

Introduction

Volume 15 of the *ABEI Journal* pays homage to Seamus Heaney, who died on 30 August 2013 at the age of 74. His obituary in *The Independent* described him as “probably the best-known poet in the world”, a well-deserved renown dating back to 1995 when he received the Nobel Prize for Literature. With a career extending over twelve main collections of poetry, beginning with the publication of *Death of a Naturalist* in 1966, he was also a much-respected academic, a playwright and a translator, producing what many consider to be the definitive translation into modern English of *Beowulf* in 1999. His death deprived the global community of Ireland’s most cherished man of letters.

In “A Tribute to Seamus Heaney,” the distinguished scholar Maurice Harmon, himself a poet, recaptures the beauty of Heaney’s most beloved work. Patricia O’Flaherty, a Brazilian who has lived in Ireland for forty-two years, recalls her unforgettable encounters with the poet. The central importance of Heaney’s 1984 collection *Station Island* is discussed by Viviane Carvalho da Anunciação. The section closes with “St Francis and the Birds”, translated into Portuguese by Brazilian specialists. This poem, so much favoured by Heaney in his readings, is also featured on our cover.

This issue also includes interviews with novelist Hugo Hamilton, at the University of São Paulo, and playwright Owen McCafferty, at Queen’s University Belfast. Liam Harte, a specialist on the Irish in Britain, is present in our regular feature “The Critic and the Author”.

Other essays in this volume discuss: writing by the nineteenth-century nun Margaret Anna Cusack, the “nun of Kenmare”; a film directed by Peter Foott; Seamus Deane’s novel *Reading in the Dark*; Brendan Behan’s *The Quare Fellow*. They are followed by Maurice Harmon’s poem “Camping”. In “Voices from Brazil”, Marcelo Pen Parreira analyses the achievement of Brazil’s most canonical novelist Machado de Assis.

The journal closes with a number of Book Reviews, including, appropriately enough one of Seamus Heaney’s last collection of poetry, *Human Chain*, published three years before his death, and Stephanie Schwerter’s newly published study of Russian influence in the poetry of Heaney and his compatriots Tom Paulin and Medbh McGuckian.

The Editors



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Ed. Pedro Corrêa do Lago. São Paulo: Itaú Cultural, 2001.