

2019

Arson in Knockmullane: 24 December 1846

Julie Kane

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.library.uab.edu/bpr>



Part of the [Creative Writing Commons](#), and the [English Language and Literature Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Kane, Julie (2019) "Arson in Knockmullane: 24 December 1846," *Birmingham Poetry Review*. Vol. 46, Article 64.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.library.uab.edu/bpr/vol46/iss2019/64>

This content has been accepted for inclusion by an authorized administrator of the UAB Digital Commons, and is provided as a free open access item. All inquiries regarding this item or the UAB Digital Commons should be directed to the [UAB Libraries Office of Scholarly Communication](#).

Julie Kane

Arson in Knockmullane: 24 December 1846

—*Patrick and Mary Horgan Lynch*

Who'd burn a family's house down Christmas Eve,
the first year of the Famine? Men he knew,
who shoveled dirt beside him, men who heaved

great stones to lay the roadways, men aggrieved
he'd given up his land to join their crew—
the men who burned his house down Christmas Eve.

Because he had a roof of sod and sheaves
of straw while they lay down in ditch or pew,
they slunk up with a flaming torch, and heaved.

Six children slumbering. Their mother's sleeves
caught fire as she pulled out the youngest, two
weeks past his christening. That Christmas Eve,

the Inishannon jail was full of "thieves"
who'd stolen so they'd get a cell and soup.
The workhouse doors were bolted. How to heave

a baby in burned arms? Did they believe
in God and bless the dark that hid the view
of corpses in the road that Christmas Eve,
dead mouths stained green from eating grass and leaves?