

CONTENTS

Introduction

xxiii

BOOK I: FROM THE BEGINNING TO THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY

TO THE SIXTH CENTURY

ANONYMOUS

1. 'The *rath* in front of the oak wood' 3
2. 'Three rounded flanks I loved' 3
3. 'He is coming, Adzed-Head' 3

DALLÁN FORGAILL (attrib.)

4. *A Poem in Praise of Colum Cille* 3

From the Latin

COLUMBANUS

5. *A Boat Song* 9

SEVENTH CENTURY

ANONYMOUS

6. *The Boyhood of Christ* 11

EIGHTH CENTURY

ANONYMOUS

7. *Saint Patrick's Breastplate* 12
8. *Epitaph for Cú Chuimne* 14

BLÁTHMAC MAC CON BRETTAN

9. *from A Poem to Mary* 15

EIGHTH/NINTH CENTURY

From The Ulster Cycle (10-13)

from Exile of the Sons of Uisliu

10. *Two Poems of Derdriu* 16

CONTENTS

	<i>from How the Bulls were Begotten</i>	
11.	<i>The Two Bulls</i>	19
	<i>from The Táin</i>	
12.	<i>The Armies Enter Cuailnge</i>	20
13.	<i>Before the Last Battle</i>	21
ANONYMOUS		
14.	<i>Toward Winter: Four Fragments</i>	22
NINTH CENTURY		
ANONYMOUS		
15.	<i>An Iviéd Tree-Top</i>	23
16.	<i>The Hag of Béara</i>	23
17.	<i>Créide's Lament for Dínertech</i>	27
<i>A Selection of Monastic Poems (18-25)</i>		
18.	'All alone in my little cell'	28
19.	<i>Four 'Glosses'</i>	30
20.	<i>Pangur Bán</i>	31
21.	'A busy yellow bee'	32
22.	'A sweet little bell'	32
23.	'Adore we the Lord'	32
24.	<i>The Hermit Marbán</i>	32
25.	<i>from the Prologue to The Calendar of Oengus</i>	36
ANONYMOUS		
26.	'First of summer, lovely sight'	38
27.	<i>Epitaph for Mael Mhuru</i>	40
28.	<i>An Insult</i>	40
29.	<i>The Lovely Étan</i>	41
<i>From the Latin (30-34)</i>		
DONATUS (c.829-876)		
30.	<i>The Land Called Scotia</i>	41
SEDULIUS SCOTTUS (d. 858)		
31.	<i>Request for Meat and Drink</i>	41
32.	<i>Death of a Ram</i>	42
33.	<i>from The Defeat of the Norsemen</i>	42
34.	'I read, or write'	44

CONTENTS

ANONYMOUS

35. 'Getting to Rome'	44
36. 'The wind is wild tonight'	44
37. 'Cold! Cold!'	44
38. 'I bring you news'	45
39. 'Look out there'	46
40. <i>Liadan and Cuirithir</i>	46
41. <i>Amergin's Songs</i>	47

TENTH CENTURY

ANONYMOUS

42. 'I'm ashamed of my thoughts'	50
43. 'Alone up here on the mountain'	51
44. <i>Manchán's Prayer</i>	53

OENGUS CÉILE DÉ (*fl.* late 10th cent.)

45. 'The time is ripe and I repent'	54
-------------------------------------	----

ANONYMOUS

46. 'Ah blackbird, giving thanks'	55
-----------------------------------	----

ELEVENTH CENTURY

ANONYMOUS

47. 'Eve am I'	56
----------------	----

MAEL ÍSU Ó BROLCHÁIN (d. 1086)

48. <i>To an Elderly Virgin</i>	56
49. 'My sins in their completeness'	58
50. 'I give Thee thanks, my King'	58

ANONYMOUS

51. <i>Praise of God</i>	59
52. 'A great tempest on the Plain of Ler'	59

From the Latin

BISHOP PATRICK (d. 1084)

53. <i>An Invocation</i>	61
--------------------------	----

CONTENTS

ELEVENTH/TWELFTH CENTURY

A Selection of Poems attributed to Colum Cille (54-58)

- | | |
|---|----|
| 54. 'O Son of God, it would be sweet' | 64 |
| 55. 'Mary mild, good maiden' | 65 |
| 56. 'If I owned all of Alba' | 67 |
| 57. 'Three places most loved I have left' | 69 |
| 58. 'My claw is tired of scribing' | 69 |

ANONYMOUS

- | | |
|----------------------------------|----|
| 59. <i>The Fort of Árd Ruide</i> | 70 |
|----------------------------------|----|

TWELFTH CENTURY

A Selection of Verses attributed to Suibne Geilt

- | | |
|------------------------------------|----|
| 60. 'I am in great misery tonight' | 72 |
|------------------------------------|----|

A Selection of Fenian Poems (61-66)

- | | |
|---|----|
| 61. 'Cold is the winter' | 78 |
| 62. <i>Créide's Lament for Cael</i> | 79 |
| 63. <i>Goll Mac Morna Parts from his Wife</i> | 81 |
| 64. 'There once was a time' | 83 |
| 65. 'My hands are withered' | 83 |
| 66. 'The Place of the Fian is bare tonight' | 84 |

ANONYMOUS

- | | |
|------------------------------------|----|
| 67. 'The blackbird calls in grief' | 85 |
|------------------------------------|----|

THIRTEENTH CENTURY

MUIREADHACH ALBANACH Ó DÁLAIGH (*fl.* early 13th cent.)

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|----|
| 68. 'Mighty Mary, hear me' | 87 |
| 69. 'Young man of alien beauty' | 91 |
| 70. 'Last night my soul departed' | 95 |
| 71. <i>On the Gift of a Knife</i> | 97 |

GIOLLA BRIGHDE MAC CON MIDHE (*fl.* mid 13th cent.)

- | | |
|--------------------------------|----|
| 72. <i>A Defence of Poetry</i> | 98 |
|--------------------------------|----|

From the Norman French

ANONYMOUS

- | | |
|---|-----|
| 73. from <i>The Fortification of New Ross</i> | 102 |
|---|-----|

CONTENTS

FOURTEENTH CENTURY

- GOFRAIDH FIONN Ó DÁLAIGH (d. 1387)
74. *A Child in Prison* 107
- GEARÓID IARLA MAC GEARAILT (d. 1398)
75. 'Woe to him who slanders women' 110

Early English

- ANONYMOUS
76. 'Icham of Irlaunde' 111
77. 'Alas! How should I sing?' 111
78. *The Land of Cokaygne* 111
- BROTHER MICHAEL OF KILDARE (fl. early 14th cent.)
79. *Sweet Jesus* 117

BOOK II: FROM THE FOURTEENTH TO THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

FOURTEENTH/FIFTEENTH CENTURY

- TADHG ÓG Ó HUIGÍN (d. 1448)
80. *Lament for Fearghal Ruadh* 125

FIFTEENTH CENTURY

- ANONYMOUS
81. 'You are desolate, fort of kings' 129
82. 'Monk, step further off' 129

English

- ANONYMOUS
83. from *A Letter sent by the Mayor and Inhabitants of the
Citie of Waterford . . .* 130

FIFTEENTH/SIXTEENTH CENTURY: ANONYMOUS LOVE POETRY

84. 'Keep your kiss to yourself' 132

CONTENTS

85. 'Take my song of love to heart'	132
86. 'I will not die for you'	133
87. 'You that are jealous and have a wife'	133
88. 'Sir, so suspicious'	134
89. <i>A Glance</i>	135
90. 'Lady of shrouding hair'	135
91. 'It is far from just between us'	136
92. 'No sickness worse than secret love'	136
93. 'Do not torment me, lady'	137
94. 'Men's loving is a false affection'	137

English

95. <i>Translation of an Irish Song</i>	138
---	-----

SIXTEENTH CENTURY

MAGHNAS Ó DOMHNAILL (d. 1563)

96. 'A heart made full of thought'	139
97. 'A famished end to my tale this night'	139
98. 'Love, I think, is a disease'	140

LOCHLANN ÓG Ó DÁLAIGH (*fl.* mid 16th cent.)

99. <i>In Praise of Three Young Men</i>	140
---	-----

TADHG DALL Ó HUIGÍN (1550–1591)

100. <i>A Visit to Enniskillen</i>	143
101. <i>A Satire on the O'Haras</i>	148

LAOISEACH MAC AN BHÁIRD (*fl.* late 16th cent.)

102. 'A fond greeting, hillock there'	149
103. <i>Two Sons</i>	150

ANONYMOUS

104. <i>Company in Loneliness</i>	152
-----------------------------------	-----

English

ANONYMOUS

105. from <i>The Praise of Waterford</i>	154
106. <i>A Postscript to Verses on the History of France</i>	155

CONTENTS

SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

ANONYMOUS

- | | |
|---|-----|
| 107. <i>The Scholar's Life</i> | 156 |
| 108. 'There are three who await my death' | 156 |
| 109. <i>Three Epigrams</i> | 157 |
| EOCHAIDH Ó HEOGHUSA (fl. late 16th—early 17th cent.) | |
| 110. <i>A Change in Style</i> | 158 |
| 111. <i>Mag Uidhir's Winter Campaign</i> | 159 |
| FEAR FLATHA Ó GNÍMH (fl. early 17th cent.) | |
| 112. <i>After the Flight of the Earls</i> | 162 |
| 113. <i>The Passing of the Poets</i> | 164 |
| MATHGHAMHAIN Ó HIFEARNÁIN (fl. early 17th cent.) | |
| 114. 'I ask, who will buy a poem?' | 167 |
| SEATHRÚN CÉITINN (1580—c.1644) | |
| 115. 'At the news from Fál's high plain' | 168 |
| 116. 'O lady full of guile' | 169 |
| PÁDRAIGÍN HAICÉAD (c.1600—1654) | |
| 117. <i>On Hearing it has been Ordered in the Chapterhouses of Ireland that the Friars make no more Songs or Verses</i> | 170 |
| PIARAS FEIRITÉAR (c.1600—1653) | |
| 118. 'Lay your weapons down, young lady' | 170 |
| DÁIBHÍ Ó BRUADAIR (c.1625—1698) | |
| 119. <i>Adoramus Te, Christe</i> | 172 |
| 120. 'O it's best be a total boor' | 172 |
| 121. <i>For the Family of Cúchonnacht Ó Dálaigh</i> | 173 |
| 122. 'A shrewish, barren, bony, nosy servant' | 174 |
| TOMÁS 'LÁIDIR' MAC COISDEALBHAIGH (fl. mid 17th cent.) (attrib.) | |
| 123. <i>Úna Bhán</i> | 174 |

English

- | | |
|--|-----|
| LUKE WADDING (1588—1657) | |
| 124. <i>For Innocents Day</i> | 175 |
| 125. <i>On the Circumsision: New Years Day</i> | 176 |

CONTENTS

ANONYMOUS

- Two Ballads of the Williamite Wars*
126. *Lilli Burlero* 178
127. *The Boyne Water* 179

EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

SÉAMAS DALL MAC CUARTA (c.1650–1733) (trans. from the Irish)

128. 'The houses of Corr an Chait are cold' 181

JONATHAN SWIFT (1667–1745)

129. *On Stella's Birthday: Written AD 1718–[19]* 181
130. *The Description of an Irish Feast . . .* 182
131. *The Progress of Poetry* 184
132. *Clever Tom Clinch Going to be Hanged* 186
133. *Holyhead. Sept. 25, 1727* 186
134. from *The Life and Character of Dean Swift* 187
135. from *Verses on the Death of Dr Swift* 189

AOGÁN Ó RATHAILLE (c.1675–1729) (trans. from the Irish)

136. 'Brightness most bright I beheld on the way, forlorn' 195
137. 'The drenching night drags on' 196
138. *The Vision* 197
139. *Valentine Browne* 198
140. 'No help I'll call' 199

CATHAL BUÍ MAC GIOLLA GHUNNA (c.1680–1756)
(trans. from the Irish)

141. *The Yellow Bittern* 200

OLIVER GOLDSMITH (1728–1774)

142. from *The Traveller. On Freedom and Ambition* 201
143. from *The Deserted Village* 203
144. *A Sonnet* 210
145. *Translation of a South American Ode* 210
146. *Elegy on the Death of a Mad Dog* 210
147. *Song: from The Vicar of Wakefield* 211
148. *Song: from She Stoops to Conquer* 212
149. from *Retaliation* 212

CONTENTS

EOGHAN RUA Ó SÚILLEABHÁIN (1748–1784) (trans. from the Irish)	
150. from 'Séamas, light-hearted and loving friend of my breast'	215
151. <i>A Magic Mist</i>	216
ANONYMOUS (trans. from the Irish)	
152. <i>Two Epigrams</i>	218
EIBHLÍN DHUBH NÍ CHONAILL (fl. 1770) (trans. from the Irish)	
153. from <i>The Lament for Art Ó Laoghaire</i>	219
BRIAN MERRIMAN (1749–1805) (trans. from the Irish)	
154. <i>The Midnight Court</i>	222
RICHARD BRINSLEY SHERIDAN (1751–1816)	
155. <i>Drinking Song</i> : from <i>The School for Scandal</i>	247
156. <i>Song</i> : from <i>The Duenna</i>	248
SEVENTEENTH TO NINETEENTH CENTURIES: FOLK POETRY	
<i>Folk Poems and Songs, Prayers and Charms from the Irish</i>	
157. 'It is well for small birds'	249
158. 'My own dark head'	249
159. 'My grief on the ocean'	250
160. 'Remember that night'	250
161. <i>Yourself and Myself</i>	251
162. <i>Little Black Rose</i>	252
163. <i>Cill Chais</i>	253
164. <i>The Widow's Curse</i>	254
165. <i>To the Holy Trinity</i>	254
166. <i>A Charm for Lighting the Fire</i>	254
167. <i>A Charm for Love and Lasting Affection</i>	255
<i>Ballads in English</i>	
168. <i>The Blackbird</i>	255
169. <i>The Shan Van Vocht</i>	256
170. <i>The Wearin' o' the Green</i>	257
171. <i>The Croppy Boy</i>	258

CONTENTS

172.	'General wonder in our land'	259
173.	<i>The Orange Lily</i>	260
174.	<i>The Night Before Larry was Stretched</i>	261

BOOK III: THE NINETEENTH AND TWENTIETH CENTURIES

ANTOINE RAIFTEIRÍ (1784–1835) (trans. from the Irish)

175.	'I am Raifteirí, the poet'	267
------	----------------------------	-----

THOMAS MOORE (1779–1852)

176.	'She is far from the land'	267
177.	' 'Tis the last rose of summer'	268
178.	'Dear Harp of my Country'	268
179.	<i>The Meeting of the Waters</i>	269
180.	'Oh! blame not the bard'	269
181.	'Oh! where's the slave so lowly'	270
182.	<i>The Petition of the Orangemen of Ireland</i>	271

JAMES CLARENCE MANGAN (1803–1849)

183.	Dark Rosaleen	273
184.	<i>The Nameless One</i>	275
185.	<i>O'Hussey's Ode to the Maguire</i>	277
186.	<i>Kathaleen Ny-Houlahan</i>	279
187.	<i>Lament over the Ruins of the Abbey of Teach Molaga</i>	280
188.	<i>A Vision of Connaught in the Thirteenth Century</i>	282
189.	<i>The Woman of Three Cows</i>	284
190.	<i>Good Counsel</i>	285
191.	<i>To Sultan Murad II</i>	285
192.	<i>A Song from the Coptic</i>	286
193.	<i>Siberia</i>	286

SAMUEL FERGUSON (1810–1886)

194.	The Burial of King Cormac	288
195.	<i>Aideen's Grave</i>	291
196.	<i>Deirdre's Lament for the Sons of Usnach</i>	296
197.	<i>At the Polo-Ground</i>	298
198.	<i>Lament for Thomas Davis</i>	301

THOMAS DAVIS (1814–1845)

199.	Lament for the Death of Eoghan Ruadh O'Neill	303
200.	<i>A Nation Once Again</i>	305

CONTENTS

WILLIAM ALLINGHAM (1824-1889)	
201. from <i>Laurence Bloomfield in Ireland:</i> <i>Lord Crashton: The Absentee Landlord</i> <i>The Eviction</i>	306 307 308
202. 'Four ducks on a pond'	308
W. B. YEATS (1865-1939)	
203. <i>To Ireland in the Coming Times</i>	309
204. <i>Red Hanrahan's Song about Ireland</i>	310
205. <i>On Those that Hated 'The Playboy Of The Western World', 1907</i>	310
206. <i>Easter 1916</i>	311
207. <i>The Seven Sages</i>	313
208. <i>Coole Park and Ballylee, 1931</i>	313
209. <i>The Circus Animals' Desertion</i>	315
PÁDRAIG Ó HÉIGEARTAIGH (1871-1936) (trans. from the Irish)	
210. 'My sorrow, Donncha'	316
J. M. SYNGE (1871-1909)	
211. <i>On an Anniversary</i>	318
212. <i>To the Oaks of Glencree</i>	318
213. <i>A Question</i>	318
214. <i>Winter</i>	319
215. <i>The Curse</i>	319
P. H. PEARSE (1879-1916)	
216. <i>Renunciation</i> (trans. from the Irish by the author)	319
PADRAIC COLUM (1881-1972)	
217. <i>A Poor Scholar of the Forties</i>	320
218. <i>An Old Woman of the Roads</i>	321
219. <i>She Moved Through the Fair</i>	322
FRANCIS LEDWIDGE (1887-1917)	
220. <i>June</i>	323
221. <i>A Fear</i>	323
222. <i>Thomas MacDonagh</i>	324
AUSTIN CLARKE (1896-1974)	
223. <i>Tenebrae</i>	324
224. from <i>Civil War</i>	325
225. <i>The Straying Student</i>	325

CONTENTS

226. <i>Penal Law</i>	326
227. <i>Her Voice Could Not Be Softer</i>	327
228. <i>Martha Blake at Fifty-One</i>	327
229. <i>Japanese Print</i>	332
230. <i>Anacreontic</i>	332
PATRICK KAVANAGH (1904-1967)	
231. <i>Sanctity</i>	333
232. <i>On Looking into E. V. Rieu's Homer</i>	333
233. <i>Kerr's Ass</i>	334
234. <i>Epic</i>	334
235. <i>Canal Bank Walk</i>	335
236. <i>Lines Written on a Seat on the Grand Canal . . .</i>	335
SAMUEL BECKETT (1906-)	
237. <i>Two Poems:</i>	
1 <i>Cascando</i>	336
2 <i>Saint-Lô</i>	337
238. <i>Four Poems:</i>	
1 <i>Dieppe</i>	337
2 'my way is in the sand flowing'	337
3 'what would I do without this world faceless incurious'	338
4 'I would like my love to die'	338
PADRAIC FALLON (1906-1974)	
239. <i>Kiltartan Legend</i>	339
240. <i>Lakshmi</i>	340
241. <i>Assumption</i>	341
242. <i>Painting of my Father</i>	342
LOUIS MACNEICE (1907-1963)	
243. <i>Carrickfergus</i>	345
244. <i>The Sunlight on the Garden</i>	346
245. <i>Autobiography</i>	347
246. <i>House on a Cliff</i>	348
247. <i>Soap Suds</i>	349
DENIS DEVLIN (1908-1959)	
248. <i>from Memoirs of a Turcoman Diplomat</i>	349
249. <i>Ank'hor Vat</i>	352
250. <i>The Lancet</i>	353
251. <i>Venus of the Salty Shell</i>	354

CONTENTS

252. <i>Wishes for Her</i>	355
253. <i>Little Elegy</i>	356
MÁIRTÍN Ó DIREÁIN (1910—) (trans. from the Irish)	
254. <i>Homage to John Millington Synge</i>	358
SEÁN Ó RÍORDÁIN (1916–1977) (trans. from the Irish)	
255. <i>Death</i>	359
256. <i>Claustrophobia</i>	359
257. <i>Ice Cold</i>	360
258. <i>The Moths</i>	360
VALENTIN IREMONGER (1918—)	
259. <i>The Toy Horse</i>	361
260. <i>This Houre Her Vigill</i>	361
RICHARD MURPHY (1927—)	
from <i>The Battle of Aughrim</i> (261–5)	
261. <i>Rapparees</i>	362
262. <i>Wolfhound</i>	363
263. <i>Green Martyrs</i>	364
264. <i>Orange March</i>	365
265. <i>Casement's Funeral</i>	365
266. <i>High Island</i>	366
THOMAS KINSELLA (1928—)	
267. <i>A Hand of Solo</i>	367
268. <i>Ancestor</i>	369
269. <i>Tear</i>	370
270. <i>Wyncote, Pennsylvania: A Gloss</i>	373
JOHN MONTAGUE (1929—)	
271. <i>Above the Pool</i>	373
272. <i>All Legendary Obstacles</i>	374
273. <i>Hero's Portion</i>	375
274. <i>Mother Cat</i>	377
SEAMUS HEANEY (1939—)	
275. <i>Docker</i>	378
276. <i>Bogland</i>	378
277. <i>Sunlight</i>	379
278. <i>A Constable Calls</i>	380
279. <i>The Guttural Muse</i>	381

CONTENTS

DEREK MAHON (1941-)	
280. <i>A Disused Shed in Co. Wexford</i>	382
281. <i>Derry Morning</i>	384
282. <i>The Woods</i>	385
SEAMUS DEANE (1941-)	
283. <i>Scholar I</i>	386
284. <i>Scholar II</i>	387
MICHAEL HARTNETT (1941-)	
285. <i>All That is Left . . .</i>	388
286. <i>I Have Heard Them Knock</i>	389
287. <i>The possibility that has been overlooked is the future</i>	389
288. <i>from A Farewell to English</i>	390
Explanatory and Biographical Notes	393
Sources and Acknowledgements	410
Index of First Lines	415
Index of Authors	423