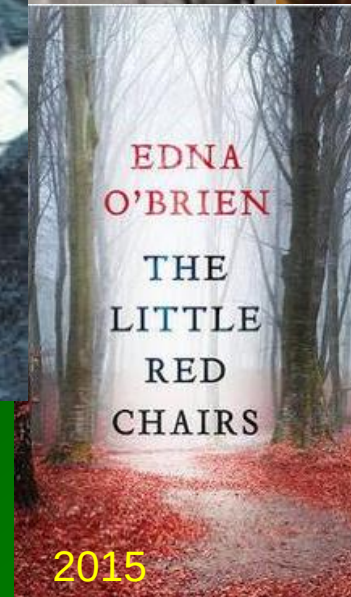
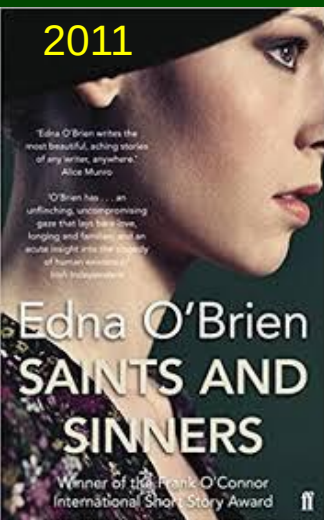
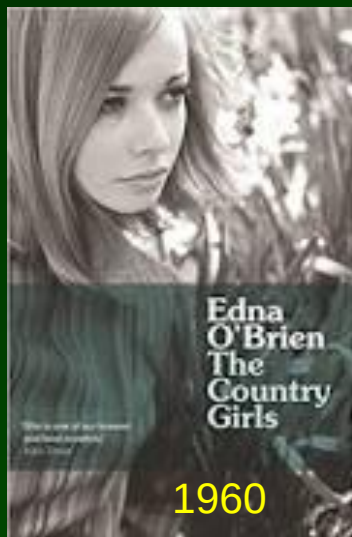


Irish Writers



Edna O'Brien

1930 -



Edna O'Brien

- **Women and Love:** The struggle of women trying to liberate themselves from the restrictions, inhibitions and RC morals implanted in them, and to attain emotional fulfilment and happiness.
- **Ireland and women - State of the Nation:** Political response to both gendered oppression and literary parochialism (climate of censorship in the newly independent Ireland's intellectual culture). Devastating lived effects of frustration with the cloying myth of 'Ireland-as-motherland' on Irish women.
- Her **recent fiction** broadens its focus and engages more actively with contemporary social and political issues.

Edna O'Brien - links

- Edna O'Brien's childhood (interview) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uu2dmfmhy5Y>
- Edna O'Brien on Today With Pat Kenny <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ad2ii625m6g>
- Edna O'Brien -Life,Storied 1 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j1Ptzpa1Srk>
- Edna O'Brien -Life,Storied 2 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e5vRxXjlUiI>
- Edna O'Brien -Life,Storied 3 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kFtkAnYrW0w>
- **The Country Girls (Opening)**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OPPuHDn791s&NR=1+country+girls>
- The Country Girls - Part 1 of 8 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GOwVM4FKUIk>
- The Country Girls - Part 2 of 8 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i2bClq1m_kc
- The Country Girls - Part 3 of 8 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vTpjZgGFuL4>
- The Country Girls - Part 4 of 8 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F4fMcuNRBLU>
- The Country Girls - Part 5 of 8 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qk_R4lpzGMs
- The Country Girls - Part 6 of 8 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KkURqyy4ITl>
- The Country Girls - Part 7 of 8 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LWTNAw0M1k4>
- The Country Girls - Part 8 of 8 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g8t1XpQWT8I>

The Country Girls

Questions on the scene

- What is this scene about?
- What impression do you get of the two girls? What is their relationship like?
- Describe the body language used in the 'confession scene'.
- Which themes/issues are addressed or foreshadowed in this scene?
- How does the narrator describe her mother? How is she depicted in this scene?
- Choose one character, either Kate or Baba. Write her diary entry at the end of that day describing her feelings during the role play.

The Dining Room

- I used to sit there, admiring the room and its pale yellow walls and the two paintings depicting waves that were descending violently on a range of grey-black cliffs, somewhere in England. It was there, on top of the china cabinet, that I kept dolls which a Protestant woman, a friend of my mother's, had sent to me each Christmas. First was the Princess, whom I called Rosaleen, a sleeping doll, cheeks vivid as if coloured with fresh cochineal, and eyelashes that by a mere tilt of the head would exquisitely flutter. The doll the following year was male, a little Dutch drummer boy in red and fawn, a velvet pyjama suit and a drummer's orange hat. He too came in an oblong box, snug inside folds of tissue paper, and one day I did what I dimly knew to be a profane thing. I took the little drummer boy and laid him over the Princess in her blue taffeta dress, with its apron of net, put the lid back on and left them to their mischiefs'
 - (Edna O' Brien, *The Country Girl*, 2012, pp.19-20)

1955 -

Paula Meehan

- Relationships – family
- City life and suburbia
- Strong sense of memory and place
- Changing landscape of Ireland



Buying Winkles

1

My mother would spare me sixpence and say, 'Hurry up now and don't be talking to strange men on the way.' I'd dash from the ghosts on the stairs where the bulb had blown out into Gardiner Street, all relief. A bonus if the moon was in the strip of sky between the tall houses, or stars out, but even in the rain I was happy – the winkles would be wet and glisten blue like little night skies themselves. I'd hold the tanner tight and jump every crack in the pavement, I'd wave up to women at sills or those lingering in doorways and weave a glad path through men heading out for the night.

2

She'd be sitting outside the Rosebowl Bar on an orange-crate, a pram loaded with pails of winkles before her. When the bar doors swung open they'd leak the smell of men together with drink and I'd see light in golden mirrors. I envied each soul in the hot interior.



3

I'd ask her again to show me the right way to do it. She'd take a pin from her shawl- 'Open the eyelid. So. Stick it in till you feel a grip, then slither him out. Gently, mind.' The sweetest extra wrinkle that brought the sea to me. 'Tell your Ma I picked them fresh this morning.'

4

I'd bear the newspaper twists bulging fat with winkles proudly home, like torches.

Paula Meehan



Eavan Boland

1944 -



'The dial of a washing machine, the expression in a child's face – these things were at eye-level as I bent down to them during the day. I wanted them to enter my poems. I wanted the poems they entered to be Irish poems.'



Themes in Boland's Poetry

- The past and the present
- Individual responsibility
- Ireland's troubled and violent history
- The role of women
- Marginalisation of women and the weak and vulnerable
- Love
- Domestic life

This Moment

A neighbourhood.
At dusk.

Things are getting ready
to happen
Out of sight.

Stars and moths.
And rinds slanting around fruit.

But not yet.

One tree is black.
One window is yellow as butter.

A woman leans down to catch a child
who has run into her arms
this moment.

Stars rise.
Moths flutter.
Apples sweeten in the dark.

Eavan Boland





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