PADRAIC COLUM

Reading from his Irish Tales and Poems

WITH NOTES BY ZACK BOWEN, STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK, BINGHAMTON, NEW YORK

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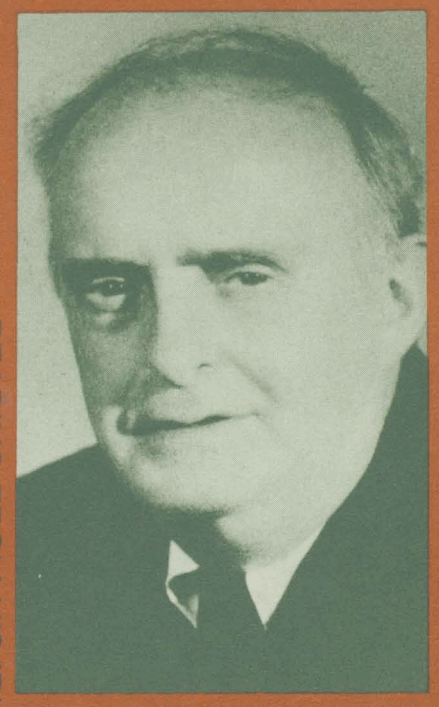

BLARNEY CASTLE
THE WIZARD EARL
REMINISCENCE II (I saw the wind to-day)
REMINISCENCE X (At the fore of the year)
THE BIRD OF JESUS
AN OLD SONG RE-SUNG (As I went down through Dublin city)
WILD ASS
BIRD OF PARADISE
CONDORS
MAY DAY
HONEY-SELLER
OLD WOMAN OF THE ROADS

COVER DESIGN BY RONALD CLYNE

DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

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PADRAIC COLUM

reading from his IRISH TALES and POEMS with notes by ZACK BOWEN, State University of New York, Binghamton, New York

SIDE A BAND 1

BLARNEY CASTLE

The best way to get to Blarney Castle is to walk there--to walk there, I mean, from the town of Cork. You will go to Patrick's Bridge. You will walk along the quays. You will pass Shandon Church whose bells a poet has made famous. You will come to a second bridge. Then you will turn up Blarney Street. You will go on until you come to a place named Clougheen. And the valley which Blarney Castle dominated is then before you.

But you should stay for a while upon Patrick's Bridge and take in the scene and the people. Across the way is Shandon Church with its turret.

White and brown is Shandon's steeple,
Parti-coloured like the people.

Two sides of the turret are of white stone, two of brown stone. The white stone is used again in the embankment of the river; the Lee flows along the quays of limestone. This is the central part of Cork.

You then go on a long street that begins in an undistinguished part of the town and ends in a lane. And then you are out of the town and in the county of Cork. Clougheen--"the little stones"--is not a village; there is a church there and a few houses, a pump, and that is all. And the road to Blarney is before you.

I go to Blarney by the fields that are the greenest of all the green fields of Eirinn. Yonder field is a green mirror for the clouds to make shadows upon. And I pass a field that has yellow dandelions and grass so soft and smooth that I think that only the cattle of a king have any right to graze there--no other cattle would be worthy of such a sward. Passing these fields I come to Blarney village with its factory, a dull little place. And then I go through the gate and enter the grounds of Blarney's old castle, grounds overgrown with shrubs.

Near the gate, under the trees, with a shawl over her head for shelter from the showers, is a simple-faced old woman. She returns my salutation, and I go over and talk to her. She has a rambling mind. She likes the air here and she likes to watch the flowing water. She does not say it to me, but I gather from her rambling allusions that she nurses the hope that some of the visitors will make her some sort of offering--something that would give her an allowance for tea or snuff. And over and over again she tells me that she likes to watch the flowing water from where she sits. There are handsome trout in that stream that never were caught and that never can be caught. She tells me a legend of the castle that has as much to recommend its authenticity as any of the half-dozen legends that are current. And as I go away from her she says, "May God carry you every road safe."

The keep is built on a shelf of rock that dominates the valley. I go to the top, about a hundred feet up. There I come upon a group who are not ordinary visitors. A personage whom I take to be an Indian prince is kissing the stone by proxy. A servitor is hanging down the wall to lip it. From the top of the keep I look on the green lawns that are all around me. Blarney has nothing to show better than these, except perhaps a yew tree that grows out of a tier of rock on which the castle is built. It bends outward and some of its branches grow towards the ground. Others are bare. The branches that are lifted up have constant movement, like waves, dark green feathery branches waving against rock and wall. There it grows blended somehow with rock and ruin, like some unused image that has come spontaneously into a poet's verse.

The legend of the castle that my old woman told me had to do with water and a fairy woman, and, although the woman in it is old, not young, the story I imagine is part of the widely spread story of the water maiden Undine or Melusina. The King of Munster saved an old woman who was about to drown in the lake. She had nothing to give him by way of reward. She told him, however, that if he would mount the topmost wall of his castle, and kiss a stone which she described to him, he would gain speech that would win friend or foe to him, man or woman. There is the lake that might well be the scene for the encounter with the Melusina, or the Undine; it is about a mile from the castle.

But, as the friend who meets me here, a poet and a scholar, reminds me, Blarney was famous for its groves before the stone and its lake were ever heard of. The place-name itself means "groves." And it is for its groves that Blarney is celebrated in what is the most diverting of

Irish poems; "The Groves of Blarney" which was made up to parody a song made in schoolmaster's English in the eighteenth century. The structure and the sound of Gaelic poetry are reproduced in it: the "a" sound of "Blarney" is woven through every stanza, but every word that has the sound seems to have gone into its place smilingly:

The groves of Blarney, they are so charming
Down by the purling of sweet silent streams,
Being banked with posies that spontaneous grow there,
Planted in order by the sweet rock close.
'Tis there the daisy and the sweet carnation,
The blooming pink and the rose so fair,
The daffydowndilly, likewise the lily,
All flowers that scent the sweet fragrant air.

There's gravel walks there for speculation
And conversation in sweet solitude;
'Tis there the lover may hear the dove, or
The gentle plover in the afternoon;
And if a lady would be so engaging
As to walk alone in these shady bowers,
'Tis there the courtier he may transport her
Into some fort or all underground.

For 'tis there's a cave where no daylight enters,
But cats and badgers are forever bred;
Being mossed by nature that makes it sweeter
Than a coach and six or a feather bed.
'Tis there the lake is, well stored with perches
And comely eels in the verdant mud;
Besides the leeches, and groves of beeches
Standing in order for to guard the flood.

There's statues gracing this noble place in—
All heathen gods and nymphs so fair,
Bold Neptune, Plutarch, and Nicodemus,
All standing naked in the open air!
So now to finish this brief narration,
Which my poor genius could not entwine;
But were I Homer, or Nebuchadnezzar,
'Tis every feature I would make it twine.

This is the poem which James Stephens told me once he would rather have written than anything in an Irish anthology.

* Essay taken from Cross Roads in Ireland, by Padraic Colum (New York, 1930), pp. 306-312.

SIDE A BAND 2

The Wizard Earl

Another famous Irish castle sets me on a pilgrimage. It is the castle of Maynooth in a place three or four counties away from the County of Cork in the County of Kildare. This castle was the stronghold of the great Fitzgerald family, the head of which was the Earl of Kildare. Here is the story I heard told about Maynooth castle. I'll call the story "The Wizard Earl."

"The Wizard Earl" was altered from the source. Words that are bracketed were omitted from Colum's reading. When he substituted other words for omitted ones, the substituted words are written above the line. I suggest that you print the version Colum reads (with the ommissions and changes) since the changes seem purposeful. (Z. B.)

To GATHER Fern-seed and get any good out of it, you must gather it on Midsummer's Eve just as the sun is going down, neither a minute before nor a minute after. The Fern-seed gathered at such time lets you walk unseen by mortal eyes; you can be here and you can be there and no one will either see or know you. But you have to be very watchful when you are about to gather the seed; beings are abroad that will try to do you harm, and will be able to do it if all your wits and all your mind aren't on your purpose. For that reason you mustn't have people watching while you're doing it—they will scatter your wits if you know that they are there.

Gerald, the Earl of Kildare, who lived in the great castle of Maynooth, got ready to gather Fern-seed on a certain Midsummer's Eve. Besides being the Earl of Kildare he was a Wizard, and the people who had seen him making spells and working wonders called him the Wizard Earl. Why such a great Wizard as he was had waited so long to gather the seed that would let him go unseen I don't know; perhaps he had had harder things to do and things that had to be done first. Be that as it may, at a time in his life when he was well advanced in wizardry, Earl Gerald went up a hillside to be ready to gather the Fern-seed at the right minute of Midsummer's Eve. He had all his wits and all his mind in harness, and he was ready to say the spell:

Let me unseen
Go and stand,
Fern-seed
On my left hand!

when he saw heads watching him from behind every stone on the hillside. The country people had expected his coming and were there to watch all he did. He was very angry, and if he had had a sword in his belt he would have cut many of the heads off. But you may not carry iron with you when you are out on Midsummer's Eve and amongst enchantments. Earl Gerald carried no sword. He changed himself into a Stag with high and wide antlers and stood there [threatening] menacing the people who had come to watch him. They went helter-skelter away. But it was too late then for the Wizard Earl to gather the Fern-seed that would let him walk and stand unseen.

He changed back into his own proper [form] shape and went down the hillside and into his Castle. He went into a secret chamber where he used to read sit ing by the light of a magic lamp; it was the light of this lamp streaming brightly through the slit in the wall that had made the servants and the country people around take notice of his wizardries. He stood reading a deep book of magic that was propped up before his eyes when a knocking came upon the door of the chamber. He opened the door and there stood his young Countess.

"I wanted to see what your secret chamber is like, Gerald," said she.

"Yes, my love," he said, "but I was going up on the Tower I want to look at the stars in to-night's sky."

"Won't you take me up with you, Gerald," said she, "and tell me the names of the stars?"

"I will," said the Wizard Earl, quenching the magic lamp and leaving the chamber in darkness which was what he wanted to do, for there were things in the chamber that he did not want her to look upon.

They went up the winding stair and out on the top of the Tower. Behind them went Cogan, the Monkey that belonged to the Castle. People thought that the Monkey was there to help the Earl in his wizardries. But that wasn't so; a Monkey was kept in Maynooth Castle for the reason that a Monkey had saved the life of an infant heir: the place had taken fire, the child was in a burning room, and a Monkey that had been made a pet of had taken him up, and, holding him with one arm, had scrambled to the branch of a tree and had held the infant heir until his master and mistress called to him to come down. Ever since that had happened a Monkey was kept in Maynooth Castle; there is a Monkey on the Fitzgerald plate to this day.

Well, the Earl and Countess with Cogan behind them went to the top of the Tower. Earl Gerald and his lady saw Bone-fires burning on every side; there were shoutings and lowings, for the country people were driving their cattle through the fires as they used to until some years ago; they did this to free them from any evil power that might be upon them. From the fires they looked up to the sky; it was clear and lovely. He began to tell her about the stars, and his arm went about her as they stood by the parapet looking up at the sky. The Countess wasn't more than a girl, and as Earl Gerald spoke to her he remembered that he hadn't given her much of his company since they were wedded, for his wizardries had taken up his days and his nights. But he would forget them for a while, he thought, and get to know his beautiful Countess.

"But I will never get to know you, Gerald," said she, as he clasped her hand.

"Why do you say that, my Duck of Diamonds?" said he.

"Because you can change yourself into so many shapes. As soon as I knew you in one you would change into another shape."

"How do you know I can change shapes?" asked the Wizard Earl.

"The country people saw you do it. I have heard all about it from the maids. You frightened the people terribly, you wicked shape-changer."

"I should have frightened them more. I should have left them speechless."

"But how will I ever get to know you in all your shapes?" said the lady.

"You need know me only in one, my Cluster of Nuts," said he.

"I should never know you at all if I only knew you in one, you shape-shifter," said she.

"Well, the truth is," said he, "that there are only a few shapes I can change into. The country people think I can change into a thousand, but that isn't so. Three is the most I can manage."

"Let me see them—oh, let me see them," said the Countess, taking his face between her hands.

"Don't ask for that--you mustn't ask for that," said he.

"Oh, but why not?" said she. "Let me see your three shapes—let me see them now and I'll never ask to see them again."

"It cannot be," said he.

"Not even if your Countess asked you lovingly on a night like this?" said she.

"My White Calf,' said the Earl, "if I changed shapes, and if anyone who loved me was made afraid by the change— Now, are you listening to this?"

"I am, my love."

"If anyone who loved me was made afraid by the change, I'd have to disappear. No mortal would ever see me again."

"Is that true?" she asked.

"It is true," he told her very solemnly.

"Where would you disappear to?"

"I'd have to go into the Fairy Mounds. I'd live a long time there—hundreds of years—but mortals would never see me again except on Midsummer Eves. And you might be frightened by the change I made."

"I'd never be made afraid. I'd know it was you who were there, you old Wizard."

"I'm afraid, and very much afraid, that you'd be afraid," he said.

"I couldn't be made afraid," said she. "How could I? I'd know it was you. And I'd be made miserable every day to think that you could change into shapes I had never seen. The country people have seen you as some wonderful thing, but I never have. Now wouldn't you change your shape for the sake of the neglected wife you brought into your big Castle and have never done anything to pleasure?"

"Will you not be afraid?"

"No."

"And you'll remember that it is I."

"Of course I will. And I'll love you so much when I've seen you do these wonderful things. Give me a kiss now and nothing will frighten me."

So he kissed her and she kissed him back, and he turned away and muttered the spell that changed his shape. Then the Countess saw a great Stag with lowered antlers standing before her. Her breath came quickly, and then she said, "I'm not afraid." The Stag moved away, and in a while Earl Gerald stood before her.

"I wasn't a bit afraid," said she. "Now go and change into something else, my Share of the World."

He did. He changed into a Cat-of-the-Mountain that stood staring at her with unwinking eyes. "I'm not afraid," said she, but she was—just a little bit. The Cat drew back from her, and then, as

before, Earl Gerald showed himself. "And now for this change," he said, "and then you'll have seen me in all the shapes I can change into. I'm not afraid that you'll be made frightened by this."

He changed before her eyes. He remained the same Earl Gerald, but Earl Gerald become so tiny that he wasn't up to her knee. And she was so enchanted by this shape that she cried out to him not to change back for a while. She watched him as he walked across the floor that was the top of the Tower, going over to the parapet, as small and as fine a figure as ever walked, and she said to herself She loved the Earl doubly [she thought,] now that he was so much like a small child.

And then she screamed out, for the Monkey that had been squatting in the shadows made a bound and lifted the little one up in his long arms. And hearing her scream, he sprang up on the parapet. "Oh, I'm frightened, I'm frightened!" cried the lady, as she saw the Monkey leaning over, the changed Earl in his arms. There was a sigh as if the night-wind passed over her, and when she went to where Cogan was there was nothing in his arms. The Monkey jumped down from the parapet and crouched in a corner. The Earl had disappeared.

Then she ran down the stairway calling to the servants, and they got lights and ran outside with her. [They] searched [all] round to see if he had fallen from the Tower, but no trace of him was to be found. He had disappeared; he had gone into the Fairy Mounds.

The young Countess grew old; she died; another Earl and another Countess lived in the great Castle of Maynooth. Other Earls and other Countesses lived and grew old there and died. Stones fell from the walls, grass grew around where the Tower stood; the Castle was demolished, and a new house for the Earls was built near by. But still Earl Gerald lived on. He lived in the Fairy Mounds with the heroes who are to help in the deliverance of the land and he [was] their leader.

On Midsummer Eves he rides abroad with a train of horsemen. The horses of the other riders have no shoes on their hoofs; Earl Gerald's horse has, but they are not iron; they are silver shoes. When those shoes are worn thin he will know that the time has come when the people are ready to take help from him[self] and his horsemen. One [Mid]summer Eve a man [who] was crossing the Curragh of Kildare, saw a single rider going towards where a company of riders waited for him. "Has the time come?" they shouted. And the rider said, "Not yet, not yet!" [That was just before Earl Gerald's descendant, Lord Edward Fitzgerald, was making the people ready for an uprising.]

And another Midsummer's Eve, not so long ago, a very lordly-looking man rode up to a blacksmith's forge in the long twilight. He dismounted, and the blacksmith, coming outside to attend to the horse, lifted a hoof [up], and, behold! the shoe was of silver, and the nails that fastened it were of silver too. He raised the second, and the third, and the fourth hoof, and the shoe on each was of silver and fastened with silver nails. "I have no metal to match what is here, my Lord," said the blacksmith. "I do not want them repaired," said the lordly-looking man. "What I want is to know how many miles' traveling they will have to do before they are worn thin?" "Two hundred miles, my Lord," said the blacksmith. "It will not take many more Midsummer [s] Eves," said the man, as he mounted the silver-shod horse and rode away. That was Earl Gerald as sure as we are standing by this Bone-fire. And some of us will live to see the Midsummer Eve when he and his riders will come out on the Curragh of Kildare, he with his horse's silver shoes worn as thin as they can be worn.

*From the Big Tree of Bunlahy (Dublin, 1933), pp. 103-112

SIDE B BAND 1

Poems

Reminiscence

II

I saw the wind to-day:
I saw it in the pane
Of glass upon the wall:
A moving thing—'twas like
No bird with widening wing,
No mouse that runs along
The meal bag under the beam.
I think it like a horse,
All black, with frightening mane,
That springs out of the earth,
And tramples on his way.
I saw it in the glass,
The shaking of a mane:
A horse that no one rides!

*Collected Poems of Padraic Colum (New York, 1953), pp. 4-5.

SIDE B BAND 2

Reminiscence

X

At the fore of the year, and on Candlemas Day,
All early at Mass I remarked her—
Like the dew on green corn, as bright and as clear
Were her eyes, and her voice was the starling's!

With bragging and lies, I thought that her mind
I'd engage, and then win her with praises,
But through Spring and through Summer she has left me to rise
Every day with a pain that will slay me!

Oh, come, O my love, ere the life from me goes
If your hand but to lightly lay on me,
And a grief take away that none else can remove—
For now 'tis the reaping of barley!

* Collected Poems, p. 14.

SIDE B BAND 3

The Bird of Jesus

It was pure indeed,
The air we breathed in, the light we saw,
I and my brother, when we played that day,
Or piped to one another; then there came
Two young lads of an age with one another,
And with us two, and these two played with us,
And went away.

Each had a bearing that was like a prince's,
Yet they were simple lads and had the kindness
Of our own folk—lads simple and unknowing:
Then, afterwards, we went to visit them.

Theirs was a village that was not far off,
But out of reach—towards elbow, not towards hand:
And what was there were houses—
Houses and some trees—
And it was like a place within a fold.

We found the lads,
And found them still as simple and unknowing,
And played with them: we played outside the stall
Where worked the father of the wiser lad—
Not brothers were the boys, but cousins' children.

There was a pit:
We brought back clay and sat beside the stall,
And made birds out of clay; and then my brother
Took up his bird and flung it in the air:
His playmate did as he,
And clay fell down upon the face of clay.

And then I took
The shavings of the board the carpenter
Was working on, and flung them in the air,
And watched them streaming down.

There would be nought to tell
Had not the wiser of the lads took up
The clay he shaped: a little bird it was;
He tossed it from his hand up to his head;
The bird stayed in the air.

O what delight we had
To see it fly and pause, that little bird,
Sinking to earth sometimes, and sometimes rising
As though to fly into the very sun;
At last it spread out wings and flew, and flew,
Flew to the sun.

I do not think
That we played any more, or thought of playing,
For every drop of blood our bodies held
Was free and playing, free and playing then.
Four lads together on the bench we sat:
Nothing was in the open air around us,
And yet we thought something was there for us—
A secret, charmed thing.

So we went homeward; by soft ways we went
That wound us back to our familiar place.
Some increase lay upon the things we saw:
I'll speak of grasses, but you'll never know
What grass was there; words wither it and make it
Like to the desert children's dream of grass;
Lambs in the grass, but I will not have shown you
What fleece of purity they had to show;
I'll speak of birds, but I will not have told you
How their song filled the heart; and when I speak
Of him, my brother, you will never guess
How we two were at one!

Even to our mother we had gained in grace!

* Collected Poems, pp. 44-46.

SIDE B BAND 4

An Old Song Re-sung

As I went down through Dublin city
At the hour of twelve of the night,
Who did I see but a Spanish lady
Washing her feet by candle light.
    First she washed them,
    Then she dried them,
    All by a fire of amber coals,
In all my life I never did see
A maid so neat about the soles.

I asked her would she come a-walking,
And we went on where the small bats flew,
A coach I called then to instate her,
And on we went till the grey cocks crew.
    Combs of amber
    In her hair were,
    And her eyes had every spell,
In all my life I never did see
A maid whom I could love so well.

But when I came to where I found her,
And set her down from the halted coach,
Who was there waiting, his arms folded,
But that fatal swordsman, Tiger Roache?
    Then blades were out,
    And 'twas thrust and cut,
    And never wrist gave me more affright,
Till I lay low upon the floor
Where she stood holding the candle light.

But, O ye bucks of Dublin city,
If I should see at twelve of the night.
In any chamber, such lovely lady
Washing her feet by candle light,
    And drying o'er
    Soles neat as hers,
    All by a fire of amber coal—
Your blades be dimmed! I'd whisper her,
And take her for a midnight stroll!

*Collected Poems, pp. 75-76.

SIDE B BAND 5

Wild Ass

The Wild Ass lounges, legs struck out
In vagrom unconcern:
The tombs of Achaemenian kings
Are for those hooves to spurn.

And all of rugged Tartary
Lies with him on the ground,
The Tartary that knows no awe,
That has nor ban nor bound.

The wild horse from the herd is plucked
To bear a saddle's weight;
The boar is one keeps covert, and
The wolf runs with a mate.

But he's the solitary of space,
Curbless and unbeguiled;
The only being that bears a heart
Not recreant to the wild.

*Collected Poems, (p. 168.)

SIDE B BAND 6

Bird of Paradise

With sapphire for her crown,
And with the Libyan wine
For lustre of her eyes;
With azure on her feet
As though she trod the skies;
Then iris for her vest,
Rose, ebony, and flame
(The bird that Camoens
Won for his golden lay),
She lives a thing enthralled,
In forests that are old,
As old as is the Moon.

*Collected Poems, p. 176.

SIDE B BAND 7

Condors

I. CONDORS FLYING

We watched the Condors winging towards the Moon,
A Moon that glimmered in the blue daylight;
Around us were the Andes, and beyond
Andes, the Ocean, empty like the Moon.
I heard you speak in Atahualpa's tongue;
Then distances grew present; all the range
Of Condors' wings between my thought, your thought:
As though they had transcended need for wings,
We watched the Condors winging towards the Moon.

*Collected Poems, p. 182

SIDE B BAND 8

May Day

May day! Surpassing time!
The lovely colours stay,
And where there's shaft of light
The blackbird rounds his lay.

The cuckoo flies and calls,
That bird of dusty hue,
From branch and then from hedge,
'All, May-time, welcome you!'

Lesser the river goes,
The heather tresses spread,
And horses seek the pool:
The bog-down lifts its head.

The sail is far away:
But near—a strenuous bard,
The corncrake in long grass,
Makes much of his one word.

Peace, peace is over all,
And where the swallows skim,
One hears the rushes talk;
The quagmire sucks its rim.

The sea lies smooth these times,
The ocean-tides are lulled;
The deer makes sudden start;
The blossoms fill the wold.

Now like the raven's coat,
The bog is seen around,
The trout leaps in the stream;
Strong is the hero's bound.

And in the clear-skyed month
Man comes into his own;
The maiden in fair pride
Buds, and her beauty's known.

The haze is on the lake,
And there's a harp of might—
The forest in the breeze:
The colours take the height.

And in the pool below
A virgin with her chant,
The lofty waterfall,
Welcomes the visitant.

On us a longing comes
Horses to mount and ride,
And on the horses, too,
To take their mettled stride.

Bees load themselves from bloom;
The kine go up the hill,
Dry mud upon their flanks;
The ants bear all they will.

The water-flag is gold
Where shaft of light strikes down,
And up, above us all,
A singing fellow's gone—

The lark. And all are told
This is the season's prime;
Welcome, the songster shrills,
May day, surpassing time!

*The Poet's Circuits (London, 1960), pp. 52-53.

SIDE B BAND 9

Honey-Seller

Down a street that once I lived in
You used to pass, a honey-seller,
And the town in which that street was
Was the shabbiest of all places:
You were different from the others

Who went by to barter meanly:
Different from the man with coloured
Windmills for the children's pennies;
Different from the drab purveyor
With her paper screens to fill up
Chill and empty fireplaces.

You went by, a man upstanding,
On your head a wide dish, holding
Dark and golden lumps of honey;
You went slowly, like an old horse
That's not driven any longer,
But that likes to take an amble.

No one ever bought your honey,
No one ever paid a penny
For a single comb of sweetness;
Every house was grim unto you
With foregone desire of eating
Bread whose taste had sweet of honey.

Yet you went, a man contented
As though you had a king to call on
Who would take you to his parlour,
And buy all your stock of honey.

On you went, and in a sounding
Voice, just like the bell of evening,
Told us of the goods you carried,
Told us of the dark and golden
Treasure dripping on your wide dish.

You went by, and no one named you! *

* Poet's Circuits, pp. 92-93.

SIDE B BAND 10

Old Woman of the Roads

OH, to have a little house!
To own the hearth and stool and all!
The heaped-up sods upon the fire,
The pile of turf against the wall!

To have a clock with weights and chains
And pendulum swinging up and down,
A dresser filled with shining delph,
Speckled and white and blue and brown!

I could be busy all the day
Clearing and sweeping hearth and floor,
And fixing on their shelf again
My white and blue and speckled store!

I could be quiet there at night
Beside the fire and by myself,
Sure of a bed and loth to leave
The ticking clock and the shining delph!

Och! but I'm weary of mist and dark,
And roads where there's never a house nor bush,
And tired I am of bog and road,
And the crying wind and the lonesome hush!
And I am praying to God on high,
And I am praying him night and day,
For a little house, a house of my own—
Out of the wind's and the rain's way.

* The Poet's Circuits, p. 110.

Poems and Essays edited by Zack Bowen, State University of New York at Binghamton

Padraic Colum

Padraic Colum was born in County Longford, Ireland, on December 8, 1881. Unlike a great number of the Irish poets of the turn of the century, he was raised in a rural, Irish Catholic setting. His father was master of a workhouse, a public welfare establishment run by the government for poverty-stricken Irish migrant families. His impressions of the people who came to the workhouse and their stories have formed the basis for much of his poetry.

Mr. Colum entered upon the Irish literary scene at the age of twenty when his first play was produced in Dublin. He became a part of the Celtic Revival at the turn of the century and was immediately accepted into the group centered about William Butler Yeats and the new Irish Theatre. The Land, Mr. Colum's second play, was the first successful play produced in the Irish Theatre movement. He was an intimate of Yeats, Lady Gregory, A. E., Joyce and Synge. His literary associations have included friendships with practically all of the major writers of the twentieth century, including the writers of the "Lost Generation" who were attracted to Paris following World War 1. He married literary critic Mary Gunning Maguire in 1912. Mrs. Colum was his intellectual companion and severest critic until her death in 1956.

Mr. Colum's long and distinguished career includes some sixty-four published volumes and innumerable essays and articles dating from the turn of the century. His works include two biographies, Arthur Griffith (Dublin, 1959) and Our Friend James Joyce (New York, 1958), the latter written in collaboration with his wife. His latest plays were produced this year (1965) in Dublin and Connecticut, and he will have a recently written noh play produced in Dublin during the coming season. Mr. Colum is best known in the United States for his poetry and folk stories, two of which are represented in this album. His translations of traditional legends and Homeric classics re ceived such popular acclaim that Mr. Colum has become known internationally as an authority on classical mythology and folklore.

In 1923 he was invited by the Hawaiian legislature to come to the islands to compile a history of the

legends and lore of the Polynesian people. Several volumes testify to his work there. In recent years Mr. Colum's efforts have been directed chiefly to writing his increasingly popular legends and stories for children, several of which, including The Children's Homer and The Boy Who Knew What the Birds Said, are classics in the field. At age eighty-four Mr. Colum continues to be a prolific writer. His faculties unimpaired, and his wit as caustic as ever, he travels twice a year between his Dublin and New York apartments, he gives a number of lectures and readings both here and in Ireland, and he presides over the meetings of the James Joyce Society.

His concerns have been ever with common people and things. They are rediscovered through his simple, direct style. Plato's world of appearances which we have in recent years abandoned for the inner truths of the world of forms comes alive once again and causes us to reexamine through the eyes of the poet the truth in seeing what is there to see, and the beauty and uniqueness of the commonplace.

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