

**Classic Poetry Series**

**Padraic Colum  
- poems -**

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# Padraic Colum(8 December 1881 – 11 January 1972)

an Irish poet, novelist, dramatist, biographer, playwright, children's author and collector of folklore. He was one of the leading figures of the Celtic Revival.

## Early life

Colum was born Patrick Collumb in a County Longford workhouse, where his father worked. He was the first of eight children born to Patrick and Susan Collumb. When the father lost his job in 1889, he moved to the United States to participate in the Colorado gold rush. Padraic and his mother and siblings remained in Ireland. When the father returned in 1892, the family moved to Glasthule, near Dublin, where his father was employed as Assistant Manager at Sandycove and Glasthule railway station. His son attended the local national school.

When Susan Collumb died in 1897, the family was temporarily split up. Padraic (as he would be known) and one brother remained in Dublin, while their father and remaining children moved back to Longford. Colum finished school the following year and at the age of seventeen, he passed an exam for and was awarded a clerkship in the Irish Railway Clearing House. He stayed in this job until 1903.

During this period, Colum started to write and met a number of the leading Irish writers of the time, including W. B. Yeats, Lady Gregory and Æ. He also joined the Gaelic League and was a member of the first board of the Abbey Theatre. He became a regular user of the National Library of Ireland, where he met James Joyce and the two became lifelong friends. During the riots caused by the Abbey Theatre's production of *The Playboy of the Western World*, Colum, with Arthur Griffith, was the leader of those inciting the protests, which, as he later remarked, cost him his friendship with Yeats.

He collected Irish folk songs, including the famous *She Moved Through the Fair*, for which Colum wrote most of the words, with the musicologist Herbert Hughes. He was awarded a five year scholarship to University College Dublin by a wealthy American benefactor, Thomas Kelly.

## Early poetry and plays

He was awarded a prize by Cumann na nGaedheal for his anti-enlistment play, *The Saxon Shillin'*. Through his plays he became involved with the National

Theatre Society and became involved in the founding of the Abbey Theatre, writing several of its early productions. His play, *Broken Sail* (revised as *The Fiddler's House*) (1903) was performed by the Irish Literary Theatre. *The Land* (1905), was one of that theatre's first great public successes. He wrote another important play for the Abbey named *Thomas Muskerry* (1910).

His earliest published poems appeared in *The United Irishman*, a paper edited by Arthur Griffith. His first book, *Wild Earth* (1907) collected many of these poems and was dedicated to Æ. He published several poems in Arthur Griffith's paper, *The United Irishman* this time, with *The Poor Scholar* bringing him to the attention of WB Yeats. He became a friend of Yeats and Lady Gregory. In 1908, he wrote an introduction to the *Everyman's Library* edition of Edgar Allan Poe's *Tales of Mystery and Imagination*.

In 1911, with Mary Gunning Maguire, a fellow student from UCD, and David Houston and Thomas MacDonagh, he founded the short-lived literary journal *The Irish Review*, which published work by Yeats, George Moore, Oliver St John Gogarty, and many other leading Revival figures.

In 1912 he married Maguire, who was working at Patrick Pearse's experimental school, St Enda's, Rathfarnham, County Dublin. At first the couple lived in the Dublin suburb of Donnybrook, where they held a regular Tuesday literary salon. They then moved to Howth, a small fishing village just to the north of the capital. In 1914, they traveled to the USA for what was intended to be a visit of a few months but lasted eight years.

#### Later life and work

In America, Colum took up children's writing and published a number of collections of stories for children, beginning with *The King of Ireland's Son* (1916). This book came about when Colum started translating an Irish folk tale from Gaelic because he did not want to forget the language; After it was published in the *New York Tribune*, Hungarian Illustrator Willy Pógany suggested the possibility of a book collaboration, so Colum wove the folktale into a long, epic story.

Three of his books for children were awarded retrospective citations for the Newbery Honor. A contract for children's literature with Macmillan Publishers made him financially secure for the rest of his life. Some other books he wrote are *The Adventure of Odysseus* (1918) and *The Children of Odin* (1920). These works are important for bringing classical literature to children.

In 1922 he was commissioned to write versions of Hawaiian folklore for young people. This resulted in the publication of three volumes of his versions of tales from the island. First editions of this work were presented to US president Barack Obama by Taoiseach Enda Kenny on the occasion of his visit to Dublin, Ireland on 23 May 2011. Colum also started writing novels. These include *Castle Conquer* (1923) and *The Flying Swans* (1937). The Columns spent the years from 1930 to 1933 living in Paris and Nice, where Padraic renewed his friendship with James Joyce and became involved in the transcription of *Finnegans Wake*.

After their time in France, the couple moved to New York City, where they both did some teaching at Columbia University and CCNY. Colum was a prolific author and published a total of 61 books, not counting his plays. He adopted the form of Noh drama in his later plays. Molly died in 1957 and Pádraic finished *Our Friend James Joyce*, which they had worked on together before her death. It was published in 1958. Colum divided his later years between the United States and Ireland. In 1961 the Catholic Library Association awarded him the Regina Medal. He died in Enfield, Connecticut, aged 90, and was buried in St. Fintan's Cemetery, Sutton.

Asked how to say his name, he told *The Literary Digest* the last name was the same as the word column. "In my first name, the first a has the sound of au. The ordinary pronunciation in Irish is pau'drig." (Charles Earle Funk, *What's the Name, Please?*, Funk & Wagnalls, 1936.)

# A Ballad Maker

ONCE I loved a maiden fair,  
Over the hills and jar away,  
Lands she had and lovers to spare,  
Over the hills and far away.  
And I was stooped and troubled sore,  
And my face was pale, and the coat I wore  
Was thin as my supper the night before  
Over the hills and far away.

Once I passed in the Autumn late,  
Over the hills and jar away,  
Her bawn and barn and painted gate,  
Over the hills and jar away.  
She was leaning there in the twilight space,  
Sweet sorrow was on her fair young face,  
And her wistful eyes were away from the place,  
Over the hills and jar away.

Maybe she thought as she watched me come,  
Over the hills and jar away,  
With my awkward stride and my face so glum,  
Over the hills and jar away.  
Spite of his stoop, he still is young,  
They say he goes the Shee among,  
Ballads he makes; I've heard them sung  
Over the hills and jar away.

She gave me good-night in gentle wise,  
Over the hills and jar away,  
Shyly lifting to mine, dark eyes,  
Over the hills and jar away.  
What could I do but stop and speak,  
And she no longer proud, but meek?  
She plucked me a rose like her wild-rose cheek-  
Over the hills and jar away.

To-morrow Mavourneen a sleeveen weds,  
Over the hills and jar away,  
With corn in haggard and cattle in sheds,

Over the hills and jar away.  
And I who have lost her, the dear, the rare-  
Well, I got me this ballad to sing at the fair,  
Twill bring enough money to drown my care,  
Over the hills and jar away.

Padraic Colum

# A Connachtman

IT'S my fear that my wake won't be quiet,  
Nor my wake house a silent place :  
For who would keep back the hundreds  
Who would touch my breast and my face?

For the good men were always my friends,  
From Galway back into Clare;  
In strength, in sport, and in spending,  
I was foremost at the fair;

In music, in song, and in friendship,  
In contests by night and by day,  
By all who knew it was given to me  
That I bore the branch away.

Now let Manus Joyce, my friend  
(If he be at all in the place),  
Make smooth the boards of the coffin  
They will put above my face.

The old men will have their stories  
Of all the deeds in my days,  
And the young men will stand by the coffin,  
And be sure and clear in my praise.

But the girls will stay near the door,  
And they'll have but little to say:  
They'll bend their heads, the young girls,  
And for a while they will pray.

And, going home in the dawning,  
They'll be quiet with the boys;  
The girls will walk together,  
And seldom they'll lift the voice;

And then, between daybreak and dark,  
And between the hill and the sea,  
Three women, come down from the mountain,  
Will raise the keel over me.

But 'tis my grief that I will not hear  
When the cuckoo cries in Glenart,  
That the wind that lifts when the sails are loosed,  
Will never lift my heart.

Padraic Colum



# A Cradle Song

O men from the fields,  
Come gently within.  
Tread softly, softly  
O men coming in!  
Mavourneen is going  
From me and from you,  
Where Mary will fold him  
With mantle of blue!  
From reek of the smoke  
And cold of the floor  
And the peering of things  
Across the half-door.  
O men of the fields,  
Soft, softly come thro'  
Mary puts round him  
Her mantle of blue.

Padraic Colum

# A Drover

To Meath of the pastures,  
From wet hills by the sea,  
Through Leitrim and Longford  
Go my cattle and me.  
I hear in the darkness  
Their slipping and breathing.  
I name them the bye-ways  
They're to pass without heeding.  
Then the wet, winding roads,  
Brown bogs with black water;  
And my thoughts on white ships  
And the King o' Spain's daughter.  
O! farmer, strong farmer!  
You can spend at the fair  
But your face you must turn  
To your crops and your care.  
And soldiers—red soldiers!  
You've seen many lands;  
But you walk two by two,  
And by captain's commands.  
O! the smell of the beasts,  
The wet wind in the morn;  
And the proud and hard earth  
Never broken for corn;  
And the crowds at the fair,  
The herds loosened and blind,  
Loud words and dark faces  
And the wild blood behind.  
(O! strong men with your best  
I would strive breast to breast  
I could quiet your herds  
With my words, with my words.)  
I will bring you, my kine,  
Where there's grass to the knee;  
But you'll think of scant croppings  
Harsh with salt of the sea.

Padraic Colum

# A Mountaineer

ERE Beowulf's song  
Was heard from the ships,  
Ere Roland had set  
The horn to his lips:

In Ogham strokes  
A name was writ:  
That name his name  
Lives in yet.

The strokes on the edge  
Of the stone might count  
The acres he has  
On this bare mount;

But he remembers  
The pillar-stone,  
And knows that he is  
Of the seed of Eoin.

Padraic Colum

# A Poor Scholar Of The 'Forties

MY eyelids red and heavy arc  
With bending o'er the smold'ring peat.  
I know the Aeneid now by heart,  
My Virgil read in cold and heat,  
In loneliness and hunger smart.  
And I know Homer, too, I ween,  
As Munster poets know Ossian.

And I must walk this road that winds  
Twixt bog and bog, while east there lies  
A city with its men and books;  
With treasures open to the wise,  
Heart-words from equals, comrade-looks;  
Down here they have but tale and song,  
They talk Repeal the whole night long.

'You teach Greek verbs and Latin nouns,'  
The dreamer of Young Ireland said,  
'You do not hear the muffled call,  
The sword being forged, the far-off tread  
Of hosts to meet as Gael and Gall  
What good to us your wisdom-store,  
Your Latin verse, your Grecian lore?'  
And what to me is Gael or Gall?  
Less than the Latin or the Greek  
I teach these by the dim rush-light  
In smoky cabins night and week.  
But what avail my teaching slight?  
Years hence, in rustic speech, a phrase,  
As in wild earth a Grecian vase!

Padraic Colum

# A Rann Of Exile

NOR right, nor left, nor any road I see a comrade face,  
Nor word to lift the heart in me I hear in any place;  
They leave me, who pass by me, to my loneliness and  
care,  
Without a house to draw my step nor a fire that I might share!

Ochone, before our people knew the scatt'ring of the  
dearth,  
Before they saw potatoes rot and melt black in the earth,  
I might have stood in Connacht, on the top of Cruchmaelinn,  
And all around me I would see the hundreds of my  
kin.

Padraic Colum

# A Saint

THE stir of children with fresh dresses on,  
And men who meet and say unguarded words,  
And women from the coops  
Of drudgeries released;

And standing at their doors to watch go by  
Small pomps with pennons and with first spring-flowers,  
And, lifted over them,  
Your name that sanctifies.

But you, when you came here, it was to front  
Hard-handed men, and trouble them for dues  
To stay the fatherless  
Portion of what they ploughed.

To claim resource from them whose own resource  
Was pittance this you came here to do,  
And give for what you gained  
Your season of bright youth:

The hunt upon the mountain-side, the dance  
Down in the vale; the whisper at the door;  
Kiss on unstaying lips  
That afterwards would stay;

Music you could have made would make our land  
Of noble note and join our different breeds,  
And make your name endeared  
On roadside and in hall.

All this was changed, as when the warm stream  
Setting through ocean toward vine-bearing isles,  
Turns its flow toward capes  
Where heather only thrives.

That day that was of battles and hard pledges  
Has all been changed into this whitened morn-  
Music and holiday,  
And benediction bells.



# A Seer

'BELOW there are white-faced throngs,  
Their march is a tide coming Higher;  
Below there are white-faced throngs,  
Their faith is a banner flung higher;  
Below there are white-faced throngs,  
White swords they have yet, but red songs;  
Place and lot they have lost hear you not?  
For a dream you once dreamed and forgot!'

'But a dream has a life of its own  
The wizard seas it can cross  
A dream has a life of its own  
It comes like the albatross.  
A dream has a life of its own,  
From my feet to your feet it has flown  
And you, you victorious  
That wild, white thing will lose!'

Padraic Colum



# Achill Girl's Song

FROM THE IRISH

I'd bring you these for dowry  
A field from heather free,  
White sheep upon the mountain,  
And calves that follow me.

I saw you by the well-side  
Upon Saint Finnian's Day;  
I thought you'd come and ask for me  
But you kept far away.

Oh, if you ask not for me,  
But leave me here instead,  
The petticoat in dye-pot here  
Will never fast its red

For me upon the well-slope  
To wear on Finnian's Day  
My dress will be the sheet bleached there,  
My place, below the clay!

Padraic Colum

# Across The Door

THE fiddles were playing and playing,  
The couples were out on the floor;  
From converse and dancing he drew me,  
And across the door.

Ah! strange were the dim, wide meadows,  
And strange was the cloud-strewn sky,  
And strange in the meadows the corncrakes,  
And they making cry!

The hawthorn bloom was by us,  
Around us the breath of the south  
White hawthorn, strange in the night-time  
His kiss on my mouth!

Padraic Colum

# An Drinaun Donn

A HUNDRED men think I am theirs when with them I  
drink ale,  
But their presence fades away from me and their high spirits fail  
When I think upon your converse kind by the meadow  
and the linn,  
And your form smoother than the silk on the Mountain of O'Flynn.

Oh, Paddy, is it pain to you that I'm wasting night and day,  
And, Paddy, is it grief to you that I'll soon be in the clay?  
My first love with the winning mouth, my treasure you'll abide,  
Till the narrow coffin closes me and the grass grows through my side.

The man who strains to leap the wall, we think him  
foolish still,  
When to his hand is the easy ditch to vault across at will;  
The rowan tree is fine and high, but bitter its berries grow,  
While blackberries and raspberries are on shrubs that blossom low.

Farewell, farewell, forever, to yon town amongst the trees;  
Farewell, the town that draws me on mornings and on  
eves.  
Oh, many's the ugly morass now, and many's the crooked  
road,  
That lie henceforth between me and where my heart's  
bestowed.

And Mary, Ever Virgin, where will I turn my head!  
I know not where his house is built, nor where his fields are spread.  
Ah, kindly was the counsel that my kinsfolk gave to me,  
'The hundred twists are in his heart, and the thousand tricks has he.'

Padraic Colum

# An Idyll

You stay for a while beside me with your beauty young and rare,  
Though your light limbs are as limber as the foal's that follows the mare;  
Brow fair and young and tender where thought has scarce begun,  
Hair bright as the breast of the eagle when he strains up to the sun!

In the space of a broken castle I found you on a day  
When the call of the new-come cuckoo went with me all the way,  
You stood by un-mortised stones that were rough and black with age,  
The fawn beloved of the hunter in the panther's broken cage!

And we went down together by paths your childhood knew,  
Remote you went beside me like the spirit of the dew,  
Hard were the hedgerows still, sloe-bloom was their scanty dower,  
You slipped it within your bosom, the bloom that scarce is flower!

And now you stay beside me with your beauty young and rare,  
Though your light limbs are as limber as the foal's that follows the mare,  
Brow fair and young and tender where thought has scarce begun,  
Hair bright as the breast of the eagle when he strains up to the sun!

Padraic Colum

# An Old Song Re-Sung

As I went down through Dublin city  
At the hour of twelve of the night,  
Who did I see but a Spanish lady  
Washing her feet by candle light.  
First she washed them,  
Then she dried them,  
All by a fire of amber coals,  
In all my life I never did see  
A maid so neat about the soles.

I asked her would she come a-walking,  
And we went on where the small bats flew,  
A coach I called then to instate her,  
And on we went till the grey cocks crew.  
Combs of amber  
In her hair were,  
And her eyes had every spell,  
In all my life I never did see  
A maid whom I could love so well.

But when I came to where I found her,  
And set her down from the halted coach,  
Who was there waiting, his arms folded,  
But that fatal swordsman, Tiger Roache?  
Then blades were out,  
And 'twas thrust and cut,  
And never wrist gave me more affright,  
Till I lay low upon the floor  
Where she stood holding the candle light.

But, O ye bucks of Dublin city,  
If I should see at twelve of the night,  
In any chamber, such lovely lady  
Washing her feet by candle light,  
And drying o'er  
Soles neat as hers,  
All by a fire of amber coal  
Your blades be dimmed! I'd whisper her,  
And take her for a midnight stroll!

Padraic Colum

# An Old Woman Of The Roads

O, to have a little house!  
To own the hearth and stool and all!  
The heaped up sods against the fire,  
The pile of turf against the wall!

To have a clock with weights and chains  
And pendulum swinging up and down!  
A dresser filled with shining delph,  
Speckled and white and blue and brown!

I could be busy all the day  
Clearing and sweeping hearth and floor,  
And fixing on their shelf again  
My white and blue and speckled store!

I could be quiet there at night  
Beside the fire and by myself,  
Sure of a bed and loth to leave  
The ticking clock and the shining delph!

Och! but I'm weary of mist and dark,  
And roads where there's never a house nor bush,  
And tired I am of bog and road,  
And the crying wind and the lonesome hush!

And I am praying to God on high,  
And I am praying Him night and day,  
For a little house - a house of my own  
Out of the wind's and the rain's way.

Padraic Colum

# Aquarium Fish

MOULD-COLOURED like the leaf long fallen from  
The autumn branch, he rises now, the Fish.  
The cold eyes of the gannets see their rock:  
He has No-whither. Who was it marked  
Earth from the waters? Who  
Divided space into such lines for us,  
Giving men To and Fro, not Up and Down?  
This dweller in the ancient element  
Knows Space's cross-road. Who  
Closed up the Depth to us? He rises now  
Mould-coloured like the leaf long fallen from  
The autumn branch, with eyes that are like lamps  
Magicians fill with oils from dead men ta'en,  
Most rootless of all beings, the Fish.

Padraic Colum



# Arab Songs

## I. THE PARROT AND THE FALCON

MY Afghan poet-friend

With this made his message end,

'The scroll around my wall shows two the poets have known

The parrot and falcon they

The parrot hangs on his spray,

And silent the falcon sits with brooding and baleful eyes.

Men come to me : one says

'We have given your verses praise,

And we will keep your name abreast of the newer names;

But you must make what accords

With poems that are household words

Your own: write familiar things; to your hundred add a score.'

My friend, they would bestow

Fame for a shadow-show,

And they would pay with praise for things dead as last year's leaves.

But I look where the parrot, stilled,

Hangs a head with rumours filled,

And I watch where my falcon turns her brooding and baleful eyes!

Come to my shoulder! Sit!

To the bone be your talons knit!

I have sworn my friends shall have no parrot-speech from me;

Who reads the verse I write

Shall know the falcon's flight,

The vision single and sure, the conquest of air and sun!

Is there aught else worthy to weave within your banners' folds?

Is there aught else worthy to grave on the blades of your naked swords?'

## II. UMIMAH

Saadi, the Poet, stood up and he put forth his living words;

His songs were the hurtling of spears, and his figures the flashing of swords'

With hearts dilated the tribe saw the creature of Saadi's mind:

It was like to the horse of a king a creature of fire and of wind!

Umimah, my loved one, was by me; without love did these eyes see my fawn,

And if fire there were in her being, for me its splendour was gone:

When the sun storms up on the tent it makes waste the fire of the grass:  
It was thus with my loved one's beauty the splendour of song made it pass!

The desert, the march, and the onset these, and these only avail;  
Hands hard with the handling of spear-shafts, brows white with the press of the  
mail'

And as for the kisses of women these are honey, the poet sings,  
But the honey of kisses, beloved it is lime for the spirit's wings!

### III. THE GADFLY

Ye know not why God hath joined the horse-fly unto the horse,  
Nor why the generous steed should be yoked with the poisonous fly:  
Lest the steed should sink into ease and lose his fervour of limb,  
God hath bestowed on him this a lustful and venomous bride!

Never supine lie they, the steeds of our folk, to the sting,  
Praying for deadness of nerve with wounds the shame of the sun:  
They strive, but they strive for this the fullness of passionate nerve;  
They pant, but they pant for this the speed that outstrips the pain!

Sons of the Dust, ye have stung there is darkness upon my soul!  
Sons of the Dust, ye have stung yea, stung to the roots of my heart!  
But I have said in my breast the birth succeeds to the pang,  
And, Sons of the Dust, behold your malice becomes my song!

Padraic Colum

# Asses

'I KNOW where I'd get  
An ass that would do,  
If I had the money  
A pound or two.'

Said a ragged man  
To my uncle one day;  
He got the money  
And went on his way.

And after that time  
In market or fair  
I'd look at the asses  
That might be there.

And wonder what kind  
Of an ass would do  
For a ragged man  
With a pound or two.

O the black and roan horses the street would fill,  
Their manes and tails streaming, and they standing still,

And their owners, the men of estate, would be there,  
Refusing gold guineas for a colt or a mare.

And one, maybe, riding up and down like a squire  
So that buyers from Dublin might see and admire

The hunter or racer come to be sold  
And be willing and ready to pay out their gold.

With men slouching beside them and buyers not near  
It's no wonder the asses held down head and ear.

They had been sold or in by-ways bought  
For a few half-crowns tied up in a knot,

And no one so poor as to buy one might come

To that fair that had horses so well prized at home!

And then it fell out  
That at Arva or Scrabbey,  
At some down-county fair,  
Or Mohill or Abbey,

On two asses I happened  
Without duress or dole  
They were there in the market,  
A dam and her foal.

And the owner, a woman,  
Did not slouch or stand,  
But in her cart sitting  
Was as grand as the grand;

Like a queen out of Connacht  
From her toe to her tip,  
Like proud Crania Uaile  
On the deck of her ship.

And her hair 'twas a mane:  
The blackberries growing  
Out of the hedge-rows  
Have the sheen it was showing,

There kind was with kind  
Like the flowers in the grasses  
If the owner was fine,  
As fine were her asses.

White, white was the mother  
As a dusty white road;  
Black on back and on shoulders  
The cross-marking showed.

She was tall she could carry  
A youth stout of limb,  
Or bear down from her mountain  
The bride decked for him!

Such was the mother  
The foal's hide was brown,  
All fleecy and curly,  
And soft like bog-down;

And it nuzzled its mother,  
Its head to her knee,  
And blue were its eyes  
Like the pools of the sea!

Then I thought all the silver  
My uncle could draw  
Might not pay for the creatures  
That that day I saw;

And I thought that old Damer,  
Who had troughs made of gold,  
Could not pay for the asses,  
The young and the old.

And I think of them still  
When I see on the roads  
Asses unyoked,  
And asses with loads;

One running and trotting,  
With harness loose,  
And a man striking and hitting  
Where his stick has use;

And one with a hide  
Like a patched-on sack  
And two creels of turf  
Upon its back;

And one in the market,  
Meek and brown,  
Its head to the cart-shafts  
That are down;

Eating its forage

A wisp of hay;  
In the dust of the highway  
Munching away;

Unmarked in the market  
As might be a mouse  
Behind a low stool  
In a quiet house

Then I think of the pair  
Horses might not surpass  
The dam and her foal,  
The white ass and brown ass.

Padraic Colum

# At Cashel

ABOVE me stand, worn from their ancient use,  
The King's, the Bishop's, and the Warrior's house,  
Quiet as folds upon a grassy knoll:  
Stark-grey they stand, wall joined to ancient wall,  
Chapel, and Castle, and Cathedral.

It is not they are old, but stone by stone  
Into another lifetime they have grown,  
The life of memories an old man has:  
They dream upon what things have come to pass,  
And know that stones grow friendly with the grass.

The name has crumbled CASHEL that has come  
From conqueror-challenging CASTELLUM  
Walls in a name! No citadel is here,  
Now as a fane the empty walls uprear  
Where green and greener grass spreads far and near!

Padraic Colum

# Ave Atque Vale

THOROUGH waters, thorough nations I have come  
To lay last offerings at your low abode,  
Brother, and to appeal  
To ashes that were you.

Since that which none can check has borne you  
From my regard, poor brother, these gifts take  
The tokens that are due  
To ancient pieties;

But find them washed with tears, the many tears  
A brother shed; and now I say Farewell  
Henceforth and for all time,  
Hail, brother, and Farewell!

Padraic Colum



# Bat

IN broad daylight  
He should not be:  
Yet toward and froward,  
Froward and toward  
He weaves a flight.  
Who will guide him back to his cave,  
A little Bat astray,  
Where he'll rest on the breast of night,  
Away from day's bright miscreation?  
The linnet throbs through the air,  
The magpie coquettes with day,  
The rook caws 'Time to be gone,'  
And travels on;  
While toward and froward,  
Froward and toward,  
The Bat ... a fathom  
Of flight . . . weaves.

Padraic Colum

## Before The Fair

'Lost,' 'lost,' the beeves and the bullocks,  
The cattle men sell and buy,  
Crowded upon the fair green,  
Low to the lightless sky.

'Live,' 'live,' and 'Here,' 'here,' the blackbird  
From the top of the bare ash-tree,  
Over the acres whistles  
With beak of yellow blee.

And climbing, turning, and climbing  
His little stair of sound,  
'Content,' 'content,' from the low hedge  
The redbreast sings in a round.

And I who hear that hedge-song  
Will fare with all the rest,  
With thoughts of lust and labour,  
And bargain in my breast.

The bare hedge bright with rain-drops  
That have not fallen down,  
The golden-crowded whin-bush  
Nor know these things my own!

Padraic Colum

# Bird Of Paradise

WITH sapphire for her crown,  
And with the Libyan wine  
For lustre of her eyes;  
With azure on her feet  
As though she trod the skies;  
Then iris for her vest,  
Rose, ebony, and flame  
(The bird that Camoens  
Won for his golden lay),  
She lives a thing enthralled.  
In forests that are old,  
As old as is the Moon.

Padraic Colum

# Bison

How great a front is thine  
A lake of majesty!  
Assyria knew the sign  
The god-incarnate king!

A lake of majesty  
The lion's drowns in it!  
And thy placidity  
A moon within that lake!

As if thou still dost own  
A world, thou takest breath  
Earth-shape and strength of stone,  
A Titan-sultan's child!

Padraic Colum

# Blades

SOJOURNER, set down  
Your skimming wheel;  
Nothing is sharp  
That we have of steel:  
Nothing has edge:  
Oh, whirl around  
Your wheel of stone  
Till our blades be ground!

Harshly, quickly, under blades  
Hafted with horn and wood and bone  
Went the wheel:  
Narrow long knives that should be one edge,  
House-knives that sliced the loaf to the heel,  
And scraped scales off mackerel,  
And weighty knives that were shaped like a wedge-  
Stone wakened keenness in their steel:  
Knives with which besom-makers pare  
Their heather-stalks, and hawkers' blades  
Used by men of a dozen trades;  
Broad-bladed knives that cut bacon-sides,  
And stumpy knives for cobblers' hides,  
With hunters' knives that were thinned with wear:-  
All were brought to,  
All were laid on,  
All were ground by  
The Sojourner's wheel.

And those who filled the market-square  
Saw hand and eye upon their ware  
That were well schooled and scrupulous  
To spend upon that task their use.  
But sparks came from the eyes and met  
The sparks that were from the edges whet  
As eagerly and wittingly  
The dullness of each blade scoured he,  
And the brow he bent was like a stone.

Over the grinding-stone he sang,

'The dalesman's sword shall make you fear,  
And the dirk in the grasp of the mountaineer,  
likewise the pirate's blue cutlass  
have left your blades long edgeless!'  
the men were thinking of games of cards,  
the looks of the boys were turned towards  
corner where they played pitch and toss,  
the women thought of the herring across  
tongs to roast where pot-hooks hang,  
ready and unforward men have no right to any lien  
the gifts of Tubal Cain,  
The gifts of our father, Tubal Cain!'

But no one drew meaning from the song  
As he made an equal edge along  
One side of the blade and the other one,  
And polished the surface till it shone.

'Now leave a blessing on what you have done.'

'For what I have done I take my fee,  
But no blessing I leave on it,' said he,  
'Everybody knows,  
Everybody knows

That the knife-grinder  
No blessing bestows.'

Then the market-place, with wheel a-pack,  
He left, and the men to their cards went back  
And talked of a bird in the cocker's loft;  
And of liming linnets beside the croft  
The boys told between pitch and toss;  
And the women laid the herring across  
The tongs to roast for a sloven's meal.

And he went out beside the Peel  
Tower, and through Saint Selskar's Gate,  
Heading at a hearty rate  
Towards the hilltops and the shades.

And three who brought back sharpened blades

To their fathers' stalls by the Tan-yard Side,  
And then stayed while a blackbird cried  
Quietly by their groundsills  
The butcher's daughter,  
The cobbler's daughter,  
The hawker's daughter,  
Were lost on the hills!

Padraic Colum

# Branding The Foals

WHY do I look for fire to brand these foals?  
What do I need, when all within is fire?  
And lo, she comes, carrying the lighted coals  
And branding tool—she who is my desire!  
What need have I for what is in her hands,  
If I lay hand upon a hide it brands,  
And grass, and trees, and shadows, all are fire!

Padraic Colum



# Breffne Caoinc

NOT as a woman of the English weeping over a lord of the  
English

Do I weep—

A cry that scarcely stirs the heart!

I lament as it is in my blood to lament—

Castle and stronghold are broken,

And the sovereign of the land beside the lake lies dead

Mahon O'Reilly!

In his day the English were broken:

I weep beside Loch Sheelin and the day is long and grey!

Padraic Colum

# Condors

## I. CONDORS FLYING

WE watched the Condors winging towards the Moon,  
A Moon that glimmered in the blue daylight;  
Around us were the Andes, and beyond  
Andes, the Ocean, empty like the Moon.  
I heard you speak in Atahualpa's tongue:  
Then distances grew present; all the range  
Of Condors' wings between my thought, your thought:  
As though they had transcended need for wings,  
We watched the Condors winging towards the Moon.

## II. CONDORS IN THE JARDIN DES PLANTES

To sink into the depths we need take weights-  
Put on such armour as our divers use;  
To rise above the fathomed we must bear  
Weights, and you are weighted for emprise  
Of rising to where flows the thinnest air,  
And here beneath our towers you roost and run,  
And trail your wings. I think I know your pain,  
Your pain and weariness!  
Like divers are ye that perpetually,  
Plated in metal, make circuit about  
Where some sidereal gesture has withdrawn  
The tides, the main-  
Condors with shuttered, iron-heavy wings!

Padraic Colum

# Crane

I KNOW you, Crane:  
I, too, have waited,  
Waited until my heart  
Melted to little pools around my feet!

Comer in the morning ere the crows,  
Shunner,  
Searcher  
Something find for me!  
The pennies that were laid upon the eyes  
Of old, wise men I knew.

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The Little Fox  
THAT sidling creature is a little Fox:  
Like other canine he is leashed and led;  
He goes upon the sidewalk; houses tower;  
Men trample; horses rear; he drags his leash.

Did not I  
Once know a lad from Irrus where they leave  
Mittens for foxes; where they invite  
A fox to a child's christening; where they have  
Foxes as gossips to their boys and girls?

Would that a lad from Irrus now was here  
To tell his gossip that a human creature  
Has heart for him, and fain would cover up  
His bowels of dread, and find some way to bring  
His rainy hills around him, the soft grass,  
Darkness of ragged hedges, and his earth  
The black, damp earth under the roots of trees!  
Would that a lad from Irrus now was here  
Where houses tower and where horses rear!

Padraic Colum

# Crows

THEN, suddenly, I was aware indeed  
Of what he said, and was revolving it:  
How, in the night, crows often take to wing,  
Rising from off the tree-tops in Drumbarr,  
And flying on: I pictured what he told.

The crows that shake the night-damp off their wings  
Upon the stones out yonder in the fields,  
The first live things that we see in the mornings;  
The crows that march across the fields, that sit  
Upon the ash-trees' branches, that fly home  
And crowd the elm-tops over in Drumbarr;  
The crows we look on at all hours of light,  
Growing, and full, and going these black beings have  
Another lifetime!

Crows flying in the dark  
Blackness in darkness flying; beings unseen  
Except by eyes that are like to their own  
Trespassers' eyes!

And you, old man, with eyes so quick and sharp,  
Who've told me of the crows, my fosterer;  
And you, old woman, upon whose lap I've lain  
When I was taken from my mother's lap;  
And you, young girl, with looks that have come down  
From forefathers, my kin ye have another life  
I've glimpsed it, I becoming trespasser-  
Blackness in darkness flying like the crows!

Padraic Colum

# David Ap Gwillam At The Mass Of The Birds

THE Thrush, the Lark, and, chief, the Nightingale,  
With one small bird whose name I do not ken,  
Offered a Mass; the little bird was clerk,  
At intervals he struck his silver bell.

The stars above that were but whitened then  
The candles were; the altar was a stone;  
Myself was there, with meet observances  
Hearing the Mass the birds said in the dell.

It was the Lark who sang in dark's decrease  
Kyrie Eleison; then the Nightingale  
The Consecration chanted solemnly.  
(The silver bell was rung for him in chief.)  
And then the Thrush, the dweller in the vale,  
Orate Fratres sang how near, how clear!  
The Thrush it was who, as the sun appeared,  
Held up the Monstrance, a dew-circled leaf!

Padraic Colum

## Dedication: To M. C. M. C.

THE well-

They come to it and take  
Their cupful or their palmful out of it.

The well-

Stones are around it, and an elder bush  
Is there; a high rowan tree; and so  
The well is marked.

Who knows

Whence come the waters? Through what passages  
Beneath? From what high tors  
Where forests are? Forests dripping rain!  
Branches pouring to the ground; trunks, barks, roots,  
Letting the streamlets down: through the dark earth  
The water flows, and in that secret flood  
That's called a spring, that finds this little hollow.

Who knows

Whence come the waters that fill cup and palm?

Sweetheart and comrade, I give you  
The waters' marches and the forest's bound,  
The valley-filling cloud, the trees that set  
The rains beneath their roots, out of this well.

Padraic Colum

# Dedicatory Poem: To George Sigerson, Poet And Scholar

Two men of art, they say, were with the sons  
Of Milé,—a poet and a harp player,  
When Milé, having taken Ireland, left  
The land to his sons' rule; the poet was  
Cir, and fair Cendfind was the harp player.

The sons of Milé for the kingship fought—  
(Blithely, with merry sounds, the old poem says)  
Eber and Eremon, the sons of Milé  
And when division of the land was made  
They drew a lot for the two men of art.

With Eber who had won the Northern half  
The Harper Cendfind went, and with Eremon  
The Northerner, Cir the poet stayed;  
And so, the old Book of the Conquests says,  
The South has music and the North has lore.

To you who are both of the North and South,  
To you who have the music and the lore,  
To you in whom Cir and Cendfind are met,  
To you I bring the tale of poetry  
Left by the sons of Eber and of Eremon.

A leabhráin, gabh amach f&#n saoghal,  
Is do gach n-aon dá mbuaileann leat  
Aithris cruinn go maireann Gaedhil,  
T'réis cleasa claon nan Gall ar fad.

Padraic Colum

# Dermott Donn Macmorna

ONE day you'll come to my husband's door,  
Dermott Donn MacMorna,  
One day you'll come to Hugh's dark door,  
And the pain at my heart will be no more,  
Dermott Donn MacMorna!

From his bed, from his fire I'll rise,  
Dermott Donn MacMorna,  
From the bed of Hugh, from his fire I'll rise,  
With my laugh for the pious, the quiet, the wise,  
Dermott Donn MacMorna!

Lonesome, lonesome, the house of Hugh,  
Dermott Donn MacMorna,  
No cradle rocks in the house of Hugh;  
The list'ning fire has thought of you,  
Dermott Donn MacMorna!

Out of this loneliness we'll go,  
Dermott Donn MacMorna,  
Together at last we two will go  
Down a darkening road with a gleam below,  
Ah, but the winds do bitter blow,  
Dermott Donn MacMorna!

Padraic Colum



# Dublin Roads

WHEN you were a lad that lacked a trade,  
Oh, many's the thing you'd see on the way  
From Kill-o'-the-Grange to Ballybrack,  
And from Cabinteely down into Bray,  
When you walked these roads the whole of a day.

High walls there would be to the left and right,  
With ivies growing across the top,  
And a briary ditch on the other side,  
And a place where a quiet goat might crop,  
And a wayside bench where a man could stop.

A hen that had found a thing in her sleep,  
One would think, the way she went crawl-crawl-cree,  
You would hear as you sat on the bench was there,  
And a cock that thought he crew mightily,  
And all the stir of the world would be

A cart that went creaking along the road,  
And another cart that kept coming a-near;  
A man breaking stones; for bits of the day  
One stroke and another would come to you clear,  
And then no more from that stone-breaker.

And his day went by as the clouds went by,  
As hammer in hand he sat alone,  
Breaking the mendings of the road;  
The dazzles up from the stones were thrown  
When, after the rain, the sun down-shone.

And you'd leave him there, that stone-breaker,  
And you'd wonder who came to see what was done  
By him in a day, or a month, or a week:  
He broke a stone and another one,  
And you left him there and you travelled on.

A quiet road! You would get to know  
The briars and stones along by the way;  
A dozen times you'd see last year's nest;

A peacock's cry, a pigeon astray  
Would be marks enough to set on a day;

Or the basket-carriers you would meet  
A man and a woman they were a pair!  
The woman going beside his heel:  
A straight-walking man with a streak of him bare,  
And eyes that would give you a crafty stare.

Coming down from the hills they'd have ferns to sell,  
Going up from the strand they'd have cockles in stock:  
Sand in their baskets from the sea,  
Or clay that was stripped from a hillside rock  
A pair that had often stood in the dock!

Or a man that played on a tin-whistle:  
He looked as he'd taken a scarecrow's rig;  
Playing and playing as though his mind  
Could do nothing else but go to a jig,  
And no one around him, little or big.

And you'd meet no man else until you came  
Where you could look down upon the sedge,  
And watch the Dargle water flow,  
And men smoke pipes on the bridge's ledge,  
While a robin sang by the haws in a hedge.

Or no bird sang, and the bird-catchers  
Would have talk enough for a battle gained,  
When they came from the field and stood by the bridge,  
Taking shelter beside it while it rained,  
While the bird new-caught huddled and strained

In this cage or that, a linnet or finch,  
And the points it had were declared and surmised:  
And this one's tail was spread out, and there  
Two little half-moons, the marks that were prized;  
And you looked well on the bird assized.

Then men would go by with a rick of hay  
Piled on a cart; with them you would be  
Walking beside the piled-up load:

It would seem as it left the horses free,  
They went with such stride and so heartily-

And so you'll go back along the road.

Padraic Colum

## Fourth Station

Jesus His Mother meets:  
She looks on Him and sees  
The Savior in Her Son:  
The Angel's word comes back:  
Within her heart she says,  
"Unto me let this be done!"  
Still is she full of grace.  
By us, too be it one,  
That grace that brings us revelation!

Padraic Colum

# Fuchsia Hedges In Connacht

I THINK some saint of Eirinn wandering far  
Found you and brought you here Demoiselles!  
For so I greet you in this alien air!

And like those maidens who were only known  
In their own land as daughters of the King,  
Children of Charlemagne  
You have, by following that pilgrim-saint,  
Become high vot'resses  
You have made your palace beauty dedicate,  
And your pomp serviceable:  
You stand beside our folds!

I think you came from some old Roman land  
Most alien, but most Catholic are you:  
Your purple is the purple that enfolds,  
In Passion Week, the Shrine,  
Your scarlet is the scarlet of the wounds:  
You bring before our walls, before our doors  
Lamps of the Sanctuary;  
And in this stony place  
The time the robin sings,  
Through your bells rings the Angelus!

Padraic Colum

# Garadh

FOR the poor body that I own  
I could weep many a tear:  
The days have stolen flesh and bone,  
And left a changeling here.

Four feeble bones are left to me,  
And the basket of my breast,  
And I am mean and ugly now  
As the scald flung from the nest.

The briars drag me at the knee,  
The brambles go within,  
And often do I feel him turn,  
The old man in my skin.

The strength is carded from my bones,  
The swiftness drained from me,  
And all the living thoughts I had  
Are like far ships at sea!

Padraic Colum

# Gilderoy

THE smith who made the manacles,  
With bar and bolt, and link and ring,  
Sang out above his hearty blows  
'I can't have grief for everything.'

As Roger by the rope-walk went  
The bramble-bird cheeped up to sing;  
He cut the wanted coil, and said  
'I can't have grief for everything.'

The lad who came to Ladder Lane,  
And saw his hemp-cravat a-string,  
'Jack's doom 's Jill's dule,' he said, 'but then,  
I can't have grief for everything.'  
And I who carried bag and wig,  
Looked up and saw him turn and swing;  
The dog he gave fixed eyes on me  
Can I have grief for everything?

Padraic Colum

# Girls Spinning

FIRST GIRL

MALLO lero iss im bo nero!

Go where they're threshing and find me my lover,

Mallo lero iss im bo bairn!

SECOND GIRL

Mallo lero iss im bo nero!

Who shall I bring you? Rody the Rover?

Mallo lero iss im bo baun!

FIRST GIRL

Mallo lero iss im bo nero!

Listen and hear what he's singing over.

Mallo lero iss im bo baun!

(A man's voice sings

I went out in the evening, my sweetheart for to find;

I stood by her cottage window, as well I do mind;

I stood by her cottage window, and I thought I would get in,

But instead of pleasures for me my sorrows did begin!

Fine colour had my darling though it wasn't me was  
there:

I did not sit beside her, but inside there was a pair!

I stood outside the window like a poor neglected soul,

And I waited till my own name was brought across the coal!

Here's a health unto the blackbird that sings upon the tree,

And here's to the willy-wagtail that goes the road with me!

Here's a health unto my darling and to them she makes her own:

She's deserving of good company; for me, I go my lone.

My love she is courteous and handsome and tall;

For wit and for behaviour she's foremost of them all!

She says she is in no way bound, that with me she'll go free,

But my love has too many lovers to have any love for me!

FIRST GIRL

Mallo lero iss im bo nero!

Who weds him might cry with the wandering plover!



Mallo lero iss im bo baun!  
Mallo lero iss im bo nero!  
Where they're breaking the horses, go find me my lover!  
Mallo lero iss im bo baun!

SECOND GIRL

Mallo lero iss im bo nero!  
Him with the strong hand I will bring from the clover.  
Mallo lero iss im bo baun!

FIRST GIRL

Mallo lero iss im bo nero!  
I wait till I hear what he's singing over.  
Mallo lero iss im bo baun!

(Another man's voice  
Are they not the good men of Eirinn,  
Who give not their thought nor their voice  
To fortune, but take without dowry  
The maids of their choice?

For the trout has sport in the river  
Whether prices be up or low-down,  
And the salmon, he slips through the water  
Not heeding the town!

Then if she, the love of my bosom  
Did laugh as she stood by my door,  
O Fd rise then and draw her in to me,  
With kisses go leor!

It's not likely the wind in the tree-tops  
Would trouble our love nor our rest,  
Not the hurrying footsteps would draw her,  
My love from my breast!

FIRST GIRL

Mallo lero iss im bo nero!  
He sings to the girsha in the hazel-wood cover.  
Mallo lero iss im bo baun!

Mallo lero iss im bo nero!

Go where they're shearing and find me my lover.  
Mallo lero iss im bo baun!

SECOND GIRL

Mallo lero iss im bo nero!  
The newly-come youth is looking straight over!  
Mallo lero iss im bo baun!

FIRST GIRL

Mallo lero iss im bo nero!  
If you mind what he sings you'll have silver trover.  
Mallo lero iss im bo baun!

(A young man's voice sings  
Once I went over the ocean,  
On a ship that was bound for proud Spain:  
Some people were singing and dancing,  
But I had a heart full of pain.

I'll put now a sail on the lake  
That's between my treasure and me,  
And I'll sail over the lake  
Till I come to the Joyce country.

She'll hear my boat on the shingles,  
And she'll hear my step on the land,  
And the corncrake deep in the meadow  
Will tell her that I'm at hand!

The summer comes to Glen Nefin  
With heavy dew on the leas,  
With the gathering of wild honey  
To the tops of all the trees.

In honey and dew the summer  
Upon the ground is shed,  
And the cuckoo cries until dark  
Where my storeen has her bed!

And if O'Hanlon's daughter  
Will give me a welcome kind,  
O never will my sail be turned  
To a harsh and a heavy wind!

FIRST GIRL

Mallo lero iss im bo nero!

Welcome I'll give him over and over.

Mallo lero iss im bo baun!

Padraic Colum

# Hawaiian

SANDALWOOD, you say, and in your thoughts it chimes  
With Tyre and Solomon; to me it rhymes  
With places bare upon Pacific mountains,  
With spaces empty in the minds of men.

Sandalwood!

The Kings of Hawaii call out their men,  
The men go up the mountains in files;  
Hands that knew only the stone axe now wield the iron axe:  
The sandalwood trees go down.

More sandalwood is called for:

The men who hunt the whale will buy sandalwood;  
The Kings would change canoes for ships.  
Men come down from the mountains carrying sandalwood on their backs;  
More and more men are levied;  
They go up the mountains in files; they leave their taropatches so that famine  
comes down on the land.

But this sandalwood grows upon other trees, a parasite;  
It needs a growing thing to grow upon;  
Its seed and its soil are not enough for it!

Too greedy are the Kings;  
Too eager are the men who hunt the whale to sail to  
Canton with fragrant wood to make shrines for the  
Buddhas;  
Too sharp is the iron axe!

Nothing will ever bring together again  
The spores and the alien sap that nourished them,  
The trees and the trees they would plant themselves  
upon:  
Like the myths of peoples,  
Like the faiths of peoples,  
Like the speech of peoples,  
Like the ancient creation chants,  
The sandalwood is gone!

A fragrance in shrines  
But the trees will never live again!

Padraic Colum

# Hornets

How strangely like a churchyard skull  
The thing that's there amongst the leaves!

A Hornets' nest; but stir the branch  
And they'll be round your head and ears!

So wary ana so weaponed,  
How do they not possess the wold?

Their lives a watch, their act a doom,  
Of their own terrors they must die!

Livid, uneyed, articulate,  
How like a skull their nest they make!

Padraic Colum

# Humming-Bird

UP from the navel of the world,  
Where Cuzco has her founts of fire,  
The passer of the Gulf he comes.

He lives in air, a bird of fire,  
Charted by flowers still he comes  
Through spaces that are half the world.

With glows of suns and seas he comes;  
A life within our shadowed world  
That's bloom, and gem, and kiss of fire!

Padraic Colum

# I Shall Not Die For Thee

O woman, shapely as the swan,  
On your account I shall not die:  
The men you've slain -- a trivial clan --  
Were less than I.  
I ask me shall I die for these --  
For blossom teeth and scarlet lips --  
And shall that delicate swan-shape  
Bring me eclipse?  
Well-shaped the breasts and smooth the skin,  
The cheeks are fair, the tresses free --  
And yet I shall not suffer death,  
God over me!  
Those even brows, that hair like gold,  
Those languorous tones, that virgin way,  
The flowing limbs, the rounded heel  
Slight men betray!  
Thy spirit keen through radiant mien,  
Thy shining throat and smiling eye,  
Thy little palm, thy side like foam --  
I cannot die!  
O woman, shapely as the swan,  
In a cunning house hard-reared was I:  
O bosom white, O well-shaped palm,  
I shall not die!

Padraic Colum



# Imitation Of A Welsh Poem

AND that was when the chevaldour  
Through the whole of night  
Sang, for the moon of mid-July  
Made the hillside bright.

Morfydd to David ap Gwillam spoke  
When the song they did not hear,  
'Something is stirring in the fern,  
A living thing comes near.'

'Twas not the wolf, 'twas not the deer  
That came with pause and bound;  
A creature stood above the pair  
Ap Gwillam's Irish hound

And knew them then, and knew them there  
Where the pine branches wave,  
As close beside, as deep in earth,  
As lone as in a grave!

Padraic Colum

# In Memory Of John Butler Yeats

'TO-NIGHT,' you said, 'to-night, all Ireland round  
The curlews call.' The dinner-talk went on,  
And I knew what you heard and what you saw,  
That left you for a little while withdrawn-  
The lonely land, the lonely-crying birds!

Your words, your breath is gone!  
O uncaught spirit, we'll remember you  
By those remote and ever-flying birds  
Adown the Shannon's reach, or crying through  
The mist between Clew Bay and Dublin Bay!

Padraic Colum

# In The Carolina Woods

HERE you should lie, ye Kings of eld,  
Barbarossa, Boabdil,  
And Czar Lazar and Charlemagne,  
Arthur, Gaelic Finn-  
Here where the  
muffling Spanish mosses  
Forests with forests fill!

Not in a cavern where the winds  
Trample with battle-call,  
But in these woods where branch and branch  
From tree and tree let fall  
Not moss, but grey and cobweb beards,  
Kings' cabalistic beards!

Here should you sleep your cycles out,  
Ye Kings with hoary beards!

Padraic Colum

# Interior

THE little moths are creeping  
Across the cottage pane;  
On the floor the chickens gather,  
And they make talk and complain.

And she sits by the fire  
Who has reared so many men;  
Her voice is low like the chickens'  
With the things she says again:

'The sons that come back do be restless,  
They search for the thing to say;  
Then they take thought like the swallows,  
And the morrow brings them away.

In the old, old days upon Innish,  
The fields were lucky and bright,  
And if you lay down you'd be covered  
By the grass of one soft night.

And doves flew with every burial  
That went to Innishore  
Two white doves with the coffened,  
But the doves fly no more.'

She speaks and the chickens gather,  
And they make talk and complain,  
While the little moths are creeping  
Across the cottage pane.

Padraic Colum

# Jackdaw

ALOOOF from his tribe  
On the elm-tree's top,  
A jackdaw perched  
A hand-reach up.

Silent he sat  
On the branch, nor stirred,  
And I saw m him  
A changeling bird.

Grass was worn  
Round pots and a pan,  
A flea-bitten horse,  
And a tilted van,

Where tinker's or gypsy's  
Brats at play  
Made vagrant's game of  
Some citizen's way.

I watched the daw  
On the branch, beguiled:  
I saw a vagrant  
From the wild.

The entail broken  
What had he?  
The humour of one  
Out of his degree.

The franchise of one  
Without kith or kind,  
And only the pauper's  
Single mind!

The daws on the elms  
Kept tribal speech,  
And he perched there,  
Within a hand's reach-

He flew; his flight  
Neither high nor wide  
Was a vagabond's  
To a seedman's stride.

A dog on the ground  
Was rubbing for fleas;  
Rags were there  
He fluttered to these:

Held a bright rag up  
Like a banner won,  
And went and hid it  
Behind a stone!

Padraic Colum

# Kalmuck Bride

I HAVE saddled your white steed, and I have burnished them-  
Your belt with crystal clasps, your lance, your scimitar,  
Your carbine silver-chased; now ere you mount and ride  
Across the sky-wide steppe, a horseman to the war:

A promise make your bride: that at the self-same hour,  
Whether you gallop on or halt in some wide mart,  
You'll look up at the moon, so round, so full, so bright,  
The almost moveless moon, with longing in your heart!

And I beside the tent will gaze and gaze and gaze  
Upon the self-same moon that's like the looking-glass  
You brought me from the fair of whitened Kadajah,  
The present from your hand in which I saw my face.

(Shine, lance and scimitar, shine belt, and shine, carbine,  
With magic of the moon I have endued your shine!)

Charmed by that double gaze, the moon that's won unto  
The magic I contrive, will mirror my wan face,  
And you will see above, so far, so still, so sad,  
The daughter of the Khan who nightly seeks your gaze.

Padraic Colum

# King Cahill's Farewell To The Rye Field

WRITTEN TO THE LONDONDERRY AIR

'Tira autumn sun your shadow's flung, my Cahill,  
Upon the field where now your reaping's done,  
Lo, there! And lo! Your reaper's wreath of rushes  
Is on your forehead like a kingly crown.

'And I have come to name you King of Connacht,  
And bid you where O'Connor's muster grows:  
No shadow-king, but one to front the Norman,  
And rear the standard that all Eire knows.'

'Farewell,' he said, 'farewell the field I've sickled,  
Farewell the youths whose backs were bent with mine,  
Farewell the maids whose singing now comes to me  
'O Brigid, bless our fields, our roofs, our kine!''

'No Norman keep shall frown above your labors,  
No pale they'll make to hold our Irish deer;  
A true-born scion of Connacht's kings, I go now:  
This brand, my father's sword, shall lead your axe,  
your spear.'

Padraic Colum



# Laburnums

OVER old walls the Laburnums  
hang cones of fire;  
Laburnums that grow out of old  
mould in old gardens:

Old maids and old men who have savings or pensions have  
Shuttered themselves in the pales of old gardens.

The gardens grow wild; out of their mould the Laburnums  
Draw cones of fire.

And we, who've no lindens, no palms, no cedars of Lebanon,  
Rejoice you have gardens with mould, old men and old maids:

The bare and the dusty streets have now the Laburnums,  
Have now cones of fire!

Padraic Colum

# Legend

THERE is an hour, they say,  
On which your dream has power:  
Then all you wish for comes,  
As comes the lost field-bird  
Down to the island-lights;  
There is an hour, they say,  
That's woven with your wish:  
In dawn, or dayli' gone,  
In mirk-dark, or at noon,  
In hush or hum of day,  
May be that secret hour.

A herd-boy in the rain  
Who looked o'er stony fields;  
A young man in a street,  
When fife and drum went by,  
Making the sunlight shrill;  
A girl in a lane,  
When the long June twilight  
Made friendly far-off things,  
Had watch upon the hour:  
The dooms they met are in  
The song my grand-dam sings.

Padraic Colum

# Lilac Blossoms

WE mark the playing-time of sun and rain,  
Until the rain too heavily upon us  
Leans, and the sun stamps down upon our lustres,  
And then our trees stand in their greennesses  
No different from the privets in the hedges,  
And we who made a pleasaunce at the door-step,  
And, whether by the ash-heap or the spring-well  
Growing, were ever fresh and ever radiant,  
And fragrant more than grass is  
We, we are gone without a word that praised us  
You did not know how short the playing-time!

Padraic Colum

# Macaws

GREEN wings and yellow breasts on birds that stare  
That turn their heads and stare,  
And a red streamer tail!  
They come from Yucatan  
Where priests with clownish hats, and jade  
Nose-coverings,  
Looked pompously from steps of pyramids.  
Now this their Yucatan,  
This shop where they are Brobdingnagian.  
Macaws that stare,  
And blow into the conchs of their beaks,  
And climb with their club feet.

Padraic Colum

# Men On Islands

CAN it be that never more  
Men will grow on Islands?  
Ithaka and Eriskey,  
Iceland and Tahiti!  
Must the engines he has forged  
Raven so for spaces  
That the Islands dwindle down,  
Dwindle down!  
Pots that shelve the tap-root's growth?  
Must it be that never more  
Men will flower on Islands?  
Crete and Corsica, Mitylene,  
Aran and Iona!

Padraic Colum

# Monkeys

Two little creatures  
with faces the size of  
a pair of pennies  
are clasping each other  
"Ah do not leave me"  
One says to the other  
in the high monkey -  
cage in the beast shop  
there are no people  
to gape at them now  
for people are loth  
peer in the dimness  
have they not builded  
streets and playhouses  
sky sign and bars  
to lose the lonlieness  
shaking the hearts  
of the two little monkeys  
Yes, but who watches  
the penny small faces  
can hear the voices  
"Ah do not leave me  
suck i wil give you  
warmth and clasping  
and if you slip from  
this beam can never  
find you again  
Dim is the evening  
and chill is the weather  
there drawn from their coloured  
hemisphere  
the apes lilliputian  
with faces the size of  
a pair of pennies  
and voices as low as  
the flow of my blood.

Padraic Colum

# Night-Fliers

THE birds that soar break space  
Like heavy bodies hurled!  
Not so the birds of night  
They move as in a sphere  
On which they touch always  
How patterned their flight!  
The owl, the whippoorwill!

And like volcano's ash  
His plumes all cinderous  
Black mirrors are his eyes  
(The owl's). They'll fill with light  
What time will come the cries  
As from tongues taut with dew  
(The whippoorwills). What sounds  
Are in their day-lost world,  
What motions and what hues!

Padraic Colum

# No Child

I HEARD in the night the pigeons  
Stirring within their nest:  
The wild pigeons' stir was tender,  
Like a child's hand at the breast.

I cried 'O stir no more!  
(My breast was touched with tears).  
O pigeons, make no stir  
A childless woman hears.'

Padraic Colum



# Odysseus: In Memory Of Arthur Griffith

You had the prose of logic and of scorn,  
And words to sledge an iron argument,  
And yet you could draw down the outland birds  
To perch beside the ravens of your thought  
The dreams whereby a people challenges  
Its dooms, its bounds. You were the one who knew  
What sacred resistance is in men  
That are almost broken; how, from resistance used,  
A strength is born, a stormy, bright-eyed strength  
Like Homer's Iris, messenger of the gods,  
Coming before the ships the enemy  
Has flung the fire upon. Our own, our native strength  
You mustered up. But I will never say this,  
Walking beside you, or looking on you,  
With your strong brow, and chin was like a targe,  
And eyes that were so kindly of us all.

And sorrow comes as on that August day,  
With our ship cleaving through the seas for home,  
And that news coming sparkling through the air,  
That you were dead, and that we'd never see you  
Looking upon the state that you had builded.

The news that came was like that weight of waters  
Poured on our hopes! Our navies yet unbuilt,  
Our city left inglorious on its site,  
Our fields uncleared, and over  
Our ancient house the ancient curse of war!  
And could we pray, touching the island-homeland,  
Other than this: 'Odysseus, you who laboured  
So long upon the barren outer sea;

Odysseus, Odysseus, you who made  
The plan that drove the wasters from the house,  
And bent the bow that none could bend but you:  
Be with us still:  
Your memory be the watcher in our house,  
Your memory be the flame upon our hills.



# Old Men Complaining

## First Old Man

He threw his crutched stick down: there came  
Into his face the anger flame,  
And he spoke viciously of one  
Who thwarted him—his son's son.  
He turned his head away.—“I hate  
Absurdity of language, prate  
From growing fellows. We'd not stay  
About the house the whole of a day  
When we were young,  
Keeping no job and giving tongue!  
“Not us in troth! We would not come  
For bit or sup, but stay from home  
If we gave answers, or we'd creep  
Back to the house, and in we'd peep  
Just like a corncrake.

“My grandson and his comrades take  
A piece of coal from you, from me  
A log, or sod of turf, maybe;  
And in some empty place they'll light  
A fire, and stay there all night,  
A wisp of lads! Now understand  
The blades of grass under my hand  
Would be destroyed by company!  
There's no good company: we go  
With what is lowest to the low!  
He stays up late, and how can he  
Rise early? Sure he lags in bed,  
And she is worn to a thread  
With calling him—his grandmother.  
She's an old woman, and she must make  
Stir when the birds are half awake  
In dread he'd lose this job like the other!”

## Second Old Man

“They brought yon fellow over here,  
And set him up for an overseer:  
Though men from work are turned away  
That thick-necked fellow draws full pay—

Three pounds a week.... They let burn down  
The timber yard behind the town  
Where work was good; though firemen stand  
In boots and brasses big and grand  
The crow of a cock away from the place.  
And with the yard they let burn too  
The clock in the tower, the clock I knew  
As well as I know the look in my face.”  
Third Old Man

“The fellow you spoke of has broken his bounds—  
He came to skulk inside of these grounds:  
Behind the bushes he lay down  
And stretched full hours in the sun.  
He rises now, and like a crane  
He looks abroad. He’s off again:  
Three pounds a week, and still he owes  
Money in every street he goes,  
Hundreds of pounds where we’d not get  
The second shilling of a debt.”

First Old Man

“Old age has every impediment  
Vexation and discontent;  
The rich have more than we: for bit  
The cut of bread, and over it  
The scrape of hog’s lard, and for sup  
Warm water in a cup.  
But different sorts of feeding breaks  
The body more than fasting does  
With pains and aches.  
“I’m not too badly off, for I  
Have pipe and tobacco, a place to lie,  
A nook to myself; but from my hand  
Is taken the strength to back command—  
I’m broken, and there’s gone from me  
The privilege of authority.”  
I heard them speak—  
The old men heavy on the sod,  
Letting their angers come  
Between them and the thought of God.



# Old Soldier

WE wander now who marched before,  
Hawking our bran from door to door,  
While other men from the mill take their flour:  
So it is to be an Old Soldier.

Old, bare and sore, we look on the hound  
Turning upon the stiff frozen ground,  
Nosing the mould, with the night around:  
So it is to be an Old Soldier.

And we who once rang out like a bell,  
Have nothing now to show or to sell;  
Old bones to carry, old stories to tell:  
So it is to be an Old Soldier.

Padraic Colum

# Old Woman Of The Roads

O, to have a little house!  
To own the hearth and stool and all!  
The heaped up sods against the fire,  
The pile of turf against the wall!  
To have a clock with weights and chains  
And pendulum swinging up and down!  
A dresser filled with shining delph,  
Speckled and white and blue and brown!  
I could be busy all the day  
Clearing and sweeping hearth and floor,  
And fixing on their shelf again  
My white and blue and speckled store!  
I could be quiet there at night  
Beside the fire and by myself,  
Sure of a bed and loth to leave  
The ticking clock and the shining delph!  
Och! but I'm weary of mist and dark,  
And roads where there's never a house nor bush,  
And tired I am of bog and road,  
And the crying wind and the lonesome hush!  
And I am praying to God on high,  
And I am praying Him night and day,  
For a little house - a house of my own  
Out of the wind's and the rain's way.

Padraic Colum

# On Two Sisters Whose Deaths Were Together

IN woods remote, hid in the mountain hollows,  
Doves there are that have a gentler beauty,  
Doves that are marked as by a poet's image,  
And hence are called Doves of the Wounded Heart.

And such ye were, and we could never learn the  
Call that would bring you to our breasts, our hands!  
And such ye were, and ye were aliens in our  
Barnyard-world Doves of the Wounded Heart!

You who were proud no storm had ever turned your  
Flight, and you who were her cherished one  
May ye have found, hid in your mountain hollows,  
Your wood remote, Doves of the Wounded Heart!

Padraic Colum



# Otters

I'LL be an otter, and I'll let you swim  
A mate beside me; we will venture down  
A deep, full river when the sky above  
Is shut of the sun; spoilers are we;  
Thick-coated; no dog's tooth can bite at our veins  
With ears and eyes of poachers; deep-earthed ones  
Turned hunters: let him slip past,  
The little vole, my teeth are on an edge  
For the King-fish of the River!

I hold him up  
The glittering salmon that smells of the sea:  
I hold him up and whistle!

Now we go  
Back to our earth; we will tear and eat  
Sea-smelling salmon: you will tell the cubs  
I am the Booty-brmger: I am the Lord  
Of the River the deep, dark, full, and flowing River!

Padraic Colum

# Pigeons

ODALISQUES, odalisques,  
Treading the pavement  
With feet pomegranate-stained:  
We bartered for, bought you  
Back in the years  
Ah, then we knew you,  
Odalisques, odalisques,  
Treading the pavement  
With feet pomegranate-stained!

Queens of the air  
Aithra, Iole,  
Eos and Auge,  
Taking new beauty  
From the sun's evening brightness,  
Gyring in light  
As nymphs play in waters  
Aithra, Iole,  
Eos and Auge!

Then down on our doorsteps,  
Gretchen and Dora. . . .

## II

Pigeons that have flown down from the courts behind the orchards! Pigeons that run along the beach to take sand into your crops! What contrast is between you, birds of a rare stock, and the waves that know only the buccaneer sea-gulls and the sand-marten emigrants! And what contrast is between your momentary wildness here and your graces in the courtyards beyond the orchards!

You rise up and fly out five wave lengths from the beach. And now a strange element is under you the green, tumbling, untried sea. With that half-remembered element below you, you think, maybe, of rocky breeding-places and strong mates. Bravely  
you hang above the untried, alluring sea just five wave-lengths out!

You remind us of the ladies who came down to the gypsy carts that were on the beach yesterday, and swore they would take to the gypsy ways!

And now you run along by the waves, taking more grains of sand into your crops!

A wave-break startles you. You take to your wings again. Now you see the dove-cotes beyond the orchards, and you fly towards them.

And all night long you will hear the sea breaking, and you will dream, maybe, in the dove-cotes, of strong mates and rocky breeding places.

At dawn you will fly down to the beach again, run along the hard sand, take grains into your crops, and fly five wavelengths from the beach.

The sand-martens will have left their holes, and you will see them gathered in flocks on the sand-heights, the dusky gypsies.

And you will not notice when they have departed, going without after-thoughts, going over that green, alluring element, the sea.

Pigeons that run along the beach, taking sand into your crops!

Padraic Colum

# Plovers

THE Plovers fly and cry around,  
Unguided, nestless, without bourn,  
Wandering and impetuous,  
Turning and flying to return.

These wild birds seen on Ireland's ground  
I name upon Hawaiian beaches  
Estrayents, they, of all lands' ends,  
They have the oceans for their reaches.

My thoughts are like the Plovers' flight,  
Unguided, nestless, without bourn,  
Wandering and impetuous,  
Turning and flying to return.

Padraic Colum

## Polonius And The Ballad Singers

A gaunt built woman and her son-in-law—  
A broad-faced fellow, with such flesh as shows  
Nothing but easy nature—and his wife,  
The woman's daughter, who spills all her talk  
Out of a wide mouth, but who has eyes as gray  
As Connemara, where the mountain-ash  
Shows berries red indeed: they enter now—  
Our country singers!

"Sing, my good woman, sing us some romance  
That has been round your chimney-nooks so long  
'Tis nearly native; something blown here  
And since made racy—like yon tree, I might say,  
Native by influence if not by species,  
Shaped by our winds. You understand, I think?"

"I'll sing the song, sir."

To-night you see my face—  
Maybe nevermore you'll gaze  
On the one that for you left his friends and kin;  
For by the hard commands  
Of the lord that rules these lands  
On a ship I'll be borne from Cruckaunfinn!  
Oh, you know your beauty bright  
Has made him think delight  
More than from any fair one he will gain;  
Oh, you know that all his will  
Strains and strives around you till  
As the hawk upon his hand you are as tame!

Then she to him replied:

I'll no longer you deny,  
And I'll let you have the pleasure of my charms;  
For to-night I'll be your bride,  
And whatever may betide  
It's we will lie in one another's arms!

"You should not sing

With body doubled up and face aside—

There is a climax here—'It's we will lie'—

Hem—passionate! And what does your daughter sing?"

"A song I like when I do climb bare hills—

'Tis all about a hawk."

No bird that sits on rock or bough  
Has such a front as thine;  
No king that has made war his trade  
Such conquest in his eyne!  
I mark thee rock-like on the rock  
Where none can see a shape.  
I climb, but thou dost climb with wings,  
And like a wish escape,  
She said—  
And like a wish escape!  
No maid that kissed his bonny mouth  
Of another mouth was glad;  
Such pride was in our chieftain's eyes,  
Such countenance he had!  
But since they made him fly the rocks,  
Thou, creature, art my quest.  
Then lift me with thy steady eyes.  
If then to tear my breast,  
She said—  
If then to tear my breast!  
"The songs they have  
Are the last relics of the feudal world:  
Women will keep them—byzants, doubloons,  
When men will take up songs that are as new  
As dollar bills. What song have you, young man?  
"A song my father had, sir. It was sent him  
From across the sea, and there was a letter with it,  
Asking my father to put it to a tune  
And sing it all roads. He did that, in troth,  
And five pounds of tobacco were sent with the song  
To fore-reward him. I'll sing it for you now—  
The Baltimore Exile.  
" The house I was bred in—ah, does it remain?  
Low walls and loose thatch standing lone in the rain,  
With the clay of the walls coming through with its stain,  
Like the blackbird's left nest in the briar!  
Does a child there give heed to the song of the lark,  
As it lifts and it drops till the fall of the dark,  
When the heavy-foot kine trudge home from the paurk,  
Or do none but the red-shank now listen?  
The sloe-bush, I know, grows close to the well,  
And its long-lasting blossoms are there, I can tell,

When the kid that was yeaned when the first ones befell  
Can jump to the ditch that they grow on!  
But there's silence on all. Then do none ever pass  
On the way to the fair or the pattern or mass?  
Do the gray-coated lads drive the ball through the grass  
And speed to the sweep of the hurl?  
O youths of my land! Then will no Bolivar  
Ever muster your ranks for delivering war?  
Will your hopes become fixed and beam like a star?  
Will they pass like the mists from your fields?  
The swan and the swallows, the cuckoo and crake,  
May visit my land and find hillside and lake.  
And I send my song. I'll not see her awake—  
I'm too old a bird to uncage now!  
"Silver's but lead in exchange for songs,  
But take it and spend it."  
"We will. And may we meet your honor's like  
Every day's end."  
"A tune is more lasting than the voice of the birds."  
"A song is more lasting than the riches of the world."

Padraic Colum

# Queen Gormlai

NOT fingers that e'er felt  
Fine things within their hold  
Drew needles in and through,  
And smoothed out the fold,  
And put the hodden patch  
Upon the patch of grey  
Unseemly is the garb  
That's for my back to-day!

O skinflint woman, Mor,  
Who knows that I speak true  
I had women once,  
A queen's retinue;  
And they were ones who knew  
The raiment of a queen;  
Their thoughts were on my tire,  
Their minds were on my mien!

Light of hand and apt,  
And companionable,  
Seven score women, Mor,  
I had at my call,  
Who am to-day begrudged  
The blink of candle-light  
To put it on, the garb,  
That leaves me misbedight.

I wore a blue Norse hood  
The time I watched the turns  
And feats of Clann O'Neill  
We quaffed from goblet-horns;  
A crimson cloak I wore  
When, with Niall the King,  
I watched the horses race  
At Limerick in the Spring!

In Tara of King Niall  
The gold was round the wine,  
And I was given the cup



A furze-bright dress was mine;  
And now this clout to wear  
Where I rise to sup whey,  
With root-like stitches through  
The hodden on the grey!

No more upon the board  
Candles for kings are lit,  
No more can I bid her  
And her bring gowning fit;  
The bramble is no friend  
It pulls at me and drags;  
The thorny ground is mine  
Where briars tear my rags!

Padraic Colum

# Reminiscence

I

The Swallows sang  
ALIEN to us are  
Your fields, and your cotes, and your glebes;  
Secret our nests are  
Although they be built in your eaves;  
Un-eaten by us are  
The grains that grow in your fields.

The Weathercock on the barn answered  
Not alien to ye are  
The powers of un-earthbound beings:  
Their curse ye would bring  
On our cotes, and our glebes, and our fields,  
If aught should befall  
The brood that is bred in the eaves.

The Swallows answered  
If aught should befall  
Our brood that's not travelled the seas,  
Your temples would fall,  
And blood ye would milk from your beeves:  
Against them the curse we would bring  
Of un-earthbound beings!

II

I saw the wind to-day:  
I saw it in the pane  
Of glass upon the wall:  
A moving thing 'twas like  
No bird with widening wing,  
No mouse that runs along  
The meal bag under the beam.  
I think it like a horse,  
All black, with frightening mane.  
That springs out of the earth,  
And tramples on his way.  
I saw it in the glass,

The shaking of a mane:  
A horse that no one rides!

### III

Meet for a town where pennies have few pairs  
In children's pockets, this toyshop and its wares:  
Jew's-harps and masks and kites  
And paper lanterns with their farthing lights,  
All in a dim lit window to be seen:

Within-

The walls that have the patches of the damp,  
The counter where there burns the murky lamp,  
And then, the counter and the shelf between,  
The dame,  
Meagre, grey-polled, lame.

And here she's been since times are legendary,  
For Miler Dowdall whom we used to see  
Upon the hoarding with deft hands held up  
To win the champion's belt or silver cup-  
Would come in here to buy a ball or top-  
That Miler Dowdall, the great pugilist  
Who had the world once beneath his fist!  
Now Miler's is a name that's blown by!

How's custom? Bad enough! She had not sold  
Kites for ten boys along the street to hold-  
She sold them by the gross in times agone:  
Wasn't it poor, the town  
Where boys  
Would count their mort of marbles, saving them  
In crock or jar till round the season came,  
And buy no more to handsel in first game?  
And toys  
The liveliest were stiffened like herself,  
The brightest were grown drab upon her shelf!

But she's not tragical no, not a whit :  
She laughs as she talks to you that is it  
As paper lantern's farthing candle light  
Her eyes are bright,

Her lame, spare frame upborne  
A paper kite held by a string that's worn;  
And like a jew's-harp when you strike its tongue  
That way her voice goes on

Recalling long ago. And she will hop  
The inches of her crib, this narrow shop,  
When you step in to be her customer:  
A bird of little worth, a sparrow, say,  
Whose crib's in such neglected passageway  
That one's left wondering who brings crumbs to her.

How strange to think that she is still inside  
After so many turns of the tide  
Since this lit window was a dragon's eye  
To turn us all to wonder coming nigh  
Since this dim window was a dragon's eye!

#### IV

Down a street that once I lived in  
You used to pass, a honey-seller,  
And the town in which that street was  
Was the shabbiest of all places;  
You were different from the others  
Who went by to barter meanly:  
Different from the man with colored  
Windmills for the children's pennies;  
Different from the drab purveyor  
With her paper screens to fill up  
Chill and empty fireplaces.

You went by, a man upstanding,  
On your head a wide dish, holding  
Dark and golden lumps of honey;  
You went slowly, like an old horse  
That's not driven any longer,  
But that likes to take an amble.

No one ever bought your honey,  
No one ever paid a penny  
For a single comb of sweetness;

Every house was grim unto you  
With foregone desire of eating  
Bread whose taste had sweet of honey.

Yet you went, a man contented  
's though you had a king to call on  
Who would take you to his parlour,  
And buy all your stock of honey.  
On you went, and in a sounding

Voice, just like the bell of evening,  
Told us of the goods you carried,  
Told us of the dark and golden  
Treasure dripping on your wide dish.  
You went by, and no one named you!

V

The crows still fly to that wood, and out of the wood she comes,  
Carrying her load of sticks, a little less now than before,  
Her strength being less; she bends as the hoar rush bends in the wind;  
She will sit by the fire, in the smoke, her thoughts on root and the living branch  
no more.

The crows still fly to that wood, that wood that is sparse and gapped;  
The last one left of the herd makes way by the lane to the stall,  
Lowing distress as she goes; the great trees there are all down;  
No fiddle sounds in the hut to-night, and a candle only gives light to the hall.

The trees are gapped and sparse, yet a sapling spreads on the joints  
Of the wall, till the castle stones fall down into the moat:  
The last one who minds that our race once stood as a spreading tree,  
She goes, and thorns are bare, where the blackbird, his summer songs done,  
strikes one metal note.

VI

The Mountain Thrush I say,  
But I am thinking of her, Nell the Rambler:  
She'd come down to our houses bird-alone,  
From some haunt that was hers, and we would see her  
Drawing the water from the well one day,

For one house or another, or we'd hear her  
Garrulous with the turkeys down the street,  
We children.

From neighbour's house to neighbour's house she'd go  
Until one day we'd see  
Her worn cloak hanging behind our door;  
And then, that night, we'd hear  
Of Earl Gerald: how he rides abroad,  
His horse's hooves shod with the weighty silver,  
And how he'll ride all roads till those silver shoes  
Are worn thin;  
As thin as the cat's ears before the fire,  
Upraised in such content before the fire,  
And making little lanterns in the firelight.

The Mountain Thrush, when every way's a hard one,  
Hops on in numbness till a patch of sunlight,  
Falling, will turn her to a wayside song;  
So it was with her, Rambler Nell, a shelter,  
A bit upon the board, and she flowed on  
With rambler's discourse tales, and rhymes, and sayings,  
With child's light in her worn eyes, and laughter  
To all her words.

The lore she had-  
'Twas like a kingly robe, on which long rains  
Have fallen and fallen, and parted  
The finely woven web, and have washed away  
The kingly colours, but have left some threads  
Still golden, and some feathers still as shining  
As the kingfisher's. While she sat there, not spinning,  
Not weaving anything but her own fancies,  
We ate potatoes out of the ash, and thought them  
Like golden apples out of Tiprobane.

When winter's over-long, and days that famish  
Come one upon another like snowflakes,  
The Mountain Thrush makes way down to our houses:  
Hops round for crumbs, and stays a while, a comer  
Upon our floors.

She did not think  
Bread of dependence bitter; three went with her  
Hunger, Sorrow, and Loneliness and they  
Had crushed all that makes claims, though they'd not bent her,  
Nor emptied her of trust what was it led her  
From house to house, but that she always looked for  
A warmer welcome at the hearth ahead?

So she went on until it came one day  
The Mountain Thrush's heart-stop on the way.

## VII

An old man said, 'I saw  
The chief of the things that are gone;  
A stag with head held high,  
A doe, and a fawn;

'And they were the deer of Ireland  
That scorned to breed within bound:  
The last; they left no race  
Tame on a pleasure-ground.

'A stag, with his hide all rough  
With the dew, and a doe and a fawn;  
Nearby, on their track on the mountain,  
I watched them, two and one,

'Down to the Shannon going-  
Did its waters cease to flow  
When they passed, they that carried the swiftness  
And the pride of long ago?

'The last of the troop that had heard  
Finn's and Oscar's cry;  
A doe and a fawn, and before,  
A stag with head held high!'

## VIII

'A Stranger you came to me over the Sea,  
But welcome I made you, Seumas-a-ree,

And shelter I gave you, my sons set to ward you,  
Red war I faced for you, Seumas-a-ree.

'Now a craven you go from me over the Sea,  
But my best sons go with you, Seumas-a-ree;  
Foreign graves they will gam, and for those who remain  
The black hemp is sown och, Seumas-a-ree!

'But the Boyne shall flow back from the wide Irish Sea,  
On the Causeway of Aughrim our victory shall be:  
Two hundreds of years and the child on the knee  
Will be rocked to this cronach, Seumas-a-ree!'

IX

You blew in  
Where Jillin Brady kept up state on nothing,  
Married her daughter, and brought to Jillin's house  
A leash of dogs, a run of ferrets, a kite  
In a wired box; linnets and larks and gold-finches  
In their proper cages; and you brought with you this song:

If you come to look for me,  
Perhaps you'll not me find:  
For I'll not in my Castle be-  
Inquire where horns wind.

Before I had a man-at-arms  
I had an eager hound:  
Then was I known as Reynardine,  
In no crib to be found.

You used to say  
Five hounds' lives were a man's life, and when Teague  
Had died of old age, and when Fury that was a pup  
When Teague was maundering, had turned from hill to hearth  
And lay in the dimness of a hound's old age,  
I went with you again, and you were upright  
As the circus-rider standing on his horse;  
Quick as a goat that will take any path, and lean-  
Lean as a lash; you'd have no speech  
With wife or child or mother-in-law till you  
Were out of doors and standing on the ditch



Ready to face the river or the hill:

Then Hen-wife's son once heard the grouse  
Talk to his soft-voiced mate;  
And what he heard the health-poult say  
The loon would not relate.

Impatient in the yard he grew,  
And patient on the hill;  
Of cocks and hens he'd take no charge.  
And he went with Reynardine.

Lean days when we were idle as the birds,  
That will not preen their feathers, but will travel  
To taste a berry, or pull a shred of wool  
That they will never use. We pass the bounds:  
A forest's grave, the black bog is before us,  
And in its very middle you will show me  
The snipe's nest that is lonelier than the snipe  
That's all that's there; and then a stony hill,  
A red fox climbing, pausing, looking round his tail  
At us travelling against wind and ram  
To reach the river-spring where Finn or Fergus  
Hardened a spear, back of a thousand years.

And still your cronies are what they were then  
The hounds that know the hill and know the hearth  
(One is Fury that's as old as Argos now  
That crawled to Odysseus coming back);  
Your minstrels, the blackbird singing still  
When kites are leaving, crows are going home,  
And the thrush in the morning like a spectre showing  
Beside the day-spring; and your visitors,  
The cuckoo that will swing upon a branch,  
The corncrake with quick head between the grass-tufts.

And still your song is what it used to be  
About that Reynardine who came to lord  
A castle (O that castle with its trees!),  
Who heard the horns, and let his turret grow  
The foxglove where his banner should be seen:

The hawk is for the hill, he cried,  
The badger for the glen;  
The otter for the river-pools  
Amen, amen, amen!

X

At the fore of the year, and on Candlemas Day,  
All early at Mass I remarked her  
Like the dew on green corn, as bright and as clear  
Were her eyes, and her voice was the starling's!

With bragging and lies, I thought that her mind  
I'd engage, and then win her with praises,  
But through Spring and through Summer she has left me to rise  
Every day with a pain that will slay me!

Oh, come, O my love, ere the life from me goes  
If your hand but to lightly lay on me,  
And a grief take away that none else can remove  
For now 'tis the reaping of barley!

XI

It would not be far for us two to go back to the age of bronze:  
Then you were a king's daughter, your father had currags on hore,  
A herd of horses, good tillage upon the face of four hills,  
And clumps of cattle beyond them where rough-browed men showed their  
spears.  
And I was good at the bow, but had no men, no herds,  
And your father would have bestowed you in a while on some unrenowned  
Ulysses, or on the old king to whom they afterwards raised  
Three stones as high as the elk's head (this cromlech, maybe, where we sit)

How fair you were when you walked beside the old forest trees!  
So fair that I thought you would change and fly away as a swan,  
And then we were mates for play, and then all eagle you grew  
To drive me to range the tempest king's child of the hero-age!  
I called three times as an owl: through the gap where the herdsman watched  
You ran, and we climbed the height where the brackens pushed at our knees;  
And we lay where the brackens drew the earth-smell out of the earth,  
And we journeyed and baffled the fighters of three ill-wishing kings!

It would not be far for us two to go back to the age of bronze  
The fire left by the nomads is lone as a burning ship!  
We eat them as we pass by, the ears of the sweet green wheat!  
At last, a king, I relieve a good clan from a dragon's spleen!  
Pieces of amber I brought you, big as a bowman's thumbs,  
Trumpets I left beside you, wrought when the smiths had all art,  
A dancing-bird that I caught you they are back in the age of bronze:  
I give what I made, and found, and caught a score of songs!

Padraic Colum

# River-Mates

I'LL be an otter, and I'll let you swim  
A mate beside me; we will venture down  
A deep, dark river, when the sky above  
Is shut of the sun; spoilers are we,  
Thick-coated; no dog's tooth can bite at our veins  
With eyes and ears of poachers; deep-earthed ones  
Turned hunters; let him slip past  
The little vole; my teeth are on an edge  
For the King-fish of the River!  
I hold him up  
The glittering salmon that smells of the sea;  
I hold him high and whistle!  
Now we go  
Back to our earths; we will tear and eat  
Sea-smelling salmon; you will tell the cubs  
I am the Booty-bringer, I am the Lord  
Of the River; the deep, dark, full and flowing River.

Padraic Colum

# Roger Casement

THEY have hanged Roger Casement to the tolling  
of a bell,  
Ochone, och, ochone, ochone!  
And their Smiths, and their Murrays, and their Cecils say it's well,  
Ochone, och, ochone, ochone!  
But there are outcast peoples to lift that  
spirit high,  
Flayed men and breastless women who laboured  
fearfully,  
And they will lift him, lift him, for the eyes  
of God to see,  
And it's well, after all, Roger Casement!

They've ta'en his strangled body from the gallows to the pit,  
Ochone, och, ochone, ochone!  
And the flame that eats into it, the quicklime, brought to it,  
Ochone, och, ochone, ochone!  
To waste that noble stature, the grave and brightening face,  
In which courtesy and kindness had eminence of place,  
But they they'll die to dust which the wind will take a-pace,  
While 'twas yours to die to fire, Roger Casement!

Padraic Colum

## Shall I Go Bound And You Go Free?

SHALL I go bound and you go free,  
And love one so removed from me?  
Not so; the falcon o'er my brow  
Hath better quest, I dare avow!

And must I run where you will ride,  
And must I stay where you abide?  
Not so; the feather that I wear  
Is from an eyrie in the air!

And must I climb a broken stair,  
And must I pace a chamber bare?  
Not so; the Brenny plains are wide  
And there are banners where I ride!

Padraic Colum

## She Moved Through The Faire

My young love said to me: My mother won't mind,  
And my father won't slight you for your lack of kind.  
She put her arms 'round me; these words she did say:  
It will not be long, love, 'til our wedding day!  
Then she stepped away from me, and she moved thru the Faire,  
And so fondly I watched her move here and move there;  
At last she turned homeward, with one star awake,  
As the Swan in the evening moves over the lake.  
Last night she came to me, my dead love came in,  
And so soft did she move that her feet made no din;  
She put her arms 'round me; these words she did say:  
It will not be long, love, 'til our wedding day!

Padraic Colum

# Snake

BUT, Snake, you must not come where we abide,  
For you would tempt us; we should hear you say:

'Oh, somewhere was a world was cold and spare,  
And voiceless; somewhere was a Being was not

Engrossed with substance, with no fervencies  
Of love and hatred, and he made me, Snake!

The wise Elohim, they who made the rest  
Of Creatures, made them ail-too manifold

Mortised and rampired, jointed, vascular;  
And I was put an alien in their world,

All head, all spine, all limb, all loin,  
Swift as a bird and single as a fish.'

Above you fruits unglanced at bend and glow,  
And, bare and voiceless, you do tempt us, Snake!

Padraic Colum



# Sojourning And Wandering

## AUTUMN

A GOOD stay-at-home season is Autumn: then there's  
work to be joined in by all:

Though the fawns, where the brackens make covert, may range away  
undeterred,

The stags that were lone upon hillocks now give heed to the call,  
To the bellowing call of the hinds, and they draw back to the herd.

A good stay-at-home season is Autumn; the brown world's marked into fields;  
The corn is up to its growth; the acorns teem in the wood;  
By the side of the down-fallen fort even the thorn-bush yields  
A crop, and there by the rath the hazel nuts drop from a load.

## SPRING

Now, coming on Spring, the days will be growing,  
And after Saint Bride's Day my sail I will throw;  
Since the thought has come to me I fain would be going,  
Till I stand in the middle of the County Mayo!

The first of my days will be spent in Claremorris,  
And in Balla, beside it, I'll have drinking and sport,  
To Kiltimagh, then, I will go on a visit,  
And there, I can tell you, a month will be short.

I solemnly swear that the heart in me rises,  
As the wind rises up and the mists break below,  
When I think upon Carra, and on Gallen down from it,  
The Bush of the Mile, and the Plains of Mayo!

Killeadean's my village, and every good's in it;  
The rasp and blackberry to set to one's tooth;  
And if Raftery stood in the midst of his people,  
Old age would go from him, and he'd step to his youth!

Padraic Colum

## Song Of Starlings

WE'VE watched the starlings flocking past the statues  
That we have often seen in other cities  
Hope, Justice, Commerce and have heard them sing  
Unvarying songs that are their memories-  
Memories of winds that they've been blown by,  
And rivers bordered with their beds of sedges,  
And level lands on which are empty folds.  
Daylight dims, and we  
May not return to where a lamp  
Beams, making a room familiar, and a wife  
Tells of the children's doings: we hear the starlings  
As we have heard them often in other cities,  
Around other cupolas, along other cornices,  
In sunless parks bunched on the tops of trees,  
And see around us bleak, monotonous fields  
Our hearts must ever hold theirs are these songs  
These are the songs that most touch us exiles!

Padraic Colum

# Spinning Songs

## A MOUNTAIN SPINNING SONG

(A Young Girl sings it)

THE Lannan Shee

Watched the young man Brian  
Cross over the stile towards his father's door,  
And she said, 'No help,  
For now he'll see  
His byre, his bawn, and his threshing-floor!  
And, oh, the swallows  
Forget all wonders  
When walls with the nests rise up once more!  
My strand is knit.

'Out of the dream  
Of me, into  
The round of his labour he will grow;  
To spread his fields  
In the winds of spring,  
And tramp the heavy glebe and sow;  
And cut and clamp  
And rear the turf  
Until the season when they mow.'  
My wheel runs smooth.

'And while he toils  
In field and bog  
He will be anxious in his mind  
About the thatch  
Of barn and rick  
Against the reiving autumn wind,  
And how to make  
His gap and gate  
Secure against the thieving kind.'  
My wool is fine.

'He has gone back;  
No more I'll see  
Mine image in his deepening eyes;  
Then I'll lean above

The Well of the Bride,  
And with my beauty, peace will rise!  
O autumn star  
In a lake well hid,  
Fill up my heart and make me wise!  
My quick brown wheel!

'The women bring  
Their pitchers here  
At the time when the stir of the house is o'er;  
They'll see my face  
In the well-water,  
And they'll never lift their pitchers more.  
For each will say  
'How beautiful  
Why should I labour any more!  
Indeed I come  
Of a race so fine  
'Twere waste to labour any more!'  
My thread is spun.

#### AN ISLAND SPINNING SONG

(An Older Girl sings if)

One came before her and said, beseeching,  
'I have fortune and I have lands,  
And if you'll share in the goods of my household  
All my treasure's at your commands.'

But she said to him, 'The goods you proffer  
Are far from my mind as the silk of the sea!  
The arms of him, my young love, round me,  
Is all the treasure that's true for me!'

'Proud you are, then, proud of your beauty,  
But beauty's a flower will soon decay;  
The fairest flowers they bloom in the summer,  
They bloom one summer, and they fade away.'

'My heart is sad, then, for the little flower  
That must so wither where fair it grew  
He who has my heart in keeping,

I would he had my body too.'

### A MIDLAND SPINNING SONG

(An Old Woman sings if)

There was an oul' trooper went riding by  
On the road to Carricknabauna,  
And sorrow is better to sing than cry  
On the way to Carricknabauna!  
And as this oul' trooper went riding on  
He heard this sung by a crone, a crone  
On the road to Carricknabauna!

'I'd spread my cloak for you, young lad,  
Were it only the breadth of a farthen,  
And if your mind was as good as your word.  
In troth, it's you I'd rather!  
In dread of ere forgetting this,  
And before we go any farther,  
Hoist me up to the top of the hill,  
And show me Carricknabauna!'

'Carricknabauna, Carricknabauna,  
Would you show me Carricknabauna?  
I lost a horse at Cruckmaelinn,  
At the Cross of Bunratty I dropped a limb,  
But I left my youth on the crown of the hill  
Over by Carricknabauna!  
Girls, young girls, the rush-light is done.  
What will I do till my thread is spun?

Padraic Colum

# Swallow

HE knows Queen Lab, her isle,  
And black, enormous Kaf,  
The Swallow, and 'Allah'  
He cries

As into Giaour lands  
With Dervish faith and rite,  
Hueless, a Saracen,  
He flies.

Like scimitars his wings,  
And, all unluminous,  
Black, like a genie's thought,  
His eyes.

Padraic Colum

# The Ballad Of Downal Baun

The moon-cradle's rocking and rocking,  
Where a cloud and a cloud goes by:  
Silently rocking and rocking,  
The moon-cradle out in the sky.

The hound's in his loop by the fire,  
The bond-woman spins at the door;  
One rides on a horse through the court-yard:  
The sword-sheath drops on the floor.

I  
MY grandfather, Downal Baun,  
Had the dream that comes three times:  
He dreamt it first when, a servant-boy,  
He lay by the nets and the lines,

In the house of Fargal More,  
And by Fargal's ash-strewn fire,  
When Downal had herded the kine in the waste,  
And had foddered them all in the byre;

And he dreamt the dream when he lay  
Under sails that were spread to the main,  
When he took his rest amid dusky seas,  
On the deck of a ship of Spain;

And the dream came to him beneath  
The roof he had raised in his pride,  
When beside him there lay and dreamt of her kin,  
His strange and far-brought bride.

He had dreamt three times of the treasure  
That fills a broken tale  
The hoard of the folk who had raised the mounds,  
Who had brewed the Heather Ale;

And he knew by the thrice-come dream  
He could win that hoard by right,  
If he drew it out of the lake by a rush

Upon Saint Brigid's Night,  
By rushes strung to the yoke of an ox  
That had never a hair of white!

## II

So Downal, the silent man,  
Went to many a far-off fair,  
And he bought him an ox no man could say  
Was white by a single hair;

And he came to the edge of the lake  
Where no curlew cried overhead:  
Silent and bare from the shaking reeds  
The lake-waters spread;

And he found it afloat on the current,  
The yoke that was hard for the brunt;  
And he took the yoke and he bound it,  
Upon the ox its front;

It was strung with a tie of rushes:  
He saw the burthened net:  
By the push of the ox, by the pull on the rush  
Towards the shore the hoard was set'

Gold cups for Downal Baun,  
Sword hilts that Kings' hands wore!  
O the rush-string drew the treasure  
Till the ripples touched the shore!

Red rings for Downal's bride,  
With silver for her rein!  
But weight was laid on each mesh of the net,  
And the lake held its own again!

'I will break their strength,' he cried,  
'Though they put forth all of their might,  
For to me was given the yoke and the dream,  
And the ox with no hair of white.'

He whispered, 'Labour, O Creature.'  
The wide-horned head was set;



The runnels came from eyes, nose and mouth;  
The thick hide was all sweat.

'Forgive me the goad, O Creature!'  
It hunched from foreleg to flank,  
Heaved; then the yoke on its forehead  
Split, and the treasure sank,  
And Downal was left with the broken yoke,  
And the silent ox on the bank.

He turned the ox to the sedges;  
He took it and held the yoke up,  
Then he flung it far back in the waters  
Of the dark mountain-cup;

And he shouted, 'Doomsters, I know  
Till five score years from this night,  
The treasure is lost, and I trow  
My ox has the hair of white.'

He stood by the ox its front,  
And brute and man were still,  
Till Downal saw lights burn on the lake,  
And fires within the hill.

III

He turned: a horse was beside him;  
It was white as his ox was black;  
Who rode it was a woman:  
She paced with him down the track;

And along a road not straitened  
By ridge or tower or wood,  
And past where the Stones of Morna  
Like headless giants stood;

And then on the Night of Saint Brigid,  
The prayer of her vigil he said,  
When he looked on the white-horsed woman,  
And saw the sign on her head.

'The silks that I wear to my elbows,

The golden clasps at my side,  
The silver upon my girdle  
I will give them for your bride.'  
'Such gear, O Horned Woman,  
Makes due a pledge, I deem.'  
'Nay. I will gift you freely,  
And you shall tell your dream.'

'They say that whoever tells not  
His dream till he hears the birds  
That man will know the prophecies  
In long-remembered words.'

'Nay. Tell your dream. Then this hazel  
Distaff your wife will gain.'  
'The thing that comes in silence,' he said,  
'In silence must remain.'

'O dream-taught man,' said the woman  
She stood where the willows grew,  
A woman from the country  
Where the cocks never crew!

'O dream-taught man,' said the woman  
She stayed by a running stream  
'As wise, as wise as the man,' she said,  
'Who never told his dream.'

Then, swift as the flight of the sea-pie,  
White woman, white horse, went away,  
And Downal passed his haggard,  
And faced the spear of the day;

And brought his ox to the byre,  
And gave it a measure of straw  
'A white hair you have,' said Downal,  
'But my plough you are fit to draw,

'And for no dream you'll be burthened,  
And for none you will bear the yoke.'  
Then he lifted the latch of his house-door,  
And his bride at his coming awoke,

And he drank the milk that she gave him,  
And the bread she made he broke.

The ox was his help thereafter  
When he ploughed the upland and lea,  
And the growth on the Ridge of the Black Ox  
Had a place in men's memory.

And my grandfather, Downal Baun,  
Henceforth grew in gains where he stood  
Strong salmon of Lough Oughter,  
Grey hawk of the shady wood!  
The moon-cradle's rocking and rocking,  
Where a cloud and a cloud goes by:  
Silently rocking and rocking,  
The moon-cradle out in the sky.

To morrow well gather the rushes,  
And plait them beside our fire,  
And make Saint Brigid's crosses  
To hang in the room and the byre.

Padraic Colum

# The Beggar's Child

MAVOURNEEN, we'll go far away  
From the net of the crooked town  
Where they grudge us the light of the day.

Around my neck you will lay  
Two tight little arms of brown.  
Mavourneen, we'll go far away  
From the net of the crooked town.

And what will we hear on the way?  
The stir of wings up and down  
In nests where the little birds stay!  
Mavourneen, we'll go far away  
From the net of the crooked town  
Where they grudge us the light of the day.

Padraic Colum

# The Bird Of Jesus

IT was pure indeed,  
The air we breathed in, the light we saw,  
I and my brother, when we played that day,  
Or piped to one another; then there came  
Two young lads of an age with one another,  
And with us two, and these two played with us,  
And went away.

Each had a bearing that was like a prince's,  
Yet they were simple lads and had the kindness  
Of our own folk lads simple and unknowing:  
Then, afterwards, we went to visit them.

Theirs was a village that was not far off,  
But out of reach towards elbow, not towards hand:  
And what was there were houses  
Houses and some trees  
And it was like a place within a fold.

We found the lads,  
And found them still as simple and unknowing,  
And played with them: we played outside the stall  
Where worked the father of the wiser lad  
Not brothers were the boys, but cousins' children.

There was a pit:  
We brought back clay and sat beside the stall,  
And made birds out of clay; and then my brother  
Took up his bird and flung it in the air:  
His playmate did as he,  
And clay fell down upon the face of clay.

And then I took  
The shavings of the board the carpenter  
Was working on, and flung them in the air,  
And watched them streaming down.

There would be nought to tell  
Had not the wiser of the lads took up

The clay he shaped: a little bird it was;  
He tossed it from his hand up to his head;  
The bird stayed in the air.

O what delight we had  
To see it fly and pause, that little bird,  
Sinking to earth sometimes, and sometimes rising  
As though to fly into the very sun;  
At last it spread out wings and flew, and flew,  
Flew to the sun.

I do not think  
That we played any more, or thought of playing,  
For every drop of blood our bodies held  
Was free and playing, free and playing then.  
Four lads together on the bench we sat:  
Nothing was in the open air around us,  
And yet we thought something was there for us  
A secret, charmed thing.

So we went homeward; by soft ways we went  
That wound us back to our familiar place.  
Some increase lay upon the things we saw:  
I'll speak of grasses, but you'll never know  
What grass was there; words wither it and make it  
Like to the desert children's dream of grass;

Lambs in the grass, but I will not have shown you  
What fleece of purity they had to show;  
I'll speak of birds, but I will not have told you  
How their song filled the heart; and when I speak  
Of him, my brother, you will never guess  
How we two were at one!

Even to our mother we had gained in grace!

Padraic Colum

# The Burial Of Saint Brendan

ON the third day from this (Saint Brendan said)  
I will be where no wind that filled a sail  
Has ever been, and it blew high or low:  
For from this home-creek, from this body's close  
I shall put forth: make ready, you, to go  
With what remains to Cluan Hy-many,  
For there my resurrection I'd have be.

But you will know how hard they'll strive to hold  
This body o' me, and hold it for the place  
Where I was bred, they say, and born and reared.  
For they would have my resurrection here,  
So that my sanctity might be matter shared  
By every mother's child the tribeland polled  
Who lived and died and mixed into the mould.

So you will have to use all canniness  
To bring this body to its burial  
When in your hands I leave what goes in clay;  
The wagon that our goods are carried in  
Have it yoked up between the night and day,  
And when the breath is from my body gone,  
Bear body out, the wagon lay it on;

And cover it with gear that's taken hence  
'The goods of Brendan is what's here,' you'll say  
To those who'll halt you; they will pass you then:  
Tinkers and tailors, soldiers, farmers, smiths,  
You'll leave beside their doors all those thwart men  
For whom my virtue was a legacy  
That they would profit in, each a degree

As though it were indeed some chalice, staff,  
Crozier, or casket, that they might come to,  
And show to those who chanced upon the way,  
And have, not knowing how the work was done  
In scrolls and figures and m bright inlay:  
Whence came the gold and silver that they prize,  
The blue enamels and the turquoises!

I, Brendan, had a name came from the sea  
I was the first who sailed the outer mam,  
And past all forelands and all fastnesses!  
I passed the voiceless anchorites, their isles,  
Saw the ice-palaces upon the seas,  
Mentioned Christ's name to men cut off from men,  
Heard the whales snort, and saw the Kraken!

And on a wide-branched, green, and glistening tree  
Beheld the birds that had been angels erst:  
Between the earth and heaven 'twas theirs to wing:  
Fallen from High they were, but they had still  
Music of Heaven's Court: I heard them smg:  
Even now that island of the unbeached coast  
I see, and hear the white, resplendent host!

For this they'd have my burial in this place,  
Their hillside, and my resurrection be  
Out of the mould that they with me would share.  
But I have chosen Cluan for my ground  
A happy place! Some grace came to me there:  
And you, as you go towards it, to men say,  
Should any ask you on that long highway:

'Brendan is here, who had great saints for friends:  
Ita, who reared him on a mother's knee,  
Enda, who from his fastness blessed his sail:  
Then Brighid, she who had the flaming heart,  
And Colum-cille, prime of all the Gael;  
Gildas of Britain, wisest child of light.'  
And saying this, drive through the falling night.

Padraic Colum



# The City Clocks

THE City clocks point out the hours  
They look like moons on their darkened towers-

And I who was shown my destination  
Thrice, but have no sense of location,

Am back again at one or the other  
Looming clocks that have changed the figure.

Moments a thousand have hurried over,  
And the sought place is as far as ever.

The City clocks point out the hours  
They look like moons on their darkened towers;

That Time and Place are a tangled skein  
Their mingled strokes say over again.

Padraic Colum

# The Dead Player: In Memory Of Dudley Digges

THE candles lighted and the figure prone  
Announce this to you: they are laid aside,  
The noble, whimsical and pathetic roles,  
Disanimated, not to be resumed!

And still the knocks, the three, the solemn knocks!

The role we singled when we spoke his name,  
Of instant goodness and deep faithfulness  
Will be sustained beyond the curtain fall.

Padraic Colum

# The Furrow And The Hearth

I

STRIDE the hill, Sower,  
Up to the sky ridge,  
Flinging the seed,  
Scattering, exultant!  
Mouthing great rhythms  
To the long sea-beats  
On the wide shore, behind  
The ridge of the hillside.

Below in the darkness  
The slumber of mothers,  
The cradles at rest,  
The fire-seed sleeping  
Deep in white ashes!

Give to darkness and sleep,  
O Sower, O Seer!  
Give me to the earth  
With the seed I would enter!  
Oh, the growth through the silence  
From strength to new strength;  
Then the strong bursting forth  
Against primal forces,  
To laugh in the sunshine,  
To gladden the world!

II

Who will bring the red fire  
Unto a new hearth?  
Who will lay the wide stone  
On the waste of the earth?

Who is fain to begin  
To build day by day  
To raise up his house  
Of the moist yellow clay?

There's clay for the making

Moist in the pit,  
There are horses to trample  
The rushes through it.

Above where the wild duck  
Arise up and fly,  
There one can build  
To the wind and the sky.

There are boughs in the forest  
To pluck young and green,  
O'er them thatch of the crop  
Shall be heavy and clean.

I speak unto him  
Who in dead of the night  
Sees the red streaks  
In the ash deep and white;

While around him he hears  
Men stir in their rest,  
And the stir of the babe  
That is close to the breast!

He shall arise,  
He shall go forth alone,  
Lay stone on the earth,  
And bring fire to stone.

Padraic Colum

# The Knitters

IN companies or lone  
They bend their heads, their hands  
They busy with their gear,  
Accomplishing the stitch  
That turns the stocking-heel,  
Or closes up the toe,  
These knitters at their doors.  
Their talk 's of nothing else  
But what was told before  
Sundown and gone sundown,  
While goats bleat from the hill,  
And men are tramping home,  
By knitters at their doors.  
And we who go this way  
A benediction take  
From hands that ply this task  
For the ten thousandth time  
Of knitters at their doors.  
Since we who deem our days  
Most varied, come to own  
That all the works we do  
Repeat a wonted toil:  
May it be done as theirs  
Who turn the stocking-heel,  
And close the stocking-toe,  
With grace and in content,  
These knitters at their doors.  
The Charm  
Uisge cloiche gan irraidh

WATER, I did not seek you,  
Water of hollow stone;  
I crossed no one's acre to find you  
You were where my geese lie down.

I dip my fingers and sprinkle,  
While three times over I say,  
'Chance-bound and chance-found water  
Can take a numbness away.'

The numbness that leaves me vacant  
Of thought and will and deed  
Like the moveless clock that I gaze on-  
It will go where the ravens breed.

I empty the stone; on the morrow  
I shall rise with spirit alive;  
Gallant amongst the gallant,  
I shall speak and lead and strive.

In search there is no warrant,  
By chance is the charm shown:  
Water, I did not seek you,  
Water of hollow stone!

Padraic Colum

# The Landing

THE great ship lantern-girdled.  
The tender standing by;  
The waning stars cloud-shrouded,  
The land that we descry!

That pale land is our homeland,  
And we are bound therefor;  
On her lawns nor in her coppice  
No birds as yet make stir.

But birds are  
flying round us,  
The white birds of the sea  
It is the breeze of morning,  
This that comes hummingly.

And like the talk that comes from  
A room where a babe is born  
Such clearness and such mystery  
Are in words said on the morn,

Where, like a nation cloven,  
In two our ranks divide:  
One half on the high ship's bulwark,  
One half by the tender's side;

Where, like a people sundered,  
Who yet have each other's hail,  
Faces look down from the bulwarks,  
And look up from the tender's rail;

And names are called and spoken  
'Nancy,' 'Mary,' 'Owen!'  
'Good-bye, and keep your promise!'  
'Farewell to you, my son!'

They are more spirit-stirring  
Than any words that are  
Remembered from the spokesmen

Of any avatar!

'Oh, all I had to tell you!'  
'Ellen,' 'Michael,' 'Joan'-  
'Good-bye, and God be with you!'  
'And can it be you're gone!'

The great ship lantern-girdled,  
Her engines thresh, immerse  
The great ship that had station  
Takes motion for her course.

Her little course the tender,  
Our little ship, goes on  
The stars they are fast waning,  
But we'll land ere 'tis the dawn!

Green, greener grows the foreland  
Across the slate-dark sea,  
And I'll see faces, places  
That have been dreams to me!

Padraic Colum



# The Old College

Of the Irish, Paris  
THE Lombards having gone back to their land,  
We, who might never flock to native land  
Except like birds that fly like fugitives,  
Desperately, in a wind across the sea,  
We drew our brood to their forsaken nest.  
The Lombards' halls became the Irelanders',  
And charity was craved for us 'twas given  
In names of Almantza and Namur,  
Cremona, Barcelona, Charleroi  
Fields that our soldiers bled on for a cause  
Not ours, under command not ours.

Our order broken, they who were our brood  
Knew not themselves the heirs of noted masters,  
Of Columbanus and Erigena:  
We strove towards no high reach of speculation,  
Towards no delivery of gestated dogma,  
No resolution of age-long dispute.  
Only to have a priest beside the hedges,  
Baptizing, marrying,  
Offering Mass within some clod-built chapel,  
And to the dying the last sacrament  
Conveying, no more we strove to do  
We, all bare exiles, soldiers, scholars, priests.

Padraic Colum

# The Plougher

Sunset and silence! A man: around him earth savage, earth broken;  
Beside him two horses -- a plough!

Earth savage, earth broken, the brutes, the dawn man there in the sunset,  
And the Plough that is twin to the Sword, that is founder of cities!

"Brute-tamer, plough-maker, earth-breaker! Can'tst hear? There are ages  
between us.

Is it praying you are as you stand there alone in the sunset?

"Surely our sky-born gods can be naught to you, earth child and earth  
master?

Surely your thoughts are of Pan, or of Wotan, or Dana?

"Yet why give thoughts to the gods? Has Pan led your brutes where they  
stumble?

Has Dana numbed pain of the child-bed, or Wotan put hands to your plough?

"What matter your foolish reply! O man, standing lone and bowed earthward,  
Your task is a day near its close. Give thanks to the night-given God."

.....

Slowly the darkness falls, the broken lands blend with the savage;  
The brute-tamer stands by the brutes, a head's breadth only above them.  
A head's breadth? Ay, but therein is hell's depth, and the height up to  
heaven,  
And the thrones of the gods and their halls, their chariots, purples, and  
splendors.

Padraic Colum

# The Poet

'THE blackbird's in the briar,  
The seagull's on the ground-  
They are nests, and they're more than nests,' he said,  
'They are tokens I have found.

There, where the rain-dashed briar  
Marks an empty glade,  
The blackbird's nest is seen,' he said,  
'Clay-rimmed, uncunningly made.

By shore of the inland lake,  
Where surgeless water shoves,  
The seagulls have their nests,' he said,  
'As low as catties' hooves.'

I heard a poet say it,  
The sojourner of a night;  
His head was up to the rafter,  
Where he stood in candles' light.

'Your houses are like the seagulls'  
Nests they are scattered and low;  
Like the blackbirds' nests in briars,' he said,  
'Uncunningly made even so.

But close to the ground are reared  
The wings that have widest sway,  
And the birds that sing best in the wood,' he said,  
'Were reared with breasts to the clay.

You've wildness I've turned it to song;  
You've strength I've turned it to wings;  
The welkin's for your conquest then,  
The wood to your music rings.'

I heard a poet say it,  
The sojourner of a night;  
His head was up to the rafter,  
Where he stood in candles' light.



# The Poor Girl's Meditation

I AM sitting here  
Since the moon rose in the night,  
Kindling a fire,  
And striving to keep it alight;  
The folk of the house are lying  
In slumber deep;  
The geese will be gabbling soon:  
The whole of the land is asleep.

May I never leave this world  
Until my ill-luck is gone;  
Till I have cows and sheep,  
And the lad that I love for my own;  
I would not think it long,  
The night I would lie at his breast,  
And the daughters of spite, after that,  
Might say the thing they liked best.

Love takes the place of hate,  
If a girl have beauty at all:  
On a bed that was narrow and high,  
A three-month I lay by the wall:  
When I bethought on the lad  
That I left on the brow of the hill,  
I wept from dark until dark,  
And my cheeks have the tear-tracks still.

And, O young lad that I love,  
I am no mark for your scorn;  
All you can say of me is  
Undowered I was born:  
And if I've no fortune in hand,  
Nor cattle and sheep of my own,  
This I can say, O lad,  
I am fitted to lie my lone!

Padraic Colum

# The Resplendent Quetzal-Bird

OTHERS have divers paints and enamels,  
Lavish and bright on breast and wing feathers:  
You, Guatemalan, have sunken all colours  
Into glory of greenness!

There may be palms as greenly resplendent,  
Palms by the Fountain of Youth in Anahuac  
Such greens there may be on sea-sunken bronzes  
The Gates of Callao!

There may be words in rituals spoken  
To Quetzalcoatl who makes verdure through rain-flow  
Words like the gash made by knives of obsidian  
To tell of such greenness!

Padraic Colum

# The Rune-Master

ARCH-SCHOLAR they'll call you,  
Kuno Mayer,  
Who know the word  
Behind the word  
The men of learning . . .  
But who will tell them  
Of the blackbird  
That your heart held?

On an old thorn-tree  
By an ancient rath  
You heard him sing,  
And with runes you charmed him  
Till he stayed with you,  
Giving clear song.

He sang o'er all  
That Maravaun  
Told King Guire;  
And he told you how  
Bran heard the singing  
Of a lovely woman  
And sailed for Faerie;  
And of how slain princes  
Kept tryst with women  
Loved beyond  
The pain of death,  
In days when still  
The boat of Mananaun  
Bore towards Eirinn!

Arch-scholar they'll call you  
Nay, Rune-master!  
You read in texts  
Not words only,  
But runes of old time;  
And when you spoke them  
A curlew cried  
Over grass-waste Tara,

And a cuckoo called  
From the height of Cashel,  
And an eagle flew  
From Emain Macha!

Ochone, ochone!  
That we'll see no more  
In the Eastern or  
The Western World  
Your great head over  
The lectern bending,  
Nor hear your lore  
By a pleasant fireside.

But the runes you've read  
Have given us more  
Than the sword might win us:  
May kind saints of Eirinn  
Be beside you  
Where birds on the Living  
Tree sing the Hours!

Padraic Colum



# The Sea Bird To The Wave

On and on,  
O white brother!  
Thunder does not daunt thee!  
How thou movest!  
By thine impulse  
With no wing!  
Fairest thing  
The wide sea shows me!  
On and on  
O white brother!  
Art thou gone!

Padraic Colum

# The Sister's Lullaby

You would not slumber  
If laid at my breast:  
You would not slumber.

The river-flood beats  
The swan from her nest:  
You would not slumber.

And like that quick flood  
My blood goes unguessed:  
You would not slumber.

Times without number  
Has called the wood quest:  
Times without number.

As oft as she called  
To me you were pressed:  
Times without number.

Now you'd not slumber  
If laid at my breast  
Times without number.

O starling reed-resting,  
I'll rock you to rest:  
So you will slumber.

Padraic Colum

# The Terrible Robber Men

OH I wish the sun was bright in the sky,  
And the fox was back in his den O!  
For always I'm hearing the passing by  
Of the terrible robber men O!  
Of the terrible robber men.

Oh what does the fox carry over the rye,  
When it's bright in the morn again O!  
And what is it making the lonesome cry  
With the terrible robber men O!  
With the terrible robber men.

Oh I wish the sun was bright in the sky,  
And the fox was back in his den O!  
For always I'm hearing the passing by  
Of the terrible robber men O!  
With the terrible robber men.

Padraic Colum

# The Tin-Whistle Player

'Tis long since, long since, since I heard  
A tin-whistle played,  
And heard the tunes, the ha'penny tunes  
That nobody made!

The tunes that were before Cendfind  
And Cir went Ireland's rounds  
That were before the surety  
That strings have given sounds!

And now is standing in the mist,  
And jigging backward there,  
Shrilling with fingers and with breath,  
A tin-whistle player!

He has hare's eyes, a long face rimmed  
Around with badger-grey;  
Aimless, like cries of mountain birds  
The tunes he has to play

The tunes that are for stretches bare,  
And men whose lives are lone  
And I had seen that face of his  
Sculptured on cross of stone,  
That long face, in a place of graves  
With nettles overgrown.

Padraic Colum

# The Toy-Maker

I AM the Toy-maker; I have brought from the town  
As much in my plack as should fetch a whole crown,  
I'll array for you now my stock of renown  
And man's the raree will show you.

Here's a horse that is rearing to bound through the smoke  
Of cannon and musket, and, face to that ruck,  
The horseman with sword ready-held for the stroke,  
Lord Lucan, maybe, or Prince Charlie.

An old woman sitting and waiting for call,  
With her baskets of cockles and apples and all;  
A one-legged sailor attending a ball,  
And a tailor and nailer busy.

Or would you have these? A goose ganging by,  
With head up in challenge to all who come nigh;  
A cock with a comb dangling over his eye,  
And a hen on a clutch nicely sitting;

Or a duck that is chasing a quick thing around,  
Or a crow that is taking three hops on the ground,  
Or an ass with head down (he is held in a pound);  
Or a fox with his tail curled around him?

A ship made of shells that have sheen of the sea,  
All ready to sail for black Barbarie,  
The Lowlands of Holland, or High Germanic  
And who'll be the one that will steer her?

I'll speak of my trade: there's a day beyond day  
When the hound needn't hunt and the priest needn't pray,  
And the clerk needn't write, and the hen needn't lay,  
Whence come all the things that I show you.

I am the Toy-maker; upon the town wall  
My crib is high up; I have down-look on all,  
And coach and wheelbarrow I carve in my stall,  
Making things with no troubles in them.

Padraic Colum

# The Wayfarer

## I. THE TREES

THERE is no glory of the sunset here!  
Heavy the clouds upon the darkening road,  
And heavy, too, the wind upon the trees!  
The trees sway, making moan  
Continuous, like breaking seas.  
impotent, bare things,  
You give at last the very cry of earth!  
I walk this darkening road in solemn mood:  
Within deep hell came Dante to a wood  
Like him I marvel at the crying trees!

## II. THE STAR

A mighty star anear has drawn and now  
Is vibrant on the air

The half-divested, trembling trees of his  
Bright presence are aware

Below within the stream I him behold  
Between the marge and main -

My bone and flesh, what dust they'll be when he,  
That star, dips here again!

## III. THE CAPTIVE ARCHER

To-morrow I will bend the bow:  
My soul shall have her mark again,  
My bosom feel the archer's strain.  
No longer pacing to and fro  
With idle hands and listless brain:

As goes the arrow, forth I go.  
My soul shall have her mark again,  
My bosom feel the archer's strain.  
To-morrow I will bend the bow.

#### IV. TRIUMPHATORS

The drivers in the sunset race  
Their coal-carts over cobble-stones  
Not draymen but triumphators:  
Their bags are left with Smith and Jones,  
They let the horses take their stride,  
Which toss their forelocks in their pride.

Not blue nor green these factions wear  
Which make career o'er Dublin stones;  
But Pluto his own livery  
Is what each whip-carrier owns.  
The Caesar of the cab-rank, I  
Salute the triumph speeding by.

Padraic Colum



# Tulips

An age being mathematical, these flowers  
Of linear stalks and spheroid blooms were prized  
By men with wakened, speculative minds,  
And when with mathematics they explored  
The Macrocosm, and came at last to  
The Vital Spirit of the World, and named it  
Invisible Pure Fire, or, say, the Light,  
The Tulips were the Light's receptacles.  
The gold, the bronze, the red, the bright-swart Tulips!  
No emblems they for us who no more dream  
Of mathematics burgeoning to light  
With Newton's prism and Spinoza's lens,  
Or Berkeley's ultimate, Invisible Pure Fire.  
In colored state and carven brilliancy  
We see them now, or, more illumined,  
In sudden fieriness, as flowers fit  
To go with vestments red on Pentecost.

Padraic Colum

# Verses For Alfeo Faggi's Stations Of The Cross

I

HERE Pilate's Court is:

None may clatter nor call  
Where the Wolf giving suck  
To the Twins glares on all  
'Strip Him and scourge Him  
Till flesh shows the blood,  
And afterwards nail Him  
On cross of wood.'

O Lord

Silence in us the condemning word!

II

Heaven witnesseth, but only in the heart

Is any aid:

'They know not what they do,' and then on Him

The Cross is laid

The Cross that's wide and long enough to bear

His flesh and bone:

A spectacle unto the crowded way,

The Man goes on.

The Father's will

May we know also, and may we fulfil!

III

Beneath the load

The knees quail;

The heart pants,

The joints fail;

Almost the bones break;

He faints, his breath being loss;

He sinks beneath the Cross!

May we

Be mindful of this road to Calvary!

IV

Jesus His Mother meets:

She looks on Him and sees

The Saviour in Her Son:

The Angel's word comes back:  
Within her heart she says,  
'Unto me let this be done!'  
Still is she full of grace.  
By us, too, be it won  
The grace that brings us revelation!

V

'If He should die upon the road  
That were a turn of ill:  
'Tis fixed the Crucifixion be  
Upon that skull-shaped hill.  
Ho, man who looks with pity on  
The Man we take to death  
Bear you the Cross I order it  
Until He wins back breath.'  
We take  
Our hearts being moved, the Cross up for Thy sake!

VI

Down to her face His face He bends:  
The helper she, the heartner:  
His image in her cloth He leaves;  
He leaves it, too, to all like her  
Who serve within a little room,  
But run to help outside the door,  
Who mend and brighten needed things:  
He leaves it to good hearts, the Poor!  
May we, too, wait,  
Like her, and help, and be compassionate!

VII

The Spirit is willing aye,  
But weak the flesh put on;  
Deadly the Cross's weight;  
He stumbles on a stone,  
And lies upon the road,  
Seeing His Body's blood.  
May we  
Forget not in these times that agony!

VIII

Heavy the Cross is:  
He drags beneath its beam,  
Yet, Women of Jerusalem,  
Weep not for Him:  
Weep for your children, rather,  
For that they cannot see  
The true Son of David,  
The Saviour, shown ye.  
O Lord,  
Also to us say the revealing word!

IX  
The skull-shaped hill is near:  
The earth and heaven are bare  
Of light, and sight, and sound;  
He falls upon the ground,  
Knowing that journey's end  
Without one to befriend.  
O Lord  
Bring us to Life according to Thy word!

X  
'Wouldst have me share this cloth,  
Dividing it with sword?  
Nay, fellow, we will keep it whole,  
But hearken to my word:  
Behind the Cross the dice  
We'll throw; who wins will get  
What's high enough in price  
To pay a tavern debt.'  
The vesture that makes one with Thee our soul,  
May we keep whole!

XI  
'This thong, I know, will last;  
Draw out the arm and make it fast;  
Through hand and board with strength  
Drive the nail of mickle length.  
Now, King of the Jews, in the sun,  
Gape, for our work is done.'  
God send  
That our labours have no evil end!

## XII

The birds are flying home,  
Now darkened is the sky,  
And He hath given up  
With that great bitter cry  
The ghost, and on the Cross  
(His Mother stays by it),  
The title rightly His,  
KING is writ.  
May we draw near  
Considering in our hearts what Man is here!

## XIII

Though pitiful it is to see  
The wounds, the broken Body,  
(The Body of Him that was  
As fair as lily of the grass!)  
Though the brow with thorns is riven,  
And a spear through the side is driven,  
It was all for our healing done,  
Mother, by thy Son!  
May we  
This Body in its glory come to see!

## XIV

Now in the tomb is laid  
Who had neither house nor hall,  
Who in the wide world walked,  
And talked with one and all;  
Who told the sparrow's worth,  
The lily's praises said,  
Who kept wakeful in the garden  
Now in the tomb is laid.  
His Spirit still doth move  
On a new way of love!

## L'ENVOI

Prince, by thine own darkened hour,  
Live within me, heart and brain;  
Let my hands not slip the rein!  
Ah, how long ago the hour

Since a comrade rode with me:  
Now, a moment, let me see  
Thyself, lonely in the dark,  
Perfect, without wound nor mark!

Padraic Colum

# Vultures

FOUL-FEATHERED and scald-necked,  
They sit in evil state;  
Raw marks upon their breasts  
As on men's wearing chains.

Impure, though they may plunge  
Into the morning's springs,  
And spirit-dulled, though they  
Command the heaven's heights.

Angels of foulness, ye,  
So fierce against the dead!  
Sloth on your muffled wings,  
And speed within your eyes!

Padraic Colum

# What The Shutter Said As She Lay By The Fire

In The Farmer's House

I'M glad to lie on a sack of leaves  
By a wasted fire and take my ease.  
For the wind would strip me bare as a tree  
The wind would blow out' age upon me,  
And I'm dazed with the wind, the rain, and the cold!  
If I had only the good red gold  
To buy me the comfort of a roof,  
And under the thatch the brown of the smoke!  
I'd be up in my painted room  
Until my hired girl would come;  
And when the sun had warmed my walls  
I'd rise up in my silks and shawls,  
And break my fast beside the fire.  
And I'd watch them that had to sweat  
And shiver for shelter and what they ate  
The farmer digging in the fields,  
The beggars going from gate to gate,  
The horses striving with their loads,  
And all the sights upon the roads.

I'd live my lone without clan nor care,  
And none around me to crave a share:  
The young have mocking, impudent ways,  
And I'd never let them a-nigh my place,  
And a child has often a pitiful face.  
I'd give the rambling fiddler rest,  
And for me he would play his best,  
And he'd have something to tell of me  
From the Moat of Granard down to the sea!  
And, though I'd keep distant, I'd let in

Out' women who would card and spin,  
And clash with me, and I'd hear it said,  
'Mor, who used to carry her head  
As if she was a lady bred,  
Has little enough in her house, they say;  
And such a one's child I saw on the way  
Scaring crows from a crop, and glad to get



In a warmer house, the bit to eat  
Oh, none are safe and none secure,  
And it's well for some whose bit is sure!

I'd never grudge them the weight of their lands  
If I had only the good red gold  
To huggle between my breast and my hands!

Padraic Colum

# Wild Ass

THE Wild Ass lounges, legs struck out  
In vagrom unconcern:  
The tombs o Achaemenian kings  
Are for those hooves to spurn.

And all of rugged Tartary  
Lies with him on the ground,  
The Tartary that knows no awe,  
That has nor ban nor bound.

The wild horse from the herd is plucked  
To bear a saddle's weight;  
The boar is one keeps covert, and  
The wolf runs with a mate.

But he's the solitary of space,  
Curbless and unbeguiled;  
The only being that bears a heart  
Not recreant to the wild.

Padraic Colum

## Young Girl: Annam

I AM a young girl;  
I live here alone:  
I write long letters  
But there is no one

For me to send them to. My heart  
Teaches me loving words to use,  
But I can repeat them only  
In the garden, to the tall bamboos.

Expectantly I stand beside the door. I raise  
The hanging mat. I,  
The letter folded, gaze out  
And see shadows of the passers-by.

In the garden the fire-flies  
Quench and kindle their soft glow:  
I am one separated,  
But from whom I do not know.

Padraic Colum