

**“Look at the poor boys,  
God help them.”**

**“WHO’D EVER THINK IT  
WOULD COME TO THIS?”**

Libretto by Ed Vulliamy  
Adaptation for performance by Kellie Hughes

**A Cantata in Commemoration of the Irish Civil War –  
Its Fallen, Bereaved and Survivors –  
on the Occasion of the Centennial, 2022.**

## **PART 1: 'INTROIT'**

### **CHORUS: FR. MATHIAS MACMAHON**

At almost every step,  
One meets on the roads the hideous spectacle,  
Of human beings in the agony of hunger,  
Walking in a living death.

### **EITHNE COYLE**

Colonel Olphert...  
The landlord of a huge area of Donegal,  
Had terrified the native population...

### **CHORUS: LIAM DE RÓISTE**

An orgy of destruction and ruin.

### **EITHNE COYLE**

The famous and infamous battering ram,  
His bailiff and the emergency men used to knock down the houses,  
After dragging the unfortunate tenants out.  
Some of them had to be carried out on their mattresses,  
Like the poor woman with a baby, one day old...  
The bailiff had a list of over a thousand houses on that day,  
Listed for demolition.

### **CHORUS: LIAM DE RÓISTE**

The pale cold stars looking down,  
On the scene of desolation and frightfulness.

### **CHORUS**

We declare the right of the people of Ireland,  
To the ownership of Ireland,  
And to the unfettered control,  
Of Irish destinies,  
To be sovereign and indefeasible.

### **CHORUS: LIAM DE RÓISTE**

Last night in Cork was such a night of destruction and terror.  
An orgy of destruction and ruin.  
The calm sky frosty red –  
Red as blood.  
The pale cold stars looking down  
On the scene of desolation and frightfulness.

### **FEMALE SOLOIST: THE CROWD (ERNIE O'MALLEY)**

Who'd ever think it would come to this?

## **PART 2: TREATY & FOUR COURTS**

### **CHORUS: GENERAL MULCAHY**

For Centuries England strove,  
To reduce Ireland to an English province...  
The problem now,  
Is to define some sort of provincial autonomy for Ireland...  
The first question of imperial importance,  
Is allegiance to the Crown.

### **ERNIE O'MALLEY**

The five Irish delegates...  
Signed under Lloyd George's threat of-  
'Immediate and terrible war',  
On the Irish people...

### **TOM CARNEY**

When the Treaty came, the unofficial crowd,  
Were ninety per cent Treatyite in our Battalion...

### **MARY RICE SPRING**

No one can be enthusiastic for the Treaty...

### **TOM CARNEY**

The majority of people accepted the Treaty...

### **MARY RICE SPRING**

...but I believe it will get us independence,  
With less bloodshed,  
And quicker than the other way.

### **TOM CARNEY**

...the priests were ninety-eight per cent against us.

### **MARY RICE SPRING**

It is a wretched business altogether.

### **CHORUS: GENERAL MULCAHY**

The majority of (the) people of Ireland,  
Are willing to accept the Treaty...

...

### **TOM MAGUIRE**

If we held a council one night,  
There might be a man who was on it,  
With the Free State the next night.

**ERNIE O'MALLEY**

The coward cheering you today,  
Would cut your throat tomorrow,  
If they had the pluck.

**TOM MAGUIRE**

At first we did not realise,  
That men could be so bitter against us.

...

**CHORUS MEMBER (WITH CHORUS): WINSTON CHURCHILL**

The presence in Dublin, in violent occupation of the Four Courts,  
Of a band of men styling themselves the Headquarters of the Republican Executive,  
Is a gross breach and defiance of the Treaty...

**ERNIE O'MALLEY**

I was in the Orange hall one night,  
When Liam Mellows came in by the back yard...

**CHORUS MEMBER: LIAM MELLOWS**

We're going to take over the Four Courts tonight.

**CHORUS MEMBER: DAVID LLOYD GEORGE**

I do not want to use the language of menace,  
But it is essential that that should be brought to an end,  
And speedily.

**ERNIE O'MALLEY**

In fours we marched along by the river,  
Surrounded soon by a crowd;  
Some curious, some cheered,  
Others muttered words of sympathy.

**CHORUS: THE CROWD (ERNIE O'MALLEY)**

Look at the poor boys, God help them.  
Who'd ever think it would come to this?

**ERNIE O'MALLEY**

If we don't fight before the British leave the country,  
We will be left to face each other.

**CHORUS**

I will be faithful to His Majesty King George V,  
His heirs and successors by law in virtue of,  
The common citizenship of Ireland and the United Kingdom.

**ERNIE O'MALLEY**

Orders were sent out to the brigades to stand-to.  
The uncertainty was at an end.

**MALE SOLOISTS: ERNIE O'MALLEY**

War again,

**FEMALE SOLOISTS: ERNIE O'MALLEY**

And a ruthless one.

**CHORUS: THE CROWD (ERNIE O'MALLEY)**

Look at the poor boys, God help them.  
Who'd ever think it would come to this?

## **PART 3: FIGHTING (Atrocities and Reprisals)**

### *Section I*

**SEAMUS Mc CANN**

[The] I.R.A. had the first man to fall in the fight for the Republic.

**MARY RICE SPRING**

They've been firing on the station here since 6 o'clock.  
An awful cannonade.

**SEAMUS Mc CANN**

James Marten of New Mills.  
He was a great little fellow and was a good volunteer.

**MARY RICE SPRING**

I can't see anyone,  
The streets are empty.

**SEAMUS Mc CANN**

His home was a great home during the Trouble,  
For all men on the run.

**CHORUS: BRODIE MALONE**

Everyone mad for action...

**MARY RICE SPRING**

The station blazing and crackling,  
The people on their way to Mass watching it.  
A group of IRA at the gate.  
Some of them defeated Free State,  
Some of them victorious Republicans,  
So busy abusing one another,  
They hardly listen to my appeal,  
To do something about the station.  
One can hardly believe either side will give in...

### *Section II*

**TOM CARNEY**

I think it was Carty who discovered,  
That their spies were communicating,  
With the garrison in Moylough...

**CHORUS MEMBER: TOM CARNEY**

Two married farmers with large families.

**CHORUS MEMBER: TOM CARNEY**

Carty brought them out,  
Blindfolded them,  
And went for a priest.

**TOM CARNEY (SPOKEN)**

Then he shot the two of them.

...

**TOMMY HEAVEY**

Plunkett said that he would go outside,  
To surrender to save the women,  
He opened the door,  
And he went out with his hands above his head-

**CHORUS MEMBER: Mc CORLEY**

Are you Plunkett?

**CHORUS MEMBER: PLUNKETT**

I am.

**CHORUS MEMBER: Mc CORLEY**

You're not coming in alive.

*Section III*

**MAY DÁLAIGH**

The bombing that night woke us in our house,  
For we thought it was thunder.  
It was awful, at about 3 o'clock.  
The children going to school saw it...

**CHORUS MEMBER: MAY DÁLAIGH**

The dead splattered on the road.

**MAY DÁLAIGH**

As they cycled into school.  
They had coffins filled and put out on the street.  
They didn't know anyone who had been left alive.

**CHORUS: SOUTH WEST GALWAY BRIGADE**

Duggan's flying column has been broken up...  
We have been able to arrest a large number of the most active irregulars.

**SEAMUS Mc CANN**

Gallagher and Gordon escaped from the hut...  
Were captured by Free State soldiers again,  
Under Tom Glenning.  
Gordon and Gallagher were Riddled with bullets,  
And then thrown into the lorry.

**JACK FEEHAN**

We decided that we would attack Clifden...  
I showed the soldier the three mines...  
And I told him we didn't want any loss of life...

**CHORUS: REPORT FROM 3<sup>RD</sup> BATTALION AREA**

The irregulars are in full control of the area...

**JACK FEEHAN**

He stood at the door and he shouted in my words.  
'They're lighting the mines and if you don't want to go up, come down'.

**CHORUS: REPORT FROM 3<sup>RD</sup> BATTALION AREA**

The civil population is in a terrible state...

**CHORUS MEMBER: FIELD GENERAL HEADQUARTERS**

Arms were handed over wholesale to the enemy.

**FIELD GENERAL HEADQUARTERS**

Sentries were drunk at their posts.

**CHORUS: REPORT FROM 3<sup>RD</sup> BATTALION AREA**

The civil population is in a terrible state...

**CHORUS MEMBER: FIELD GENERAL HEADQUARTERS**

And when a whole garrison was put in (the) clink owing to insubordination,  
The garrison sent to replace them turned out to be worse.

*Section IV*

**CHORUS MEMBER: TO GENERAL STAFF, DUBLIN**

Commander-in-Chief shot dead in ambush.

**CHORUS MEMBER: 1<sup>ST</sup> SOUTHERN DIVISION**

At 8.35am a party of Free Staters about 30 strong,  
Passed near Béal na Bláith on the road to Bandon...  
Mr. Collins was one of the party.



**CHORUS MEMBER: 1<sup>ST</sup> SOUTHERN DIVISION**

The firing was terrific...

**CHORUS MEMBER: 1<sup>ST</sup> SOUTHERN DIVISION**

I have since learned that Mr. Collins,  
Was shot dead during the engagement.

*Section V*

**JOHNNY GREALY**

A priest asked for a truce;  
And we granted it provided that no reinforcements,  
Were brought in and no fresh positions occupied.

**CHORUS MEMBER: JOHNNY GREALY**

They broke both of these undertakings.

**CHORUS MEMBER: JOHNNY GREALY**

Ten lorry loads of troops came in...

**CHORUS MEMBER: JOHNNY GREALY**

And they occupied fresh positions.

**JOHNNY GREALY**

There was a fight on then in Collooney.

**BRODIE MALONE**

Out of Collooney comes a Republican, running...  
The Free State were firing at him,  
And he headed towards us.  
The Staters... ringed us round,  
But we let them have it.

**CHORUS MEMBER: REPORT- DUBLIN**

A guerrilla campaign,  
Day by day becomes more effective...

**CHORUS MEMBER: REPORT- DUBLIN**

Ambushes and casualties become heavier.

**CHORUS MEMBER: REPORT- COUNTRY**

The country is rapidly becoming complete chaos.

*Section VI*

**JACK FEEHAN**

A fellow named McDonagh,  
A bad pill from that area,  
Didn't he run into Morrison and James from Ballina,  
Who were having their lunch.

**CHORUS MEMBER: JACK FEEHAN**

Didn't he shout 'Hands Up',  
And shot one of their fingers,  
As they put up their hands.

**JACK FEEHAN (SPOKEN)**

And then shot them dead anyway...

...

**JOHNNY O'CONNOR**

The Major and a bunch went out in a Lancia car.

**CHORUS MEMBER: JOHNNY O'CONNOR**

He jumped out and he kicked the stuffing out of 3 or 4 lads there.

**CHORUS MEMBER: JOHNNY O'CONNOR**

Moss Hogan he picked and tied a rope to his legs.

**CHORUS MEMBER: JOHNNY O'CONNOR**

There was a colt in the fields.

**CHORUS MEMBER: JOHNNY O'CONNOR**

He tied the rope to the colt's legs,  
Then drove the colt along the road...

**CHORUS MEMBER: JOHNNY O'CONNOR**

Poor Moss was in a devil of a way,  
As a result of the battering,  
He got by being dragged with the colt.

...

**JOHNNY O'CONNOR**

Michael Hogan was a terrible murderer.

**CHORUS: JOHNNY O'CONNOR**

He was a devil.

**JOHNNY O'CONNOR**

Jack Galvin was murdered at Ballyseedy,  
Near the Protestant church.

**CHORUS MEMBER: JOHNNY O'CONNOR**

He was thrown inside the wall,  
His body wasn't found for three days.

**CHORUS MEMBER: JOHNNY O'CONNOR**

Both of his arms broken.

...

**GREG ASHE**

Griffin knew us all.  
Tom O'Sullivan, he wounded him,  
With a blast out of a Thompson...  
Tied him to the tail end of a motor car,  
And pulled him behind for 3 miles.

**CHORUS MEMBER: GREG ASHE**

Bob McCarthy, himself and Hancock...  
Spent 3 days killing him.

**GREG ASHE**

No one since Noah's Ark was treated in such a way...  
They gave him an awful death.

The torture began then.  
He was in the old workhouse and they put him in a corner...  
They pegged stones at him...

In Ballymullen Barracks,  
They thought he was dead,  
They put him in a coffin.

**CHORUS MEMBER: GREG ASHE**

The officer fired a couple of shots...

**CHORUS MEMBER: GREG ASHE (SPOKEN)**

...through the coffin.

**CHORUS: GREG ASHE**

No one since Noah's Ark was treated in such a way...

...

**SOLOISTS: STATEMENT OF THE SURVIVOR**

We were all placed around a log of timber on the road and tied together.

**SOLOIST: STATEMENT OF THE SURVIVOR**

Our hands were tied together...

**SOLOIST: STATEMENT OF THE SURVIVOR**

And our ankles...

**SOLOIST: STATEMENT OF THE SURVIVOR**

And another rope was tied around our knees.

**SOLOIST: STATEMENT OF THE SURVIVOR**

We were told we were to be blown to atoms...

**SOLOIST: STATEMENT OF THE SURVIVOR**

As a reprisal...

**SOLOIST: STATEMENT OF THE SURVIVOR**

For the deaths of the Free State officers...

**SOLOIST: STATEMENT OF THE SURVIVOR**

Killed in Castleisland.

**CHORUS: STATEMENT OF THE SURVIVOR**

We wished each other goodbye.

**CHORUS/SOLOISTS: STATEMENT OF THE SURVIVOR**

Then the explosion.

**SOLOIST: STATEMENT OF THE SURVIVOR**

I remember no more.

**CHORUS: GREG ASHE**

No one since Noah's Ark was treated in such a way.

## **PART 4: JAIL, HUNGER STRIKE & ESCAPE**

### *Section I*

#### **EITHNE COYLE**

I was the first woman arrested during the Civil War...  
I had been arrested so often and released that I thought,  
The Staters did not intend to jail a woman.  
I discovered my error,  
When I was bundled into a lorry,  
And driven like the hammers of Hades...  
To the barracks in Ballyshannon...

#### **JACK COMER**

In Tintown 2 ninety per cent,  
Of the men had scabies,  
Then there was lice...

#### **CHORUS: INTELLIGENCE DEPARTMENT MESSAGE**

Prisoners here much overcrowded.

#### **JACK COMER**

There were five men in my cell.  
Some cells had seven or eight men.

#### **CHORUS: INTELLIGENCE DEPARTMENT MESSAGE**

Health in danger. Defence bad.

#### **JACK COMER**

Men slept in reliefs,  
For there was neither space nor blankets.

#### **CHORUS: MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

A growing clamour,  
For the arresting of women.

#### **EITHNE COYLE**

Kilmainham brought in women searchers,  
Fortified with DUTCH courage...  
Their helpers, had their faces blackened,  
To avoid recognition.

#### **CHORUS: MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Accommodation in Kilmainham Prison now taxed to its utmost.

#### **EITHNE COYLE**

A dreadful night,

**EITHNE COYLE (cont.)**

Echoed with the screams of our women and girls,  
Dragged, by the hair.  
Some of the women searchers took off their high-heeled shoes,  
To beat our prisoners on the head.  
Maura Lomesford was shot in the side of the head.  
Una Stock was battered and bruised.

*Section II*

**JACK COMER**

The old lad with the shit bucket.

**JACK FEEHAN**

The old lad with the shit-cart would bring in and out our messages.

**JACK COMER**

This old lad used to take out our dispatches,  
In Bovril bottles covered in oiled silk...  
They were thrown into the officers' lavatory.  
He would empty the cart away from the Camp,  
Poke out the bottle, take out the dispatches,  
And send them...  
Always he posted them without fail.

**CHORUS: JACK COMER**

The old lad with the shit bucket.

**JACK COMER**

He offered to take out a man a day in his cart...

**JACK FEEHAN**

The old lad with the shit-cart.

**JACK COMER**

I don't even know his name.

*Section III*

**TOMMY HEAVEY**

We used flake meal...  
With sugar and yeast.

**TOMMY HEAVEY (cont.)**

It was allowed to ferment for a fortnight in one cell...

**JACK COMER**

Coffee bottles were nearly filled with whiskey.

**JACK COMER**

On top was a spoonful of coffee to hide the smell.

**JACK FEEHAN**

They came at first to get in whiskey for a concert,  
And a bit of a hooley afterwards.  
They wouldn't sing unless they got a drink...

**JACK COMER**

We had a Fancy Dress football match...  
We broke the rules.  
The teams began to fight.  
A crowd came in and broke up the game.

*Section IV*

**JACK COMER**

Éamon Enright became Camp officer in charge.  
The Staters asked him for the names of all the hut leaders...  
He refused,  
So he was hung up in the Glass House.  
He was driven mad by this treatment.

**CHORUS: THE CROWD (ERNIE O'MALLEY)**

Look at the poor boys, God help them.  
Who'd ever think it would come to this?

**CHORUS: DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE**

'Lady Willow' left for Limerick...

**EITHNE COYLE**

That infamous "Lady Willow",  
An old cattle boat where one hundred and fifty men,  
Were crammed like sardines in Dublin Bay.  
The hatches closed, they were left without air, food or water.  
They were all sick, with no place to relieve that sickness,  
Except on top of each other.

*Section V*

**JACK FEEHAN**

Orders came in... to go on [strike],  
In sympathy with the lads in the 'Joy...

**JACK COMER**

Are you prepared to die on hunger strike?  
Write 'yes' or 'no'...

**JACK FEEHAN**

We communicated with the next camp by a stone,  
Hurled well over the wires with a message in it...

**JACK COMER**

Men went to the wires,  
The Free State Tommies threw loaves of bread at them.  
There were 500 or 600 men stampeding for food.

**EITHNE COYLE**

The prisoners including my late brother...  
Were tortured, hosed and beaten.

**CHORUS: CHIEF OF GENERAL STAFF**

Prisoners on Hunger Strike,  
Should not be released.  
No exception to this rule.

*Section VI*

**ERNIE O'MALLEY**

Bob Barton taught me chess...  
Talked of literature and art.  
The bare dirty walls took on another texture.  
A friendship... able to change their grimness.  
I read to Jimmy.  
*Don Quixote* in a huge volume with Doré illustrations,  
There was Sancho's advice,  
Underlined in my pocket edition:

**CHORUS: ERNIE O'MALLEY**

'Let's run away now,  
For there is no one to see us running'



**TOMMY HEAVEY**

Eight of us escaped. We went to this house.  
Frank O'Bierne approached first.

**FRANK O'BIERNE**

I know you don't agree with us,  
But can we get in to dry ourselves?

**FEMALE SOLOIST**

Come in, come in.  
Ye the fellows who have escaped,  
Ye have the welcome of the world.

**CHORUS: ERNIE O'MALLEY**

'Let's run away now,  
For there is no one to see us running'

## **PART 5: ERSKINE CHILDERS**

### **ERSKINE CHILDERS**

I was bound by honour, conscience and principle,  
To oppose the Treaty by speech, writing and action,  
Both in peace and, when it came to the disastrous point, in war.

### **BERTIE SCULLY**

Childers had this little Derringer in his waistcoat pocket,  
So that if captured, he would be taken in arms...

### **MICHAEL COMYN**

Erskine Childers sent for me yesterday to defend him...  
He is to be tried before military committee,  
For being in possession of a pistol,  
Without lawful authority.  
They mean to shoot him.

### **MOLLY CHILDERS**

We know that we may have to face his hardest hour...

### **CHORUS MEMBER: LIAM LYNCH**

As an officer you are entitled,  
In accordance of the recognised rules of warfare,  
To demand and to be accorded treatment,  
As a prisoner-of-war suitable to your rank.

### **MOLLY CHILDERS**

You know that Erskine will not recognise the court,  
Or defend himself against charges brought,  
By an authority which we dismiss.  
I stand beside him in this...

### **CHORUS MEMBER: STATEMENT OF OBJECTION- ERSKINE CHILDERS**

Captain Childers does not recognise the legality of the Provisional Government,  
And consequently does not recognise the legality of this court...

### **CHORUS: STATEMENT BY ERSKINE CHILDERS**

Nov. 17<sup>th</sup> 1922.

### **ERSKINE CHILDERS**

I threw myself into the work of the Republican movement...  
I took a strong line at first against the British Dominion scheme...  
The slow growth of moral and intellectual conviction,  
Brought me to where I stand,  
It was and is impossible to go back.

**MICHAEL COMYN**

The Master of the Rolls decided against us today...  
Capt. Childers has got his death sentence.  
He will be shot tomorrow morning...

**CHORUS: LETTER- ERSKINE CHILDERS**

November 20<sup>th</sup>.

**ERSKINE CHILDERS**

I have been told that I am to be shot tomorrow.  
I am fully prepared...  
I have a belief in the beneficent shaping of our destiny,  
And I believe God means this for the best,  
For Ireland and for humanity.

**CHORUS: LETTER- ERSKINE CHILDERS**

November 20<sup>th</sup> 10pm.

**ERSKINE CHILDERS**

My execution is postponed.  
That is all I know...  
I would far rather it come at once.

**CHORUS: LETTER- ERSKINE CHILDERS**

November 21<sup>st</sup>.

**ERSKINE CHILDERS**

Another day of waiting and meditation.

**CHORUS: LETTER- ERSKINE CHILDERS**

November 22<sup>nd</sup>.

**ERSKINE CHILDERS**

Another day before the fact of the four executions...  
Then like a thunderbolt...  
The knowledge that more were pending.

**CHORUS: LETTER- ERSKINE CHILDERS**

November 23<sup>rd</sup>.

**ERSKINE CHILDERS**

Another day, and the last...

**SOLOISTS: JIMMY MOONEY**

It'll soon be dawn.

**CHORUS: LETTER- ERSKINE CHILDERS**

November 24<sup>th</sup>.

**ERSKINE CHILDERS**

Morning hours before execution...

**CHORUS: JIMMY MOONEY**

It'll soon be dawn.

**ERSKINE CHILDERS**

My beloved country,  
God send you courage, victory and rest.

**MOLLY CHILDERS**

This is my great comfort...

**ERSKINE CHILDERS**

And to all our people harmony and love.

**MOLLY CHILDERS**

I know he was right.

**ERSKINE CHILDERS**

It is 6 "a.m." ...  
It all seems simple and inevitable.

**MOLLY CHILDERS**

I know he was right.

**ERSKINE CHILDERS**

Like lying down,  
After a long day's work.

**MOLLY CHILDERS**

Erskine was executed this morning at 7 o'clock...  
[I] once again kept vigil with him,  
And was with him in love & prayer...

**ERSKINE CHILDERS**

Take a step forward lads,  
It'll be easier that way.

## **PART 6: THE END**

### **CHORUS MEMBER: DEVANS**

Eithne we cannot win this war...

### **EITHNE COYLE**

Complete demoralisation.

### **FRANK AIKEN**

We always thought the enemy would not go so far.

### **EITHNE COYLE**

The decent men remained decent,  
And fought to the last ditch.  
It was the rag tag and bobtail,  
That crept in when they thought all dangers over,  
That caused the general decay in our ranks.

### **ERNIE O MALLEY**

We didn't know how to fight,  
We didn't know how to surrender.

### **CHORUS MEMBER: MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Senators Jameson and Douglas approached by Mr. De Valera,  
Who expressed himself willing to negotiate for peace.

### **FRANK AIKEN**

The Army Executive after careful consideration,  
Decided that armed resistance to the Free State Government,  
Would not bring us nearer our objective at this time.

### **CHORUS: MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

The Peace Establishment Bill,  
Should proceed without delay.

...

### **FRANK AIKEN**

The dumping of arms does not mean that the usefulness of the I.R.A. is past...  
On the contrary, a disciplined Volunteer force,  
Will be a great source of strength,  
To the Nation in its march to Independence.  
Our duty in the future as in the past,  
Does not end with our army work...

**CHORUS: MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

The Peace Establishment Bill,  
Should proceed without delay.

**FRANK AIKEN**

This nation has no use for slackers,  
Or those who throw up their hands in despair.  
We have work to do.  
It is our duty to do it.

**CHORUS: MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

All political issues,  
Shall be decided by the majority vote,  
Of the elected representatives of the people.

## **PART 7: 'IT'LL SOON BE DAWN'**

### **CHORUS: A POST OFFICE EMPLOYEE**

Brothers and pals fighting each other,  
It is not human nature.

### **FEMALE CHORUS: A POST OFFICE EMPLOYEE**

If you were down here,  
You would laugh at some of the tricks between them.

### **MALE CHORUS: A POST OFFICE EMPLOYEE**

While they are playing at war,  
The poor country is being ruined...

### **MARY RICE SPRING**

They had not wanted to fight each other these boys,  
What curse pushed them into it?

*Overlapping begins.*

### **CHORUS: A POST OFFICE EMPLOYEE**

While they are playing at war,  
The poor country is being ruined...

### **SEÁN IRWIN**

The cold eye of the historian will record that  
The government were forced to execute 77 men,  
But will any regard be paid to the human emotion,  
To the dreadful duty imposed,  
On army personnel to carry out these executions...

### **MARY RICE SPRING**

They had not wanted to fight each other these boys.

### **SEÁN IRWIN**

The anguish of having to see one time comrades in arms,  
Shot to death by firing squad.

### **MARY RICE SPRING**

They had not wanted to fight each other these boys...

### **SEÁN IRWIN**

And to be aware that these men,  
Did not really know what it was all about.

**MARY RICE SPRING**

What curse pushed them into it?

**CHORUS: A POST OFFICE EMPLOYEE**

While they are playing at war,  
The poor country is being ruined...

**SEÁN IRWIN**

I cursed the fates,  
The frailty of the leaders,  
The stupidity of men,  
That brought the country,  
To this pitch of barbarity.

**CHORUS: A POST OFFICE EMPLOYEE**

While they are playing at war,  
The poor country is being ruined...

**CHORUS: FR. MATHIAS MACMAHON**

Walking in a living death.

**TOM BARRY**

It is not for us here to go into the rights,  
And wrongs of the civil war.

**SEÁN IRWIN**

Regardless of the right and wrong,  
The civil war is now part of our history...

**TOM BARRY**

Many of you here were on opposite sides...

**CHORUS: JIMMY MOONEY**

It'll soon be dawn.

**TOM BARRY**

But let us end all futile recriminations...  
Which divided brother against brother,  
Neighbour against neighbour...

*Refrain from CHORUS: JIMMY MOONEY  
repeated throughout.*

**CHORUS: JIMMY MOONEY**

It'll soon be dawn.



**MOLLY CHILDERS**

I know he was right.

**SOLOIST: THE CROWD (ERNIE O'MALLEY)**

Look at the poor boys,  
God help them.

*Refrain from THE CROWD (ERNIE O'MALLEY)  
repeated as the choir enter the auditorium,  
'Dawn' is repeated until end.*

**SOLOIST: THE CROWD (ERNIE O'MALLEY)**

Who'd ever think it would come to this?

**CHORUS: JIMMY MOONEY**

Dawn.

**END**