

## H I S T

### In Celebration of 250 years of The College Historical Society, Trinity College Dublin

Let two hundred years, two score and ten  
Echo through this chamber of debate:  
*That this house...* A motion passed again,  
*Ayes* and *no's* such arguments create.  
Emmet, Davis, Goldsmith, Moore and Tone,  
Solemn names of those who surely spoke,  
Whose prestige and eloquence we loan,  
Ghosting orators to still evoke.  
Sometimes loggerheaded either-ors,  
Yielding to the win-lose logic of debate;  
Yet those times we spark more light than heat,  
Dared nuances someone's speech explores.  
Now from both sides of the floor we fête,  
This arena where we found our feet.

*On a point of order!* someone calls –  
Order we more honour in the breach –  
Still for novices a silence falls,  
Soft deflowering of a maiden speech.  
Broken in, you face the taunting few,  
Brazen out the wag and heckler's jeer,  
Grasp the ballot box to steady you,  
Trusting to a countering *Hear! Hear!*  
Confident, keep learning ploys and tricks,  
Play then to the house, outwit with guile  
Driving home an argument that sticks,  
Score your point to swing the rank and file.  
Ordinary members' aye or no  
Sway a balanced motion's touch and go.

*On a point of information!* Youth  
Parallels the universe and we're  
Cocksure of the black and white of truth,  
Members aren't ordinary here!  
Finding what in turn we might become,  
We both pose and posture as needs be;  
Left or right we beat our callow drum,  
This or that of burning certainty.  
*Through the chair!* Do we then slowly grow  
Into all those argued views we hold,

Taking every stance to heart as though  
Roles we play will shape how we unfold?  
Full of green and youthful self-esteem,  
Gravitas and swaggered futures dream.

Lessons in the politics of power,  
Ballots and electoral upsets,  
Private business till the witching hour,  
Late cabal intrigues, impeachment threats.  
Laws and rules and learned formality,  
Proper modes and manners of address,  
Earned marked thanks of the Society,  
All in earnest — yet a playfulness.  
Although sincere we somehow still all know  
How the Hist is our first practice run,  
Our tongue-in-cheek careers in embryo,  
Mixing both what's serious and fun.  
In rules and arguments our lives gestate,  
Interns in the hothouse of debate.

Those who stood before this membership  
Never will now suffer from stage fright,  
Or in mid-speech begin to lose the grip,  
Letting belly butterflies take flight.  
Through our lives if we are called to speak  
Or to marshal arguments at speed;  
Schooled in oratorical technique,  
Everyone who hears us will take heed.  
In debate's seedbed a sureness bloomed,  
More a confidence than simply skill,  
Self-belief with which we were imbued.  
Fluency and presence now assumed,  
Unbeknownst to us we're moving still  
Motions of a lifelong gratitude.

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