

Beyond the Horizon

Eoin Lane

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Trials and tragedies can spur artists to great heights, but they can also undermine everything they've worked for. Such is the weighty conundrum behind Eoin Lane's *Beyond the Horizon*, about six decades of an artist's life on the breathtakingly beautiful shores of Ireland.

The story is framed around the present-day encounters of an inquisitive photographer and hermit-like landscape painter, Colin. Colin's father was claimed by the wild waters of the Atlantic when he was young; the tragedy led Colin to a lifelong obsession with the sea. His adulthood is shadowed by his tumultuous romance with Aisling, a troubled soul who both inspires and hinders his artistic progress.

A painter himself, Eoin Lane recounts Colin's struggles to develop his craft and find his own artistic voice with convincing clarity. Whenever Colin meets a new painterly challenge head-on with innovative brush strokes and approaches, Lane's spare but precise prose sings.

Colin's quest to create the perfect painting pushes him physically as well as emotionally. He travels to remote, inhospitable locations for inspiration, all of which are captured with striking imagery. The brisk narrative also underlines the major push-pull contradictions that most artists confront: the lure of creating more commercially successful work versus following one's muse, or how the artist's essential solitude takes a toll on marriage and any hope for a normal, solid family life.

In comparison to these incisive depictions of an artist at work, Colin's ragged romance with Aisling, and a love triangle involving an old college friend, is more conventional, even a bit rote. But as Colin's quest leads him from Ireland to the United States, Italy, and back again to Ireland for a poignant conclusion, Lane spins a thoughtful tale of artistic integrity and redemption.

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