

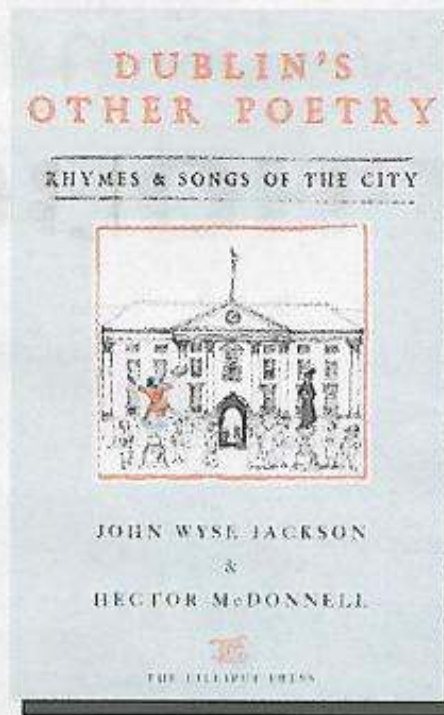
Dublin's Other Poetry: Rhymes and Songs of the City

By John Wyse Jackson &
Hector McDonnell
(Lilliput Press)

The 'other poetry' of this anthology's title refers to the lesser-known light verse, songs, parodies, bawdy rhymes and the like that pay tribute to the capital's rich characters – and that often slip under the literary radar.

This collection brings together a number of unserious, mocking or sarcastic verses from four centuries, each of them put into context by the editors with explanatory notes and background on the author. Each song or poem is illustrated by Hector McDonnell's humorous drawings – poignant, witty and often helpful in distilling the essence of the texts.

But it's not the impressive round-up of 'discarded' verse – by such well-known authors as Jonathan Swift, Brendan Behan, George Bernard Shaw, Oliver St John Gogarty, Dorothy Sayers and of course the Dublin balladeer Zozimus – which makes this col-



The poems take
in a wide range
of topics, from
the Dart-speak
of today to
the rowdy
Donnybrook Fair
of bygone years

lection such an enjoyable kaleidoscopic view of Dublin's society past and present. Rather, it's the numerous anonymous or little-known contributors, often saved from obscure ballad sheets or publications such as the TCD Gazette, that sets it apart.

A playful tone – always mocking either politics, the church or the upper classes – is maintained throughout the book. The poems take in a wide range of topics, from the Dart-speak of today to the rowdy Donnybrook Fair of bygone years. Many an interesting detail about forgotten customs or parts of Dublin is also revealed; for example we learn about the loose women of some parts of Dublin in 'Rakes of Stoney Batter'.

Together with the previously published *Ireland's Other Poetry* by the same editors, *Dublin's Other Poetry* combines the best of those poems that find themselves in the discard pile of history. Above all, it's the sharp wit, irreverence towards the establishment and the wide range of mainly unknown contributors that make this collection a vivid reflection of Dublin life, always maintaining its independent spirit and an eye for the comic in a tragic or desolate situation.



Isabel Roleff has written articles and reviews for various magazines in her native Germany. More information about her work can be found at irishwritersexchange.com