TRANSCRIPTS

Dorothy Macardle's Civil War Gaol Journals 1922-1923

Mountjoy 1922
Vigil 1922
Kilmainham 1923

Dorothy Macardle, Jail Journal, P150/1658, De Valera Papers, University College Dublin Archives.

NOTE: HIGHLIGHTED TEXT CORRESPONDS TO MATERIAL IN PLAYSCRIPT

MOUNTJOY 1922

BY DOROTHY MACARDLE

The Hunger Strike

Honor Murphy – The Debate

The 6th

Agnes

The Doctor

The Split- Development

The Stopping of Letters

The Sentries

Absolution

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I thought the tide was turning in Ireland, those few swift days. That mood of intense pity, one with intense hope and pride that was the mood of Ireland before last July seemed to have revived again. Our work at 73 knew neither meal nor sleeping time. We painted posters, gathered processions, even I spoke with Maeve to white-faced crowds in the dark streets of evening from the ruins in O' Connell street, the fountain in James Street, where I once heard de Valera speak; the crowds that were charged and threatened and fired over by soldiers, but would not go. I rushed No. 16 of Freedom out in haste; the little paper has become the sea into which tumbles every rivulet of my thoughts and what peace it is at last, that those turbulent, erratic torrents have found a sea. This was my thought about the time.

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Miss MacSwiney's danger and suffering [behind the stone and iron of Mountjoy] became an intolerable thought. To be doing anything for ten minutes seemed shameful. On Thursday, Meave and Iseult and I spent hours on the floor in my sitting room painting posters;
''Miss MacSwiney's 6th day of Hunger Strike in Mountjoy'', ''5 women on Hunger Strike in Mountjoy''.
In the afternoon, a cable came from Ms Sheehy Skeffington, ''Muriel ill. Conscious about Mary and Baby. Wire news at once''. It was poor Mrs MacSwiney, who was in the United States. Maeve could not go to discover where little Moira was. I said, I would go to 23 Suffolk Street and find out. There, Lili O' Brennan, eagerly kind as ever, told me the best plan would be to go to Mrs Cathal Brugha, in Rathgar; she would know. She gave me [L.1.] for the cablegram, and I left. I

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went with a message then to the newspaper offices. After that, I ought to have called in at the printing press to see how Rose was getting on with the printing of No.16 and then straight to Mrs Cathal Brugha.
But I did not do what I ought to have done. I was in a fatalistic drifting mood. Saturday would be Donald's birthday. I was not satisfied with the shade of the brown tie I had bought for him. He wanted the colour of dead leaf - it was not the colour of any leaf I had ever met. It was in my bag, it would not mean ten minutes delay. I went to the poplin shop and changed it and walked toward Nassau Street then to get the tram to Rathgar. So, it happened that I passed Suffolk Street and found a crowd gathered and looked down and saw

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military motor cars and lorries drawn up outside 23. The big raid at last! I was dismayed; those 'captured documents', would be published. More Republican secrets in the enemies' hands. The women who worked there might be taken to Goal. I saw B standing silent in the crowd. 'Could one do anything to help,' I asked [her/him], 'by going in?'. 'I'll go', a girl standing by said. I emptied my pockets into my handbag and gave it to her to hold. 'There are documents they don't want taken', answered B. The Soldiers let me pass in and upstairs into Lili O Brennan's room. She and Miss Bermingham were sitting by the wall. Mrs Cogley was in another room, and Mrs Gallagher and two girls.

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The raiders were turning out all drawers reading everything. There were still important despatches in a drawer on the table, not far from the fire. I sat by that table writing. Lili sat between me and the fire: but a sentry stood watching me all the time. I had finished a long birthday letter to Donald and still had no chance. It was impossible. We were all under arrest, 'No one is allowed out'. Mrs Cogley thought she might persuade them of her innocence and be allowed to go. The officer half-promised she should be released. I also demanded to be allowed to go. He asked my name and address. I gave the Dundalk address. He

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knew the Macardles and said he hoped to let me go. I gave Kathleen Devaney my warm scarf. She had no coat. And the officer said we should all be taken to Portobello first, and he decided to take us there.

We were put into comfortable motor cars at the doors and driven away through the familiar lamp-lit streets. I had known, of course, that Freedom would bring my arrest, yet now it was inevitable that we were captives, powerless to escape, being taken to imprisonment that must last, at best, until the Republic is winning... months or years, maybe. I thought I would open the door and try to slip out; impossible, the second car was behind. So, we came to Portobello and sat in a circle in the guard-room

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there. The light of a curious lamp, like a lighthouse, on our faces, while sullen, rough-looking soldiers came in and out. The authorities were looking up our records, we supposed. A voice began shouting insults from the window to us. We complained to an officer. The man went away. Our Spirits were high, rather wild even, and the ruling passion strong in captivity. I related to the others the true story of the English Gunners who had to manage the guns for the Free State army at the Four Courts. It would be news, I thought, to the young soldier behind the lamp.

Not a word of explanation was

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given to any of us, then or afterwards. We were packed into the motor cars again and driven down Stephens Green and Grafton St.

Some thought we were being taken back to Suffolk Street. Others knew it was Mountjoy. I longed intensely to see one face of a friend; to let them know what was being done to me. I had the letter I had written to Donald, addressed, in my hand, and would have thrown it to be posted to any friend I might

see. I was sure, quite sure, I told the others, that Maeve and her brave throng of Republican women would be either in O' Connell St or outside Mountjoy. It was

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just about the hour when they always met. I would see her and call out to her. I felt sure there would be a hundred hands to take the letter even – not impossibly, a rescue; we might slip out into the crowd and be hidden and get away.
But she was not in O'Connell Street. There was no sign of a friend, no sign of one Republican woman outside Mountjoy. Cecilia Gallagher recklessly slipped out of the car but was caught on the pavement again.
Those familiar gates, outside which I had stood so often in suspense and anguish for those within, opened before us and closed behind. We were Republican Prisoners of War.

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Mountjoy had been the center of all our thoughts as, two years ago, was Brixton Goal. Now the one desire was to see Miss MacSwiney; to know for ourselves how she was. After an interview with the Governor in the office, where we told our names and addresses and no more; some sat down, though not invited to do so- while the governor [wrote us down]. Lili, an old fellow worker and friend of his was not asked even that. We were led down long, dark corridors and across a yard, delivered into the hands of a matron and wardresses, perfunctorily searched and shown into a long bare cell. This was the hospital; we seven were to be kept here.
Then began, among the wardresses, a quest for bedding and supper, and for us, gathered

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out on the landing, the questioning of what lay heavily on my heart. The women here were on hunger strike. Must we, in loyalty, hunger strike too?

We discussed nothing but hunger striking all the morning. Iseult's horror of it as blasphemy against the body increased the horror of it which the ghastly history of Brixton had given me. I had been able, for weeks, to contemplate imprisonment serenely and had not felt it worthwhile to give up a little work and sleep at Roebuck to avoid arrest, but for these few days, I felt afraid, afraid that to be arrested then would make it

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necessary to do this terrible thing. Probably if we did it, they would let us die. Iseult had heard a description of the pain…I was afraid to tell her I was afraid.

Lili was the first. I knew, when I knew her better, that she was bound to be. A little light, faery-like being; she is worn to a ghost of a faery by her burning faith and intense work; a gentle eager- hearted, loving woman. She would not urge it on any others, but she would do it herself. It would not be long for her; she was ill…

One or two were sturdily against it …the rest waited for a lead. There were a dozen reasons against it. It was too late - six days

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too late. It would be useless now. We were none very strong. And I knew, knew clearly and without question, that I had no reason but fear of death and agony for not doing this thing. I knew it would be a service to the Republic; it was a thing that I could do. I had written and spoken of the ultimate sacrifice. Was all that unreal - was it only for the sacrifice of others that I

was ready? I grew unutterably ashamed. And still, I was afraid. All my imagination knew of the long tale of Brixton took vivid life. I think I prayed to Terence MacSwiney, not to God. Then the pure thought of the Republic grew

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strong, strong enough to make it possible. I said I would hunger strike too.

Tessie, a pretty, apple-cheeked, dark-haired Kerry girl said she would do it too. I hated that she was scarcely more than a child, but nothing would dissuade her. She was brave. Two who were very delicate should have been exempt. I wanted [three] to do it and not the rest. Others said it should be none or all. The thought of coercing any girl to that risk or suffering was horrible. Cecilia said then that we should not decide until the morning. We should take supper

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tonight. Tea and bread and butter were brought in, and they all took a little supper. For me, the hunger strike had begun. I could not eat or drink and had to pretend to. My throat felt contracted and dry. Seven beds were brought in and placed side by side. The long cell just had room for them. Candles were lit, and we were locked in. We took off our dresses and let down our hair. There was much high-spirited, jesting talk. I had hardly courage for it. The thought of what was coming frightened me. I lay in bed, a bed that was a punishment, surely and after a while, I slept. I dreamed all night that I was out driving among trees, but prison was before me in the dream, and hunger strike, and maybe death.

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Of course, daylight brought a little more courage and a little hope. I awoke earlier than usual while the others were still sleeping and lay looking at the white-washed walls with three iron doors and three iron shuttered peepholes, and the white ceiling curved over us in three folds. Three cells had been thrown into one to make the ward. Cecilia and Lili were whispering, discussing the hunger strike. My cowardly heart was telling me it was useless and would do more harm than good. They can easily release her if she makes her protest alone; a crowd of women doing it will only stiffen them and make them ashamed to yield. It was a cowardly plea, and I

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hardly expressed it, even to myself. I would be able for the hunger strike, I thought. I was almost certain that, having begun, I would not give way. It is the beginning always that is difficult for me. But the peephole opposite my bed opened, and a sunny face looked in. ''Sighle!'' with a cry of recognition, Lili and others sprang out of bed and crowded about the hole. ''How is she?'', ''How is Miss MacSwiney?'', ''How are you all?'' Miss MacSwiney was wonderful still…Honor Murphy was very bad, and Mrs O Rahilly; their hunger strike was off. Mrs Humphries was very bad. ''Mother is breaking down'', Sighle said wretchedly, ''but she won't come off unless I do''. Miss MacSwiney was distressing herself terrible over them all, imploring and commanding them to

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give it up. She said, worrying about them had taken three days of life out of her. It was worse to her than anything else. It

would affect her brain and they had no right to do it, no sufficient cause. ''No, no, no,'', Sighle urged; we must not do it, not suggest it, it had been a mistake.
The cell doors were opened. Breakfast was brought in, and we drank tea, thankful that we had announced no decision. Lili saw Miss MacSwiney then, and that determined us finally not to hunger strike.
I confer, it was a lightening of the heart to me. I looked forward to imprisonment contentedly; a new

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experience, a little hardship, confinement, but nothing to fear. One would be able to write and read.
The great eagerness was to see the other prisoners and, above all, Miss MacSwiney. The rest were at exercise. Mrs Humphries and Sighle, Rita Farrelly, Mme O Rahilly and Brigid O'Mullane. Mrs O' Rahilly told me the story of the arrests as we walked around the dusty grass patch under the blind grey prison walls. Mrs Cogley and I still half expected to be released, and the others made me learn a score of urgent messages by heart. Sighle, brave and laughing, supple and straight of body as a boy, began playing vigorous games, but she had been six days on hunger strikes and had to give up.

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I delighted in her from the first; her frail blue eyes and coils of beautiful hair, and friendly, radiant smile and sincere manner. Brigid O' Mullane and Moire Mc Kee had been brought in after us. We had one gay glimpse of them in the passages last night, and were quite happy and at home.
I have not made up my mind about Brigid O' Mullane. I remember her during the Bombardment in those memorable

of days when I was working with Mr Childers, and we wanted recruits. He told me with a considering look that she had volunteered to help but …he said, half smiling…only because she supposed the work had become dangerous now. This attitude startled us. She has, certainly, what Terence MacSwiney's

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comrades used to call a ''die for Ireland face''; transparent, colorless, with thin keen features, dark eyes, a high smooth forehead, and brushed back from it; a short, dark mane of glossy hair. Her movements are light and decisive; soldierly indeed. She is a characteristic type, one of the finest in many aspects of the Young Ireland of our time. Moira; Dick Mc Kee's sister is of another type; small, dark, quiet, sympathetic, gentle and shy, with a breath-taking record of adventurous secret service to her credit, known only to a few.
We talked to Honor Murphy first through the peephole of her cell, then

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doors were opened, and we went in. She had been here a month before the others, quite alone since her arrest. When the printing press was destroyed; ''All is lost, even Honor', Frank Gallagher said that day. She had made great friends with her gaolers it seemed having no resentment against those who betrayed the Republic, and been petted and given a kitten and lived in great serenity. The Hunger strike had made her alarmingly ill, and still, she was too weak to move out of bed. Laughingly, she told us how all the days of the hunger strike she and Sheila had talked about nothing except food. It was hard always to think of Honor in prison. I had met her too, working

with Erskine Childers and heard his wondering praise of her, ‘such a splendid little girl’. I hated it at the time that she was continually riding under fire. Such

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a fair pretty, dreamy girl; destined, you would think, less for wars and politics than for some delicate romance. It was comforting to find her contented here. Yet, it seems a surrender of spirit, somehow, to become contented in a goal. Miss MacSwiney sent down for Cecilia Gallagher, and all was quiet in our cell while we waited for her return. She came down after a little while and told us. It was the seventh day of Miss MacSwiney’s hunger strike. She was weak but not suffering too much, vividly interested in everything, quite serene. It was wonderful news. What this woman was doing seemed almost terrible in its splendor to me.

Aside note: Crowded in the passage of the recreation ground, I saw a group of the others, evidently full of distress. Saw them lead away Rita Farrelly, sobbing wildly. Saw Cosgrove, the Governor, looking after her in sullen distress. He had told her that her father was dead. She did not know that he was ill. She had gone home on seven days parole.

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Mrs Humphries, wise and motherly and simple to us from the first, summoned us upstairs to say the rosary outside Miss MacSwiney's cell. After it, we went in one by one. She was lying on her side, among white blankets and pillows, and looked up smiling and spoke in a voice less faint than I had feared.

I felt almost sure, then, that it would not be for long.

Prison dinner; a plate of rice, which for want of spoons and from sheer merriment, some lapped up with their tongues; and

tea, very weak with thick bread and butter, made a hungry day. At bedtime, we demanded and were given milk. I wrote to Donald.
Davy and Tessie, our lightest

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hearted and youngest of us made laughter with foolery and stories and Irish dances. But outside continually there were raucous shouts from sentries and sharp challenges and, just outside the window, startling shots. To these sounds, we went to bed, half undressed, and sleep closed our first prison day.

Saturday 11th Nov

'The priest will be here at 9.30 to hear confession', the wardress who wakened us said. Then began a discussion, grave and frivolous. What was to be done? Absolution would be refused, we knew; except on the unthinkable condition of promising to support the Bishops' pastoral and do nothing to oppose the provisional government.
I had an impious desire to engage the priest in a political discussion and ask him

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four or five questions, which I felt quite sure would be unanswerable; but even a heretic could not use the confessional for a prank. However, the others were longing to go to Communion and went to the Chapel. They came back crest-fallen and bitter. Cecilia had gone in first. The priest had heard her confession and then, 'Now my child, I have to ask you certain questions', on account of her being here. Outside, she would not have been asked. She protested and finally

answered, not to his satisfaction, and he would not absolve her. She reported, and the rest did not go in. 'The four walls of Mountjoy keep us from absolution', as Lucy said. To a heretic, this keeping of the keys seems strange.
As the rest walked about our high-walled recreation ground, the [whitehaired] Governor of the prison came towards us, that uniform, Pearse's

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desecrated uniform is more repellant here than ever Khaki could have been. We turned away. But I heard my name called and crossed to him. The others, startled, looked after, certain it meant release.
'No', he said, 'It is Mme O Rahilly I want'. She was in the chapel. He waited for her. We did not see her again. She was released, but for fear I suppose of her taking out messages, was not allowed to come near us. I thought I had done so little, so miserably little for the Republic, that my turn would come very soon; a half-ignominious release.
I wanted to be writing; the journalist habit was on me, and it was almost a physical deprivation now to have no channel for the outflow of one's thoughts. I hoped Freedom was being carried on, we had all prepared Fortunately [we caught the editor's arrest].

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We were aching for a sign from the outer world. How had our friends heard of our arrest? Who would write? When would we be sent nightgowns, brushes and combs? I knew it was possible that no one had heard of me until Friday, when I should have lectured in College. Had my pupils guessed? The dear 'Pfeiffists' would be shocked, agitated. Would they be a little indignant, I

wondered? Would it, even a very little, make them think about the Republic? If it did, it might be almost worthwhile. They are worth winning for Ireland; those sweet-spirited intellectual girls. I was forbidden, by my promise to the college, to win them through my teaching or discussion. It would be good to win them even a little way through this.

p.31 Sat 11th Nov

Letters came! One for me from Lilian Dalton, so heartfelt & loving and sorry; a good letter to get. My Pfeiffists are desolate, she says. Poor Helga; she will really care. She has been afraid to think about the Republic because of her protestant mother. Will she gain courage to think about it now?

It was childhood again, the hour in the recreation ground, running and crying out and playing blind-mans-buff. We who had fancied the life of the Republic hung on our wit and labour, utterly irresponsible now helpless, though it should perish. Like childhood too, the scene in the cell when we found great untidy parcels lying on our beds; linen, sponges, pencils; hurriedly gathered together

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and rushed up to the gate by our friends. There was no pretence at restraining our excitement and delight.

The rosary again, and a brief glimpse of Miss MacSwiney, and then it was five o'clock.

At five o'clock, the comical little Deputy Governor required we should be locked into our cells. This, it appeared, was not political treatment. Brigid O' Mullane, a Commandant of Cuman na mBan to the last hair in her head, determined that we must protest; the cell doors must be open until nine o' C.

Protest could take only one form; we would refuse to leave the landing, and Paudeen would send for soldiers and have us dragged forcibly to our cells. This had already been done to Sighle once. To some of the young and war-like spirits

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the thought seemed exhilarating. To my unadventurous spirit, it was repellant in the extreme. Paudeen arrived before the question had been settled. Lili O Brenan had already by consent, which so swiftly in little communities recognises character, been appointed our spokeswoman. She and Brigid went forward to interview the blustering little man.
He had to await an answer from Portobello - it should come in a few days. Some wanted to refuse to retire. Others thought it would be more reasonable to wait. I suggested an ultimatum; an answer by Monday, or we would be free, and this was put to the vote. Patience had the majority, and we retired; 'Suffolk Street' covered, I felt sure, with the contempt of the warrior sect.

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We were all propagandists in cell '∞' Our natural medium, thought and word. The four above, Mrs Humphries, Sighle, Brigid and Rita Farrelly were women of deeds. One already the heroine of a famous fight, champions of Cuman na mBan.
There would inevitably be a difference of attitude…a little scorn. But the challenging, reckless spirit and boyish beauty of those girls is very lovable; however they frown on us.
Aside: Sighle, 'You never think of consequences.'

Someone had actually got a newspaper; we opened it, and a displayed heading shocked us into speechless dismay. Erskine Childers has been arrested.

To our hopes of saving the Republic, it is the worst blow except one that could be given. To Lili Brennan, it is the

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worst personal blow. Erskine Childers is the most brilliant, and one of the most noble and faithful champions Ireland has; and the love that those who know him have for him is greater even than the hatred the enemies of Ireland have for him. To me, the little time I worked with him is the brightest, grandest memory I have. His unashamed dependence, his mole-like drudgery, his quick, ardent, wondering praise like a poets of all the light-hearted helpers who went and came and under it all, the brilliant power and utter fearlessness and fine nobility of the man…to be proud of the Republic is to be glad of him. He has been arrested, taken alive because a dairymaid clung to him, and the attackers were able to take his gun. God save him for Ireland! His peril is very great.

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My companions, Lili especially, are old campaigners and know how to live through such times as these. There was very little said about the news, though Lili was his secretary, and he is her leader and hero and most precious friend. She and Nóinín and Davy sat round one of the little tables with a candle, playing cards. Lili's face in the candlelight had a strange, tense sweetness; it played radiantly on Nóinín's golden hair. They are rare, fine, charming people, these prisoners of war.

Before bedtime, Nóinín began singing an old, romantic Spanish song. I like her singing better here even than on the public stage; the folk song quality, the touch of impersonation, the clear

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value of the words gives its subtleties, which are not lost in a prison cell. We are thanking our stars, unkindly, that she was captured and not released.

Davy, who has the pale, grave face and sleek head of a Madonna is disclosing a droll delicious wit; packs of laughter rang out in answer to her maledictions, ''That you may have a son a Bishop'', and her retort, ''I don't care a Paudeen!''

I sat in the farthest corner with another candle stump, making new words to the, ''Shan Bhan Bhocht'', which when written were hailed with delight but criticised as being too severe. ''Then what will the traitors do'', was objected to. It was too harsh…too harsh for our gaolers, maybe!

Sun 12th Nov

The others got up in the dark and went to the chapel for early mass. When they came in, they were going to say the rosary outside Miss MacSwiney's cell, and half asleep, I tumbled out of bed and knelt with them. She is worse, Mrs Humphries told us, she had a restless night. The thought of slow, slow suffering and the ghastly withering of life to which she was deliberately going; of the hideous miracle which had turned Ireland's passionate gratitude and pity for her name into the wicked hatred that could let her die. It was all a thought, an atmosphere black and heavy and stifling. It made one's heart feel strained to do impossible things. It was cold, and I had hardly any food for three days, so it was not strange that

halfway through the rosary, the world receded from me giddily in a grey mist, and I fell into somebody's arms. I was quite contented to be on the floor, in half oblivion, but I could not make my voice

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heard, and they lifted me and brought me downstairs, and a nurse laid me on my bed and brought me a hot water bottle and a little cup of tea, tea in a ~~china~~ cup. I was not ill and lay there all the morning in a restful, contented frame of mind. The pang of imagination about Miss MacSwiney had exhausted itself; I suppose I was not troubling about her. A loveable little kitten visited me. They say he is a little convict. We have christened him Rory Beg.

My own things, my friends and possessions, my book wanting to be published and my new play waiting to be produced, and the delightfulness of my fireside and my big windows looking over Stephens Green, all these were vivid to my mind and had a new preciousness to my heart. Leaving prison, going home to all that would be very wonderful. I had always known I had more than my share of the

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pleasantest things of life and the only danger was forgetting the value of them. Prison would wake one to the pleasure of life again- make it all fresh – "Herrlich, wie am ersten Tag!"

Lily, too was unwell and Davy, and the Doctor came. Poor man, he is afraid to be human, afraid to be concerned and kind as a doctor talking to his patient would naturally be. He forces himself to keep an air of indifference as who should say,

'remember, although we do our duty to you, you and your ailments are nothing to us'. He is afraid of his government, afraid for his position, afraid to be his manliest and best self. It is the same with the wardresses here. What a vile, craven slavery of the soul!

p.41 Sun 12th Nov

Our food is carried into us by convict women ['locals']. They are [humourously] to be called. The poor old soul is broken, a shambling body and a distorted, repellant visage, continually twisting with repressed tears. Nóinín, who wins everyone's confidence by her sweet, serious interest and gentle manner, heard her story. She had been sentenced for receiving stolen property. She had not known it was stolen, she said. She had seven more months to serve, 'Pray for me that I'll be with my children for Xmas', she said, weeping again and again. The thought of Xmas in prison seemed to terrify her. Agnes is very different, a younger woman; square set, dark-eyed, well able for all the chances and mischances of life, not afraid to fire us sly, friendly glances and run into us with stolen sugar or eggs. Her tales; they

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are all, if you'd credit their [raucous, amusing, innocence], is that she is sentenced for owing £5 for board and lodging. Righteous indignation arose in me. 'Outrageous!', I said, 'It's more scandalous to imprison people for poverty than imprison them for being Republicans.' This sentiment appealed to her; it seems - she sidled into me at tea time with another stolen egg. I would have no scruples about [acting] as [receivers] of stolen property here; the property of the people who have stolen days and nights of my life - but unhappily, the eggs are stale. A

wardress told us afterwards that this Agnes is mal-adventurous. Her plan of life is to take first-class lodgings, get credit as a university student and instead of paying her rent, do a term in goal! There is something that

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one begins to sympathise with in such dealings; such dealings with a world that puts honest folk in prison for telling the truth. She is more pleasing to her maker, I feel sure, in her fearlessness than the prison Doctor or Paudeen O' Keefe.

Our three windows; high and barred, the lower panes muffed; can be reached by standing on the head rail of the beds. There is an element of risk in this; men prisoners have been shot for doing no less. Intense excitement was caused this morning when somebody, peering out over the muffed glass, whispered ecstatically that she could see the men out in the compound […] the men of the Four Courts who have been shut away for

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months. She recognised Maurice. It must be 'B Wing'! Frank Gallagher was there, one of the most valiant and masterly young writers and fighters of the Republic, 'a man of gold', Erskine Childers called him. They are splendid friends. Cecilia and he had been married just a month or two before the bombardment, and before the first wonder of their romance was over, his arrest had come. She climbed on her bed rail and clung to the window sash looking through the clear glass, reckless of the sentries and their guns. She cried out and waved her hand, and came down. Frank was there. He had seen her. It must have been the first he knew of her imprisonment, and turned white, and waved his hand and gone quickly in.

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We heard the men singing before bedtime; evidently a Sunday night concert. When they stopped, we stood up and sang, answering them. Nóinín, leading with her rich, glorious voice. We sang, ''The Soldier's Song''.

ASIDE: Rory O'Connor is there; the quiet, dark, daring man who achieved such wonderful rescues and engineering feats. Liam mellows; the fair young, and thoughtful man whose brain is full of beautiful, workable schemes; next to De Valera and Childers, perhaps the noblest man Ireland has. And Sean, the dear young boy.Sean MacBride and Robert Barton, T.D is here. We have to be thankful that these men, the hope of the Republic, are safe in Gaol.

Mon 13th Nov

We are beginning now to [regulate] the community of seven and appoint […] This is my day for cleaning the cell. An urgent discussion was held with the others about the action to be taken with regard to being locked in at five o' c today. Two spokeswomen, Brigid and Lili. If he offered to negotiate, they were to use their discretion. If he refused, our protest was to be made. We watched him

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gesticulating in his funny, bullying way, bringing his arm down with a lurch of his whole […] body and wag of his head and our spokeswomen came back to report. He had given his word of honour that if we went back to our cells, we would not regret it. He had a message from Portobello. We consented to retire, and they went back with our answer, and then Lili came to us

with the result. Cell doors would, in future, be open from breakfast time until 9 pm, and continual access to the recreation ground would be arranged. I was thankful it had ended without a tussle with the Free State soldiers. Some of the others; the three girls upstairs felt, I think, that it was a little shameful to have averted a fight.

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Aside: Miss MacSwiney kept me when I went in, troubled about my faint yesterday. She had not recognised me on Friday, she said, but she remembered now sitting by my fire in 73. She is full of concern about us; our rights, our food it makes her pain harder to see.

We in Suffolk Street were not in a militant mood. We had a heart for nothing, care for nothing else but Miss MacSwiney, whose weakness was becoming worse and worse, and the newspapers were still saying, 'no change is reported in her condition', and no sign came from the world that anyone cared. Lili said we must send out a report to our own D.P., and she and I set to work, amid respectful silence, to draw up appeals. All the anxiety and shame, and pity that has been consuming me went into mine so that when I had finished it, I was tired. They all wanted it until they heard Lili's, which was stronger and simple, Hers, they said, made one long to something;

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mine made them want to cry. I agreed, but the people upstairs took both. They could not decide.To my dismay afterwards they came and told me they had shown the letters to Miss

MacSwiney. It appalled me to think she had read all that I had written, and did not dare to go near her all day. Dad has written suggesting that my flat should be given up. It has upset me too much. One should not be so desperately attached to places. It is weak; but not to have any rooms to go home to - it is an utterly desolating thought. I wrote to dad but did not send the letter. It was too violent.

Tues 14th Nov

Miss MacSwiney's […] as that she wanted my letter sent with certain passages from Lili's inserted. With labour and irritation; I accomplished this distracting task, and the letter was sent out, under-ground. We had little hope that our Director of Publicity would manage to get it into the public press.

p.48 Tues 14th Nov

Inaction is becoming unbearable; that this suffering should go on, hours after and nothing be done, day and night. We ask one another, is there nothing that we can do? Fantastical schemes are proposed and turned over, and their utter impotence shown. I know what the old phrase means now, to be eating one's heart.

A paper came - Monday's! Erskine Childers is being tried …a trick…by his…most venomous enemies in a secret court. We are terribly afraid.

There was a hateful statement in the paper by Cosgrove about Miss MacSwiney. It hurt her, they said. It maddened me. I wrote an answer to it, which we sent out to the D.P. I sent him, too, a little poem, 'The Pilgrim', for Freedom. Lili brought a copy to Miss MacSwiney, and she wanted to keep it.

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<u>The Pilgrim</u>

Unhesitant towards the dark unknown,
Her soul travels alone,
Made swift by pity, omnipotent by faith;
And [sure / some], the holy dead,
Who gave their world for Ireland, lean above
That agony and shed
Their splendour upon her spirit,
Because her love
It is like to theirs
But time, in whose name
She dies, by whose sons she is
Flung to [wrath/death]
Bows down her head,
Broken with bitter shame.

p.50 Wed 15th Nov

A new recreation ground has been prepared for us. A circular grass plot with three narrow circular stone paths; so narrow that if two walk side by side, one keeps slipping down. Here we walk round, slipping down, round and round and round in a caged monotony; it is a hateful place. Just over the wall is the canal. Our continued question is; are there sentries outside? There is a little hollow turret in the wall, but a sentry is always there.

I walked round and round with Ms Humphries, trying to analyse the curious scruples which we all know we share about the ethics of prison life. Why is it that we do not send out for every comfort we can devise and make life as

p.51 Wed 15th Nov

livable as may be here? We do send out for food and clothing, but not for overly luxurious things. Ms Humphries scruple is religious; this is an opportunity for mortifying the flesh, which we should thankfully accept. I have no belief at all in self-denial as a virtue for its own sake. I think my scruple must be political. It would make things easier for our gaolers to make them easier for ourselves – it seems illogical, but the instinct is strong. Still, a certain amount of civilization I will make.
Read that Ms MacSwiney has been arrested in Washington for demonstrating for Mary MacSwiney's release.

p.52 Wed 15th Nov

Our precious Nóinín was orderly for the day. When we came into dinner; we found a table set that made us forget every trouble in pure laughter - apples on a polished tin lid, serviettes of pleated newspaper, illustrated menu cards describing the prison dinner in decorative French. It was as jolly a festival as I have ever enjoyed.
'A clergyman wishes to see Miss McArdle', a wardress announced and followed by excited and mirthful benedictions. I went to the surgery, where a tall person introduced himself to me as Mr Greer. I thought he had come in hope of winning my soul, so hastened to assure him that I was charmed to

p.53

meet him, although not a member of his church. He had been sent by my pupil, Peggie, who is his niece. The innocent child had entrusted him with confidential notes for me, and he had

left them all with the censor! I hope she will talk to him as he deserves.

We discussed the political situation with much politeness. He enquired whether there was no way of getting me out. I could promise to remain neutral, he supposed? I explained that it would not be possible to be free and refrain from working for the Republic. He looked at me in sad bewilderment and said goodbye. He will think of me as a 'fanatic' or 'idealist', I suppose - unhappy man!

ASIDE: I have always heard that prisoners confined and [….] to hate one another- and although we seven are good friends now, I see how that would come. Never from early in the morning until too late at night is there silence. One hates people for talking, hates their voices, also. […] complete waste of time…in the hope of anything … doom of hated and of getting […] reading and writing done, I have asked for rules of silence, and we have made these for a few hours each day. Cecilia is hard to quiet!

p.54 Wed 15th Nov

Honor has become a problem. Discussed among us with grave faces and in hushed tones. She has told us that she will not work for the Republic any more. Cecilia says that she has been dubious all the time, and Frank used to solve her doubts. Cecilia tries very hard, discussing patiently with her the whole story of this war. My thought was that Honor had turned pacifist; she hated killing, she said. Nothing would be easier to understand. But it was not that our war before the truce she still thoroughly approves. The Bishop pastoral has shaken her; their assumption that killing by Republicans is murder while murder by Free Staters is 'authorized', legitimate war.

p.55

She refused to sign our statement about Ms MacSwiney because she thinks her justly imprisoned; wrong to hunger strike. Yet this astonishing girl endured three days hunger strike in support of her. We are all deeply troubled. We like Honor and have admired her courageous devotion. It is miserable to see her losing her faith. Miss MacSwiney is sad about it too.
The evening paper came, and our statement was in it at full length. It could not but help, we were sure, and the joy of this made it seem a kind act of providence that had sent us here. I for one was altogether glad.

p.56 Wed 15th Nov

To have succeeded even in this little thing gave us an elation of hope. Nóinín suggested we should sing for Miss MacSwiney and chose hymns and traditional Irish songs and marshalled us on the stairs. The bell of the angelus was chosen, and a sweet, childish song about Bernadette. The last verse was forgotten, and I have to invent words. When we were ready, Nóinín herself sang angelically; the music seemed to fill the prison and melt away the walls. There was nothing in the universe but that wild, old sorrowful Irish music and the sacrifice going on in that little cell; the latest of a million martyrdoms.
We heard shots outside this morning and coarse laughter. Davy climbed up to the window and came down with a white face. The soldiers had shot a cat, and it was in agonies on the grass.

p.57 Thurs 16th Nov

Night was hideous, with the soldiers shouting and shooting in the yard. Agnes came in at breakfast time and whispered to me

that one of the men convicts had been shot. His eye was gone. He had looked out of the window of his cell.
From the cells below, a horrible banging and beating on an iron door has gone on this morning. We do not hear it anymore.
The prisoner has gone out of her mind. She has been taken to the asylum today. She is 19 years old. At exercise time, Rita Farrelly came back, all in black, and instantly a group was round her greedy for news; Freedom, is going still, she

p.58 Thurs 16th Nov

told me. Somebody had done well! There has been a raid on 73. She does not know how much damage was done. ~~Dad is going to keep on my flat for me…~~
I suppose my files of Poblacht and Freedom are gone again. She pulled the last issue of Poblacht out of her pocket. It was like water to thirsting men. Our first chance of Republican news.
But the news was horrible. Jo Clarke, who stocked Freedom for us and Poblacht, has been taken and tortured in Wellington Barracks to make him give up the editors and printers names. The account of his torture is hideous, sickening to read.
Erskine Childers is in Portobello. His enemies are venomous. It is a frightening thought, that gentle, chivalrous man.

p.59

Maeve and all her throng of women are working ceaselessly outside. I knew she would be. It is good to know that we have her. Every night at eight o' Clock; they march, singing and praying all-round the goal. It is a splendidly reassuring thought. If I had the Catholic faith in prayer, I should have hope, but I have very little now.

Ms MacSwiney is wearing her strength away now with anxiety for Erskine Childers. It has made her sleepless and restless, and she grows very weak.
ASIDE: She asked me why I didn't come in yesterday and thanked me for the letter and laughed a little at its praise of her and asked me to come tomorrow.

She lies very still; her thick dark hair in two plaits over her shoulders, her face curiously young-looking when she smiles. She smiles always when one goes, and no one can stop her writing. The shame

p.60 Thurs 16th Nov

of all that is happening makes her unable to cease work. She has written a letter to the Free State soldiers today. Her great dread is of the 6th. But I am afraid she cannot live unless they release her to see whether any redemption will come then.
No letter had come to me from ~~Madame~~ Maeve or Iseult, and I was unhappy about them. Outside Miss MacSwiney's door after the rosary, Sighle slipped into my hand a thin, closely folded, close-written note. It was from Maeve. It has come underground. I was thrilled when I saw what it was, like Bernadette, and rushed with it to the passage light.

p.62 Thurs 16th Nov

'There has been an appalling raid on 73', she wrote 'the house shot up'- they made a bonfire in the road of all your papers and manuscripts- plays, even college lectures- your pupils were picking up fragments of lectures on Hamlet in the street for souvenirs. They painted skulls and cross bones on your sitting room walls with green paint.

Plays…and my book; everything burnt. I had published nothing. All my work. It was a shattering thing to hear. It was well I had no one of my own there; I would have cried out…and cried. It is true, I know that courage creates courage. I clung to a vivid memory of Mrs [Sclheld] when she stood serenely

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watching the wrecking of Cullenswood House. It made this not so overwhelming. And I remembered that allegiance to the Republic had cost me nothing, nothing at all. This was my baptism, perhaps. I had to learn to be an Irish Republican. What sort of a loss is this, compared to the loss of a brother. I felt ashamed, and then it became a little enough thing. I was quite recovered by the time I went into Miss MacSwiney and gave her Maeve's message, and told her quite light-heartedly about the raid. But she is too wise and too understanding to be deceived; 'Shame, shame!', she said vehemently. 'Shame to burn your manuscripts! Shame! Furniture, other things, I would not mind [….] Her distress greater my own.

p.64 Thurs 16th Nov

'It is nothing to be very sad about', I said, and convinced myself, it has hardly troubled me since, except in little moments. My Rhythm book;

I can't write the Rhythm book again. It was studying and lecturing on English poetry that made it possible. For eight years, I have been testing my theory and choosing quotations for it, and when I finished the draft of it in June, I destroyed every scrap of my rough work. I must put it out of my head. All the time that I have been here; no one has sent me pen or paper or ink. The hunger to be writing is on me, these long, slow days, and I have to write this in pencil on

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little miserable borrowed scraps. I have written to Iseult begging for my writing case and supplies of manuscript paper. I shall be better able for prison when that comes. It is strange that she has not sent it yet. It will surely come tomorrow. Then I need not be idle anymore. A despatch box came today full of luxurious toilet things chosen by Iseult. Cream and expensive powder, eau de cologne and perfumed soap. It made one feel a woman and not a mere prisoner and was a great delight.
But what I am starving, for now, is paper and ink. I could write the little play again from memory, I hope if it came in time.

p.61 Thurs 16th Nov

After many futile efforts to put our mind to it; we succeeded in holding a debate tonight.
It was planned partly for the benefit of poor Honor Murphy in the hope of clearing for her, her confused and wavering thoughts. The subject was, “That the P.Q, being the legitimate [gaol] of the country - armed opposition to it is justly punishable by imprisonment”.
Cecilia, against her convictions, made out a case rather cleverly for the P.Q. Honor, in spite of her support of them, made so poor a case that we could less than ever understand her change. Lili and I spoke against the motion. Lili, briefly and very well. I, at such length, giving the history of events since Dec. last, that the chairman cut me short. Of course, the [negative] won.

p.66 Fri 17th Nov

The young Irelanders upstairs decided to make leaflets and give them to the guards. This has been tried once and discovered,

and Paudeen's arrangement is that if it is done again, all parcels and letters and paper will be stopped. Letters stopped! What a wilderness of anxieties this would be. Parcels stopped would mean hunger that could be endured but no writing paper; no occupation, no chance of keeping this journal or writing the play; to go out with nothing made, nothing learned.The others are gallantly indifferent about this. I am ashamed to oppose their plan, though I know it is useless. But it does not seem to me worthwhile. Will I ever be fit to be an Irish Republican at all?

p.67 Prisoners' Families

I think there are all types of friends and relatives attached to us seven. The first crop of letters were mostly from shocked Free State relations and were […], obviously for the benefit of the censor with ~~remarks~~ expressions of confidence in the Government which has put us in goal - a little trying to read- and careful disassociation from our crimes. Poor Davy was reduced to tears and dreadful misery by a letter threatening that if she did not sign the form and come out, her mother's death would be on her; a vilely mean and cruel form of coercion. I would not encourage poor Davy even to apply for parole.

p.68 Fri 17th Nov

Knowing that even among people with no little comprehension of honour, she would be tormented with persuasions to break it. And Davy would make no excuses for herself about […] she has the clear, simple truthfulness which was the fundamental cause of the anti-treaty position.

Lili has good republican friends who have known prison themselves and are clever about the little things, which have so

much more value than the big. They send her parcels containing what she has been wanting, and write her letters which neither belittle nor magnify her misfortune, and show entire sympathy with her own aspirations and indignations and fears.

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I too, have good friends, but not of the type most helpful to a prisoner of war. My Republican friends are few, and they are so responsible and anxious and busy about vital things that is only odd, hasty thoughts they can spare for me. Dad is solicitous and generous, but has no imagination for my needs, has a perverse pleasure in writing to tell me that Republicans are deserting the cause. He wrote me one lie about Erskine Childers for which I hated him with a volcanic hatred for twenty-four hours.

Mother is much more understanding, but maddens me with suggestions that all I want for Ireland is peace. She who knows nothing and cares

p.70 Fri 17th Nov

nothing for the Republic; knows nothing of what peace would mean, desires only the surrender of all that I would be imprisoned for life to save. How childish it is to let the sayings of people so utterly ignorant shake one's peace of mind! But for all that, she writes kind and sympathetic letters, and this is rather wonderful and she sends me delightful presents of the right things.

Jack has not written at all. It is impossible not to feel there is an end of all friendship with people who do not write; for it can only mean that they are bigoted by Anti-Republican, or

indifferent to me, or afraid. With Jack, I suppose it is a little of all. He is fine

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and I long for him to be happy, but how can we be friends? Mona is full of thought and kindness, but writes with a queer constraint as if she were making experiments in style. Donald's letters are good; his talk, cheerful and frank, and vivid; and with real sympathy not over-expressed. But all their letters are void of all reference to the only things I really care about now; the fight for the Republic, Miss MacSwiney, and the fight for Erskine Childers life. Whether it is want of understanding or want of sympathy or respect for the censor, I cannot guess. It makes all their letters seem little false.

p.72 Fri 17th Nov

Nóinín has preoccupied friends, who being on the run and busy, cannot write to her, and she is desolate. And she has other ex-prisoner friends who write delightfully and send her apple tarts and trifles and chickens roasted at home. Receiving presents give us a childish joy.

The ideal Prisoner family is I suppose; first heart-soul Republican, therefore a little proud of its prisoner; second, a little non-political and domestic, therefore able to attend to the minor comfort of life and third; full of the affectionate clan spirit that takes the care of the prisoner as a pleasant duty and all good qualities of imagination, heart and brain contribute to the writing of letters which give wings to the prisoner's day.

p.73 Friday (cont.)

Mrs Humphreys warned us this morning that Miss MacSwiney was getting worse. She had three collapses between 4 and 6

am. A priest visited her but told her he would not give her absolution.

We got yesterday's paper; a [d…tion] has gone to the government. Her release is expected. It was a lifting of dread, a dawn of hope, but we could not be sure. She hardly expects herself to be released and is troubled this evening. ''It will be such a disgrace to Ireland if they let me die. What I want is that they should refuse on the 6th to take the oath. I would die", she said, "to prevent one Irishman from taking that oath on the 6th". If she dies before the 6th; I wonder will it make one of these renegades ashamed?

p.74 Fri 17th Nov

The evening paper was smuggled to us. It contained awful news. Four boys have been captured and secretly tried and executed, ''for illegal possession of a revolver''. Killed without even their parents being told. James Fisher, Peter Cassidy, Richard Twohig, John Gaffney.

The horror of this thing done is intensified by the ominous significance for what is to come. Erskine Childers was in, ''illegal possession of revolver''. He is being tried in Portobello Barracks today.

To make war on man with artillery, capture them then and execute them for possession of a revolver. What an appalling degradation of war.

''The government has no intention'', the paper said ''of releasing Miss MacSwiney''. The paper cannot be kept from her. She insists on

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knowing everything. There is no cheating that powerful will. She had promised us a list of her favourite songs and sent them down to us. All varieties were named; 'The Wests' Awake' – [ifusher] - 'Clare's Dragoons' - 'My Old Kentucky Home Goodnight' and she had written at the bottom of the page, "Don't shirk the jolly ones". We tried to sing the jolly ones, but it was hard for Nóinín. Desperation and dread beyond expression were on us when we were locked into our cells. We were afraid for Mary MacSwiney, afraid for Erskine Childers, afraid for Ireland.

Cecilia tried to hearten us, but

p.76 Fri 17th Nov

her plan was pure schoolboy pranks and fooling, not good enough to make one forget. Davy and Tessie were caught into it. Lili gallantly pretended to be. I was so wretched, and my wretchedness so longed for peace and gentleness and music that I could not even pretend. When prayer time came, and they were quiet, I tried to pray. Then outside the window, a wild outcry began; you could not tell whether it was from the yard or the guard room or from B. Wing.

It seemed as if hundreds of voices, not human, were raised in a savage, triumphant- howling. It swelled into yells and sank to a grumble. It made me think of bloodhounds tearing a human victim in a Grand Guignol play. It made me remember the descriptions of the pograms

p.77

which Miss McSwiney gave me in Belfast. I remembered rumours that had come out to us from this prison. When Teeling and other infamous Free State soldiers ran amok in the

basement cell. The howling grew hideous, and my senses were pierced with long shrieks of frantic terror and pain. We looked at one another; the others were exerting fierce control. We kept silence, trying to guess where it came from, but it was no use. I could not help trembling, and they were angry with me. "Pray", Lili said and we fell on our knees. The others said the rosary. I prayed for quiet to fall on those savage spirits. I tried to make quiet come over them but the noises went on and on. Our lights went out, and we lay in silence except for the laughter and teasing of

p.78 Sat 18th Nov

Cecilia until, at last the awful noises died away.

Saturday

The nurse came in, in the morning. Miss MacSwiney was worse. Her sister had come to the Goal and had been refused admission and had stayed outside the gate all night. Those noises were […]. The guards entertained themselves like that when they were paid on Friday nights. No harm had been done. Outside, she said, the tension was heaving/bearing…keen. ''The faces of your men are terrible'', she said. The executions were too much.

The news about her sister came to Mary MacSwiney. Since 3 o' C on Friday; Annie had been on

p.79

hunger strike at the gate. Her lovely tranquility was broken. She was agitated, wretched. She looked up at us with piteous eyes and could not smile. There was only one more thing she could do to protest, until her sister was admitted; she would refuse

the attendance of the nurses. She smiled wistfully at me, “you will have to be my nurses now”.

I was afraid for the I.R.A. The provocation was fearful now. I was afraid they would think reprisals the only way to stop the torture of prisoners and executions like those on Friday. All this time though, they have taken thousands of prisoners and had

p.80 Sat 18th Nov

no means at all of detaining them. They have not killed or injured one, except of course the execution of spies. They have set their prisoners free, although that meant that these men were instantly fighting and hunting them again [all to recognize them in d……] It is a wonderful record, but it seems impossible that this standard of chivalry should be maintained on one side while the other tortures its prisoners and kills them, ‘’For illegal possession of a revolver’’.

p.81

All these days, we have been making desultory efforts to organise ourselves and form a prisoners' Council. There is opposition from the members of the Cuman Na mBan upstairs who want no control in the prison but their own and cannot realise that those who are not members of the military organisation count as Republicans at all. We propagandists in ‘Suffolk St.’ are unanimous in wanting to resist this and have an organisation to include all prisoners, but we have failed to put our minds to it these anxious days. We have asked Lili to be our spokeswoman, that is all.

p.82 Sat 18th Nov

Ms Humphries has promised Miss MacSwiney that vigils will be kept for her all day, and has made a little altar on the upper

landing outside her room. The trouble now is about nursing her at night.

We sent for the Governor Phil Cosgrove, and he came about 8 o' C. He was, or appeared to be distressed. We protested against Miss Annie MacSwiney's treatment. He said it was wrong, but he could do nothing. He had tried to get her admitted - Portobello refused.

We asked that our cells should be unlocked all night so that we might nurse Mary MacSwiney and hold vigils. In turn, we offered parole not to attempt during the night hours to escape. He consented almost with relief.

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Miss MacSwiney was very grateful and glad of this. She has been crying. A letter came into her from her sister - underground. She had been attacked and drenched from hose pipes at the gates. It was unbearable to see Mary MacSwiney crying. It makes one hate, hate, hate.

One has returned to childhood here in many ways. Here we are playing with real excitement in that ugly compound. Prisoners and the games I used to play with the little […] Merrion Sq! I have not played games at all for years. It is surprising to find how enlivening it is to run and how enjoyable mere physical exercise of one's limbs and

p.84 Sat 18th Nov

muscles can be. But I came in very tired, and the cell was empty. Solitude is a rare blessing here. I lay down on my bed and watched the three red, barred squares of sunlight moving

along the wall. I have a great longing to be out under the stars. I will walk over the hills all night when I am free; or with Donald along the Thames.

I wrote for Nóinín to sing a song about Terence MacSwiney, 'The Beacon Song'. It goes to the old time 'The Heath is brown on Carrigdhoun'. She liked it and sang it to us all gloriously. She will sing it for Miss MacSwiney soon.

p.85

The vigils are to begin at 9 pm, and we are to watch and pray for two hours and a half each. Miss MacSwiney's suggestion that we should pray for three things. First, that Annie may be let in. Second, that Erskine Childers may not be killed. And third, for her release.

We are obeying even to the order of the prayers - she is obeyed in everything. She is distressed and restless tonight. Tonight, we have heard the whole town is to be searched for de Valera. If he is taken, it will be defeat. O God! What Ireland has to suffer to become free!

p.86 Sat 17th Nov

Yesterday, Kevin O Higgins made a speech in the Provisional Parliament hinting that the reason for executing the four boys was to prepare the way for the execution of Mr Childers.

p.87 Sun 19th Nov

My vigil was from 4.30 pm to 7. A strange experience; peace-giving and strengthening. But how slowly, how intolerably slowly left to itself in solitude and silence, time goes! So slowly, the moments are passing over her, every moment loaded with patience and pain.

She lies with her eyes closed, her rosary between her folded hands, endurance in every line. She opens her eyes when she knows one is watching and smiles. And one has to say some light-hearted, tranquil thing. She is troubled that we are losing a little sleep.

p.88 Sun 19th Nov

I went with the others to early mass because I wanted to hear them sing. We walked over the dark compound before dawn and were led through labyrinthine corridors of the convict Jail. More hideous this place is than anything I have ever imagined. A vast steel cage for human beings; vista upon vista of iron rails, iron stairways, iron galleries, and low deep doors inset to the convicts' cells. God grant that the Republic of Ireland will not put men and women in iron hells.

The chapel is ugly, the priest ugly, the window behind the altar cheap and crude. On the right-hand pew ~~seat,~~ the convict women sat in quaint grey dresses and white caps,

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glancing wistfully across the aisle at us.

It was a strange situation my comrades were in. Catholics in whom the fire of their religion burnt pure and strong to martyrdom. Lili, Ms Humphries… I think Davy could suffer any agony for their faith. They seem to me sanctified by prayer and self-denial and holy thought. To be with them is to breathe their religion with the [air]. And these women, because they will not take a false oath, and bow to an alien King, betray all that is to them honourable, and outlawed from their church; denied its sacraments, refused absolution for their sins, refused the body and blood of the Redeemer.

p.90 Sun 19th Nov

The mass seemed to them a strange duel between them and the priest. He preached about the seed falling on stony ground; a sermon implying condemnation of them as renegade Catholics. They answered gloriously, standing to sing their hymns:
'Faith of our Fathers'.

The prisoners met to form a Council:
B.O.M and other members of Cuman na Mban refused to form a Prisoners Council, wishing the Commandant of the Prison Branch of C.na mB. to be an independent authority. The non-militarists, Nóinín, myself and indeed all 'Suffolk St.' are indignant at them.

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To the communion rails went the poor convicts, went our wardresses and Honor Murphy, who has forsworn the Republic, pushed past Mrs Humphreys to go. They were given communion. The rest stayed behind. When the time came, they sang sweetly, wistfully, confidently.

'Sweet Sacrament Divine'

I think it is good for the Irish People to follow this stupid and slavish action of their Bishops; they will learn to search their own hearts and obey their own conscience and make their communion directly with their God. They will be priest–ridden no more.
But they suffer by the denial of the sacrifice, a pain that I can scarcely understand.

p.92 Sun 19th Nov

Miss MacSwiney is consumed with unhappiness about her sister, who is still fasting at the gate. She wanted a letter written about it to the Archbishop, and the others asked me to draft one. The letter I wrote was an appeal; he could hardly have refused it, I think, and the others wanted to send it as it was. But Miss MacSwiney, though she praised it, said it would 'let the Republic down!' We must send not an appeal but a demand. The letter I drafted then was hateful, but we sent it. It was the best I could do.

Nurse told us the soldiers fired on the meeting in O'Connell St. Maeve's meeting. She and Iseult there

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as I saw them before. She, dead white, still, holding the women, while the soldiers fired over their heads. Iseult aflame, self-forgetting. Her arms flung out, standing between the people and the guns. Women have been killed and wounded. Nurse does not know who. I ought to have been there with Iseult.

They have condemned Erskine Childers to death. Lili thinks he will be shot tomorrow at dawn.

Love for him, desire and longing for him, passionate craving for him, Childers and Bobby and Erskine Óg rushed over us like a stormy ocean of pain. I would have drowned in it, half lost my senses, I think, only Lili was so marvelously brave.

He is her friend, and her life's work is his. She loves him as few [natures] can love at all, and yet she can bear this as he will be bearing it himself. She is playing cards with others, and her face is smiling and sweet.

My memory is torturing me. I remember every look and word of his everything I wanted to ask and say.

p.94 Tues 21st Nov

Monday: Erskine Childers has not been executed. There are no names I know among the wounded and killed. [Copied letters from M. about A.]

Tues

An action of Habeus Corpus has been taken on behalf of Mr Childers. He may be saved.

Wed 22nd Nov

It is a code that I am learning only slowly from the others, who have learnt to endure things for the Republic from Lili who was a prisoner in Kilmainham in 1916 and heard her friends and leaders being executed outside that when there is much to suffer talk must be all about happy foolish things.
Mrs Humphrey's makes us all sew shirts for soldiers. There are penniless men in the I.R.A. Lili, and Sighle are holding classes in Irish. We play rounders in the compound. I would be writing, but no pen or ink or paper has come for me yet.

p.95 Wed 22nd Nov

We had delight and excitement over parcels. A beautiful dressing gown for me - a most lovely blue.
Somebody came into the cell with news that was both sorrowful and happy. A priest was with Miss MacSwiney. She was being anointed; receiving the sacrament for death. To the others, it was relief. The refusal of the sacraments had seemed to them such a terrible thing.
We went into her afterwards, one by one, all the restlessness and despair had gone. She looked full of content.

[A Newspaper clipping dated November 25th, 1922: Miss M. MacSwiney T.D. sister returns to the prison gate.]

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After Miss MacSwiney's Release

See Book 6 for interval

p.97 Thurs 30th Nov

Now that the sublime fight of Miss MacSwiney is victoriously over and she has left us, life here will begin to settle into its narrow ways; a little, little world it will become, full of feverish little activities and rivalries, and even I am afraid, squabbles. There are some of us like Lili, whose thoughts still flow with the great tides of the movement for which we are here, and to whom no little thing will ever shut out the sun. There are some like Nóinín and me who want to write and read and study here, but there are others, younger and more full of exuberant energy, who will forever be inventing distractions and adventures for themselves and who will expend wit, daring excitement from morning to night on the little histories of our own little world. Today it is a question of attendance. The kind convict women who carried our food up from the passage and brought it to us and who scrubbed and cleaned

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the floors have been sent away, and we are expected to do this work ourselves. We were invited to cook our own food but refused, and this is probably Paudeen's 'Revenge'. We are not of course going to undertake the work of the prisoners, and have refused through our Council to go down for the food. Cosgrove said last night that it would be arranged for us, but today the food has not been brought up; it has been left in the

lower passage to cool. Our policy is to go without the food until we are reduced one after another to lying in bed, then Doctors and Nurses will be required to attend on us and bring us our meals. On this, we are sure to win. The splendid demonstration they have been given of how a woman can stand hunger means that we shall win this way. A victory of endurance.
A day of hunger has left me very limp.

p.99 Thurs 30th Nov

Chaos! Anarchy! Fury, insult and revenge! As a private protest for attendance; four girls stayed outside after 5 o'C. They were still walking about in the dark and cold at about 7. They were dragged in by soldiers. O 'Keefe arrived with his army. Nóinín and I were in our cell, speechless with wrath at this disloyalty to the Council and the ruin of our plans. We would not to go out to show interest or take part in the struggle. The rest 35 [women gathered] on the stairs. O' Keefe ordered the prisoners into their cells to be locked up. They refused to go. Then followed a hideous scrummage. Soldiers with girls in their arms, girls clinging to the railings and door handles. Soldiers using filthy language, soldiers twisting their arms, girls being flung into cells, any girls into any cells. I went to the door to forbid soldiers to come in here and saw Miss Humphries being dragged about

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by three soldiers, it was too much for my resolution. I rushed out, blazing at O' Keefe, accusing him. He seemed ashamed and made them let her go. Rita Farrelly, Sighle and other mutineers were thrown into our cell and locked in with us; laughing, jesting, saying, ''We shall be lynched here''. Later Davy was brought in; sick, white and shattered from the horror

of being handled by the men, and crept miserably to bed. Indignation was poured out on the delinquents until they were a little subdued by the result of their little enterprise.
When the prisoners were restored to their proper cell, discussion and wrath were loosed. Half the night, our anger was exploding in little gusts; what would happen next? How could the situation be met now? Everyone's character, attitude and motives all possibilities lost and remaining

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to us were [resolved]. Very late, we fell asleep. We woke to a day of contentions, plans, interviews, [penalties], angers and despairs. If there had been a principle at stake, there would be some meaning in this, but it is only impatience. Our way would have won.
To some, prison life has become bright and exhilarating. To some, including Nóinín and Lily and me; it has become discordant, wretched, scarcely tolerable. All parcels and letters are stopped. Mother's birthday will be on Monday. If she does not hear from me, she will be terribly anxious. And the deputy has offered us all the conditions of an internment camp. Reasons for and against questions of principle are volleying to and fro. Prospects of ceaseless contention are before us.

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The effect of prison on the convictions of Republicans is curious. One effect; the obvious is to crystallise into blind, unquestioning allegiance what has been perhaps a reasoned, clear-eyed faith. We are enduring something for a cause - all human [natures/creatures] craving for self-justification makes

us [~~assure/~~sure] ourselves a thousand times that the cause is worth it - the greatest cause in the world. We are here confined together, fighting Republicans, refused all friendly association with people of other and neutral views. Each impregnates the other with her own convictions until each becomes seven times the Republican she was, seven times armed with knowledge and argument.
We meet the other side now, no longer represented by interesting gentlemen and women who used to be our friends

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but represented solely by those whose very existence is a humiliation and offence - our gaolers. The guards and sentries who parade fully armed and uniformed for our coercion and give us orders in rough, vulgar tones. Soldiers who haul us with beastly insults into our cells. Contempt for our opponents becomes a passion. We become [confirmed] emotionally against the other side.
But what of our Republican allegiance and ideals?
I who have been quite outside army councils and inner secrets of the Republican leaders am hearing now about those things. I am meeting in ceaseless and closest contact, and in [_____] acutely revealing character- representative Republican types, can deduce from the attitudes and mentality of these something of the character of

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those who control the movement. What are the qualities they reveal?
I think, generalising, that the most [tame, fineness] of character, purity of motive, sincerity and power of sacrifice, detachment from material things, moral, mental and physical

courage are in all and every one of those whom I am learning intimately here and with all this a charity tolerance so large that it is hard to believe they could win any war. And with this goes the last and wistful longing for cosmopolitan and intellectual experience of which, by their very devotion to an enslaved country, they have been deprived. Their minds except one or two, except on moral questions, are less interesting, less rich

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than those of my English friends. There is only one with whom one can talk of books.

In character, I find one fault in all - lack of foresight and calculation. This is more extreme in the militants and has been the cause of enterprises which produced a split. With it goes a lack of insight into the [enemy's case and resources]. The exception, I think is Nóinín, the one cosmopolitan here. The feeling I have now about our movement is that it is all […] and heroism and charity; a beautiful, splendid cause, but I am sure that there is a lack of wisdom and that the wise and patient leaders see

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all their policy ruined, all their constructive work undone, by a reckless [rebellious], thoughtless military clan. Great and deep pride in a few of our more [patient / politic] leaders; Erskine Childers and de Valera above all, a half angry despair against our militarists, and a fear that they will wreck all remains and there remains a religious faith and joy in the cause- a feeling that to go out to a defeated Ireland would be worse than any imprisonment – a feeling that victory must be. But prison is

doing this also to me; breaking me from the desire to do political work. I realise the follies and [obstructions] so much committed incessantly by our own and feel nervously incapable of overcoming them. It has stopped the course of work: editing and writing

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in which I had learnt to go forward easily, the initial impetus still sending me forward in a rhythmic routine. I feel too tired and too sad to initiate again.

My leader, who turned me to that work and made me able to do it, and under whose inspiration I thought to work again, has been taken by the enemy and killed, and with him I almost fear the thoughtful, constructive aspect of the movement, which I loved best to help has almost disappeared. I am adrift from my habit of work, adrift from my leader, adrift from all the courses that I know. It will be very

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difficult to find a way to work again.

After these past days of deprivation, […], I know that an insatiable craving will be on me for a wide-ranging, irresponsible, loving life - all new experiences and varying sights and sounds and companionships of rich and various minds. I shall not want, for a month or two, to go into [larmes?] and work in the narrow familiar ways. Yet, I shall be penniless. There is no pleasure or travel or adventure before me after this, even if I am free.

[ASIDE: Poblacht has been brought in. Childers last splendid statement. Heard of the executions yesterday of J. Spooner, Pat Farrelly, John Murphy]

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There are two phases in the feeling which prison produces towards the wide world.

At first, it seemed to me that Freedom is in itself so glorious a thing that every street corner, every familiar place would be dear and precious and beautiful to me forever afterwards when I become free: that the most grey places would content me. But now it has become quite different. I think I'm free and that the world is all before me where to choose. I shall choose a suffocating little hotel in Kensington where from day to day, there is no savour of life, no change, no adventure, no beauty, not one of the grand or poignant emotions of life.

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I feel angry and bitter with all the waste of life in the world that I have endured. Or I will be choosing Dublin and all well-known, familiar things. I know now how good those things are. My big yellow room at the top of 73, with three windows looking out on the changes of day and night and all the weathers and seasons over St. Stephens Green, and my cushioned corner by the fire, all copper and orange and red and gold and the strange, beautiful friends who gather there. Even with the whole world and all its wealth to choose from, from Egypt to the Golden Gate, I could not choose more wisely and happily than this. Yet there is a world elsewhere, there are other places, other minds. I want to see Scotland and Munich and Assisi and Florence and Rome.

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There is a [something], very different affect which prison is having on some of us. Honor Murphy's allegiance to the

Republic is broken. For a month, she was here alone. They were kind and petted her. In seeing the human kindness, that is, of course, somewhere in these men, she ~~forgot~~ lost sight of the dishonour for which they stand; cut off from all Republican thought, she fell victim to the confusions and misrepresentation of the new state press. Her vision failed, and her resistance weakened. Her weakness takes refuge in a kind of passivism. She will not support killing by either side. She will not

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serve the Republic at all for fear of encouraging its war. In spite of this recantation, she has lived in the [kindest relation] with all of us in spite even of her friendly conversations with our gaolers under our eyes. Miss MacSwiney was distressed and reproachful. Honor would not sign even our statements about her, but to compensate, went on vigil for her every night. And for her, she endured with sweet illogical loyalty three days hunger strike. But she has given the Free State undertaking. The day after Miss MacSwiney, she was released. She went out almost wretched, afraid to meet both Republican and Free State friends.

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Mrs Humphries, in all this long time to think, and escape from the mere current and force of habit, had become half subject to the Bishop's Pastoral. [She ____] in this, Mary MacSwiney's strength.

Others have become so angry with the obstructive and dis-ordinate elements among Republicans that they feel they do not want to work among Republicans again. Others, seeing the demoralisation it has produced in the Free State Soldiers, and of the terrible sacrifices among our own, feel that nothing is worth war. So prison and the long thoughts it brings are losing some allegiance to the cause.
Again, so hideously evil do imperialism and treachery seem so unthinkable that Ireland should not be saved from it, and from such men that to fight to the last seems everything now.

p.114 Sat Dec 2nd

~~(ASIDE: A tinge of passivism that was in my whole outlook and [... my] incapacity to understand physical force has been [cured]. I realise that superior physical force brought us here and keeps us here and that nothing but physical victory (except surrender, which is unthinkable) can bring us out. I understand how much is [based] on it.)~~
Saturday
O' Keefe informed Bridie last night of new regulations: no attendance, no letters, no parcels. Complete isolation from the outside world. With a sudden feeling of exhilaration, Suffolk St. prepared for a big fight. Meanwhile, the food is being left downstairs, and we are not eating it. We are living on what has been sent in, and distributing biscuits and ham to the other cells. Our council's policy is to refuse to handle the food unless it is brought up to the landings. Miss Farrell, representing the Kerry Girls, agreed. This morning we heard suspicious sounds outside. The Kerry girls were going down and helping themselves to food. I went out and tried to dissuade them. It was no good. At dinner time, the same thing happened again. It

is disastrous. The Council interviewed O' Keefe. He offered to divide food into three portions because the Kerry girls would not resist. They had to consent to our going down for it. This is defeat.

p.115 Sat Dec 2nd

O' Keefe says nine men were taken prisoner last night and killed today. We don't know whether to believe it. He promises our letters and parcels tonight.

We are becoming obsessed with ugly little struggles about scrubbing, cooking and parcels, the use of the kettle and the fire; and very jaded and angry with one another. It is sad. I don't want to waste good paper any more on the petty, sordid story of our days.

~~O Keefe has read to our Council some new regulations from Portobello. No letters no parcels of food or cigarettes.~~ The order to soldiers to fire wide to frighten prisoners is withdrawn. The order stands now, 'fire to hit'.

~~The order about letters and parcels is not yet enforced.~~

p.116 Sat Dec 2nd / Mon Dec 4th

We have been writing handbills to the soldiers, ''When you take prisoners, do you give them up to be killed?'' "To lie faithful to H. M. King George…"

These have been sent, I hear, into the guardroom where about 80 men should see them. But these men seem so demoralised we have little hope that they will succeed.

Mon 4th Dec

There is an irrepressible superstition that things will change, a time will come. We women will be released on Dec 6th. I can see no hope of it. December 6th will be the shameful

anniversary of Ireland's most lamentable day. On the 6th, The Irish Free State will be supposed to have come into being: the Irish Republic to be dead.
The Republic of Ireland! Beautiful, dream-built city, living, invisible only to those who

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loved thee among the poor sordid houses, and tumbled hovels of the Ireland that was not free, shining with a purity and grandeur, surpassing the purity and grandeur of ancient Athens or Rome. How men have loved thee. How rejoicingly have they lived. How freely and proudly died for thee. How great and holy was life in the day's men call the Terror when the prisons gallows of thine enemy overshadowed the land, and the clamour of their tortures and murders filled the night. With what glorious serenity then, we defied and ignored that terror and declared and lived our passionate allegiance to thee!
What little state in the whole world's history has been served and

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[…] and guarded with so much noble love.
It was a splendour and valour mankind is not able to maintain; too bright to live long in this decadent world. With a spell of softening peace, the enemy [unstrung] the sinews of our valour, with slow flattery and subtle threats. They won some of our most trusted to their will with a fearful threat. They overwhelmed others and at that moment trapped them into signing away the Republic they were pledged and [missioned] to defend.

And those who signed away the Republic had the love and praise and [sling/sting] aid of the enemy so that against those who would not sign they might make war, and the war they made is as

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shameful and as brutal as the war that two years ago, the enemy was making against them. A year has gone. On the 6th of December, the power of those who signed is to be held by the enemy established. They will be allies strongly rooted in power. We who would not desert the Republic will be outlaws ~~in Ireland~~ without place or citizenship, without power to work for Ireland – defeated, subject to our ancient enemy unreconciled. The last of our comrades in prison or exile, forbidden to write or speak, labour for the Ireland of our love. Living in the dead, unbeautiful cities of a betrayed and conquered land.
Nóinín Cogley came in while I was writing this. Crying, the gay, valiant-hearted woman had

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a letter in her hand. They have imprisoned her husband now. Her little boys are without any relatives in the country. She is in despair. They have Frank Gallagher here in B. Wing. He and Cecilia, who has been a few months married to him, wave to each other every morning at 8.30 through the bars. This is how Republicans will have to live, or in exile, or quiet and subdued in Ireland - a defeated life.
''I would die a thousand times'', Miss MacSwiney wrote in one of those magnificent letters she sent out from here, ''to save the shame of one Irishman taking an oath to England on Dec 6th ''. Next Wednesday, they will be taking it. They will make

themselves British subjects. But I will not be a British subject and

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there are thousands in these gaols who will still be free. And the Republic of Ireland, because its existence is a thing of the laws of nature: the law of freedom will not be dead, and we have splendid men: de Valera, Liam Mellows, Rory O'Connor still. I shall be glad always that on this black 6thof December, I was a Republican Prisoner of War.
[Daily Mail - Childers letters (Dec 2nd) Poblacht – a statement of his.]

Prison Moods

Nóinín has taken charge of our housekeeping, organized a cupboard in the surgery, and arranged our larder there. I have been sent teaspoons, and little green-handled knives and china cups and saucers- white and gold. I thought it would make a little touch of elegance and civilization would make it easier to be cheerful here, but the result is just the contrary, to my

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dismay. It was when I first opened Nóinín's cupboard and took out the butter in the butter dish and the little tea- knives from their tin box that the sense of being a caged and impotent prisoner, and an utter loathing of my captivity fell on me like a sickening blight. For hours after, I could talk and joke and play games only with difficulty and dare not look forward at all. I can't quite comprehend why it is. Is it that the familiar, home-like cupboard gave me a sudden nostalgia for my own kitchen, with its […] pictures and […] plates and blue cups, or for Iseult or was it that all Nóinín's dainty

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careful arrangements looked as if they were planned for a long time?

Or is it that prison half-civilized thus loses the stimulus of a new experience, and the courage [strung] to meet it relaxes, and the ordinary mood of life takes place of that fighting mood and claims piteously the sweet freedom of natural life? I suppose it is a mixture of all these things. Certainly, I am a less courageous prisoner since I opened that cupboard than are any of my companions here.

p.124 Tues 5th Dec

Donald ended his letter wisely, 'Goodnight and happy dreams'. Last night I had a dream that gathered together all the happiest things of natural life. It was in England. ''I love England and pray'', Erskine Childers said in his last message, "that her attitude to Ireland will change completely and finally". It was that saying perhaps that made all the lovely things that are peculiarly England's haunt my mind: that and huge-Walpole's ''Cathedral'' and a kind letter from [CLT] who quarrels with me about Ireland whenever we meet. If England was innocent of Empire, there would be no lovelier country in the world. I was in England in my dream, visiting some woman whom I greatly loved, visiting her early in the morning because I was only for a few hours in her little town. It was her quiet little house that was so beautiful; hidden in a wide, high-walled garden whose flowers overflowed into the low rooms. The rooms were softly lit, softly furnished and filled with treasures

p.125 Tues Dec 5th

of beaten brass and carved ivory from the Far East and all fragrant and full of colour and peace. The dear woman was created I think out of many women I have loved; mother, who is friendlier to my imagination now than she has been for years, and others; and then she changed into Cecilia Gallagher and she told me that the house was Franks and Frank was in Ireland, in Gaol, that whenever he went to Ireland, he was imprisoned, but that he would always be going again and again, in a forlorn hope to awaken the Republic. Yet, I praised them in my dream, that possessing peace and luxury, they kept the brave Republican virtue of poverty still. I have thought sometimes that the Irish are so ready to sacrifice all they have because nothing that they have is very desirable…prosperity has made traitors and cowards of thousands now.

p.126 Tues Dec 5th

Tomorrow will be December 6th. It would be such misery to be Free that I think one should be thankful to be in Gaol.
At night, after the light was out, we began to recall these days last year. Lili was in London with the delegation, taking care of Erskine Childers and acting as his secretary. She told us about the evening of the 5th. Barton's misery, the pressure used against him, her own desperate prayers. How they went out at 10 o' C. to Downing Street; Erskine Childers, with the look of a man doomed. Of those who were together that night- two are in prison

p.127 Wed Dec 6th

and three are dead. The one who was faithful killed in captivity by the inheritors of the work of those who failed.

Wed 6th Dec

There has been no good in today, nothing but the sense of the death of honour, the death of beauty and hope. The triumph of cynical, fraudulent, unholy powers. But it is weakness and cowardice to be so overwhelmed. The Republic is not dead because the King of England has given the [royal as..cut]
We shall live to make Ireland free.

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As we were falling asleep, we heard singing of a kind and laughter began outside. The Free state soldiers celebrating the birth of Irish Freedom, I suppose.
They were familiar songs and familiar accents that we heard, reminiscent of British Tommies on their way to victory: "Here we are, here we are, here we are again", was the last outburst that we heard.
''Very true'', Nóinín murmured sleepily, ''very true''.

p.129 Thurs 7th Dec

Nóinín is a woman quite different from any others I have ever known; perhaps because of her French nationality and French girlhood and her South American adventures and her life among artists and singers, and her little boys. Pleasure, even nowadays, pleasure is to her an art. Such tales as she tells of [wagers] and disguises and wild nights. She is as pretty as an angel or a [sineu]; all womanhood and kindness and charm. Yet tragic emotion is never very far away. She was the first of us I think to cry. I woke and heard her sobbing on our second night. She was hardly able to stay for five minutes in Miss MacSwiney's room and singing the 'Ave Maria' to her

p.130 Thurs Dec 7th

was a perilous struggle. Cradle songs, which we wanted for Miss MacSwiney - she can't sing at all because of her little boys. But all the time, even within five minutes of her most desperate moments, while tears are in her eyes and in her voice, she is saying quaint things and singing quaint little Breton songs and making us laugh as delightedly as her audience in the theatre do. The girls love her and adore her voice. She is the ablest member of our Council of five. Against the enemy, she uses quite other weapons than ours. She did perilous secret service for Michael Collins between Ireland and France, and sheltered through the worst of the terror, the men who are imprisoning her now.

When she heard two days ago that her husband was arrested,

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she broke down altogether. She was in terror for her little boys. I could not have endured it in her place. I would have said that this constituted duress and have signed the form. I told her so. I did not [not] know she did not know herself, what she would do.

She is ill too from a bronchial cold and anaemic and over wrought. She doesn't sleep. I helped her to write a letter to Portobello enquiring whether she was to be released. She gave it to Paudeen to deliver but rushed in from him, ~~shaking~~ and flung herself on her bed, shaken with sobs. He had said she must sign the form, and she can't, can't……

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she has no scruples about any promise to them. Would not think twice about signing and breaking it, but she can't, can't. Poor little saint. Except Lili, she is the finest Republican of all!

I am feeling what [Flory Fahy?] calls, ''Mammonish''.
I long for the fleshpots of Egypt! Mrs [Floweiss] tea table in the Loggie at the hill: the lovely old Tudor Manor House where I met Walter de la Mare; the wide garden of St. Hughs and the room they gave me there. The room of the [.....], rich with books, all the luxurious peace which England has won for herself by her plunderous adventures and murderous conquests over all the globe.

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I can want them and laugh at them and do without - the winds of God blow more freely, sweetly through our spirits, I think, who are Irish and honest and in Gaol.
A good letter from Donald, a real good letter, the best anyone has written me yet. But he is being hard hit, blow after blow, about what he cares for most. It will be hard for him not to lose heart. It is very painful to be 22.

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Nóinín has been telling us our fortunes with cards and almost frightened me. All my thoughts, she said, are towards a rather fair young man and an elderly woman. They are quarrelling about money. The woman thinks of sending for professional advice.
Someone with whom I have been in close daily intimacy is going to give me a very great shock - something to do with money. It will upset me very much. The rather fair young man is fighting for me.
A group of people are discussing me and my possibilities and my work. The young man is defending. A woman is attacking me. The young man and I are enjoying a brilliant [success] in a

crowded house. Before this, there is a difficulty. I am cheated about money.

p.135 Thurs Dec 7th

I have been in prison with Miss MacSwiney, making her suffering easier for her, witnessing the fortitude and loving courage of her all that time that is worth much. To have been here with Lili and good Republicans who loved her at the time of Erskine Childers death, that saved one anger and bitterness and desperate misery. It was easier to be here than to be outside, trying to think of other things, trying to work. I could not have lectured in college that afternoon. And on this miserable 6th of December, when the Republic is sold and Ireland's honour flung away, the only bearable place and only honourable place to be is in prison: a Republican Prisoner of War.

p.136 Thurs Dec 7th

What security this prison life has given to one's allegiance! It is to me, as a Republican, the sacrament of confirmation. The long empty hours for thinking, the companionship of pure Republican spirits and brave Republican minds, the inspiration of Miss MacSwiney's fortitude and the bravery of many here; all these and some other mysterious power that is in Mountjoy are making poise and serenity in my mind. Please, God I'll go out from this prison a better Republican than I came in.

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~~Fri Dec 8th Feast of Immaculate Conception~~

~~There was a lot of noise all night outside. The others went out in the dark to early mass.~~

We held a debate the Dublin people in Suffolk St. that Miss MacSwiney was not justified in hunger striking. Brigid O' Mullane made case in support of the motion so clever and so outrageously falsified to my mind that I sprang up in a melodramatic agony and implored that someone else would take the chair. To keep an impartial attitude was impossible. From the […] point of view, which is all I care about. The debate was good; nearly everyone present spoke - intelligently too.

In summing up, I was shockingly partisan. Fury and laughter arose. I could not help it. The motion was defeated by 9 to 7.

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It was a happy evening. Had we all been free, we could not have chosen a better occupation or a better company. We came down from the rosary in a peaceful mood. We had recovered well from the crushing shock and misery about Erskine Childers. There is a kind of peace.

Nurse Philips came up the stairs in her outdoor things. A buzzing crowd encompassed her at once, ''Any news, any news''.''Yes'', she said gravely. ''Two members fired at leaving the Dail: Sean Hales shot dead, O 'Maille wounded''. Two of our girls cried out, ''good''. Others tried to hush them and questioning bewilderedly whether this should have been done. We gathered in our cells. These men were guilty of high treason. Yesterday, they took the shameful oath.

They were guilty of the execution of 8 prisoners of war. They had condoned the murders

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of some twenty or thirty young Republicans within the last few months. There is no doubt they were evil and guilty men. Yet to

kill like this, in the street, is murder and to murder even a murderer is a terrible thing.

It will be done on both sides now. So far, it has been done only on one. And there will be hideous reprisals for this and reprisals for those reprisals again. Another multiplying horror added to this horrible war.

There was strong difference of opinion among the seven of us about it all. Nóinín and Cecilia regretted it. So do I.

The night was full of shouting and firing and hideous noise.

There is some excitement among the guards.

We have been here a month today.

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Feast of the Immaculate Conception

We all slept badly.

The others went out in the dark to early mass. I was still drowsy when I heard them coming in, talking in low voices: ''Haven't you heard?'', Lili said when I looked up.

Mrs Humphrey's had heard the sound of pick axes at work through the night. Coming from mass, they had seen a throng of officials behind the iron gate in the place of graves. The place where Kevin Barry was buried. Isn't that where Kevin Barry was shot? Lili said. ''Shot? Kevin Barry?'' The others couldn't understand her. A convict man had called out to them from the window- ''Four men executed this morning''.

We heard shots, one after another. You could not tell whether they were single shots. Lili, who was in Kilmainham when the leaders were shot outside her cell in 1916 said this was not the sound. We could not know

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who the victims would be. Any four chosen at random from among their 900 prisoners would do, I suppose for the vengeance they intend. Would they dare to kill Rory or Liam Mellows? Would they kill Seán MacBride. Sean seemed to be looking at me, laughing, with his dark, teasing face. Or would it be four poor, obscure boys caught lately, like they executed two weeks ago? Would poor Cooney be one; the heroic boy who when the attempt at escape ended so disastrously with four deaths took all the responsibility on himself?

''Rory O'Connor, Liam Mellows, Cooney and a man named [Barry]'', one of the Wardresses says. I think this is a guess work. They are the first names one would guess. But there is no reason, can be no pretense of any reason - they surrendered after a clean fight four months ago - for killing them.

We went about our mornings work; washing the supper things, waiting for that sound, making breakfast. We were sitting round the table at half past nine when suddenly shots rang out; not a single shot but a volley and after it, single

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revolver shots, one after another, close… they went on and on. We looked at Lili, 'That is an execution', she said.

Sheila Humphries saw the firing party coming back.

At dinner time, we heard the stop-press. After evening exercise in the dusk, as we were coming in, nurse came to the passage door and told us the news. Rory O' Connor, Liam Mellows, Dick Barrett, Jo Mc Kelvey; a reprisal for Sean Hales.

~~They were court marshalled at 12 o'c last night.~~

p.143 Wed 13th Dec

I have not kept this journal these last few days because it seems senseless to write or to record such unconsoled horror there has been. Some said on Friday, ''we are beaten, the Republic should surrender now''. The younger ones cried out in dismayed reproach, ''No!'' These people had shown themselves so evil, so mad, so savage. Ireland must be saved from them at any cost. As for me I believe with equal intensity two contrary things; I believe that if Ireland is not to become a hell of corruption and slavish degradation, this Provisional Government and all it stands for must be thrust out and that the men who can support it are so bestial and so dangerously insane that to kill them could hardly be a sin. And I believe what I said on Friday night, ''We are defeated now". The Imperialists have

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taken up a weapon too vile for us to use. They are punishing acts of war ~~by murdering the helpless,~~ not by war, not even by tracking and trying and executing those they call criminals but by secretly murdering the people we love who are helpless prisoners in their hands.

Nothing that we can do to them can be as terrible as that. We can't kill our prisoners; ~~we can't attack their women and children~~ to compete with them, we should have to threaten helpless people whom they love. We should have to kill their children. We should surrender rather than do that. Awful news has come since then. The burning of Mrs McGarry's house. Children have been injured by the I.R.A.

The death of Erskine Childers was not so destroying to faith and hope and courage as this news. Lili declares it cannot be true. I

am sure there [are lies in the reports of it]. But children have been hurt by the I.R.A.

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I suppose Republican houses will be burnt and the children of Republicans hurt. It will be like the Belfast pogrom very soon. I cannot believe that De Valera will let it come to that. Yet, I cannot believe that he will let Ireland be given up to this loathsome treaty, these base, […] God pity us, what are we to do?

Geasa

How is it that Mulcahy and his comrades, once true Irishman; have become so malignant, so callous and dead to honour that they can murder old comrades who never fought but in self-defence, and who have been for months prisoners at their hands? It is because there is a law for true Irishmen which if they break, they shut out light and life forever from their souls. It is 'Geasa' to an Irishman to stand against the freedom of Ireland, to be free is the destiny god has in

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mind for holy Ireland. To stand for the Freedom of his country and the destiny of every Irishman. While he lives obeying this holy land, he lives gloriously, in spite of hunger, danger, prison, torture, any […], any pain. If he dies obeying it, he dies exultant and serene.

But if he breaks this law, the punishment falls on him that only the breaking of a [man's peace] can bring peace, security, wealth, fame, power may come to him, and he may believe himself content. But honour and beauty and glory are shut out

from his spirit. He does not even desire them, does not remember them because his soul is dead.
Those who have never known the law and have neglected to live by it, listening to this and following the easy way of the enemies garrison in our land, are punished by a great loss ~~the height the depths of~~ - To them

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the heights of love and hope and loyalty are unknown and all the splendour that can be [pain]. Yet they may be without evil, gentle and kindly men.
But those to whom this law has been revealed and who have obeyed it, as [sworn] to live and die obeying it, giving their allegiance to the freedom of their land. If these fail, their punishment is that they become slaves and liars and must live lying to themselves for fear they should perceive that they are slaves.
And if these, through fear or that compassion which fears death less than dishonour for those it loves, or through dishonest thought or […] or greed for power, give themselves over to the enemy and betray the freedom of their land - it is their punishment that the corruption of their enemy enters into them and joining with the corruption of treachery fills them with the foul and loathsome life which is when it sees purity must kill.

p.153 Wed 13th Dec
In the evening, shots were fired by a sentry into Sadie Dowling, and Eithne Coyle's cell. Three bullets came through the windows and were embedded in the walls. We sent for the governor deputy. They did not come.

Eithne had settled me in her cell to write, and I had just finished and come back to 'Suffolk Street' when three terrific shots rang out. Two bullets had crashed through the window over Sadie's cell where she and [Ester ___Dowd] were sitting and […] into the wall. One had gone through Eithne's cell. There was excitement, of course. Poor Sadie was frightened but the rest were full of […] and laughter and chatter. They seem incapable of taking anything seriously, indeed!
With [the ruling] passion strong upon me, I sat down to write a detailed report to get the Council to send for the Governor to put the responsibility on him. Bridie strongly objected. She thinks it should be taken as the [fortune of war!]

p.154 Thurs 14th Dec

Farewell to Dervorgilla

One by one, they thrust themselves into my memory, the people of my vanished plays, born out of the life my imagination, foredoomed ever and be given life.
Poor Cassandra is crying out me from among the flames. She was wild and beautiful, and I loved her. She and I, at the making of her, were so young. I was undistracted, and all given up to poetry then, and I wrote this ambitious drama in the Greek Style, with lyrical choruses between the acts. It was chaotic; a mingling of slow, lyrical poetry and violent action. It could never have been played on any stage. But poor Casandra was very loveable and sad.
Asthara, I cannot believe dead. She had three nights of such rapturous, enchanted life. I had a free fantastic imagination then

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and mingled Arabian Alchemy recklessly with old Gaelic Myth: there was poetry in it, James Stephen's said. I do not believe Asthara can be dead.

And Dervorgilla, I am sure that she is gone. She was to be an Irish masterpiece. A great historical drama of the beginning of this endless war, a more complete and massive work than any Irish dramatist has done. Dervorgilla was to be innocent, infinitely tragic, noble and adorable as Maeve. How wonderfully the events of that dreadful history grouped themselves for the dramatic scenes. I know the movement of my play was fierce and inevitable and strong. I laboured severely over those scenes and over the verse.

I will try again, maybe, to write a play of Devorgilla, but I will have to write it in prose. My poetry is all over now. They are burnt offerings to the Republic of Ireland, my tragic women; may the Gods be appeased!

p.156 Sat 16th Dec

College has dismissed me 'for being absent from college without leave!'. The more I see of that class of Irish people, the more pitiably slavish they seem. Afraid to keep a Republican on their staff and afraid to give the real reason for dismissing me! I knew of course since I wrote and told the Council I was helping with a campaign for prisoners, that this would come. It had to be accepted.

And though I have been long enough tied to sessions and the conventions of their narrow world, there is real loss in the loss of my lecturing work.

To be working at glorious poetry with people like my girls, whose lives are

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lost for these years in the studious worlds and to feel their quick response and intelligent enquiry and their vivid love of it all, and to have that channel for all the criticism of poetry and drama that never quite stops buzzing in my mind. It was very pleasant and good. All that I am as a teacher and interpreter of literature, all that I planned and trained myself to be will be nothing always to my comrades in Republican work. It is the death of a happy part of one's personality. May it rest in peace and not be waiting to come alive again!

They are pretending I hear in College, that I broke my promise, concealing my letter to the Council. Injustice is very bitter. There is even injustice here. Lily even says bitter things to me about taking all this too easily - not feeling it enough.

Aside: There is Erskine Childers and his unconquerable gentleness to remember in spite of injustice that would have driven me insane.

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All these nights, I am awake for long hours and awake in pain, and the pain is heavy over the days without compensation or relief. It is that Erskine Childers is dead. That is the one unbearable thing. If I could [discover …it it not …] if I could [… live in Ireland], I can not believe that anything else would seem to hurt at all. I should know that while he lived, the Republic lived, and its honour and nobility were secure. And all the rich, happy life of love that was with him and the boys and Molly Childers in their warm house that not to be broken into the agony it is. And for myself, to be talking to him and telling him

all this and hearing his grateful, sweet-spirited talk about things again. To be working with him, maybe. Last night, when the torment of it was worn out and I fell asleep, I dreamt that someone told me he was not dead.

p.148 Jan 3rd

O' Keefe submitted the form to me today. I never thought I would mind, but it is like a sourness in one's blood - the insult that it is. They do not submit it to Republicans whose faith has been proved.

He did, at least, tell me very sheepishly and held it well away. Mother writes, hinting that those who sign have ''pluck'', to insinuate I suppose that I will be a coward refusing to sign. The burning bitterness of it. I wrote her a most bitter letter but have torn it up. It is a hideous thing that one can't stop the pain of an insult except by insulting in return and mother mustn't be hurt.

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I remember how when Mona was staying with me at 73, two or three months ago; we joked about risking all established comfort for adventure and the hope of richer life. ''I daresay it is quite a good thing'', I remember saying, ''To cast your bread upon the waters and burn your boats''. I had sent to the Council of Alexandra College then a letter telling them I felt constrained to take part in a campaign for the proper treatment of Republican prisoners and that this might involve public work. I know this would almost certainly mean dismissal, and had no notion of what I should do after that except try to publish my book on the language of poetry at last. Now that book and nearly all my other manuscripts have gone up in smoke - raiders shot up 73 and made a bonfire of my papers

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on the night of my arrest. Yesterday, Iseult wrote that they have had to take all my things out of the house. Fare well to my beloved rooms. And today, I hear that the Council of Alexandra College are depriving me of my post. I have to give up my flat.

It is interesting - the world is all before me where to choose. I have a family including a good sister and the best of brothers (only that the Republic is Greek to him) and good friends, and about £130 a year. I shall not be derelict and I shall not have to leave Ireland, which after all, is all I care for much. I suppose there will be work to do for the Republic still. But Erskine Childers is the only man I could be happy and content to work for except

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de Valera; because among fighting men, such scrupulous care for peace and charity and justice are hard to find. And Erskine Childers has been killed. I will travel around Ireland and travel abroad. I will take no post. I will be poor and free. I will maybe write.

Bitter longing for the beautiful life at 73 comes in little gushes now and then, and bitter longing for prose and verse that I have written and liked and to be giving out the theories and the praises of poetry that I wrote in that book and to have that wonderful intellectual relation again, all […] among noble things, that one can never have so well as with one's pupils, and yet, I dare say, I shall live to be glad that I have lost all this.

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They were loves and possessions, maybe holding me back from my destiny. Perhaps in the wilderness, I shall find a way to travel and a better service to be giving to Ireland than I have known.

I have sworn that I will not be crushed by these little losses into an unadventurous, discontented, imprisoned life. They shall make me free. I will travel Ireland. I will go to the western mountains and the rocky coasts and the lakes. I will see the world. Sighle has been talking to me about the Blasket Islands. It is to Dingle and those Islands I will go.

I have written a ghost story founded on a tale Tessie told me. It is called ‘Samhain’.

Vigil

A Journal of Mountjoy

November 1922

By Dorothy Macardle

Vigil
Prison Moods
Prison Dreams
Prison Moods
Prison Letters
Prison Books
Victory
Prison Likings
Prison Hates
The Golden Rule
The "Locals"
Slavery
Tea - Parties
The Commune
The [...]
Childs Play
The Sentries

p.3 Vigil Wed 22nd Nov

Never was a heretic more completely captured in the atmosphere of an alien world than I am here.

I am sure that nothing that can happen will ever make me a member of the Roman Catholic Church. There is a quaint childlikeness in it, a fantastical exactitude about the unimaginable other world which would always shut the like of

me outside. Yet, I am sure that of all religions in the world, it provides most openings and avenues into spiritual life, most magic for the creation of unseen powers. Mrs Humphry's is the Mother Catholic here. Three times daily, she shepherds us all to prayer, and we kneel on the bare stairway looking up at the little altar they have made with sweet with sweet pious ingenuity, where a candle lights up a gilded picture of our Lady of perpetual succour, and murmur the rosary in Irish for Miss MacSwiney's sake.

This is another thing which seems strange to me, that instead of framing in the imagination and in

p.4 Prayers & Wonders Wed 22nd Nov

careful words the one grace and blessing we all desire they say always these same traditional words. I cannot pray so. Indeed I can scarcely ever pray at all, but sometimes I can image the opening of the gate, image her release and recovery with an intensity that may perhaps be helping a little to bring these to pass, and I can call on invisible, beneficent powers, but without knowing, ever, whether they hear or heed. I think this praying of mine worthless, but I am quite sure that there are some of these religious, pure hearted women whose prayers have power. For their intentions, we are all praying now in order as Miss MacSwiney asked for them; first that her sister may be let in, second that Erskine Childers may be saved from execution and third for her release. I prayed so strongly, at my first vigil for the first; trying to thrust my will on the prison governor, and

p.5 Wed 22nd Nov

appealing to the invisible powers, that I felt sure almost, that they would bring her in. But when I prayed for Erskine Childers; it became clear to me that prayer must be always only for the

highest spiritual thing and that this is the meaning of that perplexing, 'thy will be done', which used to seem to me to annul our prayer. I knew that I must pray for the purification of Ireland and for his life only if the sacrifice of it was not necessary to that end. It seemed to me that he might very probably be spared. But when I prayed for Miss MacSwiney; I felt desolate, because it seemed that the people of Ireland could not be purified again and quickened without her death. When I questioned Lili; I found her thoughts had gone just the other way, and I think she is more likely to have caught the truth.

p.6 Lili's Miracle

I think Lili has a rare spiritual power. Her faith in her religion, in her friends and heroes and in the Republic is un-flickering, imaginative and joyous. No small thing I think can darken her mind. And even the death of our noblest I believe would seem bearable to her – death for this faith. She understands the spiritual bearings of things. Tonight, when I came on Vigil after her, there was a sense that surprised and subdued me of the benign presences. It was as if it was leaning over us, waiting for our prayers.

p.7

Lili came down from her vigil quiet and glowing, her little white face like a child saint's. She sat in a corner telling the strangest, fantastic things about her vigil, with such sweet wonder that it is certain she believed it in the depths of her heart. She told us the candle was guttering out and that the melting wax, as it fell formed itself from one figure after another of the Madonna and the Saints. St. Patrick was there and the holy Mother and

Child. Quite evidently this little mystery had filled her with happiness and hope.

p.8 The Blessed Spirit Wed 22nd Nov

{p.7 Tessie and I kept Vigil together} last night - the two earliest hours. Miss MacSwiney was very peaceful, although wide awake. There is no doubt that receiving the sacrament has given her fresh strength. It was when Tessie and I were both kneeling that the strange little mystery happened. The place was very quiet, no one moving at all, and I wondered when I heard light swift footsteps coming down as if from her room and felt someone pass behind me and pause at the top of the stairs - so surprised that I turned to look - there was no one there. For a moment my heart failed me. I wondered if she had died and her spirit had gone past us into the night, but the thought seemed extravagant. Without looking at Tessie, I went on praying just as I had been. But in a moment, she looked round with

p.9 Thurs 23rd Nov

a perplexed countenance at me, asking who had passed. She had heard a foot fall behind us and heard it pause on the stairs. Startled, I went quickly into Miss MacSwiney's room and was relieved to find her there, still wide awake. Tessie and I were pleased by this mysterious visit and because it seemed a brotherly presence – Terence MacSwiney perhaps. But those who came to relieve us, when we told them, grew terrified of our "ghost".

Thurs 23rd Nov

This has been a peaceful, even happy day. Our patient has so much more strength, and the fret and trouble seem almost

gone. She wrote a splendid answer to a very stupid statement which was in the papers of Bishop Cohalan. It is good to hear of the deputation to Cosgrove, Louise Gavan Duffy and Mrs. Mulcahy, and even Mrs. Wyse Power!

P.10 Wed 22nd Nov

We suspected that the medical report book was being written up by nurses who knew nothing of how Miss MacSwiney was. Brigid looked about and found a quite false report that last night Miss MacSwiney has slept for, I think Seven hours. We protested and began to keep a report book of our own. I wrote a report of "Miss MacSwiney's Condition" to the D.P.

p.13 Erskine Childers Thurs 23rd Nov

And there is a rumor that the authorities of this prison went to Portobello to beg for her release. If only God or Ireland would inspire them to insist, to threaten, to resign! But there is little hope of this. Erskine Childers application for Habeaus Corpus still goes on for himself and 8 unnamed prisoners. It is distressing to hear his Counsel's argument, all based on the [derivation] of authority for the King. I can't help wondering if it could not have been more frankly and less objectively done. Could not Counsel have asserted, while maintaining that the King's authority in Ireland was nothing, that the accusers had no logical or consistent case even on their own assumption. "Men are terrible muddlers", as Miss MacSwiney says. In the evening news came; first heart sinking that the application for writs of Habeus Corpus had been refused. But an hour later Lili came in, her little white face aglow. The case

p.14 Parcels Thurs 23rd Nov

is deferred until Monday to the count of appeal."Oh", she sighed joyfully, "I'll play a game of Bridge!". She and Davy, Noreen and Lucie are playing quietly now under the light.

At last, this afternoon my pens and paper came! A note from poor Iseult this morning. She has been ill and is miserable about the world, promising to send my things; then a wooden box from Leverett and Frye. I met our "local" staggering under it and groaning, "Christmas is coming". There are pressed meats of all kinds, jam and biscuits and lemon curd, innumerable delicious things. All that will last. I am burying against the day when we shall forfeit parcels for some enterprise.
but we had an exciting tea. And there were pens and papers and I have begun at last to write this journal.
God Speed the Work!

p.15 Effects of Ham Thurs 23rd Nov

Good resolutions! But at the end of their game such groans of hunger and pathetic picturing's of food they hoped ~~not~~ for came forth from the players that I could not forbear to say casually, In a minute I'll give you some bread and ham. At first there was a gasp, then an ecstatic silence, then like a bacchanalian rout they were upon me while I cut bread and spread it with butter and dispensed ham sandwiches. A choral hymn of rapture followed the first taste of it, then a munching quiet and after the second sandwich all round, such intoxicated hilarity that the girls on vigil had to come and implore us to make less noise.
My vigil was from eleven to one. Miss MacSwiney lay so still, breathing so faintly, it was hard to know whether she was living or dying. There were moments of suspense, but all was well.

p.16 The Sacrifice Thurs 23rd Nov

It is the twenty-first day now. After this, Nurse Dunne says, even if a hunger-striker is released it is either death or health broken forever. And now, Miss MacSwiney has said to Noreen; the shrinking of the flesh will begin and the neuralgic pain. Standing over her in that dark room while she lay still, unconscious of anything but utter weariness and the necessity to endure on and on, her eyes closed, her sweet face hollow and thin, an odium of it all rushed on me. The minutes pass over her so slowly, so monotonously here, each one of them deepening her suffering, bearing her nearer to an anguish one dare scarcely imagine. And outside throughout Ireland, what work are those dreadful moments achieving? And for whom? Are the people she is torturing herself

p.17 Dream of Parole Fri 24th Nov

for worth it all? Ireland is worth it. I know she is right prophetically, heroically right. But how are we ever to forgive our own generation if they leave her here to die?

Fri 24th Nov

I have been trying to write a poem but the thing I want to say is too hard for me, and I can't catch my own thoughts in the air in this chatter-full room. So instead, I sat up in bed and in view of the weekly invitation to confession, wrote out some “posers for priests"! I am tempted to go into the confessional for the fun of posing them, but I suppose it would be sacrilegious to use the confessional so.

An interesting dream I had last night. I was out for one day on parole and had gone into college. The attitudes of all the different people were as unexpected as you would expect them to be. Miss [Joyce] intensely

p.18 Letters Fri 24th Nov

though shyly, sorry. The girls almost tragic, lovingly kind. Miss White, when I said goodbye gave me a firm handclasp at arm's length - the dream was not fair to her. Miss Webb clung to me and kissed me with an affection that remembered everything.

My only letter was from Sir Robert Woods as skilled and formal as though we had never been friends, saying the swelling above the old scar need not worry me at all. He disapproves of me, I suppose. I hope they won't scold Patricia for writing to me. I enjoy her letters: funny, restrained little notes, generally with a child-like, affectionate outburst at the end. And she sent me a pack of cards, which was a thoughtful gift. Chrysanthemums came yesterday from Maud Cherry, and she was one of the first to write

p.19 Fri 24th Nov

but an odd, embarrassed letter. She is an ingrained conservative, I think, whose knowledge of history of the world makes her feel that she would like to be a revolutionary - but she never will. The quaintest letter of all was from that good, Christian protestant [Frideswide], a little account, like a schoolgirls essay, of the expedition to places of interest in Dublin, which she took my Division iv, and not one syllable or hint about my arrest. The fulfillment of what she felt to be a Christian duty, I suspect. Dads' letters, full of his faith in the Free State, hoping that Miss MacSwiney will take food or be granted "a fool's pardon", full too of concern for me; are another demonstration of the oddity of the [mistake] out of which God made man. Mothers' letters, which are sympathetic;

and Donald's, which are vividly narrative; and Helga's and Lilian's

p.20 Fri 24th Nov

are the best. Mona's are as always pathetically constrained. Yet I know she would do everything there is to be done for me, if she were here. As it is, there is no one idle enough or quite concerned enough to imagine my necessities and send me the things I want. Iseult is very good, but I know more would be done if I had anyone of my own. I wrote to Lilian yesterday and I asked that my girls – only my best friends- would send me writing things. If they are at all what I remember myself at their age in friendship to have been, they will be happy doing this. Girls give friendship of a loyal and lovely kind. Life without my students will be emptied of a most precious thing. I am quite sure to lose my college post.

p.21 Erskine Childers Execution Fri 24th Nov

Lili was happier and more hopeful about Erskine Childers today, but Miss MacSwiney told her the appeal for Monday had been refused. About dinner time we could hear a 'Stop-Press' being cried in the streets. Lili said it must be an order for Miss MacSwiney's release. I stayed in, copying letters, while she and the others went out to exercise and Mrs. Humphries told me Erskine Childers had been killed. We know, this evening, that it is true. They have killed him, put him out of Ireland, out of life. That dear, loving, grateful, brilliant heroic man. They have done a hideous, unutterable, never-to-be forgiven thing. Erskine Childers was good; good and clear and splendid to the heights and depths of his spirit. He

p. 22 Execution Fri 24th Nov

gave and won the love that belongs only to heroes and saints. Every moment of my memory of him is splendid with the worth of his work, and his fearlessness, happy with his quick, impetuous praise. He was selfless in his devotion to Ireland as a woman might be in love. He had the wisdom and penetration of the astutest politician and yet he founded every thought and act of his on pure principles and truth. His life and all that belonged to it was right and happy in spite of dangers and losses beyond number, and gentle always in spite of the poisonous hostilities of the vilest foes. ~~His wife, his boys, his home and few possessions were all~~ His wife is wonderful and their love fabulous and there are no sons of Ireland finer than his two boys.

p.23 Fri 24th Nov

To have put all that happiness, all that sweetness, all that glorious service out of the world. What has come to the men he laboured for that they could do this thing?
Despair of Ireland, hate of our race, recollections of dangers and labours suffered for these traitors. Praise of the men these traitors have killed, is all […] theme of the prison talk tonight. It is like the execution of Casement, they say. Lili is reconciled, kind and brave. Davy is perhaps the most desperate. I am selfish. I cannot help it; miserable for my own loss. I thought his friendship was one of the golden things to come. I thought I could be working under him. We have not told Miss MacSwiney. She is so very weak. It is said now, Nurse Dunne tells us, that it is their intention to let her die and to kill [E...] O' Maille and the seven other men, and to

p.24 Fri 24th Nov

take some revenge against Mrs. Humphries. I think it is likely to be true. The new reign of terror has begun - God help de Valera!

God [strengthen] help us to save Ireland from these corrupt and evil men!

When I was working with Erskine Childers those days of the fighting in Dublin, I kept a rough record, and I wrote the story of our journey to Waterford in a green manuscript book. I wish I could know whether the raiders have burnt these and two other little notes I had from him.

The jealousy and meanness that are in our people are so pitiful that it was perhaps the only way his honor could be saved - this death for the Republic. His best friends are saying it is for the best. Frank Gallagher told Cecilia in

p.25 Fri 24th Nov

a letter that he had promised it would be his lifework, if Childers died, to tell the story of his splendid life. I am thankful he is living to do this. I know he will do it well. He was a man whose praise one longs for. He praised me and made me write for the Republic and all this time while he was fighting, I have done my best. I would have loved to know that he was pleased. These are contemptible, selfish, thoughts.

Gods pity and the love and pity of Ireland on Bobby, Mrs. Childers and Erskine Óg!

p.27 Mulcahy

It is Mulcahy, we understand, who is responsible for refusing the release. Some paper has published the statement that he is little Moira MacSwiney's Godfather and that once he was ill with pneumonia in Miss MacSwiney's house and she nursed him back to health and saved his valuable life.

She is angry that this has been made public. She hates to remember that he is Moira's godfather – “Someday, I will get hold of that church register and scratch it out!”, she said vehemently. “Do”, I answered, with my heart shrinking at that “someday”.
But how to account for this most strange being? Is he, as a pupil of mine suggested once, like Shakespeare's Richard ii; a contemplative, a poet, forced into action by mischance?

p.28
Or, as I suggested then, Macbeth; a man full of imagination and natural goodness taking one evil step and then forced for his own protection to go the devil's way, "Things bad begun make strong themselves by ill". It cannot be explained in either of these ways; "a fanatic", "an ascetic" Miss MacSwiney says, "He thinks he should crush his own feelings in everything". Here I am sure is insight and the truth. It is a most dangerous, unconquerable type; upheld in cruelty by all the selfless enthusiasm of a martyr, incorruptible focus his ruthless course, unconquerable by fear. St. Kevin, who strangled the young girl who served and loved him, must have been such a man. What a figure of

p.29
tragedy! What drama would not Shakespeare have created around such a man. I suppose there is no greater danger to human character than this pride we sometimes take in crushing our human, natural clemencies. War enforces this and all warriors must learn to do it. Where it ceases to be good and becomes hideously evil is hard surely to discern. It is specially a danger of this hateful war.

p.30 Civilization Sat 25th Nov

A rumor and a promise have been throbbing in the air for a week. This morning it was fulfilled. Davy came back from the bathroom with the news that the hot water was hot. Owing to congestion in our landing, I went upstairs. Mrs. Humphry's had made her bath as clean as any bath ever seen. I lay in deep, hot water and washed with flower-scented frothy soap and was at peace with the world. Afterwards, I climbed up on the bath and found a place where the tainted glass of the window was scratched clear, and I saw the water of the canal, and the streets all jolly in the cold sunlight, and a woman going out in a fur coat, and the white smoke of a train.

And surely, surely it seemed, that to be anywhere in the free air of the world, whether poor or alone or hungry or defeated or derelict, is all a human being need desire. These are prison moods, I suppose, as foolishly

p.31 Prison Moods - Bad News Sat 25th Nov

as all the moods which would make us fly to troubles that we know not of than hear those ills we have. They would come more poignantly and oftener. I am sure, if the one absorbing anxiety were past.

When I went into Miss MacSwiney again, she had been told, I could see, about Erskine Childers' death. She was lying deep in her pillows, un-responding, suffering. I leant over her and kissed her. “I can't forgive them”, she whispered, “can't forgive them for killing Erskine Childers”. I talked just a little, praising him, but nothing could distract her form the worst misery of it, “I feel ashamed…ashamed”. Still, to this great heart the Irish people are one and the faithful are ashamed with the iniquity of the traitors. I lost that sense of fellowship long ago, perhaps because

p. 33 The Open-Air Sat 25th Nov

I never knew any of these renegade men. She had tears in her eyes. It is the only time I have seen her cry.

It has been a cold, pale day, lit by a wintry sun. When I went out over our little compound even was glamourous with a faint gold. In the colorless sky over the dull solid turrets of the prison, floated a streak of fragile clouds, every tint in them of silver and gold and bronze. My mind is full of Robert Louis Stevenson today. I wish he had been in prison and written of it.

To make this earth our hermitage,
A cheerful and a changeful page,
God's ~~strange~~ bright and intricate device
Of days and seasons doth suffice
How many days and seasons, I wonder will

p.35 Sat 25th Nov

be lost out of our lives and we looking always at the sky only and dusty grass plots and stone walls. It is a queer robbery that we can be robbed of the berries in the hedges and the frozen pools.

And yet, I will tell the truth. It is not God's hills and rivers that I am longing for at all. It is [of the London underground Stevenson's verses make me think!] I want cities and theatres and travel and the talk of far-off friends, foreign cities, and the Liffey under the city lights and Donald ~~and to be talking of faery plays or life in the Republic of Ireland, at peace and full~~ and to be trying over the music for a faery play…

p.36 The Bible – Jehovah Sat 25th Nov

At night, during my vigils I have been reading that grand, shameless, pagan book; the Old Testament - the book of Kings.

A rich and gorgeous world it is this of King David and Solomon and Saul. David is as loveable as Lancelot, I think and a stronger more original personality, more outright and daring in his sin. From his adorable boyhood to his royal old age, he has the same vital, originating mind and unhesitant will. His impetuous human affections, tenacious, magnanimous and child hearted as Lancelot [found them]; the free passionate imagination breaking out in the lyric outcry over Jonathan and Absalom. The immense Kingliness of the Man, the manliness of the boy and of the King- make up one of the most vivid personalities recorded or imagined I have ever known.

p.37 Sat 25th Nov

But what a God it this Jehovah! Jealous, petty, self-glorious, tyrannical, mean, an absolute enslaver of the soul of man, by lavish favoritism and terrorism unsurpassable by any fiend. That Christ did not preach as an utter revolutionary against the idolatry of this false God seems to me unaccountable. To build his doctrine of love upon this doctrine of ruthlessness was impossible surely. Why did he not condemn this terrible religion?

Is the God of Israel, God the Father? The father of Christ? Not Obramah? He did not condemn it and it is stronger in us than Christianity today. To suffer blows and humiliation patiently is good, Christ teaches, it is base and lavish, answers the blood of man, in which the violent

p.38 Jehovah Sat 25th Nov

doctrines of Jehovah burn still. So, the world is torn and devastated with war. Those who are violent and predatory by nature have a need, whereby to praise themselves and win the world's praise. Those who love truth and justice are paralysed

by a creed which allows them to see evil done and not take arms against it. The good are idle, the evil busy in the great affairs of the world. And when man or woman, like Erskine Childers or Mary MacSwiney, try to fight for justice, reconnecting these two creeds, there are so few to follow them that they die.

p.32 Sat 25th Nov

Ms. MacSwiney read in this morning's paper that her sister left the gates last night, without breaking her fast, and returned this morning. She is distressed and puzzled about this. The paper contained part of her letter to Bishop Cohalan.

P. 39 No Change Sun 26th Nov

When the others went to mass at 9 o C, I went up to take care of Miss MacSwiney. The report of the last watchers was 'very restless and moaning'. I dreaded finding her in pain, but when I went in, she looked up at me smiling and talked to, but her voice was very faint. "No Change" is the report, as always in the morning papers. This is desperate, most mean and dangerous part of the campaign. Lily proposed interviewing Dr. O' Connor and we waylaid him with four of five cuttings giving the same farcical account of her. His defense was that these were not based on medical reports and what the papers said was no concern of his. We challenged his professional honour and told him that it would certainly appear to be collusion between him and the Government in a campaign against her life. He consented at last to try to stop these reports.

P.40 Slavery Sun 26th Nov

Even at this crisis, this man whose sympathies are fair enough could not be persuaded to break through the routine of his

work, risk his post, speak one unexpected word. Indeed, it is not yet untrue to say [of that us] that we are a nation of slaves. This moral enslavement is a thing so massive so oppressive and at the same time so imperceptible to the senses that the Irish people has crawled under it for generations and never known themselves to be less than men. To conceal our true desires, to hide our flag, be secretive about our faith, to refrain from the enterprises we would gladly undertake, to hold back from supporting our more fearless friends from championing a losing campaign. To defer to people and opinions that we despise, to live the tools of systems which we abhor, to act speak and even think an intricate and endless lie - this slavery is Ireland's Slavery; the very basic foundation of the "Irish Free State". From this the Republic of Ireland shall be free.

p.41 Sun 26th Nov

Sunday night was very unhappy. Miss MacSwiney was wretchedly weak and looked up with such suffering eyes that I could hardly keep serene enough to lay with her. Then I found Bridie expounding a question of conduct to her and insisting on her arbitrating. Eithne Coyle and Norah O' Shea had been brought in. They had not been given leave to have their cells unlocked at night. Ought they to refuse to go into them at 9 o' clock. It was evidently a hard and very distressing problem to Miss MacSwiney and she bore it with a seriousness and an effort to concentrate that was very painful to see. Bridie insisted on her deciding. Miss MacSwiney could not help realizing that a fight would probably mean for her the loss of us as we should be locked in our cells. To me

p.42 Sun 26th Nov

that thought was unbearable and to fight for this seemed unreasonable, needlessly aggressive, even a little like taking an unfair advantage of the concession- "It is a concession, not a right", Miss MacSwiney said, and then sinking wearily into her pillows very gently très […fully], "I am afraid I'll have to ask you to let someone else decide…I am too much concerned". Really indignant, I said surely the newcomers had consciences and could decide for themselves and went with Bridie out of the room. Then followed fierce little meetings at the stairhead, in passages, and in our ward - extreme wrath against what seemed the arrogance of Bridie, determination to put an end to this unstable position. The little contention ended with an interview with Cosgrave when he readily agreed at the request of Bridie and Lily to extend the concession to the other two.

p.45 The Split Sun 26th Nov

It came to a head with this little crisis – the curious latent conflict which is in the Republic - the difference that is between the political party and the army - between De Valera and Rory, and here between the Militarist Cuman na mBan element and "Suffolk Street". We think them vastly pugilistic, too ready to be aggressive on a weak case. They think us “willing slaves”. We think the military organisation should serve - they think it should command.

There are two acutely apposite points of view as to what should be our attitude here. We would fight but only for our rights within the prison - they would find pretext for fighting all the time. We want to study, write and debate and dislike incessant distraction. Distraction to them the breath of life. They opposed the subject to a Prisoners' Council tonight. We have decided that we must insist on forming one. Lily is on the warpath and on fire.

p.46 A Night of Fear Sun 26th Nov

After all this when I went into her, I found Miss MacSwiney exhausted and suffering more than I have seen her ever before. Her hands were clutching and twisting from the maddening tingle and irritation of the nerves of her arms.

I asked if her head ached. She said no, but [there was] she had a bothered feeling in it. She would have nobody blamed, "they were quite right", she would not have me distressed. She let me massage the poor, thin wrists with eau-de-cologne, and settle her pillows, and praised my strong hands and pretended to be restful then. I think she was a little easier, but she did not fall asleep. It all began to seem utterly impossible; as if it must be a nightmare and not true, that this awful thing had to go on. We had been told so definitely by everyone that they mean to let her die; the savagery of those [executions/recanting] opened so

p.47 This Sacrifice Sun 26th Nov

familiar and horrible a policy. The press was so false and powerful an enemy - Ireland so enslaved and dead-hearted and corrupt. All hope of her release was gone from me.

The longing images that used to come of happy days when we would be talking together, maybe at seventy-three, remembering all this had to be thrust away. I foresaw days and nights of more and more awful agony, as me watching, helpless to relieve it. I foresaw the day she would lie there dead, but it brought a kind of numb madness to think of that. Such horror and such agonising beauty is in all this. Each moment of this long torture she is inflicting on herself. She is crucifying herself, hourly, daily for the people of Ireland. And not for

p.48 Sun 26th Nov

any swift, bright, tangible salvation her agony and death can give them, but for the little hope of bringing a little courage back to their fainting hearts. Such love, such faith, such power of spirit can hardly have been witnessed in the world. Almost more wonderful than Terence's sacrifice, it seems to me, because to go to suffering that is unknown to your imagination is less difficult than to go to suffering of which every hideous moment is known, branded into the imagination and memory as is the suffering of hunger strike into hers. I think there is scarcely anything in the world for which I could do this. And no less wonderful than her power to do it is her power of doing is without regret, without bitterness, without self-pity, without impatience, day after day. She is without a hundred things that Terence

p. 49 Sun 26th Nov

had, without things that would give her ease. We are not nursing her as she should be nursed. We are all living our own noisy irresponsible lives, hardly hushing our voices for her sake. All day long, there must be things that make her suffer a little more that she need, but she does not think of that. She never asks us to be quiet for her sake. She smiles at us as we come in, and what she asks for she asks considerately, and thanks us lovingly and is troubled if we seem tired. "You are very good", she said wistfully when I was leaving her this morning at 7.

We are assisting at the sacrifice of a heroic and beautiful life. I don't know how it is to be borne. ~~I want this woman for my friend.~~ I want her to be in the world. I want her for Ireland, and

they are going to let her die. ~~My vigil was from 5-7am. I stayed a little late and she was conscious for me to go to bed.~~

P. 51 Mon 27th Nov

Today she is feverish. Bridie told the doctor. She says if that is so, this is the coming of the end. We have been hoping desperately day after day, and it has made us do less for her than we should have done. Today I meant to send a letter to the newspapers, challenging them about the false reports, but there is no way of getting it out. Her letter to the Cardinal and the Archbishop will go I hope today. The Independent actually gives a true report, "She is very weak". Maybe the Doctor has done this. I wrote to Dr. Lynn through the censor asking for a lotion, pretending it was for myself – I think she will understand. I am to be in charge every day from 11-1 o' C. This will be a relief. Noreen, Cecilia and Lili are to take afternoon duty. We all realise we shall be nursing dying woman now.

p. 52 <u>The Prisoners Council</u> Mon 27th Nov

We summoned a full meeting at 2.30. Noreen in the chair. All came, Bridie is in a more reasonable frame of mind. A Cuman na mBan meeting had been held first at which Lily attended and cleared the air. Our meeting was very frank; the real issue was faced and all went well. No objection was made and a counsel of three was chosen. Lily O' Brennan, Brigid O' Mullane, Ms. Cogley - a very fair and satisfactory result, I thought. I am particularly glad Noreen is on.

I came in a little early from exercise and went into Miss MacSwiney. She was lying in the dim light, miserable, unsmiling. I knew her sister was on her mind. I had just seen the letter from Annie which she had sent us to read; an

account of Thursday night, when the soldier attacked her like savages, yelling,

p. 53 Annie Mac Swiney Letter Mon 27th Nov

tore down her screens; threatened with bayonets the girls who guarded her, and even forced her at last to save the girls lives to go away. It was a horrible story. Demoralization would not go farther than it has gone in those wild hearts of men. And after days of hunger strike, as Miss MacSwiney said in terrible distress, her sister would not be fit for all that shock.

The most dreadful thought is that a time must come when her peace of mind and contentment will be gone and she will lie unsmiling as now I think she is trying to shorten it all for her sister's sake. Even the nurse to massage her, the one relief left to her, she refuses now.

With a heart stifled with sorrow, not able to say any encouraging thing, I left the room. The people of Ireland could save her, and they are letting her die.

p.54 Release Mon 27th Nov

It was after the gas was lighter and after tea, when we were settled in one another's cells that the rumour came. The Governor and some man Dr. O' Connor and a strange Doctor are coming up. The one continual dread seized us; they were going to remove her to another part of the prison, take her away from us. That was a thing we were not going to allow. We were prepared to fight to the death rather than that. Or it might be…somebody said the word breathlessly - release. “It is release”, Davy cried in the door. Release! Joy like that, coming so sudden after such despair is a thing one hardly remembers afterwards. It vanishes from the memory as does violent pain. I only remember our looking at one another speechlessly, a

sense of light - light shining out of faces and wide open eyes. But we knew we must be

p. 55 Mon 27th Nov

quiet. We crept upstairs. Sheila was coming out of her room, radiant as a Seraph. We stood tense and silent against the walls, then stole down again. Lily went into her and came down. Miss MacSwiney had told her she was not equal to it…to excitement…and sent her away. We lined up on the landing against the wall. We were to give her a silent military salute. The stretcher bearers went up. Bridie and Rita were called up to move the altar. I brought Kathleen O' Carroll out from her bed - maybe it was bad for her but she must have it to remember this splendid hour - and put her among us on a chair. Sheila came down and said she wanted after all to say goodbye, to see every one of us. “Too happy, faint with happiness, she was”, Sheila said, “like a child”. We said we would stand as we were and the stretcher would be carried past. At last the men on the landing stooped. We saw them lifting

p.56 Mon 27th Nov

the stretcher on their shoulders. They carried it slowly on the stairs and on the landing they stopped. She was lying motionless but then she held out her hand. One after another stole up and kissed her. She looked up smiling, intensely happy. It seemed a terrible [throng/thing] and I was afraid for her and didn't go near, but it was difficult. Then they lifted her again, and turned down the stairs while we leaned over the banisters watching. A dreadful moment came - they were carrying her head foremost, and the stairs were so steep that the blood would surely rush to her head. She moaned suddenly, “O let

me get up and walk". I was frightened - somebody held on to me- but I was not going to scream. At last, they reached the foot of the stairs and set her down. She lay so still. I thought for a moment she might be dead. To die then, before the gate!

p. 57 Mon 27th Nov

But then she moved her head. Sheila went down and came up again. She was all right. Then they carried her away. The others said the rosary then, but I went to Kathleen O Carroll who was sobbing wildly in her bed. It was only a result of the excitement and I had her laughing soon.

There was hilarious celebration of course then. Some climbed to the window of the Humphrey's cell and shouted and cheered until a sentry fired. They cheered more loudly and wildly than before. Some raided Miss MacSwiney's room for souvenirs – a bit of pumice stone was my share of loot. They danced and laughed and carried Miss Humphrey's shoulders high. I opened shortbread and tinned coffee and prepared a feast. Then for a moment, I was alone in her white empty cell. It was

p. 58 Mon 27th Nov

comforting to kneel by that bed where one had knelt watching such suffering and bury one's head in that pillow and give thanks and be at peace.

But now that she has gone all that made this prison glorious is gone. I don't want to be here. I want to escape. It is a prison…prison…and I may be kept a year. But it will be a thing to be thankful for always, to have been here through this, nursing her, and to have seen this holy victory won.

p.59 <u>In Memory</u> Tues 28th Nov

The memory of it now has a strange quality - not all pain; a sweet anguish, an aching beauty are in it. I know at last what the old word “glory” means. It means the great pride and wonder that can exist only with danger or sacrifice or pain. Remembering easy contented days, only dulled with moods of loneliness or soured a little with unkind words. These days when our hearts were half breaking with love and pity, when we saw human love and endurance at their highest, held tense and resistant night and day, these in spite of the pain, the days when life was most desirable.

p.60 Afterwards Tues 28th Nov

I have often heard that there is nothing one misses so much as a patient one has nursed. Certainly, this patient is missed, missed, so that one looks around bewildered at a new world, and finds it prison. While she was here this was where one wanted to be. Now that she is gone it is all changed. Life has moved away and left us here in a waste space. Soon, in a day or two, we will try to make it habitable and become interested and happy at that, but now there is nothing but missing her and her need of us and her keen desire to know everything that concerned us and her courage and her loving words and welcoming smile. When shall I see her again?

p.61 Tues 28th Nov

Mrs. Humphries is troubled. She misses Miss MacSwiney's strength. She has been swayed to and fro since the bishops pastoral. To give up holy communion seems to her the worst thing in the world and a deprivation inflicted upon God. To her obedience to the Pastors, even when her conscience is in conflict with theirs, would be the greater virtue (a doctrine which seems to me to make a religion for slaves). But she is so

deeply involved in the Republican movement now, with her son and daughter, that she cannot bring herself to renounce it. Instinct more pleasing to her Maker, I dare say, than her conscience lets her think. Miss MacSwiney, she said, by her grand strength made all seem clear, "She in her weakness was giving strength to us". It is true that spiritual strength, which may be is in full health a little over bearing here, shining through physical frailness and dependence was a miracle-working thing.

p.69 Letter from Miss MacSwiney Wed 29th Nov

To Mrs Humphries for us all, the women had on Sunday, walked 9 times round the walls of Mountjoy praying for her release.

The fall of Jericho.

Chocolates from Honor

p. 62 Victory Tues 28th Nov

(After end of book)

There is a sweetness in this victory greater than any sweetness I have ever known. I think it is perhaps because it means no defeat or hurt to any human being, and because it is a victory of goodness over evil in the hearts of Irish people. This has been the despairing shame of the sorrow of these days, that it seemed as if the people of Ireland had lost that living spiritual sense which revolts against cruelty and responds to suffering and is inspired by courage and courageous moods. It has seemed as if that human spirit, which is the breath of divinity in man was dying out of them, and that soon only the animal […] would remain. The heroic spirit of Ireland would be dead. And in the leaders who have induced the change in

p. 63 Tues 28th Nov

the people, it is as if all the spiritual force had turned to malice and hardness and would never give way to justice or mercy again.

That deadness and that malice were Miss McSwiney's enemies - these were keeping her here to die.

The only hope at all there was for her was in the weapon of her own pain. She was helpless. She could not nor would not hurt or harm her enemy in any way, only it would make the evilness of their apathy felt and known. Her challenge was to all that slumbered in this. She risked nothing but her own agony and her own death. The appeal of it was entirely to that thing in them which seemed so nearly dead; extinction if it could once be stirred to life again it might be saved from the struggle was between that death or the great living challenge that her suffering put forth. Whether the ~~death~~

p.64 Tues 28th Nov

frost upon their spirits was so heavy that before her sacrifice had accumulated power enough to pierce it would have killed her. Would the minutes that pass so long, so slowly over her here or pass so quickly and unheeded in the distracted world outside slice her life before they had brought quickening to the others? Even if that happened, we knew her death would work the miracle. But now, without dying she has won justice, pity, chivalry at that great loving challenge, wakened again hardness gave way to compassion or to the fear at the least of doing wrong. Cruelty grew ashamed. Man and woman who had been in a mood of malice or indifference or cowardice let justice and valour waken in them again and paid tribute to truth once again. And having awakened they will not relapse into that

apathy so completely. The people of Ireland have been given life.

p.65 Books Wed 29th Nov

That prisoners should be sent books is apparently obvious to their friends is certainly true. But the books they send… Here, where each square foot of table space has to be stretched out as jealousy as a gold miners claim. I have the craziest collection of antiquated magazines, books on health and beauty, books on trades- unionism, race-course novels picked up on railway book stalls, old schoolbooks found in dusty corners of the house. It gives one a sense of being regarded as a pauper.
When I decide to read and to write out for exactly the books to be read here It becomes a most difficult and exciting question- of the myriad books in the world that I have never had time and never hoped to have time to read and have leisure for now; which are to be chosen?
Because there is so much leisure… long books, the long poems that I would have chosen in my academic days, 'The Ring and the Book' or 'The Faery Queen' or 'Paradise Lost'? No, not swift moving enough to entrance these tedious days.
Books finely written with the discretion of finish of consummate art, I desire. Life is so lax and rude here that one craves the company of master artists.
Books of activity, and adventurous colonized worlds remote from this stagnation, books of revolution, or foreign places, or

p.67 Wed 29th Nov

great characters in them, great movements such as will not seem tame or trivial even beside the story Ireland is making today, or a fantastical history remote from all our world.
And famous books so that the reading of them add to the large pleasure there is in being intimate with the things the rest of the world knows and keeps as its emblems and its types.
A good prisoner's family, mine -
Mother has sent me Machiavelli's History of Florence. What book in the world would it be better to read here? I know enough of Florence to long to know more, and it is the first foreign city I will live in when my time for travel comes, and maybe I shall discover a [theme for] and the play like 'The Gift' – and Machiavelli will be fascinating to meet…

p.68 Wed 29th Nov

Donald has sent me, 'The Gadfly', a book of Italian Revolution; the [likest] movement to ours, in the most different setting and a place and time in which from reading about Mazzini and Garibaldi, I know enough to understand. I read it long ago and remember the intensity of the book and remember the Gadfly himself, but all his history I forget. It will be good to meet him again.
From Iseult, Dostoevsky' White Nights' the most absorbing of writers, most perfect of artists in Russia and the strange subtle Russian thought.
And Mona has sent me Don Quixote!
Whether I shall love him as others do, I can't guess- here I enter a really unknown world- now feel I like some watcher of the Skies….
Praise be to all makers of good books!
They have a prisoner's prayers.

p.43 Obedience Wed 29th Nov

I wonder whether this is not the worst force in the world-the system which brings intelligent men and women into organisations which demand on the abnegation of their own judgement and obedience in all things to authority. Where this organisation is a religion, as the Roman Catholic Church, the results are such deplorable manifestations as the recent Pastoral, and of the desertion by convinced Republicans of the Republican cause. They cease to speak and work for the thing in which they believe. When the organization is militarist, it may result in such appalling demoralisation as we see here today, when the mere habit of obedience induces thousands of good-hearted Irishmen to become the instruments by which

p.44 Wed 29th Nov

treachery, murder and dishonor beyond remedy are committed and to think themselves innocent - without the soldiers this reign of traitors would be impossible. Erskine Childers would not be executed. Mary MacSwiney would not die. They make it possible and believe they keep their innocence still. Did they feel this responsibility truly for one day they would put an end to it, they are saturated with the slavery of obedience and it goes on.

6th Dec

Patsie Woods has been forbidden to write to me and send me messages and she obeys! Patsie who has loved me when she was three years old and wrote to me three times without…an answer here and sent me a pack of cards. I worshiped her father when I was a little girl. A queer obedience this.

p.70

Monday 27: Miss MacSwiney released

Kerry girls arrived.

Tues 28: Question of cooking our own food.

Entertainment in 10- charades.

Honor Murphy released.

Wed 29: Parcels- cups and saucers- little tea knives and spoons- clean clothes – books- civilizations.

Now our prison life begins.

The hand-painted Doctor –

That you may have a son a Bishop!

I don't care a Paudeen!

Sayings of the day: I would give a ham sandwich to hear a bird sing.

Kilmainham

1923

Dorothy Macardle

p.58b Feb 8 1923

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

p.57b
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

p.56a
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

p.56b
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 hope; 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 Leadership

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.

p.41b
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?

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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.

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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.

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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 <u>Dreams</u>
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

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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

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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

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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.

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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.

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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.

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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.

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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

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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-

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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.

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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

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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.

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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

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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

p.25b

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

p.24a

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 Windows

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 The Hermit

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

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