

Oi wuz waitin' for me Nora, but its meself that heard her footsteps, lighter than the dew fallin' on the blossoms; an' its mavoureen that made a swate pictur, wid the sunlight glintin' her little red cloak' all flyin' behind her, in her hurry to spake wid me; her purty, white ankles like snowflakes dancin' over the laves, her blue eyes shinin' like twin stars under her brown curls, an' her cheeks like two red roses a growin' on wan stalk."

"An' its Mike, acushla, that has the two strong arrums,' said me colleen, the red roses a growin' all over the gardin' av her face, as Oi carried her across the stepping stones av the river, so the wather shouldn't be a wettin' her two purty feet."

"An' aftherwards how we kissed wan another, wid no eyes to witness the love-light av our sows, but the angels, who were afther lookin' down from the blue sky."

"Och, but its the sad picture that's comin' now, Miss, whin me pore Nora (God luv her an' rest her swate sowl) had gone to jine them self-same angels. An' she lay there, wid the tall candles a burnin' near her, so still an' cold, wid the purty white petticoat on that she wuz afther warin' the day whin Father McGrath spake the howly worruds that made us wan. Shure we wuz wan, an' she wuz the wan av the two av us, for the Ballycuilish folk wuz always sayin' 'That divil av a Mike, he doesn't count at all at all.'"

"An' there me darlint wuz lyin', wid her two bright eyes closed, her long dark hair a curlin' on her forehead as it wuz afther doin' in her loife toime, an' twin lilies a growin' where the roses used to bloom on her cheeks."

"The neighbors wur cryin' fit to brake their hearts, an' a sayin' Mike wuz the sowless spalpeen that he

didn't be afther wapin' wid the mourners."

"Shure its meself that wuz the biggest mourner, only they couldn't see the tayers that were droppin' from me heart instid av me two eyes."

"But me darlint understood, for she saw wid the eyes av the angels, an she knew all the sorrow av me sowl, whin Oi placed the grane shamrocks on her dead breast."

"The bhoys took to whisperin' among themselves that all the deviltry wuz gone out o' Mike. Shure the heart av me heart an' the loife av me loife wint away whin the howly saints took me swate gurl."

"The sight av the white shamrock buds, the purple mists across the river, the sun, whin it wuz sinkin' behind the Ballycuilish hill, all samed to spake to me sowl av Nora, an' it well nigh drove the rason from me brain, so wan day me mind wuz made up to lave the old sod an' jine me brother in Canada."

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"Is they shamrocks, ye're afther askin, Miss?"

"Yis, they'se shamrocks an' all dried up and faded; but its meself that's carried them betwane the laves o' me dead gurl's prayer-book for nigh on forty years. Oi gathered them the night before laving the old land, while me colleen's eyes were lookin' down on me from Hivin'."

"An' its these same withered shamrocks an' the blessed stars abuv that have helped me all these long years in Canada, for whin Oi'm afther foindin' it difficult to say no to the dhrink, or wan or another av the divil's timptashuns, Oi jist touch this little book in me pocket, or else Oi look up to the eyes av me Nora, a shinin' down from the sky o' nights, an' its always wan or both av 'em that are afther sayin' 'Be thrue, Mike, be thrue!'"