

Sgeulachdan nan Taighean-Céilidh

Ged a shéideadh faoilteach oirnn
Is faobhar nan gaoth tuath,
Ged bhiodh an sneachd' a' taosgadh
'S 'na stac ri taobh nam bruach,
Ged reothadh i mar stàilinn
Gu mullach àrd nan cruach,
Cha chumadh siud bhon chéilidh sinn
Far 'n cluinnte sgeul is duan.

Ged shileadh i gu dì orrasach
Le frasan fiadhaich fuar'
'S clach-mheallain tighinn bhon iarmailt
Ga siabadh oirnn mun cuairt,
Cha chumadh tuil no dì le sinn
'S cha bhiodh oirnn sgìths no gruaim
'S na h-eachdraidhean gan innse dhuinn
Le seanchaidh sì theil suairc.

Bhiodh sloinneadh air ar sinnsearachd
Ga mhìneachadh 's ga luaidh,
Bhiodh deasbad air an iasgach ann,
'S gach deacair bha 'na ruaig;
Bhiodh tubaistean is bàthadh,
Is gàbhaidhean a' chuain,
'S bhiodh ionndrainn air na càirdean ann
Thug tuinn an t-sàile bhuainn.

The Tales of the Ceilidh-Houses

Even if wolftime were blowing on us
And the keen blade of the northerlies,
Even if snow were cascading down
And piling up on the hillsides,
Even if frost were as hard as steel
Up to the high tops of the stacks,
It wouldn't keep us from the ceilidh
Where story and song could be heard.

Even in torrential rain
Full of cold squally showers
With hailstones coming from the sky
Being swept round about us,
No flood or downpour kept us back
Nor did we feel tired or gloomy
As we were being told stories
By some calm competent reciter.

Our ancestral genealogy
Would be set out and explained,
There'd be a debate about fishing
And the difficulties besetting it;
There'd be accidents and drownings
And the perils of the ocean,
And we'd remember the kinsfolk
Of whom the sea waves had robbed us.

Bhiodh Cogadh Mór a' Cheusair
Le chuid chreuchdan is mì-stàth,
A dh'fhàg na ceudan mì le
Ann an ì obradh fuar a' bhàis;
'Na sheanchas dh'fhàgadh leòinte sinn,
'S bu tric thug deòir 'nar pàirt
A' cuimhneachadh a' chòmhlain sin
A thréig an deò sna blàir.

Chluinnte sgeul bhiodh sònraichte
Aig seòladair a' chuain,
A-muigh air bhàrr nam bòc-thonnan
Ri aimsir reòdhta 's fhuar,
A' dì readh do na h-àrd-chroinn
'S a' teàrnadh asta nuas
'S an iùbhrach dol gu dùbhlán
Ann an dùrantachd nan stuadh.

Bhiodh birlinnean MhicDhòmhnaill
Le'n cuid sheòl a' dol gu sàil,
A' fàgail bun Loch Aoineart
Le soills' na madainn thràth,
A' seòladh tro Chaol Ì le
Ri aimsir iargalt' gràic
Gu fasgadh Carraig Fhearghais,
Mar chaidh ainmeachas san dàn.

There'd be the Great War of the Kaiser
With all its wounds and pointlessness,
Leaving hundreds of thousands
In death's cold sacrifice;
It made us anguished to hear it,
And our tears frequently flowed
As we remembered the many
Who lost their lives in the battlefields.

Some special tale would be heard
From the sailor of the sea,
Out on top of the swelling waves
In cold freezing weather,
Climbing into the high masts
And climbing down them again
As the ship faced a challenge
Amongst the obdurate breakers.

The birlinns of MacDonald
Would put to sea fully rigged,
Leaving Loch Eynort's mouth
In the early morning light,
Sailing through Islay's Sound
In harsh inclement weather
To Carrickfergus's shelter
As described in the poem.

A-muigh air bhàrr Cuan Éirinn
'S muir ag éirigh do na neòil,
Bhiodh Mac Nìll cur bhréid rith'
Gu reubadh nan tonn mòr';
Cha chumadh aimsir Ruairidh
An àm ceangal cruaidh nan ròp —
Bu Tartar anns a' chruadal e
An àm cur suas nan seòl.

Bhiodh bòcain agus sì thich
A' tuineadh cinnteach feadh nam bruach —
Bha iomadh sgeul ri inns' orra
San tì m a chaidh air ruaig;
Bhiodh iad tric ri fàth-feith
'S 'nan aincheist don an t-sluagh,
A' cur geas air pàistean
'S a' cur mhàthraichean fo ghruaim.

Chluinnte sgeul mun àirigh
Is mun mhànràn is an ceòl
A bha cho tric a' tàrmachadh
Am measg nan àlach òg';
Bhiodh tàin ann air am buachailleachd
A-muigh feadh chluaintean feòir —
Bha saorsa 's sì th neo-bhuaireasach
A' cuartachadh nan crò.

Dh'fhalbh na taighean càirdeil ud,
'S 'nan àit' tha gnàthach' ùr
'S tha mhuinntir bha gam pàirteachadh
An-diugh a' cnàmh san ùir;
Tha dòighean eil' air tàrmachadh
'S tha 'n abhcaideachd air chùl,
'S tha fàrdaichean an t-sòlais ud
'S an còmhlàichean 's iad dùint'.

Dòmhnall Aonghais Bhàin

Out on the height of the Irish Sea
With ocean rising to the clouds,
MacNeil would lay on more sail
For tearing the great waves;
No weather could stop Ruairi
In time of lashing the ropes —
He was a Tartar for toughness
When it came to hoisting sails.

Ghosts and fairies most certainly
Dwelt amongst the braes —
Many tales would be told of them
In times now gone by;
They often lay in wait
And caused folk much trouble,
Placing spells upon the children
And worrying the mothers.

There'd be a tale of the shieling
And of the fun and music
That were so often pursued
By the younger generations;
Cattle would be herded there
Out around the pastures —
Untroubled peace and freedom
Encompassed the cowfolds.

Those friendly houses have gone,
And new customs have replaced them
While the people who shared them
Now rot in the soil;
Other ways have taken hold
And such entertainment has gone,
While those buildings of pleasure
Have had their doors all closed.

Donald MacDonald