



SONGS AND POEMS

Inspired by the 1916 Rising

An Góilín

Frank Harte Festival 2015

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Introduction

AN GÓILÍN PRESENTS THIS BOOKLET at the 2015 Frank Harte Festival to whet our appetites for next year's centenary celebration of the event which initiated the establishment of Irish independence in the southern part of Ireland. It is a selection of some of the best songs, poems, orations and recitations which recall the audacious event and the brave men and women who made a stand like the Fenians before them. As Peadar Kearney sang about the Fenians 'wise men have told us, their cause was a failure.'

Our motivation for putting together this short collection is to paraphrase Frank Harte's assertion that songs were a key to understanding the past, often saying : *"those in power write the history, while those who suffer write the songs, and, given our history, we have an awful lot of songs."* It is interesting to note that one of the most prolific song writers during the period of the struggle for Irish Independence – Peadar Kearney – was an uncle of Brendan and Dominic Behan who sang all his songs and subsequently penned many good songs in the same Dublin vernacular; "The Ould Triangle" and "The Patriot Game" particularly come to mind.

The poetry and song inspired by the 1916 Rising is significant in that its contemporary contributors comprised a Nobel laureate, W.B. Yeats, whose immortal words "a terrible beauty is born" captured in five words the transformation of Irish public opinion which the execution of the 1916 leaders brought about. Two more were from the inspirational leaders of the Easter Rising – Padraig Pearse and James Connolly. Another, the O'Rahilly, who was shot dead off Moore Street just before the surrender, explained his motivation in a song and then there was Peadar Kearney whose Dublin wit and sarcasm identify the Rising as a very Dublin affair. A half century later, two traditional singers, the late Liam Weldon and Luke Kelly, reflected their disappointment that 'the Sons of Róisín' failed to live up to the republican principles and aspirations espoused by Pearse and Connolly. Both despised the later day 'Soldiers of Destiny' whom Liam excoriated in his great song "Dark Horse on the Wind" with the words "In the ashes of our broken dreams we've lost sight of our goal."

Out of heroic strife these songs and poems were born. They have a special place in Dublin's oral tradition alongside the Wexford songs of ninety-eight and the songs of the Napoleonic era recording as they do, the people's perspective on these momentous events which shaped our modern history.

Part 1: Pre-Rebellion Songs and Orations

Peadar Kearney's "Down by the Glenside" was a reminder of a previous struggle and sacrifice. It invokes an old woman (Ireland) who recalls the Fenians and calls for renewed efforts in the search for Irish freedom

Down by the Glenside – *Peadar Kearney*

Twas down by the glenside, I met an old woman,
A plucking wild nettles, she ne'er saw me coming,
I listened awhile to the song she was humming
Glory o, glory o, to the bold Fenian men!

'Tis fifty long years since I saw the moon beaming
On strong manly forms and on eyes with hope gleaming,
I see them again, sure, through all my day dreaming,
Glory o, glory o, to the bold Fenian men!

Some died by the wayside, some died 'mid the stranger,
And wise men have told us, their cause was a failure,
But they stood by old Ireland, and they never feared danger,
Glory o, glory o, to the bold Fenian men!

I passed on my way, God be praised that I met her,
Be life long or short, I will never forget her,
We may have great men, but we'll never have better,
Glory o, glory o, to the bold Fenian men!

Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa, was born in Skibbereen in 1831, He was arrested with O'Leary, Kickham and other Fenians for their activities, and sentenced by Judge Keogh to penal servitude for life, but was amnestied, and went to America where he edited The United Irishman newspaper. He died in New York in 1915, and his body was taken home and buried in Glasnevin Cemetery, Dublin. P. H. Pearse's oration at the grave of this unrepentant Fenian is regarded as a stepping stone and a call to arms for another uprising against British rule in Ireland. O'Donovan Rossa was a supporter and fundraiser of a bombing campaign in Britain; his burial coincided with the British Government's departure from its previous commitment to Home Rule for Ireland.

Oration at the grave of O'Donovan Rossa
delivered by P.H Pearse on August 1st 1915.

This oration was given just eight months before the rising.
“Ireland unfree shall never be at peace” he warned.

IT HAS SEEMED RIGHT, before we turn away from this place in which we have laid the mortal remains of O'Donovan Rossa, that one amongst us should, in the name of all, speak the praise of that valiant man, and endeavour to formulate the thought and the hope that are in us as we stand around his grave. And if there is anything that makes it fitting that I rather than some other--I, rather than one of the grey-haired men who were young with him, and shared in his labour and in his suffering, should speak here, it is, perhaps, that I may be taken as speaking on behalf of a new generation that has been re-baptised in the Fenian faith, and that has accepted the responsibility of carrying out the Fenian programme. I propose to you, then, that here by the grave of this unrepentant Fenian, we renew our baptismal vows; that here by the grave of this unconquered and unconquerable man, we ask of God, each one for himself, such unshakeable purpose, such high and gallant courage, such unbreakable strength of soul as belonged to O'Donovan Rossa.

Deliberately here we avow ourselves, as he avowed himself in the dock, Irishmen of one allegiance only. We, of the Irish Volunteers, and you others who are associated with us in to-day's task and duty, are bound together, and must stand together henceforth in brotherly union for the achievement of the freedom of Ireland. And we know only one definition of freedom: It is Tone's definition; it is Mitchel's definition; it is Rossa's definition. Let no one blaspheme the cause that the dead generations of Ireland served by giving it any other name and definition than their name and definition.

We stand at Rossa's grave, not in sadness, but rather in exaltation of spirit that it has been given us to come thus into so close a communion with that brave and splendid Gael. Splendid and holy causes are served by men who are themselves splendid and holy. O'Donovan Rossa was splendid in the proud manhood of him--splendid in the heroic grace of him, splendid in the Gaelic strength and clarity and truth of him. And all that splendour, and pride, and strength was compatible with a humility and a simplicity of devotion to Ireland, to all that was olden and beautiful and Gaelic in Ireland; the holiness and simplicity of patriotism of a Michael O'Clery or of an Eoghan O'Growney. The clear true eyes of this man almost alone in his day visioned Ireland as we to-day would surely have her--not free merely but Gaelic as well; not Gaelic merely, but free as well.

In a closer spiritual communion with him now than ever before, or perhaps ever again, in spiritual communion with those of his day living and dead, who suffered with him in English prisons, in communion of spirit too with our own dear comrades who suffer in English prisons to-day, and speaking on their behalf as well as our own, we pledge to Ireland our love, and we pledge to English rule in Ireland our hate. This is a place of peace, sacred to the dead, where men should speak with all charity and with all restraint; but I hold it a Christian thing, as O'Donovan Rossa held it, to hate evil, to hate untruth, to hate oppression, and hating them, to strive to overthrow them. Our foes are strong, and wise, and wary; but strong and wise and wary as they are, they cannot undo the miracles of God, Who ripens in the hearts of young men the seeds sown by the young men of a former generation. And the seeds sown by the young men of '65 and '67 are coming to their miraculous ripening to-day. Rulers and Defenders of Realms had need to be wary if they would guard against such processes. Life springs from death, and from the graves of patriot men and women spring live nations. The defenders of this realm have worked well in secret and in the open. They think that they have pacified Ireland. They think that they have purchased half of us, and intimidated the other half. They think that they have foreseen everything. They think that they have provided against everything; but the fools, the fools, the fools! they have left us our Fenian dead, and while Ireland holds these graves, Ireland unfree shall never be at peace.

The quintessential Dublin Lockout song was written by Donagh MacDonagh (1912-1968), a playwright, poet and a great friend of Frank Harte. He was the son of the poet Thomas MacDonagh, an executed leader of the 1916 Rising. The song was written for a stage production for the Workers' Union of Ireland in the late 1950s/early 1960s and was popularised through the singing of Ted McKenna in O'Donoghue's pub. It has become an anthem of the Irish labour movement. It was as a result of the lockout that the Irish Citizen Army was established and later armed to defend labour activists against the police.

Dublin City 1913 – *Donagh MacDonagh*

In Dublin City in 1913

The boss was rich and the poor were slaves.

The women working and the children starving

'Till on came Larkin came like a mighty wave.
The worker cringed when the bossman thundered,
And seventy hours was their weekly chore.
They asked for little and less was granted
Lest getting little they might ask for more.

Then on came Larkin in 1913
A mighty man with a powerful tongue,
The voice of labour, the voice of justice
And he was gifted as he was young
God gave us Larkin in 1913,
A union man with a union tongue.
He raised the workers, he gave them courage.
He was their leader, the workers' son.

In the month of August the bossman told us
No union man for him could work.
We stood by Larkin and we told the bossman
We'd fight or starve, but we would not shirk.
Eight months we fought and eight months we starved.
We stood by Larkin through thick and thin,
But foodless homes and crying of children
They broke our hearts and we could not win.

When Larkin left us, we seemed defeated,
The night seemed dark for the working man
But on came Connolly with new hope and courage
And raised the slogan, "We rise again",
In Dublin City in 1916
The British Army they shelled the town.
They burned our city, they shot our leaders,
The harp was buried beneath the crown.

They shot MacDiarmuid and Pearse and Plunkett.
They shot MacDonagh, Ceannt, and Clarke the brave.
From bleak Kilmainham they took their bodies
To Arbour Hill and a quicklime grave.
But last of all of these seven heroes
I'll sing the praise of James Connolly,
The voice of labour, the voice of justice,
He gave his life that we might be free.

The Irish Citizen Army (ICA) was established in November 1913 by James Larkin, James Connolly and Captain Jack White for the defence of workers engaged in demonstrations from attack by the police. It was later armed with German Mauser rifles smuggled to Howth in July 1914. It never numbered more than 250 members. When the IRB were planning the Easter Rising in January 1916 they invited James Connolly who then commanded the ICA to join the organising Military Council. Connolly saw the rising as an opportunity for workers to wage civil war against capitalism. He proclaimed ‘the cause of Ireland is the cause of Labour, and the cause of Labour is the cause of Ireland.’

The Citizen Army is out today – *Liam McGabhann*

The Citizen Army is out today, and if you wonder why,
Go ask the lords of the banking house if their cash returns be high.
'Tisn't the bosses who bear the brunt, 'tisn't you and I,
But those women and kids whose tears were hid as the strikers went stumbling by.
The docker loads two hundred tons in his master's ship per day;
At night the docker's daughter bends her weary limbs to pray.
From the old North Wall to Liberty Hall was a dead line of unskilled;
They heaved an' hauled when the bosses called and stopped when the bosses willed.

The Citizen Army is out today, and if you wonder why,
It's because Jim Larkin came this way to nail the bosses' lie.
The iron gyves on their limbs and lives would crush them till they die,
Those women and kids whose tears were hid as the strikers went marching by.
The docker and carter and heaver of coal were only the backwash then,
Till Larkin built that union up and the bosses feared again.
From the old North Wall to Liberty Hall came that dead line of unskilled
In a new-born fight for the workers' rights that the bosses thought they'd killed.

The Citizen Army is out today, and if you wonder why,
Go ask the troops in their masters' pay if the blood on their guns be dry.
Ah, well, they won where the baton and gun have swung where the dead ones lie,
For those women and kids whose tears were hid as the wounded went staggering by.
Jim Connolly watches ships sail out through flags at Kingstown Pier,
And starving Dublin sends its toil of guard and fusilier—
Food for the guns that over the world have thundered murder's peal,
And Dublin's broken union men die first on Flanders fields.

The Citizen Army is out today, and if you wonder why,
Go ask them in the grey and green why the Starry Plough flies high.
'Tisn't only the bosses we challenge now, for Connolly has cast the die
For those women and kids whose tears were hid as the soldiers went
marching by.

Four hundred bosses planned to break that dead line of unskilled;
Four hundred bosses drink tonight, for Connolly is killed;
But, dead or alive, there are those who chose a glorious thing to do,
For Connolly built that union up for the likes of me and you.

The Citizen Army is out today, and if you wonder why,
Go ask the lords of the banking house if their cash returns be high.
For they are there, and we are here: it's a fight to the knife again;
The Citizen Army is out today—come, workers, rise again!

Connolly, was a lifelong Marxist and his motivation for joining forces with the rebellion are clearly expressed in the words of his own song. Central to his thinking was a desire to overthrow the capitalist establishment rulers, whether they be King or Kaiser. Labour's Starry Plough flag was flown over the GPO during the rising.

A Rebel Song – *James Connolly*

Come workers sing a rebel song,
A song of love and hate;
Of love unto the lowly and hate unto the great,
The great who trod our fathers down,
Who steal our children's bread,
Whose hands of greed are stretched to rob,
The living and the dead.

Chorus

Then we'll sing our rebel song
As we proudly sweep along
To end the age old tyranny that makes for human tears,
Our march is nearer done
With each setting of the sun,
And the tyrants might is passing
With the passing of the years

We sing no more of wailing
And no songs of sighs or tears,
High are our hopes and stout our hearts,
And banished all our fears.

Our flag is raised above us,
So that all the world may see,
'Tis labour's faith and Labour's arm
Alone can Labour free. (*Chorus*)

Out of the depths of misery,
We march with hearts aflame,
With wrath against the ruler's false,
Who wreck our manhood's name.
The serf who licks the tyrant's rod,
May bend forgiving knee;
The slave who breaks his slav'ry's chain,
A wrathful man must be. (*Chorus*)
Our army marches onward,
With its face towards the dawn,
In trust secure in that one thing,
The slave may lean upon.
The might within the arm of him,
Who knowing freedom's worth,
Strikes hard to banish tyranny,
From off the face of earth. (*Chorus*)

The Easter Rising could not have taken place without arms and ammunition. The arming of the Irish Volunteers and the Irish Citizen Army is largely attributed to the guns bought in Germany and smuggled to Howth by Erskine Childers in his yacht the Asgard in July 1914. Again the story and sentiment of the time is reflected in a song.

My Old Howth Gun

There is sorrow in my heart, O my old Howth gun!
Since we lately had to part, O my old Howth gun!
For in Ireland's day of need well you proved a friend indeed,
When you made the bullets speed, O my old Howth gun!
When you made the bullets speed, O my old Howth gun!

I was glad when you were near, O, my old Howth gun!
And no foemen did I fear, O my old Howth gun!
For your bark and bitter bite put the Saxon curs to flight,
And they wouldn't dare to fight, O, My old Howth gun!
And they wouldn't dare to fight, O, My old Howth gun!

How glorious was your feel, O, my old Howth gun!
When you made the Saxon reel, O, my old Howth gun!
When the Lancers trim and neat charging down O'Connell Street
Had to beat a quick retreat, O, my old Howth gun!
Had to beat a quick retreat, O, my old Howth gun!

The parting it was sore, O, My old Howth gun!
Sure I ne'er may see you more, O, my old Howth gun!
There was glorious hope that we could have set old Ireland free,
Now your parted from me, O, my old Howth gun!
Now your parted from me, O, my old Howth gun!

But a day will come again, O, my old Howth gun!
When I'll join the fighting men, O, my old Howth gun!
With some brave determined band proudly there I'll take my stand
For the freedom of our land, O, my old Howth gun!
For the freedom of our land, O, my old Howth gun!

Padraig Pearse adapted the words of this old Jacobite song to welcome home the fighter's (Wild Geese) who would come from abroad to free Ireland. It became a popular song and was said to have been sung in the GPO during the rising.

Óró, sé do bheatha 'bhaile – *P.H. Pearse*

'Sé do bheatha, a bhean ba léanmhar,
Do b' é ár gcreach thú bheith i ngéibheann,
Do dhúiche bhreá i seilbh méirleach,
Is tú díolta leis na Gallaibh.

Óró, sé do bheatha 'bhaile,
Óró, sé do bheatha 'bhaile,
Óró, sé do bheatha 'bhaile
Anois ar theacht an tsamhraidh.

Tá Gráinne Mhaol ag teacht thar sáile,
Óglaigh armtha léi mar gharda,
Gaeil iad féin is ní Frainc ná Spáinnigh,
Is cuirfidh siad ruaig ar Ghallaibh.

Óró, sé do bheatha 'bhaile, (x3)
Anois ar theacht an tsamhraidh.

A bhuí le Rí na bhFeart go bhfeiceam,
Mura mbeam beo ina dhiaidh ach seachtain,
Gráinne Mhaol agus míle gaiscíoch,
Ag fógairt fáin ar Ghallaibh.

Óró, sé do bheatha 'bhaile, (x3)
Anois ar theacht an tsamhraidh.

Part 2 The Rising Songs, Poems and Proclamation

The Proclamation

The Proclamation of the Republic was the document issued by the Irish Volunteers and the Irish Citizen Army during the Easter Rising. It was modelled on a similar document issued in 1803 by Robert Emmett. It was printed in Liberty Hall in the days preceding the Rising. The seven signatories were all executed following the rebellion. It is thought that Pádraig Pearse read the proclamation at the beginning of the Rising outside the General Post Office in what is now O'Connell Street, Dublin. The proclamation provides us with an insight to the type of Ireland envisaged by the leaders.

POBLACHT NA hÉIREANN
THE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT OF THE IRISH REPUBLIC
TO THE PEOPLE OF IRELAND

IRISHMEN AND IRISHWOMEN: In the name of God and of the dead generations from which she receives her old tradition of nationhood, Ireland, through us, summons her children to her flag and strikes for her freedom.

Having organised and trained her manhood through her secret revolutionary organisation, the Irish Republican Brotherhood, and through her open military organisations, the Irish Volunteers and the Irish Citizen Army, having patiently perfected her discipline, having resolutely waited for the right moment to reveal itself, she now seizes that mo-

ment, and supported by her exiled children in America and by gallant allies in Europe, but relying in the first on her own strength, she strikes in full confidence of victory.

We declare the right of the people of Ireland to the ownership of Ireland and to the unfettered control of Irish destinies, to be sovereign and indefeasible. The long usurpation of that right by a foreign people and government has not extinguished the right, nor can it ever be extinguished except by the destruction of the Irish people. In every generation the Irish people have asserted their right to national freedom and sovereignty; six times during the past three hundred years they have asserted it in arms. Standing on that fundamental right and again asserting it in arms in the face of the world, we hereby proclaim the Irish Republic as a Sovereign Independent State, and we pledge our lives and the lives of our comrades in arms to the cause of its freedom, of its welfare, and of its exaltation among the nations.

The Irish Republic is entitled to, and hereby claims, the allegiance of every Irishman and Irishwoman. The Republic guarantees religious and civil liberty, equal rights and equal opportunities to all its citizens, and declares its resolve to pursue the happiness and prosperity of the whole nation and of all its parts, cherishing all of the children of the nation equally, and oblivious of the differences carefully fostered by an alien Government, which have divided a minority from the majority in the past.

Until our arms have brought the opportune moment for the establishment of a permanent National Government, representative of the whole people of Ireland and elected by the suffrages of all her men and women, the Provisional Government, hereby constituted, will administer the civil and military affairs of the Republic in trust for the people.

We place the cause of the Irish Republic under the protection of the Most High God, Whose blessing we invoke upon our arms, and we pray that no one who serves that cause will dishonour it by cowardice, inhumanity, or rapine. In this supreme hour the Irish nation must, by its valour and discipline, and by the readiness of its children to sacrifice themselves for the common good, prove itself worthy of the august destiny to which it is called.

Signed on behalf of the Provisional Government:

THOMAS J. CLARKE	THOMAS MacDONAGH
SEAN Mac DIARMADA	EAMONN CEANNT
P. H. PEARSE	JOSEPH PLUNKETT
JAMES CONNOLLY	

Frank Harte wrote that this song 'has all the satirical humour of the Dubliner' and noted that even in the title Kearney labelled the Easter Rising as a little "Row in the Town"

The Row in the Town – *Peadar Kearney*

I'll sing you a song of the row in the town,
When the Green Flag went up and the crown rag came down,
'Twas the neatest and sweetest thing ever you saw,
And they played the best game played in Erin Go Bragh.

A thousand young men now, of every degree,
With their rifles and shotguns, they swore to be free,
And one fine Easter Monday, they laughed at the 'Law',
And they played the best game played in Erin Go Bragh.

God rest gallant Pearse and his comrades who died,
Tom Clarke, McDermott, MacDonagh, MacBride,
And here's to James Connolly, he gave one 'Hurrah',
As he faced the machine guns for Erin Go Bragh.

Brave Ceannt and his comrades, like lions at bay,
From the South Dublin Union poured death and dismay,
And what was the wrath, when those Englishmen saw
All the dead khaki soldiers in Erin Go Bragh.

Here's to Ned Daly and all his command,
From the Four Courts to Broadstone, their fighting was grand,
For the might of the Empire, they cared not a straw,
And they played the best game played in Erin Go Bragh.

A young De Valera was down at Ringsend,
For the honour of Ireland to hold and defend,
He had no veteran soldiers but volunteers raw,
Playing sweet Mauser music for Erin Go Bragh

A brave English Captain was raging that day,
He said, 'Give me an hour and I'll blow them away',
But a big Mauser bullet got stuck in his craw,
And he died of lead poisonin' in Erin Go Bragh.

Here's to the men of the brave rank and file,
And the loyal-hearted women of Erin's green isle,
Let true men salute them in wonder and awe,
The stoutest and bravest in Erin Go Bragh.

All glory to Dublin, to her's, the renown,
Through the long generations her fame will go down,
And her children will tell how their forefather's saw,
The red blaze of freedom in Erin Go Bragh.

This song reflects the impact the rising had on the ordinary people of Ireland who lost sons and daughters who were active in the Rising and other innocent civilians caught in the crossfire.

The Dying Rebel – *Seamus Kavanagh*

The night was dark, and the fight was ended,
The moon shone down O'Connell Street,
I stood alone, where brave men perished
Those men have gone, their God to meet.

My only son was shot in Dublin,
Fighting for his country bold,
He fought for Ireland and Ireland only,
The Harp and Shamrock, Green, White and Gold.

The first I met was a grey haired father
Searching for his only son,
I said "Old man, there's no use searching
For up to heaven, your son has gone".

The old man cried out broken hearted
Bending o'er I heard him say:
"I knew my son was too kind hearted,
I knew my son would never yield".

The last I met was a dying rebel,
Bending low I heard him say:
"God bless my home in dear Cork City,
God bless the cause for which I die."

Peadar Kearney evoked the pride of a sweetheart for the blood sacrifice of her true love who died to make his country free. This song with its jaunty air is a powerful romantic post Rising call to arms to the youth of Ireland.

The Tri-Coloured Ribbon – *Peadar Kearney*

I had a true love if ever a girl had one
I had a true love a brave lad was he
One fine Easter Monday with his gallant comrades
He started away for to make Ireland free

For all around my hat I wear a tri-coloured ribbon, oh
All around my hat until death comes to me
And if anybody's asking me the reason why I wear it
It's all for my own true love I never more will see

He whispered "Goodbye love, old Ireland is calling
High over Dublin our Tri-colour flies.
In the streets of the city the foe man is falling
And wee birds are whistling 'Old Ireland arise'."

For all around my hat I wear a tri-coloured ribbon, oh
All around my hat until death comes to me
And if anybody's asking me the reason why I wear it
It's all for my own true love I never more will see

In praying and watching the dark hours passed over
The roar of the guns brought no message to me
I prayed for Old Ireland, I prayed for my lover
That he might be safe and Old Ireland be free

For all around my hat I wear a tri-coloured ribbon, oh
All around my hat until death comes to me
And if anybody's asking me the reason why I wear it
It's all for my own true love I never more will see

The struggle was ended, they brought me the story
The last whispered message he sent unto me
"I was true to my land, love, I fought for her glory
And gave up my life for to make Ireland free"

For all around my hat I wear a tri-coloured ribbon, oh
All around my hat until death comes to me
And if anybody's asking me the reason why I wear it
It's all for my own true love I never more will see

Roger Casement had gone to Germany to seek help and arms from the German government. He sailed into Tralee Bay on the German ship the *Aud* with a cargo of rifles on Good Friday 1916. Unfortunately, due to a road accident, the volunteers who were due to meet him failed to reach the rendezvous point at Banna Strand.

Lonely Banna Strand

'Twas on Good Friday Morning near to the month of May
A German ship was signalling beyond out in the bay.
We've twenty thousand rifles all ready for to land
But, no answering signal came to them from lonely Banna Strand.

A motor-car was dashing through the early morning gloom,
A sudden crash, and in a stream they went to meet their doom
Two Irish lads lay dying there, fast like their hopes so grand
They could not give the signal now from lonely Banna Strand.

'No signal answers from the shore,' Sir Roger sadly said,
'No comrades here to welcome me, alas! they must be dead;
But I must do my duty and at once I mean to land,'
So in a small boat pulled ashore to lonely Banna Strand.

The German ship was lying there with rifles in galore.
Up came a British ship and said, 'No Germans reach the shore;
You are our Empire's enemy, and so we bid you stand.
No German foot shall e'er pollute the lonely Banna Strand.'

If we sail for Queenstown Harbour, said the Germans: 'We're undone
The British are our masters man for man and gun for gun.
We've twenty thousand rifles here, but they never will reach land.
We'll sink them all and bid adieu to lonely Banna Strand.'

The R.I. C. were hunting for Sir Roger high and low,
They found him at McKenna's Fort, said they: 'You are our foe.'
Said he, 'I'm Roger Casement, I came to my native land,
I meant to free my countrymen on lonely Banna Strand.'

They took Sir Roger prisoner and sailed for London Town,
And in the Tower they've laid him as a traitor to the Crown.
Said he, 'I am no traitor,' but his trial they made him stand.
For bringing German rifles to lonely Banna Strand.

'Twas in an English prison that he went to meet his death.
'I'm dying for my country,' he said with his last breath.
In prison ground they've laid him, far from his native land
Now the wild waves sing his Requiem on lonely Banna Strand.

They took Sir Roger's body back in the year of '65
And with his comrades of '16, in peace and tranquil lies,
His dying wish it is fulfilled, he lies in his native land,
Now the waves can roll in peace again, on lonely Banna Strand

The first meeting of Dáil Eireann in 1918 was attended by the Rev. P. O'Neill from Rostrevor. As the roll was being called the expression "Faoi ghlas ag na nGall" was exclaimed when the name of members who had been imprisoned were mentioned. He returned home and penned what has become the iconic song of the Easter Rising.

The Foggy Dew – Rev. P O'Neill

As down the glen one Easter morn to a city fair rode I,
There armed lines of marching men in squadrons passed me by;
No pipe did hum, no battle drum did sound its loud tattoo
But the Angelus bell o'er the Liffey's swell rang out in the foggy dew.

Right proudly high over Dublin town they hung out a flag of war,
'Twas better to die 'neath an Irish sky than at Suvla or Sud El Bar;
And from the plains of Royal Meath strong men came hurrying through
While Brittania's Huns with their great big guns, sailed in through the
foggy dew.

O' the night fell black and the rifles' crack made "Perfidious Abion" reel
'Mid the leaden rain, seven tongues of flame did shine o'er the lines of
steel.

By each shining blade a prayer was said that to Ireland her sons be true,
And when morning broke still the war flag shook out its fold in the
foggy dew

'Twas England bade our wild geese go that small nations might be free,
But their lonely graves are by Suvla's waves or the fringe of the gray
North Sea.

O' had they died by Pearse's side or fought with Cathal Brugha,
Their names we'd keep where the Fenians sleep, 'neath the shroud of the
foggy dew.

The bravest fell, and the requiem bell rang mournfully and clear,
For those who died that Eastertide in the springtime of the year;
While the world did gaze with deep amaze at those fearless men, but few
Who gave their lives that freedom's light might shine through the foggy
dew.

Ah, back through the glen I rode again, and my heart with grief was sore,
For I parted then with valiant men whom I never shall see more;
But to and fro in my dreams I go and I'd kneel and pray for you,
For slavery fled, O glorious dead, when you fell in the foggy dew.

Michael Joseph O'Rahilly ("The O'Rahilly", 1875-1916) who was born in Ballylongford, County Kerry, was a republican and Irish language enthusiast. On Friday 28th April, with the GPO on fire, he volunteered to lead a party out to make their way to Williams and Woods factory off what is now Parnell Street. He was caught in machine gun fire at the top of Moore Street, where he died from his wounds. His aspirations for an independent Ireland are captured in the words of his song.

Thou Art Not Conquered Yet Dear Land – *The O'Rahilly*

Thou art not conquered yet dear land,
Thy spirit still is free
Though long the Saxons ruthless hand
Has triumphed over thee.
Though oft obscured by clouds of woe,
Thy sun has never set;
'Twill blaze again in golden glow
Thou art not conquered yet!

Though knaves may scheme and slaves may crawl
To win the master's smile,
And though thy best and bravest fall,
Undone by Saxon guile;
Yet some there be, still true to thee,

Who never shall forget
That though in chains and slavery
Thou art not conquered yet!

Chorus

Through ages long of war and strife,
Of rapine and of woe,
We fought the bitter fight of life
Against the Saxon foe;
Our fairest hopes to burst thy chains
Have died in vain regret,
But still the glorious truth remains-
Thou art not conquered yet!

Part 3: Post Rising Songs, Poems and Recitations

Recent research and publications have shown the significant role played by the women of Cumann na mBan in the Rising. They acted as nurses, couriers and fighters in actions all over the city.

The Soldiers of Cumann Na mBan – *Brian O’Higgins*

All honour to Óglaigh na hÉireann!
All praise to the men of our race,
Who in days of betrayal and slavery
Saved Ireland from ruin and disgrace,
But do not forget in your praising
Of them and of deeds they have done
Their loyal and true hearted comrades,
The soldiers of Cumann na mBan

Chorus

They stand for the honour of Ireland
As sisters in days that are gone,
And they’ll march with their brothers to freedom
The soldiers of Cumann na mBan

No great-hearted daughter of Ireland
Who died for her sake long ago,
Who stood in the gap of her danger,
Defying the Sassenach foe
Was ever more gallant or worthy
Of glory in high sounding rann,
Than the comrades of Óglaigh na hEireann
The soldiers of Cumann na mBan

O, high beat the heart of our Mother
The day she has longed for is nigh,
When the sunlight of joy and of freedom
Shall glow in the eastern sky;
And none shall be honoured more proudly
That morning by chieftain and clan
Than the daughters who served her in danger,
The soldiers of Cumann na mBan.

There are many songs written about James Connolly, but this one by Cork writer Patrick Galvin surely ranks as by far the best. It has gone firmly into the tradition and is a great favourite among trade unionists.

James Connolly – *Patrick Galvin*

Where oh where is our James Connolly?
Where oh where can that brave man be?
He is gone to organise the union.
That working men might yet be free.

Where oh where is the Citizen Army?
Where oh where is that gallant band?
They've gone to join the Great Rebellion,
For the freedom of each working man.

And who'll be there to lead the van?
Oh who'll be there to lead the van?
Who but our own James Connolly,
The hero of each working man.

Who carries high the burning flag?
Who carries high the burning flag?
Who but James Connolly all pale and wounded,
Who carries high the burning flag.

They carried him up to the jail.
They carried him up to Kilmainham Gaol.
And there they shot him one bright May morning,
And quickly laid him in a quick lime grave.

Who mourns now for our James Connolly?
Who mourns for that fighting man?
Oh lay me down in yon green garden,
But make my bearers Union men.

So we laid him down in yon green garden,
With Union men on every side,
And swore we'd make one mighty Union,
And fill that gallant man with pride.

Now all you noble young Irishmen,
Come join with me for liberty.
And we'll forge a mighty weapon,
And break the bonds of slavery!

This poem captures the profound change which took place in the aftermath of the Rising and the execution of its leaders. Yeats, highly regarded internationally as a poet, carried that message to the world.

Easter 1916 – W B Yeats

I HAVE met them at close of day
Coming with vivid faces
From counter or desk among grey
Eighteenth-century houses.
I have passed with a nod of the head

Or polite meaningless words,
Or have lingered awhile and said
Polite meaningless words,
And thought before I had done
Of a mocking tale or a gibe
To please a companion
Around the fire at the club,
Being certain that they and I
But lived where motley is worn:
All changed, changed utterly:
A terrible beauty is born.

That woman's days were spent
In ignorant good-will,
Her nights in argument
Until her voice grew shrill.
What voice more sweet than hers
When, young and beautiful,
She rode to harriers?
This man had kept a school
And rode our winged horse;
This other his helper and friend
Was coming into his force;
He might have won fame in the end,
So sensitive his nature seemed,
So daring and sweet his thought.
This other man I had dreamed
A drunken, vainglorious lout.
He had done most bitter wrong
To some who are near my heart,
Yet I number him in the song;
He, too, has resigned his part
In the casual comedy;
He, too, has been changed in his turn,
Transformed utterly:
A terrible beauty is born.

Hearts with one purpose alone
Through summer and winter seem
Enchanted to a stone
To trouble the living stream.

The horse that comes from the road.
The rider, the birds that range
From cloud to tumbling cloud,
Minute by minute they change;
A shadow of cloud on the stream
Changes minute by minute;
A horse-hoof slides on the brim,
And a horse splashes within it;
The long-legged moor-hens dive,
And hens to moor-cocks call;
Minute by minute they live:
The stone's in the midst of all.

Too long a sacrifice
Can make a stone of the heart.
O when may it suffice?
That is Heaven's part, our part
To murmur name upon name,
As a mother names her child
When sleep at last has come
On limbs that had run wild.
What is it but nightfall?
No, no, not night but death;
Was it needless death after all?
For England may keep faith
For all that is done and said.
We know their dream; enough
To know they dreamed and are dead;
And what if excess of love
Bewildered them till they died?
I write it out in a verse -
MacDonagh and MacBride
And Connolly and Pearse
Now and in time to be,
Wherever green is worn,
Are changed, changed utterly:
A terrible beauty is born.

In this short poem Pádraig Pearse justifies the blood sacrifice through the eyes of his own mother whose two sons he knew were soon to be executed. He knew, despite her great personal loss, she would take pride in the fact that “her sons were faithful and they fought”.

The Mother – *P.H. Pearse*

I do not grudge them: Lord, I do not grudge
My two strong sons that I have seen go out
To break their strength and die, they and a few,
In bloody protest for a glorious thing,
They shall be spoken of among their people,
The generations shall remember them,
And call them blessed;
But I will speak their names to my own heart
In the long nights;
The little names that were familiar once
Round my dead hearth.
Lord, thou art hard on mothers:
We suffer in their coming and their going;
And tho' I grudge them not, I weary, weary
Of the long sorrow-And yet I have my joy:
My sons were faithful, and they fought.

This poem is significant because the poet Francis Ledwidge - who was a friend of Thomas McDonagh - had volunteered to fight in the British Army in the Great War before the Rising occurred. He would die later fighting in the trenches of France.

Lament for Thomas McDonagh – *Francis Ledwidge*

He shall not hear the bittern cry
In the wild sky, where he is lain,
Nor voices of the sweeter birds,
Above the wailing of the rain.

Nor shall he know when loud March blows
Thro' slanting snows her fanfare shrill,
Blowing to flame the golden cup
Of many an upset daffodil.

But when the dark Cow leaves the moor,
And pastures poor with greedy weeds,
Perhaps he'll hear her low at morn
Lifting her horn in pleasant meads.

Brendan Behan continued the rebel song writing tradition of his republican forebears (Peadar Kearney was his uncle) with this adaptation of *The Memory of the Dead* written in 1843 by John Kells Ingram the first lines of which read “Who Fears to Speak of Ninety-eight? Who blushes at the name?”

Who fears to speak of Easter Week – *Brendan Behan*

Who fears to speak of Easter Week
That week of famed renown,
When the boys in green went out to fight
The forces of the Crown.
With Mausers bold and hearts of gold
And the Countess dressed in green
And high above the G.P.O.
The rebel flag was seen.

Then came ten thousand khaki coats
Our rebel boys to kill,
Before they reached O'Connell Street,
Of fight they got their fill.
They'd Maxim guns and cavalry
And cannon in galore;
But it's not our fault that e'er a one
Got back to England's shore.

They shot our leaders in a gaol
Without a trial, they say;
They murdered women and children too
Who in their cellars lay.
They dug their grave with gun and spade
To hide them from our view
Because they could neither kill nor catch
The Rebels so bold and true.

May the Lord have mercy on three men
Who faced the murderous foe,
There was Dickson, Sheehy-Skeffington
And McIntyre also.
'Twas in a dismal barrack cell
They met their fate so cruel,
Yes, they were shot with no clergy got
To prepare them for their doom.

The marriage of Grace Gifford and the poet Joseph Mary Plunkett one of the signatories to the Proclamation on the eve of Plunkett's execution is perhaps one of the most poignant images in the immediate aftermath of the Rising. This song was made famous by the singing of the late Jim McCann of Dubliner's fame.

Grace – Frank and Seán O'Meara

As we gather in the chapel here in old Kilmainham Jail
I think about these past few weeks, oh will they say we've failed?
From our school days they have told us we must yearn for liberty
Yet all I want in this dark place is to have you here with me

Oh Grace just hold me in your arms and let this moment linger
They'll take me out at dawn and I will die
With all my love I place this wedding ring upon your finger
There won't be time to share our love for we must say goodbye

Now I know it's hard for you my love to ever understand
The love I bare for these brave men, the love for my dear land
But when Pádraic called me to his side down in the GPO
I had to leave my own sick bed, to him I had to go

Oh, Grace just hold me in your arms and let this moment linger
They'll take me out at dawn and I will die
With all my love I'll place this wedding ring upon your finger
There won't be time to share our love for we must say goodbye

Now as the dawn is breaking, my heart is breaking too
On this May morn as I walk out, my thoughts will be of you
And I'll write some words upon the wall so everyone will know
I loved so much that I could see his blood upon the rose.

Oh, Grace just hold me in your arms and let this moment linger
They'll take me out at dawn and I will die
With all my love I'll place this wedding ring upon your finger
There won't be time to share our love for we must say goodbye
For we must say goodbye

In this recitation Luke Kelly questioned the motives and actions of political inheritors of Dail Eireann more than fifty years after the Easter Rising. Has the state yet achieved in those parts of Ireland governed from Dublin the type of society envisioned in the proclamation? Does the State, as the proclamation asserts, “guarantee(s) religious and civil liberty, equal rights and equal opportunities to all our (its) citizens, and declare(s) our (its) resolve to pursue the happiness and prosperity of the whole nation and of all its parts, cherishing all of the children of the nation equally”? How does the state interpret cherishing all its citizens equally today in our laws and services?

For what died the Sons of Róisín? – *Luke Kelly*

For what died the sons of Róisín?
Was it fame?
For what died the sons of Róisín?
Was it fame?
For what flowed Ireland's blood
And rivers that began when Brian chased the Dane
And did not cease nor has not ceased
With the brave sons of 16
For what died the sons of Róisín?
Was it fame?

For what died the sons of Róisín?
Was it greed?
For what died the sons of Róisín?
Was it greed?
Was it greed that drove Wolfetone
To a martyr's (pauper's) death
In a cell of cold wet stone
Will German, French or Dutch
Inscribe the Epitaph of Emmett
When we've sold enough of Ireland
To be but strangers in it
For what died the sons of Róisín?
Was it greed?

To whom do we owe our allegiance today?
To whom do we owe our allegiance today?
To those brave men who fought and died
That Róisín live again with pride
Her sons at home to work and sing
Her youth to dance and make her valleys ring
Or her faceless men, who for Mark and Dollar
Betray her to the highest bidder
To whom do we owe our allegiance today?

For what suffer our patriots today?
For what suffer our patriots today?
They have a language problem
So they say
How to write “No Trespass”
Must grieve their hearts full sore
We got rid of one strange language
Now we’re faced with many, many more
For what suffer our patriots today?

Liam Weldon likewise expressed his disappointment and despair at the “charlatans” who, acting in their own self interest, have aggrandised themselves while representing parties with stated republican values and ethos.

Dark Horse on the Wind – *Liam Weldon*

Oh those who died for liberty
Have heard the eagle scream
All the ones who died for liberty
Have died but for a dream
Oh rise, rise, rise,
Dark horse on the wind
For in no nation on the earth
More broken dreams you’ll find.

The flames leaped high, reached to the sky
And seared a nation’s soul
In the ashes of our broken dreams
We’ve lost sight of our goal

O rise, rise, rise,
Dark horse on the wind
And help our hearts seek Róisín
Our soul again to find.

Now charlatans wear dead men's shoes
Aye and rattle dead men's bones
'Ere the dust has settled on their tombs
They've sold the very stones
O rise, rise, rise,
Dark horse on the wind
For in no nation on the earth
More Pharisees you'll find

In grief and hate our motherland
Her dragon's teeth has sown
Now the warriors spring from the earth
To maim and kill their own
O rise, rise, rise,
Dark horse on the wind
For the one-eyed Balor still reigns king
In our nation of the blind.

The original song in English "A Soldier's Song" was written by Peadar Kearney and music composed by Patrick Heeney. It was officially translated into Irish by Liam O'Rinn and published in 1923 and was later formally adopted by the state as The Irish National Anthem

Amhrán na bhFiann – Peadar Ó Cearnaígh

Seo dhibh a cháirde duan Óglaigh,
Cathréimeach briomhar ceolmhar,
Ár dtinte cnámh go buacach táid,
'S an spéir go min réaltogach
Is fonnmhar faobhrach sinn chun gleo
'S go tiúnmhar glé roimh thíocht do'n ló
Fé chiúnas chaomh na hoiche ar seol:
Seo libh canáidh Amhrán na bhFiann.

Curfá:

Sinne Fianna Fáil
A tá fé gheall ag Éirinn,
buion dár slua
Thar toinn do ráinig chugainn,
Fé mhóid bheith saor.
Sean tír ár sinsir feasta
Ní fhagfar fé'n tiorán ná fé'n tráil
Anocht a théam sa bhearna bhaoil,
Le gean ar Ghaeil chun báis nó saoil
Le guna screach fé lámhach na bpiléar
Seo libh canaídh Amhrán na bhFiann.

Cois bánta réidhe, ar árdaihb sléibhe,
Ba bhuachach ár sinsir romhainn,
Ag lámhach go tréan fé'n sár-bhrat séin
Tá thuas sa ghaoith go seolta
Ba dhúchas riamh d'ár gcine cháidh
Gan iompáil siar ó imirt áir,
'S ag siúl mar iad i gcoinne námhad
Seo libh, canaídh Amhrán na bhFiann. (Curfá)

A bhuíon nách fann d'fhuil Ghaeil is Gall,
Sin breacadh lae na saoirse,
Ta scéimhle 's scanradh i gcroíthe namhad,
Roimh ranna laochra ár dtire.
Ár dtinte is tréith gan spréach anois,
Sin luisne ghlé san spéir anoir,
'S an bíobha i raon na bpiléar agaibh:
Seo libh, canaídh Amhrán na bhFiann.

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