

Stones Of Aran: Labyrinth - Tim Robinson

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Like J.M. Synge almost a century before him, Tim Robinson portrays the inner and outer life of a landscape and its inhabitants. Encyclopedia of myth and reality, herbal, love-letter, missal, jest-book, anthology of cultural responses - Stones of Aran juggles modes from page to page. Its apparent inexhaustibility is borrowed from just one scrap of the Earth's surface: Arainn, the largest of the three Aran islands, off Ireland's west coast. The first volume, Pilgrimage, led the reader around the coastline, dazzled and enchanted by the complex interplay of rock and ocean. Labyrinth concludes this microscopic mission, opening up the interior and merging cosmic themes with the utterly personal. By the end, the island is mysteriously returned to itself, untrodden and unread. Stones of Aran: Labyrinth is a companion volume to Stones of Aran: Pilgrimage (1986), the acclaimed first step of a magisterial survey. Nine years on Robinson completes his quest. 'One of the most original, revelatory and exhilarating works of literature ever produced in Ireland.'- Michael Viney, The Irish Times 'Robinson's Aran will, inevitably, become part of the general myth. It is a wonderful achievement.'- Seamus Deane, London Review of Books 'Wholly delightful... the natural world has seldom been better described. In an age of rigid specialisms and arcane jargon, he is a polymathic autodidact who restores the honourable original meanings of amateur and dilettante.'- Patrick Curry, Times Literary Supplement 'Stones of Aran warms cold geology into fervent life. Robinson's chosen form is wholly irresistible.'- Jonathan Keates, The Observer 'Taken together, Tim Robinson's two volumes on Aran constitute one of the major Irish prose texts of this century in any genre ... Within the lofty architecture of this writing, many of our cherished conceptions of place and identity find their apotheosis and are accordingly transcended.'- Sean Lysaght, The Irish Review 'A triumph of literary and topographical excavation. His comments on every facet of Aran life are authoritative and absorbing and his individual approach to the subject has turned the whole thing into an idiosyncratic masterpiece.'- Patricia Craig, New Statesman

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