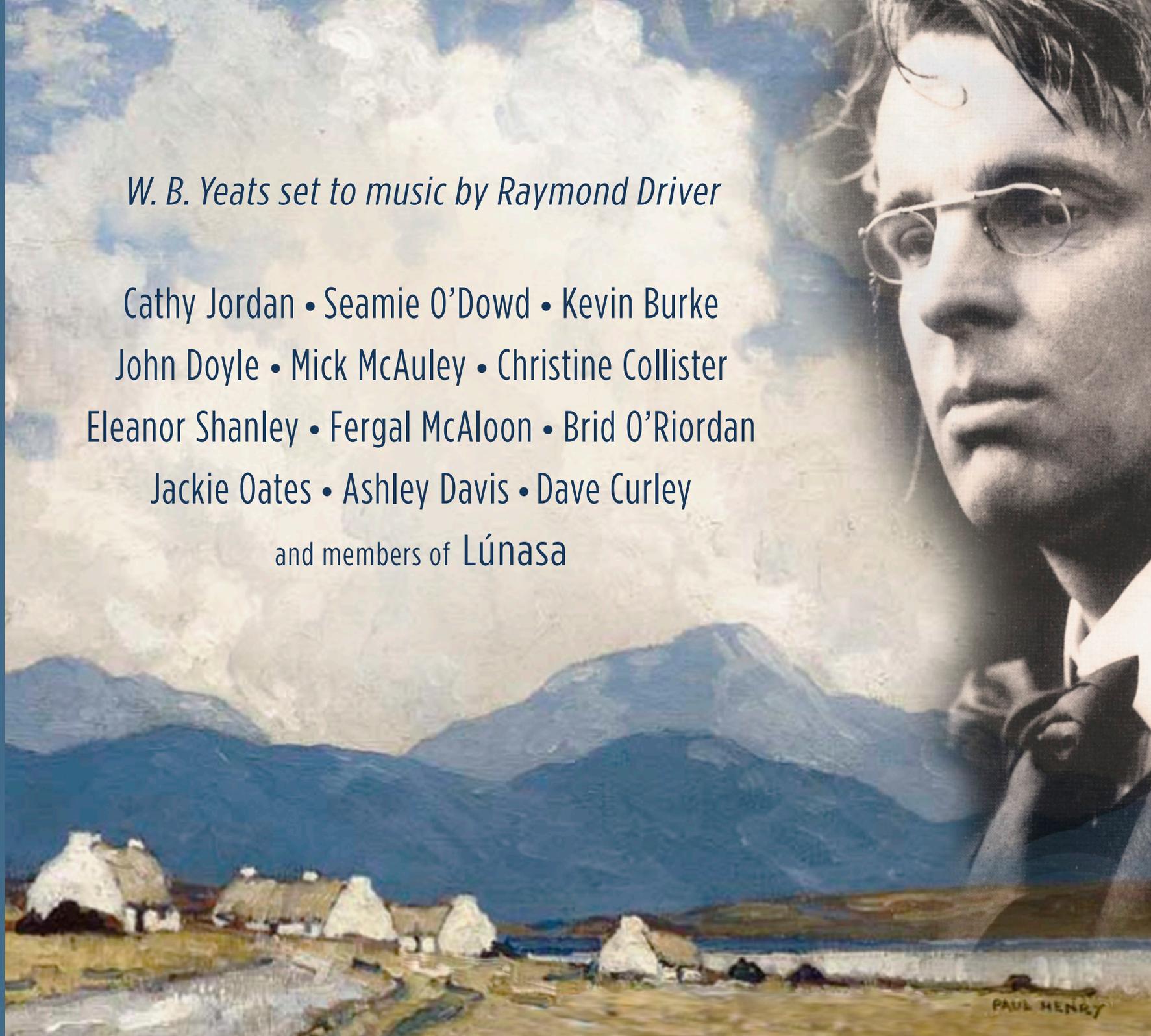


# I AM OF IRELAND

## Yeats in Song

*W. B. Yeats set to music by Raymond Driver*

Cathy Jordan • Seamie O'Dowd • Kevin Burke  
John Doyle • Mick McAuley • Christine Collister  
Eleanor Shanley • Fergal McAloon • Brid O'Riordan  
Jackie Oates • Ashley Davis • Dave Curley  
and members of Lúnasa



## I AM OF IRELAND/Yeats in Song

“...among the best I’ve heard.”

Andrew McGowan, Founder & President of the W. B. Yeats Society of New York

William Butler Yeats wrote that he wanted his poetry to be spoken on a stage or sung. Much of his poetry is inherently musical with its hauntingly beautiful words and simple rhyme schemes. “I AM OF IRELAND/Yeats in Song” is a collection of twenty-four Yeats poems I set to music, a musical celebration of the poet and Ireland. For the past two years a number of legendary and gifted Celtic artists have recorded my settings (or songs) using traditional instruments.

When I was a young boy of eight or nine years old, my father gave me an English literature textbook. The most enchanting words in that book were from the poem, *Down by the Salley Gardens*, described by Yeats as “an attempt to reconstruct an old song from three lines imperfectly remembered by an old woman in the village of Ballysodare, Sligo, who often sings them to herself.”

Fifty years later, I still found Yeats’s words enchanting. While walking in the woods one day with my black lab, Chloe, I began silently reciting *He wishes for the Cloths of Heaven*, a love poem probably addressed to Maud Gonne, a fierce Irish nationalist and revolutionary. Suddenly a tune came to me, an exciting and pleasant surprise to say the least since my only experience with music is singing and listening. Eventually, I set over a hundred Yeats poems to music,

singing each song into a handheld recorder. [*To my great horror, I once erased all the songs, but that’s another story. All’s well that ends well.*]

I soon discovered soprano Laura Whittenberger and pianist Peyson Moss (both graduates of The Peabody Conservatory) who in February 2016, performed my Yeats tunes at the American Irish Historical Society in New York City. The recital, sponsored by The W. B. Yeats Society of New York, was a success. Who knew that what began as a dog walk on a path in the woods would lead to a concert on Fifth Avenue (across from The Metropolitan Museum of Art!). A CD followed, *Words that Sing in the Night*, which was released in June 2018.

In early 2019, Paul Marsteller (a music producer) discussed with me the idea of creating a various artists Celtic adaptation of my Yeats songs. One by one, we assembled a stellar cast of notable traditional folk singers and musicians. While many of these artists may be known to you, others will be, perhaps, a happy discovery.

*I AM OF IRELAND/Yeats in Song* has been a labor of love. Hopefully it will survive as a fitting homage to W. B. Yeats, the man who inspired it.

*Raymond Driver, April, 2021*

# I AM OF IRELAND

## Yeats in Song

*W. B. Yeats set to music by Raymond Driver*

1. 'I am of Ireland'
2. He wishes for the Cloths of Heaven
3. The Lake Isle of Innisfree
4. He tells of the Perfect Beauty
5. The Falling of the Leaves
6. The Wild Swans at Coole
7. Brown Penny
8. The Song of Wandering Aengus
9. The Two Trees
10. The Folly of Being Comforted
11. The Pity of Love
12. Faery Song (*from 'The Land of Heart's Desire'*)
13. When You are Old
14. An Irish Airman foresees his Death
15. The White Birds
16. The Lover tells of the Rose in his Heart
17. The Mask
18. The Ballad of the Foxhunter
19. September 1913
20. The Cradle Song
21. Never give all the Heart
22. Ephemera
23. He tells of a Valley full of Lovers
24. The Fiddler of Dooney



[www.yeatsinsong.com](http://www.yeatsinsong.com)

Music Composed by Raymond Driver

Co-produced by Paul Marsteller & Raymond Driver

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## **'I AM OF IRELAND'**

*'I am of Ireland,  
And the Holy Land of Ireland,  
And time runs on,' cried she.  
'Come out of charity,  
Come dance with me in Ireland.'*

One man, one man alone  
In that outlandish gear,  
One solitary man  
Of all that rambled there  
Had turned his stately head.  
'That is a long way off,  
And time runs on,' he said,  
'And the night grows rough.'

*'I am of Ireland,  
And the Holy Land of Ireland,  
And time runs on,' cried she.  
'Come out of charity  
And dance with me in Ireland,'*

'The fiddlers are all thumbs,  
Or the fiddle-string accursed,  
The drums and the kettledrums  
And the trumpets all are burst,  
And the trombone,' cried he,  
'The trumpet and trombone,'  
And cocked a malicious eye,  
'But time runs on, runs on.'

*'I am of Ireland,  
And the Holy Land of Ireland,  
And time runs on,' cried she.  
'Come out of charity  
And dance with me in Ireland.'*

**Cathy Jordan vocals**

**Seamie O'Dowd fiddles, guitars, backing vocals, percussion, piano**

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## **HE WISHES FOR THE CLOTHS OF HEAVEN**

Had I the heavens' embroidered cloths,  
Enwrought with golden and silver light,  
The blue and the dim and the dark cloths  
Of night and light and the half-light,  
I would spread the cloths under your feet:  
But I, being poor, have only my dreams;  
I have spread my dreams under your feet;  
Tread softly because you tread on my dreams.

**John Doyle vocals, guitar**

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## THE LAKE ISLE OF INNISFREE

I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,  
And a small cabin build there, of clay and wattles made;  
Nine bean-rows will I have there, a hive for the honey-bee,  
And live alone in the bee-loud glade.

And I shall have some peace there, for peace comes  
dropping slow,  
Dropping from the veils of the morning to where the  
cricket sings;  
There midnight's all a glimmer, and noon a purple glow,  
And evening full of the linnet's wings.

I will arise and go now, for always night and day  
I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore;  
While I stand on the roadway, or on the pavements grey,  
I hear it in the deep heart's core.

**Christine Collister** *vocals*  
**Gabriel Rhodes** *guitar*  
**Joel Zifkin** *fiddle*  
**David Gossage** *whistles*

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## HE TELLS OF THE PERFECT BEAUTY

O cloud-pale eyelids, dream-dimmed eyes,  
The poets labouring all their days  
To build a perfect beauty in rhyme  
Are overthrown by a woman's gaze  
And by the unlabouring brood of the skies:  
And therefore my heart will bow, when dew  
Is dropping sleep, until God burn time,  
Before the unlabouring stars and you.

**Dave Curley** *vocals, guitar*  
**Cillian Vallely** *uilleann pipes*  
**Trevor Hutchinson** *bass*  
**Colin Farrell** *fiddle*

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## THE FALLING OF THE LEAVES

Autumn is over the long leaves that love us,  
And over the mice in the barley sheaves;  
Yellow the leaves of the rowan above us,  
And yellow the wet wild-strawberry leaves.

The hour of the waning of love has beset us,  
And weary and worn are our sad souls now;  
Let us part, ere the season of passion forget us,  
With a kiss and a tear on thy drooping brow.

**Eleanor Shanley** *vocals*  
**Kevin Burke** *fiddle*  
**Laura Zaerr** *harp*

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## THE WILD SWANS AT COOLE

The trees are in their autumn beauty,  
The woodland paths are dry,  
Under the October twilight the water  
Mirrors a still sky;  
Upon the brimming water among the stones  
Are nine-and-fifty swans.

The nineteenth autumn has come upon me  
Since I first made my count;  
I saw, before I had well finished,  
All suddenly mount  
And scatter wheeling in great broken rings  
Upon their clamorous wings.

I have looked upon those brilliant creatures,  
And now my heart is sore.  
All's changed since I, hearing at twilight,  
The first time on this shore,  
The bell-beat of their wings above my head,  
Trod with a lighter tread.

Unwearied still, lover by lover,  
They paddle in the cold  
Companionable streams or climb the air;  
Their hearts have not grown old;  
Passion or conquest, wander where they will,  
Attend upon them still.

But now they drift on the still water,  
Mysterious, beautiful;  
Among what rushes will they build,

By what lake's edge or pool  
Delight men's eyes when I awake some day  
To find they have flown away?

**Fergal McAloon** *vocals*

**Niall Hanna** *guitar*

**Dedicated to Kevan Hughes**

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## BROWN PENNY

I whispered, 'I am too young,'  
And then, 'I am old enough';  
Wherefore I threw a penny  
To find out if I might love.  
'Go and love, go and love, young man,  
If the lady be young and fair.'  
Ah, penny, brown penny, brown penny,  
I am looped in the loops of her hair.

O love is the crooked thing,  
There is nobody wise enough  
To find out all that is in it,  
For he would be thinking of love  
Till the stars had run away  
And the shadows eaten the moon,  
Ah, penny, brown penny, brown penny,  
One cannot begin it too soon.

**Jackie Oates** *vocals, fiddle*

**Gabriel Rhodes** *guitar, accordion*

**Rick Richards** *percussion*

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## THE SONG OF WANDERING AENGUS

I went out to the hazel wood,  
Because a fire was in my head,  
And cut and peeled a hazel wand,  
And hooked a berry to a thread;  
And when white moths were on the wing,  
And moth-like stars were flickering out,  
I dropped the berry in a stream  
And caught a little silver trout.

When I had laid it on the floor  
I went to blow the fire aflame,  
But something rustled on the floor,  
And some one called me by my name:  
It had become a glimmering girl  
With apple blossom in her hair  
Who called me by my name and ran  
And faded through the brightening air.

Though I am old with wandering  
Through hollow lands and hilly lands,  
I will find out where she has gone,  
And kiss her lips and take her hands;  
And walk among long dappled grass,  
And pluck till time and times are done  
The silver apples of the moon,  
The golden apples of the sun.

*Seamie O'Dowd vocals, bouzouki, fiddles, whistles*

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## THE TWO TREES

Beloved, gaze in thine own heart,  
The holy tree is growing there;  
From joy the holy branches start,  
And all the trembling flowers they bear.  
The changing colours of its fruit  
Have dowered the stars with merry light;  
The surety of its hidden root  
Has planted quiet in the night;  
The shaking of its leafy head  
Has given the waves their melody,  
And made my lips and music wed,  
Murmuring a wizard song for thee.  
There the Loves a circle go,  
The flaming circle of our days,  
Gyring, spiring to and fro  
In those great ignorant leafy ways;  
Remembering all that shaken hair  
And how the winged sandals dart,  
Thine eyes grow full of tender care:  
Beloved, gaze in thine own heart.

Gaze no more in the bitter glass  
The demons, with their subtle guile.  
Lift up before us when they pass,  
Or only gaze a little while;  
For there a fatal image grows  
That the stormy night receives,  
Roots half hidden under snows,

Broken boughs and blackened leaves.  
For all things turn to barrenness  
In the dim glass the demons hold,  
The glass of outer weariness,  
Made when God slept in times of old.  
There, through the broken branches, go  
The ravens of unresting thought;  
Flying, crying, to and fro,  
Cruel claw and hungry throat,  
Or else they stand and sniff the wind,  
And shake their ragged wings; alas!  
Thy tender eyes grow all unkind:  
Gaze no more in the bitter glass.

**Christine Collister** *vocals*

**Kevin Burke** *fiddle*

**Cal Scott** *bass, guitar, piano, arranger*

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## THE FOLLY OF BEING COMFORTED

One that is ever kind said yesterday:  
'Your well-beloved's hair has threads of grey,  
And little shadows come about her eyes;  
Time can but make it easier to be wise  
Though now it seems impossible, and so  
All that you need is patience.'

Heart cries, 'No,  
I have not a crumb of comfort, not a grain,  
Time can but make her beauty over again:  
Because of that great nobleness of hers

The fire that stirs about her, when she stirs,  
Burns but more clearly, O she had not these ways  
When all the wild summer was in her gaze.'

O heart! O heart! If she'd but turn her head,  
You'd know the folly of being comforted.

**Mick McAuley** *vocals, guitars, melodeon, bouzouki*

**Dana Lyn** *violin*

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## THE PITY OF LOVE

A pity beyond all telling  
Is hid in the heart of love:  
The folk who are buying and selling,  
The clouds on their journey above,  
The cold wet winds ever blowing,  
And the shadowy hazel grove  
Where mouse-grey waters are flowing,  
Threaten the head that I love.

**Ashley Davis** *vocals*

**Colin Farrell** *fiddle, whistles*

**Cormac De Barra** *harp*

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## **FAERY SONG** *(from 'The Land of Heart's Desire')*

The wind blows out of the gates of the day,  
The wind blows over the lonely of heart,  
And the lonely of heart is withered away  
While the faeries dance in a place apart,  
Shaking their milk-white feet in a ring,  
Tossing their milk-white arms in the air;  
For they hear the wind laugh, and murmur and sing  
Of a land where even the old are fair,  
And even the wise are merry of tongue;  
But I heard a reed of Coolaney say,  
'When the wind has laughed and murmured and sung,  
The lonely of heart is withered away!'

*Cathy Jordan vocals, bones*

*Kevin Burke fiddle*

*Seamie O'Dowd guitar, harmonica, mandolin, banjo*

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## **WHEN YOU ARE OLD**

When you are old and grey and full of sleep,  
And nodding by the fire, take down this book,  
And slowly read, and dream of the soft look  
Your eyes had once, and of their shadows deep;

How many loved your moments of glad grace,  
And loved your beauty with love false or true,  
But one man loved the pilgrim soul in you,  
And loved the sorrows of your changing face;

And bending down beside the glowing bars,  
Murmur, a little sadly, how Love fled  
And paced upon the mountains overhead  
And hid his face amid a crowd of stars.

*Fergal McAloon vocals*

*Mick O'Brien uilleann pipes & low whistle*

*Niall Hanna guitar*

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## **AN IRISH AIRMAN FORESEES HIS DEATH**

I know that I shall meet my fate  
Somewhere among the clouds above;  
Those that I fight I do not hate  
Those that I guard I do not love;  
My country is Kiltartan Cross,  
My countrymen Kiltartan's poor,  
No likely end could bring them loss  
Or leave them happier than before.

Nor law, nor duty bade me fight,  
Nor public men, nor cheering crowds,  
A lonely impulse of delight  
Drove to this tumult in the clouds;  
I balanced all, brought all to mind,  
The years to come seemed waste of breath,  
A waste of breath the years behind  
In balance with this life, this death.

*John Doyle vocals, guitar*  
*Cillian Vallely uilleann pipes*

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## THE WHITE BIRDS

I would that we were, my beloved, white birds on the  
foam of the sea!  
We tire of the flame of the meteor, before it can fade and  
flee;  
And the flame of the blue star of twilight, hung low on  
the rim of the sky,  
Has awaked in our hearts, my beloved, a sadness that  
may not die.  
A weariness comes from those dreamers, dew-dabbled,  
the lily and rose;  
Ah, dream not of them, my beloved, the flame of the  
meteor that goes,  
Or the flame of the blue star that lingers hung low in the  
fall of the dew:  
For I would we were changed to white birds on the wan-  
dering foam: I and you!  
I am haunted by numberless islands, and many a Danaan  
shore,

Where Time would surely forget us, and Sorrow come  
near us no more;  
Soon far from the rose and the lily and fret of the flames  
would we be,  
Were we only white birds, my beloved, buoyed out on  
the foam, of the sea!

*Jackie Oates vocals, fiddle*  
*John Spiers melodeon*  
*Jack Rutter bouzouki*  
*Natalie Haas cello*

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## THE LOVER TELLS OF THE ROSE IN HIS HEART

All things uncomely and broken, all things worn out  
and cold,  
The cry of a child by the roadway, the creak of a  
lumbering cart,  
The heavy steps of the ploughman, splashing the  
wintry mould,  
Are wronging your image that blossoms a rose in the  
deeps of my heart.  
The wrong of unshapely things is a wrong too great to  
be told;  
I hunger to build them anew and sit on a green knoll  
apart,  
With the earth and the sky and the water, re-made, like a  
casket of gold  
For my dreams of your image that blossoms a rose in the  
deeps of my heart.

*Mick McAuley vocals, guitars, tin whistle, low whistle, melodeon*

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## THE MASK

'Put off that mask of burning gold  
With emerald eyes.'

'O no, my dear, you make so bold  
To find if hearts be wild and wise,  
And yet not cold.'

'I would but find what's there to find,  
Love or deceit.'

'It was the mask engaged your mind,  
And after set your heart to beat,  
Not what's behind.'

'But lest you are my enemy,  
I must enquire.'

'O no, my dear, let all that be;  
What matter, so there is but fire  
In you, in me?'

**Christine Collister** *vocals*

**Gabriel Rhodes** *guitar, string arrangement*

**Danny Levin** *strings*

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## THE BALLAD OF THE FOXHUNTER

'Lay me in a cushioned chair;  
Carry me, ye four,  
With cushions here and cushions there,  
To see the world once more.

'To stable and to kennel go;  
Bring what is there to bring;  
Lead my Lollard to and fro,  
Or gently in a ring.

'Put the chair upon the grass:  
Bring Rody and his hounds,  
That I may contented pass  
From these earthly bounds.'

His eyelids droop, his head falls low,  
His old eyes cloud with dreams;  
The sun upon all things that grow  
Falls in sleepy streams.

Brown Lollard treads upon the lawn,  
And to the armchair goes,  
And now the old man's dreams are gone,  
He smooths the long brown nose.

And now moves many a pleasant tongue  
Upon his wasted hands,  
For leading aged hounds and young  
The huntsman near him stands.

'Huntsman Rody, blow the horn,  
Make the hills reply.'

The huntsman loosens on the morn  
A gay wandering cry.

Fire is in the old man's eyes,  
His fingers move and sway,  
And when the wandering music dies  
They hear him feebly say,

'Huntsman Rody, blow the horn,  
Make the hills reply.'  
'I cannot blow upon my horn,  
I can but weep and sigh.'

Servants round his cushioned place  
Are with new sorrow wrung;  
Hounds are gazing on his face,  
Aged hounds and young.

One blind hound only lies apart  
On the sun-smitten grass;  
He holds deep commune with his heart:  
The moments pass and pass:

The blind hound with a mournful din  
Lifts slow his wintry head;  
The servants bear the body in;  
The hounds wail for the dead.

**Fergal McAloon** *vocals*

**Leonard Barry** *uilleann pipes, tin whistle*

**Seamie O'Dowd** *bouzouki, guitar, banjo, backing vocals*

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## SEPTEMBER 1913

What need you, being come to sense,  
But fumble in a greasy till  
And add the halfpence to the pence  
And prayer to shivering prayer, until  
You have dried the marrow from the bone;  
For men were born to pray and save:  
Romantic Ireland's dead and gone,  
It's with O'Leary in the grave.

Yet they were of a different kind,  
The names that stilled your childish play,  
They have gone about the world like wind,  
But little time had they to pray  
For whom the hangman's rope was spun,  
And what, God help us, could they save?  
Romantic Ireland's dead and gone,  
It's with O'Leary in the grave.

Was it for this the wild geese spread  
The grey wing upon every tide;  
For this that all that blood was shed,  
For this Edward Fitzgerald died,  
And Robert Emmet and Wolfe Tone,  
All that delirium of the brave?  
Romantic Ireland's dead and gone,  
It's with O'Leary in the grave.

Yet could we turn the years again,  
And call those exiles as they were

In all their loneliness and pain,  
You'd cry, 'Some woman's yellow hair  
Has maddened every mother's son':  
They weighed so lightly what they gave.  
But let them be, they're dead and gone,  
They're with O'Leary in the grave.

*John Doyle vocals, guitar*  
*Cillian Vallely low whistle*

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## THE CRADLE SONG

The angels are stooping  
Above your bed;  
They weary of trooping  
With the whimpering dead.

God's laughing in Heaven  
To see you so good;  
The Sailing Seven  
Are gay with His mood.

I sigh that kiss you,  
For I must own  
That I shall miss you  
When you have grown.

*Jackie Oates vocals, fiddle*

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## NEVER GIVE ALL THE HEART

Never give all the heart, for love  
Will hardly seem worth thinking of  
To passionate women if it seem  
Certain, and they never dream  
That it fades out from kiss to kiss;  
For everything that's lovely is  
But a brief, dreamy, kind delight.

O never give the heart outright,  
For they, for all smooth lips can say,  
Have given their hearts up to the play.  
And who could play it well enough  
If deaf and dumb and blind with love?  
He that made this knows all the cost,  
For he gave all his heart and lost.

*Dave Curley vocals, tenor guitar*

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## EPHEMERA

'Your eyes that once were never weary of mine  
Are bowed in sorrow under pendulous lids,  
Because our love is waning.'

And then she [said]:

'Although our love is waning, let us stand  
By the lone border of the lake once more,  
Together in that hour of gentleness  
When the poor tired child, Passion, falls asleep:  
How far away the stars seem, and how far  
Is our first kiss, and ah, how old my heart!'

Pensive they paced along the faded leaves,  
While slowly he whose hand held hers replied:  
'Passion has often worn our wandering hearts.'

The woods were round them, and the yellow leaves  
Fell like faint meteors in the gloom, and once  
A rabbit old and lame limped down the path;  
Autumn was over him: and now they stood  
On the lone border of the lake once more:  
Turning, he saw that she had thrust dead leaves  
Gathered in silence, dewy as her eyes,  
In bosom and hair.

'Ah, do not mourn,' he said,  
'That we are tired, for other loves await us;  
Hate on and love through unrepining hours.  
Before us lies eternity; our souls  
Are love, and a continual farewell.'

**Brid O'Riordan** *vocals*

**Derek O'Sullivan** *guitar*

**Mick O'Brien** *low whistle*

Track produced by Philip Begley

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## HE TELLS OF A VALLEY FULL OF LOVERS

I dreamed that I stood in a valley, and amid sighs,  
For happy lovers passed two by two where I stood;  
And I dreamed my lost love came stealthily out of the wood  
With her cloud-pale eyelids falling on dream-dimmed eyes:  
I cried in my dream, O women, bid the young men lay  
Their heads on your knees, and drown their eyes with your hair,  
Or remembering hers they will find no other face fair  
Till all the valleys of the world have been withered away.

**Fergal McAloon** *vocals*

**Kevin Burke** *fiddle*

**Stephen O'Dowd** *pipes*

**Seamie O'Dowd** *guitar, harmony fiddle, mandolin*

## THE FIDDLER OF DOONEY

When I play on my fiddle in Dooney,  
Folk dance like a wave of the sea;  
My cousin is priest in Kilvarnet,  
My brother in Mocharabuiee.

I passed my brother and cousin:  
They read in their books of prayer;  
I read in my book of songs  
I bought at the Sligo fair.

When we come at the end of time,  
To Peter sitting in state,  
He will smile on the three old spirits,  
But call me first through the gate;

For the good are always the merry,  
Save by an evil chance,  
And the merry love the fiddle  
And the merry love to dance:

And when the folk there spy me,  
They will all come up to me,  
With 'Here is the fiddler of Dooney!'  
And dance like a wave of the sea.

**Seamie O'Dowd** *vocals, bouzouki, fiddle*

*"...I would have all the arts draw together; recover their ancient association, the painter painting what the poem has written, the musician setting the poet's words to simple airs, that the horseman and the engine-driver may sing them at their work."*

— W. B. Yeats

## I AM OF IRELAND

### Yeats in Song

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