



- In the middle classes the gifted son of a family is always the poorest—usually a writer or artist with no sense for speculation—and in a family of peasants, where the average comfort is just over penury, the gifted son sinks also, and is soon a tramp on the roadside.
 - *The Vagrants of Wicklow*, written 1901-1902, first published in *The Shanachie* (Dublin, autumn 1906).
- What is the price of a thousand horses against a son where there is one son only?
 - [*Riders to the Sea*](#) (1904)
- I knew the stars, the flowers, and the birds,
The gray and wintry sides of many glens,
And did but half remember human words,
In converse with the mountains, moors, and fens.
 - *Prelude* (1910)
- As a man has no right to kill one of his children if it is diseased or insane, so a man who has made the gradual and conscious expression of his personality in literature the aim of his life, has no right to suppress himself any carefully considered work which seemed good enough when it was written. Suppression, if it is deserved, will come rapidly enough from the same causes that suppress the unworthy members of a man's family.
 - Draft of a preface in "Notebook 16"; Quoted in *The Collected Works of J.M. Synge*, vol. 1, Introduction (1962)
- I'm a good scholar when it comes to reading but a blotting kind of writer when you give me a pen.
 - Draft of a preface in "Notebook 16"; Quoted in *The Collected Works of J.M. Synge*, vol. 1, Introduction
- I asked if I got sick and died, would you
With my black funeral go walking too,
If you'd stand close to hear them talk or pray
While I'm let down in that steep bank of clay.
 - *A Question*
- Lord, confound this surly sister,
Blight her brow with blotch and blister,
Cramp her larynx, lung and liver,
In her guts a galling give her.
 - *The Curse*
- These are rotten, so you're the Queen
Of all are living, or have been.
 - *Queens*

[\[edit\]](#) *The Playboy of the Western World* (1907)

- When I was writing *The Shadow of the Glen* I got more aid than any learning could have given me from a chink in the floor of the old Wicklow house where I was staying, that let me hear what was being said by the servant girls in the kitchen.
 - Preface
- In a good play every speech should be as fully flavoured as a nut or apple.
 - Preface
- May I meet him with one tooth and it aching, and one eye to be seeing seven and seventy devils in the twists of the road, and one old timber leg on him to limp into the scalding grave. There he is now crossing the strands, and that the Lord God would send a high wave to wash him from the world.
 - Act II
- They're cheering a young lad, the champion playboy of the Western World.
 - Act III

[\[edit\]](#) *The Aran Islands* (1907)

- The grief of the keen is no personal complaint for the death of one woman over eighty years, but seems to contain the whole passionate rage that lurks somewhere in every native of the island. In this cry of pain the inner consciousness of the people seems to lay itself bare for an instant, and to reveal the mood of beings who feel their isolation in the face of a universe that wars on them with winds and seas.
 - Pt. I
- A man who is not afraid of the sea will soon be drowned, he said, for he will be going out on a day he shouldn't. But we do be afraid of the sea, and we do only be drowned now and again.
- There is no language like the Irish for soothing and quieting.
- A translation is no translation, he said, unless it will give you the music of a poem along with the words of it.

