Kilmainham

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Since our earliest days at Mountjoy, there has been a rumour that Kilmainham was being prepared for Republican Women. It was half dismaying, half exhilarating, this thought.

'Kill- and-maim-'em' gaol is a name that most hideous of the prisons has earned. Time and again, it has been confirmed as unsanitary and unfit for the habitation of human beings. But then its […] are so illustrious, from far off days right through to 1916. Robert Emmet was imprisoned there, and Parnell there Pearse and Conolly and Plunkett, MacDonagh awaited execution – also Eamon Ceannt and MacBride. de Valera was among those sentenced men. It was in Kilmainham that they were killed…I hope to be sent there for a little while in a little while only before the day of victory and release.

The last fortnight in Mountjoy has been restful and almost happy, although we were without chairs or tables and still sleeping on the floor. Betty Kiernan and Kathleen Coyle are so young and so imaginative and considerate and fine. We have enjoyed one another's company

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and Betty's stories, after lights out- miraculous stories of the war, miraculous but true.

This evening at about 9 o' C, Paudeen was heard tramping in. He required all prisoners to assemble in the lower hall. Some strolled out with the air of indifference which they assume to take the sting out of obedience: others, in frank excitement, came running noisily downstairs; 'The Heavenly Host', from

the top landing of course refused to descend. Standing under the gas, Paudeen read out the prisoner's names and each one as she was called passed to the end of the passage.
It became clear, soon that although he was reading the names in alphabetical order he was omitting a few. Betty Kiernan was called and mine, but neither Kathleen or Jennine Coyle's nor Margaret Skinner… only 46 out of the 60 were to go. We were to be ready for midnight. 'I'm taking you to a camp', Paudeen said. We knew, therefore, that it was not to a camp we were going.
He was darkly

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threatening about those who had refused to answer their names; 'They'll be sorry- I'm a man of my word'. Everyone laughed, bitter for defiance or involuntarily – we knew what his word is worth.
'Pack', he said. Kathleen ran in to help us. Our 'Dresser' was retransformed into the elements of which it was composed and soon we had three wooden boxes packed with clothes, crockery and books.
When that was done, I wrote the last page of the last ghost story of my Mountjoy book. The story called 'The Brother' and I read it to Betty and Kathleen. They loved it and I was pleased with it myself.
We had been locked in so could not pay farewell calls to the mysterious fourteen. Why had they been omitted? The whole prison was of course conjecturing, some of the most renowned were among the fourteen. When we thought of them we said they were all going to be tried, but then some innocents

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had been kept too. Perhaps they were only to be kept awhile and would follow in another cavalcade. What would be done with Noreen Cogley. She was so ill, and poor Annie Moore? What route should we be likely to take? If I escaped, I bequeathed the box containing my […] to Betty. If she escaped, I would claim her things. If either of us escaped we'd seek refuge with Kathleen's mother - it was not far.

Then my letter, I had been adding to every day for a week, in the hope, when we drove off, to throw it to any friendly folk on the road. I knew that to get it would give Mother an excitement, and do her good. I wrote a final post-script and sealed it, for luck with an extra stamp. Going so late, there might be no friend anywhere on the road. That would be desperate.

Then we went silly. We played ghosts - the murderers ghost that

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haunted Kilmainham and Hamlet and Lady Macbeth. At last, when it was midnight, and we delirious with excitement, we danced the crazy opening scene of *Macbeth*- the witches on the Blasted Heath, hissing and shrieking the words;

'When shall we three meet again…'.

The doors were unlocked. Paudeen and his army were outside. We rushed in and out of the cells, bidding farewell to the dear familiars we were leaving to so hidden a fate. Then, one by one we were passed down between files of green uniformed men into the dark passage and herded there. We passed out through the recreation ground and then my first glimpse for three months of the wide night sky. It was disappointing. There

should have been a full moon but the sky was covered with clouds. Betty and I found one another again and linked fingers, not to be separated for

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the drive. I had my box of papers and pens my hand, my letter in the right hand pocket of my coat. All else I had left to fate. It was very dark; soldiers and prisoners crowded together at the inner gates. Then we passed through to the outer yard. There, under the lighted windows of a guard house; two great lorries stood with hooped frame- works of iron over them, but no coverings, thank the stars!

Before them was the outer gate; the gate I knew so bitterly well from the other side.

My mind was full of the legend we had left written on our cell wall, as we waited there a long time in the cold.

'We shall remember it with pride,
Who pass this bitter gate where waves
The Captive flag over Captive Graves
We lived where those own noblest died'.

Somebody beside me whispered; 'the graves… the graves'. There it was under the

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high wall; a poor little patch of grass, with six shrubs and a few white stones.

We mounted the lorries then. Betty and I stood at the right side, just by the graves. Kevin Barry's was there and Rory's and Liam's and Dick Barrett' and Jo Mc Kelvey's. I suppose they killed them there, against that wall.

The memory of that volley and the thought of Liam and Rory standing against the wall; their open graves waiting at their feet was like a storm…but Aggie O' Shea had climbed into the car and the squeal of her unceasing melodeon had begun. Behind in the second car, evidently, [sat] 'The Heavenly Host'; and their ever reiterated 'Hip hip hurrah!' was invading the night. Did they cheer about different things, I wondered, every-time? A shy young soldier approached me diffidently holding hand, as though offering some precious thing…it held a little wet block clay. As I took and put it in my handkerchief he

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murmured; 'From Kevin Barry's Grave', and turned his back.
I could have cried; not for Kevin Barry, or Rory or Liam; but for the poor young soldier in green. He was in that army, hunting, sometimes, maybe executing sometimes, the men who upheld the dear cause for which all these died, taking the women who upheld it to prison now. And he could bring us, as a sacred offering; clay from their graves. How has the trap closed on him, I wondered? If he tried to escape now it meant death with that wretchedness and shame and sorrow must his heart have become over cast.
He took up his post beside me in the lorry. With him there I had no hope of escape. His rifle was in his hand.
The great gates opened- the lorry swayed and grumbled and moved out. Down the avenue where I had knelt so often, praying for the Republicans who were being hanged inside, praying for

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Mary MacSwiney, while the soldiers fired over us to drive us away, and out of the lower gates, onto the road.
We were all speechless with excitement but the melodeon was going still. There were no women around the gate; not a soul on the road or in the windows. Dublin was fast asleep. We past a cinema palace, all shut up; then a hoarding plastered with announcements of plays - none I longed to go to, mercifully. I was uneasy about my letter; there seemed to be nobody awake. I held it over the edge of the lorry in my right hand, under my scarf. The young soldier looked in the opposite direction most of the time. I could have easily dropped it on the road but that a [truck] behind kept a flaring white eye on us all the time. If I dropped it, it would be seen. I thought I should have a chance when we turned a corner perhaps.

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Even now, even after three months in prison; the North Circular Road was dull. I can imagine finding life richer even in Kilmainham than it will be for the dwellers in those villas of brick! We turned to the left and passed a Barracks. The soldiers cheered. We passed one or two other motors and no other living soul.
It was for the river I was longing most of all, but so dark the night was that I could see nothing when we came to it but a gleaming pool. Quite close, very beautiful and exciting, were the lights of Knightsbridge Station. Betty whispered then; 'do you see that light?'. 'Drop your letter now', she meant. But I could not; the [trucks] were behind. I cursed them though they were picturesque as black Dragons, illuminated by their own fiery breath and great eyes.

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The letter was still in my right hand when we drew up at Kilmainham Gaol. I was bitterly disappointed. They would have so loved to get it; Mother and Mona and Donald. I had longed so much for a good talk.

There was a delay here and we settled down in patience to wait, sitting on our boxes in the lorry.

The young soldier beside me bent down his head; 'how long were you in?', he whispered. I answered; 'Three months'.

There was real distress in his voice as he exclaimed under his breath; 'Ah dear, dear, dear!'

He whispered again eagerly, a meeting had been held; some old IRA men were working. He believed the women would be released soon.

There was something so wistful, also apologetic in the way he said it, that I took a risk; 'will you post a letter for me?', I whispered and he answered, 'certainly, I will'. I slipped it

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behind my back into his hand. I knew he had been a Republican once. I heard Nora Conolly's clear gentle voice saying, as she looked at the prison; 'The British executed my father in there'. It was a shock to some of the soldiers. They turned their faces away. They had not known, of course, that James Connolly's daughter was one of us.

I was sorry for my young friend and spoke to him, 'when is your time up?'. 'Not for six weeks', he said sadly and then as if craving to explain himself, pleadingly, he said, 'you see, I was in the Northern Division of the IRA.' I understood and answered at once.

‘I was in the North myself at that time. I know how it happened; our men were trapped. They couldn’t understand’. He spoke hurriedly, gratefully, ‘That was it.‘

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I was so sorry for him, that I told him, ‘this is the saddest chapter of Ireland’s history’, I said, ‘but there’ll be very little ill feeling when it’s all over, I think.’
‘I hope there won’t’, he answered sadly, ‘I hope there won’t’. Then he had to pass us into the gaol.

It is altogether unlike our little prison hospital at Mountjoy. A long, high building shaped like a narrow horse shoe with a concrete floor. Around the floor and around two iron galleries above are the iron doors of the cells. An iron staircase and iron gangway and an iron grating enclosing the galleries from roof to floor give the impression of a great cage. Cells on the first gallery were allocated to Betty and me. We could not tell whether we would be facing north, south, east or west. I went into mine and put down my bag. I felt as if I had been thrust living into a tomb. It was partly the narrowness of the cell and the curved ceiling

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perhaps, and the tiny barred window out of reach; partly it was the chill, underground smell. A mortuary chapel or a white sepulchre might smell like that. It was lit by a single flaring gas jet and ventilated by iron gratings in the wall, communicating presumably with some dark pipe or shaft. The window doesn’t open at all and there were no hot pipes. Inside was an iron bedstead, with sheets like sail – cloths, black blankets, all new,

a striped pillow and a high narrow mattress about half of the size of the little bed. There were also a new bed stool and table, an enamelled basin, a plate, knife, fork, spoon and mug. 'The worse the better', is a good motto for Republicans nowadays. The first dismayed moment was instantly followed by the mutual grins of amused resignation with which such things are most easily met. For company's sake, I slept with Betty, on the edge of her bed. It was hardly sleep. My mind was haunted with thoughts of that poor young soldier and the terrible trap he and others like him are in; forced either to kill the old comrades, or to be

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miserably killed. In Mrs Humphries cell, the names of five Free State Soldiers are written and 'awaiting our execution' is written below 'for refusing to execute orders to murder Republicans'. Those soldiers who have intimated to F.S if that they will not re-join when their time is up, are now, Betty told me, being sent into all the most dangerous work. This means that just now our men are killing those who in a few weeks, won't be their comrades again. The thought of mother getting my long letter was pleasant. I hope she will enjoy it as much as I think she will.

Breakfast was brought in the morning by wardresses; bread, butter and mugs of tea, hot and strong. We got up then and explored our new house. It was full of dull, stale air; not a breath seemed to come into it out of the sky. The sense of enclosure was very oppressive. There was no sign of any heating management, no bath, no hot

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water, no means of heating a mug of milk; even the gas jet was turned off at the mains.

Our exploration of the landing was rewarded by two discoveries. At the apex of the horse shoe, there is a cold wash house with a concrete floor, where the water lies in pools and a wooden ledge with the taps running round. In the window of this, all the glass had been broken and a blast of heavens air came through. By climbing on the ledge we could see a wide wonderful, living world. At the left, on a roof stood a sentry, protected by a pile of sand bags. He looked at us and looked away. Beyond the prison wall were streets, busy with shops; day carts passed, people in motors, people walking - one or two looked at our faces peering through the bars. Beyond are green slopes where new houses are being built. Away to the right, a sight dangerous to look upon from prison, are the Dublin Mountains, the Path of Chualann, dearest in all the world. One very quickly has as much of this as a prisoner can bear, I climbed down and

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went round the gallery, examining the doors of the cells. Betty followed me, very quiet. Her splendid brother was once here. Prison killed him; he died afterwards in France.

Funny little names the men prisoners had carved over the doors; ‘Wood Bine Villa’, ‘Plain People’, ‘Barry’s Hotel’, ‘The Better Ole’, ‘Howth Gunmen’, ‘Mutineers’,‘Dev’s Own’, ‘The Sons of Dawn’.

We came to one suddenly that sobered our amusement; on it was written: Joseph Plunkett’s cell in 1916!

Here, that brave man had awaited execution. In that cell, poor Grace had been married to him the night before.
We found no sign of Conolly's cell. Before one door, Betty stopped. The name of her old house was carved on it; her brother's name. He lay there after the Four Courts fight, wounded in the left lung. No doctor came to him all the six weeks. He was helped only by his fellow prisoners. He was released only to die. Lowering down again to our own gallery, we met Nora Conolly talking to a new-comer. It was Grace Plunkett. She had been seized in her own house and brought here

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In the night, by men in the uniform that Joseph Plunkett and James Connolly wore. It made me feel it cannot go on long. England has done a thing so monstrous, so abnormal to us all. Nature is against and nature must win. They looked happy those two women. It must be a bitter and proud thing for them, to be here. It was very chill. Betty and I wrapped ourselves in blankets and sat on my bed trying to get warm I would have given much for a hot drink. Betty talked about her brother; the splendid Shawn. She told me of a man she had met in 1916. He was a soldier in the Munster's, an Irishman, and the Munster's were sent to crush the rising here. During the fighting in Dublin, he saw a dead rebel lying in his green uniform on the road. His rifle lay by his side and the soldier went

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over to take it and saw the dead rebels face. It was his own brother. The soldier took the green uniform of the dead man

and went away and stripped off the khaki and put the green uniform on and went out to fight for the freedom of his own country. Shawn did not know what became of him in the end. Freedom is justice and justice is a law of nature. Justice will surely win. What matter, then, how long we are here, 'on the cold paving stones of hell'.

I have been talking to Nora Conolly. Her father was her hero. I think I asked her whether she was glad or sorry that he died here, as he did. 'When I see the blunders that the leaders make', she answered, 'I am tempted to be sorry he is not alive now - he was so far seeing'. But she knows that we should never have had the Republic. We should have had something like the treaty, long ago, if he had not died.

p.48a Wed Feb 1923

This morning, through the open doors on the opposite side, I could see white gleams of sunlight. We dashed across the bridge and went in to Miss Meagher's. Sure enough, sunshine was streaming through the window and gleaming in a white square on the wall. The cell was sweet with it, and bright, and warm. Through the window, when you climbed up, there is a far glimpse of the hills - the hills shrouded in a haze of silver light. Betty and I went back, in dismal silence, to our tomb-like cells. They face north, and look only on the prison wall.

A note has come from the governor. We are to send and receive only one letter a week - no parcels will be allowed. […] prison, without newspaper, without books, without letters, without sewing materials; idle days. This is not political treatment. It must be a hunger strike, at last. A general meeting is to be held after the rosary

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[ASIDE] We have had a meeting. A letter is to be written to the Governor making demands for political treatment; 'prisoners to send out three letters a week; no restrictions on in-coming letters and parcels'. The question, what action we shall take if this is refused, has not yet been discussed.

Such a nervous hunger is on me for sunlight, that I think, if I can't find one ray to stand in…what will happen? I shall become miserable, I suppose; nothing more terrible than that, and lose all power to write or work.

All day, I have been watching for the sun, to see if the light is going to fall in my accessible place. It came through the glass roof and fell on the top of the walls all round, but even by walking all about the upper gallery, it cannot be reached. It fell on a wall of our exercise yard, but you go down steps there, and are below its level as hopelessly under those […] walls, as though you lived at the bottom of a well. I went to the matron, and asked that when the upper cells were opened, Betty and I should be moved to two of them. It is an […] those cells are [not to be opened]. They have shut us altogether away from the sun [….] thinking we are […]

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Some of the 'Heavenly Host', have been shouting out of the wash house windows. It is going to be boarded up. We shall never be able to look again at the hills.

After this war, there will be, it seems likely, 'War of the Orangemen', and the Great War with England, after that. I wonder, whether I shall be Kilmainham all the time, and all the twelve thousand men still in gaol? There seems no reason why any of us should be released. There seems [to…] for justice left

in the people who have any power. Please God, it will not all end in something as poor as the Treaty, after all.

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When the gas lit, the cell begins to look habitable. I think from 5 to 11 o clock, here I could exist cheerfully enough. Golden syrups for tea, too, was an episode worthy of record. Poor betty has toothache, and her eyes have given out from the bad light in her cell. I have little to grumble about, in comparison, so long as I can read.

I gave history lessons to five of the prisoners, who were keen enough about studying, to be content to hear teacher as ignorant as themselves giving a talk out of book. It was the study of Diarmuid Mc Morrogh, the first cause of all our troubles, a wretched story enough. But to be learning and teaching were to be alive again.

Afterwards, Nora Connolly strolled in. I have felt a little afraid of her, as of someone who has been tortured. Someone, who has travelled very far into the unknown. I have felt a very strong desire to come close to her personality and mind. After the long, […] talk this evening. I see that it was natural to feel so. The relation there was between her and her father was tender, heroic beyond any I have heard of between father and child, and her psychic experiences have been unique. She is full of imagination; her phrases, her way of seeing things are intense and strangely true. But she is ill now,

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and suffering. The heroes are too much alive. She was trying to recover from a breakdown, when she was arrested, and brought here. She is going to try to write. She is writing a book

about her father, and a book of Psychic stories. If she can keep alive enough, her book about James Connolly might to prosper here.

It was not here, but at the castle that she saw him last. He was brought here only at the very end, a few hours before execution.

I have known, of course, that the great leaders and martyrs of Ireland must have lived on the mountain peaks of life always, not only at the moment before death, and that the storm-winds of beauty and delight blow there as well as hurricanes of anguish. Nora Connolly has lived always with her father on those heights. Since she was a child of seven, he trained her to his own ardour, and she is filled with it still. He sent her, while she was still a young girl, on missions that, if they had failed, would have meant her death. She helped him to prepare the great insurrection that was almost certain to cost his life, and after that storm was over,

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she went to America, because the people there wanted to hear the truth, and she went about telling it, telling it with all her heart, and all her imagination, until the long, reiterated torture of recalling it almost broke her down.

Days consecrated to that labour, nights abandoned to tears of utter desolation, until a mysterious comfort came from her father out of the dark. Of all these things she told me in a tired, sad voice, not as things of which she is proud, but as things which she was not quite strong enough to do well.

Her appearance is very childlike; some say she is like a Japanese, with her small, brown face, and the oriental moulding of cheek and chin, and straight, black hair. But I think

Japanese women do not have eyes like hers; wide dark pupils, dark brown - looking into them, is like looking into deep pools, in the bottom of which lies some mysterious gleaming thing. I think, there would be few companions for such a spirit of her in the Ireland of this time, far indeed, in the world. She says, the sun left the world for her when her father died. The things she told me will be in her book.

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I woke in the bleak, dawn light, this morning. It is a bad time to wake in gaol. Then, life & courage are ebbed away, and the day lies before one, so intolerably long. One knows that the sun will be rising, and the colours waking, and the birds singing in the world, and the knowledge falls like a chilling shadow over body, mind and spirit, that in prison there will be no colours, no bird-song, not even the light of the sun. And there seems no reason why this imprisonment should ever end.
It is not over those miseries themselves, I was despairing, but that something that made me feel able to hear much greater misery has gone. It is as if some open rift into light, and beauty, and holiness had been boarded up by the governor of the gaol. It may be the mere physical loss of the sunlight that has so disastrously affected even ones spirit. More likely, it is a loss of hope, because no good news of the fight has come from

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anywhere, and if the Republic is defeated, there will be no light, or holiness, or beauty in Ireland for a long while. Maybe, it is a loss of hop; it feels as if I had lost God - as if he was forbidden, by the Free State Government, to visit this gaol.

'It is only for a month', some strong, brave presence seemed to be saying - someone standing beside my bed.
'The life of iron for a month, you must manage to endure this little thing. As for God, God made this Gaol'. Then it went far away from me saying, 'You will always be too small a spirit for Irelands fight'. It was my own fancy, of course, working on Nora Connolly's talk. It was nothing but my own fancy. It has comforted me, and humbled me, all the same.
The sun rose and over our ceiling stole a very faint, silvery light. It stayed about an hour, then stole away. It was scarcely light, the shadow of the light only, but it came from the sun.
I have written my last story *De Profundis*. I can live this 'life of iron now'. All's well.

p.44a Feb 9th 1923

A wonderful day. Letters and parcels came! For me, chocolate biscuits from another, a blessed addition to Kilmainham food. Better still, a long letter from Donald –['al…. letter'] , so cleverly answering mine, that his camouflage for the censor for a long time bewildered me! It is extraordinarily comforting to have a private understanding with them all again. My thousand blessings on the soldier who posted my letter. It would have been well rewarded, I am sure, for giving it up. A little note from Mother, one from Mona, a card and letter from Rose Jacob. She has been a kind and helpful friend. Since about a month ago, since the embargo; Iseult and Maeve seem not to have thought of me at all. It is a fact one can't escape from; the unfortunate are easy to forget. Now that I can't write to my friends, I wonder how many of them will write to me?

I was a terrible fool about my play. That comes of listening to fortune telling! All the prophesies of a brilliant success for a work of mine, and my battles fought victoriously by a fair young man, fired it in my imagination that Donald was going to get, 'The Gift' produced! And now that Carrington has gone on tour without it. I blame Donald! Could anything be more unfair? God help us to let such nonsense

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stick in my mind!
From the obsessions that prisoners are subject too,
Good Lord deliver us!
It was an idea that Donald didn't care much more than my disappointment about the play, was so afflicting me. The child has done everything reasonable about it and is the best of friends. All's well.
This evening, when the gas was lit and I was settling down to work, Nora Connolly came in. She was shaken and frightened looking, and her voice sounded on the verge of tears; 'have you seen the paper?', she said.
The paper was startling certainly. A great headline right across the front page; Liam Deasy's Surrender. It looked like a sudden panic stricken capitulation; a calamitous end of the war; an irremediable surrender of the Republic.
I saw through the door, all the prisoners standing about in groups; silent, stricken, with white faces aghast. One or two passed and looked at me with eyes full of misery and despair. I alone, I think, in the whole prison, was not struck to the very heart with utter dismay. But I understood what

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it meant or seemed to mean to them.

'Did you believe so much ?', I asked Nora Connolly, 'in the military campaign'?

She answered brokenly, 'no…no…I didn't…but I thought we'd get something…some terms…not…not…this!'

The terms of Deasy's brief message looked, of course, crazy, grotesque. De Valera and all the leaders to deliver themselves up. It crossed my mind, that the man might have been driven insane in prison, or signed under torture, or that the whole thing might be a forgery. His long statement was printed below…

Nora Connolly took the paper to her cell. 'I must dig into this', and promised to lend it afterwards to me.

May God forgive me if I was weakened by the hopes of our own release. I believe it was not that, but to me, this war seems so piteous, so dreadful an injury to Ireland, such a strength to the common enemy, so devoid of wisdom, so destructive of noble patriotism and of human bodies and souls; almost any end to it, that implied no falsehood would seem good. A treaty with England, even a pact with the Free State Government, would be false. Surrender would not! A pact would leave us bound in honour to their vileness. Surrender would leave us morally free.

p.43a <u>Leadership</u>

It is interesting to study in this prison, how leadership is allowed to, or achieved by personalities, who are in all qualities at opposite extremes.

Brighid is a young, self-confident militant, with the walk and air of a sergeant major; energetic, able to assume at will, a manner full of condescension with some power of

organisation. She regards herself as divinely appointed to rule and without waiting for election, takes upon herself the offices of the head. By an extraordinary number of the prisoners, she is taken at her own valuation. Loyalty to those who do not accord her the same respect, does not appear necessary to her. Her policy is with each new-comer, to speak depreciatingly of these, as poor- spirited folk who can't fight. A crowd of country girls and some town girls of a characterless type have made a popular leader of her, given her the military title of commandment, and leave their world for her to rule. Few of them express, in my question of the Commonweal, views or principles of their own. Force attracts them, self-confidence impresses them. Militarism is their one ideal. They are content to choose an officer with these qualities and obey. They are the majority here 'what's good enough for Mick is good enough for me'.

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The minority is composed chiefly of the older women, and less flighty-spirited girls, and mostly of those from the cities. They are individualists. At a meeting, nearly everyone has some observation to make and some point of view to express. All the writers and propagandists are in this group, and many as well with military records since 1916. They refuse to appoint a 'Commandant'. 'Representative', is the title which, as Republicans, they prefer. She is to consult the whole group in all matters of importance.

They have chosen Nora, perhaps the quietest, gentlest, least assertive woman here. They have discovered in her a deep, thinking and far- seeing mind; pertinacious logic, a large Republican sense of right, firmness and fearlessness towards

the enemy, infinite patience with dissentious comrades, and public spirt that will labour endure. She is struggling out of a nervous breakdown, which has hung over her ever since her father was executed in this prison, and shrank from the responsibility. But her election was unanimous, so she would not refuse to act.

The minority, it is noteworthy, are all supporters of de Valera: most of the majority regard him with some misgiving, as a lover of peace, rather than of war.

'One man knew the way into the […]; but the fools said wherefore should we follow one man!'

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I have believed in no policy since the surrender of the Four Courts, except refusing to be provoked or driven into civil war, and making the people of Ireland see the truth. To clear away the […] of deceit and terror with which they have been overwhelmed, and bring the people back to their old clear heroic faith and allegiance to the free Republic; that has seemed to me the only thing worth doing.

But men had the reins in their hands, and it is the way of all men since the birth of the world. When war is made on him, to make war. So the heart-rending war of brothers has gone on.

To those who believed in it and rejoiced in the growing strength of the Republican army, surrender would be the end of the world. To me, it would be the beginning of hope. I believe that all justice, all nature, all virtue that is in the universe is on the side of Ireland's freedom, and that as long as we keep that ideal clear and clean; The Republic is invincible. Only a false treaty that destroys the justice and honesty of our ideal could defeat it. We can never make false terms with our

false enemies. We can freely surrender to their brute force.
No military surrender has any terror for me.
All this will look like mere cowardice to the other

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prisoners, they will think I am wanting my own release, at the expense of the Republic. Maybe, but it is what I believe, before God.
I have been saying to some of the dismayed and wretched, Kerry girls, whose life is in the fight, that this must mean that our political position is strong, so strong that we know that we could win on an election now. Through all our history, it is in defeat, Ireland has been victorious, and in loss, that she has gained; 'it is not those who can inflict most but to those who can endure most, victory will be.'
Our sufferings, the imprisonment of boys and girls, the torture and execution of prisoners; these have made Republicans. All that we inflict, I believe, turns the hearts of the people from the Republic again. It would, for us, to endure everything, and inflict a little maybe.
We can never win the Republic without the people. To make Republicans is all that matters.

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Remember the glorious surrender of Pearse and Connolly, in 1916; how that their deaths here, in Kilmainham, made Ireland Republican and heroic.
If there is peace, what is to prevent us all travelling the length and breadth of Ireland making the people see the truth? In a few months, maybe, we should have made the people Republican again, and after that, let the common enemy -

England, do its worst. Would not anything else that England can inflict on us be better than this shameful war?
The girls half agree with me. I believe, they seemed a little comforted, at least.
I went in to Lili O Brennan. She was reading the paper, with a face of gloom; 'It is worse than the treaty", she said.
I borrowed the paper then, and read the whole of Deasy's statement. What devil- dramatist could have devised a more desperate, and fearful situation for a brave, patriotic man?

p.40a
He has wanted passionately to stop this war. He was trying to persuade Liam Lynch to make peace. In the midst of that labour, he was arrested, and as our own deputy, Chief of Staff, went to Lynch in importance, he could only expect death.
He could not die, and leave Ireland rushing insanely to shameful destruction. He could see no other end to this war.
He applied to the enemies Commander in Chief for permission to advise his colleagues.
They made only one answer to that; a brilliant one, inspired surely, by the leader of all the fiends. They court marshalled him, and sentenced him to be shot at dawn.
On one condition, and only one they would stop execution. He must send out a recommendation to his colleagues to make peace, and it must be a recommendation dictated by them, that or nothing.
He had a clear choice before him in those few hours, no middle way; to send out the recommendation, to surrender in all the enemies abjecting, extravagant, seemingly terrified terms in essentially saving his own life, or to send out nothing

to […], his own honour saved, his name beside the names of Childers and Liam and Rory.

p.40b

And leave Ireland to its awful doom.
God knows how awful that doom was to be. No doubt they told him of new frightfulness they had devised; wholesale torture, burning, devastation, execution of women prisoners, killing of all prisoners on capture, execution of [.....], Malle, Barton; all the best men in their hands. They have the power, doubtless, they have the intention to do these things, Doubtless, they proved their intentions to him.
He signed their document and sent it out. Mulcahy had declared an Amnesty until Feb 18. For two weeks, there are to be no more executions. From what hell the country has been saved, for those two weeks, we cannot guess; whether Ireland will be saved by a surrender or lost by a surrender, or whether there will be no surrender at all. No human being can foresee. As for Liam Deasy, all but the most fine and generous of the men of Ireland are likely to desecrate his name. To save his own honour, and prove that what he wrote was not written to save his own life, and to urge peace on his countrymen in the most persuasive way. But because he believes in peace in the best way; as far as I can see it, would be to shoot himself at once. But he is a prisoner - he has no gun.

p.39a

There is one thing I cannot understand, if surrender or compromise were wise, why could not Liam Lynch or De Valera propose it in free undictated terms? Why must it be done at

such awful self- sacrifice, and in such disastrous enforced terms, by Liam Deasy, who was in the enemies hands?
It seems to me, that he exaggerated his own responsibility in the matter, his own duty to do this thing, and has perhaps made a terrible mistake.
I found Nora Connolly in Lily Brennan's room. They had been reading Deasy's document and talking it all out. Both had recovered from their dejection and seemed to believe it might come to good: 'Surrender to them is better than a compromise', Nora Connolly said. She outlined, fore-seemingly developments, non- military, but politically, that might be full of hope.

p.39b
Lily Brennan came to me just before we were locked in: 'I have seen the evening paper. Liam Lynch has completely repudiated Deasy's suggestion', she says, 'he had no right, being a prisoner to speak'.
But I think it will not end there.

Monday
Mother writes about this cheering news! I wonder what would make her realise that I care, quite seriously for the Republic! If I died for it, I am sure she would imagine I died cursing de Valera! I suppose it is not unnatural that to her, the desire to have me out of gaol should be so strong that she can imagine no stronger desire in me. I wish she could see a vision of the faces which greets, 'this cheering news'.
Mulcahy is stating that he allowed Deasy to send out confidential messages with his document. It makes little difference, the wording of the message is what counts.

p.38a Dreams

It is melancholy that I can never dream that I have been released and am free. I have dreams sometimes, not very often, in which there is no thought of prison at all, but almost every night I have some dream in which I am free for a moment, but prison is closing on me again. And in my dreams, I have a fear, a 'phobia', of prison, which the Gods be praised, has never touched me awake.

My first dream in Mountjoy, I remember vividly. I was driving in sunny, mountainous country by car, but I was on hunger strike and I had to return to Gaol.

In Mountjoy, I dreamed too, that I escaped from church on the way back from mass. We had been taken out to […] church and I ran down side streets by […] house, quite unnoticed and realised that there was nothing at all to prevent my going home. But instantly, quelling my heart, just as it lightened ecstatically with that thought, came a doubt - surely before they let us out to church, some body, Lily or another of the prisoners council had given parole for us all? I did not know and had no way

p.38b

of knowing.

I could not decide what to do. If I went straight back to gaol, it might be only to find that no parole had been given, and I should lose the only chance of escape. We might be there, after that, for years. I could perhaps run home, and write to Lili, and if she replied that parole had been given, I could return and no harm would have been done. I can't remember how the dream ended. I think, I went straight back. Then,

there was the dream in which I was in Westminster with Donald, asking him terrified, 'Is this a dream?' And the other, in which I told him to let me tell him everything quickly; 'listen, quick, because this is only a dream and in a minute, I'll wake up in gaol!.'
But last nights was the most brain sick and heart sickening of all. I was back in childhood places; in the boys room in Seatown Place, on a radiant spring day in the Demense. Others were with me; friends, brothers; I think. I was wild with the idea of escape. I believed there must be a secret way out by the caves. Or there was a mysterious path along the river. I had

p.37a
never been to the end and surely, surely if you went through the wood, right through, you would come out. And then, I remembered, bewilderedly, that there was no need for secrecy, no need to steal away, or run. The world was all before me, nobody watching, nobody trying to put me in gaol. Yet, the panic craving remained and the frantic haste to escape, to escape, to escape prison. If I did not do something, I should be in prison again, soon, quite soon now. But, I couldn't find out how, and why, or how to escape. I awoke then in Kilmainham Gaol.

Surely all dismalness is in this place. The cells are tiny, with tiny windows. My windows looks on a close prison wall, and no sunlight ever shines through it. There is no room big enough for a group to gather in; only the cold, concrete floor. There are no hot pipes, no stove. There is no hot water. All washing has to be done in icy water, in a place without sinks or basins,

where the water drains away in open channels, on a concrete floor, and where one has to stand always in the wet. There is no way anywhere of

p.37b

warming oneself, however sick or chilled one may feel. No way of heating something to drink, no place where one can sit in a ray of the sun. There is no green grass, or tree, or weed to be seen.

The only recreation found in the stone-paved, high-walled little square; the execution yard. There is a concrete slab in the wall. It was against this that Pearse, and Connolly, and Plunkett, and the others were made stand. The bullets would go through the stone walls perhaps, but not through the concrete, striking it, they would enter the men's bodies again. There is still the window of the wash-house. There are gas jets in the evening. There is a little can of hot water sent up to wash greasy dishes in, after dinner. These are all the sweet amenities of this life. 'A life of iron', since that was said to me in a dream; this cold and darkness have no power over me, at all. I am tired here, but that is all. All the prisoners seem well able to bear it. They would be hard, especially the young ones, to break soon.

p.36a

Miss Cunningham, has sent me books; four that I chose out of a list she offered me. What a blessed thing to do for a prisoner was that! One is about the psychology of dreams. The writers' symbolism seems to me saner that of most psychologists. But how ignorant these students are of all true spiritual knowledge! The communion of one mind with another:

inspiration from the dead; that mysterious knowledge that comes of what is unknown or of what is yet to come. These things that happened day and night in Ireland seem to be undreamed of in their philosophy. What would Gustavus Miller make, I wonder, of a dream I had a night or two ago?
I was going through a great, rejoicing crowd in Dundalk, I think, to meet Miss Mary MacSwiney and the Chief. I believe it is the first time I have dreamed of her, in spite of the way my imagination was obsessed with her, while we nursed her in Mountjoy. The Chief seemed in the dream to have arrived quietly, alone. I saw him in a carriage driving away from the market place up-hill, then away from town. The crowd was gone.

p.36b
But when the carriage was half way up the hill, the Chief jumped down and began to walk back saying to the people in it that he would like to meet Mary MacSwiney.
Then, she appeared, stepping out of a railway carriage. I received her alone. The emotion of meeting her again, after all the suspense, all the suffering, all the terrible reconcilement to her death of those days in Mountjoy overcame me so much that I forgot everything else. I put her into the carriage I had waiting and drove with her into town.
It was not until we had driven some way that I remembered the chief walking down to meet her, alone. We had driven away from him. I was stricken with remorse and fear. He was hunted and I had forgotten him, left him wandering in the open street; the inconsiderate unkindness of it. I was wretchedly afraid and ashamed. She went back then I think, and drove away with him up the hill, and I came down alone.

The dream turned into something quite different then; a ghastly vision on the roadside of a man, and a boy caught in a whirligig, which had got out of control, gaining mad impetus before my eyes, and whirled them horribly to death. The horror of the dead boy's body woke me up.

p.35a

I hate to think about this dream; that whirligig wound up and out of control on the roadside after I had met Miss MacSwiney, and the Chief had gone. Is it this mad, ghastly war?

And what does it mean that Miss Mac Swiney forgets the Chief and turns a different way, leaves him in peril, alone?

Pray Heaven, there is no interpretation of this dream except that my mind is full, now-a days, of compassion for de Valera, and of wondering where, and when I shall meet Miss MacSwiney again.

Monday Night

An unthought of disaster has happened. They have arrested Miss MacSwiney again, and brought her here. She was outside the barred window in the passage, and asked for me. I heard the prisoners crowded there, calling my name. I ran down, and clinked on the window-sill, and saw her there. 'Now', she said, 'I have to begin all over again'. The thought is altogether unbearable. We can't let her do it! She must do it, of course

p.35b

but we can't let her do it alone. Thank God, this time, I am not afraid. If a number of us hunger- strike, they will hardly dare to keep her. She has cried out against our supporting her already,

but I think we must do it, in spite of her. I spoke to many of the girls, and they agree, but before anything could be decided, we were locked in.
It will be hard on Mother, but perhaps it will all be over before she hears. Anyway, this time, I think, it must be done. I think, even before we hold a meeting, I must begin. I will take no breakfast, anyway.

Betty showed me a photo a while ago of a man in Free State uniform. He used to be in the IRA and was fond of her, but since he joined the Free State army, she could not be friendly to him at all. This made him terribly sad, and at last, he hinted to her, that she would be satisfied if she understood.
Two weeks ago, his officers discovered among his things, a plan and code prepared for the IRA. He was, of course, placed under arrest. She dreamed last night that he sprang onto a cart on which she was sitting, and gripped her hand, gasping, as if with pain. A friend has written to her today, to say that there is bad news of him, but did not tell what it is.

Aside: I was afraid about the cart in the dream. Carts were used for executions in the old days Betty tells me now that an ancestor of this man was hanged from a cart.

p.34a
I was breakfast orderly, having slept hardly at all. I was afraid of dozing off just at breakfast time, so got up, and hung over the balcony waiting for the trays to emerge from underground. It was rather luck, I thought that my orderly day should come now, before real hunger had begun. In a few days it might be

difficult to give out food. I was longing to see Miss MacSwiney, and expecting a battle with her.
Breakfast came, and I gave out mug fulls' of tea. Then, I asked, which was Miss MacSwiney's cell. 'Didn't you hear?', astonished voices answered, 'she had been released!.'
It seems they drove her, and the three with her, away in a taxi-cab, last night. They have learnt wisdom. Great is the clan of the Mac Swiney's and very formidable in combat! It is a victory cheering to the heart.
I ate the breakfast of my life.

p.34a A Dream

Betty dreamed again last night about Tom, her friend in the Free State army. She was in a dark, tangled place among terrifying wild beasts; one of which had fiery breath, and innumerable horns. She could escape from them only by crossing a dark turbid stream. Tom was standing, waiting for her, with his arms folded, calm and stern. The place where he was standing was a wide, green, sunlight field. Betty rushed to the water, trying to cross, but there were no stepping-stones, and thrusting up from it everywhere, piercing her feet, were the sharp points of spears. She had not succeeded in crossing when she awoke.
A wide green field, is of course to all children of Kathleen Ni Houlihan, Ireland free. How is it that Tom is always there? The tangled, dark place, full of evil and peril is like Ireland now; 'The Irish Free State'. What is the painful water full of spears, that has still to be crossed? And why is it turbid? Is there some ignominy as well as suffering yet to come?

p.33a

Certainly there is nothing like a threat of unbearable things to make us bear those ills we have contentedly! After the nightmare dread of watching Miss MacSwiney through another hunger strike and hunger striking oneself, simple imprisonment appears a wholly endurable fate. All to say, I have felt lifeless, quite inert; the proper languishing in prison, I suppose of the history books. It is a natural result, I am sure of being without fresh air, without sight or sound of freshness, without space for movement, without warmth, without sunlight.

But there is nothing alarming in it at all. I have lain in bed, and let Betty bring me meals, and sit talking to me in her charming, grave yet light – hearted way. I have lain looking at a jar of long stemmed, single daffodils, and at these tulips, pink and white in another jar, and the hunger for something beautiful that was over me is satisfied. And, I have read as much as seems interesting of one of Miss Cunningham's big Books, 'The logic of the Unconscious mind', and drowned the rest of the hours away.

Now, the gas is lit, and we have had tea, not prison tea. Betty contrived to boil a mug of water on the gas, and make home-made tea, and I am lazily alive again. Certainly there are worse things than to be in gaol.

p.33b Ash Wednesday Feb 14 1923

I was wakened by that most bitter sweet sound in all the prisoners world; the 'early chirp of half-awakened birds'. What windows it flings open in the mind on scenes dearer than the faery lands forlorn of any nightingale song. My little window at Speen on the Chilterns, Rupert Brookes country, when I woke

there, the first morning of escape with […] from a Land which had become more intolerable than any gaol. I looked out to see what place she had brought me to for that brief, precious week, and I saw long fields, grey, green, and misty in the morning sun, and beyond long woods, dark […] pine woods and beech woods, silver as in a faery play. Then we breakfasted and went out.
Thanks be to the angels, of all good holidays. No-one can know, who has never suffered long confinement, what an unfading, incorruptible prisoner each sunlit or moonlit memory can be. How vividly, with what potent [magical] redemption,
'they flash upon the inward eye
That is the bliss of solitude'.

When I went outside my cell to fetch breakfast, I could see the radiant reflection of sunlight outside the wash- house, on the top gallery, and as soon as breakfast was finished, Betty and I ran up to the window. It was an exciting moment while one climbs up, it is one picture, but a different

p.32a
one every-time that opens there. This morning it was beautiful, so beautiful that I nearly climbed down, and flew from it again. The sky was white, a haze of sunlight, and the sun itself, indistinguishable from its own surrounding glory, shone straight into our faces. Under it, the straggling factories and streets, clustered houses were lost, too, in a white sun, steeped mist; (all the ugly conscience dropped in it and a clean harmony remained). Only the gleaming roofs and the naked tree-tops and the white, blowing smoke from the chimney's

emerged into cleaner air. And the hills were lost too, in their own shadow; all one long, unbroken blue, grey range. Over there, lay the one cloud in the sky; long, compact, shadowed below, shining white above, like a floating snow drift.
Out of the misty streets, into the road that passes the prison, milk cart came rattling. People were moving about, quickly and busily. It is a wide-awake day. Right under the windows, is the outer wall of the prison, with the great execution slab.
Connolly could not even see the sun. That window will become very dangerous - if we are here much longer - to our endurance. I am haunted by a little poem of Rupert Brookes, but I don't think I have the words quite right-

p.32b

All suddenly the wind comes soft,
And Spring is here again;
And the hawthorn quickens with buds of green,
And my heart with buds of pain.

My heart all Winter lay so numb,
The earth so dead and frore,
That I never thought the Spring would come,
Or my heart wake any more.

But Winter's broken and earth has woken,
And the small birds cry again;
And the hawthorn hedge puts forth its buds,
And my heart puts forth its pain.

But, praise the saints, it is only February ye. Maybe by Hawthorne time, I shall be in Speen again, and the garden of Roebrock or Glenamaline.

It was at Portobello that Erskine Childers was executed. It is said they let him live to see the sun. If it had been here, he would have seen nothing but those blank walls, and a little square of sky. If it had been here…
I wonder how Nora Conolly endures this place.

p.31a

Seven new prisoners from Limerick came in last night, Miss Ryan said. Lili told me, that 23 Suffolk Street, the Sinn Fein Headquarters, now a peace committee, is meeting there. That is where she and Miss MacSwiney were arrested. Liam Deasy's message has been to this peace committee, an unanticipated disaster, and 'a stab in the back'.
Surely, surely, prisoners should be the last people to have to do with the making of terms? Only a very great and firm mind could be utterly unaffected by thoughts of personal reputation. A prisoner on parole would be tempted to reject terms that a free man might accept or if he were sentenced as Deasy was, to immediate execution, he would be tempted to put out any message at all in order to gain time to do the rest. Could this publication of a false advice, in order to win time to give right counsel be disastrous. That is what *~~Collins, Griffin,~~ Barton, Gavan Duffy did.

p.31b

Friday: This has been the least tedious day here so far. A pile of good letters came, one from Iseult. She has two new Danes called; deliciously and characteristically – 'Seraphine' and 'Parafine'! One from Donald, enclosing one from Murray Carrington. He may be able to produce *The Gift,* in July. It is a

joyous thought. D. has been offered an appointment as permanent A.S.M at his Majesty's, and has refused, and he without any immediate prospect of work. I am delighted with him. He'll be a Republican yet. I wonder how soon he will taste the apple of the tree of knowledge of good and evil? It is all he needs to make him a fine man. At present he is a kind and charming boy, but there seems to be nowhere in his heart or mind any strong feeling against injustice or strong championship of justice, humanity or truth. He has no historical sense or sense of evolution, no interest in the progress of humanity. His intuitive morality is fair and right, but his intellectual morality is of the dark ages. The deepest and highest capacities of manhood have never been stirred in him, and I fear the art he has chosen awakes narrow irresponsible selfish men. I think only an emotional shock would awaken him. He would have to be the victim of injustice himself before he would realise its existence. At present, he is a member of the privileged English class who

p.30a

have everything to gain and nothing to lose by capitalism, the oppression of the working class, the subjection of Ireland, and all the other established and highly varnished tyrannies of our time. Maybe if someone he cared for very much were the victim, that would do as well, but I imagine he would still be busy finding pretexts for the oppressor, rather than championing the oppressed; though to the sufferer he would be most sympathetic or kind. Perhaps, if I had been allowed to die in prison, it would have opened up the way to light, and once he saw truth he would, I think, have the courage to live by it.

It is strange how with some natures, nothing but a personal emotional experience does any good. It would be worth prison, and worse things to me to have a brother who was a brave, clear- sighted Irishman; thinking straight, talking straight, able to live in England, and see the best in it, and yet be firm and clear and fearless about Ireland's right. A brother who was all that, and yet not in the hardships and dangers of the fight! That is an adjustment- past praying for, to be sure.

p.30b

Betty wrote to a friend begging for definite news of her soldier, Tom. I am afraid the news will be very bad.

Tish Casey was tying my dress on for me in Betty's room, and Betty suddenly asked light- heartedly, 'what is it to dream of white sheets? I dreamt last night I was sewing away at beautiful white sheets. Is that good to dream of white?' Tish Casey looked across at me warningly, and I said vaguely it should be good. Betty cannot know that in her own orthodoxy, the surest dream-presage of news of death is to dream that you are making a shroud.

The unhappiest blunders of the world come from man trying to be cleverer than God. For the sake of good, he compromises with evil. Out of compassion, he surrenders to cruelty. He makes a deal with falsehood that he may live longer, and tell the truth, and always when these things are done, evil and cruelty and falsehood are made strong. There is no wisdom wiser than wreckless truth.

The signing of the treaty has turned brave, honourable Irish men into mean politicians and hypocritical slaves; the surrender of the Four Courts has flung ten thousand Irish men

into prison, to be broken, tortured and the best surrendered there. Liam Deasy's surrender has ruined our hope of peace.

p.29a

God drives his chariot wildly, zig zag to right and left over the road, yet it is going forward, always towards the goal.
It is in a spiral that we ascend; in a spiral movement, quick, giddy and violent, that Ireland is moving upwards to freedom now. And for us, in the rush of the movement, the trend upward is scarcely perceptible, only we feel, dismayed, the sharp fling side-ways, to right and left. But nothing is what it seems to us to be. The surrender of 1916, broke the hearts of those who survived it, seemed utter defeat. The men who surrendered and who were executed knew better. 'Let no one tell you this is defeat', James Connolly said, 'it is not'. He was right, it was a strong lift upward. It made the people of Ireland heroic. The republican elections followed that; a magnificent victory. Then the War of Independence came and we believed that extermination was before us, until we rounded the curve suddenly and England called a truce. But too soon - we went too far to meet peace. Then came the treaty - intolerable surrender. Then Rory o' Connor's occupation of the four courts - perilous defiance again. Then the bombardment. Danger and agony to Republicans, but

p.29b

the salvation of the Republic, making compromise impossible for us. The Civil War, to my immediate vision, a hopeless, terrible blunder. The murder of Prisoners, Erskine Childers and Liam and Rory gone, but God only knows. God, the fierce, secret master of this tragic play - what curse will suddenly be

turned, showing that we have sprung up towards victory in the night.
I am moving, blindly in the dark. I cannot see whether we are going up or down. They tell me we are moving right upwards. I cannot be certain, cannot urge them on through this painful and cruel way. Yet, I cannot tell but that they are right and travel to a good end. I dare not try to hold them back.
It is only in prison that I could have peace of mind.

Dad writes suggesting that he might be able to obtain my release on parole. Why is the thought more painful and nerve-shaking than the thought of spending the Spring in this hateful prison? To be outside, free. An intensive campaign against the Republic going on - executions of prisoners maybe - to be pledged, pledged to their enemies - to do nothing at all to help the victims - to be forced to be in London. I think that would be a worse kind of suffering than this.

p.28a Friday 16th Feb
Annie mac Swiney has come with other women from Cork. She has been on hunger strike since her arrest. She is very tall, and looked even taller walking with Lily and Cecilia to support her round the floor.
A bitter revolt against the weapon of the hunger strike is on me. It is too dreadful that after those weeks outside the gate of Mountjoy, this woman should have to face it again here. But, how unjust to be angry with any but the tyrants whose treachery and ruthlessness drive brave women to such a terrible protest.
The rumour arose instantly of course: 'a sympathetic hunger strike at once'. Again, bitterness, all unjust, filled me. None of

these women had struck for their own release, or as protest against their own arrest. She is not a great Republican, a member of the Dáil, like her sister. The work that was to be done by a sister of Terence Mac Swiney, hunger striking in an Irish Gaol has been victoriously accomplished by Mary. Why must this dreadful agony be the death or the broken health for years of young girls?
They will exempt the most delicate of course.

p.28b
I am, I believe, the healthiest woman in the gaol. But I will not hunger-strike for this. I could not die for it. This inspiration would not be pure enough to carry beyond the twentieth day and my imagination is tortured with a vision of Mother, sitting, brooding in dread all day, lying all night awake, picturing the long horror of it, suffering greater than mine, would be. I will not put her, and myself, into that pain and danger for one woman. It would be different if it were for an article of the faith. There will be many to think me a coward; maybe they will be right.
Having resolved this, I spent a night of dark, immeasurable misery. These to be anything, the least, the vainest, the most forlorn, that one might do for the Republic, and to refuse to do it - this puts me in the outer darkness. I doubt if I can bear it, even for mother. I will be able to hunger- strike, maybe, without letting her know.
No…there is no wisdom, but honestly, I will not hunger-strike for this.

p.27a Saturday 17th Feb

Our letters and parcels are being stopped. We dare not let the standard of political treatment fall. The men are beaten, but women can still fight this, and for the sake of all Republican prisoners it must be done. For this I will hunger strike if need be, even I.

Brigid has seen the governor. For the present, he will accede to our demands. All is well.

Volunteers for a sympathetic, hunger strike are to give in their names. Mine will not be one.

When Mary Mac Swiney came here, the night after my dream of her and the Chief, I was afraid the dream might be coming true. This morning, the papers have great headings, 'Miss MacSwiney and De Valera - Republican split'. She has written him a letter, refusing to support a statement, a statement he has made, proposing the opposite course, 'I consider your action rumours', she says, and the enemy have captured her letter and published it.

p.27b

The Chiefs own statement is like all of his; firm, rooted to the formulations, pleading for a lasting peace. I think if de Valera were not one of the noblest leaders any revolution has had, as noble as Mazzini; even he would have surrendered, or deserted, or let his heart break long ago. Such obstruction he suffers from his own. If his patience and heroic gentleness endure a few months longer, I believe the Republic will be saved, but it is hard to see how any man could endure much more.

My dream frightens me. In it, Miss MacSwiney went back again to join the Chief, and walked with him on his uphill road. But that ghastly whirligig rushed on.

Sunday 18th Feb

The amnesty ends today. And the war goes on.

p.26a Monday Feb 19

Word came suddenly for the Matron, the upper gallery was to be opened. I could take a sunny cell. When the doors of, 'the Green Flash and Hut 24' were unlocked, and Betty and I found ourselves in possession, each of a wide, pure, brilliant beam of sun; it was a revival of dead hope, joy and life beyond any words. Then, I pulled the table to the window and climbed on it, looking out. I looked out on one of the widest, kindest and most beautiful views that any window of mine has ever shown. Beyond the streets and houses; green fields, the whole serene, beloved, heart- lifting range of the Wicklow Hills. The hills with snow upon them, one farthest peak a pure crystal and over the hills; white, moving, sunlit clouds!

Release, itself will hardly hold more of ecstasy than this sudden inheritance of the hills and sun.

p.26b Tuesday

I am alive again, and writing, and seeing a hundred things that one may do in Gaol. Letters have come. Poor Dad! He sends me the form! It hasn't even power to disturb me now.

Wednesday

Parcels at last! My big hamper of food. I have been, for two weeks, rather hungry. It will be good not to be hungry any more until a hunger-strike has to come.

We are having political treatment still, so my turn is not yet. Eighteen girls have offered for Miss MacSwiney. How can she

bear to let them do it? Surely she would rather die? It is not to begin for a few days.

Thursday: A day of clear, sweet air and bright sunshine, a good days work. I wrote a hymn for the Senate last night – rather blasphemous, I'm afraid!

p.25a Friday

Voyage Autour de ma Chamber

I like the shape of this cell. The ceiling arches a little, and the top of the alcoves of the window and the door are arched. It is at the curved end of the horse – shoe shaped gallery from which the door opens, so the walls slope away at an obtuse angle towards the window making the cell wider at the window end. There are two rows of seven little panes in the window. The stool is under it, so that one has only to stand up on it to see my unsurpassable view. The little, busy, happy suburban street; prams, trams and gay advertisement hoarding's and green fields and behind, the whole range of the mountains. It is a vision of freedom itself, its holiest in its most everyday moods. Since I came in possession of that window, I have not felt like a prisoner at all. The head of my bed is at the left, against the wall in which the window is, so as to escape the early light. As I lie here, I have in front of me the old, stained and rusty iron door. Through my peephole, I can see a glimpse of the blue iron cage work that encloses us. The other peephole is stuffed with a handkerchief full of earth - sacred earth, 'Imperial Caesar…"…as Hamlet said.

At the left of the door, high in the wall, hangs that which is the

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whole solace and comfort of our lives – a sooty gallon can. A workman gave me a nail. I hammered this into the wall, where many a prisoner had made a hole. I pierced the can on two sides and hung it there on a string, and now when the gas is on, and a flare under it, water boils! That means tea, not prison tea, tasting of ancient tin, but tea as comforting to the soul, and as inspiring to the mind as wine of Hippocrene. It means hot-bottles. The chilled and sick and neuralgic can be tucked warm into bed. It means hot water to wash in, clean towels, clean clothes. It means fried bacon and eggs. A cry of exultation rings out through the prison when the discovery comes, 'The gas is on!' And, a groan echoes along the vaulted roof when the worshipped flame flickers and expires.
On the right hand side of the door is the one luxury the prison architect has allowed; a little, two- shelved bracket in the corner. On the top shelf, I have five books and a tall empty glass. How beautiful tulips or daffodils would look in it against the bare, white wall! I had pink tulips a few weeks ago, but they died. There is a pot of face cream and a powder box - relics of an almost forgotten civilisation - on the shelf below. My clothes are in wooden boxes that came from

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my friendly grocer. The mirror, a little beauty, Mother's Xmas present, hangs on that wall. It was the first looking glass any of us had in Mountjoy and caused frenzied excitement when it came. And the […] for the window. I have hung a line for my blue dressing gown and my red shawl. A Zulu basket hangs there on one of the nails, the only string bag I have here. All our food is in my wife's room. She keeps the kitchen, I keep the study here.

The study is along the right hand wall; the deal table, with pens in the lid of a date box and letters in a green chocolate box, and a thing of beauty between them – a woven blotting book, silver and covered with autumn leaves in rich dyed fabric. Stella's Xmas present. A wastepaper basket; Lili's present, is beside the table, and a wooden box on its side full of books and my manuscript papers in a despatch box. My sunbeam strikes first, just as the clank of breakfast mugs awakens me, right over my head on left hand wall. All the morning it is growing and creeping towards the door, and when after dinner, I come back from Bettys' room, It is full on my study table and the pictures on my wall.
They are only odd treasures, stuck with pins to the wall, but in a way they are windows into both my worlds.
There is a picture of De la Mare's Poem,

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'The Faery's in the garden'. Judith painted it and sent it to me. It is all moonlight and shadows. And the wicked faery, under a […] cherry tree. She painted a lovelier one, all frost and fire and stars for the little salamander, but I have never been able to find it since we came from Mountjoy.
There are photos of Gabrielle which Donald sent me. Gabrielle, as 'Willow-the Wisp', haunting me with longings for Gabrielle as […]. There is the German silhouette, Iseult sent, 'to make us feel ornamentally pathetic', a desolate figure clinging to a beautiful but unrelenting wrought iron gate. Then, my calendar from Polly Holy, a scene that might be in Galway or Down-Patrick or anywhere in Ireland still, and keeps memory vivid of many drives through lonesome country sides on the work of the White-Cross; thatched cottages in a green -yellow

field and a grey, rough stone wall, and blue hills. And then, the window into the greater world, a photo cut from an English paper of the noblest man I have ever known; Erskine Childers, standing as I have seen him scores of times, his hands in his pockets, his head a little tilted, looking at one with a half bewildered, tragic, friendly look. It is a good likeness, but I see him more livingly in dreams. There is a

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photo of Molly Childers too, taken at the trial, I suppose. Her face full of brave suffering. I have not the courage yet to look much at this. I can be resigned now to his death, a death as splendid and as fruitful for Ireland as Emmet's or Connolly's. I can never be resigned to her pain.

Many shocks of bad news have come on us while we have been in gaol, but today's false alarm opened up a blackness of despair and misery more than anything I ever imagined before. A 'Stop-Press', was being called in the streets outside, and a crowd of girls crowding at the wash-house windows stood for hours trying to discover what the news could be. News boys held up their placards to them. They were just too far off to read. The boys tried to shout the news, and could not quite be heard. It was something about an arrest.

Somebody came into my cell. I don't know who it was, and said, 'They say de Valera has been captured.' 'Who said it?' 'A solider shouted it up.' 'It's nothing, nothing', I said 'he is joking, it's not true!'

But it was another hour before we were quite

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sure that it was not true, and though I would not be such a fool as to believe it, I could not get the heart straight in my body - §'You put the heart across me!', country women say - that is what happened.

'If it is true', Lily said, 'we are lost.'

'The Republic may be saved without him', I said,

'but not the honour of Ireland. It is only he will get the Republic we want. Without him, it might come and not be worth having'. Lily knows him and said that is what she meant. Betty did not believe it at all. The men, she says have him too well guarded - he will never be taken. They love nobody the way they love him. 'Captain o' Leary told me', she said laughing, 'that they have him like a sugar stick in a glass case!' And if they have him they won't keep him - the English never could. There are men in the Free State army wouldn't see a hair of the head of him touched.

The relief of hearing at last that there is no truth in this at all makes every other possible catastrophe seem small. Character is more important in Ireland's fight than in any other, because we have to

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fight enemies so corrupt, and it is more important at this moment than at any other in Ireland's fight. Who but de Valera could keep men who have been vilely and cruelly betrayed- from growing cruel and vile? His were the comrades of Rory and Liam and Erskine Childers – they once served devotedly the very traitors who joined England now to hunt them down, who have killed over fifty of their prisoners in their gaols, and murdered God knows how many by the roadside, and in their

homes; yet his men do not kill their prisoners - they set them free, rather than kill them to hunt and murder again.
'It is terrible on the boys', Betty says, 'especially where they get a man, they know has been slandering and hunting and wronging them and know he'll do it again. But de Valera has said, the first prisoner that is killed, he will resign and leave Ireland. And the men are said and led by de Valera.
But if the execution of prisoners goes on by the Free State it is said, he will consent to executions soon, because there is no other way at all to save the lives of the prisoners in Mountjoy.

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How strange it is that all my friends, those who are in my lasting sense my own, should be among the enemy. For Iseult's is a far-off friendship, and Maeve's farther still, and […] scarcely friendship at all. Mother and Mona and Donald, even are among the enemy. It was 'good news' to them when Deasy surrendered. They are good friends to all of me that matters least, enemies to all my hearts desires. My health, my comfort, my release from prison they would labour for, and they will rejoice, even Donald and for my sake, (they will say), if all the hope I live and have worked for and been imprisoned now for, is utterly broken and crushed. They are sorry about my imprisonment, sorry and kind and even Donald, a little ashamed. It is a poor, lonesome, aching, friendship only one can have with such tender friends.

Life has one reward of joy only for those who fight this ever-losing, never-lost, never- ending fight. Loss, hardship, wounds, and captivity, pain and death will come to them. But to these will be added the secret, shining comradeship of brothers,

whose proud brotherhood outlasts death. Pitiful indeed is he who goes alone, and sees no bothers face smiling upon him when the fight is hard.

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I have borrowed from Miss Annie MacSwiney her brothers book, 'Principles of Freedom' and Terence MacSwiney is among the prophets of my world. It was a joy, which I am ashamed to say, amazed me, to find a mind so exquisitely civilised, a spirit so comprehensive and calm and wise. The intensity, the heroic ardour, the purity of this main flame, all the world has recognized; to discover so large a vision and so philosophic a heart with that intensity and rigour, was unexpected.

Had he been nothing but a moral philosopher, he would have been a great one. He would have been a great saint, I am quite certain, in Saint Francis's time. He could have been a poet as great as Wordsworth, had his ardour poured itself only into words. He would have lived, had fate granted time, a life which would have been a great Christian work of art. As things fell out, what fell to him was to die and infinitely noble death. Annie told me that just before he became delirious, the doctor struggled so persistently to make him take lime juice that he moaned at last 'Ah let me die in peace!' . The doctor put his face close to the sufferer and said fiercely, 'but you're not going to die in peace, you're going to die in pain!' Terry smiled, she said and opened his hand and said, 'you, as a doctor, have

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done your best. I want to thank you, before it comes'. That is, I imagine, to be a saint.

His book is not a paeon of Ireland or of patriotism at all, but quite frankly of beauty, justice, fraternity and truth. His devotion to the ideal of Ireland free, is passionate because to his imagination, Ireland unfree is shut out from truth, bravery and beauty, while Ireland free will so overflow with all life's splendour that the whole world will be re-illumined by that light.

He hates nothing, even his own enemies, except were evil, but he loves, with dauntless, vehement impassion championship, the beauty that is in freedom – the beauty that will live in spite of Empire because of such lovers as this.

I think the death of such a man in England's prison will bring the fall of England's Empire nearer than any other blow for freedom which my hero could have struck. But it is hard not to hate or curse with bitterness he would have blamed, the people under whose rule all such men as he must live in gaols or die.

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Annie MacSwiney was released this morning. The agony has not been so long, the strain so heavy as in Mary's hunger-strike. Instead of the painful, heart shaking excitement of her release, there is a great, restful thankfulness in the air.

Mary MacSwiney sent us all a marvellous armful of flowers. What glories there are in the world, now it is Spring!

All the fortune tellers (a prison is a busy time of them), and the political prophets among us too, say we shall be released either in March or in September. September! I should have been nine months in gaol. Donald could not go to Italy - Perhaps, perhaps I should miss 'The Gift'.

But to be released in March; that could only come, I am afraid, by surrender or defeat. And, if that means anything real, it means a country so utterly bereft of hope, faith, love, that life would seem as grey and dusty as the grave.
I can imagine going out into an Ireland so broken and hopeless, that to look back at these days in

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prison, days all lit up with faith and love and hope would be to look back on a happiness growing incredible to the dead heart. How one rediscovers the oldest wisdom in the world. Surely, to live, we need nothing but hope. Prison with the dream of Ireland free, may be years away, is all lit up with life: the whole world, that hope gone out of it, would be an [….] desert. I knew these windows would be perilous to our peace! Poor little Betty broke down for the first time last night. She climbed up to her window to look at the moon. There was a half-moon in a wet, cloudy sky and to the right, the city and the sky lighted yellow over it.
She heard, somewhere in the fields that lie between us and the mountains, the […] music of a fancy fair. It played Patricks' day and 'Comeback to Eireann' and 'The old folks of Home'. Then, in a farm somewhere in the dark, a dog barked, and the big farm in BallyWilliam, and the wide roads at night were too much. She climbed down and crept into bed and cried for long hours till she fell asleep.

p.64b The Exile

Some for a year or two, many for almost all their lives; the men and women of the Republic have been over laboured. They have been freedom's slaves. Always, there has lain to their hands work; heavy, dangerous, difficult - more than there were labourers to perform - always they have known that if the work were left undone, all that Irish men have been dying for would die. Faithfulness have been an ever- driving tyrant, and leisure a thing that will come, maybe, with victory and old age.
Whether the work that waited was the work a man or woman had planned to do. Whether it was the work each could do best or worst mattered little - the making or marring of a human being, the quickening or deadening of the individual spirit, counted not at all.
The enemy was at the gates - the great defensive barrier had to be built. So, body, mind and soul were lent to that labour and until that labour became a familiar vehement thing, giving peace. But that which had listened for music out of the air, that which had involved far-travelling thoughts, that into which shapes of imagination and phrases of poetry used to flow has no space to live in, no home, no friend, no welcome any more. And quite suddenly, in the strong heat of it, we are

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snatched from that labour of defence, imprisoned, so that if all we lived for were spinning into madness or crashing to ruin we could put out no hand or thought to help.
Now, amidst all the dismay of this (though there be shame in the confession), there is pitiful, banished ego that is glad. The labourer stands erect again with wide eyes, the windows of the mind are open; thought, fancy and meditation come flying,

hover diffidently, still unsure of welcome and enter in. It seems that at last, in imprisonment, the exiled self is free.
But that hope and solace are only for a little while, for prison closes even on the dreaming soul.
A comradeship too close, too narrow grows to a mortal enemy of that self. In one confined with many others the myriad incessant impacts of their thought, the incessant claim of their talk or revelry, and the businesses and contests all the [commonweal beleaguer and destiny] at last the privacy of the mind.
Where two only are together that close, unchosen companionship works more slowly, in its own way. Each mind learns, through failures and rebuffs and silences to turn to the other only those facets which the other can understand, and

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out of a thousand there are often but very few. There is talk between them, if the cause of the disaster of the leaders of the dead, and talk of the prison businesses of the day. But all the rest on each is silent, condemned to solitary confinement for all the prison time, and in solitary confinement that long-banished, hungering ego does not thrive.
For a little while only, in those solitudes, thought and imagination live and work: Out of memories the mind goes weaving dreams and philosophies again, out of the very stuff of its imprisonment, even, it weaves for a little while. But this brooding soul is too like the body of the hunger- striker, which feeds on its own substance until that is spent and then begins to die. The glimpse of the Milky Way or a wave breaking or a stormy tree, one breath of the wind of the world might bring new life. But there is nothing, nothing but the [story/stony]

monotonies and uncontenting flippancies of the prison day, so that at last, spirit falls into the listless apathy of the starved.
It is now that I have found myself committing a grave and bitter sin, a sin that has seemed to me always a blasphemy against life - striving to shorten the days. Hours of half- conscious

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drowsing, hours of reading great, tedious books, hours of walking up and down the stone corridors alone, because I have nothing beyond a friendly greeting or question to say- and it is months of life, sweet life that men break their hearts for when they are dying, that we annihilate like this.
Perhaps in this long winter- sleep that it is getting, that banished ego, with all its joyous powers, is growing young again and strong. Maybe it will awaken when I am free.

p.62b A Dream

In prison dreams, I find, the world has a charm and innocence that I never felt so poignantly before; streets and gardens and people's houses are like places in some exquisitely written tale, each pervaded with some gentle atmosphere - some delicate, harmonious mood. No heaven could be more sweetly habitable than the world of my prison dreams.
But, it is very seldom in the dreams that come to me here that I am safe and free. Either, I am escaping dangerously, hunted, lurking, and running as though for life, or I am free only on parole, and a heavy dread of imprisonment is over me still.
Last night, for a little while, I was quite free in a dream, walking among narrow paths in Westminster with Donald, on a day of sun and seagulls when the Thames was blue. Westminster had lost in my dream all its sinister and evil power - only the beauty

and ancientness of the great buildings remained, and that grandeur standing in the airy, April sunshine filled me with joy, and Donald was there to share the delightful world.

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I was talking to him about prison, and prison dreams when suddenly, as we turned under a stone archway, a dread seized me and I caught his arm;

'O Donald', I cried out, 'I dreamt this so often, in prison - this place and you - I believe this is a dream!'

'It's not', he said, smiling 'not this time', and then, laughing at me, 'Are you going to cry?'

I was quite reassured then, and stopped to breathe in the gladness and relief of it, and days and months and years of freedom seemed to be opening like wide spaces before my mind. But then, swiftly the fear came again and I held him, 'It is', I cried, 'O Donald, the walls! The walls!'

I woke up, then, on my mattress on the floor, my hands pressed against the white wall of the cell, and Donald leagues away over the sea.

p.61b <u>Windows</u>

There is a mysterious region, evasive as a mirage, in the dawn hours between sleep and wake. It is then that my soul, undisguised by the habits and manners of my days, lives its own secret life. Revelations, harmonious, powers flow into my being then of which, when I wake, not even a memory is left. I know this, though how I know it, I could not tell.

So independent of place and time, brain and body, this clear existence seems to me likely that it resembles the spirits existence after death. I could not describe it - will not try.

It was in state nearer to waking that I lay this morning when the windows opening in the wall. The wide high windows of our cells are merciful; through them the sunlight and moon light come, and we can watch the seagulls and the stars. But never to have any glimpse at all of earth or sea - that can become an intolerable, maddening frustration of sense and soul. I have thrust the first stirring of that hunger down a score of times. It is one of those waking's of nature in the heart and brain which no prisoner dare indulge. To desire a window and find on all sides only a dead wall - that could

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turn to agony, in fever body and mind.

But this morning, no sooner did that first perilous stirring come, than windows opened before me in the wall to which my face was turned, as I lay on the cell floor. A wide, long window, stretching from the ceiling almost to the floor, opened first, and outside that window it was day. About four o clock, on a blue, August afternoon, and outside, there was a wide lawn with trees. The lawn was not closely clipped; buttercups grew in it, and the trees were tall firs, straight and dark, yet, because there were borders of shrubs and flower beds around it, I knew this was a garden lawn; a garden where tired men and women would be coming soon, from acting and lecturing or listening to lectures or the play, and we would be having tea. That window closed and the window that opened then looked down over the city, from a height. There were trees there too, marvellously varied - many bronze like beeches - some silver as willows , [one a Jure] stays scarlet, like flame. A pale blue sky was over them and everywhere sea-gulls wheeled. Then, below the same

window, it became suddenly dark – the trees had lost all colour; only the dark

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soft, outlines of the tallest, showed a cloudy sky, dim- lit by an unseen moon, seemed to be moving over the still earth but beyond the green it was eerily lighted by a dull amber glow - there the city, full of lights - all around the Green stood the black [horses /houses] - at the right rose up the College Dome, the high street-lamps, richly yellow, seemed to be hanging from the trees…

Then it was daylight again; midday in April or in May and the window looked out on a flowery corner, bounded by a rough stone archway and a grey wall. Again, the sky was blue, with light white clouds and against the grey wall and the pale sky stood two sapling trees; one a rich lined copper beech, and one an almond budded with pale pink flowers. Tall grey- green flags of […] tulip, holly-hocks in blossom, wall flowers and carnations, tufts crowded around the tree-roots, and white-starred mosses, and purple periwinkles clustered up on the walls.

The wall closed and opened once more on a dark- blue, Mediterranean sea with white foam whirling round a sunken reef; 'perilous seas…forlorn….forlorn…the very word is like a knell.' I wakened then, in my cell staring at a white, dead wall. What windows shall I look out of when I am free?

p. 59a <u>The Hermit</u>

I believe there are now sixty Republican women here. How many, I wonder, in the reality of the mind, are imprisoned within these walls? In the small person of Lili I have already

discovered two; one is a votaress, saintly and mystic, the other; a busy- brained official of Sinn Fein.
In Marguerite there are three at least, besides those whom I have not found. One is a daughter of Eve, demanding admiration and winning it instantly, everywhere, by her wit, talent and charm. Another is a child of France and Ireland, a Doctrinaire Republican, fierce and serious in thought and work, and third is the mother of Mitchell and little Fergus and the kind solicitous friend of all here who fall sorry or sick.
As for me there is scarcely one complete personality, I think, but there seems to me to be a quarrelling throng of beings all half alive. A kind of a pacifist is here, who is plunged into depths of gloom by news of military achievements, which set the other prisoners cheering lustily with delight. And there is a vehement Republican, who finds few companions, for of the sixty

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prisoners, nearly all seem stronger as Nationalists than herself, but comparatively indifferent Republicans in the revolutionary sense of the word. Liberty, Fraternity and Equality are instincts, but not passions, with them.
There is an active propagandist and an insatiable play-goer and an untravelled traveller hungry for foreign cities and Scottish Highlands and Irish lakes. These may be one or three; they are all angry, suffering, impatient and cannot bear imprisonment at all. And there is one, sometimes, though rarely […] to whom prison is more friendly than any other place; who revels in long idle hours that have no barrier against the fantastical wanderings of erratic thought, loves the spacious absence of all but congenial minds; loves the friendly companioned hours of

talk and story-telling after the lights are out at night and the door locked; loves the complete enforced irresponsibility, the leisure to read even while Ireland is burning, the freedom to write faery tales while men are being starved in gaol.
A heartless worthless egoist is this - a hermit of the dark ages, without even the grace to pray.

p.58a A Dream

Last night I was with Donald in London in Mothers little room, I think. There was something I was fearfully eager to explain to him – probably something about my unfortunate play, but I could not get him to attend.
'Donald', I was saying, feverishly- 'Listen, do listen! I must tell you this, and we can't lose a moment, do listen because this is a dream! Don't you understand, Donald, I'm dreaming and in a minute I shall wake in gaol. Do Listen, Donald!' And then I woke.

Aside: And Mona, whose thoughts about Ireland, I think, not even she or her maker knows. All kindness, a little baffled, not quite knowing what to say- closer to me, in her own way than anyone else. And Donald, best of brothers and friends but doubtful of my cause.

Prisoner families are a strange study in this war of brothers. There is poor Davy's, without sense of pride or honour, without care for Ireland or understanding or her care for it, persecuting her with exaggerated tales of her mother's illness, hoping to torment her into desertion. There is Betty's father, typical old tyrant of the strong farmer class, who drove her from her home, by his tyrannies; 'He'll forgive me everything in the

world, he'll be so proud of me', she says, 'when he hears I have been in gaol'. And there is mine, strangest of all, I think. Dad, an Imperial, Home- Ruler; who thinks me all in the wrong; does everything for me that money and a blundering unimaginative love could do; goes humbly to the members of his government begging pardon for his erring child; cannot, cannot, cannot understand why I won't sign the form. And mother; a stage Englishwoman of the morning post type; so ashamed of my imprisonment that she will give no one but the family, letters addressed to me to post; wretchedly ill & seeking me to take her to Bath.

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'Seven Years' (1916-1923)

Poems: Garrett O' Driscoll- (''The Stalworth Son'')

V. Goodfellow – Autumn

[…]

Father Brown

The Pilgrim (M Mac S) Nov 1922

The Beacon Song – […] made for M. MacS in Mountjoy. Nov.1922 (N. Cogley)

On Leaving Mountjoy. Jan 19. 1923

[i]*Dirge for the Dying Year* Dec 31 1922

To M.C .

Captivity. Kilmainham March 1923

The Builders (An Poblacht- June 1922)

Song for Beltaine (N. Cogley)

The Rebels (Hughes) Freedom

Samhain (Kevin Barry)

The Prisoner

The [Mourners] (K. B.)''The Young, triumphant dead'' Young Ireland.

Out of the Strife (K. B)

Maeve (''gentle as an angel is'')

The Moon (''a golden moon […]

The Lover […] July 1922

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[i] Dirge for the Dying Year
Farewell sad year, down in the clouded west
Sink with the day amid gloomy pageantry
Of royal purple, as is sweet for thee
For thou hast vanquished our Kingliest
And buried them away with the dead leaves

A plunder was it that the air bereaves
of sweetness, bitter war of brotherhood,
Life of its pride, death of its quietude,
In thy slow passing mournful live grieves
gentlest sons by sons unfaithful slain

Thy clouds were miseries; they winds were pain
That stript our blossomed boughs and strewed the flowers
on every valley, all things that were ours
Thou didst lay waste; they will not laugh again
though men remember; Haste thee and begone,
Linger no more! Thy tyranny is done;
Young stars muster their spears behind the pall
of dusk. They march to guard thy funeral
And herald to our skies tomorrows' sun.
Mountjoy Prison
Dec 31st 1922