

# ANACH CUAIN

traditional ballad, Co. Galway

*very freely (mm ~ 88)*

Musical notation for measures 1-4. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. The music consists of a series of chords, starting with a forte (*f*) dynamic.

Musical notation for measures 5-8. Measure 5 is marked *rit.* and measure 6 has a *XII* fingering. The tempo marking *mm ~ 50* appears at the start of measure 7. The dynamic is *mp*. Measure 8 contains a triplet of eighth notes.

Musical notation for measures 9-11. Measure 10 contains a triplet of eighth notes.

Musical notation for measures 12-14. Measure 13 contains a triplet of eighth notes.

Musical notation for measures 15-17. Measure 15 contains a triplet of eighth notes.

Musical notation for measures 18-20. Measure 19 contains a triplet of eighth notes.

Musical notation for measures 21-23. Measure 21 contains a triplet of eighth notes.

*If my health is spared I'll be long relating / Of the boat that sailed out from Anac Cuain  
And the keening after of mother and father / As the laying out of each corpse was done.*

This is an adaptation of a song in the "sean nós" (old style) describing the loss of a boat named "Caisleán Nua" ("New Castle") and nineteen passengers in Loch Corrib, Co. Galway, in September 1828. The words set to the undoubtedly much older air were composed by the blind poet Anthony Raftery (1784 - 1835). The sorrowful song has long outlived the memory of the actual event, although there has apparently been a recent effort in the area to erect a memorial to the tragedy.

"Anac Cuan" can be spelled a number of ways, but the basic meaning is something like "marshy harbor". The boat actually departed from the town of Annaghdown (= Anac/Eanach Dúin, "marshy fort"), but the reason why two similar but different names are involved in the story of the ill-fated boat is not immediately apparent.

The remains of the boat - not much more than a large and leaky rowboat that was apparently the victim of an impatient sheep being brought to market - were located in the River Corrib in 1978 by divers from a club in Galway. One of the principal divers was - coincidentally - another Raftery. I don't know if he's a relative of the poet or not!