



Arthur Cormack

BUANAS

SKYECD58

Faclan nan Òran agus Eadar-theangachaidhean

Songs Lyrics and Translations

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Cha tig Mòr mo bhean dhachaigh

My wife Morag will never return home

Arthur Cormack (Vocals); **Ingrid Henderson** (Piano); **Rachel Walker** (Backing Vocals); **Angus MacKenzie**; Whistles; **Blair Douglas** (Accordion)

In this song a bereaved father mourns the mother of his child. He lulls the child gently, observing that while everything in nature will continue to renew, his wife did not have a long life. Often sung to the tune of *Lochaber No More*, I picked up this tune from Rita and Mary Rankin in Toronto in 1991. When we were recording this, I asked Angus MacKenzie of Dàimh, originally from Mabou, to play whistles and when I told him about the tune he reckoned Rita and Mary might have got it from his late mother, Maureen, herself a Rankin from Mabou.

Cha tig Mòr mo bhean dhachaigh
Cha tig Mòr mo bhean ghaoil
Cha tig màthair mo leanaibh
Nochd cha laigh i ri m' thaobh

*My wife Morag will never return home
Morag, my beloved wife will not return
The mother of my children
Will not lie by my side tonight*

Èist, mo leanaibh, gu sàmhach
Cuimhnich thusa mar thà
Tha do mhàthair sa chlachan
'S ann am achlais dhut fàs

*Listen quietly, my baby,
Remember how it is
Your mother is in the graveyard
You will grow up in the crook of my arm*

Tha an crodh-laoigh anns an eadrach
'S iad a' freagairt nan laogh
Tha mo Mhòr-sa 'n Dùn Bheagain
'S cha fhreagair i m' ghlaodh

*The cattle are in the milking-fold
Lowing in answer to the calves
Morag lies in Dunvegan
And will not answer my call*

Ged a gheibhinns' air m' òrdugh
Stoc is stòras on rìgh;
B' annsa Mòr a thighinn dhachaigh
Gu laighe ri m' thaobh

*Though I would get by order
Cattle and riches from the king
I would far rather Morag were with me
Lying by my side*

Fàsaidh bàrr air an fhiùrain
Agus duilleach air craoibh
Fàsaidh fras air an luachair
Ged nach d' fhuair mo bheans' aois

*Flowers will form on the branch
The trees will grow leaves
Seed will appear on the rushes
But my wife did not have a long life*

Ged a dhèanainn fhìn pòsadh
Mar bu chòir dhomh nad dhèidh
O cha togadh mo chridhe
Ri fìdheall nan teud

*Although I should remarry
As I ought to with you gone
My heart will not lift
To the sound of the stringed fiddle*

Mo Mhàiri Mhìn

My Tender Mary

Arthur Cormack (Vocals); **Iain Smith** (Mandolin & Backing Vocals); **Blair Douglas** (Piano and Accordion); **Rachel Walker** (Backing Vocals); **Allan Henderson** (Fiddle); **Eric Cloughley** (Guitar & Drums)

A love song written by Blair Douglas and set in Portree, using his childhood haunts such as Sgorrybreck and Ben Cracaig as a backdrop. Although I know Blair better than most people, his muse for this particular song remains unknown!

A Mhàiri bhòidheach, 's a Mhàiri mhìn
Is tu mo ghràdhais is m' eudail bhinn;
Seach gach gruagach, mo roghainn fhìn
A Mhàiri bhòidheach, a Mhàiri mhìn.

*My beautiful Mary and my tender Mary
You are my darling and my treasure
Above all the girls, you are my choice
My beautiful Mary, my tender Mary*

Mi 'm shuidh' sa chiaradh, aig ceann a' chidh'
Oidhche Dhùbhlachd, 's am bàgh fo shith;
Mo shùil ri Cràthcaig, 's an Sgorra ghrinn
Ach na mo smuaintean, tha mo Mhàiri mhìn.

*Sitting at dusk, by the quayside
A December evening, the bay calm;
My eye is on Ben Chrachaig and Scurrybreac
But my thoughts are on my beautiful Mary*

Gheall thu dhòmhsa do làmh 's do chridh'
Ach bha do bhriathran, gun bhlàths 's gun bhrìgh;
'S ged bha mo dhùilsa gum biomaid pòst'
Bha 'n dris 's an droigheann an cois an ròis.

*You promised me your hand and your heart
But your words were without warmth and substance
Although I hoped that we would be wed
There were thorns and briars on the rose*

Am fois na h-oidhche, 's mi leam fhìn
Bidh mo smuain ort, a Mhàiri mhìn;
A Mhàiri bhòidheach, ged mheall thu mi
Cho fad 's is beò mi, bidh 'n gath nam chridh'.

*In the quiet of the night, when I am alone
I think of you, my tender Mary
My beautiful Mary, you deceived me
As long as I live there will be a thorn in my heart*

Thàinig maor na mo dhàil

A factor came to me

Arthur Cormack (Vocals); **Mary Ann Kennedy** (Harp)

One of the saddest but most beautiful of songs, written by Neil MacPhee from Vatersay in two sections. Four verses were written in February 1925 when his wife died with the remaining verses written on the anniversary of her death in February 1926. It was sung originally to the tune of *Iain Ghlinn Cuaich* but the bàrd's daughter, Theresa MacNeill, gave the words to Kenna Campbell in the 1980s and asked her to compose a tune especially for the song, the one I sing here, with thanks to Kenna for teaching it to me.

Thàinig maor na mo dhàil
Le teann òrdan gum pàighinn cis,
Gun grad libhriginn dha
Beanag lurach an nàdair ghrinn;
Thug e dhomh airson òl
Deoch a' mhulaid a dhòirt mum chridh',
Dh'òl mi cupan a' bhròin
Dh'fhosgail tobraichean deòir mo chinn

*A factor came to me
With a sharp order to pay a tax
Immediately I was to deliver to him
My beautiful wife of the most lovely nature
He gave me to drink
A cup of sadness that poured on my heart
I drank the cup of sorrow
And wells of tears opened*

Tha bean chomain mo chridh'
Air a tasgadh sa chill gun deò
'S mise 'g acain na dith
Ged nach leasaich e mi ri m' bheò
Ro mhath choimhlion thu ghaoil
Cuspair beatha gach aon dhe d' sheòrs',
Ionad màthar is mnaoi
Dàrna cathair fo Rìgh na Glòir.

*My beloved wife
Has been deposited lifeless in the grave
I bemoan her loss
Although this can never be changed
You fulfilled to perfection, my love
The life roles expected of you
As a mother and a wife
You sit in the chair next to God*

Dh'fhàg thu dìleab nad dhèidh
Ged nach airgead, no sprèidh, no nì
Triùir do phàistean beag òg

*You left a legacy behind you
Though not money nor cattle nor worldly things
But three of your young children*

Nach robh riamh na bu bhòidhch' san tìr
Ged nach ceannaich an t-òr
Tochra thug thu le còir dhomh fhìn
Chaneil comhartachd dhòmhs'
'S ann a mheudaich mo bhròn ri linn.

Bhon a thriall thu don uaigh
Tha dubh iargain a luaidh gam chlaoidh
Chaidh a' bhliadhna mun cuairt
Cha do thiorraich mo ghruaidh gad chaoidh
Ach 's e nì tha gam chràdh
'S a' cur saighdean an sàs am thaobh
Freagairt ceistean do phàist'
"Cuin a thig i, mo mhathair chaomh?"

Làmh bu dèanadach feum
Ceann na riaghailt bu ghèire tùr
Nàdur foighdneach, rèidh
Cridhe carantach, cèilidh, ciùin;
Modhail, sìobhalt do bheul -
Ribheid bhinn an àm gleusadh ciùil
Com bu shubhailceach beus
Dha robh màthair Mhic Dhè na h-iùil.

B' òg a fhuair mi thu ghaoil
Leis an t-Sacramaid naoimh air làimh
'N dèidh a seulachadh dhuinn
Ann an ìobairt na h-Aifrionn-bhainns'
Ged a shaoileadh le càch
Gun sgaoileadh am bàs am bann
Cha do dh'fhuasgail e dha
Tha gach dual dhe gu làidir, teann.

*There were none more beautiful in the land
Though gold did not buy
The dowry that assigned you to me
There is no comfort for me
My sadness has grown as a result*

*Since you went to the grave
Black sorrow has exhausted me, my darling
A year has passed
But my cheek has not dried lamenting you
But the thing that pains me
And has placed an arrow in my side
Is answering your children's questions:
"When will my darling mother come?"*

*A resourceful and useful hand
A head filled with great sense and wisdom
A patient, calm nature
A charitable, sociable, peaceful heart
A polite, civil tongue –
Sweet reeds in times of singing
A heart of virtuous conduct
Mary, Mother of God, was her guide*

*I was young when we were married, love,
By the Holy Sacrament
Sealed for us
In the offering of the Wedding Mass
Though others might think
That the ties would be broken in death
They have not been opened
Each strand stands strong and tight*

Cnoc nan Craobh

The Hill of the Trees

Arthur Cormack (Vocals); **Mary Ann Kennedy**, **Gillebride Macmillan**, members of **Inverness Gaelic Choir** (Backing Vocals)

This song is one of many by Dòmhnall Ruadh Caimbeul, Donald Campbell. This one was written for his wife, Morag Campbell - Mòr nigh 'n Uilleam Bàin, referred to in the song. Several of Dòmhnall Ruadh's songs have been recorded by the Campbells of Greepe, relatives of Dòmhnall Ruadh. This one was given to me by a member of that illustrious family, Ann Michie, in the late 1980s when she was living in Camustianavaig and the Gaelic tutor for Portree Gaelic Choir.

Èirich 's tiugainn, o mo chailin
Èirich 's tiugainn, o mo ghaol,
Èirich 's tiugainn leam a chuachag,
'S bheir sinn cuairt gu Cnoc nan Craobh

*O rise up and come my darling,
O rise up and come my love
Rise up and come with me my pretty one
We'll take a walk to Cnoc nan Craobh (The Hill of the Trees)*

Ged a bhiodh gaoth fhuar a' Mhàirt ann,
Sneachda bàn air bhàrr a' fhraoich,
Shuidhinn greis air Cnoc na h-Àirigh,
'S Mòr Nigh'n Uilleam Bàin ri m' thaobh

*Though the cold March wind is blowing
And the white snow lies on the heather
I would sit for a while at the Hill of the Shieling
With Marion, fair William's daughter by my side*

Mheall is char thu mi le d' bhriathran,
'S thug thu mi le d' bheul a thaobh;
'S cha mhòr nach deacha mi gad iarraidh
'S gun mi fichead bliadhna dh'aois

*You teased and charmed me with your words
You beguiled me with your talk
I almost asked for your hand in marriage
Before the age of twenty*

Chì thu bhanarach 's a buachaill,

You will see the milkmaid and her herdsman

Buaraichean aca ri 'n taobh,
'S na laoigh bheaga ruith mun cuairt orr'
Sìos is suas mu Chnoc nan Craobh

*With the cow-fetters beside them
The young calves running round them
Up and down about Cnoc nan Craobh*

Nuair bu dlùithe 'm fraoch sam barrach,
'S duilleach a' falach nan craobh,
'S tric a ghabh mi sgrìob le m' annsachd,
Null 's a nall mu Chnoc nan Craobh

*When the heather and the branches were at their thickest
And the leaves completely covered the trees
I would often take a walk with my beloved
Back and forth around Cnoc nan Craobh*

Tha 'n t-Easa Mòr bha 'n Àirigh Bhàidein,
Tighinn a-mhàin o ghleann a' fhraoich,
'G uisgeachadh nan lusan àlainn
Timcheall Gàradh Chnoc nan Craobh

*The Great Waterfall at Àirigh Bhàidein,
Flowing down from the heather glen,
Watering the beautiful plants
Around Cnoc nan Craobh's garden*

'S iomadh dheònaicheadh bhith tàmh ann,
Thig iad o 'n t-sàl is o 'n fhraoch,
'Bheachdaireachd air obair nàdair
Timcheall gàradh Chnoc nan Craobh

*Many people would wish to live there
They come from the sea and the heather
To contemplate nature's work
Around Cnoc nan Craobh's garden*

An nochd gur faoin mo chadal dhomh *Tonight, sleep is futile for me*

Arthur Cormack (Vocals); **Chaz Stewart** (Guitar); **Blair Douglas** (Accordion); **Allan Henderson** (Fiddle)

I first heard the melody for this song on the wonderful *Skyedance* album by Alasdair Fraser and Paul MacLis and had the pleasure of singing the song with Alasdair at a concert in Santa Cruz towards the end of his Valley of the Moon Fiddle Camp in California where I taught Gaelic singing in 1996. The words in this version are from *Sàr-obair nam Bàrd Ghàidhealach* although there are other versions, for example in Keith Norman MacDonald's Gesto Collection. The writer is unknown.

An nochd gur faoin mo chadal dhomh
Sior acain na bheil bhuam,
Do chomunn le deagh chaoimhnealachd
Dh'fhàg mi bho'n raoir fo ghruaim;
Gur tric mi ann an aisling leat,
Gach uair d' an dèan mi suain;
Trom-osnach nuair a dhùisgeas mi
Air bhith gad ionndrainn bhuam

*Tonight, sleep is futile for me
Bemoaning what I don't have
Your kindly company
Left me sorrowing last night
I often dream about you
Each time I sleep
Sighing heavily when I awake
Missing your presence*

Air bhith dhomh 'g ionndrainn suairceis bhuam,
S tu leagh mo shnuadh 's mo bhlàth,
O rinn do ghaol-sa fuarachadh
Cha dualach dhomh bhi slàn;
'S ann riut a leiginn m' uireasbhaidh,
Air ghleus nach cluinneadh càch,
Dh'fhàg d' aogasg mi cho muladach,
'S gur cunnart dhomh am bàs

*Missing your gentleness
Which fused with my smile and my affections
Since your love has cooled
I cannot survive
I would reveal my imperfections
In confidence to you
Your beauty has left me so sad
That my life is in danger*

Is mòr a tha do ghibhtean ort
A tha gun fhios do chàch;
Corp seang gun fheall gun fhalachd ann
Gur cas thu mhealladh gràidh;
'S a liughadh òigear furanach
A thuilleadh orm-sa 'n sàs,
D' an tugadh d' aodann faothachadh,
'S an t-aog gan cur gu bàs

*Great are your gifts
Unseen by others
A slender body lacking deceit and malice
You beguile many, my love
There are scores of welcoming young lads
Apart from me
Who have rejoiced in your beauty
And are now facing death*

Tha bean do neòil am braithreachas
Mar eala bhàn nan speur;
Gur binne leam bhith mànràn leat

*A woman of your complexion is like
The fair swan of the skies
It was sweeter for me to whisper lovingly to you*

Na clàrsaichean nan teud;
Is tha do thlachd is d' àillidheachd,
A' cur do ghràidh an cèill;
Gur cosmhail thu ri àilleagan,
D' an umhlaich càch gu lèir

Thug mise gaol da-rìridh dhut
Nuair bha thu d' nionaig òig;
Is air mo làimh nach dìbrinn e
Air mhìle punnd den òr;
Ged fhaighinn fhìn na chrùintean e
Ga chunntadh dhomh air bòrd;
Cha trèiginn gaol na ribhinne
A tha 'n Ìle ghlas an fheòir

Ged is socrach mo leaba

Arthur Cormack (Vocals)

Written by Gilleasbaig Ruadh Mac Mhic Dhòmhnaill, Archibald MacDonald known as 'An Ciaran Mabach'. This son, also known as *B' annsa cadal air fraoch* is said to have been written while the bàrd was in Edinburgh attending doctors after injuring his leg. Places in Skye, Uist and Lewis are mentioned in the song as he misses the opportunity to be out in the hills and moors he loved so much. This song was given to me by Allan MacDonald, Glenuig, but was also sung by Rev William Matheson.

Ged is socrach mo leaba, b' annsa cadal air fraoch,
ann an lagan beag uaigneach 's bad de luachair rim thaobh;
nuair a dh'èirinn sa mhadainn, shiubhal ghlacagan caoin
na bhith triall chon no h-Abaid 'g èisteachd glagraich nan saor.

Chan eil agam cù gleusta, chan eil feum agam dha;
cha suidh mi air bac, an sliabh fada bho chàch;
cha leig mi mo ghadhar chaoidh am faghaid an t-Sròim Bàin,
's cha sgaoil mi mo luaidhe 'n Gleann Ruadhain gu bràth.

'S oil leam càradh na frìthe 's mi bhith 'n Lite nan long -
eadar ceann Sàile Shìofoirt 's Rubha Ghrianaig nan tonn,
agus Uisinis riabhach san tric a dh'iarr mi 'n damh donn,
bhith fo bhinn aig na bodaich dham bu chosnadh cas chrom.

Tha Loch Lacasdail fhèin 's gun fiù an fhèidh air a' chlàr
far an cromadh na ceudan 'n àm dhan ghrèin dhol mu làr;
Loch nan Uidhean gan trèigsinn far 'n tric am b' fheudar
dhaibh snàmh
's Gile Bheag air a' Chaorainn 's mu dhà thaobh a' Chùirn
Bhàin.

'S binne leam na guth fìdhle ged a sgrìobt' i gu cruaidh
crònan mullach na Caillich mun iadh gailleann is fuachd
agus mullach Coir' Ìle 's brèagha frith san taobh tuath,
's a' ghlas-ghaoth nam aodann gun a faotainn mun cuairt.

'S e mo ghràdh am fear buidhe nach dèan suidhe mun bhòrd,
nach iarradh ri cheannach pinnt leanna no beòir;
uisge-beatha math dùbailt 's e nach dùraigeadh òl -

*Than to listen to the stringed harp
And your pleasure and beauty
Portray your love perfectly
You are like a treasured jewel
To which others would bow down*

*I gave my true love to you
When you were a young girl
And I swear that a thousand pounds of gold
Would not change my mind
Though I would have the gold in crowns
Counting it at a table
I wouldn't forsake my love for the girl
In green grassy Islay*

Though my bed is comfortable

*Though my bed is comfortable, I'd rather sleep in the heather
in a lonely little hollow with a clump of rushes beside me
I would rise in the morning, to traverse pleasant hollows
rather than travel to the Abbey listening to the carpenters' clamour*

*I have no quick-witted dog, I have no need of such
I won't sit on a peatbank or on a moor far away from everyone
I'll not release my hound in the chase at Sròim Bàin
And I'll never again fire a lead bullet in Glen Ruadhain*

*I am vexed by the thought of the deerforest while I'm in Leith of
the Ships
Between the head of Loch Seaforth and Greenock Point of the
waves
And brindled Uisinis where I often hunted the stags
Instead I'll be with the old men who make a living from the plough*

*Not even Loch Laxdale has deer on its plain
where hundreds would descend as the sun went down
Loch nan Uidhean has forsaken them where so many of them
once swam
And at Gile Bheag on the Caorann on each side of Cairn Ban*

*Sweet to me is the sound of the fiddle though she be robustly
played
The croon on the summit of the Cailleach in times of storm and
cold
and the top of Islay's corry and the beautiful forests in the north
The grassy wind in my face slowing my pace*

*My love is the dun-faced man who wouldn't sit at a table
Who would not order a pint of beer or ale
A double-distilled whisky he would dare not drink*

b' fheàrr leis dibh' às an fhuaran 's uisge luaineach an lòn.

He would rather drink the restless water from the stream

'S i mo ghràdh a' bhean-uasal dha nach d' fhuaras riamh lochd,
nach iarradh mar chluasaig ach gualainn nan cnoc;
's i nach fhuilingeadh an t-sradag bhith air a lasadh ri corp –
och, a Mhuire, mo chruaidh-chas nach d' fhuair mi thu nochd.

*My love is the noble lady who was never at fault
who would ask for no pillow but the shoulder of the hill
She would not bear the shot that would spark on her flank
O Virgin Mary, woe is me that I did not find you tonight*

Chuir mi 'n gunn' air a' choltair, chaoidh cha tog mi ri àird -
's ann a bhios mi aig baile dèanamh arain le sàmh;
nì mi balt a' chruaich-mhònadh, 's math an còmhnadh an càl,
's fòghnaidh siud airson sithne, 'n gille-bride breac, bàn.

*I've put the gun in its sling, I will never again make for the heights-
I'll be at home making rotten bread
I'll edge the peatstack, there's succour in cabbage
Enough of venison, there's always the oystercatcher*

Fàgail Ghlaschu

Leaving Glasgow

Arthur Cormack (Vocals); **Ingrid Henderson** (Piano); **Angus MacKenzie** (Whistles); **Paul Jennings** (Percussion)

Ruairidh Campbell, Ruairidh mac Iain mac Dhòmhnail 'ic Iain Bhàin, known as 'Ròidseag' and 'The Case' was born in Loch Carnan, South Uist on Christmas Day 1900. He came from a family of renowned bards and, by all accounts, did well in school. In common with many young men of that time, Ruairidh went to sea. It was tough life at that time with long hours, poor food and a shortage of water on voyages that often lasted a year or more. Ruairidh died suddenly in London in 1947 but left a great legacy in his songs including this one and *A Pheigi a ghràidh* (track 12).

An àm bhith fàgail Ghlaschu air madainn mhoich Dimàirt
Bha m' inntinn trom fo airtneal 's mi cho fad bho thìr mo
ghràidh,
A' fàgail mo luchd-eòlais anns a' bhaile mhòr a' tàmh
Na deòir nan sruth om shùilean 's mi cur cùlaibh ri mo
ghràidh.

*Leaving Glasgow early on a Tuesday morning
My mind was heavy with sorrow and I'm far from the land that I
love
Leaving my acquaintances who live in the city
The tears streaming from my eyes as I turn my back on my love*

Chan iongnadh ged bhiodh cianalas am-bliadhna orm is
gruaim
Tha falt mo chinn air liathadh, 's chan eil iall dheth a bhios
buan,
Is ged nach eil mi aosta thàinig caochladh air mo shnuadh
On dh'fhàg mi an t-eilean àlainn, Uibhist àrda nam beann fuar.

*It's no surprise that I feel homesickness and gloom this year
My hair has greyed and hardly a strand will remain
And though I am not old, my appearance has changed
Since I left the beautiful island, Uist of the cold, high mountains*

'S e Uibhist tìr as bòidhche leam tha 'n-diugh fo neòil nan
speur
Gur tric a shnàmh an ceò air a' Bheinn Mhòr 's mu Sgor an
Fhèidh
'S a-staigh gu gualainn Mhaireabhal, far 'm minig 'n do thàmh
an sprèidh
'S bu tric a thug mi ruaig ann 's b' e mo luaidh bhith às an
dèidh.

*Uist is the most beautiful place that lies beneath the skies
The mist often swam on Beinn Mhòr and Sgor an Fhèidh
And in to the shoulder of Maireabhal where the cattle often used
to rest
I often took a stroll there, I would love to be gathering the cattle
now*

Ach, b' fheudar Uibhist fhàgail 's tighinn a thàmh am measg
nan Gall
'S e dh'fhag a-nochd sa bhàta mi 's i mach air bhàrr nan tonn
An fhairge 's i na smùid agus an stiùir agam nam làimh
'S a cùrsa o Cheann Èirinn leinn gu Buenos Aires thall.

*But I had to leave Uist and go to live amongst lowlanders
That's what left me on the boat tonight, out on the high seas
The sea angry and my hand on the rudder
Setting our course from the tip of Ireland across to Buenos Aires*

Nuair thèid mi chun na cuibhle, nuair bhios an oidhche fuar,
Gur tric a bhios nam inntinn-sa 'n aon nì don tug mi luaidh
Bu mhath dhomh bhith nam chiobair seach bhith mach fo
bhinn nan stuadh
Gu faighinn cadal socair dh'aindeoin osnaichean a' chuain.

*When I'm at the wheel on a cold night
Often in my mind my one love
I would rather be a shepherd than be at the mercy of the waves
Then I could get a restful sleep despite the sighing of the sea*

Ach tha gillean gasta innte cho math 's a dh'fhàg an tìr
Tha Dòmhnall ann is Alasdair, tha Cailean ann 's mi fhìn
An Uibhist nam beann àrda 's ann a dh'àraicheadh na suinn
'S gun cluinnte fuaim na Gàidhlig 's iad gu h-àrd air bhàrr a'
chruinn.

*But there are lads on board as fine as ever left the shore
There's Donald and Alasdair, Colin and myself
In Uist of the high mountains the heroes were reared
And Gaelic can be heard from high up the mast*

Ach sguiridh mi den dàn seo, chan eil mo chàileachd ann,
Chan eil mi na mo bhàrd, cha deach na tàlantan nam cheann
Ma 's e gu bheil e 'n dàn dhomh tilleadh sàbhailt innte nall
Gun gabh mi bàt' na smùide 's thèid mi null gu Tìr nam Beann.

*But I'll bring this song to a close, I'm not in the mood for it
I'm not a poet, those talents weren't given to me
If it is my destiny to safely return across the sea
I'll take the steamer and head across to the Land of the Mountains*

Latha dhomh sa Chuilthionn chreagach *I was one day in the rocky Cuillin*

Arthur Cormack (Vocals); **Blair Douglas** (Piano); **Rachel Walker** (Backing Vocals)

This writer of this song is unknown but I got it from Allan MacDonald, Glenuig, when he asked me to sing in a concert at the Edinburgh Festival in 2000. It tells the story of the Battle of Coire na Creiche in Skye in 1601- the culmination of a year of feuding between the Clan MacLeod of Dunvegan and Clan Donald of Sleat, which ended with a MacDonald victory in Coire na Creiche on the northern slopes of the Cuillin hills. It was the last clan battle in Skye.

Latha dhomh sa Chuilthionn Chreagach

I was one day in the rocky Cuillin

Hoireann o gù o gu eile
O hi ù a o hug eile
Hoireann o gù o gu eile

*Hoireann o gù o gu eile
O hi ù a o hug eile
Hoireann o gù o gu eile*

Chuala mi 'phìob mhòr ga spreigeadh

I heard the great pipes stirring

Bha nam chuimhne ged bu bheag mi

I remembered, though I was but young

Latha bha chreach an Dùn Bheagan

The day of Dunvegan's destruction

Bha beul sìos air luchd nan leadan

Death befell those of the long flowing hair

Bha làrach am bròg san eabar

Their footprints were in the bloody mire

B' e Clann Dòmhnail a rinn a leagail

It was Clan Donald that knocked them down

Màiri Nighean Alasdair (Gaoil na h-Òige) *Mary, daughter of Alasdair MacKay*

Arthur Cormack (Vocals); **Blair Douglas** (Piano); **Allan Henderson** (Fiddle)

A masterpiece by William MacKenzie (Uilleam Dhòmhnail 'ic Choinnich – Bàrd Cnoc Chùsbaig) from Point in Lewis, following the death of his wife and childhood sweetheart, Mary MacKay. When eventually he had to emigrate to Canada with his family, it is said he extracted one of his teeth and left it in her grave. William died in Canada and is buried Mountain View Cemetery, Fort William, Ontario.

A Mhàiri nighean Alas' 'Caoidh
A Mhàiri nighean Alasdair
A Mhàiri nighean Alas' 'Caoidh
'S dh'fhàg mi tinn is airsneulach

*Mary, Alasdair MacKay's daughter
Mary, Alasdair's daughter
Mary, Alasdair MacKay's daughter
You have left me poorly and sorrowing*

Thug sinn fichead bliadhna pòst'
Is bha sinn òg ri leannanachd,
Is nuair a b' fheàrr a bha ar dòigh
Nach brònach rinn sinn dealachadh.

*We were married for twenty years
And were young sweethearts
And when our love was at its height
How sad we were to part.*

Ach 's e dhealaich sinn am bàs;
Cha dèanadh càil dhuinn d' fhalach air,
Bheir siud an dachaigh chum an làir,
'S mo phàistean thèid air allaban.

Tha 'n teaghlach 's iad ri togail uam
A' dol thar chuain do Chanada
Bho chaidh am màthair do an uaigh
'S e siud thug fuachd don dachaigh orr'

Chan iongnadh ged dh'fhàsainn liath,
'S mo chiabhagan bhith tanachadh,
Ma thèid mi tarsainn air an t-sàil,
'S ga fàgail ann an Aiginis.

Cha d' smaoinich sinn a-riamh 's i beò,
Gum biodh cuan mòr gar dealachadh,
Gum biodh i adhlaicht' air an Aoidh,
Is mis' fo chraoibh an Canada.

Ged a dhealaich sinn an tìm
Bidh sìth againn nach cailleadh sinn
'S nuair a choinnicheadh sinn a-rithist
Bidh fireantachd na ghealladh-san

A Mhàiri nighean Alas' 'Caoidh
A Mhàiri nighean Alasdair
A Mhàiri nighean Alas' 'Caoidh
'S dh'fhàg mi tinn is airsneulach

*But it was death that divided us
Nothing could conceal it from us
It will raise the home to the ground
And my children will be left to wander.*

*My family have upped and left me
And gone overseas to Canada
Since their mother went to the grave
Their home has become a cold place to them*

*It is no wonder that I would go grey
And my hair would thin
If I am to go across the sea
And leave here in Aiginis*

*We never thought while she was alive
That a great ocean would divide us
That she would be buried on "The Eye"
And I beneath a tree in Canada.*

*Though we are parted for a time
We will have peace that we will not lose
And when we meet again
There will be truth in that promise*

*Mary, Alasdair MacKay's daughter
Mary, Alasdair's daughter
Mary, Alasdair MacKay's daughter
You have left me poorly and sorrowing*

Tir mo ghràidh

My beloved land

Arthur Cormack (Vocals); **Eric Cloughley** (Guitar); **Iain Smith** (Mandolin & Backing Vocals); **Blair Douglas** (Piano and Accordion); **Rachel Walker** (Backing Vocals); **Allan Henderson** (Fiddle)

A song written by Blair Douglas reflecting the strength of the ties that bind the Scottish Gaels and Cape Bretoners. Having been at the wonderful Celtic Colours festival in Cape Breton on two occasions, I was struck by just how Gàidhealach some of the people are generations after their forefathers settled there. Their hospitality is legendary and their ties with Gaelic language and culture still strong.

Seasamh na m' aonar fo dhubhar giuthais
Sealladh suaimhneach gun sanas cruais;
Clachan-cuimhne, 's leacan-uaigh'
O thir nan uachdran, tha mo smuain

Air àilleachd nam beanntan, 's nan coilltean dorch'
Nam bàgh 's nan tràighean, 's nan slèibhteann corrach;
Dùthaich 's dùthchas, ceangailt' gu teann
Chan eil bacadh gar sgarradh, ach taisdeal nan tonn.

Tha mo shùil air "Tìr an Àigh"
Null thar chuain gu "Tìr mo Ghràidh".

'S a' fàgail Dhùn-Bheagain, le sgàil thar mo shùil
Clann- a-Leòid, clann- a'-bhòid, 's a' chaora-mhaol;
Cha robh feadan-airgid no' bratach-shìth
Gaoir nan Gàidheal, "cha till, cha till."

*Standing alone, 'neath the shadow of a pine
A peaceful scene, without a hint of hardship
Memorials and gravestones
From the "land of the lairds" (Skye), my thoughts are*

*On the beauty of the mountains and the dark woods
The bays and the beaches, and the steep hillsides
Our land and heritage, tightly intertwined
Nothing separates us, but an ocean voyage*

*My eye is on the "Land of Happiness" (Cape Breton)
Across the ocean to the "Land of my Love" (Cape Breton)*

*Leaving Dunvegan, with sadness in my eyes
MacLeods, the children of the voyage, and the Cheviot sheep
There was no Silver Chanter, nor Fairy Flag
The cry of the Gael, "We will not return"*

'S bidh 'n ceòl ag èirigh on Chladach a Tuath
Puirt nam fiddlearan, 's nan òran luadh;
'S e "Mo nighean donn as bòidhche", 's "Ho ro 's toil leam fhìn"
'S ged 's cian ar sgaioleadh, mar aon ar cridh'

*The music will rise from North Shore
The fiddlers' tunes and the milling/waulking songs
"Mo nighean donn as bòidhche" and "Ho ro 's toil leam fhìn"
Though great our separation, our hearts are as one*

Thoir an t-soraidh seo bhuam

Take this greeting from me

Arthur Cormack (Vocals); Mary Ann Kennedy (Harp); Duncan Lyall (Bass); Allan Henderson (Fiddle)

Iain Nicolson – An Sgiobair – was born in Siadar, Uig in Skye in 1903. Apparently he never worked at sea but earned the nickname 'The Skipper' after wearing a sailor's suit on his first day at school. During World War 2 he was in the *Royal Scots Fusiliers* and worked for the Forestry Commission thereafter. He wrote songs and poetry from his teens and lived in Cuidreach with his wife, Mary, and their eight children until his death in 1999. This song was written as an apology of sorts for Isabel (Bella) Gillies whom The Skipper had prevented from going out on a date with Duncan MacKinnon, after which he wrote a song about the prevented liaison. Bella was so annoyed at not being allowed to meet Duncan, and the song that followed, that she asked The Skipper to write another for her, this time praising her.

Thoir an t-soraidh seo bhuam
Chun na rìbhinn as suaic'
Air an tric bhios mi smuaintean an còmhnaidh
Gur òigh thu tha ciùin
A tha finealt gun smùir
Bidh gach fear a' cur ùidh na do bhòidhchead

*Take this greeting from me
To the sweet-natured girl
Who is forever in my thoughts
You are the most gentle maid
Refined and unblemished
Each man is fascinated by your beauty*

Na mo dhùisg is nam shuain
Bidh mo smuain ort gach uair
Gur e àilleachd do shnuaidh a' toirt leòn dhomh
Bheilag òg an fhuilte dhuinn
'S mòr a dh'fhàs ort a loinn
Tha thu gàrbheulach, aoidheil, gun mhòr-chùis

*In waking and sleeping
My thoughts are forever with you
Your beauty has wounded me
Young Bella of the brown hair
The embodiment of elegance has grown in you
You are smiling, affable, without conceit*

Tha thu sìobhalta, suaic'
'S tu gun phròis na gun uaill
Tha gun fhoill, na gun ghruaim, na gun ghòraich
Do dhà shùil, mheallach, chiùin
Toirt dhut àilleachd is mùirn
Beul a' mhànrain bhon cùbhraidh na pògan

*You are civil and gentle
Without pride or vanity
Without deceit, without gloom or folly
Your two beguiling, gentle eyes
Give you beauty and joy
A mouth full of loving talk and sweet kisses*

Tha thu bho fhìor Chloinn Ill los'
Bho 'n robh tàlant' is rian
Nach robh meat ann an gnìomh ri àm còmhraig
Gheibh iad urram is cliù
Bho gach aon chuir orr' iùil
'S beag an t-iongnadh 's ann leam ged bhiodh tòir ort

*You're from the true Gillies clan
Who were talented and sensible
Who were not cowardly in their actions in times of strife
They get respect and renown
From all who get to know them
It's little wonder that you would have admirers*

Ach 's tu mo roghainn fhìn
Bhon a chunnaic mi 's a chì
Ach, mo thruaighe, dè nì mi 's mi gun chòir ort?
Oir tha eagal orm a ghaoil
Gun tòir càch thu a thaobh
Oir bidh an tòir ort luchd maoin agus stòrais

*But you are my own choice
From those I've seen and will see
Alas, what can I do since I have no right to you?
Since I fear, my love,
That others will take you aside
Since you are courted by people of means and riches*

Ach mur bi e an dàn
Nach fhaigh mi thu air làimh
'S e mo dhùrachd gu bràth dhut gach sòlas
Gach beannachd nad dhèidh
'S gach cùis bhith leat rèidh
Ge b'e àite fon ghrèin sam bi d' chòmhnaidh

*But if it is not to be
And I don't get your hand
It's my eternal wish that you'll be happy
Every blessing be with you
And may everything go smoothly for you
Wherever you will live under the sun*

A Pheigi a ghràidh

Peggy, my love

Arthur Cormack (Vocals); **Eric Cloughley** (Guitar); **Chaz Stewart** (Guitar); **Allan Henderson** (Fiddle)

Written by Ruairidh Caimbeul (Ròidseag) from South Uist (see track 7 above). Although made famous by the late, great Calum Kennedy, there are many notable versions of this song loved by Gaelic audiences all over.

A Pheigi a ghràidh 's tu dh'fhàg mi buileach gun sunnd,
'S mi seòladh an-dràst' thar sàil dh'Astràilia null,
Tha 'n oidhche fliuch, fuar, 's mi shuas ga cumail air chùrs,
'S tu daonnan nam smuain, a luaidh, bhon dhealaich thu rium.

Bhon dhealaich thu rium neo shunndach m' aigne gach là,
'S mi seòladh a' chuain, 's gach uair gam sgaradh o d' ghràdh,
Ma bheir thu bhuam fuath, 's nach dual dhomh d' fhaighinn gu bràth,
Gum faic thu led shùil, a rùn nach bi mi fad' slàn.

Cho fad 's thèid mi null bidh dùil am tilleadh a-nall,
Far do dh'fhàg mi mo rùn fo thùrs am baile nan Gall,
'S thèid sinn le sunnd a-null do dh'Uibhist nam beann
Far am faigh mi ort còir le pòsadh ceangailte teann.

Nuair gheibh mi ort còir ri 'r beò cha bhì oirnn dhìth
Gun dèanainn dhut lòn gu leòr air muir agus tìr;
'S ged theireadh an sluagh a luaidh nach dèanainn dhut nì,
Gun togainn dhut bàrr a ghràidh ged 's maraiche mi.

Ged 's maraiche mi tha sgìth a' treabhadh a' chuain,
Bha 'n iomadach àit' is ceàrnaidh, deas agus tuath,
Chan fhaca mi ann tè Ghalld' a sheasadh riut suas,
A bhean a' chùil bhàin chaidh àrach an Uibhist nam buadh.

An Uibhist nam buadh gur truagh nach robh mi leat thall
Is fàinne den òr mu d' mheòir gar ceangal le bann
'S ma thilleas mi luaidh thar chuain an turas seo nall
Dh'Àird Choinnich thèid sinn le cinnt gar ceangal gu teann.

Gun sguir mi den dàn mu 'm fàs sibh uile dheth sgìth,
'S gun tuig sibh mo chàs 's mi 'n-dràst' cho fada bho thìr,
Ach an rud tha mi ràdh, gu bràth gun aidich mi fhìn,
'N taobh tuath Loch a' Chàrnain dh'àraicheadh cailin mo chridh'

*Peggy, my love, you've left me completely dejected
And I'm now sailing across the sea to Australia
The night is wet and cold and I'm up keeping the boat on course
You're ever in my thoughts, my darling, since you parted from me*

*Since you parted from me, my spirit is dejected each day
And I sail the ocean, every hour taking me away from your love
If you have turned against me and if I'm destined never to get you
You will see for yourself, my love, that I won't live long*

*As I sail I will expect to return
To where I left my sorrowing love, in the city of Lowlanders
And we will go joyfully to Uist of the mountains
Where I will give you my vows in binding matrimony*

*If you become mine, in our lifetime we'll want for nothing
I would make plenty food for you on sea and land
Though some people might say, darling, that I could make nothing
for you
I'd grow crops for you, love, though I'm but a sailor*

*Although I am a seaman tired of sailing the ocean
Who has been in many places and parts both south and north
I've never seen a lowland woman who would be a match for you,
My lady of the fair hair who was brought up in Uist of the many
virtues*

*In Uist of the many virtues, alas I'm not with you over there
And a ring of gold on your finger a band tying us together
And if I return, my love, on a voyage there across the sea
To Ard Choinnich we will go firmly bound in certainty*

*I'd better stop this song before you all become tired of it
And I hope you understand my dilemma when I'm so far from land
But I'll say one thing, I will forever admit it to myself:
It was on the north side of Loch a' Chàrnain that my beloved girl
was raised*

Pòg aon oidhche earraich

A kiss one spring night

Arthur Cormack (Vocals); **Blair Douglas** (Accordion); **Ingrid Henderson** (Piano); **Rachel Walker** (Backing Vocals); **Allan Henderson** (Fiddle); **Chaz Stewart** (Guitar); **Andrew MacPherson** (Percussion); **Eric Cloughley** (Bass)

Runrig recorded *Pòg aon oidhche earraich* with the spoken word and a vocal chorus. Calum Macdonald kindly reworked the lyrics, adding verses that could be sung with the chorus, and I am delighted to have included it. Runrig have been instrumental in bringing Gaelic to a wider audience across the world, promoting goodwill towards the language in the process. As the band retires in 2018, I would like to thank them and congratulate them for all they have achieved and I'm grateful to Calum and Rory for allowing me to record this song.

Bha an oidhche socair, ciùin
Oidhche Mhàirt ùr eile
Grian a' tuiteam tro na neòil
Ceann seachdain, crìoch la'

Os cionn gach àite a' ghealach àrd
Gillean òg' air rathad an talla
Ceòl a' gluasad thar a' bhàigh
Mar thonnann blàth an dàin

Bha i àlainn, bha i grinn
Sùilean mar na reultan cruinne
Gruagach òg cho ceart is còir
A' feitheamh air an làr

Rinn sinn dannsa 's dh'fhan sinn ann
Gun robh 'n ceòl 's an còmhradh seachad
'S mar sin dhan àite thorrach shlàn
Làn geallaidh, fois is tàimh

O luaidh b' e siud an gràdh
A dh'fhàg mi ceangailt' riut an-dràst'
Cò shaoileadh an rud a dh'fhàs
Bho phòg aon oidhche earraich?

The night was quiet and peaceful
Another new March night
The sun tumbling through the clouds
The weekend and the end of the day

Above the whole place, the moon high in the sky
The young lads on the road to the hall
The music moving across the bay
Like the warm waves of fate

She was lovely, she was beautiful
Eyes like the perfect stars
A young maid, so good and virtuous
Waiting on the dancefloor

We danced and we stayed there
Until the music and conversation were done
And then to that fertile, healthy place
Full of promise, peace and contentment

O my darling that was the love
That has left me still bound to you
Who could imagine what would grow
From a kiss one spring night?