



the
POETS RISING

1916 AND IRISH LITERATURE

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THE POETS RISING

1916 AND IRISH LITERATURE

The influences of the literary revival on the rebels of 1916 have been well documented but the impact of Irish history on Irish literature was even more powerful and more enduring. The establishment of the Irish nation-state provided Irish writers with a different kind of audience; now Irish historical novelists returned to Irish history in order to make sense of the new nation that had been achieved. They also had the advantage of newer, more, and better sources for Irish history than nineteenth-century Irish historical novelists had enjoyed. (James M. Cahalan: *Great Hatred, Little Room: the Irish Historical Novel*)

Across the Bitter Sea (1973) Eilís Dillon

Eilís Dillon's uncle, Joseph Mary Plunkett, was one of the signatories of the Proclamation and was executed after the 1916 Rising. Her vast historical novel, *Across the Bitter Sea* spans nearly seventy years of history, from the devastated landscape of Ireland after the Great Famine of the 1840s to the Easter Rising of 1916.



The Red and the Green (1965) Iris Murdoch

Born in Dublin to Protestant parents, Iris Murdoch lived in England for most of her life. In her novel, *The Red and the Green* she raises the moral and political issue of the relationship between England and Ireland and, in more general terms, the issue of the relationship between strong, dominant countries and the countries they have subjugated.

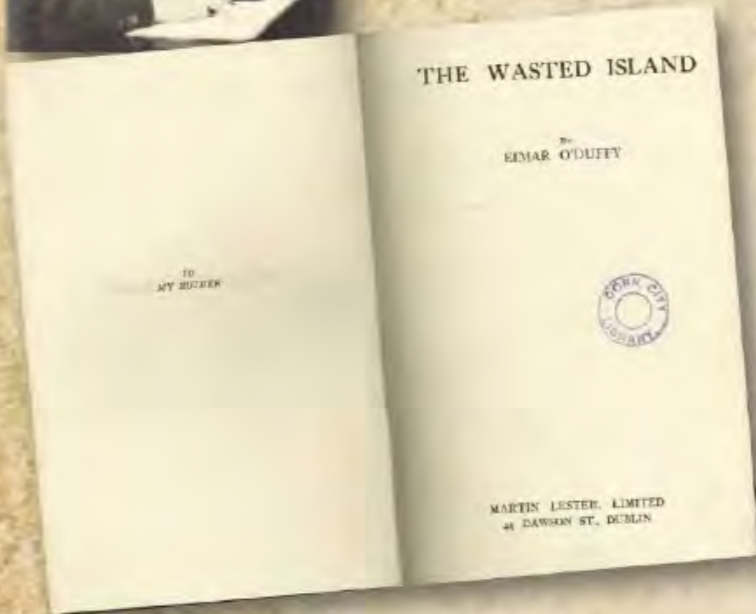
In the epilogue, the 1916 Easter Rising becomes emblematic of all those armed uprisings in countries that have fought against oppression.

'It was a reminder that people can't be enslaved forever. Tyrannies end because sooner or later people begin to automatically hit back... Freedom belongs to human nature... Whenever it's the turn of the country, however small, to rise against its tyrants, it represents the oppressed peoples of the whole world.'



The Wasted Island (1919) Eimar O'Duffy

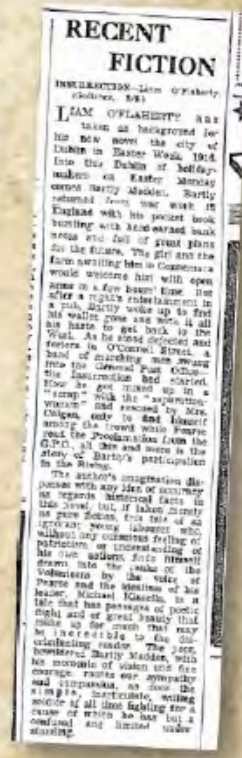
This is one of the earliest literary critiques of the Rebellion of Easter 1916. As with other war novels, there is much worthy conversation and debate about the pros and cons of the rising, the thinking behind it, and, for O'Duffy, the disaster of it coming to pass. The death of so many of the leaders of the rising, and of many other young men, is seen as a waste of talent and potential, but, even as it criticises the rebellion, the novel closes with the suggestion that all is not lost as a character declares amid all this death and waste that, *'we must begin all over again'*. (Derek Hand: *A History of the Irish Novel*)



Insurrection (1950) Liam O'Flaherty

Liam O'Flaherty was a significant Irish novelist and short story writer and a major figure in the Irish literary renaissance. His short stories are esteemed as among the finest ever written while his novels have been less admired. *Insurrection* was his final novel.

The book shows how the rising was badly planned and executed and set for failure. *'Like the rebellion itself, the book is brief, sharp, blazing with action and lit by a radiance of idealism which softens the ugly reality with which it deals, while at the same time illuminating the ugliest of its details'* (Thomas Sugrue writing in the *Saturday Review*).



The Irish Press, 14 November, 1950, p.6

Dé Luain (1966) Eoghan Ó Tuairisc

Dé Luain, Ó Tuairisc noted *'was designed to commemorate the 50th anniversary of 1916'*, and deals with the opening hours of the Revolution in Dublin, minute by minute, from midnight Easter Sunday to noon on Monday.

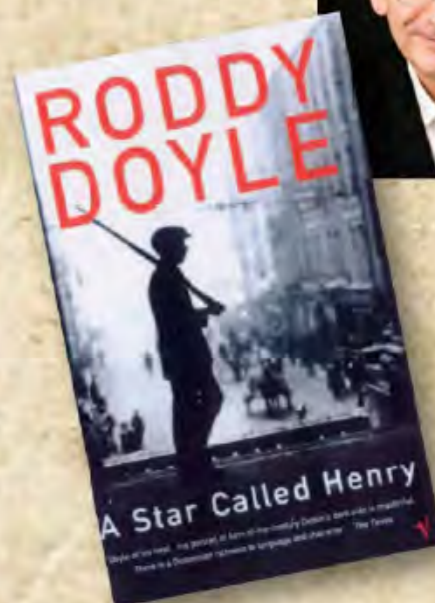
'...a work that was wrung out of the beauty and the hope and the revolutionary ideals of Easter just at the time when the legacy of that revolution was becoming an uncomfortable affair and a mindless stance for the general public.' (Alan Titley: *An tÚrscéal Gaeilge*)



A Star called Henry (1999) Roddy Doyle

The novel is set in Ireland in the era of political upheaval between the 1916 Easter Rising and 1921, seen through the eyes of young Henry Smart, from his childhood years to his early twenties. Henry, as a member of the Irish Citizen Army, becomes personally acquainted with several historical characters, including Patrick Pearse, James Connolly, and Michael Collins

'Perhaps the best part of the book is the de-glorification of 1916 and the War of Independence. It is surprising that no novelist has done this before. Perhaps it requires a brave author to take this anti-heroic approach to the hallowed men of 1916 and after. For too long, those who fought for Irish freedom were characterized only as heroes and saints, and the holiness of violence as a means to an end became firmly established in the Irish view of freedom' (Review by Turlough Johnston in the *Canadian Journal of Irish Studies*)





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By the early 1960s, Ireland had gained a new security and a comparable prosperity that allowed its people (and its writers) to look to the past with a kinder, more detached view. Returning to the struggle for freedom decades after it seemingly had been settled, Macken, Murdoch, and Ó Tuairisc were moderate about it not because they had to be but because they could afford to be, unlike the Banims writing a century before who felt they had to be cautious in presenting the Irish struggle for freedom to avoid inflaming English sensitivities. (James M. Cahalan, *Great Hatred, little Room: the Irish Historical Novel*).

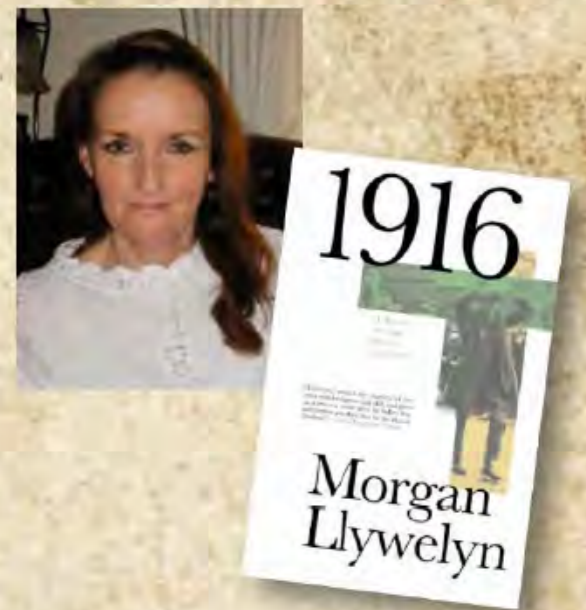
Rebel Sisters (2016) Marita Conlon-McKenna

Most of this book concerns itself with the Gifford sisters and their family in the years prior to the Rising. It chronicles the development of the suffragette movement in Ireland, as well as the formation and activities of Cumann na mBan. The story of these three women is a tragic one, but it's also a story of courage and bravery, of risking the severing of strong familial ties, not just for love but for a cause that they passionately believed in.



1916: a Novel of the Irish Rebellion (1998) Morgan Llywelyn

Morgan Llywelyn (1937-) is an Irish-American writer who lives in Dublin and has become an Irish citizen. Her novel *1916* tells the story of the fictional Ned Halloran, a young Titanic survivor who lost both his parents and almost his own life in the tragedy. He returns to his homeland of Ireland and enrolls at Saint Enda's school in Dublin where the headmaster is the renowned scholar and poet, Patrick Pearse. Through Ned's eyes, Morgan Llywelyn's *1916* examines the Irish fight for freedom, inspired by poets and teachers, fuelled by a desperate desire for independence, and played out in the historic streets of Dublin against the background of World War I. It is a story of the brave men and heroic women who, for a few unforgettable days, managed to hold out against the might of the British Empire.



At Swim, Two Boys (2001) Jamie O'Neill



(The title is an allusion to Flann O'Brien's *At Swim-Two-Birds*, a book written in a stream-of-consciousness style, similar to that used by James Joyce.)

Set during the year preceding the Easter Uprising of 1916, *At Swim, Two Boys* is a tender, tragic love story and a snapshot of people caught in the tide of history. Out at the Forty Foot bathing area, the two 16-year-old heroes make a pact to meet during the next Easter and to swim out together to the rocks and plant a green flag there to claim the rocks for Ireland. At the heart of this novel is the desire for freedom, the freedom of Ireland, and the freedom of love.

Rebels: the Irish Rising of 1916 (1990) Peter de Rosa

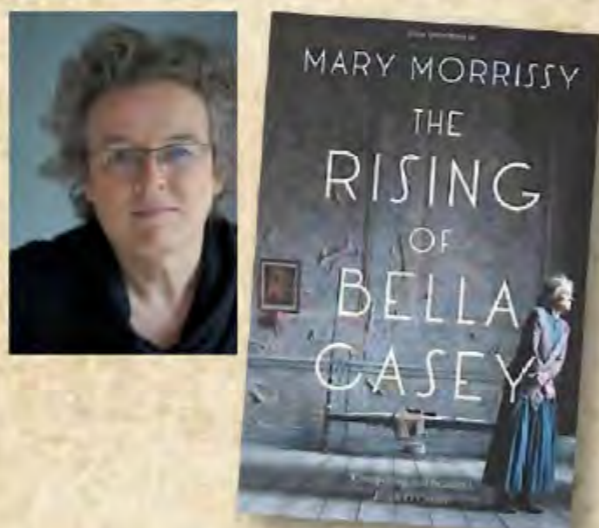


Hour by hour, sometimes minute by minute, Peter de Rosa tells the story of the momentous and terrible days when Irish men and women, armed with pikes and rifles, took over the centre of Dublin and proclaimed a republic. It was a rash, doomed, symbolic uprising, and the rebel leaders knew it. This great Irish epic moves from poignant comedy to harrowing scenes of war, ending in a tragedy as moving as any in Ireland's history.

'What in the world's history was ever more romantic than the gesture of a few young men who challenged England when she had a million men in arms, and died, and won by dying?' (Stephen Gwynn, *Dublin Old and New*)

The Rising of Bella Casey (2013) Mary Morrissy

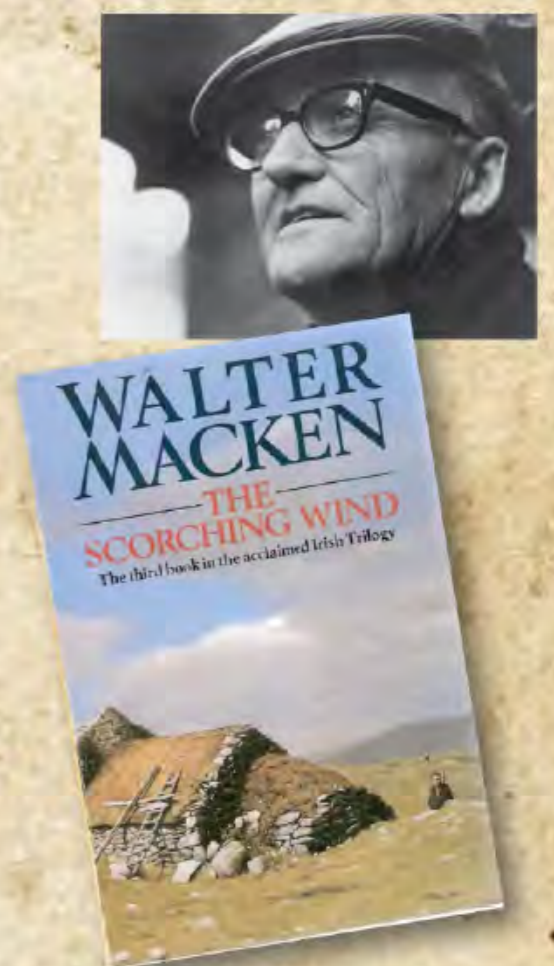
Mary Morrissy was born in Dublin and is currently Lecturer in Creative Writing in UCC. Her book *The Rising of Bella Casey* (2013) tells the real life story of Seán O'Casey's older sister Bella. She barely featured in his autobiography but in this book, Mary Morrissy fills in the missing years, weaving the real and imagined together to create Bella's story.



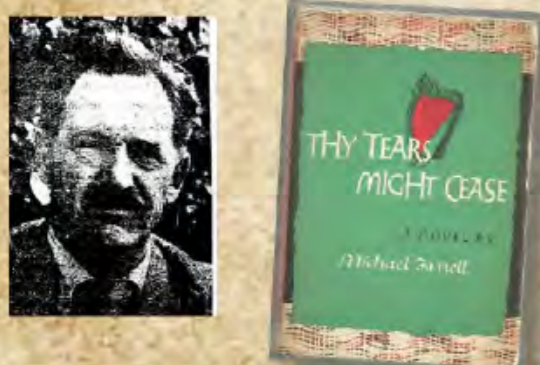
The Scorching Wind (1964) Walter Macken

The third of Macken's three historical novels, *The Scorching Wind*, extends from before the Easter Rising into the Anglo-Irish and Civil wars (1915-22). Macken's historical Ireland is predominantly a peasant society, in sharp contrast to the world of Iris Murdoch's *The Red and the Green* which is about the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy.

'I met some wonderful people in the course of writing the book — the ordinary men who went out to fight for freedom and when it was over went back to their various jobs and got on with living. It was the greatest period of our history and then we had to smash it all with a Civil War. This was a very sad business but I had to bring it in ...' (Ulta Macken, *Walter Macken: Dreams on Paper*).



Thy Tears Might Cease (published posthumously in 1963) Michael Farrell



Martin, now 17, heads out for a swim on Easter Monday and, returning to Dublin afterwards, he finds everything altered and the Proclamation being read, and slowly realizes that this is the beginning of a revolution, which signalled the end of his childhood — a vanished world of country balls. His first reaction is that of his class: deep shock. But after the executions, his opinion alters. The novel is noted for its depiction of the social and political changes that affected Ireland at this time and the birth of a new nation after World War I.

'... with the coming of stability and the dissipation of dramatic atmospheres, the stimulation of a sense of participation in great events would disappear, leaving the poets, the traditional spokesmen, mutely making way for the emergence of the novelists, with their need to document.'

Review by Connolly Cole in *The Dubliner*, Vol.3, No.1, Spring 1964.



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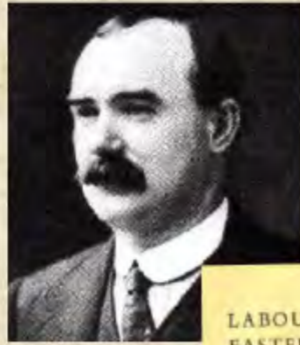
1916 AND IRISH LITERATURE

1916 in Books: Memoirs | Letters | Politics | History

Labour and Easter Week : a selection from the writings of James Connolly (1949), James Connolly

Labour and Easter Week is a collection of Connolly's writings and speeches from the years 1898 to 1916. William O'Brien wrote the introduction to the book and gives the background of the history of the time and Connolly's participation in the Rising. The collection shows the development of Connolly's nationalism up to 1916 and the last two essays in the book, titled *The call to arms* and *The Irish flag*, originally published in the Workers' Republic on 1 April 1916 and 8 April 1916 respectively, deal with the mobilization of the Irish Citizen Army from 24 March 1916 in readiness for the insurrection. The collection also includes Connolly's last statement to the Field General Court Martial held at Dublin Castle, three days before his execution –

'We succeeded in proving that Irishmen are ready to die endeavouring to win for Ireland those national rights which the British Government has been asking ... for Belgium. As long as that remains the case, the cause of Irish freedom is safe. Believing that the British Government has no right in Ireland, never had any right...and never can have any right in Ireland, the presence, in any one generation of Irishmen, of even a respectable minority, ready to die to affirm that truth, makes that government for ever a usurpation and a crime against human progress'... 9 May 1916 (p.177).



The Sinn Fein Rebellion Handbook (1917) Irish Times

The Irish Times republished this collection of articles in 1917. These were originally published in the newspaper in May 1916. The articles include lists of casualties from all sides, rebels and prisoners as well as a list of premises involved and buildings destroyed and a map of key locations.

Details of Roger Casement's trial and execution are included as is Hannah Sheehy-Skeffington's statement of her husband's last hours in respect to his arrest and shooting. It gives a full account of the executions and those arrested and interned. It also contains photographs, facsimiles of documents, and an index.

Compiled by the "Weekly Irish Times," Dublin.

SINN FEIN REBELLION HANDBOOK.

Easter, 1916.



Edith Somerville (1858 -1949)

Edith Somerville (1858 -1949) was born in Corfu but spent most of her life at Drishane House in Castletownshend, Co. Cork. Appalled by the executions of Pearse, Clarke, and MacDonagh on 4 May 1916, she wrote the first appeal for clemency for the Irish Rebels in a letter published on 9 May in The Times. She blamed the British for the state of affairs in Ireland:

'Sir...Sinn Fein, unprovoked by the indulgence of its rulers, proceeded to sharpen its claws. ...Financed by Germany, tutored by America, sheltered by England ... the Gaelic League was turned from its ingenious programme of jig dancing and warbling passé treason in modern Irish, and was set to more effective issues... England sat quiet while these lóds were being taught disloyalty to her... let her send out these captives to join their brothers in the trenches ...' The craythure is young. Ah! Spare him, my Lord!'



Lily MacManus (1894-1941)

Lily MacManus (1894-1941) was born in Castlebar, Co. Mayo, and was an outspoken republican nationalist. Her novels reflect her firmly-held views. In her memoir, *White Light and Flame: memories of the Irish Literary Revival and the Anglo Irish War* (1929), she describes how she first heard of the Rising.

"It was on Easter Tuesday when the news reached the country..."

[Wednesday, 26 April:] Stormy. A great moaning in the wind this morning as if it were one of the Three Waves of Ireland moaning for some national danger. No news...No posts; no trains to bring them; no papers. Fear for Ireland.

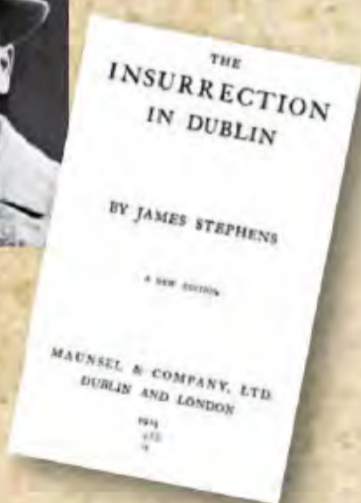
[Sunday, 30 April:] Heard the report given out by the police that the Irish volunteers had been surrounded and been given twenty-four hours to surrender.

[Friday, 6 May:] Got the first Irish Independent published since April 25. It has a full account of the Rising Pádraig Pearse was shot on Wednesday, and Thomas MacDonagh and Tom Clarke...I am overwhelmed with sorrow for Ireland and her sons. Once more she lies helpless and bound ... she will rise again."



Mary Lambert Butler (Mrs. O'Connell)

The insurrection in Dublin (1916,) James Stephens



According to Stephens, in the forward to the book, this was not a history of the Rising nor did he know much about it, but it was a chronicle of events from Monday, 24 April to Sunday, 30 May 1916 as he experienced them. In the latter chapters he discusses the Volunteers, the leaders of the insurrection, and the Irish question in general.

'He [Stephens] has set down what he saw and heard and no more. His narrative has a photographic truth. But of course it is autobiography rather than history. It is confined to his personal experiences; it might be styled the history of a hundred yards for a week. It was fortunate that a writer of his power should have been there to describe matters.'

Studies, Vol.6, no. 22, June 1917, p. 335



Prison Letters of Countess Markiewicz (1st published 1934)

Countess Markiewicz was imprisoned five times for her part in the Easter Rising and subsequent revolutionary activities. She had been sentenced to death after the Rising but this was commuted to life imprisonment because of her gender. She spent time in Aylesbury, Holloway, and Mountjoy prisons as well as Cork Jail and the North Dublin Union Internment Camp. These letters were written to her sister Eva Gore-Booth addressing her as 'Dearest old darling'.

'The one thing I have gained by my exile is the privilege of writing a letter but there is very little to say as I do not suppose 'an essay on prison life' would pass the Censor, however interesting and amusing it might be!'

Excerpt from letter to Eva from Aylesbury Prison, 8 August 1916





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Easter 1916 : the Story of the Rising (1941), Brian O'Higgins

This personal history of the Rising includes brief biographies of some of those who died in the rebellion, poems, historical notes, letters and speeches of some of the leaders, and a copy of the Proclamation. Brian O'Higgins was a founding member of Sinn Féin. He took an active part in the Rising in the GPO. In 1918 he was elected Member of Parliament for Clare West and later to the second Dáil of 1921. He was a member of the Gaelic League and a publisher by profession.

Here is an excerpt from the book on the events in Cork on Easter Sunday/Monday:

'In Cork, the situation was a terrible one. One dispatch after another from Dublin reached MacSwiney, MacCurtain and the other officers there, finishing up with one from Séan MacDiarmada which gave them the joyful tidings that MacNeill was with the fighting men at last and that everything was in readiness for the mobilisation on Sunday. The Cork men were to march out towards Kerry to receive their share of arms and equipment that were to be landed by the German ship [The Aud]. Some had already left the city on Sunday when a special messenger arrived from Dublin with the news that the ship had been captured and a peremptory order signed by MacNeill to cancel all arrangements and manoeuvres.'



Easter 1916 : the Story of the Rising (1941), Brian O'Higgins



Máire Nic Shiubhliagh

Máire Nic Shiubhliagh (1883-1958) was born in Dublin to a nationalist and Irish-speaking family. She was a founder actress of the Abbey Theatre, and its first leading lady when it opened in December 1904. She was by all accounts outstandingly beautiful and talented but put her acting career to one side when she took part in the Easter Rising. Her father, brother, and brother-in-law published the *Irish War News* for Pearse, and her sister carried dispatches for Cathal Brugha. Máire herself led Cumann na mBan 'girls' in Jacob's biscuit factory.

In her memoir, *The Splendid Years* (1955), she recalls her experience of the Easter Rising:

'The great thing was that what you had always hoped for had happened at last. An insurrection had taken place, and you were actually participating in it. The pity was that it ended so soon. The news of the surrender, when it came, was heart breaking.'

'The great spirit of this whole period was all around us in Jacob's, the enthusiasm, the wonderful feeling that underlaid every worthwhile activity in Dublin in those years. No one had any regrets – why should they have had? Until the surrender there was not a word of complaint from anyone I met. You never thought much about what the result of it all would be. You never assumed that victory was certain, but neither did you think of defeat. What might happen if we lost meant nothing: life or death, freedom or imprisonment, these things did not enter into it at all.'



Peig Sayers

Peig Sayers (1873-1958) was born in Dún Chaoin, Co. Kerry. In 1892 she married Peatsáí Ó Guithin and moved to An Blascaod Mór. She continued to live on the island until 1942 when she returned to Dún Chaoin. Her most famous book, *Peig*, was published in 1936 and a collection of her memories, *Machnamh Seanamhná (An old woman's reflections)* followed in 1939. It contains an account of how she heard about the Rising:

'The postman brought us the story... Dublin city was one big fire and the big guns of the Stranger battering it and the fragrant blood of the Irish being spilled. 'The Irish are awake again, said he...the day came at last when they (the Volunteers) were able to strike a blow on their enemy'...

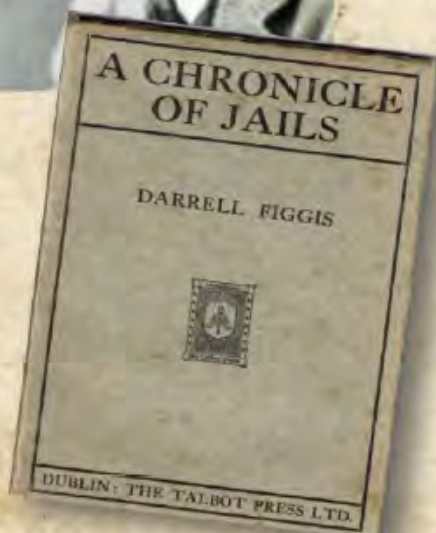
'but it will be paid for dearly, because great as our hate for England is, great and wonderful is the strength she has. We heard that the sun never goes down on her lands.'



A Chronicle of Jails (1917), Darrell Figgis

Figgis (1882-1925) was an author, journalist, politician and tea merchant. He was a member of the Irish Volunteers and took part in the Howth Gun Running. Although he didn't take an active part in the Rising, *A chronicle of Jails* is an account of his arrest and imprisonment in the aftermath of the rebellion. In the first three chapters he describes the mood in the country up to that Easter Sunday and the following week:

'The days were full of anxiety. A few of the older people, in secure possession of their pensions, cursed the 'Sinn Feiners' roundly. But most were perplexed and told one another of tales of those who in elder days had died for Ireland. There was little else to tell.'

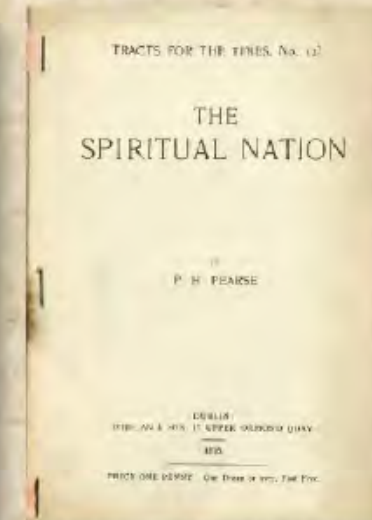


The Separatist Idea; The Spiritual Nation; The Sovereign People (1916), Pádraic Pearse

These three pamphlets were written by Pearse in the months leading up to the Rising. He develops his ideas on republicanism, focusing on revolutionaries such as Wolfe Tone, James Fintan Lalor, John Mitchel, and Thomas Davis. He considers the concepts of independence, separation, and national freedom in an Irish context.

'Freedom is a condition which can be lost and won and lost again; nationality is a life, which, if once lost, can never be recovered. A nation is a stubborn thing, very hard to kill; but a dead nation does not come back to life, any more than a dead man.' *The Spiritual Nation* (February 1916).

'Nationality is a spiritual fact; but nationhood includes physical freedom and physical power in order to the maintenance of physical freedom as well as the spiritual fact of nationality. This physical freedom is necessary to the healthy life and may even be necessary to the continued existence of the nation. Without it the nation droops, withers, ultimately perhaps dies.' *The Sovereign People* (March 1916).





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Revolutionary Playwrights

While Thomas MacDonagh, Pádraic Pearse, James Connolly and Terence MacSwiney were committed to Irish independence and the nationalist movement, they also believed that *'cultural revival and a political renaissance might go hand in hand.'* Between 1908 and 1921 the plays they wrote used the stage to highlight various aspects of the political situation of that time.

Thomas MacDonagh's *When the Dawn is Come* (1908)

The Abbey Theatre

Opening Night: 15 October 1908 for 4 performances. Part of a double bill with *'The Rogueries of Scapin'* by Lady Gregory

When the Dawn is Come predicted bloodshed eight years before the Rising. Padraic Colum who was living in New York in 1916 recalled how the script which he had read years earlier described the struggle against Britain and the hero sacrificing his life for Ireland.

In a review, the play was described as the first to *'proclaim that Ireland will yet by her own strength and of her own will drive out the foreign ruler...which cares much for the hopes of tomorrow, and little for the sorrows and heroisms of yesterday.'*



James Connolly's *Under Which Flag* (1916)



Liberty Hall

Opening Night: 26 March 1916

The play was written for the Liberty Hall Workers Dramatic Company and was performed in the new theatre opened by Connolly on 20 February, 1916. On opening the new theatre Connolly told those attending to *'either join in with the dramatic and social activities that suited the rebellious aims of the Citizen Army or get out.'*

Under Which Flag, Connolly's only play, illustrates his undying commitment to the nationalist agenda. Three weeks [A month] after its premier Liberty hall was destroyed and Connolly was dead.

Terence MacSwiney's *The Revolutionist* (1921)

The Abbey Theatre

Opening night: 24 February 1921

The play was written by MacSwiney in 1914 and is set after Home Rule. The main character Hugh O'Neill wants to rid Ireland of the secret political societies that are widespread in the country. The hero eventually concludes that sacrificing himself may be the only way of uniting the people.

MacSwiney believed that *'a dramatist should be moved by his own tragedy; the novelist should be interested in his own story.'* He embraced the role of the heroic Hugh in *The Revolutionist* by dying on hunger strike in Brixton Prison on 25 October, 1920.

The Revolutionist was run in The Abbey after MacSwiney's death. Yeats predicted the play would be a great success as it *'would greatly move the audience who will see the Mayor in the play's hero.'*



Pádraic Pearse's *The Master* (1915)



Irish Theatre, Hardwicke Street

Opening night: 20 May 1915

The Irish Theatre was established by Thomas MacDonagh and Joseph Plunkett. In competition with The Abbey its aim was to showcase more contemporary and new works both Irish and European. The theatre was also used for meetings of the Volunteers and for military training. The rebellion a year later would involve almost the entire cast of *The Master*, including Pearse's student Eamonn Bulfin, the Volunteer who would hoist the flags on the GPO in 1916.

Reference:

James Moran, *Four Irish Rebel Plays* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2007)





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(Re)Pressing the Rising

Now you see it...

The Irish Nationalist press had many voices before The Rising, ranging from the cultural nationalism of *An Claidheamh Soluis* to the paramilitary instruction manual that was the *Irish Volunteer*.



In what was to be the latter's final issue, dated April 22, the following appeared, notifying the Volunteers of Easter manoeuvres:

The confusion which followed in relation to this notice was to play a crucial part in the fate of The Rising.



The irreverent *Spark*, also dated April 22, responded to warnings from the *London Times*. The latter thundered about the need for British authorities to crack down on the Irish Volunteers, a theme which, closer to home, was also dear to the *Irish Times*.

SPREAD THE LIGHT!

The circulation of "Nationality" increases by rapid strides weekly, because:

- (1) We publish news and views of prime national importance which the "republic" Press either hides or falsifies.
- (2) The people of Ireland have grown tired of hypocrisy and humbug, and avail of the first opportunity to get an expression of unprejudiced and unpartisan national opinion.
- (3) Some of our readers have consistently "spread the light" by getting their friends to read "Nationality,"—a course we now ask you to adopt.

Our success is gratifying, but we are not and will not be satisfied until the true facts of the present state in our country's history are readied in every Irish home. This realization cannot come a moment too soon.

Those of our Nationalist fellow-countrymen whose minds have been politically befogged and whom we have not yet reached, feel instinctively that we are right. It costs you, readers, to give them the means of reading this as a possible fact—

- (1) Collect individual subscriptions for three months (1/8 post paid) or
- (2) Secure a number of weekly subscribers in your locality. If you cannot conveniently and promptly get the papers from a newsagent (which we would prefer) we will send them direct from this office at reasonable rates.

Address all business communications to The Manager, "Nationality," 12 DOLLY ST., DUBLIN.

START THE CAMPAIGN TO-DAY!

Just as the following page from the Arthur-Griffith-inspired *Nationality* shows the enthusiasm behind much of the Nationalist press days before The Rising...

...The *Hibernian*, April 22, notes its defiance of the equally zealous British forces' attempts to clamp down on such publications.

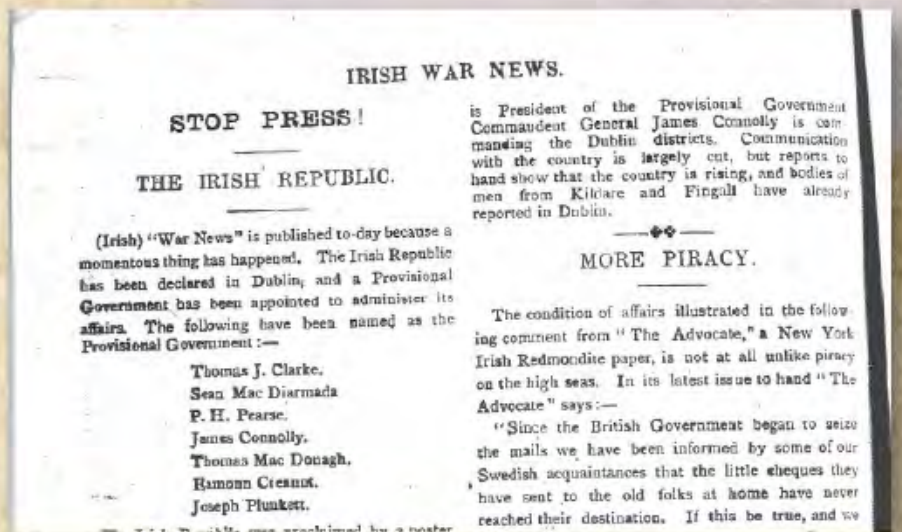
THE GAELIC PRESS, 30 Upr. Liffey St. Dublin
 (Though the premises were raided by the military and police on Friday, 24th March, and the machinery dismantled) BEGS TO ANNOUNCE that with kind friendly co-operation and assistance, the firm will continue to carry on BUSINESS AS USUAL in all branches, including:—Book Printing, Newspaper Printing, Job Printing, Publishing, Retail Newsagency, Stationery.

In the present crisis, THE GAELIC PRESS hope they are justified in relying upon the continued support of their customers and sympathisers.

THE GAELIC PRESS, GENERAL PRINTERS, PUBLISHERS, WHOLESALE NEWSAGENTS, AND STATIONERS, 30 UPPER LIFFEY STREET, DUBLIN.
 Telephone 78.



The *Irish War News*, April 25, did manage to publish, proudly announcing the Rising and the establishment of The Irish Republic.



1916



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The POETS RISING

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(Re)Pressing the Rising

And now you don't....

The outbreak of The Rising led to a declaration of martial law and the implementation of strict censorship.



The Catholic Bulletin, May/June issue, with its censored editorial.

Three poems in this issue were also excised.

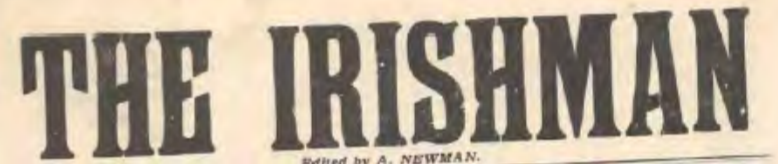
Some were content to carry on business as usual, as this advertisement from the Irish Nation, June 22, shows:



The establishment papers of the day took some time to print again, amidst the chaos, damage and draconian censorship, as did the smaller Nationalist newspapers. The people were starved of news and devoured anything which put the revolutionary events into perspective, as is illustrated by the notice on the front page of the Irish Opinion, two months after The Rising.

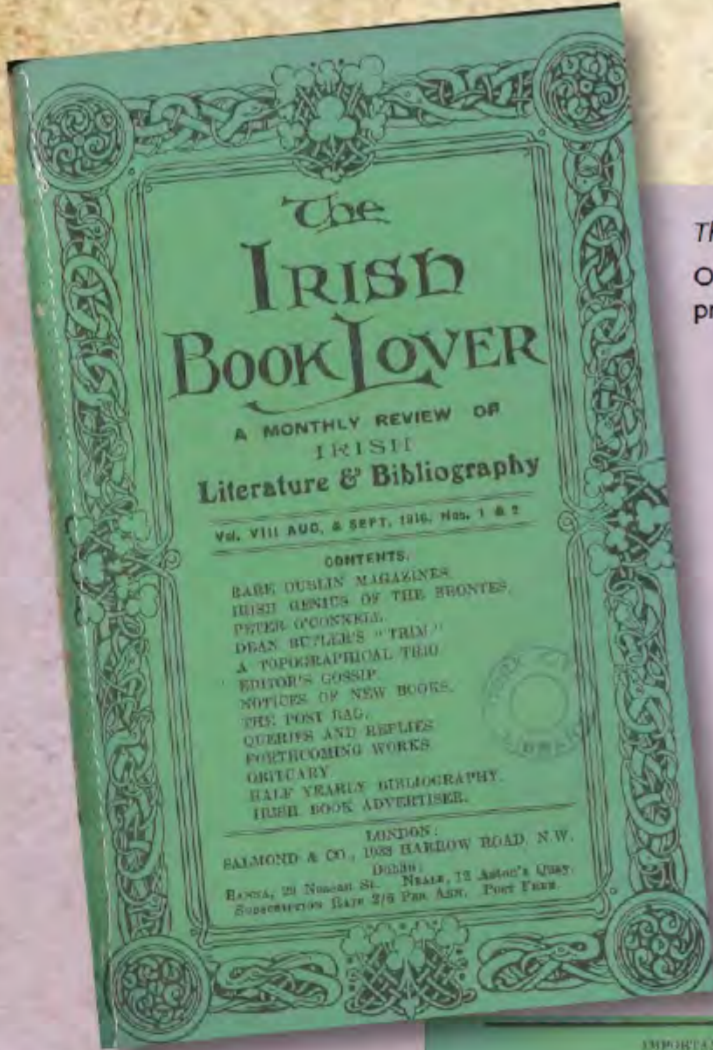
A plethora of postcards, mass cards, pamphlets and ephemera of all sorts filled the gap for information about the Rising, its leaders and their subsequent executions. They jostled for attention with the mainstream press and helped to shape the public reaction to the Rising.

Additional reasons for the fall-off in Nationalist publications are also illustrated by the following explanation from the Irishman, September issue.



NOTES.
Where Are We?
It would require the services of a Sebastian to explain the various articles which appear in the Irishman...
Two Opinions.
These are the views of the Irishman regarding the...
Changed Times and a changed

The Irish Book Lover, August/September issue, has some interesting material: Obituaries of the literary leaders of The Rising, as well as tales of petty literary profiteering, and attempts to fill in the gaps left by the ongoing British censorship.



OBITUARIES
Deaths of literary leaders of The Rising...

EDITOR'S GOSPEL
The result of the recent 'rising' in Dublin...

Editorial Note
Editorial Note: should appear in a single page...

Editorial Note
Editorial Note: should appear in a single page...

Editorial Note
Editorial Note: should appear in a single page...



1916
2016





the POETS RISING

1916 AND IRISH LITERATURE

AS DOWN THE GLEN ONE EASTER MORN...

Ireland has a long tradition of song and ballad-writing which reflect our social, economic and political history, a tradition which continues to the present day.

Not unsurprisingly, the events of 1916 also generated many such songs and ballads, of which the following are but a small selection.



The Soldiers' Song

On Wednesday, 26 April 1916, in the G.P.O., James Connolly, in an effort to raise the spirits of the Volunteers, started to sing **The Soldier's Song**, one of their marching songs. The Volunteers joined him, singing *Soldiers are we, whose lives are pledged for Ireland.....* (Agony at Easter, the 1916 Uprising, Thomas M Coffey)

They were to sing it again, drowning 'out the roar of the flames and of the guns' as they left the burning G.P.O. for the last time on Friday, 28 April 1916.

(1916 The Easter Rising, Tim Pat Coogan)

Originally written by Peadar Kearney in 1907 with music by Patrick Heeney, and translated into Irish as **Amhrán Na bFiann** by Liam Ó Rinn, it was officially adopted as the National Anthem in 1926. The State was to adopt the practice of regarding the chorus as the anthem and in 1929 the Executive Council authorised Colonel Fritz Brase, founding director of the Army School of Music, to provide a suitable musical arrangement. This new arrangement was approved and published the following July.

Amhrán Na bFiann

*Sinne Fianna Fáil
A tá fé gheall ag Éirinn,
buion dár slua
Thar toinn do ráinig chugainn,
Fé mhóid bheith saor.
Sean tír ár sinsir feasta
Ní fhagfar fé'n tíorán ná fé'n tráil
Anocht a théam sa bhearna bhacil,
Le gean ar Ghaeil chun báis nó saoil
Le guna screach fé lámhach na bpiléar
Seo libh canaidh Amhrán na bhFiann.*

Óró, Sé do Bheatha 'bhaile is another song reported to have been sung in the G.P.O. during the Rising.

The words of this old Jacobite song were adapted by Padraig Pearse to welcome home the Wild Geese who would return home from abroad to free Ireland.

*Tá Gráinne Mhaol ag teacht thar saile,
Óglaigh armtha léi mar gharda,
Gaeil iad féin is ní Frainc ná Spáinnigh,
Is cuirfidh siad ruaig ar Ghallaibh.*

*Óró, sé do bheatha 'bhaile,
Óró, sé do bheatha 'bhaile,
Óró, sé do bheatha 'bhaile
Anois ar theacht an tsamhrai*



Peadar Kearney



Roger Casement

GUNS FROM GERMANY

In July 1914, Erskine Childers, accompanied by his wife Molly and Mary Spring-Rice, landed in Howth with a consignment of rifles from Germany aboard *The Asgard*. British forces confronted Volunteers who were transporting the arms back to Dublin and some rifles were lost. As the British were returning to their barracks they were stoned by an angry crowd at Bachelors Walk. They responded by firing on the crowd, killing 4 people and wounding 37 others.

These events are remembered in two songs **My Old Howth Gun** and **Bachelors Walk**

Bachelors Walk

*On Bachelor's Walk a scene took place, which I'm sure had just been planned.
For the cowardly Scottish Borderers turned and fired without command.
With bayonets fixed they charged the crowd and left them in their gore.
But their deeds will be remembered in Irish hearts for evermore.*

My Old Howth Gun

*There is sorrow in my heart, O my old Howth gun!
Since we lately had to part, O my old Howth gun!
For in Ireland's day of need well you proved a friend indeed,
When you made the bullets speed, O my old Howth gun!
When you made the bullets speed, O my old Howth gun!*

Two years later on the eve of the Rising, on Good Friday, 1916, a further consignment of arms was to land on the Kerry Coast, from on board the *Aud*, under the direction of Roger Casement. They were never to reach the hands of the Volunteers.

A series of mishaps led to the scuttling of the *Aud*, the loss of the arms and the arrest of Casement. Though its author is unknown, the despair at the failure of this operation and its implications are memorably conveyed in the haunting **Lonely Banna Strand**:

Lonely Banna Strand

*'Twas on Good Friday morning, All in the month of May,
A German Ship was signalling, Beyond out in the Bay,
We had twenty thousand rifles All ready for to land,
But no answering signal did come From the lonely Banna Strand.
If we sail for Queenstown Harbour, said the Germans: 'We're undone
The British are our masters man for man and gun for gun.
We've twenty thousand rifles here, but they never will reach land.
We'll sink them all and bid adieu to lonely Banna Strand.'*

*The R.I. C. were hunting for Sir Roger high and low,
They found him at McKenna's Fort, said they: 'You are our foe.'
Said he, 'I'm Roger Casement, I came to my native land,
I meant to free my countrymen on lonely Banna Strand.'
'Twas in an English prison that he went to meet his death.
'I'm dying for my country,' he said with his last breath.
In prison ground they've laid him, far from his native land
Now the wild waves sing his Requiem on lonely Banna Strand.*



The Asgard

Molly Childers and Mary Spring-Rice on board the Asgard July 1914



THE POETS RISING

1916 AND IRISH LITERATURE



Cumann Na mBan

Many women, mostly members of the Cumann na mBan, took part in the Rising and are remembered in *The Soldiers of Cumann Na mBan* by Brian O'Higgins:

.....They stand for the honour of Ireland
As sisters in days that are gone,
And they'll march with their brothers to freedom
The soldiers of Cumann na mBan.....

O, high beat the heart of our Mother
The day she has longed for is nigh,
When the sunlight of joy and of freedom
Shall glow in the eastern sky;
And none shall be honoured more proudly
That morning by chieftain and clan
Than the daughters who served her in danger,
The soldiers of Cumann na mBan.

It is estimated that 485 people were killed during Easter Week. The grief experienced at the loss of life is brought home to us in Seamus Kavanagh's poignant *The Dying Rebel* written after the Rising.

....'The first I met was a grey haired father
Searching for his only son,
I said "Old man, there's no use searching
For up to heaven, your son has gone'

The old man cried out broken hearted
Bending o'er I heard him say:
"I knew my son was too kind hearted,
I knew my son would never yield".

The last I met was a dying rebel,
Bending low I heard him say:
"God bless my home in dear Cork City,
God bless the cause for which I die."

James Connolly

James Connolly, written by Cork poet Patrick Galvin, is widely regarded as one of the finest tributes to this 1916 leader. Frank Harte wrote: *When I met Patrick Galvin I mentioned that I had been singing the song for years without knowing that he had written it. He was pleased that the song had been accepted by the singers and said that it was not important that they should know who had written it.* (Songs of Dublin, 1978)

"Where oh where is our James Connolly?
Where oh where can that brave man be?
He is gone to organise the union,
That working men might yet be free.

They carried him up to the jail,
They carried him up to Kilmainham Gaol,
And there they shot him one bright May morning,
And quickly laid him in a quick lime grave."



Patrick Galvin



The Foggy Dew was written by Rev Charles O' Neill from Rostrevor, Co. Down and set to music by Carl G. Hardebeck, first Professor of Music in University College Cork.

When O'Neill attended the first meeting of Dáil Eireann in January 1919, many of those who had been elected were in prison in England. When their names were called out the reply was 'faoi ghlas ag na nGail' (locked up by the foreigner). He returned home and wrote what is probably the song most associated with the Rising.

While painting a vivid picture of the Rising it also explains in stirring terms why Irishmen died in Ireland for Irish freedom rather than dying on foreign shores on behalf of an Empire which had promised the freedom of small nations.

The Foggy Dew

As down the glen one Easter morn to a city fair rode I,
There armed lines of marching men in squadrons passed me by;
No pipe did hum, no battle drum did sound its loud tattoo
But the Angelus bell o'er the Liffey's swell rang out in the foggy dew.

Right proudly high over Dublin town they hung out a flag of war,
'Twas better to die 'neath an Irish sky than at Suvla or Sud El Bar;
And from the plains of Royal Meath strong men came hurrying through
While Britannia's Huns with their great big guns, sailed in through the foggy dew.

O' the night fell black and the rifles' crack made "Perfidious Abion" reel
'Mid the leaden rain, seven tongues of flame did shine o'er the lines of steel.
By each shining blade a prayer was said that to Ireland her sons be true,
And when morning broke still the war flag shook out its fold in the foggy dew

'Twas England bade our wild geese go that small nations might be free,
But their lonely graves are by Suvla's waves or the fringe of the gray North Sea.
O' had they died by Pearse's side or fought with Cathal Brugha,
Their names we'd keep where the Fenians sleep, 'neath the shroud of the foggy dew.

The bravest fell, and the requiem bell rang mournfully and clear,
For those who died that Eastertide in the springtime of the year;
While the world did gaze with deep amaze at those fearless men, but few
Who gave their lives that freedom's light might shine through the foggy dew.

Ah, back through the glen I rode again, and my heart with grief was sore,
For I parted then with valiant men whom I never shall see more;
But to and fro in my dreams I go and I'd kneel and pray for you,
For slavery fled, O glorious dead, when you fell in the foggy dew.





THE POETS RISING

1916 AND IRISH LITERATURE

1916 in Poetry



'Poetry has a long history of living underground in the Gaelic tradition and dreams of nationhood and the longing for freedom found expression in a particular way in poetry. Little wonder, then, that three poets, Pearse, MacDonagh and Plunkett, were among those who walked out on Easter Monday morning 1916 to set their country free. Their poetry expresses the longing for freedom that the authorities, fully taken up with parliamentarian and rebel movements, were blind to.'

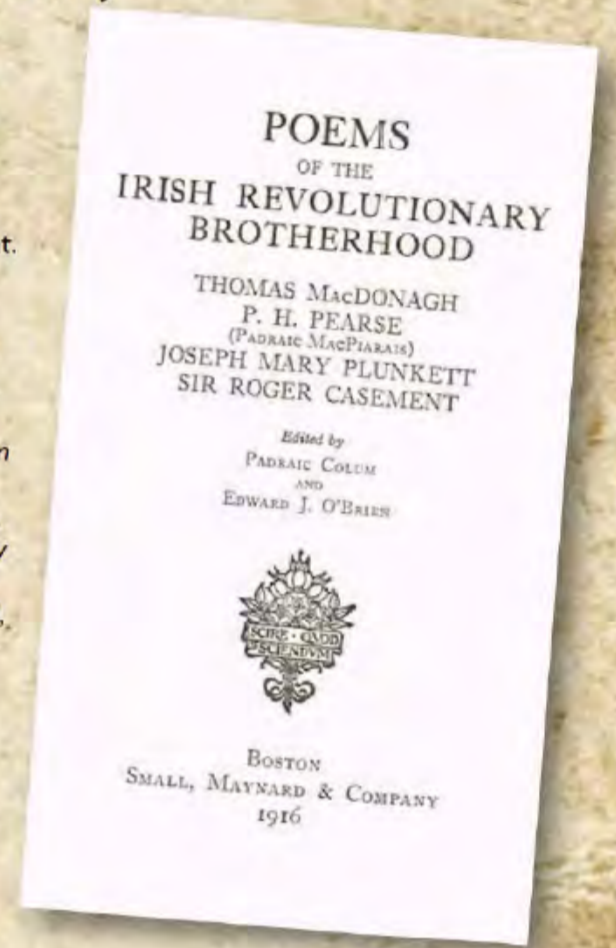
Excerpt from *A terrible beauty: poetry of 1916* (2015,) Mairéad Ashe Fitzgerald pp12-13

Poems of the Irish Revolutionary Brotherhood (1916)

Poems of the Irish Revolutionary Brotherhood (1916), edited by Padraic Colum and Edward J. O'Brien

This collection was published a few months after the 1916 executions and includes poems by Pearse, MacDonagh, Plunkett, and Casement. In his introduction Padraic Colum states:

'Pearse, MacDonagh and Plunkett became members of a secret political society that had revolution for its object. ... They made a great immutable gesture. With the good and brave Connolly, with the steadfast Clarke, with Shaun MacDermott ... and with the upright Eamonn Ceannt, who with them signed the declaration, they have passed away from our sight and they have become part of the memory of Ireland' (*Poems of the Irish Revolutionary Brotherhood*, introduction, pp. 34-5).



W. B. Yeats (1865-1939)

Nobel prize-winner for literature, poet, and dramatist, Yeats was one of the foremost figures of twentieth-century literature in Ireland and internationally. He was one of the leading lights of the Irish Literary Revival and one of the founders of the Abbey Theatre, with Lady Gregory, in 1904. He became enamoured with Irish nationalism in the 1890s after befriending Fenian John O'Leary and Maud Gonne. He was a member of the IRB in his younger days, although he detached himself somewhat from republican politics in later years. However, the events of 1916 inspired the most famous of all Irish poems, *Easter 1916* – in which he was deeply moved by the heroism and martyrdom of the rebel leaders, who are mentioned in the poem: Pearse, Connolly, MacDonagh, and MacBride. Other poems by Yeats inspired by the Rising include *Sixteen dead men*, *The rose tree* and *In memory of Eva Gore-Booth and Con Markiewicz*.

He died in 1939 in France.



'In April 1916 a handful of Irishmen took over the city of Dublin and were finally surrounded and overwhelmed by British troops with artillery.... At first my only reaction was horror that Irishmen could commit such a crime against England..... But the English were calling us traitors again and they seemed to be right.... The English shot the first batch of Irish leaders and this was a worse shock, for the newspapers said – the pro-British ones with a sneer – that several of them had been poets and I was in favour of poets. One of them, Patrick Pearse, on the night before his execution had written some poems.... which showed him to be a man of nice feeling. What made it worse was that most of his poetry had been written in Irish, the language I had abandoned in favour of Flemish. And Corkery, who introduced me to Irish, I had not seen for years. A revolution had begun in Ireland but it was nothing to the revolution that had begun in me.'

Excerpts from Frank O'Connor's *An only child* (1961) pp 122-124.

EASTER 1916
I have met them at close of day
Coming with vivid faces
From corners or along some prey
Fighting with the air;
I have passed with a nod of the head
Or polite meaningless words,
Or have lingered awhile and said
Polite meaningless words,
And thought before I had done
Of a mocking tale or a gibe
To please a companion,
Around the fire at the club,
Being certain that they and I
Had lived where another's power
All changed, changed utterly:
A terrible beauty is born.

That woman's days were spent
In agonising grief;
Her night an agonising
Till her voice grew shrill.
What voice more sweet than hers
When, young and beautiful,
She rode in harness?
This man had kept a school
And rode our winged horses;
This other his halberd and friend
Was coasting into his farm;
He might have won fame in the end,
So comely his nature seemed,
So doing and avenging thought,
This other man I had dreamed
A drunken, vainglorious lout:
He had done most bitter wrong
To some who are near my heart;
Yet I number him in the song;
He, too, has resigned his part
In the casual comedy;
He, too, has been changed in his turn,
Transformed utterly:
A terrible beauty is born.

Hears with one purpose done
Through summer and winter years
Enchanted to a stone
To trouble the living stream;
The horse that comes from the road
The rider, the birds that range
From cloud to tumbling cloud,
Minute by minute they change,
A shadow of cloud on the stream
Changes minute by minute,
A horse-hoof slides on the brim
And a horse plucks within it,
The long-legged snipe—hears dive,
And hoots in misty-reeks call,
Minute by minute they live,
The stone's in the midst of all.

The long sacrifice
Can make a stone of the heart,
O when may it suffice?
That is Heaven's part, our part
To venture names upon a name,
As a mother names her child
When sleep at last has come
On limbs that had run wild;
What is it but nightfall?
No, no, not night but death,
Was it needless death after all?
For England may keep faith
For all that is done and said,
We know their dream; enough
To know their dream and see dead;
And what if excess of love
Bewildered them till they died?
I write it out in a verse—
MacDonagh and MacBride
And Connolly and Pearse
Now and in time to be,
Wherever green is worn,
Are changed, changed utterly:
A terrible beauty is born.



THE POETS RISING

1916 AND IRISH LITERATURE

1916 in Poetry

Pádraic Pearse (1879-1916)

Poet, educationalist, essayist, revolutionary with an impassioned love for the Irish language and its revival, Pearse became the foremost embodiment of the 1916 Easter Rising. He joined the Gaelic League at a young age, eventually becoming the editor of its newspaper *An Claidheamh Soluis*. His dedication to the Irish language led him to found two bilingual schools, St. Enda's and St Ita's, which fostered a love for the linguistic, literary, and cultural traditions of Ireland. Among the teachers in his school were his brother Willie, Thomas MacDonagh (one of the 1916 leaders), and Louise Gavan Duffy, all of whom took part in the Rising (Willie Pearse and MacDonagh were executed).

His essay on ideals of education, *The Murder Machine*, became well known, but Pearse was a prolific writer in other genres: translator of Irish poems and stories, political pamphlets, short stories, plays and not least poetry, the most famous being *The Wayfarer*, *Mise Éire*, *The Mother*, *The Rebel*, *Renunciation* and *the Fool*.

A member of the Irish Volunteers and the IRB, and one of the signatories of the Proclamation of the Irish Republic, Pearse delivered the graveside oration at the funeral of O'Donovan Rossa in August 1915, which had the famous closing words "Ireland unfree shall never be at peace". This famous speech mobilised republicans and set in motion conditions for the Rising. Commander-in-chief at the GPO during the Rising, he wrote his last poem, *The Wayfarer*, in Kilmainham Jail on the eve of his execution, which took place on Wednesday, 3 May 1916, by firing squad.



THE WAYFARER

The beauty of the world hath made me sad,
This beauty that will pass;
Sometimes my heart hath shaken with great joy
To see a leaping squirrel in a tree,
Or a red lady-hird upon a stalk,
Or little rabbits in a field at evening,
Lit by a slanting sun;
On some green hill where shadows drifted by
Some quiet hill where mountain men hath sown
And soon would reap; near to the gate of Heaven;
Or children with bare feet upon the sands
Of some shalid sea, or playing on the shores
Of little towns in Connacht,
Things young and happy,
And then my heart hath told me:
These will pass,
Will pass and change, will die and be no more,
Things bright and green, things young and happy;
And I have gone upon my way
Successful.

Written by Pearse in Kilmainham Jail on the night before his execution.

Thomas MacDonagh (1878-1916)

MacDonagh was a member of the Gaelic League, the Irish Volunteers, and the IRB, and a signatory of the Proclamation. A poet, playwright, translator and teacher (joining Pearse in Saint Enda's after five years teaching in Saint Colman's in Fermoy and later lecturing in UCD) he also shared Pearse's love of the Irish language. His *Literature in Ireland: studies in Irish and Anglo-Irish* is regarded as a seminal critique of the importance of the influence of the Irish language on Irish literature in English. He was also one of the founders (with his wife Muriel Gifford) of *The Irish Review*, a journal of arts and literature. He had three collections of poetry published by 1906 (*Through the Ivory Gate*; *April and May*; and *The golden joy*). Becoming increasingly politicised, he joined the Irish Volunteers in 1913 and later the IRB. However, during all this time MacDonagh continued to write prolifically: poetry, plays and literary criticism (*Lyrical Poems* was published in 1913). Some of his more well-known poems include *Wishes for my son*, *Of a poet patriot*, *The poet captain*, *Knocknacree*, and *The Yellow bitter* (a translation of *An bonnán buí* by Cathal Bui Ma Giolla Ghunna).

One of the main organisers of the Insurrection, he was commander of a garrison in Jacob's Biscuit Factory during the Rising. He was court-martialled in Kilmainham Jail and executed by firing squad on 3 May 1916.



OF A POET PATRIOT

His songs were a little phrase
Of several songs,
Murmured in the harping of lute
More loud and long.

His deed was a single word,
Called out alone
In a night when no other word
To laughter or moan.

But his songs new words shall dwell,
The best that he could,
And his deed the colour fill
When the deed is done.

THE POETICAL WORKS OF THOMAS MACDONAGH

DUBLIN THE TALENT PRESS LIMITED 26 SALYBURY STREET

Joseph Mary Plunkett (1887-1916)



Another of the poet revolutionaries of the 1916 Rising, Plunkett was a journalist and diarist, with interests in philosophy, archaeology, mysticism and scientific subjects. He was also an accomplished linguist. He was a member of the Gaelic League and the Irish Volunteers. Although in poor health for most of his life, he travelled quite extensively, many of his journeys undertaken on behalf of the Volunteers. He co-edited *The Irish Review* with Thomas MacDonagh, and co-founded The Irish Theatre in 1914, also with MacDonagh. *The circle and the sword* was published in 1911 and was dedicated to MacDonagh. This collection contains one of his most famous poems: *I see his blood upon the rose*. A collection of his poetry, *The poems of Joseph Mary Plunkett*, was published posthumously in 1919.

As a member of the IRB Military Committee, he was chiefly responsible for planning the Rising. He served in the GPO and after surrendering he was court-martialled in Kilmainham Jail and executed on 4 May 1916 having married his fiancée Grace Gifford in the prison chapel the night before.

I SEE HIS BLOOD UPON THE ROSE

I see his blood upon the rose,
And in the stars the glory of his cross,
His body gleams amid eternal stars,
His soul's fall from the skies.

I see his face in every flower,
The shoulder and the slaying of the hand,
Are but his voice—and carried by his power,
Rocks are his written words.

All pathways by his feet are worn,
His strong hand sits the sun-blossoming rose,
His crown of thorns is woven with every thorn,
His crown is every tree.

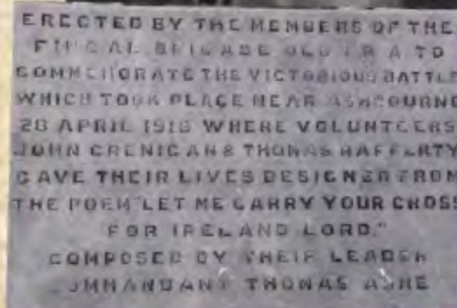


JOSEPH PLUNKETT (son of Owen Finlay),
Commander-in-Chief, 1916, Insurrection, Army.
Erected May 10, 1916.
Who was married & his bride before his execution.

Thomas Ashe (1885-1917)



Like the other poet revolutionaries and leaders of the 1916 Rising, Ashe was a member of the Gaelic League, the IRB, and the Irish volunteers. A teacher, musician, and founder of the Black Raven Pipe Band in Lusk where he taught (he was originally from Kerry), he was commandant of the 5th battalion of the Dublin Brigade which fought in north Co. Dublin and in Ashbourne, Co. Meath, during the Rising. He was condemned to death but the sentence was commuted to penal servitude for life. His poem *Let me carry your cross for Ireland, Lord* was written in Lewes Prison in England. He was released in 1917 but rearrested and imprisoned in Mountjoy Jail charged with sedition. He went on hunger strike, but, due to being force-fed, died in September 1917.



Monument at Rath Cross, north of Ashbourne, erected to remember the events of 28 April 1916.

The inspiration for the monument comes from a poem by Thomas Ashe.

LET ME CARRY YOUR CROSS FOR IRELAND, LORD!

Let me carry your Cross for Ireland, Lord!
The best of her red-drown hair,
And the pang of the gates of the sacrifice
May be borne by comrades dear,
But, Lord, take me from the offering throng,
There are many far less prepared,
Though anxious and all as they are to die
That Ireland may be saved.

Let me carry your Cross for Ireland, Lord!
My arms in this world are few
And few are the hearts will fall for me
When I go on my way to You,
Spare, oh spare to these loved ones dear
The brother and son and sister,
That the cause we love may never die
In the hand of our hearts' desire.

Let me carry your Cross for Ireland, Lord!
Let me suffer the pain and the shame,
I know my heart is true and true,
And I take on myself the blame,
Let those do with me here wherever they will,
My heart is with You,
You the spirit of the who hand her call
May be spared in Britain's walls.

Let me carry your Cross for Ireland, Lord!
The Ireland was with me,
For the spirit was of the clouded brow,
And the child of the mother's name,
For the eagle's bones of her golden wings,
For the bones of her father's name,
Let me carry your Cross for Ireland, Lord,
For the cause of Britain's walls.

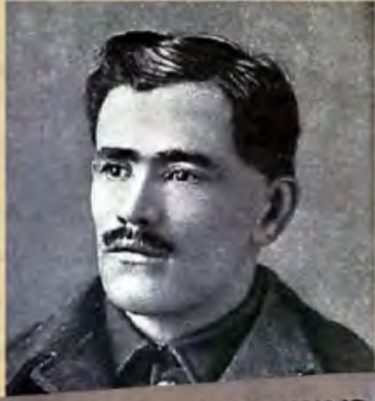


the POETS RISING

1916 AND IRISH LITERATURE

1916 in Poetry

Francis Ledwidge (1887-1917)



One of Ireland's best-loved poets, Ledwidge was both an Irish patriot and soldier in the Great War. He left a wealth of work that includes collections such as: *Songs of the fields* (1915), *Songs of peace* (1917), *Last Songs* and *The complete poems of Francis Ledwidge* (both published posthumously). An Irish Volunteer, he initially opposed John Redmond's call to join Irish regiments in WWI but eventually enlisted in Lord Dunsany's regiment. He served in Suvla Bay (the Gallipoli Campaign), Serbia, and lastly on the Western Front in 1917. He continued to write while on active service. While on leave during the Rising (he was hospitalised in Manchester), he was devastated to hear of the executions of the leaders of the Rising, particularly of his friend Thomas MacDonagh. His death inspired him to write one of his most poignant poems, *Thomas MacDonagh* (*He shall not hear the bitter cry* ...). Other poems of Ledwidge inspired by the Rising and events in Ireland at the time include: *Ireland*, *The dead kings*, *A soldiers grave* and *To Mrs Joseph Plunkett*.

He was killed in an explosion in Ypres in July 1917.

FRANCIS LEDWIDGE
POET
BORN IN SLANE 1887
KILLED IN FRANCE 1917
HE SHALL NOT HEAR THE BITTER CRY
IN THE WILD SKY, WHERE HE IS LAIN,
NOR VOICES OF THE SWEETER BIRDS
ABOVE THE WAILING OF THE RAIN.

THOMAS MACDONAGH
He shall not hear the bitter cry
In the wild sky, where he is lain,
Nor voices of the sweeter birds
Above the wailing of the rain.
Nor shall he know when loud March blows
Their slanting snows lay flowers aill,
Blowing to flame the golden cup
Of many an upset daffodil.
And when the Duck God leaves the manger
And jammers gear with greedy words,
Perhaps he'll know how long a march
Lifting her horns in judgment words.

George William Russell (Æ), (1867-1935)



Although not a participant in the Rising, Æ was an ardent Nationalist and a supporter of the workers' strike during the 1913 lockout. A poet, painter, and intellectual, he played a large part in the Irish Literary Revival and counted among his friends W. B. Yeats, James Joyce, James Stephens, Padraic and Mary Colum, and Thomas MacDonagh. He was director of the Irish Agricultural Organisation Society and through *The Irish Homestead*, its journal, which he edited, he contributed poems, essays, and stories. He published more than fifteen collections of poetry, two novels, and many essays. Although a pacifist, he nevertheless held the leaders of the Rising in great regard and they in turn inspired much of his poetry, examples of which are: *A leader*, *On behalf of some Irishmen not followers of tradition*, *Salutation*, and *Continuity*.



SALUTATION
To the Memory of Some I Know Who are Dead
and Who I would Inherit.
Their dream had left me numb and cold,
But yet my spirit rose in pride,
Refreshment in his naked gold,
The images of those who died
Or were slain in the penal cell,
Here's to you, Poet, your dream not mine,
But yet the thought for this you fell
The natural life's waters to mine.
I would be high talk from you,
Francis MacDonagh, and it seemed
The words were idle, but they grew
To sentences by death redeemed,
Like Christ's last words more great
Than life may mean by sacrifice:
High words were equalled by high fate,
You paid the price, You paid the price.

The hope lives on age after age
Earth with its beauty might be won
For labour as a heritage,
For this has Ireland lost a son:
This hope only's flame to face
Men have put life by with a smile,
Here's to you, Genuinely, my man,
Who cast the last touch on the pile.
Here's to the women of our blood
Stood by them in the fiery hour,
Rags lost some weakness in their mood,
Rags marked of a single power,
You, brave as each a hope forlorn,
Who smiled through crack of shot and shell,
Through the world cry on you to scorn,
Here's to you, Comrades, in your cell.
Here's to you men I never met,
Yet hope to meet behind the veil,
Thronged on some stony parapets
That look down upon Istanbul,
And see the confidence of dream
That dashed together in our night,
One river born from many streams
Roll in one blaze of blinding light.

Eva Gore-Booth (1870-1926)



Suffragist, labour activist, sister of Countess Constance Markievicz, friend of W. B. Yeats, Eva Gore-Booth was a lifelong campaigner against injustice and poverty. Although a pacifist, she nevertheless bewailed her sister's imprisonment and death sentence for her part in the Rising and that of other friends — Roger Casement, who was hanged for treason in Pentonville Prison in August 1916, and fellow-pacifist Francis Sheehy-Skeffington, who was murdered during the week of the Rising. Three of her poems are dedicated to Constance, Casement, and Skeffington, while others — *Heroic Death 1916*, *Easter Week* and *Comrades* — honour other leaders of the insurrection. All are in the collection, *Broken glory*.

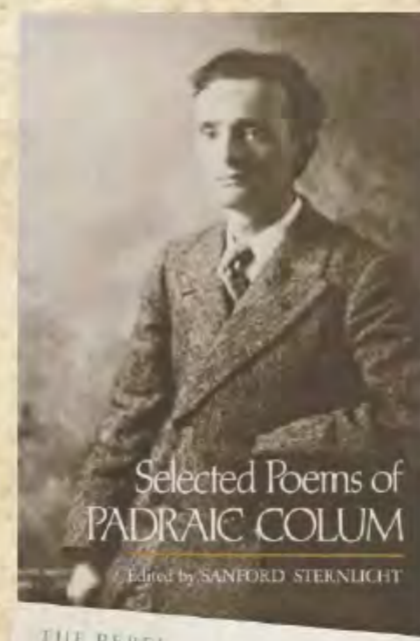
She died in London in 1926.



HEROIC DEATH, 1916
No man shall deem their resting-places flowers,
Behind a prison wall they stood to die,
Yes in those flowers' tragic green of eyes,
Dashed, the broken dreams of Ireland lie.
No cairn, heaped mound on a high windy hill,
With Irish earth the hero's heart enfolds,
But a burning grave in Pentonville,
The broken heart of Ireland holds.
Ah! ye who lay the body, how many soul
Rises above your hatred and your sorrow—
All flowers fade as the years onward roll,
There is the deathless word—a crown of thorns.

EASTER WEEK
Grief for the noble dead,
Of men who did not share their wife,
And mourned that our blood was shed,
Yet felt the broken glory in their state,
Their strange heroic questioning of fate
Gibbon, with gold the sign of sin our life.

Padraic Colum (1881-1972)



Poet, playwright, novelist, children's author, and collector of Irish folk songs, Colum was a leading figure of the Irish Literary Revival and a member of the Gaelic League and first board of the Abbey Theatre. He was one of the founders of *The Irish Review*. He and his wife, Mary, a noted writer and literary critic, were part of the international literary scene, travelling to New York and Paris at various times from 1914 to the 1930s. Generations of Irish schoolchildren would be familiar with two of his poems — *An old woman of the roads* and *A cradle song* — as well as with his words of the song *She moved through the fair*. Many of his friends were caught up in the events of Easter Week 1916, and both he and Mary were very saddened by the executions of some of those friends, particularly Roger Casement for whom he wrote the lament, *The Rebel: Roger Casement*. He lived until he was ninety, dying in 1972 in Connecticut.

THE REBEL
ROGER CASEMENT
1864-1916
They have hanged Roger Casement to the wall of a hill,
Ochone, och, ochone, ochone!
And their Smiths and their Murcys and their Coahs say,
It's a pill,
Ochone, och, ochone, ochone!
But there are honest peoples to lift that spirit high,
Fayed men and beardless women who believed loyally,
And they will lift him, lift him for the eyes of God to see,
And it's well, after all, Roger Casement!
They've 'em on the strangled body and laid 'em in the pit,
Ochone, och, ochone, ochone!
And brought the straggle fire to sweep it in by fit,
Ochone, och, ochone, ochone!
To waste that noble nature, that grew and brightening
Face
That set courtesy and kindness as essence of place,
But they — they fit to die that no poet ever will create,
While 'was power to die in fire, Roger Casement.

