

Glen Lyon – Margaret Bennett MCPS/PRS 2002

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1. Peter Stewart, 1910 and *Buain a' choirce* (Harvesting the Oats)

We belong to land planted and harvested for generations by our family in Glenconon, Skye. My great-grand-father's voice, recorded on wax cylinder, begins the sound of five generations represented on this CD. In this light-hearted reaping song you can hear the rhythmical swish of the sickle cutting the oats and the sound of the threshers at harvest-time.

Latha dhomh 's mi buain a' choirce  
Gheàrr mi beum 's cha robh e socair.  
Hò rò 's na ho ri ri ò  
Hi ri ri ri hò rò èile,  
Hò rò 's na ho ri ri ò

Gheàrr mi beum 's cha robh e socair  
Gheàrr mi mo ghlùin is leig mi osna.

Shuidh mi air uamhair a' ghortain  
Fheuch am faicinn fear do choltais.

Dh'fheuch am faicinn fear do choltais.  
Fear a' chùil duinn 's nan gruaidhean dosrach.

Fhaolainn bhig a shnàmhas an caolas  
Thoir mo shoraidh uam gu mo leannan.

*One day whilst cutting oats  
I cut a swathe and it was not easy  
Hò rò 's na ho ri ri ò  
Hi ri ri ri hò rò èile,  
Hò rò 's na ho ri ri ò*

*I cut a swathe and it was not easy  
I cut my knee and let out a sigh*

*I sat in a hollow in the field  
In the hope of seeing someone like you*

*In the hope of seeing someone like you  
The one with the brown hair and bearded cheeks*

*Little seagull that swims the sound,  
Take my greetings from me to my loved one.*

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2. *Suid mar chuir mi 'n geamhradh tharram* — It's late into the night; a young woman sits near window of her parents' thatched house. The sounds of a chilly night drifting across her bitter thoughts, as she reflects on the pain of rejection. (Night-visiting was once a common custom of courtship. In the Hebrides marriage usually followed within a year, though not according to this song from the Isle of Lewis.)

Suid mar chuir mi 'n gheamhreadh tharam

Siud mar chuir mi 'n geamhradh tharam  
Smaointinn daonnan gaol mo leannain  
Siud mar chuir mi 'n geamhradh tharam.

'S iomadh oidhche fad an t-séasan  
Thàna tusa orm air chéilidh  
'S beag bha dùil 'am as an ré sin  
Gur e leannan tè èile bh'agam  
Siud mar chuir mi'n geamhradh tharam...

'S iomadh oidhche fhliuch is reòta  
Thàna tusa thar na mòintich  
Null's a nall air garradh shòbhail  
Tigh'nn a chòmhradh gu mo leabaidh,  
Siud mar chuir mi'n geamhradh tharam...

'S iomadh oidhch' air bheagain eudaich  
Chun na beinge rinn mi èiridh;  
Comhairl' bheirinn-sa air tè eile  
Fuireach reusant' as a' leabaidh  
Siud mar chuir mi 'n geamhradh tharam..

'S ann a bha do mhàthair leòmach  
'G iarraidh ort gun mise phòsadh;  
Cha chuir mise dragh rim bheò oirr'  
'S rùm gu leoir dhom an tigh m' athar  
Siud mar chuir mi 'n geamhradh tharam...

*That's the way I spent the winter  
Always thinking of my love  
That's the way I spent the winter.*

*Every night throughout the season  
You came to visit with me,  
Little did I think at the time  
It was another woman's lover I had.  
That's the way I spent the winter*

*Many the cold and wet night  
You came across the moor  
Over the barn wall  
To keep me company in my bed.  
That's the way I spent the winter.*

*Many's the night with scarcely a stitch on  
I got up to the settle (to let you in);  
My advice to another woman  
Is to stay sensibly in her own bed.  
That's the way I spent the winter.*

*It was your mother who was snobbish  
Begging you not to marry me,  
But I will not bother her as long as I live,  
Enough room for me in my father's house.  
That's the way I spent the winter.*

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3. *Uamh an Oir* — The Cave of Gold in the south of Skye is said to be seven miles deep and if you sing a single note inside, without fail it will come back to you. An ancient Hebridean legend tells of a famous piper who goes into the cave to find out why it has claimed so many lives. From deep within his pipe music echoes, playing a tune that nobody has ever heard before. Those listening above-ground can understand from the music that a green fairy-dog attacking him. The song imitates the pipes as chorus repeats his promise to return

Nach truagh a Rìgh, gun trì làmh  
Dà làmh sa phìob, dà làmh sa phìob,  
Nach truagh a Rìgh, gun trì làmh,  
Da làmh sa phìob 's làmh sa chlàidheamh.

Eadarainn a' chruit, a' chruit, a' chruit,  
Eadarainn a' chruit,, mo chuideachd air m' fhàgail,  
Eadarainn a' luaidh, a luaidh, a luaidh,  
Eadarainn a' luaidh 's i ghall' uainn' a shàraich mi.

Bidh na minn bheaga nan gobhair chreagach  
Man tig mise, man till mis' à  
Uamh an Oir, Uamh an Oir,  
'S na lothan cliatha nan eich dhialta  
Man tig mise, man till mis' à  
Uamh an Oir, Uamh an Oir.

Bith na laoidh bheaga nan crodh eadraidh  
Man tig mise, man till mis' à  
Uamh an Oir, Uamh an Oir,  
'S na mic uchda nam fir fheachda  
Man tig mise, man till mis' à  
Uamh an Oir, Uamh an Oir.

'S iomadh maighdeann òg fo ceud-bharr  
Thèid a-null, thèid a-null  
Man tig mise, man till mis' à  
Uamh an Oir, Uamh an Oir.

*Oh Lord, I wish I had three hands,  
Two hands for the pipes, two hands for the pipes  
Oh Lord, I wish I had three hands  
Two hands for the pipes, and one for the sword.*

*Between us the harp, the harp, the harp  
Between us the harp, my companions have left me  
Between us my love, my love, my love,  
Between us my love, it was the green bitch who harassed me.*

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*Little kids will be mountain goats  
Ere I return, ere I return from  
The Cave of Gold, the Cave of Gold,  
The colts at the harrow will be saddled horses  
Ere I return, ere I return from  
The Cave of Gold, the Cave of Gold,*

*Little calves will be milch cows  
Ere I return, ere I return from  
The Cave of Gold, the Cave of Gold,  
Babes at the breast will be fighting men  
Ere I return, ere I return from  
The Cave of Gold, the Cave of Gold.*

*Many a young maid in bloom of youth  
Will pass away, will pass away  
Ere I come, ere I return from  
The Cave of Gold, the Cave of Gold*

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4. *A fhleasgaich ùir, leanainn thu* — As children we would play ‘follow-my-leader’ on the family croft where hills, rivers and fragrant meadows were the extent of our carefree existence. Among the adults this was also the natural setting for all the songs that were part of that world.

A fhleasgaich ùir, leanainn thu  
Fhir a’ chùil bhòidhich  
A fhleasgaich ùir, leanainn thu .

‘S mi gun rachadh ‘ad choinneamh  
Air mo bhonnaibh gun bhrògan.

Air bonnaibh mo chasan  
Ged bhiodh clachan gan stròiceadh.

Ged nach mo’ leat mi ‘m bliadhna  
‘S tric a dh’iarr thu mo phògan.

Ach cha bhì mi gad chàineadh  
Ged nach dàin dhomh do phòsadh

Ged bhiodh reothadh glè chruaidh ann  
Sneachda fuar air a’ mhòintich.

Dh’fhalbhainn air muir no tìr leat  
Gu ruig crìoch na Roinn Eòrpa.

*My new love, I would follow you,  
Lad of the beautiful hair,  
My new love, I would follow you.*

*I’m the one who would go to meet you  
Barefoot, without shoes;*

*On the tips of my toes  
Though the rocks would tear them.*

*This year you no longer love me  
Though you often sought my kisses.*

*But I won’t malign you  
Although I’m not fated to marry you.*

*Though there would be a hard frost  
And cold snow on the moorland.*

*I would go over land or sea with you  
To the far ends of Europe.*

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5. *Hò rinn o* – Margaret learned most of her songs are from her mother whose voice begins this track. Peigi learnt this song of unrequited love in the early 1930s and in 1953 was recorded by John MacInnes for the School of Scottish Studies in Edinburgh. Margaret learned it in the late 1950s, then Martyn, who heard it from the late 1970s, called it ‘the sour grapes song’. In this version you can almost taste the bitterness in the music.

Hò rinn ò hi ri hò rò u

Hao ri ri hò rò u éile

Hò rinn ò hi ri hò rò u.

Fhleasgaich òig ma chuir thu cùl rium

Feuch gur i an diugh a’ thréig thu.

Ghabh thu ’n t-seann tè leis an stòras

Ged a’ bha sin òg le chèile.

Càch a’ dannsa aig do bhanais

’S mis ’gam sgaradh o mo chlàibhe.

’S beag a shaol mi anns an àm sin

Gum biodh do luaidh air aon tè eile.

*Young lad, if you have turned your back on me  
Be sure that today she doesn't betray you.*

*You took the old woman with the wealth  
Although we were young together.*

*Others [are] dancing at your wedding  
And I parting from my body.*

*Little did I think at the time  
That you would give your love to any other.*

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6. *A Thearlaich òig* — Margaret was given this Jacobite song by John MacInnes. It is addressed to Prince Charles Edward Stuart and was composed in 1746 after the Battle of Culloden, though tragically, in other parts of the world, the guns of war have not ceased. An unknown woman, distraught by grief, sings between the battleground and the grave, still within the range of canon fire and sniper's bullets.

A Theàrlaich oig a' chuailein chiataich  
Thug mi gaol dhuit 's cha ghaol bliadhna,  
Gaol nach tugainn do dhiùc na dh'iarla  
'S b' fhearr liom fhìn nach fhaca mi riamh thu.

Hiuilirinn ò ro bha hò  
Lionn dubh mòr thu bhith ga mo dhith  
Hiuilirinn ò ro bha hò.

A Theàrlaich òig a mhic Rìgh Sèumas  
Chunna mi toir mhòr an-dè ort  
'A'san gu suthach is mise gu deurach,  
Uisge mo chinn tigh'n tinn om lèirsinn.

Mharbh 'ad m' athair 's mo dha bhràthair  
Mhill 'ad mo chinneadh; chreach 'ad mo chàirdean  
Sgrios 'ad mo dhùthaich; rùisg 'ad mo mhàthair  
'S bu lughaid mo mhulad nan cinneadh le Teàrlach

*Young Charles of the splendid tresses  
I gave you love, and not love for a year only,  
Love I wouldn't have given to duke or earl  
And I wish to God I had never seen you.*

*Young Charles, son of King James  
I saw a great army eager in pursuit of you  
They were joyful and I was weeping  
The flow of my tears, sick on my vision*

*They killed my father and my two brothers  
they despoiled my kindred, they ruined my people,  
They destroyed my land, they stripped my mother  
But my grief would be less if Charles had triumphed.*

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7. *Cumha Iain Gairbh* — This lament for John MacLeod of Raasay who drowned at sea, Easter 1671, was composed by his grieving sister. It is one of over fifty songs that she made to commemorate his death

Och nan och 's mi fo lèireadh  
Mar a dh'èirich don ghaisgeach,  
Chaneil sealgar na sithne  
An-diugh am frith nam beann casa.

Hù o ro hò  
Eò hò hug oran ò  
Hù o ro hò  
Eile e hò  
Hù o ro hò  
Eò hò hug oran ò  
Faill ill o  
Ro bha hò

Bha uair nach do shaoil mi,  
Ged is faoin bhith ga ràdh,  
Gun rachadh do bhàthadh  
Gu bràth air cuain farsainn.

*O alas I am anguished  
At what befell the hero  
The is no hunter of venison  
Today on the moor of the steep bens.*

*I never thought,  
Though it's foolish to say it,  
That you would ever be drowned  
Out on the wide open sea.*

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8. *Hiùraibh ò, ghràidh an tig thu* — Hoping against hope that a love will return is the recurring theme of countless songs. Like love, heartache can be expressed in any number of ways. The setting here is in the Outer Hebrides.

Hiùraibh ò, ghràidh an tig thu?  
Hiùraibh ò an tig thu ghràidh?  
Hiùraibh ò an tig thu 'm bliadhna?  
Na 'n tig thu gu sìorraidh brath?

Nochdadh ri beanntan na Hearadh  
M' aghaidh ri fearann na Pairc,  
Cianalas a' tigh'nn air m' aire  
'S gaol mo leannan a' dol bàs.

Chunnaic mi thu as mo chadal  
'S tu tigh'nn dhachaigh às a' bhlàr,  
Le do chlaidheamh caol a' lasadh  
Cha b' ann gam iarraidh-s' a bha.

Nuair a thèid mi dhan a' mhonadh  
Bith na deoir a ruith gu làr  
'S ged a' lionadh iad mo bhrògan  
Cha leig mi mo bhròn ri càch.

Nam bitheadh dùil ri do litir,  
Air an t-*Sheila* oidhche Mhàirt,  
'S mi nach sgrìobhadh sìos le ince,  
Fuil mo chridhe 's i bu bhlàith'.

*Hiùraibh ò, love will you return?*  
*Hiùraibh ò, will you return, love?*  
*Hiùraibh ò, will you return this year*  
*Or will you return ever, ever?*

*Coming into sight of the hills of Harris,*  
*My face to the land of the Park (Isle of Lewis),*  
*Homesickness coming upon me*  
*And my sweetheart's love dying.*

*I saw you in my sleep*  
*Coming home from battle,*  
*With your rapier flashing*  
*But it was not me you sought.*

*When I go to the moor*  
*The tears will be running to the ground;*

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*And even if they fill my shoes,  
I will not reveal my sorrow to others.*

*If there were hope of your letter  
On [the boat] the 'Sheila' on Tuesday night  
It's not with ink that I would reply,  
But with my heart's blood which is warmer.*

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10. *Dh'èirich mi moch madainn Chèitein*

The voice of Peter Stewart, Martyn's great-great-grandfather, sings 'I will drink a health to my love' to set the scene for work that was traditionally done by women. As they gather around the table to 'waulk' ('full' or 'mill') their hand-woven cloth, they sing of the delights of early summer. When finished the waulking, the women would roll up the cloth and then their men-folk would join them to share more songs, music, stories, along with something to eat and drink.

Dh'èirich mi moch madainn Chèitein,  
Faill-ill ò ill ù, ill ò  
Hiuraibh ò na hò na hò ro èile,  
Faill ill ò, ill ù ill ò.

'S binn a' chòisir rinn mi èisdeachd.  
Smeòraichean air bhàrr nan geugan.  
Uiseagan os cionn an t-slèibhe.  
'S bòidhche fhiamh 's a' ghrian ag èirigh.  
Madainn chiùin fo dhrùchd nan speuran.

*I arose early on a May morning*  
*Faill-ill ò ill ù, ill ò*  
*Hiuraibh ò na hò na hò ro èile,*  
*Faill ill ò, ill ù ill ò.*

*Sweet the choir that I listened to,*  
*Thrushes on the tips of branches,*  
*Larks above the moors;*  
*Beautiful the colours in the rising sun*  
*The morning calm under the dew of the heavens*

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11. *Air bhith dhòmhsa* — Travel to far-off, strange lands was common among our sea-faring people. Sometimes they would bring home curiosities that both amazed and amused — like the African finger-piano that begins this track. While in her early teens on the Isle of Lewis, Margaret was given this song by Finlay MacNeill. It is older than we can tell, as it not only pre-dates the ban of card-playing that dominated many Hebridean homes but it also mentions little white bone figures — a reminder of the magnificent Lewis chess-men dating to the 13th century.

Air bhith dhòmhsa Hao ri  
Siubhal mòintich Hao ri  
Chunna' mi bhuam O hi ri-i o  
Long san fhaodhail O hi hò

Struth is gaoth  
'N iar na h-aghaidh

'Se mo ghaol-sa  
Mo thriùir bhràithrean

Dh'fhalbh iad seachdainn  
Gus am màireach

Ga b'e aite  
Nochd an tàmh iad

Gum bi mir' ann,  
Ceòl is gàire

Iomairt gu tric  
Air an tàileasg

Air na disnean  
Geala cnàmha

Air na cairtean  
Breaca bàna

Hao ri rì ri  
O hì ri i ò  
Hòro nàile  
O hì hò

*When I was* Hao ri  
*Roaming the moor* Hao ri  
*I saw before me* O hi ri-i o  
*A ship in the narrows* O hi ho

*Tide and wind  
From the west against her*

*Beloved to me are  
My three brothers*

*They went away, a week  
From tomorrow*

*Whatever place  
They rest tonight*

*There will be mirth,  
Music and laughter;*

*They will often play  
On the chess-board*

*On the game of dice  
The white bone [figures]*

*With the cards  
Spotted white*

*Hao ri rì rì  
O hì rì i ò  
Hòro nàile  
O hì hò*

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12. *Cumha Mhic Criomain* — This lament is for Donald Bàn MacCrimmon who was killed at the Rout of Moy in 1746. The setting is Dunvegan Castle on the Isle of Skye, home to the Clan MacLeod for centuries and to their hereditary pipers, the famous MacCrimmons. The waves, the wind and the seabirds are the only music you hear when, out of the mists swirling around the battlements the banshee's eerie echoes remind us that the great MacCrimmon will never return.

Dh'iadh ceo nan stuc mu aodainn Chuillionn,  
Is sheinn a' bhean-shìth a torman mulaid,  
Gorm shuilean ciùin san Dùn a' sileadh  
On thriall thu uainn 's nach till thu tuille.

Cha till, cha till, cha till MacCriomain,  
An cogadh no sìth cha till e tuille;  
Le airgiod no nì cha till MacCriomain  
Cha till e gu bràth gu Là na Cruinne.

Tha osag nam beann gu fann ag imeachd,  
Gach sruthan 's gach allt gu mall le bruthach;  
Tha ealtainn nan speur feadh gheugan dubhach,  
A' caoidh gun dh'fhalbh 's nach till thu tuille.

Cha chluinnear do cheòl san Dùn mu fheasgar  
'S mac-talla nam mùr le mùirn ga fhreagairt;  
Gach fleasgach is òigh gun cheòl, gun bheadradh,  
On thriall thu uainn 's nach till thu tuille.

*The mist swirled round the face of Cuillin  
And the banshee sang her mournful lay,  
Blue, gentle eyes in the Castle are weeping  
Since you departed and will never return.*

*No more, no more, will MacCrimmon return  
Neither in war nor in peace will he return again;  
For neither silver nor any thing will MacCrimmon return,  
He will not return till the Day of Judgement.*

*The breeze of the bens wafts gently  
Every brook and burn flows slowly  
Birds of the heavens mourn on the branches  
Lamenting that you've gone and will never return.*

*Your music will not be heard in the Castle at evening  
Nor the echoes of the walls joyfully answering;  
Every lad and youth without music or banter  
Since you departed and will never return.*

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12. *Oran nam Mogaisean* — ‘The song of the moccasins’ is from Allan MacArthur whose people emigrated from the Isle of Canna to Newfoundland in the 1820s. Allan’s brother, Murdoch, composed the satire when he tried to learn how to make moccasins from their Micmac neighbours. When Margaret first recorded Allan in 1970, the family sang it as milling song, to the rhythm of loud percussive thumps on the boards. This version uses authentic voices to make playful fun of fact that the white man could not match the skill taught to them by the Indians. With permission of the MacArthur family [word and tune published by Margaret Bennett © ]

Tha fonn, fonn, fonn air,  
Tha fonn air na mogaisean,  
Tha fonn gun bhith trom,  
Hog i ó air na mogaisean.

Thoisich Seumas Ryan  
‘S rinn e craicean do mhogaisean,  
Gun chairt e dhiubh na h-aobrainn  
‘S cha robh iad craobhaidh fhathast air

Theid mi sios don aifhrionn  
An coibhneas nan caileagan,  
Cha ghabh iad facal ùrnuigh  
Ach suil air mo mhogaisean.

Fhuair mi craiceann caorach  
‘S dùil rium caol a ghearradh às,  
Thilg mi ‘n dara taobh e  
Ach fhuair mi laoicionn gamhnach

*Let’s sing, sing, sing, sing,  
Let’s sing about the mocassins,  
Our song won’t be heavy  
Hokey-ho for the mocassins!*

*James Ryan got started  
With a piece of hide for the moccasins,  
Although he tanned the ankle leather  
They weren’t yet soft enough*

*When I go down to mass  
In the company of the lasses  
They can’t say a word of prayer  
For staring at my moccasins.*

*I got a piece of sheepskin  
To cut a strip from it,  
I tossed it to one side  
But found a calf-hide.*



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13. *Fhir a' leadain thlàth* — We first heard this song from the Isle of Barra in 1975 when Archie Fisher sent us a recording of Flora MacNeill singing it. Not only did we love the song but also the singer, and, just for the record, Martyn has been in love with Flora since the age of four.

Fhir a' leadain thlàth  
Dh'fhàg thu mi fo bhròn.

Fhir chùl dualaich chleachdaich  
'S bòidche snuadh ri fhaicinn;  
Tha do ghaol an tasgaidh  
Seòmar glaist' 'am fheòil.

An toiseach a' gheamhraidh  
'S ann a ghabh mi geall ort,  
Shaoil leam gum bu leam thu  
'S cha do theann nam chòir.

Fhir a' leadain laghaich  
'S tu mo rùn 's mo roghainn.  
Na' sguiread thu thadhal  
An taigh 's am bì an t-òl.

Fhir a' leadain chraobhaich  
'S òg a rinn thu m' thaobhadh,  
Thug thu mi 'om dhaoine  
Fhuair mo shaothair òg.

'N gàire rinn mi 'n uiridh  
Chuir mo cheum an truimead,  
'S mise tha gu duilich  
'S muladach mo cheòl.

Tha mi trom an-dràst -  
'S e sin fàth mo dheòir -  
Fhir a' leadain thlàth  
Dh'fhàg thu mi fo bhròn.

*Lad of the smooth tresses  
You have left me broken-hearted.*

*Lad of the curling locks  
Beautiful to behold  
Your love is a treasure-trove  
In a locked room within me.*

*It was at the start of winter  
That I pledged my troth*

*I thought you were mine  
But you did not come near me.*

*Lad of the lovely hair,  
You are my love and my choice  
If only you would stop frequenting  
The inn where there is drinking.*

*Lad of the luxuriant hair  
I was young when you enticed me  
You took me from my own people  
Who nurtured me when young.*

*My last year's laughter  
Has turned my steps to lead  
It's I who feels sorry  
And sad is my song.*

*Now I am with child  
Which is the cause of my tears;  
Lad of the smooth tresses  
You have left me broken-hearted.*

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Glen Lyon – Margaret Bennett MCPS/PRS 2002

14. *Griogal Cridhe* — This powerful, passionate lament was composed by the sorrowing wife of Gregor MacGregor (a relative of Rob Roy) who was beheaded in 1570. In verse 4, the image of the highest apple was symbolic for the most beloved. The violin weeps in sympathy with the voice as it pours out expressions of grief.

'S iomadh oidhche fhliuch is thioram—  
Side nan seachd sian—  
Gheibheadh Griogal dhomhsa creagan  
Ris an gabhainn dian.

Obhan, òbhan, òbhan iri  
Obhan iri o!  
Obhan, òbhan, òbhan iri  
'S mòr mo mhulad, 's mòr.

Eudail mhoir de shluagh an domhain,  
Dhoirt iad d' fhuil an dè  
'S chuir iad do cheann air stob daraich  
Tacan beag bho d' chrè.

B' annsa bhith le Griogal Cridhe  
Tearnadh chruidh le ghleann,  
Na bhith Baron mòr na Dalach,  
Sioda geal mum cheann.

Chaneil ùbhlan idir agam  
'S ùbhlan uil' aig cach  
'S ann tha m' ùbhal curaidh caineil,  
'S cùl a chinn ri làr.

Nuair bhios mnathan òg a' bhaile  
Nochd nan cadal sèimh;  
'S ann bhios mis' air bruaich do lice  
Bualadh mo dha làimh.

*Many a night, cold and wet  
In every kind of weather  
Griogal would find for me rock  
Under which I could shelter.*

*O-van o-van, o-van eerie  
O-van eerie o-oh  
O-van o-van o-van eerie  
Great is my sorrow, so great.*

*Dearest beloved of all the people on earth*

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*They spilled your blood yesterday  
They stuck your head on an oaken spike  
Some distance from your body.*

*Better to be with Gregor of my Heart  
Bringing cattle down the glen  
Than to be with the Baron of Dull  
With white silk about my head.*

*I have no apple at all  
When every one else has one;  
My sweet fragrant apple  
Lies with his head on the ground.*

*When the young wives of the village  
Sleep peacefully tonight  
I will be lying on your tomb  
Beating my two hands in grief.*

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