

SONGS OF DONEGAL

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Songs of Donegal by Patrick MacGill

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PATRICK MACGILL

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DONEGAL**

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BY
PATRICK MACGILL

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DEDICATION

I SPEAK with a proud tongue of the people who
were

And the people who are,

The worthy of Ardara, the Rosses and Inish-
keel,

My kindred—

The people of the hills and the dark-haired
passes

My neighbours on the lift of the brae,

In the lap of the valley.

To them Slainthe !

I speak of the old men,

The wrinkle-rutted,

Who dodder about foot-weary—
For their day is as the day that has been and
is no more—

Who warm their feet by the fire,
And recall memories of the times that are gone ;
Who kneel in the lamplight and pray
For the peace that has been theirs—
And who beat one dry-veined hand against
another

Even in the sun—
For the coldness of death is on them.

I speak of the old women
Who danced to yesterday's fiddle
And dance no longer.
They sit in a quiet place and dream
And see visions
Of what is to come,

Of their issue,
Which has blossomed to manhood and woman-
hood—
And seeing thus
They are happy
For the day that was leaves no regrets,
And peace is theirs
And perfection.

I speak of the strong men
Who shoulder their burdens in the hot day,
Who stand in the market-place
And bargain in loud voices,
Showing their stock to the world,
Straight the glance of their eyes—
Broad-shouldered,
Supple.
Under their feet the holms blossom,

The harvest yields.
And their path is of prosperity.

I speak of the women,
Strong-hipped, full-bosomed,
Who drive the cattle to graze at dawn,
Who milk the cows at dusk.
Grace in their homes,
And in the crowded ways
Modest and seemly—
Mothers of children !

I speak of the children
Of the many townlands,
Blossoms of the Bogland,
Flowers of the Valley,
Who know not yesterday, nor to-morrow,
And are happy,
The pride of those who have begot them.

And thus it is,
Ever and always,
In Ardara, the Rosses and Inishkeel—
Here, as elsewhere,
The Weak, the Strong, and the Blossom-
ing—
And thus my kindred.

To them Slainthe.

