

" I think the website is a great way of highlighting and preserving the heritage of the area. Congrats to everyone concerned in this project. North Kerry and West Limerick share cultural and environmental similarities also. Being from Kilchreest I took a keen interest in the fortunes of the Aughty region during the mudslide in Derrybrien and I wrote a poem entitled Bleeding which tried to express the way in which the environmental and social disaster impacted on me at the time. It was published in full in the tribune and I also performed it at a number of poetry slams. Rath De ar an obair" ~ 31st August 2007

BLEEDING

Sliabh Aughty, my own mountain mine,
Rhododendroned ridge ever there for me;
Fields ascending higher as I go
From Ballylee to Loughrea's lake:
To look beyond at County Clare
Or to gaze at Galway Bay.

Beyond the vision of the valley
Is a village hard to find,
But now it's known the world over
Since the bog has moved in Derrybrien.

Forests, farms, furze and heather-
Colour palette in the sun:
Who'll protect them from the landslide
Slipping down the river run?

Noble men of Tobar Pheadair,
Castleboy and old Kilchreest
Wont you worry for your brothers
Who are threatened by the beast -
Now let loose on this landscape
Far beyond the mountain top;
Have you seen Abhainn dá Loilíoch?
Floating Christmas trees and peat
Slowly slithering towards Lough Cutra,
Killing brown trout in the squeeze,
Ruining roadways and the bridge.

Up in the pub that's warm and snug
There's talk and tension in the air,
They're telling tales of the fearsome gorge-
Up a thousand feet from there.

All the experts are left thinking
For they've failed to fight the flow,
All their barriers were upended
With a muffled mountain roar.

In Derrybrien they're fearing
What's gone down and what's to come -
Maybe further bigger landslides
For God's sake what's to be done?

Bring them help,
We fought for freedom,
'Tis their land, their place, their lives,
It's not just a piece of mountain -
Don't be fooled it's far more grand.
Though they're up there isolated,
They're the salt of our native land.

When Pádraig Pearse was writing poetry
'Twas not of Golden Vales he wrote
But of the little towns of Connacht,
Of mountain fields that men have sown.

At the weekend Fleadh of Cooley-Collins
I watched a lively woman dance
In sean nós style and quiet abandon
On an afternoon in Peterswell;
While at the bar there played a fiddler,
With hat of tweed and stoic face,
His bowing was so soft and gentle
In deep respect to this great place.

Just one word about the mountain
That I grew beside secure,
Thinking mountains were forever-
They were there aloft alone:
But having been to Costa Blanca,
In a town called Guardamar,

There I saw the bulls tormented
In the ring to loud acclaim;
Such noble, haughty, well built creatures
Sent to death by lance and spear;
There they lost their way so blindly
As the blood flowed down their shanks;
Now it's nature's turn to suffer
Where the bog slides o'er its floor -
Like the toros proud it's blameless
All the shame is ours alone.
Let Spanish bulls on prados prance,
Far away from the mob's olés,
To be there to see in all their beauty
Like the backdrop of these hills.

'Twas not a bull but the celtic tiger
Changed your serene mountain stance,
What you'll see is masts and turbines
Every time you upwards glance.

Throw up your head and horns on high,
You wild and fearsome toro,
While the river of mud, the mountain's blood,
Flows from the land of Lough Atorick.

~ Matt Mooney

Matt Mooney was born in South Galway in 1943. His first collection, *Droving* (Listowel, Matt Mooney, 2003) was launched at Writers Week. He lives in Listowel, Co. Kerry.