

## Call My Brother Back By Michael McLaverty

It was Morbid in Places and was mostly a book full of descriptions and not enough drama  
9780856407468 This book begins in 1918 and follows the schooling of a young boy. De moraal wordt misschien wel verwoord door een man op een zeepkist die zegt: Als we een brood met een oranje of groen lint erom van de brug zouden gooien dan pakken de zeemeewen het brood. I had always passed over the novel when choosing a new title but when I heard McLaverty's name mentioned in a number of different contexts over a short period of time I thought that I'd give the book a go. Published originally in 1939 McLaverty who was a school principal in Belfast and indeed for a time an employer of Seamus Heaney tells the story of the MacNeill family from 1918 primarily Colm who at the outset of the story is 13 years old but also of his brothers Jamesy and Alec his sisters Theresa and Clare his mother Mary and father Daniel. By the time we join the narrative Alec and Theresa have already left their Rathlin Island home with Colm soon to follow to attend school in Belfast but when tragedy strikes the whole family decamp to make a home for themselves in the ever expanding streets of West Belfast. In addition to bringing to life the outskirts of the city as they were at the time through the exploration of the boys in their new environment we also get a real feel for the city centre as it was post WW1. While the city is vibrant the fact is that sectarian tension isn't ever far away and as the prospect of partition looms large as the novel progresses the effects of the sectarian war that became the 'Troubles' often forgotten in the shadow of the later conflict in the country has a devastating impact on the city and indeed the family who for the most part attempt to live their lives as normal. The novel is a pretty short and easy read often lyrical in its descriptive prose and possibly just a little too simplified when portraying domestic and social issues but as a document which captures the feel of a time and place it's definitely worth reading and personally I'll be looking to read more of McLaverty's work. Another layer of the book reveals the complex emotional world of each of the individual characters he really gets you inside their skin and behind their eyes seeing the world as they do. Events are described in a matter of fact way which still allows humour joy and warmth to break through and illuminate the never ending days of play work study and mountain meanderings which make up the MacNeills' existence. Not a syllable is wasted in the economic telling of this story which follows Colm's journey in particular from rural altar boy to urban scholar navigating the turbulent and terrible events of Ireland in the early part of the twentieth century: The first 1/3 is set on Rathlin Island and the last 2/3 is set in Belfast: I had hoped he'd get to go back to Rathlin to visit again but he never did. I believe it's one of only a few books that are set on Rathlin, 9780856407468 This classic and brilliant novel takes us even further back in time to the early twentieth century and the conflict of the 1920s: Colm MacNeill is raised on Rathlin Island where there is not even a policeman to watch over them but a change in circumstance sees the family obliged to move to Belfast. There things will become more complicated both individually and on a grander scale, Full review here 9780856407468 Dit boek kocht ik in Belfast in 2009. Ik probeer wel vaker boeken te lezen die zich afspelen op die plek die ik bezoek dat geeft je meer achtergrond en sfeer. Belfast is helemaal zo'n stad die schreeuwt om inzicht daarom kocht ik daar Call my brother back, Ik begon er wel even in maar The catcher in the rye zat ook in mijn koffer en die won: Acht jaar later krijgt McLaverty dan eindelijk zijn kans en hij bracht Belfast terug in mijn gedachten, Hoofdpersoon in dit boek is de zachtmoedige intelligente Colm middelste kind uit een armoedig katholiek gezin: Het is mooi beschreven maar iets te wijldopig naar mijn smaak, In het tweede deel verhuisd Colm naar Belfast voor een vervolgopleiding de rest van het gezin volgt later ook: Het contrast tussen eiland en stad is groot en de melancholieke Colm heeft het niet gemakkelijk, Vooral het laatste deel vond ik boeiend hier staat de dreiging centraal: Het is het begin van het verscheurde Belfast (rond 1920 speelt het) met de oranjemarsen de avondklok de huiszoekingen arrestaties en dodelijk geweld. Heel heftig natuurlijk maar McLaverty kiest geen kant en blijft kijken met de blik van een dromerige jongen die de situatie accepteert zoals hij nu eenmaal is: Maar wij vechten om het lint! Ook zien de broers Colm en Jamesy op kerstavond een man in Shankill Road een protestants strijdlid zingen en uitgenodigd worden in de pub: Jamesy herkent hem hij zong een paar dagen

eerder een Iers lied in Falls Road: Zo laat McLaverty ons kijken naar the troubles en misschien is zijn boodschap nog wel steeds actueel, Over welke verschillen maken we ons eigenlijk druk? 9780856407468 This is a beautifully written story by my favourite Irish author. 9780856407468 It is 1918 and 13-year-old Colm MacNeill is living happily on Rathlin Island when his security is suddenly shattered by the death of his father: The loss of the family breadwinner forces the MacNeills to leave their island home for Belfast where they become caught up in the conflict, Call My Brother Back This is a book that I've had on my shelves for a while and considered one of the 'classics' of fiction about Northern Ireland, I always love a book which writes about an historical Belfast in a contemporary manner and this book is an excellent example of that. 9780856407468 This coming-of-age novel tells the story of Colm MacNeill the son of a Catholic fisherman on Rathlin Island, After a family loss they move to Belfast to a poor neighborhood off the Falls Road. Colm attends a Catholic boy's school first as a boarder and later as a day student, His fees are paid by the parish priest back on Rathlin Island, While Colm sees himself as a poor student he actually does well enough to have a university education in his future: While the move to the city means there are more opportunities for family members to work life is hard: British troops roam the streets and bigotry against Catholics is high, The British Army includes Black and Tans who roam the Catholic neighborhoods: As the story progresses particularly after the Irish Treaty is signed in July 1921 riots and violence rocks the city: In a scene later in the book among Christmas shoppers a man in a tram conductor's uniform steps onto a wooden box and starts to address the crowd, All workers Catholic or Protestant should not be fighting one another. But the people living up on the Malone Road (the better off) aren't suffering but only complaining about the bother, This book reveals details about lives in Northern Ireland in the period leading up to partition: Rural life was difficult but city life introduced new dangers and violence: IRA resistance to the British Army and protection of Catholic ghettos began at this time not in the 1960's and 1970's as many may believe, The Irish News called this A truly great novel and the best novel out of the North or for that matter perhaps out of Ireland in modern times: First published in 1939 it was republished by Poolbeg Press 40 years later in 1979: This is required reading for anyone interested in Irish writing Northern Irish novels and Belfast. 9780856407468 This novella was the trigger for a 'Road to Damascus' moment for me in my journey into literature. My first reading took place as a young student nurse in the 1980s - an antidote to the textbook studying I had to do at the time. The impressions of Rathlin Island especially the rock pools evoked by McLaverty's subtle mastery of imagery and language are burned into my memory from that first reading. And finally he does it all with a detailed nod to the cultural-historical context of the time. 9780856407468 This is a truly beautiful book from start to finish, Knowing Rathlin and Belfast well I greatly enjoyed the rich descriptions of both settings: The writing is direct and descriptive but laden with emotion and longing: Set a century ago this book also drives home how much daily life has changed and how many similarities persist still: Some readers will prefer the section on Colm's life on Rathlin Island others his life in Belfast. The book is set in the years around the War of Independence and there is much that is just ordinary family life daily living play skillfully drawn. But of course the sectarian violence encroaches on the neighbourhoods and everything changes, Colm is another in a large body of child protagonists in Irish writing. The book ended somewhat abruptly I thought. Het eerste deel speelt op Rathlin Island waar Colm opgroeit. De natuur en het eenvoudige leven daar spelen de hoofdrol. Colm zegt zijn broer te zwijgen. His words flow from the page like honey. Enough said. The time-frame of this novel is 1918-1921. The Irish Republican Army is active. They are the people dying in the riots and violence. Catholics already experienced separation discrimination and brutality. I thoroughly recommend this enchanting read. 9780856407468 This is a lovely book. He's smart likable confused. He's worth reading. 9780856407468

