



The Midnight Court and Other Poems

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A bawdy and boisterous poem of Ireland, translated by one of its most distinguished literary sons

As a teacher and translator of Irish verse, Frank O'Connor brought to the world's attention many fine poems from his native land, few as enduring—and none as controversial—as Brian Merriman's *The Midnight Court*.

An eighteenth-century masterpiece widely recognized as the greatest comic poem in Irish literature, *The Midnight Court* is a hilarious and insightful take on the battle of the sexes. In the court of a fairy queen, the men and women of Ireland air their grievances with one another. The competing lists of complaints are as long as they are uproarious, and when the queen rules in favor of the women, all young Irish bachelors are doomed to a terrible fate: marriage.

The Midnight Court has now taken its rightful place in the Irish literary canon, but when O'Connor's English translation was first published in 1945, the Irish government banned it as obscene. In a delicious irony that might have been lifted from one of O'Connor's short stories, the Gaelic original met with no censure. Here, as it first appeared, is Frank O'Connor's faithful, funny, and eloquent translation of one of the most important works in Irish literature.

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