

M I C H A E L H A R T N E T T

As far as I can make out, Michael Hartnett's translations were given to me sometime in 1969 and my intention was to bring out the entire small group of hand-written texts he gave me. Probably because of lack of resources, we settled for doing just "The Hag of Beare" which appeared in 1969 in a hand-printed edition of 100 copies. Michael's manuscript, like so many others, disappeared into the confused New Writers' Press files of the time (they are still fairly confused). It has only been in the last few months that I have begun trying to put some order on the NWP archive and my own correspondence, and that was when Michael's translations showed up. Michael was not someone who paid much regard to the preservation of his own copy material, or even to books he bought and somehow came to possess. I recall being in his rented house in Marino in 1979 (on 18 January, to be precise), during the time Michael was working in the International Telephone Exchange. It was after the pubs had closed, and there were some of his friends from the Exchange present. That evening Michael auctioned off the entire small library he had then. I think the proceedings brought him no more than a few pounds. I paid about ten shillings for his *Gipsy Ballads*. He signed it for me and added "Money is no object" and dated it "The night of the auction, 18/1/79".

—MICHAEL SMITH

Two Translations

CLOCÁN BINN

Calling bell
brought here by wild wind nightly
I would contest your clarion
rather than war with women.

CÉN AINIUS

*(Anonymous, ninth century)**However, he went on a pilgrimage and stayed in Cill Letrech in Waterford and found him and said:*

1.

Misery
must be mine eternally:
I have made my man angry.

2.

Fear of God
made me: a madness indeed
not to do as he desired.

3.

Well his way,
his hope to find his heaven
—and still to pass by all pain.

4.

For we loved the peopled plains
we rode, and we loved our hosts,
hospitable, good, they made
of no giving a long toast.

5.

Today you claim all, yet you
grant none nothing: if you give
you shame the given, with great
boasting of a little gift.

[Note in right margin: “6 {illegible comment}”]

7.

Now my body, bitter, finds
the corridors of final
recognition, the gaze of
God on his own possession.

8.

Now my hands, wrinkled to long
bones, hang down dead, hands that locked
kings of this land in loving,
in the old days, my lost days.

9.

No secret,
though my love be liberal,
that I loved *him* the longest.

Isé, didiú, crád do ratsi fairsium a luas ro gab caille.

It seems the reason for his anger was her haste in taxing the veil.

*(From Translations [September 2002], by permission
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