

'Gearan air America' – Am Bàrd MacIlleathain a bh' air a' bhruaich
'A Complaint about America' – The MacLean poet who was on the bank
(Mac-Talla VII, 11 (1898) p. 87)

'S muladach a tha mi
'M Murray Harbour 's mi gun Bheurla;
Cha b' ionann 's mar a b' àbhaist dhomh
Oir chleachd mi Ghàidhlig fhèin.
'S ann bhithinn fhèin 's mo nàbaidhean
A' mànnran greis le chèile,
'S chan fhaic mi 'n seo ach gàrlaoich
'S cha tuig mi 'n cànan fhèin.

*I am melancholy
Here in Murray Harbour and I with no English;
That's not how it used to be for me
For I used Gaelic itself.
I and my neighbours
Would prattle together a while,
And here I see only scoundrels
And I do not understand their language.*

Gur diombach dhe mo chàirdean mi
Na thàinig romham fhèin,
Nach d' innis cor an àite dhomh
'S mar a shàraich e iad fhèin;
A' dol tro choill' an fhàsaich seo
Gun chàil ach rathad 'blaise' (blaze);
O, 's muladach an t-àite seo
A' tàmh aig fear leis fhèin.

*I'm discontented with (resentful of) my relatives
Who came before myself,
That they didn't tell me about the state of the place,
And how it's worn them out.
Going throw this wilderness forest
With nothing but a blazed road;
O, this place is depressing
For one who lives alone.*

'S e th' ann a sin cùis smaointean
Mar a smaoinicheas sibh fhèin,
Cion cais(bh)eart agus aodaich
Air gach aon a bhios na fheum;
'S gun dad aig fear ri fhaotainn
Ach le shaothair às a' ghèig (geug);
O, 's cianail fad na faoileach (sic)

Leth a shaoghail ann gu rè.
That is a cause for concern (thoughts)
A you yourselves can imagine,
Lack of footwear and clothing
For everyone who is in need;
With nothing for one to acquire/get
But with his labour from off the branch;
O, it's terrible the length of the (depth) of winter
Half one's life here entirely.

Cha chuir mi fios gu bràth
A dh'iarraidh chàirdean no luchd-dàimh
A thighinn gu ruig' an t-àite seo
Gun tàladh ach mi fhèin

...

...

Cha tigeadh sibh a thàmhachd ann
Ma tha sibh aig ur cèill.

I'll never send word ('notice/knowledge')
Asking friends or relatives
To come out to this place
With no enticement but myself
...
...
You would not come to stay/reside here
If you're in possession of your wits (sense/reason).

'S nam b' aithne dhomh a sgrìobhadh
Chor 's gun innsinn dhuibh mo sgeul,
Gum fòghnadh leam an fhìrinn
Gus a dhìteadh, 's nach bu bhreug;
Ged dhèanadh fear a dhìcheall ann
'S an t-sìde a bhith ga rèir,
Cùis eagail fuachd an fhaoillich ann
Oir reothaidh daoine 's sprèidh.

If I knew writing (how to write)
In order that I could tell you all my tale,
The truth would be enough/would suffice for me
To condemn it, and that would be no lie;
Though a man should do his utmost here
And the weather reciprocate,
The cold of (the depth of) winter (am faoilleadh) is a cause of fear
For men and livestock freeze.

'S mòr gum b' fheàrr bhith 'n Alba

Ged as fearainn gharbh iad fhèin;
A h-uile taobh dham falbhainn
Ri cois na fairge rèidh;
Shiùbhlainn greis dhen anmoch ann
'S dh'fhalbhainn 's mi leam fhèin,
Gun eagal orm gum marbhte mi
Le garbh-bhiast dhubh nan geug.

*Far better to be in Scoltand
Though the lands are rough themselves,
Every direction (side) I'd go
Beside the calm sea;
I'd journey a while there in the evening
And I'd go off by myself
Not fearing that I'd be killed
By a wild black beast of the branches.*

'S ged thigeadh latha duathar oirnn
Le ceò is gaoth tuath 's gun ghrèin,
Cha b' ann an coille "shuampaichean"
A ghluaiseamaid ar ceum;
Ach biolair agus fuaranan
Is luachair ghorm an t-slèibh;
O, b' ait leam bhith 'n uair sin ann
A' buachailleachd na sprèidh.

*Though a dour day would come on us
With mist and north wind and without sun,
It was not in some 'swampy' forest
That we would take our step;
But watercress and springs
And green mountain rushes;
O I'd so enjoy to be there
At the herding of the cattle.*

B' e sin an t-àite bòidheach
Gheibhte neòinean ann dhan sprèidh,
Bhiodh driùchd air bhàrr an fheòir ann
A' toirt fàs dhan phòr sa Chèit;
Bhiodh cuthagan is smeòraichean
A' còmhradh air bhàrr gheug;
'S chan fhaic mi ri mo bheò an seo
Na seòrsachan sin fhèin.

*That was the beautiful place
Daisies would be got for the cattle,
Dew would be atop the grass*

*Giving growth to crops in May;
Cuckoos and thrushes would
Converse atop the branches;
And here I shall not see
Those exact kinds/species as long as I live.*

*Dh'fhalbh sinn às an àite sin
Gun d' ràinig sinn seo fhèin;
An dùil gum faighte fàbhar ann
'S nach biodh am màl cho treun;
'S tha "Peters" gar sàrachadh
'S mur tig am bàs air fhèin,
O, 's fheudar dhuinn gum fàg sinn seo
'S "Cunard" a tha na bhèist.*

*We went out from that place
And arrived in this one here;
Expecting some favour could be got
And the rent not be so harsh;
And "Peters" is harassing us
And unless death come on him
O, we must leave here
And "Cunard" he is a beast.*

*O, "Peters", 's truagh nach caochladh e
'S gun dreadh (sic) a smaoin don eug;
'S mura seall an t-aon-fhear air
Bidh obair daor dha fhèin;
A' spursaigeadh nan daoine bochd
'S a' cur nam maor nan dèidh;
Och, gheibh e fhathast dìoladh
Far nach faod a chur an cèill.*

*O, "Peters", it's a pity he wouldn't die
And that his thought would go to death;
And if the one-man will not look on him (God)
His work will cost him dearly;
Driving out the poor people
And putting the bailiffs after them;
O, he will yet get retribution/payment
Where it can't be put to use.*

