

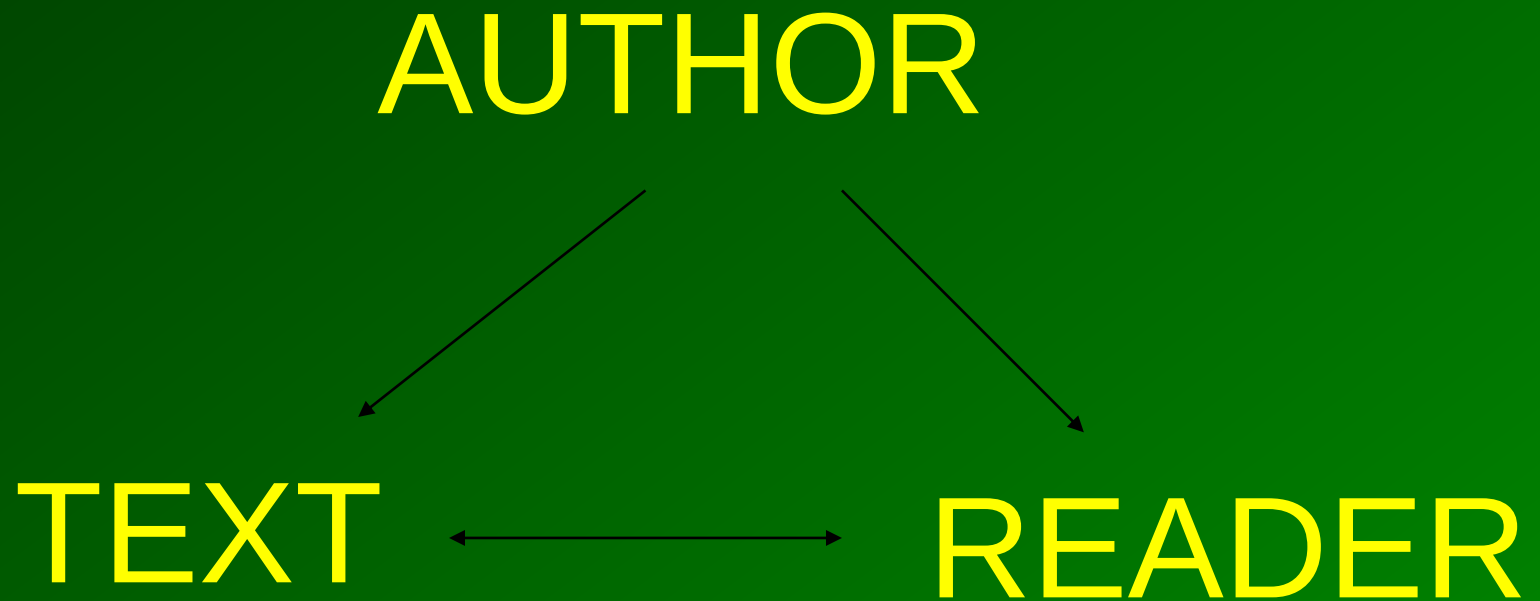
Irish Writers

Irish Writers' Painting by Robert Teeling



Carmel Hinchion
University of Limerick

Meaning Making: Reader Response



A Pedagogy of Irish Poetry



Seamus Heaney

1939 - 2013

Death
of a
Naturalist

by
Seamus
Heaney

SEAMUS
HEANEY

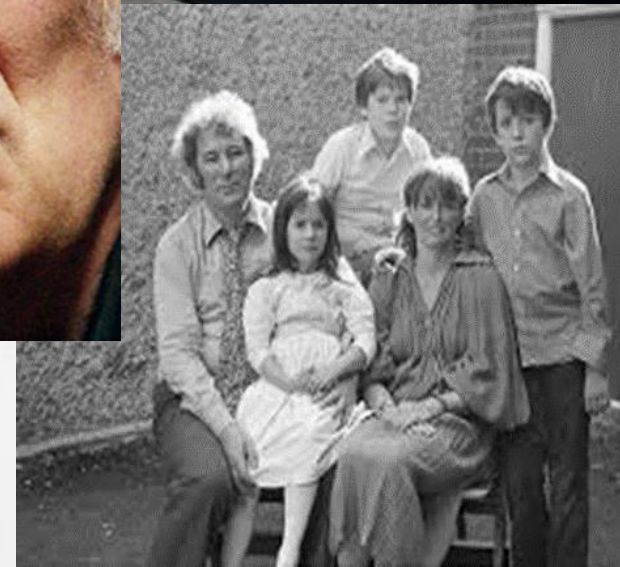
Wintering Out



Seamus Heaney
NORTH



DON'T
BE
AFRAID



Seamus
Heaney
The
Redress
of Poetry

Seamus
Heaney
Human
Chain

Seamus
Heaney

District and Circle



Digging

Between my finger and my thumb
The squat pen rests; as snug as a gun.

Under my window a clean rasping sound
When the spade sinks into gravelly ground:
My father, digging. I look down

Till his straining rump among the flowerbeds
Bends low, comes up twenty years away
Stooping in rhythm through potato drills
Where he was digging.

The coarse boot nestled on the lug, the shaft
Against the inside knee was levered firmly.
He rooted out tall tops, buried the bright edge
deep
To scatter new potatoes that we picked
Loving their cool hardness in our hands.

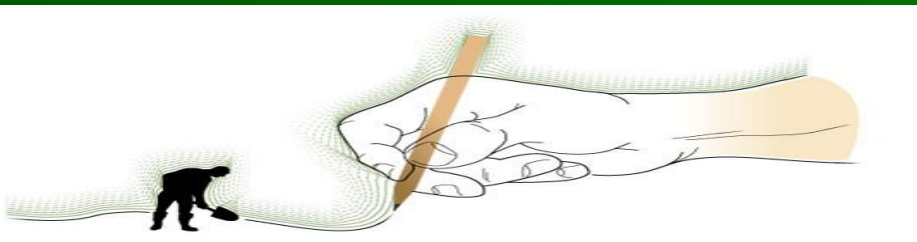
By God, the old man could handle a spade,
Just like his old man.

My grandfather could cut more turf in a day
Than any other man on Toner's bog.
Once I carried him milk in a bottle
Corked sloppily with paper. He straightened up
To drink it, then fell to right away
Nicking and slicing neatly, heaving sods
Over his shoulder, digging down and down
For the good turf. Digging.

The cold smell of potato mold, the squelch and
slap
Of soggy peat, the curt cuts of an edge
Through living roots awaken in my head.
But I've no spade to follow men like them.

Between my finger and my thumb
The squat pen rests.
I'll dig with it.

(from *Death of a Naturalist*, 1966)



Patrick Kavanagh

1904-1967



Patrick Kavanagh

- Benediction of the commonplace:
“Ordinary things wear lovely wings”
- Escape into a “historyless” world: “Try to be more human”.
- Isolation

A Christmas Childhood

I

One side of the potato-pits was white with frost –
How wonderful that was, how wonderful!
And when we put our ears to the paling-post
The music that came out was magical.

The light between the ricks of hay and straw
Was a hole in Heaven's gable. An apple tree
With its December-glinting fruit we saw –
O you, Eve, were the world that tempted me
To eat the knowledge that grew in clay
And death the germ within it! Now and then
I can remember something of the gay
Garden that was childhood's. Again

The tracks of cattle to a drinking-place,
A green stone lying sideways in a ditch,
Or any common sight, the transfigured face
Of a beauty that the world did not touch.



Kavanagh wrote part II in 1940 and part I in 1943.
At Kavanagh's funeral in 1967, Seamus Heaney
read 'A Christmas Childhood' at the graveside.

A Christmas Childhood

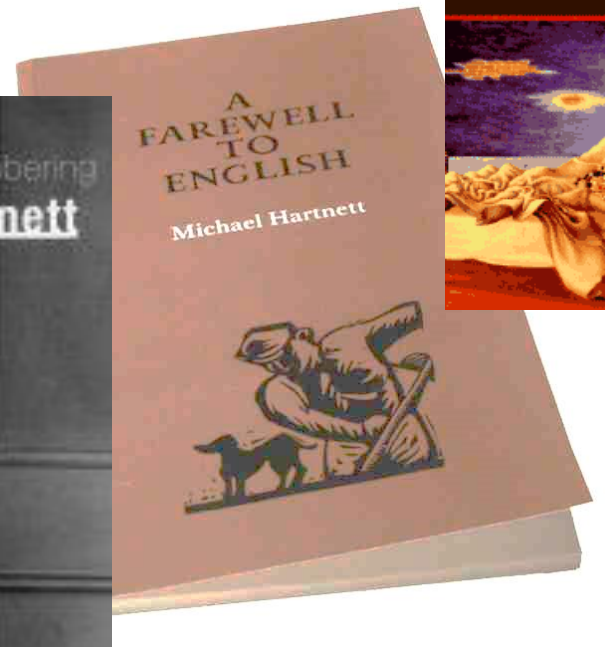
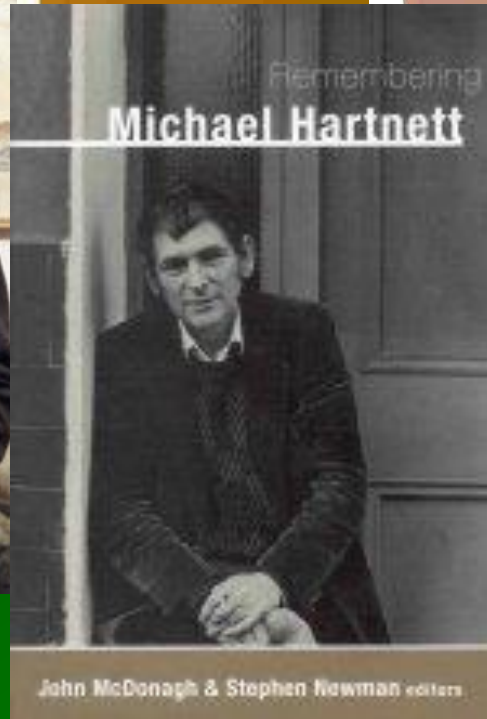
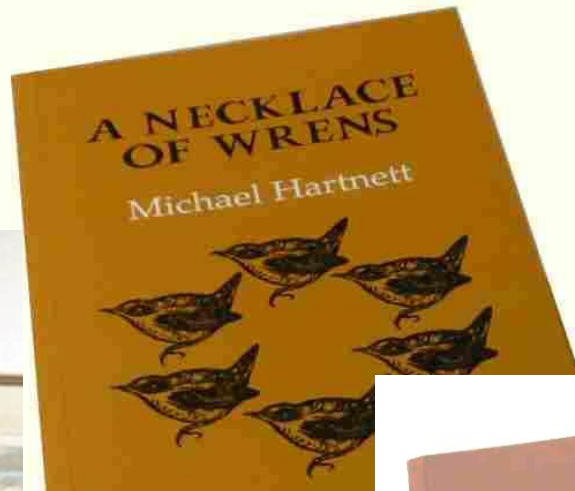
II

My father played the melodion
Outside at our gate;
There were stars in the morning east
And they danced to his music.
Across the wild bogs his melodion called
To Lennons and Callans.
As I pulled on my trousers in a hurry
I knew some strange thing had happened.
Outside in the cow-house my mother
Made the music of milking;
The light of her stable-lamp was a star
And the frost of Bethlehem made it twinkle.
A water-hen screeched in the bog,
Mass-going feet
Crunched the wafer-ice on the pot-holes,
Somebody wistfully twisted the bellows wheel.
My child poet picked out the letters
On the grey stone,
In silver the wonder of a Christmas townland,

The winking glitter of a frosty dawn.
Cassiopeia was over
Cassidy's hanging hill,
I looked and three whin bushes rode
across
The horizon — the Three Wise Kings.
And old man passing said:
'Can't he make it talk —
The melodion.' I hid in the doorway
And tightened the belt of my box-pleated
coat.
I nicked six nicks on the door-post
With my penknife's big blade —
There was a little one for cutting tobacco.
And I was six Christmases of age.
My father played the melodion,
My mother milked the cows,
And I had a prayer like a white rose pinned
On the Virgin Mary's blouse.

Michael Hartnett / Mícheál Ó hAirtnéide

1941-1999



Michael Hartnett / Mícheál Ó hAirtnéide

- Love and death.
- Parochial and national identity.
- Nature.
- He wrote in both English and Irish. One of the most significant voices in late 20th century Irish writing. "Munster's de facto poet laureate".
- Website: <http://www.michael-hartnett.com/index.htm>

Michael Hartnett “*A Necklace of Wrens*”

for Micheal O Ciarmhaic, file

When I was very young
I found a nest.
Its chirping young
were fully fledged.

They rose and re-alighted
around my neck,
Made in the wet meadow
a feather necklet.

To them I was not human
but a stone or tree: I felt a sharp wonder
they could not feel.

That was when the craft came
which demands respect.
Their talons left on me
scars not healed yet.

I mo bhuachail óg, fadó fadó,
d'aimsíos nead.
Bhí na gearrcaigh clúmhtha, fastá,
is iad ag scread.

D'éirigh siad — is thuirling
arís ar m'ucht
Ormsa bhí muince clúimh
sa mhóinéar fliuch.

Níor dhuine mé ach géag crainn
nó carp cloch
ach bhí iontas crua nár bhraith said
ag bualadh faoi m'ucht.

B'in an lá ar thuirling ceird
a éilíonn ómós:
is d'fhág a n-ingne forba orm
nár leigheasadh fós.

From *A Necklace of Wrens* 1987 and 2000 Gallery Press

Write your Autobiographical Poem

- Line 1 Write your first name,
- Line 2 Write four (4) words about you,
- Line 3 Write Brother or Sister of and then list your brother or sister's name (If you don't have brothers or sisters, write no one),
- Line 4 Write Lover of and then three (3) things you love,
- Line 5 Write Who feels and then three (3) things and how you feel about them,
- Line 6 Write Who needs and then three (3) things you need,
- Line 7 Write Who gives and then three (3) things you give others,
- Line 8 Write Who fears and then three (3) things that scare you,
- Line 9 Write Who would like to see and three (3) things you want to see,
- Line 10 Write Resident of and then the city you live in, then your street name,
- Line 11 Write your last name.
- That's it! You've created your own poem. Congratulations!



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