

Eamon Grennan

Acclaimed Irish Poet

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"Eamon Grennan's writing brings us over and over again to the discovery of what is naturally so and had passed unrecognized." —W.S. Merwin

"Few poets are as generous as Eamon Grennan in the sheer volume of delight his poems convey, and fewer still are as attentive to the available marvels of the earth. To read him is to be led on a walk through the natural world of clover and cricket and, most of all, light, and to face with an open heart the complexity of being human." —Billy Collins

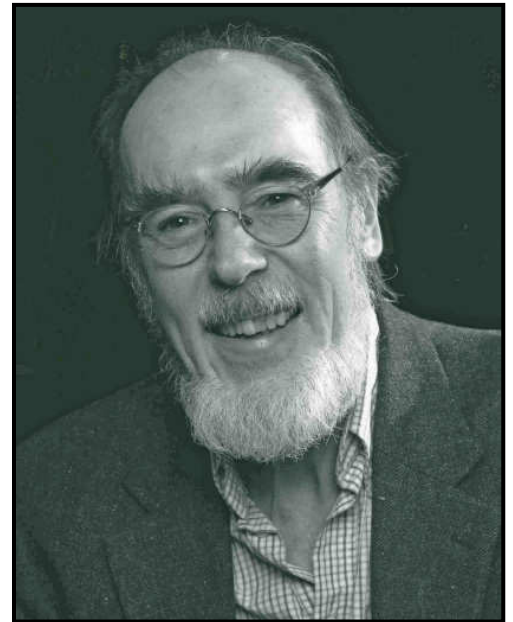
"Whether he is describing the flight of swifts over Dublin, the sight of his children in yellow macs climbing over cliff rocks, or his passage through 'a bright bead-curtain of rain,' Grennan is a writer of plainspoken reverence....[H]is poetry...is like afternoon light hitting ordinary objects: it illuminates, clarifies, and directs our gaze toward what it is we love but often overlook." —The New Yorker

Eamon Grennan was born in Dublin in 1941 and educated at UC Davis, where he studied English and Italian, and Harvard, where he received his PhD in English. His volumes of poetry include *Out of Sight: New and Selected Poems* (2010); *Matter of Fact* (2008); *Relations: New and Selected Poems* (1998); *What Light There Is & Other Poems* (North Point Press, 1989); *Wildly for Days* (1983); *What Light There Is* (1987); *As If It Matters* (1991); *So It Goes* (1995); *Selected and New Poems* (2000); *Still Life with Waterfall* (2001) and *The Quick of It* (2005). His books of poetry are published in the United States by Graywolf Press, and in Ireland by Gallery Press. Other publications include *Leopardi: Selected Poems* (Princeton 1997), and *Facing the Music: Irish Poetry in the 20th Century*, a collection of essays on modern Irish poetry. His poems, reviews, and essays have appeared in many magazines both in Ireland and the US.

Grennan has given lectures and workshops in colleges and universities in the US, including courses for the graduate programs at Columbia and NYU. During 2002 he was the Heimbold Professor of Irish Studies at Villanova University. His grants and prizes in the United States include awards from the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Guggenheim Foundation. *Leopardi: Selected Poems* received the 1997 PEN Award for Poetry in Translation, and *Still Life with Waterfall* was the recipient of the 2003 Lenore Marshall Award for Poetry from the American Academy of Poets. His poems have been awarded a number of Pushcart prizes. Grennan taught at Vassar College for thirty years where he was the Dexter M. Ferry Jr. Professor of English.

Grennan divides his time between the US and the west of Ireland. He writes in both the ancient tradition of mournful remembrance in attention to the natural world and the modern impulse to seize and preserve the moment. He returns to Ireland yearly from his current home in New York State for "voice transfusions." He attributes his "amphibian" sensibility to this dual life. "I have a double sense of things, but I tend to write about what's under my nose. I write about here when I'm here and when I go back to Ireland I write about what's there. I regard myself not as in exile, but as a migrant. That's what attracted me, in some of my early poems, to birds. My becoming a poet—in this particular incarnation anyway—was not unconnected to someone giving me the present of a pair of binoculars."

"As far as I'm concerned poetry is about elegy. Every poem is a memory of some kind, a celebratory elegy. Poems are like shells. Something is gone and that's why you write." —Eamon Grennan



From *The Branch*, February, 2012 by Barbara Mindel

EAMON GRENNAN

Poet Eamon Grennan, an acclaimed Irish bard and retired Dexter M. Ferry Jr. Professor of English at Vassar College for thirty years, will be a presenter at AAUW's Writers Tea in April.

His accolades are numerous, among them: "His poetry is like afternoon light hitting ordinary objectives: it illuminates, clarifies, and directs our gaze toward what it is we love but often overlook." (The New Yorker) "To read him is to be led on a walk through the natural world of clover and cricket and, most of all, light, and to face with an open heart the complexity of being human." (Billy Collins)

Professor Grennan was born in Dublin, educated at UC Davis and Harvard. He has given lectures and workshops in colleges and universities in the US; his grants and prizes include awards from the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Guggenheim Foundation. He received the 1997 PEN Award for Poetry in Translation; was the recipient of the 2003 Lenore Marshall Award for Poetry from the American Academy of Poets; and his poems have been awarded numerous Pushcart prizes.

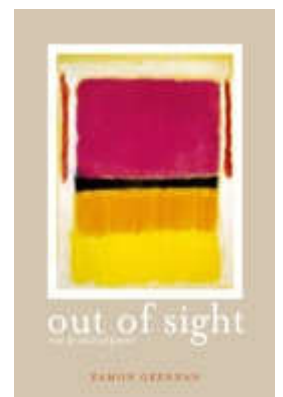
He divides his time between the US and the west of Ireland where he returns yearly for "voice transfusions" he says, adding, "I have a double sense of things, but tend to write about what's under my nose. I write about here when I'm here and when I go back to Ireland I write about what's there. I regard myself not as in exile, but as a migrant."

He writes in both the ancient tradition of mournful remembrance of the natural world and the modern impulse to seize and preserve the moment. He states, "As far as I'm concerned poetry is about elegy. Every poem is a memory of some kind, a celebratory elegy. Poems are like shells. Something is gone and that's why you write." His volumes of poems, as well as his magazine reviews and essays, have been published in the US and in Ireland.

"Eamon Grennan's writing brings us over and over again to the discovery of what is naturally so and had pass unrecognized." (W.S. Merwin) We're in for an enchanting treat as he reads from his poems at Writers Tea!

About *OUT OF SIGHT: NEW & COLLECTED POEMS (2010)*

The Retrospective Collection By Eamon Grennan, Whose Poetry "Illuminates, Clarifies, And Directs Our Gaze Toward What It Is We Love But Often Overlook" (The New Yorker) *Out of Sight* collects poetry from across Eamon Grennan's decorated career, with generous selections from his seven previous books and more than thirty new poems. This is the definitive book by one of contemporary poetry's most sensuous and shimmering voices.



About *MATTER OF FACT (2008)*

Matter of fact. Matter of life or death. What does it matter? Eamon Grennan's new poems seek out criteria with which to question what is unreliable and what is real, what is mere distraction and what is worthy of attention, what is speculation and what is fact. In prose poems and lyrics, Grennan turns to the immutable power of the natural world and the sustaining forces of art to assign value to what endures, to what finally matters. Here is the poet deeply attuned to the everyday possibilities of love, family, and beauty, and in *Matter of Fact*, he is at his unmistakable best.

Selected Writings

ART

The whole chorus saying only one thing: look
at what goes, where we stand in the midst of it:
*Golden eyes of the beginning, deep patience
of the end.* Stone-deaf, the rocks in silence
are writing our lives: mossed, or lichen- daubed
to brightness, their gravity is here to stay. . .
but so is the butterfly winged with light
and in a dozen minds at once, letting its life
be wamble and whim as air determines, though still
a fixed purpose sticks to it, it knows the score
the chorus follows as one voice, singing
Light whelms, whelms, and will end us, while
a painter, old, *is leaning slightly to the right or left.*

COLD MORNING

Through an accidental crack in the curtain
I can see the eight o'clock light change from
charcoal to a faint gassy blue, inventing things

in the morning that has a thick skin of ice on it
as the water tank has, so nothing flows, all is bone,
telling its tale of how hard the night had to be

for any heart caught out in it, just flesh and blood
no match for the mindless chill that's settled in,
a great stone bird, its wings stretched stiff

from the tip of Letter Hill to the cobbled bay, its gaze
glacial, its hook-and-scrabble claws fast clamped
on every window, its petrifying breath a cage

in which all the warmth we were is shivering.