





Dia dhuit, a éisteoir chroíúil – God be with you, dear listener of the heart!

There is a deep meaning as to why you are holding our hearth songs in your hand at this time! Nothing happens accidentally and perhaps you received this as a gift, you heard us sing in concert together or you already heard some of our earlier recordings, but know that this soundscape of ours comes from the heart. We sing to gladden you through these songs which have gladdened our hearts. That is the meaning: We want a secret shaft of light to shine upon you through listening.

On the 6th of January, 2013, Owen and Moley – my two sons - and I recorded some twenty-eight songs. Most of these were ‘first takes’, Eighteen songs made it to this recording.

It was the Christian feast of the Epiphany, or Nollaig na mBan (Women’s Christmas as we call it in Ireland) – the last day of the Christmas season. The place where it happened was no ordinary recording studio. For these three days, we transformed the round room of Glenstal Abbey into our own acoustic space. We loaded in myriads of candles, lamps, inspiring books of prayer and poetry, surpeti and shruti box were also in attendance and of course our dearest friends visited from time to time to urge us on! This is the organic sound of a mother and her two sons singing their hearts out! We hope that some of that blessed time and space, and these very sacred songs will come alive for you in the listening.

And if you listen with the ear of the heart – ‘Auscultat’ (Latin) as St. Benedict named it in the 5th century – you too can join with our voices in a great celebration of gratitude and reverence for the universe, for family and for the subtle presence of the Divine.

Nóirín Ní Riain

1, SIÚIL, A RÚN - 4.06

Song is transformative or 'Song is Reality' the poet Rilke believed.

Therefore, I choose this song to begin. For me it has always been a transfigurative song to sing. Firstly, it weaves in and out of languages expressing a kind of linguistic schizophrenia! In English, this young girl whose loved one has gone to fight in the war in France in 1691, expresses great melancholia and sadness. But then the Irish language creeps in and gradually, the grief is appeased and through the singing, healing is restored. This macaronic (the fancy name for any song that blends differing languages) song I have adapted from the marvellous West Cork singer, Bess Cronin. I often wonder if he ever returned to her. The blessing that she imparts to him from afar, I address to you now, dear listener as you embark on this sonic pilgrimage with us. 'Is go dté tú, [ár éisteoir chroí] slán' – May you, our heart-listener, go safely always!



*I wish I were on yonder hill, it's there I'd sit and weep my fill
Until my tears would turn a mill -
Is go dté tú, mo mhúirnín, slán! (May you, my dearest one, go safely.)*

Curfá/Luinneog

*Siúil siúil siúil a rún, siúil go socair agus siúil go ciúin.
Siúil go doras agus éalaigh liúm, Is go dté tú, mo mhúirnín, slán!
(Chorus: Walk, walk, walk, my love, walk steadfastly and quietly, walk to
my door and steal away with me, and may you, my dearest one, go safely.)*

*I'll sell my rock, I'll sell my reel, I'll sell my ownly spinning wheel - To buy
my love a sword of steel.
Is go dté tú, mo mhúirnín, slán! Curfá/Luinneog*

*Now that my love to France has gone and left me here to weep alone. All
my salt tears would turn to stone.
Is go dté tú, mo mhúirnín, slán! Curfá/Luinneog*

*I'll dye my petticoats, I'll dye them red, And through this world I'll beg for
bread. Until my mother would wish me dead.
Is go dté tú, mo mhúirnín, slán! Curfá/Luinneog: SLÁN!*

2, UBI CARITAS - 5.12

A very beautiful hymn traditionally sung at Holy Thursday Liturgy during the washing of the feet, it is a very ancient chant; some date the music back to the 4th century and the text could be earlier yet. It is a anthem of peace and reconciliation for our day always reminding us of our duty to love one another, to respect and revere the fragile wounds that divide us and to know that God has promised that where two or more are gathered [singing or listening] in his/her name, that same God will be there in our midst. On the day, all three of us organically enjoyed singing it so much that, so we sang it all twice!

*Antiphon: Ubi caritas et amor, Deus ibi est.
Congregavit nos in unum Christi amor.
Exsulemus et in ipso jucundemur.
Timeamus et amemus Deum vivum.
Et ex corde diligamus nos sincero. Antiphon*

*Simul ergo cum in unum congregamur
Ne nos mente dividamur caveamus
Cessent jurgia maligna, cessent lites.
Et in medio nostri sit Christus Deus. Antiphon*

*Simul quoque cum beatis, videamus
Glorianter vultum tuum, Christe Deus:
Gaudium, quod est immensum, atque probum,
Saecula per infinita saeculorum. Amen.*

*Where charity and love reside, God is there.
The love of God has gathered us together in one.
Let us rejoice and be glad therefore.
Let us love and hold in awe before us the living God.
And may we love one another with a heart that is true. Antiphon
Therefore when we are gathered together
Let us avoid being divided in mind and spirit.
Let us banish all evil and let anger not fester.
And in our midst may Christ the Lord dwell. Antiphon
Therefore, together with all the blessed may we see
Your face, in great glory, Christ the Lord.
Sheer joy which is immense and profound,
Throughout all the ages for evermore. Amen.*



3, MAGNIFICAT CUM ALLELUIA - 3.37

This is surely the greatest song of Salvation from the Christian tradition. Attributed to the pregnant Mary, in the first chapter of Luke's Gospel, I have always loved this ecstatic hymn of praise which makes no mention whatsoever of the little resident in her womb! It is pure passion and Divine praise and although many theologians hold that because of its sheer poetic beauty that it could not have been composed by a young peasant Jewish girl, I disagree. Mary, was very well versed by her mother, Anna, in Jewish Scriptures and this hymn is simply Mary's version of many women's songs from Hebrew Scriptures, for instance, Hannah's prayer of thanksgiving for her son, Samuel in 1 Samuel, chapter 2. There are many Gregorian chant tunes to this Magnificat but my heart sings when the great lofty principles here are heightened and interrupted by the supreme Jewish perfect praise word: Alleluia!

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

Magnificat anima mea Dominum. Alleluia, alleluia.

Et exsultavit spiritus meus in Deo salutari meo.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

Quia respexit humilitatem ancillae suae:

Ecce enim ex hoc beatam me dicent omnes generationes, Alleluia, alleluia.

Quia fecit mihi magna qui potens est:

Et sanctum nomen ejus. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

Et misericordia ejus a progenie in progenies, timentibus eum. Alleluia, alleluia.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

Magnificat anima mea Dominum. Alleluia, alleluia.

Et exsultavit spiritus meus in Deo salutari meo.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

Quia respexit humilitatem ancillae suae:

Ecce enim ex hoc beatam me dicent omnes generationes, Alleluia, alleluia.

Quia fecit mihi magna qui potens est:

Et sanctum nomen ejus. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

*Et misericordia ejus a progenie in progenies, timentibus eum. Alleluia,
alleluia.*

My soul magnifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour, for he has looked with favour upon his servant in her lowliness. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed. God the Almighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name. His mercy is for those who hold him in awe from generation to generation. God has shown the strength of his arm; he has confuted the proud in their deepest thoughts. He has brought down the powerful from their thrones and has lifted the lowly to high places... according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham [Father of all Nations] and to his descendants forever.

Doxology: Glory be to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning is now and ever shall be, world without end, AMEN.

Alleluia

4, GOL NA DTRÍ MUIRE - 2.26

I completed a MA in traditional religious song in Irish in 1980, exactly one month before Owen was born! This was a little manuscript hymn that I came upon in the Cumann Bealoideas, the Folklore commission in Dublin and I recorded it with the monks of Glenstal Abbey in 1980. When His Holiness, the 14th Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso, visited Ireland in 2011, I was invited to sing for him on two separate occasions, once solo and once with those same Benedictine monks. This little hymn was part of the song wheel on both occasions and now it is a firm favourite of the lads too. Sing along with us in the chorus!

GOL NA DTRÍ MUIRE (TRAIDISIÚNTA Ó nDÚN NA nGALL)

Luinneog/Curfá: M'ochón ó is m'ochón í, is m'ochón uile, mo Chailbheirí.

*D'éirig na Trí Muire dhá uair roimh an lá.
Ag an tuama cloiche ar síneadh a nGrá.
Go dtáinig an t-aingeal le solas a saith
Le scéal annsair Mhuire fá Rí na nGrás. Curfá*

*Má ghníonn tú an peaca atá mór le leigheas,
Éirigh ar maidin is tarraing go géar,
Téigí chun aifrinn le hordú ón chléir
Gus gheobhaidh sibh na flaithis fagaidh Ifreann in bhuir ndéidh.
Curfá*

*Tchífidh tú Peadar agus tchífidh tú Pól,
Tchífidh tú Conall agus tchífidh tú Eoin.
Tchífidh tú na Flaithis a's aingle go leor
Gus an Mhaighdean Mhuire 'na suí ins an ghlóir. Curfá*

**THE WEEPING OF THE THREE MARYS
(TRADITIONAL FROM CO. DONEGAL)**

Chorus: My sorrow and my great sorrow which is my Calvary.

*The three Marys rose two hours before daylight and went to the
stone tomb where their Love lay stretched.
Till an angel came with a shining face
With news for Mary from the King of Grace.*

*If you live in sin that is hard to forgive,
Rise early in the morning and endeavour to live.
Go to Mass as the clergy ordain,
And you will see Heaven and escape Hell's pain.*

*You will see Peter and you will see Paul,
And you will see Conall and John and all.
You will see Heaven and angels all around
And the Virgin Mary in glory most profound.*

5, HIM Ó Í OG Í Ó - 1.42

Moya Ní Bhraonáin, of the legendary Donegal O Braonáin family and group Clannad, visited us in Glenstal Abbey a few years ago to do a concert and recording. She taught us this little Scots Gallic waulking song and we are so grateful to her for her generosity and graciousness in so doing. Clannad's original version which is on their Fuaim album is, as a neighbour of ours at home in Caherconlish used to say, 'to die for'!

Curfá/Séist

Him ó í og í ó, A Mhórag 's nah ó ró gheallaidh, Him ó í og í ó.

Mhórag Bheag a 'chúl dualaich; Gu de dh'fhág an gruaim air t'aire. Curfá

*'G iomain a chruaidh-laoidh gu buaile; 'S nach fhaic mé mo luaidh a
dh'fhearaibh. Curfá*

*'G iomain a chruaidh-laoidh gu airidh; 'S nach fhaic mé mo ghrá a
dh'fhearaibh. Curfá*

Chan eil mo leannan-sa ga h-iarraidh; Thá té liath aige's té thártain. Curfá

Thá té úr am buth an táilléir; 'S thig I an duigh na máireach dhachaidh.

Curfá

*Little Morag of the flowing locks, why are you so troubled? Herding the
cow-in-calf to the pasture, men, I won't see my beloved. Herding the
cow-in-calf to the byre, men, I won't see my loved one. Keep on waulking
the cloth to make a lovely outfit for my lover. He doesn't want it, he has a
grey and tartan one. There is a new one at the tailor's and she is returning
tomorrow.*

6, KYRIE ELEISON - 2.07

Kyrie Eleison is the Greek corner-stone of Christian worship and we have many musical settings from the Gregorian tradition in our repertoire. This is our favourite which is from a Mass VIII entitled Missa de Angelis – the Mass of Angels and indeed this Kyrie is surely inspired by Angels!

Out of the silence of the final Kyrie, a three-part setting by the English, Renaissance composer, William Byrd appeared.

*Kyrie Eleison, Kyrie Eleison.
Christe Eleison, Christe Eleison.
Kyrie Eleison, Kyrie Eleison.*



7, A MUIRE NA NGRÁS - 2.12

This very beautiful traditional poem to Mary from Inis Meáin, Aran Islands was first published in Abhráin Diadha Chúige Connacht (Editor: Dubhglás de hÍde), 1906. Micheál put a flame of notes around it years ago and we asked him to arrange it for us for this recording. He is the pied-piper you hear playing us in and out of the prayer!

*A Mhuire na nGrás, A Mháthair Mhic Dé,
Go gcuire tú are mo leas mé.*

*Go sábhála tú mé ar muir is ar tír,
Go sábhála tú mé ar leac na bpian.*

*Go sábhála tú mé ar gach uile olc,
Go sábhála tú mé idir anam is chorp'.*

*Gárda na n-aingeal ós mo chionn,
Dia romham agus Dia liom.
Dia romham agus Dia liom.*

Translation: Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin

*O Mary of God, O Mother of Grace,
That I may belong in a peaceful place.*

*That I may be saved on the ocean and
ground,*

*That I may be saved from all pain
profound.*

*That I may be saved in body and soul,
And that I may be saved and my spirit
made whole.*

*Guardian of Angels, hold me from sin,
God before me and God within.*

8, DEUS MEUS ADUIVA ME - 1.56

Another dual-language, macaronic song, this Latin/Irish poem was written by Maol Íosa Ua Brolcháin apparently an 11th century Donegal Abbot whom legend has it was Abbot of Iona at one time. I recall singing it myself in the great Abbey of the mystical island of Í Chaluim Chille(Iona) some years back and feeling the delight of bringing it all back home!

Seán Óg Ó Tuama wedded this lovely little tune to the prayer in the 1950s, I think.

*Deus meus, adiuva me,
Tabhair dom do shearc, a Mhic dhil Dé:
Tabhair dom do shearc, a Mhic dhil Dé, Deus meus adiuva me.
Domine, da quod peto a te,
Tabhair dom go dian, a ghrian ghlan ghlé.
Tabhair dom go dian, a ghrian ghlan ghlé, Domine, da quod peto a te.
Tuum amorem sicut vis,
Tabhair dom go tréan a dearfad arís,
Tabhair dom go tréan a dearfad arís, tuum amorem sicut vis.
Domine, Domine, exaudi me,
M'anam bheith lán ded' ghrá, a Dhé,
M'anam bheith lán ded' ghrá, a Dhé, Domine, Domine, exaudi me!
Domine, Domine, exaudi me!*

*My God help me, give me your love, beloved son of God, my God help me!
Lord, give what I ask of you, give me intensely, O clear bright sun, Lord, give
what I ask of you.
Your love as you will, Give me passionately I will say again your love as you will.
Lord, Lord, listen to me, let my soul be full of you love, Lord, Lord, listen to me!*

9, THE DARKEST MIDNIGHT - 3.40

Kilmore in South East Wexford, Ireland has preserved an unbroken three hundred year old tradition of Christmas carol singing that is highly unique in style, source and context. Alas, there are still no commercial recordings of the original timeless male singing which is highly transformative and it transports the listener into an intense experience of the Divine. Here is our homage to that legacy as we sing three of the eleven verses of the Carol on Christ's Nativity.

*The darkest midnight in December,
No snow not hail not winter storm.*

*Shall hinder us for to remember,
The babe that on this night was born.*

*With shepherds we are come to see, this lovely infant's glorious charms.
Born of a maid as the prophets said, The God of love in Mary's arms.*

*Have you not heard the sacred story
How man was made those seats to fill?*

*Which the fallen angels lost in glory,
Through their presumption, pride and will.*

*They thought us mean for to obtain such glorious seats and crowns in
Heaven.*

So through a cheat they got Eve to eat the fruit, to be avenged on man.

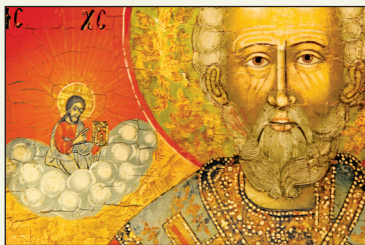
*Ye blessed angels, join our voices.
Let your gilded wings beat fluttering o'er.*

*While every soul set free rejoices.
And every devil must adore.*

*We'll sing and pray that He always may our church and clergyman defend.
God grant us grace in all our days. A merry Christmas and a happy end!*

10, HALLELU ADIR ADIRIM - 4.57

Ever before I met and became dear friends with the highly acclaimed Jewish singer, Ruth Wieder-Magan, I had known of her pioneering work in the integration of the female voice in Jewish text and song. Ruth's sacredness of singing brought me great light and hope of heart. Then the delight when we met, first at the Irish Buddhist centre, Dozchen Beara, then in Glenstal Abbey, when she came here to sing for the monks and us gathered around one evening after Vespers and then to share a workshop with her in her native Jerusalem last year. On all three occasions, Ruth sang this mesmerising Jewish chant of Blessing, naming the many aspects of God's presence among us as Creator, Sustainer, Ruler, Greatness, Majesty, Might, Leader and Source. Avia Gurman Murphy, herself a very gifted singer and musician, our mutual friend, sent me these words and in all humility and awe at our Jewish inheritance, I sing it here. There is a timelessness that unfurls in the singing and a kind of surprising amnesia comes alive. Friend and poet, John O Donohue, wrote a little seventeen word poem – Fluent – which perfectly describes the depth of feeling and being that this song brings:



*I would love to live
Like a river flows,
Carried by the surprise
Of its own unfolding.*

*hallelu adir adirim, baruch u'mehulal adonai
Halleluia, Halleluia, Halleluia
halleluia, halleluia, hallelu avadei adonai*

*hallelu adir adirim, baruch u'mehulal adonai
halleluia, halleluia, allelu avadei adonai*

*hallelu gedol gedolim, dagul u'mehulal adonai
halleluia, halleluia, allelu avadei adonai*

*hallelu hadur hadurim, vatik u'mehulal adonai
halleluia, halleluia, hallelu avadei adonai*

*hallelu zakai zakahim, chanun u'mehulal adonai
halleluia, halleluia, hallelu avadei adonai*

*hallelu tehor tehorim, yashar u'mehulal adonai
halleluia, halleluia, hallelu avadei adonai*



Afantos Egeneto - The Road to Emmaus
by Emmaus O Herlihy OSB

*hallelu kabir kabirim, la'ad u'mehulal adonai
halleluia, halleluia, hallelu avadei adonai*

*hallelu melech melachim, norah u'mehulal adonai
halleluia, halleluia, hallelu avadei adonai*

*hallelu somech somechim, ozer u'mehulal adonai
halleluia, halleluia, hallelu avadei adonai*

*hallelu pode pedu'im, tzadik u'mehulal
halleluia, halleluia, hallelu avadei adonai*

*hallelu kedosh kedoshim, rachum u'mehulal adonai
halleluia, halleluia, hallelu avadei adonai*

*hallelu shomer shomerim, tomech u'mehulal
halleluia, halleluia, hallelu avadei adonai*

11, ABIDE WITH ME - 2.57

One of the most satisfying passages in the New Testament, I feel, is in Luke's Gospel when he tells the great Resurrection story of Christ appearing "in cognito" to the two road walkers en route to Emmaus. He enchanted them with interpretations of the Hebrew Scriptures; wouldn't we all have loved to have heard that! Then, he was going to leave them when they reached the village but they said: "Abide with us, because it is nearly eventide and the day is now over" (Luke 24:29).

Surely this invitation was the source of Lyte's poignant hymn which he wrote when he was afflicted with tuberculosis. There are eight verses in all but we have chosen just four to sing for you.

*Abide with me, fast falls the eventide;
The darkness deepens; Lord with me abide:
When other helpers fail and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, O abide with me.*

*Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day;
Earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away;
Change and decay in all around I see;
O thou who changest not, abide with me.*

*I fear no foe with thee at hand to bless.
Ills have no weight, and tears no bitterness.
Where is death's sting? Where, grave, thy victory?
I triumph still, if thou abide with me.*

*Hold thou thy cross before my closing eyes;
Shine through the gloom, and point me to the skies:
Heav'n's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee;
In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me.*

12, SEACHT NDÓLÁS NA MAIGHDINE MUIRE 3.40

Little did I ever think that Owen and Moley would sing this, the very first sean-nós religious song that I learned from Pilib Ó Laoghaire in 1968, with me! Pilib taught me many sean-nós songs, but this one was the only religious song and he was the sole carrier of it. So this song has to be in memory of Pilib, his wife Eibhlín, his daughters, Colum and Íde and sons, Tadhgh and Gearóid.

Curfá

*Alleliú, Ó Íosa, alleliú s'tú mo leanbh,
Alleliú, Ó Íosa, s'tú Rí gheal na bhFlaitheas.*

*An chéad dólás do bhí ar a Mhaighdean nuair a toraíodh a leanbh
Caipíni dubha air 's na daoine á ghreadadh. Curfá
An tríú dólás... A cheann ar bharr spíce ag tabhairt a chuid fola. Curfá
An seachtú dólás...E sinte san uaigh 'sna leaca air trasna. Curfá*

*Chorus: Alleliú, O Jesus, alleliú, you are my child,
Alleliú, O Jesus, you are the bright King of Heaven.
Mary's first sorrow when they harried her Jesukin,
Black caps on his head and the crowds mocking him. Chorus
Mary's third sorrow...His head on a spike shedding his blood. Chorus
Mary's seventh sorrow...Stretched in his grave, the great stones over him.
Chorus*

13, HOMAGE TO ST. NICHOLAS - 1.48

St. Nicholas of Myra is patron saint of Russia, mariners, children, pawnbrokers, young girls in search of a man and the laity! Our mystic friend, writer and Father Abbot of Glenstal Abbey, Mark Patrick Hederman told us one evening during the recording that the name Nicholas means 'strength of the people or laity'. Furthermore, that same Nicholas is buried in Jerpoint, Co. Kilkenny!

So we simply had to honour him here through a little Eastern chant to which we set our own Irish blessing.

*Naomh Nioclás, guí orainn, Naomh Nioclás, guí orainn,
Guí orainn, guí orainn, O Naomh Nioclás!*

*Naomh Nioclás, tabhair dúinn síochán, Naomh Nioclás, tabhair dúinn
síochán,*

*Tabhair dúinn síochán, tabhair dúinn síochán, O Naomh Nioclás!
St. Nicholas, pray for us, St. Nicholas, pray for us. Pray for us, pray for us,
O St. Nicholas!*

*St. Nicholas, grant us peace, St. Nicholas, grant us peace. Grant us peace,
grant us peace, O St. Nicholas!*



14, AN CAOINEADH - 3.12

Cáit Ní Ghallchóir's rendition of this lamentation for a child I first recorded in 1979 and over the years, many, many listener's stories have evolved around it, far too many to recount here.

One morning during the halcyon recording days, it wanted to be sung again. I am certain that this was because at that moment, I was now surrounded by my own children, rejoicing in their presence and thanking God for them.

I have always harboured a deep, numbing fear in my heart which is the terrifying possibility of the sight of a coffin that would hold them. Again, John O Donohue describes that nightmarish thought: 'Now you sit bereft/Inside a nightmare,/Your eyes numbed/By the sight of a grave/No parent should ever have to see.'

'S ariúá!

Agus a leanbh!

Cad é a dhéanfaidh mé?

Tá tú ar shiúil uaim.

Agus ariú!

Agus anuraidh!

Níl duine ar bith agam.

Is ariú!

Agus mé liom fhéin.

Dá mbeitheá go moch agam.

Agus och! och! ochón ariú, gan thú!

And ariú, oh child of mine. And what will I do?

You are walking away from me.

And ariú, and a year ago.

Now I have no one at all in the world.

And ariú, and now I am on my own,

If I only had you at the break of dawn.

And och! och! ochón ariú – without you!

15, SONG OF WANDERING AENGUS - 2.58

William Butler Yeats was hopelessly in love with Maud Gonne all his life. 'Silly Willy', she called him and she rejected his many proposals, marrying Major John MacBride instead. Thank God, she did spurn him because we have this extensive, magnificent repertoire of breathtaking love poetry including this next song of unrequited love. To Abbot Mark Patrick Hederman, I dedicate this song for at least two reasons. Firstly, in June 2010, he invited me to share a presentation on Yeats with him which he had scripted for the Summer Wreath Yeats festival at the National Library in Dublin; there and subsequently, this song became a soul-song – an anam-amhráin. Secondly, because he has been an anam-chara to all four of us in many different ways down the years. Míle maith agat, a Phádraig!

Aengus is an Irish mythological god of love, youth and poetic inspiration.

May you, the listener, also 'pluck the silver apples of the moon, the golden apples of the sun' in all you do!

<i>I went out to the hazel wood, Because a fire was in my head, And cut and peeled a hazel wand, And hooked a berry to a thread; And when white moths were on the wing, And moth-like stars were flickering out, I dropped the berry in a stream And caught a little silver trout.</i>	<i>With apple blossom in her hair. Who called me by my name and ran And faded through the brightening air. Though I am old with wandering Through hollow lands and hilly lands. I will find out where she has gone, And kiss her lips and take her hands; And walk among long dappled grass, And pluck till time and times are done The silver apples of the moon, The golden apples of the sun.</i>
<i>When I had laid it on the floor I went to blow the fire aflame, But something rustled on the floor, And some one called me by my name: It had become a glimmering girl</i>	

16, REGINA CAELI - 2.37

Here is a 12th century antiphon to Mary connected with Gregory the Great - patron of singers, musicians, teachers and students and he is a Doctor of the Church.

Legend has it that one Easter morning, March 12th, 609, in Rome, he heard angels chanting the first three lines. He was walking barefoot in a great religious procession following an Icon of Mary said to have been written by Luke the Evangelist.

There and then, the bould Gregory was inspired to compose the fourth line – ora pro nobis Deum, Alleluia - which perfectly concludes the Marian prayer by implicating ourselves in it all!

Again, we felt that we needed to sing it three times and that you needed to hear it three times to take in this superb little antiphon to your heart!

*Regina Caeli, laetare, Alleluia.
Quia quem meruisti portare, Alleluia.
Resurrexit, sicut dixit, Alleluia.
Ora pro nobis Deum, Alleluia.*

*Queen of Heaven, rejoice, Alleluia. For he whom you were worthy to bear,
Alleluia, has risen, as he said, Alleluia. Pray for us to God, Alleluia.*



17, AN MHAIGHDEAN MHARA - 4.02

Years ago, I heard the legendary Donegal sean-nós singer, Áine Uí Laoi, sing this song on a vinyl recording of Tír Chonaill songs. It has always echoed in my heart waiting for the moment of harvesting! It is a mystical song, timeless too in its essence. Although I have never sung it 'out of the closet', in public, before, I am nudging it in as my final solo before we conclude!

English translation of the Irish

*Is cosúil gur mheath tú nó gur thréig tú an greann.
Tá an sneachta go frasach fá bhéal na n-abhann;
Do chúl buí daite 's do bhéilín sámh.
Siúd chugaibh Mary Chinidh 's í 'ndéidh an Eirne 'shnamh.*

*A mháithrín dhílis dúirt Máire Bhán.
Fá bhruach a' chladaigh 's fá bhéal na trá.
Maigndean mhara mo mháithrín árd,
Siúd chugaibh...*

*Tá mise tuirseach agus beidh go lá,
Mo Mháire bhroinngheal 's mo Phádraig bán
Ar bharr na dtionnta 's fá bhéal na trá,
Siúd chugaibh...*

*Tá'n oiche dorcha is tá an ghaoth I ndroch áird,
Ta an tseisreach na seasamh ins na spéartha go hárd.
Ach ar bharr na dtionnta is fá bhéal na trá,
Siúd chugaibh...*

18, THE PILLAR OF CLOUD - 2.31

Every single time we sing this 'Lead Kindly Light', we dedicate it to our beautiful young cousin, Dermot Sheridan, 'who flew away too soon', his noble mother, Carmella and gorgeous sister, Katz! (Our friend, David Black is in there too!)

For this particular rendition, we waited until Carmella was with us to record it so her blessing is woven into the tapestry here.

I have highlighted below, with leaning letters, my life's anthem and I say in Hebrew 'so be it' to this humble fragile recording of ours.

AMEN and thank you for listening!

Text: John Henry Newman: Tune: Sandon by Charles Henry Purday (1799 – 1885)

Lead kindly light amidst the encircling gloom,

Lead thou me on!

The night is dark and I am far from home,

Lead thou me on!

Keep thou my feet, I do not ask to see-

The distant scene, one step enough for me.

I was not ever thus nor prayed that thou shouldst lead me on.

I loved to choose and see my path, but now lead thou me on.

I loved the garish day and spite of fear, pride ruled my will,

Remember not past years.

So long thy power hath blessed me - sure it still will lead me on.

O'er moor and fen o'er crag and torrent till the night is gone.

And with the morn, those angel faces smile,

Which I have loved, long since and lost awhile.

Lead Kindly Light!

My deepest gratitude on this day as I write, June 12th, 2013, my 62nd birthday goes to the Divine Creator of all things who gifted me with two blessings beyond words which are my two sons, Owen and Moley. Gratitude too for their father Mícheál.

As Psalm 127 puts it (and for once and only once, exclusive language is appropriate here since I have no daughters!); 'Truly, sons are a gift from the Lord, a blessing, the fruit of the womb.' Thank you, byes, for all the fun and laughter we have shared over the years of singing together; Owen for driving the car, booking flights etc; Moles for reading out for us tit-bits of newspapers in the passenger seat and making us laugh all the while, as I sat in the back seat saying the Rosary! Few mothers have had the profound privilege and experience of recording with their children and I can truthfully say that it has been my greatest, most precious souvenir and memory of these past sixty two years.

Here I am, forty years on, still singing the praises of the community of Benedictine monks here in Glenstal Abbey. When I can, I am present with them in prayer at the daily round of the liturgical hours; when I can't be physically present, I still tune in to the GA wavelength and *Deus ibi est* – God is there!

Abbots Celestine Cullen, Christopher Dillon and Patrick Hederman were staunch allies throughout the years and continue to be, as indeed was Abbot Augustine O Sullivan RIP who first welcomed us here to sing in 1978!

What can we say about our life-long friend, 4B's, Br. Ciarán. His sensitivity towards all things vocal has always influenced and enhanced any recording we ever made.

Three friends, like the three angels that visited Abraham and Sarah under the oak of Mamre, visited us in the shadow of the primeval Glenstal oaks during the recording last January. They are my soul sisters: Sr. Mary Carmella, Sr. Mary Sheila and Sr. Mary Eimear! Thank you – Graces! And of course, thank you to my grace of a daughter-in-law, who was present to us so beautifully over the days; sometimes, cooking up a soup-storm with Cormac, sometimes mending my little Hermann bear and sometimes embroidering the letters E,A, M, on a trio-bird cushion that she bought for me in Dunnes Stores as she listened.

Christina Jurrison was also present, physically and fiscally!

I remember my parents, Paddy and Nora Ryan long since passed over but they have smiled on this recording of their daughter and grandsons as I know do my living family, near and extended; Marian, Stephen and Flynn, Noel, Annette and Ryans, and John, Patricia and O Sullivans.

Cormac McCarthy and his strikingly stunning mother and my dear walking friend - Marie Richardson were an integral part of this recording; he, our thoughtful, colourful, charming recording assistant (and sometimes master-chef); she assisting in all sorts of quiet ways!

Kieran Lynch was the gentle, competent sound recordist. Mo chroí thú!

Maurice Gunning moved sensitively around us capturing the heart of it all on camera as only he can!

SUNG AND PRODUCED BY NOIRÍN NÍ RIAIN, OWEN AND MOLEY Ó SÚILLEABHÁIN
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