



Patrick Kavanagh, A Biography: The Acclaimed Biography of One of the Foremost Irish Poets of the 20th Century

Antoinette Quinn

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Antoinette Quinn's acclaimed biography of Patrick Kavanagh, the most important Irish poet between the death of W.B. Yeats and the rise of Seamus Heaney, tells the triumphant story of his journey from homespun balladry through early journal and poetry publications to his eventual coronation as one of the most influential figures in Irish poetry.

Kavanagh (1904–1967) was born in County Monaghan, the son of a cobbler-cum-small farmer. He left school at thirteen to work the land but continued to educate himself, reading and writing poetry in his spare time. In 1929 he began contributing verses to the *Irish Statesman* and was soon publishing in Irish and English journals. His first collection, *Ploughman and Other Poems*, appeared in 1936 and was followed by an autobiography, *The Green Fool*, in 1938.

In 1939 he moved to Dublin where he spent the rest of his life as a freelance writer and as part of the social and literary scene, keeping company with a gifted generation of writers, among them Flann O'Brien and Brendan Behan. He gained recognition as an important literary voice with his long poem 'The Great Hunger' in 1942. Further collections and the novel *Tarry Flynn* appeared in the following decades to growing critical acclaim.

Published to widespread praise, *Patrick Kavanagh, A Biography* traces Kavanagh's publishing history as well as revealing what he was writing in the long interval between his books. This engaging, well-researched account of his daily professional life as a writer, his revisions and redraftings, his negotiations with publishers and editors, dispels the view that he was an untutored, gormless genius visited by an occasional flash of inspiration.

Patrick Kavanagh, A Biography is the definitive account of Patrick Kavanagh's life and work and should be the standard for years to come.

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