

Sunset to Sunrise
For Mary Farrell
1936 - 2019

Like the snail-slow pour of that perfect pint,
The session is inclined to take its time.
A thrilling clear-pitched note rolls off a single fiddle,
Is prelude to the late and longed for start.
Perhaps some jigs to kick us off - 'Tom Billy's',
With 'The Mooncoin' and some 'Dusty Windowsills'.

The rhythms permeate the bar in pulsing waves
As spreading ripples circle on the surface of a lake.
And soon the thrum within the walls rocks loud
And we can pan around to see the individuality.
Fiddle arms like pistons bowing freely up and down,
Flutes are loudly lipped with measured breaths.

A concertina exercises, fingers dancing madly,
While accordion, telescopic, squeezes out the tune,
A wizard on guitar is strumming expertly with gusto
As distinctive banjo interlopes with 'venetian effect',
The harp iconic ripples its mellifluous melody
With ornamental flourish and crescendo.

The bodhran nestles on a knee like a cherished child,
The taut skin hammered tenderly in unifying time,
A sonic imitation of soft and steady rolling thunder.
The latter-day bazouki is played happily at home.
And itchy feet upon the floor tap loudly all the while
As faces in the crowd become one all-embracing smile.

At length a hush descends and is slowly passed around
To lock us in and grip us in a shared anticipation.
The uilleann pipes are cradled on some master's expert lap.
The elbowed bellows fill the bag, a bee-swarm of a hum,
A low lament swells gently up for all our ears to capture,
A sound unique, a tune that's meant to move and to enrapture.

The cherished notes are blown aloft driven on a drone
To bewitch and tug the strings of every heart.
The slow air dies to silence and a pause,
Broken by a burst of clamorous applause.
The spell is broken, gratitude for what was just sublime
Music that enthrals and seems it would bewilder time.

Punctuated frequently to slake an aching thirst,
We're served a blend of hornpipes jigs and reels,
Polkas, slide and slip jigs, set after gifted set.
Thus, a summer session runs its course,
We drink and wonder where the time has gone.
From sundown to the first red rays of dawn.

