

The Path to Independence*

Terry McDonagh

*They took the road
they had to take - thinking
and seeing far beyond
what they thought
they could think or see
through rebellion
war – pushing hard
to claim their rights
through torture
hunger strike and pain
that felt like a curse
till a chance of peace
pushed up like morsels
one day after another
into unsatisfied conflict
sibling against sibling
fighting in the streets
fighting in the countryside
and when there was no fight left
for friends to fight about
the war-song settled
into a hard silence – until
Seán T. O’Kelly declared a republic
in 1949 – thirty-three years after 1916.*

* In recognition of the 2022 Irish in Europe Year Theme ‘**Irish Poetry Building Bridges in Europe & Around the World**’ A poem written by Terry McDonagh of Mayo/Hamburg, Grand Marshal of the 2022 Brussels Saint Patrick’s Day Parade for Peace and author of his most recent publication ‘**Two Notes from Home**’ is read. The unpublished poem titled ‘**Pathway to Independence**’ was written as part of a creative writing programme ‘**Poetry as Commemoration**’ facilitated with Poetry Ireland and University College Dublin on ‘**The Irish Civil War, Independence and the Irish Free State**’