

## Amhrán Amháin: Aistriúcháin Éagsúla

Enda Ó Catháin

Lector de irlandés

### An Bonnán Buí

le Cathal Buí Mac Giolla Ghunna (c. 1680-1756)<sup>1</sup>

A bhonnáin bhuí, is é mo chrá do luí  
is do chnámha críon tar éis a gcreim,  
is chan díobháil bídh ach easpa dí  
d'fhág tú 'do luí ar chúl do chinn;  
is measa liom féin ná scrios na Traí  
**thú bheith sínte ar leacaibh lom,**  
is nach ndearna tú díth ná dolaidh is tír  
is nárbh fhearr leat fíon ná uisce poill.

Is a bhonnáin álainn, mo mhíle crá  
**do chúl ar lár amuigh inna tslí,**  
is gur moch gach lá a chluininn do ghráig  
**ar an láib agus tú ag ól na dí;**  
is é an ní adeir cách le do dheartháir Cathal  
**go bhfaighidh mé bás mar súd, más fíor;**  
ní hamhlaidh atá – súd an préachán breá  
chuaigh a dh'éag ar ball, gan aon bhraon dí.

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<sup>1</sup> 'I gCo. Fhear Manach a rugadh Cathal Buí, dealraíonn sé. Chaith sé téimhse ag gabháil le sagartóireacht, ina dhiaidh sin chuaigh sé le filíocht agus le réiciúlacht. Dornán beag dánta a luaitear leis, ach tá daonnacht agus macántacht neamhghnách ag baint lena bhformhór. Níl aon bhreith ag aon cheann acu, ámh, ar *An Bonnán Buí*, ar an gcumas mín atá ann den ghreann is den truamhéil.'

(It is thought that *Mac Giolla Ghunna* was born in Co. Fermanagh. He spent some time reading for the priesthood before settling for the career of rake-poet. Of the handful of poems attributed to him, most are marked by a rare humanity, but none of them can match *An Bonnán Buí* with its finely-judged blend of pathos and humour.)

(Ó Tuama agus Kinsella, 2002, 132-135).

A bhonnáin óig, is é mo mhíle brón  
 thú bheith romham i measc na dtom,  
 is na lucha móra ag triall chun do thórraimh  
 ag déanamh spóirt is pléisiúr ann;  
 dá gcuirfeá scéala in am fá mo dhéinse  
 go raibh tú i ngéibheann nó i mbroid fá dheoch,  
 do bhrisfinn béim ar an loch sin Vesey  
 a fhliuchadh do bhéal is do chorp isteach.

Ní hé bhur n-éanlaith atá mise ag éagnach,  
 an lon, an smaolach, ná an chorr ghlas –  
 ach mo bhonnán buí a bhí lán den chroí,  
 is gur cosúil liom féin é ina ghné is a dhath;  
 bhíodh sé choíche ag síoról na dí,  
 agus deir na daoine go mbím mar sin seal,  
 is níl deor dá bhfaighead nach ligfead síos  
 ar eagla go bhfaighinnse bás den tart.

Dúirt mo stór liom ligean den ól  
 nó nach mbeinnse beo ach seal beag gearr,  
 ach dúirt mé léi go dtug sí bréag  
 is gurbh fhaide mo shaolsa an deoch úd a fháil;  
 nach bhfaca sibh éan an phíobáin réidh  
 a chuaigh a dh'éag den tart ar ball? –  
 a chomharsain chléibh, fliuchaidh bhur mbéal,  
 óir chan fhaigheann sibh braon i ndiaidh bhur mbáis.

## UNA MISMA CANCIÓN: DISTINTAS TRADUCCIONES

### **El Avetoro Dorado<sup>2</sup>**

por Cathal Buí Mac Giolla Ghunna

Oh avetoro de plumas rubias, me appena verte ahí tirado  
 con tus huesos carcomidos, medio roídos.  
 No la falta de comida sino la necesidad de bebida  
 te ha llevado a yacer ahí boca arriba;

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<sup>2</sup> Traducido de la versión original en irlandés por Enda Ó Catháin y Amaia García Odón.

me duele más que la destrucción de Troya  
verte tirado sobre las losas desnudas,  
tú que no molestabas ni hacías daño a nadie  
igual de feliz con agua del charco que con vino.

Y me duele tanto, oh bello avetoro  
verte tirado en el suelo del camino.  
Temprano cada mañana solía escuchar tu ronco mugido  
en los barrizales mientras bebías;  
todos me dicen, a mí, tu hermano Cathal  
que es así como voy a morir; ni que fuera verdad.  
No es cierto: contemplad el pájaro espléndido  
que murió hace un rato a falta de un trago.

Siento tanto, oh joven avetoro  
verte ahí delante entre los arbustos,  
mientras las ratas se dirigen a tu velatorio  
jugando alegremente, disfrutando.  
Si me hubieras avisado a tiempo  
de que estabas en apuros y necesitabas beber,  
habría asestado un golpe al lago Vesey  
que hubiera humedecido tu boca y tus entrañas.

Esos otros pájaros no me dan pena,  
mirlos, zorzales o garzas grises,  
pero sí mi avetoro dorado lleno de vida  
de mi misma apariencia y mismo color.  
Él solía estar siempre bebiendo  
y dicen que yo también a veces estoy,  
pero ni una gota que reciba dejaré sin beber  
por miedo a poder morir de sed.

Mi mujer me dijo que o dejaba la bebida  
o que sólo me quedaba poco tiempo de vida,  
pero yo le dije que mentía  
que la bebida me alarga la vida;  
¿no habéis visto el pájaro de cuello suave  
que murió hace un rato de sed?  
Queridos amigos, mojaos los labios  
ya que no lograréis echar un trago después de muertos.

### The Yellow Bittern / An Bunnan Buidhe<sup>3</sup>

O Bunnan Buidhe, 'tis my woe to see,  
 After all your spree, your bones stretched so;  
 Not want of food, but liquor good  
 By the frozen flood has laid you low,  
 Worse to relate than Troy's bitter fate  
 Is your sad state on the road so drear,  
 Your humble mind ne'er to ill inclined,  
 Nor preferred red wine to water clear.

O dear Bunnan, 'tis my heart is gone  
 To your corpse upon the roadway's bank;  
 Your 'grag'<sup>4</sup> so gay I heard many a day  
 In the miry way where oft you drank.  
 This is what they of brother Charles<sup>5</sup> say:  
 'Death will come this way.' 'Tis true, they think;  
 It is not so, for death's dark bow  
 Has laid you low for want of drink.

O my young Bunnan, my sad heart is gone  
 Out to you among the bushes laid;

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<sup>3</sup> The following notes and background to this English-language version of the song quoted from (Huntington, 1990, 64-65):

'Author Cathal Buidhe MacGiolla Gunna; noted by ... the Gaelic scholar Henry Morris ... from Nancy Tracey (Greencastle, Co. Tyrone); translated by Andy Doey (Ballymacaldrick, Dunloy), versified in English by George Graham (Cross Lane, Coleraine) ... [who] has kept very closely to the structure and internal rhymes of Gaelic poetry. The feature of such poetry is a similarity of vowel sounds rather than consonantal, as, for example, in the last verse where "time" rhymes with "wine".

This remarkable song was composed around the year 1700 by Cathal Buidhe MacGiolla Gunna, i.e., sallow-complexioned Charles M'Elgunn, of the barony of Tullyhaw, Co. Cavan ... [who], imbued with the old animistic ideas of the Gaelic race, calls himself, in verse 2, "brother Charles", implying that a common thirst made brothers of himself and the bird. ... The bittern [used to be] a common bird ... but died out as a nesting species about 1850. ... The poet finds the bittern lying dead by the shores of Lough Neasy, which is frozen, and moralizes that lack of drink killed the bird.'

<sup>4</sup> The bittern has a very distinctive booming call, which apparently resembles the bellow of a bull, hence its Spanish name, *avetoro* (bull bird). Incidentally, the species still breeds in parts of Spain.

<sup>5</sup> 'Cathal's nickname 'bui' (the yellow) gives him a special brotherly affinity with the yellow bittern.'

(Ó Tuama, agus Kinsella, 2002, 363).

The big rats quake to attend your wake,  
 Where fine sport they'll make and you upbraid.  
 Had you sent word, or could I have heard  
 Of your fate, poor bird, held in such pain,  
 Lough Neasy's frost I'd have cracked across,  
 From the frozen lough your drink to gain.  
 Not for all birds are these timely words;  
 I mourn not the blackbird, stork or thrush,  
 But my *Bonnán Buidhe*, so full of glee,  
 Is at heart like me or the swampy rush.  
 He was so gay that he drank all day,  
 And the people say that I am worse,  
 But good or ill I will drink my fill  
 Lest death should chill me through with thirst.

My wife wants me to leave off the spree –  
 'Or it's dead you'll be in a short time.'  
 But I replied that my wife has lied,  
 For this life will bide long years with wine.  
 Just think the cost, how the bird was lost  
 That died of thirst on an icy bed,  
 So, neighbours dear, go drink your beer,  
 There'll be none, I fear, when you are dead.

## NÓTAÍ / NOTES / NOTAS

1. Other English-language translations of *An Bonnán Buí* include those by James Stephens, Thomas MacDonagh, Thomas Kinsella (Ó Tuama and Kinsella, 2002, 133-35) and Seamus Heaney (cf. [www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/An\\_Bonnán\\_Buí](http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/An_Bonnán_Buí)).

2. Seán 'ac Dhonncha sings a version of the song in Irish on the CD recording 'An Spailpín Fánach: Traditional Songs from Connemara' published by Cló Iar-Chonnachta in 1994 (catalogue reference: CIGD 006).

3. Brian McNamara plays an instrumental setting of the song air on the CD recording 'A Pipers Dream' published by Drumlin Records in 2000 (cf. [www.piperbrian.com](http://www.piperbrian.com)).

4. Both the air and some of the Irish lyrics being sung feature in a short animated film entitled *An Bonnán Buí* (Maria Murray, Pádraig O'Neill, Edith Pieperhoff, 1995). To view a short clip of this animation, which was inspired by the song, do a search for 'An Bonnán Buí' in [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com).

**TAGAIRTÍ / REFERENCES / REFERENCIAS**

- HUNTINGTON, G. (1990): *Sam Henry's Songs of the People*. Athens Georgia.  
Ó TUAMA, S. AGUS KINSELLA, T. (2002): *An Duanaire 1600-1900: Poems of the Dispossessed*. Baile Átha Cliath.

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