



# LONG KESH POEMS

**Sentenced Republican Prisoners  
(Provisional)  
Long Kesh Concentration Camp**

A Chairde,

We, the sentenced Republican prisoners, in Long Kesh would like to take this opportunity to extend our thanks to all the people throughout the country who have helped us and our families during this long and hard struggle. We would, particularly, like to thank the people who have helped us to highlight the appalling conditions in this concentration camp. In the face of massive British and Free State propaganda, these people continued to bring the truth to the fore. As both these Statelets were born of lies and deceit, truth will be the weapon that will bring them both down. This collection of poems, written by the men in here, was put together between early morning raids by the British Army and weekly searches by Prison Officers; its very existence is our answer to the futile attempts of the Establishment, to harass, torture and suppress us. We hope that you will enjoy reading them and that they will give you some insight into life behind the wire! We will finish by urging everyone to play his or her part in this, our final phase of victory.

Is Mise,  
Derek Thompson

*Published on behalf of the sentenced Republican  
prisoners in Long Kesh Concentration Camp.*

by

**Clann na nGaedheal**

Republican Girl Scouts,  
at 7 Summerhill Parade,  
Dublin 1.

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## CONCESSIONS

It was in the year of Seventy-Two  
And the sky was full of lead  
T'was a troubled year for Ireland  
With many being shot dead.

The British were terrified  
As from their posts they ran  
Shouting "Please men, call a ceasefire.  
We'll consider your demand'."

Well, they asked our leaders over  
While they schemed their dirty plan  
Thinking they could buy and sell them  
To stop the struggle in the land.

But our leaders made it straight to them  
'Throw your concessions into the sky'  
We will fight to free our country  
Which your money could not buy.

Now the Brits are back to killing  
Men, women, and children, too,  
But the Provos will beat them  
And that's what they intend to do.

Anton Mag Aonasa.

## LET HIM DIE

He is dead, he is dead.  
I do not weep.  
In his death dies a hundred thousand wrongs.  
His boot no longer opens the locked door,  
His hand no longer wields a heavy baton upon my head.  
He is dead, he is dead.

I did not hate him, when alive,  
For I knew him not.  
I knew only that I hated his masters,  
And I hated his actions,  
And I hated his killings of our innocents,  
And the words that he said.  
Now he is dead, he is dead.

Alas, in his place will step another,  
It may well be his brother,  
And my second thought will be,  
Let him, too, step into the aim of my rifle,  
Let him, too, fall to the sould of the revolution.  
If he will not ask why,  
Let him die.

My first thought is a constant prayer,  
That they will see their evil deeds in true light,  
That they will leave our island alone,  
So that we can forgive,  
And let them live.

R. Lavery (Belfast)

## PAWNS IN A POLITICAL CHESS GAME

No forgiveness, Father,  
Do I need forgiveness?  
I have not sinned.  
This ghetto has its own strange laws,  
We live by them.  
Danger signal alarm, guard dogs,  
We played our part.  
Even nature demands that man can do no less.

Am I guilty? No.  
What need for forgiveness?  
Shall I answer for others' deeds?  
Or the sectarian speeches of the 12th politicians?  
Father, forgive them.  
They need forgiveness.  
For in these dreary cages of Long Kesh,  
Part Christian from Christian,  
Brother from brother.  
Our children sick of a sick society.  
We hope and pray  
That this dread disease  
Will pass them by.

As the sun rises over the camp  
And days drag slowly by  
Our hopes are high, our spirits good,  
For our final goal in sight we see,  
Ireland united, Gaelic and free.

Liam O'Pleimeann (Doire)

## WAR OF INDEPENDENCE

It was a deed of bravery and courage,  
Those men were gallant and brave.  
It happened on an Easter Sunday,  
When true men their lives they gave.

They issued a proclamation,  
A document both good and true,  
Those men were executed  
But their thoughts live on in you.

Their proclamation was cast in the gutter,  
By men who were wanton with greed.  
They carried out reprisals on comrades,  
They ne'er considered the people's needs.

Their fight was still on in the forties,  
They fought for social reform.  
They interned them again in the fifties,  
Because they fought against wrong.

Then we look at the late sixties,  
Again we find social unrest.  
Fifty years of hatred and trouble  
Because those wanton men knew best.

And now in nineteen seventy-five,  
Still we see strife with a gun,  
But at least we have one consolation,  
'Cause the fight we know we have won.

Seimbo O h-Eara (Newington)

## TRIBUTE TO BILLY REID

'Twas in the town of Belfast  
All in the month of May,  
Three youthful Irish soldiers boys  
Set out upon their way,  
A mission to accomplish  
Ireland's freedom, which we need,  
And the leader of that gallant band  
Was Lieut. Billy Reid.

He drove the car so carefully  
A rendezvous to keep  
But as he turned a corner  
He met a soldier's jeep.  
Into the heat of the battle  
Our three brave lads did stray  
They faced the foe so bravely  
And Billy Reid led the way.

Out of the car our three lads jumped  
And Billy he was first  
He sprayed the British soldiers  
With a deadly Thompson burst  
He turned unto his comrades  
Saying you two get away  
As the first two British soldiers  
In their own blood they lay.

He turned once more to face the foe,  
The battle must be won,  
Rise up against the tyranny  
Of England and her Huns.  
But the bullet caught our Billy,  
His life it took away,  
And there on a street in Belfast,  
an Irish martyr lay.

Remember men of Ireland  
The courage of Billy Reid,  
His name we'll always cherish;  
It's more like him we need.  
He passed the test so gallantly—  
Though his life he had to pay,  
When he gave his life for Ireland's cause  
On the fifteenth day of May.

Seorse O hEara

Dedicated to Lieut. Billy Reid, shot dead on active service, by British troops on the 15th day of May, 1971.

## GHOSTS OF JUSTICE

'Halt', the Para shouted.  
I heard and I obeyed.  
I stopped and raised my arms.  
The Para shot me dead.

He approached my prostrate body,  
Lying on the ground.  
I watched him kick it over;  
He didn't even frown.

In fact he smiled an evil grin  
Upon an evil face,  
A look to delight Lucifer  
And all his evil race.

I followed him where 'ere he went,  
I saw each evil deed,  
I saw him shoot more innocents,  
I saw their bodies bleed.

He moved from Falls to Shankill,  
And still the red blood ran,  
Murdering without a second thought  
Of Black an' Tans.

And when his tour was over  
I followed to his home,  
I saw him stab a black man,  
His heart was made of stone.

I saw him rape a young girl,  
I heard his lawyers say  
'The young lad's in the Paras  
He'll soon be going away'.

I saw him walking from the court,  
I saw his evil grin,  
I saw him ticking off the days  
'Till his next tour would begin.

This time he went to Ardoyne,  
And there he did his worst,  
Shooting down young boys and men,  
Smiling at the Hurst.

He went on television,  
All rumours he would crush.  
He stood and lied, it was his way;  
He didn't even blush.

He lied away a young lad's life,  
He lied away the charge,  
He told them how good he was  
And how lucky they all were.

He told them that he was their friend,  
Yet he had to earn his pay,  
And if they were having trouble  
They could blame the I.R.A.

And then he lied of Ireland's cause  
And also of his role,  
He lied and lied and lied,  
He lied away his soul.

But now it's done, I must move on,  
With ghostly words I tell  
A Para punished for his deeds,  
A Para burns in Hell.

R. Lavery.

'T. C.'

I never knew anyone like him; he was everybody's friend.  
He was just the kind of person whose kindness could never end.  
If he ever thought you were lonely, he would talk to you for  
hours.  
Now all we can do to repay him is send him a bunch of flowers.

He was just the sort of person who could forgive anyone  
For making him unhappy, no matter what they'd done.  
The only ones he couldn't forgive are the ones who took his life,  
For if it weren't for those murderers, his country would know no  
strife.

The British have oppressed us for many years gone by,  
And T.C. loved his country, as only Irishmen know how.  
Any wrong he did was done for Ireland's cause,  
He did all he could to help us be free from British laws.

They shot him on his birthday, on his way home from a dance,  
They said he was a gunman, so T.C. hadn't a chance.  
A friend went out to help him, but the British gunned him down,  
Will there ever be any justice while the Brits are in this town?

On Saturday night when T.C. died, many more were murdered  
too,  
The British claim six hits, but the Orangemen shot two.  
All those who died were heroes, and will not have died in vain,  
For some day soon I hope to see old Ireland free again.

CHRISTINE

The above poem was written by a young girl from the Newington  
area in proud and loving memory of Vol. Tony Campbell, C. Coy.  
3rd Batt. Belfast Brigade, who was murdered at new Lodge Road on  
the 4th February, 1973.

SNIPER

My nerves feel tight  
Ten minutes to go.  
My job tonight,  
To shoot two of the Foe.

My rifle is clean  
My aim as sharp as a knife.  
And tonight my rifle,  
Will end a Brit's life.

I'll leave for the place,  
Where I'll take my shots.  
And here I will wait for  
The khaki-clad murdering rats.

The foot patrol comes  
With a sergeant at the head,  
My rifle spits forth,  
The Sergeant lies dead.

The others stand crying,  
And some are sick.  
Again I shoot,  
A private dies with a kick.

I leave my spot,  
Creep into the night,  
Happy at the thought,  
Two more Brits are out of the fight.

I feel nothing for the Brits  
I have killed.  
I think of my country  
And the Irish blood they have spilled.

I return to my home,  
Put my rifle away,  
My country's freedom  
Will be my pay.

George McChesney (Co. Down).

### SPOIRID NA hEIREANN

I gave my life for love of Ireland,  
I gave my heart and soul the same,  
I do not die as did not Wolfe Tone,  
I do not live alone in name.  
My spirit joins in living battles  
I stand beside each volunteer  
I guide the men who walk in darkness,  
Their darkest hour is drawing near.  
When their mind is filled with anguish,  
I touch their hearts and they fight on.  
I knew so well, as do my children,  
The darkest hour is just 'fore dawn.

R. Lavery.

Dedicated to Marty Forsyte.

### HOME RULE

“Home Rule, Home Rule” was the slogan long ago,  
And so my beloved Ulster was divided by the foe.  
We'll have no united Ireland; it's British we want to say.  
But they're only trying to convince themselves in a funny sort of  
way.  
Since those dark days when the fight was weak, and freedom was  
but a dream,  
And through tyranny and bribery the green blood flowed in  
streams,  
Who really believed, except a few, we'd unharness the British yoke?  
And to speak of a united Ireland was a fifty-year joke.

But the British couldn't get enough to support and pay the  
corrupted,  
So they started to look for an easy way out when the bombing and  
shooting erupted:  
We'll give you civil rights and suspend the special powers.  
To hell with your concessions now, give us what is ours.

But still the cry is heard again: “We'll have no united Ireland”  
Though not as loud as before, from this side of the divided island.  
And in their hearts and minds they ask though the question may  
be sore,

“When will Ireland be united, in nineteen-seventy-three or four?”  
Larry McCurry (Belfast).

### LONG KESH

The wind blows and whistles and rattles out its song  
Among the cages of barbed wire, all day and all night long.  
It blows through drafty huts, it's with you everywhere,  
It never stops exploring, relentless, monotonous, blustering air.

Miles and miles of barbed wire, all around to see,  
On top of grill-type caging, keeping me here unfree.  
Someone once said: "It's funny, it's really like a zoo"  
But that was made for the hippopotamus, and seal and fishes, too.

Eighty-five men around, twenty four hours a day,  
No privacy, not a minute, to think, to write, to pray.  
And the chains that keep us imprisoned here are implanted in the  
mind,  
These endless miles of barbed wire around our hearts they wind.

The wind blows and whistles, winter and summer long,  
It brings the snow, the rain, the sun, each day the same old song.  
The tunes that I'll remember when I'm grey and old,  
How we suffered for you, freedom, in the dampness and the cold.  
Larry McCurry.

### LONELINESS

The grey-haired old woman sits all alone,  
In her own little world she calls her home.  
Loneliness and sadness have crept in with the years  
And down the wrinkled old cheeks flow a stream of tears.  
She thinks of the happiness that she once knew  
When she had a husband, and children, too.  
Her husband is dead, the children all gone.  
Now life's but a struggle to carry on.  
Her standards of living have fallen far down the hill,  
Now she has not the money, 'nor the will.  
The tears, they're dried up, with the end of her shawl,  
And life's but a memory, hung up on the wall.  
Old photographs, some faded, some torn,  
These are the happy times of years before.  
Silence and emptiness are all that are left  
Of a poor old woman, who once knew best.

S. Kilpatrick.

### THE MASKS

The scene is cast, the play begins,  
The actors take their place,  
The masks are here, the masks we use, to cover  
To our face.

Some masks we use are painted gay,  
Some are filled with sorrow.  
We choose a mask for this special day,  
This mask may change tomorrow.

Cannot these masks be cast aside,  
Along with all our worries and fears,  
Cannot we show our own true selves,  
And not disguise with smiles and tears?

Perhaps, ourselves are too ugly in truth,  
To reveal our heads, resembling swine,  
But, perhaps, through truth and Christian doings,  
We may again be true and kind.

## THE PRODIGAL SON

The old woman sat in her rocking chair, as she silently wept a tear,  
For somebody's son was striking a blow for her Ireland, beloved and dear,  
But it's not one of hers, for they're long since gone, far way o'er the billowing sea.  
"Oh my sons, oh my sons, could not one of you have stayed to help make this country free?"

She got to her feet and she hobbled across to a wardrobe she'd closed long ago,  
She remembered it well that cold winter's day, they buried her man in the snow.  
He died in the glen with his rifle at hand, and a smile on his young hardened face.  
"I have sons, I have sons" were his words at the end, "who will readily soon take my place."

She took out his cap, his trench coat and shirt, and his boots that had worn-out soles  
She took out his gun; 'twas more empty than full, and the green flag, moth-eaten and holes,  
And she knew that she would never be happy again, 'till at least one of her sons was at home,  
If only to die on his bandolier, then take to the hills, to fight for what was his own.

The long weeks went past, and grew into months, and she lay on her bed near to death,  
"It seems I will die and my prayers go unheard", she said in a weakening breath.  
And then footsteps were heard, in the kitchen below, and the creak of a badly-oiled door,  
"Who is this who has come, there is nothing to take, surely you can see I am poor".

But the footsteps came on, and the doorhandle turned, and the door was pushed back to the wall  
And there stood a man, with a bag in his hand, red-haired, handsome and tall,  
"Tis me", he said and his voice was strong, "Your son from a far-off shore—  
I had to come home, to this home that I love, for my heart was heavy and sore.

I heard of your troubles and I heard of your pain, I remembered when 'ere we were young,  
And the stories you told us around our warm fire, in your beautiful, sweet Gaelic tongue,  
And I sneaked to the wardrobe, when you weren't there, on the night before I went away,  
And I swore to my God that someday I'd come back, that I'd take up a part in the fray.

And she prayed that night, and gave thanks to her God, for the return of her youngest-born son  
The youngest, the bravest, the boldest and best, the one always looking for fun  
The next morning he stood, as his father had stood, those long twenty years ago.  
As she watched him make for the hills to the west, the rocking chair went to and fro.

Larry McCurry.

## THE RIGHT TO LIVE

We followed the path of many,  
We walked the path with a few,  
We few opposed the hordes of evil,  
And came up shining new.

We followed men like Tone and Lawlor  
The greats within our cause,  
Pearse and Emmet, Connolly two,  
They brought to light the flaws.

In recent years the price we paid  
Was high, but even though  
These brave men died, the cause they fought  
Was true, we'll always know.

Others have been a bit more lucky,  
They'll spend some years unfree,  
Then they're free to carry on  
The fight, old Ireland to free.

But even though they're free to fight,  
No one is free to forget or forgive,  
"Who dares to say forget the past?"  
We shall always fight for the right to live.

Seimbo O h-Eara (Newington)

## BRITISH SOLDIERS AT PLAY

A large drunken force had assembled  
Outside of Cage Six,  
With riot gear on, and wielding  
Batons, cudgels and nailed-filled sticks.

Inside the huts lay defenseless prisoners,  
Laughing, talking and joking,  
Not knowing that soon,  
Their bodies would be torn and broken.

The Brits came into the cage  
And on the huts with their batons did batter,  
Then the hut doors were kicked open  
And we were marched out to the slaughter.

I glanced around and the cage was black  
With these wine drunken scum,  
Then over to the wire through a gauntlet  
Each one had to run.

Beaten, battered and confused,  
We were lined up against the wire.  
The lips of the men were seen  
Moving in prayer.

"Give it to the Fenians",  
The drunken voices did yell.  
And with heads sprouting blood  
To the ground the men fell.

The cries of the men  
Struck terror and fear  
Then the war dogs came at us  
And our bodies did tear.

We asked not for mercy,  
No mercy was given.  
We thought we were leaving that night  
The land of the living.

Back to the wire we were dragged  
And on to our feet,  
While in to the ground,  
Our blood and sweat did seep.

You can break us in body  
With your cudgels, batons and sticks.  
But our spirits stay strong", was the yell  
From the men in blood-stained Cage Six.

George McChesney (Co. Down).

## THE SCARS OF PAIN

The scars of pain and injury  
Are easy to forget,  
But when an Irish life is lost,  
We'll hold you in our debt.  
For every child that cries for Dad  
And Mother for her son,  
We'll hound you murdering British  
Until our job is done.  
So think awhile before you shoot  
With rifle at the aim,  
We need not know your number;  
Nor need we know your name.  
You'll never boast an Irish death  
No matter where you go,  
So think awhile before you shoot,  
Don't say you didn't know.

R. Lavery.

## DAVID McAULEY

Forgive us, Lord, should we forget your youthful Irish boy,  
Who served the cause of freedom that others might have joy.  
Wee Davy's gone in body, yes, but his spirit's with us still,  
To give us strength and courage, his unbeaten rebel will.

A sad accident has parted us, a cruel hand of fate,  
You didn't see the freedom day, but you won't have long to wait.  
Only fifteen years of age, in an Irish rebel's grave.  
We'll shed a tear most proudly when the tricolour is raised.

All Ireland mourns your passing, for it was a sorry blow  
That broke your mother's heart, with pain no man can know.  
Now you've gone to take position, beside Tone and Pearse and Orr.  
And you shall see our land soon free, the green flag raised once more.

Larry McCurry,  
In Proud and Loving memory  
Of David McAuley Ardoyne.

## THE PHOENIX

Wolfe Tone standing to the fore,  
Behind him, Ireland's brave —  
Pearse, Connolly, McCracken, Orr,  
Rising from his grave.  
Ireland's sun has risen,  
A country once so cold,  
Warmed by her children's blood,  
As Pearse had once foretold.  
Yet, England in a dying panic  
Murdered all around,  
But fanned the flames of freedom  
That would bring her to the ground.  
And when the flames are dying down,  
No longer burning high,  
And from out their burning ashes rise  
A Phoenix to the sky.

R. Lavery.

## ST. PETER AND THE PARA

A Para, went to the golden gates  
And asked St. Peter to get in.  
St. Peter took him by the throat  
And punched him in the chin.

Said Peter, "You went to Ireland,  
To plunder and to loot.  
You went across to Ireland  
Men, women and kids to shoot.

'Twas on a Sunday in Derry  
Into a march you poured your lead.  
'Twas on that Sunday in Derry  
You shot thirteen people dead.

You'd thought you'd go back to Belfast  
And kill some of that rebel lot,  
But it was there in a street in Belfast  
Where your life ended with a shot.

And now you stand before me  
Asking to get in.  
You haven't got a chance, said Peter,  
"For your life's been one long sin".

I watched the savage deeds you did  
Until the day you fell".  
Then Peter opened a door  
And kicked the Para to Hell.

George McChesney (Co. Down).

## FREEDOM

Standing by a shallow stream,  
Watch the fish assemble in a team.  
Then in the sun they lie and dream,  
That, my friend, is freedom.

The sweet-sounding note of the little thrush,  
As she sits and sings in a hawthorn bush.  
She's got all day; she's in no rush,  
Because she's got her freedom.

But miles of wire and screws with keys,  
And their dirty laundry full of fleas,  
As they try and bring you to your knees,  
We all know that's not freedom.

Cages with huts that are full of damp,  
And beatings that leave you with many a cramp,  
While you lie and rot in a concentration camp,  
That is far from freedom.

But Ireland free of the British scum,  
Then down to work, hang up the gun,  
And no more Irishmen on the run,  
Then we'll have our freedom.

Anton MacAonasa (Ard Macha).

## THE BRAVE PARA

It was on a Sunday afternoon,  
In good old Derry city,  
The Paras murdered thirteen men,  
For them they showed no pity.

They shot them down in cold blood —  
Those dirty murdering scum.  
But when the I.R.A. arrived,  
Away the Paras run.

The Paras think there's glory  
In shooting unarmed men.  
For every Irishman shot that day,  
Of you Paras, we'll shoot ten.

We hate you, murdering Paras,  
And you know we always will.  
We'll arm ourselves and out we'll go  
You Paras for to kill.

You came from out the slums,  
Where your fellow rats do dwell.  
I hope that everyone of you,  
Will be burning soon in hell.

From these savage paras,  
Our homes we must defend.  
So I say to all you Irishmen,  
To the graveyard, the Paras we must send.

George McChesney (Co. Down).

## COMPOUND 18

As I look about the compound,  
The day is near its end  
And I see the lads around me,  
In here, because their rights they would defend.

They wanted to see old Ireland free,  
A cause they held most dear,  
Some lost their homes and some their lives,  
Because in their hearts they held no fear.

Now, the fight outside is still going on,  
And have no doubts that fight will be won.  
We will have an Ireland united  
And free from the British scum.

So let us think of this, lads,  
We will not be here for good  
And we'll have our land free and prosperous  
Where free men can live as they should.

Seasamh O Mainlaoir (St. Matthews)

### LONG KESH LAMENT

I sit alone, although surrounded,  
I watch the wire and think of home,  
I see the beat which screws have pounded,  
And think of lies and what they've done.

The towering posts, they rise above us,  
The lonely lights they shine all night,  
How true to life this place has made us,  
Yet, freedom longs for the wings of flight.

The cheerful faces, the joyful sounds,  
How near are these to truthful feelings,  
Now near to truth, within these bounds,  
Can one come without revolting?

This is our plight, what can we do?  
Of freedom we all have our own visions,  
Of our crimes we have not a clue,  
Is this the same in other prisons?

Seimbo O h-Eara (Newington).

### BRITISH MARKMANSHIP, '69 – '73

Here, there, the mad white hare  
Runs free to the melting snows  
Above the vixen's cubs in a dry bed lair  
Beneath the stolen waters flow:  
And the new born lamb moves to its brightest sun,  
While the cock pheasant sits on tight.  
'Ere the leaden rain, a cry of pain  
Stirs the rats and carrion to flight.  
The ewes stand sad, while the ghosts of the bards  
Sweep the Moor with a mist full of tears,  
Where the hunter stood that was once manhood,  
Now lost in a mountain of fear.

An Madra Rua.

### THE CHILD OF IRELAND

(A Father's thoughts – dedicated to the children of Political Prisoners)

My prayer is thoughtful, every hour, every day,  
Or proud on my knees in a straight soldier's way.  
Whichever may God pleases, His will, His might,  
On those who would such a millstone  
Who would cast an infant into the night.

Awake in the night, in terror, in fright  
In such a nightmare of rear, in your finest year  
And on-one to comfort you.  
Then you are only half a child – fatherless and Irish,  
And privileged to be ravished by royal societies.

I rushed to you in every equally innocent year,  
Forbidden to notice your sighs, your tears, or to notice the wire  
That leaves me envenomed in claustrophobia,  
Praying, a straight soldier's justifiable massacre.

Yet patiently you speak happiness to your warrior bard,  
His tenacity, his courage, his magnificence beyond the bars,  
And long am I wise to your haunted tenderness,  
While cowards you grievously with olive branches of doves,  
My song is a prayer to the sheltering hawk – a father's love.

## R. C. TRAITORS

Come all you R. C. traitors  
And listen to my song  
You joined the bloody U.D.R.  
And did your country wrong.

You wear the British khaki,  
You're a member of a filthy band  
Who thinks they'll run the I.R.A.  
Right out of Ireland.

Have you forgotten what happened  
In the year of sixty-nine  
When the B. men murdered thirteen people  
One whose age was nine.

You're living in a world of make-believe  
If you think the 'ra will run  
For the time will come when all of you  
Will die by a Fenian gun.

You say the Queen will thank you  
Or at least you hope she would  
But the only thanks that you will get  
Is a bullet and a hood.

So all you R. C. traitors  
I hope you'll see the light  
The Provos will win this war  
For they know their fight is right.

George McChesney.

## LIFE BEFORE DEATH

We tried to tell the people,  
But they would not believe.  
They would not believe that Teddy Heath  
Is laughing up his sleeve.

And then we tried to tell them  
That he's not the only one,  
That all the politicians are the same,  
They're only having fun.

They haven't the intention  
Of paying back their theft,  
We ask with more than wonder,  
Is there a life before death?

R. Lavery (Belfast)

## THE WAR GOES ON

We've three meals a day  
And a bed every night.  
Have the men outside  
Who continue the fight?  
We can go for a walk  
In the afternoon sun  
With no worries of a bullet  
From a British gun.  
We've no more nightmares  
Nor sleepless nights,  
No more gun battles or  
Midnight flights.  
So forget about our 'plight'  
And remember the men  
Outside, who continue the fight.

Joe McKee (Lower Falls)

## FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE

In Moscow's fair city, a little while past  
An order from Dublin came through very fast.  
Kosygin took the call, on the hot line;  
You'd a heard the phone buzz from here to the Rhine.

The voice came through as clear as a note,  
A shipment was needed on the very next boat.  
"You've heard of our trouble here, and freedom near won,  
Stormont abolished and the Brits on the run.

There's one little problem that's come to my mind.  
The cause of my trouble I'll try to outline.  
These Brits they are cunning, in behind steel,  
The saracen car they use as a shield.

And the Brits are all cowards, they sneak and they hide.  
We've shot them in front as well as behind,  
And the armour piercing bullets are all very well,  
But I was thinking of something in the line of a shell."

Kosygin stood up, a smile on his lips,  
Saying "Anything, be it battle-ships,  
A machine that I have will serve all your needs,  
Will blast all the armour from Ireland to Leeds.

Sure it's good to do business with one of the boys,  
And hearing you, Pat, just adds to my joys.  
And when my ship sails, she'll be full to the hull  
With R.P.G. 7's, from Russia, with love."

Joe Boorman.

## THE PRIDE OF SOUTH DOWN

You've heard of the South Down battalion  
Well-known for its brave men so true.  
And how they fought in the struggle,  
There was nothing that they couldn't do.

But there's one man stands out in my memory –  
The bravest of men strong and sound,  
His name is young George McChesney, –  
The pride of sweet Rathfrieland town.

One night as he went out to battle,  
Disaster it struck straight from hell,  
While patrolling the hills of Rathfrieland,  
He fell down a bloody draw-well.

Now to get poor Geordie out wasn't easy,  
All his comrades they gathered around,  
To save the skin of their leader  
The pride of sweet Rathfrieland town.

Now Geordie is in prison for Ireland,  
Doing bird everyday of the week,  
But he won't do any fighting where he is  
'Cause they don't supply guns in the nick.

Generations will remember our Geordie  
And how he fought for South Down  
But I hope he won't fall down no draw-wells,  
When he goes back to sweet Rathfrieland town.

Anton Mac Aonasa (Ard Macha).

## ENTWINING AND FLOURISHING

Ageless without blemish 'nor sin,  
Spoken on the tongue of the Gael,  
Echoed through village to hill,  
Entwines in the vocal of gentry and slave,  
By the hearth of the slave it flowed,  
By the hearth of the gentry it existed,  
By the pike of the yeo it resisted,  
Beautiful on the flow to the ear,  
Enriched with the richness of the harp,  
Created the cultivation of the mind,  
Overflowing the banks of the invader,  
Like the evergreen it holds the cloak,  
Like the evergreen it holds on high,  
Like the wind it blows the seed,  
Abused by the modern for change,  
Struggling like the salmon for life,  
Overcoming the culture of oppression,  
Bursting like buds of spring,  
Saddening the woman of fortune,  
Saddening the woman of greatness,  
Saddening the yeo of modernness,  
Spreading with the swiftness of time,  
Growing with the love of love,  
Preparing for the Gael of tomorrow,  
Staunch and ready for the Ireland of new.

J. McGeown (Lurgan)