

# *Birds of Celtic Twilight*

A NOVEL IN VERSE

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Birds of Celtic twilight. A fen, a sea, strong wind  
and her Maggie, rough-hewed, interior, brash. Rocks,  
her secret Gaelic love. Windiness alone, above all  
else in bleeding.

Pull her nightly to the tall dark cliff. A rain of birds,  
raptors and the snouts of sea animals.



A chilly day. Wind cracks the fog banging on chimes.

A lone owl hoots. Gregorian notes crash riotously as  
the wind howls, bumps against the dirty glass.

She stood shivering, gazing at the scrawny hill.

There a seal there a gull amidst the tide, slapping the  
coastline. Full-to-the-brim it tumbles leaving its echo-  
roar to disturb or not the flock that just landed. A palish  
sunrise hacks at the cold day.

She stalked the edge, the very precipice of the universe.  
(Such were her thoughts as she walked this dawn, next  
to the water, singing.)



It wasn't clear what kind of day it'd be. Dune flowers  
relaxed, softly swaying. She faced the sea, its moody  
blundering.

Gradual swelling, then long, windy nothingness. Raw-  
ness climbed the cliff. The gulls' slow arcs above the  
graying clouds like half-dried sheets, soppy, not crisp.

Her thoughts fell to the boy who knew now that he  
loved the girl who, the day before, had married a man  
she didn't love, had never loved. Her mother saw his  
yearning. She couldn't stop her daughter, she felt, so  
she tried to stop the boy from making a fool of himself.

Facing the moony shore she shook her finger at its  
whitecaps, which plunged regardless. So much pain,  
*yet pfumph*—there they go.

Later she stood, backhanding crumbs from around  
her chin, swishing them from her bodice. Stars shone  
brilliant above the sleepy sea. She walked out into the  
night, the full moon reeking, fire flowers flitting  
through the bountiful air and sky. Crunch crunch

crunch. Her footsteps on the gravelly path down to the beachhead.



The birds were silent when she woke dizzy with her violent dream. She lay there listening.

The slappy sea. Pounding, roaring, lashing out its non-message. She lay awake, sour breath melting salt-sea night.

Rain and sea, a hovering mist cycling and enclosing her world. (She felt like an island.)



DEAD. This manner of speaking referred now to his father, the man who saw God twice.

First God told him to paint. Later God told him to stop.

Does anyone do more?

She woke into the brilliant morning knowing the answer.



A high sun shone. So bright. So bright that its rays struck the coil of a road up the green-capped blindingly-glistening hill. Cows grazed with their backs toward it.

She stripped her toast of crust and buttered it lavishly. Her *hoya*'s blossoms twirled along the ledge, gulping the sunny sun. She sipped her coffee, dazed, staring out, comforted by her tangled dream that wrung from her her terror, twisted it out like a wringer twists out dirty soapy water.

The room was quiet. The slight jump of the wall-clock's hands. The tipping wind on her outdoor flowers.

Tick-tock. Tick-tock. She felt paralyzed. As if the significant click, the one to which her life had for years looked forward, had taken place in the dark, during her dream.

The intensity of the brawl still present in her body.