

**Mo ghile mear (My gallant darling) by Seán Clárach Mac Domhnaill (1691-1754), lamenting the defeat of Bonnie Prince Charlie in 1746:**

1. (performed by Irish singer Mary Black)  
Seal dá rabhas im' mhaighdean shéimh,  
'S anois im' bhaintreach chaite thréith,  
Mo chéile ag treabhadh na dtonn go tréan  
De bharr na gcnoc is in imigéin.

***Curfá:***

**Sé mo laoch mo Ghile Mear  
'Sé mo Shaesar, Ghile Mear,  
Suan ná séan ní bhfuaireas féin  
Ó chuaigh i gcéin mo Ghile Mear.**

2. (performed by Irish singer Iarla Ó Lionaird)  
Bímse buan ar buairt gach ló,  
Ag caoi go cruaidh 's ag tuar na ndeor  
**[caoineadh means crying, something missing?]**  
Mar scaoileadh uaim an buachaill beo  
'S ná ríomhtar tuairisc uaidh, mo bhrón.

***Curfá***

3. (performed by Irish singer Mary Ann Kennedy)  
Ní labhrann cuach go suairc ar nóin  
Is níl guth gadhair i gcoilltibh cnó,  
Ná maidin shamhraidh i ngleanntaibh ceoigh  
Ó {d'imthigh} sé uaim an buachaill beó.

***Curfá***

4. (performed by Scottish singer Karen Matheson)  
Marcach uasal uaibhreach óg,  
Gas gan gruaim is suairce snódh,  
Glac is luaimneach luath i ngleo  
Ag teascadh an tslua 's ag tuairgan trian

***Curfá***

5. (performed by Irish singer Karan Casey)  
Is cosúil é le hAonghus Óg,  
Le Lughaidh Mac Céin na mbéimeann mór,  
Le Cú Raoi, ardmhac Dáire an óir,

Taoiseach Éireann tréan ar tóir.

### **Curfá**

6. (performed by Scottish singer and piper Allan MacDonald)

7. (original stanza not performed in the recording)

{Ghile Mear 'sa seal faoi chumha,  
'S Éire go léir faoi chlócaibh dubha;  
Suan ná séan ní bhfuairéas féin  
Ó chuaigh i gcéin mo Ghile Mear.}

### **English translation and comments by Peadar Laighléis:**

1. Once I was beautiful maiden,  
But now I'm a spent, worn-out widow,  
My consort strongly plowing the waves, [i.e. abroad, in French service]  
Over the hills and far away.

#### ***Chorus:***

**He's my champion/hero my Gallant Darling [not as simple as this],  
He's my Caesar, a Gallant Darling,  
I've found neither rest nor fortune  
Since my Gallant Darling went far away.**

2. Every day I'm constantly enduring grief,  
Weeping bitterly and shedding tears,  
Because my lively lad has left me  
And no news is told of him - alas.

#### ***Chorus***

3. The cuckoo doesn't sing cheerfully at noon,  
And the sound of hounds isn't heard in the nut-tree woods,  
Nor a summer morning in a misty glen  
Since my my lively boy went away from me.

#### ***Chorus***

4. Noble, proud young horseman [knight? But cavalry best section of Irish Jacobite forces]  
Warrior unsaddened, of most pleasant countenance  
A swift-moving [athletic] hand, quick in a fight,  
Slaying the enemy [host] and smiting the strong.

5. He is like Young Aongus [of Tuatha Dé Danann – like Apollo]  
Like Lugh son of Cian of the great blows [also Tuatha – Lugh killed the giant/cyclops Balor]

with a sling]

Like Cú Raoi, the grandson of Daire of the gold [too obscure for me; also Tuatha, but Daire can be given as Irish translation of Darius, king of the Persians and Medes]

Leader of Ireland strong in pursuit [Taoiseach translates better as „Führer“]

7. {Gallant Darling for a while under sorrow,

And **Ireland** completely under black cloaks; [dark clouds is nearer in meaning]

I have found neither rest nor fortune

Since my Gallant Darling went far away.}

### **Mythological background (WIKIPEDIA):**

The **Tuath(a) Dé Danann** (Irish pronunciation: [t̪ˠuəhə d̪eː d̪ˠaŋˠˠəŋˠˠ/], usually translated as "people(s)/tribe(s) of the goddess Danu"), also known by the earlier name **Tuath Dé** ("tribe of the gods"), are a supernatural race in Irish mythology. They are thought to represent the main deities of pre-Christian Gaelic Ireland. The Tuath Dé dwell in the Otherworld but interact with humans and the human world. Their traditional rivals are the Fomorians (Fomoir), who seem to represent the harmful or destructive powers of nature. Each member of the Tuath Dé has been associated with a particular feature of life or nature, but many appear to have more than one association. Many also have bynames, some representing different aspects of the deity and others being regional names or epithets. Much of Irish mythology was recorded by Christian monks, who modified it to an extent. They often depicted the Tuath Dé as kings, queens and heroes of the distant past who had supernatural powers or who were later credited with them. Other times they were explained as fallen angels who were neither good nor evil. However, some medieval writers acknowledged that they were once gods. A poem in the *Book of Leinster* lists many of them, but ends "Although [the author] enumerates them, he does not worship them". The Dagda's name is explained as meaning "the good god"; Brigit is called "a goddess worshipped by poets"; while Goibniu, Credne and Luchta are referred to as *Trí Dé Dána* ("three gods of craftsmanship"), Characters such as Lugh, the Morrígan, Aengus and Manannán mac Lir appear in tales set centuries apart, showing all the signs of immortality. They also have parallels in the pantheons of other Celtic peoples: for example Nuada is cognate with the British god Nodens; Lugh is cognate with the pan-Celtic god Lugus; Brigit with Brigantia; Tuirenn with Taranis; Ogma with Ogmios; and the Badb with Catubodua.

The Tuath Dé eventually became the Aos Sí or "fairies" of later folklore. The Old Irish word *tuath* (plural *tuatha*) means "people, tribe, nation"; *dé* is the genitive case of *día* and, depending on context, can mean "god, gods, goddess" or more broadly "supernatural being, object of worship". In the earliest writings, the mythical race are referred to as the **Tuath Dé** (plural **Tuatha Dé**). However, Irish monks also began using the term *Tuath Dé* to refer to the Israelites, with the meaning "People of God". Apparently to avoid confusion with the Israelites, writers began to refer to the mythical race as the **Tuath Dé Danann** (plural **Tuatha Dé Danann**). The Old Irish pronunciation is [t̪ˠuaθa d̪eː d̪anaŋ] and the Modern Irish pronunciation is [t̪ˠuə(hi) d̪eː d̪ˠaŋˠˠəŋˠˠ] in the West and North, and [t̪ˠuəhə d̪eː d̪ˠaŋˠˠəŋˠˠ] in the South. A rough English approximation is *tooa(hə) day danan* or *tooa(hə) jay danan*. *Danann* is generally believed to be the genitive of a female name, for which the nominative case is not attested. It has been reconstructed as *Danu*, of which *Anu* (genitive *Anann*) may be an alternative form. *Anu* is called "mother of the Irish gods" by Cormac mac Cuilennáin. This may be linked to the Welsh mythical figure Dôn. Hindu mythology also has a goddess called Danu, who may be an Indo-European parallel. However, this reconstruction is not universally accepted. It has also been suggested that *Danann* is a conflation of *dán* ("skill, craft") and the goddess name *Anann*. The name is also found as *Donann* and *Domnann*, which may point to the origin being proto-Celtic *\*don*, meaning "earth" (compare the Old Irish word for earth, *doman*). There may be a link with the mythical Fir Domnann and the British Dumnonii.

**Jacobite traditional, performed by Anne Buckley as Erin the Goddess,  
Lord of the Dance live at The Point Theatre in Dublin on July 2, 1996:**

I would I were on yonder hill  
It's there I'd sit and cry my fill  
And every tear would turn a mill  
Is go dté tú mo mhúirnín slán  
[And may you go safely, my darling]

Siúl siúl siúl a rún  
[Go, go, go, my love / treasure]  
Siúl go socair 'is siúl go ciúin  
[Go quietly and go peacefully]  
Siúl go doras agus éalaigh liom  
[Go to the door and fly with me]  
Is go dté tú mo mhúirnín slán  
[And may you go safely, my darling]

I'll sell my rock, I'll sell my reel  
I'll sell my only spinning wheel  
For to buy my love a coat of steel  
Is go dté tú mo mhúirnín slán

I'll dye my petticoats, I'll dye them red  
And 'round the world I'll beg for bread  
Until my parents would wish me dead  
Is go dté tú mo mhúirnín slán

And now my love has gone to France  
To try his fortune to advance  
If he ne'er came back, there'll be but a chance  
Is go dté tú mo mhúirnín slán

**Background and interpretation:**

The history of the song is unclear. It has been suggested that the song refers to the "Wild Geese" of the Glorious Revolution. If it does, however, the original version has probably been lost. It is not uncommon that Irish songs were translated into English, with their chorus surviving in Irish, or being transformed into nonsense words, but in most of these cases, some of the Irish version still survives.

"Siúil a Rún" is one of the most widely sung songs in the Irish repertoire. Well-known performances are by Clannad from their album *Dúlaman* and Mary Black on different occasions, e.g. on the BBC's "The Highland Sessions" or with Altan on "Altan Beo – 21 Bliain ag Ceol".