"Casement's Funeral" Richard Murphy

After the noose, and the black diary deeds Gossiped, his fame roots in prison lime: The hanged bones burn, a revolution seeds. Now Casement's skeleton is flying home.

A gun salutes, the troops slow-march, our new Nation atones for her shawled motherland¹
Whose welcome gaoled² him when a U-boat threw This rebel Quixote³ soaked on Banna Strand.

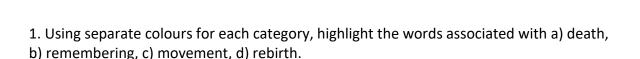
Soldiers in green guard the draped catafalque⁴
With chalk remains of once ambiguous bone
Which fathered nothing till the traitor's dock
Hurt him to tower in legend like Wolfe Tone⁵.

From gaol yard to the Liberator's tomb
Pillared in frost, they carry the freed ash,
Transmuted relic of a death-cell flame
Which purged for martyrdom the diarist's flesh.

On the small screen I watch the packed cortege⁶
Pace from High Mass. Rebels in silk hats now
Exploit the grave with an old comrade's speech:

White hair tossed, a black cape flecked with snow.

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2. What does the poem do with these different categories? How does it evoke Casement's funeral?



The feminised Irish "Nation atones for her shawled motherland" (I.8):

The tradition of using female allegorical figures had its golden age during 19th-century nation building. While it associated female icons with patriotic virtues, it contributed to a long history of using female representations for abstract concepts such as nations, rather than to memorialise actual historical female figures.

¹ 'shawled motherland': refers to the countryside region of Kerry, where Casement's boat had landed before his arrest. Kerry people were involuntarily made witnesses for the Crown during Casement's trial.

² 'gaoled': imprisoned

³ 'Quixote': The main character of Miguel de Cervantes' *Don Quixote* is idealistic to the point of being impractical.

 $^{^{\}rm 4}$ 'catafalque': a raised platform to support the coffin during ceremonious funerals.

⁵ 'Wolfe Tone': Wolfe Tone was a leading 18th-century Irish revolutionary figure.

⁶ 'cortege': solemn procession