

Hallaig

Somhairle MacGill-Eain

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Hallaig

“Tha tìm, am fiadh, an coille Hallaig”

Tha bùird is tàirnean air an uinneig
troimh ’m faca mi an Aird an Iar
’s tha mo ghaol aig Allt Hallaig
’na craoibh bheithe, ’s bha i riamh

eader an t-Inbhir ’s Poll a’ Bhainne,
thall ’s a bhos mu Bhaile-Chùirn:
tha i ’na beithe, ’na calltuinn,
’na caorunn dhìreach sheang ùir.

Ann an Screapadal mo chinnidh,
far robh Tarmad ’s Eachann Mór,
tha ’n nigheanan ’s am mic ’nan coille
a’ gabhail suas ri taobh an lóin.

Uaibhreach a nochd na coilich ghiuthais
a’ gairm air mullach Cnoc an Rà,
dìreach an druim ris a’ ghealaich—
chan iadsan coille mo ghràidh.

Fuirichidh mi ris a' bheithe
gus an tig i mach an Càrn,
gus am bi am bearradh uile
o Bheinn na Lice f' a sgàil.

Mura tig 's ann theàrnas mi a Hallaig
a dh' ionnsaigh sàbaid nam marbh,
far a bheil an sluagh a' tathaich,
gach aon ghinealach a dh' fhalbh.

Tha iad fhathast ann a Hallaig,
Clann Ghill-Eain 's Clann Mhicleòid,
na bh' ann ri linn Mhic Ghille-Chaluim:
chunnacas na mairbh beò.

Na fir 'nan laighe air an lianaig
aig ceann gach taighe a bh' ann,
na h-igheanan 'nan coille bheithe,
dìreach an druim, crom an ceann.

Eadar an Leac is na Feàrnaibh
tha 'n rathad mór fo chóinnich chiùin,
's na h-igheanan 'nam badan sàmhach
a' dol a Chlachan mar a thùs.

Agus a' tilleadh as a' Chlachan,
á Suidhisnis 's á tir nam beò;
a chuile té òg uallach
gun bhristeadh cridhe an sgeòil.

O Allt na Feàrnaibh gus an fhaoilinn
tha soilleir an dìomhaireachd nam beann
chan eil ach coimhthional nan nighean
ag cumail na coiseachd gun cheann.

A' tilleadh a Hallaig anns an fheasgar,
anns a' chamhanaich bhalbh bheò,
a' lìonadh nan leathadan casa,
an gàireachdaich 'nam chluais 'na ceò,

's am bòidhche 'na sglèò air mo chridhe
mun tig an ciaradh air na caoil,
's nuair theàrnas grian air cùl Dhùn Cana
thig peileir dian á gunna Ghaoil;

's buailear am fiadh a tha 'na thuaineal
a' snòtach nan làraichean feòir;
thig reothadh air a shùil 's a' choille:
chan fhaighear lorg air fhuil ri m' bheò.

Somhairle MacGill-Eain

Hallaig

“Time, the deer, is in Hallaig Wood”

There’s a board nailed across the window
I looked through to see the west
And my love is a birch forever
By Hallaig stream, at her tryst

Between Inver and Milk Hollow,
Somewhere around Baile-Chuirn,
A flickering birch, a hazel,
A trim, straight sapling rowan.

In Screapadal, where my people
Hail from, the seed and breed
Of Hector Mor and Norman
By the banks of the stream are a wood.

To-night the pine-cocks crowing
On Cnoc an Ra, there above,
And the trees standing tall in moonlight –
They are not the wood I love.

I will wait for the birches to move,

The wood to come up past the cairn
Until it has veiled the mountain
Down from Beinn na Lice in shade.

If it doesn't, I'll go to Hallaig,
To the sabbath of the dead,
Down to where each departed
Generation has gathered.

Hallaig is where they survive,
All the MacLeans and MacLeods
Who were there in the time of Mac Gille Chaluim:
The dead have been seen alive,

The men at their length on the grass
At the gable of every house,
The girls a wood of birch trees
Standing tall, with their heads bowed.

Between the Leac and Fearnas
The road is plush with moss
And the girls in a noiseless procession
Going to Clachan as always

And coming back from Clachan
And Suisnish, their land of the living,

Still lightsome and unheartbroken,
Their stories only beginning.

From Fearn's burn to the raised beach
Showing clear in the shrouded hills
There are only girls congregating,
Endlessly walking along

Back through the gloaming to Hallaig
Through the vivid speechless air,
Pouring down the steep slopes,
Their laughter misting my ear

And their beauty a glaze on my heart.
Then as the kyles go dim
And the sun sets behind Dun Cana
Love's loaded gun will take aim.

It will bring down the lightheaded deer
As he sniffs the grass round the wallsteads
And his eye will freeze: while I live,
His blood won't be traced in the woods.

Seamus Heaney