

Triall na h-Ùine

Nuair thriallas bhuainn na bliadhnaichean
Thig iargain oirnn is gruaim,
Bidh imcheist air ar n-inntinnean
Is iomachruth air ar snuadh;
Bidh dòigh is beachdan ùr' againn,
'S ar cùrs' air tighinn mun cuairt
Na rubhaichean thug riasladh dhuinn
'S chum sìos sinn air ar cuairt.

Cha tàinig e don t-saoghal seo
'S cha tig a h-aon gu bràth —
Cho goirid 's gum bi 'n ùin' aige
Ma chì a shùil an là —
Nach fiosraich trioblaid thalmhaidheach
Measg soirbheachaidh is bàidh,
Cho aithghearr 's gum bi chuairt againn
Tha duais dhuinn anns a' bhàs.

Ma gheibh sinn àireamh bhliadhnaichean
Mun iarrar sinn a-null,
Bidh iomaluaisg agus deacaireachd
Is dearmail tighinn dhuinn dlùth;
Bidh meirg a' tighinn le màirnealachd
'S théid màrnanachd air chùl —
Ar n-inntinn fàsaidh riaghailteach,
Is riaspach gun chus sunnd.

The Passage of Time

When the years start escaping us
We grow worried and morose,
Anxiety preys on our minds
And our looks begin to change;
We develop new ways and opinions,
Because our course has come around
Those headlands that bedevilled us
And held us back upon our voyage.

The man has never come into this world
And nor will he ever come —
No matter how short his time may be
Should his eye see the day at all —
Who suffers no worldly distress
In the midst of success and love,
For no matter how swift be our voyage
It's in death we receive our reward.

If we get a reasonable number of years
Before we're asked to go over,
Difficulty and confusion
And anxiety will affect us;
Rust will set in from paralysis
And high spirits will be lost —
Our minds will be set in a groove,
Confused and lacking in joy.

Air ais gur tric a' sealltainn sinn
Mun gheall a fhuair sinn òg
(A chosg ar n-ùin' a' geòbraich)
Gun gheamhradh ri tighinn òirnn:
Bha buailtean gorma 's raointean
Ann am faoineasan na h-òig'
Gun smaoin air gaoth an eara-dheas
Far na fairge dol thighinn òirnn.

Na caistealan gun d' dhìrich iad
Le stiòpaill do na speur'
Gun stéidhe-bhuinn ro chinnteach
Mar a dh'innseas dhuinn an sgeul!
An-diugh chan fhaic mi sgeul orra,
Sann thuit iad sìos gu léir —
Ged b' iol-cheàrnach 'n cuid sheòmraichean
Si chòinneach nach do thréig.

Nuair chì mi madainn bhòidheach
Bheir i m' òig' thugam as ùr
'S mi cuimhneachadh nan sòlasan
'S cho bòidheach 's a bha gach flùr;
Ach thàinig tuiltean geamhraidh
A chuir loinn nan crann fo smùr
'S cha léir dhomh nis ach sìorraidheachd
Is crìonadh anns an ùir.

Often do we look back
On the idea we had when we were young
(When we spent our time in blethering)
That no winter would ever afflict us:
Such green pastures and fields
Were but the vanities of youth
Without the thought of the south-east wind
That would blow on us off the sea.

How those castles rose up
With towers to the skies
Without too sure a foundation
As we're told by the tale!
I see no trace of them today,
For they have all fallen down —
Though their rooms had many corners
The moss hasn't left them alone.

When I see a beautiful morning
It brings me back to my youth
And I remember the pleasures
And how lovely was each flower;
But the floods of winter arrived
Which obscured the shape of the trees
And all I see now is eternity
And rotting in the grave.

An Uibhist ghorm nan stùcan
Far 'm bu dùthchasach an ceòl
A dh'fhosgail mi mo shùilean —
Toiseach dùdlachd madainn m' òig';
'S ged dh'fhàiltich sneachd' a' gheamhraidh mi
Aig doras gleann nan deòir,
Bha slàn-lusan is cluarain ann
Nach mill gaoth tuath no reòdh.

Soraidh leat, a leughadair,
'S na ruith leat fhéin don chùil —
Cha teich thu air an t-siorraidheachd,
Si 'chrìoch agad co-dhiù;
Gheibh am bàs a chòirichean
(Tha 'n t-òrdagh aig' on chrùn)
Nuair dh'àithneas Rìgh na Glòrach
A tha còmhnaidh os ar cionn.

Dòmhnall Aonghais Bhàin

It's in blue-green Uist of the mountains
Where music was in people's blood
That I first opened my eyes —
Early doldrums the dawn of my youth;
And though winter snow was my welcome
At the door of the valley of tears,
There were healing plants and thistles
Which no north wind or frost can destroy.

Farewell to you, dear reader,
And don't run to hide in a corner —
You can't escape eternity,
It's your destiny whatever;
Death will obtain his rights
(He has a mandate from the crown)
When the King of Glory commands
Who dwells above our heads.

Donald MacDonald