

Carolann's Rambles



Creative Responses

COOLE MUSIC & ARTS

2021

Creative Responses to Carolan's Life.....

The year 2020 was the 350th anniversary of the birth of Turlough Carolan, a blind Irish harper who was famed as a composer and professional musician in Connaught, Clare & south Ulster until his death in 1738, at the age of 68.

Carolan made his living by travelling, on horseback, from patron to patron, where he was always a welcome guest. As a thank you for his hosts' hospitality he would compose a planxty (tune), to which he often set his own poetry.

Carolan's music has survived and has become a cornerstone of Irish traditional repertoire today. Carolan's compositions giving us a glimpse into a fascinating period of Irish history where Catholic & Protestant gentry were patrons of the arts, against the backdrop of the Penal Laws.

From March - June 2021, the young musicians of Coole Music & Arts worked with Galway musician Sinead Hayes to discover more about the life and music of Turlough Carolan.

Each group of musicians learned a Carolan tune as well as a traditional tune. The young musicians were also invited to respond creatively to the life and music of Turlough Carolan. Their original artworks, stories and poetry are extraordinary, and we celebrate them in this e-book.

Congratulations to all the brilliant young musicians of Coole Music & Arts for their fantastic creativity.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to Katharina Baker and all the Coole Music and Arts tutors for making this project a reality. A special thanks to all the parents of these talented musicians who helped with videos, scanning artworks, and typing stories and poetry - this e-book would not have been possible without you.

Thanks also to the Eimear Noonan Memorial Bursary committee for their support of this project. The bursary celebrates the life of young musician Eimear Noonan, whose life was tragically cut short in 2017.

www.coole-music.com

www.eimearnoonanmusicbursaryaward.net

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the Carolan's Rambles Creative Responses

Idris Sabry - Carolan's Harp



Tomás Minoque: Carolan Portrait



Clodagh O' Donnell : Carolan at the Door

I was having breakfast when I heard a knock on the door.

I didn't want to open the door because I didn't want to get the smallpox. Then I heard music.

I had to open the door. I played music myself but then my violin got broken and I forgot how to play. When it broke I fell into tears because I loved playing music.

I opened the door and the music warmed my heart very much and fast. Then I saw a few shillings fall out of the musician's pocket, and I gave him some shillings of my own. I know the money was very valuable to me, but he was more poor. I let him stay for one night. In the morning

I was woken up by very pretty music. He called it the O'Donnell polka - and he had composed it for me! When he was going I wanted to give more money, but I had no more, and he said "That was fine, you gave me loads."

Then he left.



[Click HERE to hear this story.](#)

Eabha Crossan: Wooden Model of Harp



Abby Finnegan: Carolan's Life Part I

Turlough O'Carolan

Turlough O'Carolan was an Irish harpist.

He was born in the 1600s.

He was

born in an area called Nobber in co Meath.



When he turned 18 he went blind due to smallpox.

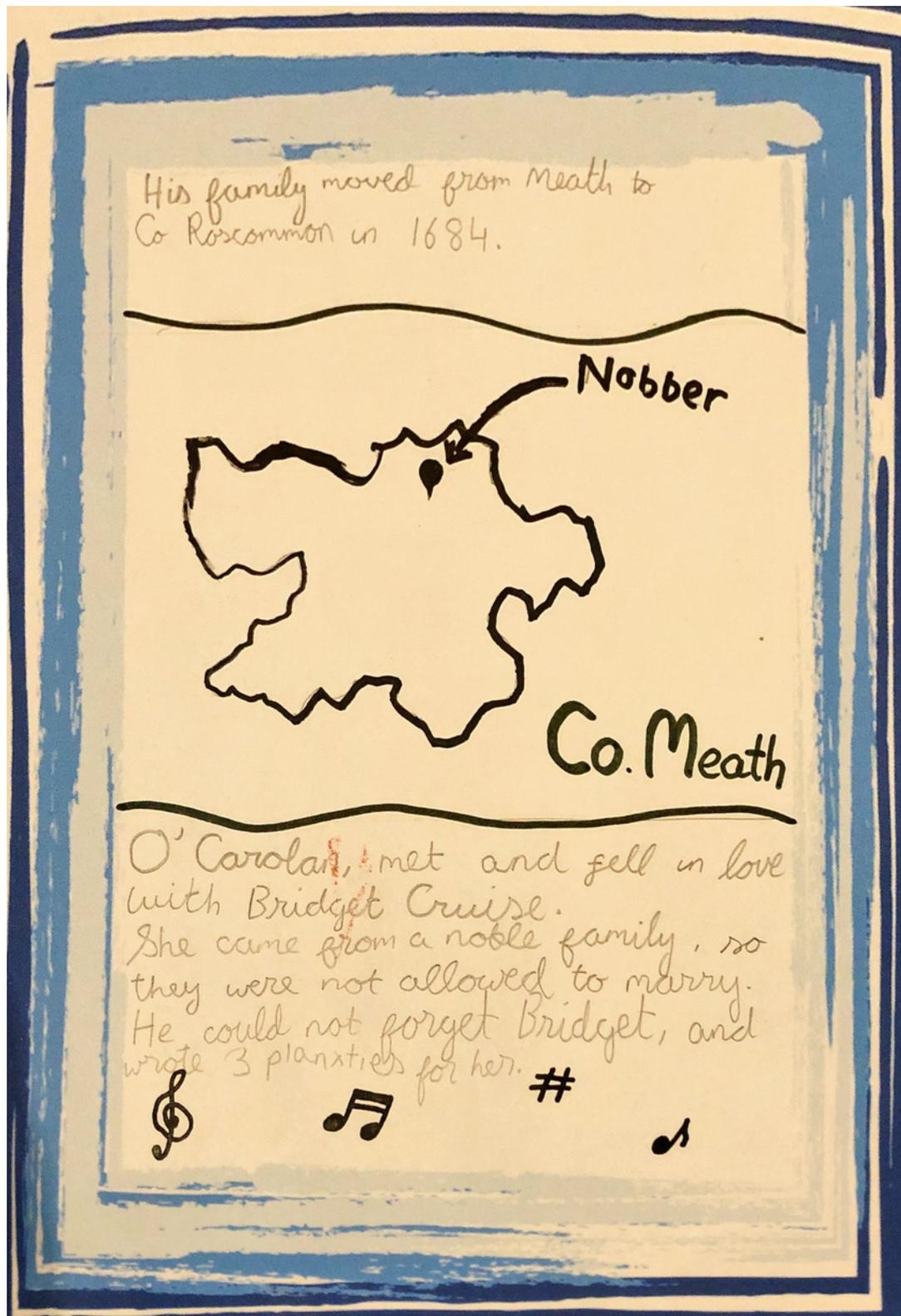
He travelled with his horse and guide to play, and compose for his patrons.

He married when he was in his 50s, and had 7 children.

Turlough O'Carolan died in 1738.



Abby Finnegan: Carolan's Life Part II



Ciara Finn: Carolan at the Apple Tree

The day started like every other. I had to get up with the first crow of our cockerel to light the fire. Our house only has two rooms, and it was freezing.....
first crow of our cockerel to light the fire. Our house only has two rooms, and it was freezing inside and outside. I decided to walk about a mile to find the apple tree from the village about six miles away. But when I got there everyone from the village about six miles away was crowded around one man.

I could not really make out who it was but when a group of people cleared I knew exactly who it was. It was Turlough Carolan.

I was in shock. "He is actually here" I thought. I was very excited so I ran all the way back home to my little brother and my mam. I told them the news and they were excited too.

So for the next few days, I kept going down to the apple tree to see him play.

The end.



[Click HERE to hear this story.](#)

Gwenolé Jost Hegarty: Carolan Portrait



Purlough O'Carolan
by
Gwenolé Hegarty

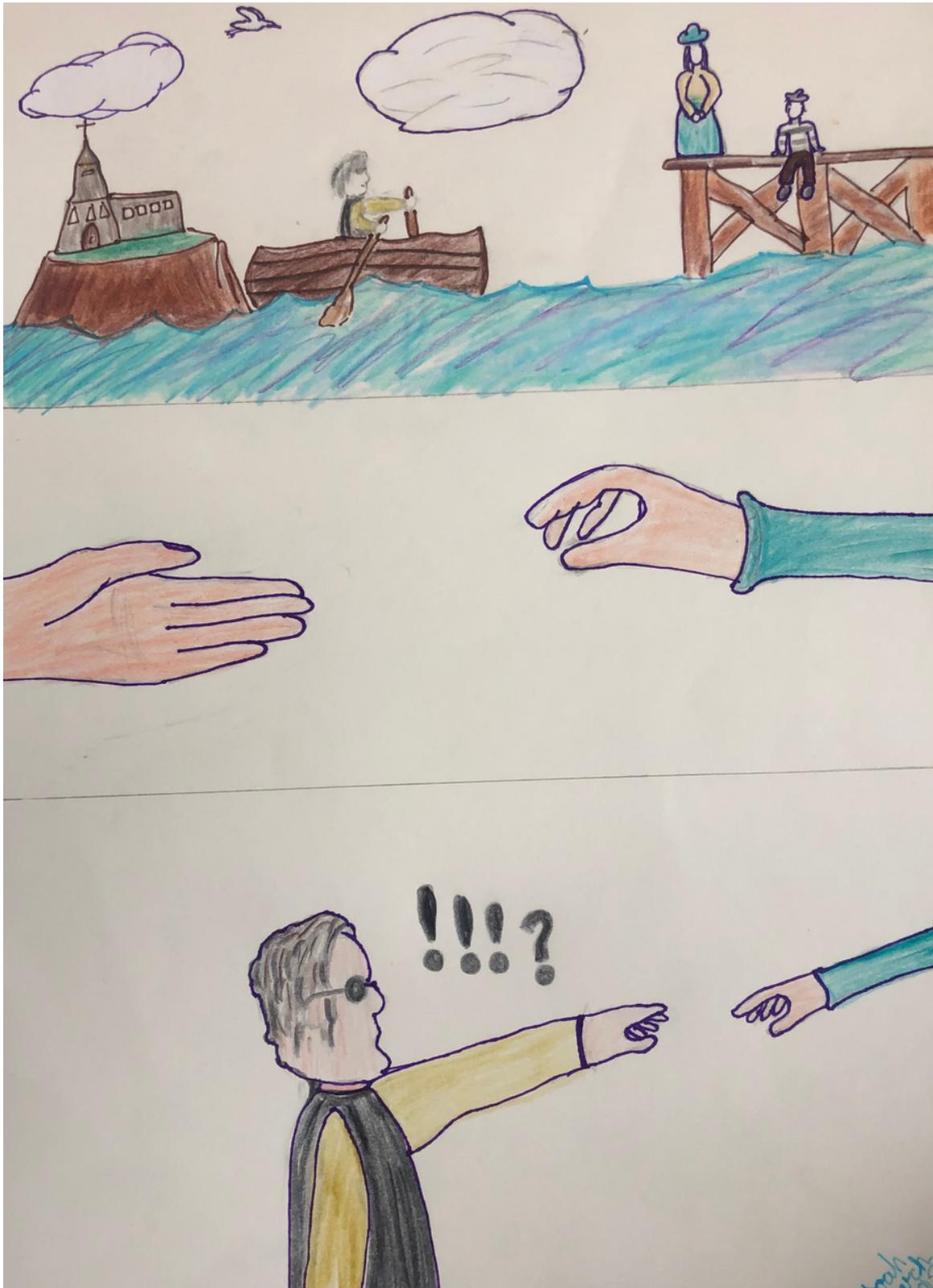
Aoife Gallagher: Carolan on the Road



Abby Finnegan: Carolan's Harp



Noah Farrell: The Bridget Cruise Story



Noah Farrell: Carolan Begins...

Although I had gotten up before mother, father was already tending the fire in the forge. I bent down to light the fire and something dug into my knee. I looked down and picked it up. A coin rested in my hand and I felt a surge of excitement. What luck to find a coin on market day!

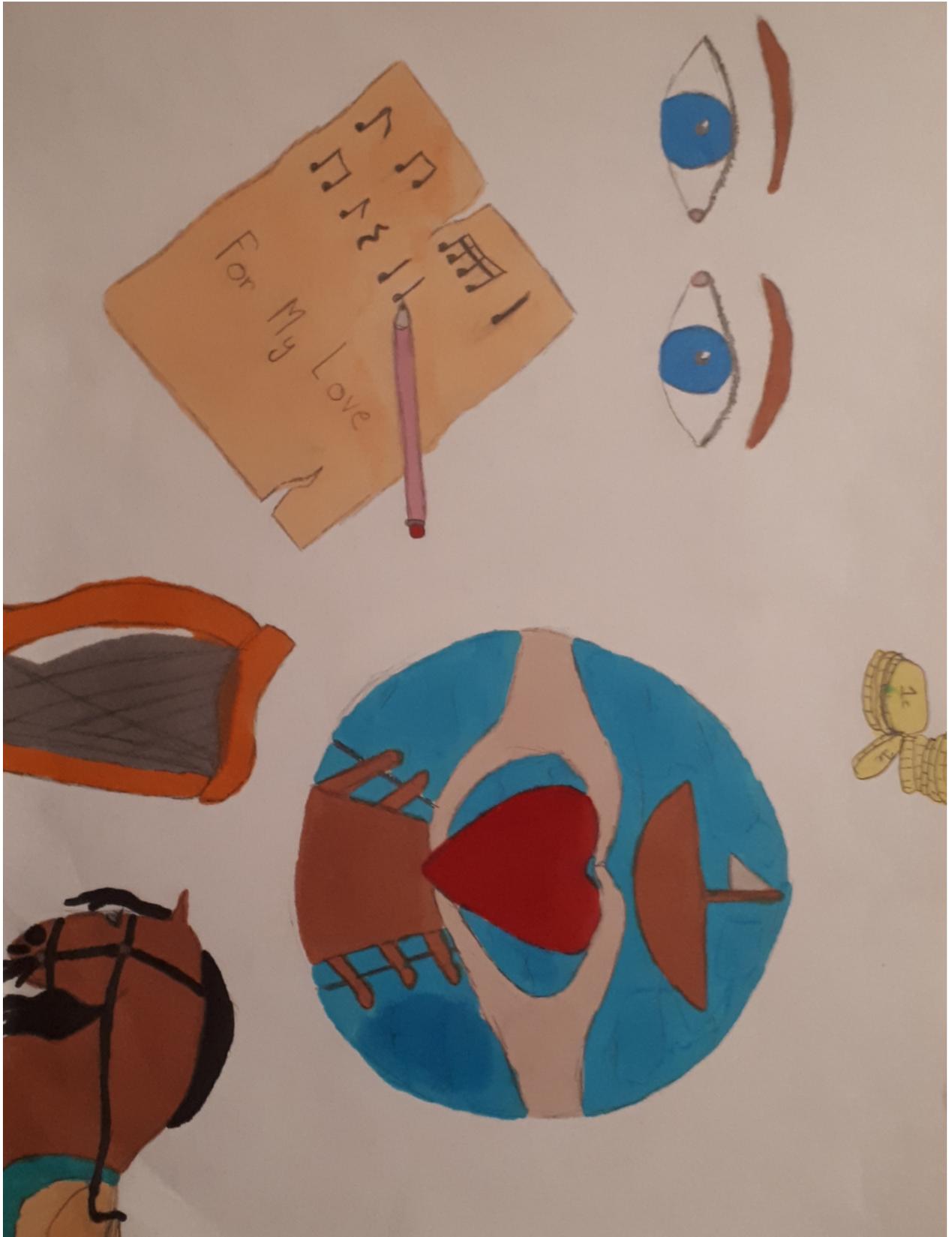
Three hours later I stand in front of a stall selling pastries and reach into my pocket, taking out the little gold coin and placing it on the counter. I ask for a small pastry that looks delicious. The lady at the stall smiles and hands me my pastry and my change. I don't have much use for the copper coins left in my hand so I throw them into a hat lying on the ground in front of a busking harpist. Maybe I can play the harp some day.....

Written - 336 years later - by Noah Farrell, DaCapo Orchestra
The Burren, March 2021.



[Click HERE to hear this story.](#)

Isla Eagleton: *The Bridget Cruise Story*



Gabriel Kelly: Bridget Cruise Portrait



Kitty Sabry - Poem: Bridget Cruise

Your voice like a nightingale,
Your scent as sweet as a rose,
A magical moment to sail,
When on the boat stepped your toes.

The soft touch of your hand,
On the boat at the lough,
Of all the pilgrims in the land,
You appeared in your finest frock.

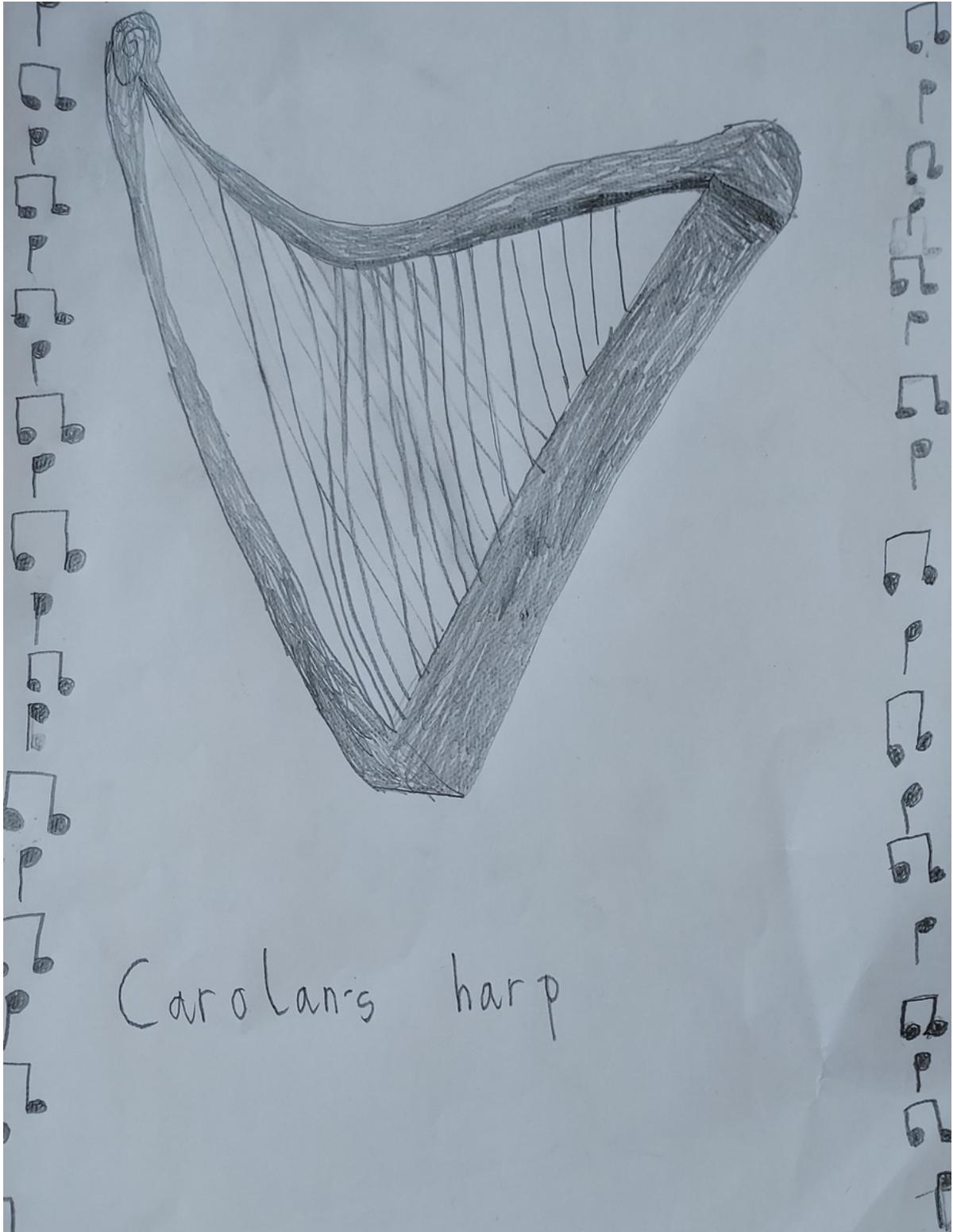
For now my love, I am wed,
Promised to Mary Maguire,
This day I cherish but dread,
Awakes in me a long lost fire

My dearest Bridget Cruise, our love will always be true
This sweet melody is just for you.



[Click HERE to
hear this poem](#)

Noah Mahoney: Carolan's Harp



Matthew Jannian: Carolan & Da Capo



Noah Farrell: The Music Tree



Aoife O'Donnell: An Unforgettable Day...

The day started like every other. Our house was freezing. I had my breakfast which was warm because the milk was not left in the fridge. I had to go shopping for more milk and jam. It was a beautiful spring morning. It was very quiet outside, except I could hear some music in the distance. Such beautiful music.

I walked on past the shop until I saw this man playing a harp. When he finished his song, he looked at me and said he would compose a piece for me if I had some food. I didn't have food with me, but I no doubt wanted a piece of music composed by him more than anything. His name was Turlough Carolan and he was blind.

There was no way I could leave without giving him something. So I decided I would go back the way to the shops and get him some food, which I did. When I returned, he had composed a piece for me. He played it for me and I loved it. It was hard to say goodbye, but at least I had a piece of music composed by him and I won't

forget this day.



[Click HERE to hear this story.](#)

Suman Ni Chadkha: Mrs. McDermott Roe



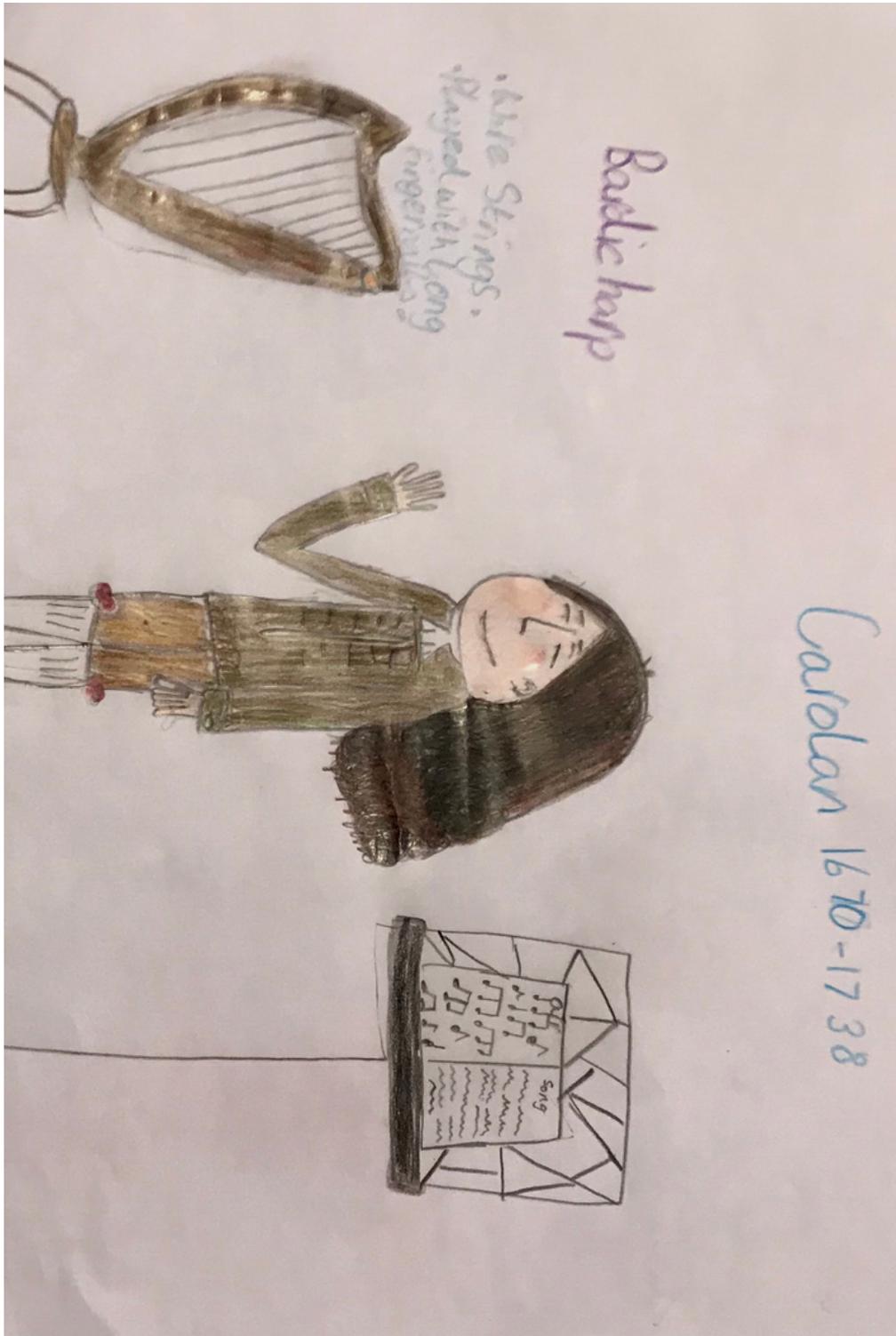
Louis Darabi: Carolan's Harp



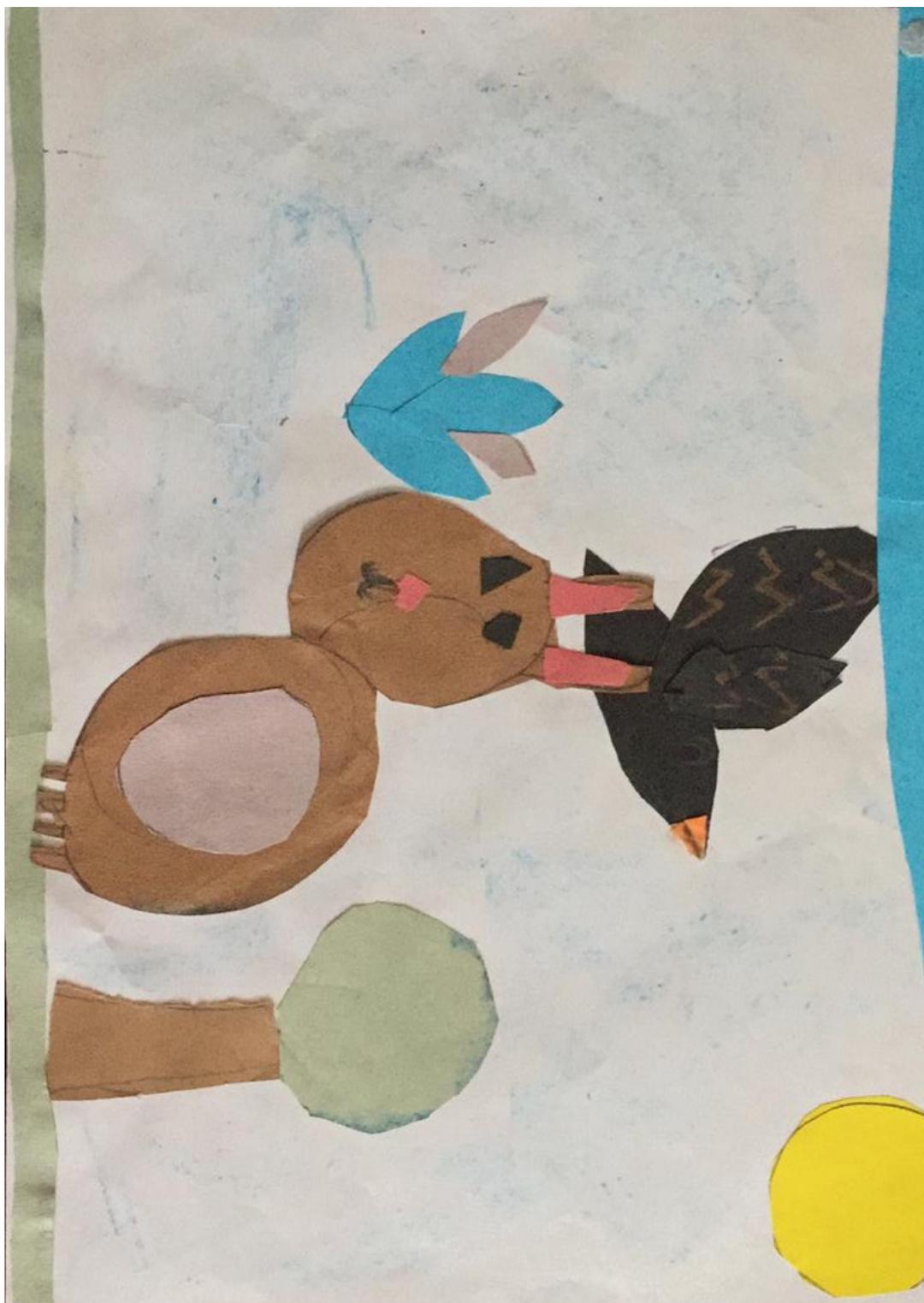
Ronan B' Sullivan: Carolan's Life



Kate Fitzgerald: Carolan's Musical World



Madison Browne: At One with Nature



Róisín Murphy: Alderford House



Alderford House

Maud de Eyto: Carolan's Life

Carolan got a guide from Mrs. MacDermott Roe,
And then she told him 'off you go!

Also, some money,
For her little honey!

And last but not least,
A big great horse beast!

Then he went to play harp,
Because his mind was very sharp!

Turlough composed music for others,
Sisters, brothers, fathers and mothers!

Mary Maguire was the woman he married
And soon 7 children she carried

But in 1738 he felt the end was coming,
So he went back to Meath as he was humming!

Mrs. MacDermott Roe
Told him to stay and not go

He went to his old room,
And let melodies bloom

He told Mrs. MacDermott Roe stories
Of all his great glories

And then where he lay,
He sadly passed away

Turlough had a great life,
with 7 children, a harp and a wife!

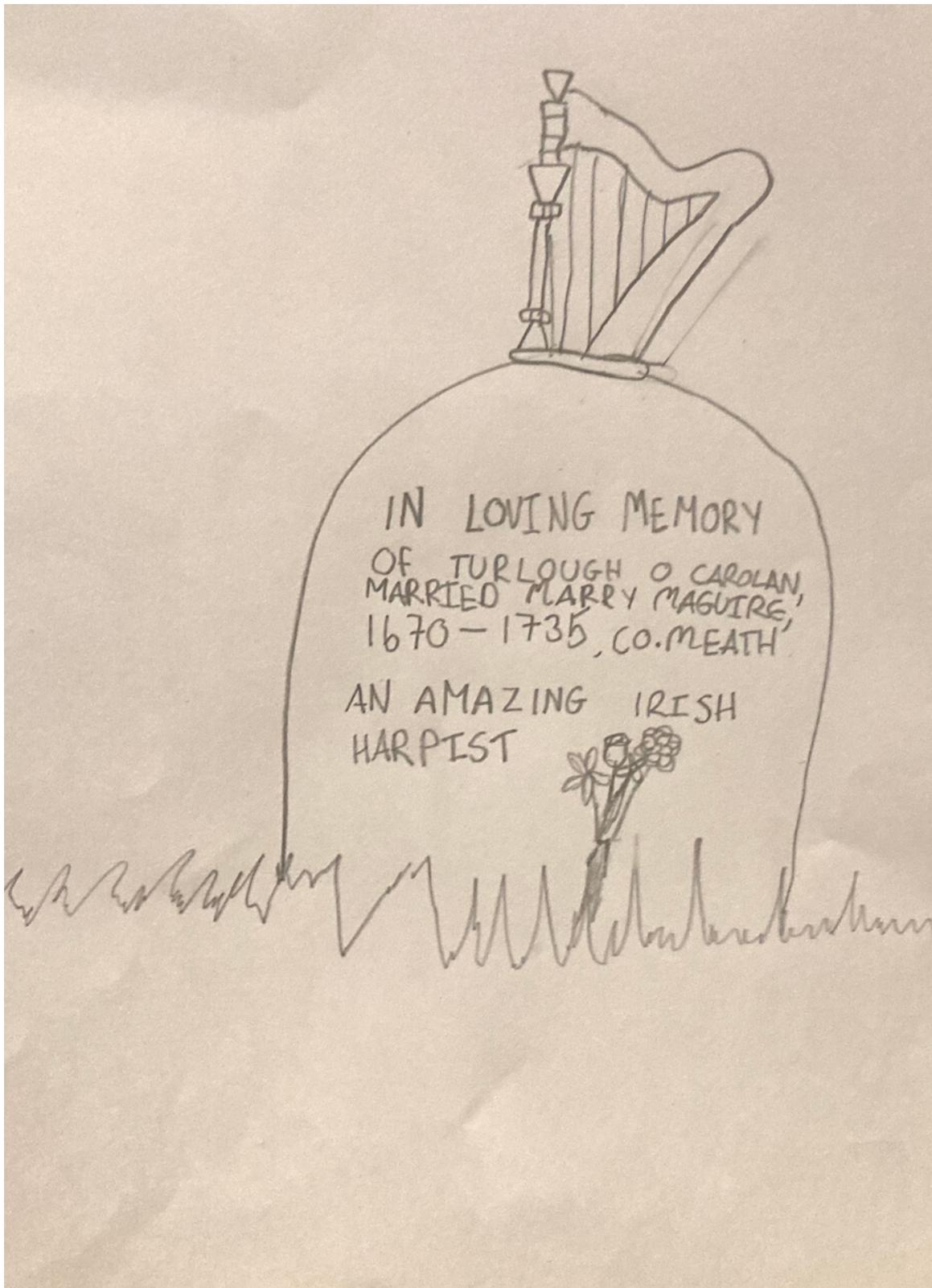


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Micheal Minoque: Carolan in the Hills



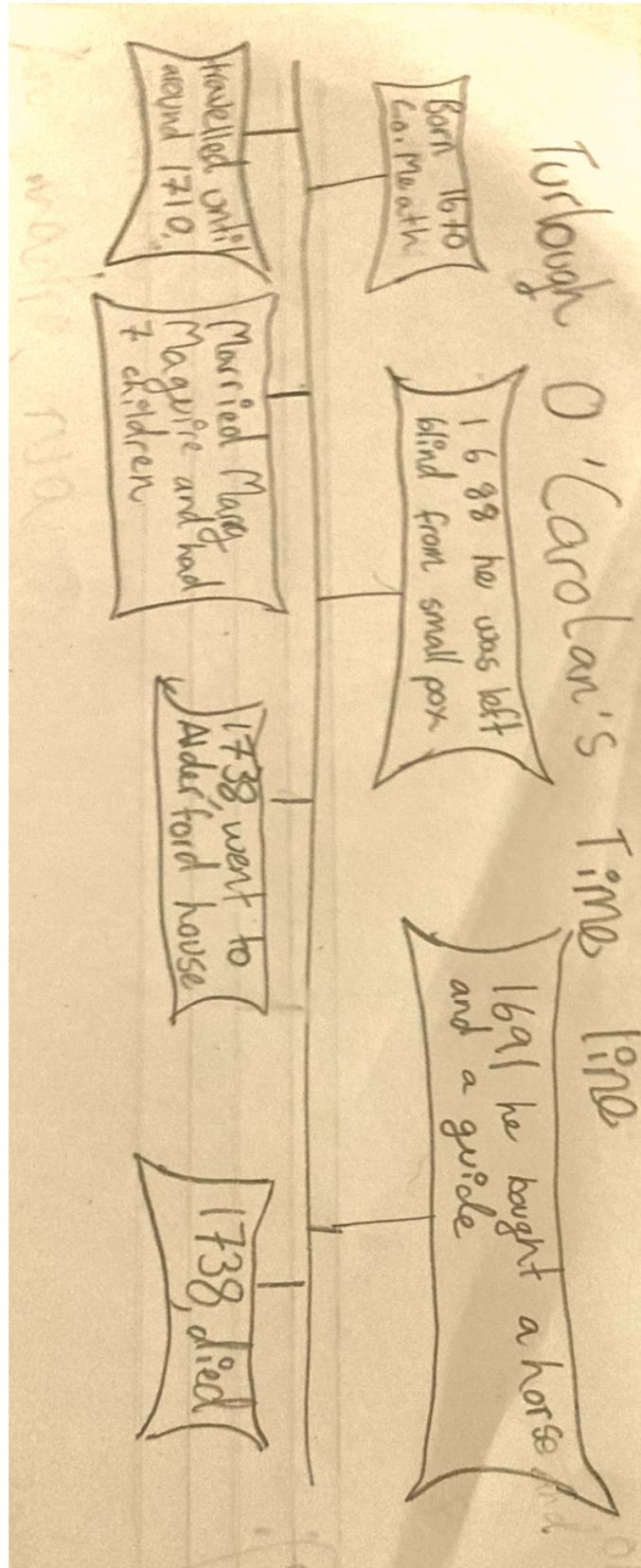
Maud de Eyto: Carolan's Grave



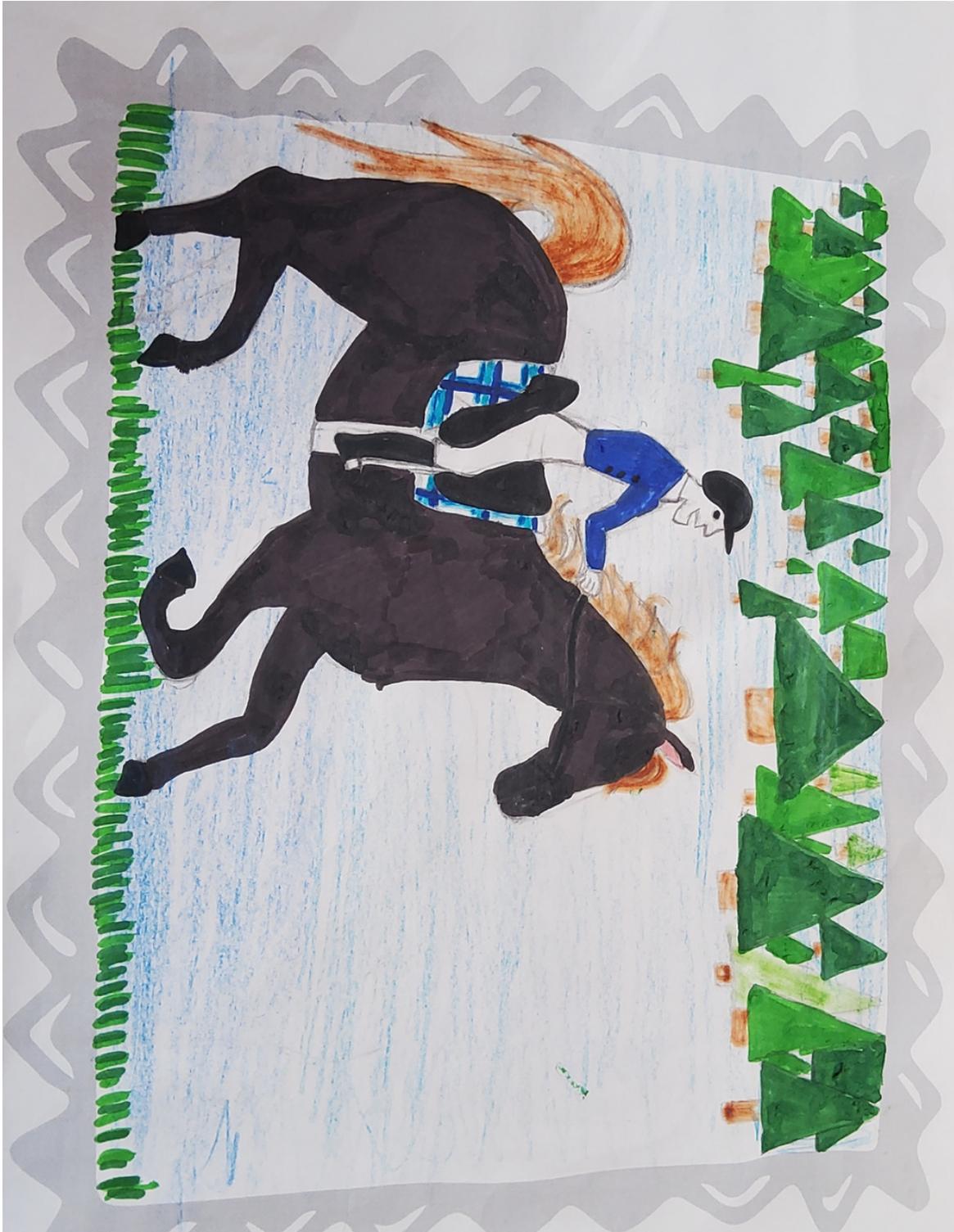
Molly Tannian: Carolan & his Horse



Maud de Eyto: Carolan Timeline



Lily Darabi: Afternoon in the Forest



Micheál Minoque:
Carolán's Ramble to the Burren

I was feeling exhilarated after that mighty session in Winkles Pub, Kinvara. They say the music there is unbelievable and at last I know why. But now I'm looking forward to even better craic in an inn, deep in the heart of the Burren. I'm starting to think the closer you get to that wonderful place, the better the music, people and environment are.

This pub, Heart of Stone Inn, has the music of Faery's (or so I'm told). The greatest musicians and dancers of this time come there to join the fun. And now I'm going to make the journey over the limestone hills to hear the music of the síthe.

* * *

We set out at the break of dawn, me my horse and my guide,
across the first of the rocky fields.

After a while, we started ascending a craggy hill. My guide told me 'twas called Sliabh Carron. Once we got to the enormous pile of rock at the top of the hill, the cairn, the sun was starting to set. I turned back towards the north: towards Kinvara.' The first of the musicians would be starting to tune their instruments now, I thought. In fact, I could hear the music. Somehow, the noise was carried across the flat limestone pavements, all the way to my keen ears.

I stayed and listened a moment then I turned and spurred my horse back to the south.

* * *

My guide told me there was a souterrain, or underground chamber made by people thousands of years ago over to the south-south-east, which would provide shelter at night. We slept in similar places, like caves, ruins and old ring forts, for the following nights.

We travelled over mountains, through forests and woods
and across barren rocky landscapes.

We waded through turlough (from which I got my name), river and lake.

Twás great craic.

* * *

Carolan's Ramble to The Burren Part II

And as we rode, I thought.

I thought of what this land might look like.

Ever since I lost my sight, my other senses have soared.

I imagined the place to be barren and lonely looking, at first sight, but when studied closely, I sensed it would be a place of wonders and amazement.

I heard the birds singing their dawn chorus at sunrise and the animals scurrying through the undergrowth at night in the mossy hazel forests.

I smelled the scent of unique wildflowers and the smell of limestone on the wind.

I tasted the lovely fresh air giving me bursts of energy.

I felt the sun on my back, the cool breeze on my face
and the weight of my harp in my arms.

* * *

Also, ever since I got blind, I have had something like a sixth sense (or fifth since I lost sight). I have been able to sense if a tree or boulder was near, or any other big object. It is as if I can feel the air that was moved for it to be there and see the change in the wind when I pass it.

In this way I realized that we were nearing the top of the hill,
the last hill, as my guide told me.

The sun was setting when we walked to the crest. I felt the echo of a valley under my feet. Then, a sound of music and merriment arose from below. I laid my hand on my harp and smiled.

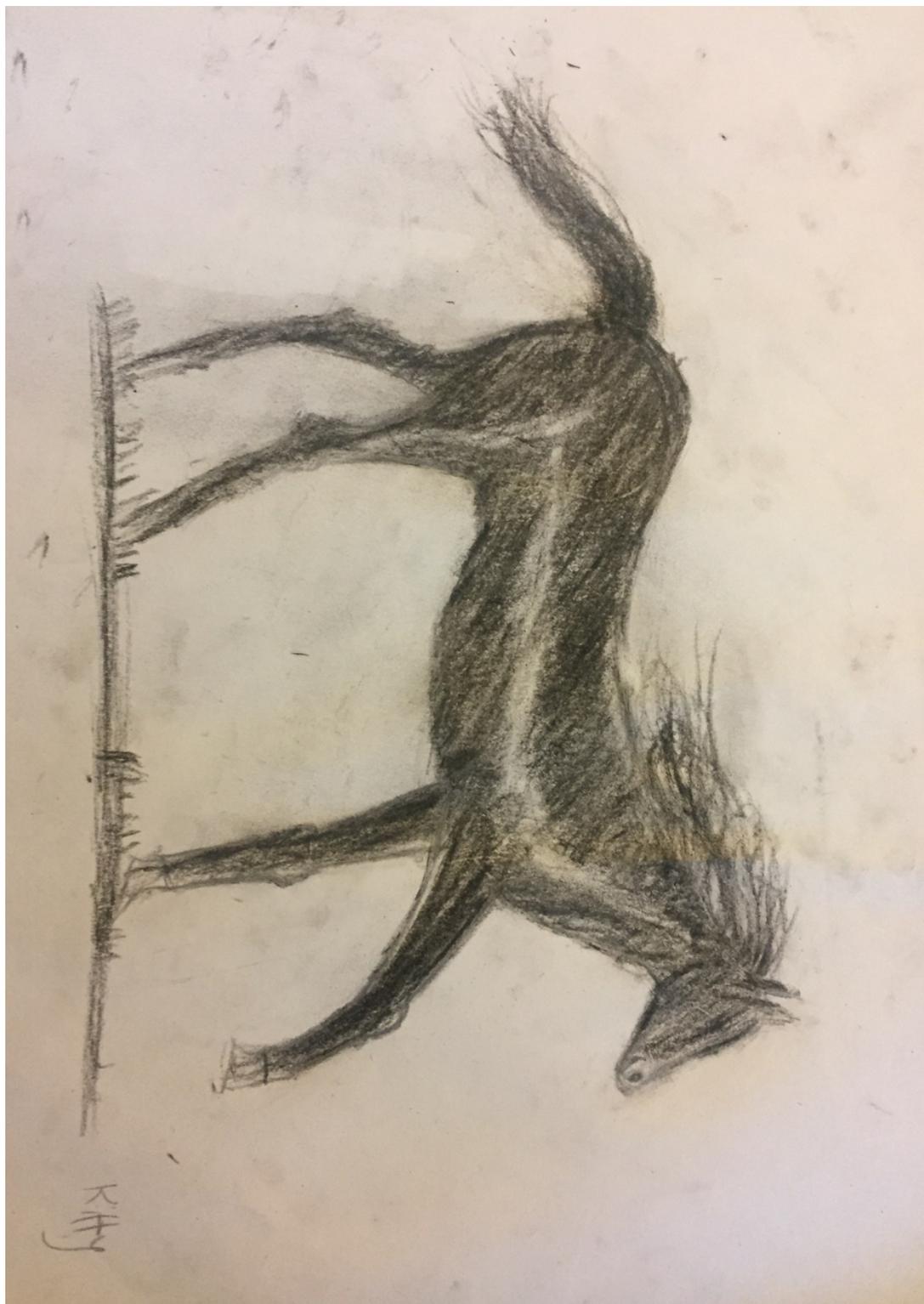
I had decided what I would call my new tune.

'The Burren'.



[Click HERE to
hear this story.](#)

Kitty Sabry: Carolan's Horse



Lana Ni Chadkha: Carolau's Harp & Horse



Seán Gallagher: Carolan's Harp & Cart



Idris Sabry - Story: Carolan comes to Town

The day started like every other. I had to get up with the first crow of our cockerel to light the fire. Our house only has two rooms and it was freezing. A thin sheet covered me. I could feel the damp air on my bare feet and my fingers were like icicles. I had to step over the pig to light the fire. She was snoring so loudly I could barely hear myself think.

Father had already left for work in the stables at the Big House. I wish we had a fire in every room with servants to light it before we got up instead of waking up to the cold and damp air. I wish we had fine clothes and shoes on our feet like the gentry at the big house. Instead, we cook, eat, and sleep in the same room with the animals on top of us. We barely have enough money to pay the rent and put food on the table. Anyway, I have to do my chores. Father wants me to have dinner ready when he gets home.

I am tired of potatoes and eggs, or should I say just potatoes, as the chickens haven't laid any eggs today! I drew water from the neighbour's well and cleaned out the cauldron and dreamed of how life could be different, better... with music and dancing and comfort and warmth.

As I cleaned the yard, I listened to the birds and saw the first signs of Spring. The snowdrops, wild garlic and daffodils were in bloom. The dandelions and daisies were dotting our little green field, and I imagined the fairies dancing among the wildflowers happy in the morning. I imagined I heard them playing the flute, the harp and fiddle until I was woken from my daydreaming by the sound of my father's donkey coming up

Carolan comes to Town - Continued

He was out of breath and red faced and I hoped I wasn't in trouble. He was spluttering something while waving his arms in the air, almost dancing a jig. "Carolan is coming to town".

"What?" I said.

"He's playing at the Big House this evening!" he bellowed.

I was speechless. My heart was beating like a fast greyhound.

It was dusk. We were outside the big house in the frosty evening. We were freezing, our clothes were damp and we were barefoot. We peered through the window at the gentry, in their silk and tweed clothes, dancing and drinking beneath the chandelier. They looked so happy and warm from the open fireplace. The food was like something from my dreams. Ribs, chicken and steak all served on silver plates. We heard music that sounded like birds tweeting and playing, so we looked around the room and saw O'Carolan. I couldn't believe it. I was looking at O'Carolan. All my miserable and cold thoughts just ran off my back when I saw and heard him. It seemed like angels were flying around him and it even seemed like the fairies from the woods came out to listen.



[Click HERE to
hear this story.](#)

Mia Farrell:

Storyboard for Scenes from Carolan's Life



Scene 1: e.g. Carolan on his horse

Description: Wide shot of Carolan on horseback. As the storm rages, Carolan's faithful horse gallops onwards leaving the guide behind.



Scene 2:

Description: The horse brings Carolan to a little cottage so they can take shelter from the storm.



Scene 3:

Description: A lonely old widow welcomes Carolan into her house. She has heard all about him from friends who work for the local landlord.



Scene 4:

Description: The widow is thrilled to hear the harpist play in her little home. Tears stream down her face as she listens.

BY MIA FARRELL

Carolau's Rambles

Congratulations to all the young musicians of Coole Music & Arts for their creativity and imagination!

**"Creativity is contagious. Pass it on!"
Albert Einstein**

Original Back Cover Artwork: Mia Farrell