

MUSIC

Cape Breton's Diversity in Unity

Poit-Dhubh MhicFhraing

Mìle marbhaisg air an t-saoghal,
'S mise dh'fhaodadh a ràdh;
'S ann orm-sa thàinig an caochladh
Seach aon uair mar bhà.
'S mi nach bitheadh nam aonar
Air faondradh gun stàth;
Nach bochd mo sgeul leibh a dhaoine
'S mi 'n diugh 's mo thaobh air an làr.

Anns an linn a chaidh seachad
Bu mhòr am beachd air mo ghnìomh;
Bha mi nuairsin glè reachdail
Le mac na braiche ga shnìomh.
Bha daoine'-uaisle leam cleachdte,
'S cha be 'm beachd a bhiodh crìon,
'S iad nach buaileadh orm bata
Ged tha 'n diugh gaiseadh nam chliabh.

Bho linn bàs an duine shaoibhir,
Gilleasbaig Caimbeul mo ghràidh,
Cha robh neach ann ri cainnt rium
'S cha mhuth' sheinnt' orm dàn,
Gus 'n do cheannaich MacFhraing mi,
Fear gun ghamhlas do chàch;
Chuir e suas mi 'n taigh samhraidh
'S bu mhòr an call rinn sin dhà.

Rinn e gach nì mar bu mhiann leam
'S cha robh e spìocach mu dhèidh'nn;
Fhuair e copar gu cliath dhomh
'S phàigh e dèanamh ga rèir.
Bha gach nì an deagh riaghailt
Mar bu mhiann leinn gu feum,
'S thàinig cealgair' mar ghadaich'
A rinn ar glacadh le chèil'.

'S e gèidsear dubh na ban-ionnsaich'
Thàinig gar n-ionnsaidh a-nis;
Cha mhuth' bheir mi de chliù
Dhan neach a dh'ionnsaich dha slios.
Ged dhèanainn beagan de lionn
Cha b'ann air cosg a' chrùin bha mi ris;
Nach ceàrr 's nach d'rinn mi mi-ùmhlachd,
Mo thoirt gu cùirt gun luchd meas.

Carson a chuir' orm cìs
Airson ar cuid fhìn chur air dòigh,
An dèidh a phàigheadh dà-fhillte
'S fhaighinn sgrìobhte le còir?
Ma gheibh fear casga molasses,
Nach eil e ceart dha gu leòr
A chur gu feum mar is math leis
'S ma bhios e taitneach ri òl.

Na daoine còire dh'fhalbh 'uainne
'S nach eil buan, 's mòr an call;
Bu mhiann leo' suidhe mun cuairt orm,
'S iad fhèin bhiodh suairce mun dram.
Ciamar dh'iarraim de dh'àilgheas
Ach a bhith mar bhà iad san àm?
Sinn an dòchas an dràst'
Iad bhith 'n sòlas gràs-mhor gun cheann.

Nuair a chruinnicheadh a' chòisir
De dhaoine còire bhiodh ceart,
B' e 'm miann gum faighte nan còmhdhail
Mac na Tòisich gu pailt.
'S e bheireadh misneachd is dòchas
Dhan fhear òg a bhiodh tais,
A dh'fhàgadh ìosal fear bòsdail,
'S a dhèanadh òg am fear glas.

Ciamar dh'fhanas mi sàmhach
'S mo chridhe cràidhteach nam chom?
Cò an neach anns an àite
Nach gabhadh pàirt ann am chainnt?
Nuair a chì iad an nàbaidh
A bha ro-chàirdeil 's gach àm
Air a ghlacadh gun fhàbhar
'S a chur fo chàin a bha trom.

Nam b'ann an tìr nan sàr ghaisgeach,
Nan Gàidheal gasta bha thall,
A rinn an nì bha seo tachairt,
Mar a ghlacadh MacFhraing;
Bhiodh an gèidsear fon casan
Ged bhiodh a dhaga na làimh;
'S iad nach tilleadh le taiseachd,
'S nach biodh fo chasan nan Gall.

Translation:

Rankin's Still

A thousand woes to the world,
I can well say that;
I have changed so much
From what I used to be.
I would not be alone
Wandering aimlessly;
Sad is my tale, folks,
As I lie on my side on the floor.

In times past
My work was highly respected;
I was law-abiding then,
Producing the son of malt.
Noble folk were used to me
And their opinion was not flimsy;
They would not hit me with a staff,
Though my body is now weak.

Since the death of the rich man,
My dear Archie Campbell,
Nobody conversed with me
Nor sang for me
Until Rankin bought me -
A man without malice to others;
He placed me in a summer-house
And suffered much because of that.

He did everything as I wished
And was not miserly about it;
He got copper to make a worm for me
And paid for its manufacture.
Everything was in good order,
Just as we would want it to be,

Until a thieving hypocrite
Came and caught us both.

It was the dirty exciseman
Who came for us now;
I would not pay any respect
To the person who trained him.
Although I might make some beer,
I didn't do so at the expense of the crown;
Since I was not being disloyal
It was wrong to take me without defence to court.

Why should I be fined
For putting our affairs in order,
Having paid it two-fold
And had it affirmed in writing?
If a man gets a cask of molasses,
Isn't it appropriate
That he use it as he wishes,
If it's pleasant to drink?

The nice people who have left us
And are no longer alive, more's the pity,
Would wish to sit around me,
So polite when having a dram.
Why should we seek pleasure
Other than what they had at the time?
It is our hope now
That they are having graceful eternal happiness.

When the assembly gathered
Of kind and righteous men,
It was their desire to have with them
Plenty of MacIntosh (whisky).
It would give courage and hope
To the timid young man,
Humiliate the boastful person,
And make the grey man young.

How can I remain silent
When my heart weighs heavily?
Who in the place
Would not agree with what I'm saying?
When they see their neighbour,
Who was always very friendly,
Caught without favour
And penalised with a heavy fine.

If this were to happen -
How Rankin was caught -
In the land of heroes,
The Gaels over yonder;
The exciseman would be under their feet,
Even though his pistol was in his hand;
They would not make a cowardly retreat,
And would not be under the feet of the Lowlanders.

Recording:

[Poit-Dhubh MhicFhraing](#). Angus MacLellan. T-1084. Beaton Institute, Cape Breton University.