

## Water and its (Dis)Contents

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### 1. *The watery hazes*



1 - Achill

It's a foggy morning in Ireland as I begin this essay. The newspapers report weather warnings from the Meteorological Service as though fog were not an essential ingredient of winter here, not to mention part of our mythology and, some say, our personalities. The rose bushes outside my window, the bony birch and the watery hazel, the leaves on the lawn, the naked beeches are all shades of old gold. The ground is damp and soft underfoot because we have just come out of a prolonged period of gales and heavy rain. Everything outside my front door feels slightly damp. Even the air is, as we say, 'close'. It is a soft morning in that age old Irish euphemism.

The newspapers also report, a little breathlessly, the threat to our peace, the possibility of democracy in peril in this little republic, of revolution even. One TD for the right-wing Fine Gael Party<sup>1</sup>, has declared that the country is

<sup>\*</sup> I wish to express deep gratitude and appreciation to my friend Conci Mazzullo, whose work (from her photo-sequence "The Warp and Weft of Water") illustrates this article. References to all quoted authors and texts are listed at the end of the essay.

<sup>1</sup> As I write, the Irish government is composed of two parties: Fine Gael (FG), a kind of *Democrazia Cristiana* lite, though with historical links to fascism; and the Irish Labour Party (ILP).

facing an “ISIS situation” – not from Islamic State extremists but from the rival left-wing Sinn Féin party and the socialist TD Paul Murphy. The citizenry has lost faith in the government, it is said, and the decision to set up a company to charge for water is the tipping point. The government and the commentariat are shocked that such a minor variation in the neoliberal governance to which we have become accustomed should produce so powerful a derangement in governmentality. People, they say, are increasingly likely to take action, less amenable to logical argument, less reasonable. People are, in fact, angry and all the commentators agree that the government failed to explain to people that they must do as they are told. Consequently, should democracy collapse in Ireland, the politicians will be to blame for not using the right kind of public relations mechanism. The people, it seems is like a child and cannot be expected to understand these matters, while the government is a teacher who must take the trouble to lead it out of ignorance. That the media are, in the main, the loudspeakers of the government, faithfully reproducing government press-releases, sound-bites and general propaganda is not in question and plays no part in the putative collapse of what passes for democracy nowadays.

But why water?

Why not various other more brutal governmental strategies for finding the money to pay the unconscionable debts of failed banks and failed bankers? Why not emigration, particularly the haemorrhage of young people, always a sound bet where angst and the Irish psyche are concerned, and a painful subject for many, including the present writer. Why not cuts to health, education, care of the elderly, disability services, wages? Why not mass unemployment, still stubbornly high at 12% and only that low because the annual exodus of 80,000 people (against a total population of 4.6 million) relieves the pressure a little? Why not the increasing precarity of all work? Why not the disappearance of public ownership in a vast and shameful sell-off of everything from the telecommunications system to the national airline and the increasing reliance on private companies to provide public healthcare? Why not the stultifying hegemony of bourgeois prejudice and self-justification that passes for our independent media? Why water?

It is a truism that Irish literature, and by extension the Irish psyche, is permeated by a sense of place, but I would suggest that it is permeated to a far deeper level by water, although H<sub>2</sub>O, being a relatively simple and almost ubiquitous element, is far less productive of scholarly exegesis, than, say, Joyce’s Dublin. So let me take you on a short voyage over the fast-running streams of the Irish psyche. We will travel light and, as Shakespeare says, “with windlasses and assays of bias, by indirections find directions out”. We will discover water in all its natural forms.

When Irish people meet, the first and safest topic of conversation, one around which a near universal consensus exists, is the weather: if literature bears any relationship to life as it is lived on this planet, Irish literature should

mention water in all its forms, from rivers and seas to the mist that occludes all distance and gives rise to our famous “soft day”.

## 2. *The Mist Becoming Rain*

If the ancient *Lebor Gabála Éirenn* (The Book of Invasions of Ireland), which dates to at least the 11<sup>th</sup> century, is to be believed (and why not?) the Tuatha Dé Danaan or People of the Goddess Danu attempted to defeat a group of invading Milesians by raising a storm to drive their ships away. Storms in Ireland always involve rain of course. Unfortunately for the Tuatha Dé Danaan, the enemy poet Amergin spoke a verse that calmed the sea and the Milesians landed anyway and went on to defeat the locals. The Tuatha Dé Danaan went underground and became the *Sí* or fairies who at least until the advent of electric light still troubled country people, souring milk out of spite and playing unfortunate tricks on those unlearned enough to cross them. Along the way, we poets lost our military usefulness as we lost our power to affect the weather and nowadays we have to content ourselves with the pathetic fallacy which is poor compensation indeed, and is almost never called for by the armed forces.

Water figures in other mythologies too. In one of the great myths of the Fiannaíocht Cycle (fragments are extant from the 7<sup>th</sup> century), for example, Fionn Mac Cumhaill had the power of healing wounds by offering water from his cupped hands. When his enemy Diarmaid was gored in a boar-hunt he repeatedly brought water to him only to spill it at the last minute. He relented in the end, but it was too late. Fionn himself received his wisdom and magical powers by catching a special salmon, usually called the Salmon of Knowledge, on behalf of his druid master, and accidentally tasting it. He caught the salmon in the River Boyne, a river of immense significance in Irish mythology and history.

We should not be surprised at this watery myth-making. The country is, after all, as *The Comic History of Ireland* (1955) has it, an island surrounded by water. It is the first landmass that greets the great Atlantic frontal systems that sweep down from Greenland and the Arctic and its western mountains form the barrier upon which much of the moisture must condense. Unsurprisingly, therefore, water plays its part, not only in the early myths, but in Irish poetry and prose from the earliest times to the present, though the part it plays varies from the magical to the brutally physical, from a cause of misery to an object of sensual admiration. In Frank O'Connor's beautiful translations of Irish poetry, *Kings, Lords And Commons*, we encounter it on every second or third page. Here an 8<sup>th</sup> century poet laments a “Storm At Sea”:

Tempest on the plain of Lir  
Bursts its barriers far and near,

And upon the rising tide  
 Wind and noisy winter ride –  
 Winter throws a shining spear.

An anonymous monk or scribe notes that “Heavy waters in confusion / Beat the wide world’s strand” (“Winter”); another that “The curlew cannot sleep at all / His voice is shrill above the deep / Reverberations of the storm; / Between the streams he will not sleep” (“Grania”) and so on through the dark ages, which, we are told, were not so dark in Ireland, and into the age of the Normans who built their castles on riverbanks and overlooking harbours. Rivers, in particular are important to the Normans for commerce and for transport, but also for pleasure. In “The Land of Cockayne”, a mediaeval poem in Hiberno-English dialect, nuns take to a boat on a hot day and a monk, seeing them pass:

Hi makith ham nakid forto plai,  
 And lepith dune in-to the brimme  
 And doth ham sleilich forto swimme.

Edmund Spenser in his *A View Of The Present State of Ireland* (1633) is very prolix on the matter of waters, rivers and harbours:

Suer it is yett a most bewtifull and sweete Country as any is under heaven, seamed thoroughout with many godlie rivers, replenished with all sortes of fishe most abundantlie; sprinkled with verie many sweete Ilandes and goodlie lakes, like litle inland seas, that will carrie even shippes uppon their waters...

Later, after the defeat of the Gaelic way of life, which was also in many ways the defeat of the Hiberno-Norman way of life since they were according to some historians *Hiberniores Hibernis ipsis*, and the decay of the Bardic system, we have the dispossessed poets of the seventeenth century lamenting their condition by reference to water again:

I have thought long this wild wet night that brought no rest  
 Though I have no gold to watch, or horned kine, or sheep  
 A storm that made the wave cry out has stirred my breast... (“A Sleepless Night”)

This is the Kerry poet Aogán Ó Rathaille and the storm here stands for the great tempest of history that swept away his hereditary patrons, the chieftains of Munster: “The heart within my breast tonight is wild with grief / Because, of all the haughty men who ruled this place, / ... None lives”. In O’Connor’s translation of Brian Merriman’s mock heroic poem *Cúirt An Mhean Oíche*, a strangely modern mock-trial, in which a man is tried as a representative of all men for failing to please the sexual desires of Irish women represented by a series of female witnesses, we hear that “There are men working in rain and sleet / Out of their

minds with the troubles they meet ...” Ó Rathaille and Merriman could be said to represent the last fling of the great Gaelic traditions of poetry, even though both were influenced by themes and forms from elsewhere, Merriman in particular, it has been argued, by European writing (candidates vary from Voltaire and Rousseau to the *Roman de la Rose* and the *Chanson de la Malmariée*). However, Merriman composed (it was preserved orally) his one and only surviving poem in 1781 and Thomas Moore had been born two years earlier and between the two the gulf is so great as to be almost an ocean. Literature in Ireland, in the main, would be in English from Moore until the late nineteenth century revival of the language, and that is not to undervalue the beauty of the folksong tradition in Irish.

Nevertheless, the English speaking poets were watery too. Moore cautioned “Silent, O Moyle be the roar of thy waters” and celebrated the Vale of Avoca with the words: “There is not in this wide world a valley so sweet / As that vale in whose bosom the bright waters meet”. Later, James Clarence Mangan, that *poète maudit par excellence* – alcoholic, opium addict, paranoid and possibly bipolar, translator, forger, poet – who died at 46 of cholera, utters the following invocation to his muse:

ROLL forth, my song, like the rushing river,  
That sweeps along to the mighty sea;  
God will inspire me while I deliver  
My soul of thee! (“The Nameless One”)

But now the English Romantics have brought us water as a convenient metaphor for revolution, among other things, and Irish writers are not immune to fashion. The nationalist poet of the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century known as Speranza (Lady Jane Francesca Wilde, Oscar’s mother) foresaw the coming of revolutionary “hosts of men / Strong in their manhood... Swift as rushing torrents down a mountain glen” (“The Dawn”). The poem is remarkable for the quantity of weather and water tropes: lowering clouds; “the glorious Dawn upstreaming”; “purple mists”; ordinary mists; tempests; an ocean; streams of various kinds, including that mentioned above of men; crimson clouds; a golden shower; a golden dawn and quite a lot of wind of various strengths – a day’s weather for a typical Irish day, in other words.

By the time we come to the poets of the Celtic Twilight, water has been tamed and infused with the kind of ineffable sadness that only a group of writers with occasional recourse to the French and Italian Rivas could feel. The triumph of the “soft day” perhaps. Yeats, for example, writes of an old pensioner who sheltered “from the rain / Under a broken tree” (“The Lamentation of The Old Pensioner”); “The dews drop slowly and dreams gather” (“The Valley of The Black Pig”); and “All that’s beautiful drifts away / Like the waters” (“The Old Men Admiring Themselves In The Water”). Later he would find the storm’s voice fiercer, and the stone in the stream a trouble,

a kind of fanaticism, and he would call on “A blast of wind, O a marching wind” (“Three Marching Songs”) to blow for the brief and risible excrecence of fascism in Ireland.

Joyce was not above a nice bit of watery twilight himself. In *Chamber Music* the late romantic Joyce hears “the noise of waters / Making moan” all day and “the winds cry to the waters’ / Monotone”. The most famous image in *Dubliners* is of water, albeit mostly in crystalline form:

Yes, the newspapers were right: snow was general all over Ireland. It was falling on every part of the dark central plain, on the treeless hills, falling softly upon the Bog of Allen and, farther westward, softly falling into the dark mutinous Shannon waves. It was falling, too, upon every part of the lonely churchyard on the hill where Michael Furey lay buried. (“The Dead”)

But in *Ulysses*, Buck Mulligan regards water with contempt compared to tea: “When I makes tea I makes tea, as old mother Grogan said. And when I makes water I makes water”. To ‘make water’, of course, also means ‘to urinate’. And for Stephen Dedalus the sea is unromantically “snotgreen, bluesilver, rust”. Yet he stands on “the top of the Howth tram alone crying to the rain: Naked women! naked women!”. And water retains its erotic charge for Molly Bloom, daydreaming of men and masturbating in her dark bed after her beauty sleep, thinking “that rain was lovely”.



2 - Horizon

In the next generation, Austin Clarke was reminded of a woman, though not Molly Bloom, when “the watery hazes of the hazel / Brought her into my mind” (“The Lost Heifer”) but we have the author’s own word for it that the woman in question was the traditional feminine personification of Ire-

land and therefore still political. In that regard, following the trail from A to B and from B to C we can conclude that, for Clarke, water = Ireland. It is often hard to demur, especially in November. “The Lost Heifer” is, in fact, more about water than it is about either women or Ireland, and indeed Seán Lucy calls it a “strange little weather vision”:

When the black herds of the rain were grazing,  
 In the gap of the pure cold wind  
 And the watery hazes of the hazel  
 Brought her into my mind,  
 I thought of the last honey by the water  
 That no hive can find.

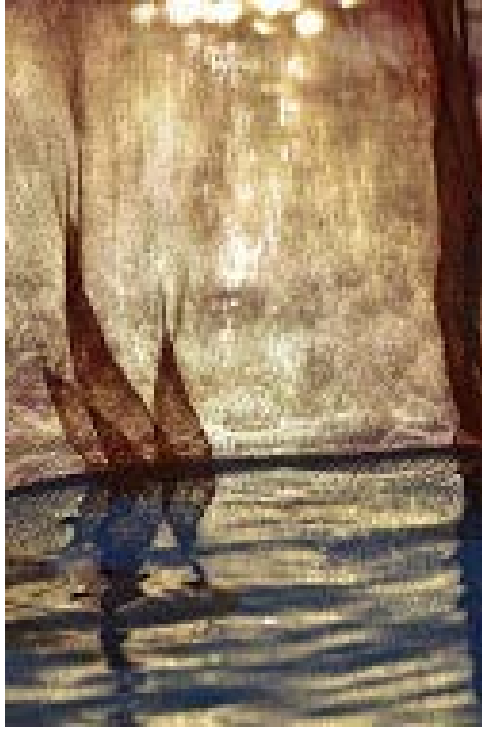
Brightness was drenching through the branches  
 When she wandered again,  
 Turning silver out of dark grasses  
 Where the skylark had lain,  
 And her voice coming softly over the meadow  
 Was the mist becoming rain.

Elizabeth Bowen’s Irish novels and stories hold much water and weather. In *The Heat of The Day*, for example, “[t]he river traced the boundary of the lands: at the Mount Morris side, it has a margin of water-meadow into which the demesne woods, dark at their base with laurels, ran down in a series of promontories”.

Things change, of course, and in Beckett’s *Endgame* it pointedly hasn’t rained.

But water makes a comeback among contemporary writers. The lakes of Lovely Leitrim are central to the late John McGahern’s beautiful melancholy last novel *That They May Face The Rising Sun*: “Easter morning came clear. There was no wind on the lake. There was also a great stillness. When the bells rang out for Mass, the strokes trembling on the water, they had the entire Easter world to themselves”. Colm Tóibín’s *The Blackwater Lightship* is clearly set by water, as is John Banville’s *The Sea*, in which the sea itself is an extended metaphor, if not a character in its own right whose reaction to Morden, the protagonist, is a great swell like “another of the great world’s shrugs of indifference”. John Montague, who was Beckett’s friend, has “swirls of black rain and fog” (“A Lost Tradition”) to dog the historical steps of O’Neill and O’Donnell in their great march south to Kinsale and destruction. And in Derek Mahon’s “Achill” “A rain-shower darkens the schist for a minute or so / Then it drifts away and the sloe-black patches disperse”. We might say that Montague and Mahon reinstate the punitive and immiserating effect of water lost at Twilight. We are back to the hard rain of O Rathaille. Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill’s “Ebbtide” expresses the reversion: “I said, / the tide

will have to turn / and cover this waste of sand / pour over limpets on rocks / over wrack drying waterless / (ribbons like withered vellum)". And her prophetic mermaid speaks to us from "a bottomless well".



3 - Sails

We know from the Meteorological Service, that on the west coast of Ireland, where Achill Island lies, it rains on 225 days a year on average, whereas the east and south coasts get a mere 150. Appropriately, the dividing line is traced by Ireland's longest river which effectively divides the island in two unequal parts. To be precise, the island is divided by a waterway that starts at the Atlantic, at the Shannon estuary and goes northwards to connect with the River Erne via the Lough Allen Canal and Erne Waterway and emerge on the northwest coast at the long sandy estuary of Ballyshannon. As it happens, it also divides the part of the country that gets 225 days of rain a year (the province of Connacht for the most part) from the rest of us. The Shannon, understandably, figures strongly in mythology and also in literature. In *Cúirt An Mbean Oíche* (The Midnight Court), for example, the poet has one of the characters take the Shannon water as a symbol of the extent of another character's jealousy:



Do you think you mad bitch you might be able  
To drink the Shannon dry or to drain it?<sup>2</sup>

And draining the Shannon is an old saying for a useless task similar to the expression pissing against the wind. Even though the Shannon is Ireland's longest river I don't know of any traditional song in which it is a protagonist unless we count the execrable Irish-American nonsense of James I. Russell's "Where The Shannon River Flows" ("where the fairies and the blarney will never never die"), made famous by John McCormack and Bing Crosby and consequently part at least of the parlour-song tradition. On the other hand, its northern sister the Erne has several beautiful songs including "Buachaill Ón Éirne" ("The Boy from the Erne"), and it figures in the haunting and fragmentary "An Mhaighdean Mhara" ("The Mermaid") which has in its refrain the line "Siúd chugaibh Mary Chinidh 's í 'ndiaidh an Éirne 'shnámh" ("Here comes Mary Chinidh after swimming across the Erne"). Corkery argued, in "The Hidden Ireland", that the Irish poetic tradition turned to song with the suppression of the bardic schools, and whether or not that argument is valid, there is a great reservoir of poetry in the sung tradition.

Other rivers have their songs. The River Lee, which flows through Cork has several, as has the Liffey. And Dublin is blest with one in which its Royal Canal figures prominently – the haunting prison song "The Old Triangle" from Brendan Behan's play *The Quare Fellow* (although it must be said that Behan himself never claimed authorship of the song):

A hungry feeling  
Came o'er me stealing  
And the mice were squealing  
In my prison cell  
And that auld triangle went jingle-jangle  
All along the banks of the Royal Canal.

The poet Patrick Kavanagh is commemorated by a statue of himself seated on a bench beside Dublin's other canal. It was his wish – "O commemorate me where there is water, / Canal water preferably, so stilly / Greeny at the heart of summer" ("Lines Written on A Seat On The Grand Canal, Dublin"). The name Dublin derives from the Irish *dubh linn* and means "black pool" and the Irish word for Cork, the city where I live, is Corcaigh, which means 'of the marsh'. It is not just the writers who are haunted and tormented by water, of course, but the variety and depth of water in literature reflects the reality of people's lives. Nevertheless, it is important not to become misty-

<sup>2</sup> The translation here is my own.

eyed about it. Wind, tide and wave, tempest and thunderstorm, river and lake and ocean – water is above all a force of nature to be lived with.



4 - Camden Town

### 3. *The Banks of My Own Lovely Lee*

The watery City of Cork is built on the estuarine landscape of the River Lee, the houses initially constructed on marshy islands before the wealthy merchants moved uphill to Montenotte and downriver to Tivoli (the aspirations of the merchant class tended towards The Grand Tour). Most of the city's streets were once rivers, covered at various times by the city corporation. Cork used to be called the Venice of The North, but Bologna is a better comparison – another city of covered waterways. Nowadays there remain two visible branches of the river that hold the old, low-lying historical centre, the 'flat of the city', in their watery embrace, but underneath everything is the susurrus of running water and rising tide. The city floods from the sea at certain times of the year, when the wind is south-easterly and there are spring tides. Gales push the flowing tide up-river and hold it in when the ebb starts and sometimes it is high tide for several days. Cork is the second largest natural harbour in the world – Sydney being the first – and there is a difference between low tide and high of 3-4 metres. A deep atmospheric depression can easily add another metre to that. Then shops and homes in the flat of the city put sandbags against their doors and lift anything that

might be damaged out of the way. The City Council and the Meteorological Service issue warnings. We often come in for the remnants of hurricanes which sweep off the east coast of America and cross the Atlantic. In 1986 the tail-end of Hurricane Charley created havoc. When the storm abated I drove down to see my parents in the little harbour village of Whitegate and found that the sea-wall had been laid flat along its entire length. My parent's house was a very old one and the floors were uneven and a lake of salt water had settled in the centre. I found them seated by the fire in their hats and coats and the water lapping at the legs of their chairs.

Only once in living memory did Cork City flood from the landward side. An unprecedented rainfall in the mountain catchment area of the River Lee led to dangerous pressure on the hydroelectric dam at Iniscarra, which is also Cork City's main reservoir. Eventually the power company, fearing for the structural integrity of the dam, opened the sluices and the result was a disastrous flood. Directly in the path of the water was the County Hall, Cork's first modernist structure, containing the County Library which stored its specialist book collections in the basement (below water level). Beyond that was the university's Glucksman Gallery, which stored the exhibitions it had taken down in the basement (below water level). A hotel was almost completely destroyed. It had an underground car-park (below water level) and on the night of the flood there was a display of high-cost motor cars which had to be evacuated in a hurry. Beyond that again was the still-inhabited flat of the city, The Marsh and the main shopping streets. Homes and businesses were flooded.

Is it surprising, in a country so beset by water and so obsessed by it, that often feels itself drowning in water while simultaneously being on a relatively fragile piece of land surrounded by it, that the decision to tax it or even privatise it would seem like a gross injustice, a sin against nature, the theft of a birthright?

#### 4. *The politics of water*

After the biggest anti-water charge protest to date (October 2014), for which turnout estimates vary from 50,000 to 150,000, the socialist journalist Eamonn McCann asked the simple questions: "Why Water? Why Now?" His conclusions were interesting. "The people", he suggested, "have been pushed too far". And although he conceded that the immediate *casus belli* was water, it was, he argued, more complex. There were the memories of other marches, other struggles, and the example of Northern Ireland's Civil Rights marches and a more recent mass non-payment movement which prevented the introduction of the same kind of charges there. And then there was water itself. "Water is elemental", McCann wrote. "Delivering water to homes is the most essential public service of all".



### 5 - Steps

The idea of having to pay for a substance so natural that it falls from the sky and without which we'd die sparks a particular anger. The people are being corralled into a captive market. Being told under threat of retaliation to pay what could soon develop into a private operation for this privilege incites outrage.

The exact intensity of this outrage is a constant preoccupation of the media: how big are the marches? to what extent are they manipulated by "sinister fringe elements"? to what extent are ordinary people disaffected with politics as practised until now? who leads the marches? how 'political' are they? Journalists constantly seek out The Good Protestor, a saintly personage who can tell them that she has never protested before, that she is not a member of any political party (especially leftwing parties) and is, in essence, not political. The Good Protestors tell the journalists that they have been pushed too far; that their wages have been cut; that their standard of living has fallen; that their children have emigrated because they couldn't find work; that their communities are suffering; that they resent shouldering the cost of

paying international bondholders; that the elites prosper at the expense of the ordinary person. What they say, in other words, is highly political, but because none of them talks about crises of overproduction and immiseration or the falling rate of profit they can be safely regarded as honest and good citizens (non-ideological) and therefore some kind of measure of the extent to which “the water-charge crisis” has extended into the voting population. But it’s not hard to detect the political content and only our deliberately obtuse commentariat is capable of ignoring it. For behind the general and particular hardships and angers of the protestors is one widely-held if not universally accepted principle: they believe in a state which is *for* its citizens in a way that the neoliberal state can never be. This is a profound divergence from everything that our recent politics has tried to achieve by way of ‘common sense’. In this hegemonic ‘common sense’ formulation, citizens are to be customers of the state which sells us various services that cannot be monetised by corporations; to be a citizen is merely to be a customer with a loyalty card. The protestors reject this conception of their place in the world. For them the state is a social entity established and maintained on behalf of its people, not the other way round. It may seem like a trivial distinction, but it is a tenacious ideology, and profoundly opposite to the state as defined by Friedman, or Thatcher and Reagan, whose belief in the ‘small state’ was espoused in Ireland by successive parties especially the late and unlamented Progressive Democrats.

Political it may be, this belief in the state *for* the people, but the media presents the protestors responses to questions, their declared beliefs about politics, as something like the plaintive cry of a seabird, melancholy but meaningless by comparison with the great international discourses of Crisis, Recession, Sovereign Debt, Default, The IMF, The ECB and Angela Merkel. And this too angers the marchers. They feel that the media is not *for* them either. They sense that hegemony that Gramsci described so well, the rule of the elite through the dominant common sense, aided by the subaltern intellectuals of economics, politics and the media.

Thus, while the subject of water *qua* water resonates strongly with the protestors it is also no more than the symbol of other disaffections, discontentments and dissonances. And behind everything is a general feeling that the state has got away from us over many years, that we don’t really have a democracy anymore, if we had one, that the wealthy elites and the corporations have quietly taken control of something we thought belonged to us, that we’re living in something close to an oligopoly in which what passes for politics plays a merely instrumental role, or is a kind of acting out of some pathological self-obsession. It is entirely appropriate that water should be the metaphor, or perhaps more correctly, the synecdoche of this long-standing discontent. For water is a shape-shifter, ever and life affirming, in logical terms both an accident and an essence: in a land of water only a fool would put a price on it.

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The essay includes quotations from: <<http://www.rabble.ie/2014/11/20/ireland-facing-isis-situation-over-water-charge-protests>> (05/2015); Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (I, 1, 65-66); E.J. Delaney, J.M. Feehan, *The Comic History of Ireland*, Cork, Mercier, 1955; *Lebor Gabála Éirenn*, original text ed. and trans. by Robert Alexander Stewart Macalister, London, Irish Text Society, 1938-1956, 5 vols; *Kings, Lords, & Commons: an Anthology from the Irish* [1959], trans. by Frank O'Connor, Dublin, Gill and Macmillan, 1970; *The Kildare Poems*, ed. by A.M. Lucas, Dublin, The Columba Press, 1995; Edmund Spenser, *A View of the Present State of Ireland* [1633], Hoboken, Wiley-Blackwell, 1997; Thomas Moore, *Moore's Irish Melodies*, London, Longman's Green, 1866; *The Collected Works of James Clarence Mangan. Vol. 4: Poems 1848-1912*, Dublin, Irish Academic Press, 1999; Lady Francesca Wilde, *Poems by Speranza (Lady Wilde)*, Glasgow, Cameron and Ferguson, 1871; W.B. Yeats, *The Collected Poems*, 2nd rev. ed. by R.J. Finneran, New York, Scribner, 1996; James Joyce, *Collected Works*, Minerva, Classics Kindle edition, 2013; James Joyce, *Poems and Exile*, London, Penguin, 1992; Arthur Clarke, *Collected Poems*, ed. by R. Dardis Clarke, Manchester, Carcanet, 2008; Elizabeth Bowen, *The Heat of the Day* [1948], Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1962; Samuel Beckett, *Endgame* [1957], London, Faber, 2011; John McGahern, *That They May Face the Rising Sun*, London, Faber, 2001; Colm Tóibín, *The Blackwater Lightship*, London, Picador, 1999; John Banville, *The Sea*, London, Picador, 2005; John Montague, *The Rough Field*, Loughcrew, Gallery Press, 1972; Derek Mahon, *Selected Poems*, Loughcrew, Gallery Press, 1991; NualeaNi Dhomhnaill, *Selected Poems/Rogha Danta*, trans. by Michael Hartnett, Dublin, Raven Arts Press, 1986; Brian Merriman, *Cúirt An Mhean Oíche*, Liam P. Ó Murchú, Baile Átha Cliath, An Clóchomhar Tta, 1982; Brian Merriman, *The Midnight Court*, trans. by Frank O'Connor, Dublin, O'Brien Press 1989; Brendan Behan, *The Quare Fellow* (1954), New York, Grove Press, 1956; Patrick Kavanagh, *Collected Poems*, London, Penguin, 2005; Daniel Corkery, *The Hidden Ireland: A Study of Gaelic Munster in the Eighteenth Century* [1924], Dublin, Gill & MacMillan, 1983; Seán Lucy, "The Poetry of Austin Clarke", *The Canadian Journal of Irish Studies* 9, 1, Jun., 1983, pp. 5-21; Eamonn MacCann, "Why water, why now? Ireland takes to the streets", *The Irish Times*, 1 Nov 2014.