

Folk & Traditional Song Lyrics

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Anac Cuain

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If my health is spared I'll be long relating,
Of the boat that sailed out from Anac Cuain,
And the keening after of mother and father,
As the laying out of each corpse was done.
Oh King of Graces, who died to save us,
It was a small affair but for one or two,
But a boat-load bravely on a calm sailing,
Without storm or rain to be swept to doom.

The boat sprang a leak and left all those people,
And frightened sheep out adrift on the tide,
It beats all telling what fate befell them,
Eleven strong men and eight women died.
Men who could manage a plough or harrow,
For to break the fallow or scatter seed,
And the women whose fingers could move so nimbly,
To spin fine linen or cloth to weave.

Young boys they were lying where crops were ripening,
From the strength of youth they were borne away,
In their wedding clothes for their wake they robed them,
Oh King of Glory man's hope is vain.

May burning mountains come tumbling downward,
On that place of drowning may curses fall,
Full many the soul it has left in mourning,
And left without hope of a bright day's dawn.
The cause of their fate was no fault of sailing ,
It was the boat that failed them the `Caislean Nuadh',
And left me to make with a heart that's breaking,
This sad lamentation for Anac Cuain.

The full text of this song both in the Irish and in English translation can be found in Mrs. Costello's book,

`Amrain Muighe Seola' Traditional Folksongs from Galway and Mayo.....
Eibhlin Bean Mhic Choisdealbha.

This song was composed by Raftery the poet to commemorate the terrible disaster which befell the people of `Annaghdown' (Anac Cuain) when on their

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way to a fair in Galway. About thirty villagers with ten sheep and other goods set off in an old boat from the shores of Lough Corrib to go the eight miles into Galway. In those days there was no direct road, and the lake was the nearest way. The boat was rotten, and when within two miles of Galway a leak was sprung. One of the men endeavouring to plug it with his coat, and pressing with his heel to drive it more firmly in, drove the whole plank out of the boat. In a few seconds all of these poor people were struggling in the water, and although they were close to land, nineteen of them drowned, eleven men and eight women.

Mrs Costello collected this song from Pat O'Neill who lived at Drumgriffin, Annaghdown. Pat always maintained that there were two songs written on the subject, one by Raftery, and one by a local poet named Cosg

The note above is taken from Mrs. Costello's book

Raftery's original poem in Irish has ten verses of equivalent length to those shown above, the three and a half verses above are a selection from the poem and are the only ones that I sing.

Mrs. Costello does not say who made the translation but I believe that I was translated by Monsignor Padraig de Bruin. FH

FH
apr97