

Liam Murphy

The Book Hub Publishing Group have produced another milestone in the diverse and inspirational literary career of John Ennis with, *Going Home to Wyoming (Later Selected Poems 2000 – 2020)*.

The work John Ennis has done as a poet and educator (Head of Humanities at WIT) has marked him out as a committed humanitarian to many causes, local, national and international. He has edited and co-edited international anthologies linking Newfoundland and Canada to Irish and European source material. This alone assures his place in the pantheon of academic achievers and literary luminaries.

The selection is taken from 14 books and was made by the co-editors Niall MacGiolla Bhui (Book Hub) and Renee Sigel (Rare Swan Press). I love the cover with its Apple Tree Celtic Knot, outlining the complexity and simplicity. The title poem is full of references to the poet's diverse interests like a reflective "subversive of subversives".

Today Ennis spends his creative time between Waterford and Mullingar, and I have a crazy vision of him on his High Horse, crossing the Joe Dolan Bridge, ready to do battle with words to remember a vanishing tradition, to acknowledge his roots, and family influences, and to remind people of the restless and possibly, ceaseless inhumanity of the world.

There is a dipping in, here and there, to a storehouse of words, and the persona words that embody stories, like in 'Varuð' where Diarmuid shares with Grainne "there is no rational explanation for all this – what can only be engendered with a mere kiss or what comes with a partner, every little *geis*, the other asks for, sometimes paradise. We soared".

I love it when poetry raises me up and allows me or forces me to overcome fear or hesitation and soar.

The parade of imagery is impressive and humbling at times. A poem about idealism in a seminary can shout "Bollocks Jerusalem. Bollocks the Fad. Fintan didn't give a god-damn".

The next poem looks at 'April Fools' Day', and a hundred soldiers come to knock down the house of Nureddin Amro.

A page later, we are in Tienanmen Square "not knowing what comes next".

What comes next in the book is 'Pelar La Pava' about killing turkeys for Christmas. "The turkey money bought the winter coats". Another image from the same poem "ready for the old man's cart into Mullingar: their great country breasts as plump as nudes from Rodin".

John Ennis' collection *Tráithníní* in 2000 was a revelation, the short line, the beauty like a spine down the page, and I quote one poem in full, (all short lines run together) "And I remember your face on the pillow a quarter of a century of your spine, how love swerves in curves, beauty flexing like a bow, my lips on yours, your lips on mine". Wow!

The last poem in this selection is 'Live Life Magnificently' and the last line: "Poetry, a warehouse where Gods are moved".