

THE MULTILINGUAL MERMAID

Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill in Translation



CULTURAL PARTNER

Aistriú



Gallery Books

The Multilingual Mermaid:
Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill in Translation
is published in a limited
edition of 500 copies
on 30 November 2021.

The Gallery Press
Loughcrew
Oldcastle
County Meath
Ireland

www.gallerypress.com

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books@gallerypress.com*

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Translations by Paul Muldoon © 2007, 2021
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ISBN 978 1 91133 824 6

A CIP catalogue record for this book
is available from the British Library.

The Multilingual Mermaid receives financial assistance
from the Arts Council.



Contents

Introduction 9
Translation Editor's Note 11
Translator's Note 13

Poems by Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill
translated into English by Paul Muldoon

Cuimhne an Uisce 14
 A Recovered Memory of Water 15
An Mhúruch san Ospidéal 18
 The Mermaid in the Hospital 19
An Mhurúch agus Focail Áirithe 22
 The Mermaid and Certain Words 23
Leide Beag 26
 A Tiny Clue 27

Poems by Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill translated into

Arabic / العربية 28
Chinese Mandarin / 汉语 40
Czech / Čeština 48
Dutch / Nederlands 56
French / Français 59
Galician / Galego 68
Spanish / Español 77
German / Deutsch 84
Greek / Ελληνικά 92
Japanese / 日本語 101
Polish / Polski 111
Portuguese / Português 126

Acknowledgements 136
Biographical Notes 138

Leide Beag

Dá gcaithfeá faid do mharthana iomláin'
ag cúléisteacht leis an mhurúch
b'fhéidir go bhfaighfeá leide beag anseo is ansiúd
cár bh as dí. Thángas-sa aniar aduaidh
uirthi lá fómhair is a naíonán
á bréagadh faoina seál aici.

'Ní tú éan gorm na mbainirseach,
ní tú gearrcach glas na gcaobach,
ní tú coileán an mhadra uisce,
ní tú lao na maoile caoile,'

an suantraí a bhí á chanadh aici
ach do stop sí suas láithreach bonn
chomh luath is a thuig sí
duine eile a bheith ar an bport.

Tuigeadh dom gur ghlac sí náire
i dtaobh é bheith cloiste agam in aon chor.
Tuigeadh dom chomh maith go raibh blas an-láidir
den bhfarraige air mar shuantraí ar an gcéad scór.

A Tiny Clue

You could spend your entire life
eavesdropping on the mermaid
before you'd pick up the tiniest little clue
about where she was really from. One autumn day

I happened upon
her and her child
while she was comforting it under her shawl.

'You are not the blue-green pup of the seal.
You are not the grey chick of the greater black-backed gull.
You are not the kit of the otter. Nor are you
the calf of the slender hornless cow.'

This was the lullaby she was singing
but she stopped short
immediately she realized
someone else was in the neighbourhood.

I had the distinct sense she was embarrassed
I'd overheard her in the first place.
I also came away with the impression
the lullaby was, to put it mildly, redolent of the sea.

Leide Beag
A Tiny Clue

小小的提示

你可以用你的一生
偷听这个人鱼的故事
之后你会得到一个小小的提示
关于她真正的家乡。一个秋日
我碰见她和她的孩子
她正在披肩之下安抚孩子。

‘你不是蓝绿相间的海豹幼崽。
不是大黑背鸥的灰色雏鸟。
不是水獭的宝宝，
也不是那头瘦长无角牛的孩子。’

这是她唱的摇篮曲
但她突然停顿
猛然意识到
有人在附近。
我明显感到她有些尴尬
我一开始就在偷听她讲话。
我离开的时候有这样的印象
那只催眠曲，婉转地说，使人想起大海。

*Leide Beag
A Tiny Clue*

Un petit indice

Si tu passais toute ta vie
à écouter aux portes chez la sirène
il se pourrait que tu glanes ici ou là des petits indices
sur ses origines. Je l'ai prise au dépourvu
un jour d'automne en train de cajoler
son enfant sous son châle.

« Tu n'es ni le petit, bleu-vert, de la maman phoque,
ni l'oisillon gris de la goélande,
tu n'es ni le jeune de la loutre de mer,
ni le veau de la fine vache normande. »

Cette berceuse, elle la chantait
quand soudain elle s'est tue
dès qu'elle a senti
qu'il y avait quelqu'un.

J'ai compris qu'elle avait honte
que je l'aie entendue.
J'ai compris aussi que la chanson
sentait fort la mer de toute façon.