

Sixteen Poems eBook

Sixteen Poems by William Allingham

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Sixteen poems by William
Allingham: Selected by
William Butler Yeats

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LET ME SING OF WHAT I KNOW

A wild west Coast, a little Town,
Where little Folk go up and down,
Tides flow and winds blow:
Night and Tempest and the Sea,
Human Will and Human Fate:
What is little, what is great?
Howsoe'er the answer be,
Let me sing of what I know.

THE WINDING BANKS OF ERNE



Adieu to Belashanny!
where I was bred and born;
Go where I may, I'll think of you,
as sure as night and morn.
The kindly spot, the friendly town,
where every one is known,
And not a face in all the place
but partly seems my own;
There's not a house or window,
there's not a field or hill,
But, east or west, in foreign lands,
I'll recollect them still.
I leave my warm heart with you,
tho' my back I'm forced to turn—
Adieu to Belashanny,
and the winding banks of Erne!

No more on pleasant evenings
we'll saunter down the Mall,
When the trout is rising to the fly,
the salmon to the fall.
The boat comes straining on her net,
and heavily she creeps,
Cast off, cast off—she feels the oars,
and to her berth she sweeps;
Now fore and aft keep hauling,
and gathering up the clew,
Till a silver wave of salmon
rolls in among the crew.
Then they may sit, with pipes a-lit,
and many a joke and 'yarn';—
Adieu to Belashanny,
and the winding banks of Erne!



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The music of the waterfall,
the mirror of the tide,
When all the green-hill'd harbour
is full from side to side,
From Portnasun to Bulliebawns,
and round the Abbey Bay,
From rocky Inis Saimer
to Coolnargit sandhills gray;
While far upon the southern line,
to guard it like a wall,
The Leitrim mountains clothed in blue
gaze calmly over all,
And watch the ship sail up or down,
the red flag at her stern;—
Adieu to these, adieu to all
the winding banks of Erne!

Farewell to you, Kildoney lads,
and them that pull an oar,
A lug-sail set, or haul a net,
from the Point to Mullaghmore;
From Killybegs to bold Slieve-League,
that ocean-mountain steep,
Six hundred yards in air aloft,
six hundred in the deep,
From Dooran to the Fairy Bridge,
and round by Tullen strand,
Level and long, and white with waves,
where gull and curlew stand;
Head out to sea when on your lee
the breakers you discern!—
Adieu to all the billowy coast,
and winding banks of Erne!

Farewell, Coolmore,—Bundoran! and
your summer crowds that run
From inland homes to see with joy
th' Atlantic-setting sun;
To breathe the buoyant salted air,
and sport among the waves;
To gather shells on sandy beach,
and tempt the gloomy caves;
To watch the flowing, ebbing tide,
the boats, the crabs, the fish;



Young men and maids to meet and smile,
and form a tender wish;
The sick and old in search of health,
for all things have their turn—
And I must quit my native shore,
and the winding banks of Erne!

Farewell to every white cascade
from the Harbour to Belleek,
And every pool where fins may rest,
and ivy-shaded creek;
The sloping fields, the lofty rocks,
where ash and holly grow,
The one split yew-tree gazing
on the curving flood below;
The Lough, that winds through islands
under Turaw mountain green;
And Castle Caldwell's stretching woods,
with tranquil bays between;
And Breesie Hill, and many a pond
among the heath and fern,—
For I must say adieu—adieu
to the winding banks of Erne!

The thrush will call through Camlin groves
the live-long summer day;
The waters run by mossy cliff,
and banks with wild flowers gay;
The girls will bring their work and sing
beneath a twisted thorn,
Or stray with sweethearts down the path
among the growing corn;
Along the river-side they go,
where I have often been,
Oh, never shall I see again
the happy days I've seen!
A thousand chances are to one
I never may return,—
Adieu to Belashanny,
and the winding banks of Erne!



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Adieu to evening dances,
when merry neighbours meet,
And the fiddle says to boys and girls,
'Get up and shake your feet!'
To 'seanachas' and wise old talk
of Erin's days gone by—
Who trench'd the rath on such a hill,
and where the bones may lie
Of saint, or king, or warrior chief;
with tales of fairy power,
And tender ditties sweetly sung
to pass the twilight hour.
The mournful song of exile
is now for me to learn—
Adieu, my dear companions
on the winding banks of Erne!

Now measure from the Commons down
to each end of the Purt,
Round the Abbey, Moy, and Knather,—
I wish no one any hurt;
The Main Street, Back Street, College Lane,
the Mall, and Portnasun,
If any foes of mine are there,
I pardon every one.
I hope that man and womankind
will do the same by me;
For my heart is sore and heavy
at voyaging the sea.
My loving friends I'll bear in mind,
and often fondly turn
To think of Belashanny,
and the winding banks of Erne.

If ever I'm a money'd man,
I mean, please God, to cast
My golden anchor in the place
where youthful years were pass'd;
Though heads that now are black and brown
must meanwhile gather gray,
New faces rise by every hearth,
and old ones drop away—
Yet dearer still that Irish hill
than all the world beside;



It's home, sweet home, where'er I roam
through lands and waters wide.
And if the Lord allows me,
I surely will return
To my native Belashanny,
and the winding banks of Erne.

ABBEY ASAROE

Gray, gray is Abbey Asaroe,
by Belashanny town,
It has neither door nor window,
the walls are broken down;
The carven-stones lie scatter'd
in briar and nettle-bed;
The only feet are those that come
at burial of the dead.
A little rocky rivulet
runs murmuring to the tide,
Singing a song of ancient days,
in sorrow, not in pride;
The boortree and the lightsome ash
across the portal grow,
And heaven itself is now the roof
of Abbey Asaroe.

It looks beyond the harbour-stream
to Gulban mountain blue;
It hears the voice of Erna's fall,—
Atlantic breakers too;
High ships go sailing past it;
the sturdy clank of oars
Brings in the salmon-boat to haul
a net upon the shores;
And this way to his home-creek,
when the summer day is done,
Slow sculls the weary fisherman
across the setting sun;
While green with corn is Sheegus Hill,
his cottage white below;
But gray at every season
is Abbey Asaroe.



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There stood one day a poor old man
above its broken bridge;
He heard no running rivulet,
he saw no mountain-ridge;
He turn'd his back on Sheegus Hill,
and view'd with misty sight
The Abbey walls, the burial-ground
with crosses ghostly white;
Under a weary weight of years
he bow'd upon his staff,
Perusing in the present time
the former's epitaph;
For, gray and wasted like the walls,
a figure full of woe,
This man was of the blood of them
who founded Asaroe.

From Derry to Bundrowas Tower,
Tirconnell broad was theirs;
Spearmen and plunder, bards and wine,
and holy abbot's prayers;
With chanting always in the house
which they had builded high
To God and to Saint Bernard,—
where at last they came to die.
At worst, no workhouse grave for him!
the ruins of his race
Shall rest among the ruin'd stones
of this their saintly place.
The fond old man was weeping;
and tremulous and slow
Along the rough and crooked lane
he crept from Asaroe.

A DREAM

I heard the dogs howl in the moonlight night;
I went to the window to see the sight;
All the Dead that ever I knew
Going one by one and two by two.

On they pass'd, and on they pass'd;
Townsfellows all, from first to last;



Born in the moonlight of the lane,
Quench'd in the heavy shadow again.

Schoolmates, marching as when we play'd
At soldiers once—but now more staid;
Those were the strangest sight to me
Who were drown'd, I knew, in the awful sea.

Straight and handsome folk; bent and weak, too;
Some that I loved, and gasp'd to speak to;
Some but a day in their churchyard bed;
Some that I had not known were dead.

A long, long crowd—where each seem'd lonely,
Yet of them all there was one, one only,
Raised a head or look'd my way:
She linger'd a moment—she might not stay.

How long since I saw that fair pale face!
Ah! Mother dear! might I only place
My head on thy breast, a moment to rest,
While thy hand on my tearful cheek were prest!

On, on, a moving bridge they made
Across the moon-stream, from shade to shade,
Young and old, women and men;
Many long-forgot, but remember'd then.

And first there came a bitter laughter;
A sound of tears the moment after;
And then a music so lofty and gay,
That every morning, day by day,
I strive to recall it if I may.

THE FAIRIES



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Up the airy mountain,
Down the rushy glen,
We daren't go a-hunting
For fear of little men;
Wee folk, good folk,
Trooping all together;
Green jacket, red cap,
And white owl's feather!
Down along the rocky shore
Some make their home,
They live on crispy pancakes
Of yellow tide-foam;
Some in the reeds
Of the black mountain lake,
With frogs for their watch-dogs,
All night awake.

High on the hill-top
The old King sits;
He is now so old and gray
He's nigh lost his wits.
With a bridge of white mist
Columkill he crosses,
On his stately journeys
From Slieveleague to Rosses;
Or going up with music
On cold starry nights,
To sup with the Queen
Of the gay Northern Lights.

They stole little Bridget
For seven years long;
When she came down again
Her friends were all gone.
They took her lightly back,
Between the night and morrow,
They thought that she was fast asleep,
But she was dead with sorrow.
They have kept her ever since
Deep within the lake,
On a bed of flag-leaves,
Watching till she wake.



By the craggy hill-side,
Through the mosses bare,
They have planted thorn-trees
For pleasure here and there.
Is any man so daring
As dig them up in spite,
He shall find their sharpest thorns
In his bed at night.

Up the airy mountain,
Down the rushy glen,
We daren't go a-hunting
For fear of little men;
Wee folk, good folk,
Trooping all together;
Green jacket, red cap,
And white owl's feather!

THE LEPRACAUN OR FAIRY SHOEMAKER

Little Cowboy, what have you heard,
Up on the lonely rath's green mound?
Only the plaintive yellow bird
Sighing in sultry fields around,
Chary, chary, chary, chee-ee!—
Only the grasshopper and the bee?—
'Tip-tap, rip-rap,
Tick-a-tack-too!
Scarlet leather, sewn together,
This will make a shoe.
Left, right, pull it tight;
Summer days are warm;
Underground in winter,
Laughing at the storm!
Lay your ear close to the hill.
Do you not catch the tiny clamour,
Busy click of an elfin hammer,
Voice of the Lepracaun singing shrill
As he merrily plies his trade?
He's a span
And a quarter in height.
Get him in sight, hold him tight,
And you're a made
Man!

You watch your cattle the summer day,
Sup on potatoes, sleep in the hay;

How would you like to roll in your carriage,
Look for a duchess's daughter in marriage?



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Seize the Shoemaker—then you may!

'Big boots a-hunting,
Sandals in the hall,
White for a wedding-feast,
Pink for a ball.
This way, that way,
So we make a shoe;
Getting rich every stitch,
Tick-tack-too!'

Nine-and-ninety treasure-crocks
This keen miser-fairy hath,
Hid in mountains, woods, and rocks,
Ruin and round-tow'r, cave and rath,
And where the cormorants build;
From times of old
Guarded by him;
Each of them fill'd
Full to the brim
With gold!

I caught him at work one day, myself,
In the castle-ditch where foxglove grows,—
A wrinkled, wizen'd, and bearded Elf,
Spectacles stuck on his pointed nose,
Silver buckles to his hose,
Leather apron—shoe in his lap—

'Rip-rap, tip-tap,
Tick-tack-too!
(A grasshopper on my cap!
Away the moth flew!)
Buskins for a fairy prince,
Brogues for his son,—
Pay me well, pay me well,
When the job is done!'

The rogue was mine, beyond a doubt.
I stared at him; he stared at me;
'Servant, Sir!' 'Humph!' says he,
And pull'd a snuff-box out.
He took a long pinch, look'd better pleased,
The queer little Lepracaun;



Offer'd the box with a whimsical grace,—
Pouf! he flung the dust in my face,
And while I sneezed,
Was gone!

THE GIRL'S LAMENTATION

With grief and mourning I sit to spin;
My Love passed by, and he didn't come in;
He passes by me, both day and night,
And carries off my poor heart's delight.

There is a tavern in yonder town,
My Love goes there and he spends a crown;
He takes a strange girl upon his knee,
And never more gives a thought to me.

Says he, 'We'll wed without loss of time,
And sure our love's but a little crime;—
My apron-string now it's wearing short,
And my Love he seeks other girls to court.

O with him I'd go if I had my will,
I'd follow him barefoot o'er rock and hill;
I'd never once speak of all my grief
If he'd give me a smile for my heart's relief.

In our wee garden the rose unfolds,
With bachelor's-buttons and marigolds;
I'll tie no posies for dance or fair,
A willow-twigg is for me to wear.

For a maid again I can never be,
Till the red rose blooms on the willow tree.
Of such a trouble I've heard them tell,
And now I know what it means full well.

As through the long lonesome night I lie,
I'd give the world if I might but cry;
But I mus'n't moan there or raise my voice,
And the tears run down without any noise.



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And what, O what will my mother say?
She'll wish her daughter was in the clay.
My father will curse me to my face;
The neighbours will know of my black disgrace.

My sister's buried three years, come Lent;
But sure we made far too much lament.
Beside her grave they still say a prayer—
I wish to God 'twas myself was there!

The Candlemas crosses hang near my bed;
To look at them puts me much in dread,
They mark the good time that's gone and past:
It's like this year's one will prove the last.

The oldest cross it's a dusty brown,
But the winter winds didn't shake it down;
The newest cross keeps the colour bright;
When the straw was reaping my heart was light.

The reapers rose with the blink of morn,
And gaily stook'd up the yellow corn;
To call them home to the field I'd run,
Through the blowing breeze and the summer sun.

When the straw was weaving my heart was glad,
For neither sin nor shame I had,
In the barn where oat-chaff was flying round,
And the thumping flails made a pleasant sound.

Now summer or winter to me it's one;
But oh! for a day like the time that's gone.
I'd little care was it storm or shine,
If I had but peace in this heart of mine.

Oh! light and false is a young man's kiss,
And a foolish girl gives her soul for this.
Oh! light and short is the young man's blame,
And a helpless girl has the grief and shame.

To the river-bank once I thought to go,
And cast myself in the stream below;
I thought 'twould carry us far out to sea,
Where they'd never find my poor babe and me.



Sweet Lord, forgive me that wicked mind!
You know I used to be well-inclined.
Oh, take compassion upon my state,
Because my trouble is so very great.

My head turns round with the spinning wheel,
And a heavy cloud on my eyes I feel.
But the worst of all is at my heart's core;
For my innocent days will come back no more.

THE NOBLEMAN'S WEDDING

I once was a guest at a Nobleman's wedding;
Fair was the Bride, but she scarce had been kind,
And now in our mirth, she had tears nigh the shedding
Her former true lover still runs in her mind.

Attired like a minstrel, her former true lover
Takes up his harp, and runs over the strings;
And there among strangers, his grief to discover,
A fair maiden's falsehood he bitterly sings.

'Now here is the token of gold that was broken;
Seven long years it was kept for your sake;
You gave it to me as a true lover's token;
No longer I'll wear it, asleep or awake.'

She sat in her place by the head of the table,
The words of his ditty she mark'd them right well:
To sit any longer this bride was not able,
So down at the bridegroom's feet she fell.



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'O one, one request, my lord, one and no other,
O this one request will you grant it to me?
To lie for this night in the arms of my mother,
And ever, and ever thereafter with thee.'

Her one, one request it was granted her fairly;
Pale were her cheeks as she went up to bed;
And the very next morning, early, early,
They rose and they found this young bride was dead.

The bridegroom ran quickly, he held her, he kiss'd her,
He spoke loud and low, and listen'd full fain;
He call'd on her waiting-maids round to assist her
But nothing could bring the lost breath back again.

O carry her softly! the grave is made ready;
At head and at foot plant a laurel-bush green;
For she was a young and a sweet noble lady,
The fairest young bride that I ever have seen.

KATE O' BELASHANNY

Seek up and down, both fair and brown,
We've purty lasses many, O;
But brown or fair, one girl most rare,
The Flow'r o' Belashanny, O.
As straight is she as poplar-tree
(Tho' not as aisy shaken, O,)
And walks so proud among the crowd,
For queen she might be taken, O.
From top to toe, where'er you go,
The loveliest girl of any, O,—
Ochone! your mind I find unkind,
Sweet Kate o' Belashanny, O!

One summer day the banks were gay,
The Erne in sunshine glancin' there,
The big cascade its music play'd
And set the salmon dancin' there.
Along the green my Joy was seen;
Some goddess bright I thought her there;
The fishes, too, swam close, to view
Her image in the water there.



From top to toe, where'er you go,
The loveliest girl of any, O,—
Ochone! your mind I find unkind,
Sweet Kate o' Belashanny, O!

My dear, give ear!—the river's near,
And if you think I'm shammin' now,
To end my grief I'll seek relief
Among the trout and salmon, now;
For shrimps and sharks to make their marks,
And other watery vermin there;
Unless a mermaid saves my life,—
My wife, and me her merman there.
From top to toe, where'er you go,
The loveliest girl of any, O,—
Mavrone! your mind I find unkind,
Sweet Kate o' Belashanny, O!

'Tis all in vain that I complain;
No use to coax or chide her there;
As far away from me as Spain,
Although I stand beside her there.
O cruel Kate! since that's my fate,
I'll look for love no more in you;
The seagull's screech as soon would reach
Your heart, as me implorin' you.
Tho' fair you are, and rare you are,
The loveliest flow'r of any, O,—
Too proud and high,—good-bye, say I,
To Kate o' Belashanny, O!



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FOUR DUCKS ON A POND

Four ducks on a pond,
A grass-bank beyond,
A blue sky of spring,
White clouds on the wing;
What a little thing
To remember for years—
To remember with tears!

AEOLIAN HARP

What is it that is gone, we fancied ours?
Oh what is lost that never may be told?—
We stray all afternoon, and we may grieve
Until the perfect closing of the night.
Listen to us, thou gray Autumnal Eve,
Whose part is silence. At thy verge the clouds
Are broken into melancholy gold;
The waifs of Autumn and the feeble flow'rs
Glimmer along our woodlands in wet light;
Within thy shadow thou dost weave the shrouds
Of joy and great adventure, waxing cold,
Which once, or so it seemed, were full of might.
Some power it was, that lives not with us now,
A thought we had, but could not, could not hold.
O sweetly, swiftly pass'd:—air sings and murmurs;
Green leaves are gathering on the dewy bough;
O sadly, swiftly pass'd:—air sighs and mutters;
Red leaves are dropping on the rainy mould.
Then comes the snow, unfeatured, vast, and white.
O what is gone from us, we fancied ours?—

THE MAIDS OF ELFIN-MERE

When the spinning-room was here
Came Three Damsels, clothed in white,
With their spindles every night;
One and Two and three fair Maidens,
Spinning to a pulsing cadence,
Singing songs of Elfin-Mere;
Till the eleventh hour was toll'd,
Then departed through the wold.



Years ago, and years ago;
And the tall reeds sigh as the wind doth blow.

Three white Lilies, calm and clear,
And they were loved by every one;
Most of all, the Pastor's Son,
Listening to their gentle singing,
Felt his heart go from him, clinging
Round these Maids of Elfin-Mere.
Sued each night to make them stay,
Sadden'd when they went away.

Years ago, and years ago;
And the tall reeds sigh as the wind doth blow.

Hands that shook with love and fear
Dared put back the village clock,—
Flew the spindle, turn'd the rock,
Flow'd the song with subtle rounding,
Till the false 'eleven' was sounding;
Then these Maids of Elfin-Mere
Swiftly, softly, left the room,
Like three doves on snowy plume.

Years ago, and years ago;
And the tall reeds sigh as the wind doth blow.

One that night who wander'd near
Heard lamentings by the shore,
Saw at dawn three stains of gore
In the waters fade and dwindle.
Never more with song and spindle
Saw we Maids of Elfin-Mere,
The Pastor's Son did pine and die;
Because true love should never lie.

Years ago, and years ago;
And the tall reeds sigh as the wind doth blow.



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TWILIGHT VOICES

Now, at the hour when ignorant mortals
Drowse in the shade of their whirling sphere,
Heaven and Hell from invisible portals
Breathing comfort and ghastly fear,

Voices I hear;

I hear strange voices, flitting, calling,
Wavering by on the dusky blast,—
'Come, let us go, for the night is falling;
Come, let us go, for the day is past!'

Troops of joys are they, now departed?
Winged hopes that no longer stay?
Guardian spirits grown weary-hearted?
Powers that have linger'd their latest day?

What do they say?

What do they sing? I hear them calling,
Whispering, gathering, flying fast,—
'Come, come, for the night is falling;
Come, come, for the day is past!'

Sing they to me?—'Thy taper's wasted;
Mortal, thy sands of life run low;
Thine hours like a flock of birds have hasted:
Time is ending;—we go, we go.'

Sing they so?

Mystical voices, floating, calling;
Dim farewells—the last, the last?
Come, come away, the night is falling;
'Come, come away, the day is past.'

See, I am ready, Twilight voices!
Child of the spirit-world am I;
How should I fear you? my soul rejoices,
O speak plainer! O draw nigh!

Fain would I fly!

Tell me your message, Ye who are calling
Out of the dimness vague and vast;
Lift me, take me,—the night is falling;
Quick, let us go,—the day is past.

THE LOVER AND BIRDS



Within a budding grove,
In April's ear sang every bird his best,
But not a song to pleasure my unrest,
Or touch the tears unwept of bitter love;
Some spake, methought, with pity, some as if in jest.
To every word
Of every bird
I listen'd, and replied as it behove.

Scream'd Chaffinch, 'Sweet, sweet, sweet!
Pretty lovey, come and meet me here!'
'Chaffinch,' quoth I, 'be dumb awhile, in fear
Thy darling prove no better than a cheat,
And never come, or fly when wintry days appear.'
Yet from a twig,
With voice so big,
The little fowl his utterance did repeat.

Then I, 'The man forlorn
Hears Earth send up a foolish noise aloft.'
'And what'll he do? What'll he do?' scoff'd
The Blackbird, standing, in an ancient thorn,
Then spread his sooty wings and flitted to the croft
With cackling laugh;
Whom I, being half
Enraged, called after, giving back his scorn.

Worse mock'd the Thrush, 'Die! die!
Oh, could he do it? could he do it? Nay!
Be quick! be quick! Here, here, here!' (went his lay.)
'Take heed! take heed!' then 'Why? why? why? why? why?
See-ee now! see-ee now!' (he drawl'd) 'Back! back! back! R-r-r-run away!'
O Thrush, be still!
Or at thy will,
Seek some less sad interpreter than I.



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'Air, air! blue air and white!
Whither I flee, whither, O whither, O whither I flee!
(Thus the Lark hurried, mounting from the lea)
'Hills, countries, many waters glittering bright,
Whither I see, whither I see! deeper, deeper, deeper, whither I see, see,
see!
'Gay Lark,' I said,
'The song that's bred
In happy nest may well to heaven make flight.'

'There's something, something sad,
I half remember'—piped a broken strain.
Well sung, sweet Robin! Robin sung again.
'Spring's opening cheerily, cheerily! be we glad!
Which moved, I wist not why, me melancholy mad,
Till now, grown meek,
With wetted cheek,
Most comforting and gentle thoughts I had.

THE ABBOT OF INNISFALLEN

The Abbot of Innisfallen
awoke ere dawn of day;
Under the dewy green leaves
went he forth to pray.
The lake around his island
lay smooth and dark and deep,
And wrapt in a misty stillness
the mountains were all asleep.
Low kneel'd the Abbot Cormac
when the dawn was dim and gray;
The prayers of his holy office
he faithfully 'gan say.
Low kneel'd the Abbot Cormac
while the dawn was waxing red;
And for his sins' forgiveness
a solemn prayer he said:
Low kneel'd that holy Abbot
while the dawn was waxing clear;
And he pray'd with loving-kindness
for his convent-brethren dear.
Low kneel'd that blessed Abbot
while the dawn was waxing bright;



He pray'd a great prayer for Ireland,
he pray'd with all his might.
Low kneel'd that good old Father
while the sun began to dart;
He pray'd a prayer for all men,
he pray'd it from his heart.
His blissful soul was in Heaven,
tho' a breathing man was he;
He was out of time's dominion,
so far as the living may be.

The Abbot of Innisfallen
arose upon his feet;
He heard a small bird singing,
and O but it sung sweet!
It sung upon a holly-bush,
this little snow-white bird;
A song so full of gladness
he never before had heard.
It sung upon a hazel,
it sung upon a thorn;
He had never heard such music
since the hour that he was born.
It sung upon a sycamore,
it sung upon a briar;
To follow the song and hearken
this Abbot could never tire.
Till at last he well bethought him;
he might no longer stay;
So he bless'd the little white singing-bird,
and gladly went his way.

But, when he came to his Abbey,
he found a wondrous change;
He saw no friendly faces there,
for every face was strange.
The strange men spoke unto him;
and he heard from all and each
The foreign tongue of the Sassenach,
not wholesome Irish speech.
Then the oldest monk came



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forward,
in Irish tongue spake he:
'Thou wearest the holy Augustine's dress,
and who hath given it to thee?'
'I wear the Augustine's dress,
and Cormac is my name,
The Abbot of this good Abbey
by grace of God I am.
I went forth to pray, at the dawn of day;
and when my prayers were said,
I hearken'd awhile to a little bird,
that sung above my head.'
The monks to him made answer,
'Two hundred years have gone o'er,
Since our Abbot Cormac went through the gate,
and never was heard of more.
Matthias now is our Abbot,
and twenty have pass'd away.
The stranger is lord of Ireland;
we live in an evil day.'
'Days will come and go,' he said,
'and the world will pass away,
In Heaven a day is a thousand years,
a thousand years are a day.'
'Now give me absolution;
for my time is come,' said he.
And they gave him absolution,
as speedily as might be.
Then, close outside the window,
the sweetest song they heard
That ever yet since the world began
was utter'd by any bird.
The monks look'd out and saw the bird,
its feathers all white and clean;
And there in a moment, beside it,
another white bird was seen.
Those two they sang together,
waved their white wings, and fled;
Flew aloft, and vanish'd;
but the good old man was dead.
They buried his blessed body
where lake and green-sward meet;



A carven cross above his head,
a holly-bush at his feet;
Where spreads the beautiful water
to gay or cloudy skies,
And the purple peaks of Killarney
from ancient woods arise.

THE RUINED CHAPEL

By the shore, a plot of ground
Clips a ruin'd chapel round,
Buttress'd with a grassy mound;
Where Day and Night and Day go by,
And bring no touch of human sound.

Washing of the lonely seas,
Shaking of the guardian trees,
Piping of the salted breeze;
Day and Night and Day go by
To the endless tune of these.

Or when, as winds and waters keep
A hush more dead than any sleep,
Still morns to stiller evenings creep,
And Day and Night and Day go by;
Here the silence is most deep.

The empty ruins, lapsed again
Into Nature's wide domain,
Sow themselves with seed and grain
As Day and Night and Day go by;
And hoard June's sun and April's rain.

Here fresh funeral tears were shed;
Now the graves are also dead;
And suckers from the ash-tree spread,
While Day and Night and Day go by;
And stars move calmly overhead.

Here end sixteen poems, written by William Allingham, and selected for re-printing by William Butler Yeats. Printed upon paper made in Ireland, and published by Elizabeth Corbet Yeats at the Dun Emer Press, in the house of Evelyn Gleeson at Dundrum, in the county of Dublin, Ireland, finished on the fifteenth day of September, in the year 1905.