

**FINGAL: AND  
OTHER  
POEMS OF OSSIAN**

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**JAMES MACPHERSON**

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# F I N G A L.

## BOOK I.

Cuthullin sat by Turf's wall: by the tone of the  
rustling sound. His spear leaned against the rock.  
His shield lay on the grass, by his side. Amid  
his thoughts of mighty Svaran, a hero slain by  
the chief in war: the accent of music comes, Ma-  
ran the son of Fíthil!

"Arise," says the youth, "Cuthullin, arise.  
I see the ships of the north! Many, chief of men,  
are the foe. Many the heroes of the sea, heroes  
Svaran! — "Kuraa," replied the blue-eyed  
chief, "those eyes troublest, son of Fíthil! Thy  
knees have increased the foe. It is Fingal, king  
of deserts, with aid to green Fria of streams, —  
"I beheld their chief," says Moran, "fall on a  
glistering rock. His spear is a blazed pine. His  
shield the rising moon! He sat on the shore! like  
a cloud of mist on the silent hill! Many, chief  
of heroes! I told, many are our hosts of war.  
We'll set them rained, the mighty arm; but many  
mighty men are seen from Turf's windy walls.

"He spoke, like a wave on a rock, "Who in this  
land appears like me? Heroes stand not in my  
presence: they fall in earth from my hand. Who  
can meet Svaran in fight? Who but Fingal, king of  
Spirits of streams? Once we wrestled on Malisee;  
our heads overturned the woods. Rocks fell from  
their place; rivulets, changing their course, fled  
murmuring from our side. Three days we renewed  
the strife; heroes stood at a distance and trembled.  
On the fourth, Fingal says, that the king of the  
ocean fell: but Svaran says, he stood! Let dark  
Cuthullin yield to him, that is strong as the streams  
of his land! "

"No," replied the blue-eyed chief, "I never  
yield to mortal man! Dark Cuthullin shall be

great or dead! Go, son of Fithil, take my spear,  
 Strike the sounding shield of Samu. It hangs at  
 Nera's rustling gate. The sound of praise is not  
 Its voice! My heroes shall hear and obey. He  
 went. He struck the bossy shield. The hills, the  
 rocks reply. The sword spreads along the wood:  
 dew-stead by the lake of roses, Curuch begs from  
 the sounding rock! and Conual of the bloody spear!  
 Crogal's breast of snow beats high. The son of  
 Favi leaves the dark-brown hind. It is the shield  
 of war, said Bannar! the spear of Curthulla,  
 Luga! Son of Læ son, put on thy arms! Cal-  
 mar, lift thy sounding steel; Fann! dreadful horn,  
 arise! Cuchor from thy red face of Conual! Bend  
 thy knee, O Ehl! descend from the streams of  
 Eona. On old shores thy side as from moor  
 along the whistling heath of Muru: thy side that  
 is white as the foam of the troubled sea; when  
 the dark winds pour it on rocky Cushon.

Now I salute the chiefs, in the pride of their  
 former deeds! Their souls are kindled at the bat-  
 tles of old; at the ardours of other times. Their  
 eyes are flames of fire. They roll in search of the  
 foes of the god. Their mighty hands are on their  
 swords. Lightning pours from their sides of steel.  
 They run like streams from the mountains; each  
 rushes roaring from the hill. Bright are the chiefs  
 of battle, in the armour of their fathers. Glossy  
 and dark their heroes follow, like the gathering  
 of the rainy clouds behind the red meringe of  
 heaven. The sounds of rushing arms ascend.  
 The grey dogs cowl between. Lurgul bursts the  
 song of battle. Bocking Conual echoes round. On  
 Læ's dewy heath they stand, like mist that  
 shades the hills of Arann: when harken and dark  
 is softer high, and Ehl its head to heaven.

"Hail," said Curthulla, "sons of the narrow  
 vales! Hail, hunters of the deer! Another sport is  
 drawing near: it is like the dark relling of the  
 waves of the cause! Or shall we fight, ye sons  
 of war! or yield green Erin to Lochlin! O Con-  
 ual, speak, thou best of men! thou breaker of the  
 shields! thou best often fought with Lochlin: wilt  
 thou lift thy father's spear?"

"Cuthullin!," calm the chief replied, "the spear of Connal be keen. It delights to strike in battle; to mix with the blood of thousands. But though my hand is bent on fight, my heart is for the peace of Erin<sup>\*)</sup>. Behold, thou dost in Connar's war, the noble deed of Swaran. His masts are many on our coasts, like reeds in the lake of Luga. His ships are forests clothed with mists, when the trees yield by means to the squally wind. Many are his chiefs in battle; Connal is for peace! Fingal would shun his arm, the first of mortal men! Fingal, who scatters the mighty, no stormy winds the relaxing Coast; and night settles with all her clouds on the hill!."

"O' thy, thou man of peace," said Calmar, "O' thy," said the son of Methol<sup>\*\*)</sup>. "O' thy, Connal, to thy silent hills, where the spear never brightens in war! Pursue the dark brown deer of Crumla; stop with thine arrows the bounding cours of Lena. But, blue-eyed son of Seno, Cuthullin, vnder of the field, scatter thou the cours of Lochlu<sup>\*\*\*)</sup>! over through the mists of their guide. Let no vessel of the kingdom of some bound on the dark rolling waves of Inshore<sup>\*\*\*\*)</sup>. Rise, ye dark winds of Erin, rise! roar, whirlwinds of Lara of gods! Auld the tempest let me rise, run, in a cloud, by angry ghosts of men; auld the tempest let Calmar die, if ever clime was spart to him, so much as the battle of silechia!."

"Calmar," Connal slow replied, "I never fled, young son of Marga! I was with my friends in fight, but soon is the game of Connal! The battle was won in my presence; the valiant ever come! But, son of Seno, hear my voice, regard the ancient throne of Cuthullin. Give wealth and half the land for peace, all Fingal shall arrive on our coast. Or, if war be thy choice, I lift the sword and spear. My joy shall be in the midst of thousands; my soul shall lighten through the gloom of the fight."

\*) Erin, a name of Ireland, Dan. lang., or *Eriú*, *eriu*, and *Eria*, in Irish.

\*\*) The Gaelic name of Boscawen is *geual*.

\*\*\*) The Gaelic name is *lochlu*.

"To me," Cathba replies, "pleasant is the noise of arms! pleasant as the thunder of heaven, before the shower of Spring. But gather all the shining tribes; that I may view the sons of war! Let them pass along the heath, bright as the sun-shine before a storm, when the west wind collects the clouds, and Morven echoes over all her oaks! But where are my friends in battle? the supporters of my arm in danger? Where art thou, white-breasted Catha! Where is that cloud in war, Dúchánar? Hast thou left me, O Fergus! in the day of the storm? Fergus, first in our joy at the feast? son of heroes! son of death! comest thou like a rose from Malmar? like a hart from thy echoing hills? Hail, thou son of Rossa! what shades the soul of war!"

"Four stanzas," replied the chief, "rise on the grave of Catha. These hands have laid in earth Dúchánar, that cloud in war. Catha, son of Teoman! thou wert a sea-beam in Erin. And thou, O valiant Dúchánar! a mist of the marshy land; when it moves on the plains of autumn, bearing the death of thousands along. Murua! fairest of maidens! canst thy sleep in the bosom of the rock! Thou hast fallen in darkness, like a star, that shines across the desert; when the traveller is alone, and moans the transient beam!"

"Say," said Sena's blue-eyed son, "say how fell the chiefs of Erin. Fell they by the sons of Lochlin, striving in the land of heroes? Or what confound the strong in arms to the dark and narrow house?"

"Cathba," replied the hero, "fell by the sword of Dúchánar at the rock of the noisy streams. Dúchánar came to Tara's care; he spoke to the lovely Murua. "Murua, fairest among women, lovely daughter of strong-armed Cormac! Why in the circle of stones? In the cave of the rock alone? The stream murmurs along. The old trees groan in the wind. The lake is troubled before thee: dark are the clouds of the sky! But thou art snow on the heath; thy hair is the mist of Couma; when it curls on the hill, when it shines to the beam of the west! Thy breasts are two smooth rocks



seen from Brannu of streams. Thy arms, like two white yellers, in the belly of the great Fingal."

"From whence," the fair-haired maid replied, "from whence, Duchónair, most glorious of men! Dark are thy brows and terrible! Red are thy rolling eyes! Dars Swainn appear on the sea! What of the fur, Duchónair? "From the hill I return, O Maon, from the hill of the dark-brown hinds. Three have I slain with my bearded yew. Three with my long-bounding dogs of the chase. Lovely daughter of Cormac, I love thee as my seat! I have slain one stately lord for thee. High was his boundy lance; and bent his feet of mind."

"Duchónair," calm the maid replied, "I love thee not, thou glorious man! Dark is thy heart of rock; dark is thy terrible brow. But, Catha, young son of Torman, thou art the love of Moron. Thou art a son born, in the day of the gloomy storm. Swartest thou the son of Torman, lovely on the hill of his hinds? Here the daughter of Cormac waits the raving of Catha!"

"Long shall Moron wait," Duchónair said, "long shall Moron wait for Catha! Behold this sword unsheathed! Here waders the blood of Catha. Long shall Moron wait. He fell by the stream of Boyon. On Urona I will raise his tomb, daughter of blue-shielded Cormac! Then on Duchónair thine eyes; he arm a strong sea storm."

"Is the son of Torman fallen?" said the wildly-bursting voice of the maid; "is he fallen on his echoing hills, the youth with the breast of snow? the first in the chase of Enech? the first of the strangers of ocean? Thou art dark <sup>to</sup> me, Duchónair, cruel is thine arm to Moron! Give me that sword, my foe! I love the wandering blood of Catha!"

"He gave the sword to her tears. She played his ready breast! He fell, like the bank of a mountain-stream, and stretching forth his hand, he spoke: "Daughter of blue-shielded Cormac! Thou hast slain me in youth! the sword is cold in my breast! Moron, I feel it cold. Give me to Moira the maid. Duchónair was the dream of her night. She will

\*) She alludes to Moron, "the dark man."

raise my tomb; the hunter shall raise my fame.  
 But draw the sword from my breast. Morn, the  
 steel is cold! She came in all her tears, she came;  
 she drew the sword from his breast. He pierced  
 her white side! He spread her fair locks on the  
 ground! Her bursting blood sounds from her side;  
 her white arm is stained with red. Rolling in  
 death she lay. The cave re-echoed to her sigh.

"Pray," said Cuthullin, "in the souls of the  
 heroes! their deeds were great in fight. Let them  
 ride around me on clouds. Let them show their  
 features of war. My soul shall then be firm in  
 danger; mine arm like the thunder of heaven! But  
 be thou on a sure beam, O Morun! near the  
 window of my rest; when my thoughts are of  
 peace; when the din of arms is past. Gather the  
 strength of the tribes! Here is the war of Krial!  
 Attend the ear of my host! Drjuna in the noise  
 of my course! Place three spears by my side;  
 follow the booming of my steed! that my soul  
 may be strong in my friends, when battle darkens  
 around the beams of my steel!"

As rushes a storm of foam from the dark study  
 deep of clouds, when the thunder is travelling  
 above, and dark-brown night sits on half the hill.  
 Through the breaches of the tempest look forth the  
 dim faces of ghosts. So fierce, so vast, so terrible,  
 rushed out the sons of Krial. The chief, like a  
 white of ocean, when all his billows pass on,  
 poured valour forth, as a stream, rolling his sight  
 along the shore. The sons of Lochlin heard the  
 noise, as the sound of a winter-storm. Swaran  
 struck his bossy shield: he called the son of Arne.  
 "Your murmur rolls along the hill, like the gathered  
 flies of the eve! The sons of Fala descend, or  
 rustling winds enter in the distant wood! Such is  
 the noise of Gornal, before the white tops of my  
 waves arise. O son of Arne! ascend the hill; view  
 the dark face of the death!"

He went. He travelling swift returned. His eyes  
 rolled wildly round. His heart beat high against  
 his side. His words were fluttering, broken, slow.  
 "Arise, son of ocean, arise, chief of the dark-brown  
 shields! I see the dark, the mountain-stream of

battle! the deep-moving strength of the sons of Erin! The car of war comes on, like the blast of death! the rapid car of Cathullin, the noble son of Seno! It bends behind like a wave near a rock: The lee sun steeps'd mist of the heath. Its sides are embossed with stours, and sparkle like the sea round the boat of night. Of polished yew is its beam; its seat of the sunniest beam. The sides are repainted with spurs; the bottom is the fast-stone of heroes! Before the right side of the car is seen the snorting horse! the high-mound, broad-headed, proud, wide-trooping, strong steed of the host. Loud and resounding is his hoof; the spreading of his mane above is like a stream of smoke on a ridge of rocks. Bright are the sides of the steed! his name is Su'm-Siladha!

— Before the left side of the car is seen the snorting horse! The thin-mound, high-headed, strong-headed, free, bounding son of the hill: his name is Desomnal, among the stately sons of the sword! A thousand things adorn the car on high. Used polished brass above is a wreath of foam. This wreath, bright studded with gems, bend on the stately necks of the steeds. The scrolls, that like torrents of mist fly over the streamy vales! The wildness of deer is in their course; the strength of eagles descending on the prey. Their noise is like the blast of winds, on the sides of the snow-headed Gornal.

— Within the car is seen the chief; the strong-headed son of the sword. The hero's name is Cathullin, son of Seno, king of stells. His red cheek is like my polished yew. The look of his blue-railling eye is wide, beneath the dark arch of his brow. His hair flies from his head like a flame, as bending forward he wields the spear. Fly, king of ferns, fly! He comes, like a storm along the streamy vale!

— When did I fly? replied the king. — When did Surraia flee from the back of spears? When did I shrink from danger, chief of the little soul? I met the storm of Gornal, when the foam of my waves hung high. I met the season of the clouds; shall Surraia fly from a hero? Were Fingal himself before me, my soul should not darken with