The Wind That Shakes the Barley
Robert Dwyer Joyce

The Wind That Shakes the Barley" is an Irish ballad written by Robert Dwyer Joyce (1836–1883), a Limerick-born poet and professor of English literature. The song is written from the perspective of a doomed young Wexford rebel who is about to sacrifice his relationship with his loved one and plunge into the cauldron of violence associated with the 1798 rebellion in Ireland. The references to barley in the song derive from the fact that the rebels often carried barley or oats in their pockets as provisions for when on the march. This gave rise to the post-rebellion phenomenon of barley growing and marking the "croppy-holes," mass unmarked graves into which slain rebels were thrown, symbolizing the regenerative nature of Irish resistance to British rule.