

## **Préacháin Chill Fhíonáin**

### **The Crows of Kilfinane**

#### **A bilingual rensaku (haiku sequence) by Gabriel Rosenstock**

Now the herons you see in Sendai are white, without having to be dyed  
that way; and the crows, without being dyed, are black.

**Bankei (1622 – 1693)**



contráth  
nach dearg iad a mbeola . . .  
cailíní ar ais ó Shasana

*twilight*  
*redness of their lips . . .*  
*girls home from England*

**roimh Bhéarla roimh Ghaeilge**  
**an chéad teanga a bhí agam . . .**  
**préacháinis**

*before English before Irish*  
*my first language . . .*  
*language of crows*

**féach uirthi  
Máire Ní Dhálaigh . . .  
i gcónaí chun deiridh**

*look at her  
Mary Daly . . .  
always bringing up the rear*

**grian an tráthnóna . . .  
na préacháin ag éirí níos duibhe  
is níos duibhe**

*evening sunshine . . .  
the crows become blacker  
and blacker*

úlla rácáilte  
níos glaise ná a chéile . . .  
peacaí nár insíodh

*stolen apples  
each greener than the next . . .  
sins never confessed*

caitheamh saighead . . .  
ár bhFionn Mac Cumhaill féin  
an seaimpín áitiúil

*playing darts . . .  
the local champion  
our very own Finn McCool*

cró na gcearc . . .  
ag súil go dtabharfadh an gadaí  
na cosa leis

*hen house . . .  
hoping the thief  
will get away*

leamhain ina mílte  
sa tóir orainn . . .  
tiomáint abhaile ó Luimneach

*pursued  
by thousands of moths . . .  
driving home at night from Limerick*

**aingil m'óige  
eití is súile . . .  
chomh dubh le pic**

*angels of my youth . . .  
wings and eyes  
as black as hell*

**an chruinne go léir  
á doirteadh as . . .  
gob an phréacháin**

*it pours out  
the whole universe . . .  
mouth of the crow*

amach sa samhradh . . .  
fuaim bhán liathróidí leadóige  
i gcéin

*late summer . . .  
white sound in the distance  
of tennis balls*

lá aonaigh . . .  
fear láidir ag geonaíl  
ar leaba tairní

*fair day . . .  
a strong man groaning  
on a bed of nails*

nach bhfuil aon rian díobh  
rian ar bith?  
teaghlach a chuaigh ar imirce

*is there no trace of them  
no trace at all?  
emigrant family*

lá aonaigh . . .  
boladh bualtraí  
agus pórtair

*fair day . . .  
odour of cow shit  
and porter*

**an tost  
is doimhne ar fad . . .  
tost na bpréachán**

*the deepest silence  
of all . . .  
silence of the crows*

**ag scinneadh tharam  
le blianta fada . . .  
soiléir i gcónaí**

*flitting across my vision  
all these years . . .  
never blurred*

**conas a éiríonn leis  
teacht isteach im' thaibhreamh?  
'dtí an garrán leat!**

*what power does it have  
to enter my dreams?  
get thee to a rookery!*

cuma an diabhail air . . .  
sagart paróiste  
ar muin capaill

*he looks like the devil . . .  
parish priest  
on a horse*



Beannacht na Naomhshacraiminte . . .  
tríd an túis  
i ngrá le bean rialta

*Benediction . . .*  
*through a cloud of incense*  
*in love with a nun*

mórshiúl Fhéile Chorp Chríost . . .  
meangadh ar aghaidh  
amadán an bhaile

*Corpus Christi procession . . .*  
*a smile on the face*  
*of the village idiot*

i dtreo neimhe a d'fhéach  
ní suas síos an baile . . .  
dealbh na Maighdine

*towards heaven she looked  
not up and down the street . . .  
statue of the Virgin*

**éisc dhubha shuaite  
in airde . . .  
aigéan suaite**

*restless black fish  
high above . . .  
restless ocean*

**cá bhfuil ár dtriall  
ní bhainim le bhur dtreibh . . .  
bhur dteach ina phraiseach**

*where are you taking me  
I am not of your tribe . . .  
your house is a mess*

**níl guth cinn agaibh deirtear . . .  
thug bhur n-amhráin  
chuig doras neimhe mé**

*they say you cannot sing . . .  
your songs have brought me  
to heaven's door*

tobar beannaithe . . .  
cén tart é seo  
nach féidir a mhúchadh

*holy well . . .  
what is this thirst  
that cannot be quenched*

scuab an ghaoth léi  
chun siúil é . . .  
bailiúchán stampaí

*the wind blew it  
to the four corners of the earth . . .  
stamp collection*

an Rí Leopold ar stampa . . .  
deacair naoimh a aithint  
ó bhithiúnaigh

*King Leopold on a stamp . . .  
hard to know saints  
from villains*

Cill Fhíonáin  
a leath ina thaibhreamh  
agus an leath eile de –?

*Kilfinane  
half of it a dream  
and the other half –?*

**Kilfinane . . .  
níl préacháin in ann é a rá . . .  
Cill Fhíonáin! Cill Fhíonáin!**

*Kilfinane . . .  
crows can't say it . . .  
Cill Fhíonáin! Cill Fhíonáin!*

grian an tráthnóna  
ar na cannaí bainne aige . . .  
fear agus tréad gabhar

*evening sun  
on his milk cans . . .  
a man goes by with a herd of goats*

clapsholas . . .  
gabhann taibhse Staker Wallace  
tríd an mbaile

*twilight . . .  
the ghost of Staker Wallace  
passes through the village*

**conair gan chonair  
bhur gconairse gan bhac . . .  
clog an aingil**

*your pathless path  
knows no obstacle . . .  
angelus bell*

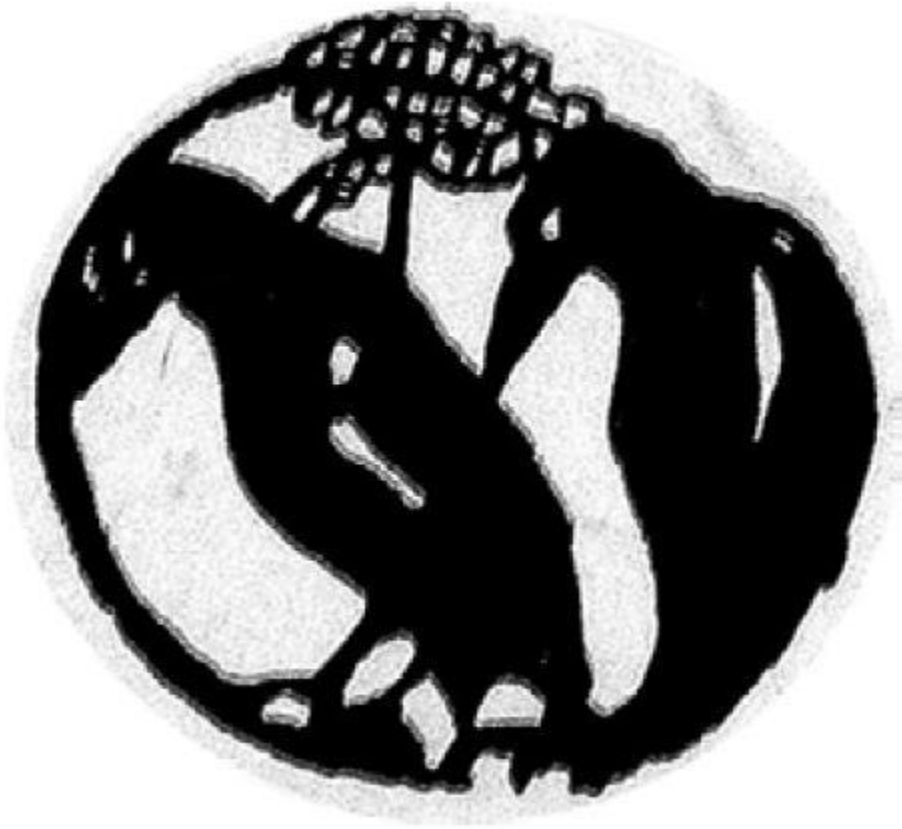
**cailíní  
sa bhaile ó Shasana . . .  
ní binn leo glór na bpréachán**

*girls  
home from England . . .  
they can't abide the din of crows*

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Gabriel Rosenstock is a poet, haikuist, tankaist, playwright, novelist, translator, short story writer and essayist. His latest book is *Walk with Gandhi*, illustrated by Masood Hussain, haiku and commentary celebrating the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Mahatma Gandhi. Photo-haiku posters (with American photographer Ron Rosenstock) may be viewed here:

<https://www.rosenstockandrosenstock.com/product-page/poster-1>



Artwork: Nicholas Roerich (c.1905)