## The BROAD BLACK BRIMMER

THERE'S A UNIFORM THAT'S HANGING
IN WHAT'S KNOWN AS FATHER'S ROOM
A UNIFORM SO SIMPLE IN ITS STYLE
IT HAS NO BRAID OF GOLD OR SILK
NO HAT WITH FEATHERED PLUME
YET MY MOTHER HAS PRESERVED IT ALL THIS WHILE
ONE DAY SHE MADE ME TRY IT ON A WISH OF MINE FOR YEARS "IN MEMORY OF YOUR FATHER, SON," SHE SAID
AND WHEN I'D PUT THE SAM BROWNE ON
SHE WAS SMILING THRU HER TEARS
AS SHE PLACED THE BROAD BLACK BRIMMER ON MY HEAD!

IT'S JUST A BROAD BLACK BRIMMER
WITH ITS RIBBONS FRAYED AND TORN
BY THE CARELESS TWIST OF MANY A MOUNTAIN BREEZE
AN OLD TRENCH COAT THAT'S BATTLE STAINED AND WORN
AND BREECHES ALMOST THREADBARE AT THE KNEES
A SAM BROWNE BELT WITH A BUCKLE BIG AND STRONG
AND A HOLSTER THAT BEEN EMPTY MANY A DAY
WHEN MEN CLAIM IRELAND'S FREEDOM
THE ONE THEY'LL CHOOSE TO LEAD THEM
WILL WEAR THE BROAD BLACK BRIMMER OF THE I.R.A.!

IT WAS THE UNIFORM SO PROUDLY WORN
BY MY FATHER LONG AGO
WHEN HE REACHED MY MOTHER'S HOMESTEAD ON THE RUN
IT WAS THE UNIFORM MY FATHER WORE
IN THAT LITTLE CHURCH BELOW
WHEN FATHER MAC, HE BLESSED THE PAIR AS ONE
AND AFTER TRUCE AND TREATY
AND THE PARTING OF THE WAYS
HE WORE IT WHEN HE MARCHED OUT WITH THE REST
AND WHEN THEY BORE HIS BODY DOWN
THAT RUGGED HEATHER BRAES
THEY PLACED THE BROAD BLACK BRIMMER
ON HIS BREAST!