

MY PEOPLE

(Do mo mhuintir, mo sheacht sinsear, to those who survive ...)

To this place
as immigrants they came,
fleeing the famine
which stalked our name ...

so many slain ...

A pit was opened,
an earthy chasm cut,
our corpses thrown in
into the damp, boggy ground to rot ...

no prayer, nor stone, nor hint of grace
there remains to mark the place
where generations, now erased,
once lived, loved, laughed and sang ...

I traced us back, in unbroken line,
before Patrick came, AD 279

one generation never far
from where the previous lay,
i dteanga Gealach,
beannacht, urnaí a dhuradh é ...

While those who survived,
fled death's grip,
human cargo,
in a flesh-laden ship ...

Cha till ...
no more, the tap root gone
Cha till ...
no more, the circle of morn,
Cha till ...
no more, my father born in a foreign land
breaking our chain,
breaking our clan.

How can we ever begin again ...

The weight of that ... stuns me into silence.