# An tEarrach Thiar

“Tá áit lárnach ag an dúlra sa dán seo.” É sin a phlé.

From beginning to end, we see that nature has a central role in the poem, ‘An tEarrach Thiar’, by Máirtín Ó Direáin. It is to be seen clearly there. The poet shows his love for his native place when he makes an enticing, positive description of the tranquil life of the island people in spring, and they co-operating with nature. Its obvious that nature has a central role in the lives of the people on the island.

In the first verse, we see a man out in his field digging, sowing potatoes, perhaps: *(línte)*. There’s nothing else to be heard but the rasping sound of the spade, that beautiful warm spring day. The people of the island were depending on the ground to sustain themselves. Nature is in question here. After that, we are given a description on the weather there: *(línte)*. The sweetness, peace and beauty of nature is to do with this image.

In the second verse, a description is made on a man carrying a creel of seaweed on his back. It was the custom of the farmers to harvest seaweed in the spring to put it on the ground as fertiliser. The people of the island were depending on nature here also. With the sun shining down, we see the seaweed glistening, and the white stony shore on the island: *(línte)*. It was hard work, but we don’t see any pressure here because nature and the people were co-operating together.

We see an image of the women of the island working in the pools, harvesting seaweed. The poet describes the stoney shore with the compound word: “(*focal)”*. Again, the local women are co-working with nature, and depending on it. Nature has a central role in their lives.

And we approaching the end of the poem, the poet creates a beautiful image in the final verse of another aspect of traditional seasonal work of the island – the fishermen out fishing. Fishing was very important for the life of the island – we see the importance of nature in the life of the island. There’s a description there of the naomhóg returning home, *“full of fish”*, and the weak empty sound that the oars make. There’s a description of the enticing and magical sea, the gold light of the sun shining on it. With the word *“mall”*, the poet shows the lack of pressure to do with island life. The sea is calm, and nature is helping the islanders. Certainly, nature has a central role in their lives.

It is obvious from beginning to end that nature was truly important in the lives of the islanders. We see a couple of images about island-life at the time: digging in a field, harvesting seaweed in the pools, or carrying the seaweed in creels, and fishing in currachs.

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