

## [Inside Front Cover - Oidhche Na Calluinn](#)

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Testing... Oidhche Na Calluinn m'A.. There are a good many men today on Cape Breton who remember going out on a frosty winter evening to celebrate Oidhche Na Calluinn. They would set out in a small group or if there was a lot of territory to cover perhaps there would be two groups, one at each end of the district • and each group would have a leader who would take them door to door. Sometimes they would go on sleighs and bells would be ringing, and on stormy nights they would be on snowshoes. The occupants of each house would see their lanterns and hear them but they would not open the door. For they would hear strange sounds and see from the window a strange, . strange sight. -' The leader of the band would be wrapped in a dried sheepskin pulled up around his head. He would be running with another man running behind him, beating on the skin and sending up [ a horrible rattling sound as they circled the house three times in the direction of the sun. Then they would come to the door and the leader would yell out the DUAN NA CALLUINN. When he came to the last lines the door would be opened and the people would give something • perhaps potatoes or mutton or beef, and it would go in a bag brought to handle the goods. Roderick MacLeod the dried sheepskin on the North Shore. Finally, they would all go to one house. It was usually a home where the people were less fortunate than their neighbors. Perhaps the father had died or was ill and it did not look as though there would be much of a holiday season in this house. They DUAN NA CALLUINN mar a thuair sinn e bho Scalpach bliadhnachan air ais Thainig mis' an seo air tus A dh'urachadh dhuibh na Calluinn; Cha ruiginn a leas siud innseadh, Bha i ann bho linn mo sheanar. Theid mi deiseil air an fhardaich 'S teKrnaidh mi aig an dorus. Craicionn Caluinn 'na mo phocaid, 'S maith an ce6 a thig bho'n fhear ud; Chan eil duine chuireas r'a shrSin e Nach bi e ri bheo dheth fallain. Gheibh fear an tig he 'na iHmh e Gus a cheann a chur 's an teallach. Theid e deiseil air na paisdean, Ach gu h-araid gheibh a' bhean e. Gheibh a?? bhean e, 's i as fhiach e... L'h riarachaidh na Calluinn. Leis an tart a th'air an duthaich Chan eil duil againn ri drama. Aon rud beag a tha mi diultadh, Ruileagan a' bhuntata charraich. Cha ghabh sinn an t-aran gun an t-im 'S cha ghabh sinn an t-im gun an t-aran. Gabhaidh sinn an caise leis fein 'S cia air eisd a bhitheamaid falarah 'S ma tha e againn'r'a fhaotainn Ma dh'fhaodas na cum mail' oirnn. 'S fosgail an dorus 's leig a stigh sinn. THE CALLUINN RPIYME as we got it from Sealpay (Harris) years ago I came here first of all, To renew for you the Calluinn; I need not tell you that It was there from the time of my grandfather. I'll go sunwise round the house And I'll descend at the door. The Calluinn skin in my pocket. And good will be the smoke coming from it; There's no one who will hold it to his nose But won't be healthy all his life. The man of the house will get it in his hands To put its head in the fireplace. He'll go sunwise round the children. But over and above, the woman of the house will get it. The woman of the house will get it, and she well deserves it... The hand that dispenses the Calluinn. Because of the



drought in the countryside We don't expect a drink. One small thing that I refuse •  
The tiny scabby potatoes. We'll not take the bread without the butter. And we'll not  
take the butter without the bread. We'll take the cheese on its own And how then  
could we be empty-handed And if it's there for us to get it If you may, do not detain  
us. Open the door and let us in. would get pots boiling and take food from the bag  
and cook up a terrific feast. And there would be singing and perhaps a story, and  
the tables would be pushed aside and a fiddler would set the whole room to  
dancing. And a wonderful time would be had in this house where only hours before  
it did not look like such a fine time could possi\*\* bly be had. And it would be the  
wee hours and a sharp frost for the merrimakers to take off again for home, leaving  
behind what was left of the food • often a supply for a long, long time.

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