

# POESIA AO MEIO DIA

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com SUSAN HOY



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# **Sixteen Dead Men**

by W. B. Yeats

*O but we talked at large before  
The sixteen men were shot,  
But who can talk of give and take,  
What should be and what not  
While those dead men are loitering there  
To stir the boiling pot?*

*You say that we should still the land  
Till Germany's overcome;  
But who is there to argue that  
Now Pearse is deaf and dumb?  
And is their logic to outweigh  
MacDonagh's bony thumb?*

*How could you dream they'd listen  
That have an ear alone  
For those new comrades they have found,  
Lord Edward and Wolfe Tone,  
Or meddle with our give and take  
That converse bone to bone?*

# **The Rebel**

by Patrick Pearse

*I am come of the seed of the people, the people that sorrow,  
That have no treasure but hope,  
No riches laid up but a memory  
Of an Ancient glory.  
My mother bore me in bondage, in bondage my mother was born,  
I am of the blood of serfs;  
The children with whom I have played, the men and women with whom I  
have eaten,  
Have had masters over them, have been under the lash of masters,  
And, though gentle, have served churls;  
The hands that have touched mine, the dear hands whose touch is familiar  
to me,  
Have worn shameful manacles, have been bitten at the wrist by manacles,  
Have grown hard with the manacles and the task-work of strangers,  
I am flesh of the flesh of these lowly, I am bone of their bone,  
I that have never submitted;  
I that have a soul greater than the souls of my people's masters,  
I that have vision and prophecy and the gift of fiery speech,  
I that have spoken with God on the top of His holy hill.  
And because I am of the people, I understand the people,  
I am sorrowful with their sorrow, I am hungry with their desire:  
My heart has been heavy with the grief of mothers,  
My eyes have been wet with the tears of children,  
I have yearned with old wistful men,  
And laughed or cursed with young men;  
Their shame is my shame, and I have reddened for it,  
Reddened for that they have served, they who should be free,  
Reddened for that they have gone in want, while others have been full,  
Reddened for that they have walked in fear of lawyers and of their jailors  
With their writs of summons and their handcuffs,  
Men mean and cruel!*

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

# **The Mother**

by Patrick Pearse

*I do not grudge them: Lord, I do not grudge  
My two strong sons that I have seen go out  
To break their strength and die, they and a few,  
In bloody protest for a glorious thing,  
They shall be spoken of among their people,  
The generations shall remember them,  
And call them blessed;  
But I will speak their names to my own heart  
In the long nights;  
The little names that were familiar once  
Round my dead hearth.  
Lord, thou art hard on mothers:  
We suffer in their coming and their going;  
And tho' I grudge them not, I weary, weary  
Of the long sorrow – And yet I have my joy:  
My sons were faithful, and they fought.*

# *Wishes for my Son*

by Thomas MacDonagh

*Now, my son, is life for you,  
And I wish you joy of it,-  
Joy of power in all you do,  
Deeper passion, better wit  
Than I had who had enough,  
Quicker life and length thereof,  
More of every gift but love.*

*Love I have beyond all men,  
Love that now you share with me-  
What have I to wish you then  
But that you be good and free,  
And that God to you may give  
Grace in stronger days to live?*

*For I wish you more than I  
Ever knew of glorious deed,  
Though no rapture passed me by  
That an eager heart could heed,  
Though I followed heights and sought  
Things the sequel never brought.*

*Wild and perilous holy things  
Flaming with a martyr's blood,  
And the joy that laughs and sings  
Where a foe must be withstood,  
Joy of headlong happy chance  
Leading on the battle dance.*

*But I found no enemy,  
No man in a world of wrong,  
That Christ's word of charity  
Did not render clean and strong-  
Who was I to judge my kind,  
Blindest groper of the blind?*

*God to you may give the sight  
And the clear, undoubting strength  
Wars to knit for single right,  
Freedom's war to knit at length,  
And to win through wrath and strife,  
To the sequel of my life.*

*But for you, so small and young,  
Born on Saint Cecilia's Day,  
I in more harmonious song  
Now for nearer joys should pray-  
Simpler joys: the natural growth  
Of your childhood and your youth,  
Courage, innocence, and truth:  
These for you, so small and young,  
In your hand and heart and tongue.*

# *I See His Blood Upon the Rose*

by Joseph Mary Plunkett

*I see his blood upon the rose  
And in the stars the glory of his eyes,  
His body gleams amid eternal snows,  
His tears fall from the skies.  
I see his face in every flower;  
The thunder and the singing of the birds  
Are but his voice—and carven by his power  
Rocks are his written words.  
All pathways by his feet are worn,  
His strong heart stirs the ever-beating sea,  
His crown of thorns is twined with every thorn,  
His cross is every tree.*



# Connolly (1933)

by Liam MacGabhann

*The man was all shot through that came today  
Into the barrack square;  
A soldier I – I am not proud to say  
We killed him there;  
They brought him from the prison hospital;  
To see him in that chair  
I thought his smile would far more quickly call  
A man to prayer.  
Maybe we cannot understand this thing  
That makes these rebels die;  
And yet all things love freedom – and the Spring  
Clear in the sky;  
I think I would not do this deed again  
For all that I hold by;  
Gaze down my rifle at his breast – but then  
A soldier I.  
They say that he was kindly – different too,  
Apart from all the rest;  
A lover of the poor; and all shot through,  
His wounds ill drest,  
He came before us, faced us like a man,  
He knew a deeper pain  
Than blows or bullets – ere the world began;  
Died he in vain?  
Ready – present; And he just smiling – God!  
I felt my rifle shake  
His wounds were opened out and round that chair  
Was one red lake;  
I swear his lips said 'Fire!' when all was still  
Before my rifle spat  
That cursed lead – and I was picked to kill  
A man like that!*

# FOR JAMES CONNOLLY

by Eiléan Ní Chuilleanáin

*i*

*When I think of all the false beginnings ...*

*The man was a pair of hands,*

*the woman another pair,*

*to be had more cheaply,*

*the wind blew, the children were thirsty –*

*when he passed by the factory door he saw them,*

*they were moving and then waiting,*

*as many as the souls that crowded by Dante's boat*

*that never settled in the water –*

*what weight to ballast that ferry?*

*They are there now, as many*

*as the souls blown by the winds of their desire,*

*the airs of love,*

*not one of them weighing*

*one ounce against the tornado*

*that lifts the lids of houses, that spies*

*where they crouch together inside*

*until the wind sucks them out.*

*It is only the wind, but what braced muscle, what earthed foot*

*can stand against it, what voice so loud*

*as to be heard shouting Enough?*

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*He had driven the horse in the rubbish cart, he knew  
the strength in the neck under the swishing mane,  
he knew how to tell her to turn, to back or stand  
He knew where the wind hailed from, he studied  
its language, it blew in spite of him.*

*He got tired waiting for the wind to change,  
as we are exhausted waiting for that change,  
for the voices to shout Enough , for the hands  
that can swing the big lever and send the engine rolling  
away to the place we saw through the gap in the bone  
where there was a painted room, music and the young people  
dancing on the shore, and the Old Man of the Sea  
had been sunk in the wide calm sea.*

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*he sea moves under the wind and shows nothing  
– not where to begin. But look for the moment  
just before the wave of change crashes and  
goes into reverse. Remember the daft beginnings  
of a fatal century and their sad endings, but let's not  
hold back our hand from the lever. Remember James Connolly,  
who put his hand to the work, who saw suddenly  
how his life would end, and was content because  
men and women would succeed him, and his testament  
was there, he trusted them. It was not a bargain:  
in 1916 the printer locked the forme,  
he set it in print, the scribes can't alter an iota  
– then the reader comes, and it flowers again, like a painted room.*

# A DEMONSTRATION

by Jessica Traynor

*Letter by this morning's post to say I may go home for Xmas  
if I won't have a demonstration (do they picture bands?)*

*– Dr Kathleen Lynn*

*What might drive me, a doctor,  
to jump out of reason and into the fire  
of rebellion? Haunted by skulls  
that boast through the thin skin of children  
who ghost the alleyways, dying  
young in silent demonstration,  
I raise my own demonstration  
against my limits as woman and doctor.  
I remember those I've watched dying  
of gulping coughs, praise the mercy of gunfire  
that scythes through women and children.  
I number those dead, count their skulls.  
Outside city hall, a policeman's skull, s  
hattered by a bullet. This is less a demonstration,  
more a bewilderment of poets and children,  
watched over by one errant doctor.*

*My convictions temper in the fire  
and quicklime of what follows, the dying  
man brought out and shot at dawn, the everdying  
Cuchulainn with his necklace of skulls –  
all that spitting, revolutionary fire.  
And my part in that demonstration  
won't be forgotten, but as a woman doctor  
put down to hysteria, or a lack of children –  
for what are women really but children  
themselves, living and dying  
without reason? They say a real doctor  
might cure me, could measure my skull  
and tell its emptiness, demonstrate  
my zeal was nothing but a mindless fire.  
A rebel dying stokes the nation's fire,  
but starving children? Ask this doctor  
to number our gains in skulls. Expect a demonstration.*

# ***The Patriot Game***

Piarsas Ó Lorcáin

*Piarsas Ó Lorcáin - The Patriot Game | Live at Other Voices Anam (2024).*



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