

# The Foggy Dew

Easter Week

The musical score is written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 4/4 time signature. It consists of three staves of music. The first staff contains measures 1 through 4, with chords Em, Am, D, Em, and Am. A first ending bracket labeled '1.' spans measures 4 and 5, with an Em chord below it. The second staff starts at measure 5 and contains measures 5 through 8, with chords Em, G, D, and Em. The third staff starts at measure 9 and contains measures 9 through 12, with chords Am, Em, Am, D, G, Em, Am, and Em. The piece concludes with a double bar line at the end of the third staff.

1. 'Twas down the glen one Easter morn  
To a city fair rode I.  
When Ireland's line of marching men  
In squadrons passed me by.  
No pipe did hum, no battle drum  
Did sound its dread tattoo,  
But the Angelus bell o'er the Liffey's swell  
Rang out in the foggy dew.
2. Right proudly high over Dublin town  
They hung out a flag of war.  
'Twas better to die 'neath an Irish sky  
Than at Suvla or Sud el Bar  
And from the plains of Royal Meath  
Strong men came hurrying through;  
While Brittania's sons with their long-range guns  
Sailed in from the foggy dew.
3. 'Twas England bade our wild geese go  
That small nations might be free.  
Their lonely graves are by Suvla's waves  
On the fringe of the grey North Sea,  
But had they died by Pearse's side  
Or fought with Valera true,  
Their graves we'd keep where the Fenians sleep  
'Neath the hills of the foggy dew.
4. The bravest fell and the solemn bell  
Rang mournfully and clear  
For those who died that Eastertide  
In the springing of the year  
And the world did gaze in deep amaze  
At those fearless men and true  
Who bore the fight that freedom's light  
Might shine through the foggy dew.

---

"The Foggy Dew" is an Irish song written by Canon Charles O'Neill, a County Down priest, in 1919 to commemorate the Easter Rising of 1916.

On Easter Sunday, April 24th, 1916, in what would become known as the Easter Rising, James Connolly and Pádraig Pearse led an insurrection in Dublin against British rule of Ireland. The Irish rebel force, estimated at between 1,200 and 2,000, seized the General Post Office and other prominent governmental buildings in Dublin. However, in about a week's time Britain's well-trained and heavily-armed occupying force squashed the insurrection. At the time of the rising, which coincided with World War I, many (and probably most) Irish citizens did not support an armed revolt against British troops, but Irish sentiment changed drastically in subsequent weeks as British Command summarily executed all real and imagined leaders of the insurrection. Sixteen leaders of the insurrection, including Pádraig Pearse and an already badly injured James Connolly, who unable to stand was placed in a chair before a firing squad, were executed. In the eyes of the Irish people these men soon became martyrs in Ireland's struggle for home rule. O'Neill's song encouraged Irishmen to fight for Ireland's freedom, rather than for the British, as so many young Irishmen were doing in World War I. The song's noting of Suvla and Sud-El-Bar referred to sites at Gallipoli, scene of the disastrous 1915 British offensive against the Turks. The massive casualties there included Irishmen who were serving in the British Army during World War I, and Irishmen perished all across the Western Front fighting the Germans.

The two leaders mentioned in the song are Pádraig Pearse who led the rising and Éamon de Valera who was released under an amnesty in June 1917 and later became the President of Dáil Éireann and President of the Republic and, after independence, served two terms as Taoiseach (Prime Minister) and President. At his retirement in 1973 at the age of 90, he was the oldest head of state in the world.

There are a few old traditional English and Irish ballads that go by the name of "The Foggy Dew". The music is from a manuscript that was in possession of Kathleen Dallat. That manuscript gives Carl Hardebeck as the arranger. It is the same air as the traditional love song "The Maid on the Mourne Shore".

The song (also sometimes known as "Down the Glen") has been performed and recorded by most Irish traditional groups, including The Clancy Brothers and Tommy Makem, The Dubliners, The Chieftains, Shane MacGowan and The Wolfe Tones among others.

Pete Seeger recorded this song with his own lyrics, calling it "Over the Hills".