

Selected Poetry

Far Away from Ireland

Though I'm far and very far away from Ireland,
There's a knot of purple thistles on a cliff above the sea,
Like a silver censer flaming between the sky and me,
The blood-red bells of fuchsias swing around a cabin door,
Where the yellow sunlight showers down to flood the earthen floor,

Far away, and very far away, in Ireland.

Though I'm far and very far away from Ireland,
There's a grey rock 'mid the heather where the bees hum
all the day,

Adown its mossy shoulder trails a crimson briar spray,
Like a craobh of ancient Ogham locked beneath Time's
magic key,

But the beauty of its message is as clear as dawn to me
Far away, and very far away in Ireland.

Though I'm far and very far away from Ireland
There's a turf-cart standing idle in a quiet village street,
The hens roosting on its axle in the shadow from the heat,
There's a barefoot boy beside it looking out towards the
sea,

And the birds have far more trouble for the morrow's morn
than he,

Far away, and very far away, in Ireland.

Thought I'm far and very far away from Ireland
If the black hand of misfortune had gripped my joyous
heart,

If the red blisters of disgrace had made my pale cheeks
smart,

I'd little heed the trouble or the pain that lay on me,
If climbing on a white road between golden whins I'd be
Far away, and very far away, in Ireland.

—CATHAL O'BYRNE, in the *Irish World*.

A Ballad of Spring's Unrest

Up in the woodland where Spring
Comes as a laggard, the breeze
Whispers the pines that the King,
Fallen, has yielded the keys
'To his White Palace and flees
Northward o'er mountain and dale.
Speed then the hour that frees!
Ho, for the pack and the trail!

Northward my fancy takes wing,
Restless am I, ill at ease.
Pleasures the city can bring
Lose now their power to please.
Barren, all barren, are these,
Town life's a tedious tale;
That cup is drained to the lees—
Ho, for the pack and the trail!

Ho, for the morning I sling
Pack at my back, and with knees
Brushing a thoroughfare, fling
Into the green mysteries:
One with the birds and the bees,
One with the squirrel and quail,
Night, and the stream's melodies—
Ho, for the pack and the trail!

L'ENVOI

Pictures and music and teas,
Theatres—books even—stale.
Ho, for the smell of the trees!
Ho, for the pack and the trail!

—"B.L.T.," in *A Line o' Verse or Two*.

The Hunted

There is no rest for them, even in Death:

As life had barred them from lair to lair,
Still with unquiet eyes and furtive breath,
They haunt the secret by-ways of the air.
They know Earth's outer regions like a street,
And on pale ships that make no port of call,
They pass in silence when they chance to meet,
Saying no names, telling no tales at all.

Yet, on November nights of wind and storm,
Shivered and driven from their ghastly shores,
They peer in lighted windows glowing warm,
And thrill again at dear, remembered doors—
But they are wary listeners in the night:
Speak but a name, and they are off in flight.

—DAVID MORTON, in *Current Opinion*.

Nos Immortales

Perhaps we go with the wind and cloud and sun,
Into the free companionship of air;

Perhaps with sunsets when the day is done,
All's one to me—I do not greatly care;

So long as there are brown hills—and a tree
Like a mad prophet in a land of dearth—

And I can lie and hear eternally

The vast monotonous breathing of the earth.

I have known hours, slow and golden-glowing,
Lovely with laughter and suffused with light,

O Lord, in such a time appoint my going,

When the hands clench, and the cold face grows white,
And the sparks die within the feeble brain,
Spilling its star-dust back to dust again.

—STEPHEN VINCENT BENET, in the *Literary Digest*.

Theocritus

Not of war nor of tears did he build his song,
For the hills and the fields and the shepherd throng
Are caught in his delicate net of words,
With the dread wood-nymphs and the gray seabirds.

"Daphnis," he sang. "Daphnis is dying now.

Ye violets bear thorns, ye cattle bow

Your heads and weep for Daphnis." And he sang
Of Polyphemus till the meadows rang.

Of Echines he sang; then bowed his head

And sang of Amaryllis loved, yet dead.

Then in a gladdened tone he told the tales

Of goatherds' loves in still Sicilian vales.

There the cicada with a noisy note

Chirped in the pine-tree while the poet wrote.

Within his verse he caught the hum of bees

That haunt the flowers underneath the trees.

—MARY LAPSLEY CAUGHEY, in the *North American Review*.

Nausikaa

You will never be old!

The days and the years go by,

And centuries have rolled

Over the Phaeacian sky.

But you are a girl and run,

Fresh bathed and warm and sweet,

After the flying ball,

On little, sandaled feet.

And with The Wanderer

We stand for audience,

Pleased with your gaiety,

Charmed by your innocence.

The women we forget

Age and die quietly,

But you are a maiden yet,

Playing beside the sea.

—LOUISE DRISCOLL, in *Contemporary Verse*.



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