

**POEMS OF THE IRISH  
REVOLUTIONARY  
BROTHERHOOD**

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Poems of the Irish Revolutionary Brotherhood by Various

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BROTHERHOOD

THOMAS MacDONAGH  
P. H. PEARSE  
(PADRAIC MacPIARAIS)  
JOSEPH MARY PLUNKETT  
SIR ROGER CASEMENT

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## INTRODUCTION

THE years that brought maturity to the three poets who were foremost to sign, and foremost to take arms to assert, Ireland's Declaration of Independence, may come to be looked back on as signal days in Irish history. They were days of preparation. The youth of Nationalist Ireland had turned to a task — the task of learning — of learning first the Irish language, of learning then about Irish public affairs, and at the end of learning arms and about the handling of men.

The generation that became conscious twenty years ago turned with hope, faith and reverence to Gaelic Ireland. From the remnant of the Gaelic-speaking people they would learn what

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civilization their country was capable of attaining to. Those who regarded themselves as the historic Irish nation were then rediscovering their origins and their achievements: they were Celts; they were of the race of Brennus and Vercingetorix, of Cuchullain and Maeve, of Columbanus and Scotus Eirigena; they were of the breed of the warriors who had shaken all empires although they had founded none; of the race of the missionary saints, and of the lovers of learning who had made themselves the patrons and protectors of European culture. The Ireland they willed would not be an autonomous West Britain, but a resurgent Gaelic nationality. And their race-dream was as fantastic perhaps as the race-dream of any other reviving people.

Those who mastered the Irish language began to learn it in classes spontaneously organized in the cities

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and the villages, and they made themselves fluent by living with fishermen and small farmers in far islands and remote villages. Class-work made a comradeship between young men and women. Their first control was over classes and their first intervention in public affairs was from the lecture-platform.

Padraic Pearse was the first of the young men to be seriously spoken of in the Gaelic League. He had learned Irish in one of the few schools where it was then taught, and he took up Irish studies in University College, then part of the old Royal, and now part of the new National, University. He graduated from University College and was called to the bar.

Meanwhile he had mastered the language and had learnt about Gaelic life by living for long spaces of time in a cottage he owned in one of the poorest