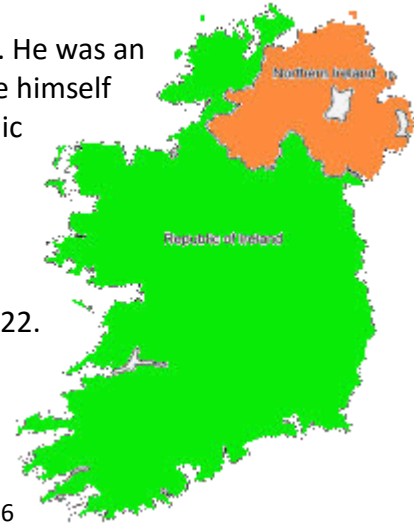


Mise Éire

I Am Ireland



This poem was written by Patrick Henry Pearse (Pádraic Mac Piarais), 1879–1916. He was an Irish educator, patriot and poet, educated for the law but early in his career made himself part of the Gaelic movement in Ireland. Pearse was active in the work of the Gaelic League and edited its journal, *An Claidheamh Soluis*. He founded the influential bilingual St. Enda's School near Dublin. He joined (1913) the Irish Volunteers and commanded the Irish forces in the Easter Rebellion of 1916. Upon his surrender he was tried by court-martial in England and promptly executed. His stories, poems, and plays were collected in 1917, his political writings and speeches in 1922.



Pádraic Mac Piarais (Patrick Pearse) (1879–1916)

Mise Éire - I am Ireland

Ireland April 7th, 1916

Mise Éire: Sine mé ná an Chailleach* Bhéarra	I am Ireland: I am older than the old woman* of Beare.
Mór mo ghlóir: Mé a rug Cú Chulainn cróga.	Great my glory: I who bore Cuchulainn, the brave.
Mór mo náir: Mo chlann féin a dhíol a máthair.	Great my shame: My own children who sold their mother.
Mór mo phian: Bithnaimhde do mo shíorchiapadh.	Great my pain: My irreconcilable enemy who harasses me continually...
Mór mo bhrón: D'éag an dream inar chuireas dóchas.	Great my sorrow That crowd, in whom I placed my trust, died.
Mise Éire: Uaigní mé ná an Chailleach* Bhéarra.	I am Ireland: I am lonelier than the old woman* of Beare.

* an Chailleach = old woman = witch

Courtesy of Jack & Vivian, IrishPage.com, February 2009

"I speak to my people, and I speak in my people's name to the masters of my people. I say to my people that they are holy, that they are august, despite their chains, That they are greater than those that hold them, and stronger and purer, That they have but need of courage, and to call on the name of their God, God the unforgetting, the dear God that loves the peoples For whom He died naked, suffering shame. And I say to my people's masters: Beware, Beware of the thing that is coming, beware of the risen people, Who shall take what ye would not give. Did ye think to conquer the people, Or that Law is stronger than life and than men's desire to be free? We will try it out with you, ye that have harried and held, Ye that have bullied and bribed, tyrants, hypocrites, liars!" - Excerpt from "The Rebel" by Patrick Pearse.

The Hag of Béara
Ninth century, anonymous

I am ebbing—but not like the sea.
It is age drains my colour
bringing me only grief,
while the sea's glad tide will return.

I am Buí, the hag of Béara.
I had new shifts once to wear
but am so cast down today
I haven't one cast-off shift.

Possessions,
not people, is all you value.
As for me, when I was young
it was people only I loved.

And the people I loved the most,
I traveled across their land
and they looked after me well
and boasted little about it.

Now people ask politely
But won't give much away,
and little though they give
they boast about it greatly.

Chariots at high speed
And horses seizing the prize,
there was a flood of them once.
And I bless the King who gave them.

Now my body gropes out sourly
Sensing its destined home,
and whenever it suits God's Son
let Him come and recover His loan.

Nothing but narrow bones
you will see when you look at my arms.
But they did sweet business once
round the bodies of mighty kings.

Look at my arms: you will see
Nothing but narrow bones.
They are not worth lifting up

to circle a sweet young man.

Young girls fill with pleasure
When Beltaine comes around,
but misery suits me better,
An ancient thing, past pity.

There's no honey in my talk,
No sheep are killed for my wedding.
My hair is scarce and grey.
If my veil is thin, what matter?

And no matter
If the veil on my head is white
--who had veils of every colour
and drank the best of beer.

So I'll envy no ancient thing
except the hill of Femen:
I have worn out age's garment
But Femen's hair holds its yellow.

The royal stone at Femen
And Rónán's cahir at Bregon
--it is long since the storm first touched them
yet their cheeks are not old or worn.

Winter begins to waken
The sea's great roaring wave
and I cannot look forward now
to company high or low.

It is many a day
since I sailed the seas of youth.
The years of my beauty are over
and all my lust is spent.

Many a day
Since I have felt the heat.
I go full dressed in the sun.
I feel old age upon me.

The summer of my youth

And the autumn, too, are spent.
 And winter that ends it all
 --its first days have touched me.

I wasted my youth from the start
 and I'm glad I chose to do it.
 If I'd 'leaped the wall' only a little
 would this cloak be any the newer?

Lovely the cloak of green
 that my King has thrown on the hill
 and great is the One who dyed it
 and Who makes soft wool from coarse.

Pity me: only a wretch.
 Every acorn rots away.
 The feast of bright candles is over
 and I'm left in this darkened cell.

I had business once with kings
 and drank their mead and wine.
 But I drink whey-water now
 with other withered ancients.

For beer, a cup of whey. . .
 But my trials be all God's will.
 I pray thee, living God,
 avert my blood from rage.

With age's stained cloak around me
 my senses start to deceive.
 Grey hair grows out of my skin
 like rot on an ancient tree.

My right eye taken from me
 down-paid on the Promised Land.
 And the left eye taken too

to make the title sure.

There is a wave at the flood
 and another at the swift ebb
 and what the flood wave gives
 the ebb takes from your hands.

The flood wave
 and that other wave at the ebb,
 both have come upon me
 and I know them well.

The flood wave
 Couldn't reach my cellar now.
 I had a great following once
 But a hand fell on them all.

If the Son of Mary knew
 He'd lie under my cellar pole!
 There's nothing much for Him there
 but I never said no to a man.

Everything is wretched
 And the wretchedest thing is Man.
 He sees the flood-tide ebb
 but his ebb without an end.

Happy the isle in the ocean wide
 Where the flood follows the ebb.
 As for me, after my ebb
 I can look forward to nothing.

There is scarcely a single house
 I still can recognize.
 What once was full in flood
 has ebbed to the full at last.

Amergin Glúingel 10th century poems about earlier period...

The Song of Amergin

I am a stag of seven tines,
 I am a wide flood on a plain,
 I am a wind on the deep waters,
 I am a shining tear of the sun,

I am a hawk on a cliff,
 I am fair among flowers,
 I am a god who sets the head afire with smoke.
 I am a battle waging spear,
 I am a salmon in the pool,
 I am a hill of poetry,
 I am a ruthless boar,
 I am a threatening noise of the sea,
 I am a wave of the sea,
 Who but I knows the secrets of the unhewn dolmen ?

Duan Amhairghine

Am gáeth tar na bhfarraige
 Am tuile os chinn maighe
 Am dord na daíthbhe
 Am damh seacht mbeann
 Am drúchtín rotuí ó ngréin
 Am an fráich torc
 Am seabhac a néad i n-aill
 Am ard filidheachta
 Am álaine bhláithibh
 Am an t-eo fis
 Cía an crann agus an theine ag tuitim faire
 Cía an dhíamhairina cloch neamh shnaidhite
 Am an ríáin gach uile choirceoige
 Am an theine far gach uile chnoic
 Am an scíath far gach uile chinn
 Am an sleagh catha
 Am nóma tonnag sírhintaghaív
 Am úagh gach uile dhóich dhíamaíní
 Cía fios aige conara na gréine agus linn na éisce
 Cía tionól na rinn aige, ceangladh na farraige,
 cor i n-eagar na harda, na haibhne, na túatha.

Amergin's Challenge

I am a wind across the sea
 I am a flood across the plain
 I am the roar of the tides
 I am a stag* of seven (pair) tines
 I am a dewdrop let fall by the sun
 I am the fierceness of boars*
 I am a hawk, my nest on a cliff
 I am a height of poetry (magical skill)
 I am the most beautiful among flowers
 I am the salmon* of wisdom
 Who (but I) is both the tree and the lightning strikes it
 Who is the dark secret of the dolmen not yet hewn
 I am the queen of every hive
 I am the fire on every hill
 I am the shield over every head
 I am the spear of battle
 I am the ninth* wave of eternal return
 I am the grave of every vain hope
 Who knows the path of the sun, the periods of the moon
 Who gathers the divisions, enthralls the sea,
 sets in order the mountains. the rivers, the peoples

Toghairm na hÉireann

Áiliu íath nÉireann
 éarmach muir
 mothach sliabh screatach
 screatach coill citheach
 citheach ab eascach
 eascach loch linnmhar

Amergin's Invocation of Ireland

I request the land of Ireland (to come forth)
 coursed is the wild sea
 wild the crying mountains
 crying the generous woods
 generous in showers (rain/waterfalls)
 showers lakes and vast pools

linmhar tor tiopra	vast pools hosts of well-springs
tiopra túath óenach	well-springs of tribes in assembly
óemach ríg Teamhrach	assembly of kings of Tara
Teamhair tor túathach	Tara host of tribes
túathach mac Mhíleadh	tribes of the sons of Mil
Míleadh long libearn	Mil of boats and ships
libearn ar nÉirinn	ships come to Ireland
Éireann ard díglas	Ireland high terribly blue
dícheatal ro gáeth	an incantation on the (same) wind
ro gáeth bán Bhreise	(which was the) wind empty of Bres
Breise bán buaigne	Bres of an empty cup
Bé adhbhul Ériu	Ireland be mighty
Érimon ar dtús	Ermon at the beginning
Ir, Éber, áileas	Ir, Eber, requested
áiliu íath nÉireann	(now it is) I (who) request the land of Ireland!

Another version:

I am the wind which breathes upon the sea
 I am the wave of the ocean.
 I am the murmur of the billows.
 I am the ox of the seven combats.
 I am the vulture upon the rocks.
 I am a beam of the Sun.
 I am the fairest of plants.
 I am a wild boar in valour.
 I am a salmon in the water.
 I am a lake in the plain.
 I am a word of science.
 I am a point of a lance in battle.
 I am the God who created in the head the fire.
 Who is it who throws light into the meeting in the mountain?
 Who announces the ages of the Moon? Who teaches the place where couches the Sun?
 If not I? I invoke the land of Ireland!

Another version:

I am Wind on Sea,
 I am Ocean-wave,
 I am Roar of Sea,
 I am Bull of Seven Fights,
 I am Vulture on Cliff,
 I am Dewdrop,
 I am Fairest of Flowers,
 I am Boar for Boldness,

I am Salmon in Pool,
I am Lake on Plain...
I am Word of Skill,
I am the Point of a Weapon (that poureth forth combats),
I am God who fashioned Fire for a Head.
Who smootheth the ruggedness of a mountain?
Who is He who announceth the ages of the Moon?
And who, the place where falleth the sunset?
Who calleth the cattle from the House of Tethra?
On whom do the cattle of Tethra smile?
Who is the troop, who the god who fashioneth edges...?
Enchantments about a spear? Enchantments of Wind?"

Eavan Boland 1944-**Mise Éire**

I won't go back to it –
 into old dactyls,
 oaths made
 by the animal tallows
 of the candle –

land of the Gulf Stream,
 the small farm,
 the scalded memory,
 the songs
 that bandage up the history,
 the words
 that make a rhythm of the crime

where time is time past.
 A palsy of regrets.
 No. I won't go back.
 My roots are brutal:

I am the woman –
 a sloven's mix
 of silk at the wrists,
 a sort of dove-strut
 in the precincts of the garrison –

who practises
 the quick frictions,
 the rictus of delight
 and gets cambric for it,
 rice-coloured silks.

I am the woman
 in the gansy-coat
 on board the 'Mary Belle',
 in the huddling cold,

holding her half-dead baby to
 her as the wind shifts east
 and north over the dirty
 water of the wharf

mingling the immigrant
guttural with the vowels
of homesickness who neither
knows nor cares that

a new language
is a kind of scar
and heals after a while
into a passable imitation
of what went before.

William Butler Yeats 1864-1939

I Am Of Ireland

*'I am of Ireland,
And the Holy Land of Ireland,
And time runs on,' cried she.
'Come out of charity,
Come dance with me in Ireland.'*

One man, one man alone
In that outlandish gear,
One solitary man
Of all that rambled there
Had turned his stately head.
That is a long way off,
And time runs on,' he said,
'And the night grows rough.'

*'I am of Ireland,
And the Holy Land of Ireland,
And time runs on,' cried she.
'Come out of charity
And dance with me in Ireland.'*

'The fiddlers are all thumbs,
Or the fiddle-string accursed,
The drums and the kettledrums
And the trumpets all are burst,
And the trombone,' cried he,
'The trumpet and trombone,'
And cocked a malicious eye,
'But time runs on, runs on.'

*I am of Ireland,
And the Holy Land of Ireland,
And time runs on,' cried she.
"Come out of charity
And dance with me in Ireland.'*

Nuala Ní Dhomhail (1952-)

Hag

Once I dreamt I was the earth,
the parish of Ventry its length and breadth,
east and west, as far as it runs,
that the brow of the Maoileann
was my forehead, Mount Eagle
the swell of my flank,
the side of the mountain
my shanks and backbone,
that the sea was lapping
the twin rocks of my feet,
the twin rocks of Parkmore
from the old Fenian tales.

That dream was so real
That when I woked next morning
I glanced down to see if, perchance
my feet were still wet.
Then off I went, and promptly forgot
All about my vision until,
O, when was it exactly, nearly
two years later, the fright
of my daughter stirred again
The dregs of that dream.

We were strolling the sand
But she was so dead-beat
She turned towards home, while
I trudged onwards alone.
Before I got far, I heard
Her come running back, sniveling
And sobbing at every step's breath.
'What's wrong?' 'O, Mam, I'm scared stiff,
I thought I saw the mountains heaving
Like a giantess, with her breasts swaying,
About to loom over, and gobble me up.'

(Translated by John Montague)

Ceist na Teangan

Cuirim mo dhóchas ar snámh
 i mbáidín teangan
 faoi mar a leagfa náionán
 i gliabhán
 a bheadh fite fuaite
 de dhuilleoga feileastraim
 is bitiúman agus pic
 an bhfóirfidh iníon Fharoinn?
 bheith cuimilte lena thóin

ansan é a leagadh síos
 i measc na ngiolcach
 is coigeal na mban sí
 le taobh na habhann,
 féachaint n'fheadaraís
 cá dtabharfaidh an sruth é,
 féachaint, dála Mhaoise,
 an bhóirfidh iníon Fharoinn?

The Language Issue

I place my hope on the water
 in this little boat
 of the language, the way a body might put
 an infant

in a basket of intertwined
 iris leaves,
 its underside proofed
 with bitumen and pitch,

then set the whole thing down amidst
 the sedge
 and the bulrushes by the edge
 of a river

only to have it borne hither and thither,
 not knowing where it might end up;
 in the lap, perhaps,
 of some Pharaoh's daughter.

(Translated by Paul Muldoon)

Thomas Moore 1779-1852**Let Erin Remember**

Let Erin remember the days of old,
 Ere her faithless sons betray'd her,
 When Malachi wore the collar of gold,
 Which he won from her proud invader;
 When her kings, with standard of green unfurl'd,
 Led the Red-Branch knights to danger;
 Ere the em'rald gem of the western world
 Was set in the crown of a stranger.

On Lough Neagh's band, as the fisherman strays,
 When the clear cold eve's declining,
 He sees the round tow'rs of other days
 In the wave beneath him shining!
 Thus shall mem'ry often, in dreams sublime,
 Catch a glimpse of the days that are over;

Thus sighing, look thro' the waves of Time
For the long faded glories they cover!

As Vanquished Erin

As vanquished Erin wept beside
The Boyne's ill-fated river,
She saw where Discord, in the tide,
Had dropped his loaded quiver.
Lie hid, she cried, ye venom'd darts,
Where mortal eye may shun you;
Lie hid -- for oh! the stain of hearts
That bled for me is on you.

But vain her wish, her weeping vain --
As Time too well hath taught her:
Each year the fiend returns again,
And dives into that water:
And brings triumphant, from beneath,
His shafts of desolation,
And sends them, winged with worse than death,
Throughout her maddening nation.

Alas for her who sits and mourns,
Even now beside that river --
Unwearied still the fiend returns,
And stored is still his quiver.
When will this end? ye Powers of Good!
She weeping asks for ever;
But only hears, from out that flood,
The demon answer, Never!

Though the Last Glimpse of Erin

Though the last glimpse of Erin with sorrow I see,
Yet wherever thou art shall seem Erin to me;
In exile thy bosom shall still be my home,
And thine eyes make my climate wherever we roam.

To the gloom of some desert or cold rocky shore,
Where the eye of the stranger can haunt us no more,
I will fly with my Coulin, and think the rough wind
Less rude than the foes we leave frowning behind.

And I'll gaze on thy gold hair as graceful it wreathes,
And hang o'er thy soft harp as wildly it breathes;

Nor dread that the cold hearted Saxon will tear
One chord from that harp, or one lock from that hair.*

Anonymous

An Ghaeilge

Is mise an Ghaeilge
Is mise do theanga
Is mise do chultúr
D'Úsáid na Filí mé
D'Úsáid na huaisle
D'Úsáid na daoine mé
is d'Úsáid na lenaí
Go bródúil a bhí siad
Agus mise faoi réim.

Ach tháinig an strainséir
Chuir sé faoi chois mé
Is rud ní ba mheasa
Nior mhaith le mo chlann mé
Anois táim lag
Anois táim tréith
Ach fós táim libh
Is beidh mé go beo.
Tóg suas mo cheann
Cuir áthas ar mo chroí
Labhraí mé
Ó labhraí mé!

The Irish Language

I am Irish
I am your language
I am your culture
The poets used me
The nobles used me
The people used me
and the children used me
Proud they were
And I flourished.

But the stranger came
He suppressed me
Something worse than that was
my own people rejected me
Now I am weak
Now I am feeble
But still I am with you
and I will be forever.
Raise up my head
Put joy in my heart
Speak me
Oh speak me!

Kathleen O'Driscoll (1941---)

Motherland

So long, my mystic land of milk and honey,
Beefy bankers, trendy lawyer-landlords,
Faultless pedigreed, god fearing killers exchanging
Tory blue for tory green.
You plump complacent sow
Devouring your fat farrow
While you shed the half-dead weak ones
On your neighbor, your own life long enemy,
Whom you blackmail to feed them on her scraps
Or else you'll tell the world of her dire meanness.

You think I'll quit your misty shores
In loving tears, forget my terror of your greedy henchmen,

Sing romantic ballads of your legendary beauties,
And perhaps return to die among your saints and heroes?

You puffed up, arrogant bloodsucker,
If I survive no thanks to you,
I'll show each soul I meet
My shrunken twisted heart
And give you credit
For your economic artistry.