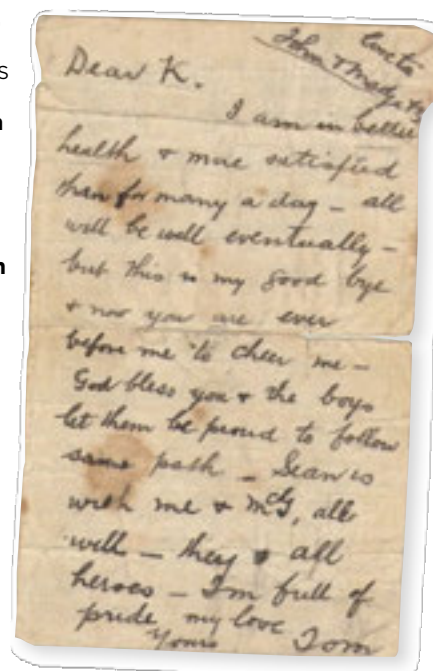




Left: biographer Helen Litton. STEVE HUMPHREYS

Above: Kathleen Clarke, Tom's widow, in mourning clothes, with her sons John Daly Clarke, Tom Clarke Jnr and Emmet Clarke. Right: the letter Tom (inset below) wrote to Kathleen on the eve of his execution. 'I'm full of pride, my love,' he wrote.



## 'The Wayfarer'

By Patrick Pearse

The beauty of the world hath made me sad,  
 This beauty that will pass;  
 Sometimes my heart hath shaken with great joy  
 To see a leaping squirrel in a tree,  
 Or a red lady-bird upon a stalk,  
 Or little rabbits in a field at evening,  
 Lit by a slanting sun,  
 Or some green hill where shadows drifted by  
 Some quiet hill where mountainy man hath sown  
 And soon would reap; near to the gate of Heaven;  
 Or children with bare feet upon the sands  
 Of some ebb'd sea, or playing on the streets  
 Of little towns in Connacht,  
 Things young and happy.  
 And then my heart hath told me:  
 These will pass,  
 Will pass and change, will die and be no more,  
 Things bright and green, things young and happy;  
 And I have gone upon my way  
 Sorrowful.

### AN ASSESSMENT DR LUCY COLLINS

'The Wayfarer' reflects on the fleeting beauty of life's journey at a moment of decisive personal and political change. Alternating rhythms capture its shifting moods of sorrow and joy.

Yet, as its style and language suggest, this is a nostalgic work — here, a timeless ideal is a greater source of imaginative power than the immediacy of lived experience.

The 'green' and 'quiet' hill evokes perfect peace, but also reveals the passage of time through seasonal patterns of planting and harvesting.

The biblical resonance of the scene is reinforced by the image of the gates of heaven, which open the poem to a space of redemption often invoked by the poets of 1916.

This poem's air of melancholy does not derive directly from political events, however, but from the life that is slipping from the speaker's grasp.

Written shortly before Pearse's execution, it shows the poet seeking to come to terms with his impending death.

Dr Lucy Collins is a lecturer in English at University College Dublin (UCD). She is the curator of 'Reading 1916', a forthcoming exhibition at UCD Special Collections



# ing Fenian roots

ance about her family's strong links to 1916, writes **Kim Bielenberg**

Independence and the Civil War were not talked about.

"We wouldn't have discussed it in the home. My mother is a pacifist, and she had no time for republicanism. She is the sort of person who switched off the television when Gerry Adams came on."

It was when Helen went on holiday to Limerick to stay with her grandparents that she learned more about her Fenian roots and the strong links with 1916.

Her great-grandfather Edward was a Fenian who was jailed for his role in a rebellion in 1867. He had nine daughters and one son, Ned, but died young.

When Edward died, his brother, a much more prominent Fenian, John Daly, became the father figure of the household and ran



a bakery, which became a focus for republican activity in Limerick.

John Daly and his nephew Ned did not get on, however, and the younger man eventually moved to work and live Dublin. Helen says: "It is said in the family that no two Daly men could ever live in the same house happily."

"John Daly felt his nephew Ned grew up spoiled rotten, surrounded by women. Ned was not John's idea of a man — he was very interested in his appearance and he loved to sing in a beautiful baritone voice.

"Ned's ultimate ambition was to be a soldier — but he did not know where to go with it, because he could not join the British Army. He studied military manuals."

Ned Daly's ambition was fulfilled

when he joined the Volunteers, and he rapidly rose up the ranks to become Commandant.

"He was respected as a commander during the Rising, because he was a good tactician. He altered his plans according to the circumstances, and pulled back where necessary."

Helen describes how Kathleen Clarke faced an unimaginable ordeal after the surrender, when both her husband Tom and her brother Ned were sentenced to death.

"On the eve of Tom Clarke's execution, she visited him in Kilmainham Jail, and then on the following day she also visited her brother before he faced a firing squad."

Helen Litton has written biographies of both Daly and Clarke. She also edited Kathleen Clarke's memoir, 'Revolutionary Woman'