

Iain Crichton Smith

This indispensable anthology contains selections of the best work by Scotland's most acclaimed modern Gaelic poets: Sorley Maclean, George Campbell Hay, Iain Crichton Smith, Derick Thomson, and Donald MacAulay. Designed as much for English readers of Gaelic, the poems are presented with line-for-line translations. These translations have been made by the poets themselves, thereby maximizing the retention of the spirit and form of the originals.

The first Selected since 1985 and the poet's death, this looks afresh at the work of one of Scotland's best loved writers and one of the original Penguin Modern Poets.

"Consider the Illies", by Iain Crichton Smith

A Bibliography of Iain Crichton Smith

Selected Stories of Iain Crichton Smith

Murdo

New Poets

When the breathing got worse he went into the adjacent room and got the copy of Dante. All that night and the night before he had been watching the dying...When a mirror was required to be brought she looked at it, moving her head restlessly this way and that. He knew that the swelling was a portent of some kind, a message from the outer darkness, an omen. - The Dying ALTHOUGH BEST KNOWN as one of Scotland's greatest modern poets, Iain Crichton Smith was also prolific as a writer of short stories. These pieces form a central part of his oeuvre, demonstrating the full range and versatility of his literary talent. From humour to tragedy, from inner monologues to extrovert surrealism, the diversity of his writing indicates the extraordinary range of his own reading and mental world. Crichton Smith wrote short stories throughout his life. Some are fragments, others almost novellas, and the best of them all show him to be an author of unique sensitivity and intelligence. These two collections, comprising the complete English stories, include over 45 stories never before published in book form, as well as others that have been out of print for many years, thus making it possible to judge Crichton Smith's achievement as a writer in full. Incorporates stories from Survival Without Error, The Black and the Red and The Village.

The house was extraordinarily peaceful as if by an act of will I had banished all the fertile ghosts. It had an unearthly calm as if I were floating on a dumb sea of solitude. I found myself humming to myself as if I had come to the silence of myself. I went to the bookcase and took out a book and began to read. Strangely enough I didn't realise at first what book it was. Then I saw that it was the Bible. I turned to the New Testament and began to read, 'In the beginning was the Word...' - The Hermit ALTHOUGH BEST KNOWN as one of Scotland's greatest modern poets, Iain Crichton Smith was also prolific as a writer of short stories. These pieces form a central part of his oeuvre, demonstrating the full range and versatility of his literary talent. From humour to tragedy, from inner monologues to extrovert surrealism, the diversity of his writing indicates the extraordinary range of his own reading and mental world. Crichton Smith wrote short stories throughout his life. Some are fragments, others almost novellas, and the best of them all show him to be an author of unique sensitivity and intelligence. These two collections, comprising the complete English stories, include over 45 stories never before published in book form, as well as others that have been out of print for many years, thus making it possible to judge Crichton Smith's achievement as a writer in full. Incorporates stories from The Hermit, Murdo, Mr Hill in Hades and Selected Stories.

1959: Iain Crichton Smith, Karen Gershon, Christopher Leveson. [Poems]

An Extract from Iain Crichton Smith's Murdo, the Life and Works

After the Dance

The Complete English Stories 1949-76

NEW POETS 1959 (NINETEEN HUNDRED AND FIFTY-NINE) : IAIN CRICHTON SMITH, KAREN GERSHON, CHRISTOPHER LEVENSON

This edition focuses on the work of Gaelic/English writer Iain Crichton Smith, to coincide with the choice of 12 of his poems for the Higher English syllabus. It contains new poetry and fiction by Crichton Smith, an in-depth interview with the author, and a detailed study of the 12 poems by critic Colin Nicholson.

Murdo Macrae is one of the most extraordinary and fascinating of Iain Crichton Smith's literary creations. Dismissed from his job as a bank teller, Murdo tries to write, but cannot get beyond the first sentence. Murdo has a wild and fertile imagination, and, much to the incomprehension of his long-suffering wife, Janet, sets out to convert all he meets to his bizarre philosophy and unique vision of the world.

Murdo's surreal and often hilarious antics, however, mask much deeper questions about his inadequacy in the face of social convention and his own spiritual turmoil. It is this juxtaposition of tragicomic elements, together with the fact that Murdo is in so many ways the alter ego of his creator, that brings real poignancy to these stories and confirms Iain Crichton Smith as one of Scotland's most versatile literary talents of modern times. This volume contains the two publications, Murdo and Other Stories and Thoughts of Murdo. It also includes another substantial piece, the autobiographical Life of Murdo, which is published in book form here for the first time.

The Contribution of Iain Crichton Smith

Ben Dorain. Translated from the Gaelic ... by Iain Crichton Smith

Problems of Scottishness in Iain Crichton Smith's Poetry

Papers of Iain Crichton Smith, poet, 1981-89

By Edwin Morgan

After the DanceSelected Stories of Iain Crichton SmithCasemate Publishers

John Blackburn's SCOTNOTE study guide analyses the religious, political and historical themes and patterns of Crichton Smith's work, and is a suitable guide for senior school pupils and students at all levels.

The Tenement

A Poetry of Opposition

Two cold coasts compared

Context Questions and Answer

Collected Poems

Ralph Simmons, a writer, struggles to survive a nervous breakdown that leaves him anxious, suspicious, and frightened. In the Middle of the Wood is considered by many to be Iain Crichton Smith's most remarkable achievement in prose. Like Waugh's The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold, it derives directly from a phase of paranoia, which in Crichton Smith's case actually led to a spell in a mental hospital.

The world, in Iain Crichton Smith's vision is a field full of folk; and one Scottish village is its microcosm. Here, the Minister wrestles with his loss of faith, and his cancer, concealing them even from his wife, but she had divined them. Mrs Berry cultivates her garden assiduously, and when Jehovah's Witnesses come quoting their texts, she tells them that the hill at the end of the village can be climbed by many paths. Old Annie has no doubts about her path: she has no use for Christianity ('Protestants and Catholics, nothing but guns and fighting') and finds her answer in the East. On more mundane levels, Morag Bheag worries about her son serving in Northern Ireland, and Chrissie Murray shocks the village by leaving her husband and making for Glasgow - taking only a radio with her, that's what shocks most. Murdo Macfarlane vehemently urges his puritanical views - about, for instance, the use of the church hall for a young people's dance - and David Collins nurses his hatred of Germans, but cannot insult them when they come as tourists. In short, it's a village much like any other, with its prejudices and certainties and kindness and heartbreak: the whole and the small part. As the Minister sees in his visionary moment at the annual sports, when the petty disputes over the wheel-barrow race and the tragic news of young Bheag's death come together in his realisation that it's all a part of 'this supremely imperfect and perfect earth.' Mr Crichton Smith's novels never carry any superfluous weight: they're as spare as sprinters.

He writes with a poet's concentration, and never more precisely, or more movingly, than here, in what amounts to a gentle, compassionate meditation on life and death, with a warm, affirmative conclusion.

A Field Full of Folk

Iain Crichton Smith, Norman MacCaig, George Mackay Brown

Critical Essays

The Life and Works

With an Enthusiast's View

Charting the development of his poetry over the last 40 years, this book offers insights into the work of the Scottish poet, Iain Crichton Smith.

These short stories by the renowned Scottish author demonstrate the powerful imagination that became "the wonder of literary Scotland" (Sorley MacClean, author of Eimhir). Growing up on the Isle of Lewis in Scotland's Outer Hebrides, Iain Crichton Smith was raised speaking Gaelic. When he went to school in Stornoway, he spoke English. Like many islanders before and since, his culture was divided. In After the Dance, he explores that tumultuous divide and its effects on the small communities he knew so well. The stories in this volume prove that big themes—love, history, power, submission, death—can be addressed without the foil of irony. Instead, Smith reveals their resonance by rooting them in place, and giving them a voice that risks pure, humane, impassioned speech. This updated edition includes the story 'Home.'

Deer on the High Hills

Mirror and Marble

The Poetry of Iain Crichton Smith

A Poet of Question Marks

Iain Crichton Smith's Perception

The tenement has its being, its almost independent being, in a small Scottish town. Built of grey granite, more than a century ago, it stands four-square in space and time, the one fixed point in the febrile lives of the transient human beings whom it shelters. At the time of which Iain Crichton Smith writes, there are married couples in three of the flat; two widows and a widower occupy the others. All of them are living anxious lives of quiet desperation, which Mr Smith anatomises with cool and delicate understanding. The Masons, Linda and John, are the youngest and perhaps the happiest house-hold, who can still look to the future with hope: he has quite a well-paid job in a freezer shop, she is expecting a child. Mr Cooper's role in life is humbler: he is a lavatory attendant, but can take an off pride in his work. The Camerons provide drama: the husbands, once a long distance lorry driver who was sacked for heavy drinking and now a casual labourer, is consumed with unreasoning hate of Catholics, and when drunk becomes a raging brute who batters and terrifies his wife. Trevor Porter, an ex-teacher who like to think of himself as a poet (unpublished), is destroying his marriage by his self-absorption, though after his wife has surprised him by dying of cancer he feel guilt-ridden. Mrs Fios is the tenement's most colourful inhabitant: the widow of a local hotel owner, she still has money and can indulge in holiday cruises and foreign lovers. Mrs Miller, up on the top floor, is odd-woman-out even in this company of loners: since her husband was killed by lightning, crucified on the telephone wires he was repairing, she has become a slatternly recluse, who finds occasional drinking companions among the town's down-and-outs. The course of several of these lives reaches startling crisis during the little party to celebrate the birth of the Masons' child. But Iain Crichton Smith declines any easy resolution of events. His fascinatingly ill-assorted group of characters, brought together only by grey granite, are left to struggle on, with their own strengths and weaknesses.

Retrained, finely wrought ... Mr Crichton Smith shows us isolation, perplexity, loneliness, a combination of blindness and indifference - New Statesman 'Mr Crichton Smith has an acute feeling for places and atmosphere. The wind-blown heaths, the grey skies, the black dwellings, the narrow lives, the poverty - are all vividly depicted ... one can linger over the sheer beauty of his phrases' - Observer The eviction of the crofters from their homes between 1792 and the 1850s was one of the cruellest episodes in Scotland's history. In this novel Iain Crichton Smith captures the impact of the Highland Clearances through the thoughts and memories of an old woman who has lived all her life within the narrow confines of her community. Alone and bewildered by the demands of the factor, Mrs Scott approaches the minister for help, only to have her faith shattered by his hypocrisy. She finds comfort, however, from a surprising source: Donald Macleod, an imaginative and self-educated man who has been ostracised by his neighbours, not least by Mrs Scott herself, on account of his atheism. Through him and through the circumstances forced upon her, the old woman achieves new strength.

Selected Poems

Iain Crichton Smith, Barry Tebb, Michael Longley

Modern Scottish Gaelic Poems

A Study of the Poetry of Iain Crichton Smith

Poems of Iain Crichton Smith

Webpage includes an article about writer Iain Crichton Smith.

The Complete English Stories 1977-98

The Black Halo

The Last Summer

Iain Crichton Smith Memorial Prize 1999