

Black 47

"Red Hugh"

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Another sleepless night
On a foreign shore
Candle flickers by my bed
Locks bolt my door

I drink too much wine
But it gives my brain relief
Stops the meanderings
That root me from my sleep

I stare out at the night
From a sweat-soaked bed
The Queen lays plots in London
But she won't have my head

The candle gutters
The smell sweeps me back
To the icy fields of Kinsale
The bodies burning black

Fire and lightning protect Tirconail
Fire and brimstone rain down on London
They'll long remember Red Hugh O'Donnell
I could not join that battle

I gave orders from my horse
Wick low snows had withered
The toes inside my boots
Still a fever of anxiety

Racks my bones
All my friends dead
On Kinsale's icy roads
Oh, were I back in Ulster

I'd dive in Swilly's foam
Her crystal waters
Would soothe my soul
Dispatches from O'Neill

He grows old and cautious
Our allies are deserting

My blade would rip their stomachs
If Philip won't help

I'll return alone
O'Neill longs for an armistice
What profit in a peace
With a queen who'll break her word

I swear to God
That bitch will taste my sword
I'll drag her red wig from her head
Pull out her poisoned tongue

I must get back to Ulster
The candle is dead
There's footsteps at my door
They halt

I'm tormented by that whore
Who waits at court in London
For word of my demise
Her agents hunt me everywhere

But I will not be taken
By any of her men
My head will not grace London's spike
I'll fight her to the end

Tonight I sup with James Blake
An honest man is he
He's promised me three ships of war
We'll sweep Lizzie from her throne

I will take my place
High King of the Irish
Defender of my faith
With O'Neill as my adviser

O'Byrne at my side
I'll rule with justice
But now the dawn is breaking
On this foreign shore

I will arise and say my prayers
Tomorrow I'll go home

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