ships of Norway, arms and strife; the Children of Lir on the Moyle Race; gentle Columba in your port.

A royal hall your stony hills; a silken pillow the heather of your hollows; sweeter the drink a drop from your streamlets than the wine of another land in a golden cup.

Sweetheart of my love-talk and my wooing; land of my desire, fold in which the hills are gathered together; gem of all lands and loveliest of them, a blessing on you and peace from God.
Oisein
Innis dhuinn, a Phàdraig,
aire onair do léighinn –
a bheil nèamh gu h-àraid
aig Fionn is Fianna Éireann?

5 Thug Pàdraig na speulairean bharr a shròine, phaisg e Mlosachan
na h-Eaglaise, is thubhairt e:–

A Oisein, mhic an fhlatha,
so mar rinneadh an t-òrdan –
cha bhi nèamh aig na peacaich
a bhios ri feadail Di-Domhnaich.

11 Oisein
B'fhéarr feadail nan sealgair
air an leargaidh Di-Domhnaich,
a bhith 'g éisteachd do shearmon
agus seirm do shailm comhla.

15 Pàdraig
Ach ma ní thu flor aidmheil,
ag ghabhail aithreachais Íosail,
sa' cheann thall bidh do dhbúil-sa
ri Hallelúia nach criochnaich.

19 Oisein
Nach mi a bhiodh falamh,
an déidh na ghabh mi 'dhàin riombach,
a bhith a' seinn "Thalla laoghaibh"
air an aon teud gu slòrruidh,
is thuirt thu fhéin rium an duan ud
a bhith buan, gun sgur aca.
Chithear fós iad, ge árd iad,
is an càrsan 'gan tachdadh.

27 Pàdraig
Cha tig glochar air sgòrman
an taigh glòrmhor mo Righsa,
is uisge beò ann 'na ghalain
a chaisgeadh an iota.

\[1: \text{followed by} \quad \text{Duan atharrais air d'an dán d'an goirear Ùrnuigh Oisein} \]
\[\text{s a thòisicheas car mar seo:} \quad 45 \]

\[1 \quad \text{Oisean} \quad \text{om. 45} \]
\[5 \quad \text{phaisg e} \quad \text{thubhairt e: om. 45} \]
\[8 \quad \text{rinneadh an t-òrdan} \quad \text{tha e} \quad \text{`san òrdugh 45} \]
\[9 \quad \text{bhi} \quad \text{n-eil 45} \quad 10 \quad \text{a: om. 45} \]
\[13 \quad \text{na do phrasgan phresentar} \quad 45 \]
\[14 \quad \text{seirm do shailm} \quad \text{t'eildeirean 45} \]
\[15 \quad \text{Ach} \quad \text{thu flor} \quad \text{Dà, ... thusa 45} \]
\[16 \quad \text{s ma cheannachieas tu Bloball 45} \]
\[17 \quad \text{bidh Hug agad le sulas 45} \quad ? \quad ? \]
\[18 \quad \text{ri} \quad \text{nach criochnaich} \quad \text{air} \quad \text{... gu slòrraidh 45} \]
\[19-22 \quad \text{Nach iadsan tha falamh / dol gu cathair a' bhialium} /
\quad \text{gu bhi seinn Hallelúia / 's iad 'san tuchan gun criochnamh.} \quad 45 \]
\[23-26 \quad \text{om. 3} \quad 30 \quad \text{a chaisgeadh: chon caisg air 45} \]
Chaoidh cha n-thaicear ann pathadh, ged nach fhaighhear an Stuth ann, oir tha tì ann is cofaidh, a bhios 'na dheoch aig na Turcaich.

35 Oisein
Ma's e teaghlach Tiotótail a th'ann taigh glórmhor do Righsa, b'fhéarr leam bò san taigh-osda, measg nan stòp s mi làn fiona. B'fhéarr aon sgailc as an fhuaran ud shuas air Beinn Eadair, na tì cairtidh na ciste is do bhriosgaidean déilidh.

43 Pàdraig
Cuist, a thrusdair na misge, bus gun ghiocas, gun Sgriobtuir, agus t'athair s a shinnsreachd cruinn ud shios anns a' ghríosaich.

47 Oisein
Is beag tha dh'eòlas 'nad spuaic-sa. Is e uaimh fhuar reòta a th'ann Ifrinn an dubhraidh — is cha n-eil Fionn ann a chomhnuidh. Toll làn snagardaich fhaiclan, cha n-fhaic m'Fhiann-sa no Fionn e, is e làn casadaich s lóinidh is mile sron ann 'gan srúbadh.

55 Pàdraig
Nach do leugh thu Chriosostom? Bi 'd thosd, a anaChriosd dhearbhta, oir tha an t-àit 'na loch lasrach, mar bhios mi 'g canainn san tsearmoin. Sin sloc teinteach nan coire, nach fhaic solus na gréine, is tha Fionn s Tarbh Bhàsain agus Bàl ann le chèile.

31-34 : om.  36 glórmhor : glóror  45
35 Ma's e : Masa  45  36 a th'ann : om.  45
37 san : an  45  39-42 : om.  45
44 bus : beul  45  47 'nad : ad'  45
46 : gam bruich an Ifrinn 'sa ghríosaich.  45
48 Is e uaimh fhuar : Oir se taigh fuar  45
49 an dubhraidh : nan dubhléac  45
50 a chomhnuidh : a' còmhnuidh  45
51-54 : om.  45  55 leugh : leubh  45
56 : Tha thu 'd AnaChriosd dearbhta  45
57 lasrach : teine  45
58 : Tha e 'n sin 'sa cheud chaibideil.  45
61 Bhàsain : Bhèisean  45
62 Bàl : Béal  45
Oisein

B'fhéarr mo gharadh an Ifrinn na blasad dibhe do Righsa, ma's E fhéin a chuir m'athair gu baile na grioishaigh.
Cuir 'nam láimh claidhe sgaiteach, biodag mhaith no sgian-luthaidh, is do Righ s a luchd cúirte, chuirinn smuid asda uile.

Pàdraig (ris fhéin)

Cluinnibh sin! Claidhe sgaiteach, is e 'n athleanabas 'aoise - Fionn s a mhúsgaid s a chlogaid, agus Osgar s a straoillean.

(ri Oisein)

Ma thig Fionn an rùn catha do'n chaisteal tha shuas ud, bheir mo Righ staigh am fàradh s e 'dòrtadh teàrra mu 'chluasan.

Oisein (a' beucaich agus 'anail 'na uchd is e a' smeurachadh mu'n chagailt)

Bheireadh Osgar cruinnleum as a chur greim air a' bharran.
Bheireadh e macóim as na h-ainglean, is e a staigh ac' gun taing dhiaibh.
A dh'aindecoin Sherraphim s aingeal bhiodh do cheannard san daorsa - is a Phàdraig dhuihb stiallaich, b'fhèahirid thu sgian 'na do chaolan.

Pàdraig (le meud-mòr is tarcuis)

Sin thu fhéin ann, a Oisein.
Leig dhliot an clobha s cuir saod ort, is tu lán aineolais pheacaich – is b'fhèahirid thu ealtainn ri t'aodann.
Oisein

A Phàdraig naoimh, cha bu mhisd' thu –
fhadh s a dh'fhiosraich mi t'aogasg,
s mur deach mi ceárr leis an doille –
corra ghaoisid 'nad mhaol-chnap.

Pàdraig (is an rudadh 'na ghruaidh)

Ma leanas tu, mo ghaisgich,
gu stailceach sa' cheum sin,
cha toir mi branndaigh no rùm dhuit,
no tì làn siùcair no déilidh.

Oisein (ri miolaran)

Na bi gu dona nis, abstoil,
do'n tseana-dhallan s e rùiste.
Bidth mi réidh riut, Mhic Ailpein,
s gur ann agad an siùcar.

Ossian's Prayer Revised

Ossian: Tell me, Patrick, for the honour of your learning, have Fionn and the Fiann of Erin attained to heaven truly?

Patrick: But if you become a professing churchgoer and make humble repentance, you may look forward eventually to a Halleluia without end.

Ossian: Isn't it me who would be a blockhead, after all the splendid verses I've recited in my time, to be singing "Haulalooya" (a) on the same pitch without cease - for you yourself have just told me that that ballad goes on and on endlessly. We'll see them yet, high as they are, choking with hoarseness.

(a) There is a homophonic pun in the Gaelic.
Patrick: Never wheezing will come on throat in the glorious house of my King, with living water there by the gallon to put a stop to their thirst. Never thirst will be seen there, although the hard stuff is not available, for there's tea to be had and coffee, the Turks' favoured drink.

Ossian: If it's a Teetotal Household, the glorious dwelling of your King, dearer to me were death in the pub, among the stoups, and me brim-full of wine. Dearer one good swallow from yon stream up on the Hill of Howth than the tinted tea out the chest and your hardboard biscuits.

Patrick: Wheesht, scullion of the drunkenness, gab without sense without Scripture, and your father and his ancestry keeping each other company on the cinders.

Ossian: Little knowledge there is in your scruffy pate. Dark Hell is a cold frozen cave - and Fionn hasn't his quarters there anyway. Such a pit full of grinding of teeth my Fianna and Fionn will not set eyes on, and it full of coughing and rheumatism and a thousand noses sniffing away.

Patrick: Have you not read Chrysostom? Be silent, you proven Antichrist, for the place is a burning loch, as I shall be expounding in my sermon. That is the fiery pit of the stewpans, that sees not the light of the sun, and Fionn and the Bull of Bashan, and Baal are there together.

Ossian: Better a warm session in Hell than one taste of your King's drink, if it's himself who sent my father to the township of the cinders. Hand me a cleaving sword, a good dirk or a clasp-knife, and your King and his courtiers I'd send them all packing.

Patrick (to himself): Listen to that now! A cleaving sword, and him in the infancy of his old age - Fionn with his musket and his helm, and Osgar with his thumps.

(to Ossian): If Fionn comes with fighting in mind to the castle up yonder, my King will draw in the ladder and pour tar about his lugs.

Ossian (rasping and out of breath, and fumbling around the fireplace): Oscar would take a whirling leap to get a foothold on the ramparts. He would spread terror among the angels, making his way in, despite them all. In spite of Seraphim and angels, your chief would be in chains - and, dirty streaky Patrick, you'd be the better of a knife in your guts.

Patrick (with contemptuous superiority): There you go again, Ossian. Put down the tongs and behave yourself, and you so full of wicked ignorance - and you would be none the worse of a razor to your face.

Ossian: Well Blessed Patrick - as far as I can make out your appearance and if my blindness hasn't led me astray - you'd be the better of a little fur on your bald knob.

Patrick (getting red in the face): If you stubbornly persist in that way, my hero, I won't give you any brandy or rum, or sugar-thick tea or hardboard biscuit.

Ossian (fawning): Oh, apostle, don't be bad to the poor blind old man. I give in to you, son of Alpin, since it's you that have the sugar.

(As Hay's translation corresponds to an earlier version of the poem - one close to text 45 - it has needed adapting; emendations are underlined.)
Gràdh nan gruagach, o’n dh’fhàs i fuar rium, 
cha n-eil dol suas domh no suain ’na déidh, 
o’n chuir i suarach a’ bhruidhinn chluaineis 
s gach coinncean uaigneach dh’fhàg luath mo cheum.
Eiridh ’n latha is a’ ghrian le ’gathannaibh, 
éiridh ’n ceathach rìth’ o’n achadh réidh, 
éiridh ’n driùchda bharr fhìùr is gheugan – 
och, c’òin’ a dh’éireas mo chridhe fhéin?

Shiubhail mi anmoch fonn dall is garbhchlach, 
sios leis a’ Gharbh Alld s mi faibh gu sgìth, 
gus an d’ràinig mi ’n cnocan cùrnach 
os cionn na fàrdais a b’àros di; 
an ciar a’ mhochthrath s an speur ag gormadh 
chaidh ’n t-eun gu gairm ann a baile shìos, 
chunnaic mi ’n smùid teadh o thaigh mo rùin-sa, 
shil mo shùilean is thionndaiddh mi.

Tha tasgaidh luachmhor am falt mo grhuagaich, 
mar bheairteas uaislean ’na chruachan ann, 
òr nan cuaillean os cionn a gruaidhse, 
am pailteas ruadh-dùr ’na chruachan trom; 
fìon dèarg a beul is e rìteach leusach, 
s a muineal glègeal mar éiteag thonn, 
mar aiteal gréine air chathadh bheuchthonn, 
no sneachd ’ga shèideadh air stèibhsean lom.

Nuair thig a’ ghaoth bharr an àilein bhraonnaich 
bidh faile mhaothlus s e caoin ’na beul, 
is crìdeil faoilidh thig oiteag chaolghlinn, 
roid an aonaich s am fraoch ’na sgéith; 
ma’s gaoth á deas i a thig g’ar tatadh 
o shìosan cadaltaich blàth ri gréin, 
thig smuain mo ghràidh leath’ is smuairean cràidhte, 
a’ ghaoth a thanig o ’th-fàite fhéin.

1938
A SONG

Since the bonniest of lassies has grown cold towards me, no cheer I'll find after her nor sleep, since she's despised all our sweet nothings and every meeting that lightened my step. The day will rise and the sun with its rays, and with it the mist will rise from the level plain, the dew will lift over flowers and branches - but when oh when will my own heart lift?

Late I walked rough forbidding country, heading down Garvald, my progress slow, till I came to the rocky hilltop overlooking the dwelling that was her home; in the dawn's half-light as the sky was paling, down in her township the cock did crow, I saw smoke rise from the house of my dear, tears filled my eyes and I turned to go.

There is priceless treasure in my lassie's hair, like the wealth of nobles in piles high, with the gold of the curls above her face and the red-gold abundance of her thick locks; red wine her mouth, florid and glistening, her throat pure white like a sea-smoothed stone, like sun-gleam in the spray of crashing waves, or drifting snow across bare hills blown.

When the wind comes over from the drizzly meadow, it breathes a sweet taste of fragrant herbs, and a mild kindly breeze comes from narrow defiles with heath bog-myrtle and heather in its wing; if it's a south wind that comes to lull us from sleepy hillsides warmed by the sun, thoughts of my love it brings and searing sadness, this wind that from her own place is come.
In flames o’ fire, in a Reid furnace, in bluidreid licht passt away Priam’s fowk; an’ the lowe lept up in the luft lik a bricht stab in the breist o the nicht. Daith wandert, an’ wudd in the streets the sword swept.

Priam’s people passt in the flames. Fowk that war fey, led on a heidlong rodd by a lass wi a bricht face. Man there isna that hasna heard o their gait astray; come there wilna that wilna greet for thon brokkin place.

Here brokk as deep a wave o ruin an’ scowred the shore; truly, for here the land is harrowt bare o men. Lowe tae licht the sky there wasna. Wull sorrow gar sangs be made tae lift oor names tae the licht again?

Fowk that deed lik a fire on the hull, smowlert oot? Left in a lee by the man that made it, an’ gaed his way; deein black in the driftin rain at a rock’s foot, ashes steerd by the hand o the wund, cauld an’ grey.

Nae sign tae see that heat an’ the quick flame war there; an’ no’ a sign in the herriet straths, that we should ken hoo life, a balefire, bleeed on the ridges, Reid an’ fair, hoo sword an’ the sang there lept in the hand an’ the mooth o men.

An’ us the lave — tae gang lik ghaists in a strange land? Stumblin steps an’ unsiccar gait in oor awn glens; shuffle lik coos in ways that are waa’d on either hand; keep tae the causey, no’ a fowk, but a flock o men.

"Keppoch is wasteit" — weel we may sing it. The ebb tide has hared oor beach lik a besom. This is oor tune o tunes, the daft bleating o grey sheep in tumblet toons, an’ the shepherd caain his dogs heich on the hullside.
I gun ùrlar a b'fhiù iomradh,
creag 'n am iomram, uagh 'n am seòlaidh;
i cho staileach 's gun i socrach,
b'e 'n "soraidh slàn" air cois air bòrd dhith.

1938

[RANN AOIRE AIR BÀTA]

Without a deck worthy of the name, she was a rock to row, a tomb to sail in; she so thrawn and none too stable, it was a "fond farewell" to be standing aboard her. MB
DO NA DAOINE MULADACH SIN NACH GABH ACH ÓRAN GAOIL
MA'S BANAIS NO BAISTEADH NO MOD E.

Tha mìle Màiri Bhàn 'san dùthaich
us thréig gach sgìùrach dhiubh a rùn;
tha mìle ribhinn donn a bharr ór',
's chan iad as fheàrr ma's fior bhur tùrs',
tha mìle nighean dubh lùn chuireid,
's tha corra nighean bhuidh' 'sa chùis;
ach bàn no buidh' iad, breac no stiallach,
tha creach is cianalas 'nan lùib.

Och och, nach searbh e, cor fear Albann,
's gach dì ri gairm 's ri gulf 's ri éigh,
a' caoidh mar dh'fhàg e fhéin a dhachaidh,
's mar dh'fhàg a chaileag mhin e fhéin.
Nach eil Cùil Fhodair fhéin gu leòr leibh?
Thoir beagan sgoìd dith 's mòth bhur gleus.
Nach b'fheàrr leibh "Fair anall am botul"
na oiteag mhnà gun bhan gun stèidh?

FOR THOSE MELANCHOLY FOLK WHO ONLY EVER SING LOVESONGS
WHETHER AT A WEDDING, A CHRISTENING OR A MOD.

A thousand Fair Marys there are in the land, and every one of the hussies has ditched her man; there are a thousand brown-haired maidens, moreover, who aren’t much better if your sorrow speaks true; a thousand black-haired girls full of wiles, and the odd golden-haired girl to mention too; but fair or golden, speckled or streaked, ruin and regret they bring in their wake.

Och, bitter the plight of the men of Scotland, every one of them cries out, weeps and wails, lamenting how he left his home behind him, and how his douce girl has now left him. Is Culloden itself not sufficient for you? Tighten the sails some and change your tune. Would you not prefer "Hand over the bottle" to a feminine waft insubstantial and fey?

MB
Cuing mo dhrom' an aois anis, ribe mo choise, robach, liath; fear thig eadar soills' is súilean, fear thig eadar rùn is gniomh.

Fàgaidh e am faillean crotach, fo gach dos 's e chuireas sgian; is och, b'e 'm bàrr air gach miosguinn thìghinn eadar mi s an sliabh.

Thug e dhlom a' Chruach Chaoraíonn, s an gunna caol 'san ealchainn shuas. Bhuin e dhlom mo neart, am meàirleach; dh'fhàg e mi gun làmh, gun luaths.

Na'n robh aige corp a ghlaicainn, s na'n tachraíonn ris leis fhéin sa' bheinn, bhiodh saltairt ann is fraoch 'gà reubadh, is fuil air feur mu'n sgaradh sinn.

1938

THE HUNTER AND AGE

A yoke on my back Age is now, a snare for my foot, shaggy and grey: a man who comes between the light and my eyes, one who comes between intention and deed.

He leaves the sapling crooked, under every thicket it's him wields the knife, and och, to top his every malice, he comes between me and the hill.

He has taken from me the Rowan Summit and the slender gun, up on its hook: he's snatched from me my strength, the thief, and left me without speed or agility of hand.

Had he a body that I could seize, and were I to chance on him in the hills alone, there would be much trampling, much wrenching of heather, and blood on the grass before we'd part.
AGE AND THE HUNTER

Yoke of my neck, this Age comes o'er me,
snare of my feet, the gray, the still.
Between the eyes and the light he is standing;
he stands between the deed and the will.

There is the hand that warps the sapling,
that sets the knife to the apple's root;
and, oh, 'twas the crown of all his malice
to snatch the hill from beneath my foot.

He has taken from me the paths of the Cruach;
he has rusted my gun like an autumn leaf;
he has taken away from me strength and laughter,
and hand and foot, like a heartless thief.

If Age were a man that hands could grapple,
and I could come on him secretly
up on the hill where no man passes,
grass would be reddened ere he went free.
SONG

Day will rise and the sun from eastward,
the mist in his rays from marsh and plain;
the dew will rise from the bending branches –
och, when will my own heart rise again?
For a treasure shines on the head that haunts me,
like old kings’ vaults or the spoils of Spain,
gold hair falling about her shoulders,
the red gold pouring like burning rain.

Her mouth is the sun through red wine shining;
lips that are tender and fine with pride.
White is the neck where the ringlets cluster,
like a white stone under the running tide;
like a burst of sun on broken water,
when the hard wind scatters the spindrift wide,
or the drifting snow that the wind is blowing,
whispering, cold on the bare hillside.

By night I travelled rough lonely places,
and down by Garvalt I took my way,
till I reached at dawning the rocky summit
above the house where my darling lay;
the stars were fading, the sky was paling,
the cock told loud in her home of day;
I saw the smoke from her hearthstone rising;
I wept and sighing I turned away.

From showery meadows the wind comes softly
with a scent of blossoms and tender grass.
Heartsome the breezes from narrow valleys;
myrtle and heather they breathe, and pass.
But the south wind singing, that comes to lull us
from sleepy hillsides and seas of glass,
brings to me thoughts of care and sorrow
out of the airt where dwells my lass.

1938

1 : THA TASGAIDH LUACHMHOR... 40 (See notes) [45] 40 *21 ; P23 A H J
5 For a treasure shines : A treasure is twined 40 me, : me P23 A H J
6 vaults or the : riches, like 40
7 hair ... about her shoulders : plaits ... above her forehead 40
8 red gold ... burning : red-gold ... fairy 40
9 : Red the mouth like the wine of Flanders 40
11-12 : white the throat that throbs with her singing, / white the neck that the ringlets hide, 40
14 hard : west 40 mad P23 A H J
15 or the drifting : like the drifted 40
16 whispering, : sifted and 40 17-32 : om. 40
20 house ... lay; : town ... lay, P23 A H J
24 wept and : wept, and P23
28 breathe, and : breathe and P23 A H J
Leaving those men, whose hearts
are hearths that have no fire,
my greetings, westward go
to lovely long Kintyre.

Her uplands draw my thoughts,
till over lands and seas
my dreamings go, like birds
that seek the leafy trees.

Of names sweet to the mouth,
of names like the sounding sea,
for my delight alone
I'll write this litany.

Ròaig and Àirigh Fhuar,
words from some fairy tale,
the Grianan and Davaar,
Carradale, Sunadale.

These on my mouth, I walk
among grey walls and chill;
these are a flame to warm,
a sain against all ill.

1938
TIOMNADH

Ach có a bheir gu beachdaidh dhuinn,
gun teagamh ’bhith ’san sgeul,
nuair thig dalladh air na sùilean,
dùnadh air a’ bheul,
fìos air an tìr aineoil ud,
s air rathad rùin ar ceum?

Có dh’innseas e ma’s cadal duinn
s e maireannach gun là,
smàladh dhuinn gun ùrachadh
is mùchadh gu bràth,
no an tadhail sinn tìr éigin
slòr éibhinn thar gach àit?

Ma’s Tìr nan Og no Abhalon
am fonn is lainnreach lìth;
ma’s Pàrrthas naomh na glaine e,
gun anuair ann ach sith,
es e clìarach, seirmeil, scunta –
O fèathail e, gun slòn!

An Tìr nan Og bios ealtan
a’ seinn air frasan cìuil,
glòr nan dìl neolochdach
is slànadh lot ’na sunnd;
bios Tìr fo Thuinn, mar chualas e,
gun ghluasad ànraighe dhùir.

Is gann a mhòsglas cuiseag ann
no duilleag air a’ ghéig;
is gann a lùbas luachair ann
air bruach nan caochnai glèibh;
bìdh drillsein cos ann tsàile ann
de thràighean ris a’ ghrèin.

Ciod e mur ruig an aos orra
a chaoidh san tsamhradh bhuan?
Oir chluinninn coill’ an Lagain ann
ri latha sèididh chuaidh.
Sgeir Leathann s i ri beucaigh,
bhreug i mo chridhe bhuan.

Dh’iarrainn gaoth is sgairt aice
’cur sgapadh fo na neòil,
a’ teaghd á tuath bharr Chruachain
s an fhuachd an teum a beòil;
marcan-sìne ’màrsaladh
air clàr a’ chuaín le pròis.
Cur froise mar bhrait falaich
s e 'faicheachd thar nan stuadh;
an slioban searbh, sgathach
mar ghathan neimh' air gruidh;
ioagmaoin an stiùramaich,
b'e sin m'ionndrainn bhuam.

Uainlios mln na meala
cha toir do Bhreannnan sith.
A dheòraidh léith a' churaich,
nach miann leat muir ri 'shlìn, 
s nach b'fhèarr leat faire fairge
na sailm an Chìirt do Righ?

Thigeadh an eallach dhroma orm
is cromadh a' chinn léith,
ma gheibh mi fhéin, mu'n druid sin orm,
mo chuid de ghaoth s de speur,
s mo laighe far am b'eòlach mi –
cha mhór mo ghuidh', a Dhé!

Air Rudha Lagan Ròaig
biodh tòrramh s tional fhear,
is àros chlach 'ga chàrnadh
fo sgàirneach dubh nam preas;
is fàgabha ann air m'ùilinn mi
is uinneag ris an ear.

Chì mi na luing chaola
is caoirein diubh 'nan steud,
s mo chlusas ri dùrd na gaoithe
s ri glaoth mo dhaoine fhéin.
Laighdhidh mi 'san ionad
far an tric am biodh mo cheum.
TESTAMENT

Who then will give us, with certainty and not a shadow of doubt in the tale, when blindness falls on
the eyes and silence on the mouth, information on that unknown land and on the mysterious road we
are to travel?

Who will tell if sleep awaits us, eternal with no dawn of day, if we are to be extinguished and never
revived, snuffed out for ever, or if we shall haunt some land perpetually happy beyond all other?

If the land of brightest hue is the Land Of The Young or Avalon, or if it is blessed Paradise of the
pure, with no tempestuousness but only calm, full of poesy, melody, enchantment – how peaceful it
must be, untouched by the elements!

In the Land Of The Young flocks of birds sing on showers of music, the voice of un tarnished creation
with balm in its cheer to heal all wounds; the Land Under The Waves, it is said, is not disturbed by
any grim storm.

Hardly a blade of grass stirs there or leaf on a branch; hardly do the rushes bend on the banks of the
mountain streams; there by the sea there is a sparkling of sunbathed strands.

What of it if age never touches them, in that eternal summertime? For there I would hear the
woodland of Lagan on a day of hard winds. Broad Skerry with its howling has stolen my heart from
me.

I would want a wind of howling force putting the clouds to flight, coming from the north over the
ridge of Ben Cruachan with cold clutched in its jaws, and the tempest-cavalry parading proudly on the
ocean’s plain.

A downpour like a curtain advancing over the billows; the sharp stinging sea-spray like poison-
darts on the cheek; the anxiety of the steersman – that would be my longing.

The honeyed douce verdant garden will not give peace to Brendan. Silver-haired vagrant of the
coracle, would your desire not be for the sea against its wicker, and would you not prefer the watch
of the deep to psalms in the Court of your King?

Let the back-burden come upon me and the stooping of a greying head, if I can get, before those
close in on me, my share of wind and sky, and to be laid to rest in familiar territory – my request, O
God, is not excessive!

On Lagan Ròaig Point let there be a funeral assembly and a gathering of men, and a dwelling of
stones built up below the thicketed black scree, and leave me there on my side with a window to the
east.

I will see the slender ships sending off blazing steeds of foam, and my ear will pick up the hum of
the wind and the shouts of my own people. I that place will I lie where oft my feet had tread.

MB
BRIODAL MÁTHAR

Mo luran thu,
mo dhunein thu,
èh, m’ultachan is m’eallach cléibh;
is tu luchd sàibhir
nan long Spàinteach,
slod’ an àird ri s fion fo ghréis.

M’Osgar mór thu,
m’usgar dìr thu,
mo mhogul chnò a chromas geug;
Ronadh cupain,
riarach’ guidhe,
crioch mo shiubhail, freagairt m’fheum.

Leabaidh éirigh
do mo ghréin thu,
iùl mo cheum thu thar gach reul;
cuilean suairc thu,
faillean uain’ thu,
fearan cruaidh ’thig gu bhith treun.

1938

MOTHER’S FONDLING TALK

My bonnie thing art thou, my mannie art thou – eh, my arm load and breast burden; thou art the rich lading of the Spanish ships, silk aloft on them and linen embroidered.

My great Oscar art thou, my golden jewel art thou, my cluster of nuts that bends the bough; my cup-filling, my prayer-fulfilment, end of my journeying, answer to my need.

The bed from which my sun rises art thou, the guidance of my steps more than every star; a pleasant puppy art thou, a green shoot art thou, a hardy wee man who will come to be strong.
GATHER, GATHER, GATHER

I got his hat in lend from Chames, and asked Rob Cam to mind the coo, and went to the Druim Neònach games to see our Highland Who Iss Who.

Never a scenery so fair was heard of yet on Scotland's shores; my Cot, the Duke of Brill wass there in Hunting Cameron plus fours.

The leddies from the U.S.A. sat row on row like chugs on shelves; their tartan bonnets, surely they would melt the fery stones themselves.

Pipe Major Tamson won the day, och, his wass the MacCrimmon's fist! the cabar prize wass born away by Al the Olive Pugilist.

Our fathers' ways are with us yet, our ancient backbone is unbent, the only Highlandmen I met I found in the Refreshments Tent.

RENAISSANCE

Mac Ruariaidh 'ic Hiram Mhóir for exiled centuries atones, regains his long-lost native shore, and studies Gaelic Without Groans.

A kilted brave - a piper too - advanced my way, his head on high. I asked him, "Ciamar tha thu 'n diugh?" He swore at me. I wonder why.

Miss Anabella (Deirdre) Sharp of Rumbleriggs' artistic group, assumes a bun and buys a harp, and wears a Hebridean droop.
Sir Percy can say "Slàinte mhòr",
and sports his learning through the town;
Lord Bangem-buts of Gleann nan Deòir
has bought a tartan dressing-gown.

Burn burn, ye bonfires; pipers play,
(our grandeur springs from scenes like these)
while Tennessee and Kent display
their atavistic tendencies.

Ye grouse, bid fame your last adieu,
ye hinds (fourfooted) deign a tear,
you are no longer in the news;
Wallstreet is looking pretty queer.

The tartan maker's head is bowed,
the Highland Ball, its glory dim,
stags in the corries groan aloud;
Wallstreet is looking pretty grim.

Good Highland folk who lately quailed,
let joy enlustre all your looks,
no longer will ye be assailed
through Gaelic conversation books.

But what of all our tartan dolls?
and what of all these bonnets bright?
what is the use of Falloch Falls?
In Wallstreet all is not quite right.

Ye stalkers all, unlace your boots,
and firewards stretch the stockinged toe;
rest well, ye ghillies. No one shoots,
for Wallstreet's down the drain, you know.

No more to hook the sportsmen's trout,
no more to shoot their deer for them;
no more will kilts be seen about;
for Wallstreet's gone to - well - ahem!

9 lately : late have corr.
THE SOCCER SCENE

The English team was pretty fair,
MacQuilken's dribbling stirred the crowd,
Ross had considerable flair,
so had Mackenzie and MacLeod.

But Scotia triumphed through the work of Con O'Flaherty at half;
O'Brien, Connel, and McGurke
made our attack, and so did Taaffe.

This migratory age has more
than many mysteries to show.
The greatest? To what southern shore
do Anglo-Saxon players go?

THE PROPER PROCEDURE

A fellow can, as someone said,
(why not indeed?) dream noble dreams;
ideas will assail one's head;
one entertains all sorts of schemes.

Life offers oh! so many larks:
fill up the Tay and trick the tide,
make candles from Kilbrennan sharks,
divert the cart to Kelvinside.

Should you have some such scheme in hand,
(perhaps you want to dam the Clyde?)
mention it to your Member, and
the English Members will decide.

8 : remove the Mound to Morningside.
   marg. remove the cart to Kelvinside. 45b
11 mention : suggest 45b   just tell 37

THE SCOTTISH CHELSEA
or GED IS FAD AMACH BARRAIDH RUIGEAR E *

It spoils the sleep of poor and rich,
this crowding of our tenements,
but there are farflung outposts which
are just as bad to all intents.
An isle there is, where to and fro phoneticists do roam unchecked, and Danish savants row on row, all jotting down the dialect.

This island has been scrutinised, examined, viewed, turned inside out, oh, criticised and analysed, described, depicted, talked about.

The crowding passes all belief; dense swarms of poets block the view, and novelists, and a Highland Chief! What will the wretched natives do?

* "Though Barra is far out it can be reached" — a Gaelic proverb.

**COMPENSATIONS**

The Scottish scene looks rather glum, but there are compensations too. Our Secretary's sure to come and rhapsodise about the view.

Our aviation is — you know, "where are the snows of yesteryear?"; good chap, good chap, to ease the blow he'll grant a ministerial tear.

Our shipping, railways and so forth, fly South like clouds of homing rooks; the noble chap will hurry North, and give us sympathetic looks.

The Highlands are devoured by deer, the Herring Industry is dead. Faint not, my soul; he will appear and pat the children on the head.
OUR CULTURE STILL COUNTS

No, we are not forgotten quite, though we have known neglect and wrongs; Paul Robeson, to my delight, has started singing Gaelic songs.

The interest spreads in every way; another case occurs to me; an English judge the other day said "Harry Lauder, who is he?"

Yet one more case I will subjoin, — ungrudging fellow that I am! — Madame Tabouis intends to join the Piping Girls of Dagenham.

They can’t forget us. Why? Oh well, our haggis, Piping Girls, Braemar, and tartan spats, and Harry L., will never let them get so far.

TIR NAN ÓG
(The Land Of The Young)

"This Tîr nan Óg! — well, dash and drat, it’s placed so flaming far away." My friend, it’s not so bad as that; you can get there within a day.

David MacBrayne will take you out, for a con-sider-ati-on, where no one’s ever put about though Time itself should all be gone.

Should Kent be blown up to the skies, they’d say "Well well, indeed", and draw their bonnets down across their eyes, and sleep within the lion’s maw.

There’s no one minds or cares a dime, and no one does, and no one knows, and if you ask them "What’s the time?" they say "Och, Monday, I suppose."

To gaze upon a scene so fair not everyone is fully fit. A Yankee business man went there, and died of nightmares after it.
HOW TO DEAL WITH "REVELATIONS"

The fat's in the fire, and we're all in the soup,
the reporters are out on the scent of as scoop,
the bag that we made has emitted the cat,
why, even the public is smelling a rat!
   So gather, gather, gather Griogaraich.

Set up a committee to ponder awhile,
and a new sub-committee to docket and file,
and a sub-sub-committee to get in the way,
and your deed is a deed that is nameless for aye.
   Oh, gather, gather, gather Griogaraich.

NATURE NOTES

Should I be asked to choose the beast
which, speaking roughly, differs least
from old Sir Blank, I should of course
select his closest friend the horse;
it's teeth are large, its voice is gruff,
it is so tactless and so tough.

A soul-mate must be found at once
for one of these Commissions
that roost. I'd pair it at a stab
with Partan or the Common Crab;
it's little eyes that hardly see,
it's gait with its obliquity.

In this free land I'd rather not
talk frankly of the Empire Scot,
or of his pals; but in my eyes
they're very like a swarm of flies:
they're irksome, but their aims are safe;
a little sugar's all they crave.

To higher things. Where would you park
the Secret'ry in Noah's ark?
He'd have to swim, so much does he
resemble that great mystery
the herring – whence he comes, where goes,
and why and wherefore no one knows.
BUFFALO BILL IN GAITERS

Our ministers are apt to stick
in principles, and haven't tact;
the English prelate is more slick,
he is a two-gun man in fact.

Upon his left side, lo, there swings
a holster stuffed with Luke and John;
Psalms, Judges and the Book of Kings
his good right side he bears upon.

While quiet reigns and Europe snores
he keeps to merely Christian lines,
but should a crisis sprout, he roars
of "smiting" and the Philistines.

He is adaptable, he boasts;
and it intrigues a man to see
him excavate the Lord of Hosts
in moments of emergency.

The Foreign Office like it; so
if he can please them why can't we?
Our ministers are learning, though:
wait till the crisis and you'll see.

'S LEAM FHEIN AN GLEANN
The Glen Is Mine

The Glen Is Mine, (and at a cost
of thousands it is pretty sweet.)
I've put a notice on a post
to say so, and the thing's complete.

I've bought some crofters too, and though
it is their country, yet it's clear --
The Empire Needs Them. They must go.
(Besides they might disturb the deer.)

There is a drove-road running through,
I'm told an ancient right of way.
Barbed wire, a notice-board or two,
and it is Holy Ground for aye.

How jollah, what! For miles and miles
in peace I stroll as I incline,
and no one sees, as wreathed in smiles
I skip, and shout "The Glen is mine."

skip : leap corr.
AN INFORMATIVE VOLUME BOUND TASTEFULLY IN BLUE

"From Solway Firth to John o'Groats
look at our herring and our oats.
Neglected? Nothing of the sort.
You cad, you've had a new report."

Westminster is in fact a dear,
and gives us almost every year,
a volume bound in blue. (Quite right;
the colour is most apposite.)

It tells us just how doomed are we,
and drips "alarm" and "sympathy".
We should be honoured. What a fuss!
Pages and pages all for us!

Go ask the anecdotard boar;
for half a century and more
Blue Books have fall'n like gentle rain:
and yet some people will complain.

AM FIANN AIR AN UILLINN
The Fiann On Their Elbows

According to a yarn, which you need not believe, a man once found his way into a cave, the existence of which he had never suspected before. Leaning up against the end of the inner wall were a number of great boulders, and on the floor before him lay a horn. He picked it up and blew it, out of curiosity, and the rocks seemed to him to take on the appearance of men. However he blew a second blast, and sure enough the huge men raised themselves up on their elbows and fixed their saucer-like eyes on him. "Séid arithid, a dhuine bhig" ("Blow again, little man") rumbled one of them. The little man dropped the horn and made for the mouth of the cave as fast as he could, and a bitter shout followed him — "Is miosa dh'fhág thu no mar fhuaire" ("Worse you left us than you found us"). These great men were the Fiann, and it is said that the third blast will be blown yet and they will rise again.

The bus arrives. They tumble out
and hurry screeching to the cave;
they babble, jostle, grope about,
and feel adventurous and brave.

Out by their hidden dwelling's gate
the tourists fumble, whisper, stare,
and far within the Fiann wait
leaning on their elbows there.

What if some Cockney brave at last
should find the horn where still it lies,
and blow upon it that third blast,
and Fionn and all the Fiann rise?
"Most undesirable. Would they be Empah Spirited, and bar the ceds who jeer at Empah Day? No, let them stay the stones they are."

True, true. Their blood could never be Red, White and Blue. But don’t forget the horn’s still there. (It seems to me someone will blow the damned thing yet).

The war will come in Spring, they say; and if it comes I bet, my friend, they’ll find some "Belgium" to defend. (Invest In Steel, while yet you may.)

The Fiery Cross from London flies, and caterans (encased in spats) all mount their tanks, and cock their gats, and gallop off with shining eyes.

And thus we fight for gutters fit for Scottish heroes, where they may (complete with begging licence) play trombones – they "having done their bit".

Weeping through Scotland, shore to shore, and pipers puffing, red and wudd, and Donald choking in his blood – the "little Belgiums" matter more.
OUR NATIONAL BUILDING

That whatnot on the Calton Hill
(no, not the jail) is said to fill
a long-felt want. You know the way
our daring journals talk today.

No more will Scotland, it transpires,
be governed through some dozen wires,
as in the bad days tha' are goane,
but through a single telephone.

The Cabinet will be ringing through,
and sending wires and letters too,
so, when you come to think of it,
the G.P.O. will benefit.

God help me! what munificence.
How free they are with Scotland's pence!
What will they give us next? The moon?
The salts! I feel inclined to swoon.
BANALTRUM NAM BÁRD

(Trí Rainn is Amhran)

Banaltrum nam bárd mo rún-sa,
s a cuid stiùiridh domhain gu leòr.
Dh'ionnsuich mi le meud mo ghràidh dhi
 c'as a thài nig Och ochòin.

Their mi gur feàrr na gach naomh i
gu saoghaltachd a chur fo chois.
O'n dh'ìarr mi gràdh s a dhìirt i gràdh dhomh,
thigeadh am bàs – is beag mo thoirt.

Chrath i 'ceann, is fhuaire mi eòlas
air màthair-uisg' a' bhòrin s nan deur.
Thug i cùl rium, s dh'fhàg i glic mi,
s cha b'e'n glic às eutrom e.

Ceangal

13 A bhean lurach neochoamh, ri d'chaoineadh dh'ionnsuicheadh mi.
'S tu thug dhomh bhith naomh s an gaol air uirigh sa' chill.
Sheall thu dhomh aobhar gach glaidh a bhuidhneadh o chir,
s nach cuir thu mi saoghalta, saobh, beò, suinndach arisd?

1939

THE NURTURER OF POETS

(Three Verses and Envoi)

The nurturer of poets is my love, and her guidance is profound. Through the greatness of my love for her I have learned whence came Och ochone.

3 I maintain that she is better than any saint for teaching contempt for the love of the world. Since I sought for love and she refused it, let death come – I care little.

She shook her head, and I attained knowledge of the fountainhead of sorrow and tears. She turned her back on me and left me wise – and it was no light, easy wisdom.

Envoi

7 Lovely, unkind woman, weeping for you has been my schooling. It is you who have taught me saintliness and longing for a bed in the churchyard. You have revealed to me the cause of every cry that was ever wrung from a heart; and will you not make me worldly, foolish, alive and cheerful again?

1-2 Through ... her I have learned : I have learned, through ... her, A
3 that : om. A the world : this world A sought : asked her A
7 weeping ... schooling : I have had my schooling in weeping for you A
9 and will : Will A
AN GAOL A BH’ANN

Leigear an gaol an doichoimhne,
is doibrar leis na leannain e.
Nithear cainnt is coineamh leo
cleas choigrich fuar’ is aineolaich.

’S e’n doichoimhne as suaineadh dhaibh;
’s e’n suarachas as fasgadh dhaibh;
s a’ ghrlosach fuar gun chridhealas
sa’ chridh’ astaigh ’ga saltairt leo.

1939

LOVE THAT WAS

Love is forgotten and is banished by the lovers. They meet and talk like cold strangers or people unacquainted.

Forgetfulness is the mantle that baps them; indifference is their shelter; while they stamp out the feeble, cheerless ember in their inward hearts.

*21; A

LOVE IS FORGOTTEN

Love is forgotten, lovers stray,
and one another they deny;
they meet and talk upon their way
like strangers or like passers-by.

They meet and play the casual part,
with gaiety they bolt their door,
while still they stifle in their heart
embers of fire that warm no more.

1939

1: The lovers leave their sweethearts, > loves are forgotten, lovers stray corr. 3
2 and one another : each other corr. 3 3 and ... way : upon the roadway, corr. 3
4 like strangers or : and talk corr. 3 6: and easily they part again corr. 3
7 while still they : they talk, and corr. 3 8 fire : fires 3 warm : cheer marg. 3
(See notes for extra verse in 3).
Sgairt mo dhaoine 's am mórachd
am fiathach s an tròcair
Thug na bliadhnaichan leòd sud s b'e 'm beud.

Cha do sheall sibh [ ]
is sibh a shealladh gu h-losal;
brù is sporan a' stòr ghabhail réim.

Cearcan sgròbain rinn cumasg
ach có bu mhó 'dhèanadh trusadh
théid bhur stòras 'na dhuslach 'nur beul.

Leig sibh srian le luchd foirneirt
cha do chaisg sibh an dòrn ac'
bidh e duinte fo' r sòrin gu bhur n-éis.

Bho' n a ruaig sibh na b'thiach dhìbh
am mach gu iomall na h-iarmailt
tha sibh airceach bochd crion air veg spéis.

Na h-òga do-chiosnaicht'
a phut an t-àr as an t'ir so,
is ann tha dubhphrasgan diolain 'nan déidh.

Na coimhich a b'thìù leibh
air na mhill sibh bhur dìthach,
fasdaidh iadsan mar chò sibh air éill.

1939 (-1946?)

THE FIERY SPIRIT OF MY PEOPLE...

My people’s fire and dignity, their liberality and compassion, all have gone with the years – great the loss!

You did not appear [ ], as you kept your gaze low, purse and belly holding sway more and more.

Like scratching hens you caused mayhem, fighting to amass the most, but your wealth will turn to dust in your mouths.

You gave free rein to oppressors, you did not stay their hand, it will clench under your noses in your need.

Since you drove out your best to the ends of the earth, you are now poor, needy, pathetic, of low worth.

The indomitable youths whom war drove from this land have left a worthless pack of mongrels behind.

The strangers you revered so, for whom you ruined your country, they will retain you as a dog on the leash.
AN DÉIDH TRÀGHAIDH THIG LIONADH
After Ebb Comes Flood

I thought this tide would rise and lip the grass, so that the waves would break among the trees, spring flood of spirit soften our clenched mass of dry root tendrils; burst in blooms a frieze. Scotland's gapped forest, great boles tumbled, meet the running tide that roared about its feet.

Who will take pains to say what none will see? This tide is set to ebbing, leaving dry the staring boulders. Greed sets murder free. (When rogues fall out, then good men go to die). We saw too dimly. Flood for evermore slips down our beach to climb some other shore.

The spirit ebbs, and all our visions pass. Now lifts another tide and thickly runs, brochan of blood. When it draws down across bare stones, then, barren Scotland, where are your sons? Will none be here to do as we were fain, and think that after ebb comes flood again?
A BALLAD IN ANSWER TO SERVIUS SULPICIUS RUFUS

Rufus leans owre the gunnel o his ship,
skelpin afore the snappin wund frae Thrace,
the shores he conned at schule, astern they slip,
strawn wi the shards o toons, a stony place;
the thocht he droned at schule fa' intae place —
"We girm at deein? Nos homunculi,
wi Athens doon!"  Yet, Servius, by yere grace,
she lived her day, syne deed, an' sae maun I.

Noo Nineveh is nocht, Argos a name;
the quays o Carthage, nae man moors thereat,
the lang groond-swell has drawn thaim til its wame;
sand is the hauld whar the queen Dido grat;
Troy toon an' Tyre hard fates hae trampit flat,
by tyrant time owrecassen, lo, they lie —
yet, air a shon sin uile, for aa that,
they lived their day, syne deed, an' sae maun I.

Teamhair 'na fèar — Tara is grass, they say;
Durlus o Guaire, o the open door,
nane but the wund gangs guestin there the day;
Sycharth o Owen the saft rain ootwore.
Emain an' Tailltiu, heard ye these afore?
MacEwen's Kerry keep, that wance was high,
sin time is thrawn ye may speir lang therefor.
They lived their day, syne deed, an' sae maun I.

Whar are thy choirs noo, Jedburgh, whar, Scone?
Iona, whar thy monks? Dunadd, thy kains?
The Lia Fàil lies penned in London toon;
Canmore, auld hoolets bicker owre his banes.
Duntuilm an' Carnaborg o the MacLeans,
an' Mingarry, ill-kent, aft-sung they lie;
the Stewarts mak a rant for dandlin weans —
They lived their day, syne deed, an' sae maun I.

Envoi

Dia (Lord Goad), Prince o the Coal-Black Beard,
the Alberdeen an' Glesca toon should lie
twa smowlderin cowps, my sang wad be (I'm feard):
They lived their day, syne deed, an' sae maun I.

1939
They deed, thae men ablow the mools,
for fules that played at history.
Aye, boys. Oor tae thrapple daith
for fules grown auld wha winna dee.
IS DUILICH AN T-SLIGHE

'S tiamhaidh dùsgadh a' mhochthrâth,  
's càch 'nan crùban gu socrach;  
làn an dùinn seo a mhosgail roimh 'n ghréin.

Dhaoine cridhe, aig ar gainne  
cha n-eil ann duinn 'sa gheachd seo  
ach gach fear a bhithe fearail dha fhéin.

Cha n-eil buidheann 'nar deagaidh  
bhiodh 'gar stuideadh air aghart  
le moladh 's le gleadhair 's le eubh.

Cha n-eil fudhainn de bhunait  
ach dà chois aig gach duine,  
b'fhèarr am forcadh is fulang gach beum.

Beum teanga ar dùthcha,  
beum slat an fhir sgiàrsaidh,  
bàs fuar anns na cùiltean gun sgeul.

Ghabh sinn toiseach an âtha,  
nil na sheachain e gâir' oirnn,  
seal 'san t-sruth 's bidh a ghàirich 'nar déigh.

Och o'n dhiùlt mi an gâbhadh,  
's a rinn mi stad aig beul âtha,  
tha mo crhidhe 'ga chinâmh gu ro-gheur.

Ach a chuideachd na seasmhachd,  
moladh beò cha do mheath sibh,  
ged a choisinn mi masladh dhomh fhéin.

Nuair a ghlaodhas mi 'n ath-uair  
le mòrachadh fhacal,  
bidh mo ghnìomhan, mo ghealladh, d'an réir.

Mo chompanaich ghaoilach,  
thuit iad bhuam air gach taobh dhiom,  
is dh'hàgadh ris mi 'sa chaonnaig leam fhéin.

1939...

1 : FINAL LYRIC TO NATIONALISTS WHO REFUSE
   ENGLISH CONScription. (DY) 40
6  fhèin : féin corr. 40
11  dà : dhà marg. 32
19-30 : om. 40
DIFFICULT IS THE ROAD

Melancholy the early morning awakening, everyone else fast asleep; only a handful have stirred before sunrise.

Dear friends, we are so few that our only recourse in this struggle is for each to be manful for himself.

There is no team behind us to urge us on and to prod us with acclamation, cheering and praise.

We have under us for prop only each man's two legs - we should solidly plant them and suffer each blow.

The tongue-lashing of our country, the scourge of the whipper, a cold death in the backstreets unnoticed.

We crossed the ford head-on, those who dodged it will mock us, but a while in the stream and we will leave their laughter behind.

Alas, since I refused the danger and halted at the mouth of the ford, regret eats mercilessly into my heart.

But you, steadfast comrades, praise never softened you, though I earned disgrace for myself.

The next time I trumpet with grandiose eloquence, my actions, I promise, will match my words.

My beloved companions fell away all around me, and left me exposed and alone in the fray.

ALBA

The blaferring wind blows from the South-west;
it strikes, and our boat louts low on her side;
ridge runs upon ridge boarding her, storm-pressed,
but lightly she lifts and scatters the seas wide.

Here we must bide, work her to win home,
though the decks welter and swim, and the grinding gale storms white on the crests, trailing their cold foam,
for nothing is here but the sea when her seams fail.

Death girns from the grey glens that her stem rives,
and rows her in sharp seelek as she goes.
Oh, blinding the spray, bitter the rain drives,
and dim in the drift only the scudd of the land shows.

1940
AN GAOL CHA D’FHIOSRAICH MI
(Tri Rainn is Amhran)

An gaol cha d’fhiosraich mi uair –
dé, cha chualas e bhith ann –
ach nise chuartaich e mì
eadar chas, mo dhìth, is cheann.

Bean ghuanach a thàlaidh mì;
a sheallas bith s a ceann cróm.
Tha 'cridhe corrach fada bhuam
mar ghaoth chruaidh a' falbh nan tonn.

Cha n-eil truas aice rium;
cha do chuir i suim 'nam chor;
ise 'càradh a cùil bhàin;
mise 'dol bàs air a son.

Ceangal

A nighean an sgàthain, is clàr do bhathais mar chéir,
a sheallas 'nam gnùis is rùn do chridh' agad fhéin,
ge tais orm do shùil, cha dìth do smaointean 'na déidh.
Cum agad an t-amharc is aisig mo chridhe làin chreuchd.

1940

LOVE I NEVER KNEW
(Three Verses and an Envoi)

Love I never knew of, I had not heard that there was such a thing, but now it has encircled me
between foot and head, my loss.

A fickle woman has lured me, that looks quietly, her head bent. Her wavering heart is far from me
like a hard wind travelling the waves.

She has no pity for me, she has given no heed to my plight, she arranging her fair hair, and I dying
for the sake of her!

Envoi.

Lass with the mirror, your forehead white as wax, that gazes in my face keeping the counsel of your
heart to yourself; though softly your eye rests on me, your thoughts do not follow closely after your
glance; keep to yourself the gaze and give me my scourged heart again.

3 A fickle woman has : The fickle woman that 38 is far : goes wandering 38
8 to yourself : your own (to yourself) 38
10 scourged heart again : heart again, monster! 38
CEITHIR GAOTHAN NA H-ALBANN

M'oiteag cheòlmhhor chaoin 'teachd deiseil 'nam bheitheach Samhradh i; mo stoirm chuain le dile 'cur still 's gach alldan domh; a' ghaoth tuath le cathadh sneachda 'nì dreachmhlor beannan domh; a' ghaoth 'tha'g iomain m'fh haloisg Earraich ri leathad ghleanntaichean.

Duilleach an tSamhradh, tuil an Dìmhair, na cuithean s an árdghaoth Earraich i; dìurd na coille, bùirich eas, ùire 'n tsneachda s an fhaloisg i; tlàths is binneas, árdan, misneach, ìs is sileadh nam frasan i; anail mo chuirp, àrach mo thuigse, mo làmhan, m'uilte is m'anam i. Fad na bliadhna, ré gach ràidhe, gach là s gach claradh feasgair dhomh, is i Alba nan Gall s nan Gàidheal is gàire, is blàths, is beatha dhomh.

c. 1940

THE FOUR WINDS OF SCOTLAND

My melodious, gentle breeze blowing from southward in my Summer birchwood is she; my ocean storm, with downpour sending in headlong spate each burn for me; the north wind with driving snow that makes beautiful the mountains for me; the wind that drives my Springtime muirburn up the slopes of glens is she.

The leaves of Summer, the spate of Autumn, the snowdrifts and the high Spring wind is she; the sough of the woodland, the roaring of waterfalls, the freshness of the snow and the heather ablaze is she; mild pleasantness and melody, angry pride and courage, growth and the pouring of the showers is she; breath of my body, nurture of my understanding, my hands, my joints and my soul is she. All year long, each season through, each day and each fall of dusk for me, it is Scotland, Lowland and Highland, that is laughter and warmth and life for me.

*21 ; A K
NA BAIDEALAN

Wondrous clouds are heaped aloft, with a dark dangerous flush and a fierce swelling; strong turrets, towers full of pride, threatening banners, mist and rage.

Fearful darkness creeps before them, and down out of them dart the lightning flashes; they trail after them the gray rain like a blinding curtain across the sea.

Yonder are waves and land, their colour lost, blotted out by the torrent from the skies, and gapped Arran gone from us under a cloak - it is a terrible glory of the glories of God.
GRUNND NA MARA

"Tha iad ann an grunnd na mara,
is cha b'e sud an rogha cala" -
rug sud orm o dh'fhalbh mo mhacan,
an cuilean a bhithinn 'ga thatadh,
a dheanadh gaire 'na mo ghlaicbhidh.

Thàinig an seann sgeul air a chasan.
Tha an speur ag ciaradh mu fheasgar,
goir aig na h-eòin air na sgeirean,
geumnaich a' chruidh a' teachd dhachaidh,
èigheach nan giullan anns a' bhaile,
s mi'm thurraman leam fhéin mu'n chagailt,
a' smuaineachadh air na bh' agam.

Chì mi do chòta air an tarran,
is, och! an tigh gun fhuaime, gun fhacal,
an stairsneach nach bi fuaim chas oirr',
an seòmar fàs s an leabaigh fhalamh.
Ma's e an osna théid fada,
cluinnear m'osnaich far an laigh thu
'nad chadal luasganach san fheamainn,
s na fuathan a' sior dhol seachad,
cruthanna aognaidh na mara!

Am marbh a' bruidhinn:

"Éisd, a bhean, is na bi rium,
is truimide mo dhìol do bhron;
sgàin is leagh an long fo 'r buinn -
thrial an cuimhn' an cois an deò.
Lunnainn a mharbh mi,
a mhill an tsíl nach fhaca i.
Theagamh gu'm b'aithne dhomh thu,
sgùr an sàl mo chuimhne nis.
Tha mi air sabhd sa' chuan mhór;
bu Domhnall mise an dé.
Laigh do ghuil orm 'na lòd,
ge b'e có thu, a bhean, éisd."

Mo losgadh, mhuinntir nan Eilean,
is daor a phàigh sibh mòrachd Bhreatainn!

1940
THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA

"They are in the bottom of the sea – yon was not their chosen haven"– that has now borne down on me since my lad departed, the pup that I used to caress and who would laugh away in my arms. The old tale has come to pass. The evening sky is growing dusky, the birds are crying out on the skerries, the cattle bellowing on their home, the boys shouting in the village, while I rock myself by the fire, alone, thinking of what was once mine.

I see your coat hanging on the nail, and oh! not a sound in the house, not a word, the threshold that will never bear the sound of footsteps, the vacant room and the empty bed. If sighs travel far, the sound of my sighing will reach you, in your fitful sleep among the tangle, the water demons going ever past you, terrible spectres of the sea!

*The dead man speaking:*

"Wheesht, woman, and don't disturb me, your grief makes my lot all the worse; the ship burst and dissolved under our feet - memory disappeared with life's breath. London it is that murdered me, that destroyed the eye it had never seen. It may be that I used to know you, but the salt-sea has scoured my memory now. Adrift I go in the deep sea; Donald I was, in former days. Your weeping has been weighing on me like a heavy burden, whoever you are, woman, wheesht."

My burning, people of the Islands, dearly have you paid for the greatness of Britain!

*MB*

---

THE WAUKRIFE CORP

Frae the cannle licht whar he ligged his lane in the nocht the deid man cem tie the door, an' fain was he tie win there ben, but bolt an' bar stood stench afore.

"O the morn tie ma lair they wull cairry me, an' hap me close in the yird, ma dear, my langsome spale in the mools tie dree; come, leave me farweel or I gang frae here."

"When the cock has Crawed an' the day comes up, then I'll rise ma last farweel tie gie, for the nicht is derk an' the shaddas strange; but, och, ma dear, is it weel wi' ye?"

The deid man grat. "The lanesome deid, that their kin should speir 'Is it weel wi' ye?' when they coor at thaim in the nicht wi' dreid, an' steek the door that they come tie."

1940?

1: ins. (DY)
SOOTHSWARDS OWRE THE SEA

The Englishmen hae taen tie dunts, an' sterted on a splore,
I hope they may get dunts an' clours, for every ane a score;
they spoilt oor land an' thirlet oor men, an' cleaned us fore an' aft
an' garred auld Scotlan' drift an' drive, a herriet hirplin' craft.

5 Tie Flanders for tie fecht for thaim they fain wad hae me gang,
w' pokes ahint an' guns afore, an' baynets thin an' lang,
w' claes the colour o' the sharn, a basin on ma bree,
but I'll awa' an' tak a rant tie Soothward owre the sea.

9 They thocht tie herd us lik' a wheen o shochlin' hairy yowes,
I think they'll find us thrawn eneuch, an' ragged fowk tie rowse;
their cratur King an' me, ma boys, we little do agree,
I'll no come rinnin' like' a tyke though he should whistle me.

13 Then farweel Scotlan' for a wee, farweel the lang Kintyre,
ye'll see us yet, we'll raise a lowe an' set yere hills on fire;
we'll bide a bit, an' watch a bit, an' counsel patiently,
then ready we'll come rinnin' wi' a Sooth wund owre the sea.

17 When Scotlan's Lion loups again, an' breenges up fu' reech,
then we will baste the gangerils, an' gie thaim clours aneuch,
an' a' the herm they did tie us, we'll richt it speedily,
when North awa' for Scotlan' we come skelpin' owre the sea.

THE OLD FISHERMAN

Greet the bights that gave me shelter,
they will hide me no more with the horns of their forelands.
I peer in a haze, my back is stooping;
my dancing days for fishing are over.

5 The shoot that was straight in the wood withers,
the bracken shrinks red in the rain and shrivels,
the eyes that would gaze in the sun waver;
my dancing days for fishing are over.

9 The old boat must seek the shingle,
her wasting side hollow the gravel,
the hand that shakes must leave the tiller;
my dancing days for fishing are over.

13 The sea was good night and morning,
the winds were friends, the calm was kindly -
the snow seeks the burn, the brown fronds scatter;
my dancing days for fishing are over.
THE KERRY SHORE

Blow, good wind from westward, blow against the dawn, blow across this livid loch with shadows strown. Sweetly blew the breeze from westward, o’er she lay, coming down the Kerry Shore at break of day.

Up from hills of dreaming Cowal came the sun, clear he stood and struck with fire the waters dun, waves green-sided, bright, white-crested glittered gay, coming down the Kerry Shore at break of day.

Branches rocking, waves of shadow, all the trees becked and swung in Glennan to the singing breeze, Caisteal Aoil, the Bróg, the Buck to leeward lay, coming down the Kerry Shore at break of day.

Head on Tarbert, through the seas she raised a cry, jewels of foam around her shoulders tossed on high, green waves rose about her bows and broke away, coming down the Kerry Shore at break of day.

1940

FUAR FUAR
Cold Cold

Heich o,
braes that the green things brockit are clootit wi snaw, mavis an merle wi the spent sun hae socht awa. Sooth aye, for the birk is nae bield wi the drift ablow.

Cauld, alas, the Nor’ wind hunts the kairrie frae cairn tae cairn, the scowry cratur drants owre soopit flats o aim, whar the green rash dandlet its hacklet heid, an’ the laverock was.

Sair, sair – whar the gowd nuts bendit the boos the straucht rods stan! What ails the grizzlet airts that they tak sic a pick tae this lan? Laggan was leafy; the snaw blins the sma birds there.

1940
CÒMHRADH NAN RUDHA
The Talk Of The Headlands

Says Ebbing Point to Laggan Head:
"Where do they watch their nets to spread
on the black lifting of the sea,
that laid their homeward course on me?"

"When the sun stoops and leaves the sky
the loch lies dead, with not a cry
or torch to mark from far or near.
It leaves me lonely, watching here."

Says Laggan Head across the bight:
"What sounds the men must riege to-night,
not Holy Isle or Ailsa know,
who flashed farewell and saw them go.

"They search dark seas they never kent,
seeking out death, ill-rested, spent;
yet sweet it drones aye in their ear,
the swell that breaks upon us here."

1940

[ALBA ÀRSAIDH]
[A Fragment]

Alba àrsaidh gheannach ghorm,
choillteach, tholmach, mhachaireach,
Alba iongantach, mo stòr,
's tu thug beò 's a dh'altruim mi;
B'bg a sheas mi air do shon,
's mo chridhe goirt mar thachair dhuit,
bo'n thagh mi thu tha 'm fraoch fo m'cheann,
's a ghaoil, nach seall thu fasgadh dhomh?

1940?

[ANCIENT SCOTLAND]

Ancient Scotland, blue and valleyed, of woods and knowes and plains, wondrous Scotland, my
treasure, 'twas you who brought me to life and nourished me; young I stood on your behalf, and my
heart sore for what had befallen you, since I have chosen you the heather is under my head, and my
love, will you not show me shelter?
AM MARAICHE GÀIDHEALACH 'SA CHOGADH

Is iomadh oidhch' air bheag socair, eadar Lochlann is Sealtainn, a thug mi 'marcachd nan sùghan, a'.ruith nan spinnsealair falaich; cha b'e fuaim nan tonn copach, s i ri postadh 's 'gan sadadh, a bha 'nam chluasan 'san am sin, ach dùrd an altain 'sa' Ghleannan.

Eadar Narvik s am Bùta, a' falbh nan sùmainn 'nan sreathaibh, is sinn ag clìadhadh an liathcnap, ag iarraidh na creiche; gaoth tuath ann, sneachd dûmhail, muir a' brùchdadh asteach oir' – chlíthinn na sùghan geal deàrrsach mu'n Gharbhaird a' spreadadh.

Ged a leanainn an streup so gu cùl na greíne thar mara, le gach stiuadh a' sgoltadh a th' eadar Lochlann s an Aifric, bhiodh bàghhannan m'eòlais, is mi 'seòladh air m'aineol, ag cur aighear fo m'ìntinn, 's 'gam chumail dìreach ri anuair.

1940?

THE GAELIC SAILOR AT WAR

Many's the night of little rest between Norway and Shetland that I've spent riding the billows, chasing the elusive rievers; it wasn't the sound of the foaming waves, as her tramping flung them far, that was in my ears then, but the humming of the wee burn in the Glennan.

Between Narvik and the Butt of Lewis, travelling the ranked breakers, as we harrowed the grey mound on our foraying search; a north wind, the snow thick and the sea rushing in on her— I could see the glittering white billows crashing about Garvel.

Though I should continue this warring over the seas to the furthest horizon, cleaving every wave between Norway and Africa, my own familiar bays as I sailed to unknown parts would lift my spirits to gladness and keep me upright in the face of storms.

MB
[BRANG AIR NA SASANNAICH]

_Cuiridh sinn brang air na Sasannaich,_  
_sparraidh sinn glas air am beulaibh,_  
_cuiridh sinn brang air na Sasannaich,_  
_brang air na Sasannaich, glas air am beulaibh._

'Illean, o'n chaill sinn deagh chleachdainn ar n-athair,  
chaidh a h-uire rud tarsuinn 'nar dúthaich bhig fhéin oirn;  
thigeadh na spadairean, chuireadh iad dhachaidh iad,  
thurraich air tharraich a' gabhail ratreuta.

_Cuiridh sinn etc._

Dh'fhag iad ar dúthaich 'na caile 'sna cúiltean,  
tromcheannach türsach 's a h-álach 'ga tréigsinn,  
mheall iad le cúinneadh i, rinn iad a spilleadh,  
ghàir iad is thionndaidh iad uaire gu h-eutrom.

_Cuiridh sinn etc._

Ged bhiodh iad ri feadail cha ruith sinn mar mheasain,  
ealamh gu claisteachd nuair chuireadh iad feum air;  
is comme leinn spagluinn nam fear a chuir falamh i,  
seasaidh sinn daingeann ged chrathadh na speuran.

A MUZZLE ON THE ENGLISH

_A muzzle we'll put on the English, a gag we'll force on their mouths, a muzzle we'll put on the English, muzzle on the English, gag on their mouths._

Lads since we lost the good ways of our forefathers, all has slipped from us in our own little country;  
the bragghartics used to come and they would be sent packing, falling over each other in pannicked retreat.  
_A muzzle we'll put . . ._

6 They left our country as a girl in the backstreets, lethargic, depressed to see her brood leave her.  
They seduced her with money, and then they abused her, they laughed and breezily turned away from her.  
_A muzzle we'll put . . ._

Though they should whistle we'll not come running like lapdogs, alert of hearing when they could put it to use; we care little for the crouseness of those who despoiled her, firm we will stand though the skies should shake.  
_A muzzle we'll put . . ._
ALBA GHAOIL Ó

Ged tha thu nis bochd ìosal,
Alba ghaoil ó,
bidh sùil is seirc gach tir’ ort,
a mhùirneach chaomh ó.
Ged tha t’aodach diblidh,
càirrear gùn de’n tsiod’ ort.
Thèid thu mach fo uidheam rioghail,
Alba ghaoil ó.

Chaidh t’ainm s do chliù a dhìtheadh,
Alba ghaoil ó.
Is suarach t’Àit is t’Àire,
a mhùirneach chaomh ó.
Ach togar leinn anios thu;
òlar fhathast fion ort,
is gheibh luchd t’fhuaith’ an dìol dinn,
Alba ghaoil ó.

Is fheàirrde tàir a dìoladh,
Alba ghaoil ó.
B’e’n troich a ghabhadh dìmeas,
a mhùirneach chaomh ó.
Cha b’abhaisist dhuit bhith closnaichte’
; is mithich dhuit bhith dìreach.
Mosgail do sheann innsginn,
Alba ghaoil ó.

1940?

DEAR SCOTLAND O

Though you are now poor and lowly, dear Scotland O, the love and gaze of every land will be on you, dear and kindly O; though your clothing is mean, a gown of silk will be set about you, you will go forth garbed royally, dear Scotland O.

Your name and your renown are blotted out, dear Scotland O, wretched is your place and your rank, dear and kindly O; but you will be raised up by us, wine will be drunk to you yet, and those who hate you will get their fill of us, dear Scotland O.

Despising is the better for being repayed, dear Scotland O, he’d be a dwarf that would accept contempt, dear and kindly O; it was not your custom to be subdued, and it is time for you to be ascending, now rouse your old spirit, dear Scotland O.
[THREIG AN COMUNN]

A hill óro och is ochan,
thréig an comunn a bha treis ann,
a hill óro och is ochan.

Chaidh an gaol gu snomh 's gu fuachd oirnn;
a chridh', bu luath a thréig an t-seirc ud.

Chum mi mach gun robh mi coma,
's mi 'gam bhroadh le rinn sgeine.

Thuirt gum bu choingeis leam sud,
's dubhan teann am' chliabh air greimeadh.

'S ann tha stobadh fo m'aisnibh;
cha dean cainnt no bòsd a leigheas.

Thug thu guin dhomh fhéin ri ghiùlan
gach àit an tionndaidh mi fo m'seire.

A chinn duibh is 'aghaidh ghaolach,
cò shaoileadh mis' is tu bhith deasbud?

Corp is anam a bhith 'n aisith,
mo leannan bhuam cho grad air teicheadh.

Cò chunnaic amhgar riamh air domhan
mar sheannchomunn dol air deireadh?

Mo shùil ri gàire s ri suairceas,
thug thu sùil shuarach rathad eile.

1940

[GONE THE ACCORD]

Ahill óro och is ochan,  Gone the accord that once we had,  Ahill óro och is ochan.

Love has turned painful and cold on us; my heart, how swiftly that affection was lost!
I maintained a front of insouciance, all the time feeling jabbed by the point of a knife.
It left me quite indifferent, I said, while in my breast a hook lodged tight.
A stabbing pain grips my ribs, and talk or bravado cannot heal it.
You have given me a stinging wound to endure, everywhere I turn with my burden.
You of the dark head and lovely face, who would have thought we two would argue?
Body and soul at war with each other, and my lover gone so suddenly from me.
Who ever saw a more grievous thing in the world than an old accord coming to an end?
When I had an eye to laughter and pleasantness, with disdain you looked the other way.

MB
Is ann 'nan laighe an Cill Aindreann
tha dithisd bhan a dh'altruim mi,
mnài 'chuir maise air a' bheatha,

ged bu sean iad, le'n cuid gnomh;
Ealasaid maraon is Anna,

bha iad farsuing, caomh, neochrion:
thug iad saoghal mór rí fialachd,
is thug aon bhliadhna iad do'n chill.

Uaisle ghiUlain, caintn bu chiùine,
suairces, sunnd is cridhe mór,
có a shaoileadh mnaith an nos da bhith 'nan aobhas iognaidh leò?
Mar sin bha Ealasaid is Anna,

le sgairt a fheagradh do'n aois òig.
Bha sean fharsuingeachd nan Gàidheal
arisd 'nan gnàths a' tighinn beò.

An sean saoghal còir 'bha 'nochdadh
riamh tromhaibh anns gach ceum —
feumaidh sinn a'ràdh, mo thraighbe,
gu'm "b'aisling uair éigin ê".
Bu mhaith a bhiodh sinn dheth, a dhithisd,
a'm fàgadh sibh mar ghibht 'nur dèidh,
s na'm fàigheadh daoín' an tsaoighal ghoirt seo,
a leth nan sochair bh'annaibh fhèin.

Cha do chrom thu ceann no inntinn,
Ealasaid, gu rud crion nach b'fhìù;
is Anna phàirteach ghaol an tsonais
làmh no dorus cha do dhùin.
Chì mi thu fo fhiamh a' ghàire
a' roinn air cèach air ceann do bhùird,
s ma tha thu fhathast mu'n tseann òite
is spiorad failteach, coibhneil thù.
IN MEMORIAM FOR ELISABETH AND ANNE MacMILLAN

There lying in Tarbert graveyard are two women who nurtured me; women who made this life beautiful, although they were old, with their deeds. Elizabeth together with Anne, they had breadth of spirit and kindliness and liberality; they spent a long life in generosity and one year took them to the grave.

Nobility of bearing, great gentleness of speech, pleasantness, cheer and a great heart — who would think that aged women would be a cause for wonder with such? Thus were Elizabeth and Anne, with a smeddum that would befit young years. The old breadth of spirit of the Gael came alive again in their habitual ways.

The decent old world that always showed through you at every step — we may say, alas, that "it was a vision once upon a time". Well would we be off, the two of you, if you had left behind you as a gift, and if the people of this sore world could get, the half of the good qualities that were in yourselves.

You never lowered your head or mind, Eliza, to any paltry worthless thing; and sharing, dear, happy Anne closed nor hand nor door. I see you with your smile sharing to the rest at the head of your table; and, if you are still about the old place, you are a kindly, welcoming spirit.

Gaelic title 13
1 There ... graveyard: Lying in Cill Ainndreann rest
1-2 who made ... deeds: who, although they were old, made life beautiful with their actions 13
2 Elizabeth: Eliza rest
3-4 they ... grave: om. rest
3 in: with corr. 15
5 great: om. rest pleasantness: affability rest
6 for: of rest
9 you: om. 15 may: may well rest
10 Well ... of you: We would be well off, you two 13
12 in yourselves: ever innate in you 24 innate in your very selves 13
13 lowered your: bent your 24 stooped with 13
14 closed nor: kept closed neither 24 closed neither 13
15 kindly: generous rest
Nách seall sibh a’ chaobh ud.

An cuileann cruaidh, craobh na mollachd nach fás fochnn ’na sgáile,
’sgaoil thar iomall an domhain,
’s seacadh fodha ’s gach àirde,
is teann a sparr e na freumhan
thraogh féithean gach àlaich,
ach thig fás air fonn goirticht’—
tha e bogadh, a chàirdean!

Gu dé as cleachdadh do Shasainn?
Siuthad, faraid an Éirinn;
gheibhearr freagairt an fhuaithais
á iomadh uaign an t-fhéin leat;
greas, is féidir leis ’sna h-Innsean
feuch an Innsear an domhain:
och, is farsaing an eachdraidh,
is lom a chreach iad an Éiphit.

Reachadh an talamh air udal
na’n robh guth aig na cnámhan,
is iad ag éigheach ’s a’ tagairt
na rinn Sasunn de chràdh oir’;
guth Uallaíach chaidh shracadh,
guth Ghilleasbuig, guth Màiri
éigh nan leòint’ air Cuil Fhodair,
glòir na gort ann an Dàrien.

Cha do chaochail iad nàduir
is iad ’gur tàladh le bruidhinn
gus am faicear bhur sreathan
fo’n chlò lachdunn ’s fo’n ghunna.
Siud an trosg chaidh a chealgadh
dol ’na airmibh gu duineil
feuch a shùil air an fhàire
is a nàmhaid aig ’uilinn.

Och bhualann e dhaoine!
Nach do thaom sibh ur cuaislean
anns gach dùthaich fo’n iarmalt,
ri breun-riasladh ’s ri murtadh;
is na Sasunnaich stràiceil
a’ marcadh árd air ur muineal
’s ann an deireadh an gach tuaireap
is beag a fhuaireadh g’a chionn leibh.

Cha deir na bh’ againn de ghòrach
b’fheàirrde crònan a’ chait sinn;
’s ann da fhéin, mar a theireir,
bhios a cheilear ’ga ghabhail.
Is ma thogas sinn gunna
’s ma bhios builean ’gan taraing,
’s ann duinn fhéin is do dh’ Albainn
a dheargar gach claidheabh.
An e crùbadh 'san làthaich
'am' sglàbhaiche aca?
Ghin m'athair-sa saor mi
is cha d'fhoghluim mi gealtachd.
Ged bu toigh leò mo shracadh
is a' ghreallach thoirt amas
's iomadh beinn a tha 'm dhùthaich
s am bithinn ùmhal do'n phaca?

Bidh sinn sealan 'gar ruagadh
feadh nan uaimh is nan dùsluinn;
s ged a ni iad mo mharbhadh
cha n'hhalbh mi gun diùbhail
ma théidear gu buillean
's mi bhuidhneas sa chunnradh
cha n-fhaigh iad ach mise
's gheobh mi dithisd no tribhir dhiubh.

B'fhad da isal sinn, fhéara,
tha 'n t-am againn bhith dìreach
na leigibh an dearmad
ar n-Albainn bhochd dhileas
ach forcaibh bhur casan
s cumaibh carraid ri miltean,
is seasaibh gu daingeann,
is daibhsan na striochdaibh.

c.1940

[THE HARD HOLLY]

1. Look you now at that tree . . . .

2. The hard holly, the accursed tree in whose shadow not a shoot grows, which has spread beyond the ends of the earth, causing all to wither under it in every airt, close and deep it pushed its roots so that they drained the bog-runnels of every plain (?), but growth will come to sorely parched soil - it is softening up, friends!

3. What are England's customary ways? Go enquire in Ireland; you will find that spectres answer you from many a foreign grave; hurry and ask them in India, see what story is told you: oh, their history reaches far, they plundered Egypt bare.

4. The ground would start rocking if bones had a voice, were they to shout and claim redress for all the torments England inflicted on them; the voice of Wallace who was drawn and quartered, the voice of Archibald, the voice of Mary, the cries of the wounded on Culloden, the moan of famine in Darien.
5. Their nature has not changed, as they seduce you with fine talk till ranks of you appear in the khaki, gun in hand. Look at the fool who was duped, going manfully under arms, see his gaze fixed on the horizon and his enemy at his elbow.

6. Oh let’s be rid of it, men! Haven’t you drained your blood-vessels in every land under the sun, in foul carnage and murder; while the arrogant English rode head high over your backs; and after their every stramash, little won by you for it all.

7. The stupidity of our past actions needs no repeating, we would be all the better for the purr of the cat — for no one but itself does it croon, as they say. And if we should lift a gun and if blows are to be struck, for ourselves and for Scotland will every sword be reddened.

8. Am I to crouch in the mud like some slave for them? My father begot me a free man and I have not learnt cowardice. Though they should wish to rip me apart and tear the guts out of me, there is no lack of hills in my country, and would I grovel to the pack?

9. They will pursue us a while through the dens and the thickets; and even should they kill me, I’ll not go down without damage; if it comes to blows, I will win in the bargain; they can only get me, and of them I’ll get two or three.

10. We’ve lain low a long while, boys, it’s now time we stood upright; do not be neglectful of our poor loyal Scotland; but plant your legs firmly and hold the fight against thousands, stand firm and determined, and to them never yield.

MB

AONARAIN NA CILLE

Ochan, aonarain na cille,
gach aon ‘na ionad fhéin fa leth,
‘na thighearna air taighe gun tathaich
far nach dèanar forrad air.

Cha n-éirich grian ann no reul,
cha tig neul no fras no gaoth,
gormadh an là no ’n dòthrath,
síth no ùspairt, gràin no gaol.

1940-42 ?

*21 ; A J

THE LONELY ONES OF THE CHURCHYARD

Alas, the lonely ones of the churchyard, each one in his own place apart, master of a house unvisited, where no one comes to ask after him.

Neither sun nor star rises there; no cloud comes, or rain, or wind; no day’s dawning nor dusk of evening; peace or tumult, loathing or love.

1 : om. A J 3 nor dusk : or dusk A J 4 loathing : hate A J

*21 ; A J
Air tilleadh dhachaidh feasgar dhomh s an teine a' cur ruaim dheth, chunnaic mi an creachdair 'na laighe socair suaimhneach; cha n-thaicinn ach an druim dheth, fionnadh dubh is b'arr a chluasan – fhuaire mi Casan Sìoda 'na shineadh anns an luitire.

"Siud thusa 'na do chuachaig, gun smuain air làimh do bhiathaidh, 'nad stidean leisg, mithaingeil, làn aingidheachd is mialaich. B'olc gu leòr 'nad phiseig thu, droch stic nam prat mirianail, ach nis is làn-chata feusaig thu, a réir na chaill mi dh'iasg leat."

"Sealgair nan trannsa is fear rannsachaidh nan cùiltean; Ord nan Luch, 'gan tòireadh le do chròcan, s cha b'e 'n sùgradh; Freiceadan Dubh gach tollaig, is tu roimpe 'na do chrùban; ceatharnach sa' chidsin 'nì na measraichean a sgrùdadh."

"'S e Spògan Sròil a b'athair dhuit, fear caithreamach na h-oidhche, a fhuaire ri Coiseachd Chlùimh thu, bean chuirn a b'haide ighnean. Fhuaire thu do thogail leis a' ghoid, s cha b'ann gu dòmhain – s nach ocl an sogail a thug id dhuit, a mhurtair nan eun eum haideach?"

"Cha n-eil gealbhonn no smèdrach a Ghleann Crò gu ruig Loch Fhine, lon-dubh no gobhlan-gaoithe o Ard Laoigh gu Gleann Stora, cha n-eil eireag bheag no luchag, no eun guir am peas 'san rioghadh, nach eil air 'fhaicill roimh do spògan – och'din, a Chasan Sìoda!"

"Seachain an cò aosda le 'chraos s a shùilean gruamach; thugad bean na còcaireachd s a' phòit 'na làimh gu bualadh; seachain an cat buidhe ud, laoch guineach air leth-chluais e, no bheir e Inbhir Lòchaidh dhuit, mo Spògan Sìoda uallach!"

"Seo rabhadh dhuit, a mhic ud, is na leigear e an dìochuimhnn'. Nuair thig mi dhachaidh anmoch leithmhárth s air mo mhiobhadh, ma gheibh mi 'na mo chathair thu, o, seallaidh mi le cinnt dhuit nach persona grata thu, a ghràdh, a Chasan Sìoda."

1942

2  'na : 's e  20  20 *21 ; P3 A
5  chuachaig, gun : chuachaig gun  P3 A
7  phiseig : phiseag  P3 A
10  Luch, 'gan : Luch 'gan  P3 A
21  'chraos : a chraos  P3 A
27  'na : air  20  o, seallaidh : o seallaidh  P3 A
Coming home in the evening, when the fire was throwing out a ruddy glow, I saw the plunderer lying peacefully at his ease; I could only see his back, black fur and the tips of his ears — I found Silk Feet reposing on the ashes.

"There you are coiled up without a thought for the hand that feeds you, a bad, ungrateful pussy full of ungodliness and meowing. You were bad enough when a kitten, a bad lot full of disorderly pranks, but now you are a full-grown whiskered cat, judging by the amount of fish I have lost through you."

"Huntsman of the lobbies and investigator of the nooks and crannies; Hammer of the Mice, pursuing them with your grappling-hooks, and it's no laughing matter; Black Watch of every chink, crouching before it; cateran in the kitchen, who scrutinises the dishes."

"Satin Paws was your father, the loud musician of the night; he had you by Downy Tread, a gentle lady with claws of the longest. You were brought up to thieving, and not idly — and wasn't it a bad education they gave you, murderer of the little birds?"

"There's not a sparrow or a thrush from Glen Croe to Loch Fyne, a blackbird or a swallow from Ardlui to Glen Shira, there's not a little chicken or a mouse or a broodie bird in any bush in the kingdom, but it's on its guard against your paws. Alas, Silk Feet!"

"Avoid the aged dog with his maw and his glum eyes; watch out for the cook with the pot in her hand to hit you; avoid yon yellow cat — he's a ferocious warrior with one ear — or he'll give you an Inverlochy, my jaunty Silk Paws!"

"Here's warning for you, you son of the devil, and don't let it be forgotten. When I come home late, half dead and battered by the weather, if I find you in my chair, oh, I will show you quite decidedly that you are not persona grata, my darling Silk Feet."

5 lot : stick
9 laughing : joking
10 scrutinises : will scrutinise
12 and wasn't : wasn't
15 little : tiny
17 watch : look
20 warning : a warning
Do not waver this way and that, woman. Take heed and know that I am no lapdog for you to entice, then despise, to beckon to you, then chase away.

Light-hearted then gloomy, burning then cool; your mind half set on going, half set on staying; now a little prick from the cursed conscience, and, at another moment, your blood aflame with living fire.

I am not a child for your beguiling. I am not a toy or a soft pet. There is a gate of iron to my heart, which I can bar against you instantly.

If you think it a game to be distantly strange and cold with me, I would think it sport to be hard. You will come to drink from the spring, and will find on its surface ice.
This is no time for lamenting or sighing, it is a time for incitement and activity; it is a time for inditing, speech and songs, a time for hope and expectation; a time for burgeoning, sap and juice, a time for sculpting and musicians; a time for thoughts, cheer and laughter; a time for life and renewal of growth.

This is only the Springtime storm that sweeps away from us the snow of Winter, Maytime's pitiless midwife, keen Sguabag with her hard fingers. It is she that shouts most vehemently, proclaiming cold. After she has passed snow goes racing to the sea, and every tree that has no pith in its branches will be swiftly plucked away by the thaw.

All the old, dryrotted wood of the world, the aged, withered timber putrefying in the earth, rods that give no support to men, their bark peeling off them — they will be scattered as by a flail on the gray face of the grim streams; room will be made for the joyous new growth, which will make pleasant the tranquil summer.

1: SGUABAG 1942  all  6: that: who A  9: putrefying: rotting  all

1: SGUABAG 1942  all  6: that: who A  9: putrefying: rotting  all
FAIRE M'ÒIGE

Siud e m’fhàire san Earrach is criochar mo fhradhairc ’sa Chòitein, tràth thilleadh gealghrian a’ mhochtath s a h-uillinn sna cnocain ag éirigh, cnoc air muin cnuic anns a’ Cheathramh, mullaichean s leacainnean éibhinn, guala s guala bhòidheach, na tomain an Còmhail s na sléibhteann, uchdach air uchdaich a’ dòmhlachadh, aonach is mòinteann nam feithean. Seall, Sliabh Gaoil a’ sìneadh san ògsholas fhiondharg gréine, rogha is tagadh nan sliabh, beinn-sheilge Dhiarmaid s na Péinne, druim fada min air dheagh shnaidheadh mar bhalla a chasgadh na séisde, a’ sruthadh ’na shliosan s ag aonadh ’na ruigheachan faon ris an ròidhean. An rìgh am meadhon a shluagh, deagh bhuachaill am meadhon a spréidhe - cóir gach rìgh sin s a urram ’na àite suidhe is éirigh. Seasadh a mhuintir deas air is clì air ag amharach s ag éisdteachd - an crìde na h-àirdhe tuath siud Cruachan Beann fo bhrìgh ghil, stuidh a’ chòrein airdghil ’s lòr bhrìsachd air faire s leis deth. B’e sin clachtharruing mo shùla, an casthoon trìcheannach glèghéal.

1942

MY YOUTH’S HORIZON

Yon was my horizon in the Spring and the bounds of my sight in the Maytime, when the white sun of morning would return with its elbow on the knowes arising: hill upon hill in Kerry, the summits and the joyous hillsides, shoulder upon bonny shoulder, the hillocks in Cowal and the high hills; ascent crowding upon ascent, upland and moorland of the bog-runnels. See Sliabh Gaoil stretched out in the young wine-red light of the sun, pick and choice of all hills, hunting-mountain of Diarmad and the Fiann; a long smooth ridge, finely carved, like a wall to check the siege, streaming down in flanks and joining in long gentle slopes with the flatland.

The king in the midst of his people, a good herdsman in the midst of his kine - that is the right and honour accorded to every king in his place of sitting down and rising up. Let his people stand to right of him and to left of him, looking and listening - in the heart of the northern airt Cruachan under a white snood, the wave of the high white crest ever breaking and gleaming on the horizon. That was the lodestone of my eye, the steep bright wave, triple-crested.

8 herdsman: shepherd C kine: flocks C 22 821 ; C
12 bright ...-crested: triple-crested, bright-white wave corr. 22
[DUILLEACH AN FHOGHAIR]
(Tri Rainn is Amhran)

Duilleach an fhoghair a chaidh as,
fochainn an earraich so ’teachd trid;
na sgap a’ bhliadhna is i ’meath,
a’ bheatha ùr a dh’fhàs ’na cill.

Thug thusa cùl ri t’òige fhéin
’nad Chéitein blàth le claoadh glic.
Nuair thuiteas do dhuilleach donn
feuch nach trom a’ chuirimhne sin.

Fuar do ghiocas, aghaidh dhonn,
thoir car-mu-thom do d’bhith le moit.
Breithnich ciaradh gach là,
s an dàimh a thagras an ùir ort.

Ceangal
Saobhghliocas sheann ughdar a thùraich faoineas an dé,
a chuir thusa an diugh o t’iùl an ceannaire riù fhèin.
Dhiùlt thu an sùgradh, is dhiùlt thu baileach mo bheul.
Biodh agad, a rùin – ach is dhiùt an talamh do’n chré.

1942

[THIS AUTUMN FOLIAGE]
(Three Verses and Envoi)

The foliage of this dead autumn that is gone, the shoots of this spring’s grass coming through it.
What the year scattered as she decayed; the new life that has grown in her graveyard.

You have turned your back on your own youth, in your warm Maytime with perverse “wisdom”.
When your yellow leafage falls, take heed that the memory of that be not heavy.

Cold is your wisdom, brown face, to play hide and seek with your being in petulant pride. Judge (the meaning of) the darkening of each day, and the kinship that the earth will claim on you.

Envoi
The false wisdom of old authors who devised foolishness yesterday, has put you today off your path in rebellion against yourself. Fondling you have refused, and you have refused completely my mouth.
So be it, my dear,— but the earth is close to the clay.
SKOTTLAND TIL NORDSJØFARERNE

Westwards the whole night without end, quick as smoke she hunts, fearless, alone; she stoops and swerves under the squalls – the east is taken, westwards they must turn.
White death on black steeds, fiercely the driven waves thunder as she stamps; forward under pale banners, listen, they tramp, the sea's northeast cavalry on the hunt.

Thus in times past the longship, when hard hands held Scotland's isles firm under the plunderer's yoke (still our mouths repeat the Norse language.) Then we were enemies, now we are friends.
No, Norway's keels no longer carry the old terror through storm and waves. Brothers of war, you who are following the hope we follow, welcome to our country from the ocean's terror.

tr. Arne Kruse
DEUX VERS

Hélas, les morts muets, solitaires!
Chacun dans son endroit dort immuré,
maître d'une maison noire, amère,
où personne ne vient le saluer.

Ni soleil s'y lève, ni étoile.
On n'y sent pas le vent ni voit nuée.
Jamais y flambe l'aube, pays pâle,
sans peur, sans amour, sans paix, sans épée.

1943

TWO VERSES

Alas, the mute, solitary dead! Each in his place sleeps walled in, master of a black, bitter house, where no one comes to greet him.

Neither sun nor star rise there. The wind is not felt, nor mist-cloud seen. Never does the dawn blaze there, pallid country, without fear, without love, without peace, without sword.

LE REVENANT DU MARIN PARLE À SA MÈRE

Femme, lâchez-moi. Ne pleurez plus.
Sur moi la douleur pèse, où je suis.
Sous nos pieds le bateau s'est fendu.
La mémoire aveugla cette nuit.

Percé par vos larmes, de l'oubli
pourquoi m'attirez-vous, inconnue?
Pourquoi m'éveillez-vous, endormi?
Est-ce que jadis je vous ai vue?

Une fois j'étais Donald, je crois.
Les courants m'emportent et les flots.
Femme, que fait frissonner ma voix,
je vous laisse. Cessez vos sanglots.

1943

THE SAILOR'S GHOST SPEAKS TO HIS MOTHER

Woman, release me. Weep no more. Pain weighs heavily on me, where I am. Under our feet the ship split asunder. Memory blinded that night.

Pierced I am by your tears, from oblivion why do you attract me, stranger? Why do you wake me up, when I sleep? In bygone times have I ever seen you?

Once I was Donald, I think. The currents and the flows carry me away. Woman, who shivers at my voice, I am leaving you. Cease your sobbing.

MB

1 : ÉISD, A BHEAN, IS NA BI RIUM 35 5 oublıı : oublıı, 35 11 que : qui 37 35 37 ; *B
TU VOIS? LA VIE NE RESTE PAS.
CES FEUILLES MORTES FONT DES FLEURS.
AU TOMBEAU OÙ L’ÉTÉ SOMBRA,
ELLE RENAIT DE L’AN QUI MEURT.

5

TA JEUNESSE, TU LA RENIES
DANS TON AVRIL ENSOLEILLÉ.
QUAND LA FEUILLE TOME JAUNIE,
COMMENT VAS-TU T’EN RAPPELER?

LES MORTS SÉVRÈS T’ONT GELÉE.
LEURS MOTS T’EXILENT DU CORPS DOUX.
PENSE AU SOIR, PORT DE TOUT SOLEIL,
AUX DROITS QU’À LA TERRE SUR NOUS.

Envoi

LA FAUSSE SAGESSE DES MOINES ENCOÎTRÉS
T’À RENDUE REBELLE À TON ÊTRE ET TA BEAUTÉ.
MA BOUCHE TU FUIS, MES BRAS TU AS REPOUSSÉS.
AINSI SOIT, CHÉRIE – MAIS LA TERRE EST TOUjours PRÈS.

1943

THREE VERSES AND ENVOI

YOU SEE? LIFE DOES NOT STAY. THESE DEAD LEAVES BEGET FLOWERS.
AT THE TOMB WHERE SUMMER SANK INTO DARKNESS, LIFE IS REBORN OUT OF THE DYING YEAR.

THE YOUTH YOU DISOWN, IN YOUR SUNNY APRIL YEARS, HOW WILL YOU REMEMBER IT, WHEN THE Faded LEAF FALLS?

5

THE GRIM DEAD HAVE FROZEN YOU. THEIR WORDS BANISH YOU FROM THE BODY’S SWEETNESS. THINK OF THE EVENING, THE PORT TO EVERY SUN, OF THE RIGHTS WHICH THE EARTH HOLDS OVER US.

Envoi

THE FALSE WISDOM OF THE CLOISTERED CLERICS HAS MADE YOU REBEL AGAINST YOUR BEING AND YOUR BEAUTY.
MY MOUTH YOU AVOID, MY ARMS YOU HAVE PUSHED AWAY. SO BE IT, LOVE – BUT THE SOIL IS ALWAYS CLOSE.

MB
Le goéland qui là-haut balance
derrière mon bateau,
les soirs, plongeant, quitte les horizons,
s’envolant à son îlot.

Fidèle à sa niche de falaise,
il a son lit connu;
mais les miens s’étendent et s’éveillent,
toujours nouveaux venus.

Le soleil les voit toutes les heures
entre les deux minuits;
avec l’épée, la charrue, la nostalgie
ils errent sans répit.

Tous les promontoires de la terre
leur cachent les baies d’ici;
tous les monts du monde rejettent l’écho
de leur musique hardie.

Ils ont pris les remparts des continents;
les océans ils ont rougi;
leur sang abreuve les royaumes lointains,
vêtus en cramoisi.

1943

THE GAEL REFLECTS

The seagull that hovers up there behind my boat, in the evenings dives off beyond the horizons, flying to his searock.

Faithful to his nook in the cliff he has his familiar bed; but my folk lie down and wake up, always newly come.

The sun sees them every hour between the two midnights; with sword, plough and nostalgia they wander without respite.

All the promontories of the earth hide from them the bays of this place; all the mountains of the world return the echo of their hardy music.

They have taken the ramparts of the continents; they have reddened the oceans; their blood quenches the faraway kingdoms, dressed in scarlet.
L’ÉCOSSE M’ACCOMPAGNE

J’oublie
mes sombres monts, fauves, nus,
esclave las du beau soleil?
Or, lis
ces vers à toi tendus
du cœur splendide de l’été,
et dis
si tu me vois changé.
Sous les vagues de l’Algérie
la mémoire s’est-elle donc noyée?

Je vois
ces sommets solitaires.
Leurs maîtres sont en ma patrie.
L’effroi
des falaises sévères,
des rochers ascètes, surgit.
Les rois
de la Haute Kabylie
menacent impéreurs, et moi,
je tiens ces fronts superbes en mépris.

Les champs
y donnent et redonnent,
dans ce pays bien-aimé du soleil;
et dons
y courbent et couronnent
les branches des arbres rangés;
fruits dont
un peuple vit bercé.
Vaincues de mains durcies, elles ont
plus de gloire, nos pentes labourées.

Ce Dieu
seul et impitoyable,
et son prophète guerrier –
affreux
ses saints naissent du sable,
conquistadors, prêchant l’épée.
Tous creux,
ses dogmes entonnés.
Les saints des îles parlent mieux,
Colum et sa royale humilité.

Blème
sous la bourrasque d’hiver,
fouetté par la grêle du nord;
même,
on pays là-bas, m’est-il cher
sous l’averse aveugle qui mord.
Gemme
quand le dur temps s’endort,
et le vent du large sème,
mourant, pleurnichant, la paix sur ses bords.

1943
SCOTLAND GOES WITH ME

I forget my untamed, stark, dark mountains, a weary slave to the fine sun? Yet, read these lines offered you from the resplendent heart of summer, and say if you see me changed. Under the waves of Algeria, then, has memory drowned?

I see these lonely summits. Their masters are in my homeland. The terror of the grim cliffs, of the ascetic rocks, suddenly looms. The kings of High Kabylia imperiously threaten, and as for me I hold these superb brows in disdain.

Here the fields yield and yield again, in this country beloved of the sun; and gifts here bend and crown the branches of the well-ordered trees; fruits on which a people sweetly lives. Conquered with hardened hands, they hold more glory, our ploughed slopes.

That solitary, ruthless God, and his warrior prophet - horrible, his saints rise to life from the sand, conquistadors, preaching the sword. All hollow, his intoned dogmas. The saints of the isles speak better, Colum and his kingly humility.

Ghostly pale under the winter squall, whipped by the hailstones from the north; even, my country yonder, is it dear to me under the blind, biting shower. Gem when the harsh weather goes to sleep, and the wind from off the sea, with a dying whimper, sows peace on its banks.

MB

STANCES DE SIMPLE SOLDAT
PRIVATE'S VERSES

HYPOCRITE

Il veut passer pour exemplaire,
et sermonise, Dieu le sait;
mais il y a bien des pas à faire
de comme il faut à comme il fait.

HYPOCRITE

He'd like to pass for a paragon, and, God knows, he pontificates; but there's a long way separates what one should do and how this one acts. MB

L'ESSENTIEL

L'enfant que vous châtiez,
pourquoi faut-il l'éduquer,
vu que tout le monde naît
maître du système D?
THE ESSENTIAL THING

The child you were punishing, why give it an education, when everyone is born a master of the art of
wangling?  MB

CRIME ET PUNITION

"Le sergent dit que l'accusé
a eu l'audace de penser."
"Quoi! Penser?" (ébahi, il tousse)
"Toi! Quinze jours de calabouse."

CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

"The sergent says that the accused had the audacity to think." "What! Think?" (he coughs, amazed)
"You! Two weeks in the clink."  MB

LE CAPITaine

"Il m'en veut de partis pris.
Sait-il ce que 'troupe' vaut?"
"Vieille noix, pour lui - tant pis -
'troupe' veut dire 'troupeau'."

THE CAPTAIN

"He holds some grudge against me. Does he realise what 'troop' is worth?" "The old imbecile, for
him - too bad - 'a troop' means 'a herd'."  MB

"Ne t'en fais pas
c'est pas la peine. . ." (Chanson populaire)

Ces goujats m'insultent sans le savoir guère.
Je me tais après tout.
Eux, ils sont chiens; je suis fils de mon père.
Je m'en fais? Je m'en fous.

"Don't get upset i it's not worth it. . ." (Popular song)

These boors insult me unwittingly. I keep my silence after all. They are dogs; I am my father's son.
I get upset? I don't give a damn.  MB
ÉPREUVE DE DOUTE

Inapercu dans ce feu
la Mort si je passerai,
marchant sous la main de Dieu,
enfin je la reverrai —

La belle face fière
que tu montres à l’océan;
la mine joyeuse altière
dont tu vois ses flots criants.

Je verrai croître - magie -
renaître à mes yeux avides
ton front hautain, ma patrie,
qui dit: "J’ignore leurs brides".

Regarde qui dit: "Voyez
si j’ai l’air assujetti!
Qui a vu mes pics courbés?
Devant qui ai-je fléchi?"

Mais, mon pays, j’ai peur pour toi.
Les monts durent: meurt la flamme.
L’autel survit à la foi.
Auras-tu gardé ton âme?

Le pouvoir noir de la guerre
m’ayant rendu inquiet,
peut-être, élève de l’ère,
bas je me demanderai:

"C’est mon Arran crénelé,
qu’en partant j’ai vu bleu;
mais est-il le parapet
d’un château dédans trahi?

"Ce faste de faîtes longs,
marge de la mer rieuse
et du ciel clair, est-il donc
une façade trompeuse?"

"Entourés de telles cimes,
autels de la liberté,
se peut-il, cœur, que s’abîme
un peuple qui s’est troqué?

"Sont-ils, ces monts, une frise,
décor d’une tragédie
où une nation qui vise
chacun son but, perd sa vie?"

Mais, je le sais, quand je vois
les hauts remparts de ma terre,
devant leur fierté fuira
ce cauchemar qui me serre.

1943
TRIAL OF DOUBT

Unobserved in this fire if I should slip past Death, walking in God's protection, I will at last see it again—

The noble, bonnie face that you turn to the ocean; the proud, joyful expression from which you see its roaring waves.

I will see grow— as magic—, rise again for my avid eyes your lofty brow, my homeland, which says: "I know not their bridles".

Look who says: "See if I look subjected! Who has seen my peaks bowed? Before whom have I stooped?"

But, my country, I fear for you. The mountains endure: the flame dies. The altar outlives the faith. Will you have preserved your soul?

My mind turned anxious by the black power of war, perhaps, a pupil of my era, will I silently ask myself:

"It is my serrated Arran, that on leaving I saw tinted blue; but is it the parapet of a castle betrayed inside?"

"This pageant of long crests, fringe of the laughing sea and of the bright sky, is it then a deceptive façade?"

"Surrounded by such peaks, altars of liberty, could it be, heart, that a people which has bartered itself is rotting?"

"Are they a frieze, these mountains, the set for some tragedy in which a nation which aims each for his own goal (sic) loses its very soul?"

But I know it when I see the high ramparts of my land, before their pride will flee this nightmare that grips me.

MB
MEN AND WOMEN OF SCOTLAND

Men and women of Scotland, tempestuous race that I love; people who are not to be trampled on, and who will not trample on the necks of others; oh, hearts that are not dull and dead, may you be a sea that will never ebb in the towns and glens of Scotland, on her rough knowes and her plains.

Land of my forebears, Scotland, children of Scotland, my kin, you are my flesh and the sap of my heart, my courage and my right hand.

The old blue land of the mountain pinnacles, it is she that has given us being and pith. She is rough, she is cheerful and kindly, she is interwoven in every one of us. On plain and on upland we have suckled at her breast. Be we Lowland, my dear, or Gaels, it was she that nurtured us.

Land of my forebears, Scotland, children of Scotland that will not yield, my food, my drink and my breath are you. . . I will not see you brought low.
O Sfax gu Casablanca
cha n-eil rathad garbh no réidh
air nach fhaicear thu 'gad chosnadh
le cnàimh do dhroma chur gu feum.

Fo chuail cheithir tunna,
s tu a' tuisleachadh fo'n luchd,
is do bhiorain spàg 'gan lùbadh
aig an dùn a th'air do dhruim.

A Bhò Udnòn, nach eil na cluasan
as sauicheantas do d'threubh,
cho fada ris an fhaidhidinn
'thug Allah dhuit mar sgéimh?

Is iomadh Arabach mór, sultmhor,
s do dhà uiread ann gu lèir,
a dh'éigheas "Gaodam!" (Bì air t'aghaidh)
'ga do shlacadh gus an fhéil;

Air a shuaineadh ’na bhumus,
is a chuifein gaoil ’na bheul,
is 'uile bhathar air a thorradh
roimhe is ’na dhéidh.

Air bhith tric a’ gabhail beachd ort
’s e mo bhréith – s is maith bhréith mhall –
gur comhchur thu nan eileamaid
a leanas san ath rann:

Paidhir chluas is ceithir chasan,
faidhidinn is peall,
fichead punnd de’n ùmhlaich
is unnsa de’n stalc.

1944
THE FATHER OF THE EARS

From Sfax to Casablanca there is not a road, rough or smooth, where you are not to be seen earning your living by putting your backbone to good use.

Under a four ton burden, stumbling beneath the load, and your twigs of legs buckling under the heap that is on your back.

Bû Udnîn, are not the ears, which are the badge of your tribe, as long as the patience which Allah gave you for beauty?

Many a big, fleshy Arab, with fully twice your bulk in him, yells "Qeddam!" (Get a move on), as he belts you to the fair;

Swathed in his burnous, with his beloved cigarette in his mouth, and all his wares piled up in front of him and behind him.

After having often taken notice of you, it is my judgement – and a leisurely judgement is a good one – that you are a synthesis of the elements that follow in the next verse:

A pair of ears and four feet, patience and a shaggy pelt, twenty pounds of obedience and an ounce of stubbornness.

[RANN FO CHRAOIBH ORAINSE]

An dèidh coiseachd beanntan Tûnais,
is sloda chûbhraidh bhur cnuic gharbh.
An dèidh cluinntinn "Allah! Allah!"
is guth meala leam bhur sailm.

1943-44?

[VERSE UNDER AN ORANGE TREE]

After walking the hills of Tunis, like perfumed silk are your wild braes. After hearing "Allah! Allah!" a honeyed voice to me your psalms. MB
BROSNACHADH

Alba ghràidh, thoir crathadh ort
le braise, 's tuig na th' ann;
tha cas glaoic air t'amhaichsa,
's do bheatha geal an geall:
's nach searbh an sgeul air t'iomchar e,
's e iomraitheach 's gach ball,
gu’n d’aithnic cèach mar chaochladh ort,
do dhaoine bhith cho fann?

Och Alba, mas e ’m bàs a th’ ann,
’s mas cnàmhadh dhuit ad shuain,
mas crionadh le caoin-shuarachas,
gur fuar a’ chrìoch do d’shluagh.
Am fàg thu do na ghràidhais thu
’s le ’m bàill thu a bhith suas,
ach gur ri òm do ghìùlainsa
is t’ionndrainn uap’ ’san uaigh?

Ach gu ma h-e nach fhaicear sin:
bidh lasair mar ri leus,
’s tu fhéin ad shléibhtean faloisge,
is glanadh roimp’ ’s na déidh;
o’n Pharbh gu muir na Maoil’ annad
bidh chaoir ud suas ri speur,
’s is iomadh tícheann ’s coigreach
their “Oit” air chorraig chreucht.

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t : om. P27
9-16 : om. P27
22 ri : ri’n P27

INCITEMENT TO BATTLE

Beloved Scotland, give yourself a brisk shake and understand the situation: the foot of every fool is on your neck and your precious life itself is at stake. Is it not a bitter comment on your bearing, so renowned in every part, that others have recognised the change in you from the feebleness of your people?

O Scotland, if death is your lot, and mouldering in your sleep, if it is to be a withering away through apathy, then a cold end awaits your people. Will you leave nothing for those who grew to love you and wished to see you flourish, except weeping at the time of your funeral procession and regret when you lie in your tomb?

But let that not be seen; there will be a flame and a blaze, and you will be like hills alight with heather-burning, everything cleansed before it and after. From Cape Wrath to the waters of the Mull of Kintyre that conflagration will stretch to the heavens, and many a lord and foreigner will cry "Ouch" as his fingers smart.

MB
AN CNOCAN FRAOICH

Och, a chuidealch ghràidh 'sa bheil fuil nan sàr, feuch a' chuing air a càramh le làmhan nan daoí, is ar sealbhachd àsraidh a' searg mu lár, is tos' nam bâittean fàis air ar Cnocan Fraoich. Dà cheud bliadhna s an còrr - mar a dh'ìarradh daonnan leò - fhuair iad iail mu n-ar còirichean, teann is caol. Chaidh ar creic air d'or anns a' Bhargan Mhòr, is leag iad an dubhchròg air ar Cnocan Fraoich.

Am Bliadh’n’ a’ Phrìonnna ‘nan rangaibh dìuth theann na lasgairlean le dùrachd an tìr a chur saor; a h-uile maith is mith gus na h-éill a bhìrseadh, gillean 'san robh misneach crìdh’ an laoirich. Là Chuilfhodair a’ dol slos chaidh an dochann air an tsiabh; fhuair na Sasunaich am miann orra s’oirn marao. Sgaoil iad teine s crochadh, coinluirg is mort, geurlannruinn is gort feadh a’ Chnocain Fràoich.

Nuair a dh’èigheadh sàmhchar an déigh an air, ghléidh iad an sean näимhdeas ‘nan crìdhe ‘na choair, is iad 'ga àrrach mar rogha bhlàiths – bhà iad an rùn bàis duinn ’s do’r Cnocan Fraoich. Is mar thoradh air a’ ghràin chaidh gach baile thogail slàn; chuireadh coirich ann am àite nan Gàidheal caomh. Is e sgèul nan làrach s nan raointean bán mar a b’fheudar dhaibh bhith fàgail a’ Chnocain Fràoich.

Och, mar thrèigeadh gun truas e fo fhéidh is luachair, s an clàdan s an cluaran ’nam bàrr air gach raon; gun ach mèilich uan anns an Earrach fhuar far an clùinnte duan air a h-uile gaoith. E gun daoin, gun chòmhnuaidh, gun ghealbhan, gun cheòl, is na h-allmharaich ri spòrs air le gàire faoin; s e cho aonranach, bròrnach, aognuaidh, dòite ri aon chnoc san Èòrpa, ar Cnocan Fraoich.

Tha e ’n dàn do’n linn so na h-éill a chur dhinn, as na banntaibh diomhair ’gar cur fo sgaoil. Is na biomaid diomhair, ach sìthaid ri gnìomh le duinealas is dìlseachd do’r dìleab aod’. Bidh a' bhratach ghorm is gheal a' stoirmrich ri gath, mar a bha i ann o shean, Crois ar n-Ainndreis Naoimh. Far an robh cromadh cinn clùinnear coireal binn, is a' fhìobh 'ga seinn air ar Cnocan Fraoich.

Bidh bàigh an speur ris is fàbhar Dhé, is togar dheth ’na dhèigh sin dreach lom an aoid, le bruthainn ghréine is bògdhealt Chéit, chuireas snodhach anns gach gèig air ar Cnocan Fraoich. Gum bi fàs agus beatha ’na bhlàthlagain fhasagain, snàmhaidh smùid a theallach mu bhàrr nan craobh; is bidh 'òigrìdh cheutaich trathnòin ag éideachd ri ceòlan eunlaidh ar Cnocain Fraoich.

1944
OUR HEATHER KNOWE

Alas, dear companions of the line of the great men, see the yoke imposed by the hands of the wicked, our ancient dominion withering to the ground, and the emptied townships silent on our Heather Knowe. Two hundred years and more, as was ever their desire, they got a leash round our rights, bound fast and tight; we were sold for gold in the Great Bargain, and their black paw came down on our Heather Knowe.

6 In the Year of the Prince, in tight ranks marching, the valiant sought earnestly to set their land free; noble and commoner, all sought to break the thongs, lads who had the courage and the heart of heroes. As Culloden day passed, they were felled on the moor; the English got their way with them and likewise with us. They spread fire and hanging, set loose lurchers and murder, persecution and famine throughout the Heather Knowe.

11 When peace was proclaimed in the wake of the slaughter, they maintained the old enmity in their hearts like an ember, tending it well like a choice source of warmth – death their intent, for us and our Heather Knowe. And because of this hatred every township was rebuilt; foreigners were installed where had been kindly Gaels. The story which ruined settlement and untilled field tell, is of forced departures from the Heather Knowe.

16 Oh, how ruthlessly it was abandoned to the deer and the rushes, with the burr and the thistle every field’s only crop, and in the cold Spring air but the bleating of lambs, where a song was once carried on every wind. Stripped of people and habitation, hearthfire and music, while foreigners now sport there in inane merriment, it is as solitary, sad, wasted and scorched as any hill in Europe, our Heather Knowe.

21 It is this generation’s mission to cast off the fetters, that we be set loose from our invisible thongs; so let us not be idle, but go forward in action with bold manliness and loyalty to our ancient legacy. The blue and white flag will fly high on its staff, as it did of old, our Holy Andrew’s cross; sweet chorusing will be heard where heads once were cowed, as the pipes are sounded on our Heather Knowe.

26 The heavens will look kindly on it, it will be in God’s favour, and the deadly barren aspect will then lift from its brow, with the sun’s sultry heat and the fresh Maytime dew that will send sap up each branch of our Heather Knowe. There will be growth and life in its warm sheltered hollows, about the tree-jops will drift the smoke of its hearths, and in the afternoon hours bonnie youths will listen to the warbling of the birds on our Heather Knowe.

MB
[BAIL’ IOMHAIR]
(Tri Rainn is Amhrain)

Is uasal leibh bhur saobhadh mhèirleach,
màthair-ghuir nan ceudan àr;
ma tha e sluagh mhòr, ainmeil, rioghal, 
tha Bail’ Iomhair an tosd a’ bhaís.

Thog sibh bhur lùchairtean àlainn
le clachaibh ar làrach fuar.
Am fuil phriséil bhlàith ar daoine
bhàth sibh saorsa nan sluagh.

Is e bhur buannachd ar calldachd,
is e bhur n-alladh cleith ar n-ainm,
is bhur n-uabhar ar cinn chroma,
is e bhur tromalaigh’ ar fearg.

Amhran

Le sprùdlich nam balla a b’hasgadh do’r sluagh o thùs,
thog sibh bhur n-aitreabh, a clachairean slìom nan lùb.
B’ann air cuirp ar fear dàna, a chàrnadh leibh glùn air ghlin,
a rinn sibh am màrsal gu stàtail gu cumhachd is cùirt.

1944

7 bhlàith: dig 35a
14 a clachairean slìom: le clachaireachd slìom corr. 35a

[BALLIVER]
(Three Verses and an Envoi)

A cause of pride to you is your lair of thieves, you war-mongering infector of poison. It may be populated, famous and royal, but Balliver meanwhile lies in the silence of death.

You built your splendid castles with the stones of our cold empty townships. In the warm, precious blood of our people you drowned the freedom of nations.

Your gain is our loss, your fame is the suppression of our name, your pride is our stooped heads, your nightmare is our anger.

Envoi

With the rubble of the walls that sheltered our people from earliest times, you built your mansions, you sleekit stonemasons of guile. On the corpses of our brave, successive generations piled up high, you made your stately advance to honour and might.

MB
THE DUTY OF THE HEIGHTS

The dark mountain under the downpour, exposed as an anvil to the tempest, the wind ever blows about its summit, the mist ever drifts about its sides; difficult under the feet are its dripping paths; snug and safe about its base are houses, corn-plots and gardens.

Often a few have assented to trials so that others should taste the happiness that was won in the face of Powers and tempest. The scream of the wind on the crests; not a breath is heard on the straths. It is the buffeting of the heights that gives tranquility to the little glen.

Youth of my country, is it to be the placidity of the plains, then? The peace and slumber of the low valleys, sheltered from the rough blast? Let your steps be on the summit, and your breast exposed to the sky. For you the tearing wind of the pinnacles, lest destruction come on us in a landslide.
You have made an ocean of tears and blood, and its viscous waves are rushing and swelling. See now, you hands of failing strength, just how well you are able to sail it.

With your silken mouth and your fine delicate hands, (the stain of butchery rusty under your nails), your are putrefied, quite putrefied, however plausible your blustering oratory.

"Freedom" and "Justice" come out, sleek and oily, from your gluttonous gullet like a greasy spillage. While in the four airts of the world they are sinking away in the slaughter-spill of gore that you have caused to flow.

Your pirate ship will veer out of control. There is bilge-water all over her water-logged deck. Laden down with pride and plunder she wilts, as the waves you have wakened assault her planks.

Fleeing from the sea of the peoples she ravaged, she gets caught on the sharp skerries of the great Powers. See now, you hands of failing strength, just how well you are able to steer her.
AN CEANGAL

Seadh, chaith mi mo thlom s mo dhìchìoll ri dàin, fhìr chòir,
'gan snaidheadh s 'gan lòmhadh sa' bhìnnchainnt is àsraidh glòr,
an Dùn Ad a thug binn is an I a rinn cràbhadh foil,
a labhair mo shinnsre s na rìghrean an Sìùin o thòis.

Théid sibh, a dhàin, théid gu dàna, gun fhìaradh ròid,
ag éigheadh 's gach àird ri m'luichd clàirsneachd fior chìall mo cheòil:
"Troimh cheusadh is sàrach nan Gàidheal tha 'n dìan fhuil beò,
is cha tèig iad an làrach gus an smàlar a' ghrian fadheòidh."

ENVOI

Yes, I have spent my time and my greatest energies on poems, dear man, chipping them and polishing
them in the sweet speech of ancient utterance, that delivered justice in Dunadd, and that practised
quiet piety in Iona, the speech my forefathers spoke, and the kings in Scone from the beginning.

You will go, poems, you will go boldly, not turning aside on your road, crying
to my listeners in all
the airts the true meaning of my music: "Through the crucifixion and trials of the Gaels their fervid
blood lives on, and they will not forsake the field of battle till the sun is blotted out in the end."
MOCHTÀR
IS
DÙGHALL
Mokhtar and Dougall, you have met in an everlasting fellowship without conversation.
The walls of your gossiping house were the tortured, wounded cactus.
The hospitality that followed welcome for you was the fill of your mouth of hot dust.
The greeting of your new companionship was the sudden, hard voice of the mortar.
The man who wrote the closing words of your song with splinters, roaring and smoke,
The man who fired the shot, he was no cheerful, eager warrior.
His belly driving him to weep with the bad, tepid water of the flats.
His eyes red and watering with want of sleep and the schnapps he had drunk.
Is e a' speuradh is a' mallachadh
an stùir, an teas 's a' chòirneil.

* * * * *

A bheil fhios ciod e 'n dubh chumhachd
a chuir cruinn sibh air an sgòrr seo?

A stùir thar bheann 's thar chuan sibh,
gur cruadhachadh le dòrainn?

Nur tríúr — sibh fhèin rinn bràithreachas
's an làmh a naisg bhur n-còlas.

A' sèapail is a' màgaran,
a' snàgail mar bhèisdean feòlachd.

An Gefreit' a thug am bàs dhuibh,
's a thàrr as gur fagail còmhla.

Dh'fhalbh e crom is gearanach
fo 'eagal 's luchd a' mhòrtaír.

Ghlacadh, 's an sgreuch 'na mhuineal,
'na fearna cuthaigh air Ceap Bòn e.

"Der Krieg ist Scheiss! Der Führer Scheiss!"
b'e sin an Sieg Heil fa dheòidh aig'.

He blaspheming, and cursing the dust, the heat and the colonel.

* * * * *

Who knows what black power brought you together on this pinnacle.
Guided you over mountains and oceans, hardening you with misery.
The three of you — you two who formed your brotherhood, and the hand that bound you together in acquaintance.

Sneaking, crawling on all fours, snaking like beasts of prey.
The Gefreiter who gave you your death, and pulled out, leaving you together,
He was captured with the scream in his throat, a madman on Cape Bon.
"Der Krieg ist Scheiss! Der Führer Scheiss!" — that was his Sieg Heil in the end.
Ach dh’fhuirich sibh san làrach measg diumàir an deibh chròin seo.

An seo tha ’n "trusdar Arabach" ’s an "Ràimi rapach" còmhla.

Am b’e sin a’ chainnt a bh’agaibh nuair a thachradh sibh sna rèidean?

No ’n do nochd sibh daonnachd chaiddreachach san aiteal am bu bheò sibh?

Daoine nach gabhadh fionnaireachd le burnus no dath còta?

Nach coma! Air an leathad seo rinn sibh mu dheireadh còrdadh,

Is chan eil foirfeach no marbat a thearbas sibh le ’èolas;

Tàileab, iomàm no ministear chuireas ioghnadh, crith no bròn oirbh.

* * * * *

Fear-rèite treun is tioranach deagh shibhealtachd na h-Eòrpa!

But you stayed on the battlefield amongst the jumar of this swarthy jebel. Here are the "lousy Arab" and the "dirty Roumi" together. Was that the speech you used when you used to meet on the highways? Or were you humane and affable in the glimpse of time you were alive? Men who would not turn coldly hostile on account of a burnous or the colour of a coat? What does it matter? On this hillside you agree at last. There is no elder or marabout who can estrange you with his knowledge. Taleb, imam, or minister to fill you with wonder, or trembling or sorrow. A powerful, tyrannous reconciler is the goodly civilisation of Europe!
A h-uile mì an làmh Allah!
Mharbhadh Mochtár. Cha tig e dhachaidh.

Cluinnibh, a mhathan uile an dùair!
Chruinnich armaitean nan Rùimi
am falachd uachdar an dìthacha;
thug iad bruidhinn air an fhùdar
sna beanntan sear am fearann Thùnais,
is bha m'fhèar fhèin 'na Thioraillliùr ann.

Mar a chomharraich Dia ’s a rùnaich,
ràinig e ’n bad bu cheann do ’chùrsa,
fòd air an amais tràill is prionnnsa.
Athair mo chloinne, dh’fhèac e ’ghhiùinean,
’s chan fhios domh cò a dhùin a shùilean,
no cà ’n do chàraich iad san ùir e.

Mo bhràithreachan is bràithreachan m’athar,
leughaibh an lorg is siribh adhar
an fhìr nach fhac’ e is a spad e!
Fallas bhur làmhain air a chhaiceann;
geiltchrith a ghuaillean fo’r basan!
Mo chuimhne! — chan e sin a thachras.
Rinneadh crodh dhinn ri linn m’athar.

Everything is in the hand of Allah! Mokhtar has been killed. He will not come home.

Hear, all ye women of the douar! The armies of the Roumis gathered in the feud of rulers and country; they made the powder speak out, among the mountains eastward in the land of Tunis, and my own man was there, a Tirailleur. As God had marked it out and planned it, he reached the spot which was the end of his course, the turf on which both slave and prince must tread. The father of my children, he bent his knees, and I do not know who has closed his eyes, or where they have laid him in the earth.

My brothers, and the brothers of my father, read the trail and seek the wind of the man who never saw him, and yet who killed him. The sweat of your hands be on his skin; the terrified trembling of his shoulders be under your palms! I forget — these things do not happen. In my father’s time we were turned into cattle.
The blessing of Allah and His peace be on him! Yon was no condemned Kaffir who would spit upon the Truth, and piss on the graves of the Faithful. That was the hand that was ready to reach out in help, and that would not close over usury wrung from the weak, that would not caress the dunghill dog. The blessing of the Merciful and His peace be on him! Mouth that never tasted the filth of wine; that would repeat the prayers without forgetfulness, five times a day in lowly guise prostrating himself; purified in the lawful manner. Soul that will not feel the fires of Iblis; that would not shun the duty of a faithful Believer, even alone by himself in the heat of the weary fields. Though he was far from summons and the report of men, and from the shrill, sweet voice of the Muezzin, humbly and submissively his forehead would touch the crumbled dust of the thirsty furrows. He would repeat every gorgeous name that the Prophet ever had, and every prophet in the holy writing, Moses, Ibrahim 's ar Tighearn losa; gidheadh, am fianaíoin a oin a shiolaich o Adhamh, ge sràlaid, àrd a chìrein, chan fhaite a’ cromadh a chinne e, marsanta, tàileab, càid no sich e. A ghruaim no ‘ghràin, a thlachd no’mhiothlachd, shealladh e steach an shìilean rightean.
Rinneadh 'ionnlaid, 's cha d'rninn e ùrnaigh:
tharrainn e is cha do thionndaigh.

Tha fuireis mo chlèibh a' gabhail
airson mo chèile, stèidh mo thraighe,
mo chrodh, mo threudan is m'fhear-agairt.
Cha sìn a sgàile air an rathad,
a' ghrian a' cromadh 's e 'dol dhachaidh.
'Na thaigh diochuimhnichear e fhathast
gun tigeadh e trathnòin gu baile.

A mhathan an dùir, leugaibh ar faoineas!
Na biodh bhur n-earbsa as an t-saoghal,
's gur cealgach, ainiocht dhomhor, claoin e.
Cha taigh seilbh' e ach taigh aogheacha.
Seallaibh mun cuairt! Cà bheil bhur daoine?

Èighibh is buailibh bhur basan!
Mharbhadh Mochtàr an cèin air 'aineol.
An nì a sgriobhadh dhà, 's e 'thachair.

His ablutions were performed, yet he performed no prayer. He set out and did not turn back.

The furnace of my heart is kindling for the sake of my husband, stay of my house, my flocks, my herds and my pleader. No more will his shadow lengthen on the road, as he goes homeward with the declining sun. In his house it will be forgotten yet that he ever came home at evening.

Women of the douar, consider the vanity of us! Put not your trust in the world, for it is treacherous, merciless and perverse. It is no house that we own, but a guesting house. Look about ye! Where are your people now?

Cry and strike your hands together! Mokhtar has been killed far away in a strange country. What was written for him has befallen him.
The woman of the house was of the old style, but your own spirit was less narrow, although your hands were hard and dark brown, the hue of the soil, and without any beauty.

Your grandfather used to tell how his father rode away in the sanctified hosts of Abd el-Qader (God’s mercy on him!). His long gun across the saddle of his mare; a broad silken girdle the colour of blood about his white burnous drawing it tight; a pistol bound with strips of gold showing from under it, ready to draw; his Indian blade, with the name of Allah engraved on it in close twining lettering, in a fine scabbard of lovely leather, with the carnation dye of Tafilalet to give it colour. On his head was the saining of the old women, to shield his body in the thick of the battle from swift volleying and the thrust of swords. Hidden in the breast of his clothing he bore a scroll, on which the taleb had written words from the Holy Book, and through them had scattered mystical numbers of good omen.
Maithéanas Dhè air Abd al-Cadair!
Nuair a bhriosaigh cath is cath air,
's a rùnaich an t-Aon lán mhasladh
nan Creidmheach, 's a Bhreatach Uaine allail
ga leagadh, ga saltairt is ga sracadh,
's a shiobadh mar dhuslach uaidh a smala,
thug Aimir nan Dileas thairis,
is thill do shinnseanair slàn dhachaidh,
gun chreuichd, ach reubte 'na anam.
Chuir e a ghunna am falach
a-muigh, is thaisg e a chlaidheamh
an cist' a sheòmhair fhèin. Mun aisith
riamh ri dìil cha dhubhairt e facal.

Lean e fuar, tosdach, dùinte,
is, air cho mian 's a dhèante sgrùdadh
's a leughte roethadh marbh a ghnùise,
a cheusadh cridhe theth cha rùisgte.
Bhuidhinn e rèim air gus an uine
san dh'fhàisg an tìom an smachd 's an tùr as.
Chunnacas e 's a shaibhleann sùbhblach,
a threadun, 's e gun fhois, mar ùigean,
feadh àite-teàrnaidh na dòthcha,
air an ard mhachair nach cunglaich
an radharc, 's a thàirneas toil is shilean
air aghaidh o innis gu innis ùidheadh
cadar Batna is Mansòra.
Cha chreideid, is 'fhlaicinn bhith meagus àspairt
nan aoghaire, 's an treud ga chùntadh,
gun do reub e riamh bian nan Rùimì.

The mercy of God on Abd el-Qader! When battle upon battle had gone against him, and the One
God willed the complete humiliation of the Believers, and willed that the renowned Green Banner
should be cast down, trampled under foot and torn; when his smala was swept away from him like
dust, the Imam of the Faithful gave over, and your grandfather's father returned home unhurt,
without a wound, but wounded in his soul. He hid his gun away outside the house, and laid by his
sword in the kist in his own room. About the warfare he never spoke a word to any soul.

He went on cold and silent and withdrawn, and however minutely he was scrutinised, however
closely the dead frost of his face was read, the crucifixion of his hot heart was not to be laid bare.
He warred it down and mastered it until the season when Time wrung the mastery and sense out of
him. He was to be seen with his moving granaries, his flocks, travelling restless, like some gloomy
solitary, wandering through all the camping-grounds of the country, on the high plateau that does not
confine the sight, but draws onward both eye and desire from dark remote pasture to pasture
between Batna and Mansoura. None would have believed, as they saw him so quiet among the
bustle of the shepherds as the flocks were counted, that he had ever rent the skins of the Roumis.
But time and the long onward reaching of the Way will wreck the most everlastingly settled endurance, tempered in a thousand griefs and misfortunes. Age rode him as a horseman, bridled his understanding and gave the whip to his fancies, setting him trembling as he heard (it seemed to him) the dead he once knew speaking. He would complain of his head and its heaviness, and how the beak of a worm was boring and gnawing at it. Two years he passed in his tent, at times in a stupor, at times in a frenzy, sitting away in the darkest corner of it. In the Dogdays he would not move a hand to chase away the swarms of flies that buzzed about him all day long. At times a flush would be seen on his cheek, and he would start as memory stabbed him. He would cry: "The high stronghold of our warrior - tâh es-sùr! - the rampart has fallen, the rampart of Takidemt!" and a fit of weeping would come over him, or he would roll himself in the dust, praying for the damnation of Colonel Yussuf, the slave who betrayed his creed twice over.

But when he was drained and feeble the Merciful revealed His mercy.

For on a loud, windy, showery morning when the others were making ready to raise camp,
air dha bhith cho fad’ air iomall
a ghaolaich uile, ’na chús frionais
don chuid gun mhothachadh, gun mhionach,
dh’èalaidh e ’na thosd, gun lideadh,
à comann Chloinn’ Adhaimh driopail.
Is e ’leag Ahmad, ’àirde spioraid.

Nuair as glaine croistal a’ chridhe,
mar tha e furasda a bhhriseadh!

Rinneadh ’ionnlaid, rinneadh èideadh
ann an gile mhin a lèine,
air an do fhros iad uisge seunata
tobar Zemzem, on tìr chèin ud
a dh’fhògair am Fàdth is a ghèill dha.
Chaidh a ghiùlan air na dèilean
gu mall, mùirneach gus an rèilig
’bu cheann-uidhe do luchd a threuda.

Thog an luchd-caoinidh an t-èigheach
am farsaingeachd na machrach cèire,
is mhùch a’ ghailleann, a bu bheus da,
fo chùirtein sìibhlach nan neul e.
Trà chuairt thuìt an ëir troimh fhèuraibh
an fhir den t-sluagh bu ghill feusag.

Thogadh mar chomharra ’na dheidh sin
an dà chloich-fhianais measg an fhèuraich;
is dh’fhàgadh ’na laighe leis fhèin e
air a thaobh deas, ’s a bhaithais chèirgeal
ri àird an ear. Fhuaradh a Lèigh dha.

singing and tightening the girths, having been so long out on the margin of his loved ones, a cause
of impatience to those that were insensible and had no bowels of compassion, he crept away in
silence, without a word, from the bustling fellowship of Adam’s Clan.

It was the loftiness of his spirit that brought Ahmed down. When the crystal of the heart is at its
purest, how easy it is to shatter it!

He was washed, he was arrayed in the smooth whiteness of his shroud; and on it they sprinkled
blessed water from the well of Zemzem in that far-off land which drove out the Prophet, then
yielded to him. He was borne upon the boards slowly, affectionately, to that graveyard which was
the journey’s end for the people of his tribe. The keeners raised their crying in the vastness of the
dark steppe, and the storm that roared bass to it drowned it under the shifting curtains of the clouds.

Three times the earth fell through the fingers of the man whose beard was whitest among the people.
 Afterwards they raised as a sign his two wimess-stones among the grass, and he was left lying there
alone on his right side, his wax-white forehead towards the east. His Healer had been found for
him.
That was what you heard from Omar, the garrulous, fluent knowing one, who could give finish and
colour to speech, and who would keep fast under the spell of his far-fetched yams about Djeha and
Haroun the Just the traveller, even though the gloaming was near. You begged him, and you got the
rest from him.

For he was egged on by the heat of his nature to endure the great weariness of the desert, youth and
the lust of gold willing him to seek out wonders through peril, and acquaint himself with its tortured
pathways.

He sold his sheep at the markets and put his wares together – rolls of silk worked with embroidery,
cotton, rugs, shirts, vessels of brass, cups, amulets; knives with carved jewel-set hilts; burnouses
from Souse, as light as the webs of the cunning spider; ankle-rings in their hundreds, and an
abundance of every beautifying preparation, henna, kohl, herbs and roots;
coifidh is milseanan gun euradh,
innealan-cibilit is cirean-feasaig
agus Corain an dathaibh tibhinn,
le caignidhean is cuairteagan reidhe
a chuireadh le tlachd air mhisg an leirsinn.

Le a shreath chàmhail fon luchd ud
thog e 'n àird air mochthrath fionnar,
mun do nochd a' ghrìan cùl nan tulach
a gharadh nam pàilлина dubha.
Thuirrt e: "An ainm a' Chruithir!"
is rinn e an cúrsa a chumail
air Bìoscrà, 's e air mhearan subhach
a' tilgeadh os a chionn a mhusgaid
's ga ceapadh, a' ghabhail na luinneig:--

Bhith dol nad leum air muin cùrsain,
cù bharr ēille fàlbh 'na dheann,
bhith 'g eisdeachd gliongartaich nan usgar,
bheir sin a' cheann as a' cheann.

B'e fhèin an luinneagach, gòrach,
sgeulachdach, gàireachdach, pògach
air bhoile le fèon na h-òige.
Bu chezusdach leis mall-imeachd stòlda
a' charabhain sin, aich, is dòcha,
uair a dhrìch e sa' ghìolmainn
casbhealach Sfà, is dhearc e cròn mhùir
na Sahara, 's i aibhiseach dòite
ghradh dh'fhuirich e gun cheòl, gun chòmhradh.

coffee and sweetmeats without stint; instruments of music and combs for the beard, and Corans in joyous colours, with interlocking letters and smooth whorls which would inebriate the sight with pleasure.

With his string of camels under that burden he took the road on a cool early morning, before the sun showed from behind the knowes to warm the black tents. He said "In the name of the Creator" and held his course on Biskra, and he in a delirium of pleasure, throwing his musket into the air and catching it, while he sang the song:--"To race bounding on a charger, a hound off the leash streaking away, to listen to the tinkling of jewels – these things drive the worm from the head."

'Tis he that was the songful, daft one, the man for tales and laughter and kisses, mad with the wine of youth. He thought the placidly dignified slow pace of the caravan a torture, but yet, it is likely when he tipped in the gloaming the steep pass of Sfà, and gazed on the saffron sea of the Sahara, vast and grimly glooming, that he quickly fell silent of music and conversation.

2 and smooth whorls which: in sinuous whorls that 20a 20a 57 ; *D
5 He said "In ... Creator": "In ... Creator" he said 20a
6 and he: he 20a 7 race: race ahead 20a 8 worm: worm of care 20a
10 He ... but: A torture it was to him, the placid, dignified slow pace of the caravan; 20a
11 saffron: tawny 20a
Fhuair e fir-iúil ann am Bioscra,
evèach, cinnteach, fir gun ghiorag.

Stiùir an luchd-iúil iad gun bhruadhinn
seachad air cnàmhan luchd-thurais
's air fuaran mhárba, thachdte, dhruidte
air an sèideadh 's air an slugadh.

Choisich iad gun sgeul, gun luinneag
troimh fhàsach bhalbh far nach cluinnte
ach cagarsaich na gainmhich uidhre
's an siomhù ga cur gu sruthadh –
uchdar an fhuinn air snàmh mar uisge.

Lios Allah, gun a seis air luimead,
far an tràig an deargan am fear-siubhail,
neochaochdaighchadh na fàire buidhe,
air chrith 's a' dannsadh, do-ruigheachd.

Mar nàmhaid nach robh dol as air,
fear-dloighail nach cuirte bhar 'fhalaichd,
dhèirich a' ghríon a h-ùile la tha.
Nuair sheas i dìreach anns an adhar
aig a h-àirde, fo phreas no carraig
cha robh sgàile. Bhrùth a gathan
gach beò 'bha guasaid air an talamh.
Is nuair a bhiodh a bhiodh an oidheche aca,
an oidheche, 's iad a' buidhinn astair
ri 'fionnarachd, an corp air chrathadh
fon aodach bòite le falias,
bu deoch a fuaran àrd don anam
bhith leughadh baighchuairt nam plaineadh,
air buidhnean nan reul a bhith cur aithne,

He got guides in Biskra, knowing, certain, not men to panic.

Their guides led them with never a word spoken past the bones of travellers, and past dead springs,
choked, closed up, drifted over, swallowed. They walked with neither song nor story through the
dumb wilderness, where was heard only the whispering of the dun sand as the simoom
streaming - the surface of the land drifting like water. The Garden of Allah, without its match for
bareness, where the very flea forsakes the traveller! The unchangingness of the yellow horizon,
quivering and dancing, unattainable.

Like an enemy from whom there was no escaping, an avenger not to be turned aside from his feud,
the sun rose up every day. When it stood overhead in the air at its zenith, under bush or rock there
was no shadow. Its rays crushed every living thing that was moving on the earth. But when the
night was with them, the night, and they were winning distance during its coolness, their bodies
shaking under their clothes drowned in sweat, it was as a drink from a high hill spring to their souls
to be reading the silent wheeling of the planets, to be making acquaintance with the companies of
the stars,
a fine golden dust dashed across the sky, and through it blazing the prime guiding lanterns of every road, be it in the twilight of the arid tundra, in the barren desert, on the ridge of the sea — Vega, Altair and the Plough, Orion planting fast his feet the Pleiades that chose their tack for the steersmen of the ships of Tarsus, and for the pilots of the heroes out of Aulis. A magic vessel of healing was the flooding of the moon, pouring down in soft waves; it was mercy, it was enchantment, it was a dandling; it was the hand of healing after battle. A melody would rise up out of the silence of their contentment, and travel down the line of the caravan swelling as it went, like a blaze growing from a spark — holy hymns to the One who rules the morning, and intricate, closely-twined poems that were fashioned at the court of Damascus, songs of wine and beautiful women:—

"We will drain it in its pure strength with no admixture, and we will drink it mingled with pure snow water; and we will plait music and verses together in a lordly dwelling of lovely marble."

To the old turbans they were loathsome, but to the lads flowers of art.

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There is no healing in time of hunger but the heavy ears of corn, and no cure for poverty but the Sudan, the land where a burnous will earn two slaves, if it is soft and fine. That was the saying which the old men had through the cafes, and there was truth in their clucking. They found riches there and honour, bargaining at their ease with the black men, measuring out fragrant coffee, silk and cotton for slender women and stout lads. After a few days of quiet and rest, they urged a flock full of tears and sighing through the very heart of the deep wilderness. Their minds taken up with what they had gained, slaves and ivory and heavy lumps of gold, with questions of food and fodder, with the long thin thread of wells that meant life and haven-sheltering for them, they made naught of the wounded complaints that rose up, gust upon gust, from the crushed ranks of misfortune. Pitilessly they would bring them to silence with strokes of the rod and mocking, driving them on at their ease from the backs of their camels, without any scourching of foot. Mercy fled before greed for wealth, and they answered with hardness and anger the beseeching of their poor fellow men; for their hearts, perverted, were opened to the inciting of the evil spirit of the will, and they had barred the door on humanity. But very much as they had done, others did to them.
"By the purposes of Allah" said Omar, combing his beard with his fingers "however notched, rocky, scorched, pinnacled and stony a precipitous mountain may be, or the barren hard ground on a level plain, living breath is always to be found in it, venomous beasts dwelling there, serpents, scorpions and the rest of them. So it is with the golden-hot desert. There are eyes in it to seek out slaughter, there are lips in it to speak of violence, there are feet in it to come pursuing after...

"One day when the sun was at its height, and the whole world ready to split with its heat - its burning having at last made the slaves give up their whining - just when we were on the point of halting the march, we saw the appearance of a man on the horizon directly south of us, on a camel. Neither head nor hand of him moved, but still he was, like a tree or an ancient rock thrust in the sand. We pulled up for fear of enemies coming to scatter our slave rabble on us, and we penned them into a hollow with a guard over them. Said my guide, as he dismounted from his beast: "Far from us be danger!" and then, in a low voice: "Day of my affliction! My bones will yet be seen, oh Lord, whitening in the hateful wilderness. See yonder a Touareg scout on the horizon."
Chuir sinn ar luaidh 's ar fùdar làmh ruinn,
is dh'ullaich sinn ar n-aimr gu làmhach,
is ged nach do dh'ithinn sinn rè an là u'd
mu fheasgar bha sinn cheana sàthach.
(Gum mallaich Dia an fheusag bhàn seo,
mur b'ann mar sin 's gach car a thàrla.)
A-nis bha ciaradh nan tràth ann,
àm na doille is nan sgàile.

"San oídche shuidhich sinn an fhaire
ceithir thimcheall an lagain,
is cha robh gin nach robh a' caithris,
gun bhiadh, gun deoch, gun fhois, gun chadal,
gun sùil ri grian no madainn hfaicinn,
is gul nan tràilil gar cur an laigead,
a' tolladh 's a' treachailt fo'r n-anam.

"Seall domh fear tha beò air thalamh,
is musg 'na dhörm, no sgìath, no claidheamh,
bhithinn gun smuain, 's mi òg, 'na bhadaibh.
Ach dol a gheleachd san dithreachbainceil
ri Tuargach, b'e bhith cur a' chatha
ri uilebhèist chuain san fhuar-aisean.
Gun spion Dia an teanga asam
ma tha mi breugach. Cìa b'as daibh?
Cò dh'innseas sin duit ach am Maighstir,
no nathair adharcach nan clachan?
Thigeadh iad 'nan sgaoth mar phlathadh
as an aon àird is ionadh fhalach
ris na lòcuisit, 's an dà chuid aca
'tnam plàigh 's 'nan sgìùrs 's gach àit an laigh iad.
Sheàp iad, na mortairean luatha bradach,
à saobhaidh air choreiginn nach fhacas
le sùilean Creidmhich chneasda, m'anam.

We laid our powder and our lead beside us, and made ready our arms for firing; and although we
did not eat all that day, at evening we were already replete. (May God curse this white beard if it
was not thus that it happened in every point.) And now it was the darkening tide, time of blindness
and of shadow.

"In the night we set the watch round all four
sid~ of the hollow, and there was not one
that was not waking, without food or drink or rest or sleep, without hope of ever seeing sun or morning,
and the weeping of the slaves weakening us, burrowing and undermining our souls.

"Show me any man living on earth, with a musket in his fist, or a knife or a sword and without a
thought I would have been at his throat when I was young. But to go and fight in the unkent desert
with a Touareg, that was to give battle to a monster of the ocean in the cold sea depths. May God
tear out my tongue if I lie! Whence did they come? Who can tell that but the Master, or the
horned viper of the stones? They would come in a swarm suddenly from the same airt
and hidden place as the locusts, and both of them are a plague and a scourge in every place they
alight. They sneaked, the swift thieving murderers, out of some lair or other that has never been seen by the
eye of a decent Believer, my soul.
Chluinnte feasgar 's an teine lasadh
an luchd-iùil a' teachd an cagar,
beul ri cluais, air Tamanrassat,
Tenesruft, dithreabhan na Haggar
is Iomuisear. Sàr bhриchdadh fhacal
a b'euchd leò uile a bhith aca,
ged nach aithnicheadh iad 'nan clabhás,
sruth seach cinneadh, beinn seach baile.
A-nis bha an cuideachd dìomhair againn.

"Bu sheachd feàrr leam, a ghrian mo bheatha,
ceud Turcach a dhòmhlachadh a-steach orm
le tartar is raspaòs mar chleachd iad,
ag èigheach cuid-oidhche is dibharsain
dhaibh fhèin, don gilean is don eachaibh;
ged bhiodh e teannadh gu feasgar,
na fraighean cho lom ris na leacaibh,
's iad fhèin ri cnìmh an ri deasbad,
gun bhlas na h-oidhche – fir no beathaich –
as an craosalbh gionach, leathann.
B'fhèarr leam sin na aiteal fhaicinn
uam air faire den luchd-chreach' ud.

"Cha robh guth air clos no cadal
fad na h-oidhch' ud gus an latha;
chan fhacas oidhche riamh a b'fh'haide.

"Oidhche bhiothbhuan san rath-dhorcha,
bu dùinte dall a mall-uairean gorma.
Bu bhagairt leinn gach cagar 's monnhur
a bh'aig an osaig feadh nan tolman;
Bu ghuth nàmhaid gach gluasad soirbheis,
's gach ospag iomansaigh mheirlich borba.

At evening when the fire was blazing the guides used to be heard talking in a whisper - mouth close
to ear - of Tamanrasset, Tenezruft, the wastes of the Haggar and Imusharh. A fine belching of
words which they thought it a remarkable feat to know, although
in their chatter they could not tell
the difference between stream and tribe, mountain and town. And now the mysterious band was
upon us.

"I would rather seven times, sun of my life, that a hundred
Turks should crowd in on me with
uproar and overbearing swagger as was their wont, shouting for food and lodging and diversion for
themselves, their lads and their horses; even though it should be drawing on to evening, the shelves
as bare as the flagstones, and they snarling and disputing, not yet having put the taste of the night
out of their gluttonous wide maws. I would rather that than see, even far off on the horizon, a
glimpse of those plunderers.

"There was no mention of repose or sleep all that night till daylight, and never was seen a night
that was longer. An eternal night in the moon's last quarter, shut in and blind were its dragging
blue hours. A threat we thought every whisper and murmur that the breeze made through the dunes;
the voice of an enemy was each stirring of the wind, and every gust an onset of wild robbers.

8 evening : evening, and a long summer day gone past, all
"Is beag a b'fhèàirrde sinn ar n-bísdeachd
is cur ar cluasan gus an deuchainn.
Nuar a b'airgead òr nan reultan,
's a ghlas an là am bun na speuran
'na sholas tiamhaidh, fann, air òginn
a' taisbeanadh dìth bhìdh theachd na grèine,
thug sinn sùil mun cuairt le chèile –
siùd againn sealladh truagh ar lèiridh!
Air gach làimh dhinn 'nan luchd-sèisidh,
feuch, na Tuargaich mar fhad èigh dhuinn,
mar armadh thaibhse no aising èitigh,
a' gabhail beachd oirn 's iad 'nan ceudan.

"Gu h-obann, a Dhia, le tuiltean òmair
thar an fhàsaich ghlaist gan dòrtadh,
leum a' ghrian san speur is dresòs dìth;
gach preas is tolman ri 'h-ògleus
a' seasamh a-mach air a leth-òradh
air ghrùnnd a sgàile gu roichdail, beòdhia.
Sheall i dhuinn flor chruth nam bòcan;
gach aon le 'aodann air a chòmhdaich,
brèid uaine gu bàrr a shròine,
cleas ar maighdeann 's ar ban pòsda.

"Bu chosmhail iad 'nan uidheam còmhraig
ri feachdan ãrsaideh Shidi Òcbo
nuair mharcach e 's an Creideamh còmhla,
ijuchair gach daingnich 'na thruaill òrdha,
fear-ìthil gach bealaich a lann shròiceach,
o Chairruàn gu ruig am mòrchuan.
Bha sleaghann aca bu tana còrrdhias,
sgiathan crunne, claidhnean mòra,
is bogha aig gach fear den chòmhlan
air fiaradh cùl slinnein mar ri dòrloch.

"We were little the better of our listening and the putting of our eyes to the test.
When the gold of the stars was silver, and the day showed pale at the foot of the sky,
a melancholy, feeble light scarce revealing the close approach of the sun,
we all threw a glance around together – and yonder was the wretched sight of our misfortune!
On every side of us, as besiegers, behold the Touaregs within shouting distance of us,
like an army of spectres or a ghastly vision, watching us in their hundreds.

Suddenly, oh God, with floods of amber pouring over the grey wilderness,
the sun leaped into the sky, shedding forth a blaze;
every fold and dune stood out in its young light, half-gilded, defined
and vivid on the background of its own shadow.
It revealed to us the real appearance of those terrors,
each one with his face covered over, a green veil to the top of his nose in the manner of our maidens and married women.

"They were similar in their war-gear to the antique hosts of Sidi Oqba,
when he and the Faith rode together, the key of every stronghold in his gilded sheath,
his rending sword the guide of every pass from Kairouan to the great ocean.
They had spears with fine tapering points, round shields and great swords,
and each man of the company had a bow aslant behind his shoulder, along with a quiver.

5 : followed by Neither hand nor mouth was stirred by them. all 57 ; *D
We did not see one musket in their hands, and we ourselves had guns and lead without stint, but I gave the order not to take to firing or fighting. The wide desert was around us, we in a region we did not know, they in a place where they were well acquainted.

"A while we passed there without speech or movement, crouching, full of apprehension and terror, like cattle for the slaughter in a fold, while they rode to and fro in noisy groups, and strayed hither and thither taking counsel with their nobles.

"Then, in a clap, their talking ceased, the movement stopped, and they all stood fixed where they were. I looked and saw two men coming from the breast of a group, a tall, broad warrior and a wee mannie, making towards us at a stately unhurried pace. They stopped short when they had reached ten paces from us; the warrior raised his right hand as a sign of greeting, and I myself greeted the bloody devil. Then he set to in a gurgling speech that no Believer living could understand, and it would have been a choice diversion to listen to it had not Death been at our elbow waiting to be urged on by that maw of his. He went on gesturing with his hand and swelling out his chest, while his blabbering streamed and poured from him;
it was stammering, broken, stifled and thick like the hoarseness of a man whose uvula is swollen
and is choking him. I listened humbly, and neither laughter nor weeping was very far away from
me. All the time I was praying: "Oh Creator, who fashioned him and who put such speech as he
has in his gullet, grant to us means of understanding, or else my throat will not be whole and

sound!" Then I noticed the wee mannie, and there was a smile on the scoundrel's face.

"It is better to have a mouth of silk than to be strangled, and a tongue of honey and flattery will
keep the sharpest knife away from the ribs. I answered, then, the leader of the pack with courtesy
and musical, sleekit, well-turned phrases, not knowing whether it was worth my while to joint them
together. I put sweetness and a savoury taste on them, hoping that the hound would understand the
sense without understanding the words.

"Oh noble man that has come from afar to us, your converse is more melodious than the stringed
lute, the learned expositions of the sages of Egypt and the songs of Andalusia all together. By my
head and by my beard, I do not know if I am to liken your form and your virtues, your deep secret
wisdom and your prowess to the Sultan of Stamboul of the steeds, or to the King of Granada who
reigned so wide, and of whom are told so many tales.
Your visit has brought the blessing of God upon us, and — I will not conceal it — after seeing you and listening to you, never more will I seek aught throughout the markets but news that your life is long and joyous, and it would be riches to me to be a beggar and gaze upon you for ever, oh countenance of the sun. But look with pity upon your needy servant, and tell him now your own good will."

"The mannikin turned his face to us, nudged his camel closer, touched his forehead, made obeisance and began — oh wonder of wonders — in Arabic as choice and courtly as is to be heard in the royal Bardo of Tunis:

"It does not profit you to coin words of gold as a gift for this brute. Speech will not close his maw, but only its fill of what he has plundered, for he is a robber of the highways of this region who will strip even the pilgrim bare. For the sake of Allah's countenance, do not rouse him. Be humble and offer him no defiance, and you will escape with your life from the monster, although he should snatch from you the winnings of your trading. Twenty years ago, my eyes, he plundered my caravan, and, as I was handsome and strong, he made me a captive and a slave of no account."
"My companions' bones, oh grief! - the wind of the wastes endlessly smoking with fine sand has raised a heap and a mound upon them. I studied my wisest course, set to and learned the yowling speech of the brutes, and this day I am court counsellor and reiving companion of that dog. He says to me: 'It is you that devise each wise plan and fresh novelty for us. You are my feet for me to travel, you are my hands and my famed wings bearing me up in flight out of my crouching.' And so I have the wretched rank of a courtier, and they have ever been prisoners in every court. And should my intent be to escape without his leave, I would never stretch that course very far, for the inanimate desert would be guiding him, betraying my path and bringing him towards me. The wind would cry to him: 'Turn! Turn! He went yon way'; and each particle of earth and every stone that felt the weight of my charger would shout: 'He is here, here, warrior!' Ya Rabbi Rabbi! The markets of Tunis, the harbour, the shadowy streets, the palace, and all of it cool, snow-white, fresh-white - never will my two eyes open on it again. But see now, a surly mist is darkening the ugly face of the boor. What I have said suffices us, dear man; but I have had the command, along with threats, to tell you that the dog desires to delve and rummage amongst your wares. Everything he thinks of worth will be his, as a sign of your good will."

"Cnámhan mo chompanaic, a thùirse, thog goath nan ditheabh 's i sior smùidrich gainmhe mine tòrr is dùn orn'. Leugh mi mo ghlicosas, theann mi 's dh'ionnsaich an donnalaich cainnnt a th'aign na brùidean; is tha mi 'n diugh mar chomhairleich cùirte 's mar chompanach creiche aig a' chù sin. Their e rium: "Is tu a thùras Gach car glioç 's gach annas hr dhuinn. Is tu mo chasan leis an siòdhblainn, is tu mo làmhan 's mo sgìathan clùiteach gam thoirt air òite as mo chrùban." Fhuair mi le sin droch-inbh' a' chùirteir, 's bu phriosanaich riamh anns gach cùirt iad. An e dol as gun chead bu rùn domh? Chan fhad' a shìòninn riamh an cùrs' ud, oir bhiodh am fàsach marbh ga stiùradh, a' brath mo shìlife 's ga thòirt gam ionnsaigh. Ghoireadh a' ghaoth ris: "Tìonndaidh! Tìonndaidh! Ghabh e mar sin", 's gach bruan ùrach 's gach clach a dh'fhairicheadh trom mo chùrsain: "Tha e 'n seo, an seo, a dhìhlnaich!" Ya Rabbi, Rabbi! Fèilltean Túnaich, an caladh, na sràidean sgàile, an lùchairt, 's an t-ìomlan fìonnar, sneachdheal, ùrghéal - gu bràth chan fhosgail mo dà shùil air. Ach seall a-nis. Tha ceathach mùgach a' ciaradh aogas grànd' an ùmàidh. Is leòr dhuinn na thuirt mi, a rùnaich; ach fhuair mi 'n t-òrdan mar ri bùtich innse dhuit gu bheil an cù sin air mhiann ruambair a-measg do bhathair. Sìon a fiù leis bidh aige mar chromharra do dheagh dhùrachd."
Although the heart within me was smoking, I said, making my countenance smooth: "On my head and on my eyes". The mannie returned cheerfully to say that I held it an honour to be plundered. The son of Iblis turned his back on us, and raised his right hand - oh God, the uproar!

"When I speak of it this very day a mantle of blood comes over my sight. May God turn yellow the faces of that tribe! There was not a thin, needy wolf to whom wrongdoing was food and drink, that was not in his scores and hundreds among our possessions, blaspheming, tugging, jostling and exchanging blows. Every bundle we had was tried, rent and torn asunder. Even the slaves themselves were tested and they prodded them and jabbed them with their black fingers. All day long the monsters continued, and I watched them out of the fetters of my necessity, baring my teeth in a smile.

"Praise be for it to the Lord of all the Worlds, the Merciful, the Compassionate, the One God; the Master of the Dawn, who saved us, and who put in my head the thought.

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1-9 Although ... continued, : om. 20b  
9 watched ... fetters : watching ... bounds 20b  
9-10 necessity, ... smile. : necessity. 20b  
11 all : om. 20b
"Anns gach conaltradh mun ghealbhan, fhuair na Tuargaich an t-aimm sin, bhith beò gun sògh air nòs nan ainmhídh, beatha chaol air foddar garbh ac' air meas buidhe nan craobh-pailme, is air bainne an gobhar an fhann a dh'ionailtreadh measg chlach is gainmhe. Dheasaich mi, matà, is thairg mi ti meannta millis don mhèirleach gharg ud, dh’fheuch an tigeadh e o ’aintheas le tlachd, ’s an callachadh a bhail e. Bhlaís e air, a Chruithir m’anama, sgob e as e an aon bhalgam, is shình e air a ghlugail bhalbhain.

"- "Thuirt e," ors’ an duinein sgeigeil, "Is maith an gobhar a shil a leithid, ge b’e càite no cô leis e- s da-rìrbh sin na tha e creidsinn." - "A ghrian an fhàsach", rinn mi freagairt "cha ghobhar dubh no bànn ga leigeil a rinn an deoch, ach luibhean seacte an ceann uisge, is fodha teine. Mas toigh le d’chridhe leòmhain, bheir mi am pailteas duit den luibh, is fleasgach a thàireas gu mion-èiblach ceart i, air mhodh gum bi i daonnan deas duit nuair is trom an là ’s a theas ort."

"In every conversation around the fire the Touaregs had got the name of living without any luxury, after the manner of animals, having a lean life on rough fodder, on the yellow fruit of the palm trees, and the milk of their weakly goats that browsed through stones and sand. I made ready, therefore, and offered sweet mint tea to the wild robber, to see if pleasure would make him give up his fury, and if his belly would tame him. He tasted it, oh Creator of my soul, and drained it in one mouthful; then started his dumbie's mouthings.

"He said", said the mocking mannie, "Good is the goat that gave such milk, wherever it might be and whoever might own it - and in truth that is what he believes." "Sun of the desert", I answered, "it was no goat, black or white, that made the drink on being milked, but dried herbs with a fire underneath. If it pleases your lion heart I will give you abundance of the herb, and a youth who will mask it cunningly and rightly, so that it will always be ready for you when the day and its heat are heavy upon you."
“After some vapouring we did not understand — "The sun of the desert says", said the mannie, "that his lofty heart deigns to accept what you have offered, and, furthermore, to recompense your good will and the honour, what remains of your gifts will be restored to you as it stands, and your gold also. (Our beasts would fail under its weight.) While he is restraining his company and bringing them to heel, without looking about you, go to your wares and gather them together, bless God and continue your journey. If your company is seen here again it will get the same disastrous stripping. Farewell, fortunate that you are, you who are going, while I am biding." I took the mannie by the hand, but avoided his eyes, for they were wet with tears. He turned away and followed the warrior, who was herding his pack of whelps with the shaft of his spear and the edge of his voice.

Then we prepared our departure, and gathered what remnants were left of slaves and goods. About a third remained.
“Làin èibhneis — ar ceann a’ snàmh leis
’s ar cridhe a’ falbh air sgiathan àrda —
thug sinn ar cùl ris a’ ghràisg ud.
Bu teàrnadh gach dìreach leinn gam fàgail.”

* * * * *

Is tric a lean thu snàth a ròsgeul,
snàth fada mìn ga chur fo d’choir leis;
snàth siola a shniomhadh e le ’chòmhradh,
dearg na fala is buidhe an òir ann,
is tu nad shuidhe ri uilinn Òmair
fo sgàil’ an dorais, a’ mealtainn còmhla
na h-òiteig ag osnaich trasd an còmhnard.
Ach air na ghabh sibh asda ’shòlas,
le t’athair caomh, le aon mhac Òmair,
b’fhaoineas peacach iad ’s bu ròlaís.

690-693 : om. 36
691 ’s ar : ar 35
694-703 : om. 35

“Full of joy — our heads swimming with it, and our hearts away on lofty wings — we turned our
back on yon rabble. Every ascent was a descent to us as we left them.”

* * * * *

3 Often you followed the thread of his romances. A long, fine thread that he unwound before you, a
silken thread of speech that he twined with the yellow of gold and the red of blood in it, while you
sat by Omar’s elbow under the shadow of the door, and you enjoyed together the breeze sighing
over the plain. But for all the pleasure that you had from them, in the eyes of your dear father,
Omar’s only son, they were sinful vanity and vapouring.

1 lofty : loftier 20c
2 as we left : leaving 20b 20c
3-7 : om. 20b 20c
In the nest of the eagle, aloft on the dizzy, perilous precipice, you do not find the meadow wren being reared. The swift hand of the wilderness will not mother a son who would be turned by a dyke, offspring who could be kept in a byre. The messan of the bold barking will beget no hound to which rock pinnacles and tumbled boulders are level ground, no terrier which will defy the fox. Often has true humility begotten pride, and often has a worthless being been born in a palace. And never yet, for all their numbers, druids, soothsayers and prophets – never from the time of the kingdoms of the Euphrates, has one been found who would go surety on a little child before it grew older, without wisely waiting for the judgement of its days. Most dissimilar were Omar and the child whom he welcomed with such joy, kissing it as it clung to its mother’s breast.
"Ciod e an duine?" orsa Plondar.
"Ciod e nach gabh e bhith 'na thloman?"
Cò leis an dàna roimh-innse
cur a shruthan, at a shlontan,
štáth is grian a fhéathan dòrail?
Cà bheil mairmeulaich a shide?

Cha sácheachr an cridhe 's 'ionndrain,
tagait na h-inntinn 's a geur-sgrùdadh
le fios, le fianais radhare a dhùsghaidh,
's gach faire 'na cloich-tharraing ùr dha.

Tha marcach ann a chuireas spuir ris,
neo-fhaiscinneach ann fhèin ga chuípeadh;
tha sealgair ann fhèin ga stuígeadh,
'se fhèin a mhìolchu fhèin. Is uime
an iall a shnaidhmeadh dha le 'Chruithear.
Fiadh an spioraid ga shior ruith leis;
corr aiteal clis, cha mhò a chuid dheth,
a dh'aindeoín ruaig na h-ionndrain tuilich.

Mhochtàír, am bothan bochd do chinnidh
chuala neach o ghuth a spioraid
ràdh a theireadh ris a' chridhe

*eunan luaineach 'na chiomach,
air a chungachadh an ciste;
gu dìrd an ear thèid e 's streadh,
gu dìrd an iar bheir e sitheadh,
's a chaoidh chan fhaigh e mach air ite.

Bha 'n t-eunan sin an cliabh na dithid
a dh'altrum thu le seirc 's le gliocas.

"What is man?" said Pindar. "What can he not be in his times?" Who is bold enough to foretell the
set of his tides, the swelling of his gales, the pleasant sunshine of his kindly calms? Where is the
weather prophet of his weather?

The heart and its longing will not be satisfied, nor the case pleading of the intellect and its keen
scrutiny, by the knowledge and the witness borne by his waking sight. Every horizon is a new
lodestone to draw him.

There is a rider in him who sets spurs to him, invisible within him, whipping him on; there is a
hunter within him who eggs him onward, and he himself is his own hound. About him is the leash
which his Creator knotted for him. The deer of the spirit is for ever coursed by him; a glimpse that
goes in a flash, seen from time to time, he is fated to have no more than that of it, in spite of the
pursuit made by stumbling desire.

Mokhtar, in some poor hut of your race, a man heard from the voice of his spirit a saying that spoke
this way of the heart: a wandering bird made captive and penned in a kist; eastward it goes seeking,
westwards it goes darting, but it will never win out on the wing. That bird was in the breast of the
two who brought you up with affection and wisdom.
Bu draoidh do Ómar oir an fhásaich, 'na stuaidhan òir air ghrùnd na fàire, gaoth gun nèdil mar anail amhainn, an dipéardan ri dannsa bàinidh; gach tìr nach b'èdil da, treubh is càinain, na margaidhean, na thùr, na sràidean, sgreagan nam bealach, bùrn nan oàsais, 's am bàs 's an cunnart orra 'nan geàrdaidh.

T’athair Òbàid, 'athair-san Ómar, 's gach fear aca 'na chuan eòlaish le gnè an t-sïreadair 'na dreeòs ann; b’ionnan an stuigeadh a bha fòdhpà, ach cha b’ionnan fiadh òn tòireadh. Mhrarach Ómar cnoc is còmhnaid; b’fhalbhachach 'inbhe agus 'òige. Dh’fhian Òbàid 'na shuidhe stòlda – ceann crom 'na thosd – ag èisdeachd còsir a smaointean fhèin, an seinn 's an còmhradh.

Geasan saoghalta cha do thàilaidh 'inntinn no 'shùilean rìamh len ìlleachd, ach fàire a b’fhaide uaidh 's a b’aìrde 's a b’fhìrinnich a gach fàire; fàire gun mhùir-làn gun tràghadh, gun neul, gun ghrian, gun fhèath, gun ãnradh, gun slorchaìrt òidhecheannan is làithean, taobh thall de chrìochan rioghaich Nàduir. Doimhne na Cruitheachd òs a h-Àirdeàd; am Prìomh Adhbhàr a thur 's a ghràbhail gach dùil ann eadar bhuan is bhàsmhor; a chuirs air ghlúasad le 'làimh ghràdhmhor na plaineidean 's na reultan ìrdà, 's a dh’fhàdàidh leis na beatha blàithe;

Omar’s enchanter was the rim of the desert, running in waves of gold on the background of the horizon, a cloudless wind like the breath from a furnace, the mad dancing of the heat tremors; all the lands that he did not know, the tribes and their tongues, the markets, the towers, the streets; the rocky, stony ground of the passes, the water of the oases, and death and danger as guards standing over them.

[Your father Obayd, his father Omar, each one of them an ocean of knowledge set ablaze with the seeker’s temper; they felt the very same prodding spur, but quite different was the deer each man pursued.] Omar rode hill and plain; ever on the way were his youth and his manhood. Obayd stayed sitting quietly – a head bent in silence – listening to the chorus of his own thoughts, their singing and their talk.

The world’s enchantments did not lure his mind or his eyes with their beauty, but a horizon that was farther from him, and higher and truer than all the horizons that are; a horizon where there is neither full tide nor ebb, cloud nor sun, calm nor tempest, a horizon that does not know the eternal cycle of nights and days, beyond the bounds of Nature’s kingdom. The depths of Creation and its heights, the Prime Cause that conceived and formed every created thing that is, be it everlasting or mortal; that set in motion with its loving hand the planets and the lofty stars, and that kindled the flame of warm life;

6-8 Your ... pursued : om. P36
Tobar a’ Bhith, Àithne nan Àithntean,
an Fhùrin far am forfe län i,
b’e sin fiadh a sheilge dàna.
B’e sin a shealg, ’s a dhùil ri teàrnadh
seallaidh, mar aiteal a’ Bhàird Shlàbhaich
"nuair a bheanas Muire Mòthair,
’sa chamhannaich ghlè dìg, le fàitheam
a màntail ris an ùrfeur bhàise”
a’ foillseachadh car priobaidh Pàrrthas.

B’i earail Òmair dhuit, ’s tu d’bhalach:
— "Guidheam ortsa, air cheann t’athar,
meal an saoghal ’s na toill masladh.
Biodh lùmh is cridhe fosgailt’ agad;
biodh misneach agus cruadal annad;
thoir uait an nàimhdes is an caidneabh.
Brath an aoigh is brath an t-salainn —
is miosa fear mosach agus sgráing air,
’s gur fial Cruthadair nan anam,
’s le fialachd shèid e ’nanail annainn."

Shìdeadh Òbàd ort à aird cèile,
gad chur air ghabhail ùir le ’earail.

— "Gabh ealla ris an t-saoghal mhosach.
Chan eil ’na bhòidhchhead is ’na shodal
ach gile oíllteis duine lobhair.
A bheairteas uile, ciod e ach closach?
A luchd sanntachaidh, is coin iad.

the Well from which flows all Being, the Commandment from which arose all commandments,
Truth where it is perfect and whole, such was the deer of his bold hunting. Such was his hunting,
and his hope was ever for the descent of some vision like the moment’s glimpse of the Slav poet:
"when Mother Mary, in the white young morning, brushes the fresh, drenched grass with the hem of
her mantle", revealing Paradise for an instant.

This was Omar’s advice to you when you were a boy: "I pray you, by your father’s head, enjoy the
world and earn no disgrace. Let your heart and hand be open; let there be spirit and hardiness in
you; give freely in enmity and fellowship. Betrayal of a guest, betrayal of the salt — still worse
is a mean man with an ill-tempered look, for the Creator of souls is generous, and in generosity he
breathed his breath into us."

Obayd would blow upon you out of another airt, setting you on a fresh course with his counsel.
"Watch apart, and take nothing to do with the vile world. Its beauty and flattery are but the
horrible whiteness of a leprous man. All its wealth, what is it but carrion? Those who are greedy for
it are dogs.
If you truly desire grace, learn humility, forsake your pride. Streams do not water lofty fields.

Let not the good thirst of your soul be quenched by the brief, accustomed measure of earthly things, or by the piteous lightning-flash of that which passes away.

There is no place for pleasure between heaven and earth for us. How will grain powder emerge if the two grinding-stones do not crush it?

Show kindness and demand no reward; any indebtedness you incur throw into the Tigres; God will return it to you in the waste lands.

A wind is the spirit. A torrent of spindrift the world, with beginning and end riding each other for ever; corrosion to nothing and coming of age; growth, bud, blossoms, fruit and ripe sweetness, and the brown leaf fallen to the ground and withering. Nevertheless there is one thing that is sure and constant, that stands in its own truth eternally. Seek with your nets that magical bird.''

Thus was his advice to you, loftier and more difficult than a child's mind could grasp, and which you did not understand until he died.
Bu toigh le Ómar spórs is aighear, is toirm nan ceârrach anns a’ Chaifidh ‘nàin suidh’ air bratan-ùrlair alfa a’ cluich air disnean ‘s air na cairtean; a’ giarrachadh nan oidhche fada is callach teth nan latha lasrach le tòimbhseachain is sgeulachd Antair. Bhiodh an tambur ‘s a ghaîta aca, cofaidh na h-lemen, seinn is aiteas.

Sin far an robh an dòmhlan aoibhach, nach leigeadh durc ‘nàn còir no daormann – clàr-feòrne, còmhraidh, feedain chaola, uain air biorain is feòil gu saor ann, an deòridh ‘s an dèircein a’ glaodhach: "Rudeigin air ghaol Dè, a dhaoine!" 'S an sgeulaiche a b’fhèarr ‘s a b’aosda 'na thosd, nuair thogadh Ómar gaolach a ghuth an tiugh a’ chòmhlain aotruim. Ach bhiodh a mhac ri làithean maotha a dìge fhèin a’ tighinn daonnan air fùidhean is air nithean naomha, a’ déanamh tarcais air an t-saoghal, air foill na beatha is a faoincas.

Omar loved fun and high spirits, and the din of the gamblers in the café as they sat on their alfa rugs playing at chess and cards; shortening the long nights and reducing the hot burden of scorching days with riddles and the tale of Antar. Tambur and gaita were played, coffee from the Yemen consumed, amidst much singing and merriment.

There was to be seen the cheerful crowd, that admitted no oaf or miser into its company – chess-boards, banter, slender chanters, lambs on spits and meat freely to be had, vagrants and beggars calling: "Something for the love of God, men!", and the best and most venerable storyteller falling silent when dear Omar would raise his voice in the thick of the happy group. His son, however, in the tender days of his own youth would bring the talk round always to prophets and matters spiritual, in contempt of the world, of life’s fraudulence and vanity.
"An ótrach gu lèir an domhan?"
orsa Omar. "Is réóthadh t’fhoghlam. Smaointeann buidhe mar dhuilleach foghair, nach eil san t-saoghail no sa’ chollainn ach priosan bruid’ is cuibhreach trom dhuinn.

"Ged ràinig mi air radharc ceòthar is anail ghearr na h-aoise breòite, air tuisleachadh s’air tèarnadh-glòmainn; ged thàinig orm an aímsir leòinte bheir lùth gu sèapail don mhorchuid a dhùth fuath, gràidh, eagail, dòchais, tha cridhe gàrrlaid blàth na h-òige ’nam chom, ’nam smaointeann is ’nam chòmhridh.

"Cluinnibh, fhearaibh, m’ògmhac naomhal Èisdibh a bhreith ’s a bheachdan aosda. Chan eil a bheatha measg nan daoine, chan eil a shealladh air an t-saoghail; is fad’ o ait a shuidhe ’smaointeann, cha cheann-uidhe sliabh no raon daibh."

"Ge òg mi an làthair bhur n-aoise," ors’ Obáid gu ciùin, "chan aom mi le fanaid, no le buaireadh aòbhein na tha a-bhos’ na shruth a’ caochladh gu meallta diomhbuin, a’ tighinn le faoilte ’s a’ falbh gar n-antoil ’na chùis chaoinidh.
Tha mi nach ceannsaich an t-Aog e;
the lasting soul, it is as a light snowflake driven by the wind, but its chargers take wild leaps to the far rim of the suns and the worlds. What name shall I give it, my friends? Blossom of most delicate blossoms, which has no roots or growth in this world but on high in the holy garden.”

“My darling boy!” said Omar with pride, “Your voice is more melancholy and soothing than an echo in a desolate valley, when the faint bleating of lambs is heard in the evening as the shepherd wearily gathers them in.

“But the Master I follow is the One God of succour, who gives growth to the vine and to the bramblebush; the Governor of dawn and dusk, who commands the sun, saying “Shine forth!”, who draws the clouds from the darkness of the deep and then returns them to its womb, saying: “Pour out yonder, and leave splendid and gleaming the rockfaces of the peaks and the terrible wasteland. Refresh in your shade the weariness of a scorched soil. Fill out the golden ears of corn for my children.” He is generous, He is compassionate and kind, and it is not grief or tears that will earn Paradise from Him, or cold indifference to his radiance.
"Mas e naomhachd cùl ri aighear, ceusadh na colla, 's a bhith air sgaradh ris an t-saoghal a rinn ar n-Athair, carson a chuir e A chuid mhac ann, 's a thug E dhuinn fion ar fala, lòchran ar радhairc is, car tamaill, a' cholainn uallach òg gu aiteas?"

"Chuir E ann sinn gu ar tearbadh;" orsa Obàid "le milsead 's seirbhead gu ar deuchainn 's ar gne a dhearbadh. An stàilinn neo-foirfe chearbhach, mì an saoghal buait' a meirgeadh.

"Nì e an droch cruaidh a lùbadh no mhaolachadh, is smal is smùrach a chrhuinneachadh air a faobharr dìosail; ach an deagh stàilinn fhaghairt gu sùrdail le feum 's le deuchainnibh dìòtha, ga cur an gèiread 's gach aon ionnsaigh.

"Thèid steud-each na colla uaidhric o rian a dh'easbhuidh smachd is buaileadh, 's am marcaich a leig srian fhuasgailt le 'roidean dalla is le 'ruathar, a' ruith air cunnart is slor thuailge is sitrich nam miann 'na chluasan.

"Thus if saintliness is the shunning of gaiety, the crucifying of the body, and seceding from the world created by our Father, why has He placed His sons in its midst, and given us the wine of our blood, the lantern of our sight, and, for a spell, a vigorous young body quick to gladness?"

"He has placed us in the world to separate us out;" said Obayd "to test us with life's sweet and bitter and to let us prove our nature. Steel which is imperfect and blemished, the mad world will set to rust.

"It bends or blunts the bad metal, and causes stain and blot to collect on the dullened blade; but the good steel it eagerly tempers through hardship and close testing, increasing its sharpness with every encounter.

"The steed of the arrogant body will lurch out of control for lack of beating and discipline, and the rider who has given free rein to its blind dashes and violent boltings will find himself running a course of danger and evergreater misery, deafened by the neighings of desire."
“A bith cuidhte is a clocras!
Is crom mall mi, dall is dbìlìdh
anns na geimhlibh dualach slòrraidh
as cuid den bheatha a thug an Rìgh dhuinn.
Tha freumhach ann a cheanglas stòs mi
air leathad gaothach 's rìdhlean ìosal,
gam chumail ann ri uisg 's slòntan
's fo bhruthainn thuim na grèine fìochmhoir,
measg cealgairreachd is cèò na time,
ion is nach ruig mi air an Ìhhrinn
san t-Slòrraidheachd far an rìochdail flor i.

"Is fad-fhulangach ar n-Athair rlìch;
is iochdmhor È; ach dèanaibh tionndadh
o'r n-amaideas, o'r n-uaill, o'r sùgradh,
no thig latha a throm-sìghrsa oirbh,
is nithean nithean 'na bhur dùthaich
'bheir oirbh, ge neo-sgàthach lùimhhor,
cur bhur làmhan roimh bhur sùilean,
is mil a ràdh, seadh mil is sùcar,
ris a' Bhàs is sìbh ga iomndrain."

B'i sin an fhàistreachd a rinn t'athair,
's a thàinig air a cois ri d'latha.

Ràinn aoigh sinn is rinn sinn aiteas,
rinn sinn boch ris, rinn sinn aighear;
ràinn o thir gun ùir, gun chlachan,
's cha b'ann a chois, air each, air asail.
Dh'òbair sinn caora
le fèisd is faoiltie,
le bùidheachas is gàire
air a thàllibh.

Thàinig e taobh ruinn, is rinn e sùidhe an sìth;
shocraich e e fhèin againn, is rinn e fuireach fo dhòin.
A guest came to us and we rejoiced, we celebrated him and we made merry; he came from a land without soil or stones, he did not come on foot, on horseback or donkey. We sacrificed a sheep amidst feasting and exultation, with thankfulness and laughter, on his account. He came to our side, and sat down in peace; he made himself at home with us, and settled in security.

Ten years only, quick as a glimpse, passed by your father and you, from the day he recited your birth-song till the setting of his evening-sun when they said to you: “Long may you live! He has finally escaped from his enemy the world.”

He was humble, and there was no shadow in him. Your grandfather once told an enemy: “Though you should crawl back into your mother’s belly, I will squash you, you piece of dirt, squash you!” But your father said to a man who was harassing him: “Here is my cheek. Strike then, brother.”

Thirty years was his allotted time on earth. He was the smith of his own soul, one who looked into the mirror of his own heart, where hardly a shadow from the outside world was to be detected in the brightness, calm and without blemish, of its purity. Little did he care for house or plot of land, for herds or flocks, or golden treasure — his was an invisible wealth.

Those who were but flesh and blood called him “the spluttering candle”, but there was a flame in him which the dust-blinded eye could not perceive. There was a gentle light from him which they did not understand, although to you it was revealed.
THE TEARS OF SATAN

A wanderer in the desert – wracked by heat and thirst – found a runnel flowing from the mouth of a cave, shade and spring in one.

He crouched and took a taste of it, drinking it out of his cupped hand. His expectation fled in a surge of anger; it was bitter with the taste of sea-water.

He crept inside away from the sweltering heat, seeking the coolness of the cave. He found in the darkest recess a large stooped man sitting in solitude.

A large stooped man weeping and sighing, of lofty and noble countenance. His tears it was, being shed unceasingly, that formed the bitter streamlet of the cave.

That man was Satan, once an angel, who had rebelled and been banished, crying now for that which he had forfeited, the face of Allah, the sight of His Greatness.

The traveller went on his way, with no thought now of thirst or swelter, asking himself, as he walked, when creation and Creator would ever be one.

When would peaceful alliance be called between what had been made and That which fashioned it, and concord declared between that which exists and That which first put it in place?
Shorter was your lifesong, Mokhtär. Your roots yielded no blossom; the fruit of your sap never burst forth on a topmost branch; hardly did your being give warmth to wife or children, loved ones or family, such was the brevity and haste of your days.

A short while you spent at Omar's elbow, a short while in the fields and at the folds, a short while in the intimate company of your spouse, and you left, not willingly, on a journey that led you to the gaping maw of the mortar.

Limestone splintering in the heat, shrivelling of rocks in its dust-speckled rays; the pounded soil going up in puffs under the recalcitrant hooves of the mules.

The horned viper in every defile; the shimmering heat and buzzing of flies; a knifesharp ridge without cloud or breath of air, circled by the droning planes.

Nimble Death hides among the thickets, ready for ambush on the flank of every hill, keeping watch from the shade of the gloomy rivulet, on shadeless sunbright Saghouan.
As I rose early on a warm, dewy morning in the wee bay down below, there was a scarlet window in the sky, flushing flaming red. The melody of the early breeze awakened, sighing and whispering joyfully in the clumps of trees where quiet and peace had their accustomed place.

The sea sent its swell murmuring against a frowning shore. A little breeze sang sleepy music, a gentle wind of the sea. Faint sounded the purling of eddying water in the channel of the burn, beneath the branches of the hazel and the tressed birch, under the fresh green tops of the trees.

Out sounded the music of birds warbling in free, unchecked torrents. The bonny thrush with his melodious beak, perched on a slender branch. Chanting, cheer and coolness at the time when the...
flaming of the stars was drained to paleness, and the new day pouring ruddy in floods of fire over
the heathery hills.

Am I awake or sleeping? Was it real, what I saw in that glimpse, or was it a vision of weariness?
The high-pitched, shrill shouting of the camel-driver awoke me out of the grey, Paradise coolness of
the wee bay down below.
Eachdraidh nan Gàidheal! Sgeul nan lotan, buill' air buille, nach d'ràinig plosgadh a' chridhe, 's a liuthad cuisl' air fosgladh. Bu chuspair iad do shaighdean goirte, is b'amaiseach urchraichean a' Mhifhortain, bu chuimseach an såthadh is bu domhainn. B'i siud a' choille a rinn sono, a rinn lurach, 's a lion le 'h-osnaich gleann is eilean, còs is cnocan. B'ùrar a bàrr is bu dosrach; bu bhinn a h-eòin earraich is, as t-fhoghar, bu chrom a geugan fon cuid toradh. B'i siud a' choille a fhuir a sgrib doininn, fhuir a leagadh, fhuir a lomadh, fhuir beàrn air bheàrn le sèdeadh ospag, is an tuagh ga geurachadh mu 'coinneimh. Ach thad 's a dh'fhanas freumh a dheoghal brìogh na h-ùrach, 's a chur snodhaich suas fon rùisg, le druìchd is soineann, thig failleanan ùr o na stocaibh gu 'cur 'na tuiltean uaine molach air ais far a b' uaine i roimhe. A dh'aingeoin fògraighd, fhiadh is bochdainn, 's na thàinig uile à Là Chuilfhodhair, cha leagadh buan a fhuir ar doire.

A Dhùghail, chunnac t'athair 's do sheanair an daoine a' falbh ri luaths le leathad, agus san là bu chruaidhe greim ac' air an dìleab thar luach a theasaírgh an tuath on fom is o a ceathach. B'ann sa' chlais ghàbhaidh a bha 'n eatar ga fuadan leis fo làn a sreathan; ach bhris ri d'latha latha eile, a gheall còirbheas rathail leatha.

The history of the Gaels! The tale of wounds inflicted blow upon blow, which failed to stop the heartbeat in spite all the open veins. They have been the target for painful arrows, and well-aimed were the gunshots of Misfortune, unerring and deep the knife-lunges. Yon was the forest that brought happiness and beauty, and filled with its sighs glen and island, hollow and hillock. Fresh and luxuriant were its topmost branches; sweetly sounded its birds of Springtime, and in the Autumn heavy were its boughs under their fruit. Yon was the forest which was torn open by tempests, which was felled, was maimed, saw gap after gap blown by the breezes, and the axe all the while being whetted before it. But as long as one root survives to suck the juice of the earth and to put sap under the bark, with dew and with sunshine fresh saplings will sproout from the stumps, and in time restore floods of green bush where there was greenness before. In spite of expulsions, deer and poverty, and all that befell in the wake of Culloden, it is no permanent felling that our grove has suffered.

Dougall, your father and your grandfather saw their people fleeing fast down a brae, and in days of greatest hardship still holding on to that priceless inheritance which the common people rescued from the fogs of time. In a perilous hollow was the boat, being blown full sail into the wind; but in your day there broke a new day, bringing her the promise of good fortune and prosperity.
You yourself were as merry as a little kid, a boy on beach and hilltop, as light as a bird above its nest, your mind taken up with boats and shinty; an oar, a caman, a rod about a pool; a hare for running, a trout for swimming; tiller and sail and handline to go seeking provision of fish in sun and rain; a little chanter you had for sweet music, warbling under the nimble beats of your fingers. You knew neither doubt, nor fear, nor grief; there was not one single hidden thought in you, your face a clean bright mirror to your heart. A while you spent in merry playing; at the end of autumn with a sack over your shoulder, gathering nuts and brambles from the bush; Halloween - with the harvest in the yard - away you went masked with a false face, thigging apples and sweet things, disguised beyond all recognition with the old clothes from the bottom of the kist. Living in the sunshine of your world you grew older, until you were a strapping lad and grew acquainted with the trade of your folk - the trade of the solan coming down, the bird of the long watch falling in a rush - with their fruit-garden and their plot, the foaming, rough, white-broken sea.
THE FISHERMAN'S WIFE

I got no sleep all the night from dark to daylight, and I near crying; the wind so shrill, and I listening to it, and my own man and the skiff at sea.

I was praying for shielding and shelter from the dark gale for the brown skiff, between Arran and the bays of Cowal. Unlucky is he whose livelihood is a net and the sea.

Treacheryous witch of the wrinkled face, bonny enchantress of the hundreds of shifting shapes, womb from which arose both plain and rough mountains, wretched sea of the waves and the tides.
A’ MHUIR

The secret, deceitful, changing sea, with its lovely perils that draw the eyes and the desire of youth, bringing his longing to life with the wizardry of horizons and new coastlines. Weaver of spells, the trickster, full of secrets; ever knew, beyond knowing, full of wonder.

The welcoming smile of the sea, and the surly bristling of its awakening; the sudden wind out of grim airts, its squalls coming down like a hammer, its light breezes, its calm, its peacefulness; the long points of the skerries and the crouching rocks waiting in ambush for stem and seams.

A mighty headlong host mantled in driving spindrift, a great host, a host of horsemen, a tempest host of battle, quick cavalry in fierce raging ranks, white-maned, white-headed, steeds of strife.
A mighty sea, a great sea with the wind driving it on; a mighty host, a great host, a haughty host of
cavalry; white death from windward in his saddle roaring; grey steeds snorting terribly, the crests of
the waves coming onwards with a rush.

There is a headland beyond every headland; bays that we do not know and ports there are. There is
a boat under our feet to set sailing, the wind at her heels and the old sea round us. And there is
not, dear, on all the earth, full satisfying or a true journey’s end for the love of wandering in man.

A' BHEAN A' BRUIDHINN

Na falbh m'ulaidh, ach dèan fuireach air cladach t'eòrlais,
cois lèin a' phhuirt far an dèan sruth nan caisreag ceòl duit,
is e a' seinn gu fàirge troimh ghlile ghaímhe, 's an t-suain 'na chrònan,
- calltainn 's beithe gu dubhar leth ris - o chnuic is còsan.

Bi gu m'mhiann. Na gèill don fhiaibhrais chuaín, 's gur leòr dhuit
ar puirt, ar n-eileanan 's ar sgeirean, is mol an òbain
far an deachaidh do cheud eathar air sàil fo a' stèrnadh.
Dèan thusa fanachd. Na lean braise dhall na h-òige.

Teas gun fhois nan caladh coimheach, 's an dòmhladh shluigh ann',
na taighlean-solais nach fhac' thu roimhe, 's an leis a' sguabadh
nan eòrthir aineoil; 's cul bheann nach aithne dhuit, gu buadhach
teachd na gréine sear sna speuran dearag is uaine . . .
Ni sin taigh tosdach, cridhe goirt is sùil lèan smuairein,
is i ag amharc cathair fhalamh an fhir air chuantan.

THE WOMAN SPEAKS

Do not go, my darling. Bide on the shore that you know, by the tide-tip of the bay where the
eddying burn makes music for you, singing to the sea through the whiteness of sand, with sleep in
its crooning; hazel and birch for shade along it, as it comes from the knowes and the hollows.

Do what I ask. Do not give way to the ocean fever. Enough for you are our little bays, our
islands and our skerries, and the shingle of the creek where your first boat went to sea under your steering.

Do you but stay. Do not follow the blind urge of youth.

The heat without rest of the foreign harbours, and their thronging crowds; the lighthouses you never
saw before, their beams sweeping the unknown coasts. And from behind mountains that you do not
know the triumphant coming of the sun, red and green in the eastern sky. These things leave a
silent house, a sore heart and a mournful eye looking at the empty chair of the man who is at sea.
[AN DUINE AGUS AN COGADH]

Saoghal fa leth mac-an-duine,  
domhan beò leis fhéin gach urra;  
grian is dorchasdan na cruinne,  
siúilmhara 's grianstad san fhuil ann.  
Cia mheud glèn a th'ann ar cumadh?  
Chan innis sgeul, cha lorg cuimhn' iad,  
s athbhheirear iad uile cuideachd  
'san naoidhean, is a shinnre cruinn ann.  
Thèid e leò gu ceann a thuras,  
s bidh pàirt dheth beò an déidh a shiubhail.  
Chlìthear a ghnùis s e fhéin 'na uirigh;  
faodar gur e a ghuth a chluinnear  
is ogh' an ogha nach fhaic' e 'bruidhinn.  
Cùis-bhùirt sinn! Ged a thà na h-uile  
'nàn taighean-stòir lán fòtuis, usgar,  
dhileab ársaidh, shubhailc, dhubhailc,  
dh'than Clann Adhaimh fòs 'na struidhear,  
'ga sgapadh fhéin gu dall, faoin, fuilteach.

Peacadh a thruailleas ùir is adhar,  
duin' òg an salachar a' chatha  
'dol as ri reothairt bhrais a latha.

Brisear an teud -- stadar an ceilear --  
nuir bhunne, àird shein n iad.  
Sguirear s gun am port ach leitheach.

[MAN AND WAR]

A world apart is each son of man, a living world in himself is every person; an earth’s sunshine and darkness, tides and solstices in his blood. How many generations go to shape us? No story can tell and no memory trace them. Yet they are all reborn together in the little child, and his ancestry is united within him. Along with it he goes to the end of his journey, and a part of him will be alive after he is gone. His face will be seen when he himself is in his grave, and it may be that it is his voice that will be heard, when the grandson of the grandson whom he never saw is speaking. We are a fit subject for derision! Though all men are storehouses full of refuse, gems, ancient heirlooms, virtues and vices, Adam’s Clan still remains a wastrel, squandering itself blindly, foolishly, bloodily.

It is a crime that corrupts earth and air, a young man amid the filth of battle, perishing in the headlong springtide of his days.

The string is snapped, the singing stopped, when their music sounded its sweetest. They cease with the melody but half played.
It is a misdeed that blinds sun and stars, the bonniest and the strongest of us at mutual massacre, slaying and crucifying themselves. Youth — butcher and flock in one — being put to the test. The nations of the world on a foul night shattering one another’s bright lanterns.

These two saw the fighting of battle. May God never let anyone who is close to me see such a thing, aye, even a moment’s glimpse of it, even though it should be in sleep and in a dream.

In the sweltering heat Mokhtar moved his hand, to wipe away the sweat, to chase away a fly. The Gefreiter started, and let loose the shot.

There died the angry pride of regal Ahmed, the gentle meekness of Obayd and Omar’s living heart — they died a second time along with Mokhtar by the mortar.

There died the man who lay at his elbow. All his ancestry was blotted out. His children were murdered unborn.
There was reduced to dust the little world that grew within him in his green spring time, which was created, unknown to him, by everything around him; which he formed by his thoughts on all that he saw and heard, after understanding had laid its manly, difficult, noble burden on his shoulders. Two complex, priceless worlds were blotted out forever before they had attained the fulness of their being, and were swept from the sky by a chance blow.

Murder of the dead, and murder of the children never begotten — the end of two worlds.

THE END
ATMAN

Rinn thu goid 'nad éiginn.
Dh'fhéach thu breug gu faotainn as.
Dhit iad, chàin is chuip iad thu,
is chuir iad thu fo ghlas.

Bha 'm beul onorach a dhit thu
pladach, bideach 'sa ghnòis ghlas.
Bha Ceartas sreamshùileach o sgrùdadh
a leabhar cunntais, s iad sior phailt.

Ach am beul a dhearbhadh breugach,
tha e modhail, éibhinn, binn.
Fhuair mi eirmseachd is sgeàil uaith,
s guen e ro còlach air tràth bidh.

Thogte do shùil o'n obair
á cruth an tsaothail a dheoghal tlachd.
Mhol thu Debel Iussuf dhomh,
a cumadh is a dath.

Is aithne dhomh thu, Atmain,
bean do thaighde s do chóigneár òg,
do bhaidnein ghobhar is t'asail,
do ghoirtein seagail is do bhó.

Is aithne dhomh thu, Atmain.
Is fear thu s tha thu beò:
dhà nì nach eil am breitheamh,
s a chaill e 'chothrom gu bhith fòs.

Cha n-ainmig t'fhallus 'na do shùilean.
Is eòl duit sùgradh agus fearg.
Bhlais is bhlaigh thu 'n difir
cadar milis agus searbh.

Dh'fhéach thu gràin is bròn is gàire.
Dh'fhéach thu anradh agus grian.
Dh'fhairich thu a' bheatha,
is cha do mheath thu roimpe riamh.

Na'n robh thu beairteach, is do chaolán
garbh le caoile t'airein sgith,
cha bhiodh tu 'chuideachd air na miolan
an dubh phriosan Mhondoven.

Nuair gheibh breitheamh còir na chùirte
làn a shùla de mo dhruim,
thig mi a thaobh g'ad fhàilteachadh
trasd an tsràid ma chì mi thu.

Sidna Àissa, chaidh a cheusaadh
mar ri mèirtich air bàrr sléibh,
is b'e'n toibheum, Atmain, àicheadh
gur bràthair dhomh thu fhéin.
You thieved in your need. You tried a lie to get off. They condemned you, reviled you and whipped you, and they put you under lock and key.

The honourable mouth that condemned you was blubberish and tiny in the gray face. Justice was bleary-eyed from scrutinising its account-books, and they ever showing abundance.

But the mouth which was found lying, was mannerly, cheerful and melodious. I got sharp repartee and tales from it, though it was not too well acquainted with a meal.

Your eye would be raised from your work to draw pleasure from the shape of the world. You praised Jebel Yussuf to me, its fonn and its colour.

I know you, Atman, the woman of your house and your five young things, your little clump of goats and your ass, your plot of rye and your cow.

I know you, Atman. You are a man, and you are alive: two things the judge is not, and that he has lost his chance of being ever.

Your sweat is not seldom in your eyes. You know what sporting and anger are. You have tasted and tasted the difference between sweet and bitter.

You have tried hatred and grief and laughter. You have tried distress and sunshine. You have felt life, and never shrunk before it.

Had you been wealthy, and your gut thick with the leanness of your tired ploughmen, you would not be keeping company with the lice in the black prison of Mondovl.

When the decent judge of the court gets the fill of his eye of my back, I will come aside and cross the street to welcome you if I see you.

Sidna Īissa was crucified along with thieves on the top of a hill, and it would be a blasphemy, Atman, to deny that you are a brother of mine.
AN T-EÒLAS NACH CRUTHAICH

Fear a' bholeathneachaidh s an fhiosa, am fisrach balbh nach cruthaich ní, tearbar am maith s an t-olc leis air meidhean cothromach a chinn.

Seallaidh e le cinnt an cunntas, mar ionnsramaid le gràdaibh mion. Slat-thomhais e gun anam-fàis ann, nach toir ní ùr gu blàths is bith.

Cha n-eil òrd ann, gilb no clàrsach. Cha snaidh, cha ghràbail e, cha seinn. Cha n-eil sguabadh fuarghuth sin' ann. Cha n-eil grìosach ann no greim.

Cha n-eil gul ann, fuath no mallachd. Cha n-eil beannachd ann no aoibh. Cha mhaoiadh e dòrn, cha toir e dùlan. Cha tig as cgar sùgraidh caomh.

Eanchainn gheur gun neul, s i torrach mar thuagh sgoltaidh an làimh theun; beul a mheasas sarbh is milis, gun domblas ann, gun mhill leis fheidh.

Cluasan éisdeachd gach aon bhinnis, s nach gluais an spiorad as a thosd; sùilean sgrùdaidh gach aon sgéimhe an ceann céille marbh nach mol.

Mar bhean a phògas fir gu gràdhach, is nach àraich, 'na staid thruaigh, leanabh leatha fhein gu 'phògadh, b'e sin an T-Eòlas falamh, fuar.

1944

1 an fhiosa : a' ghliocais corr. 35
11 ann. : ann, rest
13 mallachd : mallachd, rest
15 dùlan : dubhslàn, rest
16 caomh : chaomh 20
18 theun : > threin 33
21 éisdeachd : éisdidh corr. 35
23 sgéimhe : sgéimhe, rest
26 àraich, ... thruaigh, : àraich ... thruaigh rest
THE KNOWLEDGE THAT DOES NOT CREATE

The man of judgement and knowledge, the dumb, well-informed man who does not create anything, good and bad are segregated by him on the just scales of his head.

He shows with precision his recording, like an instrument with delicate degrees. He is a measuring rod without any soul-of-growth in him. He will bring no new thing to warmth and being.

There is no hammer or chisel or harp in him. He will not carve or engrave or sing. There is no sweeping of tempest’s cold voice in him. There is no hot ember in him or grip.

There is no weeping in him, or hatred or cursing. There is no blessing in him or rejoicing. He will not brandish his fist or make defiance. No kind whisper of sweethearting will come from him.

A keen, unclouded brain, as fruitful as a cleaving axe in a strong hand; mouth which appraises bitter and sweet, without any gall or honey in it of its own.

Ears that listen to all melodiousness, but which do not move the spirit out of its silence. Eyes which scrutinise all beauty, set in a dead head, full of sense, that praises not.

As a woman who kisses men fondly, but who will not rear, in her sad state, a child of her own to kiss, such is cold, empty knowledge.

1 man who : one who C

22 *21 ; C
CÒMHRADH AN ALLDAIN

Na h-aibhnichean móra,
ge mórail, mall, leathann iad,
Tàimis is Tiobar
s an Nil, ge aod’ a seanachas -
na chunnaic mi ’nam thurus
de shruthan móra s meadhonach,
Hamlz agus Harrais
is Safsaf Sgiogda eatorra;
Seabhs is Buidhima
is Picentino eabarach,
Meidearda Chuirimiri,
Forni, Ino s Sele leo,
Remel fo Chonstantina
is Líri a dhearg ar fleasgaichean -
ma’s briagh iad, is sheudar daibh
gèilleadh do’n Alld Bheithe sin.
Ge cian iad no ainmeil,
is balbhain gun cheileir iad.

Guthan is cluig
aig mo shruthan mu na clachan dhomh,
cruitean is fuinn,
luinneagan labhar ann;
tiompain is clàrsaichean,
gàireachdaich is cagarsaich,
sùgradh is deasbud,
feadain gu farumach.

Crònan sgeap mar dhuis
is ceòl brugha troimh an rainich uaith;
cuairteagan is dannsadh,
canntaireachd is caithreaman.
Fàilte leis a’ bhruthach
is Cumha am beul a’ chladaich ann;
glaine, gile, binneas,
Sruth glinne is ghlacagan.

An linnthean a shàmhchair
is sgàth an do’n chràobh bheithe e,
an t-hilteagan achrannach,
slatagach, meanganach.
Bidh a sgàile thar a bhile,
sam bricein ’ga fhalach ann;
bidh a faileas air ’uachdar
’na lion duathair is gathannan,
s is comhcheòl a cheòlain
còmhradh na h-ainnire.

Chan eil guth aig daoine
o chaoineadh gu cainnt fhanaideach,
eadar ciùine s mearan,
beannachadh is mallachadh,
comhairle no searmoin, 
eirmseachd is sgaiteachas, 
nach cluinneh leis na tuilm 
feadh nam bulbhag s nan caiseal uadh.

Cluinneh iognadh s mithatlachd, 
miodal min is masgull ann; 
'n ám tachairt ris na creagan 
bidh gearnach is talach ann; 
brosnachadh is cronachadh, 
moladh is achhasan - 
mo shruthan briaithreach, bruidhneach, 
tha guidhe is atach ann.

Tha dàin is duain is úrnuighean, 
sgeòil-rùin agus naigeachdan; 
tha salmaireachd is aoradh, 
tha aoirean is magail ann, 
s an ceòl a chual a mac Laériteis 
là Céitein 'ga ghabhail ann.

Mu Shamhainn uair bidh donnalaich, 
ochanach is casaid ann, 
ceumadh is taolrich 
neas a' raillit a' faicheachd ann.

Là Lhànaidh bidh snaith fhaim aige 
neas duanaigh aig balachan.

Cha n-eil eun sléibh no coille 
nach tug a ghoir 'na leasain uadh, 
s e tiamhaidh, luaineach, ioraltach - 
tric mar ghairm fheadagan.

Sann aige 'air tús 
a dh'ionnsaich iad an gearan ac', 
a dh'ùirich ceòl nan Cruimeineach 
le cuir agus breabadaich, 
Taorluath is Siubhal 
a' sruthadh á tuill leadarra.

Cantail is cruitearchadh, 
ruitheannan ceilearchadh, 
fuin stàit il mar chèud manach 
an Laidionn 'seinn an Fheasgarain.

Saltairt is sitrich 
'n ám lighe neas eachrachd ann; 
rothan troma s drumaichean 
s na tuitean a' greasad air; 
canain air cabhsairean 
an stealraich gach eas' aige.

Cha teirig caintnt no duain dha 
s a' ghrian s an cuan a' solar dha, 
le 'n àlach neòl a' cumail fileantachd 
am filidheachd a choilleagan - 
na neòl beaga is na baidealan 
le frasan a' cur dheoch thuigie;

52 caiseal : caisil P2 C (corr. 33)
74 a ghoir : an goir 35
93 teirig : teirinn 20b P2 corr. 20a 35
The great rivers, though they are majestic, broad and slow; Thames and Tiber, and the Nile, though aged be its history; and all that I saw on my journey of great and middling streams, Hamiz and Harrash and Safsaf of Skikda among them; Seybouse and Budjima and the muddy Picentino; the Medjerda of Kroumiria, the Fomi, Imo and Sele along with them; the Rhummel under Constantine, and the Liri that our youths reddened - although they be fine, they must yield to yon Alld Beithe; though they be far-off or namely, they are dumb creatures without melody.

Voices and bells my wee burn makes round the stones for me; small harps and tunes and loud ditties in it; tympans and great harps, laughing and whispering; sweethearting and disputing, chanters sounding out. A beehive humming like the drones of pipes, and fairy-knowe music it sends out through the bracken. Eddying and dancing, canntaireachd and bold war-note sounding. It sounds a Welcome down the brae, and a Lament at the lip of the tide; pureness, whiteness and melody, stream of the glen and the little hollows.
In the pools of its tranquillity it is a mirror for the birch-tree, the lovely darling of the intricate twigs and branches. Her shadow lies across its brink, and the little trout hides himself in it; her reflection is on its surface, a net of shade and sunbeams, and the speech of the maiden sounds in harmony with its music.

There is no tone of voice among men from lamentation to derision, between placidity and frenzy, cursing and blessing, counselling or preaching or cutting repartee, that the knowes do not hear from it among its boulders and lynns.

Wonder and displeasure, smooth fawning and flattery are heard in it, and when it comes against the rocks it has gurning and complaining in it. Encouraging and blaming, praising and reproving - my wordy, talkative wee burn, it has supplication and beseeching in it. There are songs and lays and prayers, secret tales and newsbearing; there are psalmody and worshipping, satires and mockery in it; and the music that Laertes' son heard is sung in it on May days. About Halloween there will be howling and lamentation and accusing in it, pacing and clanging like an army marching in it. And on Lugh's day it will have a thread of sound like a boy singing a little song.

There is no bird of the wood or hill that did not learn its cry in lessons from it, so melancholy, wandering and cunning it is, often like the call of plovers. It was from it in the beginning that they learned their complaining, which the music of the MacCrimmons renewed with cadences and prancing, Taorluath and Siubhal streaming from clangorous chanter holes. Canticles and crowdering, rippling runs of melody, stately tunes like a hundred monks in Latin chanting Vespers. Trampling and neighing in time of flood like cavalry; heavy wheels and drums when the spates hurry it on; cannons on causeys in the spouting of its every waterfall.

Speech and songs will never fail it while the sun and the ocean provide for it, with their brood of clouds keeping fluency in the poesy of its lays; the little clouds and the stormy battlement clouds sending drinks to it with showers; the high turreted snow clouds, the black awful thunder clouds, the swift Spring clouds from the north-west, the dark heavy clouds of Autumn, the clouds of day-time and of night-time giving without stinting tunefulness to it. The smirr, the mist and the soft rain ply it with instruction and songs unceasingly; every hidden runnel of water (the tiny veins of the moorland are they); every rill and channel send blood and cheer to it. The heather shaking down the dew when the early morning wind awakens, the bracken and the rushes rocking in the breeze, and the fresh plants of the boglands play the landlord with tiny cups for it.

An eternal song descending every season from the corries, at times with a drowsy droning, at times with a tempestuous roaring; crying out and questioning, and answering itself in its conversing: crooning down to the shore, coaxing and enticing; returning to the dark sea from its cèilidh with the moorlands, the little living stream that I love better than all the grand silent rivers.
And I Was Left To Smell The Leaves (Italian proverb)

My young apple tree at the end of the garden, that I tended all year long in hope; early and evening my eye would be on it, expecting that its crop would be for me.

While I was a little space away from it, savouring the scent of the leafage and the fruit on the low branches, up to it went a man without scruple, and stripped my fine apple tree on me.

The green apple tree that I kept untouched, among whose boughs my hand never went to pluck an apple, another one stripped it top and bottom, and the scent alone was left as my share of it.
AT THE QUAYSIDE

The buyers peer with hands in pockets, black against the break of day, and riege their wits for jests to cheapen our siller won from waters grey.
Down from the quay they climb to finger what our brown nets swept away, the hard-won harvest we have wrestled from sea and night, from wind and spray.

What do they know, or any others, of how the midnight wind commands, and herds the glimmering crests to leeward to break in ranks on hidden strands, or how dawn shows the torn horizon to staring eyes or frozen hands?
Only the night sea, wudd with winter, can give them the mind that understands.

We weather foreland after foreland, and string the bow of every bight, where lamps in homes by windless harbours shine warm and yellow through the night. We face, unshielded, wind and water, and black to leeward as we fight we glimpse the crouching, thundering forelands that bare their fangs there, foaming white.

Hour and hour the hammering motor echoes through the hold below; hour and hour the restless forefoot soars, then belts the black to snow; the dark sea, wounded, phosphorescent, lashes, with icy fire aglow, the eyes that read it, watching forward the sliding waters as we go.

Our wives at home are waking with us. Listening to the gale they lie. We listen to its high crests hissing, and mark the neighbour's light outbye, red now, green now, lifting, sinking, while, unquiet, our steersman's eye traces the stays to where the masthead staggers its arc across the sky.

And lights on one bright star beyond it, above a cloud rim winking plain like a beacon on a rampart, and of a sudden sees it wane. Down the wind a grey wall marches, towering; across us leap again the streaming spindrift and the fury, the squall, the blindness and the rain.
And if Fortune chances on us
in the dark, and swings our keel
into the airt where shoals are swimming,
we mark them, shoot and round them wheel.
Then a foot for purchase on the gunnel,
numb hands that have lost their feel,
the ebb tide straining, the steep seas snatching
a backrope like a rod of steel.

The buyers outlined on the quayside
ganting and peering in a line,
the half-awakened early risers
that wonder if the night was fine,
though they can look at dark to seaward,
and see far out our torches shine,
what can they know of our dim battles
round Pladda, Arran and Loch Fyne?

49 siller: silver 35 P
57 strands: strands; 37
wudd: mad 37 P?
bight: bight 35
12 : unshielded with the gale we battle corr. 35
21 there, foaming: there foaming P?
22 restless: plunging 37
30 crests: crest P?
38 steersman: steerman B (corr. 30)
39 and of a sudden sees: and, of a sudden, sees P?
45 marches: marches 37
49 chances on: travels with corr. 35
50 in: through corr. 35
52 shoot and: shoot, and 37
53 Then a: Then, a 35 37 P?
55 the steep seas: a steep sea 37 the steep sea P?
57 buyers outlined... quayside: buyers, outlined... quayside, 35 buyers standing... quayside, P?
63 dim: > black 35
64 Pladda: > Plada 30
PRÍOSAN DHA FHÉIN AN DUINE?

Seall an t-amhsan clis ’na shaighid
o ’fhaire fo na nebhl,
s an t-eun a’ luasgan air a shlataig,
s e ’cur a bhith air fad ’na cheòl.
Their gnlomha is guth gach creutair ruinn,
ach éisdeachd riu air chòir:
"Cha chuir ceann is cridh’ air iomrall thu.
Bi iomlan is bi beò".

Có air bith a chruthaich sinn,
cha d’rinn E ’n cumadh ceàrr,
mar thig air tús gach duine
air bh eag uireabhuidh o ’làimh.
A bheil ní nach biodh air chomas dha
ach cothrom a thoirt dhà,
is a bhuaadh anile cómhla ann
a’ còrdadh ’nan comhfàs?

Ach nè tric de ’bhuadhanna
bròg chuagach fo ’shàil,
cuid dhiubh fo’n chuíp, gun srian riu,
s an dà thrian dhiubh ’nan tâmh.
Bidh an cridhe ’na thòran aimhreiteach,
s an ceann aige ’na thràill,
no bidh an corp ’na phriosanach
s an inntinn air ’na geàrd.

Ceann is cridhe, teine s coinneal
a thoirt soluis dhuinn is blàiths,
an corp treun s an t-anam maothsiathach
air aoiheachd ann car tràth,
fhuaire sinn, is ò dhà chois a shiubhal
ge ceart cunbhalach air lár,
is ò dhà shòil a shealladh suas uaith,
no ’ruith cuairt nan ceithir àird.

An cridhe fialaidh, misneachail,
na bu chiomach e am fròig.
‘Uraich cridh’ an tsaoghail leis –
cuir mu sgoil e – cuir gu stròdh.
Biodh do dhruim s do shealladh dòreach,
agus t’inntinn geur gun cheò.
Lean gach beò a th’ann mar thiomnadh,
is bi iomlan is bi beò.

Is seall an troichshluagh dàicheil, rianail,
nach robh riabhach a chlebhbeò,
is beachdan chàich ’nan gàradh-criche dhaibh
’gan crionadh ann an crò.
Nigh snídhe mall an abhaistich
an sgarraidh as an clò,
is thug e breacan ùr an nàduir
gus a’ ghnàthach ghlas fadheòidh.
Ma's seabhag bhras no smeòrach thu,
min no ròmach clò do ghnè,
na dèan a' Chruitheachd a nàrachadh
le nàir' á crìdhe s' à crè.
Mar thaing do'n Tì chuir déò annad,
ma tha do dhòigh 'na Chreud,
no mar fhialachd do d'chomhdhaoine,
bi bòd is bi thu fhéin.

1944

MAN HIS OWN PRISON?

See the sudden gannet come as an arrow from his watching under the clouds, and the bird rocking on
its branch, putting all its being into its music. The actions and voices of every creature say to us, if
we would but listen to them rightly: "Head and heart will not lead you astray. Be complete, and be
alive."

Whoever it was who created us, His modelling was not at fault, to judge from how every man comes
at first with few defects from His hand. Is there anything that would not be within man's powers,
were but the chance given him, with all his qualities together harmonising in a united growth?

But often he makes of his qualities a lopsided shoe under his heel; some of them, unbridled, under the
whip, and two thirds of them in idleness. The heart may be a turbulent tyrant, with the head under it,
its thrall; or the body may be a prisoner, with the intellect standing over it on guard.

Head and heart, fire and candle, to give us light and warmth; the strong body, and the soul with its
delicate wings a guest in it for a while - we have that, and two feet to travel right
firmly on the ground; with two eyes to look up from it, or to run the circle of the four airts.

The generous, spirited heart, let it not crouch, a prisoner, in a nook. Freshen the heart of the world
with it. Unleash it. Be spendthrift with it. Let your back and your gaze be straight, and your mind
keen and unmisted. Follow the witness of every living thing there is, and be complete and be alive.

And see the plausible, orderly dwarf-people, who were never but half living, with the opinions of
others as a march-dyke round them, wasting them away in a pen. The slow seeping of the habitual
has washed the scarlet out of their cloth, and reduced the fresh tartan of their natures to the gray
customary at length.

Whether you are a headlong hawk or a thrush, whether the stuff of your nature be smooth or rough,
do not put Creation to shame by being ashamed of heart and body. In thankfulness to the One who
put breath in you (if your trust is in His Creed), or in generosity to your fellow men, be alive and be
yourself.

5  it was who : it is has  A J
24-25 whether the ... rough : smooth or shaggy the stuff of your character  A J
Chì mi ré geàrd na h-oidhche
dréòs air chrith 'na fhroidhneas thall air faire,
a' clapail le a sgiathaibh,
a' sgapadh s a' cìaradh rionnagan na h-àrd' ud.

Shaoileadh tu gu'n cluinnte,
ge cian, o 'bhuillsgein ochanaich no caoineadh,
ràn corruiich no gàir fuatha,
comhart chon cuthaich uaidh no ulfhait fhaoilchon;
gu'n ruigeadh drannad an fhòirneirt
o'n fhùrneis òmair iomall fhéin an tsaoghail.
Ach siud a' dol an leud e
ri oir an speur an tosachd ols is aognaidh.

C'ainm an nochd a th' orra,
nan sràidean bochda anns an sebird gach uinneag
a lasraichean s a deatach,
a sradagan is sgreadail a luchd thuinidh,
is taigh air thaigh 'ga reubadh,
am broinn a chéile am brùchadh toit' a' tuiteam?
Is có an nochd tha 'g atach
am Bàs a theachd gu grad 'nan cainntibh uile,
no a' spàirm measg chlach is shàilthean
air bhàinidh a' gairm air cobhair, is nach cluinnear?
Có an nochd a phàigheas
seann chìs abhaisteach na fala cumant?

Uair dearg mar lod na h-àraich,
uair bàn mar ghile thràight' an eagail éiltigh,
a' dìreachd s uair a' teàrnadh,
a' sìneadh le sitheadh árd s a' call a mheudachd;
a' fànnachadh car aitil,
s ag at mar anail dhiabhail air dhéinead,
an t-Olc 'na chridhe s 'na chúisle,
chì mi 'na bhùillean a' sloladh s a' leum e.
Tha 'n dreòs 'na oilt air fàire,
'na fhàinne ròis is òir am bun nan speuran,
a' breugnachadh s ag àicheadh
le 'shoillse sèimhe àsraidh àrd nan rèultan.

1945
BIZERTA

I see during the night guard a blaze flickering, fringing the skyline over yonder, clapping with its wings and scattering and dimming the stars of that airt.

You would think that there would be heard from its midst, though far away, wailing and lamentation, the roar of rage and the yell of hate, the barking of dogs from it or the howling of wolves, that the snarl of violence would reach from yon amber furnace the very edge of the world. But yonder it spreads along the rim of the sky in evil, ghastly silence.

What are their names to-night, the poor streets where every window spews its flame and smoke, its sparks and the screaming of its inmates; while house upon house is rent and caves in in a gust of smoke? And who to-night are beseeching death to come quickly in all their languages, or are struggling among stones and beams, crying in frenzy for help, and are not heard? Who to-night is paying the old accustomed tax of common blood?

Now red like a battlefield puddle, now pale like the drained whiteness of foul fear, climbing and sinking, reaching and darting up and shrinking in size, growing faint for a moment and swelling like the breath of a devil in intensity, I see Evil as a pulse and a heart, declining then leaping in throbs. The blaze, a horror on the skyline, a ring of rose and gold at the foot of the sky, belies and denies with its light the ancient tranquillity of the stars.

AN LAGAN

Có chunnaic an lagan tosdach,
   s a' ghrian mochthrath air a shlios,
ag òradh cromadh réidh an ruighe,
nach do chaill a chridhe ris?

Có chunnaic riamb an lagan dlomhair,
   s a dhiùltadh a bhith gèith is fann,
   ged bu dian, dlùth an Fhiann air;
   'na Dhiarmaid le a Chràinne ann?

Có chunnaic an lagan uaine,
   s e suainte 'na choille chéir,
   nach d'fhàg, san tionsndadh uith, fo'n bharrach
   roinn de 'anam as a dhéidh?

Cha n-eil gaoir no gul san lagan,
cha n-eil falachd ann no foilò;
sgiath dhomhs' e roimh gach dochar,
nach leig olc 'nam thaic a chaoidh.

Cha n-fhaicear múth no gràin san lagan;
cha n-fhaicear cùrradh ann no bròn;
cha tig fuath no leònadh faisg air;
is cosrigt' ann gach gasan feóir.

* * * * *
B'fhior dhomh moladh bras a' bhalaich
a sheinn na facail sin 'nam cheann;
b'fhior dhomh, ged tha 'mhuire cho farson
eadar mi s an lagan thall.

Tha mi an diugh taobh mara céine
fo speur nach tha a ghrian sgadh,
ag éideachd drumaireachd air làmhaich,
là fo gheasaibh, bliath, gun deò.

Bu mhinig ràmhan strè 'gad riastadh,
a mhuir ghríanach nam baile geal,
luingeas Argois is na Crèité
is trìreimich na Gréig' o shean.

Shalaich cabhlaichean na Ròimhe
is mòr-chuis Chàirtaisd cop do stuadh
le fuil, is cuirp is clàran loisgte,
le sannt, le mort, le geilt s le fuath.

Cà bheil tuinn uain' as glaine cobhar?
Ach bu chorrach, luath an sith
eadar Bheanas is Ràgùsa
is spùinneadaran borb Aildr.

Ge b'e córsa air am bris iad,
is truaillte an gile fhuar
an diugh fhéin, is iad le drillsein
a' cur gu th nam marbh truagh.

Tha fuil sa' ghainmhich air am bris iad,
tha fuil 's gach alld a thig 'nan ceann;
thà grís san oidhche dhiubh ri lasair
bhàiltean air chrìth fo chlaidheamh dàll.

Siud a' mhuir a thà cho farson,
is strìoch fala cùl gach stuaigh;
siud na bliadhnachan air bhàinidh,
is iad bodhar le ràn nan canan buan.

Tha toirm nan stuadh s nam bliadhna eadar
mi fhéin is fear a' mholaith thall.
'Nan déidh am faighear leam san lagan
na dh'fhàg mi uair de m'anam ann?

(1937 +) 1945

8 Diarmaid : Diarmad rest
23 'mhuir : a' mhuir rest
30 a mhùir : mhùir rest
32 na Gréig' : nan Greugach > na Gréige 35 na Gréige A
34 's le : is rest
49 thà : tha rest
THE HOLLOW

Who saw the silent hollow, with the early sun upon its flank, gilding the smooth sweep of the lower slope, that did not lose his heart as he looked?

Who ever saw the secret hollow, and would refuse to be tired and faint—though close and eager the pursuing Fiann to him—a Diarmid with his Grainne there?

Who saw the green hollow, happed in its dark woodland, that did not leave under the birch tops, as he turned away, a part of his soul behind him?

There is no outcry or weeping in the hollow, there is no feud in it or treachery; it is a shield to me against all harm, which will never let ill come near me.

Envy or hatred are not seen in the hollow, hurting or grief are not seen in it, enmity or wounding will not come near it, consecrated is each stalk of grass in it.

* * * * *

11 True was the impetuous boy’s praise, that sang those words in my head; true it was, although the sea is so wide between me and the hollow beyond it.

I am to-day beside a far-off sea, under a sky whose sun never sees a lowering cloud, listening to the drumming of our gunfire, on a charmed day, warm and breathless.

15 Often were you torn by oars of strife, sunny sea of the white towns, the ships of Argos and Crete and the triremes of Greece long ago.

The fleets of Rome and the arrogance of Carthage defiled the foam of your billows with blood, and corpses and charred timbers, with greed, and murder, and panic and hatred.

Where are there green waves of purer foam? But unstable and transitory was their peace between Venice and Ragusa and the fierce rievers of Algiers.

21 Whatever be the coast they break on, their chill whiteness is corrupted even to-day, as, sparkling, they send the pitiful dead to the land.

There is blood on the sand on which they break, there is blood in each stream that flows into them; they shine dull red in the night from the glare of cities rocking beneath a blind sword.

There is the sea that is so wide, with a streak of blood at the back of every billow; there are the frenzied years, deaf with the roar of the eternal cannon.

27 The thunder of the billows and the years is between me and the one, beyond them, who made the praise. After them will I find in the hollow that part of my soul which I once left there?

15 you torn by oars of strife: the oars of strife tearing you A

17, 25, 27 billows: waves all

23 flows into: mingle with A

27 one ... praise: one who made the praise, beyond them all
BEINN IS MACHAIR

Feuch, na dromannan clachach,
faur, fosgailte, frasach,
a bheir do’n fhradharc le farsuingeachd ròic,
a’ slòr òicheadh nan machair;
is nam mìltean ri farpuis,
a’ sìreadh dìon agus smachd anns a’ chòrd.

Beachdaich sineadh nam bruthach,
lom, fìrinneach, duineil,
eadar fàrce neochumhang s na neòil.
Nach feàrr an seasmhacht na’n sonas,
agus sgean nan ospag
na saoghal seasgar ’ga chosnadh air lòn?

Air an réidhlean gun mhùthadh,
fàr an gèillear do’n ùine
fo throm speuran gun brachadh deò;
fàr a bheil seangain na h-ùrach,
is iad dìchiolach dùmhail
’nam mìltean an smùrach gach còis.

Troimh a chèile an utadh,
ag cur réis gun cheann-uidhe,
driop gun chèill ac’ a thrusadh an còrr;
is sgaothan sheillean nach cunntar
a’ solar sna flùiribh,
agus suaircneasachd dhùsail ’nan ceòl.

Sud am baile ’na shiùrsaich,
is corp is anam ’nan cùnnradh
feadh nan sàrshràid s nan cùil ann gach lò;
is fo ’chomhair àrd lurach,
ghan chomunn nam mullach,
gach aon fo choron geal chuithe ’na dìgh.

Tha othail is sùrd ann
an deidh shocharthan s cùinnidh,
s an sodal làn umhlachd do’n phriòs
ag amharc o’n ùpraid
ri àrdan nan stùcan,
ri tosd nan coire s ri dubhshlàn nan sgùrr.

An t-alld is luath labhar brasbhinn
leis na bruthaichean cosa,
ò an réidhlean a thachdadh fadheòidh;
is théid an luaths dheth s a’ mhìsneach
gu gruaim bhodaich chrioplach,
ged a b’uallach le slòis e s e òg.

Théid a cheilearan saora
neoch-eismeileach aobhach
’nan sruth eabair feadh raointean is fèdir;
théid a bhagartaich ghaisgich
gu mion chagarsaich chaillich,
no gu talach beag smachdaichte fòil.
Behold, the stony ridges, cold, exposed and rainswept, that regale the eye like a banquet spread, forever disowning the plains and the competing thousands who seek refuge and discipline in the pen.

Consider the stretch of the braes, bare, essential, heroic, between a boundless horizon and the clouds. Is their permanence not better than happiness, and the knife-thrusts of squalls to a cosy life earned by meadows?

On the unchanging plain, where all yields to time under heavy suffocating skies, where the ants of the earth go in assiduous congestion, in their thousands in the dust of every hollow.

Barging through one another, running a race without goal, in a crazy rush to hoard up their surplus; while swarms of bees too numerous to count pick provision from flowers, their music casting spells of drowsiness.

There’s the city, that whore, body and soul sold daily as commodities in its thoroughfares and backalleys, and behind it high and lovely the pure company of the summits, each one a virgin crowned in white wreathes.

There is jostling and flurry after profits and cash, while fawning obeisance to arrogant pride looks up from the uproar to the proud heights of the peaks, to the silence of the corries and the pinnacles’ challenge.

The fast, loud, free-singing burn rushing down the steep braes is eventually smothered by the plain, and its energy and smeddum turn to an old cripple’s gloom, though jauntily it raced down slopes in its youth.

Its unchecked warblings, assertive and joyous, become a thick miry current through fields and grass; and its loud martial bluster an old woman’s feeble whispers, or a timid resigned plaintive murmur.

Now a muted brown sluggard, blind and burrowing deep, full of chasms, danger and deceit, its grease-thick whirlpools, polluted and putrid, drink up the nauseous dregs of the people.

Good folk of the world, were it not for the clamour of those whose mettle is of the windswept hills and the peaks, were it not for the streek of blade-sharp steel in your mien, you would be as enslaved as the oppressed herd Moses hurried from the pen.
Yonder is a little bark, with the grievous burden of an eternal wind on her worn sails, climbing an ocean that has no coast, alone within the distant circle of the horizon, with a confusion of weeping and laughter aboard her.

Grief, Joy, Age and Youth, Eminent and Of-No-Account are hauling at the everlasting gear that trims her canvas; Folly and Wisdom, Saint and Sinner take her helm in turn, and all obey them.

Under a sky now sunny, now lowering – trough and crest – calm and tempest – she goes on to a horizon that neither stem nor eye yet overlept, and her track and her tumult of voices die astern of her.

There she goes with a curve on her sails, putting each sheet to the test, an ancient ship with bustle and cheer and suffering aboard her; a horizon full of secrets unrevealed under her bowsprit head, and the foam of her wake closing and losing itself in the great sea astern.
IS E CRÌOCH ÀRAIDH

Cha n-eil do shàsachadh a-bhos;
's e dorus taigh do ghràidh an uaigh.
Cha n-eil an saoghal truagh nam beò
ach fàsach fògraith is ionraill chruidh.

Is e tha 'n sgeul ar là gu léir
roimhradh bu chòr a leum ri luaths.
Cha n-fhoillsichear do shùil fo'n ghréin
smior is meud an Leabhair Bhuain.

Is deuchainn gheàrr ar beatha bhochd,
laimrig an aiseig null gu'r tìr.
A bhos tha 'n t-òlc s na slòntan borb,
ach thall tha foirfeachd agus sìth.

A mhòladh sin do'n Uile-ghlic,
do'n Dia tha biotbhuan, maith is treun,
a las a' ghrian s na reultan òir
os cionn gleann a' bhròin s nan deur.

A mhòladh do Aoghaire nan neul,
a their ris a' Chéitein "Gabh mu thuath";
Buachail an tsamhraidh measg nan crann,
foghair is geamhraidh d'A chloinn thuraigh.

A thulgas an seòl-mara mall
bhos is thall air òir an fhuinne;
is Dorsair tìr nan gaoth, s d'an réir
bheir leum is laighe air na tuinn.

A sgeadaicheas a' choille lom,
s a bheir a trusgan donn do'n òir;
a roinneas gàire oirnn is deòir,
breith, bás, breòiteachd, slàint' is lùths.

A thòr dhuinn òige, fàs is aois,
a shnaidh an saoghal is a sgiamh;
a dh'fhosgail romhainn muir is tìr,
am magh s cruth miorganlaicheach nan slabh.

A thòr ar Bith dhuinn iomadh-fhìil't,
inntinn is colainn, ceann is làmh,
s a thug e dhuinn gu 'mhòladh leis,
s cha n-ann 'na oidhch' a' meath roimh'n là.

Gabh gu deònach ri 'lagh glic.
Siubhail A shlighe ceum air cheum.
Lean cumadh siòrruaidh a' Phuirt Mhòir
a rinn E dhuinn mar cheòl ar gnè.

Cluich an t-Úrlar mall air tòis,
s gach roinn 'na dhéidh le lùths 'nad chuir,
air Crùnluath bras do là cuir ceann,
till air an Úrlar mhall is sguir.
An Dha sin as Athair leat,
'na sheirc i chruthaich sinn gu lèir,
nach binn am moladh Dhà o 'chloinn,
a dìmeas mu na rinn E fhein?

Is e A smuain an t-anam maoth,
's e 'anail chaomh a' bheatha bhilath.
Dèan Dà moladh sònà, fior.
Meal is mol sàr ghnìomhaì A lòmh.

1945

MAN'S CHIEF END

Your satisfaction is not to be had in this life; the door to the house that you love is the grave. The wretched world of the living is but a wilderness of exile and hard wandering.

The tale of all our days is but a foreword to be quickly passed over. The pith and bulk of the Eternal Book is revealed to no eye under the sun.

Our poor life is but a short trial, the jetty of the ferry across to our land. On this side are evil and the savage storms; beyond are perfection and peace.

Praise for it be to the All-wise, to the God who is eternal, good and powerful, who lit the sun and the golden stars above the vale of grief and tears.

Praise for it to the Shepherd of the clouds, who says to the Maytime "Go northwards"; to the Herdsman of summer among the trees, of autumn and winter for his wretched children.

Who rocks the slow tide hither and thither on the edge of the land; who is Doorkeeper of the tower of the winds, and by them makes the waves leap and lie down.

Who clothes the bare woodland, and gives its brown raiment to the soil. Who shares out laughter and tears to us, birth, death, sickliness, health and vigour.

Who devised youth, and growth and age for us. Who carved the world and its beauty. Who opened sea and land before us, the plain and the wondrous shapes of the hills.

Who devised our being for us so manifold, mind and body, heart and hand, and gave it to us to praise Him with it, and not as a night waning before the day.

Accept His wise law willingly. Travel His path step by step. Follow the eternal composition of the Pibroch He made for us as the music of our nature.

Play first the slow Urlar, and after it each part with vigour in your cadences. Complete the headlong Crunluath of your days, return to the slow Urlar and cease.

That God whom you esteem Father, who created us all in His affection, is it not sweet praise for Him from His children, their contempt for what He Himself fashioned?

The delicate soul is His thought; warm life is His dear breath. Make a true and happy praise for Him. Enjoy and praise the excellent work of His hands.
Rinn Casan Sìoda mosgladh air a shocair as a chrùban, 'ga shineadh is a' mèannaich le sealladh dreugain d'br orm.
Dh' imlich e 'spògan agus chas e 'shròn le diomh rium, is thuirt e mu dheireadh rium: "Nì Maith, nach leamh do bhùitich!"

"Seo mise 'nam dhubh thròll agad, s 'nam gheàrd s do cheann fo d' sgéith-sa gun taingealachd no bruidhinn air no buidheachas 'na éirig, ach: "An d' iòth an cat na sgàdain ud a ghabh a' ghaoth dhaibh fhéin uainn?" is: "Cò 'gheid an trosg s am bainne?" – agus, abair e, le speuradh."

"Thug thu ainm a' mhurtair dhomh, ach cuir riut an chlù sin.
Fluair thu cearc no dhà sa' ghogail s iad a' spioladh ort do fhlùirean.
Ghabh thu fearg na dunach riu, a' mionnachadh gu bruideil an amhaichean a shinadh, agus linnig thu do bhùr leo."

"Na h-eòin a tha sa' ghàradh ud a' togail àl gun obair, 'gan reamhrachadh air gròiseidean, is ròic ac' air do chosdas, fo fhèasgar 's e as diota dhaibh an sìol a chuir thu mo chothrath.
Cò 'sgapas gus na speuran iad? Gu dé ma dh' iòth mi 'n trosg ort?"

"Ma's aithne dhuit na h-iaisgairean, bu mhichiallach uait an 'leisg' ud. Their luchd nan cuairt samhraidh riù 'nan aineolas a leithid.
Gach oidhche 's trang ar caithris duinn, s gur e ar madain feasgar.
'S mi chumas clos is cadal riut. Cha ghabh mi riut mar bhreitheamh."

"Tha mile luch san taigh agad ri straighlich anns na Cùiltean.
Tha Seanaid dhiubh sa' cheàrnaidh is bàtaillean slàn fo'n ùrlar.
Bíd an oidhche ac' air chèìlìdh, a' cur réis s a' streap nan cùirt-ein, is millidh iad do shranraich le'n dannsaichean 'gad dhùsgadh."

"'S mi chuireas tosd is teicheadh orra. 'S mi 'n Dubh Dhealan obann a chromas air na deireagain mu'n teirinn iad 'nan tollaig.
'Ceatharnach sa' chidsìn!" – cha bu mhìside thu mo chogadh nuair lorg mi oídch' air truinneir iad a' dannsadh roidele ochd'nar."

"Fuighleach do bhùird mar thuarasdal – nach duairc do shùil an deàidh sin, s gach cuirm a th' aig na luchainn s iad crunnu san tsonmar leughaidh.
Chreim iad leabhar Shomhairle, s tha 'n comharra 'nan deàd air; chaidh am fiaclan minarach anns na Dàin s an Craobh Nan Teud ort."

"Iain Lom s Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair s Rob Donn, o'n ghabh an sùil ort' is eagach caol an duilleagan, s is cutach an rainn chìùiteach.
Cuiridh mi geall nach tomhais thu an cron is mó a dhèitrigh orm – fhuiridh mi an racoirt gu driopail iad ag ith e t'dòrain ùir-sa." 

"Sean chù leisg nan deargan, bheir mi dhuit a dhealbh s a dhòighean – miolaran is gadrichaideachd s a shròn a chur sna pòitean.
E fhéin s a dh'rannd s a chulagan! – cha dèan e tèrn ri 'bheò dhuit.
Is fhèarr s mo spòg na esan slàn – nach mi a shàbhall t'dòran?"

"Ach nach iomadh feasgar sonais agus fois' a thug sinn cómhla, s tu 'gam thachas cùl nan cluasan s mi 'gam shuathadh rìut s a' crònan?
Ghabh rabhadh, agus cuimhnic air na luchainn s air na h-eòin sin.
Anis nach leig thu celadh dohmh? – cha n-fhiach do chaingit an córr um." 1945
Silk Feet stirred slowly from where he was crouching, stretching himself and yawning, and casting a hostile dragon look in my direction. He licked his paws and twisted his nose in annoyance at me, and finally said to me: “God, how your ranting irritates me!”

“Here I am, a total slave to you, and keeping guard while your head’s tucked under your wing, and no thanks or indeed any mention or acknowledgement do I get in return, but "Did the cat snap up all that herring that took off with the wind?", and "Who stole the cod and the milk?" – and – let me tell you – in choice language.

“You called me a murderer, but grant yourself that honour. You found a hen or two clucking and plucking away at your flowers. You flew into a blind rage, brutally swearing that you’d twist their necks, and you lined your stomach with them.

“The birds in that garden there, work-shy and idly rearing, fattening their broods on gooseberries and all gorgeing themselves at your expense, their diet in the evening are the seeds you planted that morning. Who scatters them all sky-high? So what, if I did eat your cod?

“If you know fisherfolk at all, that "lazy" was quite crass. That’s the sort of thing the summer tourists ignorantly call them. Every night our watch is busy, and the evening is our morning. It’s I preserve your peace and sleep. I’ll take no judgement from you.

“There are a thousand mice in your house making a clatter in the crannies. There’s a Synod of them in the kitchen area, and an entire battalion under the floorboards. The night they spend ceilidhing, racing each other and climbing up the curtains, and they ruin your snoring, waking you up with their dances.

“It’s me shuts them up and makes them run. I’m the swift Black Lightning that falls upon the dirty pests before they disappear down their chink. "Cateran in the kitchen" indeed! – you were no worse off for my war-waging the night I discovered them on a plate dancing an eightsome reel.

“The leftovers of your table for wages – how resentfully you view that, while the mice enjoy feast upon feast when they gather in the reading-room. They’ve nibbled away at Sorley’s book, and have left a mark to prove it; their shameless teeth have dug into the Poems and the Tree Of Harpstrings.

“Iain Lom and Alexander MacDonald and Rob Donn, ever since they set their eyes on them their pages have been thin and notched, and their celebrated verses much abridged. I’ll wager that you’ll never guess the damage that most shocked me – I found them last night busy furiously munching away at your new song.

“As to the old lazy flea-ridden dog, I’ll describe him and his ways for you – whining and gluttony and sticking his nose into pots. Him and his growl and molars! – he won’t do a useful turn for you in his life. Better my paw than his whole mass – wasn’t it me who rescued your song?

“But isn’t it many a quiet, blissful evening we’ve spent together, you tickling me behind the ears, me rubbing myself against you and purring? Take a warning, and bear in mind those mice and birds. Now, will you please let me sleep? – your talk isn’t worth any more of my time.”
NA TUINN RIS NA CARRAIGEAN

A mhuir fo chobhar ris na carraigean,
an caraich iad le d'chòmhrag?
Saoghal nan gineal fialbhanach,
an t래스' am marbh no 'm beò ann?

Am bi cinnt nam marbh a' meatachadh
na beatha is na h-òige,
is am meòr chnàmha mu'r buinn luaineach
'gar toirt anuas 'nan córdaibh?

Am bi gach smuain a smuainicheadh
'na ceangal cruaidh mu'r còmhradh,
is caint àr saidh 'na sean bhuarach dhuinn
nuair bhios smuain ùr 'ga tôireadh?

Ciod e ma chruthaicheadh an talamh seo
le cladaichean gu'r cròthadh?
A mhuir, mo mhuirsia, tha 'n speur rionnagach
le gaothaibh saor ag ulfhaire dìrnne!

1945?

THE WAVES AGAINST THE ROCKS

Sea foaming against the rocks, will they ever be moved by your fighting? The world with its transient generations, is the dead or the living the stronger in it?

Will the certainty of the dead make life and youth timid, and will their bony fingers be about our wandering feet to bring us down in their cords?

Will every thought that was ever thought be a hard bond about our conversation; and will ancient talk be an old hobble for us, when we are pursuing some new thought?

What if this land has been created to hem us in with its shores? Sea, my sea, the starry sky howls over us with its free winds!

1 The world : This world rest 36b 22 *21 ; P29 C
2 transient generations : generations that come and go 36b
3 timid : wilt 36b 22 P29 weak C
4 some : a 36b
AN T-ÒIGEAR A' BRUIDHINN O'N ÙIR

Seall, a chinne-dhaomna, dlùth air, s gu'n toir an tsùil do'n chuimhne rabhadh.

Seall am fonn a dh'ol ar lotan air a threabhadh leis a' chanan.

Seall na h-achaidhean a shluig sinn, a' sgeith an duslaich anns an adhar.

Ruidhle aig na cuilbh dhubh' Orr' ri drumaireachd nan gunn' a' tabhann.

Air an uisgeachadh le feòlachd, le fuil òigeart oidhch' is latha.

Air an ruamhar, air an riastradh, air an cliathadh leis a' chasgairt.

Seall na bothain is na bailtean 'nan cruachan clachaireachd gun anam.

Seall smùr nam baile pronn san Eadait, s nan clachan leagte thall san Aifric.

Duslach mìn nan taighhean marbha, stùr armaitean air uaigh nan dachaidh.

Bu chòir gu'n cruinnicheadh gaoth mhòr e air feadh na h-Eòrpa fad' is farsuing.

As an Eòrpa is á Breatainn 'ga sguabadh leatha 'na neul gathach.

S gu'n séideadh i sna sùilean cruaidhe leis nach truagh ar lotan sracte.

Leis nach truagh ar buain Barraich, s ar n-uaighean feachda air ar n-aincol.

'Gan lìonadh le sleaghan duslaich, 'gan cur a shruthadh is 'gan dalladh.

Cearrt mar a thachd an duslach ciar sinn, s a mhùch e griàg ar latha.

1: om. 36
3 ar: air 36
14 anam: fhasgadh 36
18 armaitean: armait P14 corr. 36
20 farsuing: farsuing, K
26 n-aincol: n-aincol, K

1945
Look closely on it, mankind, and let the eye bid the memory take heed.
See the land that has drunk our wounds, ploughed by the cannon.
See the fields that swallowed us, spewing their dust in the air.
As the black pillars dance a reel on them to the drumming of the barking guns.

They are watered with butchery, with the blood of young men night and day.
They have been dug, they have been torn, they have been harrowed by the slaughter.
See the cottages and towns, heaps of masonry without a soul.
See the dust of the crushed towns in Italy, and of the villages overthrown in Africa.
The fine dust of the dead houses, the stour of armies on the graves of homes.

A great wind should gather it through Europe far and wide.
From Europe and from Britain, sweeping it along in a stabbing cloud.
To blow in the hard eyes that do not grieve for our torn wounds.
That do not grieve for us, mown in the Springtime, or for our campaign graves in strange lands.
To fill them with spears of dust, to set them streaming and to blind them.
Even as the dark dust choked us, and quenched the young sun of our day.
MEFTAH BÃBKUM ES-SABAR?
Iuchair Bhur Doruis An Fhaighdindinn?

Is cuimhne leam an Sùg el-Cheamais, 'sa chaifidh dhorca is sinn a' deasbud, guth ciannail mar ghuth chlag fo fheasgar a mhol dhomh striochdadh do'n Fhreasdal. "Mo chríde fhéin, is faoin bhur gleachd Ris, s gu bheil gach toiseach agus deireadh air an sgriobhadh Aige cheana."

Sgrùd e bas a làimhe s lean e:

"Do roinn, do mhanadh 's do sgàile, théid iad cuide riut 's gach àite."

"An rud a tha 'san Dàin s a sgriobhadh, is gainntir sin a ghlas an Rìgh oirnn. "S i 'n fhadhiddinn le sealladh lósal iuchair dorus ar dubh phriosain."

Ghin aintighearmas na gréine lasraich, is ainneart speuran teth na h-Aifríc, gliochas brùite sgith nam facal.

A ghliocais mar chluig mhall' an fheasgair, cha n-ann duinne do leithid!
Oir sgriobhadh roghainn fa leth duinn, an tsìth s am bàs no gleachd s a' bheatha.

Dh'fhalbh na diasan, dh'fhan an asbhuain?
Thuit na bailtean, chinn an raineach?
A bheil tom luachrach air gach stàirsnich?
A shaoghail, tha sinn ann g'a aindeoin;
tha a' ghrìosach theth fo'n luaithre fhathast.

Na iarraidh oirnn, matà, cur sìos dhiubh draoidheachd cheòimhgh ñachal lìomhta, nithean clòimheachd, sgeòil an tsìdhein, ceò no àrain air son nìonag, óran tàlaidh caileach sitheil a' tulgadh a h-ogha s 'ga bhriorál – na iarraidh, ach sgal na ploba.
Beachdan gnàthach, laghach, cinn teach, òraid dochuileil a ceann sìolge, nòsann àbhaisteach no minead, suaimhneas turban geal na h-Ioslam, faidhiddinn Anabracha 'ga shìneadh fa chomhair Allah fo'n bhruathainn shìorraidh na iarraidh – tha sinn beò dàrtribh, agus "Is fuar a' ghaoth thar Ìle gheibheara aca an Cinnìrè".
Iarraidh gàire, gean is mighean, càirdeas, nàimhdeas, talchd is miolthachd – iarraidh faileas flor ar n-inntinn.
Síribh an annas ar làimhe
a' bheatha ghoirt, gharbh, luathghàireach,
oir thairg am Fresdal ré ar làithean
roghainn na beatha no a' bhàis dhuinn.

Blàr-cath' ar toile, leac ar teine,
an raon a dhùisgeas ar seisreach,
stéidh togaill ar làmhan s ar dealais;
an talla a fhuaire sinn gun cheilear,
is far an cluinnear moch is feasgar
ceòl ar sinn sre s gair ar seinne;
an leabhar far an sgrìobhbar leinne
bàrdachd ùr fo'n rann mu dheireadh
a chuireadh leis na bàird o shean ann —
b'e sin ar ãr. No, mur an gleachdar,
rud suarach ann an cùill 'ga cheiltinn,
a thraogh s a dhìochuimhnic sluagh eile.

1945

1-21, 27-49 : om. 42
4 dhomh : domh rest
5 fhéin, : fhéinl. P27
8 lean e : lean e. 36
9 's : is rest
15-17 : ins. 36
19 duinne : dhuinne K >dhuinne 33
21 bàs : bàs, 36 P27
22 na diasan, : am bàrr is 42
23 na bailtean : an t-arbhar 42
24 : followed by s an d'halbh brod ar sluaigh tharais? 42
25 aindeoin; : aindeoin! P27
26 fo'n : fo'r 42 P27
27 dhuibh : duibh rest
30 ceòd : ceòd, P27
36 : om. sic 21
39 shlornuidh : shlornuidh – P27
40 iarraidh – tha : iarraidh. Tha P27
41-42 : "Is ... Cinnitre" : Is ... Cinnitre C (corr. 33)
42 gheibhhear : fhuaras 36
44 mlothlachd- : mlothlachd. P27 K mlothlachd, C (33)
49 dhuinn : duinn rest
50-52 : s2 / a' chagailt far an dearg ar teine, / s1 42
51 dhùisgeas ar : dhùisgear le'r 42
50 : om. 42
51-52 an ... dhùisgeas ar ... / stéidh ..... dealais : Stéidh ..... dealais, / a' chagailt far an dearg
ar teine, / an ... dhùisgear le'r ... ; 42
55 s : is rest
56 far : anns P27
57 ùr : ùr, P27
I remember at Suq el-Khemis, while we argued in the dark café, a voice, melancholy as the voice of bells when evening falls, that counselled me to be submissive to Providence. "My own heart, your struggle against It is in vain, for every beginning and ending has been written by It already."

He gazed at the palm of his hand and went on:

"Your portion, your predestined fate and your shadow — these accompany you in every place. What is fated and has been written is as a dungeon that the Divine King has locked upon us. Patience with a downcast look is the key to the door of our wretched prison."

The tyranny of the flaming sun, and the violence of the hot skies of Africa had begotten the tired, bruised wisdom of these words.

Wisdom like the slow bells of evening, not for us is your like! For a choice apart has been written for us: peace and death, or struggling and life.

Are the full ears gone, and only the stubble remaining? Fallen are the townships, and up has sprung the bracken? Is there a clump of rushes on every threshold? Oh, world, we are here and live on in spite of it; the hot ember is under the ashes yet.

Do not ask us, then, to set down for you some musical wizardry of polished words; soft, downy things or tales of the fairy knowe; mist, or songs for young girls; the lullaby of some peaceful old woman as she rocks her oe and gives it fondling talk — do not ask that, but the scream of the pipes. Nice, habitual, certain opinions; a plausible oration from a well sleeked head; customary ways or smoothness; the tranquillity of the white turbans of Islam, the patience of an Arab prostrating himself before Allah in the eternal sultriness, do not ask for them — we are alive in earnest, and "Cold is the wind over Islay that blows on them in Kintyre". Ask for laughter, and cheerful and angry moods, friendship, enmity, pleasure and displeasure. Ask for the true reflection of our mind.

Seek in each new work of our hand life, sore, rough and triumphant; for Providence has offered us during our days the choice between life and death.

The battlefield of our will, the hearthstone of our fire, the field our ploughteam will awaken, the foundation for the building of our hands and our zeal; the hall we found without melody, and where will be heard, early and evening, the music of our forebears and the clamour of our singing; the book where we will write new poetry below the last verse put in it by the poets of old — such will be our land. Or, if there be no struggle, a mean thing of no account, hidden away in a corner, which another people drained dry and forgot.
TILLEADHUILÎSEIS

Rainig mac Laérteis,
seal mu'n d'éirich orra'n là,
Iotacais tòrrgean 'òige.

Anns na tràthaibh cianail
mu'n leum a' ghrian, bha 'n iubhrach àrd
dìùth fo sgàile an tsean chòrsa.

Bha'n cruinne aosda 'mosglaadh,
ag osnaich luchd nan linn a' fàs;
osna air son na gréine
am beul gach dùil roimh'n là;
s an sgùrr a b'aira air 'ùr òradh.

Bu chadal dà, s bha 'n t-eathar
gu mear a' breabadh cuip o 'sàil,
s i 'cur nam bàgh s nan rudha còlach.

An ciar nan coille dòrùchdach
s nan dùsluinn tiugh thog eòin mu'n àl
an gearan brìste bàigheil:
bha brìdein beul an làin
is éigh a chràidh aige sa' ghlòmuinn.

Is riabh bha chadal sithe
do dh'Uillseas, sgith o 'fhògradh.
An deàidh gach euchd is faontraidh,
mar an naoidhean, rinn e suain
air a shuaineadh 'na chleòca.

II

Bu chadal do dh'Uillseas;
is dh'fhàg iad sint' e air an tràigh,
fhéin s a shàibhreas uile còmhla.

Bu chadal. Is nuair dhubsg e
cha d'airtnich e a dhùthaich ghràidh,
oir chàraich a' bhan-dia fo cheò i.

B'e sean-chù dall nan cartan
a' cheud bhèd a dh'airtnich e,
nuair thill a bhèd o cheudan dòruinn.

Gun fhuran is gun aithne,
'na chùís-bhùirt aig fanaid chàich,
fhuair e cúil 'na àros mòrail.
III

37 A' cagnadh 'fheirge, an riodch an déircich
'na dhùn fhéin, bu ghailbheach
a shùil-fhíar fo 'mhailghean air cuirm nan tòiseach.

'Na dhéidh bu labhar sreang a bhogha,
is b'hfìonnnar oiteag a shaighdean
feadh an talla air gruidean na dòmhlaich.

43 Is iomadh misgear uabhrach a tholladh,
s a leig 'fhochaid dheth s a ghàire,
s a shleuchd 'na fhuil s a làmhan dearg mu 'sgòran.

Is suiridheach maoth a fhuir a leagadh
beul fodha, s e 'sgeith lod fala
measg fion, feòl', arain, chuachan is fhèar-feòrne.
A short space before day rose upon them, Laertes' son reached Ithaca and the strands of his youth. In the melancholy moments before the sun leaps up, the high-sided boat was close under the shadow of the old coast.

The ancient world was stirring, sighing at its burden of centuries ever increasing; a sigh of longing for the sun in the mouth of every creature before the coming of day; and the highest peak newly gilded. He was asleep while the boat was prancing, kicking foam from her heel, weathering the well-known bays and headlands.

In the dark of the dewy woods and the close set thickets, the birds above their brood raised their broken complaint of cheeping. A sandpiper at the lip of the tide was calling out its hurt in the half-light. And still Ulysses slept a sleep of peace, tired from his exile. After all his exploits and wandering, like a little child he slumbered wrapped in his cloak.

Ulysses slept; and they left him lying on the strand, himself and his riches together.

He slept. And, when he wakened, he did not recognise his dear native land, for the goddess had put a mist over it.

The old blind dog, full of ticks, was the only living thing that recognised him, when he brought his life back from hundreds of grievous trials.

Unwelcomed and unrecognised, a butt for the mockery of all, he found a corner in his lordly dwelling.

Chewing his anger, in the guise of a beggar in his own dun, stormy was his sidelong glance under his brows at the banquet of the chiefs.

And, afterwards, loud sounded the string of his bow, and cool was the waft of his arrows throughout the hall on the cheeks of the throng.

Many an arrogant drunkard was pierced, and gave over his jibing and laughter, as he bowed down in his blood with his hands red about his throat.

And many a delicate suitor was cast down prone on his face, spewing a puddle of blood amongst wine and flesh and bread, amongst goblets and chessmen.
AR BLÁR CATHA

Taobh thall gach rudh' a thogadh leinn,
is cùl gach cnuic a choisich sinn;
a' ruith na dh'fhalaich cromadh
  gach faire fad' air fuaradh;
  màrsal s dol stos fo bhhrataichean
nach d'fhairich gaoth ar n-àirdean;
clachtharruing anns gach àird dhuinn
  is ar màthair 'gar cur uaipe –
fad nan linnntean taisdealach
b'e sin a bhà air mhanadh dhuinn,
is eadar sinn is còrs' ar n-altruim
  feath is stoirm nan uile chuantan.

Rangan MhicAoidh is feachd Ghustàvuis,
  arm na Frainge, geàrd nan Liuthais,
a liuthad ceum sgìth is leòn is àrach,
  s gun leas ar màthar an aon bhuille.
An e gu'n d'èinn sinn a dearmad,
  s gu'n d'fhàs i searbh is bochd is cruaidh dhuinn?
Threig sinn i s a làmb, ar leinn,
  'na feum s 'na teinn 'gar n-utadh uaipe.

Taobh thall gach cnuic s gach rudh' air thalamh,
na còrsaichean úrach 'gar tarruing,
na dòighean úrach a' srìos ar dachaidh,
'gar ruagadh a thoirt buaidh air aineol.
Falbh d'ar deòin is falbh d'ar n-aindeòin
gu tàirneanaich nan àrach tarmhor;
buadhach an smùid nan còmhrag thairis,
is smùid an fhògraith tuigh an Cataibh,
smùid an fhòirneirt feadh gach baile.

Có dh'fh'han a chluinninn gaoth nan cuantan
  feadh luachair nan gort 'na h-aonar?
Tha 'n treabhaiche taobh thall nan cuantan
  'toirt beath' á gruaim nan coilltean aosda.
Tha 'n taigh, 'bha aoigh eil blàth, gun mhullach,
  s a' ghaoth s an t-uisge ann air aoigheachd.
Tha 'm baile fuear fo thosd na h-uaghach,
  s a dhao'ín air stuidhian fuear' an t-saoghail,
a' fosgladh le iuchair na h-éigin
  dorus seòmar-breith gach gaoithe –
cur is buain is cath is ceannach
  air stairsnich seòmar-breith gach gaoithe.

Fuil an ràn nam blàr asainn,
failus sna coilltean sàmhach dhinn,
clachtharruing anns gach àird dhuinn
  is ar màthar 'ga cur suarach;
dol bàs a' bualadh dhianbhuillean
an iomall cian na cuinne,
gun bhriathar is gun buille
  'ga cuideachadh 'na truaighe.
Faire seachad, Fair' ur a' nochdadh, 
gu 'cur le'r duthaich s leis a' bhochodainn 
fo uisg' ar stiùrach, s ar sealladh romhainn.

Taighean ur againn 'gan togail 
air oir nam fàsach cian, coimheach – 
deanntag is luachair 'nan tomain 
an Albann air làr nan tobhta.

An t-arbhar stuadhach le'r n-obair 
ri luasgan òrbhuidhe fo'n oiteig 
far am b' àrsaidh, aognuidh, tosdach 
gàile na ròchoille gun mhòsgladh;
s am fraoch, s an raineach, s a'chopag 
a' brùchadh air ais thar lom nan goirtein;
thar clais is iomair a rinn torrach 
fallus ar sinnsre, s a dhìon o'n choigreach 
gluin air ghlèin am fuil gun obadh.

Is tòm dhùinn sgur de chathan ciana, 
ar càil a thionndadh ris an iarchuan, 
s ar n-àghaidh ris an duthaich sgìambaich 
a dh'earb ar n-athraichean o Dhìth ruinn.

Is i Alba ar clachtharruing.
Is i Alba ar blàr catha.
'S i jhein a dh'uisgicheas ar fallus;
's i jhein a ghuras teas ar fàla.

Tha àite do gach buaidh a th' annainn 
'na gleanntaichean 'na bailtean.

Tha feum air smuaintean s air tapachd 
eadar an stairsneach s ceann a' bhaile.

1945
OUR FIELD OF BATTLE

The far side of every headland we ever raised, the back of every knowe we ever walked; pursuit of all that was ever concealed by the curve of every horizon far to windward; marching and charging under banners that never felt the wind of our heights, a lodestone in every airt for us, and our mother thrusting us from her – through the pilgrim centuries such was our predestined lot, while between us and the coast that reared us stretched the calms and storms of all the oceans.

7 The ranks of Mackay, the campaigning of Gustavus, the army of France, the guard of the kings Louis – so many weary steps and wounds and stricken fields, and no benefit to our mother in one single blow. Was it that we neglected her, and that she grew bitter and poor and hard towards us? We forsook her, and her hand- it seemed to us—ever in her need and hard straits was thrusting us from her.

12 The far side of every knowe and headland on earth – the new coasts drawing us on, the new ways destroying our home, driving us out in flight to seek victory in lands we didna ken; going willingly and against our will to the thunder of the thirsty battlefields; victorious in the smoke of the battles beyond the seas, while the smoke of eviction lay thick over Sutherland, the smoke of oppression drifted through every township.

17 Who has stayed to listen to the wind of the oceans as it sings its lonely song in the rushes of the furrows? The ploughman is beyond the oceans winning life from the gloom of the age-old forest. The house, that was warm and hospitable, is roofless, and the wind and the rain are guesting in it. The township is cold and quiet as the grave, and its people are on the cold waves of the world, opening with the key of necessity the door of the birth chamber of every wind — sowing and harvesting, battle and buying on the threshold of the birth chamber of every wind.

23 Our blood flows in the roar of the battlefields; our sweat flows in the silent woods. There is a lodestone in every airt for us, while our mother is left despised; dying as we strike fierce blows on the far-off rim of the world, without a word or a blow to help her in her pitiful condition.

A horizon past, a new horizon showing, to sink with our land and with poverty beneath our wake, while we gaze ahead of us. New houses raised by our hands on the edge of strange, far-off wilderesses, while nettle and rush spring in clumps on the floors of the ruined houses in Scotland. The undulating wheat through our toil sways golden-yellow in the breeze, where ancient, ghastly and silent lay the shadow of the vast forest not yet awakened – while heather and bracken and dockens burst back across the open plots, over furrow and ridge that were made fruitful by the sweat of our forefathers, and that were protected from the stranger, generation upon generation, by their blood ungrudgingly shed.

34 It is time for us to cease from far-off battles, to turn our back to the western sea and our face to the bonny land that our fathers entrusted to us from God.

Scotland is our lodestone. Scotland is our field of battle. It is she that our sweat will water; it is she that the heat of our blood will warm. There is room for every quality that is ours in her glens and her cities. There is a need for thought and courage between the threshold and the end of the township.

2 ever: om. P36 C
7 army: armies all
7-8 the kings: om. P36 C
14 thirsty: thirsting P36
33 upon: after P36 C
FORERUNNERS

The lonely star standing above the dawn,
that heralds light to come when all is grey,
proclaims to night the future noon, then wan
– the shadows challenged – dies in the rising day.

Drowned in the surging light they prophesied,
lost in the later blaze, in flames akin,
how many herald stars have waned and died,
forgotten in the day they ushered in.

1946

t: THE MORNING STAR  P17
s-8: om. P17

GREY ASHES

Be canny o trampan on grey ashes;
they steer an’ the air wins the hert o thaim.
In their hidden hert there dems the grieshoch,
an’ oot o the grieshoch is born the flame.

Be canny, be canny o grey ashes
that ligg but reek i the airless bield.
Swing, wund, swing twa points – they are reekan;
swing three – an’ the breeze rinns owre the field.

1946

t: om. 8  NEIGHBOURLY ADVICE  36  8 36 37 (30) ; *B J
2: om. 8
2 they steer an’: Ye stirr them  corr. 36  air : wund 36
4 an’: and  36
s-8: om. 8 36
s rinns: rins B J (corr. 30)
THE WHITE LICHT. . . .

The white licht, wellan up frae springs
yont Asia, pales the gowd o the sterns
tae a wae siller, syne consumed
i the kendlet crucible o the east,
an ilk limestone lirk o bare Hymettus
purples, crimsons then gowden burns,
as the new sun, kythan, glisters alang
green watter ablow a rocky coast.

They sterns that dwine frae east tae west,
an' swarf in the surgean Aegaean glory,
wane abune flindert craigs, a waste
o cairns an' soopit stanes, mair weary,
mair yeld than Knoydart's heidlang coast,
or Rannoch, lang an' braid an' oorie.

Sae when the sun westers ayont
Aegina, an' doongaun, drains the flush
frae heich upland, heidland, island,
an' the nicht ower aa things cups her hands,
ye that whan young rinn on bare rocks
an' lauched tae watch green watter flash
alang a heidlang Scottish shore—
coont ye this ane o the fremmit lands?

Bonny an' kent afore elsewhere,
new an' acquaint, steep, prood, sea-graven,
bare, hard, bonny, tautfeatured land,
clear, sherp, hertsome, a land for livan.

Bare, hard, bonny — its winds blaw clean
across clear ridges aff the sea,
nae shoggan an' flaffan o fullyerie,
o reeshlan reeds an' hedges here,
nae watter-reek o laich loanans
tae dull the thrust o thocht an' ee,
nae braid pleuch-acres o seichan brairds,
nae plains unendan rowed in haar.

Bricht an' hard — a maze sea-fretted,
kyle an' skerry, stack an' strand,
bricht an' hard — a maze steep-snedded,
screc an' scarnoch, strath an' glen,
bricht an' hard — wi rocky heidlands
derk atween lines o bleezan sand,
wi naethin boss in't, mauchy nor mauchless,
heavy nor dozent, a land for men.
A wee land, bricht an' hard, whaes fowk
soared tae man's heichmaist aince lang syne;
stil snaewhite, kythan far frae land,
their temples vaunt it as they crine.

Oor ain land wi its bitter blufferts,
it's flauchts o licht, its frosty sterns,
flashes an' rairs its strengthenan challance—
what triumphs will answer frae its bairns?
t: om. 36 20 SCOTLAND P23
2 sterns: starns P23
4 crucible: crucibles corr. 36
6 burns: turns marg: burns 36
8 watter: watters 20 P23
9 sterns: starns P23 west: > wast 30
craigs,: craigs- P23
than: nor 20
when: whan P23
an': an', 36 20 P23
aa things: aathing 36 20 hands: haunds 20
rinn: ran P23
lauched: leuch P23 watter: watters 20
hertsome,: hertsome- 20 P23
sea,: sea; P23
o: nae 20
pleuch acres: pleuch-acres 20
fretted, : fretted; P23
scedded, : snedded; P23
39-40: om. 36 20
dozent,: dozent - 20 P23
land: lan' 36 fowk: men corr. 36
aince: aince, 20 P23
still: still, 20 snaewhite: snawhite P23 far: leagues corr. 36
stems: starns P23
challance-: challance. P23
"It's orra, man, the fowk I ken
wha seem tae gang on burnan grund,
aye breengean oot an' lowpan ben
lik paper men in a breeze o wund;
thrang aye, an' maistly thrawn,
ne'er contentit wi their awn;

rinnan aa week, dry days an' drookan,
lik the bylie's echt-day clock,
wi ne'er a pause for thocht or lookan.
They're gyte, the bodies," said oor Jock.
"Blint wi sweit an' wudd on winnan,
shair as daith they'll dee o pechan.
Life's nae lang eneuch for rinnan –
better slaw than aye forfochen,"
said oor Jock.

"It's orra, man, hoo mony fowk
aye snifter owre what's feenisht fair,
the milk they tint, the crocks they brokk
echteen simmers syne or mair;
greetan aye, giren aye,
derknan the-day wi cloods blawn bye.

Maenan owre the meat they're stechan
lik a wheen o craikan hens,
sweir an' scunnert wi their brochan,
het or cauld, lik ailan weans;
lookan ahint them aye an' seichan,
feart afore o what — wha kens?
They're daft, the gowks, wi aa their bleatan
o wandert sheep. They'll dee o carean.
Life's nae lang eneuch for greetan
better lauchs nor tears for sharean,
better bricht nor black for weiran,"
said oor Jock.
KAILYARD AND RENAISSANCE

Kailyairder:

Chiels o the Rinascimento,
 a thing I'd hae ye aa tak tent o —
 forget a while the stoor an' steer med
 by thon rampagean Clan MacDiarmaid —

Why maun ye fyle, but mense or meanan,
ilk kailyaird that ye e'er hae been in?
 Gin ye but sicht a kail-stock rampant,
up gangs yere fit, an' syne ye tramp on't.

Oor kailyaird wa' s dung doon an' scattert,
oor kailyaird sangbuiks raxt an' spattert
wi ink o infamy an' slander;
it ryses e'en a Yairder's gander.

Whan auld's Scotland's stern was dwinan,
brightness, fame, e'en name was tinan,
an' leid an' land had sairly suffert
frae the parchan Soothland bluffert
 — pair Kintra — whar did sangsters bide in't
hauf sae leal an' hauf sae eident,
keepan the true Lallans lowan,
as whar the kindly kail was growan?

Stringan rhymes it was, I grant ye;
twasna Homer, Virgil, Dante;
words eneuch an' thocht fu scanty —
yet the rhymes they strung can haunt ye.
They but took a hamely daunder
on Pegasus, an' naethin grander.
Tho the ootcome wasna Spender,
it had hert, was warm an' tender.

Twasna sang as maisters med it,
words thrice waled an' finely sneddit,
line wi line in kindness beddit,
lilt an' thocht thegither weddit.

Wi the Union an' Culloden
waa'd in war the gates they trod in;
Scotland in a rickle liggan —
was there marble for their biggan?

Renaissance Chiel:

Had they waled their stane an' wan it,
there was rowth o honest granite;
gin they trod their gate wi smeddum,
wha daur muzzle or forbid them?
They warmed their haunds, nae firean gian,
at oor fire whan it was deean;
griessoch-rhymsters, rypan cinders,
reengean oot odd bits an' flinders.
Tak ony Muse’s hand and kiss it;
speir wha’t was she used tae visit,
whaes een hae seen, whaes ears hae heard her —
she ne’er cam near a richt Kailyairder.
Yon’s the reason there’s a feck o
Kailyairders answer their ain echo
lik gowks in Spring alang the braes,
lik cribbin parrots an’ lik jays.

Aye, the rhymes they strung can haunt me.
Thro the nicht in dreams they daunt me
wi their snifteran, snivellan greetan,
till I scraich an’ wauken sweitan.

Kailyairders! Is’t o thaim ye’re thriepan?
Dreams o thaim hae gard me, sleepan,
lowp frae bed an’ jouk ablow it,
I’se descrive a Kailyaird poet.

Croonan the Sangs His Mither Sang
he dovers in his Granny’s Chair,
an’ rowses Scotia’s Bens an’ Glens
in fifteen hunner lines or mair.

Taen frae a yaird juist no’ his ain,
hel slorps his cauld hail het again,
tha what wi Briars an’ Bonny Broom
for growan hail there’s scarcely room.

Waff an’ wersh an’ mim an’ mauchy,
thaw-ice, dull an’ boss an’ bauch, he
Lets Fa’ the Tear in ilka season,
an’ greets in rhyme, but no’ wi reason.

This thowless, sornan, thirled North Briton
bewails in words his land doonpitten;
his reid sun dees in Lauder’s gloaman,
while reid o dawn fair sets him foaman.

His swaiveran gate’s o ane that trauchles,
aimless, in slippan-slappan bauchles,
swaiveran, slaiveran, stumblan, mumblan,
while ootbye life’s white spate gangs tumblan,
an’ deif, he disna hear it rumblan.

1946

KAILYARD : KAILYAIRD 36 8 tramp : stamp 36 36 (30); *B
scattered: battered 36 9 spattert : spattered 36
ryses : raises corr. 36 10 war : were 36
blads: bits 36 12 : extra lines inserted (See notes.) 36.
he ... he: hae ... he 36 44 answez: answer sic B (corr. 30)
me: mel 36 47 sic B (corr. 30)
Croonan: Cronnan 53 aimless: waff corr. 36
ACHMHASAIN

(Tri Rainn is Amhran)

Na beanntan àrda, saora,
dh’huilingeas gaoth is grian,
’gar fasicinn mar a tha sinn –
is achmhasan dhuinn iad.

Glinn nan làrach uaigneach,
far na bhuadhail am fiadh,
na h-achaidhean fo rainich –
is achmhasan dhuinn iad.

Ar tir bha uair ’na leòghann,
bha mòr ri trod s ri sith,
’na measan aig sàil Shasuinn –
is achmhasan dhuinn iad.

Ceangal

Euchdan ar cinnidh dhuinn is achmhasan flor,
a cheòl is a bhàrdachd, a chàinain ’s ar n-oigridd ’ga dìth;
na h-uilld bhras, is a’ ghaoth ’thig saor a mhàrannan cian,
samhail misneach ar n-athraithchean – achmhasain, achmhasain iad.

1946

REBUKES

(Three Verses and an Envoi)

The high, free mountains that endure wind and sun, that they should see us as we are – they are a rebuke to us.

The glens with their lonely ruined village sites, where the deer has conquered, the fields under bracken – they are a rebuke to us.

Our land which was once a lion, which was great in war and peace, a messan at England’s heel – it is a rebuke to us.

Envoi

The heroic feats of our nation truly are a rebuke to us; its music and its poetry, its language which our youth goes lacking; the headlong burns and the wind which comes free for far-off seas, the image of our fathers’ spirit – rebukes, rebukes are they.
(Nuair a rèinig arm a’ Phrionnsa ùr Shasuin, agus iad air an abhainn a chur as an déidh, thionndaith iad, rùisg gach fear a chlaidheimh, agus dh’amhairc iad gu tosdach air Albainn car tacain.)

Nuair a chuir ant-arm an abhainn,
s a sheas iad air ceud raointean Shasuin,
thionndaith iad gun ghlaodh, gun fhacal,
dh’amhairc iad le dùrachd dhainginn
air Albainn, s rùisg gach fear a chlaidheimh.
Bheachdaich iad ’nan tosd car tacain,
is gheall iad dhi an neart s an gaisge.

Sgrioch na truaillean fo’n stàlìnn,
dh’èigh a’ phlob is lean am mòrsal.

Tha an còrr againn air chuimhne.
Chaidh an gealladh sin a chumail
le ceuman sgìth s le lotan fullteach.
Chuir iad Gollat mòr air uídil,
is, aon ri triùir, mu dheireadh thuìd iad.

– Dhùn iad an greis a bhos le alladh. –
Aon chuairt, aon chuairt gheibh sinn air thalamh
a nochdadh an fhaghairt a th’ annaoin,
a dheuchainn faobhar ar tapachd,
a chosnadh cliù do’r tir no masladh.

Is e bu chòir dhuinn stad is tìonndadh,
amharc air ar tìr le dùrachd,
le gealladh blàth gun bhòsd, gun bhùitich,
is lann ar spioraid theth a rùsgadh,
seann lann lasaighgeal ar dùthcha;
s a liuthad bliadhna meirg’ is dùsail
a mhaolaich i ’san truail dhùinte.
B’e ’n dùsal dubh e – seo an dùsgadh.

1946
THE PRINCE’S ARMY

(When the Prince’s army reached the soil of England after fording the river, they turned round, every man unsheathed his sword and they looked silently on Scotland for a while.)

When the army had forded the river and they stood on the first fields of England, they turned round without either a cry or a word, they looked with steady, purposeful devotion on Scotland and every man unsheathed his sword. They gazed silently for a while, and vowed to her their strength and courage.

The sheaths scraped under the returning steel, the pipe cried out and the march continued.

The rest of it is in our memory. That vow was kept with weary steps and bloody wounds. They set great Goliath rocking, and, one against three, they fell at last.

They closed their spell in this world with honour.... One spell, one spell only do we get on earth to show the temper of our metal, to test the edge of our courage, to win fame for our country or shame.

Now is the time when we should stop and turn, look upon our land with affection and devotion, with a warm promise without either boasting or threats, and unsheath the blade of our hot spirit, the old flaming-white sword of our country — so many years of rusting and slumber it has been growing blunt, set fast in its sheath.

It was a wretched slumber — this is the awaking.

STILL GYTE, MAN?

"Still gyte, man? Stude I in yere claes
I’d thole nae beggar’s nichts an’ days,
chap-chappan, whiddenlik a moose,
at ae same cauld an’ steekit hoose."

"What stane has she tae draw yere een?
What gars ye, syne she aye has been
as toom an’ hertless as a hoor,
gang sornan kindness at her dure?"

"Though ye should talk a hunner year,
the windblown wave will seek the shore,
the muirlan watter seek the sea.
Then, wheesht man. Sae it is wi me."

1 had forded : forded P36
12 our metal : the metal in us rest

1946
ESTA SELVA SELVAGGIA
This Savage Wood

Relief exults, nostalgia sighs
at yesterday shot from our skies
in smoke and splinters, speeches, lies.

Today's no ground to stand upon -
unstable fiction balanced on
to-morrow and the day that's gone;
the hair of midnight, finely drawn
between last evening and the dawn.

Fearful hope and angry fear
guess at to-morrow, paling there,
one man's foul another's fair.

Yesterday? We saw it die
among the shellbursts in the sky,
and heard the snarling headlines cry,
hyenas of a night of fears,
scarlet with tracer, pale with flares,
under distorted guiding-stars.

Man, violent against his will,
tore himself open, looked his fill
and saw; and he is shuddering still.

The swaying landmines lingering down
between Duntocher and the moon
made Scotland and the world one.
At last we found a civilisation
common to Europe and our nation,
sirens, blast, disintegration.

The house has buried sister, mother.
Sheer chance - a direct hit. Another
near Bou Arâda buried brother.
None was left, and no one mourned.
The telegram has been returned
undelivered, scrapped and burned.

1: om. 8b 36
4 to stand upon: for standing on 8b
5-8: a midnight moment balancing on
last evening and tomorrow's dawn
> 7-8 marg: 5-6 8b
10-11 paling ... fair: ins. 8b
14 headlines: headlines' 8b corr.36 cry: cry. P30 36
21-32: om. 8b ins. 36 30 left: left 36
The Bofors got him with his bombs away; crashed airman, hustled from his burning plane
(Salopard, vould ce que tu as fait!)
stumbles dazed to where his stick has strewn tiles, splintered glass and plaster blotting blood,
pales, stammers: "Gesù Cristo! But they should have struck across the docks. A puff of wind, a second early! That was by my hand?"

The sergeant from the Folgore
sips his wine and chats away:
"Ostia! It was bizarre.
At San Vincenzo, in the square behind the church, we found them there.
Two Fridolins, both some days gone,
early! near them a girl of twenty-one
shot through the face, two caps, a gun,
two glasses and a demi-john.
"Poisoned the wine she had, I'd say.
But one as he began to sway
still had strength left to make her pay."

"Merde!" says the gendarme "Ces messieurs indigènes,
why waste one's time on questioning them, when science can help. Some electricity applied to the softer parts, and one will see."

Chopping sticks below the prickly pears;
turban, hook nose, cheeks hollow with his years.
He drew his lips back, said: "There comes a day when the Fransâwi will be swept away."
Jabbing the earth he twisted his cleaver round - "Just as I grind this cleaver in the ground, kitèb, keibât - dogs, bitches - where we find them, hakdha, hakdha- thus, thus will we grind them."

33 fait : fait 36 fait? sic B (corr. 30)
35 plaster blotting : plaster-blotting 8b 36 P30
37 earlyl : early. 36 44 Vincenzo : Vincenzo P30
40 a woman with them corr. 8b 48 through : in 8b 36
47 the : their 8b 51 one ... sway : one, ... sway, P30 8b 36
50 left : ins. 8b 53-56 : Gendarme. 8b
53 some : a little corr. 36 57-64 : Arab. 8b
59 day : day, 36 63 them, : them 36 P30
The Irno Bridge; Salerno in the sun, while Capo d'Orso in a bluish haze watches the cobalt waves against him run.

(You'll find the rest in any guide-book's praise). This is the land par excellence where you sought select starred ruins, and the parrot phrase of guides made wearisome the beauty spot. This is the hell where barking batteries heap on the old fresh ruins smoking hot.

Here are your newly made antiquities; new graves and stumps of riddled ~abies frown from Paestum to the Arno’s Galleries.

The Irno Bridge; the Spring wind from the town sifts rubble-dust across - ghost-walking yet, sharp dust of murdered homes now ten months down.

This father, hunched up on the parapet, peddles his daughter with sly, beaten eyes; finding no hirer, begs a cigarette.

And past the Osteria, loud with flies, trail the perduta gente of this world, "artistic rags" and all. What judge denies peace to these homeless wisps by warblast whirled?


Ragged and filthy, six years old, he stumbles on the kerb, and lies dead still, as if content to hold this resting pose and never rise. Hands reach down and put him back, swaivering, on uncertain feet. "Poverini! They are so weak. Where and how are they to eat?"


"Er hat uns belogen – he told us lies." "Who wanted war? The poor man dies in war. He threw dust in our eyes."
Only the great make wars," they say, "I pezzi grossi, gros bonnets, el-kebär bass make war to-day."

"Halåf! Βούλγαρικα σκλά! Cretini 'e merda! Βρομεροί! Τό Μακαρονιά! Σαλέ Ιταλία!

"N'åd din bâbak – salauds – dogs! Jene Scheissherrn! Wops and Frogs, they're all the same, myte, like the Wogs."

..............................

"What crime was it we suffered for?"
"They started it. We willed no war."
Listen to yourselves. Beware.

Yesterday? We saw it die, and yet unburied see it lie rotting beneath a sultry sky.

Where the east pales bleak and grey, to-morrow is it, or yesterday?
Ask the old men. Can they say?

Yesterday made them. On its walls they write its end; and down it falls in blood and pacts and protocols.

We, having seen our yesterday, blasted away, explained away, in darkness, having no to-day, guess at tomorrow dawning grey, tighten our packstraps for the way.
EUROPE'S PITEOUS PLIGHT

The finely hewn ramparts of Europe are down in a heap upon her plains.
Their ancient carvings are split and splattered with gore.
The close-fitting courses of her towers are collapsed in small rubble.
The people of her halls are wanderers dispersed.

Without ever rest, full of need, are the nights and days of her folk.
The shrill voice of their pitiful complaining drowns the hard roaring of her winds.
Gone from Europe is a third of her tranquil, aged beauty.
The old sanctuary of the arts, the tender heart of humanity.
Och, she is become a promontory of Asia, the Balkans of the world!
AN T-IASGAILR

Seo mar dh’aithnic mi riamh thu,
fhuair oilein aig sgoil an iasgaich.

An sealladh fir, na sùilean socrach
a sgrùdadh slugan dubh an doininn,
s a leughadh seagh an àrdthuinn obainn,
ceann geal troimh dhall na h-oidhche ’nochdadh.

Tha fuaradh s fiasadh, faire s fulang
’nad shùil s an ciùine do ghutha.
Dh’fhàg caol is cuan, rudh’ air rudha
le’n sruthan-cinn s le’n gaothaibh uile,
dh’fhàg cathadh sguabie iomadh tuinne,
feath is gaillionn is siontan dubha,
air do ghruaidh an seul, a dhuine.

1946

THE FISHERMAN

This is how I ever recognised you, who were brought up
at the school of the fishing.
The man’s look, the steady eyes that would search
the black gullet of the storm, and that would read
the meaning of the sudden towering wave, a white crest showing through
the blindness of the night.

Windward and leeward, watching and enduring
are in your eyes and in the gentleness of your voice.
Kyle and open ocean, foreland after foreland
with their head tides and all their winds;
the swept spindrift of many a wave, calm and gale
and black tempest have set their seal upon your cheek, man.
THE FISHERMAN

This is aye the way I kent you,
that had the fishing for school and learning,
the sea's scholar, the gale's apprentice.

The man's glance, long and steady,
to search the black gullet of the tempest,
to read the sudden breaker's meaning,
through the night's blindness palely gleaming.

Windward and leeward, watching, enduring,
are in your eye and the quiet sureness
of the gentle voice that aye is yours, man.

Narrow kyle and open ocean,
foam-rimmed foreland after foreland
with head-tides setting, head-winds blowing,
- wind, sea - all have gone
to mould you.

Many a wave with spindrift sweeping,
gales, calm, black tempest, pale haar
creeping have set their stamp upon your cheek, man.

1946

9 quiet sureness: sureness corr. 36
14-15: no break 36

BLOIGH EADAILTEACH

A bhith leatha o laighe na gréine
gun ní 'gar faicinn ach na reultan,
aon oidhch' amháin, aon oidhche Chéitein,
aon oidhch' amháin; is 'na déidh sin
na tilleadh grian eile a dh'éirigh
s na glasadh là am bun nan speuran.

1946?

1: om. 7 20a 2: dl 7 4: amháin: bhuan 7
5: na glasadh latha sear 'sna speuraibh 7 6: s. 7

ITALIAN FRAGMENT

To be with her from the setting of the sun, with nothing to see us but the stars, one night only, one
night of May, one night only; and after it let no other sun return to rise and let no day break at the
foot of the sky.

20b: *P1
TLACHD IS MISNEACH

Clùcharan nan eun mun’u'n chladach,
a’ dùsgadh air chionn teachd an latha.
Boladh a’ bheithe s na rainich
ag éirigh suas le dealt nan glacaibh.
Tùs roid nan còs fo chùrmein lainnir
a’ smùidrich ri grian dh na maideine.
Na cnuc fa chomhair Rudha Meall Daraich,
cnuc bheaga, fhiadhach, mholaich, chasa;
a’ ghaoth ri osnaich trasd am mala,
am muing uaine ’ga crathadh,
s a’ mhuir mu’n bonnaibh ri cagar -
ha sin daonnan mar roinn de m’anam,
’na thobar fionnar sith’ is tlachda.
Bha, is bidh s mi beò air thalamh.

A’ mhuir gheatbheadh fo’n doinionn,
s i nuallanach, uathbhasach a’ sloistreach
druimeach, fuarghlas ri Rudha Loisgte.
A’ mhuir earrach ri solus
grian ghaothach a’ Mhàirt s a’ mhosglaidh.
Muir na h-oidhche reubte a’ losgadh,
s an teine-sionnachain a’ nochadh
gach sgar an cliathaich na sgotha,
fo ’guaillean s mu ’sàil a’ frosaeadh;
lasair is sradagan ’sa chop dhith,
s i ’ruith s a’ tionndadh mar fhiadh air cnocan.
Gaoth, frasan, sléibhteann is tuinn mo locha,
bha sin riabh ’na fhuaran sonais
s ’na éibbleig misnish dhomh air choimhich.
Bha, is bidh ’nam chuairt a bhos domh.

1946

6 grian dh: gréin díg 36 C (corr. 33)
7 Meall Daraich: > Maol Daraigh 33
15 druimeach, fuarghlas: -druimeach, fuarghlas- 36
17 sléibhteann: sliabh rest 29 ’nam: ’s mo rest

PLEASURE AND COURAGE

The low cheeping of birds about the shore, wakening to meet the coming of day. The fragrance of birch and bracken rising aloft with the dew of the hollows. The incense of the bog-myrtle in the little dales, bog-myrtle beaded and glittering, steaming in the young morning sun. The hills facing Rudha Meall Daraich, little, wild, steep, shaggy hills, the wind sighing across their brows, their green mane tossing in it, and the sea whispering round their feet — that was always as a part of my soul, a cool well of peace and pleasure. Was, and will be while I live on earth.

The Winter sea under the storm, roaring and terrible, surging in cold-gray ridges against Rudha Loisgte. The Spring sea gleaming in the light of the windy sun of March and the awakening. The night sea torn and burning, the blazing phosphorescence revealing every seam in the skiff’s hull, showering under her shoulders and about her heel — flames and sparks in her foam, as she races and turns like a deer on a knowe. Wind, showers, hills and waves of my loch, these were always a spring of happiness and an ember of courage for me in strange lands. Were, and will be for all my journey here.
PLEASURE AND COURAGE

The chirp of birds along the water,
awakening to greet the dawning;
the fragrant scent of birch and bracken
born with the dew from little valleys,
rising with the dew, drifting softly.

Incense of myrtle in the hollows,
obg-myrtle with clear dewdrops beaded
in the young sun of morning steaming.
The hills of the bay fronting the headland,
wee hills, wooded, wild and headlong,
the winds across their summits sighing,
singing about their brows and crying;
their green mane tossing—swaying branches—the
sea about their feet lapping.

That was ever, the shore that reared me,
part of my soul, knit in my being;
a cool well of peace and pleasure
it was, and will be for ever.

The Winter sea the hard wind scourges,
roaring and terrible, upsurging—
cold-grey ridges bristling, foaming—
about the sentinel, sheltering forelands.
The Spring sea flashing and breaking
in the windy sun of March the waker.

The nightsea, stemtorn, keeltorn, burning
that, phosphorescent, lights the lurching
seams of the hull above it towering,
under stern and shoulders showering;
flames and sparks in the skiff’s foam blazing
as she runs and turns to her rudder, racing
like a deer on a knowe, her quick heel spurning
the gleaming, windtorn, hurrying summits.

Waves of my loch, wind, rain and heather,
these were a spring of gladness ever,
an ember of courage in strange countries;
were, and will be throughout life’s journey.
STOC IS FAILLEANAN

Thalla, Eudochais, is beachdaich.
A' chraobh a leag iad an uiridh – seall! – cha n-fhaidh thu 'stoc am bliadhna aig lìonmhòrachd nam fìrnan uime.

Tha ceathach uaine uimpe a' cleith oirn lot na tuailge a leag a mullach, oir ghin na freumhan, s iad air fanachd, àlach ghillan far na thu't i.

"Sin tè a dhith air a’ choille, beàrn 'san doire nach dùinear" – ach dh’ùraich i a beatha fhathast le failleanan an aghaidh dùile.

"Slàn leatha," thuirt sinn, "s’le ‘cuid smeòrach. Cha chluinnear ceòl a h-eunlaith tuille." Nuair a théid bliadhna s bliadhna seachad bidh iad a’ seinn as ùr ’na duilleach.

Dh’fhian na freumhan an déidh an leagaidh a tharruing beatha o’n ùir do’n bhuin i. A dh’aindeoín choilltearan is tuailge dh’athnuaadhach i a h-eòin o’n duslach.

Ar cainnt s ar cultur, car sealain ged rachadh an leagadh buileach, cuiridh am freumhan s an seann stoc dhiubh failleanan snodhaich is duilleach.

1946

STUMP AND SHOOTS

Come, Despondency, and consider. The tree that they felled last year – look! – this year you cannot see the stump for the multitude of shoots around it.

There is a green mist about it hiding from us the wound of the axe that brought down its crest; for the roots, which remained, begot a brood of young shoots against all expectation.

"That is one lacking from the wood, a gap in the grove that will never be closed" – but it still renewed its life with young shoots against all expectation.

"Farewell to it," we said, "and to its thrushes. The music of its birds will be heard no more. When a year and a year have passed, they will be singing afresh among its leaves.

The roots remained after the downfall, to draw life from the soil to which it belonged. In spite of woodmen and axe it has renewed its birds from the dust.

Our speech and our culture, though they should be wholly cast down for a time – their roots and their old stock will put forth sappy shoots and leaves again.
OLD STUMP AND YOUNG SHOOTS

Come, Despondency, gaze on this sign and ponder.

The tree they felled in the Spring of the year that is gone,
look! seek for the stump – this Spring you cannot find it
for the young shoots around it, so close have they grown.

There is a green mist about it, hiding
the wounds of the axe that humbled a crest that was tall;
for the same roots bided still, and sent up sunwards
a brood of slender stems where the old tree fell.

"There is one that the wood has lost forever;
a gap in the grove," we said "that will never close."
But it still renewed its life against expectation
with saplings, and, brought to earth, with the Spring it rose.

"Farewell to it," we said, "and to all its thrushes.
The music of its birds will be heard no more."
When a year and a year are gone they will yet be singing
again among leaves we thought no Spring would restore.

The old roots bided on after the felling,
to draw fresh life from the soil from which it grew.
In spite of woodman and axe, this stump we grieved for
has brought its leaves and its birds from the dust anew.

Our speech and culture – Despondency, consider –
though they be brought low for a time and forgotten by men,
the old stock still has its roots, and the roots will bring us
shoots and sap, branches and leaves again.
SCOTS ARCADIA

Walkan heich an gazean far —
\textit{listenan tae the wund in the rashes} —
sun an shadow, clood an clear
shift athwart the hillsides dappled.

Listenan tae the burns gang doon —
\textit{listenan tae the wund in the rashes} —
watchan Autumn doon the braes,
a spate o gowd amang the bracken.

Watch him rinn alang the glen —
\textit{listenan tae the wund in the rashes} —
edge the bramble leaves wi bluid,
kendle fire on rowan branches.

Glisteran rocks wi sun an rain —
\textit{listenan tae the wund in the rashes} —
the heather bields the broon muirhen,
the wae curlew cries lanesome sadness.

Birk an hazel, rowan reid —
\textit{listenan tae the wund in the rashes} —
bracken, heather; sae 'tis made,
oor ain Arcadia, wild an tranquil.

1946

1 \texttt{far} : faur 15
2 \texttt{wund} : wind 15
3 \texttt{shadow} : shadda 15 $\rightarrow$ shadda 30
5-20 : \textit{om.} 15

36 (30) 15 ; P36 $\mathbb{B} \mathbb{J}$
WE ABIDE FOR EVER

From the dun Grampians to the green Atlantic,
these glens beneath our living, moving skies
are still a hearth where glows a fire undying,
home of a handful, not of a folk that dies.

These glens and islands, towns by rocky harbours,
are towers untaken where our fathers were;
 surviving adverse centuries, defying
the siege of history, we yet are there.

Since that ill-fated day on bleak Culloden,
when wind and hail, lead and artillery,
when hireling horsemen facing unslept hunger
won, but not over souls, their victory,

wave upon wave of fate has roared against us –
a way of life undone in every thing,
e’en to the plaid once worn by kings in Scotland;
our leaders exiles with their exiled king.

The thatch ablaze, red sparks from flaming rafters –
go, Canada has need of head and hand;
the sombre woods receiving – sick and weary –
those that the sheep had driven from their land.

And more. For war and war in far-off countries
left blood-stained tartan strewn on hill and Howe.
Death, with his sudden, violent tiend to gather,
stalks through our story, even until now.

In spite of blows and weary prophesyings
we yet go forward, courage not being gone.
Come from a past of tempest and of trial –
hear, world, and hear mankind! – we yet live on.

We are the Gaels that centuries have not shaken;
We are no broken ghosts, no vanished race.
Our spirit cries in pride from clamorous chanters,
speaks with a tongue of ancient strength and grace.

As long as sun and moon go circling westward,
while, ebb and flow, pulses the constant tide,
while day from night, while light returns from darkness,
with speech and melody we will abide.

1946
UNA PIÙ CRUDEL DEL MARE (Orlando Innamorato)
One More Cruel Than The Sea

The sunny wind from off the land
veered to a greyer, colder air
against the shore, and vexed the sand
with restless foam. I saw her there.

The changing airt, the broken calm -
her faithless heart was there in them.
In blenching sea and paling sun
I saw her, never one the same.

When can I mind that she was one;
who, cold and kind, has changed for me
like the waters and the wind?
She is as cruel as the sea.

THE TWO NEIGHBOURS

Two that through windy nights kept company,
two in the dark, two on the sea at the steering,
with aye one another's bow-wave and wake to see,
the neighbour's light away on the beam plunging and soaring.

Two on blind nights seeking counsel in turn -
"Where will we head now?" — sharing their care and labours,
spoke across plashing waters from stern to stern,
comrades in calm, fellows in storm, night-sea neighbours.

Dark and daybreak, heat and hail had tried
and schooled the two in the master glance for esteeming
the curve of the outgoing net, the set of the tide,
the drift of wind and sea, the airt where the prey was swimming.

Two on the sea. And the one fell sick at last,
"for he was weak, the soul, and old". And the other
watched long nights by his bed, as on nights that were past
he watched from the stern for his light, sea-neighbour, in ill a brother.

Watched by the peep of a lamp long nights by his side;
brightened his mood, talking their sea-nights over;
followed him to Cill Ainndreis when he died,
and left him at peace in a lee that would feel no wind for ever.
NA CASAN AIR TÌR

Tha mo chasan air tìr
is mo lion air croich òrdail.
tha mo sgoth air a’ mhol
is na sgorraidhean foìdhpe.

Tha na sgorraidhean foìdhpe,
is mi gu dòigheil air cathair
mu choinnimh gealbhain mhòir éibhinn,
is mi ’g éisdeachd na gailinn.

Tha mi ’g éisdeachd na gailinn
ri sgal is toirm orgain,
agus torrunn na mara
air a’ chladach ’san dorcha.

Na’s mó cha chuir iad orm cùram,
s cha bhi an stiùireadh ’gam shàrach.
na’s mó cha leugh mi an losgadh,
s cha n-iarr mi coltas feadh bhàghan.

Cha bhi mi ’n eisimeil an losgaidh
is a’ choltais na’s fhaide;
am freasdal motor is llontan,
an taing na sine s luchd ceannaich.

Na’s mó cha téid làmh dhiom
air druim-àrcan no ceannair,
s cha n-fhaic mi rudhadh na gréine
trasd an speur cùl a’ Cheathraimh.

Iomachar s an Innis
is Rudha Sgibinis àlainn,
an Sgat Mòr is an Coileach –
seo soraidh is slàn leibh.

Tha ’n crann-céill’ air an fharadh.
Nì mo mhaic-sa a ghabhail.
Is eòl da camus is caolais
nach leig an aois dhomh bhith ’tathaich.

Faoadadh esan ri slòntan
fad na h-oidhche bhith ’caithris.
Tha mi fhéin air mo shocair,
is tha mo sgoth air a’ chladach.

1947?

27 Mòr : > Mhòr 33
32 dhomh : domh C (33)
34 oldhche : oidhche C (33)
FEET ASHORE

My feet are ashore and my net is hung neatly on a pole; my skiff is on the shingle, held up by the props.

The props hold her up, and I am sat comfortably in front of a merry big fire, listening to the gale.

I am listening to the gale’s shrieking and organ-thunder, and to the roar of the sea on the shore in the dark.

No more will they worry me, nor will the steering trouble me: no more will I read the burning, nor seek appearance in the bays.

I will no longer be dependent on burning and appearance, beholden to motor and nets, or indebted to weather and traders.

No more will I turn a hand to cork-rope or bridle-rope, nor will I see the sun streaking the sky red behind Kerry.

Imachar and Inchmarnock and lovely Skipness Point, the Great Skate and the Cockerel – here’s farewell and so long to you.

The helm’s in the loft – my son will put it to use. He knows of creeks and kyles that age will not let me frequent.

Let him keep vigil against the elements all night. I now am at rest, and my skiff on the beach.

MB

ARDLAMONT

Rain from windward, sharp and blinding;
sweet to hear my darling tramping
on her way, the seas unminding,
swinging forefoot wounding, stamping.

Steep to windward ridges breaking,
huddled down in flocks before her;
light she throws her head up, shaking
broken seas and spindrift o’er her.

1947?

B
FÀIRE

Inntinn acrach, cridhe tartmhor,
sealladh do’im falamh fad a fhradhairc,
a bheil na shàsaicheas bhur sireadh
thar faire idir na’s fhaid’ air aghaidh?

Còrsa ùr — an tuilleadh annas —
a lòchrain a’ fàs fann roimh’n ghréin air:
cainnt eil’ air àrdorus nam bùthan:
speur cinnidh ùr fo smùid an éirigh.

Uair is uair, còrsaichean ùra,
is cùinneadh ùr ’ga chur a cheannach
blais ùr a dh’fhlon: is sriut de chòmhradh
nach tuigeart deò dheth, taobh a’ chalaidh.

Taighean-soluis an tsaoghail,
a sheòlaidean, a chaoil, a chuantan,
ùpraid a cheidhe, dòmhlachd a chabhsair —
uisge-stiùrach ’ga chall ’sna stuidhan.

Is ann a tha dhà rudha Ghàidhealach,
s na shàsaicheas sùil, cridh’ is inntinn
an taobh a staigh dhiubh. Dh’fhàg thu, m’anam,
’nad dhéidh am bad is tobar t’iota.

Gu leòir a dh’imeachd s a dh’iomairt.
Gu leòir, a chrìdhe, de d’ ghràdadh eirithir.
Is ann mu loch s fo shléibhtean t’àraich
tha faire t’iarraidh s tlachd a sheasas.

Ach, tha fhios agam, ged chì mi
Cluaidh s Loch Fìne mu dheireadh,
tha faire ’n sin deas air Aòrann
a bhìos ’gam tharruing uair eile.

1947
Hungry mind, thirsty heart, gaze that finds empty all that falls within it – can it be that what will satisfy your seeking lies over some horizon further on?

A new coast – more novelties yet – its beacons growing dim along it before the sun: another tongue above the doors of the shops: the sky of a new nation with the smoke of their morning rising athwart it.

Time upon time, new coastlines, and a new coinage sent to buy a new taste of wine: and a flood of talk, not a word of it understood, along the side of the harbour.

The lighthouses of the world, its roadsteads, its straits, its oceans: the bustle of its quays, the thongs of its pavements – these are all wake that is lost among the waves.

There are two Highland forelands, and enough to satisfy eye, heart and mind lies inside them. You have left behind you, my soul, the place which is a well to quench your thirst.

Enough of travelling and bustle. Enough, heart, of your scrutiny of coastlines. It is around the loch and below the hills that watched you grow that you will find the horizon you are seeking, and pleasure that endures.

But I know, although I see Clyde and Loch Fyne at last, there is a horizon yonder south of Arran, that will be pulling at me again.

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THE SMOKY SMIRR O RAIN

A misty mornin’ doon the shore wi a hushed an’ caller air, an’ ne’er a breath frae East or Wast tie sway the rashes there, a sweet, sweet scent frae Laggan’s birks gaed breathin’ on its ane, their branches hingin beaded in the smoky smirr o rain.

The hills around war silent wi the mist alang the braes. The woods war dink an’ quiet wi dewy, glintin’ sprays. The thrushes didna raise for me, as I gaed bye alane, but a wee, wae cheep at passin’ in the smoky smirr o rain.

Rock an’ stane lay glisterin’ on aa the heichs abune. Cool an’ kind an’ whisperin’ it drifted gently doon, till hill an’ howe war rowed in it, an’ land an’ sea war gane. Aa was still an’ saft an’ silent in the smoky smirr o rain.

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1947
THE FRESH SAPLING

A fresh sapling in bloom in a dewy garden, standing alone, grace and growth and the fragrant scent of the branches; yon is a fitting image for my love, and even more fine her bearing and countenance. There is joy and warm affection in the cheerful welcome of her voice.

Where is anyone to be found with a heart, who, stirred by love, did not stand rooted adoringly upon catching sight of her in the street? All the comeliness and shapeliness of Creation rest in her. There is the beauty of the entire earth in the face of my love.

Every lock on her head gleams and blazes like gold. That she should be seen by my side, beloved, that would be sheer magic for me. Gentle speech, steadfast and true, and a greeting without guile; a low voice and sweet of tone, a tranquil voice like water down a glen.

Night and day and every season go past you never to return, besieging your young beauty with relentless malice. Surrender to love, and leave not the final victory to time, before your fair head and the warm glow of your cheeks submit to its forceful striving.

MB
THE FRESH SAPLING

Sapling that grew with dew and sunshine and days, leafy and slender, fresh the scent of its sprays, blooming unknown with none to speak in its praise, where I steal in alone in secret to gaze.

Slender she grew and straight, the one that I praise, a face I look long to, framed in red gold ablaze. And better than all I've said the spell of her ways, steadfast and true, with grace around her in rays.

When I was down I sought you always, my dear. Welcome I found there, kindness, solace and cheer. Gentle and low your slow, soft voice in my ear; sweet voice like the sound of running water to hear.

1947

EDINBURGH

A windy toon o cloods an' sunny glints; pinnacled, turret'd, stey an' steep grey toon; her soughin' gables sing their norlan' rants tae saut an' caller blufferts on her croon.

Steeple an' toor an' battlement stand bauld, an' gaze ootowre the kindly lands o Forth tae the braid seaward lift, far, clear an' cauld, an' front her airt, the stern, abidin' north.

Oh, I hae seen her leamin' frae afar, bricht thro the fleetin' bladder o the rain, an' happed an' hidden, rowed in norsea haar, secret an' dour, loom grandly, prood an' lane.

Tae stand an' watch frae oot the wooded west the heich ranks o her dignity gang by, an' see it surgein' seaward, crest on crest, her lang swell merchan' ridged against the sky.

1947
THE WALLS OF BALCLUTHA

The pale moon with her healing stream
drenches the world with light and calm;
whitens the rocks and dims the stars
along the eastern sky, and pours
an amber path across the sea.
Peace floods down broken crags and scree.
Southward, Orion over Bute
stamps with a restless, angry foot,
leans over Scotland in her sleep
and seems to spurn her, taut to leap
out across the sky, and stand
towering above some other land.

Yonder blaze the spangled Pleiades,
clear in the air as over warmer seas.
So Attic steersmen saw them, sure and bright,
and shaped their course through the Aegaean night.
So from the charred and smoking hill of Troy
they led Odysseus westward on his way.

The moon with tranquil witchcraft stills
the old sounds of the very hills.
The daylong roaring of the burns
is lulled and lowered, and it turns
to a fine thread of thin rilling.
The glittering summits, gently spilling
in rocky flanks, go curving, falling
chequered with shade and silver light,
still in the stillness of the night.
Thin lines that coil by dip and fold
the pathways go, alive of old,
broken and lost in hillside grass,
old echoing ways where no men pass.
Still, still, too still — still without peace
those roads to harried villages.

The rocky ways, grown green at last,
where bards and saints have passed,
harper and judge, ambassador,
piper and man of war
swordgirt and plaided, stepping long,
shield behind shoulder slung;
monk and physician, staid and slow,
merchant and galley crew.
The rocky ways, grown green at last,
where peace and war have passed,
shepherd and keeper have them now,
and tall the grasses grow
where learning walked and poetry,
music and history;
where kindness passed, and courage stepped
lightly, and laughter leaped
at wit and song. There no men come.
Their echoes all are dumb.

Here one who casts his care away
and, singing on a summer day,
by glen and hill goes wandering,
comes suddenly upon a thing
and halts before it, looking long,
and leaves half done his summer song.
Hidden in silent hollows, thronged
with slender birch, the homesteads wronged
by greed and haste and hidden fear,
look for the men that held them dear.

Gaunt on the hillsides, looming high,
standing gapped against the sky,
torn gables make their hard reproof
to those that see and stand aloof.
Drowning the acres won by man,
the brackens, thick where furrows ran
and generations laboured, hint
to those who see indifferent.
The spiked rush under broken walls,
on hearth and threshold, bends and thrills
and tosses to the summit wind.

Here it happened. Had they sinned
against the sun, the folk who sang
around these hearths till the rocks rang
and dark hills listened in the night?
Had they sinned against the light,
that stood and watched their thatch ablaze,
then turned to walk the world’s ways?
Gone are they, with their vanished years?
Lost like the smoke from trampled fires?

Those ravaged townships on a thousand hills
are in our being, and their memory fills
our songs and spirit, colouring our mind.
Bitterly gone. All gone. Men of our kind,
our kindly race, torn up and cast away.
Foreboding, so, is born with us, a gray
burden from birth. We must be rid of it.
And so the restless fear, felt, and so late,
to lose the past and our inheritance,
the colour of our thought, our native glance;
to watch, losing our inborn gait and stance,
our vision fade of what we were, and fall,
beaten without a battle, and lose all.
We fear defeat without a hint of war,
to follow on another people’s star,
warp ourselves out of being what we are,
to lose our name and nature, thought and mood,
the old, sure ground on which our fathers stood.
We go beneath that burden, and we grope
through chilling myths that blench the face of hope.
A trouble to the heart, an old distress,
fable of poverty and bitterness;
the fated withering of our ancient tree,
root and blossom, blight of history;
the fated blight that greys our springtime field,
il, done of old, and never to be healed;
starkness and bleakness innate in our land,
false tale to lame the spirit, hold the hand.
False, false. Black lie of our predestined dearth,
veiling the crime that made the mossgrown hearth,
the threshold soft with grass that knows no feet.
Of our own selves, believing, we repeat
that wrong upon ourselves, and hug defeat.

But we are men, and have both thought and will.
The same sun rises eastward on us still
as rose on Athens. There is in us yet
the seed that flowered in Attica; and, hot,
that flame – an ember near to glow again –
that flared and lit up Florence. We are men,
and hidden in us, restless, with its urge,
the seed of graciousness. Half heard, the surge
of the creative spirit breaks unstilled
upon our rocks. The spirit is not killed.
Let spring but strike its sunlight through our showers,
our sprays will vaunt a flourish of new flowers,
new blooming, shaped and coloured by the past.
Was will beget will be unwarped at last.

Orion, straddled over Bute,
rear his restless, angry foot,
and round the midnight Ploughshaft creeps
marking the hour, while Scotland sleeps.
SEEKER, REAPER

She's a seeker, thon boat. She's a solan's hert.
She's a solan's look. She'll strik doon oot o nowhere.
"Cast off!" she says, "Cast off!" red mad tie stert,
"The loch is wide wi wanderin' watter. Lowse me! Drive me! Go there!"
She's a greed for wind an goin', she's away! an goin' itsel.
She'd whiten the world's watter. She'd trail her wake through Hell.
She's a reaper, she's a river, she's a racer,
She's a teerer thon. It teks the wind tie pace her.

She's a leaper. She's a gled roar wi the sea afore her face.
She shootsers bye her anchor chain, she canna lie at peace.
She wanders at her anchor and feels the slidin' sea.
Norrard, sou'ard, east an west wilna let her be.
She bridles at her moorins along the quiet quay;
She canna lie at peace and be content in any lee.

As she listens tie the lappin' o the herbour watter,
lippin' at her shouther, the hale sea's pullin' at her;
as it runs its thereids o light along her sunny plankin',
"Up anchor, boys! Come, nightfall! Wester, sun!" she's thinkin'

The shape o her thoughts is on her in her mould from bow tie stern.
Her drivin' mood speaks oot o her wi the way her shootsers turn.
When she clears the dusky herbour where the evenin' windows drowse,
she sets her stern doon and she lifts her questin' bows.
Her motor rings and roars in her, birlin' its whirrin' tunes,
and over she sings and over again, while on the motor drones

Heiskir, Haiskir,
the Heids o Ayr,
Heiskir, Haiskir,
the Heids o Ayr,
Man and Canna,
they ken me there,
I've flung the seas they sent me
about me in the air.

I ken the spate o Cuan Sound,
the lurkin' Cairns o Coll;
Peel and Port Erin
and the bights o Donegal,
my anchor's felt the groond in ye,
I've raised ye, left ye all,
I've bucked yere ebb at daybreak,
and I've seen yere evenin' fall.
The rocks o Sleat sprang up and spoke
tie hear my motor roar;
my bow-wave's run tie brekk itsel
against the Skerryvore;
Rudha Hunish, Vatersay,
they've felt my wash afore.

I've seen them shine, and then go oot,
the lights o Stornoway;
I've watched Fife Ness grow faint and fade
fornent the brekk o day;
I ken the oorie, haary east
beyond the Isle o May.

Eastward's braw and westward,
aa the ways the rudder tilts;
norrard and sou'ard,
I never found their faults;
windward's a wakener,
and leeward's a waltz.

Aa night long ye hear it
chime through the motor's roar,
wi an older tune from far-off days
the loch has heard afore,
when foray's vauntin' high white sails
came slippin' up the shore.

Miklagarth, Skarphethinn,
Miklagarth, Skarphethinn,
Rómanborg, Skarphethinn,
Miklagarth, Skarphethinn.
Utan-ferth, Skarphethinn,
vestur-ferth, Skarphethinn,
skip o hof, Skarphethinn,
haf o býr, Skarphethinn,
býr o rör, Skarphethinn.
Utan-ferth, Skarphethinn,
suthur-ferth, Skarphethinn,
haf o lopi, Skarphethinn,
lopi o vindur, Skarphethinn,
býr o haf, Skarphethinn,
nes o nes, Skarphethinn.
Gullborg, Skarphethinn,
vínborg, Skarphethinn,
vínnaborg, Skarphethinn,
sunnanborg, Skarphethinn.
Miklagarth, Skarphethinn. *

fornent: about 20
63: when the low long ships from Norway 20 >when the striped sails o foray 30b
came ... up: went ... doon 55 went ... up 20 65-84: om. 55
65: preceded by Vik, vík, Skarphethinn / Skip, skip, Skarphethinn. ins. 30a
67-70: 68-67 70-69 20 76 haf: lögur 20

* Byzantium, Skarphethinn, Byzantium..., Rome-city..., Byzantium... . Outward journey..., westward journey..., ship and ocean..., ocean and fair wind..., fair wind and calm..., . Outward journey..., southward journey..., ocean and sky..., sky and wind..., fair wind and ocean..., point and point... . City of gold..., city of wine..., city of women..., southern city..., Byzantium... . MB
Long is sgioba, long is sgioba, 
gaoth is gilean, gaeth is gilean, 
muir is misneach, muir is misneach, 
sgòd an ruigheadh, sgòd an ruigheadh, 
seòl is sitheadh, seòl is sitheadh, 
creach is iomairt, creach is iomairt, 
creach is iolach, creach is iolach, 
fraoch is frionas, glaoth is frioghan, 
long is sgioba, long is sgioba.

This is the song the motor dirls, 
birlin’ loud and bright, 
and: The Calf o Man, the Rauchlin, 
I've seen them loom by night. 
I've kent the deep troughs take from me 
the lurchin’ Ailsa light.

When my gunnel’s worn wi raspin’ nets, 
and my sides are white wi salt, 
when my ropes unlay wi haulin’ 
and my steerin’s aa at fault; 
when my seems are chinked and strakes are crushed, 
and the decks are trampled tie spales, 
when the length o me is sterted 
wi hammerin’ intie gales; 
when my motor scarce can drive me 
from off some loud lee-shore, 
then anchor me in Tarbert, 
gie me chain. And no’ afore.

Aa the points o Scotland 
wi their wheelin’ lights in turn, 
I’ve raised them bright aheid, 
and I’ve sunk them faint astern, 
scourin’ by tie heidlands 
where new lights burn.

There’s a daft song trembles through me 
as my forefoot flings and becks, 
it echoes hollow in the howld, 
it dirls, runs wild and checks, 
it throbs and laughs at hidden rocks 
and aa their brokkin’ wrecks, 
it beats along my plankin’ 
and bluffets doon the decks.

* A ship and a crew, a ship and a crew; wind and lads, wind and lads; sea and spirit, sea and spirit; a sheet stretched hard, a sheet stretched hard; a sail and coursing, a sail and coursing; foray and turmoil, foray and turmoil; foray and outcry, foray and outcry; rage and anger, yelling and bristling; wind and lads, wind and lads; a ship and a crew, a ship and a crew.
Leeward, send me. Windward, send me.
Leeward, send me. Windward, send me.
Steer me, tend me. Steer me, tend me.
Weer me, mend me. Weer me, mend me.
Work me, spend me. Work me, spend me.
Risk me, fend me. Risk me, fend me.

The dawn sun, big and scarlet,
on the foggy Heids o Ayr;
the Badger's Moon dims Pladda light
wi her white, unblin'kin' stare;
Barra Soond, Lochboisdale,
I've whitened water there.

The blin' shores o Kilbrennan
in the murky pit o night,
they'v'watched the changin' colours
o my port and starboard light;
they'v'heard my capstain drummin' roond
in loch and kyle and bight.

Eastward's braw and westward,
aa the ways the rudder cants,
norrard's aye good hope for me,
and sou'ard's aye my chance,
windward's a loud welcomer,
and leeward's but a dance.

Heiskir, Haiskir,
the Heids o Ayr,
Heiskir, Haiskir,
the Old Heids o Ayr,
Man and Canna,
they ken me there,
I've pitched the seas they sent me
about me in the air,
I've belted aa the seas I've met
tie trailin' wisps o hair.

When the fleet's a maze o crossin' lights
along a windy coast,
she'll pass ye lik a dream,
she'll flit bye ye lik a ghost,
her lights stand up astern,
ye take her wash and she is lost.
She's seen, her lights grow big on ye,
she's level, and she's gone,
while her motor whines and rages
in her waist tie drive her on.
There's no the keel been laid
that she wilna overhaul;
when ye'd speak tie her abeam,
  she's through the night afore ye call.
She's by ye in a glint.
  Was it any boat ye saw?
She'll waltz the hale fleet,
  thon boat, she'll waltz them aa.

She's a solan, she's a tramper, she's a sea-shaker,
she's a hawk, she's a hammer, she's a big sea-breaker,
she's a falcon, she's a kestrel, she's a wide-night-seeker,
she's a river, she's a render, she's a foam-spray-waker.
She's a stieve sea-strider, she's a storm-course-keeper,
she's a tide-scour-bucker, she's a quick-light-leaper,
she's a stem-teerer, keel-teerer, seeker, finder, reaper.
She's Cast off! Anchor up! deid anchor-weary,
she's a chain-snubber, moorin'-strainer, restless herbour peerie.
She's a skyline-raiser, skyline-sinker, hull-down horizon-crosser,
she's foreland, foreland, on and on, a high-heid-tosser.
She's a glint, she's a glimmer, she's a glimpse, she's a fleeter,
she's an overhauler, leave-astern, a hale-fleet-beater;
she's a kyle-coulter, knot-reeler, thrang-speed-spinner,
her mood is moulded on her and the mind that made her's in her.
She's a wake-plough, foam-plough, spray-hammer, roarer,
she's a wind-anvil, crest-batterer, deep-trough-soarer,
she's a dance-step-turner, she's a broad-wake-scorer,
she's a sound-threider, bight-stringer, her hert runs oot afore her.
When the big long seas come on lik walls, cold-white-heided,
she doesna flinch a point for them. Straight her wake is threided.

Though they come from the world's rim
  along wi a livin' gale,
she'll gap and batter through them
  and teer her chosen trail.
She's stieve, thrawn, light, quick,
  fast, wild, gay;
she'll curtain the world wi hammerd seas,
  she'll drench the stars wi spray.
They can tower between her and the sky –
  she never felt their awe;
she'll walk them aa, thon trampin' boat,
  she'll rise and walk them aa.

She's a solan's hert, a solan's look;
  she canna thole a lee.
I'll coil her ropes and redd her nets,
  and ease her through a sea.
She's a seeker, she's a hawk, boys.
  Thon's the boat for me.
SPRING HERE NORTHAWAY

I tak ma buik and read in't sangs aboot the Spring.
It's aa Sooth winds and Zephyrs, a droll, fremmit thing.
It's fu' o Zephyrs whisperan and wee saft airs o wind;
brockit owre wi rosebuds, a gairden o the mind.
A souchan, seichan, wispy thing, wi silken wafts aa day
lispan amang they rosebuds that warm nae livan brae.
It's dandlet and it's fondlet. Almichty God! I fling
the buik frae me and lauch. Ah, no! It's no' oor Spring.

That's the Spring for lassie-boys, a waft Spring for gowks;
a Spring that's spun frae readan, o buiks grown oot o buiks;
fancy's season, forman oot o prent, wi fancy's looks.
It wad flaff awa e'en in a lull o the Spring that we ken best,
Spring frae the back o Lewis, oot o the steel Northwest.

Spelteran the deid-time's hardness
its lourd and foggy air,
flingan aa its ice tae flinders
in glints o frosty fire.
Loud and shoutan, swaggeran, vauntan
in gantan Winter's ear,
rairan in't: "Grey Winter, wander!"
"Ye'll gan tho ye are sweir."
"Rise oot frae aff the land, and foonder
whar nane will ken or care!"
Young and hard, no' tae be dauntont
Spring comes rantan here.

Winter gowls wi an auld man's anger,
that naethin' in the warld can please.
Spring cries keen wi a young man's daftness,
stridean eager owre the seas
that glister back the glint o his een,
and race wi his mood as on he flees.
What can the warld but lout and curtsey,
laith or no', whan he lets drive?
Aathing cants and rakes afore him,
shakes itsel and leaps alive.

He comes and asks the leave o nane.
He rairs in shrillan wi a run,
and clears a way for the northdrawn sun.
The heich, blae wa's o hail
come ramstam doon the loch,
and blench the sunlicht pale.

And the tall trees and laich,
there's nane but leans and gies
and streams lik a shiveran sauch.
45 Thro sunspoke bars he flees,
  huddlan on the ranks
  o snawblae cloods, owre seas
  aa steely flautchs and blinks
  o caller windy licht.
  In owre the steep sea-brinks
  Spring comes cauld and bricht.

52 Spring's a riever, a wudd-wind-stripper,
  Spring's a waukener, Spring's a whipper
  o writhean branch-tips. Spring's a shogger
  o bielded shaws, a flail, a flogger,
  an edge, a spear, a driven dagger,
  young thrust that gars grey Winter stagger.

58 There's nae land-wa' he wilna spring,
  nae frozen daith he wilna ding,
  nae snaw mortclaiths he wilna fling
  torn frae the craigs whar lourd they hing.
  His mornin challance-sang he'll sing
  in Winter's lyart beard, and sting
  the world's bluid tae heat. He'll wring
  life back frae frost. Nae dauntont thing,
  nor Wast-wind-hauntit. No' oor Spring.

66 1947
TRIÚIR AN EARRAICH
The Spring Three

Winter's windy sentence
in the mooth o March the ranter.
March comes wudd and wantons,
  and fleggs the dowff auld dranter.
    Gang yere ways, Winter!

March is swack and March is swank.
April aye has March tae thank
  for flinderan auld Winter's dure.
March comes hardy, March comes daft,
  March comes bauld wi sturt afore.
April follows, wi a waft
  o sun and rain and gentle air.
March drils "Up!", a daybreak drummer.
April gies a glisk o Simmer.

Frae dawn til nicht they talk.
Gowk answers chimean gowk
  through the yellow Beltane Day.
Kendle licht and leam.
Brindle ilka brae.
Tip the shaws wi bloom;
  hap the howes gay
in green and growth, May.

THE NERRA BOAT

There's no a boat in the hale wide loch can stay wi ye;
there's no a keel that leaves thon wake on aa the sea.
Sheeted in, ye lift lik a bird and leap lik a flame,
till the sea's a smother aroond a runner it canna tame.

Black and nerra, stieve and taper tie travel far.
Long and lean, lean and hungry for wind ye are.
A long white curve from sheet tie peak, yere taut stays cry,
  and the tiller trembles beneath the fingers as slant ye lie.

Trim and gethered in thegither, ye cant and drive,
and seek aheid more wind tie bring ye right alive.
Ye look aheid for brekkin' seas, and race tie meet
the watter black wi the flurry o wind on yere windward beat.

Send yere stem through the hert o the seas that run yere way,
and fling them scattered bye your shootters in bursts o spray.
Teer the watter, green or brokkin', and roard home
  a sheet lik a rod, and a lee-gunnel white wi a stream o foam.

1947-'48
Hing there, solan,
lik fate up astern;
the watch that doesna wander.
Swing there, solan.
Slip across the wind and turn
in a dippin' arc. Hover up thunder.
The height o a man and a man's grip in yere two wings there,
tipped wi black and set wi strength, the stievest in air.

Hing there, solan.
Swing there, solan.
Linger at yere ease
in the face o a teerin' breeze, solan.
The eyes in thon heid,
what dim hints can they read, solan,
beneath the flurry o white, the twist o a squall on the watter?

Is it the sea puckered wi syle, a stray, shallow scatter
o a brokkin shoal, torn asunder by nets in the night?
Or a gray, green, derk shadda that blunts the surface light,
derkenin' the hue o the loch for half a mile or more,
dullin' its waverin', flauchterin' glints, five faddoms doon oot there;
along the lip o the deep channel where the easy eddies are,
forgein' aheid through the slack edge o the spring-tide scour,
oot in the run o Carraig Nam Ban –
is thon what ye've seen again, solan?

Between Maol Dubh and Carraig Nam Ban, half-daft, half-wild,
there are white sheep skelterin' doon oor green field;
a huddle o a brekkin' sea and a rough rant o wind
hoarse over the low plaint o the oot-runnin' tide,
the deep, hollow farewell o the ebb to the shore o either side,
the oot-dreg, the sooth-dreg over the feet o the land.
Bright green, derk green, then liftin' intie light,
streakum-stroakum here and there wi wee scuds o white,
the loch's below ye, and, secret in't, thon grey shadda hides,
the solid back o a broad shoal wi its breist against the tide's.

Hing there, solan.
Swing there, solan.
Glance doon, solan;
a look lik a lance, solan.
Cant doon, solan, and let yerself drive.
[THEN FAREWELL, TARBERT . . ]

(Song)

Then farewell, Tarbert, for a while, farewell the hale Kintyre; farewell the loch, farewell the Sound, farewell the Kerry Shore. Farewell tie foreland, rock and strand, tie skerry, bight and hill; though I should trevel twinty lands ye’d stand afore me still.

May good luck go for neebor wi the boats that sail from here, in wind or calm tie hadd yere helm, wherever ye may steer. The sea would be a store for ye, if thoughts could work their will. I never watched a settin’ sun and didna wish ye well.

May good luck hadd yere steerin’ hand, and shine, a guidin’ light for aa the fleet, and may ye meet wi Fortune in the night. A redded net in every stern upon yere homeward way, and silver high in every howld afore the brekk o day.

The sea would be a store for ye, if thoughts could work their will. I never watched a settin’ sun and didna wish ye well. I’m mindin’ o ye every time I look towards the sea. I never hear the risin’ wind but aye I think on ye.

If wishin’ well could keep from ill, my wish would keep ye safe from shrouded shores by nerra seas, from shoal, from rock, from reef, from squall, from hail, from midnight gale, from daybrekk toen wi wind, and bring ye through the longest night that derkened kyle or sound.

When, choked wi storm, the mad Sou’-east leaps down on ye and raves, when risin’ fast below the gusts the Sound is hoarse wi waves, when aa is blin wi night and rain, and no’ a light tie see, may guidin’ Fortune swing yere stem and bring ye tie yere lee.

1947
NA TRÉIG DO THALAMH DŮTHCHAI

Do not forsake your native land for lands or for wealth, for honour or for harlotry.
For praise or for prayers do not forsake your native land, for promise or for bargain.
For law, for sword, for defiance do not forsake your native land; for trampling or for wounding, for fear or for threatening.
For losses, for weariness, for cares, for love, for peace, for good wishes, for kindly regard, for tranquil skies do not forsake your native land.
For the imperious wish of position or courts, though esteem and fame should be given you, do not forsake your native land.

Do not forsake your native land for lands or for wealth, for honour or for harlotry.
SMILE AND GO BY

Out go to everyone
Quick smile and ready laughter,
Warm look like the sun,
A voice like running water.

There is no still pool in him,
No linn brooding, quiet and dim.
   It lies but lightly, that warm look.
He curves, and flashes, and runs on.
His mood comes glinting, and is gone,
   Twisting, beyond a silent rock.

1947-'48

FEADAG GHÒRACH AN T-SLÉIBHE
The Daft Hill Plover

The daft hill plover tumbles,
and cries his birling cry,
tumbles and climbs and tumbles,
daft in the wide hill-sky.
Alone with his hill-top daftness,
he runs himself a race,
the windy, daft hill plover,
daft with wind and space.

1947-'48
FLOOER O THE GEAN

Flooer o the gean,
yere aefauld white she wore yestreen.
Wi gentle glances aye she socht me.
Dwell her thochts whaur dwalt her een?

Flooer o the broom,
gowden abune the thicket’s gloom,
I canna see ye as I pu’ ye.
My een are fu’, my hert is toom.

Flooeran slae,
white ye are, untried, in May.
When Simmer’s gane, an’ hard days rock ye,
yere fruit is black an’ bitter tae.

Bloom o the whin,
born frae the stabs an’ still their kin,
the een that seek her beauty yearn for
a flooer that wounds are deman in.

Flooer o the brier,
the haund that socht ye throbs wi fire.
The hert that socht her tholes its searan
tae see her mood grow sweir an’ tire.

Flooer o the thorn,
the haund that plucked at ye is torn.
Is anger’s edge in ane sae gracious?
Can thon sweet face be sherp wi scorn?

Spray o the pine,
that never fades nor faas tae crine,
green I pu’ ye, leal I ken ye.
I’ll weir the green I winna tine.

Fior di mento,
la roba vien e va come va il vento.
La bella donna fa l’uomo contento.

Flooer o the mint,
lik wund the warld’s goods come an’ are tint.
Wumman’s beauty gies man true content.

1947

4 whaur : whar P19 7 canna : scarce can P19 P19 *H
8 fu’, : fu; P19 11 When Summer : Whan Summer P19
11 et passim an’ : and P19 12 ‘black an’’ : black, and P19
18,22 haund : hand P19 27 I pu’ : I’ll pu’ P19
28 winna : wilna P19 29-34 : om. P19
THE CREW OF THE SHELISTER

The drollest crew that was ever afloat,
you went to sea in a shelister boat,
wi' a twig for a mast, and rigged wi' threid,
and a glessack for ballast, or was it a bead?

Their boathook was bent from the prong o' a fork,
the backrope was buoyed wi' crumbs o' cork,
the tiller was shaped from the skelf o' a match,
and the half o' a matchbox lid was the hatch.

The flaff o' a seagull flyin' by
near cowped their neebor. That isna a lie.
They were near away wi'it, and sprung their deck
when they ran aground on a bladder o' wreck.

Between the wreck and the side o' the pier
they came on watter ableeze, they sweir,
wi' burnin' as white as they'd ever seen.
And they crepped away wi' the heid o' a peen.

It answered; and so, at the lip o' the ebb,
you shot their net o' the spider's web,
in watter two inches deep or more,
so they cleared the ground wi' an inch to spare.

A thimble o' catch, and the hold was full.
The torch they lit was a wisp o' wool.
What was the basket was their affair;
you had neither a winch nor a brailer there.

But what they ringed was no' in my tale.
A cuddy to them was the size o' a whale.
Was it syle they struck low in in the bay,
or was it puddocks? I couldna say.

1947-'48
MADAME, A MONTE CASINO

Quando se parla, se ricorda,
quando non se parla, se ricorda,
quando non se ricorda, se ricorda —
Madame, a Monte Casino.

Quando se vive, se muore,
quando se muore, se muore,
quando non se muore, se muore —
Madame, a Monte Casino.

Quando se avanza, se avanza,
quando se fugge, se avanza,
quando non se avanza, se avanza —
Madame, a Monte Casino.

Quando se rimane, se avanza —
Madame, a Monte Casino.

Quando se rimane, se ritorna —
Madame, a Monte Casino.

(1945?) pub. 1949

MADAME, AT MONTE CASINO

When one speaks, one remembers; when one does not speak, one remembers; when one does not remember, one remembers, Madame, at Monte Casino.

When one lives, one dies; when one dies, one dies; when one does not die, one dies — Madame, at Monte Casino.

When one advances, one advances; when one flees, one advances; when one does not advance, one advances — Madame, at Monte Casino.

When one remains, one advances — Madame, at Monte Casino.

When one remains, one returns — Madame, at Monte Casino.

P36

[GONE AND GANE]

This war that's gane — what is gone?
This day that’s gane — is it gone?
This gone and gane gangs but on.

1948

What is : is it corr. 15 5 2 This : That 5 15 5
THE SUN OVER ATHENS

A broad bight and a bonny city,
streets and smoke and the sea curving,
a deed dreams over downcast houses,
a stroke sings about splintered gables,
a sword sighs about splintered doorposts;
the guns gaze and gant, thinking,
the night nods in the narrow corners,
the dark dwalms in the droning crannies,
the guns gaze together watching.

The streets stir and the stones are warming,
the houses can hear the hidden warning,
the guns gaze together watching.

The sun streams from the sky above them,
a hot hammer, higher than shrillness,
a slight stroke, a strait piercing,
sheer shining, shafts and standing,
sure shafts, a sheer hammer.
Good ground and gleaming water
for an era’s anchors, ancient shelter,
room for riding and right water
for an era’s anchors, an ancient roadstead,
for an era’s anchors, ancient haven
for an era’s anchors, war wanes in it
and wheels elsewhere to whip the water.

A lee and a long one, and a long story
looming along it, learning and battles,
through change unchanging, chains go roaring
link and link, linger and taugen
howl through hawseholes in history’s shelter,
hurry through hawseholes in history’s roadstead.
Drab drift from them as they drag the water,
ships and sheer to their sheering anchors,
gray like gulleys over grey water.
Arrayed like the rocks in ranging colours,
the colour of coastlines creeping by them,
grasp the ground and give to leeward.

Strewn like the stones on the stern horizon,
strewn like stones on the stern horizon.
The sun stands in the sky above them —
history’s hill and high marble,
screc and stones and scarred ridges,
highland, haven, headland, island,
a bright and brightness and broad curving.
Oil and island, and old fathoms,
oil in aisles, an old harbour,
islands, oars, an old haven.
Hymettus here, Hymettus eastward,
Hymettus hiding hollow and upland,
Salamis seaward, Salamis yonder,
Salamis stretched in a smirr from the water;
straying stour, the smoky Piræus,
rough with rubble, rienged by blasting,
a dark door to undeafened ages,
soundless strokes the sun hammers.
The sun strides, the sun goes westward,
the sun stands, the sun goes westward,
the sun circles, the sun goes westward;
ancient anchor for ages' thinking,
plain and port and pillars between them,
Attica, Attica, Attica rounded.
Hymettus, Hymettus, Hymettus eastward.
The sun circles, the sun goes westward.

The streets are stirring, the stones grow warmer;
the houses can hear the hidden warning;
the guns gaze together watching;
the batteries breathe the breath around them,
from bomb and blast, blare and screaming,
shock and shaking, shackled roaring,
tearing and tracer, tracks and curving,
sky and scarlet, skirting and climbing,
night and nothing, night and concussion
roaring, recoil, rending and fuming.
The guns gaze together watching.

Ancient anchor for ages' thinking,
plain and port and the pillars between them;
history's harbour, history's fathoms.
War watches and wanes above them
war waits and wanes around them
war waits and watches near them.

Ancient anchor for ages' thinking,
plain and port and pillars between them;
a lee for learning, a long story
a long lee, a low island.

Ancient anchor for ages' thinking,
the guns gaze together watching.
the sun stands, the sun goes westward.
War wavers and watches in it.

A sword swaivers that swept in the darkness;
the houses can hear the hidden warning,
the guns gaze together watching.
Link and link linger and tauten
chains in the channels of churning hawseholes,
drab like doom drift to leeward,
hulls and heel as they hear their anchors,
ships and sheer to their sheering anchors,
strife and steering, stream and hazes,
seas and steering, steering and heeding,
trails and tracks, tracer, skylines,
wakes and watching, wan mantles,
smoke in a smirr, smoke in a mantle,
wavering in wisps, wandering outward.
Ancient haven, history's harbour.

History's hill and high marble
plain and port and pillars between them,
a broad bight, a barren hillside,
a broad bight and a bonny city;
streets and smoke and the sea curving.

pub. 1957
CRUACH THARSUINN 'S NA H-OITEAGAN

An a eucinnnt an t-saoghail
as aobhar do d' thalach?
Eadar faire is faire
tha faithe roimh t'astar,
is a dh'oidhche 's a là dhuit
is slàn duit gun agadh.

Gu dé bhiodh tu ach rathail
leis gach latha tha 'g éirigh?
Sud shuas Cruach Tharsuinn
ag amharc 's ag éisteadh,
is tha goath fhionnar nan sliosan
ag ioma'irt mu d' cheumaibh.

AN T-ANMOCH AIR A’ MHONADH

Tha 'n solus 'gam fhagail,
's tha càrsan 'sa Chaol.

Tha 'n dorcha a' teàrnadh,
is tha an là 'dol a thaobh.

Tha mi 'm meadhon a' mhona'ide, ag coiseachd an fhraoich.

A’ toirt nan ceuman móir, fada,
gu bhith fada bho 'n taobh-s’!

Aig dà Loch na Machrach,
agus at air a’ ghaoith.

EVENING OUT ON THE MOORS

Light is dimming on me and there’s a hoarseness on the Sound.
Darkness descends and the day slips away.
I’m in the middle of the moors, walking the heather.
Taking long big strides to get away from this spot!
At the two Machair Lochs, and the wind ever swelling.
MIANNAN AN TAIRBEARTAICH
(mar gum b’ann le iasgair)

Gheobh mi rian mar rainn d’rain
air stéirmh nam an t-saoghadh;
an t-amhsan ’s an losgamh,
is coltas maraon iad;
a’ mhuc-mhara mu’n Choileach,
is an goireachan fhaoileag,
is coltas sin uile
a chuir an Cruithear ar taobhne.

’S e as fhèarr leam air thalamh
fuaim a’ chapstain ’s e ‘tìonnda’,
is an éigh thig gun fhosamh
o na roithleanan siùbhlach,
solus-lín ann an camus,
b’ e sin seallamh mo dhùrachd;
’s ar pùth fhéin teachd air aghart,
b’ e sin fradharc mo shùilean.

Nuair bhios steall fo a h-aisteidh,
ní i ’n t-astar a cheumamh;
’s gur e ’n ceòl e nach dona,
chùrd a motor r’ a éisteachd.
A bhith an ruith an Uilid Bheithe,
is a’ mheadainn ag éirigh,
an clàr-uachdar fo reòtach
agus dreòs air na speuran.

1960

THE TARBERTMAN’S WISHES
(as if by a fisherman)

I find order like song verses in the governance of Nature; the solan and the burning, they are appearances both; whales drifting about the Cock of Arran, and the gulls’ squabbling on the water, all those are appearances the Creator has laid our way.

What I love most in the world is the noise of the capstan turning, and the relentless din of the rolling capstan-drums; a torch-light in a bay would be the sight of my longing, and our own net-buoy moving in on us, a delight to my eyes.

With a full load beneath her hatches, she’ll stride any distance; and no unpleasing music to listen to, the drone of her motor. To be in the run of the Birch Burn at the breaking of day, the deck glistening with fish-scales and the skies ablaze.

MB
IS AOIBHINN LEAM AN DIUGH NA CHÌ

Is fada bhuamsa na nithean
a bhithinn 'gan àireamh,
a glinn, 's ceann nan tulach,
is na rudhachan sàile.

Is tìom dhomh nis a bhith 'g àireamh
nan àite is deise;
Sràid an Dòchais, Sràid Dhèòrsa,
Sràid Seòmar An t-Seilich.

Gach sràid is gach caolsràid,
clach is aol 's leacan riomhach;
Sràid A’ Phrionnssu mu dheireadh,
is i deisireach, dìreach.

1960

A JOY TO ME MY SURROUNDINGS TODAY

Far from me are the things I used to list in praise, the glens, the hilltop summits and the ocean headlands.

It's time now I list the places closer at hand: Hope Street, George Street, Sauchiehall Street.

Every street and every alley, stone and lime and elegant flagstones, and Princes Street finally, straight-running and open to the south.

MB
BÓD UILE

A' Phutag is Toll Chalum,
Na Lagain 's Rubha Dubh,
Roinn Chlòimheach 's Rubha Bòdach,
Baile Bhòid is sguir.

1960

ALL BUTE

Buttock Point and Glencallum Bay, The Laggans and Blackfarland Point, Fleecy Promontory and Bute Point, Rothesay and stop. MB

SREATHAN MEARACHDACH

Sud i thall an Toll A' Cheiligh
's i 'na seasamh fad an là,
gun ghlideachadh oiread 's òirleach,
Flòraidh Mhòr ri beul an làin.

1960

ERRONEOUS LINES

There she is, over in Cockerel Gap, standing there all day long, not budging as much as an inch, Big Florrie at the lip of the tide. MB

AN TÌDE ÀBHAISTEACH

Gìbìr agus moladh,
is coltach an là e,
Gaoth an iardheas 'na tacain,
is na frasan mar b'abhais.

1960

3 tacain : lasan 25

THE USUAL WEATHER

All glory and praise, it's a typical day, the southwest wind boding ill, and the showers as always. MB
KNAPDALE AND OTHER FARAWAY LANDS

Shamrock Creek and Baliver and the Indies entire; Rocky Pasture and Great Mound, Rome and Calcutta.  

Knapadle and Tirean Ciana Eile

Chìl Nàn Seamhrag 's Bail Ìomhair,
is na h-Innsean gu buileach;
Àirigh Chreachach 's Meall Mòr,
an Ròimh is Calcutta.

1960

DÀ THAOBH NA MAOILE

Rubha Réidh is Ceann Bharraidh,
's iad gun fhásadh bho dheò:
bithear dall le ca'-mara
eadar Arainn is Bòd.

1960

1 : IS FAIRGE DHI 'S GACH ÀITE  corr. 25
2  bhò : o  25

THE TWO SIDES OF THE MOYLE

Flat Point and Barra Head, unprotected from the wind:  

you can be blind with spindrift between Arran and Bute. 25
AN DRUIM-ÀRCAN 'S AN T-ÌOCHDAR

[Abandoned Draft]

Cha leig sinn cruit ort no cruaidhchas
a' togal luaidh' o gach rot
s tu na ràithean gu lèir sin
an Dùn Èideann air sgoil,
an Laidionn ga bhruaidhinn
s iad gur cuipeadh mar choin.
Gheibh thusa nad làmhan
an druim-àrcan, 's dèan boch.

Gheibh thusa nad làmhan
an druim-àrcan, s bi trang;
s bidh sinn air an ìochdar
'nar n-lobairtean ann,
am beul-mòr fo ar glùinean,
anns a' chrùban gu teann,
is na mill chruinne luaidhe
'tighinn an uachdar gu mall.

Dìith do'n chrann ann a toiseach
'nad sgoilear gu ceart
bidh tu dìreach 'nad sheasamh,
agus leigidh sinn leat;
is fad o'n Ghreugais ga sgriobhadh
gach ìochdar s sole bheag;
ann a deireadh bidh 'm balach,
is bithibh a' tarruing asteach.

Flor [?] thug thu 'n cutar
o Tholl na Muice fo 'siùil
tuath air Eilean na Muice
troimh Chaol Muile 's gach cùil;
ach fuaradh no fagsadh
no Camus a' Mhùir
aig dol fodha na gréine
ni thu éirigh o'n stiùir.

Rinn deireadh an fhoghmharaidh
goid oirnn gun fhios,
gach gaoth agus acain,
tarruing acair is driop;
dh'fhalbh gach leus as an losgabh
a bhraith na tomain cho tric,
is o gach árd a bhios neònach
a' ghailionn bheò, 's i gu'n tig.

Bidh e gseunach o fheasgar,
is 'na phneas air fad
leis na h-ùrd is an drumach
anns an dubhar mu seach.
Nuair théid gach motor 'na steud,
air an éigh "leigibh as",
leig thuas do sgios,
agus cnlodaigh an cat.

c.1960?
THE BOW-CORKS AND THE SOLE

We'll keep you from the back-humping jobs and the toil, as you lift the lead-weights from every surge, after all those seasons of schooling in Edinburgh, Latin being spoken and they whipping you like dogs. You'll get the bow-corks to hold, to your joy.

You'll get the bow-corks to hold, and keep busy; while we're at the sole like sacrificial victims, the gunnel under our knees, crouched and tense, as the round lead weights slowly come to the surface.

Close to the mast in her prow, a scholar indeed, you'll be standing there straight, and we'll let you be; far from the writing of Greek every bridle-rope and sole-rope; the boy will be in her stem, and let both of you haul.

[] you took the cutter from Pig Bay under sail, north of Pig Island, through the Sound of Mull and each cove; but windward or leeward or by Rampart Bay, when the sun goes down you will rise from the helm.

The tail-end of the autumn has secretly robbed us, every wind and moaning gust, anchor-hauling and bustle; all glow has left the burning, which so often betrayed the shoals, and from every ominous airt it's the wild gale descends.

It will be scowry from evening on, and an utter misery, with the hammer-squalls and the downpour succeeding each other in the dark. When every motor revs up at the shout of "let go!", give yourself a rest and go stroke the cat.

MB (except italics).
AIR SUIDH' ARTAIR DHOMH MOCHTHRATH

Là 's a' ghrian 'na lainnir,
air Suidh' Artair dhomh mochthrath,
's mi ag amharc Dhùn Sapaidh,
is nan glacagan conaisg;
ag gabhail beachd air a' mhachair,
's air na b-achaidhean toiceil,
fonn Loudaidh gun teirce,
an tür cararach thorach.

"Dèan am beachdachadh sàr-mhaith;
cha n-i 'Gharbhail a th'agad,
sùilean-cruthach nam moineach,
no mol Rudha Bhaltair;
ach fonn an cinnich na diasan
gu fialaidh, fàrsaing,
thr gun sgàirneach, gun chruadhlaich,
is i uaine, min, maiseach."

Chunnaic mise, 's bu tric sin,
'nì, le m' fhios, bu mhbò maise,
's a thig 'na smuin, is i ealadh,
chum nan creag-s' air Suidh' Artair;
b'e sin monadh Chinntrìre,
is Loch Fine 'ga amharc,
A' Gharbhaird 'ga mholadh,
cùirm is mol Rudha Bhaltair.

Tha sud ann, Cruach Tharsainn,
agus tlacht dhith gun tomhas;
Cruach An t-Sorchain 's A' Chaolbheinn,
's iad as caoiithe th' air domhan;
na fior ionaidean garbha,
Alld A' Gharbhais is Sgolaig,
a chuireadh sunnd air fear duilich,
's e 'falbh bhruthach is chnocan.

Am fraoch 's an roid chruaiche,
an luachair 's an roineach,
is na h-ùr-bhadain bheithe
fo na leathadan corraich,
an clob is a' chòineach,
gu'm b' eòlach mi orra;
gu'm b'e 'n leigeas air eucail
fàs an t-sléibhe 's a bholadh.

1 's a' ghrian 'na lainnir : grianach gun fhàfann 25
5 a' mhachair : na raointean marg: a' mhachair corr. 25
5-6 air ... toiceil : air a' cheàrama / a beir a bhàrr gu trom, toiceil marg. del. 25
10 Gharbhail : Gharbhaird 25 13 fonn : thr 25
17 sin : leam 25 19 is i : a bhios 25
20 chum : thar corr. 25 21 monadh : garbhlaich 25
24 cúirn : slios 25 29 fior > deagh marg: fior? 25
31 air fear duilich : am fear /dubhach corr./ 25
33 roid chruaiche : luachair corr. 25 34 an luachair : ins. 25
B'e 'n leigheas air tinneas,
   ceol a' ghlinne gun chlós air;
na h-alldain a' teárnadh
   bho na fásaichean tosdach.
Chuíreadh cruth an fhuinne fhiaidhaich,
   is e liathchreagach, molach,
gleus gu brath air an fhinear sin
   a bhiodh sealan 'ga choiseachd.

'S e sin tolm an h-earba,
   nach eil ceartach 'na siubhal,
's i 'g iarraidh didein taobh a'lddán
   no 'na deannruithe ri bruthach.
Is binn a ghioireas a' chroatag
   air oiteag nam mullach,
's i 'faicinn Arainn is Íle,
   is Cinnthre gu h-uile.

Bidh caoidh aig a' bhridein
   as t-oidhche 'san fheamainn,
fo 'n Earrainn Ghoineach gu h-loisal,
   is cha bu sgiós leinn a ghearan;
's e go air bhéag furtachd
   anns an dúbhar fo chreagan,
gus an éirich an lò a'ir
   bho árd Shlios A' Cheathraimh.

Bho thús saoghail 's gu suthain,
   fhuair e 'n t-úrram air àilleachd,
am fonn chaidh a chumadh
   is a luraiche gharbh air;
'na cholatas do-cheannasacht
   is ní ann e 'tha calma
is e uaitheach, garg, riomhach,
   bho Alld An Lin gus An Garbhald.

41 B'e : > Gu'm b'e 25 44 bho : o 25
45-48 : na fior mhullaichean corraich / aonranach loma, [ ] corr. 25
46 : gleus air corr. 25 48 : air a' chianalas corr. 25
49-56 : ins. marg. 25
49 'S e ... na h- : B'e (corr.) ... nan 25
50 nach eil : 's gun i marg. 25
51 'g iarraidh : 'ga corr. 25 53 a' chrotag : an crotach 25
53-54 : Is binn an tuchan 's a' choille / o na coileachan-dubha? marg. 25
55 's i faicinn : 'g amharc 25
55-56 : s e a ' sealltainn an adhair / eadar Arainn is Giodha marg. 25
57 Bidh caoidh : Gu'm biodh goir 25
58 : fad na h-oidhche /'s e 'gearan > san fheamainn/ 25
60 ghearran : cheilear corr. 25 61 ag goir : ag gairm 25
63 éirich : éireadadh 25 64 bho : o 25
65-66 : Sann tha boidhchead a shàraich, / gach àilleachd a dhealbhadh 25
67 am fonn : air fonn a > air an fhonn 25
68 gharbh : gharg 25 69 : Sgile Chalmain Eala 25
70 : is còrr a mhealas i 'gairbh > is i 'mealtainn a gairbh 25
71 : /'s e > gu/ do cheannasaithe, riomhach 25
72 bho ... An Garbhald : o ... a' Gharbhald 25
"Cha n-eil saoi gun a sheis' ann,
  ged thug thu treis mu d' thir allail.
Seall an earadheas bhuaitsa,
  agus tuairmsich a' ghabhail,
far a bheil Garbhaild an Loudaidh,
  's am monadh lom ann 'ga altrum.
Faic Sliabh Allair 's e riabhach,
  's a bhràithreach ciara gun ghainne."

"Is ann de t'abhaist 'bhith moltach
  mu 'n t-Sloc Dhomhainn 's mu 'n Ordaig;
mu Chruach Doire Léithe
  is Cnoc Na Meine cùl mòintich;
mu Rudha A' Ghrianain,
  is mu chian Lagan Ròaig.
Cluinnear glaodh bho Dhùn Iubhair
  a bheir an diog as an òran."

Och is och, an e 'thighinn
  air a' chinneach aig m' athair,
nair bha imrich an t-Sàthairn
  gus a' Ghàidhealtachd aca?
B' ann air là an deagh fhörtain
  a thog iad an acair.
Bidh mo bheannachd a chaoidh air,
  's air an sgoath 'rinn a' mhalairt.

Chunnaic Eilean Na Baintighearna
dath an cuid seòb bhuaidh;
thog iad Rudha Meall Daraich,
  's thug a-mach Toll A' Bhòdaich;
chuir iad sgothan air acair
  's b' e sin an dachaidh 's an eòlas.
Sin a' chomain a mhaireas,
  is gur Cainntrich fadheòidh sinn.

Thuirt iad "Slàn le Dùn Iubhair!"
  's thug am furan do 'n Tairbeirt,
do dhùthchaich na Gàidhlig,
  a' chàirdeis 's a' gharbhlaich.
Bu ghlic a chum iad 'san t-seòladh
  an crann-spèoid air A' Gharbhail
  's gur iad a' Ghàidhealtachd 's a' Ghàidhlig
  an dà nì 's fhèarr a tha 'n Albainn.
ON ARTHUR’S SEAT ONE MORNING

On a day of glittering sunshine, when I was on Arthur’s Seat one morning, I gazed on Dunsapie Rock and the wee dells of gorse and took stock of the coastal plain and the luxuriant fields, Lothian soil of no scarcity, the fertile easterly land.

"Take a good, long look; it is not Garvel you have here, the deep bogs of the hares or the pebble beach of Walter Point; but a soil in which the corn grows generously and expansively, a land free of stony slopes and hard rocky ground, verdant, smooth, and lovely."

I have seen, and frequently, something of greater beauty assuredly, the thought of which flies swiftly to these rocks on Arthur’s Seat: that was the plain of Kintyre, beheld by Loch Fyne, praised by Garvel, the cairns and shingle beach of Walter’s Point.

Sidelong Summit stands there, giving pleasure beyond measure; the Summit of the Footstool and Narrow Ben, the gentlest on earth; the truly untamed bounds, Altagalvash and Sgolaig, these would cheer a despondent man walking the slopes and hills.

The heather and bog-myrtle, the rushes and the fern, the fresh thickets of birch under the steep enclines, the flax and the moss, I have known them all; it was ever the remedy for infirmity, the fragrant mountain flora.
It was the remedy for sickness, the tireless music of the glen, the streams racing down from the high grounds happed in silence. The shape of the wild country, stone-grey and shaggy, would forever soothe and renew that man who would walk it a while.

That is the hillock of the roe, not wrong-footed in her movements as she takes refuge by a wee brook or goes tearing down a brae. Sweetly the plover's cry is carried in the breeze round the summits as she sights Arran and Isla and the whole of Kintyre.

By night the oyster-catcher wails in the tangle, down below, beyond the Sandy Patch, and we'd never tire of his complaint; he cries inconsolably in the shadow of the rocks till the day dawns on him from the high Kerry Slope.

Since the beginning of time and for evermore, it has been honoured with the greatest beauty, the land that was fashioned with such rough loveliness; in its untamable appearance it is a thing of great strength, proud, fierce and splendid, from the Flax Burn to Garvald.

"Every sage has his equal, though you have spent a good while evoking your glorious country. Look from you to the south-east and appraise the lie of the land, where Lothian's Garvalt stream runs, nursed by the bare plain. See gorgeous Allermuir, and its dusky brothers that lack in nothing."

"You are in the habit of singing the praises of the Deep Pit and the Thumb; of Grey Grove Summit and Mine Hill behind the moors; of Greeanan Point and of distant Lagan Ròaig. But there's a cry from Dunure that cuts short your song."

Och, och, is that an allusion to my father's people, when they embarked on their Saturday flitting and headed for Gaelic country? It was a day of good fortune when they lifted anchor. For evermore I will bless him and the crowd that made the exchange.

Lady Isle saw the colour of their sails in the distance, they raised Oaken Knowe Point and left the Bute Man's Bay behind; they anchored their skiffs, and made that their home and their country. Such is the debt that persists, and which has made Kintyre folk of us in the end.

They said "Farewell to Dunure", and gave their welcome to Tarbert, to the land of Gaelic, and of communality, the rough-terrained land. Wisely, as they sailed, was their bowsprit kept aligned on Garvel, for Gaelic and the Gàidhealtachd are the two best things in Scotland.

More powerful are the hills than any government on earth; more beneficial the virtues of the mountains than any education to be had in England; Tarbert, its livelihood won by skiff and herring-net, is mightier by far than Homer and Latin.

On causeway and moor, all my life I will praise it, Uaraidh and Ashens, Cormorant Hill and Battle Bay; from Slea ever to Claonaig, and surpassing every region in beauty, Kilcalmonell Parish, the rocky, unlevel country.

Inchkenneth and Leith, every ridge in Fife and every town, and the wisp of a faint wee breeze drifting over from Allermuir; what I beheld for a moment was a vision of Sgolaig and Bìrch Burn, as I looked out on fields and meadows, early one sunny morning on Arthur's Seat.
AIG AN FHEURLOCHAN

Aig an Fheurlochan uaigneach
air mo chuairtean 'san fhraoch,
s mi 'nam sheasamh car treiseig
anns a' bhreithneachadh chaol,
laigh an lâmh air mo ghualainn
gu suairc is gu caomh.
Rinn mi tiorndadh is amharc,
is cha n-fhaca mi 'h-aon.
Bha na mill is an t-aonach
s iad aonranach ann.
Cha n-fhaca mi gluasad
mu'n cuairt dhomb no thall.
Cha robb ach osag na gaoithe
anns an fhraoch gu mim, mall.
Labhair caoinghuth 'nam chluasan,
s cha leig mi 'm fuaim sin air chall.
"'S mi a' bhàrdachd 'tha fuireach
air na tuim s' air na mill.
Is iad m' fhuireachan taighhe
na cnuic chasa 'gam dhion.
Is tric a bhà mi a' fulang
fo'n uisge s fo'n tsin;
is tric a thür mi mo cheilear
s' na coilltean beithe sin shlos.
"Is tric a ghabh mise fsgadh
anns na Lagain ud thall.
Choinnich mis' thu 'sa Ghleannan,
ged is fada o'n án.
Chuir Bód is an Innis
an lídeadh 'nam cheann;
s' gur i Cruach Dhoire Léithe
dh'fhàg éibhinn mo rann.
"Treas air leacainnean Ghairbh-bheinn,
treas an garbh Choire Laoigh;
an Loch Abar nan stùcbeann
is an Dùthaich Mhic Aoidh;
am Both Chuideir, 'san Apainn
is an Raineach nan craobh;
ag iarraidh phuirt do na facail
air feadth Latharna chaoimh.

"Ann am Barraidh s an Uidhist
's ann cluinnear mo dhàin;
am Muile nam mòrbheann
is an Leòdhas an àigh:
feadh nan eileanan uile
nì mi fuireach is tâmh -
ann an Dùrsa s an Ile,
'san Eilean Sgitheanach àrd.

"Bha uair s bu leamsa am fearann
eadar Sealtainn is Tuaidh.
An Dùn Eideann nan righrean
bhithinn cinnteach á duais.
Bhidh teudan 'gan riaghladh
a chur rian dhomh air duain,
is gu'm freagradh gach balla
do dh' aic' tì ìs uaim.

"An dèidh gach allabain s ànràidh,
an dèidh gach tàire bu mhò,
nì mi fanachd gu h-àraid
aig na Gàidheil fadhdeidh,
's cha n-eil dhaibhsan ach éiseachd
ri gaoth nan slèibhtean le deòin,
agus cluinnear na facail
is casadh a' cheòil."

1960 (-76?)

33-36 : om. 25
38 : 60 25
39 : Thig [eadsa > iad] ri mo nàdur > 61 [but  s : is del.  dhaibhsan : dhaibh] 25
40 : 62 25
41 : 63 25
42 : an ealain 's an ceòl > agus [ealain > casadh/ a' cheòil ,  25
43 : flor ealain na h-Albann 25
44 : teachd o mo gharbhlaich nan còir.  25
BY THE GRASSY LOCHAN

By the solitary Grassy Lochan, on my wanderings in the heather, as I sat for a while in deep contemplation, the hand lay on my shoulder, kindly, gently. I turned to look, and saw no-one.

The hills and the uplands were there, desolate. I saw no movement around me or beyond. There was only the breath of the wind in the heather, soft and light. A sweet voice spoke in my ear, and that sound I will never forget.

6 "I am the poetry who dwells on the mounds and the hills. They are my dwelling and abode, the steep knolls that protect me. Often did I endure the wind and the tempest; often have I fashioned my birdsong in those birchwoods below.

"Often have I taken shelter in the Laggans out yonder. I met up with you in the Glennan, though that was long ago. Bute and Inchmarnock have put words in my head; and Grey Grove Summit has enlivened my verse.

12 "A while on the slopes of the Rough Ben, a while in wild Calf Corry; in Lochaber of the high rocky pinnacles and in Sutherland of the Mackays; in Balquidder, in Appin and in wooded Rannoch; seeking tunes for the words throughout mellow Lorne.

"In Barra and Uist my poems are heard, in Mull of the great mountains and in Lewis the fair: throughout all the isles I settle and take rest — in Jura and Isla and Skye of the high ridges.

17 "There was a time that mine was the land between Shetland and Tweed. In Edinburgh of the kings my reward was assured. Harpstrings would be tuned to accompany my songs, and every wall would echo with vowel-rime and alliteration.

"After all the wanderings and stormy times, after the greatest humiliations, I will finally dwell devotedly in the midst of the Gaels; they need only listen with goodwill to the wind in the hills, and they will hear the words and the winding music."

MB
LA FHEILL AINDREIS, 1960

Is feàrr i na 'ghrian
Air iarmait ghlain le aoibh,
Na'n t-soillearachd speur
Do Dhùn Eideann 's do'n tìr maraon;

Is feàrr i na'n tìm,
Is chì sinn i fhathast saor,
'S i seadh agus ciall
Ar bliadhna, is meud ar raoin;

'S gur iomnan 's an là-s'
A bheir bàrr air gach là 's gach naomh,
Crois gheal air ghrunnd gorm
'A' stoirmrich anns a' ghaoith.

1960

ST. ANDREW'S DAY, 1960

She is better than the sun bringing joy on a clear day, or than the brightness of skies, for Edinburgh and the entire country too;
She is better than time, and we shall yet see her free; she is the sense and meaning of our year, and the extent of our field;
And equal to this day which excels each day and each saint, a white cross on a blue ground cracking in the wind.

ORS' A' BHEÎST MHÎR RIS A' BHEÎST BHIG

O'n is mith thu, ithidh mi thu;
O'n is mion thu, ithidh mi thu;
Ged is clis thu, ithidh mi thu;
Nuair nach thios duit, ithidh mi thu;
O nach mis' thu, ithidh mi thu;
Gheobh mi ris thu, s ithidh mi thu;
Chì mi leis thu, s ithidh mi thu;
O'n is treis duit, ithidh mi thu;
O'n is driop e, ithidh mi thu;
O nach tric seo, ithidh mi thu;
O'n 's anis duinn, ithidh mi thu,
Agus, a rithisd, ithidh mi thu.
'S e mo ghlocas – ithidh mi thu.

1960

SAID THE BIG BEAST TO THE WEE BEAST

Since you’re common, I will eat you; since you’re tiny, I will eat you; though you’re nimble, I will eat you; when you least expect it, I will eat you; since you’re not me, I will eat you; I’ll catch you busy [exposed?!], and I will eat you; I’ll see you downstream [?], and I will eat you; as it’s your turn, I will eat you; to keep me busy, I will eat you; as this is rare, I will eat you; as it’s the here and now for us [?], I will eat you; and, one more time, I will eat you. My big-mouthed boast is - I will eat you.

MB
GÀIDHLIG IS GÈIDHLIG MU SEACH

AN STOIRM OIDHCHE

Is geur anochd fuaim na gaoithe,
is tu 'cluinntinn na géithe.
Amàireach 's amèireach
bidh e fèathail, 's mi éabhach.

An déidh na h-ldhche 's na h-oidhche,
nuair thig soillse na gréin' oirnn,
ńi mi éirigh is irigh
gu h-lbhinn 's gu h-éibhinn.

NA GEALAGAN

Is iad sin na fir chàlma
feadh nam bàghan 's nam beaghán,
le lùn-ghealag 's na sgàilean,
'nam meàirtich 's 'nam mèirligh.

1960

STANDARD AND DIALECT IN TURN

THE NIGHT STORM

High-pitched tonight is the sound of the wind, as you listen to the wind. Tomorrow it'll be calm, and I'll be glad.

After the night, when the sun shines bright on us, I'll rise happily.

THE SEA-TROUTS

Those are the strong men, about the bays, with a trout-net in the shadows, like thieves.

*The linguistic play of the originals has not been reproduced in translation. MB*
SEANN Ó MORDHA

'S i mo bharail gun iarraidh,
mur am fiach leibh a h-éisdeachd,
mu chùisean na bliadhna-s'
is gach bliadhna 'na dèidh seo,
gu'm bi a' ghrian gach beò mhadainn
gun agadh ag éirigh,
is gach feasgar gu cinnteach
a' dol sios fo na speuran.

Is bidh na miltean de'r cinneadh,
eadar fhir agus mh Nathan,
a' falbh uainn, mar bha roimhe,
air tòir a' chosnaidh gu Sasuinn,
agus Sasunnaich 'nan ceudan
astaigh ag càladh 'na mhalairt -
mar sin ann am bliadhna
s do thòrr de bhliadhnachan fhathast.

1960

OLD MOORE

It is my opinion unasked for, if you do not think it worth listening to, about the affairs of this year
and every year that follows it, that, every living morning, the sun will without a doubt be rising, and
every evening will certainly be going down from the skies.

And there will be thousands of our nation, both men and women, who will be leaving us, as of old, to
seek work in England, and Englishmen in their hundreds creeping in as a counterpart – thus it will be
with this year and a heap of years yet.

t : OLD MOORE 1962 21
6 seek : seek for 53
7 it will : will it 53 P18
SGEUMA GHLINN NIBHEIS

Is don’ e, Sgurr a’ Mhàim,
S cha n-fheàrr e a Bheinn Nibheis;
Tachdaidh iad an gleann
Bho Steall gu Meall An t-Suidhe;
"Amar-sgùrainn" corr
"An domhain mhòir" ’ga mhìlleadh,
Le fàlbh is stad chur ann,
Nach do gheall am filidh.

Fad nan linntean ann
Bha ’bheinn s an gleann ’nar n-anam;
Bha ’m fàsach fraoich ri ’r cùl
Ag ùrachadh ar n-aigne.
Abhainn Nibheis mhear,
Is maigh a bheir fo smachd i;
Is smachd oirn sin gu léir,
Is leugheadh sinne ’aimheal.

1960

THE GLEN NEVIS SCHEME

The situation is bleak, Sgurr A’ Mhàim, and it will not get better, Ben Nevis; they will choke up the glen from Steall to Meall An t-Suidhe; the unique "scouring-trough of the wide world" is being destroyed, with people away and all farming ceased, things which the poet did not predict.

For ages past, hill and glen have been in our soul; the heathery wild stretched behind us, refreshing our spirit. Boyant River Nevis, woe to they who bring it under control; that control is over all of us, and we are not blind to its grievous implications [?].

MB
NA GIOMAICH IS BREST IS DÜN ÉIDEANN

Cha leugh sibh na rainn seo
   Gu ceann leis an tiomadh,
Ged a mhùch sinn an éigheach
   Mu dhéidhinn nan giomach.

Chuir iad sgeul oirnn á Barraidh
   Air a' bhrad 'bha mu'n chòrsa,
S na comh Cheiltich 'ga dianamh –
   S chuir an sgeul bharr ar dòigh sinn.

Bha sinn an clos, is cho bodhar
   Ri gobhar na cairte;
S tha sinn rudeiginn dall ann;
   Is cha chàll na gheobh caraid.

Na bithibh a' fàsgadh ar cridhe
   le gach fios mu gach fulang.
A bhith 'gearan mu'n ghnothuch,
   Is crosda sin buileach.

1960

THE LOBSTERS, BREST, AND EDINBURGH

You will not read these verses to their conclusion for grief, though we have quelled their protests about the lobster affair.

They sent us word from Barra of the theft around the coast perpetrated by their Celtic cousins - and the tale rather perturbed us.

We kept silent, and as deaf as the proverbial goat of the cart; and are also a touch blind; and a friend's gain is no loss.

Do not come wringing our hearts with the smallest detail of every wrong. Complaining of the business is an utter annoyance.

MB
MONADH DUBH BHRAIDALBANN

Is Alba seo gu cinnteach,  
is Alba seo gun strlochadh,  
is Alba seo gun chireadh,  
  s an chreadh tu 'n ceò?
Is Alba seo s i rlomhach,  
is Alba seo s i rloghail,  
seo Alba nach toir cisean  
s i cinnteach bho thòs.

Seo Alba a' sior dhireadh  
o Choireach Bà 'na mltean  
de bheanntan àrda, fiorchas  
  gu lòsal nan lòn;  
gu fàire thall a' sìneadh,  
gu sàile s thun a Criche,  
s a h-àit am measg nan tìrean  
  glè chinnteach fadhòidh.

1960-61

THE BLACK MOUNT OF BREADALBANE

This is Scotland of a certainty; this is the Scotland that does not submit; this is Scotland uncombed – and would you comb the mist? This is Scotland ornate; this is Scotland the royal; this is the Scotland that does not pay tribute, and she certain from the beginning.

This is Scotland ever ascending from Coireach Bà in miles of precipitous, high mountains, stretching out to the low ground of the loanings – stretching to the horizon over yonder, to the sea and to her Border, and her place among the countries a certainty in the end.
CATH GAIRBHEACH

Briseadh madainn là na bàinidh mhòir aig Gairbheach; bu tràth a bhris, tràth a bhris. Rinn iad àrach dheth gun iochd, gun och aig Gairbheach, àrd is mith, àrd is mith. Thachair ruaim ri gruaim, thachair, an Cath Gairbheach; thachair sin, thachair sin. Gu dé rinn Iarla Mhàirr màileach an Cath Gairbheach, s gun e glic, s gun e glic? Roinn e Alba 'na dà leth leitreach an Cath Gairbheach; rinn e sin, rinn e sin. Is fada bhitheas cuimhn' againn air Cath Gairbheach; 's fada sin, 's fada sin. Is fada bhitheas caoidh againn air Cath Gairbheach – thà anis, thà anis.

[1948?] 1960-61

THE BATTLE OF HARLAW

Daybreak on the day of the great frenzy at Harlaw; early it broke, early it broke. A battlefield they made of it without mercy or pity at Harlaw, noble and peasant, noble and peasant. Red anger met sullen gloom, aye, at the Battle of Harlaw; they met indeed, met indeed. What did he do, the chainmailed Earl of Marr at the Battle of Harlaw, none too wise, none too wise? He divided Scotland in two halves at the Battle of Harlaw; that he did, that he did. Long will we bear in mind the Battle of Harlaw; long indeed, long indeed. Long will we rue the Battle of Harlaw – now we do, now we do.

MB

FOR THE CUTTY SARK MOORED IN THE PORT OF LONDON

Will the lifts haud the yerd
in the saft southern air?
Will the hooks haud the groond
at aa doon there?
Hook or hawser, aa that hauds her,
she'll lift when nane's aware,
an' trail thaim to the Gairloch
on her ain, that's shair.

She was aye winnan hame
frae soothward, dawn an' derk.
Her skysails spiered and spied
efter Clyde, morn an' mirk.
Efter aa the knots she reeled,
her warslean an' wark,
I spay we'll say it again:
"Weel dune, Cutty Sark!"

1960-61

5 Hook or: Hookmor  sic

*39P
ABUNE THE GUTTED HADDIE

It's sweir, an ye sae thrang wi't;
ye dwaam fu lang, ma laddie.
Ye'll fin yere rhymes a' roond ye
abune the Gutted Haddie.

They say the causie's shochlie,
its setts are for the aiver;
ae day, thoch, we maun roose it —
lik screes, it's Scotland's ivar.

Eenoo, for that comes efter,
rise wi the waft that blaws ye.
The heichs an whaups wull sair ye;
yon's whaur the causie ca's ye.

Aboot they braes gang verses,
whan carses dinna grow them.
they're near the levrocks yonder
wi a' the howes ablow them.

They'll kythe fornent ye thonder,
gin Willie wi ye's Wullie;
an nivar get yere spleddrach,
but kep them in a gulley.

1960-61
FAODAIDH DUINE A THEANG’ A CHUMAIL ’SAN DROCH-UAIR
(Seanfhacal Lallans)

Gabhadh cuid againn smuairein
is an smuaintean air Sgàin;

S cha do thoill i sin bhuapa,
S gur misneach bhuan i nach tràigh.

Sin an seann ainm cliuitedh
‘Chuireadh sùrd oirn ’s gach càs,

Is a thogadh bho’n chùil sinn
As ar crùban beag tàimh.

Cha n-fhaigh sinn aon là dheth,
Domhnall Dàsachdach, nis,

Ach tha ’ainm ann a rabhadh
Gu bhith bras le cur-leis.

Cluinnear tagradh nach sgledh bhuainn;
Bidh sinn beò, s coltach ris;

Bidh sinn beòdha is beadaidh,
S gheobh sinn Bearaig air ais.

1960-61

P27

A MAN MAY HAULD HIS TONGUE IN AN ILL-TIME
(Scots Proverb)

Some among us are despondent as they ponder on Scone;
She has not deserved that from them, for she is an inexhaustible source of inspiration.
Hers is the name of ancient renown that would cheer our spirits in every misfortune,
And would lift us up from the corner where quiescent we crouched.
Not one day will we draw out of Donald the Furious now,
But his name warns us yet to be bold and ambitious.
A claim will be heard from us that will be no empty talk; we shall be alive, and act as such.
We will be passionate and assertive, and gain Berwick again.

MB
GHALISTIG PHAIRC NA BÀNRIGH

Bu ghlaistig nach truagh mi,
s bu ghruarach 'bha dealbhach,
nuair bha 'Ghàidhlig gu buadhach
gu Tuaidh againn, s earbsa.
Cuairt chrom agam mochthrath
gu Boglach An t'Sealgair,
s mo laighe chruteach mus dorchnaich
air Meall A' Chonaigs lòn feirge.

S a Chaluim a' Chinn Mhòir,
cha bhòsd thu aig seanachadh!
S a Chaluim a' Chinn Mhòir,
a rinn a' ghòraiche leanabaidh!
Ma lòn thu am beul oirn
le Beurla 'nad latha dhuit,
bheir mi fhathast an caibeal
o do Mhairrearaid Bheannaichte.

1960-61

9,11 Chaluim : Chalum 53
14 latha : bheatha P27 53
16 o : bho P27 Mhairrearaid : Mhairrearad P27 53

THE SPECTRAL WOMAN OF THE QUEEN'S PARK

I was a spectral woman who was not pitiful, and I was a maiden who was comely, when we had
Gaelic victorious to the Tweed, and confidence for days to come. Bent and stooping I make my way
early to Hunter's Bog, and I lie down hunched up, before darkness falls, on Whinny Knowe full of
rage.

And Malcom Canmore, you are no shennachy's boast! And Malcom Canmore, who committed the
childish folly! If you filled our mouths with English while you were living, I will yet take the chapel
from your Blessed Margaret.

53 *21
A NATIONALIST SONG

Ho-ro my brown-haired lass, will you go with me (x3) and I'll buy a brindled coat for you.

I'll buy a brindled coat for you, one Scottish and right elegant for you, the colours of heather and heath for you, I'll buy a brindled coat for you.

There are worlds and worlds aplenty. I would cast them across the sky and make clear a level road before me, in my desire to get a brindled coat for you.

The coat that would lie on you comfortably is the colour of the moor and the heather. Right well would it suit your free nature. My love, a brindled coat you'll wear.

It's not the lily nor the rose that'll put their hue on your distinctive dress, but native colours and a traditional style which the heather of the brindled moorlands will bestow on you.
**THE WELCOME OF THE QUEEN FROM CLYDE**

She felt her engines at work as they gathered speed and her road opened out onto the seas; cold storms the silk for her shoulders, a great fine lady on the waves.

Scotland will guide her, if the Clyde built her, she is good on the ocean as she sets off from us. Barra will pilot her, as was ever her duty, and Lewis will steer her in her travels.

The Holy Loch witnessed her maiden journey. Dunoon and Toward by Bute received the waves she slowly pushed aside, and white-shored, green Kilchattan.

Pladda and the Moyle and solitary Sanda, Ailsa Craig and the Maiden Moyle above her - the welcome yonder that is on her mind, without a doubt Nova Scotia will receive it.
RO FHAD’ AIR A’ MHULLACH

Seo do threis de Choir’ Odhar, 's tu ’nad ghobhar air tòrr
Air Slià; 's an stailc ort, am fan thu ri d’bhèò?
Thig an cèòban gu ciùin ort, thig an ciùran 's an cèò,
thig am feasgar gun fhios ort; och, gildigh 's bi folbh.

Thig am feasgar gu clis ort, thig an Grioglachan òir,
thig an oldhche gun ghealach a’ falach gach Foid.
Bi tèàrnadh, a bhalaigh; och, caraigh, 's bi còir.
Thig an ceathach 's an dubhar; gildigh thusa, 's bi folbh.

1960-61

TOO LONG ON THE SUMMIT

You’ve had your while at Dun Corry, perched like a goat on a rock on Sleaa; and as stubborn too, will you wait here for ever? The smirr will gently close in on you, and the drizzle and mist, and the evening will creep in on you; come on, stir and get going.

The evening will swiftly come on you, and the Pleiades of gold, and the moonless night will come, concealing every clod. Start going back down, lad; come on, move and be sensible. The fog and the dark will be here soon; stir yourself and get going.

MB
CNOCAN A' CHAIT FHIADHAICH

Fhuair an cnocan an t-ainm,
is dh'halbh e fhéin,
s a sheòrsa leis
chaidh as gu léir.
S tha saoghal calldaidh
gu mall s gu réidh
a' dlùthachadh dlùth
mu 'dhùthaich 'na dhéidh.

Tha gach mionaid as tìr,
'san linn seo fhéin,
spiorad cait fhìadhachaich
iadhta nach eug,
spògan, spuirean
'gan cur an streup,
a' spàirn gu fhìadhachaich,
fiacaill s deud.

1960-61

7 dlùthachadh : dùnadh corr. 31
9 Tha gach mionaid : Gu bheil gach mionaid 31 Tha, gach mionaid, P27
10 linn : tlom 31

WILD CAT KNOWE

The knowe got the name, and he himself went, and with him his kind perished entirely. And slowly and smoothly a tame world is closing in close about his country after him.

Every minute in this land, in this very century, there is a wild cat spirit, encircled, which will not die, paws and talons thrown into the fight, struggling wildly, tooth and fang.

53 *21
ACARSAIDEAN A' CHUTTY SARK

Bha gach fear 'san sgioba 'gabhail mórán eagail,
Ri faicinn Ros Neodha s an loch 'san dol seachad,
Gu'n robh nì a dhith orr' a bhiodh 'na lith s 'na chneasachd,
Bho'n bha 'n Cutty Sark air acair mu dheas bhuainn.

Labhair Suidh' An Easbuig s Cill Chreagain le chéile:
"Is fadal buan gach faire dhuinn, mur faic sinn fhéin i.
Bhiodh i na bu nàdurra air àrainn a h-euchdan.
Am b'fhèarr dhi bhith fuireach bhuainn am Punto Arénas?"

'Na tâmh ann an Tàmis an tàrr i fuireach,
A' siaradh air a slabhruidean, docheannsaicht' uile,
Ma chaill i Rudha Na Cloiche is Cille Mhunna,
Is Seann Dùn a h-àbhaiste gu bràth bràth buileach?

S na h-acarasaidean céine – is cha bu ghann iad –
Anns an do chuir a dreeuchd i – is cha bu mhall i.
Bu chóir a cur gu dìithchasach le clùb, s b'e 'n t-ám e,
An Geàrrloch Chluaidh gu h-eòlach air a sàr dhà slabhruideach.

1960-61

THE CUTTY SARK'S MOORINGS

Everyman in the crew was mightily worried, at the sight of Rosneath and the loch going past, that they lacked something that would bring them colour and healing since the Cutty Sark was moored far from us down south.

Up spoke Helensburgh and Kilcreggan together: "Long and endless each watch for us, if we see nothing of her. It would be more natural to have her on the site of her exploits. Would she rather stay far from us in Punta Arénas?"

Will it befall her to be idle away on the Thames, tugging at her chains, all untamed, if she has lost for evermore Cloch Point and Kilmun, and Shandon of her wont?

And also the foreign anchorages (and they were not few) to which her career took her (she was not slow in going). It is high time that she was berthed with acclaim where her roots are, in the familiar Gare Loch on Clyde, on her two great chains.

MB
AN CNOCAN FRAOICH IS PADRE DANTE

Siud thusa air each taobh 's mi 'sealltuinn bhuamsa.
Mo ghaol, an tulach is a còmhnaid torrach;
Mo chion, an cnoc ud lochdar agus uachdar.

Lìon thu mo shùilean domh air an ceud fhosgladh,
is chì mi, nuair a dhùìnear iad mu dheireadh,
Do fhraoch 's do chreagan is t'fhonn ghràinnsear fodhad.

Pàrrthas no Iutharna cha toir dhìom aon leathad.
Càrnan no bruthach dhliot, lèana no glacag
Is tu 'nàd aìslint shìorruidh 'ga mo leantainn.

Bidh sinn 'nàr n-eòlaich fhathast, 's tu 'nàd aìslint
Is mi 'nàm thannasg. Cuir iar an Aog leinn
Là bithbhuan nach do smaointich Padre Dante.

Nach robh a bhos an taobh a rinn e glasadh.

1960-61

THE HEATHER KNOWE AND PADRE DANTE

There you are all around me as I look forth. My love, the knoll and its fertile terraces; my desire, that hill, its uplands and low grounds.

You filled my eyes the first time they opened, and when they finally close for ever I'll see your heather and your rocks and the fertile earth at your foot.

Paradise or Inferno will not deprive me of one slope, nor take one stone-heap or brae off you, one green meadow or dell, as you follow me, a vision immortal.

We shall still be acquainted, you a vision, I a ghost. We will prevail over Death, on an everlasting day not envisaged by Padre Dante.

Who was never in these parts at the advance of the dawn.

MB
NA FIACHAN GAOLACH
(Trí Rainn is Amhran)

Thug mi treis dhuit, thug mi tràth dhuit,
thug mi greis dhuit s ionadh ràidh dhuit,
thug mi treis is gach aon là dhuit,
s gu là bràth dhuit mo ghrian s mo speuran.

Fhuair mi bith uait air cheann nam bliadhna,
fhuair gach camhanach is ciaradh,
gach là màireach s mo chian nan cian uait,
is bheir mi fianuis air siud le spéis duit.

Cha n-eil 'san domhan uil' ach t'fhàire;
cha n-eil 'na rannaibh ruadh' ach t'airdean;
cha n-eil 'sna thùras sinn ach t'abhais;
s bheir mi gu bràth dhuit slàn s gu lèir siud.

Ceangal

Làithean is bliadhnanach, iarmait is cruinne-cé,
na ràidhmean 'gan riaghladh s a' ghrían a' toirt dhaibh an gné,
fàsach is diasan - is fial bheir thu dhuinn gach seud,
is pàighear na fiachan sin gun iarraidh, gun athadh dhuit fhéin.

1960-61

DEBTS OF LOVE
(Three Verses and Envoi)

I gave you a while, I gave you a time; I gave you a space and many a season; I gave you a while and each and every day, and I gave you for ever my sun and my skies.

I got being from you to face the years; from you I got each morning twilight and darkening of evening; from you I got my every tomorrow and ages of old; and to you I will bear witness of that with esteem and regard for you.

The whole world is only your horizon; all its regions are only your airts; all that we devise is only your accustomed wont — and I will give you all that for ever, whole and entire.

Envoi

Days and years, the firmament and the universe, the seasons as they are ordained and the sun giving them their nature, waste land and cornland — generously you give us each treasure, and these debts will be repaid to you without hesitation, without asking.

or The Nationalist to Scotland..... 20b

I: 20a 20b "21; P27a P27b
3 treis : treis dhuit P27a 5, 7 uait : bhuat P27a
8 duilt : dhuit 20b P27b 12-13 Ceangal : Amhran P27a
13 bliadhnachan : bliadhnaichean P27a
16 na fiachan : am fiach P27a athadh : stad P27a 20a

4 ages : my ages 20b to you : om. 20a 20b
5 of that with esteem and : to that with loving 20b 6 all : and all 20b
10 these : those 20b hesitation ... asking : asking ... hesitation 20a 20b
AR CNOCAN FRAOICH

Cha n-eil gach stios mar bhà. Chuir e oirnne bàire, na fhuair uiread àilleachd de shàrach faoin. 'S ann a dh’fhàs a’ chopag an àite chroitean, s tha làraichean s iad tosdaich 'nar Cnocan Fraoich. 'S e a chur an tre an leigheas dilleas air gach gníomh dubh dìmeas a char d’a thaobh – shaltair ainneart obann air gasain mhonaidh, s a dhaoine fhéin ’gan lot air ar Cnocan Fraoich.

An déidh gach fòirneirt, cur-fàs is fògraídh tha ’mhìsnéach is an dòchas s a’ chóir ’nan laoich. Air fonn, air creagan, air gach aon leathad bidh saoghal farsuing, leathann aig Nàisean saor. Ar n-ulaidh cnocain, ar bunait shocrach, ri turadh no ri doinionn nach bog a chaoidh – fraoch is fochann, lom no molach, cha deach e fòs a mholadh, ar Cnocan Fraoich.

1960

OUR LITTLE HEATHER HILL

Not every slope is as it was. The trials, begot by folly, which so much beauty had to endure, have been a goal driven against us. The docken has grown in the place of crofts, and there are silent ruined village sites on our Little Heather Hill. To speak out boldly is the faithful cure for all the black deeds of despite that have come its way – sudden violence trampled on moorland heather sprays, and its own people were wounded on our Little Heather Hill.

After all the violence, laying waste and exiling, courage and hope and the right are warriors. On soil, on rocks, on each and every slope there will be a wide and spacious world for a free Nation. Our treasure of a knowe, our firm foundation which will never be shaken in sun or tempest – heather and blade of grass, where it is bare or where it is shaggy, it has not yet been rightly praised, our Little Heather Hill.
A' PHÌOB MHÓR AGAINN

Thug sin bàrr air gach gaoith,
S air gach taobh as an tàrr iad,
Am binneas s a' ghaoir
Aig a' ghaoth i 'thig bho'n mhàla,
Duis is feadan is gaothair
Rì saothair ceart còmhla,
Fhuair iad am bruthach air a' chlàrsaich,
A' dol an àird le'm puirt-mhóra.

Ann am priomh-cheòl na cruinne
Fhuair na Cruimeinich a'it dhuinn;
Is chuir sinn righ air a ploban
Anns gach tìr anns an tìmh iad,
An t-inneal s an eilain,
An deachdadh s a ghabhail –
Am measg na tha 'cheòl ann
Tha seud sònraichte againn.

1560

1 sin bàrr : sud buaidh 31
2 am binneas : an crònann 31
3 bho'n : o'n 31
4 feadan is gaothair : gaothair is feadan 31
5 a' fadadh nan leusan 31
6 le dràidheachd is geasan 31
7 : a' cur teine [nar n-éisteachd > an àit éisteacht]; 31
8-16 : om. 31

OUR GREAT PIPES

It has excelled all other winds, in every airt whence they come, that bag-blown wind with its melodiousness and its stirring skirl - drones, chanter and bellows all working as one, their ascent was on the back of the clarsach, as they rose ever higher with their great pibrochs.

In the finest music of the world the MacCrimmons won a place for us, and we produced a king of all pipes, whatever the country they occur in, the instrument and the artistry, the inspired creation and its delivery - among all the music there is, we have a very special jewel.

MB
RATHAD LOUDAIDH 'S AN TRACK

Och, bidh sibh fhéin an oldhche seo
ri "did ort" leis na rudhachan,
s mo char-mu-thom, s cha bhàrdachd e,
ri càrainean s ri busaichean;
ge aognuidh luaths nan linearan,
s an tSIn 'na deagh cheann-uidhe dhaibh,
Eilean Fo Ghlaist no Iomachar,
is bichionta na cunnartan.

Seo bhuam an gearan àbhaisteach,
s bu Ghàidhlig e mu'n d'rugadh mi,
S ma's fior no fealla-dhà seo bhuaich,
gun tàrr sibh as gach udal ann,
s an oldhche 'teachd 'sa bheucaich oirbh,
s e 'séideadh geal bharr shumainnean;
s biodh sgoathan char is làraidhean
gu là a' toirt mo thuruis diom.

1960-61

LOTHIAN ROAD AND THE TRACK

Oh, you will all tonight be busy playing keekaboo with the headlands, while my own dodging – without exaggeration – will be round cars and buses; although terrifying the speed of the liners, and China a good destination for them, by Holy Isle or Imachar Point, many are the dangers.

4 This is the customary complaint from me, and it is a Gaelic one that long predates me, and whether I speak in truth or in jest, may you pull out of every dangerous tossing, as the night descends on you among the howling, and the wind froths white over the breakers; and may swarms of cars and lorries take my journey from me till dawn.

MB
SAD TO VISIT DUN MONAIDH

It is sad to visit Dùn Monaidh, a town which hundreds of poets have praised. When one sees Dùn Monaidh it is hard not to say "alas".

Seven hundred and seven and a thousand was a reckoning that ruined our pleasure and our repose, and left us exposed as dyvours with little spirit after a wealth of it.

Although it is sad to visit Dùn Monaidh, our Scotland will yet get freedom. It is sad to visit Dùn Monaidh, but it will yet be praised without sadness.
AM FLÚR GEAL SLÉIBHE

Ar leam gur éibhinn 'n ám éirigh i;
ar leam gur éibhinn 'n ám laighe slos.
Tha i beusach is tha i ceutach,
am flúr geal sléibhe dh'fhàg éibhinn ml.

Thà i màlda is thà i caomh.
Thà i àlainn s a nàdur saor.
Is e a nàdur, is e a h-àbhaist
gean is gàire, fàilte s aoibh.

Cha ghabh i mloithachd, is i gun sgraing;
Tha i slobhala bith 'na cainnt.
Tha 'snuadh s a lìth ann air ghillie dhìthein.
Cha n-eil mighean 'san ribhinn ann.

Is solus léir i 's gach àit am bl.
Is sona, sèimh i s is fàilteach l.
Tha tlàths na gràine 'san fhìr ìre dhèal Chèitéin –
's i 'm flúr geal sléibhe dh'fhàg éibhinn ml.

1964?

THE WHITE HILL FLOWER

Methinks she is cheerful at time of rising up; methinks she is cheerful at time of lying down. She is virtuous and she is bonny, the white hill flower that left me cheerful.

She is placid and she is kind. She is fine and her nature is a free one. These are her nature, these are her accustomed ways – a happy mood and laughter, welcoming and joy.

She never shows displeasure and she knows no frown. She is gentle and quiet in her speech. Her tint and complexion have the whiteness of flowers. There is no ill mood in the maiden at all.

She is a clear light in every place she goes. She is happy and gentle, and welcoming is she. The gentleness of the sun is in the white May flower – she is the white hill flower that left me cheerful.

t : SONG plus t 20b
6  s a nàdur : is dh'fhàs i  20b P15

20a 20b *21 ; P15

2 bonny : lovely 20b  that : who 20a
3  placid : gentle 20b  fine ... one : glorious and she has grown up a free being 20b
3-4 These ... these ... ways : Those ... those ... wont 20b
4  happy ... welcoming : cheerful ... a welcome 20b
5 never ... frown : feels no displeasure and never shows a grimace 20b
6  tint and complexion : complexion and hue 20b
   flowers : flowerets 20a  maiden : lassie 20b
8  clear : bright 20b  gentle ... she : tranquil and of a ready welcome 20b
9  May : Spring 20a
NATIONALIST SANG

Ma broon-haired lass, will ye gae wi me?
Ma broon-haired lass, will ye gang wi me?
Ma broon-haired lass, will ye gae wi me
an' I' se buy a brindled coat for ye.

I' se buy a brindled coat for ye,
fu' Scots, fu' fine, fu' fair tae see,
the colour o heather an' muirgerss tae
I' se buy a brindled coat for ye.

Och, there are warlds an' warlds forbye.
I'd fling them aa acrost the sky,
tae mak a road tae hasten by
tae buy a brindled coat for ye.

The coat that wad kindly sit on ye
s the colour o muirs an' heather tae.
Wi yere freeborn nature 'twad agree.
A brindled coat'll no happen' ye.

It's no' the lily, no' the rose
will gie their hue tae yere wale o claes
but kintra colours a' customs hues
the heather o brindled moors will gie.

Ma broon-haired lass, will ye gae wi me?...

publ. 1968
LATHA DHOMH BHITH 'SAN RAINICH
(Óran)

Latha dhomh bhith 'san rainich,
hug ò failill ò;
bha a' bhruthainn ann trasda,
hug ò failill eile,
hug ò failill ò.

Bha a' bhruthainn ann trasda;
bha am feàth air gach glacaig,
is air molan na mara,
is air muir far am faicte.
"Cogaidhean móra a' tachairt,
na's fhaide na Arainn
no druim Chnoc A' Chaisteil.
Cha bhi mac aig an athair;
cha bhi ogb' air a' mhacan.
'S annamh leòntach thig dhachaidh,
s a' ghrian léir air a lathadh."
Latha gréine s e taitneach,
latha dhomh bhith 'san rainich.

1968?

A DAY AMONG THE BRACKEN
(Song)

A day when I was among the bracken,  hug o failill ò;
the sultry heat was over everything  hug o failill eile, hug o failill ò.
The sultry heat was over everything. Calm lay on each hollow, and on the shingle of the sea, and on
the sea as far as eye could reach. "Great wars befalling, further away than Arran or the ridge of
Castle Knowe. The father will have no son; the son will have no grandson. Few will be the
wounded who come home, and the clear sun will be blotted out." A day of sun and it pleasant, a day
when I was among the bracken.
AN CIÜRAN CEÒBAN CEÒ

Dol slos an cladach madainn dhomh, 's an t-adhar ann gun déò; bha sith feadh fuinn is mara ann, is taise bho na neòil. Cha chluinneach feadh a' chiùinis ach fann-chiùcharan aig eòin. Bha gach nichein tosdach, drùchdach anns a' chiùran cheòban chèò.

Cha robh àird no iùl ann a stiùireadh neach 'na ròd. Cha robh àit no ùin' ann, ach aon chiùinea domhain, mòr. Bha 'n saoghal lân de'n mhaoithe fo dhraoidheachd is fo chleòc, is bann-sìthe air mo shùilean anns a' chiùran cheòban chèò.

Cha n-fhaicte fonn no faire. Bha sàmhchar air gach nì. Bha beithich agus dùsluingean 'nan smùid gun dath, gun lìth. Bha cnuic is glacan paisgte ann, is chailleadh muir is ùr. Bha fois is clos is dùsal anns a' chiùran cheòban mhin.

Chaidh sliosan agus leathadan a sealladh anns na neòil. Cha robh dath no faaim ann, no uair, no solus lò. Bha 'n stleadh mall, rèidh, socrach air cnoc, air glaic, air lòn, is bha 'm Paiste Beag fo dheatach anns a' cheathach cheòban chèò.

Bha na ciothan ceathaich chiùranaich, 's iad dùmhail, dlùth, gun ghìòr, gu cagasach, gu cùbhraidh, tais, ùr, gun ghuth, gun cheòl, a' snàmh mu mhìll is stùcan, 's a' dùnadh mu gach còs. Bha tìaths is tlachd a' tùirling anns a' chiùran cheòban chèò.

Bha na ciòthan ceathaich chiùranaich, 's iad dùmhail, dlùth, gun ghìòr, gu cagasach, gu cùbhraidh, tais, ùr, gun ghuth, gun cheòl, a' snàmh mu mhìll is stùcan, 's a' dùnadh mu gach còs. Bha tìaths is tlachd a' tùirling anns a' chiùran cheòban chèò.

1969

2 : [ ] neòil corr. 20a
3 feadh a' chiùinis ... eòin : fuaim ach bigeil lag bhideach aig na h-eòin > anns a' chiùinea ... eòin corr. 20a
5-6 : om. 20a
7 làn de'n mhaoithe : 's e làn maoithe corr. 20a
8 : om. 20a
9 faire. Bha : faire, s bha 20a
10 : om. 20a
11 cnuic ... paisgte : cnoc is glac ri'm pasgadh corr. 20a
12 cheòban : cheòban 20a 20b P15
13-19 : om. 20a
16 dheataich : dheataich 20d K
17 chiùranaich : chiùranaich 20c
19 a' snàmh mu mhìll : om. 20a is stùcan, 's : a' tùirling is 20a
20 Bha tìaths : last line - bha (sith > tìaths)/ 20a
THE SMIRRY DRIZZLE OF MIST

As I went down the shore on a morning, without a breath stirring in the air, there was peace throughout land and sea and a small rain from the clouds. All that could be heard through the stillness was a faint cheeping of birds. Everything was silent and dewy in the smirry drizzle of mist.

There was no airt or guidance there to direct one on his way. There was no place or time there, but one deep, vast stillness. The world was full of tenderness and happed in a cloak of enchantment; and my eyes were blindfolded by a fairy power in the smirry drizzle of mist.

No land or horizon could be seen. Quietness lay over everything. Birch groves and thickets were in a smoke of mist, hueless and colourless. Hills and hollows were enfolded in it, and land and sea were lost. There was peace and rest and slumber in the fine drizzle of mist.

Braes and hill slopes went out of sight among the clouds. There was no colour or sound there, or time of day or light of day. The slow, steady, gentle drifting of smirr was over howe and knowe and loaning, and the Wee Patch was in a smoke in the foggy drizzle of mist.

The thick, close, soundless showers of smirry mist - whispering, fragrant, soft, fresh, without voice or melody - were swimming around summits and cliffs and closing in about every hollow. Gentleness and pleasure were drifting down in the smirry drizzle of mist.

AN RÚNAIRE STÀIT

Domhan ann fhéin gach duine
le 'dhubhar is le 'leus.
Ar leam gu bheil an Rosach
'na fhodhomhan gu lèir.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE

A world in himself is every man, with its darkness and light. Methinks Ross is an entire underworld.
AR COR AN ALBAINN

A' chaora fo'n deimheas,
  s i 'fàs deireasach, fuar,
  ní i mèilich mu dheireadh
  s i 'bualadh bhreaban mu’n cuairt.

dòigh eile air:

An leòghann bhios fo thàmaílt,
  bheir e ràn gun fhuireach;
  bheir e 'n sitheadh garbh as,
  is marbhaidh e gach duine.

1969

OUR SITUATION IN SCOTLAND

The sheep under the shears, as it grows miserable and cold, will bleat in the end and distribute kicks around.

(Another way of it:)
The lion which is under insult will give a roar without tarrying; he will give a rough rush, and kill every man.

1 miserable : wretched 20a
2 Another ... it : another ... it – choose which you prefer 20a
4 under insult ... tarrying: : insulted ... waiting. 20a

REFERENDUM

Tha daoine beaga an Lunnainn
dh'fhàgas guineach gach rann.
Vòt iad, is chuir iad
a' ghlas-ghuib air ar drannd.

1968-69

REFERENDUM

There are wee men in London who will cause every verse to be a wounding one. They voted, and put a muzzle on our snarl.
VIA MEDIA?
[A Middle Path?]

When the trauchle wad stacher sun an' sterns,  
is't girm an' gie owre?
Or fin' the smeddum whaur it derns,  
an' dow an' be dour;
an' in ae glisk, wi aathing stey,  
gang lik stoor?

Or plunk the schule? Greet when it's dule?  
Let the shule faa?
Or fin' ye're pawkie, an' aye be jokie  
an' jook aa;
syne lauch an' blether aathigither,  
an' warsle awa'?

pub. 1969

BLIADHNA GUN GHEAMHRADH (AM PAIPEAR NAIDHEACHD)

Chithear an aiteal  
na tha 'm paipear ag iarraidh –
mirùn agus gamhlas  
is an geamhradh 'na bliadhna.

Chithear, ach fuireach,  
na tha 'n duine ag iarraidh –
deagh rùn agus rann leis  
is gun gheamhradh 'sa bhliadhna.

pub. 1970

A YEAR WITHOUT WINTER (THE NEWSPAPER)

You can see in a flash what the paper is after – ill-will and spite and winter all year.  
You can see, if you only wait, what man is after – goodwill and a verse accompanying it, and no winter in the year.
EUN MAIDNE

Is moch a ghoireas eun na maidne
air a' chraoibh fa chomhair an tàighé
an Dùn Eideann toiseach earraich.

Tha eun na maidne 'seinn an Suraidh.
Chuala Hómar a luinneag.
Dé dheth? 'S i seo Alba buileach;
Alba an seo 's an diugh i.

Dé feum bhith leantainn na seann ealain?
'S i 's ealain dhuinn ar t'ir 'nar latha,
is goirear leinn mar eun na maidne.

publ. 1970

MORNING BIRD

Early calls the morning bird on the tree opposite the house in Edinburgh at the beginning of Spring.
A morning bird is singing in Surrey. Homer heard its song. What of it? This is Scotland entirely; Scotland here and today.
What use is it to follow the old art of poetry? Our land in our day is the art for us, and our calling will be like the morning bird's.

[RANN FİRINNEACH]

Is firinneach a bhios an rann,
is bheir mi i gu ceann gun athadh –
is tric a phòg mi am beul
nach do labhair breug fhathast.

1971

[TRUTHFUL EPIGRAM]

This four-lined verse will be truthful, and I will bring it to a conclusion without hesitation – often have I kissed the mouth that never spoke a lie yet.

20
SREATHAN SİMPLIDH

Ealasaid a ghaoil s a ghràidh ghil,
is fior ge manntach a bhàrdachd –
cha n-fhaighhear coire do’n dàn seo,
s gur ãlainn moladh gach ni ãlainn.
Na’n robh agam alt gu m’ailgheas,
dhèanainn rainn a bhiodh ’nan sgàth an
do d’bhòidhchead is do t’uaisle nàduir;
ach gabh na rainn simplidh seo o m’làimhse.

Is ãlainn moladh gach ni ãlainn.
Cha n-fhaighhear coire do’n dàn seo.

An là a’ glasadadh s mi ’gabhail beachd air.
Air éirigh moch dhomh o m’leabaidh
chì mi na neòil a’ dol seachad,
is gaoth a’ Mhàirt ’gan cur air teicheadh.
Mi ’smainteachadh s mo bhas fo m’leithcheann –
feasgar bidh Ealasaid ’gam feithicheamh.
’S ann mall a bhios an là ’dol seachad.

A chionn a maithe is a mise
tha Foghar mo bhliadhna ’na Fàrrach.

Tha gaoir gach gaoithe ’na binnbhàrdachd.
’S ann ’na Nèamh tha ’n saoghál cràiteach;
’s ann ’na chamhanaich gach sgàile.

Gheall mi briathran duit is bàrdachd.
Cha n-fhaighhear coire do’n dàn seo.
Is ãlainn moladh gach ni ãlainn.

1971

SIMPLE LINES

Elizabeth my dear and my white love, this poetry, though stammering, is true – no fault will be found
with this song, since the praise of every lovely thing is lovely. Had I the power to joint words
together to my satisfaction, I would make verses which would be a mirror to your beauty and to your
nobility of nature; but accept these simple verses from my hand.

The praise of every lovely thing is lovely. No fault will be found with this song.
The day dawns as I watch it. I have risen early from my bed, and I see the clouds going by with the
wind of March putting them to flight. I am thinking with my palm to my cheek – in the evening
Elizabeth will be waiting for me. Slow is the day as it goes by.

Because of her goodness and beauty the Autumn of my year is a Spring.
The screaming of every wind is sweet poetry. The painful world is a heaven; and every shadow is a
twilight preceding dawn.

I promised you words and poetry. No fault will be found with this song. The praise of every lovely
thing is lovely.
RANNGHAIL LETH-ÉIBHINN DO DH’EALASAID
(car air doigh Och, a Naoghais, bi treun aig Rob Donn).

Ealasaid a’ bruaidhinn:
Och, a Dheòrsa, bi treun,
is cum do ghealladh dhomh fhéin.
Gheall thu dhomh bàrdachd is rannan –
biodh t’fhacail is t’aicill ’nan leum.

An comhghhealladh:
C’uime nach gabhainn-sa misneach,
s na h-uiread na’s miosa na mì.
Air sealltainn dhomh romham s ’nam dheaghaidh,
tha ’n faghart air fanachd ’nam trì.
Cha bu chneasda leam luaths nan làithean,
s an dol uainn th’aig gach rèidh s aig gach mòs;
ach dheònaich am Freasdal dhomh sòlas,
caomh leannan s an òige arisid.

Is bruthach cas e s is bòidheach,
’bhith beò ’san tsaoghal abhos.
Tha cuid a gheibh sunnd is sògh ann,
tha cuid a gheibh leòn is lot;
ach tha slios againn uile ri ’dhireadh,
s cha chinnteach am fonn fo’n chois.
’Sa’ chreachann choinnich mi Ealasaid,
 s is ealamh mo bhuidheachas dhomh.

’S e tha bhuan am irioslachd nàduir;
tha gàirdeachas bhuan agus aoiibh;
thà eòlas bhuan agus spionnadh,
s a bhith cuideachail gun a bhith faoin.
’S e tha bhuan càc bhith air banais,
is sinne ’nar caiginn lân gaoil;
pòsadh is pògadh is Pàrrthas,
s mo ghràdh bhith a ghnàth ri m’thaobh.

Is aotrom, aobhach, fileanta
thig filidheachd asam ’san uair-’s’.
Bha mi ’nam thosd ré nam bliadhna,
ach is sgìamhach an cuspair seo ’ghuair.
Gheall mi rainn do dh’Ealasaid,
ealain is aicill is uaim,
is bidh iad sona, gealghàireach
mar thoilleadh bean àilidh shuairc.

Os cionn dùrd na tràchda
cluinnear ’nar là s ’nar linn
fead nam peilear s nan slige
air slighe Hô-Chi-Minh.
Cha b’fhèarr bha na fir ré na h-eachdraidh
le’n coisichean s eachraidh is strì –
Napóléon, Attila, Xerxes,
Eildeard a h-Aon is a Trì.
Is iongantach leamsa na mnathan
le'm mais s le'm maite gun chríoch,
'bheir horó air na fearaibh, s 'bheir onair
do'n cosnadh, do'n cogadh s do'n sith;
do'n gairge, do'n gairbhe, do'n cabhaig,
do'n saogháil lán aisith is stri.
Bheirinn riaghladh an domhain do thé dhiubh,
s bhiodh éibheas air muir is air tr.

Is fiugheall bheum is chorc sinn,
na thá beò air an domhan gu léir.
'S e ar gliocas 'bhith 'g imeachd gu cruiteach,
gun fhios ach an tuit oirnn an speur.
Mar is gnathach, 's iad a' chlann nighean
bheir nigheadh is plasda do'r creuchd —
a' mhàighdeann s a' mhàthair aosda
s an cinne-daonna d'an réir.

Mholainnosa maoithe na mnathan.
Dhèanainnosa farum is fuaim.
Bheirinn ar riaghladh do ribhinn,
is sgrìobhainn Lysistrata nuadh.
Molaidh mi maoithe Ealasaid.
Dòirtidh mi ceilear 'na cluais.
Is i ùrachadh s failte m'ealain,
mo leannan is m'eala gheal chuain.

Dh'èirich làn a bòidhchid s a beusan
asteach air mo cheutaibh 'na chuan.
Gura h-e is deireadh do m'làithean
gean is gàire s uail.
Bidh ise a' peantadh a dealbhan,
s bidh mise ri rannghail bhuan.
Choinnich mi Ealasaid àillidh,
is choisinn mo mhàrsal buaidh.
A HALF-HUMOROUS JINGLE TO ELIZABETH
(rather in the manner of Rob Donn's 'Och, a Naoghaís, bi treun').

Elizabeth speaking:

Och, George, be mighty, and keep your promise to me. You promised me poetry and verses — set your words and internal rhymes leaping.

Promise kept:

Why would I not take courage, seeing there are lots who are worse off than I am? Upon looking before me and behind me, I find the metal-temper has still remained in my heart. I used to think the swiftness of the days was indecent, and the way every quarter and month departs from us; but Providence has granted me cheer, a kind sweetheart and youth once more.

It's a stey brae and bonnie to be alive in the world on this side Jordan. There are some who find merriment and luxury there, there are some who find wounds and hurts; but we all have a slope to climb, and the going is uncertain underfoot. On the bare upland reaches I met Elizabeth, and thankfulness comes readily to me.

What I desire is humbleness of nature; I desire rejoicing and cheer; I desire knowledge and vigour, and to be sociable without being silly. What I desire is that everyone should be at a wedding, with us as the couple full of love; marrying and kissing and Paradise, and my dear to be always by my side.

Lightheartedly, joyously and fluently pours poetry from me at this time. I was silent for years but comely is this subject for song that I have now got. I promised verses to Elizabeth, art and internal rhyme and alliteration; and they will be happy and bright with laughter, just as a beautiful, amiable woman would deserve.

Above the drone of the traffic there can be heard in our day and time the whistle of the bullets and the shells on the Ho-Chi-Minh Trail. And men were no better during history, with their foot-soldiers and cavalry and strife — Napoleon, Attila, Xerxes, Edward the First and the Third.

A cause for wonderment to me are women, with their beauty and their unlimited goodness, for the way in which they give a snap for men and honour men's wage-earning and war and peace; men's ferocity and roughness and haste, and their world full of unpeace and strife. I would give the governing of the world to any one of the ladies, and there would be joy on sea and on land.

All that are alive on earth are but the remnants left over by sword strokes and knife thrusts. The wisest course for us is to go about hunched up for fear that the sky may fall on us. As usual, it is the lassies who will wash and bandage our wound — the maiden and the aged mother with the human race obedient to them.

I would praise the tenderness of women. I would make a stir and uproar. I would give the governing of us to a girl, and I would write a new Lysistrata. I will praise the tenderness of Elizabeth. I will pour melody into her ear. She is the renewal of my art and the welcome given it, my sweetheart and my white ocean swan.

The full tide of her beauty and her virtues has risen up over my senses like an ocean. The end of my days is in good humour and laughter and joyful pride. She will be painting her pictures, and I will be engaged in eternal versification. I have met lovely Elizabeth, and my marching has won victory.
A BANNER AT THE TOUN HEID
(Three Verses and Envoi)

That is the finery that would please, and which would suit you gracefully; which would give you expectation of freedom, oh aged town which is young to the eyes of our esteem.

3 An old, torn banner, which has experienced a hundred losses and victories, displayed on your crest at the foot of your pure, cold sky.

The cross which was our ancestors', aloft on a slender, smooth staff; the white and the blue roaring in the wind.

Envoi

7 This town which was a stirring place with the heart of a nation in it – powerful were its haughty heartbeats once on a time, before they became slow. Today, today if you listen with a zealous ear, I wager that afresh, afresh you will notice a small, faint pulsation.
AN COMHCHEÔL IOMLAN

Is tlàth air iarmailt
grìan ar latha;
fàs is snodhach,
fochann s faillean.

Tha dàin is deachdadh
feadh an adhair –
òran a’ mhulaid,
guidheam, gabh e.

Cum an comhcheòl
coìr sin againn;
bòidhchead a' chumha
le guth an aiteis.

1971

THE COMPLETE HARMONY

Pleasant in the sky is the sun of our day; growth and sap, grass shoot and sapling.
Poems and creativity are through the air – the song of sadness, I pray you, sing it.
Keep that right harmony with us; the beauty of the lament along with the voice of joy.

3 along with : and 20b
ORION OVER BUTE

I watch Orion over Bute
stamping with his starry foot.
The tiller creaks in the rudder-head.
The lights of the fleet switch green and red.
What land is that which, east away,
lies happed in sleep and waits for day?
That land has slept both night and day
two hundred years and more, they say.
It has been a fitful sleep,
nightmare-ridden, never deep.
They can tell, who know and care,
the dawn when it will wake is near.

Still Orion over Bute
stamps with his starry, glinting foot.
The autumn Yellow Badgers' Moon
glistens on the roofs of Troon;
and round the midnight Ploughshaft creeps
marking the hour, while Scotland sleeps.
Eastern stars will yet grow pale
before the day, when – who can tell? –
Scotland will wake with the waking dawn,
and step out from two centuries gone.

That night was forty autumns back.
Near twenty autumns past there broke
the dawn, unmarked, when Scotland woke.

What land is that which, east away,
steps ever surer through the day?

1972
LIVES O MEN  
(Caller Herrin)

The kyle is haice the nicht.  
The skiffs an' aa the men 
wander but lee or licht 
till moarnin comes again. 

The big seas smoor the bows.  
The kairrie smoors the sterns.  
An' they can but jalous 
whaur the leeshore dems.

Herbar's a faur cry.  
This side o't mishanters lurk; 
an' mirk is mirker aye 
forcent thaim i the mirk.

Nae day was yet sae bricht 
as the morn's i'ts eastern place. 
The shoals soom safe the nicht. 
The nicht the kyle is haice.

1972


6 kairrie smoors : kairries steal 7 kairries steal > kairrie 7 2 20 ; *P16
5-12 : 9-12 5-8 2
9 faur : far corr. 2
9-12 : 11 (lurk) > 11-12 > 9 [ ] 11-12 > 9-12 7
10 : ins. 7
13-14 : ins. 7
13 day : dawan 7 2 daw 20 yet : e'er corr. 7
14 i'ts : in its 7 2
15 soon : sweem 7 2 20
13-16 : END 15-16 > 13-16 7 (see notes also)
THA 'MHISNEACH IS AN DÒCHAS S À' CHÒIR 'NAN LAOICH
Courage And Hope And The Right Are Warriors

Hope's a warrior that wins.
He's victor afore the fecht begins.
There flee afore him in his wars
aa the doots an' the despairs.

He that hopes has aye cheer.
He that hopes kens nae fear.
Hope is leal an' hope is true.
He that hopes will aye dow.

He gangs through aa the warld aboot
bringin the flooer frae the broukit root.
At lee lang last he's come this airt,
sensan afar oor waukan hert.

Aye, he has come this gate tae see us,
sensan the virr that's native tae us.
Wha ettles ocht maun tryst wi' him.
We've won oor battle noo he's come.

Hope in his forays has come oor gate,
an' we will on, an' no be blate.
"What hae ye frae him?" Div ye speir?
—till the lift louts we bide here.

1972

1 : HOPE'S A WARRIOR 7
1-8 : om. 7
1-4 : "1-4" 2
1 a : a (the?) corr. 2
2 He's : It's corr. 2
3 him ... his : it ... its corr. 2
5 has aye : aye has corr. 2
8 He ... will : Him ... can corr. 2
11 : an' he has come oor airt tae see us corr. 7
12 : scentan the virr that's native tie us > snowkan the smeddum o oor hert 7
12 : followed by Aye Hope in his forays has come oor wye etc. 7
14 snowkan : snowkan 7 2 tae : tie (tae?) 2
17-20 : till the lift louts > 19-20 > 17-20 7
17 gate : wye 7 corr. 2
17-18 : "17-18" 2
18 an' we gang weel thegither tae 7 corr. 2
18 no : nae 2
19-20 : "19-20" 7 2
19 : here were we aye, and, gin ye speir, corr. 7
20 : '20' 2
HOWES AN' KNOWES

There was never a heich but there was a howe. (Scotts proverb)

Is't wile me doon frae the heichs abune,
    an' lure me frae ma knowe
tae loanins wi a bield aboot,
    an' hap me in a howe?

"The knowes are yeld. The howes hae bield,
    an' sweet the watters rinn
thru gerss an' floers. An' lown the ooers
    gang dreaman i the sun."

"The knowes are yeld. The howes hae bield,
    an' lown ilk field liggs there;
    an' aye a calm an' caller waft
    gangs breathan thru the air."

The loanins roose the airy knowes;
the mailins roose the muirs.
Glaur an' stane the blossom hain.
The yird springs up i flooers.

This yird's a hoose for aa oor race.
A knowe is ilka waa;
an' antrin thochtls lik liachtan flauchs
licht the thocht o aa.

1972
ALBA CONA H-INGANTAIB
ALBA LE A H-IOGHNAIDHEAN
(The Song of Deirdre)

Is sgeulach am maraiche mara
a thill air 'còlas o' n aineol,
a shiubhall cuantas gu caladh.

'S ann bruidhneach a thogas e còrsa.
Cluaidh no Lìte sear an tsèòlaid
bidh ioghnaidhean 'san aithris sgeòil aig'.

Ge tà, bheir Alba bàrr air 'aithris,
s i a' dòsgadh as a cadal;
s gur dùthaich úr i gach aon latha,
s i 'nochdadh níthean a bha 'm falach
air feadh na h-eachraidh, sìth is aisith.
'S i bheir do'n mharaiche gach annas.

1972

1 mara : mara, 2
2 aineol : aineol; 20 P27.
4 'S ann ... còrsa : Is ... ar còrsa 2
5 sear : ins. 2  tsèòlaid : tsèòlaid, rest
7 bheir : thug corr. 2

ALBA CONA H-INGANTAIB
SCOTLAND WITH ITS WONDERS
(The Song of Deirdre)

Full of stories is the sailor of the sea, when he comes back to kent places from places unknown; when
he has travelled oceans and reached harbour.

Full of talk he makes his landfall. Whether the roadstead be Clyde or Leith in the east, there will be
wonders in his telling of tales.

And yet, Scotland will surpass his stories as she wakens from her sleep. For, with every day, she is a
new country, as she reveals things which were hidden throughout history, peace and unpeace. It is
she who will give the sailor all the wonders.

1 comes : has come 2
3 makes his landfall : raises our coast 2  in the east : ins. 2
5 stories : yarning corr. 2
AN T-ALBANNACH AIR DÚSGADH

Ar leam gur cosgarrach an curaidh,
ar leam gur calma an duine,
s gur lìonmhór, dìleas a bhuidheann,
an t-Albannach 'na dhùsg a chluinneas
  guth a thir e is a bruidhinn.

Is binn, binnghobach a choille dhosrach.
Is eunach, ceolmhór uair a mhosglaídhh.
Is grianach a mbadainn s a mhochthrath.

1973

THE SCOTSMAN ON WAKING

Combative is the warrior, I think; staunch is the man, I think, and numerous and faithful are his accompanying throng, the Scotsman awake who hears the voice of his land and its speech.

Melodious, melodious-beaked is his tufted wood. Full of birds, full of music is the hour of his stirring. Sunny are his morning and early morn.

1973

TEIRIGIDH NÀIMHDEAS: MAIRIDH CÀIRDEAS

Thig càirdeas an déidh deasbuid.
Thig aiteamh an déidh na deighè.
Is maith na nàbuidhean mu dheireadh.
Is maith na coimhearsnaich mu dheireadh.
Sinn is Sasunn -- seo na ceillear --
'sa cheann thall is dà sheis sinn.

An déidh ar deasbuid thig ar càirdeas.
An déidh na truaighe is an nàimhdeas
chithear fhathast lùmh air lùmh sinn.

1973

ENMITY WILL PASS: FRIENDSHIP WILL ENDURE

Friendship will come after dispute. Thaw will come after the ice. Good are the neighbours in the end. The neighbours are good at the last. We and England -- let there be no concealing it -- at the very end we are two equals.

After our dispute will come our friendship. After the misery and the enmity we will yet be seen hand in hand.

1973
GARVALT SIDE
An Auld-Farrant Sang

As I cam doon by Garvalt side
upon an early mornin' tide,
the levrocks i the lift sae wide
were singan oh sae cheery, oh.
I luikit syne on ilka haund
an' saw the leaman o the land,
an' syne there cam intae ma mind
the brightness o ma dearie, oh.

I saw her there that mornin' tide
as gin she stuid there by ma side,
an' aye I thocht as on I gaed
"The dawn she is o day tae me".
She is the levrocks' mornin' tide;
she is the dawn by Garvalt side;
she is the lift sae blithe an' braid
wi'its airts tae guide me tae her, oh.

For, sterns o nicht an' licht o day,
I see her brightness whaur I gae
sin' I cam doon thon Garvalt way,
an' that I tell ye shairly, oh.
The levrocks aye sing in the morn,
the muirlands gowd an' purple burn,
I hear't an' see't whaure'er I turn,
for then I kent her fairly, oh.

1973
ÒRAN MARAICHE

Là an fhèatha s là nan cèòs
cuimhnichidh mi blas do phòg
s mi a' seòladh air cuan mòr –
soraidh ó, 'eudail.

Rudha Na Cloiche – beannachd leò –
Na Cinn Gharbh, Eilean Bhóid;
luathaich luaths an einsein mhòir –
soraidh ó, 'eudail.

Dh'fhàg sinn Plada fodhainn fòs;
thùirling ceathach agus cèd;
ris a' Chuan Siar thog i 'sròn –
soraidh ó, 'eudail.

Chì sinn bruthach Chluaidh fadheòidh,
s Rudha Na Cloiche gaolach, còdèir,
'falbh s a' teadh air a' chuan mhòr –
soraidh ó, 'eudail.

1975

SAILOR’S SONG

On day of calm and day of breakers I’ll think on the taste of your kisses, as I go sailing the open sea – cheerio, my darling.

Cloch Point – farewell to them – the Garroch Heads, the Isle of Bute; the great engine has gained speed – cheerio, my darling.

Pladda we’ve already left behind; mist and fog have drifted down; to the Atlantic she’s lifted her prow – cheerio, my darling.

We’ll see at last the bank of Clyde, and Cloch Point, lovely and kind, coming and going on the brine – cheerio, my darling.

MB
AN IOMAGUIN

Soraidh leis an iomaguin,
s mi fad’ air bhith ’nam chiomach aic’;
ar leam fhéin gur iongantach
an tinneas ’tha ’na h-aoraibh.
Anis o’n fhuair mi cuidhte s i,
is eutrom, éibhinn, subhach mi.
O’n dh’fhalbh i nis air siubhal uam
is duine mi ’measg dhaoine.

Soraidh leis an iomaguin.
Cha n-fhaic mi fhéin arithisd i.
Ged chithear i air iomadh fear,
ch’ mhi a bhlos fo ’caonnaig.
Gu’m bi mi chaoidh gealghàireach ann
le aighear is le àabhachdas;
gu’m bi mi ’seinn gu m’àigheas-sa
gun sgàile ’teachd air m’aodann.

Thug mi oidhchean fada leath’,
is mi ’nam mharbhan caithriseach
a’ tionndadh tric, is m’achaine
gu’m faighinn saorsa uaipe.
Soraidh leis an iomaguin;
mo ghuidhe ann gun tilleadh dhi.
Soraidh leis an iomaguin;
cha bhí mi nis ach uallach.

1975

ANXIETY

Farewell to anxiety, whose prisoner I’ve been so long; how very strange, it seems to me, the disease in her constitution. Now since I have rid myself of her, I am light-hearted, merry and cheerful. Since she’s gone her way and let me be I am a person among people.

Farewell to anxiety, never again will I see her. Though she be seen on many a man, I’ll not be the one to get caught in her strife. I’ll for evermore be bright with laughter, full of good cheer and gladness, and I’ll sing to my heart’s content without a shadow crossing my face.

Long nights I spent with her like a corpse on vigil, tossing and turning, and praying that I should find release from her. Farewell to anxiety, my wish is that she never return. Farewell to anxiety; henceforth my mood will always be buoyant.

MB
SION A' CHUAIN

Cluinn gearghuth
mo ghuidh', a Dhia;
cop is cobhar,
cobhair iad.

1975

1-2: om. 30

30 10a 10b; *44P

OCEAN STORM

Hear my fervent plea, o God; through foam and froth, forget them not.

MB

CÙ IS A CHOILEAR

Dhomh tha t'fhacalsa druidhteach,
a rin, s mi gun fois uaidh,
o'n a ghabh mise ùidh ann
mar chù is a choilear.

1975

10; *44P

DOG AND COLLAR

Your word mesmerises me, love, and allows me no peace, since I have grown attached to it, like a dog to his collar.

MB

DO DHUINE A RINN CILLEIN

Tha tiùrr air do thràigh fhéin,
gun chàil fo'n ghrein 'ga do dhìth.
Thig an reothairt asteach
is bheir i leatha gach ni.

1975

1 thràigh: chladach corr. 10a
2 chàil: ml corr. 10a

10a 10b; *44P

TO SOMEONE WHO HAS MADE A PILE

The seaware is abundant on your shore, and not a thing in the world do you lack. In will come the springtide, and sweep it all back.

MB
AR LÀRAICHEAN

An Sean Lagan s Alld Beithe,
tha iad a’ feitheamh sheann làithean;
tha iad na’s buaine s na’s stiùrrudh
na rioghadan stàtail.
Air m’fhùrinn s air m’fhacal
tillidh fhathast na Gàidheil;
gheibh an tobhta a chuideachd
is bidh guthan san làraich.

Tha ’chuibhle a’ dìreach,
ged bha sinn lòsail ré fada.
Tha dualchas is còir ann
s is daoine bò sin air thalamh.
Dùinidh làmh dheas a’ cheartais
le gréim a bhios daingeann.
Bheirear togal mhòr chin chinn dhuinn
cho cinnteach ri m’labhairt.

’Sann tha làraichean loma
’s a bheil an tosd ’na fear taighe
fo gach meall, air gach monadh,
air gach cnoc s anns gach glacaig.
Tha an raineach s a’ chopag
s iad dosrach ’s gach achadh.
Bidh cur agus buain annt’
aig buanaichean pailte.

Masa mì Mac Iain Dheòrsa
’se an dòchas mo churaidh;
anns gach cunnart is cruaidhchas
is e mo luaidh thar nan uile.
Teichidh an t-eagal
is an teagamh roimh ’bhuillean;
cuir e gu ’dhùbhshlan,
nì e cúisean a bhuinnig.

Diridh deatach nan dachaidh
eadar Cataibh is Àbhann;
o Shrath Spé gu Ceann Bharraidh
bidh taighean is àiteach.
Ged tha làraichean loma
air gach monadh an dràsda,
théid gach duine gu ’ionad
agus tillidh na Gàidheil.

1975

18 a : am 10
26 ’s : is corr. 10
33 Diridh : Togar corr. 10
OUR RUINED TOWNSHIPS

Seanlagan and Allt Beithe, they are awaiting old days; they are more lasting and more eternal than realms of state. On my word and honour, the Gaels will yet return; the derelict hearth will find its household, and voices will ring out in the ruined township.

The wheel is turning, though we have lain low a long while. Heredity and righteousness exist, and we are living persons in the world. The right hand of Justice will close with a firm grip. We will have cause to hold our heads high again, as certainly as I speak.

There are ruined sites lying bare, with silence their man-of-the-house, by every hill, on every moor, on every knowe and in every little hollow. Bracken and docken grow unchecked in every field. There will be sowing and harvesting in them for numerous reapers.

As sure as I am the son of John son of George, my champion is hope; in every danger and crisis, he is my beloved over all others. Before his strokes will flee all fear and all doubt; challenge him to action, and he will emerge victorious.

The smoke of the homes will drift up between Sutherland and Sanda. From Strathspey to Barra Head there will be houses and cultivation. Though ruined sites lie bare on every moor at present, everyone will go to his rightful place and the Gaels will return.

MB

ÒRAN SUIRGHICH

Bi falbh is druid a’ chachailea.
Cluinn, a ghaoil, mo chagar uam.
Nach seall thu frions m’athar-sa,
s e ‘carachadh s a’ casachdaich,
is c’ul a chinn ga thachas aig’
s e ‘g amharc air an uair.

Bi falbh is druid a’ chachailea.
Thoir do spàgan dhachaidh leat.
Thoir sealladh beag air ais thugam
s biodh cuimhn’ agad air mhadainn orm.
A-màireach thig gun amharus
an rathad seo air chuairt.

1975

2 chagar uam : chagar-sa corr. 10
9-10 thugam / s biodh : thugam. / Biodh 10

COURTER’S SONG

Be gone now and shut the gate. Hear, darling, my whisper to you. See my father’s agitation, as he fidgets and coughs, scratches his nape, and checks the time.

Be gone now and shut the gate. Take your big feet home with you. Steal a quick glance at me as you go, and remember me in the morning. Tomorrow, on your rounds, come innocently by this way.

MB
RAINN GHRÀIDH

Guidheam piseach ort is rath.
Teann anall s na teann air ais.
Tha Dia math. Tha thusa math.
Tiugainn, thalla, ‘eudail.

Na bi fada. Bi am faisg.
Bi ri m’thaobhsa. Fuirich s fan.
Tha Dia math. Tha thusa math.
Tiugainn, thalla, ‘eudail.

Ni mi ’n cridh’ annam a bhrath.
Is tu ’n saoghal dhomh air fad.
Tha Dia math. Tha thusa math.
Tiugainn, thalla, ‘eudail.

1975

1 : om. 10a   RAINN GHAOIL 10b
3   math. Tha : maith s tha corr. 10a
5-12 : om. 10a

LOVE VERSES

Prosperity and luck I wish for you. Come on over and don’t hold back. God is good. You are good. Come with me, come over, darling.

Don’t be distant. Be close by. Be by my side. Stay and wait. God is good. You are good. Come with me, come over, darling.

The heart inside me I’ll betray. You are the whole world to me. God is good. You are good. Come with me, come over, darling.

MB
RAINN GHRÀIDH EILE

Tha gach oidhche 'dol am faide;
tha gach latha a' dol cil.
Cha n-eil na's dorra na an cor so.
Och, a ghràidh ghil, coitich mò.

Och, a ghràidh ghil, och, a ghràidh ghil,
och, a ghràidh ghil, coitich mò.

Cha n-i tha buan grian an tsamhraidh;
'S dian an geamhradh, fuachd is slòin.
Cha n-e tha slòrruidh an sonas.
Och, a ghràidh ghil, coitich mò.

Cuir do làmhsa fo m'uilinn;
Thoir mo chumasg cràidh gu sith.
Ceum air cheum bidh sinn a' coiseachd.
Och, a ghràidh ghil, coitich mò.

1975

MORE LOVE VERSES

Every night is dragging longer; every day is going wrong. No harder lot there is than this one. Oh, my white love, urge me on. Oh, my white love, oh, my white love, oh, my white love, urge me on.

Summer sunshine is not eternal; bitter the winter, cold and storm. Happiness lasts not forever. Oh, my white love, urge me on.

Put your hand under my arm; bring my tortured soul some peace. Step by step onwards we'll walk. Oh, my white love, urge me on.

MB
NA FAOILEAGAN MAIDNE

Sud a dhùsg mi moch air mhaidinn,
ghair fhaoileagan os cionn an taighne,
s' iad air tighinn bharr na mara.

A' goir: "Dhùn Eideann! Dhùn Eideann!
tha gile sear a' dìreach speuraibh
air chionn éirigh na gréine;
tha dol air ais air na reultan;
tha driùchd air craobhan s air fear ann,
tha driùchd air craobh, air flùr, air fear ann.
Tha soluis shràid 'fàs fann, is éisdear
ceud fhuaím na trafaig 'dol nas déine.
Tha daoin' a' dùsgadh roimh 'n éirigh.
An cuimhne leò an t-àm a thrèig sinn
's an robh righrean an Dùn Eideann,
s cùirtearan air am beulaibh;
teachdalean a tirean céine;
clàrsach is cruit air ghleus ann;
fìon 'ga òl is cèol 'ga éisdeachd?"

A' goir: "Dhùn Eideann! Dhùn Eideann!"

The morning gulls

It was that which woke me early in the morning, the cry of seagulls above the house. They had come from the sea.

Crying: "Edinburgh! Edinburgh! There is a whiteness in the east climbing the sky before the rising of the sun. The stars are fading. There is dew on trees and grass; there is dew on tree, on flower, on grass. The street lights grow faint, and there can be heard the first noise of the traffic growing in intensity. People are waking and thinking of rising. Do they remember the time that has forsaken us, when there were kings in Edinburgh and courtiers in their presence; ambassadors from far-off lands; great harp and little harp in tune there; drinking of wine and listening to music?"

Crying: "Edinburgh! Edinburgh!"
BEACHD IS BARAIL

Cluinneam uaidh, s cha n-ann os n-losal
beachd is barail air an tir seo
s am biodh reachd is rian aig righrean
riaghladh is réim aig righrean
is comhairlichean an guin den tsìoda.
Cluinneam uaidhse gu cinnteach.

"Chaill i 'n onair, chaill i 'n t-urram
nuair a thrial ar Righ do Lunnainn."

"Chaill i cothrom na cùirte
leth a' chrùin is leth an dùthchais.
Cheangladh i 'na ciomach dùthcha."

"An sin thain an t-Aonadh dunach
a chuirt baoghail ri cunnart
bladhna 'bhuail a' bhuille buileach."

"Thig feabhas air dìth s air deireas.
Cha n-eil galar gun a leigeas.
Nithear suas gach call mu dheireadh."

1975

THOUGHTS AND OPINIONS

Let us hear from you all, and in no furtive tones, your thoughts and opinions on this land, where
kings once held sway and order, kings held rule and dominion, with councillors in gowns of silk. Let
us hear from you all assuredly.

"She lost all honour and all the respect due her, when our king departed to London."

"She lost the prestige of the court, half the crown and half the patrimony. She was held in bondage, a
country imprisoned."

"Then came the disastrous Union, which added crisis to the danger; a year when the decisive blow
was struck."

"Improvement will succeed deficiency and injury. There is no illness without its cure. Every loss
will be made good in the end."

MB
A' CHRAOBH

Tha craobh anns a' ghàrradh
air an leag mi mo làmh gu tric.
Nuair a bhios mi 'na fochair
thig uamsa an osna gun fhios,
o'n a bhean mo cheud ghràdh dhi
gu meachair le 'làmh mhin ghil,
o'n a mhol mo cheud ghràdh i
là sóna 'sa Mhàigh le cion.

A meanglain a' luasgan,
is an oitcag 'gan glugasad ann;
a duilleach buidh'-uaine
le sporghail a' glugasad gu mall;
a h-eòin s iad ri ceilear,
ceòl agus seinn gun cheann;
a fuaragán liatha
ri spòrs an dlùths ciar 'sa chrann.

Tha i bruidhneach, nuair shéideas
gaoth fhionnar a' Chèitein tríd;
tha sgàile 'san tsamhradh
'na h-àrainn fo meanglain bhinn;
tha i ceòlmhor, uain' eunach;
 s i bòidheach, àrd, freumhach brìgh;
bidh boch orm is éibhneas
nuair thig snodhach s gach gèig anlos.

Bidh mi deireasach, brònach,
nuair a bheanas mo dhòid d'a rùsg.
Ma tha ealain is ceòl ann,
sheinn mi le deòir a clìù.
Ma bhean mo cheud ghràdh dhi,
leanaidh mo làmh rithe dlùth.
Ma mhol mo cheud ghràdh i,
's i a moladh an dàn a b'fhìù.

1975

30 mo : mi sic 44

THE TREE

There is a tree in the garden on which my hand comes often to rest. Whenever I'm near it, I cannot help but sigh, ever since my first love touched it delicately with her soft white hand, ever since my first love praised it fondly one happy day in May.

Its branches swinging, as the breeze sets them in motion; its yellow-green foliage stirring softly and rustling; its birds busy chorusing, music and song without cease; its grey squirrels playing in the dusky fastness of the tree-trunk.

It chatters away when the cool Maytime breeze blows through it; it offers shade around it in the Summer under its sweet branches; it is verdant, full of music and birds, lovely and tall, well stocked with roots and sap; I rejoice and am glad when the juice comes up every limb.

I feel sadness and hurt when my hand touches its bark. If artistry and music exist, I have sung its praise with tears. If my first love touched it, my hand will closely trace it. If my first love praised it, her praise was the worthiest poem of all.

MB
ELEGY ON MY MOTHER

Far she was from Argyll when death came to call on her; far from her family and from her people, when she died in alien country. A living spirit in a wracked body, a Highland woman, a Kerry woman. Far from Islay was Catriona and from Loch Fyne. Far, far.

Long will there remain a void in my heart, now that the brave woman lies at rest. As I will not see her face again, she was kindly. Peace to her soul.

MB
LA SCOZIA OGGI
(Butta)

L'uomo spera:
spererò.
Canto finora:
vanterò.

Sonno era
e lo so.
Canto finora:
vanterò.

Lontana è sera:
nell' alba vo.
Canto finora:
vanterò.

Terra dura,
cara sto.
Canto finora:
vanterò.

Terra cara,
èra ho.
Canto finora:
vanterò.

Questa è l'èra;
festa fo.
Canto finora:
vanterò.

Il canto spera.
Cantalo.
Canto finora:
vanterò.

1975-76

SCOTLAND TODAY
(Song)

Mankind hopes: I will hope. I sing hitherto: I shall vaunt.
It was a sleep and that I know. I sing hitherto: I shall vaunt.
Far off is evening: in the dawn I go. I sing hitherto: I shall vaunt.
A hard land am I, and held dear. I sing hitherto: I shall vaunt.
A land held dear, I have an era. I sing hitherto: I shall vaunt.
This is the era; I make carnival. I sing hitherto: I shall vaunt.
The song has hope. Sing it. I sing hitherto: I shall vaunt.
ANYWHERE

There is a spirit about the place that laughs and that cries; it sings and it whispers in a soft coaxing voice. There is a spirit in the place, a thing ancient, immaterial. I will return to the place, today or tomorrow.

VERSE OF LONGING

Ah, dear God, that’s a roar which is often in my ears, the waves of Loch Fyne driven fast before the storm, better than the music of pipes or fiddle or the composing of verse. Sleep eludes me, so sweet is the braying of the billows.

VIGNETTE

The coastline is lost and there is an eeriness in the sky. The wind is swelling and the clouds are swallowing the stars. Close every hatch and let the engine put speed to good use, for shelter and anchorage and harbour and quay are all within reach.
LAG AN AONAICH
(Òran san tSean Fhasan)

Ise.
A thasgaidh, a ghràidh s a ghaolain,
laigh mi leat fo’n bharrach bhaonach.
Chunna mi ’san dùn an raoir thu,
cha b’ann idir ’nad aonar.

Bha còmhraidh tairis nam ban caomh riut,
le pòg am bhèil s am bilean maotha,
is iad gu beuldearg, cúibhàn, taobhghheal.
Gheibhte le furan gu saor siud.

An cuimhne leatsa lag an aonaich,
fo’n bheitheach shlatagach s fo chaobhban
is sinn am fsgadh froise s gaoithe
’nar sinneadh ’san lagan aigheil
le cion gun chluain, gun chlaoine?

Eshan ’ga freagairt.
A thasgaidh, a ghràidh s a ghaol ghil,
laigh mi leat fo’n bharrach bhaonach.
Cha b’ann a’ bhò’n raoir no an raoir e,
ach gu minig, meachair, caoimhneil,
ach gu minig, milis, caoimhneil.

Chuirinn tharad cirb de m’aodach;
chuirinn tharad mo lámh le faolte.

Bu ghoirid leam an oidhch’ ag aomadh;
bu luath leam an là ’ga fhaoilte
’na uinneig an ear an tsaoghall.
Ma bha còmhraidh nam ban caomh rium,
le pòg am bhèil s am bilean maotha,
cha b’ann orra bha mo smaointean,
is iad cruinn ’nan suidhe taobh rium
ri mànran s ri gaire aotrom,
ach ort fhéin is tu ’nad aonar.

Ar ceum anochd gu lag an aonaich!

1976

THE MOORLAND HOLLOW
(A Song in the Old Mode)

Her.
My darling lad, my dear, my bonnie, with you I’ve lain under glistening birchtops. In the dùn last night I saw you, and you were not alone, far from it. With the gentle ladies in sweet converse, kissing you, lips soft and moist, and they so red-mouthed, white-skinned, blond-haired. Gladly and freely you’d get that from me. Do you remember the moorland hollow, under the trees and the lace-branched birches, as we sheltered close from wind and storm, lying down in the cosy hollow, our love untouched by guile and falseness?

He answers.
My darling, my white love, my bonnie, with you I’ve lain under glistening birchtops. Not last night or the night before it, but frequently, tenderly, fondly; frequently, sweetly and fondly. I’d cover you with a corner of clothing, I’d put my arm around you warmly. Too short for me was the night in its course, too quick I thought the day in dawning, in the east of the world like a window opening. If the gentle ladies held me in sweet converse, kissing me with lips soft and moist, not to them did my thoughts wander, as they sat together round me, in flirty talk, light-hearted, boisterous, but to you, my love, and you so lonely. Let’s tonight to the moorland hollow!
CALLAIDEAN SHASSUINN

Bha dealt air a’ phoilean
is bha clos air a’ ghaoith,
là Iuchair ‘sa mhochthrath
an coille dhosrach nan craobh.

Ann an iomall na coille
bha boladh feòir mhaoith.
Bha gach àilean fo norran
is bha fois air na raoin.

Bha na seilleanan mocheirigh
’solar ‘s gach taobh.
Bha an londubh a’ mosgladh
s a ghob ri binnlaoidh.

Bha callaidhean Shassuinn
fad seallaidh fo chaoir
le dealt a’mhln mhochthrath
air oir nan ur raon.

Bha an saoghal s e tosach
fo ortha aig draoidh,
là Iuchair ‘sa mhochthrath
is gach fochann fo bhraon.

1976

THE HEDGEROWS OF ENGLAND

There was dew on the pollen, there was a hush on the wind, one early summer morning in the lush, dense forest.

On the fringe of the forest hung the smell of fresh grass. Every meadow was in slumber and there was peace on the fields.

The early-risen bees were busy all around. The blackbird was waking, his beak open in sweet song.

The hedgerows of England were aglow in the distance as the early morning dew tipped the young fields.

The world was in deep silence under some magician’s spells, one early July morning with every blade of grass gleaming.

MB
**ÒIGE NA H-Aoise**

Thig an òige s a faghart
a thadhla na h-aoise.
Aig dol fodha na gréine
bidh an speur air dhath aobhach.

1975?

**YOUTH OF OLD AGE**

Youth will come with its sword temper to visit age. At the going down of the sun the sky is a joyous colour.

20 ; *P1

**LE MONTAGNARD**

Le faîte du mont et sa mine,
la voix du vent sur la colline,
 cela va où je vais.
Je regarde, j'écoute et me tais.

1976

4 me tais : tais  *sic all*  

**THE HIGHLANDER**

The mountain ridge and its aspect, the voice of the wind on the hill, that goes where I go. I look, I listen and stay silent. *MB*

**THIS WARLD**

This leelang life's a knowe tae sclim.
It tires the feet o monie.
This warld waivers whim for whim.
It's a stey brae an' bonny.

1976

1 : IT'S A STEY BRAE AN' BONNIE  

4 an' : and  

10 ; *P26
STANZE IRLANDESI

(Quste stanze sono nel metro irlandese che si chiama Amhran, o Canzone. Ha rim' al mezzo e si trova anche nel Gaelico Scozzese.)

1 È quella donna il mio danno, e ben lo so:
fiera e cara e dura, con cura vo.
Come un morto a porta chiusa sto.
Non avrò pace se tace o dice di no.

5 Dammi la mano stamani, sorridërò.
Baciami tanto, e vanto a tutti ciò.
Tu sei bella, e quello in cuore ho.
Colla speranza pranzo. Cantando vo.

9 IL FILE* E LA MORTE
Dante Alighieri trovare non si può.
Andò oltre come altri fecero.
Oggi canzoni - domani silenzio.

14 Nel cuore cura, paura e pensieri,
in strana terra erro per sentieri.
Tu sei cara; fiera e dura, sl –
dammi un bacio. Baciami. Di "Buon dì".

18 IL FILE*
So poetare. Tacere non si può.
Parole avevo; cantavo e canterò!
Tesso le rime; ogni tema dorerò.
La voce non tace. Vi piace, sì o no?

(*File è l'irlandese per poeta.)

1976

(Quese ...) : om. 10 20a P27
2 fiera ... dura, con : dura ... fiera. Con 10 fiera ... dura. Con P27
5-8 : om. P27
6 a tutti : e canto 10
7 in cuore ho : ricorderò 10
9 : om. 10 P27
14-22 : om. P27
19 : So poetare e dire. Tacere no. corr. 10
IRISH STANZAS

(These stanzas are in the Irish metre called Amhran or Song. It has internal rhyme and is also found in Scots Gaelic.)

That woman is my ruin, and well I know it: proud and dear and hard. Full of care I go. Like one dead I stand at a closed door. I will not have peace if she is silent or says "no".

Give me your hand this morning and I will smile. Do but kiss me and I boast of that to all. You are beautiful and I have that at heart. I dine along with hope. I go singing.

5 THE FILE* AND DEATH
Dante Alighieri cannot be found. He went beyond as did others. Today songs – tomorrow silence. The people listen. Nothing. I shall be silent.

In my heart care, fear and thoughts. In a land grown strange I wander by pathways. You are dear, though proud and hard, yes. Give me a kiss. Kiss me. Say "Good Day".

10 THE FILE*
I know how to poeticise. There is no being silent. I had words; I used to sing and I will sing. I plait my rhymes; I will gild every theme. The voice is not silent. You like it, yes or no?

(* File is the Irish for Poet).

3-5, 8-12: om. P27

ARIA

Guardo il cielo
ove tramonta il sole
rosso come il sangue.
Passano i giorni. Mi duole.

5

Si ride e si ama:
sempre minaccia la morte.
Cade la foglia d’autunno.
Oimè, che dura sorte!

Vieni a me, speranza.
Segue l’alba la sera.
Passa l’inverno anche.
Torna primavera.

1976

10 20; *P27

ARIA

I look at the sky where the sun sets red as blood. The days pass. It grieves me.

One laughs and one loves. Always death threatens. The autumn leaf falls. Ah me, what a hard destiny.

Come to me, hope. Dawn follows the evening. Also the winter passes. Spring returns.
SLUTT
(Gaelisk Strophe)

Munnen som talte og smilte er taus på deg.
Kyss og ord og år alle går sin vei.
Fremtida truer og duer jeg til den ei.

1976

2 er ... deg: for ja sier nei. marg: er ... deg 2
3 : årene tilbake som røken går sin vei. corr. 2

FINISHED
(Gaelic Strophe)

You say nothing. You are silent and look away from me. Your mouth which spoke and smiled is silent. Kisses and words and years all go their way. The future threatens and I am not able for it.

20 ; *P27

SKOTLAND TIL OLA NORDMANN

Reis, dikt, og tal til Ola
i dalen hvor han bor
ved marka den grønn’ og gule
hvor gresset dør og gror.
Det tiner og det suser.
Nordover vender vår
med lov om frukt og roser.
Så skjer det år før år.

Solen står, og bringer
fornyelse og liv.
Det renner og det synger
hvor isen før var stiv;
og skogens trær alle
får knopper mil for mil.
Reis, dikt, og tal til Ola,
si vinter sier farvel.

1976

13 trær : trærne sic all

SCOTLAND TO OLA THE NORWEGIAN

Go, poem, and speak to Ola in the dale where he dwells beside the green and yellow field, where the grass dies and grows. It thaws and soughs. Spring returns northward with a promise of fruit and roses. So it happens year by year.

The sun stands on the sky and brings renewal and life. There is a flowing and a singing, where before the ice was stiff; and all the wood’s trees bear buds mile by mile. Go, poem, and speak to Ola. Say Winter says farewell.

1 dale: valley 10 2 soughs: it soughs 10
2 returns: turns 10 4 on: in 10
**VÅREN**

Vender vår.
Solen står.
Landet ler.
Ånder år.

Gresset gror
hvor bonden bor.
Toner trær.
Vender vår.

1976

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**SPRING**

Spring turns. The sun stands in the sky. The land laughs. The year breathes.
The grass grows where the farmer dwells. Trees intone. Spring turns.

1, 2 turns : returns sic all

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**STEINE N PÅ FJELLET**

Her blir jeg til luften luter
en stein på fylltet grå og gammel.
Omkring fylllets vind tuter.
Jeg har set tårer og gaman.

Jeg så Håkon. Jeg så Harald.
Omkring fylllets vind tuter.
Jeg så og ser og skal se.
Her blir jeg til luften luter.

1976

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**STONES ON THE MOUNTAIN**

Here bide I till the lift louts, a stone on the mountain, grey and old. Round about the mountain-wind howls. I have seen tears and merriment.

I saw Håkon. I saw Harald. Round about the mountain-wind howls. I saw and see and shall see. Here bide I till the lift louts.
HÅPET


På alle jorden går han omkring, og viker og sviker for ingenting. Han setter redsel og tvil i flukt. Han bøier seg unna for ingen makt.

Tåken skifter. Håpet er skald. Håpet er helt og erobrer bold. Her i Skotland hos oss han bor; natten ender og dagen gryr.

Hvor han bor gryr det snart. Han er en skald som synger klart. Her i landet synger han spott og bringer vår blomst fra dens skjulte rot.


1976

HOPE

The fog shifts. Hope is a skald. Spring follows winter, and morning evening. The snow thaws. Hope is a hero. They who hope dow for aathing.

On all the earth he goes about, and turns aside and betrays for no thing. He sets fear and doubt in flight. He gives way for no power.

The fog shifts. Hope is a skald. Hope is a hero and courageous conqueror. Here in Scotland with us he dwells; the night ends and day dawns.

Where he dwells it dawns soon. He is a skald who sings clearly. Here in this land he sings sweetly and brings our flower from its hidden root.

Hope has a sword and hope has a song. No way for him is long. Here we recognise no doubt. Hope is the skald we listen to.
ENHVER SEILER

Som en som fjerne farer velger
dro han ut på sinte bølger,
lø han ut på bitre bølger.
Natt – og skyer stjernene svelger;
vinden skifter, stormen følger.
Mørket horisonten dølger.

Hver har sitt Vinland over havet.
Bare å seile stiller kravet.
Havn må forlates her i livet.
Hvert øye smerter med bølgens støv,
og land og ly er ikke lovet.

Skjebnens vær er aldri stille.
Menneskets seil er altid fulle.
Vindens røst blir rop for alle.

EVERYONE SETS SAIL

As one who chooses far off dangers he set out on angry billows, he set sail on bitter billows. Night – and clouds swallow the stars; the wind shifts, the storm follows. Darkness hides the horizon.

Everyone has his Vineland over the sea. Only to sail stills the yearning. Harbour must be left here in life. Every eye smarts from the billows’ dust, and land and lee are not promised.

Destiny’s weather is never calm. Mankind’s sails are always full. The wind’s voice becomes a shout for everyone.
THE LONG WEARY NIGHT

Open the window of the day. The night is endless and I long for the day. The skies are black and scowrie and there's sobbing in the voice of the elements.

There is neither moon nor star; wind and cloud and impenetrable darkness; rain and the wind screeching from the west, advancing violently with an incessant wailing.

Sleep or rest is impossible to find. The night is endless and without peace tonight. Grant sun and morning to us – open the window of the day.

MB
Turning in space on its axle, the old multicoloured world; sleep, stirring, night, dusk; night to the west and sun to the east.

Languages and races beyond measure, plain and moorland, scaur and meadow, voluble cities, silent wildernesses, horizon and horizon of the aged world.

When day comes from Norway, then will be an early wakening with new poetry, giving it greeting and a welcome from our place here in the everlasting universe.

The Scotland that Hugh MacDiarmid saw, which signifies something eternal, with its own meaning in the midst of all, enclosed by no horizon, that's our country!
DÚDLACHD IS EARRACH AR BLIADHNA

Is fada, 's fada, 's fad' an oidhche s i cho dubh ri gual na goibhne. Is goirid an là geamhraidh doilleir; is fuar, dian a' ghaoth is goir aic'. Samhainn s Nollaig s reodhadh boillsgeil — is geal na sléibhte, 's lom a' choille.

Is fada, farsaing an t-sinteag gus na h-uain is gu Féill Bride.  

Is ann tha dùdlachd dhubh na bliadhna a' dùnthadh nan àrdan ciara s gaoth an ear le faobhar sgian oirr' troimh Dhùn Eideann a' sianail, is fluchshneachd sgaiteach 'na sgiathainh.  

Thig an t-earrach. Thig an Céitein. Uaimichidh gile nan sléibhtean. Tha 'n dòchas daonnan 'na éibhleig ri anuair s fuachd, s tha cinnt á Céitein. Chi Alba a grian 'na speuraibh.

1976

THE DARKEST-WINTER AND SPRING OF OUR YEAR

Long, long, long is the night, and as black as the coal of the smithy. Short is the dark winter- day; cold and violent the howling wind. Hallowtide and Christmas and sparkling frost — white are the slopes, bare is the forest.  

Long and stretched is the leap till the lambs and St. Bride's Day.  

The black wintry depths of the year are closing off the dusky airts, as the knife-edged east-wind shrieks through Edinburgh, with cutting sleet in its wings.  

Spring will come. Maytime will come. The whiteness of the hills will turn to green. Hope is always a warm ember against storm and cold, and Maytime is a certainty. Scotland will see her sun in its skies.
AN T-ÚGDARRAS AGUS AN T-EÓLAS

C'àit am facas, c’àit an cualas
ann an Sasainn bhraonach uaine
no an Lunnainn an uabhair
a h-aon a nì ar ceistean fhuaasgladh?

Is faoineas bhuaapa gaoth an òraid;
is sgleòdhaibh an cainnt s an còmhraidh;
is iad mar mharaichean air còrsa
nach fhac’ iad riabh roimhe a’ seòladh,
air allaban s gun iad eòlach.
Stiùirear tirean le’n luchd còmhnaidh,
s biodh ùghdarras aig an eòlas.

1976

1: om. 11a 11b
2 uaine : uaine, 11b
5 faoineas : [ ] corr. 11a an : nan 11a
6 : 9 corr. 11a
10 tirean le’n luchd : tir le ’luchd 11a 11b

AUTHORITY AND KNOWLEDGE

Where has been seen, where has been heard, in green, dewy England or in London the proud, even one who’ll succeed in resolving our problems?

3 The wind of their specchifying is vacuous; their talk and converse is but a smokescreen for them; they are like sailors approaching a coast they have never seen before, adrift in unkent waters. Let lands be led by their inhabitants, and let authority be held by knowledge.

MB

BEANNACHADH

Righ nan reul s na gréine gile
bhith ’gad dhlon a dhith s o thinneas,
bhith ’gad dhlon o shin s o iomairt,
s tu bhith siorruidh ’n sith ’nad ionad.

1976

t : BEANNACHD corr. 11

A BLESSING

The King of the stars and the white sun, may he shield you from want and from sickness, may he shield you from tempest and from turmoil, and may you be eternally in peace in your place.

P26
Fosgail Uinneag an Lâ
[Open The Winnock O The Day]

Open the winnock o the day.
The nicht’s e’erlastin. Day come kind.
The lift is scowry, black an’ wae
an’ greetin’s i the voice o the wind.

There’s nae mune nor stern i sicht;
wind an’ kairrie, mirk on heich;
rain an’ wast-wind thro the nicht
ragean wi an unendin scraich.

There’s nae sleep nor rest ava.
Nae ease this leelang nicht I hae.
Grant us sun. Gar mornin daw.
Open the winnock o the day.

ULADH

O Shiorramachd Àir gu Àrd Macha ghluais sinn fhéin,
Siar ’nar tâintean bochd crâite gun tug sinn ceum;
Is dian a tha làmhach is ràn nam bomba ’nar déidh –
a Dhia nan gràs, "is lâidir an snaoisín ë"!

ULSTER

From the shire of Ayr to Armagh we went, westward in poor worn droves we took our step;
vehement is the firing and the roar of bombs after us – O God of grace, "it is powerful snuff"!
**IS CRION A' CHÚIL AS NACH GOIREAR**

It's A Wee Neuk Frae Whilk There's Nae E'en A Cheep  
*(Gaelic Proverb)*

Birlan i space wi colours bricht,  
the auld warld roon its axle gaun;  
sleep an' wauknan, gloamin, licht,  
nicht tae wastward, eastward dawn.

5

Mair leids an' fowks than ane can tell,  
lawland, muirland, roond they caa;  
gabbin cities, desarts still;  
the auld warld's horizons aa.

Whan day comes frae Norway's airt,  
we's wauken wi't wi brent-new verse,  
giean it welcome frae the hert  
frae oor place i th' eternal universe.

The Scotland Hugh MacDiarmid saw,  
signifyin an eternal stand,  
wi meanin o'ts ain i the midst o aa,  
wi nae steekan horizons. That's oor land.

1976

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**THE BALLOT NOT THE BULLET – A VICTORY WITH NO DEFEATED**

Suas gun slos, buaidh gun bhualadh  
buannachd gun chall, gun dith;  
nì ùr a th'ann san tseann shaoghal  
buidhinn saorsa le sith.

20; *P27

Up with no down, victory with no blows struck, gaining with no loss or deprivation; it is a new thing in the old world, winning freedom by peace.

*20; P27
LONGING FOR THE TEMPEST

Far off this year and far off last year. This is the place that was there last year, and year and year and year entirely.

God, will I ever see that again, the notches of the hills under the downpour? The slanting rain and the downpour, the dark rain and the downpour, the grey rain and the downpour, the melancholy rain and the downpour, the lamenting rain and the downpour and it in vehement, black showers with its edge tattered on its journey, the wind screaming and wailing. Never the same that as dry, warm weather; not the same as a fine, yellow day; not the same as sun and sultry heat the innocent, cool fall of rain. The brindled rain in its torrents, the rain of the western airt like a drum, the rain of the hills and the downpour, the notches of the hills under the downpour.

God, will I ever see that again?
LUINNEAG THAIRBEARTACH

Is àrd amach a thà mo ghaol.
Thà an Caol càrsanach.
Is fad' o fhearrann is o fhraoch
a thà mo laoch gu là uam.

Ringeadh sgadain feadh nan tonn,
treud nan dronn dàsachdach.
Uain' is dearg nan solus ann;
luchd nan lann làimh ruibh.

Iomachar 's a' Chleit is Cùr;
gaoth is stùr bhàirlinnean;
losgadh agus cur mu shùil;
dùrd an duine làidir.

Sgibinis is Port a' Chruidh,
slos gu ruith Chàradail;
an t-einsean ri fuaim 's ri fonn
feadh nan tonn gàireach.

Arainn eagach àrd nan beann,
òird gu teann a' teàrnadh uaip';
drumach uisge fiadhaich, fiar
ás na ciar àirsean.

Is àrd amach a thà mo ghaol.
Thà an Caol càrsanach.
Ringeadh sgadain shios an Caol –
till, a ghaol, slàn rium.

1976

A TARBERT DITTY

Far out on the sea is my love. Hoarse is the wind on Kilbrennan Sound. Far from the soil and from the heather is my love away from me till dawn.

Ringing of herring through the waves, the herd of the thrashing furious rumps. The green and red of the lights; the scaley folk close by you.

Imachar Point, the Iron Rock Ledge and Cour; the wind and the stoor of breakers; burning, and shooting round a shoal; the droning of the capstan.

Skipness and Cattle Bay, down to the run of Carradale; the engine noisily singing through the roaring waves.

High, craggy, mountainous Arran, down come the hammer-squalls from its slopes, a fierce horizontal downpour out of the murky airts.

Far out on the sea is my love. Hoarse is the wind on Kilbrennan Sound. Ringing of herring down the Sound – come back to me safe and sound, my love.

MB
GUIDHE AN IASGAIR

Fèath is fàbhar agus fortan,
pailteas coltais anns gach bàgh,
reòtach air clàr 's air clithaich
s margadh fial air teachd an là.

1976

THE PRAYER OF THE FISHERMAN

Calm and favour and good fortune, plenty appearances in every bay, a frost of fishscales on deck and gunnel, and a bountiful market at the dawning of the day.

THE FISHERMAN'S PRAYER

Calm an' favour, aye, an' fortune;
rowth o appearance in ilka bay;
a crannreuch o scales on daick an' gunnel
an' a muckle mercat at dawn o day.

1976

AUBADE

Tha driùchd air mullach nan càr
s tha rudhadh an là 'san ear.
Dùisg is bi gluasad, a ghràidh.
Cha bhruadar an là 'na ghreis.

1976

AUBADE

There is dew on the roofs of the cars and the flush of day is in the east. Waken and be stirring, my love. Day in its while is no dream.
IRISCHE STROPHE

Tá mé in mo shuidhe o d'éirigh an ghealach a-réir ...
(Amhráin Ghráda Chúige Chonnacht)

Sie schlafen dort im Dorfe alle nun.
Der Mond steht und geht im Himmel schön.
Ich liebe dich und dichte dies' allein.
Das Gesicht ist weiss – ich weiss nicht was zu tun.

1977

[IRISH STANZA]

They are all asleep in the village yonder now. The moon stands aloft and goes, beautiful, in the sky. I love you and make this poem all alone. My face is white. I do not know what to do.

11b ; *30

LUNNAINN AGUS ALBA

Tha iad ràbhartach, rìteach
a' smàiladh ar misnich
ach a dh'aindeoín an sceulachd
tha eun anns an driseig.

1977

t : om. 11

LONDON AND SCOTLAND

They are prattling and big-mouthed, as they try and snuff out our courage, but in spite of their tale there's a bird in the little briar. MB
BRISEADH NA FÀIRE 'N ALBAINN

B'fhada oídche dhubh nan neul
trasd ar speur s gach reul 'ga mhùchadh.
'San ear tha solas ar seann là,
s thé mi 'coimhead mo ghràidh a' dìòsgadh.

1977

BREAK OF DAWN IN SCOTLAND

Long was the black night of the clouds across our sky, smooring every star. In the east is the light of our old day, and I am watching my love awakening.

2 light of our old day : living light of our day 11a

BLOIGH LEBENSRAUM

Na muillionan tha 'n Sasainn fheuraich,
's mòr á meud iad, uain.
Tha 'd ag iarraidh, ma 's fior am beul seo,
bloigh Lebensraum mu thuath.

1977

A SPOT OF LEBENSRAUM

The millions that are in grassy England, they are proud of size, lamb. They are seeking, if this mouth speak true, a spot of Lebensraum up north.
O Albainn
LEUM GU TAOBH LIFE

Cionnus nach abair mi Och
no Ochain no Och ochaint?
Tha 'n samhradh a' boillsgeadh asteach
air beinn agus Machair 'nar tir;
thà sinn air raon an tsamhraidh
is taod umainn teann air a shnlomh.
Am fuasgail sinn an tsnaidhm le suairceas,
no uabhar a' chip an spion?

Spùll iad leth an tsaoghail
is chog sinn ri'n taobh air a shon.
B'e 'n tráns' e, is dhùsg sinn an Albainn
air a dearmad glan, ged a chog.
Sòraidh le cogaidhean thairis
s le gleanntaichean falamh 'nan tosd;
sòraidh le sgròdadh nan eithir,
le eithireachd, Aonadh is trod.

Thèid mi 'nam leum gu Life
a dh'fhadadh cridhe mo chlòibh;
Beinn Eadair is slòibhtean Laighean
s am Balla Tuath fo'n ghréin.
B'e 'n t-ùrachadh misnich is toile
rannt a thoirt an céin
do'n eilean mhaiseach, uaine,
far an do bhuadhchain na Gàeil.

1977

From Scotland
A LEAP TO LIFFEY SIDE

How will I not say Och or Ochain or Och ochaint? Summer is blazing in on mountain and Lowland in our country; we are on the meadow of summer, and a taut twisted tether around us. Will we undo the knot with urbanity, or will we wrench out the haughty pride of the stake?

They plundered half the world and we fought on their side on behalf of it. It was a trance, and we woke in a Scotland clean neglected, although we had fought. A farewell to wars overseas and to empty glens lying silent; a farewell to the scrutinising of coastlines, to emigration, Union, and fighting.

I will go with a leap to Liffey to kindle the heart in my breast; the Hill of Howth and the hills of Leinster and the North Wall under the sun. It would be a renewal of courage and will to take a rant far away to the bonny, green island, where the Gael was victorious.

blazing: shining
country: land
on their: by their
[AITEMH 'SA BHEINN]
(Dà rann in Amhran)

Craobh earraich air chrith fo’n bhidein, is cèò 'sa bheinn.
Sna meangain mu nìd thà drìop aig seann smeòraich s greim.
Ged thigeadh uair sgìos air cinneadh gaoil Scòta s teinn,
thà bigein san nìdein s is fileanta fòs a sheinn.

Mo bharail cha cheil air na Ceiltich s an cuan ri’n cùl.
Sgaoil an eachdraidh a greim. Thà leinn. Cha suain ach dhùisg.
Tha aiteamh sa bheinn. Thà teinn dol mu’n cuairt gu sùrd.
Thà ar latha san ear is ar seasamh air uachdar cuirn.

1978

[MOUNTAIN THAW]
(Two verses in Irish song-metre)

A springtime tree trembling under the peak, and mist on the mountain. In the branches an old thrush makes a busy bustle with a bite of food. Although destruction and hard straits used to come upon the dear race of Scota, there is a fledgling in the little nest, and fluent yet will be its singing.

My opinion I will not conceal from the Celts with the ocean at their backs. History has released its grip. Things go with us. It is not slumber but awaking. There is a thaw on the mountain. Hard straits have changed around to eager activity. Our day is in the east and we stand on the summit of a cairn.

DO DH'ŰISDEAN MACDHIARMAID

Domhan ann fhéin gach duine
le ' dhubhar is le 'leus.
Thug thu bàrr Orr' uile –
is tu an Cruinne-cé.

1978

FOR HUGH MACDHIARMID

A world in itself is every man with its darkness and its light. You have surpassed them all – you are the Universe.

1978
NA RÀTAICHEAN S A ' BHAIRDACHD

"Cìsean is ràtaichean àrda," orsi' esan rium.
"Iocaibh, s pàighibh," orsi' à "air an teas s na shluig.
Diobair a' bhardachd o t’fhàrdaidh, no creonaidh thu."
Is stòrruidh na dàin, ged bhiodh ràtaichean 'teachd gun sgur.

"Prìscean 'gan àrdadhadh àrd agus faradh nam bus
a' dìreach gach ràidh, gun sa' bhàncach ach tasdan tur;
an TV is na pàisean a' fàs is an caban 'nan sluioc.
VAT." orsi' à. Dhùisg a' bhàrdachd is chaidil a ghuth.

"Bheil e crioisdaill s mo spàrrn gach là ri pathadh 'na mhuir,
rì lòta nach tràigh, nach sàsachear aiteal liom,
is na prìscean s na pàisean, s gach ràta ag at s 'gam ruith?
Ma bhios tu ri bàrdachd gun stàth, gu'n can mi Fuich!

"Deich p air son copan cofaidh is barrachd, fuich!
Tì p air son bocsas mosach lethfralamh spung.
Dol slos air an nota, na rocaidean, alise, an Ruis;
drochthidle, cion oibre, na robairean, stailcean s muirt.
\[11\]

"A' phrls chuirear ort air son bothain mar fhail nam muc;
BP a tha com, air a shochair s nach abair diòg;
EEC is an liotar s an kilo, s na Pakidhean tiugh;
Cipras is Doire, an dolar s an t-Amin ud.

"Brezhnev is Trotski is Mosco s mo chasan flìuch;
na Sinich is pop is porno is m'ad a cruth;
gach mìonag cho moiteil s nach mothaich aiteal dhuit;
gun dìth air ball-coise, s na coin is na capaill a' ruith.

"Tha a' phìnnt 'dol an àird aon là, ged a tha i cus.
An ceann miosa no dhà 'dol an àird, s i 'na h-annas dhuiinn."
Chriochaich e, s dh'fhag e am bár fo phathadh s fo chruit.
Rinn mi diochadh mun' air lèin a thàsain s na rainn seo dhuiabh.

1978
THE RATES AND POETRY

"Taxes and high rates," said he to me. "Fork out and pay for heating and the food you have swallowed. Banish poetry from your dwelling, or else you will pay dearly for it." Poems are eternal, though rates should come without cease.

"Prices being raised to dizzy heights, and the bus fares going up every quarter, with nothing in the bank but a meagre shilling. The TV, and the children growing, with their gabs a bottomless pit. V.A.T." said he. My poetry wakened and his voice fell asleep.

"Is it Christian for me to have to struggle every day with a thirst which is a sea, with a drouth which will never ebb, and which won't be satisfied by me for an instant? And the prices and the children and all the rates swelling up and pursuing me. If you are engaged on useless poetry, I will say Fie!"

"Ten p and more for a cup of coffee, fie! Three p for a miserable half-empty box of matches. The pound losing value, the rockets, cancer, Russia; bad weather, no jobs, the robbers, strikes and murders.

"The price you have to pay up for a shed like a pigsty; your MP who couldn't care less, all snug, and won't say a word; the EEC and the litre and the kilo, and the thick Pakkies; Cyprus and Derry, the dolar and yon man Amin.

"Brezhnev and Trotsky and Moscow and my soaking wet feet; the Chinese and pop and porno and my hat out of shape; every lassie too proud to pay you the slightest regard; and no lack of football or the dogs and the horses racing.

"A pint is going up one day, although it is too dear. After a month or two, going up, novel luxury though it is to us." He left the bar thirsty and bent. I forgot the whole of his querulous whining and made these verses for you.

20 (1-13, 20-22) MB (14-19)

NA GÀIDHEIL SNA BAILTEAN

Na Gàidheil sna bailtean feadh bhalla is chabhsair is chàr, s a’ Ghàidhill a sealladh ’s a claisteachd measg stamhnadh shràid, an âiteachan aimhleathan taca ri beanntan àrd, nl mi ’n tàladh ’s an tataidh ’s an taitinn le rann no dàn.

11 20; *P15

THE GAELS IN THE TOWNS

The Gaeils in the towns making their way among walls and pavements and cars, with Gaelic out of sight and out of earshot in the midst of the confinement of streets, in places that are narrow compared with high mountains, I will lure them and fondle them and please them with a verse or a poem.

20
CÚINNEADH SAMHRAIDH

B'e siud an t-òr a b'éirig anuair, ga thoirt le stròdh, an t-òr ga sgapadh, òr a' chonaig 's òr a' bheallaidh air bruthach, an còs, air lòn, air leacaimh an t-òr d'ar n-airc ga thoirt seachad madainn 's trathnòin, is tlachd ga cheannach; ceò teasa 's luin is bruthainn trasda air gach cunntaidh 's an t-òr 'na phailteas air beallaidh 's conasg, 's 'na thoic ga faighinn 's ga cosg air soineann 's turadh tairis.

Òr a' chonaig 's òr a' bheallaidh far na ròdh an dùdlachd againn, a' ceannach luchair 's còin d'ar n-ainnis, a' fàs gun chosnadh 's ga thoirt an asgaidh an glaic, air cnoc, ri oir nan achadh. Òr a' chonaig 's òr a' bheallaidh a' teacht òirn o dhuslaich 's talamh; grian is eòin is ceòl gam fasdadh aig òr a' chonaig 's òr a' bheallaidh. An cúinneadh ãnaisd ãrtha, maiseach feadh phreasan conaisg, feadh dhuslaing beallaidh ga thoir gun toilleadh, toic is dathan, 'na dhuais chiil an cùirt nam meangan a taigh-stòir gun chrann, gun ghasadh a dh'fhosgail grian fhial an earrach; 's cha druit a' chòmhla gu fhoghar abaich. Òr a' chonaig 's òr a' bheallaidh.

1978

1 a b'éirig : is éirig 11
5 an t-òr d'ar n-airc : d'ar n-airc an t-òr 11
10 tairis : annamh 11
12 againn : d'ar ainnis corr. 11
17 a' teacht òirn : 'ga chùinneadh bhuidhe corr. 11
18 grian ... ceòl : /samhradh > grian/ is ceòl is eòin 11
20-27 : ins. 11
21 dhuslaing beallaidh : dhuslaing bheallaidh 11
23 'na dhuais chiil : gan toirt air ceòl corr. 11
24 glasadh : glasan 11

SUMMER COINAGE

That's the gold that's requital-money for hard weather given in a spendthrift way, the gold being scattered, the gold of the whin and the gold of the broom. On braes, in howes, on loanings, on slopes the gold is handed out to our neediness morning and evening, while pleasure is bought with it. Heat haze and heat-shimmering and sultry heat across every county, with the gold in plenty on broom and whin, a wealth that is got and spent on fine weather and gentle sunny weather.
The gold of the whin and the gold of the broom where midwinter froze for us, buying July and birds for our poverty; growing without being worked for and given gratis in hollow, on hill, and on the edge of the fields. The gold of the whin and the gold of the broom reaching us from the dust and the earth. Sun and birds and music are hired by the gold of the whin and the gold of the broom. The golden, beautiful coinage of August throughout whin bushes and thickets of broom, given without being deserved, riches and colours. a fee for music in the court of the branches from a storehouse unbolted, unlocked, which was opened by the generous sun of spring — and the door will not close till ripe autumn. The gold of the whin and the gold of the broom.

1978

That's... that's: That was... that was requisit-money: a requital weather: wealth sic P9

GUTH THAIRIS

Chaidh guth thairis air chìsean ar dòthcha sa' chathair mu dheas, gun fhacal gun dùird s gach dùil 'dol air ais sa' ghreis. Tha caban s iad dùinte is sùilean gun aithn' air neach. Bhith 'gan crathadh s 'gan dùsgadh o'n dùsal, b'e rathad ar leas.

1978

sa' chathair mu: sa' mu sic P27
'dol air ais: air dol as
aithn' air neach: aithne air fear

LETTING IT DROP

They have let it drop about the matter of our country in the city in the south. There's not a word or a cheep and every expectation has faded out for the moment. There are gabs which are shut and eyes which do not recognise a person. To be shaking them and wakening them from their snooze, that would be the right way for us.

person: man
DREUCHD AN FHILIDH

Tha mi cinnteach an còmhaidh a còmhadh o'n Naoinear bhinn gu lìth chur air còmhradh s air òrain 'nan caochan still, gu slòrchar ri ceòl s gus na h-eòin thoirt á craobhân òlòin. Ard lòsail mo ghìdhir, is mi bèò, bidh mi chaoídh cur dhìom.

An fhirinn gun sgledò, is an deò annam, gheobh sibh i. A bhith strì ris a' cheò, cha chòmhrag no cogadh fìr. Bigeil nan eòin 'na sòlas, 'na sonas bidh, s is slòrraidh an smeòrach le mòramhan s pongan mion.

1978

t : om. 11 11 20 ; *P15
2 air òrain nan caochan still : gu òrain 11
6 cha ... fir : cha bu deòin leam an cogadh sin cor. 11
7 Bigeil ... 'na sonas : [tha del.] bigeil ... s 'na sochair cor. 11
8 slòrraidh : priseil cor. 11

THE POET'S CALLING

I am ever sure of aid from the melodious Muses to lend colour to speech and to songs gushing like a runnel, to be ever at music and to wile the birds from their fastnesses in the trees. High or low my voice, while I live I will ever be laying off.

The truth without hazy nonsense while breath is in me you will get. To be struggling with the mist is no battle or war for a man. The chirping of the birds is a pleasure and a happiness, and eternal is the thrush with its crotchets and tiny notes.

20

MÓR Á MEUD

Och, thà iad bòsdail s cho mór á meud le dàil is mórchuis is sgledò 'nam beul. An nàisean òg seo s e àrsaidh, mòrail tàrraidh e 'n t-òirleach s an còr de'n réis.

1978

11 20 ; *P27

PROUD OF BIGNESS

Och, they are boastful and so proud of bigness, with delay and overweening pride and hazy nonsense in their mouths. This young nation, which is ancient and majestic, it will make the inch and the rest of the span.
Football and the horses being argued about and bets being laid; the drink and the wife who is waiting, and prices are too much; making a living and taking the micky and fun about the wet weather; the war that has gone and the greasy blackguards in Russia.

Tipsiness and good humour and the loud and low confusion of voices; the glasses half empty and half the time run out; the clock being studied as it hastens on eternally without ceasing; purses being plundered, I'll stand you another pint.

Is this company in the land of history and the mettlesome seed of the Scots, the country of Ossian, the country of Deirdre, the country of Henryson, the land of Iain Lom? Their forebears warred with Edward, and their blood protected the dogs and the horses being argued about and the debts being laid.

Early morning or evening, that is sure and certain, man upon man will rouse himself, I swear by the truth I tell you. There will be a mettlesome stirring, and there will be no esteem or mention again for the dogs and the horses being argued about and the debts being laid.
STAD A’ BHUS

Na’n tigeadh am bus s mi ’fuireach gu faidhidneach ris, le ticeidean s le cuibhlichean s uinneagan s staidhear air chrith; fear iomain ’na shuidhe cùl cuibhle s am faradh s an driop, gun nichein ach furtachd is suidheadchais s stadan gu tric.

An sileadh na’n sguireadh ’gam sguiteadh, bu taitneach sin. Na’n tigeadh s na’n ruigeadh am bus, gu’m b’aighearach mi, le sitheadh s le udal air uidhe s an lathach ri ’shlios.

Fear iomain is cuibhle – na’n ruigeadh e ’n stad seo nis!

Cha dioc na’s fhuilear, s ar fuireach s ar faire gu mion air ciontaich Lunnainn, s am bruidhinn a’ teachd ’na cith. Roimh an tighinn bidh furan is sulas is aiteas o’r sliochd do na fir d’ar fuil o Lunnainn, gach maith is mith.

1978

1: om. 11  
2: s le : s 11  
7: an lathach : lathach 11  
9: gu mion : tric corr. 11  
10: air /labhairt > lideathan/ Lunnainn ’sna Cumantan teachd ’na Cumantain teachd ’na > ’nan/ cith 11  
11: an tighinn ... sulas : thighinn ... furtachd 11  
12: do gach /mith > fir/ d’ar fuil o Lunnainn ’s gach maith /tha ’n siod > s gach mith/ 11

THE BUS STOP

If the bus would come, for I am waiting patiently for it, with tickets and with wheels and windows and its stair vibrating, the driver sitting behind the wheel and the fare and the bustle, and nothing but comfort and seats and stops frequently.

4 If the rain would stop scootching me, that would be pleasant. If the bus would come, if it would arrive, I would be joyful, darting and swaying on its way and the mud stuck to its side. A driver and a wheel – if it would reach this stop now!

7 What one must is more than enough, while we wait and watch closely the guilty men in London with their talk pouring down in a shower. There will be welcome and delight and gladness from our race for the men of our blood coming from London, each gentleman and commoner.

20 ; *P27
AN CRUINNEACHADH NO AN TIONAL

Tha rìl-rìl is hòrogheallaidh
an cathair Lunnainn is beòil air chritis
mu'n Chruinneachadh tha gu bhith againn
gun chumhachd canton Eilbheis mion.

1978

2 an cathair Lunnainn : san nàisean deas oirn  
marg: an cathair Lunnainn 11  
4 canton Eilbheis mion : cantoin san Eilbheis mhion  
corr. 11

THE ASSEMBLY

There is staggering confusion and a horyalley in the city of London and mouths acqivver about the Assembly that we are to have without the power of a minute Swiss canton.

20

TÎR MÓR

Féidh is caoraich, is craobhan 'gan cur s a' fàs;
na h-éisg s a' chearc-fhrioch, is gun daoine gu'd fhuran ri làimh;
na sléibhtean s am fraoch is a' ghaoth ri tuireadh gun stàth --
an dé s mi air aonach aonranach muladach àrd.

1978

MAINLAND

Deer and sheep, and trees being planted and growing; the fish and the grouse, and no people to welcome you at hand; the hills and the heather and the wind at its unavailing lamenting – yesterday when I was on a lonely, melancholy, high upland.

20
CANZONE GOLIARDICA

Cantatore
sono io.
Canto finora;
vanterò.

Del cantare
il dono do.
Canto finora;
vanterò.

Rime fiere
tesserò.
Canto finora;
vanterò.

Alla fiera
suonerò.
Canto finora;
vanterò.

Mentre respiro
canterò.
Canto finora;
vanterò.

* * * * *

So che si muore.
Morirò.
Canto finora;
tacerò.

Da folla e foro
partirò.
Canto finora;
tacerò.

All' ultima sera
dormirò.
Canto finora;
tacerò.

Notte nera
guarderò.
Canto finora;
tacerò.

Oltre quel mare
passerò.
Canto finora;
tacerò.
Caronte fero
pagherò.
Canto finora;
tacerò.

C'è lo svegliarsi?
Mai saprò.
Canto finora;
tacerò.

* * * * *

Il giorno dora
il cielo, no?
Canto finora;
vanterò.

Andrò fuori.
Sì, andrò.
Canto finora;
vanterò.

Buon è il bere.
Cosi, berrò.
Canto finora;
vanterò.

Pieni bicchieri
vuotereò.
Canto finora;
vanterò.

Buon è 'l ballare.
Ballereò.
Canto finora;
vanterò.

Buon è 'l cantare.
Canterò.
Canto finora;
vanterò.

1978

6 dono : sono 20 corr. 46
13-16 : om. 11
24 tacerò : TACERÒ 20 corr. 46
25-44 : no italics 11
34 guarderò : io vedrò 11
GOLIARDIC SONG

A singer am I. I sing hitherto; I shall vaunt.
I give the gift of singing. I sing hitherto; I shall vaunt.
Proud rhymes I will weave. I sing hitherto; I shall vaunt.
At the fair I will play music. I sing hitherto; I shall vaunt.
As long as I breathe I will sing. I sing hitherto; I shall vaunt.

* * * *

I know that one dies. I shall die. I sing hitherto; I shall be silent.
I shall depart from crowd and forum. I sing hitherto; I shall be silent.
At the last evening I shall sleep. I sing hitherto; I shall be silent.
I shall look at black night. I sing hitherto; I shall be silent.
Beyond that sea I shall pass. I sing hitherto; I shall be silent.
I shall pay grim Charon. I sing hitherto; I shall be silent.
Is there an awakening? I shall never know. I sing hitherto; I shall be silent.

* * * *

Day gilds the sky, no? I sing hitherto; I shall vaunt.
I will go out. Yes, I will. I sing hitherto; I shall vaunt.
Good is it to drink. So, I will drink. I sing hitherto; I shall vaunt.
I will empty full glasses. I sing hitherto; I shall vaunt.
Good is it to dance. I will dance. I sing hitherto; I shall vaunt.
Good is it to sing. I will sing. I sing hitherto; I shall vaunt.

20 *46

RITORNELLO

Quando piove,
sussurra, vien e va e l’aria muove.
Quando piove qua c’è ’l sol altrove
quando piove.

1978?

RITORNELLO

When it rains, it murmurs, it comes and goes and the air moves. When it rains here, there is the sun elsewhere – when it rains.
[RANN DO SHOMHAIRLE]

A Shomhairle Mhic Illeathain thallud,
mo chomhairle dhuit, s is facal fior,
crath do mhuing is bi sitrich.
Is tu am filidh s cha bu mhl.

1978

t : DO SHOMHAIRLE MACILLEATHAIN  all 11 20 ; *P15

A VERSE FOR SORLEY

Sorley MacLean over yonder, my advice to you (a true word it be), shake your mane and be neighing.
You are the master poet, not me.  

MB

LÀ ALLABAN MONAIDH

Ris a’ bhruthach, leis a’ bhruthach,
s mi a’ siubhal feadh nan sliabh;
ris an leathad, leis an leathad,
ciob is creagan, fraoch is riasg;
ris a’ mhonadh, leis a’ mhonadh,
feadag s crotag, fraoch is riasg;
farsan farsaing feadh a’ mhonaich,
faileadh roiđe, gaoth is grian.

1978

5  ris ... leis : air ... fo’n corr. 11 11 20 ; *P15
6  fraoch is riasg : caora s fiadh  11

A DAY OF RAMBLING IN THE HILLS

Up the brae, down the brae, as walking through the hills I go; up the slope, down the slope, heath and rocks, heather and fens; up the moors, down the moors, whistler and plover, heather and fens; wandering far among the moors, scent of myrtle, wind and sun.

MB

TAIGH NAN CUMANTAN

Mańana no ’n earar, is feithibh ri rădh a beăil;
domani no ’n deireadh nan seachdain, s cha daîl ach deđin;
a-mаireach no ’m feasda, no ’n teirinn an dă mhil’ dîrën?
Parlamaid Bhreatainn nach deifireach ãbhaist is dbigh.

1978

1  rădh a : rădh ach  20 (for rădhtach / rădhach ?)  20 ; *P15

THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

Mańana or the day after tomorrow, and wait for the utterance of her mouth; domani or at the weekends, and the only delay is will; tomorrow or ever, or will the bimillennium run out on us? Britain’s Parliament unhurried of custom and manner.

MB
GU'M CHUR AN AITHNE

Deòrsa Ciotach mac Iain Dheòrsa,
sìn e mar is eòl dhaibh mi;
'nam dhalt' aig Gàidheil s mi leth-Ghallda;
fuinn is rainn is dàin mo dhriop.

Bhà mi 'm bhalach an Cinntire
taobh Loch Fine, s thà mi nis
an Dùn Èideann air mo chaitean;
seisean s duain, is buan mo smid.

Ma tha aon a tha san éisdeachd
is e déidheil air an diog
s air na ceathramhan gan cumadh,
gu deimhinn, chumainn ranntachd ris.

"Tha a' Ghàidhlig riomhach beairteach",
ás is às gun abair mi.
Air mo shlataig, slon no soineann,
is bras mo bhiog mar lon an lios.

1978

4 fuinn is rainn : rann is fonn corr. 11
8 seisean : téisean 11
15 : air mo ghéig ri sin s ri soineann corr. 11
16 is bras : bidh corr. 11

BY WAY OF INTRODUCTION

Left-handed George son of John son of George, that’s the name they know me by; fostered by Gaels, and I half-Lowlander; verses and poems and tunes are my craft.

My boyhood I spent in Kintyre, on Loch Fyneside, and now my travels find me in Edinburgh; rhyme and song, of long standing is my utterance.

Should there be anyone listening here who is keen on words and on the fashioning of quatrains, assuredly I’d versify with him.

"The Gaelic tongue is rich and splendid", is what I’ll say without demur. On my twig by storm or sunshine, bold is my chirp as a blackbird’s in a garden.
M’OILEIN IS M’ALTRUM

Clothan is ceathach
air leathadan casa;
an roid is an luachair
is an cruadhlaich fo m’chasan;
am fraoch is an sliabh,
an riasg is an raineach;
air feadh mara is monaidh
chaidh m’oilein is m’altrum.

Dh’fhàg na tobhtachan làrach
dubh làrach ’nam anam;
air ruighe nan aonach
tosg aognaidh nam bailtean;
na dachaidhean sgrioste
ri lideadh s ri facal;
na ballachan briste
is smid na cuimhn’ asda.

Na doireachan s boladh
na roide sna glacan;
na leabhraichean, s eòlas
na Ròimhe s nan Aitein;
có aca fo’n ghréin
bu mhò eòachd air m’ealain,
no an loch is na sléibhtean,
no a’ Ghreugais s an Laideann?

Am bidein s am bruthach
is am mullach gun fhasgadh,
is bruidhinn gun sgrur
aig na sruthain le gleannain,
no feallanachd àrd
agus dràma nan Aitein,
dé is deise do m’inninn?
Chan eil cinnt a’ m có aca.

Gach cainnit is gach cultur
a chunnaic s nach fhaca,
aiste is nobhail,
sonaid is saga,
cèbl stàtail na Gearmaill
is na dealbhan dathte
is cumhachdaiche ’m monadh.
Is motha e agam.

1978

3 an roid : am fraoch 11
dubh : flor 11
11 air : an 11
tosg : tosd 11
15 ballachan : taighean cor. 11
17 Na doireachan : A’ choille cor. 11
23 no an : an cor. 11
24 a’ Ghreugais : ‘Ghreugais 11
27-28 bruidhinn ... sruthain : slòr bhruìdhinn / nan sruthan cor. 11
31 dé : có 11
35 aiste : iris 11
38 is : om. 11
39 ’m : om. 11
MY SCHOOLING AND MY REARING

Showers and mist on steep mountainsides; bog-myrtle and rushes and stony ground under my feet; the heather and the hill, the marshground and the ferns; over sea and moorland I was schooled and reared.

The ruined dwellings left a black imprint on my soul; on the wilderness slopes the townships' terrible gash; the gutted homes that speak and tell; the demolished walls that exhude memory's whisper.

The thickets and the scent of bog-myrtle in the hollows; books, and the learning of Rome and Athens; which of them most has affected my art, the loch and the hills or Latin and Greek?

The pinnacle, the ascent and the unsheltered summit, and the ceaseless chatter of burns down small glens, or the drama and lofty philosophy of Athens - which runs deeper in my mind? I know not for sure.

Every language and culture I have seen and not seen, essay and novel, sonata or saga, the stately music of Germany, the painted canvasses - more powerful is the moorland, and closer to my heart.

THE AULD BORDER WUMMAN

Nox est perpetua una dormienda.

Wull I nae see thaim yet, ma oe, ma ieroe?
The bairns are grown and gane, and bare's ma shoother.
Is't a leelang nicht i a bed that's nerra?
Is Heaven a freit, the Carritch a wheen o blether?

The gerss dees and grows oot on the loanin.
The burn? I'd drink its watter i a tassie.
Is't tae be that, a smooran wioot meanan, or gang, a ghaist, whaur aince I gaed a lassie?

Tae keep a hoose i the mools, when aa is endit, whaur nane chap at the dure, nane come tae speir. Gin I but had ma wull, sweet Christ, I'd mend it tae luik on Tinto in a thoosan year.

1978

2 bare's : bare 20
8 aince : since sic P9
10 tae : nane 20
11 I'd mend : I'd mand 20 I's mend sic P9
LAROCHS

Fu o unease and secret fear
they turned their heid, and doon cam waas.
Here brent the thack; here brokk the dure;
here suddent violence made the laws.

Thone lanesome laroch abune the howes
was cantie aince ablow the muir.
The rain's the guest whaur bleezed the fire,
and silence chaps at the tummet dure.

They brokkin waas that gie nae bield
war couthie aince wi sang and talk;
and hyucks war eident i the field,
as doon gaed bere gowd bauk by bauk.

Th' unending talk o the burn ablow,
and the leid o the wind the birks amang;
rashes and dockens and brekkins grow
whaur hairst was yella and bandsters thrang.

Alang the braes the baa o yowes;
the rinnan rae, the tod, the hare
are nae blate here, whaur heather grows.
The wae whaups keep the céilidh here.

The tracks grow owre, untrevellt aa;
heather is broon whaur green was gress;
the wind, the rain, the sun, the snaw,
the nicht, the day, and naethingness.

Mairtinmass and Lammas day
and seasons hae nae meanan here.
Youth or eild or freend or fae
are aa ae thing whaur larochs are.

Glesca and Embro hae their fowk;
i faur Cape Breton they are kent.
Here derns a future but a maik.
They bide, wi naethingness acquent.

Aa the mountains o the warld
tooer atween thaim and their men.
Tae continents they are thirled.
The reek will ryse frae thaim again.

They brokkin waas and fuggie flairs,
whaur feet will dance again, ding Daith;
whaur aa unguestit gant the dures,
will ootlast Crouns and Commons baith.

Toom laroch in its lanesome lee,
shenar o cities, bides its day.
Ilk laroch dwauman eternally
is a strang keep tae lippen tae.
THE MUIRLAND MAN
Hieland or Lawland

A muirland man in a fail hoose;
mach ye his mense, ye wha can.
He was stately and he was crous.
He was a king, the muirland man.

1978?
A’ CHEÓLRAIDH
Beatha Bun-os-cionn

Thug mi ’n oidhche caitrísceach
gu camhánach ìs fàire,
a’ cumadh air an rannaghail
s an aicill teachd s gà tàthadh
gun chlos on Cheòlraidh fhìadhaich
s an norran gnàthach cìan uam
mar chomhachag no iasgair
no ialtag nan sgàile.

1978

THE MUSES
A Life Upside-down

I have spent the night on vigil till break of dawn and light on the horizon, fashioning my verse, and
the internal rhymes coming and welding it together, with no respite from the feverish Muses and my
habitual slumber far from me, like an owl or a sailor or the bat in the shadows.

MB

AIRSON NA CLOINNE – FÀILT’ AIR A’ MHADAINN

Air a’ cheud mhañana di domani Là,
nuair a dh’eireas grian os cionn nan càrn,
dùis gidh sinn san t-solas is èiridh sinn gu h-obann,
s bidh sinn air ar cos gu sgaradh nan tràth.

1978

FOR THE CHILDREN – A WELCOME TO THE MORNING

On the first mañana di domani day, when the sun rises over the stony peaks, we will wake up to the
light and rise in haste, and we’ll be on our feet till evening falls.  MB
THE WHITE HEN

Oh all take a look at the chookie. She's laid some eggs. Strutting she goes, with her bent legs, her every feather most white and most shaggy. She picks, she roosts. She cackles away on her yellow legsticks, she nods and dodgles her neck, griping about the lot of the beak she carries, round the door of the hut which was always her goal; as she peers round with a fretting eye lest anyone come near her eggs.

Oh all take a look at the Members in the Commons, sitting rocking in self-importance. They talk, they chant, they sing their chorus and it is a dirge. They have their bills (?), she has her roost, she cackles away, they whine away, she struts and parades, they strut and parade. They crouch, they hatch, they will not be happy to be rid of us, but it will all come to pass, as of necessity it must.
AN NÀISEANTACH 'GA CHOMHAIRLEACHADH

[Two Drafts]

Och, cuist a nis. Bi glic. Nach eil
cuspair ar cinnidh tric fo sgeíg?
Is cus leam sin gach lideadh dheth
s cha n-urra mi an tioma chleith.

* * *

Nach cuist thu nis? An tig am feasd
an rud a shireas sibh s an seas?
Tha cuíd as sine dhlighe s neart
aig mo chuideachd chridhe, s cridhe mear.

1979

7 : Tha cudthrom /dhlighe s sine > sine s dlighe/ s reachd corr.
8  aig mo ... , s cridhe mear : /aig > aig a'/ ... dhinne s neart
     > aig mo ... , fir nach feac corr.

ADVICE TO THE NATIONALIST

Oh wheesht, now. Be sensible. Isn’t the cause of our nation often ridiculed? It is too much for me, every syllable of it, and I cannot hide my sorrow.

Won’t you wheesht now? Will it ever come, the thing you all seek and will it endure? The older part in dedication and strength lies with the company I love, and an optimistic heart. (?) MB

[FALAMH]

Agam agad againn gu léir.
Thà mi falamh I’m skint the day
roinn nan tasdan is d’ol d’a réir.
Sin an deachdadh againn fhéin,
leamsa, leatsa, leinn gu léir.

1979?

EMPTY

What I have, what you have, what we all have together. I am empty, I’m skint the day; the shillings get shared and one drinks accordingly. That’s the rule of life we follow, what’s mine, what’s yours, is ours together. MB
NA FEANSAICHEAN
[Reconstructed Draft]

Thug mi gaol dha, thug mi gràdh dha
do’n fearan riabhach fhìadhach, fhàsaich
do’n taìl-chruithaich, do’n chruaidh, do’n sgàirneach,
nach tug gin do nighean àlainn
nach tug gin do bhean no mhàthair
dh’athair no phiuhtar no bhràthair
nach tug duine dh’huil no chàirdean
nach tugadh riamh eadar lànan
nach tugadh riamh eadar càraid
do leannan, do leanabh, do phàisde

ach tha feansan fo gach ruighe
far an robh Clann Domhnaill fuireach.

Tha mo chas air rathad cumant
air rathad mòr s a Mhòrachd subhrach.

Cruach an tSorchain s Cnoc na Mèine
a' Chaolbheinn s Cruach Doire Léithe
s fad' o'n rathad, s fad' o'n éigh iad.

A Dhia nam faicinn slios Alld Bheithe
cha bu mhighean ach bu ghean e.

'S binn a' chrotag os cionn garbhlaich
is geur air rathad fuaim a' charbaid.

Far am bi am barrach boltrach
s ann a bhios na caoraich mbolach
molt is reithe s reic is lomadh
s ciobair s cù air sgurr s air monadh.

Fàsaidh raineach, fàsaidh copag
fàsaidh feur is fàsaidh croitean
fàsaidh fraoch is fàsaidh fochan.

Bitear tilleadh chum nan làrach
's bidh na feansaichean air lâr ac'.

Feansa orr' is caoraich bhàna
geamair is ciobair s cùs is fàsach.
An sin tha feansaichean is àithne.

Far am faicear taighean s àiteach
tha gaoth is fraoch is caoraich bhàna,
Far am bi fraghan, s taighean s àiteach
a nis tha feansaichean mu'n àite.

1978

34-37 : see notes.
THE FENCES

I gied it luve, I gied it likein,
sic as nane gied tae a luvley lassie,
that nane e'er gied tae wife or mither,
tae faither, tae sister, tae brither,
that man ne'er gied tae bluid or kin,
that wes ne'er gien atween a merriet couple,
that wes ne'er gien atween a merriet pair,
that wes ne'er gien tae leman, tae bairm, tae wean,
that I gied tae the brindlet, wild wilderness land,
tae the boghole, tae the hilltap, tae the tummlet rocks.
An' there are fences roond the places.

Noo there are fences ablow the gentle slope
whaur Clan Donald uset tae bide.

Ma fuit is on the common roadway,
on the heichroad, wi his Lordship crouse.

The Summit o the Fitstule an' The Knowe o the Mine,
The Nerra Ben an' The Summit o the Grey Grove,
they are faur frae the road, they are a faur cry.

Goad gin I could see Alld Beithe hillside,
it wadna be displeasure, it wad be pleasure.

Sweet is the whaup abune the reuch groond:
sherp on the road is the soond o the car.

Whaur are the fragrant birk taps,
there are the shaggy sheep,
wedder an' ram, an' sellin an' shearin,
an' shepherd an' dog on scaur an' muirland.

Brecken will grow, docken will grow,
gers will grow an' crofts will grow;
heather will grow an' blade o gerss will grow.

There will be a returnin tae the larochs
an' they will hae fences on the groond.

A fence there is an' white sheep,
gamekeeper an' shepherd an' taxes an' a wilderness.
Yonder are fences an' a commandment.

Whaur there will be hooses an' room-waas an' cultivation,
wund an' heather an' white sheep,
an' fences aboot the place.

1979
SIMMER CUNZIE

Thon’s the gowd requites hard wather,
gowd o the whin an’ gowd o the broom,
in gowpens owre aa the land thegither,
makan herts fu’ that at Yule war toom.

P9

TO THE YOUNGER GENERATION

Jimp an’ trigg an’ gleg an’ aa,
ilka day is gled an’ braw,
dae ye think the past is fell
an’ the mair nations the mair hell?

publ. 1979

EXTEMPORE IN BENNETT’S BAR

I am mair dwaibly nor dwaibly itsel,
I am mair auld nor auld;
ma neb is blae; the wund is snell.
What is’t? I hae a cauld.

publ. 1979
THE BARD, THE DRINK AN’ THE HILL

Will ye drink yill i the Cannie Man’s
or watter an’ gang tae Allermuir?
Wad ye raither hear the juke-box play
or raither the whaups’ overture?

publ. 1979

1: om. 12 44
2: Will ye : Wad ye raither 12 44
3: an’ : and 12 44
4: whaup’s : whaups’ 44

THE SONGS THAT WERE AND THAT ARE

The songs that were and that are, my dear; the songs that were, every verse, my dear; the songs that are a-plenty, my dear.

The songs that were, in every glen, my dear; the songs that were, unwritten, my dear; the songs that are, sung to the end, my dear.

The songs that were and that are, my dear; the songs that were a-plenty, my dear; the songs that are, every verse, my dear.

MB
MUIR IS TÌR
no DEIREADH OIDHCHE RI CLADACH

Eadar sgeir is sgeir,
eadar iar is ear,
is siud a’ ghrian anear.

Eadar bogha s tràigh,
eadar cop is cùrn,
is siud a’ ghrian s an là.

Eadar faoileag s lon,
eadar slios is loch,
is siud a’ ghrian, dèan boch.

eadar geansaidh s clò,
eadar isag is féidil,
is siud a’ ghrian gun sgòth.

Eadar ëir is snàmh,
eadar bùrn is sàl,
is siud a’ ghrian tràth.

Eadar còinneach s ceilp,
eadar maois is peic,
is siud a’ ghrian a’ teachd.

Eadar bog is cruaidh,
eadar deas is tuath,
is siud a’ ghrian luath.

Eadar fairge s fonn,
eadar garbhach s tonn,
is siud a’ ghrian air lom.

Eadar ceannair s làir,
eadar lannan s càth,
is siud a’ ghrian an àird.

Eadar lunn is feur,
eadar grunnd is speur,
is siud a’ ghrian ’na leus.

Eadar crann is craobh,
eadar gleann is caol,
is siud a’ ghrian ’na caoir.

Eadar mogull s dias,
eadar tobhta s cliath,
is siud a’ ghrian dol siar.

Eadar oidhche s là,
eadar àird is àird,
is siud a’ ghrian mar bhà.

Eadar duileasg s fraoch,
eadar murabhlach s naosg,
is siud a’ ghrian chaomh.
Eadar fàiteam s sgar,
eadar còmhla s tac,
is siud a' ghrian air ais.

Eadar treobhadh s cur,
eadar cathadh s dús,
is siud a' ghrian bho thuim.

Eadar dubh is moch,
eadar tulach s loch,
is siud a' ghrian d'ar toil.

Eadar ringeadh s buain,
eadar linne s cruach,
is siud a' ghrian, a lauidh.

Eadar putag s ceap,
eadar ulag s bleith,
is siud a' ghrian s ar leas.

Eadar toibh a' sáin,
eadar cobhar s beinn,
is siud a' ghrian, ar leinn.

Eadar aitheamh s sgorr,
eadar toim is fòd,
is siud a' ghrian 'na dèòs.

Eadar ailm is beith,
eadar amhsan s cearc,
is siud a' ghrian mhear.

Eadar stuadh a lòn,
eadar fuarthonn s crò,
is siud a' ghrian òir.

Eadar each a seòl,
eadar peileag s bò,
is siud a' ghrian choir.

Eadar sìonach a ròn,
eadar tuinn a torr,
is siud a' ghrian, s is leòir.

(1979?)-'80
LAND AND SEA or THE END OF A NIGHT BY THE SHORE

Between skerry and skerry, between west and east, yonder's the eastern sun.
Between heaver and shore, between foam and cairn, yonder's the sun and the day.
Between blackbird and gull, between hillslope and loch, yonder's the sun, rejoice.
Between jersey and tweed, between fish and meat, yonder's the cloudless sun.
Between earth and swim, fresh water and brine, yonder's the early sun.
Between moss and kelp, between pitcher and hamper, yonder the sun advances.
Between hard and soft, between south and north, yonder's the speedy sun.
Between ocean and land, stony ground and wave, yonder's the glaring sun.
Between net-rope and mare, between corn-husks and scales, yonder the sun climbs high.
Between roller and grass, between seabed and sky, yonder's the sun alight.
Between mast and tree, between kyle and glen, yonder's the sun aflame.
Between ear of corn and mesh, between oarseat and harrow, yonder the sun goes west.
Between night and day, from airt to airt, yonder's the sun unchanged.
Between heather and dulse, between dogfish and snipe, yonder's the gentle sun.
Between joint and seam, between doorleaf and tack, yonder the sun is back.
Between ploughing and sowing, between seaspray and dust, yonder's the sun by the knowes.
Between dawn and night, between hillock and loch, yon sun's for our delight.
Between ringnetting and reaping, between pool and peak, yonder's the sun, my dear.
Between oarpin and snare, pulley and mealgrinding, yonder's the sun of our wellbeing.
Between wall and bench, between froth and ben, yonder's the sun, I deem.
Between fathom and pinnacle, peat-clod and wave, yonder's the sun ablaze.
Between elm and birch, between solan and hen, yonder's the merry sun.
Between breaker and meadow, between cold wave and fold, yonder's the sun of gold.
Between horse and sail, between porpoise and kine, yonder's the kindly sun.
Between fox and seal, between waves and heap, yon sun is all we need.

MB
HÒRO, MHÀIRI DHUBH

Cha dèan mi car feuma ma thrèigeas mo leannan mi,
hòro, Mhàiri Dhubh, tionndaidh rium,
bean a’ chhil dualaich ’s nan cuachagan camagach,
hòro, Mhàiri Dhubh, tionndaidh rium.
A Mhàiri, nan tígeadh tu, thaitneadh tu ruinn’,
A Mhàiri, nan tígeadh tu, thaitneadh tu ruinn’,
A Mhàiri, nan tígeadh tu, b’e do bheath againn thu,
hòro, Mhàiri Dhubh, tionndaidh rium.

Tha ’n latha dol seachad, ’s e fadalach, fadalach,
is tu bhith gam dhith a dhìobair mo chadal bhuam.

Bu tu, a ghràidh, a thàladh mar leanabh mi,
bu tu sheinneadh ceòl mar smeòrach na camhanaich.

A Mhàiri, eudail, na trèig rim mhaireann mi.
A Mhàiri, a rèin ghil, tionndaidh an rathad seo.

1980

bhuam : uam 11
a ghràidh : a Mhàiri 11

HÒRO, BLACK-HAIRED MARY

A useful turn I’ll not do if my lover abandons me, Hòro, Black-haired Mary, turn to me; the lovely-haired woman of twirling locks, Hòro, Black-haired Mary, turn to me.

O should you come, Mary, you’d be our delight; O should you come, Mary, you’d be our delight; O should you come, Mary, we’d give you great welcome; hòro, Black-haired Mary, turn to me.

The day goes by, so wearily, wearily; it’s the wanting of you has banished my sleep from me.

It’s you, love, who’d lull me to sleep like a baby; it’s you would make music like the thrush of the dawn.

Mary, my treasure, don’t ever forsake me; Mary, my white love, come turn down this way.

MB
EICH MHIC NÉILL
(Oran Tathaidh)

A bhradag dhubh, a hù o haoi o, bhrist na glasan, hù o éile, cuiream ortsa an dubh chapall, hù o haoi o.

Cuiream ortsa, hù o haoi o, an dubh chapall, hù o éile, C’àit an d’fhàg thu Ruaraídh ’n Tartair? Hù o haoi o.

C’àit an d’fhàg thu Niall a’ Chaisteil, no Gilleónain mòr an gaisgeach, chuireadh crùithneachd gleal ’nam prasaich, chuireadh am flùr air an dealt dhaibh; chuireadh crùidhean òir fon casan, chuireadh srian an airgid ghlaist riu, dìallaidean sìoda sìnte thairis. Chuireadh iad leus as an adhar, chuireadh iad crìth air an talamh, sradagan gan cur á clachan. Réis is ruith is muing air chrathadh, ruith is ceumadh, réis is saltairt. Na h-eich liatha, dhìana, bhrasa, dh’fhalbhadh raointean, sgaoim cha ghabadh, nach iarradh cuip no spuir ach marcach.

1980 (-1982)

1-6: om. 11
8 prasaich: praisich 11
9: om. 11
13 às an: troimh speur is 11
15: bhuaileadh iad sradan as na clachan 11
16 air chrathadh: ’ga crathadh 11
17: ceumadh, sitrich agus saltairt 11
19: om. 11
20 nach iarradh: cha n-iarradh 11
see notes for extra lines 11

MACNEILL OF BARRA’S HORSES
(A Conflated Song)

You wee black thief, a hù o haoi o, who snapped the fetters, hù o éile, on you I cast the black mare curse, hù o haoi o.

On you I cast, a hù o haoi o, the black mare curse, hù o éile, Where did you leave Rorie the Clamorous? Hù o haoi o.

Where did you leave Neil of the Castle; or great Gilleonan the hero; who would give wine to the horses; who’d fill their manger with white wheat; who’d sprinkle flour on the dew for them; who’d shod their hooves with shoes of gold; who’d equip them with bridles of burnished silver; silken saddles spread across them. They would send a blaze through the air; they would set the earth atremble; send sparks flying from the stones. Racing and galloping, tossing their manes; galloping, striding, racing and trampling. The mettlesome, fiery light-grey horses; who’d travel the plains, never take fright, and need neither whip nor spur but a rider.

MB
CHAILEIN ÓIG, AN STIÚIR THU MI?
(Athdhéanamh air Seann Oran)

Chrom i 'ceann is rinn i gaire,
chailein Óig, an stiúir thu mi?

Nighean rígh Éireann 's i 'san àirigh.

Chrom i 'ceann is rinn i gaire,
chailein Óig, an stiúir thu mi?

Nighean rígh Éireann 's i 'san àirigh,
giullan bochd is bothan fàsach,
stairisneach chòinnich 's balla fàil air,
's e fad' as, gun taigh air àrainn,
fad' o'n bhaile, fad' o àiteach,
air aonach fraoich am-measg nan àirdhean,
os cionn nan cnoc 's thar chromadh fàire;
tughadh luachrach 's leabaidh lìr ann;
gun duine 'gluasad, gun sluagh a làthair;
's e ris, gun fhassadh o'n àileadh,
dèò nam beann is alld 's a chàinain,
aonranach, uaigneach fo'n fhànas:
sùilean-cruach is cruadhch 's càthar,
bearraidhean 's creagan is càrnach;
séibhteann 's fraoch 's a 'ghaoth air bhàinidh
a tuireadh ri tulaichean àrdra,
scideadh, caoidhean, caoineadh 's ràinig
's fuaim an uilld 'na ghuth gun tAmhann;
maighich 's fèidh is sprèidh 'ga h-àrach.

Dh'aithnich mi gu'm b'i mo ghràdhais.
Thug mi dhi cuireadh 's furan 's fàilte,
's ghabh mi null an taobh a bha i.
Thug mi brèid dhi, thug mi bràiste,
thug mi làmhainnean d'a lâmhain,
stòm is sgarfa stoda bràghaid,
usgar daoimean 's leugan 's fàinne.
Shin mi còrn an dòr 's e lân di.
Dh'òl i 'n còrn, a h-aon 's a dhà dhiubh,
dh'òl a tri de'n fitson bhà càilear.
Dhirich grís ri gruaidd na mnà sin.
Lion i 'n còrn is shin e lân dhomh:
"Seo mo phòg is dòl mo shlàinte."
Fhuair mi pòg a beòil is màrrann,
cion is gean o'n mheachair mhnàla,
mionnan pòsaidh 's còrdadh 's càirdeas,
nighean rígh Éireann 'na cèile mnà dhomh
's Eirinn uile o dhrùm gu sàile.
Fhuair mi lùchairtean is pàileas,
Teamhair 's Aileach, faiche 's pàileas,
Connachd, Mumhain 's Uladh slàn leath,
Bòinn is Sionann 's Life lán leath,'
Ghleus mi ceol di 's órain àrsaidh,
puírt lán chuir is ruithean dàna;
dh'òl mi fion oirr 'na dheoch-shlàinte,
fion 's e dearg 'na dhearbh dheoch phàite.
Dh'fhán i agam na trì ràidhean.

Chaidh mi leatha air bòrd air bàrca
dhol gu Éirinn thar an t-sàile;
sgioba lìonmhòr 's trì chroinn àrda,
siùil gheala, mhìne de lìon an fhèlnrais,
buill is slatan, acair 's càball,
staghan, siùil is stiùir ri 'sàil oirr'.
Thog sinn tìr le fortan 's fàbhar.
Ghuais sinn suas o bhruch na tràghad
gu cúirt a h-athar, dùn an Árdrigh.
Ghabh e rium mar oighre àraid
agus a bhith 'nam righ 'na àite,
's a nighean bhith 'na càil mmàn dhomh.

Fhuair mi leatha comhairlichean stàtail,
ridirean, filidhcean, bàird leath',
caistealan, baidealan àrda,
tùir is turaisd 'nan àros;
Dùn nan Gall is Gallamh 's Àrann,
Éirinn fo bhuar le 'cluaittean àl奢侈 h;
boineidean anuas aig cäch rium,
modhan 's beiceadh 's freasdal m'àithnteann,
lùbadh ghlìnn is dìol ri fàbhar;
ollamhan oilein 's aos dàna,
rannnan malaidh gun lochd 'nam lathar;
crùn is cathair, gaisgich 's gèird leath',
fhuar mì sin, 's gach gin fo'm làmhann.
Fleadh an diugh is cuirm amàireach,
fleadh is féidh is réim is sàbhreas;
manach 's clèir is cèir is cràbhadh;
 cruiteir, fidhleir, plobair, clàrsair,
cearraiche, seanchaidh 's fear abhachd,
seaglaiche is léigh ri stànhadh,
 cleasaiche 's e clis 'sàn lathair,
maor is fiosaiche ri faistneachd,
torman organ 's côisir phàisde,
capaill réis gu feum 'sàn stàbhall,
féidh is fialadh gu grian air faire,
is mi 'nam shuidh' an trusgan cràidhearga
taobh ri taobh 's mo mhaothbhain ghràdhach.
Fhuair mì siud, is rud a b'fhèarr leam,
pòg a bilean, cion is tàlach
air cluasaigh uaine 'nam shuain gu là leath'.

Chrom i 'ceann is rinn i gàire,
chailein òigh, an stiùir thu mi?
nighean righ Éireann 's i san àirigh.
	Cháilean òigh, nighean righ Éireann,
chailean òigh, an stiùir thu mi?

1980-81
She bowed her head and gave a laugh young girl, will you guide me? the King of Ireland's daughter at the shieling. Young girl, daughter of the king of Ireland, young girl, will you guide me?

The king of Ireland's daughter at the shieling; a poor lad and a pasture bothy; with floor of moss and walls of turf; out of the way with no house near it; far from township or habitation; on the heathery moor high up on the summits; above the hills and beyond the horizon; thatched with rushes and a bed on the floor; not a soul passing by, no human presence; exposed and unprotected from the wind; the mountain breeze carrying the sounds of a burn (?); solitary and desolate under vast skies: quagmires, stony ascents and moss-land; ridges, crags and rocky escarpments; mountains and heather and the wind demented; its wailing sounding around the high hillocks; hieving and lament, howling and shrieking; and the sound of the burn an incessant voice; hares and deer, and cattle being reared.

I recognised her for my love. Greeting, salutation and welcome I gave her; and over I went to where she was. I gave her a kertch, I gave her a brooch; I gave her a pair of gloves for her hands; a snood I gave her and a shawl of silk; a diamond necklace, gems and a ring. The gold horn I handed her, brimming full. She drank the cup and then another; and again a third of wine so pleasant. A glow rose in that woman's cheeks. She filled the cup and handed it to me: "Here's a kiss, now drink my health". I got a kiss of her lips and love talk; fondness and affection from the kind gracious woman; vows of marriage, a pledge and love-bond; the Irish king's daughter to be my wife; all Ireland mine from ridge to ocean. I got mansions and a palace; Tara and Ailech, plain and palace; Connaught, Munster and all Ulster by her; Boyne and Shannon and the full Liffey by her; a page and goblets, tax and tribute by her; a court and courtiers and herds of cattle; the king of Ireland's daughter at the shieling. I plied her with music and ancient songs; tunes full of twists and audacious runs; I drank wine to toast her health; scarlet wine and truly quenching. She stayed with me three seasons long.

I went with her aboard a bark; to go to Ireland across the sea; a numerous crew and three high masts; smooth white sails of Flanders linen; ropes and yards, anchor and cable; stays and sails, at her heel a rudder. We sighted land with favour and fortune. We headed up from the bank of the slure; 10 her father's court, the fort of the High King. He took to me as his very heir; that I might succeed him in the kingship; and his daughter would be my wife and spouse. By her I got stately councillors; knights, masterpoets and bards by her; fastnesses with high battlements; turreted, multi-towered mansions; Donegal, Galway and Arran; cattle-rich Ireland of luscious meadows; bonnets docked by all before me; respect and curteys and my orders obeyed; bending of knee and hoping for favours; doctors of learning and courtly artists; faultless panegyrical declaimed before me; crown, throne, heroes and guard-troupe by her; those I got, each one at my bidding. A feast today, a banquet tomorrow; feast and festivity, power and opulence; monks and clerics, devotion and candles; lute-player, fiddler, piper and harper; gamester, historian, and court entertainer; storyteller and healing physician; agile conjurer in attendance; officer and prophesying seer; peal of organs and children's choir; racing horses kept groomed in stables; feasting and bounteous giving till sunrise; and I sitting there in blood-red livery; my tender lovely wife beside me. All that I got, and a thing more precious; a kiss of her lips, and loving caresses; asleep by her side on a green pillow till daylight.

She bowed her head and gave a laugh young girl, will you guide me? etc.
CNOC AN ÀTHA DHUIBH

(Trí Rainn is Amhran)

Or a' chonaig, feur mar shloida;
mu 'bhun is binn an sruth:
tha craobhan crùinn 'nan geàrd ann
mu Chnoc an Àtha Dhuibh.

O'n lochan gus an Dlseart
tha sìth is gann gu'n tuig;
is buan Alld a' Bhràghad
fo Chnoc an Àtha Dhuibh.

Tha feur tha mar an sloda
is lith a' chonaig tiugh.
Is sgèadaichte s is sàibhir
Cnoc an Àtha Dhuibh.

Ceangal

Feur mar an sloda is lith a' chonaig mar òr,
èideadh an righ s e rìomhach s a thoic s a stòr,
badain 'ga dhìon – is sitheil cnocan an fhèòir
eadar an Dlseart bith s an lochan s na h-eòin.

1980

BLACKFORD HILL

(Three Verses and Envoi)

Gold of the whin, grass like silk; about its foot sweet-voiced is the stream: there are trees assembled together as a guard about Blackford Hill.

From the little loch to the Hermitage there is a peace that can scarcely be understood; eternal is the Braid Burn under Blackford Hill.

There is grass that is like silk and the thickset hue of the whins. Apparelled and rich is Blackford Hill.

Envoi

Grass like silk and the hue of the whins like gold; a king's clothing of finery and his hoard of riches; trees in clumps protecting it – peaceful is the grassy little knowe between the still-voiced Hermitage and the lochan and its birds.

1: om. all
5 thickset ... whins : hue of the whins thickset 10 P29 hue : colour 20b
GILE IS DEIRGE NAN CAORANN

Thà na caorann geal is bidh na caorann dearg.
Tha 'm blas leamh is searbh, s is searbh an sgàrlaid leinn
mar éibhlean air slatagan is smuin dhiubh mu shneachd,
agus beadh bith mu fhalbhan aig na h-eòin a tha 'seinn.

Caorann gheala s caorann dhearga, is eatorra bho'n ùir
duilleach cùbhraidh Iuchair, s 'na dhlùths na h-eòin s na nid.
Sgàrlaid s cha n-ann milis. Tha ar latha s a dhruim
bho gile gu deirge thruíme air a' chraobh chaorainn sin.

1980

THE WHITE AND RED OF ROWAN BERRIES

The rowan berries are white and the rowan berries will be red. Their taste is wersh and bitter, and
bitter is their scarlet to us, like embers on branches with a thought emanating from them about snow,
and a quiet thought about going with the birds that are singing.

White rowan berries and scarlet rowan berries, and between them from the earth, the fragrant leafage
of July and in its fastness the birds and the nests. Scarlet and no wise sweet. Our day and its zenith
ridge are from the whiteness to the redness of the burden on thon rowan tree.

1-2 The rowan ... branches : om. 7
2 with : and 7
3 going : being off and away 7
4-6 White ... are : om. 7

[AM BÀRD, AN DEOCH S AM MONADH]

Am b’fhèàrr a’ phìnnt leanna
na Sliabh Allair fo d’chois leat?
Am b’fhèàrr an juke-box s a cheòl
no puirt mhòra nan crotach?

pub. 1980

4 crotach : crotag 20

Would you rather the pint of beer, than feel your foot on Allermuir? Would you prefer the juke-box’s
music or the pibrochs of the curlews? MB
DEIBHIDHE
[Abandoned Draft]

Test, men, my cheer. It chafes me eastward here; west I would hurry to the island Islay, to sing my song there while gladly questing.

West of long Kintyre it lies, best of all isles. Trust, then, nowise my mood here eastward, dawn’s pale child; it is wan, weary and exiled.

Gladly I’d seek the clan of Conn, lads to stake your life upon my mind is not Chief of Islay there set fief here? upon any other

Still I long to stand, a guest, in the land with hillsides buttressed, there in that place of countries king where race the hare and the roe running.

Yet I yearn to see that isle, with my fee to Fortune’s turnstile brought on my late way out west, fought out with fate my close contest. Test.

1980

1-14: om. 7a 7b*12
1 cheer ... chafes: mood ... weighs corr. 7b
2 I would: I’d corr. 7b
4 song: songs 7b
5 lies: waits marg. del. 7b
6 Trust: Test corr. 7b
7 eastward: > east 7b dawn’s pale: chance’s corr. 7b
8 wan: ins. 7b
11-12: om. 7b
11 Chief: Lord corr. 12
13 Still ... stand: Yes I yearn to go corr. 7b
14: holding with chance a contest 7b
15: land there of all (the) [lands > countries] (the) king > place there of all countries king 7a
15 there ... of: [there ins.] to the place of [all del.] > in the place of 7b
16 race: go corr. 7a
17: Yet I yearn to see Argyll 7a corr. 7b
18 with my fee to: passing through 7a with my fee at [to marg.] 7b corr. 12
15-16 17-18: > 17-18 15-16 7a
19-20: om. 7a
19: handed in on my way west marg: brought on my late way [out ins.] west 7b
20: winning with chance my contest. marg: fought [out ins.] with fate my [closed>close] contest 7b
WUNDWARD BATE

The bow beck’s an’ the stays sough.
Oor boat gecks an’ gaes, thocht
the rudder cleiks the wave’s trooch
an’ aheid at her cheeks the spray’s reuch.

A wundward bate an’ I’ll bate we’re there.
The bowsprit frets a horizon faur
owre the keenan cauld o the sea’s rair.
Scotland’s close-hauled on a lee-shore.

Frae whaur sea meets lift the waves rinn
wi a heedless leesure, fleet they soom:
pint on a leeshore, sheet her in
for tacks asclent tae sea room.

1980

THE SUNDAY HOWFFS OF MORNINGSIDE

An’ whaur was Moses i the mirk?
luikan for matches by some quirk.
Bairns’ banter. It wad gar a stirk
lauch till it deed,
the Hermitage fornenst the Kirk
across Braid Road.

At hauf past twal the kirk comes oot.
At hauf past twal whatt aye’s afoot!—
the bar dure opens. Drouth an’ doot
o sin forgeth.
Div they cross owre turn an’ turn aboot
frae ane till the ither.

It disna chance in ony nation
but oors. Is’t reason for elation
or no? I’m no that shair. Equation
tae mak o’t daunts me—
across ae road a confrontation
fit for Dante.

But sic a stieve, thrawn confrontation
isna juist ma nearest notion.
I gang an’ seek the liveanan potion
no faur awa,
whaur the volunteer dreams o his ration
oot by the wa.

Holy Corner’s abune the brae.
Ablow the brae there liggs they three,
the Hermitage, the Merlin (twae)
the Canny Man’s;
an’ souls devout an’ drouthy hae
their pick at aince.
I Scotland here there was a day
when they twae things gaed twae an' twae;
the godly, silent, waff an' wae,
    the sinfu seichan;
on weekdaysyll an' whisky tae,
on Sunday skiechan.

The Law o life alane the Law
o Moses' stane this side the wa;
the Guid Buik an' the Carritch (twa).
    There arena monie
wha murn thon's passin sweir an' slaw.
        Or are there onie?

It's gane, an' better sae, methinks—
the bairn gants owre the Carritch kinks,
his mammie mumbles owre her thanks,
    dovers an' dwaums
an' sits wi folded haunds an' thinks
    aboot the Psalms.

The Canny Man's ma wale o aa—
a hunner knocks hing on the wa,
the Illustrated News, that's braw,
    frae 1850.
Newcomers staun an' glim an' aa
    an' tak a shuftie.

A bleezan fire at time for mittens.
Nae sinkan ship tae flegg the rattons;
ae play-act place -- choice, couthy at aince.
I hae been happy
    wi the zebra's heid, the knocks, the kittens
an' the puppy.
        Och aye, 'n' a drappy.

THE LETHER

It's somewhaur yit I dae jalouse.
    Tae say sae is nae whim.
"Be bien at ilka bleeze that lowes.
    Pit yere fitt on the lether an' sclimm."

"Mairry amang the debs.
    Be deif tae blether, an' timm
yerer gardyloo on the plebs.
    Pit yere fitt on the lether an' sclimm."
THE HERT’S AYE THE PAIRT AYE... 

The hert’s the compass tae the place
that ye wad gae whan land ye lee.
The bairn is bauld, the auld are wyce.
The aefauld instinct disna lee.

The moraliser wi his tongue
wad scaud ye? Hand on. Hae yere whim.
The hert’s aye leal. Yeve sangs tae sing.
He that wad haud ye, heedna him.

1980

THE TWA CAPITALS

Here liggs the Athens o the North
atween the Pentlands an’ the Forth.
Gin Allermuir can glisk the Firth,
then we can see
future faur a warld o worth
here yit tae be.

It’s comean yit, thoch London’s sweir
an’ drifts Provincial thru the air
northwards owre Embro. Little mair
can London dae
but that an’ rob us. Soothward there
the Muse is blae.

For o the speerit spier ye may.
For thocht or merit whatt can they?
Their nest is herriet. Nocht they hae
that isna dootit;
an’ London is a yeld quae,
that’s aa aboot it.

Hae we the hodden grey o thocht,
or tartan is’t o colour wrocht?
Oor leid we hae, oor land; an’ ocht
can mak oor ain.
A bairn wha canna coont tae echt
can see that plain.

The Thatcher wifie, wae or brash,
will hae, or wilna, her stramash.
Her mind – an’ her it disna fash –
an’ aa that’s in it,
’s atween High Wycombe an’ the Wash,
Dover an’ Thanet.
The Commons is't? Whan Scots rise spieran
o Scotland's weel an' hoo's she farean,
they sit, some silent an' some fleeran,
till, cornert, presto,
they cry, some girman an' some rairan
"Els χορευσ Ήσου!"

Awa! — if thon's their secret hymn.
Awa! — it disna suit oor whim.
Oors is the land forgetsna him
wha sang an' saw that
a man's a man — gie wye tae him! —
an' aa men aa that.

Scotland the word itsel they smoor.
They drift Provincial thru the air.
Scotland an' Embro dinna care.
We hae seen waur,
an' think nae ornament tae gair
lourd Hampthin glaur.

Here liggs the Athens o the North
an' yet will rise, a warld o worth.
Whatth thoch the Suddroun deaves the earth
at oor expense?
The London rant's a mint o mirth
tae fowk o sense.

THE HAARY TOON

Whan licht is gane it dreams alane
this eastward toon an' oorie, oh,
o ghaists that mand tae muster then.
At nachis noon be wary, oh.
There's ghaists aroon that mak nae soon.
I'll swear the mune is bleary, oh,
an' sweir abune tae blinter doon.
This haary toon is eerie, oh.

Canmore agen an' Donald Bane,
whan men are ben an' cheery, oh,
gang wi grains the wynds alang.
Bide ben an' dinna steer ye, oh.
An' Rizzio bleeds in Haley Ruid —
Wally, the deed camsteerie, oh!
Bide ben in midnight Embro toon.
This haary toon is eerie, oh.
LULLABY

My wee treasure laddie, the kye'll come home with you; the kye'll come home with you over the moorland. (repeat)
The kye'll come home with you, kye'll come home with you, kye'll come home with you over the moorland. (repeat)

My wee treasure laddie, the kye'll come home with you, the clustering kye driven by you so proudly.

My wee treasure laddie, the kye driven by you, by the rod of Your Lordship.

The kye'll come home with you, kye'll come home with you, with you they'll come back on hilltracks all misty. The kye'll come home with you, kye'll come home with you, with you they'll come back on hilltracks oft-trodden.

A flutter of sleep on my wee laddie's eyes, a flutter of sleep at the fall of the gloaming; a flutter of sleep on my wee laddie's eyes, a flutter of sleep till daybreak and birdsong.

A flutter of sleep, a flutter of sleep, a flutter of sleep till daybreak and birdsong; a flutter of sleep, a flutter of sleep, a flutter of sleep till you wake up contented.

MB
THE GREEN GAIRS O ENGLAND

Here is the ling, and bracken spreids.
Sooth awa in England there
in gairdens rosiers hing their heids,
an' green growes the gerss on the gair.

Here is canach an' fugg an' scree
myrtle an' heather bield an' bare;
there the gerss is tae the knee,
whaur green growes the gerss on the gair.

Here the muir maks o space a rowth;
thonder the hedges evermair
merch i the kintra tae the sooth,
whaur green growes the gerss on the gair.

Land an' lift are wider faur
than an hunner horizons northward here;
thonder throng meadows evermair,
whaur green growes the gerss on the gair.

Here it is boondless, sky an' scaurs -
lanes an' loanins soothward there.
"Haudl!" say the hedges. "Pass wha daurs?"
whaur green growes the gerss on the gair.

Here is the wide an' saikless waste,
merchless. A chessboard's chequered there.
Ane micht swither an' turn aamaist,
whaur green growes the gerss on the gair.

1981

growes : grows sic
WHITE ROWAN RED ROWAN

There's a flourish on the gean, and the rowans will be white, and the rowans will be red.
Pure white vaunts the gean; pure white will lie the drifts; white will the rowans show.
From the days when the birds return, to the days of Summer Song, to the days when the birds are fled.
The gean can vaunt its white; long days its leaves are green; dark days they fall and go.

Snowdrops were white, west is the year's night, white is the gean.
The rowans they are red; leaves will drift down dead; the cherry is green.
The gean flaunts its foam; gold are whin and broom; summer birds return —
The rowans will be red, the birds will all be sped, but gold the thickets burn.

The rowans they are white; the rowans will be red; white was the gean.
The rowans they are white; the rowans they are red; the cherry is green.

White rowan, red rowan, show our summer between and our sun overhead,
long days unminding when leafless is the gean, snow is white, holly red.
White rowan, red rowan, cherry green, when is our zenith overhead?
Oh, it is between when the rowans are all white and the rowans they are red.

Envoi

Red will be the rowan; holly berries will be red, when the snow is all white.
Rowan white to rowan red, with the sun overhead and small clouds that are white.

Gold burns the broom; the whins are burning gold; snowdrops were white.
White foams the gean; green is the rowan; the rowan will be white —
rowan red, rowan white.

1981

1: ins. 10a
2 drifts: snow corr. 10a show: be corr. 10a
   pure white will lie ... show: white will be the rowan, white will lie the snow ins. marg. 10a
3 to the days of: the days of corr. 10a
5: om. 10a
6-8: ins. 10a
10 they are red: will be red 10a
11-12: ins. 10a
12 unminding: forgetting corr. 10a
13 cherry green: ins. 10a
14 they are red: are all red 10a
15-18: om. 10a
(see notes for line order 10a)
DO CHARAID MARBH
(do Chalum Mac Chaluim Mhic Iain)
[Abandoned Draft]

Ris is leis, b'e sin a lios.
An drochain, b'e sin a chabhsair.
Cathadh-mara, sin a mheas.

E 'na mheite s e 'na mhaighstir
air cuantan cogaidh chuir e fios
cùrsa s cùrsa s struthan mealta.

Ghabh e seachad air a' Chrios
ghabh seachad air Albainn Nuaidh
taighean-solais, tuath is deas.

Siar is scar, mu dheas s mu thuath
réidio is radar is cairt-ùil
U-bàta is È-bàta luath
Meite, maighstir, Gàidheal gu chèil.

Ú-bàta, È-bàta
È-bàta s i luath;
sgiathal 'nan dàil o fhàir' a-nuas.
Ú-bàta, È-bàta,
È-bàta air chuairt.
Ú-bàta s i clìceach,
s an t-slorraidheachd chuain.

A bhom, a ghunna-crios no 'thoirpead,
las no bras, 's tu sheas an drochain.

Cha robh do sgleoch gann
is moch a sguir do rann
cho dearbh ris a' Chrann.
Is searbh e na th'ann –
tha thu marbh san am.

1981?

TO A DEAD FRIEND (for Malcolm Johnson)

Windward and leeward, those were his garden. The ship's deck, that was his causie. Spindrift, such was his fruit.

A mate and a master, he made the acquaintance of oceans of war, course and coast and treacherous currents.

On he sailed past the Equator, on he sailed past Nova Scotia, lighthouses, north and south.

Eastward, westward, to north and south, by radio, radar and compass, swift U-boat and E-boat, a mate and master, a Gael every inch.

U-boat, E-boat, an E-boat so swift, planes swooping towards them from the horizon. U-boat, E-boat, an E-boat on patrol, a U-boat devious and cunning in the vastness of ocean.

By bomb, machine-gun or torpedo, weary or alert you guarded the deck.

It was no small blow that hit you [?], early your song ceased, as surely as Fate – it is a bitter tale that you are dead at this time.
GEAL

'S geal canach an t-slìbhe 's is glègheal sneachda nan càrn;
tha lainnir na lèige de dh’eiteag na h-aibhne san àth;
'S geal anart na brèide is sèideadh a’ chathaidh san là.
'S geal, sneachdagheal m’eudail, an tè thais, chamagach, bhàn.

1981

t : RANN AMHRAIN 10b P15a
1 càn : árd 11a 2-4 : om. 11a
2 na lèige : na leug 10a 10b P15a
  de dh’èiteag na h-aibhne : aig èiteag aibhne 10a
    de èiteag na h-aibhne 10b P15a bho èiteag na h-aibhne 11a 11b
3-4 : om. 10a 3 brèide s : brèide s is 10b
4 sneachdagheal : sneachdghéal P15a bhàn : thlath 10b P15a

WHITE

White the mountain bogcotton and pure white is the snow on the cairns. There is a jewel-gleam from the river pebble in the shallows. White is the cloth of the kertch and the blowing of snowdrift by day. White, snow-white is my darling, the gentle fair rich-haired woman.

MB

THE CALLER WIND BLOWS

The causie’s aith for gangin an’ smooth the stanes are,
an’ Lothian Rd. the leelang day gang fey wi cairt an’ caur,
fowk breinge aheid wi little heed o ithers, hemmed by waas,
fae screech o day til niet oot o sicht o knowes an’ laws,
but heich stauns the West Kip, the caller wind blows.

It’s rallyoch on the ridges o Arran an’ Kintail
it’s mochy in the winds, scarce ain minds o ling an’ fail,
there’s traffic an’ there’s wa’s, ye maun pech, there is nae pause
fowk hauf-rinn wioot a reason an’ gleench wi nae cause,
but heich stauns the West Kip, the caller wind blows.

1981
INNIS SGEUL DÒCHAIL

(Trl Rainn is Amhran)

Innis sgeul dòchais dhomh;
gabh òran toileachais le sèis;
le fiamh a' ghàire bi fial;
cuir a' ghrian air àird an speur.

Innis sgeul dòchais dhomh;
dòirt sonas á copan làn;
olas aobhach gu h-obann las;
tairg faochadh is feobhas blàth.

Lean air còmhradh sèimh mu dhùil;
bi ri sinnd mar eun an dos;
teud binnis buail gu bras 'nam chòir;
innsis sgeul dòchais dhomh.

Ceangal no Amhran

Dòirt o do bhilean gach lideadh a choiticheas cluas;
gabh òran a-rithist s a-rithist mu shonas buan;
an dòlas seo iomain o m'chridhe le boch gu suairc;
sgeul dòchais dhomh innis is innis gu beòthail luath.

1981

TELL A TALE OF HOPE

(Three Verses and Envoi)

Tell me a tale of hope; sing a song of pleasure with a chorus; be generous with your smile; place the sun noon-high in the sky.

Tell me a tale of hope; pour happiness out of a brimming cup; light up a sudden cheerful flame; offer soothing solace and warm restoring.

Engage in calm optimistic talk, be merry like a bird in a bush; a melodious chord strike loud around me; tell me a tale of hope.

Envoi

Pour from your lips every syllable that stimulates the ear; sing again and again a song about lasting happiness; make joy and gently shift this grief from my heart; tell and tell me again, lively and racy, a tale of hope.

MB
[ AIG TOBAR AN TIGHEARNA 'S FAIRE ANN ]

Bheum a' ghrían slios nam beann,  
corcúr, cròdhearg s faire ann,  
s an sgaile mu dheirēadh trísginn  
réidhlean ùrlar nan gleann.

Laigh mo shùil air Slia' cas,  
s e 'na bhaideal mu thuath.  
Dhibh cearc-fhraoich is rinn i guileag  
air Cruach Buidhe fada shuas.

Aig Tobar an Tighearna dhomh  
s an là a' mosgladh gu mall  
drìuchd air fraoch is dealt air roid,  
s càch 'nan clos s an fhàire ann.

Shoilleirich a bheag s a bheag  
a' chamhaineach air eagan shliabh.  
Dhìsgibh, is an leus air leathad!  
Suas a' bheatha, suas a' ghrían!

1981

1 : FAIRE  all  
8 Cruach : Cruaich  10a  
14 air : an  10a  
15 leathad! : leathad,  10a  
16 ghrían! : ghrían.  10a 10b

BY THE LORD'S WELL AT DAWN

The sun smote the flank of the hills, crimson, bloodred in the dawn, as the last shadows fled the meadows on the floor of the glens.

My eye lay on precipitous Sleea, looming like a great battlement in the north. A grouse-hen awoke and let out a squawk on Yellow Summit way up high.

I was at the Lord's Well as the day slowly stirred, drizzle on the heather and dew on the bog-myrtle, and everyone asleep as dawn broke.

Little by little the morning twilight shone on the notches of the hills. Wake up, there is light on the slopes! Hail to life, hail to the sun!

MB
DO SHOMHAIRLE MACILLEATHAIN

Nuair bhios an labharag 'na tosd
ri latha featha s clos air Clàrach,
bidh do bhàrdachd, s i 'na caoir,
a' toirt bàrr air maothan màbte.

Gach beàrn sa' Chuilthionn 'na shuain,
s gach boglach shìos 'na chluain àillidh;
slànadh agus faochadh tàimh
gach bioraidh bhed a tha nad dhàin-sa.

Nuair a chuisteas ri là luin
an cagaran s a dhuilleach àlainn,
gabh-sa fois is suaimhneas smaoin,
s an sin cluinneadh gaoth a' Bhràigh' thu.

FOR SORLEY MACLEAN

When the lark turns silent on a peaceful day, and there's a calm on the Clarach, your poetry, like blazing flame, will bring a vilified stem to flower [?].

Every breach in the Cuillin happed in sleep, and every swamp down below a bright verdant pasture; a healing and restful respite [for ?] every whitehot sting found in your poems.

When on a day of prattling the wee whisperer of the lovely foliage hushes [?], find quiet rest and tranquillity of thought, and then let the Braes wind hear you.
THE HERMITAGE O BRAID
(Three Verses and Envoi)

There is scarce a tree that shogs;
aa is lown an aa is staid;
there are gloomy heidlang crags
i the Hermitage o Braid.

What Culdee fasted there,
schuled by Ee while ermies gaed?
Spier o Dysart, gif ye care.
Tis a Hermitage lik Braid.

Mirk o crags an' lown air –
here's a hame that silence made;
the Braid Burn disna row there;
quate is the Hermitage o Braid.

It kens nae herm the hermitage there o Braid;
eternal its term, whilst ermies were gathered an’ gaed.
Derk shaddas cled braes an’ the days scarce kythe there for shade.
The Culdees are gane an’ alane rinns the burn whaur they prayed.

1981

3 gloomy heidlang: heidlang, gloomy 20

AN LONAN IUCHAIR

An cluinn thu feòchan an fhèidir 's an t-achadh fo'n ghréin?
An cluinn thu an smeòrach ri 'céol mear maide air géig?
Dé dhuinn latha sòlaimteachd reòta 's an latha gun eun
's an t-Iuchar is Ògmhios nan ròs a' leantainn a' Chéit?

1982

2-4: om. 10
2 ri 'céol : ri 'cheòl 14a
3 latha : lath' ud 14a
4 's an t-Iuchar ... nan ròs ... a' Chéit : is Iuchar... ròsach ... a' Chéite 14a

THE JULY PRATTLER

Do you hear the breath of wind in the grass as the sun warms the field? Do you hear the thrush at its
gay morning song up on a branch? What do we care for a day of frozen solemnity devoid of birds,
when July and June of the roses follow May?

MB
BALLADE

Dictes moy ou, n'en quel pays
est Flora la belle Rommaine ...
mais ou sont les neiges d'antan?

FRANCOIS VILLON (rugadh 1431)

Innis dhòmhsa no cò 'n tir
am bheil Deirdre mhìn. Bheil fhios?
Chaidh i as an t-saochal a-mach.
C'àit an deach i? Cà bheil i?
Na bàird a bh'ann — feith agus éisd —
as am beul cha chluinnear smid.
Big a th'aig a' Bhàs fo smachd.
Ach cà bheil sneachd an uiridh nis?

Úisdean dealanaich MacDhiarmaid còir,
filidh a bhà seachd mòr seach mi,
arthis cha n-fhaigh neach an còrr
'chainnt a bheòil is e fo lic.
Soutar agus Edwin Muir,
an ealain rinn de'n t-saochal lios.
Cà bheil iad? Jarrabh an leac.
Ach cà bheil sneachd an uiridh nis?

Sidney Mac a' Ghobhainn bàin,
cha chluinn thu 'ghàire blàth anis.
Ged a shirite siar is sear,
cha lorgar e le fear sam bith.
Dh'oidhche s a là cha n-fhaicear e,
ged a chite e gu tric.
De'n Mhile Rioghalt bhiodh a thlachd.
Ach cà bheil sneachd an uiridh nis?

Righrean, ridirean suaitheis, cléir,
feallsanaich gheur; am math s am mith,
islean 'nan ginealaich, beairteach s bochd
dh'fhalaich an sloch a tha fo'n lic.
Curaidhean, gealtairean, balbhain, bàird,
losal is árd cha d'fhuaír iochd.
Chaidh iad ris a' Bhàs a gheachd.
Ach cà bheil sneachd an uiridh nis?

Envoi (Ceangal)

Bhà iad iomraitheach 'nan là.
Tha iomradh orra s clù anis.
Cà bheil iad? No de do bheachd?
Ach cà bheil sneachd an uiridh nis?

1982
BALLADE

Tell me in what land is sweet Deirdre — does anyone know? She has gone from the world. Where did she go? Where is she? The poets of yesteryear — stop and listen — from their mouths not a cheep is heard. All chirping silenced by Death. Ah, where now is last year’s snow?

Good Hugh MacDiarmad the lightning-bolt, a poet ten times greater than I, again one will hear no more of his utterances, as he lies under the tombstone. Soutar and Edwin Muir, their art made a garden of our world. Where are they? Ask the tombstone. Ah, where now is last year’s snow?

Fair Sydney Smith, you will not hear his warm laugh now. Though he should be sought east and west, he will be found by none at all. Night or day, he’ll not be seen, though he was once a common sight. Fond he was of the Royal Mile. But where now is last year’s snow?

Kings, knights of leisure, clerics, sharp-witted philosophers; the nobility and the peasantry, generations of common folk, rich and poor— the pit below the tombstone has hidden (claimed?) them all. Heroes, cowards, mutes, poets, lowly or powerful, not one was spared. They went to face their throes with Death. And where now is last year’s snow?

Envoi

Renowned they were in their time. Their fame and repute survive today. Where are they? What do you think? Ah, where now is last year’s snow?

MB

[GILEAD]

Cathadh lár, cathadh mara
  gile chneas na mnatha sin;
éiteag aibhne, éiteag mhara,
  sneachd air gèig a h-amhach ris.

1982

[WHITENESS]

Ground-drift, spindrift, the whiteness of that woman’s skin; river-pebble, sea-pebble, snowy branch her throat exposed. MB

[DAWN VERSE]

There is dew on the roofs of the cars
  and the flush of day in the east.
Wake and be stirring, dear.
  No dream is the day and its haste.

1982
RÓSAN AN LETHBHAILE

(Air fonn Rósan an Lethbhaile no Mòr Nigh'n a' Ghiobarlann).

Air fail ithil ó ro, horó, c'úim an ceilinn e?
Air fail ithil ó ro, horó, c'úim an ceilinn e?
Gu bheil mo shaogh' l 'na bhruidar. Is dual dhomh bhith deireasach,
'S mo ghràdh air bheagan dòchas air Ròsan an Lethbhaile.

Air fail ithil ó ro, Ròsan an Lethbhaile,
Air fail ithil ó ro, Ròsan an Lethbhaile.
Gu bheil mo shaogh' l 'na bhruidar. Is dual dhomh bhith deireasach,
'S mo ghràdh air bheagan dòchas air Ròsan an Lethbhaile.

Chan e cruas na gaoithe an raoir chum 'nam chaithris mi,
Is idir chan e fuacht 'chuir o ghuaisd le fadal mi.
Gu bheil ceann-fath mo smuairein 's mo smuainteann son fada nis
An riodh caileige tha bòidheach tha 'n Còmh' l nan slios badanach.

Fhir thàinnig thar Loch Fine, nach inns thu dhomh, guidheam ort,
Am faca tu 'n tè bhòidheach a leòn thun a' chrhidhe mi?
Am faca tu 'n tè uasal, tè uallach, tè lurach i?
Am faca tu mo ghràdh-sa, 's gur bàs dhomh mur faigh mi i.

Tha cuailean tha bòidheach air Ròsan an Lethbhaile,
Tha gràidhean mar na ròsan air Ròsan an Lethbhaile,
Thà i uasal, côir agus thà i bòidheach, ceannalta.
Ghuaisinn leath' gun stòras, 's i Ròsan an Lethbhaile.

Is coibhneil, ciùin do dhòighean, Ròsan an Lethbhaile,
Is daoimean agus or thu, Ròsan an Lethbhaile,
Is binne leam do chòmhraidh na 'n smeòrach 's i ceilearachd.
Is gile thu na 'n neòinean, a Ròsain an Lethbhaile.

Mo dhùrarachd ri d' bhèdh dhuit, Ròsain an Lethbhaile,
Dùrainginn do phòsadh, a Ròsain an Lethbhaile,
Tha mi sùndach, beòtha an còmhnaidh 's mi gun deireas orm,
Is dùil agam ri pògan o Ròsain an Lethbhaile.

Is gnàth mi coimhead Chòmhail, Ròsain an Lethbhaile
On tha thu ann a chòmhnaidh, a Ròsain an Lethbhaile.
Tha bòt' agam g' a seòladh 's cha mhòr an loch seo eadarainn,
'S gun dàil bidh mi 's tu còmhla, Ròsain an Lethbhaile.

1982

1-16: om. 10
19 Thà ... l: Thà ... is sic P15
21-24: ins. 10
23 's i: ri 10
24 a: om. 10
26 phòsadh: phògadh 10 a: om. 10
28 o: bho 10
29 coimhead: > 'g aireachd 10
30 On: bho'n 10
ROSIE OF HALF-TOWN

Air fail ithil d ro, hord, why should I hide it? (repeat) I’m living in a dream, and fated to be hurt since my love is not returned by Rosie of Half-town.

Air fail ithil d ro, hord, Rosie of Half-town, (repeat) I’m living in a dream etc.

It’s not the hardness of the wind that kept me awake last night, And neither was it the cold that forced weary inaction on me. The root-cause of my dejection and my pensiveness for a long time now Is in the shape of a beautiful girl in Cowal of the thicketed slopes.

Man who has crossed Loch Fyne, won’t you tell me, I pray you, Did you see the lovely woman who has cut me to the heart? Did you see the gorgeous woman of proud, noble bearing? Did you see my love – I will die if she can’t be mine.

Rosie of Half-town has curls so bonnie, Rosie of Half-town has rose-flushed cheeks, she’s noble and virtuous, bonnie and good-natured. I’d go away with her penniless, Rosie of Half-town.

Kind and gentle’s your manner, Rosie of Half-town, Diamond and gold are you, Rosie of Half-town, Sweeter your talk to me than the thrush’s warbling. You’re whiter than the daisy, Rosie of Half-town.

My goodwill for life to you, Rosie of Half-town, I’d so love to marry you, Rosie of Half-town. I’m ebullient and cheerful, and always content When expecting kisses from Rosie of Half-town.

I gaze often towards Cowal, Rosie of Half-town Since there you dwell, Rosie of Half-town. I’ve a boat for the sailing, not wide this loch between us, And without delay you and I will be together, Rosie of Half-town.

MB
MY DEAR BONNIE LADDIE
(A Conflated Song).

Hö were my dear bonnie laddie to come, bringing his galley and his rombustuous men; with his boat and his crew, and they smart and fit; how glad I would be were the wind to return him.

Your galley approaches these parts (?) at this moment, rounding the headland with the company I love in her. It's you'd set her course to the land of the high hills; it's you who could steer her behind the high waves.

You're my lute and my harp, my song and my poem; my fairgift, my fairing, my bliss and my pride, with your shield and your sword, at your haunches a pistol, you would set, you would leap, you would step and you'd swagger.

My bonnie man is big and burly and affable, a fair woman's lover as good as they come, fit and spirited, cheerful and boisterous; a good draught I'd down to my crown of a gentleman.

MB
WITH HEAVY HEART I WANDER THE MOORLAND

With heavy heart I wander the moorland, my son’s weapons in one hand and his shield in the other, Wearisome to me the sun and its rising, my son’s weapons in one hand and his shield in the other, Death has claimed him, O King of the Fianna ...

The fierce-smiting sapling has now been felled ...
I left him behind me under a grave-stone ...
Though far I should look, it’s not him I’ll see ...
This blow befell me on grassy moorland ...
Stooping I go and wander the moorland ...

1982
A MHNATHAN A' BHAILE SEO

Women of this township, this township, this township, women of this township, it's time you were rising. Early I rose and climbed up to the hilltop, and played you my tune to incite you to rise. Women of this township, it's time you were rising.

Early I rose and climbed up to the hilltop, and sounded my tune to incite you to rise. Women of this township, it's time you were rising.

The end of December and a New Year are on us, early I woke and was eager to rise.

Hogmanay night and the year have gone past us. Women of this township, you should be uprising.

Now starts the year with tuning of drones and a chanter's plangent tune blown by vigorous wind.
SOMEBODY
The Beginnin o an Auld Sang

Chorus:
Hey, hey for somebody,
ho, ho, for somebody,
I wad waak a winter nicht
for a sicht o somebody.

Gif somebody wad come again,
gif somebody wad mand the main,
and the auld Stewarts back again!
I hain ma hert for somebody.

Gif somebody wad board his craft,
gif he wad come wi wind frae aft,
I wad dance is I war daft
and aft I’d beck tae somebody.

Gif somebody wad raise the coast
we’d hae the something we hae lost.
Tae simmer wad turn winter frost,
gif tae us crossed owre somebody.

Like bird on gairden beuch, I’ll sing,
a gowd sun gild the heich o ling,
and swords frae belts will ready hing,
bring they but news frae somebody.

Breezes, blaw the air frae aft,
speed him tae us, winds that waft.
Ootowre the sea ma een gang aft
for a kindly lift for somebody.

Oh, gif France wad speed the keel,
the wind wad dance aboot her heel;
and aince he sees the land that’s leal,
weel I’se welcome somebody.

Mony a day I wes in gloom
hauppen by Whigs ablow their thoom,
but yet in merriment I’ll soon
somewhere wi ma somebody.

Gif he but come, the sun will sclimm;
aa Scotland’s his, her aa tae timm.
Throne and croon and coort for him –
somethin’ for ma somebody.

Hielandmen and Lawlandmen
will come tae cast the German doon.
'Twad e'en be sicht tae een are blin –
he’s nae be lown, oor somebody.
Law will ligg the Whig sae bland,  
that gied a foreign king the land;  
and London lown will kiss the haund  
some day o ma somebody.

Wife and man, we’re aa wi him.  
Scotland’s day the east will scimm,  
owre the sea if he but come.  
Someone is ma somebody.

Gif somebody the king sould be,  
I wad dance the feet aff me.  
We socht a gift that nane could gie.  
Peace there will be wi somebody.

1982
CUIDEIGN
(Oran Gallda is cruth ùr Gàidhlig air a chur air)

Haoi, haoi, do chuideigin,
hò, hò, do chuideigin,
Shiùbhlainn oidhche gheimhraidh fhad
ach am falcinn cuideigin.

Nan tigeadh cuideigin air sàil',
nan tilleadh e o fhad' o làimh,
's na Stiùbhartaithe air ais mar bhà,
dh'fhàltichinn roimh chuideigin.

Nan tigeadh cuideigin gu tràigh
is clis a rachainn-sa 'na dhàil.
Ged bhitheadh neimh sa' chupan làn
dh'olainn slàinte chuideigin.

Thig e òrme, thig an là,
air luing mhòir is gaoth mu 'sàil.
Bhid 'n gheimhraidh fuar 'na shamhraidh blàth,
an là a thilleas cuideigin.

Bha mi dubhach iomadh là
fo chuing Chùige 'dol o stàth.
Bhid mi subhach beò gu bràth
an àiteigin le cuideigin.

Nan robh cuideigin 'na righ,
dhannsainn fhèin na casan dìom.
Bha guidh' againn a bha gar dìon
's bidh sìth againn le cuideigin.

Thig na Gàidheil, thig na Goil
a leagail Ghearmaitich lem foill.
B'e 'm fradharc air ais do shùilean doill,
is cha bhi moill' air cuideigin.

1982

1 (Oran Gallda is ... air) : (Oran Gallda) 14
1, 2 do chuideigin : cuideigin 14
7 : 10 corr. 14
11 chupan : chopan 14
14 mu : ri corr. 14
17 Bha : Bhà 14
19 beò : mear corr. 14
23 : Bha guidh' /air choireigin > againn a bhà/ 'gar dìth 14
24 's : ins. 14
(See notes for additional verses in 14)
SOMEBODY
(A Lowland song given Gaelic form)

Hey, hey for somebody, ho, ho, for somebody, I would walk a long winter's night that I might see somebody.

If somebody would come by sea, if he returned from far away, and the Stewarts back as in bygone days, I would welcome somebody.

If somebody would come to shore, to join him briskly would I go. Though there should be poison in the brimming cup, I'd drink to the health of somebody.

It will come on us yet, the day will come, on a great ship, the wind at her heel. The cold winter will turn to summer warmth, on the day somebody returns.

I was dejected many a day, losing all worth under the Whig yoke. For ever I'll be alive and glad somewhere with somebody.

If somebody were the king I'd dance the feet off me. Our fervent prayer kept us protected, and we'll win peace with somebody.

The Gaels will come, and the Lowlanders too, to strike down Germans and their treacherous ways. It would be sight restored to blind eyes, and somebody will not delay.

MB

MY TRUE LOVE HAS GONE AWAY
(My own version of a well-known song)

My true love has gone away; gone my lovely spouse; good cheer follow her; for me there was only waiting. My true love has gone away.

She left me to go far; there's no point in lamenting; she set off yesterday; longer that day than last year; my true love has gone away.

It's far a sigh can go; further than a shout it's heard; groaning in my breast; it's a far shout that won't reach her; my true love has gone away.

I'm up on a hill summit, on my own and hunched with grief, tired from sun to sun, there's no respite from sorrow; my true love has gone away.

Weary by wind and cloud, weary by dry spell and sunshine: oh, where is she now? How true the song's refrain — My true love has gone away.

Good cheer follow her — down the brae I'll head. She'll come back from abroad; there's nothing to it but waiting.

My true love has gone away; etc.

MB

(See overleaf)
DH’FHALBH MO LEANNAN FHÉIN

(Mo dhèigh fhéin air dran eòbacht)

Dh’fhalbh mo leannan fhéin.
Dh’fhalbh mo chéile lurach.
Misneach mhath ‘na déidh;
dhomhsa b’fhheudar fuireach.
  Dh’fhalbh mo leannan fhéin.

Dh’fhalbh i bhuaam an cén;
chan eil feum ‘san tuireadh.
Thog i oirre ’n dé:
B’fhaid an dé na’n uiridh.
  Dh’fhalbh mo leannan fhéin.

Osna ’s fada ‘théid;
faide na’n éigh gu’n cluinnear;
osnaich ‘na mo bheul;
’s fad’ an éigh nach ruig i.
  Dh’fhalbh mo leannan fhéin.

Mi air mullach sléibh,
’s mi leam fhèin ’s mi cruiteach,
sghth gu grian o ghréin,
’s chan eil éis air mulad.
  Dh’fhalbh mo leannan fhéin.

Sghth ri gaoith ’s ri neul,
sgth ri gréin ’s ri turadh:
cà bheil i a-reisd?
’S fhlor dhomh séis na luinneig —
  Dh’fhalbh mo leannan fhéin.

Misneach mhath ‘na déidh --
bheir mi ceum le bruthach.
Tillidh i o chéin:
’s ann is fheudar fuireach.
  Dh’fhalbh mo leannan fhéin.
  Dh’fhalbh mo chéile lurach.
Misneach mhath ‘na déidh;
dhomhsa b’fhheudar fuireach.
  Dh’fhalbh mo leannan fhéin.
GIRL OF THE LOVELY BROWN HAIR WON'T YOU STAY?
(An Old Song Revamped)

Girl of the lovely hair won't you stay? It's no secret here that you're my lover. Girl of the lovely hair, won't you stay?

I'm as hungry for your kisses as are young calves for the suckling.

When I climb the mountain's shoulder, it seems before me stands my lassie.
When down the little glen I go, I sense my lover ever closer.
Each step across the moors I take, your kisses there for me are waiting.
When the birds of springtime take to song, the tune of your pretty mouth's in their vaunting.
CRUINNEAG NA BUAILE
(Òran do Nic Fhraing an Gleann Comhann)

O, cruinneag, è, cruinneag,
O, cruinneag na buaile,
O, cruinneag mo chridhe,
leat a ruithinn am fuadan.

Gur ann thall anns a' Chàrnach,
an gleann àrd nan sruth fuara,
tha 'n ribhinn as bòdhdche
dh'fàigh fo leòn gu Là Luain mi.

Tha thu cumadail, finealt',
's tu cho dìreach ri luachair,
o do mhullach gu d’ shàiltean,
gun chron, gun fhàitsean ri 'luaidh ort.

'Sann a ruithinn don Fhraing
le Nic Fhraing a' chùil dualaich.
'S tu nach bitheadh fo mhìghean
's ceòl na fìdhle nad chìusasan.

'Bheirinn ceòl dhuit is òibhneas;
bheirinn fìon dhuit an cuachan.

Bheirinn òibhneas dom cruinneig,
bheirinn luinneagan 's duain dhi.

Bheirinn treiseag air fàsgadh,
bheirinn tacan air fuaradh,
gus nach bitheadh fìos aca
is sinn fada air fuadan.

1982-83

6 sruth : srath sic P15

THE LASS OF THE CATTLEFOLD
(A song to Rankin's daughter in Glencoe)

Oh, lassie, eh, lassie. Oh lass of the cattlefold. Oh lass of my heart. With you I'd run away in hiding.

Way over in Carnach, in the cold-streamed high valley, lives the bonniest of maidens who's left me wounded for ever till Doomsday.
You are elegant and shapely, and as straight as the rushes, from your top to your heels no fault or blemish to mention.
I'd speed over to France with the lovely-haired lass Rankin. You would not be downhearted at the sound of the fiddle.

You would not be downhearted at the sound of the fiddle. I'd give you music and pleasure; wine I'd pour for you in goblets.
I would give my lass pleasure, songs I'd give her and ballads.

For a while I'd sail leeward, for a time I'd sail windward, so that they could not find us while we were far away eloping.
MUSA CALEDONIAE
[The Scottish Muse]

The muse that gaes on rallyoch ridges
— fords o burns her journey stages —
that greets the licht by muirland edges
that bields by nicht on scaurnoch ledges,
she's nivar thrang wi sangs on pages.
In coorts o kings she wan her wages,
gowd in the haas whaur noo there lodges
forgetfulness, sae memory rages.
Great herp and crowd mang lords and lieges.
She's deep, as deep as nae man gauges;
she'll thriep sae ilkane glisks and fidges;
she sings frae scaurs o peers and pages,
o Scone's, Dumferlines's, Embro's ages,
o coonelors and saints and sages.
See but her een! The stievest budgees.
In wind and rain the scree she trudges.
Hear but her voice! It nivar ages.

The ling, bogmyrtle, birk her badges,
heidlang corrie depths she gauges.
That he has heard her wha alleges
what bards wha laich in glennans lodges?
Her singing's nane o the drone o gudges
nor scaldachan o birds in cages.
She'll nae abide the mant o drudges.
She disna haunt green loanin edges,
whaur rivers rinn mang sauchs and sedges.

She is the Ane that's mair nor Nine.
Wha steecks his ear tae her maun tine
hert and tongue an haims; syne
be exiled frae the sets ingyne.
Gif ye'd be leal and her wad hear,
hear but the wind frae Allermuir
or from Schiehallion, and the air
and words will reach ye, sae, for shair,
ye will be heard for evermair,
and verse and melody will gar
ye sing like the mavis on the gair.

1982-83

1 ridges : leadges corr. marg: ridges edges ledges 10
11 preceded by Her day's for ay. She nivar ages > Her day is ay. Her wye, cleuch edges 10
2 : marg. 10 fords o burns : muir and ben 10
3-4 : > 4-3 10
4 scaurnoch ledges : balloch > scaurnoch/ leadges 10
6 wan : had corr. 10
7-8 : marg. 10
9 crowds mang lords and : crowder mang the 10
11 ilkane : aa ane 10
15-16 : om. 10 15 : ins. 11 15 See but her een! The : Afore her een the corr. 11
18-37 : om. 10
21 what bards : o thaim corr. 11
23 : followed by She disna bide mang sauchs and sedges del. 11
[DÜRACHDAN NOLLAIGE, 1982?]

Nuair a thig oirbh an Nollaig
guma sona a bhlos sibh,
agus ré na Bliadhn’ Ùire
mórán sunnd is toilinninn.

1982?

[SEASON’S GREETINGS, 1982?]

When Christmas comes on you may happiness be yours, and through the New Year much joy and contentment.  MB

[DÜR D A’ GHLINNE]

Fonn ciùil bu bhinne dàrd a’ ghlinne,
 ’s e dùint’ an grinneas chraobh;
duilleach ’s feur is guth nan eun,
là buidhe greine caomh.

1983

THE HUM OF THE GLEN

The sweetest music of all is the hum of the glen, enclosed in a delicate web of trees; foliage and grass and the voice of the birds, on a soothing golden day of sunshine.  MB
[AM BATA DUBH]
(Seann òran air a chur ris)

Chi mi bòta steach sa’ chaolais
ceathrar ga h-iomram ’s fear a’ taomadh.
Hòr ón na haoi bhàil d’.

Ceathrar ga h-iomram ’s fear a’ taomadh,
bean ’na toiseach a’ slòr chaoineadh.
Hòr ón na haoi bhàil d’.

Bean ’na toiseach a’ slòr chaoineadh,
bean ’na deireadh a’ slòr ghlaothaich,
beum air stiùir is stòrd air goaır aic’,
is i crom fo throm na gaoithe,
falt a cinn a’ falbh le gaoiódh aic’,
gach aon atach ’s gach aon ghlaoth aic’,
èighe is gul is guth air faobhar.
Flùch a h-èideadh, reuthe h-aodach,
deòir le ’gruaidh ’s le tuachd a h-aodainn.
Dìosgan ràmh is sgreuchail fhaoileag,
dhcheall làmh san iomram daonna.
Bàta dubh ’ga cur troimh’n chaolais
fad a-mach o chladach fhaochaig,
àrd a-mach o chlachan maoraich,
o mhol. o cheig, o sgeir, o mhaoil i,
fad’ o thràigh, ’s o bhàgh ’s o fhràgh aic,
fad’ o thòrr, o ùr ’s o raointean,
fad’ o shìolbhtean, feur is craobhan,
’s an caol fosgailte ’na raòn di.
Builean diana liaghann caola,
iomram gun fhìaradh, gun aomadh.
Bàrr nan tonn mar lomain chaorach
suas ri guaillean ’s air gach taobh dhi,
seòideadh fuar air uachdar caolais,
’s i ’triàrl gu fàsadh ’s caladh ’s caomhnadh.
C’as a tha a’ chuidheadh fhaoentra
a tha cuidhteas cuid is daoine?
C’as a thugadh leo, an saoil sibh,
an t-iomram teann an aghaidh gaoithe,
a’ farpais ann ri dùilean baoghail?
An do chuir iad Struth na Maoile
a dhol an caraibh Arainn gaothair
o Dhiùra ciar nam fiadh ’s nam fraochbeann?
An do theich o chreich ’s o fhaobhar,
o thughadh ’na lasair ’s falaich aotsa?
Am fuigheadh aisith ’s chlaìdheamh caol iad?
An ann de Chlann Dòmhnail an fhraoich iad,
de Chloinn Nèill no ’threubh ’ic Mhaoitlean,
an ann o’n roinn de Chloinn Mhic Aoidh iad?
Am failtich càirdean ’s dàimh a chaoidh iad?
Dh’fháthaighdinn diubh sin, nam faoidinn,
aig iomram ’s gul is guth na gaoir ac’;
a’ ghaoth ’na cuip ’s a’ mhùir ’na baoibh ac’,
caoineadh ’s ghlaothaich, ràmhann ’s taoman
madainn sgreunach mach sa’ chaolais
a’ sealltainn dhòmh’is gogar an aonaich
bàta dubh is cumha ’s caoidh innt’,
ceathrar ga h-iomram ’s fear a’ taomadh.
I see a boat inside the straits, four at the rowing and one man baling, a woman at the prow endlessly wailing, a woman at the stern endlessly shouting, as she knocks the rudder with frenzied cries, stooping under the force of the wind, the hair of her head blown in the wind, she gives every order and gives every shout, calling and weeping, voice close to breaking. Soaked is her clothing, torn her gannets, tears down her cheeks and down her cold face streaming. The creaking of oars and the shrieking of seagulls, and always the utmost toil of hand in the rowing. A black boat steered through the narrow kyle, way far out from winkle seashore, way far out from shellfish rocks, from shingle, crag, skerry or mull, far from beach and bay and heather, far from tangle, earth and fields, far from mountains, grass and trees, the kyle her open plain to travel.

The powerful strokes of slender oarblades, no straying or veering in the motion. The crest of the waves like the fleece of sheep up to her shoulders and on either side, a cold wind blowing on the kyle’s surface, as she heads for shelter and haven and safety. Where are they from, this vagrant company that are so bereft of people and wealth? From where, do you think, have they engaged in this hard rowing against the wind, pitted against the perilous elements? Did they weather the channel of the Moyle coming in the vicinity of windswept Arran from dusky Jura of the deer and the heather-hills? Have they fled from plundering raid and sword-edge, from thatch set alight and from age-old feud? Are they the remnants of warring and swordfight? Are they from the house of Clan Donald of the heather, from the clan of MacNeil or the sept of MacMillan, are they from the land of the clan of Mackay? Will friends and relations ever give them a welcome? All this I would ask them if it were in my power, as they row to the sound of weeping and crying; the wind like a whip and the sea as a witch to them, wailing and shouting, oarwork and splashes, on a turbulent morning far out in the kyle and I looking out from the upland summits on a black boat ringing with lament and mourning, four at the rowing and one man baling.

MB
MÌOS A’ GHEARRAIN

The day is ferocious and stormy with a flailing wind seeking to numb us from the ghastly harsh south-east. Blown askance are the showers that scatter from upland and scaur. All colour is washed grey; all hope of respite is now gone.

Fierce is the day, with the fury of the roused wind seeking out every shelter and shaking the leafless trees, shrieking through sharpened spindrift and round the high cliffs, sweeping the snows across and blinding the edge of our vision.

Sad is the din in the clangour of this senseless wind, a noisy fierce blowing that swirls from the jaws of the skies; mournful to the ear is the howling as all hide away, held hostage by February and the hag and the brute in its air.

If I could but be by a river in flowery meadows a while, with the sun blazing down on a day that was peaceful and mild, and from cool latticed branches sweet songs from the musical flock, instead of this knife-stab day of flailing winds and storm.
[KILLIECRANKIE]

The Hieland men cam doon the brae
and, wow, but they war vaunty oh
we focht, we fell, we ran oor ways
frae the braes o Killiecrankie oh.

They cleft, they shore wi braid claymore
their eddritch war wad daunt ye oh
an' we's be mindfu aa oor days
o the braes o Killiecrankie oh.

Aa ways fac there tae win awa
were smaa and they war scanty oh

Clan Donald met us in the widd
we met nae guid I'se grant ye, oh
some rinns, some gaes, some faas, some stays
on the braes o Killiecrankie oh.

Sic wes that war, aa ye wha hear
an' nevar fleer nor taunt me, oh
for I hae wandert weary ways
frae the braes o Killiecrankie oh.

There it was aith tae chance wi daith
wi's bitter braith an' gantin oh
an' hunners ligg wi cloven claes
doon the braes o Killiecrankie oh.

1983

12 we met nae: twas no for corr.
13: for they war fearsome tae their faes marg.
19 chance: meet corr.
20 bitter: fiery corr.

I 'RUIITH LEIS

Is mear a bhreabas i sàil
'ruiith leis air sàile gaothar.
Is mear a bhreabas i cop,
's an loch 'na lomain chaorach.

1983

16c

RUNNING BEFORE THE WIND

Madly she kicks the heel, running leeward on a windy sea, madly she kicks up froth, with the loch
like the fleece of sheep. MB
In a frenzy she kicks the heel, running leeward on windy waters, a trail of waves up in a froth against her stern, and the loch overrun with the mad fast wide-hipped sheep coming like a blaze from windward and like a fleece bleating, as she leaps before the breeze on the meadow of the loch.

In her run not a plank she'll soak when she rides the crest of the waves, [and every dip from her, north south east and west, in wait for her, and the loch ready to maul her.] Impatient as the mare bridling on the day of the races; running before the wind on the waters, her heel she kicks in a frenzy.

As she goes the waves she's hit flee for shelter from her, the black boat under sail a wonder on the green ocean.

The entire loch about her heel as she runs leeward on a sea of deep valleys, she'll not veer off the proper course under the weight of the angry wind.

Windward and leeward her garden, as she goes sprightly to starboard and port, spindrift her fruit, often has she tasted a cup of it.
THE LAND OF THE TREES
(My own version)

To be leaving the country and setting the sails to her, and steering our course to the land of the trees.

Lord how sadness weighs on me as I travel the oceans, how I miss my young lassie, she's my dear, she's my love.

There's the vastness of the ocean between me and my lover, a solid rudder and tackle, white sails and a wind.

Over the seas it appears, your precious image my darling, by night and by day through the blasts of the wind.

Come sun and come daylight, come stars and come moon, to you I'll come home with joy and delight.

Should you wed before then one you'd rather than me, take no boozer or drunkard and above all no fool.
ALAS THAT WE LEFT

Alas that we left, hoisting the sails to the high masts, alas that we left.
heading down the Clyde, the sky overcast and an ominous sound from the sea
alas that we left.

Aran to leeward and Man to windward, and my heart that's close to breaking.
Hard biscuits and constant hauling, and the surly mate quashing our spirit.
Yard and sail and the wail of the wind, and my hands painful and frozen.
Sail and yard and twining rope, endless bustle and struggle.
Snow and spindrift blinding us, and the captain has lost his bearings.
A craggy point close but the airts are closed, clouds gathering and heavy galewinds.
Every danger of the ocean coming thick all around us, and we are still so far from Australia.
All gloom will vanish and I will rejoice the day we raise the coast of Sanda
The wind in a smoke, two men at the helm as she heads in the wrong direction
running blind, into the unknown, with no certainty at all that we'll ever raise a coast in safety
the wind in command and the steer so tight – this is my song in Gaelic.

MB
WE'RE NAE AWA TAE BIDE AWA

I was fleean fair. The fire was reid.
The pints war on the table,
and if I’d been hingan by a threid,
I was hingan by a cable.

Gif ye come ben by yon toon street,
and meet in wi a bonnie laddie,
gif he spiers at ye "Will ye hae a pint?"
say "Aye, man, that’s my hobbie."

This is the sang. It isna lang.
Tae sing it is ma notion.
They sang it aa as they gaed awa
tae sail across the ocean.

1983

THE TOPER’S NIGHT

The deoch – I am cheery wi’ t,
be it eerie efter gloamin’.
There’s loch o’ t. I’se no weary wi’ t.
Fules may fleer at it. It comes foamin’.

Drink it doon, boys. No fear for ye.
Gie the gear o’ ye. It comes roamin’.
It comes roon tae ilk fier o’ ye.
Gif ye spier at me, I am homein’.

The day daws. Aa clear is it.
We maun steer an’ aa gang roamin’.
The gray waas shine sheer in it.
Frae here maun we an’ skail homein’.

1983

11 shine sheer : kythe clear corr.
12 skail : gang corr.
THE ROSYNS AND THE WASTE
[Abandoned Draft and Verse]

The rosyns blossom faur awa,
faur awa they lowe a reid
in peacefu' places faur awa
graceful the lilies lift their heid.

Here is the wide an' saikless waste,
aamaist o man aa unaware.
Soothbye, in garths wi guestin graced,
lily an' rosyn blossom there.

The waste aa wild, on ilka side,
stretches as faur as ee can faa.
Rosyn an' lily in aa their pride
blossom in gairdens by the waa.

Tae me the waste! The maist I mind
's by gair an' strand tae wand my way,
sooth in the sunny suddron land
let blossoms dover through the day.

It's faur tae whaur the lily grow
tae whaur the rosyn lowes aa reid,

1983

[THE AIRTS ETERNAL]

The west sae mild, the east sae snell,
the north sae shrill, the south wi sun,
the airts eternal, winds and clime,
are there sin' time has e'er begun.

1983
A NOR'-SEA DAY

It's a Nor'-Sea day wi haar, dear.
It's lown. The wind is wee.
I see nor sun nor star, dear,
luikan aye for ye.

It's a Nor'-Sea day wi haar, dear.
The foghorns blare on Forth.
Whaure'er I luik I see ye,
East, West, Sou' or North.

The lift's but sun or sterns, dear.
Aa derns. The caurs gang slaw,
an' melancholy, dronean,
on Forth the foghorns blaw.

The blin' haar comes ben driepan,
creepan frae the sea.
Ilk gate's a guess for aa, dear,
ilk waa a mystery.

The licht is waff an' smoorit
wi haar frae aff the sea.
Be bricht. Be crouse an' kind, dear,
an' aye hae mind o me.

1983

[THE AIRTS]
Two epigrams

Nor's auld, cauld east,
Sou' blaws virr, smirry's west.
Nae snaw-blaw, sou'-west!

North is old, cold east,
South blows vigour, smirry's west.
No snow-blow, south-west!
CHA TIG MÓR, MO BHEAN, DHACHAIDH

Cha tig Mór, mo bhean, dhachaidh,
cha tig Mór, mo bhean ghaol;
cha tig Mór, mo bhean, dhachaidh
bho chlachan nan craobh.

Thig Màrt is thig Foghar,
thig todhar, thig buain,
ach cha ghluais mo bhean dhachaidh
bho chlachan nan stuadh.

Thig blàth air a' ghiuthas.
Cinnidh duilleach air gèig.
Cinnidh gucag air luachair,
ach cha ghluais mo bhean fhéin.

Thig grian is thig gealach,
thig madainn le faoth',
thig oidhche, thig latha,
ach cha charaich mo ghaol.

Éiridh grian anns na speuran,
éiridh eòin bhàrr nan geug,
éiridh ceò bhàrr nan sléibhtean,
ach cha n-éirich i fhéin.

Laighidh grian; laighidh gealach;
laighidh balachan sgìth;
ach cha laigh i 'nam leabaidh,
s i 'na laighe 'sa' chill.

Fosglaidh Earrach na ràidhean,
fosglaidh blàthan as ùr,
fosglaidh còmhla air doras,
ach cha n-fosgail i sùil.

Bha mi uair agus shaoil mi
a saoghal bhith buan,
ach cha ghluais i dhomh dhachaidh
bho chlachan nan uaign.

Thig Foghar, thig Earrach,
s lom mo leac is gur fuar.
Cha dùisg caoineadh do mhàthair—
dèan ba-bà a nis, uain.

1983
MÓR, MY WIFE, WON'T COME HOME

Mór, my wife, won't come home, Mór won't come, my dear wife; Mór, my wife, won't come home from the wooded enclosure.

Come March and come Autumn, come manuring and harvest, my wife will not stir from the gabled enclosure.

There will come blossom on the fir. Leaves will sprout on the bough. Buds will sprout on the rush, but my wife will not stir.

Come sun and come moon, come morning with breeze, come night and come daytime, my love will not move.

Sun will rise in the skies, birds will rise from the boughs, mist will rise from the slopes, but she will not rise.

The sun will set, the moon will set; a tired wee boy lies down; but she won't lie down in my bed, since in the kirkyard she lies now.

Spring opens the seasons, fresh flowers will bloom, a doorleaf may open, but she'll not open her eyes.

There was once that I thought her life would not end, but from the graveyard enclosure home for me she'll not come.

Come Autumn, come Spring, bare and cold is my hearth. Sobbing won't wake your mother – now sleep my wee lamb.

MB

THE SAIN

"That rhyme" the spaewife said tae me
"will daunton doom, will bield frae ill."
Never the sain tae sing made she.
I ken it no? I seek it still.

Had I that sain tae bring ye bien
frae ern an' main, I'd sign ye wi't
and sing on ye that seldom sain
on bluid an' bane, on haunds and feet.

Nae gloamin' gane wad ye doonsood
tae ligg amang the deid yere lane.
Frae murmin', maen, ill thocht an' deed
I'd sing on ye that seldom sain.

But noo there's nae the charm or spell
will shield frae ill, frae harm, frae wae.
It comesna near me, inch or ell.
I can but call on Christ an' pray.

I can but say tae God my prayer.
I kenna aye whaur gangs yere gate.
The sain's a freit. I gie it owre.
The sain is tint an' blint is fate.

1983
**IS FADA 'THÀ MI 'M ÒNAR**

*Hi hoireann ó, hirl horó*

*is fada thà mi 'm ònar*

*Hi hoireann ó, hirl horó.*

Nuair bhà mi leis na caileagan
gu'm feuchainn blas am pòige,
ach níse their iad uile rium,
"Sheann-duine, 's mòr do dhòchas".

*Hi hoireann ó, hirl horó.*

Na'n tigeadh arm na Frainge oirn,
cha bhithinn las 'nan còmhdhail —
ach 's bòsda seannduin' agam sin,
s mi glagach, brùite, breòite.

Dh'fhalbhainn sléibhteann 's mharbhainn féidh
air garbhlaich féin 's mi 'm òigear;
bhualinn beum is ghearrainn leum
is dhèanainn feum an còmhrag.

Ach níse 's seanndhearg crùbain mi —
mo dhùrachd gu'n till òige —
is riumsa their na caileagan
"Bi fanachd bhuainn le d'bhòsdan!"

---

**I'M A LONG TIME ALONE**

*Hi hoireann ó, hirl horó I'm a long time alone Hi hoireann ó, hirl horó.*

When I was with the lassies I enjoyed tasting their kisses, but now what they all say to me's "You live in hope, Gerontus!".

If the armies of France came on us I'd not be slack against them - but that's an old man's boast, I'm dodderly, frail and broken.

I'd trek the hills and kill the deer in rough terrain when younger; I could strike a blow and cut a leap and hold my own in combat.

But now I'm just a stooped old man - wishing he could be young again - and what the lassies say to me's "Keep away from us with your boasts!"

**FRAGMENT**

On a hill-land bràe in May to be,
with hillbirds making faint melody,
the sun arising, my heart arising,
and the dew arising from grass, from tree.

---

1 hill-land : hillside 15

1983
AIR LEATHAD SLÉIBHE

Air leathad sléibhe 's an Céitean ann,
'n ám dúbghadh eunlaith le'n éigheach fann,
a' ghrian ag éirigh, 's mo chrídh' ag éirigh,
's an deail ag éirigh bho fheur 's bho chrann.

B'e 'n sòlas àraidh bhith 'n làthair shliabh
is drebh na fàire an àird a' triall,
eòin an fhàsaich ri'n ceòl beag tràthail
air lòn 's air àilean amhàn, 's air riasg.

This is boladh aig ròid nan còs,
aig fraoch air cnocain mholach chòrr;
fonn ciùil aig osnaich chìthin na h-oiteig,
's i 'dùsgadh mochthrath air monadh 's sgòrr.

Guileag chrotaig, 's i moch air sgéith
os cionn a' mhonaidh, a' dol 'na sèis;
chùinnein solais air chùinnein solais
an drìuchd air fochann, air ròid, air gèig.

Air leathad sléibhe 's an Céitean air,
'n ám dúbghadh eunlaith le'n éigheach mear;
drìuchd air gèig ann, air flùr, air feur ann,
'na smùid ag éirigh ri gréin 'san ear.

1983

*16; [P19]

ON A HILL-LAND SLOPE

On a hill-land slope with Maytime come, at the hour when the birds are wakening and faintly chirping, the sun rising, my heart rising, and the dew rising from grass and tree.

'Twere a deep comfort to be out in the hills as the blaze of dawn was climbing the sky, with the birds of the wilderness making small morning music down on meadow and plain and on grassy moorland.

Incense and fragrance from the bog-myrtle in small hollows, and from the heather on shaggy enchanted hillocks; a melody playing in the gentle sigh of the breezes, as they waken early on moor and summit.

The cry of a plover, on morning flight over the moor, growing in insistence; bead of light upon bead of light on dew-covered grass and myrtle and branch.

On a hill-land slope in Maytime bloom, at the hour when the birds are wakening and cheerfully chirping; and the dew on branch and flower and grass rises like smoke with the sun in the east.
WHAN YE GANG AWA, JAMIE
(For the men of 1914-1918)

Chorus:    Whan ye gang awa, Jamie,
         faur across the sea, laddie,
         whan ye gang tae Germanie,
         what'ill ye bring tae me, laddie?

I'se bring ye a silken goun, lassie.
I'se bring ye siller shoon, lassie.
Silken goun and siller shoon
ootfrae a fremmit toun, lassie.
         Whan ye gang awa, Jamie, etc.

I' se bring ye a gowden kaim, lassie,
diamant ring the same, lassie;
gowden kaim an' ring the same,
I' se bring them hame tae ye, lassie.
         Whan ye gang awa, Jamie, etc.

The barrage creeps alang, lassie.
On Flanders Daith is thrang, lassie.
The Scots amang he aye was thrang,
but my gift tae ye will gang, lassie.
         Whan ye gang awa, Jamie, etc.

A gift for ye, it's shair, lassie,
I' se bring ye frae owre there, lassie.
Shells may flare an' cannon rair,
but I' se be here frae there, lassie.
         Whan ye gang awa, Jamie, etc.

I' se bring ye ma ain sel, lassie,
back frae the yetts o hell, lassie.
My ain sel frae the yetts o hell,
I' se bring that tae yersel, lassie.

         Whan ye gang awa, Jamie,
         faur across the sea, laddie,
         whan ye gang tae Germanie
         bring back yersel tae me, laddie.

1983
I'M WEARIN' AWA, JEAN
(For Allermuir)

I'm wearan awa, Jean,
like snaw-wreathes in thaw, Jean,
I'm wearan awa
tae the land o the leal.
There's nae trouble there, Jean.
Aathing is fair, Jean,
an' happiness is shair
i the land o the leal.

I'm wearan awa, John,
like snaw-wreathes in thaw, John,
I'm wearan awa
tae the land o the leal.
There aa is fair, John.
We'se baith be there, John.
We'se be thegither there
i the land o the leal.

I'm wearan awa, Jean,
like snaw-wreathes in thaw, Jean,
I'm wearan awa
tae the land o the leal.
Tinto may be heich, Jean,
Rannoch Muir be dreich, Jean,
For thaim I will seich
i the land o the leal.

I'm wearan awa, John,
like snaw-wreathes in thaw, John,
I'm wearan awa
tae the land o the leal.
Tinto will be wi us there.
Rannoch wilna lea us there.
And Allermuir they'll gie us there
i the land o the leal.

1983
BEAM SEA IN BISCAY
(A Song for Liner Passengers)

Chorus: We're rolling in a beam sea in Biscay, oh,
We're rolling in a beam sea in Biscay, oh.
Give her steam. Oh, give her steam.
We're rolling in a beam sea in Biscay, oh.

I wish I was in Frisco, oh,
or even Rome Alaska, oh,
or steaming down the good Gulf Stream.
We're rolling in a beam sea in Biscay, oh.

She rolls and she is frisky, oh.
I dose myself with whisky, oh.
When I am seen my face is green.
We're rolling in a beam sea in Biscay, oh.

To eat a bite is risky, oh.
I treat myself to whisky, oh.
To me it seems she doesn't steam.
We're rolling in a beam sea in Biscay, oh.

You know what I would ask you, oh –
take me back to Glasgie, oh.
My face is green. Oh, give her steam.
We're rolling in a beam sea in Biscay, oh.

We're rolling etc.

1983

[NATUR'S CHILD]

He was aye lauchan an' cheery,
he was camsteerie an' wild.
They said "He's glaikit, the cratur".
He wes natur's child.

1983
OVER THE ISLES TO AMERICA

(Ruidhle)

Null thar nan eileanan
dh'Amhreaga gu'n téid sinn.
Null thar nan eileanan
dh'Amhreaga gu'n téid sinn,
Null thar nan eileanan
dh'Amhreaga gu'n téid sinn;
null rathad Shasainn
agus dhachaidh rathad Éireann.

'Saoil thu 'n téid mi leat
thar a' chuain bheucaich?
Saoil thu 'n téid mi leat
thar na mara céine?
Ghaol, gu'n téid mi leat
thar a' chuain bheucaich,
null rathad Shasainn
agus dhachaidh rathad Éireann.

Null anns an eilthireachd
dh'Amhreaga gu'n téid sinn.
Null sinn 'nar n-eilthirich!
Dh'Amhreaga gu'n téid sinn.
Null anns an eilthireachd
dh'Amhreaga gu'n téid sinn,
null rathad Shasainn agus
dhachaidh rathad Éireann.

'Saoil thu 'n téid mi leat
thar a' chuain bheucaich?
Théid mi cuide riut,
s cha bu ruith ach leum sin.
Ghaolain, théid mi leat
fada gu tir chéin ann,
null rathad Shasainn
agus dhachaidh rathad Éireann.

Null anns an eilthireachd
'nar n-eilthirich gu'n téid sinn.
Null sinn 'nar n-eilthirich!
San eilthireachd gu'n téid sinn.
Null anns an eilthireachd
'nar n-eilthirich gu'n téid sinn,
null rathad Shasainn
agus dhachaidh rathad Éireann.

Togail bhailtean ann
s gleann air ghleann 'ga léirsgrios.
Far am biodh na laoch.
caoraich ann a' méilich;
clobairean is coin
'sa choirre bhiodh na féidh ann –
null rathad Shasainn
agus dhachaidh rathad Éireann.
An saoil thu fhéin an téid mi leat thar a’ chuaín bheucaich?
'Saoil thu 'n téid mi cuide riut air druim na mara éitigh?
Théid mi leat. 'S tu leanas mi ged chreanadh mi gu geur air,
null rathad Shasainn agus dhachaidh rathad Éireann.

Mo ghealladh seo, is bheir mi dhuit e – fuireach 'na do dhéidh ann cha déan mi. Théid mi cuide riutsa, s cha’n e ruith ach leum sin.
Beannachd bhuaum le tir nan cnoc. Is soraídh e 's cha tréigsinn;
null rathad Shasainn agus dhachaidh rathad Éireann.

Dùthaich cha’n eil againn san eilthireachd gu’n téid sinn.
Null sinn, ged theirinn e!
Dh’Ameireaga gu’n téid sinn.
Dùthaich cha’n eil againn.
'Nar n-eilthirich gu’n téid sinn,
null rathad Shasainn agus dhachaidh rathad Éireann.

Sgur air cur is buain, is buailtean gu spréidh annt’;
Fògradh agus ruaig air tuath s màil ’gan éigeach;
théid sinn bho na glinn gu Inseanaich an cén ud,
null rathad Shasainn agus dhachaidh rathad Éireann.

Null thar nan eileanan, etc.

1983
OVER THE ISLES TO AMERICA

(Reel)

Over the isles to America we'll go (x3); over England way, and home by way of Ireland.

Do you suppose I'll go with you over the roaring ocean? Do you suppose I'll go with you over foreign waters? My dear, of course I'll go with you over the roaring ocean, over England way, and home by way of Ireland.

Over in exodus to America we'll go. Over as emigrants to America we'll go. Over in exodus to America we'll go, over England way, and home by way of Ireland.

Do you suppose I'll go with you over the roaring ocean? I'll go along with you, aye, jump at the chance to do so. My darling, I'll go with you away to far flung country, over England way, and home by way of Ireland.

Over in exodus as emigrants we'll go. Over we go as emigrants! In exodus we'll go. Over in exodus as emigrants we will go, over England way, and home by way of Ireland.

Building of towns there, while glen upon glen is ravaged. Where the fine people lived, there now the sheep go bleating; shepherds and their dogs in the corrie where the deer were - over England way, and home by way of Ireland.

Do you think yourself I'll go with you over the roaring ocean? Do you think I'll go along with you on the back of the raging waters? I'll go with you. It's you I'll follow though it should cost me dearly, over England way, and home by way of Ireland.

To you I'll give my promise now - staying here behind you is out. I'll go along with you, aye, jump at the chance to do so. My farewell to the land of the hills -- a goodbye, not desertion; over England way, and home by way of Ireland.

No country do we have, in exodus we'll go. Over we go, though I should say it! To America we'll go. No country do we have. As emigrants we'll go, over England way, and home by way of Ireland.

An end to sowing and reaping, the cattlefolds lie empty; banished and fleeing tenantry, as rent payments are called for; from the glens we will go to the Indians far yonder, over England way, and home by way of Ireland.

Over the isles, etc.

MB
Dé do bheachd air éirigh
lainnireach na gréine?
No dé do bharail air a laighe,
    s latha seachad s léirainn?
Is ann mar sin dhomh fhéin e
    a-nis, bhó'n chiar mo speuran.
Mo ghrian bhoilsgeach theich roimh oidhche,
    's oillt an deaghaidh éibhneis.

Rí m' mhadainn b'aoitrom, mear i,
mo chas, air fraoch nan leathad.
Fáire òg mo là bu deònach.
    Thàin' trathnòin s is sean mi.
O mhochthreach gu tràth-feasgair
na cnocain is na creagan –
Slia' mo luaidh cha tig anuas
    s cha téid mi suas am feasda.

Cha'n fhaic mi thu, a Chaolbheinn,
a nis o'n dh'hàs mi aosda.
An àite chnuic an tâmbh s a' chruit
    s ceum tuisleach chasan caola.

Féill Bride is Féill Òdin
Nollaig Mhóir s a' Chailtainn
mar choìn a' ruith bhàrr éill
théid na féilltean seachad.
Là buidhe Bealtainn bric
an Inid is an Carghas
mar ruith le gleann aig fiadh
na bliadhnachan a' falbh bhuainn.

An dé s an diugh s gach là
a màrach is an earar
gach là a' falbh 'na leum
mar each réis aig marcach,
Samhradh agus Geamhradh
Earrach air chall is Foghar
mar shruth 'na steel le eas
gach feasgar is madainn mhoch dhuinn.
OLD AGE AND THE BARD

What think you of the glittering sunrise? Or what are your thoughts on the setting of the sun when daylight and sight decline? That is my lot now, since my skies have grown dim. My radiant sun fled before the night, and joyfulness has given way to dread.

Light and lively in the morning of my life was my foot on hillslope heather. Willing my youthful dawn of day. Evening has come and I am old. From the first morning light till the evening hours, the knowes and the rocks – my beloved Slea will not come down to me, and I will never again ascend it.

You will not see me, Narrow Ben, now that I have grown old. Instead of the hills, repose and a stooped back, and the faltering step of thinned legs.

St. Bridget’s Day, St. John’s, Christmas and New Year, like dogs running off leash, the festivals go past. Yellow speckled Beltane, Shrovetide and Lent, like a deer running down a glen, the years go leave us behind.

Yesterday, today and every day, tomorrow and the day after, every day going in a sprint like a horseman on his racehorse, Summer and Winter, Spring lost and Autumn, like a stream gushing down a waterfall, our every evening and morning.

MB

SORAIDH AN SGOILEIR

Seo slàn agus soraidh
le fásach a’ mhonaidh;
Dhia, cha b’fhéarr leam mar shocair
na cnocain fa m’ chòir;
na tha de sgòrr is de dh’ aonach
cadar Òrdag ’s a’ Chaolbheinn,
a’ mhòinteach ’s am fraoch
air an aotrom a’ bhroig.
Mi ’dol bhuaidh sin gu Sasainn,
’s cha’n ann luath a bhios m’astar,
gus na duain anns an Laideann
is gu eachdraidh na Ròimh,
is gu Hòmar ’s gu Greugais.
Seo mo shorraidh, a shléibhthean.
Gus an till mi bho chèin ruibh
seo "nam dhéidh "soraidh ó".

1983

THE SCHOLAR’S FAREWELL

Here’s farewell and goodbye to the vast mountain moorland; God, no favour I’d ask but the hills in my sight; all the scaurs and bare uplands between Thumb and the Narrow Ben, the heather and moors where the shoe trod so lightly. I leave that for England, and not hurried my pace, for verses in Latin and the history of Rome, and for Homer and Greek. Farewell, then, my hills. Till I return from afar, here from me’s ‘cheerio’.

MB
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