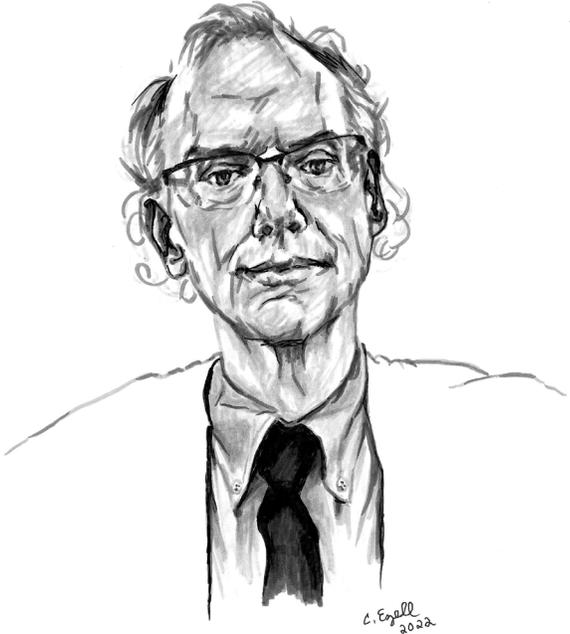


# The Pushing of the Celts

## Jonathan Locke Hart

a fragment of a lost manuscript, written Spring 2009,  
Centre Culturel Irlandais, Paris, excavated years later



### *1. I have been*

I have been  
We have been all pushed  
To the west rim

They have drummed and stolen  
Our tongue. These poems are for those  
Who drove us

The bards lost to a time with no poetry  
These words  
Are an excavation

A late tongue time has given us  
In mutation with the spaces  
Where peoples moved like the wind.

## *2. Chomh haosta leis an gceo*

Chomh haosta leis an gceo  
As old as the mist  
We are, hanging on western

Mountains, pushed into the sea  
Almost, gasping, our tongue  
As we are driven, starved,

Left to die. The tribes from south,  
And east came

Our tongues  
Died slowly, in shambles,  
Tatters, buried in the peat, bog after bog.

We are the mist rising in the morning  
Burnt off in the sun  
Unseen at night.

### *3. Chomh ata le frog sa bhfómhar*

Chomh ata le frog sa bhfómhar  
I am as swollen as a frog in autumn  
My words are as bloated after

A long summer, and winter is almost  
Come, like a lover who has spilt too much  
On a ground grown fallow. The air

Is full of bombast: I have sucked  
In my share, boasted like a warrior  
Before battle.

The danger when the leaves  
Turn is when the day grows  
Still, I will puff up and explode.

#### *4. Chomh balbh le trumpa gan teanga*

Chomh balbh le trumpa gan teanga  
Like a trumpet without a tongue  
I will call so the walls do not

Come tumbling down. No one  
Will hear me, my mute call,  
Along the watch-tower,

Might fall music  
To the night, escape the corners  
Of my mouth, wet the dry blood

Encrusted there. Some proclaim  
In a dark rain  
This is the language of silence.

## *5. Chomh cantalach le mála easóg*

Chomh cantalach le mála easóg  
As bad-tempered as a sack of weasels  
I am when you seize my land

Do not be astonished that I snap  
And bite your hand, you starve me,  
My children wizened as corn-stalk

Drying in the droughting sun.  
Conquerors come and go  
But do damage in the meantime

Yes, it is a mean time. You take up  
Our names and erase them  
With our myths.

And the winter rain would fall  
And the summer sun would burn  
The mist undone, in this no Celtic twilight.

## 6. *Chomh cinnte le sioc*

Chomh cinnte le sioc  
As certain as frost  
Death will come

It will take all of us  
The sun will  
Fade, and memory

Will go like spring behind.  
They took our books,  
They forbade our tongue

The fields grew vacant  
As they pushed us into the sea  
Into green-tongued famine.

The harvest is done  
And we are done. The frost  
At midnight comes

A frozen touch  
To our graves  
In the burden of sleep.

[The rest was lost]