

29 DE SETEMBRO DE 2021



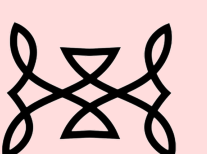
POESIA AO MEIO DIA



WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS (1865-1939)

THE SONG OF THE OLD MOTHER

I RISE IN THE DAWN, AND I KNEEL AND BLOW
TILL THE SEED OF THE FIRE FLICKER AND GLOW.
AND THEN I MUST SCRUB, AND BAKE, AND SWEEP, TILL STARS ARE BEGINNING TO BLINK AND PEEP;
BUT THE YOUNG LIE LONG AND DREAM IN THEIR BED
OF THE MATCHING OF RIBBONS, THE BLUE AND THE RED, AND THEIR DAY GOES OVER IN IDLENESS,
AND THEY SIGH IF THE WIND BUT LIFT UP A TRESS. WHILE I MUST WORK, BECAUSE I AM OLD
AND THE SEED OF THE FIRE GETS FEEBLE AND COLD.



MARY O'DONNELL

MY MOTHER REMEMBERS HER IRISH

LIKE ALICE, SHE HAS FALLEN DOWN THE RABBIT HOLE.
IN A ROOM AT THE BOTTOM,

REJECTING A BOTTLE LABELLED DRINK ME,
SHE REACHES FOR THE CRACKED URN OF LANGUAGE:

SPEAK ME, IT INVITES.
WHITE HAIR IN DISARRAY, SHE UNSTOPS IT.

THE CONTENTS FIZZ UP AND OVER THE LIP OF GLAZE
AS SHE RECOVERS THE SOUNDS SHE FORGOT

AFTER SCHOOLING. NOW, SHE HAS BROKEN AWAY
FROM THE LANGUAGE BUNKER,

ITS TORQUED ENGLISH,
TAKES TO SPEECH AT THE MIDNIGHT HOUR.

AS IF FIGHTING THE JABBERWOCKY,
SHE USES OLD SONGS TO PUSH AGAINST A PARALYSIS

OF CHAIR-LIFTS, WALKING FRAMES,
THEY EMERGE ON HER TONGUE, ANCIENT ORATORIO:

*SÍOLTA; BEIDH AONACH AMÁRACH; CAD DÚIRT TÚ,
A CHAILÍN DIL? BA MHAITH LIOM DUL ABHAILE.*

SUCH SOFTNESS THAT RARELY FOUND ITS WAY IN ENGLISH,
NOW HONEYS HER TONGUE IN THE MAGICAL FLIGHT OF DOTAGE.

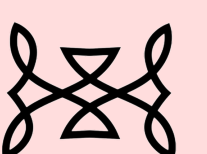
TIME, RELEASED, ENRICHES CONVERSATION.
"DID YOU KNOW THAT THIS REPUBLIC WAS BORN

70 YEARS AGO TODAY? YEARS AFTER THE MAGLIOCCOS
IN THE TOWN TAUGHT ME MUSSOLINI'S ANTHEM".

WE SPEAK OF EASTER MUSIC, THE ST. MATTHEW PASSION,
HER CEOL CRÁIFEACH. SHE WONDERS

IF THE SUN WILL DANCE, EASTER SUNDAY MORNING,
ON THE HILL ABOVE HER HOUSE AT KILNADRAIN,

WHERE SHE WANTS TO RETURN SOMETIME SOON.
MO THINTEÁN FÉIN, SHE ADDS.



MARY O'DONNELL

MY MOTHER SAYS NO ON BLOOMSDAY 2020

IT IS NOT EASY, IT IS NOT EASY
TO WHEEL AN OLD WOMAN TO THE SHOWER

ON BLOOMSDAY, WHEN THE WORLD
AND MOLLY CRY YES, YES, YES,

AND SHE IS SAYING NO, NO, NO,
BECAUSE WHAT'S LEFT OF HER LIFE

DEPENDS ON THE FREEDOM OF NO.
HOW JOYCEAN OF HER

TO RESIST THE CLEANED-UP CONSCIENCE
OF FILIAL ATTENTION, YOUR NEED

TO FIX HER TAINTS AND ODOURS,
WASH HAIR AND TEETH,

ATTEND TO TOES WHEN ALL SHE WANTS
IS TO FLOAT ON THE LILY-LEAF OF HER OWN

GREEN BEDSPREAD, DROWSING MOLLY
IN A TANGLE OF SNOW-WHITE HAIR.

NOW, DREAMS ENCLOSE HER
MORE THAN TALK OF SHOWERS OR MEALS,

THE FLOWING WATERS OF MEMORY
RISE AND TOUCH HER SKIN

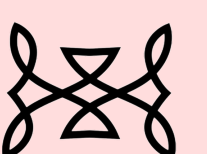
JUST WHERE THE MATTRESS EASES
SPINE AND BONES

IN THAT YELLOW-WALLED ROOM.
HELLO, MY DARLING, SHE GREETES

HIS PHOTOGRAPH, FLINGING KISSES
TOWARDS MOTTLED FRAME.

TO HER THEN,
THE LOGIC OF LOVE,

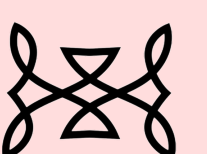
TO HER, THE LOGIC OF NO,
HER TONGUE UNTAMEABLE.



MARY O'DONNELL

HANGING HOUSE IN A CANAL

IT LAY ON THE OTHER SIDE,
THE COLOUR OF COUNTRY BUTTER.
I LONGED TO ENTER ANY WAY I COULD –
BY DOOR, WINDOW, CHIMNEY –
FOUND IT LOCKED.
BUT THERE WAS A REFLECTION,
CLEAR AS A MIRROR IN THE STILL WATERS,
THE RAISED BROWS OF DORMER WINDOWS AS IT
HUNG THERE,
UPSIDE DOWN, THE POKING NOSE OF THE PORCH,
THE COMFORTING TORSO OF WALLS.
I STRIPPED OFF, KNEW IMMEDIATELY WHAT TO DO,
DIVED, ENTERED THAT BECKONING HOUSE,
ITS BUBBLING WHISPERS AN EMBRACE
AS I BURST THROUGH ITS PORCH REFLECTION.
NOW, WITHIN, I AM DROWNING
IN SECRETS, IN THE COMPANY OF
WATER-RATS, DIVING HERONS, GREY ROACH
AND CRAYFISH.
WITH MY OWN, AS ALWAYS.



MARY O'DONNELL

MISSING BRAZIL

I WILL NOT HEAD FOR BRAZIL AGAIN,
FLY OVER THOSE STEAMING-KETTLE CLOUDS
IN A PLANE NOSING SOUTH OF THE EQUATOR,
PASSING RIO, OVER SAND-FURRED, BLONDE BEACHES,

NOR SEE THE CLOUD-SCRAPING APARTMENTS
OF SÃO PAULO, OR DRIVE PAST
THE POLITICIAN'S HIGH COMPOUND.
I WILL NOT WALK THROUGH CRACOLÂNDIA,

WITNESS TINY WOMEN WITH THIN SCARVES
WRAPPED AROUND ACORN BREASTS,
WHO SELL THEMSELVES TO ANYONE,
PEOPLE SPRAWLED BENEATH A CANOPY OF FICUS TREES

AS THE DAYTIME WORLD RUSTLES, HUSTLES
AND THEY REST WITH WATCHFUL SHUT EYES.
STREET CORNERS, CAFES,
THE SMOULDER OF THICK COFFEE

AS I DRIFT, SHOPS WHERE WOMEN
CONSIDER SKIRT LENGTHS AND DÉCOLLETAGE,
MY LIFE A HALF-IGNITED FLAME,
TREATED LIKE A CASUAL GIFT.

FALLEN FRUITS FROM A CLOWN FIG TREE
REMIND ME, DUST ON STREETS,
COUPLES TUCKED LIMB ON LIMB ON BENCHES
IN BROAD PARKS, THOSE GREEN-LIT AWNINGS

OVERHANGING A RESTAURANT
WHERE I ATE ALONE DURING A TORRENTIAL STORM
(I PHOTOGRAPHED THE EMPTY CHAIR OPPOSITE,
SENT IT HOME).

NOT LONELY, JUST ALONE,
AND EVERYTHING RICHER THAN BEFORE,
ABLAZE IN THE RAIN. NOW, I MOURN:
THOSE DAYS ARE DONE.

I WILL NOT DRIFT AGAIN
BENEATH STEAMING-KETTLE CLOUDS,
NEVER TRAVEL SO FAR AGAIN,
LEARN SO MUCH, SO LITTLE.

