

The Hole Made by a Waterfall: Ireland

Leslie Lee

Leslie Lee Publishers

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The Hole Made by a Waterfall is a charming, intimate account of family research-motivated travels through Ireland.

Leslie Lee's travelogue *The Hole Made by a Waterfall* is about a long search for her family's origins.

With her children grown, Lee found her thoughts turning to her forebearers. Thus, in 2010 and 2019, she embarked on extended trips to Ireland, where her ancestors were from. Joined by a rotating series of family members and friends from the US, she traveled across the country by car and ferry, enjoying the sights, music, and Irish people and their history. Throughout her trips, she kept a travel diary to record her adventures—and her genealogical efforts.

The book's first chapter details the 2010 trip; it represents a brisk review of Lee's trips through the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. Some entries include only a line or two; others encompass several paragraphs. The less detailed entries capture whirlwinds of activity; longer entries go deeper, contemplating particular sites and events.

Within the entries from the 2010 trip, the tone is often light, though they also consider both the physical beauty and historical context of sites, particularly castles, which are made to represent Ireland's contentious, painful history with England. Abundant sketches are used to depict both large and small details of the trips, from maps of visited locations to crumbling castles, pub musicians, and regional dishes. These illustrations are whimsical complements to Lee's enchanting descriptions of dramatic landscapes, simple and extravagant meals, and spontaneous interactions with local people.

But beyond the accounts of sightseeing is the book's more personal focus: having located some of her father's relatives in Northern Ireland, Lee seeks to discover the lost lives of her maternal ancestors. That search takes up the book's second chapter, which chronicles Lee's 2019 trip. This chapter, though shorter than the first, is also more substantial, with fewer images and longer, more complex entries. In addition to sightseeing with friends, Lee meets with genealogy experts and others whom she hopes can help her track down the women whose fortitude allowed her family to survive a brutal famine and thrive in the US. Along the way, she grapples with the less savory aspects of her family history, too, including her family members' roles in supporting English colonial ambitions. But while the book's turns represent some progress toward reconstructing Lee's ancestry, mysteries remain by its end.

Part of a travelogue series, *The Hole Made by a Waterfall* is a charming and intimate account of family research-motivated travels through Ireland.

EILEEN GONZALEZ (May 16, 2022)

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