

Still Singing



I can still hear her singing, my Grandmother baking bread, her wedding band nestled on the shelf above the table; her hair as white as the floured hands coaxing and kneading the dough. I watched in wonder through the eyes of a child and the first of the sweet warm bread was always mine.

All the old *come-all-ye songs*, majors and minors and lilting airs; The risings and the fallings and the troubles we'd seen, fragments of laments, old passions spent and true loves lost. The ancient magic and mystery of the tempestuous Gaels meandered through my mind, like motes in a sunbeam.

She was the tender and the carer, the moon and stars; the candle in the night and the keeper of our hearts. Her offspring blossomed as she wilted; while unsung and unheralded she nurtured all the flowers in her garden. In the end, she rested her weary head and slept.

The house filled with ghosts, silent and black as the soot in the dead hearth save for a whispered murmur or muted sob. I touched her still hand and kissed her cheek, bathing her in warm tears. What shadowland was this, a place bereft of warmth and recognition; a lonely and loveless void, all succour and song departed.

We laid her to her rest in the cemetery on the hill, beside her long-dead children, in a nameless grave shrouded in grey drizzle. A mute stone cross at her head, her epitaph etched in tears at her feet. We went our separate ways then, our diaspora begun.

Now, in the evening of my years, I see her in the smiles of my grandchildren and with the aroma of newly baked bread she returns to me...and I can still hear her singing.

*Dedicated to the memory of my Grandmother.
Still alive in my heart.*

Bernard J Calgie