

**WILD ROSE COUNTRY**

*Peter McGloin (Surrey) 1995*

Cluainín how I miss you since I've been away.  
Your lovely river Owenmore, and Bonet river grand.  
I long to see your mountains, O'Donnells and Benbo,  
your streams, your lakes, the beauty of my own dear native land.  
Most of all I miss the friends I sadly left behind,  
I think of them each night and day, they're always on my mind.  
I hope and pray that I'll return for all of them to see,  
to live and die where I belong in the Wild Rose Country.

To ramble down the Big Bray, what pleasure it would be,  
from the old church yard, O'Donnells rock and Larkfield road to see.  
Past Marty's and the old school, the Mill and Sycamore tree.  
On the Bridge to stand as waters rush to their meetings hurriedly.  
What sights to see of rare beauty in my Bonnet Valley home.  
Nowhere else can compare no matter where I roam  
in this world if there's a place where I'll contented be  
it must be Manorhamilton in the Wild Rose Country.

In the Bee park once again I'd like to play handball at Molly's rock  
on bonfire night I'd light the whins once more.  
To Pat and Dan's old drapery another chance to call.  
Reach Tay Pot Lane where the Tay is wet to the choice of one and all.  
In Jack Golden's grocery to spend sometime to shop.  
Then across the street for milseán in Joe McSharry's shop.  
Again to hear the Angelus from the church bells of St Clare,  
I'd pray to stay and no more stray from the Wild Rose Country.

To be in Castle street for the big fair day in May.  
Hear the dealers and Jobbers see their bargaining display.  
Help to spend the luck penny when a deal is struck and done.  
Buy some duileasc and fresh herrings take them home for all.  
Wonder down the main street turning down the monkey row,  
past the Mill and cross the bridge with the Owenmore below.  
To a little whitewashed cottage the place where I was born  
in Tuckmill park where I left my heart in the Wild Rose Country.

How sad I am in London town this dreary winters day  
for I'm lonesome for the Leitrim Glens and Cluainín far away.  
Those quaint old streets, the Castle, the Mill and St Clare's Hall  
fill my heart with fond memories that fail to dim or blurr.  
I often think of old Cloonclare and dear Cloonlougher too,  
then I say a prayer for departed friends and hope they'll pray for me.  
Return I must, in God I trust, that he will grant to me  
the health and strength to make my way to Wild Rose Country.

**RHODODENDRONS**

*Nora McGillen*

Here in Connemara I let you go  
rhododendrons purpling the landscape,  
their Lenten glow igniting the bog,  
turf stooked and stacked,  
a benediction of whitethorns over the road.  
At our Lady of the Wayside I light a candle for you,  
the muffled tones of the Mass bell,  
in my chest the knowledge you are leaving.

Light breaking through stone walls,  
rhododendrons trembling at that place near Kylemore  
where we picnicked  
remember how I gathered armfuls of them.  
Rhododendrons waiting whichever way we turn  
their sturdy gaze unflinching,  
breathing the salt tang of the wind like ether,  
knowing they will return  
here again and again.

Rhododendrons crouching along the mountainside,  
a dappled grey mare and foal circle round us  
their hoofs beating time with my heart.  
May I not hear them,  
the blossoms falling silently away.

Rotting boats railing against the harbour at Letterfrack.  
A statue of the Virgin mute amongst the rocks  
and the stone silence of rhododendrons seeping into clay.

Rhododendrons lighting our way into Clifden,  
glimmer of eternity in the falling blooms,  
rhododendrons breathing a path into Clifden,  
that you and I might return and find them  
still blooming.

*(In memoriam Agnes McGillen)*

**MORNING IN BEARA**

*Rosemarie Rowley\**

It is my sorrow to find that every delicate morning  
That I am not in Beara standing on the strand  
And the voices of birds drawing me over the ocean and hills  
To the ravine of gorse where my love is to be found

It is so suddenly, sweetly, joyfully I would leap  
And running free from stress, with tenderness  
I would turn my back on the little clouds of this world  
If I could have the full vision and apprehension of my fair darling

My loosing sight of her has left me prostrate with weakness  
Strictures in my heart, choked in my chest as I walk the street  
As long as the realm of the rivers and the clean breeze of the sea  
Are calling and shouting to this heart inside of me

It is sweet and lively to be buffeted by the winds in Beara  
With the brightness of the sun generously on the grass  
But alas, Queen of women endowed with abundant tresses  
That we are not together, among the gorse as once we were

*\*Translated by Rosemarie Rowley from an original poem by Osborn O h-Aimhirgin From 'Filiocht na nGael' (Page 242). Published by An Press Nasuinta 1938 (National Press)*