

FLORA MACNEIL CRAOBH NAN UBHAL

Traditional Gaelic Songs from the Western Isles.

An Fhideag Airgid (The Silver Whistle)

Co sheinneas an fhideag airgid?
Ho ro hu-a hu ill o
I rill u hill o ho
Mac mo righ-s' air tighinn a dh'Alba
Air luing mhoir air bharr na fairrgeadh
Air long riomhach nam ball airgid
Tearlach og nan gormshuil meallach
Failte, failte muirn is cliu dhut
Fidhleireachd is ragha ciuil dhut
Co sheinneas an fhideag airgid?
Co chanadh nach seinninn fhin i?

Who will sound the silver whistle
Now that my King's son has come to Scotland
On a great ship across the waves
On a stately ship with silver rigging?
Young Charles of the beguiling blue eyes -
Welcome, welcome, love and renown to you!
Playing of fiddles and choicest of music for you!
Who will sound the silver whistle?
Who is to say that I will not sound it myself?

Cha b'e dìreadh a' bhruthaich (It was not climbing the hillside)

Cha b'e dìreadh a' bhruthaich dh'fhag mo shiubhal gun treoir
Na teas ri la greineadh nuair a dh'eireadh i oirnn
Gu bheil moill' air mo leirsinn 's cha leir dhomh ceum roid
Cha leir dhomh ni 's fhaisge fiu a' bhata 'nam dhorn
'S mi 'sa' ghleanan bheag phreasach 's mo lethcheann air Ion
Treis air smeuran nan druisean, greis air bristeadh nan cno
'Se mo dhubhailt mo bhreacan 's mo chopan mo bhrog
'Se mo thaigh mor gach glacan, 's mo leaba gach froig
'S ged a dh'fhadainn-sa teine, chi fear foille dheth ceo
'S ged a cheannaichinn-sa buideal, chan fhaigh mi cuideachd g'a ol
'Si do nighean-sa Dhonnchaidh dha'n tug mi'n trumghaol 's mi og
Te dha bheil an cul dualach o guailleann go broig
'Se sios ma da shlinnein a's an ioad as boidhch'
'S mor gum b'fhearr dhut mi agad na aon mhac breabadair beo
Ged nach deanainn dhut fighe, bhiodh iasg is sitheann mad' bhord
'S truagh nach robh mi 's tu ghaolaich anns an aonaich 'm bi 'n ceo
Ann am buthaig bhig bharraich 's gun bhith mar rium ach d'fheoil
'S mi gu snamhadh an caolas airson faoilteachd do bheoil

It was not climbing the hillside that left my walk without strength, nor the heat of the day when the sun rises high. There is a dimness in my vision: I cannot make out a step of the path; I cannot make out what is closer to me, not even the staff in my fist: and I in a little glen of copses, my cheek on the sward.

A while picking berries from the bramble, a while cracking hazel nuts: my plaid is my towel, my shoe is my cup: a hollow is my mansion, any dark nook my bed. And if I kindle a fire, an informer will see its smoke: if I buy a keg I cannot get company to drink it. It is your daughter, Duncan, who put this burden of love on me in my youth: a girl whose hair is in ringlets from shoulder to shoe, descending between her shoulder blades, the fairest part.

You would be far better off with me than with any weaver's son alive: though I could not make cloth for you, you would have venison and salmon on your board. Alas, that you and I, darling, are not out in the misty moorlands, in a little hut of birch twigs, and no company but your own body. How I would swim the narrows for the sake of the welcome of your lips.

Faca sibh Ragnall na Ailein? (Have you seen Ronald or Alan?)

Faca sibh Raghall na Ailein
Ro hol a leo, ro hol a leo
Na idir lain og mo leannan
Laoi leo horo, trom orra cho, faral a leo
Stiuramaiche 's fhearr ri gaillionn
Bheireadh tu i slan gu cala
Fhad 's a mhaireadh stadh na tarruinn
Na giuthas os cionn na mara
Na buill chainbe ri cruinn gheala

Have you seen Ranald or Alan, or yet young John my lover?
The best of helmsmen in a gale: you would bring her safe to
harbour so long as a stay or a nail held, or pine board
stayed afloat, or hempen ropes stayed tied to her white masts.

Bheir mi sgriob do Thobar Mhoire (I shall take a trip to Tobermory)

Bheir mi sgriob do Thobar Mhoire
Far a bheil mo ghaol an comunn
E-ho hi dhiuraibh o o i dhiu
E-ho hao ri ri, e-ho hao-ri 's na bho hu-o
E-ho hi dhiuraibh o o hi dhiu
Far a bheil mo ghaol an comunn
Luchd nan leadan 's nan cul donna
Luchd nan leadan 's nan cul donna;
Dh'oladh a' fion dearg 'na thonnann
Bheir mi sgriob dha'n Achaidh Luachrach
Far a bheil mo ghaol an t-uasal
Gheibhinn cadal leat gun chluasaig
'S cul mo chinn am bac do ghuailleadh.

I shall take a trip to Tobermory
To the company that I love -
The folk of the long flowing brown hair
Who drink red wine in bumpers

I shall take a trip to Achadh Luachrach
To my high-born lover
I would sleep with you with no pillow
And the back of my head in the crook of your shoulder.

O Iain Ghlinn Cuaich, fear do choltais cha dual dha fas
Cul bachlach nan duaj 'se 'na chamlagan suas go bharr
Thoir an t-soiridh seo bhuam dh'ionnsaidh fleasgach as uaisle dreach
A dh'fhag aiceid 'nam thaobh 's a chuir saighead an aoig fo m'chrios.

O Iain a ruin, cuim a chuir thu mi faoin, air chul
Gun chuimhn' air a' ghaol bha a againn mar aon o thus
Cha tug mise mo speis do dh'fhear eile fo'n ghrein ach thu
'S cha tobhair ad dheigh gos an cairear mi fhein 'san uir.

Do phearsa dheas ghrinn dha'n tug mise gaol thar chaich
Chan 'eil cron ort ri inns' o mhullach do chinn go d'shail
'S iomadh maighdeann ghlan og thig le furan ma d'choir air straid
Ged bha m'fhortan-s' cho cruaidh 's gun tug mi dhut luaidh thar chaich.

O John Gleann Cuaich, we shall hardly look upon your like
again! Plaited curling hair and every lock of it in tresses.
Take this greeting to him who is the noblest looking scion of
all: he who left an ache in my side and shot a deadly arrow
into my body.

O John my dear, why did you cast me aside so lightly with never
a thought of the love that from the first bound us together as one?
I gave my heart to no other man under the sun, and after you
I never will, until I myself am laid in the earth.

Your elegant, shapely form that I loved above any other! There is
no flaw to be found in you, not from the top of your head to the soles
of your feet. Many a pure young girl will approach you with welcoming
look as you pass - though I by a cruel fate gave you the greatest love of all,
of all.

Chan e caoidh Mhic Shiridh (It is not lamenting MacSheenie)

Chan e caoidh mhic Shiridh
Dh'fhag an dil air mo ghruaidh

Hu o ro hu o
Horo ho hi-o hi ho
Hu o ro hu o

Chan e caoidh mo leannain
Ged a dh'fhanadh e bhuam
Ach a' caoidh mo bhrathar
Chaidh a bhathadh 'sa' chuan
'S duilich leam do chul chlannaich
Bhith 'san fheamainn 'ga luadh
'S duilich leam do gheal dheudan
Bhith 'gan reubadh 'sa' chuan

Tha do leaba gun charadh
Anns an t-seombar ud shuas
Ach cha teid mi dha caradh
'S fhad' o dh'fhag thu i fuar
'S tric mo shuil air a' rubha
Bho'n bhruthach ud shuas
Feuch a faic mi seol breidgheal
Latha greineadh 'sa' chuan.

It is not lamenting MacSheenie that has left the flood of
tears on my cheek; it is not lamenting my lover though he
stay away; it is lamenting my brother who has been drowned
in the sea.

I grieve for your clustering hair rocked in the seaweed;
I grieve for your white teeth torn asunder in the ocean.

Your bed is unmade in the chamber up there, but I shall not
go and make it: long have you left it cold. Often is my gaze
on the headland from yonder hillside, searching for a linen-white
sail on the ocean one sunny day.

Craobh nan Ubhal (Apple Tree)

O craobh nan ubhal o
Craobh nan ubhal, geug nan abhall
O chraobh nan ubhal ho
Aithnich fhein a' chraobh tha leamsa
Chraobh as mutha 's a mils' ubhlan
A bun sios 's a barr a' lubadh
Craobh nan ubhal gu robh Dia leat
Gu robh 'n aird an ear 's an iar leat
Gu robh gach gealach agus grian leat
Gu robh gach sion a thainig riamh leat.

O, apple tree, apple tree
Branch of the apple tree.
O apple tree.
Know the tree that is mine:
The tallest tree with the sweetest apples
Its trunk strikes downwards
Its top is bending.
Apple tree, may God be with you
May the East and the West be with you
May every sun and moon be with you
May every element be with you.

Gur muladh sgith mi (I am weary and desolate)

Gur muladach sgith mi, 's mi leam fhin an tir aineoil
Anns na h-eileine Diurach, 's mor mo dhuil ri dhol thairis, hai o
Mi gun phiuthar gun bhrathair, gun mhathair gun athair
Mi gun duine dha m' dhaoine ris a faod mi mo ghearain
Chaidh am bata thromh 'n chaolas, bha mo ghaol oirre dh'fhearaihbh
Bha mo leannan 'ga stiuireadh lub ur a' chuil chlannaich
Lub ur a' chuil chubhraidh 's toil leam fhin do chaol mhala
Is na faighinn-sa m'ordugh, bu leat moran do dh'fhearann
Bu leat Muil' agus Ile, Cinntir' agus Arainn, hai o
Na hi bho ho hill o horo ho
Hill o na hi bho ho
Hi na hi ri ri dhiu o
Hi-o na hi hoireann o ho
Eileadh ho horo ho
(2nd line of one couplet becomes 1st line of next)

I am weary and desolate, alone in a strange land,
among the islands of Jura, great is my longing to
cross over.

I am here without brother or sister, without father
or mother, I have not one person of my kinsfolk to
listen to my complaint.

The ship sailed through the narrows; he who I love
best of all men was on board; my lover was steering her,
beguiling the gallant of the curling hair. Beguiling
gallant of the fragrant hair, your slender brown eyebrows
are a delight to me. If my dearest wish were granted,
wide would be your lands; Mull and Islay would be yours,
Kintyre and Arran.

Alasdair Mhic Cholla ghasda (Alasdair, son of gallant Coll)

Alasdair mhic, ho ho
Cholla ghasda, ho ho
As do Iaimh-sa, ho ho
Dh'earbainn tapachd, trom eile
Chall eil o i, chall o horo
Chall eil o hi, chall o horo
Challa na haori ri, chall o horo
Haori o-ho, trom eile
Mharbhadh Tighearn,
Ach nam Breac leat,
Thiodhlaig thu e
'N oir a' lochain
'S ged 's beag mi fhin
Chuir mi ploc air
Chuala mi 'n de
Sgeul nach b'ait leam
Glaschu bheag
Dol 'na lasair
'S Obar-eadhainn
'N deis a ghlacadh

(Quatrains, 2nd couplet of one becoming 1st couplet of next)

Alasdair son of gallant Coll I'd be certain of deeds of valour
from your hand. The Lord of Auchinbreck was slain by you; you
buried him at the edge of the pool; and small as I am I myself
cast a clod on him.

Yesterday I heard a tale that did not please me, that little
Glasgow was in the flames and that Aberdeen had been taken.