The Fields of Athenry

Pete St. John

arr. Peter McLaren

2. By a lonely prison wall I heard a young man calling
"Nothing matters, Mary, when you're free.
Against the famine and the Crown I rebelled — they shot me down.
Now you must raise our child with dignity." CHORUS

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Words & music: Pete St. John

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      G  C          G    D
By a lonely prison wall I heard a young girl call - ing:
 G        C        D
“Michael they are taking you away!
         G                  C          G                    D
For you stole Trevelyen’s corn so the young might see the morn—
                                        G    C    G
Now a prison ship lies waiting in the bay.”

            G     C       G              Em
CHORUS: Low   lie   the fields of Athenry
                  G                    Em              Am   D
            Where once we watched the small free birds fly
                 G                C              G                   D
            Our love was on the wing—we had dreams and songs to sing
                                                 G   C   G
            It’s so lonely ’round the fields of Athenry

      G  C          G    D
By a lonely prison wall I heard a young man call - ing:
 G        C        D
“Nothing matters, Mary, when you’re free.
            G                C          G                   D
Against the famine and the Crown I rebelled—they shot me down.
                                        G    C    G
Now you must raise our child with dignity.”                          CHORUS

      G  C          G         D
By a lonely harbour wall she watched the last star fall - ing
        GC          D
As the prison ship sailed out against the sky
            G                  C          G              D
Sure, she’ll wait and hope and pray for her love in Botany Bay
                                       G   C   G
It’s so lonely ’round the fields of Athenry

            G     C       G              Em
CHORUS: Low   lie   the fields of Athenry
                  G                    Em              Am   D
            Where once we watched the small free birds fly
                 G                C              G                   D
            Our love was on the wing—we had dreams and songs to sing
                                                 G   C   G
            It’s so lonely ’round the fields of Athenry
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‘The Fields of Athenry’ is set in the Great Famine of the 1840s. It was written by Pete St. John (1932-2022) in 1979, and was first recorded that same year by Danny Doyle. Pete St. John also wrote ‘The Rare Ould Times’.