



Welcome to Read Mór 2024

This year the Arts Council works proudly in partnership with The Irish Prison Service to deliver Culture Night's book gifting initiative, so that the Culture Night experience continues to include those who cannot otherwise participate.

Read Mór 2024 will see a list of 30 book titles from some of the country's best-loved writers gifted to all 13 prisons nationally. In consultation with Prison Service's teaching staff, we are delighted to present a wide selection of novels, short stories, poetry and non-fiction titles.

Our relationship with the Irish Prison Service spans many years with the Artists in Prison Scheme and the Writers in Prison Scheme, through the prison service education programme, and it has offered many service users the opportunity to meaningfully engage with the arts and with artists. Looking to strengthen our relationship, on Culture Night this year, free books will be available in all prisons and many of the prisons will also host Read Mór events with some of the participating authors.

In this, our third year of Read Mór, we are thrilled to support and promote Irish and Irish based writers, publishers and independent book sellers. Our writers come from a variety of genres and disciplines, such as lecturer, psychologist and memoirist Katriona O'Sullivan, author and poet Annemarie Ní Churreáin, comic book artist and graphic novelist Will Sliney, and writer Pat Sheedy, who completed a creative writing degree while in prison.

In celebration of Culture Night, we hope that you enjoy the pleasure of reading and will continue to explore the diversity and richness of literature in Ireland.

Maureen Kennelly
Director, Arts Council



Seirbhís Phríosúin
na hÉireann
Irish Prison Service

We are delighted to partner with the Arts Council for Read Mór 2024. Its' aims align with our commitment to fostering rehabilitation and personal development within our prison communities. This initiative not only encourages a love of reading but also provides an opportunity for people in custody to engage with literature in a meaningful way. By participating in Culture Night, we hope to promote a sense of connection and inclusion. Together, we can inspire transformative experiences through the power of reading.

Dr Emma Regan,
Care & Rehabilitation Director
Irish Prison Service /
Seirbhís Phríosúin

About Read Mór

Read Mór is a book gifting initiative by The Arts Council / An Chomhairle Ealaíon on Culture Night / Oíche Chultúir, established in 2022 to celebrate the Arts Council's 70th anniversary. Following its initial success, the Read Mór Book Gifting initiative has become an annual nationwide event which aims to share the joy of reading with diverse communities, in particular with people who may not be able to participate in Culture Night activities. It also supports Irish and Irish based authors and promotes reading for pleasure.

For its third edition, Read Mór will be rolled out in partnership with the Irish Prison Service, gifting books to all prisons across the country. In addition to books being distributed to the prison locations on Culture Night (Friday, September 20th), Read Mór events will be held in several prisons, featuring some of the participating authors.

About the Arts Council

The Arts Council is the national government agency for funding, developing and promoting the arts in Ireland. Its role is to advocate, advise, invest and work in partnership with others, to cultivate a vibrant arts environment at the heart of Irish society. Established by Statute in 1951, the Arts Council is guided by the Arts Act 2003 and is an expert, autonomous body.

The Arts Council recognises that the arts have a central and distinctive contribution to make to our evolving society. Our current strategy includes priorities to support artists, increase public engagement, invest strategically, ensuring spatial and demographic equity, and developing capacity. The Arts Council's work is underpinned by a set of values that includes freedom of thought and expression, commitment to excellence, integrity, accountability and transparency, respect for diversity and collegiality.

Visit [artscouncil.ie](https://www.artscouncil.ie)

About the Irish Prison Service

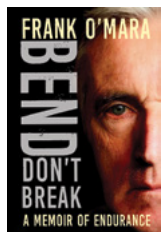
The Irish Prison Service is responsible for the safe and secure custody of persons sentenced to prison, held on remand, or held on immigration matters. It is responsible for ensuring that convicted persons properly serve their sentence and for providing them with opportunities to engage in a meaningful way to reduce the likelihood of re-offending and assist their reintegration into law-abiding society.

Visit [irishprisons.ie](https://www.irishprisons.ie)

About Culture Night

Now in its 19th year, Culture Night is a national moment celebrating all that makes up the richness and diversity of culture in Ireland today; connecting people to cultural activities locally and nationally and opening up pathways to ongoing engagement. Over 1700 free events on the night are developed in partnership with local authorities and many other national and local organisations and individuals across the island.

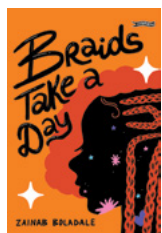
Visit [culturenight.ie](https://www.culturenight.ie)



Bend, Don't Break: A Memoir of Endurance
Frank O'Mara

Frank O'Mara, a Limerick man who competed in three Olympic Games and broke records, transitioned to a successful US telecom career. Diagnosed with early-onset Parkinson's at 48, he faced severe symptoms like tremors and difficulty walking. In this inspiring memoir, he shares his journey of overcoming adversity with determination, humour, and resilience, embodying the strength that defined his athletic and business achievements.

Memoir The O'Brien Press



Braids Take a Day
Zainab Boladale

Abidemi anticipates her final summer in Ennistymon before college, eager to leave school, learn braiding techniques, and explore her relationship with Jack. But meeting a woman from Nigeria unearths buried secrets, upending Abi's world. She must now confront family changes and redefine herself. Zainab Boladale, a journalist, TV presenter, and public speaker, was born in Nigeria and raised in Ireland.

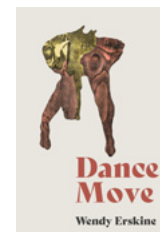
Young Adult/Debut The O'Brien Press boladale.com



Close to Home
Michael Magee

Sean returns to Belfast, falling into old habits—wild nights, borrowed money, missed rent, and dead-end jobs. The city still bears the scars of a peace without prosperity. Living with his brothers and ma, they avoid unspoken truths. One night, overwhelmed, Sean makes a grave mistake. Michael Magee, a Queen's University PhD graduate, is the award-winning author of *Close to Home*.

Literary Fiction Penguin Books



Dance Move
Wendy Erskine

In *Dance Move*, Wendy Erskine returns to Belfast, exploring ordinary lives with extraordinary depth. Drew Lord Haig sings at a paramilitary event, Max reflects on a Christian film festival, and Mrs. Dallesandro reminisces in a tanning salon on her anniversary. These stories reveal the vastness of life in everyday moments, where hopes often fall just out of reach. Erskine's debut, *Sweet Home*, won the 2020 Butler Literary Award.

Short Stories The Stinging Fly



Eyewitness to War and Peace: My Life in News
Eamonn Mallie

In *Eyewitness to War and Peace*, Eamonn Mallie recounts his remarkable career as a journalist in Northern Ireland, covering the Troubles and peace process. With unique access to figures like John Hume, Gerry Adams, and Margaret Thatcher, Mallie shares insights from his groundbreaking interviews. This memoir highlights the challenges of journalism in a divided society and the enduring pursuit of peace in Northern Ireland.

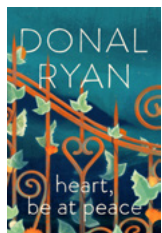
Memoir Merrion Press



Frankie
Graham Norton

Elderly Frankie Howe, once too timid to take centre stage, tries to forget her past. But when young carer Damian arrives, memories resurface. As she recounts her life—from post-war Ireland to 1960s New York—her world of art, friendships, and fleeting intensity comes alive. Through these stories, Frankie's resilience shines. Graham Norton, host of *The Graham Norton Show*, is also a bestselling author.

Literary Fiction Hodder & Stoughton



Heart, Be At Peace
Donal Ryan

In a small Irish town recovering from economic collapse, peace is threatened by new challenges. As jobs return, old dramas fade, but young people are tempted by quick money, and the older generation faces an elusive threat. *Heart, Be at Peace*, old through twenty-one voices, is a lyrical novel that stands alone or complements Donal Ryan's acclaimed *The Spinning Heart*, a multi-award-winning book.

Literary Fiction Transworld



Hell to Pay: A Tale of the Shrouded College
Will Sliney (Illustrator), Charles Soule (Author)

In *Hell to Pay*, Maia and Sebastian Stone make a dangerous deal with the Shrouded College, gaining magical powers in exchange for retrieving 666 cursed coins from hell. Each coin can summon a demon and has been used for evil over centuries. The Stones must collect them all or face eternal bondage and the world's descent into chaos. Success might grant their freedom, but the cost could be unimaginable.

Comic Image Comics



Homesickness
Colin Barrett

Colin Barrett's darkly funny and moving second book explores the lives of outcasts and misfits. A quiet pub night turns chaotic with a sword-wielding fugitive, a funeral is haunted by restless ghosts, and a policewoman confronts life's banality post-shooting. Set in County Mayo's desolate areas, these stories capture abruptness and absurdity. Barrett's acclaimed debut, *Young Skins*, won multiple literary awards, solidifying his place in contemporary fiction.

Literary Fiction Vintage



A Hundred to One: 100 convictions. 1 Million Euro.
The devastating true story of a compulsive gambler
Pat Sheedy

At just 12, Patrick Sheedy began a life of compulsive gambling and crime, accruing nearly 100 convictions and losing over a million euros. After serving time in Ireland's toughest prisons, Sheedy has overcome his addiction. *A Hundred to One* is his gripping, honest memoir of his gambling struggle and recovery. Born in Limerick, Sheedy completed a creative writing degree in prison and won the Listowel Writers' Week short-story prize twice.

Memoir Gill Books



The Hunter
Tana French

In a scorching summer, two men arrive in a small Irish village—one returning home, the other seeking wealth, and one destined to die. Retired Chicago cop Cal Hooper seeks peace in rural Ireland, building a life with Lena and helping troubled teen Trey Reddy. When Trey's estranged father returns with a gold scheme, tensions rise, threatening their world. Tana French's novel explores love, revenge, and sacrifice.

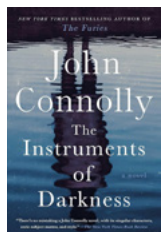
Thriller Penguin Books tanafrench.com



The Illusion of Perception
Emmet O'Brien

Gary, a young college graduate, embarks on a psychedelic journey to Woodstock 1969 and Bob Marley's 1980 performance. Through hallucinogenic experiences and reflections on iconic quotes, he explores past cultures and his own existential crisis. As he delves into his thoughts, he faces an uncertain future and questions what shadows may lie ahead. Emmet O'Brien, an Urban Poet from Dublin, is the author.

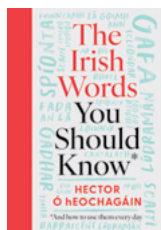
Poetry Self-published



The Instruments of Darkness: A Thriller
Book #21 of Charlie Parker
John Connolly

From bestselling author John Connolly, the Charlie Parker series returns with a gripping crime. In Maine, Colleen Clark is accused of abducting and murdering her child. While most believe her guilty, lawyer Moxie Castin and private investigator Charlie Parker think otherwise. Parker uncovers a complex story involving a suspicious husband, fascists, a disgraced psychic, and a sinister house in the Maine woods—where something dark lurks beneath.

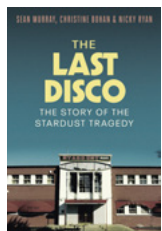
📖 Thriller 📖 Hodder & Stoughton 🌐 johnconnollybooks.com



The Irish Words You Should Know
Hector Ó hEochagáin

When speaking Irish, every word is a tiny poem. Take "loinnir," capturing sunlight on waves and the cheer of morning pints. Hector's stories offer a fresh view on Irish words, making even rain feel wetter. The Irish language connects us to land, weather, and identity, linking us to our ancestors. *The Irish Words You Should Know* will help you speak confidently and rediscover our language's magic.

📖 Gaeilge 📖 Gill Books



The Last Disco: The Story of the Stardust Tragedy
Sean Murray, Christine Bohan, Nicky Ryan

On Valentine's Day 1981, a fire at Dublin's Stardust nightclub killed 48 young people, averaging just 19 years old. Decades of campaigning led to new 2024 inquests revealing the full story. Once a nightlife beacon, the Stardust became a horror scene. This poignant book, based on meticulous research and new evidence, honours the lost, sharing survivors' and families' harrowing experiences in their pursuit of justice.

📖 Non-Fiction 📖 Bonnier Books



The Love Object: Selected Stories
Edna O'Brien

The Love Object gathers Edna O'Brien's most luminous stories, enchanting readers across generations. This collection delves into themes of families, feuds, enchantment, and love, exploring the tension between country and city life, escape, and nostalgia. Crafted in shimmering prose, these tales reflect O'Brien's mastery in depicting women's experiences and evoking deep emotion. Edna O'Brien (1930-2024) was renowned for her evocative and candid writing.

📖 Short stories 📖 Faber & Faber



On Blueberry Hill
Sebastian Barry

In *On Blueberry Hill*, PJ and Christy, sworn enemies sharing a cell for twenty years, reflect on their past lives and events leading to Montjoy Prison. As they recall childhood adventures, a deadly fight, and past loves, they uncover the tragic circumstances of their imprisonment. Sebastian Barry's play, exploring crime, survival, and reconciliation, premiered at the Dublin Theatre Festival and Centre Culturel Irlandais in Paris.

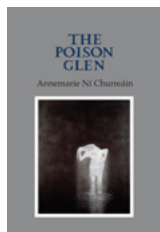
📖 Theatre Play 📖 Faber & Faber



This Plague of Souls
Mike McCormack

Returning to his empty West of Ireland home after prison, Nealon finds no sign of his wife or child. He starts receiving calls from a man claiming to know their fate, demanding a meeting for information. In a hotel lobby during a terrorist attack, Nealon and the man have a tense conversation revealing links between Nealon's past and international crimes. Mike McCormack, from County Mayo, is an award-winning novelist and short story writer.

📖 Thriller 📖 Tramp Press



The Poison Glen
Annemarie Ní Churreáin

The Poison Glen explores stolen or missing children, family loss, and Ireland's culture of silence through a blend of landscape, history, and mythology. Featuring poems of grit and magic, it includes 'The Foundling Crib,' reflecting on Dublin's 1700s Foundling Hospital and responses to Irish institutions. Annemarie Ní Churreáin, from Donegal Gaeltacht, has been shortlisted for the Shine Strong Award and the 2018 Julie Suk Award.

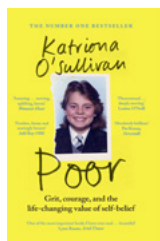
Poetry The Gallery Press



Playing Dead: How Meditation Brought Me Back to Life
Robert Sheehan

In *Playing Dead*, Robert Sheehan reflects on his quest for purpose through life's adventures and transformative lessons. Central to his journey is meditation, which he embraced to find calm amid turbulence. This memoir blends storytelling, poetry, and personal reflections, revealing how spirituality has anchored him. Sheehan offers guidance on integrating meditation into daily life for inner peace and soothing a restless mind. He is a celebrated actor, podcaster, and author.

Non-Fiction Ebury



Poor
Katriona O'Sullivan

Katriona O'Sullivan grew up bright but surrounded by poverty and chaos. Pregnant and homeless at 15, she struggled for years. Today, she's an award-winning academic dedicated to breaking educational barriers. Mentors who believed in her—teachers and community workers—helped transform her life, leading her to Trinity College. *Poor* is a heartfelt testimony and a plea for the future of disadvantaged children.

Memoir Penguin Books katrionaosullivan.org



Randomer
Colm Keegan

Randomer by Colm Keegan is a poetic tour de force that captures life's raw essentials. Despite austerity and political challenges, his optimism for family and community remains strong. Rooted in Dublin vernacular, Keegan's mature style uncovers subtle truths from lived experiences. His unique perspective on everyday moments—whether a doll's house, a meal, or a library visit—reveals the world anew with authenticity.

Poetry Salmon Poetry colmkeeganpoetry.com



Ravelling
Estelle Birdy

Set in Dublin's Liberties, Estelle Birdy's debut *Ravelling* explores the chaotic lives of young men navigating youth and manhood in their city. Born in London, Birdy grew up in Dundalk and fell in love with the Liberties at nineteen. A UCD Creative Writing graduate, she has won or been shortlisted for several competitions, including the Dalkey Creates and IWC Novel Fair.

Literary Fiction/Debut The Lilliput Press



Rememberings
Sinéad O'Connor

Sinéad O'Connor became a global icon at 21 with her voice and shaved head, notably for "Nothing Compares 2 U." Known for her defiance, including tearing up the Pope's photo on TV, she remained outspoken for decades. In her bestselling memoir *Rememberings*, O'Connor shares her journey through family struggles, the Dublin music scene, motherhood, and spirituality, offering intimate, candid insights from a remarkable artist.

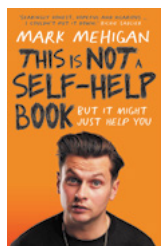
Memoir Penguin Books



Small Things Like These
Claire Keegan

Small Things Like These by Claire Keegan is a powerful novel set in 1985 Ireland. As Christmas nears, coal merchant Bill Furlong uncovers a dark secret at a local convent, confronting his past and the town's silent complicity with the church. This international bestseller is a poignant tale of quiet heroism, love, and family, exploring hope, courage, and empathy through Keegan's acclaimed storytelling.

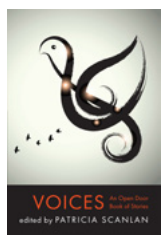
Literary Fiction Faber & Faber



This is Not a Self-Help Book
Mark Mehigan

In his twenties, Mark Mehigan masked alcoholism while leading a successful but self-destructive life. Nearing 30, he faced a nervous breakdown and funded a cocaine habit with payday loans. Seeking change, Mark asked for help and found freedom in letting go of his old ways. His story offers hope and guidance for those struggling with similar issues, though it's not a self-help book. Mark Mehigan is a comedian and host of the *Weekly Roast Podcast*.

Memoir Gill Books



Voices: An Open Door Book of Stories
Patricia Scanlan (Editor)

Since 1998, *Open Door* has showcased Ireland's finest writers. This first collection features diverse voices exploring family, friendship, ageing, love, and childhood. Included are works by Blindboy Boatclub, Dermot Bolger, Marita Conlon-McKenna, Sinéad Crowley, Martina Devlin, Roddy Doyle, Christine Dwyer Hickey, Rachael English, and more. Celebrating 40 years of the National Adult Literacy Agency, it invites readers to discover Ireland's literary treasures.

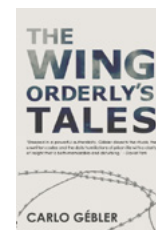
Short stories New Island Books



Why the Moon Travels
Oein DeBhairduin

Why the Moon Travels is a captivating collection of twenty tales from the Irish Traveller community, blending folklore with the mystical. Featuring brave vixens, prophetic owls, and spirits, the stories blur worlds between humans, giants, and fairies. Collected by Oein DeBhairduin and retold in his lyrical style, the book is illustrated by Leanne McDonagh. It won the Judges' Special Award and the Ellis Dillon Award in 2021.

Short Stories Skein Press



The Wing Orderly's Tale
Carlo Gébler

In *The Wing Orderly's Tales*, inmate Harold 'Chalky' Chalkman, serving twelve years for assault, works as the orderly in Her Majesty's Prison Loughanore. The story blends damnation, redemption, humour, and enduring humanity in harsh conditions. Carlo Gébler, born in Dublin to Ernest Gébler and Edna O'Brien, is a novelist, biographer, and playwright who often works with prisoners in Northern Irish jails.

Short Stories New Island Books



Youth
Kevin Curran

Youth by Kevin Curran explores four teens in Balbriggan, Ireland's most diverse town. Angel aims for Drill music and YouTube fame, Princess dreams of university escape, Dean wants to step out of his father's shadow, and Tanya is caught in the allure of internet fame. Amid adolescent pressures, their intersecting lives will transform them. Kevin Curran, a Balbriggan native, has taught there for over a decade.

Literary Fiction The Lilliput Press

Author

Quotes

“Reading doesn’t just shape my world, it transports me to another one. With comics, which is one of the most creative ways to tell a story, we can build worlds both with words and artwork, bringing people along with a full spectacle of storytelling.”

Will Slaney

“Reading gave me an escape from the world I was living in; it gave me hope- that one day things would be ok, it gave me heroes, and it taught me that there was magic in stories. Reading means being able to leave my life for a while, and experience other lands, other lives and other ideas.”

Katriona O’Sullivan

“It is not reading that can open the door to change the world, reading is the key we use to do so. It is the ammunition we collect and fill up on. What changes the world, is the power of an educated mind. Reading is imperative to education.”

Emmet O’Brien

“For me, reading is how I learn. It doesn’t matter whether I’m reading a newspaper, an advertising billboard, a book or poetry. The words in all of them have meaning, and meaning is learning.

Reading provided me with an escape during the darkest period of my life. When I had very little else, I always had my book of John Cheever’s short stories to entertain and enlighten me.

A life without reading would be a very empty existence.”

Pat Sheedy

“Reading and the world of books is my place to escape but also a place to reset myself. It’s my favourite exercise in empathy, trying on other people’s lives, learning about the world through different eyes which is infinitely inspiring.”

Colm Keegan

“Poetry is about discovery. It’s always a joy to be with readers as they discover all the ways in which a poem can help express, acknowledge and transform human experience. To observe your world, or even a world, reflected on a page, is often life-changing. We must never underestimate the power of books and the connection between language, writing and survival.”

Annemarie Ní Churreáin

“The world becomes bigger and more enchanted through reading - every time I finish reading a book I look up to find it more wondrous and fascinating.”

Mike McCormack

“Without books we are stuck inside our skulls; but with books, because they stimulate our imagination, we can fly through the universe and savour its wonders.”

Carlo Gebler



Read Mór

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