





Imram Bríg Bostúin

An Irish Mythology Collage



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Compiled by Jamie Madden, 2022

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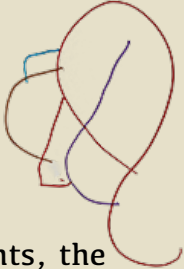

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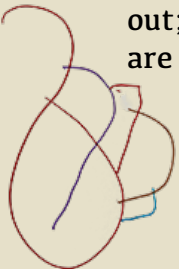
Preface (mostly) by W.B. Yeats¹


One must not expect in these stories the epic lineaments, the many incidents, woven into one great event of, let us say, the story of the War for the Brown Bull of Cuailgne. The men who imagined these had the imagination of children, and as soon as they had invented one wonder, heaped another on top of it.

Children play at being great and wonderful people, at the ambitions they will put away for one reason or another before they grow into ordinary men and women. Mankind as a whole had a like dream once; everybody and nobody built up the dream bit by bit, and the ancient story-tellers are there to make us remember what mankind would have been like, had not fear and the failing will and the laws of nature tripped up its heels. To ask, what it would have been like if Brigit went on an immram, a journey of self-discovery, which also happened to give Boston's islands their names?

They have no asceticism, but they are more visionary than any ascetic, and their invisible life is but the life about them made more perfect and more lasting, and the invisible people are their own images in the water. They may have been much besides this, for we know them from fragments of mythology picked out from: *Bethu Brigitte*, *On the Life of St. Brigit*, *Banshenchus*, *Boyhood Deeds of Fion mac Cumhail*, *'Rennes' Prose Dindshenchas*, *Ephesians*, *Isiah*, *Nehemiah*, *The Voyage of Mael Duin*, *The Voyage of the Nui Corra*, *The Adventure of Cian's Son*, *The Voyage of Bran*, *Cormac's Glossary*, *The Second Battle of Mag Tuired*, and *The Schools' Collection*.

Women, and many things that may have seemed wicked to the monks who imagined that history, may have been altered or left out; but this they must have been essentially, for the old stories are confirmed by apparitions among the country-people to-day.






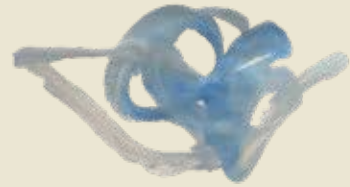
Gaelic-speaking Ireland, because its art has been made, not by the artist choosing his material from wherever he has a mind to, but by adding a little to something which it has taken generations to invent, has always had a popular literature. One cannot say how much that literature has done for the vigour of the race.

Even when Gaelic has gone, and the poetry with it, something of the habit of mind remains in ways of speech and thought and “come-all-ye”s and poetical saying; nor is it only among the poor that the old thought has been for strength or weakness. Surely these old stories helped to sing the old Irish and the old Norman-Irish aristocracy to their end. They heard their hereditary poets and story-tellers, and they took to horse and died fighting against Elizabeth or against Cromwell; and when an English-speaking aristocracy had their place, it listened to no poetry indeed, and began a play that had for spectators men and women that loved the high wasteful virtues.

If we would instead create a great community - and what other game is so worth the labour? - we must recreate the old foundations of life, not as they existed in that splendid misunderstanding of the eighteenth century, but as they must always exist when the finest minds and Ned the beggar and Seaghan the fool think about the same thing, although they may not think the same thought about it.

I need say nothing about the translation and arrangement of this book except that it is unworthy to be put beside “Cuchulain of Muirthemne [1903].” Such books should not be commended by written words but by spoken words, were that possible, for the written words commending a book, wherein something is done supremely well, remain, to sound in the ears of a later generation, like the foolish sound of church bells from the tower of a church when every pew is full, becoming an unmelodious symphony when patches of words are knit together like the clothes of Ned the beggar and Seaghan the fool.





Brigit's Childhood

Since Brigit entered religion, she never looked aside but only straight ahead.² And yet, as they say, the straight line is a godless line.³

Tradition records Dubthach meic Demri no Dreimne meic Bresail meic Dein meic Conla meic Artrach meic Artchirp meic Coirpri Níad meic Cormaic meic Oengusa Mínd meic Echach Find Fuath n-Airt meic Fédlímthe Rechtuda & rl.⁴ as Brigit's father. Her mother was a cumail, a bondmaid of his, named Broicsech.

Dubthach's wife, Dallbronach, mother of Cumman of the fair plaits,⁵ could not bear the shame of her husband impregnating Broicsech, and so soon after An Dagda's visit. So, she gave Dubthach an ultimatum, sell the bondmaid somewhere far away, or lose herself and her coibche bride price with her.

Dubthach found compromise with his wife by selling the bondsmaid but not her child. They sold Broicsech to a wizard three days' ride away. On her first sunrise there, when Broicsech was bringing in a fresh vessel of milk, she'd scarcely put one foot over the threshold when she gave birth to the girl, and the other foot still outside the house! The maid-servants washed the girl with the milk that remained in her mother's hand.

Some months later, the wizard dreamed that the baby would grow to become a saint, and from that night on, Brigit was nourished only with the pure milk of the white, red-eared cow. Brigit was reared till she was a handmaiden, and she succeeded in whatever she set her hand to, with reverence to God. She grew food. She bettered the sheep. She tended the blind. She fed the homeless.





Brigit's Maidenhood

After a time she says to her fosterer, "I do not desire to serve here. Send for my father, so he may come to meet me." So the wizard sent messengers to Dubthach, and they regaled him with stories of the maiden's many wonders. The wizard gave Dubthach a great welcome, and sent him away with his daughter, free of any fosterage fee.⁶

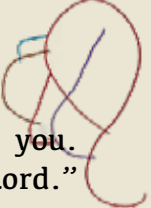
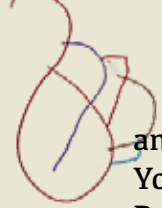
Then they returned to their country, and Brigit worked wonderous miracle after wonderous miracle. No vessel of hers was empty, and no person she served from it could remain ill. Endless bread and fish poured forth. Not one boar could go missing, let alone two.

And yet, when she set her mind on traveling to see her mother, Dubthach refused her. So, Brigit left secretly to see her mother, who was still in bondage. In pity, Brigit took her mother's labor on herself. She churned butter such that the lords received their full shares, but the poor had butter in equal plenty. Brigit divided her first churning into twelve in honor of the twelve apostles of Christ – coincidentally matching the number of lords owed a share – and a thirteenth portion she set so that it was greater than every other portion, in honor of Jesus Christ, and she gave freely from the thirteenth portion, enough butter to be the envy of the King of Spain, to the parish's poor.

Stunned, the wizard who kept Broicsech as a bondmaid looked on with apprehension. For while it is true Brigit's churn never lacked for butter, we cannot say the same of the wizard's cows. They were milked dry, each one, until in desperation the wizard sent for the Glas Gaibhnenn herself to satisfy Brigit's churn. How he got the marvelous cow, well that's quite another story, but suffice to say it saved the wizard's kine.

And then he spoke aloud to Brigit, "The butter you churned



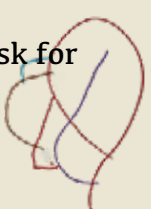



and the cows you have already milked, I offer them to you. You shall not stay here with me. Go forth to serve the Lord.” Brigit answered him and said, “Take your cows and give me my mother’s freedom.” Said the wizard, “Not only shall your mother be freed, the cows shall be given to you, and whatsoever you say, I will do, only hasten forth towards your Lord.”



Brigit dealt out the cows to the parish’s poor. Then Brigit, and her mother with her, returned to her father’s house, where Brigit donated Dubthach’s wealth and cattle to the parish poor. So on a clear morning Dubthach took Brigit along in his chariot to sell her to grind corn for Dunlang MacEnda, King of Leinster. When they came to the King’s dún, Dubthach went in to address the King while Brigit remained in the chariot. Dubthach had left his bejeweled sword in his chariot. A leper came to Brigit to beg alms.

Dubthach said to the King, “Will you buy a bondmaid? Namely, my daughter?” Dunlang asked, “Why sell your own daughter?” Dubthach replied “She will not stop giving my wealth away to the poor. She could milk the Glas Gaibhnenn itself dry, this girl, to try to give every Christian she meets a Lord’s share of butter.” The King said, “Let the maiden come into the dún.”

Dubthach went out to retrieve Brigit and was newly enraged to see she had given his own sword to the poor man. When Brigit came into the King’s presence, the King said to her, “Since it is your father’s wealth that you take, I’m afraid if I buy you, you will take my wealth and my cattle and give them to the poor.” Brigit replied, “The Son of the Virgin knows if I had your might with all Leinster, and with all your wealth I would give them to the Lord of the Elements.” Said the King to Dubthach, “In any case, you cannot get a good price for this maiden, for her value is worth more to God than to men.” And the King gave Dubthach an ivory-hilted sword to send him on his way.



Shortly after that, a man of good kin visited Dubthach to ask for



his daughter in marriage. Dubthach and his sons were willing, but Brigit refused. Her brother told her, “What good is that fair eye in your head if it will not be on a pillow by a husband?”



“The Son of the Virgin knows,” says Brigit, “it is not lively for us if it brings harm upon us.” Then Brigit put her finger under her eye, and drew it out of her head until it hung on her cheek, and she said, “Here’s your delightful eye, O Beccán!” Then his own eye burst out of his skull! When Dubthach and her brothers beheld that, they promised that she should never be told to marry a husband. Then she put her palm to her eye and it was quite whole at once. But Beccán’s eye was not whole till his death.



Dubthach sighed to Brigit, “O daughter,” says he, “put a veil on your head. If you’ve dedicated yourself to God, I will not snatch you from Him.” “Deo gratias,” says Brigit.

Brigit’s Miracles

So Brigit did leave her father’s home to go take the veil, and she gathered seven virgins to join her and they traveled to a monastery on the side of Cróchán of Bri Éile, which was named for the beautiful fairy maiden Ele, for whom young men gave their life in wooing her each Samhain.⁷ Though some say it was named for the Pool of the Modest Woman on its slopes, through which Sinan emerged from the flooding river.⁸ Still more claim Bri Éile means rock of the beautiful Brigit.⁹

There she greeted two virgins, Caren and Darren, who dwelt there, and asked for Bishop Mel. They said, “The bishop is not here, but in the churches of Mag Taulach.” Then they asked Mac Caille, a pupil of Mel the bishop, to lead them to the bishop. He said, “The way is trackless, with marshes, deserts, bogs and pools.” The women walked straight into the bog, and he could see afterwards a bridge straight as a whistle there through the





wastelands. Brigit and her virgins, now numbering nine, took to study and charity after leaving Bishop Mel in Mag Taulach.

On another day, much later, Brigit approached an assembly in Tailteann, where Patrick lived with a synod of Ireland's clerics around him. They were debating a woman who had come to return a son to Brón, a cleric of Patrick's household. "I had come to Brón to have the veil blessed on my head and to offer my virginity to God. This is what my cleric did then, he debauched me, so that I have borne him a son," sobbed the woman.



Then Bishop Mel said to Patrick, "The holy maiden Brigit is here, and she will find out for you by the greatness of her grace and the proximity of her miracles whether this woman's claim is true or false."



Brigit asked the woman by whom she had conceived the child, and told her not to utter a lie. And the woman answered, "It is by Bishop Brón."

"That is not true," said Brigit. Brigit made the sign of the cross over her face, then the woman's tongue swelled until it filled her mouth so that she could not speak. Then, Brigit made the sign of the cross over the newborn's mouth and asked it, "Who is your father?" The newborn, in an improbably manly voice answered and said, "Brón the bishop is not my father but a certain low and ill-shaped man who is sitting in the outermost part of the assembly. My mother is a liar."

They all return thanks to God, and cry out that the guilty woman be burned. But Brigit refused to have her burnt, saying "Let this woman do penance." This was done, and her head and tongue lost their swelling. The people rejoiced, the bishop was liberated, and Brigit was glorified.¹⁰

She remained the next day in Cell Lasre. A certain man of Kells, hated by his own wife, came to Brigit for help. Brigit blessed





some water. He took it with him and, his wife having been sprinkled, she straightaway loved him passionately.



Bricriu bore witness to this and said to Brigit, "It were better to free the woman than to place her in this bondage."

"What bondage?" replied Brigit. "The bondage of your own father, of Bishop Brón, of this man of Kells. Cheerful bondage though it may be." Brigit straightened the veil upon her head and replied only, "Bondservants are to obey their earthly masters with fear and trembling, with a sincere heart, as they should Christ, submit themselves to their masters, not only to those who are good and considerate, but also to those who are harsh. For there is neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for all are one in Christ Jesus. And it shall come to pass in the day that the Lord shall give rest from sorrow, from fear, and from bondage."¹¹



Bricriu sighed, "Yet now our flesh is as the flesh of our neighbors, our children as their children: and, look, we bring our own into bondage, sell our daughters to be servants. Our daughters are brought into manners of bondage beyond imagining. Neither is it in our power to redeem them; for other men have our lands."¹²

"But, perhaps you can remember," he continued, "for there will come a day on which you board a boat, with your nine women" – though some say it were seventeen – "no number greater or less than that should go. And you will wish to leave for the west. There are thrice fifty distant isles in the ocean to the west of us; larger than Erin twice is each of them, or thrice. This will come to pass on Imbolc."

Immram Brigit¹³



Brigit returned to her convent, though rather than remain cloistered through the winter, she brought her veiled, vowed



virgins to minister to the cows and the poor so that neither milk nor flesh were wanting. On the first of February, Brigit and her nine nuns set off from a trip ministering to the poor on her father's lands.

Scarcely had they left shore before three of her father's seven sons came into the harbor after them, as no woman should be seen to venture forth alone under their watch.

"Get you home," said Brigit, "for only the number we have here shall go with me"

"We will go after you into the sea and be drowned there, unless you bring us aboard!" Then the three of them cast themselves into the sea, and they swam from land. When Brigit saw that, she turned towards them so that no man should be drowned, and she brought them into the boat.



Brigit prayed as the boat left shore:

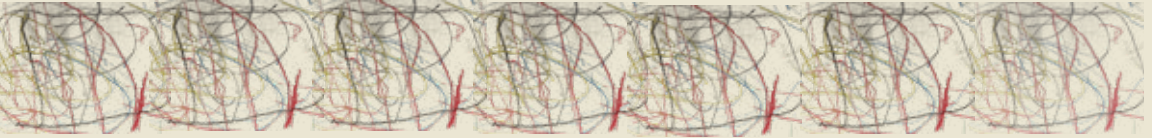
Grant me a clear day
for You art a dear friend, a kingly youth;
for the sake of Your mother, loving Mary,
ward off rain, ward off wind.¹⁴

The youngest of her three half-brothers whispered to the others in quiet awe, "Our little bondmaid will do it for us. Rain will not fall till the night, on account of Brigit today. She stills the rain and the wind."

Yet even as they said these words, a great wind came upon them, so that they were driven over the sea that day and night until the next morning. And even after morning they saw neither earth nor land, and they knew not where they were going.

Then said Brigit, "Leave the boat still, without rowing, and wherever it shall please God to bring it, bring us." Then they entered the great, endless ocean.





Three days and three nights were they, and they found neither land nor ground. Then on the morning of the third day they heard the sound of a wave against the beach, and with the daylight they saw an island high and great; and terraces all round about it. Lower was each of them than the other, and there was a row of trees around the terraces, and many great birds on these trees, and they a-singing plaintive melodious music.

Then appeared to them a vast number of great, many-coloured bird flocks. One of the birds alighted on the gunwale of the boat.

“It would be delightful,” say the crew, “if this were a messenger from the Lord to bring us tidings!” With that the one-eyed brother raises up his face. “God is able to do that.”

“It is to hold speech with you assuredly I have come,” said the bird.

Vivid was the colour of that bird. In its breast were three beautiful bright rays, with a sun’s radiance.

“Of the land of Erin am I,” quoth the raven, “and I am the soul of a woman, and I am a monkess to you,” she said to the brother.

“Tell me of this,” said he, “are we going to hell?”



“Ye will not go,” said the bird.

“Now, I am leaving you,” said the bird, “and much knowledge of your goings has not been trusted to me, and someone else will relate them to you.”

“First, tell us,” said the brother to the bird, “what are those three most beautiful rays in your breasts?”

“I will tell you,” said the bird, “There was a man in the world





whose wife I was, and I did not do his will, and I stuck not to lawful wedlock. He was sick and I was not with him. And I went three times to visit him; once to see him, another time with food for him, and the third time to attend him. So that those three times are the three beautiful rays in my breast; and all my colour would have been like that had not I severed from lawful wedlock.”

Thereafter the bird went from them and bid them farewell.¹⁵



The House of the Cod Flap

A full week were they voyaging, in hunger and in thirst, when they discovered a great, high island with a great house on the seashore with a doorway above the dunes into the plain of the island and also a door opening into the sea, against which there was a stone valve pierced by an opening through which the sea waves were flinging cod into the house.

Brigit and her women entered that house, and found it empty but furnished with a four posted bed for the chief of the house alone, and a bed for every three of his household, and food for three before every bed, and a vessel of glass with good liquor before every bed, and a cup of glass on every vessel. So Brigit and her crew dined of that food and liquor, and they give thanks to Almighty God, who had helped them from the hunger.

And they blessed the land the Cape of Cod.

The Wondrous Apples



When they went from the Cape of Cod, they were a long while voyaging, without food, hungrily, till they found another island, long and narrow with a great cliff round it on every side, and a long, narrow forest, with a beautiful bright grove of fragrant

apple trees. A very beautiful river flowed through the grove. When the wind would move the treetops of the grove, their song was sweeter than any music.

"I marvel," said Brigit, "at what I see, in Erin it is February, and here are summer apples!"¹⁶

As the boat drew close to the wood, Brigit took a branch. Three days and three nights the branch remained in her hand, while the boat sailed under the cliff to find an end to this long island, and on the third day she found a cluster of three apples at the end of the branch.

Before any one of the hungry crew could imagine the taste of an apple on her tongue, Caren shouted a warning. "Was it not just such an apple that drove Adam and Eve from paradise!?" Darren replied, "But what paradise is there in the waves beside this island?"

"The paradise is the life of the world to come, for which we give ourselves in bondage to the lord," shouted Caren.

The brothers, thinking little of the pious women, took the apples from the branch and ate them. For forty nights each of these apples sufficed them, the three brothers, then Caren gave in and asked for one, then Darren, then the seven women in turn before lastly even Brigit herself took the apple, crossing herself and saying, "by the grace of god" before eating one.

And then the oldest of the brothers said, "God enjoys our fasting. The apples were a gift from the Otherworld." None spoke against his blasphemy, as the waves and the fruit and the Long Island brokered no argument. And that is why to this day the poorest have been kept on Long Island, growing apples.¹⁷



The Feats of the Island Beast.

With the strength given by the apples, they soon drew near another island, with a fence of stone around it. Expecting a sheepfold or with luck a kine, they drew back in shock when a huge beast sprang up and raced around the island, never crossing the stone wall but fully visible above it. Or was it? Because this beast moved swifter than wind, and Brigit could never tell if she saw the beast true. It's body straightened with huge head pointing toward the ground and strange feet straight to heaven. Then its muscles and bones rotated in its own skin, like feet pushing in a mother's belly. Then the skin itself rotated around the beast in undulating waves while bone and muscle stayed still.

Just as Brigit believed her eyes had seen true, the beast sprang up and raced round about the island again as it had done at first. After thrice fifty laps, it returned to straighten its body upside down, but this time the lower half of the beast stood still while its upper half turned like a wheel, or was it racing around the island on its own while its bottom half waited below?

Brigit and her people fled with all their might, and the beast chased after them. They rowed as hard as their arms could as the beast tossed stone after stone at their curraig. They rowed until splashing and sounds were the sea herself, but a stone lodged in the keel of the boat, matching a hole in Brigit's shield, to remind the crew of the inexplicable strangeness they had encountered. No book of their Bible prepared them for the strangeness of this place they came to call *hull*.

The Guardian Cat.

Now when those apples failed, and their hunger and thirst were great, and when their mouths and their noses were full of the stench of the sea, they spot a small island that boasted a *dún*

surrounded by a high, white rampart as if built of burnt lime, or as if it were all one rock of chalk. Great was its height from the sea; it all but reached the clouds. The dún was open wide. Round the rampart were great, snow-white houses. When they entered the largest of these they saw no one there, save a small cat which was in the midst of the house, playing on the four stone pillars inside there, leaping from each pillar to the other. It looked a little at the women, and did not stop itself from its play.

After that they noticed three shelves along the roundhouse wall, from one doorpost to the other. A row of brooches of gold and of silver with their pins in the wall, and a row of neck-torques of gold and of silver, like hoops of a vat was each of them. The third row was of great swords, with hilts of gold and of silver. The rooms were full of white quilts and shining garments. A roasted ox, moreover, and a great side of bacon sat in the middle of the house, and great vessels with good intoxicating liquor.


“Has this been left for us?,” Brigit asked the cat. It looked at her briefly and began to play again. Then Brigit recognized that it was for them that the dinner had been left, so they dined and drank and slept. They put the leavings of the liquor into the pots, and stored up the leftovers of the food.

Now when they proposed to go, Brigit’s brother Beccán said, “Shall I take with me a necklace of these treasures?” “Nay,” said Brigit, “not without a guard is the house.”

Nevertheless he took a necklace jeweled in all the colours the rainbow forgot.¹⁸ Beccán regained his lost eye. The cat followed him, as far as the middle of the room, and of a sudden leapt through him like a fiery arrow, and burnt him to ashes, and then went back to play on its pillar.

Brigit soothed the cat with her words, carefully set the necklace back in its place, cleansed the ashes from the floor, and cast





them on the shore of the sea. Then they went on board their boat, and from then on their people referred to that island as The Graves.

The Mill for grinding begrudged Wealth

Not long thereafter they found an island, with a great hideous mill with gigantic egg-shaped chambers visible from afar. At work there was a miller huge and hideous. They asked him, "What mill is this?"



"Don't ask," said he, "what you do not want to know."

"Tell us" they say.

"Half the corn of your country," said he, "is ground here. More than corn. Everything which is begrudged is ground in this mill."

With that they look towards a long causeway leading back to a shore, or horizon (?). Upon the causeway trudged countless men, women, and children with dun skin and long, dubh hair. Behind them, innumerable beasts carried heavy loads of gold, iron, wood, shells, and fish heads, dripping into the waves as they went. Behind them, a miserable lot of starving human beings with glas skin and protruding bones keened in their hundreds of thousands. And behind them followed laborers black, brown, and pale carrying mighty oaks, tiny alewife, large cod, huge black whales, barrels dripping tar and oil, and chunks of stone and wood from demolished homes, and so on the line stretched past the horizon, they queued without end no matter how quickly the mill ground.


A ghostly deer stood on the island's eastern tip, bearing witness. The crew and their people christened the island Deer Island, as they did not want to know the rest.



So they left that island swiftly, madly, hastily despite feeling sad, grumpy, feeble; and they knew not where in the world they were going and where they could find aid or dry ground. The endless glass horizon tested their faith.


The Black/White Transformed Sheep.



Early on the morning of the third day after that they spy another island, divided in two by a leaden fence. They saw great flocks of sheep, a small black flock on this side of the fence and a massive, multiplying white flock on the far side. And they saw a big man separating the flocks.



When he flung a white sheep over the fence to the black sheep it became black at once. And, when he used to cast a black sheep over the fence, it became white at once. Periodically, a white sheep made a great leap over the fence and would turn suddenly black as it crossed. The big man seemed not to like this, and shot a long arm out to grab the white sheep by the hind legs, catching two in three and returning them to the white side of the island.


Brigit's people were adread at seeing that and watched from ashore, unsure of the proper path. As they watched, the big man grew frustrated at the white sheep leaping on their own to the black side and infuriated when a black sheep did the same, becoming white. He stepped over the leaden palisade, quickly gathered the forty-seven once-white-now-black sheep and tossed them roughly onto the far side of the island to become white again. The rest of the sheep, the forty-two always-black sheep, he slaughtered, offering one third to the higher glory of God, eating a third himself, and leaving the last third. The big man washed the sheep down with thrice fifty barrels of strong, sweet wine, spilling about himself, staining the white sheep, and polluting the sea.





They sailed away from the island and the sickly sweet scent of the wine in terror as they dubbed it Malaga Island.¹⁹


The Island of Sorrow / The Black Wailers.



Now when they went from that island of the mill they found a large island, with a great multitude of people. Black were these, both in bodies and raiment, with fillet headbands round their heads. They rested not from wailing.



An unlucky lot fell Caren, who took Darren with her to explore the island. When they went to stand alongside the people who were wailing, they too immediately began to weep along with them. Two of their sisters then tried to bring them back. They two at once began to weep along also.

Brigit commanded, "Let four of you go with your weapons, and look at nothing. Put your garments round your noses and mouths, and breathe only through those masks, not the air of the land. And do not take your eyes off our sisters." The four went, and brought back with them the other two, but while Caren was eager to get back to the boat, she could not convince Darren to come. "I cannot unsee it, though I would like to,"²⁰ she keened between wailing cries.



When the rest on the boat asked the three who returned what they had seen in the land, Caren spoke, "Truly, we are ignorant. We are innocent of what we saw and heard. We recall none of what they showed us." Thereafter they came rapidly from the island, which they called Governor's Island.

The Island of the Laughers.



They find another large island and as they rowed around it, a crowd on shore pointed and laughed at Brigit and her people,

but would not talk with them. Brigit and her people cast lots to see who should enter the island and explore it. The lot fell on the third of Brigit's brothers.

As soon as his feet touched the sod, he began to play and laugh continually along with the islanders, as if he had been by them all his life. His comrades waited a long time expecting him. When he did not return, they rowed round about the island to find him. He stood by the laughers, and was gaping at the boat like the others of the island. His brother called to him. But he would not converse with them, only look and laugh at them.

Thereupon they left him there, and their Island of Laughfulls came to be known as Lovell's Island.


Nut Island

Thereafter they found another island, and the sea rose up around it, making vast cliffs of water. As the boys of that island caught sight of them, they set to screaming at them and saying: "Tis they! It is they!" till they were out of breath. "Get them!"

From above, the boys threw large nuts, which thankfully missed and remained floating on the waves by them. Much of those nuts the crew gathered and took with them. Then they went away from the island and the screams ceased.

"Where are they now?" said the man who was after them. "They have gone away" said another band of them. "They are not so," said another band.

And Brigit knew not the people's name for their island, but from then on it has been known as Nut Island.



The Island of the threatening Smiths.

Now when they had been long voyaging on the waves, they saw far from them an island, and as they approached it, they heard the noise of blacksmiths smiting a mass of iron on their anvils with huge sledges, like the smiting of three or of four.

Now when they had drawn near it they heard one man asking of another, "Are they close at hand?" said he. "Yea," said the other. "Who," said a third man, "are these ladies you say are coming here?"

"Little girls they seem in a trough yonder," said he. "Trough indeed," said the second man.

When Brigit heard the smiths words, she said, "Let us retreat, but let us not turn the boat. Let's leave her stern to be foremost, so that they may not notice that we are fleeing." Then they rowed away backwards.

Again the same man who was bidding in the forge asked, "Are they near the harbour yet?" said he. "They are at rest," said the watchman: "they come not here and they go not there."

After what seemed a bit too long for his liking, he asked again, "What are they doing now?" said he. "I think," said the look-out man, "that they are running away; me seems they are further from the port now than they were some time ago."

Then the smith came out of the forge, holding in the tongs a huge mass of glowing iron, and he cast that mass after the boat into the sea; and all the sea boiled; but their boat did not; for they fled with all the strength of their faith and swiftly hurried forth into the great ocean. They dubbed the island Tinker's Island of Marble Head to shrink the smiths in their minds and forget the cruelty of their intentions.

The Magic Bridge and the Beautiful Host.

Thereafter they found another island. It was not large but boasted a fortress with a brazen door and fastenings. Uncannily, a bridge of glass rose by the portal. They learned to step carefully on the bridge, after a few falls backwards. Once upon the bridge, they could see a wonderous fountain of milk far below them.

As they looked down on the fountain, a man came out from the fortress, with a pail in his hand. Out of the lower part of the bridge he lifted a slab of glass, and filled the pail out of the fountain which flowed beneath the bridge, and went again into the fortress.

“Taét ferthigis fri Brigit” said Caren with a blush.

“Ahmra Bríg!” said the man, overhearing, and he closed the door behind him.

They knocked on the front door, striking the brazen fastenings, and the brass knocking sounded a sweet and soothing music, which sent them to sleep till the morrow morning.

When they awoke they saw the same man coming out of the fortress, with pail in hand, filling it under the same slab.


“But a housekeeper comes to meet Brigit!” said one of her brothers.

“Fierce powerful she is. Marvellously valuable do I deem Brigit!” said the man, shutting the door after him.

They knock again, and again the same melody lays them low then till the morrow. Three days and three nights they spent like this.

On the fourth day thereafter the man went to them. Beautiful,





truly. He wore a fionn mantle, with a circlet of gold round his golden hair. Two silver shoes on his shapely feet. A brooch of silver with studs of gold in his mantle, and a filmy, silken tunic next to his bán skin.

He was, moreover, shapely, fair, without blemish, without disgrace. You would think a shower of pearls had been cast into his head. You would think his mouth was a cluster of rowanberries. Whiter than snow was his nobly-built body. His cheek was like a mountain-foxglove. Like blue-bells were his eyes: like the sheen of a dark-blue blade his eyebrows and his eyelashes.

“My welcome to you, O fervent Brigit,” said he, “mother of Aed, daughter of faultless Cobtuch who was son of Ailill of Ard Ladrand, the castle of the two competitors in valour.”

“That is not my name,” she said.

“My welcome to you, O Brigit, the fair daughter of Fianamail, who forsook the child of the strong grace.”

“That is not my name,” she said.

“My welcome to you, O Brig daughter of Archa son of Carthend, consort of Domnall, who was a womanly woman. Your son was Aed Uairdnach rich in cattle. Often was he raiding men.”

“That is not my name,” she said.

“My welcome to you, O Brig Brethach, third blooming wife of Celtchar, expert in valour, known in the record of disgrace.”²¹

“That is indeed not my name,” she said.

“My welcome to you, O Brigit, poetess, daughter of the Dagda, the female sage, or woman of wisdom, the goddess whom poets adored for her protecting care, whose sisters were Brigit the

woman of leechcraft, Brigit the woman of smithwork, the breo-shaigit fiery arrow.”²²

“That is not my name,” she said.

“My welcome to you, O Bríg, mother of Ruadan, daughter of An Dagda, who keened for her son, who invented a whistle for signaling at night.

“That is not my name,” she said.”²³

“What is?” he asked, and then he named each one of the crew by their own name. “It is long since your coming here has been known and understood.”

Then he takes them with him into a great house near the sea, and hauls up their boat on shore. They saw before them in the house a couch for Brigit alone, and a couch for every three of her people. He brought them in one pan of food not unlike cheese or tàthi. He gave a share to every three. Every flavor that each desired in this they would find there. Then he tended Brigit apart. Afterwards he filled his pail under the same slab, and served liquor. A turn for every three he had. Then when he knew they had enough he stopped serving them.

“A fitting man for Brigit were this man,” said each of the men of her people.


Then the man, who gave his name as George, went away from them, with his one vessel and his pail.

Brigit’s brothers said to her, “Shall we say to him, would he, perchance, sleep with you?”

“I cannot remove all of your eyes.” Brigit replied.

When he returned, they said to him: “Will you not show affection





to Brigit, and sleep with her? And why not stay here tonight?"

George laughed at hearing such from a group of Christians, and he said "I see you know in truth where you are. Here I knew not, and have never known, what sin was. The word means nothing to me."

Brigit, shocked by her brothers' boldness and baffled by George demanded, "How is that possible, what you say?"

George replied in old verse:



We are from the beginning of creation
Without old age, without consummation of earth,
Hence we expect not that there should be frailty,
The sin has not come to us.

An evil day when the Serpent went
To the father to his city!
She has perverted the times in this world,
So there came decay which was not original to us.

By greed and lust they have slain us,
Through which they have ruined our noble race:
The withered body has gone west to Tir na Nóg,
An everlasting abode of pleasure.²⁴

Then he went from them to his house; and on the morrow, at the same hour, he comes with his tendance to them. And when they were drunken and sated, they say the same words to him.

"Tomorrow," said he, "an answer concerning that will be given to you." Then he went to his house, and they fell asleep on their couches. When they awoke, they were away in their boat on a crag; and they saw not the island, nor the fortress, nor the man, nor the place they had just been.



And they dubbed the lost fortress island *George's Island*. In time it would be a prison for traitors, and yet its hospitalities remained, though it had a reputation for ghosts.²⁵

The Island of the Wondrous Fountain.

On the third day after that they find another island, and here was a man standing inside a golden rampart that ringed the island, and covering the midst of it was soft white down.



As they came closer, they saw the man's clothes were simply the hair of his own body. Brigit went ahead, and she asked him what sustenance he used.



"Verily," said he, "there is an otherworldly fountain on this island. On Friday and on Wednesday whey or water is yielded by it. On Sundays, however, and on the solstice and equinox, good milk is yielded by it. But on the festivals of Samhain, Imbolc, Bealtine, and Lughnasa and also on the high tides of the year, it is ale and wine that are yielded by it."

Brigit returned to her people and said, "This island boasts a miraculous fountain, blessed by the Holy Mother. On Friday and on Wednesday whey or water is yielded by it. On the Sabbath, however, and on feasts of martyrs, good milk is yielded by it. But on the feasts of apostles, and of Mary and of John Baptist and also on the high tides of the year, it is ale and wine that are yielded by it."

At noon, then, there came to every one of them half a cake and a piece of fish; and they drank their fill of the liquor from the fountain of the island. And it cast them into a heavy sleep, from that hour till the morrow.

When they awoke, they saw above them the rushing waters of a cold stream, like a rainbow. They lay beneath the stream, and





yet did not get wet. Brigit poked the stream with her walking stick, and a large salmon fell out with a splash of water. Then from noon Monday till Sunday late afternoon they lay beneath the stream, poking their sticks upwards and collecting the great, enormous salmon tumbling from above out of the stream down upon the soil of the island. And all the island was full of the stench of the fish, for there was no one who could finish gathering them because of their abundance.

The hairy hermit came to them then, after three nights and three days of limitless hospitality, "Tis not The Dagda's Cauldron here on this island, and it stinks of fish now. That's too many salmon you've taken from the stream."

Taking the hint, Brigit and her crew took their leave of the island and its strange sustenance, and when they spoke of the island, they called it Bumpkin's Island in honor of its hairy hermit.


The Sea of Glass.

They sailed into a dense fog. They could not see the sky, but looking down they could see clear through the waters. They sailed a patch of sea which resembled gorm colored glass. Such was its purity that the sand of the sea bottom were clearly visible through it; and they saw no monsters nor beasts among the crags, but only the pure green sand.

For a long space of the day they were voyaging in that sea, and so great was its splendour and its beauty that it made them uneasy.

"I've never seen water this clean."

"Look! You can see to the bottom!"



"I see a forest under the harbor!"

"No! We're upside-down! Now the grey sea is above us and The Blue Hills are below!"

The Sea of Cloud and the Tree-python

They knew not which way was up nor down, but they rowed forth into another sea more like a cloud than glass, and it seemed to them that it would not support them or the boat. Then they saw down below stranger sights still, roofed strongholds and a beautiful country. So afraid was the crew of falling down, that they held tight to the boat, terrified to loosen their grip until they pass it by. Brigit gave song to her frightened crew of what she saw below, or above:

Islands dissolve and water remove
There is water at the bottom of the ocean!
Oh Lord let me go by, let the water hold me down
Oh Lord let us go by, water flowing underground.

A beautiful game, most delightful,
They play sitting at the luxurious wine,
Men and gentle women under a bush,
Without sin, without crime.

Along the top of a wood has swum
Our coracle across ridges,
There is a wood of beautiful fruit
Under the prow of our little skiff.

A wood with blossom and fruit,
On which is the vine's veritable fragrance,
A wood without decay, without defect,
On which are leaves of golden hue.

The crew leaned over the gunwale to glimpse the fragrant, fruit-laden, golden tree, but in the tree what do they see but a beast, huge, awful, monstrous!

The beast stretched forth his neck out of the tree and sets his head into the back of the largest in a passing herd of oxen and dragged it into the tree, and devours it in the twinkling of an eye. The flocks and their herdsmen flee away, at once; and when Brigit and her people saw that, even greater terror and fear seized them, for they supposed that they would never cross that mist-like sea without falling down through it.

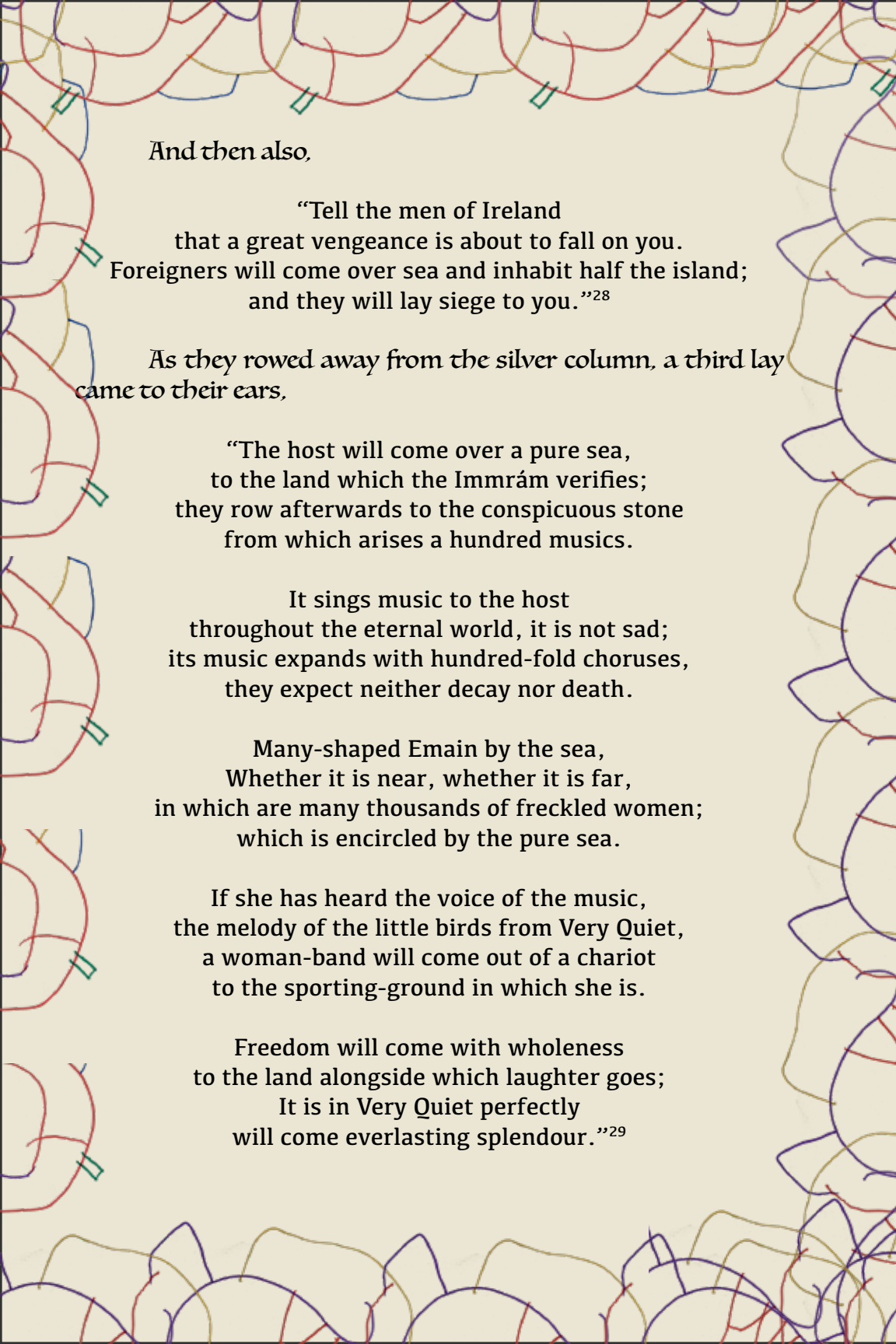
On the boat, some cursed, some prayed, some prayed then cursed then prayed and shed tears more. And the only thing that they could see was a pair of beast's eyes looking hungry.²⁶ And if they ever spoke of the place again, they gave it the name Shag Rocks.

The Silver Column and the Silver Net.

On the second day thereafter, there was shown to them a marvellous thing on the sea, a thing more wondrous than anything else, a great four cornered pillar of silver, in the midst of the sea, not a single sod of earth was about it but only the boundless ocean. And they saw not how deep its base was below in the ocean depths, or its summit above in the high clouds. A net of white bronze and silver from its summit drawn into the deep.

And then they heard a voice from the summit of yonder pillar, mighty, and clear, and distinct.

“Steadily then let Bríg row,
Not far to the Land of Women,
Emain with many hues of hospitality
Thou wilt reach before the setting of the sun.”²⁷



And then also,

“Tell the men of Ireland
that a great vengeance is about to fall on you.
Foreigners will come over sea and inhabit half the island;
and they will lay siege to you.”²⁸

As they rowed away from the silver column, a third lay
came to their ears,

“The host will come over a pure sea,
to the land which the Immrám verifies;
they row afterwards to the conspicuous stone
from which arises a hundred musics.

It sings music to the host
throughout the eternal world, it is not sad;
its music expands with hundred-fold choruses,
they expect neither decay nor death.

Many-shaped Emain by the sea,
Whether it is near, whether it is far,
in which are many thousands of freckled women;
which is encircled by the pure sea.

If she has heard the voice of the music,
the melody of the little birds from Very Quiet,
a woman-band will come out of a chariot
to the sporting-ground in which she is.

Freedom will come with wholeness
to the land alongside which laughter goes;
It is in Very Quiet perfectly
will come everlasting splendour.”²⁹

The Island Queen and her Daughters. The Island of Women.

After that they came to an island, and they beheld a rider on a racehorse coming to shore from its dún. A good, adorned horsecloth under her seat: she wore a gorm hood, and she wore a bordered corcra mantle. Gloves with gold embroidery on her hands; and on her feet adorned sandals. As she alighted, a girl at once took the horse. Then "Welcome is your arrival!" said she. "Come into the dún. The queen invites you."

"Hail Brigit," said the Queen, "the smile that smiles on you from the plain of Core's land; of each generation which it reared in turn Liffey of Lore has made ashes. Oh Brigit whose land I behold, on which each one in turn has moved about, your fame has outshone the fame of the king -- you are over them all. You will have everlasting rule with the king, apart from the land of your cemetery. Grand-child of Bresal son of Dian, sit safely enthroned, triumphant Brigit!"³⁰

Brigit's brothers cried out in hunger and terror at the Land of Women, and Brigit did not venture to go on shore, despite the welcome. The girl then threw a ball of thread to Brigit, straight at her face. Without thinking, Brigit caught the ball, and it clung to her palm. The thread of the ball was in the queen's hand, and she pulled their boat in towards the port.

"Need not your men's fear," the queen says, "you have seen their ways fail, and their fear freezes their way. Goodly decay of muddy war-bands, your violations are renounced." And then the queen recited this rosc:

Women without liberty
Legions of spear-points on every plain
Sad faces
Forests without succor
Sea without catch





Crowding of storms
surround bare estates
Emptying their dark towers
Tall places cannot endure
Each lake has tried
to flood past a multitude of kingdoms.
Unwelcomed consequences
Crying evades
every face
From unbelievable violations
violent crimes
Created in battles, your bodies!
Belief in spiked horses
Hostile truces
Tracherous princelings
Pitiful vanity obscuring
old high judgements
Judges' false edicts
Every man a betrayer
Every son a brigand
Born without hope, surviving
Sinister strange time
Through which the old will derange the young
daughter deranged.³¹

So they entered the dún, and they all bathed. The queen sat on one side of the house, and her twelve girls about her. Brigit sat on the other side, over against the queen, with her nine women and three men around her.

Then a platter of good food was brought to Brigit, and along with it a vessel of glass full of good liquor; and a platter and a vessel for every three of her people.

When they had eaten their dinner, the queen said this "How will the guests sleep?" said she. "However you say," said Brigit. "You shall delay your departure for a while," said she, "Let






each of you take their woman." For there were twelve canopied chambers in the house with good beds set.

So the twelve women and Brigit's twelve slept together, and Brigit slept with the queen. After this they slumbered till the morrow morning and began preparing to depart.

"Stay here," said the queen, "and you will never age further. Lasting life you shall have always. And what came to you last night shall come to you every night without any labour. If it ever rains, it rains beer. And you'd no longer be wandering from island to island on the ocean!" Brigit replied to the queen, "sensible reasons these may be, but I have a Christian duty to hospitality, to charity back on Érin."


"That is not hospitality nor charity you provide, merely necessity not withheld. Here, none want for the proper necessities of life: food, water, shelter, and care."

Brigit looked about the island, its people, and its splendor. She was so moved at their sight that she praised them aloud with poetry:





Without grief, without sorrow, without death,
Without any sickness, without debility,
That is the sign of Emain –
Uncommon is an equal marvel.

A beauty of a wondrous land,
Whose aspects are lovely,
Whose view is a fair country,
Incomparable is its haze.




'Many-shaped Emain by the sea,
Whether it be near, whether it be far,
In which are many thousands of holy women,
Which the clear sea encircles.





And then Bríg turned to the queen, “Tell us,” said Bríg, “how you are here. Have you any story?”

“Not hard to say, indeed,” she said. “There dwelt a good man in this island, the king of the island. To him I bore those twelve girls, and I was their mother. Then their father died, and left no heir. So I took the kingship of this island after him. Every day I go into Magh Mór, to judge the folk and to decide their disputes,” said she, “My story will be dull; peace to the heavens. It will be eternal peace.”




Then she spoke of her people, “Here, whatever they do, whether they listen to the harp or follow an enchanter, they do for the sake of joy, their joy in one another, or their joy in pride and movement; and even their battles are fought more because of their delight in a good fighter than because of any gain that is in victory. They live always as if they were playing a game.”³²


“But why must you leave us alone all day?” said Bríg. “Unless I go,” she said, “what happened to us last night will not come to us again. Only stay,” she said, “in your house, and you need not labour. I will go to judge the folk for your sake. You need not work nor worry.”



So Bríg and her twelve abode in that island for the three months of winter; and it seemed to them that those months were three years.

Home-sickness seized one of them, even Nechtan the daughter of Collbran. Her kindred kept praying to Brigit from afar that she should return to Ireland with her. The queen said to them their going would make them rue.



Then Bríg’s men were sated with pleasure, bored and aching for sport, labour, and the seas. “For we have been here for only three months, but it has seemed a full three years!” they told






Bríg. “If you will not leave with us then we will leave without you!”

“It is too long we are here,” said another of Brigit’s brothers. “Why do we not fare to our country?” said he. “What you say is not good,” said Bríg, “for we shall not find in our own country anything better than that which we find here.” He says, “And why not take what we find here back to our own country?” Without response, Bríg turned away, remembering the guardian cat. She walked away towards the Queen, and flowers bloomed along her path.

But over the days her people began to murmur greatly against Bríg, and they said this: “Great is the love which Brigit has for this woman. Let her, then, stay with her if she desires,” said they. “We will go to our country.”


“If you must leave, I cannot stay after you,” said Bríg.



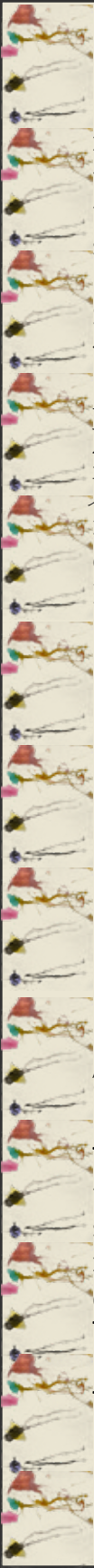
One day, then, the queen went to the judging where she worked every day. When she had gone, they went on board their boat. Then she comes on her horse, and flings a ball of yarn after them, and Bríg catches it, and it clung to her hand. A thread of the yarn was in her hand, and she draws the boat unto her, by means of the thread, back to the harbour.

So they stayed with her thrice three months more. Then Bríg’s twelve came to this consensus. “Of this we are sure, now,” said her people, “that great is Brigit’s love for this woman. Therefore she purposefully waited for the yarn that it may stick to her hand and that we may be brought back to the dún.”

“Fine then, let someone else attend the yarn,” said Bríg, “and, if it clings to their hand, let their hand be cut off.”



So they went on board their boat. The queen came and flung the ball of yarn after them. Another man in the boat catches it, and



it clings to his hand. Caren cuts off his hand, and it fell, with the yarn, into the sea. When he saw that, he at once began to wail and shriek, so that all the land was one cry, wail and shrieking.

So in that wise they escaped from her, out of the island of women.

Bríg couldn't be sure that they had not just sailed away from Paradise. She could be sure that it was not the Church's Paradise. This was a land from the oldest tales, and if it were not Paradise, Bríg did not believe she could imagine a sweeter one. She shrieked at first, she cried at last, in the end she wept. Bríg keened:³³


My childhood
What will I do?
You are gone from me
I've been left alone for years
I am alone, if I were early³⁴



Do not fall on a bed of sloth,
Let not thy intoxication overcome thee,
Begin a voyage across the clear sea,
So that you may reach the land of women.

The Island of the Intoxicating Fruits.

They were for a very long while afterwards driven about on the waves, till they found an island with a wild and fantastical sand beach. Thrown up it was by the power of winds and waves into the thousand wanton figures of a snow drift. And upon the dunes grew wild shrubs with marvelous fruits, great berries. They cast lots to see who should be the first to try the fruit.

The lot fell to Bríg. She squeezed some of the berries into a





vessel and drank the juice, and it cast her into a deep sleep from that hour to the same hour on the next day. And they knew not whether she was alive or dead, with the red foam round her lips.

Bríg dreamed she brought her son to a well, in which there were three trout that could not be caught, no matter how they hungered. Though summer, the water was wicked cold, as it is in every season. She dipped her red-haired son into the cold water, knowing not whether he would immediately be cured, or die.³⁵

Immediately on waking, she ordered “Gather you this fruit, for great is its excellence.” So they gathered, and they watered it down to moderate its power to intoxicate and send to sleep. Then they gathered all there was of it and were squeezing it and filling all their vessels before they rowed away from that island, which, not knowing the true name of the fruit, they called Plum Island.

The Return to Ireland.

Soon after, some of them saw a large crow there: “The crow is like the crows of Ireland!”

“Watch it” said Bríg, “and let’s follow.” They rowed that day till vespers. At nightfall they spot land like the land of Ireland. Bríg signaled shore – for she had invented a whistle for signaling at night – and it was people of Erin who signaled back.

Then they went until they arrived at a gathering at Srub Brain. The men asked of them who it was came over the sea. Said Bríg: “I am Bríg,” saith she. But they responded, “We do not know such a one, though Bríg is in our ancient stories.”

Then Nechtan leaps from them out of the coracle. As soon as she touched the earth of Ireland, she was a heap of ashes, as though

she had been in the earth for many hundred years.

‘Twas then that Bríg sang this quatrain:

“For Collbran’s iníon, great was the folly
To lift her hand against age,
Without any one casting a wave of pure water
Over Nechtan, Collbran’s iníon.”

Thereupon, to the people of the gathering Bríg told all her wanderings from the beginning until that time. And she wrote these quatrains in Ogham, and then bade them farewell. And from that hour her wanderings are not known.³⁶



Art by Niamh Jaehee Madden-Kim, age 3

My fabrications in the text are printed in this Luminari font. I have otherwise attempted to be as faithful to the language and events of the original stories as possible, while blending them to create this immram and contrast pre- and post-Christian Ireland. I also made changes for legibility in modern English, for brevity, to change names, and of course, to swap genders. - Jamie Madden

Afterword

I did not expect to spend this much time with Brigit.

My journey through Irish mythology and history began in earnest in 2020. Oddly enough, the *dindshenchas* brought me here. As a city planner, I was fascinated by their representation of how places change. I will forever be thankful to Isolde Ó'Brolcháin Carmody and Chris Thompson for their Story Archaeology podcast. They introduced me to Irish mythology through a feminist perspective, one rooted in the stories themselves.

When I sat down to create something for **'ÉIRÍ' Évoking Ireland's Resilient female Icons** my first intention was to blend and juxtapose Irish stories with Coast Salish stories from the land where I live today, on someone else's fourth green field, once called Babaqweb, rich in its own lore of place names.

Irish mythology and history teach me how we lived before we lived like this, and so allow me to imagine possible futures. America clings to the Anglo-Saxon / Christian 'good versus evil' worldview so prominent in their myths and the many movies based on them. As a Boston-Irish person, I revel instead in our ancestors' worldview of balance and imbalance, justice and injustice. They give me hope.

So, I found myself on a personal *immram*, aimlessly wandering the Corpus of Electronic Texts at celt.ucc.ie, rare book scans on archive.org, the endless collection at Duchas.ie, and what books I could find. I asked myself, how can I represent the evolution in worldview Irish mythology gave me? Which mythological woman could most use an *immram*? And, I ended up with Brigit. Together we left an acclaimed life rising from lowly status to uphold an oppressive system, to row through a journey of self-discovery seeing this world and ourselves through the mirror of the otherworld, until we were left, simply, with Bríg.

Jamie Madden, October 7, 2022. Babaqweb, occupied Duwamish Territory.

Endnotes

- 1 W. B. Yeats, Preface to Lady Gregory's Gods and Fighting Men: The Story of the Tuatha de Danaan and of the Fianna of Ireland, arranged and put into English by Lady Gregory [1904] http://www.ricorso.net/rx/library/authors/classic/Yeats_WB/prose/Lady_Gregory/AG_Myth2.htm
- 2 The first three sections follow the plot and events of: On the Life of St. Brigit, from Three Middle-Irish Homilies on the Lives of Saints Patrick, Brigit and Columba. Whitley Stokes First edition [36 pp.] [One hundred copies privately printed.] Calcutta (1877) <https://celt.ucc.ie/published/T201010/index.html>
- 3 The Straight Line is a Godless Line. 99% Invisible podcast <https://99percentinvisible.org/episode/the-straight-line-is-a-godless-line/>
- 4 Betha Brigitte. Three Middle-Irish Homilies. Whitley Stokes (ed), First edition [36 pp.] Privately printed Calcutta (1877) <https://celt.ucc.ie/published/G201010.html>
- 5 I augmented the genealogy from "On the Life of St. Brigit" with details from: Banshenchus: The Lore of Women. Books of Leinster, Lecan, Ui Maine, Ballymote; TCD H 3.17; Nr VII Kilbride Coll.; Brussels MS 2542 <http://www.maryjones.us/ctexts/banshenchus.html>
- 6 Bethu Brigitte. Donnchadh Ó hAodha (ed), First edition [One volume.] Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies Dublin (1978) <https://celt.ucc.ie/published/T201002/index.html>
- 7 Boyhood deeds of Fion mac Cumhaill – trans. Cross and Slover 1936
- 8 'Rennes' Prose Dindshenchas trans. Whitley Stokes
- 9 Bridget, Croghan Hill and the Bog of Allen. The Atlantic Religion March 20, 2014 <https://atlanticreligion.com/tag/cruachan-bri-eile/>
- 10 This incident appears in both Bethu Brigitte and On the Life of St. Brigit. It is one of several I believe show Brigit upholding the patriarchy, alongside the story of the man from Kells found in Bethu Brigitte (which follows in this text) and the incident of the devil in the plate that appears in both hagiographies (but omitted from this text for length)
- 11 Ephesians 6:5-11 and Isaiah 13:20

12 Nehemiah 5:5

13 The course of this immram is primarily based upon: The Voyage of Mael Duin. Tr. Whitley Stokes. Revue Celtique <https://archive.org/details/revueceltique09pari/page/n7/mode/2up>

14 Bethu Brigitte

15 Whitley Stokes, The Voyage of the Hui Corra in Revue Celtique. Volume 14, Paris, Émile Bouillon (1893) page 22–69 <https://celt.ucc.ie/published/T303030/index.html>

16 The Adventure of Cian's Son Teigue. Silva gadelica (I-XXXI) : a collection of tales in Irish with extracts illustrating persons and places by O'Grady, Standish Hayes, 1832-1915 ed. and tr. <https://archive.org/details/silvagadelicaixx02ogra/page/400/mode/2up?view=theater>

17 Good overview on this use of Boston's Long Island here: <https://www.bostonglobe.com/metro/2016/07/24/farm-that-once-benefited-homeless-now-run-fast-food-chain/V11f4CzUTaFyMnlG5AGEqN/story.html>

18 Lyric from Snow Owl. John Darnielle. https://themountangoats.fandom.com/wiki/Snow_Owl

19 Malaga Island History. <https://www.mcht.org/story/malaga-island-history/>

20 Lyric from: Posing in Bondage. Michelle Zauner. <https://genius.com/Japanese-breakfast-posing-in-bondage-lyrics>

21 Banshenchus: The Lore of Women

22 Cormac's glossary. Trans. O.T. Cuttere, 1868 https://archive.org/stream/sanaschormaicco00stokgoog/sanaschormaicco00stokgoog_djvu.txt

23 Cath Maige Tuired: The Second Battle of Mag Tuired, Author: [unknown], Elizabeth A. Gray <https://celt.ucc.ie/published/T300010/index.html>

24 Song of the Otherworld woman from: The Voyage of Bran: Meyer, Kuno (ed. and transl.), 1895, David Nutt: London, pp. 4-14 <https://archive.org/details/voyageofbranson01meyer>

25 Representative story on the George's Island ghost: <http://www.celebrateboston.com/ghost/georges-island-lady-in-black-ghost.htm>

- 26 Lyric from and apologies to The Pogues: A Pair of Brown Eyes. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A_Pair_of_Brown_Eyes
- 27 Meyer, Kuno (1895), [Voyage of Bran son of Febal to the land of the living](#), vol. 2 vols., Alfred Nutt (summary), London: D. Nutt; Nutt (1897), vol. 2. <http://www.maryjones.us/ctexts/branvoyage.html>
- 28 Whitley Stokes, The Voyage of Snedgus and Mac Riagla in Revue Celtique. Volume 9, Paris, Émile Bouillon (1888) page 14–25 <https://celt.ucc.ie/published/T303029/index.html>
- 29 The Text of Immram Brain Part 1: The Woman's Poem. Posted on 15/03/2014 by Isolde ÓBrolcháin Carmody <https://storyarchaeology.com/the-text-of-immram-brain-part-1-the-womans-poem/>
- 30 The Library: Tales and Poems of Brigid, The Mary of The Gael with other Summary Accounts of Her Life <http://cbladey.com/brigid/saintale.html>
- 31 Isolde ÓBrolcháin Carmody's translation of the Morrigan's poem from Cath Maigh Tuired (edited to add alliteration, analogy to our times) <https://storyarchaeology.com/the-morrigan-speaks-her-three-poems-2/>
- 32 W. B. Yeats, Preface to Lady Gregory's Gods and Fighting Men
- 33 Cath Maige Tuired: The Second Battle of Mag Tuired, Author: [unknown], Elizabeth A. Gray <https://celt.ucc.ie/published/T300010/index.html>
- 34 Verse from: Keen for a Dead Child, Kitty Gallagher. <https://alanlomaxarchive.bandcamp.com/track/keen-for-a-dead-child>
- 35 The Schools Collection <https://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/4922330/4870749/5079575>
- 36 Voyage of Bran son of Febal to the land of the living

