

FOR IRELAND I'D NOT TELL HER NAME

Traditional Irish Aire

This is an arrangement of the traditional Irish aire, *For Ireland I'd Not Tell Her Name*. It is thought to be based on a poem written by a native of County Kerry around 1810 and first published in 1847. The poem is about a young man's secret love for his brother's wife. Too poor to support her, and too shy to propose, he had gone abroad to seek his fortune. But when he returned to claim his love, he found her married to his brother. He composed a song for her, but for obvious reasons, refused to reveal her name. Written in Old Gaelic, these are the translated words of the original song:

Last eve as I wandered quite near
To the borders of my little farm,
A beautiful maiden appeared
Whose loveliness caused my heart's harm.
By her daring and love smitten smile
And the words from her sweet lips that came,
To meet her I raced the field o'er
But for Ireland I'd not tell her name.

Over the years, the song also morphed itself into a thinly veiled commentary on the political situation between Ireland and England, where the country of Ireland is personified as a "damsel in distress", appearing in a vision to the poet/singer pleading for assistance. Using such a political allegory was common in the days when an open discussion of the English was unwise at best.

In music and friendship,

~ Tull

