



Irish Children's Writers and Illustrators 1986-2006: A Selection of Essays

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To those of us on the other side of the Irish Sea, Irish writing and illustrating for young people in the last 20 years is associated with a well known group of practitioners and Colfer, Lynch, McBratney, Parkinson, Sharkey, Sweeney, Thompson and Waddell all have an essay devoted to them in this collection (what no Roddy Doyle?). But there are almost as many writers and illustrators here who are not so familiar to me; some of whom are published only in Ireland. These 13 short appreciations ? a typical length is about ten pages ? have been updated from a series published in **Inis: the Children's Books Ireland Magazine** between 2001 and 2004. The essays are the work of ten Irish critics, academics and writers, and each offers an analysis of at least a representative sample of its subject's work. The editors' introduction puts the writers and illustrators into the context of the world of children's books in contemporary Ireland and, fascinatingly, touches on questions of what makes a writer Irish (would the much missed Siobhan Dowd be an Irish writer I wonder?), how might a national literature or Irish voice be sustained in the face of globalised publishing, and how can the changes in Irish society be reflected and examined in its books for children: themes which run through the essays that follow. It's a book that shows the vigour and critical awareness of the children's books community in Ireland.

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