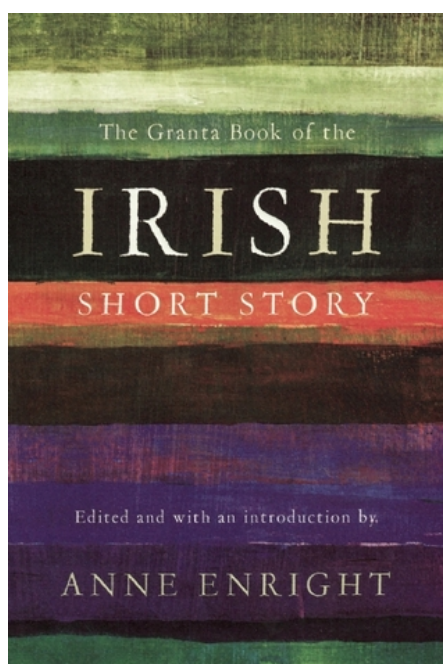




The Granta Book of the Irish Short Story

Anne Enright (Editor)

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Anne Enright has brought together a dazzling collection of Irish stories by authors born in the twentieth century – from Mary Lavin and Frank O'Connor to Claire Keegan and Kevin Barry. With a passionate introduction by Enright, *The Granta Book of the Irish Short Story* traces this great tradition through decades of social change and shows the pleasure Irish writers continue to take in the short-story form.

Deft and often devastating, these short stories dodge the rolling mythologies of Irish life to produce truths that are delightful and real. Includes Roddy Doyle, Elizabeth Bowen, Frank O'Connor, Seán Ó Faoláin, Edna O'Brien, Colm Tóibín, Claire Keegan and William Trevor.

The Granta Book of the Irish Short Story Details

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Author : Anne Enright (Editor)

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From Reader Review The Granta Book of the Irish Short Story for online ebook

Eleanor says

Like many of the Granta books this was better in some parts than others - but on the whole was excellent.

Ann Enright did an excellent job, I felt that there was an "Irishness" in every story, whether it be modern or traditional. Plenty of charm and plenty of pure writing talent.

Niamh says

fab - recommended.

Caitriona says

A varied collection with moments of real brilliance and real boredom

Shane says

A rich collection that mines the heart of what it is to be Irish: fighting colonialism, strangled by religion, divided by urban and rural sensibilities, and focussed on the internal over the external world, leading to various kinds of family dysfunction. The contributors' credentials are impressive, all of them published several times over, many with multiple collections of short stories to their credit in addition to novels, screenplays and plays, and about a third belonging to the "by-invitation-only" literary club, Aosdána.

Several themes play out, and religion's affect on families is brought out well in the stories: "The Road to the Shore," where the sheltered lives of nuns and their submission to authority figures like Mother Superior when dealing with unexpected circumstances in the outside world is well drawn; so is the impact on a mother of giving up a child to the Holy Orders in "An Attack of Hunger"; or the more insidious impact when one's son, a priest, is being accused of pedophilia in "A Priest in the Family." The taboos that religion locks the country in is brilliantly delivered in "Mothers Were All the Same." And talking of mothers, why does the mother in "Train Tracks" regularly peel her 12 year son's foreskin, because "it will be good for him when he's bigger" (did she mean 'older'?), while discussing the saving power of scapulars with him?

The revolutionary struggle against British colonial masters comes out in "Naming the Names," where love has to be subjugated to the cause; when night gangs of curfew breakers clash among themselves for turf in "Curfew,"; when a farmer would rather kill his horse rescued from drowning by British soldiers than accept their charity in "Everything in this Country Must."

Urban/regional tensions surface in “Music at Annahullion” where a piano is desired, but its value cannot be derived in a rural farmhouse people by three eccentric siblings; in “Midwife to the Fairies” where a urban midwife delivers a baby to a rural family with tragic results; in “Lilacs” where a smelly dung heap can become the new gold.

Family dysfunction is riddled throughout the collection, the best ones being, “Memory and Desire” where memories are strong and desire subtle, “The Supremacy of Grief” where people would rather focus on life than grieve over death no matter how much death is thrown in their face, and in “Men & Women” where years of humiliation and domination pushes a woman to literally take the steering wheel and leave her bullying husband stranded.

The writing styles veer towards narration over dialogue, and the dialogue, where it exists, has many accents. POV shifts happen suddenly; obviously these Irish writers haven’t been over-exposed to the writing mills in North America with their rigid rules for craft. The stories emerge as you dive into them and do not necessarily flow in a way that makes it easy for the reader to enter them; I had to re-read certain sections to comprehend what had just gone on. I noticed a subtle difference between the Northern Irish writers and their southern cousins; the former couldn’t disassociate from the “troubles” and had many more characters people their stories.

This is a slow read. Each story should be read and savoured. Each story will please, in its own way. I had to admit, upon reading this collection, that I agreed with the back cover blurb (for once) that “Irish writers have always punched well above their weight.”

Eamonn Barrett says

A nice collection. Highlights include short stories by William Trevor, Colm Toibin and a beautifully sad story of dreaming and yearning by Eugene McCabe called "Music at Annahullion". The volume is worth buying for this alone.

Patricia says

A diverse collection I found best taken in small doses.

Noel Charchuk says

My daughter brought a copy back from Ireland for me as a little souvenir of her visit to Dublin. I have really become interested in the short story form, and the authors all delivered well here. The use of language is so different, unique, it was almost like I was reading very fluently in a foreign tongue at times. I found this book to be a real teaser, and I want to explore many more of them in depth. I will be in Ireland next year and plan to haunt bookshops to pick up whatever I can by Anne Devlin, Edna O'Brien and many of the others that I enjoyed.

Kerry says

Mixed. I loved some of the stories but was less enthusiastic about others, hence only three stars rather than the four I wanted to give. The stories I loved, though, were fantastic! So well worth a read, just don't feel you have to love it all.

Becky says

Some excellent stories in here.

Sheri Fresonke Harper says

I loved this collection of contemporary Irish short stories. It contains some really unique views of Ireland chosen by the editor Anne Enright because she liked them and felt like they spoke and dripped the essence of the Irish. The tales are a mixed bag, several about children, many about unusual views of love, some about jobs, some about international relations including with ones about the English-Irish conflicts, many, many focused on dysfunctional relationships, some with feminist attitudes. Many grabbed the Irish landscape and painted it in as backdrop into the story. They start off somewhat depressing but turned eventually toward humor. There's thirty tales from 1929 on to current--many written in the 2000s.

Kay says

An interesting collection of short stories, but generally rather grim and a bit obsessed with nuns!

Abby Frucht says

from my facebook postings:

I've fallen in love! With Elizabeth Bowen's short story, Summer Night, which I came across in The Granta Book of Irish Short stories. I had a strange experience reading it. At first, past midnight night, sleepy, I found it to be a huge challenge even on the sentence level and threw it down in dismay. In the morning I forced myself to try it again (Does sound like love, doesn't it?). The story is remarkable for many reasons not least because it employs multiple points of view, and for its observations of the natural and meteorologic environment via a plot hinging on a new technology, the telephone. If you know of other works of fiction with plot elements hinging on the use of, or the absence (like House of Mirth) of the telephone, of any era, will you let me know? thanks -

and, later:

Another mesmerizer from the Granta Book of the Irish Short Story - Eugene McCabe's Music at Annahullion. What an amazing experience reading this book is turning out to be - and if I had to say, so far, what characterizes an Irish Story, I'd say that it enacts the intersection between despair and celebration. All

of the stories so far turn on a precise moment of disappointment...and yet the effect is of a kind of ebullient endurance. Kudos to editor Anne Enright!

Sarah Allen says

Read for an OLLI class. Wonderful experience of reading literature I would not have discovered on my own and discussing it with a wonderful group of readers.

M says

"Music at Annahullian" by Eugene McCabe is a master piece. There are a few not so exciting stories in the collection, but overall it's a very good collection.

Vivian Valvano says

I wanted to love this book. Thirty-one Irish short stories - and no more than half of them (maybe not even half) delighted or touched or dazzled me. And many of those that fit that category were re-reads for me. Enright's short introduction is excellent: concise and direct. Reading it, I expected an array of stories that would overwhelm me (never imagining that all would, of course). But I was so often underwhelmed here. The very best stories in the collection, for me, were those by: Anne Devlin, Edna O'Brien, Colm Toibin, Keven Barry (I'm just getting introduced to his work, and so far, I think it's splendid), Colum McCann, Eilis Ni Dhuibhne, Claire Keegan, Joseph O'Connor, William Trevor. But, again, many were re-reads. And a few others were good. It bothered me that so many didn't make the mark for me.
