5.

POEMS

1928. (march – July.
30th – 31st.)
and September

JOHN. H. HEWITT.

30th March 1.

The Ballad of The Singing Spinster.

Sitting by my father's door aspinning in the sun O
A haggard horseman rade up til me his horse bespent a done O

I bound his hurts and gave him meat an' set him in the sun O
An' there he sat an' made fine talk til day was nearly done O

Then up he rose an' went awa' off tae the settin' sun O
Singing gaily intil the twilight how all his wars were done O

He never came agen to me, aspinning in the sun O
Alack I sing most drearily: my song is nearly done O

I sit before my father's door aspinning in the sun O
But my heart's gone awa' wi' him that rade intil the sun O

La Nuit Parisienne (Nineties)

Come press upon me, mouth to mouth
Before the darkness ebbs and fails
While clamourous with nightingales
A soft wind bloweth from the south
Raping the roses of thy mouth

The wine runs from thy crusht red lips
And on thy bosom stains a smear
Ah Love that dawning should be near
And our love near its bright eclipse.
O sting no more hot aching lips.

Thy hair is cold upon thy brow
Alas thy bosom's fall and rise
Where on my fevered forehead lies
So fainter ~~now~~ - scarce a tremour now.
I rise and leave thee - sinsoild brow.

Spring of 1927

Introduction to St. Briget: a Legend.

O Chaucer father of this alien tongue
I sing a deed ancynt when thou wert young
Yet had my lot been cast in those fair times
Which thou hast pictured in thy sunny rimes
I might have gotten clearer sight of it
To render my vain speechcraft thus more fit
Alack I lag and, moralising dull
Obscure this saintly legend beautiful.

I call not on thy lover and my lord
In other themes of singing since no word
Is in this tale of fighting or loud strife
Of knights and men whose valor was their life
That Morris drew in happy nearer years
Catching the shining of their sloping spears.
Nor on the shore does any sung of me

Laugh with the laughter of the joyous sea:
Or feel the salt tang on their pursed lips
as rise and fall the fortunes of fair ships.
Since he O master is gone far away
From our hoarse conflict and our throaty fray
Who seek to build the new Jerusalem
with streets aglitter pavd with precious gem -
Of jacinth, jasper, shining in Time's dawn
For he has found his exiled Avalon
And sitteth quaffing goblets of red wine
with master musick makers too, divine
I cease -

You stir and yawn most wearily
Lest some such calander be writ by me

Still in my voice I sometimes think I hear
That lusty Norseman's harmonies too clear
And I grow sad to deem my labor long

But echoed music of another's song.

If there shoud seem one little note or tone
To be authentic singing of my own
I pray that you who read will linger there
And try to see if anywise 'tis fair.
Nay: better still, dream not of those old men
Whose ballads like will never come agen.
But with thy head full ringing to the new
and mingld notes of the moderns who
In Poesy's high ruin'd cathedral [vault
Proclaim him chief whose muse can loudest
And grant him honor whose uncouther strains
Seem buzzings in a skull bereft of brains,
Forgetting not to gard anew, and dress
In changd apparel of the printing press:
Scan close these lines and think of him who writ
And how his ship of faith had nearly split

On rocks of faithlessness 'mid cruel gales
That tore in ribbons his creed's timid sails,
And his eye that clouded was and dull
Sought out salvation in the beautiful
And found a faith that gently, safely bore
His spirit to the farther golden shore
Where 'mid the valiant souls of Poet Kings
He sits and listens while each master sings

Alas, and have you heart to say him nay
If in awhile his fingers idly play
On that old harp whose strings are vibrant yet
With chords of melody that you forget
And afterwards remember hearing these.

O Masters who have taught me pardon please
For all thy love so illy learnt and lost.
But masters who are listning pardon most!

O Christ I saw thee with unsealéd eyes:
I marked the thorn-wounds on thy bleeding brows –
'Twas not in yew-hid gardens 'neath starr'd skies
nor at the feasting in a sinner's house

Nay Christ I saw thee, saw and, unafraid,
turned to my task and set the fuse alight
for thou went with me by the barricade;
a starshell glitter'd: and thy face was white.

Wherefore O Lord I pray that thou again
shalt stand beside me when the day is nigh –
when I shout courage to the broken men
and hail the red dawn rushing up the sky

"But you must make of High Eternal Things
the burden of your song else it is vain –
Are there not sunsets, swallows, birdsweet springs
and roses in the blossom heavy lane?
So says the Critic but I held my peace
for know I not a vision true as these?

The timelong baffled victry man still wins
over the brute that is his very kind
as every day a grander age begins
leaving old wrongs and bitterness behind –
O Each hour is a High Eternal Thing
Then Silence Critic for of these I sing!

To the Defeated American Coal Strikers

Remote from you I watch the strife told of in scanty phrase
and knew you for my fellowhearts across the beating seas
For Progress falters and staggers by many and difficult ways
or is belated by knave and fool even for centuries.

This one defeat, O hearts of mine, brings nearer to the heart
the bitter way before us who would build the earth anew:
a sullen peace and mocking pain are left you for your part
for me there lies a life ahead and noble things to do.

maymorning madrigal

O Chantecleere
Pray do not sing — she is not here
this may morning

The chestnuts spear
is blossoming — She is not here
this may morning!

The timid deer
are wandering near and more near
this may morning —

My heart shun fear
'Gin thou to sing my love is here
this maymorning!

Tonight I saw the stars break out again
fresh, young, and lovely down the arched sky
while gusty thunder ran about the hills
fevered with the drowsed blossoms of July.

So high above our struggles in the street,
our angry shoutings to unlettered men
the everlasting stars march surely on
in windy cloudrifts to be seen again.

The Gardener

Life limited his scope to this small plot,
this tiny triumph over weed and rock,
wherein he planted mint and bergamot
and those gay steeples of the hollyhock.

But now if God has planned Hereafter well
and does things nobly for the newly dead
this old man tends great banks of asphodel
and amaranthine blossoms bed on bed.

10th Aug.
14

The Witherd Face

The little house
where four roads meet
is ruinous ...
the small heat sheet

is gray, forlorn,
and rotting slow ...
where I was born
long years ago ..

A witherd face
peers oer a door
first in its place
for evermore

O when time's done
and space is fled
that witherd one
will not be dead

but with screwd lipes
and wrinkld lips
find no surprise
in time's eclipse.....

2

10th. Aug.
16

First Touch of Autumn

O Heather agen up the side of the hill
The trees shake their limbs in the freshening wind
But summer loiters longside o' me still
And blossoms and blooms in the woods o' my mind

For something has happend that makes me defy
This autumn's first sally and summer's decay
I met a young lass with a light in her eye
and a song on her lips one bright summer day

The song was a setting of words like to these
"O Love's ever young and springing and fair
For 'tis only lovers last longer than Trees
still loyal and laughing when woodlands are bare"

11th Aug.

17

Easter

a wooden cross
against the sky . . .
The black clouds toss
and hurriedly

drape the dark day
in pall of gloom
while tired men pray
in a high room . . . .

A new day breaks
in laughing gold
one woman wakes . .
the air is cold . . .

the dew upon
the grass is white
but in the dawn
the Lord shines bright:

she sees the stone
is rolled away ....

while still alone
the tired men pray ...

Ecce Homo

O Christ they draw
thy anguisht face
who never saw
high holy grace.

Thou wert not Lord
frail, wasted, thin,
.. and gasht with cord
for discipline ...

When they were wed
O surely then
engarlanded
thy happy brow!

Logos.

The ancient myth
of Christ agen
filleth me with
deep love for men :

Till I agen
say proudly with
unlettered men
"Christ is no myth =

Five Thousand

Before he died
so pitious
Lord Jesus cried
to succour us

"I am the Bread
of Life" O then
twas thus he fed
the hungry men!

The house is lonely on the hill
unvisited of men:
and one perforce stays indoors till
day like a dewy daffodil
tinges the sky again.

For there are pathways perilous
and pitfalls on that ground
and crying things mysterious
run thro the night affrighting us —
Still there are stars around!

Translation of
La dernière Feuille (Gautier)

In the forest bare and blighted
naught is left upon a bough
save a frail forgotten ~~song~~bird leaflet
and a famisht songbird now.

In my heart there now is nothing
save a feeble love to sing
but the roaring winds of autumn
have no time for listening.

Birds and leaves and loves departed,
Comes the winter chill and keen.
Sing, Bird, o'er my earthy slumber
when the tree again is green.

Translations of Voltaire's Imitations of Greek anthology (16th Aug)

I Sur une Statue de Niobé

This woman was made stone
by some celestial curse.
The sculptor doth atone,
performing the reverse.

II Sur une Statue de Vénus

Mars saw me thus and Adonis
and Vulcan – only these –
O say when was I seen by this
sculptor Praxiteles?

III The pigeons have made them a nest
in a helmet lost in the wars –
Thus Venus leans her snowy breast
against the iron breast of mars!

Translated Epigrams from L'Art Poétique (Boileau) (16th Aug)

Canto I

I 111-112 O Bard be tuneful for the noblest thought,
If put in jarring lines, is fit for naught.

I 163-174
Work then at leisure in thy poesy
nor lust at all for fort facility:
a style that's rapid, rolling on, immense,
marks less high spirit than weak critic sense.

I better like a brook that gently flows
thro' meadows where much wealth of blossom grows
than flooding torrents, that in tempest roar,
and hurl their gravel up the miry shore.
Wherefore go slowly and without faint heart
a score of times refurbish each small part.
Aye polish without cease, repolish too
adjust, trim, clip – and rub out all you do!

16th Aug

26

Canto II

103-4 The epigram, on which care must be spent,
is really writ with rime for ornament.

191 Tho they rise to the lips from out the heart
one must in songs have sense as well as art.

82-94 On the Sonnet

They say a laughing god by lucky chance
wishing to Engage the riming men of France
invented then the sonnet's rigid laws.
In two quatrains of equal length and cause
rime must with two sounds beat upon the ear:
follow six lines arrang'd with artful care
divided into tercets by the sense —
A verse form this, that claims high competence —
nor shond a word already used to rime
be pitchfork in to serve another time!
But there is mingled blessing in the curse —
A faultless sonnet's worth much epic verse.

30th Aug.

27

Large noble thoughts drift from the trees:
the mellow air was rich with scent.
I drank my fill of starry peace
and felt my youth and was content.

The ageless moon with smooth deceit
seem'd happily to fit my plan —
But there still shiver'd at my feet
my shadow like a withered man.

30th Aug.

24

Proud of myself, my craft and skill
I took the road to Skernaghan
and sturdily strode up the hill
as proud as any living man.

But near the slow foot of the brae,
a great white pillar marks the lane,
a man burnt weeds three fields away...
what else could I think of than Cain?

4th Sept.

29

Carol for Any Christmas

Sugar windows,
cotton wool,
make the winter
beautiful —

but the sleet drenched
minstrelsy
have no tinsel
spangled tree...

6th Sept

30

Any disciple to his master

I always was the young, the urgent man,
who hurried shouting down the bellsweet line,
and clamord warning to the caravan
with its rich loads of spicery and wine-

He always was the young, the singing man,
who strode before us on our voyages
and {led / drove} the feeble footed caravan
weary to seek the sandfar oasis.

June

31

Islandmagee

O Housman sang of Bredon
and Drinkwater of Wye
and Belloc of the windy Downs
that roll against the sky

But I will make a song about
a fairer place than these
where mullaghdubh stands black and
sheer against the tireless seas.

From Muldersly a man may see
the cottages in Ayr
or Belfast lying lost in smoke
since that is Belfast's care.

Behind him lies a ~~shining~~ shining streak
that sobs out to the sea
and round it lie long fields of flax
and rye that tosses free

18 Sept

Agitation

I wish someone would start
an agitation
to bring
hills and mountains
into our towns ....
Think of the fun there would be!

Besides
the mountain air
would be sweet
and the leather
and the goblin ...

When will you begin?

18 Sept
34

Accomplice

I saw a piece of orange peel
on the sidewalk
and did not kick it
into the gutter.

An old-and-charming lady
with boa-and-black-silk
slipt on it and fell . . .

I broke that woman's leg.

18th Sept.
35

O Tempora!

The magic that called up yon star
to shine above dim Bethlehem,
and lured the shining kings so far
entrancing and bewitching them,

is wholly gone because one night
three poets stood upon a hill
yet only saw one little light
leap 'ere a cottage windowsill

It is so easy to make a song
why is the deed so hard?
Yes I have often wisht to belong
to truth's hardpost rereguard

to have held a dusty post
down at the core of things
who mumble now a crazy host
of songs no soldier sings

—

Be her skin as white as milk
and her laughter light and free
she shall not outlast her silk
or her lacen filigree . . .

Be I stedfast to my trust
be I noble, angry, strong
I shall one day be as dust
something less than this light song . .

—

18th Sept

38

Pendragon Arthur 1930

The wizard touch of Merlin's gone;
King Arthur sleeps in Avalon:
and Jennifer is half forgot —
save as a rime for Camelot:
the tides flow thro' dead Iseult's tress
five fathoms deep with Lyonnesse —

But when the midnight waters stir
each lamp shines like Excalibur!

14th Sept.

39

Weather Report

The clouds with long grey fingers tore
and dragged the mountain's rainscarred head
and gorsehid brooks with baffled roar
rushed thro' the peaty drains and fled.

Some lonely sheep beneath the thorn
bleated and nosed the dripping gate
Yet I who neath these skies was born
strode blithely on undesolate.

20th Sept

40

Northmen

Old metal princes copper-colored, cool,
with pointed feet and faces set and grained
lie sleeping in the twilight beautiful
above the pebble paven palace yard

Stern kings of icy stone stand in a row
for time had dried the sap from out their veins
and ages dust has grind their beards of snow
down in the dawngrey vaults' green-gutter'd drains

19th

O trembling net of writhing cords
and little cells that ache and tire
has not the Gantry mighty words
does not the hissing fire
know visionings beyond desire?

Yet your thin shells of nerves strung bone
and veins that flow with ceaseless heat
cry out that someone must atone
somewhere for some defeat
by raillèn hands and bleeding feet!

Firstman

Soylt

I wanted to put the sunshine in a song
green fields and sheep that do their will
and from the sea a wind that sings along
to laugh its heart out up the misty hill:

a sense of languid ease beneath a tree
hearing the high boughs mutter like far surf
or of an easy tramp with heels carefree
over green miles of undulating turf.

But all I get in my hard testured song
is dust and muffled drums of our defeat
and little men that suffer heavy wrong
and barefoot children in the smoky street.

I stood on a lichened boulder where clamor evermore
the changing cries of the waters and winds on the gravelled shore:
a crescent silver a cloudstreaked broke over the waters black
and shattered to shining fragments lay splashed in a silver track.
Sudden a shape on the waters with muffled measure of oar
shot over the trail of moonlight a merged again with the shore.
Low figures shrouded a slender swayed rhythmic with silent grief
and I knew the bark for King Arthur's that wounded undying chief
so I shouted across the waters "O King that was noble a true
come back to deliver from bondage the race that of yore you knew."
The shining shape of the hero rose up unbelted and bold,
his armor agleam with moonglory a bright with the sea misty gold,
and gazed across the waters a saw me shouting his name
but he turned like a weary dreamer that heeds not the echo of fame
and he beckoned to those that were with him a I heard his great voice cry
"Unhappy in love a in warfare the times need a greater than I
I long to regain the gay gardens when spring's in Avalon
O dreamer I prithee forget me. O Rowers row me on".

27th

44

Autumn Morning

The sun broke red behind a hill
that rose abruptly from the mist
and trees stood faint and very still
like patterns on a hoarwhite glass.

It seemd I woke instead on mars
breathing a rarer atmosphere
and when I ran among the stars
the ground seemd lighter than the air.

But dreams all break and shattrd lie
for daylights feet to trample on —
I heard the farmboys raucous cry
calling the kine far down the lane.

26th

45

Suburb. Irishman

There is a villa avenue
where motors rest at every gate
I often take a short cut thro
and envy those so fortunate.
for well I know a smoky slum
where very seldom does there chance
another vehicle to come
save accidents hoarse ambulance

Teacher's Song 28th

O little lads that once I knew
forgive us all for what we do —
forgive the lash, the heavy rule,
the stupid cruelty of school —
for System's slaves ~~are~~ we like you.
Forgive us, Christ, for what we do!

[Everyman 8-IX-32]

Caravan in the Frost

I cannot think men wholly lost
when I walk in the early frost.
Indeed our new Jerusalem
will rise to guard and shelter them
built on bright hints from frost at morn
when everything is newly born,
when trees cut clearly in the air
look far more delicate and rare
and grassblades sheathed in silver mail
stand daggeredyd against the snail.
Our hearts beat sounder and our feet
make magic echoes down the street,
and skins glow with a purer flame
that is undrost of any shame.
Our touch is keener and our eyes
greeting the earth next Paradise.
But grandest hint, the bloodred sun
its banner lifts for everyone.

) omit

Homer or Marx

Had you the choice 'twixt now and Illion
there's little doubt the one that you would choose.
But I, my friend, am not so confident:
Helen perhaps was lovely in her day
Ullysses subtle, Ajax strong and brave
and Paris fair upon his father's hills ....
The misty dawn unearthing the spearlight tents,
Ruled by the sunwekt sentinels of Troy,
is beautiful in contemplation still ...
or frosty midnights when the stars stand up
and shine like Spartan heroes in their mail.
My heart goes often seaward with the ships'
beating in time to measured sweep of oars,
as Circe on a pingreen hillock stands
and hails us thro the restless cypresses —

. . —

But 'spite o' this I never can forget
the eager faces of a shouting crowd
that cry for me to rise and right their wrongs.
So go you back to Troy and Poesy
but I'll read out and make my song a sword
and set about a harder ten years' seige —
Pray God that I have no Achilles' heel.

28th Reflection on a Schoolvisit

Who strikes a child strikes Christ the man
and brings a tear onto his cheek
Do ye forget the holy plan
puts down the strong, exalts the weak?

A whip of cords - a tongue of scorn
and cruel words that bite and sting —
'Twere better never to be born
Than do this thing, than do this thing!

Sad Shepherd's Song

lack gold

'Tis strange" the shepherd sang at eve "that misers in the town
yet here I from the sun receive tributes & treasuries untold:
the pinchers by the sun's last touch burst into flame, the burning trees
flare round my flock and make them such as Jason sought beyond the seas
Yea mine own staff is gold again as that the Holy Father bore
when I last saw the singing men swing their low lamps about the floor.
Yet in the dawn then I awake the sun will shed its mellow gold
and cold winds on the leaden lake white banners of the waves unfold
the sky with heavy clouds and sad will turn my sheep to sheep of grey
and I a little wistful lad, will pipe a dreary virelay.

So it may be in the hard town the misers wake to find
the white
silver and ruddy gold has flown, and left no traces,
in the night

19th Sept.

50

Curtains

A Parrot on my Curtain sits at Ease
and views the tireless workday Pageantries:
He sees Me rise and shiver on the Floor
and shuffle yawning to the Bathroom Door,
come back and fit a Collar on with Care
and run a brownstained Comb twice thro' my Hair:
He sees me hurry down to break my Fast.
At Even when the Dust o' Day is past
I come agen to sit and read a Book
that holds less meaning than His quizzing Look.

He sees me strip and grumble into Bed
when Darkness dims his yellowbeaked Head.
Who knoweth then what hidden Things He sees
when Time has quit her sungold Pageantries

27th.

51

Therbo & Lutestring no ~~XXVII~~

O Seemliness and Diligence
are Virtues rare and good
but honest Disobedience
is that which stirs my Blood.

I cannot rest with Seemliness
since I am awkward, rude
unfitted for court Business
uncouth as Christ's own Rood.

Not do I worship Diligence:
is man to be a Mill
or that old Greek of rich sentence
who pushit Stones up a Hill?

Now nay I say and this is good
that man shud shout and fight
whiles striving for Earthbrotherhood
whiles crying for the Light.

April 1st

Silver (2 stars) Northmar.

Silver was the barbèd hook
Dropt into the silver stream
As the silver strings were strook
To allure the silver bream.

Silver [shone] was the broad faced moon
When I hookt the silver fish:
And a silver queen will soon
Sup it from a silver dish.

Silvershoon Silvershoon.

As I tost in woody cover
Little ballads to the moon
Of Endymion her lover
How he walkt in silver shoon

A little voice behind the bushes
Cried a little painful cry
Like the warning cry of thrushes
When a falcon's in the sky.

"Fling O fling thy lyric roses
Up against the trailing moon
Till a traitor dawn discloses
Snailmarks on thy silver shoon."

Taxis down the Milky Way

O Creaking wain across the sky
How laden goest thou this night?
"We carry one whose fame was high,
Whose crown and name were fair and bright"

O lumbring waggon of the stars
Whither goest thou this night?
"We bear up three whose scimitars
On earth, were glittering and bright"

O Chariot of Heaven's wrath
Flaming in speed across the night
What beast[s] on thy golden path?
"A Poet this, whose song was bright"

April 3rd.

56

An Expression in Couplets of a Textbook Commonplace.

Let sages rise and from their arbors blest
Proclaim the truth that always praise is best.
Shun teacher, shun the ready word of blame.
The human heart craves ever after fame.
Lure then thy pupils to the crown of joy,
By praise the maiden, and by laud the boy,
Nor stand, a sullen tyrant with a cane,
To goad th' unwilling intellect and brain.

April 4th

Justice

The Master sought his Slave with baying mastiffs
And found him in the sedge by Deadman's Creek:
And tho' they cut his back with stinging lashes
He would not cry or speak.

The Slave is dead: and early in the morning
They hear him passing slowly thro' the trees
And singing his old negro song of freedom
In tones beyond the seas.

The master's dead: and so the old folks whisper
"When winter night are dark and stars are dim
He runs acryin' from the baying mastiffs
Lord, how they harry him!"

Theorbo & Lutestring (contd)

The Skylarke

Take not hautbois harmonicall,
Go lay thy cittern by
And list thee to this madrigal
Arippling from the sky.
Musitianer thy art's too small
Thou canst not reach so high.

The Thrushe

Upon the budded windbent beech
Anon he taketh rest
And uttreth thence immortal speech
In deathless accents drest .....

Have they this magic in their reach
We Poets ever guest?

Holofernes and Judith
(a dramatic scene)

Ho. My brain is drowsed by the fumy wine
And I'm grown heavy witted in thy play
I fain would rest. Indeed my eyes are blear
I cannot see thy beauty near enough.
Come Damsel kiss me now before I sleep –
Nay lead me to my couch where I will rest
Till this rank humour drains out o' my heart
And I am glad again and fit for love..

Jud. O Master thou art truly not so dag'd!
A Common soldier will drink more than this
Canst thou, the forehead of the world in mail,
Be so cast down before one little cup?
Another drink Lord, then I'll kiss thee twice
Ho slave thy master thirsts!

Ho nay damsel fair
The stuff would bubble out o'my belcht mouth
I am so drunken. Pulthee lead me hence.
J. But take this parting potion. See I sip
O surely that will bless the winking draught

Hol. I will not drink. not for Jerusalem
And its known secret treasuries of gold,
And precious stones, jacynth and chrysoprase
And beryl and the opal and the pearl
That brown men bring from out the mawy deep
That brown men O there brown men seem to run
And twist about me whirling with red eyes.
They mock at me and call me drunken dog
O Curse ye so ye shades of evil night
They cry I'd drink the sea like this dive bowl
And their work would be lighter than 'tis now
For they would but pick up the cursèd pearls

Fearless of shark or wallowing behemoth...

Jud. Thou art not well O Lord High General
Come I will lead thee to thy tented rest.

[They rise to leave, H staggers]

Ho. It is not wine makes me so light o'head.
It was a wound I got in Tartary...

(Exeunt)

Jud (returning)
He sleeps and in awhile the deed is done
O Israel, and we are both avenged!
And I forever take a blessèd rank
Among the Jewish heroes of my sex
From silly Eve to - Eve the name bodes ill
For she betrayed a man once... and I too
Betrayed a man... but Adam was her flesh
And this drunk beast is but a foreigner

And worse than, that a slayer o' the foes
O God am I not justified in this?
I am

and it is folly calls on God
For He has bid me by his subtle voice.
And I would fain obey . . .

I go at last

(Exit: She returns some minutes later with His head dripping blood)

Jud. He's dead and we are freed forever from his bane
Jerusalem, clap hands and raise a shout
O Jordan, clash thy cymbals in applause
And Zion hills skip joyfully as lambs
As lambs in early spring upon a hill . . .

O Glory of old David come again
And Solomon thy splendor send once more
For we can raise free foreheads to the sun

Victorious by the benison of God
Who heads our foemen underneath his feet.

He only groan'd and said "Her lovely arms"
And those white lovely arms shove off his days
Severing fame from his cold sweated brow

Mayhap he shall in after days be known
Because I slew him on a starless night . .

. . . I'll wrap this bloody trophy in my veil . . .

(Exit)

12th April
64

Publisht in the Irishman 12th May
& in "Watchword".

Paper Banners

At noon I passd and saw you there, girls striding slowly up & down
Your paper banners in the air, the heavy air of Dublin town.

When I returnd in time for tea you held your ranks unbroken still
A sober chiding 'twas for me that seek to lessen human ill.

My life is spent in futile play, in daily strategies of brain
And seldom does there come a day when I remember wrong a pain

But you go crying this' our night, hoarse little victims of such wrong
Rallying workers to their fight. O noble sisters take my song!

12th April

65

Dublin : Easter 1928

When I rememberd who had died, and what their dream was then thought
Twas thus that Jesus crucified, sought to bring Heaven from the sky.

So I will go and I will see these dreamful poets' visionings
How men have made their world a tree where life the happy hearted sings

But when I went I saw in pain the barefoot children in the street,
The beggars singing in the rain, & knew the sting of Hope's defeat.

O Christ the bitter things I saw, the cruel, stupid, & the mean,
The only change wrought by new law – the pillarboxes now are green.

Sonnet

I said today I wond forego my craft
And write no more my songs for anyone,
Nor feather even one small winged shaft
To let it fly off randomly in fun.

I said I wond go back and read my books
Recall how marlow once said so and so;
And in the sunset when the crying rooks
High in the bare boughs clamor I wond go

Out to the open fields and drink the air
And dream of olden things of yesterday.
But in the city street I saw the stare
Of hungry men who wond not go away
So I put by these thoughts in sore unrest
For the bitter dread of the dispossest

Epitaph (Theorbo Lutestring)

O Cast not on this ebon hearse
Tributes of artificial verse
For he who lieth here below
Writ rhimes and elegies enow
But 'stead throw thou a littel leaf
To signify thy sorry grief
For soothly it was living once
Like him that sleepeth 'neath these stones
Whereas his poesy and verse
Was lifeless as this ebon hearse.

13 April
68

Reconciliation.

I saw as I was trudging down the lane
A figure round the bend at Muckle field;
I knew the walk - it summon'd up the pain
Of that mad row we had at "Boar and Shield"
When both had lied and neither one would yield.

I thought: it is too late to turn away,
It might look cowardly even if I did.
As I go past what hard thing shall I say
Or shall my deep contempt for him lie hid
And for the silly action that - I did?

But he came nearer as I went, till lo -
A thrush upon a beech at my right hand
Burst out into a bubble overflow
Of music that a child might understand
Full of the broad compassion of the land.

My foe came slowly up and stopt, while I
Within the earshot of that splendid song
Could surely not but give a happy cry
And step with added liveliness along
Forgetful now of feud or hate or wrong.

When I came up I said on his right side
And bid him time o' day with cheery word
So he smil'd almost sweetly, who had lied
Against me where the parish all had heard,
And said "It's good tae hear sucha wee bird

12th April
78

Travelling Companions

They never saw, because they had no care,
The ridged sun drop westerly in blood
When night descended quenching day's old flare
Where for a hour gold flames had burnt the wood

That scattered lay along the little hills
Green with the sudden grasses and the rain
Where in the greenest hollows daffodils
Come out to mock man's heart with Spring again.

The cows, feet hid in trailing shallow mist,
Were browsing near & nearer to the farm
That now dissolved in evining amethyst
Seemed nobly carven like an ancient charm

For all are busy in their futile ways —
One knits most skilfully with yellow wool,
One reads another one at patience plays,
One sleeps, and none perceives the beautiful.

17th April
72

Sheba comes to Solomon.

O crash the cymbals, slave for her,
Eunuch thy sackbut play,
Musitian with the dulcimer
Make melody I say; —
More than the pride of Babylon
To stately measure cometh on.

O bearded apes in golden chains,
And parakeets with bells,
And Barbary steeds with jewel'd reins,
Sinewy miracles, —
The slow procession cometh on —
'Tis Sheba come to Solomon.

O She is here: her camel's knees
Hung with long ropes of pearls,
The palanquin's bright broideries
Painted with ivory girls —
Cease music! Huckster slaves begone!
She gives herself to Solomon.

18th April.

Loyalties (Introduction to Theorbo & L)

First, Shakespeare, Nature's synonym – and then
I worship Jonson prince of classic men.
But in my heart there rings a dewy lyric
In praise of daffodils and Robin Herrick.

I mourn for Astrophel that Christian knight
For Marlowe, son of Lucifer so bright,
And him the widowed, sad from Mullа gone,
But how can I requite my Campion
Since I am but a loiterer among
The thyme thickets on the slope of song?

19th April

Dream Boy (Theorbo & L)

A Golden Boy runs thru my dreams
Laughing a golden laugh.
His hair with crystal splendor streams:
His eyes are flashing sapphire gems.
He breaks my heart in half.

He calleth me to come and play
Beckoning with golden staff
I tried to please him yesterday
But flesh's bondage bade me stay
Breaking my heart in half.

A Sonnet on Spring (Theo a L)

Now Pluto yields up Proserpine
And she returns to earth.
That hawthorn blossom is a sign
She vanquishes our dearth,
For even now the chestnut leaf
Uncoils its sticky length.
The willow's green with newer grief
That weighelt down her strength

Now poets tune the rustick lute,
And Hockmen beat the bounds.
And all the wood that erst was mute
With merriment resounds.

O Birds and maidens pitties sing
To lullaby the infant Spring.

A Ditty for the Seasons

O See where reckless Springtime spills
Her basket brimm'd with daffodils.
Yea maidens if ye will, make posies
Of eremitic pale primroses.
O Damsels who rejoice at spring
Be not so sure of anything.

O look! the summer squanders all
Her blossom in bright carnival.
Yea maidens if ye will, go pluck
The girlondes where the stript wasps suck
But, O damsels who rejoice anew,
If summer goes what will ye do?

Alas the autumn's slipt her gold
And all her gown lies i' the mould
Yea maidens set upon my head
A wreath of yellow leaves and red
For I will die before the spring.
O be not sure of anything
O be not sure of anything

19th April

(Shorthouse)

The Poet Wisheth He were Lityerses

Had I but sung as Lityerses,
O Prince of shepherds rest him now
My heart had been more generous
Than life did me allow.

I would ha' squandered wealth o' song
On every one I knew or lov'd.
Even foes Life's stir among
Me to satire had mov'd.

But I must go to my repose
Hugging to heart each little lay
Like to a maid that hides a rose
Witherd and cast away.

20th Ap 80

Publisht in "The Northman" June 4 "Freethinker" June 10th

Omens

Last night from Troy's high battlements
I saw a falling star
where shone above the Grecian tents
the moon's sharp scimitar.

To night I saw a falling star
mid roofs and chimney pots .....

I wonder who the poets are
that weave Time's subtle plots .....

20th Ap.

(Herbs & Lutestrings)

81

The Poet lamenteth that Master Benjamin Jonson his fame is passed wholly almost from the minds and hearts of men.

Who would have thought, O Ben, in after years
That thy name known once in both hemispheres
Affended to the plays rankt after Will's,
Poems, and epigrams, and playhouse bills,
Court masques, and elegies, and madrigals
That gilded pleasure at kings' carnivals
Should be remembered only now by men
As his who writ one little song, my Ben, —
Most carefully from Latin beauty brought —?
Who would have thought, O Ben, who would have thought?

(The a L)

The Poet praiseth Masters William Shakespeare and Michael Drayton and beseecheth the English muse to send another singer fit to celebrate the Heavens in suitable verses

---

Two minds these days have bodied forth Time's worth
My Shakespeare bravely speaks for all the earth
And Drayton sings of England - her alone
Melodious with his Poly-olbion.

We want a Poet now to sing of Heaven
The twining stars, the sullen shining seven.
O Muse of England, of our faith, our time,
Send thou this singer to enrich with rhime
The onlie realume left for Poesy —
Complete with him this latter Trinity.

(Herbs a Lut) 83

The Poet beggeth Master Dowland the lutenist to set his verses to musick.

Dowland, my blessings shower upon thy head
For them my soul hath dearly ravished.
One boon I crave of thee and shouldst thou grant
'Twould be (after ages my (sole) best) vaunt -

Set tunes to fit my verses that are not
Too bad to be by men entire forgot
So shall they gain an immortality
Written for love of, and preserved by thee.

22nd April.

84

On hearing an Atheist use "Creeping Jesus" as a term of Reproach

1

Creeping Jesus
gave a cry, ...
Mary raisd him
silently .....

2

Creeping Jesus
passing by
healed a poorman's
sightless eye ...

3

Creeping Jesus
gave a cry.
curst the bigots
haughtily.

4

Creeping Jesus
passing by
stopt to banquet
heartily.

5

Creeping Jesus
went to die :-
naild onto a
cross on high

6

Creeping Jesus
gave a cry ....
Creeping Jesus
walks the sky ...

7

Creeping Jesus walks the sky ....
Mary weepeth silently ..

24th April

85

Spenserian Sonnet on Seeing "Jane Burden" by D.G.R
Irish National Gallery April 1928.

To shelter from the drenching rain I strolld
Thro' swinging doors along bright galleries
But Turner's gleaming looms of misty gold,
And Flemish landscapes with their narrow trees
And writhing marbles, broken at the knees,
Were petty joy or comfort for me then
Since I grew sad to think that centuries
Could wring so little from the hearts of men.
But O I saw a face Rossetti's pen
Had hoarded up from ravage of the years.

My sorrowfld : and I rejoict agen
To worship this the Queen of Guenevere's
Where, with my Morris, I lived thro' once more
A sunny moment on Time's Stygian shore.

The Bankmanager talks of Death.

I cannot grasp this mystery of death....
When I was very small Elizabeth
my sister who had nursed me 'neath the trees
that tumbled appleblossom on my knees
grew thin and pale till, with October's rain,
she went away and never came again....
I saw her sleep the night before she left;
her face was cold and white, her fingers deft
that used to twine us daisy chains and strings
were long and quiet now; her auburn rings
of curled hair lay flatly on her breast...
I went away unkist and did not break her rest.

When I grew up one day I went to see
the white old man that once had scolded me.
He too, was sleeping, but his shining head

lay crooked on his pillow. Someone said
he stumbled in the garden and fell down...

I married, bought a villa out of town,
and went to business almost every day,
came home and dined in estimable way,
and was respected by the porters who
run up the platform shouting "Change at Crewe",
and by the clerks who met me, ten in car,
to whisper "mister Soandso is here",
and by my neighbors.... even by my wife
O slow and gentle was my creaseless life

My children went to school, played games, & one
young Harry, trusted tumbler full of fun,
went to the East, and sent us photographs
..... I can remember now our hearty laughs
when he brought in a frog by its hindleg....

A skirmish with a roving wild Touareg
took place out in the desert, and word came
that he was murdered - but the place's name
I have forgotten - still if this was Death
it seemed a stoppage only of the breather's breath,
a going out to never come again,
a lasting rest to ache or hurt or pain.....
not more than that - and even now I say
just as I did when news came yesterday
that my small daughter Ann Elizabeth....
I cannot grasp this mystery of Death....

28th April

Irishman January 26th 1929

On hearing Traveller's Tale of the Alps.

He said you should not give a shout
Among the snowbowed alpine hills
For fear that some God angry, spills
An avalanche from his redoubt.

I thought how good it would be if
I might go shouting thro' the town
Tempting some spirit to cast down
An avalanche from Heaven's cliff

To smother up the things I hate,
Blotting from sight Time's cruel face,
Fill men upon our debri base
A kinder, fairer, nobler state.

Sonnet.

O Beauty passes and those laughing eyes
And those red crying overripe young lips
Shall pass and be with dawns that will not rise
As once they did on Tyrebound threatied ships.

That face and those smooth carvd limbs of a god,
As shapt by one who sought to make stone skin
When seasons trudge their waning period
Will nurture grassroot or unquiet fir.

As did the bard of Judah long ago
I lift mine eyes unto the silent hills
But lo they pass, as neath Time's overflow
The glacier down the widining valley spills.
O Life, since Beauty passes, is a lie
For even stars drop down the midnight sky.

Three Things

Three things I wish to see before I die:
Dawn creeping up the hunchd Pyramid
where naked palms fray out the even sky
and sand wastes shimmer like a cauldronlid:

Himalayas against the sunsets pink,
their snow afire with splendor of old day,
where stars perch perilous on heaven's brink
and in their silver silence burn away:

Then Bruges with its old belfry o'er the square,
the townband playing in the cobbled street,
while sipping beer I tilt my wicker chair
and praise the place because of Time's defeat.

30th Ab

92

Was this the Face?

Seest thou yon dust that vanishes away
behind that scarlet tent upon the right?
O that was hero Hector yesterday
who bore Troy's fame high over all in fight.

Is he then dead? Yea, and this Troy will burn,
and these white Greeks again will dip their oars
from Hellas, tho they will not all return
till some have braid strange things on unknown shores.

And Helen? nay I know not what shall fall
on her white body and her fair curst face.
O who knows but some poets shall miscall
for her, this war we wag'd on Hellene race;

forgetting causes of this stupid strife,
or hiding such behind a legend told
of one Greek beauty, Menelaüs' wife,
who lov'd a Paris in Troy's age of gold.

30th April

94

That other Place.

I often go into a land
over the edge of sleep
where live Boyblue, Jack Horner, and
Miss Muffitt, and Bopeep.

But I prefer to go instead
into a far countree
where men sink noiseless, tied to lead,
beneath a seagreen sea,

where pale men walk along grim boards,
arms pinion'd behind,
while bearded pirates, gripping swords,
shout oaths into the wind;

Then on a palmgrove island green
they bury trunks of gold
where sunlight sparkles trees between
and sea green parrots scold.

They crunch to where their grounded boat
lies in the lapping tide
and push its lettered bow afloat
towards where their [schooner?] vessel's ride.

Then I take up a dreamy tool
to dig the fresh turned sand .....

till teacher tells me I'm in school ....
and not in that strange land.....

30th of.
96

Drought

The priests, graybeards, cried out in prayr
standing in grassgrown ways
while fetidly the rotten air
rose up, a stifling haze.

The walls beneath that burning sun
crumbld and crackt to dust
as languidly the spinners spun
soft silks to flatter lust.

The wells that once had bubbld out
were fould by cattle's feet;
that season's long and dreary drought
suckt color from the sheet

Nor was there sound of joy & mirth
nor plowboy carolling
the aching vastness of the earth
was sepulchre of spring.

But god from wells of Paradise
sent down a caravan
to bear them water, wines and spice
with Christ his dragoman.

1st may

98

Vanguard (may 1935)

Song for Mayday

Today you wear your ribbon red to symbolise your
brotherhood
with all the workers of the earth whose veins
run red with commen blood.

And I salute you Comrades all as one
salutes his living freinds
waken'd awhile to consciousness and turn'd
from life's ignoble ends.

But in my dreams I see a host of martyr'd
workers who have bled:
John Brown, James Connolly and Christ, for
you I wear my ribbon red.

1st may

Publisht in The Irishman 12 may

99

To the Memory of James Connolly executed
12th May 1916 in Dublin.

A dozen years have passed since then,
the memory has died away
of Connolly and the martyr'd men
who rose on Easter day.

When I was eight years old I heard
Connolly address a labor crowd -
I cannot recollect a word
yet I am passing proud,

As one who stood upon the edge
of Galilee to watch the ship
that waders pusht beyond the sedge
while bright oars flash and dip.

But not indeed as one who stood
among the crowd in Calvary
to see Christ die for Brotherhood
as Connolly died for me.

The Indeterminist pleads for Scope.

O Everyman's a heart a sensualist
But lacks the opportunity for vice —
Still who is not a saint had he the chance!
This truth is seen - as one may see below
The lavacrust of Etna bubble up
Pure veins of gold - but fine gold streakt with dross -
- Let me take fire to be my metaphor -
Its purifying tongues, its glowing heart,
Its ashes fit for nothing but to clog
The hearths of houses when the guests are gone,
Or blown against the nettles that grow round
Long unstirred dusty slumbering of kings —
Fire! That's the human heart epitomised!
The dirt and ashes of the clayey self
Laid down and left behind as rise high flames
Wild flames of passion and of Poetry.

So I would plead with God to loose his laws -
For laws but curb, restrain, and fetter in
The soul that would break out in noble deeds —
But liberty is licence milton wrote —
This liberty for right is scope for wrong —
Why that's the price man for his godhood pays -
The risk, precipitous and regretted,
That man must tread would he do more than live
Dull tedious days of chilly decency
Conventional respectability -
I bet sin against the blessed Paraclete -
It is the speculation of man's life
And I but ask for wider scope for it:
Believing in the ability of man
To live out life as God's tremendous test
And climb right up to Eden in the clouds!

6th May

The Professor discourses on Life

"The aim o' life is slonghing o' the Ape"
So said the old professor from his bench
"But, gentlemen, I must not dogmatise.
Ten years ago a sickman in this town
Had burst appendix, tumor on the lungs,
And perforated stomach: So we said
He could not live and put a tiny term
Upon his stretch o' life upon the Earth.
Six weeks however, spent in honest strife
And he looked up and laught, his cheeks grew red
And in another six he crawled about.
Two years passed and he ambled tho' again
The weary lanes of living. So I say
Tis very vain indeed to dogmatise ....
Still one of life's delights - to me atleast -
Is trying to be positive on things.

That matter and that make being worthwhile -
I like to think that everything I do
Negation is of tooth and claw and hide . . . .
— Compare with Christ and you fall very short
But with the animal and you feel proud -
So might I say in comfort to myself
"The aim o' life is slonging o' the safe".

The Indeterminist argues a Wide Acceptancy

I do not question evil I accept:
My God's so great that he embraces all
Nor word I limit him to good alone
Since evil's grand and wickedness sublime
In their own places as virtue in hers.
Granted there is a god that did create
This cooling blob of lava swung in space
And set the stars in motion thro' the sky
And urg'd the fish creep upward to the new
Is it presumption to suppose he too
Created slime and mud and snakes and lice?
I cannot get this plain — I seem to shock
Still that's my truth crouch't in the narrow well
And blinking at the sunbeam I have cast
Into her lonely plenitude of dark . . .
Some day I'll get this straiten so to say

Then I will run about the ways of men
And cry aloud my new philosophy ....
Today I know no more than brother Christ
Nay! maybe less... but I will heed his words
And pass them on, and bid you never judge.
My light in darkness may not be a star,
Nor either be a jack o' lanthorn lie
You should not say ... nor would I in your sight
Cry that your wounded Christ is myth and dream...

Nature accepts all bears upon her back
Churches and brothels, parliaments, and jails,
And only grumbles now and then afar..
Shall I have less than Nature's pagan heart?

The Mystery.

The worst thing that men's hands could do
they did and yet time did not die.
Lo summer skies still spread their blue
and stars blink in the winter sky!

They hung the Lord of all upon
a warpt and withèrd gallows tree:
and yet day still flames up in dawn
and thrushes greet it heartily!

8th May

108

The Blind Poet Asks that One read unto him in his darkn

Turn o'er yellow pages reading out the name
Of that Greek beauty who brought fire to Troy,
Of that young god whose chariot's wheeld with flame,
And that dead queen who lov'd an immortal boy
And I will listen quietly with ~~soft~~ joy
Which being profound can never need a word
Like that of God who spun this starry toy
And rested in its silence as dam heard

But after, I wou'd have you and no third
Repeat slowly dear names of places old
Whose sound rings clearly like a lonely bird
Upon a bough that splinters the moon's gold:

Not lofty names of Nineveh and Rome
But humble hillbird villages of home.

9th May.

109

Hints and Hamadryads.

Hearing the traffic's stir
I walk beside a lake
where gilding the black fir
a golden day will break:

The sunshine on the dome
of some sootstain'd saint Pauls
summons my heart to Rome
to sentinel her walls;

and one bright face to see
'neath streetlamps' windy gold
calls Helen up for me
whose beauty's never old.

Probably January

110

On hearing the Appointment of P of Wales as
Master of the Mercantile Marine. etc
Punch "A thrill went thro' the whole service at this news"

Are they thrilling who are digging
Edward dear
Frost blue fingers in the rigging,
Edward dear,
Where the waves rise mountains high
Hiding distance from the eye
And none hears the drowned man's cry
Edward dear?

Are the Lascars thrilling too
Edward dear
In stokeholds you never knew
Edward dear
Where the air is dark with dirt

111

And the men, in no bold shirt
Faces burn and bruise and hurt
Edward dear?

. . . . . .

I would beg you think again
Edward dear
Ere you tempt this sort of men
Edward dear
For the sea's a bitter master
never caring what disaster
Drowns a cabinboy at last, or
Edward dear.

8th May.

112

Nettles of Offence

One had a fair body
and one a lovely face
And I lov'd each because of this
because of their great grace.

Each in her love for me
pluckt nettles of offence.
While one lies rotd in flame one is
shod with Impenitence

[redacted]

8th May

113

Death comes to the Duchess.

They say the old lady
lies on her deathbed:
wrytwisted her body
from pains that she had.

But I say that her spirit
was crooked before:
our bodies inherit
the sins our souls bear.

To nephews and cousins,
when I was a lad, —
to her daughters and sons
things cruel she said —

[redacted]

Time works men's revenges;
they stand round her bed
and note the great changes
her sickness has made .....

7th May

Criterion

What is it marks the man out from the beast?
I think it is capacity to dream:
Tho thro the prisméd minds of tigers stalk,
For all I know, when they lie motionless
Beneath the frondage of gigantic palms
Young antelopes, gazelle, and luscious deer.
But I am sure they have no joyful dream
(Since that was only memory)
of a bright
And beautiful new world of dew and light.

As prophets measúrd in the long ago
The stature of the soul within their care
By gently asking "What think ye of Christ?"
So I would test my fellows by a phrase
What are your dreams? and I will answer strait,
According as they answer, if they be
On my side and the angels' or the world's.

(I dream with John of that Apocalypse
Of heaven come down on earth to dwell with men
And I shall live and ultimately die
To make this dream a bright reality)

Two o'clock in the Morning

Nearby a dog makes feeble moan
Rattling a rusted chain:
The drifting silence of the moon
Is shattered by a far off train.

In some high attic close a child
Breaks thro' his mother's peace
But my warm spirit walks unchilled
Beneath moonsilver splinted trees

Sonnet: To Japan on her Chinese Policy

The dragon writhes, Japan, so get ye gone
Ere he be stung into a fiery rage.
Ye thought it humor worthy of the stage
When he in righteous anger turn'd upon
The thing that sucket, gross evil scorpion,
His mighty flank when come from hermitage
Where he lay cold unheeding of all age
Until betraid awake by our false dawn.

O Get ye gone or he will rise and strike,
Pull down thy Sun from Heaven and debase
Thy nation, and turn angrily on us.

For sake of Britain and the folk ye like
Tempt not the dragon from his hiding place
For we are in a plight most piteous.

Sometime in Feb?

118

The Dead Statesman.

Asquith is dead: his cultured periods
Will never more roll thro' the council hall
Where for a reverent truced interval
The politicians named him of their gods.

I too will stand, and with no tinsel laude,
A little wreath will place upon his pall
For I remember Connolly's prison wall —
The volleys of the khaki firing squads.

When Oxford went into the deepining shades
I warrant he was met by no small band
Miners he ordered soldiers shoot, and men
Who died in France's pitiable parades
Because this was the ultimate command
That some die so our freedom live again.

9th May

119

Ballade on the Eve of the First Court of the Season

O King who will receive the merry throng
And gracious queen who makes a million bows
A tiresome riner writeth out this song
In hope you'll read it to your royal house.
The times you live in are most perilous
And night is hung with unpropitious star —
The Gossip writer in some rag avows
'This Court will be the gayest since the war'.

In Wales because our system worketh wrong
Poor miners slowly starve like famisht crows.
In Parlement because their gang is strong
A robberband with leprous gilded brows
Press into law their well begotten vows
And make them literal and regular —
Let us forget this since as each now knows
This Court will be the gayest since the War.

Our streets, by beggars trodden all day long
And workless men inconsequent as cows,
Cry out in pain and beat upon a gong
With ominous incessant clanging blows:—
In Egypt with mailed fist Britannia throws
Democracy to jackals of the far
Sandwastes lest noble passions shd arouse—
(This Court will be the gayest since the war)

L' Envoi

O King who's harmless and who daily grows
More dignified than Prince Familiar
With gratitude the heart within me glows —
This Court will be the gayest since the War!

Virgil

The young man is dead now.
He is not the first.
O Winter is shed now:
the hawthorn buds burst.

His hair was as gold as
laburnum in May —
your grief is as old as
Troy vanisht away.

The sky far and cloudless
is bright with the spring:
our lord lad speeds shoudless
on death's journeying ——

The salmon comes back to
the leap and the weir
and swifts, neck and neck, to
the sunn'd hemisphere : —

but cometh back no man
who lies underground :
and griefs for the woman
till new love is found

In Some Far Day.

The Spearhead of Pity,
the Swordhilts of Doubt
Shall threaten Time's City
and cast Belief out.

The Trumpet of Sorrow,
the Bugle of Hate
Shall usher tomorrow
the Foe thru the Gate.

And when the Towers tumble,
and Holocausts lit
On the Throne of the Humble
Lord Jesus shall sit

10th may

124

Moral

The fresh green of
newleaved tree boughs,
a rustic scene of
homecoming cows
Or young birds building in an old and windy house

Of each I'd make a
lyric thought
For Nature's sake, a —
— n echo caught
from the heart of the Thing that teaches but never yet
has taught

9th may

newleader
aug 1929

125

The Rebel

I died, a follower of Cade, in Kent for liberty.
When thousands on the barricade were murder'd there was I.

I stood beside John Brown when he was choked by Langman's noose:
And fell before the musketry of men who cannot choose.

With Sacco and Vangetti too, the chair became my throne
In Russian cells the knout I knew when frost cuts to the bone.

Indeed, on skullshaft Calvary impenitent we hung
And talkt of Zion he and I, who had to die so young.

O Christ of friendless men the friend, O Harrower of Hell
I stand, thy kinsman, to the end, teaching men to rebel

10th may.

126

Publish'd in "the Freethinker"
29th July

Colney Hatch.

I will take Truth in a bag because
they say Truth's dynamite.
and I will sap and mine earth's walls
and set the fuse alight.

Then I will run away awhile,
stop up my ears with wool ....

And when th' explosion's over come
and build Earth beautiful.

10th May

127

To the Poet of Tomorrow.

Think not because you stab your heart
and set the letters down in blood
That men will put on brotherhood
And shed the habit of the mart.

Dream not because of that small song
You seek to live and live to write
Men will forsake for spheres of light
The grosser amplitudes of wrong.

Deem not because of your frail verse
Spring will abide in hearts of men.
The winter will but come again,
The yewsprig, and the shrouded hearse.

Sing then, 'tis all thou canst, in praise
As did the great manhattanese
Who shouted over open seas
Of things that need not years or days,

Of mountains blunt against the sky,
Of sunshine on the windless lake,
Of sunset's glimmer, day's bright break
And the lone curlew's mournful cry.

10th May

Mothers
Beautiful ~~Mothers~~

When we are young our mothers are
Most exquisitely beautiful.
'Tis time's insistent critic school
That points the flaws, the stains that mar.

But at the end of life when far
And haloed grow the dreams of youth
We know things holier than truth,
And beautiful our mothers are.

10th May

130

On reading Plays of Marlowe

To thunder forth that titan Tamburlaine,
Amaze conception by a frenzied scene
Where Asian monarchs strive, the shafts between,
To haul the victor from the storied plain:
To praise, as none can ever praise again
A woman, Helen, Menelaüs' queen,
Who brought down fire on Troy and bitter teen
Leaving a tale of wandering ships and pain;

O Marlowe, then to die as dies a cur:
as dies a drunken brawler of the street!
God, night's magnificent anticifex
When stars fall down knoweth no such defeat

Marlow, thou art of stature hard to scan —
Glory and frailty thou of every man.

12th May

131

Geologist

I heard him dogmatise
about the age of Ice
and heatedly discuss
conflicting theories.

I thought how vain are men
to squander days and years
in mapping out Time's plan
from screfes and lines and scores;

when Time flings stars like dust
and earth her wealth of bloom
should men ignore the past
and feel content with home?

13th May

Sparrow

O waggish sparrow on the fence
whence bubbles thine impertinence?
You gape at me and have no dread
Guest wholly unsolicited,
and twitch thy tail and peck thy wings
filling me with unutter'd things —
Is thine the Innocence primal
old adam had before the fall —
secure in hope, the skin of faith?

O truly as my Jesus saith
God still regards the sparrow's flight
Tho' in the market four well might
be purchas'd for one farthing. O
is thine the faith that bids me know
the curse and horror of defeat

that God encounters in each street,
the ready oath, the blow, the lie,
whereby men still Christ crucify?

And art thou not from some clime sent
with all the feather'd regiment
to urge men rise and leave the ways
that muddy o'er Zion's golden days?

14th May

134

Everyman 7/6

Timber Mortimer

Whether sunshine, snow or rain
Caesar now and Charlemain
sleep and will not wake again .....

Sandstorms sweep o'er Babylon ....
Thistles cover Marathon .....
Sheba's dead, and Solomon ....

Windsfret thro' the gnarled trees
Gusty with ten centuries ....
Trees are more than dynasties.

14th May

135

Whin

O I met an ould' fella
wi' a wee straggly baird:
Hes skin wus dhry an' yella.
He ast me how I fard.

"O rightly now ould' fella"
I laft at him an' sed
"Ye see the whin is yella —
the cowl' northwin' is dead",

Sez he "Come here the morra
the shenglill all be lind
wi' blossoms — 'tis yer sorra
scatheid by the wind"

But I lef' 'dat ole' fella
an' went upon me way
I'm the whim wuz brave an' yella -
me heart wuz light an' gay!

Egypt, Carthage, Troy....

name them slowly over!
Egypt, Carthage, Troy....
dream of Grecian lover...
dream of Nubian boy...

Names, O say them slowly,
that will never die,
for they are more holy
than stark Calvary...

Christ slain by the Romans
heaven's victry won....
Greater far the woman's
heart that broke for one....

15th May

138

Dido... Hero

Dido dies in flames and pity
On the pyre that she had built.
Helen's gone, that burnt a city
And forgotten is her guilt

O the seagreen breakers cover
Hero and her drowned lad
Yet earth hath another lover ....
Memory can but make her sad.

O the earth looks forward ever
To the lovers that will be ....
Soon the love you said would never
Die will be but memory.

15th May

139

Grass

O we are men and do great things
as slaves or kings.
Time squanders us and we become
forgotten, deedless ..... dumb....
So sands drift o'er the monuments
we raisd as tents
to solace here our sojourning
against time's hated sting .....
For time's our foeman ... ever was
and is the cause
of our defeat and vain essay
Who hold fast by each day
as token that will never pass.....
The waving grass,
accomplice of oblivion,
will cover us when gone .....

Twenty twenty-one . .

Laburnum gold in plenty –
Trees a fresher green
I am only twenty
You are just nineteen .

When the hawthorn's weighty
Sixty kind more times
I will just be eighty –
Busy still at times :

For it is my duty
Every spring to praise
You, supremest beauty,
Known in my best days .

Maymonthsoneagen .

Once agen the may's in blossom
And we wander hand in hand
O'er the gorsegold hill's broad bosom
Into sudden fairyland .

Once agen the skylark rising
Praises yen with more than words ;
And despair forbids that I sing
To compete with little birds .

Once agen, no harm in trying,
I will string words in a rime,
For you know that underlying
Surges love that knows not time

15th May

Moods

Seeing you lie in the sun
One brown arm across your face
Lo I thought how only one
That livd before you had such grace:
She was Dian, starry huntress
Starbright Dian o' the chace.

Then you rose and gaz'd at me
With shy brown eyes full of joy
And I knew why men should be
Warshippers of fallen Troy,
Helen and her ancient lovers
Helen and her Trojan boy.

Gorse aflame with living gold
Flickerd round you as you stood
And I knew how Vergil told
Of sad Dido's widowhood
So my fancy caught and held you,
equal to its every mood.

15th mem

The Plumber

He smokt strong black tobacco in a pipe
That seemd to have no stem: his broken teeth
clutcht tightly as he spoke with moving lips
and shewd their brownstaind edges underneath.

A dusty vest wrinkled and markt with oil
blue overalls grown baggy at the knees —
his very cap, torn where he pusht his pipe,
was streakt with paint and spatterd with black grease

'Speaking o'boilers mum' said he one day
I'll put one in the last for fifty years.
Y'ell never need another in this house .....
Aye Wortlinton's the best o bloody beers"

Today a man of similar regard
with cutty pipe came in to fix the burst..
He took his pipe out spat and said to me
"An' are ye shure this biler's nut the furst?

It ony lasted twenty years ye say....
It shud a lasted more nor that ye know...
The plummer's dead that done it poor one' lad
... I worke for him about ten years ago..."

15th May

146

Slogans

The memory now is wholly gone
of Salamis and marathon —
Ask any workless hungry man
which was the Greek, the Persian
and which knew victory, which defeat.
We will shit blankly on the street
and laugh and say "I never heard
of either name." My heart is stirred
To think that only you and I
are left to fight Thermopylae
and none shall come crying Down
of liberty and Spartacus
unless we go like frantic flames
to burn men's hearts with new bright names

16th May

147

Travellers

O jolting, rushing in the train
We rattled past a bank of bloom .....
I summon up the scene again
In my dim firelit shadowy room ....

A sky of blue with one blown cloud,
A squandering sun that sheds his rays
Upon that bank... the primrose crowd
Glowing beneath the whin's gold blaze.

Then I turn'd round to view each face
That sat in cushion'd places sat ....
Some read, some talkt, none saw the place....
And one man fingered his hard hat

16th May

148

Warship

I know if in the Vatican
I stood to see Christ's Priests go by
My rage would surge up in a cry
Against idolatry of man.

For I would have men worship none ....
Not even Christ that died for us
Nor Lenin, Connolly, Spartacus,
Save only lost Endymion .....

17th May

149

The Songs of Silence

Sometimes when words refuse to come
I sadly meditate
how hosts of Pandemonium
clutter heavens gate
and shrill their warcries and their hate
while silent I stand desolate.

Then I recall the goldshod stars
rush silent thro' the sky
bent on their bright heroic wars
without a cry:
and I grow glad at last that I
can fight God's battles silently...

17th may

150

Jazz.

I heard the jazz band play: a saxaphone
crying a human cry across the din
as jigging shrieks the scraped violin
against the drum's insistent monotone:
the metric snapping of the fingered bone
marking the measures of the palegrey tin
dull chords crashed from the pianists long thin
fingers some artist cut from veinless stone.

But I beheld it not: my eyes were far
mid jungles steamy pitchblack silences
where flowring in the darkness like a star

A fire spird up and died in flamefleckt smoke
and round it, dull drums throbbing at their knees
flickerd the shining ebon forest folk.

18th may

151

Springsong

Shall I put on green thoughts and sing,
a minor poet of the spring
because the trees new blossoms put
in place of those the eastwind cut
down and scatterd over the grass —
because laburnum's gold that was
spent by a frolic season once
before time turnd the leaves to bronze —
because the chestnut lifts its spears
in hollow triumph for the years
green aspect that with pass away?

Earth passes not. nor passes clay:
man passes and his little hours,
intangible as last years flowers
and stampt in clay like goldred leaves

that deck man's tiny mounded graves...

Shall one whose hope's fixt in the stars,
who stands life's largesse i bright wars
against the shadow and the Past
turn simple moralist at least?
Shall I put on green thoughts to sing,
a minor poet of the Spring?

Lament for the Red Branch

No comfort is there in the cows
the High King sent to me from mealth.
No comfort in the hawthorn boughs
with berries beautiful beneath –

For now the Red Branch heroes gone
go crying down the misty wind
That mourns about the bogs at dawn
and brings back old things to my mind

So every mountain top I tread
bursts into life with ambusht men.
My feet move slowly o'er the dead
that lie unwakt in each fair glen

I will go down and take a ship
and cross the three great booming waves
to clean forget the fellowship
that binds that company of graves.

Comfort for the Past Erinn

Dead are the druids of the hills
And gone the high towns loud with bells,
Yet may its springing splendor spills –
That holiest of miracles –

And my own hawthorn that will grow
Heavy with berries underneath
Drowns many a lane with blossom'd snow
And puts a song between the teeth:

And puts a dream into the heart
To sting the singingman awake
Bidding him walk no more apart
For Beauty's sake, for Erinn's sake.

Swimming pool

O Pardon me if I digress
from my hot scolding business
to weave a lyric round a cool
laburnum margined bathing pool . .

A boy glides thro its broken glass —
such mirror for narcissus was.
Four boys stand poised on its rim
and hurl swift questionings at him
but he in crystal rapture caught
flings back in answer as he ought
no words but merry shouts of glee —

We are these lads — the poet he.

We stand on time's green shore and cry

in doubt and fear repeatedly . . . .
We question him and will not dare
to brave the waters lest some snare
deceive us when we are therein . . . . . .

He turns a streaming face to grin
at our small valor and our doubt
and utters his so merry shout . . . .

You see — I cannot once digress
from my hot scolding business!

21st may

158

on reading Thompson's 'In no Far Land'

Jordan.

O Jordan river be not proud
because doves in the sunlight shone
when Jesus stood among the crowd
and listen'd to baptiser John.

This Lagan once did brighter flow —
gulls glitter'd high above this smoke
when Jesus walkt in Sandy Row
and jested with the common folk.

21st may

159

In the Public Place

I told the haggard people of the high arch overhead
and how the sunset's glory streaks its parapet with bars
And how a flaming furnace burns not a hotter red
Than the giant whirling centres of Orion's nascent stars

Then I told them how the Poet cond ~~stake~~ Compose a noble song
~~Of how no star breaks loose and falls unshepherded~~ now the stars that whirl together never fall
But When a man rose up and answer'd dull, bitter with deep wrong his
"Songs don't fill no empty stomachs. Give us bread"

a noble song
Then I told them that the Poet cond compose
how the stars that whirl together never fall unshepherded:
but a man rose up and shouted, his dull accent
hoarse with wrong. bread
"Songs nor stars don't fill no bellies. Give us
not stones but bread

21st May
160

(45)

God the Artificer

God made your eyes
to look upon
far starlight skies
and spring's young dawn,

He made your ears
to catch the tune
spun of night's spheres,
sung of the moon.

He made your feet
slowly to tread
down Heaven's street
bediamonded.

He made your hair
to blow and toss
from Heaven's stair
to Charing Cross.

21st May

46

Sycamore

For the great press
I might not see:
I could but guess
his quality,

But Zaccaeus,
the publican,
has shewn to us,
a little man

may see the Lord
despite the throng .....
That is my word
That is my song ...

O Worshippers
I see, adore
making this verse
my sycamore.

22nd May (47) Not in Panic but in Haste

O Pan, great goatfoot horned Pan
come from uplands Arcadian
leaving thy train to sport and play
with dryad and with Attic boy

to run about this weary town
with soft airs on thy syrinx blown
wakening in the hearts of men
that woodland happiness again:
the moon; the dancing on the grass
the wholesome fare - the life that was
before gold by black Plutus spilt
engendered human shame and guilt
and exiled us from Arcady,
from woodland worshipping of thee.

O if you but play on thy pipe
they will come back, the time is ripe.
For years I have walkt here alone
mumbling thy spell in monotone -
and they are ready, you shall see,
to hurry back to Arcady.

22nd May

164

The Lost Leader

Intertwine the laurel
with the withered bays
since to Time's long quarrel
comes this last of days.

Had he gone in glory
fate had been but just.....
men forget his story
and his name is dust

Yet I can remember
when a fair young man
woke from dreary slumber
and bright days began

O Gold was his pity,
golden were his deeds,
and a golden city
rose to house his needs,

But Time, tireless sapping,
crackt its towrs across .....
here we leave him sleeping
since his heart was dross.

22nd May ~~Friendship in False Rimes~~

I have sat down to Time's repast,
Scorning the bread, to quaff the wine
But O how sickly is the taste
If friendship fails the feast to join!
If there's no laughter at the board
If none is there the cates to break
O useless is the wisest word
That men in wine could ever speak

22nd May
(~~49~~)
50

166

After writing 50 Poems and before writing another 50.

O What am I
but a wandering nightbird blown against the sky.
No comfort is it that the moon is bright
with stars on high
if the wind in my wings that melts my flight
will not cease...
a startled cry
is my sole song .....
despairingly
I cry against this bitter wrong
and long
to fly
with arched bows
of homing crows
or crescent moons of geese.

22nd May
50

As Dennis might have written to Pope

This Pope - I'll flesh my point in his cold heart,
Nay better choose his weaker hidden part,
I'll drive my steel into his hunched back
nor draw it out till he in pieces crack.
Nay stop no curses shall slip from my tongue -
The gadfly ever loves the rankest dung
So to your cesspool Pope and leave to men
The noble art of manuscript and pen
Stop writing Pope ye have a tedious bore
So back to liquor and your favorite whore
A Lady she - I'll not disgrace my page
with erdure of your choosing - Let him rage.

Who is this fellow? you must know him sir!
A crookbackt viperven'm'd Popish cur!

23rd May
52.

168

New Leader 7/6

A Father Explains.

My son and I went for a walk: —
O God how little children talk.
We saw a man stand in the street
In rags and stamping slush cold feet,
And further on another man
was begging - so the child began —

"Who's that man in the gutter dad?
Why does he look so glum an' sad?
Why's he lame an' where's his leg?
An' does he always have to beg?
What's he wearing medals for?"

Be quiet child.

He won the War!

25th May
53

169

Justification.

I gave a thought to Easter week —
followed it with a public song
since I am not afraid to speak
my mind concerning human wrong...

I sang of Connolly who was tied
wounded and broken to a chair,
and how Lord Christ was crucified,
and how they both are met in air.

But someone said with unbelief
"These Irish are not worth a song;
nor Pearse, nor Great Cuchulain's grief
nor Deirdre's sorrow, Oscar's wrong."

He rain'd my words parochial
and narrow and of little worth
as if I cared not what befall
the pleasant place that gave me birth

Sure Connolly may be a Christ
Cuchulain greater Galahad, ...
As Helen for the Greeks suffic't
Deirdre is ours, in sorrow clad ...

And singing Erin I but sing
the great heart of the wheeling earth
so I will make loud trumpeting
about the place that gave me birth.

25th may
54

London.

O London streets rush in a roar
and color splashes every part
but I will go from here no more
to lose my heart in London's heart.

Paul's dome may flutter i' the sun
pigeons flutter to the square
and children run to Kensington —
however fair I'll not be there.

The King may roll in livid state
thro cheering crowds to Westminster,
bright horseguards clatter at the gate —
however fair I'll not be there.

Rain may come down in Hammersmith
and fog fall over Bloomsbury
but I shall never walk there with
Morris who lives again for me.

The white coats may come out at Lords
the wicket may be pitcht again
and figures flash upon the boards
as players beat the Gentlemen.....

But I will never go again
for I saw many a ~~blacked~~ evil there
— Lo kings are watcht by workless men
with hungry glare and eyes that stare.

29th May
36.6.7

Three Rebel Cries

1

O Take this little whip of words
to drive the moneychangers hence
making Earth's temple fit for lords
whose armory is Innocence.....

O Take my little noise of words
to trumpet up the last Crusade
when these young men shall draw their swords
leading men o'er the barricade...

II

My pen is apter in slight songs
of spring and summer's bursting bud
than shaping miseries and wrong
into a cry from human blood.

I find it easier to call
Troy from the misty ages hold
than 'tis to raise a lyric wall
about a newtime's town of gold....

III

I make my songs bright flashing blades
to glitter in the hearts of men
as pikeheads on the barricades
that we will raise again.

O think ye that this shall not be
since civil strife is out of date —
I tell you no — for such as we
are restless in our fate.....

Nor will we cease till Mammon's crown
is trampled, broken in the street,
and Zion's City is dragged down
to ever Time's defeat.....

31st May
58

176

Maymoon

Last night the heavy air
was drunk with blossom'd snow...
the chestnuts row on row,
laburnum here and there, ...

The moon fell thro the trees
from oak to fir and beech
making, broken by each,
a dozen lattices....

31st may
59

Revenn

Hawthorn lying like a cloud
either side the drowsy lane,
mist, that makes a maggy shroud,
hints of heat again....

Corncrakes deep in dewy grass
answer grating hill to hill....
Shadows flung by light clouds pass...
and idle stands the mill..

Gorse breaks out in golden fires
where the moorland sinks and swells..
Pigeons flying round the spires
unfrightend by the bells...

Hawthorn lying like a cloud
either side the drowsy lane...

Poet praise these not so loud
I must go to sea again...

31st May
60

176

Wanderagen

A starry night: I pace my room
the fire has sunk to glowing ash.
A faint mouse gnawing in the gloom
makes riot like a thundercrash....

My thoughts beat hollow drums of war....
below there whirrs a ticking clock.....
the sky moves slowly circular
waiting in silence Dawn's shrill cock...

Sudden a train shrieks time in two,
riffing the stilly peace in rags..
the wanderlonging that I knew
comes crying back with frantic flags.

31st May
61

179

On reading notes of H. J. M°C's burial

They are discussing where you lie —
Saint Enoch's or Saint George's yard?
These aliens neath thy native sky —
Is it not Land M°Cracken?
Is it not Land?

They quote dull registers of men —
I see, undreaming thy white face
What time they captured you again
and Lang'd you, M°Cracken,
In the market place.

Were I to rise and do as you
Bright splendid things for liberty
~~They would hang me as they hanged you~~
The same tall gallows that you knew
Would serve for me MacCracken
Would serve for me?

And theirs would but question then
St Enoch's or Saint George's yard?
Bandying me from pen to pen ...
Is it not hard MacCracken?
Is it not hard?

Chrysoprase, Porphyry and Gold ...

A man might walk
for years and see
no slightest sign
of porphyry ...

A man might walk
for many days
and never meet
with chrysoprase .....

But ere the Spring
be spent and sold
pocket some bright
laburnum gold!

Kings of Tyre

The Moon is low and one faint Star
Glitters above flat Singapore:
And dawn breaks over Zangibar
where fruitboats push from out the Shore
But I shall never barter more...

The Ships may pile their Decks with Teak,
Ebony, Sandalwood, and Cane.
But I shall never stop to speak
With Negresses from Port of Spain..
Never again... never again...

Bruges Tourist Sight...

In one carved chamber you may see
all the meaning that history has...
Charles fearless duke of Burgundy
sleeping with stiffen'd feet of brass...

His daughter Marie lies at hand
frozen to metal years ago...
Even a child might understand
and wish it so and love them so...

For what is better for a man
who scattered desolation wide
and fell in battle - better than
To sleep in brass his child beside?

And what is better for a dame
that loved her broideries, her glass
than dreamless sleep and storied fame
in an eternity of brass?

Absalom

O see the messenger has come
with tidings of thy Absalom.
His father mourns in lonely state
within the room above the Gate.
And is the youngman dead? you say
turning your crying eyes away .....
As Samson's splendor was his snare
so Absalom fell by his hair ....
I thought to hear no sadder cry
than David muttring vacantly
"O Absalom my son my son
Would God this thing had neer been done"
But sadder than the feeble cry
of David muttring vacantly
in that small lonely room above
is "Absalom my love my love"

1st June 1928
①
186

98

And do ye fear it is too late
to make a song of Ninety Eight?
And is it better then to speak
of Connolly and Easter week?

Ah no for they who died for us
were noble too and glorious:
and with such splendid hierarchy
inspiring us we should be free.

I cannot make a helpful verse
of you, MacDonagh, Plunkett, Pearse
because I do not know the place
appointed for your hurried race.

But I know well where William Orr
M°Cracken, Dixon talkt before
those brief bright weeks of Ninety Eight
bore them away to brutal fate ....

And I know well the Sixroadsends
where scaffolds rattled with their friends..
and I pass homeward everyday
a place beloved by Betsy Gray....

So I refuse even to speak
about the men of Easterweek:
but early will I shout and late
of Ulstermen and Ninety Eight!

May 4th June

188

Sonnet.

I look upon the sun with jaundict eye
and find no favor in the morning air:
the heaven stretches pitifully bare,
its aching blue arched remote and high;
a smear of cloud may smudge the trackless sky,
and winging birds make markings here and there,
but greatest of life's crosses I must bear
endurance is of tir'd day's tyranny.

I live each day in hope of coming night
and weary watch the hours troop slowly in
till I shall have a snatch't spell of delight,
of silence from the hot town's overdin....

And lo! what time the moon ariseth bright
I stride the skies a starry paladin

May 4th June

189

Spenserian Sonnet

Were I to seize the gesture of old Troy,
put on the pomp and broideries of Rome,
and hunt with Dian and the attic boy,
or sit in purple state 'neath Peter's dome
who knows but then the phantasy might come-
amid the sparkle in the shadow'd glades
or then the music of the trump and drum,
beyond the glitter of the sheathless blades
or as in holy twilight whitestol'd maids
chaunt slowly on their pleasant pilgrimage
or as the taper's guttered glory fades
and capitals die from the colored page

Clear thoughts that whisper of the winding road
to that dear town where love makes its abode.

4th ~~May~~ June

190

Ukelele crying in the moon

Her almond eyes
and jetblue hair
are like thin cries
of birds in air .....

of birds in air
when no winds rise ...
her jetblack hair
her almond eyes ....

A low lagoon
sprinkled with stars
where in the moon
they strum guitars ...

Palms by the beach
and lotus there .....

O distant speech
of birds in air ...

of birds in air
when no winds rise ...
her moonblue hair ....
her almond eyes .....

On Reading Yeats' "Tower"

I sat down to read 'the Tower'
by our greatest singing man
but the music and the fire
that I knew before was gone.

Yet it gave me bitter thought —
Troy falls down - and stars gleam wan,
nothing lasts - Time's light blows out -
music leaves the singing man.

To one who said that I was everyone's
disciple

The careful music that I weave
seemeth but rough untutored skill
yet I no banner hoist and wave
to mark me poet of one school.

My single music is unique
it was not made before by man.
- each poet is to each alike
as pebbles of the molten stone!

Derby Day

I saw them head about a door
and gather talking in the street
troubled and pitiful with care
while clerks their scribbled dockets wrote.

I laught remembering of course
it was the day the horses run
when each man backs his fancied horse
that never saw racehorses run ...

Pygmalion

I would leave you in stone
when I am whirled blind dust
that this I should be gone
men might revere the past:

for silence is not broken
when words die in the air ....
no tree by westwind shaken
lasts out a hundred year.

But the cold chiseled marble
will last a longer while,
dreamless and free of trouble
unvext by dusty whirl:

a new Pygmalion
that longer will endure
who turn'd his love to stone
since words must die in air ....

5th Judge

Mirror

Every morning in the glass
I regard my skin with care.
yet I notice in my face
glimpses of your character.

Lurking humors round the lips
little echoes of your charm —
thus my mingled being trops
flattery's sincerest form

6th Judge

Tho' he be a fair Adonis
clay will fill his eyes and mouth
for tho' fairer none yet gone is
whitebrow'd lonely Ashtaroth:

and a broken armèd Venus
lies in marble, sleeps in stone.
Surely we have naught to screen us —
ruin'd is the Pantheon.

Eyeless skull of amaryllis,
bleachèd bones of Sappho mute ....
yet the Grecian spirit still is
living in dead Homer's lute.

6th June
(11)

198

Question

When I stoop thy lips to kiss
am I not caressing both
those old queens Semiramis
and the lovely Ashtaroth?

When I raise thy slender arm,
touch its ivory thru the sleeve,
is it ancient Helen's form
that I love or mother Eve?

6th March June
(12)

199

I thought the time is when you are young
you should not wait till you are old,
& laid and whistle o'er your song
for deadmen's lips are filld with mould

But what is there I have to sing?
I have not tempted life's full reach
I lack the art to ~~taught~~ wield a song
I have no cultivated touch.

5 7th May June

200

Bell horses

An old king sitting in high lonely state
waiting sad tidings of his fairest born...
.. a dusky runner panteth to the gate
his sandals gleaming with the dews of morn...
Bell horses bell horses what time o'day?

A young man nailed against a wooden tree
his fair white body writhing with the pain
while dice the laughing stupid soldiery
for who shall wear his long robe of purple gain...
Bell horses bell horses what time o' day?

7th May June

Free Thinker

201

Immortality

Talk turned this evening on the end of man
and if there is survival after death:
so I perforce them heatedly began
to quarrel with the old established faith —

"Where are the dead? ... Their bodies rot we know.
Your Jewish heaven's not above the sky..
To what far star then do the spirits go?"
So they in turn rebuke me heatedly..

"O Look around, see all the woe and pain
that clouds the days of this our only life"
One answered "Christ the Lord will come again
and bring an age of gold to end our strife —

God will have mercy on his people yet:
He will adjust th' innumerable scores ...
"Ah sir" I cried "you do, but seems, forget
He had no mercy on the brontosaurs ...

Shall we not vanish also off the earth
leaving white bones to shew what once was man
to some new creature, a greater birth
that follows us as we the saurian?

Trees

O I was born within a house
that shadowd o'er an orchard close
when apples reddend on their boughs
and cherry trees forgot their snows:

and for my rest & place I choose
where great winds crying thro' the trees
make moaning in the writhing yews
and sighing in the cypresses.

Ashes

God made men out of dust
and fashion'd him from clay
so since his deed was just
I praisd him yesterday,

for Rome and Troy are dust
and Alexander's clay . . . .
London and we, I trust,
will end the selfsame way.

Lyric

Come and see: the goldfinches,
where the fall of autumn wars
jostle off the apples trees
blossoms on the fresh golden grass.

Buttercups, beneath the rain
of the mingled pink and white,
spread with splendid golden stain
o'er the carpets of delight!

Golden Years.

When young across the hills
he singing strode,
buttercups, daffodils
around him flowed.

Now shivering down the street
he hobbles old
but streetlamps round his feet
splash puddled gold . . .

Lyric from "Sogoro"

O Love's the heavy moon among the trees
And Love's the timid cry of birds in air . . .
O Love's the spume blown off the stormy seas
And Love's the nobler kinsman of Despair . .

Nay, Love leans laughing from the lattices
The night wind blowing softly thro her hair —
O Love's the golden moon among the trees
and Love's the happy cry of birds in air.

14th June

208

Freethinker

Sonnet

I have no time to worship I must live:
the days in which we ~~live~~ more are maid with wrong.
Shall I be craven then and fail to give
hard blow for blow, and bitter song for song?
I know that breath is light and and fugitive,
that art's eternal and may well prolong
the shaken echoes beaten from Life's gong
by hands that seize on man's prerogative.

But what is there to worship if I would?
the cell and star are both beyond my ken:
the best I know is human brotherhood,
the dearest things enslaved and broken men.

So if you will call my hoarse crying wrath
An act of worship in a newer faith.

15th June

209

Queries I

Why did ye die
Macdonagh, Pearse,
and Connolly,
whose names in verse
could make a heart
of stone to stir
or break apart
Time's sepulchre?

15th June

210

II

Is it a joke
that heroes die
like thin blown smoke
lost in the sky,

And little men
of little worth
rise up again
and walk the earth?

15th June

211

Northman

Young girls alone are lovely
fresh saplings in the wind.
The grace of each young body
is pleasing to my mind.

Their faces and white bodies
heal up the hurt of time
till old immortal ladies
walk forth again in rime.

22nd June

212

Violet

I rummaged thru a deadman's box
And read the letters from his friends . . .

For withered flowers and dusty locks
I rummaged thru a deadman's box —
O how the yellow papers mocks
With words that cend not make amends —
I rummaged thru a deadman's box
And read the letters from his friends

22nd June

213

Pogrom

Romance walks slowly down the street
And History lingers at the door —

On that green bench with iron feet
He sat because his legs were sore,
A little Hebrew one might meet
Yet never notice in a score.

I spoke to him, and listened while
He told me how the times were bad...
He often hadda walk a mile
To sell one single writing pad.
He stopt: and smiled a weary smile
That was most timid and most sad —

"

Still why complain: it was far worse
In years I battled thru before....
I knew the Corcaish's knout and curse,
The murdered father on the floor —
Why my own leg was broke, and scarce
Could I get up to reach the door....

—

26th June

Three Trees.

Beside a road that wandered white
round the gentle curve of a hill
the firtree moaning stood till night
stird up its pain to crying shrill.

* * * * * * * *

The siren's hollow warning shout
flung from the thick fog baffled back,
ran thru the rigging and about
the slender dripping mast and deck.

* * * * * * * * *

And sudden words along the wires
tore thru the tall pole's fetter'd head
rekindling melancholy fires
tho men long thought the firtree dead.

26th June
216

Klansmen yews

A knot of quarrelling yews
gesticulate all night
like klansmen met for a lynching
in the streakt moonlight —

Their talk is a hidden murmer
that never becomes a cry
but in the fir tops' branches
you hear their victim die.

27th June

217

If there's a God
as some folk say
I thank him for
a happy day

and pray that he
shall all men bless
with equal measur'd
happiness

29th June

218

?

I crusht a moth with a brush last night
it left a smear on the window pane
like golden dust in the candlelight
or like a dried drop of clayey rain.

Are our achievements when we are dead
similar smears on the face of time?
And is there nothing more to be said
than may be put in a random rime?

29th

219

The Blasphemer

He said
"a wee child in our street
died o' the fever yesterday —
hers brother's in the hospital
awaitin' on, the neighbors say —

Her da ran cryin up the street
an' cursin' God an' mockin' wild"

I said
"What else was he to do?
You see, my friend, it was his child"

29th June

218

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29th June

220

I

Death and its ultimate mystery
loom large tonight in my whirling head
now nothing seemeth clear to me
save that two newsboys now are dead

A busy corner, and a bus
pinned them under a heavy wheel
O who dare call me blasphemous
to say Earth's strong foundations reel?

29th June

221

II

I have an aim in life at last —
it is to make the wheels turn slow.
We fret and hurry and rush fast
like logs in some dam's overflow.

Life should be lived out steadily:
'tis only lost stars haste and run.
'Twere better then for us to be
yoked to slow footsteps of the sun

2 29th June

222

A woman struck a Constable
amid the thick crowd's trampling stir —
sans shame sans fear the truth I tell —
I felt my heart go out to her

Why she did it I do not know
nor why he was her enemy . . . .
But then it was a lusty blow
against 'stablisht authority.

1st July

223

Grey water laps the feet of steep grey hills,
grey bosomed clouds drift slowly out to sea;
a brooding sorrow now my spirit fills
with pity for our ruin'd empery.

Cuchulain's dead: the waves upon the sand
make moaning for his pitiable end,
while curlews cry above the bleak blown land
that lovely Deirdre's name has now no friend.

Oisin need come back never for there is
no ear in this cold land would know his song.
These hilltops are but misty silences
where strove the heroes that were fair and strong.

Sheep on the hills
and larks that sang far out of sight
lay all these in the coffers
of my delight.

A white horse in a field
hedged in with dewy may
tis these my heart will treasure
out of today.

God makes his ballades of the grass
his rondeaux of the rain,
and for the triolet he has
grown clover once again.

3rd July.

On Seeing the Glens of Antrim from the Sea.

I sit and gaze across the shining flood
of scarcely ripplèd waters whose dull sound
is solemn burthen for my quiet mood,
and see the distant hills with purple crowns.

A round tow'r rises bell-less by the shore,
its broken shadow like a low refrain,
hinting of faery legendry and lore
that never now can come to us again.

Then headland after headland stretching out,
like claws of her who guards the Pyramids,
fade from the nearer green by that redoubt
to purple on the ocean's glowing lids.

I moralise upon the scene and prose
in dreary sequence to myself once more
how thought her misty capes in fancy throws
while man the Dreamer stands upon its shore

What Diaz or Dafama shall go forth,
and come with tidings of the land beyond
and how the treasures of the West and North
are little worth since this new day has dawnèd?

O shall I ever round a cape of thought
unbaffled by the tumult of the seas?
and will this triumph be too dearly bought
with fates that fell on Christ and Socrates?

2 3rd July.

228

An Aerial Moment.

The awesome silence bodeth ill, for rain;
the little ships are hasting for the land:
a silver light lies on th' unruffled main,
and clouds like precipices loom at hand.

The sudden sun, a great strong man and fair
springs in between the canyon of the clouds
and thrusteth them apart and cleaves the air,
- a noble spirit bursting from his shrouds.

6th July.

229

Gold sails on the silver water:
a pleasant wind from the east:
we bear the High King's daughter
to grace the High King's feast.

Black sails on the cruel water
the round sun sets in red ....
We seek the High King's daughter
weed tangled, floating .... dead.

The shore is low
the tide runs far
and foamflakes blow
across the bar:

a gull's hoarse cry,
the wind's dull moan:
and here am I,
alone, alone ...

O'er these I fling
my fancy's dress
yet dare not sing
for hopelessness.

O little light
O harbor light
I saw you blink
throughout the night ..

and moralis'd
and thought that I
should imitate
thy constancy ....

Nausicaa

I saw the children at their play
over the tidewet streaming sand
and in a trice I stole away
and stood upon a Grecian strand:

and shed the weariness and pain
of old Ulysses on the shore
and knew his joy and laught again
because the Princess played once more

The ragged edges of the tide
run up the beach and break in white
its hurried crying will not cease
throughout the night.

If we could be insistent so
and beat against the shores of wrong
and never cease there were no need
for my dull song.

6th July

234

The black land lies between me and the sun
the gilded water hurries restless by
and I whose manhood is but half begun
regard it with a loving critic eye.

When I was young I thought the sea a home
for sunland tattood men with bearded lips:
their hearthstone was the round white with wind
blown foam:
they lived and died within their swaying ships

The passing years have shewn the pith of truth
in that quaint childish fantasy of mine...

I know a man who sacrifict his youth
because of the enchantment of the brine

13th July.

235

Why sing we of the long ago
to doleful lute and sorrowing?
The future spreads its ample wing
the Present bids us rise and go.

For what new epics lie ahead?
what noble tales and golden deeds?
What dramas on sublimer meads
will be plaid out when we are dead?

and shall we not have heart to sing
luring men to that kinder day
as thrushes in the snowy may
announce the summer's blossoming?

Irishman

With equal largesse spends the sun,
an equal system sways the seas
and shall man prove the foolish one
to break the law that masters these?

Shall we profane attempt to bind
our fellows in unequal yoke?
O hasten lest too late we find
Sun, stars, and seas, their laws revoke.

Sometimes in verse I run a tilt
with grim injustice of my kind
and scold and blame since Earth's not built
in pattern pleasing to my mind.

Such weeds of song must surely wilt:
they seldom linger in my mind.
O give instead the happy lilt
of singing skylarks in the wind.

13th July (completed 17th)

238

Rondel

When I am gone the sun will rise
The sky will blossom with the dawn
and men will view new mysteries
when I am gone.

The moon, despite Endymion
still casts a spell o'er lover's eyes
tho she is cold and heartless stone.

So poets cry their feeble cries
each in his narrow cell alone
nor will they end their tuneful lies
When I am gone.

13th-17th July

239

Summer Noon

We have not sung the sun enough:
we long have oversung the moon.
O where is the heart that tired of love
in one short summer afternoon.

Men grasp too easily the delight
found in the silver of the moon
yet hardly can they spell aright
the splendor of the afternoon.

The heart grows weary of the cold
dream subtle mysteries of the moon
O give instead the crowded gold
of one long summer afternoon.

Dull Wordsworth in his dreary prose
has told how glory passes by:
the ~~noons~~ morns gold splendor fades to
before life manhood's even sky.

But I eccentric to the end
find poetry in twilight's grey
and scorn the lie dull Wordsworth
in wording wonder of each day

My heart rejoices in the commonplace
and I insist with vigor on the true.
My face I see in every workman's face
and in the eyes of children my delight.

I moralise on each small circumstance
and label this and that by what it seems.
For how else may men mock at Time & Chance
and light a beacon in this mist o' dreams

17th July

242

Sonnet.

The weary sun drags slowly down the sky
its flanks besmeared with bloody streaks of
a wounded lion shaking its gold he
~~too~~ faint to feel its fading majesty

Yon swarm of clouds that gathers hastily
and omnious, does see the creature st
are jackals that will feast when he is
and sleek full gorged with their glutton

But now the sunset strikes the smoky To
the fancy charges and I dream again
of that old Inca's city of renown
my bearded fathers sought to rape from S
O shall a night like this come rushing do
to darken all the glow of Britain's R

th July

243

Evening

Nine tilted stacks upon a gentle hill:
The fragrance of the hay warm in the night:
Brown dusty moths flit round the window sill
and dim stars rise and glimmer with faint light.

The sky is full of hoarse riot homing birds:
a motor's lamps flash round a distant bend
and soon are lost in shadows. These frail words
can hardly tell the joy at twilights' end.

20th July

244

The Road to Ballytober

You may trudge from Larne to Carrick 'neath the silver harvest
or thread the Nine Glens' wonder in the undark nights o'
but the best of Antrim highways and one that you must
is the road to Ballytober in the long days of July

When I walk the city pavements where streetlamps splash their
I feel them thin my bootsoles and I know I'm growing
but my heart grows light with laughter and there's courage in
on the road to Ballytober in the long days of July

I recall the wind wrecked roses and the hidden meadow
the sheepbells on the hillside, and the march lambs' timid bl
and it's sadly now I'm thinking 'neath this barr
alien
of the road to Ballytober in the long days of

245

who knows but at the end of time when each one goes his way
the king, the clown, the dreamer and the common man of clay
I shall stumble up to Heaven thro' God's barley fields of rye
by the road from Ballytober in the long days of July.

22nd. July

246

Afternoon Shower

The air is washt and shining clean;
the clouds are rent apart;
the grass puts on a fresher green
as tho' Spring touchd her heart.

The waning smell of day receives
a kindling warmth and heat:
the raindrops glitter down the leaves
and shake the meadowsweet.

A late defiant crowing cock
shouts out his glee again
as tho his spirit bade him mock
the now defeated rain.

23rd July

247

Tho' the heart of man be broken
a lasting beauty is wrought
when the unspeakable is spoken
and the unthinkable is thought.

As Christ kenn'd in and lonely
found in Gethsemane
on a moonless night Time's only
austere serenity.

Of death I no more realise
the ultimate and inner core
than weary eyes
that straining fail to see the shore

One died and left me dazzled friend
as when a glaring ~~motors light~~ car of night
rounds a sharp bend
and leaves you darker for its light

O is there any comfort then
for the shy proud hearts of dream dazed men?

Is peace reserved and solace kept
for those in common life adept?
those minds that are content enough
to love the things their fellows love?

24th July

250

Two tiny tubs
that wallowed past
each with a star
on the tip of her mast . . . .

Coal dusty, grimed,
long side the quay
Tomorrow where's
your Poetry ? . .

25th

351

Splendid mystery.

A young man went in a waste place
unutterably mad with pride :
the magic did not leave his face
until he died.

Since then the splendid mystery,
the innocent and glorious,
hangs on a warped and withered tree
remote from us.

Where no man pastures his cattle
and where no shepherds tread
we bore the breaker of battle
to the long glen's windy head.

Over the land he was lord of
we raised him high and supreme
and by him we laid his sword of
glory lest death's but a dream.

I will go where the high trees touch
their swaying branches in the air
and little knotty fingers clutch
and drag dreamtangled in my hair,

making me almost absalom
in the low twilight where the stream
in its rough warfare overcome
glides patiently as in a dream.

25th July

254

Koran

See how the rolling hills unfolds
their broad prayer mat of green and gold
whilst the Sun, that muezzin,
bids us our worship to begin
before the pagan night's white star
engages us in holy war.

21st July

255

Lyric from scene written for
R. W. Fisher's "Dairmid and Grania"

Take in thy white hawthorn hand
this little spool of mystery:
strike thrice this white peeled osier wand
and set our weary shadows free;
for the body with no shadow is the body
that is free

And when men know as much as this then
they shall be as we . . .

31st July

256.

O one may feel the country's call, the
beckoning of road and sky, the tumu
of the waterfall, the little noises of the s
and delicate inhabitants of earth and sky

And one may be compeld to go because th
mandate of the sea throbs in his heart's d
ebb and flow continually ... continua
bidding him seek the sanctuary of the se

But city sick I come again to live
beneath a darkened sky among a
multitude of men to work and fight
and talk and cry against difficul
times beneath a louring sky ...

March: 38
April: 30
May: 65
June: 33
July: 32.
198

Here end the Poems written
between Easter and August the
first nineteen twenty eight

also { August 19.
which are in the fore part of { September 23
the Book. St.

