

This copy is available at

<http://www.thecia.net/users/turlach>

GOD ' S GENTRY

BY

Donagh MacDonagh

Cast

Marks Mongan	A young and romantic tinker.
Nora Melody	A girl of eighteen.
John Melody	Her father, a hard-faced, hard-headed Mayo gombeenman or usurious trader.
Mary Melody	His wife, and excessively vague lady
Harry Ward	First tinker.
Petronious Ward	Second tinker.
Molly Ward	Third tinker.
Meg Ward	Fourth tinker.
Adolph Ward	Fifth tinker.
Sergeant Dethe Guard Moriarty Guard Bansha	Officers of the civic guard.
Mogue Ward	A tinker.
Betsy Connors	A fine strapping girl of about 19.
Balor of the Evil Eye	A mythological person
Tinkers, idlers, etc.	

Scene: The little Mayo village of Knockaderry

Time: The present

GOD'S GENTRY

Act I

Scene I

Outside the house of John Melody. It is shortly after midday on Saint John's Eve, a fine Summer day. The house is whitewashed with red painted windows and doors; there is a small shop window and above it a bedroom window can be seen. In the distance can be seen the pyramid of Croagh Patrick. Enter a band of tinkers who dance gaily, and then sing, to the tune of "The Rakes of Mallow":-

1st. Tinker: If all the tinkers now in town
Could pool their wealth and smelt it down
In whiskey every man would drown
From now to Easter Sunday.

Chorus: Laughing, cheering, dancing, drinking,
Breaking windows, cursing, winking
Always happy, never thinking
From now to Easter Sunday.

2nd. Tinker: If every tinker that you meet
On road or bohereen or in street
Could choose if he would drink or eat
He'd drink till Easter Sunday.

3rd. Tinker: If all the cans that he has sold
Were overflowing with bright gold
He'd buy no miserly leasehold -
He'd drink till Easter Sunday.

4th. Tinker: Had he the wealth that Damer had
He'd spend it like a decent lad
In making other tinkers glad
From this to Easter Sunday.

5th. Tinker: So if a tinker you should meet
Don't pass by looking at your feet,
Invite him in and stand a treat,
He'll stand on Easter Monday.

They all dance again and dance off the stage. Nora melody, a young girl of seventeen or eighteen comes to the door, and a young tinker, Marks Mongan, a lad of about twenty, goes towards her.

Marks: My mother is dying, my mother is dead.
Will you buy a good can, Miss; I'm ashamed for to beg.

Nora: And what would I do with a glittering can
Would rust in the night, will you sell me a pan?

Marks: I haven't a can and I haven't a pan;
Sure, to talk to yourself was the whole of my plan.

Nora: A dirty young tinker to talk to the daughter
Of respectable people would surely cause slaughter.

Marks: But it wasn't on talk I was really intent
For a kiss in the corner's my best argument.

Nora: I'll call a policeman, I'll call for the priest
To restrain such wild talk. Tomorrow's the feast
Of holy Saint John, and tonight as you know
The bonfires at corners will redden and glow;
At the thought of this holy and blessed event
On your prayers, not on kisses you should be intent.

Marks: Tonight's the night when bonfires glow
From end to end of sweet Mayo,
When lads heap turf at each crossroad
When girls come bent beneath a load
Of firing, when the heart is burning
And when the coldest heart is yearning
For something that the fires bring in.
On Saint John's Eve there is no sin.

Nora: I'm sure Saint John was a holy man,
Unlike the lads who mend a can.

Marks: Saint John was holy, but he's dead.
About a girl he lost his head.

Nora: Poor man, no doubt she tempted him
With painted mouth and lavish limb.

Marks: Saint John was a man with a mission
He lived in a very poor way
He ate locusts, I'm told, for his breakfast
And drank water, neat, for his tay.
He was preaching hellfire and damnation
And company keeping he banned
No dance license ever was granted
When Saint John was abroad on the land.
For dancing, he thought, was unholy,
A shocking occasion of sin
He advised the young men of the country
To avoid anything feminine.
Now, there was a young one called Salome
A devil to dance and to sing
And she took a great liking to Saint John
So, she went to her father, the king.
"If I dance, will you give me a present?"
Says she and the old lad agrees,
So she started to dance like an angel
And the king sitting back at his ease.
"Very nice," says your man when she's winded,
"Very nice, and now what will you have?"
"Oh Daddy dear, give me Saint John
That lovely young man, for me slave."
"Fair enough," says the king, "you can have him."
But Saint John, being a saint, says "No fear!"
So Salome was mad and her father
Says "Right, you can cut off his ear."

"No, no," says Salome "his head please"
So she danced with his head round the court
And bonfires on John's Eve remind us
That dancing is dangerous sport.

Nora: And we are warned by each turf fire
Against the glow of lewd desire.

Marks: Tonight's the night when Summer's in
Each bulb, each bud, each heart, each limb,
When messages from stars and moon
Draw butterflies from ribbed cocoon,
When birds sing love songs and the earth
Goes singing at the year's new birth.
Come with me where the fires are bright
And learn a Summer song tonight.

Nora: But father....

Marks: He need never know.

Nora: My mother....

Marks: Bonfires are aglow.
When I have whistled twice like this.....

He whistles like a wildbird

Leave your room and seek my kiss.

Nora turns away from him and speaks, half to
herself, half so that he can hear her.

Nora: A dirty tinker, meanly clad,
A lewd and vicious wandering lad
A lad without an honest penny
A lad who never worked for any
A lad without a roof to keep
Us safe from robbers when we sleep -
What do I say? Why 'us'?, Why 'we'?
When I should only speak of 'he'?
A lad, I was about to say,
Would earn a thrashing any day
By making love to such as I
A lad who has a wandering eye
A lad no doubt has girls in scores
From here to Connemara's shores
And little fellows lisping, "Ma,
Why did I never see my da?"
A lad without a farm or cows
A tinker who delights in rows
A lad no doubt has done a stretch
A featureless and feckless wretch
How could I ever love a lad
So low, so lewd, so meanly clad?

Marks: Why should I court a little piece
As colourless as candlegrease
With hair so neatly combed; the skin
Scrubbed till the natural oils begin

To dry up; with her little feet
Cramped into high heeled shoes. The sweet
Abundance of her breast is crammed in
Some draper's dodge of silk or satin.
How could a lass the like of her
Resign the rows of silk and fur,
Exchange the featherbed for straw
Or heather and the load guffaw
Of tinker laughter in the night -
Ah, but that lass would be a sight
In scarlet petticoat and shawl
Of fawney wool; she'd overhaul
Her life and be a natural woman
Unwashed, unshod, unpainted, common
As fuchsia, and as freshly tinted
As crocus trumpet, brightly minted.

Nora, like Marks, speaks half aside, half direct.

Nora: And so he'd have me as a slut
Uncared for as a hazel nut
As brown, as common and as hard...

Marks: (Speaking directly to her)
No, smelling sweetly as spikenard
Or woodbine or the rose's bloom....

Nora: And I without a bed or room....

Marks: The great room of the world, the bed
Of earth, and love for your bedspread.

Nora: I think its time for us to part
Something's murmuring in my heart.

Marks: Tonight, unwitnessed, let me prove
The worlds best bedspread can be love.

Nora: I'm sure its wrong.

Marks: I'm sure its right
You'll see Salome dance tonight.

Enter Nora's father, John Melody, a cantankerous
gombeenman.

John: Ah, ha! My daughter talks to a ragged
Haggard, laggard, bedraggled vaga-
Bond. (To Marks) Get out of my haggard
And out of the county or by the Lord's bounty
You'll be dragged like the hag on the tail of a cart,
Ragged, nagged and scragged till the spring of your
heart
Is snapped and you sag like a tinker's ragbag.

Marks: Oh, we're mighty and strong with the strength of the
cashbox
The bank pillars behinds us, the peelers and judges
To bolster us up in our own estimation

Ah, take of the gold chain that moors your fat belly
To the till and the counter and meet man to man.
With one hand I'll maul you and leave you fit only
To be fed to the greyhounds. One word and I'll mark
you
And leave on your visage a warning to gombeens
From this up to Doomsday.

John: Oh send for the guards, the chief superintendent
The important inspector. I'll swear information
I've been frightened and threatened
Abused and assaulted and more that this tinker
Was guilty of conduct I'll prove calculated
To lead to a breach of the peace of this nation.
Oh, God give me patience.

Nora: (Urgently, in a low voice)
Now go before my father has
A stroke or apoplexy,
Before he bursts a vessel
Or his brain-pan bursts in flames;
For God's sake go and leave him so
And leave this peaceful county; your a menace and a
torment
With your games.

Marks: (Quietly) Since you ask me so politely,
Since your eyes are full of pleading,
Since your lips are red and pleasing,
I'll not murder this old devil
Or kick him in the belly,
So tell him there's no need for such alarm.

John: (Who must be a bit deaf not to have heard)
By the lord of my country
I'll see that your poleaxed
And banjaxed, your knickknacks and budget
Your packs and your sacks will be thrown to the wind
And your broken down hacks will be skinned
For the knacker. So, foot it you slacker.

Marks: You ugly lump of merchandise,
You blot on Ireland's paradise,
You broken winded selling-plater,
You misbegotten parish prater,
You overweening understrapper,
I'll take my tongs and pull the clapper
Out of your rattling, rambling head
And leave you dead.

Enter Mary Melody, Nora's mother, an excessively
vague old lady.

Mary: Ah, one of the tinkers come selling his tinware
Now John, don't be naughty, abusing the young lad,
If it wasn't for them the cans and the kettles,
The pans and the boilers would be all gone like
riddles.

John: Out of my sight you blasted tramp
Let you and all of your tribe decamp.

Mary: Don't mind John at all, he's hasty and gusty,
A flatulent man, but he's one of the nicest
And decentest men. And he's very religious.

Marks: He's been praying for me ma'am.

Mary: And I thought you were fighting.

John: No more of this nonesense; get out of the county
Or by the Lord's bounty....

Marks: There! He's praying again ma'am.

John: Oh, give me my stick, my big black stick,
Till I batter and pound him till he's sick,
Till I maul him and murder him, hit him a kick,
Harry and hound him. Come on, my black stick.

Mary comes out of the house with a large
blackthorn stick.

Mary: Now John, don't be hasty, remember the doctor said
Temper is bad for your poor indigestion.

John: I'll lam and lambaste him and make him eat stick.

Marks: I'll not fight my father-in-law. I best be gone
quick.

He runs off, John hard after him.

Mary: Why can't your father be like me.
Placid, reposeful, staid and calm?
What has the young man done to him
That he should wish him harm?

Nora: They must have had some words about
The mending of a pan or pot.

Mary: Stop staring down the road, I' sure
The nice young tinker needs no crutch -
But if your father murders him
Its better not to see too much.
Don't cry, I'm sure your father's safe.
Come in and help me with the dishes.

She goes into the house. Nora prepares to follow
her.

Nora: I'll not come to him if he whistles;
The nuns would call such conduct vicious.

She follows her mother into the house. The
tinkers re-enter in a few seconds.

1st Tinker: Sings to the tune of "Come listen to my story
Molly Bawn"

Oh, the sugar and the tea twist and the bread
The chicken and the duckling for the pot
The potatoes and the carrots and the onions from the
garden,
Oh, who wouldn't be a tinker when its hot?

2nd Tinker: The nightshirt from the clothesline or the hedge
The blanket from the cupboard or the cot
The pony from the stable, the bottle from the table,
Oh, who wouldn't be a tinker when its hot?

3rd Tinker: The daughter of the woman from the man,
The truncheon from the bobby when your caught,
The bacon from the chimney, the porter from the
sheebeen,
Oh, who wouldn't be a tinker when its hot?

4th. Tinker: The woodbine from the hedgerows and the lanes,
The fair green and organ's gay gavotte,
The love making in the haystacks when the stars are
bright as tapers
Oh, who wouldn't be a tinker when its hot?

3rd. Tinker: Tonight's the night when bonfires glow,
To night, brave tinkers, let us show
That we're the masters of Mayo.

4th Tinker: We'll burst the bars and shutters.

5th. Tinker: We'll batter down the door.

1st. Tinker: We'll clear the gold and silver.

2nd. Tinker: We'll ransack and explore.

3rd. Tinker: Whatever has been nailed down
We'll leave, but what is loose
Belongs by right to tinkers.

4th. Tinker: And we're tinkers on the loose.

5th. Tinker: We're tinkers on the loose, my boys,
We're tinkers on the loose,
The rightful owners of the land -
And may I introduce.....

1st. Tinker: I'm Larry Ward, a nimble lad,
A lad with taste for women O,
The flash of Petticoat or shawl
Can set my heart a swimming O.

2nd. Tinker: Petronious Ward. It's my belief
that tinker lads should rule by right,
For only they know why the fires
Are lit that will be red tonight.
Though men who live in houses say
Tonight's the feast of headless John
We know that Balor rules the fires
From Ballina to Babylon.

3rd. Tinker: I'm Molly Ward; I've great regard,
Although I know it's mostly cod,
For Balor of the Evil Eye,
That poor old heathen, beaten god.

4th. Tinker: Meg Ward. I wouldn't be too sure
That Balor's power has petered out;
A god for whom so many fires
Are lit up may be still about.

5th. Tinker: I'm Adolph Ward and I don't know
Or care if Balor knows or cares.
To work. To spy. To search about
Before we're taken unawares.

As he speaks the following lines he directs the
other tinkers to search in and around the house,
and they scurry hither and thither.

Examine every window.
Make friends with every dog.
Test every bar and shutter,
We come tonight to rob.
Go in and buy a candle,
See where the money's hid,
Look into every cash box,
And lift up every lid.
Be silent as the brown mouse,
Ubiquitous as flies -
Tonight when all are sleeping
Your fingers must be eyes.

The other tinkers return to report.

1st. Tinker: There are bars on every window.

2nd. Tinker: And bolts on every door.

3rd. Tinker: There's a safe would hold a bullock
And its bolted to the floor.

4th. Tinker: He must be rich as Guinness
This scrubby gombeenman.

5th. Tinker: Tonight we'll liberate his wealth
And spend it while we can.

Enter John Melody.

John: More and more tinkers, the stinkers.
Are you bred like good Christians
In bed? Or is it you come
By the heat of the sun, like maggots?
If I were the Lord (and may He be adored),
I'd see that you breed but one year in three;
And even at that, I suppose, like rats
You'd have litters of whey headed, tow headed
Hay headed, straw headed red headed brats.

5th. Tinker: I know you're the famous and generous patron
Of traveling men, the great seed potato
Who gives his own eyes to replenish the nation.
Oh, your fame's gone before you, the tinkers adore
you
And men who once saw you remember you always
And talk of the liberal hand of Jon Melody.
But you're hated by misers who know that they're
judged
By your princely, your handsome, your famed
hospitality.

John: If flattering lies could be cashed like pound notes
All the tinkers of Ireland would be dressed in fur
coats.
And now, out of my sight, the policemen are coming
To race you and chase you, efface you,
Man, woman and brat, mongrel and cat,
Ass, mule and jennet and fiddle backed hack,
Caravan, car, spring cart and ass trap.

5th. Tinker The famous flight of Moses when himself and all his
tribe
Crossed dry-shod through the Red Sea will be nothing
to our flight.
We're a very timid people, so in fear we say goodbye.
Pray for us Mr. Melody when you go to bed tonight.

The tinkers go, singing to the tune of "The
Orange Lily O".

Then heigh-ho the tinkers O
The swilling, willing drinkers O
Beneath the sky, what man can vie
With the man who loves the tinkers O.

John: Good work, good riddance, now we're free
From tinker vice and villainy,
I swear the next one that I see
Will get a bloody end from me.

He turns complacently to go, swinging his
blackthorn stick when he is arrested by a screech
of satiric laughter from the departing tinkers.
He shakes the stick in their direction.

Laugh while you can - tonight you'll be maimed,
Shamed, blamed, proclaimed, inflamed.
Oh, little you know that tonight will be famed
As the night when the tinkers of Mayo were tamed.

End of Act I, Scene I.

ACT I

Scene 2.

The same scene, late that evening. The Summer night has not quite come, but the figure of Marks, who leans against a fence to the left, is only dimly seen at first. Later when a window is lit on the first floor a spot illuminates his face.

Marks:

Day entertains the birds for a last fling,
Presses the last drink, the road drink, on its
guests,
Urges that birds on one wing never flew.
Soon now the dusk will soften all, will smudge
The hill line, swarm within the trees, and soon
The perches, footlights, floats of fire will grow
Undimmed, and amber spots of turf fire flow.
Here in the thickening darkness I will wait
A signal from the oldest god of all.

A light is lit in the upper window, lighting his face.

And there it is, the lighthouse of my fate;
I'll dash against it like a migrant bird.
And there she is, shining in the lamplight,
Dimming the lamp, lighting the room, all bright
With youth and radiance. Now she combs her hair
And the long sparks short circuit in my heart.
Ah, strip the blouse and petticoat, room, house and
all
Down from that body and sober men will swear
A new moon, a brighter silver moon reflects
A brighter sun, astonishing Mayo.
What should I call her in this twisted tongue
Of strangers - darling or dearest, precious or my
sweet?
Ah, had I Spanish, French or sweet Italian
Or draughts of Irish from the islandmen
I'd serenade her surely - but I think
She wouldn't understand a single word.
No. A pinch on the bottom, a cuddle in the corner,
A quick kiss in the hallway, a giggle in the dark,
"Go on, your making fun of me, Oh stop, I'll call my
mother.
I'll scream! Oh don't, your terrible," would be
closer to the mark.
But no. See where she's shining, a moon through
pearly night clouds

Pure frost on early windows, glittering dew on
cobwebs,
A star seen from a well shaft - what language could
beguile her?
Not these poor cheapjack knickknacks. O Balor, lend
me light words
To win that bright night wonder. But first, I'll
borrow bird song.

He whistles like a wild bird.

No answer. Were she henbird she'd see my brake tail
feathers
The bright comb of my cockship.

He whistles again.

My curse on scheming women who lead young lads to
danger -
I wonder if I sang hymns or beat a Mea Culpa
Would I come any closer to that cold heart?

He whistles again, this time like an American
soldier.

There that's the note to fetch her, the Marshall Aid
to lovers.

Nora: Who is that in the night whistles underneath my
window?

Marks: It is one that from thy sight
Being, ah, exiled, disdeigneth
Every other common sight.

Nora: Speak softly, softly, the night grows late.
Where have you borrowed these fine words from?

Marks: From some old book that lives again
Because there's beauty shining bright
For the first time since it was young.

Nora: Speak softly, softly, the neighbours hear
A whisper that passes from pillow to pillow.
Why do you melt into shadows there?

Marks: Whisper a word and I'll come to your pillow.

Nora: Why do you come when my father hates you
And hates all men who are homeless and landless?

Marks: Because, though he hates me, I love his daughter
The mariner's star of the landless and homeless.

Nora: The priest and the bishop, the pope in his palace,
Denounce you, renounce you and all your bad scheming.
They know that young girls must beware of night
walkers,
Bad companions and thoughts best confined to their
dreaming.

Marks: If you slip past your parents and come to my arms now
I'll show you a world all bewildered with starlight,
And studded with dreams like a white Easter candle.

Nora: My father and mother are out, so be quiet
Or gossip will spancel me to a low tinker.

Marks: Their out! (he raises his voice) Then while those
cats are prowling and growling
Let the mice have a fling - will you come to the
bower?

He sings to the tune of "Come to the Bower"

Will you come to the bower through the bog and the
heather,
To the fires where the boys and girls are met
together,
Where the dancing board's laid down, where accordion
and fiddle
Are gayer than the poteen with their merry tarra-
diddle,
Will you come, will you, will you, will you come to
the bower?

You can drink tea or porter and eat scallions while
your able,
Your seat is the bogland and the heather is your
table,
The moon for a lamp and the little stars above you
And a young man at your elbow to encourage, kiss and
love you
Will you come, will you, will you, will you come to
the bower?

You can dance jigs or reels or the half set or the
lancers
And you'll shine in the midst of the fairest of the
dancers;
Will you sing like the blackbird on the highest
branch of morning
Or whisper words of love when the holy day is
dawning?
Will you come, will you, will you, will you come to
the bower?

Will you come to the bower since the sun that old
reprover
Has gone to his bed, left the world to lass and
lover,
Since the stars wait to deck you and the moon comes
out to greet you,
Will you come from your room, life and love are here
to meet you?
Will you come, will you, will you, will you come to
the bower?

Nora: I might come down and I might come out,
But the front door and back door are tight shut
As they always are when there's tinkers about.

Marks: Love laughs at fathers and locksmiths too.

He sees a ladder and puts it to the window.

And thanks to the stage hand who left this ladder
Ready here for what's to do.

The stage is illuminated by pale moonlight.

And see, the moon, prompt on her cue.

Nora descends on the ladder.

Nora: Such little wisdom as I had
Has flown out of my giddy head.

Marks receives her into his arms as she jumps
from the last rungs of the ladder. He takes her
into his arms and kisses her.

Marks: There, the first and sweetest kiss.

Nora: Whatever I may tell the priest
I'll never tell my children this.

Hand in hand, they run off the stage. After a
moment or two a sergeant of the guards and two
guards enter.

Sergeant: There are some suspicious characters
That's known to the police

1st Guard: Convictions and convictions and convictions.

Sergeant: All capable of conduct which
Might breach the civil peace.

2nd. Guard: Itinerants, Itinerants, Itinerants.

Sergeant: No fixed abode, no dwelling place,
No wealth and no possessions,
Disorderly while drinking and
Red-handed in aggressions,
A rowdy, bowsey, lousy gang
Who refuse to sign confessions.

1st. Guard: Iniquity, iniquity, iniquity.

Sergeant: Thank God they've left this neighborhood
Where men can live in peace.

2nd. Guard: No larceny, no larceny, no larceny.

Sergeant: If there's any crime, the last to hear
Are always the police.

1st. Guard: No battery, no battery, no battery.

Sergeant: If dogs aren't licensed or the bikes
go out without reflectors
If animals should wander or
The road be full of specters
There's no one comes to bother us -
They know we're their protectors.

2nd Guard: Implacable, implacable, implacable.

Sergeant: Each night we take a gentle walk
We call it our patrol,

1st. Guard: The neighborhood is peaceful so
We seldom see a soul.

2nd. Guard: I wonder why has Melody that ladder?

Sergeant: On the whole
I shouldn't trouble, trouble,
Let's continue with our stroll
No doubt he has a reason
And why bother since our goal

1st. Guard: Is amity, is amity, is amity.
They go and almost immediately the tinkers enter.

5th. Tinker: Now quick, the old man's gone for once to town,
His wife gone with him. Mogue, you climb the ladder.
Mogue climbs.

Open up the doors and windows and, like Summer flies
We'll swarm through every chink, clear out the house
And when he comes again he'll surely think
The fairies have been active. God bless old Melody's
Vindictive heart, the first shilling that he ever
took
Is prisoner still, his usury has sucked
The red gold out of the county's heart
And gathered it, a blood bank for anemic
Tinkers. Oh, there's the gold injection will do
Good, will bloat our veins and set the pulse
To beating like a costly eight day clock.
he calls through the keyhole.

Mogue, are you there? Can you not draw the bolts?

Mogue: Its bolted, barred and sealed like Noah's Ark.

5th. Tinker: Well then unseal it and let the animals
In two by two. Hurry you fool, the moon
Drenches me through my rags. I feel conspicuous
As Patrick's mountain.
There are sounds of the bolts being drawn
within.

Ah, that's the lad. Now boys
And girls be like the Summer bees and suck
The honey out of this full blown, bursting flower.

The tinkers enter with a rush and then come back,
one by one, with their exhibits which they place
on a handcart.

- 1st. Tinker: A hank of onion, is that any use? And thyme?
5th. Tinker: Grand. It will flavour rabbit and borrowed hen.
2nd. Tinker: And pills?
5th. Tinker: Yes. Nature might slam her door through overeating.
3rd. Tinker: A chamberpot?
5th. Tinker: There's grandeur for a tinker! Has it been used?
3rd. Tinker: The label on it still says "Made in England".
5th. Tinker: Then leave it
And get an Irish one; we must support
Our native manufacture.
4th. Tinker: There's stout and ale and porter, whiskey and gin,
Sherry and port wine, brandy, cider, rum.
5th. Tinker: Sings to the tune of "Goodbye Mike".

Good fellows let us drink tonight
As no man drank since Bacchus
The sky will be our cocktail jug
The lakes and seas our glasses.

Chorus

And when the sun comes up again
And sees the mighty slaughter
He'll say "The worlds gone roaring drunk,
They should have stuck to porter."

The merchant and the excise man
And all who live in houses
Will be our footstools and the hills
Our seats through our carousals.

Chorus

We'll pour the brandy, gin and rum,
The whiskey and the sherry
Down gullets thirstier than sand
And all die drunk and merry.

Chorus

Then burn the corks and pour the liquor,
Empty all the bottles,
You'll get no chance once life is past
So pour it down your throttles.

- 2nd. Tinker: There's nothing in the till but holy medals.

5th. Tinker: Leave those and try the safe. Say "Open Sesame"
 And see what happens.
There's a rusty groan from within as the safe
 opens.

1st. Tinker: Its open now and loaded
 With gold, with silver, paper notes
 And copper. But I fear its mostly copper.

5th. Tinker: Take all that fits into the bag, but spare
 The copper. Never leave a man you rob
 Completely destitute. He might despair
 Go out of business and leave our sons without
 An easy haul when times are getting bad.
 Out now. Mogue, bring the handcart, load it up.
 The sooner we're away from this bright sky
 The sooner safe. We'll hide our little treasure
 Where the distillers hide the poteen still.
 Now, march. And may our road be all downhill.
Exeunt omnes. After a moment, John and Mary
 Melody enter.

John: And now the house is safe, for angel hordes
 With fiery swords guard every door and window;
 The cherubim and seraphim march round
 And sound their trumpets that only the bat can hear.
 Mark, Luke and John and Matthew dropped their pens
 And ran to sit above there on the eaves;
 And Michael himself, who singed our parents when
 They tried to enter feloniously, will keep
 The tinkers out of my little paradise.

Mary: But all you did was say a prayer or two.

John: I paid the premium on my insurance,
 Recklessly lighting candles at every shrine
 Till the whole chapel blazed with pennyworths
 To every saint that ever worked a demi-
 Semi miracle. Tonight they'll throng
 Like football crowds to earn their candle's worth.
 Let's celebrate our safety generously,
 Go in and fry a sausage for my supper.
Mary goes in.

So who'd be daft enough to pay the insurance
 When half the saints of heaven are unemployed.
Mary return.

Mary: Either you paid the premium late or else
 The saints are on another job tonight.

John: How's that.

Mary: The safe is empty

John: Now break my heart.

Mary. The hanks of onion gone.

John: Bitter my loss.

Mary: The cups and saucers, buckets, gin and whiskey,
The chamber pots, the Beecham's Pills.

John: The guineas?

Mary: Cleaned like a well wiped baby.

John: Back now bend,
Grow old, old man, and mourn your careful youth
Hoarded so long in gold piece, bank note, cheque,
Deposit receipt and mortgage. I'll demand
My money back for all those candles wasted.

Mary: The accounts are burned, the docketts in ashes,
And Nora's gone.

John: My docketts. And my daughter!

He takes a police whistle from his pocket and
gives it several long blasts.

Since angels and Ministers of Grace
Have failed to guard, let the guards solve this case.

He gives several more blasts on the whistle as
the curtain falls.

End of Act I Scene 2.

ACT II

Later on that evening. An open bogland with blue mountains in the distance. There are rocks here and there and a big turf fire in the centre of the stage. Tinkers are dancing around the stage to the music of an accordion and a fiddle, and when the dance comes to an end a tinker steps forward and sings to the tune of "Courting in the Kitchen". All the other tinkers join in the chorus.

Tinker As I came through the land I met a handsome lassie,
I took her by the hand and asked her was she married,
She laughed and winked her eye, no answer would she
give me
But "Tinkers are the devils and I wont let one
deceive me".

Chorus: Ri-toor-a-looral-ay. Ri-toor-a-looral-addy.
Ri-toor-a-looral-ay. Ri-toor-a-looral-addy.

She took me to the house and she sat me at the table,
She handed tea and cakes and I ate like Cain and
Able,
She made me whiskey punch and then, would you believe
it
Said "Tinkers are the devil and I wont let one
deceive me".

Chorus

She sat me by the fire and I slipped my arm around
her,
I kissed her twenty times and she kissed me, never
doubt her
And when the clock said one she said "Oh do not leave
me,
Those tinkers are the devil and I won't let one
deceive me".

Chorus

A bang came to the door just as the dawn was
breaking,
Her husband with a roar set my back and belly aching,
He shouted "Who is this?" and she answered "Oh
believe me,
Its my long lost brother Tom, sure I never would
deceive ye."

Chorus

Towards the end of the song, Marks and Nora enter. At the end they applaud with the rest, then Marks steps forward, leaving Nora in the background.

Marks: While others mended kettles, a pot or greasy pan
Or sold a gaudy kerchief, I found a better plan;
No nest egg have I stolen, but found the very queen
Of beauty for my bride tonight. Tinkers, greet my
colleen.

He draws Nora forward and the tinker women crowd round her.

Tinker Woman: A pretty little piece, but skinny.

Another: A convent educated ninny.

Another: Those fingers never could be taught
To dip a purse and not be caught.

Another: She's never drop a child and then
March forward with the tinker men.

Another: To Marks.

And what will Betsy Connors say
About the work you've done today.

Nora bursts from among them.

Nora: Don't touch me with your greasy rags,
I'll not be bullied by such hags.
I just came out to see the fires
And not to listen to you spitfires.

Tinker Woman: Its the like of you that causes fight
Between the tinkers in the night.

Another: Chasing after tinker men
Like a hot cock after hen.

Another: Oh well we know the low desires
That brought you out to see the fires.

Another: Shameless little convent miss
Gumming for a tinker's kiss.

Another: Wait till Betsy Connors hears -
She'll pull your hair out, and your ears.

Another: She'll scraub your face and make mince pies
Out of your little wanton eyes.

Another: She'll pummel, punch and pulverize you
So your own ma wont recognize you.

Nora turns, terrified, to Marks.

Nora: Oh take me away.

Tinker Woman: Yes, take her away,
That's a bad day's work you did today.

Nora: Oh, hurry me back to my father's abode,
To the neat little room and the well polished floor,
To St. Peter, St. Paul and St. Patrick who guard
The windows and chimneys, the back and front door.

Enter Betsy Connors, a fine strapping girl of
about nineteen.

Betsy: So, Marks Mongan found himself a bride,
One wife is not enough for him.
Show me her here, I'll leave my mark
On vein, on feature and on limb.

Nora is pushed towards her by the women.

Look at her - whipster, hussy, slut,
Sleeveen. I'll maim her, hold my shawl.
I'll knock her two eyes into one,
I'll thump, I'll thrash her and I'll maul.

Nora retreats as Betsy makes a rush at her, then,
driven desperate, she catches her, throws her in
a circle and whirls her into the arms of a tinker
at the other side of the stage. the tinkers
stand, amazed, and Betsy drops to the ground,
whimpering.

Betsy: That's right, Marks Mongan, let your trollop
Beat and bludgeon, drub and wallop.

Nora brushes her hands together, then steps
forward very proudly and self confidently.

Nora: And now, what does Marks Mongan think of Nora Melody?
Her fame will run like a flame to Castlebar,
At Kililla too they'll talk of me, my name
Will be great among the horse dealers at Ballina.
The pilgrims at Croagh Patrick will deplore me
But under Nephin, at Mulranny and Ballycroy
At Ballinrobe and West in Carrowmore
They'll talk of Nora Melody with joy.

The tinker men surround her admiringly, feeling
the muscles of her arm and making appreciative
noises as though she were a piece of horseflesh.

Tinker man: There's muscles on that one would fell a horse from
his standing.

Another: Ah, that's the girl is fit mate for a tinker man.

Another: It's the like of her the old poets used to sing
about.

Marks dances forward, holding a can of porter.

Marks: Come, Nora child, and share the little can.

They drink bruderschaft. Nora makes a disgusted face at the taste.

Marks: From this day out its not in your father's dwelling
You'll be drying dishes or ironing flimsy lace
But among the tinkers you'll rule like Grace O'Malley
And poets forever will celebrate your face.
Like Mary Hynes, that was loved by the poet Raftery,
Or Bridin Vesey, your beauty will plague young men
Who can't possess you, and there's many will find
vocations
And say the mass because you were not for them.
And many will wish white marble and chisel
Or canvas, that would mirror the beauty you have,
And dull mouths will be singing and dull ears
sharpening
To your praise long after we both have gone to the
grave.

Nora: There's many a thing I learned for the first time
tonight,
That I'm admired and the pleasure of hearing so.

Tinker Man: Then stay with us forever. You know you're welcome.

Nora: My father
Might be annoyed. He's rather old fashioned you know.

Mogue runs in.

Mogue: We're rich as bees in Summer,
We've white wine and we've red
Potatoes and tinned salmon
Tomatoes and shop bread;
The best of Limerick bacon
And plates to hold your fill,
Condensed milk for the babies
And ne'er a merchant's bill.
We've soap for dirty tinkers
And fine combs for the fop,
We'll never see a poor day now -
We've cleared old Melody's shop.

Enter the other tinkers dragging their cart.

5th. Tinker: Clear the road for the heroes,
Clear the road for the gang,
Let tinker throats now cheer us,
Let tinker kettles bang;
Let tinker throats be gaping
For better drink than stout,
Let tinker hearts be eager
For a record drinking bout.

1st. Tinker: We've emptied kitchen, larder,
The cupboard and the shelf,
We're weighted down with bottles,
Come on and help yourself.

2nd Tinker: We'll drink tonight like gentry
And roll to bed unseen,
Our blankets will be moonbeams,
Our mattress will be green.

4th. Tinker: The valet that will wake us
Will be the sun himself.
Come on and take your fill now -
We've emptied every shelf.

Nora: So that's the fine adventure
That you would have me share,
Robbing my poor old father....

Tinker Man: Don't fear, you'll get your share!

Nora: Making the world your blood bank
To feed the tinker flea
Living like gulls that thrive on
The ploughman's industry.

To marks:

So that is why you wanted me
To leave my father's house -
To clear it for a field day
For flea and tinker louse.

Marks: Very reasonably

I never knew they had a plan
To rob your da or any man;
But, since they've done it, what is wrong
In equalizing weak and strong?
The State has taxed the wealthy man
And who can dare to tax that plan?
The wealthy man has robbed for sure
Or else he'd certainly be poor.
The state, well knowing his bad deed,
Shares out his wealth to those in need.
We modestly collaborate
With civil servants and the state.

Nora: But.....

Marks: Do not vex your pretty head
With economics. As I said
We try to equalize the wealth.
But we must do our good by stealth.

Tinker Woman: Sings to the tune of "The Sash My Father Wore"

Oh a girl that loves a tinker lad
Must learn the tinker ways,
Must eat when hungry, drink when dry
And thrive on giveaways;
She must know the tinker way of life
And borrow all she can -
We borrow all that's not nailed down
To feed the tinker clan.

Another: Oh, a girl that loves a tinker lad
Must share her father's purse
With those in need remembering
That property's a curse;
She must spot the hiding place of wealth
When she sells a pot or pan
We borrow all that's not nailed down
To feed the tinker clan.

Another: Oh, a girl that loves a tinker lad
Is happy all her days,
She need no silk or satin blouse,
No camisole or stays;
She has treasure, pleasure, plenty as
She borrows for her man,
We borrow all that's not nailed down
To feed the tinker clan.

All the tinkers join in repeating the last two
lines of each verse.

Tinker Man: Ah, the singing and the dancing, the big muscled
tinker,
Sure there's nobody like us in all this fine nation;
If the great god of fire was in need of an escort
He'd not look much further than this congregation.

Another: We're the pick of the choice of the best of the
finest,
Too great to be cabined and housed in a pen.
But we're quiet and modest and shy and retiring
And none knows our worth but the traveling men.

1st. Tinker: But my worth's not known to the traveling woman.
I've said that before and I'll say it again.

He sings, to the tune of "The Moonshiner".

In Spring I'm in love with the girls of the Spring
And I think of the buds that are swelling with
Spring,
And the sap that is rising in flower and tree,
In the Spring I'm in love but there's no one loves
me.

In Summer, in Summer, I'm always in love,
Every girl that I pass by is deluged with love,
My eye, like the sun, is hot, ripening and free -
I love every girl then but there's no one loves me.

The apples of Autumn, the ripe field of Autumn
Remind me, alas, of the lessons of Autumn
And I think how the Winter strips garden and tree;
My heart is inflamed then, but there's no one loves
me.

And no one loves me, no, no one loves me,
Oh when will those blind girls be able to see
The love that I'm bursting to give liberally
Through all the year's seasons if they'd only love
me.

For I'm young and I'm free and the Spring swells in
me,
And the blood boils in me, I adore every she;
I could love half a dozen like a god on a spree,
I'd adore, I'd devour them, if they'd only love me.

Marks: Well, here's your chance, poor Betsy Connors
Is left there, mourning with wrinkled brow,
Take her dancing in the firelight
She knows I won't be jealous now.

Betsy, who has been lying on the ground where she
fell, gets to her feet in a fury.

Betsy: Son you'd give me away like a worn out trousers,
Like a nag only able to carry the years,
Like an empty bottle when the spree is over,
I wish I could weep, but what use are tears.
Maybe some day you'll wish that I wept now,
For any ill deed I can do I'll do,
And any ill wish that will bring misfortune
I give freely and gladly to that girl and you.

1st. Tinker: But Marks meant no harm, he was being comradely,
And a fine girl like you shouldn't go to waste;
Its better to wear out, they say, than rust out,
And its not like you to be so strait-laced.

He tries clumsily to put an arm around her, but
she disengages it angrily.

Betsy: You addle-headed, blunder headed, muddle headed
Beetle headed stupo, will you keep your ham hands off
me
Or I'll beat you better looking.
And goodbye, my valiant tinkers,
May the food you've eaten choke you
And the drink hobnail your livers.

She goes.

Marks: Well, there's a little termagant.
You'd think we had been married.

5th. Tinker: Well, didn't you and she jump
Across a broom together.

Marks: I suppose so. I was young then,
A lad, minor only.
She led me on, I couldn't stop.
She raced me down a mountain
We fell together at the bottom.
Or..ah..I fell..she fell,
Well....say we fell together.
And... so we jumped the broomstick,
A year ago.

Brightening

But this girl here is worth a dozen of her.

To Nora

Don't mind about the broom, sure
No court would recognize it.

Tinker Woman: Go on and treat her decent,
She trailed many a mile behind you.

Another: Her brothers will be after you.

Another: She warmed you when the winter
Blew bagpipes in the tree tops.

Nora: Don't worry at all, I'm going home
And I'll leave this lad to his tinker slut.
One evening of tinker ways is enough
To teach a girl to keep her mouth shut.
Do you think I could stand the tinker smell
And the tinker taste and the tinker view,
And the touch of a tinker and hearing them curse?
No. For me one evening is enough of you.
So, like Betsy Connors, I'll say goodbye,
And may what you've stolen.....

The third tinker comes running in.

3rd. Tinker: Run quick. Run quick.
Away with the cart. The guards are coming.
Old melody worked a miracle -
For once the boys in blue are running.

1st. Tinker: Down to the lake and through the water
To where the distillers keep their gear.
They'll never find that hiding place,
So well concealed this many a year.

Nora: I must go home....

Marks: No time for talking,
If the police should find you here
They'd swear you let us in to pillage.
And now brave tinkers, disappear.

Exeunt omnes. Betsy puts her head up from behind a rock, then jerks it down as the Guards appear.

Guard: Oh trouble. Trouble. Trouble. Trouble. Trouble.

Sergeant: If Melody insists he's robbed, farewell our peaceful sessions,
We'll have the superintendent down to do the case in style,
Inspectors and detectives, Cautioned statements and confessions,
All copied down in longhand and a Civil Service file.

Guards: Oh trouble. Trouble. Trouble. Trouble. Trouble.

Enter John Melody.

John: Have you studied, considered, examined and traced?
Have you questioned, unearthed and turned every stone?
Did you scan, did you sound, did you delve and explore?

Sergeant: We cant answer such statements when we're on our beat.

1st. Guard Our investigations are not yet complete.

John: By the great toe of St. Peter, I'll murder those tinkers,
I'll halve them and slice them and cut them and gut them.

Sergeant: Now be very careful mister of the language that you're using,
There's no evidence at all that there's tinkers in the place.

2nd. Guard: Or if they are that one of them was adjacent to your property
At any moment relevant to the purpot of this cast.

1st Guard: And further, I'll remind you of the law of defamation
A very dangerous subject as our writers will agree.

Sergeant: Besides there is no evidence that anything was stolen
Except an unsworn statement that you have made to me.

Betsy Connors appears from behind a rock.

John: There's one of the robbers that whipped my property.

Betsy sings to the tune of "Bold Thadh O'Neill"

Betsy: Betsy Connors they call me, my heart it is breaking,
Betrayed by a young man so handsome and bold,
For he's left me and followed a rich merchant's daughter
Because I am poor and she's weighed down with gold.

Sergeant: No be on your way or I'll have to arrest you.
John: Tell me, where have this girl and this young fellow gone to?
Betsy: They have gone to an isle in the midst of the water,
Where a cow with one horn gives the sweetest of milk
-
If the father was seeking to follow that daughter
This girl would need stockings of nylon or silk.
John: She'll have them depending on how much she can tell me.
Betsy: On that island they have hidden the wealth of the merchant,
But they'll come back again once they think they are safe;
Creep into the shadows where I have been hiding,
Be as small as the mouse and as still as the grave.
Sergeant: And what in God's name is she prating about?
John: My daughter's gone off with that villainous tinker,
The tinkers are hiding my money and stuff,
If we wait we can catch them...

He glances off stage, and continues in a whisper.

They're coming already, so no more of your guff.

John, the sergeant, the guards and Betsy conceal themselves as the tinkers enter, singing:

Tinkers: The heigh-ho the tinkers O
The willing, swilling drinkers O
Beneath the sky what man can vie
With Ireland's clinking tinkers O.

Marks leads Nora in by the hand and speaks as he makes love to her. At first she is reluctant and then allows herself to be kissed.

Marks: The old philosophers sought for a stone
For turning lead to gold;
But we do better, we take poor men
And make them happy and rich and then
We take a girl ice cold,
We dance her round the fire and then
We kiss her and then we kiss her again
And we warm the girl that is cold.

She dances away from him and then back again.

5th. Tinker: And we love her father's gold.

1st. Tinker: What we can't eat will be sold.

4th. Tinker: We love old Melody's empty shop,
But better we love his gold.

The sergeant stands up from behind the rock.

Sergeant: And now the case is closed and complete,
We've witnesses here. Mr. Melody stand.
Two guards with notebooks, and one of yourselves.
You're as good as convicted by the law of the land.

On their cue the guards and Betsy stand up.

1st. Guard: And here's your legal caution:-
You needn't, if you wish, say any word,
But anything you do say will be taken down in
longhand
In a guard's well formed and strong hand
And it's evidence, no matter how absurd.

John: Arrest every man jack of them,
Arrest the whole pack of them,
Fetter and bind them, handcuff and blind them;
But start with that lout with the long tinker snout
That was mauling and pulling my daughter about.

Nora: But Marks stole nothing from your shop.

John: I see you've fallen for his slop.

2nd. Tinker: Oh, We're innocent as little babies.

3rd. Tinker: Oh, may I get the foaming rabies
If any one of us has lifted
Piece or parcel, cake or biscuit.

4th. Tinker: It's not the likes of us would rob.

5th. Tinker: Suspect the guards first of that job.

John: Oh, St. John, St. John, forgive them
For sinning on your holy day,
And to think my daughter backs them.

5th. Tinker: It's not St. John's, but Balor's day.
If he were here he'd soon put spanners
In all your works and teach you manners.

Sergeant: To first guard.
Put down a charge of sacrilege.

1st. Guard: Writing.
They'll bring a curse upon the village.

5th. Tinker: Tonight's the night when Balor's great
And when the tinkers celebrate
His memory. Now Balor come
And save us from the tinker's doom.

There is a blackout and when the lights come up Balor is seen, apparently standing on a large rock, though, in reality he is mounted on stilts. He seems at first a small, apologetic looking little man in a long black coat. He has a bandage around his forehead. There are cries of fright from the guards and the tinkers.

Balor: I was resting in a lotus land where Spring comes gently in,
Unthinking and uncaring, unwearied and untroubled,
When I heard a voice recall me to the Ireland that I loved
Before snake charming Patrick came to drive me from my people.
Who is this that rouses Balor from the footnotes of mythology.

1st. Tinker: It's the guards.

2nd. Tinker: Its the gombeenman.

5th. Tinker: They want to jail the tinkers.

Balor: Your voices are displeasing to an ear long sealed from hearing
I am a deviationist, discredited and exiled.

5th. Tinker: You'r Balor, the great fire god?

Balor: I was so named in the old days.

5th. Tinker: And being a god, you're powerful?

Balor: It depends upon the people.
Now, before the last election I was minister for fuel,
The people did my bidding and I did as much for them;
But then I lost their confidence, resigned and went on pension.

Marks: But you've still the....

he gestures

Balor: Evil Eye, the symbol of my godhead.
Yes. One blast from that optic would leave desert where you're standing.
But I'm not allowed to use it since I lost the seals of office.

5th. Tinker: But if you were believed in.....?

Sergeant: This talk is most seditious,
Heretical, illegal. I'm arresting everyone here
For criminal conversation.

Balor: But if I were believed in
Then I would resume my godhead and I'd reward my servants.

5th. Tinker: Well, I believe in Balor.

Tinkers: severally.

And I. And I. Up Balor. Good old
Balor. First vote for Balor. Balor isn't the worst.
Balor for the tinkers and the tinkers for Balor. A
Vote for Balor is a vote for Ireland.

Balor: Raising his hand in a political gesture.

My friends, your faith is touching.

Betsy: Don't listen to this heathen he'll damn you all
forever.

4th Tinker: What have we got to lose. Come on, first vote for
Balor.

Nora: What you're doing is very dangerous.

Sergeant: Quite right, miss. These elections are illegal and
unlawful,
Null void and superstitious.

John: He must be a red agent
Weighed down with gold from Moscow. I've got my eye
on Stalin.

Marks: Tinkers, we've suffered and sweated and laboured,

Betsy: Who? You?

Marks: We're the slaves of an outmoded system,
Condemned by the system to wander and roam.

2nd. Guard: Who has ever succeeded in caging a tinker?

Marks: Without land or money, without farm or home.
We're the pick of the country and nobody knows it.

Sergeant: We know all your records, they're noted and filed.

Marks: A leader is all we are lacking, a leader
Whose heart will be pure and whose reign will be
mild.
So tinkers, I offer you Balor for leader.

Sergeant: This is treachery, treason, sedition, rebellion.

5th. Tinker: Hurrah for old Balor, the man for the tinkers.

1st. Guard. The devil I know I'd prefer to this hellion.

The tinkers produce placards with slogans and
march around the stage shouting.

Tinkers: Severally.

Balor for president. Up Balor. Up us. Hurrah for the
tinkers. First vote for King Balor. Lebraensraum for
the tinkers. And down with partition.

Sergeant: Mind, all your names are noted.

Balor, still apparently a diminutive figure,
speaks in the manner of a county councilor.

Balor: My friends, and I know that you are my true friends,
I am touched, nay, I'm moved by this joyful
reception,
This decision, this epoch constructing decision
Of my warm hearted, generous, loyal adherents.

Cheers

From the depths of my heart I congratulate them
And thank them for ending my lingering exile.

Cheers

With a diffident bow I accept nomination
And I know that my friends, the old and trusty,
The new and the lusty, the tried and the true
Will forgive my poor halting and slow footed oratory;
Unaccustomed as I am to public addresses,
Having spent the best years of my life in retirement
I am nervous before such a splendid convention,
Comprising, I know, all that's best and most worthy,
Most upright and solvent in all this fine nation,
This nation, need I say, with a heart sound as metal,
But mislead and distracted too long by misgovernment.

Cheers

In the general election I suffered some losses -
The year, I remember, was 432,
I decided to rest, like an actor, till my agents
Could find me a new part in your wonderful zoo.
And now with your ready hearts and ready hands to
help me,
I know that the victory is ours for the taking,
That I can, that we can march forward together
To a future of freedom and safety and peace.
Ladies and gentlemen, with a heart full of gladness
I accept nomination and am yours to command.

There are more tinker cheers and then a brilliant
light illuminated him. He steps from behind his
rock on his stilts and is seen at his full
height, in a long coat to his ankles. The
Sergeant, guards, Melody, Betsy, shrink towards
the front of the stage. and the tinkers crowd
round their champion. He is given a black slouch
hat which he dons, a pair of spectacles and a
briefcase.

Sergeant: (Writing) On June 23rd. in the village of Knockaderry
An illegal organization met and held a meeting there,
Sedition was indulged in and a mythological person
Named Balor of the Evil Eye was elected to the chair.

John: Oh, summon the soldiers with guns and mortars
To scatter these heathens and restore law and order

Enter Mary Melody

Mary: Ah, Sergeant, I'm glad to see things so quiet,
Did you find all the property stolen from us?
There's Nora. I knew she couldn't be far off,
So you see John, you needn't have made such a fuss.

John: They're electing the devil to reign over Ireland
I'm ruined for life and she says, what's the fuss.

Marks comes forward with a microphone.

Marks: This is radio Balor, the voice of your country;
Prepare no to hear the historical news -
The long reign of terror is over, rejoice now,
The President is going to give you his views.
The President.

Balor: My friend and constituents, the new Constitution
Is drafted and ready. Now Ireland, give ear,
From this day forward the tinkers will rule you,
A generous, great hearted people, I hear.

Approving nods and applause from the tinkers.

The man who has property must instantly cede it
To the great Commonwealth of this new tinker nation,
This great, democratic and idle Republic
Where, henceforth, to labour will cause
consternation.
Man's dream of the ages, to live for mere pleasure,
To be, not a worker, but poet and thinker
Has now been achieved, and no man needs money,
All the goods are supplied free - if you are a
tinker.
To the others who live in this happy and free land
Is granted the privilege to serve loyally,
To work for the good that is common to all men -
The good of the rulers who have now set you free.
But the traitor who holds any square foot of Ireland,
The traitor who slacks and the traitor who sneers
Will be tried and convicted by the impartial tinkers
And banished to England for the rest of his years.
Ah, lucky the worker who works for a tinker,
And happy the girl to be chosen by one,
And lucky the land to be ruled by such kindness,
For the laws are abolished - only one law will run,
The law of the tinker, the right of the tinker,
The tinker's firm hand in the tinker's warm glove.
So cheer for the tinker who frees you from slavery,
And I warn you, say "Tinker" with allegiance and
love.

He turns from the microphone and points to John.

This man cedes his property to replenish the tinkers.

He points to the guards.

These men will serve poteen and porter and beer,
And they'll smile.

A pause

Yes, I knew they would smile on the tinkers,
And they'll cheer.

A pause

Yes. They'll cheer.

A pause. They cheer.

Yes, I knew they would cheer.

Into the microphone

And now I must leave you, But I'll always watch you
And see that my orders are obeyed with a smile.
And I thank my constituents who freely elected
To restore the old order in brotherly style.

He goes, and Marks takes the microphone

Marks:

That was the first and the last word of power.
Let the people of Ireland now come to the bower.

He sings to the tune of "Come to the Bower"

Will you come to the bower through the bog and the
heather
To the fires where the boys and the girls are met
together
Where the dancing board's laid down, where accordion
and fiddle
Are gayer than the poteen with their merry
tarradiddle
Will you come, will you, will you,
Will you come to the bower.

Will you come to the bower from Connacht, Leinster,
Munster
And there's ten thousand welcomes for the singing men
of Ulster
For the border is abolished and we'll all get drunk
together,
Will you leave shop and office and come dancing in
the heather,
Will you come, will you, will you,
Will you come to the bower.

End of Act II

Act III

The same set as Act I, one year later. The tinkers, brightly and garishly dressed, are once more dancing outside John melody's shop. They dance a ballet of tinker domination over landlord and tenant, over merchant and lawyer, over priest and policeman. This is dance to an Irish dance tune. Then they sing to the tune of "Biddy Mulligan, the Pride of the Coombe":

Tinker: The grapes and the barley are grown for our pleasure
They swell in the generous sun,
They're pressed and distilled to rejoice us and
gladden,
They freshen the old and the young;
They warm the cold hearted and cheer the downhearted,
Raise love thoughts in girls and in boy,
They rally the faint hearted, quicken the great
hearted;
Barley and grapes are our joy.

All the tinkers join in the chorus:

Then clink, glasses, drain glasses,
Fill glasses, drain glasses,
Let's leave no gay song unsung;
While we've bottles and throttles
Let's put in our noddles
The stuff that makes old fellows young.

Tinker: The sun on the cornfield, the sun on the vineyard
Are bottled against the cold days,
The frost cannot harm us as long as we arm us
With Summer sun's medical rays;
An apple a day keeps the doctor away,
A bottle a day keeps him well,
So for medical reasons we swallow the seasons
When grape and John Barleycorn swell.

Chorus

5th. Tinker: Who are the pick of the choicest?

Tinkers: The tinkers!

5th. Tinker: Who are the best of the nicest?

Tinkers: The tinkers!

5th. Tinker: Who are loved and respected,
Adored and protected,
Who are the elected?

Tinkers: The tinkers!

2nd. Tinker: We've been drinking for a year,
We've been eating for a year,

For a year the very best was none too good,
We've drunk brandy and champagne,
Creme de Menthe and Benedictine,
Curacao, Coca Cola, Passion Fruit and Grenadine,
Misty poteen that is good, vintage port, wine from
the wood,
Slings of gin and scarlet ladies.

Tinker: And I've finished several tuns of Nelson's blood.

5th. Tinker: The beds that we sleep in are soft as a billow,
Our blankets are softer and warmer than fleece,
Fine women are fighting to plump out our pillows,
Tuck under the blankets and turn down our sheets.
No need now to worry or hurry or think,
No need....

Tinker: What we need is more drink.

Tinkers: Severally

More drink. Brink more drink.
Let glasses clink-clink. More drink,
More drink. More drink. More drink.

Marks comes out of the shop rolling a barrel.

Marks: More drink for the tinkers,
The world famous drinkers,
More drink, as you say, for the drinkers.
But... like good fellows drink it
Like humans. Don't gulp it, but savour it.

Tinker: Brink porter, my favourite drink.
And fellows, let's gulp it, not savour it.

Marks: Waste that is willful brings want that is woeful.

Tinker: Ah, can't Balor work a miracle?
And aren't we his favourite sons,
His praetorians!

Marks: Mind fellows, I warn you, go easy.

Exit.

5th. Tinker: Go easy, her says. Does he think that indigestion
Could torture a tinker, eroding the great
Headlands of his stomach? Come tinkers, get drunk.
We'll drink to the future, the present, the past;
To the women we've won and the women who win
The love of a tinker - the bellowing bull roar,
The wave crashing sea roar, the bone crushing
Flesh tearing love of a tinker. I give you the
tinker.

Tune: "The Orange Lily O"

I've been a tinker all my life
I'll die a tinker laddie O,
Unwashed, uncombed and carefree as
My hundred year old daddy O.
And just like him, I'll have ten wives,
Or twenty if they're willing O,
I will dance and sing and have my fling
As long as there's a shilling O.

All the tinkers join in the chorus.

Tinkers: The heigh-ho, the tinkers O,
The willing, swilling drinkers O,
Beneath the sky what man can vie
With Ireland's clinking tinkers O?

1st Tinker: Oh, the merchant locks his wealth away
In safe or bank or stocking O,
But the tinker spends it while he may
Nor finds such conduct shocking O.
The lawyer, doctor, priest invest
Their cash in stocks so risky O
The tinker wiser than the rest
Invests it all in whiskey O!

Chorus

2nd. Tinker: Oh, The men who wear a collar white
as fresh milk or driven snow
Must work, bent over, while its light
For what small pay they're given O
But the tinker, loving, cursing, free
Would find such service penal O,
He may be poor but such as he
Need nurse no duodenal O!

2nd. Tinker: And I give you women. Ah, women!
The whiteness of swan down, the sweetness of honey,
The curve of the hilltop, the curve of the billow,
Lips eagerly kissing, arms ardently clipping,
Eyes closed on the pillow.
Come on and let's find them, the women for tinkers.

They rush out eagerly. The sergeant and the
guards enter.

1st Guard: Its well for the gentry can drink when they like,
Can sing and make love in the dark and the light,
But poor fellows like us must scrounge from the table
The crumbs that they leave and its seldom we're able.

They all fill mugs from the barrel.

2.d. Guard: Ah, the first drink for months. It's marched
Like a torch light procession down a throat that was
parched.

1st. Guard: And to think of the old days, the days of our might
When we sat in the snug and drank porter all night.

Sergeant: When the dismal time of closing hour drew near
And landlords cried "Just time for two more rounds"
We'd slip up to the door and seem to peer
As though a public house were out of bounds.
Then the landlord opened up a private door
And brought us drinks pressed down and flowing over,
And sent his well trained daughters with two more,
And there we fed like bullocks in thick clover.
But times have changed and we have changed with
times,
Now only tinkers are allowed to smoke
Or drink. To us such deeds are heinous crimes
For pleasures are reserved for gentlefolk.

2nd. Guard: I wonder is the same rule everywhere?

1st Guard: How should we know. The papers are all stopped,
The wireless banned, the telegraphs all dumb.

Sergeant: Drink while we can. The future is a hill
And who knows what's on the other side.

Betsy Connors enters, still dressed as in Act II,
the only tinker not brightly dressed. The guards
try to hide their drinks.

Betsy: Ah, the thieves of the world whipping the tinkers'
drink;
If they hear of this crime they'll take it out of
your skins.

1st. Guard: We thought 'twas abandoned or treasure trove or the
like.

Betsy: For all I care, drink till it dribbles down your
chins.
But fill me a can, I've a drought like a poisoned
rat.
I'm banished and banned from the tinker kingdom of
wealth
And the odd time I eat or drink I'm the same as
yourselves
Lifting a crumb or a crust by cunning or stealth.
If I had that Nora Melody, I'd pluck out her eyes,
And play marbles with them among the lads, and I'd
make
A fiddle bow of her hair and play such music
That the devils of hell would come to dance at the
wake.

Sergeant: And there's few would blame you, the way she stole
your fellow.

Betsy: I'd leave her fit to be wheeled in babby car.
For, only for her and her father we'd be streeling
The country this minute,
At Ballinrobe or Labasheeda, Belmullet or Castlebar.

As they speak, John Melody sneaks in behind and quietly steals the barrel from which they have been drinking.

And the tinkers would be thieves, and not he Peelers,
And the men that live in houses would still be grand,
And the merchants would be great in their own
estimation,
And your man inside would be still in his lotus land.

Sergeant: That man inside, if you want to hear my opinion,
That man inside is nothing more or less
Than a hypocrite and a fraud, and as for his
miracles...

He turns and notices that the barrel is gone. He lowers his voice and speaks respectfully.

And as for his miracles, they show farsightedness.

1st. Guard: Has he whipped the drink from under our very noses?
Or was the drink itself only one of his tricks?

2nd. Guard: Or has some dirty savage stolen our little treasure?

Sergeant: If its that, we better get rapidly on his tracks.

They go and, after a few moments, John Melody enters in very high spirits and singing to the tune of "Johnny the Daisy O"

John: Oh, life was never so free, hurrah,
Oh, this is the life for me hurrah,
Oh, why did I worry and labour and hurry
When I could have been on the spree, hurrah!

When I was a merchant I sighed, alas,
My money was all of my pride, alas,
but since I have none my worry is gone,
Hurrah for the health of the working class.

No need to pay rates now or income tax,
No need now for polishing bric-a-bracs,
We drink when we like and stay up half the night,
Who cares if we're called dipsomaniacs!

Betsy: And what was it landed you in this fine humor?

John: I'm as cute as a weasel, as smart as a whip.

Betsy: Was it you whipped the barrel of porter and drank it?

John: Oh, I was the smart one to give them the slip.

Betsy: It wasn't on porter but whiskey or poteen
That your sour, spitballed puss took a grip on a
song.

John: I'll tell you my secret, I've a key to the cellar
And I've emptied the bottles into where they belong.

The whiskey and gin and the port and the brandy
Have lighted a fire no brigade could bring under.
The cellar is empty, the tinkers and Balor
Will surely go mad when they hear of my plunder.

Betsy: And nothing is left?

John: Not a bottle or barrel.
The last keg of porter is the one I have still.
And I've hidden it well, the tinker republic
Will founder if Balor can't learn to distill.

Betsy: But surely a miracle.....

John: That talk is all eye-wash.
Your man lost his power in St. Patrick's campaign.
If he can't supply drink, all the tinkers will leave
him,
And once they desert, that's the end of his reign.

Enter Mary Melody

And me and the missus, the guards and the people
With a stake in the land will be powerful again.

Mary: And you and your like will be homeless and helpless
Stuck under a hedge in the mud of a lane.

Betsy: And when will this be?

John: As soon as his followers question and doubt.

Mary: Well, tell them he's no use and can't feed them
porter.

John: They'll know soon enough when the drink has run out.

John and Mary go.

Betsy: Ah, little I care if it's Patrick or Balor,
The fire or the shamrock that rules in these parts;
My heart will be broken who ever is ruling
And no politician can mend broken hearts.

She sings to the tune of "One Morning in May",
and as she sings Harry Ward, the first tinker,
enters.

I am a poor girl and my heart it is breaking,
Betrayed by a young man so handsome and bold,
For he's left me and followed a rich merchant's
daughter
Because I am poor and she's decked out with gold.

Harry: I am a young man with a heart full of sorrow,
In love this twelve months with a maiden so fair,
But she's given her heart to a treacherous young man
And passes me by with her head in the air.

Betsy: My heart broke in two when that young man betrayed
me,
One half is still his but the other is mine;
If I give half that heart is there any would take it
And hope that the two would unite at some time?

Harry: Oh, who is so rich as to scorn half a sovereign?
Who so hot in his leather to spurn half a sun?
The half moon is fragile and sweet when she's
shining,
And half of a diamond is better than none.

With a heart and a half I will take up your offer -
By simple addition that makes our hearts two.
Forget all the past, we've the present and future
To find what you get when you add true and true.

he comes closer to her.

We'll be sporty, airy lovers.
I'll give you all I have -
A free pass to the roads of the world,
A free laugh at the world as we pass,
A heart that's free to love.

Betsy: And I will give you all I have -
The half of a heart, but the better half,
The half of my life and half of my mind;
And who gets more when all is weighed?

Harry: I'm ugly and clumsy and the girls laugh
When I try to be kind or speak of love.

Betsy: I have loved a man as handsome as Finn
And all that it brought me was broken dreams.

Harry: All the love that I might have wasted
Is stored, like honey, against the winter;
All the delight of my youth is there,
Stoppered and sealed and waiting the hand
To break the seal. Now love surrounds you
And you'll shine like the earth when the Spring takes
fire
And flames in crocus or daffodil,
And the ballet dancing cherry and almond.

Betsy: And you'd love me like that though I loved another?

Harry: It isn't the past now but the future
That beaks into flower and I'll make a daisy chain
Of hours and days and seconds and minutes
And I'll hang it around your neck forever.
And no diamond necklace will be half as fine.

Betsy: I'm thinking that I was the fool to be wasting
Twelve months in mourning with my heart broken
Like frost on the top of a well. But this evening
When the sun falls over the edge of the world
I'll give you my mouth and myself for the rest of our
nights.

Harry: The day is for living, for hoping, for loving,
The night is for sleeping and dreaming,
Why waste hours of love when our bride bed is
waiting.

They kiss and go. Re-enter the sergeant and the
guards.

Sergeant: It's gone, joy go with it, and may my strong curse
Alight on the reptile that left us in grief.
May the curse of the dumb and the orphan that's blind
Be together combined and light down on the thief.
I curse him again, sure I cannot refrain,
And you'll all say "Amen" when I finish my prayer,
May the bee and the wasp and the ape and the asp
Be his daily companions through market and fair.

1st. Guard: May his temples wear horns and his toes corns,
May he lie down in terror and waken in fear.

2nd. Guard: May the weasel and rat build their nests in his hat,
The monster that stole it, our barrel of beer.

They weep noisily. Marks enters from the shop.

Marks: Men, pull yourselves together, this is most
undignified.
Why are you so grief stricken.

1st. Guard: It's just that we were thinking
Of the good old days when we had power and loved the
gentle tinkers,
And how now we're forbidden even simple joys like
drinking.

Marks: But you know that it is necessary to keep you from
temptation.

Sergeant: Oh, we've a thirst like camels that have crossed the
thankless desert.

2nd. Tinker: I'd personally renounce my soul for half a pint of
porter.

Marks: And could I put a sign up, "Policemen's souls for
sale here"?

1st. Guard: There was a little barrel with the very best of
porter
That was sitting where you're standing till some
Villain came and stole it.

Marks: My God. The very last one.

Sergeant: Aren't there lots like it?

Marks: I wish there were. (Pulls himself together) Of
Course there are, but this one was a special.
Have you no idea, sergeant, what criminal has got it?

Sergeant: In the days of our power, in the days of our might
We'd think of the tinkers, but now that you're gentry
And the gentry are beggars.....

Marks: If you find it I'll give you a pint for each man.

Sergeant: Come on, lads, let's get it.
They go. Marks calls out.

Marks: Oh, Balor, Balor. You're needed here.
Balor comes out of the shop, quite a small man
with no stilts.

Balor: What is the trouble now, boy.

Marks: A serious situation in regard to fundamentals,
The staple food of tinkers and the cost of living
index.

Balor: Explain yourself more clearly.

Marks: You promised when elected that tinkers would be
dandled
Like an only and spoiled child.

Balor: Well, haven't you been dandled, well fed, well
dressed and given
The very best of liquor?

Marks: That is the point at issue. The cellars are all
empty,
The food has all been eaten. And now redeem your
pledges.

Balor: Redeem my?

Marks: Redeem your pledges; we only need a miracle.

Balor: That is most embarrassing. You see, well, Marks, the
fact is
The miracle bank is bankrupt.

Marks: Bankrupt!

Balor: My account is overdrawn there. To secure
accommodation
I would need the faith of millions and all I have is
tinkers.
The situation's serious and I see no solution.
To buy the faith of millions I need some heartening
miracles
And without the faith of nations I have no power to
work them.

Marks: So that's how you would treat us who brought you out
of exile?

Balor: I lifted the tinker from mending a can
And made him the ruler of Ireland
I gave him silk sheets and the full of his can

And the cream of the women of Ireland.
I cuddled and coddled him, milk fed and swaddled him,
Wrapped him in ermine who only knew vermin,
And now in the heel you squabble and squeal....

Marks: And that is enough of your sermon.
you promised more than you had.

Balor: Politicians have always done that.

Marks: And nothing is all that you give?

Balor: Politicians have been known to rat.

Marks: And what's going to happen to us now?

Balor: Just this - keep it under your hat.

He puts his arm round Marks' shoulder and the two walk whispering from the stage. John Melody puts his head in to watch them go, then he enters followed by Mary Melody and Nora.

John: They've come to the end of their one year plan
If Balor cannot fill their can.

Mary: What does it mean? What did they say?

John: It means the tinkers had their day;
This is the end of their constitution,
Now for the counter revolution.

Nora: But daddy, what will happen to them?

John: They'll go back to the roads again.
And let me warn you, keep away
From that Marks Mongan from today.

Mary: You're surely not in love with him?

John: No, that was nothing but a whim.

Nora: Am I in love? And what is love?

John shrugs and he and Mary go. As Nora speaks, Marks appears, unseen by her, at the back of the stage.

That night the constellations sang in tune,
The stars bent down, caressing lake and bogland,
Shining on the heather, the placid moon
Traveled the naked sky, her Samarcand
By day, by night her mica covered road.
And was that love, or did I love him when
Eye flashed to signal eye, a secret code,
Left me betrayed by the heart's garrison?
And what is love, and do I really love?
And if I love, why should I love the lad
I hate most in the world? Ah no, I'll prove
My heart was drunk with moonlight, or was mad
with star shine, or the turf-fire's light of love.

I'll take my skittish heart and teach it sense,
Put it on rations, and send it back to school,
Exchange it's giddy pounds for sober pence
And bring the fiery rebel under rule.

Marks steps forward and tries to taker her in his
arms; She repulses him.

Marks: How could you hate me when you gave your mouth
To my mind when fuchsia burned as bright
As blood that hammered in our temples, when
You let me tame the heart that tried to burst
Out of its cage to nestle in my hand.
And did you hate me when you lay all night
On heather mattress and whispered, "This is Love"?

Nora: It was the Summer spoke and not my tongue.

Marks: And when you whispered, "All I learned or knew,
Gussed or imagined is overboard and love
Sails free before a rough and boisterous wind"
Was that because you hated?

Nora: No, because
The body spoke, and not the virtuous mind.

Marks: Now that John's Eve is here again, and love
Raises his scarlet flag on every hill....

Nora: Then father's right and Balor's race is run?

Marks: What do you mean?

Nora: You speak of John's Eve
And not of Balor's day. Your reign is over
And once again your an itinerant lout.

Marks: I'm not admitting anything, at the worst
It may be necessary to make some change and form
A government in exile. The supply position,
The economic stress may force our hands.

Re-enter the tinkers.

5th. Tinker: Where the devil have they gone to?

2nd. Tinker: There isn't a female anywhere.

Mogue: Were they auctioned off and sold as dollar earners?

5th. Tinker: I'd dearly love to attend that fair -
Fine strong women being skelped to the market,
A knowing hand to assess their girth,
A look at their calendar teeth, then a gallop
To test their wind and speed and worth.
Then the bargain sealed and the luck penny handled,
We'd load them, forty head at a time
And ship them to Dublin. Sure, 'twould save the
country,
Man dear, the census figures would climb;
And early marriage and well filled quivers
Would be the rule, and the farming classes

Would drink champagne instead of porter
And ride to the market in their own Rolls Royces.

2nd. Tinker: If we can't find women, what's the use of thinking,
And time is wasted not spent in drinking.

5th. Tinker: Good fellows let us drink tonight
As no man drank since Bacchus
The sky will be our cocktail jug
The lakes and seas our glasses.

Chorus

And when the sun comes up again
And sees the mighty slaughter
He'll say "The worlds gone roaring drunk,
They should have stuck to porter."

The merchant and the excise man
And all who live in houses
Will be our footstools and the hills
Our seats through our carousals.

Chorus

We'll pour the brandy, gin and rum,
The whiskey and the sherry
Down gullets thirstier than sand
And all die drunk and merry.

Chorus

Then burn the corks and pour the liquor,
Empty all the bottles,
You'll get no chance once life is past
So pour it down your throttles.

They turn to look for the barrel.

Mogue: The barrel is gone that was newly broached,
It must have been seen by some villain and poached.

5th. Tinker: If so, what matter, there's plenty more,
Go on and give a kick at the door.

Tinkers: More drink. More drink. More drink. More drink.
Let glasses clink, clink. More drink. More drink.

Marks steps forward:

2nd. Tinker: Bring us more drink. Our throats are parched,
We're as dry as a sermon.

Marks: Where's the barrel you got?

5th. Tinker: Some villain has trundled it, bundled it off.
Bring us another and let us blot
it up. We'll gulp it, engulf it, absorb it.

Marks: There isn't another.

Tinkers: (Severally) There isn't another?
Why not? We're thirst and cross.
We've been all crossed in love, don't cross us in
drink.

Marks: There's no more. I warned you go easy. Not a drop.

5th. Tinker: Tell Balor we want him. We're as cross as two sticks,
As mad as a wet hen. Hey, Balor, we want you.

Balor enters

Balor: Yes, gentlemen, what can I do for you?

Tinkers: More drink. More drink. More drink. More drink.

Balor: A serious situation now confronts the tinker nation,
For a year you've drunk and eaten as though 'twere
your vocation.

Tinkers: More drink. More drink. More drink. More drink.

Balor: But even drink must have an end if there's none to
brew it;
There's twelve months' work now to be done, and
you're the ones to do it.

Tinkers: More drink. More drink. More drink. More drink.

John Melody enters

Balor: The age of miracles is past.

John: Ah, tinkers, here's the truth at last.

Balor: And I know that men of your proud tradition
Won't depend on miracles for a drink.

John: Now, here is the truth, your reign is over
Gather round , tinkers, now, and think:
What goes up must soon come down,
A quart won't fit in a pint bottle,
Without a brewery the glass is empty,
An empty glass will wet no throttle.

Tinkers: Shut up. Be quiet. Throw him out.

John: Balor promised endless days
Of idle dreaming, constant drinking,
Unwearied loving, ceaseless pleasure,
Carefree, happy and unthinking.

Balor: And all that I have given them.

John: But this is the end, there's no more to give,
The cellar is empty, the bottles drunk,
And soon you'll be a fugitive.

Tinkers: (Severally) Is what he's saying true or false?
Here and now I renounce my faith.
Down with Balor, he tricked us all.
Go on. It's time to abdicate.

John blows his police whistle.

Balor: Oh, you ungrateful race, you serpent's brood,
Refugee snakes that Patrick failed to drown,
Mosquito blood is in your veins, the mad
Dog's snarl is on your crooked teeth;
Betrayal is your creed and treachery
Your faith. I'll see that Charon's ferry boat
Carries no tinker soul across the Styx,
And that St. Patrick, abandoned like myself,
Will use his staff to poke you into hellfire.

5th. Tinker: Only for us you'd be a memory still.

Marks: Men. Tinkers. Idlers. Listen to me.
The long bank holiday is at an end,
We've slept and idled, eaten, drunk and loved,
And now, rested and forceful, filled with energy
We'll step forward on the road to work.

Tinkers. No work. No work. No work. No work.

Marks: Work not for ourselves alone, but work
For Ireland's good.

2nd. Tinker: When has a tinker worked?

Marks: In the future tinkers will not gauge their worth
By pints they drink, by women they love,
But by the hours they work, the work they do.

Tinkers: Throw him out. Silence. Nonsense. No work.
No work. No work. No work. No work.

John: And this is the end of the tinker's republic.
A workers' republic! Yerrah! Don't make me laugh.

Marks: This man is talking nonsense
And that man is talking treason.

5th. Tinker: The whole world knows a tinker goes
By instinct, not by reason.

4th Tinker: A working tinker is absurd,
A walking contradiction;
Was it for this we made your man
A faction, not a fiction?

Mogue: The jig is up, our race is run,
Our luck is out, the bailiff's in,
We've lost the toss, the hand of fate
Has got us leading with the chin.

Marks: Oh, who can know what changes luck,
Maybe the clockwork of the stars
Runs down, or perhaps the fiery cock
Sleeps late and fate
Raves into work and wrecks the calendars.

3rd. Tinker: The clerical magpie, evil bird,
May send his spy upon our road.

2nd. Tinker: Or, bright with morning, we may meet
A red haired woman or a cat,
A white hare or a tailless rat.

Marks: Our feet may cross a fairy ring
And if we fail to cross our fingers
Turn back, touch wood, reverse our coat,
Luck, trembling like a compass hand,
May veer and leave us on the rocks,
Shivered and battered, smashed and far from land.

John: That's where you are now - wrecked and far from home,
Like Barney's bull - that prototype of woe.

Enter the sergeant and the guards.

Arrest the whole pack of them,
Every man-Jack of them,
Fetter and bind them, handcuff and blind them.

Sergeant: (To Balor) I'm very sorry, President, to hear the
heinous treason,
We'll take him to the madhouse, he must have lost his
reason.

John: No. The old regime is back again, and I'm in the
saddle;
Arrest them, bind them, lock them up and see that
don't skedaddle.

Sergeant: (Pointing to Balor) We can't arrest this person here.

Balor: Quite right. Before I leave you
I have one more speech to make, the last,
Which may or may nor grieve you.
Tinkers and people, humans and tinkers,
This is the last word to all my fine drinkers.
You brought me to earth again, made me a God again,
Now I must leave again, off on my tod again.
I forgive you for failing in faith since a tinker
Is seldom a poet and never a thinker;
And I leave you one gift, the last egg in my nest,
It will save you from punishments, warrants, arrest.
This is my miracle, the strongest of all;
From today let the statute book carry this law;
All property of whatsoever type, manner or
description
Chattle real or personal, asset, resource or
possession,
Dower, jointure or inheritance, asset or patrimony,
Chose in action, lock-stock-and barrel and even
common money,
Gear, tackle and rigging and accouterments of all
kinds,
Sides of bacon, barrels of porter, clay pipes and
window blinds

Shall belong, if not nailed solidly to the living
earth,
To the tinker who can take them and carry them away
in his cart.
And this act, to which all pains and penalties of the
constitution shall adhere,
Shall be known as the Tinkers Property Protection Act
of the present year.
And all of the events of the past twelve months will
be forgotten by everyone

And for that purpose there will be a statute know as
the Act of Oblivion
And now I must leave you, and as I bid you goodbye
I hope that if ever you want an odd job god to run
Your errands again you won't call on Balor of the
Evil Eye.

There is a blackout and when the lights go up
again Balor has disappeared, the scene has
changed to that of Act II and the characters are
in their poses from when the Sergeant stoop from
behind the rock.

Sergeant: And now the case is closed and complete,
We've witnesses here. Mr. Melody stand.
Two guards with notebooks, and one of yourselves.
You're as good as convicted by the law of the land.

On their cue the guards and Betsy stand up.

1st. Guard: And here's your legal caution:-
You needn't, if you wish, say any word.....

2nd. Guard: Perhaps your sergeantship is unaware
That only recently an act was passed,
The Tinkers Property Protection Act.

The sergeant pulls a pamphlet out of his pocket.

Sergeant: That's right. Now tell me, Mr. Melody
Was all your property securely nailed,
Barred, locked, bolted?

John: I think it was.

Sergeant: Think is no good. So I must charge you now
With criminal dereliction of your duty.
Guards, take him to the station for the night.
And to the tinkers, I apologise,
Wish them good luck, good health, good appetite.

The tinkers and the guards depart with John.

Marks: So, all ends well. Nora will be my bride.

Nora: No, I'll not have the people say
I left my respectable kith and kin
Disgraced my parents to streele behind
A tinker who doesn't know prayer from sin;
And I'll not change my painted room
And the patchwork guilt and single bed
For the shelter of a heeled up cart -
I'm a timid girl when all is said,
And a prayer comes readier than a curse
And a curse comes readier than a blow,
So, God bless you, and keep me far from me,
And I'll love you the more the further you go.

Marks: No stranger dog has ever learned
The tinker ways and no woman who grew
In a cottage garden could take to the wilds.
I'm afraid poor Betsy will have to do.

Betsy: Poor Betsy is richly in love, and Harry
Is richly in love with her, and they'll marry.

Marks: The sportsman who misses with one barrel
Presses the other trigger and then
Reloads; and the fisher who loses his salmon
Baits his bright hook and tries again;

And the air is still heavy with wings and the river
Still busy with fish and in every hedge
There are girls growing ripe and from this day I'll
pluck them
For that is a tinker's privilege.

(To Nora) And you in your little white bed will
remember
The great bed of earth, and my love, like a wave.

(To Betsy) And you, with your lot, will remember my
kisses
And the wild love I gave you, till your bed is the
grave.

5th. Tinker: Enough of this love talk, come open the bottles,
Time enough for the girls when we've wetted our
throttles;
From this day no tinker need work, think or grieve,
And the day of our exodus is Holy John's Eve.

The tinkers sing to the tune of "Molly Bawn"

Tinkers: Oh the chicken or the duckling from the pot,
The sugar and the bread, the twist of tea,
The potatoes and the carrots and the onion from the
garden,
Oh who wouldn't be a tinker when he's free.

The blanket from the cupboard or the cot,
The night shirt from the clothesline or the tree,
The pony from the stable and the bottle from the
table,
Oh, who wouldn't be a tinker when he's free.

The daughter or the mother from the man,
The little girl who longs for gaiety,
The bacon from the table, the porter from the
shebeen,
Oh who wouldn't be a tinker when he's free.

The woodbine in the hedgerows and the lane,
The fair green and shooting gallery,
The love making in the haystacks when the stars are
bright as tapers
Oh, who wouldn't be a tinker when he's free.

FINAL CURTAIN